

**COLERIDGE**

**SAMUEL**

**TAYLOR**

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

Samuel Coleridge  
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# Samuel Taylor Coleridge

## Biographia Literaria

### CHAPTER I

Motives to the present work—Reception of the Author's first publication—Discipline of his taste at school—Effect of contemporary writers on youthful minds—Bowles's Sonnets—Comparison between the poets before and since Pope.

It has been my lot to have had my name introduced both in conversation, and in print, more frequently than I find it easy to explain, whether I consider the fewness, unimportance, and limited circulation of my writings, or the retirement and distance, in which I have lived, both from the literary and political world. Most often it has been connected with some charge which I could not acknowledge, or some principle which I had never entertained. Nevertheless, had I had no other motive or incitement, the reader would not have been troubled with this exculpation. What my additional purposes were, will be seen in the following pages. It will be found, that the least of what I have written concerns myself personally. I have used the narration chiefly for the purpose of giving a continuity to the work, in part for the sake of the miscellaneous reflections suggested to me by particular events, but still more as introductory to a statement of my principles in Politics, Religion, and Philosophy, and an application of the rules, deduced from philosophical principles, to poetry and criticism. But of the objects, which I proposed to myself, it was not the least important to effect, as far as possible, a settlement of the long continued controversy concerning the true nature of poetic diction; and at the same time to define with the utmost impartiality the real poetic character of the poet, by whose writings this controversy was first kindled, and has been since fuelled and fanned.

In the spring of 1796, when I had but little passed the verge of manhood, I published a small volume of juvenile poems. They were received with a degree of favour, which, young as I was, I well know was bestowed on them not so much for any positive merit, as because they were considered buds of hope, and promises of better works to come. The critics of that day, the most flattering, equally with the severest, concurred in objecting to them obscurity, a general turgidness of diction, and a profusion of new coined double epithets [1]. The first is the fault which a writer is the least able to detect in his own compositions: and my mind was not then sufficiently disciplined to receive the authority of others, as a substitute for my own conviction. Satisfied that the thoughts, such as they were, could not have been expressed otherwise, or at least more perspicuously, I forgot to inquire, whether the thoughts themselves did not demand a degree of attention unsuitable to the nature and objects of poetry. This remark however applies chiefly, though not exclusively, to the Religious Musings. The remainder of the charge I admitted to its full extent, and not without sincere acknowledgments both to my private and public censors for their friendly admonitions. In the after editions, I pruned the double epithets with no sparing hand, and used my best efforts to tame the swell and glitter both of thought and diction; though in truth, these parasite plants of youthful poetry had insinuated themselves into my longer poems with such intricacy of union, that I was often obliged to omit disentangling the weed, from the fear of snapping the flower. From that period to the date of the present work I have published nothing, with my name, which could by any possibility have come before the board of anonymous criticism. Even the three or four poems, printed with the works of a friend [2], as far as they were censured at all, were charged with the same or similar defects, (though I am persuaded not with equal justice),—with an excess of ornament, in addition to strained and elaborate diction. I must be permitted to add, that, even at the early period of my juvenile poems, I saw and admitted the superiority of an austerer and more natural style, with an insight not less clear, than I at present possess. My judgment was stronger than were my powers of realizing its dictates; and the faults of my

language, though indeed partly owing to a wrong choice of subjects, and the desire of giving a poetic colouring to abstract and metaphysical truths, in which a new world then seemed to open upon me, did yet, in part likewise, originate in unfeigned diffidence of my own comparative talent.—During several years of my youth and early manhood, I revered those who had re-introduced the manly simplicity of the Greek, and of our own elder poets, with such enthusiasm as made the hope seem presumptuous of writing successfully in the same style. Perhaps a similar process has happened to others; but my earliest poems were marked by an ease and simplicity, which I have studied, perhaps with inferior success, to impress on my later compositions.

At school, (Christ's Hospital,) I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, though at the same time, a very severe master, the Reverend James Bowyer. He early moulded my taste to the preference of Demosthenes to Cicero, of Homer and Theocritus to Virgil, and again of Virgil to Ovid. He habituated me to compare Lucretius, (in such extracts as I then read,) Terence, and above all the chaster poems of Catullus, not only with the Roman poets of the, so called, silver and brazen ages; but with even those of the Augustan aera: and on grounds of plain sense and universal logic to see and assert the superiority of the former in the truth and nativeness both of their thoughts and diction. At the same time that we were studying the Greek tragic poets, he made us read Shakespeare and Milton as lessons: and they were the lessons too, which required most time and trouble to bring up, so as to escape his censure. I learned from him, that poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more, and more fugitive causes. In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word; and I well remember that, availing himself of the synonymes to the Homer of Didymus, he made us attempt to show, with regard to each, why it would not have answered the same purpose; and wherein consisted the peculiar fitness of the word in the original text.

In our own English compositions, (at least for the last three years of our school education,) he showed no mercy to phrase, metaphor, or image, unsupported by a sound sense, or where the same sense might have been conveyed with equal force and dignity in plainer words [3]. Lute, harp, and lyre, Muse, Muses, and inspirations, Pegasus, Parnassus, and Hippocrene were all an abomination to him. In fancy I can almost hear him now, exclaiming "Harp? Harp? Lyre? Pen and ink, boy, you mean! Muse, boy, Muse? Your nurse's daughter, you mean! Pierian spring? Oh aye! the cloister-pump, I suppose!" Nay certain introductions, similes, and examples, were placed by name on a list of interdiction. Among the similes, there was, I remember, that of the manchineel fruit, as suiting equally well with too many subjects; in which however it yielded the palm at once to the example of Alexander and Clytus, which was equally good and apt, whatever might be the theme. Was it ambition? Alexander and Clytus!—Flattery? Alexander and Clytus!—anger—drunkenness—pride—friendship—ingratitude—late repentance? Still, still Alexander and Clytus! At length, the praises of agriculture having been exemplified in the sagacious observation that, had Alexander been holding the plough, he would not have run his friend Clytus through with a spear, this tried, and serviceable old friend was banished by public edict in saecula saeculorum. I have sometimes ventured to think, that a list of this kind, or an index expurgatorius of certain well-known and ever-returning phrases, both introductory, and transitional, including a large assortment of modest egoisms, and flattering illeisms, and the like, might be hung up in our Law-courts, and both Houses of Parliament, with great advantage to the public, as an important saving of national time, an incalculable relief to his Majesty's ministers, but above all, as insuring the thanks of country attornies, and their clients, who have private bills to carry through the House.

Be this as it may, there was one custom of our master's, which I cannot pass over in silence, because I think it imitable and worthy of imitation. He would often permit our exercises, under some pretext of want of time, to accumulate, till each lad had four or five to be looked over. Then placing the whole number abreast on his desk, he would ask the writer, why this or that sentence might not

have found as appropriate a place under this or that other thesis: and if no satisfying answer could be returned, and two faults of the same kind were found in one exercise, the irrevocable verdict followed, the exercise was torn up, and another on the same subject to be produced, in addition to the tasks of the day. The reader will, I trust, excuse this tribute of recollection to a man, whose severities, even now, not seldom furnish the dreams, by which the blind fancy would fain interpret to the mind the painful sensations of distempered sleep; but neither lessen nor dim the deep sense of my moral and intellectual obligations. He sent us to the University excellent Latin and Greek scholars, and tolerable Hebraists. Yet our classical knowledge was the least of the good gifts, which we derived from his zealous and conscientious tutorage. He is now gone to his final reward, full of years, and full of honours, even of those honours, which were dearest to his heart, as gratefully bestowed by that school, and still binding him to the interests of that school, in which he had been himself educated, and to which during his whole life he was a dedicated thing.

From causes, which this is not the place to investigate, no models of past times, however perfect, can have the same vivid effect on the youthful mind, as the productions of contemporary genius. The discipline, my mind had undergone, *Ne falleret rotundo sono et versuum cursu, cincinnis, et floribus; sed ut inspiceret quidnam subesset, quae, sedes, quod firmamentum, quis fundus verbis; an figures essent mera ornatura et orationis fucus; vel sanguinis e materiae ipsius corde effluentis rubor quidam nativus et incalescentia genuina;*—removed all obstacles to the appreciation of excellence in style without diminishing my delight. That I was thus prepared for the perusal of Mr. Bowles's sonnets and earlier poems, at once increased their influence, and my enthusiasm. The great works of past ages seem to a young man things of another race, in respect to which his faculties must remain passive and submissive, even as to the stars and mountains. But the writings of a contemporary, perhaps not many years older than himself, surrounded by the same circumstances, and disciplined by the same manners, possess a reality for him, and inspire an actual friendship as of a man for a man. His very admiration is the wind which fans and feeds his hope. The poems themselves assume the properties of flesh and blood. To recite, to extol, to contend for them is but the payment of a debt due to one, who exists to receive it.

There are indeed modes of teaching which have produced, and are producing, youths of a very different stamp; modes of teaching, in comparison with which we have been called on to despise our great public schools, and universities,

in whose halls are hung  
Armoury of the invincible knights of old—

modes, by which children are to be metamorphosed into prodigies. And prodigies with a vengeance have I known thus produced; prodigies of self-conceit, shallowness, arrogance, and infidelity! Instead of storing the memory, during the period when the memory is the predominant faculty, with facts for the after exercise of the judgment; and instead of awakening by the noblest models the fond and unmixed love and admiration, which is the natural and graceful temper of early youth; these nurslings of improved pedagogy are taught to dispute and decide; to suspect all but their own and their lecturer's wisdom; and to hold nothing sacred from their contempt, but their own contemptible arrogance; boy-graduates in all the technicals, and in all the dirty passions and impudence of anonymous criticism. To such dispositions alone can the admonition of Pliny be requisite, *Neque enim debet operibus ejus obesse, quod vivit. An si inter eos, quos nunquam vidimus, florisset, non solum libros ejus, verum etiam imagines conquiremus, ejusdem nunc honor præsantis, et gratia quasi satietate languescet? At hoc pravum, malignumque est, non admirari hominem admiratione dignissimum, quia videre, complecti, nec laudare tantum, verum etiam amare contingit.*

I had just entered on my seventeenth year, when the sonnets of Mr. Bowles, twenty in number, and just then published in a quarto pamphlet, were first made known and presented to me, by a schoolfellow who had quitted us for the University, and who, during the whole time that he was in our first form (or in our school language a Grecian,) had been my patron and protector. I refer to Dr. Middleton, the truly learned, and every way excellent Bishop of Calcutta:

qui laudibus amplis  
Ingenium celebrare meum, calamumque solebat,  
Calcar agens animo validum. Non omnia terra  
Obruta; vivit amor, vivit dolor; ora negatur  
Dulcia conspiciere; at fieri et meminisse relictum est.

It was a double pleasure to me, and still remains a tender recollection, that I should have received from a friend so revered the first knowledge of a poet, by whose works, year after year, I was so enthusiastically delighted and inspired. My earliest acquaintances will not have forgotten the undisciplined eagerness and impetuous zeal, with which I laboured to make proselytes, not only of my companions, but of all with whom I conversed, of whatever rank, and in whatever place. As my school finances did not permit me to purchase copies, I made, within less than a year and a half, more than forty transcriptions, as the best presents I could offer to those, who had in any way won my regard. And with almost equal delight did I receive the three or four following publications of the same author.

Though I have seen and known enough of mankind to be well aware, that I shall perhaps stand alone in my creed, and that it will be well, if I subject myself to no worse charge than that of singularity; I am not therefore deterred from avowing, that I regard, and ever have regarded the obligations of intellect among the most sacred of the claims of gratitude. A valuable thought, or a particular train of thoughts, gives me additional pleasure, when I can safely refer and attribute it to the conversation or correspondence of another. My obligations to Mr. Bowles were indeed important, and for radical good. At a very premature age, even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics, and in theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me. History, and particular facts, lost all interest in my mind. Poetry—(though for a school-boy of that age, I was above par in English versification, and had already produced two or three compositions which, I may venture to say, without reference to my age, were somewhat above mediocrity, and which had gained me more credit than the sound, good sense of my old master was at all pleased with.)—poetry itself, yea, novels and romances, became insipid to me. In my friendless wanderings on our leave-days [\[4\]](#), (for I was an orphan, and had scarcely any connections in London,) highly was I delighted, if any passenger, especially if he were dressed in black, would enter into conversation with me. For I soon found the means of directing it to my favourite subjects

Of providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate,  
Fixed fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute,  
And found no end in wandering mazes lost.

This preposterous pursuit was, beyond doubt, injurious both to my natural powers, and to the progress of my education. It would perhaps have been destructive, had it been continued; but from this I was auspiciously withdrawn, partly indeed by an accidental introduction to an amiable family, chiefly however, by the genial influence of a style of poetry, so tender and yet so manly, so natural and real, and yet so dignified and harmonious, as the sonnets and other early poems of Mr. Bowles. Well would it have been for me, perhaps, had I never relapsed into the same mental disease; if I had continued to pluck the flower and reap the harvest from the cultivated surface, instead of delving in

the unwholesome quicksilver mines of metaphysic lore. And if in after time I have sought a refuge from bodily pain and mismanaged sensibility in abstruse researches, which exercised the strength and subtilty of the understanding without awakening the feelings of the heart; still there was a long and blessed interval, during which my natural faculties were allowed to expand, and my original tendencies to develop themselves;—my fancy, and the love of nature, and the sense of beauty in forms and sounds.

The second advantage, which I owe to my early perusal, and admiration of these poems, (to which let me add,) though known to me at a somewhat later period, the Lewesdon Hill of Mr. Crowe bears more immediately on my present subject. Among those with whom I conversed, there were, of course, very many who had formed their taste, and their notions of poetry, from the writings of Pope and his followers; or to speak more generally, in that school of French poetry, condensed and invigorated by English understanding, which had predominated from the last century. I was not blind to the merits of this school, yet, as from inexperience of the world, and consequent want of sympathy with the general subjects of these poems, they gave me little pleasure, I doubtless undervalued the kind, and with the presumption of youth withheld from its masters the legitimate name of poets. I saw that the excellence of this kind consisted in just and acute observations on men and manners in an artificial state of society, as its matter and substance; and in the logic of wit, conveyed in smooth and strong epigrammatic couplets, as its form: that even when the subject was addressed to the fancy, or the intellect, as in the Rape of the Lock, or the Essay on Man; nay, when it was a consecutive narration, as in that astonishing product of matchless talent and ingenuity Pope's Translation of the Iliad; still a point was looked for at the end of each second line, and the whole was, as it were, a sorites, or, if I may exchange a logical for a grammatical metaphor, a conjunction disjunctive, of epigrams. Meantime the matter and diction seemed to me characterized not so much by poetic thoughts, as by thoughts translated into the language of poetry. On this last point, I had occasion to render my own thoughts gradually more and more plain to myself, by frequent amicable disputes concerning Darwin's Botanic Garden, which, for some years, was greatly extolled, not only by the reading public in general, but even by those, whose genius and natural robustness of understanding enabled them afterwards to act foremost in dissipating these "painted mists" that occasionally rise from the marshes at the foot of Parnassus. During my first Cambridge vacation, I assisted a friend in a contribution for a literary society in Devonshire: and in this I remember to have compared Darwin's work to the Russian palace of ice, glittering, cold and transitory. In the same essay too, I assigned sundry reasons, chiefly drawn from a comparison of passages in the Latin poets with the original Greek, from which they were borrowed, for the preference of Collins's odes to those of Gray; and of the simile in Shakespeare

How like a younker or a prodigal  
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,  
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!  
How like the prodigal doth she return,  
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,  
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind!

*(Merch. of Ven. Act II. sc. 6.)*

to the imitation in the Bard;

Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows  
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm  
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,  
Youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm;  
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,

That hush'd in grim repose, expects it's evening prey.

(in which, by the bye, the words "realm" and "sway" are rhymes dearly purchased)—I preferred the original on the ground, that in the imitation it depended wholly on the compositor's putting, or not putting, a small capital, both in this, and in many other passages of the same poet, whether the words should be personifications, or mere abstractions. I mention this, because, in referring various lines in Gray to their original in Shakespeare and Milton, and in the clear perception how completely all the propriety was lost in the transfer, I was, at that early period, led to a conjecture, which, many years afterwards was recalled to me from the same thought having been started in conversation, but far more ably, and developed more fully, by Mr. Wordsworth;—namely, that this style of poetry, which I have characterized above, as translations of prose thoughts into poetic language, had been kept up by, if it did not wholly arise from, the custom of writing Latin verses, and the great importance attached to these exercises, in our public schools. Whatever might have been the case in the fifteenth century, when the use of the Latin tongue was so general among learned men, that Erasmus is said to have forgotten his native language; yet in the present day it is not to be supposed, that a youth can think in Latin, or that he can have any other reliance on the force or fitness of his phrases, but the authority of the writer from whom he has adopted them. Consequently he must first prepare his thoughts, and then pick out, from Virgil, Horace, Ovid, or perhaps more compendiously from his *Gradus*, halves and quarters of lines, in which to embody them.

I never object to a certain degree of disputatiousness in a young man from the age of seventeen to that of four or five and twenty, provided I find him always arguing on one side of the question. The controversies, occasioned by my unfeigned zeal for the honour of a favourite contemporary, then known to me only by his works, were of great advantage in the formation and establishment of my taste and critical opinions. In my defence of the lines running into each other, instead of closing at each couplet; and of natural language, neither bookish, nor vulgar, neither redolent of the lamp, nor of the kennel, such as I will remember thee; instead of the same thought tricked up in the rag-fair finery of,

—thy image on her wing  
Before my fancy's eye shall memory bring,—

I had continually to adduce the metre and diction of the Greek poets, from Homer to Theocritus inclusively; and still more of our elder English poets, from Chaucer to Milton. Nor was this all. But as it was my constant reply to authorities brought against me from later poets of great name, that no authority could avail in opposition to Truth, Nature, Logic, and the Laws of Universal Grammar; actuated too by my former passion for metaphysical investigations; I laboured at a solid foundation, on which permanently to ground my opinions, in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance. According to the faculty or source, from which the pleasure given by any poem or passage was derived, I estimated the merit of such poem or passage. As the result of all my reading and meditation, I abstracted two critical aphorisms, deeming them to comprise the conditions and criteria of poetic style;—first, that not the poem which we have read, but that to which we return, with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power, and claims the name of essential poetry;—secondly, that whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction. Be it however observed, that I excluded from the list of worthy feelings, the pleasure derived from mere novelty in the reader, and the desire of exciting wonderment at his powers in the author. Oftentimes since then, in pursuing French tragedies, I have fancied two marks of admiration at the end of each line, as hieroglyphics of the author's own admiration at his own cleverness. Our genuine admiration of a great poet is a continuous undercurrent

of feeling! it is everywhere present, but seldom anywhere as a separate excitement. I was wont boldly to affirm, that it would be scarcely more difficult to push a stone out from the Pyramids with the bare hand, than to alter a word, or the position of a word, in Milton or Shakespeare, (in their most important works at least,) without making the poet say something else, or something worse, than he does say. One great distinction, I appeared to myself to see plainly between even the characteristic faults of our elder poets, and the false beauty of the moderns. In the former, from Donne to Cowley, we find the most fantastic out-of-the-way thoughts, but in the most pure and genuine mother English, in the latter the most obvious thoughts, in language the most fantastic and arbitrary. Our faulty elder poets sacrificed the passion and passionate flow of poetry to the subtleties of intellect and to the stars of wit; the moderns to the glare and glitter of a perpetual, yet broken and heterogeneous imagery, or rather to an amphibious something, made up, half of image, and half of abstract [5] meaning. The one sacrificed the heart to the head; the other both heart and head to point and drapery.

