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Samuel Taylor Coleridge's

## BIBLIOGRAPHIA EPISTOLARIS

comprising 33 letters

and being

the Biographical Supplement of  
Coleridge's BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

with additional letters etc., edited by

A. TURNBULL

Vol. 1.

"On the whole this was surely the mightiest genius since Milton. In poetry there is not his like, when he rose to his full power; he was a philosopher, the immensity of whose mind cannot be gauged by anything he has left behind; a critic, the subtlest and most profound of his time. Yet these vast and varied powers flowed away in the shifting sands of talk; and what remains is but what the few land-locked pools are to the receding ocean which has left them casually behind without sensible diminution of its waters."

Academy, 3d October, 1903.

## PREFACE

The work known as the Biographical Supplement of the Biographia Literaria of S. T. Coleridge, and published with the latter in 1847, was begun by Henry Nelson Coleridge, and finished after his death by his widow, Sara Coleridge. The first part, concluding with a letter dated 5th November 1796, is the more valuable portion of the Biographical Supplement. What follows, written by Sara Coleridge, is more controversial than biographical and does not continue, like the first part, to make Coleridge tell his own life by inserting letters in the narrative. Of 33 letters quoted in the whole work, 30 are contained in the section written by Henry Nelson Coleridge. Of these 11 were drawn from Cottle's Early Recollections, seven being letters to Josiah Wade, four to Joseph Cottle, and the remainder are sixteen letters to Poole, one to Benjamin Flower, one to Charles E Heath, and one to Henry Martin.

From this I think it is evident that Henry Nelson Coleridge intended what was published as a Supplement to the Biographia Literaria to be a Life of Coleridge, either supplementary to the Biographia Literaria or as an independent narrative, in which most of the letters published by Cottle in 1837 and unpublished letters to Poole and other correspondents were to form the chief material. Sara Coleridge, in finishing the fragment, did not attempt to carry out the original intention of her husband. A few letters in Cottle were perhaps not acceptable to her taste, and in rejecting them she perhaps resolved to reject all remaining letters in Cottle. She thus finished the fragmentary Life of Coleridge left by her husband in her own way.

But Henry Nelson Coleridge had begun to build on another plan. His intention was simply to string all Coleridge's letters available on a slim biographical thread and thus produce a work in which the poet would have been made to tell his own life. His beginning with the five Biographical Letters to Thomas Poole is a proof of this. He took these as his starting point; and, as far as he went, his "Life of Coleridge" thus constructed is the most reliable of all the early biographies of Coleridge.

This edition of the Biographical Supplement is meant to carry out as far as possible the original project of its author. The whole of his narrative has been retained, and also what Sara Coleridge added to his writing; and all the non-copyright letters of Coleridge available from other sources have been inserted into the narrative, and additional biographical matter, explanatory of the letters, has been given. [1] By this retention of authentic sources I have produced as faithful a picture of the Poet-Philosopher Coleridge as can be got anywhere, for Coleridge always paints his own character in his letters. Those desirous of a fuller picture may peruse, along with this work, the letters published in the Collection of 1895, the place of which in the narrative is indicated in footnotes.

[Footnote: What has been added is enclosed in square brackets.]

The letters are drawn from the following sources:

"Biographical Supplement", 1847 .....	33
Cottle's "Reminiscences", 1847 .....	78
The original "Friend", 1809 .....	5
"The Watchman", 1796 .....	1
Gillman's "Life of Coleridge", 1838 .....	7
Allsop's "Letters, Conversations, etc., of S. T. C.", 1836 (1864) .....	45
"Essays on his Own Times", 1850 .....	1
"Life and Correspondence of R. Southey", 1850 .....	7
Editorials of Poems, etc .....	8
"Literary Remains of S. T. C., 1836, etc" .....	3
"Blackwood's Magazine", October, 1821 .....	1
"Fragmentary Remains of Humphry Davy", 1858 .....	15

"Macmillan's Magazine", 1864 (Letters to W. Godwin) .....	9
Southey's "Life of Andrew Bell", 3 vols., 1844 .....	2
"Charles Lamb and the Lloyds", by E. V. Lucas .....	3
"Anima Poetae", by E. H. Coleridge, 1895 .....	1

The letters of Coleridge have slowly come to light. Coleridge was always fond of letter-writing, and at several periods of his career he was more active in letter-writing than at others. He commenced the publication of his letters himself. The epistolary form was as dear to him in prose as the ballad or odic form in verse. From his earliest publications we can see he loved to launch a poem with "A letter to the Editor," or to the recipient, as preface. The "Mathematical Problem", one of his juvenile facetiae in rhyme, was thus heralded with a letter addressed to his brother George explaining the import of the doggerel. His first printed poem, "To Fortune" (Dykes Campbell's Edition of the "Poems", p. 27), was also prefaced by a short letter to the editor of the "Morning Chronicle". Among Coleridge's letters are several of this sort, and each affords a glimpse into his character. Those with the "Raven" and "Talleyrand to Lord Grenville" are characteristic specimens of his drollery and irony.

Coleridge's greatest triumphs in letter-writing were gained in the field of politics. His two letters to Fox, his letters on the Spaniards, and those to Judge Fletcher, are his highest specimens of epistolary eloquence, and constitute him the rival of Rousseau as an advocate of some great truth in a letter addressed to a public personage. In clearness of thought and virile precision of language they surpass the most of anything that Coleridge has written. They never wander from the point at issue; the evolution of their ideas is perfect, their idiom the purest mother-English written since the refined vocabulary of Hooker, Jeremy Taylor, and Harrington was coined.

Besides the political letters, Coleridge published during his lifetime four important letters of great length written during his sojourn in Germany. Three of these appeared in the "Friend" of 1809, and indeed were the finest part of that periodical; and one was first made public in the "Amulet" of 1829. Six letters published in "Blackwood's Magazine" of 1820-21, and a few others of less importance, brought up the number of letters published by Coleridge to 46. The following is a list of them:

7th Nov. 1793, "To Fortune," Ed. "Morning Chronicle" .....	1
22nd Sept. 1794, Dedication to "Robespierre," to H. Martin .....	1
1st April 1796, Letter to "Caius Gracchus," "The Watchman" .....	1
26th Dec. 1796, Dedication to the "Ode to the Departing Year," to T. Poole .....	1
1798, Ed. "Monthly Magazine, re Monody on Chatterton".....	1
1799, Ed. "Morning Post," with the "Raven" .....	1
21 Dec. 1799, Ed. "Morning Post," with "Love" .....	1
10th Jan. 1800, Ed. "Morning Post, Talleyrand to Lord Grenville" .....	1
18th Nov. 1800, "Monthly Review," on "Wallenstein" .....	1
1834, To George Coleridge, with "Mathematical Problem" .....	1

Political Letters to the "Morning Post" and "Courier" .....	21
1809, Letters of Satyrane, etc., in the "Friend" .....	8
1820-21, Letters to "Blackwood's Magazine" .....	6
1829, "The Amulet," "Over the Brocken" .....	1
--	
46	

The "Literary Remains," published in 1836, added ..... 4

Allsop, in his "Letters, Conversations, etc.," gave to the world ..... 46

Cottle followed in 1837, with his "Early Recollections", in which .... 84  
 letters or fragments of letters made their appearance

Gillman in 1838 published 11 letters or fragments, 4 of which had  
 already appeared in the works of Allsop and Cottle and in the  
 "Friend", leaving a contribution of ..... 7

The "Gentleman's Magazine" followed in 1838  
 with letters to Daniel Stuart .....17

Cottle, in 1847, re-cast his "Early Recollections", and called his  
 work "Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey", and added the  
 splendid Wedgwood series of 19 letters, and a few others of less  
 importance, in all .....25

The "Biographical Supplement" to the 1847 edition of the "Biographia  
 Literaria" contained 33 letters, 11 of which were from Cottle;  
 leaving a contribution of .....22

In 1850, Coleridge's "Essays on his Own Times", consisting of his  
 magazine and newspaper articles, contained in the Preface (p. 91),  
 a fragment of a letter to Poole .....1

Making .....252

published up to 1850 by Coleridge himself and his three early  
 biographers; and these continued to be quoted and alluded to by writers  
 on Coleridge until 1895, when Mr. E. H. Coleridge gave to the world a  
 collection of 260 letters.

Meantime, numerous biographies, memoirs, and magazines continued to  
 throw in a contribution now and then. The following, as far as I have  
 been able to ascertain, is the number of letters or fragments of letters  
 contributed by the various works enumerated:

1836-8, Lockhart's "Life of Sir Walter Scott"	1
1841, "Life of Charles Mathews"	1
" "The Mirror", Letter to George Dyer	1
1844, Southey's "Life of Dr. Andrew Bell"	5



be about 300.

Nor does this exhaust the list of letters written by Coleridge. In Ainger's Collection of the Letters of Charles Lamb are 62 letters by Lamb to Coleridge, most of which are in answer to letters received. We may therefore estimate the letters of Coleridge to Lamb at not less than 62. In Dorothy Wordsworth's "Grasmere Journal" there are no less than 32 letters to the Wordsworths[1] mentioned as having been received during the period 1800-1803, not represented among the letters in Professor Knight's "Life of Wordsworth". The total number of letters known to have been written by Coleridge is therefore between 1,100 and 1,200. Other correspondents of Coleridge not appearing among the recipients of letters in publications are probably as follows:

V. Le Grice.

Sam. Le Grice.

T. F. Middleton.

Robert Allen.

Robert Lovell.

Ch. Lloyd, Jr.

John Cruickshank.

Dr. Beddoes.

Edmund Irving.

Mr. Clarkson.

Mrs. Clarkson (except one small fragment in "Diary of H. C. Robinson").

[Footnote 1:

The letters to Lamb and Miss Wordsworth do not now exist.]

The letters of Coleridge, taken as a whole, are one of the most important contributions to English Letter-writing. They are gradually coming to light, and with every letter or group of letters put forth, the character and intellectual development of Coleridge is becoming clearer. His poems and prose works, great as these are, are not comprehensible without a study of his letters, which join together the "insulated fragments" of that grand scheme of truth which he called his "System" ("Table Talk", 12th Sept. 1831, and 26th June 1834). Coleridge, in his letters, has written his own life, for his life, after all, was a life of thought, and his finest thoughts and his most ambitious aspirations are given expression to in his letters to his numerous friends; and the true biography of Coleridge is that in which his letters are made the main source of the narrative. A Biographia

Epistolaris is what we want of such a man.

Coleridge's letters are often bizarre in construction and quite regardless of the conventions of style, and abound in the most curious freaks of emphasis and imagery. They resemble the letters of Cowper in that they were not written for publication; and, like Cowper's, they have a character of their own. But they far surpass the epistles of the poet of Olney in spiritual vision and intellectuality. The eighteenth century, from Pope and Swift down to Cowper, is extremely rich in

letter-writing. Bolingbroke, Lord Chesterfield, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Gray, Mason, Johnson, Beattie, Burns, and Gibbon, among literary personages, have contributed to the great Epistolick Art, as Dr. Johnson called it; and this list does not include the letters of the politicians, Horace Walpole, Junius, and others. The eighteenth century, in fact, was a letter-writing age; and while the bulk of the poetry of its 300 poets, with the exception of a few masterpieces of monumental quality, has gradually gone out of fashion, its letters have risen into greater repute. Even among the poets whose verse is still read there is a hesitation in public opinion as to whether the verses or letters are superior. There are readers not a few who would not scruple to place Cowper's letters above his poems, who believe that Gray's letters are much more akin to the modern spirit than the "Elegy" and the "Ode to Eton College", and who think that Swift's fly-leaves to his friends will outlive the fame of "Gulliver" and the "Tale of a Tub".

Coleridge, who stands between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, was, like the poets of the former age, a multiform letter-writer. He was often seized with letter-writing when unable to write poetry or execute those unpublished masterpieces in the composition of some of which he was engaged.

Coleridge's letters are of the utmost importance as a part of the literature of the opening of the nineteenth century. It is in the letters that we see better than elsewhere the germs of the speculations which afterwards came to fruition between 1817 and 1850, when the poetical and critical principles of the Lake School gradually took the place of the Classicism of the eighteenth century, and the theology of Broad Churchism began to displace the old theology, and the school of Paley in Evidences and Locke in Philosophy gave way before the inroad of Transcendentalism.

As the record of the phases of an intellectual development the letters of Coleridge stand very high; and, indeed, I do not know anything equal to them except it be the "Journal of Amiel".

The resemblance between Coleridge and Amiel is very striking. Both valetudinarians and barely understood by the friends with whom they came into contact, they took refuge in the inner shrine of introspection, and clothed the most abstruse ideas in the most beautiful forms of language and imagery that is only not poetry because it is not verse. While one wrote the story of his own intellectual development in secret and

retained the record of it hidden from all eyes, the other scattered his to the winds in the shape of letters, which thus, widely distributed, kept his secret until they were gathered together by later hands. The letters of Coleridge as a collection is one of the most engaging psychological studies of the history of an individual mind.

The text of the letters in the present volume is reproduced from the original sources, the "Biographical Supplement", Cottle, Gillman, Allsop, and the "Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey". Fuller texts of some of the letters will be found in "Letters of S. T. C." of 1895, Litchfield's "Tom Wedgwood", and other recent publications. One of the objects of the present work is to preserve the text of the letters as presented in these authentic sources of the life of Coleridge.

Letters Nos. 44, 45, and 46, from "Charles Lamb and the Lloyds", by Mr. E. V. Lucas (Smith, Elder and Co.); No. 130 from "Anima Poetae" (W. Heinemann), are printed here by arrangement with the poet's grandson, Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Esq., to whom my sincere thanks are also due for his kindness in reading the proofs. Mr. Coleridge, of course, is not responsible for any of the opinions expressed in this work; but he has taken great pains in putting me right regarding certain views of others who had written on Coleridge, and also on some of the mistakes made by Henry Nelson Coleridge and Sara Coleridge, who had insufficient data on the matters on which they wrote, and definite information on which, indeed, could not be ascertainable in 1847. Coming from Mr. Coleridge--the chief living authority on the life, letters, and published and unpublished writings of S. T. Coleridge--the corrections in the footnotes and elsewhere may be taken as authoritative; and I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to him accordingly,

ARTHUR TURNBULL.

KIRKCALDY,

31st January, 1911.

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1903. "From Ottery to Highgate, the story of the childhood and later years of Samuel Taylor Coleridge". By Wilfred Brown (Coleberd and Co., Ltd., Ottery St. Mary).

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## PART I

### POETRY

#### BIOGRAPHIA EPISTOLARIS

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

[1772 to 1791]

While here, thou fed'st upon ethereal beams,  
 As if thou had'st not a terrestrial birth;--  
 Beyond material objects was thy sight;  
 In the clouds woven was thy lucid robe!  
 "Ah! who can tell how little for this sphere  
 That frame was fitted of empyreal fire!" [1]

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was the youngest child of the Reverend John Coleridge, Chaplain-Priest and Vicar of the parish of Ottery St. Mary, in the county of Devon, and Master of the Free Grammar, or King's School, as it is called, founded by Henry VIII in that town. His mother's maiden name was Ann Bowdon. He was born at Ottery on the 21st

of October 1772, "about eleven o'clock in the forenoon," as his father, the Vicar, has, with rather unusual particularity, entered it in the register.

John Coleridge, who was born in 1719, and finished his education at Sidney-Sussex College, Cambridge,[2] was a country clergyman and schoolmaster of no ordinary kind. He was a good Greek and Latin scholar, a profound Hebraist, and, according to the measure of his day, an accomplished mathematician. He was on terms of literary friendship with Samuel Badcock, and, by his knowledge of Hebrew, rendered material assistance to Dr. Kennicott, in his well known critical works. Some curious papers on theological and antiquarian subjects appear with his signature in the early numbers of "The Gentleman's Magazine", between the years 1745 and 1780; almost all of which have been inserted in the interesting volumes of Selections made several years ago from that work. In 1768 he published miscellaneous Dissertations arising from the 17th and 18th chapters of the Book of Judges; in which a very learned and ingenious attempt is made to relieve the character of Micah from the charge of idolatry ordinarily brought against it; and in 1772 appeared a "Critical Latin Grammar", which his son called "his best work," and which is not wholly unknown even now to the inquisitive by the proposed substitution of the terms "prior, possessive, attributive, posterior, interjective, and quale-quare-quidditive," for the vulgar names of the cases. This little Grammar, however, deserves a philologist's perusal, and is indeed in many respects a very valuable work in its kind. He also published a Latin Exercise book, and a Sermon. His school was celebrated, and most of the country gentlemen of that generation, belonging to the south and east parts of Devon, had been his pupils. Judge Buller was one. The amiable character and personal eccentricities of this excellent man are not yet forgotten amongst some of the elders of the parish and neighbourhood, and the latter, as is usual in such cases, have been greatly exaggerated. He died suddenly in the month of October 1781, after riding to Ottery from Plymouth, to which latter place he had gone for the purpose of embarking his son Francis, as a midshipman, for India. Many years afterwards, in 1797, S. T. Coleridge commenced a series of Letters to his friend Thomas Poole, of Nether Stowey, in the county of Somerset, in which he proposed to give an account of his life up to that time. Five only were written, and unfortunately they stop short of his residence at Cambridge. This series will properly find a place here.

[Footnote 1: From a Sonnet To Coleridge by Sir Egerton Brydges--written 16th Feb. 1837. S. C.]

[Footnote 2: He was matriculated at Sidney a sizar on the 18th of March 1748, but does not appear to have taken any degree at the University. S. C.]

LETTER 1. TO MR. POOLE

My Dear Poole,

I could inform the dullest author how he might write an interesting book. Let him relate the events of his own life with honesty, not disguising the feelings that accompanied them. I never yet read even a Methodist's "Experience" in the Gospel Magazine without receiving instruction and amusement; and I should almost despair of that man who could peruse the Life of John Woolman without an amelioration of heart. As to my Life, it has all the charms of variety,--high life and low life, vices and virtues, great folly and some wisdom. However, what I am depends on what I have been; and you, my best friend, have a right to the narration. To me the task will be a useful one. It will renew and deepen my reflections on the past; and it will perhaps make you behold with no unforgiving or impatient eye those weaknesses and defects in my character, which so many untoward circumstances have concurred in planting there.

My family on my Mother's side can be traced up, I know not how far. The Bowdons inherited a good farm and house thereon in the Exmoor country, in the reign of Elizabeth, as I have been told; and to my knowledge they have inherited nothing better since that time. My Grandfather was in the reign of George I a considerable woollen trader in Southmolton; so that I suppose, when the time comes, I shall be allowed to pass as a "Sans-culotte" without much opposition. My Father received a better education than the rest of his family in consequence of his own exertions, not of his superiour advantages. When he was not quite sixteen years of age, my grandfather, by a series of misfortunes, was reduced to great distress. My Father received the half of his last crown and his blessing, and walked off to seek his fortune. After he had proceeded a few miles, he sate him down on the side of the road, so overwhelmed with painful thoughts that he wept audibly. A gentleman passed by who knew him, and, inquiring into his sorrow, took him home and gave him the means of maintaining himself by placing him in a school. At this time he commenced being a severe and ardent student. He married his first wife, by whom he had three daughters, all now alive. While his first wife lived, having scraped up money enough, he at the age of twenty walked to Cambridge, entered himself at Sidney College, distinguished himself in Hebrew and Mathematics, and might have had a fellowship if he had not been married. He returned and settled as a schoolmaster in Southmolton where his wife died. In 1760 he was appointed Chaplain-Priest and Master of the School at Ottery St. Mary, and removed to that place; and in August, 1760, Mr. Buller, the father of the present Judge, procured for him the living from Lord Chancellor Bathurst. By my Mother, his second wife, he had ten children, of whom I am the youngest, born October 20th,[1] 1772.

These facts I received from my Mother; but I am utterly unable to fill them up by any further particulars of times, or places, or names. Here I shall conclude my first Letter, because I cannot pledge myself for the accuracy of the accounts, and I will not therefore mingle it with that for the truth of which, in the minutest parts, I shall hold myself responsible. You must regard this Letter as a first chapter devoted to dim traditions of times too remote to be pierced by the eye of investigation.

Yours affectionately, S. T. COLERIDGE.

Feb. 1797. Monday.

[Footnote 1: A mistake, should be October 21st.]

## LETTER 2. To MR. POOLE

My Dear Poole,

My Father (Vicar of, and Schoolmaster at, Ottery St. Mary, Devon) was a good mathematician, and well versed in the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew languages. He published, or rather attempted to publish, several works;--1st, Miscellaneous Dissertations arising from the 17th and 18th chapters of the Book of Judges; 2d, "Sententiae Excerptae" for the use of his own School; and 3d, his best work, a Critical Latin Grammar, in the Preface to which he proposes a bold innovation in the names of the cases. My Father's new nomenclature was not likely to become popular, although it must be allowed to be both sonorous and expressive. "Exempli gratia", he calls the ablative case "the quare-quale-quidditive case!" He made the world his confidant with respect to his learning and ingenuity, and the world seems to have kept the secret very faithfully. His various works, uncut, unthumbed, were preserved free from all pollution in the family archives, where they may still be for anything that I know. This piece of good luck promises to be hereditary; for all "my" compositions have the same amiable home-staying propensity. The truth is, my Father was not a first-rate genius; he was, however, a first-rate Christian, which is much better. I need not detain you with his character. In learning, goodheartedness, absentness of mind, and excessive ignorance of the world, he was a perfect Parson Adams.

My Mother was an admirable economist, and managed exclusively. My eldest brother's name was John. He was a Captain in the East India Company's service; a successful officer and a brave one, as I have heard. He died in India in 1786. My second brother William went to Pembroke College, Oxford. He died a clergyman in 1780, just on the eve of his intended marriage. My brother James has been in the army since the age of fifteen, and has married a woman of fortune, one of the old Duke family of Otterton in Devon. Edward, the wit of the family, went to Pembroke College, and is now a clergyman. George also went to Pembroke. He is in orders likewise, and now has the same School, a very flourishing one, which my Father had. He is a man of reflective mind and elegant talent. He possesses learning in a greater degree than any of the family, excepting myself. His manners are grave, and hued over with a tender sadness. In his moral character he approaches every way nearer to perfection than any man I ever yet knew. He is worth us all. Luke Herman was a surgeon, a severe student, and a good man. He died in 1790, leaving one child, a lovely boy still alive. [1] My only sister, Ann, died at twenty-one, a little after my brother Luke:--

Rest, gentle Shade! and wait thy Maker's will; Then rise unchang'd, and

be an angel still!

Francis Syndercombe went out to India as a midshipman under Admiral Graves. He accidentally met his brother John on board ship abroad, who took him ashore, and procured him a commission in the Company's army. He died in 1792, aged twenty-one, a Lieutenant, in consequence of a fever brought on by excessive fatigue at and after the siege of Seringapatam, and the storming of a hill fort, during all which his conduct had been so gallant that his Commanding Officer particularly noticed him, and presented him with a gold watch, which my Mother now has. All my brothers are remarkably handsome; but they were as inferiour to Francis as I am to them. He went by the name of "the handsome Coleridge." The tenth and last child was Samuel Taylor, the subject and author of these Epistles.

From October 1772 to October 1773. Baptized Samuel Taylor, my Godfather's name being Samuel Taylor, Esquire. I had another called Evans, and two Godmothers, both named Munday.

From October 1773 to October 1774. In this year I was carelessly left by my nurse, ran to the fire, and pulled out a live coal, and burned myself dreadfully. While my hand was being drest by Mr. Young, I spoke for the first time, (so my Mother informs me) and said, "nasty Dr. Young!" The snatching at fire, and the circumstance of my first words expressing hatred to professional men--are they at all ominous? This year I went to school. My Schoolmistress, the very image of Shenstone's, was named Old Dame Key. She was nearly related to Sir Joshua Reynolds.

From October 1774 to 1775. I was inoculated; which I mention, because I distinctly remember it, and that my eyes were bound; at which I manifested so much obstinate indignation, that at last they removed the bandage, and unaffrighted I looked at the lancet, and suffered the scratch. At the close of this year I could read a chapter in the Bible.

Here I shall end, because the remaining years of my life all assisted to form my particular mind;--the first three years had nothing in them that seems to relate to it.

God bless you and your sincere S. T. COLERIDGE.

Sunday, March, 1797.

[Footnote 1: William Hart Coleridge, Bishop of Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands.

(He was appointed to that See in 1824, retired from it in 1842; and afterwards accepted the Wardenship of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury. S. C.) [He died in 1849.] ]

A letter from Francis S. Coleridge to his sister has been preserved in the family, in which a particular account is given of the chance meeting of the two brothers in India, mentioned shortly in the

preceding Letter. There is something so touching and romantic in the incident that the Reader will, it is hoped, pardon the insertion of the original narrative here.

Dear Nancy,

You are very right, I have neglected my absent friends, but do not think I have forgot them, and indeed it would be ungrateful in me if I did not write to them.

You may be sure, Nancy, I thank Providence for bringing about that meeting, which has been the cause of all my good fortune and happiness, which I now in fulness enjoy. It was an affectionate meeting, and I will inform you of the particulars. There was in our ship one Captain Mordaunt, who had been in India before, when we came to Bombay. Finding a number of his friends there he went often ashore. The day before the Fleet sailed he desired one Captain Welsh to go aboard with him, who was an intimate friend of your brother's. "I will," said Welsh, "and will write a note to Coleridge to go with us." Upon this Captain Mordaunt, recollecting me, said there was a young midshipman, a favourite of Captain Hicks, of that name on board. Upon that they agreed to inform my brother of it, which they did soon after, and all three came on board. I was then in the lower deck, and, though you won't believe it, I was sitting upon a gun and thinking of my brother, that is, whether I should ever see or hear anything of him; when seeing a Lieutenant, who had been sent to inform me of my brother's being on board, I got up off the gun: but instead of telling me about my brother, he told me that Captain Hicks was very angry with me and wanted to see me. Captain Hicks had always been a Father to me, and loved me as if I had been his own child. I therefore went up shaking like an aspen leaf to the Lieutenant's apartments, when a Gentleman took hold of my hand. I did not mind him at first, but looked round for the Captain; but the Gentleman still holding my hand, I looked, and what was my surprise, when I saw him too full to speak and his eyes full of tears. Whether crying is catching I know not, but I began a crying too, though I did not know the reason, till he caught me in his arms, and told me he was my brother, and then I found I was paying nature her tribute, for I believe I never cried so much in my life. There is a saying in Robinson Crusoe, I remember very well, viz.--sudden joy like grief confounds at first. We directly went ashore having got my discharge, and having took a most affectionate leave of Captain Hicks, I left the ship for good and all.

My situation in the army is that I am one of the oldest Ensigns, and before you get this must in all probability be a Lieutenant. How many changes there have been in my life, and what lucky ones they have been, and how young I am still! I must be seven years older before I can properly style myself a man, and what a number of officers do I command, who are old enough to be my Father already!

October 9th, 1797.

My Dearest Poole,

From March to October--a long silence! But it is possible that I may have been preparing materials for future Letters, and the time cannot be considered as altogether subtracted from you.

From October 1775 to October 1778. These three years I continued at the Reading School, because I was too little to be trusted among my Father's schoolboys. After break-fast I had a halfpenny given me, with which I bought three cakes at the baker's shop close by the school of my old mistress; and these were my dinner every day except Saturday and Sunday, when I used to dine at home, and wallowed in a beef and pudding dinner. I am remarkably fond of beans and bacon: and this fondness I attribute to my Father's giving me a penny for having eaten a large quantity of beans on Saturday. For the other boys did not like them, and, as it was an economic food, my Father thought my attachment to it ought to be encouraged. He was very fond of me, and I was my Mother's darling: in consequence whereof I was very miserable. For Molly, who had nursed my brother Francis, and was immoderately fond of him, hated me because my Mother took more notice of me than of Frank; and Frank hated me because my Mother gave me now and then a bit of cake when he had none,--quite forgetting that for one bit of cake which I had and he had not, he had twenty sops in the pan, and pieces of bread and butter with sugar on them from Molly, from whom I received only thumps and ill names.

So I became fretful, and timorous, and a tell-tale; and the schoolboys drove me from play, and were always tormenting me. And hence I took no pleasure in boyish sports, but read incessantly. I read through all gilt-cover little books that could be had at that time, and likewise all the uncovered tales of Tom Hickathrift, Jack the Giant Killer, and the like. And I used to lie by the wall, and mope; and my spirits used to come upon me suddenly, and in a flood;--and then I was accustomed to run up and down the churchyard, and act over again all I had been reading on the docks, the nettles, and the rank grass. At six years of age I remember to have read Belisarius, Robinson Crusoe, and Philip Quarles; and then I found the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, one tale of which, (the tale of a man who was compelled to seek for a pure virgin,) made so deep an impression on me, (I had read it in the evening while my mother was at her needle,) that I was haunted by spectres, whenever I was in the dark: and I distinctly recollect the anxious and fearful eagerness, with which I used to watch the window where the book lay, and when the sun came upon it, I would seize it, carry it by the wall, and bask, and read. My father found out the effect which these books had produced, and burned them.

So I became a dreamer, and acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity; and I was fretful, and inordinately passionate; and as I could not play at anything, and was slothful, I was despised and hated by the boys: and because I could read and spell, and had, I may truly say, a memory and understanding forced into almost unnatural ripeness, I was

flattered and wondered at by all the old women. And so I became very vain, and despised most of the boys that were at all near my own age, and before I was eight years old I was a "character". Sensibility, imagination, vanity, sloth, and feelings of deep and bitter contempt for almost all who traversed the orbit of my understanding, were even then prominent and manifest.

From October 1778 to 1779. That which I began to be from three to six, I continued to be from six to nine. In this year I was admitted into the Grammar School, and soon outstripped all of my age. I had a dangerous putrid fever this year. My brother George lay ill of the same fever in the next room. My poor brother, Francis, I remember, stole up in spite of orders to the contrary, and sat by my bedside, and read Pope's Homer to me. Frank had a violent love of beating me; but whenever that was superseded by any humour or circumstances, he was always very fond of me, and used to regard me with a strange mixture of admiration and contempt. Strange it was not, for he hated books, and loved climbing, fighting, playing, and robbing orchards, to distraction. My Mother relates a story of me, which I repeat here, because it must be reckoned as my first piece of wit.--During my fever, I asked why Lady Northcote, our neighbour, did not come and see me. My Mother said she was afraid of catching the fever. I was piqued, and answered, "Ah! Mamma! the four Angels round my bed a'n't afraid of catching it!" I suppose you know the old prayer:--

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,  
Bless the bed that I lie on!--  
Four good Angels round me spread,  
Two at my feet and two at my head.

This "prayer" I said nightly, and most firmly believed the truth of it. Frequently have I, (half-awake and half-asleep; my body diseased, and fevered by my imagination,)--seen armies of ugly things bursting in upon me, and these four Angels keeping them off.

In my next I shall carry on my life to my Father's death.

God bless you, my dear Poole,

And your affectionate, S.T. COLERIDGE.

In a note written in after life Mr. Coleridge speaks of this period of his life in the following terms:

"Being the youngest child, I possibly inherited the weakly state of health of my Father, who died, at the age of sixty-two, before I had reached my ninth year; and from certain jealousies of old Molly, my brother Frank's dotingly fond nurse--and if ever child by beauty and loveliness deserved to be doted on, my brother Francis was that child--and by the infusion of her jealousies into my brother's mind, I was in earliest childhood huffed away from the enjoyments of muscular activity in play, to take refuge at my Mother's side on my little stool, to read my little book, and to listen to the talk of my elders. I was

driven from life in motion to life in thought and sensation. I never played except by myself, and then only acted over what I had been reading or fancying, or half one, half the other, with a stick cutting down weeds and nettles, as one of the "Seven Champions of Christendom." Alas! I had all the simplicity, all the docility of the little child, but none of the child's habits. I never thought as a child, never had the language of a child." [1]

[Footnote 1: Gillman's "Life of Coleridge", p. 10.]

#### LETTER 4. TO MR. POOLE

Dear Poole,

From October 1779 to 1781. I had asked my Mother one evening to cut my cheese entire, so that I might toast it. This was no easy matter, it being a "crumbly" cheese. My Mother however did it. I went into the garden for something or other, and in the mean time my brother Frank minced my cheese, to "disappoint the favourite." I returned, saw the exploit, and in an agony of passion flew at Frank. He pretended to have been seriously hurt by my blow, flung himself on the ground, and there lay with outstretched limbs. I hung over him mourning and in a great fright; he leaped up, and with a horse-laugh gave me a severe blow in the face. I seized a knife, and was running at him, when my Mother came in and took me by the arm. I expected a flogging, and, struggling from her, I ran away to a little hill or slope, at the bottom of which the Otter flows, about a mile from Ottery. There I staid; my rage died away, but my obstinacy vanquished my fears, and taking out a shilling book, which had at the end morning and evening prayers, I very devoutly repeated them--thinking at the same time with a gloomy inward satisfaction--how miserable my Mother must be! I distinctly remember my feelings, when I saw a Mr. Vaughan pass over the bridge at about a furlong's distance, and how I watched the calves in the fields beyond the river. It grew dark, and I fell asleep. It was towards the end of October, and it proved a stormy night. I felt the cold in my sleep, and dreamed that I was pulling the blanket over me, and actually pulled over me a dry thorn-bush which lay on the ground near me. In my sleep I had rolled from the top of the hill till within three yards of the river, which flowed by the unfenced edge of the bottom. I awoke several times, and finding myself wet, and cold, and stiff, closed my eyes again that I might forget it.

In the meantime my Mother waited about half an hour, expecting my return when the "sulks" had evaporated. I not returning, she sent into the churchyard, and round the town. Not found! Several men and all the boys were sent out to ramble about and seek me. In vain! My Mother was almost distracted; and at ten o'clock at night I was 'cried' by the crier in Ottery, and in two villages near it, with a reward offered for me. No one went to bed;--indeed I believe half the town were up all the night. To return to myself. About five in the morning, or a little after, I was broad awake, and attempted to get up, and walk; but I could not move. I saw the shepherds and workmen at a distance, and cried, but so faintly,

that it was impossible to hear me thirty yards off. And there I might have lain and died;--for I was now almost given over, the ponds and even the river, near which I was lying, having been dragged. But providentially Sir Stafford Northcote, who had been out all night, resolved to make one other trial, and came so near that he heard me crying. He carried me in his arms for nearly a quarter of a mile, when we met my father and Sir Stafford Northcote's servants. I remember, and never shall forget, my Father's face as he looked upon me while I lay in the servant's arms--so calm, and the tears stealing down his face; for I was the child of his old age. My Mother, as you, may suppose, was outrageous with joy. Meantime in rushed a young lady, crying out--"I hope you'll whip him, Mrs. Coleridge." This woman still lives at Ottery; and neither philosophy nor religion has been able to conquer the antipathy which I feel towards her, whenever I see her. I was put to bed, and recovered in a day or so. But I was certainly injured; for I was weakly and subject to ague for many years after.

My Father--who had so little parental ambition in him, that, but for my Mother's pride and spirit, he would certainly have brought up his other sons to trades--had nevertheless resolved that I should be a parson. I read every book that came in my way without distinction; and my Father was fond of me, and used to take me on his knee, and hold long conversations with me. I remember, when eight years old, walking with him one winter evening from a farmer's house, a mile from Ottery; and he then told me the names of the stars, and how Jupiter was a thousand times larger than our world, and that the other twinkling stars were suns that had worlds rolling round them; and when I came home, he showed me how they rolled round. I heard him with a profound delight and admiration, but without the least mixture of wonder or incredulity. For from my early reading of fairy tales and about genii, and the like, my mind had been habituated "to the Vast"; and I never regarded "my senses" in any way as the "criteria" of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions, not by my sight, even at that age. Ought children to be permitted to read romances, and stories of giants, magicians, and genii? I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the Great and the Whole. Those who have been led to the same truths step by step, through the constant testimony of their senses, seem to me to want a sense which I possess. They contemplate nothing but parts, and all parts are necessarily little, and the universe to them is but a mass of little things. It is true, the mind may become credulous and prone to superstition by the former method;--but are not the experimentalists credulous even to madness in believing any absurdity, rather than believe the grandest truths, if they have not the testimony of their own senses in their favour? I have known some who have been rationally educated, as it is styled. They were marked by a microscopic acuteness; but when they looked at great things, all became a blank, and they saw nothing, and denied that anything could be seen, and uniformly put the negative of a power for the possession of a power, and called the want of imagination, judgment, and the never being moved to rapture, philosophy.

Towards the latter end of September 1781, my Father went to Plymouth

with my brother Francis, who was to go out as midshipman under Admiral Graves, who was a friend of my Father's. He settled Frank as he wished, and returned on the 4th of October, 1781. He arrived at Exeter about six o'clock, and was pressed to take a bed there by the friendly family of the Harts; but he refused; and to avoid their entreaties he told them that he had never been superstitious, but that the night before he had had a dream, which had made a deep impression on him. He dreamed that Death had appeared to him, as he is commonly painted, and had touched him with his dart. Well, he returned home; and all his family, I excepted, were up. He told my Mother his dream; but he was in high health and good spirits; and there was a bowl of punch made, and my Father gave a long and particular account of his travel, and that he had placed Frank under a religious Captain, and so forth. At length he went to bed, very well and in high spirits. A short time after he had lain down, he complained of a pain in his bowels, to which he was subject, from wind. My Mother got him some peppermint water, which he took, and after a pause, he said, "I am much better now, my dear!"--and lay down again. In a minute my Mother heard a noise in his throat, and spoke to him, but he did not answer; and she spoke repeatedly in vain. Her shriek awaked me, and I said--"Papa is dead!" I did not know my Father's return; but I knew that he was expected. How I came to think of his death, I cannot tell; but so it was. Dead he was. Some said it was gout in the heart;--probably it was a fit of apoplexy. He was an Israelite without guile, simple, generous, and, taking some Scripture texts in their literal sense, he was conscientiously indifferent to the good and the evil of this world. God love you and

S.T. COLERIDGE.

He was buried at Ottery on the 10th of October 1781. "O! that I might so pass away," said Coleridge, thirty years afterwards, "if, like him, I were an Israelite without guile! The image of my Father, very reverend, kind, learned, simple-hearted Father is a religion to me."

At his Father's death Coleridge was nearly nine years old. He continued with his Mother at Ottery till the spring of 1782, when he was sent to London to wait the appointed time for admission into Christ's Hospital, to which a presentation had been procured from Mr. John Way through the influence of his father's old pupil Sir Francis Buller. Ten weeks he lived in London with an Uncle, and was entered in the books on the 8th of July 1782.

LETTER 5. TO MR. POOLE

From October 1781 to October 1782. After the death of my Father, we, of course, changed houses, and I remained with my Mother till the spring of 1782, and was a day scholar to Parson Warren, my Father's successor. He was not very deep, I believe; and I used to delight my poor Mother by

relating little instances of his deficiency in grammar knowledge--every detraction from his merits seeming an oblation to the memory of my Father, especially as Warren did certainly "pulpitize" much better. Somewhere I think about April 1782, Judge Buller, who had been educated by my Father, sent for me, having procured a Christ's Hospital presentation. I accordingly went to London, and was received and entertained by my Mother's brother, Mr. Bowdon. He was generous as the air, and a man of very considerable talents, but he was fond, as others have been, of his bottle. He received me with great affection, and I staid ten weeks at his house, during which I went occasionally to Judge Buller's. My Uncle was very proud of me, and used to carry me from coffee-house to coffee-house, and tavern to tavern, where I drank, and talked, and disputed as if I had been a man. Nothing was more common than for a large party to exclaim in my hearing, that I was a prodigy, and so forth; so that while I remained at my Uncle's, I was most completely spoilt and pampered, both mind and body.

At length the time came, and I donned the blue coat and yellow stockings, and was sent down to Hertford, a town twenty miles from London, where there are about three hundred of the younger Blue-coat boys. At Hertford I was very happy on the whole, for I had plenty to eat and drink, and we had pudding and vegetables almost every day. I remained there six weeks, and then was drafted up to the great school in London, where I arrived in September, 1782, and was placed in the second ward, then called Jefferies' Ward, and in the Under Grammar School. There are twelve wards, or dormitories, of unequal sizes, beside the sick ward, in the great school; and they contained altogether seven hundred boys, of whom I think nearly one-third were the sons of clergymen. There are five schools,--mathematical, grammar, drawing, reading, and writing--all very large buildings. When a boy is admitted, if he reads very badly, he is either sent to Hertford, or to the reading school. Boys are admissible from seven to twelve years of age. If he learns to read tolerably well before nine, he is drafted into the Lower Grammar School, if not, into the Writing School, as having given proof of unfitness for classical studies. If, before he is eleven, he climbs up to the first form of the Lower Grammar School, he is drafted into the Head Grammar School. If not, at eleven years of age, he is sent into the Writing School, where he continues till fourteen or fifteen, and is then either apprenticed or articled as a clerk, or whatever else his turn of mind or of fortune shall have provided for him. Two or three times a year the Mathematical Master beats up for recruits for the King's boys, as they are called; and all who like the navy are drafted into the Mathematical and Drawing Schools, where they continue till sixteen or seventeen years of age, and go out as midshipmen, and schoolmasters in the Navy. The boys who are drafted into the Head Grammar School, remain there till thirteen; and then, if not chosen for the University, go into the Writing School.

Each dormitory has a nurse or matron, and there is a head matron to superintend all these nurses. The boys were, when I was admitted, under excessive subordination to each other according to rank in school; and every ward was governed by four Monitors,--appointed by the Steward, who was the supreme governor out of school--our temporal lord,--and by four

Markers, who wore silver medals, and were appointed by the Head Grammar Master, who was our supreme spiritual lord. The same boys were commonly both Monitors and Markers. We read in classes on Sundays to our Markers, and were catechised by them, and under their sole authority during prayers, etc. All other authority was in the Monitors; but, as I said, the same boys were ordinarily both the one and the other. Our diet was very scanty. Every morning a bit of dry bread and some bad small beer. Every evening a larger piece of bread, and cheese or butter, whichever we liked. For dinner,--on Sunday, boiled beef and broth; Monday, bread and butter, and milk and water; Tuesday, roast mutton; Wednesday, bread and butter, and rice milk; Thursday, boiled beef and broth; Friday, boiled mutton and broth; Saturday, bread and butter, and pease-porridge. Our food was portioned; and, excepting on Wednesdays, I never had a belly full. Our appetites were damped, never satisfied; and we had no vegetables. [1]

[Footnote 1: The above five letters are I-V of Mr. E. H. Coleridge's "Letters of S. T. C". Letter VI is dated 1785; Letter VII of "Letters" is dated "before 1790."]

S. T. COLERIDGE.

"O! what a change!" he writes in another note; "depressed, moping, friendless, poor orphan, half starved; at that time the portion of food to the Blue-coats was cruelly insufficient for those who had no friends to supply them." And he afterwards says:--"When I was first plucked up and transplanted from my birth-place and family, at the death of my dear Father, whose revered image has ever survived in my mind to make me know what the emotions and affections of a son are, and how ill a father's place is likely to be supplied by any other relation, Providence, (it has often occurred to me,) gave me the first intimation that it was my lot, and that it was best for me, to make or find my way of life a detached individual, a "terrae filius", who was to ask love or service of no one on any more specific relation than that of being a man, and as such to take my chance for the free charities of humanity."

Coleridge continued eight years at Christ's Hospital. It was a very curious and important part of his life, giving him Bowyer for his teacher, and Lamb for his friend. [1]

[Footnote 1: A few particulars of this "most remarkable and amiable man," the well-known author of "Essays of Elia, Rosamund Gray, Poems", and other works, will interest most readers of the "Biographia".

He was born on the 18th of February, 1775, in the Inner Temple; died 27th December, 1834, about five months after his friend Coleridge, who continued in habits of intimacy with him from their first acquaintance till his death in July of the same year. In "one of the most exquisite of all the Essays of Elia," "The Old Benchers of the Middle Temple" ("Works", vol. ii, p. 188), Lamb has given the characters of his father,

and of his father's master, Samuel Salt. The few touches descriptive of this gentleman's "unrelenting bachelorhood"--which appears in the sequel to have been a persistent mourner-hood--and the forty years' hopeless passion of mild Susan P.--which very permanence redeems and almost dignifies, is in the author's sweetest vein of mingled humour and pathos, wherein the latter, as the stronger ingredient, predominates.

Mr. Lamb never married, for, as is recorded in the Memoir, "on the death of his parents, he felt himself called upon by duty to repay to his sister [a] the sollicitude with which she had watched over his infancy. To her, from the age of twenty-one he devoted his existence, seeking thenceforth no connection which could interfere with her supremacy in his affections, or impair his ability to sustain and to comfort her."

[[Sub-footnote a: "A word Timidly uttered, for she "lives", the meek,  
The self-restraining, the ever kind."]]

From Mr. Wordsworth's memorial poem to her brother. P. W. V. P. 333.]]

Mr. Coleridge speaks of Miss Lamb, to whom he continued greatly attached, in these verses, addressed to her brother:

"Cheerily, dear Charles!  
Thou thy best friend shall cherish many a year;  
Such warm presages feel I of high hope!  
For not uninterested the dear maid  
I've viewed--her soul affectionate yet wise,  
Her polished wit as mild as lambent glories  
That play around a sainted infant's head."

(See the single volume of Coleridge's Poems, p. 28.)

Mr. Lamb has himself described his dear and only sister, whose proper name is Mary Anne, under the title of "Cousin Bridget," in the Essay called "Mackery End", a continuation of that entitled "My Relations", in which he has drawn the portrait of his elder brother. "Bridget Elia," so he commences the former, "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."--("Works", vol. ii, p. 171.) He describes her intellectual tastes in this essay, but does not refer to her literary abilities. She wrote "Mrs. Leicester's School", which Mr. C. used warmly to praise for delicacy of taste and tenderness of feeling.

Miss Lamb still survives, in the words of Mr. Talfourd, "to mourn the severance of a life-long association, as free from every alloy of selfishness, as remarkable for moral beauty, as this world ever witnessed in brother and sister. "I have felt desirous to place in relief, as far as might be, such an interesting union--to show how blest

a fraternal marriage may be, and what sufficient helpmates a brother and sister have been to each other. Marriages of this kind would perhaps be more frequent but for the want of some pledge or solid warranty of continuance equivalent to that which rivets wedlock between husband and wife. Without the vow and the bond, formal or virtual, no society, from the least to the greatest, will hold together. Many persons are so constituted that they cannot feel rest or satisfaction of spirit without a single supreme object of tender affection, in whose heart they are conscious of holding a like supremacy,--who has common hopes, loves, and interests with themselves. Without this the breezes do not refresh nor the sunbeams gladden them. A "share" in ever so many kind hearts does not suffice to their happiness; they must have the whole of one, as no one else has any part of it, whatever love of another kind that heart may still reserve for others. There is no reason why a brother and sister might not be to each other this second-self--this dearer half--though such an attachment is beyond mere fraternal love, and must have something in it "of choice and election," superadded to the natural tie: but it is seldom found to exist, because the durable cement is wanting--the sense of security and permanence, without which the body of affection cannot be consolidated, nor the heart commit itself to its whole capacity of emotion. I believe that many a brother and sister spend their days in uncongenial wedlock, or in a restless faintly expectant-singlehood, who might form a "comfortable couple" could they but make up their minds early to take each other for better for worse.

Two other poems of Mr. C. besides the one in which his sister is mentioned, are addressed to Mr. Lamb--"This Lime-tree-bower my Prison", and the lines "To a Friend, who had declared his intention of writing no more Poetry".--("Poetical Works", i, p. 201 and p. 205.) In a letter to the author ("Ainger", i, p. 121), Lamb inveighs against the soft epithet applied to him in the first of these. He hoped his "'virtues" had done "sucking"--and declared such praise fit only to be a "cordial to some greensick sonneteer."

"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."

In the next poem he is called "wild-eyed boy." The two epithets, "wild-eyed" and "gentle-hearted," will recall Charles Lamb to the minds of all who knew him personally. Mr. Talfourd seems to think that the special delight in the country, ascribed to him by my father, was a distinction scarcely merited. I rather imagine that his indifference to it was a sort of "mock apparel" in which it was his humour at times to invest himself. I have been told that, when visiting the Lakes, he took as much delight in the natural beauties of the region as might be expected from a man of his taste and sensibility. [b]

[[Sub-footnote b:

"Thou wert a scorner of the field, my Friend,  
But more in show than truth."

From Mr. W.'s poem "To a good man of most dear memory", quoted in p. 323.]]

Mr. Coleridge's expression, recorded in the "Table Talk", that he "looked on the degraded men and things around him like moonshine on a dunghill, that shines and takes no pollution," partly alludes to that tolerance of moral evil, both in men and books, which was so much remarked in Charles Lamb, and was, in so good a man, really remarkable. His toleration of it in books is conspicuous in the view he takes of the writings of Congreve and Wycherley, in his essay on the artificial comedy of the last century ("Works", vol. ii, p. 322), and in many of his other literary criticisms. His toleration of it in men--at least his faculty of merging some kinds and degrees of it in concomitant good, or even beholding certain errors rather as objects of interest, or of a meditative pity and tenderness, than of pure aversion and condemnation, Mr. Talfourd has feelingly described in his "Memoir" (vol. ii, p. 326-9), "Not only to opposite opinions," he says, "and devious habits of thought was Lamb indulgent; he discovered the soul of goodness in things evil so vividly, that the surrounding evil disappeared from his mental vision." This characteristic of his mind is not to be identified with the idolizing propensity common to many ardent and imaginative spirits. He "not only loved his friends in spite of their errors," as Mr. Talfourd observes, "but loved them, "errors and all";" which implies that he was not unconscious of their existence. He saw the failings as plainly as any one else, nay, fixed his gentle but discerning eye upon them; whereas the idolizers behold certain objects in a bedarkening blaze of light, or rather of light-confounding brightness, the multiplied and heightened reflection of whatever is best in them, to the obscurity or transmutation of all their defects. Whence it necessarily follows that the world presents itself to their eyes divided, like a chess-board, into black and white compartments--a moral and intellectual chequer-work; not that they love to make darkness, but that they luxuriate too eagerly in light: and their "over-muchness" toward some men involves an over-littleness towards others, whom they involuntarily contrast, in all their poor and peccant reality, with gorgeous idealisms. The larger half of mankind is exiled for them into a hemisphere of shadow, as dim, cold, and negative as the unlit portion of the crescent moon. Lamb's general tendency, though he too could warmly admire, was in a different direction; he was ever introducing streaks and gleams of light into darkness, rather than drowning certain objects in floods of it; and this, I think, proceeded in him from indulgence toward human nature rather than from indifference to evil. To his friend the disposition to exalt and glorify co-existed, in a very remarkable manner, with a power of severe analysis of character and poignant exhibition of it,--a power which few possess without exercising it some time or other to their own sorrow and injury. The consequence to Mr. Coleridge was that he sometimes seemed untrue to himself, when he had but brought forward, one after another, perfectly real and sincere moods of his mind.

In his fine poem commemorating the deaths of several poets, Mr. Wordsworth thus joins my father's name with that of his almost life-long friend:

"Nor has the rolling year twice measured,  
From sign to sign, its steadfast course,  
Since every mortal power of Coleridge  
Was frozen at its marvellous source;  
The rapt One of the godlike forehead,  
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth;  
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,  
Has vanished from his lonely hearth."

S. C. Footnote 1 ends: main text resumes:]

Numerous retrospective notices by himself and others exist of this period; but none of his really boyish letters have been preserved. The exquisite Essay intitled, "Christ's Hospital five and thirty years ago", by Lamb, is principally founded on that delightful writer's recollections of the boy Coleridge, and that boy's own subsequent descriptions of his school days. Coleridge is Lamb's "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 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 toward it in those unfledged years! How, in my dreams would my native town, far in the west, come back with its church, its trees, and faces! How I would wake weeping, and in the anguish of my heart exclaim upon sweet "Calne in Wiltshire!"

Yet it must not be supposed that Coleridge was an unhappy boy. He was naturally of a joyous temperament, and in one amusement, swimming, he excelled and took singular delight. Indeed he believed, and probably with truth, that his health was seriously injured by his excess in bathing, coupled with such tricks as swimming across the New River in his clothes, and drying them on his back, and the like. But reading was a perpetual feast to him. "From eight to fourteen," he writes, "I was a playless day-dreamer, a "helluo librorum", my appetite for which was indulged by a singular incident: a stranger, who was struck by my conversation, made me free of a circulating library in King Street, Cheapside."--"Here," he proceeds, "I read through the catalogue, folios and all, whether I understood them, or did not understand them, running all risks in skulking out to get the two volumes which I was entitled to have daily. Conceive what I must have been at fourteen; I was in a continual low fever. My whole being was, with eyes closed to every object of present sense, to crumple myself up in a sunny comer, and read, read, read,--fancy myself on Robinson Crusoe's island, finding a mountain of plum-cake, and eating a room for myself, and then eating it

into the shapes of tables and chairs--hunger and fancy!"--"My talents and superiority," he continues, "made me for ever at the head in my routine of study, though utterly without the desire to be so; without a spark of ambition; and as to emulation, it had no meaning for me; but the difference between me and my form-fellows, in our lessons and exercises, bore no proportion to the measureless difference between me and them in the wide, wild, wilderness of useless, unarranged book knowledge and book thoughts. Thank Heaven! it was not the age for getting up prodigies; but at twelve or fourteen I should have made as pretty a juvenile prodigy as was ever emasculated and ruined by fond and idle wonderment. Thank Heaven! I was flogged instead of being flattered. However, as I climbed up the school, my lot was somewhat alleviated."

## CHAPTER II

### CAMBRIDGE AND PANTISOCRACY

(1791 to 1795)

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!--

S. T. Coleridge entered at Jesus College, Cambridge, the 5th of February, 1791. [He did not go into residence till October 1791.]

The poems he wrote about this time and during his first vacation at College are rather conventional, and give few indications of his future deft handling of verse. His "Mathematical Problem" sent to his brother George, is a piece of droll nonsense, but the letter accompanying it is much better than the verse. It reads as follows:

#### LETTER 6. TO GEORGE COLERIDGE, WITH A POEM ENTITLED "A MATHEMATICAL PROBLEM"

Dear Brother,

I have often been surprised that Mathematics, the quintessence of Truth, should have found admirers so few and so languid. Frequent consideration and minute scrutiny have at length unravelled the cause; viz. that though Reason is feasted, Imagination is starved; whilst Reason is luxuriating in its proper Paradise, Imagination is wearily travelling on a dreary desert. To assist Reason by the stimulus of Imagination is the

design of the following production. In the execution of it much may be objectionable. The verse (particularly in the introduction of the ode) may be accused of unwarrantable liberties, but they are liberties equally homogeneous with the exactness of Mathematical disquisition, and the boldness of Pindaric daring. I have three strong champions to defend me against the attacks of Criticism: the Novelty, the Difficulty, and the Utility of the work. I may justly plume myself that I first have drawn the nymph Mathesis from the visionary caves of abstracted idea, and caused her to unite with Harmony. The first-born of this Union I now present to you; with interested motives indeed--as I expect to receive in return the more valuable offspring of your Muse.

