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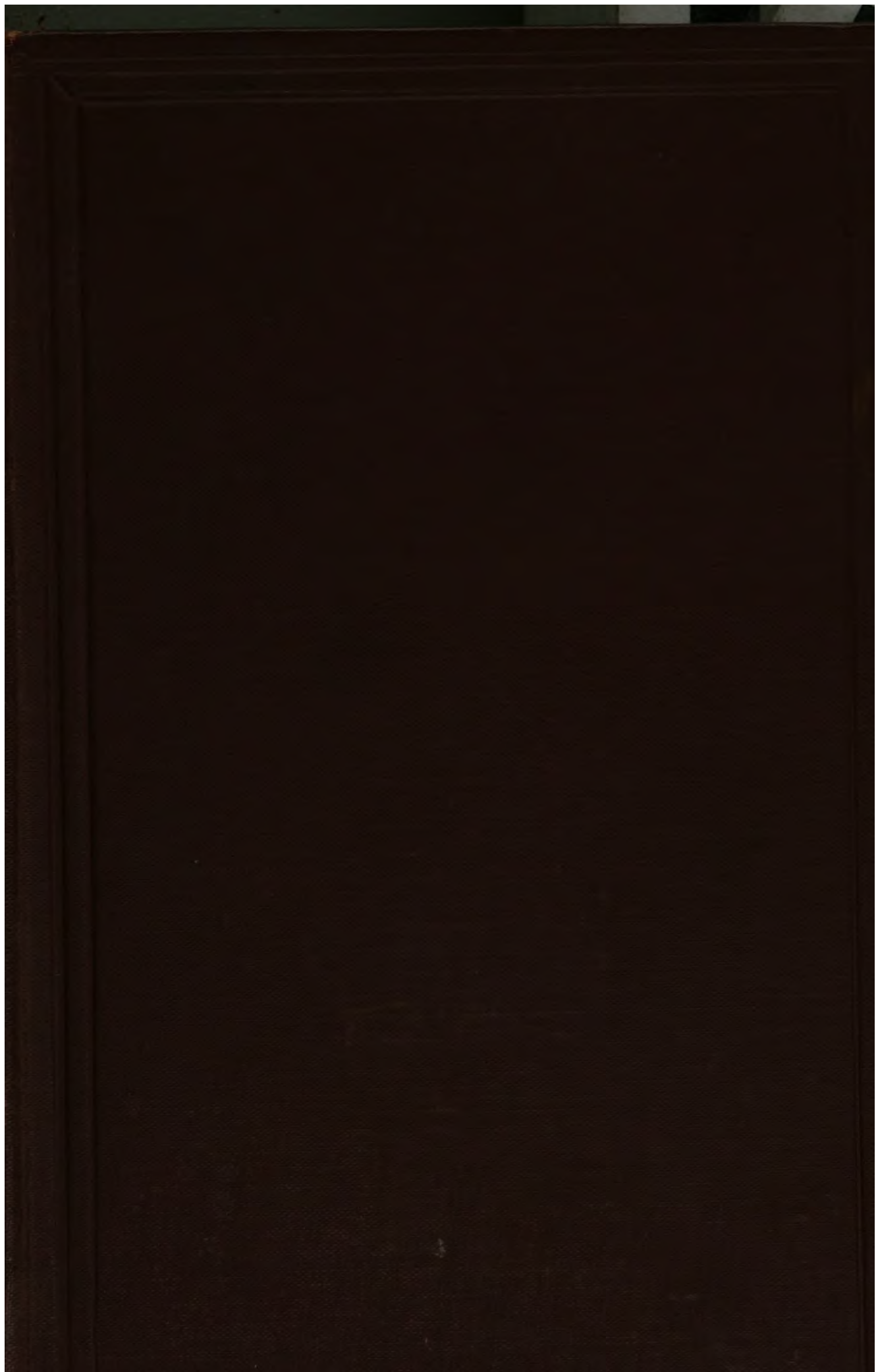
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MEMOIR AND LETTERS OF  
SARA COLERIDGE.







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## P R E F A C E.

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“ Poor is the portrait that one look portrays,  
It mocks the face on which we loved to gaze.” \*

AND if this be true of such external resemblances as pictorial art is employed to produce, it is equally true of that unconscious self-portraiture, that revelation of the inner mind, which is contained, in a greater or less degree, in any collection of published letters. The interest which such works are intended to excite is, in the main, biographical, and their object is not merely to preserve and bring to light a number of writings of intrinsic merit and beauty, but still more, perhaps, to present to the reader a record, however imperfect, of the personal characteristics, both moral and intellectual, of the writer.

But how faint and inadequate, if not incorrect, is that image of the departed, which can alone be thus repro-

\* Lines in “ Phantasmion.”

duced! Even the original correspondence, could it be given entire in all its details (which is, for obvious reasons, impossible), would be but as a mirrored reflection—a selection from the correspondence is but its scattered fragments.

The difficulty which must attend on all such undertakings as that on which I have been engaged, in editing the letters of my Mother, is rather increased than diminished by that very quality which constitutes their peculiar charm, I mean their perfect genuineness and life-like reality.

Touching descriptions of personal feeling, acute remarks and wise reflections occur here in abundance, which seem, to the eye of affection, to be “gems of purest ray serene,” the utterances of a heart full of sensibility, and an intellect at once subtle and profound. Yet, severed as they must often be from the context which justified and explained them, these thoughtful comments on the life within and around her may, it is to be feared, either lose their full significance or assume one that is exaggerated and untrue.

Even those portions of the following collection which seem, at first sight, to be most abstract and elaborate (such as the critical discussions on Art and Poetry, and those which intimate the results of speculative thought and religious inquiry), will be found, on consideration,

to be full of personal references, suggested by special occasions, and connected at all points with the realities of life.

The letters of Sara Coleridge were not acts of authorship, but of friendship ; we feel, in reading them, that she is not entertaining or instructing a crowd of listeners, but holding quiet converse with some congenial mind. Her share of that converse we are privileged in part to overhear, while the response is borne away by the winds in another direction.

A book composed of epistolary extracts can never be a wholly satisfactory one, because its contents are not only relative and fragmentary, but unauthorized and unrevised. To arrest the passing utterances of the hour, and reveal to the world that which was spoken either in the innermost circle of home affection, or in the outer (but still guarded) circle of social and friendly intercourse, seems almost like a betrayal of confidence, and is a step which cannot be taken by survivors without some feelings of hesitation and reluctance. That reluctance is only to be overcome by the sense that, however natural, it is partly founded on delusion—a delusion which leads us to personify “the world,” to our imagination, as an obtuse and somewhat hostile individual, who is certain to take things by the wrong handle, and cannot be trusted to make the needful allow-

ances, and supply the inevitable omissions. Whereas it is a more reasonable as well as a more comfortable belief, that the only part of the world which is in the least likely to concern itself with such volumes as these, is composed of a number of enlightened and sympathetic persons ; who, it is hoped, though strangers to all but the name of Sara Coleridge, may yet derive from her letters some portion of the gratification which they once afforded to those who knew and loved her. And if it be well for us to "think on whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely," and to rejoice in "any virtue and any praise," we ought surely to be willing that all who desire it should hear the music of the words in which these things are uttered, and see the light of the life in which they shone.

In conclusion, I have only to offer my respectful and grateful acknowledgments to those who have rendered this memorial possible, by their kindness in entrusting me with these treasured records of a friendship long past, yet never past away.

E. C.

HANWELL RECTORY,  
*May 7th, 1873.*

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MEMOIR.



# Memoir.

## RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE

## EARLY LIFE OF SARA COLERIDGE.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF,

*In a Letter addressed to her Daughter.*

I.

*September 8th, 1851.  
Chester Place.*

MY DEAREST E——,

I have long wished to give you a little sketch of my life. I once intended to have given it with much particularity, but now *time presses*\*—my horizon has contracted of late. I must content myself with a brief compendium.

I shall divide my history into childhood, earlier and later, youth, earlier and later, wedded life, ditto, widowhood, ditto, and I shall endeavour to state the chief moral or reflection suggested by each—some maxim which it specially illustrated, or truth which it exemplified, or warning which it suggested.

My father has entered his marriage with my mother, and the births of my three brothers with some particu-

\* This fragment of autobiography was begun during my mother's last illness, eight months before her death.—E. C.

larity in a Family Bible, given him, as he also notes, by Joseph Cottle on his marriage; the entry of my birth is in my dear mother's handwriting, and this seems like an omen of our lifelong separation, for I never lived with him for more than a few weeks at a time. He lived not much more, indeed, with his other children, but most of their infancy passed under his eye. Alas! more than any of them I inherited that uneasy health of his, which kept us apart. But I did not mean to begin with alas! so soon, or so early to advert to the great misfortune of both our lives—want of bodily vigour, adequate to the ordinary demands of life, even under favourable circumstances.

I was born at Greta Hall, near Keswick, December 22nd, 1802. My brother Hartley was then six years and three months, born September 19th, 1796, at Bristol; Derwent, born Sept. 14th, 1800, at Keswick, two years and three months old. My father, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (married at Bristol, October 4th, 1795, to Sarah Fricker, eldest daughter of Mr. Fricker, of Bristol), was now twenty-nine years of age, my mother thirty-one. Their second child, Berkeley, born at Nether Stowey, May 10th, 1798, died while my father was in Germany, February 10th, 1799, in consequence of a cold caught after inoculated small-pox, which brought on decline. Mama used to tell me mother's tales, which, however, were confirmed by my Aunt Lovell, of this infant's noble and lovely style of beauty, his large, soft eyes, of a "London-smoke" colour, exquisite complexion, regular features, and goodly size. She said that my father was very proud of him, and

one day, when he saw a neighbour approaching his little cottage at Stowey, snatched him away from the nurse half-dressed, and with a broad smile of pride and delight, presented him to be admired. In her lively way, she mimicked the tones of satisfaction with which he uttered, "This is my second son." Yet, when the answer was, "Well, this is something like a child," he felt affronted on behalf of his little darling Hartley.

During the November, and great part of December, previous to my birth, my father was travelling in Cornwall with Mr. Tom Wedgewood, as I learn by letters from him to my mother. The last of the set is dated December 16th, and in it my father speaks as if he expected to be at Ambleside, Thursday evening, December 23rd. He writes with great tenderness to my mother on the prospect of her confinement. I believe he reached home the day after my birth. Several of his letters, the last three, are from Crescelles, the house of Mr. Allan, father of Lady Mackintosh and of Mrs. Drew, the brother of Lady Alderson.

Mama used to tell me that, as a young infant, I was not so fine and flourishing as Berkeley, who was of a taller make than any of her other children, or Derwent, though not quite so small as her eldest born. I was somewhat disfigured with red gum. In a few months, however, I became very presentable, and had my share of adoration. "Little grand-lamas," my father used to call babes in arms, feeling doubtless all the while what a blessed contrivance of the Supreme Benignity it is that man, in the very weakest stage of his existence, has power in that very weakness. Then



4     *Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge.*

babyhood, even where attended with no special grace, has a certain loveliness of its own, and seems to be surrounded, as by a spell, in its attractions for the female heart, and for all hearts which partake of woman's tenderness, and whose tenderness is drawn out by circumstances in that particular direction.

My father wrote thus of Hartley and of me in a letter to Mr. Poole of 1803:—"Hartley is what he always was, a strange, strange boy, 'exquisitely wild,' an utter visionary: like the moon among thin clouds, he moves in a circle of light of his own making. He alone is a light of his own. Of all human beings I never saw one so utterly naked of self. He has no vanity, no pride, no resentments; and, though very passionate, I never yet saw him angry with anybody. He is, though seven years old, the merest child you can conceive; and yet Southey says he keeps him in perpetual wonderment; his thoughts are so truly his own. His dispositions are very sweet, a great lover of truth, and of the finest moral nicety of feelings; and yet always dreaming. He said very prettily, about half a year ago, on my reproving him for some inattention, and asking him if he did not see something: 'My father,' quoth he with flute-like voice, 'I see it—I saw it, and to-morrow I shall see it again when I shut my eyes, and when my eyes are open, and I am looking at other things; but, father, it is a sad pity, but it cannot be helped, you know; but I am always being a bad boy when I am thinking of my thoughts.' If God preserve his life for me, it will be interesting to know what he will

become ; for it is not only my opinion, or the opinion of two or of three, but all who have been with him talk of him as a thing that cannot be forgotten.

“My meek little Sara is a remarkably interesting baby, with the finest possible skin, and large blue eyes ; and she smiles as if she were basking in the sunshine, as mild as moonlight, of her own quiet happiness.”

In the same letter my father says : “Southey I like more and more. He is a good man, and his industry is stupendous ; take him all in all, his regularity and domestic virtues, genius, talent, acquirements, and knowledge, and he stands by himself.”

Of this first stage of my life, of course, I have no remembrance ; but something happened to me, when I was two years old, which was so striking as to leave an indelible trace on my memory. I fancy I can even now recall, though it may be but the echo or reflection of past remembrances, my coming dripping up the Forge Field, after having fallen into the river, between the rails of the high wooden bridge that crossed the Greta, which flowed behind the Greta Hall hill. The maid had my baby-cousin Edith, sixteen months younger than I, in her arms ; I was rushing away from Derwent, who was fond of playing the elder brother on the strength of his two years' seniority, when he was trying in some way to control me, and in my hurry slipped from the bridge into the current. Luckily for me young Richardson was still at work in his father's forge. He doffed his coat and rescued me from the water. I had fallen from a considerable height, but the

strong current of the Greta received me safely. I remember nothing of this adventure but the walk home through the field. I was put between blankets on my return to the house ; but my constitution had received a shock, and I became tender and delicate, having before been a thriving child. As an infant I had been nervous and insomnolent. My mother has often told me how seldom I would sleep in the cradle, how I required to be in her arms before I could settle into sound sleep. This weakness has accompanied me through life.

One other glimpse of early childhood my mind retains. I can just remember sitting by my Aunt Lovell in her little downstairs wingroom, and exclaiming in a piteous tone, "I'se miseral!" A poor little, delicate, low-spirited child I doubtless was, with my original nervous tendencies, after that escape from the Greta. "Yes, and you will be miserable," Aunt Lovell compassionately broke out, as mama has told me, "if your mother doesn't put you on a cap." The hint was taken, and I wore a cap till I was eight years old. I appear in a cap, playing with a doll, in a little miniature taken of me at that age by the sister of Sir William Benthorn, who also made portraits in the same style of my Uncle and Aunt Southey, my mother, Aunt Lovell, and Cousins Edith and Herbert.

I cannot leave this period of my existence without some little allusion to my brother Derwent's sweet childhood. I have often heard from mama what a fine, fair, broad-chested little fellow he was at two years old, and

how he got the name of Stumpy Canary when he wore a yellow frock, which made him look like one of these feathery bundles in colour and form. I fancy I see him now, as my mother's description brought him before me, racing from kitchen to parlour, and from parlour to kitchen, just putting in his head at the door, with roguish smile, to catch notice, then off again, shaking his little sides with laughter. Mr. Lamb and his sister, who paid a visit of three weeks to my parents in the summer of 1802, were charmed with the little fellow, and much struck with the quickness of eye and of memory that he displayed in naming the subjects of prints in books which he was acquainted with. “Pi-pos, Pot-pos,” were his names for the striped or spotted opossum, and these he would utter with a nonchalant air, as much as to say, “Of course I know it all as pat as possible.” “David Lesley, Deneral of the Cock Army,” was another of his familiars. Mr. Lamb calls him “Pi-pos” in letters to Greta Hall, after his visit to the Lakes.

My parents came to Keswick in 1800. My father writes to my Uncle Southey, urging his joining him in the North, and describing Greta Hall, April 13th, 1801. See Southey's Life, vol. ii., p. 146.

I find in a letter of mama to Aunt Lovell, written but not sent, this record of early Greta Hall times:—

“Well, after poor Mrs. Southey's\* death you all removed to Bristol, where the first child, Margaret, was born and died. Soon after this period Southey, Edith, and you (Mrs. Lovell) came to Keswick. How well I

\* The mother of Robert Southey.—E. C.

recollect your chaise driving up the Forge Field! The driver could not find the right road to the house, so he came down Stable Lane, and in at the Forge Gate. My Sara was seven months old, *very sweet*, and her uncle called her 'Fat Sal.'

"My husband, I think, was then in Malta, where he remained three years, there and in Sicily and Rome. Soon after his return in the autumn of 1806, Coleridge went away with Hartley to the Wordsworths at Coleorton; thence he went to London, and wrote to me to bring the other two children to Bristol, and wait there in College Street at Martha's with mother till he should join us to go to Stowey and Ottery together. Accordingly, I set off to Penrith, stayed a night at old Miss Monkhouse's, and next day proceeded towards Liverpool, where we were met by Dr. Crompton's carriage, and taken to Eton Hall, four miles out of Liverpool, where we stayed a fortnight, to the great happiness of Derwent and Sara. Thence we got to Birmingham, stayed a few days with the Misses Lawrence, saw Joseph Lovell and wife and children, and then proceeded to Bristol, to Martha's in College Street.

"After some time Samuel Taylor Coleridge brought Hartley from London to join us, and we five all proceeded to Stowey, to Mr. Poole's most hospitable abode, remaining most pleasantly with him for more than two months, and did not go to Ottery at all. (I believe they had illness there.) We made visits to Ashhall (Mr. Brice's), to Bridgewater, at the Chubbs'. Then I, with my children, returned to Bristol, hoping to be rejoined

by father. At length he came, but was not for returning with us to Keswick. We set forward with Mr. De Quincey to Liverpool, where we (*i.e.*, myself and children) remained a few days with the Coster family, and were again joined by Mr. De Quincey, and reached Grasmere, where we were joyfully received by the Wordsworths at their cottage, and the next day took a chaise to Keswick, on which occasion poor Hartley was so afraid that he should not again be a pet of dear friend Wilsy,\* that he screamed out of a window of the chaise, 'O Wilsy, Wilsy, let me sleep with you!'"

I was in my fifth year during this visit to the South, and my remembrances are partial and indistinct glimpses of memory, islanded amid the sea of non-remembrance. I recollect more of Derwent than of Hartley, and have an image of his stout build, and of his resolute, managing way, as we played together at Bristol. I remember Mrs. Perkins, with her gentle Madonna countenance, and walking round the Square with her daughter, who gave me currants when we came round to a certain point. I have faint recollections, too, of Stowey, and of staying at the Costers' at Liverpool. At this time I was fond of reading the original poems of the Miss Taylors, and used to repeat some of them by heart to friends of mama's. Aunt Martha I thought a fine lady on our first arrival at College Street. She wore a white veil—so it seems to my remembrance—when I first saw her. I can but just remember Aunt Eliza, then at Mrs. Watson's, and that there was an old lady, very invalidish,

\* Mrs. Wilson, the landlord's housekeeper.—See Memoir of Hartley Coleridge, p. xxix.—E. C.

at College Street, Mrs. Fricker, my mother's mother. At this time I could not eat meat, except bacon.

My brothers were allowed to amuse themselves with the noble art of painting, which they practised in the way of daubing with one or two colours, I think chiefly scarlet, over any bit of a print or engraving in vol., or out of it, that was abandoned to their clutches. It was said of Derwent, that upon one of those pictorial occasions, after diligently plying his brush for some time, he exclaimed, with a slow, solemn, half-pitying, half-self-complacent air, "The little minute thingth are *very* difficult; but they *mutht be done!* ethpethially *thaithes!*"\* This "*mutht be done*" conveyed an awful impression of resistless necessity, the mighty force of a principled submission to duty, with a hint of the exhausting struggles and trials of life.

Talking of struggles and trials of life, my mother's two unmarried sisters were maintaining themselves at this time by their own labours. Aunt Martha, the elder, a plain, but lively, pleasing woman, about five feet high, or little more, was earning her bread as a dress-maker. She had lived a good deal with a farmer, in the country, Uncle Hendry, who married Edith Fricker, her father's sister; but not liking a female-farmer mode of life, came to Bristol, and fitted herself for the business. Uncle Hendry left her a small sum of money, some hundreds, and would have done more, doubtless, had she remained with him. Burnet offered marriage to my Aunt Martha, during the agitation of the Pantis-

\* *i.e.*, chaises.—E. C.

ocracy scheme. She refused him scornfully, seeing that he only wanted a *wife in a hurry*, not her individually of all the world.

Aunt Eliza, a year or twenty months younger, about the same height, or but a barleycorn above it, was thought pretty in youth, from her innocent blue eyes, ingenuous florid countenance, fine light-brown hair, and easy light motions. She was not nearly so handsome in face, however, as my mother and Aunt Lovell, and had not my Aunt Southey's fine figure and quietly commanding air. Yet, on the whole, she was very feminine, pleasing, and attractive. Both sisters sang, but had never learned music artistically.

Such were my Aunts Martha and Elizabeth Fricker in youth; but they had sterling qualities, which gave their characters a high respectability. Without talent, except of an ordinary kind, without powerful connections, by lifelong perseverance, fortitude, and determination, by prudence, patience, and punctuality, they not only maintained themselves, but, with a little aid from kind friends, whom their merits won, they laid by a comfortable competency for their old age. They asked few favours, accepted few obligations, and were most scrupulous in returning such as they did accept, as soon as possible. They united caution and discretion with perfect honesty and truth, strict frugality and self-control, with the disposition to be kind and charitable, and even liberal, as soon as ever it was in their power. Their chief faults were pride and irritability of temper. Upon the whole, they were admirable women. I say



were ; but one, Aunt Eliza Fricker, still survives, in the Isle of Man. Aunt Martha died of paralysis, at the Isle of Man, September 26, 1850, at the age of seventy-three. Aunt Eliza is ailing ; she must be seventy-three, I believe now, or seventy-two.\*

Our return to Greta Hall has left an image on my mind, and a pleasant one. I can just remember entering the parlour, seeing the urn on the table, and tea things laid out, and a little girl, very fair, with thick yellow hair, and round, rosy cheeks, seated, I think, on a stool near the fire. This was my cousin Edith, and I thought her quite a beauty. She looked very shy at first, but ere long we were sociably travelling round the room together on one stool, our joint vessel, and our childish noise soon required to be moderated. I was five years old, the Christmas after this return, which, I believe, was latish in autumn. I remember how Mr. De Quincey jested with me on the journey, and declared I was to be his wife, which I partly believed. I thought he behaved faithlessly in not claiming my hand. I will now describe the home of my youth, dear Greta Hall, where I was born, and where I resided till my marriage, at twenty-six years of age, in September 1829. It was built on a hill, on one side of the town of Keswick, having a large nursery garden in front. The gate at the end of this garden opened upon the end of the town. A few steps further was the bridge over the Greta. At the back of Greta Hall was an orchard of

\* Miss Fricker died at Ramsay, in the Isle of Man, in September 1868.—E. C.

not very productive apple-trees and plum-trees. Below this a wood stretched down to the river side. A rough path ran along the bottom of the wood, and led, on the one hand (the Skiddaw side of the vale), to the Cardingmill Field, which the river near by surrounded ; on the other hand, the path led below the Forge Field, on to the Forge. Oh, that rough path beside the Greta ! How much of my childhood, of my girlhood, of my youth, was spent there !

But to return to the house. Two houses inter-connected under one roof, the larger part of which my parents and my Uncle and Aunt Southey occupied, while the smaller was the abode of Mr. Jackson, the landlord. On the ground floor was the kitchen, a cheerful, stone-flagged apartment, looking into the back place, which was skirted by poultry- and other out-houses, and had trees on the side of the orchard, from whence it was separated by a gooseberry hedge. There was a drooping laburnum tree outside our back-kitchen, just in the way as you passed to the Forge Field portion of the kitchen garden.

A passage ran from the kitchen to the front-door, and to the left of this passage was the parlour, which was the dining-room and general sitting-room. This apartment had a large window, looking upon the green, which stretched out in front, in the form of a long horse-shoe, with a flower-bed running round it, and fenced off from the great nursery garden by pales and high shrubs and hedges. There was another smaller window, which looked out upon another grass plot. The room

was comfortably but plainly furnished, and contained many pictures, two oil landscapes, by a friend, and several water-colour landscapes. One recess was occupied by a frightful portrait of mama, by a young lady.

The passage ran round the kitchen, and opened into two small rooms in one wing of the rambling tenement, one which Aunt Lovell sat in by day, and another which held the mangle, had cupboards as a pantry, but was called the mangling-room. Here were kept the lanterns and all the array of clogs and patterns for out-of-door roamings. The clog shoes, were ranged in a row, from the biggest to the least, and curiously emblemed the various stages of life.

The staircase, to the right of the kitchen, which you ascended from the passage, led to a landing-place filled with bookcases, a few steps more led to a little bedroom which mama and I occupied; that dear bedroom where I lay down, in joy or in sorrow, nightly for so many years of comparative health and happiness, whence I used to hear the river flowing, and sometimes the forge hammer in the distance, at the end of the field; but seldom other sounds in the night, save of stray animals. A few steps further was a little wing bedroom,—then the study, where my uncle sat all day occupied with literary labours and researches, but which was used as a drawing-room for company. Here all the tea-visiting guests were received. The room had three windows, a large one looking down upon the green with the wide flower-border, and over to Keswick Lake and mountains beyond. There were two smaller windows looking toward the lower part

of the town seen beyond the nursery-garden. The room was lined with books in fine bindings; there were books also in brackets, elegantly lettered vellum-covered volumes lying on their sides in a heap. The walls were hung with pictures, mostly portraits, miniatures of the family and some friends by Miss Benthorn; of Uncle and Aunt Southey by Downman, now engraved for the Life of Southey; of my cousin Edith and me by Mr. Nash; and the three children, Bertha, Kate, and Isabel, by the same hand. At the back of the room was a comfortable sofa, and there were sundry tables, beside my uncle's library table, his screen, desk, &c. Altogether, with its internal fittings up, its noble outlook, and something pleasing in its proportions, this was a charming room. I never have seen its like, I think, though it would look mean enough in my eyes, as a mere room, could I see it now, as to size, furnishing, &c. The curtains were of French grey merino, the furniture-covers, at one time, buff; I cannot tell what they were latterly. My uncle had some fine volumes of engravings, which were sometimes shown to visitors; especially, I remember, Duppa's sketches from Raffaele and Michael Angelo from the Vatican.

On the same floor with the study and wing bedrooms was a larger bedroom above the kitchen, looking into the backyard. This was my uncle and aunt's sleeping apartment. A passage, one side of which was filled with bookshelves, led to the Jackson part of the house, the whole of which after his decease (and some rooms before) belonged to our party. There was a room which

used to be my father's study, called the organ room, from an old organ which Mr. Jackson placed there ; a bedroom generally occupied by Aunt Lovell looked into the backplace ; this was a comfortable but gloomyish room. At the end was a wing bedroom. Thence stairs led down to Wilsy's bedroom, Hartley's parlour, Wilsy's kitchen and back-kitchen.

In the highest story of the house were six rooms, a nursery, nursery bedroom, maid's bedroom, another occupied by Kate and Isabel at one time, a sort of lumber-room, and a dark appleroom, which used to be supposed the abode of a bogle. Then there was a way out upon the roof, and a way out upon the leads, over one wing of the house, whence we could look far out to the Penrith Road, Brow Top, and the Saddleback side of the region.

I must now give one general sketch of the garden, of which scraps of description have already been attached to that of the house. It was very irregular. In front of the house and the two large windows of parlour and study, was the green, running out in the form of a long horse-shoe, with a wide border of flower-garden all round, and sheltered by a hedge. The kitchen garden was in two parts, on either side of this lawn. There was green sward also on the side of the house containing the front door, and there were green palings inclosing this part of the premises. A few steps from the front door of the larger side of Greta Hall was the front door of the landlord side, and that wing of the building was covered with ivy. The parlour of that part of the house, long called Hartley's parlour, looked out on a piece of green

sward on the other side of our front door. From the back-pace a path led along to the gate of the nursery-garden. To the right was another piece of green with a large copper beech at one end and a sort of shrubbery ; below that again a set of beds, which were given up to us children as our garden.

That part of the kitchen-garden which lay below the hedge that bounded the lawn was divided into beds for the smaller vegetables, and there was at the lower end a little grove of raspberry bushes, white and red, and beyond this a plantation of underground artichokes, which my uncle was fond of, and a gooseberry hedge called Hartley's, I think, for what reason I forget. Peas and beans were in the lower part of the garden abutting on the Forge Field ; in the upper compartment were the strawberry beds.

My young life is almost a blank in memory from that well-remembered evening of my return from our series of southern visits, till the time of my visit to Allan Bank, when I was six years old. That journey to Grasmere gleams before me as the shadow of a shade. Some goings on of my stay there I remember more clearly. Allan Bank is a large house on a hill overlooking Ease-dale on one side, and Grasmere on the other. Dorothy, Mr. Wordsworth's only daughter, was at this time very picturesque in her appearance, with her long, thick, yellow locks, which were never cut, but curled with papers, a thing which seems much out of keeping with the poetic simplicity of the household. I remember being asked by my father and Miss Wordsworth, the poet's sister, if

I did not think her very pretty. "No," said I, bluntly ; for which I met a rebuff which made me feel as if I was a culprit.

My father's wish it was to have me for a month with him at Grasmere, where he was domesticated with the Wordsworths. He insisted upon it that I became rosier and hardier during my absence from mama. She did not much like to part with me, and I think my father's motive, at bottom, must have been a wish to fasten my affections on him. I slept with him, and he would tell me fairy stories when he came to bed at twelve and one o'clock. I remember his telling me a wild tale, too, in his study, and my trying to repeat it to the maids afterwards.

I have no doubt there was much enjoyment in my young life at that time, but some of my recollections are tinged with pain. I think my dear father was anxious that I should learn to love him and the Wordsworths and their children, and not cling so exclusively to my mother, and all around me at home. He was therefore much annoyed when, on my mother's coming to Allan Bank, I flew to her, and wished not to be separated from her any more. I remember his showing displeasure to me, and accusing me of want of affection. I could not understand why. The young Wordsworths came in and caressed him. I sate benumbed ; for truly nothing does so freeze affection as the breath of jealousy. The sense that you have done very wrong, or at least given great offence, you know not how or why—that you are dunned for some payment of love or feeling

which you know not how to produce or to demonstrate on a sudden, chills the heart, and fills it with perplexity and bitterness. My father reproached me, and contrasted my coldness with the childish caresses of the little Wordsworths. I slunk away, and hid myself in the wood behind the house, and there my friend John, whom at that time I called my future husband, came to seek me.

It was during this stay at Allan Bank that I used to see my father and Mr. De Quincey pace up and down the room in conversation. I understood not, nor listened to a word they said, but used to note the handkerchief hanging out of the pocket behind, and long to clutch it. Mr. Wordsworth, too, must have been one of the room walkers. How gravely and earnestly used Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth and my Uncle Southey also to discuss the affairs of the nation, as if it all came home to their business and bosoms, as if it were their private concern! Men do not canvass these matters now-a-days, I think, quite in the same tone. Domestic concerns absorb their deeper feelings, national ones are treated more as things aloof, the speculative rather than the practical.

My father used to talk to me with much admiration and affection of Sarah Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, who resided partly with the Wordsworths, partly with her own brothers. At this time she used to act as my father's amanuensis. She wrote out great part of the "Friend" to his dictation. She had fine, long, light brown hair, I think her only beauty, except a fair skin,



for her features were plain and contracted, her figure dumpy, and devoid of grace and dignity. She was a plump woman, of little more than five feet. I remember my father talking to me admiringly of her long light locks, and saying how mildly she bore it when the baby pulled them hard in play.

Miss Wordsworth, Mr. Wordsworth's sister, of most poetic eye and temper, took a great part with the children. She told us once a pretty story of a primrose, I think, which she spied by the wayside when she went to see me soon after my birth, though that was at Christmas, and how this same primrose was still blooming when she went back to Grasmere.

. . . My father had particular feelings and fancies about dress, as had my Uncle Southey and Mr. Wordsworth also. He could not abide the scarlet socks which Edith and I wore at one time. I remember going to him when mama had just dressed me in a new stuff frock. He took me up and set me down again without a caress. I thought he disliked the dress ; perhaps he was in an uneasy mood. He much liked everything feminine and domestic, pretty and becoming, but not fine-ladyish. My Uncle Southey was all for gay, bright, cheerful colours, and even declared he had a taste for the *grand*, in half jest.

Mr. Wordsworth loved all that was rich and picturesque, light and free in clothing. A deep Prussian blue or purple was one of his favourite colours for a silk dress. He wished that white dresses were banished, and that our peasantry wore blue and scarlet and other warm

colours, instead of sombre, dingy black, which converts a crowd that might be ornamental in the landscape into a swarm of magnified ants. I remember his saying how much better young girls looked of an evening in bare arms, even if the arms themselves were not very lovely, it gave such a lightness to their general air. I think he was looking at Dora when he said this. White dresses he thought cold, a blot and disharmony in any picture, in door or out of door. My father admired white clothing, because he looked at it in reference to woman, as expressive of her delicacy and purity, not merely as a component part of a general picture.

My father liked my wearing a cap. He thought it looked girlish and domestic. Dora and I must have been a curious contrast,—she with her wild eyes, impetuous movements, and fine, long, floating yellow hair,—I with my timid, large blue eyes, slender form, and little, fair, delicate face, muffled up in lace border and muslin. But I thought little of looks then; only I fancied Edith S., on first seeing her, most beautiful.

I attained my sixth year on the Christmas after this my first Grasmere visit. It must have been the next summer that I made my first appearance at the dancing school, of which more hereafter. All I can remember of this first entrance into public is, that our good-humoured, able, but rustical dancing-master, Mr. Yewdale, tried to make me dance a minuet with Charlie Denton, the youngest of our worthy pastor's home flock, a very pretty, rosy-cheeked, large-black-eyed, compact little laddikin. But I was not quite up to the business.

I think my beau was a year older. At all events, it was I who broke down, and Mr. Yewdale, after a little impatience, gave the matter up. All teaching is wearisome; but to teach dancing of all teaching the wearisomest.

The last event of my earlier childhood which abides with me is a visit to Allonby, when I was nine years old, with Mrs. Calvert. I remember the ugliness and meanness of Allonby (the town, a cluster of red-looking houses, as far as I recollect,) and being laughed at at home for describing it as "a pretty place," which I did conventionally, according to the usual practice, as I conceived, of elegant letter writers. The sands are really fine in their way, so unbroken and extensive, capital for galloping over on pony-back. I recollect the pleasures of these sands, and of the seaside animation and vegetation; the little close, white Scotch roses; the shells, the crabs of every size, from Lilliputian to Brobdignagian, crawling in the pools; the sea-anemones, with their flower-like appendages, which we kept in jugs of salt water, delighted to see them draw in their petals, or expand them by a sudden blossoming; the sea-weed, with its ugly berries, of which we made hideous necklaces. All these things I recollect, but not what I should most regard now, the fine forms of the Scotch hills on the opposite coast, sublime in the distance, and the splendid sunsets which give to this sort of landscape a gorgeous filling up.

Of the party, beside J. and R. Calvert and M., their sister, were Tom and William M——, two sons of Mrs.

Calvert's sister, Mrs. M——. We used to gallop up and down the wide sands on two little ponies, a dark one called Sancho, and a light one called Airey, behind the boys. M. and I sometimes quarrelled with the boys, and, of course, in a trial of strength got the worst of it. I remember R. and the rest bursting angrily into our bedroom, and flinging a pebble at M., enraged at our having dared to put crumbs into their porridge; not content with which inroad and onslaught, they put mustard into ours next morning, the sun having gone down upon their boyish wrath without quenching it. One of them said, it was all that little vixen, Sara Coleridge; M. was quiet enough by herself.

I had a leaven of malice, I suppose, in me, for I remember being on hostile terms with some little old woman, who lived by herself in a hut, and who took offence at something I did, as it struck me, unnecessarily. She repaired to Mrs. Calvert to complain, and the head and front of her accusation was, "that'un (meaning me) ran up and down the mound before her door." Mrs. C. thought this no heinous offence; but it was done by me, no doubt, with an air of derision. The crone was one of those morose, ugly, withered, ill-conditioned, ignorant creatures who in earlier times were persecuted as witches, and tried to be such. Still, I ought to have been gently corrected for my behaviour, and told the duty of bearing with the ill-temper of the poor, and ignorant, and afflicted.

At this time, on coming to Allonby, I was rather delicate. I remember that Mrs. Calvert gave me a glass

of port wine daily, which she did not give to the other children. Oh me, how rough these young Calverts and M——s were! and yet they had a certain respect for me, mingled with a contrary feeling. I was honoured among them for my extreme agility,—my power of running and leaping. They called me “Cheshire cat” because I “grinned,” said they. Almost as pretty as Miss Cheshire, said Tom M. to me one day, of some admired little girl.

Such are the chief *historical* events of my little life up to nine years of age. But can I in any degree retrace what being I was then, what relation my then being held to my maturer self? Can I draw any useful reflection from my childish experience, or found any useful maxim upon it? What *was* I? In person very slender and delicate, not habitually colourless, but often enough pallid and feeble looking. Strangers used to exclaim about my eyes, and I remember remarks made upon their large size, both by my Uncle Southey and Mr. Wordsworth. I suppose the thinness of my face, and the smallness of the other features, with the muffling close cap, increased the apparent size of the eye, for only artists, since I have grown up, speak of my eyes as large and full. They were bluer, too, in my early years than now. My health alternated, as it has done all my life, till the last ten or twelve years, when it has been unchangeably depressed, between delicacy and a very easy, comfortable condition. I remember well that nervous sensitiveness and morbid imaginativeness had set in with me very early. During my Grasmere visit I used to feel frightened at

night on account of the darkness. I then was a stranger to the whole host of night-agitators, ghosts, goblins, demons, burglars, elves, and witches. Horrid ghastly tales and ballads, of which crowds afterwards came in my way, had not yet cast their shadows over my mind. And yet I was terrified in the dark, and used to think of lions, the only form of terror which my dark-engendered agitation would take. My next bugbear was the Ghost in Hamlet. Then the picture of Death at Hell Gate in an old edition of Paradise Lost, the delight of my girlhood. Last and worst came my Uncle Southey's ballad horrors, above all the Old Woman of Berkeley. Oh, the agonies I have endured between nine and twelve at night, before mama joined me in bed, in presence of that hideous assemblage of horrors, the horse with eyes of flame! I dare not, even now, rehearse these particulars, for fear of calling up some of the old feeling, which, indeed, I have never in my life been quite free from. What made the matter worse was that, like all other nervous sufferings, it could not be understood by the inexperienced, and consequently subjected the sufferer to ridicule and censure. My Uncle Southey laughed heartily at my agonies. I mean at the cause. He did not enter into the agonies. Even mama scolded me for creeping out of bed after an hour's torture, and stealing down to her in the parlour, saying I could bear the loneliness and the night-fears no longer. But my father understood the case better. He insisted that a lighted candle should be left in my room, in the interval between my retiring to bed and mama's joining

me. From that time forth my sufferings ceased. I believe they would have destroyed my health had they continued.

Yet I was a most fearless child by daylight, ever ready to take the difficult mountain-path and outgo my companions' daring in tree-climbing. In those early days we used to spend much of our summer-time in trees, greatly to the horror of some of our London visitors.

On reviewing my earlier childhood, I find the predominant reflection

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II.

THUS abruptly terminates, in the very middle of a sentence, the narrative of Sara Coleridge's childhood. The history of her wedded life and widowhood, which would have been of such deep interest as told by herself, had time and strength been granted, is, fortunately, to a great extent contained in her correspondence. In order, however, to combine the scattered notices of the letters, and put readers at once in possession of the main facts ; and still more, in order to provide some partial substitute for that chapter of her youth, which would other-

wise remain a blank, it has seemed desirable to preface the correspondence by a slight biographical sketch. In doing this, I shall gratefully avail myself of the valuable reminiscences most kindly imparted to me by friends, both of earlier and later date, as well as of an interesting memoir of my mother which appeared shortly after her death in an American journal,\* composed by one who, though personally unknown to her, was yet a highly esteemed correspondent, the lamented Professor Henry Reed of Philadelphia.

In that dear home of her childhood, remembered with such loving minuteness after more than twenty years of absence, Sara Coleridge grew up as fair and sweet as one of the exquisite wild flowers of her native vale. The childish prettiness which had excited the admiration of her young playfellows at Allonby, changed first into the maidenly bloom of fifteen ; at which age she is mentioned by the painter William Collins, as " Coleridge's elegant daughter Sara, a most interesting creature," of whom he made a sketch, which was greatly admired by her father for its simplicity and native refinement. It represents her in the character of the Highland Girl, seated in rustic fashion under a tree. Five years later these girlish graces had matured into a perfection of womanly beauty, which is thus described by Sir Henry Taylor :—

" I first saw your mother," he writes in a letter which I have lately had the pleasure of receiving from him,

\* " The Daughter of Coleridge," written for the *Literary World*, July, 1852.



“when in 1823 I paid my first visit to Mr. Southey at Greta Hall, where she and her mother were staying. I suppose she was then about twenty years of age. I saw but little of her, for I think she was occupied in translating some mediæval book from the Latin, and she was seen only at meals, or for a very short time in the evening ; and as she was almost invariably silent, I saw nothing and knew nothing of her mind, till I renewed my acquaintance with her many years after. But I have always been glad that I did see her in her girlhood, because I then saw her beauty untouched by time, and it was a beauty which could not but remain in one’s memory for life, and which is now distinctly before me as I write. The features were perfectly shaped, and almost minutely delicate, and the complexion delicate also, but not wanting in colour, and the general effect was that of gentleness, indeed I may say of composure, even to stillness. Her eyes were large, and they had the sort of serene lustre which I remember in her father’s.

“After her marriage, I think, I did not see her till the days of her widowhood, in young middle life, when she was living in Chester Place, Regent’s Park. Her beauty, though not lost, was impaired, and with the same stillness and absolute simplicity which belonged to her nature, there was some sadness which I had not seen before in the expression of her face, and some shyness of manner. I think I was myself shy, and this perhaps made her so, and the effect was to shut me out from the knowledge, *by conversation*, of almost any part of her mind and

nature, except her intellect. For whenever she was shy, if she could not be silent, which was impossible when we were alone together, she fled into the region where she was most at home and at ease, which was that of psychology and abstract thought; and this was the region where I was by no means at ease and at home. Had we met more frequently (and I never cease to wish that we had) no doubt these little difficulties would soon have been surmounted; and we should have got into the fields of thought and sentiment which had an interest common to us both. But I was a busy man in these years, and not equal in health and strength to what I had to do, and it was in vain for me to seek her society, when I was too tired to enjoy it; and then came her illness and her early death, and she had passed away before I had attained to know her in her inner mind and life. I only know that the admirable strength and subtlety of her reasoning faculty shown in her writings and conversation, were less to me than the beauty and simplicity and feminine tenderness of her face; and that one or two casual and transitory expressions of her nature in her countenance, delightful in their poetic power, have come back to me from time to time, and that they are present with me now, when much of what was most to be admired in her intellectual achievements or discourse, have passed into somewhat of a dim distance."

Of all the personal influences which had to do with the formation of my mother's mind and character in early life, by far the most important were those exercised by the two eminent men with whom she was so inti-

mately connected, by ties of kindred or affection, her Uncle Southey, and her father's friend Mr. Wordsworth. In attempting to estimate the value of these various impressions, and trace them to their respective source, I am but repeating her own remark when I say, that in matters of the intellect and imagination, she owed most to Mr. Wordsworth. In his noble poetry she took an ever-increasing delight, and his impressive discourse, often listened to on summer rambles over the mountains, or in the winter parlours of Greta Hall and Rydal Mount, served to guide her taste, and cultivate her understanding. But in matters of the heart and conscience, for right views of duty and practical lessons of industry, truthfulness, and benevolence, she was "more, and more importantly, indebted to the daily life and example of her admirable Uncle Southey," whom she long afterwards emphatically declared to have been, "upon the whole, the best man she had ever known."

There is a third province of human nature beside those of the intellect and the moral sense,—that of the spiritual, where the pure spirit of Sara Coleridge breathed freely, as in an "ampler ether, a diviner air." In these serene and lofty regions she wandered hand in hand with her father, whose guidance she willingly followed, with a just confidence in his superior wisdom, yet with no blind or indiscriminating submission. He, like herself, was but a traveller through the heavenly country, whose marvels they explored together; and the sun of Reason was above them both to light them on their way. In September 1825, when not quite

three-and-twenty, she was reading the "Aids to Reflection," "and delighted with all that she could clearly understand," as she says in a letter of that date to Sir John Taylor Coleridge. "Do you not think," she adds, with modest deference to the opinion of a highly respected elder cousin, "that in speaking of free will, and the other mysteries of religion, my father, though he does not attempt to explain what I suppose is inexplicable, puts the subject in a new and comfortable point of view for sincere Christians?" The "new and comfortable point of view," thus early perceived and adopted, was still more deeply appreciated, when years of experience and reflection had increased her sense of its importance. Led by circumstances, as well as by natural congeniality of mind, to a study of her father's philosophy, she then devoted herself, with all the fulness of matured conviction, to the task of illustrating those great principles of Christian truth which it was the main object of his life to defend. If, in following this path, she approached the dusty arena of controversy (though without actually entering it), and watched the combatants with approving or disapproving eye, it will yet, I believe, be acknowledged, even by those who differ most widely from her conclusions, that in her mode of reaching them she combined charity with candour. Possessing, as she did, a knowledge of theology, both as a history and a science, rare in any woman (perhaps in any layman), she had received from heaven a still more excellent gift, "even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

These solemn investigations were, however, the appropriate employment of a more advanced stage of life than that of which I am now speaking. In youthful days my mother's favourite pursuits were chiefly literary and linguistic. Before she was five-and-twenty she had made herself acquainted with the leading Greek and Latin classics, and was well skilled in French, Italian, German, and Spanish. These acquirements were mainly the result of her own efforts, though it is needless to point out the advantages she derived in her studies from the advice and direction of a man like Mr. Southey, and from the use which she was kindly encouraged to make of his valuable library.

Natural History, too, in all its branches, especially those of botany and zoology, was a subject in which she found endless attractions. The beauty of nature manifested in bird or insect, flower or tree, delighted her poetical imagination ; while the signs of Divine Wisdom and Goodness, revealed in all the works of creation, furnished a constant theme for the contemplations of a thoughtful piety. Other advantages accompanied these studies, so healthful both to mind and body. The outdoor interests which they provided, the habits of careful observation which they rendered necessary, aided in the harmonious development of her faculties, and served to counterbalance the subjective tendencies of her intellect. She could turn at any time from the most abstruse metaphysical speculations, to inspect the domestic architecture of a spider, or describe the corolla of a rose.

The work referred to by Sir Henry Taylor in his

interesting letter, as that upon which my mother was engaged at the time of his first visit to Greta Hall, was probably her translation of the "Memoir of the Chevalier Bayard, by the Loyal Servant;" which was published by Mr. Murray, in 1825. The trouble of rendering the accounts of battles and sieges, from the French of the sixteenth century, into appropriate English, was considerable; but was lightened by the interest inspired by the romantic character and adventures of Bayard, the Knight "sans peur et sans reproche."

This was not, however, her earliest appearance in print. Her first literary production was one concerning which Professor Reed gives the following particulars, in the notice above referred to. After observing that it "manifestly had its origin in connexion with some of Southey's labours,"\* he proceeds thus:—"In 1822 there issued from the London press a work in three octavo volumes, entitled, 'An Account of the Abipones, an Equestrian people of Paraguay. From the Latin of Martin Dobrizhoffer, eighteen years a Missionary in that country.' No name of translator appears, and a brief and modest preface gives not the least clue to it; even now in catalogues the work is frequently ascribed to Southey. At the time of the publication Miss Coleridge was just twenty years of age, and therefore this elaborate toil of translation must have been achieved before she

\* The work was undertaken, in the first instance, for the purpose of assisting one of her brothers in his college expenses. The necessary means were, however, supplied by his own exertions; and the proceeds of the translation (£125) were funded in Sara Coleridge's name, for her own use.

had reached the years of womanhood. The stout-hearted perseverance needed for such a task is quite as remarkable as the scholarship in a young person. Coleridge himself spoke of it with fond and just admiration, when, in 1832, he said :

“‘My dear daughter’s translation of this book is, in my judgment, unsurpassed, for pure mother-English, by anything I have read for a long time.’

“Southey in his ‘Tale of Paraguay,’ which was suggested by the missionary’s narrative, paid to the translator a tribute so delicate, and so controlled, perhaps, by a sense of his young kinswoman’s modesty, that one need be in the secret to know for whom it is meant. It is in the stanza which mentions Dobrizhoffer’s forgetfulness of his native speech, during his long missionary expatriation, and alludes to the favour shown him by the Empress Maria Theresa.”

“ But of his native speech because well-nigh  
 Disuse in him forgetfulness had wrought,  
 In Latin he composed his history,  
 A garrulous but a lively tale, and fraught  
 With matter of delight and food for thought,  
 And if he could in Merlin’s glass have seen  
 By whom his tomes to speak our tongue were taught,  
 The old man would have felt as pleased, I ween,  
 As when he won the ear of that great Empress Queen.”

Canto III., stanza 16.

“ Charles Lamb, in an epistolary strain, eminently characteristic, echoes the praise bestowed upon his friend’s child, and her rare achievement. Writing to

Southey, in 1825, in acknowledgment of a presentation copy of the ‘Tale of Paraguay,’ he says :

““The compliment to the translatress is daintily conceived. Nothing is choicer in that sort of writing than to bring in some remote impossible parallel—as between the great empress and the unobtrusive quiet soul, who digged her noiseless way so perseveringly through that rugged Paraguay mine. How she Dobrizhofferred it all out puzzles my slender latinity to conjecture.’ ”\*

There is a graceful allusion to my mother’s classical attainments in that lovely strain composed in her honour by the great poet whose genius, especially in its *earlier* manifestations, she so highly admired and revered :—

“ Last of the Three, though eldest born,  
Reveal thyself, like pensive morn,  
Touched by the skylark’s earliest note,  
Ere humbler gladness be afloat ;  
But whether in the semblance drest  
Of dawn, or eve, fair vision of the west,  
Come with each anxious hope subdued  
By woman’s gentle fortitude,  
Each grief, through meekness, settling into rest.  
Or I would hail thee when some high-wrought page  
Of a closed volume lingering in thy hand,  
Has raised thy spirit to a peaceful stand  
Among the glories of a happier age.  
Her brow hath opened on me, see it there  
Brightening the umbrage of her hair,  
So gleams the crescent moon, that loves  
To be descried through shady groves.

\* “Talfourd’s Letters of Charles Lamb,” vol. ii. p. 189.



Tenderest bloom is on her cheek.  
 Wish not for a richer streak,  
 Nor dread the depth of meditative eye,  
 But let thy love upon that azure field  
 Of thoughtfulness and beauty, yield  
 Its homage, offered up in purity.  
 What wouldst thou more? In sunny glade,  
 Or under leaves of thickest shade,  
 Was such a stillness ere diffused  
 Since earth grew calm, while angels mused?  
 Softly she treads, as if her foot were loth  
 To crush the mountain dewdrops, soon to melt  
 On the flower's breast; as if she felt  
 That flowers themselves, whate'er their hue,  
 With all their fragrance, all their glistening,  
 Call to the heart for inward listening;  
 And though for bridal wreaths and tokens true  
 Welcomed wisely; though a growth  
 Which the careless shepherd sleeps on,  
 As fitly spring from turf the mourner weeps on,  
 And without wrong are cropped the marble tomb to strew."

My mother was once told by a poetical friend that, till he knew the original, he had always taken this passage in the *Triad* for a personification of the Christian grace of Faith. She used to smile at her involuntary exaltation, and maintain that there must be something exaggerated and unreal in a description which was liable to such a misinterpretation. Yet the conjecture may have been a right one in the spirit, though not in the letter. Certainly no one who knew my mother intimately, and was privileged to see "the very pulse of the machine"—

“A being breathing thoughtful breath,  
A traveller betwixt life and death,  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill”—

could doubt that such a life as hers could only be lived “by faith.”

That light of faith, which shone so brightly in declining years, had been early sought and found between the troubled clouds of life's opening day. In 1828, when the “Triad” was written, Sara Coleridge was no stranger to the most powerful emotion which can agitate a woman's heart, either for joy or sorrow. The “anxious hope” alluded to by the poet, with almost parental tenderness, was for the joyful time when she might be enabled peacefully to enjoy the “dear and improving society” of him to whom she had given her affections; the “grief” that settled into the “rest” which is promised to the meek and lowly, arose not so much from the postponement of her own happiness as from sympathy with his disappointment, and sorrow for its cause, which was principally the uncertainty of health and means on both sides.

In 1822, while on a visit to her father at Highgate, she had first met her cousin, Henry Nelson Coleridge, a younger son of James Coleridge, Esq., of Heath's Court, Ottery St. Mary, who was educated at Eton College, and at King's College, Cambridge, where his course was not unmarked by academical honours. He was then practising as a Chancery barrister in London, and made frequent pilgrimages to Highgate, one result of which was

that series of notes to which the world is indebted for the "Table Talk of S. T. Coleridge."

The attachment thus formed between the two youthful cousins, under the roof of Mr. Gillman, was never for a single moment regretted by my mother, in spite of the solitudes to which it exposed her, and the sorrows which, in after years, cast a shade of sadness over the stillness which characterized her gentle face.

"She was a maid," thus writes Hartley Coleridge of his only sister :—

"Not easily beguiled by loving words,  
Nor apt to love ; but when she loved, the fate  
Of her affections was a stern religion,  
Admitting nought less holy than itself."

These "seven years of patience" did not pass without bringing forth precious fruits of piety and goodness in a heart already enriched with the dews of heavenly blessing. "Your virtues," writes my father to his betrothed in a letter of 1827, "never shone so brilliantly in my eyes as they do now ; and it is a spring of deep and sacred joy in my heart to think that, however weak and wavering my steps may be in the ways of religion, you are already a firm traveller in them, and indeed a young saint upon earth. The trials to which our engagement has exposed you have been fatiguing and painful ; but you have borne them all, not only without impatience or murmuring, but with a holy cheerfulness and energetic resignation, than which no two states of the heart are more difficult to man, or more acceptable to God.

"I made a true remark to you once, which I feel

every day justified by our own correspondence, that spiritual things differ from mere things of sense in this amongst other points, that sensual objects, capacities, and enjoyments are all naturally bounded, short, and fugitive, whilst pure love and pure intellectual communion are essentially without limits, and that to the pure-hearted a boundless ascent towards identity of moral being lies open, and that every day fresh depths of love and thought might open to the tender and assiduous sympathies of two mutually adoring persons. I have always loved you as much as my heart could feel at the time ; but my respect, my veneration for you has gone on increasing as I knew you more intimately. I hope I shall always have the sense to submit myself to your guiding influence in all cases of moral election. The more closely I imitate your habits, thoughts, and actions, the better and happier man shall I become."

