EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE'S *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* is an anthology, at once coruscating and convenient, of the poet's topics. More than an anthology, it is a chrestomathy designed to introduce and display Coleridge's vocabulary, the range and variety of his interests, and the keenness of his observations. *Table Talk* is the first in a line continued by the *Anima Poetae* edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge in 1895 and *Inquiring Spirit* edited by Kathleen Coburn in 1951. E. H. Coleridge thought of *Anima Poetae* as supplementing the *Table Talk* by drawing on manuscript sources, but H. N. Coleridge had in fact found little reason to distinguish between topics on which the poet conversed and subjects explored in his notebooks and marginalia. Despite the encyclopaedic quality he gave to the *Table Talk* as chrestomathy, the manuscripts now available in the present edition do display, more clearly than the entries that H. N. Coleridge was able to publish in 1835, the informal and personal turn that private conversation often gave to general topics; the informality of everyday private talk was one element, though not the chief, that Henry as nephew and son-in-law hoped to catch in his record. He did not expect to capture the full effect epitomised in Washington Allston's memory of Coleridge in 1805, ". . . I am almost tempted to dream that I have once listened to Plato in the groves of the Academy",[1] but he did hope to popularise Coleridge as the Plato or, failing that, the Giordano Bruno of their fallen time.

Coleridge did not follow the progress of the nephew's record of his talk, and may never have known of its existence; but he would have had reasons for approving equally of the conception and of the title. He admired "inordinately" the *Colloquia Mensalia; or The Familiar Discourses of Dr. Martin Luther at His Table . . .* (1652).[2] He admired and annotated also the *Table Talk* of the pungent scholar John Selden (1689). The title has Shakespearian sanction. In *The Merchant of Venice* (III v 88), when Jessica offers Lorenzo praise before dinner, he answers, "No,

[1] Jared B. Flagg *The Life and Letters of Washington Allston* (New York 1892) 64.

[2] Luther was more than a model for C: "His Table-talk is next to the Scriptures my main book of meditation, deep, seminative, pauline, beyond all other works in my possession, it *potenziates* both my Thoughts and my Will." C to EC 8 Feb 1826: *CL* VI 561.

pray thee, let it serve for table-talk''. In *Coriolanus* table-talk might be said to rank with grace and benediction: Aufidius' lieutenant reports on Coriolanus' popularity (IV vii 4):

> Your soldiers use him as the grace fore meat,
> Their talk at table, and their thanks at end . . .

Henry Coleridge had something more elevated in mind than Sidney's definition of table-talk, in *An Apologie for Poetry*, as ''words as they chanceably fall from the mouth''. If Luther, Selden, and Shakespeare are the height of the scale, at the contemporary base the term had currency. William Hazlitt followed *The Round Table* of 1817 with *Table Talk; or, Original Essays* in 1821–2. More pertinently, Volume X of *Constable's Miscellany* (Edinburgh 1827) was entitled *Table-Talk; or, Selections from the Ana, Containing Extracts from the Different Collections of Ana, French, English, Italian, and German*.[3] The Preface to this miscellany spoke of the ''same blending of moral apothegms, of critical remarks, of serious and comic anecdotes, of scientific or literary information'' to be found, ''more or less modified by natural habits, and the state of human knowledge'', in the *ana* of French, Turk, Arab, or Greek, or the ''Bon Mots of Cicero''. The engraved title-page to this volume of 1827 depicted a dining table set for eight, with the doorway beyond, the guests yet to arrive. The setting was apt for Coleridge's entrance.

As an admirer of Luther and Selden, Coleridge would agree that such talk must not be completely personal, nor of a kind to be kept strictly private. Luther's was the talk ''held with diverse Learned Men'', as proclaimed on the title-page of one of the editions Coleridge annotated. Anthony Carlisle, Coleridge complained in 1812, unprofessionally detailed ''to a Woman, who made it the subject of common Table Talk'', everything ''I had confided to him as a Surgeon''.[4] The woman who repeated Carlisle's indiscretion debased the function of conversation at the table. Proper table-talk is informal discourse suited to all the circumstances, personal, intellectual, and civic, of the hearers. It is not ''common'', for not all are capable of such discourse.

Table-talk recorded to be published would also be suited to the circumstances and needs of the time. Henry Nelson Coleridge saw that the public situation, as discussed in the dining salons of 1823–35, called in two particular ways for his uncle's advent. In a proper symposium all prominent views need to be heard in order for truth to be recognised; Socrates' superiority becomes clear in the context of related but defective,

[3] More specialised, *Dramatic Table Talk or Scenes . . . Serious and Comic in Theatrical History and Biography* ed Richard Ryan (3 vols 1825–30).

[4] *CL* III 408.

inferior opinions. After 1791 James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* had provided a dominant portrait not only of one whose talk met no counterbalancing voices but also of a talker distinctively wrong, in Henry Nelson Coleridge's opinion, for the times. In 1785 *Dr Johnson's Table Talk* had been arranged by Stephen Jones in alphabetical order, after the manner of Selden's; there was a new edition, amplified from Boswell's *Life*, in 1798 and again in two volumes in 1808. The younger James Boswell issued *The Table Talk of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* in two volumes in 1818. Henry Nelson Coleridge's Introduction of 1835 clearly sets up Johnson as the talker to be surpassed and overcome.[5] Coleridge's works in prose, from *The Friend* on, had spoken to the needs of all who had survived the Age of Johnson, but readers had been few. The strength of his poems alone, deflected by C's uncertain aim in such books as the *Biographia Literaria*, could not convert or redeem an age given over to utilitarian self-interest, *laissez faire*, and the blinders of common sense. A record of the higher reaches of C's conversation could better meet the needs of the time by making his mind available to a wider audience than had yet heard it aright. Although sometimes as entertainment rather than philosophic message, reviewers also saw Coleridge as successor and rival to Johnson. Henry Nelson Coleridge had considerable additional success in provoking reviewers into comment on his antithesis of the expansive Coleridge and the constricted Sir James Mackintosh. All agreed that Coleridge was the more copious talker.[6]

"If our author's poetry is inferior to his conversation, his prose is utterly abortive", William Hazlitt wrote in 1825, giving the general reason that "the world is growing old" and the specific reason that Coleridge's faculties "have gossiped away their time, and gadded about from house to house, as if life's business were to melt the hours in listless talk".[7] The more sensitive to Hazlitt's charge that his talk had been a sign of inertia

[5] Making comparison easier, John Murray issued simultaneously James Boswell *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (8 vols 1835) and advertised it in *TT* (1835).

[6] De Q, as will be seen, set up Macaulay as the challenger for C's title, and others saw a resemblance: see App F 16, vol II, below.

[7] *The Spirit of the Age* (2nd ed 1825) 57, 70, 71. Basil Willey's explanation for the superiority of C's conversation to commissioned composition contrasts sharply with Hazlitt's: ". . . to be at his best his mind must be in action and growth, and his feelings ardent as he composes. Thus he shines most of all in conversation, where he can range freely and follow the scent wherever it leads; next best, in marginal annotations, in notebooks and in letters, where formal arrangement is not expected. Least of all in set composition, where the requirements of order and strict progression freeze the genial current, and often inhibit him altogether." *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1972) 179. Subsequent discussions of C's difficulties with "set composition" have begun with the question of his eclectic borrowing rather than with the strength of his spontaneity.

because he suspected Southey and Wordsworth of making similar assessments, Coleridge himself defended from time to time the energies he had expended in informal daily instruction. He justified his reluctance to lecture in Leeds in 1823 by assessing the cost to himself as greater than any instruction or pleasure he could currently give "either by a series of Lectures, or even by conversation, by which I have in the course of my Life atchieved ten fold more than by all my public Efforts, from the Press or the Lecture-Desk".[8] He had proclaimed the virtues of his conversation more directly in *Biographia Literaria*: "Would that the criterion of a scholar's utility were the number and moral value of the truths, which he has been the means of throwing into the general circulation; or the number and value of the minds, whom by his conversation or letters, he has excited into activity, and supplied with the germs of their after-growth!"[9] If Coleridge rather than his nephew is to be considered as the begetter of the *Table Talk*, his credo is announced; if a distinguished rank be denied him, the passage in *Biographia Literaria* continues, he could "dare look forward with confidence to an honorable acquittal".

If the *Table Talk* were arranged by topic, under headings and subheadings with such continuity as the nephew always felt free to provide any unpublished prose by Coleridge that seemed to need it, then the result would not only equal any of Coleridge's other works in range of favourite subjects, but would match most of them in clarity and portions of some of them in fulness of exposition of difficult but treasurable pronouncements. Such an arrangement by subject would lose the high degree of spontaneity retained in the nephew's manuscript version—reaching its height, perhaps, in 1830–32—and would cost us the sense of conversational flow from day to day in the last decade of Coleridge's life, with all the conversational repetitions and revisions in differing contexts. In the workbooks as the nephew and his heirs preserved them, we have both an anthology and a record of Coleridge in maturity.

COLERIDGE AS TALKER

It was universally acknowledged, although various and conflicting interpretations underlay the acknowledgement, that S. T. Coleridge was the greatest talker of his age. By 1790 his recitals of what he had read or heard overawed fellow Bluecoats at Christ's Hospital. Clement Carlyon and George Greenough, who studied and travelled with him in Germany in 1799, each felt the compulsion, like many after them, to record snip-

[8] To Dr Williamson [11] Nov 1823: *CL* v 310.

[9] *BL* ch 10 (*CC*) I 220.

pets from his astonishing conversation. Carlyon recalled years later Coleridge's vitality during their pedestrian tour through the Harz Mountains: "He never appeared to tire of mental exercise; talk seemed to him a perennial pastime; and his endeavours to inform and amuse us ended only with the cravings of hunger or the fatigue of a long march . . .".[10] Charles Lamb, among the first and the last to hear the golden flow with unillusioned love, epitomised his friend in the album of a London bookseller:

> In him was disproved that old maxim, that we should allow every one his share to talk. He would talk from morn to dewy eve, nor cease till far midnight; yet who ever would interrupt him,—who would obstruct that continuous flow of converse, fetched from Helicon or Zion? He had the tact of making the unintelligible seem plain. Many who read the abstruser parts of his "Friend" would complain that his works did not answer to his spoken wisdom. They were identical. But he had a tone in oral delivery which seemed to convey sense to those who were otherwise imperfect recipients.[11]

Close friends like Lamb and Wordsworth could hear in "the unintelligible made plain" both angelic wisdom and airy nothings. Others would either experience irreproachable wisdom or be decidedly vexed by a seemingly vaporous unintelligibility.

So many hearers reported Wordsworth's appraisals to them of Coleridge's conversational power that they have made it seem one of Wordsworth's most interesting topics. Mrs John Davy, a neighbour in Ambleside, made notes on his remarks to her assembled guests in 1844: "He said that the liveliest and truest image he could give of Coleridge's talk was, 'that of a majestic river, the sound or sight of whose course you caught at intervals, which was sometimes concealed by forests, sometimes lost in sand, then came flashing out broad and distinct, then again took a turn which your eye could not follow, yet you knew and felt that it was the same river: so,' he said, 'there was always a train, a stream, in Coleridge's discourse, always a connection between its parts in his own mind, though not one always perceptible to the minds of others.' "[12] His remarks to Henry Nelson Coleridge on 15 Oct 1829 distinguish an early and a late Coleridge, but trace a unifying genius in both:

> S. T. C. never did *converse* in the common sense of the word; he would lay hold of another person's suggestion, & then refine upon it, divide & subtilize it till he

[10] Carlyon I 130. Joseph Farington was fascinated with the report of Sir George Beaumont on 29 Nov 1803: ". . . *Coleridge*, a few years ago a violent Democrat but now quite opposite,—abt. 32 years old,—of great genius,—a Poet,—prodigious command of words,—has read everything." Farington (1978–) VI 2174.

[11] *L Life* 666; *L Works* I 351–2.

[12] Margaret Fletcher, Mrs Davy, in *W Mem* II 443; *W Prose* (1876) III 441–2.

had made it entirely his own. He borrowed largely, but he had a right to do so, for he gave away as largely. He is now too often dreamy; he rarely comes into contact with popular feelings & modes of thought.—You cannot incarnate him for a minute. The activity of his imagination, wch I must call morbid, disturbs his sense & recollection of facts. Many men have done wonderful things—Newton—Davy &c; but S. T. C. is the only wonderful man I ever knew.[13]

Wordsworth commented similarly to Samuel Rogers that the only intellect that ever astonished him became in later life "a little dreamy and hyper-metaphysical".[14] On 27 May 1830, after Wordsworth's remarks of October, Henry Nelson Coleridge brought Coleridge around to a comparison: "W's conversation runs round & round again in eddies—it never progresses—My fault is the ōr way—I skip from one thing to anr too fast & unconnectedly."[15]

As Coleridge was in a unique position to know how far he understood the meaning of his own words, and as moreover he was one of the most persistent and telling critics of his mental processes, conversational and otherwise, it is worth asking whether he perceived his leaps from one subject to the next as disruptions in his own thought or as sudden accelerations, simply too abrupt for his hearer, in the momentum of his progress from initiative through demonstration and illustration to full exploration.[16] Tentatively, supported by the dual assumption that he did not always converse the same way and that he was aware of conversing in more than one way, we can most usefully interpret his words on skipping "from one thing to another too fast and unconnectedly" as eliding two perceived faults: sometimes he leaped from one point to another that beckoned enticingly ahead, without making a secure logical connexion between them; at other times he saw the connexion—and on occasion even foresaw it as he began the periphrasis—but did not make the connexion clear to his audience. Because of Henry Nelson Coleridge's method of recording each subject in a separate entry, these faults do not lie on the surface of the *Table Talk*; neither disconnexion nor continuity can be found in his final record without attentive search.

Even the best known attempt to describe one of Coleridge's harangues as a series of leaps by Hartleian associations half buried in memory—the account by John Keats of an encounter on Hampstead Heath in April

[13] App D, below, from MS B ff 9–9v. For publication in his *QR* review of *PW* (1834) HNC added Sir Walter Scott among those thought by WW to have done wonderful things, and in print Newton became Georges Cuvier. *CH* 621.

[14] Alexander Dyce *Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers* ed Morchard Bishop (1952) 147n.

[15] MS B f 18v.

[16] The criteria come from C's "Essays on Method" in *Friend (CC)* I 448–524.

1819—can be shown to illustrate Wordsworth's analogy of a winding river.

I walked with him a[t] his alderman-after dinner pace for near two miles I suppose In those two Miles he broached a thousand things—let me see if I can give you a list—Nightingales, Poetry—on Poetical sensation—Metaphysics—Different genera and species of Dreams—Nightmare—a dream accompanied by a sense of touch—single and double touch—A dream related—First and second consciousness—the difference explained between will and Volition—so m[an]y metaphysicians from a want of smoking the second consciousness—Monsters—the Kraken—Mermaids—southey believes in them—southeys belief too much diluted—A Ghost story—Good morning—I heard his voice as he came towards me—I heard it as he moved away . . . Good Night!''[17]

The connectives from subject to subject, on the way from initiative to full demonstration for a novice, can be supplied from similar juxtapositions in the published works. The comprehensive index in each volume of *The Collected Works of S. T. Coleridge* makes the process available without detailed exposition here, but one can go representatively from Coleridge's description of his metaphysics as ''the referring of the mind to its own consciousness for truths indispensable to its own happiness'', on to ''those rapid alternations of the sleeping with the half-waking state, which is *the true witching time* . . . the fruitful matrix of Ghosts'' (in a passage on Luther's inkpot thrown at the devil), and on to a distinction between this state, when ''a sort of under-consciousness blends with our dreams'' and we ''dream *about* things'', and the fuller sleep of the nervous system when we ''*dream the things*''.[18] These passages equally illustrate the transitions from metaphysics to dreams to double touch to first and second consciousness to metaphysics again. A river of subliminal transitions can be similarly traced through many of the conversations recorded by Henry Nelson Coleridge.

In August 1814 Coleridge had analysed in a notebook the hazards of such an encounter with him as Keats had undergone:

There are two sorts of talkative fellows whom it would be injurious to confound/ & I, S. T. Coleridge, am the latter. The first sort is of those who use five hundred words more than needs to express an idea—that is not my case—few men, I will be bold to say, put more meaning into their words than I or choose them more deliberately & discriminatingly. The second sort is of those who use five hundred more ideas, images, reasons &c than there is any need of to arrive at their object/ till the only object arrived at is that the mind's eye of the bye-stander is dazzled with colors succeeding so rapidly as to leave one vague impression that there has been a great Blaze of colours all about something. Now this is my case—& a

[17] *The Letters of John Keats 1814–1821* ed Hyder Edward Rollins (2 vols Cambridge, Mass 1958) II 88–9.

[18] *Friend (CC)* I 108, 140; *SM (CC)* 80.

grievious fault it is/ my illustrations swallow up my thesis—I feel too intensely the omnipresence of all in each, platonically speaking—or psychologically my brain-fibres, or the spiritual Light which abides in the brain-marrow as visible Light appears to do in sundry rotten mackerel & other *smashy* matters, is of too general an affinity with all things/ and tho' it perceives the *difference* of things, yet is eternally pursuing the likenesses, or rather that which is common [between them]/ bring me two things that seem the very same, & then I am quick enough [not only] to shew the difference, even to hair-splitting—but to go on from circle to circle till I break against the shore of my Hearer's patience, or have my Concentricals dashed to nothing by a Snore—that is my ordinary mishap.[19]

This passage displays the same imagistic sense of "all in each" that Coleridge's talk must characteristically have contained.

The tape recorder has shown how fragmentary and uncompleted most casual discourse is. Newsmen learned that President Kennedy was no more given to complete sentences or explicit transitions than President Eisenhower had been. Before the tape recorder, it was impossible to cap-

[19] *CN* II 2372. C was more apologetic in late Nov 1828, when he learned, in his words, "that he is a most remorseless *Talker*—and that if his Ears were as long as his Tongue, his Consociates might well apprehend that their Patience would be *brayed*, tho' perhaps not *in a mortar*—and expect Rain in spite of Blue Skies and Sunshine". To Mrs Joshua Bates: *CL* VI 774.

He had been chastened by reading in *La Belle Assemblée* VIII (Dec 1828) 258–9 a tribute to Sir George Beaumont, signed "N. M.", published simultaneously in *The Anniversary* for 1829 ed Allan Cunningham pp 157–62: "We remember once of meeting at his table that wizard in conversation, Coleridge the poet. The discourse at first was discursive, and shifted with the shifting dishes; it glanced upon art, upon prose romances, and then shone full upon poetry. Coleridge burst out like a conflagration. We had met the inspired man before, and were aware of the untiring fascination of his eloquence, and how effectually he could keep a listener captive. It was at a midnight supper; he took up a prawn, and from that diminutive text preached upon the flux and reflux of the ocean, the wild theory of St. Pierre, the immensity of the leviathan, and the magnificence of the great deep. Had we supped with a whale entire, he could not have done more with his subject. At the baronet's table, however, he seemed less inclined to pursue his wild career, though verse presented an ample field, and Lady Beaumont found time to say, 'I wish, Mr. Coleridge, you would give us a volume of such poems as the Genevieve.' 'The Genevieve, my lady,' said the Bard, in a voice as musical as the inimitable poem itself, 'I shall give you a far worthier work than the Genevieve.' He then proceeded to draw the character of a work of a devout nature, in which his learning and his talent would be poured freely out; and if the excellence of the book equal the splendid summary of its contents, it will be a treasure to the church. From this a transition to the Revelations was easy and natural; but if it had been neither, the orator would have made it both, for he is unequalled in the art of transition, and never seems embarrassed for a moment. From the Revelations, the hand of his friend the Rev. Edward Irving was then seeking to lift the veil, and to this new and magnificent task the Poet turned with sparkling eyes and glowing brow—he had found a theme suitable to his own lofty imagination, and as mystical as his own mind. How he soared! He appeared to think that the Apocalypse was a divine poem rather than a Revelation." Can N. M. be the Nicholas Mitchell who turned on C, RS, and WW in *Poets of the Age* (1832)? *WL* (*L* rev) II 518n.

ture fully either nuance or detail in such conversation as Coleridge's. Within what was possible, Henry Nelson Coleridge's revisions in the manuscripts of Table Talk show that he often had to sacrifice the rhythm of spoken sentences in the more serviceable cause of retaining the key words that Coleridge had chosen "deliberately & discriminatingly". The redundancy of "ideas, images, reasons &c" that we can assume to have been normal in the actual conversation is absent from the earliest years of Henry Nelson Coleridge's record; even in the later years, if one can judge by comparison with the letters, notebooks, and fuller marginalia, the redundancy was usually lost in the interest of the intellectual kernel and highlighted phrase. Many who had listened to Coleridge at Highgate with enchantment or perplexity must have felt a sudden illumination as the subjects they had strained yearningly toward now flashed before them in the compact paragraphs of *Table Talk*.

When the great talkers are classified as to purpose or method—talking for victory, talking to entertain, talking to arouse—Coleridge usually emerges as the supreme monologuist who astounded, and astounded in part by seeming to need no external stimulus. It was Mme de Staël's definition of him, often quoted, that he was "a master of monologue, mais qu'il ne savait pas le dialogue".[20] Sensitive to the charge that he allowed the intrusion of no other voice, he protested once in 1819: "And even in conversation, I can affirm most sincerely that any interruption, or admonition that I have lost the bit and curb, and am reducing the conversation to a mono-drama, or dialogue (in which one of the two *dramatis personae* is forced to act the mute) of tongue *versus* ear, is received by me not only thankfully, but with unfeigned pleasure."[21] In the *Table Talk* itself, the entries for 29 June 1833 end with Coleridge beckoning to an unnamed entrant: "I am glad you came in to punctuate my discourse, which I fear has gone on for an hour without any stop at all."

[20] When HCR found Mme de Staël so quoted by HNC in *QR*—and in *TT* (1835) II 217n—he somehow believed that he was the only person she had honoured with her *bon mot* and therefore that he must have been HNC's hidden source (*CRD* I 201), but she had said it also to JTC at Coppet in 1814 after she had met C in Sept 1813: Bernard, Lord Coleridge *The Story of a Devonshire House* (1905) 241.

Joseph Cottle says that during his residence in Bristol C gave little chance for "true, interchangeable conversation": "On almost every subject on which he essayed to speak, he made an impassioned harangue of a quarter, or half an hour; so that inveterate talkers, while Mr. Coleridge was on the wing, generally suspended their own flight, and felt it almost a profanation to interrupt so impressive and mellifluous a speaker. This singular, if not happy peculiarity, occasioned even Madame de Stael to remark of Mr. C. that 'He was rich in a Monologue, but poor in a Dialogue.' " Cottle *Rem* 77. One of De Q's accounts of C as conversationalist cites Staël. *De Q Works* X 281.

[21] To Joseph Hughes: *CL* VI 1049.

Henry Nelson Coleridge explains both the prolongation and the compulsiveness as "the habit of his intellect, which was under a law of discoursing upon all subjects with reference to ideas or ultimate ends".[22] Although Coleridge preened himself on ability to lower his subjects to suit all kinds and conditions of listeners, he suffered less from complaints that he talked over the heads of his auditors than from his own certainty of indiscretions in the presence of strangers. He made a memorandum in 1804:

> In company, indeed with all except a very chosen few, never dissent from any one as to the *merits* of another/ especially, in your own supposed department/ but content yourself with praising in your turn the really good. . . . Coleridge! Coleridge! will you never learn to appropriate your conversation to your company? Is it not desecration, indelicacy, a proof of great weakness & even vanity to talk to &c &c, as if you [talk]ed [with Words]worth & Sir G. Beau[mont?][23]

How far the discretion of H. N. C. saved us from the indiscretions of S. T. C. cannot be known, but the manuscripts now published reveal more than the family thought it discreet to publish in 1835, and some of the reviewers professed to be shocked by a variety of casual remarks. The personal, derogatory remarks now revealed will afford, at worst, titillation.

Not all hearers of Coleridge or readers of the *Table Talk* were pleased to sacrifice indiscretion for elevation. To a charge that Coleridge's talk is difficult to follow, however, the retort of Dr Johnson seems just: "Sir, I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding."[24] In the perceptive footnote already cited, Henry Nelson Coleridge defended his uncle against Johnson's supposed superiority to "discursive and continuous" talkers like Burke and Coleridge, an assumption of superiority implicit in Mme de Staël's *bon mot*: "And if dialogue must be cut down in its meaning to small talk, I, for one, will admit that Coleridge, amongst his numberless qualifications, possessed it not. But I am sure that he could, when it suited him, converse as well as any one else, and with women he frequently did converse in a very winning and popular style, confining them, however, as well as he could, to the detail of facts or of their spontaneous emotions."[25] In 1827 Henry Nelson Coleridge had made a suggestion to Sara, his fiancée: "It would be well worth your while to be very attentive to your father's conversation, when you are with him, and endeavour afterwards to preserve some of

[22] Entry 36:545n, 4 Jul 1833, *TT* (1835) II 217n.

[23] *CN* II 2193.

[24] Jun 1784 in *Boswell's Life of Johnson* ed George Birkbeck Hill rev. L. F. Powell (6 vols Oxford 1934–50) IV 313.

[25] Entry 36:545n.

it, as I have done. Especially as he talks to you on plainer subjects.''[26] It was not altogether or even largely a matter of stooping. The lode of simplicity in Coleridge's temperament and character, overlooked in most studies of his intellectual and literary borrowings, put him into direct communion with those he loved and with innocent, kindly souls in general.

He seems in fact to have charmed by innocence as well as by eloquence. Women of taste but without the intellectual aggressiveness of a Staël tended to proclaim him abundantly lovable. ''Indeed'', concluded the widow of the actor Charles Mathews, ''I do not know whether he was not a more charming companion when he stooped his magnificent mind to the understanding of the less informed and little gifted, than when he conversed with higher intellects.''[27] The generous innocence that Anne Mathews illustrates in Coleridge's love of flowers was praised also by Sarah Flower Adams, the daughter of Coleridge's first publisher, who reports, in ''some such words'' as Coleridge's, a flowery apostrophe to an engraving (over Lamb's mantel) of a girl half listening to an admonition against the roses of life.[28] Anne Gillman wrote after Coleridge's

[26] MS E, following E 57.

[27] *Memoirs of Charles Mathews* (4 vols 1838–9) III 190. Not every woman allowed herself to be taken in. Katharine Byerley Thomson (1797–1862), who had suffered the disillusionment of going to the Royal Institution when Coleridge announced that he had left his lecture at home, made a general assessment: ''. . . he was *so* eloquent—there was such a combination of wit and poetry in his similes—such fancy, such a finish in his illustrations; yet . . . It was all fancy, flourish, sentiment.'' *Recollections of Literary Characters and Celebrated Places* (2 vols 1854) II 59–60. For Mrs Thomson's memory of C's tearful narration to her, when a child, of the woeful history of Mary of Buttermere see II 58. There was never a chance that the utilitarian Harriet Martineau would succumb either to C's sentiment or to his economics: *Autobiography* (3 vols 1877) I 396–9.