Thine ever S. T. C.

Christ's Hospital, March 31, 1791. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letters VIII-XXXI follow No. 6 of our collection.]

The piece of doggerel, to which this epistle is a preface, will be found in vol. ii, p. 386, of the Aldine Edition of Coleridge's Poems.

Coleridge's brother George also wrote verses, and "Mathematical Problem" is just one of the cantrips in verse that passed between the brothers.]

He gained Sir William Browne's gold medal for the Greek Ode in the summer of that year. It was on the Slave Trade. The poetic force and originality of this Ode were, as he said himself, much beyond the language in which they were conveyed. In the winter of 1792-3 he stood for the University (Craven) Scholarship with Dr. Keate, the late head-master of Eton, Mr. Bethell (of Yorkshire) and Bishop Butler, who was the successful candidate. In 1793 he wrote without success for the Greek Ode on Astronomy, the prize for which was gained by Dr. Keate. The original is not known to exist, but the reader may see what is probably a very free version of it by Mr. Southey in his *Minor Poems*. ("Poetical Works", vol. ii, p. 170.) "Coleridge"--says a schoolfellow [1] of his who followed him to Cambridge in 1792, "was very studious, but his reading was desultory and capricious. He took little exercise merely for the sake of exercise: but he was ready at any time to unbend his mind in conversation; and, for the sake of this, his room, (the ground-floor room on the right hand of the staircase facing the great gate,) was a constant rendezvous of conversation-loving friends. I will not call them loungers, for they did not call to kill time, but to enjoy it. What evenings have I spent in those rooms! What little suppers, or "sizings", as they were called, have I enjoyed; when Aeschylus, and Plato, and Thucydides were pushed aside, with a pile of lexicons and the like, to discuss the pamphlets of the day. Ever and anon a pamphlet issued from the pen of Burke. There was no need of having the book before us;--Coleridge had read it in the morning, and in the evening he would repeat whole pages "verbatim"."--"College Reminiscences, Gentleman's Mag"., Dec. 1834.

[Footnote 1: C. V. Le Grice.]

In May and June, 1793, Frennd's trial took place in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, and in the Court of Delegates, at Cambridge. Frennd was a Fellow of Jesus, and a slight acquaintance had existed between him and Coleridge, who however soon became his partizan. Mr. C. used to relate a remarkable incident, which is thus preserved by Mr.

Gillman:--"The trial was observed by Coleridge to be going against Frennd, when some observation or speech was made in his favour;--a dying hope thrown out, as it appeared, to Coleridge, who in the midst of the Senate House, whilst sitting on one of the benches, extended his hands and clapped them. The Proctor in a loud voice demanded who had committed this indecorum. Silence ensued. The Proctor, in an elevated tone, said to a young man sitting near Coleridge, "Twas you, Sir!" The reply was as prompt as the accusation; for, immediately holding out the stump of his right arm, it appeared that he had lost his hand;--'I would, Sir,' said he, 'that I had the power!' That no innocent person should incur blame, Coleridge went directly afterwards to the Proctor, who told him that he saw him clap his hands, but fixed on this person, who he knew had not the power. 'You have had,' said he, 'a narrow escape.'"--"Life of S. T. C"., i, p. 55.

Coleridge passed the summer of 1793 at Ottery, and whilst there wrote his "Songs of the Pixies" ("Poetical Works", i, p. 13), and some other little pieces. He returned to Cambridge in October, but, in the following month, in a moment of despondency and vexation of spirit, occasioned principally by some debts not amounting to £100 he suddenly left his college and went to London. In a few days he was reduced to want, and observing a recruiting advertisement he resolved to get bread and overcome a prejudice at the same time by becoming a soldier. He accordingly applied to the sergeant, and after some delay was marched down to Reading, where he regularly enlisted as a private in the 15th Light Dragoons on the 3d of December, 1793. He kept his initials under the names of Silas Tomkyn Comberbacke. "I sometimes," he writes in a letter, "compare my own life with that of Steele, (yet O! how unlike!)--led to this from having myself also for a brief time borne arms, and written 'private' after my name, or rather another name; for, being at a loss when suddenly asked my name, I answered "Cumberback", and verily my habits were so little equestrian, that my horse, I doubt not, was of that opinion." Coleridge continued four months a light dragoon, during which time he saw and suffered much. He rode his horse ill, and groomed him worse; but he made amends by nursing the sick, and writing letters for the sound. His education was detected by one of his officers, Captain Nathaniel Ogle, who observed the words,--"Eheu! quam infortunii miserrimum est fuisse felicem!"--freshly written in pencil on the stable-wall or door, and ascertained that Comberbacke was the writer. But the termination of his military career was brought about by a chance recognition in the street: his family was apprized of his situation, and after some difficulty he was duly discharged on the both of April, 1794, at Hounslow.

Coleridge now returned to Cambridge, and remained there till the commencement of the summer vacation. But the adventures of the preceding

six months had broken the continuity of his academic life, and given birth to new views of future exertion. His acquaintance with Friend had materially contributed to his adoption of the system called Unitarianism, which he now openly professed, and this alone made it imperative on his conscience to decline availing himself of any advantages dependent on his entering into holy orders, or subscribing the Articles of the English Church. He lived, nevertheless, to see and renounce his error, and to leave on record his deep and solemn faith in the catholic doctrine of Trinal Unity, and the Redemption of man through the sacrifice of Christ, both God and Man. Indeed his Unitarianism, such as it was, was not of the ordinary quality. "I can truly say"--were Coleridge's words in after life--"that I never falsified the Scripture. I always told the Unitarians that their interpretations of the Scripture were intolerable upon any principles of sound criticism; and that if they were to offer to construe the will of a neighbour as they did that of their Maker, they would be scouted out of society. I said then plainly and openly that it was clear enough that John and Paul were not Unitarians. But at that time I had a strong sense of the repugnancy of the doctrine of vicarious atonement to the moral being, and I thought nothing could counterbalance that. 'What care I,' I said, 'for the Platonisms of John, or the Rabbinisms of Paul?--My conscience revolts!' That was the ground of my Unitarianism."--"Table Talk", Bohn Library edition, p. 290.

At the commencement of the Long Vacation, in June, 1794, Coleridge went to Oxford on a visit to an old school-fellow, intending probably to proceed afterwards to his mother at Ottery. But an accidental introduction to Robert Southey, then an under-graduate at Balliol College, first delayed, and ultimately prevented, the completion of this design, and became, in its consequences, the hinge on which a large part of Coleridge's after life was destined to turn.

The first letter to Southey was written from Gloucester on 6th July 1794, and it shows the degree of intimacy on which the two undergraduates stood at this time. They had met only about a month before, for Southey writes on 12th June to his friend Grosvenor Bedford: "Allen is with us daily and his friend from Cambridge, Coleridge, whose poems you will oblige me by subscribing to, either at Hookam's or Edward's. He is of most uncommon merit, of the strongest genius, the clearest judgment, the best heart. My friend he already is, and must hereafter be yours," ("Life and Correspondence of Southey", i, 210). The poems mentioned were a projected volume of "Imitations from Modern Latin Poets", of which an ode after Casimir is the only relic. Coleridge's first letter to Southey reads as follows:

#### LETTER 7. TO SOUTHEY

6 July 1794.

You are averse to gratitudinarian flourishes, else would I talk about hospitality, attention, &c. &c.; however, as I must not thank you, I will thank my stars. Verily, Southey, I like not Oxford, nor the

inhabitants of it. I would say thou art a nightingale among owls; but thou art so songless and heavy towards night that I will rather liken thee to the matin lark, thy "nest" is in a blighted cornfield, where the sleepy poppy nods its red-cowled head, and the weak-eyed mole plies his dark work; but thy soaring is even unto heaven. Or let me add (for my appetite for similes is truly canine at this moment), that as the Italian nobles their new-fashioned doors, so thou dost make the adamant gate of Democracy turn on its golden hinges to most sweet music. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letter XXXII gives the full text of No. 7. Letter XXXIII is dated 15 July, 1794.]

For the next fifteen months Coleridge and Southey were close companions, Coleridge being the elder by two years.

Upon the present occasion, however, he left Oxford with an acquaintance, Mr. Hucks, for a pedestrian tour in Wales. [2] Two other friends, Brookes and Berdmore, joined them in the course of their ramble; and at Caernarvon Mr. Coleridge wrote the following letter to Mr. Martin, of Jesus College.

[Footnote 2: It is to this tour that he refers in the "Table Talk", p. 88.--"I took the thought of "grinning for joy" in that poem ("The Ancient Mariner") from my companion (Berdmore's) remark to me, when we had climbed to the top of Penmaenmaur, and were nearly dead with thirst. We could not speak from the constriction, till we found a little puddle under a stone. He said to me,--'You grinned like an idiot.' He had done the same."]

LETTER 8. To HENRY MARTIN [1]

July 22d, 1794.

Dear Martin,

From Oxford to Gloucester,+ to Ross,+ to Hereford, to Leominster, to Bishop's Castle,+ to Montgomery, to Welshpool, Llanvelling,+ Llangunnog, Bala,+ Druid House,+ Llangollin, Wrexham,++ Ruthin, Denbigh,+ St. Asaph, Holywell,+ Rudland, Abergeley,+ Aberconway,+ Abber,+ over a ferry to Beaumaris+ (Anglesea), Amlock,+ Copper Mines, Gwindu, Moeldon, over a ferry to Caernarvon, have I journeyed, now philosophizing with Hucks, 1 now melancholizing by myself, or else indulging those daydreams of fancy, that make realities more gloomy. To whatever place I have affixed the mark +, there we slept. The first part of our tour was intensely hot--the roads, white and dazzling, seemed to undulate with heat--and the country, bare and unhedged, presenting nothing but stone fences, dreary to the eye and scorching to the touch. At Ross we took up our quarters at the King's Arms, once the house of Mr. Kyrle, the celebrated Man of Ross. I gave the window-shutter a few verses, Which I shall add to the end of the letter. The walk from Llangunnog to Bala over the

mountains was most wild and romantic; there are immense and rugged clefts in the mountains, which in winter must form cataracts most tremendous; now there is just enough sun-glittering water dashed down over them to soothe, not disturb the ear. I climbed up a precipice on which was a large thorn-tree, and slept by the side of one of them near two hours.

At Bala I was apprehensive that I had caught the itch from a Welsh democrat, who was charmed with my sentiments; he bruised my hand with a grasp of ardour, and I trembled lest some discontented citizens of the "animalcular" republic might have emigrated. Shortly after, in came a clergyman well dressed, and with him four other gentlemen. I was asked for a public character; I gave Dr. Priestley. The clergyman whispered his neighbour, who it seems is the apothecary of the parish--"Republicans!" Accordingly when the doctor, as they call apothecaries, was to have given a name, "I gives a sentiment, gemmen! may all republicans be "gull"oteened!" Up starts the democrat; "May all fools be gulloteened, and then you will be the first!" Fool, rogue, traitor, liar, &c. flew in each other's faces in hailstorms of vociferation. This is nothing in Wales--they make if necessary vent-holes for the sulphureous fumes of their temper! I endeavoured to calm the tempest by observing that however different our political opinions might be, the appearance of a clergyman assured me that we were all Christians, though I found it rather difficult to reconcile the last sentiment with the spirit of Christianity! "Pho!" quoth the clergyman; "Christianity! Why we a'nt at "church" now, are we? The gentleman's sentiment was a very good one, because it shows him to be sincere in his principles." Welsh politics, however, could not prevail over Welsh hospitality; they all shook hands with me (except the parson), and said I was an open-speaking, honest-hearted fellow, though I was a bit of a democrat.

On our road from Bala to Druid House, we met Brookes and Berdmore. Our rival pedestrians, a "Gemini" of Powells, were vigorously marching onward, in a postchaise! Berdmore had been ill. We were not a little glad to see each other. Llangollen is a village most romantically situated; but the weather was so intensely hot that we saw only what was to be admired--we could not admire.

At Wrexham the tower is most magnificent; and in the church is a white marble monument of Lady Middleton, superior, "mea quidem sententia", to anything in Westminster Abbey. It had entirely escaped my memory, that Wrexham was the residence of a Miss E. Evans, a young lady with whom in happier days I had been in habits of fraternal correspondence; she lives with her grandmother. As I was standing at the window of the inn, she passed by, and with her, to my utter astonishment, her sister, Mary Evans, "quam afflictim et perditam amabam",--yea, even to anguish. They both started, and gave a short cry, almost a faint shriek; I sickened, and well nigh fainted, but instantly retired. Had I appeared to recognise her, my fortitude would not have supported me:

Vivit, sed mihi non vivit--nova forte marita.

Ah, dolor! alterius nunc a cervice pependit.

Vos, malefida valetae accensae insomnia mentis,  
Littora amata valetae; vale ah! formosa Maria.

Hucks informed me that the two sisters walked by the window four or five times, as if anxiously. Doubtless they think themselves deceived by some face strikingly like me. God bless her! Her image is in the sanctuary of my bosom, and never can it be torn from thence, but by the strings that grapple my heart to life! This circumstance made me quite ill. I had been wandering among the wild-wood scenery and terrible graces of the Welsh mountains to wear away, not to revive, the images of the past;--but love is a local anguish; I am fifty miles distant, and am not half so miserable.

At Denbigh is the finest ruined castle in the kingdom; it surpassed everything I could have conceived. I wandered there two hours in a still evening, feeding upon melancholy. Two well dressed young men were roaming there. "I will play my flute here," said the first; "it will have a romantic effect." "Bless thee, man of genius and sensibility," I silently exclaimed. He sate down amid the most awful part of the ruins; the moon just began to make her rays pre-dominant over the lingering daylight; I preattuned my feelings to emotion;--and the romantic youth instantly struck up the sadly pleasing tunes of "Miss Carey"--"The British Lion is my sign--A roaring trade I drive on", &c.

Three miles from Denbigh, on the road to St. Asaph, is a fine bridge with one arch of great, great grandeur. Stand at a little distance, and through it you see the woods waving on the hill-bank of the river in a most lovely point of view.

A "beautiful" prospect is always more picturesque when seen at some little distance through an arch. I have frequently thought of Michael Taylor's way of viewing a landscape between his thighs. Under the arch was the most perfect echo I ever heard. Hucks sang "Sweet Echo" with great effect.

At Holywell I bathed in the famous St. Winifred's Well. It is an excellent cold bath. At Rudland is a fine ruined castle. Abergeley is a large village on the sea-coast. Walking on the sea sands I was surprised to see a number of fine women bathing promiscuously with men and boys perfectly naked. Doubtless the citadels of their chastity are so impregnably strong, that they need not the ornamental bulwarks of modesty; but, seriously speaking, where sexual distinctions are least observed, men and women live together in the greatest purity. Concealment sets the imagination a-working, and as it were, "cantharadizes" our desires.

Just before I quitted Cambridge, I met a countryman with a strange walking-stick, five feet in length. I eagerly bought it, and a most faithful servant it has proved to me. My sudden affection for it has mellowed into settled friendship. On the morning of our leaving Abergeley, just before our final departure, I looked for my stick in the place in which I had left it over night. It was gone. I alarmed the house; no one knew any thing of it. In the flurry of anxiety I sent for

the Crier of the town, and gave him the following to cry about the town and the beach, which he did with a gravity for which I am indebted to his stupidity.

"Missing from the Bee Inn, Abergeley, a curious walking-stick. On one side it displays the head of an eagle, the eyes of which represent rising suns, and the ears Turkish crescents; on the other side is the portrait of the owner in wood-work. Beneath the head of the eagle is a Welsh wig, and around the neck of the stick is a Queen Elizabeth's ruff in tin. All down it waves the line of beauty in very ugly carving. If any gentleman (or lady) has fallen in love with the above described stick, and secretly carried off the same, he (or she) is hereby earnestly admonished to conquer a passion, the continuance of which must prove fatal to his (or her) honesty. And if the said stick has slipped into such gentleman's (or lady's) hand through inadvertence, he (or she) is required to rectify the mistake with all convenient speed. God save the king."

Abergeley is a fashionable Welsh watering place, and so singular a proclamation excited no small crowd on the beach, among the rest a lame old gentleman, in whose hands was described my dear stick. The old gentleman, who lodged at our inn, felt great confusion, and walked homewards, the solemn Crier before him, and a various cavalcade behind him. I kept the muscles of my face in tolerable subjection. He made his lameness an apology for borrowing my stick, supposed he should have returned before I had wanted it, &c. &c. Thus it ended, except that a very handsome young lady put her head out of a coach-window, and begged my permission to have the bill which I had delivered to the Crier. I acceded to the request with a compliment, that lighted up a blush on her cheek, and a smile on her lip.

We passed over a ferry to Aberconway. We had scarcely left the boat ere we descried Brookes and Berdmore, with whom we have joined parties, nor do we mean to separate. Our tour through Anglesea to Caernarvon has been repaid by scarcely one object worth seeing. To-morrow we visit Snowdon. Brookes, Berdmore, and myself, at the imminent hazard of our lives, scaled the very summit of Penmaenmaur. It was a most dreadful expedition. I will give you the account in some future letter.

I sent for Bowles's Works while at Oxford. How was I shocked! Every omission and every alteration disgusted taste, and mangled sensibility. Surely some Oxford toad had been squatting at the poet's ear, and spitting into it the cold venom of dulness. It is not Bowles; he is still the same, (the added poems will prove it) descriptive, dignified, tender, sublime. The sonnets added are exquisite. Abba Thule has marked beauties, and the little poem at Southampton is a diamond; in whatever light you place it, it reflects beauty and splendour. The "Shakespeare" is sadly unequal to the rest. Yet in whose poems, except those of Bowles, would it not have been excellent? Direct to me, to be left at the Post Office, Bristol, and tell me everything about yourself, how you have spent the vacation, &c.

Believe me, with gratitude and fraternal friendship,

Your obliged S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Footnote 1: Long portions of this letter appear in a letter to Southey of 15 September 1794. See "Letters", p. 74.]

[Footnote 2: Hucks published, in 1795, an account of the holiday entitled "Tour in North Wales".]

On his return from this excursion Coleridge went, by appointment, to Bristol for the purpose of meeting Southey, whose person and conversation had excited in him the most lively admiration. This was at the end of August or beginning of September. Southey, whose mother then lived at Bath, came over to Bristol accordingly to receive his new friend, who had left as deep an impression on him, and in that city introduced Coleridge to Robert Lovell, a young Quaker, then recently married to Mary Fricker, and residing in the Old Market. After a short stay at Bristol, where he first saw Sarah Fricker, Mrs. Lovell's elder sister, Coleridge accompanied Southey on his return to Bath. There he remained for some weeks, principally engaged in making love, and in maturing, with his friend, the plan, which he had for some time cherished, of a social community to be established in America upon what he termed a pantisocratical basis.

Much discussion has taken place regarding the origin of Pantisocracy, most writers on the subject attributing the scheme to Coleridge. A perusal of the letters of Southey, however, leads to a different conclusion. Southey was enamoured during his stay at Oxford with Plato, and especially with the "Republic" of the Greek philosopher; and he frequently quotes from the work or refers to its principles in his correspondence with Grosvenor and Horace W. Bedford between 11th November 1793 and 12th June 1794. Before his meeting with Southey no trace of ideal Republicanism appears in the letters of Coleridge. His leaning notwithstanding this was already towards Republicanism, and the friendship struck up between him and Southey was a natural consequence of flint coming into contact with steel. The next two letters, to Southey, indicate the fiery nature of the young Republicans.

#### LETTER 9. To SOUTHEY

6 Sept. 1794.

The day after my arrival I finished the first act: I transcribed it. The next morning Franklin (of Pembroke Coll. Cam., a "ci-devant Grecian" of our school--so we call the first boys) called on me, and persuaded me to go with him and breakfast with Dyer, author of "The Complaints of the Poor, A Subscription", &c. &c. I went; explained our system. He was enraptured; pronounced it impregnable. He is intimate with Dr. Priestley, and doubts not that the Doctor will join us. He showed me some poetry, and I showed him part of the first act, which I happened to have about me. He liked it hugely; it was "a nail that would drive...."

Every night I meet a most intelligent young man, who has spent the last five years of his life in America, and is lately come from thence as an agent to sell land. He was of our school. I had been kind to him: he remembers it, and comes regularly every evening to "benefit by conversation," he says. He says £2,000 will do; that he doubts not we can contract for our passage under £400; that we shall buy the land a great deal cheaper when we arrive at America than we could do in England; "or why," he adds, "am I sent over here?" That twelve men may "easily" clear 300 acres in four or five months; and that, for 600 dollars, a thousand acres may be cleared, and houses built on them. He recommends the Susquehanna, from its excessive beauty and its security from hostile Indians. Every possible assistance will be given us; we may get credit for the land for ten years or more, as we settle upon. That literary characters make "money" there: &c. &c. He never saw a "bison" in his life, but has heard of them: they are quite backwards. The mosquitos are not so bad as our gnats; and, after you have been there a little while, they don't trouble you much.

#### LETTER 10. TO SOUTHEY

18 Sept. 1794.

Since I quitted this room what and how important events have been evolved! America! Southey! Miss Fricker!... Pantisocracy! Oh! I shall have such a scheme of it! My head, my heart, are all alive. I have drawn up my arguments in battle array: they shall have the "tactician" excellence of the mathematician, with the enthusiasm of the poet. The head shall be the mass; the heart, the fiery spirit that fills, informs and agitates the whole. SHAD GOES WITH US: HE IS MY BROTHER!! I am longing to be with you: make Edith my sister. Surely, Southey, we shall be frendotatoi meta frendous--most friendly where all are friends. She must, therefore, be more emphatically my sister.... C----, the most excellent, the most Pantisocratic of aristocrats, has been laughing at me. Up I arose, terrible is reasoning. He fled from me, because "he would not answer for his own sanity, sitting so near a madman of genius." He told me that the strength of my imagination had intoxicated my reason, and that the acuteness of my reason had given a directing influ-\* \*ence to my imagination. Four months ago the remark would not have been more elegant than just: now it is nothing. [1]

[Footnote 1: This letter is given in full in "Letters", No. XXXIV.]

These letters show that Pantisocracy was now the all absorbing topic.

The following letter written at this time by Coleridge to Mr. Charles Heath, of Monmouth, is a curious evidence of his earnestness upon this subject:

LETTER 11. To CHARLES HEATH OF MONMOUTH [1]

(----1794).

Sir,

Your brother has introduced my name to you; I shall therefore offer no apology for this letter. A small but liberalized party have formed a scheme of emigration on the principles of an abolition of individual property. Of their political creed, and the arguments by which they support and elucidate it they are preparing a few copies--not as meaning to publish them, but for private distribution. In this work they will have endeavoured to prove the exclusive justice of the system and its practicability; nor will they have omitted to sketch out the code of contracts necessary for the internal regulation of the Society; all of which will of course be submitted to the improvements and approbation of each component member. As soon as the work is printed, one or more copies shall be transmitted to you. Of the characters of the individuals who compose the party I find it embarrassing to speak; yet, vanity apart, I may assert with truth that they have each a sufficient strength of head to make the virtues of the heart respectable, and that they are all highly charged with that enthusiasm which results from strong perceptions of moral rectitude, called into life and action by ardent feelings. With regard to pecuniary matters it is found necessary, if twelve men with their families emigrate on this system, that £2,000 should be the aggregate of their contributions--but infer not from hence that each man's "quota" is to be settled with the littleness of arithmetical accuracy. No; all will strain every nerve; and then, I trust, the surplus money of some will supply the deficiencies of others. The "minutiae" of topographical information we are daily endeavouring to acquire; at present our plan is, to settle at a distance, but at a convenient distance, from Cooper's Town on the banks of the Susquehanna. This, however, will be the object of future investigation. For the time of emigration we have fixed on next March. In the course of the winter those of us whose bodies, from habits of sedentary study or academic indolence, have not acquired their full tone and strength, intend to learn the theory and practice of agriculture and carpentry, according as situation and circumstances make one or the other convenient.

Your fellow Citizen, S. T. COLERIDGE. [Footnote: Letter XXXV is dated 19 Sept. 1794.]

[Footnote 1: One of the Pantisocrats.]

The members of the society at that time were Coleridge himself, Southey, Lovell, and George Burnett, a Somersetshire youth and fellow collegian with Southey. Toward the beginning of September, Coleridge left Bath and went, for the last time, as a student, to Cambridge, apparently with the view of taking his degree of B.A. after the ensuing Christmas. Here he published "The Fall of Robespierre" ("Lit. Remains", i, p. 1), of which the first act was written by himself, and the second and

third by Mr. Southey, and the particulars of the origin and authorship of which may be found stated in an extract from a letter of Mr. Southey's there printed. The dedication to Mr. Martin is dated at Jesus College, 22nd of September 1794.

[The following is the Dedication:]

LETTER 12. To HENRY MARTIN, ESQ., OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.  
DEDICATORY LETTER TO THE "FALL OF ROBESPIERRE," A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS BY  
COLERIDGE AND SOUTHEY.

Dear Sir,

Accept as a small testimony of my grateful attachment, the following Dramatic Poem, in which I have endeavoured to detail, in an interesting form, the fall of a man whose great bad actions have cast a disastrous lustre on his name. In the execution of the work, as intricacy of plot could not have been attempted without a gross violation of recent facts, it has been my sole aim to imitate the impassioned and highly figurative language of the French Orators, and to develop the characters of the chief actors on a vast stage of horrors.

Yours fraternally, S. T. COLERIDGE.

Jesus College, September 22, 1794.

[Note: Letters XXXVI-XLII follow No. 12.]

This dedicatory letter is no doubt an apology for a play destitute of dramatic art. The declamatory speeches may be an intentional imitation of the harangues of the Revolutionaries, but they are more likely to be the product of the inflation of youth. The redeeming feature of the play is the beautiful little lyric, "Domestic Peace", which is in rhythm an imitation of Collins' "How Sleep the Brave".

The scheme of Pantisocracy was not much further forward at the close of 1794 than it had been in the summer; and Southey had been advised to try it in Wales instead of on the banks of the Susquehanna. Coleridge writes in December:

LETTER 13. TO SOUTHEY  
--Dec. 1794.

For God's sake, my dear fellow, tell me what we are to gain by taking a Welsh farm? Remember the principles and proposed consequences of Pantisocracy, and reflect in what degree they are attainable by Coleridge, Southey, Lovell, Burnett, and Co., some five men \_going partners\_ together! In the next place, supposing that we have found the preponderating utility of our aspheterising in Wales, let us by our

speedy and united inquiries discover the sum of money necessary. Whether such a farm with so very large a house is to be procured without launching our frail and unpiloted bark on a rough sea of anxieties? How much money will be necessary for "furnishing" so large a house? How much necessary for the maintenance of so large a family--eighteen people--for a year at least?]

[Note: Letters XLIII gives the full text of this Letter 13. Letters XLIV-L follow 13.]

In January 1795, he was to return--and then with Spring breezes to repair to the banks of the Susquehanna! But his fate withstood;--he took no degree, nor ever crossed the Atlantic. Michaelmas Term, 1794, was the last he kept at Cambridge; the vacation following was passed in London with Charles Lamb, and in the beginning of 1795 he returned with Southey to Bristol, and there commenced man.

The whole spring and summer of this year he devoted to public Lectures at Bristol, making in the intervals several excursions in Somersetshire, one memorial of which remains in the "Lines composed while climbing Brockley Combe". It was in one of these excursions that Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Wordsworth first met at the house of Mr. Pinney. [1] The first six of those Lectures constituted a course presenting a comparative view of the Civil War under Charles I and the French Revolution. Three of them, or probably the substance of four or five, were published at Bristol in the latter end of 1795, the first two together, with the title of "Conciones ad Populum", and the third with that of "The Plot Discovered". The eloquent passage in conclusion of the first of these Addresses was written by Mr. Southey. The tone throughout them all is vehemently hostile to the policy of the great minister of that day; but it is equally opposed to the spirit and maxims of Jacobinism. It was late in life that, after a reperusal of these "Conciones", Coleridge wrote on a blank page of one of them the following words:--"Except the two or three pages involving the doctrine of philosophical necessity and Unitarianism, I see little or nothing in these outbursts of my youthful zeal to retract; and with the exception of some flame-coloured epithets applied to persons, as to Mr. Pitt and others, or rather to personifications--(for such they really were to me)--as little to regret."

Another course of six Lectures followed, "On Revealed Religion, its corruptions, and its political views". The Prospectus states--"that these Lectures are intended for two classes of men, Christians and Infidels;--the former, that they may be able to "give a reason for the hope that is in them";--the latter, that they may not determine against Christianity from arguments applicable to its corruptions only." Nothing remains of these Addresses, nor of two detached Lectures on the Slave Trade and the Hair Powder Tax, which were delivered in the interval between the two principal courses. They were all very popular amongst the opponents of the Governments; and those on religion in particular were highly applauded by his Unitarian auditors, amongst whom Dr. and Mrs. Estlin and Mr. Hort were always remembered by Coleridge with regard and esteem.

The Transatlantic scheme, though still a favourite subject of conversation, was now in effect abandoned by these young Pantisocrats. Mr. C. was married at St. Mary Redcliff Church to Sarah Fricker on the 4th of October, 1795, and went to reside in a cottage at Clevedon on the Bristol Channel; and six weeks afterwards Mr. Southey was also married to Edith Fricker, and left Bristol on the same day on his route to Portugal. At Clevedon Mr. and Mrs. Coleridge resided with one of Mrs. C.'s unmarried sisters and Burnett until the beginning of December.

[Footnote 1: This statement of H. N. Coleridge, and a remark by Wordsworth in a letter to Wrangham of November 20th, 1795, are the only evidence on which rests the belief that Coleridge and Wordsworth met before 1797. The letter is quoted in the "Athenaeum" of December 8th, 1894. See also Letter LXXXI, to Estlin, May 1798.]

### CHAPTER III

#### THE WATCHMAN

(1795 to 1796)

Ah! quiet dell! dear cot, and mount sublime!  
I was constrained to quit you. Was it right,  
While my unnumbered brethren toiled and bled,  
That I should dream away th' entrusted hours  
On rose-leaf beds pampering the coward heart  
With feelings all too delicate for use?

\* \* \* \* \*

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.

Coleridge had in the course of the summer of 1795 become acquainted with that excellent and remarkable man, the late Thomas Poole of Nether Stowey, Somerset. In a letter written to him on the 7th of October, C. speaks of the prospect from his cottage, and of his future plans in the following way:

#### LETTER 14. To THOMAS POOLE

My Dear Sir,

God bless you-or rather God be praised for that he has blessed you! On Sunday morning I was married at St. Mary's, Redcliff--from Chatterton's church. The thought gave a tinge of melancholy to the solemn joy which I felt, united to the woman, whom I love best of all created beings. We

are settled, nay, quite domesticated, at Clevedon,--our comfortable cot! \* \* \* The prospect around is perhaps more various than any in the kingdom: mine eye gluttonizes. The sea, the distant islands, the opposite coast!--I shall assuredly write rhymes, let the nine Muses prevent it if they can. \* \* \* I have given up all thoughts of the Magazine for various reasons. It is a thing of monthly anxiety and quotidian bustle. To publish a Magazine for one year would be nonsense, and, if I pursue what I mean to pursue, my school-plan, I could not publish it for more than one year. In the course of half a year I mean to return to Cambridge--having previously taken my name off from the University's control--and, hiring lodgings there for myself and wife, finish my great work of "Imitations" in two volumes. My former works may, I hope, prove somewhat of genius and of erudition; this will be better; it will show great industry and manly consistency. At the end of it I shall publish proposals for a School. \* \* \* My next letter will be long and full of something;--this is inanity and egotism. \* \* Believe me, dear Poole, your affectionate and mindful--friend, shall I so soon have to say? Believe me my heart prompts it. [1] S. T. COLERIDGE!

In spite of this letter Coleridge had not abandoned the project of starting a magazine. His school-plan, as well as a project to become tutor to the sons of the Earl of Buchan at Edinburgh (see Letter to George Dyer, "Bookman" for May 1910), came to nothing. A meeting was held among his chief friends "one evening," says Cottle, "at the Rummer Tavern, to determine on the size, price, and time of publishing, with all other preliminaries essential to the launching this first-rate vessel on the mighty deep. Having heard of the circumstance the next day, I rather wondered at not having also been requested to attend, and while ruminating on the subject, I received from Mr. C. the following communication."

[Footnote 1: Letter LI is our No. 14. LII is dated 13 November 1795.]

LETTER 15. To COTTLE

(--Dec. 1795).

My dear Friend,

I am fearful that you felt hurt at my not mentioning to you the proposed "Watchman", and from my not requesting you to attend the meeting. My dear friend, my reasons were these. All who met were expected to become subscribers to a fund; I knew there would be enough without you, and I knew, and felt, how much money had been drawn from you lately.

God Almighty love you!

S. T. C.

"It is unknown," says Cottle, "when the following letter was received

(although quite certain that it was not the evening in which Mr. Coleridge wrote his "Ode to the Departing Year"), and it is printed in this place at something of an uncertainty." The probable date is 1 January 1796.

#### LETTER 16. To COTTLE

January 1st (1796).

My dear Cottle,

I have been forced to disappoint not only you, but Dr. Beddoes, on an affair of some importance. Last night I was induced by strong and joint solicitation, to go to a cardclub to which Mr. Morgan belongs, and, after the playing was over, to sup, and spend the remainder of the night: having made a previous compact, that I should not drink; however just on the verge of twelve, I was desired to drink only one wine glass of punch, in honour of the departing year; and, after twelve, one other in honour of the new year. Though the glasses were very small, yet such was the effect produced during my sleep, that I awoke unwell, and in about twenty minutes after had a relapse of my bilious complaint. I am just now recovered, and with care, I doubt not, shall be as well as ever to-morrow. If I do not see you then, it will be from some relapse, which I have no reason, thank heaven, to anticipate.

Yours affectionately,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[The Mr. Morgan referred to in the above letter was John James Morgan with whom Coleridge afterwards lived in London, at Hammersmith, and at Calne. Dr. Beddoes was the founder of the Pneumatic Institution, and the friend of the Wedgwoods and Humphry Davy; and it was he who was instrumental in introducing Coleridge to these acquaintances.]

The monthly anxiety of a Magazine justly alarmed Coleridge on the 7th of October; yet in the December following he courageously engaged to conduct a weekly political Miscellany. This was The Watchman, of which the following Prospectus was in that month printed and circulated.

"To supply at once the places of a Review, Newspaper, and Annual Register.

"On Tuesday, the 1st of March, 1796, will be published No. 1. price fourpence, of a Miscellany, to be continued every eighth day, under the name of "The Watchman", by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. This Miscellany will be comprised in two sheets, or thirty-two pages, closely printed in 8vo; the type, long primer. Its contents, 1:--A history of the domestic and foreign policy of the preceding days. 2:--The speeches in both Houses of Parliament; and, during the recess, select parliamentary

speeches from the commencement of the reign of Charles I. to the present æa, with notes historical and biographical. 3:--Original essays and poetry. 4:--Review of interesting and important publications. Its advantages, 1. There being no advertisements, a greater quantity of original matter will be given, and the speeches in Parliament will be less abridged. 2. From its form it may be bound up at the end of a year, and become an Annual Register. 3. This last circumstance may induce men of letters to prefer this Miscellany to more perishable publications as the vehicle of their effusions. 4. Whenever the Ministerial and Opposition prints differ in their accounts of occurrences, etc. such difference will always be faithfully stated."

Mr. C. went to Bristol in the beginning of December for the purpose of arranging the preliminaries of this undertaking, and at the close of the month he set off upon the tour mentioned in Chapter X of the "Biographia Literaria", to collect subscribers. It will be remembered that he was at this time a professed Unitarian; and the project of becoming a minister of that persuasion seems to have passed through his head. He had previously preached, for the first time, two sermons at Mr. Jardine's Chapel in Bath, the subjects being the Corn Laws and the Hair Powder Tax. He appeared in the pulpit in a blue coat and white waistcoat, and, according to Mr. Cottle's testimony, who was present, Coleridge delivered himself languidly, and disappointed every one. But there is no doubt that he subsequently preached upon many occasions with very remarkable effect. The following extracts are from letters written by Mr. C. in the month of January, 1796, during his tour to his early and lasting friend, Mr. Josiah Wade of Bristol, and may serve as a commentary on parts of the accounts given of the same tour in the Biographia Literaria.

#### LETTER 17. To JOSIAH WADE

Worcester, January, 1796.

My dear Wade,

We were five in number, and twenty-five in quantity. The moment I entered the coach, I stumbled on a huge projection, which might be called a belly with the same propriety that you might name Mount Atlas a mole-hill. Heavens! that a man should be unconscionable enough to enter a stage coach, who would want elbow room if he were walking on Salisbury Plain.

The said citizen was a most violent aristocrat, but a pleasant humorous fellow in other respects, and remarkably well informed in agricultural science; so that the time passed pleasantly enough. We arrived at Worcester at half-past two: I, of course, dined at the inn, where I met Mr. Stevens. After dinner I christianized myself, that is, washed and changed, and marched in finery and clean linen to High Street. With regard to business, there is no chance of doing anything at Worcester. The aristocrats are so numerous, and the influence of the clergy is so extensive, that Mr. Barr thinks no bookseller will venture to publish

"The Watchman". \*\*\*

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S.--I hope and trust the young citizeness is well, and also Mrs. Wade.  
Give my love to the latter, and a kiss for me to Miss Bratinella.

#### LETTER 18

Birmingham, January, 1796.

My dear Friend,

\*\*\* My exertions here have been incessant, for in whatever company I go, I am obliged to be the figurante of the circle. Yesterday I preached twice, and, indeed, performed the whole service, morning and afternoon. There were about 1,400 persons present, and my sermons, (great part extempore,) were preciously peppered with politics. I have here at least double the number of subscribers I had expected. \* \* \*

[It was at Birmingham that Coleridge met the Tallow Chandler whom he has immortalized in his "Biographia Literaria". The sketch of the "taperman of lights" is one of the masterpieces of English humour.]

#### LETTER 19. To JOSIAH WADE

Nottingham, January, 1796.

My dear Friend,

You will perceive by this letter I have changed my route. From Birmingham on Friday last (four o'clock in the morning), I proceeded to Derby, stayed there till Monday morning, and am now at Nottingham. From Nottingham I go to Sheffield; from Sheffield to Manchester; from Manchester to Liverpool; from Liverpool to London; from London to Bristol. Ah, what a weary way! My poor crazy ark has been tossed to and fro on an ocean of business, and I long for the Mount Ararat on which it is to rest. At Birmingham I was extremely unwell; a violent cold in my head and limbs confined me for two days. Business succeeded very well;--about a hundred subscribers I think.

At Derby, also, I succeeded tolerably well. Mr. (Joseph) Strutt, the successor of Sir Richard Arkwright, tells me I may count on forty or fifty in Derby. Derby is full of curiosities;--the cotton and silk mills; Wright the painter, and Dr. Darwin,[1] the every thing but Christian. Dr. Darwin possesses, perhaps, a greater range of knowledge than any other man in Europe, and is the most inventive of philosophical men. He thinks in a new train on all subjects but religion. He bantered me on the subject of religion. I heard all his arguments, and told him it was infinitely consoling to me, to find that

the arguments of so great a man, adduced against the existence of a God, and the evidences of revealed religion, were such as had startled me at fifteen, but had become the objects of my smile at twenty. Not one new objection--not even an ingenious one! He boasted "that he had never read one book in favour of such stuff, but that he had read all the works of Infidels!"

What would you think, Mr. Wade, of a man who, having abused and ridiculed you, should openly declare that he had heard all that your enemies had to say against you, but had scorned to inquire the truth from any one of your friends? Would you think him an honest man? I am sure you would not. Yet such are all the Infidels whom I have known. They talk of a subject, yet are proud to confess themselves profoundly ignorant of it. Dr. Darwin would have been ashamed to reject Hutton's theory of the Earth without having minutely examined it;--yet what is it to us, how the earth was made, a thing impossible to be known? This system the Doctor did not reject without having severely studied it; but all at once he makes up his mind on such important subjects, as whether we be the outcasts of a blind idiot called Nature,[2] or the children of an All wise and Infinitely Good God!--whether we spend a few miserable years on this earth, and then sink into a clod of the valley; or endure the anxieties of mortal life, only to fit us for the enjoyment of immortal happiness! These subjects are unworthy a philosopher's investigation! He deems that there is a certain self-evidence in Infidelity, and becomes an Atheist by intuition. Well did St. Paul say, "ye have an evil heart of unbelief".

\* \* \* What lovely children Mr. Barr of Worcester has! After church, in the evening, they sat round and sang hymns so sweetly that they overpowered me. It was with great difficulty that I abstained from weeping aloud; and the infant in Mrs. B.'s arms leaned forward, and stretched his little arms, and stared, and smiled. It seemed a picture of heaven, where the different Orders of the blessed join different voices in one melodious hallelujah; and the babe looked like a young spirit just that moment arrived in heaven, startled at the seraphic songs, and seized at once with wonder and rapture. \* \* \*

From your affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Footnote 1: Erasmus Darwin, 1731-1802.]

[Footnote 2: See poem, "Human Life", written about 1815.]

LETTER 20

Sheffield, January, 1796.

My very dear Friend,

I arrived at this place late last night by the mail from Nottingham, where I have been treated with kindness and friendship, of which I can give you but a faint idea. I preached a charity sermon there last Sunday. I preached in coloured clothes. With regard to the gown at Birmingham (of which you inquire), I suffered myself to be over-persuaded. First of all, my sermon being of so political a tendency, had I worn my blue coat, it would have impugned Edwards. They would have said, he had stuck a political lecturer in his pulpit. Secondly, the society is of all sorts,--Socinians, Arians, Trinitarians, etc., and I must have shocked a multitude of prejudices. And thirdly, there is a difference between an inn and a place of residence. In the first, your example is of little consequence; in a single instance only, it ceases to operate as example; and my refusal would have been imputed to affectation, or an unaccommodating spirit.

Assuredly I would not do it in a place where I intended to preach often. And even in the vestry at Birmingham, when they at last persuaded me, I told them I was acting against my better knowledge, and should possibly feel uneasy afterwards. So these accounts of the matter you must consider as reasons and palliations, concluding, "I plead guilty, my Lord!" Indeed I want firmness; I perceive I do. I have that within me which makes it difficult to say, No, repeatedly to a number of persons who seem uneasy and anxious. \* \* \*

My kind remembrances to Mrs. Wade. God bless her and you, and (like a bad shilling slipped in between two guineas), your faithful and affectionate friend, S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Note 1: Letter LIII is our 19.]

## LETTER 21

Manchester, January 7, 1796. My dear Friend,

I arrived at Manchester last night from Sheffield, to which place I shall only send about thirty numbers. I might have succeeded there, at least equally well with the former towns, but I should injure the sale of the "Iris", the editor of which paper, (a very amiable and ingenious young man of the name of James Montgomery)[1] is now in prison for a libel on a bloody-minded magistrate there. Of course I declined publicly advertising or disposing of "The Watch man" in that town.

This morning I called on Mr. ----- with H.'s letter. Mr. ----- received me as a rider, and treated me with insolence that was really amusing from its novelty. "Overstocked with these articles. "-----" People always setting up some new thing or other. "-----" I read the "Star" and another paper: what could I want with this paper, which is nothing more?"--"Well, well, I'll consider of it." To these entertaining "bons mots" I returned the following repartee--"Good morning, Sir." \* \* \*

God bless you, S. T. C.

[Footnote 1: The Poet, 1771-1854.]

Mr. C. went to Liverpool and was as successful there as elsewhere generally in procuring subscribers to "The Watchman". The late Dr. Crompton found him out, and became his friend and patron. His exertions, however, at Liverpool were suddenly stopped by news of the critical state of Mrs. C.'s health, and a pressing request that he would immediately return to Bristol, whither Mrs. C. had now gone from Clevedon. Coleridge accordingly gave up his plan of visiting London, and left Liverpool on his homeward trip. From Lichfield he wrote to Mr. Wade the following letter:

## LETTER 22

Lichfield, January, 1796.

My dear Friend,

\* \* \* I have succeeded very well here at Lichfield. Belcher, bookseller, Birmingham; Sutton, Nottingham; Pritchard, Derby; and Thomson, Manchester; are the publishers. In every number of "The Watchman" there will be printed these words, "Published in Bristol by the Author, S. T. Coleridge, and sold, etc."

I verily believe no poor fellow's idea-pot ever bubbled up so vehemently with fears, doubts, and difficulties, as mine does at present. Heaven grant it may not boil over, and put out the fire! I am almost heartless. My past life seems to me like a dream, a feverish dream--all one gloomy huddle of strange actions and dim-discovered motives;--friendships lost by indolence, and happiness murdered by mismanaged sensibility. The present hour I seem in a quick-set hedge of embarrassments. For shame! I ought not to mistrust God; but, indeed, to hope is far more difficult than to fear. Bulls have horns, lions have talons:

The fox and statesman subtle wiles ensure,  
The cit and polecat stink and are secure;  
Toads with their venom, doctors with their drug,  
The priest and hedgehog in their robes are snug.  
Oh, Nature! cruel step-mother and hard  
To thy poor naked, fenceless child, the bard!  
No horns but those by luckless Hymen worn,  
And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn!  
With naked feelings, and with aching pride,  
He bears the unbroken blast on every side;  
Vampire booksellers drain him to the heart,  
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart.

S. T. C.

Coleridge on his return to Bristol resided for a short time on Redcliff Hill, in a house occupied by Mrs. C.'s mother. He had procured upwards of a thousand subscribers' names to "The Watchman", and had certainly some ground for confidence in his future success. His tour had been a triumph; and the impression made by his personal demeanour and extraordinary eloquence was unprecedented, and such as was never effaced from the recollection of those who met with him at this period. He seems to have employed the interval between his arrival in Bristol and the 1st of March--the day fixed for the appearance of "The Watchman"--in preparing for that work, and also in getting ready the materials of his first volume of poems, the copyright of which was purchased by Mr. Cottle for thirty guineas. Coleridge was a student all his life; he was very rarely indeed idle in the common sense of the term; but he was constitutionally indolent, averse from continuous exertion externally directed, and consequently the victim of a procrastinating habit, the occasion of innumerable distresses to himself and of endless solicitude to his friends, and which materially impaired, though it could not destroy, the operation and influence of his wonderful abilities. Hence, also, the fits of deep melancholy which from time to time seized his whole soul, during which he seemed an imprisoned man without hope of liberty. In February, 1796, whilst his volume was in the press, he wrote the following letter to Mr. Cottle:

LETTER 23

My dear Cottle,

I have this night and to-morrow for you, being alone, and my spirits calm. I shall consult my poetic honour, and of course your interest, more by staying at home than by drinking tea with you. I should be happy to see my poems out even by next week, and I shall continue in stirrups, that is, shall not dismount my Pegasus, till Monday morning, at which time you will have to thank God for having done with your affectionate friend always, but author evanescent,

S. T. C.

[The last letter is one of many short notes to Cottle explaining why he was not making progress with the proposed volume of Poems. The next is the concluding letter of the series, still apologizing for the delay.

LETTER 24. To COTTLE.

Stowey, (--Feb. 1796.)

My dear Cottle,

I feel it much, and very uncomfortable, that, loving you as a brother, and feeling pleasure in pouring out my heart to you, I should so seldom be able to write a letter to you, unconnected with business, and uncontaminated with excuses and apologies. I give every moment I can spare from my garden and the Reviews (i.e.) from my potatoes and meat to the poem ("Religious Musings"), but I go on slowly, for I torture the poem and myself with corrections; and what I write in an hour, I sometimes take two or three days in correcting. You may depend on it, the poem and prefaces will take up exactly the number of pages I mentioned, and I am extremely anxious to have the work as perfect as possible, and which I cannot do, if it be finished immediately. The "Religious Musings" I have altered monstrously, since I read them to you and received your criticisms. I shall send them to you in my next. The Sonnets I will send you with the "Musings". God love you!

From your affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.]

Shortly afterwards, mistaking the object of a message from Mr. Cottle for an application for "copy" for the press, Coleridge wrote the following letter with reference to the painful subject:

#### LETTER 25

Redcliff Hill, February 22, 1796.

My dear Sir,

It is my duty and business to thank God for all his dispensations, and to believe them the best possible; but, indeed, I think I should have been more thankful, if He had made me a journeyman shoemaker, instead of an author by trade. I have left my friends; I have left plenty; I have left that ease which would have secured a literary immortality, and have enabled me to give to the public works conceived in moments of inspiration, and polished with leisurely solicitude; and, alas! for what have I left them? For--who deserted me in the hour of distress, and for a scheme of virtue impracticable and romantic! So I am forced to write for bread--write the flights of poetic enthusiasm, when every minute I am hearing a groan from my wife! Groans, and complaints, and sickness! The present hour I am in a quick-set hedge of embarrassment, and, whichever way I turn, a thorn runs into me. The future is cloud and thick darkness. Poverty, perhaps, and the thin faces of them that want bread looking up to me! Nor is this all. My happiest moments for composition are broken in upon by the reflection that I must make haste. "I am too late." "I am already months behind." "I have received my pay beforehand."----O wayward and desultory spirit of Genius, ill can'st thou brook a taskmaster! The tenderest touch from the hand of obligation

wounds thee like a scourge of scorpions!

I have been composing in the fields this morning, and came home to write down the first rude sheet of my Preface, when I heard that your man had brought a note from you. I have not seen it, but I guess its contents. I am writing as fast as I can. Depend on it, you shall not be out of pocket for me. I feel what I owe you, and, independently of this, I love you as a friend,--indeed so much that I regret, seriously regret, that you have been my copyholder.

If I have written petulantly, forgive me. God knows I am sore all over. God bless you! and believe me that, setting gratitude aside, I love and esteem you, and have your interest at heart full as much as my own.

S. T. COLERIDGE. [1]

On the 1st of March, 1796, "The Watchman" was published; it ended with the tenth number on the 13th of May following. In March Mr. C. removed to a house in Oxford Street in Kingsdown, and thence wrote the following letter to Mr. Poole:

[1: Letter LIV is our 25.]

LETTER 26

30th March, 1796.

My dear Poole,

For the neglect in the transmission of "The Watchman", you must blame George Burnett, who undertook the business. I however will myself see it sent this week with the preceding Numbers. I am greatly obliged to you for your communication--(on the Slave Trade in No. V);--it appears in this Number. I am anxious to receive more from you, and likewise to know what you dislike in "The Watchman", and what you like, but particularly the former. You have not given me your opinion of "The Plot Discovered".

Since you last saw me, I have been well nigh distracted. The repeated and most injurious blunders of my printer out of doors, and Mrs. Coleridge's danger at home--added to the gloomy prospect of so many mouths to open and shut, like puppets, as I move the string in the eating and drinking way;--but why complain to you? Misery is an article with which every market is so glutted that it can answer no one's purpose to export it.

I have received many abusive letters, post-paid, thanks to the friendly malignants! But I am perfectly callous to disapprobation, except when it tends to lessen profit. Then indeed I am all one tremble of sensibility, marriage having taught me the wonderful uses of that vulgar commodity, yclept Bread. "The Watchman" succeeds so as to yield a

"bread-and-cheesish" profit. Mrs. Coleridge is recovering apace, and deeply regrets that she was deprived of the pleasure of seeing you. We are in our new house, where there is a bed at your service whenever you will please to delight us with a visit. Surely in Spring you might force a few days into a sojourning with us.

Dear Poole, you have borne yourself towards me most kindly with respect to my epistolary ingratitude. But I know that you forbade yourself to feel resentment towards me, because you had previously made my neglect ingratitude. A generous temper endures a great deal from one whom it has obliged deeply.

My poems are finished. I will send you two copies the moment they are published. In No. III of "The Watchman" there are a few lines entitled, "The Hour when we shall meet again" ("Dim Hour! that sleep'st on pillowing clouds afar"), which I think you will like. I have received two or three letters from different "Anonymi", requesting me to give more poetry. One of them writes thus:--

"Sir, I detest your principles; your prose I think very so so; but your poetry is so beautiful that I take in your "Watchman" solely on account of it. In justice therefore to me and some others of my stamp, I entreat you to give us more verse, and less democratic scurrility. Your Admirer,--not Esteemer."

Have you read over Dr. Lardner on the Logos? It is I think, scarcely possible to read it, and not be convinced. I find that "The Watchman" comes more easy to me, so that I shall begin about my Christian Lectures (meaning a publication of the course given in the preceding year). I will immediately order for you, unless you immediately countermand it, Count Rumford's Essays; in No. V of "The Watchman" you will see why. (That number contained a critique on the Essays.) I have enclosed Dr. Beddoes's late pamphlets; neither of them as yet published. The Doctor sent them to me.... My dutiful love to your excellent Mother, whom, believe me, I think of frequently and with a pang of affection. God bless you. I'll try and contrive to scribble a line and half every time the man goes with "The Watchman" to you.

N.B. The Essay on Fasting I am ashamed of--(in No. II of "The Watchman");--but it is one of my misfortunes that I am obliged to publish ex tempore as well as compose. God bless you.

S. T. COLERIDGE.[1]

[Footnote 1: Letter LV is our 26.]

Two days afterwards Mr. Coleridge wrote to Mr. B. Flower, then the editor of the "Cambridge Intelligencer", with whom he had been

acquainted at the University:

LETTER 27

April 1, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I transmitted to you by Mr. B---- a copy of my "Conciones ad Populum", and of an Address against the Bills (meaning "The Plot Discovered"). I have taken the liberty of enclosing ten of each, carriage paid, which you may perhaps have an opportunity of disposing of for me;--if not, give them away. The one is an eighteen-penny affair;--the other ninepence. I have likewise enclosed the Numbers which have been hitherto published of "The Watchman";--some of the Poetry may perhaps be serviceable to you in your paper. That sonnet on the rejection of Mr. Wilberforce's Bill in your Chronicle the week before last was written by Southey, author of "Joan of Arc", a year and a half ago, and sent to me per letter;--how it appeared with the late signature, let the plagiarist answer.... I have sent a copy of my Poems--(they were not yet published):--will you send them to Lunn and Deighton, and ask of them whether they would choose to have their names on the title page as publishers; and would you permit me to have yours? Robinson and, I believe, Cadell, will be the London publishers. Be so kind as to send an immediate answer.

Please to present one of each of my pamphlets to Mr. Hall--(the late Robert Hall, the Baptist). I wish I could reach the perfection of his style. I think his style the best in the English language; if he have a rival, it is Mrs. Barbauld.

You have, of course, seen Bishop Watson's Apology for the Bible. It is a complete confutation of Paine; but that was no difficult matter. The most formidable Infidel is Lessing, the author of "Emilia Galotti";--I ought to have written, "was", for he is dead. His book is not yet translated, and is entitled, in German, "Fragments of an Anonymous Author". It unites the wit of Voltaire with the subtlety of Hume and the profound erudition of "our" Lardner. I had some thoughts of translating it with an Answer, but gave it up, lest men, whose tempers and hearts incline them to disbelief, should get hold of it; and, though the answers are satisfactory to my own mind, they may not be equally so to the minds of others.