The noble affection thus generously expressed was as fully returned by her on whom it was bestowed. In a letter written on the eve of her marriage she thus addresses the expected bridegroom, " You will not, I know, grudge a few tears to my dearest mother, to dear Keswick, dear Greta Hall, and its dear and interesting inmates. These changes, these farewells, are types of the great change, the long farewell, that awaits us all hereafter. We cannot but be thoughtful upon them. Yet I know and feel that *this* change is to be infinitely for the better ; and in your dear and improving society I trust I shall learn to look upon that other change as a blessed one too. The sadness of my present farewell

will be tempered by the prospect of meeting all here frequently again upon earth, as, I hope, all dear friends will be united in heaven. But that speculation would lead me too far. Fear not, Henry, that such speculations, or rather, such a tendency in my nature to speculation and dreaminess, will render me an unfit wife for you. Does not Wordsworth point out to us how the most excursive bird can brood as long and as fondly on the nest as any of the feathered race? \* This taste for the spiritual I consider a great blessing, crowned by that other inexpressibly great one, the having found a partner who will tolerate, approve, sympathize in all I think and feel, and will allow me to sympathize with him."

On the 3rd of September, 1829, Henry Nelson Coleridge and Sara Coleridge were married at Crosthwaite Church, Keswick. After a few months spent in a London lodging, they began their frugal housekeeping in a tiny cottage on Downshire Hill, Hampstead, where their four elder children were born, of whom the twins, Berkeley and Florence, died in infancy. In 1837 my parents moved to a more commodious dwelling in Chester Place, Regent's Park, where a third daughter, Bertha Fanny, was born in 1840, who survived her birth but a few days.

My mother's married life was, as Professor Reed has truly observed, "rich in the best elements of conjugal happiness,—wedded to a gentleman of high moral worth,

\* "True to the kindred points of Heaven and home."

—*The Skylark.*

and of fine mind and scholarship, one who blended literature with his professional pursuits,—she was not exposed to the perils of intellectual superiority.”

The compositions (chiefly on classical subjects) which occupied his leisure, while his health lasted, and which displayed the varied powers of an acute and polished intellect, and the elegant taste of an accomplished scholar, formed a topic of common interest, and one which is frequently referred to in her letters of that period, with visible pride and pleasure. With respect to moral and personal qualities, too, my father was, as she afterwards said to a friend when describing her grief at his loss, “of all men whom she had ever known, best suited to her ;” and this quite as much by force of contrast as of resemblance. Of sensitive temperament, reserved though deeply earnest feelings, and manners which illness and suffering rendered serious, though not usually sad, she was especially likely to feel the charm of the wit, gaiety, and conversational brilliancy, which, on social occasions, made her husband the “life and soul of the company,” as well as of the joyous frankness and overflowing affectionateness which made him the delight of his home.

In that genial atmosphere of loving appreciation, free from the cares and depressing circumstances of her girlhood, she was encouraged and enabled to put forth all her best powers—

“A thousand happy things that seek the light,  
Till now in darkest shadow forced to lie,” \*

\* From a song in “Phantasmion.”

began to "show their forms and hues in the all-revealing sun." The imaginative genius which she inherited from her father (together with his turn for philosophical reflection, developed in her at a later date) found its most perfect expression in her romance of *Phantasmion*, published in 1837. The wild and beautiful scenery of her birthplace, vividly remembered and fondly dwelt on in the enforced seclusion of sickness (for she was now unhappily an invalid), reappears here, idealized by imagination, to form the main subject of the picture; while groups of graceful and dignified figures give animation to the landscape, and fairy forms flitting above or around them, Spirits of the Wind, the Woods, or the Waters, serve as a connecting link between humanity and nature.

"Nothing has appeared in this species of writing," says a friendly American critic, "to be for one moment compared with '*Phantasmion*,' since Fouquè produced his inimitable '*Undine*.' There is one characteristic feature in this book that will render it peculiarly acceptable to all lovers of nature. We do not allude to its accuracy in the delineating of the infinite phases of earth and air, sea and sky, though nothing can be more perfect in this respect; but what we mean, is its remarkable freedom from the conventional forms and usages of life. It has the patriarchal simplicity, the beautiful truthfulness of primitive ages; while it is at the same time enriched and ennobled by the refinement of a more advanced period. . . . Do you ask what is its grand characteristic? It is beauty,—beauty, truly

feminine, beauty of conception, character, and expression. It is indeed a wilderness of sweets, illumined by the richest hues of earth and heaven, and through which a stream of magic melody is for ever flowing. . . . The ‘Songs of Phantasmion!’ what sweetness of verse! what breathings of a tender spirit! whose voice—who but the writer’s own spirit of the flowers—could do them justice?”

This beautiful fairy tale was at first intended (though it soon outgrew its original limits) as a mere child’s story for the amusement of her little boy, whose beauty, vivacity, and early intelligence are described with maternal love and pride, in one of the letters of that period, in reply to the question of her brother Hartley, about his unseen nephew. The education of her children was now their mother’s principal object, an object on which she deemed it no waste to lavish the charms of her genius, and the resources of her cultivated understanding. Latin grammar, natural history, geography, and the “Kings of England,” were all made easy and attractive to the little learners by simple and appropriate verses, written on cards, in clear print-like characters. Even a set of wooden bricks, which was a favourite source of amusement, was thus agreeably decorated, in the hope that those tough morsels, *hic*, *hæc*, *hoc*, and their congeners, might glide gently over the youthful palate, sweetened with play and pleasure. From these Sibylline leaves of the nursery a selection of juvenile poetry was published in 1834, by my father’s desire, who wished that other children might have some share in the advantages enjoyed by his own. The little



volume, entitled "Pretty Lessons for Good Children," proved a popular work, and passed through five editions.

" Learning, Herbert, hath the features  
Almost of an Angel's face ;  
Contemplate them steadfastly,  
Learn by heart each speaking grace.  
Truth and wisdom, high wrought fancy,  
In those lineaments we trace ;  
Never be your eyes averted  
Long from that resplendent face !" \*

Happy the boy who is permitted to see those glorious lineaments reflected in the "angel-face" of a wise and tender mother! It may not be uninteresting to the sympathizing reader to learn, that he who enjoyed the blessing of such rare guardianship lived to appreciate and reward it, and to attest its value by those public honours that are won by industry and talent.† And that, when disease came to blight the hopes of his manhood, and cut short a promising career, Learning was, to him as to her, a shield from the monotony of the sick-room and an exceeding great reward; and that as long as anything earthly could claim his attention, it was seldom "averted from that resplendent face."

\* Fifth stanza of a poem on the Latin declensions in "Pretty Lessons,"—*Facies, a Face.*

† My brother was the Newcastle and Balliol scholar in 1847 and 1848, and took a double first class at Oxford in 1852, which latter honour his mother did not live to witness. He was a fine Icelandic scholar; and at the time of his death, which took place in 1861, he was engaged in preparations for the new English dictionary projected by the Philological Society, of which he was a member.

But it is time to return to an earlier stage of the narrative, when that domestic happiness so patiently waited for, and thankfully enjoyed, was smitten by the hand of death. All that was earthly of it fell to the earth, and was no more; but there remained to the desolate widow the Christian's hope of a heavenly re-union, which proved an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast, when the waves of affliction rose high. In 1841 my father's health began to give way; and in January 1843 he died of spinal paralysis, after a trying illness of nine months.

In her deep distress my mother again endeavoured to act upon that principle of "energetic resignation" (so different from the aimless broodings of mere submission), which had been early noticed in her by the discriminating eye of affection. "I feel it such a duty, such a necessity," she writes to a friend three months after her bereavement, "to cling fast to every source of comfort, to be, for my children's sake, as happy, as willing to live on in this heart-breaking world, as possible, that I dwell on all the blessings which God continues to me, and has raised up to me out of the depths of affliction, with an earnestness of endeavour which is its own reward;—for so long as the heart and mind are full of movement, employed continually in not unworthy objects, there may be sorrow, but there cannot be despair. The stagnation of the spirit, the dull, motionless brooding over one miserable set of thoughts, is that against which, in such cases as mine, we must both strive and pray."

There is another, an equally interesting, though less personal, point of view, in which this great bereavement was an important turning-point in the life of Sara Coleridge. Her husband was Mr. Coleridge's literary executor, and the editorial, task first undertaken by my father, now devolved upon his widow. It has been beautifully remarked by Professor Reed, as a peculiarity of my mother's truly feminine authorship, that it was in no case prompted by mere literary ambition, but that there was ever some "moral motive,"—usually some call of the affections, that set her to work, and overcame her natural preference for retirement. This helpful, loving, and unselfish spirit, which had actuated her hitherto, now took a more commanding form, and led her to dedicate the whole of her intellectual existence to the great object of carrying out her husband's wishes, of doing justice to a father's name. In the fulfilment of this sacred trust, she found occasion to illustrate and adorn the works which fell under her editorship with several compositions of no inconsiderable extent, and displaying powers of critical analysis, and of doctrinal, political, and historical research and discussion, of no common order. The most important of these are the "Essay on Rationalism, with a special application to the Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration," appended to Vol. II. of the "Aids to Reflection," the "Introduction" to the *Biographia Literaria* ; and a Preface to the collection of her father's political writings, entitled "Essays on his Own Times, by S. T. Coleridge," which contains, in Professor Reed's opinion, the most judicious and impartial comparison

between British and American civilization, and the social and intellectual conditions of the two countries, that has yet been written. "And thus," continues her accomplished friend and biographer, "there have been expended in the desultory form of notes, and appendices, and prefaces, an amount of original thought and an affluence of learning, which, differently and more prominently presented, would have made her famous. There is not one woman in a thousand, not one man in ten thousand, who would have been thus prodigal of the means of celebrity."

"Father ! no amaranths ere shall wreathe my brow ;  
Enough that round thy grave they flourish now !  
But Love his roses 'mid my young locks braided,  
And what cared I for flowers of richer bloom ?  
Those too seemed deathless—here they never faded,  
But, drenched and shattered, dropt into the tomb." \*

This blended expression of the wife's and the daughter's affection was recorded when she was in the midst of her pious duties. Ere long she too was called upon to resign the work, still unfinished, into another, but a dear and well-skilled hand.† Seven years of waiting for the happiness so long expected—again seven years—not always of mourning, but of faithful memories and tender regrets for that which had past away for ever ; and then came preparations for the "great change, the long farewell," to which she had learned to look forward when on the very eve of bridal joys and earthly blessed-

\* From an unpublished poem by Sara Coleridge.

† Her brother, the Rev. Derwent Coleridge, the present Editor.

ness. She who had once called marriage the type of death, now heard the summons to the heavenly Marriage Feast, with no startled or reluctant ear. Solemn indeed is the darkness of the Death Valley, and awful are the forms that guard its entrance—

“Fear, and trembling Hope,  
Silence, and Foresight,”

but beyond all these, and revealed to the heart (though not to the eye) of the humble and believing Christian, are the blissful realities of Light and Love.

After a lingering and painful illness of about a year and a half, Sara Coleridge was released from much suffering, borne with unflinching patience, on the 3rd of May, 1852, in the forty-ninth year of her age. In the old churchyard of Highgate (now enclosed in a crypt under the school chapel) her remains lie, beside those of her parents, her husband, and her son.

The following letter will be read with pleasure, not only for its own sake, but as a tribute to my mother's memory, from one whose friendship, correspondence, and society helped to brighten her latter years, and to whom this work owes some of the most interesting portions of its contents.

“I rejoice to hear,” Mr. de Vere writes to me, on the subject of the present publication, “that a portion of your mother's letters will be published so soon. To those who knew her she remains an image of grace and intellectual beauty that time can never tarnish. A

larger circle will now know, in part at least, what she was. Her correspondence will, to thoughtful readers, convey a clearer impression than aught beside could convey of one who of course could only be fully understood by those who had known her personally and known her long.

“In their memories she will ever possess a place apart from all others. With all her high literary powers she was utterly unlike the mass of those who are called ‘literary persons.’ Few have possessed such learning; and when one calls to mind the arduous character of those studies, which seemed but a refreshment to her clear intellect, like a walk in mountain air, it seems a marvel how a woman’s faculties could have grappled with those Greek philosophers and Greek fathers, just as no doubt it seemed a marvel when her father, at the age of fourteen, woke the echoes of that famous old cloister with declamations from Plato and Plotinus. But in the daughter, as in the father, the real marvel was neither the accumulated knowledge nor the literary power. It was the spiritual mind.

‘The rapt one of the Godlike forehead,  
The heaven-eyed creature,’

was Wordsworth’s description of Coleridge, the most spiritual perhaps of England’s poets, certainly of her modern poets. Of her some one said, ‘Her father had looked down into her eyes, and left in them the light of his own.’ Her great characteristic was the radiant spirituality of her intellectual and imaginative being. This it was that looked forth from her countenance.

“Great and various as were your mother’s talents, it was not from them that she derived what was special to her. It was from the degree in which she had inherited the feminine portion of genius. She had a keener appreciation of what was highest and most original in thought than of subjects nearer the range of ordinary intellects. She moved with the lightest step when she moved over the loftiest ground. Her ‘feet were beautiful on the mountain-tops’ of ideal thought. They were her native land; for her they were not barren; honey came up from the stony rock. In this respect I should suppose she must have differed from almost all women whom we associate with literature. I remember hearing her say that she hardly considered herself to be a woman ‘of letters.’ She felt herself more at ease when musing on the mysteries of the soul, or discussing the most arduous speculations of philosophy and theology, than when dealing with the humbler topics of literature.

“As might have been expected, the department of literature which interested her most was that of poetry—that is, poetry of the loftiest and most spiritual order, for to much of what is now popular she would have refused the name. How well I remember our discussions about Wordsworth! She was jealous of my admiration for his poems, because it extended to *too many* of them. No one could be a true Wordsworthian, she maintained, who admired so much some of his later poems, his poems of accomplishment, such as the ‘Triad.’ It implied a disparagement of his earlier poems, such as ‘Resolution and Independence,’ in which the genuine Words-

worthian inspiration, and that alone, uttered itself! I suspect, however, that she must have taken a yet more vivid delight in some of her father's poems. Beside their music and their spirituality, they have another quality, in which they stand almost without a rival,—their subtle sweetness. I remember Leigh Hunt once remarking to me on this characteristic of them, and observing that in this respect they were unapproached. It is like distant music, when the tone comes to you pure, without any coarser sound of wood or of wire; or like odour on the air, when you smell the flower, without detecting in it the stalk or the earth. As regards this characteristic of her father's genius, as well as its spirituality, there was something in hers that resembled it. One is reminded of it by the fairy-like music of the songs in 'Phantasmion.'

"There is a certain gentleness and a modesty which belong to real genius, and which are in striking contrast with the self-confidence and self-assertion, so often found in persons possessed of vigorous talents, but to whom literature is but a rough sport or a coarse profession. It was these qualities that gave to her manners their charm of feminine grace, self-possession, and sweetness. She was one of those whose thoughts are growing while they speak, and who never speak to surprise. Her intellectual fervour was not that which runs over in excitement; a quietude belonged to it, and it was ever modulated by a womanly instinct of reserve and dignity. She never 'thought for effect,' or cared to have the last word in discussion, or found it difficult to conceive how

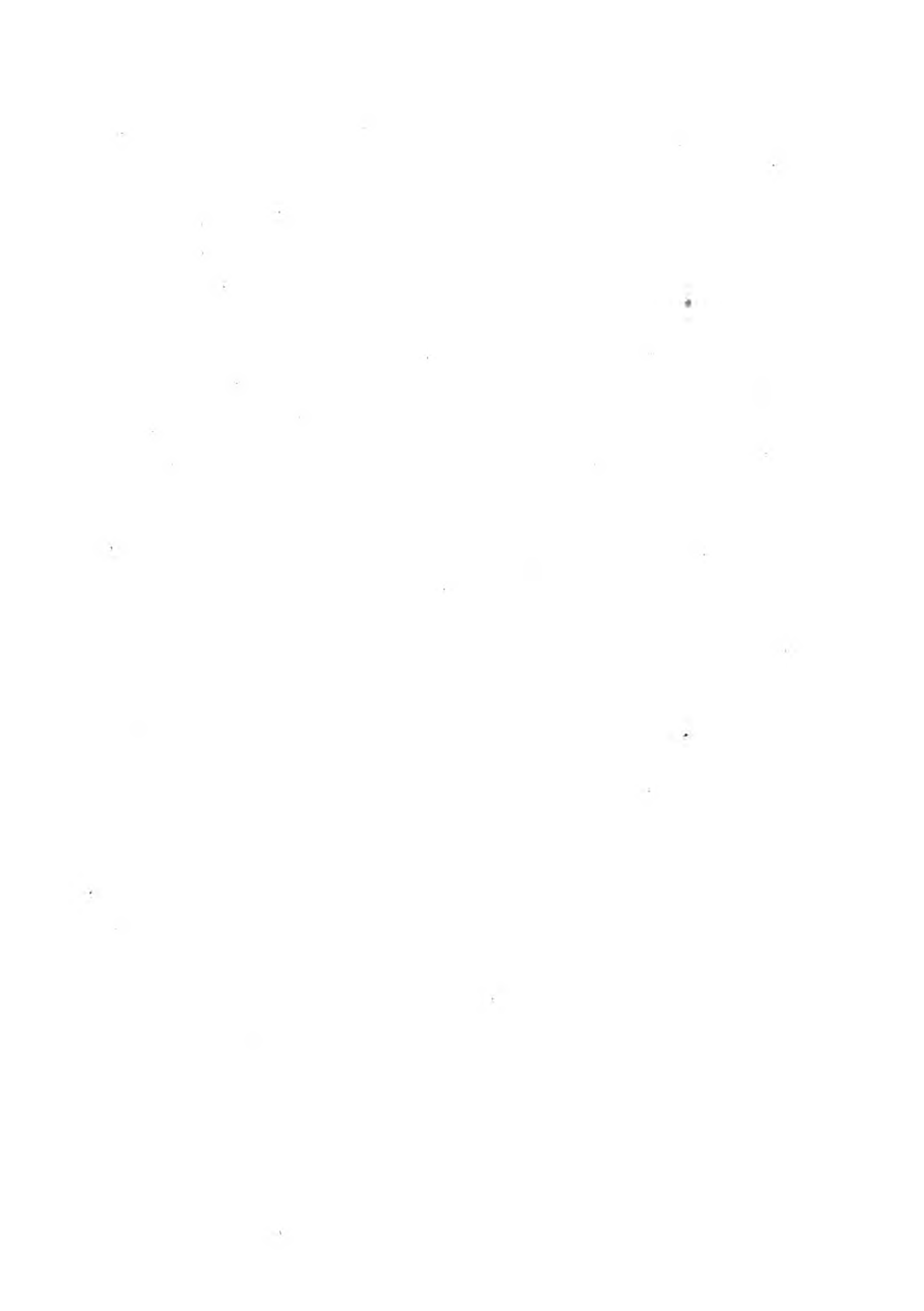


others should differ from her conclusions. She was more a woman than those who had not a tenth part of her intellectual energy. The seriousness and the softness of her nature raised her above vanity and its contortions. Her mind could move at once and be at rest.

“ I fear that the type of character and intellect to which your mother belonged must be expected to grow rarer in these days of ‘fast’ intellect. Talents rush to the market, the theatre, or the arena, and genius itself becomes vulgarized for want of that ‘hermit heart’ which ought to belong to it, whether it be genius of the creative or the susceptible order. There will always, however, be those whose discernment can trace in your mother’s correspondence and in her works the impress of what once was so fair. But, alas ! how little will be known of her even by such. Something they will guess of her mind, but it is only a more fortunate few who can know her yet higher gifts, those that belong to the heart and moral being. If they have a loss which is theirs only, they too have remembrances which none can share with them. They remember the wide sympathies and the high aspirations, the courageous love of knowledge, and the devout submission to Revealed Truth ; the domestic affections so tender, so dutiful, and so self-sacrificing, the friendships so faithful and so unexacting. For her great things and little lived on together through the fidelity of a heart that seemed never to forget. I never walk beside the Greta or the Derwent without hearing her describe the flowers she had gathered on their margin in her early girlhood. For her they seemed

to preserve their fragrance, amid the din and the smoke of the great metropolis."

To these high and discerning praises, any addition from me would be indeed superfluous. Yet one word of confirmation may here find a place ; it is this, that such as Sara Coleridge appeared to sympathizing friends and admiring strangers, such she was known to be, by those who, as her children, lived with her in habits of daily intimacy, and depended on her wholly for guidance, affection, and support. To such an one, her memory is almost a religion ; or, to speak more soberly as well as more Christianly, it is prized not only out of love for herself, but as a practical evidence of the truth of that Religion, which made her what she was.



## CHAPTER I.

1833.

Letters to her Husband, her eldest brother Hartley Coleridge, and  
Miss Trevenen.



## I.

Importance of indirect Influences in Education—Description of her Son at three years old—A Child's first effort at Recollection.

TO HARTLEY COLERIDGE, Esq.,  
Dove Cottage, Town End, Grasmere.

*Hampstead*, 1833.—I THINK the present hard-working, over-busy, striving age, somewhat over-does the *positive* part of education, and forgets the efficacy of the negative. *Not* to make children irreligious by dosing them with religion unskilfully administered—*not* to make them self-important by charging them on no account to be conceited (which you used to complain of so bitterly)—*not* to make them busy-bodies and uncharitable by discussing the misdemeanours of all belonging to them, whom they ought to hold in reverence, in their hearing, giving them the fruit of the tree of ill knowledge (a fruit which both puffs up and imparts bitterness) before their stomachs have acquired firmness enough to receive it without injury (before the secretions of the mind are all settled, and such knowledge can subsist without disturbing the sweet juices of charity and humanity)—*not* to create disgust, or excite hypocrisy, by attempting to pour sensibility, generosity, and such other good qualities, which cannot be supplied from without, but must well up from within,

by buckets full into their hearts,—*not* to cram them with knowledge which their minds are not mature enough to digest (such as Political Economy), the only result of which will be to make them little superficial coxcombs, —in short, to give nature elbow room, and not to put swathes on their minds, now we have left off lacing them upon their infant bodies, to trust more to happy influences, and less to direct tuition, not to defeat our own purpose by over-anxiety, and to recollect that the powers of education are even more limited than those of circumstances, that nature and God's blessing are above all things, and to arm ourselves against the disappointment that may attend our best directed and most earnest endeavours ; all these considerations, I think, are treated too slightly in the present day. Folks are all too busy to think ; churches are built in a fortnight—but not quite such as our ancestors built. The only wonder is that there is so much childish innocence and nature left in the world. But, as an old nurse said, "O Lord, ma'am, it's not very easy to *kill a baby*," so I think it not very easy to spoil a child. Nature has a wonderful power of rejecting what does not suit her ; and the harangue which is unfitted for juvenile hearts and understandings, often makes no impression upon either. How often does a child that was certainly to be ruined by mismanagement disappoint all the wise Jeremiahs, and turn out an amiable member of society !

You say you cannot bring before your mind's eye our little Herby. A mother is qualified to draw a child's portrait, if close study of the original be a qualification.

High colouring may be allowed for. I will try to give you some notion of our child. He is too even a mixture of both father and mother to be strikingly like either ; and this is the more natural as Henry and I have features less definite than our expressions. This may, perhaps, account for that flowing softness and more than childlike indefiniteness of outline which our boy's face presents : it is all colour and expression—such varying expression as consists with the sort of corporeal moulding which I have described ; in which the vehicle is lost sight of, and the material of the veil is obscured by the brightness of what shines through it—not that pointed sort of fixed expression which seems more mechanically formed by strong lines and angular features. To be more particular, he has round eyes, and a round nose, and round lips and cheeks ; and he has deep blue eyes, which vary from stone grey to skiey azure, according to influences of light and shade ; and yellowish light-brown hair, and cheeks and lips rosy up to the very deepest, brightest, tint of childish rosyhood. He will not be a handsome man, but he is a pretty representative of three years old, as D—— was a “representative baby,” and folks who put the glossy side of their opinions outermost for the gratified eyes of mothers and nurses, and all that large class with whom rosy cheeks are the beginning, middle, and end of beauty, say enough to make me—as vain as I am. I don't pretend to any exemption from the general lot of parental delusion, I mean that, like most other parents, I see my child through an atmosphere which illuminates, magnifies,



and at the same time refines the object to a degree that amounts to a delusion, at least, unless we are aware that to other eyes it appears by the light of common day only. My father says that those who love intensely see more clearly than indifferent persons; they see minutenesses which escape other eyes; they see "the very pulse of the machine." Doubtless, but then, don't they magnify by looking through the medium of their partiality? Don't they raise into undue relative importance by exclusive gazing—don't wishes and hopes, indulged and cherished long, turn unto realities, as the rapt astronomer gazed upon the stars, and mused on human knowledge, and longed for magic power, till he believed that he directed the sun's course, and the sweet influences of the Pleiades?

To return to our son and heir; he is an impetuous, vivacious child, and the softer moments of such are particularly touching (so thinks the mother of a vehement urchin). I lately asked him the meaning of a word; he turned his rosy face to the window, and cast up the full blue eyes, which looked liquid in the light, in the short hush of childish contemplation. The innocent thoughtfulness, contrasted with his usual noisy mirth and rapidity, struck my fancy. I had never before seen him condescend to make an effort at recollection. The word usually passed from his lips like an arrow from a bow; and if not forthcoming instantly there was an absolute unconcern as to its fate in the region of memory. The necessity of brain-racking is not among the number of his discoveries in the (to him) *new* world.

All wears the freshness and the glory of a dream ; and the stale, flat and unprofitable, and the *improbus labor*, and the sadness and despondency, are all behind that visionary haze which hides the dull reality, the mournful future of man's life. You may well suppose that I look on our darling boy with many fears—but “fortitude and patient cheer” must recall me from such “industrious folly ;” and faith and piety must tell me that this is not to be his home for ever, and that the glories of this world are lent but to spiritualize us, to incite us to look upward ; and that the trials which I dread for my darling are but part of his Maker's general scheme of goodness and wisdom.

## II.

Mrs. Joanna Baillie—“An Old Age Serene and Bright”—Miss Martineau's Characters of Children—“A Little Knowledge” of Political Economy “a Dangerous Thing”—Comparison of Tasso, Dante, and Milton.

To Miss E. TREVENEN, Helston, Cornwall.

*Hampstead*, 1833.—Our great poetess, or rather the sensible, amiable old lady that *was* a great poetess thirty years ago, is still in full preservation, as to health. Never did the flame of genius more thoroughly expire than in her case ; for though, as Lamb says, “Ancient Mariners,” “Lyrical Ballads,” and “Kehamas” are not written in the grand climacteric, the authors of such flights of imagination generally give out sparkles of their ancient fires

in conversation ; but Mrs. Joanna Baillie is, as Mr. Wordsworth observes, when quoting her non-feeling for Lycidas, "dry and Scotchy : " learning she *never* possessed, and some of her poetry, which I think was far above that of any other woman, is the worse for a few specks of bad English ; then her criticisms are so surprisingly narrow and jejune, and show so slight an acquaintance with fine literature in general. Yet if the authoress of "Plays on the Passions" does not now write or talk like a poetess, she *looks* like one, and *is* a piece of poetry in herself. Never was old age more lovely and interesting ; the face, the dress, the quiet, subdued motions, the silver hair, the calm *in-looking* eye, the pale, yet not unhealthy skin, all are in harmony ; this is winter with its own peculiar loveliness of snows and paler sunshine ; no forced flowers or fruits to form an unnatural contrast with the general air of the prospect.

I never could relish those wonderfully young-looking old ladies that are frequently pointed out to our admiration, and who look like girls at a little distance ; so much the greater your disappointment when you come close. Why should an old person *look* young ? ought such a one to *feel* and *think* young ? if not, how can the mind and person be in harmony ; how can there be the real grace and comeliness which old age, *as old age*, may possess, though not round cheeks and auburn ringlets ?

Do you read Miss Martineau ? How well she always succeeds in her portraits of children, their simplicity and partially developed feelings and actions ; and what a pity it is that, with all her knowledge of child nature, she

should try to persuade herself and others that political economy is a fit and useful study for growing minds, and limited capabilities, a subject of all others requiring matured intellect and general information as its basis! This same political economy, which quickens the sale of her works now, will, I think, prove heavy ballast for a vessel that is to sail down the stream of time, as all agree that it is a dead weight upon the progress of her narratives, introducing the most absurd incongruities and improbabilities in regard to the dramatic propriety of character, and setting in arms against the interest of the story the political opinions of a great class of her readers. And she might have rivalled Miss Edgeworth! What a pity that she would stretch her genius on such a Procrustes bed! And then what practical benefit can such studies have for the mass of the people, for whom it seems that Miss M—— intends her expositions? they are not like religion, which may and must mould the thoughts and acts of everyday life, the true spirit of which therefore cannot be too much studied and explained; but how can poor people help the corn-laws, except by sedition, and what pauper will refuse to marry, because his descendants may, hundreds of years hence (if hundreds of things don't happen to prevent it), help among millions of others to choke up the world? Who, in short, will listen to dry and doubtful themes, when passion calls? A smattering of Greek or Latin is, in my opinion, a harmless thing; nay, I think it useful and agreeable, just according to its extent; a little is good, more is better, if people are aware how short a way they have proceeded,

and what a length of road is before them, which they have more opportunity of seeing than those who have never set out. But a little learning is, indeed, a dangerous thing, when no part can be seen clearly without a view of the whole, and when knowledge, or fancied knowledge, is sure to incite to practice. . . . .

I admire the elegant and classical Tasso, but cannot agree with those who call him the great poet of Italy. He borrowed from the ancients, not, as Milton did, to melt down the foreign with the original ore of his own mind, and to form out of the mass a new creation wholly his own in shape and substance, and in its effect on the minds of others. It appears to me that he only produced a vigorous and highly-wrought imitation of former copies, into which he combined many new materials, but the frame and body of which was not original. Dante's was the master-mind that wrought, like Homer and Milton, for itself from the beginning, and which influenced the poetry of Italy for ages.

### III.

Characteristics of English Scenery—Somerset, Yorkshire, Devon, Derbyshire, and the Lakes—Visit of H. N. Coleridge to Mr. Poole at Nether Stowey.

To Miss E. TREVENEN, Helston, Cornwall.

*Hampstead, October 1833.*—Henry agrees with me in thinking the Somerset landscape the ideal of *rurality* where nature is attired in amenity rather than in grandeur. The North of England is more picturesque; you

are there ever thinking of what might be represented on canvas ; parts of Yorkshire are far more romantic, especially in the mellowing lights and hues of autumn, when its old ruins and red and yellow trees and foaming streams, bring you into communion with the genius of Scott ; Derbyshire is lovely and picturesque, but to me it is unsatisfactory, as mimicking, on too small a scale, a finer thing of the same sort. Dovedale may have a character of its own ; I understand it is more pastoral than the English Lakeland, yet with a portion of its wilder beauty, but Matlock struck me as a fragment of Boro-dale, without the fine imaginative distance. Devon is a noble county, but less *distinctly* charactered, I think, than the sister one ; it displays specimens of variously-featured landscapes, here the river-scenery of Scotland, there a smiling meadow-land ; in one place reminding you of the North of England, in another a wild desolate moor, or fine sea-view peculiar to itself ; still, in the general face of the country, I have felt that there was the want of individuality and a due proportion of the various features of the scene ;—in many parts the trees, though superb specimens in themselves, domineer, in their giant multitude, too exclusively over the land, and prevent the eye from taking in a prospect where the perfection of parts is subservient to the soul-entrancing effect of the whole. Devonshire has sometimes struck me as the workshop of nature, where materials of the noblest kind and magnitude are heaped together. The only defect, Henry says, in Somersetshire, is the fewness and unclearness of the streams. With Nether Stowey he was espe-

cially delighted ; it is indeed an epitome of the beauties of the county ; he was much interested with the marked original character and gratified by the attentions of his host, our old friend Mr. Poole ; he visited my father's tiny cottage, where my brother Hartley trotted and prattled, and where my unknown baby brother Berkeley, a beautiful infant, was born ; the pleasant reminiscences of my father's abode in the village gave Henry much pleasure.

## IV.

“ Dodging ”—Children best managed by Authority, not by premature appeals made to their Feelings.

To her Husband.

*Hampstead, October 1833.*—Herby begins his lessons now with “ Oo shan't dodge me ! ” but I tell him (or tell myself rather) that without dodging no scholar was ever made. Short instructions at a time, and thorough cross-examination of those given, is the system I would go upon in teaching. Be sure that the first step is *really* taken before you attempt to proceed, and don't fancy that children will listen to lectures, either in learning or morality. Punish a child for hurting his sister, and he will draw the inference that it is wrong, without a sermon on brotherly affection. Children mark what you *do* much more, and what you say less, than those who know them not imagine. Another of my rules is, never to draw upon the sensibility of children, or try to

*create* what must be a native impulse, if genuine ; neither would I *appeal* to what is so unsure a ground of action. I would not tell a child to refrain from what is wrong because it *gives me pain*. I know from experience how soon that falls flat on the feelings, and how can you expect sympathy where there can be no experience or conception of the evil suffered ? Do you remember how poor little — used to behave when told not to make his mother's head ache ? Nothing is more sure to disgust than a demand for sympathy where there is a lack of all materials for its production. How can a child comprehend a grown person's bodily sensations, or parental griefs and anxieties ? You must appeal to reason and conscience, not so much by argument as by such a medium as is most applicable to the mind of a child. If you have reason to think your motives misunderstood, in any way which may affect the child's feelings or conduct, a few leading hints may soon set the matter right.

V.

The Ancients' close Observation and accurate Delineation of Nature  
—Names of Colours in classic poetry—"The Georgics."

To the Same.

*Hampstead, December 1833.*—Martin says the ancients were vague in the description of colours. I doubt not, if we understood them thoroughly, we should find that what appears vague and shadowy, proceeded from fine-



ness and accuracy of discernment. The ancients were precise in the delineation of nature. They did not see it with a spirit of Wordsworth,—no more, I think, did Shakespeare. But they either drew and coloured in the open air, and conveyed forms and tints closely and vividly, or they translated literally from the poets who did so, as Virgil appears to have done from Homer and Theocritus. This applies to their poetical diction. The spirit and form of Virgil's work were doubtless borrowed with modification ; but the vague, dreamy imagery of Shelley, Keats, &c., I believe to be a thing of modern growth. The ancients did not modify and compose out of floating reminiscences of other books. *Purpureus*, as applied to a swan, of course is metaphorical, red being the most brilliant of colours, and a white swan gleaming in full daylight, one of the most resplendent of natural objects. The passages on the hyacinth, I think, are perfectly consistent, if closely examined, and express a peculiar shade of red, belonging to one of the multitudinous tribe of lilies. *Glaucus*, too, has a precise meaning. *Pallens* is very expressive and true in the way it is applied, meaning yellowish white. *Niger* must have meant *dark-coloured*, not merely black. How exact the metaphors of the peasantry are. "The Georgics" is the Rubens portrait of nature. How exquisite is the expression, yet nothing is idealized. Herby must read that poem, as soon as he has Latin enough to gather the meaning through the foreign garb. It will make him look at nature, and looking at nature will make him relish that sweet transcript. He has just

come in from his walk with a sprig of arbutus, with its red fruits, which, he says, are strawberries. He agrees with those who named the arbutus the strawberry tree. Virgil affirms that folks once lived on these "mocking" strawberries and acorns, a thing which I make bold to disbelieve.



CHAPTER II.

1834.

Letters to her Husband, and to Miss Trevenen.



## I.

Books for the Little Ones—"Original Poems"—Mrs. Howitt's Poetry—Mrs. Hannah More—Girlish view of her literary pretensions confirmed by maturer judgment—A group of Authoresses—Remarks on Jane Austen's novels by the Lake Poets—Hannah More's celebrity accounted for—Letters of Walpole and Mrs. Barbauld—Love of gossip in the reading Public.

To Miss EMILY TREVENEN, Helston, Cornwall.

*Hampstead, August 1834.*—Mary Howitt's book \* is a perfect *love* as to its external part; the prints are really exquisite. The poems I have not read through, but what I have read confirm me in my previous opinion that she has a genuine vein of poetry, though not, I think, a very affluent one. Some of the puffs (one of them at least) said that she had even surpassed the authoresses† of the "Original Poems" in hitting off something truly poetical, yet *intelligible to children*, in verse. To this particular theme of praise I cannot subscribe. I think Mary Howitt's verses do *not* contain what all children must enter into, in the same degree that the "Original Poems" do; but in this respect I think them preferable even as regards fitness for youthful (I mean for childish) minds, that they represent scarcely anything but what is bright

\* "Sketches of Natural History."

† Ann and Jane Taylor, daughters of Isaac Taylor of Ongar, and sisters of the popular author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm."—E. C.

and joyous. Children should dwell apart from the hard and ugly realities of life as long as possible. The "Original Poems" give too many revolting pictures of mental depravity, bodily torture, and of adult sorrows; and I think the sentiments (the tirades against hunting, fishing, shooting, &c., for instance) are morbid, and partially false.

When I say that Mary Howitt's vein is not affluent, I mean that she is given to *beat out* one fancy as a gold-beater does a bit of gold,—that the self-same imagination is reproduced, with a little change of attire, in one poem after another.

You speak of Mrs. Hannah More. I have seen abundant extracts from her "Remains," and I think I could not read them through if I were to meet with them. I fear you will think I want a duly disciplined mind, when I confess that her writings are not to my taste. I remember once disputing on this subject with a young chaplain, who affirmed that Mrs. Hannah More was the greatest female writer of the age. "Whom," he asked, "did I think superior?" I mentioned a score of authoresses whose names my opponent had never even heard before. I should not now dispute doggedly with a divine in a stage coach, but years of discretion have not made me alter the opinion I then not very discreetly expressed, of the disproportion between Mrs. More's celebrity and her literary genius, as compared with that of many other female writers whose fame has not extended to the Asiatic Islands. I cannot see in her productions aught comparable to the imaginative

vigour of Mrs. J. Baillie, the eloquence and (for a woman) the profundity of Madame de Staël, the brilliancy of Mrs. Hemans (though I think *her* over-rated), the pleasant broad comedy of Miss Burney and Miss Ferrier, the melancholy tenderness of Miss Bowles, the pathos of Inchbald and Opie, the masterly sketching of Miss Edgeworth (who, like Hogarth, paints manners as they grow out of morals, and not merely as they are modified and tintured by fashion); the strong and touching, but sometimes coarse pictures of Miss Martineau, who has some highly interesting sketches of childhood in humble life; and last not least, the delicate mirth, the gently-hinted satire, the feminine decorous humour of Jane Austen, who, if not the greatest, is surely the most faultless of female novelists. My Uncle Southey and my father had an equally high opinion of her merits, but Mr. Wordsworth used to say that though he admitted that her novels were an admirable copy of life, he could not be interested in productions of that kind; unless the truth of nature were presented to him clarified, as it were, by the pervading light of imagination, it had scarce any attractions in his eyes; and for this reason, he took little pleasure in the writings of Crabbe. My Uncle Southey often spoke in high terms of "Castle Rackrent;" he thought it a work of true genius. Miss Austen's works are essentially feminine, but the best part of Miss Edgeworth's seem as if they had been written by a man. "Castle Rackrent" contains genuine humour, a thing very rare in the writings of women, and not much relished by our sex in general. "Belinda" contains



much that is powerful, interspersed, like the fine parts of Scotland, with tracts of dreary insipidity; and what is good in this work I cannot think of so high an order as the good things in "Castle Rackrent" and "Emma." I have been led to think that the exhibition of disease and bodily torture is but a coarse art to "freeze the blood." Indeed, you will acquit me of any affected pretence to originality of criticism, when you recollect how early my mind was biassed by the strong talkers I was in the habit of listening to. The spirit of what I sport on critical matters, though not always the application, is generally derived from the sources that you wot of. Yet I know well that we should not go by authority without finding out a reason for our faith; and unless we test the opinions learned from others with those of the world in general, we are apt to hold them in an incorrect, and, at the same time, a more strong and unqualified way than those do from whom we have derived them.

Though I think with the "Spectator," &c., that Mrs. More's very great notoriety was more the work of circumstances, and the popular turn of her mind, than owing to a strong original genius, I am far from thinking her an *ordinary* woman. She must have had great energy of character, and a sprightly versatile mind, which did not originate much, but which readily caught the spirit of the day, and reflected all the phases of opinion in the pious and well-disposed portion of society in a clear and lively manner. To read Mrs. More's new book was a sort of good work, which made the reader feel satisfied

with him or her self when performed ; and it is agreeable to have one's very own opinions presented to one in handsome language, and placed in a highly respectable point of view. Then Mrs. More entered the field when there were few to make a figure there beside, and she was set agoing by Garrick and Johnson. Garrick, who pleased all the world, said that the world ought to be pleased with her : and Johnson, the Great Mogul of literature, was gracious to a pretender whose highest ambition was to follow him at a humble distance. He would have sneered to death a writer of far subtler intellect, and more excursive imagination, who dared to deviate from the track to which he pronounced good sense to be confined. He even sneered a little at his dear pet, Fanny Burney ; *she* had set up shop for herself, to use a vulgarism ; she had ventured to be original. I must add that Mrs. More's steady devotion to the cause of piety and good morals added the stamp of respectability to her works, which was a deserved passport to their reception ; though such a passport cannot enable any production to keep its hold on the general mind if it is not characterized by power as well as good intention.

I admired some of Walpole's Letters in this publication, and I read a flattering one from Mrs. Barbauld, who was a very acute-minded woman herself. Some of her Essays are very clever indeed. I like Mrs. More's style—so neat and sprightly. The Letters seem to contain a great deal of anecdote, the rage of the reading public, but that is an article which I am not particularly fond of.

## II.

Reasons why the Greek and Latin Poets ought to continue to form part of the course of School Instruction—Lord Byron's peculiar experience no argument against it—Milton's scheme of Education—Conjecture as to the effect of Circumstances on the development of poetic Genius.

To her Husband.

*Hampstead, August 28th, 1834.*—I feel quite against the notion of substituting a lower set of books for the classic poets, in the instruction of youth. Purity and force of language and of thought are not so much learned by rule as imbibed by early and long habit, so far as they are to be gained from without. They acquire an interest from association with the "visionary gleam" of our first years. The classic author is but dimly understood at first; but his various merits are developed with the developing mind of the student, and in the end he possesses the charm of an old affection and a new love combined. Such works present clear and pleasing images to the intellect in its very first stage; and the absence of all that is false in logic and corrupt in taste is a vast advantage.

Such, I think, is the effect of early classical reading in those who possess a sensibility and aptness for literature; and those who find no stimulus in the pursuit sufficient to make them recur to it in after years, are surely better furnished with a little Homer, Virgil, and Horace, than with the words of an inferior writer.

I cannot think Lord Byron, with his perverse fastidious taste, is a fair instance in this question, great as his poetical taste may have been. Horace, nine times out of ten, I should conjecture, is not the occasion of flogging; faults in construing are but a small part of school offences. As to Milton, he would have altered the system of old England in many particulars; but I cannot think that the Republic he advocated would ever produce a Miltonic mind, attired at least so gracefully as was that which presented to us the "Paradise Lost."

Query, what would Milton, Shakespeare, and Walter Scott have been, had they been born in the United States in the nineteenth century? How would their genius have manifested itself? Byron, Wordsworth, and Coleridge would, I think, have been less altered in the garb of their minds than the former three. Shakespeare's plays are full of royal and courtly associations; Milton's style is based upon the ancient classics; chivalry and antiquity are the very spirit of Scott's creations. My father and Wordsworth philosophized upon man and nature; their writings are not strongly tinged with any particular atmosphere; they wrote neither of nor for the fabrics of ancient power, and the French Revolution gave their minds a cosmopolitan impulse. As to Byron, the tone of his mind in his most ambitious attempts was borrowed from them; and his Eastern tales have little to do with European antiquity. A travelled American might easily have imbibed the spirit they display.

III.

Dryden and Chaucer.

To the Same.

*Hampstead, September 1834.*—Dryden's fables are certainly an ideal of the rapid, compressed manner. Each line packs as much meaning as possible. But Dryden's imagination was fertile and energetic rather than grand or subtle; and he is more deficient in tenderness than any poet of his capacity that I am acquainted with. His English style is animated and decorous, full of picture-words, but too progressive for elaborate metaphors.

In "Palamon and Arcite" there is all Dryden's energy and richness; but you feel in such a subject his want of tenderness and romance. He seems ever playing with his subject, and almost ready to turn the lover's devotion, and the conquering Emily herself, into a jest. The sly satire of Chaucer suited his genius; but there is a simple pathos at times in the old writer which is alien to Dryden's mind. Chaucer jested upon women like a laughing philosopher; Dryden like a disappointed husband.

IV.

Concentration, not Versatility, the secret of Success in life—Visionaries—The Passion of Envy and the Vice of Cruelty—Is Sporting wrong? Practical bearings of the question—Cruelty of Children seldom deliberate—Folly of exaggerating Bird-nesting into a crime.

To the Same.

*Hampstead, September 1834.*—Persons who succeed in the world without moulding themselves on the world's

model are those who command attention by doing some particular thing thoroughly well ; a crowd of minor achievements pass for nothing, or convey only the notion of a studious idler. I would not give a farthing for you to be thought clever in architecture, or conversant with technicalities of the arts, a fine fencer, dancer, carver, or the best shot in England. Details which conduce to one great point are profitable, but not if they be entirely desultory. Would your moral and intellectual character, your whole man, be a grain the more respectable and admirable ? I think it would be much less so if these pursuits diverted you in any degree from the main earthly objects of your life : your profession as the means of an honourable livelihood, and of benefit to others ; literature as ennobling and blessing your own life, and enabling you to extend those advantages to the world, which enhances the dignity of the pursuit ; and those duties of home which love and religion impose. . . .

These writers on Natural History are quite as fanciful and vague in their theories, quite as often raise a structure on a quaking bog, in their discussion upon facts, as those who are conversant with abstract matters. To be a visionary depends on the temper, not on the subject of contemplation, and none are more misled by imagination than the enthusiasts of mammon, or those who go about to establish the truth of facts in which they take an interest. I knew a man of the world who had a gold and silver dream about Peru, and who went thither upon such uncertain information, and drew such

solid inferences from shadowy premises as astonished many of his friends. Over-eagerness to find particular things true leads us away from the truth.

And what a visionary is the envious man ! He walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain ; he is possessed and agitated and impelled by something which exists only in his own fancy. The dog in the manger is an old apologue ; but I suppose a dog can no more be capable of envy than of veneration. May not envy be defined as a debility of the imagination, the condition or proximate causes of which are want of energy of mind and irritability of temperament ? Envy no doubt tends to harden the heart, but it is not naturally connected with hard-heartedness. You will see very charitable and compassionate persons extremely envious. But people eminently envious are never good-tempered ; and though persons of strong intellectual powers are not free from the feeling, it seldom tyrannizes over minds that reflect much, and are freshened and stimulated by a variety and choice of speculations. It is a modification of selfishness which can only exist through a false estimate of ourselves and others, and the things of this world. It is allied to pride and covetousness, but more closely to the former than the latter, because objects of pride are objects of imagination more than those of covetousness. Envious persons are always proud, but not always grossly covetous. Envy argues an obliquity of the reasoning powers, and never exists in any great degree in any very candid and sincere mind, but it does not imply wilful injustice ; candour is unconscious, or

at least natural honesty, but justice is honesty of the will pursued upon principle. Envious persons are not necessarily unconscientious, though envy, like every irregular passion, tends to obscure the perception of right, and to weaken the moral power. I might add that envy is a weakness of human nature, not a peculiarity of individuals; and he who subdues it the most, or naturally has the least of it, is the person to be remarked, as he who is most under its influence is most noted for evil. It is not like shyness or openness, which is characteristic of one person, while the reverse is characteristic of another. . . . In the work on Nat. History, I met with some good-natured, commonplace observations to this effect, that the coarse and ignorant are apt to be coarsely and ignorantly cruel. I added this note—

“ Man is lord of the creation, yet his is not an absolute monarchy. There are limitations which the demands of his own heart rather than their rights insist upon; but they are not very easily defined, and the line between use and abuse has never yet been strictly drawn. To take an abstract pleasure in sorrow of the meanest thing that feels, is the mark of a degraded nature—to indulge in such a pleasure is to degrade it wilfully; but how far may we justifiably consult our pleasure or our pride regardless of such suffering? Falconry and hare-hunting have their apologists among the refined and reflective, as well as angling and shooting, which indeed occasion less protracted misery. Bird-nesting has not been defended, because peasant boys care not to defend themselves from imputations on their sensibility. All



perceive that it is unworthy of a reasoning creature to inflict pain by way of venting irritated feelings ; but how far we may make it matter of amusement, or at least connect amusement with it, the conscience does not so readily determine. The contemplation of suffering for itself alone is, in very rare instances, I believe, the source of gratification. Cruelty is said to be natural, because children tease and kill living creatures, but in the same breath you are told that they do it out of ignorance, which no doubt is united with a pleasing sense of power. No, I believe that positive cruelty is a mark of the utmost corruption of our sin-prone nature, and, as in Nero and Domitian, the result of sophistication. Even boys that torture a mouse or a hedgehog, are not delighted, I should think, with the pain of the animal—they do not image that very distinctly, but are amused with observing its conduct under those trying circumstances. In this case the sensibilities are dormant, or, put it at the worst, they are naturally torpid or obtuse, not excited and demonized, as in some extraordinary cases, where a hard and turbulent nature has been stimulated and trained by very peculiar circumstances. I think we may say that the more the excitement of any sport with animals proceeds from the exhibition of suffering, and the more inconsiderable are the benefit and pleasure arising collaterally in proportion to the suffering occasioned, the more it may be reprobated as cruel and degrading.”

\* This note has swelled under my transcribing hand. I was going to add, that in treating of the conduct of man

towards animals, we must not forget that they are *things*, as my father says, and not persons. They have no *rights* to regulate this matter, for an animal may be used in *any* way if the needs of man require it. But man violates his own dignity and hardens his heart if the suffering or evil is disproportioned to the necessity, and, as my father would say, every unhardened heart and unperverted mind is "*possessed*" by this idea. To strike an animal in passion is a cruel and degrading action more than an unjust one. It is cruel, because it is to inflict pain without necessity. To strike a man would be unjust as well as cruel ; he has a right not to be struck, independent of all circumstances. He can only forfeit his right by his own acts and deeds. I cannot think that slaves in the West Indies are *practically* treated as things. It would be impossible to manage any reasoning creature with advantage to the manager in this manner. There is a sort of compact between the master and slave. "If you will serve me well you shall have such and such advantages," is the strain of every prosperous slave-holder to his work people. But it was a vile state of things that the contrary was the theory which the laws of the country were regulated by, though, as you and many others think, this evil was not to be remedied on a sudden by Act of Parliament. However, to return from this excursion to the point of practice in my mind at present. It is very difficult to lay down rules for children or others on a matter which cannot be brought to any standard more fixed than the varying requirements of different men, these requirements being

defined by tastes, desires, and habits as various as the minds and situations of the agents. Nor is there any law by which you can condemn bear-baiting and uphold angling. Even if the fish are eaten, they are a mere luxury to the angling idler and his family. I think it ill-judged to lead children to look with contempt or dislike upon uneducated boys amusing themselves with bird-nesting. What precept of the gospel, or the spirit of it even, do they infringe? The sorrow of the bird is no part of the pleasure. The less we teach Christianity and humanity by way of censure upon others the better. The animal suffering is very inconsiderable; the bird builds again immediately. But I would never put a child in the way of bird-nesting. I would say, "Don't take the eggs, it is a pity—the poor bird will miss them;" but I would not teach forbearance as a Christian duty, nor treat the matter with the same solemnity that I should do the unkindness to a sister or playmate, or insolence to a servant. If I saw a child tease or torture an animal, I should of course say that is *cruel*, and I should let the child perceive that the animal feels bodily pain. The absence of all forethought or anticipation in the creature is not a reflection to which it would be useful to lead a child's mind. But all exaggerated pictures of animal suffering, the investing them with human sentiments (except in an apologue which the child soon understands), tirades against hunting, shooting, &c., I would let alone. And the author of "Hartleap Well" is as great an enemy of this false sentimentality as any in the kingdom.

V.

The Drama and the Epic—Painting among the Ancients—Sense of the Picturesque in Nature, a development of Modern Taste.

To the Same.

*Hampstead, September 1834.*—In a drama the event is to display character ; in an epic the characters are to carry on the event. Drama is biography, the Epic history. Lear, Othello, are the subjects of those dramas, the Loss of Eden, the destruction of Priam's power and domestic blessing by the anger of Achilles, those of Milton's and Homer's poems. In an Epic, only such a diversity of characters as the event would naturally assemble, and such qualities in the hero as would bring about the event, are essential to the conception of this sort of poem. In the Drama, characters are chosen for the subject, because their qualities are interesting and remarkable ; and the proof of this is their bringing about particular events, or showing a certain line of conduct in peculiar circumstances. The Epic would be retarded by the exhibition of passion in all its stages, such as we have in Othello ; it would be out of proportion, and would engross the whole attention from the general narrative. . . . .

There can be no doubt that Cicero had a feeling of the interest to be derived from a copy of living objects on canvas, or even of those of still life, as the scene and circumstance of action. But the picturesqueness of the group may not have been the source of interest (at least not to the consciousness of the beholder, though no

doubt it did enhance the gratification), but the life portrayed in the picture. The beholder was to be instructed, animated, or soothed by the story of some event, or knowledge of some fact, rather than astonished, gratified, entertained by the exhibition of art, and spectacle of abstract beauty. I think this is the general distinction between the ancient and modern notions in regard to painting, though there may be exceptions, and the times of old may have had an infusion of our feelings, as we doubtless partake of that sort of interest which was the chief and most defined one to them. The pleasure to be derived from the power of art was by no means so decidedly modern, as a sense of the picturesqueness of inanimate combinations. The latter must belong to a people who have long been refined, a people who have leisure to luxuriate in things which have no being but in the imagination, and who have hit upon combinations and notions of the agreeable and beautiful, which were never suggested to the fancy even of sages and philosophers of simpler ages. Don't you think that much of the best modern poetry would be unintelligible to Cicero?—I mean as to the sentiment of it.

## VI.

The Sublime and the Beautiful—Comparative Popularity of Shakespeare, Milton, and Ben Jonson—Education of Taste by an Exclusive Study of the Best Models.

To the Same.