The reader must make himself acquainted with the general style of composition that was at that time deemed poetry, in order to understand and account for the effect produced on me by the Sonnets, the Monody at Matlock, and the Hope, of Mr. Bowles; for it is peculiar to original genius to become less and less striking, in proportion to its success in improving the taste and judgment of its contemporaries. The poems of West, indeed, had the merit of chaste and manly diction; but they were cold, and, if I may so express it, only dead-coloured; while in the best of Warton's there is a stiffness, which too often gives them the appearance of imitations from the Greek. Whatever relation, therefore, of cause or impulse Percy's collection of Ballads may bear to the most popular poems of the present day; yet in a more sustained and elevated style, of the then living poets, Cowper and Bowles [6] were, to the best of my knowledge, the first who combined natural thoughts with natural diction; the first who reconciled the heart with the head.

It is true, as I have before mentioned, that from diffidence in my own powers, I for a short time adopted a laborious and florid diction, which I myself deemed, if not absolutely vicious, yet of very inferior worth. Gradually, however, my practice conformed to my better judgment; and the compositions of my twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth years—(for example, the shorter blank verse poems, the lines, which now form the middle and conclusion of the poem entitled the Destiny of Nations, and the tragedy of Remorse)—are not more below my present ideal in respect of the general tissue of the style than those of the latest date. Their faults were at least a remnant of the former leaven, and among the many who have done me the honour of putting my poems in the same class with those of my betters, the one or two, who have pretended to bring examples of affected simplicity from my volume, have been able to adduce but one instance, and that out of a copy of verses half ludicrous, half splenetic, which I intended, and had myself characterized, as *sermoni propiora*.

Every reform, however necessary, will by weak minds be carried to an excess, which will itself need reforming. The reader will excuse me for noticing, that I myself was the first to expose *risu honesto* the three sins of poetry, one or the other of which is the most likely to beset a young writer. So long ago as the publication of the second number of the Monthly Magazine, under the name of Nehemiah Higginbottom, I contributed three sonnets, the first of which had for its object to excite a good-natured laugh at the spirit of doleful egotism, and at the recurrence of favourite phrases, with the double defect of being at once trite and licentious;—the second was on low creeping language and thoughts, under the pretence of simplicity; the third, the phrases of which were borrowed entirely from my own poems, on the indiscriminate use of elaborate and swelling language and imagery. The reader will find them in the note [7] below, and will I trust regard them as reprinted for biographical purposes alone, and not for their poetic merits. So general at that time, and so decided was the opinion concerning the characteristic vices of my style, that a celebrated physician (now, alas! no more) speaking of me in other respects with his usual kindness, to a gentleman, who was about to meet me at a dinner party, could not however resist giving him a hint not to mention 'The house that

Jack built' in my presence, for "that I was as sore as a boil about that sonnet;" he not knowing that I was myself the author of it.

## CHAPTER II

Supposed irritability of men of genius brought to the test of facts—Causes and occasions of the charge—Its injustice.

I have often thought, that it would be neither uninstrucive nor unamusing to analyze, and bring forward into distinct consciousness, that complex feeling, with which readers in general take part against the author, in favour of the critic; and the readiness with which they apply to all poets the old sarcasm of Horace upon the scribblers of his time

—genus irritabile vatum.

A debility and dimness of the imaginative power, and a consequent necessity of reliance on the immediate impressions of the senses, do, we know well, render the mind liable to superstition and fanaticism. Having a deficient portion of internal and proper warmth, minds of this class seek in the crowd *circum fana* for a warmth in common, which they do not possess singly. Cold and phlegmatic in their own nature, like damp hay, they heat and inflame by co-acervation; or like bees they become restless and irritable through the increased temperature of collected multitudes. Hence the German word for fanaticism, (such at least was its original import,) is derived from the swarming of bees, namely, *schwaermen*, *schwaermerey*. The passion being in an inverse proportion to the insight,—that the more vivid, as this the less distinct—anger is the inevitable consequence. The absence of all foundation within their own minds for that, which they yet believe both true and indispensable to their safety and happiness, cannot but produce an uneasy state of feeling, an involuntary sense of fear from which nature has no means of rescuing herself but by anger. Experience informs us that the first defence of weak minds is to recriminate.

There's no philosopher but sees,  
That rage and fear are one disease;  
Tho' that may burn, and this may freeze,  
They're both alike the ague.

But where the ideas are vivid, and there exists an endless power of combining and modifying them, the feelings and affections blend more easily and intimately with these ideal creations than with the objects of the senses; the mind is affected by thoughts, rather than by things; and only then feels the requisite interest even for the most important events and accidents, when by means of meditation they have passed into thoughts. The sanity of the mind is between superstition with fanaticism on the one hand, and enthusiasm with indifference and a diseased slowness to action on the other. For the conceptions of the mind may be so vivid and adequate, as to preclude that impulse to the realizing of them, which is strongest and most restless in those, who possess more than mere talent, (or the faculty of appropriating and applying the knowledge of others,)—yet still want something of the creative and self-sufficing power of absolute genius. For this reason therefore, they are men of commanding genius. While the former rest content between thought and reality, as it were in an intermundium of which their own living spirit supplies the substance, and their imagination the ever-varying form; the latter must impress their preconceptions on the world without, in order to present them back to their own view with the satisfying degree of clearness, distinctness, and individuality. These in tranquil times are formed to exhibit a perfect poem in palace, or temple, or landscape-garden; or a tale of romance in canals that join sea with sea, or in walls of rock, which, shouldering back the billows, imitate the power, and supply the benevolence of nature to sheltered navies; or in aqueducts that, arching the wide vale from mountain to mountain, give a Palmyra to the desert. But alas! in times of

tumult they are the men destined to come forth as the shaping spirit of ruin, to destroy the wisdom of ages in order to substitute the fancies of a day, and to change kings and kingdoms, as the wind shifts and shapes the clouds [8]. The records of biography seem to confirm this theory. The men of the greatest genius, as far as we can judge from their own works or from the accounts of their contemporaries, appear to have been of calm and tranquil temper in all that related to themselves. In the inward assurance of permanent fame, they seem to have been either indifferent or resigned with regard to immediate reputation. Through all the works of Chaucer there reigns a cheerfulness, a manly hilarity which makes it almost impossible to doubt a correspondent habit of feeling in the author himself. Shakespeare's evenness and sweetness of temper were almost proverbial in his own age. That this did not arise from ignorance of his own comparative greatness, we have abundant proof in his Sonnets, which could scarcely have been known to Pope [9], when he asserted, that our great bard—

—grew immortal in his own despite.

*(Epist. to Augustus.)*

Speaking of one whom he had celebrated, and contrasting the duration of his works with that of his personal existence, Shakespeare adds:

Your name from hence immortal life shall have,

Tho' I once gone to all the world must die;  
The earth can yield me but a common grave,  
When you entomb'd in men's eyes shall lie.  
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,  
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read;  
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse,  
When all the breathers of this world are dead:  
You still shall live, such virtue hath my pen,  
Where breath most breathes, e'en in the mouth of men.

*SONNET LXXXI.*

I have taken the first that occurred; but Shakespeare's readiness to praise his rivals, ore pleno, and the confidence of his own equality with those whom he deemed most worthy of his praise, are alike manifested in another Sonnet.

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,  
Bound for the praise of all-too-precious you,  
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,  
Making their tomb, the womb wherein they grew?  
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write  
Above a mortal pitch that struck me dead?  
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night  
Giving him aid, my verse astonished.  
He, nor that affable familiar ghost,  
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,  
As victors of my silence cannot boast;  
I was not sick of any fear from thence!  
But when your countenance fill'd up his line,  
Then lack'd I matter, that enfeebled mine.

*S. LXXXVI.*

In Spenser, indeed, we trace a mind constitutionally tender, delicate, and, in comparison with his three great compeers, I had almost said, effeminate; and this additionally saddened by the unjust persecution of Burleigh, and the severe calamities, which overwhelmed his latter days. These causes have diffused over all his compositions "a melancholy grace," and have drawn forth occasional strains, the more pathetic from their gentleness. But no where do we find the least trace of irritability, and still less of quarrelsome or affected contempt of his censurers.

The same calmness, and even greater self-possession, may be affirmed of Milton, as far as his poems, and poetic character are concerned. He reserved his anger for the enemies of religion, freedom, and his country. My mind is not capable of forming a more august conception, than arises from the contemplation of this great man in his latter days;—poor, sick, old, blind, slandered, persecuted,—

Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,—

in an age in which he was as little understood by the party, for whom, as by that against whom, he had contended; and among men before whom he strode so far as to dwarf himself by the distance; yet still listening to the music of his own thoughts, or if additionally cheered, yet cheered only by the prophetic faith of two or three solitary individuals, he did nevertheless

—argue not  
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot  
Of heart or hope; but still bore up and steer'd  
Right onward.

From others only do we derive our knowledge that Milton, in his latter day, had his scorners and detractors; and even in his day of youth and hope, that he had enemies would have been unknown to us, had they not been likewise the enemies of his country.

I am well aware, that in advanced stages of literature, when there exist many and excellent models, a high degree of talent, combined with taste and judgment, and employed in works of imagination, will acquire for a man the name of a great genius; though even that analogon of genius, which, in certain states of society, may even render his writings more popular than the absolute reality could have done, would be sought for in vain in the mind and temper of the author himself. Yet even in instances of this kind, a close examination will often detect, that the irritability, which has been attributed to the author's genius as its cause, did really originate in an ill conformation of body, obtuse pain, or constitutional defect of pleasurable sensation. What is charged to the author, belongs to the man, who would probably have been still more impatient, but for the humanizing influences of the very pursuit, which yet bears the blame of his irritability.

How then are we to explain the easy credence generally given to this charge, if the charge itself be not, as I have endeavoured to show, supported by experience? This seems to me of no very difficult solution. In whatever country literature is widely diffused, there will be many who mistake an intense desire to possess the reputation of poetic genius, for the actual powers, and original tendencies which constitute it. But men, whose dearest wishes are fixed on objects wholly out of their own power, become in all cases more or less impatient and prone to anger. Besides, though it may be paradoxical to assert, that a man can know one thing and believe the opposite, yet assuredly a vain person may have so habitually indulged the wish, and persevered in the attempt, to appear what he is not, as to become himself one of his own proselytes. Still, as this counterfeit and artificial persuasion must differ, even in the person's own feelings, from a real sense of inward power, what can be more natural,

than that this difference should betray itself in suspicious and jealous irritability? Even as the flowery sod, which covers a hollow, may be often detected by its shaking and trembling.

But, alas! the multitude of books and the general diffusion of literature, have produced other and more lamentable effects in the world of letters, and such as are abundant to explain, though by no means to justify, the contempt with which the best grounded complaints of injured genius are rejected as frivolous, or entertained as matter of merriment. In the days of Chaucer and Gower, our language might (with due allowance for the imperfections of a simile) be compared to a wilderness of vocal reeds, from which the favourites only of Pan or Apollo could construct even the rude syrinx; and from this the constructors alone could elicit strains of music. But now, partly by the labours of successive poets, and in part by the more artificial state of society and social intercourse, language, mechanized as it were into a barrel-organ, supplies at once both instrument and tune. Thus even the deaf may play, so as to delight the many. Sometimes (for it is with similes, as it is with jests at a wine table, one is sure to suggest another) I have attempted to illustrate the present state of our language, in its relation to literature, by a press-room of larger and smaller stereotype pieces, which, in the present Anglo-Gallican fashion of unconnected, epigrammatic periods, it requires but an ordinary portion of ingenuity to vary indefinitely, and yet still produce something, which, if not sense, will be so like it as to do as well. Perhaps better: for it spares the reader the trouble of thinking; prevents vacancy, while it indulges indolence; and secures the memory from all danger of an intellectual plethora. Hence of all trades, literature at present demands the least talent or information; and, of all modes of literature, the manufacturing of poems. The difference indeed between these and the works of genius is not less than between an egg and an egg-shell; yet at a distance they both look alike.

Now it is no less remarkable than true, with how little examination works of polite literature are commonly perused, not only by the mass of readers, but by men of first rate ability, till some accident or chance [10] discussion have roused their attention, and put them on their guard. And hence individuals below mediocrity not less in natural power than in acquired knowledge; nay, bunglers who have failed in the lowest mechanic crafts, and whose presumption is in due proportion to their want of sense and sensibility; men, who being first scribblers from idleness and ignorance, next become libellers from envy and malevolence,—have been able to drive a successful trade in the employment of the booksellers, nay, have raised themselves into temporary name and reputation with the public at large, by that most powerful of all adulation, the appeal to the bad and malignant passions of mankind [11]. But as it is the nature of scorn, envy, and all malignant propensities to require a quick change of objects, such writers are sure, sooner or later, to awake from their dream of vanity to disappointment and neglect with embittered and envenomed feelings. Even during their short-lived success, sensible in spite of themselves on what a shifting foundation it rests, they resent the mere refusal of praise as a robbery, and at the justest censures kindle at once into violent and undisciplined abuse; till the acute disease changing into chronic, the more deadly as the less violent, they become the fit instruments of literary detraction and moral slander. They are then no longer to be questioned without exposing the complainant to ridicule, because, forsooth, they are anonymous critics, and authorized, in Andrew Marvell's phrase, as "synodical individuals" to speak of themselves *plurali majestatico*! As if literature formed a caste, like that of the Paras in Hindostan, who, however maltreated, must not dare to deem themselves wronged! As if that, which in all other cases adds a deeper dye to slander, the circumstance of its being anonymous, here acted only to make the slanderer inviolable! [12] Thus, in part, from the accidental tempers of individuals—(men of undoubted talent, but not men of genius)—tempers rendered yet more irritable by their desire to appear men of genius; but still more effectively by the excesses of the mere counterfeits both of talent and genius; the number too being so incomparably greater of those who are thought to be, than of those who really are men of genius; and in part from the natural, but not therefore the less partial and unjust distinction, made by the public itself between literary and all other property; I believe the prejudice to have arisen, which considers an unusual irascibility concerning the reception of its products as characteristic of genius.

It might correct the moral feelings of a numerous class of readers, to suppose a Review set on foot, the object of which should be to criticise all the chief works presented to the public by our ribbon-weavers, calico-printers, cabinet-makers, and china-manufacturers; which should be conducted in the same spirit, and take the same freedom with personal character, as our literary journals. They would scarcely, I think, deny their belief, not only that the genus irritabile would be found to include many other species besides that of bards; but that the irritability of trade would soon reduce the resentments of poets into mere shadow-fights in the comparison. Or is wealth the only rational object of human interest? Or even if this were admitted, has the poet no property in his works? Or is it a rare, or culpable case, that he who serves at the altar of the Muses, should be compelled to derive his maintenance from the altar, when too he has perhaps deliberately abandoned the fairest prospects of rank and opulence in order to devote himself, an entire and undistracted man, to the instruction or refinement of his fellow-citizens? Or, should we pass by all higher objects and motives, all disinterested benevolence, and even that ambition of lasting praise which is at once the crutch and ornament, which at once supports and betrays, the infirmity of human virtue,—is the character and property of the man, who labours for our intellectual pleasures, less entitled to a share of our fellow feeling, than that of the wine-merchant or milliner? Sensibility indeed, both quick and deep, is not only a characteristic feature, but may be deemed a component part, of genius. But it is not less an essential mark of true genius, that its sensibility is excited by any other cause more powerfully than by its own personal interests; for this plain reason, that the man of genius lives most in the ideal world, in which the present is still constituted by the future or the past; and because his feelings have been habitually associated with thoughts and images, to the number, clearness, and vivacity of which the sensation of self is always in an inverse proportion. And yet, should he perchance have occasion to repel some false charge, or to rectify some erroneous censure, nothing is more common than for the many to mistake the general liveliness of his manner and language, whatever is the subject, for the effects of peculiar irritation from its accidental relation to himself. [13]

For myself, if from my own feelings, or from the less suspicious test of the observations of others, I had been made aware of any literary testiness or jealousy; I trust, that I should have been, however, neither silly nor arrogant enough to have burthened the imperfection on genius. But an experience—(and I should not need documents in abundance to prove my words, if I added)—a tried experience of twenty years, has taught me, that the original sin of my character consists in a careless indifference to public opinion, and to the attacks of those who influence it; that praise and admiration have become yearly less and less desirable, except as marks of sympathy; nay that it is difficult and distressing to me to think with any interest even about the sale and profit of my works, important as, in my present circumstances, such considerations must needs be. Yet it never occurred to me to believe or fancy, that the quantum of intellectual power bestowed on me by nature or education was in any way connected with this habit of my feelings; or that it needed any other parents or fosterers than constitutional indolence, aggravated into languor by ill-health; the accumulating embarrassments of procrastination; the mental cowardice, which is the inseparable companion of procrastination, and which makes us anxious to think and converse on any thing rather than on what concerns ourselves; in fine, all those close vexations, whether chargeable on my faults or my fortunes, which leave me but little grief to spare for evils comparatively distant and alien.