I suppose you have heard that I am married. I was married on the 4th of October.

I rest all my poetical credit on the "Religious Musings". Farewell; with high esteem, yours sincerely,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Benjamin Flower, the editor of the "Cambridge Intelligencer", printed the first published version of the "Monody on Chatterton" in his Edition of the Rowley Poems, 1794. He was also to have been the publisher of the "Imitations of the Latin Poets", of which Coleridge spoke so often at this time. Our next letter is from "The Watchman" of 1 April, in answer to a correspondent. Godwin, whom Coleridge had hailed in one of his sonnets in the "Morning Chronicle" (10 January, 1795) as one formed to "illuminate a sunless world" by his "Political Justice" (1793), is here attacked with some virulence. In after years Coleridge held a better opinion of Godwin and wrote some of his finest letters to him.

#### LETTER 28. TO CAIUS GRACCHUS.

You have attacked me because I ventured to disapprove of Mr. Godwin's Works: I notice your attack because it affords me an opportunity of expressing more fully my sentiments respecting those principles.--I must not however wholly pass over the former part of your letter. The sentence "implicating them with party and calumniating opinions," is so inaccurately worded, that I must "guess" at your meaning. In my first essay I stated that literary works were generally reviewed by personal friends or private enemies of the Authors. This I "know" to be fact; and does the spirit of meekness forbid us to tell the truth? The passage in my Review of Mr. Burke's late pamphlet, you have wilfully misquoted: "with respect to the work in question," is an addition of your own. That work in question I myself considered as mere declamation; and "therefore" deemed it woefully inferior to the former production of the venerable Fanatic.--In what manner I could add to my numerous "ideal" trophies by quoting a beautiful passage from the pages which I was reviewing, I am ignorant. Perhaps the spirit of vanity lurked in the use of the word "I" "--ere "I" begin the task of blame." It is pleasant to observe with what absurd anxiety this little monosyllable is avoided. Sometimes "the present writer" appears as its substitute: sometimes the modest author adopts the style of royalty, swelling and multiplying himself into "We"; and sometimes to escape the egotistic phrases of "in my opinion," or "as I think," he utters dogmas, and positively asserts--"exempli gratia": "It is" a work, which, etc." You deem me inconsistent, because, having written in praise of the metaphysician, I afterwards appear to condemn the essay on political justice. Would an eulogist of medical men be inconsistent, if he should write against vendors of (what he deemed) poisons? Without even the formality of a "since" or a "for" or a "because," you make an unqualified assertion, that this essay will be allowed by all, except the prejudiced, to be a deep, metaphysical work, though abstruse, etc. etc. Caius Gracchus must have been little accustomed to abstruse disquisitions, if he deem Mr. Godwin's work abstruse:--A chief (and certainly not a small) merit is its perspicuous and "popular" language. My chapter on modern patriotism is that which has irritated you. You condemn me as prejudiced--O this enlightened age! when it can be seriously charged against an essayist, that he is prejudiced in favour of gratitude, conjugal fidelity, filial

affection, and the belief of God and a hereafter!!

Of smart pretty fellows in Bristol are numbers, some  
Who so modish are grown, that they think plain sense cumbersome;  
And lest they should seem to be queer or ridiculous,  
They affect to believe neither God nor "old Nicholas"![1]

I do consider Mr. Godwin's principles as vicious; and his book as a pander to sensuality. Once I thought otherwise--nay, even addressed a complimentary sonnet to the author, in the "Morning Chronicle", of which I confess with much moral and poetical contrition, that the lines and the subject were equally bad. I have since "studied" his work; and long before you had sent me your contemptuous challenge, had been preparing an examination of it, which will shortly appear in "The Watchman" in a series of essays. You deem me an "enthusiast"--an enthusiast, I presume, because I am not quite convinced with yourself and Mr. Godwin that mind will be omnipotent over matter, that a plough will go into the field and perform its labour without the presence of the agriculturist, that man may be immortal in this life, and that death is an act of the will!!!--You conclude with wishing that "The Watchman" "for the future may be conducted with less prejudice and greater liberality:"--I ought to be considered in two characters--as editor of the Miscellany, and as a frequent contributor. In the latter I contribute what I believe to be the truth; let him who thinks it error, contribute likewise, that where the poison is, there the antidote may be. In my former, that is, as the editor, I leave to the public the business of canvassing the nature of the principles, and assume to myself the power of admitting or rejecting any communications according to my best judgment of their style and ingenuity. The Miscellany is open to all "ingenious" men whatever their opinions may be, whether they be the disciples of Filmer, of Locke, of Paley, or of Godwin. One word more of "the spirit of meekness." I meant by this profession to declare my intention of attacking things without expressing malignity to persons. I am young; and may occasionally write with the intemperance of a young man's zeal. Let me borrow an apology from the great and excellent Dr. Hartley, who of all men least needed it. "I can truly say, that my free and unreserved manner of speaking has flowed from the sincerity and earnestness of my heart." But I will not undertake to justify all that I have said. Some things may be too hasty and censorious; or however, be unbecoming my age and station. I heartily wish that I could have observed the true medium. For want of candour is not less an offence against the Gospel of Christ, than false shame and want of courage in his cause.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Footnote 1: The lines are by Coleridge.]

LETTER 29. TO MR. POOLE.

11th April, 1796.

My dear, very dear Friend,

I have sent the 5th, 6th, and part of the 7th Number--all as yet printed. Your censures are all right: I wish your praises were equally so. The Essay on Fasts I am ashamed of. It was conceived in the spirit, and clothed in the harsh scoffing, of an Infidel. You wish to have one long essay;--so should I wish; but so do not my subscribers wish. I feel the perplexities of my undertaking increase daily. In London and Bristol "The Watchman" is read for its original matter,--the news and debates barely tolerated. The people of Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, etc., take it as a newspaper, and regard the essays and poems as intruders unwished for and unwelcome. In short, each subscriber, instead of regarding himself as a point in the circumference entitled to some one diverging ray, considers me as the circumference, and himself as the centre to which all the rays ought to converge. To tell you the truth, I do not think "The Watchman" will succeed. Hitherto I have scarcely sold enough to pay the expenses;--no wonder, when I tell you that on the 200 which Parsons in Paternoster Row sells weekly, he gains eight shillings more than I do. Nay, I am convinced that at the end of the half year he will have cleared considerably more by his 200 than I by the proprietorship of the whole work.

Colson has been indefatigable in my service, and writes with such zeal for my interests, and such warmth of sorrow for my sufferings, as if he wrote with fire and tears. God bless him! I wish above all things to realize a school. I could be well content to plod from morning to night, if only I could secure a secure competence; but to toil incessantly for uncertain bread weighs me down to earth.

Your Night-dream has been greatly admired. Dr. Beddoes spoke in high commendation of it. Your thoughts on Elections I will insert whenever Parliament is dissolved. I will insert them as the opinions of a sensible correspondent, entering my individual protest against giving a vote in any way or for any person. If you had an estate in the swamps of Essex, you could not prudently send an aguish man there to be your manager,--he would be unfit for it;--you could not honestly send a hale hearty man there, for the situation would to a moral certainty give him the ague. So with the Parliament:--I will not send a rogue there; and I would not send an honest man, for it is twenty to one that he will become a rogue.

Count Rumford's "Essays" you shall have by the next parcel. I thank you for your kind permission with respect to books. I have sent down to you "Elegiac Stanzas" by Bowles; they were given to me, but are altogether unworthy of Bowles. I have sent you Beddoes's Essay on the merits of William Pitt; you may either keep it, and I will get another for myself on your account, or if you see nothing in it to library-ize it, send it me back next Thursday, or whenever you have read it. My own "Poems" you will welcome. I pin all my poetical credit on the "Religious Musings". In the poem you so much admired in "The Watchman", for "Now life and

joy," read "New life and joy." (From "The Hour when we shall meet again".) "Chatterton" shall appear modernized. Dr. Beddoes intends, I believe, to give a course of Chemistry in a most "elementary" manner,--the price, two guineas. I wish, ardently wish, you could possibly attend them, and live with me. My house is most beautifully situated; an excellent room and bed are at your service. If you had any scruple about putting me to additional expense, you should pay me seven shillings a week, and I should gain by you.

Mrs. Coleridge is remarkably well, and sends her kind love. Pray, my dear, dear Poole, do not neglect to write to me every week. Your critique on "Joan of Arc" and the "Religious Musings" I expect. Your dear mother I long to see. Tell her I love her with filial respectfulness. Excellent woman! Farewell; God bless you and your grateful and affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Mr. C.'s first volume of poems was published by Mr. Cottle in the beginning of April, 1796, and his sense of the kind conduct of the latter to him throughout the whole affair was expressed in the following manner on a blank leaf in a copy of the work:

LETTER 30.

Dear Cottle,

On the blank leaf of my Poems I can most appropriately write my acknowledgments to you for your too disinterested conduct in the purchase of them. Indeed, if ever they should acquire a name and character, it might be truly said the world owed them to you. Had it not been for you, none perhaps of them would have been published, and some not written.

Your obliged and affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Bristol, April 15, 1796.

[Another project of Coleridge to earn a small sum to tide over financial difficulties was to "Rumfordise" the cities of England. Coleridge reviewed Rumford's Essays in "The Watchman" of 2nd April. Count Rumford (Count of the Holy Roman Empire), had cleared certain cities of Austria of beggars and vagabonds, and had established garden cities for the soldiery practising agricultural pursuits and engaging in remunerative occupations during their non-attendance at drill. What part of the "Rumfordising" Coleridge proposed to apply to his native country does not appear from the letter.]

LETTER 31. TO COTTLE

(Apr. 1796.)

My ever dear Cottle,

Since I last conversed with you on the subject, I have been thinking over again the plan I suggested to you, concerning the application of Count Rumford's plan to the city of Bristol. I have arranged in my mind the manner, and matter of the Pamphlet, which would be three sheets, and might be priced at one shilling.

Considerations

Addressed to the Inhabitants of Bristol,  
on a subject of importance,  
(unconnected with Politics.)

BY S. T. C.

Now I have by me the history of Birmingham, and the history of Manchester. By observing the names, revenues, and expenditures of their different charities, I could easily alter the calculations of the "Bristol Address", and, at a trifling expense, and a few variations, the same work might be sent to Manchester and Birmingham. "Considerations addressed to the inhabitants of Birmingham", etc. I could so order it, that by writing to a particular friend, at both places, the pamphlet should be thought to have been written at each place, as it certainly would be "for" each place. I think therefore 750 might be printed in all. Now will you undertake this? either to print it and divide the profits, or (which indeed I should prefer) would you give me three guineas, for the copyright? I would give you the first sheet on Thursday, the second on the Monday following, the third on the Thursday following. To each pamphlet I would annex the alterations to be made, when the press was stopped at 250.

God love you!

S. T. C.

Cottle says regarding this project, "I presented Mr. C. with the three guineas, but forbore the publication."]

LETTER 32. TO MR. COTTLE

(April) 1796.

My ever dear Cottle,

I will wait on you this evening at nine o'clock, till which hour I am on "Watch." Your Wednesday's invitation I of course accept, but I am rather sorry that you should add this expense to former liberalities.

Two editions of my "Poems" would barely repay you. Is it not possible to get 25 or 30 of the "Poems" ready by to-morrow, as Parsons, of Paternoster Row, has written to me pressing about them? "People are perpetually asking after them. All admire the poetry in the "Watchman"," he says. I can send them with 100 of the first number, which he has written for. I think if you were to send half a dozen "Joans of Arc" (4to £1 1s. 0d.) on sale or return, it would not be amiss. To all the places in the North we will send my "Poems", my "Conciones", and the "Joans of Arc" together, "per" waggon. You shall pay the carriage for the London and Birmingham parcels; I for the Sheffield, Derby, Nottingham, Manchester, and Liverpool.

With regard to the "Poems" I mean to give away, I wish to make it a common interest; that is, I will give away a sheet full of Sonnets. One to Mrs. Barbauld; one to Wakefield; one to Dr. Beddoes; one to Wrangham--a college acquaintance of mine,--an admirer of me, and a pitier of my principles;--one to George Augustus Pollen, Esq.; one to C. Lamb; one to Wordsworth; one to my brother George, and one to Dr. Parr. These Sonnets I mean to write on the blank leaf, respectively, of each copy. \* \* \* \* God bless you, and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

"The Sonnets," says Mr. Cottle, "never arrived." [But a pamphlet of 16 pages, containing 28 Sonnets, was printed, the only extant copy of which is in the Dyce Collection. "Poems", 1893, p. 544.]

LETTER 33. TO MR. POOLE

6th May, 1796.

My very dear Friend,

The heart is a little relieved, when vexation converts itself into anger. But from this privilege I am utterly precluded by my own epistolary sins and negligences. Yet in very troth thou must be a hard-hearted fellow to let me trot for four weeks together every Thursday to the Bear Inn--to receive no letter. I have sometimes thought that Milton the carrier did not deliver my last parcel, but he assures me he did.

This morning I received a truly fraternal letter from your brother Richard of Sherborne, containing good and acceptable advice. He deems my

"Religious Musings" "too metaphysical for common readers." I answer--the poem was not written for common readers. In so miscellaneous a collection as I have presented to the Public, "singula cuique" should be the motto. There are, however, instances of vicious affectation in the phraseology of that poem;--"unshudder'd, unaghasted", for example. ("Not in the poem now".) Good writing is produced more effectually by rapidly glancing the language as it already exists than by a hasty recourse to the mint of invention. The "Religious Musings" has more mind than the Introduction of B. II. of "Joan of Arc", ("Destiny of Nations", Poet. W. I. p. 98) but its versification is not equally rich. It has more passages of sublimity, but it has not that diffused air of severe dignity which characterizes my epic slice. Have I estimated my own performances rightly? ...

With regard to my own affairs they are as bad as the most rampant philo-despot could wish in the moment of cursing. After No. XII I shall cease to cry the state of the political atmosphere. It is not pleasant, Thomas Poole, to have worked fourteen weeks for nothing--for nothing; nay, to have given to the Public in addition to that toil, £45. When I began the Watchman I had £40 worth of paper given to me; yet with this I shall not have received a farthing at the end of the quarter. To be sure I have been somewhat fleeced and over-reached by my London publisher. In short, my tradesmen's bills for "The Watchman", including what paper I have bought since the seventh number, the printing, etc., amount exactly to £5 more than the whole of my receipts. "O Watchman, thou hast watched in vain!"--said the Prophet Ezekiel, when, I suppose, he was taking a prophetic glimpse of my sorrow-sallowed cheeks.

My plans are reduced to two;--the first unpracticable,--the second not likely to succeed.

Plan 1. I am studying German, and in about six weeks shall be able to read that language with tolerable fluency. Now I have some thoughts of making a proposal to Robinson, the great London bookseller, of translating all the works of Schiller, which would make a portly quarto, on condition that he should pay my journey and my wife's to and from Jena, a cheap German University where Schiller resides, and allow me two guineas each quarto sheet, which would maintain me. If I could realize this scheme, I should there study chemistry and anatomy, and bring over with me all the works of Semler and Michaelis, the German theologians, and of Kant, the great German metaphysician. On my return I would commence a school for either young men at £105 each, proposing to perfect them in the following studies in this order:--1. Man as an Animal;--including the complete knowledge of anatomy, chemistry, mechanics, and optics:--2. Man as an intellectual Being;--including the ancient metaphysics, the system of Locke and Hartley--of the Scotch philosophers--and the new Kantean system:--3. Man as a Religious Being;--including an historic summary of all religions, and of the arguments for and against natural and revealed religion. Then proceeding from the individual to the aggregate of individuals, and disregarding all chronology, except that of mind, I should perfect them: 1--in the history of savage tribes; 2--of semi-barbarous nations; 3--of nations emerging from semi-barbarism; 4--of civilized states; 5--of luxurious

states; 6--of revolutionary states; 7--of colonies. During these studies I should intermix the knowledge of languages, and instruct my scholars in "belles lettres", and the principles of composition.

Now, seriously, do you think that one of my scholars, thus perfected, would make a better senator than perhaps any one member in either of our Houses?--Bright bubbles of the age--ebullient brain! Gracious Heaven! that a scheme so big with advantage to this kingdom--therefore to Europe--therefore to the world--should be demolishable by one monosyllable from a bookseller's mouth!

My second plan is to become a Dissenting Minister, and adjure politics and casual literature. Preaching for hire is not right; because it must prove a strong temptation to continue to profess what I may have ceased to believe, "if ever" maturer judgment with wider and deeper reading should lessen or destroy my faith in Christianity. But though not right in itself, it may become right by the greater wrongness of the only alternative--the remaining in neediness and uncertainty. That in the one case I should be exposed to temptation is a mere contingency; that under necessitous circumstances I am exposed to great and frequent temptations is a melancholy certainty.

Write, my dear Poole! or I will crimp all the rampant Billingsgate of Burke to abuse you. Count Rumford is being reprinted.

God bless you and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

On Friday, the 13th of May, 1796, the tenth and last number of "The Watchman" appeared--the Author having wisely accelerated the termination of a hopeless undertaking, the plan of which was as injudicious as the execution of it by him for any length of time impracticable. Of the 324 pages, of which "The Watchman" consists, not more than a hundred contain original matter by Coleridge, and this is perhaps more remarkable as a test of the marvellous spring of his mind almost immediately afterwards than for any very striking merit of its own. Still, however, the nascent philosopher may be discovered in parts; and the Essay on the Slave Trade, in the fourth number, may be justly distinguished as comprising a perfect summary of the arguments applicable on either side of that question.

In the meantime Mr. Poole had been engaged in circulating a proposal amongst a few common friends for purchasing a small annuity and presenting it to Mr. Coleridge. The plan was not in fact carried into execution;<sup>[1]</sup> but it was communicated to Mr. C. by Mr. Poole, and the following letter refers to it:--

[Footnote 1: An error. A subscription annuity of £35 or £40 was collected and paid to Coleridge in 1796 and 1797.]

## LETTER 34. TO MR. POOLE

12th May, 1796.

Poole! The Spirit, who counts the throbbings of the solitary heart, knows that what my feelings ought to be, such they are. If it were in my power to give you anything, which I have not already given, I should be oppressed by the letter now before me. But no! I feel myself rich in being poor; and because I have nothing to bestow, I know how much I have bestowed. Perhaps I shall not make myself intelligible; but the strong and unmixed affection which I bear to you seems to exclude all emotions of gratitude, and renders even the principle of esteem latent and inert. Its presence is not perceptible, though its absence could not be endured.

Concerning the scheme itself I am undetermined. Not that I am ashamed to receive;--God forbid! I will make every possible exertion; my industry shall be at least commensurate with my learning and talents;--if these do not procure for me and mine the necessary comforts of life, I can receive as I would bestow, and, in either case--receiving or bestowing--be equally grateful to my Almighty Benefactor. I am undetermined therefore--not because I receive with pain and reluctance, but--because I suspect that you attribute to others your own enthusiasm of benevolence; as if the sun should say--"With how rich a purple those opposite windows are burning!" But with God's permission I shall talk with you on this subject. By the last page of No. X, you will perceive that I have this day dropped "The Watchman". On Monday morning I will go "per" caravan to Bridgewater, where, if you have a horse of tolerable meekness unemployed, you will let him meet me.

I should blame you for the exaggerated terms in which you have spoken of me in the Proposal, did I not perceive the motive. You wished to make it appear an offering--not a favour--and in excess of delicacy have, I fear, fallen into some grossness of flattery.

God bless you, my dear, very dear Friend. The widow is calm, and amused with her beautiful infant. [1] We are all become more religious than we were. God be ever praised for all things! Mrs. Coleridge begs her kind love to you. To your dear Mother my filial respects.

S. T. COLERIDGE. [2]

[Footnote 1: Mrs. Robert Lovell, whose husband had been carried off by a fever, about two years after his marriage with my Aunt. S. C.]

[Footnote 2: Letter LVI is our 34. LVII is dated 13 May, 1796.]

The visit to Mr. Poole at Stowey was paid, and Mr. C. returned to Bristol on the 20th of May, 1796. On his way back he wrote the following letter to Mr. Poole from Bridgewater:--

LETTER 35

29th May, 1796.

My dear Poole,

This said caravan does not leave Bridgewater till nine. In the market-place stand the hustings. I mounted, and pacing the boards, mused on bribery, false swearing, and other foibles of election times. I have wandered too by the river Parret, which looks as filthy as if all the parrots in the House of Commons had been washing their consciences therein. Dear Gutter of Stowey! Were I transported to Italian plains, and lying by the side of a streamlet which murmured through an orange grove, I would think of thee, dear Gutter of Stowey, and wish that I were poring on thee!

So much by way of rant. I have eaten three eggs, swallowed sundries of tea and bread and butter, purely for the purpose of amusing myself, and I have seen the horse fed. When at Cross, where I shall dine, I shall think of your happy dinner celebrated under the auspices of humble independence, supported by brotherly love. I am writing, you understand, for no worldly purpose but that of avoiding anxious thoughts. Apropos of honey-pie:--Caligula or Heliogabalus,[1] (I forget which,) had a dish of nightingales' tongues served up. What think you of the stings of bees? God bless you. My filial love to your mother, and fraternity to your sister. Tell Ellen Cruikshanks, that in my next parcel to you I will send my Haleswood Poem to her. Heaven protect her, and you, and Sara, and your Mother, and--like a bad shilling passed off in a handful of guineas--your affectionate friend and brother,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S. Don't forget to send by Milton my old clothes and linen that once was clean--a pretty "periphrasis" that![2]

[Footnote 1: Elagabalus.]

[Footnote 2: Letter LVIII is our 35. LIX is dated 22 June 1796.]

The month of June, 1796, was spent in Bristol, and some negotiation took place as to Mr. C.'s settling in Nottingham, the particulars of which the Editor is unable to state. On the 4th of July Mr. Coleridge writes to Mr. Poole.

LETTER 36. TO MR. POOLE

4th July, 1796.

My very dear Poole,

Do not attribute it to indolence that I have not written to you.

Suspense has been the real cause of my silence. Day after day I have confidently expected some decisive letter, and as often have been disappointed. "Certainly I shall have one to-morrow noon, and then I will write." Thus I contemplated the time of my silence in its small component parts, forgetful into what a sum total they were swelling. As I have heard nothing from Nottingham notwithstanding I have written a pressing letter, I have, by the advice of Cottle and Dr. Beddoes, accepted a proposal of Mr. Perry's, the editor of the "Morning Chronicle",--accepted it with a heavy and reluctant heart. On Thursday Perry was at Bristol for a few hours, just time enough to attend the dying moments of his associate in the editorship, Mr. Grey, whom Dr. Beddoes attended. Perry desired Dr. B. to inform me that, if I would come up to London and write for him, he would make me a regular compensation adequate to the maintenance of myself and Mrs. Coleridge, and requested an immediate answer by the post. Mr. Estlin, and Charles Danvers, and Mr. Wade are or were all out of town;--I had no one to advise with except Dr. Beddoes and Cottle. Dr. B. thinks it a good opening on account of Grey's death; but I rather think that the intention is to employ me as a mere hackney without any share of the profits. However, as I am doing nothing, and in the prospect of doing nothing settled, I was afraid to give way to the "omenings" of my heart; and accordingly I accepted his proposal in general terms, requesting a line from him expressing the particulars both of my proposed occupation and stipend. This I shall receive to-morrow, I suppose; and if I do, I think of hiring a horse for a couple of days, and galloping down to you to have all your advice, which indeed, if it should be for rejecting the proposals, I might receive by post; but if for finally accepting them, we could not interchange letters in a time sufficiently short for Perry's needs, and so he might procure another person possibly. At all events I should not like to leave this part of England--perhaps for ever--without seeing you once more. I am very sad about it, for I love Bristol, and I do not love London; and besides, local and temporary politics have become my aversion. They narrow the understanding, and at least acidulate the heart; but those two giants, yclept Bread and Cheese, bend me into compliance. I must do something. If I go, farewell, Philosophy! farewell, the Muse! farewell, my literary Fame!

My "Poems" have been reviewed. The "Monthly" has cataracted panegyric on me; the "Critical" cascaded it, and the "Analytical" dribbled it with civility. As to the "British Critic", they durst not condemn, and they would not praise--so contented themselves with commending me as a "poet", and allowed me "tenderness of sentiment and elegance of fiction." I am so anxious and uneasy that I really cannot write any further. My kind and fraternal love to your Sister, and my filial respects to your dear Mother, and believe me to be in my head, heart, and soul, yours most sincerely.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

The Editor can find no further trace of the proposed connection with the "Morning Chronicle"; but almost immediately after the date of the preceding letter, Mr. Coleridge received an invitation from Mrs. Evans, then of Barley, near Derby, to visit her with a view to his undertaking the education of her sons. He and Mrs. C. accordingly went to Barley, where the matter was arranged to the satisfaction of both parties; and Mr. C. returned to Bristol alone with the intention of visiting his Mother and Brother at Ottery before leaving the south of England for what promised to be a long absence. But this project, like others, ended in nothing. The other guardians of Mrs. E.'s sons considered a public education proper for them, and the announcement of this resolution to Mr. C. at Bristol stopped his further progress, and recalled him to Darley. After a stay of some ten days, he left Darley with Mrs. C., and visited Mr. Thomas Hawkes at Mosely, near Birmingham, and thence he wrote to Mr. Poole--

#### LETTER 37. TO MR. POOLE

August, 1796.

My beloved Friend,

I was at Matlock, the place monodized by Bowles, when your letter arrived at Darley, and I did not receive it till near a week afterwards. My very dear Poole, I wrote to you the whole truth. After the first moment I was perfectly composed, and from that moment to the present have continued calm and lighthearted. I had just quitted you, and I felt myself rich in your love and esteem; and you do not know how rich I feel myself. O ever found the same, and trusted and beloved!

The last sentences of your letter affected me more than I can well describe. Words and phrases which might perhaps have adequately expressed my feelings, the cold-blooded children of this world have anticipated and exhausted in their unmeaning gabble of flattery. I use common expressions, but they do not convey common feelings. My heart has thanked you. I preached on Faith yesterday. I said that Faith was infinitely better than Good Works, as the cause is greater than the effect,--as a fruitful tree is better than its fruits, and as a friendly heart is of far higher value than the kindnesses which it naturally and necessarily prompts. It is for that friendly heart that I now have thanked you, and which I so eagerly accept; for with regard to settlement, I am likely to be better off now than before, as I shall proceed to tell you.

I arrived at Darley on the Sunday.... Monday I spent at Darley. On the Tuesday Mrs. Coleridge, Miss Willett, and I went in Mrs. Evans's carriage to Matlock, where we stayed till Saturday.... Sunday we spent at Darley, and on Monday Sara, Mrs. Evans, and myself visited Oakover, a seat famous for a few first-rates of Raffael and Titian; thence to Ilam, a quiet vale hung round with wood, beautiful beyond expression, and

thence to Dovedale, a place beyond expression tremendously sublime. Here, in a cavern at the head of a divine little fountain, we dined on cold meat, and returned to Darley, quite worn out with the succession of sweet sensations. On Tuesday we were employed in packing up, and on Wednesday we were to have set off.... But on the Wednesday Dr. Crompton, who had just returned from Liverpool, called on me, and made me the following proposal:--that if I would take a house in Derby and open a day-school, confining my number to twelve scholars, he would send three of his children on these terms--till my number should be completed, he would allow me £100 a year for them;--when the number should be complete, he would give £21 a year for each of them:--the children to be with me from nine to twelve, and from two to five--the last two hours to be employed with their writing or drawing-master, who would be paid by the parents. He has no doubt but that I shall complete my number almost instantly. Now 12 x 20 guineas = £252, and my mornings and evenings at my own disposal = good things. So I accepted the offer, it being understood that if anything better offered, I should accept it. There was not a house to be got in Derby; but I engaged with a man for a house now building, and which is to be completed by the 8th of October, for £12 a year, and the landlord to pay all the taxes except the Poor Rates. The landlord is rather an intelligent fellow, and has promised me to Rumfordize the chimneys. The plan is to commence in November; the intermediate time I spend at Bristol, at which place I shall arrive, by the blessing of God, on Monday night next. This week I spend with Mr. Hawkes, at Mosely, near Birmingham; in whose shrubbery I now write. I arrived here on Friday, having left Derby on Friday. I preached here yesterday.

If Sara will let me, I shall see you for a few days in the course of a month. Direct your next letter to S. T. C., Oxford Street, Bristol. My love to your dear Mother and Sister, and believe me affectionately your ever faithful friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

I shall write to my Mother and Brothers to-morrow.

At the same time Mr. C. wrote to Mr. Wade in terms similar to the above, adding that at Matlock the time was completely filled up with seeing the country, eating, concerts, etc.

LETTER 38

(--Sept. 1796.)

"I was the first fiddle;--not in the concerts--but every where else, and the company would not spare me twenty minutes together. Sunday I dedicated to the drawing up my sketch of education, which I meant to publish, to try to get a school!" He speaks of "the thrice lovely valley

of Ilam; a vale hung with beautiful woods all round, except just at its entrance, where, as you stand at the other end of the valley, you see a bare bleak mountain standing as it were to guard the entrance. It is without exception the most beautiful place I ever visited." ... He concludes:--"I have seen a letter from Mr. William Roscoe, author of the "Life of Lorenzo the Magnificent"; a work in two 4to volumes (of which the whole first edition sold in a month); it was addressed to Mr. Edwards, the minister here, and entirely related to me. Of me and my compositions he writes in terms of high admiration, and concludes by desiring Mr. Edwards to let him know my situation and prospects, and saying that if I would come and settle at Liverpool, he thought a comfortable situation might be procured for me. This day Edwards will write to him."

Whilst at Birmingham, on "The Watchman" tour, Mr. C. had been introduced to Mr. Charles Lloyd, the eldest son of Mr. Lloyd, an eminent banker of that place. At Mosely they met again, and the result of an intercourse for a few days together was an ardent desire on the part of Lloyd to domesticate himself permanently with a man whose conversation was to him a revelation from Heaven. Nothing, however, was settled on this occasion, and Mr. and Mrs. C. returned to Bristol in the beginning of September. On the 24th of September he writes to Mr. Poole:--

#### LETTER 39. TO MR. POOLE

24th September, 1796.

My dear, very dear Poole,

The heart thoroughly penetrated with the flame of virtuous friendship is in a state of glory; but lest it should be exalted above measure, there is given to it a thorn in the flesh. I mean that where the friendship of any person forms an essential part of a man's happiness, he will at times be pestered with the little jealousies and solitudes of imbecile humanity. Since we last parted I have been gloomily dreaming that you did not leave me so affectionately as you were wont to do. Pardon this littleness of heart, and do not think the worse of me for it. Indeed my soul seems so mantled and wrapped round with your love and esteem, that even a dream of losing but the smallest fragment of it makes me shiver, as if some tender part of my nature were left uncovered and in nakedness.

Last week I received a letter from Lloyd, informing me that his parents had given their joyful concurrence to his residence with me, but that, if it were possible that I could be absent from home for three or four days, his father wished particularly to see me. I consulted Mrs. Coleridge, who advised me to go.... Accordingly on Saturday night I went by the mail to Birmingham, and was introduced to the father, who is a mild man, very liberal in his ideas, and in religion an allegorizing Quaker.[1] I mean that all the apparently irrational parts of his sect

he allegorizes into significations, which for the most part you or I might assent to. We became well acquainted, and he expressed himself thankful to Heaven, "that his son was about to be with me." He said he would write to me concerning money matters, after his son had been some time under my roof.

On Tuesday morning I was surprised by a letter from Mr. Maurice, our medical attendant, informing me that Mrs. C. was delivered on Monday, 19th September, 1796, half-past two in the morning, of a son, and that both she and the child were uncommonly well. I was quite annihilated with the suddenness of the information, and retired to my room to address myself to my Maker, but I could only offer up to Him the silence of stupified feelings. I hastened home, and Charles Lloyd returned with me. When I first saw the child, I did not feel that thrill and overflowing of affection which I expected. I looked on it with a melancholy gaze; my mind was intensely contemplative, and my heart only sad. But when two hours after, I saw it at the bosom of its mother--on her arm--and her eye tearful and watching its little features--then I was thrilled and melted, and gave it the kiss of a Father. \* \* \* \* The baby seems strong, and the old nurse has over-persuaded my wife to discover a likeness to me in its face,--no great compliment to me; for in truth I have seen handsomer babies in my lifetime. Its name is David Hartley Coleridge. I hope that ere he be a man, if God destines him for continuance in this life, his head will be convinced of, and his heart saturated with, the truths so ably supported by that great master of Christian Philosophy.

Charles Lloyd wins upon me hourly; his heart is uncommonly pure, his affections delicate, and his benevolence enlivened, but not sicklied, by sensibility. He is assuredly a man of great genius; but it must be in a "tete-a-tete" with one whom he loves and esteems that his colloquial powers open:--and this arises not from reserve or want of simplicity, but from having been placed in situations, where for years together he met with no congenial minds, and where the contrariety of his thoughts and notions to the thoughts and notions of those around him induced the necessity of habitually suppressing his feelings. His joy and gratitude to Heaven for the circumstance of his domestication with me, I can scarcely describe to you; and I believe his fixed plans are of being always with me. His father told me, that if he saw that his son had formed habits of severe economy, he should not insist upon his adopting any profession; as then his fair share of his (the father's) wealth would be sufficient for him.

My dearest Poole, can you conveniently receive Lloyd and me in the course of a week? I have much, very much, to say to you, and to consult with you about; for my heart is heavy respecting Derby; and my feelings are so dim and huddled, that though I can, I am sure, communicate them to you by my looks and broken sentences, I scarcely know how to convey them in a letter. C. Lloyd also wishes much to know you personally. I shall write on the other side of the paper two of his sonnets, composed by him in one evening at Birmingham. The latter of them alludes to the conviction of the truth of Christianity, which he had received from me. Let me hear from you by post immediately, and give my kind love to your

sister and dear mother, and likewise my love to that young man with the soul-beaming face, which I recollect much better than I do his name. ("Mr. Thomas Ward of Over Stowey".) God bless you, my dear friend, and believe me with deep affection yours,

S. T. COLERIDGE.[2]

[Footnote 1: The relationship of Coleridge and the Lloyds is told fully in "Charles Lamb and the Lloyds", by E. V. Lucas, 1898.]

[Footnote 2: Letter LX is our 39.]

The reader of Coleridge's Poems will remember the beautiful lines "To a young friend, on his proposing to domesticate with the Author". They were written at this time and addressed to Lloyd; and it may be easily conceived what a deep impression of delight they would make on a mind and temperament so refined and enthusiastic as his. The Sonnet "To a Friend who asked how I felt when the Nurse first presented my infant to me"--is the metrical version of a passage in the foregoing letter. A short time before the birth of little Hartley C., Mr. Southey had returned to Bristol from Portugal, and was in lodgings nearly opposite to Mr. Coleridge's house in Oxford Street. There had been a quarrel between them on the occasion of the abandonment of the American scheme, which was first announced by Mr. Southey, and he and Coleridge had ceased to have any intercourse. But a year's absence had dissipated all angry feelings, and after Mr. C.'s return from Birmingham in the end of September, Southey took the first step, and sent over a slip of paper with a word or two of conciliation.[1] This was immediately followed by an interview, and in an hour's time these two extraordinary youths were arm in arm again. They were indeed of essentially opposite tempers, powers, and habits; yet each well knew and appreciated the other,--perhaps even the more deeply from the contrast between them. Circumstances separated them in after life; but Mr. Coleridge recorded his testimony to Southey's character in the "Biographia Literaria", and in his Will referred to it as expressive of his latest convictions.

[In Ainger's "Letters of Charles Lamb" will be found a series of letters by Lamb to Coleridge on various matters, literary and domestic, which affords a good insight into the doings of Coleridge at this time. The following beautiful letter by Coleridge was written on the occasion of the death of Lamb's mother.

[Footnote 1: The paper contained a sentence in English from Schiller's Conspiracy of Fiesco at Genoa. "Fiesco! Fiesco! du Sumst einen Platz in meiner Brust, den das Menschengeschlecht, dreifach genommen, nicht mehr besetzen wird". "Fiesco! Fiesco! thou leavest a void in my bosom, which the human race, thrice told, will never fill up." Act V, Sc. 16. S. C.]

LETTER 40. TO CHARLES LAMB[1]

(29 Sept. 1796.)

Your letter, my friend, struck me with a mighty horror. It rushed upon me and stupified my feelings. You bid me write you a religious letter; I am not a man who would attempt to insult the greatness of your anguish by any other consolation. Heaven knows that in the easiest fortunes there is much dissatisfaction and weariness of spirit; much that calls for the exercise of patience and resignation; but in storms, like these, that shake the dwelling and make the heart tremble, there is no middle way between despair and the yielding up of the whole spirit unto the guidance of faith. And surely it is a matter of joy, that your faith in Jesus has been preserved; the Comforter that should relieve you is not far from you. But as you are a Christian, in the name of that Saviour, who was filled with bitterness and made drunken with wormwood, I conjure you to have recourse in frequent prayer to "his God and your God," [2] the God of mercies, and father of all comfort. Your poor father is, I hope, almost senseless of the calamity; the unconscious instrument of Divine Providence knows it not, and your mother is in heaven. It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream by the song of birds, and the gladsome rays of the morning. Ah, how infinitely more sweet to be awakened from the blackness and amazement of a sudden horror, by the glories of God manifest, and the hallelujahs of angels.

As to what regards yourself, I approve altogether of your abandoning what you justly call vanities. I look upon you as a man, called by sorrow and anguish and a strange desolation of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God; we cannot arrive at any portion of heavenly bliss without in some measure imitating Christ. And they arrive at the largest inheritance who imitate the most difficult parts of his character, and bowed down and crushed under foot, cry in fulness of faith, "Father, thy will be done."

I wish above measure to have you for a little while here--no visitants shall blow on the nakedness of your feelings--you shall be quiet, and your spirit may be healed. I see no possible objection, unless your father's helplessness prevent you, and unless you are necessary to him. If this be not the case, I charge you write me that you will come.

I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair--you are a temporary sharer in human miseries, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine Nature. I charge you, if by any means it be possible, come to me.

I remain, your affectionate,

S. T. COLERIDGE.[3]

Of the next letter Cottle says:--"A second edition of Mr. Coleridge's poems being demanded, I was under no obligation, the copyright being mine, in publishing a second edition, to make Mr. Coleridge any payment, alterations or additions being optional with him; but in his circumstances, and to show that my desire was to consider Mr. C. even

more than myself, I promised him, on the sale of the second edition of 500, twenty guineas. The following was his reply: (not viewing the subject quite in the right light; but this was of little consequence)."

[Footnote 1: The letter to which this is an answer is No. VIII of Canon Ainger's "Letters of Lamb".]

[Footnote 2: "Vide" St. John, ch. xx, ver. 17.]

[Footnote 3: Letter LXI is our 40.]

#### LETTER 41. TO COTTLE

Stowey, Oct. 18th, 1796.

My dear Cottle,

I have no mercenary feelings, I verily believe; but I hate bartering at any time, and with any person; with you it is absolutely intolerable. I clearly perceive that by giving me twenty guineas, on the sale of the second edition, you will get little or nothing by the additional poems, unless they should be sufficiently popular to reach a third edition, which soars above our<sup>[1]</sup> wildest expectations. The only advantage you can derive therefore from the purchase of them on such terms, is, simply, that my poetry is more likely to sell when the whole may be had in one volume, price 5 shillings., than when it is scattered in two volumes; the one 4 shillings., the other possibly 3 shillings. In short, you will get nothing directly, but only indirectly, from the probable circumstance, that these additional poems added to the former, will give a more rapid sale to the second edition than could otherwise be expected, and cause it possibly to be reviewed at large. Add to this, that by omitting every thing political, I widen the sphere of my readers. So much for you. Now for myself. You must see, Cottle, that whatever money I should receive from you, would result from the circumstances that would give me the same, or more--if I published them on my own account. I mean the sale of the poems. I can therefore have no motive to make such conditions with you, except the wish to omit poems unworthy of me, and the circumstance that our separate properties would aid each other by the union; and whatever advantage this might be to me, it would, of course, be equally so to you. The only difference between my publishing the poems on my own account, and yielding them up to you; the only difference, I say, independent of the above stated differences, is, that, in one case, I retain the property for ever, in the other case, I lose it after two editions.

However, I am not solicitous to have any thing omitted, except the sonnet to Lord Stanhope and the ludicrous poem;<sup>[1]</sup> only I should like to publish the best pieces together, and those of secondary splendour, at the end of the volume, and think this is the best quietus of the whole

affair.

Yours affectionately,

S. T. COLERIDGE.]

[Footnote 1: "my" in "Early Recollections".]

[Footnote 2: "Written before Supper".]

On the 1st of November, 1796, Coleridge wrote the following letter to his friend:

#### LETTER 42

November 1, 1796.

My beloved Poole,

Many "causes" have concurred to prevent my writing to you, but all together they do not amount to a "reason". I have seen a narrow-necked bottle, so full of water, that when turned up side down not a drop has fallen out--something like this has been the case with me. My heart has been full, yea, crammed with anxieties about my residence near you. I so ardently desire it, that any disappointment would chill all my faculties, like the fingers of death. And entertaining wishes so irrationally strong, I necessarily have "day"-mair dreams that something will prevent it--so that since I quitted you, I have been gloomy as the month which even now has begun to lower and rave on us. I verily believe, or rather I have no doubt that I should have written to you within the period of my promise, if I had not pledged myself for a certain gift of my Muse to poor Tommy: and alas! she has been too "sunk on the ground in dimmest heaviness" to permit me to trifle. Yet intending it hourly I deferred my letter "a la mode" the procrastinator! Ah! me, I wonder not that the hours fly so sweetly by me--for they pass unfreighted with the duties which they came to demand!

\* \* \* I wrote a long letter to Dr. Crompton, and received from him a very kind letter, which I will send you in the parcel I am about to convey by Milton.

My "Poems" are come to a second edition, that is the first edition is sold. I shall alter the lines of the "Joan of Arc", and make "one" poem entitled "Progress of European Liberty, a Vision";--the first line "Auspicious Reverence! hush all meaner song," etc. and begin the volume with it. Then the "Chatterton,--Pixies' Parlour,--Effusions 27 and 28--To a young Ass--Tell me on what holy ground--The Sigh--Epitaph on an Infant--The Man of Ross--Spring in a Village--Edmund--Lines with a poem on the French Revolution"--Seven Sonnets, namely, those at pp. 45, 59, 60, 61, 64, 65, 66--"Shurton Bars--My pensive Sara--Low was our pretty

Cot--Religious Musings";--these in the order I have placed them. Then another title-page with "Juvenilia" on it, and an advertisement signifying that the Poems were retained by the desire of some friends, but that they are to be considered as being in the Author's own opinion of very inferior merit. In this sheet will be "Absence--La Fayette--Genevieve--Kosciusko--Autumnal Moon--To the Nightingale--Imitation of Spenser--A Poem written in early youth". All the others will be finally and totally omitted. It is strange that in the "Sonnet to Schiller" I should have written--"that hour I would have wished to 'die'--Lest--aught more mean might stamp me 'mortal';"--the bull never struck me till Charles Lloyd mentioned it. The sense is evident enough, but the word is ridiculously ambiguous.

Lloyd is a very good fellow, and most certainly a young man of great genius. He desires his kindest love to you. I will write again by Milton, for I really can write no more now--I am so depressed. But I will fill up the letter with poetry of mine, or Lloyd's, or Southey's. Is your Sister married? May the Almighty bless her!--may he enable her to make all her new friends as pure, and mild, and amiable as herself!--I pray in the fervency of my soul. Is your dear Mother well? My filial respects to her. Remember me to Ward. David Hartley Coleridge is stout, healthy, and handsome. He is the very miniature of me. Your grateful and affectionate friend and brother,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Speaking of lines by Mr. Southey, called "Inscription for the Cenotaph at Ermenonville",<sup>[1]</sup> written in his letter, Mr. C. says, "This is beautiful, but instead of Ermenonville and Rousseau put Valchiusa and Petrarch. I do not particularly admire Rousseau. Bishop Taylor, old Baxter, David Hartley, and the Bishop of Cloyne are my men."

The following Sonnet, transcribed in the foregoing Letter, has not been printed. "It puts in," he says, "no claim to poetry, but it is a most faithful picture of my feelings on a very interesting event." See the Letter to Mr. Poole of 24th September, 1796. This Sonnet shows in a remarkable way how little the Unitarianism, which Mr. C. professed at this time, operated on his fundamental "feelings" as a catholic Christian.

"On receiving a Letter informing me of the birth of a Son."

When they did greet me Father, sudden awe  
Weigh'd down my spirit: I retir'd and knelt  
Seeking the throne of grace, but inly felt  
No heavenly visitation upwards draw  
My feeble mind, nor cheering ray impart.  
Ah me! before the Eternal Sire I brought  
Th' unquiet silence of confused thought  
And hopeless feelings: my o'erwhelmed heart  
Trembled, and vacant tears stream'd down my face.

And now once more, O Lord! to thee I bend,  
Lover of souls! and groan for future grace,  
That, ere my babe youth's perilous maze have trod,  
Thy overshadowing Spirit may descend,  
And he be born again, a child of God!

It was not till the summer of 1797 that the second edition Of Mr. C.'s Poems actually appeared, before which time he had seen occasion to make many alterations in the proposed arrangement of, and had added some of his most beautiful compositions to, the collection. It is curious, however, that he never varied the diction of the Sonnet to Schiller in the particular to which he refers in the preceding Letter. [2]

[Footnote 1: Afterwards included among the "Minor Poems" of Mr. S.--S. C.]

[Footnote 2: See Dykes-Campbell's edition of Coleridge's "Poems", p. 572.]

#### LETTER 43. To MR. POOLE

5, November, 1796.

Thanks, my heart's warm thanks to you, my beloved Friend, for your tender letter! Indeed I did not deserve so kind a one; but by this time you have received my last. To live in a beautiful country, and to enure myself as much as possible to the labours of the field, have been for this year past my dream of the day, my sigh at midnight. But to enjoy these blessings near you, to see you daily, to tell you all my thoughts in their first birth, and to hear yours, to be mingling identities with you, as it were!--the vision-weaving Fancy has indeed often pictured such things, but Hope never dared whisper a promise. Disappointment! Disappointment! dash not from my trembling hand this bowl, which almost touches my lips. Envy me not this immortal draught, and I will forgive thee all thy persecutions! Forgive thee! Impious! I will bless thee, black-vested minister of Optimism, stern pioneer of happiness! Thou hast been the cloud before me from the day that I left the flesh-pots of Egypt, and was led through the way of a wilderness--the cloud that had been guiding me to a land flowing with milk and honey--the milk of innocence, the honey of friendship!

I wanted such a letter as yours, for I am very unwell. On Wednesday night I was seized with an intolerable pain from my right temple to the tip of my right shoulder, including my right eye, cheek, jaw, and that side of the throat. I was nearly frantic, and ran about the house almost naked, endeavouring by every means to excite sensation in different parts of my body, and so to weaken the enemy by creating a division. It continued from one in the morning till half-past five, and left me pale and faintly. It came on fitfully, but not so violently, several times on Thursday, and began severer threats towards night; but I took between 60 and 70 drops of laudanum, and sopped the Cerberus just as his mouth

began to open. On Friday it only niggled, as if the Chief had departed, as from a conquered place, and merely left a small garrison behind, or as if he had evacuated the Corsica, and a few straggling pains only remained. But this morning he returned in full force, and his name is Legion. Giant-Fiend of a hundred hands, with a shower of arrowy death-pangs he transpierced me, and then he became a Wolf and lay gnawing my bones!--I am not mad, most noble Festus! but in sober sadness I have suffered this day more bodily pain than I had before a conception of. My right cheek has certainly been placed with admirable exactness under the focus of some invisible burning-glass, which concentrated all the rays of a Tartarean sun. My medical attendant decides it to be altogether nervous, and that it originates either in severe application, or excessive anxiety.

My beloved Poole, in excessive anxiety I believe it might originate. I have a blister under my right ear, and I take 25 drops of laudanum every five hours, the ease and spirits gained by which have enabled me to write to you this flighty, but not exaggerating, account. With a gloomy wantonness of imagination I had been coquetting with the hideous possibles of disappointment. I drank fears like wormwood--yea--made myself drunken with bitterness; for my ever-shaping and distrustful mind still mingled gall-drops, till out of the cup of Hope I almost poisoned myself with Despair.

Your letter is dated 2. November; I wrote to you on the 1st. Your Sister was married on that day; and on that day I several times felt my heart overflowed with such tendernesses for her, as made me repeatedly ejaculate prayers in her behalf. Such things are strange. It may be superstition to think about such correspondences; but it is a superstition which softens the heart and leads to no evil. We will call on your dear Sister as soon as I am quite well, and in the mean time I will write a few lines to her.

I am anxious beyond measure to be in the country as soon as possible. I would it were possible to get a temporary residence till Adscombe is ready for us. I wish we could have three rooms in William Poole's large house for the winter. Will you try to look out for a fit servant for us,--simple of heart, physiognomically handsome, and scientific in vaccumulgence. That last word is a new one, but soft in sound, and full of expression. Vaccumulgence! I am pleased with the word. Write to me all things about yourself; where I cannot advise, I can console; and communication, which doubles joy, halves sorrow.

Tell me whether you think it at all possible to make any terms with ----.[1] You know, I would not wish to touch with the edge of the nail of my great toe the line which should be but half a barley-corn out of the circle of the most trembling delicacy! I will write to Cruikshank tomorrow, if God permit me. God bless and protect you Friend! Brother! Beloved! Sara's best love and Lloyd's. David Hartley is well. My filial love to your dear Mother. Love to Ward. Little Tommy! I often think of thee! S. T. COLERIDGE.[2]

[Footnote 1: William Poole.]

[Footnote 2: Letter LXII is our 43. Letters LXIII-LXX follow.]

Charles Lloyd, spoken of in a letter of my father's in the last chapter as "a young man of great genius," was born Feb. 12th, 1775, died at Versailles Jan. 15th, 1839. He published sonnets and other poems in conjunction with my Father and Mr. Lamb, in 1797, and these and Mr. Lamb's were published together, apart from my Father's, the year afterwards. "While Lamb," says Sergeant Talfourd, "was enjoying habits of the closest intimacy with Coleridge in London, he was introduced by him to a young poet whose name has often been associated with his-- Charles Lloyd--the son of a wealthy banker at Birmingham, who had recently cast off the trammels of the Society of Friends, and, smitten with the love of poetry, had become a student at the University of Cambridge. There he had been attracted to Coleridge by the fascination of his discourse; and, having been admitted to his regard, was introduced by him to Lamb. Lloyd was endeared both to Lamb and Coleridge by a very amiable disposition and a pensive cast of thought; but his intellect had little resemblance to that of either. He wrote, indeed, pleasing verses and with great facility,--a facility fatal to excellence; but his mind was chiefly remarkable for the fine power of analysis which distinguishes his "London", and other of his later compositions. In this power of discriminating and distinguishing--carried to a pitch almost of painfulness--Lloyd has scarcely ever been equalled, and his poems, though rugged in point of versification, will be found by those who will read them with the calm attention they require, replete with critical and moral suggestions of the highest value."

Besides three or four volumes of poetry Mr. Lloyd wrote novels:--"Edmund Oliver", published soon after he became acquainted with my Father, and "Isabel" of later date. After his marriage he settled at the lakes. "At Brathay," (the beautiful river Brathay near Ambleside,) says Mr. De Quincey, "lived Charles Lloyd, and he could not in candour be considered a common man. He was somewhat too Rousseauish, but he had in conversation very extraordinary powers for analysis of a certain kind, applied to the philosophy of manners, and the most delicate 'nuances' of social life; and his Translations of Alfieri together with his own poems, shew him to have been an accomplished scholar."

My Mother has often told me how amiable Mr. Lloyd was as a youth; how kind to her little Hartley; how well content with cottage accommodation; how painfully sensitive in all that related to the affections. I remember him myself, as he was in middle life, when he and his excellent wife were most friendly to my brothers, who were school-fellows with their sons. I did not at that time fully appreciate Mr. Lloyd's intellectual character, but was deeply impressed by the exceeding refinement and sensibility marked in his countenance and manners,--(for he was a gentleman of the old school without its formality,)--by the fluent elegance of his discourse, and, above all, by the eloquent pathos, with which he described his painful mental experiences and wild waking dreams, caused by a deranged state of the nervous system. *\_Le ciel nous vend toujours les biens qu'il nous prodigue\_*. Nervous

derangement is a dear price to pay even for genius and sensibility. Too often, even if not the direct effect of these privileges, it is the accompanying drawback; hypochondria may almost be called the intellectual man's malady.

"The Duke D'Ormond", which was written 24 years before its publication in 1822, that is in 1798, soon after Mr. Lloyd's residence at Stowey, has great merit as a dramatic poem, in the delineation of character and states of mind; the plot is forced and unnatural; not only that, but what is worse, in point of effect, it is tediously subjective; and we feel the actions of the piece to be improbable while the feelings are true to nature; yet there is tragic effect in the scenes of the 'denouement'. I understand what it was in Mr. Lloyd's mind which Mr. De Quincey calls 'Rousseauish'. He dwelt a good deal on the temptations to which human nature is subject, when passions, not in themselves unworthy, become, from circumstances, sins if indulged, and the source of sin and misery; but the effect of this piece is altogether favourable to virtue, and to the parent and nurse of virtue, a pious conviction of the moral government of the world. The play contains an 'anatomy' of passion, not a 'picture' of it in a concrete form, such as the works of Richardson and of Rousseau present, a picture fitted to excite 'feelings' of baneful effect upon the mind, rather than to awaken 'thought', which counteracts all such mischief. Indeed I think no man would have sought my Father's daily society who was not predominantly given to reflection. What is very striking in this play is the character of the heroine, whose earnest and scrupulous devotion to her mother occasions the partial estrangement of her lover, d'Ormond, and, in its consequences, an overwhelming misery, which overturns her reason and causes her death, and thus, through remorse, works the conversion of those guilty persons of the drama, who have been slaves to passion, but are not all "enslaved, nor wholly vile." Strong is the contrast which this play presents, in its exhibition of the female character, with that of the celebrated French and German writers, who have treated similar subjects. Men write,--I have heard a painter say, men even paint,--as they feel and as they are. Goethe's Margaret has been thought equal to Shakespeare's Ophelia and Desdemona; in some respects it is so; but it is like a pot of sweet ointment into which some tainting matter has fallen. I think no Englishman of Goethe's genius and sensibility would have described a maiden, whom it was his intention to represent, though frail on one point, yet lovely and gentle-hearted, as capable of being induced to give her poor old mother a sleeping potion. "It will do her no harm." But the risk!--affection gives the wisdom of the serpent where there would else be but the simplicity of the dove. A true Englishman would have felt that such an act, so bold and undaughterly, blighted at once the lily flower, making it "put on darkness" and "fall into the portion of weeds and out-worn faces." In Mr. Lloyd's youthful drama even the dissipated Marchioness, who tempts and yields to temptation, is made to play a noble part in the end, won back from sin by generous feeling and strong sense: and the description of Julia Villeneuve's tender care of her mother is so characteristic of the author, that I cannot help quoting a part of it here, though it is not among the powerful parts of the play.