1834.—It is perhaps more true to say that the sublime

cannot be so long dwelt upon as the beautiful, than that it is less *popular*. That style is, I think, as easily felt and estimated by the uncultivated taste as the other. But from its own nature it cannot be long sustained, for awe and terror owe half of their being to novelty and surprise; yet an appeal to those feelings, or rather an attack upon them, is as surely effective as any in the world. Indeed I believe far more persons can appreciate the merits of "Theodore and Honoria" (the supernatural scene of which is sublime in the German style, though not in the more elevated one of Milton and Dante) than of "Palamon and Arcite," which is beautiful; or of "The Cock and the Fox," which is witty and exquisite. Why and how far is Shakespeare more popular than Milton? Not (to *conjecture* merely) because there is more of the sublime in Milton's poem, but simply because persons unused to dwell upon what is abstract, who have acquired no knowledge of literary perfections, are unable to keep up their attention during the course of an epic, especially one which embodies a scheme of theology, and therefore demands the cognizance of the understanding throughout the main part of it, to be relished at all. The only parts of Shakespeare that are popular, as you have stated,\* are the selections for the stage, the incidents of some of his plots, and the passions exhibited by some of his characters, though they are far from being understood. There is an upper surface which catches the general eye, but what lies

\* In his "Introduction to Homer," a second edition of which was being prepared by my father in 1834.—E. C.

beneath, which is indicated to the refined taste, or to the fine perception of genius, is not generally caught. The verdant lawn presents a pleasing aspect to the eye of the rustic, yet it is not so interesting as to that of the florist, the botanist, the physiologist, who perceived a thousand peculiarities in that mass of vegetation which are unseen by others, and who can pierce the bosom of the earth to discover how, and why, and whence it has arisen. "Paradise Regained" is less popular than "Paradise Lost," yet it contains comparatively little of the sublime; but it is too abstract to be generally relished; it has no merits but those which a refined taste can alone appreciate. "The White Doe," the "Flower and the Leaf," and many other such plays of pure imagination, can never be popular, in whole or in part. "The Pilgrim's Progress" has a complete upper surface of popularity. How little is Shakespeare's delicate sportive dialogue now appreciated, such as that between Hotspur and his wife! Coarser copies have superseded it. Ben Jonson's plays were received with rapture, when plot and incident were not to be had elsewhere, or not in any more popular form; and his reputation was upheld by the finer wits who frequented the theatre in those days. But now, who, except bookish persons, know anything about them, or perceives that the "Fox" and the "Alchemist" are works of art a thousand times finer in design, and more exquisite in execution than those of modern vulgar dramatists? When good works alone were presented from the first to the populace, even their taste must have been simpler

and finer than in times when it becomes sophisticated and yet degraded by inferior trash. If a peasant were shown daily a collection of Claudes and Correggios alone, he would be far more in the way of learning to admire them than if such pictures were thinly scattered amongst a set of glaring daubs.

VII.

Mrs. Joanna Baillie's Taste in Dress—Opinion of the Poetess and of her Sister, expressed by an eminent Savant.

To the Same.

*Hampstead, September 4, 1834.*—I saw Mrs. Joanna Baillie before dinner. She wore a delicate lavender satin bonnet: and Mrs. J—— says she is fond of dress, and knows what every one has on. Her taste is certainly exquisite in dress, though (strange to say) not, in my opinion, in poetry. I more than ever admired the harmony of expression and tint, the silver hair and silvery-grey eye, the pale skin, and the look which speaks of a mind that has had much communing with high imagination, though such intercourse is only perceptible now by the absence of everything which that lofty spirit would not set his seal upon. Sir John Herschel says that Mrs. Agnes Baillie is “by far the cleverer woman of the two;” but this is the speech of a *clever* man, a man whose acute mind can pierce some of the mysteries of the world of fact, but which does not sympathize with



all the beings of the world of imagination. And then, in Mrs. Joanna Baillie, age has slackened the active part of genius, and yet is in some sort a substitute for it. There is a declining of mental exercitation. She has had enough of that; and now for a calm decline, and thoughts of Heaven.

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Miss Herschel.

Mrs. J—— says that Caroline Herschel, sister of the late Dr. Herschel, is a person of uncommon attainments and abilities, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society. She is now eighty-four; her letters from Berlin, where she resides, are full of vigour and spirit. She says:—"My brother and I have sometimes stood out star-gazing till two o'clock, and have been told next day that, the night before, our neighbour's pigs had died of the frost."

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Hard Words in the Latin Grammar useful to young Learners.

\* Those odd words, *Genitive, Vocative, Præterpluperfect*, &c., are helps to the memory. They have a quaint uniform of their own, and are something like one another, but unlike all other things.

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Geography made Easy.

How much knowledge may be put into a child, by good economy of instruction, without employing his mind more than is perfectly wholesome! To Herby the map is a sort of game, and one that contains far more variety

than any play that could be devised. To find out Sumatra or Owhyhee, to trace the Ganges, and follow the Equator in every different map, is a supreme amusement ; and the notions of hot and cold, wet and dry, icy seas and towering palm-trees, with water dashing, and tigers roaming, and butterflies flitting, and his going and seeing them, and getting into tossing boats, and climbing by slow degrees up the steep mountain, are occupying his little mind, and give a zest to the whole affair. And then there is the pleasure of preaching it all over again to Nurse !

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Right Opinions must be held in the right Spirit.

It is a fortunate thing to be induced by any circumstances to adopt the most edifying opinions, whichever they may be ; but of still more consequence is the manner in which we hold and maintain them. Indeed, even in the most vital considerations, the *manner of holding it* is almost more than the speculative, abstract creed. I never can forget that the most (apparently) Christian-spirited creature I ever knew was a Unitarian.



CHAPTER III.

1834 (*continued*).

Letters to her Husband and her eldest Brother, and to Mrs.  
Plummer.



I.

Composition of "Pretty Lessons for Good Children."

TO HARTLEY COLERIDGE, Esq.

*Dove Cottage, Town End, Grasmere* — 1834.—What you say about Natural History, dear Hartley, is quite accordant with my own feelings ; but I am not *studying* it, or reading anything systematically. A few pretty works with coloured prints have been lent to me, and I took an especial interest in the subject, not only for the attractions you mention, but because I could talk to little Herby about the birds and beasts, and show him the pictures.

I have also amused myself, and instructed him, with mama's assistance, by means of little rhymes, which I ink-printed upon cards. Henry had a fancy for having some of them printed, as a little record of some of my occupations during a season of weakness and suffering, when I was shut out from almost all pleasures and means of usefulness. In this view you will look at the little book which I send you. It is worth nothing in any other. It may amuse some other children, but it cannot be to any other child what these verses have been to Herby, struck off as they were for the occasion, an occasion in which he was specially interested.

## II.

Chaucer's Poetry not that of a primitive Age.

To her Husband.

It appears to me absurd to speak of Chaucer as living in the "infancy of our poetry." Chaucer's metre is proved by Tyrwhitt to be, as old Speght declared, quite perfect, if the words are pronounced as they were in his day. So says Sir W. Scott. Time only has "mismetred" him, as he himself apprehended. Dryden says that numbers were in their nonage till Denham and Waller appeared. This is a strange misappreciation, as critics think now, of Spenser and Chaucer. And then as to the *matter* of Chaucer, it cannot be called the offspring of a rude age, or even of a simple age. Much of it is satire, which is the growth of an age of social institutions. As to the refinements and complications of civilization, they may go on *ad infinitum*, and poetry will gain from that a great variety of objects, and a different tone. Yet it may be perfect in kind at a very early period. Wordsworth, I think, would have been as fine a poet in Chaucer's age as now. The garb of his mind would doubtless have been different; perhaps some of his poetry would have been less exquisite; and certainly it may be supposed that certain circumstances are more congenial to certain minds than to others equally powerful. But a vivid imagination, with strong intellect and talent, must manifest itself, I imagine, under any circumstances.

## III.

Note on Enthusiasm—Mischievous effect of wrong Names given to Moral Qualities.

To the Same.

My mind misgives me about some notelets that I have pencilled in J——'s "Journal of Art." Most of them are about facts in Natural History; but one is on the use of the word "Enthusiasm." Knapp says, "he must disclaim the epithet *Enthusiastic*. His is not an ecstasy that glows, fades, and expires, but a calm, deep-rooted conviction, &c." I have said—"Must Enthusiasm expire? That of Linnæus survived through pain and weakness. Neither can I think that enthusiasm precludes calmness and rationality. That ardour which does so is fanaticism. But the enthusiasm of great minds is a steady heat, and though opposite, not contrary, to sobriety, as generosity is opposed to prudence, not exclusive of it. Enthusiasm with some persons is a synonym for extravagance. But how otherwise can we designate that habit of mind which impels to the most arduous and persistent efforts in pursuit of what must be its own reward, and the object of an abstract devotion? and was not this the primary meaning of enthusiasm?" I do think that words from being used in a half wrong, or wholly wrong sense, reflect upon the things originally signified a portion of that misapprehension. The word enthusiasm is taken for extravagance, and thus *genuine* enthusiasm is looked upon as in some sort extravagant. Over-strict religionists are called *serious*, till undis-



tinguishing worldlings connect superstition or spiritual self-deception with staid reflective piety. Persons of warm fancy and weak judgment are called *romantic*, through which an elevated spiritual temper, and imaginative mode of viewing subjects and objects, is deemed inseparable from a certain degree of self-delusion and want of skill in the executive government of daily life ; and people will not perceive that true poetry is truth, and that fiction conveys reality, because both have been falsified, and made false to their proper aim ; the vehicle itself, and the thing to be conveyed, being both corrupted.

## IV.

Cowper's "Iliad and Odyssey"—Requisites for a successful Translation of Homer.

To the Same.

I hate Cowper's slow, dry, blank verse, so utterly alien to the spirit of the poem, and the minstrel mode of delivery. How could it have suited any kind of recitative or melody, or the accompaniment of any music ? It is like a puffy, pompous, but unpolished man moving laboriously in a stiff dress of office. Those boar and lion-hunting similes describing swift motion, are dreadfully dragging in this sort of verse. In Milton there is little of this rapidity and flash to be conveyed. How meditative are the speeches of the fallen host ! We feel conscious of the scope of the poem—that they have ages of time before them to work in, that they are not

planning a scheme to be executed in days, or weeks, or months. In Homer, the time of action seems to be the life of individual men, and all is measured according to this scale. In Milton, we are reading of superhuman agencies, of times with which day, month, or year had nothing to do.

The only sort of translation of Homer, I think, which would be thoroughly gratifying, should be on Pope's plan, but better executed. There should be his brilliance and rapidity—or rather that of Dryden's in the Fables,—with that thorough understanding of the spirit and proprieties of the whole poem, which would enable the translator (he being a person of some poetical genius) to give substitutes for the exact physical meaning of certain passages, yet to preserve the spirit and to maintain the rich flow of verse, and keep the genius of the language unviolated, at the same time that he transported us to ancient times and distant places. Cowper's poem is like a Camera Lucida portrait,—far more unlike in expression and general result than one less closely copied as to lines and features. In a different material there must be a different form to give a similar effect.

## V.

False Etymologies—Dr. Johnson, his Mental Powers, and Moral Character—Quiet Conclusion of "Paradise Lost," and of the Part of Shylock in the "Merchant of Venice"—Silence of Revenge ; Eloquence of Love and Grief, and Indignation.

To the Same.

*Hampstead, October 1834.*—I am often provoked by

the silly derivations of words given in books. Two doctors (Johnson and Webster) have derived butterfly from *butter*,—one because these flies come in butter season (they come from March to November, and what *is* butter season?), and the other because a very common butterfly is yellow! No, no, the *vox populi* that makes language is a much more accurate reporter of nature, and of all truth, than a guessing writer of books. Butterflies are *better* flies—larger flies, the largest sort of flies that you meet with. Poor Dr. Johnson was often dead tired when he made that dictionary, though it was on the whole a favourite work. But he had no fine perceptions about objects of sight,—that is apparent in all that remains of his mind. He was indeed half blind; but I do not agree with those who attribute his coldness in regard to painting, natural landscape, &c., to that. He might have seen enough to admire, but his mind was anti-poetical; he was, as my father would have said, more keen than subtle. To call his mind gigantic, if the dimensions of the mind are meant, I believe is erroneous; but he used his powers with giantly strength. If an ordinary scholar could bring readily into play all his latent power and knowledge, he would appear a giant in conversation. Johnson's written works leave no such impression; but he was a man of deep and strong feeling; his mind was vigorous and saw all objects clearly within a certain range, and he had the power of arranging his thoughts and the various parts of a subject in an effective manner, and expressing his views with clearness and energy. Amid an apparent consciousness

of frailty, and sense of suffering, there is a strong cleaving to that which is good and holy. It is this mournful dignity, this religious humanity, which interest me in his writings, and he had just so much imagination as will enable a man to picture his views and feelings thus clearly to others.

I think the concluding verses of "Paradise Lost" are truly sublime. There is an awful beauty about them.

"The cherubim descended ; on the ground,  
Gliding meteorous, as evening mist  
Risen from a river o'er the marish glides,  
And *gathers ground* fast at the labourer's heel,  
Homeward returning."

How skilfully are the points of likeness here just pointed at, and then the image is abandoned, just when it has done its work, and attention is drawn off to a new one ; the flaming sword of God, the comet, and Libyan sands. Then the pathetic gentle-heartedness of the angel, hastening, yet leading them away ; and they looking back once more saw their "once happy seat" waved over by that threatening hand ; and then the few sad, subdued lines, so like human life and its submission, with a sort of sad effort after reparation, to an inevitable calamity. Just so quietly does Shylock go off the scene—"I am not very well, I would go home." It is remarkable how devoid all Shylock's language is of exaggeration. There is no amplifying, no playing with the subject, and waving it up and down like a streamer to catch different lights and display itself in various

fantastic attitudes, as Shakespeare's lovers expatiate and add stroke after stroke to the picture of their possessed fancy. Shylock's passion of revenge is expressed, according to the view in my father's preface, by a bare, keen reiteration of certain matters of fact ; he seems to shrink and double himself up like a crouching tiger, in order to shoot out all his energies when let loose upon their prey ; when the moment patiently waited for arrives, he thrusts forth his cutting blade in the face of his enemy—you did thus and thus—see, you fool, what you imagined of me, and what I have made you. It is these sharp contrasts of neither more nor less than the actual facts, which constitute all his oratory, and all his feelings of hatred are shown by hugging the reality with a fierce intensity, saying the very thing which was in every part of his heart over and over again. Indignation that breathes scorn, and believes deeply in the wrongfulness of the offender, but is not transfigured into malice ; strong grief that has not collapsed into despair, are almost as expatiative as love ; “ O that I were a mockery-king of snow, to melt before the sun of Bolingbroke,” is the language of a wandering fancy. And the Scriptures are full of such illustrations of sorrowfulness ; for grief rushes out eager for a vent, and roams forth, seeking for employment, for a change from the intolerable misery of passiveness. Anger will talk much and strongly, but not so fancifully as love and grief ; it stems the fancy by its violence, and those passions which, like revenge, impel to action, employ the energies in another way. As a watery mirror shaken by the wind presents

only the confused fragments of a picture, the mind agitated by vehement anger reflects no continuous imagery, like sorrow which is still and meditative. Yet there is a sort of sullen resentment, which seems to stupefy the soul, and a scorn which is unutterable; it fears to be dissipated in words, and imparts an energy which facilitates restraint. Scorn argues self-possession; a man in a passion cannot scorn.

## VI.

Authority of Criticism—The Judicial Faculty as much a part of the Human Mind as the Inventive Faculty—Great Art appeals to Sympathies which exist in all.

To the Same.

H—'s position is plainly absurd; for what but criticism is to establish the merits of any work? Does he mean that poets only can judge of poetry, and that they alone are to criticise each other? Even according to this view, how is he to prove that any particular critic is not a poet potentially, whether he have published or not? It seems to favour his notion that poets who write above the age, and whose productions are of an original mould, are often unjustly criticised in the beginning; but they are so as much by the critical poets of the day, as by the men of judgment who have no poetical power. Witness Dryden's first impressions of *Paradise Lost*. By degrees it is perceived that the new type may be

tried on the same principle as the old admired models, and that by *analogy* with them, though not by an unfair comparison, it will stand its ground. But the critical faculty must decide upon this question, be it in poet or prose-man, and the only question is, "can the faculty of judging poetry be possessed apart from poetical power?" I should answer, yes, undoubtedly. Waller had no perception of Milton's merits. But he was not a *great* poet. Neither was Dryden great in comparison with Milton; and according to that view none could judge of Milton but Milton himself. Certainly no critic could so mould and refine the taste and judgment of the age as he who afforded such models to exercise them upon; but the poet does not create in others the faculty of judging, though he may stimulate and direct it; that faculty must decide whether they are models or not, after all. My father and Wordsworth may have improved the poetical taste of the age, but that does not exempt them from being amenable to criticism, for unless they can touch the feelings, or win the verdict of the judgment of men, they are not great poets; I mean the judgment, not of the unlearned, but that faculty where it is really developed. Those poets were wronged by particular critics, who did not try their merits fairly, but that does not prove them above criticism. The same may be said of painting. The great painter is to be appreciated not by painters alone; he appeals to faculties latent in all, and possessed in various degrees by various men. They may be oftener developed in painters than in others; but I believe that he who can execute a fine Dutch

piece, may be a very indifferent judge of a poetical landscape, or sublime representation from Scripture, except as to the technical part. E—— thinks the Titian (Bacchus and Ariadne) is only excellent for colour, and that Claude has no merit different from Turner. Then all that poetry, that sentiment, which others have perceived in those pictures, are either a mere accident, or a matter of imagination in the beholder. “The critic is only to abstract rules from the poet’s practice,”—*that* I cannot admit. If judgment be a faculty of the mind, it must be innate, consequently as old as the inventive faculty; and as soon as ever a poet wrote, a critic might judge whether he had written well or ill. “The critic has only to inquire whether the world has acknowledged the poet,” then the world is the original critic that decided the matter; and the world decided that Byron was finer than Wordsworth, Campbell than Coleridge.

## VII.

Botany—The Linnæan System quite as *natural* as the Modern Classification, though less comprehensive — Both Arrangements ought to be learned by Botanical Students.

To the Same.

Professor S—— makes an attack upon the Linnæan System of Botany, because a man on a savage island would find it of no use! Now, I think, that as the facts on which he founded it are true, it ought to be learned



in addition to any more philosophical arrangement that may have been since devised. The knowledge of a science is truly useful, not for any one particular accidental purpose to which it may be applied, but generally for the enlargement of the mind, the confirmation of general principles, elucidation of the natural and metaphysical world, and consequently the practical good of mankind, on the broad scale, and in special instances. And then the very instance he adduces is so inconclusive. On a desert island a man that sees a herb without bracts may be sure it is fit to eat, because he may be sure it belongs to the cabbage tribe. Next year a new sort of cabbage, that is a deadly poison, may be discovered. Nightshade and potatoés are of the same natural family; but who that first saw the one after old acquaintance with the other could derive any practical benefit from the knowledge of that fact? Then, as if the new classification was more *natural* than the other! In one system plants are classified according to the number of pistils and stamens: in another according to some more general features of agreement; but in both nothing more than the agreement actually specified is implied. Both arrangements ought to be known. Certainly the one called Natural is better, because it embraces a combination of agreements. And it may be proved, that plants, like the animal creation, may be arranged in classes, one within another, till you come to the particular species.

VIII.

On the Death of Samuel Taylor Coleridge\*—Details of his last Illness—His Will, Letters, and Literary Remains—Respect and Affection felt for him by those with whom he lived—Probable Influence of his writings on the Course of Religious Thought—Remarks on his Genius and Character by different Critics—His last Readings and Notes.

TO MRS. PLUMMER.

*Hampstead, Oct. 1834.*—My dearest L., Your affectionate and interesting letter gave me great pleasure and gratified my feelings in regard to my dear father, whose memory still occupies the chief place in my thoughts. Your appreciation of his character and genius, my dear friend, would endear you to me were there no other ties between us. In his death we mourn not only the removal of one closely united to us by nature and intimacy, but the extinction of a light which made earth more spiritual, and heaven in some sort more visible to our apprehension. You know how long and severely he suffered in his health; yet, to the last, he appeared to have such high intellectual gratifications that we felt little impulse to pray for his immediate release; and though his infirmities had been grievously increasing of late years, the life and vigour of his mind were so great that they hardly led those around him to think of his dissolution. His frail house of clay was so illumined, that its decaying condition was the less perceptible. His departure after all seemed to come sud-

\* At Mr. Gillman's house, the Grove, Highgate, on the 25th of July, 1834.—E. C.

denly upon us. We were first informed of his danger on Sunday the 20th of July, and on Friday the 25th he was taken from us. For several days after fatal symptoms appeared, his pains were very great; they were chiefly in the region of the bowels, but were at last subdued by means of laudanum, administered in different ways; and for the last thirty-six hours of his existence he did not suffer severely. When he knew that his time was come, he said that he hoped by the manner of his death to testify the sincerity of his faith; and hoped that all who had heard of his name would know that he died in that of the English Church. Henry saw him for the last time on Sunday, and conveyed his blessing to my mother and myself; but we made no attempt to see him, and my brothers were not sent for, because the medical men apprehended that the agitation of such interviews would be more than he ought to encounter. Not many hours before his death he was raised in his bed and wrote a precious faintly-scrawled scrap, which we shall ever preserve, recommending his faithful nurse, Harriet, to the care of his family. Mr. Green, who had so long been the partner of his literary labours, was with him at the last, and to him, on the last evening of his life, he repeated a certain part of his religious philosophy, which he was especially anxious to have accurately recorded. He articulated with the utmost difficulty, but his mind was clear and powerful, and so continued till he fell into a state of coma, which lasted till he ceased to breathe about six o'clock in the morning. His body was opened, according to his own

earnest request—the causes of his death were sufficiently manifest in the state of the vital parts ; but that internal pain from which he suffered more or less during his whole life was not to be explained, or only by that which medical men call nervous sympathy. A few out of his many deeply attached and revering friends attended his remains to the grave, together with my husband and Edward ; \* and that body which did him such “ grievous wrong ” was laid in its final resting-place in Highgate churchyard. His executor, Mr. Green, after the ceremony, read aloud his will, and was greatly overcome in performing his task. It is indeed a most affecting document. What little he had to bequeath (a policy of assurance worth about £2560) is my mother’s for life, of course, and will come to her children equally after her time. Mr. Green has the sole power over my father’s literary remains, and the philosophical part he will himself prepare for publication ; some theological treatises he has placed in the hands of Mr. Julius Hare of Cambridge and his curate, Mr. Sterling (both men of great ability). Henry will arrange literary and critical pieces—notes on the margins of books, or any miscellaneous productions of that kind that may be met with among his MSS., and probably some letters will appear if they can be collected. I fear there will be some difficulty in this ; but I have understood that many written by him at different times exhibit his peculiar power of thought and expression, and ought not to be lost to the world if they

\* The Rev. Edward Coleridge, his nephew.—E. C.

could be recovered. No man has been more deeply beloved than my dear father; the servants at the Grove wept for him as for a father, and Mr. and Mrs. Gillman speak of their loss as the heaviest trial that has ever befallen them, though they have had their full share of sorrow and suffering. Mrs. Gillman's notes, written since his death, are precious testimonies to me of his worth and attaching qualities. In one of them she speaks of "the influence of his beautiful nature on our domestics, so often set down by friends or neighbours to my good management, his forgiving nature, his heavenly-mindedness, his care not to give offence unless duty called on him to tell home truth; his sweet and cheerful temper, and so many moral qualities of more or less value, and all adorned by his Christian principles. His was indeed Christianity. To do good was his anxious desire, his constant prayer—and all with such *real* humility—never any kind of worldly accommodating the truth to any one—yet not harsh or severe—never pretending to faults or failings he had not, nor denying those he thought he had! But, as he himself said of a dear friend's death, 'it is recovery and *not death*. Blessed are they that sleep in the Lord—his life is hidden in Christ. In his Redeemer's life it is hidden, and in His glory will it be disclosed. Physiologists hold that it is during sleep chiefly that we grow; what may we not hope of such a sleep in such a Bosom?' " Much more have I had from her, and formerly heard from her lips, all in the same strain; and during my poor dear father's last sufferings

she sent a note to his room, expressing with fervency the blessings that he had conferred upon her and hers, and what a happiness and a benefit his residence under her roof had been to all his fellow-inmates. The letters which I have seen of many of his friends respecting his lamented departure have been most ardent ; but these testimonies from those who had him daily, hourly, in their sight, and the deep love and reverence expressed by Mr. Green, who knew him so intimately, are especially dear to my heart. My dear Henry, too, was deeply sensible of his good as well as his great qualities ; it was not for his genius only that he revered him, and it has been one of many blessings attendant on my marriage, that by it we were both drawn into closer communion with that gifted spirit than could otherwise have been the case. There was everything in the circumstances of his death to soothe our grief, and valuable testimonies (such as I have mentioned, with many, many others) from valued persons have mingled their sweetness in the cup.

We feel happy, too, in the conviction, that his writings will be widely influential for good purposes. All his views may not be adopted, and the effect of his posthumous works must be impaired by their fragmentary condition ; but I think there is reason to believe, that what he has left behind him will introduce a new and more improving mode of thinking, and teach men to consider some subjects on principles more accordant to reason, and to place them on a surer and wider basis than has been done hitherto. It is not to

be expected that speculations which demand so much effort of mind and such continuous attention, to be fully understood, can ever be *immediately* popular,—the written works of master spirits are not perused by the bulk of society whose feelings they tincture, and whose belief they contribute to form and modify,—it is through intervening channels that “sublime truths, and the maxims of a pure morality” are diffused among persons of various age, station, and capacity, so that they become “the hereditary property of poverty and childhood, of the workshop and the hovel.” Heraud, in his brilliant oration on the death of my father, delivered at the Russell Institution, observes that religion and philosophy were first reconciled—first brought into permanent and indissoluble union in the divine works of Coleridge; and I believe the opinion expressed by this gentleman, that my father’s metaphysical theology will prove a benefit to the world, is shared by many persons of refined and searching intellect both in this country and in America, where he has some enthusiastic admirers; and it is confidently predicted by numbers that this will be more and more felt and acknowledged in course of time. My dear L——, I will not apologize to you for this filial strain; I write unreservedly to you, knowing that you are alive to my father’s merits as a philosopher and a poet, and believing that you will be pleased to find, that he who was misunderstood and misrepresented by many, and grossly calumniated by some, was and is held in high honour as to moral as well as intellectual qualities, by good and intelligent

persons. "Hereafter," says a writer in Blackwood, "it will be made appear that he who was so admirable a poet was also one of the most amiable of men." The periodicals have been putting out a great many attempts at accounts of his life—meagre enough for the most part, and all more or less incorrect as to facts. We have been very much hurt with our former friend, Mr. De Quincey, the opium eater as he chooses to be styled, for publishing so many personal details respecting my parents in *Tait's Magazine*. As Henry says, "the little finger of retaliation would bruise his head;" but I would not have so good a Christian as my father defended by any measure so unchristianlike as retaliation, nor would I have those belonging to me condescend to bandy personalities. This, however, was never intended by my spouse; but, I believe, he has some intention of reckoning with the scandal-monger for the honour of those near and dear to us. Some of our other friends will be as much offended with this paper of his as we are. He has characterized my father's genius and peculiar mode of discourse with great eloquence and discrimination. He speaks of him as possessing "the most spacious intellect, the subtlest and most comprehensive" (in his judgment) that ever existed amongst men. Whatever may be decided by the world in general upon this point, it is one which, from learning and ability, he is well qualified to discuss. I cannot believe that he had any enmity to my father, indeed he often speaks of his kindness of heart; but "the dismal degradation of pecuniary embarrassments,"



as he himself expresses it, has induced him to supply the depraved craving of the public for personality, which his talents would have enabled him in some measure to correct.

My next letter, my dear L., shall be of a more light-some and general nature, but this is dedicated to my dear father's memory; and I could say much more on that subject if I had more strength, and more paper, and were not afraid of wearying even you, who are a reader and lover of his works. When Mr. Poole of Nether Stowey received his copy of the will, in which his name was affectionately mentioned, he read it aloud to his niece, Mrs. Sandford, who expressed her admiration with tears in her eyes. One of the last books that my dear father ever perused is the "Memoir and Diary of Bishop Sandford," which he greatly approved; some notes pencilled on the margin are among the last sentences he wrote.

## IX.

Attachment of Mr. Wordsworth to the Church of England—Arguments for an Establishment, in Mr. Coleridge's "Church and State."

To the Same.

*Hampstead*, 1834.—I am always hoping, my dear —, that the chances of life, happy ones I trust in your case, will bring you to reside in the south. Of livings—of anything connected with our dear, excellent,

venerable Church Establishment, I hardly dare to speak. I really shudder, as I turn over the menacing pages of the *Spectator*, and that organ of destructiveness, *Tait's Magazine*. How well do I remember Mr. Wordsworth, with one leg upon the stair, delaying his ascent till he had uttered, with an emphasis which seemed to proceed from the very profoundest recesses of his soul—"I would lay down my LIFE for the Church!" This was the conclusion of a long and eloquent harangue upon that interesting subject.

My father, in his "Constitution of the Church and State, according to the Idea of each," has taken the *a priori* view of the matter, and argued for an Establishment with reasonings which none of the Destructives ever attempt to overthrow. Whatever they may pretend, it is by not reasoning but by very different engines, that they are effecting their object.



## CHAPTER IV.

1835.

Letters to her Husband, to Mrs. Plummer, Miss Trevenen, Mrs.  
Henry M. Jones.



## I.

Early Training—How to instil right Principles of Conduct ; and teach a Child the use of his Mind—A little Boy's notion of Parental Discipline.

To Miss E. TREVENEN, Helston, Cornwall.

*Hampstead, January 1835.*—I was highly interested in dear Derwent's last letter. I could subscribe to every word of his remarks. I have always felt that such statements of "naughty" and "good," as he objects to, have no effect in averting naughtiness or producing goodness ; and I know well that you "cannot beguile a child to any useful purpose." But, when you come to practical management, a mother must say a thousand things to her child which have no other use but this,—they gradually help to form his notions of right and wrong. "O silly boy," we say, "to be afraid in the dark, which is as safe as the light!" this will not take away the nervous fear which the very darkness produces ; but will it not tend to avert mistaken notions, if often repeated, and consistently persisted in ? "You ought to give your sister your shells—you ought to like that she should be pleased." I do not expect that he will act on this immediately ; but is it not a little preparation, for "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" ? As to reading for children, something must be set before them which they will partly understand, which they will like as

much as they can like anything of the kind, and which will not pervert or mislead. It seems to me that with four or five years old, more than this cannot be effected, and it would be waste of time to attempt it. D——'s remarks are beautiful on the propriety of early habituating children to the yoke of duty—to labour and application. I would never turn all lessons into play ; but without losing sight of this principle we may, perhaps, turn a child's play, to a certain degree, into lessons. For instance, when Herby looks over a book of coloured prints, I never attempt to make a task of the thing ; but I draw his attention to such points as are of a general interest—the knowledge of which may come usefully into play afterwards. This flower is crimson, that is pink, that scarlet ; I make him observe this difference, and his great amusement is to compare these different hues together. “ These birds have small wings and large bodies—that sort of birds the contrary.” In this way I think a child *may* be “ beguiled usefully ” into the habit of observation—into the *use of his mind*, the particular facts are of little consequence, or less consequence ; but they are not totally useless ; they form a nucleus of knowledge—they give an interest to other facts ; and this little knowledge is gathered at a time when, if that were not done, nothing else would be. I am perhaps in some danger of attaching even too much importance to intellectual pursuits and to book learning. I have been forced upon such considerations by circumstances, as well as led to them by natural taste, and what we dwell constantly upon we are too apt to magnify. A dancing-

master thinks that the execution of a waltz or the solo part of a quadrille is the chief point of education. However, this is more for my own mind to beware of, than likely to lead to practical errors affecting the interests of my children. . . .

Herby and Dervy are unanimous in their views of ground-rice pudding. I was telling Herby what good order his cousin was in, and that he was made to do what he was bid by his papa. "Does he *force* him?" asked the urchin. "To be sure, unless he does what is right of his own accord." "It's naughty to *force* him," was the reply. "You know Ulysses said, 'we can't take Troy by *force!*'"

## II.

Her Contributions to the "Table Talk"—Taking Notes a useful Practice—Education: A quick Child may be taught a good deal without any danger of Cramming—Deaths of Charles Lamb and Edward Irving.

To Mrs. PLUMMER.

*Hampstead*, 1835.—As to my contributions to the "Table Talk," I am ashamed to say that they really amount to a mere nothing. Two or three short memorables I remember recording; and I often wonder now how I could have been so negligent a listener. But there were several causes for this. In the first place, my father generally discoursed on such a very extensive scale, that it would have been an arduous task for *me* to attempt recording what I had heard. Henry could sometimes



bring him down to narrower topics, but when alone with me he was almost always on the star-paved road, taking in the whole heavens in his circuit. Another impediment was this. When I was at Highgate (I think of it with grief and shame, for I ought perhaps to have had my mind in better order), my heart and thoughts were very much oppressed and usurped by a variety of agitating personal matters ; I was anxious about my brothers, and their prospects—about Henry's health, and upon the subject of my engagement generally. The individual of this year often longs for the slighted opportunities of years ago ; but we cannot be what experience makes us, and live over again the years which have been gradually forming our tastes, desires, and capabilities. This may seem a truism. What I wish to convey to you is, that if I could have seen years ago how useless taking thought for all *those* things really was, and how permanently valuable every relic of my father's mind would be (which I did not then perceive *to the extent* that I do now, though well aware of his great powers), I should have tried to be an industrious gleaner, instead of loitering about the harvest-field as I did.

Writing down a discourse, or a part of it, is very useful also to the mind, and a good test whether you have at all comprehended what you heard.

I must not finish my letter without telling you a little about my secondary *selves*—my children—because they *are* self in a second edition. I am on my guard how, and how much I speak of them, for fear of appearing or being selfish. Both are well and brisk at present.

Herby is reported to be a forward child, and we have many admonitions against pushing, cramming, and over-refining, which are all very just and sensible, and will, I hope, keep us from straying into the wrong path. But I cannot think we have been betrayed into it yet; neither would our admonishers think so, if they understood the whole state of the case. The child in question has a show of Coleridgian quickness, and bookishness, and liveliness of mind. He retains what he learns pretty well, and is mighty fond of sporting it afterwards, which he does with great vehemence and animation. For instance, he informs every one he meets that Chimborasco, whatever Coley\* may say on the subject, is not so high as Dhawalagiri, the highest of the Himalayas; and that he is certain that the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Day (domestics at his Uncle Patteson's, in Bedford Square) was not nearly so grand as that of Peleus and Thetis, on Mount Pelion. He is at this moment bent upon making bilberry preserve at Keswick, and rosefruit-jam from hips that must be gathered on Mount Caucasus. Hearing him talk in this way gives some people a notion that he is *crammed*. I can only say that I put no food into his mind which is not prepared as carefully for his childish digestion as the pap and panada which are recommended for infants; and he certainly never has any more of it at a time than he has the fullest appetite for. He hears certain stories about Troy and other antiquities over and over again, and looks at coloured plates of flowers which are lent

\* His cousin John Coleridge Patteson; well known to the Church and the Country as the "Martyr-Bishop" of the Pacific Islands.—E. C.

me, and gradually learns some of their names ; and he is actually fond of poring over maps, and tracing the course of rivers. But what, is there in all this (*done in the way he does it*) which can strain the intellect, or overload the mind of a young child ? I assure you nobody can be more careful than I am not to err on these points, for I am fully aware of the mischief both to body and mind which may be caused thereby ; but at the same time we all know that there is much in habit, in the gradual training both of hand and muscles. My boy will have to go through the mental labour required in a public school, and in after-life he will have to gain his bread by head-work. I cannot therefore follow the advice of those who say, Let him run about all day, and leave books entirely alone. I feel sure that such a plan would not be for his welfare, either for the present or in the long run.

I teach him writing too, because I think it a good thing to keep a child sitting still, and paying attention for a longer time than you are employing his intellect. The habit of regularity and submission should be taught early. As for the art of writing, it may be learned more quickly at a much later age ; but it is a useful instrument in learning other things ; and the time is not altogether thrown away that is spent in teaching an urchin of four years and three months to scribble. . . .

We have been much grieved lately by the death of our old friend Mr. Charles Lamb, of the India House. He was a man of amiable manners, and kind and liberal heart, and a rare genius. His writings exhibit a rare

union of pathos and humour, which to me is truly delightful. Very interesting short memoirs of him have already appeared, and I see new editions of his works advertised. So soon after my father, whom, humanly speaking, he worshipped! Irving is also gone. He was one whose good and great parts my father saw in a strong light, and deeply did he lament the want of due balance in his mind, which ended in what may be almost called madness. Irving acknowledged that to my father, more than to any one, he owed his knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

III.

"The *Accomplishment* of Verse"—The delighted Duty of improving natural Talents.

To Miss EMILY TREVENEN, Helston, Cornwall.

*Hampstead, July 12th, 1835.*—I rejoice, dear Miss Trevenen, to think of your versifying tastes (I am sure I have expressed that sentence as humbly as you yourself would dictate!)\* As for poetry, in the strict sense

\* The lady who formed so modest an estimate of her own powers was the daughter of the Rev. Thomas Trevenen, rector of Cardinham, in Cornwall, and member of a good old Cornish family. She was a woman of accomplished mind and truly Christian character, and will long be remembered with affectionate respect by those who enjoyed the benefit of her influence and example. A small volume of juvenile poetry, entitled "Little Derwent's Breakfast," written by her for the amusement and instruction of her godson, Derwent Moultrie Coleridge, and published in 1839 was probably referred to by her correspondent in the present passage.—E. C.

of the word, I cannot think that any woman of the present day, whose productions I have seen, has furnished the genuine article from her brain-warehouse, except Mrs. Joanna Baillie. I have read many of Mrs. Hemans' most mature productions with a due degree of attention. I think them interesting, full of poetical feeling, displaying much accomplishment, and a very general acquaintance with poetry, and some proficiency in the art of versifying ; but though poetry is an art, no truly excellent poem can be produced by art alone, and to practise the whole art there must be high natural endowments. Of poetical imagination, it appears to me that a very small portion is to be found in the works of Mrs. Hemans. Yet this lady has given delight to thousands by her verses ; and they must have been the source of great delight and improvement to herself. Just as I would have any one learn music who has an opportunity, though few can be composers, or even performers of great merit, I would have any one, who really and truly has leisure and ability, make verses. I think it a more refining and happy-making occupation than any other pastime-accomplishment.

## IV.

Newspaper Criticisms on the "Table Talk"—Unreasonable Complaints Answered, and False Insinuations indignantly Rejected—Mr. Coleridge not a Partisan, either of Whigs or Tories, though he was a Friend of the People and Supporter of the National Church—Mr. Southey's Opinion of the Book.

To Mrs. HENRY M. JONES, Heathlands, Hampstead.

*Downshire Place, Hampstead, July 1835.*—My dear

Mrs. Jones,—We send you “Table Talk,” thinking that you may like to see a little more of it than the fragments given in reviews. Henry desired me to tell you, with kind regards, that the *Morning Chronicle* is wrong in its conjecture respecting Lord Londonderry. The ambassador alluded to was a “far less able man.” \*

The *Printing Machine* and other critical publications find fault with the editor of “Table Talk” for not having done what they themselves admit no reporter upon earth could do. They all allow that it was impossible to represent on paper the ample sweeping current of my father’s discourse. They add, however, that the work has preserved much valuable matter, which would otherwise have perished; that it serves in some measure to confirm and elucidate my father’s written works, and ought always to be printed as a companion to the “Friend,” &c. This was all that Henry expected to do; he dreamt not of placing Coleridge *the talker* before his readers, but merely hoped to preserve some part of his talk.

One of my father’s Whig friends insinuates that if he had told his own story, he would have told it more Whiggishly. The spirit of party is “father to this thought;” it is not true. Henry is a man of honour, though, as some may think, an illiberal Tory. I refer such objectors to my father’s little work on “Church and State.” Could he, who had such an “idea of the constitution of Church and State,” think more favourably of the Reform Bill, and of the projected alienation of

\* “Table Talk,” p. 286.—Note of Aug. 28, 1833.

Church property, than he appears to have done in Henry's publication? I can truly reassert what has often been asserted before, that my father was no party man. He cared for no public man or ministry, except so far as they furthered what he considered the best interests of the country. "He had a vision of his own," and he scrupled not to condemn and expose the acting Tories if they ran counter to it. He was no lover of great and fine people—the pomps and vanities of this world were distasteful to him rather than otherwise. He had lived in a cottage himself, and he loved cottages, and he took a friendly interest in the inhabitants of them. He thought himself a true friend to the people in upholding the Church, which he considered the most popular institution in the country.\* If Henry had wished to please his own party, through thick and thin, he would not have printed many of the opinions recorded in "Table Talk." As to my father's having any interest in leaning to one side more than another, I really believe that figment is discarded by all but those who care not whether it be true or no, so that it serves an unworthy purpose.

Lord Brougham made a *kind offer* to my father, but it would not have been for his dignity and consistency to have accepted it.

I am glad that my Uncle Southey is pleased with "Table Talk." He says to Henry, "You have dealt well with the De Quincey and the Benthamite Reviewer," *i.e.*, him of the Westminster.

\* See "Table Talk," pp. 159, 322.

Of course when my father was in company with Whigs, he refrained from all strong expressions respecting Whig conduct, and rather sought those topics on which he could sincerely agree with them, than those on which they must have differed.

IV.

Union of Thought and Feeling in the Poetry of Wordsworth—The White Doe of Rylstone.

To Mrs. HENRY M. JONES, Heathlands, Hampstead.

*Downshire Place, Hampstead, July 1835.*—We are expecting a new set of Mr. Wordsworth's poems, including the "Excursion;" and I really think the murmuring river Wharfe, the grey rocks, the dusky trees, and verdant sod, the ancient abbey, and the solitary Doe, "white as lily of June," will be pleasant subjects of contemplation in this hot, languid weather. The poetry of Wordsworth will give you at least as much fervour and tenderness as you will find in Byron or Hemans; and then, in addition, you will find in it a high philosophy, a strengthening and elevating spirit, which must have a salutary tendency for the mind.

Mr. Wordsworth opens to us a world of suffering, and no writer of the present day, in my opinion, has dealt more largely or more nobly with the deepest pathos and the most exquisite sentiment; but for every sorrow he presents an antidote; he shows us how man may



endure, as well as what he is doomed to suffer. The poem of the "White Doe of Rylstone" is meant to exhibit the power of faith in upholding the most anguish-stricken soul through the severest trials, and the ultimate triumph of the spirit, even while the frail mortal body is giving way.

"From fair to fairer, day by day  
A more divine and loftier way,  
Even such this blessed pilgrim trod,  
By sorrow lifted towards her God,  
Uplifted to the purest sky  
Of undisturbed mortality."

—*White Doe*, Canto vii.

The first and last cantos are much superior in point of imaginative power to the others upon the whole; but the speech of Francis to his sisters in the second is beautiful. I remember that it was greatly admired by dear Hartley.

"Hope nothing, if I thus may speak  
To thee, a woman, and thence weak,  
Hope nothing, I repeat, for we  
Are doomed to perish utterly.

Forbear all wishes, all debate,  
All prayers for this cause, or for that,

Espouse thy fate at once, and cleave  
To fortitude without reprieve."

—Canto ii.

The address of the father to Francis in the fifth canto is a favourite of mine.

“ Might this our enterprise \* have sped,  
Change wide and deep the land had seen,  
A renovation from the dead,  
A spring-tide of immortal green.  
The darksome altars would have blazed  
Like stars when clouds are rolled away ;  
Salvation to all eyes that gazed,  
Once more the Rood had been upraised  
To spread its arms, and stand for aye !”

—Canto v.

V.

Charles Lamb, his Shyness and Tenderness—A lifelong  
Friendship.

To Mrs. H. M. JONES, Heathlands, Hampstead.

*Hampstead*, 1835.—I agree to your criticism on Lamb, and sympathize most entirely in your preference of field, and grove, and rivulet, to square, garden, street, and gutter. I always feel so particularly *insecure* in a street. Nevertheless I can quite understand Lamb's feeling. A man is more especially alone, very often, in a crowd, Nowhere can an individual be so isolated, so independent as in London. Nowhere else can he see so much and be himself so little observed. This I think is the “sweet security of streets” † which the eccentric old

\* The “enterprise” referred to was the “Rising of the North,” in the 12th year of Elizabeth, 1569, under the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, “to restore the ancient religion.”—E. C.

† I care not to be carried with the tide that smoothly bears human life to eternity ; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth, the face of town and country, the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here.—*Lamb's Essays. New Year's Eve.*—E. C.

bachelor delighted in. And then he had been educated at Christ's Hospital, all his boyish recreations, when life was new and *lifesome*, had passed in streets, and we all know that the circumstances of our childhood give the prevailing hue to our involuntary tastes and feelings for the rest of our lives. I cannot picture to myself a Paradise without lakes and mountains. Our poor friend was much affected by my father's death,\* and had a fanciful presentiment that he should not remain long behind. He must have remembered some interesting remarks† connected with this subject in an old preface of my father's, the preface to a volume containing united poems of Coleridge and Lamb.

\* Mr. Lamb's visit to Highgate, shortly after my grandfather's death, is thus described by Judge Talfourd:—"There he asked leave to see the nurse who had attended upon Coleridge; and being struck and affected by the feeling she manifested towards his friend, insisted on her receiving five guineas from him—a gratuity which seemed almost incomprehensible to the poor woman, but which Lamb could not help giving as an immediate expression of his own gratitude. From her he learned the effort by which Coleridge had suppressed the expression of his sufferings, and the discovery affected him even more than the news of his death. He would startle his friends sometimes by suddenly exclaiming 'Coleridge is dëad,' and then pass on to common themes, having obtained the momentary relief of oppressed spirits."—*Letters of Charles Lamb*, vol. ii., p. 304.—E. C.

† The reference is probably to the Latin motto printed on the title-page of the second edition of "Poems by Coleridge, Lamb, and Lloyd," which appeared in May 1797:—*Duplex nobis vinculum, et amicitia, junctarumque Camænarum; quod utinam neque mors solvat; neque temporis longinquitas*. Charles Lamb died on the 27th of December, 1834, five months and two days after the friend whom he loved so well.—E. C.

VI.

Writings of Charles Wolfe in Prose and Verse\*—His defence of Poetry against the attacks of the Utilitarians—Wolfe with the Methodists—Wesley's Interview with two crazy Enthusiasts—Political Questions from a Conservative point of view—The Secularization of Church Property—Projected Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland certain to lead to the same Measure in England—A Sisterly Wish on behalf of the Sister Isle.

To Mrs. H. M. JONES, Heathlands, Hampstead.

*Downshire Place, Hampstead, 1835.*—My dear Mrs. Jones—The "Remains of C. Wolfe," kindly lent by Dr. Park, I return with many thanks. As to the ode on Sir John Moore's Burial, and the Gra-ma-chree verses,† which suit the old melody to perfection, I have them almost by heart. The latter I have heard sung by Edith Southey in her tasteful way, and read aloud by Mr. Wordsworth with his deep, solemn voice, and exquisite intonation. The observations on poetry, though expressed with enthusiasm, are, in the opinion of a poet's

\* Collected and published in 1825 by Archdeacon Russell. The Reverend Charles Wolfe (of the same family with General Wolfe) was born at Dublin in 1791, and died at Cork, in his thirty-second year, of consumption. He was for three years curate of Donoughmore, in the diocese of Armagh, where he won the love and respect of his parishioners by his devotion to his professional duties, which he combined with literary pursuits. He is best known to posterity by his beautiful poem on the Burial of Sir John Moore, who fell at the Battle of Corunna, January 26th, 1809.—E. C.

† The popular song beginning—

“If I had thought thou could have died,  
I might not weep for thee.”—E. C.

daughter, absolutely true. When people say, of what *use* is poetry, what need is there for works of imagination? "Oh, argue not the *need*," I am ready to exclaim; but I think if the cause *were* argued, it might be plainly proved that poetry and the sister arts are of use in more ways than one. It is the fashion now to cry up science at the expense of fine literature, on the ground that the former is more useful to mankind. The meaning of the term utility must be agreed on before the argument can proceed, but I think unless a very narrow and *corporeal* definition is insisted on, both will be admitted highly useful in different, and also in some similar ways, and neither can operate so beneficially apart, as when they play into each other's hands. For poetry is truth as well as science, and truth of a most ennobling, and, therefore, improving kind. Your mark is also in another part of the memoir, which interested me no less; I mean Wolfe's explanations with the Methodists. I have lately been employed in transcribing my father's notes on Southey's Life of Wesley. Many of them relate to sanctification, and the new birth; to faith and works; to free grace; free-will and election; subjects on which there have been long and bitter disputations,—as my father thinks, because the disputants have not gone deep enough, and started from the very beginning. I could not help laughing, in the midst of all this grave reasoning, at my uncle's story of "two ignorant dreamers," who, thinking that Wesley's new birth had not taken place in the right way, informed him from the Lord, that he must be

“born’d again,” and vowed that they would stay in his house till it was done. He showed them into the Society Room, where they remained without meat, drink, and firing, till they were very glad to go away and mind their own business.\*

Did I almost make thee a Tory? Truly thou hast almost made me ashamed to call myself one; but I believe if you and I had converted each other, and changed sides as to politics, our respective wiser-halves would soon waltz us back again to our former creeds. I rest content, however, with having elicited from you a decided condemnation of O’Connell and such reformers as he; and you will rest content with my assuring you that the poverty of curates and incumbents of small livings, a grievance not unknown in the circle of my nearest and very dear friends, and the troubles of Ireland, are evils which I lament, and should be thankful to see *reformed*. How far some part of them are capable of a remedy at present, without bringing on greater calamities than themselves, and what are the best and safest measures which can be employed for their removal or mitigation, can be the only points of controversy, I should think, between disinterested *liberal* Conservatives and truly religious sane-minded Whig or Radical Reformers. The reason, I believe, why the former distrust the policy of Lord Brougham, is because they *think* that, however unintentionally on his part, it would betray us finally into the hands of O’Connell and his band, as well as of English Church Destroyers and

\* Southey’s Life of Wesley, vol. ii., p. 273.—E. C.

Revolutionists. I have been reading the "Edinburgh Review," and am therefore not entirely unacquainted with the Liberal line of argument, and many are the long discussions which I have listened to on these questions. As to the English Church, surely it is apparent that there is a deficiency of funds for the spiritual wants of the people,—to provide for them fully at least. If she enjoyed all the property originally intended for her use, this would not be the case. As to the grievances of those who have to help to support a Church to which they do not belong, I believe it is argued that the majority of the United Kingdom are Protestants, and that a Church Establishment cannot subsist long if the nation at large does not contribute to its maintenance. This, of course, is only an argument to those who admit the beneficial effects of an Establishment, and have no wish to see Church and State disunited. The "Edinburgh" says, No, no; but it has yet failed to convince the Conservatives that depriving the Irish Church of its property would not be the first step to the ruin of the Establishment both in England and Ireland. Put in, they say, the narrow edge of the wedge, and there is a compact indefatigable band of conspirators, who will drive it right onwards till they have brought the fabric to the ground, and poor Mother Church to voluntary contributions, which many of her children consider a beggarly condition. "Look at America" is the cry of both parties. "We do look at her," the Conservatives make answer, "and we cannot like her as to her religious condition;" and the "Quarterly" endeavours to prove

that even were it the best in the world for her, it would not do equally well in England. But let me no longer betray my own cause by pleading it after my feminine fashion, nor misrepresent the arguments on either side by attempting to repeat them. When I read or hear of the mutual injuries of England and Ireland, I fancy it would have been a blessed thing had the sea never flowed between the two countries. Had they been all in one, surely there would have been more unity between them of interests and of feelings. But let us hope that days of peace and general enlightenment will arrive by ways past man's finding out. I am sure it is the duty of the Conservatives to *wish* that their opponents' cause may be the just one, for in all human probability it will be successful.—Believe me, my dear Mrs. Jones,  
most truly yours,  
SARA COLERIDGE.

## VII.

Severity not the right mood of Treatment for an Obstinate Temper, in spite of its apparent Success—Parental Discipline has a higher Aim, and avails itself of higher Influences.

To her Husband.

*Hampstead, October 1835.*—Some people go on day after day and month after month pursuing a method, which day after day and month after month they find invariably to fail, without once saying to themselves, “Since this plan works so ill, is it, or is it not, the least bad that can be imagined?” They live from hand to



mouth, as it were, impelled by feeling to a regular routine which they never correct by principle. Mr. —, self-flattering man, says he has but one bout with all his children—*venit, videt, vincit*—and yet — was, up to the last time I had the opportunity of observing her, a most obstinate little animal. My aim is something far beyond extorting obedience in particular instances. Unless the wayward *will* is corrected, what care I for the *act*; unless the fount is purified, what care I for an artificial cleansing of the draught which falls to my portion this day or the next? If I thought that to force compliance by terror would induce a salutary habit, by which the heart might be bettered, it might be my duty to take this painful course. But I do not think so. I believe the experiment to be worse than dangerous; for the improvement of our children's moral nature I put my trust in no methods of discipline; these may answer well for a warring prince or general who has a particular external object to gain, and cares not for his instruments, except *as* instruments. I, too, have a particular object to gain, that our children should acquire a certain portion of book-learning; but my *whole* aim is their general welfare, as it must be that of every truly parental heart, the growth of their souls in goodness and holiness; to promote which I put my faith in no ways and means which I have power over, but the influence of good example, the constant inculcation of none but sound principles, and the opportunities which we can afford our children of gaining worldly experience and religious knowledge and impressions. For they must be *wise as*

*serpents*, and innocent as doves. Of course I do not mean to undervalue the advantage of sensible artificial management, I would but place it in a fair light, and show that it is no enchanter's wand, but more analogous to a doctor's drugs and diet, which may do good, but which are quite inefficacious in many cases, and can effect nothing unless other operatives combine to aid the work. Indeed I do not strictly *put my faith* in anything but the power of grace in the heart. What I mean is, that I hope more from favourable influences of this kind I have mentioned than from any mechanical routine ; and I really think that "you shall be beaten unless you do it, or you shall be mortified and annoyed till you look and speak humbly," is a sort of external force which does not touch the heart.

## VIII.

## Spiders—Their Webs and Ways.

To the Same.

This day, 5th of October, I saw a large primrose-coloured butterfly, which looked the very emblem of April or May. Also I examined three or four spiders, and saw quite plainly the spinnerets in their tails, and once I clearly perceived the thread issuing from the apertures. The thread of a spider's net is composed of such a multitude of threadlets that it gives one a good notion of the infinite divisibility of matter. A spider,

when examined, feigns death, and lies back with all his arms and legs closely pinioned to his sides, so that he shrinks up into as small a space as possible. In this condition he is a good symbol of some wretched slave, stupefied and collapsed into stillness in the presence of a mighty one. I have often marvelled at the strength of a spider's web, which offers far more resistance to my finger, as I push and bend it, than a net made of silken threads of the same apparent substance would do. This firmness is procured by the multiplicity of threadlets of which every thread is composed, which circumstance also hastens the drying of the fluid gum, so great a surface being exposed to the air. While we compare natural objects or operations with artificial ones, we are so taken up with the likeness that we forgot the difference. There is no other thing in art or nature similar to the spinning of spiders. Evelyn would watch spiders for five hours together.

## IX.

Unpractical Suggestions of a Writer in the *Athenæum* on the subject of Female Education—Boarding School life not unhealthy for Girls under ordinary Circumstances—Alleged Physical Superiority of Savage over Civilized Races not founded on Fact ; nor much worth regretting if it were.

To the Same.

