ABSTRACT

Genius, Heredity, and Family Dynamics.
Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his Children: A Literary Biography

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The children of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Hartley, Derwent, and Sara, have received limited scholarly attention, though all were important nineteenth century figures. Lack of scholarly attention on them can be blamed on their father, who has so overshadowed his children that their value has been relegated to what they can reveal about him, the literary genius. Scholars who have studied the children for these purposes all assume familial ties justify their basic premise, that Coleridge can be understood by examining the children he raised. But in this case, the assumption is false; Coleridge had little interaction with his children overall, and the task of raising them was left to their mother, Sara, her sister Edith, and Edith's husband, Robert Southey.

While studies of S. T. C.'s children that seek to provide information about him are fruitless, more productive scholarly work can be done examining the lives and contributions of Hartley, Derwent, and Sara to their age. This dissertation is a starting point for reinvestigating Coleridge's children and analyzes their life and work. Taken out from under the shadow of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, we find that Hartley was not

doomed to be a “child of romanticism” as a result of his father’s experimental approach to his education; rather, he chose this persona for himself. Conversely, Derwent is the black sheep of the family and consciously chooses not to undertake the family profession, writing poetry. Instead, he establishes a successful career as an educator and editor. Sara Coleridge, the primary inheritor of her father’s intellectual gifts, faces the challenges of female authorship but finds an acceptable avenue of self-expression in writing educational verses for children through which she can exercise her mental acumen and express her personal fears and struggles publicly.

Overlooking Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s children as important figures has been a loss to nineteenth century studies. Hence, revisionary work must be done to remedy the lack of scholarly interest in the second generation of Coleridges and to recognize their not inconsiderable contributions, in both literary and intellectual terms, to later Romanticism and Victorianism.

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by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of English

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The works listed below are cited in the text by the following abbreviations and page numbers.

CF	Earl Leslie Griggs, *Coleridge Fille: A Biography of Sara Coleridge* (London: Oxford UP, 1940).
CL	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).
Education	Derwent Coleridge, *The Education of the People: A Letter to the Right Hon. Sir John Coleridge. With an Appendix* (London: Rivingtons, 1861).
HC	Earl Leslie Griggs, *Hartley Coleridge: His Life and Work* (London: U of London P, 1929).
"Memoir"	Derwent Coleridge, "Memoir of Hartley Coleridge by his Brother," *Poems by Hartley Coleridge with a Memoir of his Live by his Brother,* by Hartley Coleridge, ed. Derwent Coleridge, Vol. 1, 2nd ed. (London: Edward Moxon, 1851).
Minnow	Mrs. Sara (Fricker) Coleridge, *Minnow Among Tritons: Mrs. S. T. Coleridge's Letters to Thomas Poole. 1799-1834.* Ed. Stephen Potter. (Bloomsbury, London: Nonesuch Press, 1934).
Notebooks	Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 3 vols. (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1957).

SPP Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Selected Poetry and Prose of Coleridge*, ed. Donald A. Stauffer (New York: Modern Library College Editions, 1951).

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To TFG III,

whose daily example has taught me

the meaning of family.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

When one hears the name "Coleridge," the patriarch of the Coleridge family, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, typically comes to mind. This is hardly surprising considering his importance in British Romanticism and the role he played in importing the works of German Romantics to England. He was, quite simply, a literary genius. But when asked to name other members of the Coleridge family, most would be hard pressed to identify his kin. Those who have undertaken extensive study of S. T. C.'s life and work would fare better and should be able to name his wife, Sara, and his three surviving children, Hartley, Derwent, and Sara. However, only a small portion of these scholars could provide detailed information on the lives, interests, and activities of Coleridge's children. Lack of scholarly interest in the second generation of Coleridges accounts for our lack of familiarity with the names of Coleridge's offspring and, by extension, their not inconsiderable contributions, in both literary and intellectual terms, to later Romanticism and Victorianism. [1]

[1] I do not define the terms "Romantic" and "Victorian" by a set of characteristics that seem to delineate a movement in literature or a group of writers. Such definitions inevitably fall short, failing to capture the complexity of the cultural context that is an important part of literary production. They also create a deceptive notion of unity between writers and their work that generally does not exist. The writers we now call "Romantic" did not view themselves as belonging to a single unit. The term was not applied to these writers until 1863, when French critic Hippolyte Taine first used the term "Romantic School" to characterize certain English poets discussed in his *History of English Literature* (Perkins 96). Similarly, G. K. Chesterton applied the term "Victorian" to an age of literature in 1913, when he published *The Victorian Age in Literature*. Rather than attempting to identify these terms by "character traits," I define the terms by temporal parameters: "Romantic" includes the major writers and works of the period beginning in 1780 and ending in 1830, and "Victorian includes the major writers and works from the period between 1837 and 1901, the years of Queen Victoria's reign. These definitions enable me to make distinctions between the two periods without oversimplifying the nature of British literature at the time.