Indignation at literary wrongs I leave to men born under happier stars. I cannot afford it. But so far from condemning those who can, I deem it a writer's duty, and think it creditable to his heart, to feel and express a resentment proportioned to the grossness of the provocation, and the importance of the object. There is no profession on earth, which requires an attention so early, so long, or so unintermitting as that of poetry; and indeed as that of literary composition in general, if it be such as at all satisfies the demands both of taste and of sound logic. How difficult and delicate a task even the mere mechanism of verse is, may be conjectured from the failure of those, who have attempted poetry late in life. Where then a man has, from his earliest youth, devoted his whole being to an object,

which by the admission of all civilized nations in all ages is honourable as a pursuit, and glorious as an attainment; what of all that relates to himself and his family, if only we except his moral character, can have fairer claims to his protection, or more authorize acts of self-defence, than the elaborate products of his intellect and intellectual industry? Prudence itself would command us to show, even if defect or diversion of natural sensibility had prevented us from feeling, a due interest and qualified anxiety for the offspring and representatives of our nobler being. I know it, alas! by woful experience. I have laid too many eggs in the hot sands of this wilderness, the world, with ostrich carelessness and ostrich oblivion. The greater part indeed have been trod under foot, and are forgotten; but yet no small number have crept forth into life, some to furnish feathers for the caps of others, and still more to plume the shafts in the quivers of my enemies, of them that unprovoked have lain in wait against my soul.

Sic vos, non vobis, mellificatis, apes!

## CHAPTER III

The Author's obligations to critics, and the probable occasion—Principles of modern criticism—Mr. Southey's works and character.

To anonymous critics in reviews, magazines, and news-journals of various name and rank, and to satirists with or without a name in verse or prose, or in verse-text aided by prose-comment, I do seriously believe and profess, that I owe full two-thirds of whatever reputation and publicity I happen to possess. For when the name of an individual has occurred so frequently, in so many works, for so great a length of time, the readers of these works—(which with a shelf or two of beauties, elegant Extracts and Anas, form nine-tenths of the reading of the reading Public [14])—cannot but be familiar with the name, without distinctly remembering whether it was introduced for eulogy or for censure. And this becomes the more likely, if (as I believe) the habit of perusing periodical works may be properly added to Averroes' catalogue of Anti-Mnemonics, or weakeners of the memory [15]. But where this has not been the case, yet the reader will be apt to suspect that there must be something more than usually strong and extensive in a reputation, that could either require or stand so merciless and long-continued a cannonading. Without any feeling of anger therefore—for which indeed, on my own account, I have no pretext—I may yet be allowed to express some degree of surprise, that, after having run the critical gauntlet for a certain class of faults which I had, nothing having come before the judgment-seat in the interim, I should, year after year, quarter after quarter, month after month—not to mention sundry petty periodicals of still quicker revolution, "or weekly or diurnal"—have been, for at least seventeen years consecutively, dragged forth by them into the foremost ranks of the proscribed, and forced to abide the brunt of abuse, for faults directly opposite, and which I certainly had not. How shall I explain this?

Whatever may have been the case with others, I certainly cannot attribute this persecution to personal dislike, or to envy, or to feelings of vindictive animosity. Not to the former, for with the exception of a very few who are my intimate friends, and were so before they were known as authors, I have had little other acquaintance with literary characters, than what may be implied in an accidental introduction, or casual meeting in a mixed company. And as far as words and looks can be trusted, I must believe that, even in these instances, I had excited no unfriendly disposition. Neither by letter, nor in conversation, have I ever had dispute or controversy beyond the common social interchange of opinions. Nay, where I had reason to suppose my convictions fundamentally different, it has been my habit, and I may add, the impulse of my nature, to assign the grounds of my belief, rather than the belief itself; and not to express dissent, till I could establish some points of complete sympathy, some grounds common to both sides, from which to commence its explanation.

Still less can I place these attacks to the charge of envy. The few pages which I have published, are of too distant a date, and the extent of their sale a proof too conclusive against their having been popular at any time, to render probable, I had almost said possible, the excitement of envy on their account; and the man who should envy me on any other, verily he must be envy-mad!

Lastly, with as little semblance of reason, could I suspect any animosity towards me from vindictive feelings as the cause. I have before said, that my acquaintance with literary men has been limited and distant; and that I have had neither dispute nor controversy. From my first entrance into life, I have, with few and short intervals, lived either abroad or in retirement. My different essays on subjects of national interest, published at different times, first in the Morning Post and then in the Courier, with my courses of Lectures on the principles of criticism as applied to Shakespeare and Milton, constitute my whole publicity; the only occasions on which I could offend any member of the republic of letters. With one solitary exception in which my words were first misstated and then wantonly applied to an individual, I could never learn that I had excited the displeasure of any among my literary contemporaries. Having announced my intention to give a course of Lectures on

the characteristic merits and defects of English poetry in its different aeras; first, from Chaucer to Milton; second, from Dryden inclusively to Thomson; and third, from Cowper to the present day; I changed my plan, and confined my disquisition to the former two periods, that I might furnish no possible pretext for the unthinking to misconstrue, or the malignant to misapply my words, and having stamped their own meaning on them, to pass them as current coin in the marts of garrulity or detraction.

Praises of the unworthy are felt by ardent minds as robberies of the deserving; and it is too true, and too frequent, that Bacon, Harrington, Machiavel, and Spinoza, are not read, because Hume, Condillac, and Voltaire are. But in promiscuous company no prudent man will oppugn the merits of a contemporary in his own supposed department; contenting himself with praising in his turn those whom he deems excellent. If I should ever deem it my duty at all to oppose the pretensions of individuals, I would oppose them in books which could be weighed and answered, in which I could evolve the whole of my reasons and feelings, with their requisite limits and modifications; not in irrecoverable conversation, where however strong the reasons might be, the feelings that prompted them would assuredly be attributed by some one or other to envy and discontent. Besides I well know, and, I trust, have acted on that knowledge, that it must be the ignorant and injudicious who extol the unworthy; and the eulogies of critics without taste or judgment are the natural reward of authors without feeling or genius. *Sint unicuique sua praemia.*

How then, dismissing, as I do, these three causes, am I to account for attacks, the long continuance and inveteracy of which it would require all three to explain? The solution seems to be this,—I was in habits of intimacy with Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Southey! This, however, transfers, rather than removes the difficulty. Be it, that, by an unconscionable extension of the old adage, *noscitur a socio*, my literary friends are never under the water-fall of criticism, but I must be wet through with the spray; yet how came the torrent to descend upon them?

First then, with regard to Mr. Southey. I well remember the general reception of his earlier publications; namely, the poems published with Mr. Lovell under the names of Moschus and Bion; the two volumes of poems under his own name, and the Joan of Arc. The censures of the critics by profession are extant, and may be easily referred to:—careless lines, inequality in the merit of the different poems, and (in the lighter works) a predilection for the strange and whimsical; in short, such faults as might have been anticipated in a young and rapid writer, were indeed sufficiently enforced. Nor was there at that time wanting a party spirit to aggravate the defects of a poet, who with all the courage of uncorrupted youth had avowed his zeal for a cause, which he deemed that of liberty, and his abhorrence of oppression by whatever name consecrated. But it was as little objected by others, as dreamed of by the poet himself, that he preferred careless and prosaic lines on rule and of forethought, or indeed that he pretended to any other art or theory of poetic diction, except that which we may all learn from Horace, Quintilian, the admirable dialogue, *De Oratoribus*, generally attributed to Tacitus, or Strada's *Prolusions*; if indeed natural good sense and the early study of the best models in his own language had not infused the same maxims more securely, and, if I may venture the expression, more vitally. All that could have been fairly deduced was, that in his taste and estimation of writers Mr. Southey agreed far more with Thomas Warton, than with Dr. Johnson. Nor do I mean to deny, that at all times Mr. Southey was of the same mind with Sir Philip Sidney in preferring an excellent ballad in the humblest style of poetry to twenty indifferent poems that strutted in the highest. And by what have his works, published since then, been characterized, each more strikingly than the preceding, but by greater splendour, a deeper pathos, profounder reflections, and a more sustained dignity of language and of metre? Distant may the period be, but whenever the time shall come, when all his works shall be collected by some editor worthy to be his biographer, I trust that an appendix of excerpts of all the passages, in which his writings, name, and character have been attacked, from the pamphlets and periodical works of the last twenty years, may be an accompaniment. Yet that it would prove medicinal in after times I dare not hope; for as long as there

are readers to be delighted with calumny, there will be found reviewers to calumniate. And such readers will become in all probability more numerous, in proportion as a still greater diffusion of literature shall produce an increase of sciolists, and sciolism bring with it petulance and presumption. In times of old, books were as religious oracles; as literature advanced, they next became venerable preceptors; they then descended to the rank of instructive friends; and, as their numbers increased, they sank still lower to that of entertaining companions; and at present they seem degraded into culprits to hold up their hands at the bar of every self-elected, yet not the less peremptory, judge, who chooses to write from humour or interest, from enmity or arrogance, and to abide the decision "of him that reads in malice, or him that reads after dinner."

The same retrograde movement may be traced, in the relation which the authors themselves have assumed towards their readers. From the lofty address of Bacon: "these are the meditations of Francis of Verulam, which that posterity should be possessed of, he deemed their interest:" or from dedication to Monarch or Pontiff, in which the honour given was asserted in equipoise to the patronage acknowledged: from Pindar's

—'ep' alloi—  
 si d'alloi megaloi: to d'eschaton kory-  
 phoutai basilensi. Maeketi  
 paptaine porsion.  
 Eiae se te touton  
 upsou chronon patein, eme  
 te tossade nikaphorois  
 omilein, prophanton sophian kath' El-  
 lanas eonta panta.—OLYMP. OD. I.

there was a gradual sinking in the etiquette or allowed style of pretension.

Poets and Philosophers, rendered diffident by their very number, addressed themselves to "learned readers;" then aimed to conciliate the graces of "the candid reader;" till, the critic still rising as the author sank, the amateurs of literature collectively were erected into a municipality of judges, and addressed as the Town! And now, finally, all men being supposed able to read, and all readers able to judge, the multitudinous Public, shaped into personal unity by the magic of abstraction, sits nominal despot on the throne of criticism. But, alas! as in other despotisms, it but echoes the decisions of its invisible ministers, whose intellectual claims to the guardianship of the Muses seem, for the greater part, analogous to the physical qualifications which adapt their oriental brethren for the superintendence of the Harem. Thus it is said, that St. Nepomuc was installed the guardian of bridges, because he had fallen over one, and sunk out of sight; thus too St. Cecilia is said to have been first propitiated by musicians, because, having failed in her own attempts, she had taken a dislike to the art and all its successful professors. But I shall probably have occasion hereafter to deliver my convictions more at large concerning this state of things, and its influences on taste, genius and morality.

In the Thalaba, the Madoc, and still more evidently in the unique [16] Cid, in the Kehama, and, as last, so best, the Roderick; Southey has given abundant proof, *se cogitare quam sit magnum dare aliquid in manus hominum: nec persuadere sibi posse, non saepe tractandum quod placere et semper et omnibus cupiat*. But on the other hand, I conceive, that Mr. Southey was quite unable to comprehend, wherein could consist the crime or mischief of printing half a dozen or more playful poems; or to speak more generally, compositions which would be enjoyed or passed over, according as the taste and humour of the reader might chance to be; provided they contained nothing immoral. In the present age *periturae parcere chartae* is emphatically an unreasonable demand. The merest trifle he ever sent abroad had tenfold better claims to its ink and paper than all the silly criticisms on it, which proved no more than that the critic was not one of those, for whom the trifle was written;

and than all the grave exhortations to a greater reverence for the public—as if the passive page of a book, by having an epigram or doggerel tale impressed on it, instantly assumed at once loco-motive power and a sort of ubiquity, so as to flutter and buz in the ear of the public to the sore annoyance of the said mysterious personage. But what gives an additional and more ludicrous absurdity to these lamentations is the curious fact, that if in a volume of poetry the critic should find poem or passage which he deems more especially worthless, he is sure to select and reprint it in the review; by which, on his own grounds, he wastes as much more paper than the author, as the copies of a fashionable review are more numerous than those of the original book; in some, and those the most prominent instances, as ten thousand to five hundred. I know nothing that surpasses the vileness of deciding on the merits of a poet or painter,—(not by characteristic defects; for where there is genius, these always point to his characteristic beauties; but)—by accidental failures or faulty passages; except the impudence of defending it, as the proper duty, and most instructive part, of criticism. Omit or pass slightly over the expression, grace, and grouping of Raffael's figures; but ridicule in detail the knitting-needles and broom-twigs, that are to represent trees in his back grounds; and never let him hear the last of his galli-pots! Admit that the Allegro and Penseroso of Milton are not without merit; but repay yourself for this concession, by reprinting at length the two poems on the University Carrier! As a fair specimen of his Sonnets, quote

"A Book was writ of late called Tetrachordon;"

and, as characteristic of his rhythm and metre, cite his literal translation of the first and second Psalm! In order to justify yourself, you need only assert, that had you dwelt chiefly on the beauties and excellencies of the poet, the admiration of these might seduce the attention of future writers from the objects of their love and wonder, to an imitation of the few poems and passages in which the poet was most unlike himself.

But till reviews are conducted on far other principles, and with far other motives; till in the place of arbitrary dictation and petulant sneers, the reviewers support their decisions by reference to fixed canons of criticism, previously established and deduced from the nature of man; reflecting minds will pronounce it arrogance in them thus to announce themselves to men of letters, as the guides of their taste and judgment. To the purchaser and mere reader it is, at all events, an injustice. He who tells me that there are defects in a new work, tells me nothing which I should not have taken for granted without his information. But he, who points out and elucidates the beauties of an original work does indeed give me interesting information, such as experience would not have authorized me in anticipating. And as to compositions which the authors themselves announce with

Haec ipsi novimus esse nihil,

why should we judge by a different rule two printed works, only because the one author is alive, and the other in his grave? What literary man has not regretted the prudery of Spratt in refusing to let his friend Cowley appear in his slippers and dressing gown? I am not perhaps the only one who has derived an innocent amusement from the riddles, conundrums, tri-syllable lines, and the like, of Swift and his correspondents, in hours of languor, when to have read his more finished works would have been useless to myself, and, in some sort, an act of injustice to the author. But I am at a loss to conceive by what perversity of judgment, these relaxations of his genius could be employed to diminish his fame as the writer of Gulliver, or the Tale of a Tub. Had Mr. Southey written twice as many poems of inferior merit, or partial interest, as have enlivened the journals of the day, they would have added to his honour with good and wise men, not merely or principally as proving the versatility of his talents, but as evidences of the purity of that mind, which even in its levities never dictated a line which it need regret on any moral account.

I have in imagination transferred to the future biographer the duty of contrasting Southey's fixed and well-earned fame, with the abuse and indefatigable hostility of his anonymous critics from his early youth to his ripest manhood. But I cannot think so ill of human nature as not to believe, that these critics have already taken shame to themselves, whether they consider the object of their abuse in his moral or his literary character. For reflect but on the variety and extent of his acquirements! He stands second to no man, either as an historian or as a bibliographer; and when I regard him as a popular essayist,—(for the articles of his compositions in the reviews are, for the greater part, essays on subjects of deep or curious interest rather than criticisms on particular works)—I look in vain for any writer, who has conveyed so much information, from so many and such recondite sources, with so many just and original reflections, in a style so lively and poignant, yet so uniformly classical and perspicuous; no one, in short, who has combined so much wisdom with so much wit; so much truth and knowledge with so much life and fancy. His prose is always intelligible and always entertaining. In poetry he has attempted almost every species of composition known before, and he has added new ones; and if we except the highest lyric,—(in which how few, how very few even of the greatest minds have been fortunate)—he has attempted every species successfully; from the political song of the day, thrown off in the playful overflow of honest joy and patriotic exultation, to the wild ballad; from epistolary ease and graceful narrative, to austere and impetuous moral declamation; from the pastoral charms and wild streaming lights of the *Thalaba*, in which sentiment and imagery have given permanence even to the excitement of curiosity; and from the full blaze of the *Kehama*,—(a gallery of finished pictures in one splendid fancy piece, in which, notwithstanding, the moral grandeur rises gradually above the brilliance of the colouring and the boldness and novelty of the machinery)—to the more sober beauties of the *Madoc*; and lastly, from the *Madoc* to his *Roderick*, in which, retaining all his former excellencies of a poet eminently inventive and picturesque, he has surpassed himself in language and metre, in the construction of the whole, and in the splendour of particular passages.

Here then shall I conclude? No! The characters of the deceased, like the encomia on tombstones, as they are described with religious tenderness, so are they read, with allowing sympathy indeed, but yet with rational deduction. There are men, who deserve a higher record; men with whose characters it is the interest of their contemporaries, no less than that of posterity, to be made acquainted; while it is yet possible for impartial censure, and even for quick-sighted envy, to cross-examine the tale without offence to the courtesies of humanity; and while the eulogist, detected in exaggeration or falsehood, must pay the full penalty of his baseness in the contempt which brands the convicted flatterer. Publicly has Mr. Southey been reviled by men, who, as I would fain hope for the honour of human nature, hurled fire-brands against a figure of their own imagination; publicly have his talents been depreciated, his principles denounced; as publicly do I therefore, who have known him intimately, deem it my duty to leave recorded, that it is Southey's almost unexampled felicity, to possess the best gifts of talent and genius free from all their characteristic defects. To those who remember the state of our public schools and universities some twenty years past, it will appear no ordinary praise in any man to have passed from innocence into virtue, not only free from all vicious habit, but unstained by one act of intemperance, or the degradations akin to intemperance. That scheme of head, heart, and habitual demeanour, which in his early manhood, and first controversial writings, Milton, claiming the privilege of self-defence, asserts of himself, and challenges his calumniators to disprove; this will his school-mates, his fellow-collegians, and his maturer friends, with a confidence proportioned to the intimacy of their knowledge, bear witness to, as again realized in the life of Robert Southey. But still more striking to those, who by biography or by their own experience are familiar with the general habits of genius, will appear the poet's matchless industry and perseverance in his pursuits; the worthiness and dignity of those pursuits; his generous submission to tasks of transitory interest, or such as his genius alone could make otherwise; and that having thus more than satisfied the claims of affection or prudence, he should yet have made for himself time and power, to achieve more, and in more various departments, than almost any other

writer has done, though employed wholly on subjects of his own choice and ambition. But as Southey possesses, and is not possessed by, his genius, even so is he master even of his virtues. The regular and methodical tenor of his daily labours, which would be deemed rare in the most mechanical pursuits, and might be envied by the mere man of business, loses all semblance of formality in the dignified simplicity of his manners, in the spring and healthful cheerfulness of his spirits. Always employed, his friends find him always at leisure. No less punctual in trifles, than steadfast in the performance of highest duties, he inflicts none of those small pains and discomforts which irregular men scatter about them, and which in the aggregate so often become formidable obstacles both to happiness and utility; while on the contrary he bestows all the pleasures, and inspires all that ease of mind on those around him or connected with him, which perfect consistency, and (if such a word might be framed) absolute reliability, equally in small as in great concerns, cannot but inspire and bestow; when this too is softened without being weakened by kindness and gentleness. I know few men who so well deserve the character which an antient attributes to Marcus Cato, namely, that he was likest virtue, in as much as he seemed to act aright, not in obedience to any law or outward motive, but by the necessity of a happy nature, which could not act otherwise. As son, brother, husband, father, master, friend, he moves with firm yet light steps, alike unostentatious, and alike exemplary. As a writer, he has uniformly made his talents subservient to the best interests of humanity, of public virtue, and domestic piety; his cause has ever been the cause of pure religion and of liberty, of national independence and of national illumination. When future critics shall weigh out his guerdon of praise and censure, it will be Southey the poet only, that will supply them with the scanty materials for the latter. They will likewise not fail to record, that as no man was ever a more constant friend, never had poet more friends and honourers among the good of all parties; and that quacks in education, quacks in politics, and quacks in criticism were his only enemies. [17]

## CHAPTER IV

The Lyrical Ballads with the Preface—Mr. Wordsworth's earlier poems—On fancy and imagination—The investigation of the distinction important to the Fine Arts.