*Hampstead, October 1835.*—The *Athenæum* is fond of bringing out great mouthing articles against modern female education ; but the huge mountain of denuncia-

tion brings forth but a mouse of instruction in the better way. The weakliness and imperfect forms of modern ladies are all laid to ignorance and want of sense in their governors, pastors, and masters. This seems to me by far too unqualified a charge. It may be true that the squaw and the copper-coloured woman of the western woods has a constitution that will bear wind and weather, and a pair of shoulder-blades that are as even as a pair of dice. It may be that the habits of civilized life, snug houses, warm, soft beds, abundant meals, and the habit of sitting on a chair while we make our complicated clothes, write numerous letters, read interesting books, converse with our friends, wait during compound meals, attend divine service, and *sit* under the clergyman, may be unfavourable to a certain sort of bodily vigour; but our women live as long as they used to do, they go through as uninterrupted a routine of duty, pleasure, and occupation (in one shape or another) as the female savages do; the *whole woman* is as much put into action among the former as the latter; and if it be true, which the *Athenæum* writer himself avers, that mechanical causes have little to do with spinal curvature, why are the employments of young girls at school so vehemently denounced? As to the harp or the tambour-frame, not one girl in thirty or forty in the middle classes is confined by those exercises, or could be injured by them. When that old argument of savages is brought forward, it always seems to be forgotten that none but the strongest children ever pass the age of infancy in those communities. Many are put to death, and no weakly

child survives the hardships of that mode of life. We, by medical and *nutrical* art, preserve hundreds of delicate infants, who grow up to be delicate men and women, and have still more delicate children. Schoolmistresses are abused for the mode in which they lead out their girls to take exercise; but let the writer take the poor women's place, and let us see how he would manage. There must be order, regularity, in a school as well as in an army. How are twenty girls to be kept out of mischief, and under the eye of the mistress, if they are to straggle about as they like? The shepherd has barking dogs to help him to keep *his* flock in order. Like Madame de Genlis, we may sit down and imagine a delightful scheme of education, all the circumstances being made on purpose by the writer's imagination; but in actual life we must do the best we can under such circumstances as we happen to light upon. It is only to a limited extent indeed that we can manufacture them to suit us. The *Athenæum* writer is like a clumsy fencer, he knows that something is to hit, but he hits far too hard, and hits only half of the right place. He accuses imperfect civilization of all our evils and sufferings. Whether civilization *can* ever be so perfect as to preserve the good things we now enjoy, and divest them of their bad accompaniments, is a problem which I cannot solve; but of this I feel quite sure—namely, that civilization and cultivation such as we have, are well worth the price we pay for them.

X.

Puns—Affectation.

To the Same.

October 1835.—I can't say I should care to know Mr. — from your account. Puns are often unacceptable to the feelings; they come like a spoonful of ice-cream in the midst of a comfortable smoking hot steak, or as a peppery morsel when your palate was in expectation of a mild pudding. The *place for life* was a good thing, but the worst of a regular punster is that he picks up so many poor jokes, which any one equally on the look-out might have hit upon, merely because they lie in his way, while other people are content to say things, worth hearing in themselves, but which there is no cleverness in saying. How much more agreeable is many a piece of news, a kind remark, a civil inquiry, than smart sentences which one is not in the humour of listening to. . . .

I believe G— is what is commonly called affected, but the affectation in question is perfectly natural to the individual, though not natural to the occasion—*i.e.*, not what would be natural to most people on such an occasion. It is engendered by vanity; the desire to make an impression leads a vain man to think that all he has to bring forward is fitted to make an impression; consequently a disproportioned manner is produced, the manner is too big for the matter, too earnest, too *portentous*, or too exquisite for the occasion, according to the view which other people take of the occasion. Shrewd people seldom fall into these mistakes; shrewdness prunes vanity, but does not eradicate it.



CHAPTER V.

1836.

Letters to her Husband, her Mother, Mrs. H. M. Jones, Miss  
Trevenen, Miss Arabella Brooke.

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## I.

“Miscellaneous Plays,” by Mrs. Joanna Baillie.

To Miss E. TREVENEN.

*Hampstead*, 1836.—Have you seen Mrs. J. Baillie’s twelve new dramas? \* One critique says they have the same vigour of thought and felicity of language as her earlier productions, but that they are not so sustained nor so well united, nor have the same propriety of action and character. The passion of hatred is powerfully exhibited in the Comedy of *The Election*. Successful and admirable as Mrs. Baillie’s dramas are, I cannot think it a good plan to announce one particular passion in the title-page of a play; it leads you to expect to find the labouring author, rather than a picture of life itself transmitted through the author’s mind and hand in the following pages.

\* Published in three volumes, in 1836, nearly forty years after the appearance of the first volume of “*Plays on the Passions*.” It was during our residence at *Hampstead* that my mother became acquainted with the aged poetess, whose genius she highly admired, and whose personal appearance and manners are pleasingly described in several passages of her correspondence. Mrs. Baillie died at *Hampstead* in February 1851.—  
E. C.

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II.

A *perfect* Reticule—Bridgewater Treatise by Dr. Roget—Natural History less dependent on other Sciences than Astronomy— or Comparative Anatomy ; Want of Reality in the Poetry of Mrs. Hemans—Excess of this Quality in Crabbe.

To Mrs. H. M. JONES,\* Heathlands, Hampstead.

*Downshire Place, Hampstead, 1836.*—My dear Mrs. Jones,—A mock-heroical note-writer might commence a billet on the present occasion, thus :—“ O for the glowing language of a Hemans, or the lively fancy of an L. E. L., that I might return fitting acknowledgments for my kind neighbour’s various and refined courtesies !” In sober earnest, though, I do think you ought not to be thanked in a common, dry, cool manner for your friendliness, and I feel doubly obliged and flattered by your spending *time* upon me as well as other things. As to the reticule, it is a *gentlewoman’s bag*.—I could say nothing better of it, were I to study for a fortnight ; and when I consider how difficult it is to produce a perfectly lady-like reticule, how many would-be genteel people carry reticules, and infect every reticule fashion they adopt with an air of vulgarity or shabby gentility, how many laboriously-wrought reticules I have seen in the course of my life, none of which came up to my beau-ideal of a bag, how many negative

\* Our kind friend and neighbour, whose amiable attentions are here gratefully, though playfully acknowledged, has been for some years a resident in her native country of Ireland ; where I hope she will read these memorials of the happy past, with feelings in which pleasure may predominate over regret.—E. C.

as well as positive qualities a perfect bag ought to have, I really think your success in this line is a triumph of art and tastefulness ; you have completely embodied all my airy reticulous imaginations, and have combined satin and velvet into a shape fit to be patronized by an exclusive. This may perhaps truly be called *running on* about a reticule, but it will at least show you, dear Mrs. Jones, that your attentions give the pleasure you design ; neither you nor I would be in raptures with a bag, or any other elegance, which was bought in a shop, and in no way connected with genial feeling.

If I may not saunter over "Roget" in my usual manner, will you be kind enough to bid me hasten my perusal. I am pleased and I hope instructed with what I have read. Dr. Roget, in this volume\* more especially, treats of many matters which I am often wishing to know about. Comparative anatomy, though highly interesting, makes one often feel the want of the knowledge of mechanics ; and one cannot proceed far in astronomy without mathematics. But there are certain portions of physiology which I fancy may be understood sufficiently for a great degree of pleasure and profit, without the aid of other sciences.

I return the "Forest Sanctuary," &c. I think Lord Byron's remark on Mrs. Hemans was very just ; he said she was a poet, but too "stilted and apostrophical ;" this you may remember in Moore's Life of Lord B. But she was a very extraordinary woman, and had a

\* On Animal and Vegetable Physiology : one of the Bridgewater Treatises, 1834.—E. C.

wonderful command of language. Yet various as her subjects are, I still feel, as I did after reading the other volume of her poems which you lent me, that there is a *sameness* in her productions upon the whole ; the spirit and tone of feeling are almost invariably the same ; she keeps one so long in a sublime region of thin ether that one craves to come down and breathe the common air, impregnated with odours that put one in mind of real life. People say there is *too* much real life in Crabbe, and certainly he did not idealize enough ; but in spite of this defect he is a great and permanent favourite with me. Mrs. Hemans' " Hebrew Mother " struck mama from its great likeness to my Uncle Southey's style of poetry ; I thought it very beautiful. " Evening prayer at a Girls' School " is another of my favourites.

Believe me, my dear Mrs. Jones, your truly obliged friend,

SARA COLERIDGE.

### III.

Etymology of *Plat* and *Plait*—The *Plaits* (or *Plats*) of a Lady's Hair, and the *Plaits* of her Gown, originally the same Word, though different in Meaning and Pronunciation \*—A Social Sunbeam.

To Mrs. H. M. JONES.

*Hampstead*, 1836.—My dear Mrs. Jones—My dictionaries are highly flattered by the appeal made to them

\* The former being called *plat*, and the latter *pleat*. Might not the old-English word *pleach* have been included among the derivatives of  $\pi\lambda\epsilon\kappa\omega$  ?

from the Court in John Street, and after some consultations together give it as their unanimous opinion that plat and plait have precisely the same pedigree—Gr., *πλεκω*; Latin, *plecto* and *plico*; French, *plisser* and *plier*; Italian, *piegare*; and *ploeyen*, Dutch.

They have also come to the conclusion that to fold, weave, braid, twist, twine, plait, plat, and platt, are to a certain degree synonymous, though in making minor distinctions we use them in slightly different senses; plaiting is a sort of weaving, and weaving is a sort of infolding. The word platted is used in Scripture, as all must recollect; “they platted a crown of thorns;” they wove a garland. It was a remark of my dear father’s,\* that we cannot ascertain the precise meaning of words by searching for their roots only; words that originally were the same become appropriated to separate uses, as there is a greater *demand* for language, and the knowledge and refinement of the speakers of the language increase. To *plait* now, with milliners and clear-starchers, means a particular way of folding muslin, and to plat with smart young ladies signifies nothing in the world but twisting their glossy tresses in a neat and elegant manner; and yet plat and plait both come originally from *plecto* and from *plico*, and both *plecto* and

The “pleached bower” in which Beatrice awaited her friends, in “Much Ado about Nothing,” was one formed of the *plaited* or interwoven branches the honeysuckle, which,

“ripened by the sun,  
Forbid the sun to enter.”—E. C.

\* See “Coleridge’s Notes on English Divines,” vol. ii., p. 259.—E. C.

plico, according to my aforesaid informants, are either derived from or cognate with the Greek word pleko, which must excuse my writing it in Roman character. . .

You have a suggestive Byronic imagination, or you could never have fancied that your visit injured me; this is turning a *beam* into a *cloud*, and a lively mind like yours ought to employ itself in doing the reverse.

## IV.

“*Clever*” People not always *thinking* People—Serious Reflections suggested by the receipt of Taylor’s “Holy Living and Dying,” as a Present from a Friend—Sympathy more to be prized than Admiration—“The Boy and the Birds,” and the “Story without an End”—A Critic’s Foible.

To Miss EMILY TREVENEN.

*Hampstead, August 1836.*—Dear Miss B——! Henry and I quite agree on her character; she is one of the *thinking* class, which is so congenial to our tastes and feelings. A merely *clever* person, without depth of sensibility or reflection, I own is not congenial to me—I mean abstractedly considered. I might know a person in actual life to whom that description applied, whom yet I might love and like from early habit, or peculiar circumstances, or the predominance of other attractive qualities.

I must thank you, dearest friend, for the “Holy Living and Dying;” it would have pleased you to see how charmed and surprised I was on opening the bundle and finding what it contained. “Bibles laid open,

millions of surprises,” \* George Herbert says, are too often of little avail to sanctify the worldly spirit. There are two awful thoughts which often beset my mind, and must, I think, present themselves to all who dwell on religious considerations. The first is, the want of opportunity to become spiritually minded in such a large portion of the humbler classes, as well as of savage tribes and nations not Christianized : the other (its counterpart), what endless opportunities are either wasted or not turned to a sufficiently good account by persons in our line of life, their very commonness almost taking from their efficacy.

What you say of your sojourn near us is most gratifying, and expressed in your own refined, feminine, yet thoughtful way. It finds an echo in all our hearts, otherwise it would not be gratifying ; for I hope we are past those years of vanity when one desires to be considered exciting, even when the excitement is not mutual.

Both the children enjoy “ *The Boy and the Birds.*” † As to the “ *Story without an End,*” ‡ I admire it, but think it quite unfit for juvenile readers. None but mature minds, well versed in the artificialities of sentimental literature, can understand the inner meanings of it ; and I do not think it has that *body* of visual imagery and adventure which renders many a tale and allegory delightful to those who cannot follow the author’s main

\* From a Sonnet entitled “ *Sin,*” in Herbert’s “ *Temple.*”—E. C.

† By Mary Howitt.—E. C.

‡ Translated by Mrs. Austin from the German of Carové.—E. C.



drift. Bees, and flies, and leaves, and flowers are talked *about*, but not *described*, so as to give the child any clearer notion of them and their properties than he originally had, and all that is ascribed to them, all the sentiments put into their mouths, as one may say, are such as can breed naught but confusion in the juvenile brain. "*That child* is always asleep, or else dreaming," I overheard Herby say to himself, as he looked at the picture with an air of contempt. . . .

O reviews! if you yourselves were reviewed, how you might be cut up and exposed. A common fault of reviewers, and one which makes them desert good sense, is that they are so desirous to take a spick-and-span new view of any debated point. They smell down two roads, and if both have been trodden before, they rush at once down the third, though it may lead to nothing, like a blind alley. So it is with the Edinburgh Reviewer; he perks up his nose, and tries to say some third thing, which never has been said before, and which is the worst thing of the three.

## V.

A Visit to Devonshire—Advantage of frequent Intercourse among Relations—Forebodings of Illness, too soon realized—Maternal Cares and Interests—Interruption of her Journey homeward.

To Miss E. TREVENEN, Helston.

*Manor House,\* Ottery St. Mary, Devon, October 8,*

\* The residence of Francis George Coleridge, Esq., one of my father's elder brothers.—E. C.

1836.—Married relations should not live in the same house with each other, perhaps not next door ; but it is a mutual disadvantage to be so far from each other that unless health and purse are in the most flourishing state, they must pass years without the opportunity of intercourse. Even relations that often disagree, if there be any respect and affection at bottom, care more for one another, and love one another's society better, than those who seldom meet.

Our old acquaintance, Dr. Calvert, gave a cheerful account of Greta Hall, where all were well and in very fair spirits. Aunt Lovell seemed quite in good health, and tripped up to shake hands like a young girl. Such are the turns and changes of life. My turn of strength will perhaps come ; but at present, the prospect of my health is like the prospect of lake and mountain at Keswick, when the whole being involved in mist, one might as well be in a flat unwatered country, for all the advantage one has of scenery. Could I be sure that health and strength were indeed behind the cloud ! Little H—— tells me that I “ have come here for nothing,” because I have only once been as far as the flower garden, and that I am a “ poor dull woman,” who can have no enjoyment. But the pretty little maid is out there, I trust. It is true I have not enlarged my notions of the picturesque, nor much improved my acquaintance with Devonshire, but I have met several of my relations in a sociable way, gleaned a little out of Frank's library, and become better acquainted with the children than some would

have been in three years. Herby and Edy have derived much benefit from this visit, I trust, and had their little minds ventilated by fresh scenes, people, and goings-on. Herbert's nervous temperament and general delicacy of frame have been placed in a clearer light to me by the change than ever, and I trust I shall use this knowledge aright. I listen to the advice and opinions of *all* experienced persons,—let my notion of their discernment be great or small. Every kind and degree of experience on the management of young people obtains a fair hearing from me ; but I am now fully convinced how entirely it is the duty of a mother to act resolutely on her own judgment, when she has once formed it with all due deliberation, and with as much clear-sightedness as she has it in her power to exert. I would give a good deal if Herbert could have little A—— for his constant companion ; these two are so nearly matched in age that they run well together, and in temper are so well suited to each other, and so fitted to do one another good, that I regret the little opportunity they will have of playing and studying side by side. A—— is a sweet boy ; there is an innocent solemnity and a sprightly gravity about him which are charming, and contrast well with Herbert's quick, eager, mercurial temperament. Herby is excessively fond of him. It is pretty to see them play dominoes together, chattering all the time with a light-hearted earnestness and importance, the pomposity and intensity of their words contrasting prettily with the easiness of their looks and tones ;—or to hear them read the Bible, verse about, with Henry ; A—— serious and

steady, pronouncing his words distinctly, and proceeding smoothly to the end of the verse ; Herbert, poor fellow, more interrupted by his occasionally impeded utterance, and by the thoughts which the subject suggests. He does not skim the surface, but stops continually to look under the ice. . . . .

*Ilchester, October 21.*—Dear Miss T.—You will all be grieved to find that I am stopped on my journey home by nervous illness, and am here in bed under the doctor's care. All circumstances are favourable. I cannot now write particulars. God bless you and your true

S. C.

VI.

“Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.”

NOTE.—This affecting letter, which breathes the very spirit of Christian resignation, was occasioned by an earnest desire to suggest topics of consolation to my poor Grandmother, who was alone at home when she received the news of her daughter's illness, and was thrown by it into a state of the greatest anxiety and trouble. During this period of suffering and weakness, my mother was, however, still able to read, and reflect on what she read, as appears from the following passages of her correspondence. The books which chiefly occupied her attention, while she was thus detained at Ilchester, seem to have been her father's Literary Remains ; the writings of Mrs. Hemans, a lady whose poetical talent gave her a good deal of pleasure, though she was apt to note its deficiencies ; and several devotional works by Abbot, an author of the Evangelical School, much esteemed by serious persons of the last generation.—E. C.

To her Mother.

*Castle-Inn, Ilchester, October 24, 1836.*—Dear Mother

—I entreat you to pray for cheerfulness and fortitude to the Giver of all good. Be sure that the effort to pray will be useful, however distracted your poor thoughts may be. Let us recollect that were we enjoying all that our worldly hearts desire, how rapidly does time move on ; how soon shall we arrive at the end of our earthly course—then what will worldly good things avail us ? But these days of trial are more available for securing a happy seat in the eternal kingdom, than those which our unsanctified hearts might deem more blessed. The merciful Saviour has given us a check in the midst of our heedless career, and bids us consider, ere it be too late, whither are we hastening, lest we think only of the roses on the wayside, and forget the glorious city in the clouds, which, would we raise our eyes, we might see right before us. Dearest mother, be not grieved for this visitation. When you go to heaven before me, if you leave your poor daughter with a more serious, chastened heart (though still a weak and sin-inclined one) you leave her in far better case than if her frame were as free from uneasy weakness as the best in the land. Look not on this as a poor consolation, only taken up because no better can be had. These which I have alluded to are substantial truths, which will abide to my weal or woe, when all this busy and bustling world for me exists no longer. I thought my business here was to teach my darling boy ; to be respected, admired, beloved ; my head said otherwise, but my heart felt thus. Now I feel, more feelingly, that my business here is to make my soul fit for eternity, and my earthly tasks are but

the means by which that blessed work of my salvation is to be effected. Not according to what I do here, but according to the spirit in which I do it, shall I be judged hereafter. Is there anything in this reflection that tends to weaken our zeal, prudence, industry, forecast, in the exercise of our earthly avocations? Our worldly things would be better done than they are, could we but view them only in their due relations to heavenly things; as children are best educated when they are accounted as children, and not treated with the state, and ceremony, and indulgence, that rightfully belong to the mature.

God bless you, my beloved mother.—I remain, your warmly affectionate,  
SARA COLERIDGE.

VII.

“The *shaping* Spirit of Imagination.”

To her Husband.

*Ilchester, Somerset, October 25, 1836.*—Chemists say that the elementary principles of a diamond and of charcoal are the same; it is the action of the sun or some other power upon each that makes it what it is. Analogous to this are the products of the poet's mind; he does not *create* out of nothing, but his mind so acts on the things of the universe, material and immaterial, that each composition is in effect a new creation. Many of Mrs. Hemans' poems are not even in this sense creations; she takes a theme, and this she illustrates in

fifty different ways, the verses being like so many wafers, the same thing in blue, green, red, yellow. She takes descriptions from books of natural history or travel, puts them into verse, and appends a sentiment or a moral, like the large red bead of a rosary at the end of several white ones. But all these materials have undergone no fusion in the crucible of imagination. We may recognize the author's hand by a certain style of selection and arrangement, as we might know a room furnished by Gillow or Jackson, according to the same rule; but there is no stamp of an individual mind on each separate article.

### VIII.

Speculations on Life and Organization—Life considered as the connecting Link between Mind and Matter—Mr. Coleridge's Application of this View to the Scriptural Narratives of Demoniacal Possession; \* and to the Christian Doctrine of the Resurrection.

To the Same.

*Ilchester, October 27, 1836.*—The sensorium is what we feel by; if I have a blow on the back, it is not the back that feels, but that organ; if I am *informed* that I shall have a blow on the back, it is the sensorium that gives the feeling of apprehension. In the one case the channel of communication is the body, in the other the mind; when the sensorium is affected through the body,

\* Coleridge's Lectures on Shakespeare, &c., vol. ii., pp. 152-3, 155-6.

it may affect the mind, when affected through the mind, it may affect the body; as this inn may convey news from Ilminster to Wincaunton, or news from Wincaunton to Ilminster. What *is* the sensorium—what constitutes it the organ of feeling? surely something more than the material particles of which it is composed, and which alone our material senses recognize. *Life*, whatever that power may be; the same principle that animates the flower, the zoophyte, ant, elephant, man; a something which is neither the soul, nor the visible, tangible frame, but keeps both united, or rather, makes the human frame a fit receptacle and instrument of the reasonable soul, this life it is which feels by the sensorium. Now, my father seems to imagine that the “evil spirits” spoken of in Scripture may be something akin to the fierce spirit or life of a tiger, the treacherous spirit or animating principle of a wolf, which might mysteriously have become connected with the human frame; and indeed we know, that when reason fails, the animating principle which remains in man, the mere life, appears endowed with evil, bestial qualities, malice, treachery, ferocity, unmitigable cruelty; in the presence of some madmen or idiots, we feel as in the presence of a wolf or a tiger, not in the presence of what is called a cruel, remorseless man. But to imagine that the soul of a demon, that is, a demon’s identity, can inhabit the body of a man, co-tenant with his soul or identity, or that the two identities can be mingled together (two *alls*, made into a double *all*, as if fire or water could be made double fire or water, by the add



tion of fresh fire and water), is surely an incredible creed, a proposition contrary to that very reason which is to decide on its acceptance or rejection. Equally monstrous is it to suppose that the man's soul is expelled, and that the demon's soul reigns in its stead ; *then* the subject of discourse is *not a man at all*, but a demon in a man's body ; we cannot then say that a *man* is cured, but that a demon has been expelled from a mortal body, and the soul, which formerly dwelt in it, recalled, as the soul of Lazarus was recalled to his lifeless body. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that the Almighty Saviour, by restoring the body to the conditions of health, freed the suspended soul, restored the instrument by which, in this world of matter, the soul can alone be conscious of its existence, and so doing, expelled that evil nature which, in the absence of a higher power, reigned in the unrul'd realm ? When we speak of being inspired by the Spirit, united to Christ, having our corrupt will purified by the influence of the Holy Ghost, do we ever mean that our personal identity is lost, that either Person of the Trinity is indisputably one with our person ?

Life is the steam of the corporeal engine ; the soul is the engineer who makes use of the steam-quicken'd engine. In life there is no more personal identity than in the body to which it belongs ; indeed, the tangible frame and the life together constitute the body ; it is *my* life, *my* body, not more myself than my clothes, and only seeming more so because in this world inseparably connected. The Reason is the soul in its integrity, with

all its faculties awake ; the reason may be impaired, and yet some of its faculties may remain capable of action, as memory and imagination. While the reason, *as to its integrity*, is suspended, the evil life or nature may draw those faculties to the service of evil, and make them cry aloud, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth?" Yes, the life and corporeal frame together constitute the body ; therefore I have the same body that I had as a child, and God may raise me up with my identical body ; for the same principle of life continues, and surrounds itself with new matter according to its need, as the fish forms its shell suitable to its own shape, and ever renewed according to its growing wants. Thus the *shell-fish* is ever the same, though the shell is yearly different. Thus the soul yearly expands, having yearly a tenement enlarged and accommodated for its expansion, till at length the conditions of the perfect soul are attained. The soul can never cease to exist, but it may cease to be conscious of existence, as in a trance ; or as the soul of Lazarus was suspended during the four days that his body lay in the grave. In sleep, the soul, as to its integrity, seems to be suspended, and the life plays with the memory, the fancy, and the faculties of the soul ; or rather with the soul itself, then capable only of exerting those partial faculties. It is plain that in the case of a madman afterwards restored, his reasonable soul has been suspended, not destroyed, or separated ; and who knows but that the soul of an idiot *exists* in its integrity, that the soul of an infant who dies young *exists* in mature perfection, though destitute in

this world of an instrument by which to exercise its faculties? And if life be not the result of organization, but the organizer, is it not conceivable that it may exist apart from the material frame, as the soul may exist apart from the body?

IX.

“The Remains” \*—Metaphysics like Alum.

To the Same.

*Ilchester, November 1836.*—How delightful are the “Remains!” I quite grieve to find the pages on my left hand such a thick handful. One wants to have such a book to dip into constantly, and to go on reading such discussions on such principles and in such a spirit, on a thousand subjects.

It does not seem as if the writer was especially conversant with this or that, as Babbage with mechanics, and Mill with political economy; but as if there was a subtle imaginative spirit to search and illustrate all subjects that interest humanity. Sir J. Mackintosh said that “S. T. C. trusted to his ingenuity to atone for his ignorance.” But in such subjects as my father treats of, ingenuity is the best knowledge.

Like all my father’s works, the “Remains” will be more sold at last than at first. Like alum, these meta-

\* Published now under the following titles :—Lectures on Shakespeare, &c.; Notes on English Divines; and Notes Theological, Political, &c.—E. C.

physical productions melt slowly into the medium of the public mind ; but when time has been given for the operation, they impregnate more strongly than a less dense and solid substance, which dissolves sooner, has power to do. Why? Because the closely compacted particles are more numerous, and have more energy in themselves. By the public mind, I mean persons capable of entertaining metaphysical discussions.

X.

Abbott's "Corner-Stone," and other Religious Works—Comparison of Archbishop Whately with Dr. Arnold, in their mode of setting forth the evidences of Christianity—Verbosity of Dr. Chalmers—Value of the Greek Language as an Instrument of Mental Cultivation.

To Miss ARABELLA BROOKE.

*Ilchester, November 8, 1836.*—My dear Miss Brooke—Though I am under orders to write to no one except my husband and mother, or sister, I must thank you with my own hand for thinking so affectionately of me in my trouble, as you evidently have done, and as I felt sure you would do.

. . . . .  
Since I saw you, I have read with great attention, and I humbly hope, not without profit, Abbott's "Young Christian," "Corner-Stone," and "Way to do Good." In a literary point of view, these works are open to much criticism, though their merits in that way may be consi-

derable ; and certainly, in several points, the author is far from being what a sincere member of our Church can call orthodox. For instance, his view of the Atonement seems to me below the right standard ; he dwells solely on the effect produced in man, entirely leaving out of sight the mysterious propitiation towards God ; and his illustration of the "Lost Hat" strikes me as inadequate and presumptuous. But notwithstanding these exceptionable points, and several others,—his very diffuse style, and a frequent want of harmony between his expressions and the deep reverential feelings which he aims to excite,—I think very highly of Abbott, as an energetic, original, and fresh-minded writer ; and I think his works calculated to do great good, by leading those who peruse them to scrutinize their own spiritual state, and the momentous themes of which he treats with zeal and fervour, if not always with perfect judgment.

I wish I could put into your hand a book from which I have derived great pleasure, Whately's "Essays on some Difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul." The Archbishop does not seem to be a profound, subtle, metaphysical writer, neither does he aim at anything of the kind. What he does aim at, he seems to me to have well accomplished. He reasons clearly to particular points from a general view of Revelation, not from the nature of things in themselves ; and his style is vigorous, simple, and perspicuous. In this respect it resembles that of Dr. Arnold, but the latter does not so exclusively address the understanding ; he does more in the way of touching the heart, at the same time that (when party

spirit is out of the question) he reasons forcibly and clearly, as far as I can judge, I mean.

The substance of what pleases you in Abercrombie \* I have lately read in Chalmers's Bridgewater Treatise ; † and, oh ! when the wordy Doctor does get hold of an argument, what a splutter does he make with it for dozens of pages. He is like a child with a new wax doll, he hugs it, kisses it, holds it up to be admired, makes its eyes open and shut, puts it on a pink gown, puts it on a blue gown, ties it on a yellow sash ; then pretends to take it to task, chatters at it, shakes it, and whips it ; tells it not to be so proud of its fine false ringlets, which can all be cut off in a minute, then takes it into favour again ; and at last, to the relief of all the company, puts it to bed.

I wish very much that some day or other you may have time to learn Greek, because that language is an *idea*. Even a little of it is like manure to the soil of the mind, and makes it bear finer flowers.—My dear A——, your truly affectionate friend,

SARA COLERIDGE.

\* *Inquiries concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth.* By Dr. Abercrombie.—E. C.

† *On the Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man.* By the Rev. Dr. Thomas Chalmers.—E. C.



CHAPTER VI.

1837.

Letters to her Husband ; to Miss A. Brooke, Mrs. Plummer,  
Mrs. H. M. Jones.





## I.

Difference between the Italian Satiric Poets and their English Imitators.

To Miss E. TREVENEN.

10 *Chester Place*, 1837.—I cannot think that the English Beppoists have any authority among the Italians for their style. Ariosto conceived his subject to a certain degree lightly and sportively ; and Pulci has a vein of satire ; but these ingredients in them are interfused so as to form a *tertium aliquid*—not grape-juice and water, but *wine*. Their satire and their sentiment, their joke and their earnest, do not intersect each other in distinct streaks, like the stripes of red and blue in the Union Flag.

## II.

Unsatisfactoriness of Desultory Correspondence—"Phantasmion, a Romance of Fairyland"—Defence of Fairy Tales by Five Poets—Books *about* Children not often Books *for* Children—Incongruous Effect of Scripture Lessons, intermixed with Nursery Talk and Doings—Christianity best taught by a Mother out of the Bible and Prayer-Book—"Newman's Sermons"—"Maurice's Letters to the Quakers."

To Miss ARABELLA BROOKE.

10 *Chester Place, Regent's Park*, July 29, 1837.—We

always feel some difficulty in addressing those whom we are not in the habit of addressing frequently ; we feel that the letter which is to make up for long silence, and epitomize the goings on of a good many months, ought to be three times as kind, satisfactory, and news-ful, as if two others had preceded it. And being at the same time quite sure that this very circumstance will tend to freeze the genial current of our thoughts, and that occurrences which might have had some savour in them, if told when fresh, are now grown vapid, we are apt to look on the matter as a sort of task, something we would wish to perform better than we have any chance of doing ; and this feeling is the stronger the more we desire to stand well with the letter-expectant. Letters that come seldom cannot do without preambles ; which are always stupid things, but sometimes seem necessary to prevent the appearance of abruptness.

Without extending *my* preamble quite over the whole first page, I will commence my true epistle by begging your acceptance of a little book which is to accompany it. This little book was chiefly written the winter before I last saw you, when I was more confined to my couch than I am now ; and whether any friends agree with my husband (the most partial of them all) in thinking it worth publishing or no, they will attach some interest to the volume as a record of some of my recumbent amusements ; and be glad to perceive that I often had out-of-door scenes before me in a lightsome, agreeable shape, at a time when I was almost wholly confined to the house, and could view the face of nature only by very

short glimpses.\* It requires no great *face* to publish now-a-days; it is not stepping upon a stage where the eyes of an audience are upon you, but entering a crowd, where you must be very tall, strong, and striking indeed, to obtain the slightest attention. In these days too, to print a fairy tale is the very way to be *not read*, but shoved aside with contempt. I wish, however, I were only as sure that *my* fairy tale is worth printing, as I am that works of this class are wholesome food, by way of variety, for the childish mind. It is curious that on this point Sir Walter Scott, and Charles Lamb, my father, my Uncle Southey, and Mr. Wordsworth, were all agreed. Those names are not so great an authority to all people as they are to me; yet I think they might be set against that of Miss Edgeworth, powerfully as she was able to follow up her own view. Sir W. Scott made an exception in her favour, when he protested against the whole generation of moral tales, stories of naughty and good boys and girls, and how their parents, pastors,

\* L'ENVOY OF PHANTASMION.

Go, little book, and sing of love and beauty,  
To tempt the worldling into fairy land;  
Tell him that airy dreams are sacred duty,  
Bring better wealth than aught his toils command,  
Toils fraught with mickle harm.

But if thou meet some spirit high and tender,  
On blessed works and noblest love intent,  
Tell him that airy dreams of nature's splendour,  
With graver thoughts and hallowed musings blent,  
Prove no too earthly charm.—S. C.

Written in a copy of *Phantasmion* about the year 1845.—E. C.

and masters did or ought to have managed them. It is not to be denied that such stories are exciting to children, and indeed spoil their taste utterly for works which have less of everyday life, though not less of truth, in them. But the grand secret of their sale seems to be, that they interest the *buyers* of the books, mamas and governesses, who see in such productions the history of their own experience, and the reflection of minds occupied with the same educational cares as their own. In this way, "Grave and Gay," by Miss Tytler, sister of the historian, was very interesting to me; but I would not put it into the hands of my children, excellent manual of divinity as it is thought by some. It is not in such scraps, nor with such a context, however pretty in its way, that I should like to present the sublime truths of Christianity to the youthful mind: "Florence put the cherry in her mouth, and was going to eat it all up," &c.,—just before or after extracts from the Sermon on the Mount, or allusions to the third chapter of St. John's Gospel. The Bible itself, that is, the five Books of Moses, and the four Gospels, with a mother's living commentary, together with the Catechism and Liturgy, appear to me the best instruments for teaching the Christian religion to young children.

I have lately been reading, certainly with great interest, the sermons of John Henry Newman; and I trust they are likely to do great good, by placing in so strong a light as they do, the indispensableness of an orthodox belief, the importance of sacraments as the main channels of Christian privileges, and the powers, gifts, and offices of

Christian ministers derived by apostolical succession ;— the insufficiency of personal piety without Catholic brotherhood—the sense that we are all members of one body, and subjects of one kingdom of Christ ; the danger of a constant craving for religious excitement, and the fatal mistake of trusting in any devotional thoughts and feelings, which are not immediately put into act, and do not shine through the goings on of our daily life. But then these exalted views are often supported, as I think, by unfair reasonings ; and are connected with other notions which appear to me superstitious, unwarranted by any fair interpretation of Scripture, and containing the germs of Popish errors.

The letters of Maurice to the Quakers should be taken in conjunction with these discourses, to qualify them and keep the mind balanced. Maurice is a profound thinker, a vigorous though rough writer ; and I trust you would not like him the worse for sharing my father's spirit. His divinity seems based on the Aids to Reflection, and though no servile imitator, he has certainly borrowed his mode of writing and turn of thought very much from S. T. C.

III.

“Mary and Florence ; or, Grave and Gay,” a Tale for Children \*—  
Right Interpretation of St. John iii. 8—Heavenly Things should  
be set before Children, both “plainly” and “by a Parable.”

To Mrs. H. M. JONES, Hampstead.

I have read “Mary and Florence,” and have been charmed with it ; the story has made me “grave” and “gay,” according to the writer’s intention. As to the “utility” of this and other such works, that is, whether or no they answer their *professed purpose*, I could write a long sermon or essay, which my readers would suspect to be more than half borrowed from S. T. C. and H. N. C. The illustration of the nature of the soul by the wind I thought calculated, in some measure, to mislead. The wind is as *material* a thing as the cheek it blows upon ; we cannot see it, but we can feel and hear it ; it is cognizable by the senses, and therefore material. The verse from St. John’s Gospel does not, I think, bear upon this point at all, but has reference solely to the operations of divine grace. “As the wind bloweth where it listeth,” so grace comes by the will of God, not at man’s pleasure ; “thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell how it cometh nor whither it goeth, so is every man that is born of the Spirit.”

Thou knowest the existence of grace in the heart by its *effects*, but canst not understand the nature of it, nor of God’s working ; “how it cometh, nor whither it goeth.” This is the case with every man who has such grace given him that his heart and mind are *born again*—*i.e.*, totally renewed. Such, I believe, is the interpre-

\* By Miss Fraser-Tytler.—E. C.

tation of this passage by good divines, and surely it has no reference to the nature of spirit as opposed to matter. Nicodemus did not fancy that he could *see* the soul of man, but he desired an explanation of our Lord's expression, "Thou must be born again." Miss T. gives a material description of heaven to her young catechumens. In this she goes contrary to the judgment of the celebrated Abbott, who, in his "Corner-Stone," declares this to be an injudicious method; but John Abbott, author of the "Child at Home" (often confounded with the former), declares that young folks ought to have their feelings warmed by these visual pictures. To combine the two methods would be best, I should think. But let me say again that, in spite of all these critical thoughts, I was charmed with the book, and so much excited with the gipsy story at the end (which to be sure is as wild a romance, the conversion at least, as anything in Mrs. Ratcliffe), that I almost feared being kept awake by it, and for a long time could think of nothing but Herby in a similar situation. He would not have *slept*, I fear, under such circumstances as Florence did. The story of the "Mouse" is sweetly and humorously told.

## IV.

Regent's Park.

To Mrs. PLUMMER.

10 *Chester Place, Regent's Park, August 26th, 1837.*—  
In regard to our change of abode, we have great reason on the whole to be satisfied. From the upstairs apartment we have really a nice look out, which, however, I



may not dignify with the name of *view*. The foreground consists of good houses, and to the right a garden with stone balustrade, and beyond, the trees of the park, behind which we can see a portion of many a glowing sunset. Where dark green foliage, backed with buff and crimson clouds, is clearly to be seen, one ought not to complain of being banished from the shows of nature. The walks, too, are invaluable in this neighbourhood. At Hampstead I always had to climb, here a few steps brings me into the park, with its acres of green turf, and flocks of country *looking* (and *sounding*) sheep. The grand want is the want of water; \* but even at Norwood (rural as that is) we should be no better off in this respect. You may imagine what a playground the park is for our children.

## V.

Dryden's censure of Ovid, on the score of the rhetorical Expressions attributed to the dying Narcissus—His Observations not true to Nature, nor applicable to the case in question—Definition of "Force" and "Liveliness" in Poetry—The Homeric Mythology not Allegorical—Symbolical Character of the Imagery of Milton and Wordsworth—Originality of Virgil.

To her Husband.

*Sept. 13th, 1837.*—Dryden's criticisms were fine for the times in which he wrote, which were corrupted from

\* This was before the adjoining estate, with its artificial lake, wooded knolls, and islets, was added to Regent's Park. In after years, the walk right across the new park and up Primrose Hill to see the sunset (returning along the terraces) was a favourite one with my mother, on fine summer evenings.—E. C.

the purity of the Elizabethan age, and had not learnt the metaphysical accuracy which some in these days have attained to. Comparing them with the best critics of this day, I should describe them as lively and distinctly expressed rather than profound. He finds great fault with Ovid's poems, but I think in one passage on wrong grounds. "Would a man dying for love express his passion by such conceits as 'Inopem me copia fecit,' and a dozen more of the like sort, poured on the neck of one another, and meaning all the same thing?" Shakespeare, in "Romeo and Juliet," showed forth the passion of love, which is so pre-eminently imaginative, venting itself in every variety of metaphor, and I can assert from experience that it is the impulse of minds in strong emotion, to eddy perpetually round the one magnetic theme, and to express the same feeling in twenty different forms of speech. I think "inopem me copia fecit," which is not a mere verbal contrast, but a contrast of things actually existing, is perfectly natural under the circumstances. "How strange is my fate! my very abundance causes me to be in want; possession makes me suffer the pangs of unsatisfied desire." Such reflections would be perfectly natural to a man who could pine away in love-sickness of his imagined self. Such a death is not to be described with the physical accuracy of a medical report. We are to be shown the passion of love incarnate, not flesh and blood dying in consequence of love. And surely Ovid's tone of description is to be modified by the nature of his subject; fears and sorrows that brought on such catastrophes as the being

changed into a tree or a waterfall, may be touched with a lighter hand than the agonies of Lear or Othello. . . .

In regard to *force* and *liveliness*, may we not call the latter one mode of the former, rather than a separate property? Scott's poems afford samples of lively force, but they contain little of that force which seizes the imagination, and obliges it to contemplate fixedly something spiritual, which has nothing in it of corporeal life. The "Leech Gatherer" is a poem which is forcible but solemn; it arrests and fixes the mind, instead of hurrying or leading it on. Yet the illustrations of this poem are as lively as the main design is far removed from bodily attributes. The stone is absolutely endued with motion by the comparison with a sea-monster that had crept out upon the shore to sun himself. Liveliness expresses the motion, the action of life, that by which life is manifested. When the lively is also sublime, as the "Battle of the Gods," we do not apply to the mixed effect the term of a quality which so generally describes the less exalted movements and acts of life; but Homer's force, as you have observed, always consists of liveliness. In him there is no force like that of Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, Schiller, Coleridge, where lively metaphors and life-like images are but to adorn or partly represent the various realities of abstract being. Their force results from the thing signified, together with the outward symbol, from the union and mutual fitness of the two. Philosophers may fancy that the Grecian mythology was allegorical, but the force of Homer is not derived at all from those inner significations. His divine and human

battling is sublime, from being vast, fearful, and indistinct. It is *animated*, full of animal motion; it is a picture that strikes and pleases in and for itself alone; it is conceived and executed with all the power of mature genius, inspired by the circumstances, the wants, desires, hopes, lives of a peculiar state of human life, a state which precluded contemplation, and demanded action. Compare Homer's poetry with Milton's first books of "Paradise Lost." With what does the latter possess our minds? "With greatness fallen, and the excess of glory obscured." It is the *force* with which this subject is made to engross our contemplations, to tinge the whole of that dark fiery region and those prostrate angel warriors with an awful sadness, the aptness of that region so described to shadow out eternal bale, of those vast and dimly lustrous images to represent the warring evils of our spiritual part, this it is which constitutes the peculiar perfection of that grand product of imagination. In this it is essentially different from Homer, life and progression are not its characterizing spirit. They are represented by the older poet with the greatest conceivable truth and power, and Milton availed himself of that prototype in the embodying of his conceptions. He imitated Homer in as far as he trode the same ground with him, but the main scope of his poem was an aboriginal of his own intellect. In regard to Virgil, whom Dryden rather unfairly, as I think, contrasts with Homer, it appears to me that he has been rather misappreciated by being constantly looked at in his aspect of an imitator, and that his having

cast his poem in a ready-made mould, has prevented most critics from observing the peculiarities of his own genius in the substance of thought, and in the external ornaments of diction. A finer and more true criticism might be exerted by discovering and expressing that which was his own, rather than that which he borrowed.

## VI.

“Parochial Sermons” by John Henry Newman—Power and Beauty of his Style—Tendency of his Teaching to exalt the Passive rather than the Active Qualities of Humanity—The Operation of Divine Grace on the Soul is a Mystery, the visible Effect whereof is Holiness—But Writers of the Oxford School appear to represent the Effect as no less invisible than the Cause—The Ordinance of Preaching.

To the Same.

*Chester Place, September 23rd, 1837.*—I think your expressions about Newman quite well chosen. Decidedly I should say he is a writer, first, of *great talent*, secondly, of *beauty*. The *beauty* of his writing is shown for the most part in the tasteful simplicity, purity, and lucid propriety of his style; but now and then it is exhibited in well chosen and brief metaphors, which are always according to the spirit of the subject. Speaking of children in allusion to our Saviour’s remark, that of such is the kingdom of heaven, he observes that this is only meant of little ones in their passive nature; that, like water, they reflect heaven best when they are still. However, it seems to be a point with the Oxford writers,

either for good or evil, very much to represent, not children only, but men, as the *passive* un-co-operating subject (or rather, in one sense, *object*) of divine operation. They are jealous of holding up, or dwelling much upon, grace as an *influence* on the conscious spirit, a stimulator and co-agent of the human will, or enlightener of the human intellect. That view, they think, is insufficient, leads to an inadequate notion of Christian ordinances, and of our Christian condition, and causes a confusion between God's general dealings with the human race, or His subordinate workings with Christians and His special communications to the members of the New Covenant. "Salvation" is to be considered (exclusively) "as God's work in the soul." But whether it be not just as much God's work if carried on with the instrumentality of these faculties which He originally conferred, may be a question. Again, the Oxford writers dwell much on the necessity of a belief in mysteries not level to our understanding (of which my father says that they cannot run counter to our reason, because they do not move on any line that can come in contact with it, being beyond the horizon of our earthly faculties). But the question is whether our Saviour ever spoke of any operations on men, the *effects* of which they were not enabled plainly and clearly (if their hearts be well disposed) to judge of. The *operations* themselves are not our concern, any more than the way in which God created the earth, and all that is therein. The operations themselves belong to that heaven which none can understand but He that is in heaven, and which conse-

quently I cannot believe that God ever meant us to understand, the symbols which the inspired writers employed on this subject being more probably intended to convey a notion of the desirability and accessibility of heaven than of heaven itself. Whately truly says, in relation to subjects of this kind, that a blind man may be made to understand a great deal *about* objects of sight, though sight alone could reveal to him *what they are*.

To return to my theme. It is an undoubted truth that the manner in which God operates upon man is and must be as unintelligible to man as the way in which God created him at first ; but does it flow from this truth, or does it appear from the tenor of Scripture, that Christ, who constantly appealed to the reason and the will of His hearers (as Newman himself urges against the Predestinarians), ever spoke of divine operations on man, the *effects* of which he might not judge of by intelligible signs? The Syrian was commanded to bathe in a certain river, and how it was that bathing in that river could heal his leprosy, it was not given him to know. But was he commanded to believe that he had been healed of leprosy, while to all outward appearance, and by all the signs which such a thing can be judged of, the leprosy remained just as before? Surely it is not from the expressions of Scripture, but from the supposed necessary consequences of certain true doctrines, *according to a certain mode of reasoning*, that the non-intelligibility of the *effects* of God's working is contended for. Newman himself urges that baptism is scarcely ever named in Scripture without the mention of spi-

ritual grace ; that baptism is constantly connected with regeneration. And then I would ask, is not spiritual grace generally mentioned in Scripture, either with an implication or a full and particular description of those good dispositions and actions which are to proceed from it, and which men may judge of, as of a tree from its fruits? And is regeneration ever mentioned in Scripture in such a way as to preclude the notion that it is identical with *newness of life*? and is not *newness of life*, according to our Saviour and St. Paul, identical with doing justice and judgment for Christ's sake, doing righteously because of feeling righteously? Are we ever led by the language of Scripture to suppose that regeneration is a mystical something, which, though it may, and in certain circumstances must, produce goodness and holiness, yet of *its own nature* need not absolutely do so ; which may exist in unconscious subjects, as in infants, acknowledged incapable of faith and repentance, which might, as to its own essence (though the contrary actually is the case), exist even in the worst of men? In short, that regeneration is the receiving of a new nature, a more divine, and yet not better or more powerful nature. Surely here are words without thoughts. What notion have we of a *divine* nature which does not include or consist of the notions of goodness and power? Newman illustrates the subject by the case of devils, who, he says, have a divine but not a good nature. To elucidate the obscure doctrine of regeneration by reference to evil spirits is like attempting to brighten twilight by the shades of night, and is a



perfect contrast to the proceeding of our Saviour, who was accustomed to explain "the kingdom of heaven" by parables and stories about things which His listeners daily saw with their eyes, and handled with their hands.

In the same spirit of being mysterious above what is written, Newman and his fellow-labourers in the Oxonian vineyard are wont to contend that preachers are bound to preach the gospel, as a blind servant is bound to deliver a message about things which he can never see, as a carrier-pigeon to convey a letter, the contents of which it cannot understand. They are not to preach for the sake of saving souls, nor to select and compose from the gospel in order to produce a good effect, nor to grieve if the gospel is the savour of death to those who will not hear. In short, it would be presumption and rationalism in them to suppose that their intellect or zeal was even to be the medium through which God's purposes were to be effected. What God's purposes *are* in commanding the gospel to be preached, and sending His Only Son into the world, they maintain that we cannot guess (as if God had not plainly revealed it Himself throughout the Bible). They are merely to execute a trust, to repeat all the truths of the gospel, one as much and as often as the other. For what practical result of such a principle can there be, unless it be this, that a clergyman is to preach as many sermons on the Trinity and the Incarnation as on faith and hope and charity, and the necessity of a good life, along with its details. Yet Newman is the very man who would

accuse such a proceeding of irreverence, and too great an exercise of intellect.

## VII.

Graphic Style of the Old Testament Narratives—Greek and Roman History less Objective.

To the Same.

*September 30th, 1837.*—I think Herby is more struck with Exodus than with Genesis, for the former is even more strikingly objective than the latter, and the account of the various Plagues arrests the attention even of the youngest mind. The most objective passages in Roman and Grecian history unfortunately are *not* the really important ones and the hinges of great events; they are biographical episodes or anecdotes, for the most part; as the striking off the heads of the poppies, the death of Regulus, and much of what relates to Alexander, the Roman emperors and their private follies. But in the Old Testament a great battle is won by the Israelites before Moses sits upon a *stone* on a *hill*, and has his *arms held up* on either side by Aaron and Hur. The whole history is a series of pictures. If you make pictures of Roman history, you must imagine the postures, the accessory parts, all the detail of surrounding objects; but in the Bible they are made out for you. Thus you can call to mind the main course of events in Jewish history by means of such pictures impressed upon the memory; but Roman

history could not correctly be represented in any such manner. A series of its most picturable scenes would not recall the march of the principal events.

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Married Happiness.

Marriage, indeed, is like the Christian course ; it must either advance or go backwards. If you love and esteem thoroughly, the more you see, and do, and feel, and talk together, the more channels are opened out for affection to run in ; and the more room it has to expand, the larger it grows. Then the little differences and uncongenialities that at first seemed relatively important, dwindle into nothing amid the mass of concord and tenderness ; or if their flavour still survives, being thus subordinate, like mustard or other condiments which would be intolerable in large proportions, it adds a zest to the whole dish.

VIII.

“Phantasmion” a Descriptive Piece ; not an Allegory, or Moral Tale—Want of Artistic Unity in Goethe’s Faust.

To the Same.

*Sept. 29th, 1837.*—In regard to “Phantasmion’s” want of general purpose and meaning, I can only say that it does not belong to that class of fictions in which a single truth or moral is to be illustrated by a sequence of events, of which Miss Edgeworth’s and Miss Martineau’s tales are instances, or in which, as in the “Fairy Queen” and the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” the

character and descriptions are all for the sake of an allegory, which not only shines through them, but determines the general form to be produced, as the osseous system of an animal under the flesh. It belongs to that class of fictions, of which *Robinson Crusoe*, *Peter Wilkins*, *Faust*, *Undine*, *Peter Schlemil*, and the *Magic Ring* or the *White Cat*, and many other fairy tales are instances ; where the ostensible moral, even if there be one, is not the author's chief end and aim, which rather consists in cultivating the imagination, and innocently gratifying the curiosity of the reader, by exhibiting the general and abstract beauty of things through the vehicle of a story, which, as it treats of human hopes, and fears, and passions, and interests, and of those changeful events and varying circumstances to which human life is liable, may lend an animation to the accompanying descriptions, and in return receive a lustre from them. It may be a defect in "*Phantasmion*" that one thought is not as predominant throughout the narrative as in some of the above-mentioned tales ; and I may venture to say (comparing little things with great), that this want of unity, exhibited in a somewhat different way, is also perceptible in *Faust*. There the prevailing thought at the outset is quite merged in another, which arises adventitiously out of the progress of the story. We begin with the hopes and fears of a philosopher, with the Satanic principle of knowledge apart from goodness, working only potent evil ; we end with a tale of seduction, of an innocent creature coming in contact with subtle and wicked beings, her beauty

and goodness of heart being thrown into strong relief by the gloomy and awful circumstances in which she is placed ; this black, with gleams of white, being Goethe's constant mode of producing effect, analogous to Martin's painting. The Faust is not a symmetrical whole, but a dual consisting of two halves ; for, however the author might prove logically that the evils of the latter part of the story do arise out of the wrong-headedness and heartedness, described in the first part, still—to the feelings of the readers (and they are the rightful judges in this case), the history of Margaret is an episode, an independent relation which inspires its own peculiar thoughts, fancies, and emotions, in a superseding way, and does not act upon the whole as a mere vessel to carry forward the interests and concerns announced from the first. Compare Faust with any of Shakespeare's, Jonson's, or Massinger's fine plays, and we shall see its inferiority in regard to totality of impression.

## IX.

Preparations for the study of Divinity—Tendency to Discursiveness inherited from her Father.

To the Same.

*October 4th, 1837.*—I feel the strongest bent for theological topics ; and it seems to myself that I should want neither ingenuity in illustration, nor clearness of conception, to a certain extent ; but then I am utterly deficient in learning and knowledge. I feel the most complete

sympathy with my father in his account of his literary difficulties. Whatever subject I commence I feel discontent unless I could pursue it in every direction to the farthest bounds of thought, and then when some scheme is to be executed, my energies are paralyzed with the very notion of the indefinite vastness which I long to fill. This was the reason that my father wrote by snatches. He could not bear to complete incompletely, which everybody else does.

X.

A view of Grasmere—"Prosy" Letters preferred to Practical ones—  
Inefficiency of Dames' Schools, and even of National Schools,  
as at that time conducted—Effect of Church Principles and  
Practices, in giving a Religious tone to a School.\*

To Mrs. PLUMMER.

10 *Chester Place, Regent's Park, October 21st, 1834.*—  
You would have been pleased, could you have witnessed  
the reception of your sweet picture in this house. It  
arrived the day before Henry's return home, and it was  
quite a pleasure to take him into the drawing-room, as  
soon as he had made himself neat after the journey,  
and show him the new "Grasmere." The view is a

\* It was in order to remove this acknowledged inefficiency that the first Training College for National Schoolmasters was established at Chelsea by the National Society, under the direction of the Rev. Derwent Coleridge, in 1841.—E. C.

more characteristic one of the Lake and Vale than the other which we possess ; and in it we can point to the very spot where my brother Hartley lives, which, to mama and me, is very interesting.

I cannot now answer your nice full letter as it deserves, for I have a good deal of epistolary work on hand ; but I must tell you one thing, which is, never to apologize to me for *prosing*. What some people call prosing, I like ; and what I do dislike in letters is a long history of comings and goings, visitings and being visited, allusions to Mrs. A. B., and Lady C. B., and other folks whom I never saw, and do not care twopence about.

Your remarks on National Schooling I fully accede to, as far as my knowledge extends ; still when the education of a people is to be considered, even allowing the truth of them all, it is hard to decide positively against institutions of the kind in some shape or other. Six Dames' Schools under your superintendence, energetic body as you are, might be an excellent substitute ; but I am sorry to say, in those which I have heard of lately, nothing, or next to nothing is learned, and the parents merely pay for having their children kept out of harm's way. Have you ever thought much about Normal Schools ? Till some better system is adopted than at present generally prevails, and the art of teaching is regularly taught, I fear the National Schools will continue very inefficient.