Describing how her aged parent's extreme infirmity rendered her incapable, without a sacrifice, of leaving the small dwelling to which she had been accustomed, and how this had prevented her even from hinting her lover's proposal for their union, Julia says,

"Though blind

She loved this little spot. A happy wife  
There lived she with her lord. It was a home  
In which an only brother, long since dead,  
And I, were educated: 'twas to her  
As the whole world. Its scanty garden plot,  
The hum of bees hived there, which still she heard  
On a warm summer's day, the scent of flowers,  
The honey-suckle which trailed around its porch,  
Its orchard, field, and trees, her universe!--  
I knew she could not long be spared to me.  
Her sufferings, when alleviated best,  
Were most acute: and I could best perform  
That sacred task. I wished to lengthen out,--  
By consecrating to her every moment,--  
Her being to myself! etc."

"Could I leave her?--

I might have seen her,--such was D'Ormond's plea--  
Each day. But who her evening hours could cheer?  
Her long and solitary evening hours?--  
Talk her, or haply sing her, to her sleep?  
Read to her? Smooth her pillow? Lastly make  
Morning seem morning with a daughter's welcome?  
For morning's light ne'er visited her eyes!--  
Well! I refused to quit her! D'Ormond grew  
Absent, reserved, nay splenetic and petulant!  
He left the Province, nor has he once sent  
A kind enquiry so t' alleviate  
His heavy absence."

"Beritola" is Italian in form, as much as Wieland's "Oberon", but the spirit is that of the Englishman, Charles Lloyd; it contains the same vivid descriptions of mental suffering, the same reflective display of the lover's passion, the same sentiments of deep domestic tenderness, uttered as from the heart and with a special air of reality, as "The Duke D'Ormond" and the author's productions in general. The versification is rather better than that of his earlier poems, but the want of ease and harmony in the flow of the verse is a prevailing defect in Mr. Lloyd's poetry, and often makes it appear prosaic, even where the thought is not so. This pathetic sonnet is one of a very interesting set, on the death of Priscilla Farmer, the author's maternal grandmother, included in the joint volume:

"Oh, She was almost speechless! nor could hold

Awakening converse with me! (I shall bless  
No more the modulated tenderness  
Of that dear voice!) Alas, 'twas shrunk and cold  
Her honour'd face! yet, when I sought to speak,  
Through her half-open'd eyelids She did send  
Faint looks, that said, 'I would be yet thy friend!'  
And (O my chok'd breast!) e'en on that shrunk cheek  
I saw one slow tear roll! my hand She took,  
Placing it on her heart--I heard her sigh  
'Tis too, too much!' 'Twas Love's last agony!  
I tore me from Her! 'Twas her latest look,  
Her latest accents--Oh my heart, retain  
That look, those accents, till we meet again!"

S. C.

Meantime Coleridge had written to Charles Lloyd's father three letters about his son, highly interesting as glimpses of his own character. These letters were first published in "Charles Lamb and the Lloyds", by E. V. Lucas. They are as follows:

LETTER 44. To CHARLES LLOYD, SEN.

Dear Sir,

As the father of Charles Lloyd you are of course in some measure interested in any alteration of my schemes of life; and I feel it a kind of Duty to give you my reasons for any such alteration. I have declined my Derby connection, and determined to retire once for all and utterly from cities and towns: and am about to take a cottage and half a dozen acres of land in an enchanting Situation about eight miles from Bridgewater. My reasons are--that I have cause to believe my Health would be materially impaired by residing in a town, and by the close confinement and anxieties incident to the education of children; that as my days would be dedicated to Dr. Crompton's children, and my evenings to a course of study with my admirable young friend, I should have scarcely a snatch of time for literary occupation; and, above all, because I am anxious that my children should be bred up from earliest infancy in the simplicity of peasants, their food, dress, and habits completely rustic. I never shall, and I never will, have any fortune to leave them: I will leave them therefore hearts that desire little, heads that know how little is to be desired, and hands and arms accustomed to earn that little. I am peculiarly delighted with the 21st verse of the 4th chapter of Tobit, "And fear not, my son! that we are made poor: for thou hast much wealth, if thou fear God, and depart from all sin and do that which is pleasing in His sight." Indeed, if I live in cities, my children (if it please the All-good to preserve the one I have, and to give me more), my children, I say, will necessarily become acquainted with politicians and politics--a set of men and a kind of study which I deem highly unfavourable to all Christian graces. I have myself erred greatly in this respect; but, I trust, I have now seen my error. I have

accordingly snapped my squeaking baby-trumpet of sedition, and have hung up its fragments in the chamber of Penitences.

Your son and I are happy in our connection--our opinions and feelings are as nearly alike as we can expect: and I rely upon the goodness of the All-good that we shall proceed to make each other better and wiser. Charles Lloyd is greatly averse from the common run of society--and so am I--but in a city I could scarcely avoid it. And this, too, has aided my decision in favour of my rustic scheme. We shall reside near a very dear friend of mine, a man versed from childhood in the toils of the Garden and the Field, and from whom I shall receive every addition to my comfort which an earthly friend and adviser can give.

My Wife requests to be remembered to you, if the word "remember" can be properly used. You will mention my respects to your Wife and your children, and believe that I am with no mean esteem and regard

Your Friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Saturday, 15th Oct., 1796.

LETTER 45. To CHARLES LLOYD, SEN.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter, and thank you for that interest which you take in my welfare. The reasons which you urge against my present plan are mostly well-founded; but they would apply equally against any other scheme of life which 'my' Conscience would permit me to adopt. I might have a situation as a Unitarian minister, I might have lucrative offices as an active Politician; but on both of these the Voice within puts a firm and unwavering negative. Nothing remains for me but schoolmastership in a large town or my present plan. To the success of both, and indeed even to my 'subsisting' in either, health and the possession of my faculties are necessary Requisites. While I possess these Requisites, 'I know', I can maintain myself and family in the COUNTRY; the task of educating children suits not the activity of my mind, and the anxieties and confinement incident to it, added to the living in a town or city, would to a moral certainty ruin that Health and those faculties which, as I said before, are necessary to my gaining my livelihood in 'any' way. Undoubtedly, without fortune, or trade, or profession it is 'impossible' that I should be in any situation in which I must not be dependent on my own health and exertions for the bread of my family. I do not regret it--it will make me 'feel' my dependence on the Almighty, and it will prevent my affections from being made earthly altogether. I praise God in all things, and feel that to His grace alone it is owing that I am 'enabled' to praise Him in all things. You think my scheme 'monastic rather than Christian'.

Can he be deemed monastic who is married, and employed in rearing his children?--who 'personally' preaches the truth to his friends and neighbours, and who endeavours to instruct tho' Absent by the Press? In what line of Life could I be more 'actively' employed? and what titles, that are dear and venerable, are there which I shall not possess, God permit my present resolutions to be realised? Shall I not be an Agriculturist, an Husband, a Father, and a 'Priest' after the order of 'Peace'? an 'hireless' Priest? "Christianity teaches us to let our lights shine before men." It does so--but it likewise bids us say, Our Father, lead us not [into] temptation! which how can he say with a safe conscience who voluntarily places himself in those circumstances in which, if he believe Christ, he must acknowledge that it would be easier for a Camel to go thro' the eye of a needle than for HIM to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? Does not that man 'mock' God who daily prays against temptations, yet daily places himself in the midst of the most formidable? I meant to have written a few lines only respecting myself, because I have much and weighty matter to write concerning my friend, Charles Lloyd; but I have been seduced into many words from the importance of the general truths on which I build my conduct.

While your Son remains with me, he will, of course, be acquiring that knowledge and those powers of Intellect which are necessary as the 'foundation' of excellence in all professions, rather than the immediate science of 'any'. 'Languages' will engross one or two hours in every day: the 'elements' of Chemistry, Geometry, Mechanics, and Optics the remaining hours of study. After tolerable proficiency in these, we shall proceed to the study of 'Man' and of 'Men'--I mean, Metaphysics and History--and finally, to a thorough examination of the Jewish and Christian Dispensations, their doctrines and evidences: an examination necessary for all men, but peculiarly so to your son, if he be destined for a medical man. A Physician who should be even a Theist, still more a 'Christian', would be a rarity indeed. I do not know 'one'--and I know a 'great many' Physicians. They are 'shallow' Animals: having always employed their minds about Body and Gut, they imagine that in the whole system of things there is nothing but Gut and Body. \* \* \*

I hope your Health is confirmed, and that your Wife and children are well. Present my well-wishes. You are blessed with children who are 'pure in Heart'--add to this Health, Competence, Social Affections, and Employment, and you have a complete idea of Human Happiness.

Believe me,

With esteem and friendly-heartedness,

Your obliged

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Monday, November 14th (1796).

LETTER 46. To CHARLES LLOYD, SEN.

Dear Sir,

I think it my duty to acquaint you with the nature of my connection with your Son. If he be to stay with me, I can neither be his tutor or fellow-student, nor in any way impart a regular system of knowledge. My 'days' I shall devote to the acquirement of 'practical' husbandry and horticulture, that as "to beg I am ashamed," I may at least be able "to dig": and my evenings will be fully employed in fulfilling my engagements with the 'Critical Review' and 'New Monthly Magazine'. If, therefore, your Son occupy a room in my cottage, he will be there merely as a Lodger and Friend; and the only money I shall 'receive' from him will be the sum which his 'board' and 'lodging' will cost 'me', and which, by an accurate calculation, I find will amount to half a guinea a week, 'exclusive' of his washing, porter, cyder, spirits, in short any potation beyond table-beer--these he must provide himself with. I shall keep no servant.

I must add that Charles Lloyd must 'furnish' his own bed-room. It is not in my power to do it myself without running into debt; from which may heaven amid its most angry dispensations preserve me!

When I mentioned the circumstances which rendered my literary engagement impracticable, when, I say, I first mentioned them to Charles Lloyd, and described the severe process of simplification which I had determined to adopt, I never dreamt that he would have desired to continue with me: and when at length he did manifest such a desire, I dissuaded him from it. But his feelings became vehement, and in the present state of his health it would have been as little prudent as humane in me to have given an absolute refusal.

Will you permit me, Sir! to write of Charles Lloyd with freedom? I do not think he ever will endure, whatever might be the consequences, to practise as a physician, or to undertake any commercial employment. What weight your authority might have, I know not: I doubt not he would struggle to submit to it--but would he 'succeed' in any attempt to which his temper, feelings, and principles are inimical? \* \* \* What then remains? I know of nothing but agriculture. If his attachment to it 'should' prove permanent, and he really acquired the steady dispositions of a practical farmer, I think you could wish nothing better for him than to see him married, and settled 'near you' as a farmer. I love him, and do not think he will be well or happy till he is married and settled.

I have written plainly and decisively, my dear Sir! I wish to avoid not only evil, but the 'appearances' of evil. This is a world of calumnies! Yea! there is an imposthume in the large tongue of this world ever ready to break, and it is well to prevent the contents from being

sputtered into one's face. My Wife thanks you for your kind inquiries respecting her. She and our Infant are well--only the latter has met with a little accident--a burn, which is doing well.

To Mrs. Lloyd and all your children present my remembrances, and believe me in all esteem and friendliness, Yours sincerely, S. T. COLERIDGE. [1]  
Sunday, December 4, 1796.

[Footnote 1: To this letter Mr. Lloyd seems to have returned the question, How could Coleridge live without companions? The answer came quickly, as we learn from a letter from Coleridge to Poole {'Letters', I, p. 186}, in which he mentions Mr. Lloyd's query and quotes his own characteristic reply: "I shall have six companions: My Sara, my babe, my own shaping and disquisitive mind, my books, my beloved friend Thomas Poole, and lastly, Nature looking at me with a thousand looks of beauty, and speaking to me in a thousand melodies of love. If I were capable of being tired with all these, I should then detect a vice in my nature, and would fly to habitual solitude to eradicate it." Coleridge's letter to Mr. Lloyd, containing this passage, seems to have been lost. Note by E. V. Lucas.]

The 'Ode to the Departing Year,' Coleridge tells us, was written on 24th, 25th, and 26th December, 1796. It was first printed in the 'Cambridge Intelligencer' of 31st December, and then republished, along with the 'Lines to a Young Man who abandoned himself to a Causeless Melancholy' (probably Charles Lloyd), in quarto form of 16 pages. It was then prefaced by the following letter:

LETTER 47. TO THOMAS POOLE, OF STOWEY. DEDICATION  
TO THE "ODE TO THE DEPARTING YEAR."

My dear Friend,

Soon after the commencement of this month, the editor of the 'Cambridge Intelligencer' (a newspaper conducted with so much ability, and such unmixed and fearless zeal for the interests of piety and freedom, that I cannot but think my poetry honoured by being permitted to appear in it) requested me, by letter, to furnish him with some lines for the last day of this year. I promised him that I would make the attempt; but almost immediately after, a rheumatic complaint seized on my head, and continued to prevent the possibility of poetic composition till within the last three days. So in the course of the last three days the following Ode was produced. In general, when an author informs the public that his production was struck off in a great hurry, he offers an insult, not an excuse. But I trust that the present case is an exception, and that the peculiar circumstances which obliged me to write with such unusual rapidity give a propriety to my professions of it: "*nec nunc eam apud te jacto, sed et ceteris indico; ne quis asperiore limae carmen examinet, et a confuso scriptum et quod frigidum erat ni statim traderem.*" (I avail myself of the words of Statius, and hope that I shall likewise be able to say of any weightier publication, what 'he'

has declared of his Thebaid, that it had been tortured with a laborious polish.)

For me to discuss the 'literary' merits of this hasty composition were idle and presumptuous. If it be found to possess that impetuosity of transition, and that precipitation of fancy and feeling, which are the 'essential' excellencies of the sublimer Ode, its deficiency in less important respects will be easily pardoned by those from whom alone praise could give me pleasure: and whose minuter criticisms will be disarmed by the reflection, that these lines were conceived "not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of Academic Groves, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow."<sup>[1]</sup> I am more anxious lest the 'moral' spirit of the Ode should be mistaken. You, I am sure, will not fail to recollect that among the ancients, the Bard and the Prophet were one and the same character; and you 'know' that although I prophesy curses, I pray fervently for blessings. Farewell, Brother of my Soul!

--O ever found the same  
And trusted and beloved!

Never without an emotion of honest pride do I subscribe myself

Your grateful and affectionate friend, S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Bristol, December 26, 1796.]

[Footnote 1: From the Preface to the first Edition of Johnson's  
\_Dictionary of the English Language.\_]

## CHAPTER IV

### CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS OF COLERIDGE

(From Mr. Wordsworth's Stanzas written in my Pocket-copy of Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence'.)

With him there often walked in friendly guise,  
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,  
A noticeable Man with large grey eyes,  
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly  
As if a blooming face it ought to be;  
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,  
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy;  
Profound his forehead was, though not severe;  
Yet some did think that he had little business here:

Sweet heaven forefend! his was a lawful right:

Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;  
His limbs would toss about him with delight,  
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.  
Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy  
To banish listlessness and irksome care;  
He would have taught you how you might employ  
Yourself; and many did to him repair,--  
And certes not in vain; he had inventions rare.

For Josiah Wade, the gentleman to whom the letters, placed at the beginning of the last chapter, were written, the fine portrait of Mr. Coleridge by Allston, (nearly full length, in oils,) was painted at Rome in 1806.[1]--I believe in the spring of that year. Mr. Allston himself spoke of it, as in his opinion faithfully representing his friend's features and expression, such as they commonly appeared. His countenance, he added, in his high poetic mood, was quite beyond the painter's art: "it was indeed "spirit made visible"."

Mr. Coleridge was thirty-three years old when this portrait was painted, but it would be taken for that of a man of forty. The youthful, even boyish look, which the original retained for some years after boyhood, must rather suddenly have given place, to a premature appearance, first of middle-agedness, then of old age, at least in his general aspect, though in some points of personal appearance,--his fair smooth skin and "large grey eyes," "at once the clearest and the deepest"--so a friend lately described them to me,--"that I ever saw," he grew not old to the last. Sergeant Talfourd thus speaks of what he was at three or four and forty. "Lamb used to say that he was inferior to what he had been in his youth; but I can scarcely believe it; at least there is nothing in his early writing which gives any idea of the richness of his mind so lavishly poured out at this time in his happiest moods. Although he looked much older than he was, his hair being silvered all over, and his person tending to corpulency, there was about him no trace of bodily sickness or mental decay, but rather an air of voluptuous repose. His benignity of manner placed his auditors entirely at their ease; and inclined them to listen delighted to the sweet low tone in which he began to discourse on some high theme. At first his tones were conversational: he seemed to dally with the shallows of the subject and with fantastic images which bordered it: but gradually the thought grew deeper, and the voice deepened with the thought; the stream gathering strength, seemed to bear along with it all things which opposed its progress, and blended them with its current; and stretching away among regions tinted with ethereal colours, was lost at airy distance in the horizon of fancy. Coleridge was sometimes induced to repeat portions of 'Christabel', then enshrined in manuscript from eyes profane, and gave a bewitching effect to its wizard lines. But more peculiar in its beauty than this was his recitation of 'Kubla Khan'. As he repeated the passage--

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!

--his voice seemed to mount and melt into air, as the images grew more visionary, and the suggested associations more remote."[2]

Mr. De Quincey thus describes him at thirty-four, in the summer season of 1807, about a year and a half after the date of Mr. Allston's portrait.

"I had received directions for finding out the house where Coleridge was visiting; and in riding down a main street of Bridgewater, I noticed a gateway corresponding to the description given me. Under this was standing, and gazing about him, a man whom I shall describe. In height he might seem to be above five feet eight: (he was in reality about an inch and a half taller;) his person was broad and full, and tended even to corpulence: his complexion was fair, though not what painters technically style fair, because it was associated with black hair: his eyes were large and soft in their expression: and it was from the peculiar appearance of haze or dreaminess, which mixed with their light, that I recognised my object. This was Coleridge. I examined him steadfastly for a minute or more: and it struck me that he saw neither myself nor any object in the street.

He was in a deep reverie, for I had dismounted, made two or three trifling arrangements at an inn door, and advanced close to him, before he had apparently become conscious of my presence. The sound of my voice, announcing my own name, first awoke him; he started, and for a moment, seemed at a loss to understand my purpose or his own situation; for he repeated rapidly a number of words which had no relation to either of us. There was no 'mauvaise honte' in his manner, but simple perplexity, and an apparent difficulty in recovering his position among daylight realities. This little scene over, he received me with a kindness of manner so marked that it might be called gracious.

Coleridge led me to a drawing room and rang the bell for refreshments, and omitted no point of a courteous reception. He told me that there would be a very large dinner party on that day, which perhaps might be disagreeable to a perfect stranger; but, if not, he could assure me of a most hospitable welcome from the family. I was too anxious to see him, under all aspects, to think of declining this invitation. And these little points of business being settled, Coleridge, like some great river, the Orellana, or the St. Lawrence, that had been checked and fretted by rocks or thwarting islands, and suddenly recovers its volume of waters, and its mighty music, swept, at once, as if returning to his natural business, into a continuous strain of eloquent dissertation, certainly the most novel, the most finely illustrated, and traversing the most spacious fields of thought, by transitions, the most just and logical, that it was possible to conceive."

I will now present him as he appeared to William Hazlitt in the February

of 1798, when he was little more than five and twenty.

"It was in January, 1798, that I rose one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud, to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one, in the winter of the year 1798. 'Il y a des impressions que ni le temps ni les circonstances peuvent effacer. Dusse-je vivre des siècles entiers, le doux temps de ma jeunesse ne peut renaitre pour moi, ni s'effacer jamais dans ma mémoire.' When I got there, the organ was playing the hundredth psalm, and when it was done, Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text. "He departed again into a mountain 'himself alone'." As he gave out this text his voice 'rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes;' and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. The idea of St. John came into my mind, of one crying in the wilderness, who had his loins girt about, and whose food was locusts, and wild honey. The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war--upon church and state--not their alliance, but their separation--on the spirit of the world, and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. He talked of those who had inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore. He made a poetical and pastoral excursion,--and to shew the fatal effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock, as though he should never be old, and the same poor country lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an alehouse, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the finery of the profession of blood.

Such were the notes our once loved poet sung:

and for myself, I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together, Truth and Genius had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of Religion. This was even beyond my hopes. I returned home well satisfied. The sun that was still labouring pale and wan through the sky, obscured by thick mists, seemed an emblem of the 'good cause'; and the cold dank drops of dew, that hung half melted on the beard of the thistle, had something genial and refreshing in them." [3]

A glowing dawn was his, but noon's full blaze  
Of 'perfect day' ne'er fill'd his heav'n with radiance.  
Scarce were the flow'rets on their stems upraised  
When sudden shadows cast an evening gloom  
O'er those bright skies!--yet still those skies were lovely;  
The roses of the morn yet lingered there  
When stars began to peep,--nor yet exhaled

Fresh dew-drops glittered near the glowworm's lamp,  
And many a snatch of lark-like melody  
Birds of the shade trilled forth'mid plaintive warbling.

The principal portraits of Coleridge are, besides the one by Allston referred to by Sara Coleridge, engraved by Samuel Cousins, one by Peter Vandyke, painted in 1795; one by Hancock, drawn in 1796; another by Allston, unfinished, painted in Rome; one by C. R. Leslie, taken before 1819, one by T. Phillips, belonging to Mr. John Murray, engraved for the frontispiece of Murray's edition of the 'Table Talk'; another by Phillips, in the possession of William Rennell Coleridge, of Salston, Ottery St. Mary; and a crayon sketch by George Dawe, now at The Chanter's House. These portraits have often been engraved for biographies and editions of Coleridge's 'Poems'. Vandyke's portrait appears in Brandl's Life and Dykes-Campbell's edition of the 'Poems'; Hancock's in the Aldine edition of the 'Poems'; and Leslie's in the Bohn Library 'Friend' and in E. H. Coleridge's 'Letters of S. T. C'. Allston's portrait of 1814 is given in Flagg's 'Life of Allston'. The two best reproductions of Vandyke's and Hancock's portraits are to be found in Cottle's 'Early Recollections'.

A small portrait in oils (three replicas), taken by a Bristol artist, 'circ.' 1798, engraved for Moxon's edition of 1863.

A portrait in oils by James Northcote, taken in 1804 for Sir G. Beaumont, engraved in mezzotint by William Say.

A portrait in oils taken at the Argyll Baths, 'circ.' 1828 (see 'Letters', 1895, ii, 758).

A pencil sketch of S. T. C., et. 61, by J. Kayser (see 'Letters', ii, frontispiece).

[Bust by Spurzheim. Bust by Hamo Thornycroft, Westminster Abbey.]

[Footnote 1: An error of Sara Coleridge. This portrait was painted for Wade in Bristol, 1814: and is now in the National Portrait Gallery (Flagg's 'Life of Allston', pp. 105-7). The portrait of 1806 was given to Allston's niece, Miss R. Charlotte Dana, Boston.]

[Footnote 2: Talfourd's full description is found in "Final Memorials of Ch. Lamb", last chapter.]

[Footnote 3: Hazlitt's full description is found in 'Essays of William Hazlitt', Camelot Series, pp. 18-38.]

## STOWEY

Learning, power, and time,  
(Too much of all) thus wasting in vain war  
Of fervid colloquy. "Sickness, 'tis true,  
'Whole years of weary days, besieged him close,  
Even to the gates and inlets of his life!  
But it is true, no less, that strenuous, firm,  
And with a natural gladness, he maintained  
The citadel unconquered, and in joy  
Was strong to follow the delightful Muse."

With the letter of Nov. 5, [1] the biographical sketch left by Mr. Coleridge's late Editor comes to an end, and at the present time I can carry it no further than to add, that in January, 1797, my Father removed with his wife and child, the latter then four months' old, to a cottage at Stowey, which was his home for three years; that from that home, in company with Mr. and Miss Wordsworth, he went, in September, 1798, to Germany, and that he spent fourteen months in that country, during which period the Letters called Satyrane's were written.

[Footnote 1: No. 43. Sara Coleridge now continues the narrative for ten lines.]

Cottle, in his 'Reminiscences', says Mr. Coleridge sent him the following letter from Stowey:

### LETTER 48

(January, 1797.)

Dear Cottle,

I write under great agony of mind, Charles Lloyd being very ill. He has been seized with his fits three times in the space of seven days: and just as I was in bed last night, I was called up again; and from twelve o'clock at night, to five this morning, he remained in one continued state of agonized delirium. What with bodily toil, exerted in repressing his frantic struggles, and what with the feelings of agony for his sufferings, you may suppose that I have forced myself from bed, with aching temples, and a feeble frame.\* \* \*

We offer petitions, not as supposing we influence the Immutable; but because to petition the Supreme Being, is the way most suited to our nature, to stir up the benevolent affections in our hearts. Christ positively commands it, and in St. Paul you will find unnumbered instances of prayer for individual blessings; for kings, rulers, etc. etc. We indeed should all join to our petitions: "But thy will be done, Omniscient, All-loving Immortal God!"

Believe [1] me to have towards you, the inward and spiritual gratitude and affection, though I am not always an adept in the outward and visible signs.

God bless you,

S. T. C.

[Footnote 1: "My respects to your good mother, and to your father and believe me," etc.--"Early Recollections".]

The next letter refers to the second edition of the poems, and must have been written early in January, 1797.

#### LETTER 49

(3 January, 1797.)

My dear Cottle,

If you delay the press it will give me the opportunity I so much wish, of sending my "Visions of the Maid of Arc" to Wordsworth, who lives [1] not above twenty miles from this place; and to Charles Lamb, whose taste and judgment, I see reason to think more correct and philosophical than my own, which yet I place pretty high. \* \* \*

We arrived safe. Our house is set to rights. We are all--wife, bratling, and self, remarkably well. Mrs. Coleridge likes Stowey, and loves Thomas Poole and his mother, who love her. A communication has been made from our orchard into T. Poole's garden, and from thence to Cruikshank's, a friend of mine, and a young married man, whose wife is very amiable, and she and Sara are already on the most cordial terms; from all this you will conclude we are happy. By-the-bye, what a delightful poem, is Southey's "Musings on a Landscape of Caspar Poussin". I love it almost better than his "Hymn to the Penates". In his volume of poems, the following, namely,

"The Six Sonnets on the Slave Trade.--The Ode to the Genius of Africa.--To my own Miniature Picture.--The Eight Inscriptions.--Elinor, Botany-bay Eclogue.--Frederick", ditto.--"The Ten Sonnets". (pp. 107-116.) "On the death of an Old Spaniel.--The Soldier's Wife, Dactyls,--The Widow, Sapphics.--The Chapel Bell.--The Race of Banco.--"Rudiger".

All these Poems are worthy the Author of "Joan of Arc". And

"The Musings on a Landscape", etc. and "The Hymn to the Penates",

deserve to have been published after "Joan of Arc", as proofs of progressive genius.

God bless you,

S. T. C.

[Footnote 1: Mr. Wordsworth lived at Racedown, before he removed to Allfoxden. (Cottle.)] [The dates of Letters 49 and 50 are determined by that of a letter from Lamb to Coleridge of 5th January 1797 ("Ainger", i, 57). Letter 49 implies that Coleridge was now acquainted with Wordsworth. A letter from Mrs. Wordsworth to Sara Coleridge of 7th Nov. 1845 (Knight's "Life of Wordsworth", i, iii) gives the date of the first meeting of the poets as "about the year 1795." Professor Knight thinks this should be 1796. In the letter of Wordsworth to Wrangham, referred to in Note to Letter 13, Wordsworth does not say that he knew Coleridge personally. Letter 49 is the only trustworthy "contemporary" evidence on the subject.]

After receiving Lamb's answer of 5th January, in which Lamb criticises unfavourably the "Joan of Arc" lines ("Ainger", i, 57), Coleridge writes:

#### LETTER 50. TO COTTLE

(10 January 1797).

My dear Cottle,

The lines which I added to my lines in the "Joan of Arc", have been so little approved by Charles Lamb, to whom I sent them, that although I differ from him in opinion, I have not heart to finish the poem.

"Mr. Coleridge in the same letter," says Cottle, "thus refers to his "Ode to the Departing Year"."

\* \* \* So much for an "Ode", which some people think superior to the "Bard" of Gray, and which others think a rant of turgid obscurity; and the latter are the more numerous class. It is not obscure. My "Religious Musings" I know are, but not this "Ode".

Coleridge, in 1797, as in 1796, was invariably behind time with his "copy" for the second edition. He thus writes Cottle:

#### LETTER 51. TO COTTLE

(Jany 1797).

My dear Cottle,

\* \* \* On Thursday morning, by Milton, the Stowey carrier, I shall send you a parcel, containing the book of my Poems interleaved, with the alterations, and likewise the prefaces, which I shall send to you, for your criticisms. \* \* \*

LETTER 52. TO COTTLE

Stowey, Friday Morning (1797).

My dear Cottle.

\* \* \* If you do not like the following verses, or if you do not think them worthy of an edition in which I profess to give nothing but my choicest fish, picked, gutted, and cleaned, please to get some one to write them out and send them, with my compliments to the editor of the "New Monthly Magazine". But if you think as well of them as I do (most probably from parental dotage for my last born) let them immediately follow "The Kiss".

God love you,

S. T. C.

TO AN UNFORTUNATE YOUNG WOMAN.

WHOM I HAD KNOWN IN THE DAYS OF HER INNOCENCE.

Maiden! that with sullen brow,  
Sitt'st behind those virgins gay;  
Like a scorched, and mildew'd bough,  
Leafless mid the blooms of May.

Inly gnawing, thy distresses  
Mock those starts of wanton glee;  
And thy inmost soul confesses  
Chaste Affection's majesty.

Loathing thy polluted lot,  
Hie thee, Maiden! hie thee hence!  
Seek thy weeping mother's cot,  
With a wiser innocence!

Mute the Lavrac [1] and forlorn  
While she moults those firstling plumes  
That had skimm'd the tender corn,  
Or the bean-field's od'rous blooms;

Soon with renovating wing,  
Shall she dare a loftier flight,

Upwards to the day-star sing,  
And embathe in heavenly light.

#### ALLEGORICAL LINES ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Myrtle Leaf, that, ill besped,  
Pinest in the gladsome ray,  
Soiled beneath the common tread,  
Far from thy protecting spray;

When the scythes-man o'er his sheaf,  
Caroll'd in the yellow vale,  
Sad, I saw thee, heedless leaf,  
Love the dalliance of the gale.

Lightly didst thou, poor fond thing!  
Heave and flutter to his sighs  
While the flatterer on his wing,  
Woo'd, and whisper'd thee to rise.

Gaily from thy mother stalk  
Wert thou danced and wafted high;  
Soon on this unsheltered walk,  
Flung to fade, and rot, and die!

[Footnote 1: The Skylark.]

Cottle subjected the two poems to severe criticism, and Coleridge replied:

#### LETTER 53. TO COTTLE

Wednesday morning, 10 o'clock.

(January, 1797.)

My dearest Cottle,

\* \* \* "Ill besped" is indeed a sad blotch; but after having tried at least a hundred ways, before I sent the Poem to you, and often since, I find it incurable. This first Poem is but a so so composition. I wonder I could have been so blinded by the ardour of recent composition, as to see anything in it.

Your remarks are "perfectly just" on the "Allegorical lines", except

that, in this district, corn is as often cut with a scythe, as with a hook. However, for "'Scythes-man'" read "Rustic". For "'poor fond thing", " read "foolish thing", and for "'flung to fade, and rot, and die", " read "flung to wither and to die".

\* \* \* \* \*

Milton (the carrier) waits impatiently.

S. T. C. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letters LXXI-LXXII follow Letter 53.]

Only the second poem was included in the second edition. The next letter, which contains an unrealized prophecy regarding Southey, speaks of the joint partnership of the volume of 1797.

#### LETTER 54. TO COTTLE

Stowey,--(Feby. or Mch. 1797.)

My dear Cottle,

\* \* \* Public affairs are in strange confusion. I am afraid that I shall prove, at least, as good a Prophet as Bard. Oh, doom'd to fall, my country! enslaved and vile! But may God make me a foreboder of evils never to come!

I have heard from Sheridan, desiring me to write a tragedy. I have no genius that way; Robert Southey has. I think highly of his "Joan of Arc", and cannot help prophesying that he will be known to posterity, as Shakspeare's great grandson. I think he will write a tragedy or tragedies.

Charles Lloyd has given me his Poems, which I give to you, on condition that you print them in this Volume, after Charles Lamb's Poems; the title page, "Poems, by S. T. Coleridge. Second Edition: to which are added Poems, by C. Lamb, and C. Lloyd". C. Lamb's poems will occupy about forty pages; C. Lloyd's at least one hundred, although only his choice fish.

P.S. I like your "Lines on Savage".

God bless you,

S. T. COLERIDGE."

During his stay at Stowey, Coleridge remained a subscriber to Catcott's Library, Bristol; and the following letter to the librarian is worth

preserving.

## LETTER 55. TO COTTLE

Stowey, May, 1797.

My dear Cottle,

I have sent a curious letter to George Catcott. He has altogether made me pay five shillings! for postage, by his letters sent all the way to Stowey, requiring me to return books to the Bristol Library. \* \* \* \*

"Mr. Catcott,

"I beg your acceptance of all the enclosed letters. You must not think lightly of the present, as they cost me, who am a very poor man, five shillings.

"With respect to the "Bruck. Hist. Crit." although by accident they were registered on the 23d of March, yet they were not removed from the Library for a fortnight after; and when I received your first letter, I had had the books just three weeks. Our learned and ingenious Committee may read through two quartos, that is, one thousand and four hundred pages of close printed Latin and Greek, in three weeks, for aught I know to the contrary. I pretend to no such intensesness of application, or rapidity of genius.

"I must beg you to inform me, by Mr. Cottle, what length of time is allowed by the rules and customs of our institution for each book. Whether their contents, as well as their size, are consulted, in apportioning the time; or whether, customarily, any time at all is apportioned, except when the Committee, in individual cases, choose to deem it proper. I subscribe to your library, Mr. Catcott, not to read novels, or books of quick reading and easy digestion, but to get books which I cannot get elsewhere,--books of massy knowledge; and as I have few books of my own, I read with a common-place book, so that if I be not allowed a longer period of time for the perusal of such books, I must contrive to get rid of my subscription, which would be a thing perfectly useless, except so far as it gives me an opportunity of reading your little expensive notes and letters.

"Yours in Christian fellowship,

"S. T. COLERIDGE."

Whether Coleridge had given Southey the opportunity to try his skill at the drama or not does not appear; but the following letter to Cottle shows that he had addressed himself to the task of composing a tragedy, evidently "Osorio".

LETTER 56. TO COTTLE

Stowey, May, 1797.

My dearest Cottle,

I love and respect you as a brother, and my memory deceives me woefully, if I have not evidenced, by the animated tone of my conversation when we have been *tete-a-tete*, how much your conversation interested me. But when last in Bristol, the day I meant to devote to you, was such a day of sadness, I could do nothing. On the Saturday, the Sunday, and ten days after my arrival at Stowey, I felt a depression too dreadful to be described.

So much I felt my genial spirits droop,  
My hopes all flat; Nature within me seemed  
In all her functions, weary of herself,

Wordsworth's [1] conversation aroused me somewhat, but even now I am not the man I have been, and I think I never shall. A sort of calm hopelessness diffuses itself over my heart. Indeed every mode of life which has promised me bread and cheese, has been, one after another, torn away from me, but God remains. I have no immediate pecuniary distress, having received ten pounds from Lloyd. I employ myself now on a book of morals in answer to Godwin, and on my tragedy...

There are some poets who write too much at their ease, from the facility with which they please themselves. They do not often enough

Feel their burdened breast  
Heaving beneath incumbent Deity.

So that to posterity their wreaths will look unseemly. Here, perhaps, an everlasting *Amaranth*, and, close by its side, some weed of an hour, sere, yellow, and shapeless. Their very beauties will lose half their effect, from the bad company they keep. They rely too much on story and event, to the neglect of those lofty imaginings that are peculiar to, and definite of the Poet.

The story of Milton might be told in two pages. It is this which distinguishes an epic poem from a romance in metre. Observe the march of Milton; his severe application; his laborious polish; his deep metaphysical researches; his prayer to God before he began his great work; all that could lift and swell his intellect, became his daily food.

I should not think of devoting less than twenty years to an epic poem. Ten years to collect materials and warm my mind with universal science. I would be a tolerable Mathematician. I would thoroughly understand Mechanics; Hydrostatics; Optics and Astronomy; Botany; Metallurgy; Fossilism; Chemistry; Geology; Anatomy; Medicine; then the mind of man; then the minds of men, in all Travels, Voyages, and Histories. So I would spend ten years; the next five in the composition of the poem, and the five last in the correction of it. So would I write, haply not unhearing of that divine and nightly-whispering voice, which speaks to mighty minds, of predestinated garlands, starry and unwithering.

God love you.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S. David Hartley is well and grows. Sara is well, and desires a sister's love to you.

[Footnote 1: Mr. Wordsworth at this time resided at Allfoxden House, two or three miles from Stowey.--[Note by Cottle.]]

"The following letter of Mr. C," says Cottle, "was in answer to a request for some long-promised copy, and for which the printer importuned."

#### LETTER 57. TO COTTLE

Stowey (May), 1797.

My dear, dear Cottle,

Have patience, and everything shall be done. I think now entirely of your brother:[1] in two days I will think entirely for you. By Wednesday next you shall have Lloyd's other Poems, with all Lamb's, etc. etc. \* \* \*

S. T. C.

"A little before this time," says Cottle, "a singular occurrence happened to Mr. C. during a pedestrian excursion into Somersetshire, as detailed in the following letter to Mr. Wade."

[Footnote 1: My brother, when at Cambridge, had written a Latin poem for the prize: the subject, "Italia, Vastata," and sent it to Mr. Coleridge, with whom he was on friendly terms, in MS. requesting the favour of his remarks; and this he did about six weeks before it was necessary to deliver it in. Mr. C. in an immediate letter, expressed his approbation of the Poem, and cheerfully undertook the task; but with a little of his procrastination, he returned the MS. with his remarks, just one day after it was too late to deliver the poem in!--[Note by Cottle.]]

## LETTER 58. TO WADE

(May, 1797.)

My dear friend,

I am here after a most tiresome journey; in the course of which, a woman asked me if I knew one Coleridge, of Bristol. I answered, I had heard of him. "Do you know, (quoth she) that that vile jacobin villain drew away a young man of our parish, one Burnett," etc. and in this strain did the woman continue for near an hour; heaping on me every name of abuse that the parish of Billingsgate could supply. I listened very particularly; appeared to approve all she said, exclaiming, "dear me!" two or three times, and, in fine, so completely won the woman's heart by my civilities, that I had not courage enough to undeceive her. \* \* \*

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S. You are a good prophet. Oh, into what a state have the scoundrels brought this devoted kingdom. If the House of Commons would but melt down their faces, it would greatly assist the copper currency--we should have brass enough.

Coleridge, like all the Return-to-Nature poets of the eighteenth century, Thomson, Cowper, Burns, and others, was given to that humanitarian regard for the lower creatures which brought forth such poems as Burns's "Address to a Mouse" and Coleridge's own lines to a "Young Ass". The following letter to Cottle is an amusing sample of that humanitarianism. George Burnett, one of the pantisocrats, occasionally resided with Coleridge, and during the latter's temporary absence from Stowey had taken ill. On reaching Stowey, Coleridge wrote to Cottle.

## LETTER 59. TO COTTLE

Stowey (May, 1797).

My dear friend,

I found George Burnett ill enough, heaven knows, Yellow Jaundice--the introductory symptoms very violent. I return to Bristol on Thursday, and shall not leave till "all be done".

Remind Mrs. Coleridge of the kittens, and tell her that George's brandy is just what smuggled spirits might be expected to be, execrable! The smack of it remains in my mouth, and I believe will keep me most horribly temperate for half a century. He (Burnett) was bit, but I

caught the Brandiphobia.[1] (obliterations \* \* \* \* \*)

--scratched out, well knowing that you never allow such things to pass, uncensored. A good joke, and it slipped out most impromptu--ishly.)

The mice play the very devil with us. It irks me to set a trap. By all the whiskers of all the pussies that have mewed plaintively, or amorously, since the days of Whittington, it is not fair. 'Tis telling a lie. 'Tis as if you said, "Here is a bit of toasted cheese; come little mice! I invite you!" when, oh, foul breach of the rites of hospitality! I mean to assassinate my too credulous guests! No, I cannot set a trap, but I should vastly like to make a Pitt--fall. (Smoke the Pun!) But concerning the mice, advise thou, lest there be famine in the land. Such a year of scarcity! Inconsiderate mice! Well, well, so the world wags.

Farewell, S. T. C.

P.S. A mad dog ran through our village, and bit several dogs. I have desired the farmers to be attentive, and tomorrow shall give them, in writing, the first symptoms of madness in a dog.

I wish my pockets were as yellow as George's Phiz!

[Footnote 1: It appears that Mr. Burnett had been prevailed upon by smugglers to buy some prime cheap brandy, but which Mr. Coleridge affirmed to be a compound of Hellebore, kitchen grease, and Assafoetida! or something as bad.--[Cottle's note.]]

The next letter must belong to the end of May or beginning of June. Cottle's note shows that the second edition of the poems was now published.

#### LETTER 60. TO COTTLE

Stowey (June), 1797.

My dear Cottle,

I deeply regret, that my anxieties and my slothfulness, acting in a combined ratio, prevented me from finishing my "Progress of Liberty, or Visions of the Maid of Orleans", with that Poem at the head of the volume, with the "Ode" in the middle, and the "Religious Musings" at the end. \* \* \*

In the "Lines on the Man of Ross", immediately after these lines,

He heard the widow's heaven-breathed prayer of praise,  
He mark'd the shelter'd orphan's tearful gaze.

Please to add these two lines.

And o'er the portion'd maiden's snowy cheek,  
Bade bridal love suffuse its blushes meek.

And for the line,

Beneath this roof, if thy cheer'd moments pass.

I should be glad to substitute this,

If near this roof thy wine-cheer'd moments pass.

"These emendations," Cottle adds, "came too late for admission in the second edition; nor have they appeared in the last edition. They will remain therefore for insertion in any future edition of Mr. Coleridge's Poems."

The exact date on which Coleridge and Wordsworth met in the year 1796 has not been ascertained; but Coleridge speaks in the next letter as if he was now well acquainted with Wordsworth. Coleridge had been at Taunton early in June ('Letters, 220). On the 8th of June he wrote to Cottle.

#### LETTER 61. TO COTTLE

(8th) June, 1797.

My dear Cottle,

I am sojourning for a few days at Racedown, Dorset, the mansion of our friend Wordsworth; who presents his kindest respects to you. \* \* \*

Wordsworth admires my tragedy, which gives me great hopes. Wordsworth has written a tragedy himself. I speak with heartfelt sincerity, and I think, unblinded judgment, when I tell you that I feel myself a little man by his side, and yet I do not think myself a less man than I formerly thought myself. His drama is absolutely wonderful. You know I do not commonly speak in such abrupt and unmingled phrases, and therefore will the more readily believe me. There are, in the piece, those profound touches 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. \* \* \*

God bless you, and eke [1]

S. T. COLERIDGE. [2]

[Footnote 1: The reader will have observed a peculiarity in most of Mr. Coleridge's conclusions to his letters. He generally says, "God bless you, and, or eke, S. T. C." so as to involve a compound blessing.--[Cottle.]]

[Footnote 2: Letter LXXIII is our 61.]

Shakespeare evidently occupied an important place in Coleridge's mind even at this early date. His discovery of rivals to the prince of English dramatists in his friends Southey and Wordsworth only indicates how largely Shakespeare already bulked in his view of the dramatic art.

The next letter to Cottle is of a milder type, and leads up to an interesting meeting, famous in the lives of Lamb, Coleridge, and Wordsworth.

#### LETTER 62. TO COTTLE

Stowey, June 29th, 1797.

My very dear Cottle,

\*\*\*Charles Lamb will probably be here in about a fortnight. Could you not contrive to put yourself in a Bridgwater coach, and T. Poole would fetch you in a one-horse chaise to Stowey. What delight would it not give us. \*\*\*

Still more interesting is the often quoted letter describing Dorothy Wordsworth.

#### LETTER 63. TO COTTLE

Stowey (3-17 July), 1797.

My dear Cottle,

Wordsworth and his exquisite sister are with me. She is a woman indeed! in mind I mean, and heart; for her person is such, that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her rather ordinary; if you expected to see an ordinary woman, you would think her pretty! but her manners are simple, ardent, impressive. In every motion, her most innocent soul outbeams so brightly, that who saw would say,

Guilt was a thing impossible in her.

Her information various. Her eye watchful in minutest observation of

nature; and her taste, a perfect electrometer. It bends, protrudes, and draws in, at subtlest beauties, and most recondite faults.

She and W. desire their kindest respects to you.

Give my love to your brother Amos. I condole with him in the loss of the prize, but it is the fortune of war. The finest Greek Poem I ever wrote lost the prize, and that which gained it was contemptible. An Ode may sometimes be too bad for the prize, but very often too good.

Your ever affectionate friend.

S. T. C.[1]

[Footnote 1: Letter LXXIV follows 63.]

Dorothy Wordsworth's description of Coleridge whom she met now for the first time is as follows: "You had a great loss," she wrote to a friend, "in not seeing Coleridge. He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good tempered and cheerful, and, like William, interests himself so much about every little trifle. At first I thought him very plain, that is, for about three minutes. He is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips, and not 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, such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression; but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind: it has more of 'the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling' than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows, and an overhanging forehead.

"The first thing that was read after he came was William's new poem, "The Ruined Cottage", with which he was much delighted; and after tea he repeated to us two acts and a half of his tragedy, "Osorio". The next morning William read his tragedy, "The Borderers". (Knight's "Life of Wordsworth", i, 111-112.)

The line Coleridge quotes in his description of Dorothy:

Guilt is a thing impossible in her

occurs in the additional verses Coleridge had written to the "Joan of Arc" lines sent to Lamb.

John Thelwall, one of the sturdy democrats of the time who had made no small commotion with his Revolutionary principles, had also visited Coleridge at Stowey in the summer of 1797. Coleridge had corresponded with him before knowing him personally ("Letters", 202), chiefly about politics, religion and books. Coleridge thus describes Thelwall to Wade.

LETTER 64. TO WADE

Stowey (17-20 July), 1797.

My very dear friend,

\* \* \* John Thelwall is a very warm-hearted, honest man; and disagreeing as we do, on almost every point of religion, of morals, of politics, and philosophy, we like each other uncommonly well. He is a great favorite with Sara. Energetic activity of mind and of heart, is his master feature. He is prompt to conceive, and still prompt to execute; but I think he is deficient in that patience of mind which can look intently and frequently at the same subject. He believes and disbelieves with impassioned confidence. I wish to see him doubting, and doubting. He is intrepid, eloquent, and honest. Perhaps, the only acting democrat that is honest, for the patriots are ragged cattle; a most execrable herd. Arrogant because they are ignorant, and boastful of the strength of reason, because they have never tried it enough to know its weakness. Oh! my poor country! The clouds cover thee. There is not one spot of clear blue in the whole heaven!

My love to all whom you love, and believe me, with brotherly affection, with esteem and gratitude, and every warm emotion of the heart,

Your faithful

S. T. COLERIDGE.

The next letter closes the visit of Thelwall.

LETTER 65. TO COTTLE

Stowey, Sept. 1797.

My very dear Cottle,

Your illness afflicts me, and unless I receive a full account of you by Milton, I shall be very uneasy, so do not fail to write.

Herbert Croft is in Exeter gaol! This is unlucky. Poor devil! He must now be unpeppered. We are all well. Wordsworth is well. Hartley sends a grin to you? He has another tooth!

In the wagon, there was brought from Bath, a trunk, in order to be forwarded to Stowey, directed, "S. T. Coleridge, Stowey, near Bridgwater." This, we suppose, arrived in Bristol on Tuesday or Wednesday, last week. It belonged to Thelwall. If it be not forwarded to

Stowey, let it be stopped, and not sent.

Give my kind love to your brother Robert, and "ax" him to put on his hat, and run, without delay to the inn, or place, by whatever bird, beast, fish, or man distinguished, where Parson's Bath wagon sets up.

From your truly affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

In the beginning of September Coleridge was meditating a visit to his favourite Bowles, whom, in spite of his youthful admiration, he had not seen since he first saw him in Salisbury when a mere boy. ("Letters", 211.)

#### LETTER 66. TO COTTLE

(3 Sept., 1797.)

I shall now stick close to my tragedy (called "Osorio"), and when I have finished it, shall walk to Shaftesbury to spend a few days with Bowles. From thence I go to Salisbury, and thence to Christchurch, to see Southey.

"This letter," Cottle says, "as was usual, has no date, but a letter from Wordsworth determines about the time when Mr. C. had nearly finished his Tragedy."

September 13, 1797.

"\* \* \* Coleridge is gone over to Bowles with his Tragedy, which he has finished to the middle of the 5th Act. He set off a week ago."

J. Dykes Campbell in his Life of Coleridge asserts that the Tragedy of "Osorio" was sent to Drury Lane "without much hope that it would be accepted."<sup>[1]</sup> This, however, is inaccurate. The play was not sent; Coleridge went to London with it, for he writes to Cottle in the beginning of September:

[Footnote 1: "Life", p. 78.]

#### LETTER 67. TO COTTLE

London (10-15 Sept.) 1797.

Dear Cottle,

If Mrs. Coleridge be in Bristol, pray desire her to write to me immediately, and I beg you, the moment you receive this letter, to send

to No. 17, Newfoundland Street, to know whether she be there. I have written to Stowey, but if she be in Bristol, beg her to write to me of it by return of post, that I may immediately send down some

cash for her travelling expenses, etc. We shall reside in London for the next four months.

God bless you, Cottle, I love you,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P. S. The volume (second edition, Coleridge, Lloyd, and Lamb) is a most beautiful one. You have determined that the three Bards shall walk up Parnassus, in their best bib and tucker. [!]

Coleridge's beautiful Sonnet to W. Linley, Sheridan's brother-in-law and secretary, is dated 12 September, 1797, and Coleridge must have been in London from about that date to 3 December, with perhaps an interval of return between. The sonnet is dated from Donhead, in Wilts, whither Coleridge had probably gone on a visit from London. Wordsworth's play was presented to Covent Garden. An undated letter of Coleridge to Cottle, which must have been written about the end of November, informs us that it was through Coleridge the play was tried at Covent Garden.

[Footnote 1: Letters LXXV-LXXVII follow 67.]

#### LETTER 68. TO COTTLE

(28 Nov. 1797.)

I have procured for Wordsworth's tragedy, an introduction to Harris, the manager of Covent Garden, who has promised to read it attentively, and give his answer immediately; and if he accepts it, to put it in preparation without an hour's delay.

A letter by Dorothy Wordsworth of 20th November<sup>[1]</sup> confirms the fact that "The Borderers" was sent to Covent Garden. Both plays were rejected, that of Coleridge on account of the obscurity of the last three acts; and Coleridge wrote to Cottle his feelings on the occasion.

[Footnote 1: Knight's "Life of Wordsworth", i, 127.]

#### LETTER 69. To COTTLE

(2 Dec. 1797.)

Dear Cottle,

I have heard nothing of my Tragedy, except some silly remarks of Kemble's, to whom a friend showed it; it does not appear to me that there is a shadow of probability that it will be accepted. It gave me no

pain, and great pleasure, in finding that it gave me no pain.

I had rather hoped than believed that I was possessed of so much philosophical capability. Sheridan most certainly has not used me with common justice. The proposal came from himself, and although this circumstance did not bind him to accept the tragedy, it certainly bound him to every, and that the earliest, attention to it. I suppose it is snugly in his green bag, if it have not emigrated to the kitchen.

I sent to the "Monthly Magazine" (1797), three mock Sonnets, in ridicule of my own Poems, and Charles Lloyd's, and Lamb's, etc. etc. exposing that affectation of unaffectedness, of jumping and misplaced accent, in common-place epithets, flat lines forced into poetry by italics, (signifying how well and mouthishly the author would read them) puny pathos, etc. etc. The instances were almost all taken from myself, and Lloyd, and Lamb.

I signed them 'Nehemiah Higginbotham.' I think they may do good to our young Bards.

God love you,

S. T. C.

P. S. I am translating the "Oberon" of Wieland; it is a difficult language, and I can translate at least as fast as I can construe. I have made also a very considerable proficiency in the French language, and study it daily, and daily study the German; so that I am not, and have not been idle. \* \* \*

Coleridge had been introduced through Poole to the Wedgwoods; and hearing that Coleridge was in need of funds, Tom Wedgwood offered Coleridge £100, sending an order for the amount. Coleridge was now meditating entering the Unitarian ministry, and was perplexed whether to remain with Poetry or enter the pulpit. He writes to Cottle on the occasion:

#### LETTER 70. TO COTTLE

Stowey (January, 1798.)

My very dear friend,

This last fortnight has been very eventful. I received one hundred pounds from Josiah Wedgwood, in order to prevent the necessity of my going into the ministry. I have received an invitation from Shrewsbury, to be minister there; and after fluctuations of mind, which have for nights together robbed me of sleep, and I am afraid of health, I have at length returned the order to Mr. Wedgwood, with a long letter, explanatory of my conduct, and accepted the Shrewsbury invitation. \* \*

The next letter Cottle says refers to the Wedgwood Pension, but may be about the rejection of the £100.[1]

[Footnote 1: See Litchfield's "Tom Wedgwood", pp. 54-56.]

#### LETTER 71. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD[1]

Shrewsbury, Friday night, (--January), 1798.

My dear sir,

I have this moment received your letter, and have scarcely more than a moment to answer it by return of post.

If kindly feeling can be repaid by kindly feeling, I am not your debtor. I would wish to express the same thing which is big at my heart, but I know not how to do it without indelicacy. As much abstracted from personal feeling as possible, I honor and esteem you for that which you have done.

I must of necessity stay here till the close of Sunday next. On Monday morning I shall leave it, and on Tuesday will be with you at Cote-House.

Very affectionately yours,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

T. Wedgwood, Esq.

[Footnote 1: Not in "Early Recollections".]

The next letter refers to the offer of the Pension of £150 a year, which the Wedgwoods conferred on Coleridge.

#### LETTER 72. TO COTTLE

(24 January, 1798).

My very dear Cottle,

The moment I received Mr. T. Wedgwood's letter, I accepted his offer. How a contrary report could arise, I cannot guess....

I hope to see you at the close of next week. I have been respectfully and kindly treated at Shrewsbury. I am well, and now, and ever,

Your grateful and affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letter LXXVIII follows 72.]