A small pool of scholars has taken an interest, albeit limited, in their lives. Eleanor A. Towle's, *A Poet's Children, Hartley and Sara Coleridge,* was published as early as 1912, less than thirty years after the second generation of Coleridges had died. This text provides biographical information on the eldest and youngest of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's children, emphasizing the degree of interaction they had with their father and the various people whom they came into contact with and who offered them support. Derwent Coleridge is not included in this study because, as the author suggests, he was most unlike his father in his distaste for abstractions, a detail that apparently made him unworthy of study (46).

Earl Leslie Griggs began his career by publishing his dissertation on the life and works of Hartley Coleridge in 1929. There, Griggs paints a picture of a man who lacks direction and focus in his life, who wanders from profession to profession, whose behavior disappoints his family on a number of occasions, and who, like his father, is plagued by bad luck in his attempts to use his literary skills. Ultimately, he finds Hartley's literary accomplishments to be inferior to his father's because he never reaches the level of sublimity (180). In 1936, he and his wife, Grace Evelyn Griggs, edited and published a collection of Hartley Coleridge's letters. Griggs also edited a collection of Hartley Coleridge's poetry in 1942; both texts made the life and work of this lesser known writer more accessible to other scholars.

Herbert Hartman first pursued further study of Hartley Coleridge after Griggs. In the preface to his text, *Hartley Coleridge: Poet's Son and Poet*, he states Hartley is a minor figure unworthy of a definitive biography that one might produce for a major

figure like his father.[2] Hartman instead focuses on Hartley's genius—his personality (vii). Hartman's description of Hartley Coleridge traces the development of an idiosyncratic man loved by many who lived in the Lake District. Hartley's small size, the coddling he received from his female relatives, and the methods his father used to educate him were all factors in his childhood that contributed to his unusual character (175). This character was further developed when he lived at Oxford, where he experienced two major blows: he failed to win the Newdigate Prize in 1816, a prestigious award conferred by the Oxford chair of poetry for the best original entry, and he lost his Fellowship at Oriel College in 1820 on charges of "sottishness, a love of low company and general inattention to college rules" (67; Griggs 73). These incidents established Hartley's lifelong feeling of inadequacy and intensified his love of drinking. In spite of these personal issues, Hartley was actually very popular with all who knew him for his conversational talents, generosity, and kindness. No amount of failure—and he experienced much failure in his life—could prevent his neighbors in the Lake District from praising him and holding him in higher regard than William Wordsworth himself. For to the dalesmen of the Lakes, Hartley was preferred to Wordsworth and his genius because Hartley was closely involved in their day to day lives, and, at least from their perspective, was better equipped to represent them in his poetry.

Earl Leslie Griggs continued his study of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's offspring in 1940 when he published *Coleridge Fille: A Biography of Sara Coleridge.* While Griggs characterizes Sara Coleridge as a minor figure in this text (vii), he does highlight her intellectual accomplishments, both generally and as she studied her father's predecessors

[2] Hartman's conclusions about Hartley are ironic when one considers that Hartman's text, only the second extant biography on Hartley at the time, was in many ways a definitive biographical text.

in order to edit his works and defend his reputation. He describes her as a dedicated daughter, wife, and mother who was also involved in literary and intellectual pursuits.

Virginia Woolf also wrote about Sara Coleridge. In her article, which appeared in *The New Statesman and Nation* on October 26th, 1940, Woolf described Sara Coleridge as "unfinished" and "interrupted," taking her cue from the twenty-six page autobiography Sara wrote before her death. Sara intended to end each section with a moral reflection upon its contents, but she left off writing the autobiography as she was on the verge of developing a reflection upon her early childhood. She concluded with a single set of ellipses (111). Woolf interprets these ellipses as a representation of a life that was never completed, interrupted by the responsibilities of being a wife and mother and the burden of physical illness—breast cancer—which took Sara Coleridge's life in 1852. These interruptions, Woolf argues, prevented Sara from creating her own body of work (118). Woolf imagines that Sara would have liked to write on topics of theology, metaphysics, or criticism as these were topics that she enjoyed and wrote about in journals and letters (116). But Sara's choice to direct her efforts to her father's works took precedence over her own literary aspirations. Ultimately, Sara could not complete the work she set out to do because the interruptions also put a stop to her editorial labors and, by extension, her attempts to learn more about herself (115, 118).