[28] ''After some time he moved round the room, to read the different engravings that hung upon the walls. One, over the mantel piece, especially interested his fancy. There were only two figures in the picture, both women. One was of a lofty, commanding stature, with a high intellectual brow, and of an abbess-like deportment. She was standing in grave majesty, with the finger uplifted, in the act of monition to a young girl beside her. The face was in profile, and somewhat severe in its expression; but this was relieved by the richness and grace of the draperies in which she was profusely enveloped. The girl was in the earliest and freshest spring of youth, lovely and bright, with a somewhat careless and inconsiderate air, and she seemed but half inclined to heed the sage advice of her elder companion. She held in her hand a rose, with which she was toying, and had she been alive you would have expected momentarily to see it taken between the taper fingers, and scattered in wilful profusion. Coleridge uttered an expression of admiration, and then, as if talking to himself, apostrophized in some such words as these: 'There she stands, with the world all before her: to her it is as a fairy dream, a vision of unmingled joy. To her it is as is that lovely flower, which woos her by its bright hue and fragrant perfume. Poor child! must thou too be re-

death to his daughter: ''We believe that he possessed a more heavenly nature than was ever before given to Man—yet not that he was perfect—But surely he was born with sweetness beyond compare—''.[29]

Although the motivations of that letter might make its sentiment suspect, Thomas Allsop (whom Mrs Gillman and Sara Coleridge regarded as a radical boor) wrote publicly in an almost identical vein: ''Of all the men, ordinary or extraordinary, I have ever known, Coleridge was the one in whom the *child-like*, the almost infantile, love and joyance, giving birth to or rather intermingled with perfect sympathy and identity of feeling, most predominated. His mind was at once the most masculine, feminine, and yet *child-like* (and, in that sense, the most innocent) which it is possible to image.''[30] All those closest to Coleridge, if we exempt Mrs Coleridge and Sara Hutchinson on the ground of their own temperaments, have left witness of his sweetness and simplicity.

The innocence they agree on would have coursed through many of the conversations from which Henry Nelson Coleridge and others have dislodged selections, but innocence was harder to make interesting at second hand than learning, anecdote, brilliantly keen distinctions, and touches of malice. Few of the reports from men gathered by Richard W. Armour and Raymond F. Howes in *Coleridge the Talker: A Series of Contemporary Descriptions and Comments* include among the sayings that astounded them any specific instances of kind or innocent language. They were astounded by what other talkers could not attain, the breadth of his knowledge, the continuous flow, and the rhythm of surprises in his *Weltanschauung*.

The charges of unintelligibility measure his audience. One can retain full sympathy with his listeners while categorising those who dispraised

minded of the thorns that lurk beneath? Turn thee to thy monitress! she bids thee clasp not too closely pleasures that lure but to wound thee. Look into her eloquent eyes; listen to her pleading voice; her words are words of wisdom; garner them up in thy heart; and when the evil days come, the days in which thou shalt say ''I find no pleasure in them,'' remember her as thus she stood, and, with uppointing finger, bade thee think of the delights of heaven—that heaven which is ever ready to receive the returning wanderer to its rest.' '' *Monthly Repository* NS IX (1835) 167; Bertram Dobell *Sidelights on Charles Lamb* (1903) 307–9 (var).

[29] VCL S MS F 3.71. Cf the Gillmans' phrases on the tablet in St Michael's Church, Highgate: ''Under the pressure of a long | And most painful disease | His disposition was unalterably sweet and angelic; | He was an ever-during, ever-loving friend, | The gentlest and kindest teacher, | The most engaging home companion.'' Mary Shelley's brief praise on 18 Jan 1824 was the highest she could give: ''Seeing Coleridge last night reminded me forcibly of past times: his beautiful descriptions reminded me of Shelley's conversations.'' *Mary Shelley's Journal* ed Frederick L. Jones (Norman, Oklahoma 1947) 192.

[30] Allsop II 175–6.

on this score as (*a*) persons—the largest group—who were unfamiliar with much of his terminology and most of his topics, (*b*) persons of inferior intelligence or slow wit, whatever the degree of knowledge, (*c*) persons with an impatient disinclination to listen, (*d*) persons of opposed or differing opinion who were irritated into inattention by aspects of his thought or his expression, (*e*) persons envious or temperamentally unsympathetic, (*f*) persons who would have preferred to do the talking, and (*g*) persons who embodied a mixture of these characteristics. Is this categorisation intended to deny that Coleridge was ever unintelligible? Not at all. He was capable of speaking what was not fully intelligible to him, let alone his hearers; he was also capable—to go beyond Lamb's phrase—of making not only the unintelligible but also the intelligible less than plain. Nor does the categorisation mean that we have no surviving report of discontent from a hearer in better command of several of Coleridge's subjects than he was.

We may take as the norm comments by Samuel Rogers to Alexander Dyce:

> Coleridge was a marvellous talker. One morning, when Hookham Frere also breakfasted with me, Coleridge talked for three hours without intermission about poetry, and so admirable, that I wish every word he uttered had been written down.
>
> But sometimes his harangues were quite unintelligible, not only to myself, but to others.[31]

[31] Dyce *Recollections of Rogers* 146. Henry Hart Milman is similarly reported on 23 Jul 1854, like Rogers at second hand: "The Dean used often to see and hear S. T. Coleridge, but his wonderful talk was far too unvaried from day to day; also, there were some absolute deficiencies in it, such as the total absence of wit; still, it was very remarkable. 'But,' he added, 'I used to be wicked enough to divide it into three parts: one third was admirable, beautiful in language and exalted in thought; another third was sheer absolute nonsense; and of the remaining third, I knew not whether it were sense or nonsense.' " Caroline Fox *Memories of Old Friends* . . . ed Horace N. Pym (Philadelphia 1882) 320. This work (p 71) gives us a version of C's rapid departure from Rome to escape Napoleon's retaliation against C's articles in the *M Post* "very offensive to Napoleon's dignity".

The painter Joseph Farington reacted somewhat like Rogers and Milman when he first met C at Sir George Beaumont's 25 Mar 1804: "The evening was passed not in conversation but in listening to a succession of opinions, & explanations delivered by Coleridge, to which I attended from a desire to form a judgment of his ability. It was all metaphysical, frequently perplexed, and certainly at times without understanding His subject. Occasionally there was some brilliance, but I particularly noticed that His *illustrations* generally disappointed me & rather weakened than enforced what He had before said. . . . His Dialect particularly when reading is what I shd. call *broad Devonshire*, for a gentleman.—His manner was good natured & civil & He went on like one who was accustomed to take the lead in the Company He goes into." Farington (1978–) VI 2276.

Rogers's example of another who "could not make head or tail of Coleridge's oration" (on a different occasion) was Wordsworth.

Perhaps there was advantage in having an intensive exposure to Coleridge for a limited number of months, not (unless you were Lamb) for life—the optimum time was about two years for Gioacchino de' Prati (1790–1863), the Italian patriot brought to Coleridge by Sir James Stuart and his wife's sister, Mrs Henry Woodcock:

> We did not leave the house without visiting the garden, which was a favourite place of our poet; here he took me under his arm, and we began to converse together in German. Coleridge spoke this language quite correctly, and with a soft Hanoverian accent. German literature stood highly in his favour; this sympathy for the German was only equalled by his aversion for the French. He seemed to take so much interest in me, that he made me promise to be with him the next day an hour or two before the company which was wont to visit him, did assemble. "We shall," said he "have a private talk here in the garden if the weather be fine, otherwise you will excuse my taking you in my room, which is my place of rest, my study, and my library."
>
> On returning home, Mrs. W., the sister of the noble baronet, who introduced me to C., asked me how I was satisfied with my new acquaintance. "Satisfied," answered I, "I am delighted, enraptured; I find concentrated in him all the talents which I have left with regret on the continent. As a poet, he reminds me of Schiller, as a philosopher, he equals Schelling, and as a speaker, he excels Fichte. As far as I could judge of those different talents combined together, he stands between Göethe and Lessing. I shall see him to morrow, and I expect a great treat from a private conversation which he promised me."
>
> Accordingly I went, and my visits were repeated at least once a week for two years running, when by a series of mishaps I was obliged to leave the metropolis. . . .
>
> Men of real genius have something in them, which distinguishes them from men of mere talent. This something is like all internal powers of Nature—indescribable, and yet must be felt by every one who comes within their atmosphere. It is a latent light or life, which emanates from them, and is possessed of electrical generative power. If a man of talent speaks, we listen with satisfaction, we may learn that which we do not know; but, if a man of genius unfolds the depths of his thoughts, his thoughts become as it were seeds, which germinate within our mind, and make us think and feel that which we never would have thought or felt before, unless previously acted upon by the master mind. This is the cause of the charm and the power of the conversations of S. T. Coleridge. Whether he was speaking on metaphysics, theology, poetry, history, or the most trifling subjects of common occurrence, his genius threw a new light upon the object of his discourse, and compelled his company to think in their turn, and to examine the question in a point of view, which, without his aid, would for ever have escaped their minds. His friends assembled at Mr. Gillman's towards tea time, and remained there till late in the evening.
>
> I often spent the morning and afternoon with him, and had the pleasure of conversing with him for whole hours, which I reckon among the most agreeable and instructive ones I ever spent in my life. For he was not only a deep philosopher

and poet, but a man possessed of great knowledge in many sciences, and was moreover the most pleasant and humorous companion in the world. No day elapsed in which he did not amuse me with some pleasant anecdote, in which he or some of his friends cut the principal figure.[32]

Even John Taylor Coleridge, who had listened carefully as early as 1811, grew weary despite continuing wonder:

June 1825.—This week I have seen a good deal of my Uncle Sam. He sate with me one day in Chambers for a long time and he dined here on Friday. . . . He is certainly a most surprising man, but I cannot say that his conversation instructs or amuses me much. It is somewhat obscure, partly from real depth and height, partly also I suspect from the imperfectness of the expression. He astonishes you, he electrifies you almost as he goes on, but you cannot remember the train afterward, nor much of the separate members. But after all, the universality of his knowledge is the most wonderful part of him—he is a real improvisatore on *every* subject and a quack in none.[33]

Against this norm, Sir Henry Holland (1788–1873) is the almost perfect embodiment of all the designated traits of discontent:

I saw Coleridge . . . rarely, and never took a place among the worshippers at his shrine. I recollect him only as an eloquent but intolerable talker; impatient of the speech and opinions of others; very inconsecutive, and putting forth with a plethora of words misty dogmas in theology and metaphysics, partly of German origin, which he never seemed to me to clear up to his own understanding or to that of others. What has come out posthumously of his philosophy has not removed this imputation upon it. I suspect his "Table Talk," as we have it in the very agreeable volume bearing this title, to have been sifted as well as abridged by the excellent judgment of the Editor.[34]

Leigh Hunt was interested in few of Coleridge's subjects outside belles-lettres and the political opinions that Coleridge opposed to his own. Fortunately Hunt was also a conveyer of personal and domestic detail:

I heard him the other day, under the grove at Highgate, repeat one of his melodious lamentations, as he walked up and down, his voice undulating in a stream of music, and his regrets of youth sparkling with visions ever young. At the same time, he did me the honour to show me, that he did not think so ill of all modern liberalism as some might suppose, denouncing the pretensions of the money-getting in a style which I should hardly venture upon, and never could equal; and asking, with a triumphant eloquence, what chastity itself were worth, if it were a casket, not to keep love in, but hate, and strife, and worldliness? On the same occasion, he built up a metaphor out of a flower, in a style surpassing the famous

[32] *Penny Satirist* 6 Oct 1838 p 2, 13 Oct p 4; partly reprinted in *C Talker* xxi.

[33] "Diary of John Taylor Coleridge" in Bernard, Lord Coleridge *This for Remembrance* (1925) 42.

[34] *Recollections of Past Life* (1872) 205–6.

passage in Milton; deducing it from its root in religious mystery, and carrying it up into the bright-consummate flower, "the bridal chamber of reproductiveness." Of all "the Muse's mysteries," he is as great a high-priest as Spenser; and Spenser himself might have gone to Highgate to hear him talk, and thank him for his "Ancient Mariner." His voice does not always sound very sincere; but perhaps the humble and deprecating tone of it, on those occasions, is out of consideration for his hearer's infirmities, rather than produced by his own. He recited his "Kubla Khan," one morning, to Lord Byron, in his Lordship's house in Piccadilly, when I happened to be in another room. I remember the other's coming away from him, highly struck with his poem, and saying how wonderfully he talked. This is the impression of every body who hears him.

It is no secret that Mr. Coleridge lives in the Grove at Highgate with a friendly family, who have sense and kindness enough to know that they do themselves an honour by looking after the comforts of such a man. His room looks upon a delicious prospect of wood and meadow, with coloured gardens under the window, like an embroidery to the mantle. I thought, when I first saw it, that he had taken up his dwelling-place like an abbot. Here he cultivates his flowers, and has a set of birds for his pensioners, who come to breakfast with him. He may be seen taking his daily stroll up and down, with his black coat and white locks, and a book in his hand; and is a great acquaintance of the little children. His main occupation, I believe, is reading. He loves to read old folios, and to make old voyages with Purchas and Marco Polo; the seas being in good visionary condition, and the vessel well-stocked with botargoes.[35]

In contrast with Hunt, Philarète Chasles was prepared upon arrival at Highgate (probably in 1820) to grasp Coleridge's philosophical and political thought:

In all his conversations which were not direct instruction, one could not but lament some obscurity and mistiness; but in listening and endeavouring to follow

[35] James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784–1859) *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries; with Recollections of the Author's Life, and of His Visit to Italy* (2nd ed 2 vols 1828) II 52–4.

Thomas Colley Grattan had heard C in Brussels in June 1828; he introduced specifically remembered comments with a general impression of drowsy flow: "In almost everything that fell from Coleridge that evening there was a dash of deep philosophy—even in the outpourings of his egotism—touches not to be given without the whole of what they illustrated. In a word, the impression made on me by his voluptuous and indolent strain of talk, flowing in a quiet tone of cadenced eloquence, was that he was by far the most pleasing talker, but by no means the most powerful, I had ever heard. He led you on beside him by the persuasive elegance of diction, but never drove you forward by the impetuous energy of argument. 'He had,' as Bishop Burnet said of William Penn, 'a tedious, luscious way that was not apt to overcome a man's reason though it might tire his patience.' But Coleridge's talk was not absolutely tiresome, only somewhat drowsy. I thought it would be pleasant to fall asleep to the gushing melody of his discourse, which was rich in information and suavity of thought. But there was something too dreamy, too vapoury to rouse one to the close examination of what he said. Logic there no doubt was, but it was enveloped in clouds. You were therefore delighted to take everything for granted, for everything seemed to convince—because it took a shape and colour so seductive." *Beaten Paths; and Those Who Trod Them* (2 vols 1862) II 113–14.

him, I experienced nothing of that weariness and disgust that the systems of Bentham caused in me, neither that vacuum which the theatrical and pompous Foscolo induced. Vibrating to all emotions, capable of comprehending all systems, possessing rich treasures of memory and a truly independent spirit, with a taste for all philosophical reveries and caprices, and luxuriating in beauty, with the ability to reproduce his brilliant and deep thought with all the fascination of genius, Coleridge appeared to me a sort of mystical Diderot. Unhappily, the feebleness of his frame, much increased from his fatal indulgence in opium, did not permit him to draw up as a whole his magnificent system of aesthetic Christianity, of which he has only bequeathed some vestiges.

It would be impossible to enumerate the variety and depth of studies from which he reaped such fruits. He was familiar with the brilliant prose of Jeremy Taylor, the sonnets of Bowles, and the essays of Addison; also the works of Jean Jacques and Rabelais, Crebillon and Goldsmith, enchanted him. Romance, history, poetry, the dramatic art, the fine arts, he essayed them all, and enjoyed all. The erudite and occult sciences claimed his regard; the metaphysics of Fichte, Kant, Winckelmann, and Hegel counted him among their adepts. Coleridge has neared all shores.[36]

William Jerdan, who claimed possession of a device for stopping Coleridge's flow, reported also that Coleridge was often wrought to tears by thinking of a man who remembered something he said:

About this time [1824] I became acquainted with Mr. Coleridge, who was then residing with his stanch friend, Mr. Gillman, at Highgate; and on many occasions enjoyed the pleasure of his social conversation, I was going to say, but it must be called what it was, most eloquent outpourings, *de totidem rebus et quibusdem aliis*. I am not aware that I am yet overtaken by the foible of garrulous old age; but in my earlier years and prime I know I was accounted an excellent conversationalist, chiefly because I was an excellent listener, and also for a certain knack I had of drawing out the lions of the company. Thus by exposing, or rather immolating myself, by provoking Hook, I could always pitch him into the right key; and with Coleridge, by throwing in some extraneous vagary, I rarely failed to divert him into other topics from any dissertation which was becoming too far prolonged or too metaphysical. Coleridge gave lectures full of glowing ideas and glorious imagery; but they did not contribute much of the *aurum palpabile*; and yet he was wonderfully enthusiastic about them. A gentleman who had heard him "discourse" a number of years before, repeated a passage which had made a strong impression, and dwelt upon his memory; and Coleridge's delight was measureless. His countenance gleamed with ecstacy, and his large grey eye filled with tears of exultation. It was curious to witness the extraordinary effect of so trifling an incident; but I have heard him relate the anecdote and repeat the passage many times as the highest compliment ever paid to him.[37]

[36] Victor Euphémion Philarète Chasles (1798–1873) "Improvisations of Coleridge" *Notabilities in France and England* (New York 1853) 122. The chapter on C, from *Études sur les hommes et les moeurs aux XIX^e^ siècle* (Paris 1850), is reprinted in *Mémoires* (2 vols Paris 1876–7) I 167–73. Chasles attempts to place C with regard to German philosophy.

[37] *The Autobiography of William Jerdan, with His Literary, Political, and Social Reminiscences and Correspondence During the Last Fifty Years* (4 vols 1852–3) III 34–5.

With the lapse of another fourteen years, Jerdan remembered more favourably "the Old Man Eloquent" and the method of diverting him:

He could rarely fatigue an attentive listener. It was only when his "philosophy" (with which he abounded on all occasions) betrayed him into abstruse paradoxes and metaphysical refinements that his rich colloquialism took the shape of dissertation, and was delivered with a fervent eloquence, most powerful in lecture, but subversive of conversation; and these bursts were so admirable that there was seldom any disposition to interrupt them. When it did occur that they went wandering into all cognate matters and consonant sentiments, it was the easiest thing possible, by throwing in some absurd remark or irrelevant question, to divert the current into quite another channel, and enjoy and re-enjoy the versatility and depths of an inexhaustible mind.[38]

Bryan Waller Procter (1787–1874), with a memory largely for anecdotes, was both amused and respectful:

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was like the Rhine,

That exulting and abounding river.

He was full of words, full of thought; yielding both in an unfailing flow, that delighted many, and perplexed a few of his hearers. He was a man of prodigious miscellaneous reading, always ready to communicate all he knew. From Alpha to Omega, all was familiar to him. He was deep in Jacob Behmen. He was intimate with Thomas Aquinas and Quevedo; with Bacon and Kant, with "Peter Simple" and "Tom Cringle's Log;" and with all the old divines of both England and France. The pages of all the infidels had passed under his eye and made their legitimate (and not more than their legitimate) impression. He went from flower to flower, throughout the whole garden of learning, like the butterfly or the bee,—most like the bee. He talked with everybody, about anything. He was so full of information that it was a relief to him to part with some portion of it to others. It was like laying down part of his burden. He knew little or nothing of the art of painting; yet I have heard him discuss the merits and defects of a picture of the poorest class, as though it had sprung from the inspiration of Raffaelle. He would advert to certain parts, and surmise that it had been touched upon here and there; would pronounce upon its character and school, its *chiaroscuro*, the gradations, the handling, etc., when in fact it had no mark or merit or character about it. It became transfigured, sublimated, by the speaker's imagination, which far excelled both the picture and its author. Coleridge had a weighty head, dreaming grey eyes, full, sensual lips, and a look and manner which were entirely wanting in firmness and decision. His motions also appeared weak and undecided, and his voice had nothing of the sharpness or ring of a resolute man. When he spoke his words were thick and slow, and when he read poetry his utterance was altogether a chant.

One day, when dining with some lawyers, he had been more than usually eloquent and full of talk. His perpetual interruptions were resented by one of the guests, who said to his neighbour, "I'll stop this fellow;" and thereupon addressed the master of the house with "G——, I've not forgotten my promise to

[38] *Men I Have Known* (1866) 120.

give you the extract from 'The Pandects.' It was the ninth chapter that you were alluding to. It begins: 'Ac veteres quidam philosophi.' '' ''Pardon me, sir,'' interposed Coleridge, ''there I think you are in error. The ninth chapter begins in this way, 'Incident saepe causae,' etc.'' It was in vain to refer to anything on the supposition that the poet was ignorant, for he really had some acquaintance with every subject. I imagine that no man had ever read so many books and at the same time had digested so much.

Coleridge was prodigal of his words, which in fact he could with difficulty suppress; but he seldom talked of himself or of his affairs. He was very speculative, very theological, very metaphysical, and not unfrequently threw in some little pungent sentence, characteristic of the defects of some of his acquaintance. In illustration of his unfailing talk, I will give an account of one of his days, when I was present. He had come from Highgate to London, for the sole purpose of consulting a friend about his son Hartley (''our dear Hartley''), towards whom he expressed, and I have no doubt felt, much anxiety. He arrived about one or two o'clock, in the midst of a conversation, which immediately began to interest him. He struck into the middle of the talk very soon, and held the ''ear of the house'' until dinner made its appearance about four o'clock. He then talked all through the dinner, all the afternoon, all the evening, with scarcely a single interruption. He expatiated on this subject and on that; he drew fine distinctions; he made subtle criticisms. He descended to anecdotes, historical, logical, rhetorical; he dealt with law, medicine, and divinity, until, at last, five minutes before eight o'clock, the servant came in and announced that the Highgate stage was at the corner of the street, and was waiting to convey Mr. Coleridge home. Coleridge immediately started up oblivious of all time, and said, in a hurried voice, ''My dear Z——, I will come to you some other day, and talk to you about our dear Hartley.'' He had quite forgotten his son and everybody else, in the delight of having such an enraptured audience.[39]

For the early years most reports of Coleridge's conversation derive from encounters with him on walking tours, in his lodgings, at dinner parties (or Rogers's breakfasts), or on visits to such convivial friends as Charles and Mary Lamb. Soon after he went to live with James and Anne Gillman at Moreton House, Highgate Hill, in 1816, friends began to bring visitors there, increasingly on Thursday evenings until those evenings became an open house to friends and institutionalised as a ''class'' in 1822, with few interruptions until 1829, when Coleridge wrote to Allsop of ''our former Thursday Evening *Conver-* or to mint a more appropriate term, *One*versazioni''.[40] The Thursdays were suspended in late 1830 through most of 1831. At 3, The Grove, Highgate, where the Gillmans moved in December 1823 (with a house-warming for 150 guests on 1 June 1824), there was a special upper room for Coleridge; in his

[39] *An Autobiographical Fragment* . . . ed Coventry Patmore (1877) 144–7. Procter dates this episode 1823. After severe trials to C in 1820–2, HC had gone to the Lakes, whence the reports to C were favourable. *CL* v 248, 255, 268n, 273, 286, 295, 335.

[40] *CL* vi 790.

room, rather than in the parlour or the garden, visitors gathered during the long periods of illness in his final five years.

Coleridge was seldom "visible" before noon; the dinner hour was four—later a more fashionable five or five-thirty, but on Thursdays the hour of dining remained four, in order that they might "see a few intelligent friends from Town—from 6 to 10 or 11".[41] Philarète Chasles, writing of an occasion in 1820, or perhaps more likely 1822 or 1823:

> We arrived at eight at the small but elegant residence of Coleridge; about thirty persons were already assembled in a small blue room, simply furnished. Coleridge was discoursing. Standing in front of the chimney upon which he leaned back, with head erect and arms crossed, his dreamy eyes lost in abstractions, transported by the inspirations of his own genius, he seemed to be addressing, not the auditors, but replying to his own thoughts. His voice was vibratory, rich and full, his features harmonious, his ample brow, shaded by dark brown curls, in which here and there some silver lines intruded, the beautiful contour of his mouth, sweet in expression, also the softness of his expressive eyes, won favour unheard.[42]

Chasles was a voluminous and rapid essayist, critic, and novelist; one wonders about the brown hair merely touched with silver and about the audience of thirty ("une trentaine de personnes"). In July 1825 Coleridge wrote to Daniel Stuart:

> There is one thing too, that I can not help considering as a recommendation to our Evenings, that in addition to a few Ladies & pretty Lasses we have seldom more than 5 or 6 in company, and these generally of as many different professions or pursuits—. A few weeks ago we had present, two Painters, two Poets, one Divine, an eminent Chemist & Naturalist, a Major, a Naval Captain & Voyager, a Physician, a colonial Chief Justice, a Barrister and a Baronet—& this was the most numerous Meeting, we ever had—[43]

A year later, mildly protesting the perception of Edward Coleridge that his uncle's mind was cloudy and eddying, Coleridge again emphasised the variety of persons "that had at different times been with me during the last 3 or four months—Merchant, Manufacturer, Physician, Member of Parliament & keen politician, chemist, Clergymen, *poetic* Ladies, Painters, Musical Men, Barristers & Political Economists—to each of whom, in turn, I had talked in his own way, & . . . they had all expressed their admiration of the *clear* point of view, in which I placed things".[44]

[41] *CL* IV 783, V 365, VI 532, 584, 732, 746; *C at H* 143.

[42] Chasles *Notabilities in France and England* 119.

[43] *CL* V 474.

[44] *CL* VI 592. Richard Monckton Milnes, 1st Baron Houghton (1809–85), recalled publicly, at the unveiling of the bust of C in Westminster Abbey (1885), that when he and Arthur Hallam visited C as mere students from Cambridge, he "received them as Goethe or as Socrates might have done". James Pope-Hennessy *Monckton Milnes* (2 vols New York 1951–5) II 254.

In a marginal note defending his schedule, "seldom up, till 12 at noon", he expatiated: "Too true; and add that he is as seldom in bed, till 3 in the morning; but likewise do not forget, that from 12 to 4, from 7 to 10, and from 11 to 3, he is at work, either collecting, or correcting, or composing."[45] The results of that working schedule were bestowed upon the friends and the variety of professional persons who assembled after 6 P.M. one evening a week.

We have at second hand the first impressions of Mary Pridham, who married Derwent Coleridge in December 1827: "I remember Mrs. Derwent Coleridge's telling me of her recollections of her father-in-law in her early married life. She listened with great wonder, she said, to the flow of his discourse; there was no hesitation or pause—on and on it went. The bedroom candles would be brought in and placed on a table near the door of the drawing-room. Coleridge would move slowly across the room, continuing his discourse the while, continuing it as he went through the hall to the staircase, continuing it as he slowly mounted the stairs, until his voice was lost in the distance."[46]

What had been marvellous in a boy of sixteen became at Highgate a marvel conditioned by one's expectations and by Coleridge's failing health. Charles Valentine Le Grice, a fellow student at Christ's Hospital and Cambridge, after almost forty years saw the ancient wonder again on 18 June 1833 at the Gillmans' and on 26 June at Trinity College:

> I visited Coleridge at Highgate. A most melancholy sight—his hair white: his frame debilitated—an aged broken down man! His faculties still—shall I say perfect—this I fear I cannot say—but still predominant—his talk eloquent. He spoke of Wordsworth—Scott—Ossian—Brougham. I listened—and was full of sad thoughts. O Coleridge! and does the tale of thy life end in this? . . .
>
> O how changed! All things are changed! I deeply see and feel that "All is vanity". I write this still with a heart grateful for many blessings.[47]

Emerson, an eager disciple, also arrived too late for the fulfilment of his best hopes, on 5 Aug 1833: "I was in his company for about an hour, but . . . his discourse . . . was often like so many printed paragraphs in his book—perhaps the same—so readily did he fall into certain commonplaces. As I might have foreseen, the visit was rather a spectacle than a conversation, of no use beyond the satisfaction of my curiosity. He was

[45] Annotation on *The Dramatic Works of Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher* ed George Colman (4 vols 1811) III flyleaf: *CM (CC)* I 392.