The next letter is an amusing one coming from Coleridge. It is an apology for the "Monody on the Death of Chatterton", which he wished to discard from the second edition of his poems, but which Cottle insisted on retaining among the poet's "choice fish, picked, gutted, and cleaned."

#### LETTER 73. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MONTHLY MAGAZINE"

January 1798.

Sir,

I hope this letter may arrive time enough to answer its purpose. I cannot help considering myself as having been placed in a very ridiculous light by the gentlemen who have remarked, answered, and rejoined concerning my "Monody on Chatterton". I have not seen the compositions of my competitors (unless indeed the exquisite poem of Warton's, entitled "The Suicide", refer to this subject), but this I know, that my own is a very poor one. It was a school exercise, somewhat altered; and it would have been omitted in the last edition of my poems but for the request of my friend Mr. Cottle, whose property those poems are. If it be not in your intention to exhibit my name on any future month, you will accept my best thanks, and not publish this letter. But if Crito and the Alphabet-men should continue to communicate on this subject, and you should think it proper for reasons best known to yourself to publish their communications, then I depend on your kindness for the insertion of my letter; by which it is possible those your correspondents may be induced to expend their remarks, whether panegyric or vituperative, on nobler game than on a poem which was, in truth, the first effort of a young man, all whose poems a candid critic will only consider as first efforts.

Yours, with due respect,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Shrewsbury.

Coleridge, even at this date, shows signs of a Catholicism in literary taste beyond the average man of his time; but it is an Intellectual Hospitality to all sorts and conditions of minds and men rather than a wide or deep enlightenment.

He already manifested a tendency to read the most abstruse and

out-of-the-way books. He commissioned Thelwall to purchase for him Iamblichus, Proclus, Sidonius Apollinaris, Plotinus, Ficino; and he read Dupuis' huge "Origine de tous les Cultes", a fantastic work tracing the genesis of all religions to the worship of the stars ("Letters", 181-2). This love of recondite lore remained with him through life; but it was his meeting with William and Dorothy Wordsworth that helped most at this juncture to develop the possibilities within him. Wordsworth was one of those who are lofty rather than wide, but who, by their self concentration, act as a healthy corrective to the over-diffusiveness of the Shakespearian type of mind.)

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LYRICAL BALLADS; GERMANY

Cottle's acquaintance with Coleridge led to his making friends with Wordsworth, and in his "Early Recollections" and "Reminiscences", the Bristol bookseller tells a few amusing tales about the poets. The following is the best:

"A visit to Mr. Coleridge, at Stowey, in the year 1797, had been the means of my introduction to Mr. Wordsworth. Soon after our acquaintance had commenced, Mr. W. happened to be in Bristol, and asked me to spend a day or two with him at Allfoxden. I consented, and drove him down in a gig. We called for Mr. Coleridge, Miss Wordsworth, and the servant, at Stowey, and they walked, while we rode on to Mr. W.'s house at Allfoxden, distant two or three miles, where we purposed to dine. A London alderman would smile at our preparation, or bill of fare. It consisted of philosophers' viands; namely, a bottle of brandy, a noble loaf, and a stout piece of cheese; and as there were plenty of lettuces in the garden, with all these comforts we calculated on doing very well.

"Our fond hopes, however, were somewhat damped, by finding, that our 'stout piece of cheese' had vanished! A sturdy "rat" of a beggar, whom we had relieved on the road, with his olfactories all alive, no doubt, "smelt" our cheese, and while we were gazing at the magnificent clouds, contrived to abstract our treasure! Cruel tramp! An ill return for our pence! We both wished the rind might not choke him! The mournful fact was ascertained a little before we drove into the courtyard of the house. Mr. Coleridge bore the loss with great fortitude, observing, that we should never starve with a loaf of bread and a bottle of brandy. He now, with the dexterity of an adept, admired by his friends around, unbuckled the horse, and, putting down the shafts with a jerk, as a triumphant conclusion of his work, lo! the bottle of brandy that had been placed most carefully behind us on the seat, from the force of gravity, suddenly rolled down, and before we could arrest this spirituous avalanche, pitching right on the stones, was dashed to pieces. We all beheld the spectacle, silent and petrified! We might have

collected the broken fragments of glass, but the brandy; that was gone!  
clean gone!

"One little untoward thing often follows another, and while the rest stood musing, chained to the place, regaling themselves with the Cognac effluvium, and all miserably chagrined, I led the horse to the stable, when a fresh perplexity arose. I removed the harness without difficulty, but after many strenuous attempts, I could not get off the collar. In despair, I called for assistance, when aid soon drew near. Mr. Wordsworth first brought his ingenuity into exercise, but after several unsuccessful efforts, he relinquished the achievement, as a thing altogether impracticable. Mr. Coleridge now tried his hand, but showed no more grooming skill than his predecessors; for after twisting the poor horse's neck almost to strangulation, and to the great danger of his eyes, he gave up the useless task, pronouncing that the horse's head must have grown, (gout or dropsy!) since the collar was put on! 'for,' he said 'It was a downright impossibility for such a huge Os Frontis to pass through so narrow a collar!' Just at this instant the servant girl came near, and understanding the cause of our consternation, 'La, Master,' said she, 'you do not go about the work in the right way. You should do like as this,' when turning the collar completely upside down, she slipped it off in a moment, to our great humiliation and wonderment; each satisfied, afresh, that there were heights of knowledge in the world, to which we had not yet attained.

"We were now summoned to dinner, and a dinner it was, such as every "blind" and starving man in the three kingdoms would have rejoiced to "behold". At the top of the table stood a superb brown loaf. The centre dish presented a pile of the true coss lettuces, and at the bottom appeared an empty plate, where the 'stout piece of cheese' "ought" to have stood! (cruel mendicant!) and though the brandy was 'clean gone,' yet its place was well, if not "better" supplied by an abundance of fine sparkling Castalian champagne! A happy thought at this time started into one of our minds, that some condiment would render the lettuces a little more palatable, when an individual in the company, recollected a question, once propounded by the most patient of men, 'How can that which is unsavoury be eaten without "salt"?' and asked for a little of that valuable culinary article. 'Indeed, sir,' Betty replied, 'I quite forgot to buy salt.' A general laugh followed the announcement, in which our host heartily joined. This was nothing. We had plenty of other good things, and while crunching our succulents, and munching our crusts, we pitied the far worse condition of those, perchance as hungry as ourselves, who were forced to dine, off aether alone. For our next meal, the mile-off village furnished all that could be desired, and these trifling incidents present the sum and the result of half the little passing disasters of life.

"The "Lyrical Ballads" were published about Midsummer, 1798. In September of the same year, Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Wordsworth left England for Germany, and I quitted the business of a bookseller. Had I not once been such, this book would never have appeared."

The reference in the following letter to a ballad of 340 lines has never been explained by any biographer of Coleridge. The "Ancient Mariner" in its first form extended to 658 lines. Some have surmised that the "Three Graves" is meant; but this poem was 318 lines as published in 1809-1817.

#### LETTER 74. TO COTTLE

Feb. 18, 1798.

My dear Cottle,

I have finished my Ballad, it is 340 lines; I am going on with my "Visions": altogether (for I shall print two scenes of my Tragedy, as fragments) I can add 1500 lines; now what do you advise? Shall I add my Tragedy, and so make a second volume? or shall I pursue my first intention of inserting 1500 in the third edition? If you should advise a second volume, should you wish, "i.e.", find it convenient, to be the purchaser? I ask this question, because I wish you to know the true state of my present circumstances. I have received nothing yet from the Wedgwoods, and my money is utterly expended.

A friend of mine wanted five guineas for a little while, which I borrowed of Poole, as for myself, I do not like therefore to apply to him. Mr. Estlin has some little money I believe in his hands, but I received from him before I went to Shrewsbury, fifteen pounds, and I believe that this was an anticipation of the five guinea presents, which my friends would have made in March. But (this affair of the Messrs. Wedgwoods turning out) the money in Mr. Estlin's hand must go towards repaying him that sum which he suffered me to anticipate. Meantime I owe Biggs £5, which is heavy on my thoughts, and Mrs. F. has not been paid her last quarter which is still heavier. As to myself, I can continue to go on here, but this £10 I must pay somehow, that is £5 to Biggs, and £5 to Mrs. F....

God bless you,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S. This week I purpose offering myself to the Bridgwater Socinian congregation, as assistant minister, without any salary, directly, or indirectly; but of this say not a word to any one, unless you see Mr. Estlin.

Coleridge sent his poem of the "Raven" to the "Morning Post" at this time with the following curious letter to the Editor. The poem appeared in the paper of 10th March.

LETTER 75. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MORNING POST",

WITH THE "RAVEN", A POEM.

10 March, 1798.

Sir,

I am not absolutely certain that the following poem was written by Edmund Spenser, and found by an angler buried in a fishing-box:

Under the foot of Mole, that Mountain hoar,  
Mid the green alders, by the Mulla's shore;

but a learned Antiquarian of my acquaintance has given it as his opinion that it resembles Spenser's minor poems as nearly as "Vortigern" and "Rowena" the Tragedies of William Shakespeare. This poem must be read in recitative, in the same manner as the "AEgloga Secunda" of the "Shepherd's Calendar".

CUDDY.

"The Latin motto," Cottle says, "prefixed to the second edition of Mr. C.'s poems, puzzled everybody to know from what author it was derived. One and another inquired of me, to no purpose, and expressed a wish that Mr. C. had been clearer in his citation, as 'no one could understand it.' On my naming this to Mr. Coleridge, he laughed heartily, and said, "It was all a hoax. Not meeting," said he, "with a suitable motto, I invented one, and with references purposely obscure, as will be explained in the next letter."

LETTER 76. TO COTTLE

March 8th, 1798.

My dear Cottle,

I have been confined to my bed for some days, through a fever occasioned by the stump of a tooth, which baffled chirurgical efforts to eject, and which, by affecting my eye, affected my stomach, and through that my whole frame. I am better, but still weak, in consequence of such long sleeplessness and wearying pains; weak, very weak. I thank you, my dear friend, for your late kindness, and in a few weeks will either repay you in money, or by verses, as you like. With regard to Lloyd's verses, it is curious that I should be applied to, "to be persuaded to resign," and in hopes that I might "consent to give up" (unknown by whom) a number of poems which were published at the earnest request of the author, who assured me, that the circumstance was of "no trivial import to his happiness!"

Times change and people change; but let us keep our souls in quietness!  
I have no objection to any disposal of Lloyd's poems except that of  
their being republished with mine. The motto which I had  
prefixed--"Duplex, etc." from Groscollias, has placed me in a ridiculous  
situation, but it was a foolish and presumptuous start of  
affectionateness, and I am not unwilling to incur the punishment due to  
my folly. By past experiences we build up our moral being. The Giant  
Wordsworth--God love him! When I speak in the terms of admiration due to  
his intellect, I fear lest these terms should keep out of sight the  
amiableness of his manners. He has written near twelve hundred lines of  
a blank verse, [1] superior, I hesitate not to aver, to anything in our  
language which any way resembles it. God bless you,

S. T. COLERIDGE. [2]

[Footnote 1: "The Ruined Cottage", or "Tale of Margaret", afterwards  
incorporated in the "Excursion".]

[Footnote 2: Letter LXXIX is our 76, which see for full text.]

#### LETTER 77. TO WADE

March 21st, 1798.

My very dear friend,

I have even now returned from a little excursion that I have taken for  
the confirmation of my health, which had suffered a rude assault from  
the anguish of the stump of a tooth which had baffled the attempts of  
our surgeon here, and which confined me to my bed. I suffered much from  
the disease, and more from the doctor; rather than again put my mouth  
into his hands, I would put my hands into a lion's mouth. I am happy to  
hear of, and should be most happy to see, the plumpness and progression  
of your dear boy; but--yes, my dear Wade, it must be a but, much as I  
hate the word but. Well,--but I cannot attend the chemical lectures. I  
have many reasons, but the greatest, or at least the most ostensible  
reason, is, that I cannot leave Mrs. C. at that time; our house is an  
uncomfortable one; our surgeon may be, for aught I know, a lineal  
descendant of Esculapius himself, but if so, in the repeated transfusion  
of life from father to son, through so many generations, the wit and  
knowledge, being subtle spirits, have evaporated....

Ever your grateful and affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

#### LETTER 78. TO COTTLE

(Mch. or Apl. 1798.)

My dear Cottle,

I regret that aught should have disturbed our tranquillity; respecting Lloyd, I am willing to believe myself in part mistaken, and so let all things be as before. I have no wish respecting these poems, either for or against re-publication with mine. As to the third edition, if there be occasion for it immediately, it must be published with some alterations, but no additions or omissions. The "Pixies", "Chatterton", and some dozen others, shall be printed at the end of the volume, under the title of Juvenile Poems, and in this case I will send you the volume immediately. But if there be no occasion for the volume to go to press for ten weeks, at the expiration of that time, I would make it a volume worthy of me, and omit utterly near one-half of the present volume--a sacrifice to pitch black oblivion.

Whichever be the case, I will repay you the money you have paid for me, in money, and in a few weeks; or if you should prefer the latter proposal, "i.e.", the not sending me to the press for ten weeks, I should insist on considering the additions, however large, as my payment to you for the omissions, which, indeed, would be but strict justice.

I am requested by Wordsworth, to put to you the following questions. What could you, conveniently and prudently, and what would you give for--first, our two Tragedies, with small prefaces, containing an analysis of our principal characters? Exclusive of the prefaces, the tragedies are, together, five thousand lines; which, in printing, from the dialogue form, and directions respecting actors and scenery, are at least equal to six thousand. To be delivered to you within a week of the date of your answer to this letter; and the money which you offer, to be paid to us at the end of four months from the same date; none to be paid before, all to be paid then.

Second.--Wordsworth's "Salisbury Plain", and "Tale of a Woman"; which two poems, with a few others which he will add, and the notes, will make a volume. This to be delivered to you within three weeks of the date of your answer, and the money to be paid as before, at the end of four months from the present date.

Do not, my dearest Cottle, harass yourself about the imagined great merit of the compositions, or be reluctant to offer what you can prudently offer, from an idea that the poems are worth more. But calculate what you can do, with reference simply to yourself, and answer as speedily as you can; and believe me your sincere, grateful, and affectionate friend and brother,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Cottle offered thirty guineas each to Wordsworth and Coleridge for their tragedies; but this offer, says Cottle, "after some hesitation was

declined from the hope of introducing one or both on the stage." Cottle received the following letter soon after:

#### LETTER 79. TO COTTLE

(14 Apl., 1798.)

My dear Cottle,

I never involved you in bickering, and never suspected you, in any one action of your life, of practising guile against any human being, except yourself.

Your letter supplied only one in a link of circumstances, that informed me of some things, and perhaps deceived me in others. I shall write to-day to Lloyd. I do not think I shall come to Bristol for these lectures of which you speak.[1] I ardently wish for the knowledge, but Mrs. Coleridge is within a month of her confinement, and I cannot, I ought not to leave her; especially as her surgeon is not a John Hunter, nor my house likely to perish from a plethora of comforts. Besides, there are other things that might disturb that evenness of benevolent feeling, which I wish to cultivate.

I am much better, and at present at Allfoxden, and my new and tender health is all over me like a voluptuous feeling. God bless you,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Footnote 1: "Chemical Lectures," by Dr. Beddoes, delivered at the Red Lodge [Cottle].]

The origin of the volume of lyrical ballads is best told in Cottle's own words.

"Wordsworth," says Cottle, on his introduction by Coleridge at Stowey, "read me many of his Lyrical Pieces, when I immediately perceived in them extraordinary merit, and advised him to publish them, expressing a belief that they would be well received. I further said he should be at no risk; that I would give him the same sum which I had given to Mr. Coleridge and to Mr. Southey, and that it would be a gratifying circumstance to me, to have been the publisher of the first volumes of three such poets as Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth; such a distinction might never again occur to a Provincial bookseller.

"To the idea of publishing he expressed a strong objection, and after several interviews, I left him, with an earnest wish that he would reconsider his determination.

"Soon after Mr. Wordsworth sent me the following letter.

'Allfoxden, 12th April, 1798.

'My dear Cottle,

'...You will be pleased to hear that I have gone on very rapidly adding to my stock of poetry. Do come and let me read it to you, under the old trees in the park. We have a little more than two months to stay in this place. Within these four days the season has advanced with greater rapidity than I ever remember, and the country becomes almost every hour more lovely. God bless you,

'Your affectionate friend,

'W. WORDSWORTH.'

"A little time after, I received an invitation from Mr. Coleridge to pay himself and Mr. Wordsworth another visit. At about the same time, I received the following corroborative invitation from Mr. Wordsworth.

'Dear Cottle,

'We look for you with great impatience. We will never forgive you if you do not come. I say nothing of the "Salisbury Plain" till I see you. I am determined to finish it, and equally so that you shall publish.

'I have lately been busy about another plan, which I do not wish to mention till I see you; let this be very, very soon, and stay a week if possible; as much longer as you can. God bless you, dear Cottle,

'Yours sincerely,

'W. WORDSWORTH.

'Allfoxden, 9th May, 1798.'

"The following letter also on this subject, was received from Mr. Coleridge.

#### LETTER 80. TO COTTLE

(April, 1798.)

My dear Cottle,

Neither Wordsworth nor myself could have been otherwise than uncomfortable, if any but yourself had received from us the first offer of our Tragedies, and of the volume of Wordsworth's Poems. At the same time, we did not expect that you could with prudence and propriety, advance such a sum as we should want at the time we specified. In short, we both regard the publication of our Tragedies as an evil. It is not

impossible but that in happier times, they may be brought on the stage: and to throw away this chance for a mere trifle, would be to make the present moment act fraudulently and usuriously towards the future time.

My Tragedy employed and strained all my thoughts and faculties for six or seven months; Wordsworth consumed far more time, and far more thought, and far more genius. We consider the publication of them an evil on any terms; but our thoughts were bent on a plan for the accomplishment of which, a certain sum of money was necessary, (the whole) at that particular time, and in order to this we resolved, although reluctantly, to part with our Tragedies: that is, if we could obtain thirty guineas for each, and at less than thirty guineas Wordsworth will not part with the copyright of his volume of Poems. We shall offer the Tragedies to no one, for we have determined to procure the money some other way. If you choose the volume of Poems, at the price mentioned, to be paid at the time specified, "i.e." thirty guineas, to be paid sometime in the last fortnight of July, you may have them; but remember, my dear fellow! I write to you now merely as a bookseller, and intreat you, in your answer, to consider yourself only; as to us, although money is necessary to our plan, (that of visiting Germany) yet the plan is not necessary to our happiness; and if it were, W. could sell his Poems for that sum to someone else, or we could procure the money without selling the Poems. So I entreat you, again and again, in your answer, which must be immediate, consider yourself only.

Wordsworth has been caballed against "so long and so loudly", that he has found it impossible to prevail on the tenant of the Allfoxden estate, to let him the house, after their first agreement is expired, so he must quit it at Midsummer. Whether we shall be able to procure him a house and furniture near Stowey, we know not, and yet we must: for the hills, and the woods, and the streams, and the sea, and the shores would break forth into reproaches against us, if we did not strain every nerve, to keep their poet among them. Without joking, and in serious sadness, Poole and I cannot endure to think of losing him.

At all events, come down, Cottle, as soon as you can, but before Midsummer, and we will procure a horse easy as thy own soul, and we will go on a roam to Linton and Linmouth, which, if thou comest in May, will be in all their pride of woods and waterfalls, not to speak of its august cliffs, and the green ocean, and the vast Valley of Stones, all which live disdainful of the seasons, or accept new honours only from the winter's snow. At all events come down, and cease not to believe me much and affectionately your friend.

S. T. COLERIDGE. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letters LXXX-LXXXV follow letter 80.]

"In consequence of these conjoint invitations, I spent a week with Mr. C. and Mr. W. at Allfoxden house, and during this time, (beside the reading of MS. poems) they took me to Linmouth, and Linton, and the

Valley of Stones....

"At this interview it was determined, that the volume should be published under the title of "Lyrical Ballads" on the terms stipulated in a former letter: that this volume should not contain the poem of "Salisbury Plain", but only an extract from it; that it should not contain the poem of "Peter Bell", but consist rather of sundry shorter poems, and, for the most part, of pieces more recently written. I had recommended two volumes, but one was fixed on, and that to be published anonymously. It was to be begun immediately, and with the "Ancient Mariner"; which poem I brought with me to Bristol. A day or two after I received the following:"

#### LETTER 81. TO COTTLE

(May, 1798.)

My dear Cottle,

You know what I think of a letter, how impossible it is to argue in it. You must therefore take simple statements, and in a week or two, I shall see you, and endeavour to reason with you.

Wordsworth and I have duly weighed your proposal, and this is an answer. He would not object to the publishing of "Peter Bell" or the "Salisbury Plain", singly; but to the publishing of his poems in two volumes, he is decisively repugnant and oppugnant.

He deems that they would want variety, etc., etc. If this apply in his case, it applies with ten-fold more force to mine. We deem that the volumes offered to you, are, to a certain degree, one work in kind, though not in degree, as an ode is one work; and that our different poems are, as stanzas, good, relatively rather than absolutely: mark you, I say in kind, though not in degree. As to the Tragedy, when I consider it in reference to Shakespeare's, and to "one" other Tragedy, it seems a poor thing, and I care little what becomes of it. When I consider it in comparison with modern dramatists, it rises: and I think it too bad to be published, too good to be squandered. I think of breaking it up; the planks are sound, and I will build a new ship of the old materials.

The dedication to the Wedgwoods, which you recommend, would be indelicate and unmeaning. If, after four or five years, I shall have finished some work of importance, which could not have been written, but in an unanxious seclusion, to them I will dedicate it; for the public will have owed the work to them who gave me the power of that unanxious seclusion.

As to anonymous publications, depend on it, you are deceived. Wordsworth's name is nothing to a large number of persons; mine stinks.

The "Essay on Man", the "Botanic Garden", the "Pleasures of Memory", and many other most popular works, were published anonymously. However, I waive all reasoning, and simply state it as an unaltered opinion, that you should proceed as before, with the "Ancient Mariner".

The picture shall be sent.[1] For your love gifts and bookloans accept our hearty love. The "Joan of Arc" is a divine book; it opens lovelily. I hope that you will take off some half dozen of our "Poems" on great paper, even as the "Joan of Arc".

Cottle, my dear Cottle, I meant to have written you an Essay on the Metaphysics of Typography, but I have not time. Take a few hints, without the abstruse reasons for them, with which I mean to favour you. 18 lines in a page, the line closely printed, certainly more closely printed than those of the "Joan";[2] ("Oh, by all means, closer, "W. Wordsworth") equal ink, and large margins; that is beauty; it may even, under your immediate care, mingle the sublime! And now, my dear Cottle, may God love you and me, who am, with most unauthorish feelings,

Your true friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S.--I walked to Linton the day after you left us, and returned on Saturday. I walked in one day, and returned in one.[3]

[Footnote 1: A portrait of Mr. Wordsworth, correctly and beautifully executed, by an artist then at Stowey; now in my possession. [Cottle's note.]]

[Footnote 2: "Joan of Arc", 4to first edition, had twenty lines in a page. [Cottle.]]

[Footnote 3: Letters LXXXVI-XCII follow 81.]

Coleridge has given his account of the origin of the "Lyrical Ballads" in the fourteenth chapter of the "Biographia Literaria", and Wordsworth's account is found in the Fenwick Note to "We are Seven".

An estrangement with Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd at this time took place which has been the subject of many surmises as to its origin among the biographers of Coleridge. The coldness with Lamb passed off by the beginning of 1800 when Charles wrote to Coleridge in his customary humorous vein; but Lloyd was not so soon taken back to favour. Southey joined the cabal against Coleridge and encouraged the estrangement; but he too was on friendly terms with Coleridge in the autumn of 1799.

On the 14th May Coleridge's second child was born, named Berkeley, after the idealist philosopher who had now displaced Hartley, who had been in the ascendant when the first child was born.

With the adoption of Berkeley as his pet philosopher, we can understand Coleridge's determination to visit Germany. He had heard rumours of the Kantian Philosophy, and wished to acquire thoroughly a knowledge of the language of the Germans principally to be able to read Kant in the original. This project Coleridge speaks of as early as 6th May, 1796 (Letter 33); but it was only now when he enjoyed the support of the Wedgwoods that he could afford to put it into execution. The volume of "Lyrical Ballads" was published in the early part of the autumn of 1798; and along with William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Coleridge set sail from Yarmouth. John Chester, a resident of Stowey, also accompanied them.

Coleridge arrived at Cuxhaven on 19th September, from which place he wrote Mrs. Coleridge an account of the voyage and his first impressions of Germany. This account is more fully given in the "Letters of Satyrane" in the "Biographia Literaria". He took up his quarters at Ratzeburg, staying with the pastor of that town; while Wordsworth and his sister went to Goslar. From Ratzeburg Coleridge repaired to Göttingen on 12th February, 1799, to attend lectures at the University. He worked hard while in Göttingen to acquire a knowledge of the literature of Germany, and made himself proficient in the dialects as well as of classical German. He met two of the Parrys, brothers of the Arctic explorer, at Göttingen; and, later, Clement Carlyon, an Englishman from Pembroke College, joined the group. Carlyon afterwards in later life, in his "Early Years and Late Reflections", depicted Coleridge as the life and soul of the party, incessantly talking, discussing, and philosophizing, and diving into his pocket German Dictionary for the right word. Carlyon devotes 270 pages of the first volume of his book to Coleridge.

Berkeley Coleridge died in February, and the news depressed Coleridge and threw his studies for some time into disorder; but the Wordsworths visited him at Göttingen, and they had some talk about the future place of their abode in England. The Wordsworths were desirous of staying in the North of England; but Coleridge at this time had resolved to remain at Stowey, to be near Poole, in whom he felt his "anchor", as he expressed it. (J. Dykes-Campbell's "Life", chap. v.)

Coleridge during his stay in Germany wrote a good many letters to his wife, to Poole, and the Wedgwoods. We can quote only two fragments from those to his wife, and the long one, "Over the Brocken".

#### LETTER 82. TO MRS. COLERIDGE

14 Jany., 1799.

The whole Lake of Ratzeburg is one mass of thick transparent ice--a spotless Mirror of nine miles in extent! The lowness of the Hills, which rise from the shores of the Lake, preclude the awful sublimity of Alpine scenery, yet compensate for the want of it by beauties, of which this very lowness is a necessary condition. Yester-morning I saw the lesser

Lake completely hidden by Mist; but the moment the Sun peeped over the Hill, the mist broke in the middle, and in a few seconds stood divided, leaving a broad road all across the Lake; and between these two Walls of mist the sunlight "burnt" upon the ice, forming a road of golden fire, intolerably bright! and the mist-walls themselves partook of the blaze in a multitude of shining colours. This is our second Frost. About a month ago, before the Thaw came on, there was a storm of wind; during the whole night, such were the thunders and howlings of the breaking ice, that they have left a conviction on my mind, that there are Sounds more sublime than any Sight "can" be, more absolutely suspending the power of comparison, and more utterly absorbing the mind's self-consciousness in its total attention to the object working upon it. Part of the ice which the vehemence of the wind had shattered, was driven shore-ward and froze anew. On the evening of the next day, at sun-set, the shattered ice thus frozen, appeared of a deep blue, and in shape like an agitated sea; beyond this, the water, that ran up between the great Islands of ice which had preserved their masses entire and smooth, shone of a yellow green; but all these scattered Ice-islands, themselves, were of an intensely bright blood colour--they seemed blood and light in union! On some of the largest of these Islands, the Fishermen stood pulling out their immense Nets through the holes made in the ice for this purpose, and the Men, their Net-Poles, and their huge Nets, were a part of the glory; say rather, it appeared as if the rich crimson light had shaped itself into these forms, figures, and attitudes, to make a glorious vision in mockery of earthly things.

The lower Lake is now all alive with Skaters, and with Ladies driven onward by them in their ice cars. Mercury, surely, was the first maker of Skates, and the wings at his feet are symbols of the invention. In skating there are three pleasing circumstances: the infinitely subtle particles of Ice, which the Skate cuts up, and which creep and run before the Skate like a low mist, and in sun-rise or sun-set become coloured; second, the shadow of the Skater in the water seen through the transparent Ice; and third, the melancholy undulating sound from the Skate, not without variety; and when very many are skating together, the sounds and the noises give an impulse to the icy Trees, and the woods all round the Lake "tinkle"![1]

[Footnote 1: Letter XCIII repeats 82, XCIV-XCVI follow.]

#### LETTER 83. TO MRS. COLERIDGE

Ratzeburg, 23 April, 1799.

There is a Christmas custom here which pleased and interested me.--The Children make little presents to their Parents, and to each other; and the Parents to the Children. For three or four months before Christmas the Girls are all busy, and the Boys save up their pocket-money, to make or purchase these presents. What the Present is to be is cautiously kept secret, and the Girls have a world of contrivances to conceal it--such as working when they are out on visits and the others are not with them;

getting up in the morning before day-light, etc. Then on the evening before Christmas day one of the Parlours is lighted up by the Children, into which the Parents must not go: a great yew bough is fastened on the Table at a little distance from the wall, a multitude of little Tapers are fastened in the bough, but not so as to burn it till they are nearly burnt out, and coloured paper, etc. hangs and flutters from the twigs.--Under this Bough the Children lay out in great order the presents they mean for their Parents, still concealing in their pockets what they intend for each other. Then the Parents are introduced--and each presents his little Gift--and then bring out the rest one by one from their pockets, and present them with kisses and embraces.--Where I witnessed this scene, there were eight or nine Children, and the eldest Daughter and the Mother wept aloud for joy and tenderness; and the tears ran down the face of the Father, and he clasped all his Children so tight to his breast--it seemed as if he did it to stifle the sob that was rising within him.--I was very much affected.--The Shadow of the Bough and its appendages on the wall, and arching over on the Ceiling, made a pretty Picture--and then the raptures of the "very" little Ones, when at last the twigs and their needles began to take fire and "snap"--O it was a delight for them!--On the next day, in the great Parlour, the Parents lay out on the table the Presents for the Children: a scene of more sober joy succeeds, as on this day, after an old custom, the Mother says privately to each of her Daughters, and the Father to his Sons, that which he has observed most praise-worthy and that which was most faulty in their conduct.--Formerly, and still in all the smaller Towns and Villages throughout North Germany, these Presents were sent by all the Parents to some one Fellow who in high Buskins, a white Robe, a Mask, and an enormous flax Wig, personates Knecht Rupert, i.e. the Servant Rupert. On Christmas Night he goes round to every House and says, that Jesus Christ, his Master, sent him thither--the Parents and elder Children receive him with great pomp of reverence, while the little ones are most terribly frightened--He then enquires for the Children, and according to the character which he hears from the Parent, he gives them the intended Present, as if they came out of Heaven from Jesus Christ.--Or, if they should have been bad Children, he gives the Parents a Rod, and in the name of his Master, recommends them to use it frequently.--About seven or eight years old the Children are let into the secret, and it is curious how faithfully they keep it![1]

["Over the Brocken" must occupy a chapter of itself.]

[Footnote 1: Letter XCVII repeats 83, XCVIII follows.]

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RELIGION OF THE PINEWOODS

Coleridge called the letters from Germany which he published in "The

Friend" of 1809 the "Letters of Satyrane". He was fond of masquerading under the name of this allegorical personage of the "Faery Queen"; and in his "Tombless Epitaph" he described himself as Idolo-crastes Satyrane. Under this disguise he looked upon himself as the spokesman of the Idea of the Omnipresence of the Deity. In order to appreciate the following beautiful letter, one of the finest Coleridge ever wrote, the reader should peruse Coleridge's "Aeolian Harp", "Lines written on leaving a Place of Retirement", "The Lime-Tree Bower", and Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey". Wordsworth's sonnet, "It is a beautiful evening", and Coleridge's own "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni", also belong to the same feeling for the God of Nature, but they were composed after the letter "Over the Brocken".

Clement Carlyon, who is the chief authority for the life of Coleridge during his stay at Göttingen, gives a lively account of the ascent of the Brocken, which took place on Whit Sunday, 12th May 1799. The party visited the "magic circle of stones where the fairies assembled," and halted for the first time at the village of Satzfeld, a romantic village, "a bright moonlight at night, and the nightingale heard."

Coleridge was in high spirits, and kept talking all the way, discoursing on his favourite topics. Sublimity was defined as a "suspension of the powers of comparison"; "no animal but man can be struck with wonder"; Shakespeare owed his success largely to the cheering breath of popular applause, the enthusiastic gale of admiration. The English Divines were applauded by Coleridge, Jeremy Taylor prominently; and a play by Hans Sachs was preferred to a play of Kotzebue; from which he launched into a discourse on Miracle plays. Coleridge's conversation was peppered with puns, some of which Carlyon quotes.

Carlyon also notices that their course up the mountain was impeded by stunted firs; and he describes the dancing party of peasants with whom Coleridge was so much taken. The party returned to Göttingen on 18th May. Coleridge had written the day before to his wife.

#### LETTER 84. TO MRS. COLERIDGE

Clausthal, 17 May 1799.

Through roads no way rememberable, we came to Gieloldshausen, over a bridge, on which was a mitred statue with a great crucifix in its arms. The village, long and ugly; but the church, like most Catholic churches, interesting; and this being Whitsun Eve, all were crowding to it, with their mass-books and rosaries, the little babies commonly with coral crosses hanging on the breast. Here we took a guide, left the village, ascended a hill, and now the woods rose up before us in a verdure which surprised us like a sorcery. The spring had burst forth with the suddenness of a Russian summer. As we left Göttingen there were buds, and here and there a tree half green; but here were woods in full foliage, distinguished from summer only by the exquisite freshness of their tender green. We entered the wood through a beautiful mossy path;

the moon above us blending with the evening light, and every now and then a nightingale would invite the others to sing, and some or other commonly answered, and said, as we suppose, "It is yet somewhat too early!" for the song was not continued. We came to a square piece of greenery, completely walled on all four sides by the beeches; again entered the wood, and having travelled about a mile, emerged from it into a grand plain--mountains in the distance, but ever by our road the skirts of the green woods. A very rapid river ran by our side; and now the nightingales were all singing, and the tender verdure grew paler in the moonlight, only the smooth parts of the river were still deeply purpled with the reflections from the fiery light in the west. So surrounded and so impressed, we arrived at Prele, a dear little cluster of houses in the middle of a semicircle of woody hills; the area of the semicircle scarcely broader than the breadth of the village.

\* \* \* \* \*

We afterwards ascended another hill, from the top of which a large plain opened before us with villages. A little village, Neuhoff, lay at the foot of it: we reached it, and then turned up through a valley on the left hand. The hills on both sides the valley were prettily wooded, and a rapid lively river ran through it. So we went for about two miles, and almost at the end of the valley, or rather of its first turning, we found the village of Lauterberg. Just at the entrance of the village, two streams come out from two deep and woody coombs, close by each other, meet, and run into a third deep woody coomb opposite; before you a wild hill, which seems the end and barrier of the valley; on the right hand, low hills, now green with corn, and now wooded; and on the left a most majestic hill indeed--the effect of whose simple outline painting could not give, and how poor a thing are words! We pass through this neat little town--the majestic hill on the left hand soaring over the houses, and at every interspace you see the whole of it--its beeches, its firs, its rocks, its scattered cottages, and the one neat little pastor's house at the foot, embosomed in fruit-trees all in blossom, the noisy coomb-brook dashing close by it. We leave the valley, or rather, the first turning on the left, following a stream; and so the vale winds on, the river still at the foot of the woody hills, with every now and then other smaller valleys on right and left crossing our vale, and ever before you the woody hills running like groves one into another. We turned and turned, and entering the fourth curve of the vale, we found all at once that we had been ascending. The verdure vanished! All the beech trees were leafless, and so were the silver birches, whose boughs always, winter and summer, hang so elegantly. But low down in the valley, and in little companies on each bank of the river, a multitude of green conical fir trees, with herds of cattle wandering about, almost every one with a cylindrical bell around its neck, of no inconsiderable size, and as they moved--scattered over the narrow vale, and up among the trees on the hill--the noise was like that of a great city in the stillness of a sabbath morning, when the bells all at once are ringing for church. The whole was a melancholy and romantic scene, that was quite new to me. Again we turned, passed three smelting houses, which we visited; a scene of terrible beauty is a furnace of boiling metal, darting, every moment blue, green, and scarlet lightning, like serpents'

tongues!--and now we ascended a steep hill, on the top of which was St. Andrias Berg, a town built wholly of wood.

We descended again, to ascend far higher; and now we came to a most beautiful road, which winded on the breast of the hill, from whence we looked down into a deep valley, or huge basin, full of pines and firs; the opposite hills full of pines and firs; and the hill above us, on whose breast we were winding, likewise full of pines and firs. The valley, or basin, on our right hand, into which we looked down, is called the Wald Rauschenbach, that is, the Valley of the Roaring Brook; and roar it did, indeed, most solemnly!

The road on which we walked was weedy with infant fir-trees, an inch or two high; and now, on our left hand, came before us a most tremendous precipice of yellow and black rock, called the Rehberg, that is, the Mountain of the Roe. Now again is nothing but firs and pines above, below, around us! How awful is the deep unison of their undividable murmur; what a one thing it is--it is a sound that impresses the dim notion of the Omnipresent! In various parts of the deep vale below us, we beheld little dancing waterfalls gleaming through the branches, and now, on our left hand, from the very summit of the hill above us, a powerful stream flung itself down, leaping and foaming, and now concealed, and now not concealed, and now half concealed by the fir-trees, till, towards the road, it became a visible sheet of water, within whose immediate neighbourhood no pine could have permanent abiding place. The snow lay every where on the sides of the roads, and glimmered in company with the waterfall foam, snow patches and waterbreaks glimmering through the branches in the hill above, the deep basin below, and the hill opposite. Over the high opposite hills, so dark in their pine forests, a far higher round barren stony mountain looked in upon the prospect from a distant country. Through this scenery we passed on, till our road was crossed by a second waterfall, or rather, aggregation of little dancing waterfalls, one by the side of the other for a considerable breadth, and all came at once out of the dark wood above, and rolled over the mossy rock fragments, little firs, growing in islets, scattered among them. The same scenery continued till we came to the Oder Seich, a lake, half made by man, and half by nature. It is two miles in length, and but a few hundred yards in breadth, and winds between banks, or rather through walls, of pine trees. It has the appearance of a most calm and majestic river. It crosses the road, goes into a wood, and there at once plunges itself down into a most magnificent cascade, and runs into the vale, to which it gives the name of the "Vale of the Roaring Brook." We descended into the vale, and stood at the bottom of the cascade, and climbed up again by its side. The rocks over which it plunged were unusually wild in their shape, giving fantastic resemblances of men and animals, and the fir-boughs by the side were kept almost in a swing, which unruly motion contrasted well with the stern quietness of the huge forest-sea every where else.

\* \* \* \* \*

In nature all things are individual, but a word is but an arbitrary character for a whole class of things; so that the same description may

in almost all cases be applied to twenty different appearances; and in addition to the difficulty of the thing itself, I neither am, nor ever was, a good hand at description. I see what I write, but, alas! I cannot write what I see. From the Oder Seich we entered a second wood; and now the snow met us in large masses, and we walked for two miles knee-deep in it, with an inexpressible fatigue, till we came to the mount called Little Brocken; here even the firs deserted us, or only now and then a patch of them, wind-shorn, no higher than one's knee, matted and cowering to the ground, like our thorn bushes on the highest sea-hills. The soil was plashy and boggy; we descended and came to the foot of the Great Brocken without a river--the highest mountain in all the north of Germany, and the seat of innumerable superstitions. On the first of May all the witches dance here at midnight; and those who go may see their own ghosts walking up and down, with a little billet on the back, giving the names of those who had wished them there; for "I wish you on the top of the Brocken," is a common curse throughout the whole empire. Well, we ascended--the soil boggy--and at last reached the height, which is 573 toises [1] above the level of the sea. We visited the Blocksberg, a sort of bowling-green, enclosed by huge stones, something like those at Stonehenge, and this is the witches' ball-room; thence proceeded to the house on the hill, where we dined; and now we descended. In the evening about seven we arrived at Elbingerode. At the inn they brought us an album, or stammbuch, requesting that we would write our names, and something or other as a remembrance that we had been there. I wrote the following lines, which contain a true account of my journey from the Brocken to Elbingerode.

I stood on Brocken's sovran height, and saw  
Woods crowding upon woods, hills over hills;  
A surging scene, and only limited  
By the blue distance. Wearily my way  
Downward I dragged, through fir groves evermore  
Where bright green moss moved in sepulchral forms,  
Speckled with sunshine; and, but seldom heard,  
The sweet bird's song become a hollow sound;  
And the gale murmuring indivisibly,  
Reserved its solemn murmur, more distinct  
From many a note of many a waterbreak,  
And the brook's chatter; on whose islet stones  
The dingy kidling, with its tinkling bell,  
Leapt frolicksome, or old romantic goat  
Sat, his white beard slow waving. I moved on  
With low and languid thought, for I had found  
That grandest scenes have but imperfect charms  
Where the eye vainly wanders, nor beholds  
One spot with which the heart associates  
Holy remembrances of child or friend,  
Or gentle maid, our first and early love,  
Or father, or the venerable name  
Of our adored country. O thou Queen,  
Thou delegated Deity of Earth,  
O "dear, dear" England! how my longing eyes

Turned westward, shaping in the steady clouds  
Thy sands and high white cliffs! Sweet native isle,  
This heart was proud, yea, mine eyes swam with tears  
To think of thee; and all the goodly view  
From sovran Brocken, woods and woody hills  
Floated away, like a departing dream,  
Feeble and dim. Stranger, these impulses  
Blame thou not lightly; nor will I profane,  
With hasty judgment or injurious doubt,  
That man's sublimer spirit, who can feel  
That God is every where, the God who framed  
Mankind to be one mighty brotherhood,  
Himself our Father, and the world our home.

We left Elbingerode, May 14th, and travelled for half a mile through a wild country, of bleak stony hills by our side, with several caverns, or rather mouths of caverns, visible in their breasts; and now we came to Rubilland,--Oh, it was a lovely scene! Our road was at the foot of low hills, and here were a few neat cottages; behind us were high hills, with a few scattered firs, and flocks of goats visible on the topmost crags. On our right hand a fine shallow river about thirty yards broad, and beyond the river a crescent hill clothed with firs, that rise one above another, like spectators in an amphitheatre. We advanced a little farther,--the crags behind us ceased to be visible, and now the whole was one and complete. All that could be seen was the cottages at the foot of the low green hill, (cottages embosomed in fruit trees in blossom,) the stream, and the little crescent of firs. I lingered here, and unwillingly lost sight of it for a little while. The firs were so beautiful, and the masses of rocks, walls, and obelisks started up among them in the very places where, if they had not been, a painter with a poet's feeling would have imagined them. Crossed the river (its name Bodi), entered the sweet wood, and came to the mouth of the cavern, with the man who shews it. It was a huge place, eight hundred feet in length, and more in depth, of many different apartments; and the only thing that distinguished it from other caverns was, that the guide, who was really a character, had the talent of finding out and seeing uncommon likenesses in the different forms of the stalactite. Here was a nun;--this was Solomon's temple;--that was a Roman Catholic Chapel;--here was a lion's claw, nothing but flesh and blood wanting to make it completely a claw! This was an organ, and had all the notes of an organ, etc. etc. etc.; but, alas! with all possible straining of my eyes, ears, and imagination, I could see nothing but common stalactite, and heard nothing but the dull ding of common cavern stones. One thing was really striking;--a huge cone of stalactite hung from the roof of the largest apartment, and, on being struck, gave perfectly the sound of a death-bell. I was behind, and heard it repeatedly at some distance, and the effect was very much in the fairy kind,--gnomes, and things unseen, that toll mock death-bells for mock funerals. After this, a little clear well and a black stream pleased me the most; and multiplied by fifty, and coloured ad libitum, might be well enough to read of in a novel or poem. We returned, and now before the inn, on the green plat around the Maypole, the villagers were celebrating Whit-Tuesday. This

Maypole is hung as usual with garlands on the top, and, in these garlands, spoons, and other little valuables, are placed. The high smooth round pole is then well greased; and now he who can climb up to the top may have what he can get,--a very laughable scene as you may suppose, of awkwardness and agility, and failures on the very brink of success. Now began a dance. The women danced very well, and, in general, I have observed throughout Germany that the women in the lower ranks degenerate far less from the ideal of a woman, than the men from that of man. The dances were reels and waltzes; but chiefly the latter. This dance is, in the higher circles, sufficiently voluptuous; but here the emotions of it were far more faithful interpreters of the passion, which, doubtless, the dance was intended to shadow; yet, ever after the giddy round and round is over, they walked to music, the woman laying her arm, with confident affection, on the man's shoulders, or around his neck. The first couple at the waltzing was a very fine tall girl, of two or three and twenty, in the full bloom and growth of limb and feature, and a fellow with huge whiskers, a long tail, and woollen night-cap; he was a soldier, and from the more than usual glances of the girl, I presumed was her lover. He was, beyond compare, the gallant and the dancer of the party. Next came two boors: one of whom, in the whole contour of his face and person, and, above all, in the laughably would-be frolicsome kick out of his heel, irresistibly reminded me of Shakespeare's Slender, and the other of his Dogberry. Oh! two such faces, and two such postures! O that I were an Hogarth! What an enviable gift it is to have a genius in painting! Their partners were pretty lasses, not so tall as the former, and danced uncommonly light and airy. The fourth couple was a sweet girl of about seventeen, delicately slender, and very prettily dressed, with a full-blown rose in the white ribbon that went round her head, and confined her reddish-brown hair; and her partner waltzed with a pipe in his mouth, smoking all the while; and during the whole of this voluptuous dance, his countenance was a fair personification of true German phlegm. After these, but, I suppose, not actually belonging to the party, a little ragged girl and ragged boy, with his stockings about his heels, waltzed and danced;--waltzing and dancing in the rear most entertainingly. But what most pleased me, was a little girl of about three or four years old, certainly not more than four, who had been put to watch a little babe, of not more than a year old (for one of our party had asked), and who was just beginning to run away, the girl teaching him to walk, and who was so animated by the music, that she began to waltz with him, and the two babes whirled round and round, hugging and kissing each other, as if the music had made them mad. There were two fiddles and a bass viol. The fiddlers,--above all, the bass violer,--most Hogarthian phizzes! God love them! I felt far more affection for them than towards any other set of human beings I have met with since I have been in Germany, I suppose because they looked so happy!

[Footnote 1: marked with an asterisk in the proofing (not the original text), but not explained further.]

## CHAPTER VIII

### RETURN TO ENGLAND; "WALLENSTEIN", AND THE "MORNING POST"

On the 21st May, Coleridge wrote the following letter in which he informs Josiah Wedgwood what he had done in Germany, and what he expected to do with the knowledge which he had acquired there.

#### LETTER 85. TO JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

May 21st, 1799. Gottingen.

My dear sir,

I have lying by my side six huge letters, with your name on each of them, and all, excepting one, have been written for these three months. About this time Mr. Hamilton, by whom I send this and the little parcel for my wife, was, as it were, setting off for England; and I seized the opportunity of sending them by him, as without any mock-modesty I really thought that the expense of the postage to me and to you would be more than their worth. Day after day, and week after week, was Hamilton going, and still delayed. And now that it is absolutely settled that he goes to-morrow, it is likewise absolutely settled that I shall go this day three weeks, and I have therefore sent only this and the picture by him, but the letters I will now take myself, for I should not like them to be lost, as they comprise the only subject on which I have had an opportunity of making myself thoroughly informed, and if I carry them myself, I can carry them without danger of their being seized at Yarmouth, as all my letters were, yours to ---- excepted, which were, luckily, not sealed. Before I left England, I had read the book of which you speak. [1] I must confess that it appeared to me exceedingly illogical. Godwin's and Condorcet's extravagancies were not worth confuting; and yet I thought that the Essay on "Population" had not confuted them. Professor Wallace, Derham, and a number of German statistic and physico-theological writers had taken the same ground, namely, that population increases in a geometrical, but the accessional nutriment only in arithmetical ratio--and that vice and misery, the natural consequences of this order of things, were intended by providence as the counterpoise. I have here no means of procuring so obscure a book, as Rudgard's; but to the best of my recollection, at the time that the Fifth Monarchy enthusiasts created so great a sensation in England, under the Protectorate, and the beginning of Charles the Second's reign, Rudgard, or Rutgard (I am not positive even of the name) wrote an Essay to the same purpose, in which he asserted, that if war, pestilence, vice, and poverty, were wholly removed, the world could not exist two hundred years, etc. Seiffmilts, [2] in his great work concerning the divine order and regularity in the destiny of the human race, has a chapter entitled a confutation of this idea; I read it with great eagerness, and found therein that this idea militated against the glory and goodness of God, and must therefore be false,--but further confutation found I none!--This book of Seiffmilts has a prodigious

character throughout Germany; and never methinks did a work less deserve it. It is in three huge octavos, and wholly on the general laws that regulate the population of the human species--but is throughout most unphilosophical, and the tables, which he has collected with great industry, prove nothing. My objections to the Essay on Population you will find in my sixth letter at large--but do not, my dear sir, suppose that because unconvinced by this essay, I am therefore convinced of the contrary. No, God knows, I am sufficiently sceptical, and in truth more than sceptical, concerning the possibility of universal plenty and wisdom; but my doubts rest on other grounds. I had some conversation with you before I left England, on this subject; and from that time I had purposed to myself to examine as thoroughly as it was possible for me, the important question. Is the march of the human race progressive, or in cycles? But more of this when we meet.

What have I done in Germany? I have learned the language, both high and low German, I can read both, and speak the former so fluently, that it must be a fortune for a German to be in my company, that is, I have words enough and phrases enough, and I arrange them tolerably; but my pronunciation is hideous. 2ndly, I can read the oldest German, the Frankish, and the Swabian. 3rdly. I have attended the lectures on Physiology, Anatomy, and Natural History, with regularity, and have endeavoured to understand these subjects. 4thly, I have read and made collections for a history of the "Belles Lettres," in Germany, before the time of Lessing: and 5thly, very large collections for a "Life of Lessing"; to which I was led by the miserably bad and unsatisfactory biographies that have been hitherto given, and by my personal acquaintance with two of Lessing's friends. Soon after I came into Germany, I made up my mind fully not to publish anything concerning my Travels, as people call them; yet I soon perceived that with all possible economy, my expenses would be greater than I could justify, unless I did something that would to a moral certainty repay them. I chose the "Life of Lessing" for the reasons above assigned, and because it would give me an opportunity of conveying under a better name than my own ever will be, opinions which I deem of the highest importance. Accordingly, my main business at Gottingen has been to read all the numerous controversies in which Lessing was engaged, and the works of all those German poets before the time of Lessing, which I could not afford to buy. For these last four months, with the exception of last week, in which I visited the Hartz, 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, and with a view to the one work, to which I hope to dedicate in silence, the prime of my life; but I believe and indeed doubt not, that before Christmas I shall have repaid myself. [3]

I never, to the best of my recollection, felt the fear of death but once; that was yesterday when I delivered the picture to Hamilton. I felt, and shivered as I felt it, that I should not like to die by land or water before I see my wife and the little one; that I hope yet remains to me. But it was an idle sort of feeling, and I should not like to have it again. Poole half mentioned, in a hasty way, a circumstance

that depressed my spirits for many days:--that you and Thomas were on the point of settling near Stowey, but had abandoned it. "God Almighty! what a dream of happiness it held out to me!" writes Poole. I felt disappointment without having had hope.

In about a month I hope to see you. Till then may heaven bless and preserve us! Believe me, my dear sir, with every feeling of love, esteem, and gratitude,

Your affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

(Josiah Wedgwood, Esq.) [4]

[Footnote 1: Malthas on Population, 1798.]

[Footnote 2: Should be Syssmilch.]

[Footnote 3: Cottle here omits a part of this letter about pecuniary matters.]

[Footnote 4: Letters XCIX-CIII follow Letter 85.]

It is interesting to compare this letter with that to Poole of 6th May 1796; it will be seen that Coleridge thus carried out his project of three years before. He had been able to convince the Wedgwoods of the desirability of introducing a knowledge of the German philosophy into England to refute the philosophy of Hume and expose the shallowness of the metaphysics of Locke and the Paley School of Theology. Tom Wedgwood was himself a philosopher, and saw in Coleridge the champion of a new basis of faith, and hence the friendship between them, and the support of the Wedgwoods to Coleridge in carrying out his self-education.

Coleridge returned to England about a month after the Wordsworths, in July, 1799, and he reached Stowey before the 29th, when he wrote to Southey, and the two worked in concert for the publication of an annual started as the 'Annual Anthology', of which two volumes appeared, one in 1799 and one in 1800, Coleridge contributing some of his poems to the latter. 'The Devil's Thoughts', a conjoint squib which caused some sensation was sent to the 'Morning Post' on 6th September.

Coleridge spent a part of the Autumn of 1799 at Ottery St. Mary visiting his mother and brothers. Coleridge then went to Southey at Exeter, and they visited the ash dells round about Dartmoor together ('Letters', 305). Coleridge also saw Josiah Wedgwood at his seat of Upcott on his way home; and on 15th October we find him back at Stowey ('Letters', 307). Still later he went north to see Wordsworth who was staying at Sockburn on the Tees with the Hutchinsons. Cottle accompanied them as far as Greta Bridge, where John Wordsworth joined their company. Coleridge and William and John Wordsworth then went on tour to the Lake District, visiting Grasmere, when Wordsworth made

arrangements to take a house at Townend (now known as Dove Cottage), and came back to Sockburn (Knight's 'Life of Wordsworth', chap. xii). It was at Sockburn that Coleridge first met Sarah Hutchinson; and here it is conjectured he wrote his beautiful poem 'Love', which appeared in its first form in the 'Morning Post', on 21st December 1799, prefaced with the following letter.

LETTER 86. TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'MORNING POST' WITH THE POEM 'LOVE', FIRST PUBLISHED AS 'INTRODUCTION TO THE TALE OF THE DARK LADIE'.

21 December, 1799.

Sir,

The following poem is the introduction to a somewhat longer one, for which I shall solicit insertion on your next open day. The use of the old ballad word 'Ladie' for Lady, is the only piece of obsolescence in it; and as it is professedly a tale of ancient times, I trust that "the affectionate lovers of venerable antiquity," (as Cambden says) will grant me their pardon, and perhaps may be induced to admit a force and propriety in it. A heavier objection may be adduced against the Author, that in these times of fear and expectation, when novelties 'explode' around us in all directions, he should presume to offer to the public a silly tale of old-fashioned love; and five years ago, I own, I should have allowed and felt the force of this objection. But, alas! explosion has succeeded explosion so rapidly that novelty itself ceases to appear new; and it is possible that now, even a simple story wholly unspiced with politics or personality, may find some attention amid the hubbub of Revolutions, as to those who have remained a long time by the falls of Niagara, the lowest whispering becomes distinctly audible.