I have wandered far from the object in view, but as I fancied to myself readers who would respect the feelings that had tempted me from the main road; so I dare calculate on not a few, who will warmly sympathize with them. At present it will be sufficient for my purpose, if I have proved, that Mr. Southey's writings no more than my own furnished the original occasion to this fiction of a new school of poetry, and to the clamours against its supposed founders and proselytes.

As little do I believe that Mr. Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads were in themselves the cause. I speak exclusively of the two volumes so entitled. A careful and repeated examination of these confirms me in the belief, that the omission of less than a hundred lines would have precluded nine-tenths of the criticism on this work. I hazard this declaration, however, on the supposition, that the reader has taken it up, as he would have done any other collection of poems purporting to derive their subjects or interests from the incidents of domestic or ordinary life, intermingled with higher strains of meditation which the poet utters in his own person and character; with the proviso, that these poems were perused without knowledge of, or reference to, the author's peculiar opinions, and that the reader had not had his attention previously directed to those peculiarities. In that case, as actually happened with Mr. Southey's earlier works, the lines and passages which might have offended the general taste, would have been considered as mere inequalities, and attributed to inattention, not to perversity of judgment. The men of business who had passed their lives chiefly in cities, and who might therefore be expected to derive the highest pleasure from acute notices of men and manners conveyed in easy, yet correct and pointed language; and all those who, reading but little poetry, are most stimulated with that species of it, which seems most distant from prose, would probably have passed by the volumes altogether. Others more catholic in their taste, and yet habituated to be most pleased when most excited, would have contented themselves with deciding, that the author had been successful in proportion to the elevation of his style and subject. Not a few, perhaps, might, by their admiration of the Lines written near Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the Wye, those Left upon a Yew Tree Seat, The Old Cumberland Beggar, and Ruth, have been gradually led to peruse with kindred feeling The Brothers, the Hart-leap Well, and whatever other poems in that collection may be described as holding a middle place between those written in the highest and those in the humblest style; as for instance between the Tintern Abbey, and The Thorn, or Simon Lee. Should their taste submit to no further change, and still remain unreconciled to the colloquial phrases, or the imitations of them, that are, more or less, scattered through the class last mentioned; yet even from the small number of the latter, they would have deemed them but an inconsiderable subtraction from the merit of the whole work; or, what is sometimes not unpleasing in the publication of a new writer, as serving to ascertain the natural tendency, and consequently the proper direction of the author's genius.

In the critical remarks, therefore, prefixed and annexed to the Lyrical Ballads, I believe, we may safely rest, as the true origin of the unexampled opposition which Mr. Wordsworth's writings have been since doomed to encounter. The humbler passages in the poems themselves were dwelt on and cited to justify the rejection of the theory. What in and for themselves would have been either forgotten or forgiven as imperfections, or at least comparative failures, provoked direct hostility when announced as intentional, as the result of choice after full deliberation. Thus the poems, admitted by all as excellent, joined with those which had pleased the far greater number, though they formed two-thirds of the whole work, instead of being deemed (as in all right they should have been, even if we take for granted that the reader judged aright) an atonement for the few exceptions, gave wind and fuel to the animosity against both the poems and the poet. In all perplexity there is a portion of fear, which predisposes the mind to anger. Not able to deny that the author possessed both genius

and a powerful intellect, they felt very positive,—but yet were not quite certain that he might not be in the right, and they themselves in the wrong; an unquiet state of mind, which seeks alleviation by quarrelling with the occasion of it, and by wondering at the perverseness of the man, who had written a long and argumentative essay to persuade them, that

Fair is foul, and foul is fair;

in other words, that they had been all their lives admiring without judgment, and were now about to censure without reason. [18]

That this conjecture is not wide from the mark, I am induced to believe from the noticeable fact, which I can state on my own knowledge, that the same general censure has been grounded by almost every different person on some different poem. Among those, whose candour and judgment I estimate highly, I distinctly remember six who expressed their objections to the Lyrical Ballads almost in the same words, and altogether to the same purport, at the same time admitting, that several of the poems had given them great pleasure; and, strange as it might seem, the composition which one cited as execrable, another quoted as his favourite. I am indeed convinced in my own mind, that could the same experiment have been tried with these volumes, as was made in the well known story of the picture, the result would have been the same; the parts which had been covered by black spots on the one day, would be found equally *albo lapide notatae* on the succeeding.

However this may be, it was assuredly hard and unjust to fix the attention on a few separate and insulated poems with as much aversion, as if they had been so many plague-spots on the whole work, instead of passing them over in silence, as so much blank paper, or leaves of a bookseller's catalogue; especially, as no one pretended to have found in them any immorality or indelicacy; and the poems, therefore, at the worst, could only be regarded as so many light or inferior coins in a rouleau of gold, not as so much alloy in a weight of bullion. A friend whose talents I hold in the highest respect, but whose judgment and strong sound sense I have had almost continued occasion to revere, making the usual complaints to me concerning both the style and subjects of Mr. Wordsworth's minor poems; I admitted that there were some few of the tales and incidents, in which I could not myself find a sufficient cause for their having been recorded in metre. I mentioned *Alice Fell* as an instance; "Nay," replied my friend with more than usual quickness of manner, "I cannot agree with you there!—that, I own, does seem to me a remarkably pleasing poem." In the Lyrical Ballads, (for my experience does not enable me to extend the remark equally unqualified to the two subsequent volumes,) I have heard at different times, and from different individuals, every single poem extolled and reprobated, with the exception of those of loftier kind, which as was before observed, seem to have won universal praise. This fact of itself would have made me diffident in my censures, had not a still stronger ground been furnished by the strange contrast of the heat and long continuance of the opposition, with the nature of the faults stated as justifying it. The seductive faults, the *dulcia vitia* of Cowley, *Marine*, or *Darwin* might reasonably be thought capable of corrupting the public judgment for half a century, and require a twenty years war, campaign after campaign, in order to dethrone the usurper and re-establish the legitimate taste. But that a downright simpleness, under the affectation of simplicity, prosaic words in feeble metre, silly thoughts in childish phrases, and a preference of mean, degrading, or at best trivial associations and characters, should succeed in forming a school of imitators, a company of almost religious admirers, and this too among young men of ardent minds, liberal education, and not

—with academic laurels unbestowed;

and that this bare and bald counterfeit of poetry, which is characterized as below criticism, should for nearly twenty years have well-nigh engrossed criticism, as the main, if not the only, butt of review, magazine, pamphlet, poem, and paragraph; this is indeed matter of wonder. Of yet greater

is it, that the contest should still continue as undecided as [19] that between Bacchus and the frogs in Aristophanes; when the former descended to the realms of the departed to bring back the spirit of old and genuine poesy;—

CH. Brekekekex, koax, koax.  
 D. All' exoloisth' auto koax.  
 Ouden gar est' all', hae koax.  
 Oimozet' ou gar moi melei.  
 CH. Alla maen kekraxomestha  
 g', oposon hae pharynx an haemon  
 chandanae di' haemeras,  
 brekekekex, koax, koax!  
 D. Touto gar ou nikaesete.  
 CH. Oude men haemas su pantos.  
 D. Oude maen humeis ge dae m'  
 oudepote. Kekraxomai gar,  
 kan me deae, di' haemeras,  
 eos an humon epikrataeso tou koax!  
 CH. Brekekekex, KO'AX, KOAX!

During the last year of my residence at Cambridge, 1794, I became acquainted with Mr. Wordsworth's first publication entitled *Descriptive Sketches*; and seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced. In the form, style, and manner of the whole poem, and in the structure of the particular lines and periods, there is a harshness and acerbity connected and combined with words and images all a-glow, which might recall those products of the vegetable world, where gorgeous blossoms rise out of a hard and thorny rind and shell, within which the rich fruit is elaborating. The language is not only peculiar and strong, but at times knotty and contorted, as by its own impatient strength; while the novelty and struggling crowd of images, acting in conjunction with the difficulties of the style, demands always a greater closeness of attention, than poetry,—at all events, than descriptive poetry—has a right to claim. It not seldom therefore justified the complaint of obscurity. In the following extract I have sometimes fancied, that I saw an emblem of the poem itself, and of the author's genius as it was then displayed.—

'Tis storm; and hid in mist from hour to hour,  
 All day the floods a deepening murmur pour;  
 The sky is veiled, and every cheerful sight  
 Dark is the region as with coming night;  
 Yet what a sudden burst of overpowering light!  
 Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,  
 Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form;  
 Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine  
 The wood-crowned cliffs that o'er the lake recline;  
 Those Eastern cliffs a hundred streams unfold,  
 At once to pillars turned that flame with gold;  
 Behind his sail the peasant strives to shun  
 The west, that burns like one dilated sun,  
 Where in a mighty crucible expire  
 The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.

The poetic Psyche, in its process to full development, undergoes as many changes as its Greek namesake, the butterfly [20]. And it is remarkable how soon genius clears and purifies itself from the faults and errors of its earliest products; faults which, in its earliest compositions, are the more obtrusive and confluent, because as heterogeneous elements, which had only a temporary use, they constitute the very ferment, by which themselves are carried off. Or we may compare them to some diseases, which must work on the humours, and be thrown out on the surface, in order to secure the patient from their future recurrence. I was in my twenty-fourth year, when I had the happiness of knowing Mr. Wordsworth personally, and while memory lasts, I shall hardly forget the sudden effect produced on my mind, by his recitation of a manuscript poem, which still remains unpublished, but of which the stanza and tone of style were the same as those of *The Female Vagrant*, as originally printed in the first volume of the *Lyrical Ballads*. There was here no mark of strained thought, or forced diction, no crowd or turbulence of imagery; and, as the poet hath himself well described in his *Lines on revisiting the Wye*, manly reflection and human associations had given both variety, and an additional interest to natural objects, which, in the passion and appetite of the first love, they had seemed to him neither to need nor permit. The occasional obscurities, which had risen from an imperfect control over the resources of his native language, had almost wholly disappeared, together with that worse defect of arbitrary and illogical phrases, at once hackneyed and fantastic, which hold so distinguished a place in the technique of ordinary poetry, and will, more or less, alloy the earlier poems of the truest genius, unless the attention has been specially directed to their worthlessness and incongruity [21]. I did not perceive anything particular in the mere style of the poem alluded to during its recitation, except indeed such difference as was not separable from the thought and manner; and the Spenserian stanza, which always, more or less, recalls to the reader's mind Spenser's own style, would doubtless have authorized, in my then opinion, a more frequent descent to the phrases of ordinary life, than could without an ill effect have been hazarded in the heroic couplet. It was not however the freedom from false taste, whether as to common defects, or to those more properly his own, which made so unusual an impression on my feelings immediately, and subsequently on my judgment. It was the union of deep feeling with profound thought; the fine balance of truth in observing, with the imaginative faculty in modifying, the objects observed; and above all the original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world around forms, incidents, and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops.

This excellence, which in all Mr. Wordsworth's writings is more or less predominant, and which constitutes the character of his mind, I no sooner felt, than I sought to understand. Repeated meditations led me first to suspect,—(and a more intimate analysis of the human faculties, their appropriate marks, functions, and effects matured my conjecture into full conviction,)—that Fancy and Imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power. It is not, I own, easy to conceive a more apposite translation of the Greek *phantasia* than the Latin *imaginatio*; but it is equally true that in all societies there exists an instinct of growth, a certain collective, unconscious good sense working progressively to desynonymize [22] those words originally of the same meaning, which the conflux of dialects supplied to the more homogeneous languages, as the Greek and German: and which the same cause, joined with accidents of translation from original works of different countries, occasion in mixed languages like our own. The first and most important point to be proved is, that two conceptions perfectly distinct are confused under one and the same word, and—this done—to appropriate that word exclusively to the one meaning, and the synonyme, should there be one, to the other. But if,—(as will be often the case in the arts and sciences,)—no synonyme exists, we must either invent or borrow a word. In the present instance the appropriation has already begun, and been legitimated in the derivative adjective: Milton had a highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind. If therefore I should succeed in establishing the

actual existence of two faculties generally different, the nomenclature would be at once determined. To the faculty by which I had characterized Milton, we should confine the term 'imagination;' while the other would be contra-distinguished as 'fancy.' Now were it once fully ascertained, that this division is no less grounded in nature than that of delirium from mania, or Otway's

Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber,

from Shakespeare's

What! have his daughters brought him to this pass?

or from the preceding apostrophe to the elements; the theory of the fine arts, and of poetry in particular, could not but derive some additional and important light. It would in its immediate effects furnish a torch of guidance to the philosophical critic; and ultimately to the poet himself. In energetic minds, truth soon changes by domestication into power; and from directing in the discrimination and appraisal of the product, becomes influencive in the production. To admire on principle, is the only way to imitate without loss of originality.

It has been already hinted, that metaphysics and psychology have long been my hobby-horse. But to have a hobby-horse, and to be vain of it, are so commonly found together, that they pass almost for the same. I trust therefore, that there will be more good humour than contempt, in the smile with which the reader chastises my self-complacency, if I confess myself uncertain, whether the satisfaction from the perception of a truth new to myself may not have been rendered more poignant by the conceit, that it would be equally so to the public. There was a time, certainly, in which I took some little credit to myself, in the belief that I had been the first of my countrymen, who had pointed out the diverse meaning of which the two terms were capable, and analyzed the faculties to which they should be appropriated. Mr. W. Taylor's recent volume of synonymes I have not yet seen [23]; but his specification of the terms in question has been clearly shown to be both insufficient and erroneous by Mr. Wordsworth in the Preface added to the late collection of his Poems. The explanation which Mr. Wordsworth has himself given, will be found to differ from mine, chiefly, perhaps as our objects are different. It could scarcely indeed happen otherwise, from the advantage I have enjoyed of frequent conversation with him on a subject to which a poem of his own first directed my attention, and my conclusions concerning which he had made more lucid to myself by many happy instances drawn from the operation of natural objects on the mind. But it was Mr. Wordsworth's purpose to consider the influences of fancy and imagination as they are manifested in poetry, and from the different effects to conclude their diversity in kind; while it is my object to investigate the seminal principle, and then from the kind to deduce the degree. My friend has drawn a masterly sketch of the branches with their poetic fruitage. I wish to add the trunk, and even the roots as far as they lift themselves above ground, and are visible to the naked eye of our common consciousness.

Yet even in this attempt I am aware that I shall be obliged to draw more largely on the reader's attention, than so immethodical a miscellany as this can authorize; when in such a work (the Ecclesiastical Polity) of such a mind as Hooker's, the judicious author, though no less admirable for the perspicuity than for the port and dignity of his language,—and though he wrote for men of learning in a learned age,—saw nevertheless occasion to anticipate and guard against "complaints of obscurity," as often as he was to trace his subject "to the highest well-spring and fountain." Which, (continues he) "because men are not accustomed to, the pains we take are more needful a great deal, than acceptable; and the matters we handle, seem by reason of newness (till the mind grow better acquainted with them) dark and intricate." I would gladly therefore spare both myself and others this labour, if I knew how without it to present an intelligible statement of my poetic creed,—not as my opinions, which weigh for nothing, but as deductions from established premises conveyed in

such a form, as is calculated either to effect a fundamental conviction, or to receive a fundamental confutation. If I may dare once more adopt the words of Hooker, "they, unto whom we shall seem tedious, are in no wise injured by us, because it is in their own hands to spare that labour, which they are not willing to endure." Those at least, let me be permitted to add, who have taken so much pains to render me ridiculous for a perversion of taste, and have supported the charge by attributing strange notions to me on no other authority than their own conjectures, owe it to themselves as well as to me not to refuse their attention to my own statement of the theory which I do acknowledge; or shrink from the trouble of examining the grounds on which I rest it, or the arguments which I offer in its justification.

## CHAPTER V

On the law of Association—Its history traced from Aristotle to Hartley.

There have been men in all ages, who have been impelled as by an instinct to propose their own nature as a problem, and who devote their attempts to its solution. The first step was to construct a table of distinctions, which they seem to have formed on the principle of the absence or presence of the Will. Our various sensations, perceptions, and movements were classed as active or passive, or as media partaking of both. A still finer distinction was soon established between the voluntary and the spontaneous. In our perceptions we seem to ourselves merely passive to an external power, whether as a mirror reflecting the landscape, or as a blank canvass on which some unknown hand paints it. For it is worthy of notice, that the latter, or the system of Idealism may be traced to sources equally remote with the former, or Materialism; and Berkeley can boast an ancestry at least as venerable as Gassendi or Hobbes. These conjectures, however, concerning the mode in which our perceptions originated, could not alter the natural difference of Things and Thoughts. In the former, the cause appeared wholly external, while in the latter, sometimes our will interfered as the producing or determining cause, and sometimes our nature seemed to act by a mechanism of its own, without any conscious effort of the will, or even against it. Our inward experiences were thus arranged in three separate classes, the passive sense, or what the School-men call the merely receptive quality of the mind; the voluntary; and the spontaneous, which holds the middle place between both. But it is not in human nature to meditate on any mode of action, without inquiring after the law that governs it; and in the explanation of the spontaneous movements of our being, the metaphysician took the lead of the anatomist and natural philosopher. In Egypt, Palestine, Greece, and India the analysis of the mind had reached its noon and manhood, while experimental research was still in its dawn and infancy. For many, very many centuries, it has been difficult to advance a new truth, or even a new error, in the philosophy of the intellect or morals. With regard, however, to the laws that direct the spontaneous movements of thought and the principle of their intellectual mechanism there exists, it has been asserted, an important exception most honourable to the moderns, and in the merit of which our own country claims the largest share. Sir James Mackintosh,—(who, amid the variety of his talents and attainments, is not of less repute for the depth and accuracy of his philosophical inquiries than for the eloquence with which he is said to render their most difficult results perspicuous, and the driest attractive,)—affirmed in the Lectures, delivered by him in Lincoln's Inn Hall, that the law of association as established in the contemporaneity of the original impressions, formed the basis of all true psychology; and that any ontological or metaphysical science, not contained in such (that is, an empirical) psychology, was but a web of abstractions and generalizations. Of this prolific truth, of this great fundamental law, he declared Hobbes to have been the original discoverer, while its full application to the whole intellectual system we owed to Hartley; who stood in the same relation to Hobbes as Newton to Kepler; the law of association being that to the mind, which gravitation is to matter.