[46] Ellis Yarnall *Wordsworth and the Coleridges* (1899) 133.

[47] Richard Madden "The Old Familiar Faces: An Essay in the light of some recently discovered documents of Charles Valentine Le Grice referring to Lamb, Coleridge and Wordsworth" *Charles Lamb Bulletin* NS No 6 (Apr 1974) 115.

old and pre-occupied, and could not bend to a new companion and think with him.''[48] He had written of Coleridge in a commonplace book of 1824–36: ''He is a god to me who shall rightly define & divide.''[49] But in 1833 he had things of his own to say and much to ask; Coleridge, though frail, had attacked Unitarianism with vigour; and Emerson had read Carlyle.

Carlyle was both the most dyspeptic and the most eloquent of Coleridge's detractors. Perhaps he knew how much he owed to Coleridge, how effectively Coleridge had anticipated his exploitation of German thought, and how solidly—despite the opium, adenoids, and other infirmities—Coleridge had earned what all Carlyle's emotions told him was excessive attention from disciples who could just as well have been Carlyle's. His first surviving report went on 24 June 1824 to his brother John:

> Besides Irving I have seen many other curiosities. Not the least of these I reckon Coleridge, the Kantean metaphysician and quondam Lake poet. I will tell you all about our interview *when we meet*. Figure a fat flabby incurvated personage, at once short, rotund and relaxed, with a watery mouth, a snuffy nose, a pair of strange brown timid yet earnest looking eyes, a high tapering brow, and a great bush of grey hair—you will have some faint idea of Coleridge. He is a kind, good soul, full of religion and affection, and poetry and animal magnetism. His cardinal sin is that he wants *will*; he has no resolution, he shrinks from pain or labour in any of its shapes. His very attitude bespeaks this: he never straightens his knee joints, he stoops with his fat ill shapen shoulders, and in walking he does not tread but shovel and slide—my father would call it *skluiffing*. He is also always busied to keep by strong and frequent inhalations the water of his mouth from overflowing; and his eyes have a look of anxious impotence; he *would* do with all his heart, but he knows he dare not. The conversation of the man is much as I anticipated. A forest of thoughts; some true, many false, most part dubious, all of them ingenious in some degree, often in a high degree. But there is no method in his talk; he wanders like a man sailing among many currents, whithersoever his lazy mind directs him—; and what is more unpleasant he preaches, or rather soliloquizes: he cannot speak; he can only ''*tal-k*'' (so he names it). Hence I found him unprofitable, even tedious: but we parted very good friends I promising to go back and see him some other evening—a promise I fully intend to keep. I sent him a copy of Meister about which we had some friendly talk. I reckon him a man of great and useless genius—a strange not at all a great man.[50]

He wrote more colourfully in August to Thomas Murray:

[48] Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) *English Traits* (1856) 7.

[49] *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson* ed William H. Gilman et al (14 vols Cambridge, Mass 1960–78) VI (ed Ralph H. Orth) 209. Emerson copied passages from *TT* (1835) in *Journals* VI 174, 188, 193, 200, 209, 341.

[50] *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (Durham, N. C. 1970–) III 90–1.

Charles Lamb is a ricketty creature in body and mind, sprawls about and walks as if his body consisted of four ill-conditioned flails, and talks as if he were quarter drunk with ale and half with laudanum. Coleridge is a steam-engine of a hundred horses power—with the boiler burst. His talk is resplendent with imagery and the shows of thought; you listen as to an oracle, and find yourself no jot the wiser. He is without beginning or middle or end. A round fat oily yet impatient little man, his mind seems totally beyond his own controul; he speaks incessantly, not thinking or imagining or remembering, but combining all these processes into one; as a rich and lazy housewife might mingle her soup and fish and beef and custard into one unspeakable mass and present it trueheartedly to her astonished guests.[51]

To Jane Welsh in November he used one of Coleridge's favourite similes: "Poor Coleridge is like the hulk of a huge ship; his mast and sails and rudder have rotted away."[52] John, the brother, educated to be a doctor, was readier to receive instruction. On 16 May 1830 he wrote to Thomas: "Coleridge has been unwell of late, but is now getting better. I saw him yesterday for the second time. I believe there is no man in the island puts more thought through himself."[53] But Thomas Carlyle, as Charles Richard Sanders has summarised the case, "might have been a happier man if there had never been a Coleridge".[54]

Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859), who shared Carlyle's envy of Coleridge, particularly of his subtler grasp of German thought, was able to respond with a nearer balance. In a first piece after Coleridge's death, which scandalised all Coleridge's friends, he insisted on the logical cohesion of the transitions in Coleridge's talk.[55] He returned for further appraisal in 1845:

There is another accomplishment of Coleridge's, less broadly open to the judgment of this generation, and not at all of the next—viz. his splendid art of conversation,—on which it will be interesting to say a word. Ten years ago, when the music of this rare performance had not yet ceased to vibrate in men's ears, what a sensation was gathering amongst the educated classes on this particular subject! What a tumult of anxiety prevailed to "hear Mr. Coleridge," or even to talk with a man who *had* heard him. Had he lived till this day, not Paganini would have been so much sought after. That sensation is now decaying, because a new generation has emerged during the ten years since his death. But many still remain whose sympathy (whether of curiosity in those who did *not* know him or of admiration in those who *did*) still reflects as in a mirror the great stir upon this

[51] Ibid III 139.

[52] Ibid III 199. For Carlyle's most famous account of C, in his *Life of Sterling*, see App N. vol II, below.

[53] National Library of Scotland MS 1775 A. 60, quoted in C. Richard Sanders "The Background of Carlyle's Portrait of Coleridge in *The Life of John Sterling*" *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* LV (1973) 44–5.

[54] *Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement* (Durham, N. C. 1942) 151.

[55] In *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* 1834: *De Q Works* II 152–3.

subject which then was moving in the world. To these, if they should inquire for the great distinguishing principle of Coleridge's conversation, we might say that it was the power of vast combination "in linked sweetness long drawn out". He gathered into focal concentration the largest body of objects, *apparently* disconnected, that any man ever yet, by any magic, could assemble, or, *having* assembled, could manage. His great fault was that, by not opening sufficient spaces for reply, or suggestion, or collateral notice, he not only narrowed his own field, but he grievously injured the final impression. For, when men's minds are purely passive, when they are not allowed to react, then it is that they collapse most, and that their sense of what is said must ever be feeblest. Doubtless there must have been great conversational masters elsewhere, and at many periods; but in this lay Coleridge's characteristic advantage, that he was a great natural power, and also a great artist. He was a power in the art; and he carried a new art into the power.[56]

[56] "Coleridge and Opium-Eating" *Bl Mag* LVII (1845) 129; *De Q Works* v 204–5 (var).

In an essay on "Conversation" in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* Oct 1847, De Q found C below the ideal talker: ". . . all reputation for brilliant talking is a visionary thing, and rests upon a sheer impossibility: viz. upon such a histrionic performance in a state of insulation from the rest of the company as could not be effected, even for a single time, without a rare and difficult collusion, and could not, even for that single time, be endurable to a man of delicate and honourable sensibilities.

"Yet surely Coleridge *had* such a reputation, and without needing any collusion at all; for Coleridge, unless he could have all the talk, would have none. But then this was not conversation. It was not *colloquium*, or talking *with* the company, but *alloquium*, or talking *to* the company. As Madame de Staël observed, Coleridge talked, and *could* talk, only by monologue. Such a mode of systematic trespass upon the conversational rights of a whole party gathered together under pretence of amusement is fatal to every purpose of social intercourse, whether that purpose be connected with direct use and the service of the intellect, or with the general graces and amenities of life. The result is the same under whatever impulse such an outrage is practised; but the impulse is not always the same; it varies, and so far the criminal intention varies. . . . Meantime, Coleridge's habit of soliloquizing through a whole evening of four or five hours had its origin neither in arrogance nor in absolute selfishness. The fact was that he *could* not talk unless he were uninterrupted, and unless he were able to count upon this concession from the company. It was a silent contract between him and his hearers that nobody should speak but himself. If any man objected to this arrangement, why did he come? For, the custom of the place, the *lex loci*, being notorious, by coming at all he was understood to profess his allegiance to the autocrat who presided. It was not, therefore, by an insolent usurpation that Coleridge persisted in monology through his whole life, but in virtue of a concession from the kindness and respect of his friends. You could not be angry with him for using his privilege, for it was a privilege conferred by others, and a privilege which he was ready to resign as soon as any man demurred to it. But, though reconciled to it by these considerations, and by the ability with which he used it, you could not but feel that it worked ill for all parties. Himself it tempted oftentimes into pure garrulity of egotism, and the listeners it reduced to a state of debilitated sympathy or of absolute torpor. Prevented by the custom from putting questions, from proposing doubts, from asking for explanations, reacting by no mode of mental activity, and condemned also to the mental distress of hearing opinions or doctrines stream past them by flights which they must not arrest for a moment so as even to take a note of them, and which yet

The ideal listeners were young men trained in the sciences but interested in a broad range of humanistic subjects and feeling no rivalry with the white-haired sage. One such was Sir William Rowan Hamilton (1805–65), precocious mathematician, later Astronomer Royal of Ireland; at Trinity College, Dublin, he was twice winner of the Vice-Chancellor's Prize for English verse and was appointed Andrews Professor of Astronomy in 1827. He was elected President of the Royal Irish Academy in 1837. Hamilton's notes and correspondence show that he followed Coleridge's classical, historical, and theological lucubrations with precision and simultaneously with awe. When he says that he understands Coleridge on every subject except science, he does not question the accuracy or fulness of Coleridge's knowledge (except in mathematics, where he finds Coleridge unaware of the value to his own anti-materialistic doctrines of Boscovich's theory of a point), but he regards Coleridge's metaphysically idealistic applications of biology and physics as scientifically useless: "As to Coleridge and his obscurity in conversation, I assure you that whenever I thought him obscure I laid all the blame on myself."[57] He tells of an archdeacon who piqued himself on the clarity of his ideas concerning the classics, but, finding that Coleridge put those ideas into embarrassing confusion, abruptly ran from the house. Hamilton, earnest and eager as he was, felt also the charm of Coleridge's self-deprecation:

> This reminds me of something that Coleridge once said to me, at the rooms of Dr. Thirlwall, the present Bishop of St. David's. I met Mr. Coleridge in these rooms, in Cambridge, in 1833, having, however, already in 1832, visited him several times in the neighbourhood of London, and listened to him there. You

they could not often understand, or, seeming to understand, could not always approve, the audience sank at times into a listless condition of inanimate vacuity. To be acted upon for ever, but never to react, is fatal to the very powers by which sympathy must grow, or by which intelligent admiration can be evoked. For his own sake, it was Coleridge's interest to have forced his hearers into the active commerce of question and answer, of objection and demur. Not otherwise was it possible that even the attention could be kept from drooping, or the coherency and dependency of the arguments be forced into light.

"The French rarely make a mistake of this nature. . . . It is not strange, therefore, that Madame de Staël noticed little as extraordinary in Coleridge beyond this one capital monstrosity of unlimited soliloquy,—that being a peculiarity which she never could have witnessed in France; and, considering the burnish of her French tastes in all that concerned colloquial characteristics, it is creditable to her forbearance that she noticed even this rather as a memorable fact than as the inhuman fault which it was. On the other hand, Coleridge was not so forbearing as regarded the brilliant French lady. He spoke of her to ourselves as a very frivolous person, and in short summary terms that disdained to linger on a subject so inconsiderable." *De Q Works* x 281–3.

[57] *Life of Sir William Rowan Hamilton* ed R. P. Graves (3 vols 1882–9) I 601.

may have heard that nobody ever talked with Coleridge; for the full and rapid torrent of his own eloquence of discourse soon absorbed all minor rivulets, such as other men could supply. However, I must acknowledge that he took very graciously, and in good part, any few words I ventured to throw in; and allowed them to influence, and in some degree to guide his own great, and sweet, and wondrous stream of speech. Presuming that he had forgotten those former visits of mine, which, however, he afterwards assured me that he had not done, I said to Coleridge, on being placed beside him by Dr. Thirlwall, at Cambridge, that I had read most of his published works: but, by way of being very honest, I added, But, sir, I am not sure that I understand them all. "The question is, sir," said he, "whether I understand them all myself."[58]

Viscount Adare,[59] a pupil of Hamilton's, visited 3, The Grove about three weeks before Coleridge's death and reported at once to his teacher. Lord Adare, B.A. in 1833 and F.R.S. in 1834, was an archaeologist in correspondence about astronomy with John F. W. Herschel, but he was less attuned than Hamilton to Coleridge's religious thought and literary interests:

Burlington Hotel, London, June 30, 1834.

I am so exceedingly obliged to you for the letter you were so kind as to give me for Coleridge. I took it to-day, and on inquiring if Mr. Coleridge was at home, I was told he had been ill and could not see anyone; but I begged the servant to take up the letter to him, and to my great delight he sent down to say he would see me—this I consider as a compliment to you. Up I went, feeling a mixture of pleasure and awe, and was shown into a small room, half full of books in great confusion, and in one corner was a small bed, looking more like a couch, upon which lay certainly the most remarkable looking man I ever saw; he quite surpassed my expectations; he was pale and worn when I first entered, but very soon the colour came into his cheeks and his eye brightened, and such an eye as it is! such animation, and acuteness! so piercing! He began by asking how you were, and telling me how ill he had been for three months, but he is now getting a little better; he said he was sure it would give you pleasure to know (as far as I could understand) that religion had alleviated very much his hours of pain, and given him fortitude and resignation. He then talked about the Church, but really I found it so difficult to follow him that I cannot recollect what he said, but even less can I remember what I should say were the subjects of conversation: this I think arises from a great want of method; but I say this, feeling I do him injustice: still it strikes me he rambled on; but I remarked how, when once or twice he was interrupted by people coming into the room and speaking to them, he resumed at the very word he left off at—he said he was sure you would feel very sorry at the line of conduct Thirlwall had pursued about some petition about the Dissenters, and how it had pained him.[60] Now and then he said something very droll, which made

[58] Ibid II 623.

[59] Edwin Richard Wyndham Wyndham-Quin (1812–71), 3rd Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl in the peerage of Ireland (1850) and 1st Baron Kenry of the United Kingdom (1866). At the time of his B.A. from Trinity College, Dublin in 1833 he bore the courtesy title of Lord Adare.

[60] See TT 16 Apr 1834 (36:637), MS B f 117; 31 May 1834, MS B ff 118^{v}–19 (previously unpublished).

us laugh; and he conversed with so much vigour and animation, though he had difficulty in *speaking* at all. I ventured, when a pause came, to put in a word. This happened twice: the second time I asked him when we might hope for another work from him. He said he had one very nearly ready, and it would have been out, were it not for his illness. He gave me the plan of the book, but really he got so deep, using words in a sense not familiar to me, that I could not follow him, and I gazed on his eloquent and venerable countenance, as he went on describing the results of his thoughts. All I can tell you is, that his book is on *logic* of some particular kind, and is a sort of introduction to his great work, as he calls the one which Aubrey[61] says exists only in his brain. He gave me a sketch of this also, very brief: the title I thought beautiful, and would have given anything to have written it down for you: indeed, much as I enjoyed the visit, I wished you could have been in my place, for I know you would have enjoyed it so exceedingly, and could have recollected all. He also spoke beautifully about Kant, who, as well as Bacon, was, he says, an Aristotelian; but I was unable to comprehend his explanation of the sense in which he said their methods were similar. He says he will get some one to look out for that work of Kant's for you, which he says is very valuable, and he told me how little Kant is known or read in proportion to what he ought to be. I was with him more than half an hour—nearer an hour, I believe—and could willingly, as you may suppose, have staid all day; but I, with some resolution at last, got up and said something about fearing I had interrupted him. I told him how you liked Kant, and how delighted you would be at hearing he [Coleridge] was about to publish another work. I must say, since I came to London I have not felt so happy as this day; and I consider the visit to Coleridge has been productive of complete pleasure, unmixed with disappointment of any kind; and I know not how to thank you for sending me the letter. I had half a mind, when in Dublin, to have asked you for one, but I feared it might look assuming, as of course in myself I have no right to intrude upon Coleridge, ill as he is. His head is finer than I had expected, and his eye different. I supposed it black and rather soft, instead of being grey and penetrating.[62]

Henry Nelson Coleridge himself would have only one more opportunity to watch those animated eyes and listen to distinctions and relationships that Lord Adare could not quite grasp.

A century later Donald A. Stauffer was able to survey the records of Coleridge's conversation from Christ's Hospital to those final days:

> Coleridge began to talk at an early age and never left off until he died at sixty-two. . . . .
>
> The talk went on through the years until he had become in his own person a kind of *causerie célèbre*, the Sage of Highgate to whom people made pilgrimages or for whom they gave dinners—Carlyle and Hood and Hunt and Keats and Lockhart and Scott and even the acidulous Francis Jeffrey, with Cooper and Emerson from America. Not all of them liked the torrent of talk, particularly those who preferred to talk themselves. But a man who could hold for decades the austere Wordsworth and the simple Southey and the quirky Lamb, who could more-

[61] Sir Aubrey de Vere (1788–1846), 2nd Bt (1818), poet, admirer of C, and friend of SC.

[62] *Life of Hamilton* II 94–5.

over transform his nephew Henry Nelson Coleridge into the Boswell who recorded *Table Talk*, is no mere whisperer.

What did he talk about? Everything. Yet essentially his one never-entirely-forgotten subject was relationship—relating parts, or fusing disparates, within a single reality.[63]

That summary would have satisfied surgeons like James Gillman and Joseph Henry Green, who exchanged views on medical questions with Coleridge over a period of years, but above all learned from him that their profession, their faith, and their lives formed a single reality. Henry Coleridge, as a young barrister, listened to the same message.

HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE

Henry Nelson Coleridge, the recorder and editor of the *Table Talk*, was the fifth of six sons of James Coleridge (1759–1836), "The Colonel", who was the fourth son in the family of which Samuel Taylor Coleridge was the youngest. Henry, named for the hero of the hour, Admiral Horatio Nelson, was born on 25 October 1798 at Heath's Court (The Chanter's House), Ottery St Mary, Devonshire, where James, upon marriage to Frances Duke Taylor (1759–1838), had retired from the Army on half pay, as Captain of the 6th Foot, and became Lieutenant Colonel of the local militia.[64] Henry attended the King's School in Ottery St Mary, where George Coleridge (1764–1828), brother of the poet, was schoolmaster until his retirement in 1808. In 1809 Henry entered Eton College assisted by funds from "Aunt Brown" of Combesatchfield.[65]

Except when an outbreak of scarlet fever at Eton in 1811 sent him into quarantine for a few months at Heath's Court, he flourished, with popular vivacity and conspicuous learning. In 1818 the Task Prize of two books joined his lengthening list of honours. He wrote sprightly letters to his brother Frank in English, French, and Latin. Edward Coleridge, after he had become assistant master at Eton (he married the daughter of the master, John Keate), remembered that "the growing success of my Brother Henry at Eton, in some sort screwed me up" to work.[66] Henry

[63] "Introduction" *Selected Poetry and Prose of Coleridge* ed Donald A. Stauffer (New York 1951) x.

[64] Details concerning HNC are taken from *DNB; G Mag* NS XX (1843) 97–8; Edith Coleridge *Some Recollections of Henry Nelson Coleridge and His Family* (Torquay 1910) 3–11; "The Biographia non Literaria of Edward Coleridge" transcription in BM Add MS 47555; correspondence and papers of HNC and SC, at VCL, UT, BM, and elsewhere as designated. JTC began a memoir of HNC. UT ms.

[65] Dorothy Ayre Taylor (1755–1831), widow of Henry Langford Brown and maternal aunt of the Heath's Court Coleridges. Bernard Coleridge *Devonshire House* (1905) 68, 173.

[66] BM Add MS 47555 f 11.

acted the part of Captain Worthington in a school production of *The Poor Gentleman* by George Colman the Younger.[67] He contributed poems and critical essays to the "College Magazine", which circulated in manuscript. Influences from Southey, Byron, and Coleridge are as evident as his informed admiration of Wordsworth. One poem in quatrains, *The Bride of the Cave: A Ballad*, based on an episode in William Mariner *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands* (1817) and anticipating Byron's use of the episode, was also printed in *Poetry of the College Magazine* (Windsor 1819) and published in the last number of *The Etonian*, August 1821.

After winning an Eton scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, where he was admitted on 7 March 1818 and matriculated for the Easter Term, Henry was second, in his first year, for the Davies University Scholarship, ahead of Thomas Babington Macaulay; the winner was the orientalist Thomas Pell Platt, B.A. and Fellow of Trinity College in 1820. In his second year Henry gained the Browne Medals for Greek and Latin Odes, and "had the mottoes to my Epigrams published for being good ones; that is the Epigrams".[68] In September he won the Porson Prize for an epigram, and in 1821 he won again the Browne Medal for a Greek Ode, which Coleridge had won in 1792. The two volumes of *The Etonian* (October 1820–August 1821), edited by Walter Blunt and Winthrop Mackworth Praed, contain at least sixteen contributions from him, several of them signed "Gerald Montgomery". Besides *vers de société* and other verse, including a parodistic imitation of Wordsworth—"I was a boy"—he contributed essays on the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Lamb, and a mock-review of Southey, after the manner of *Criticisms on the Rolliad*.[69] Walter Graham depended heavily on the critical essays to declare Henry Nelson Coleridge at twenty-three "one of the most important early interpreters of Romantic criticism".[70] The volumes went through four editions by 1824.

It had been almost a condition of his aunt's aid that Henry would win a fellowship to King's. In 1817 he had assured his elder brother John that the idleness at King's would not infect him: "I don't think I can be idle,

[67] Derwent Coleridge "Memoir" *Poems of John Moultrie* (2 vols 1876) I xvi.

[68] HNC to JTC, BM Add MS 47557 f 55.

[69] *Etonian* I 8, 57, 67–8, 99–104, 210, 217–25, 251–6, 273, 307–18, 336–9, II 49–58, 97–105, 144, 340–8, 349–52, 400.

[70] "Henry Nelson Coleridge, Explicator of Romantic Criticism" *Philological Quarterly* IV (1925) 231. Graham concluded that HNC became with the review of C's poetical works in 1834 "the chief expositor of romantic criticism" (p 238); cf Graham on HNC in "Contemporary Critics of Coleridge" *PMLA* XXXVIII (1923) 286–8.

for it never affords me any pleasure.''[71] His vivacity made him welcome to friends whenever he turned from study. He has been called ''the most brilliant and captivating of the band of brothers'', with ''irresistible wit, sparkling and pointed''.[72] Besides Praed and John Moultrie, friends continued from Eton, his intimates at Cambridge were the poet Chauncey Hare Townshend, Macaulay, the Benthamite statesman Charles Pelham Villiers (1802–98) and his brother Thomas Hyde Villiers (1801–32), and the jurist Charles Austin. He overlapped in residence with his cousin Derwent. Moultrie addressed to Derwent the section of his poem *The Dream of Life* that reminiscently assesses Henry at Cambridge and after:

> Turn we next
> To him—thy kinsman, once my schoolfellow,
> And more than most of my compeers at school,
> Or thy collateral kindred, to us both
> By close-knit bonds united;—in those days
> A comely youth, though prematurely grey,
> And long ere manhood's noon upon his brow
> To wear the stainless silver of old age.
> Graceful he was in person and in mind,
> Enrich'd with classical accomplishments,
> And stores of various study—apt to learn,
> And with intense susceptibility
> Of soul and sense endued. Some deem'd him proud,
> And in himself too confident.—In truth,
> 'Twas not his nature to dissemble powers
> With which he had been gifted, nor the lore
> To which he had attain'd, and envious men,
> Who hated him for both, were prompt to blame
> That which they could not imitate:—yet few
> Were cast by nature in a finer mould,
> Or arm'd with apprehensions more acute,
> And exquisite of beauty and of truth,
> Moral and intellectual. To create
> Was not his province; but his mind received,
> And treasured, and retain'd, with ready tact,
> The lessons by profounder minds instill'd,
> Which, with expressive utterance, to the taste
> And apprehensions of the world at large
> He skillfully adapted.—Hence his task
> Was rightly chosen, when, in after years,
> He to the teaching of that Master Mind
> Subjected his whole soul—content to share
> The glory which must rest, in time to come,
> On those outpourings of immortal thought

[71] BM Add MS 47557 f 19.

[72] Bernard Coleridge *Devonshire House* 138.

> By his sole pen preserv'd, or by his toil
> Collected and arranged. His was, in truth,
> A proud and happy lot, to have imbibed
> Those lessons, while he lived, and after death
> To link his own remembrance with the name
> Of Earth's profoundest Teacher:—happier still
> In that his toils were sweeten'd and sustain'd
> By such treasure of connubial wealth
> As few have e'er possess'd.[73]

The poem first appeared in 1843, soon after Henry's death. To Sara, as bereaved widow, Derwent defended Moultrie's description of Henry as "not creative" relative to others in the circle:

> If anything is wanting to the description of Henry's character, it is connected with his conversational ~~persons~~ powers. There was about him a certain festive brilliancy, as to the manner, and, as to the matter, so happy a mixture of the speculative and the practical, the remote and the present, the results of reasoning and the results of observation, as to make him intellectually the most agreeable companion I ever knew: and the same power, as far as could be expected, appeared in his writings.[74]

Derwent distinguishes Henry's writings from his conversation by the absence of three qualities also absent from the *Table Talk*: voice, look, and occasion. The first two, *parole* and expression of face and eye, are almost unavoidably absent; the third, by a choice "not creative", leaves the advantage with Boswell's life of Johnson, where the contextual occasion is usually clear and the drama of combat is frequent.

Concurrently with Henry's intellectual achievements at Cambridge and after, there were ominous physical symptoms. During 1821 he had swelling of the knee and inflammation of the eye. Trouble with his sight would recur every two or three years; he had an especially "alarming inflammation of the eyes" in the spring of 1828.[75] He became Fellow of King's in 1821, and to begin preparation as a barrister he was admitted at the Middle Temple on 16 June 1821. By 1823 (when he took the BA home for periods of weeks and later months, from a "rheumatic complaint" or "spinous condition". He began to publish essay-reviews on classical Greek and other literary subjects in the *British Critic, Knight's*

[73] John Moultrie *Poems* with a Memoir by Derwent Coleridge (2 vols 1876) I 424–5. The poem next turns to SC. "The Poet's Daughter" (II 392–3) describes her as a seeming emanation from the dream of "bard or prophet saint"—which, the poet concludes, she was. In the title of a sonnet by Moultrie, "To —— by Anticipation", VCL S MS F 4.25 has the blank filled in, in pencil, as "S. C."

[74] Quoted, SC to JTC, BM Add MS 47558 ff 198–9.

[75] SC to Elizabeth Crump Wardell, from Greta Hall, 5 Jul 1828. DCL ms.

Quarterly Magazine (continued from 1825 without Knight's name), and *Quarterly Review* (of which John Taylor Coleridge was editor from December 1824 to November 1825, when he was succeeded by J. G. Lockhart). In an age of anonymous writing Henry began to be known among Conservative editors and suspected by editors and publishers of the Opposition.