In 1989, Bradford K. Mudge rewrote the image of Sara Coleridge that Earl Leslie Griggs offered. His text, *Sara Coleridge, a Victorian Daughter: Her Life and Essays*, shows that in many ways, Sara lived up to the Victorian ideal of femininity. Her beauty and personality attracted the attention of many. She was also well-educated, benefiting from the resources available to her at her home, Greta Hall. She had a voracious appetite

for learning, so much so that her uncle, Robert Southey, and brother Hartley feared that her education would make her unfit for the domestic duties required of a wife (26, 38). Their concerns did not prevent her from marrying a first cousin, Henry Nelson Coleridge, in 1829. Shortly thereafter, Sara delivered her first child, a son, and was thus fully enabled to live up to the ideal of the "Angel of the House," the phrase used to describe the role of women later in the nineteenth century. Mudge reveals, however, that her uncle and brother's fears were warranted, for marriage and family life did not suit the scholarly mind of Sara Coleridge. She found her new position as wife and mother stifling; illness and bouts of hysteria were for a time her only means of escaping from this bondage. She discovered a second avenue of release after her father's death in 1834 when she took up the task of editing his major works and defending his reputation. As an editor and critic, Sara could participate in the intellectual activities she loved without transgressing the boundaries of feminine propriety. Nevertheless, her work was not without consequences: she sacrificed a literary reputation of her own in favor of establishing a literary reputation for a father who had been absent during most of her formative years.

In 2007, Peter Swaab compiled the first comprehensive collection of Sara Coleridge's poetry, giving scholars easy access to the literature Sara produced beyond that which was prepared to honor her father's memory and legacy. Moreover, this text presents Sara Coleridge as an author in her own right. Scholars can now, for the first time ever, begin to study her works independent of her father's influence. They can judge the quality of these poems and the nature of Sara Coleridge's poetic skill. In short, Swaab's edition of her *Collected Poems* poses a direct challenge to Virginia Woolf's

assessment of her as an impotent female writer who was, by no choice of her own, bound to produce only literature that served the interests of her male relatives.

The first and only major critical work on the forgotten Derwent Coleridge appeared in 1996. The authors, Raymonde Hainton and Godfrey Hainton, undertake this study as a means to rescue Derwent from obscurity. According to the authors, Derwent's importance as a Victorian figure lies in his involvement in education as the headmaster of Helston School, which became known as "the Eton of the West" under his watch (Chitty 41), and the first principal of St. Mark's College, the first school formed in England for the specific purpose of training teachers. The authors assert that Derwent Coleridge's educational philosophy was essentially the educational philosophy of his father; he accomplishes what his father could not by putting this philosophy into practice and educating prominent Victorian figures like Charles Kingsley, who was a student at Helston from 1832 to 1836. Kingsley benefitted greatly from the freedom he had to explore Derwent Coleridge's library (Chitty 42). The exotic tastes of his headmaster, who knew Arabic, Hawaiian, Coptic, and Zulu, gave young Kingsley access to a variety of unusual texts (43). Kingsley's education at Helston seems to have played an important role throughout his life; his major works—*Water Babies, Alton Locke,* and even his biological textbook, *Glaucus*—all apply educational theory in some form.

The study of the life and work of Derwent Coleridge is hampered by the lack of a published collection of his personal letters. Personal letters are available in the manuscript collections housed in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin, the College of St. Mark and St. John, Plymouth, Devon, and the Wordsworth Museum at Dove Cottage, but travel expenses and the time commitment

required to work through these manuscripts prevent many scholars from accessing these materials. Given the importance of his work in the field of education, a published collection of his letters is critical to further the study of his contribution to his age.

The most recent major critical assessment of one of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's offspring can be found in Andrew Keanie's book, *Hartley Coleridge: A Reassessment of His Life and Work,* published in the summer of 2008. Keanie attempts to rescue Hartley from his marginalized position and demonstrate to the modern reader that he is a poet worthy of consideration, not simply due to his connection with the Lake Poets, but due to his individual genius, participation in the tenets of Romanticism, and his progression away from these ideas and towards an anticipation of aspects of Modernism (ix-x). Keanie provides the reader with a sweeping study of Hartley's works, poetic and prosaic, to demonstrate how he exemplified the concepts of his father and Wordsworth. In the process, Keanie contrasts Hartley to later Romantic figures like Byron, Shelley, and Keats to identify why Hartley never achieved the same rank as the second generation of Romantics. Keanie concludes his study by discussing Hartley's "nothingness"—an image Hartley ingeniously framed for himself and led others to believe. Through this image, and his own seemingly contradictory perception of himself as a "king in his own . . . paradise" (175), Keanie argues Hartley anticipates certain characteristics of Modernism and positions himself within our cultural heritage (177).

Clearly, scholarship on the Coleridge children has been sporadic and narrow at best. Even in studies specifically designed to discuss one or more of the Coleridge offspring, many scholars relegate them to the position of a minor figure and emphasize

their degree of similarity to their father.[3] Yet such an approach to studying the Coleridge children is questionable given the fact that Samuel Taylor Coleridge was an absent father. He traveled considerably when his children were young, leaving his wife to care for them on her own. In November of 1806, just four years after the birth of his youngest child, he separated from his wife, taking Hartley with him (Lefebure 172-3). Their time together was short lived; Hartley returned in 1808 to begin his formal education at Reverend Dawes' school in Ambleside (Griggs, *HC* 47). Derwent and Sara spent considerably less time with their father during their childhood, a point that indicates some scholars attempt to overestimate the degree of influence Samuel Taylor Coleridge had over his children.