Of the former clause in this assertion, as it respects the comparative merits of the ancient metaphysicians, including their commentators, the School-men, and of the modern and British and French philosophers from Hobbes to Hume, Hartley, and Condillac, this is not the place to speak. So wide indeed is the chasm between Sir James Mackintosh's philosophical creed and mine, that so far from being able to join hands, we could scarcely make our voices intelligible to each other: and to bridge it over would require more time, skill, and power than I believe myself to possess. But the latter clause involves for the greater part a mere question of fact and history, and the accuracy of the statement is to be tried by documents rather than reasoning.

First, then, I deny Hobbes's claim in toto: for he had been anticipated by Des Cartes, whose work *De Methodo*, preceded Hobbes's *De Natura Humana*, by more than a year. But what is of much

more importance, Hobbes builds nothing on the principle which he had announced. He does not even announce it, as differing in any respect from the general laws of material motion and impact: nor was it, indeed, possible for him so to do, compatibly with his system, which was exclusively material and mechanical. Far otherwise is it with Des Cartes; greatly as he too in his after writings (and still more egregiously his followers De la Forge, and others) obscured the truth by their attempts to explain it on the theory of nervous fluids, and material configurations. But, in his interesting work, *De Methodo*, Des Cartes relates the circumstance which first led him to meditate on this subject, and which since then has been often noticed and employed as an instance and illustration of the law. A child who with its eyes bandaged had lost several of his fingers by amputation, continued to complain for many days successively of pains, now in this joint and now in that, of the very fingers which had been cut off. Des Cartes was led by this incident to reflect on the uncertainty with which we attribute any particular place to any inward pain or uneasiness, and proceeded after long consideration to establish it as a general law: that contemporaneous impressions, whether images or sensations, recall each other mechanically. On this principle, as a ground work, he built up the whole system of human language, as one continued process of association. He showed in what sense not only general terms, but generic images,—under the name of abstract ideas,—actually existed, and in what consist their nature and power. As one word may become the general exponent of many, so by association a simple image may represent a whole class. But in truth Hobbes himself makes no claims to any discovery, and introduces this law of association, or (in his own language) discursion of mind, as an admitted fact, in the solution alone of which, and this by causes purely physiological, he arrogates any originality. His system is briefly this; whenever the senses are impinged on by external objects, whether by the rays of light reflected from them, or by effluxes of their finer particles, there results a correspondent motion of the innermost and subtlest organs. This motion constitutes a representation, and there remains an impression of the same, or a certain disposition to repeat the same motion. Whenever we feel several objects at the same time, the impressions that are left, (or in the language of Mr. Hume, the ideas,) [24] are linked together. Whenever therefore any one of the movements, which constitute a complex impression, is renewed through the senses, the others succeed mechanically. It follows of necessity, therefore, that Hobbes, as well as Hartley and all others who derive association from the connection and interdependence of the supposed matter, the movements of which constitute our thoughts, must have reduced all its forms to the one law of Time. But even the merit of announcing this law with philosophic precision cannot be fairly conceded to him. For the objects of any two ideas need not have co-existed in the same sensation in order to become mutually associable. The same result will follow when one only of the two ideas has been represented by the senses, and the other by the memory.

Long however before either Hobbes or Des Cartes the law of association had been defined, and its important functions set forth by Ludovicus Vives. *Phantasia*, it is to be noticed, is employed by Vives to express the mental power of comprehension, or the active function of the mind; and *imaginatio* for the receptivity (*via receptiva*) of impressions, or for the passive perception. The power of combination he appropriates to the former: "*quae singula et simpliciter acceperat imaginatio, ea conjungit et disjungit phantasia.*" And the law by which the thoughts are spontaneously presented follows thus: "*quae simul sunt a phantasia comprehensa, si alterutrum occurrat, solet secum alterum representare.*" To time therefore he subordinates all the other exciting causes of association. The soul proceeds "*a causa ad effectum, ab hoc ad instrumentum, a parte ad totum;*" thence to the place, from place to person, and from this to whatever preceded or followed, all as being parts of a total impression, each of which may recall the other. The apparent springs "*saltus vel transitus etiam longissimos,*" he explains by the same thought having been a component part of two or more total impressions. Thus "*ex Scipione venio in cogitationem potentiae Turcicae, propter victorias ejus de Asia, in qua regnabat Antiochus.*"

But from Vives I pass at once to the source of his doctrines, and (as far as we can judge from the remains yet extant of Greek philosophy) as to the first, so to the fullest and most perfect enunciation

of the associative principle, namely, to the writings of Aristotle; and of these in particular to the treatises *De Anima*, and "*De Memoria*," which last belongs to the series of essays entitled in the old translations *Parva Naturalia*. In as much as later writers have either deviated from, or added to his doctrines, they appear to me to have introduced either error or groundless supposition.

In the first place it is to be observed, that Aristotle's positions on this subject are unmixed with fiction. The wise Stagyrice speaks of no successive particles propagating motion like billiard balls, as Hobbes; nor of nervous or animal spirits, where inanimate and irrational solids are thawed down, and distilled, or filtrated by ascension, into living and intelligent fluids, that etch and re-etch engravings on the brain, as the followers of Des Cartes, and the humoral pathologists in general; nor of an oscillating ether which was to effect the same service for the nerves of the brain considered as solid fibres, as the animal spirits perform for them under the notion of hollow tubes, as Hartley teaches—nor finally, (with yet more recent dreamers) of chemical compositions by elective affinity, or of an electric light at once the immediate object and the ultimate organ of inward vision, which rises to the brain like an *Aurora Borealis*, and there, disporting in various shapes,—as the balance of plus and minus, or negative and positive, is destroyed or re-established,—images out both past and present. Aristotle delivers a just theory without pretending to an hypothesis; or in other words a comprehensive survey of the different facts, and of their relations to each other without supposition, that is, a fact placed under a number of facts, as their common support and explanation; though in the majority of instances these hypotheses or suppositions better deserve the name of *upopoiaseis*, or suffictions. He uses indeed the word *kinaeseis*, to express what we call representations or ideas, but he carefully distinguishes them from material motion, designating the latter always by annexing the words *en topo*, or *kata topon*. On the contrary, in his treatise *De Anima*, he excludes place and motion from all the operations of thought, whether representations or volitions, as attributes utterly and absurdly heterogeneous.

The general law of association, or, more accurately, the common condition under which all exciting causes act, and in which they may be generalized, according to Aristotle is this. Ideas by having been together acquire a power of recalling each other; or every partial representation awakes the total representation of which it had been a part. In the practical determination of this common principle to particular recollections, he admits five agents or occasioning causes: first, connection in time, whether simultaneous, preceding, or successive; second, vicinity or connection in space; third, interdependence or necessary connection, as cause and effect; fourth, likeness; and fifth, contrast. As an additional solution of the occasional seeming chasms in the continuity of reproduction he proves, that movements or ideas possessing one or the other of these five characters had passed through the mind as intermediate links, sufficiently clear to recall other parts of the same total impressions with which they had co-existed, though not vivid enough to excite that degree of attention which is requisite for distinct recollection, or as we may aptly express it, after consciousness. In association then consists the whole mechanism of the reproduction of impressions, in the Aristotelian Psychology. It is the universal law of the passive fancy and mechanical memory; that which supplies to all other faculties their objects, to all thought the elements of its materials.

In consulting the excellent commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas on the *Parva Naturalia* of Aristotle, I was struck at once with its close resemblance to Hume's *Essay on Association*. The main thoughts were the same in both, the order of the thoughts was the same, and even the illustrations differed only by Hume's occasional substitution of more modern examples. I mentioned the circumstance to several of my literary acquaintances, who admitted the closeness of the resemblance, and that it seemed too great to be explained by mere coincidence; but they thought it improbable that Hume should have held the pages of the Angelic Doctor worth turning over. But some time after Mr. Payne showed Sir James Mackintosh some odd volumes of St. Thomas Aquinas, partly perhaps from having heard that he had in his *Lectures* passed a high encomium on this canonized philosopher; but chiefly from the fact, that the volumes had belonged to Mr. Hume, and had here

and there marginal marks and notes of reference in his own hand writing. Among these volumes was that which contains the *Parva Naturalia*, in the old Latin version, swathed and swaddled in the commentary afore mentioned

It remains then for me, first to state wherein Hartley differs from Aristotle; then, to exhibit the grounds of my conviction, that he differed only to err: and next as the result, to show, by what influences of the choice and judgment the associative power becomes either memory or fancy; and, in conclusion, to appropriate the remaining offices of the mind to the reason, and the imagination. With my best efforts to be as perspicuous as the nature of language will permit on such a subject, I earnestly solicit the good wishes and friendly patience of my readers, while I thus go "sounding on my dim and perilous way."

## CHAPTER VI

That Hartley's system, as far as it differs from that of Aristotle, is neither tenable in theory, nor founded in facts.

Of Hartley's hypothetical vibrations in his hypothetical oscillating ether of the nerves, which is the first and most obvious distinction between his system and that of Aristotle, I shall say little. This, with all other similar attempts to render that an object of the sight which has no relation to sight, has been already sufficiently exposed by the younger Reimarus, Maasz, and others, as outraging the very axioms of mechanics in a scheme, the merit of which consists in its being mechanical. Whether any other philosophy be possible, but the mechanical; and again, whether the mechanical system can have any claim to be called philosophy; are questions for another place. It is, however, certain, that as long as we deny the former, and affirm the latter, we must bewilder ourselves, whenever we would pierce into the adyta of causation; and all that laborious conjecture can do, is to fill up the gaps of fancy. Under that despotism of the eye (the emancipation from which Pythagoras by his numeral, and Plato by his musical, symbols, and both by geometric discipline, aimed at, as the first propaedeutica of the mind)—under this strong sensuous influence, we are restless because invisible things are not the objects of vision; and metaphysical systems, for the most part, become popular, not for their truth, but in proportion as they attribute to causes a susceptibility of being seen, if only our visual organs were sufficiently powerful.

From a hundred possible confutations let one suffice. According to this system the idea or vibration *a* from the external object *A* becomes associable with the idea or vibration *m* from the external object *M*, because the oscillation *a* propagated itself so as to re-produce the oscillation *m*. But the original impression from *M* was essentially different from the impression *A*: unless therefore different causes may produce the same effect, the vibration *a* could never produce the vibration *m*: and this therefore could never be the means, by which *a* and *m* are associated. To understand this, the attentive reader need only be reminded, that the ideas are themselves, in Hartley's system, nothing more than their appropriate configurative vibrations. It is a mere delusion of the fancy to conceive the pre-existence of the ideas, in any chain of association, as so many differently coloured billiard-balls in contact, so that when an object, the billiard-stick, strikes the first or white ball, the same motion propagates itself through the red, green, blue and black, and sets the whole in motion. No! we must suppose the very same force, which constitutes the white ball, to constitute the red or black; or the idea of a circle to constitute the idea of a triangle; which is impossible.

But it may be said, that by the sensations from the objects *A* and *M*, the nerves have acquired a disposition to the vibrations *a* and *m*, and therefore *a* need only be repeated in order to re-produce *m*. Now we will grant, for a moment, the possibility of such a disposition in a material nerve, which yet seems scarcely less absurd than to say, that a weather-cock had acquired a habit of turning to the east, from the wind having been so long in that quarter: for if it be replied, that we must take in the circumstance of life, what then becomes of the mechanical philosophy? And what is the nerve, but the flint which the wag placed in the pot as the first ingredient of his stone broth, requiring only salt, turnips, and mutton, for the remainder! But if we waive this, and pre-suppose the actual existence of such a disposition; two cases are possible. Either, every idea has its own nerve and correspondent oscillation, or this is not the case. If the latter be the truth, we should gain nothing by these dispositions; for then, every nerve having several dispositions, when the motion of any other nerve is propagated into it, there will be no ground or cause present, why exactly the oscillation *m* should arise, rather than any other to which it was equally pre-disposed. But if we take the former, and let every idea have a nerve of its own, then every nerve must be capable of propagating its motion into many other nerves; and again, there is no reason assignable, why the vibration *m* should arise, rather than any other *ad libitum*.

It is fashionable to smile at Hartley's vibrations and vibratiuncles; and his work has been re-edited by Priestley, with the omission of the material hypothesis. But Hartley was too great a man, too coherent a thinker, for this to have been done, either consistently or to any wise purpose. For all other parts of his system, as far as they are peculiar to that system, once removed from their mechanical basis, not only lose their main support, but the very motive which led to their adoption. Thus the principle of contemporaneity, which Aristotle had made the common condition of all the laws of association, Hartley was constrained to represent as being itself the sole law. For to what law can the action of material atoms be subject, but that of proximity in place? And to what law can their motions be subjected but that of time? Again, from this results inevitably, that the will, the reason, the judgment, and the understanding, instead of being the determining causes of association, must needs be represented as its creatures, and among its mechanical effects. Conceive, for instance, a broad stream, winding through a mountainous country with an indefinite number of currents, varying and running into each other according as the gusts chance to blow from the opening of the mountains. The temporary union of several currents in one, so as to form the main current of the moment, would present an accurate image of Hartley's theory of the will.

Had this been really the case, the consequence would have been, that our whole life would be divided between the despotism of outward impressions, and that of senseless and passive memory. Take his law in its highest abstraction and most philosophical form, namely, that every partial representation recalls the total representation of which it was a part; and the law becomes nugatory, were it only for its universality. In practice it would indeed be mere lawlessness. Consider, how immense must be the sphere of a total impression from the top of St. Paul's church; and how rapid and continuous the series of such total impressions. If, therefore, we suppose the absence of all interference of the will, reason, and judgment, one or other of two consequences must result. Either the ideas, or reliques of such impression, will exactly imitate the order of the impression itself, which would be absolute delirium: or any one part of that impression might recall any other part, and—(as from the law of continuity, there must exist in every total impression, some one or more parts, which are components of some other following total impression, and so on ad infinitum)—any part of any impression might recall any part of any other, without a cause present to determine what it should be. For to bring in the will, or reason, as causes of their own cause, that is, as at once causes and effects, can satisfy those only who, in their pretended evidences of a God, having first demanded organization, as the sole cause and ground of intellect, will then coolly demand the pre-existence of intellect, as the cause and ground-work of organization. There is in truth but one state to which this theory applies at all, namely, that of complete light-headedness; and even to this it applies but partially, because the will and reason are perhaps never wholly suspended.

A case of this kind occurred in a Roman Catholic town in Germany a year or two before my arrival at Goettingen, and had not then ceased to be a frequent subject of conversation. A young woman of four or five and twenty, who could neither read, nor write, was seized with a nervous fever; during which, according to the asseverations of all the priests and monks of the neighbourhood, she became possessed, and, as it appeared, by a very learned devil. She continued incessantly talking Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, in very pompous tones and with most distinct enunciation. This possession was rendered more probable by the known fact that she was or had been a heretic. Voltaire humorously advises the devil to decline all acquaintance with medical men; and it would have been more to his reputation, if he had taken this advice in the present instance. The case had attracted the particular attention of a young physician, and by his statement many eminent physiologists and psychologists visited the town, and cross-examined the case on the spot. Sheets full of her ravings were taken down from her own mouth, and were found to consist of sentences, coherent and intelligible each for itself, but with little or no connection with each other. Of the Hebrew, a small portion only could be traced to the Bible; the remainder seemed to be in the Rabbinical dialect. All trick or conspiracy was out of the question. Not only had the young woman ever been a harmless, simple creature; but she was evidently

labouring under a nervous fever. In the town, in which she had been resident for many years as a servant in different families, no solution presented itself. The young physician, however, determined to trace her past life step by step; for the patient herself was incapable of returning a rational answer. He at length succeeded in discovering the place, where her parents had lived: travelled thither, found them dead, but an uncle surviving; and from him learned, that the patient had been charitably taken by an old Protestant pastor at nine years old, and had remained with him some years, even till the old man's death. Of this pastor the uncle knew nothing, but that he was a very good man. With great difficulty, and after much search, our young medical philosopher discovered a niece of the pastor's, who had lived with him as his house-keeper, and had inherited his effects. She remembered the girl; related, that her venerable uncle had been too indulgent, and could not bear to hear the girl scolded; that she was willing to have kept her, but that, after her patron's death, the girl herself refused to stay. Anxious inquiries were then, of course, made concerning the pastor's habits; and the solution of the phenomenon was soon obtained. For it appeared, that it had been the old man's custom, for years, to walk up and down a passage of his house into which the kitchen door opened, and to read to himself with a loud voice, out of his favourite books. A considerable number of these were still in the niece's possession. She added, that he was a very learned man and a great Hebraist. Among the books were found a collection of Rabbinical writings, together with several of the Greek and Latin Fathers; and the physician succeeded in identifying so many passages with those taken down at the young woman's bedside, that no doubt could remain in any rational mind concerning the true origin of the impressions made on her nervous system.

This authenticated case furnishes both proof and instance, that reliques of sensation may exist for an indefinite time in a latent state, in the very same order in which they were originally impressed; and as we cannot rationally suppose the feverish state of the brain to act in any other way than as a stimulus, this fact (and it would not be difficult to adduce several of the same kind) contributes to make it even probable, that all thoughts are in themselves imperishable; and, that if the intelligent faculty should be rendered more comprehensive, it would require only a different and apportioned organization,—the body celestial instead of the body terrestrial,—to bring before every human soul the collective experience of its whole past existence. And this, this, perchance, is the dread book of judgment, in the mysterious hieroglyphics of which every idle word is recorded! Yea, in the very nature of a living spirit, it may be more possible that heaven and earth should pass away, than that a single act, a single thought, should be loosened or lost from that living chain of causes, with all the links of which, conscious or unconscious, the free-will, our only absolute Self, is coextensive and co-present. But not now dare I longer discourse of this, waiting for a loftier mood, and a nobler subject, warned from within and from without, that it is profanation to speak of these "mysteria tois maede phantasteisin, os kalon to taes dikaiosynaes kai sophrosynaes prosopon, kai oute hesperos oute eos outo kala. To gar horon pros to horomenon syngenes kai homoion poiaesamenon dei epiballein tae thea, ou gar an popote eiden ophthalmos haelion, haelioeidaes mae gegenaemenos oude to kalon an idae psychae, mae kagae genomenae—to those to whose imagination it has never been presented, how beautiful is the countenance of justice and wisdom; and that neither the morning nor the evening star are so fair. For in order to direct the view aright, it behoves that the beholder should have made himself congenerous and similar to the object beheld. Never could the eye have beheld the sun, had not its own essence been soliform," (i.e. pre-configured to light by a similarity of essence with that of light) "neither can a soul not beautiful attain to an intuition of beauty."