Meanwhile two events occurred of first importance. In August 1822 he left for a tour of France. This was not one of the important events, but he was to transcribe as a present for Sara Coleridge the letters he wrote to his father, from 6 August at Calais to 25 September from Rouen, along with his early record of her father's talk. At the end of 1822 Sara and her mother came to London. Henry Nelson Coleridge had dinner with Coleridge at the John Taylor Coleridges' on 28 December, and first saw Sara at Highgate on 5 January. Getting to know his cousin and uncle was doubly momentous for him and doubled again for posterity. In a letter to his sister "Fran" on 7 January he tried to be frivolous; he and John had walked to Highgate wet, prepared for one or the other to fall in love with Sara, a "lovely creature" in whom he detected *design*: "John went home, and I stayed to dine. My uncle talked at an immense rate, now in glimmer and now in gloom! I walked home at nine."[76] To his brother James on 11 March he was more serious, but not completely open:

My dear ~~Fanny~~ Jem

You have seen Sara—she is a pretty little thing is she not? I think she possesses the most cultivated and beautiful mind I have ever met with. I am much pleased that my Aunt Brown saw her . . . to invite her to Combsatchfield. She deserves and stands in need of much pity and protection. Her mother is a detestable fidgett, if not a tyrant. But that's entirely ⟨between⟩ you and me, if you please. My authority however is strong—even from the victim herself.

In the next B.C. there are two articles of mine—Werner and Kruitzner—and Ugo Foscolo and Petrarch.[77]

Before Sara and her mother left for Ottery on 5 March, she and Henry had been secretly betrothed. They expected opposition from both fathers:

[76] UT ms. Frances Duke Coleridge (1796–1842), usually "Fanny", later the second wife of the judge Sir John Patteson (1790–1861), a close friend of JTC and legal colleague of both JTC and HNC.

[77] BM Add MS 47558 f 93. In the spring of 1823 he wrote to Frank (f 94): "I met Edith Southey at Fanny's yesterday. She is a very fine girl indeed; not so pretty in face as Sara, but taller and more finished in her figure." HNC reviewed Byron's *Werner; or, The Inheritance: A Tragedy* (1822) and the tale dramatised by Byron, Harriet Lee *Kruitzner, or the German's Tale* (5th ed 1823), in *British Critic* 2nd s XIX (Mar 1823) 242–53: Byron was "beginning to be ridiculous" (p 243). HNC's review of Ugo Foscolo *Essays on Petrarch* (1823) followed in Apr, pp 373–88.

they were first cousins, they were both given to debilitating illnesses, and neither had a favourable prospect financially. Henry had assessed his intellectual capacities for his brother James on 11 January:

> Even thus early in life, I know my strength to be in *discourse*, and not in *intention*, of mind. Accordingly, I am fond of, and understand, History, Poetry and Criticism. I affect Oratory and Theology, because none of these demand much analytic reasoning to comprehend, but rather call for a general admiration of the beautiful, a sense of what is just and pure in taste and execution, expansion rather than attention of thought, width rather than depth.[78]

Sara had recently proved her mental stamina by translating *An Account of the Abipones, an Equestrian People of Paraguay*, from the Latin of the Jesuit Martin Dobrizhoffer (3 vols 1822).

One of the signs that Henry had been smitten also by Sara's father appears in "Scibile", which he contributed to the inaugural number of *Knight's Quarterly Magazine* I (1823) 180–92. There he paraphrases loosely an elderly man of unfashionable ideas who is clearly Coleridge: "the old gentleman", in remarks "originally addressed to a young man", is grateful for Luther, prefers Clarendon as historian to Hume, finds in society a principle of Permanency and a principle of Progression, and has taught the young man to question whether Rossini is a better composer than Corelli, Haydn, Mozart, or Handel.

In 1824 Henry expected to visit Sara in the Lakes, but instead he went to Ottery with a recurrence of pain, variously diagnosed, according to the first paragraph of his *Six Months in the West Indies*, as "rheumatism proper, rheumatism gout, gout proper, and an affection in the spinous process". Colonel James ordered the engagement broken off. Coleridge, apparently ignorant of the attachment until 1826, declined then to interfere: he could not condemn his daughter to unhappiness. Sara, who had accepted John Taylor Coleridge's aid in ending the persistent proposals of marriage from John May Jr, assured him on 17 August that she would not consider herself disengaged from Henry even if he could not give his hand with his heart.[79] May had been at Eton with Henry; excluded by Dr Keate from the college-bound, he spent 1818 at Heath's Court, with Henry's brother the Rev James Duke Coleridge as his tutor. John Taylor Coleridge wrote to May on 24 August that Henry's attack this year had been much worse than the one in July 1823: "I took the gig and drove my father down to Falmouth to see Henry—since that time I am told he

[78] BM Add MS 47558 f 90. This letter continues with admiration of C and SC: "Her mother I do not very much like."

[79] UT Grantz 695, 699.

is much improved . . . then he had only been drawn in a Bath chair to the Baths—now he can walk for an hour or more at a time.''[80]

The next event, though less momentous than getting to know Sara and Coleridge, proved indicative both of Henry's health and of his character. To provide an improved climate for his ''rheumatic'' back, and to divert him from his engagement to Sara, it was decided that Henry would go to the West Indies with his cousin William Hart Coleridge (1789–1849), recently appointed the first Bishop of Barbados and the Leeward Islands. They were to sail from Plymouth in late November, but bad weather held them into December. ''Henry has managed to catch cold''.[81] Between his arrival at Barbados on 29 January 1825 and his final departure on 8 August, he set foot on most of the islands from Trinidad northward to Anguilla.

Six Months in the West Indies, in 1825 appeared anonymously over John Murray's imprint the first week in February 1826. Henry assigned the copyright to Murray for £200 to be paid in two instalments.[82] His acceptance of slavery until education could prepare the slaves for self-government, coupled with a ''gay, laughing Epicureanism'' and ''lively sallies'', provoked answers. One from Birmingham, in two parts, was entitled *The Young Logicians; or School-boy Conceptions of Rights and Wrongs. With a Particular Reference to ''Six Months in the West Indies''* (1828). First, however, Henry had to deal with the family; a flippant reference at the outset to the ''two cousins'' Margaret and Lucy who gave food and medicines to the poor, recognisable as the widowed sisters Jane and Sarah (Mrs George and Mrs Luke Coleridge) caused all recoverable copies to be bought in and a less offensive leaf substituted. Sara found the advance sheets sent to Southey ''delightfully vivacious & amusing'', and Southey concurred.[83] Coleridge made a note that the author of this book, whose epithet and name he put into Greek characters, ''my harum scarum nephew, Henry'', had taken a position on slavery that in error ''implies the direct politocratic power of the Gospel''.[84] The thin concealment of Henry's identity, presumably from curious women, indicates that Coleridge did not predict in 1826 that Henry would become the first major explorer of the notebooks.

A second edition of *Six Months in the West Indies*, also anonymous, with additions, appeared later in 1826; and a third, with the name

[80] Bodleian MS Eng Lett c 289.

[81] JTC to May, ibid.

[82] Records of John Murray Publishers Ltd. The contract of 11 Feb 1826 was between John Murray and Henry Coleridge ''of the Middle Temple Student at Law''. HNC acknowledged receipt of the £200 immediately.

[83] *CL* VI 560n.

[84] *CN* IV 5402.

"Henry Nelson Coleridge, M.A., Late Fellow of King's College, Cambridge" on the title-page. A one-page Preface, signed "H. N. C., *Lincoln's Inn, October*, 1832", proclaimed the need for a new edition "when the right hand of the colonial power of England is hacked at with a pertinacious hatred, of which there is no example in the history of domestic treason or foreign hostility". Henry was seldom irresolute.

When the book first appeared, he had taken up residence at Lincoln's Inn, to begin practice as equity draughtsman and conveyancer. He was called to the bar by the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple on 24 November 1826. At the end of July Sara had come to visit Lady Beaumont and remained in London a year. Her longest period with the Gillmans extended from 17 September to 8 October. When she visited the John Taylor Coleridges in January 1827 consent had been given to the marriage whenever circumstances seemed more propitious. Not many in the family expected the arrival of propitious circumstances. Sara's brother Hartley wrote to Derwent:

> *Entre nous*—I wish the dear girl had form'd another attachment. Worldly considerations apart, I do not think the author of the *Six Months' Residence* the likeliest person in the world to accord with the exquisite tenderness and susceptibility of her moral and physical constitution . . . our Sariola will require delicacy in a husband. . . . The *Six Months*, is very clever, and tolerably sensible, but there is a flippancy, a vulgarity about it, which I cannot esteem. . . . Neither do I think he feels sufficiently the moral enormity of the slave system . . . At all events, he writes temperately, and practically—avoiding the coarse-heartedness of the West-indian party on one hand, and the bravado of Macaulay and such like spouting-club heroes, on the other.[85]

Sara Hutchinson informed Edward Quillinan: "I am sorry to tell you (but it is a secret) that she is engaged to one of her Cousins—he who has written the conceited work about West India and who is very delicate in constitution—having had an affection of the spine—without fortune but what he can make by his wits & the Law—".[86] The Southeys, envious for their Edith, were afraid, not that the cousins would marry, but that Lady Beaumont might promote Sara's beauty and intellect into a liaison above her station.[87] But Wordsworth, who had wished her affectionately a thousand good wishes on her departure in 1822, wrote now a brief note: "I wish you were back again in Cumberland—and take care that you

[85] *HCL* 93. In Aug 1829, as the marriage approached, HC again appraised HNC for DC: "I could have wish'd . . . that she had chosen a richer man, and that a richer man had chosen her" (108).

[86] *SHL* 323; cf 341, 349. In 1832 SH referred to HNC as "an efficient person" with whom she would have been willing to serve as guardian to WW's children (*SHL* 388).

[87] VCL S MS F4.29. But Edith urged SC to return promptly to Keswick rather than to go to DC's at Helstone. Ibid.

keep your health, and the good looks of which I hear so much—farewell my very dear Friend—''.[88]

Henry looked for sources of income additional to his chancery practice, which was as yet slow. He issued anonymously, and Murray published, two pieces of conservative thought on current issues: *Remarks on the Present State of the Roman Catholic Question*, 1827, and *A Letter to the Right Honorable the Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham*, 1829.[89] Lord Winchilsea had withdrawn his support of the new King's College of London. In the preparations of 1828 to counterbalance University College by including instruction at King's in ''the doctrines and duties of Christianity'', Henry had been appointed Secretary to the Provisional Committee of the college at a salary (decided upon in 1829) of £300 a year.[90] Assessing in letters to Frank his financial ability to marry, he listed his other income as legal fees, mostly conveyancing £100 (= £200?), a pupil £105, reviewing £50, estimated gift from his father £50, and Sara's three per cent stock at £200 (he would sell it), all of which totalled £955, against debts of £475 and the need to borrow two or three hundred more.[91]

Henry and Sara were married in the church at Crosthwaite, Keswick, the ''Cathedral of the Lakes'', on 3 September 1829. Wordsworth had intended to take temporary lodgings for them in Grasmere, but in the event they remained in Keswick for a few weeks before going to London, where they stayed first with John and Frances Patteson and then moved into lodgings in Bernard Street, off Russell Square, and next to modest quarters in Gower Street, while Sara's mother went on to the Derwent Coleridges in Helston. Coleridge, too ill with erysipelas and other ailments to attend the wedding, revised his will and came at once to greet them. He could have noticed that both of them had nervous ailments almost equal to his. In the summer of 1830, after a pause in Highgate, they moved to 1 Downshire Place, Downshire Hill, Hampstead. Sara then sent for her mother, who arrived in time for Sara's confinement with the first child, Herbert, and remained until her death in 1845.

[88] *WL* (*L* rev) I 699 (should be dated 1822), II 186 (VCL S MS F5.42, 5.53). On 26 Apr 1829 to HCR, WW described SC as ''one of the loveliest and best of Creatures''. *CRC* I 207; *WL* (*L* rev) II 69.

[89] ''I have nearly finished a letter to Lord W; to be signed Civis. I will give you good reason for not putting my name or consulting the Abp.'' HNC to JTC, endorsed 23 Apr 1829, BM Add MS 47557 f 80^{v}. In 1833 Murray reported a loss on ''Civis'' of £10-16-0. UT ms.

[90] HNC and SC to Elizabeth Wardell. DCL ms. Additional information from H. A. Harvey, College Archivist, King's College.

[91] 21 Nov 1828, 12 Jun 1829. BM Add MS 47588 ff 105–8^{v}. He was still burdened with debts in 1833: Bernard Coleridge *Devonshire House* 311.

After the move to Hampstead, Henry came home from Lincoln's Inn for week-ends and holidays. He usually walked the seven miles or so, sometimes by way of Highgate to see Coleridge. He continued to take pupils along with his chancery practice. Upon passage of the Reform Bill he was named by the Whig ministry as a revising barrister, which took him on circuit between the Trinity and Michaelmas law sittings to different regions of Somerset, Wiltshire, and Devon, in order to revise or certify the lists of eligible voters. He became also lecturer to the Incorporated Law Society of the United Kingdom on the principles and practice of equity, his contract renewed annually at least through 1835–6. On 9 September 1831 he wrote to Southey that his lot had been drawn for the army: it "costs near five pounds to get a tall man to stand in my shoes".[92]

He wrote *A Short Account of the Life & Death of Swing, the Kent Rick-Burner*, dated 1830 but actually 1831, a sober rebuttal published by Effingham Wilson (for John Murray) to offset *The Life and History of Swing, the Kent Rig-Burner*, published by the radical Richard Carlile in 1830. The more vigorously sarcastic style that one comes to expect of Henry Coleridge appears in *The Genuine Life of Mr. Francis Swing* (W. Joy & H. Hughes 1831), but the family collection now at the University of Texas includes four copies of *A Short Account* and one of the answered *Life and History*, but none of the *Genuine Life*. *Notes on the Reform Bill*, "by a Barrister", 1831, is usually attributed to John Taylor Coleridge, but Sara, who reported to Elizabeth Crump Wardell on 4 July 1831 that 3300 copies had been sold, thought her husband the author.[93] Coleridge, who annotated the first edition, wrote to Henry about an "excellent paragraph" in the second edition.[94] John warned Henry in 1831 "against too much *pamphleteering*; it is a dangerous line for a lawyer".[95]

More overtly and more durably, and perhaps more lucratively, Murray published Henry's *Introductions to the Study of the Greek Classic Poets*, Part I, in 1830, "Designed Principally for the Use of Young Persons at School and College"; there was a revised edition in 1834 and another in 1846. After a "General Introduction", the work concerns Homer. Part II never appeared, although Henry's reviews in the *Quarterly* contained materials towards such a volume. In 1831 he was asked by Edward Hawtrey, then assistant master of Eton, to stand for the position of professor

[92] UT ms.

[93] DCL ms. The copy in the BM, bound with other "Ottery Pamphlets on the Reform Bill", has a marginal note by C, pp 39–41: *CM (CC)* II 90.

[94] *CL* VI 858–9. The "excellent paragraph" C mentioned is readily identified as one on p 11 of the 2nd ed; see *CM (CC)* II 90.

[95] *Devonshire House* 304.

of humanity at Glasgow, but he declined.[96] John James Park (1795–1833), appointed professor of English law at King's College, London, in 1831, asked Henry to give a course of lectures in May and June of 1833; later that year Henry agreed to provide the Law Society of the United Kingdom with "a modern universal history from Mahomet to French Revolution", written out on two sheets every fortnight, at about £500 a year for three years, in addition to his lectures on equity.[97] In 1834 he took on another pupil, "one Grove of Swansea", who came to Lincoln's Inn from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.[98]

After Coleridge's death Henry Nelson Coleridge became to the public above all the editor and chief custodian of the works of his uncle and father-in-law; he performed those functions in fact from 1830 on. To the family and friends he was also the loving husband of the accomplished and beautiful Sara, who was equally loving but frequently ill, and from 1830 to 1834 hysterical during and after pregnancies. Henry came to better terms with Hartley, and it was his dying wish that his executors remit £100 of a £500 loan to Derwent.[99] Hartley wrote a verse tribute immediately after Henry's death, but he had written a more affective sonnet beginning

> Kinsman—yea, more than kinsman—brother, friend,—
> O more than kinsman! more than friend or brother!
> My sister's spouse, son to my widow'd mother!—
> How shall I praise thee right, and not offend?
> For thou wert sent a sore heart-ill to mend.
> Twin stars were ye, thou and thy wedded love . . .[100]

When spinal paralysis immobilised Henry in December 1842, Sara wrote to various relatives the details of his choking phlegm, his occasional relief from spasms, and the regimen ordered by Sir Benjamin Brodie. On 17 January she began a journal, which she continued until January 1844 as a record of her reactions to Henry's dying and to other deaths that followed. The end came ten minutes to one o'clock on the afternoon of Thursday, 26 January 1843, at 10 Chester Place, Regent's

[96] HNC to RS 1 Oct 1831. UT ms.

[97] BM Add MS 47557 ff 100^{v}, 102, 103.

[98] Ibid f 103.

[99] SC to DC. UT Grantz 40, 43. In 1836, when CW's son Christopher was a candidate for headmaster of Harrow School, he asked HNC to write a letter of recommendation.

[100] *To H. N. Coleridge* in *Poems*, with a Memoir of His Life by His Brother (2 vols 1851) II 52. HC dated 28 Jan 1843 his poem *On the Death of Henry Nelson Coleridge Addressed to a Friend* (II 177–9); HNC's nephew Arthur Duke Coleridge (1830–1913)—son of Frank—wrote in a copy of *Poems* acquired 8 Mar 1856, at II 179, "Much of this Letter omitted".

Park (whither they had moved in 1837): "So ends the great charm of this world to me".[101]

Sara was glad that the children had not seen the end; nor could they remember "the blooming brilliant face I first saw at Mr Gillman's at Highgate".[102] Herbert, born in 1830, went on to a brilliant career; Edith, born in 1832, among other accomplishments was memoirist of her parents, notably of her mother. No likeness of Henry is known to exist (Edith said he could not afford to have his portrait painted), and this Introduction has given the longest available biographical account of him. His brother John drafted a memoir, but only fragments of it have survived among the family papers.

HNC AND STC

Henry, aged twelve, had accompanied his brother to Richmond in April 1811, when John, almost twenty-one, recorded their uncle Samuel's conversation more fully than Henry was able to do in 1823. When he saw and heard Coleridge a second time, at John's, on 28 December 1822, seeds of the *Table Talk* were planted.

Henry's opportunities to visit and record talk in 1823–4 did not depend solely on his love of the poet's daughter. In June 1823 Coleridge would be "always delighted to see" Henry.[103] A year later Coleridge wished "he would come oftener".[104] But it is clear that the opportunity afforded Henry to meet Charles Lamb, Edward Irving, and J. Blanco White at Highgate on 15 December 1825 resulted from Coleridge's enthusiasm for Henry's brother Edward, an enthusiasm heightened because Edward was trying to help Henry Gillman through difficulties at Eton.[105] Coleridge was no more pleased than the next with *Six Months in the West Indies*. He found the levities and olfactory images too reminiscent of Southey's similar offences, with the addition of impertinent coxcombry that might bring ruin to the family name.[106] Even before he learned how intense the attachment between Henry and Sara, he saw in the indiscreet words, "I love my cousin . . . almost my sister ere my wife", the possibility that knowledgeable readers would make an identification with Sara.[107] In short, the book was pleasant and informative but scandalous.

[101] UT ms.
[102] SC to JTC: UT Grantz 722.
[103] *CL* v 279.
[104] C to JTC 3 May [1824]: *CL* v 361.
[105] Ibid 521.
[106] C to EC [8 Feb 1826]: *CL* vi 560. Dangerous signs; as illustrated in RS, "all men of cold constitutions are naturally immodest".
[107] C to EC 26 Jul 1826: *CL* vi 589. The reference is to *Six Months* 117.

Nor was Henry's conduct toward his uncle acceptable. William Hart Coleridge, before he went out as Bishop of Barbados, had visited Coleridge at Highgate several times; after his return he seemed studiously to avoid The Grove. Coleridge complained to Edward and Henry that his neighbours assigned denigrative reasons for the Bishop's absence; Edward expressed "manly indignation", but Henry, though signing himself "dutifully", defended the Bishop.[108] As if sensitive to the disapprobation, Henry preserved no record of his uncle's talk between his return from Barbados and his father's consent to the engagement with Sara in early 1827. A copy of Henry's *Remarks on the Catholic Question* was presented "with HNC's affectionate respects",[109] but Coleridge felt a sufficiently lingering chill to assure Derwent that he would have liked a sinecure through the Liverpool ministry on Hartley's account, and "now you & Mary; and Sara and—for her sake & *since so it is*—Henry".[110]

Surprisingly, after transcribing his entries for Sara in January 1827 (MS E), Henry continued to record talk through August and then ceased until April 1830. All indications point to frequent meetings and to mutual affection and respect during this period. On 20 February 1828 Coleridge subscribed himself "your affectionate Friend".[111] Paradoxically this letter contains a passage that Henry was to publish as Table Talk in 1835 under the date of 1 May 1833.[112] Once in 1829, in a paradox for the most unstoppable talker of his age, Coleridge "was engaged in a more than commonly interesting conversation with, or rather listening to, my nephew, Henry Nelson Coleridge, respecting his plans, which . . . include my daughter's change of *state* tho' not of name".[113] Mrs Gillman invited Sara and Henry to spend a week with them beginning 23 March 1830, after Hilary law term.[114] Henry was currently giving editorial aid toward the second edition of *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, and would soon perform the same function for *Aids to Reflection*. By a codicil to his will on 2 July 1830, naming J. H. Green as executor, Coleridge designated Green, Gillman, and Henry trustees for Hartley's portion of his bequest. When Henry remarked in a review-article on Hesiod (*Quarterly Review* March 1832) that "Milton seems to have taken a pregnant hint for a part of his grand description . . . in Paradise Regained", Coleridge protested in the margin: "Now on my Conscience,

[108] *CL* VI 560–1, 586.
[109] BM C 126 i 3 (5).
[110] Undated: *CL* VI 705.
[111] *CL* VI 730.
[112] Entry 36:495 in the numbers assigned in the present edition to *TT* (1835), *TT* (1836).
[113] C to Mrs George Frere [9 Feb 1829]: *CL* VI 785.
[114] VCL S MS F 3.62.

Henry! this is the only *flat* remark, I ever heard from YOU or knew of your making''.[115]

The entries in Henry's workbooks from February through August 1827, like those of 1822–4, represented important intellectual events in a diary, with Coleridge reported in the third person. In April 1830 the record began with increased vigour, a greatly improved skill in conveying nuance, and a conviction that the task would in time have major public significance. On 8 June 1830 Henry wrote to his father that the fifty pages he had already accumulated would ''make one of the most interesting *Table Talks* that ever was published''.[116] John, particularly, watched with interest as the work grew.

The manuscript version of *Table Talk* published in *The Collected Works of S. T. Coleridge* greatly reduces the number of days to which talk is assigned. Aside from the clear evidence of the manuscripts, many of the previously published dates would be excludable on the basis of biographical data. On a few occasions Henry was present during Coleridge's rare excursions to London or his equally rare visits to Hampstead. Illness made such visits from Coleridge increasingly unlikely. Most of the recorded talk Henry heard at the Gillmans' during his week-ends of relief from Lincoln's Inn or during the vacations between law sittings—whenever he himself during such periods was not on circuit as revising barrister or visiting his parents or other relatives. In the gap between his entries of 11 September and 26 October 1831 he and Sara left the baby with Sara's mother and visited in Ottery.[117] Sara's confinements and other illnesses seem to have kept Henry with her no more often than they sent him to Highgate with news of her health. Saturdays predominate. For many of the months when Henry was seeing Coleridge, the earlier portion of Sundays was reserved for J. H. Green. Some of Coleridge's letters to Henry represent afterthoughts following their conversations; others remark on Henry's current illness or absence. From 1830 the dates in the manuscripts include most of the opportunities Henry can have had to accomplish his purpose.

Sara's opportunities would have been fewer still. Her nervous prostrations before and after her confinements were prolonged. When she was not restricted to Downshire Hill (and Coleridge simultaneously restricted to The Grove), she was often away seeking rest, at Ottery, Brighton, or

[115] *CM (CC)* II 88.

[116] UT ms, quoted at length TT 6 Jun 1830 n1, below. By the ''50 quarto pages'' he mentions in that letter he apparently refers to MS B and ignores the earlier entries of MS A.

[117] SC to Elizabeth Wardell 2 Nov 1831. DCL ms.

elsewhere. She spent five weeks in Brighton in the autumn of 1832. Mrs Coleridge's language of surprise at her husband's "power of continuous talking" after Edith's christening in August 1832 indicates that he had not been a frequent visitor to Hampstead.[118] Sara, confessing on 27 March 1833 to Elizabeth Wardell that she had not been well since the birth of Edith, from a complaint "entirely nervous", wrote that neither she nor her father had been really well since the christening.[119] Soon after that letter she went into "nervous misery" from her next pregnancy. Twins, Berkeley and Florence, were born 14 January 1834. Their death on the 19th elicited a sonnet from Hartley and a poem from Henry; Coleridge worried for Sara, but he was not up to verse. Sara, near exhaustion from worry about herself, her son, her daughter, and her father, felt relief that the house would not be further crowded by twins.[120] Although the first of five editions of her *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children* appeared in the summer of 1834, she had written the verses for Herbert, she said, on her back.

Even when Sara apologised for not contributing more to the *Table Talk*, it is clear that she had especially in mind the brief opportunities before her marriage:

> As to my contributions to "Table-Talk", I am ashamed to say that they really amount to a mere nothing. Two or three short memorables I remember recording; and I often wonder now how I could have been so negligent a listener. But there were several causes for this. In the first place, my father generally discoursed on such a very extensive scale, that it would have been an arduous task for *me* to attempt recording what I had heard. Henry could sometimes bring him down to narrower topics, but when alone with me he was almost always on the star-paved road, taking in the whole heavens in his circuit. Another impediment was this. When I was at Highgate (I think of it with grief and shame, for I ought perhaps to have had my mind in better order), my heart and thoughts were very much oppressed and usurped by a variety of agitating personal matters; I was anxious about my brothers, and their prospects—about Henry's health, and upon the subject of my engagement generally. . . . What I wish to convey to you is, that if I could have seen years ago how useless taking thought for all *those* things really was, and how permanently valuable every relic of my father's mind would be (which I did not then perceive *to the extent* that I do now, though well aware of his great powers), I should have tried to be an industrious gleaner, instead of loitering about the harvest-field as I did.[121]

[118] *Minnow* 165; cf Mrs C to Emily Trevenen, that C "talked incessantly with the greatest vigor and eloquence"—"on that day, if never in his life before, a most extraordinary person" (addition to a letter from SC, UT ms).

[119] DCL ms.

[120] SC to Elizabeth Wardell 19 Jan 1834. DCL ms.

[121] *SC Mem* I 123–4.

After her marriage Sara would have been seldom "alone with" her father when his conversation was on its "star-paved road".