In Coleridge's stead, Robert Southey, his brother-in-law, fulfilled the role of father to these children. He and his wife Edith, along with their children and the widowed Mrs. Robert Lovell, lived with Sara Coleridge and her children at Greta Hall. Their home was a happy one. The children were well educated by the family in a school run in the home; they learned Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek, arithmetic, writing, music, drawing, and needlework (Lefebure 218). In addition, the children had access to Southey's extensive library, which contained 14,000 volumes at the time of his death, an advantage perhaps most enjoyed by the young Sara Coleridge (Towle 86-7). As the home of Robert Southey, a well-known literary figure in his day, Greta Hall hosted a variety of visitors. William and Dorothy Wordsworth, who were Derwent's godparents, lived approximately thirteen miles away in Grasmere and were regular visitors (Speck 110). Other visitors included the Shelleys, William Hazlitt, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas De Quincey, Humphry Davy, and William Wilberforce (Hainton 21). By the time the

[3] Andrew Keanie is a clear exception to this rule.

Coleridge children had reached adulthood, they had the opportunity to meet many of the well known writers and thinkers of their day.

Though the Coleridge children established themselves as writers and thinkers in their own right apart from their father's influence, few scholars have seen value in studying the individual merits of the second generation. The shadow of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's genius has effectively obscured their accomplishments from the view of contemporary scholars. I suggest that this lack of interest in Coleridge's children has caused scholars to overlook the considerable contributions they made to nineteenth century literature and education. My dissertation acknowledges this overlooked area of study by analyzing the lives and works of Hartley, Derwent, and Sara Coleridge. The study begins by describing the home life of the Coleridge children at "Aunt Hill," the nickname for their Keswick home, Greta Hall, and the place where each one was raised and received an extensive early education. Additionally, this chapter explores the degree of separation between Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his children during their formative years to underscore the shortcomings in extant scholarly studies on the Coleridge family. Following the chapter, the reader will find a chapter devoted to each one of S. T. C.'s children. Chapter Three discusses Hartley Coleridge as "the child of romanticism," a persona fashioned by his father in his childhood that he later chose to maintain for the rest of his life. Chapter Four presents Derwent Coleridge, the black sheep of the family who made a conscious decision to separate himself from them and establish himself in the world. He was able to do so by securing a position as the headmaster of Helston Grammar School, a post that served as a foundation for his extensive work to improve standards of education for students and teachers alike. He also edited several collections

on the works of family and friends, a task that he viewed as a labor of love and a means of honoring the dead. Chapter Five portrays Sara Coleridge, the primary inheritor of her father's intellectual gifts, not as the diligent editor of her father's works, as she is more commonly known, but as the mother who also successfully authored a collection of educational verses for children and thus created an acceptable avenue of self-expression in a literary market that offered limited opportunities for married women.

In the concluding chapter, I synthesize the contributions the Coleridge children have made to Romanticism and Victorianism. Furthermore, I discuss how overlooking Samuel Taylor Coleridge's children as important figures beyond what they contribute to our knowledge of their father has been a loss to nineteenth century studies. Though we already know of some of the literary and educational contributions Hartley, Derwent, and Sara made to their times, this investigation will put together material scattered over a variety of sources and not as yet assembled in any coherent pattern. Furthermore, I hope that more scholarly attention will be paid to these three figures as a result of this dissertation, not solely because of their family connection to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, but because of their individual accomplishments and their shared creative and editorial enterprises.

To some readers, my choice to write the biography of a family, as opposed to a single individual, in this dissertation may be surprising. According to my own assertions, all of the Coleridge children are overlooked and important nineteenth century figures, so it may seem that focusing on a single individual and producing a comprehensive piece of scholarship would achieve the same goal of bringing attention to the life and work of one of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's offspring, apart from his immediate influence. While I am

well aware of the benefits of researching just one of the Coleridge children, I cannot ignore the important family dynamics that dominate their lives and works. Unlike earlier scholars, I do not believe that these family relations determine their value within literary studies and literary history; however, I do believe that the family connections, in particular between all of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's children, are crucial to understanding each individual figure and his or her literary output, for the Coleridges were collaborators, and their work is bound together. Hence the need for a family biography that collectively explores the lives of Coleridge's offspring and the interconnections between their work. Only through this medium can we appreciate the origins of their creative and professional work.