## CHAPTER VII

Of the necessary consequences of the Hartleian Theory—Of the original mistake or equivocation which procured its admission—*Memoria technica*.

We will pass by the utter incompatibility of such a law—if law it may be called, which would itself be a slave of chances—with even that appearance of rationality forced upon us by the outward phenomena of human conduct, abstracted from our own consciousness. We will agree to forget this for the moment, in order to fix our attention on that subordination of final to efficient causes in the human being, which flows of necessity from the assumption, that the will and, with the will, all acts of thought and attention are parts and products of this blind mechanism, instead of being distinct powers, the function of which it is to control, determine, and modify the phantasmal chaos of association. The soul becomes a mere *ens logicum*; for, as a real separable being, it would be more worthless and ludicrous than the Grimalkins in the cat-harpsichord, described in the *Spectator*. For these did form a part of the process; but, to Hartley's scheme, the soul is present only to be pinched or stroked, while the very squeals or purring are produced by an agency wholly independent and alien. It involves all the difficulties, all the incomprehensibility (if it be not indeed, *os emoiqe dokei*, the absurdity), of intercommunion between substances that have no one property in common, without any of the convenient consequences that bribed the judgment to the admission of the Dualistic hypothesis. Accordingly, this *caput mortuum* of the Hartleian process has been rejected by his followers, and the consciousness considered as a result, as a tune, the common product of the breeze and the harp though this again is the mere remotion of one absurdity to make way for another, equally preposterous. For what is harmony but a mode of relation, the very *esse* of which is *percipi*?—an *ens rationale*, which pre-supposes the power, that by perceiving creates it? The razor's edge becomes a saw to the armed vision; and the delicious melodies of Purcell or Cimarosa might be disjointed stammerings to a hearer, whose partition of time should be a thousand times subtler than ours. But this obstacle too let us imagine ourselves to have surmounted, and "at one bound high overleap all bound." Yet according to this hypothesis the disquisition, to which I am at present soliciting the reader's attention, may be as truly said to be written by Saint Paul's church, as by me: for it is the mere motion of my muscles and nerves; and these again are set in motion from external causes equally passive, which external causes stand themselves in interdependent connection with every thing that exists or has existed. Thus the whole universe co-operates to produce the minutest stroke of every letter, save only that I myself, and I alone, have nothing to do with it, but merely the causeless and effectless beholding of it when it is done. Yet scarcely can it be called a beholding; for it is neither an act nor an effect; but an impossible creation of a something nothing out of its very contrary! It is the mere quick-silver plating behind a looking-glass; and in this alone consists the poor worthless I! The sum total of my moral and intellectual intercourse, dissolved into its elements, is reduced to extension, motion, degrees of velocity, and those diminished copies of configurative motion, which form what we call notions, and notions of notions. Of such philosophy well might Butler say—

The metaphysic's but a puppet motion  
That goes with screws, the notion of a notion;  
The copy of a copy and lame draught  
Unnaturally taken from a thought  
That counterfeits all pantomimic tricks,  
And turns the eyes, like an old crucifix;  
That counterchanges whatsoe'er it calls  
By another name, and makes it true or false;  
Turns truth to falsehood, falsehood into truth,

By virtue of the Babylonian's tooth.

The inventor of the watch, if this doctrine be true, did not in reality invent it; he only looked on, while the blind causes, the only true artists, were unfolding themselves. So must it have been too with my friend Allston, when he sketched his picture of the dead man revived by the bones of the prophet Elijah. So must it have been with Mr. Southey and Lord Byron, when the one fancied himself composing his Roderick, and the other his Childe Harold. The same must hold good of all systems of philosophy; of all arts, governments, wars by sea and by land; in short, of all things that ever have been or that ever will be produced. For, according to this system, it is not the affections and passions that are at work, in as far as they are sensations or thoughts. We only fancy, that we act from rational resolves, or prudent motives, or from impulses of anger, love, or generosity. In all these cases the real agent is a something-nothing-everything, which does all of which we know, and knows nothing of all that itself does.

The existence of an infinite spirit, of an intelligent and holy will, must, on this system, be mere articulated motions of the air. For as the function of the human understanding is no other than merely to appear to itself to combine and to apply the phaenomena of the association; and as these derive all their reality from the primary sensations; and the sensations again all their reality from the impressions ab extra; a God not visible, audible, or tangible, can exist only in the sounds and letters that form his name and attributes. If in ourselves there be no such faculties as those of the will, and the scientific reason, we must either have an innate idea of them, which would overthrow the whole system; or we can have no idea at all. The process, by which Hume degraded the notion of cause and effect into a blind product of delusion and habit, into the mere sensation of proceeding life (*nisus vitalis*) associated with the images of the memory; this same process must be repeated to the equal degradation of every fundamental idea in ethics or theology.

Far, very far am I from burthening with the odium of these consequences the moral characters of those who first formed, or have since adopted the system! It is most noticeable of the excellent and pious Hartley, that, in the proofs of the existence and attributes of God, with which his second volume commences, he makes no reference to the principle or results of the first. Nay, he assumes, as his foundations, ideas which, if we embrace the doctrines of his first volume, can exist no where but in the vibrations of the ethereal medium common to the nerves and to the atmosphere. Indeed the whole of the second volume is, with the fewest possible exceptions, independent of his peculiar system. So true is it, that the faith, which saves and sanctifies, is a collective energy, a total act of the whole moral being; that its living sensorium is in the heart; and that no errors of the understanding can be morally arraigned unless they have proceeded from the heart. But whether they be such, no man can be certain in the case of another, scarcely perhaps even in his own. Hence it follows by inevitable consequence, that man may perchance determine what is a heresy; but God only can know who is a heretic. It does not, however, by any means follow that opinions fundamentally false are harmless. A hundred causes may co-exist to form one complex antidote. Yet the sting of the adder remains venomous, though there are many who have taken up the evil thing, and it hurted them not. Some indeed there seem to have been, in an unfortunate neighbour nation at least, who have embraced this system with a full view of all its moral and religious consequences; some—

—who deem themselves most free,  
When they within this gross and visible sphere  
Chain down the winged thought, scoffing ascent,  
Proud in their meanness; and themselves they cheat  
With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,  
Their subtle fluids, impacts, essences,  
Self-working tools, uncaus'd effects, and all

Those blind omniscients, those almighty slaves,  
Untenanting creation of its God!

Such men need discipline, not argument; they must be made better men, before they can become wiser.

The attention will be more profitably employed in attempting to discover and expose the paralogisms, by the magic of which such a faith could find admission into minds framed for a nobler creed. These, it appears to me, may be all reduced to one sophism as their common genus; the mistaking the conditions of a thing for its causes and essence; and the process, by which we arrive at the knowledge of a faculty, for the faculty itself. The air I breathe is the condition of my life, not its cause. We could never have learned that we had eyes but by the process of seeing; yet having seen we know that the eyes must have pre-existed in order to render the process of sight possible. Let us cross-examine Hartley's scheme under the guidance of this distinction; and we shall discover, that contemporaneity, (Leibnitz's *Lex Continui*.) is the limit and condition of the laws of mind, itself being rather a law of matter, at least of phaenomena considered as material. At the utmost, it is to thought the same, as the law of gravitation is to loco-motion. In every voluntary movement we first counteract gravitation, in order to avail ourselves of it. It must exist, that there may be a something to be counteracted, and which, by its re-action, may aid the force that is exerted to resist it. Let us consider what we do when we leap. We first resist the gravitating power by an act purely voluntary, and then by another act, voluntary in part, we yield to it in order to alight on the spot, which we had previously proposed to ourselves. Now let a man watch his mind while he is composing; or, to take a still more common case, while he is trying to recollect a name; and he will find the process completely analogous. Most of my readers will have observed a small water-insect on the surface of rivulets, which throws a cinque-spotted shadow fringed with prismatic colours on the sunny bottom of the brook; and will have noticed, how the little animal wins its way up against the stream, by alternate pulses of active and passive motion, now resisting the current, and now yielding to it in order to gather strength and a momentary fulcrum for a further propulsion. This is no unapt emblem of the mind's self-experience in the act of thinking. There are evidently two powers at work, which relatively to each other are active and passive; and this is not possible without an intermediate faculty, which is at once both active and passive. In philosophical language, we must denominate this intermediate faculty in all its degrees and determinations, the IMAGINATION. But, in common language, and especially on the subject of poetry, we appropriate the name to a superior degree of the faculty, joined to a superior voluntary control over it.

Contemporaneity, then, being the common condition of all the laws of association, and a component element in the *materia subjecta*, the parts of which are to be associated, must needs be co-present with all. Nothing, therefore, can be more easy than to pass off on an incautious mind this constant companion of each, for the essential substance of all. But if we appeal to our own consciousness, we shall find that even time itself, as the cause of a particular act of association, is distinct from contemporaneity, as the condition of all association. Seeing a mackerel, it may happen, that I immediately think of gooseberries, because I at the same time ate mackerel with gooseberries as the sauce. The first syllable of the latter word, being that which had coexisted with the image of the bird so called, I may then think of a goose. In the next moment the image of a swan may arise before me, though I had never seen the two birds together. In the first two instances, I am conscious that their co-existence in time was the circumstance, that enabled me to recollect them; and equally conscious am I that the latter was recalled to me by the joint operation of likeness and contrast. So it is with cause and effect: so too with order. So I am able to distinguish whether it was proximity in time, or continuity in space, that occasioned me to recall B on the mention of A. They cannot be indeed separated from contemporaneity; for that would be to separate them from the mind itself. The act of consciousness is indeed identical with time considered in its essence. I mean time *per se*, as

contra-distinguished from our notion of time; for this is always blended with the idea of space, which, as the opposite of time, is therefore its measure. Nevertheless the accident of seeing two objects at the same moment, and the accident of seeing them in the same place are two distinct or distinguishable causes: and the true practical general law of association is this; that whatever makes certain parts of a total impression more vivid or distinct than the rest, will determine the mind to recall these in preference to others equally linked together by the common condition of contemporaneity, or (what I deem a more appropriate and philosophical term) of continuity. But the will itself by confining and intensifying [25] the attention may arbitrarily give vividness or distinctness to any object whatsoever; and from hence we may deduce the uselessness, if not the absurdity, of certain recent schemes which promise an artificial memory, but which in reality can only produce a confusion and debasement of the fancy. Sound logic, as the habitual subordination of the individual to the species, and of the species to the genus; philosophical knowledge of facts under the relation of cause and effect; a cheerful and communicative temper disposing us to notice the similarities and contrasts of things, that we may be able to illustrate the one by the other; a quiet conscience; a condition free from anxieties; sound health, and above all (as far as relates to passive remembrance) a healthy digestion; these are the best, these are the only Arts of Memory.

## CHAPTER VIII

The system of Dualism introduced by Des Cartes—Refined first by Spinoza and afterwards by Leibnitz into the doctrine of *Harmonia praestabilita*—Hylozoism—Materialism—None of these systems, or any possible theory of association, supplies or supersedes a theory of perception, or explains the formation of the associable.

To the best of my knowledge Des Cartes was the first philosopher who introduced the absolute and essential heterogeneity of the soul as intelligence, and the body as matter. The assumption, and the form of speaking have remained, though the denial of all other properties to matter but that of extension, on which denial the whole system of Dualism is grounded, has been long exploded. For since impenetrability is intelligible only as a mode of resistance; its admission places the essence of matter in an act or power, which it possesses in common with spirit; and body and spirit are therefore no longer absolutely heterogeneous, but may without any absurdity be supposed to be different modes, or degrees in perfection, of a common substratum. To this possibility, however, it was not the fashion to advert. The soul was a thinking substance, and body a space-filling substance. Yet the apparent action of each on the other pressed heavy on the philosopher on the one hand; and no less heavily on the other hand pressed the evident truth, that the law of causality holds only between homogeneous things, that is, things having some common property; and cannot extend from one world into another, its contrary. A close analysis evinced it to be no less absurd than the question whether a man's affection for his wife lay North-east, or South-west of the love he bore towards his child. Leibnitz's doctrine of a pre-established harmony; which he certainly borrowed from Spinoza, who had himself taken the hint from Des Cartes's animal machines, was in its common interpretation too strange to survive the inventor—too repugnant to our common sense; which is not indeed entitled to a judicial voice in the courts of scientific philosophy; but whose whispers still exert a strong secret influence. Even Wolf, the admirer and illustrious systematizer of the Leibnitzian doctrine, contents himself with defending the possibility of the idea, but does not adopt it as a part of the edifice.

The hypothesis of Hylozoism, on the other side, is the death of all rational physiology, and indeed of all physical science; for that requires a limitation of terms, and cannot consist with the arbitrary power of multiplying attributes by occult qualities. Besides, it answers no purpose; unless, indeed, a difficulty can be solved by multiplying it, or we can acquire a clearer notion of our soul by being told that we have a million of souls, and that every atom of our bodies has a soul of its own. Far more prudent is it to admit the difficulty once for all, and then let it lie at rest. There is a sediment indeed at the bottom of the vessel, but all the water above it is clear and transparent. The Hylozoist only shakes it up, and renders the whole turbid.

But it is not either the nature of man, or the duty of the philosopher to despair concerning any important problem until, as in the squaring of the circle, the impossibility of a solution has been demonstrated. How the *esse* assumed as originally distinct from the *scire*, can ever unite itself with it; how being can transform itself into a knowing, becomes conceivable on one only condition; namely, if it can be shown that the *vis representativa*, or the Sentient, is itself a species of being; that is, either as a property or attribute, or as an hypostasis or self subsistence. The former—that thinking is a property of matter under particular conditions,—is, indeed, the assumption of materialism; a system which could not but be patronized by the philosopher, if only it actually performed what it promises. But how any affection from without can metamorphose itself into perception or will, the materialist has hitherto left, not only as incomprehensible as he found it, but has aggravated it into a comprehensible absurdity. For, grant that an object from without could act upon the conscious self, as on a consubstantial object; yet such an affection could only engender something homogeneous with itself. Motion could only propagate motion. Matter has no Inward. We remove one surface, but to meet with another. We can but divide a particle into particles; and each atom comprehends in itself

the properties of the material universe. Let any reflecting mind make the experiment of explaining to itself the evidence of our sensuous intuitions, from the hypothesis that in any given perception there is a something which has been communicated to it by an impact, or an impression *ab extra*. In the first place, by the impact on the percipient, or *ens representans*, not the object itself, but only its action or effect, will pass into the same. Not the iron tongue, but its vibrations, pass into the metal of the bell. Now in our immediate perception, it is not the mere power or act of the object, but the object itself, which is immediately present. We might indeed attempt to explain this result by a chain of deductions and conclusions; but that, first, the very faculty of deducing and concluding would equally demand an explanation; and secondly, that there exists in fact no such intermediation by logical notions, such as those of cause and effect. It is the object itself, not the product of a syllogism, which is present to our consciousness. Or would we explain this supervention of the object to the sensation, by a productive faculty set in motion by an impulse; still the transition, into the percipient, of the object itself, from which the impulse proceeded, assumes a power that can permeate and wholly possess the soul,

And like a God by spiritual art,  
Be all in all, and all in every part.

And how came the percipient here? And what is become of the wonder- promising Matter, that was to perform all these marvels by force of mere figure, weight and motion? The most consistent proceeding of the dogmatic materialist is to fall back into the common rank of soul-and- bodyists; to affect the mysterious, and declare the whole process a revelation given, and not to be understood, which it would be profane to examine too closely. *Datur non intelligitur*. But a revelation unconfirmed by miracles, and a faith not commanded by the conscience, a philosopher may venture to pass by, without suspecting himself of any irreligious tendency.

Thus, as materialism has been generally taught, it is utterly unintelligible, and owes all its proselytes to the propensity so common among men, to mistake distinct images for clear conceptions; and vice versa, to reject as inconceivable whatever from its own nature is unimaginable. But as soon as it becomes intelligible, it ceases to be materialism. In order to explain thinking, as a material phaenomenon, it is necessary to refine matter into a mere modification of intelligence, with the two-fold function of appearing and perceiving. Even so did Priestley in his controversy with Price. He stripped matter of all its material properties; substituted spiritual powers; and when we expected to find a body, behold! we had nothing but its ghost—the apparition of a defunct substance!

I shall not dilate further on this subject; because it will, (if God grant health and permission), be treated of at large and systematically in a work, which I have many years been preparing, on the Productive Logos human and divine; with, and as the introduction to, a full commentary on the Gospel of St. John. To make myself intelligible as far as my present subject requires, it will be sufficient briefly to observe.—1. That all association demands and presupposes the existence of the thoughts and images to be associated.—2. That the hypothesis of an external world exactly correspondent to those images or modifications of our own being, which alone, according to this system, we actually behold, is as thorough idealism as Berkeley's, inasmuch as it equally, perhaps in a more perfect degree, removes all reality and immediateness of perception, and places us in a dream-world of phantoms and spectres, the inexplicable swarm and equivocal generation of motions in our own brains.—3. That this hypothesis neither involves the explanation, nor precludes the necessity, of a mechanism and co-adequate forces in the percipient, which at the more than magic touch of the impulse from without is to create anew for itself the correspondent object. The formation of a copy is not solved by the mere pre-existence of an original; the copyist of Raffael's Transfiguration must repeat more or less perfectly the process of Raffael. It would be easy to explain a thought from the image on the retina, and that from the geometry of light, if this very light did not present the very same difficulty. We might as rationally chant the Brahim creed of the tortoise that supported the bear, that supported

the elephant, that supported the world, to the tune of "This is the house that Jack built." The sic Deo placitum est we all admit as the sufficient cause, and the divine goodness as the sufficient reason; but an answer to the Whence and Why is no answer to the How, which alone is the physiologist's concern. It is a sophisma pigrum, and (as Bacon hath said) the arrogance of pusillanimity, which lifts up the idol of a mortal's fancy and commands us to fall down and worship it, as a work of divine wisdom, an ancile or palladium fallen from heaven. By the very same argument the supporters of the Ptolemaic system might have rebuffed the Newtonian, and pointing to the sky with self-complacent grin [26] have appealed to common sense, whether the sun did not move and the earth stand still.