S. T. COLERIDGE.[1]

[Footnote 1: Letter CIV follows 86.]

This was followed on 10th January 1800 by the political verses 'Talleyrand to Lord Grenville', heralded by a letter as good as, if not better than, the verses.

LETTER 87. TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'MORNING POST' WITH 'TALLEYRAND TO LORD GRENVILLE', A METRICAL EPISTLE.

10 January, 1800.

Mr. Editor,

An unmetrical letter from Talleyrand to Lord Grenville has already appeared, and from an authority too high to be questioned: otherwise I could adduce some arguments for the exclusive authenticity of the following metrical epistle. The very epithet which the wise ancients used, "aurea carmina" might have been supposed likely to have determined the choice of the French minister in favour of verse; and the rather when we recollect that this phrase of "golden verses" is applied emphatically to the works of that philosopher who imposed 'silence' on all with whom he had to deal. Besides, is it not somewhat improbable that Talleyrand should have preferred prose to rhyme, when the latter alone 'has got the chink'? Is it not likewise curious that in our official answer no notice whatever is taken of the Chief Consul, Bonaparte, as if there had been no such person existing; notwithstanding that his existence is pretty generally admitted, nay that some have been so rash as to believe that he has created as great a sensation in the world as Lord Grenville, or even the Duke of Portland? But the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Talleyrand, 'is' acknowledged, which, in our opinion, could not have happened had he written only that insignificant prose letter, which seems to precede Bonaparte's, as in old romances a dwarf always ran before to proclaim the advent or arrival of knight or giant. That Talleyrand's character and practices more resemble those of some 'regular' Governments than Bonaparte's I admit; but this of itself does not appear a satisfactory explanation. However, let the letter speak for itself. The second line is supererogative in syllables, whether from the oscitancy of the transcriber, or from the trepidation which might have overpowered the modest Frenchman, on finding himself in the act of writing to so 'great' a man, I shall not dare to determine. A few notes are added by,

Your servant,

GNOME.

P.S.--As mottoes are now fashionable, especially if taken from out of the way books, you may prefix, if you please, the following lines from Sidonius Apollinaris:

Saxa, et robora, corneasque fibras  
Mollit dulciloquiâcanorus arte!

Coleridge had arrived in London in the end of November (Dyke-Campbell's 'Life', 105); and Mrs. Coleridge and Hartley were also at 21, Buckingham Street, Strand, on 9th December ('Letters', 318). He was now a regular contributor to the 'Morning Post', Stuart, the proprietor paying all expenses ('Letters', 310),[1] Coleridge, too, had made the acquaintance of Godwin ('Letters', p. 316), whom he had castigated in the 'Watchman', and who, he says, "is no great things in intellects; but in heart and manner he is all the better for having been the husband of Mary Wollstonecraft" ('Letters', 316). He began a

correspondence with Godwin, and of the eighteen letters by Coleridge to him we are enabled to give nine. Lamb was the means of drawing Coleridge and Godwin together, and in Lamb's letters of this period ('Ainger', i, 111, 113, 115), we find glimpses of Coleridge while engaged on his translation of 'Wallenstein'.

While in London Coleridge did not neglect his friends elsewhere; we have interesting letters to the Wedgwoods, Poole, and Southey. The next three letters are from London.

[Footnote 1: For an account of Coleridge as a journalist see Mr. H. D. Traill's 'Life of Coleridge', p. 79.]

#### LETTER 88. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD

21, Buckingham Street, Strand, January, 1800.

My dear sir,

I am sitting by a fire in a rug great coat. Your room is doubtless to a greater degree air tight than mine, or your notions of Tartarus would veer round to the Greenlander's creed. It is most barbarously cold, and you, I fear, can shield yourself from it, only by perpetual imprisonment. If any place in the southern climates were in a state of real quiet, and likely to continue so, should you feel no inclination to migrate? Poor Southey, from over great industry, as I suspect, the industry too of solitary composition, has reduced himself to a terrible state of weakness, and is determined to leave this country as soon as he has finished the poem on which he is now employed. 'Tis a melancholy thing that so young a man, and one whose life has ever been so simple and self-denying \* \* \*

O, for a peace, and the south of France! I could almost wish for a Bourbon king, if it were only that Sieyes and Buonaparte might finish their career in the old orthodox way of hanging. Thank God, "I have my health perfectly", and I am working hard; yet the present state of human affairs presses on me for days together, so as to deprive me of all my cheerfulness. It is probable that a man's private and personal connexions and interests ought to be uppermost in his daily and hourly thoughts, and that the dedication of much hope and fear to subjects which are perhaps disproportionate to our faculties and powers, is a disease. But I have had this disease so long, and my early education was so undomestic, that I know not how to get rid of it; or even to wish to get rid of it. Life were so flat a thing without enthusiasm, that if for a moment it leaves me, I have a sort of stomach sensation attached to all my thoughts, "like those which succeed to the pleasurable operations of a dose of opium".

Now I make up my mind to a sort of heroism in believing the progressiveness of all nature, during the present melancholy state of

humanity, and on this subject "I am now writing"; and no work on which I ever employed myself makes me so happy while I am writing.

I shall remain in London till April. The expenses of my last year made it necessary for me to exert my industry, and many other good ends are answered at the same time. Where I next settle I shall continue, and that must be in a state of retirement and rustication. It is therefore good for me to have a run of society, and that various and consisting of marked characters. Likewise, by being obliged to write without much elaboration, I shall greatly improve myself in naturalness and facility of style, and the particular subjects on which I write for money are nearly connected with my future schemes. My mornings I give to compilations which I am sure cannot be wholly useless, and for which, by the beginning of April I shall have earned nearly £150. My evenings to the "Theatres", as I am to conduct a sort of Dramaturgy or series of Essays on the Drama, both its general principles, and likewise in reference to the present state of the English Theatres. This I shall publish in the "Morning Post". My attendance on the theatres costs me nothing, and Stuart, the Editor, covers my expenses in London. Two mornings, and one whole day, I dedicate to these Essays on the possible progressiveness of man, and on the principles of population. In April I retire to my greater works,--"The Life of Lessing". My German chests are arrived, but I have them not yet, but expect them from Stowey daily; when they come I shall send a letter.

I have seen a good deal of Godwin, who has just published a Novel. I like him for thinking so well of Davy. He talks of him every where as the most extraordinary of human beings he had ever met with. I cannot say that, for I know "one" whom I feel to be the superior, but I never met with so extraordinary a "young man". I have likewise dined with Horne Tooke. He is a clear-headed old man, as every man must needs be who attends to the real import of words, but there is a sort of charlatany in his manner that did not please me. He makes such a mystery out of plain and palpable things, and never tells you any thing without first exciting, and detaining your curiosity. But it were a bad heart that could not pardon worse faults than these in the author of "The Diversions of Purley".

Believe me, my dear sir, with much affection

Yours,

S. T. COLERIDGE. [1]

Thomas Wedgwood, Esq.

[Footnote 1: Letter CV follows our No. 88.]

LETTER 89. TO JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

21, Buckingham Street, Feb. 1800.

My dear sir,

Your brother's health (Mr. Thomas Wedgwood) outweighs all other considerations. Beyond a doubt he has made himself acquainted with the degree of heat which he is to experience there (the West Indies). The only objections that I see are so obvious, that it is idle in me to mention them: the total want of men with whose pursuits your brother can have a fellow feeling: the length and difficulty of the return, in case of a disappointment; and the necessity of sea-voyages to almost every change of scenery. I will not think of the yellow fever; that I hope is quite out of all probability. Believe me, my dear friend, I have some difficulty in suppressing all that is within me of affection and grief. God knows my heart, wherever your brother is, I shall follow him in spirit; follow him with my thoughts and most affectionate wishes.

I read your letter, and did as you desired me. ---- [1] is very cool to me. Whether I have still any of the leaven of the "Citizen," and visionary about me--too much for his present zeal, or whether he is incapable of attending \* \* \* \* As to his views, he is now gone to Cambridge to canvass for a Fellowship in Trinity Hall. Mackintosh has kindly written to Dr. Lawrence, who is very intimate with the Master, and he has other interest. He is also trying hard, and in expectation of a Commissionership of Bankruptcy, and means to pursue the law with all ardour and steadiness. As to the state of his mind, it is that which it was and will be. God love him! He has a most incurable forehead. ---- [2] called on him and looking on his table, saw by accident a letter directed to himself.

Said he, "Why ---- [3] what letter is this for me? and from ----." [4]

"Yes I have had it some time."

"Why did you not give it me?"

"Oh, it wants some explanation first. You must not read it now, for I can't give you the explanation now."

And ----,[5] who you know is a right easy-natured man, has not been able to get his own letter from him to this hour! Of his success at Cambridge, Caldwell, is doubtful, or more than doubtful. \* \* \*

So much of ----.[6] All that I know, and all I suspect that is to be known. A kind, gentlemanly, affectionate hearted man, possessed of an absolute talent for industry. Would to God, he had never heard of Philosophy!

I have been three times to the House of Commons; each time earlier than the former; and each time hideously crowded. The two first days the debate was put off. Yesterday I went at a quarter before eight, and remained till three this morning, and then sat writing and correcting other men's writing till eight--a good twenty four hours of unpleasant activity! I have not felt myself sleepy yet. Pitt and Fox completely answered my pre-formed ideas of them. The elegance and high finish of Pitt's periods, even in the most sudden replies, is "curious," but that is all. He argues but so so, and does not reason at all. Nothing is rememberable of what he says. Fox possesses all the full and overflowing eloquence of a man of clear head, clear heart, and impetuous feelings.

He is to my mind a great orator; all the rest that spoke were mere creatures. I could make a better speech myself than any that I heard, except Pitt and Fox. I reported that part of Pitt's which I have enclosed in brackets, not that I report ex-officio, but my curiosity having led me there, I did Stuart a service by taking a few notes.

I work from morning to night, but in a few weeks I shall have completed my purpose, and then adieu to London for ever. We newspaper scribes are true galley-slaves. When the high winds of events blow loud and frequent then the sails are hoisted, or the ship drives on of itself. When all is calm and sunshine then to our oars. Yet it is not unflattering to a man's vanity to reflect that what he writes at twelve at night, will before twelve hours are over, have perhaps, five or six thousand readers! To trace a happy phrase, good image, or new argument, running through the town and sliding into all the papers. Few wine merchants can boast of creating more sensation. Then to hear a favourite and often-urged argument, repeated almost in your own particular phrases, in the House of Commons; and, quietly in the silent self-complacency of your own heart, chuckle over the plagiarism, as if you were monopolist of all good reasons. But seriously, considering that I have newspapered it merely as means of subsistence, while I was doing other things, I have been very lucky. "The New Constitution; The Proposal for Peace; The Irish Union;" etc. etc.; they are important in themselves, and excellent vehicles for general truths. I am not ashamed of what I have written.

I desired Poole to send you all the papers antecedent to your own; I think you will like the different analyses of the French constitution. I have attended Mackintosh's lectures regularly; he was so kind as to send me a ticket, and I have not failed to profit by it.

I remain, with grateful and most affectionate esteem,

Your faithful friend

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Josiah Wedgwood, Esq.[7]

[Footnote 1: Basil Montagu.]

[Footnote 2: John Pinney.]

[Footnote 3: Montagu.]

[Footnote 4: Wordsworth.]

[Footnote 5: Pinney.]

[Footnote 6: Montagu.]

[Footnote 7: Letters CVI-CIX follow 89.]

## LETTER 90. TO POOLE

March, 1800.

If I had the least love of money I could make almost sure of £2,000 a year, for Stuart has offered me half shares in the two papers, the "Morning Post" and "Courier", if I would devote myself with him to them. But I told him that I would not give up the country, and the lazy reading of old folios for two thousand times two thousand pound--in short that beyond £250 a year I considered money as a real evil.--

I think there are but two good ways of writing--one for immediate and wide impression, though transitory--the other for permanence. Newspapers are the first--the best one can do is the second. That middle class of translating books is neither the one nor the other. When I have settled myself "clear", I shall write nothing for money but for the newspaper. You of course will not hint a word of Stuart's offer to me. He has behaved with abundant honour and generosity.

## CHAPTER IX

### KESWICK

Coleridge had determined not to live in London; his engagement with Stuart he regarded as only a temporary shift to clear off some debt which he had incurred in his visit to Germany. After a short stay with Lamb ("Ainger", i, 113), and a tour to the North to see Wordsworth (J. Dykes Campbell's "Life", 113), he returned to Stowey, writing to Godwin on 21st May.

## LETTER 91. TO GODWIN

Wednesday, May 21, 1800.

Dear Godwin,

I received your letter this morning, and had I not, still I am almost confident that I should have written to you before the end of the week. Hitherto the translation of the "Wallenstein" has prevented me, not that it engrossed my time, but that it wasted and depressed my spirits, and left a sense of wearisomeness and disgust which unfitted me for anything but sleeping or immediate society. I say this because I ought to have written to you first; yet, as I am not behind you in affectionate esteem, so I would not be thought to lag in those outward and visible signs that both show and verify the inward spiritual grace. Believe me, you recur to my thoughts frequently, and never without pleasure, never without my making out of the past a little day-dream for the future. I left Wordsworth on the 4th of this month; if I cannot procure a suitable

house at Stowey I return to Cumberland and settle at Keswick, in a house of such prospect that if, according to you and Hume, impressions constitute our being, I shall have a tendency to become a god, so sublime and beautiful will be the series of my visual existence. But, whether I continue here or migrate thither, I shall be in a beautiful country, and have house-room and heart-room for you, and you must come and write your next work at my house. My dear Godwin! I remember you with so much pleasure, and our conversations so distinctly, that, I doubt not, we have been mutually benefited; but as to your poetic and physiopathic feelings, I more than suspect that dear little Fanny and Mary have had more to do in that business than I. Hartley sends his love to Mary. [1] "What, and not to Fanny?" "Yes, and to Fanny, but I'll 'have' Mary." He often talks about them.

My poor Lamb, how cruelly afflictions crowd upon him! I am glad that you think of him as I think: he 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 an hundred men of mere talents. Conversation with the latter tribe is like the use of leaden bells--one wearies by exercise. Lamb every now and then "irradiates", and the beam, though single and fine as a hair, yet is rich with colours, and I both see and feel it. In Bristol I was much with Davy, almost all day. He always talks of you with great affection, and defends you with a friendly zeal. If I settle at Keswick he will be with me in the fall of the year, and so must you: and let me tell you, Godwin, that four such men as you, I, Davy, and Wordsworth, do not meet together in one house every day in the year--I mean four men so distinct with so many sympathies. I received yesterday a letter from Southey. He arrived at Lisbon after a prosperous voyage, on the last day of April; his letter to me is dated May-Day. He girds up his loins for a great history of Portugal, which will be translated into Portuguese in the first year of the Lusitanian Republic.

Have you seen Mrs. Robinson [2] lately--how is she? Remember me in the kindest and most respectful phrases to her. I wish I knew the particulars of her complaint; for Davy has discovered a perfectly new acid by which he has restored the use of limbs to persons who had lost it for many years (one woman nine years), in cases of supposed rheumatism. At all events, Davy says, it can do no harm in Mrs. Robinson's case, and, if she will try it, he will make up a little parcel and write her a letter of instructions, etc. Tell her, and it is the truth, that Davy is exceedingly delighted with the two poems in the "Anthology".

N.B. Did you get my attempt at a tragedy from Mrs. Robinson?

To Mrs. Smith I am about to write a letter, with a book; be so kind as to inform me of her direction.

Mrs. Inchbald I do not like at all; every time I recollect her I like her less. That segment of a look at the corner of her eye--O God in heaven! it is so cold and cunning. Through worlds of wildernesses I would run away from that look, that "heart-picking" look! 'Tis

marvellous to me that you can like that woman.

I shall remain here about ten days for certain. If you have leisure and inclination in that time, write; if not, I will write to you where I am going, or at all events whither I am gone.

God bless you, and

Your sincerely affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Mr. T. Poole's,

N[ether] Stowey, Bridgwater.

Sara desires to be remembered kindly to you, and sends a kiss to Fanny, and "dear meek little Mary."

[Footnote 1: Mrs. Shelley.]

[Footnote 2: The celebrated Perdita. She died in the following December.]

Next month Coleridge wrote to Davy.

#### LETTER 92. TO HUMPHRY DAVY

Saturday Morning, Mr. T. Poole's, Nether Stowey, Somerset.

My dear Davy,

I received a very kind letter from Godwin, in which he says that he never thinks of you but with a brother's feeling of love and expectation. Indeed, I am sure he does not.

I think of translating Blumenbach's Manual of Natural History: it is very well written, and would, I think, be useful both to students, as an admirable direction to their studies, and to others it would supply a general knowledge of the subject. I will state the contents of the book:

1. Of the naturalia in general, and their divisions into three kingdoms.
2. Of organised bodies in general.
3. Of animals in general.
4. Of the mammalia.
5. Birds.
6. Amphibious.
7. Fishes.
8. Insects.
9. Worms.
10. Plants.
11. Of minerals in general.
12. Of stones and earthy fossils.
13. Of mineral salts.
14. Combustible minerals.
15. Of metals.
16. Petrifications.

At the end there is an alphabetical index, so that it is at once a natural history and a dictionary of natural history. To each animal, etc., all the European names are given, with of course the scientific characteristics. I have the last edition, "i.e.", that of April, 1799. Now, I wish to know from you, whether there is in English

already any work of one volume (this would make 800 pages), that renders this useless. In short, should I be right in advising Longman to undertake it? Answer me as soon as you conveniently can. Blumenbach has been no very great discoverer, though he has done some respectable things in that way, but he is a man of enormous knowledge, and has an "arranging" head. Ask Beddoes, if you do not know. When you have leisure, you would do me a great service, if you would briefly state your metaphysical system of impressions, ideas, pleasures, and pains, the laws that govern them, and the reasons which induce you to consider them as essentially distinct from each other. My motive for this request is the following:--As soon as I "settle", I shall read Spinoza and Leibnitz, and I particularly wish to know wherein they agree with, and wherein differ from you. If you will do this, I promise you to send you the result, and with it my own creed.

God bless you!

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Blumenbach's book contains references to all the best writers on each subject. My friend, T. Poole, begs me to ask what, in your opinion, are the parts or properties in the oak which tan skins? and is cold water a complete menstruum for these parts or properties? I understand from Poole that nothing is so little understood as the chemical theory of tan, though nothing is of more importance in the circle of manufactures; in other words, does oak bark give out to cold water all those of its parts which tan?

Coleridge and his family at last settled down at Greta Hall in July, 1800, and he thus writes to Josiah Wedgwood of the event.

LETTER 93. To JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

July 24, 1800.

My dear sir,

I find your letter on my arrival at Grasmere, namely, dated on the 29th of June, since which time to the present, with the exception of the last few days, I have been more unwell than I have ever been since I left school. For many days I was forced to keep my bed, and when released from that incarceration, I suffered most grievously from a brace of swollen eyelids, and a head into which, on the least agitation, the blood was felt as rushing in and flowing back again, like the raking of the tide on a coast of loose stones. However, thank God, I am now coming about again.

That Tom receives such pleasure from natural scenery strikes me as it does you. The total incapability which I have found in myself to associate any but the most languid feelings, with the God-like objects

which have surrounded me, and the nauseous efforts to impress my admiration into the service of nature, has given me a sympathy with his former state of health, which I never before could have had. I wish, from the bottom of my soul, that he may be enjoying similar pleasures with those which I am now enjoying with all that newness of sensation; that voluptuous correspondence of the blood and flesh about me with breeze and sun-heat, which makes convalescence more than repay one for disease.

I parted from Poole with pain and dejection, for him, and for myself in him. I should have given Stowey a decided preference for a residence. It was likewise so conveniently situated, that I was in the way of almost all whom I love and esteem. But there was no suitable house, and no prospect of a suitable house.

\* \* \* These things would have weighed as nothing, could I have remained at Stowey, but now they come upon me to diminish my regret. Add to this, Poole's determination to spend a year or two on the continent, in case of a peace and his mother's death. God in heaven bless her! I am sure she will not live long. This is the first day of my arrival at Keswick. My house is roomy, situated on an eminence, a furlong from the town; before it an enormous garden, more than two-thirds of which is rented as a garden for sale articles; but the walks are ours. Completely behind the house are shrubberies, and a declivity planted with flourishing trees of ten or fifteen years' growth, at the bottom of which is a most delightful shaded walk, by the river Greta, a quarter of a mile in length. The room in which I sit commands from one window the Bassenthwaite lake, woods, and mountains. From the opposite, the Derwentwater and fantastic mountains of Borrowdale. Straight before is a wilderness of mountains, catching and streaming lights and shadows at all times. Behind the house, and entering into all our views, is Skiddaw.

My acquaintances here are pleasant, and at some distance is Sir Guilfred Lawson's seat, with a very large and expensive library, to which I have every reason to hope that I shall have free access. But when I have been settled here a few days longer, I will write you a minute account of my situation. Wordsworth lives twelve miles distant. In about a year's time he will probably settle at Keswick likewise. It is no small advantage here, that for two-thirds of the year we are in complete retirement. The other third is alive and swarms with tourists of all shapes, and sizes, and characters. It is the very place I would recommend to a novelist or farce writer. Besides, at that time of the year there is always hope that a friend may be among the number and miscellaneous crowd, whom this place attracts. So much for Keswick.

Have you seen my translation of "Wallenstein". It is a dull heavy play, but I entertain hopes that you will think the language for the greater part, natural, and good common sense English; to which excellence, if I can lay fair claim in any work of poetry or prose, I shall be a very singular writer, at least. I am now working at my "Introduction of the Life of Lessing", which I trust will be in the press before Christmas, that is, the "Introduction", which will be published first. God bless

you,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Josiah Wedgwood, Esq.

To Davy Coleridge wrote on the succeeding day.

#### LETTER 94. TO DAVY

Keswick, Friday Evening, July 25, 1800.

My dear Davy

Work hard, and if success do not dance up like the bubbles in the salt (with the spirit lamp under it), may the Devil and his dam take success! My dear fellow! from the window before me there is a great "camp" of mountains. Giants seem to have pitched their tents there. Each mountain is a giant's tent, and how the light streams from them. Davy! I "ache" for you to be with us.

W. Wordsworth is such a lazy fellow, that I bemire myself by making promises for him: the moment I received your letter, I wrote to him. He will, I hope, write immediately to Biggs and Cottle. At all events, those poems must not as yet be delivered up to them, because that beautiful poem, "The Brothers", which I read to you in Paul Street, I neglected to deliver to you, and that must begin the volume. I trust, however, that I have invoked the sleeping bard with a spell so potent, that he will awake and deliver up that sword of Argantyr, which is to rive the enchanter "Gaudyverse" from his crown to his foot.

What did you think of that case I translated for you from the German? That I was a well-meaning sutor who had ultra-crepidated<sup>[1]</sup> with more zeal than wisdom!! I give myself credit for that word "ultra-crepidated," it started up in my brain like a creation. I write to Tobin by this post. Godwin is gone Irelandward, on a visit to Curran, says the "Morning Post"; to Grattan, writes C. Lamb.

We drank tea the night before I left Grasmere, on the island in that lovely lake; our kettle swung over the fire, hanging from the branch of a fir-tree, and I lay and saw the woods, and mountains, and lake all trembling, and as it were idealized through the subtle smoke, which rose up from the clear, red embers of the fir-apples which we had collected: afterwards we made a glorious bonfire on the margin, by some elder bushes, whose twigs heaved and sobbed in the uprushing column of smoke, and the image of the bonfire, and of us that danced round it, ruddy, laughing faces in the twilight; the image of this in a lake, smooth as that sea, to whose waves the Son of God had said, "Peace!" May God, and all his sons, love you as I do.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Sara desires her kind remembrances. Hartley is a spirit that dances on an aspen leaf; the air that yonder sallowfaced and yawning tourist is breathing, is to my babe a perpetual nitrous oxide. Never was more joyous creature born. Pain with him is so wholly transubstantiated by the joys that had rolled on before, and rushed on after, that oftentimes five minutes after his mother has whipt him, he has gone up and asked her to whip him again.[2]

[Footnote 1: "Ne sutor ultra crepidam."]

[Footnote 2: Letter CX follows No. 94.]

Coleridge was now as enamoured of the Lake District as he had been of Stowey. On 22nd September he wrote to Godwin.

#### LETTER 95. TO GODWIN

Monday, Sept. 22, 1800.

Dear Godwin,

I received your letter, and with it the enclosed note,[1] which shall be punctually re-delivered to you on the first of October.

Your tragedy [2] to be exhibited at Christmas! I have, indeed, merely read through your letter; so it is not strange that my heart continues beating out of time. Indeed, indeed Godwin, such a stream of hope and fear rushed in on me, as I read the sentence, as you would not permit yourself to feel! If there be anything yet undreamt of in our philosophy; if it be, or if it be possible, that thought can impel thought out of the usual limit of a man's own skull and heart; if the cluster of ideas which constitute an identity, do ever connect and unite into a greater whole; if feelings could ever propagate themselves without the servile ministrations of undulating air or reflected light; I seem to feel within myself a strength and a power of desire that might dart a modifying, commanding impulse on a whole theatre. What does all this mean? Alas! that sober sense should know no other way to construe all this, than by the tame phrase, I wish you success! That which Lamb informed you is founded on truth. Mr. Sheridan sent, through the medium of Stuart, a request to Wordsworth to present a tragedy to his stage; and to me a declaration, that the failure of my piece was owing to my obstinacy in refusing any alteration. I laughed and Wordsworth smiled; but my tragedy will remain at Keswick, and Wordsworth's is not likely to emigrate from Grasmere. Wordsworth's drama is, in its present state, not fit for the stage, and he is not well enough to submit to the drudgery of making it so. Mine is fit for nothing, except to excite in the minds of good men the hope "that the young man is likely to do better." In the

first moments I thought of re-writing it, and sent to Lamb for the copy with this intent. I read an Act, and altered my opinion, and with it my wish.

Your feelings respecting Baptism are, I suppose, much like mine! At times I dwell on Man with such reverence, resolve all his follies into such grand primary laws of intellect, and in such wise so contemplate them as ever-varying incarnations of the Eternal Life--that the Llama's dung-pellet, or the cow-tail which the dying Brahmin clutches convulsively, become sanctified and sublime by the feelings which cluster round them. In that mood I exclaim, my boys shall be christened! But then another fit of moody philosophy attacks me. I look at my doted-on Hartley--he moves, he lives, he finds impulses from within and from without, he is the darling of the sun and of the breeze. Nature seems to bless him as a thing of her own. He looks at the clouds, the mountains, the living beings of the earth, and vaults and jubilates! Solemn looks and solemn words have been hitherto connected in his mind with great and magnificent objects only: with lightning, with thunder, with the waterfall blazing in the sunset. Then I say, shall I suffer him to see grave countenances and hear grave accents, while his face is sprinkled? Shall I be grave myself, and tell a lie to him? Or shall I laugh, and teach him to insult the feelings of his fellow men? Besides, are we not all in this present hour, fainting beneath the duty of Hope? From such thoughts I stand up, and vow a book of severe analysis, in which I shall tell "all" I believe to be truth in the nakedest language in which it can be told.

My wife is now quite comfortable. Surely you might come and spend the very next four weeks, not without advantage to both of us. The very glory of the place is coming on; the local genius is just arraying himself in his higher attributes. But, above all, I press it because my mind has been busied with speculations that are closely connected with those pursuits that have hitherto constituted your utility and importance: and, ardently as I wish you success on the stage, I yet cannot frame myself to the thought that you should cease to appear as a bold moral thinker. I wish you to write a book on the power of words, and the processes by which human feelings form affinities with them--in short, I wish you to "philosophize" Horne Tooke's system, and to solve the great questions--whether there be reason to hold that an action bearing the semblance of predesigning consciousness may yet be simply organic, and whether a series of such actions are possible--and close on the heels of this question would follow the old, "Is logic the essence of thinking?"--in other words, "Is thinking possible without arbitrary signs? or how far is the word arbitrary a misnomer? are not words, etc., parts and germinations of the plant, and what is the law of their growth?" In something of this order I would endeavour to destroy the old antithesis of Words and Things, elevating, as it were, Words into Things, and living things too. All the nonsense of vibrations, etc., you would, of course, dismiss.

If what I have here written appear nonsense to you, or common sense in a harlequinade of "outré" expressions, suspend your judgment till we see each other.

Yours sincerely,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

I was in the country when "Wallenstein" was published. Longman sent me down half-a-dozen--the carriage back the book was not worth.

[Footnote 1: A loan often pounds.]

[Footnote 2: "Antonio."]

Coleridge had asked Godwin to stand godfather to his child, which compliment Godwin declined. Hence the passage in the above letter on Baptism.

Davy now occupied a large part of Coleridge's attention. On 9th October he wrote:

LETTER 96. To DAVY

Thursday night, October 9, 1800.

My dear Davy,

I was right glad, glad with a "stagger" of the heart, to see your writing again. Many a moment have I had all my France and England curiosity suspended and lost, looking in the advertisement front column of the "Morning Post Gazetteer", for "Mr. Davy's Galvanic habitudes of charcoal. ..." Upon my soul, I believe there is not a letter in those words round which a world of imagery does not circumvolve; your room, the garden, the cold bath, the moonlight rocks, Barristed, Moore, and simple-looking Frere, and dreams of wonderful things attached to your name--and Skiddaw, and Glaramara, and Eagle Crag, and you, and Wordsworth, and me, on the top of them! I pray you do write to me immediately, and tell me what you mean by the possibility of your assuming a new occupation; [1] have you been successful to the extent of your expectations in your late chemical inquiries?

In your poem,[2] "impressive" is used for "impressible" or passive, is it not? If so, it is not English; life "diffusive" likewise is not English. The last stanza introduces "confusion" into my mind, and despondency--and has besides been so often said by the materialists, etc., that it is not worth repeating. If the poem had ended more originally, in short, but for the last stanza, I will venture to affirm that there were never so many lines which so uninterruptedly combined natural and beautiful words with strict philosophic truths, "i.e.", scientifically philosophic. Of the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh stanzas, I am doubtful which is the most beautiful. Do not

imagine that I cling to a fond love of future identity, but the thought which you have expressed in the last stanzas might be more grandly, and therefore more consolingly exemplified. I had forgot to say that sameness and identity are words too etymologically the same to be placed so close to each other.

As to myself, I am doing little worthy the relation. I write for Stuart in the "Morning Post", and I am compelled by the god Pecunia, which was one name of the supreme Jupiter, to give a volume of letters from Germany, which will be a decent "lounge" book, and not an atom more. The "Christabel" was running up to 1,300 lines, and was so much admired by Wordsworth, that he thought it indelicate to print two volumes with his name, in which so much of another man's was included; and which was of more consequence, the poem was in direct opposition to the very purpose for which the lyrical ballads were published, viz., an experiment to see how far those passions which alone give any value to extraordinary incidents were capable of interesting in and for themselves in the incidents of common life. We mean to publish the "Christabel", therefore, with a long blank-verse poem of Wordsworth's, entitled "The Pedlar".[3] I assure you I think very differently of "Christabel". I would rather have written "Ruth", and "Nature's Lady",[4] than a million such poems. But why do I calumniate my own spirit by saying I would rather? God knows it is as delightful to me that they "are" written. I "know" that at present, and I "hope" that it "will" be so; my mind has "disciplined" itself into a willing exertion of its powers, without any reference to their comparative value.

I cannot speak favourably of W.'s health, but indeed he has not done common justice to Dr. Beddoes's kind prescriptions. I saw his countenance darken, and all his hopes vanish, when he saw the "prescriptions"--his "scepticism" concerning medicines! nay, it is not enough "scepticism"! Yet, now that peas and beans are over, I have hopes that he will in good earnest make a fair and full trial. I rejoice with sincere joy at Beddoes's recovery.

Wordsworth is fearful you have been much teased by the printers on his account, but you can sympathise with him. The works which I gird myself up to attack as soon as money concerns will permit me, are the "Life of Lessing", and the "Essay on Poetry". The latter is still more at my heart than the former: its title would be an essay on the elements of poetry--it would in reality be a "disguised" system of morals and politics.

When you write, and do write soon, tell me how I can get your essay on the nitrous oxide. If you desired Johnson to have one sent to Lackington's, to be placed in Mr. Crosthwaite's monthly parcel for Keswick, I should receive it. Are your galvanic discoveries important? What do they lead to? All this is "ultra crepidation", but would to heaven I had as much knowledge as I have sympathy! My wife and children are well; the baby was dying some weeks ago, so the good people would have it baptized; his name is Derwent Coleridge, so called from the river, for fronting our house the Greta runs into the Derwent. Had it been a girl, the name should have been Greta. By the by, Greta, or

rather Grieta, is exactly the Cocytus of the Greeks; the word, literally rendered in modern English, is, "The loud Lamenting;" to griet, in the Cambrian dialect, signifying to roar aloud for grief or pain, and it does "roar" with a vengeance!

I will say nothing about Spring--a thirsty man tries to think of anything but the stream when he knows it to be ten miles off!

God bless you! Your most affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE.[5]

Another letter to Godwin at this time indicates that Coleridge was still expecting to be able to finish "Christabel", which as a completed poem, Coleridge, as we have already seen, calculated would run up to 1,300 lines.

[Footnote 1: No doubt the leaving of the Pneumatic for the Royal Institution.]

[Footnote 2: That entitled, "Written after Recovery from a Dangerous Illness." It is to be found in the "Memoirs of his Life", vol. i, p. 390. Coleridge's critical remarks apply to it as it was first written; the words objected to are not to be found in it in its corrected printed state.]

[Footnote 1: A name changed to "The Excursion".]

[Footnote 2: "Three years she grew in sun and shower."]

[Footnote 5: Letter CXI is our 96.]

## LETTER 97. TO GODWIN

Monday, Oct. 13, 1800.

Dear Godwin,

I have been myself too frequently a grievous delinquent in the article of letter-writing to feel any inclination to reproach my friends when, peradventure, they have been long silent. But, this out of the question, I did not expect a speedier answer; for I had anticipated the circumstances which you assign as the causes of your delay.

An attempt to finish a poem of mine for insertion in the second volume of the "Lyrical Ballads", has thrown me so fearfully back in my bread and beef occupations, that I shall scarcely be able to justify myself in putting you to the expense of the few lines which I may be able to scrawl in the present paper--but some parts in your letter interested me deeply, and I wished to tell you so. First, then, you know Kemble, and I

do not. But my conjectural judgments concerning his character lead me to persuade an absolute passive obedience to his opinion, and this, too, because I would leave to every man his own trade. "Your" trade has been, in the present instance, "first" to furnish a wise pleasure to your fellow-beings in general, and, "secondly", to give Mr. Kemble and his associates the power of delighting that part of your fellow-beings assembled in a theatre. As to what relates to the first point, I should be sorry indeed if greater men than Mr. Kemble could induce you to alter a "but" to a "yet" contrary to your own convictions. Above all things, an author ought to be sincere to the public; and, when William Godwin stands in the title-page, it implies that W. G. approves that which follows. Besides, the mind and finer feelings are blunted by such obsequiousness. But in the theatre it is Godwin and Co. "ex professo". I should regard it in almost the same light as if I had written a song for Haydn to compose and Mara to sing; I know, indeed, what is poetry, but I do not know so well as he and she what will suit his notes or her voice. That actors and managers are often wrong is true, but still their trade is "their" trade, and the presumption is in favour of their being right. For the press, I should wish you to be solicitously nice; because you are to exhibit before a larger and more respectable multitude than a theatre presents to you, and in a new part, that of a poet employing his philosophical knowledge practically. If it be possible, come, therefore, and let us discuss every page and every line.

Now for something which, I would fain believe, is still more important, namely, the propriety of your future philosophical speculations. Your second objection, derived from the present "ebb" of opinion, will be best answered by the fact that Mackintosh and his followers have the "flow". This is greatly in your favour, for mankind are at present gross reasoners. They reason in a perpetual antithesis; Mackintosh is an oracle, and Godwin therefore a fool. Now it is morally impossible that Mackintosh and the sophists of his school can retain this opinion. You may well exclaim with Job, "O that my adversary would write a book!" When he publishes, it will be all over with him, and then the minds of men will incline strongly to those who would point out in intellectual perceptions a source of moral progressiveness. Every man in his heart is in favour of your general principles. A party of dough-baked democrats of fortune were weary of being dissevered from their fellow rich men. They want to say something in defence of turning round. Mackintosh puts that something into their mouths, and for awhile they will admire and be-praise him. In a little while these men will have fallen back into the ranks from which they had stepped out, and life is too melancholy a thing for men in general for the doctrine of unprogressiveness to remain popular. Men cannot long retain their faith in the Heaven "above" the blue sky, but a Heaven they will have, and he who reasons best on the side of the universal wish will be the most popular philosopher. As to your first objection, that you are a logician, let me say that your habits are analytic, but that you have not read enough of travels, voyages, and biography--especially men's lives of themselves--and you have too soon submitted your notions to other men's censures in conversation. A man should nurse his opinions in privacy and self-fondness for a long time, and seek for sympathy and love, not for detection or censure. Dismiss, my dear fellow, your theory of Collision

of Ideas, and take up that of Mutual Propulsion. I wish to write more, and state to you a lucrative job, which would, I think, be eminently serviceable to your own mind, and which you would have every opportunity of doing here. I now express a serious wish that you would come and look out for a house. Did Stuart remit you £10. on my account?

S. T. COLERIDGE.

I would gladly write any verses, but to a prologue or epilogue I am absolutely incompetent.

Coleridge was a tremendous walker and hill climber. The following letter narrates a curious adventure in a storm among the mountains.

#### LETTER 98. TO DAVY

October 18, 1800.

My dear Davy,

Our mountains northward end in the mountain Carrock--one huge, steep, enormous bulk of stones, desolately variegated with the heath plant; at its foot runs the river Calder, and a narrow vale between it and the mountain Bowscale, so narrow, that in its greatest width it is not more than a furlong. But that narrow vale is "so" green, "so" beautiful, there are moods in which a man might weep to look at it, On this mountain Carrock, at the summit of which are the remains of a vast Druid circle of stones, I was wandering, when a thick cloud came on, and wrapped me in such darkness, that I could not see ten yards before me, and with the cloud a storm of wind and hail, the like of which I had never before seen and felt. At the very summit is a cone of stones, built by the shepherds, and called the Carrock Man. Such cones are on the tops of almost all our mountains, and they are all called "men". At the bottom of the Carrock Man I seated myself for shelter, but the wind became so fearful and tyrannous, that I was apprehensive some of the stones might topple down upon me, so I groped my way farther down and came to three rocks, placed on this wise  $\frac{1}{3} \times 2$ \*\*\* each one supported by the other like a child's house of cards, and in the hollow and screen which they made, I sate for a long while sheltered, as if I had been in my own study in which I am now writing: there I sate with a total feeling worshipping the power and "eternal link" of energy. The darkness vanished as by enchantment; far off, far, far off to the south, the mountains of Glaramara and Great Gable and their family appeared distinct, in deepest, sablest "blue". I rose, and behind me was a rainbow bright as the brightest. I descended by the side of a torrent, and passed, or rather crawled (for I was forced to descend on all fours), by many a naked waterfall, till fatigued and hungry (and with a finger almost broken, and which remains swelled to the size of two fingers), I reached the narrow vale, and the single house nestled in ash and sycamores. I entered to claim the universal hospitality of this

country; but instead of the life and comfort usual in these lonely houses, I saw dirt, and every appearance of misery--a pale woman sitting by a peat fire. I asked her for bread and milk, and she sent a small child to fetch it, but did not rise herself. I ate very heartily of the black, sour bread, and drank a bowl of milk, and asked her to permit me to pay her. "Nay," says she, "we are not so scant as that--you are right welcome; but do you know any help for the rheumatics, for I have been so long ailing that I am almost fain to die?" So I advised her to eat a great deal of mustard, having seen in an advertisement something about essence of mustard curing the most obstinate cases of rheumatism. But do write me, and tell me some cure for the rheumatism; it is in her shoulders, and the small of her back chiefly. I wish much to go off with some bottles of stuff to the poor creature. I should walk the ten miles as ten yards. With love and honour,

My dear Davy, yours,

S. T. COLERIDGE. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letter CXII is our 98.]

The next letter relates how Coleridge wrote the Second Part of "Christabel", which had been composed before 4th October (Dorothy Wordsworth's "Journals", i, 51).

#### LETTER 99. TO JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

Keswick, Nov. 1, 1800.

My dear Sir,

I would fain believe that the experiment which your brother has made in the West Indies is not wholly a discouraging one. If a warm climate did nothing but only prevented him from getting worse, it surely evidenced some power; and perhaps a climate equally favourable in a country of more various interest, Italy, or the South of France, may tempt your brother to make a longer trial. If (disciplining myself into silent cheerfulness) I could be of any comfort to him by being his companion and attendant, for two or three months, on the supposition that he should wish to travel, and was at a loss for a companion more fit, I would go with him with a willing affection. You will easily see, my dear friend, that I say this only to increase the range of your brother's choice--for even in choosing there is some pleasure.

There happen frequently little odd coincidences in time, that recall momentary faith in the notion of sympathies acting in absence. I heard of your brother's return, for the first time, on Monday last, the day on which your letter is dated, from Stoddart. Had it rained on my naked skin I could not have felt more strangely. The 300 or 400 miles that are

between us seemed converted into a moral distance; and I knew that the whole of this silence I was myself accountable for; for I ended my last letter by promising to follow it with a second and longer one, before you could answer the first. But immediately on my arrival in this country I undertook to finish a poem which I had begun, entitled "Christabel", for a second volume of the "Lyrical Ballads". I tried to perform my promise, but the deep unutterable disgust which I had suffered in the translation of the accursed "Wallenstein", seemed to have stricken me with barrenness; for I tried and tried, and nothing would come of it. I desisted with a deeper dejection than I am willing to remember. The wind from the Skiddaw and Borrowdale was often as loud as wind need be, and many a walk in the clouds in the mountains did I take; but all would not do, till one day I dined out at the house of a neighbouring clergyman, and some how or other drank so much wine, that I found some effort and dexterity requisite to balance myself on the hither edge of sobriety. The next day my verse-making faculties returned to me, and I proceeded successfully, till my poem grew so long, and in Wordsworth's opinion so impressive, that he rejected it from his volume, as disproportionate both in size and merit, and as discordant in its character. In the mean time I had gotten myself entangled in the old sorites of the old sophist,--procrastination. I had suffered my necessary businesses to accumulate so terribly, that I neglected to write to any one, till the pain I suffered from not writing made me waste as many hours in dreaming about it as would have sufficed for the letter writing of half a life. But there is something beside time requisite for the writing of a letter--at least with me. My situation here is indeed a delightful situation; but I feel what I have lost--feel it deeply--it recurs more often and more painfully than I had anticipated, indeed so much so, that I scarcely ever feel myself impelled, that is to say, pleasurably impelled to write to Poole. I used to feel myself more at home in his great windy parlour than in my own cottage. We were well suited to each other--my animal spirits corrected his inclination to melancholy; and there was something both in his understanding and in his affections, so healthy and manly, that my mind freshened in his company, and my ideas and habits of thinking acquired day after day more of substance and reality. Indeed, indeed, my dear, sir, with tears in my eyes, and with all my heart and soul, I wish it were as easy for us all to meet as it was when you lived at Upcott. Yet when I revise the step I have taken, I know not how I could have acted otherwise than I did act. Everything I promised myself in this country has answered far beyond my expectation. The room in which I write commands six distinct landscapes--the two lakes, the vale, the river and mountains, and mists, and clouds and sunshine, make endless combinations, as if heaven and earth were for ever talking to each other. Often when in a deep study, I have walked to the window and remained there looking without seeing; all at once the lake of Keswick and the fantastic mountains of Borrowdale, at the head of it, have entered into my mind, with a suddenness as if I had been snatched out of Cheapside and placed for the first time, in the spot where I stood--and that is a delightful feeling--these fits and trances of novelty received from a long known object. The river Greta flows behind our house, roaring like an untamed son of the hills, then winds round and glides away in the front, so that we live in a peninsula. But besides this

etherial eye-feeding we have very substantial conveniences. We are close to the town, where we have respectable and neighbourly acquaintance, and a most sensible and truly excellent medical man. Our garden is part of a large nursery garden, which is the same to us and as private as if the whole had been our own, and thus too we have delightful walks without passing our garden gates. My landlord who lives in the sister house, for the two houses are built so as to look like one great one, is a modest and kind man, of a singular character. By the severest economy he raised himself from a carrier into the possession of a comfortable independence. He was always very fond of reading, and has collected nearly 500 volumes, of our most esteemed modern writers, such as Gibbon, Hume, Johnson, etc. etc. His habits of economy and simplicity, remain with him, and yet so very disinterested a man I scarcely ever knew. Lately, when I wished to settle with him about the rent of our house, he appeared much affected, told me that my living near him, and the having so much of Hartley's company were great comforts to him and his housekeeper, that he had no children to provide for, and did not mean to marry; and in short, that he did not want any rent at all from me. This of course I laughed him out of; but he absolutely refused to receive any rent for the first half-year, under the pretext that the house was not completely furnished. Hartley quite lives at the house, and it is as you may suppose, no small joy to my wife to have a good affectionate motherly woman divided from her only by a wall. Eighteen miles from our house lives Sir Guilfred Lawson, who has a princely library, chiefly of natural history--a kind and generous, but weak and ostentatious sort of man, who has been abundantly civil to me. Among other raree shows, he keeps a wild beast or two, with some eagles, etc. The master of the beasts at the Exeter 'Change, sent him down a large bear,--with it a long letter of directions, concerning the food, etc. of the animal, and many solicitations respecting other agreeable quadrupeds which he was desirous to send to the baronet, at a moderate price, and concluding in this manner: "and remain your honour's most devoted humble servant, J.P. Permit me, sir Guilfred, to send you a buffalo and a rhinoceros." As neat a postscript as I ever heard--the tradesmanlike coolness with which these pretty little animals occurred to him just at the finishing of his letter! You will in three weeks see the letters on the 'Rise and Condition of the German Boors'. I found it convenient to make up a volume out of my journey, etc. in North Germany--and the letters (your name of course erased) are in the printer's hands. I was so weary of transcribing and composing, that when I found those more carefully written than the rest, I even sent them off as they were.

\* \* \* \* \*

My littlest one is a very stout boy indeed. He is christened by the name of "Derwent,"--a sort of sneaking affection you see for the poetical and novellish, which I disguised to myself under the show, that my brothers had so many children Johns, Jameses, Georges, etc. etc., that a handsome Christian-like name was not to be had except by encroaching on the names of my little nephews. If you are at Gunville at Christmas, I hold out hopes to myself that I shall be able to pass a week with you there. I mentioned to you at Upcott a kind of comedy that I had committed to writing in part. This is in the wind.

Wordsworth's second vol. of the 'Lyrical Ballads' will, I hope, and almost believe, afford you as unmingled pleasure as is in the nature of a collection of very various poems to afford to one individual mind. Sheridan has sent to him too--requests him to write a tragedy for Drury Lane. But W. will not be diverted by anything from the prosecution of his great work.

Southey's 'Thalaba', in twelve books, is going to the press.

Remember me with great affection to your brother, and present my kindest respects to Mrs. Wedgwood. Your late governess wanted one thing, which where there is health is I think indispensable in the moral character of a young person--a light and cheerful heart. She interested me a good deal. She appears to me to have been injured by going out of the common way without any of that imagination, which if it be a Jack o' Lanthorn to lead us out of our way, is however, at the same time a torch to light us whither we are going. A whole essay might be written on the danger of thinking without images. God bless you, my dear sir, and him who is with grateful and affectionate esteem,

Yours ever,

S. T. COLERIDGE

Josiah Wedgwood.

Coleridge was still in money difficulties, and the following letter is chiefly about his indebtedness to the Wedgwoods.

#### LETTER 100. TO JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

November 12, 1800.

My dear sir,

I received your kind letter, with the £20. My eyes are in such a state of inflammation that I might as well write blindfold, they are so blood-red. I have had leeches twice, and have now a blister behind my right ear. How I caught the cold, in the first instance, I can scarcely guess; but I improved it to its present glorious state, by taking long walks all the mornings, spite of the wind, and writing late at night, while my eyes were weak.

I have made some rather curious observations on the rising up of spectra in the eye, in its inflamed state, and their influence on ideas, etc., but I cannot see to make myself intelligible to you. Present my kindest remembrance to Mrs. W. and your brother. Pray did you ever pay any particular attention to the first time of your little ones smiling and

laughing? Both I and Mrs. C. have carefully watched our little one, and noticed down all the circumstances, under which he smiled, and under which he laughed, for the first six times, nor have we remitted our attention; but I have not been able to derive the least confirmation of Hartley's or Darwin's Theory. You say most truly, my dear sir, that a pursuit is necessary. Pursuit, for even praiseworthy employment, merely for good, or general good, is not sufficient for happiness, nor fit for man.

I have not at present made out how I stand in pecuniary ways, but I believe that I have anticipated on the next year to the amount of Thirty or Forty pounds, probably more. God bless you, my dear sir, and your sincerely

Affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Josiah Wedgwood, Esq.

The publication of the "Wallenstein" had brought on Coleridge the odium of being an advocate of the German Theatre, at this time identified with the melo-dramatic sentimentalism of Kotzebue and his school. English opinion did not then discriminate between a Schiller and a Kotzebue. The following curious disclaimer appeared in the "Monthly Review" on 18th November 1800.

LETTER 101. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MONTHLY REVIEW".

Greta Hall, Keswick,

Nov. 18, 1800.

In the review of my translation of Schiller's "Wallenstein" ("Rev". for October), I am numbered among the partisans of the German theatre. As I am confident there is no passage in my preface or notes from which such an opinion can be legitimately formed, and as the truth would not have been exceeded if the direct contrary had been affirmed, I claim it of your justice that in your Answers to Correspondents you would remove this misrepresentation. The mere circumstance of translating a manuscript play is not even evidence that I admired that one play, much less that I am a general admirer of the plays in that language.

I remain, etc.,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

During the latter half of 1800 Dorothy Wordsworth's "Journal" contains many entries showing that Coleridge and the Wordsworths were in frequent communication with each other. Coleridge thought nothing of traversing

the dozen miles between Keswick and Dove Cottage by the highway, or over the hill passes. Wordsworth and Dorothy, too, went often to Keswick, and occasionally stayed with the Coleridges ("Grasmere Journals", i, 43-60).

Amid these literary and poetic meetings between the poets and their families, other correspondents were not forgotten by Coleridge. The following two letters to Davy indicate that the poets were taking some interest in science.

#### LETTER 102. TO DAVY

Greta Hall, Tuesday night, December 2, 1800.

My dear Davy,

By an accident I did not receive your letter till this evening. I would that you had added to the account of your indisposition the probable causes of it. It has left me anxious whether or no you have not exposed yourself to unwholesome influences in your chemical pursuits. There are "few" beings both of hope and performance, but few who combine the "are" and the "will be." For God's sake, therefore, my dear fellow, do not rip open the bird that lays the golden eggs. I have not received your book. I read yesterday a sort of medical review about it. I suppose Longman will send it to me when he sends down the "Lyrical Ballads" to Wordsworth. I am solicitous to read the latter part. Did there appear to you any remote analogy between the case I translated from the German Magazine and the effects produced by your gas? Did Carlisle[1] ever communicate to you, or has he in any way published his facts concerning "pain", which he mentioned when we were with him? It is a subject which "exceedingly interests" me. I want to read something by somebody expressly on "pain", if only to give an "arrangement" to my own thoughts, though if it were well treated, I have little doubt it would revolutionize them. For the last month I have been trembling on through sands and swamps of evil and bodily grievance. My eyes have been inflamed to a degree that rendered reading and writing scarcely possible; and strange as it seems, the act of metre composition, as I lay in bed, perceptibly affected them, and my voluntary ideas were every minute passing, more or less transformed into vivid spectra. I had leeches repeatedly applied to my temples, and a blister behind my ear--and my eyes are now my own, but in the place where the blister was, six small but excruciating boils have appeared, and harass me almost beyond endurance. In the meantime my darling Hartley has been taken with a stomach illness, which has ended in the yellow jaundice; and this greatly alarms me. So much for the doleful! Amid all these changes, and humiliations, and fears, the sense of the Eternal abides in me, and preserves unsubdued my cheerful faith, that all I endure is full of blessings!

At times, indeed, I would fain be somewhat of a more tangible utility than I am; but so I suppose it is with all of us--one while cheerful,

stirring, feeling in resistance nothing but a joy and a stimulus;  
another while drowsy, self-distrusting, prone to rest, loathing our own  
self-promises, withering our own hopes--our hopes, the vitality and  
cohesion of our being!

I purpose to have 'Christabel' published by itself--this I publish  
with confidence--but my travels in Germany come from me now with mortal  
pangs. Nothing but the most pressing necessity could have induced  
me--and even now I hesitate and tremble. Be so good as to have all that  
is printed of 'Christabel' sent to me per post.

Wordsworth has nearly finished the concluding poem. It is of a mild,  
unimposing character, but full of beauties to those short-necked men who  
have their hearts sufficiently near their heads--the relative distance  
of which (according to citizen Tourder, the French translator of  
Spallanzani) determines the sagacity or stupidity of all bipeds and  
quadrupeds.

There is a deep blue cloud over the heavens; the lake, and the vale, and  
the mountains, are all in darkness; only the 'summits' of all the  
mountains in long ridges, covered with snow, are bright to a dazzling  
excess. A glorious scene! Hartley was in my arms the other evening,  
looking at the sky; he saw the moon glide into a large cloud. Shortly  
after, at another part of the cloud, several stars sailed in. Says he,  
"Pretty creatures! they are going in to see after their mother moon."

Remember me kindly to King. Write as often as you can; but above all  
things, my loved and honoured dear fellow, do not give up the idea of  
letting me and Skiddaw see you.

God love you!

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Tobin writes me that Thompson [2] has made some lucrative discovery. Do  
you know aught about it? Have you seen T. Wedgwood since his return? [3]

[Footnote 1: Afterwards Sir Antony, a distinguished surgeon.]

[Footnote 2: The late Mr. James Thompson, of Clitheroe.]

[Footnote 3: Letter CXIII is our 102; CXIV follows 102]

LETTER 103. TO DAVY

February 3, 1801.