Furthermore, this study is intended as a beginning, not an end. As Stanley Fish states in his essay, "Biography and Intention," "criticism can only proceed when some set of answers to these questions is firmly in place, when notions of agency, personhood, cause, and effect are already assumed and are already governing the readings we produce" (15). Clearly, scholarship on the Coleridge siblings has not as of yet provided adequate answers to the questions of "agency, personhood, cause and effect." We instead have narrowed studies that more often than not assume the marginal character of the figure rather than seek to overcome it. Re-evaluation that attempts to demonstrate individual personhood and merit within the context of a family involved in various collaborative activities is a necessary first step and the ultimate goal of this dissertation. I hope that, once this goal is accomplished, scholarship on Hartley, Derwent, and Sara may move forward, taking further steps to insert these Coleridges into the literary canon.

I have also chosen to call this dissertation a "literary biography." As such, it will focus, as all biographies do, on the lives of each figure. Sources will include but are not limited to personal letters written by each figure, pertinent letters written by relations and friends, and extant biographies written by modern and contemporary scholars. These sources will help to reveal the contributions that each Coleridge made to his or her times and make it possible to assemble their work into a coherent pattern.

What will make this biography literary, as the title suggests, is its focus on individuals who were writers themselves and the inclusion of critical examination of various published works written by each figure. This method closely follows the definition of literary biography, which is outlined by Leon Edel during the Alexander Lectures at the University of Toronto in 1955 and 1956. Such biographies have a long history; most scholars consider James Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, published in 1791, to be the first literary biography (Honan ix; McKeon 38). According to Michael McKeon, this form had its origins in the emergence of the novel in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. McKeon reveals that the genre of the novel was possible only after the subject could be viewed as an individual entity as opposed to a creation of what we now consider to be external forces, like history and culture (18). Over time, the disengagement experienced by narrative subjects like Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe came to be applied to writers as well, not just their subjects (20). The early novel provided a pattern for writers to re-imagine themselves, as Boswell does in his *London Journal*, and to conceive of other writers (27). Today, the genre of literary biography is more popular than ever as general curiosity about the lives of authors, contemporary or otherwise, has grown.

The value of literary biography lies in its ability to restore the voices of the marginalized, i.e. the working class, women, minorities, etcetera. Scholars interested in these areas of study often seek to identify the specificity of the individual experience. For example, feminist scholarship aims at communicating the female experience, an experience that cannot be divorced from the female human being (Booth 88). As such, the biographies of individual females are an important part of feminist scholarship. Sharon O'Brien highlights this importance when she states, "Women's lives have been erased, unrecorded, or represented by patriarchal stories, and biography can be a powerful means for reinscribing women in history" (128). Likewise, the lives of other marginalized groups have been lost or misrepresented in history. The second generation of Coleridges is no exception. While their history has been recorded, it has been drawn in service to the life and work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the only family member that literary history widely recognizes. This dissertation will work to garner recognition for Hartley, Derwent, and Sara as well through a biographical approach. Indeed, we cannot separate these figures from their identification as the children of Samuel Taylor Coleridge; however, biographical criticism requires us to examine a broader portrait of the individual and consider the whole of his or her life experience, where the patriarch's influence was indeed limited. The collaboration that took place between members of the family and the selected works produced by each will be examined as well and will illustrate the extent of their influence individually and as a family. Such material will more than adequately demonstrate that Hartley, Derwent, and Sara Coleridge are important figures in their own right, and not simply as a consequence of their hereditary

connection to a literary genius, that deserve greater attention within nineteenth century studies.

CHAPTER TWO

Life at Greta Hall

The Coleridge family moved into Greta Hall in 1800. At this point, the family included a three year old son, David Hartley Coleridge, and would soon include a second child. The Coleridges had also lost a son, Berkeley, just prior to their move. Greta Hall would be the last home that Samuel Taylor Coleridge would share with his wife and children. His stay there was short and fraught with turmoil. Greta Hall was also to be the home where Mrs. Sara Coleridge faced her greatest marital trials. Here, she drew the criticism and pity of her neighbors. She struggled to keep her family together, and she experienced the heartache of failure. Nevertheless, she found happiness at Greta Hall. As her marriage deteriorated, she found a source of support in her two sisters, Mary and Edith, and her brother-in-law, Robert Southey. Together, this family built a home where their children could have happy childhoods and a quality education. They also surrounded themselves with friends, the greatest writers and thinkers of the day. They created peace out of disorder.

The move to Greta Hall seems to have been precipitated by Dorothy and William Wordsworth's decision to move to Dove Cottage in Grasmere, thirteen miles away from Keswick and Greta Hall. Prior to the move, William and S. T. C. had developed a close friendship. In 1798, while both the Coleridges and Wordsworths were residents of Somerset, the pair published their experimental collection of poetry, *Lyrical Ballads*. Coleridge, William, and Dorothy set out for Germany that same year. Upon returning from their travels, Wordsworth, who had moved to the north of England, wanted