## CHAPTER IX

Is Philosophy possible as a science, and what are its conditions?—Giordano Bruno—Literary Aristocracy, or the existence of a tacit compact among the learned as a privileged order—The Author's obligations to the Mystics—to Immanuel Kant—The difference between the letter and the spirit of Kant's writings, and a vindication of prudence in the teaching of Philosophy—Fichte's attempt to complete the Critical system—Its partial success and ultimate failure—Obligations to Schelling; and among English writers to Saumarez.

After I had successively studied in the schools of Locke, Berkeley, Leibnitz, and Hartley, and could find in none of them an abiding place for my reason, I began to ask myself; is a system of philosophy; as different from mere history and historic classification, possible? If possible, what are its necessary conditions? I was for a while disposed to answer the first question in the negative, and to admit that the sole practicable employment for the human mind was to observe, to collect, and to classify. But I soon felt, that human nature itself fought up against this wilful resignation of intellect; and as soon did I find, that the scheme, taken with all its consequences and cleared of all inconsistencies, was not less impracticable than contranatural. Assume in its full extent the position, nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu, assume it without Leibnitz's qualifying *praeter ipsum intellectum*, and in the same sense, in which the position was understood by Hartley and Condillac: and then what Hume had demonstratively deduced from this concession concerning cause and effect, will apply with equal and crushing force to all the other eleven categorical forms [27], and the logical functions corresponding to them. How can we make bricks without straw;—or build without cement? We learn all things indeed by occasion of experience; but the very facts so learned force us inward on the antecedents, that must be presupposed in order to render experience itself possible. The first book of Locke's *Essay*, (if the supposed error, which it labours to subvert, be not a mere thing of straw, an absurdity which, no man ever did, or indeed ever could, believe,) is formed on a sophisma heterozaetaeseos, and involves the old mistake of *Cum hoc: ergo, propter hoc*.

The term, Philosophy, defines itself as an affectionate seeking after the truth; but Truth is the correlative of Being. This again is no way conceivable, but by assuming as a postulate, that both are *ab initio*, identical and coinherent; that intelligence and being are reciprocally each other's substrate. I presumed that this was a possible conception, (i.e. that it involved no logical inconsonance,) from the length of time during which the scholastic definition of the Supreme Being, as *actus purissimus sine ulla potentialitate*, was received in the schools of Theology, both by the Pontifical and the Reformed divines. The early study of Plato and Plotinus, with the commentaries and the *THEOLOGIA PLATONICA* of the illustrious Florentine; of Proclus, and Gemistius Pletho; and at a later period of the *De Immenso et Innumerabili* and the "*De la causa, principio et uno*," of the philosopher of Nola, who could boast of a Sir Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville among his patrons, and whom the idolaters of Rome burnt as an atheist in the year 1600; had all contributed to prepare my mind for the reception and welcoming of the *Cogito quia Sum, et Sum quia Cogito*; a philosophy of seeming hardihood, but certainly the most ancient, and therefore presumptively the most natural.

Why need I be afraid? Say rather how dare I be ashamed of the Teutonic theosophist, Jacob Behmen? Many, indeed, and gross were his delusions; and such as furnish frequent and ample occasion for the triumph of the learned over the poor ignorant shoemaker, who had dared think for himself. But while we remember that these delusions were such, as might be anticipated from his utter want of all intellectual discipline, and from his ignorance of rational psychology, let it not be forgotten that the latter defect he had in common with the most learned theologians of his age. Neither with books, nor with book-learned men was he conversant. A meek and shy quietest, his intellectual powers were never stimulated into feverous energy by crowds of proselytes, or by the ambition of proselyting. Jacob Behmen was an enthusiast, in the strictest sense, as not merely distinguished, but

as contra-distinguished, from a fanatic. While I in part translate the following observations from a contemporary writer of the Continent, let me be permitted to premise, that I might have transcribed the substance from memoranda of my own, which were written many years before his pamphlet was given to the world; and that I prefer another's words to my own, partly as a tribute due to priority of publication; but still more from the pleasure of sympathy in a case where coincidence only was possible.

Whoever is acquainted with the history of philosophy, during the last two or three centuries, cannot but admit that there appears to have existed a sort of secret and tacit compact among the learned, not to pass beyond a certain limit in speculative science. The privilege of free thought, so highly extolled, has at no time been held valid in actual practice, except within this limit; and not a single stride beyond it has ever been ventured without bringing obloquy on the transgressor. The few men of genius among the learned class, who actually did overstep this boundary, anxiously avoided the appearance of having so done. Therefore the true depth of science, and the penetration to the inmost centre, from which all the lines of knowledge diverge to their ever distant circumference, was abandoned to the illiterate and the simple, whom unstilled yearning, and an original ebullency of spirit, had urged to the investigation of the indwelling and living ground of all things. These, then, because their names had never been enrolled in the guilds of the learned, were persecuted by the registered livery-men as interlopers on their rights and privileges. All without distinction were branded as fanatics and phantasts; not only those, whose wild and exorbitant imaginations had actually engendered only extravagant and grotesque phantasms, and whose productions were, for the most part, poor copies and gross caricatures of genuine inspiration; but the truly inspired likewise, the originals themselves. And this for no other reason, but because they were the unlearned, men of humble and obscure occupations. When, and from whom among the literati by profession, have we ever heard the divine doxology repeated, I thank thee, O Father! Lord of Heaven and Earth! because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes [28]. No; the haughty priests of learning not only banished from the schools and marts of science all who had dared draw living waters from the fountain, but drove them out of the very Temple, which mean time the buyers, and sellers, and money-changers were suffered to make a den of thieves.

And yet it would not be easy to discover any substantial ground for this contemptuous pride in those literati, who have most distinguished themselves by their scorn of Behmen, Thaulerus, George Fox, and others; unless it be, that they could write orthographically, make smooth periods, and had the fashions of authorship almost literally at their fingers' ends, while the latter, in simplicity of soul, made their words immediate echoes of their feelings. Hence the frequency of those phrases among them, which have been mistaken for pretences to immediate inspiration; as for instance, "It was delivered unto me;"—"I strove not to speak;"—"I said, I will be silent;"—"But the word was in my heart as a burning fire;"—"and I could not forbear." Hence too the unwillingness to give offence; hence the foresight, and the dread of the clamours, which would be raised against them, so frequently avowed in the writings of these men, and expressed, as was natural, in the words of the only book, with which they were familiar [29]. "Woe is me that I am become a man of strife, and a man of contention,—I love peace: the souls of men are dear unto me: yet because I seek for light every one of them doth curse me!" O! it requires deeper feeling, and a stronger imagination, than belong to most of those, to whom reasoning and fluent expression have been as a trade learnt in boyhood, to conceive with what might, with what inward strivings and commotion, the perception of a new and vital truth takes possession of an uneducated man of genius. His meditations are almost inevitably employed on the eternal, or the everlasting; for "the world is not his friend, nor the world's law." Need we then be surprised, that, under an excitement at once so strong and so unusual, the man's body should sympathize with the struggles of his mind; or that he should at times be so far deluded, as to mistake the tumultuous sensations of his nerves, and the co-existing spectres of his fancy, as parts or symbols of the truths which were opening on him? It has indeed been plausibly observed,

that in order to derive any advantage, or to collect any intelligible meaning, from the writings of these ignorant Mystics, the reader must bring with him a spirit and judgment superior to that of the writers themselves:

And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek?

—a sophism, which I fully agree with Warburton, is unworthy of Milton; how much more so of the awful Person, in whose mouth he has placed it? One assertion I will venture to make, as suggested by my own experience, that there exist folios on the human understanding, and the nature of man, which would have a far juster claim to their high rank and celebrity, if in the whole huge volume there could be found as much fulness of heart and intellect, as burst forth in many a simple page of George Fox, Jacob Behmen, and even of Behmen's commentator, the pious and fervid William Law.

The feeling of gratitude, which I cherish toward these men, has caused me to digress further than I had foreseen or proposed; but to have passed them over in an historical sketch of my literary life and opinions, would have seemed to me like the denial of a debt, the concealment of a boon. For the writings of these Mystics acted in no slight degree to prevent my mind from being imprisoned within the outline of any single dogmatic system. They contributed to keep alive the heart in the head; gave me an indistinct, yet stirring and working presentiment, that all the products of the mere reflective faculty partook of death, and were as the rattling twigs and sprays in winter, into which a sap was yet to be propelled from some root to which I had not penetrated, if they were to afford my soul either food or shelter. If they were too often a moving cloud of smoke to me by day, yet they were always a pillar of fire throughout the night, during my wanderings through the wilderness of doubt, and enabled me to skirt, without crossing, the sandy deserts of utter unbelief. That the system is capable of being converted into an irreligious Pantheism, I well know. The Ethics of Spinoza, may, or may not, be an instance. But at no time could I believe, that in itself and essentially it is incompatible with religion, natural or revealed: and now I am most thoroughly persuaded of the contrary. The writings of the illustrious sage of Koenigsberg, the founder of the Critical Philosophy, more than any other work, at once invigorated and disciplined my understanding. The originality, the depth, and the compression of the thoughts; the novelty and subtlety, yet solidity and importance of the distinctions; the adamant chain of the logic; and I will venture to add—(paradox as it will appear to those who have taken their notion of Immanuel Kant from Reviewers and Frenchmen)—the clearness and evidence, of the Critique of the Pure Reason; and Critique of the Judgment; of the Metaphysical Elements of Natural Philosophy; and of his Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason, took possession of me as with the giant's hand. After fifteen years' familiarity with them, I still read these and all his other productions with undiminished delight and increasing admiration. The few passages that remained obscure to me, after due efforts of thought, (as the chapter on original apperception,) and the apparent contradictions which occur, I soon found were hints and insinuations referring to ideas, which KANT either did not think it prudent to avow, or which he considered as consistently left behind in a pure analysis, not of human nature in toto, but of the speculative intellect alone. Here therefore he was constrained to commence at the point of reflection, or natural consciousness: while in his moral system he was permitted to assume a higher ground (the autonomy of the will) as a postulate deducible from the unconditional command, or (in the technical language of his school) the categorical imperative, of the conscience. He had been in imminent danger of persecution during the reign of the late king of Prussia, that strange compound of lawless debauchery and priest-ridden superstition: and it is probable that he had little inclination, in his old age, to act over again the fortunes, and hair-breadth escapes of Wolf. The expulsion of the first among Kant's disciples, who attempted to complete his system, from the University of Jena, with the confiscation and prohibition of the obnoxious work by the joint efforts of the courts of Saxony and Hanover, supplied experimental proof, that the venerable old man's caution was not groundless. In spite therefore of his own declarations, I could never believe,

that it was possible for him to have meant no more by his *Noumenon*, or *Thing in itself*, than his mere words express; or that in his own conception he confined the whole plastic power to the forms of the intellect, leaving for the external cause, for the *materiale* of our sensations, a matter without form, which is doubtless inconceivable. I entertained doubts likewise, whether, in his own mind, he even laid all the stress, which he appears to do, on the moral postulates.

An idea, in the highest sense of that word, cannot be conveyed but by a symbol; and, except in geometry, all symbols of necessity involve an apparent contradiction. *Phonaeese synetosisin*: and for those who could not pierce through this symbolic husk, his writings were not intended. Questions which cannot be fully answered without exposing the respondent to personal danger, are not entitled to a fair answer; and yet to say this openly, would in many cases furnish the very advantage which the adversary is insidiously seeking after. *Veracity* does not consist in saying, but in the intention of communicating, truth; and the philosopher who cannot utter the whole truth without conveying falsehood, and at the same time, perhaps, exciting the most malignant passions, is constrained to express himself either mythically or equivocally. When Kant therefore was importuned to settle the disputes of his commentators himself, by declaring what he meant, how could he decline the honours of martyrdom with less offence, than by simply replying, "I meant what I said, and at the age of near fourscore, I have something else, and more important to do, than to write a commentary on my own works."

Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, or *Lore of Ultimate Science*, was to add the key-stone of the arch: and by commencing with an act, instead of a thing or substance, Fichte assuredly gave the first mortal blow to *Spinozism*, as taught by Spinoza himself; and supplied the idea of a system truly metaphysical, and of a *metaphysique* truly systematic: (i.e. having its spring and principle within itself). But this fundamental idea he overbuilt with a heavy mass of mere notions, and psychological acts of arbitrary reflection. Thus his theory degenerated into a crude [30] *egoismus*, a boastful and hyperstoic hostility to Nature, as lifeless, godless, and altogether unholy: while his religion consisted in the assumption of a mere *Ordo ordinans*, which we were permitted *exoterice* to call *GOD*; and his ethics in an ascetic, and almost monkish, mortification of the natural passions and desires. In Schelling's *Natur-Philosophie*, and the *System des transcendentalen Idealismus*, I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do.

I have introduced this statement, as appropriate to the narrative nature of this sketch; yet rather in reference to the work which I have announced in a preceding page, than to my present subject. It would be but a mere act of justice to myself, were I to warn my future readers, than an identity of thought, or even similarity of phrase, will not be at all times a certain proof that the passage has been borrowed from Schelling, or that the conceptions were originally learnt from him. In this instance, as in the dramatic lectures of Schlegel to which I have before alluded, from the same motive of self-defence against the charge of plagiarism, many of the most striking resemblances, indeed all the main and fundamental ideas, were born and matured in my mind before I had ever seen a single page of the German Philosopher; and I might indeed affirm with truth, before the more important works of Schelling had been written, or at least made public. Nor is this coincidence at all to be wondered at. We had studied in the same school; been disciplined by the same preparatory philosophy, namely, the writings of Kant; we had both equal obligations to the polar logic and dynamic philosophy of Giordano Bruno; and Schelling has lately, and, as of recent acquisition, avowed that same affectionate reverence for the labours of Behmen, and other mystics, which I had formed at a much earlier period. The coincidence of Schelling's system with certain general ideas of Behmen, he declares to have been mere coincidence; while my obligations have been more direct. He needs give to Behmen only feelings of sympathy; while I owe him a debt of gratitude. God forbid! that I should be suspected of a wish to enter into a rivalry with Schelling for the honours so unequivocally his right, not only as a great and original genius, but as the founder of the *Philosophy of Nature*, and as the most successful improver of the *Dynamic System* [31] which, begun by Bruno, was re-introduced (in a more philosophical

form, and freed from all its impurities and visionary accompaniments) by Kant; in whom it was the native and necessary growth of his own system. Kant's followers, however, on whom (for the greater part) their master's cloak had fallen without, or with a very scanty portion of, his spirit, had adopted his dynamic ideas, only as a more refined species of mechanics. With exception of one or two fundamental ideas, which cannot be withheld from Fichte, to Schelling we owe the completion, and the most important victories, of this revolution in philosophy. To me it will be happiness and honour enough, should I succeed in rendering the system itself intelligible to my countrymen, and in the application of it to the most awful of subjects for the most important of purposes. Whether a work is the offspring of a man's own spirit, and the product of original thinking, will be discovered by those who are its sole legitimate judges, by better tests than the mere reference to dates. For readers in general, let whatever shall be found in this or any future work of mine, that resembles, or coincides with, the doctrines of my German predecessor, though contemporary, be wholly attributed to him: provided, that the absence of distinct references to his books, which I could not at all times make with truth as designating citations or thoughts actually derived from him; and which, I trust, would, after this general acknowledgment be superfluous; be not charged on me as an ungenerous concealment or intentional plagiarism. I have not indeed (eheu! res angusta domi!) been hitherto able to procure more than two of his books, viz. the first volume of his collected Tracts, and his System of Transcendental Idealism; to which, however, I must add a small pamphlet against Fichte, the spirit of which was to my feelings painfully incongruous with the principles, and which (with the usual allowance afforded to an antithesis) displayed the love of wisdom rather than the wisdom of love. I regard truth as a divine ventriloquist: I care not from whose mouth the sounds are supposed to proceed, if only the words are audible and intelligible. "Albeit, I must confess to be half in doubt, whether I should bring it forth or no, it being so contrary to the eye of the world, and the world so potent in most men's hearts, that I shall endanger either not to be regarded or not to be understood."

And to conclude the subject of citation, with a cluster of citations, which as taken from books, not in common use, may contribute to the reader's amusement, as a voluntary before a sermon: "Dolet mihi quidem deliciis literarum inescatos subito jam homines adeo esse, praesertim qui Christianos se profitentur, et legere nisi quod ad delectationem facit, sustineant nihil: unde et discipline severiores et philosophia ipsa jam fere prorsus etiam a doctis negliguntur. Quod quidem propositum studiorum, nisi mature corrigitur, tam magnum rebus incommodum dabit, quam dedit barbaries olim. Pertinax res barbaries est, fateor: sed minus potent tamen, quam illa mollities et persuasa prudentia literarum, si ratione caret, sapientiae virtutisque specie mortales misere circumducens. Succedet igitur, ut arbitror, haud ita multo post, pro rusticana seculi nostri ruditate captatrix illa communi-loquentia robor animi virilis omne, omnem virtutem masculam, profligatura nisi cavetur."

A too prophetic remark, which has been in fulfilment from the year 1680, to the present 1815. By persuasa prudentia, Grynaeus means self-complacent common sense as opposed to science and philosophic reason.

Est medius ordo, et velut equestris, ingeniorum quidem sagacium, et commodorum rebus humanis, non tamen in primam magnitudinem patentium. Eorum hominum, ut sic dicam, major annona est. Sedulum esse, nihil temere loqui, assuescere labori, et imagine prudentiae et modistiae tegere angustiores partes captus, dum exercitationem ac usum, quo isti in civilibus rebus pollent, pro natura et magnitudine ingenii plerique accipiunt.

"As therefore physicians are many times forced to leave such methods of curing as themselves know to be the fittest, and being overruled by the patient's impatience, are fain to try the best they can: in like sort, considering how the case doth stand with this present age, full of tongue and weak of brain, behold we would (if our subject permitted it) yield to the stream thereof. That way we would be contented to prove our thesis, which being the worse in itself, is notwithstanding now by reason of common imbecility the fitter and likelier to be brooked."

If this fear could be rationally entertained in the controversial age of Hooker, under the then robust discipline of the scholastic logic, pardonably may a writer of the present times anticipate a scanty audience for abstrusest themes, and truths that can neither be communicated nor received without effort of thought, as well as patience of attention.

"Che s'io non erro al calcolar de' punti,  
Par ch' Asinina Stella a noi predomini,  
E'l Somaro e'l Castron si sian congiunti.  
Il tempo d'Apuleio piu non si nomini:  
Che se allora un sol huom sembrava un Asino,  
Mille Asini a' miei di rassembran huomini!"