In sum, most of the conversation recorded in *Table Talk* was heard by Henry, usually alone with Coleridge, at the Gillmans'. John Gibson Lockhart, who associated Coleridge with temperate hope and had found him more hopeful at Ramsgate in the summer of 1833 than he seemed in remarks on the Reform Bill in *Table Talk*, in his review of the work imagines Coleridge and Henry in nightly gloom. He may close in too narrowly the scene he asks his readers to picture with Henry as listener, but his description rests at least partly on knowledge and not on mere speculation. Instead of "the *stage directions*, so useful and entertaining in the case of Boswell", we may supply for the *Table Talk*, he says, "one melancholy formula—*place*, Mr. Coleridge's bed-room—*time*, night—*present*, the poet in his arm-chair, physically worn and exhausted by a day of pain, but refreshed and invigorated by the recent entrance of his dear young friend, to whom it is a sort of necessity of his nature that he should unburthen himself of some of the innumerable trains of thought and reflection that have been occupying him, as far as bodily sufferings might permit, since their last meeting".[122] But we must also, says Lockhart, see the nephew as "loving and respectfully attentive".

From the summer of 1832 Henry had been at work assembling texts for a new edition of Coleridge's *Poetical Works*. He hunted down juvenilia that Sara would later exclude on the grounds of Henry's "mixture of high taste and low taste, passion & unselectness, delicacy (or particularity) and exceeding freeness—dignity and familiarity".[123] "I have endeavoured to collect every thing", Henry wrote to John, "& the arrangement & corrections give me much trouble".[124] Like Ernest Hartley

[122] *QR* LIII (1835) 80. HNC wrote to John Murray on 18 Dec 1834 that after meeting that day with Lockhart concerning the Table Talk he could promise "to attend to his suggestions". UT ms.

[123] SC to DC 23 Jan 1852, UT Grantz 96: "My dear Henry found these poems in old MS. books &, in all the ardour of first love, would insert them in the new edition. . . . I think by this time he would have been ready to discard these *puerilia*. But the truth is, it is *our judgment versus H.N.C.* not our judgment against STC, either unbiassed, or swayed by friends, which constitutes our great exertion of editorial boldness. The fact must have been, that my Father never troubled his head about the edition of 1834—left ⟨it⟩ entirely to Henry.—Had he given the matter a thought, he never COULD have sanctioned the publication of poems he scorned in 1796." She continues similarly in Grantz 133, 134, 136.

[124] 20 Mar 1834, BM Add MS 47557 f 103^{v}. Discussions with Murray probably account for the sentences that follow: "this edition, which is stereotyped, will never be superseded. If S.T.C. should hereafter write ~~any~~ much more poetry it would be added in anōr volume of the same size".

Coleridge later, he assigned titles that have been accepted as if they were the poet's. One assumes that he resurrected nothing without the poet's consent, but he included in the three volumes of 1834 his own poem *On Berkeley and Florence Coleridge*, as by "a friend".[125] Except that he lacked Ernest Hartley Coleridge's unguided freedom to publish as Coleridge's verses culled from the notebooks and could not feel free to make changes arbitrarily in the text of the poems, Henry seems to have had the same trust that Coleridge had expressed to him regarding the preface to the second edition of *Aids to Reflection* in 1830: ". . . I assure you, that I have quite confidence enough in your taste & judgement to give you a Chart Blanch for any amendments in the style".[126] The first volume was available by 20 March, the second in April; the third was listed among new books in the *Literary Gazette* for 19 July. To the third volume, containing the translation from Schiller's *Wallenstein*, Henry added on a final leaf one of Coleridge's dullest poems, as if in a last victory for "unselectness".[127]

To cap his stewardship during his uncle's lifetime, Henry also wrote and carefully revised the most important of all reviews of the *Poetical Works*, that for the *Quarterly*, reprinted in the *Museum of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* of Philadelphia. His authorship of the review, undertaken at Lockhart's suggestion, had not been revealed to Coleridge. Knowing that the review would, as usual, be altered by the editor, Henry adjured Lockhart: "as S.T.C. & oṝs [others] can hardly fail to recognize the writer, you will not insert any expressions touching on my poor Uncle's personal or private life or adventures".[128] With this problem in mind, Henry modified before sending off the review such passages as one, already referred to, quoting Wordsworth:

> We had the pleasure, one clear October day, of accompanying Mr Wordsworth from Rydal to the summit of Bow Fell. A thousand things make that excursion memorable to us; but we refer to it now only as being the occasion on wc̄h Mr Wordsworth said, in concluding an elaborate description of the friend of his youth, "Many men have done wonderful *things*—as Newton, Davey, Scott &c; but Coleridge was the only wonderful *man* I ever knew".[129]

Intermediately in the manuscript this was reduced to begin, "We think we have somewhere heard repeated a remark by Mr Wordsworth that", with changes to indirect quotation and past tense. In the *Quarterly* it be-

[125] *PW* (1834) II 149–50. The identity of the friend was clear enough from the poem.

[126] 1 Dec 1830: *CL* VI 849.

[127] *Love, Hope, and Patience in Education*, from *The Keepsake* for 1830: *PW* (1834) III 331.

[128] UT ms.

[129] UT ms. For HNC's original record, see App E.

gan, "Perhaps our readers may have heard repeated a saying of Mr. Wordsworth".[130] Henry decided to save for a work less anonymous the remark of Mme de Staël to "one of Mr Coleridge's nephews at Coppet, 'Your uncle ~~was~~ is excellent at monologue, but he does not understand *le dialogue*' ".[131]

Henry's review is almost an annex, or in the circumstances an antechamber, to the *Table Talk*. Much comes directly from his record of his uncle's conversation, even to the description of Mackintosh's manner of speaking that serves in the review as the antithesis of Coleridge's.[132] One of his many additions to the page proofs[133] elaborates on Coleridge's insistence that his poetry was more musical than pictorial.[134] The remark of Naldi, in illustration of Coleridge's taste in music, survives both in the review and in *Table Talk*.[135] The long account of Coleridge's Faust, Michael Scott (in *Table Talk* under the date 15 February 1833), appears in the review unchanged.[136] There are other parallels. And yet occasionally, perhaps from the vanity of authorship, Henry suppresses from *Table Talk* Coleridge's conversation as the source of critical interpretations and judgements in the review. In a startling example, Coleridge is quoted in the manuscript on 1 July 1833 concerning the seminal idea of *Christabel* as "witchery by daylight";[137] after Henry had appropriated that interpretation in the review, he removed it from the text of *Table Talk* and cited the *Quarterly* reviewer as the source.[138] The charitable view is that he not only expected knowledgeable readers to identify the author of the review-essay but also to recognise in his authorship the ultimate authority for both general and specific interpretations as Coleridge himself. In any view, Henry was trying to promulgate the best that had been thought and said in his time, to make it prevail, and to honour the thinker of it, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

He could not have expected that the poet's death and the publication of *Table Talk* would follow so quickly that comparison of the two texts would show either that Coleridge was himself the chief source of the essay or that his purported conversation had been modified to fit the views of his nephew. To the extent that Henry did anticipate the poet's death, his fine description in the review-essay of Coleridge's conversation,

[130] *QR* LI I (1834), reprinted *CH* 621.

[131] So the version of his ms of the review, f 4.

[132] *CH* 623; cf *TT* 36:35.

[133] VCL S MS F 121, proof p 6; cf *CH* 627, 632–3.

[134] TT 31 Mar 1832, MS B f 57^{v}.

[135] *CH* 627–8; *TT* 36:282, 5 Oct 1830; MS B f 33^{v}.

[136] *CH* 640–1.

[137] MS B f 97^{v}.

[138] *TT* (1835) II 22 (36:546). Another parallel between *TT* and the *QR* review, on language in Milton and Shakespeare, is acknowledged at 3 Jul 1833 (36:542n).

though it pressed him hard to improve upon it in the Preface to *Table Talk*, can be considered an advertisement for the collection he was preparing:

> Those who remember him in his more vigorous days can bear witness to the peculiarity and transcendent power of his conversational eloquence. It was unlike anything that could be heard elsewhere; the kind was different, the degree was different, the manner was different. The boundless range of scientific knowledge, the brilliancy and exquisite nicety of illustration, the deep and ready reasoning, the strangeness and immensity of bookish lore—were not all; the dramatic story, the joke, the pun, the festivity, must be added—and with these the clerical-looking dress, the thick waving silver hair, the youthful-coloured cheek, the indefinable mouth and lips, the quick yet steady and penetrating greenish grey eye, the slow and continuous enunciation, and the everlasting music of his tones,—all went to make up the image and to constitute the living presence of the man. He is now no longer young, and bodily infirmities, we regret to know, have pressed heavily upon him. His natural force is indeed abated; but his eye is not dim, neither is his mind yet enfeebled. . . .
>
> Mr. Coleridge's conversation, it is true, has not now all the brilliant versatility of his former years; yet we know not whether the contrast between his bodily weakness and his mental power does not leave a deeper and a more solemnly affecting impression, than his most triumphant displays in youth could ever have done. To see the pain-stricken countenance relax, and the contracted frame dilate under the kindling of intellectual fire alone—to watch the infirmities of the flesh shrinking out of sight, or glorified and transfigured in the brightness of the awakening spirit—is an awful object of contemplation; and in no other person did we ever witness such a distinction,—nay, alienation of mind from body,—such a mastery of the purely intellectual over the purely corporeal, as in the instance of this remarkable man. Even now his conversation is characterized by all the essentials of its former excellence; there is the same individuality, the same *unexpectedness*, the same universal grasp; nothing is too high, nothing too low for it; it glances from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth, with a speed and a splendour, an ease and a power, which almost seem inspired: yet its universality is not of the same kind with the superficial ranging of the clever talkers whose criticism and whose information are called forth by, and spent upon, the particular topics in hand. No; in this more, perhaps, than in anything else is Mr. Coleridge's discourse distinguished: that it springs from an inner centre, and illustrates by light from the soul. His thoughts are, if we may so say, as the radii of a circle, the centre of which may be in the petals of a rose, and the circumference as wide as the boundary of things visible and invisible.[139]

Henry recorded several topics of lively conversation on 5 July 1834. On the 23rd Sara wrote to Emily Trevenen, and Mrs Coleridge added a few words: "We send twice a day to Highgate; when H[enry] goes, poor father begs not to see him, nor anybody, but the Doctors and attend-

[139] *QR* LII 2–3; *CH* 621–2.

ants''.[140] On the 26th Henry asked Lockhart to append to his review a notice of Coleridge's death on 25 July.[141] Reporting that action to John on 7 August, he disparaged his review: ''I am afraid the whole is crude, & I takes no pleasure in the performance''.[142] On 8 August he reported to James on their Aunt Sara's health:

> She is the widow of a great man—the greatest, in my judgment, since Milton. The impression he has made is profound, tho' at present in this country not very extensive. In America his influence is more general, &, if I mistake not, there will be a burst of power & glory around his memory very shortly in England.[143]

In October Sara mentioned the Table Talk to Mrs Wardell: ''Henry has some notices of *his own* respecting my father which will appear by & by—But they have nothing to do with the MSS. in the hands of M[r] Green''. Her father admired and trusted Henry. ''My husband too was greatly attached to him & deeply sensible of his good & great qualities; M[rs] Gillman will testify that he was ever loving & respectfully attentive to my Father & it is not a little that would satisfy her on this score''.[144]

Henry had begun work immediately on the *Table Talk*, with an eye also for the *Literary Remains* to follow. ''I hope'', he wrote to John Taylor Coleridge when he had reached the last sheets of the second volume, they ''will add in a substantial way to the fame & utility of S. T. C.''.

> Few, I believe, will give me credit for the labor of putting the text together; it reads nicely now, but the materials committed to me were fragmentary in the extreme. I think I understand the poetical & critical part of S. T. C.'s mind better than any other of the persons at all in the way of undertaking such a work; & if I have done him no harm, I believe you will think I have done him great good.[145]

He prepared a new edition of *The Friend*, with a synoptical plan of the contents and additional documents, for 1837; a fourth edition of *Aids to Reflection* and a third of *Church and State* in 1839. In 1840 he made public for the first time Coleridge's *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit* and began work on a new edition of *Biographia Literaria*,[146] which Sara was to complete for publication in 1847. Wordsworth accepted twice over Sara's dedication to him of the *Biographia*, but urged her to tone down such references as that to the ''latest writings of my dear Henry''.[147]

[140] UT Grantz 1352. SC wrote similarly to HC the same day: Grantz 509.

[141] National Library of Scotland MS 924.10.

[142] BM Add MS 47557 f 106. Cf HNC to Poole 17 Sept 1834: ''It is inadequate—but right, I believe as far as it goes . . .''. BM Add MS 35344 f 112[v].

[143] BM Add MS 47558 f 119.

[144] Postmarked 13 Oct 1834. DCL ms.

[145] HNC to JTC 31 Jul 1836, BM Add MS 47557 f 123.

[146] HNC to Thomas Tracy 21 Apr 1840, HUL MS Am 661 (7).

[147] VCL F MS F5.61.

Those two volumes, completed by Sara with annexes more acute, learned, and original than her husband had provided in his eagerly devout series of volumes, were the first fruits of her succession to him in editing aright the works of their beloved mentor.

HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE'S *TABLE TALK*

Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, as it was entitled in 1835, is the labour of Henry Nelson Coleridge, amplified as noted in the edition by his brother John, "Mr Justice Coleridge", and, as not noted, compressed here and there into discretion by John and others. A correspondent in the *Times Literary Supplement* commented on marginalia displayed in the bicentennial exhibition at the British Museum: "Coleridge is as learned in his remarks on Gilbert White's *The Works in Natural History* as he is entertaining on Martin Luther's *Colloquia mensalia* (whose title he used for his *Table Talk*) . . .".[148] One can speak of the content of *Table Talk* as deriving directly from S. T. Coleridge, but the title and much more came from Henry. S. T. Coleridge used no title for his table-talk.

Most of the talk occurred tête-à-tête at Highgate. On 29 December 1822 Henry summarised in his diary what he had heard his uncle say the previous evening at the John Taylor Coleridges'. He was present when Coleridge came to dinner again on 9 January and 26 April 1824. On 24 July 1831 Henry and Sara encountered him unexpectedly at the British Gallery. The conversation of 9 August 1832 occurred at Hampstead, and possibly that of 8 September 1830 also. At the Gillman house-warming on 1 June 1824 others were present while Henry listened; on 4 April 1832 one or more Unitarians were present, and on 8 June 1833 someone more concerned than Henry for the rights of Negroes. When Henry visited on 13 May 1832 others were present, Coleridge was in poor spirits, and no record of talk resulted. Occasionally there is the hint of a dissenting voice in the room. The recorded talk may of course include still other days at Hampstead and further days when Henry was not alone with his uncle, but the bulk of the Table Talk resulted from Henry's congenial stimulus to the flow of talk. In 1823–4, 1827, and 1830–4 (the years of Henry's report from Highgate), even when Coleridge was not up to holding open Thursdays, visitors acquainted with the Thursdays were often present; it is noteworthy that the dates in the manuscript include only five Thurs-

[148] A Special Correspondent "Coleridge at the British Museum" *TLS* 21 Jul 1972 p 852.

days,[149] with no clear indication of an augmented audience on those five. The person who enters to "punctuate" the discourse on 29 June 1833 could be one of the Gillmans. For the most part *Table Talk* contains what Coleridge said to his nephew, not all of what he said and little of it designed exclusively for Henry, but said directly to him.

One of the strongest signs that what Henry recorded is conversation comes in instances of mishearing. On 27 December 1831 he thought he heard an Italian phrase attributed to "Francesco Tessela"; unable later to identify a Tessela, he modified the entry in 1835 to avoid specification. The name Coleridge pronounced was almost certainly Francesco (that is, Francis) "de 'Salez' ".[150] On 26 September 1830 Henry wrote "Fall of Fiers" for Fall of Foyers. On 21 May 1832 he wrote "Hollerus", which he later changed to Hugo de St Victor. On 4 May 1833 John Scotus Erigena first came to him as "J. Scotus—& Ramus"—the other John Scotus and Ramus. Possibly it was Coleridge who said "the Abbé Raynal" on 7 July 1832 when he meant Giovanni Ignazio Molina, but perhaps Henry's ear or memory supplied the more obvious authority on Chile.[151] Once or twice Henry seems to have scribbled notations for what he had not heard clearly, failed later to make an identification, and generalised the entry in print to evade the question.[152] Henry's brothers, his father, and of course Sara knew that he was recording conversation for eventual publication, but lapses in proper names and in titles of works by major authors support other evidence that Coleridge was not consulted concerning the work in progress. Nowhere in the manuscripts is there evidence that Henry returned at a later date to correct a name misheard.

With no clear exceptions, each day's entries represented a new beginning in the manuscript record. Entries for a given date more often than not begin by differing from the last entry of the preceding date in ink, in thickness of nib, and in size and slant of letters. Entries within a date vary, but less often, and perhaps never without special significance. When Henry's penmanship within a date varies, only the next date of record limits our guess as to the period of time that elapsed while he

[149] 30 Aug 1827, 27 May 1830, 23 Sept 1830, 9 Aug 1832, 28 Aug 1833.

[150] MS B f 54^{v} (36:343).

[151] MS B f 32^{v} (36:275), f 63 (36:385), f 87 (36:501), f 66 (36:392). On Molina see *CN* III 3789n.

[152] E.g. MS B f 90, 15 May 1833 (36:515), on one of Goethe's lyrics. Lockhart, in his review of *TT* (1835), tells us that Henry "commonly set down, before going to bed, what fragments he had been able to carry away". *QR* LIII (1835) 79. Lockhart had been in effect the publisher's editor for the volumes; HNC would have met with him almost from the moment that Murray agreed to publish the TT.

made the record that survives. Determinations of a fresh beginning are made easier by his tendency to begin a long entry in a tightly controlled script but to allow the script to become larger and looser as he proceeds. A direct contrast frequently appears: a small, neat record on one date will be followed by a larger script with a thicker nib on the next date, or vice versa. Because of such characteristics, it has been possible in the annotations to refer to insertions of a word or a sentence or two "in a later script", meaning Henry's hand but distinguishable from the original script of the entry by a combination of pen, ink, and penmanship. Such changes also make it nearly certain that he recorded Coleridge's talk in his workbooks near to the time when he heard it. (The successive workbooks that make up the manuscript version are described at the end of this Introduction).

Henry's injunction to Sara in March 1827 was to listen closely to her father's talk "and endeavour afterwards to preserve some of it, as I have done". The "afterwards . . . as I have done" is one of our few external clues. The manuscript entries now published in *The Collected Works of S. T. Coleridge* were made soon after Henry heard the remarks. How soon? Do the surviving manuscripts represent transcriptions from an initial record not preserved? The balance of evidence, including especially revisions current with first recording in the workbooks, suggests that these entries were normally the initial record, made soon after each return from Coleridge to the location of the workbook. Henry is often more hesitant, with more changes in language, at the commencement of an entry, and then progressively fluid; one would expect the opposite if he were transcribing from an earlier draft. On 28 January 1832, for example, the running corrections indicate that exact wording was not established when he began to write.[153] At one point, where he first writes and then cancels "& accor" in a sentence that later includes "& accordingly", it might be thought that his eye has leaped ahead in copying from an earlier version, but all other corrections in the entry suggest rather that he began to conclude the sentence before perceiving that an intermediate clause would make the thought clearer.

At the very beginning, the next day after hearing Coleridge at dinner on the 28th, he recorded the event of the dinner in his diary and summarised briefly what he had heard Coleridge say. A similar pattern continued through 1827. At first Sara was as important to the diary as her father; next Coleridge's talk seemed to be what was most worth recording; soon the workbooks were used chiefly to record Coleridge's talk but

[153] MS B f 55^{v} (36:348).

also occasionally to transcribe his words from manuscript sources and, rarely, to jot notes on Henry's own reading, both when that reading was directed by Coleridge's remarks and when (as far as we can tell) it was not. He recorded, not conversations or monologues, but Coleridge's topics, apparently at first without regard to the order of topics or to transitions between them. At first, in 1823 and 1824, he used a cautious past tense throughout, as if to certify only what Coleridge said on each particular occasion, not what his opinions could be said to be over a longer period. Later on he probably recorded the topics more nearly in the order they were spoken, but with few transitions, for by then he had erected the principle that his was a record of separable topics.

The workbooks would seem probably to have been in general the first written record. There are signs here and there, however, of transcription. On 13 April 1830, the first date of his new beginning, he wrote "but he never in any way led to bottom the Religion", a syntactic impossibility where the phrase "but he never" anticipates the first words of the next clause; he then crossed out the initial "but he never" and wrote "& so far as it" above the line.[154] This error might well result from the mind getting ahead of the hand in composition, but it could easily occur from letting the eye get ahead in transcription from an intermediate source. Dates out of order also could be explained if some of the entries at that point had been written first on a loose sheet or scrap of paper available after a short delay for transcription into the diary. Entries dated 31 March 1830 follow entries dated 20 April, and are themselves followed by Wordsworth's remarks of 15 October 1829.[155] One begins to believe that Henry used intermediate notations only or largely in early 1830, but there is a similar return to 9 August 1832 after entries dated 11 August.[156] Did the return of 23 September 1830 to note Coleridge's remarks on Huskisson on the 19th result from finding a temporarily misplaced notation or from a sudden memory on the 23rd of something said four days before?[157] What does it mean that the date 25 June 1831 occurs three times in succession for table-talk, each separated by notes from Henry's own reading of Machiavelli?[158]

Although an increase in skills brought fuller and fuller records, one does not imagine Henry carrying his red workbook to the Gillmans' and back, and still less imagines him sitting at the Gillmans' taking notes from *The Prince* between brief conversations with Coleridge. General

[154] MS B f 7 (36:127).
[155] MS B ff 8–10.
[156] MS B f 72.
[157] MS B f 32. A slip of the pen in writing "19" on a later date is a less likely possibility.
[158] MS B ff 37^{v}–9.

psychology requires the postulate that he kept the diary at Lincoln's Inn until his marriage in 1829, that he later kept at Hampstead each book currently used for recording table-talk, and that he sometimes made notes at Lincoln's Inn to preserve topics of Coleridge's conversation until it was convenient to transcribe them at Hampstead. Of her father's talk Sara made entries in the red book only two or three times, but she occasionally transcribed there passages from Coleridge's early letters to her mother or similar documents. This occasional presence of Sara's hand also suggests that the workbooks remained most of the time at Hampstead.

How far is the language Coleridge's? Comparison with other utterances by the Coleridge of 1822–34, whether on the particular topic at issue or on other subjects, reveals similarities, sometimes to the point of identity, in image, syntax, and range of vocabulary. Clearly Henry preferred to report Coleridge's own words, but it is equally clear that he did not feel bound either to the syntax or to the diction originally chosen for the record. The revision of one word, whether closer to the word Coleridge pronounced or farther away, often entailed further revision for stylistic harmony. Henry's continued changes to the text in 1835 and 1836, along with his free revisions in *Literary Remains* when dealing with unfinished or unpolished documents in Coleridge's hand, suggest very strongly that he was more interested in clarity of content, from his original record on, than in reportorial precision. Unfortunately for precisionists, he considered himself superior as a popular stylist to Coleridge—and he proved to be so.

From 1832 on, his workbooks include transcriptions from Coleridge's marginalia and similar documents. About 10 June 1832 he had copied into the red workbook, from a collection of tracts by John Asgill, Coleridge's note on the charm for cramp at Christ's Hospital; in 1835 he published it as table-talk of that date.[159] To plump up an entry concerning Richard Baxter on 12 July 1827 in the published versions, he included a remark he had transcribed on 6 August 1832 from marginalia in *Reliquiae Baxterianae*.[160] He appropriated, and assigned to various dates, sententiae copied by his brother Edward from Coleridge's notebooks and recopied by Henry on 1 September 1832.[161] One of these, on a woman's friendship, he published in a footnote with the explanation that he found it "on a page dyed with an imprisoned rose-leaf".[162] Two more were reversed, combined, and added to the text in 1836.[163] Most of these, as it happens, were from Jean Paul Richter's *Geist*—one more way of adding

[159] MS B f 64 (36:390).

[160] MS B f 70 (36:101). He followed this with another passage (36:102) taken from the Baxter.

[161] MS B f 73. EC's ms is VCL BT 25.

[162] 36:117, *TT* (1835) I 88 and n.

[163] 36:583, *TT* (1835) II 258–9.

by accident to Coleridge's reputation for plagiarism. The leaf was torn from the workbook, probably when Henry was preparing *Literary Remains* and the second edition of *Table Talk*.

Aware that he had come along when his uncle's earlier brilliance had been dulled somewhat by years and illnesses, Henry wished to capture as far as he could the range in tone as well as topic. A "retrospect" in the *Christian Observer*, attributable to the Reverend Thomas A. Methuen, drew upon *Table Talk* for its list of Coleridge's characteristics as a talker: conversational fluency; sprightly, occasionally severe, sayings; imagination; classical wealth; gigantic memory; theological views; and religious character.[164] Among the elements in the range caught by Henry but unspecified by Methuen are a wealth of knowledge, interest, and perception concerning English literature and English history, particularly of the seventeenth century; areas of European history and literature, especially but not solely theological or religious; Biblical as distinct from theological views; political theory and contemporary politics; the anecdotal, comic and good-humoured as well as "severe"; sociological observation; as much science as Henry could absorb; and *obiter dicta*, sometimes wry, sometimes buoyant, concerning current verse and fiction. To achieve this range Henry kept both ear and eye open. When the manuscript record of Coleridge's discussion of Whigs and Tories on 28 January 1832 could be amplified from a letter Henry received from Coleridge in May of that year, the published versions included the amplification.[165] Lacking the opportunity to hear Coleridge's last words, Henry borrowed appropriate words to end the table-talk from a letter of 1827 to Derwent.[166]

Going through Coleridge's notebooks in 1835–6 in search of materials for *Literary Remains*, Henry decided that some entries were more appropriate for the second edition of *Table Talk* than for "Omniana", possibly because he thought them especially characteristic.[167] It seems probable that the small "T.T." above some of these entries in Coleridge's notebooks was usually a notation of Henry's in 1835–6 of suitability for *Table Talk*, even though he included some of them instead among the "Omniana" of *Literary Remains*. Beginning in 1834 or 1835, he drew a

[164] Πίστις "Retrospect of Friendly Communication with the Poet Coleridge" *Christian Observer* XLIV (May 1845) 257–63. After quoting Staël, he modified her remark (259): "On the whole, perhaps, his vast conversational powers were too little exercised in *dialogue*".

[165] 36:348, *TT* (1835) II 22; MS B f 55^{v}; *CL* VI 905.

[166] 36:664 from *CL* VI 705. The date is conjectural. The fragment is at VCL; when DC gave it to HNC is not known.