Coleridge nearby to help with the enlarged two volume edition of the text, published in 1800. Upon Coleridge's instructions, the Wordsworths entered into negotiations to secure a home for him in Keswick. Simultaneously, Thomas Poole and Mrs. Coleridge sought a larger home for the family in Nether Stowey, as Coleridge had instructed them to do. Coleridge chose Keswick over Nether Stowey in June 1800, when negotiations on Greta Hall were finalized (Jones 101). Coleridge described the idyllic setting of his new home in a letter dated July 29, 1800:

> my God! what a scene—! Right before me is a great *Camp* of single mountains—each in shape that resembles a Giant's Tent!—and to the left, but closer to it far than the Bassenthwaite Water to my right, is the lake of Keswick, with it's Islands & white sails, & glossy Lights of Evening—*crowned* with green meadows, but the three remaining sides are encircled by the most fantastic mountains, that ever Earthquakes made in sport; as fantastic, as if Nature had *laughed* herself into the convulsion, in which they were made.—Close behind me at the foot of Skiddaw flows the Greta, I hear it's murmuring distinctly—then it curves round almost in a semicircle, & is now catching the purple Lights of the scattered Clouds above it directly before me— (*CL* 1: 614-15)

To Coleridge, Greta Hall's beautiful surroundings and its position near William and Dorothy Wordsworth made it an ideal spot to rouse his literary imagination.[1] The location of Greta Hall did not prove advantageous for the Coleridge's marital relationship, however. The proximity of the Coleridge family to the Wordsworths soon made Mrs. Coleridge and her dealings with her husband an object of scrutiny for Dorothy and William. Both felt that she was a poor match for their literary genius of a friend. Coleridge encouraged their distaste for his spouse by relating to them stories of his wife's temper and unsympathetic nature. The Wordsworths responded by seeking out ways to

[1] The Coleridge family would later discover that this home, while surrounded by beauty, was poorly constructed. The house had been built hastily, and the front portion, which offered an impressive view of the mountains, was exposed to constant winds. Furthermore, the front of Greta Hall was near collapse in 1803 and had to be rebuilt (Lefebure 129).

separate the couple (Lefebure 139). Meanwhile, Sara was left to manage her husband, whose opium dependence worsened during their residence at Greta Hall, while under the critical eye of her watchful neighbors.

Sara was always in a losing position when it came to her marriage, for the idea of marriage was brought before her as a result of convenience and necessity. At the time Sara and S. T. C. met, Coleridge and his future brother-in-law, Robert Southey, were developing a scheme to begin a Pantisocratic society in America (Holmes 69). They agreed that the members of this society ought to be married couples, and Southey, having already chosen a Miss Edith Fricker to be his wife, suggested Coleridge consider her sister Sara as a likely candidate for his wife (69-70). The match seemed particularly advantageous for the society as a whole because it would help to ensure that Southey and Coleridge's wives could get along and work together once they arrived in America. When the scheme began to unravel, Coleridge continued to pursue Sara, who had refused rival suitors and a guarantee of financial security in favor of the poet and at the expense of the respect of her family (Lefebure 53). Whether or not S. T. C. pursued her out of love or duty at this stage is unclear. The latter seems likely as Coleridge's letters indicate that Southey placed a significant amount of pressure on S. T. C. to behave honorably towards Miss Fricker.

During their courtship, Coleridge also directed his attention toward Mary Evans, the sister of one of his classmates at Christ's Hospital. Miss Evans was S. T. C.'s first love interest, and he maintained his feelings towards her after leaving Christ's Hospital. In November of 1794, he received word that Mary might be engaged. Fearing the worst, Coleridge wrote to her to discover the truth:

> Indulge, Mary! this my first, my last request—and restore me to *Reality*, however gloomy. Sad and full of heaviness will the Intelligence be—my heart will die within me—I shall receive it however with steadier resignation from yourself, than were it announced to me (haply on your marriage Day!) by a Stranger! Indulge my request—I will not disturb your Peace by even a *Look* of Discontent—still less will I offend your Ear by the Whine of selfish Sensibility. (*CL* 1: 130-1)

That December, Coleridge received Mary's reply. She was indeed engaged to a Mr. Fryer Todd. The news put an end to Coleridge's pursuit of Miss Evans and gave him further reason to consider Sara Fricker as potential wife. Southey's insistence that Coleridge follow through with the attention he had bestowed upon Miss Fricker was a second, powerful factor in the relationship between Sara and S. T. C. In December of 1794, after receiving Mary Evans' reply to his questions of her rumored engagement, Coleridge wrote the following message to Southey:

> To lose her!—I can rise above that selfish Pang. But to marry another—O Southey! bear with my weakness. Love makes all things pure and heavenly like itself:—but to marry a woman whom I do *not* love—to degrade her, whom I call my Wife, by making her the Instrument of low Desire—and on the removal of a desultory Appetite, to be perhaps not displeased with her Absence!—Enough!—These Refinements are the wildering fires, that lead me into Vice.
>
> Mark you, Southey!—*I will do my Duty*. (*CL* 1: 145)

Coleridge clearly states he does not love Sara Fricker. He had reserved these feelings for Mary Evans, and he evidently saw Miss Fricker as an object of physical attraction. Such sentiments do not tend to make for a good, lasting marriage, so it comes as no surprise that Coleridge decided he and his wife were unevenly matched early on.