## CHAPTER X

A chapter of digression and anecdotes, as an interlude preceding that on the nature and genesis of the Imagination or Plastic Power—On pedantry and pedantic expressions—Advice to young authors respecting publication—Various anecdotes of the Author's literary life, and the progress of his opinions in Religion and Politics.

"Esemplastic. The word is not in Johnson, nor have I met with it elsewhere." Neither have, I. I constructed it myself from the Greek words, *eis en plattein*, to shape into one; because, having to convey a new sense, I thought that a new term would both aid the recollection of my meaning, and prevent its being confounded with the usual import of the word, imagination. "But this is pedantry!" Not necessarily so, I hope. If I am not misinformed, pedantry consists in the use of words unsuitable to the time, place, and company. The language of the market would be in the schools as pedantic, though it might not be reprobated by that name, as the language of the schools in the market. The mere man of the world, who insists that no other terms but such as occur in common conversation should be employed in a scientific disquisition, and with no greater precision, is as truly a pedant as the man of letters, who either over-rating the acquirements of his auditors, or misled by his own familiarity with technical or scholastic terms, converses at the wine-table with his mind fixed on his museum or laboratory; even though the latter pedant instead of desiring his wife to make the tea should bid her add to the quant. suff. of *thea Sinensis* the oxyd of hydrogen saturated with caloric. To use the colloquial (and in truth somewhat vulgar) metaphor, if the pedant of the cloister, and the pedant of the lobby, both smell equally of the shop, yet the odour from the Russian binding of good old authentic-looking folios and quartos is less annoying than the steams from the tavern or bagnio. Nay, though the pedantry of the scholar should betray a little ostentation, yet a well-conditioned mind would more easily, methinks, tolerate the fox brush of learned vanity, than the sans culotterie of a contemptuous ignorance, that assumes a merit from mutilation in the self-consoling sneer at the pompous incumbrance of tails.

The first lesson of philosophic discipline is to wean the student's attention from the degrees of things, which alone form the vocabulary of common life, and to direct it to the kind abstracted from degree. Thus the chemical student is taught not to be startled at disquisitions on the heat in ice, or on latent and fixible light. In such discourse the instructor has no other alternative than either to use old words with new meanings (the plan adopted by Darwin in his *Zoonomia*;) or to introduce new terms, after the example of Linnaeus, and the framers of the present chemical nomenclature. The latter mode is evidently preferable, were it only that the former demands a twofold exertion of thought in one and the same act. For the reader, or hearer, is required not only to learn and bear in mind the new definition; but to unlearn, and keep out of his view, the old and habitual meaning; a far more difficult and perplexing task, and for which the mere semblance of eschewing pedantry seems to me an inadequate compensation. Where, indeed, it is in our power to recall an inappropriate term that had without sufficient reason become obsolete, it is doubtless a less evil to restore than to coin anew. Thus to express in one word all that appertains to the perception, considered as passive and merely recipient, I have adopted from our elder classics the word *sensuous*; because *sensual* is not at present used, except in a bad sense, or at least as a moral distinction; while *sensitive* and *sensible* would each convey a different meaning. Thus too have I followed Hooker, Sanderson, Milton and others, in designating the immediateness of any act or object of knowledge by the word *intuition*, used sometimes subjectively, sometimes objectively, even as we use the word, *thought*; now as the thought, or act of thinking, and now as a thought, or the object of our reflection; and we do this without confusion or obscurity. The very words, *objective* and *subjective*, of such constant recurrence in the schools of yore, I have ventured to re-introduce, because I could not so briefly or conveniently by any more familiar terms distinguish the *percipere* from the *percipi*. Lastly, I have cautiously discriminated

the terms, the reason, and the understanding, encouraged and confirmed by the authority of our genuine divines and philosophers, before the Revolution.

—both life, and sense,  
Fancy and understanding; whence the soul  
Reason receives, and reason is her bring,  
Discursive or intuitive: discourse [32]  
Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,  
Differing but in degree, in kind the same.

I say, that I was confirmed by authority so venerable: for I had previous and higher motives in my own conviction of the importance, nay, of the necessity of the distinction, as both an indispensable condition and a vital part of all sound speculation in metaphysics, ethical or theological. To establish this distinction was one main object of *The Friend*; if even in a biography of my own literary life I can with propriety refer to a work, which was printed rather than published, or so published that it had been well for the unfortunate author, if it had remained in manuscript. I have even at this time bitter cause for remembering that, which a number of my subscribers have but a trifling motive for forgetting. This effusion might have been spared; but I would fain flatter myself, that the reader will be less austere than an oriental professor of the *bastinado*, who during an attempt to extort per argumentum baculinum a full confession from a culprit, interrupted his outcry of pain by reminding him, that it was "a mere digression!" "All this noise, Sir! is nothing to the point, and no sort of answer to my questions!" "Ah! but," (replied the sufferer,) "it is the most pertinent reply in nature to your blows."

An imprudent man of common goodness of heart cannot but wish to turn even his imprudences to the benefit of others, as far as this is possible. If therefore any one of the readers of this semi-narrative should be preparing or intending a periodical work, I warn him, in the first place, against trusting in the number of names on his subscription list. For he cannot be certain that the names were put down by sufficient authority; or, should that be ascertained, it still remains to be known, whether they were not extorted by some over zealous friend's importunity; whether the subscriber had not yielded his name, merely from want of courage to answer, no; and with the intention of dropping the work as soon as possible. One gentleman procured me nearly a hundred names for *THE FRIEND*, and not only took frequent opportunity to remind me of his success in his canvass, but laboured to impress my mind with the sense of the obligation, I was under to the subscribers; for, (as he very pertinently admonished me,) "fifty-two shillings a year was a large sum to be bestowed on one individual, where there were so many objects of charity with strong claims to the assistance of the benevolent." Of these hundred patrons ninety threw up the publication before the fourth number, without any notice; though it was well known to them, that in consequence of the distance, and the slowness and irregularity of the conveyance, I was compelled to lay in a stock of stamped paper for at least eight weeks beforehand; each sheet of which stood me in five pence previously to its arrival at my printer's; though the subscription money was not to be received till the twenty-first week after the commencement of the work; and lastly, though it was in nine cases out of ten impracticable for me to receive the money for two or three numbers without paying an equal sum for the postage.

In confirmation of my first caveat, I will select one fact among many. On my list of subscribers, among a considerable number of names equally flattering, was that of an Earl of Cork, with his address. He might as well have been an Earl of Bottle, for aught I knew of him, who had been content to reverence the peerage in abstracto, rather than in concretis. Of course *THE FRIEND* was regularly sent as far, if I remember right, as the eighteenth number; that is, till a fortnight before the subscription was to be paid. And lo! just at this time I received a letter from his Lordship, reproving me in language far more lordly than courteous for my impudence in directing my pamphlets to him,

who knew nothing of me or my work! Seventeen or eighteen numbers of which, however, his Lordship was pleased to retain, probably for the culinary or post-culinary conveniences of his servants.

Secondly, I warn all others from the attempt to deviate from the ordinary mode of publishing a work by the trade. I thought indeed, that to the purchaser it was indifferent, whether thirty per cent of the purchase-money went to the booksellers or to the government; and that the convenience of receiving the work by the post at his own door would give the preference to the latter. It is hard, I own, to have been labouring for years, in collecting and arranging the materials; to have spent every shilling that could be spared after the necessaries of life had been furnished, in buying books, or in journeys for the purpose of consulting them or of acquiring facts at the fountain head; then to buy the paper, pay for the printing, and the like, all at least fifteen per cent beyond what the trade would have paid; and then after all to give thirty per cent not of the net profits, but of the gross results of the sale, to a man who has merely to give the books shelf or warehouse room, and permit his apprentice to hand them over the counter to those who may ask for them; and this too copy by copy, although, if the work be on any philosophical or scientific subject, it may be years before the edition is sold off. All this, I confess, must seem a hardship, and one, to which the products of industry in no other mode of exertion are subject. Yet even this is better, far better, than to attempt in any way to unite the functions of author and publisher. But the most prudent mode is to sell the copyright, at least of one or more editions, for the most that the trade will offer. By few only can a large remuneration be expected; but fifty pounds and ease of mind are of more real advantage to a literary man, than the chance of five hundred with the certainty of insult and degrading anxieties. I shall have been grievously misunderstood, if this statement should be interpreted as written with the desire of detracting from the character of booksellers or publishers. The individuals did not make the laws and customs of their trade, but, as in every other trade, take them as they find them. Till the evil can be proved to be removable, and without the substitution of an equal or greater inconvenience, it were neither wise nor manly even to complain of it. But to use it as a pretext for speaking, or even for thinking, or feeling, unkindly or opprobriously of the tradesmen, as individuals, would be something worse than unwise or even than unmanly; it would be immoral and calumnious. My motives point in a far different direction and to far other objects, as will be seen in the conclusion of the chapter.

A learned and exemplary old clergyman, who many years ago went to his reward followed by the regrets and blessings of his flock, published at his own expense two volumes octavo, entitled, *A NEW THEORY OF REDEMPTION*. The work was most severely handled in *THE MONTHLY* or *CRITICAL REVIEW*, I forget which; and this unprovoked hostility became the good old man's favourite topic of conversation among his friends. "Well!" (he used to exclaim,) "in the second edition, I shall have an opportunity of exposing both the ignorance and the malignity of the anonymous critic." Two or three years however passed by without any tidings from the bookseller, who had undertaken the printing and publication of the work, and who was perfectly at his ease, as the author was known to be a man of large property. At length the accounts were written for; and in the course of a few weeks they were presented by the rider for the house, in person. My old friend put on his spectacles, and holding the scroll with no very firm hand, began—"Paper, so much: O moderate enough—not at all beyond my expectation! Printing, so much: well! moderate enough! Stitching, covers, advertisements, carriage, and so forth, so much."—Still nothing amiss. Selleridge (for orthography is no necessary part of a bookseller's literary acquirements) L3. 3s. "Bless me! only three guineas for the what d'ye call it—the selleridge?" "No more, Sir!" replied the rider. "Nay, but that is too moderate!" rejoined my old friend. "Only three guineas for selling a thousand copies of a work in two volumes?" "O Sir!" (cries the young traveller) "you have mistaken the word. There have been none of them sold; they have been sent back from London long ago; and this L3. 3s. is for the cellaridge, or warehouse-room in our book cellar." The work was in consequence preferred from the ominous cellar of the publisher's to the author's garret; and, on presenting a copy to an acquaintance, the old gentleman used to tell the anecdote with great humour and still greater good nature.

With equal lack of worldly knowledge, I was a far more than equal sufferer for it, at the very outset of my authorship. Toward the close of the first year from the time, that in an inauspicious hour I left the friendly cloisters, and the happy grove of quiet, ever honoured Jesus College, Cambridge, I was persuaded by sundry philanthropists and Anti-polemists to set on foot a periodical work, entitled THE WATCHMAN, that, according to the general motto of the work, all might know the truth, and that the truth might make us free! In order to exempt it from the stamp-tax, and likewise to contribute as little as possible to the supposed guilt of a war against freedom, it was to be published on every eighth day, thirty-two pages, large octavo, closely printed, and price only four-pence. Accordingly with a flaming prospectus,—"Knowledge is Power," "To cry the state of the political atmosphere,"—and so forth, I set off on a tour to the North, from Bristol to Sheffield, for the purpose of procuring customers, preaching by the way in most of the great towns, as an hireless volunteer, in a blue coat and white waistcoat, that not a rag of the woman of Babylon might be seen on me. For I was at that time and long after, though a Trinitarian (that is ad normam Platonis) in philosophy, yet a zealous Unitarian in religion; more accurately, I was a Psilanthropist, one of those who believe our Lord to have been the real son of Joseph, and who lay the main stress on the resurrection rather than on the crucifixion. O! never can I remember those days with either shame or regret. For I was most sincere, most disinterested. My opinions were indeed in many and most important points erroneous; but my heart was single. Wealth, rank, life itself then seemed cheap to me, compared with the interests of what I believed to be the truth, and the will of my Maker. I cannot even accuse myself of having been actuated by vanity; for in the expansion of my enthusiasm I did not think of myself at all.

My campaign commenced at Birmingham; and my first attack was on a rigid Calvinist, a tallow-chandler by trade. He was a tall dingy man, in whom length was so predominant over breadth, that he might almost have been borrowed for a foundery poker. O that face! a face kat' emphasin! I have it before me at this moment. The lank, black, twine-like hair, pingui-nitescens, cut in a straight line along the black stubble of his thin gunpowder eye-brows, that looked like a scorched after-math from a last week's shaving. His coat collar behind in perfect unison, both of colour and lustre, with the coarse yet glib cordage, which I suppose he called his hair, and which with a bend inward at the nape of the neck,—the only approach to flexure in his whole figure,—slunk in behind his waistcoat; while the countenance lank, dark, very hard, and with strong perpendicular furrows, gave me a dim notion of some one looking at me through a used gridiron, all soot, grease, and iron! But he was one of the thorough-bred, a true lover of liberty, and, as I was informed, had proved to the satisfaction of many, that Mr. Pitt was one of the horns of the second beast in THE REVELATIONS, that spake as a dragon. A person, to whom one of my letters of recommendation had been addressed, was my introducer. It was a new event in my life, my first stroke in the new business I had undertaken of an author, yea, and of an author trading on his own account. My companion after some imperfect sentences and a multitude of hums and has abandoned the cause to his client; and I commenced an harangue of half an hour to Phileleutheros, the tallow-chandler, varying my notes, through the whole gamut of eloquence, from the ratiocinative to the declamatory, and in the latter from the pathetic to the indignant. I argued, I described, I promised, I prophesied; and beginning with the captivity of nations I ended with the near approach of the millennium, finishing the whole with some of my own verses describing that glorious state out of the Religious Musings:

—Such delights

As float to earth, permitted visitants!

When in some hour of solemn jubilee

The massive gates of Paradise are thrown

Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild

Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,

And odours snatched from beds of amaranth,

And they, that from the crystal river of life  
Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales!

My taper man of lights listened with perseverant and praiseworthy patience, though, as I was afterwards told, on complaining of certain gales that were not altogether ambrosial, it was a melting day with him. "And what, Sir," he said, after a short pause, "might the cost be?" "Only four-pence,"—(O! how I felt the anti-climax, the abysmal bathos of that four-pence!)—"only four-pence, Sir, each number, to be published on every eighth day."—"That comes to a deal of money at the end of a year. And how much, did you say, there was to be for the money?"—"Thirty-two pages, Sir, large octavo, closely printed."—"Thirty and two pages? Bless me! why except what I does in a family way on the Sabbath, that's more than I ever reads, Sir! all the year round. I am as great a one, as any man in Brummagem, Sir! for liberty and truth and all them sort of things, but as to this,—no offence, I hope, Sir,—I must beg to be excused."

So ended my first canvass: from causes that I shall presently mention, I made but one other application in person. This took place at Manchester to a stately and opulent wholesale dealer in cottons. He took my letter of introduction, and, having perused it, measured me from head to foot and again from foot to head, and then asked if I had any bill or invoice of the thing. I presented my prospectus to him. He rapidly skimmed and hummed over the first side, and still more rapidly the second and concluding page; crushed it within his fingers and the palm of his hand; then most deliberately and significantly rubbed and smoothed one part against the other; and lastly putting it into his pocket turned his back on me with an "over-run with these articles!" and so without another syllable retired into his counting house. And, I can truly say, to my unspeakable amusement.

This, I have said, was my second and last attempt. On returning baffled from the first, in which I had vainly essayed to repeat the miracle of Orpheus with the Brummagem patriot, I dined with the tradesman who had introduced me to him. After dinner he importuned me to smoke a pipe with him, and two or three other illuminati of the same rank. I objected, both because I was engaged to spend the evening with a minister and his friends, and because I had never smoked except once or twice in my lifetime, and then it was herb tobacco mixed with Oronooko. On the assurance, however, that the tobacco was equally mild, and seeing too that it was of a yellow colour; not forgetting the lamentable difficulty, I have always experienced, in saying, "No," and in abstaining from what the people about me were doing,—I took half a pipe, filling the lower half of the bowl with salt. I was soon however compelled to resign it, in consequence of a giddiness and distressful feeling in my eyes, which, as I had drunk but a single glass of ale, must, I knew, have been the effect of the tobacco. Soon after, deeming myself recovered, I sallied forth to my engagement; but the walk and the fresh air brought on all the symptoms again, and, I had scarcely entered the minister's drawing-room, and opened a small packet of letters, which he had received from Bristol for me; ere I sank back on the sofa in a sort of swoon rather than sleep. Fortunately I had found just time enough to inform him of the confused state of my feelings, and of the occasion. For here and thus I lay, my face like a wall that is white-washing, deathly pale and with the cold drops of perspiration running down it from my forehead, while one after another there dropped in the different gentlemen, who had been invited to meet, and spend the evening with me, to the number of from fifteen to twenty. As the poison of tobacco acts but for a short time, I at length awoke from insensibility, and looked round on the party, my eyes dazzled by the candles which had been lighted in the interim. By way of relieving my embarrassment one of the gentlemen began the conversation, with "Have you seen a paper to-day, Mr. Coleridge?" "Sir!" I replied, rubbing my eyes, "I am far from convinced, that a Christian is permitted to read either newspapers or any other works of merely political and temporary interest." This remark, so ludicrously inapposite to, or rather, incongruous with, the purpose, for which I was known to have visited Birmingham, and to assist me in which they were all then met, produced an involuntary and general burst of laughter; and seldom indeed have I passed so many delightful hours, as I enjoyed

in that room from the moment of that laugh till an early hour the next morning. Never, perhaps, in so mixed and numerous a party have I since heard conversation, sustained with such animation, enriched with such variety of information and enlivened with such a flow of anecdote. Both then and afterwards they all joined in dissuading me from proceeding with my scheme; assured me in the most friendly and yet most flattering expressions, that neither was the employment fit for me, nor I fit for the employment. Yet, if I determined on persevering in it, they promised to exert themselves to the utmost to procure subscribers, and insisted that I should make no more applications in person, but carry on the canvass by proxy. The same hospitable reception, the same dissuasion, and, that failing, the same kind exertions in my behalf, I met with at Manchester, Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield,—indeed, at every place in which I took up my sojourn. I often recall with affectionate pleasure the many respectable men who interested themselves for me, a perfect stranger to them, not a few of whom I can still name among my friends. They will bear witness for me how opposite even then my principles were to those of Jacobinism or even of democracy, and can attest the strict accuracy of the statement which I have left on record in the tenth and eleventh numbers of THE FRIEND.

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