My dear Davy--

I can scarcely reconcile it to my conscience to make you pay postage for

another letter. O, what a fine unveiling of modern politics it would be if there were published a minute detail of all the sums received by Government from the Post establishment, and of all the outlets in which the sums so received flowed out again; and, on the other hand, all the domestic affections that had been stifled, all the intellectual progress that would have been, but is not, on account of the heavy tax, etc., etc. The letters of a nation ought to be paid for as an article of national expense. Well! but I did not take up this paper to flourish away in splenetic politics. A gentleman resident here, his name Calvert, an idle, good-hearted, and ingenious man, has a great desire to commence fellow-student with me and Wordsworth in chemistry. He is an intimate friend of Wordsworth's, and he has proposed to W. to take a house which he (Calvert) has nearly built, called Windy Brow, in a delicious situation, scarce half a mile from Greta Hall, the residence of S. T. Coleridge, Esq., and so for him (Calvert) to live with them, 'i.e.', Wordsworth and his sister. In this case he means to build a little laboratory, etc. Wordsworth has not quite decided, but is strongly inclined to adopt the scheme, because he and his sister have before lived with Calvert on the same footing, and are much attached to him: because my health is so precarious and so much injured by wet, and his health, too, is like little potatoes, no great things, and therefore Grasmere ("thirteen" miles from Keswick) is too great a distance for us to enjoy each other's society, without inconvenience, as much as it would be profitable for us both: and likewise because he feels it more necessary for him to have some intellectual pursuit less closely connected with deep passion than poetry, and is of course desirous, too, not to be so wholly ignorant of knowledge so exceedingly important. However, whether Wordsworth come or no, Calvert and I have determined to begin and go on. Calvert is a man of sense and some originality, and is besides what is well called a handy man. He is a good practical mechanic, etc., and is desirous to lay out any sum of money that is necessary. You know how long, how ardently I have wished to initiate myself in Chemical science, both for its own sake, and in no small degree likewise, my beloved friend, that I may be able to sympathize with all that you do and think. Sympathize blindly with it all I do even "now", God knows! from the very middle of my heart's heart, but I would fain sympathize with you in the light of knowledge. This opportunity is exceedingly precious to me, as on my own account I could not afford the least additional expense, having been already, by long and successive illnesses, thrown behindhand, so much, that for the next four or five months, I fear, let me work as hard as I can, I shall not be able to do what my heart within me "burns" to do, that is, to "concenter" my free mind to the affinities of the feelings with words and ideas under the title of "Concerning Poetry, and the nature of the Pleasures derived from it". I have faith that I do understand the subject, and I am sure that if I write what I ought to do on it, the work would supersede all the books of metaphysics, and all the books of morals too. To whom shall a young man utter "his pride", if not to a young man whom he loves?

I beg you, therefore, my dear Davy, to write to me a long letter when you are at leisure, informing me:--Firstly, What books it will be well for me and Calvert to purchase. Secondly, Directions for a convenient little laboratory. Thirdly, To what amount apparatus would run in

expense, and whether or no you would be so good as to superintend its making at Bristol. Fourthly, Give me your advice how to "begin". And, fifthly, and lastly, and mostly, do send a "drop" of hope to my parched tongue, that you will, if you can, come and visit me in the spring. Indeed, indeed, you ought to see this country, this beautiful country, and then the joy you would send into me!

The shape of this paper will convince you with what eagerness I began this letter; I really did not see that it was not a sheet.

I have been 'thinking' vigorously during my illness, so that I cannot say that my long, long wakeful nights have been all lost to me. The subject of my meditations has been the relations of thoughts to things--in the language of Hume, of ideas to impressions. I may be truly described in the words of Descartes: I have been "res cogitans, id est, dubitans, affirmans, negans, pauca intelligens, multa ignorans, volens, nolens, imaginans etiam, et sentiens." I please myself with believing that you will receive no small pleasure from the result of these broodings, although I expect in you (in some points) a determined opponent, but I say of my mind in this respect: "Manet imperterritus ille hostem magnanimum opperens, et mole sua stat." Every poor fellow has his proud hour sometimes, and this I suppose is mine.

I am better in every respect than I was, but am still 'very feeble'. The weather has been woefully against me for the last fortnight, having rained here almost incessantly. I take quantities of bark, but the effect is (to express myself with the dignity of science) "x" = 0000000, and I shall not gather strength, or that little suffusion of bloom which belongs to my healthy state, till I can walk out.

God bless you, my dear Davy! and

Your ever affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S.--An electrical machine, and a number of little nicknacks connected with it, Mr. Calvert has.--"Write".[1]

[Footnote I: Letter CXV is our 103.]

Josiah Wade, the early Bristol friend of Coleridge, who probably was one of the three friends who assisted him with funds to start 'The Watchman', was now intending to travel in Germany. He applied to Coleridge for advice regarding the mode of travelling, and Coleridge tendered his counsel in the following characteristic epistle.

LETTER 104. To JOSIAH WADE

March 6, 1801.

My very dear friend,

I have even now received your letter. My habits of thinking and feeling, have not hitherto inclined me to personify commerce in any such shape, so as to tempt me to turn pagan, and offer vows to the goddess of our isle. But when I read that sentence in your letter, "The time will come I trust, when I shall be able to pitch my tent in your neighbourhood," I was most potently commanded [1] to a breach of the second commandment, and on my knees, to entreat the said goddess to touch your bank notes and guineas with her magical multiplying wand. I could offer such a prayer for you, with a better conscience than for most men, because I know that you have never lost that healthy common sense, which regards money only as the means of independence, and that you would sooner than most men cry out, enough! enough! To see one's children secured against want, is doubtless a delightful thing; but to wish to see them begin the world as rich men, is unwise to ourselves, for it permits no close of our labours, and is pernicious to them; for it leaves no motive to their exertions, none of those sympathies with the industrious and the poor, which form at once the true relish and proper antidote of wealth.

\* \* \* Is not March rather a perilous month for the voyage from Yarmouth to Hamburg? Danger there is very little, in the packets, but I know what inconvenience rough weather brings with it; not from my own feelings, for I am never sea-sick, but always in exceeding high spirits on board ship, but from what I see in others. But you are an old sailor. At Hamburg I have not a shadow of acquaintance. My letters of introduction produced for me, with one exception, viz., Klopstock, the brother of the poet, no real service, but merely distant and ostentatious civility. And Klopstock will by this time have forgotten my name, which indeed he never properly knew, for I could speak only English and Latin, and he only French and German. At Ratzeburg, 35 English miles N.E. from Hamburg, on the road to Lubec, I resided four months; and I should hope, was not unbeloved by more than one family, but this is out of your route. At Gottingen I stayed near five months, but here I knew only students, who will have left the place by this time, and the high learned professors, only one of whom could speak English; and they are so wholly engaged in their academical occupations, that they would be of no service to you. Other acquaintance in Germany I have none, and connexion I never had any. For though I was much entreated by some of the Literati to correspond with them, yet my natural laziness, with the little value I attach to literary men, as literary men, and with my aversion from those letters which are to be made up of studied sense, and unfelt compliments, combined to prevent me from availing myself of the offer. Herein, and in similar instances, with English authors of repute, I have ill consulted the growth of my reputation and fame. But I have cheerful and confident hopes of myself. If I can hereafter do good to my fellow-creatures as a poet, and as a metaphysician, they will know it; and any other fame than this, I consider as a serious evil, that would only take me from out the number and sympathy of ordinary men, to make a coxcomb of me.

As to the inns or hotels at Hamburg, I should recommend you to some German inn. Wordsworth and I were at the "Der Wilde Man," and dirty as it was, I could not find any inn in Germany very much cleaner, except at Lubeck. But if you go to an English inn, for heaven's sake, avoid the "Shakspeare," at Altona, and the "King of England," at Hamburg. They are houses of plunder rather than entertainment. "The Duke of York" hotel, kept by Seaman, has a better reputation, and thither I would advise you to repair; and I advise you to pay your bill every morning at breakfast time: it is the only way to escape imposition. What the Hamburg merchants may be I know not, but the tradesmen are knaves. Scoundrels, with yellow-white phizzes, that bring disgrace on the complexion of a bad tallow candle. Now as to carriage, I know scarcely what to advise; only make up your mind to the very worst vehicles, with the very worst horses, drawn by the very worst postillions, over the very worst roads, and halting two hours at each time they change horses, at the very worst inns; and you have a fair, unexaggerated picture of travelling in North Germany. The cheapest way is the best; go by the common post wagons, or stage coaches. What are called extraordinaries, or post-chaises, are little wicker carts, uncovered, with moveable benches or forms in them, execrable in every respect. And if you buy a vehicle at Hamburg, you can get none decent under thirty or forty guineas, and very probably it will break to pieces on the infernal roads. The canal boats are delightful, but the porters everywhere in the United Provinces, are an impudent, abominable, and dishonest race. You must carry as little luggage as you well can with you, in the canal boats, and when you land, get recommended to an inn beforehand, and bargain with the porters first of all, and never lose sight of them, or you may never see your portmanteau or baggage again.

My Sarah desires her love to you and yours. God bless your dear little ones! Make haste and get rich, dear friend! and bring up the little creatures to be playfellows and school-fellows with my little ones!

Again and again, sea serve you, wind speed you, all things turn out good to you! God bless you,

S. T. COLERIDGE. [2]

John Stoddart, a friend of Coleridge, visited him while at Keswick in the month of October, 1800, and saw the Wordsworths at Grasmere (Dorothy Wordsworth's 'Journal', i, 55)--It was then that Stoddart obtained a copy of 'Christabel', and read it shortly afterwards [3] to Sir Walter Scott, then busy with his 'Border Minstrelsy'. The beauty of 'Christabel' touched Sir Walter's romantic imagination, and echoes of the poem are discernible in the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' and the 'Bridal of Tryermain'.

But Coleridge, in spite of many attempts, could not complete the piece, and had to give up the endeavour. In a letter to Godwin of 25th March 1801, Coleridge thus laments what was practically the end of his career as a poet:

[Footnote 1: "Tempted," E.R., ii, 18.]

[Footnote 2: Letters CXVI-CXVII follow 104.]

[Footnote 3: In 1802.]

LETTER 105. To GODWIN.

Wednesday, March 25, 1801.

Dear Godwin,

I fear your tragedy [1] will find me in a very unfit state of mind to sit in judgment on it. I have been during the last three months undergoing a process of intellectual exsiccation. During my long illness I had compelled into hours of delight many a sleepless painful hour of darkness by chasing down metaphysical game, and since then I have continued the hunt, till I found myself, unaware, at the root of pure mathematics, and up that tall smooth tree, whose few poor branches are all at the very summit, am I climbing by pure adhesive strength of arms and thighs, still slipping down, still renewing my ascent. You would not know me! All sounds of similitude keep at such a distance from each other in my mind, that I have forgotten how to make a rhyme. I look at the mountains (that visible God Almighty that looks in at all my windows)--I look at the mountains only for the curves of their outlines; the stars, as I behold them, form themselves into triangles; and my hands are scarred with scratches from a cat, whose back I was rubbing in the dark in order to see whether the sparks from it were refrangible by a prism. The Poet is dead in me; my imagination (or rather the Somewhat that had been imaginative) lies like a cold snuff on the circular rim of a brass candlestick, without even a stink of tallow to remind you that it was once clothed and mitred with flame. That is past by. I was once a volume of gold leaf, rising and riding on every breath of Fancy, but I have beaten myself back into weight and density, and now I sink in quicksilver and remain squat and square on the earth amid the hurricane that makes oaks and straws join in one dance, fifty yards high in the element.

However I will do what I can. Taste and feeling have I none, but what I have, give I unto thee. But I repeat that I am unfit to decide on any but works of severe logic.

I write now to beg that, if you have not sent your tragedy, you may remember to send 'Antonio' with it, which I have not yet seen, and likewise my Campbell's 'Pleasures of Hope', which Wordsworth wishes to see.

Have you seen the second volume of the 'Lyrical Ballads', and the preface prefixed to the first? I should judge of a man's heart and

intellect precisely according to the degree and intensity of the admiration with which he read these poems. Perhaps, instead of heart I should have said Taste; but, when I think of 'The Brothers', of 'Ruth', and of 'Michael', I recur to the expression and am enforced to say heart. If I die, and the booksellers will give you anything for ray life, be sure to say, "Wordsworth descended on him like the [Greek: Gnothi seauton] from heaven; by showing to him what true poetry was, he made him know that he himself was no Poet."

In your next letter you will, perhaps, give me some hints respecting your prose plans.

God bless you, and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Greta Hall, Keswick.

P.S.--What is a fair price--what might an author of reputation fairly ask from a bookseller, for one edition, of a thousand copies, of a five-shilling book?

[I congratulate you on the settlement of Davy in London. I hope that his enchanting manners will not draw too many idlers about him, to harass and vex his mornings.]

[Footnote: 1 This tragedy was entitled Abbas.]

## PART II

### THE PERMANENT

I will write for "The Permanent", or not at all." (Letter to Sir G. Beaumont, "Coleorton Memorials", ii, 162.) "Woe is me! that at 46 I am under the necessity of appearing as a lecturer, and obliged to regard every hour given to "The Permanent", whether as poet or philosopher, an hour stolen from others as well as from my own maintenance." (Letter to Mudford, Brandl's "Life of Coleridge", p. 359.)

\* \* \* \* \*

The conventional view of Coleridge that opium killed the poet in him does not commend itself to the scientific consciousness. Opium has the tendency to stimulate rather than to deaden the poetic imagination, as the history of De Quincey can testify; and one of Coleridge's most imaginative pieces, "Kubla Khan", is said to have been occasioned by an overdose of the drug.

The poet in Coleridge was extinguished by a very different thing than opium. Coleridge's poetic faculty was suspended by the loss of hope and also by the growth of his intellect, by the development of his reasoning and philosophic powers, and by the multiplication of the interests which appealed to him, and the many problems which presented themselves for his solution. He was, constitutionally, the most comprehensive mind of a new age, and just because he was its greatest thinker he was perplexed and attracted by the majority of the problems which arose around him, and which he himself helped to raise. Poetry, the poetry of the Romantic Movement, in which he far excelled all his contemporaries, was no longer capable of grappling with the philosophic, theological, political and social questions now on the horizon or which Coleridge felt would soon, by the development of international affinities, be on the horizon of the English mind. Hence Coleridge's thirst for the new lore of the German philosophy, which seemed to him to supply a want in the Intellectualism of his native country.

In spite of this, Coleridge knew that in being deserted by the poetic spirit, he was leaving a high artistic realm for one of lesser glory; and hence his letter to Godwin of 25th March 1801, and, later on, his dirge over himself in "Dejection".

Coleridge, in choosing to follow Wordsworth to the Lake District in preference to remaining at Nether Stowey with Poole, had experienced some contrition, for Poole, after all, was a more profound appreciator of his many-sidedness and the Cervantean vein of his character than Wordsworth, who appreciated Coleridge only from that side of him which resembled himself.

Tom Poole regretted, like others, that Coleridge had no permanent calling, or could not fix upon an undertaking worthy of his powers. Poole looked upon Coleridge's devotion to journalism while he was engaged upon the "Morning Post" as a "turning aside of his powers from higher ends" ("T. Poole and his Friends", ii, 2), and wished him to give himself up to something more "permanently" useful to society ("T. Poole and his Friends", ii, 3). The correspondence of Coleridge and Poole from 1800 onwards, often turns upon the subject ("T. Poole and his Friends", ii, 66, 68, 122, 177, 187, 205, 226, 247); and Coleridge admitted a "distracting manifoldness" in his objects and attainments ("T. Poole and his Friends", ii, 122). "You," said Coleridge, "are nobly employed--most worthy of you. "You" are made to endear yourself to mankind as an immediate benefactor: I must throw my bread on the waters" ("T. Poole and his Friends", ii, 122).

While engaged in these argumentations with his best friend, Coleridge was striving to think out in his deep philosophic and musing mind many problems of the time; and there arose in his imagination the Idea of the Permanent. He was henceforth no longer the Poet of Romanticism, whose significance he had exhausted, but the philosopher of the Permanent, which presented itself as a splendid possibility in all departments of human knowledge and activity. In his prose works and letters we find a continual reference to what Coleridge now calls "The Permanent"--the permanent principles of Morals, Philosophy, and Religion, and of the

permanent principles of criticism as applied to Poetry and the Fine Arts. Everything is now adjusted by Coleridge to this idea. Art, morals, religion, and politics are tried by its standard, to find if they are founded in the permanent principles of human nature.

It is in the light of this Idea, the ideal of Coleridge's later life, that we must judge Coleridge and weigh him. To continue to see in opium the sole or even the principal cause of his failure, is to misjudge him altogether. To compare him with others of different powers who accomplished more in one direction in the matter of literary output, with Sir Walter Scott or Byron, for instance, is misleading. It is the man of profound genius, who in his own time, is feeling on all sides into the Future, who is least likely to give forth "finished productions," as they are called, in which the subjects of which they treat are often exhausted, and please the ear of the Present. Coleridge is such a man of genius; nearly all his works are fragmentary, unfinished, suggestive rather than "complete," just because they verge upon that Transcendentalism which he was the first to make audible to English ears in his day. Ill health, and opium in conjunction with ill health, contributed no doubt to enfeeble his utterance; but to assert that opium was the cause or the main cause of Coleridge's inability to do what he wanted himself to do, or what his friends and contemporaries expected him to do, is a gross perversion of the facts of the case. Coleridge's inability arose from his multiplicity of motive, his visionary faculty of seeing in the light of a new principle a host of problems rise up on all sides, all claiming recognition and solution. "That is the disease of my mind--it is comprehensive in its conceptions, and wastes itself in the contemplations of the many things which it might do." (Letter to Poole, 4th January 1799, "Letters", p. 270). A greater than Coleridge had felt this tendency before him, and created as its embodiment "Hamlet"; and Coleridge has been called the Hamlet of literature.

## CHAPTER X

### ILL HEALTH; SOUTHEY COMES TO KESWICK

On 13th April 1801 Coleridge wrote to Southey the following letter, and Southey replied in cordial terms, from which it will be gathered a reconciliation had been made since the Lloyd and Lamb quarrel. [1]

[Footnote 1: See "Letters", vol. i, 304.]

LETTER 106. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

Greta Hall, Keswick; April 13. 1801.

My dear Southey,

I received your kind letter on the evening before last, and I trust that this will arrive at Bristol just in time to rejoice with them that rejoice. Alas! you will have found the dear old place sadly "minus"ed by the removal of Davy. It is one of the evils of long silence, that when one recommences the correspondence, one has so much to say that one can say nothing. I have enough, with what I have seen, and with what I have done, and with what I have suffered, and with what I have heard, exclusive of all that I hope and all that I intend--I have enough to pass away a great deal of time with, were you on a desert isle, and I your "Friday". But at present I purpose to speak only of myself relatively to Keswick and to you.

Our house stands on a low hill, the whole front of which is one field and an enormous garden, nine-tenths of which is a nursery garden. Behind the house is an orchard, and a small wood on a steep slope, at the foot of which flows the river Greta, which winds round and catches the evening lights in the front of the house. In front we have a giant's camp--an encamped army of tent-like mountains, which by an inverted arch gives a view of another vale. On our right the lovely vale and the wedge-shaped lake of Bassenthwaite; and on our left Derwentwater and Lodore full in view, and the fantastic mountains of Borrodale. Behind us the massy Skiddaw, smooth, green, high, with two chasms and a tentlike ridge in the larger. A fairer scene you have not seen in all your wanderings. Without going from our own grounds we have all that can please a human being. As to books, my landlord, who dwells next door,[1] has a very respectable library, which he has put with mine; histories, encyclopaedias, and all the modern gentry. But then I can have, when I choose, free access to the princely library of Sir Guilfred Lawson, which contains the noblest collection of travels and natural history of, perhaps, any private library in England; besides this, there is the Cathedral library of Carlisle, from whence I can have any books sent to me that I wish; in short, I may truly say that I command all the libraries in the county. ...

Our neighbour is a truly good and affectionate man, a father to my children, and a friend to me. He was offered fifty guineas for the house in which we are to live, but he preferred me for a tenant at twenty-five; and yet the whole of his income does not exceed, I believe, £200 a year. A more truly disinterested man I never met with; severely frugal, yet almost carelessly generous; and yet he got all his money as a common carrier[2], by hard labour, and by pennies. He is one instance among many in this country of the salutary effect of the love of knowledge--he was from a boy a lover of learning. The house is full twice as large as we want; it hath more rooms in it than Allfoxden; you might have a bed-room, parlour, study, etc., etc., and there would always be rooms to spare for your or my visitors. In short, for situation and convenience,--and when I mention the name of Wordsworth, for society of men of intellect,--I know no place in which you and Edith would find yourselves so well suited.

S. T. C.

[Footnote 1: Greta Hall was at this time divided into two houses, which were afterwards thrown together.]

[Footnote 2: This person, whose name was Jackson, was the "master" in Wordsworth's poem of 'The Waggoner', the circumstances of which are accurately correct.]

The remainder of this letter, as well as another of later date, was filled with a most gloomy account of his own health, to which Southey refers in the commencement of his reply.

#### SOUTHEY TO COLERIDGE

Bristol, July 11, 1801.

Yesterday I arrived, and found your letters; they did depress me, but I have since reasoned or dreamt myself into more cheerful anticipations. I have persuaded myself that your complaint is gouty; that good living is necessary, and a good climate. I also move to the south; at least so it appears: and if my present prospects ripen, we may yet live under one roof. ...

You may have seen a translation of "Persius", by Drummond, an M.P. This man is going ambassador, first to Palermo and then to Constantinople: if a married man can go as his secretary, it is probable that I shall accompany him. I daily expect to know. It is a scheme of Wynn's to settle me in the south, and I am returned to look about me. My salary will be small--a very trifle; but after a few years I look on to something better, and have fixed my mind on a consulship. Now, if we go, you must join us as soon as we are housed, and it will be marvellous if we regret England. I shall have so little to do, that my time may be considered as wholly my own: our joint amusements will easily supply us with all expenses. So no more of the Azores; for we will see the Great Turk, and visit Greece, and walk up the Pyramids, and ride camels in Arabia. I have dreamt of nothing else these five weeks. As yet every thing is so uncertain, for I have received no letter since we landed, that nothing can be said of our intermediate movements. If we are not embarked too soon, we will set off as early as possible for Cumberland, unless you should think, as we do, that Mahomet had better come to the mountain; that change of all externals may benefit you; and that bad as Bristol weather is, it is yet infinitely preferable to northern cold and damp. Meet we must, and will.

You know your old Poems are a third time in the press; why not set forth a second volume? \* \* \* Your "Christabel", your "Three Graces", [1] which

I remember as the very consummation of poetry. I must spur you to something, to the assertion of your supremacy; if you have not enough to muster, I will aid you in any way--manufacture skeletons that you may clothe with flesh, blood, and beauty; write my best, or what shall be bad enough to be popular;--we will even make plays "a-la-mode" Robespierre. \* \* \* Drop all task-work, it is ever unprofitable; the same time, and one twentieth part of the labour, would produce treble emolument. For "Thalaba" I received £115; it was just twelve months' "intermitting" work, and the after-editions are my own. ...

I feel here as a stranger; somewhat of Leonard's feeling. God bless Wordsworth for that poem![2] What tie have I to England? My London friends? There, indeed, I have friends. But if you and yours were with me, eating dates in a garden at Constantinople, you might assert that we were in the best of all possible places; and I should answer, Amen: and if our wives rebelled, we would send for the chief of the black eunuchs, and sell them to the Seraglio. Then should Moses [3] learn Arabic, and we would know whether there was anything in the language or not. We would drink Cyprus wine and Mocha coffee, and smoke more tranquilly than ever we did in the Ship in Small Street.

Time and absence make strange work with our affections; but mine are ever returning to rest upon you. I have other and dear friends, but none with whom the whole of my being is intimate--with whom every thought and feeling can amalgamate. Oh! I have yet such dreams! Is it quite clear that you and I were not meant for some better star, and dropped, by mistake, into this world of pounds, shillings, and pence? ...

God bless you!

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

[Footnote 1: "The Three Graves".]

[Footnote 2: "The Brothers" is the title of this poem.]

[Footnote 3: Hartley Coleridge.]

SOUTHEY TO COLERIDGE

July 25.

In about ten days we shall be ready to set forward for Keswick; where, if it were not for the rains, and the fogs, and the frosts, I should, probably, be content to winter; but the climate deters me. It is uncertain when I may be sent abroad, or where, except that the south of Europe is my choice. The appointment hardly doubtful, and the probable destination Palermo or Naples. We will talk of the future, and dream of it, on the lake side. \* \* \* I may calculate upon the next six months at my own disposal; so we will climb Skiddaw this year, and scale Etna the

next; and Sicilian air will keep us alive till Davy has found out the immortalising elixir, or till we are very well satisfied to do without it, and be immortalised after the manner of our fathers. My pocket-book contains more plans than will ever be filled up; but whatever becomes of those plans, this, at least, is feasible. \* \* \* Poor H----, he has literally killed himself by the law: which, I believe, kills more than any disease that takes its place in the bills of mortality. Blackstone is a needful book, and my Coke is a borrowed one; but I have one law book whereof to make an auto-da-fe; and burnt he shall be: but whether to perform that ceremony, with fitting libations, at home, or fling him down the crater of Etna directly to the Devil, is worth considering at leisure.

I must work at Keswick; the more willingly, because with the hope, hereafter, the necessity will cease. My Portuguese materials must lie dead, and this embarrasses me. It is impossible to publish any thing about that country now, because I must one day return there,--to their libraries and archives; otherwise I have excellent stuff for a little volume; and could soon set forth a first vol. of my History, either civil or literary. In these labours I have incurred a heavy and serious expense. I shall write to Hamilton, and review again, if he chooses to employ me. \* \* \* It was Cottle who told me that your Poems were reprint"ing" in a "third" edition: this cannot allude to the "Lyrical Ballads", because of the number and the participle present. \* \* \* I am bitterly angry to see one new poem [1] smuggled into the world in the "Lyrical Ballads", where the 750 purchasers of the first can never get at it. At Falmouth I bought Thomas Dermody's "Poems", for old acquaintance sake; alas! the boy wrote better than the man! \* \* \* Pye's "Alfred" (to distinguish him from Alfred the pious [2]) I have not yet inspected; nor the wilful murder of Bonaparte, by Anna Matilda; nor the high treason committed by Sir James Bland Burgess, Baronet, against our lion-hearted Richard. Davy is fallen stark mad with a play, called the "Conspiracy of Gowrie", which is by Rough; an imitation of "Gebir", with some poetry; but miserably and hopelessly deficient in all else: every character reasoning, and metaphorising, and metaphysicking the reader most nauseously. By the by, there is a great analogy between hock, laver, pork pie, and the "Lyrical Ballads",--all have a "flavour", not beloved by those who require a taste, and utterly unpleasant to dram-drinkers, whose diseased palates can only feel pepper and brandy. I know not whether Wordsworth will forgive the stimulant tale of "Thalaba",--'tis a turtle soup, highly seasoned, but with a flavour of its own predominant. His are sparagrass (it ought to be spelt so) and artichokes, good with plain butter, and wholesome.

I look on "Madoc" with hopeful displeasure; probably it must be corrected, and published now; this coming into the world at seven months is a bad way; with a Doctor Slop of a printer's devil standing ready for the forced birth, and frightening one into an abortion. \* \* \* Is there an emigrant at Keswick, who may make me talk and write French? And I must sit at my almost forgotten Italian, and read German with you; and we must read Tasso together.

God bless you!

Yours,

R. S.

[Footnote 1: Coleridge's poem of "Love".]

[Footnote 2: This alludes to Mr. Cottle's "Alfred".]

The next two letters to Davy indicate that Coleridge's health was now of the worst, and that he was thinking seriously of emigrating for some time.

#### LETTER 107. TO DAVY

Monday, May 4, 1801.

My dear Davy,

I heard from Tobin the day before yesterday--nay, it was Friday. From him I learn that you are giving lectures on galvanism. Would to God I were one of your auditors! My motive muscles tingled and contracted at the news, as if you had bared them, and were 'zincifying' their life-mocking fibres.

When you have leisure and impulse--perfect leisure and a complete impulse--write to me, but only then. For though there does not exist a man on earth who yields me greater pleasure by writing to me, yet I have neither pain nor disquietude from your silence. I have a deep faith in the guardianship of Nature over you--of the Great Being whom you are manifesting. Heaven bless you, my dear Davy!

I have been rendered uneasy by an account of the Lisbon packet's non-arrival, lest Southey should have been on board it. Have you heard from him lately?

It would seem affectation to write to you and say nothing of my health; but in truth I am weary of giving useless pain. Yesterday I should have been incapable of writing you this scrawl, and to-morrow I may be as bad. "Sinking, sinking, sinking! I feel that I am 'sinking'." My medical attendant says that it is irregular gout, with nephritic symptoms. 'Gout', in a young man of twenty-nine!! Swollen knees, and knotty fingers, a loathing stomach, and a dizzy head. Trust me, friend, I am at times an object of moral disgust to my own mind! But that this long illness has impoverished me, I should immediately go to St. Miguels, one of the Azores--the baths and the delicious climate might restore me--and if it were possible, I would afterwards send over for my wife and children, and settle there for a few years; it is exceedingly

cheap. On this supposition Wordsworth and his sister have with generous friendship offered to settle there with me--and happily our dear Southey would come too. But of this I pray you, my dear fellow, do not say a syllable to any human being, for the scheme, from the present state of my circumstances, is rather the thing of a "wish" than of a "hope".

If you write to me, pray in a couple of sentences tell me whether Herschell's thermometric "spectrum" (in the "Philos. Trans.") will lead to any revolution in the chemical philosophy. As far as "words" go, I have become a formidable chemist--having got by heart a prodigious quantity of terms, etc., to which I attach "some" ideas, very scanty in number, I assure you, and right meagre in their individual persons. That which must discourage me in it is, that I find all "power" of vital attributes to depend on modes of "arrangement", and that chemistry throws not even a distant rushlight glimmer upon this subject. The "reasoning", likewise, is always unsatisfactory to me. I am perpetually saying, probably there are many agents hitherto undiscovered. This cannot be reasoning: we must have a deep conviction that all the "terms" have been exhausted. This is saying no more than that (with Dr. Beddoes's leave) chemistry can never possess the same kind of certainty with the mathematics--in truth, it is saying nothing. I grow, however, exceedingly interested in the subject.

God love you, my dear friend! From Tobin's account, I fear that I must give up a very sweet vision--that of seeing you this summer. The summer after, my ghost perhaps may be a gas.

Yours affectionately,

S. T. COLERIDGE. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letter CXVIII follows No. 107.]

#### LETTER 108. TO DAVY

Greta Hall, Keswick, May 20, 1801.

My dear Davy,

Though we of the north must forego you, yet I shall rejoice when I receive a letter from you from Cornwall. I must believe that you have made some important discoveries in galvanism, and connected the facts with other more interesting ones, or I should be puzzled to conceive how that subject could furnish matter for more than one lecture. If I recollect aright, you have identified it with electricity, and that indeed is a wide field. I shall dismiss my 'British Critic' and take in 'Nicholson's Journal', and then I shall know something about you. I am sometimes apprehensive that my passion for science is scarcely true and genuine--it is but 'Davyism'! that is, I fear that I am more delighted at 'your' having discovered facts than at the facts having been

discovered.

My health is better. I am indeed eager to believe that I am really beginning to recover, though I have had so many short recoveries followed by severe relapses, that I am at times almost afraid to hope. But cheerful thoughts come with genial sensations; and hope is itself no mean medicine.

I am anxious respecting Robert Southey. Why is he not in England? Remember me kindly to Tobin. As soon as I have anything to communicate I will write to him. But, alas! sickness turns large districts of time into dreary uniformity of sandy desolation. Alas, for Egypt--and Menou! However, I trust the 'English' will keep it, if they take it, and something will be gained to the cause of human nature.

Heaven bless you!

S. T. COLERIDGE.

The next letter to Godwin renews his complaints about health.

#### LETTER 109. To GODWIN

Greta Hall, Keswick.

Dear Godwin,

I have had, during the last three weeks, such numerous interruptions of my "uninterrupted rural retirement," such a succession of visitors, both indigenous and exotic, that verily I wanted both the time and composure necessary to answer your letter of the first of June--at present I am writing to you from my bed. For, in consequence of a very sudden change in the weather from intense heat to a raw and scathing chillness, my bodily health has suffered a relapse as severe as it was unexpected....

I have not yet received either "Antonio", or your pamphlet, in answer to Dr. Parr and the Scotch gentleman [1] (who is to be professor of morals to the young nabobs at Calcutta, with an establishment of £3,000 a year!). Stuart was so kind as to send me Fenwick's review of it in a paper called the "Albion", and Mr. Longman has informed me that, by your orders, the pamphlet itself has been left for me at his house. The extracts which I saw pleased me much, with the exception of the introduction, which is incorrectly and clumsily worded. But, indeed, I have often observed that, whatever you write, the first page is always the worst in the book. I wish that instead of six days you had employed six months, and instead of a half-crown pamphlet, had given us a good half-guinea octavo. But you may yet do this. It strikes me, that both in this work, and in the second edition of the "Political Justice", your retractations have been more injudicious than the assertions or dogmas

retracted. But this is no fit subject for a mere letter. If I had time, which I have not, I would write two or three sheets for your sole inspection, entitled "History of the Errors and Blunders of the Literary Life of William Godwin". To the world it would appear a paradox to say that you are at all too persuadable, but you yourself know it to be the truth.

I shall send back your manuscript on Friday, with my criticisms. You say in your last, "How I wish you were here!" When I see how little I have written of what I could have talked, I feel with you that a letter is but "a mockery" to a full and ardent mind. In truth I feel this so forcibly that, if I could be certain that I should remain in this country, I should press you to come down, and finish the whole in my house. But, if I can by any means raise the moneys, I shall go in the first vessel that leaves Liverpool for the Azores (St. Michael's, to wit), and these sail at the end of July. Unless I can escape one English winter and spring I have not any rational prospect of recovery. You "cannot help regarding uninterrupted rural retirement as a principal cause" of my ill health. My ill health commenced at Liverpool, in the shape of blood-shot eyes and swollen eyelids, while I was in the daily habit of visiting the Liverpool literati--these, on my settling at Keswick, were followed by large boils in my neck and shoulders; these, by a violent rheumatic fever; this, by a distressing and tedious hydrocele; and, since then, by irregular gout, which promises at this moment to ripen into a legitimate fit. What uninterrupted rural retirement can have had to do in the production of these outward and visible evils, I cannot guess; what share it has had in consoling me under them, I know with a tranquil mind and feel with a grateful heart. O that you had now before your eyes the delicious picture of lake, and river, and bridge, and cottage, and spacious field with its pathway, and woody hill with its spring verdure, and mountain with the snow yet lingering in fantastic patches upon it, even the same which I had from my sick bed, even without raising my head from the pillow! O God! all but dear and lovely things seemed to be known to my imagination only as words; even the forms which struck terror into me in my fever-dreams were still forms of beauty. Before my last seizure I bent down to pick something from the ground, and when I raised my head, I said to Miss Wordsworth, "I am sure, Rotha, that I am going to be ill;" for as I bent my head there came a distinct, vivid spectrum upon my eyes; it was one little picture--a rock, with birches and ferns on it, a cottage backed by it, and a small stream. Were I a painter I would give an outward existence to this, but it will always live in my memory.

By-the-bye, our rural retirement has been honoured by the company of Mr. Sharp, and the poet Rogers; the latter, though not a man of very vigorous intellect, won a good deal both on myself and Wordsworth, for what he said evidently came from his own feelings, and was the result of his own observation.

My love to your dear little one. I begin to feel my knee preparing to make ready for the reception of the Lady Arthritis. God bless you and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Tuesday Evening, June 23, 1801. [2]

[Footnote 1: Mackintosh]

[Footnote 2: Letters CXIX-CXXII follow No. 109.]

Coleridge, for want of funds, was unable for the present to carry out his project of going abroad, and the next letter to Davy tells us that he had resolved to go to London instead, and write for the daily papers again.

#### LETTER 110. To DAVY

Greta Hall, Keswick, Cumberland, October 31, 1801.

My dear Davy,

I do not know by what fatality it has happened, but so it is; that I have thought more often of you, and I may say, "yearned" after your society more for the last three months than I ever before did, and yet I have not written to you. But you know that I honour you, and that I love whom I honour. Love and esteem with me have no individual being; and wherever this is not the case, I suspect there must be some lurking moral superstition which nature gets the better of; and that the real meaning of the phrase "I love him though I cannot esteem him," is--I esteem him, but not according to my system of esteem. But you, my dear fellow, 'all' men love and esteem--which is the only suspicious part of your character--at least according to the 5th chapter of St. Matthew.--God bless you.

And now for the business of this letter. 'If I can', I leave this place so as to be in London on Wednesday, the 11th of next month; in London I shall stay a fortnight; but as I am in feeble health, and have a perfect 'phobia' of inns and coffee-houses, I should rejoice if you or Southey should be able to offer me a bed-room for the fortnight aforesaid. From London I move southward. Now for the italicized words 'if I can'. The cryptical and implicit import of which is--I have a damned thorn in my leg, which the surgeon has not been yet able to extract--and but that I have metaphysicized most successfully on 'Pain', in consequence of the accident, by the Great Scatterer of Thoughts, I should have been half mad. But as it is I have borne it 'like a woman', which, I believe, to be two or three degrees at least beyond a 'stoic'. A suppuration is going on, and I endure in hope.

I have redirected some of Southey's letters to you, taking it for granted that you will see him immediately on his arrival in town; he left us yesterday afternoon. Let me hear from you, if it be only to say what I know already, that you will be glad to see me. O, dear friend,

thou one of the two human beings of whom I dare hope with a hope, that elevates my own heart. O bless you!

S.T. COLERIDGE. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letters CXXIII-CXXXI follow No. 110.]

Sir Humphry Davy's description of Coleridge at this date is well known, and we must quote it; "Coleridge has left London for Keswick. During his stay in town I saw him seldomer than usual; when I did see him, it was generally in the midst of large companies, where he is the image of power and activity. His eloquence is unimpaired: perhaps it is softer and stronger. His will is less than ever commensurate with his ability. Brilliant images of greatness float upon his mind, like images of the morning clouds on the waters. Their forms are changed by the motions of the waves, they are agitated by every breeze, and modified by every sunbeam. He talked in the course of an hour of beginning three works; he recited the poem of 'Christabel' unfinished, and as I had before heard it. What talent does he not waste in forming visions, sublime, but unconnected with the real world! I have looked to his efforts, as to the efforts of a creating being; but as yet he has not laid the foundation for the new world of intellectual forms" ('Fragmentary Remains', p. 74).

Southey had now returned from Portugal, and was also in London ('Southey's Letters', i, 183). It was not till September, 1803, that Southey came to Keswick ('Southey's Letters', i, 229-31). During the interval Coleridge had written various things for the 'Morning Post', the most outstanding contributions being the two powerful letters to Fox of 4th and 9th November 1802, written on the occasion of that statesman going to Paris and paying court to Napoleon. The next eight letters to Thomas Wedgwood give the best impression of Coleridge between October 1802 and February 1803.

Letter 111 To Thomas Wedgwood

Keswick, Oct. 20, 1802.

My dear sir,

This is my birthday, my thirtieth. It will not appear wonderful to you, when I tell you, that before the arrival of your letter, I had been thinking with a great weight of different feelings, concerning you, and your dear brother, for I have good reason to believe, that I should not now have been alive, if in addition to other miseries, I had had immediate poverty pressing upon me. I will never again remain silent so long. It has not been altogether indolence, or my habit of procrastination which have [1] kept me from writing, but an eager

wish,--I may truly say, a thirst of spirit, to have something honourable to tell you of myself.

At present I must be content to tell you something cheerful. My health is very much better. I am stronger in every respect, and am not injured by study, or the act of sitting at my writing desk; but my eyes suffer if at any time I have been intemperate in the use of candle-light. This account supposes another, namely, that my mind is calm, and more at ease. My dear sir, when I was last with you at Stowey, my heart was often full, and I could scarcely keep from communicating to you the tale of my distresses, but could I add to your depression, when you were low? or how interrupt, or cast a shade on your good spirits, that were so rare, and so precious to you? ...

I found no comfort but in the driest speculations;--in the 'Ode to Dejection', which you were pleased with. These lines, in the original, followed the line "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  
And that which suits a part infests the whole,  
And now is almost grown the temper [2] of my soul.

I give you these lines for the spirit, and not for the poetry. ...

But better days are arrived, and are still to come, I have had Visitations of Hope--that I may yet be something of which those who love me may be proud.

I cannot write that without recalling dear Poole. I have heard twice, and written twice, and I fear by a strange fatality, one of the letters will have missed him. Leslie [3] was here some time ago. I was very much pleased with him. And now I will tell you what I am doing. I dedicate three days in the week to the 'Morning Post', and shall hereafter write, for the far greater part, such things as will be of as permanent interest as any thing I can hope to write; and you will shortly see a little essay of mine, justifying the writing in a newspaper.

My comparison of the French with the Roman Empire was very favourably received. The poetry which I have sent is merely the emptying out of my desk. The epigrams are wretched indeed, but they answered Stuart's purpose, better than better things. I ought not to have given any signature to them whatsoever. I never dreamt of acknowledging either them, or the 'Ode to the Rain'. As to feeble expressions, and unpolished lines--there is the rub! Indeed, my dear sir, I do value your opinion

very highly. I think your judgment on the sentiment, the imagery, the flow of a poem, decisive; at least, if it differed from my own, and if after frequent consideration mine remained different, it would leave me at least perplexed. For you are a perfect electrometer in these things--but in point of poetic diction, I am not so well satisfied that you do not require a certain aloofness from the language of real life, which I think deadly to poetry.

Very soon however I shall present you from the press with my opinions full on the subject of style, both in prose and verse; and I am confident of one thing, that I shall convince you that I have thought much and patiently on the subject, and that I understand the whole strength of my antagonist's cause. For I am now busy on the subject, and shall in a very few weeks go to press with a volume on the prose writings of Hall, Milton, and Taylor; and shall immediately follow it up with an essay on the writings of Dr. Johnson and Gibbon, and in these two volumes I flatter myself I shall present a fair history of English Prose. If my life and health remain, and I do but write half as much, and as regularly as I have done during the last six weeks, this will be finished by January next; and I shall then put together my memorandum-book on the subject of Poetry. In both I have endeavoured sedulously to state the facts and the differences clearly and accurately; and my reasons for the preference of one style to another are secondary to this.

Of this be assured, that I will never give any thing to the world in 'propria persona' in my own name which I have not tormented with the file. I sometimes suspect that my foul copy would often appear to general readers more polished than my fair copy. Many of the feeble and colloquial expressions have been industriously substituted for others which struck me as artificial, and not standing the test; as being neither the language of passion, nor distinct conceptions. Dear sir, indulge me with looking still further on in my literary life.

I have, since my twentieth year, meditated an heroic poem on the 'Siege of Jerusalem', by Titus. This is the pride and the stronghold of my hope, but I never think of it except in my best moods. The work to which I dedicate the ensuing years of my life, is one which highly pleased Leslie, in prospective, and my paper will not let me prattle to you about it. I have written what you more wished me to write, all about myself.

Our climate (in the north) is inclement, and our houses not as compact as they might be, but it is a stirring climate, and the worse the weather, the more unceasingly entertaining are my study windows, and the month that is to come is the glory of the year with us. A very warm bed-room I can promise you, and one at the same time which commands the finest lake and mountain view. If Leslie could not go abroad with you, and I could in any way mould my manners and habits to suit you, I should of all things like to be your companion. Good nature, an affectionate disposition, and so thorough a sympathy with the nature of your complaint, that I should feel no pain, not the most momentary, at being told by you what your feelings require at the time in which they

required it; this I should bring with me. But I need not say that you may say to me,--"You don't suit me," without inflicting the least mortification. Of course this letter is for your brother, as for you; but I shall write to him soon. God bless you,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Thomas Wedgwood, Esq.

[Footnote 1: 'Sic.']

[Footnote 2: Cottle prints "temple," an error.]

[Footnote 3: The eminent Edinburg Professor. For three years the private tutor of Mr. T. Wedgwood (Cottle). [For further information regarding John, afterwards Sir John, Leslie (1766-1832) see 'Tom Wedgwood' by Lichfield.]]

#### LETTER 112. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD

Keswick, November 3, 1802.

Dear Wedgwood,

It is now two hours since I received your letter; and after the necessary consultation, Mrs. Coleridge herself is fully of opinion that to lose time is merely to lose spirits. Accordingly I have resolved not to look the children in the face, (the parting from whom is the downright bitter in the thing) but to go to London by to-morrow's mail. Of course I shall be in London, God permitting, on Saturday morning. I shall rest that day, and the next, and proceed to Bristol by the Monday night's mail. At Bristol I will go to "Cote-House"[1] At all events, barring serious illness, serious fractures, and the et cetera of serious unforeseens, I shall be at Bristol, Tuesday noon, November 9.

You are aware that my whole knowledge of French does not extend beyond the power of limping slowly, not without a dictionary crutch, through an easy French book: and that as to pronunciation, all my organs of speech, from the bottom of the Larynx to the edge of my lips, are utterly and naturally anti-Gallican. If only I shall have been any comfort, any alleviation to you I shall feel myself at ease--and whether you go abroad or no, while I remain with you, it will greatly contribute to my comfort, if I know you will have no hesitation, nor pain, in telling me what you wish me to do, or not to do.

I regard it among the blessings of my life, that I have never lived among men whom I regarded as my artificial superiors: that all the respect I have at any time paid, has been wholly to supposed goodness, or talent. The consequence has been that I have no alarms of pride; no "cheval de frise" of independence. I have always lived among equals. It

never occurs to me, even for a moment, that I am otherwise. If I have quarrelled with men, it has been as brothers or as school-fellows quarrel. How little any man can give me, or take from me, save in matters of kindness and esteem, is not so much a thought or conviction with me, or even a distinct feeling, as it is my very nature. Much as I dislike all formal declarations of this kind, I have deemed it well to say this. I have as strong feelings of gratitude as any man. Shame upon me if in the sickness and the sorrow which I have had, and which have been kept unaggravated and supportable by your kindness, and your brother's (Mr. Josiah Wedgwood) shame upon me if I did not feel a kindness, not unmixed with reverence towards you both. But yet I never should have had my present impulses to be with you, and this confidence, that I may become an occasional comfort to you, if, independently of all gratitude, I did not thoroughly esteem you; and if I did not appear to myself to understand the nature of your sufferings; and within the last year, in some slight degree to have felt myself, something of the same.

Forgive me, my dear sir, if I have said too much. It is better to write it than to say it, and I am anxious in the event of our travelling together that you should yourself be at ease with me, even as you would with a younger brother, to whom, from his childhood you had been in the habit of saying, "Do this Col." or "don't do that." All good be with you.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Thomas Wedgwood, Esq.[2]

[Footnote: 1 Westbury, near Bristol, the then residence of Mr. John Wedgwood.]

[Footnote 2: Letters CXXXII-CXXXIV follow 112.]

LETTER 113. To THOMAS WEDGWOOD

Keswick, January 9, 1803.

My dear Wedgwood,

I send you two letters, one from your dear sister, the second from Sharp, by which you will see at what short notice I must be off, if I go to the "Canaries", If your last plan continue in full force, I have not even the phantom of a wish thitherward struggling, but if aught have happened to you, in the things without, or in the world within, to induce you to change the place, or the plan, relatively to me, I think I could raise the money. But I would a thousand-fold rather go with you whithersoever you go. I shall be anxious to hear how you have gone on since I left you. You should decide in favour of a better climate somewhere or other. The best scheme I can think of, is to go to some part of Italy or Sicily, which we both liked. I would look out for two houses. Wordsworth and his family would take the one, and I the other,

and then you might have a home either with me, or if you thought of Mr. and Mrs. Luff, under this modification, one of your own; and in either case you would have neighbours, and so return to England when the home sickness pressed heavy upon you, and back to Italy when it was abated, and the climate of England began to poison your comforts. So you would have abroad in a genial climate, certain comforts of society among simple and enlightened men and women; and I should be an alleviation of the pang which you will necessarily feel, as often as you quit your own family.

I know no better plan: for travelling in search of objects is at best a dreary business, and whatever excitement it might have had, you must have exhausted it. God bless you, my dear friend. I write with dim eyes, for indeed, indeed, my heart is very full of affectionate sorrowful thoughts toward you.

I write with difficulty, with all the fingers but one of my right hand very much swollen. Before I was half up the "Kirkstone" mountain, the storm had wetted me through and through, and before I reached the top it was so wild and outrageous, that it would have been unmanly to have suffered the poor woman (guide) to continue pushing on, up against such a torrent of wind and rain: so I dismounted and sent her home with the storm in her back. I am no novice in mountain mischiefs, but such a storm as this was, I never witnessed, combining the intensity of the cold, with the violence of the wind and rain. The rain drops were pelted or slung against my face by the gusts, just like splinters of flint, and I felt as if every drop cut my flesh. My hands were all shrivelled up like a washer-woman's, and so benumbed that I was obliged to carry my stick under my arm. O, it was a wild business! Such hurry skurry of clouds, such volleys of sound! In spite of the wet and the cold, I should have had some pleasure in it, but for two vexations; first, an almost intolerable pain came into my right eye, a smarting and burning pain; and secondly, in consequence of riding with such cold water under my seat, extremely uneasy and burthensome feelings attacked my groin, so that, what with the pain from the one, and the alarm from the other, I had "no enjoyment at all!"

Just at the brow of the hill I met a man dismounted, who could not sit on horse-back. He seemed quite scared by the uproar, and said to me, with much feeling, "O sir, it is a perilous buffeting, but it is worse for you than for me, for I have it at my back." However I got safely over, and immediately all was calm and breathless, as if it was some mighty fountain put on the summit of Kirkstone, that shot forth its volcano of air, and precipitated huge streams of invisible lava down the road to Patterdale.

I went on to Grasmere. [1] I was not at all unwell, when I arrived there, though wet of course to the skin. My right eye had nothing the matter with it, either to the sight of others, or to my own feelings, but I had a bad night, with distressful dreams, chiefly about my eye; and waking often in the dark I thought it was the effect of mere recollection, but it appeared in the morning that my right eye was blood-shot, and the lid swollen. That morning however I walked home, and

before I reached Keswick, my eye was quite well, but "I felt unwell all over". Yesterday I continued unusually unwell all over me till eight o'clock in the evening. I took no "laudanum or opium", but at eight o'clock, unable to bear the stomach uneasiness and achings of my limbs, I took two large tea-spoons full of Ether in a wine glass of camphorated gum-water, and a third teaspoon full at ten o'clock, and I received complete relief; my body calmed; my sleep placid; but when I awoke in the morning, my right hand, with three of the fingers, was swollen and inflamed. The swelling in the hand is gone down, and of two of the fingers somewhat abated, but the middle finger is still twice its natural size, so that I write with difficulty. This has been a very rough attack, but though I am much weakened by it, and look sickly and haggard, yet I am not out of heart. Such a 'bout'; such a "periless buffeting," was enough to have hurt the health of a strong man. Few constitutions can bear to be long wet through in intense cold. I fear it will tire you to death to read this prolix scrawled story.

Affectionately dear Friend, Yours ever,

S. T. COLERIDGE.[2]

[Footnote 1: The then residence of Mr. Wordsworth. [Cottle.]]

[Footnote 2: Letter CXXXV is our No. 110.]

#### LETTER 114. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD

Friday night, Jan. 14, 1803

Dear Friend,

I was glad at heart to receive your letter, and still more gladdened by the reading of it. The exceeding kindness which it breathed was literally medicinal to me, and I firmly believe, cured me of a nervous rheumatic affection, the acid and the oil, very completely at Patterdale; but by the time it came to Keswick, the oil was all atop.

You ask me, "Why, in the name of goodness, I did not return when I saw the state of the weather?" The true reason is simple, though it may be somewhat strange. The thought never once entered my head. The cause of this I suppose to be, that (I do not remember it at least) I never once in my whole life turned back in fear of the weather. Prudence is a plant, of which I no doubt possess some valuable specimens, but they are always in my hothouse, never out of the glasses, and least of all things would endure the climate of the mountains. In simple earnestness, I never find myself alone, within the embracement of rocks and hills, a traveller up an alpine road, but my spirit careers, drives, and eddies, like a leaf in autumn; a wild activity of thoughts, imaginations,

feelings, and impulses of motion rises up from within me; a sort of bottom wind, that blows to no point of the compass, comes from I know not whence, but agitates the whole of me; my whole being is filled with waves that roll and stumble, one this way, and one that way, like things that have no common master. I think that my soul must have pre-existed in the body of a chamois chaser. The simple image of the old object has been obliterated, but the feelings, and impulsive habits, and incipient actions, are in me, and the old scenery awakens them.

The further I ascend from animated nature, from men, and cattle, and the common birds of the woods and fields, the greater becomes in me the intensity of the feeling of life. Life seems to me then an universal spirit, that neither has, nor can have an opposite. "God is everywhere," I have exclaimed, and works everywhere, and where is there room for death? In these moments it has been my creed, that death exists only because ideas exist; that life is limitless sensation; that death is a child of the organic senses, chiefly of the sight; that feelings die by flowing into the mould of the intellect becoming ideas, and that ideas passing forth into action, reinstate themselves again in the world of life. And I do believe that truth lies in these loose generalizations. I do not think it possible that any bodily pains could eat out the love of joy, that is so substantially part of me, towards hills, and rocks, and steep waters; and I have had some trial.

On Monday night I had an attack in my stomach and right side, which in pain, and the length of its continuance appeared to me by far the severest I ever had. About one o'clock the pain passed out of my stomach, like lightning from a cloud, into the extremities of my right foot. My toe swelled and throbbled, and I was in a state of delicious ease, which the pain in my toe did not seem at all to interfere with. On Tuesday I was uncommonly well all the morning, and ate an excellent dinner; but playing too long and too rompingly with Hartley and Derwent, I was very unwell that evening. On Wednesday I was well, and after dinner wrapped myself up warm, and walked with Sarah Hutchinson, to Lodore. I never beheld anything more impressive than the wild outline of the black masses of mountain over Lodore, and so on to the gorge of Borrowdale. Even through the bare twigs of a grove of birch trees, through which the road passes; and on emerging from the grove a red planet, so very red that I never saw a star so red, being clear and bright at the same time. It seemed to have sky behind it. It started, as it were from the heavens, like an eye-ball of fire. I wished aloud at that moment that you had been with me.

The walk appears to have done me good, but I had a wretched night; shocking pains in my head, occiput, and teeth, and found in the morning that I had two blood-shot eyes. But almost immediately after the receipt and perusal of your letter the pains left me, and I am bettered to this hour; and am now indeed as well as usual saving that my left eye is very much blood-shot. It is a sort of duty with me, to be particular respecting facts that relate to my health. I have retained a good sound appetite through the whole of it, without any craving after exhilarants or narcotics, and I have got well as in a moment. Rapid recovery is constitutional with me; but the former circumstances, I can with

certainty refer to the system of diet, abstinence from vegetables, wine, spirits, and beer, which I have adopted by your advice.