Coleridge's sense of duty provided little benefit to his marriage. Six years after his wedding day, Coleridge described his marriage in a letter to Robert Southey:

> Sara—alas! We are not suited to each other. But the months of my absence I devote to *self*-discipline, & to the attempt to draw her nearer to me by a regular development of all the sources of our unhappiness—then for another Trial, *fair* as I hold the love of good men dear to me—*patient*,

> as I myself love my own dear children. I will go believing that it will end happily—if not, if our mutual unsuitableness continues, and (as it assuredly will do, if it continue) increases & strengthens, why then, it is better for her & my children, that I should live apart, than that she should be a Widow & they Orphans. Carefully have I *thought thro'* the subject of marriage & deeply am I convinced of it's indissolubleness.—If I separate, I do it in the earnest desire to provide for her &[the]m; that while I live, she may enjoy the comforts of life; & that when I die, something may have been accumulated that may secure her from degrading Dependence. When I least love her, then m[ost] do I feel anxiety for her peace, comfort, & welfare. Is s[he] not the mother of my children? And am I the man not to know & feel this?—Enough of this. (*CL* 2: 767)

The perceived degree of difference between himself and Mrs. Coleridge provided S. T. C. with an outlook on his marriage that he might not have had otherwise. It caused him to view it in much the same way that a patron might view his relationship to the person he supports. Coleridge's job was to provide for his wife and children and to ensure that they might live in comfort and without fear of debt. Like a patron, he could do this from afar, a point that demonstrated to him that separation from one's wife was possible and even beneficial, while marriage itself was a contract that could not be breached. As we will see, this attitude guided most of Coleridge's later interaction with Sara Coleridge. Also, as the circumstances of his life changed, his views on marriage and his wife quickly degraded, leaving Mrs. Coleridge at a further disadvantage in her marriage.

That said, Coleridge did not always feel this way about his marriage. In his letter to Thomas Poole, written days after the wedding, Coleridge I enraptured by the fact that he is married, and Sara Fricker now bears his name (*CL* 1: 160). At this stage, Sara is the "heart honour'd Maid" S. T. C. praises in "The Eolian Harp" (*SPP* 64). But these feelings deteriorated quickly as the joys of marriage transformed into reality and the Coleridges discovered that they, like all couples, had domestic affairs to keep in order,

bills to pay, and a family to support. Coleridge's inability to provide for his family combined with Mrs. Coleridge's practical nature made for an uncomfortable home.

The sentiments of her husband were not the only challenges Mrs. Coleridge had to face in her marriage. The Wordsworth family brought with it another burden for Mrs. Coleridge—Sarah Hutchinson. The twenty-six year old Sarah and her sister Mary, the future Mrs. William Wordsworth, stayed at Dove Cottage with the Wordsworths from the winter of 1800 to the spring of 1801. Coleridge first met the sisters in 1799 on a visit to Yorkshire and was immediately attracted to Sarah. Thus, when Sarah Hutchinson's visit to Grasmere coincided with Coleridge's marital turmoil and she was willing to lend a sympathetic ear to his complaints about Mrs. Coleridge, S.T.C.'s attraction to Sarah quickly turned into infatuation (Lefebure 142-3). Mrs. Coleridge was well aware of the fact that she had a rival for her husband's love. In a letter written to Mrs. Coleridge in November of 1802, S.T.C. seems to justify his romantic feelings for Miss Hutchinson by reinterpreting the traditional marriage contract: "Would any good & wise man, any warm & wide hearted man marry at all, if it were part of the Contract—Henceforth this Woman is your only friend, your sole beloved! all the rest of mankind, however amiable & akin to you, must be only your *acquaintance*!" (*CL* 2: 887-8). Coleridge would answer his own question with a resounding no. He believed that he had the right to love whomever he pleased and that his wife ought not to complain about those toward whom he chose to direct his attention.

Mrs. Coleridge was not as complacent as her husband hoped she would be, and, given her upbringing, this comes as no surprise. Scholars believe that she and her sisters

attended Hannah More's school in Bristol.[2] All received an education that exceeded the usual standards for female learning at the time. As a schoolgirl, Sara Fricker excelled in maths and was well read in English and French literature. The young Sarah also read *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft shortly after it was published in 1792. She quickly took to the ideals Wollstonecraft presented there: "The idea of being a loving friend to your husband rather than a 'humble dependent' was very attractive, and what Wollstonecraft wrote about female independence and self-reliance had become so evidently necessary by the time Sarah read the book, it seemed a fundamental truth" (Jones 4). Hence, her husband's reinterpretation of the marriage contract did not sit well with her. She had her own views on the subject; a wife ought to take full responsibility for her family and has a duty to her husband to discuss openly with him any matter upon which they may disagree. Such interaction suited Mrs. Coleridge's ideal of wifely behavior.