In regard to instilling religious *feeling*, that, I fear, no large school can ever do, but if a foundation of correct principles were laid, and the Church and her ordinances

rendered more prominent objects for the minds of the children than they have hitherto been, this surely would be something. Feeling might come in other ways, by the nameless opportunities of life; and the two (what was taught at school, and what accrued to the learner elsewhere) might work together for good.

## XI.

Conservative Replies to some Arguments of the Radical Party—

The British Constitution not originally Popular, but Paternal—

An appeal to Universal Suffrage not an appeal to the Collective

Wisdom of the age, but to its Collective Ignorance—"The

Majority *will* be always in the right;" but not till it has

adopted the views of the Minority—Despotism of the mob in

America regretted by many Americans—English Government

not a mere machine for registering Votes—How are the

People to be trained to a right Exercise of their Liberties?—

"*Govern* them, and lift them up for ever."

To Mrs. H. M. JONES, in reply to a Political Essay by Dr. PARK.

"The British Constitution is *founded* on public opinion." The institutions and forms of government in which this idea is more or less adequately manifested have been wrought out by public opinion, yet surely the idea itself is not the result and product, but rather the secret guide and groundwork of public opinion on the point in question, as embodied in definite words and conceptions. But what public opinion was that which moulded our admired policy, and fashioned the curious and complicated mechanism of our state



machine? Did it reflect the minds and intellects of the majority? Or was it not rather the opinions of the best and wisest, to which our *aristocratic* forms of government gave both publicity and prevalence.

Surely we have little reason to say that public opinion, taken *at large*, is necessarily just and wise by virtue of its being public,—necessarily that to which the interests of the nation may be safely entrusted. If we identify it with the opinions of the majority at all times and on all subjects, it cannot be identified with the collective wisdom of the age. Like foam on the surface of the ocean, pure if the waters below are pure, soiled and brown if they are muddy and turbid, it can but represent the character of that from which it proceeds, the average understandings and morals of the community. How are the masses to be purified and tranquillized? How rendered capable of judging soundly on affairs of state, as far as that is possible to men of humble station? Surely not by the introduction of a vote-by-ballot system, which virtually silences the gifted few, and reduces to inaction the highest wisdom of the day. Truth, it is said, must ever prevail; but unless utterance is given her,—nay, more, unless her voice is heard, not drowned by the clamours of the crowd, what means has she of prevailing? Public opinion is consonant to reason and goodness only inasmuch as it is influenced by the wise and good. It is often grossly absurd, and the public opinion of one year or month is condemned by that of the next. There is some truth in the notion of Miss Martineau, to which, by stress of arguments, she

has been driven, "that the majority *will be* in the right." The only rational interpretation of which seems to me to be this, that, *on given points*, the majority *ultimately* decide in favour of the truth, because, in course of time, the opinions of the wisest on those particular subjects are proved, by experience and successive accessions of suffrages from competent judges, to be just; they are stamped before the public eye and in characters which those who run may read (or as Habakkuk really has it, "he may run that readeth"), and in such points public opinion is in fact the adoption of *private* opinion by the public; the judgment approved by the majority is anything rather than that which the majority would have formed by aid of their own amount of sense and talent, for "nel mondo non è se non volgo." In time the whole lump is leavened with that which emanated from a few; but what practical application should be made of this axiom, "the majority will be in the right"? Ought it to be such as would lead us to throw political power, without stop or stay, directly into their hands, and abide all the consequences of their blundering apprenticeship, while in particulars in which the public interests are concerned, in which immediate action is required, they are *learning* to be right? Will it console us under the calamities which their ignorance may inflict, that they will know better in the end? And when the Commonwealth is in ruins, will this after-wisdom restore the shattered fabric, or indemnify those who have suffered during its disorganization? This notion of a ruined Commonwealth appears no visionary bugbear to those

who believe the continuance of a Christian and Catholic government essential to the well-being of the state.

Before we argue about public opinion, before we decide what this great power has already done, or what it ought to do, it would be as well to settle what we mean by the term. The public opinion of this country, on *particular points*, in *this* age of the world, is perfectly just and enlightened. On the Newtonian or Copernican system, for instance, public opinion now is identical with that of the philosopher in his closet. But what was public opinion on this same system in the age of Kepler and Galileo? (for Newton was anticipated in some measure by those great men.) If, however, by public opinion be meant the opinions of the multitude taken collectively, the general body of their opinions concerning all matters of which man can take cognizance,—this can no more be the best possible, than the mass of mankind are as able, moral, and enlightened as a certain number of individuals in every age. But ought not a state to be guided by the best possible opinions? Ought it to be swayed by the uncorrected thoughts of the multitude?

It is not high Tories and Churchmen alone who feel that in America public opinion is a tyrant,—because it is a public opinion not sufficiently acted on by the wisest and best individuals;—their voice has utterance, and in time is heard, but by the forms of society and of government established there,—especially the want of a landed gentry and influential endowed Church,—they do not enough prevail over the voices of the crowd; and the

will of the majority is too much felt for the welfare of the majority themselves. Many Americans are now admitting this, and it appears either implicitly or explicitly in the pages of every American traveller. Miss Martineau would have helped us to find it out had we needed her information.

With us, government hitherto has not been degraded in its character to that of a machine, the functions of those who are engaged in it being simply this, to ascertain and obey a popular will, like the index of a clock worked by a pendulum. Our laws and institutions have been moulded by the suggestions of a wise minority, which the mechanism of our state machinery enabled to come gradually into play ; so that the interests of the people have been consulted rather than their blind wishes. Thus, our constitution, considered as an outward thing, has been formed according to an idea of perfection (never in this world to be more than partially realized) —an idea existing equally in the minds of all our countrymen, but most distinctly and effectively developed in those which are aided by an acute and powerful intellect, improved to the highest point by education, study, and reflective leisure.

Is it not obvious from Dr. Park's own abstract that our government has never been popular in the sense in which my father denies it to have been such? Has it not ever been "a monarchy at once buttressed and limited by the aristocracy?" Was it ever popular as the American government is so? If not, still less has it been popular after such a sort as our modern Liberals

—our separators of Church and State—will leave no stone unturned to make it. On the other hand, is it not clear as noon-day—nay, gloried in by numbers—that, notwithstanding the prolonged duration of Parliament, the remnant of lordly influence in the popular elections and House of Commons, the standing army, and national debt, the British State is more democratic in this nineteenth century than at any former period? \* Ought it to be still more democratic; still more the mere representative of the multitude, and exponent of their will? Are we likely to fare better under the dominion of the people than this country did in former times, when government had not renounced its right to consult for the benefit of the community, even independently of its inclinations? On the answer to this question depends the answer to that of Dr. Park, were the acts above named constitutional?

The sage Whig Hallam is of opinion that the Reform Bill went too far in establishing democratic principles; and as to such politicians as Hume, Warburton, Roebuck, and their allies, I should imagine they sympathized but little in the anxiety of reasoners like Dr. Park and S. T. C., for the balance of powers, and so that they could but succeed in overthrowing the Church and the aristocracy, would care much less than a straw for the old and venerable idea of the British Constitution.

\* We cannot surely imagine that more power and liberty were really enjoyed by the people under the sway of the strong-headed, strong-handed Cromwell, or that their interests were more attended to during the corrupt reign of Charles II.—S. C.

A noble national character belongs to the people of England, and grieved indeed should I be to suppose that they wanted a "foundation of moderation and good sense." But how are those good qualities to be most efficiently improved, confirmed, elicited? How does a wise mother act in regard to the children under her care,—those children in whom she perceives with delight the germs and first shoots of a thousand amiable affections and excellent dispositions? I need hardly say that she does not trust to them solely; that she remembers of what jarring elements man is a compound; and that she takes care to keep the passions and infirm tempers of her charge in due restraint, in order that their good feelings and reasoning habits may be strengthened and increased. Just so should a paternal government act towards the national family which it has to govern.

These are some of the thoughts which have been suggested to me by the perusal of Dr. Park's instructive abstract. I am aware that they are quite imperfect and inconclusive; but they give a notion of the way in which I have been led to look on the subject of government.

## XII.

Insanity—Intermediate State of the Departed not distinctly  
revealed in Scripture.

To Mrs. JOSHUA STANGER.

10 *Chester Place, November 28th, 1837.*—In many cases of insanity, I believe there has been a lucid interval

before death, but in such a case as that of — this was perhaps hardly to be expected. Where derangement has been brought out by some mental cause, the last illness may produce a change both in mind and body, which may for a short time restore reason. But derangement in — was merely a symptom of general bodily decay, and it was not likely that an increase of that very weakness which first disordered her faculties should be attended by any brightening of them.

It is very awful to think in how many ways the opportunity of a death-bed preparation may be denied us ; it may be prevented not only by sudden death, but also by loss of mental power, only to terminate in dissolution. We may trust, however, that for our friends “to die is gain,” whatever may be the immediate or intermediate state of those who thus leave us. Mr. Dodsworth, Mr. J. H. Newman, and other influential writers, insist strongly on this point, that the Resurrection, and not the departure from this life, is the period on which the hope of a Christian ought to be fixed ; and they say it is too common to hear the bereaved enlarge on the *immediate* felicity of the released sufferer escaped from his tabernacle of clay. For my part, I cannot think all the texts they bring to prove their points entirely conclusive ; and it does not seem clear to me that Scripture has left anything positively revealed on this subject. For all practical purposes, the death of every Christian is to him the coming of the Lord.

## CHAPTER VII.

1838.

Letters to her Husband, to Mrs. Joshua Stranger, Mrs. Plummer,  
Miss A. Brooke, Miss Trevenen.



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## I.

Letter of Condolence to a Friend on the Death of a Brother.\*

To Mrs. JOSHUA STANGER, Wandsworth.

10 *Chester Place, Regent's Park, January 16th, 1838.*

—My dear friend,—By this time I conclude you are returned from your distressful and agitating journey; and I will no longer delay to express my grief at the melancholy termination of all your long anxieties for your dear brother. But in this case there really and truly is much to soothe and console your feelings, and there is no difficulty in finding a topic of comfort on the subject, when I have such a happy conviction that *he* was prepared to exchange this world for a more blessed state of existence, and that you have a heart sufficiently disciplined by thought and previous trial, and that heavenly aid of which thought and trial are but instruments, to take true pleasure in the contemplation of his “great gain;” and look back on his past life, not so much to awaken earthly regret, as to find sources of satisfaction in regard to that which we trust he now enjoys. For,

\* The youngest son of Dr. Calvert of Greta Bank, Keswick, Cumberland, and nephew of the Raisley Calvert who was Mr. Wordsworth's friend. His only sister, Mrs. Joshua Stanger, was my mother's earliest friend and companion in their native vale; to which she returned in 1843, after a few years spent in the South; and now dwells there in the midst of her own people.—E. C.

indeed, a more innocent and conscientious creature I really believe he has not left behind him, among all his survivors, as far as I know ; and purity, though no passport to heaven, is a great qualification for a blessed station there. The want of it for a course of many years, may be made up for by our Saviour's perfect righteousness. Yet, "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ;" and surely those who have been pure and peaceful all their lives, as I imagine to have been the case with your dear brother, must have a special enjoyment of this heavenly privilege.

Your loss, and the tears of natural sorrow which I know you must shed, have made me vividly imagine what my own feelings would be on the loss of either of my brothers. The wrench would indeed be severe. I suffered much in parting with my beloved father, but unfortunately I had been so little in his society during my life, being separated from him by illness during two or three years of our residence at Hampstead, that his departure did not make so great a difference to my heart as it would have done otherwise. And so accustomed had I been to commune with him in his books, more than face to face, that even now I never feel, while I peruse his sayings, chiefly on religious subjects, as if he were no more of this world. I fear it will be difficult for me to learn resignation by your trials, but I trust they will not be altogether lost on me for salutary admonition ; and I can represent them more strongly to myself than those of persons with whom and with whose connections I am less intimate. Dear Raisley's

image, indeed, is associated with all my early recollection, and haunts the scenes of my childhood and girlhood, which memory presents with more warmth and distinctness than those of after-life.—Believe me, my dear Mary, your truly affectionate friend,

SARA COLERIDGE.

## II.

Mr. Gillman's Life of her Father—Earlier Development of Mr. Coleridge's Mind in the Direction of Poetry than in that of Theological Research.

To Mr. GILLMAN, The Grove, Highgate.

*May 8th*, 1838.—I must tell you how gratified I have been by the perusal of the first volume of the Life.\* I assure you we all feel deeply cheered and pleased to think that such a record of a good man's affection and respect for S. T. C. will exist for the world. The work contains many new and, as I think, valuable pieces of my father's writing and conversation; and I cannot but believe that it will be read with profit and pleasure by many persons less nearly interested in the subject of the Memoir than myself. My father's life must necessarily seem deficient in outward events to those who care for nothing but story. His letters would not tell his external history as those of Sir Walter Scott did his; and many circumstances must be passed over cursorily or in silence by a biographer of strictly delicate feeling.

\* "Life and Letters of S. T. Coleridge," by James Gillman, Esq.—E. C.

But there are many meditative, reflective readers in the world, many who appreciate my father's works and admire his unworldly and deeply-feeling character, and they will be glad to peruse a memoir of S. T. C. such as the present, undebased by the display of paltry vanity and selfish pride. I am glad Mr. Gillman put a note and a comment on the letter about Trinity to Mr. Cottle. Not with such arguments did my father defend the great Catholic doctrine in later years; but it is part of the history of his mind, and shows how far it was from having attained to its full growth in philosophical theology, when in poetry it had come into the most perfect blossom.

### III.

Blessing of Fraternal Affection—Danger to which it is exposed from Human Infirmity.

To Mrs. PLUMMER, Gateshead.

10 *Chester Place, July 20th, 1838.*—The longer I live the more deeply I enter into the spirit of the Psalmist's animated expressions about fraternal unity and love. But minds must be in almost a heavenly state before this unity and love can reign uninterruptedly among them. The contentions and passing anger of childhood are succeeded by sources of disagreement and alienation in too many cases of a much deeper kind. Brothers and sisters marry, and the new interests and discordant feelings of the fresh family connexions are often found

to weaken attachments and all but sever fraternal friendships which would otherwise produce a great deal of happiness. All this is expressed in the gross ; but a *something* of what I allude to alloys the social comfort of most family circles which I happen to know intimately. There would be little use in reflecting upon these unpleasant topics, to mention which I was led away, I scarce know how, if the contemplation of the evil did not lead to such measures for its avoidance or mitigation as are within our power ; and that there are many such, your cheerful temper will lead you very readily to believe and affirm.

IV.

Seaside Occupations—Bathing : Childish Timidity not to be cured by Compulsion—Letter-writing : Friendly Letters, like Visits, not mere Vehicles for News.

To Mrs. PLUMMER, Gateshead.

*Herne Bay, Aug. 30th, 1838.*—You ask for a letter from Herne Bay, and I take the opportunity to comply with your request now that papa and the children and Ann have just set off on the rumble of the coach for Canterbury. I have been strolling on the beach, rejoicing that the Canterbury visitors have so softly brilliant a day for their excursion, yet partly regretting that they have turned their backs on the bathing-place. This is quite a day to make Herby in love with the ocean waters. At first he suffered much from fear

when he had to enter them, and he has not yet achieved the feat of going thoroughly overhead; but I think you will agree with us that no good would be done by forcing him. Troy town, as he long ago observed himself in reference to the treatment of children, after all was *not* taken by force. Bathing is not like a surgical operation, which does good however unwillingly submitted to; and we cannot make children fearless by compelling them to undergo the subject of their fears. This process, indeed, has sometimes made cowards for life. There is much in habit, doubtless, but persons who act upon this truth, without seeing its practical limitations, often commit great errors.\*

I must not, however, proceed to state these limitations, and see whether or no they agree with your speculations on child management, seeing that my paper and my time have their limitations too. *Apropos* to this last point, however, I must digress again, to say how few people have what I consider just and clear notions on the subject of letter-writing! † You are one of my few cordial, genial correspondents who do not fill the first page of their epistles with asseverations of how much they have to do, or how little news they have to

\* It may be worth while to mention, in proof of the practical success of my mother's indulgent system, that the early nervousness here alluded to completely passed away. My brother learned to swim as easily as most boys as soon as he went to school at Eton, where bathing and boating became his favourite amusements.—E. C.

† The lady whose letter-writing style is thus pleasantly described is the wife of the Rev. Matthew Plummer, Vicar of Heworth, and author of several useful works on Church matters.—E. C.

tell, and how sure you are, as soon as it is at all necessary to your well-being, to hear it from some other quarter. Why do these people waste time in visiting their friends of an evening, or calling on them of a morning? Why do they not pickle and preserve, and stitch and house-keep all day long, since those and such-like are the only earthly things needful? The answer doubtless would be, "Friendships must be kept up; out of sight out of mind; and as man is a social creature, he must attend to the calls of society." Now, it is exactly on this ground, and not, in nine cases out of ten, for the sake of communicating news, that letter-writing is to be advocated. It is a method of visiting our friends in their absence, and one which has some advantages peculiar to itself: for persons who have any seriousness of character at all, endeavour to put the better part of their mind upon paper; and letter-writing is one of the many calls which life affords to put our minds in order, the salutary effect of which is obvious.

## V.

The History of Rome, by Dr. Arnold—The Study of Divinity, Poetry, and Physiology, preferred to that of History or Politics—Christian Theology, as an Intellectual System, based on Metaphysics—Importance of Right Views on these Subjects—National Education the proper Work of the Church.

To Miss ARABELLA BROOKE.

*Herne Bay, September 8th, 1838.*—We are reading Dr. Arnold's "Rome," and feel that we now for the first



time see the old Romans off the stage, with their buskins laid aside, and talking like other men and women. They do not lose by this: the force of the Roman character is as clearly brought out in Dr. Arnold's easy, matter-of-fact, modern narrative, as it could have been in the stilted though eloquent language of their own historians. People say how Whiggish it is, in spite of the disclaimers in the preface. There is certainly a great deal of anti-aristocracy in it; but then, I imagine, if ever aristocracy showed itself in odious colours, it must have been during the early times of Rome; and no faithful historian could have concealed this, though he might have manifested less zeal and alacrity in the task of exposing it. However, I speak in ignorance: politics and history are subjects in which I have less of my desultory feminine sort of information than some others which seem rather more within my compass. Divinity may be as wide a field as politics; but it is not so far out of a woman's way, and you derive more benefit from partial and short excursions into it. I should say the same in regard to poetry, natural history in all its branches, and even metaphysics—the study of which, when judiciously pursued, I cannot but think highly interesting and useful, and in no respect injurious.

The truth is, those who undervalue this branch of philosophy, or rather this root and stem of it, seem scarce aware how impossible it is for any reflective Christian to be without metaphysics of one kind or other. Without being aware of it, we all receive a metaphysical scheme, either partially or wholly, from

those who have gone before us ; and by its aid we interpret the Bible. It is but few perhaps who have time to acquire any clear or systematic knowledge of divinity. When the heart is right, individuals may be in some respects first-rate Christians without any speculative insight, because the little time for study is caused by active exertion ; and this active exertion, pursued in a religious spirit, and converted into the service of God by the way of performing it, is perhaps the most effective school of Christianity. But when there *is* time to read, then I do think that, both for the sake of others and of ourselves, the cultivation of the intellect, with a view to religious knowledge, is a positive duty ; and I believe it to be clearly established, though not cordially and generally admitted, that the study of metaphysics is the best preparatory exercise for a true understanding of the Bible. False metaphysics can be counteracted by true metaphysics alone ; and divines who have not the one can hardly fail, I think, to have the other. . . . .

My husband is warmly interested in a plan for improving National Schools, and bringing them into connection with the Church, on the basis of the National Society. Henry sent the explanatory papers drawn up by the Committee of the National Society to Dr. Arnold ; but he, "with regret," declined to sign, on account of the too great influence which, in his view, the clergy would have over the education machine. Perhaps you will feel with him ; but all must admit

that it is a difficult problem how any education worthy of the name can be carried out without religion, and how religion worthy of the name can be taught without the framework of certain doctrines.

## VI.

Literary Varieties—Spirituality of Northern Nations, and Metaphysical Subtlety of the Greeks.

To her Husband.

*Chester Place, September 1838.*—The introduction to this work\* is an excellent piece of criticism, written in a good style, with a spice of your own living individual manner in it, a sort of refined downrightness; your manner compared with my father's is as short-crust to puff paste.

“A passion for descending into the depths of the spiritual being of men,” is ascribed to the Scandinavians and Germans; true, they are more spiritual than the Southern, and yet what could exceed the metaphysical subtlety of the ancient Greeks? The *feelings* of the former are more imbued with a seeking of the supernatural, and yet the intellect of the latter could sound any depths of the spirit which are fathomable by man, as S. T. C. seems to say in the “Friend,” where he speaks of their great advances in metaphysical lore, compared with their backwardness in science.

\* The “Introduction to Homer,” by H. N. Coleridge.—E. C.

VII.

Miracle of the Raising of Lazarus passed over by the Synoptical Gospels.

To the Same.

*Chester Place, September 1838.*—The more one thinks of it the more puzzling it seems that the raising of Lazarus is only recorded in St. John's Gospel. The common way of accounting for the matter cannot easily be set down, but yet it does not satisfy. We feel there may be something yet in the case which we do not fathom, and knowing as we do from constant experience how much there is in most things which transcend our knowledge,—what unsuspected facts and truths have come to light, and explained phenomena of which we had given quite different explanations previously,—we cannot but feel that the true way of accounting for this discrepancy has never yet come to light.

VIII.

Connection between the Senses and the Mind—Poetic Genius implies a sensitive Organization—Early Greatness of great Poets—Poetic Imagination of Plato brought to bear upon Abstract Ideas.

To the Same.

*Herne Bay, September 21st, 1838.*—Herbert is a most sensitive child, as alive to every kind of sensation, as quick in faculties. Indeed, I believe that this sensitiveness does itself tend to quicken and stimulate the intellect. He will have especial *need* of self-control, and I trust in time that he will have it ; but at his age the sun of true

reason has but sent up its rays above the horizon; its orb is not yet visible. If we are fearfully and wonderfully made in body, how much more so in mind, and how much less can we fathom the constitution of the latter than of the former! But considered in a *large sense* they are *one*; else how could the mind act on the body, the body on the mind? Where the senses are active and rapid ministers to the mind, supplying it abundantly and promptly with thought-materials, no wonder that the intellect makes speedy advances; and such sensitiveness is doubtless one constituent of a poet. Still, whether or no true greatness and high genius shall be discovered, must depend upon the constitution and properties of the intellect in itself; and this is the reason that so many fine buds prove but indifferent flowers, rather than the popular account of the matter that the sooner the plant blossoms, the sooner it will fade and fall. Never tell me that Milton and Shakespeare were not as wonderful children as the young Rosciuses, or any other modern prodigy, and hollow puff-ball! How exquisitely does Plato illustrate his subject out of his own actual history, out of things moving, sensuous and present, filling with life blood the dry, though clear and symmetrical vein-work of his metaphysic anatomy!

## IX.

Treasures of English Literature—Arnold's "Rome."

To the Same.

*October 6th, 1838.*—I see you have Locke's works in folio, and a good Addison. How the possession of these

works makes us feel the littleness of our reading—of what we can really mark, learn, and digest. “Amid a thousand tables we stand,” and though we do not “want food,” having access to those tables, yet how sparingly can we partake! Even as it is, what a strange, superficial thing is the ordinary way of reading a book, even when we fancy ourselves reading with attention. I more and more grudge to bestow time on the literature of the day, and the book club will not gain much of my devotion. Arnold’s “Rome” is no mere ephemeral; that book seems destined to fill a permanent place, both as embodying Niebuhr, and from its own merits, as an able, animated history and historical commentary. I do not judge of it as to arrangement of parts, nor praise it as to the minute details of style, but the style, considered in a large view, is its great charm, and it is certainly a characteristic and vigorous work. The account of Dionysius the Tyrant, and remarks on his character, and that of the Greek tyrannies are especially striking.

## X.

The Homeric Ithaca—Autobiographical Air of the Odyssey.

To the Same.

*October 2nd, 1838.*—What an enigma the Homeric Ithaca is! It seems quite out of the question that it should be Thiaki. And why should it send only twelve suitors if it were the huge island Cephalonia? The vivid natu-

ralness of the "Odyssey" seems to have inspired the notion of its being an autobiography into the minds of critics who differ in various particulars. No doubt it was so in the same way that the "History of the Plague" and other such fictions were true history. It brought together sundry incidents and places with which the writer or writers were perfectly familiar from some means or other. There is a very natural passage of this kind in "Don Juan," taken from some personal narrative, and merely versified. It seems as if some critics wrote by *feel*. Le Chevalier had a true *sense* of a certain characteristic of the "Odyssey," but how absurdly, as it appears to me, has he enunciated and reasoned upon it! Bryant's anti-Asiatic theory seems to run in the face of the poem. Surely he must have looked at some place in Egypt, and remembered detached passages in the "Iliad," without considering the general aspect of the whole.

## XI.

Description of the Falls of Niagara in Miss Martineau's  
"Retrospect of Western Travel."

To Miss E. TREVENEN, Helston.

*October* 1838.—Miss Martineau's "Retrospect of Western Travel" I have read and enjoyed. It takes you through out-door scenes, and though the politics are overpowering now and then, it freshens you up by wanderings amid woods and rivers, and over mountain brows, and among tumbling waterfalls. I think Miss

Martineau made one more at home with Niagara than any of the other American travellers. She gives one a most lively *waterfallish* feeling, introduces one not only to the huge mass of rushing water, but to the details of the environs, the wood in which the stream runs away, &c. She takes you over it and under it, before it and behind it, and seems as if she were performing a duty she owed to the genius of the cataract, by making it thoroughly well-known to those at a distance, rather than desirous to display her own talent by writing a well-rounded period or a terse paragraph about it.

## XII.

### Lukewarm Christians.

To the Same.

*Chester Place, December 1838.*—I have no doubt that — disapproves of the Catholic party just as much as of the Evangelicals, and on very similar grounds. It is not the peculiar doctrines which offend thinkers of this description. About them they neither know nor care. It is the *high tone*, the insisting upon *principles*, to ascertain the truth or unsoundness of which requires more thought than they are disposed to bestow on such a subject. It is the zeal and warmth and eagerness by which tempers of this turn are offended. The blunders and weakness of warm religionists are not the *sources* of their distaste, but the *pretexts* by which they justify to themselves an aversion which has a very different



origin. Be kind to the poor, nurse the sick, perform all duties of charity and generosity, be not religious overmuch—above all, keep in the background all the peculiar cardinal doctrines of Christianity—avoid all vices and gross sins—believe the Bible to be true, without troubling yourself about particulars—behave as resignedly as you can when misfortunes happen—feel grateful to God for His benefits—think at times of your latter end, and try “to dread your grave as little as your bed,” if possible. Such will ever be—more or less pronounced and professed—the sum of religion in many very amiable and popular persons. Anything more than this they will throw cold water upon by bucketsful.

CHAPTER VIII.

1839.

Letters to her Husband, Mrs. Plummer, Miss A. Brooke,  
Miss Trevenen.



Characteristics of the Oxford School of Divines—Catholicisms, even for the best Purposes, not favourable to Truth—Superior Confidence inspired by an Independent Thinker—Are Presbyterians Excluded from the Visible Church?—Authority of Hooker cited against such a decision—Defence of the Title of Protestant—Luther's Injustice commonly done to his Character and Work.

To Mrs. PLUMMER, Heworth Vicarage, Gateshead.

10 *Chester Place, Regent's Park, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1839.*  
 —The "Letter of a Reformed Catholic," \* and that on the "Origin of Popery," I think remarkably well done, clear, able, and popular. Such judgment as I have on such a matter I give unto you, and this need not imply any presumption on my part. But though I can sincerely express my approbation of the way in which these performances are *executed*, I must candidly confess that I do not follow your husband on the Oxford road, so far as he seems to have proceeded. On some subjects, specially handled by Newman and his school, my judgment is suspended. On some points I think the apostolicals quite right, on others clearly unscriptural and unreasonable, wilfully and ostentatiously maintaining positions which, if carried out to their full length, would overthrow the foundations of all religion.

\* A Controversial Pamphlet, by the Rev. Matthew Plummer.—E. C.

I consider the party as having done great service in the religious world, and that in various ways ; sometimes by bringing forward what is wholly and absolutely true ; sometimes by promoting discussion on points in which I believe their own views to be partly erroneous ; sometimes by exposing gross deficiencies in doctrine in the religion of the day ; sometimes by keenly detecting the self-flatteries and practical mistakes of religionists. But the worst of them, in my opinion, is that they are, one and all, *party men* ; and just so far as we become absorbed in a party, just so far are we in danger of parting with honesty and good sense. This is why I honour Frederic Maurice, and feel *inclined* to put trust in his writings, antecedently to an express knowledge of their contents, because he stands alone, and looks only to God and his own conscience. Such is human nature, that as soon as ever men league together, even for the purest and most exalted objects, their carnal leaven begins to ferment. Insensibly their aims take a less spiritual character, and their means are proportionately vulgarized and debased. Now, when I speak of *leaguings together*, of course I do not mean that Mr. Newman and his brother divines exact pledges from one another like men on the hustings, but I do believe that there is a tacit but efficient general compact among them all. Like the Evangelicals whom they so often condemn on this very point, they use a characteristic phraseology ; they have their badges and party marks ; they lay great stress on trifling external matters ; they have a stock of arguments and topics in common. No sooner has Newman blown the Gospel

blast, than it is repeated by Pusey, and Pusey is re-echoed from Leeds. Keble privately persuades Froude, Froude spouts the doctrines of Keble to Newman, and Newman publishes them as "Froude's Remains." Now, it seems to me that, under these circumstances, truth has not quite a fair chance. A man has hardly time to *reflect on his own reflections*, and ask himself, in the stillness of his heart, whether the views he has put forth are strictly the truth, and nothing more or less than the truth; if, the moment they have parted from him, they are eagerly embraced by a set of prepossessed partisans, who assure him and all the rest of the world that they are thoroughly excellent. (How many truly great men have modified their views after publication, and in subsequent works have written in a somewhat altered strain.)

These writers, too, hold the dangerous doctrine of the "economy of truth." Consistently with these views, if one of them wrote ever so extravagantly, the others would refrain from exposing him, for fear they should injure the cause, at least so long as he remained with them, on principal points. God, of course, can bring good out of evil, and in this way I do believe that the errors of the party will serve His cause in the end as well as their sound tenets. Yet I cannot think that what I have described is the truest method of promoting pure religion; and it seems to me that the most effective workmen in the Lord's vineyard, those whose work tells most *in the end*, are they who do not agree beforehand to co-operate, but who pursue their own task without regard to the way in which others execute theirs.

Well, I have looked at the "Reformed Catholic" again, and think it as well done as I did at first; but still there are some points on which I am not quite of the writer's mind.

I cannot yet bring myself to believe that the Kirk of Scotland in no sense belongs to the Body of Christ—in no sense makes a part of the visible Christian Church. Would Hooker have said so? \* One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; these are the only essentials, I think, which he names. A man may even be a heretic, yet not altogether—nay, not at all—excluded from this communion, though he can never belong to the mystical invisible Church of the elect till he becomes a Christian in heart and mind, as well as in outward profession. The Kirk may have deprived herself of a privilege by losing the episcopal succession, may have thrown away a benefit by rejecting the government of bishops (if we only put the matter in the outward light), yet she may still make an erring part of that Church to which Christ's Spirit is promised.

This, however, is a difficult subject. I do not pretend to have very decided convictions upon it. Of one thing, however, I feel pretty sure, that I shall call myself a *Protestant* to the end of my days. Yes! a Catholic Christian, as I humbly hope,—and, *moreover*, a Protestant of the Church of England. I profess that

\* But we speak now of the visible Church, whose children are signed with this mark, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." In whomsoever these things are, the Church doth acknowledge them for her children; them only she holdeth for aliens and strangers in whom these things are not found.—Hooker, Eccl. Pol. Book, book iii., ch. 1.—E. C.

“ Reformed Protestant Religion ” which our monarch swears to defend on his coronation ; the Protestantism of Cranmer and Hooker, of Taylor, of Jackson, and of Leighton. These are great names, and dear and venerable are the associations with the title of Protestant in my mind. To call myself such does not make me a whit the less Christian and Catholic, nor imply that I am so ; it does not mix me up with sectarians any more than the latter term connects me with the gross errors and grievous practices of Romanists, who, whether they are entitled to the name or not, will always assume it. As for its being a *modern* designation,—that which rendered a distinctive appellation necessary is an event of modern times ; and that, I think, is a sufficient defence of it on this score. “ Reformed Catholic ” savours altogether of Newman and the nineteenth century.

In regard to Luther, I do not jumble him up with our reformers as to the whole of his theology ;—on some points he was less orthodox than they. But I cannot think it altogether just to say that he “ left, rather than reformed the Church.” It is the Oxford fashion to dwell upon what he omitted, to throw into shade the mighty works which he did ; to hold him forth as a corrupter, to forget that he was a great and wonderful reformer. If there were “ giants in those days,” the mightiest of them all was the invincible German. And how any man who thinks deeply on religious subjects can bring himself to speak scorn of this brave Christian warrior, or how he can divest his spirit of gratitude towards so great a benefactor, to whose magnanimity,



more than to any other single instrument in God's hand, it is owing that we are not blind buyers of indulgences at this hour, I confess is past my comprehension.

“ In our halls is hung  
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old.”

Blighting breaths may tarnish the lustre of those trophies for a passing moment ; but it is too late in the day to teach us that Milton is *not a poet*, and that Luther and Wycliffe, and Ridley, and Latimer were not worthy champions of the faith.

## II.

A Little Lecturer—Stammering a Nervous Affection, dependent  
on the Imagination.

To her Husband.

*Chester Place, Sept. 4th, 1839.*—Herby preached last night about chemical matters like a regular lecturer ; I thought he looked quite a little Correggiesque Mercury, —or something between Hermes and Cupid,—as he stood on the little chair *lecturing* volubly, and throwing out one leg and arm, with his round face glowing with childish animation, and a mixture of intelligence and puerility. The conclusion was after a list of names a league long, “ and the last is something like so and so ; but the chemist's man had a pen in his mouth when he answered my question about it, and I could not hear distinctly how he pronounced the name.” It is wonder-

ful how clearly he speaks when there is an impulse from within which overbears and makes him forget the difficulty of articulation.\* For it certainly is the pre-imagination of the difficulty of pronouncing a word that ties the tongue in those who stammer. F. M. could pronounce a studied oration without stuttering ; I account for the fact in this way : it was the hurry of mind, excited by the anticipation of an *indefinite* field of words to be uttered, which paralyzed his articulating powers. With a paper before him, or a set speech on the tablet of his memory, he said to himself : thus much have I to pronounce and no more ; whereas in extemporary speech there is an uncertainty, an unlimitedness, the sense of which leads most talkers to inject a *plus quam sufficit* of *you knows* into their discourse, and which causes others to hesitate. The imagination is certainly the seat of the affection, or rather the source of it. The disorder may be defined as a specific weakness of the nerves in connection with a particular imagination, or it may arise and be generated during the inexplicable reciprocal action, *wechsel-wirkung*, of one upon the other, in which, as S. T. C. says, the cause is at the same time the effect, and *vice versa*. The curious thing is, that there is an idiosyncrasy in this, as perhaps to some degree in all other complaints, and every different stammerer stammers in his own way, and under different circumstances.

\* The slight impediment in his speech, to which my brother was subject as a child, was never entirely outgrown, though it diminished considerably in after years.—E. C.

III.

Philosophy of the "Excursion."

To the Same.

*Chester Place, Sept. 17th, 1839.*—I am deep in the "Excursion," and am interested at finding how much of Kant and Coleridge is embodied in its philosophy, especially in "Despondency Corrected." I should not say that the "Excursion" was as intensely poetical, as pure poetry, as ecstatic, as many of the minor pieces; it holds more of a middle place between poetry, philosophy, and the thoughtful, sentimental story. But it is exquisite, be it what it may.

IV.

Lord Byron on the Lake Poets.

To the Same.

*Chester Place, October 4th, 1839.*—"The Lake Poets are never vulgar." I often think of this remark of Lord Byron. Genius is an antiseptic against vulgarity; but still no men that I ever met, except downright patricians, were so absolutely unvulgar as Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth.

V.

Writing to Order—Sunday Stories and Spanish Romances.

To Miss E. TREVENEN, Helston.

*Chester Place, 1839.*—Miss ——'s stories are, as you observe, "remarkably fit for their purpose." How she

can contrive to write so exactly as a story composer for a Society ought to write ; how she can manage to be so wholly and solely under the dictation of the *proper sort* of spirit, I cannot imagine. I, for my part, am neither *goody* enough nor good enough (and I humbly admit that to submit on proper occasions to *goodness* of a certain kind is a part of goodness) for anything of the sort. I should feel like a dog hunting in a clog, or a cat in gloves, or a gentleman's carriage forced to go upon a railroad ; or, to ascend a little higher, as Christian and his fellow-pilgrim did when they left the narrow path, and got into the fields by the side of it. I should always be grudging at the Society's quickset hedge on the right hand and the left. As for Herbert, he is deep in "Amadis de Gaul ;" and the boy that is full of the Endriago and Andandana, and Don Galaor, and the Flower of Chivalry himself, and his peerless Oriana, is not quite in the right mood to relish good charity schoolgirls, and the conversion of cottagers that don't go to church, which Nurse, however, thinks worth all the Endriagos in the world.

## VI.

Pain more bearable when its Cause is Known—Books and Letters *composed*, but never Written—Musings on Eternity—"We know not yet what we shall be"—Descriptions of Heaven, Symbolical, Material, and Spiritual—Conjectures of Various Writers respecting the Condition of Departed Souls.

To Miss ARABELLA BROOKE, Gamstone Rectory, East Retford.

*Chester Place*, 1839.—It is painful to be unable to un-

derstand one's suffering, to translate it into an intelligible language, and bring it distinctly before the mind's eye. But it is already a sign that we are no longer wholly subdued by its power, when we can analyze it, and make this very indefiniteness an object of contemplation. This evinces a degree of mastery over that which has of late been a tyrant. And if "to be weak is miserable" (oh! how often have I thanked Milton for that line!), to exercise any kind of power, or have any kind of strength, is so far an abatement of mystery. To be sure, the explanation which my father gives of this mental fact, the uneasiness felt at the *unintelligibility* of an affection, when we cannot tell whence it arises nor whither it tends, is not a little abstruse, and what is popularly called transcendental. "There is always a consolatory feeling that accompanies the sense of a proportion between antecedents and consequents. It is eternity revealing itself in the form of time."

Dear Miss Brooke, there are not many persons to whom I should quote a metaphysical passage of S. T. C. in a letter; but I see you are one who like to be what the world calls idle—that is, outwardly still from the inward activity of thought—to pause and look down into the deep stream, instead of hastening on in view of the shallow, sparkling runnel. Dear me! some people *think* more over the first page of an essay than others do while they write a volume. Thinking too much, and trying to dive deeper and deeper into every subject that presents itself, is rather an obstacle to much writing. It drags the wheels of composition; for

before a book can be written, there is a great deal to be *done*: contemplation is not the whole business. I am convinced that the Cherubim do not write books, much less publish them, or make bargains with booksellers, or submit to the ordeal of disgusting puffery and silly censure. I am convinced they do nothing but think; while the Seraphim are equally given up to the business of loving.

But I must consider the limits of this letter, and the observations which it ought to contain, and my letter-writing strength, which is at present but small. I am truly grieved that I cannot give a proper answer to your last, or its interesting predecessor, which came with Abercrombie's Essay. If I could but put on paper, without too much bodily fatigue, half the thoughts which your reflective epistles suggested to me, little as they might be worth your reading, you would see that your letters had done their work, and were not like winds passing across the Vale of Stones, but like those gales which put a whole forest in motion. That reminds me of another advantage enjoyed by the Cherubim and Seraphim. I am sure they do not write letters with pen, ink, or paper, nor put them into the post, nor stop to consider whether they are worth postage, nor look about for franks and private conveyances. They have a quintessence of our earthly enjoyments and privileges: the husk for them drops off, and all is pure spirit and intelligence.

All this nonsense is excusable in me, because I am poorly, out of humour with those activities in which I

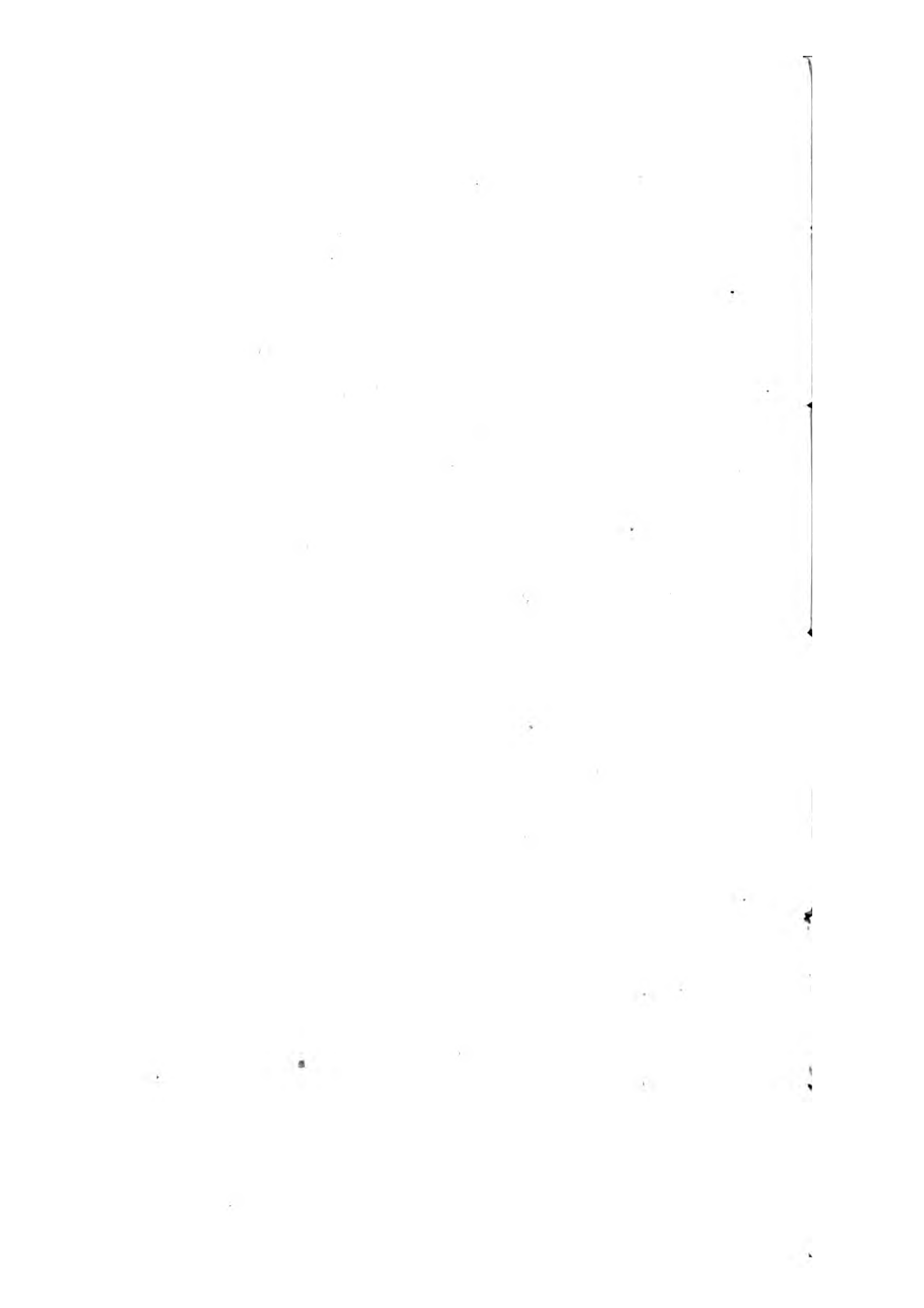
cannot share, and quite cross and splenetic because I am not as free from fleshy ills and earthly fetters as the angels in heaven. *Apropos* to which, I have not read Mr. Taylor's Book, and from your account of it am afraid I should not be such a reader as he would wish to have, unless, indeed, he confines himself to the statement of a few principles which may guide our views respecting the life to come, instead of attempting to describe it particularly, like Dr. Watts and others. It seems to me so obvious, both from the reason of the thing and the manner in which Scripture deals with it, that "if one came from the dead" to tell us all about it, he would leave us as wise as he found us. In what language could he express himself? In a language of symbols? But that we have already in the Bible; and we want to translate it literally, or at least into literal expressions. We know that they who have pleased God shall be eternally blessed; that they who have sinned against the light will suffer from a worm that never dies: and what more can we know while we are roofed over by our house of clay? A true account of the other world would surely be to the inhabitants of earth as a theory of music to the deaf, or the geometry of light to the blind.

Inquirers into the future state are all either Irvingites or Swedenborgians, horrified as most of them might be to be compared either with Irving or Swedenborg. They either give us earth newly done up and furnished by way of our final inheritance, observing that man is essentially finite, and must therefore have a material

dwelling-place; or they talk of a *spiritual* heaven, while the description they give of it is only a refined edition of the things and goings-on of this world. What else *can* it be? All conjecturers may not talk of "wax-candles in Heaven," but the spirit which dictated the thought is in every one of them.

I think I shall never read another sermon on the Intermediate State. Newman has no Catholic consent to show for his views on that subject, though doubtless they come in great measure from the Fathers. The supposition that blessedness and misery hereafter may both arise from increased powers, reminds me of an oft-quoted passage in a work of S. T. C., in which he conjectures that an infinite memory may be the Book of Judgment in which all our past life is written, and every idle word recorded in characters from which our eyes can never be averted. It was a fine thought in Swedenborg to represent the unblest spirits in the other world as *mad*. His visions are founded on many deep truths of religion. Had he given them as an allegorical fiction like the "Pilgrim's Progress," it would have been well.

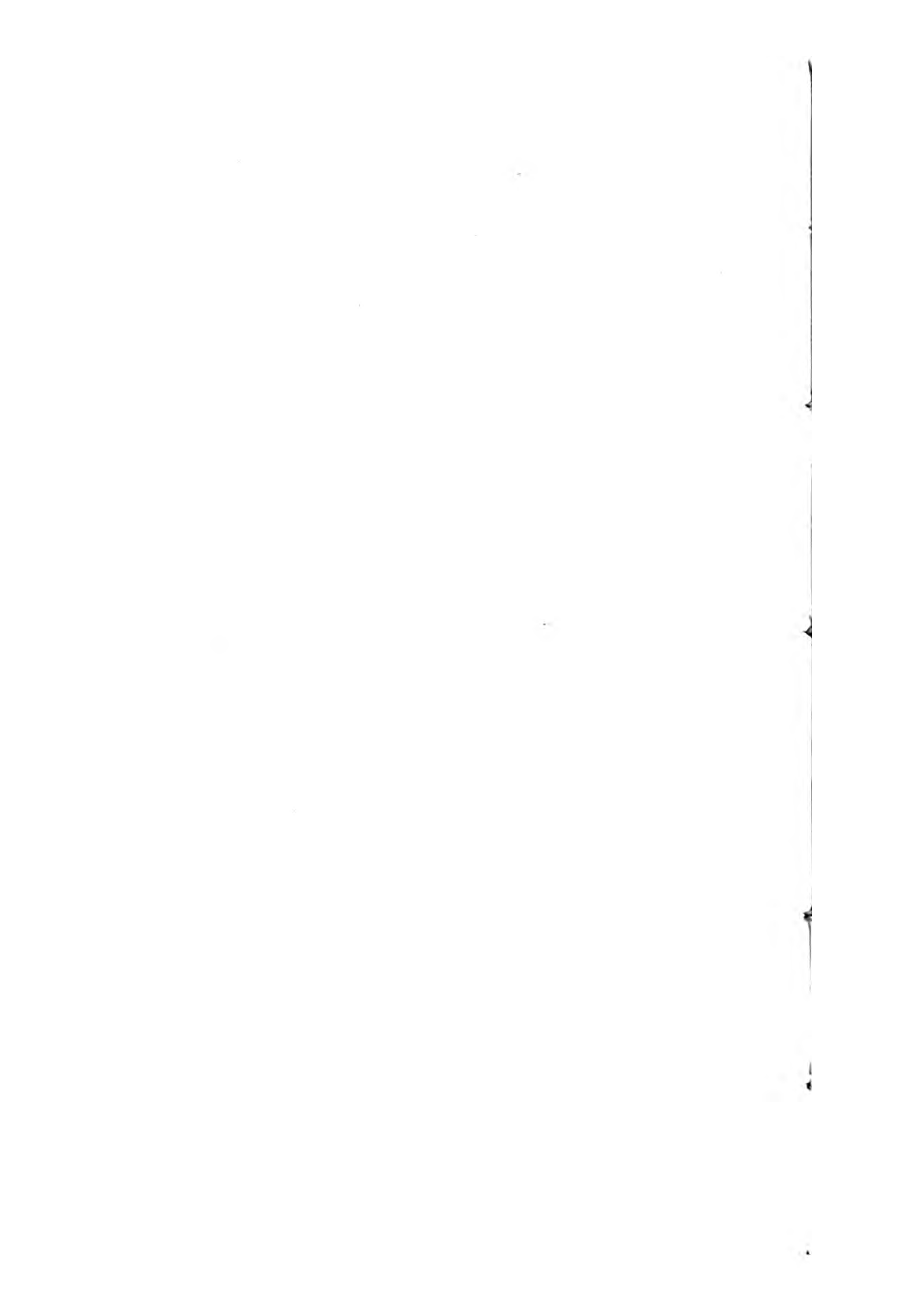




## CHAPTER IX.

1840.

Letters to her Husband, her eldest Brother, Mrs. J. Stanger,  
Mrs. H. M. Jones.



## I.

Love of Books a Source of Happiness, and likely to be increased  
by Classical Studies.

To her Eldest Brother.

*January*, 1840.—I have a strong opinion that a *genuine* love of books is one of the greatest blessings of life for man and woman, and I cannot help thinking that by persons in our middle station it may be enjoyed (more at one time, less at another, but certainly during the course of life to a great extent enjoyed) without neglect of any duty. A woman *may* house-keep, if she chooses, from morning to night, or she may be constantly at her needle, or she may be always either receiving or preparing for company, but whatever those who practise these things may say, it is not necessary in most cases for a woman to spend her *whole* time in this manner. Now, I cannot but think that the knowledge of the ancient languages very greatly enhances the pleasure taken in literature—that it gives depth and variety to reading, and makes almost every book, in whatever language, more thoroughly understood. I observe that music and drawing are seldom pursued after marriage. In many cases of weak health they cannot be pursued, and they do not tell in the intercourse of society and in

conversation as this sort of information does, even when not a word of Greek or Latin is either uttered or alluded to.

## II.

Lord Byron's *Mazeppa* and *Manfred*—His Success in Satire and in Sensational Writing.

To Mrs. H. M. JONES.

*January 14th*, 1840.—I have had great pleasure in refreshing my girlish recollections of the "Lament of Tasso" and "Mazeppa." The latter is the only poem of Byron's which reminds me of Scott. I think it most spirited and impressive in its line. Byron is excellent in painting intense emotion and strong sensation of body or mind; he is also good in satire and sarcasm, though not very amiable; but I do not like him when he attempts the philosophic, invading the province of Goethe and Wordsworth, or when he tries his hand at the wild and supernatural, in which line I think him a mere imitator, and far outdone by Scott, Shelley, and many others. "Manfred," I think, has been greatly overrated, as indeed the public seems now beginning to see—the poetical public at least. Still there are fine things in it; but the graphic descriptions in the journal are better, I think, than the corresponding passages in verse.

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III.

Practical View of the Duties of God-parents—Sponsorship now-a-days chiefly a Social Obligation.

To the Same.

1840.—Though writing even the shortest note exhausts and pains me in my present very weak and irritable state, yet I cannot feel satisfied, dear friend, without expressing to you with my own hand how much I am pleased by your kind acceptance of the office which Henry and I both wish to put upon you, and the very kind words which you made use of on the occasion. In regard to *responsibility*, if I had thought that it involved any, I should have scrupled to attempt imposing such a burden on you, as indeed I should have scrupled, in regard to myself, to take upon me the name of god-mother to six different children, as I unhesitatingly have done; for whatever the theory of sponsorship may be (and I never yet met one who seemed to me to have a very intelligible and satisfactory theory on the subject, when one comes to examine the words which are usually uttered in this matter by rote), yet the fact is, and, as the world is regulated at present, must be, that the religious education of children rests almost wholly and solely with those who have the bringing of them up in other respects, together with the spiritual pastors and masters whom the Church appoints. “The duties of a sponsor,” says a correspondent of mine, “are not very well defined;” but those which I look for from you for

my now expected little one, are clearly defined in my own mind, and are such as I am bold enough to reckon upon from your kindness. The truth is, you have ever shown such a special friendship towards me and mine, something so much more than mere lip-civility, or even slight though genuine good will, such as the majority of our pleasant friends and acquaintances afford us, that I flatter myself you will view a child of mine with a certain degree of favour and partiality for my sake (indeed, I perhaps may add for its father's and grandmother's sakes), and the value of a *real* partiality from a person of worth, in this world of professions, of much speaking and less feeling, I am deeply sensible of. *This* kindness and interest of feeling is what I would fain secure from you, not merely a little nominal formal religious examination, which, as matters now stand in the world, is all in that way that sponsors ever do or can perform for their font-children. This interest I really believe you do feel for my H. and E. (it has ever been a pleasure to me to think so), and for their future brother or sister, if the dear hope is ever to be realized, I flatter myself you would feel, whether you were called the little Coleridge's godmama, or simply its mother's friend. Only it is pleasant to link a *name* which implies kindness and interest with the thing itself, though perhaps the latter would exist in almost equal degree independently of the former.

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IV.

On the Death of an Infant Daughter.

To Mrs. JOSHUA STANGER, Wandsworth.

10 *Chester Place, Regent's Park, August 10th, 1840.*—  
My dear Friend,—Your last kind note was written in a strain which harmonized well with my feelings. Would that those feelings which a trial such as we have lately sustained must needs bring with it, to all who have learned, in any degree however insufficient, to trust in Heaven, whether for temporary consolation or for eternal happiness,—would that those feelings could be more lasting than they are; that they could leave strong and permanent traces; that they could become “the *very habit* of our souls,” not a mere mood or passing state without any settled foundation. My thoughts had turned the same way as yours, where all mourners and friends of those that mourn will naturally go for sure and certain hope and ground of rejoicing, to that most divine chapter of the raising of Lazarus. “Thy brother shall rise again.” This indeed is spoken plainly, this is “no parable,” no metaphor or figure of speech. But in the next chapter we see the same blessed promise illustrated by a very plain metaphor. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.”