[167] E.g. *CN* III 3497, 3554, 3938, 4128, 4304; cf *TT* 36:116, 362, 509.

vertical line through each item in his own workbooks that he prepared for publication in *Table Talk* or *Literary Remains*. Some of these are single lines down the page when everything on the page appears in *Table Talk* (1835). No line is present for items not prepared for publication by him. Separate, differing lines are present for items he published after 1835. From these three variations, it seems probable that he drew the vertical lines at the time of transcribing from the workbooks in expectation of publication. Such lines are present for all items that survive in MS F, which is a collection of scraps cut from the revised manuscript at the instigation of various members of the family who objected to this entry or that. MS F seems to tell us that Henry, not a clerk, transcribed for *Table Talk*. Once he had obtained fuller access to the notebooks, he ceased to rely on his miscellaneous transcriptions in the workbooks—from *Reliquiae Baxteriana*, for example—for the texts he published.[168]

Among other changes for the revised manuscript, Henry altered a substantial portion of the dates. He adjusted the dates for three discernible reasons. Occasionally he chose to consolidate remarks on the same subject where his original record shows a return to the subject after a period of days or years. As the earliest entries were individually lean and of little bulk collectively, he moved parts of later entries to the earliest dates. There are in fact few instances of this change, but from these few the purpose is evident. Most of all, he broke up the large blocks of talk from a single day and created new dates, usually successive to the actual date of record, for more even distribution over the calender. This change has the effect, probably incidental, of making it seem that the sessions with Coleridge came more frequently than they did. Distribution has also the effect, probably not incidental, of lightening the printed page. His handling of 21 July 1832 seems a clear example of his freedom with dates for the purpose of punctuation to the eye of the reader.[169] In revision (MS F) he created the date 24 July for Coleridge's remarks of the 21st concerning his opposition to the slave trade in 1796. When disapproval by his advisers caused the omission of this entry from the printed versions, he retained the date 24 July for Coleridge's remarks on the futility of the new infant schools.[170] By a piece of isolated mischief, he transferred to Earl Grey under date of 20 March 1831 what had been recorded of Jacques Necker on 14 August 1831.[171] Where dates survive on the scraps

[168] When he acknowledged notes from JTC for *TT* he had laid out plans also for *LR*: "What I shall do is, to set a fellow to transcribe the parts roughly designated by me first on even pieces of paper, & then consider & class them afterwards." HNC to JTC 13 Aug 1834, BM Add MS 47557 f 108.

[169] MS B ff 67–9.

[170] MS B f 68^{v} (36:406).

[171] MS B f 49 (36:293).

of MS F, they are identical with the original dates in the workbooks, thereby suggesting that the distribution of dates occurred for the most part at a late point in the preparation of *Table Talk*.[172] If it occurred after John Murray or his representatives had seen the manuscript, punctuation to the eye might have been the principal consideration.

The creation of smaller units by distribution of a day's long talk over several dates proved so successful that references to the *Table Talk* have usually, for more than a century, been identified by the published dates of the entries concerned. Publication now of the original dates in the manuscript may in this sense seem inconvenient, but relatively few of Henry's changes of date involved changes in sequence of entries, although he did alter the order of entries within dates as a procedure separate from the change in date. Cross-references in the present edition between the manuscript and published versions should ease the burden of transition to new dates. (See also Appendix V, Table of Comparative Dates, vol II, below.) Luckily, few scholarly arguments have hinged on a specific date in Coleridge's utterances to his nephew. It has been wrong to assume on the basis of *Table Talk* that Coleridge expressed a given opinion on a given date, but scholars fortunately have realised that *Table Talk* as published rarely opens totally new vistas on Coleridge's thought. The dates have been a convenience without diverting intellectual history into gross error. Nevertheless, the present edition is a watershed for reference, even within *The Collected Works of S. T. Coleridge*.

Perhaps it is equally fortunate that close linguistic study of *Table Talk* has been minimal. Stylistic changes between the manuscripts and the printed versions scream out less than changes of date, but a student comparing the manuscript version with previously printed versions will notice immediately both verbal and substantive changes. Sometimes, as in the early entry on *Othello*, Henry enlivened the printed version by inserting connectives and pauses: "whereas", "in fact", "you see", "See how utterly".[173] From a sentence on the inheritance of Christianity through the mother, at the end of the first long paragraph in MS A, the words "and with the tone of her voice" were omitted in MS E but expanded in 1835 to read "and with the first-remembered tones of her blessed voice".[174] A clause on John Dryden (indebted to Pope) progresses in the manuscripts from "he *gets* warm" through "his chariot wheels *get* hot".[175] Such verbal changes occur in clusters throughout

[172] E.g. the entry on Harriet Macklin, not published, is dated 15 Aug 1832 in MS B 72^{v} and in MS F. *TT* (1835) II 94–5 had reached 19 Aug in the redating of the 9–11 Aug sequence.

[173] MS A p 99, 6 Jan 1823 (36:1–2).

[174] MS A p 97; MS E 11 (36:28).

[175] MS B f 108, 23 Oct 1833 (36:601).

Henry Nelson Coleridge's work. Are they his improvements or attempts at restoration of what was originally heard? Sometimes one, no doubt, and sometimes the other. Probably some of them, though not restorations of what was originally heard, come from the rhythm of Coleridge's voice when he returned to the same subject at a later date. In any event, Henry's chief effort was not to recapture the exact words, but to convey Coleridge's thought with verbal approximations to his force of expression.

Most of the parlour Latin, absent from the manuscripts, enters in 1835. Hearers with Greek usually included more Greek phrases than Latin tags in their reports of what Coleridge said, in conformity with Henry's manuscript version rather than with the *Table Talk* of 1835 or 1836. Most of the specific examples of Latin—*siccissimis pedibus, ad hominem et pro tempore, Gradus ad Philosophiam*—were probably intruded by Henry at will, but their intrusion may restore something of the flavour that Coleridge's letters and notations, as well as his publications, suggest he gave normally to his talk. Educated hearers may have noticed the Greek, which was usually pertinent to the topic, whereas the Latin tags would have seemed an ordinary decoration in educated speech.

With the question of restoration or invention we reach an embarrassment. Some of the most famous sentences in the published *Table Talk* are not in the manuscripts: "To see him act, is like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning."[176] "I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so."[177] "Upon my word, I think the Œdipus Tyrannus, the Alchemist, and Tom Jones, the three most perfect plots ever planned."[178] The remark about "a smack of Hamlet" may not at first have seemed pertinent to the discussion of *Hamlet*, though memorable enough. Or Henry may have heard it on another occasion and remembered it when transcribing his original record. The image of Kean is supported by William Jerdan's testimony and has the true Esteesian ring. So also has the pronouncement on the three perfect plots, although it seems dragged from elsewhere into the contrast of Fielding and Richardson; Henry had no later opportunity of hearing the remark in a different conversation.

[176] 36:34, 27 Apr 1823; MS A p 102. George Rowell calls it "the century's most quoted piece of dramatic criticism". Introduction *Victorian Dramatic Criticism* (1971) xiii. William Jerdan, in *Literary Gazette* 23 May 1835 p 321, says of the passage as printed that it "was uttered in our company"; he offers a substitute for one phrase, but takes no exception to the sentence on flashes of lightning. We may take it that HNC (a) heard C say it on a later occasion, (b) was informed by another who heard C say it, or (c) heard it in 1823, but remembered it later than 1827.

[177] 36:80, 24 Jun 1827; MS B f 4.

[178] 36:661, 5 Jul 1834; MS C p 41. Another piece of wit not in the workbooks is dropped into a paragraph on Junius: "Horne Tooke and a long sentence seem the only two antagonists that were too much for him." 36:542, 1 Jul 1833; MS B f 96^{v}.

Many of the modifications between the workbooks and the printed page remove or meliorate possible offences, especially where those prospectively offended would be otherwise more friendly than Whigs or Unitarians could be expected to be. Harsh language concerning the "ignorant zealotry & sordid vulgarity of the leaders of the day", the Whig ministers, could stand.[179] In correspondence concerning *Table Talk*, Henry seems totally unconscious of falsification in meliorating some statements but leaving occasional belligerences unchanged. In an antithetical sentence on the geologist Lyell, Coleridge may have said "most of what he denies is false", as the manuscript affirms, but the revision of 1835 removes an ambiguity and thus clarifies Coleridge's meaning: "He affirms a great deal that is true, and he denies a great deal which is equally true . . .".[180] Sometimes the suppression of a proper name accomplishes the dramatic sense of an opponent's presence along with anonymity, as when "you" replaces a newspaper in "What the Times says about the quarrel in the United States is sophistical".[181] If Henry's prudential revisions in MS F had in mind his own advisers and Murray's as much as the public beyond them, he was wrong only in not being prudent enough for the advisers.

After setting to work on the table-talk soon after Coleridge's funeral, Henry was able to thank John on 13 August 1834 for a first instalment of notes and to promise an important step in his procedure: "I shall submit the Table Talk, when drawn out, to you, Lockhart & Green—three very distinct represīves [respresentatives] of feelings & opinion. My own capital judgment will come last."[182] A month later he apparently sent John his workbooks along with (presumably) a first portion of his revision. John replied in alarm on the 18th:

My dear Henry,

I have read some not all the books I return—I wish I had had more time—to read them all—You will not be surprized to hear me say, that I have been electrified by many of the paragraphs & delighted and instructed by more.

But in my opinion you *must omit many of these*—as at present advised, I think many decidedly wrong and pernicious—that that is not all, thousands will read these *dicta*, who will never read their justification, or explanation, or modification—what will be the consequence—1st many pious Christians (infirmiores paullo if you please) will be offended—some will be perverted—some will pervert.

In editing these dicta depend on it you have S T C's reputation and his means

[179] MS B f 77, 20 Jan 1833 (36:454).

[180] MS B f 94, 29 Jun 1833 (36:531). In revising, HNC would have seen that he had originally begun the sentence with "A great deal" instead of with "Much".

[181] MS B f 84, 8 Apr 1833 (36:484).

[182] BM Add MS 47557 f 108.

at least of doing harm where he is wrong, sometimes even where he is right, more in your power than Mr Green will have.

Are some of the subjects here such as OUGHT to be printed upon from a note of half a conversation—do consider this? Inspiration for instance—take the note about the Gadarene Possession, & look at St Luke c. VIII, especially v. 28th—ask yourself did the possessed say, what is there recorded—if he did what becomes of the note—if he did not, what becomes of St Luke's VERACITY—I don't say ACCURACY—

I feel so much fellow interest in this with you, that I hope you will sell or print nothing, till I can talk over the whole matter with you.

My pencillings are mere hasty "jottings"—wrong or right—but do let me *talk* with you.

Yours ever
JTC.

Septr. 18th. 1834[183]

Henry must have received a second note immediately. On the 21st, in response to John's misgivings, he defended both Coleridge and himself:

I am much obliged by your note—you must read the whole collection, the latter part of wch is more literary & less liable to exception. Some of your objections proceed from your not having graduated in Trismegisti philosophia—as where you object to the possibility of ~~con~~ propositions involving a contradiction in terms being each true—This very contradiction according to the syllogistic logic confined to the finite forms of the Understanding, & yet, by our inner certainty of the truth, evincing the necessity of referring them to a higher logic—that of Ideas & the Reason—is S. T. C.'s definition, or characteristic of an Idea—See Aids to Reflection p. 226 in the old edition & Church & State p. 12—He cites, *Before* Abraham *was*, I *am*, & &c. But as to all the notes on Inspiration & the genuineness of books of the Bible—I upon the whole agree with you upon their omission. It will make a hole in the materials, but that must not be regarded. All these things will appear ere long—but at least I shall not have the responsibility, & what is more, they will appear from his own pen. One or two short notes may still remain. You know his view of Possession is Lardner's & others—Lardner argues it in an aside & comes to a very ⟨clear⟩ conclusion for common readers—S. T. C.'s views are not peculiar in this—but in furnishing a view of what is called inspiration, wch leaves the character & authority of the text in harmony with that conclusion. Not to lose time, I have sent back the books, wishing you to peruse them all accurately—& if you can send them to town by about the first week in October—that will do. I shall do nothing with them at present. I think your memdum should be printed, however we will look at it. . . . I start for Bath tomorrow morning,—& begin at Bradford Tuesday.[184]

John devised a system of crosses to indicate on MS F three degrees of advisability against publishing. The surviving scraps show that one cross

[183] UT ms.

[184] BM Add MS 47557 f 114. On 2 Nov HNC assured RS: "I will take care to publish nothing wch can hurt private feelings, or wch indeed S. T. C. might not have said or written in his own person openly." UT ms.

was at least sometimes enough to secure omission from print. One of the later censors used a similar system of ×'s, so that entries in MS F occasionally bear notations like × × × + + in the margin. But again, one × was sometimes enough to bury an entry concerning practices of the clergy, Biblical inspiration, or members of the Coleridge family. Edward and Derwent seem to have been the next censors after John; their verbal objections or queries, where recoverable, appear in the annotations to the present edition. As they were written in pencil on the verso of the leaf preceding the leaf commented on, and only the entries subsequently omitted have survived from MS F, few of these queries have been recovered.

Because of the censorship by Henry's brothers and others close to the project, the present edition includes as no earlier edition does personal remarks on Wordsworth, Southey, and Scott; anecdotes about Coleridge's father, mother, and brother George; comments on his own poems; axioms concerning sexual passion; and a wide range of Biblical criticism. Of the last, as Henry pointed out to John, we have had the essence from works published by Henry in 1838–40 and by others who came after him. In eliminating what seemed the most daring of Coleridge's comments on the Bible, the circle overruled one of his basic assumptions, forcefully expressed in a notebook entry of 1804:

> So far from deeming it, in a religious point of view, criminal to spread doubt of God, immort. & virtue . . . in the *minds* of individuals, I seem to see in it a *duty*—lest men by taking the *words* for granted never attain the feeling or the true *faith* . . . whereas to *doubt* has more of faith, nay even to disbelieve—than that blank negation of all such thoughts & feelings which is the lot of the Herd of Church and Meeting Trotters.[185]

The scraps of MS F represent Henry's conciliatory approach to those in the circle who took another view. His original transcription of the passages represented what his brothers regarded as Coleridge's lack of caution and Henry's usual temerity.

On 25 September 1834, in Melksham, Wiltshire as revising barrister, Henry wrote to Murray:

> I shall probably wish to publish soon a volume of selected specimens of S. T. Coleridge's Table Talk wc̄h have been preserved by me. I set a high value on them for their own merit, & also for their relative interest, in respect of Mr Coleridge's name & now rapidly increasing public. You have my offer of the MS, & I have no objection to its ⟨being⟩ submitted to Mr Lockhart; but the contents, consisting of short paragraphs, are so peculiarly liable to quotation &c, that I must

[185] *CN* II 2296.

be particular with you as to not letting the MS. ~~to~~ be exposed except to a confidential person.[186]

Whatever the intermediate exchanges, he wrote again on 1 December:

I send with this my MS. of "Specimens of the Table Talk of the late S. T. C." With the exception of some few additional notes, & a preface or introduction of a sheet & a half or two sheets, the copy is fit for the press as it is. The little poems at the end were omitted by accident in the late edition of S. T. C.'s poetical works, & the exclusive right to them is not mine—but their present publication is permitted.

Now my wish & intention are to sell this work, if I can get what I think it is, under the circumstances, fairly worth; & with that view I offer it to you in the first place. And I shall be obliged by your letting me ⟨have⟩ the MS. back again with your decision ⟨upon it⟩ with as little delay as may be convenient to yourself. I need not request you to keep the MS. safe & secret.

On the 13th Henry asked, on the advice of "some of my friends who have read the work", four hundred guineas in two instalments, the second to be paid six months from the day of publication. On the same day Murray answered, "I agree, according to your proposal"—to pay the amount asked in three instalments, the last to come twelve months from publication. He added a second paragraph: "I wish you would appoint some day about 4 o clock to meet M^r^ Lockhart at the Athenaeum, as he has read the MS & has one or two things to suggest."[187] On the 18th Henry gave assurances on this point: "I have talked with Mr Lockhart this morning touching the Table Talk, & will attend to his suggestions. I am ready for the printer when ever you choose to give directions." He had further news for Murray on the 13th: "I have added a small paper of further reminiscences from my brother, & I think it probable that before printing I shall be able to get some more." If the "further reminiscences" were John's notes from April 1811, any that arrived later (if used) were inserted as a footnote.[188]

Henry had been considering the addition of table-talk remembered by still other listeners. On 3 September he had written to Thomas Poole: "If you can give me any *dicta* of S. T. C. with dates as near as possible, I wish you would, as I think of making a miscellaneous chapter of Table Talk from other sources than my own." Readers of the present edition may smile at the request for "dates as near as possible", but Henry had

[186] One of some forty-five letters from HNC to John Murray, 1826–41, retained by John Murray Publishers Ltd with others from SC. This correspondence shows that Murray regularly sent to HNC copies of *QR*, which would then be available to C.

[187] UT ms.

[188] I.e. 36:666–7: *TT* (1835) II 343–57; and note to 36:310, *TT* (1835) I 243n–4.

in mind the ascertaining of the decade, or some such period of time, in which Coleridge had expressed a remembered opinion or observation. In the same letter he proposed that Poole write "a memoir—short & leading", but preferably with a chronological record of "whatever you remember remarkable in the sayings & doings of S. T. C.—recording the opinions & feelings of the time", to serve as a prefix to *Table Talk*.[189] On the 17th he was agreeing that such materials could be sent to Green.[190] A year later Poole sent a portion of what was desired.[191]

Henry's plans for his Preface were at least partly formed by 2 November, when he wrote to Southey of "a selection from a volume of recollections of S. T. C.'s conversations, with some notes & a preface, in wch I must needs say a word to that abandoned man, De Quincey". It was in this letter that he made the rash promise: "I will take care to publish nothing wch can hurt private feelings".[192]

In December Henry sent "a good deal" of copy to the printer and corresponded with Murray about the illustrations. At the beginning of 1835, printing was held up for a month or more, probably to wait on copy from Henry. On 3 January he wrote to Sara: "I am writing my preface, & get on very draggingly, & unsatisfactorily with it; but something of the sort must be done, & after I get back, the printing will, no doubt, proceed rapidly, as Murray will have it come out with the next Qu[arterly]."[193] The hope of having Poole's memoir may have been one cause of delay in Henry's Preface; by April, waiting on Poole as a cause for delay gave way to the need Henry felt to answer unfavourable proleptic treatment of *Table Talk* in the *Edinburgh Review* and *Westminster Review*. A later reviewer explained a final delay as arising "from a wish to make arrangements that would secure the advantage of copyright in America".[194] Henry's Preface was dated from Lincoln's Inn 11 May 1835, less than two weeks before publication.

Henry was not enthusiastic about the two illustrations chosen by Murray: (1) as frontispiece to Volume I, a lithograph by Louis Haghe (1806–85) from the portrait by Thomas Phillips (1770–1845) owned by Murray, engraved with Coleridge's complimentary-close-with-signature and mounted;[195] (2) as frontispiece to Volume II, the lithograph by George

[189] BM Add MS 35344 ff 110–11; the first sentence quoted is a postscript on the flap.

[190] Ibid ff 112–13.

[191] Ibid 118–24. Poole had corresponded with SC as well as HNC from the time of C's death: *Poole* II 294–300, 303–8; Poole to SC, totally co-operative, 13 Nov 1834: UT ms.

[192] UT ms.

[193] UT ms.

[194] *Dublin University Magazine* VI (Jul 1835) 1.

[195] On 17 Aug HNC wrote to JTC that he had seen Phillips's copy of the portrait, for which he asked "sixty guineas,

Scharf (1788–1860) from his own water-colour of Coleridge's room at The Grove, engraved from a copy owned by J. H. Green.[196] In presenting copies of the published volumes to Poole on 25 May 1835, Henry lamented, "The lithograph is vile; but I have not to answer for it."[197]

In April 1835 Murray paid A. Spottiswoode of New-Street-Square £159.11.9 for printing 2000 copies. Eleven copies were sent to Stationers' Hall for copyright, fifty copies were presented, and 1939 copies sold for £913.6.0, with a profit on 30 June 1838 of £92.8.8. Here was a work of commercial success such as Coleridge's prose had never enjoyed.

Enough copies were sold soon after publication to put a second edition immediately in view. In August Henry was "painfully doing a dull article on Hartley's Worthies for the Q.R.", specifically "for the money coming in aptly in the dead noon of vacation".[198] In September at Heath's Court, with *Literary Remains* as well as a new edition of *Table Talk* pressing upon him, he saw "but very little time for doing any thing to the Esteesian papers".[199] His clerk was busy transcribing materials for *Literary Remains*, but Henry must have found time for his own progress toward the end of the year, for he was able to write to Murray on 19 January 1836:

> I send the first vol. of the Table Talk, corrected, & with several new passages inserted—enough to warrant you in calling this an edition with additions, if you like. I have cut out from the Preface all the matter of a temporary or controversial interest, &, now reduced to half its length, it contains that only wch is proper & necessary for a permanent introduction to the work. I have done the same with the notes. The other volume you shall have similarly treated in a few days.
>
> It would save time & trouble, if you will direct a correction of the proofs ac-

twenty less than the price for the original", but would probably ask more after C's death. BM Add MS 47557 f 109. HNC thought the best portrait that by Allston owned by Josiah Wade. Haghe was the first to practise lithography successfully in Britain. The portrait itself, painted in 1818, is reproduced as the frontispiece to *Friend (CC)* I. It is still in the possession of John Murray Publishers Ltd. SC wrote to DC 22 Jan 1852: "The frontispiece to the Table Talk is odious, and yet Phillips' picture—the original at Salston House—is very pleasing." UT ms.

[196] HNC to Murray 22, 26 Dec 1834. The water-colour, now in the Coleridge Cottage, Nether Stowey, is reproduced in *CM (CC)* opposite I cxv; the lithograph is reproduced from a signed proof in *CL* opposite VI 659.

[197] BM Add MS 35344 ff 114–15.

[198] HNC to JTC 11 Aug 1835, BM Add MS 47557 f 117; cf f 118^{v}. See *QR* LIV (Sept 1835) 330–55; HC to SC, *HCL* 177 ("It looks too like a family concern. I think the praise excessive, but let that pass."). The praise is not let pass by Elizabeth Story Donno "The Case of the Purloined Biography: Hartley Coleridge and Literary Protectivism" *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* LXXXII (1979) 469–70.

[199] HNC to SC 12, 17 Sept 1835, UT ms.

cording to the accompanying copy—the same to be sent to me, with the name of the printer. After that there need be no delay.

He continued his excisions and additions through Volume II. On 10 March he told John that the second edition in one volume was "nearly finished in printing".[200]

Murray's account books show a payment to Spottiswoode in June for printing 2000 copies. Edward Finden re-engraved the frontispiece portrait. For advertising £50.4.1 was added to the £57.18.7 spent in advertising the first edition. But sales of the second edition dropped off rapidly. In June 1838 there were 1177 on hand; after Henry's death in 1843 there were 822 copies, but what had been loss in 1838 had become a profit of £26.8.10. These profits increased by £69.13.0 when 796 copies were remaindered to H. G. Bohn.

For the second edition, Henry removed from the Preface his responses to reviews and his denunciation of De Quincey's charges in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* that Coleridge was a frequent plagiarist. In the rebuttal of De Quincey, Henry had relied mostly on a defence by Julius Hare published in the January number of the *British Magazine*.[201] From the table-talk itself he dropped conjectures concerning Shakespeare's text that had been rejected in letters to him from Alexander Dyce; he eliminated an entry called by the *Westminster Review* a "coarse, indecent attack on Malthus" and a passage (with a note by himself) considered libellous by Sir Francis Head, whom it concerned.[202] He omitted an uncomplimentary reference to Sotheby's translation of Virgil's Georgics; George Burnett's name; claims of journalistic success denied by Daniel Stuart; and similar bits to which objection had been taken during 1835.[203] He meliorated other passages, and made verbal changes throughout. He added a large number of new entries, mostly brief and mostly from Coleridge's notebooks or marginalia. As he says in the letter of 19 January to Murray, he dropped several footnotes of temporary interest, some written in further rebuttal to reviews and journals. He rescued as new annotation some of the defences carried away in reducing the Preface; for example, the fuller explanation of Coleridge's remarks on Plato and Xenophon, which the *Edinburgh Review* had declared contradictory.[204] Instead of the miscellaneous poems at the close, he substituted the letter to Adam

[200] BM Add MS 47557 f 121[v].

[201] *TT* (1835) I xxxix–lxix.

[202] *TT* (1835) I 128 (35:170), II 88 (35:426), 295–6 (35:625), 306–8 (35:635).

[203] *TT* (1835) I 74 (36:88), 157 (36:215), 173 (36:228).

[204] *TT* (1836) 9n, 26 (36:15, 50) from *TT* (1835) I lxvn–lxvi.

Steinmetz Kennard, which he had transcribed in MS C probably with *Table Talk* in mind.

The text of this second edition, except for the addition of two notes by Sara in the third edition of 1851 and gradual accumulation of small errors, is the text by which the *Table Talk* had been known to readers for more than a century and a half. After 1850 the demand for *Table Talk* rose again quickly and remained strong. There were editions or reprintings in 1851 (2000 copies), 1852 (1000 copies), 1858 (500 copies), 1865 (500 copies), 1870 (750 copies), 1874 (750 copies), and 1882 (1250 copies). In 1884, although John Murray Ltd sold the stereotype plates to Grant of Edinburgh and editions appeared simultaneously with the imprints of George Bell and Sons (Bohn's Standard Library) and George Routledge and Sons (Morley's Universal Library), Murray retained the steel plate for the frontispiece and printed 1000 copies in March. Walter Scott and Oxford University Press were among later publishers of the work. Although *Biographia Literaria* has been the critical favourite of the twentieth century, *Table Talk*, in the words of Lucy Watson, "has been perhaps the most popular of all books either relating to or written by S. T. Coleridge".[205]

The first edition of 1835 is much closer to Henry Nelson Coleridge's manuscripts than the second edition, and the chief difference between them is the addition in the second edition of materials from written sources, so that the intervening century and a half has been inadvertently mistaken in following the second edition (or third) rather than the first. *Table Talk* (1836) does, however, include Henry Nelson Coleridge's considered revisions, and its extremity of difference from the manuscripts makes it appropriate for reprinting as an appendix in *The Collected Works of S. T. Coleridge* along with the manuscript version. Above all, it is the text known to generations of readers. But no future generation can neglect the manuscript version now published. It is representative of the need for a scholarly edition that the reference to "Skelton's Richard Sparrow" has been neither corrected nor challenged in any edition, although Dyce called Henry Nelson Coleridge's attention to the error.[206] For another example, in entry 36:49 (1 May 1823) "John, xv.28" is incorrectly interpolated for John 14.28, and no subsequent editor has corrected it. More important than the correction of careless error, the manuscripts supply names where the sensibilities of 1835 and 1836

[205] *C at H* 94. *Aids to Reflection* and perhaps other works by C would have maintained an equal readership in the United States through most of the nineteenth century.

[206] *TT* (1835) I 60 (36:72); MS B f 1^{v} (10 Mar 1827).

required blanks. Occasionally, also, names can be supplied even though Henry failed to make the proper identification. If the manuscript version is not ideal, it must be utilised in preparing any edition truthful to H. N. Coleridge's own intentions.

REVIEWS OF 1835

Because of the lapse of months between printing and publication, with the premature appearance of the official review by John Gibson Lockhart in the *Quarterly*, the daily newspapers noticed and quoted *Table Talk* before most of the monthlies and quarterlies had their chance. William Cobbett quoted Coleridge as sounding American.[207] Henry Taylor, who achieved sudden celebrity with *Philip van Artevelde* in June 1834 and was sensitive to competition, remembered that "the favourite theme of every magazine and journal" for the next year and more was Coleridge—less like the usual attention after a celebrated death, Taylor said, than "like the noisy inebriety of an Irish funeral".[208] *Table Talk* appeared during this inebriety.

Lockhart's official review has been cited earlier on the reasons for the lack of Boswellian drama in *Table Talk* and on Coleridge's relative cheerfulness concerning the condition of England after passage of the Reform Bill.