I have no dread or anxiety respecting any fatigue which either of us is likely to undergo, even in continental travelling. Many a healthy man would have been laid up with such a bout of thorough wet, and intense cold at the same time, as I had at Kirkstone. Would to God that also for your sake I were a stronger man, but I have strong wishes to be with you. I love your society, and receiving much comfort from you, and believing likewise that I receive much improvement, I find a delight very great, my dear friend! indeed it is, when I have reason to imagine that I am in return an alleviation to your destinies, and a comfort to you. I have no fears and am ready to leave home at a two days' warning. For myself I should say two hours, but bustle and hurry might disorder Mrs. Coleridge. She and the three children are quite well.[1]

I grieve that there is a lowering in politics. The 'Moniteur' contains almost daily some bitter abuse of our minister and parliament, and in London there is great anxiety and omening. I have dreaded war from the time that the disastrous fortunes of the expedition to Saint Domingo, under Le Clerc, was known in France. Write me one or two lines, as few as you like.

I remain, my dear Wedgwood, with most affectionate esteem, and grateful attachment,

Your sincere friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Thomas Wedgwood, Esq.

[Footnote 1: Sara had been born 23rd December 1802.]

#### LETTER 115. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD

Nether Stowey, Feb. 10, 1803.

Dear Wedgwood,

Last night Poole and I fully expected a few lines from you. When the newspaper came in, without your letter, we felt as if a dull neighbour had been ushered in after a knock at the door which had made us rise up and start forward to welcome some long absent friend. Indeed in Poole's case, this simile is less over-swollen than in mine, for in contempt of my convictions and assurance to the contrary, Poole, passing off the Brummagem coin of his wishes for sterling reasons, had persuaded himself fully that he should see you in 'propria persona'. The truth is, we had no right to expect a letter from you, and I should have attributed your not writing to your having nothing to write, to your bodily dislike of

writing, or, though with reluctance, to low spirits, but that I have been haunted with the fear that your sister is worse, and that you are at Cote-House, in the mournful office of comforter to your brother. God keep us from idle dreams. Life has enough of real pains.

I wrote to Captain Wordsworth to get me some Bang. The captain in an affectionate letter answers me: "The Bang if possible shall be sent. If any country ship arrives I shall certainly get it. We have not got anything of the kind in our China ships." If you would rather wait till it can be brought by Captain Wordsworth himself from China, give me a line that I may write and tell him. We shall hope for a letter from you to-night. I need not say, dear Wedgwood, how anxious I am to hear the particulars of your health and spirits.

Poole's account of his conversations, etc., in France, are very interesting and instructive. If your inclination lead you hither you would be very comfortable here. But I am ready at an hour's warning; ready in heart and mind, as well as in body and moveables.

I am, dear Wedgwood, most truly yours,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Thomas Wedgwood, Esq.

#### LETTER 116. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD.

Stowey, Feb. 10, 1803.

My dear Wedgwood,

With regard to myself and my accompanying you, let me say thus much. My health is not worse than it was in the North; indeed it is much better. I have no fears. But if you fear that, my health being what you know it to be, the inconveniences of my being with you will be greater than the advantages; (I feel no reluctance in telling you so) [1] it is so entirely an affair of spirits and feeling that the conclusion must be made by you, not in your reason, but purely in your spirit and feeling. Sorry indeed should I be to know that you had gone abroad with one, to whom you were comparatively indifferent. Sorry if there should be no one with you, who could with fellow-feeling and general like-mindedness, yield you sympathy in your sunshiny moments. Dear Wedgwood, my heart swells within me as it were. I have no other wish to accompany you than what arises immediately from my personal attachment, and a deep sense in my own heart, that let us be as dejected as we will, a week together cannot pass in which a mind like yours would not feel the want of affection, or be wholly torpid to its pleasurable influences. I cannot bear to think of your going abroad with a mere travelling companion; with one at all influenced by salary, or personal conveniences. You will not suspect me of flattering you, but indeed dear Wedgwood, you are too

good and too valuable a man to deserve to receive attendance from a hireling, even for a month together, in your present state.

If I do not go with you, I shall stay in England only such time as may be necessary for me to raise the travelling money, and go immediately to the south of France. I shall probably cross the Pyrenees to Bilboa, see the country of Biscay, and cross the north of Spain to Perpignan, and so on to the north of Italy, and pass my next winter at Nice. I have every reason to believe that I can live, even as a traveller, as cheap as I can in England. God bless you. I will repeat no professions, even in the superscription of a letter. You know me, and that it is my serious, simple wish, that in everything respecting me, you would think altogether of yourself, and nothing of me, and be assured that no resolve of yours, however suddenly adopted, or however nakedly communicated, will give me any pain, any at least arising from my own bearings.

Yours ever,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Thomas Wedgwood, Esq.

P. S. Perhaps Leslie will go with you.

[Footnote 1: Should be "Feel no reluctance in telling me so."]

LETTER 117. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD.

Poole's, Feb. 17, 1803.

My dear Wedgwood,

I do not know that I have anything to say that justifies me in troubling you with the postage and perusal of this scrawl. I received a short and kind letter from Josiah last night. He is named the sheriff. Poole, who has received a very kind invitation from your brother John, in a letter of last Monday, and which was repeated in last night's letter, goes with me, I hope in the full persuasion that you will be there (at Cote-House) before he be under the necessity of returning home. Poole is a very, very good man, I like even his incorrigibility in little faults and deficiencies. It looks like a wise determination of nature to let well alone.

Are you not laying out a scheme which will throw your travelling in Italy, into an unpleasant and unwholesome part of the year? From all I can gather, you ought to leave this country at the first of April at the latest. But no doubt you know these things better than I. If I do not go with you, it is very probable we shall meet somewhere or other. At all events you will know where I am, and I can come to you if you wish it.

And if I go with you, there will be this advantage, that you may drop me where you like, if you should meet any Frenchman, Italian, or Swiss, whom you liked, and who would be pleasant and profitable to you. But this we can discuss at Gunville.

As to ----,[1] I never doubted that he means to fulfil his engagements with you, but he is one of those weak moralised men, with whom the meaning to do a thing means nothing. He promises with ninety parts out of a hundred of his whole heart, but there is always a speck of cold at the core that transubstantiates the whole resolve into a lie.

I remain in comfortable health,--warm rooms, an old friend, and tranquillity, are specifics for my complaints. With all my ups and downs I have a deal of joyous feeling, and I would with gladness give a good part of it to you, my dear friend. God grant that spring may come to you with healing on her wings.

God bless you, my dear Wedgwood. I remain with most affectionate esteem, and regular attachment, and good wishes.

Yours ever,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Thomas Wedgwood, Esq.

P. S. If Southey should send a couple of bottles, one of the red sulphate, and one of the compound acids for me, will you be so good as to bring them with you?

[Footnote 1: Mackintosh.]

LETTER 118. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD.

Stowey, Feb. 17, 1803.

My dear Wedgwood,

Last night I received a four ounce parcel letter, by the post, which Poole and I concluded was the mistake or carelessness of the servant, who had put the letter into the post office, instead of the coach office. I should have been indignant, if dear Poole had not set me laughing. On opening it, it contained my letter from Gunville, and a small parcel of "Bang," from Purkis. I will transcribe the parts of his letter which relate to it.

Brentford, Feb. 7, 1803.

My dear Coleridge,

I thank you for your letter, and am happy to be the means of obliging you. Immediately on the receipt of yours, I wrote to Sir Joseph Banks, who I verily believe is one of the most excellent and useful men of this country, requesting a small quantity of Bang, and saying it was for the use of Mr. T. Wedgwood. I yesterday received the parcel which I now send, accompanied with a very kind letter, and as part of it will be interesting to you and your friend, I will transcribe it. "The Bang you ask for is the powder of the leaves of a kind of hemp that grows in the hot climates. It is prepared, and I believe used, in all parts of the east, from Morocco to China. In Europe it is found to act very differently on different constitutions. Some it elevates in the extreme; others it renders torpid, and scarcely observant of any evil that may befall them. In Barbary it is always taken, if it can be procured, by criminals condemned to suffer amputation, and it is said, to enable those miseries to bear the rough operations of an unfeeling executioner, more than we Europeans can the keen knife of our most skilful surgeons. This it may be necessary to have said to my friend Mr. T. Wedgwood, whom I respect much, as his virtues deserve, and I know them well. I send a small quantity only as I possess but little. If however, it is found to agree, I will instantly forward the whole of my stock, and write without delay to Barbary, from whence it came, for more."

Sir Joseph adds, in a postscript: "It seems almost beyond a doubt, that the Nephenthe was a preparation of the Bang, known to the Ancients."

Now I had better take the small parcel with me to Gunville; if I send it by the post, besides the heavy expense, I cannot rely on the Stowey carriers, who are a brace of as careless and dishonest rogues as ever had claims on that article of the hemp and timber trade, called the gallows. Indeed I verily believe that if all Stowey, Ward excepted, does not go to hell, it will be by the supererogation of Poole's sense of honesty.--Charitable!

We will have a fair trial of Bang. Do bring down some of the Hyoscyamine pills, and I will give a fair trial of Opium, Henbane, and Nephenthe. By-the-bye I always considered Homer's account of the Nephenthe as a 'Banging' lie.

God bless you, my dear friend, and

S.T. COLERIDGE. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letter CXXXVI follows 118.]

The last four letters were written from Stowey, whither Coleridge had gone on a visit to Poole.

During the same period some events had taken place which changed the aspect of things. He had become acquainted with William Sotheby, the poet, translator of Homer and Wieland, to whom he communicated in long

letters his views on Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction, indicating a widening divergence from his brother poet. He had also made for the satisfaction of Sotheby a translation in blank verse of Gessner's 'Erste Schiffer', which has been lost ('Letters', 369-401). He had likewise paraphrased one of Gessner's Idylls, published as the 'Picture of The Lover's Resolution', in the 'Morning Post' of 6th September 1802. 'Dejection, an Ode', the 'Hymn before Sunrise', and the beautiful dramatic fragment, the 'Night Scene', are the last products of Coleridge's chilled poetic imagination. A third edition (1803) of the Early Poems was issued under the superintendence of Lamb ('Ainger', i, 199-206). He had made a second tour in Wales in company with Tom Wedgwood in November and December 1802 ('Letters', 410-417) returning to find that Sara had been born on 23rd December 1802. In August 1803 Coleridge went on tour to Scotland with the Wordsworths ('Letters', 451, and Dorothy Wordsworth's 'Journal'). It is impossible for us to give all the correspondence of this busy, mental period, but on 4th June 1803, Coleridge writes to Godwin.

LETTER 119. To GODWIN

Saturday Night, June 4, 1803.

Greta Hall, Keswick.

My dear Godwin,

I trust that my dear friend, C. Lamb, will have informed you how seriously ill I have been. I arrived at Keswick on Good Friday, caught the influenza, have struggled on in a series of convalescence and relapse, the disease still assuming new shapes and symptoms; and, though I am certainly better than at any former period of the disease, and more steadily convalescent, yet it is not mere 'low spirits' that makes me doubt whether I shall ever wholly surmount the effects of it. I owe, then, explanation to you, for I quitted town, with strong feelings of affectionate esteem towards you, and a firm resolution to write to you within a short time after my arrival at my home. During my illness I was exceedingly affected by the thought that month had glided away after month, and year after year, and still had found and left me only 'preparing' for the experiments which are to ascertain whether the hopes of those who have hoped proudly of me have been auspicious omens or mere delusions; and the anxiety to realize something, and finish something, has, no doubt, in some measure retarded my recovery. I am now, however, ready to go to the press with a work which I consider as introductory to a 'system', though to the public it will appear altogether a thing by itself. I write now to ask your advice respecting the time and manner of its publication, and the choice of a publisher, I entitle it

'Organum Vera Organum, or an Instrument of Practical Reasoning in the Business of Real Life'; [1] to which will be prefixed,

1. A familiar introduction to the common system of Logic, namely, that of Aristotle and the Schools.
2. A concise and simple, yet full statement of the Aristotelian Logic, with reference annexed to the authors, and the name and page of the work to which each part may be traced, so that it may be at once seen what is Aristotle's, what Porphyry's, what the addition of the Greek Commentators, and what of the Schoolmen.
3. An outline of the History of Logic in general,
  - 1st Chapter. The Origin of Philosophy in general, and of Logic 'speciatim'.
  - 2d Chap. Of the Eleatic and Megaric Logic.
  - 3d Chap. of the Platonic Logic.
  - 4th Chap, of Aristotle, containing a fair account of the "[Greek: Orhganon]--of which Dr. Reid, in 'Kaimes' Sketches of Man', has given a most false, and not only erroneous, but calumnious statement--in as far as the account had not been anticipated in the second part of my work, namely, the concise and simple, yet full, etc. etc.
  - 5th Chap. A philosophical examination of the truth and of the value of the Aristotelian System of Logic, including all the after-additions to it.
  - 6th Chap. On the characteristic merits and demerits of Aristotle and Plato as philosophers in general, and an attempt to explain the fact of the vast influence of the former during so many ages; and of the influence of Plato's works on the restoration of the Belles Lettres, and on the Reformation.
  - 7th Chap. Raymund Lully.
  - 8th Chap. Peter Ramus.
  - 9th Chap. Lord Bacon, or the Verulamian Logic. both Chap. Examination of the same, and comparison of it with the Logic of Plato (in which I attempt to make it probable that, though considered by Bacon himself as the antithesis and the antidote of Plato, it is 'bona fide' the same, and that Plato has been misunderstood).[2]
  - 10th Chap. Descartes,
  - 11th Chap. Condillac, and a philosophical examination of 'his' logic, 'i.e.' the logic which he basely purloined from Hartley.

Then follows my own 'Organum Vera Organum', which consists of a "[Greek: Eustaema] of all 'possible' modes of true, probable, and false reasoning, arranged philosophically, 'i.e.' on a strict analysis of those operations and passions of the mind in which they originate, or by which they act; with one or more striking instances annexed to each, from authors of high estimation, and to each instance of false reasoning, the manner in which the sophistry is to be detected, and the words in which it may be exposed.

The whole will conclude with considerations of the value of the work, or its practical utility in scientific investigations (especially the first part, which contains the strictly demonstrative reasonings, and the analysis of all the acts and passions of the mind which may be employed to the discovery of truth) in the arts of healing, especially in those parts that contain a catalogue, etc. of probable reasoning; lastly, to the senate, the pulpit, and our law courts, to whom the whole--but especially the latter three-fourths of the work, on the probable and the false--will be useful, and finally instructive, how to form a commonplace book by the aid of this Instrument, so as to read with

practical advantage, and (supposing average talents) to 'ensure' a facility and rapidity in proving and in computing. I have thus amply detailed the contents of my work, which has not been the labour of one year or of two, but the result of many years' meditations, and of very various reading. The size of the work will, printed at thirty lines a page, form one volume octavo, 500 pages to the volume; and I shall be ready with the first half of the work for the printer at a fortnight's notice. Now, my dear friend, give me your thoughts on the subject: would you have me to offer it to the booksellers, or, by the assistance of my friends, print and publish on my own account? If the former, would you advise me to sell the copyright at once, or only one or more editions? Can you give me a general notion what terms I have a right to insist on in either case? And, lastly, to whom would you advise me to apply? Phillips is a pushing man, and a book is sure to have fair play if it be his 'property'; and it could not be other than pleasant to me to have the same publisher with yourself, 'but'----. Now if there be anything of impatience, that whether truth and justice ought to follow that "but" you will inform me. It is not my habit to go to work so seriously about matters of pecuniary business; but my ill health makes my life more than ordinarily uncertain, and I have a wife and three little ones. If your judgment leads you to advise me to offer it to Phillips, would you take the trouble of talking with him on the subject, and give him your real opinion, whatever it may be, of the work and of the powers of the author?

When this book is fairly off my hands, I shall, if I live and have sufficient health, set seriously to work in arranging what I have already written, and in pushing forward my studies and my investigations relative to the 'omne scibile' of human nature--'what' we are, and 'how we become' what we are; so as to solve the two grand problems--how, being acted upon, we shall act; how, acting, we shall be acted upon. But between me and this work there may be death.

I hope your wife and little ones are well. I have had a sick family. At one time every individual--master, mistress, children, and servants--were all laid up in bed, and we were waited on by persons hired from the town for the week. But now all are well, I only excepted. If you find my paper smell, or my style savour of scholastic quiddity, you must attribute it to the infectious quality of the folio on which I am writing--namely, 'Scotus Erigena de Divisione Naturae', the forerunner, by some centuries, of the schoolmen. I cherish all kinds of honourable feelings towards you; and I am, dear Godwin,

Yours most sincerely,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Footnote 1 Extant in MS. See 'Athenaeum', 26th October 1895.]

[Footnote 2: See the 'Friend', Bohn Library, pp. 319-345.]

You know the high character and present scarcity of 'Tuckers Light of Nature'. "I have found in this writer" (says Paley, in his preface to his 'Moral and Political Philosophy') "more original thinking and observation upon the several subjects he has taken in hand than in any other, not to say in all others put together". His talent also for illustration is unrivalled. But his thoughts are diffused through a long, various, and irregular work. And a friend of mine, every way calculated by his taste and private studies for such a work,[1] is willing to abridge and systematize that work from eight to two volumes--in the words of Paley, "to dispose into method, to collect into heads and articles, and to exhibit in more compact and tangible masses, what in that otherwise excellent performance is spread over too much surface." I would prefix to it an essay containing the whole substance of the first volume of Hartley; entirely defecated from all the corpuscular hypothesis, with more illustrations. I give my name to the essay. Likewise I will revise every sheet of the abridgment. I should think the character of the work, and the above quotations from so high an authority (with the present public, I mean) as Paley, would ensure its success. If you will read or transcribe, and send this to Mr. Phillips, or to any other publisher (Longman and Rees excepted) you would greatly oblige me; that is to say, my dear Godwin, you would essentially serve a young man of profound genius and original mind, who wishes to get his 'Sabine' subsistence by some employment from the booksellers, while he is employing the remainder of his time in nursing up his genius for the destiny which he believes appurtenant to it. "Qui cito facit, bis facit." Impose any task on me in return. [2]

[Footnote 1: Hazlitt. The abridgment was made, and published in 1807.]

[Footnote 2: Letter CXXXVII follows 119.]

Godwin published his 'Life of Chaucer' in 1803. The next letter refers to this work.

LETTER 120. TO GODWIN

Friday, July 10, 1803.

Greta Hall.

My dear Godwin,

Your letter has this moment reached me, and found me writing for Stuart, to whom I am under a positive engagement to produce three essays by the beginning of next week. To promise, therefore, to do what I could not do would be worse than idle; and to attempt to do what I could not do well, from distraction of mind, would be trifling with my time and your

patience. If I could convey to you any tolerably distinct notion of the state of my spirits of late, and the train or the sort of my ideas consequent on that state, you would feel instantly that my non-performance of the promise is matter of 'regret' with me indeed, but not of 'compunction'. It was my full intention to have prepared immediately a second volume of poems for the press; but, though the poems are all either written or composed, excepting only the conclusion of one poem (equal to four days' common work) and a few corrections, and though I had the most pressing motives for sending them off, yet after many attempts I was obliged to give up the very hope--the attempts acted so perniciously on my disorder.

Wordsworth, too, wished, and in a very particular manner expressed the wish, that I should write to him at large on a poetic subject, which he has at present 'sub malleo ardentem et ignitum'. I made the attempt, but I could not command my recollections. It seemed a dream that I had ever 'thought' on poetry, or had ever written it, so remote were my trains of ideas from composition or criticism on composition. These two instances will, in some manner, explain my non-performance; but, indeed, I have been very ill, and that I have done anything in any way is a subject of wonder to myself, and of no causeless self-complacency. Yet I am anxious to do something which may convince you of my sincerity by zeal: and, if you think that it will be of any service to you, I will send down for the work; I will instantly give it a perusal 'con amore'; and partly by my reverential love of Chaucer, and partly from my affectionate esteem for his biographer (the summer, too, bringing increase of health with it), I doubt not that my old mind will recur to me; and I will forthwith write a series of letters, containing a critique on Chaucer, and on the 'Life of Chaucer', by W. Godwin, and publish them, with my name, either at once in a small volume, or in the 'Morning Post' in the first instance, and republish them afterwards.

The great thing to be done is to present Chaucer stripped of all his adventitious matter, his translations, etc.; to analyse his own real productions, to deduce his province and his rank; then to compare him with his contemporaries, or with immediate prede- and suc- cessors, first as an Englishman, and secondly as a European; then with Spenser and with Shakespeare, between whom he seems to stand mid-way, with, however, a manner of his own which belongs to neither, with a manner and an excellence; lastly, to compare Dante and Chaucer, and inclusively Spenser and Shakespere, with the ancients, to abstract the characteristic differences, and to develop the causes of such differences. (For instance, in all the writings of the ancients I recollect nothing that, strictly examined, can be called humour; yet Chaucer abounds with it, and Dante, too, though in a very different way. Thus, too, the passion for personifications and, "me judice", strong, sharp, practical good sense, which I feel to constitute a strikingly characteristic difference in favour of the "feudal" poets.) As to information, I could give you a critical sketch of poems, written by contemporaries of Chaucer, in Germany; an epic to compare with his "Palamon", and tales with his Tales, descriptive and fanciful poems with those of the same kind in our own poet. In short, a Life of Chaucer ought, in the work itself, and in the appendices of the work, to make

the poet explain his age, and to make the age both explain the poet, and evince the superiority of the poet over his age. I think that the publication of such a work would do "your" work some little service, in more ways than one. It would occasion, necessarily, a double review of it in all the Reviews; and there is a large class of fashionable men who have been pleased of late to take me into high favour, and among whom even my name might have some influence, and my praises of you weight. But let me hear from you on the subject.

Now for my own business. As soon as you possibly can do something respecting the abridgment of Tucker,[1] do so; you will, on my honour, be doing "good", in the best sense of the word! Of course I cannot wish you to do anything till after the 24th, unless it should be "put" in your way to read that part of the letter to Phillips.

As to my own work, let me correct one or two conceptions of yours respecting it. I could, no doubt, induce my friends to publish the work for me, but I am possessed of facts that deter me. I know that the booksellers not only do not encourage, but that they use unjustifiable artifices to injure works published on the authors' own account. It never answered, as far as I can find, in any instance. And even the sale of a first edition is not without objections on this score--to this, however, I should certainly adhere, and it is my resolution. But I must do something immediately. Now, if I knew that any bookseller would purchase the first edition of this work, as numerous as he pleased, I should put the work out of hand at once, "totus in illo". But it was never my intention to send one single sheet to the press till the whole was "bona fide" ready for the printer--that is, both written, and fairly written. The work is half written "out", and the materials of the other half are all in paper, or rather on papers. I should not expect one farthing till the work was delivered entire; and I would deliver it at once, if it were wished. But, if I cannot engage with a bookseller for this, I must do something else "first", which I should be sorry for. Your division of the sorts of works acceptable to booksellers is just, and what has been always my own notion or rather knowledge; but, though I detailed the whole of the contents of my work so fully to you, I did not mean to lay any stress with the bookseller on the first half, but simply state it as preceded by a familiar introduction, and critical history of logic. On the work itself I meant to lay all the stress, as a work really in request, and non-existent, either well or ill-done, and to put the work in the "same class" with "Guthrie" and books of practical instruction--for the universities, classes of scholars, lawyers, etc. etc. Its profitable sale will greatly depend on the pushing of the booksellers, and on its being considered as a "practical" book, "Organum vere Organum", a book by which the reader is to acquire not only knowledge, but likewise "power". I fear that it may extend to seven hundred pages; and would it be better to publish the Introduction of History separately, either after or before? God bless you, and all belonging to you, and your Chaucer. All happiness to you and your wife.

Ever yours, S. T. C.

P.S. If you read to Phillips any part of my letter respecting my own

work, or rather detailed it to him, you would lay all the stress on the "practical".

[Footnote 1: Godwin exerted himself actively in the matter, as appears by the correspondence of Charles Lamb.]

The ambitious scheme of the letters to Godwin did not exhaust Coleridge's projects at this season. To Southey he wrote:

#### LETTER 121. To SOUTHEY [1]

Keswick, July, 1803.

My dear Southey,

... I write now to propose a scheme, or rather a rude outline of a scheme, of your grand work. What harm can a proposal do? If it be no pain to you to reject it, it will be none to me to have it rejected. I would have the work entitled "Bibliotheca Britannica", or an History of British Literature, bibliographical, biographical, and critical. The two "last" volumes I would have to be a chronological catalogue of all noticeable or extant books; the others, be the number six or eight, to consist entirely of separate treatises, each giving a critical biblio-biographical history of some one subject. I will, with great pleasure, join you in learning Welsh and Erse: and you, I, Turner, and Owen, might dedicate ourselves for the first half year to a complete history of all Welsh, Saxon, and Erse books that are not translations, that are the native growth of Britain. If the Spanish neutrality continues, I will go in October or November to Biscay, and throw light on the Basque.

Let the next volume contain the history of "English" poetry and poets, in which I would include all prose truly poetical. The first half of the second volume should be dedicated to great single names, Chaucer and Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton and Taylor, Dryden and Pope; the poetry of witty logic,--Swift, Fielding, Richardson, Sterne: I write "par hasard", but I mean to say all great names as have either formed epochs in our taste, or such, at least, as are representative; and the great object to be in each instance to determine, first, the true merits and demerits of the "books"; secondly, what of these belong to the age--what to the author "quasi peculium". The second half of the second volume should be a history of poetry and romances, everywhere interspersed with biography, but more flowing, more consecutive, more bibliographical, chronological, and complete. The third volume I would have dedicated to English prose, considered as to style, as to eloquence, as to general impressiveness; a history of styles and manners, their causes, their birth-places and parentage, their analysis.

These three volumes would be so generally interesting, so exceedingly

entertaining, that you might bid fair for a sale of the work at large. Then let the fourth volume take up the history of metaphysics, theology, medicine, alchemy, common, canon, and Roman law, from Alfred to Henry VII.; in other words, a history of the dark ages in Great Britain. The fifth volume--carry on metaphysics and ethics to the present day in the first half; the second half, comprise the theology of all the reformers. In the fourth volume there would be a grand article on the philosophy of the theology of the Roman Catholic religion. In this (fifth volume), under different names,--Hooker, Baxter, Biddle, and Fox,--the spirit of the theology of all the other parts of Christianity. The sixth and seventh volumes must comprise all the articles you can get, on all the separate arts and sciences that have been treated of in books since the Reformation; and, by this time, the book, if it answered at all, would have gained so high a reputation, that you need not fear having whom you liked to write the different articles--medicine, surgery, chemistry, etc., etc., navigation, travellers, voyagers, etc., etc. If I go into Scotland, shall I engage Walter Scott to write the history of Scottish poets? Tell me, however, what you think of the plan. It would have one prodigious advantage: whatever accident stopped the work, would only prevent the future good, not mar the past; each volume would be a great and valuable work "per se". Then each volume would awaken a new interest, a new set of readers, who would buy the past volumes of course; then it would allow you ample time and opportunities for the slavery of the catalogue volumes, which should be at the same time an index to the work, which would be, in very truth, a pandect of knowledge, alive and swarming with human life, feeling, incident. By the bye, what a strange abuse has been made of the word encyclopaedia! It signifies, properly, grammar, logic, rhetoric, and ethics and metaphysics, which last, explaining the ultimate principles of grammar--log., rhet., and eth.--formed a circle of knowledge. \* \* \* To call a huge unconnected miscellany of the "omne scibile", in an arrangement determined by the accident of initial letters, an encyclopaedia, is the impudent ignorance of your Presbyterian bookmakers. Good night!

God bless you! S. T. C.

[Footnote 1: Southey's biographer says regarding this scheme: "Soon after the date of the letter, my father paid a short visit to London, the chief purpose of which was to negotiate with Messrs. Longman and Rees respecting 'the management of a "Bibliotheca Britannica" upon a very extensive scale, to be arranged chronologically, and made a readable book by biography, criticism, and connecting chapters, to be published like the Cyclopaedia in parts.'"]

SOUTHEY TO S. T. COLERIDGE, ESQ.

Bristol, Aug. 3, 1803.

Dear Coleridge,

I meant to have written sooner; but those little units of interruption and preventions, which sum up to as ugly an aggregate as the items in a lawyer's bill, have come in the way. ...

Your plan is too good, too gigantic, quite beyond my powers. If you had my tolerable state of health, and that love of steady and productive employment which is now grown into a necessary habit with me, if you were to execute and would execute it, it would be, beyond all doubt, the most valuable work of any age or any country; but I cannot fill up such an outline. No man can better feel where he fails than I do; and to rely upon you for whole quartos! Dear Coleridge, the smile that comes with that thought is a very melancholy one; and if Edith saw me now, she would think my eyes were weak again, when, in truth, the humour that covers them springs from another cause.

For my own comfort, and credit, and peace of mind, I must have a plan which I know myself strong enough to execute. I can take author by author as they come in their series, and give his life and an account of his works quite as well as ever it has yet been done. I can write connecting paragraphs and chapters shortly and pertinently, in my way; and in this way the labour of all my associates can be more easily arranged. ... And, after all, this is really nearer the actual design of what I purport by a bibliotheca than yours would be,--a book of reference, a work in which it may be seen what has been written upon every subject in the British language: this has elsewhere been done in the dictionary form; whatever we get better than that form--"ponemus lucro". [1]

[Footnote 1: Letter CXXXVIII is our 121. CXXXIX-CXLII follow 121.]

To Thomas Wedgwood Coleridge, on his return from the Scotch tour, wrote:

LETTER 122. To THOMAS WEDGWOOD

Keswick, September 16, 1803.

My dear Wedgwood,

I reached home on yesterday noon. William Hazlitt, is a thinking, observant, original man; of great power as a painter of character-portraits, and far more in the manner of the old painters than any living artist, but the objects must be before him. He has no imaginative memory; so much for his intellectuals. His manners are to ninety-nine in one hundred singularly repulsive; brow-hanging; shoe-contemplating--strange. Sharp seemed to like him, but Sharp saw him only for half an hour, and that walking. He is, I verily believe, kindly-natured: is very fond of, attentive to, and patient with children, but he is jealous, gloomy, and of an irritable pride. With all

this there is much good in him. He is disinterested; an enthusiastic lover of the great men who have been before us. He says things that are his own, in a way of his own: and though from habitual shyness, and the outside of bear skin, at least of misanthropy, he is strangely confused and dark in his conversation, and delivers himself of almost all his conceptions with a "Forceps", yet he "says" more than any man I ever knew (you yourself only excepted) of that which is his own, in a way of his own; and often times when he has warmed his mind, and the juice is come out, and spread over his spirits, he will gallop for half an hour together, with real eloquence. He sends well-feathered thoughts straight forward to the mark with a twang of the bow-string. If you could recommend him as a portrait painter, I should be glad. To be your companion, he is, in my opinion utterly unfit. His own health is fitful.

I have written as I ought to do: to you most freely. You know me, both head and heart, and I will make what deductions your reasons may dictate to me. I can think of no other person (for your travelling companion)--what wonder? For the last years, I have been shy of all new acquaintance.

To live beloved is all I need,  
And when I love, I love indeed.

I never had any ambition, and now, I trust I have almost as little vanity.

For five months past my mind has been strangely shut up. I have taken the paper with the intention to write to you many times, but it has been one blank feeling;--one blank idealess feeling. I had nothing to say;--could say nothing. How dearly I love you, my very dreams make known to me. I will not trouble you with the gloomy tale of my health. When I am awake, by patience, employment, effort of mind, and walking, I can keep the Fiend at arm's length, but the night is my Hell!--sleep my tormenting Angel. Three nights out of four, I fall asleep, struggling to lie awake, and my frequent night-screams have almost made me a nuisance in my own house. Dreams with me are no shadows, but the very calamities of my life. \* \* \*

In the hope of drawing the gout, if gout it should be, into my feet, I walked previously to my getting into the coach at Perth, 263 miles, in eight days, with no unpleasant fatigue; and if I could do you any service by coming to town, and there were no coaches, I would undertake to be with you, on foot in seven days. I must have strength somewhere. My head is indefatigably strong: my limbs too are strong: but acid or not acid, gout or not gout, something there is in my stomach. \* \* \*

To diversify this dusky letter, I will write an "Epitaph", which I composed in my sleep for myself while dreaming that I was dying. To the best of my recollection I have not altered a word.

Here sleeps at length poor Col. and without screaming  
Who died, as he had always lived, a dreaming:  
Shot dead, while sleeping, by the gout within,  
Alone, and all unknown, at E'nbro' in an Inn.

It was Tuesday night last, at the Black Bull, Edinburgh. Yours, dear  
Wedgwood, gratefully, and

Most affectionately,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Thomas Wedgwood, Esq.

The character of Hazlitt in this letter is as good as anything in La  
Bruyere. The next letter (without date in Cottle's "Reminiscences", but  
which must be 1803) is to Miss Cruikshank, of Nether Stowey. The  
Penelope referred to is Penelope Poole, the cousin of Tom Poole.

LETTER 123. To MISS CRUIKSHANK

(No date, supposed to be 1803.[1])

My dear Miss Cruikshank,

With the kindest intentions, I fear you have done me some little  
disservice, in borrowing the first edition of my poems from Miss B--. I  
never held any principles indeed, of which, considering my age, I have  
reason to be ashamed. The whole of my public life may be comprised in  
eight or nine months of my 22nd year; and the whole of my political sins  
during that time, consisted in forming a plan of taking a large farm in  
common, in America, with other young men of my age. A wild notion  
indeed, but very harmless.

As to my principles, they were, at all times, decidedly anti-jacobin and  
anti-revolutionary, and my American scheme is a proof of this. Indeed at  
that time, I seriously held the doctrine of passive obedience, though a  
violent enemy of the first war. Afterwards, and for the last ten years  
of my life, I have been fighting incessantly in the good cause, against  
French ambition, and French principles; and I had Mr. Addington's  
suffrage, as to the good produced by my Essays, written in the "Morning  
Post", in the interval of the peace of Amiens, and the second war,  
together with my two letters to Mr. Fox. [2]

Of my former errors, I should be no more ashamed, than of my change of  
body, natural to increase of age; but in that first edition, there was  
inserted (without my consent!) a Sonnet to Lord Stanhope, in direct  
contradiction, equally, to my "then", as to my present principles. A  
Sonnet written by me in ridicule and mockery of the bloated style of

French jacobinical declamation, and inserted by Biggs, (the fool of a printer,) in order forsooth, that he might send the book, and a letter to Earl Stanhope; who, to prove that he was not mad in all things, treated both book and letter with silent contempt. I have therefore sent Mr. Poole's second edition, and if it be in your power, I could wish you to read the "dedication to my brother," at the beginning, to Lady E. Perceval, to obtain whose esteem, so far at least as not to be confounded with the herd of vulgar mob flatterers, I am not ashamed to confess myself solicitous.

I would I could be with you, and your visitors. Penelope, you know, is very high in my esteem. With true warmth of heart, she joins more strength of understanding; and, to steady principle, more variety of accomplishments, than it has often been my lot to meet with among the fairer sex. When I praise one woman to another I always mean a compliment to both. My tenderest regards to your dear mother, whom I really long to spend a few hours with, and believe me with sincere good wishes,

Yours, etc.,

S. T. COLERIDGE [3]

[Footnote 1: Dated "1807" in "Early Recollections".]

[Footnote 2: It appears from Sir James Macintosh's Life, published by his son, that a diminution of respect towards Sir James was entertained by Mr. Fox, arising from the above two letters of Mr. Coleridge, which appeared in the "Morning Post". Some enemy of Sir James had informed Mr. Fox that these two letters were written by Macintosh, and which exceedingly wounded his mind. Before the error could be corrected, Mr. Fox died. This occurrence was deplored by Sir James, in a way that showed his deep feeling of regret, but which, as might be supposed, did not prevent him from bearing the amplest testimony to the social worth and surpassing talents of that great statesman. Mr. Coleridge's Bristol friends will remember that once Mr. Fox was idolized by him as the paragon of political excellence; and Mr. Pitt depressed in the same proportion. [Note by Cottle.]]

[Footnote 3: Letter CXLIII follows 123.]

In the beginning of 1804 we find Coleridge in London, whither Poole, too, had gone to superintend the compilation of an Abstract on the condition of the Poor Laws.

LETTER 124. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD

16, Abingdon Street, Westminster, Jan. 1804.

My dear friend,

Some divines hold, that with God to think, and to create, are one and the same act. If to think, and even to compose had been the same as to write with me, I should have written as much too much as I have written too little. The whole truth of the matter is, that I have been very, very ill. Your letter remained four days unread, I was so ill. What effect it had upon me I cannot express by words. It lay under my pillow day after day. I should have written forty times, but as it often and often happens with me, my heart was too full, and I had so much to say that I said nothing. I never received a delight that lasted longer upon me--"Brooded on my mind and made it pregnant," than (from) the six last sentences of your last letter,--which I cannot apologize for not having answered, for I should be casting calumnies against myself; for, for the last six or seven weeks, I have both thought and felt more concerning you, and relating to you, than of all other men put together.

Somehow or other, whatever plan I determined to adopt, my fancy, good-natured pander of our wishes, always linked you on to it; or I made it your plan, and linked myself on. I left my home, December 20, 1803, intending to stay a day and a half at Grasmere, and then to walk to Kendal, whither I had sent all my clothes and viatica; from thence to go to London, and to see whether or no I could arrange my pecuniary matters, so as leaving Mrs. Coleridge all that was necessary to her comforts, to go myself to Madeira, having a persuasion, strong as the life within me, that one winter spent in a really warm, genial climate, would completely restore me. Wordsworth had, as I may truly say, forced on me a hundred pounds, in the event of my going to Madeira; and Stuart had kindly offered to befriend me. During the days and affrightful nights of my disease, when my limbs were swollen, and my stomach refused to retain the food--taken in in sorrow, then I looked with pleasure on the scheme: but as soon as dry frosty weather came, or the rains and damps passed off, and I was filled with elastic health, from crown to sole, then the thought of the weight of pecuniary obligation from so many people reconciled me; but I have broken off my story.

I stayed at Grasmere (Mr. Wordsworth's) a month; three fourths of the time bed-ridden;--and deeply do I feel the enthusiastic kindness of Wordsworth's wife and sister, who sat up by me, one or the other, in order to awaken me at the first symptoms of distressful feeling; and even when they went to rest, continued often and often to weep and watch for me even in their dreams. I left them January the 14th, and have spent a very pleasant week at Dr. Crompton's, at Liverpool, and arrived in London, at Poole's lodgings, last night at eight o'clock.

Though my right hand is so much swollen that I can scarcely keep my pen steady between my thumb and finger, yet my stomach is easy, and my breathing comfortable, and I am eager to hope all good things of my health. That gained, I have a cheering, and I trust prideless confidence that I shall make an active, and perseverant use of the faculties and requirements that have been entrusted to my keeping, and a fair trial of their height, depth, and width. Indeed I look back on the last four months with honest pride, seeing how much I have done, with what steady

attachment of mind to the same subject, and under what vexations and sorrows, from without, and amid what incessant sufferings. So much of myself. When I know more, I will tell you more.

I find you are still at Cote-house. Poole tells me you talk of Jamaica as a summer excursion. If it were not for the voyage, I would that you would go to Madeira, for from the hour I get on board the vessel, to the time that I once more feel England beneath my feet, I am as certain as past and present experience can make me, that I shall be in health, in high health; and then I am sure, not only that I should be a comfort to you, but that I should be so without diminution of my activity, or professional usefulness. Briefly, dear Wedgwood! I truly and at heart love you, and of course it must add to my deeper and moral happiness to be with you, if I can be either assistance or alleviation. If I find myself so well that I defer my Madeira plan, I shall then go forthwith to Devonshire to see my aged mother, once more before she dies, and stay two or three months with my brothers. But, wherever I am, I never suffer a day, (except when I am travelling) to pass without doing something.

Poole made me promise that I would leave one side for him. God bless him! He looks so worshipful in his office, among his clerks, that it would give you a few minutes' good spirits to look in upon him. Pray you as soon as you can command your pen, give me half a score lines, and now that I am loose, say whether or no I can be any good to you.

S. T. COLERIDGE. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letters CXLIV-CXLVI follow 124.]

#### LETTER 125. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD

16, Abingdon Street, Westminster, Jan. 28, 1804.

My dear friend,

It is idle for me to say to you, that my heart and very soul ache with the dull pain of one struck down and stunned. I write to you, for my letter cannot give you unmixed pain, and I would fain say a few words to dissuade you. What good can possibly come of your plan? Will not the very chairs and furniture of your room be shortly more, far more intolerable to you than new and changing objects! more insufferable reflectors of pain and weariness of spirit? Oh, most certainly they will! You must hope, my dearest Wedgwood; you must act as if you hoped. Despair itself has but that advice to give you. Have you ever thought of trying large doses of opium, a hot climate, keeping your body open by grapes, and the fruits of the climate? Is it possible that by drinking freely, you might at last produce the gout, and that a violent pain and inflammation in the extremities might produce new trains of motion and feeling in your stomach, and the organs connected with the stomach,

known and unknown? Worse than what you have decreed for yourself cannot well happen. Say but a word and I will come to you, will be with you, will go with you to Malta, to Madeira, to Jamaica, or (if the climate, of which, and its strange effects, I have heard wonders, true or not) to Egypt.

At all events, and at the worst even, if you do attempt to realize the scheme of going to and remaining at Gunville, for God's sake, my dear dear friend, do keep up a correspondence with one or more; or if it were possible for you, with several. I know by a little what your sufferings are, and that to shut the eyes, and stop up the ears, is to give one's self up to storm and darkness, and the lurid forms and horrors of a dream. I scarce know why it is; a feeling I have, and which I can hardly understand. I could not endure to live if I had not a firm faith that the life within you will pass forth out of the furnace, for that you have borne what you have borne, and so acted beneath such pressure--constitutes you an awful moral being. I am not ashamed to pray aloud for you.

Your most affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE. [1]

[Footnote 1: Letters CXLVII-CXLIX follow 125.]

These letters on the Pains of Sleep are followed by one to Davy on the non-sympathy of the well with the sick.

#### LETTER 126. TO DAVY

Tuesday morning, 7, Barnard's Inn, Holborn. [1]

My dear Davy,

I trusted my cause last Sunday, I fear, to an unsympathizing agent. To Mr. Tuffin I can scarcely think myself bound to make a direct apology, as my promise was wholly conditional. This I did, not only from general foresight, but from the possibility of hearing from you, that you had not been able to untie your former engagement. To you, therefore, I owe the apology: and on you I expressly and earnestly desired Tobin to call and to explain for me, that I had been in an utterly incompatible state of bodily feeling the whole evening at Mr. Renny's; that I was much hurt by the walk home through the wet; instantly on my return here had an attack in my bowels; that this had not wholly left me, and therefore that I could not come, unless the weather altered. By which I did not mean merely its 'holding up' (though even this it did not do at four o'clock at Barnard's Inn, the sleety rain was still falling, though slightly), but the drying up of the rawness and dampness, which would infallibly have diseased me, before I had reached the Institution--not to mention the effect of sitting a long evening in damp clothes and shoes on an

invalid, scarcely recovered from a diarrhoea. I have thought it fit to explain at large, both as a mark of respect to you, and because I have very unjustly acquired a character for breaking engagements, entirely from the non-sympathy of the well with the sick, the robust with the weakly. It must be difficult for most men to conceive the extreme reluctance with which I go at all into 'company', and the unceasing depression which I am struggling up against during the whole time I am in it, which too often makes me drink more 'during dinner' than I ought to do, and as often forces me into efforts of almost obtrusive conversation, 'acting' the opposite of my real state of mind in order to arrive at a medium, as we roll paper the opposite way in order to smoothe it.

Be so good as to tell me what hour you expect Mr. Sotheby on Thursday.

I am, my dear Davy, with sincere and affectionate esteem, yours ever,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Footnote 1: The twopenny post-mark is that of 6th March, 1804.]

Amid these letters, complaining of ill health and full of apologies for broken engagements, Coleridge could write genuine literary criticisms of the first order. The following letter addressed to Sarah Hutchinson is his opinion of Sir Thomas Browne. He had presented her with a copy of 'Religio Medici' with copious annotations (see 'Athenaeum', 30 May 1896, p. 714).

#### LETTER 127. TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

March 10th, 1804,

Sat. night, 12 o'clock.

My dear----

Sir Thomas Browne is among my first favorites, rich in various knowledge, exuberant in conceptions and conceits, contemplative, imaginative; often truly great and magnificent in his style and diction, though doubtless too often big, stiff, and hyperlatinistic: thus I might without admixture of falsehood, describe Sir T. Browne and my description would have only this fault, that it would be equally, or almost equally, applicable to half a dozen other writers, from the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth to the end of Charles II. He is indeed all this; and what he has more than all this peculiar to himself, I seem to convey to my own mind in some measure by saying,--that he is a quiet and sublime enthusiast with a strong tinge of the fantast,--the humourist constantly mingling with, and flashing across, the philosopher, as the darting colours in shot silk play upon the main dye.

In short, he has brains in his head which is all the more interesting for a little twist in the brains. He sometimes reminds the reader of Montaigne, but from no other than the general circumstances of an egotism common to both; which in Montaigne is too often a mere amusing gossip, a chit-chat story of whims and peculiarities that lead to nothing,--but which in Sir Thomas Browne is always the result of a feeling heart conjoined with a mind of active curiosity,--the natural and becoming egotism of a man, who, loving other men as himself, gains the habit, and the privilege of talking about himself as familiarly as about other men. Fond of the curious, and a hunter of oddities and strangenesses, while he conceived himself, with quaint and humorous gravity a useful inquirer into physical truth and fundamental science,--he loved to contemplate and discuss his own thoughts and feelings, because he found by comparison with other men's, that they too were curiosities, and so with a perfectly graceful and interesting ease he put them too into his museum and cabinet of varieties. In very truth he was not mistaken:--so completely does he see every thing in a light of his own, reading nature neither by sun, moon, nor candle light, but by the light of the faery glory around his own head; so that you might say that nature had granted to him in perpetuity a patent and monopoly for all his thoughts. Read his "Hydriotaphia" above all:--and in addition to the peculiarity, the exclusive Sir-Thomas-Browne-ness of all the fancies and modes of illustration, wonder at and admire his entireness in every subject, which is before him--he is "totus in illo"; he follows it; he never wanders from it,--and he has no occasion to wander;--for whatever happens to be his subject, he metamorphoses all nature into it. In that "Hydriotaphia" or Treatise on some Urns dug up in Norfolk--how earthy, how redolent of graves and sepulchres is every line! You have now dark mould, now a thigh-bone, now a scull, then a bit of mouldered coffin! a fragment of an old tombstone with moss in its "hic jacet";--a ghost or a winding sheet--or the echo of a funeral psalm wafted on a November wind! and the gayest thing you shall meet with shall be a silver nail or gilt "Anno Domini" from a perished coffin top. The very same remark applies in the same force to the interesting, though the far less interesting, Treatise on the Quincuncial Plantations of the Ancients. There is the same attention to oddities, to the remotenesses and "minutiae" of vegetable terms,--the same entireness of subject. You have quincunxes in heaven above, quincunxes in earth below, and quincunxes in the water beneath the earth; quincunxes in deity, quincunxes in the mind of man, quincunxes in bones, in the optic nerves, in roots of trees, in leaves, in petals, in every thing. In short, first turn to the last leaf of this volume, and read out aloud to yourself the last seven paragraphs of Chap. V. beginning with the words "More considerables," etc. But it is time for me to be in bed, in the words of Sir Thomas, which will serve you, my dear, as a fair specimen of his manner.--"But the quincunx of heaven--(the Hyades or five stars about the horizon at midnight at that time)--runs low, and 'tis time we close the five ports of knowledge: we are unwilling to spin out our waking thoughts into the phantasmes of sleep, which often continueth precogitations,--making tables of cobwebbes, and wildernesses of handsome groves. To keep our eyes open longer were but to act our Antipodes. The huntsmen are up in America, and they are already past their first sleep in Persia." Think you, my dear Friend, that there ever

was such a reason given before for going to bed at midnight;--to wit, that if we did not, we should be acting the part of our Antipodes! And then "the huntsmen are up in America."--What life, what fancy!--Does the whimsical knight give us thus a dish of strong green tea, and call it an opiate! I trust that you are quietly asleep--

And that all the stars hang bright above your dwelling,  
Silent as tho' they watched the sleeping earth! [1]

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[Footnote 1: From 'Dejection: An Ode', the "Lady" of the later version of which was Sarah Hutchinson. See Knight's 'Life of Wordsworth', ii. 86.]

Coleridge now wrote to Tom Wedgwood of his determination to go to Malta. Stoddart, his old friend, had invited him thither.

#### LETTER 128. TO THOMAS WEDGWOOD

(24) March, 1804.

My dear friend,

Though fearful of breaking in upon you after what you have written to me, I could not have left England without having written both to you and your brother, at the very moment I received a note from Sharp, informing me that I must instantly secure a place in the Portsmouth mail for Tuesday, and if I could not, that I must do so in the light coach for Tuesday's early coach.

I am agitated by many things, and only write now because you desired an answer by return of post. I have been dangerously ill, but the illness is going about, and not connected with my immediate ill health, however it may be with my general constitution. It was the cholera-morbus. But for a series of the merest accidents I should have been seized in the streets, in a bitter east wind, with cold rain; at all events have walked through it struggling. It was Sunday-night.

I have suffered it at Tobin's; Tobin sleeping out at Woolwich. No fire, no wine or spirits, or medicine of any kind, and no person being within call, but luckily, perhaps the occasion would better suit the word providentially, Tuffin, calling, took me home with him. \* \* \* I tremble at every loud sound I myself utter. But this is rather a history of the past than of the present. I have only enough for memento, and already on Wednesday I consider myself in clear sunshine, without the shadow of the

wings of the destroying angel.

What else relates to myself, I will write on Monday. Would to heaven you were going with me to Malta, if it were but for the voyage! With all other things I could make the passage with an unwavering mind. But without cheerings of hope. Let me mention one thing; Lord Cadogan was brought to absolute despair, and hatred of life, by a stomach complaint, being now an old man. The symptoms, as stated to me, were strikingly like yours, excepting the nervous difference of the two characters; the flittering fever, etc. He was advised to reduce lean beef to a pure jelly, by Papin's digester, with as little water as could secure it from burning, and of this to take half a wine glass 10 or 14 times a day. This and nothing else. He did so. Sir George Beaumont saw, within a few weeks a letter from himself to Lord St. Asaph, in which he relates the circumstance of his perseverance in it, and rapid amelioration, and final recovery. "I am now," he says, "in real good health; as good, and in as cheerful spirits as I ever was when a young man."

May God bless you, even here,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Before Coleridge left for Malta, Humphry Davy wrote the following beautiful letter to Coleridge, and Coleridge replied in a letter equally beautiful in its self-portraiture.

Royal Institution, Twelve o'clock, Monday.

My dear Coleridge,

My mind is disturbed, and my body harassed by many labours; yet I cannot suffer you to depart, without endeavouring to express to you some of the unbroken and higher feelings of my spirit, which have you at once for their cause and object.

Years have passed since we first met; and your presence, and recollections in regard to you, have afforded me continued sources of enjoyment. Some of the better feelings of my nature have been elevated by your converse; and thoughts which you have nursed, have been to me an eternal source of consolation.

In whatever part of the world you are, you will often live with me, not as a fleeting idea, but as a recollection possessed of creative energy,--as an imagination winged with fire, inspiring and rejoicing.

You must not live much longer without giving to all men the proof of power, which those who know you feel in admiration. Perhaps at a distance from the applauding and censuring murmurs of the world, you will be best able to execute those great works which are justly expected from you: you are to be the historian of the philosophy of feeling. Do not in any way dissipate your noble nature! Do not give up your

birthright!

May you soon recover perfect health--the health of strength and happiness! May you soon return to us, confirmed in all the powers essential to the exertion of genius. You were born for your country, and your native land must be the scene of your activity. I shall expect the time when your spirit, bursting through the clouds of ill health, will appear to all men, not as an uncertain and brilliant flame, but as a fair and permanent light, fixed, though constantly in motion,--as a sun which gives its fire, not only to its attendant planets, but which sends beams from all its parts into all worlds.

May blessings attend you, my dear friend! Do not forget me: we live for different ends, and with different habits and pursuits; but our feelings with regard to each other have, I believe, never altered. They must continue; they can have no natural death; and, I trust, they can never be destroyed by fortune, chance, or accident.

H. DAVY.

LETTER 129. TO DAVY

Sunday, March 25, 1804.

My dear Davy,

I returned from Mr. Northcote's, having been diseased by the change of weather too grievously to permit me to continue sitting, for in those moods of body brisk motion alone can prevent me from falling into distempered sleep. I came in meditating a letter to you, or rather the writing of the letter, which I had meditated yesterday, even while you were yet sitting with us. But it would be the merest confusion of my mind to force it into activity at present. Yours of this morning must have sunken down first, and must have found its abiding resting-place. O, dear friend! blessed are the moments, and if not moments of "humility", yet as distant from whatever is opposite to humility, as humility itself, when I am able to hope of myself as you have dared hope of and for me. Alas! they are neither many nor of quick recurrence. There "is" a something, an essential something, wanting in me. I feel it, I "know" it--though what it is, I can but guess. I have read somewhere, that in the tropical climates there are annuals as lofty and of as an ample girth as forest trees:--So by a very dim likeness I seem to myself to distinguish Power from Strength--and to have only the former. But of this I will speak again: for if it be no reality, if it be no more than a disease of my mind, it is yet deeply rooted and of long standing, and requires help from one who loves me in the light of knowledge. I have written these lines with a compelled understanding, my feelings elsewhere at work--and I fear, unwell as I am, to indulge my [1] deep emotion, however ennobled or endeared. Dear Davy! I have always loved, always honoured, always had faith in you, in every part of my

being that lies below the surface; and whatever changes may have now and then "rippled" even upon the surface, have been only jealousies concerning you in behalf of all men, and fears from exceeding great hope. I cannot be prevented from uttering and manifesting the strongest convictions and best feelings of my nature by the incident, that they of whom I think so highly, esteem me in return, and entertain reciprocal hopes. No! I would to God, I thought it myself even as you think of me, but....

So far had I written, my dear Davy, yesterday afternoon, with all my faculties beclouded, writing mostly about myself--but, Heaven knows! thinking wholly about you. I am too sad, too much dejected to write what I could wish. Of course I shall see you this evening here at a quarter after nine. When I mentioned it to Sir George, "Too late," said he; "no, if it were twelve o'clock, it would be better than his not coming." They are really kind and good [Sir George and Lady Beaumont]. Sir George is a remarkably 'sensible' man, which I mention, because it 'is' somewhat REMARKABLE in a painter of genius, who is at the same time a man of rank and an exceedingly amusing companion.

I am still but very indifferent--but that is so old a story that it affects me but little. To see 'you' look so very unwell on Saturday, was a new thing to me, and I want a word something short of affright, and a little beyond anxiety, to express the feeling that haunted me in consequence.

I trust that I shall have time, and the greater spirit, to write to you from Portsmouth, a part at least of what is in and upon me in my more genial moments.

But always I am and shall be, my dear Davy, with hope, and esteem, and affection, the aggregate of many Davys,

Your sincere friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE. [2]

[Footnote 1: Perhaps "any" is the right word here.]

[Footnote 2: Letter CL follows, 129.]

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