Our loss indeed has been a great disappointment, and even a sorrow; for, strange as it may seem, these little speechless creatures, with their wandering, unspeaking eyes, do twine themselves around a parent's heart from



the hour of their birth. Henry suffered more than I could have imagined, and I was sorry to see him watch the poor babe so closely, when it was plain that the little darling was not for this world, and that all our visions of a "dark-eyed Bertha," a third joy and comfort of the remainder of our own pilgrimage, must be exchanged for better hopes, and thoughts more entirely accordant with such a religious frame of mind as it is our best interest to attain. I had great pleasure in anticipating the added interest that you would take in her as your godchild. But this is among the dreams to be relinquished. Her remains rest at Hampstead, beside those of my little frail and delicate twins.—God bless you, my dear Mary, and your truly attached friend,

SARA COLERIDGE.

*Note.*—Bertha Fanny Coleridge was born on the 13th of July, 1840, and died eleven days afterwards.—E. C.

## V.

"They sin who tell us love can die."

To her Husband.

*The Green, Hampstead, September 13th, 1840.*—Will death at one blow crush into endless ruin all our mental growths as an autumnal tempest prostrates the frail summer house, along with its whole complexity of interwoven boughs and tendrils, which had gradually grown up during a long season of quiet and serenity? Surely there will be a second spring when these firm and profuse growths shall flourish again, but with

Elysian verdure, and all around them the celestial mead shall bloom with plants of various sizes, down to the tenderest and smallest shrublet that ever pushed up its infant leaves in this earthly soil. Surely every one who has a heart must feel how easily he could part with earth, water, and skies, and all the outward glories of nature ; but how utterly impossible it is to reconcile the mind to the prospect of the extinction of our earthly affections, that such a heart-annihilation has all the gloom of an eternal ceasing to be.

## VI.

## A Sunset Landscape.

To the Same.

*October 14th, 1840.*—I was thinking lately of my days spent in the prime of childhood at Greta Hall. How differently all things then looked from what they now do ! This world more substantial, more bright, and clothed in seemingly *fast colours*, and yet though these colours have waxed cold and watery, and have a fitting evanescent hue upon them : to change my present mind-scene for that one, rich as it was, would be a sinking into a lower stage of existence ; for now, while that which was so bright is dimmer, wholly new features have come forth in the landscape, features that connect this earth “with the quiet of the sky,” and are invested in a solid splendour which more evidently joins in with the glories of the heavens. The softened and subdued appearance of earth, with its pensive evening sadness, harmonizes well with the richer part of the prospect, and

though in itself less joyous and radiant than it once was, now forms a fitting and lovely portion of the whole view, and throws the rest into relief as it steals more and more into shadow.

## VII.

## The true Art of Life.

To the Same.

10 *Chester Place, October 20th, 1840.*—We ought indeed, my beloved husband, to be conscious of our blessings, for we are better off than all below us, perhaps than almost all above us. The great art in life, especially for persons of our age, who are leaving the vale of youth behind us, just lingering still perhaps in the latter stage of it, and seeing the bright golden fields at the entrance of it more distinctly than those nearer to our present station, is to cultivate the love of doing good and promoting the interests of others, avoiding at the same time the error of those who make a worldly business and a matter of pride of pursuits which originated in pure intentions, and bustle away in this secular religious path, with as little real thought of the high prize at which they should aim, and as little growth in heavenliness and change from glory to glory, as if they served mammon more directly. Anything rather than undergo the mental labour of real self-examination, of the study, not of individual self, but of the characters of our higher being which we share with all men. For one man that *thinks*, with a view to practical excellence, we may find fifty who are ready to *act* on what they call their own thoughts, but which they have unconsciously received from others.

## CHAPTER X.

1841-1842.

Letters to her Husband, Mrs. Plummer, Mrs. Thomas Farrer,  
Miss Trevenen, Mrs. H. M. Jones, the Rev. Henry Moore,  
the Hon. Mr. Justice Coleridge.



## I.

### Necessity of Patience and Hope in Education.

To Mrs. PLUMMER.

*April* 1841.—Patience is the most important of all qualifications for a teacher; and the longer one has to do with managing young persons, or indeed persons of any sort or kind, the more one feels its value and indispensability. It is that resource which we constantly have to fall back upon when all else seems to fail, and our various devices, and ways, and means, and ingenuities give way one after another, and seem almost good for nothing but to preach about. By patience I do not mean that worthless substitute for it which hirelings (in *temper*, for a paid governess is often a much better instructor than a mama) sometimes make use of, a compound of oil and white-lead, as like putty as possible. With patience, hope too must keep company, and the most effective of teachers are those who possess most of the arts of encouraging and inspiring—spurring onward and sustaining at the same time—both lightening the load as much as may be, and stimulating the youngsters to trot on with it gallantly.

## II.

The Lake Poets on Sport—The Life of Wesley a wonderful Book.

To her Husband.

*Chester Place, October 13th, 1841.*—Southey and

Wordsworth loved scenery, and took an interest in animals of all sorts ; but not one could they have borne to kill ; and S. T. C. was much of the same mind, though *he* would have made more allowance for the spirit of the chase than the other two. W——'s "Hart-leap Well" displays feelings of high refinement. Doubtless there is a sort of barbarism in this love of massacre which still keeps a corner even in cultivated minds, but which the progress of cultivation must *tend* to dissipate, and perhaps with it some habits that for some persons are more good than evil. Notwithstanding "Hartleap Well," Wordsworth always defended angling, and so did Dora ; but the Southey's, from the greatest to the least, gave no quarter to any slaughterous amusement. . . .

What a biography the life of Wesley is ! What wonders of the human mind does it reveal, more especially in the mental histories of Wesley's friends and coadjutors !

### III.

Coolness of unimaginative People—Imagination, like Religion,  
"requires looking after."

To the Same.

18th Oct. 1841.—There is a great coolness about the *minds* of the C——'s, though they have a *quantum suff.* of heart about them. The reason of this calmness of theirs is, that though persons of good sense, they have no vividness or activity of imagination ; things are not multiplied, heightened, and deepened to them by this

mirror in the back part of the mind. "A great deal of religion," said old Fisher of Borodale, "requires a great deal of looking after." There is so much acuteness and keen truth in this observation that I do not believe it original, but a popular saying. So we may say of imagination, the more a man has, the more sense and firmness he needs to keep it in order. An excitable imagination, united with a weak intellect and a want of force of character, is a plague both to the possessor and his friends.

#### IV.

Inflexibility of the French Language—The Second Part of Faust ;  
its Beauties and Defects—Visionary Hopes.

To the Same.

*Chester Place, October 19th, 1841.*—I feel more than ever the inflexibility and fixedness of the French language, which will not *give* like English and German. It has few words for sounds,—such as clattering, clanking, hanging, &c.,—whereas the Germans are still richer than we in such. Derwent wanted, when here, to point out to me some of the beauties of the fifth Act of the second part of Faust, which, in point of vocabulary, and metrical variety and power, is, I do suppose, a most wonderful phenomenon. Goethe, with the German language, is like a first-rate musician with a musical instrument, which, under his hand, reveals a treasure of sound such as an ordinary person might play for ever without discovering. D—— has a most keen sense of this sort of



power and merit in a poet, and his remarks were interesting, and would have been more so if the book had been at hand. He gives us the general *intention* of the piece, which he considers a failure,—the philosophy confused, unsound, and not truly profound. The execution of parts he thinks marvellous ; and as the pouring forth of an old man of 84, a psychological curiosity. . . . .

Your delightful letter and the after-written note both arrived at once. Your account of yourself is not worse, and that is the best that can be said of it. The lane is long indeed ; we could little have thought of all its turnings and windings when we first entered it ; but I still trust that it will issue out into Beautiful Meadows at last.

V.

Reminiscences of a Tour in Belgium—Hemling's "Marriage of St. Catherine" at Bruges ; and Van Eyck's "Adoration of the Lamb" at Ghent—Devotional Gravity of the early Flemish Painters ; and human Pathos of Rubens—Works of that Master, at Antwerp and Mechlin.

To Miss E. TREVENEN, Helston.

*Chester Place, October 27th, 1841.*—Ostend is interesting merely from old recollections, especially military ones, and because it is foreign ; not so Bruges, which I think the most perfect jewel of a town I ever saw, and how completely is the spirit of the place transfused into my Uncle Southey's interesting poem, "The Pilgrimage to Waterloo." Here we visited the Hospital of St.

John, saw the sisters tending the sick, and studied the beautiful and curious works of Hemling in the adjoining parlour. Do you remember the "Marriage of St. Catherine," with its beautiful background of vivid light green, and that exquisitely delicate and youthful neck of the bride Saint, shaded with such transparent gauze? Mr. Milnes (whom we met at Ghent on our return) specially admired Herodias' Daughter in the shutter of this picture. He said she looked at the bloody head in the charger so expressively, just as if she could not turn her fascinated eyes from it, and yet shuddered at it. The cathedral is large and impressive, and contains a noble statue of Moses,—more like a Jupiter Tonans, however, than the Hebrew Legislator. At Ghent I visited St. Bavon's; what a superb cathedral it is, with its numerous chapels clustered round the nave! I do indeed remember that paradisiacal picture of the "Adoration of the Lamb," with its velvety green lawn, and hillocks, and luxuriant rose-bushes. It is said that these old masters first opened the way to the Italian school of landscape-painting, by the backgrounds of their pictures. There is a very peculiar air about them, an imaginativeness combined with life-like everyday reality, and a minuteness of detail which interferes with anything like *intense* passion, but not with a sober, musing sort of emotion. A deeply religious character is impressed upon these pictures, and there is a mild and chastened wildness about them (if the seeming contradiction may be ventured on) which is very interesting, and specially suits some moods of the de-

votional mind. I think it is well; however, that the traveller for the most part sees these old paintings before he is introduced to those of Rubens; the fire, life, movement, and *abandon* of his pictures quite unfit one, for a time, for the sedater excellencies of Hemling and Van Eyck. The "Descent from the Cross" is, perhaps, the finest and most *beautiful* of all that great master's performances; but no picture that I have ever seen (except in another line, the Sebastiano in our National Gallery) ever affected me so strongly as Rubens' "Christ Crucified betwixt the Thieves," in the Antwerp museum. That is really a *tremendous* picture; in the expression of vehement emotion, in passion, life, and movement, I think it exceeds any other piece I ever beheld. How tame and over-fine Vandyck shows beside Rubens! I cannot greatly admire him as an historical painter, especially on sacred subjects. He should always have been employed on delicate fine gentlemen and ladies, and folks about court. Some of his Maries and Magdalens are most graceful and elegant creatures; but Rubens' youthful Magdalen at the foot of the Cross, imploring the soldier not to pierce the Saviour's side, moves one a thousand times more than all his lady-like beauties. However, I do not maintain, deep as is my admiration of Rubens, that his pictures thoroughly satisfy a religious mood of mind. They are somewhat over-bold; they almost unhallow the subject by bringing it so home, and exciting such strong earthly passion in connection with it. No sacred picture ever thoroughly satisfied me except the Raising of Lazarus, by Sebastian

del Piombo and Michael Angelo. The pictures at the Antwerp museum, I believe, you did not see ; but were you not charmed with those at Mechlin? What a delicately brilliant piece is the "Adoration of the Magi," at St. John's Church, with its beautiful shutters especially! and "St. John at Patmos," with that noblest of eagles over his head. Rubens ranked this among his finest productions. "The Miraculous Draught," too, in the Church of Notre Dame, painted for the Fisherman's Company, how splendid it is! And that *volet à droite* "Tobias and the Angel," is the loveliest of all Rubens' shutter-pictures. What "colours of the showery arch" are there! What delicate aerial lilacs and yellows, softening off the scarlet and crimson glow of the centre-piece.

## VI.

## Prayer for the Dead.

To Mrs. J. STANGER.

*Chester Place, January 12th, 1842.*—Some long to pray for their departed friends. How far better is it to feel that they need not our prayers ; that we had best pray for ourselves and our surviving dear ones, that we may be where we humbly trust they are !

## VII.

## A Visit to Oxford.

To Mrs. THOMAS FARRER, 3 Gloucester Terrace, Regent's Park.

*Chester Place, Easter, 1842.*—Yesterday Mr. Coleridge

and I returned from a very interesting excursion to Oxford. When I was in the midst of those venerable structures, I longed for strength to enter every chapel and explore the whole assemblage of antique buildings thoroughly. As it is, I have filled up the indistinct outline of imagined, but unseen Oxford most richly. Magdalen Chapel, as a single object, is what pleased me the most, but the merit of Oxford, and its power over the feelings, lies in what it presents to the visitor collectively, the vast number of antique buildings which it presents to the eye, and of interesting associations which it brings into the mind.

## VIII.

Illness of her Husband, and Death of his only Sister.

10 *Chester Place, Dec. 7th, 1842.*—My dearest Louisa, —Little did I think when I received your last but one letter, that I should be thus long ere I communicated with the writer, and little did I think (and this was in mercy) what trials were to come upon me before I renewed my intercourse with you. I well remember beginning a letter to you soon after I received yours—explaining some of my theological views, about Romish saints, or something of the sort—(you may remember our old theological discussions). Something prevented me from finishing it and sending it off; week after week went on and the begun letter remained a beginning. Then commenced a new era with me of sorrow, and

I humbly trust of purification. When these troubles began, I became reserved in writing to my friends, not from closeness of heart, but because I could not afford to expend my mental strength and spirits in giving accounts to them of my anxieties and troubles; it was a prime necessity to keep all my stock within me. It is a bad plan, however, to put off writing to a friend from month to month, till we feel that only a very long and excellent letter can be fit to make up for such a silence. You must excuse a very poor one from me now, dear friend, not proportioned, I assure you, to my interest in you, and wish that you should continue to feel an interest in me and mine; but to my present epistolary powers. I heard with great pleasure from dear E. that you had been thinking much of my husband's prostration, and with friendly sympathy; on the whole he has throughout this trying dispensation been wonderfully supported in mind. He has ever been as hopeful as any one under the circumstances could be, and he is quiet and resigned, and derives great comfort from devotional reading, from prayer, and religious ministrations. Our eldest brother has been a great soother and supporter to him during the most alarming and suffering part of his illness. J.'s company and conversation have been a constant blessing, and, indeed, all his family have shown him the tenderest affection during his illness. The bonds that unite us have been drawn closer by this trial of ours, than ever before. Alas! one of our circle, who has for years been the centre of it, to which all our hearts were most strongly drawn, is removed. O L——! hers was

the death-bed of a Christian indeed. No one could die as she did, who had not made long and ample preparation beforehand. She foresaw the present termination of her illness, when the rest of us were flattering ourselves with vain hopes that she would live down her wasting malady, and see a green old age. Keenly sensible as she was of the blessing of her lot in this world, and no one could *enjoy* more than she did those temporal blessings—a good husband, honoured among men, very promising, affectionate children, easy circumstances, and if least, yet to her not little, a charming country residence in her beloved native country—she yet cast not one longing, lingering look behind, when called to quit all and go to the Saviour. So strong was her wish to depart and *be with Christ*, that she even was not diverted from it by her tender love for her husband and children—which to me, who know her heart towards them, is really marvellous. Great must have been her faith to realize, as she did, the unseen world.\* Her death-bed reminds me of the last days of one—a very different person from her in many respects—my dear father. He had just the same strong, steadfast faith—the same longing to leave this world for a better, the same collectedness of mind during his last illness. *He* retained his intellectual powers to the last moment of his waking existence, but

\* This lamented relative, both cousin and sister-in-law, between whom and my mother there always existed a most tender affection, was the daughter of James Coleridge, Esq., of Heath's Court, Ottery St. Mary, and wife of the Hon. Mr. Justice Patteson. She died in November 1842, at Feniton Court, near Honiton.—E. C.

was in a coma for some hours before life was extinct. She was unconscious during the last two hours, and, for some time previously, it was only conjectured that she heard and joined in the prayers offered at her bed-side.

IX.

On the Same Topics—Religious Bigotry.

To the Rev. HENRY MOORE,\* Eccleshall Vicarage, Staffordshire.

10 *Chester Place, Dec.* 1842.—My dear Mr. Moore—I inclose to you my brother James' account of the last days and hours of our most beloved sister Fanny. Her call hence to what we cannot doubt will be to her an unspeakably better world, has left a blank in our circle which I cannot describe. The event has long been anticipated. She herself has looked forward to it for some time; but there is a gulf between the real actual things and these kinds of conjectural anticipations, the depth of which we find when all is over. She was a most impressive, influence person. There was a strength of mind (not *intellect*, though she was clever) in her which would have approached to sternness but for her loving, tender disposition. She was the *deepest-hearted* creature! Henry has not been worsened in *body* by this affliction. Invalids often bear these shocks better than persons in health.

We were amused by your account of the Puritanical

\* At present Archdeacon of Stafford.—E. C.



Archdeacon. Religious bigotry is a dull fire—*hot* enough to roast an ox, but with no lambent, luminous flame shooting up from it. The bigots of one school condemn and, what is far worse, mutilate Shakespeare; those of another would, if they could, extinguish Milton. Thus the twin-tops of our Parnassus would be hidden in clouds for ever, had these men their way.—Believe me, ever faithfully yours,

SARA COLERIDGE.

Henry desires his kindest regards to you, and wished this letter to be written.

X.

“Hope deferred”—Her Son at Eton.

To Mrs. HENRY M. JONES, Hampstead.

*December* 1842.—I try to think of that better abode in which we may meet each other, free from those ills which flesh is heir to. *We* have a special need to look and long for the time when we may be clothed upon “with our house which is from heaven;” for in this tabernacle we do indeed groan, “being burdened.” Bodily weakness and disorder have been the great (and only) drawbacks, ever since we met twenty years ago, to our happiness in each other. It will seem chimerical to you that I have not yet abandoned *all* hope. But this faint hope, which perhaps, however, is stronger than I imagine, does not render me unprepared for what all around me expect. The Lord has given; and when He takes away, I can resign him to his Father

in heaven; and looking in that direction in which he will have gone, I shall be able to have that peace and comfort which in no shape then will the world be able to give me.

To-day I attended the Holy Communion. To be away so long from my beloved husband was a great trial to me (of course I did not attend the morning service); but I knew he greatly wished it, and I made an effort to satisfy him. It requires no great preparation for one who leaves the room of severe sickness where all things point to a spiritual world—partly here around us, partly to come.

You will be pleased, dear friend, to learn that Herbert has taken a good place in "trials" at Eton. Out of seventy boys, he had a 12th place assigned him in the 5th form—the highest but one, boys much older being down at 32, 39, and so forth.

## XI.

### Resignation.

To the Hon. Mr. JUSTICE COLERIDGE,\* 4 Montague Place, London.

*January* 1843.—I now feel quite happy, or, at least, satisfied. Could I arrest his progress to a better sphere of existence by a prayer, I would not utter it. When I once know that it *is* God's will, I can feel that it is

\* My father's elder brother, now Right Hon<sup>ble</sup>. Sir John T. Coleridge Member of the Privy Council.—E. C.

right, even if there were no such definite assurances of rest and felicity beyond this world. I cannot be too thankful to God, so far as my own best interests are concerned, that He is thus removing from earth to heaven my greatest treasure, while I have strength and probably time to benefit by the measure, and learn to look habitually above ; which now will not be the spirit against the flesh, but both pulling one way, for the heart will follow the treasure. Thus graciously does the Blessed Jesus condescend to our infirmities, by earthly things leading us to heavenly ones.

## CHAPTER XI.

1843 (*continued*).

Letters to her Son, her Eldest Brother, Mrs. Gillman, Mrs. J. Stanger, Hon. Mr. Justice Coleridge, Rev. Henry Moore, Edward Quillinan, Esq., Mrs. Thomas Farrer, Miss Morris, Mrs. H. M. Jones.



## I.

To her Son.\*

*January 26th*, 1843.—My dear Boy—My most beloved and honoured husband, your excellent father, is no more in this world, but I humbly trust in a far better. May we all go where he is, prepared to meet him as he would have us! God bless you! Live as your beloved father would have you live. Put your trust in God, and think of heaven, as he would wish you.

May we all meet above! May we all join with him the Communion of Saints, and be for ever with the Blessed Jesus! Your good uncle James was with me at the last.

I make an effort to write to you, my dear boy, from beside the remains of the dear, blessed, departed one. For you alone could I do this; but it is due to his son, our child.—Your loving mother,

SARA COLERIDGE.

## II.

Her Husband's Death—First meeting with him at Highgate.

To Mrs. GILLMAN.

*February* 1843.—My dearest Mrs. Gillman—You have ere now, I trust, received an announcement of my loss,

\* Written by my mother to my brother at Eton, on the day of my father's death.—E.C.

of which I cannot now speak. My sorrow is not greater than I can bear, for God has mercifully fitted it to my strength. While I was losing my great earthly happiness, I was gradually enabled to see heaven more and more clearly, to be content to part with earthly happiness, and to receive, as a more than substitute, a stronger sense of that which is permanent. I should have deferred writing thus to you, dear friend, till I was stronger; but I think it right to tell you that, at my strong desire, the remains of my beloved husband are to be deposited in Highgate Churchyard, in the same precinct with those of my revered father.

It was at Highgate, at your house, that I first saw my beloved Henry. Since then, now twenty years ago, no two beings could be more intimately united in heart and thoughts than we have been, or could have been more intermingled with each other in daily and hourly life. He concerned himself in all my feminine domestic occupations, and admitted me into close intercourse with him in all his higher spiritual and intellectual life. It has pleased God to dissolve this close tie, to cut it gradually and painfully asunder, and yet, till the last fatal stroke, to draw it even closer in some respects than before.—God bless you, my dear friend. I am ever your truly affectionate and respectful

SARA COLERIDGE.

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III.

On the same Subject—Trial of a Mourner's Faith, and how it was met.

To the Rev. H. MOORE.

*February 13th, 1843, Chester Place.*—My dear Friend—Letter writing is improper for me now, but I must pen two or three lines to thank you for your last letter, and to tell you that I accept, from my heart, all your offers of friendship to me and mine. When I call your letter "most brotherly," with *such brothers* as I have, it is the strongest epithet I can use. You loved, you still love and understand and value my departed Henry; this would for ever make me a friend to you, even if you had not expressed yourself so kindly, as you have ever done, to me, and if we had not another thought, or interest, or sympathy in common.

I must add but a line or two more, for I am suffering very sadly from a nervous cough, which scarce leaves me a minute's peace night or day, except for a few hours in the middle of the twenty-four, when I am least weak. I caught a violent cold in attending on my husband on the Sunday and Wednesday nights of his final trial; but the weak and relaxed state into which I immediately sank as soon as the last call for exertion was over, has more to do with my present suffering (the medical man thinks) than this exposure. Had I strength, I could tell you much that would interest you deeply of Henry's last days and months. His energy, while his poor, dear, outward man was half dead, was one of the most strik-



ing instances of the mind's independence of the body that can well be imagined. But oh! dear Mr. Moore, when I backward cast my eye, or rather when it reverts of itself, to the various scenes of his last illness, I feel that I have an ocean of natural tears yet to shed. At the time (except during the last fortnight) I but half felt the deep sadness, because I looked upon all his bitter sufferings as painful steps in the way to comparatively easy health, and felt as if every one of them was so much misery out of the way. Now that delirium, stupor, death are at the end of them, they have a different aspect. There is a comfort (I am speaking now of *mere* human feelings) in thinking that the anguish I have gone through, which will be merged, I humbly trust, before I go hence, in that peace which the world cannot give, is probably the heaviest part of my earthly portion, or that it must have seasoned me to bear well what remains behind.

But in this mingled cup there are other sorrows of a still deeper kind ; for physical evil is not *evil* in the most real sense. The separation is a fearful wrench from one for whom, and in expectation of whose smile, I might almost say, I have done all things, even to the choice of the least articles of my outward apparel, for twenty years. But even that is not the heaviest side of the dispensation. It is to feel, not merely that he is taken from *me*, but that, as *appears*, though it is but appearance, he is not. That the sun rises in the morning, and he does not see it. The higher and better and enduring mind within us has no concern with these *sensations*, but they *will* arise,

and have a certain force. While we remain in the tabernacle of the flesh, they are the miserable, cloggy vapours that from time to time keep steaming up from the floor and the walls, and obscure the prospect of the clear empyrean which may be seen from the windows. The most effective relief from them which I have found, is the reminding myself that he who is past from my sight is gone whither I myself look to go in a few years (not to mention all those of whom the world was not worthy, before the publication of the Gospel, and since), and that if I can contemplate my own removal, not with mere calmness, but with a cheerfulness which no other thought bestows, why should I feel sad that he is there before me? But these of which I have spoken are only the sensations of the natural man and woman I well know in my heart of hearts and better mind, that if he is not now in the Bosom of God, who is not the God of the dead, but of the living, or if all these hopes are but dreams, I can have but little wish to bring him back to earth again, or to care about anything either in earth or heaven. In my weakest moments, indeed, I have *never* wished that it were possible to recall him, or to prevent his departure hence. I thank God and the power of His grace, there has been no agony in my grief, there has been no struggle of my soul with Him. I have always had such a strong sense and conviction that if this sorrow *was to be*, and was appointed by God, it was entirely right, and that it was mere senselessness to wish anything otherwise than as infinite goodness and infinite wisdom had ordained it. Forgive so much about

my own feelings. Give my very kind regards to Mrs. M., and respects to Miss H., and believe me ever your affectionate friend,

SARA COLERIDGE.

#### IV.

Affectionate Kindness of Relatives and Friends—Special Gifts of a Christian Minister, in his Attendance upon the Sick and Dying.

TO HARTLEY COLERIDGE, Esq., Grasmere.

10 *Chester Place, March 9th, 1843.*—My dear Brother—I have long been wishing to renew my suspended intercourse with you. To do this requires some resolution, after all that has passed since I last wrote to you. When I have thought of taking up my pen to address you, a crowd of strong emotions and deeply concerning thoughts and remembrances have rushed upon me, pressing for utterance, and my spirits have sunk under the eagerness and intenseness of their requisitions. It is not because I anticipated an inadequate sympathy from you that I have felt thus, but from the very contrary. I have been answering kind and tender letters from persons less near and dear to me, who could not and *ought* not to feel for me as I am sure you have done, with comparative—I will not say calmness—(for since all uncertainty was removed, and my loss presented itself to me as fixed and inevitable, I have been

more deeply calm in spirit than ever I was before in my life)—but with comparative lightness of feeling. Now, however, I take the first step of renewing a correspondence with you, which I hope will be cheerfully continued with pleasure and benefit to us both (if I may so far assume and presume) to the end of our lives. It is better to write little and often, than much at a time, and in this way, without formally asking your *advice*, which in a woman of my years is for the most part a mere form, I shall learn your views and feelings on many interesting subjects, and be, I humbly trust, improved and strengthened thereby. The great moulder of my mind, who was, perhaps, more especially fitted to strengthen my weak points and supply my deficiencies, and altogether to keep my mind straight and even, than any other man or woman living, is gone where I cannot come,—removed out of the sphere of my human understanding,—though not, I trust, out of spiritual communion both with me and all who are, or seek to be, in any vital sense Christians. On this account I have the more need to make much of the friendship of my brothers,—and no widow, I think, when withdrawn from the arms of a husband, can ever have been more affectionately sustained by those of brothers than I have been. The sadder my prospect grew, the more closely they circled round me; but a thousand times dearer to my heart than their kindness to me were the proofs they gave of affection, respect, and admiration for him who was soon to be taken away from our mortal sight. The expressions of dear John and of Frank were especially

affecting. Of James\* you have doubtless heard what he was to me through all the last scenes of my trial. Upon this so important occasion, I found a brother—I may say an individual man—in him, whom before I knew not. I now saw for the first time what was the secret of his influence and popularity in his own pastoral sphere. He appears by the bed of sickness and coming death (and he could not so appear unless his heart were interested) entirely forgetful of self, absorbed in what is before him. His own opinions, habits of mind, private interests, seem gone, to a degree which strikes a bystander like myself as unusual. Then, in performing his professional part, he is the more effective from the absence of the intellectual in his mode of thought. There is nothing theological about James. From him you have the pure spirit of Gospel consolation and assurance—conditionally expressed—as it is in the Bible itself, with as little mixture of foreign matter as possible. This is not art in him, or knowledge. It is the result of the simple, though not weak, character of his intellect. He does not reason on one side or the other, but lets the moral and spiritual content of the inspired Book produce its own effect upon his mind, and find its own suitable utterance. His countenance and tone of voice are highly affecting and impressive, when he is thus seen in his best attitude of mind. Frank seemed gratified by my evident appreciation of his brother. But I cannot thus speak of them without mentioning dear

\* Dr. Coleridge, Vicar of Thorverton, near Exeter, was my father's eldest brother.—E. C.

Edward\* and Derwent too. Both in their several ways have been most soothing and helpful to me. . . My children are both going on well. Herbert is very well reported of from school, where his character for general cleverness continues ; though he fails in verse composition, and in other more essential points, I feel hopeful and happy about him. His letters to his sister are an amusing mixture of pure childishness, childish pedantry, and affectionate ruffianism. . . .—Believe me, my dear Hartley, your much attached sister,

SARA COLERIDGE.

V.

Memoir of Nicholas Ferrer.

To the Hon. Mr. Justice COLERIDGE.

*March 11th, 1843.*—I am reading a very interesting Memoir of Nicholas Ferrer,† who lived in the times of James I. and Charles I. Were it not for certain expressions on the subject of grace, which clearly show that the writer is no disciple of Pusey, one might suppose it a publication of the Oxford School,—the sentiments, and some of the principles which it illustrates, being

\* The Rev. Edward Coleridge, Rector of Mapledurham, my father's younger brother.—E. C.

† The friend of George Herbert, and editor of his Poems. Izaak Walton, in his Life of Herbert, gives a striking account of this remarkable man, who founded a Christian Society at Giddon Hall, Huntingdon, for purposes of devotion and charity, in accordance with the principles of the Church.—E. C.

just such as Paget seeks to recommend by his amusing Tales. Without intended disparagement to Paget, how great is the superiority of the narrative to the fiction as a vehicle of truth!—the one bears something the same relation to the other, when carefully criticised, as the piece of linen or lace, viewed through a microscope, to the natural leaf or slip of wood examined in the same way.

## VI.

## A Quiet Heart.

To the Hon. Mr. Justice COLERIDGE.

*March 22nd, 1843.*— . . . I chat away thus to you, my dear brother, as if I had a light gay heart, but I have only a quiet one. When I go out of doors from the incessant occupation of mind and hands, the full sense of my widowhood comes upon me, and the sunshine only seems to draw it out into vividness. Hampstead is a sadder place to me than Highgate. Yet sadness is not quite the word for my feelings,—that seems too near to unhappiness. When I hear of happy marriages now, I do not feel that wretched sense of contrast with my own solitary state which I should once have felt. I rather feel a sort of compassionate tenderness for those who are entering on a career of earthly enjoyment, the transitoriness of which they must sooner or later be brought to a sense of. But for them, as for myself, there is a better communion beyond this present world,

which, if begun here, will in the end supersede all other blessedness arising from union with objects of love.

## VII.

## Monument of Robert Southey—Recumbent Statues.

To the Hon. Mr. Justice COLERIDGE.

*March 28th, 1843.*—I scarce know what is finally settled about my uncle's monument. A modification of Lough's design seems most approved. The recumbent figure is all right in theory, but awkward in practice. Do what you will it looks deathly, with too real and actual a deathiness. This is one of the instances, I think, of the difficulty of reviving old fashions; if you alter them at all, or even take them from amid the circumstances and states of feeling among which they were originated, you have a spectre of the past rather than the living past itself, a kind of resurrection. The recumbent figures on the old tombs are rather death idealized than death itself. The armour veiled from view the lifelessness of the limbs, and brought the body, as by a medium, into harmony with the sepulchral stone. The full robe of the dame by the warrior's side did the same thing in another way, and contrasted well with the male attire; and that one attitude of the hands crossed upon the breast, or pressed together in prayer, alone perfectly agrees with the whole design. The brasses are not open to these remarks, because they are much further removed from



life, and therefore cannot offend by the semblance of death.

### VIII.

On her Loss—Injury done to the Mind by brooding over Grief.

To Mrs. PLUMMER, Gateshead.

10 *Chester Place, April 27th, 1843.*—Your letter was very welcome to me, and I will thank you for it at once, though I cannot now write at all as I wish, either as to matter or manner, so much am I occupied, and so unequal am I to getting much done in a short time, from bodily weakness and sensitiveness of nerves.

What you say, dearest, of your own particular grief in the loss that bears so heavily upon me, that but for very special mercy it must have crushed me to the earth, is extremely gratifying to me. Nothing soothes me so much as to hear *his* deserved praises, and to have assurances from his friends of the esteem and affection he excited. Few men have been ever more generally liked, or more dearly *loved* in a narrower sphere. Never before his illness did I fully know what a holy, what a blessed thing is the love of brothers and sisters to each other. By my bereavement all my relations seem to be brought closer to me than before, for pity excites affection, and gratitude for kindness and sympathy has the same effect. But my beloved Henry's brothers are twice as much to me as in his precious lifetime. John is such a friend and supporter as few widows, I think, are

blest with. You will not, I am sure, dear friend, think me boastful, but grateful for saying all this. I feel it now such a duty, such a necessity, to cling fast to every source of comfort—to be for my children's sake as happy, as willing to live on in this heart-breaking world as possible; that I dwell on all the blessings which God continues to me, and has raised up to me out of the depths of affliction, with an earnestness of endeavour which is its own reward; for so long as the heart and mind are full of movement, employed continually on not unworthy objects, there may be sorrow, but there cannot be despair. The stagnation of the spirit, the dull, motionless brooding on one miserable set of thoughts, is that against which in such cases as mine we must both strive and pray. After all, it would be impossible for one bereaved like me, to care for the goings on of this world but for the blessed prospect of another; and it is a most thankworthy circumstance that the more agitating our trials become, the brighter that prospect, after a little while, beams forth, through the reaction of the mind when strongly excited. The heaviest hours come on after the subsidence of that excitement, when we come out again from the chamber of death and mourning into all the common ways of life. All the social intellectual enjoyments, new books, the sight of sculpture, painting, the conversation of pleasant friends, are full of trial to me. I turn away from what excites any lively emotion of admiration or pleasure, now that I can no longer share it with him who for twenty years shared all my happiest thoughts.

IX.

God's Will the best Consolation.

To Mrs. FARRER.

*May 8th*, 1843.—My dear Mrs. Farrer—This morning I have received your letter, of the kindness of which I have not time to speak adequately. I feel very glad to be able to avail myself of your offer. Broadstairs I have often wished to visit. I was to have visited it with my beloved invalid, but God ordered things otherwise, doubtless better for us both. As my friend, Mr. Frederic Maurice, truly says, in answer to some remarks of mine, there is more calmness in the thought, "It is God's will," than in all other consolations. I had been saying to him how impossible it is for any religious, reflective person to look back upon the bitterest dispensations of the Almighty Hand with a serious wish that they had never been awarded, that the web which Providence has woven could be unravelled, and all the good though trying gifts which our Father in heaven has bestowed, taken back again. Sorrow makes us very egotistic, and to those that understand not the house of mourning, very tedious and commonplace. But to those who are feeling deeply, or sympathizing with those who feel, the sense of *reality* in the oft-expressed sentiment lends it freshness and force.

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X.

New Friends—A Happy Pair.

To her Eldest Brother.

*Broadstairs, May 30th, 1843.*—My dear Brother—  
This is my last day at Broadstairs. To-morrow I depart for Chester Place, after a fortnight spent here with my little Edith and our maid Elizabeth, at the temporary abode of Mrs. Thomas Farrer, a lady whom I must rank among my friends, though not among my old acquaintances. My first introduction to her, not two years ago, was through her sons, favourite pupils of Edward C——, whom I met at Eton, and who thereupon felt desirous that their family and mine should be on visiting terms, as we were already neighbours in Regent's Park. To this wish I acceded, though a little dismayed at that time, at the way in which the circle of our acquaintances was beginning to widen. I have since, however, rejoiced that I did not withstand the proposal, having been greatly pleased with the clan of the F——s, a large and very united one, so far as I have seen and come to know them. Mrs. F——'s eldest daughter, a very sweet and pretty girl of nineteen, is to be married next August to the heir of the N——'s, a most amiable and promising young man; and I have taken pleasure in resting my eyes on the smooth true love course of this young couple, which appears to my fancy at present like the quietest of rivulets gliding along in the sun, with pretty wild flowers upon its banks. How will it

run in that part of the region which is not yet in sight? May it not break over rough stones, or become suddenly lost underground, as mine has been? These are questions which the sight naturally suggests, and which cast an air of melancholy over it, in spite of all its sunshiny brightness, to the mind of the widow in her weeds. But the young pair, and even their friends at large, appear to see only the present sunshine. C——'s lids are unsullied by a tear; and long may the brown orbs under them (I have seen few so beautiful) beam darkly forth as now, full of calm happiness undimmed and unclouded.

## XI.

### Dryness of Controversial Sermons.

To the Hon. Mr. Justice COLERIDGE, Heath's Court, Ottery St. Mary.

*June 27th*, 1843.—Dr. Arnold's sermon is all you described it. Would that of this sort, so practical, and appealing to the heart and religious mind, were at least the *majority* of *preached* sermons! Some doctrinizing from the pulpit may be necessary. But surely it ought to be subservient and subordinate to the practical; whereas, nine times out of ten, the practical point merely serves as an introduction or a pretext for a setting up the opinions of one school of thinkers, and a pulling down the opinions of another, with charges against the latter almost always one-sided and unfair. This sermon of Dr. A——'s, and one which I heard from

Dr. Hodgson at Broadstairs on death and judgment, are quite oases in the hot sandy wilderness of sermons which my mind's reverted eye beholds. I do not mean that many of them were not good; but when they are viewed altogether, a character of heat and barrenness seems to pervade them.

## XII.

Preliminary Essay to the "Aids to Reflection," by the Rev. James Marsh—Her "Essay on Rationalism"\*—Consolation and Instruction derived from Theological Studies.

To the Hon. Mr. Justice COLERIDGE.

*Chester Place, July 1843.*—I am glad that you think Marsh's essay *very good*. My dear husband read it during his illness, and was confirmed in his high opinion of it. As to my own production (*much as I admire it myself!*), I do not expect that it will be admired by any one else. It makes larger demands on the attention of readers than I, with my powers, have perhaps any right to make, or can repay. Even if the thinking were sound or important, the arrangement is bad. If bad arrangement in S. T. C. is injurious to readability, in S. C. it will be destructive. Moreover, I have made to myself *no friends*. A follower out of the principles of S. T. C. myself, whithersoever they lead me, because they seem to me the *very truth*, I cannot join hands

\* Appendix C to the second volume of the "Aids to Reflection," Sixth Edition.—E. C.

with any of his half or quarter disciples. I praise, and admire, and applaud all the combatants on the theological arena, even the hearty opponents of my father, but I cannot entirely agree with any one of them ; and some of his friends have done him more harm, if such ephemeral harm were worth talking of, than his foes. Yet I should never regret the time spent on this little composition, though I should be rather out of pocket and not into reputation by it, as will certainly be the case ; for it has sometimes brought one part of my mind into activity, when the other part, if active, could only have been alive to anguish ; and it has given me a more animated intercourse with some great minds now past from our nether sphere, than I could have had from merely reading their thoughts, without thinking them over again myself.

### XIII.

A Visit to Margate—Domestic Economy in its Right Place—An Eton Schoolboy—Reading under Difficulties—High Moral Aim of Carlyle's "Hero-worship"—Joy of a True Christian—The Logic of the Heart and the Logic of the Head.

To Mrs. FARRER.

12 *Cliff Terrace, Margate, Sept. 5th, 1843.*—My dear Friend—Here we are, my children, and nurse, and self, on the East Cliff at Margate, a few miles from the spot where I sojourned with you in June. That fortnight is marked among the fortnights of this my first year of widowhood with a comparative whiteness, in the midst

of such deep (though never, I must thankfully acknowledge, never, even at the earliest period of my loss, quite unrelieved) blackness. I fixed upon this place, instead of Broadstairs or Ramsgate, on account of its greater cheapness, and because it could be reached with rather less exertion. Lodgings certainly *are* cheaper than I could have got them in an equally good situation at more genteel sea-bathing places; but provisions are dear enough—lamb 8½d. and beef 9d.! I am so often twitted with my devotion to intellectual things, that I am always glad of an opportunity of sporting a little beef and mutton erudition, though I cannot help thinking that, as society is now constituted in the professional middle rank of life—still more in a higher one—women may get on and make their families comfortable, and manage with tolerable economy—by which I mean economy that does not cost more than it is worth of time and devotion of spirit—with less knowledge of details respecting what we are to eat, and what to put on, than used to be thought essential to the wise and worthy matron. I daresay your dear C. will make her loved and honoured S. as comfortable as if she had been studying butchers' and bakers' bills, and mantua-making, and upholstery in a little way, for the last seven years, instead of reading Dante, and Goethe, and Richter, and Wordsworth, and Tennyson. But to return to this place, it is a contrast to Broadstairs as looked out upon from the White Hart, where we took up our abode the first night; but the East Cliff, where, by medical recommendation, we have settled ourselves



for a fortnight or three weeks, is neither more nor less than the Broadstairs Cliffery continued ; and as we return from the gully leading down to the sands (the very brother to that which I so often went down and up with you), Edy and I might almost fancy that we were returning to the Albion Street lodgings, if it were not for the tower of the handsome new church, where we attended morning service last Sunday, which reminds us that we are at Margate.

We were delayed in coming hither for some days by Herbert's prolonged stay at Rickmansworth, where he spent nearly three weeks in a sort of boys' paradise, bathing two or three times a-day. Both Baron and Lady A—— wrote about him to me in very gratifying terms. It is perhaps not right to repeat things honourable to our children without being equally communicative about their faults and ill-successes. But you have been so specially friendly with me, and shown such kind interest about all that concerns me, that I think I should withhold a pleasure from you in not telling you what has very much pleased me. H. thinks this place very *seedy*, and despises the bathing. The tide seems never in a state to please him ; but the truth is, he wants companions, and does not like to be a solitary Triton among the minnows, or rather, as those are fresh-water fish, among the crabs and seaweed. However, he has got " Japhet in Search of a Father " from the circulating library, reads a portion daily of Euripides, and has begun learning French ; and it is quite right that a little *seediness* should come in its turn after

“jollity,” and quietness and plain fare after “splendid lark,” with “sock” of all sorts, that he may learn to cut out interests and amusements for himself out of home materials.

I must tell tales of the vessel that brought us hither, in order to deter you, dear friend, from ever trusting yourself to it in future. The “Prince of Wales” does certainly make its way fast over the water, but the vibration of its disproportionately small frame under the energy of its strong steam-engine is such, that it fatigued me much more than a slower voyage would have done, and gave both nurse and me a headache. The motion almost prevented me too from reading. Carlyle’s “Hero-worship” trembled in my hand like a culprit before a judge; and as the book *is* very full of paradoxes, and has some questionable matter in it, this shaking seemed rather symbolical. But oh! it is a book fit rather to shake (take it all in all) than to be shaken. It is very full of noble sentiments and wise reflections, and throws out many a suggestion which will not waste itself like a blast blown in a wilderness, but will surely rouse many a heart and mind to a right, Christian-like way of acting and of dealing with the gifted and godlike in man and of men. Miss Farrer lent me the work, and many others. Very pleasant to me was her stay at Gloucester Terrace, if *pleasant* is a fit word for an intercourse which awakened thoughts and feelings of “higher gladness” than are commonly so described. She is one who loves to reveal her mind, with all its “open secrets,” to those who care at all for

the one thing which is, and which she happily has found to be, needful; and few indeed are the minds which will so well bear such inspection as she invites; few can display such a pure depth of sunny blue without a cloud, such love for all men, and Christ above all—ascending from them whom she has seen to God whom she has not seen, and again honouring them and doing good to them, on principle, for His sake. My doctrinal differences from her (and *some* doctrine we all must have in this world) are considerable; but I could almost say, that were all men like her, no Christian *doctrine* would be needed. She has much knowledge, too, of men and things—has read and seen much; and pray tell your T. H. that I learned to thread the at first bewildering labyrinth of her discourse, after a while, much better than at first. Even to the last her rapid transitions confounded me very often, and some of her replies to objections are rather appeals to the imagination and affections than properly answers. But she has a logic of her own; and though I do maintain that Christendom would fall abroad if it were not knit together by a logic of another sort, the want of which would be felt sorely, if it were possible that it could ever be wholly wanting, which the nature of man prevents; yet this logic of the heart and spiritual nature is more than sufficient to guide every individual aright that possesses it in such high measure as she does.

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## XIV.

Beauty of Sussex Scenery—Congenial Society.

To Mrs. JOSHUA STANGER, Fieldside, Keswick, Cumberland.

*Tunbridge Wells, September 26th, 1843.*—I am having every advantage here which a most agreeable family circle and daily drives in an easy carriage, in the most inspiriting air, through a lovely country, can give me ; and I do fully believe that I shall be better in the end for having made the effort to come hither, and to mix myself up with my neighbours' concerns. I seek to take an interest in all their little belongings, and cultivate cheerfulness as much as possible. Enough of melancholy remembrance and deep irremovable regret is sure to remain, let me do what I may to enter thankfully and genially into the present.

The landscape here, which I believe you are well acquainted with, continually puts me in mind of Milton's description of Paradise, the slopes are so emerald-velvety, and the clumps and clusters of trees so varied and beautiful. But there is an imperfection in the prospect from the want of water. I long to introduce dancing rills, and fairy waterfalls, and lucid pools, into the midst of these basin-like valleys, and to people the glades with deer, and the villages with a freer, finer peasantry. There is a great want of water generally in the South of England. Devonshire has plenty of it ; but the climate of Devon is to me a drawback for which nothing can compensate.

The family party here consists of Judge E——, his

wife, two daughters, and eldest son : the youngest is at Eton. The visitors are Miss M——, a charming young woman, most animated and intelligent, a niece of Judge E——, and myself. Judge E—— is one of the most agreeable men in the family circle that I have ever known. He has the indescribable air and way of a man of high birth about him ; and there is in his conversation that happy mixture of seriousness, with light sportiveness and arch remark, which everybody likes, and which is never jarring or oppressive, whatever mood one may be in.

## XV.

## Friendly Recollections and Anticipations.

To Miss MORRIS.

*October* 1843.—You cannot think what pleasure I have in looking back upon my late visit. The verdurous, soft quiet beauty of the country at Tunbridge Wells seems to form a very harmonious *ground* for the more prominent remembrances with which it has furnished me. Your relatives of the honourable and honoured name of E——, like glow-worms, shine in the shade ; they come out *most* brightly in family life, as indeed do all characters who have much in them. How can that *much* be shown in company ? That part of my recollections in which you figure, dear Miss Morris, of the character of *that* I do not now speak to you, but I trust it will appear more and more in our future

lives, as a suitable beginning of a happy and fruitful friendship.—Believe me, affectionately yours,

SARA COLERIDGE.

XVI.

On her Loss—Cheerfulness instead of Happiness—Visits to  
Eton and Tunbridge Wells.

To Mrs. HENRY M. JONES, Hampstead.

*Eton, October 13th, 1843.*—Of course I am not up to the mark of easy, quiet enjoyment; yet I feel that, for a time, it is good for me to be here. I cannot withdraw myself from the world; I must live on in this outward scene (though it continually seems most strange to my feelings that I should yet be mixed up in it and Henry gone from it for ever). But since I have been doomed to outlive my husband, I must, for my children's sake as well as my own, endeavour to enter, with as much spirit as I can, into the interests and movements of the sphere to which it is God's will that I should yet belong. Ever since my widowhood I have *cultivated cheerfulness* as I never did before. During my time of union I possessed *happiness*; mere *cheerfulness* I looked upon as a weed, the natural wild produce of the soil, which *must* spring up of itself. Now I crave to see fine works of art, or the still more mind-occupying displays of nature. I try to take an interest in the concerns of my friends, to enter into the controversies of the day, to become intimate with the mood of mind and character of various persons, who are nothing to me (*I* being nothing to them), except

as *studies*; just as a lichen or a curious moss may be, only in a higher manner and degree. All this with an earnestness unfelt in former times. To a certain extent I find my account in this; my mind is restless, and rather full of desultory activity than, what is far better, concentrated energy; but it does not stagnate. I do not brood miserably over my loss, or sink into an aimless, inert despondency; I have even an upper stratum of cheerfulness in my mind, more fixed than in my happy married days, but then it is only an upper stratum, beneath it, unmoved and unmodified, is the sense of my loss.

I have been interrupted, to see Dr. Hawtrey. He was such an intimate friend of my beloved Henry. I shall always, on this account, feel a special interest in him. And he is in himself much to be liked and approved, most amiable in his domestic character, as son and brother, and full of intellectual refinement; a good scholar, and an accomplished modern linguist.

I came hither for a holiday, but I assure you I have no complete one. Herbert *makes* me read "Euripides" with him, and hear his Latin theme, I being as good a judge of Latin composition as a Great Cham of Tartary is of English.

My visit at Tunbridge Wells was a very agreeable one. I was quite astonished at the picturesque beauty and great variety of the country there, and found the family of Judge E—— quite charming in every-day familiar life. Miss M——, who was my fellow visitant, I found more than an agreeable companion, though she

is that in a high degree ; her brilliancy and amusing humour is the mere sparkling, polished surface of a genuine jewel, in which the ground is invaluable. I cannot but add her to my list of *friends* made since marriage, in which list you, dear friend, are so prominent. Mama is looking anxiously for a sight of you. Your affectionate conduct towards her, dear Mrs. Jones, gives me more comfort than I can well express. I do not think she fails at all in mind, and in body her declension is very gentle and gradual.

I must get ready to drive out and see the oak forests of Windsor, in all the charming drapery of autumnal gleam and shadow.—I remain your truly attached friend,

SARA COLERIDGE.

Excuse the egotism of this letter. Sorrow makes one egotistical.

## XVII.

Sympathy inspired by the Sorrows of Childhood and Youth.

To EDWARD QUILLINAN, Esq.\*

*Eton, October 24th, 1843.*—I scarce know why it is that I feel far more moved by the griefs of childhood and of youth than those of middle age. One has a sense, I suppose, that the young have a sort of *right* to happiness, or rather to gladsomeness and enjoyment ; that if they ever are to be gay and pretty then is the

\* The son-in-law of Mr. Wordsworth. Mr. Quillinan was well acquainted with the Portuguese language and literature, and has left a translation of the first five cantos of the “*Lusiad* of Camoens.”—E. C.



time. Sorrow and sallow cheeks come to me at my time of life not unnaturally. Reflection has preceded them, and ought at least to have enabled the fading mourner to look beyond them, to see a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness, and to drown in its lustre, superinduced over the worsening remnant of our earthly life, all its own melancholy hues. The comparative health and beauty of those who have fairly parted with youth is but a poor thing at the best. But you will laugh at my moralizing on the subject of beauty, at least if you do not bear in mind that I am not thinking of that which we ascribe to *a beauty*, the admired of the ball-room, the celebrated toast, but rather of that general attribute which the Psalmist must have referred to, when he complained so heavily that his "beauty was wasted for very trouble." We all have, or have had *beauty*, though we are not all "beauties."

## XVIII.

Restoration of the Jews—Literal Fulfilment of the Promise apparently Indicated by Old Testament Prophecy, and by the Words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans.

To Mrs. JOSHUA STANGER, Keswick.

10 *Chester Place, December 18th, 1843.*—The passage which has always seemed to me very strong for the restoration of the Jews, or at least very remarkable, and

seemingly hitherto unfulfilled, is Jeremiah xxiii. 5—8.\* Ben Ezra and Mr. Dodsworth take great pains to show that this cannot be understood of any restoration of the Jews to their own land, that has *already* taken place. I never read any argument against the opinion of the restoration of the Jews; and should like to know how Mr. Myers, and others who have a positive belief that Scripture is not to be so understood, interpret that passage. My own mind has hitherto been quite suspended on the subject, which I have but very cursorily examined; I have no positive formed belief against this view, as I own I have against the doctrine of the Millennarians.

Zechariah xiv. 4, 5, "And his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives" has more apparent reference to the restoration of the Jews than to the Millennium.

There seems, too, to my mind to be a sort of internal probability,—or rather, I mean, a sort of fitness and propriety in the thing; it looks like a completion of a design of which two parts were already accomplished;—I mean the setting apart of the chosen nation,—then the dispersion among the Gentiles. Does it not seem as if their restoration were the proper last act of the great drama? Of course, I speak of this only as an

\* "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, &c. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country," &c. (Jer. xxiii. 5—8).

auxiliary argument ; and then the latter part of Romans, chapter xi.,\* seems to favour this view not a little.

XIX.

Readings in Aristophanes—Cheerfulness and Simplicity of Early Poetry.

To the Hon. Mr. Justice COLERIDGE.

*Chester Place, December 26th, 1843.*—As to Aristophanes, I quite accede to the justice of your representations of his not altogether fitness for the joint perusal of Herby and me. I had clean forgotten the uncleanness, till my boy discreetly observed that there was a word in the next line which would not do to be voiced aloud. We shall only read the “Frogs,” but Herby is so delighted with this play that it would be a pity for him not to finish it, as I believe, from what Frere says, that there is but little, after the first scene, to object to in it. The *spirit* of the humour of Aristophanes a boy like Herbert may well enter into, when the *material* is once cleared out of its concealing husk and set before him. The temptation to read Aristophanes is, that his plays are mirthful, and “as there’s

\* For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be blind in your own conceits ; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved ; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Romans xi. 25, 26).

nought but care on every hand,” I am glad of every scrap of cheerfulness which I can lay before my children, now in their spring season when they can enjoy it. I feel sadly for them that this is a widowed home. But they appear as glad as others of their age, and the great change to me bears lightly upon them in comparison.

We have been laughing heartily at the “Frogs” again. It would be a lounge to read Homer with Herby; but I feel a wish to get him through some of the harder, more troublesome parts of the classical task that lies before him. It is wonderful,—*not* wonderful so much as noticeable,—how fitted the ancient classics are in general for the youthful mind. They contain, indeed, the youthful mind of our human race, are less abstract and subjective than modern compositions.



CHAPTER XII.

1844.

Letters to Miss Morris, John Kenyon, Esq., Mrs. Edward Coleridge, Mrs. Farrer, Mrs. J. Stanger.



## I.

“ Travelling Onwards ”—Differences of Mental Perspective in the Contemplation of Truth—Doctrine of the Millennium—Symbolism in the Bible—“ Messiah’s Kingdom ” and the “ Reign of the Saints,” both signify the Establishment of Christianity—Literal Explanation of the latter Prophecy by some of the Fathers, not founded on Tradition.

To Miss MORRIS, Mecklenburg Square.

*Chester Place, January 1844.*—“ Geneva!” and “ Rome!” My hope and trust is that we are *travelling onwards*, and shall in time leave these names, these badges of division, behind us. So far I understand and sympathize with Mr. Maurice, that I think there has been much of “ notionalism ” among all parties ; by which I take him to mean, in general, a losing sight, or at least a steady view, of spiritual *substance*, through the perplexing and deluding atmospheric medium of the mere understanding, its refractions and distorting reflections ; so that differences have arisen, not from pure perversity of heart, as believers are so apt to say of those who disagree with them, nor from an absolute blindness to truth, but from difference of position and a variableness and uncertainty in the medium itself. I sympathize with him, too, in this, that from being very strongly



possessed with the thought which I have just mentioned, I am a good deal isolated from all the conflicting parties now on the arena, and cannot agree wholly either with Tractarians or anti-Tractarians. For Maurice is at bottom quite as unlike any *party* in his views as I have been led to be, though his language would put him into the class of High Churchmen, somewhere between the old section and the new, with those who read him but cursorily, without asking him and themselves very strictly what that language, in *his* mouth, means.