> We ourselves happened to have several long conversations with him . . . not many months before his illness confined him to his chamber; and then, in the open air, walking by the sea-side, his tone of prediction was undoubtedly more hopeful than the reader of his sick-bed *talk* might be able to conjecture. We think it right to record that he more than once expressed his belief that, under the circumstances in which the Reform bill had placed the country, there was much more likelihood of good than of evil results from extending still further the electoral suffrage. The great mischief, he always said, had been placing too much power in one particular class of the population, the class above and below which attachment to our old institutions in church and state is most prevalent.[209]

Lockhart added Joseph Spence's *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men* (1820) to the *ana* with which *Table Talk* could worthily compete. Like all the reviewers after him, and according to the general practice of the era, he quoted liberally from the volumes under

[207] In repudiating this view as not comprehensive, HNC rejected equally the opposite generalisation: "It suits the M. Chronicle in a paragraph I saw the other day, to say that S. T. C. vituperated Parliamentary Reform: no such thing, he only abused this Reform Bill—a very different thing, I conceive." HNC to Poole 15 Jun 1835. BM Add MS 35344 ff 116–16v.

[208] *Autobiography of Henry Taylor 1800-1875* (2 vols 1885) I 191.

[209] *QR* LIII (Feb 1835) 79–103; quotation p 103.

consideration. His own favourites he classified under the headings of Shakespeare; other writers; politics, including popular education; and "the actual business of life—men and manners in general".[210]

Most of the reviewers of *Table Talk* had heard Coleridge discourse. For fifteen years nearly every literate person had known somebody who could have secured a welcome at The Grove. Two who did not boast of personal knowledge, Thomas Perronet Thompson (1783–1869) in the *Westminster Review* and Herman Merivale (1806–1874) in the *Edinburgh Review*, abused the work in April, early enough for Henry Nelson Coleridge to answer in his Preface. Thompson had access only to Lockhart's review in the *Quarterly* and to the passages quoted there.[211] He condemned Coleridge as a turncoat who attacked economists and defended slavery: "the Tory sophist was a man of little soul", erected into a higher being to satisfy the needs of a party characterised by "the remoteness from useful truth and the clinging to all harmful darkness".[212]

Merivale, a barrister of the Inner Temple since 1832, probably kept in mind the nephew, his brother Mr Serjeant Coleridge (made Justice of the King's Bench in 1835), and their brother-in-law the justice Sir John Patteson as much as he regarded the sayings of the poet. His review in the *Edinburgh* is on the whole fair, though chilly in tone. Coleridge had achieved "that celebrity as a converser, or rather a discourser, which rendered him, during the latter years of his life, again an object of public curiosity and interest".

> Conversation, in the ordinary sense of the word, was not to be met with in his company. His visitors came only for the purpose of hearing the dissertations of a lecturer. . . .
>
> The theory of dreams and apparitions; the doctrines of phrenology, animal magnetism, and similar semi-medical questions; the singular forms in which enthusiasm or other disturbing causes have influenced the passive faculties of the mind;—all these topics . . . afforded a frequent exercise to his wandering fancy. On such subjects, and on the Platonic, or Kantian theory of mind, to which they invariably led him, he would hold forth to his audience, mazed and half-entranced. . . .
>
> We do not deny, that the editor of these volumes has acquitted himself in a manner highly creditable. . . . He has endeavoured to reduce to the form of aphorisms the sayings of one of the most eloquent, but least concise and definite of reasoners; and has extracted in this manner, in unconnected fragments, much which was evidently wrapt up in the texture of some fine-spun but continuous theory.[213]

[210] Ibid 97.

[211] Jerdan said that the *Westminster* reviewer "reviewed the first reviewer out of the materials he himself had furnished". *Literary Gazette* 23 May 1835 p 321.

[212] *Westminster Review* XXII (Apr 1835) 531–7; quotation p 537. HNC responded in *TT* (1835) I xxxin.

[213] *Ed Rev* LXI (Apr 1835) 129-35; quotations 130, 131, 133.

Henry Nelson Coleridge found in the review much to resent. Without any intention of "correcting all the mistakes of the Edinburgh Reviewer", he cited the misconstruing of Coleridge on Xenophon and Plato and rejected the reviewer's declaration that Coleridge was "an unconscionable plagiary, like Byron".[214] The following October, reviewing *Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh*, Francis Jeffrey took the opportunity to turn the contrast between Coleridge and Mackintosh on its head. He attacked fiercely the work of "the admiring, or rather idolizing, nephew", and accused the uncle of general incompetence needlessly prolonged.[215]

On 25 April *The Printing Machine; or, Companion to the Library and Register of Progressive Knowledge* reviewed *Edinburgh Review* No 123, with a rebuttal on *Table Talk*:

> We think it is, upon the whole, the ablest of the numerous accounts of this extraordinary man that have appeared since his death—with the exception of the admirable series of papers by M. de Quincy in "Tait's Magazine," which, notwithstanding some things that may, perhaps, be excepted to, are the only exposition of the genius, the philosophy, and the personal history and character of Coleridge yet attempted, that in spirit and power is worthy of the subject.

Along the way, the reviewer took on Lockhart's review in contrast with Merivale's, which he found to be,

> throughout, tolerant and liberal, and perfectly free from the party animosity and spite in which the writer of the paper on the same work in the last number of the "Quarterly Review" chose so plentifully, and with such singular bad taste, to indulge.[216]

Table Talk afforded literary reviews and magazines a special opportunity to memorialise or epitomise Coleridge's career. William Jerdan (1782–1869), editor of the *Literary Gazette*, gave the work a lead review on 23 May and a second instalment the following week. The first began: "This publication has made some noise in the political, polemical, and party periodicals, before it reached our sphere."[217] He praised Henry Nelson Coleridge for making of crumbs from the table "a feast worthy

[214] *TT* (1835) I lxv–lxviii.

[215] *Ed Rev* LXII (Oct 1835) 242–8; quotation p 243.

[216] III 275. A writer in the same *Printing Machine* (III 23) had said in a delayed review of Lamb's *Works* on 10 Jan 1835: "Even his friend Coleridge, who thought so profoundly, and much of whose poetry has so exquisite a finish, has left things behind him which may, in comparison with his more elaborate or happier efforts, be said to be hastily or carelessly constructed; and since his death it has been somewhere stated that a few of his poems were all of his published compositions which, if he could have had his wish, he would have preserved."

[217] *The London Literary Gazette; and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c* No 957 (23 May 1835) 321–2; No 958 (30 May 1835) 340–2.

of his friend and the public''. Jerdan claimed a greater acquaintance than one would suspect from other sources:

> Coleridge we knew well, and many a delighted hour we have spent in his society. His sagacity was profound, his eloquence, when dissertating (for he rarely conversed), overpowering, though sometimes, even in linked sweetness, too long drawn out; his manner of telling anecdotes wonderfully playful and amusing; his sketches of character epigrammatic, and often terribly keen; and his very mysticism replete with the deepest thought and most original combinations.[218]

The second notice, besides quoting ''brief and pithy remarks'', told of an episode with Theodore Hook and two anecdotes heard from Coleridge by Jerdan, who later retold them in his reminiscences with changes suggesting that neither version was precise.[219] In a story about Coleridge's father trying to teach a schoolboy an ironic ''Ha! ha! ha!'' in a performance of his own play (previously declined by Garrick), the adolescent victim was first one of Coleridge's brothers and then Coleridge himself. In a story of a man who could quote at Cambridge in 1833 from Coleridge's ''first lecture'' some thirty years earlier, the person with a pleasing memory was first a clergyman from Devon or Cornwall and later ''a working man''. There were verbal changes in quoting Coleridge's praise of Theodore Hook as conversational wit. Jerdan had not returned for authority or consistency to his review; the variants in his two anecdotes were of no significance to him, and would not have been to Coleridge the teller as distinct from Coleridge in the rôle of hearer or reader. The point of each anecdote remained the same; to Jerdan the importance of the episode in Cambridge was that Coleridge proudly told each visitor in succession of the flattering encounter.

Like the *Literary Gazette* its chief competitor, the *Athenaeum*, gave *Table Talk* a two-part review on 23 and 30 May.[220] Charles Wentworth Dilke, who had taken over the *Athenaeum* in 1830, was determined to fight puffery by preventing any influence upon his reviewers from publishers or authors. Disciples of Coleridge, however, the ''Apostles'' Frederick Denison Maurice, John Sterling, and Richard Chenevix Trench, had controlled the new weekly until Dilke lifted the editorial and financial burdens from Sterling, and they remained active contributors in 1835.[221] The *Athenaeum* reviewer believed Henry Nelson Coleridge's method to be as successful as any listener to Coleridge could expect:

[218] P 321. Jerdan was not pleased (322) by the reference to the *Literary Gazette* in *TT* (1835) I 173 (36:228); he rejected C's theory of a revolution ''when the press fell off from literature'': 36:366, *TT* (1835) II 42.

[219] *Men I Have Known* (1866) 120–2.

[220] Pp 387–8, 406–7.

[221] Leslie Alexis Marchand *The Athenaeum: A Mirror of Victorian Culture*

> . . . His conversation, if it is to be so called, was a self-evolved speculation of the moment, a thinking aloud. It required almost as comprehensive a mind as his own to follow out his chain of reasoning—his linked subtleties; and no man that ever lived, not Coleridge himself, could have recorded it fully and faithfully two hours after.[222]

The reviewer was surprised, however, by the recorded remarks on current issues: "We were quite startled at the crude bald dogmatism, which we found upon occasions reverently set down here—so utterly opposed to Coleridge's conciliatory and gentle nature." Avoiding the religious interests of Maurice, Sterling, and Trench, the review quoted from entries on contemporary writers and more extensively on poets of the past, for "every word uttered by Coleridge on this subject deserves to be treasured up as fine gold".[223] With the intention of publishing a life of Coleridge, Dilke sent a messenger to Paris to talk to Underwood and Mackenzie, who had known Coleridge in Malta; if he had received by May their word that "there was more humbug in Coleridge than in any man that ever was heard of",[224] their attitude is not reflected in the *Athenaeum* review. Underwood, like Jerdan, was struck by Coleridge's tendency to repeat the same remarks, as if spontaneously, to each visitor in succession.

In June a disciple in the *Monthly Review* began the dozen pages allotted to *Table Talk* with a paean to the poet and sage.[225] Coleridge "stands in the foremost rank among men of genius", as "one of the most extraordinary and worthy, even of that small phalanx"; poetic and metaphysical, an exemplar of the best in Christianity and humanity, he was "still greater and lovelier" than those virtues imply. "Indeed there was nothing ordinary about him." As a talker he had an "almost matchless voice", with "a splendid fluency of diction", "very subtle perceptions", and "glorious illustrations". His system "combined physiology and metaphysics". Totally unlike the plagiarist described by De Quincey in *Tait's*, "if ever there was an independent and original thinker, that man was Coleridge". After quoting mostly literary entries from Henry Nelson Coleridge's record, with a sprinkling of the Biblical, but before quoting at length from John Taylor Coleridge's account of his uncle's talk in 1811, the reviewer summarised his attitude toward *Table Talk* with guarded vagueness:

(Chapel Hill, N.C. 1941) 6–22, 105. The editor's marked file for 1835 was not available (ibid p ix).

[222] *Athenaeum* 23 May 1835 p 387.

[223] Ibid 407.

[224] Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke (1810–69) *The Papers of a Critic* (2 vols 1875) I 32.

[225] *M Rev* 4th s II (Jun 1835) 250–61.

There are many opinions in these volumes, from which we must dissent. There is also querulousness, owing, no doubt, to the discourser's bodily infirmities and his frequent dejection of mind. But one cannot read and examine any considerable portion of his Talk, without admiring and loving the man—without desiring to read more, and without feeling enlightened either by some discovery or warmed by a kindred glow of zeal, imagination, or piety.[226]

The *Dublin University Magazine* divided a long review between the numbers for July and September.[227] Few other reviewers had praised so specifically the *Table Talk* itself—''one of the most interesting books which we have ever read'' and ''two of the most amusing volumes in the language''. After initial praise, the review turned to Coleridge's poetry, his prose works, and his residence with the Gillmans. Once more Coleridge was defended against the charges of plagiarism from De Quincey and the *Edinburgh Review*.[228] Returning to a general appraisal at the beginning of the September instalment, the reviewer insisted that *Table Talk* ''must be regarded as a genuine part of his works, and in all fairness considered as a record of about the same value as any other volumes of his prose''.[229] The reviewer intended ''The highest praise to this book which it is possible a work of the kind can receive''.

An equally laudatory review by John Abraham Heraud (1799–1887) appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for August, near to the date when Heraud delivered his *Oration on the Death of Coleridge* at the Russell Institution.[230] He endorsed Henry Nelson Coleridge's Preface still again in refuting De Quincey's charge of plagiarism. We have ''our own memoranda of the conversation of Coleridge'', he said, with better notes on the Trinity than those in *Table Talk*; but he had for Henry Nelson Coleridge ''a very profound esteem'' and ''high laud''.[231]

In July the ''Ecclesiastical Record'' of the *British Critic, Quarterly Theological Review, and Ecclesiastical Record* (XVIII 255) concentrated into two sentences praise for Coleridge, the two volumes, and their editor: ''. . . it would be a grievous wrong not to mention with passing, but cordial and almost reverential praise, the 'Table Talk' of the late Mr. Coleridge; a publication, which contains outpourings of an overflowing mind, and is singularly interesting, from the oracles which that extraordinary man took an especial pleasure in delivering on the subject of re-

[226] Ibid 259.

[227] *Dublin University Magazine* VI (1835) 1–16, 250–67.

[228] Ibid 7–13, 251.

[229] Ibid 250. T. M. Raysor wrote a century later: ''The selections from *Table Talk* are indispensable to any collection of Coleridge's criticism.'' *MC* 401n.

[230] *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* XII (Aug 1835) 123–35. John Abraham Heraud is well represented in *C Talker* 257–62, 394, 409.

[231] *Fraser's* 123, 128, 131.

ligion and ecclesiastical polity. The Editor, too, has done his part well, because he has not done too much; but has kept himself subordinate to his distinguished kinsman.'' Henry preserved a copy of this and of similar praise from the *British Magazine and Monthly Register of Religious and Ecclesiastical Information*: ''The editor of that work deserves the most affectionate thanks of all good men for having preserved to us so many precious records of the wisdom & power of this great philosopher.''[232]

The Reverend Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1776–1847), the bibliographer, quarrelled respectfully with Coleridge (as reported in *Table Talk*) in several footnotes before he reviewed *Table Talk*, Coleridge, and the reviewers all together in a long footnote attached to a reference to ''poetic prose'' in his own remarks on Coleridge as talker:

> I speak in reference to Mr. Coleridge's conversation. A pretty correct notion may be formed of this conversation from the ''*Specimens* of Mr. Coleridge's *Table Talk*,'' just published, in two very *taking* duo-decimo volumes, with a portrait of the ''Talker'' prefixed. I saw Mr. Phillips in the execution, or rather, perhaps, finishing, of that portrait—and I thought it, and yet think it, abundantly resembling—''VIR IPSISSIMUS.'' Could sound have come from the lips, or action been imparted to the eye or hands of that painted portrait, there was COLERIDGE HIMSELF. The lithographised copy prefixed to the ''Specimens'' is unworthy of all parties concerned. The ''Table Talk'' itself has been copiously and vigorously reviewed in the Quarterly and Edinburgh Critical Journals. I incline to give the latter Review the preference; simply because it is more close, pointed, and pertinent. The Quarterly Reviewer seems himself to be both a poet and a relation; and, in parts, has allowed his attachment to control the exercise of impartiality. This is natural and pardonable, *per se*. On the other hand, the Magazines of *Blackwood* and *Tait* have been yet more copious in their notices of the celebrated deceased. The *pro* and the *con* have been exhibited with more formidable powers of contrast in these respective Periodicals. . . . Yet each critical artist gives us an interesting picture; and it is still a resemblance of the intellectual powers of Coleridge. If I might offer a very humble opinion upon this ''Table Talk'' (to which the preceding pages have more than once or twice referred with satisfaction), I should bring forward the expression of regret that the subject of POLITICS (cameleon-like and fleeting!) had been introduced; or comparisons instituted of great departed philosophers. When Mr. Coledridge [sic] talks of its requiring ''two Bacons to make one John Milton,'' or ''two or three such men as Newton and Galileo to make one Kepler''—it surely does imply the possession of something like superhuman powers in the judge, to institute such a comparison! Was Coleridge deeply read in the *Calculus* of Newton? And upon *what* book, after the *Bible*, does INSPIRATION ITSELF seem to brood as upon the *Principles* of Newton?[233]

[232] UT ms.

[233] *Reminiscences of a Literary Life* (2 vols 1836) I 255n–6.

In the reviews the rivalry of Coleridge and Mackintosh is seen for what it is, a religious war between objectively oriented empiricists and an opponent struggling in all his works and words to depress empiricism to a lower rung and keep it there by a God-given idealism of spirit. The utilitarians wished to see Coleridge as a puppy raised by others, in their yearning for a moon, to the highest rung of illusion. For the opponents of utilitarian empiricism, Coleridge was a prophetic hero; spirit was in danger, the Church was in danger and therefore learning (Coleridge's clerisy) was in danger, God was in danger, the Bible needed rescue. For the *Edinburgh* old scores were still unsettled. Coleridge's revaluations in political, ecclesiastical, and literary history faded behind his confrontations with the present; no reviewer thought his views of Richard Baxter or of Beaumont and Fletcher of prime interest to the reader. Apparently his revaluations of and within the seventeenth century had been absorbed in the world of letters and were no longer news.

It is difficult to praise the *Table Talk* in the terms of the *Dublin* reviewer, as "of about the same value as any other volumes of his prose", without charging those volumes, as it is conventional to charge them, with a failure of ordonnance. The *Dublin* reviewer, seeking a record of vital ideas well expressed, however discretely packaged the ideas, nevertheless would seem to share the spirit of Coleridge's own praise of volumes gathering the table-talk of Luther and Selden. Like Coleridge, he followed with pleasure the quick dartings of ambitious exploration powered by moral fervour.

Probably few since the first reviewers and Emerson have read the *Table Talk* through as a single adventure. Yet Henry Coleridge has caught something of adventure, partly in his own reach for a fuller and fuller record of a mind but more in the scudding flights of a human spirit in its aspiration for a worthy death. In that record of adventure, he was right to call upon the letter to Derwent—"I am dying"—as the last entry.

PERSONAL RESPONSES TO *TABLE TALK*

Most of the responses from individuals were more specific than the questions raised by reviewers. General assessments by individuals are more interesting than informative. The painter C. R. Leslie (1794–1859), who knew Coleridge well, averred in his recollections: "It is not the lot of any one, twice in his life, to meet with so extraordinary a man. I now read over and over again what his nephew has recorded of his conversation, and I can vouch for the exactness with which his manner is preserved in

those precious little volumes.''[234] J. C. Hare (1795–1855) came to a quite different conclusion. He felt that only his friend John Sterling could have captured the strengths of Coleridge's conversations, ''their depth, their ever varying hues, their sparkling lights, their oceanic ebb and flow; of which his published Table-talk hardly gives the slightest conception''.[235] Robert Southey formed immediately an opinion similar to Hare's: ''S. T. C.'s 'Table Talk' came to me yesterday. . . . There was no week in which Coleridge's talk would not have furnished as much matter worthy of preservation as these two volumes contain. Henry Coleridge has kept marvellously clear of indiscretion in his perilous talk.''[236] Aside from seeing the value of not reporting all Coleridge said, Southey assumed that he had been often the subject of remarks he had rather not see in print. And we can be sure that Coleridge ''in his perilous talk'' said things about Southey that Henry Nelson Coleridge suppressed even from his workbooks. To Henry himself Southey sent a ''kind acknowledgment of the Table Talk'' with several factual corrections and captious queries that appear in the present edition as annotations to the respective entries involved.[237] According to Sara, in expressing his pleasure in the volumes Southey said to Henry, '' 'You have dealt well with Dequincey & the Benthamite Reviewer' i.e. him of the Westminster.''[238]

Carlyle and Emerson took the volumes as representative of Coleridge. Froude's version of Carlyle's immediate confidence to his journal has been corrected:

> *Coleridge's Table Talk*: insignificant; yet expressive of Coleridge. A great Possibility—that has not realized itself. Never did I see such apparatus got ready for thinking, and so little thought. He mounts scaffolding, pullies and tackle, gathers all the tools in the neighbourhood, with labour, with noise, demonstration, precept, abuse,—and sets three bricks. I do *not* honour the man; I pity him (with the *opposite* of contempt); see in him one glorious up-struggling ray (as it were), which perished, all but ineffectual, in a lax, languid, impotent *character* (*gemuth*): this is my theory of Coleridge,—very different from that of his admirers here.[239]

[234] Charles Robert Leslie *Autobiographical Recollections* ed Tom Taylor (2 vols 1860) I 44.

[235] Julius Charles Hare ed *Essays and Tales by John Sterling, with a Memoir of His Life* (2 vols 1848) I xv–xvi. Samuel Carter Hall (1800–89), declaring that nobody could have caught the ''superabundance'' in the way it was remembered, called *TT* (1835) ''only a collection of scraps, chance-gathered''. *A Book of Memories* (2nd ed 1871) 43.

[236] RS in *Correspondence of Henry Taylor* ed Edward Dowden (1888) 64. RS must really have written ''perilous task''.

[237] UT ms. HNC replied to RS 27 Jun 1835.

[238] SC to Mrs H. M. Jones c Jul 1835. UT Grantz 1149.

[239] Journal entry of 26 May 1835, quoted in Sanders ''The Background of Carlyle's Portrait of Coleridge in *The Life of John Sterling*'' *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* LV (1973) 45–6.

Emerson, despite his disappointment from inability in 1833 to rouse Coleridge to new questions, stated briefly to his brother William on 27 July 1835 an opinion that may be taken as diametrically opposed to Carlyle's: "Coleridge's Table Talk is, I think, as good as Spence's or Selden's or Luther's; better."[240]

Most of Coleridge's friends from earlier days were appalled by the remarks Henry Nelson Coleridge reported concerning the Reform Bill. The issue was real; even the Whig leaders were afraid that the country might be on the edge of revolution. Lockhart and other reviewers had been discreet on the point, and individual correspondents were only slightly less cautious, but those who had known both Coleridge and Henry Nelson Coleridge were not more shocked than suspicious. Thomas Allsop's *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge* (1836) was not a work that those near Coleridge at the end could admire, but older friends were glad at least to see the political pall of *Table Talk* brightened by any source from which light might come. Hartley, as a letter to his mother on 16 May 1835 makes clear, had prepared himself for the worst Henry could do:

> The *Table Talk* has been reviewed both in the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly*, but I have not read either review. I might have done so, but I wish to read the Book itself first. I hope *Henry has been very, very, careful as to what he has recorded.* Dear papa often said things which he *would not himself have published: and I have heard him utter opinions both in Religion and in Politics not very easy to reconcile with what he has published.*[241]

Henry saw this letter and perhaps others quoting Hartley, who wrote in January 1836 to reassure him:

> . . . What makes you think that I dislike your 'Table Talk'? I might have fears lest it should be Mali exempli—fears which Allsop has shewn not to be wholly groundless. I might tell Derwent, that the book gave me no feeling of my father's manner, which it does not pretend to do, but the execution of the work I greatly admire, and Derwent well observes that it were sad indeed if so much excellent criticism, so much moral, religious, and political wisdom were to perish with the lips that uttered it. I have not seen Allsop's book.[242]

On 18 January Hartley wrote again to his mother: "But on this head, permit me to say, that my Father's opinions on many points of public import were considerably different during the years wherein I last conversed with him, from those which Henry has recorded. He admitted the necessity of a reform in parliament, and though I could never have imagined

[240] *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson* ed Ralph L. Rusk (6 vols New York 1939) I 448.

[241] *HCL* 174.

[242] Ibid 181.

that he could have much admired little Johnny Russell's unprecedented piece of stupidity and blundering, call'd 'the Reform Bill', I thought he would have been thankful, as I am, for any thing which got rid of the idolized abominations of the old system, not as better in itself, but as necessary, transitory, and, at least, making room for something better.''[243] Sara, who had heard similar political objections from other readers of *Table Talk*, would have none of it from Hartley, to whom she wrote on 21 January:

As to our differences in regard to politics they give me little concern except as to the different view it leads us to take of our dear Father's mind. That Henry has not only faithfully reported what he heard, but that he has reported *all* he heard, as far as he could remember it, on the subjects in question, ⟨without picking & culling⟩ I feel quite confident both from my knowledge of Henry's character & conduct on other occasions, & from what I myself recollect of my Father's Conversation. Besides I refer the objector to the Church & State & other works which my Father published in his latter years. Has my husband printed anything as coming from him which is not accordant with the tone and substance of those deliberate productions? Derwent says that my Father would naturally, from the courtesy of his temper, put forward the most Tory side of his opinions *to* a Tory. But the truth is, unless sincerity was to be sacrificed, my Father with all his ingenuity and subtlety, could not have seemed to agree with Henry on politics unless he had really done so in the main. The real truth is that I believe some of my husband's opinions on the Catholic Question, the Reform Bill, the Church, Political Economy &c to have been to a *certain degree* moulded by those of my Father—at any rate I think they took a more determinate shape from his . . .[244]

On 8 May Hartley assured Henry that ''nothing could be more remote from my intention than to accuse you of misrepresentation or suppression'', but he reiterated at still greater length what he understood Coleridge's view of reform to be.[245]

A letter from Coleridge's old friend Thomas Poole, when he first received *Table Talk* as a gift from Henry and glanced over a few entries, has been lost, but subsequent correspondence shows that its tenor was similar to Hartley's. Henry's immediate—and long—reply to ''one or two of the remarks'', although important as a description and defence of his procedure, can be represented here by quotations; it has been in print, with insignificant omissions, since 1888:

As to the mere fidelity of my reporting, I assure you that the only liberty taken by me, was to omit—perhaps, in a few instances, also to soften—language of the same sort as that to wch you object. When you wrote, you had not, I think, read the whole book; but I think, when you have done so, you will acquit me of making a Tory of S. T. C. altho' of course his reprobation of modern Whig politics

[243] Ibid 184.

[244] UT Grantz 512. SC refers first to ''our Father'' and thereafter to ''my Father''.

[245] *HCL* 189.

cannot be approved by you. I am sure I cannot myself go quite so far in some points as he expresses himself in the Table Talk—either as to the Church or as to personal loyalty to the King; but you see it had no weight with me in my report. . . . The dates of what he sa[id] are given throughout, & that it is a faithful rec-or[d,] taken generally, for ~~these~~ those latter years of his life, I doubt not.[246]

On 22 June Poole generously apologised and explained: ''. . . my impression was, that had I been conversing with Coleridge, I should have induced him to have *much modified* his assertions. . . . *No*, I AM SURE that your report *is most correct*; and further, that you are quite entitled to the high credit you disclaim; viz. of representing the *Individuality* of his conversation. . . . *Your Notes* are always pertinent and often *very interesting* . . .''.[247] A letter from Josiah Wade, another friend from Bristol days, among Henry Nelson Coleridge's papers at the University of Texas, is dated 26 September 1836 and must refer to *Literary Remains* rather than to *Table Talk*: ''I sincerely thank you for the two Volumes you kindly ordered the publishers to send me. I have read them with delight—those for Mr. Gutch I have forwarded to him at Worcester . . .''. Wade had given all pertinent papers in his possession, including some that proved explosively pertinent, to Joseph Cottle, who said he was authorised to write Coleridge's life; the Gillman–Coleridge circles, and even Poole, were in despair over Cottle's desire to counteract the picture of Coleridge in *Table Talk* by making clear the horrors of addiction to opium, a moral project in which Southey alone encouraged him. The issue was not whether Coleridge had taken laudanum, but how hard he had been able to fight against it and whether he had been able to overcome its debilitating effects.

Daniel Stuart, like Cottle, was eager to make public his own version of the past. Like Cottle, he manipulated his memory to the point of modifying documentary evidence. Unlike Cottle, he had a direct effect on the second edition of *Table Talk*. Southey had suggested to Henry Nelson Coleridge on 7 November 1834 that Stuart and Cottle would be willing and reliable informants.[248] The following September Stuart began with Henry in a very low key: ''The Table Talk is so well written and so well gives Coleridge's opinions that it would be presumption in me to attempt

[246] HNC to Poole 15 June 1835: BM Add MS 35344 ff 116–17; cf *Poole* II 303–4.

[247] Ibid f 118; *Poole* II 305.

[248] VCL S MS F4.21. ''. . . Stuart, who will be very willing to give you all the information he possesses,—& it is much. So will my old friend Cottle.'' James Gillman, after publishing a notice that nothing of C's was to be published without consent of the executors, wrote to HNC of Cottle on 11 Jul 1836: ''. . . send M^r^ Poole the copy of my first letter to M^r^ Cottle, but his conduct has been so dishonest & he has proved himself so miserable a fanatic that I leave him to the care of the Law when required''. VCL S MS F3.66.

to add to it. Some facts I will give, which you many use as you please.''[249] Recital of his facts did not bring forth, as he expected, attention, apology, and retraction. Like Cottle and Southey, he regarded himself as a martyr to Coleridge's irresponsibilities. *Table Talk*, by what he considered an equivocal reference to him as ''Mr. Stewart, of the Courier, a very knowing person'', and by reporting Coleridge's claim to have raised the circulation of the *Morning Post* to 7000 copies a day (under the dates of 1 May 1832 and 7 June 1830), had added to the ingratitude and concomitant offences of *Biographia Literaria*. A month later he clarified the grounds of his plea:

> When you was writing, or rather publishing the Table Talk, why did you not apply to me who was at hand ready & willing?—Why? but that, as it appears to me, you were impressed with unfavourable, disagreeable feelings respecting me, and did not wish me to come within your sight. You who were to write his life, did not know the character of the Man, after all your intimacy.

The sentence on Henry's ignorance of his uncle's character was an afterthought, squeezed in for added intimidation. Later the tone changed again:

> . . . were it to be said hereafter, that Coleridge made the fortune of both the newspapers, and was neglected [and] deserted by me in the days of his poverty; that attack upon me could be well supported by reference to his Literary Biography & Table Talk, by his Will, by the want of notice at his funeral, and last but not least of all, by this, that Henry Coleridge his favourite . . . never applied for information to Mr. Stuart. . . . What but indignation and contempt could have prevented Henry from applying to Stuart, which he did not for a year, and only then when recommended to do so by Southey: and still more, not a word of kindness or kind allusion to Stuart, either in the Biography or Table Talk, but the contrary.[250]

His use of the third person suggests that he had already determined upon making the letters public. When sure that neither Henry Nelson Coleridge nor Gillman would incorporate his account of Coleridge within their own publications, Stuart published his version in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in three instalments, quoting in the process letters from Coleridge and portions of this correspondence with Henry Nelson Coleridge.[251] Meanwhile, in the second edition of *Table Talk*, he had become ''Mr. Stuart . . . who was very knowing in the politics of the day''; and the reference to the *Morning Post* under date of 7 June 1830 had disappeared completely. The latter change, a poor substitute for the desired

[249] Stuart to HNC 19 Sept 1835: VCL S MS F6 f 2^{v}.

[250] 22 Oct 1835: ibid ff 1–1^{v}.

[251] *G Mag* NS IX (May, Jun 1838) 485–92, 577–90, X (Jul 1838) 22–7.

retraction in Henry's Preface of Coleridge's remarks both here and in *Biographia Literaria*, gave Stuart a springboard:

"Table Talk" is an imitation of Boswell's Life of Johnson, and some future Mr. Croker, amplifying and enriching it by new, amusing, and interesting anecdotes, may hold me up as an ungrateful person, who was rolling about in my carriage, while Coleridge, who made my fortune, was starving in Mr. Gillman's garret. To shield myself from such consequences therefore I reluctantly come forward to tell a plain tale . . .[252]

Had Stuart rested on his known generosity and not introduced distortions of his own, some future Mr Croker could have annotated with praise.

Henry Crabb Robinson, who can be counted among those displeased by the tone of remarks on reform in *Table Talk*, had baited Coleridge as one more favourable toward Stuart than he himself was but also as one equally acquainted with Stuart's slippery methods of conducting the *Morning Post* and *Courier*.[253] Robinson is the author of a leaf that has survived among the Coleridge papers in the Victoria College Library:

As a Set off to Comments that I am afraid will not be acceptable, I will give a *Specimen* that you would gladly have made use of.

S. T. C. was praising one day his old friend D. S. who I understand was on many occasions generous to him—I could not help putting some awkward questions—on which he said

Why my dear Sir, if I am pressed, which I don't like to be about Dan's character I should say—Dan is a Scotchman who is content to get rid of the itch when he can afford to wear clean linen—[254]

The same leaf contains a second piece of table-talk:

Another time he replied to some commonplace sentimental morality

Oh Sir you mistake it altogether—That is not goodness, that is goody-ness—

The Goody is in your T: T:[255]

Robinson had *Table Talk* in mind when he complained to Mary Wordsworth on 27 October 1836:

[252] Ibid IX 485. To blunt Stuart's argument SC added a final section (XVI) to her Introduction to *EOT* I xc–xciii. She lacked the original correspondence and a complete file of *M Post* and *Courier* necessary to make C's case even stronger.

[253] *CRB* I 37; *EOT (CC)* I lxvii–lxxxv.

[254] VCL S MS F11.3, No 475. In 1815 HCR recalled C's words differently but to the same effect: "He is a Scotchman, glad to get rid of the itch now he can afford to wear clean linen." *CRB* I 170.

[255] In 1853, revising his report of a meeting with Cottle 29 Aug 1836 at which he recommended Cottle's omission of public statements against C's executors, he reworded notes apparently of Mar–Apr 1836, before he was aware of the availability of *TT* (1836). He began with a remark of C's concerning societies for the propagation of the Bible: " 'Ay, sir, there can be no doubt that these are good men, very good men, who are so zealous in widely spreading these societies. It is a pity they want sagacity enough to foresee that in sending the Bible thus everywhere among the instructed and the reprobate, they will be

It is quite provoking to see an attempt made to exhibit one of the profoundest thinkers and most splendid talkers of his age, as vulgarly orthodox—To think with the Wise and talk with the vulgar is an odious maxim of spurious prudence—C: cannot be said to talk *with* the vulgar, but he talked *to* them at least And he was gratified by feeling and exciting sympathy—[256]

Where the majority complained that the transcendental flow was missing from isolated entries, and the advisers had feared Henry Nelson Coleridge's lack of taste, Robinson remembered Coleridge as much earthier than the *Table Talk* or *Literary Remains* suggested.

When Mrs Henry M. Jones of Hampstead revealed her views of selections given in the reviews and of what the reviewers said about them, Henry and Sara sent her a copy of *Table Talk* with a defence from Sara:

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

~~Some~~ One of my Father's Whig friends insinuates that if he had told his own story he would have told it more Whiggishly.—the spirit of party is "father to this thought—"—it is not true. Henry is a man of honour, though as some may

propagating, instead of the old *idolatry*, a new *bibliolatry*.'

"Will the forthcoming volume of the 'Table-talk' contain a wiser word than the above? Perhaps not an acuter than those in the following: 'That is not goodness', said Coleridge in my presence, to some one who was urging rather a commonplace and sentimental morality,—'that is not goodness, but should be called *goodyness*.' " *CRD* II 230. His reference to "goodyness" in *TT* is specifically to *TT* 36:568 (*TT* 17 Aug 1833 n 6, below).

[256] *CRC* I 320–1. HCR, after an evening with WW that included HNC on 16 Apr, began to read "a third of volume one" of *TT* (1835) in the Athenaeum Club 25 May 1835: "This book will be harshly and unjustly estimated I think. A more difficult book, not original, I cannot well imagine. Coleridge's sayings were curious as well as wise in their connection, but without their connection they may to the ordinary reader seem merely odd. His puns and strong sayings are recollectable and repeatable; not so the wiser and deeper words that fell from him. I have seen nothing yet in this book at all equal to what I recollect. The preface contains a severe but well-merited rebuke of De Quincey for his shameful article in *Tait's Magazine*." *CRB* II 464. The next day, before finishing I he started on II, "very heavy indeed", more political especially in 1831, "chiefly on the Reform Bill, Malthus, and the Church—all the very topics on which he is most bigoted and least ingenious"; he continued on 1 Jun "with very mixed feelings—pleasure greater than approbation, and very little concurrence in feeling". *CRB* II 465. He called on HNC 26 Jun with tidings of SH's death. *CRB* II 465. For the exchange of letters that followed on 17–18 Nov, see App F 35, below.

think an illiberal Tory . . . If Henry had wished to please his own party through thick and thin he would not have printed many of the opinions recorded in Table Talk. . . . I wonder what Mr Herman Merivale thinks of his papa's last letter in Blackwood—It ~~was~~ is more Conservative than ever: much the same I suppose that my brother Hartley, dear fellow, will think of the Table Talk. I wish *he* had preserved specimens of my father's discourse. I am sure we would have given him free leave to print all the radicality he ~~had~~ ever heard my Father utter—it might have seemed inconsistent with some of the sayings and doings of the Tory party, but I am confident it would not have been so with his own "Idea of Church & State."[257]

Among other letters to which Henry had to draft answers, most were intended either as corrections on specific points or, like the letter from William Edmondstoune Aytoun (1813–65), as a strengthening of Henry's hand against De Quincey, particularly on the matter of Coleridge's source with regard to Pythagoras' abstention from beans.[258]

Across the Atlantic, where Harper and Brothers issued the *Table Talk* in 1835, printed in two volumes and bound as one, few reviewers had the opportunity to compare their own recollections with Henry Nelson Coleridge's. On 30 August 1836 Henry wrote to the Rev Thomas Tracy (1781–1872) of Newburyport, Massachusetts, a Germanist whose translations Henry tried to place with London publishers: "You gratify me very much by your kind recommendation of the Table Talk;—it will I think, be hereafter an interesting document."[259] A visitor from Germany, Friedrich Ludwig Georg von Raumer (also 1781–1872), who was to achieve popularity in North America before he wrote its history, read the two volumes of *Table Talk* at the Athenaeum in Pall Mall on a rainy 26 June 1835. Not only was *he* "delighted with the varied, interesting remarks of this extraordinary man"; he also found that the Athenaeum copy had already become marked "with great *nota benes* of English approbation".[260] Hartley called Raumer's praise of *Table Talk* and Coleridge to Henry's attention.[261]

The corrections communicated to Henry by Alexander Dyce (1798–1869), already mentioned, are specific enough to be quoted most appropriately in annotations. It is worth noting here, however, that Dyce's letter begins, as a correction to Henry's Preface, with his celebrated account, heard from Wordsworth in 1835, of the collaboration on *The*

[257] Jul 1835? UT Grantz 1149.

[258] UT ms.

[259] HUL MS Amer 661.

[260] Friedrich von Raumer *England in 1835* . . . tr Sarah Austin [and H. E. Lloyd] (1836) 285–6. Raumer noted with admiration the observation that every man is an Aristotelian or a Platonist and the disgruntled verses on Cologne.

[261] "He speaks highly of the Table talk and of my father, though some of the sentiments are at variance with his own." *HCL* 194.

Ancient Mariner, first published by Derwent and Sara as a note in their edition of Coleridge's poems.[262] Dyce's memories of Coleridge were heightened by recollections of the actor Charles Mathews lovingly caricaturing him:

> Coleridge, *when thinking aloud*, would address any one he met: and I have heard the elder Charles Mathews act, with matchless humour, a scene (founded, he said, on fact), of which the following is a fragment,—mimicking to the life the solemn tones of Coleridge, and the surprise and squeaking voice of the urchin whom he addressed:—
>
> "*Coleridge, walking near Highgate, meets an apothecary's boy.*
>
> *Coleridge*. I have been considering, boy, that though I have known several persons good because they were religious, I have seldom known persons religious because they were good—
>
> *Boy*. Sir?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> *Coleridge*. Boy, did you never reflect on the magnificence and beauty of the external universe?
>
> *Boy*. No, sir, never," &c, &c.

Mathews was a very frequent visitor to Coleridge, who had a great regard for him.[263]

[262] *PW* (1852) 383–4.

[263] *The Reminiscences of Alexander Dyce* ed Richard J. Schrader (Columbus, Ohio 1972) 178–9.

William Maginn put into the mouth of Theodore Hook a parody of C in "The Fraserians" *Fraser's Magazine* XI (Jan 1835) 15–16: " 'Yes,' said Hook, 'he would not only have aided in the discussion of questions literary and political, but in the discussion of any thing else that is before us. I confess I could not help laughing at the fuss made about the sobriety, and temperance, and so forth, of Coleridge, in the newspapers, immediately after his death, when I knew so much of his habits.'

" 'Why,' said Jack Churchill, 'I have been informed by Barnett or Tarbor, I forget which, of the Spring Gardens' Coffee-house, that Coleridge's bill, when he stopped there, was something like that of Falstaff's,—a halfpenny worth of bread to a hogshead of sack. It was soda water and brandy, eighteenpence—glass of brandy, sixpence—roll of bread, twopence—glass of sherry, ninepence—brandy and water, cold, a shilling—roll of bread, twopence—pint of sherry, three shillings—mutton chop, a shilling—bottle of port, six shillings—glass of brandy, sixpence—pint of porter, threepence—roll of bread, twopence—paper, sixpence—brandy and water, seven shillings—anchovy toast, a shilling—glass of brandy, sixpence—small beer, twopence—and so forth, day after day. Coleridge was a wet customer.'

" 'I shall never forget,' remarked Hook, 'the first time he was introduced to me, or I to him, which you please. Mathews, who was always a great friend and admirer of his, promised to bring him down to dine with me, when I lived close by Putney Bridge; but he could not meet him in time. Old Cole, nevertheless, found out the way, but did not arrive until we had almost finished our wine.'

" 'By my soul, then,' interrupted Ainsworth, 'that must have been at rather a late hour, if I may judge by your present habits.'

" 'Never mind,' returned Theodore; 'I mean that he came about half-past nine o'clock, we having dined at six; so that we had nearly arrived at our brandy and water, which was what I meant when I said we had finished our wine; and into

A. G. L'Estrange's memories of Coleridge seem to have fused both with his memories of Mathews mimicking Coleridge and with the memories of others reported to him. After retelling from William Harness of an occasion when Coleridge raised his hands and head "in the manner which Charles Mathews so cleverly caricatured", he tells with omniscient au-

the room he walked, with a countenance as solemn as a mustard-pot. Mathews jumped up, and introduced him as rapidly as possible. "Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Hook—Mr. Hook, Mr. Coleridge." I bowed; he bowed. I offered him a chair; he accepted it. I asked him if he would take any claret; he inclined his head in assent. I filled his glass; I filled my own. I emptied mine; he emptied his. But not a word did he speak. I made some observation about the heat or the cold of the weather, but to no effect: he was silent. I filled him another glass. He opened his mouth, it is true; but it was only to swallow the claret. Can this, thought I, be the great speaker? Good God, the man's dumb! The thought had scarcely passed through my pericranium when our old friend, acting the part of Balaam's ass, opened his mouth and spake. You all remember the chant of his voice: I had never heard him speak before, and the first words that saluted my ears were, "When we reflect upon the state of Spain—" "Sir!" said I; but it was of no use, out flowed the gush of eloquence. "When we reflect upon the state of Spain, the mind naturally reverts—(your health, Mr. Hook!)—to the subjugation of the Peninsula in the days of the Visigoths, when the Mahometan hosts, introduced by the treachery of native grandees, having succeeded in defeating the legitimate prince, broke down the force of the Spanish nation for a moment, and made themselves masters of tower, and town, and tented plain—(thank you, Mr. Hook; the glass is full enough)—until the Goths were driven into the eternal fastnesses of the everlasting mountains, thence to rebound, under the conduct of the gallant Pelayo, destined to drive gradually, by successive shocks, into the sea, the infidel invaders; and planting at last the banners of Ferdinand and Isabella over the towers of Granada, deserted by Boabdil, to regain for Christendom the land of Spain. (Thank you; the claret is very good indeed.) So, when a more godless army than that introduced by the treachery of Count Julian crossed the Pyrenees under Napoleon Buonaparte—more godless, I say, because the infidelity of Jacobinism is worse and more unchristian in feeling and principle than that of the Moslem—they, too, won tower, and town, and tented plain; but the hills that lift up their heads into heaven, those they won not. And from them came rebounding the might of Spain, supported by the gallant army of the Duke of Wellington; and as the towers of Granada saw the last of the Islam, so did Vittoria chase from Iberian land the relics of the Frenchman. (Your health, Mr. Hook—thank you.) Now you may inquire why I have thought it necessary to institute this comparison between the Mahometan and Jacobinical invaders of Spain. ['I declare to Heaven,' here interjected Hook, 'I did not see the necessity; but as Coleridge did, he proceeded.'] It was occasioned thus: I arose this morning saddened and depressed by influences which I could not account for, and I went to dissipate my chagrin in one of those green lanes abounding about Highgate, and which are every where the characteristic and the main ornament of the scenery of England. And as I there roved along, on lowly fancies bent, I saw seated across a stile two of those gallant fellows whose dress denoted them to be of the Guards of Britain, and from whose bosoms depended the medal which proved that they had shared in the glorious day of Waterloo. And I thought upon that day, and then upon him who won it—and then upon his military career—and then upon his deeds in freeing the Peninsula from the insolent foe; and while thus musing, there came into my head the parallel

thority of how Coleridge among the children of Highgate "would lay his hand on the shoulder of one of them and walk along discoursing metaphysics to the trembling captive . . . 'I never,' he exclaimed one day to the baker's boy—'I never knew a man good because he was religious, but I have known one religious because he was good.' "[264] A moral can be extracted: initial reactions to *Table Talk* were based not only on fixed attitudes but also, like most of the materials in this Introduction, on extremely fallible memories of what Coleridge at some time or another said. Only the reviewers proclaimed what he should have said, and that very briefly in comparison with their quotations of what he was said to have said.

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF *TABLE TALK*

The earliest surviving materials from Henry Nelson Coleridge's record of his uncle's conversation, and probably the earliest made, appear in three workbooks with dated entries. The major part of the record sur-

which I have been in some measure endeavouring to make out for the information of the company. (Your health, Mr. Hook.) 'Such,' continued Theodore, 'were the first words I heard from Coleridge. I thought myself exceedingly lucky that he had seen only two Guardsmen lounging over a hedge; for if he had seen a troop, the oration would not have been over until the present moment. I can bear testimony, however, to the fact, that he never lost a glass of wine while he was pouring forth his sentences. If he was getting rid of words *ore rotundo*, he was beyond doubt swallowing claret *ore aperto* at the same moment.'

" 'Certainly,' said Barry Bryan Cornwall Procter, 'there were times when it was quite impossible to refrain from laughing at the ultra eloquence of my friend Coleridge. I was a regular member of his Thursday night's *conversazioni*, as were Mr. Irving, of whom we have been speaking, and Mr. Basil Montagu, with whom I generally went. And the drollest part of the thing was that it had infected, as if by contagion, all the establishment of Gillman, with whom he resided. I recollect calling one day with Basil Montagu to visit Coleridge, who happened at the time to be in London. The servant-maid who opened the door replied to our question, that she did—not—know—but—that—if—we—were so—kind—as—to wait—for—the—shortest portion—of—time—she—would—inquire of—the—lady—of—the—house. Every other inquiry we made was answered in the same fashion; and at last, when out of the infinite verbiage we had discovered that he was staying at Blandford Place, Pall Mall, a little fellow about ten years of age was consulted as to the particular address, and he answered, as oracularly as Coleridge himself, "He — dwells — at — Blandford Place — close — by — the — street — called — Pall Mall — as — to the —precise — number — I cannot — inform— you — but — there — being — only — two — houses — in — the —place — if — you — do — not — find — that —he — lives — at — number — one—you—may—apply—with—the —certainty—of—discovering—him— at — number — two." And this was from a gaffer not higher than the table.' "

[264] A. G. L'Estrange *The Literary Life of the Rev. William Harness* (1871) 143–4.

vives in MS B, in the Victoria College Library, Toronto. The earliest entries appear in MS A, the latest in MS C. The mss designated D, E, and F are ancillary to the original record of MSS A, B, and C.

MS A

A red roan quarto workbook, originally 136 ruled leaves 22.3 cm × 18.5 cm, watermarks "JM 1816" and "JM & M 1816", gathered in eights. Paginated, possibly by HNC, to p 110. Three later leaves are loose but reinserted in sequence.

Location: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, the University of Texas at Austin.

Intended as a diary, "The Confessional" (know thyself), the book is headed on p 1:

> Henry Nelson Coleridge. Wednesday 7. February. 1821
> King's College. Cambridge.
>
> ---
>
> The Confessional.
> Γνῶθι σεαυτόν.

At the end of 1822 HNC's encounter with his uncle Samuel and his cousin Sara focused the entries more narrowly. For nearly a year, ending 2 Jun 1824 (p 110), C's conversation took almost sole possession; his reported remarks continue from recto to verso of each leaf. Leaves after p 100 were used for notes on HNC's reading. On p 75 HNC copied five passages from C's marginalia in "Baxter Life"; it is not clear why the leaf had been left blank; the verso remains blank. Beginning on p 97 with the conversation of 28 Dec 1822, HNC made entries on the versos only for that day and then for 5 Jan 1823. Afterwards he turned back to p 96 and made a series of short undated entries on the blank versos; i.e. pp 96, 98, 100, 102. These entries must have been made before 13 Feb, because table-talk with that date takes up on p 102; thereafter HNC continued on both sides of each leaf. Earlier, besides his diary, he had transcribed notes on family genealogy (pp 26–9), epigrams from C (p 32), and brief passages from *Omniana* (p 34).

MS B

A red roan workbook (now disbound), originally 136 unruled leaves 22.3 cm × 18.3 cm, watermark "JM 1816"; 122 foliated leaves survive, including 12 loose leaves reinserted in sequence; gathered in eights.

Location: Victoria College Library, University of Toronto.

MS B is the basic record, containing entries from Coleridge's conversation dated 24 Feb 1827 through 23 Jun 1834. From time to time

HNC—occasionally SC—copied into this workbook passages from C's letters to Mrs C, C's marginalia, and, from transcriptions made by EC, C's notebooks. A few leaves contain notes from HNC's reading. A passage from Voltaire on Shakespeare was transcribed on ff 3^{v}–4 as pertinent to C's remarks on *Hamlet*.

Lines inked vertically through separate entries or entire pages, in MSS A, B, and C, indicate passages published in *TT* (1835) or transcribed from these workbooks for publication in *LR*. It can be conjectured, then, that the leaves were torn out by HNC himself, after the transcriptions for *TT* (1835), so that a clerk could copy the passages for *LR*. Some of these leaves are inked "T. T." in the upper right-hand corner, but they had not been returned to MS B when the mss passed from the family to the Victoria College Library.

One unlocated leaf followed f 67; five leaves are missing from the first gathering; leaves once conjugate with f 115, f 116, and f 117 are missing; they almost certainly contained no table-talk. F 121^{v}, f 122, and f 123 are blank; f 122^{v} and^{f} 123^{v} contain notes by HNC on Greek, Latin, and Joachim du Bellay. Transcriptions from MS B by Ernest Hartley Coleridge refer to an earlier foliation.

MS C

Dark red leather workbook with gold-stamped borders, six fleur-de-lys decorations, and lyres in each corner of front cover; leaves 22 cm × 18.5 cm, watermark "Smith & Allnutt 1827"; gathered in sixteens. Pages 1 through 39 have been numbered. Stubs indicate the removal of leaves from the beginning (before the numbering of pages) and following the entries of table-talk. Labelled on p 1: "Sara's Poetry".

Location: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin.

Entries by HNC of C's conversation dated 28 Jun 1834 and 5 Jul 1834 on ff 20^{v}–21^{v} (pp 40–2), followed immediately on ff 21^{v}–22^{v} (pp 42–4) by HNC's transcription of C's letter to Adam Steinmetz Kennard, published by HNC, not for the first or last time, in *TT* (1836) 319–20.

Earlier than the table-talk, HNC had transcribed in this workbook verses exchanged between "Emma" (SC) and "Henry" dated 1823–8. After recording family dates provided by her aunts, SC next entered lists of her poems and then transcribed poems she had written during widowhood.

MS D

One leaf of a letter in C's hand to DC, made available by DC to HNC, perhaps specifically for its use in *TT* (1835) II 341, under the date of 10

Jul 1834, as C's last words to his audience. In *CL VI* 705 the fragment is dated "October 1827?". The rest of C's letter has not been found.

Location: Victoria College Library, Toronto.

MS E

Workbook of grey paper over boards, half leather (red), leaves 22.2 cm × 18.4 cm. Headed "Letters written during a tour in France from August 6th to September 29th 1822. Given to Sara Coleridge by her admiring and affectionate friend and cousin Henry Nelson Coleridge. *2. Jan. 1827.*" Following the ten numbered letters on 51 leaves, HNC transcribed for SC, on the rectos of 17 leaves, the table-talk of 1822–4 from MS A, numbering the entries in the sequence of their physical appearance there, beginning with the first undated entry on MS A, p 96. Two numbers, 3 and 43, are repeated in error. Entry 34 (presumably the known entry 36:37, on the national debt) has been cut from MS E. No 57, on the marriage of first cousins, was cut from MS E but has been returned to it. The mutilated page ends with a note in SC's hand: "H. N. Coleridge, from m.s. of Table Talk of STC. S.C. 1849". While the mss were held by the family, a scrap from MS F p 73, with anecdotes of C's father and his brother George (24 Jul 1830), was pinned over the gap beneath No 56 in MS E, where it remains. The leaves of the workbook following these transcriptions have remained blank. The text of MS E is given in the present edition as Appendix B.

MS F

Single leaves and identifiable scraps cut from a revision of the table-talk submitted by HNC to other members of the family, probably in Oct or Nov 1834, certainly between Sept 1834 and the printing of *TT* (1835). The loose leaves and fragments bear watermarks dated 1833 and 1834, variously from "C Wilmot", "J. Whatman", and other papermakers. The family attempted to preserve all these fragments with MS B.

Location: Victoria College Library, Toronto.

The preserved fragments of MS F account almost completely for the total of those entries cancelled with a vertical line in MS B but not published in *TT* (1835). Surviving page numbers and other physical indicators suggest that MS F followed approximately the sequence of MS B. The entries bear pencilled crosses and x's, with a few pencilled notes (usually on the verso of a fragment of MS F that directly preceded the page referred to in the objecting note), all from censors within the family—unless there are unidentifiable marks of objection from John Gibson Lockhart, who read the work, and probably the version of it represented in MS F, for John Murray.

One scrap, for 24 Jul 1832, bears what appears to be an entry number, an inked 319, and may come from an earlier transcription than the other surviving fragments. One pencilled sequence of numbers was introduced after the entries were excised, or possibly at the time of their excision. As indicated in the description of MS E, one scrap of two anecdotes from MS F (24 Jul 1830) has been erroneously attached to MS E.

The identifiable text of MS F, with a fuller description, is given in the present edition as Appendix C.