If you will soon be addressing Mr. Bickersteth, pray convey my best thanks to him for his last gift. I think I have read all that he says on the Promised Glory, and know the texts which he brings to the service of his view. Certainly, looked at in one way, they serve it effectively. I cannot, however, help seeing them in another. The more we look back to the development and expression of thought in past ages, the more, I think, we find that great spiritual and moral truths were in the earlier times continually presented in the form of the fable or myth. Instead of sermons and scientific treatises, they had allegories and symbolical representations: all doctrines—moral, religious, or metaphysical—were embodied and clad in sensuous forms. To speak of this, and draw inferences from it in the interpretation of that old book, the Bible, is considered a modern refinement, a piece of rationalism. But rationalism did not invent the mythical mode of writing: it does but point it out, and compare what it presumes to be instances of it in Scripture with countless others out

of Scripture. I seem to myself to see plainly that the descriptions of the Messiah's kingdom in the Prophets are descriptions of Christianity itself, in all the glory, and gladness, and purity of the idea, under the guise of actual history, and with all the pomp of sensuous imagery to render the symbol significant. In the same way I read the Revelations ; and it seems to me that on this plan an interpretation may be given, which, though at first it seems bold, yet is in truth more consistent with itself, and more accordant with the language of Scripture, when that is tried by the proper rules, than any other. I cannot but think that the whole theory of the earthly millennial kingdom stands on an insecure foundation, because I always find from writers on the subject that at bottom it rests with every one of them on Rev. xx. 4, as it did from the first ; and I do verily believe that the language of that text will not admit of the interpretation which their theory gives to it. The early Fathers, some of them, understood it so ; but such symbolical texts they made sad work with, I believe, for the most part. We should not, any of us, like to accept their Biblical criticism all through ; and criticism it was plainly enough, not traditional knowledge of any clear description.

## II.

Critique on the Early Poems of Elizabeth Barrett (Mrs. Browning)  
—Favourite Pieces—Exuberance of her Style inappropriate to

Solemn Themes—Hasty Objections made by Miss B—— to the Ideal Philosophy of Berkeley, and to the Wolfian Theory of Homer.

To JOHN KENYON, Esq.\*

*Regent's Park*, 1844.—My dear Mr. Kenyon—At last I return with thanks the Poems of Miss Barrett, which I now always mention in high terms to any of my acquaintances, when the conversation affords an opportunity. I think my favourites are the "Poet's Vow," "A Romance of the Ganges," "Isobel's Child" (so like "Christabel" in manner, as mama and I both thought), "The Island," "The Deserted Garden," and "Cowper's Grave." But my conception of Miss B——'s poetical merit is formed from lines and stanzas occurring here and there in most of the poems—from the general impression produced by the whole collection, rather than from any number of entire pieces. "The Seraphim" contains *very* fine passages; and perhaps no other single poem in the volume has impressed me so strongly with the writer's power; and yet, taken as a whole, with re-

\* A friend of Mr. Southey's, and relative of the gifted lady whose earlier works form the subject of this letter. It is proper to add that the two concluding paragraphs are only inserted here for the sake of the interesting remarks which they contain on Berkeley's system and the Homeric question, since the notes which originally called them forth were withdrawn in subsequent editions. In Mrs. Browning's later publication, my mother particularly admired the "Drama of Exile" (the subject of which she thought "more within the sphere of poetic art" than that of the "Seraphim"), "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," "The Cry of the Children," the "Rhyme of the Duchess May," and the "lovely sonnet" called "Irreparableness."—E. C.

ference not to what others could produce, but with what it ought to be, I confess it does not altogether please me. If there be a subject throughout the range of human thought which demands to be treated (if treated at all as the prominent theme of any metrical composition) with a sober Miltonic majesty of style, rather than with a wild modernism and fantastic rapture, surely that subject is the Crucifixion of a Saviour and the Redemption of a fallen world. Even in that clever translation of the “Prometheus Bound” (for very clever it is) there occur some phrases which want the Hebraic simplicity of the original. “The faded white flower of the Titanic brow,”—do you think that quite comes up to the manly broadness and boldness of the Greek Dramatist, or suits the awful circumstances of the Titan fixed upon his rock? There is a *flower* in both cases, to be sure; but Æschylus meant that *the whole outward man* of Prometheus would be parched and discoloured by the sun’s heat; and this he expressed by a plain but untranslatable Græcism. I think that your cousin should study a noble simplicity, especially as her poetical aims are so high, lest she should be obliged to finish the lofty temples of imagination with brass instead of gold. You see how easy it is to *preach* even for those who cannot practice; but Miss Barrett *can* practice, and will benefit, I trust, by preaching of more authority than mine, the presumption of which will never reach her ears.

I cannot make an end of my preaching, however, without venturing a remark or two on her summary manner of dealing with the Homeric question, and with

the opinions of Berkeley. Surely no one, who understands what Berkeley's scheme of Idealism really was, would suppose that the poor bishop was bound, in consistency with his metaphysical principles, to let a cart run over him! He tells us plainly, that if by material *substance* he meant only that which is *seen* and *felt*, then is he "more sensible of matter's existence than any other philosopher." I question whether Miss B—— did not confound idealism with unreality, as persons new to the subject invariably do. Few metaphysicians would ratify her sentence that Berkeley was "out of his senses;" though none now perhaps believe his system true in fact, or look upon it as other than a platform on which a certain number of pregnant truths were exhibited in a strong point of view. Channing observes how it has influenced the modes of thinking among metaphysicians.

Then, again, Miss B——'s censure of all who believe in the "Homeric speculation" is sweeping indeed. It sweeps away, like chaff before the wind, not only almost all the great scholars and fine critics of learned Germany, not only "the eloquent Villemain," and numbers of French Savans,—not only men of genius and learning, such as Wolf and Heyne, and the Italian Vico,—but those of the highest *poetic* feeling, who, both in this and other countries, are converts to the system.

Before I conclude, however, let me add that I do not quarrel with any one for sticking resolutely to the "blind old man of Scio's rocky isle," nor pretend to have formed a decided opinion on this puzzling point

upon which great doctors have agreed to differ ; though I *incline* to the belief, that if Homer ever existed, he no more wrote *all* the books of the Iliad, than one Hercules performed the twelve labours ascribed to him. The books, to be sure, are extant, the labours fabulous ; but I mean that the one, as the other, *may* have been a nucleus around whose works those of others were collected, but whose name remained to the whole.

*P. S.*—Since writing the above, I have again read the “Seraphim,” and am more impressed with its merit than at first. It is *full* of beauty.

### III.

Gladness a Natural Gift of Childhood—Severe Discipline not suited to the Period of Early Youth.

To her Eldest Brother.

*Chester Place, 1844.*—There is a gladness generally found in children happily circumstanced and managed by those who understand and will to act upon the simple rules, by observance of which these little ones are made and kept as happy as they can be ;—keeping black care quite out of their sight, addressing them with cheerful looks and tones, never keeping them long at any one task, yet enforcing a certain amount of work, with occasional half and some whole holidays, regularly,—never letting any trouble remain as a weight and grinding pressure upon their minds,—but inflicting

at once whatever is absolutely necessary,—and then diverting their minds to what is easy and pleasant. A child must also have a certain amount of health and of intellectual activity, imaginativeness, and so forth, to be perpetually *gladsome*,—but with the positives and negatives that I have named, we shall find any child in a country or town cottage not only cheerful, but joyous.

Of course, I am not implying that to produce and maintain this gladness is the great work of education—but I feel assured that it is a true part of education, and that amid this ease from without, and consequent happiness from within, the affections, temper, and understanding expand and grow more favourably, and take a better and more generous form than under other circumstances. What I am now saying, however, applies to children as such: this I think the best *preparatory* state, because it best enables the native powers to develop themselves; but trial and hardship are proper to exercise and consolidate them from time to time as soon as they have gained a certain measure of strength; and to put the matter practically, I think that parents should make their children as easy and happy as ever they can without indulging them in what is wrong, leaving *discipline* to be supplied by the ordinary and inevitable course of events, the sorrow, difficulty, and suffering which life in this world brings to every individual. The young people that are spoiled by an indulgent home are spoiled, I think, not by over-happiness, but from having been encouraged in selfishness, never made to understand, and led to practise Christian duty.

IV.

The Temple Church—Colour in Architecture.

To Mrs. EDWARD COLERIDGE, Eton.

*June* 1844.—Yesterday, I saw with delight for the first time the restored Temple Church. The restoration seems to me to be in excellent taste, with the exception of the altar. No doubt, the great beauty of this interior consists in what it always had, its general form, with the clustered pillars, and exquisite interlacing of arches. But the decorative part brings out and illuminates this original and essential beauty, as I have so often seen the rich colours of sunset illuminate the fine forms of my native hills.

V.

Use of Metrical Rules in Poetry—Versification of “Christabel” and “The Ancient Mariner”—Artificial Character of some of the Greek Metres.

To Miss MORRIS.

*June* 10th, 1844.—Have you been poetizing of late? Mind, I do not tie you down to those longs and shorts; but, depend upon it, there is much use in them. The more our ear can direct us the better, but rules help and educate the ear. Poetry is more of an *art* than people in general think. They know that Music and Painting are arts; but they imagine that Poetry must flow forth spontaneously, like the breath which we breathe, without volition or consciousness. All our finest metrists knew these rules: how far they went by them I cannot say;



but I know that my father, whose versification has been greatly admired by critics, was fond of talking about anapæsts and iambuses ; and if people admired “*Christabel*,” as it were, by nature, he was never easy till he had put them in the way of admiring it more scientifically. Dr. Carlyle says he never succeeded in making him admire “*The Ancient Mariner*” properly. He was obliged, after all, to go back to his own first rude impressions, and rely upon them.

The manner in which the ancient verse was constructed is a curious problem. It seems as if those very artificial metres, dependent on syllabic quantity, could never in any degree have been written by ear, or otherwise than as such verse is written now. All critics, however, agree that the best and seemingly most *easy* and *natural* styles, both in prose and verse, are those that have been most artfully written and carefully elaborated. Art alone will do nothing, but it improves and educes the natural gift. Cobbett taught wrong doctrine on this head ; and so, I believe, did my Uncle Southey.

## VI.

The “*Life of Arnold*” a Book to be “gloried in”—The Visible Church, not to be Identified with any Single System—Dr. Arnold’s Opinion that there ought to be no Distinction between the Clergy and the Laity,

To the Hon. Mr. JUSTICE COLERIDGE.

*July* 1844.—I cannot tell you in one short day, or the longest summer day that ever shone, what I feel and

think about the "Life of Arnold,"—how I rejoice over it, how I glory in it, what good I augur from it. Not that I can see my way through the *whole* of Arnold's view, or perceive the justice of all his practical conclusions. I cannot but think with him that the *visible* Church is a human institution, sanctioned and blessed by God, and rendered the vehicle of His grace, just so far as it is really an efficient instrument of the preservation and propagation of true Christianity. I can see no sufficient reason to believe that it was supernaturally ordained by Him in detail—that it is not in this respect essentially different from its Jewish predecessor. I cannot doubt that it was full of error from the first, the Apostles during their life repressing, but not radically removing, wrong notions of the faith. I imagine that the Church, as a spiritual power co-ordinate with the Word and the Spirit, is certainly realized through a visible machinery and system of outward ordinances, but by no means confined to one alone, and that one prescribed by Christ Himself: so far as any one answers its great end better than another, so far it is a more divine and a fuller organ of the Spirit. But putting the question on the grounds upon which Arnold himself would have placed it—moral evidence, reason, and the plain-speaking of Scripture—I cannot but infer that religion and affairs of policy ought to have distinct functionaries; and certainly the general judgment of mankind, and not a mere sect and party of Christians, has inclined to this view rather than the other.

## VII.

“Nothing to do”—Isaac Taylor’s Suggestion that there will be Work as well as Rest in Heaven—Seaside Views and Walks—Fellow-Lodgers—Idleness and Extravagance of London Shopkeepers—Two Sorts of Diffuseness—Lord Eldon—Reflections on his Character and Portrait.

TO Mrs. FARRER.

5 *Nelson Place, Broadstairs, Aug. 27th, 1844.*—Dearest Mrs. Farrer—I will not defer writing to you till I have “nothing else to do ;” for I hope that time will never come. Mr. Taylor of Ongar, in his “History of Enthusiasm,” takes pains to show that we shall have a great deal *to do* in heaven, and even have to work hard there. My remark, however, is quite limited to the time of this mortal life ; for I think we are scarcely qualified as yet to cut out our work in the world to come, or determine upon the manner in which we shall spend eternity. Probably our present ideas of labour and rest will not be among the things which we shall carry along with us into the other state ; and I cannot think Mr. Taylor is justified in accusing other Christians of having *indolent notions* of heaven, because they have not exactly his view of the *exertions* that are to be made there. Be that as it may, however, the main part of my business here at Broadstairs is to scribble on scraps of paper, sometimes on sheets ; and I am sure that after all your great kindness to me, and concern shown for my comfort, I ought to fill one of these little sheets, as well as I can, to you, little indeed as I have to put into it.

I know you will be pleased to hear how very satisfactory I find these lodgings. I never before had a *bed-room* with an interesting prospect, and I undervalued to you what I had scarce learned to prize. But nothing can be more charming than the view which I have before me now. The cornfield betwixt me and the sea takes off the sense of dreariness, and occasional bleak chilliness, which a full view of the "unfruitful ocean," and *that alone*, relieved only by the not more fruitful or lifesome shore, has always inspired me with. The sea thus viewed has something of a lake-like aspect; but that soft green hue was never seen upon any of my native lakes, although their calm bosoms used to exhibit a great variety of hues. I take short walks sometimes two or three times a day; yesterday, I walked out between seven and eight in the evening in hopes to see the moonlight shining on the sea. But the moon, which had bathed the landscape in tender light, the night before, was hidden in clouds; still I had a pleasant walk towards Dampton Stairs, and saw the *earth-stars*,—the lights on Goodwin sands and others, to advantage. For a day and a half after your departure, I felt low and unequal to walking; but since then my mercury has risen a little, and I feel as if the sea was (or "*were*"? no, *was* in this case, I think) doing me that kind and degree of good which it generally has done, whenever I have tried it under tolerably favourable circumstances. The only drawback has been the noisiness of the children. Yesterday afternoon I began to think it went quite beyond bounds, and all my self-

reminders that I had loud-voiced chatterers of my own, did not bring me to feel complacently on the subject of so much rattling up and down stairs, incessant slamming of doors, and squeaking and squabbling. They say there is no lane so long but it comes to an end at last. I find, however, that *my* lane is a very short one, for the noise-makers depart in a day or two; indeed, they have been very bearable ever since yesterday. Their "pa" and "ma" keep a shop in Oxford Street; and now that I am able to make some calm, disinterested philosophic reflections on all that I have observed in this family, I am confirmed in my old opinion that the inferior London shopkeepers are an ill-managing class. I *suspect*, at least (I will not venture to say more), that they have more luxury with less in proportion of real respectability, that they partake more of the *civilization* of their times with less of the *cultivation*, than almost any other portion of the community. These children live on the stairs or in the kitchen, and never take a book or needle in their hands, and yet their parents are overburdening Mrs. Smith with cooking attendance, dressing well, and living for many weeks by the sea in commodious lodgings. The extravagance and recklessness that go on in the families of tradesmen in London is beyond what the rank above them even dream of. No wonder they hate the Church and band against her. The farmers may be still worse in grudging their money; but shopkeepers turn against the Church, I think, because they are better fed than taught, and because they hate regularity,

and all that is stern and strict. Methodism and Quakerism have their own strictness ; but *they*, many of them, stick to no sect, but go after this or that preacher. They represent the *bad* spirit of this age more completely than almost any other large class amongst us ; but, I believe, they are to be pitied more than blamed, having great temptations to all they do amiss.

I heard Dr. H—— again last Sunday, and continued to like his manner of preaching, for its earnestness and practicability, and aiming at the one thing needful. The fault of his style is a verbosity and diffuseness ; he gives you five branches of illustration, where one good solid bough would be quite enough. It is well to be reminded that we are better than the beasts that perish, and can give greater glory to God ; but the various particulars of our superiority, beginning with our erect posture, &c., &c., might be left to our own minds to suggest. This is very different from such diffuseness as that of Lord Eldon, who had not, I conjecture, *more words than matter*, but more matter of various kinds than he could arrange to perfection ; the minor matters overlaid the major, as the muffling ivy prevents the fine figure of a noble oak, with its well-proportioned trunk and branches, from being clearly discerned. He was perspicuous in thought, but not equally perspicuous in expression. I read to the end of this last volume of his life with very great interest of various kinds. The concluding portion, containing the vindication of his professional character, appeared to me very ably written, and upon the whole, more than

triumphant, and the remarks on Chancery business, and the legal anecdotes interspersed, are very good also. The perusal brought home to me, what I have long felt, how impossible it is that any eminently good, and great, and useful man should go through life without being perseveringly and violently misrepresented and ill-used. That review by Justice W. is such a specimen of able, but untruthful and unfair writing! The portrait of Lord Eldon, the more I look at it, the more it seems to be the very man; mild sensibility and weight of intellect, and moral firmness and sound judgment, are all marked in that countenance.

### VIII.

Religious Discussion Necessary to the Church; and Useful, under certain Conditions, to the Individual Christian.

To Mrs. JOSHUA STANGER.

10 *Chester Place, November 7th, 1844.*—You spoke in your last to me of controversy, and its spiritual inutility. I quite agree with you that it is of no *direct* benefit to the soul, and that it may be pursued injuriously to ourselves and others. But still I think it has its use even in a religious point of view, and that it may be used without being abused. I would exchange the term controversy (which gives a notion of *quarrelling* to many) for the milder one of discussion. This surely is necessary for the Church at large, if it is to be preserved from error, whilst the human understanding is so prone as it

is to self-deception. But I own I should be disposed to go further ; and to say that *in reason and in season*, it is useful for the individual. We cannot have clear definite views, or know well what our professed tenets really are, or why we ought to hold them, unless we reflect upon them, and compare them with the opposite ones which we reject. Persons who never do this (such persons, I believe, are very few, even among those who disclaim controversy) are apt, I think, to become narrow, superstitious, and bigoted ; to think their own belief the only one that any wise and good person can hold, yet all the time not to know what that belief really is, or how far it substantially (not in words only) differs from that of other Christians, with whom they disagree. Such, I mean, is the *tendency*, in my opinion, of an undiscussing, taking-for-granted frame of mind, though I fully believe that practical Christianity is found both among those who discuss, and those who leave alone discussion ; and where that is, nothing else can be deeply amiss.





## CHAPTER XIII.

1845.

Letters to the Hon. Mr. Justice Coleridge, Hartley Coleridge, Esq.,  
Aubrey de Vere, Esq., Miss Morris, Miss Erskine, Mrs.  
Farrer, the Hon. Mrs. Henry Taylor.



## I.

Memories of her Native Vale—The “Quarterly Review” a greater Authority on Practical than on Poetical Matters—Dr. Arnold as a Man and a Writer—His peculiar Theory of Church and State—Definition of Humility and Modesty, suggested by a Note in the “Northern Worthies.”

To HARTLEY COLERIDGE, Esq.,  
Dove Cottage, Town End, Grasmere.

*Chester Place, January 20th, 1845.*—Your communications and comments are ever most interesting to me, partly because they are upon persons and things in my native land, to which I have turned since my loss with renewed love and longing—to thoughts of the hills and the lakes, and still more of the rivers and streamlets, my dearly-beloved Greta rushing over the stones by the Cardingmill Field, or sweeping past, swollen with rains; and all the lovely flowers, especially the yellow globe flower, which fringe the banks, or lurk in the woods, or crowd and cluster in the open glades. But then my remembrance of all these things is inseparably associated with the feelings of early youth, which lends a glow to them. *Now*, if I were at the Blue-bell Bog, or on the slope of Goosey Green, I should be sinking with fatigue, not knowing how I should get back again. Even an easy saunter by Greta's side would be a very different thing, now that life, or the best part of it, is all

behind me, from what it was when this same life was *before* me—a vision often broken and obscured indeed by fear and anxiety, but yet with the Sun of Hope burning in its centre. This thought prevents me from lamenting, as I otherwise might, that I cannot look to spend my latter years in the lovely country of my youth. Yet I never take a solitary walk in the Park without longing that I could turn my steps towards dear old Friar's Crag. I think, in spite of middle age, and sickness and sorrow, I should still have much enjoyment in looking on the Lake, every day differently complexioned from the last, in gazing on the hills lit up by sunset, and all the manifold shows of nature among my native hills. Herbert H—— seems to miss the richness and variety of the lake-land exceedingly. In his last letter he observed how flat countries lose all their attractions in winter, which does but interestingly vary those of a mountainous district. Do not think, however, from my speaking of having left the best part of life behind me, that I am unhappy. I do not in the least wish to be happier, in the sense of having more satisfaction and animated enjoyment in the things of this world. It is best for me as it is. . . . .

It is remarkable how strong the "Quarterly Review" is in dealing with *matters of fact*: various as the writers in it must be, they always shine in that department. In abstract reasonings this "Review" is not great, and in æsthetics it is generally poor enough. Its poetical criticism is arbitrarily vague, without the slightest attempt at principle, and in a sneering, contemptuous

spirit. Its treatment of Keats and Tennyson was ultra-zoilian. I admire Keats excessively. Mr. Wordsworth used to say of Shelley and Keats that they would ever be great favourites with the young, but would not satisfy men of all ages. There is a truth in this saying, though I should say that it is not *literally* true, for I myself and many other *mediævals* can read their productions with unabated pleasure. But yet I feel that there is in those writers a want of solidity: they do not embody in their poems much of that with which the deeper and the universal heart and mind of man can sympathize. To be always reading Shelley and Keats would be like living on quince-marmalade. Milton and Wordsworth are substantial diet for all times and seasons.

Your admiration of Arnold I fully share. I admire, and, what is more, deeply honour him as a man, and as a writer so far as the man appears in his writings. As a reasoner and speculator I surmise that he was not *great*, though what he does see clearly he expresses with great energy and lifesomeness. It seems to me that he arrived at much truth which subtler men miss through sheer honesty and singleness of heart and mind, through sheer impatience and imprudence, not through philosophy. His views of Church and State I cannot well understand (I have not seen his fragment on the Church): so far as I *can* understand them, I imagine (it seems presumptuous for such as I to *opine* positively on such a subject) that they are incorrect and inadequate. He was a great historian; yet I would fain see how he

reconciled them with history, let alone philosophy. By unifying the State with the Church, does he not nullify and destroy the latter as a spiritual power, the antagonist of the world, and confer privileges and functions on the former incompatible with its proper and peculiar ones? I should say, in my ignorance, that this is after all but Romanism in disguise, at least practically. But perhaps I do not apprehend his scheme. He was and is a burning and a shining light in this country. His "Life and Letters" seem to have made a greater impression on the public mind than any book that has been published for many a day. . . . .

Reading your "Life of Mason" lately (during the height of my illness I read the "Doctor" and your "Worthies:": I did not want *new* books, but soothing ones in which I took a special interest), I noticed that you said in a note, "Modesty and vanity are only different phenomena of one and the same disposition, viz., an extreme consciousness and apprehensiveness of being observed."\* But this degrades modesty, methinks, into mere bashfulness, which belongs to the physical temperament, and is but modesty's shadow. Many a youth has both modesty and vanity; for modesty is directly opposed, not to vanity, but to impudence. Still, modesty is surely something more than the *fear of being observed*, which is, indeed, but a phase or mood of vanity, when it is not mere nervous bashfulness.

How shall we define Modesty? Surely it is an im-

\* "Lives of Northern Worthies," by Hartley Coleridge, vol. ii., p. 256.  
—E. C.

portant virtue, and a grace to boot. Is it not *moderation*, viewed in its moral rather than its prudential aspect—ingenuous shame, and keen sensibility to all that is unseemly, unfitting, disproportionate in reference to self? It is closely allied to Justice, for he who does not overrate himself is the less likely to arrogate to himself more than is his due : it borders upon Humility and Piety, for he who is not disposed to exalt his own merits in his own eyes or in those of others, though not necessarily humble on that account, is yet far more in the way of being so than if he had a high notion of his relative excellence, and a desire to parade and proclaim it. Humility is not the mere consciousness of our low estate, but the disposition to act and suffer as if we had no high claims ; and this is different from modesty, yet, I think, akin to it. Humility, perhaps, is the being *content* with the low place and scant portion ; Modesty, a sense of the impropriety of claiming a higher and a better.

## II.

The Royal Academy of 1845—Turner's Painting.

To Miss ERSKINE.

*May 18th, 1845.*—It is commonly said that this is not a striking Exhibition, simply, I think, because there is in it no great glaring Maclise, nor the usual number of fine animal pieces, with fur which one longs to stroke, by Landseer. I should say, as some others say too,



that it is upon the whole a very interesting collection of specimens of our modern English school of painting : it contains so many sweet landscapes by Stanfield (no Callcotts, alas !), by Collins, Creswick, Lee (one of whose pictures is almost a Gainsborough), Leitch, Harding, and Roberts, though about the productions of this last there is rather a tiring sameness.

In this list I have not included Turner, because I can find but few persons who agree with me that he *is* to be admired ; but I had the comfort of an accordant voice with mine in dear Lady P——'s. I do not like Turner's Venetian views, of which he has four in the present Exhibition, so much as two pictures called "Whalers," in which sea and sky are mixed up together in most (by me) *admired* confusion. No other man gives me any notion of that infinity of hues and tints and gradations of light and shade which Nature displays to those who have eyes for such lights, except Turner : no one else gives me such a sense of the power of the elements, no one else lifts up the veil and discloses the *penetralia* of Nature, as this painter does. The liquid look of his ocean and its lifesomeness, and that wonderful steam that is rising up and hovering over the agitated vessel, are what one might look for in vain in any but the Turnerian quarter.

On the other hand, I cannot admire Landseer's "Shepherd in Prayer," so much as it is the fashion to do. In this picture he aims at something in a higher line than he has attempted before ; and, to my mind, in this higher line he wants power. There is

doubtless a sweet feeling about the picture: the shepherd is good, and he kneels before a most picturesquely rural crucifix, but the sheep are *de trop*; such a quantity of dead fleece scattered around, and continued on to the very horizon, I cannot away with, or rather, I wish it away. Neither can I satisfy D—— in the amount of admiration which he demands for Eastlake's "Comus." It is very pure and harmonious, and finely coloured, but it wants intensity, and meaning, and spirit. The "Heiress" by Leslie is a most lovely girl; and Clater's "Bride" as fair and vernal as the hawthorn wreath with which she is encircling her head, in contempt of Fashion with her orange-flowers. Etty has seven or eight pictures, all of which have his usual merits, more or less, and some of them are beautiful. His *flesh* is first-rate; but one may look in vain in him for the spirit—that is, the spiritual and refined.

## III.

Visitors before Luncheon.

To Miss MORRIS.

*Chester Place*, 1845.—First, I must reply to your proposal of coming to see me between twelve and one o'clock. My *rule* is, not to let my friends visit me at that early hour when they can with no great difficulty come at a later one; because the two hours before my mid-day meal are with me the most uneasy in the whole twenty-four. Still, I do not wish to be more

subjected to my bodily weakness than is unavoidable, and every now and then I am called down to some old friend whom I do not like to send away unseen. Old gentlemen especially *will* take their own way in such matters, and look in when it suits them rather than when it suits me. At first I feel faint and cross; but when they begin laying down the law about this and that,—the Church and the Tract doctrines, and other such subjects,—as if there was but one opinion in the world that was really worth a straw, and that their own,—all other reasoners and thinkers dancing about after vain shadows and will-o'-the-wisps,—I am provoked into a sort of enraged strength,—my controversial muscles begin to plump up,—I lose sight of luncheon (a vision of which had been floating before my dull eyes before), and, as soon as a pause occurs, I fill it up with my voice, and, whether listened to or not, improve by exercise my small powers of expressing opinion.

## IV.

Interpretations of Scripture Prophecies by Writers of the Evangelical School—Antichristian Character of the Papacy supposed to be predicted by the “Little Horn” in the Book of Daniel, the “Man of Sin” in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, and “Babylon the Great” in the Revelations—Contents of the Sixth Vial—Shelley’s Atheism—Not Papal but Pagan Rome the real Object of the Apocalyptic Denunciations.

To Miss MORRIS.

10 *Chester Place, June 21st, 1845.*—I have felt that I ought to have been conversing with you of late on a

subject upon which I have been venturing to write (I mean a *letter* only)—the subject of prophecy.

I told Mr. B—— the impression which the different passages in Scripture, most important in the Antichrist controversy, and most dwelt upon by each party, as proving their own particular views, make upon me, when I read them without the medium of note or comment, and with no theory intervening betwixt my mind's eye and the text. The "little horn" of Daniel presents to me a staring likeness of the Pope. That it was intended for him, and for none other than he, I will not venture to say. I do not feel sure of *that*, all things considered, so far as I can consider them. But I say it is *awfully like* him,—that he *is* a little horn that speaks great things, and has eyes, *such eyes* as no other power in this world possesses, that he changes times and laws presumptuously and iniquitously, and has worn out a great many saints of God with persecutions. But when I read the language of the New Testament on the Man of Sin and Antichrist, instead of seeing this picture enlarged and rendered more distinct,—on the contrary, I see only a generalization. The mystery of iniquity is in the Papacy;—but that popery, and popery alone, is the mystery of iniquity I cannot persuade myself. Here, I think, Horsley, Palmer, and a hundred others, who oppose the theory which identifies Antichrist with the Pope or Popery, are strong. That "wicked that is to be consumed by the spirit of the Lord's mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of His coming," is certainly no popery that has existed yet.

But it is said there is to be another manifestation of popery and its corruption, and this it is which is to be destroyed. Now, it is just this way of interpreting Scripture, this putting into the sacred text *ad libitum*, and filling up ever so great a gulf and gap with supposition, which seems to me so unwarrantable, and a method too which never leads to any conclusion, because every different theorist can resort to the same expedient to justify his opinions. See the tracts on Antichrist, and the use *they* make of this argument. If all the abominations, persecutions, presumptions, and impious pretensions of the Papacy, which history records, are the characters of the Man of Sin, then surely he has been already revealed, as he was not revealed in St. Paul's own day. To say that we have already witnessed these things, and that they constitute the wickedness of the wicked one, and yet that he is *still to be revealed* close before the advent of the Lord, and His reign upon earth, is not, in my opinion, to submit our minds to the text of Scripture, but to make it say what we like. The "powers, and signs, and lying wonders" of Romanism have been manifested at full. It is highly improbable that they can ever deceive the world again as they have done. What a crafty priesthood can contrive in one part of the civilized world, an active press and an irrepressible spirit of inquiry and opposition to superstitious falsity exposes and counteracts in another part. The passage in Timothy, on forbidding to marry, does not to my mind describe Romanistic errors, but religious notions of a somewhat different kind.

If such are my impressions from the Epistles, still more strongly do I feel, on going on to the Apocalypse, that Popery was not the object of the apostolic predictions and denunciations, except so far as *all* falsehood and corruption is so. I cannot pretend to assign the meaning of all the various symbols,—I *never* have seen them to my mind satisfactorily explained. The “vials” are filled, to every man’s fancy, with just those exhibitions of evil which most strongly have excited his aversion, and alarmed his fears. Mr. B—— notices Shelley’s “Revolt of Islam,” under the sixth vial. Alas! poor Shelley! “I’se wae to think of him,” as Burns was to think of old Nick and his gloomy fate. He had a religious element in his nature; but it was sadly overborne by an impetuous temper, and a certain presumption, which made him cast aside all the teaching of other men that did not approve itself at once to his judgment. But to mention him under the sixth vial is to give him an infamous sort of fame which he scarcely, I think, deserved. As an unbeliever he was utterly insignificant,—made no proselytes, had no school, nor belonged to any school. He had ceased to be an atheist before he died, and never had any power, or excited any great attention, I think, except as a poet. In that line he has a station from which he cannot be moved, while any genuine taste for poetry, as such, exists.

To conclude my impressions of prophecy, not from commentaries, but from the text. I own I can see nothing but Imperial and Pagan Rome in the Revela-

tions, as the great object of the prophet's denunciations, from beginning to end. It should be borne in mind, I think, that the persecutions under the Roman Empire were the only warfare that ever has been carried on against Christianity as such,—against the *religion* itself under any form. The martyrs during that warfare were the only sufferers who could *properly* be said to have died “for the testimony of Jesus.” There have been anti-Papal martyrs enough for the purity of the faith; but is it not putting the less before the greater to imagine that these, and not the thousands that were put to death and tortured for professing Christianity at all, are those of whom the apoclypt wrote with such a pen of fire? But the whole description of this Babylon the Great, and her downfall, this city on seven hills, to my mind, is expressive of the great Roman *Empire*, of which Rome itself was the representative, and not Papal Rome, which never sat upon seven hills; and to convert those seven hills into seven Electors of Germany, seems to me a more incredible transformation than any in Ovid's metamorphoses. Nothing can exceed the boldness of Scriptural metaphor; but this boldness has its own laws, and the same figure which fits one sentence fits not another.

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V.

Occasional Recurrence of Millennial Preachings—Unpractical Nature of the Doctrine—Bearing of the Parable of the Ten Virgins on this Subject—Various Styles of Contemporary Divines.

To Miss MORRIS.

1845.—I find that there has been a very general preaching of the Millennium in various parts of the country of late years. So it will continue to be, I think, ever and anon, till some victorious arm shall arise, or some victorious pen shall write some book in which a real advance shall be made in the elucidation of the subject. Hitherto there has been nothing more than a repeated eddying round a certain number of arguments, which contain a certain quantity of force, and are especially striking when first presented to the unprepared mind, but which, as I have been led to think, are not strong enough to bring the matter to a conclusion with the majority of the reflective and judicious. Hence the subject is often brought forward, eagerly enforced, makes a number of converts—some few permanent ones, others only for a season; but then it dies away again, without taking any deep hold of the Church at large. I know how your brother disposes of this fact in that judicious sermon of his on the “Actual Neglect,” &c., which shows a clearer insight into the difficulties of the question, I think, than most Millennial discourses do. He observes that the *wise* virgins slumbered as well as the foolish, while the Bridegroom tarried. But if the *wise* as well



as the foolish neglect this doctrine, what are they that attend to it? Our Lord leaves no room for them in His parable at all. Looking at the structure of it, I can hardly persuade myself that He meant by this slumber to indicate a blameable inattention to His coming again; for what more could the wise virgins have done, had they kept awake the whole night, than provide oil for their lamps? what would they have gained more than admission to the marriage-feast? . . .

I agree with you quite about Mr. B——'s sermon and its "dry brilliancy." It reminds me of those bright, burnished insects whose juiceless bodies clink and rattle as they whisk glittering along. His style wants oiling.

Newman's sermon, "Faith against Sight," one of those addressed to the University, is an admirable specimen of his mind and manner. I think he is the finest writer, upon the whole, that we have at present; but, with all his power, he will never be able, as I believe, to establish more than one half of his body of opinion in this land.

## VI.

### Dr. Pusey's Preaching.

To Miss MORRIS, Mecklenburg Square.

*Chester Place, July 7th, 1845.*—We have had Pusey and Manning preaching here lately, the former three times. Pusey's middle sermon, preached in the evening, was the perfection of his style. But it is wrong to talk of *style* in respect of a preacher whose very merit

consists in his aiming at no *style* at all. He is certainly, to my feelings, more impressive than any one else in the pulpit, though he has not one of the graces of oratory. His discourse is generally a rhapsody, describing, with infinite repetition and accumulativeness, the wickedness of sin, the worthlessness of earth, and the blessedness of heaven. He is as still as a statue all the time he is uttering it, looks as white as a sheet, and is as monotonous in delivery as possible. While listening to him, you do not seem to see and hear a *preacher*, but to have visible before you a most earnest and devout spirit, striving to carry out in this world a high religious theory.

## VII.

Sunset over the Sea.

To Mrs. FARRER.

*Herne Bay, August 9th, 1845.*—Yesterday evening the soft blue of sea and sky, illumined with windows of bright rose-colour, which seemed like windows of heaven indeed, with the Apocalyptical City stretched out in gemmy splendour on the other side, as fancy suggested, was most lovely and tranquillizing.

## VIII.

Canterbury Cathedral, and St. Augustine's College.

To the Hon. Mr. Justice COLERIDGE,  
Heath's Court, Ottery St. Mary.

*Herne Bay, August 10th, 1845.*—Last Wednesday we

went to Canterbury to see the Cathedral and St. Augustine's. The former I admired more than ever; and D——'s architectural lore made our excursion all round the outside, and through the inside of this more beautiful than sublime structure, all the more memorable and interesting. Some of the old painted glass is the very ideal of that sort of thing, rich and gemmy with minute designs, and far removed from the modern *picture* style of painted window. We visited the precincts of St. Augustine's with very great interest, and were pleased to see with our own eyes, how considerable a part of the ancient structure will be woven into the view, and what a *physical continuity*, as D—— says, there will be of the one with the other. The new dining-hall takes in the woodwork, to a great extent, of the old refectory for strangers; and the antique architectural forms (in the middle-pointed style) will be carefully reproduced. The old gateway will form a very imposing entrance to the modern college.

## IX.

Re-union of Christendom—The Romish Clergy, and the Roman Church.

To the Hon. Mr. Justice COLERIDGE.

*Chester Place, August 26th, 1845.*—As for desire for re-union with the Church of Rome—I verily think that no one can exceed me in desire for the union of all Christendom, that all who call upon the Name of the

Lord, and acknowledge the moral law of the New Testament, and the necessity of obeying it, should be in communion with each other,—the millions of Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists in America, as well as the Romanists of Italy and Spain. But such a union cannot be without concessions on one side or the other, if not on both, unless the parties were to change their minds to a great extent, in which case the debate and the difficulty would be at an end; and I for one could never give up or adopt what would satisfy either body. I suppose, however, that you have a desire for a re-union with *Rome*, of a very different kind from any you may entertain for union with all Christians; you look upon Rome as a branch of the true Church, and the others above-named as out of the pale of the true Church. With this feeling I cannot pretend to have much sympathy, though it may be my error and misfortune not to have it. I think that the Congregationalists belong to the Church of Christ, as well as the others. The Church of Rome I am accustomed to regard, not as the aggregate of Christians professing Romish doctrine, but as the body of the Romish clergy, together with the system of religious administration upon which they proceed. For the former, the multitude of Romish individuals, I have no feelings of dislike or disrespect whatever,—I believe that numbers of them are full of true religion and virtue, and worship God in spirit and in truth. The Romish clergy, considered in their corporate capacity, I cannot but look upon as full of worldly wisdom and worldly iniquity,

and I think, as you do of the Reformation, that old Nick contemplates it—*i.e.*, this body, with great satisfaction, the cockles of his heart leaping up with delight at the view. My Uncle Southey was abused for calling the system of the Romish Church “a monstrous structure of imposture and wickedness;”—yet I think he did a good deal to substantiate the charge; he certainly had far more *information* on the subject than our young innamoratos of the modern Romish Church can any of them boast, and he had no sort of sympathy with Dissenters and Low Churchmen to inspire him with enmity against the opposite quarter of Christendom. Still I am endeavouring to get rid of Protestant prejudice; of all feelings and views merely founded on habit, apart from reflection and genuine spiritual perception,—and to consider quietly whether or no there be not some good even in the Romish ecclesiastical system;—and some good I do believe there is, *especially for the lower orders*, as I also think there is some good in the Methodist system, with which, as well as with the religious practices of the strict Evangelicals, Blanco White is always comparing the system in which he, to his misery, was brought up. But I own it seems to me that the good, whatever it may be, is inextricable from the evil, both from the nature of the thing, and also because the Romish body have never been known to make any *real* concession of any kind or sort—none that was not meant as a mere temporary expedient, to be withdrawn on the earliest opportunity: and looking upon them, as I do, as *a power of this world*, aiming at

political domination and not inspired, as a body, with any pure zeal for the furtherance of the *truth*, be it what it may, I cannot believe they ever will.

X.

“New Heavens and a New Earth.”

The following lines may fitly be inserted here, as a poetical expression of the writer’s sentiments on these high subjects.—E. C.

TO A FAIR FRIEND ARGUING IN SUPPORT OF THE RENOVATION, IN A LITERAL SENSE, OF THE MATERIAL SYSTEM.

PHILONOUS TO HYLASIA.

I.

Keep, oh ! keep those eyes on me,  
If thou wouldst my soul persuade,  
Soul of reasoner, bold and free,  
Who with pinions undismayed  
Soars to realms of higher worth  
Than aught like these poor heavens and earth.

II.

Talk no more of Scripture text,  
Tract and note of deep divine :  
These but leave the mind perplexed—  
More effectual means are thine :  
Through that face, so fair and dear,  
The doctrine shines as noonday clear.

III.

Who that sees the radiant smile  
Dawn upon thy features bright,  
And thy soft, full eyes the while  
Spreading beams of tender light,  
But must long those looks to greet,  
When perfect souls in joyance meet ?

IV.

Who that round some verdant home  
 Day by day with thee hath strayed,  
 Through its pathways loved to roam,  
 Sat beneath its pleasant shade,  
 But must hope that heavenly bower  
 May wear such hues as these of ours?

V.

O ye fair and pleasant places,  
 Where the eye delighted ranges ;  
 O ye dear and friendly faces,  
 Loved through all your mortal changes ;  
 Are ye but stars, to shine through this life's night,  
 Destined, in Heaven's great Day, to vanish from our sight?

S. C., 1845.

To Miss MORRIS.

*Eton, September 8th, 1845.*—I have often spoken of you to Mr. de Vere ; and yesterday I told him that the views which he was setting forth, in regard to the future world, the glorified body, and the new heavens and earth, were in spirit, and to a great degree in form, extremely similar to those I had heard you express and warmly enlarge upon. *I* am much more *dry*, alas! on these subjects ; at least I am aware that my belief must appear very dry and cold to all but those who entertain it. *We* somehow fancy that we are to have a quint-essence of all that is exalted, and glowing, and beautiful, in your new-world creed hereafter, only not in the same way. Mr. de Vere cannot bear to part with our human body altogether, nor with this beautiful earth with its glorious canopy. He wants to keep these

things, but to have them unimaginably raised, and purified, and glorified! *I* think that *they* must go, but that all the loveliness, and majesty, and exquisiteness, are to be unimaginably extracted and enshrined in a new, unimaginable form, in another, and to us now, inconceivable state of existence. He said (so like you), “But I want *this earth* to have a fair trial, to have it show what it can be at the best, in the highest perfection of which it is capable, which never has been yet manifested.”

XI.

Poetry of Keats : its Beauties and Defects—“The Grecian Urn” and “Endymion.”

To AUBREY DE VERE, Esq., Curragh Chase, Ireland.

*Eton, September 1845.*—I admire Keats extremely, but I think that he wants solidity. His path is all flowers, and leads to nothing but flowers. The end of the Endymion is no point : when we arrive there, it is looking down a land of flowers, stretching on *ad infinitum*, the separate parts indistinguishable. I admire all the minor poems which you have marked, three of them especially. In the “Grecian Urn” I dislike the third stanza : it drags out the substance of the preceding stanzas, which, after all, is stuff of *fancy*, not of the higher *imagination*, to weariness ; and it ends with an unpleasant image, expressed in no very good English. “High sorrowful” is Keats’ English, if English at all.



I must say that, spite of the beautiful poetry, as far as words and images go, I've no patience with that Adonis lying asleep on a couch, with his "white arm" and "faint damask mouth," like a "dew-lipped rose," with lilies above him, and Cupids all round him. If Venus was in love with such a girl-man as that, she was a greater fool than the world has ever known yet, and didn't know what a handsome man is, or what sort of a gentleman is "worthy a lady's eye," even as far as the mere outward man is concerned. I do think it rather effeminate in a young man to have even dreamed such a dream, or presented his own sex to himself in such a *pretty-girl* form. And where is the sense or the beauty of setting one woman opposite another, for a pair of lovers, instead of an Apollo and a Venus? This effeminacy is the weak part of Keats. Shelley has none of it. There is no greater stickler than I am for the rights of woman—not the right of speaking in Parliament and voting at elections, but of having her own sex to herself, and all the homage due to its attractions. There is one merit in Byron: he is always manly. The weaknesses he has are weaknesses of an imperfect man, not a want of manliness.

You will perhaps tell me that the Greek poets have sometimes ascribed a delicate beauty to Adonis. But I say those poets must have been thinking of their own lady-loves all the while, and that *Venus herself* would have admired a very different swain. It is not the possession of any beauty of form or hue that will make a man effeminate; but it is the presence of such

beauty apart from something else to which it is subordinated. It is the absence of this *something else*, and the presentation without it, of that which in woman is characteristic and prominent, which makes this picture of Keats so disagreeably feminine, at least to my taste. I think I have a right to preach on *this* theme, just because I am a woman myself. Men in general are frights, especially before and after five-and-twenty. Nothing provokes ladies more than to hear men admiring one another's beauty. It is less affronting for each man to admire his own ; they fancy *that* is for their sakes !

I must take another half sheet to quarrel with you about the "Endymion." How could you possibly, after making so many marks, pass over that powerful description of Circe torturing the metamorphosed wretches in the forest, one of the most striking passages in the whole poem? I am afraid you like nothing that is *horrid*, that you are too fond of the "roses and the thistle-down," and find such things "too flinty hard for your nice touch." To me it is *refreshing*, after the sugar upon honey and butter upon cream of much that precedes. It is fine, too, as an allegory. And is not that an energetic expression?—

" Disgust and hate,  
And terrors manifold, *divided me*  
*A spoil amongst them.*"

Especially powerful is that part beginning—

" Avenging, slow,  
Anon she took a branch of mistletoe."

The deliberate way in which she does the thing is so fine, and their anticipation of agony, and the poor elephant's pathetic prayer! One feels the cumbrous weight of flesh weighing one down in reading it.

Again, you take no notice of Cynthia's speech to her lover, so Beaumont and Fletchery—

“ O that the dreadful smiles  
Had wanéd from Olympus' solemn height,  
And from all serious gods !”

Brimful of love-sick silliness, no doubt, but so is the whole poem ; and, instead of flattering the fellow in that way, she ought to have given him a sharp dig with her keenest arrow for having the abominable bad taste to call her lunar lips “slippery blisses.” By-the-by, what think you of “nectarous camel-draughts”? Is it not enough to horrify the very genius of osculation into a fit? Surely, after a *camel-draught* of nectar, Glaucus might have found the contents of the “black, dull, gurgling phial” an agreeable change, and after such a drench of roses and ambrosia, who would not cry aloud for camomile and wormwood?

These are your omissions. Then, in the way of commision, you put a stroke of approval at these lines—

“ Old Æolus thy foe  
Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the *gruff* complaint  
Of all his rebel tempests.  
. . . . “ Dark clouds faint  
When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam  
Slants over *blue dominion*.”

*Gruff* is a ludicrous word ; and if we may talk about

*blue dominion*, I know not what classes of words there are that may not intermarry with every other class.

You approve also this—

“ While ocean’s tide  
Hung swollen at their backs, and *jewell’d* sands  
Took *silently* their footprints.”

Ocean’s tide hangs swollen from a dyke, which keeps it back ; but does it ever thus hang from a sandy beach, and how should sands be *jewelled*, and why should it be noticed that they took footprints *silently* ?

It seems to me that Keats not only falsifies language very frequently, besides making words, such as *orby*, *serpentine*, &c., ad libitum, but that he also falsifies nature sometimes in his imagery. He turns the outer world into a sort of raree show, and combines shapes and colours as fantastically and lawlessly as the kaleidoscope. The kaleidoscope certainly has a law of its own, and so has the young poet, but it is not nature’s law, nor in harmony with it. The old masters, in all their vagrancy of fancy and invention, never did thus. They always placed their wild inventions in the real world, and while we wander in their realms of faëry, we have the same solid earth and blue sky over our heads as when we take a walk in the fields to see Cicely milking the cow. This, I think, is occasionally the fault of Keats, and another is that sameness of sweetness and over-lusciousness of which I have already spoken. Reading the *Endymion* is like roaming in a forest of giant jonquils. Nevertheless, I take great delight in his volume, and thank you much for putting it into my hands.

## XII.

Sudden Death of her Mother \*—Reflections on the Event.

To the Hon. Mr. JUSTICE COLERIDGE.

*Chester Place, September 26th, 1845.*—MY DEAREST JOHN—Thank you for your most kind letter. My soul is indeed very sorrowful. The death-silence is awful. I had to think of her every minute of the day, to be always on my guard against noise; and she was one that made herself *felt*, dear creature, every hour in the day. *I* shall never be *so* missed by any one, my life is so much stiller, and more to myself.

I feel more than ever the longing to go and join them that are gone—but for my children. But the greatest tie to earth is gone from me, for even the children could do better without me than she could have done.

All that Nurse tells me of her last days is soothing. She wrote contentedly, thankful for Nurse's devotion to her, and speaking even of Caroline's desire to please her. She had said to me, as I was going away, "This is the last time you must leave me." I said, "If you are in the least ill, let me know, and I will return directly." I knew it would only vex her to give up the visit *then*.

I always looked forward to nursing her through a long last illness. I know not how it was, I could never help looking forward to it with a sort of satisfaction. I day-dreamed about it—according to the usual way of my mind—and cut it out in fancy all in my own way. She

\* At Chester Place, on the 24th of September, during my mother's absence on a visit to the Rev. Edward Coleridge at Eton.—E. C.

was to waste away gradually, without much suffering, and to become more and more placid in spirit, and filled with the anticipation of heavenly things. I thought, too, that this would help to prepare me for my change. Now I seem as if a long-cherished prospect had been snatched away from me. I thank God I was not thus suddenly separated from Henry.—Ever your very affectionate sister,  
SARA COLERIDGE.

XIII.

Peculiar Sense of Solitude arising from the loss of a Parent—  
Editorial Labours on the “*Biographia Literaria*”—Mr. Coleridge’s immense Reading ; and striking Quotations made from obscure Authors.

To the Hon. Mrs. HENRY TAYLOR.

10 *Chester Place, December 8th, 1845.*—Your kind invitation I feel quite grieved to decline, but I must decline it, as I have done many others that have lately been made me. I do not feel sufficiently equable in spirits to leave home *now*, and cannot agree with my friends in general that I should regain this quietude better elsewhere than at home. But I hope to see more of you, dear Mrs. Taylor, some time hence. The death of my mother permanently affects my happiness, more even than I should have anticipated, though I always knew that I must feel the separation at first as a severe wrench. But I did not apprehend, during her life, to what a degree she prevented me from feeling heart-solitude, and the full forlornness of a widow’s state. Her

age and infirmities, though they caused me great uneasiness, had not made any sensible alteration in her mind or heart. I lost in her as apprehensive a companion, and one who entered as fully into life, as if she had died at fifty. She had a host of common remembrances with me and interests which my children are strangers to. They cannot connect me, as conversation with her so constantly did, with all my early life. But the worst is the loss of cares and duties, due to her, which gave additional interest to my existence, and made me feel of *use* and important.

I am not, however, brooding over grief, from want of employment. I am just now, indeed, *absurdly* busy. I have to edit my father's fragmentary work, the *Biographia Literaria*, or at least to continue the preparations already made for a new edition. To carry on these upon the plan on which they were commenced, and to do for the *Biographia* what has been done for "The Friend," and other works of my father, I have found, as I advanced into the first volume, *for me*, exceedingly troublesome. A clever literary man, who reads and writes on a large scale, would make nothing of the business, but it makes me feel as if I had no rest for the sole of my feet, and must be continually starting up to look into this or that volume, or find it out in some part of Europe. As little boys at school do *so* wish that Virgil and Livy would but have written *easily*, so I am sometimes tempted to wish that my father would just have read more *commonplace-ishly*, and not quoted from such a number of out-of-the-way books,

which not five persons in England, but himself, would ever look into. The trouble I take is so ridiculously disproportioned to any effect that can be produced, and we are so apt to measure our importance by the efforts we make, rather than the good we do, that I am obliged to keep reminding myself of this very truth, in order not to become a mighty person in my own eyes, while I remain as small as ever in the eyes of every one else.

Then my father had such a way of seizing upon the *one* bright thing, out of long tracts of (to most persons) dull and tedious matter. I remember a great campanula which grew in a wood at Keswick—two or three such I found in my native vale, during the course of my flower-seeking days. As well might we present one of these as a sample of the blue-bells of bonny Cumberland, or the one or two oxlips, which may generally be found among a multitude of cowslips in a Somersetshire meadow, as specimens of the flowerhood of the field, as give these extracts for proof of what the writer was generally wont to produce.

#### XIV.

“S. T. C. on the Body”—The Essential Principle of Life not dependent on the Material Organism—Teaching of St. Paul on this Point—The Glorified Humanity of Christ—Disembodied Souls—Natural Regrets arising from the Thought of our great Change.

To AUBREY DE VERE, Esq.

“What did Luther mean by a body? For to me the word seemeth capable of two senses, universal and



special ; first, a form indicating to A. B. C., &c., the existence and finiteness of some one other being, *demonstrative* as *hic*, and *disjunctive* as *hic et non ille*, and in this sense God alone can be without body ; secondly, that which is not merely *hic distinctive*, but *divisive* ; yea, a product divisible from the producent as a snake from its skin, a precipitate and death of living power, and in this sense the body is proper to mortality, and to be denied of spirits made perfect, as well as of the spirits that never fell from perfection, and perhaps of those who fell below mortality, namely, the devils."\*

What did S. T. C. mean by a *form*, not material ? A material form is here *divisive* as well as *disjunctive*, and this he denies of the essential body or bodily principle. Did he conceive the body in essence to be supersensuous, not an object of sense, not coloured or extended in space ? Of the bodily principle we know only this, that it is the power in us which constructs our outward material organism, builds up our earthly tenement of flesh and blood. Can this power, independently of the organism in and by which it is manifested, be conceived of as a *form* indicating the existence and finiteness of some one being to another ? I believe that with our present faculties we are incapable of conceiving how a soul can be embodied, otherwise than in a sensuous frame, but knowing as we do, that our fleshly case is not a part of ourselves, but that there is a something in ourselves which thus clothes us in matter, I think we may infer that the human body in the deepest sense is

\* Coleridge's "Notes Theological, Political," &c., page 49.—E. C.

independent of matter, and that it may, in another sphere of existence, be our *form*, that which indicates to other beings our finite distinct individual being, in a way which now we are not able to know or imagine.

But what did St. Paul mean when he declared so emphatically, “Now this, I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Is he not to be understood literally? Must we suppose him to have meant only this, the carnal mind, or the man in whom the lower animal nature has the upper hand cannot inherit the kingdom? But how will such an interpretation suit the context? St. Paul has been speaking not of holiness and unholiness, but of soul and body and the state after death, when this mortal tabernacle shall have been dissolved. In reference to this subject he affirms that as we have borne the *image of the earthy*, that is a material body, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, and then straightway adds that flesh and blood shall not inherit the Divine kingdom. To this, indeed, he adds again, “Neither doth *corruption inherit incorruption*, evidently identifying flesh and blood with the corruptible, not introducing the alien topic of spiritual corruption. Jeremy Taylor affirms in reference to this passage in Corinthians, that “in the resurrection our bodies are said to be spiritual, not in substance, but in effect and operation;” upon which my father observes, “This is, in the first place, a wilful interpretation, and secondly, it is absurd, for what sort of flesh and blood would incorruptible flesh and blood be? As well might we speak of marble flesh and blood. In

the sense of St. Paul, as of Plato and all other dynamic philosophers, flesh and blood is *ipso facto* corruption, that is, the spirit of life in the mid or balancing state between fixation and reviviscence. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death is a Hebraism for "this death which the body is." For matter itself is but *spiritus in coagulo*, and organized matter the *coagulum* in the act of being restored, it is then repotentiating. Stop its self-destruction as matter, and you stop its self-reproduction as a vital organ." \*

St. Paul declares that in the resurrection we are to be clothed with a spiritual body, and to leave behind the natural body which we had from Adam. Now, what is a spiritual as opposed to a *natural* body? Surely the latter is a material and fleshly body, and no body of flesh and blood can be otherwise than natural, or can be properly spiritual. Make the flesh and blood ever so thin, fine, and aerial, still the difference betwixt that and any other flesh and blood will be one of degree, not of kind. But the Apostle does not promise us a body of refined flesh and blood, such as, according to some theologians, Adam had before the fall, but sets aside our Adamite body altogether, and seems indeed to imply that the first man had no spirituality at any time, for he is opposed to the second man as being of the earth, earthy, as if in his character of the *first man*, and not as fallen man, he was the source of earthiness, the Lord from Heaven alone being the foundation of the spiritual.

\* "Notes on English Divines," vol. ii., p. 284.—E. C.

There are some who believe that the Lord from Heaven is now sitting at the right hand of the Father in a material and fleshly body, such as He wore upon earth, and appeared in after the Resurrection,—a *metaphorical* right hand, as Pearson explains it, but the body of Him who sits thereat, of flesh and blood. It is quite natural for such believers to expect that the bodies of the saints in the resurrection will be fleshly too. As the first fruits, so they must think will be all that follow. This argument, however, seems to prove too much for those who contend that our bodies in the future world are to be of flesh and blood, but refined and glorified, and no longer natural. For the body in which our Lord ascended was the same as that which He had before He rose from the dead. It was certainly a natural body, that could be felt as well as seen, and which ate and drank.

But my father believed that there will be a resurrection of the *body*, which will have nothing to do with flesh and blood; he speaks of a *noumenal* body, as opposed to our present phenomenal one, which appears to the senses, “no visible, tangible, accidental body, that is, a cycle of images and sensations in the imagination of the beholders, but a supersensual body, the *noumenon* of the human nature.”\* In truth, he considered *this* body inseparable from the being of man, indispensable to the actual existence of finite spirits, the notion of disembodied souls floating about in some unknown region in the intermediate state, after the dissolution of the

\* “Notes on English Divines,” vol. ii., p. 52.—E. C.

material organism, and before the union of the soul with a celestial, incorruptible flesh-and-blood body, he looked upon as a mere dream, a chimera suited only to the times when men were wont to convert abstractions into persons, and to ascribe objective reality to creatures which the intellectual and imaginative faculty engendered within itself. He laughed at the notion of the separability of the *real* body from the soul, the arbitrary notion of man as a mixture of heterogeneous components. "On this doctrine," he says, "the man is a mere phenomenal result, a sort of brandy-sop, a toddy-punch, a doctrine unsanctioned by, indeed inconsistent with, the Scriptures. It is not true that body plus soul makes man. Man is not the syntheton or composition of body and soul, as the two component units. No—man is the unit, the prothesis, and body and soul are the two poles, the positive and negative, the thesis and antithesis of the man, even as attraction and repulsion are the two poles in and by which one and the same magnet manifests itself." \*

I continually feel sorrowful at the thought of never again beholding the faces of my friends, or rather, about to be sorrowful. I come up to the verge of the thought ever and anon, but before I can enter into it am met by the reflection, "O vain and causeless melancholy!"—whatever satisfaction or happiness I can conceive as accruing to me in this way, cannot the Omnipotent bestow it upon me in some other way, if this is not in harmony with His Divine plan? The loss, the want, is in this life

\* "Notes on English Divines," vol. ii., p. 96.—E. C.

only, for whatever that other sphere of existence may be, I shall be adjusted to it. Still in this life it is a loss and a trial to feel that we cannot image or represent to ourselves veritably the state and happiness. We long to see again the very faces of our friends, and cannot raise ourselves to the thought that in the other world there may be no seeing with the visual eye, but something better than such seeing, something by which it is absorbed and superseded. The belief that the future world for man is this world reformed, exalted, and purified, is one which I cannot reconcile with reason.



## CHAPTER XIV.

1846.

Letters to Aubrey de Vere, Esq., Rev. Frederick D. Maurice,  
Henry Taylor, Esq., Miss Morris, Mrs. H. M. Jones, Mrs.  
Richard Townsend.





## I.

The Conviction of Sin—Exaggerated Self-Accusations of the Religious—Substantial Agreement amongst Christians of all Denominations.

To Miss MORRIS, Mecklenburg Square.

*January 14th, 1846, 10 Chester Place.*—I will at once tell you the thought or two that occupied my mind as I read your letter, on the subject of the comparative sense of sin. I quite agree with you that the *sentiment*, the feeling is natural, and, perhaps, necessary, in an awakened or awakening state of mind, respecting sin, its odiousness, and its danger. But, then, I think it is capable of being modified or balanced by the representations of the reasoning mind. This latter must tell most sinners, whose overt acts are not of the most flagrant description, that, in all probability, if they saw the hearts of others as they see their own, they would behold a very similar train of goings on to that which they discern by inward inspection. And when they hear so many of those, who appear to be trying to please God, express this opinion of their own *superior* wickedness in terms equally strong,—as strong as human language will admit,—how can they, without suspending the use of reason, avoid drawing the inference that it is no more to be relied on as *absolute truth*, than the unawakened Pharisee's notion, that he is *holier* than other men ?

The feeling in itself I believe to be a good one, but I do think it is plainly the intention of our Maker that man should not be guided by feeling alone, or by his intellect alone, but that he should be kept in the right path by the alternate or mingled action of the two. The sense of being worse than any one else, if thus kept in its sphere by reason, will be nothing more than a keen spiritual sensibility; if it went further and clouded that inward eye which makes us acquainted with *truth*, we know not what perversions might follow, what evil reactions and corruptions, even of the spiritual mind by means of the understanding. How often has it appeared as if excessive spiritual humility passed over into spiritual pride, and the very man who was calling himself a worm, and really fancying himself such, has shown, by his acts and words, that he considered every soul alive that did not embrace his notions of election, justification, and such parts of theology, as far beneath himself, in the eye of God, as a soul that is and is to be cast out for ever, is beneath a soul that is to be saved. Yet this same self-deceiver, as he referred to feeling alone, felt sure that he was really humble. Had he tried himself by all the different criteria whereby we may arrive at a knowledge of ourselves, by the state of his heart and by his outward course of action, by the conclusions of his judging and comparing faculty, as well as by his emotions, he could hardly have been thus ignorant what spirit he was of.

My clergyman friend, who is to spend this evening with me, speaks strongly and sadly of the mutual misunder-

standings that prevail amongst Christians, and I own I daily more and more lament these *dogmatic* differences. I know the parties on both sides insist that they are substantial and not merely logical (*ens logicum*) differences, but I do believe that most persons, who have gone between various parties as I have done, not merely *read* on both sides, that is by no means enough, but eat and drunk and slept, and talked confidentially and interchanged, not only courtesies, but heart kindnesses on both or all sides, would have very much the same impression with myself, that though logical truth is one, and cannot belong equally to those who logically differ, yet that the life and soul and substance of Christianity may be pretty equally partaken by those who logically differ. And to confess the truth, my own belief is that the whole logical truth is not the possession of any one party, that it exists in fragments amongst the several parties, and that much of it is yet to be developed.

## II.

### Grace in Baptism.

TO AUBREY DE VERE, Esq., Curragh Chase, Adare.

1846.—People talk about a *seed* of grace sown in the heart remaining latent, then springing up, bearing fruit, &c., in all which, I think, they deceive themselves by material analogies, and forget the true nature of that which they speak of. The use of those metaphors in Scripture is quite different. I think that error and con-

fusion have arisen on the subject from confused notions of the nature and predicates of *spirit*. Men think of the "heart" as if it really were a fleshy receptacle. They do not consider that the *heart* means the mind considered as feeling, and that the mind is essentially *action*. The very passivity of the mind is an *act* of suffering. Again, men sophisticate the doctrine of regeneration by departing from the idea involved in the word, and presented in Scripture. It is nearly the same with recreation, and must therefore be a general and inalienable change. The gift in baptism is regeneration (as I believe) in a *secondary* sense. It is a power unto regeneration, surrounding the soul as with an atmosphere, and influencing it perpetually with the subordinate co-operation of the will.

### III.

Defence of Mr. Coleridge's View of Baptism—Regeneration, in its Primary Sense, means the Work of God upon the Soul, which leads to Sanctification—Baptism effects a change of State (not of nature) by giving the promise of the Holy Spirit—"The Gospel of the Poor"—Use of Rationalism in rectifying popular Theology—Negative Character of German Philosophy.

To AUBREY DE VERE, Esq., Curragh Chase, Adare.

*Chester Place, January 23rd, 1846.*—By *actual regeneration*, I mean that change of the soul from evil to good by the Spirit of the Redeemer, which fits it for eternal bliss. This is the idea of regeneration contained in Scripture, where to be a son of God and to be freed from sin are identified. Regeneration *in this sense* is

very fully described by South and Taylor, and many other (not merely evangelical) divines. Dr. Pusey calls it the secondary regeneration, and has sometimes described it quite scripturally. St. Paul speaks of the same thing when he talks of the “new creature,” which is the soul of man renewed by the Spirit, its dispositions raised and purified, grace and goodness predominating within it, and sin being put down. Now, no divine ever has said, or can say, that regeneration in this (which I must own I consider its proper and primary) sense, is produced in the moment of baptism. The spirit of man and spiritual action, *as it is in itself*, considered apart from our representations, has no real relation to time, at least according to the philosophy adopted by my father, whose views of baptism in my essay I attempted to set forth and defend (a lady to-day told me that Mr. Newman wondered that the said essay was not more read). But regeneration, which I suppose to be the under-side or co-extensive ground of justification and of sanctification (unless we take it as including them), *phenomenally* viewed, is a gradual process. What, then, is *baptismal* regeneration? Surely it must be neither more nor less than *a power given to the soul of the baptized for the production of the actual regeneration*. So far divines are agreed. All worth speaking of admit that the regeneration I have described is required in Scripture, and that it cannot take place in a moment in the soul of an infant. They differ when they come to define the power unto regeneration granted in baptism, or rather *how this power belongs to the soul*. Newman, in

his desire to adhere to the primitive doctrine, or at least that which the early Christian writers *most* inclined to (for I believe their conceptions to have been vague and unsettled), and which the Council of Trent adopted, described it to be *within* the soul, to constitute an entire change and spiritualization of its nature. Now this my father considered to be utterly irrational, and I must add that I consider it, though not so meant, in itself most irreverential and profane. According to this view, the very same soul which is given to all evil, is an abiding place of the Spirit of God. Indeed, Keble affirmed this in express terms, "almost in all evil," were his words. I cannot believe that any human being, whose soul had been spiritualized and re-created in the image of God, ever grew up a "scandal to the Church." I hope it may be sufficient to say, with Waterland, Bethel, and, as I understand him, Thorndyke, that baptism *consigns* the regenerative Spirit to the soul, or, to adopt your expression, *introduces it into spiritual circumstances*, which is a very different thing from merely giving it outward means and opportunities. In virtue of baptism we have the Spirit, as it were, at *our right hand*, ever ready to lead us into all goodness and truth, and make means and opportunities available to our welfare. It is not *within* us from the first, but ever *coming within* us as fast as we admit it, and operating upon us from without, so that we cannot help admitting it, except by an act of resistance, an exertion of the rebellious will. Does not this doctrine secure all the same spiritual results as the other, without, as the other does, bringing us into conflict

with Scripture and experience and the spiritual sense? One who has received the baptismal gift may indeed grow up a scandal to the Church, because he may continually resist the Spirit. But holding first by the *idea* of regeneration given by reason and Revelation, I hold it right to say that no *really* regenerate person ever became reprobate and ungodly, or ever ceased to be a true follower of Christ. If a man falls away from grace, as the Epistle to the Hebrews affirms that men may, it is because he never received grace more than partially, he did not *so* receive it as to prevent the sinful principle, though latent, from being the master principle of his spirit. So far, I own, my doctrine coincides with that of Calvin, and I think that our Saviour's words plainly affirm what I have just expressed. If there is no such thing as a state of the soul as preclusive of a final fall and general corruption, as the state of a butterfly is preclusive of a relapse into the caterpillar, how should Christ so positively have predicted that His sheep should never perish, and that no one should pluck them out of His hand? St. Augustine, that sophisticator of theology (of whom the late Bishop Butler said that, if he and Pelagius had been hung upon two cross sticks, it would have been all the better for the Church), was the first, I believe, who brought in the notion of the possible fall of the regenerate.

With a very deep sigh, my dear friend, I partly admit what you said about Rationalism, that it cannot be the religion of the poor and simple. But then, I believe that every *refined* view of Christianity is more or less a



rationalistic system. What, think you, do the poor make of correct Anglicanism, or of Newmanic Romanism? A philosophic Christianity maintains all the spiritual ideas of the Catholic faith; neither does it preclude the belief in an outward and visible system, but continually tends to rectify, purify, and explain it. The spirit and the principle have been at work in the Church from the beginning. But then I am not prepared to say that a perfect scheme of philosophic Christianity has ever yet been developed, or that it is the possession of one party or any individual. The Rationalists of Germany have shown their philosophy for the most part destructively and negatively more than in any other way. But this is not true of Neander, or, as far as I know, of Schleiermacher. *They* have a body of substantive belief in their minds, not a world of unbelief on one hand, and a chaos of uncertainty and something-undetermined-ness—on the other.

## IV.

“Moral Effects the Test of Spiritual Operations” \*—Dream-Verses—Milton’s Beauty.

TO AUBREY DE VERE, Esq., Curragh Chase, Adare.

10 *Chester Place, January 17th, 1846.*—I find that two clergyman-friends of mine, who attacked my little essay on Rationalism, hold, after all, precisely the same

\* “Aids to Reflection,” vol. ii., p. 66.—Essay on Rationalism, by Sara Coleridge.

opinion of baptismal efficacy which I have endeavoured to set forth in that essay—namely, that it is not, as Newman teaches, an internal, total, instantaneous, spiritual, non-moral change, giving a *power* unto righteousness, but a consignment of the regenerative spirit, made instantaneously, for the purpose of producing a total spiritual *and* moral change gradually realized, an introduction of the soul, as it were, into a new spiritual atmosphere, or, as my father somewhere expresses it, “the periphery of graces belonging to the Church of Christ.” This is Waterland’s doctrine, and, I believe, that of Arthur Thorndyke. I found that they disliked, as much as I do, the severance in Newman’s theory of the spiritual and the moral (which he continually tries to cloak over, but is obliged to reveal, when he comes to display the root part of his doctrine), “the notion that a soul, in spite of being actually spiritually regenerate, may grow up a scandal to the Church!” This is a notion which common sense and common feeling protest against at the outset, and which the subtlest metaphysical sense, as I imagine, condemns, as an empty phantom, at the end of reflection’s career. . . . .

Your sister’s verses are very sweet and lovely. Thank you for sending them. Sir W. H.’s are mighty good ones to be written in a dream. My Uncle Southey had some good stories of dream verse-making. He was a sceptic on the subject. He thought that, on these occasions, men either dreamed that they composed in a dream (if the poem was good for anything, like *Kubla Khan*), or dreamed that their dream-verses were

good poetry. He used to repeat some most inane verses which a certain poet composed in his sleep, and kept repeating in the hearing of his wife. He assured her, when he woke, that he had produced, while under the dominion of Morpheus, the finest poem in the world,—if he could but recollect it. He was rather crestfallen when she repeated to him the nonsensical couplet which he had voiced aloud over and over again, while he supposed himself to be rivalling Milton.

Speaking of Milton, do you think that the human face divine ever fell into a finer form than his? It has all the beauty which Italian painters give to St. John, and is infinitely more manly, meaning, and intellectual.

## V.

Originality of Milton's Genius—Love of Nature displayed in his Poetry.

To AUBREY DE VERE, Esq.

1846.—Milton “not *characteristically* one of *nature's great men?*” *Every* great man is *characteristically nature's* great man. When did art or learning ever make the most distant approximation to a Milton? Learning may be the *form* of Milton's poetry, but nature is its matter—or at most, learning is the body, while nature inspires the soul. Book-knowledge was more to Milton, world-knowledge to Shakespeare; but I believe that the latter owed as much to what he

*acquired*, what he took into his mind from without, as the former. But book-knowledge, after all, was less to Milton than observation of external nature. It is this lore surely which forms the master charm of Comus, Lycidas, the Allegro and Penseroso, the descriptions of Eden, which are the more perfect part of the "Paradise Lost." Wordsworth has *humanized* nature; but Milton glorified it, *out of itself*, in showing how divine a thing it is, in its own, and none but its own loveliness, how evidently the work of God. Here he is, as you, and Wordsworth before you, say, essentially Hebraic, so far as the Hebraic mind appears in the Old Testament. Hence his sublimity,—his simplicity and grandeur, as to the nature of his theme, which the classical ornament by no means injures or misfits. He never is *so* ornamental as not to be "sensuous and impassioned," for his ornaments are all, in themselves, the fresh products of nature, and the use that has been made of them, since they were first gathered, has deadened, in no least imaginable degree, their everlasting verdure. Milton is more profusely, more thickly and richly poetic than Wordsworth, his felicities of diction and brilliancies of imagination are more uniformly spread over the mass of his productions. As for the Homeric poetry, it is perfection in its way; but in regard to *thought*, the work of the intellect-evolving reason and the spirit, it displays the childhood of the human race, and that under an imperfect, obscured, and broken Revelation.

VI.

Blanco White—Comparison between his state of Mind and that of Cowper and of Shelley.

To the Rev. FREDERICK D. MAURICE,  
Chaplain's Lodge, Guy's Hospital.

*Chester Place, February 4th, 1846.*—I was disappointed with the review of Blanco White's\* life, in the Quarterly, which I had heard highly praised for liberality and beautiful feeling. To my mind it by no means does justice to Blanco White's head or heart. It does not set in a strong point of view that in B. W.'s character in which he was superior, as it strikes me, to the mass of even good men,—a determined, far-going, all-sacrificing truthfulness. Neither does it render justice to the powers of thought in Blanco White. It is easy to point out vacillations, inconsistencies. The more a man thinks for himself and looks *into* things, the more will be his apparent inconsistencies. There is an external superficial consistency with which the masses of men are contented. And the review does no justice to the faith Blanco White evidenced in his last illness; nor does it fairly compare Cowper's state of mind with his, though the comparison is in one point instituted. Cowper was quite as unhappy as B. White,

\* The Rev. Joseph Blanco White, Author of "Letters on Spain, by Don Leucadio Doblado," was born at Seville, of a Roman Catholic family, in 1775. He came to England, and joined the English Church, about 1817. After passing through various phases of belief and scepticism, he died a Deist, in 1841.—E. C.

far more so than Shelley. A great deal of Shelley's misery was merely poetry; and he too had wretched health, and suffered habitual pain. It is also to be taken into account that men who have separated from the Christian world, do not conceal their heart-wretchedness, nor affect to receive comfort as others are apt to do.

I hope and believe that the Christian has the more consolation for being such. But the dearer this hope is, the less can one bear to hear half-truths and make-believes pressed into the service of it.

## VII.

### Character of her Mother.

To Mrs. H. M. JONES, Hampstead.

*February 21st, 1846.*—I really feel more and more that your appreciation of my mother was just and clear-sighted. Her character rises upon me now as I look back upon it, and compare her *perfect* simplicity and honesty, her union of steady, deep affection for those she was connected with by blood or friendship, her earnest gratitude, with an artless way of dealing respecting them, and dispassionate views. Hasty she was at the moment of provocation, but never was any one more just to all mankind, as far as her knowledge and insight extended, less swayed by peevish resentment in her deliberate judgments. There are some more devout in temper, more exalted in the world's eye, who are far

inferior to her in those Christian tempers, who are perpetually on the watch *to set up* those they love by studied representations, while negatively or positively they are depreciating and unjust to those whom they love less, and whose praise seems to them so much taken from their own dear ones. *She* never disparaged others that those she loved might shine the more, though she sometimes too bluntly and straightforwardly commended her loved ones.

## VIII.

Unfair Criticism of Mr. Coleridge's Religious Opinions—His MS.  
Notes—Care taken of them by Mr. Southey.

TO HENRY TAYLOR, Esq., Mortlake.\*

*February 26th*, 1846.—I would always invite and welcome for my father, as he did for himself, the closest examination of the character and merit of his writings. The sooner they are clearly understood, both for praise and for usefulness, or for detection of delusive appearances of truth and excellence, the better. His complaint always was that nobody would question his views in *particulars*, that nobody would fight with him hand to hand, but that random missiles were discharged at him from a distance, by men who fled away while they fought.

I do not know how any of the Notes came to be effaced, never having seen the copy of the "Life of

\* Author of "Philip Van Artevelde," now Sir Henry Taylor.—E. C.

Wesley," in which they were written by my father himself. He did sometimes forget to finish a note, in some instances most tantalizingly. Perhaps he broke off to think, and then either did not satisfy himself, or forgot to record his conclusions. Some of his *marginalia* have been cruelly docked by binders, some rubbed out. My Uncle Southey used to ink over his pencilled notes, "that nothing be lost," as he said, with his usual diligence. When shall we see such diligence again, such regularity, with such genius and versatility? I think if he had not been a poet, he would have been called a plodder, and have become a respectable and useful writer by sheer industry.

## IX.

### Beauties of Crabbe.

TO MRS. RICHARD TOWNSEND, Springfield, Norwood.

*Chester Place, June 17th, 1846.*—I am glad that you enjoy Crabbe. Sir Francis Palgrave praised him most warmly, and was pleased and rather surprised to have a warm response from me the other day, at Mr. Murray's. The "Tales of the Hall" are what I now like the best of all his sets of poems. In my earlier days I did not perceive half their merits, the fine observation of life, the tender sympathy with human sorrow, the gentle smile at human weakness, the humour, the pathos, the firm, almost stern morality, the excellent, clear, pure



diction, and the touches of beauty (as I think) interspersed here and there. The Songs I much admire: the descriptions of Nature are decidedly poetical, in my opinion, though they bear the same relation to Milton's and Wordsworth's descriptions as the expression of Murillo's pictures does to that of Raphael's and Leonardo's.

## X.

Reflections of an Invalid—Defence of Luther—Charges of Irreverence often unjustly made—Ludicrous Illustration found in a Sermon of Bishop Andrewes—Education: how far it may be Secular without being Irreligious—Mr. Keble's "Lyra Innocentium"—Religious Poetry.

Miss ERSKINE.

*July 23rd, 1846.*—My dear A——, I thought to have answered your letter very soon; but I have been ever falling from one poorliness into another, each slight in itself, but producing a general weakness in me which is no slight evil, or rather it is the general weakliness which rendered me liable to those little attacks, and the attacks make it worse. But I am making the vestibule of my letter a doleful sick room, in which the most interesting and refreshing objects that present themselves, are bottles from the apothecary's shop full of tonics, sedatives, liniments, gargles, and so forth. Your letter, on the contrary, was full of fresh air, and made me think of you both when I read it, and from time to

time ever since, riding away on a spirited pony, with most *countrified* cheeks and eyes, and a very light heart and mind *less* light than ever. I could wish your heart and mind to be like two buckets, the latter to be ever filling, fuller and fuller, with the streams of sacred and all other lore, pure as water and rich as wine—while the former grows constantly more and more empty of earthly cares and troubles. I hope that your dear mother continues well and does not walk too much. She is rather apt, I believe, not to think of herself, when others are concerned. There are so many depôts, of the largest possible extent, where selfishness and self-preservativeness may be borrowed to any amount, that if she can but be persuaded of the necessity, she might readily furnish herself with a little of the needful article. But this I have said, as it were, with one eye open and the other shut, for, though there are in every street and lane and country village such vast stocks of selfishness to be found, yet those who are in want of the article never know how to get at any of it. Every particle clings to its native place like petrifications in marble. But all this moral reflection is enough to *petrify* you by its stupidity, and, in order to put a little life into both of us, I must e'en turn for a while to *controversy*.

How say you, my A——, that you are not *growing in love for Luther*, but rather becoming hardened in a *Tracts for the Times-y* view of that great and good man, the noblest divine instrument, in my opinion, which the world has seen after the Prophets and Apostles? *Coarse?* What is coarseness in such a man, of such dimensions, of

such mental and spiritual thews and sinews, with such a heart and soul and spirit, and such a mighty life-long work as he had to perform, and performed most heroically? If Luther had been a "nice man for a small tea-party," if to write a few Tracts for the times, or publish a few volumes of sermons, or to put a church in proper ecclesiastical order, after a modernized-primitive fashion, had been all his vocation upon earth, then truly a little coarseness would have quite spoiled him. But he was, as Julius Hare says, "a Titan," and "when a Titan walks abroad among the pygmies, the earth seems to rock beneath his tread." It is vain to tell me that Luther could not have been spiritual-minded, because he used rough, coarse, homely expressions. His whole life, public and private, the general character of his writings, so far as I know them, prove *to me* that he *was* a spiritual-minded man, and the most deeply convinced of sin that ever lived. That Luther was profane I cannot admit. I have always thought that the language of the Oxford theologians respecting profaneness in religion had much in it that was both narrow and uncharitable. They confound want of good taste with want of piety, homely breeding with that irreverence which springs from the heart; in the mean time *they* are teaching doctrines and expressing opinions which appear to many earnest and thoughtfully-religious minds in the highest degree derogatory to God and Christ and Christianity. Every one is profane who does not adopt their peculiar ceremoniousness in religion, who cannot specially revere all that they have made up their minds to think worthy of reverence.

Think of this comparison from the pen of Bishop Andrewes, one of their highest favourites amongst our Anglican divines: “Are they like to *buckets*? one cannot go down, unless the other goes up.” The “*buckets*” are the Saviour and the Comforter! Now, would not this be pronounced highly profane by the Luther-haters, had it been found in a book of Luther’s? Yet Andrewes is considered the *beau ideal* of a reverential spirit, by the Oxford writers, and I have no doubt that he never for a moment lost the feeling of reverence out of his heart. Yet, with all Luther’s occasional scurrility and violence, I doubt whether an example so unworthy of the highest of all subjects could be found in his works. That instance from Andrewes is brought forward in a long note in the new work of Archdeacon Hare, “The Mission of the Comforter, and other Sermons.” The second volume is twice as long as the other and full of notes. Note W. contains a most warm, thorough, searching, resolute defence of Luther against all his modern censors. It is not to be expected, indeed, that they who dislike the work which Luther did can ever like the workman; still they should not bring up again the refuted slanders of Romanists, and quote his writings out of the books of his Romish adversaries instead of out of his own.

Yesterday I discussed with Mr. M——, or rather, he with me, Dr. Hook’s remarkable pamphlet on National Education. M—— contends that no part of education should be dissociated from *religious* education, that we ought not to divide our life or our teaching into secular

and religious, and that such a plan as the one proposed would clamp and rivet a wrong principle of education and prevent the arising of a higher and more deeply religious system.

I think certainly that no man could teach history in an effective, living manner, without infusing into it the tone and principle either of Socinianism or Trinitarianism. But I believe that in the routine of the National School, except where religion is formally introduced, the spirit of Christianity is not felt at all. And certainly a man may teach reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic without letting it appear whether he is a Mahometan or a Christian—nay, more, I do not see how he could keep steadily to his business in teaching these branches without keeping his peculiar form of religion in the background. Still I believe that M—— is right, and that we who embrace with our hearts the Divinity of Christ, should not allow a disbeliever even to teach our children to cypher; though I would by no means admit that we ought to keep *out of all intercourse* with such disbelievers, and that is another point on which I think the Oxford teaching injurious.

I meant to talk with you a little about the *Lyra Innocentium*, but have hardly left myself room. I am doing it all possible justice, for I read it slowly, two or three poems a day, and some two or three times over. I like best “Sleeping on the Waters” and the “Lichgate.” Still it would be quite insincere to say that I either like or approve of it, *upon the whole*, either as religion or poetry, though there are beautiful passages.

I hope you do not *wholly* approve of it as religion. Surely the Marianism is far more than our best and greatest divines would approve. The article in the "Quarterly" is the article of a friend, and in the main a partisan; the reviewer mentions some important faults in the volume as poetry, but to my mind there is a deeper fault than any he mentions, namely, want of truth and substance, and not only of doctrine, but of human child-nature. The incidents recorded are quite insignificant in themselves, they add nothing to our knowledge, no richness to our store of reflections. They are used as mere symbols, suggestive of analogies. They are just so many pegs and hooks on which Mr. Keble can hang his web of religious sentiment. The "Reviewer" says that to *excel as a poet* is not Mr. Keble's aim. This seems to me something like goodyism. He who writes poetry surely should aim to excel as a poet, and the more if his theme is religion, and his object to spiritualize and exalt. Every great poet has a higher aim, of course, than that of merely obtaining admiration for his poetic power and skill. Wordsworth's aim was to elevate the thoughts of his readers, to enrich and purify their hearts, but he sought to excel as a poet in order that he might do this the more effectually. I believe that Isaiah and Ezekiel sought to excel as poets, all the more that their poetry was the vehicle of divine truth, of truth awakened in their souls by inspiration.

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XI.

Composition of "Phantasmion"—Love in Fairyland.

TO AUBREY DE VERE, Esq.

Before writing Phantasmion I thought that for the account of Fairyland Nature I need invoke no other muse than Memory, my native vale, seen through a sunny mist of dreamery, would supply all the materials I should want and all the inspiration, but for the love part and the descriptions of personal beauty, I invoked Venus to aid me. On my application she told me that Fairyland love was such weak, syrupy stuff, and so little in demand, that it was hardly worth her while to keep any in store. She would send out Cupid as soon as she could catch him, to gather cowslips and primroses enough to make a few small bottles, that to ferment it she would use a little sea-foam which he might whisk off the surface of the waves after bathing, and that I should have it, fresh and fresh, as I wanted it in the progress of my story. In the mean time, though she could by no means lend me any of her swans or golden-breasted pigeons, she had a sick dove, which had broken its leg, and lost its health for want of exercise, which was at my service for any use I could put it to. These handsome offers I was glad to accept, seeing that they were the best I could obtain, and so if the love poetry of the volume is rather mawkish and soporific, or if some of it tastes a little brackish as if tears had trickled into the liquor, you must bear in mind what

poor wild flowers and froth I had to brew it of; and if the story is but a lame affair, and the whole piece a faint and sickly piece of painting, you must lay it all to the account of the broken-legged dove, and the shabbiness of Venus in lending me no better help. Coarse-minded thing! she can't endure Fairyland, where the lovers are as fine as mists, and the ladies evanescent as rainbows. She admires heavy hulks, downright, visible, tangible wretches, and would have the very ladies perceptible to the mere unpurged visual orb! There was Venus Cœlestis, but I dared not apply to her, *she* was too exalted for me. There ought to be a Venus Fairylandensis, abiding between earth and heaven, to assist writers of fairy tales.

Since you desired to know particularly what I did, and where I was when I wrote the book, and all the circumstances attending its composition, I must further inform you that Cupid behaved abominably about the cowslips. He wove them into tisty-tosty-balls, and tossed them up in the sun, so that they were absolute hay before he brought them to make the love-small-beer. I begged Venus (who by-the-by is just like her picture by Correggio in the National Gallery) to take him by the wing and give him a good shake, but she merely snatched up one of the cowslip balls and flung it in his face, which he took as a signal for a game of romps, threw a whole handful at her, then let fall his basket and ran away, screaming and laughing. Foreseeing how vapid the beer would be when the flowers were thus banged about, I grew very cross, and re-



proached Venus for taking the matter so lightly. But she only laughed and told me that I should have done just the same with my urchin; just at that moment Herby came in, and began to be as naughty as Cupid, looking all the time equally pretty, so that I thought it as well not to push the dispute any further just then.

Another misfortune to me was this, that Mercury, at my request, put off Cupid's reading-lesson, in order that he might have full time to gather the cowslips in the morning, consequently he came cross and tired to his master in the afternoon, and at last fell asleep over his book. This put Mercury out of humour, and he was heard to say, that since I had made a dunce of his pupil, I might appear like a dunce myself, for all the help he would give me toward the invention of my tale. However, I have since heard that he has taken the book into favour, so far as to teach Cupid to read out of it, and that the little fellow is well pleased with the descriptions of the butterflies and bees, and other creatures with wings, insect and human, and both his mother and his uncle think that Hermillian was intended as a portrait of him.

#### A Character.

To the Same.

... His manner is not shy or taciturn, yet is essentially reserved; all that is said seems meted out beforehand: so far it is to go, and no farther; and the smile is sweet, yet seems too intentional. I like more overflow and self-abandonment to the subject of dis-

course ; but then I was bred up amongst poets, who are enthusiastic, overflowing people for the most part, and let their thoughts run away with them now and then, as the dish ran away with the spoon. F. N. talks in a very finished way, but his talk is *all* finished when it is presented to you : it is stereotyped, as it were—not to be modified or enlarged by alien suggestions. Thus it is as perfect as he can make it—that is, very perfect on its own scale : you are to take it, and be thankful. He has a *Latin* sort of intellect.

*December 30th, 1846.*

## XII.

### Comparative Merits of the Earlier and Later Poems of Wordsworth—Burns.

TO AUBREY DE VERE, Esq.

1846.—Your scheme of a critique on Wordsworth would be very noble and comprehensive, if adequately executed. The difficulty would be to avoid obscurity and vagueness. I agree to all your characteristics, so far as I understand them, except those of the later poetry, of which I take a wholly different view from that expressed in your prospectus. You have brought me to see more beauty in them than I once did ; but when you say they have more *latent imagination*, are more *mellow*, exhibit “faculties more perfectly equipoised,” you seem to me to have framed a theory apart from the facts. They have more *fancy*, but surely not more

imagination, latent or patent. They can hardly be mellowed, for they have not the same body; their substance is thinner; and some of the author's poetic faculties are, to my mind, not *there* to be equipoised. What! are any of the later poems, in the blending and equipoise of faculties, beyond "Tintern Abbey," "The Leech-gatherer," "The Brothers," "Ruth"? Did the instrument become mellowed than in "Three years She Grew," "The Highland Girl," "The White Doe"? Surely there is far more real strength in the "Sonnets to Liberty," "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle," "Platonic Ode," "Rob Roy's Grave," than in anything the author has produced during the last twenty years.

That is a good distinction of meditative and contemplative.

Your characteristics of Burns are excellent. I agree to them all heartily. I am glad you are not too *genteel* to like Burns.

### XIII.

Classification of Mr. Wordsworth's Poems, with a View to proving the Superiority of the earlier Ones over the Later—Earlier Poems; Meditative; Lyrical—Poems of Incidents; Reflective and Pathetic—Poems of Sentiment; Reflective and Imaginative; Descriptive—Ballad Poems—Homely Strains—Sonnets—Later Poems.

To AUBREY DE VERE, Esq.

#### SCALE OF MR. WORDSWORTH'S POETRY.

The poems are arranged in classes according to the

character of the composition, but in a loose, inexact manner, as such classes are apt to run into one another, some poems having the characteristics of more than one.

The degrees of excellence are marked by the letters of the alphabet—*a* being the highest, and so on.

Meditative strains, sedate in character, and in which solemnity and tenderness mutually succeed or flow into each other.

The Old Cumberland Beggar. *a, a, a.*

Tintern Abbey. *a, a, a.*

Address to my Infant Daughter. *a.*

The Happy Warrior. *a.*

Lines on the French Revolution. *a.*

When to the Attractions.

Nutting.

To M. M.

There was a Boy.

The Yew-tree Seat.

A Little Onward.

Certain passages of the Excursion. See further on.

(The excellencies of the "Excursion" are of a diffusive kind: you must gather them from a large surface. The most condensed passage is in the 4th book, "Within the soul a faculty abides.")

Lyrical compositions, more rapt and fervid than the former, and equally exalted in spirit.

Intimations of Immortality. Ode sublimely imagina-

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tive. Thorough Wordsworthians think this poem transcendent, and that its merits baffle description.

Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle. *a, a, a.*

Ode to Duty. *a, a.*

Rob Roy's Grave. *a, a.*

Elegiac, but with a solemn fervour which connects them with the two former classes.

Peel Castle. *a, a.*

Laodamia. *a, a.* "Laodamia" partly belongs to the next.

Poems containing some history or incident, dignified and solemn in tone, or, when less elevated, full of a deep, reflective pathos.

*The Leech-gatherer.* *a, a, a.* (A title I prefer to the new one, "Resolution and Independence." Derwent says, "The Old Cumberland Beggar" might, in the same spirit, have been changed into "Advantages of Mendicancy.")

The Female Vagrant. *a, a.*

The Brothers. *a, a.*

Ruth. *a, a.*

Michael. *a.*

The Matron of Jedburgh. *a.* There is a lyrical air about this poem.

The Thorn. *b.* Fine in parts, but unequal.

The White Doe. First and last cantos, especially the former; interview of Francis and Emily, in the second; and speech of the Father in the fifth. *a, a.*

Peter Bell. Unequal, but striking and impressive in general conception, with passages of deep passion and potent imagination.

The Waggoner. Humbler in its aim and general conception, but more equal in execution, more tender and harmonious in tone, more truly in keeping if lower in tint, and with less depth and brilliancy of colouring. The Epilogue I prefer to the Prologue of Peter Bell.

Poems, reflective and pathetic, in which the *habit* of grief is more impressively described than any particular acts or accesses of the passion.

The Affliction of Margaret. *a.*

The Emigrant Mother. *a.* Pleasing but not powerful.

The two April Mornings. *a, a.*

The Fountain. *a, a.*

'Tis Said that Some have Died for Love. *a.*

Vaudracour and Julia.

History of Margaret, in the Excursion ; of the Solitary's Wife, and of Ellen.

Song for the Wandering Jew. Not improved by the new stanzas.

The Mad Mother.

The Complaint.

The Complaint of the Forsaken Indian Woman. This poem describes grief not as the attendant on a permanent state, but arising from a sudden misfortune. Schiller has a poem of the same sort,

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Nadowernsche Todtenklage; but less intense in feeling.

Poems of sentiment, imaginatively presented, distinguished by exquisiteness of expression, in which the language seems more especially one with the thought or inseparably incorporated with it.

*b*, not so great as the two first classes.

Three Years She Lived in Sun and Shower. *a, a, a.*

The Highland Girl.

She was a Phantom of Delight.

To H. C., Six Years Old.

Farewell, thou Little Nook.

Yarrow Unvisited.

Castle of Indolence.

A Poet's Epitaph.

All these first six are almost equally excellent; the two last very good, but less sweet perhaps.

Less perfect in execution, or lighter and humbler in the tone of feeling.

The Cuckoo.

To a Skylark.

I Travelled Among Unknown Ways. (Last stanza exquisite.)

She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways.

If Nature for a Favourite Child.

A Slumber did my Spirit Seal.

The Green Linnet.

The Sparrow's Nest.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud. (Unequal ; second stanza beautiful.)

I Met Louisa in the Shade.

The Solitary Reaper.

To the Daisy.

To the Same Flower.

O Nightingale, thou Surely Art.

Inferior, but of the same class.

To a Butterfly.

Stepping Westward.

Glen Almain.

Of this set some are as perfect in their way, having as much unity of execution as those of the first set, and some, as the verses on Matthew, “If Nature, &c.,” are as deep in feeling. But none of them so finely unite harmony of expression with a high poetic spirit.

“Beggars” belongs to this class, and has some power about it. But though thoroughly Wordsworthian, it is to my mind unsuccessful.

Poems of reflection imaginatively conceived.

Gypsies.

I cannot yet feel quite satisfied with this poem. I wish that such fine language had a more clearly justifying subject. Mr. de Vere alleges, that though, if the reality of the case be considered, the “tawny wanderers” were quite in the right to take their rest ; yet the poet,



looking at the matter poetically, did very well to be indignant at them, and to express his indignation in the most magnificent manner. Now, I know that the poetical aspect of things, and the common-sense, unadorned aspect of them are very different; but can it be right to make them clean *contrary*, the one to the other, on any occasion? The poet may *add* to truth of fact "the light that never was on sea or land,"—but this light ought surely to exalt and glorify, not to reverse or misrepresent it. The actual ought to underlie the whole fabric, and even regulate its form, though it be not itself immediately visible. Otherwise, we convert poetry, which ought to be truth of a peculiar kind, into falsehood. The great merit of Mr. Wordsworth's best poems is, that they present realities of the heart and mind of man and of external nature, in the grandest forms, and under the most glowing and glorifying lights, wherein they can possibly appear. Some deny that these lights are glowing. They have seldom, indeed, any such glow as is opposed to purity and solemnity. But in his finest poems they are intense and transfigure the objects, not changing the form and lineaments so as to render them unrecognizable, but exalting, refining, illuminating them.

The small Celandine—There is a Flower, the lesser Celandine. Last stanza is in the pithy manner of some of the old poets.

Fidelity. Last four lines fine.

My Heart Leaps up.

The Kitten and the Falling Leaves.

Yes, full surely 'twas the Echo.

It is no Spirit.

Preface to the White Doe.

Animal Tranquillity and Decay.—A prosy didactic title.

Descriptive pieces highly imaginative, and pervaded with a sentiment inspired by the objects of the description, the outward forms of nature, not arising from other sources, and arbitrarily arrayed therein.

Yew Trees. Sublime.

To Joanna. Containing the fine passage finely imitated by Lord Byron in *Childe Harold*, about the echo among the mountains.

The Danish Boy. A fragment.

Here I might have placed—

There was a Boy.

To M. H.

When to the attractions.

Nutting.

The “*Evening Walk*” and “*Descriptive Sketches*” are energetic, but seem to want a point to seize the heart and fancy. They want unity of aim.

Passages in the *Blind Highland Boy*.

*Idle Shepherd Boys*.

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Description of Skating at Sunset.

Night Piece.

Emma's Dell. "There is an Eminence."

The Haunted Tree.

Influence of Natural Objects.

There are fine descriptive passages in the "Excursion," especially that beginning, "Such was the boy; but for the growing youth, What soul was his," p. 10, 1st book; and the description of the cloud city at the end of the 2nd book, p. 71.

"Characteristics of a Child Three Years Old" is pretty and graceful, like a woman's writing.

Poems of the ballad character.—Serious and Pathetic.

The Horn of Egremont Castle.

The Last of the Flock.

The Force of Prayer:

The Childless Father. Up, Timothy. Very affecting and pleasing.

Poor Susan. Still better in the same line.

Ellen Irwin. My old friend Mr. Calvert wore me out with this poem. I have pleasing juvenile associations with it, but not poetical ones. He was always half-admiring, half-quizzing, his friend's muse.

The Seven Sisters.

Lucy Gray.

Repentance.

More homely, and with an occasional sportiveness

not sufficiently distinguished from the ludicrous. Mr. Wordsworth's utter want of all sense of the humorous seems to me connected with his mistakes on this head.

The Idiot Boy. Admired by Charles James Fox. I think that none but a poet and a man of power could have written, or dared have written, "The Idiot Boy;" but, like "Peter Bell," and "The Thorn," and, in less degree, some of his other poems, it has in it a radical defect in the original cast and conception.

The Two Thieves.

The Farmer of Tilbury Vale.

The Pet Lamb.

The morality of the first two of these poems is dubious. It is not well to be so figurative and poetic in a matter of morals, that the wrong sense is the more obvious. But I do not see that there is any humility of thought and diction in these poems which is not within the rules of taste, rightly and liberally understood.

Lower again, but still not without power and marks of an individual mind, which to me are pleasing.

Goody Blake. That is surely a stanza which has some efficacy towards freezing the blood.—"She prayed, her withered hand uprearing."

We are Seven.

Written in Germany. "A fig for your languages."

Homely strains, not ballads.

To a Sexton. "Let thy wheelbarrow alone." Quaint, but with a sort of vivid realizing of the country churchyard which used to please me, as Tennyson's vivid realizations of cottage gardens, old country mansions, reedy swamps where swans expire, and spots about the country village, please me.

A Character.

Sonnets. The finer sonnets belong to the first-class of sedate, meditative strains, 1; or the less elevated sentimental class, 2; some are imaginatively descriptive, 3.

With how sad steps. 3.

Surprised by joy. 2.

Among the Mountains.

I watch, and long have watched.

I am not one. The series of four sonnets beginning thus. 1.

Three Sonnets on Sleep. 2.

Earth has not anything. 1.

Lady, the songs of Spring. 1.

The world is too much with us. 1.

Once did she hold.

Toussaint.

Inland, within a hollow vale.

Two voices are there.

Milton, thou shouldst be living.

It is not to be thought of.

When I have borne in memory.

These times touch monied worldlings.  
Shout, for a mighty victory.  
Another year, another deadly blow.  
Clarkson, it was an obstinate hill.  
Hail! Zaragoza.  
Brave Schill.  
Ah! where is Palafox?  
The power of armies.  
What need of clamorous bells.  
From the dark chambers.  
Calvert, it must not be unheard.  
Pure element of waters.  
Calm is all nature.  
With ships the sea.  
It is a beauteous evening.  
Praised be the art.  
The fairest, brightest hues.  
Methought I saw.  
The Imperial Consort.  
Fallen and diffused.  
Grief, thou hast lost.  
As the cold aspect.  
While not a leaf.  
Ye sacred nurseries.  
Shame on the faithless heart.  
Ward of the Law.  
    &c., &c., &c.

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EXCURSION.

Such was the boy, p. 10 of 6th vol. of last edition.

Story of Margaret, p. 36.

Cloud City, p. 71.

Voiceless the stream, p. 96.

Description of the Solitary's married life and mental history after his bereavement.

His wife's death, pp. 101-113.

How beautiful this dome of sky, p. 116. Miltonic.

Religion of the Ancients, pp. 138-39-40.

A Curious Child—passage that Landor quarrelled about, p. 155.

Of the later poems, those that have pleased me best are—

Lines on a Portrait.\*

Dion.

On the longest day.\*

The Triad.\*

Evening Ode.

Ode to Lycoris.

The minstrels played.†

Ethereal Minstrel.

Yarrow visited.

Yarrow revisited. Inferior, but elegant.

Remembrance of Collins.

Lines in a Boat.

The Pass of Kirkstone.

Some of the Duddon Sonnets. My father said the best of them were written early.

Of these poems, I like best those that I have marked with a \*.

I have purposely exhibited the earlier poems by themselves, in order to make it appear whether or no the author's fame rests principally on them, whether anything approaching to the like amount of poetic *stuff* can be produced from the later productions, which almost equal them in bulk. How comparatively few of the former could lovers of his poetry afford to part with! Perhaps my great preference of the earlier set may not be defensible by æsthetic rules: I might not be able to prove that there is a difference of *kind*, more than of mere degree, between the first and the last; that the former are poetry and works of genius in a higher sense than the latter; that the latter are produced wilfully by the author's poetic skill and talent, while the former were effluxes of the poetic spirit, and results of inspiration; that the latter are imitations and elaborate reproductions of what was produced in *substance* before, rather than fresh products of thought and feeling. But so it is, that I feel they never can have any great hold on my mind. I have heard some of them to the greatest advantage; for if anything can *teach* one to love poetry, it is to see that it is loved, and hear it repeated in tones of love and admiration by those who are themselves poetical. And I shall read it through again, and see much more in it than I have ever yet

† "Laodamia" and the "White Doe" are intermediate in style between the early and later poems, and mark the transitional state of the Wordsworthian genius.—S. C.



done, though nothing, I fear, comparable to two-thirds, at least, of the old set.

My notion of the superiority of such poems as "Tintern Abbey," "The Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle," "The Female Vagrant," &c., over such as "Dion," "The Triad," "The Ode to Lycoris," I might *partly* illustrate by referring to the difference betwixt such a face and countenance as that of J—— H——, or of B—— N——, at the same age, with the face and countenance of Schiller, or any of the handsomer of the ancient Greeks. The former are graceful, refined, and elegant, but they want breadth, mass, and expansion. There may be all, and more than all, their elegance, with greater breadth; for where the features are more solid and on a bolder scale, the face may be altogether wider, with no loss of beauty, but the contrary, and with an infinite gain in grandeur and force. So, too, the expression may be as refined, yet far more impressive and energetic.

#### XIV.

Critique on "Laodamia"—Want of Truth and Delicacy in the Sentiments attributed to the Wife in that Poem—No Moral Lesson of any Value to be drawn from such a Misrepresentation—Superior Beauty and Fidelity of a Portrait taken from the Life—Leading Idea of Shelley's "Sensitive Plant."

REASON FOR NOT PLACING "LAODAMIA" IN THE  
FIRST RANK OF WORDSWORTHIAN POETRY.

Laodamia is, in my opinion, as a whole, neither powerfully conceived nor perfectly executed. I venture to say

that there is both a coarseness and a puerility in the design and the sentiments. I see a want of feeling, of delicacy, and of truthfulness, in the representation of Laodamia herself. The speech put into her mouth is as low in tone as it is pompous and inflated in manner. Would even a Pagan poet, would Homer have ascribed such an address to Andromache or Penelope? Would he have made any virtuous matron and deeply-loving wife address her lord returned from the dead so in the style of a Medea or a Phœdra? Surely in Ovid’s “Epistle of Laodamia to Protesilaus” there is nothing so unmatronly and unwifely, bold and unfeminine. Not only does the poet make Laodamia speak thus—he clenches the imputation by a commentary. He ascribes to her *passions* unworthy of a pure abode, *raptures* such as Erebus disdains—implies that her feelings belong to mere sense, the lowest part of our nature. By what right does he impute to the spouse of Protesilaus such grossness of character, and how can he do so without representing her as quite unworthy of that deep sympathy and compassion which yet he seems to claim for her? “O judge her gently who so deeply loved.” *Deep* love is utterly incompatible with such passions and raptures as Erebus can have any pretence to disdain. Even where they existed, they would be consumed, burnt up as a scroll, in the strong, steady fire of conjugal affection. After all, what is the moral of this much-pretending, lofty-sounding poem? What is it that the poet means to condemn and to warn against? To judge by his words, we must suppose him to be declaiming against

subjugation to the senses, because these things earth is ever destroying and Erebus disdaining. Now, if Laodamia really longed to be re-united with her husband only for the sake of his "roseate lips" and blooming cheeks, she would deserve censure and contempt too, but the true reason of her sorrow and reluctance to part with him is this, that *she* is chained to the sphere of outward and visible things, while he is gone, Heaven knows whither, and that, except through a sensuous *medium*, she can have *no communion* with him, none of which she can be conscious, not the highest and most spiritual. Love can have no other fruition than that of union. The fervent apostle longs to be dissolved and to be *with* Christ. The poet's machinery, too, is extremely ill-adapted for bringing out any deep or fine thoughts on such a subject. His heaven itself is a heaven of *sense*, Elysian fields, with purling brooks and liliated banks, "purpureal gleams," and all that we have here on a brighter and larger scale, where the pride of the eye, by far the strongest and most seductive of all the senses, is to be oceanically gratified. But is submission to the will of God, and a patient waiting to be *made happy in His way*, true faith and *trust* in the Author of our being, that He who gave us our hearts and the objects of them, can and will give us the feelings and the fruitions best adapted to our eternal well-being, if we rely upon Him with an energy of self-abandonment and patience, what the poet meant to inculcate? I can only say that if this be the case, nothing can be more circuitous and misleading than the way which he takes

to arrive at his point ; all along, if he aims that way he shoots another.

In this poem Mr. Wordsworth wilfully divested himself of every tender and delicate feeling in the contemplation of the wife and the woman, for the sake of a few grand declamatory stanzas, which he knew not else how to make occasion for. Of course a poor woman is glad to see the external form of her husband after a long and perilous absence, right glad, too, to see him with a ruddy cheek, thankful under such circumstances to receive ever so dislocating a squeeze—a thing to the mere sense unluxurious, nay painful, but comfortable to the heart within, as making assurance doubly sure that there he is, the good man himself, no vision or spectre like to vanish away, but a being, confined like herself within the bounds of space, and likely for many a day to be perceptible within that portion of space which is their common home ; proof also, or, at least, a strong sign,—that whether or no he be as glad to rejoin her as she is to have him back, at all events he is more glad than words can express.

Why did Mr. Wordsworth write in this hard, forced, falsetto style of *Laodamia* ? Was this a sketch taken from *very* nature ? Was it drawn by the light of the sun in heaven, or by real moonlight in all its purity and freshness ? No—but by the beams of a purple-tinted lamp in his study, a lamp gaudily coloured, but dimmed with particles of smoke and fumes of the candle. Compare with this the thoughts and feelings embodied in that exquisite sketch, “*She was a Phantom of Delight,*”

the fine and delicate interweaving of the outward and sensuous with the things of the heart and higher mind in that poem. Can we not see in a moment that the poet had been gazing on the deep and manifold countenance of Nature herself, of Truth and Reality, when he threw forth those verses, that he had been *seeing*, not inventing? Yet is it not far more finely imaginative than the other? Would any but a great poet have so seen the face of Nature, or so portrayed it? Mrs. Wordsworth lies, in essence, at the bottom of that poem. How angry would the bard be to have her connected in any way with the other, and its broad, coarse abstractions! So long as sense *is* divorced from our higher being, it is, indeed, a low thing, but may it not be redeemed, and by becoming the minister and exponent of the other, be purified and exalted? I have ever thought those doctrines that seek to sever the sensuous from our humanity, instead of retaining and merging it in the sentimental, the intellectual and the spiritual, "a vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself and falls on the other side."

I have received more consolation from Mr. Wordsworth's poetry than from any sermons or works of devotion at different times of my life, but I must have more truth and freshness than there is in Laodamia to be either highly gratified or consoled. I would not have poetry always dwell in the *common* world, but still it must always have truth at the bottom. I admire, for instance, and see great truth in Shelley's "Sensitive Plant." It is wild, but there is nothing unreal or forced

about it. I look upon it as a sort of apologue, intended, or at least fitted, to exhibit the relations of the perceptive and imaginative mind, as modified by the heart, with external nature.

END OF VOLUME I.