Coleridge did not recognize the characteristics of independence, free thought, and intelligence in his wife. Rather, he felt that she was beneath him. In the November 1802 letter, he states, "in sex, acquirements, and in the quantity and quality of natural endowments whether of Feeling, or of Intellect, you are the Inferior" (*CL* 2: 888). He delivered this news to Mrs. Coleridge just one month before she gave birth to their third child. Coleridge continued his barrage of criticism in the same letter, stating

> it would be preposterous to expect that I should see with your eyes, & dismiss my Friends from *my* heart, only because you have not chosen to give them any Share of *your* Heart; but it is not preposterous, in me, on the contrary I have a *right* to expect & demand, that you should to a certain degree love, & act kindly to, those whom I deem worthy of my Love.—If

[2] Hannah More (1745-1833), educator, bluestocking, writer, and philanthropist, ran a boarding school for girls with her four sisters. The school was quite successful and attracted a number of prominent patrons (Skedd par. 2).

> you read this Letter with half the Tenderness, with which it is written, it will do you & both of us, GOOD. (*CL* 2: 888)

Clearly, Coleridge's relationship with his wife was under a great strain because of the bond between Coleridge and the Wordsworths. Mrs. Coleridge sensed the Wordsworths' negative opinion of her and disliked the ways in which they interfered with her family life. She resented the fact that Coleridge preferred them to her. In Coleridge's opinion, his relationship with William and Dorothy Wordsworth was more valuable to him than his relationship with his wife because they fostered his intellectual and literary interests in a way she was incapable of due to what he deemed as her lack of mental acumen and feeling. Furthermore, being near the Wordsworths afforded Coleridge the opportunity to be near Sarah Hutchinson, the object of his affections. He did not feel the need to hide his feelings for Miss Hutchinson from his wife, for, as the above letter indicates, he believed he was entitled to love whomever he pleased, regardless of his marital status. These tensions, combined with the independent natures of both Coleridge and Sara, made Greta Hall an unhappy home during their first years of residence there.

Another issue arose during this time that further divided the Coleridge home—opium addiction. S.T.C. first used the drug during his days as a student at Christ's Hospital, London to treat his medical issues. As a college student, he used the drug recreationally, and by the time he resided in the Lake District, he was opium dependent (McKusick par. 16). Kathleen Jones gives an eye-opening account of the extent of Coleridge's opium use:

> Sometime in the spring of 1801 Coleridge discovered the notorious Kendal Black Drop, a viciously addictive concentration, retailing at several shillings a phial – a habit not likely to improve the Coleridges' tight finances. He was also consuming crude opium and wrote to friends asking them to send him supplies, promising payment 'in futura'. Samuel owed everybody money and was totally incapable of meeting his literary

> commitments. According to Southey he was swilling laudanum alone at the rate of two pints a week, costing £5, and when things were bad consuming up to a pint a day, plus large quantities of brandy to 'keep it on his stomach' and raw opium as well. (Jones 120)

While friends were helping to support his habit, the residents of Greta Hall were suffering under the effects of Coleridge's addiction. For her own part, Mrs. Coleridge's stress over her husband's opium use, worries about his health, and fear for the family's financial situation culminated in a variety of illnesses, including colds and rheumatism (Lefebure 134). Coleridge's opium abuse also greatly affected his eldest son, Hartley. Hartley, who had always been favored by his father, could not understand the change he observed in the man who once worshipped him. He quickly found himself on the wrong side of his father's ever-shifting moods. Hence, he avoided his father as much as he could by spending time with Mr. William Jackson, landlord of Greta Hall, and his housekeeper, Mrs. Wilson, or he entertained himself in the kitchen garden (136).

Mrs. Coleridge could not silently watch her husband self destruct. She believed it to be her duty to confront her husband about the dangers of his opium abuse and the toll it was taking on their family. Given the effects of Coleridge's behavior, Mrs. Coleridge saw the situation as dire and continually opposed his desire to pursue his damaging habits. Coleridge, however, viewed her exhortations as evidence of her lack of affection and sympathy for his situation. He used the discord in their home as an excuse for his opium consumption, telling the residents of Dove Cottage that he had to take the drug in order to cope with Mrs. Coleridge's temper. The Wordsworths, who were blindly sympathetic to S.T.C.'s complaints and who fostered his fantasies, felt that Coleridge was the unlucky victim in a hopeless marriage (139). Interestingly, some scholars have also looked at Mrs. Coleridge's reaction to her husband's drug use and arrived at the same

conclusion. In his discussion about Coleridge's opium addiction, Rupert Christiansen writes in *Romantic Affinities: Portraits from an Age. 1780-1830*,

> Locked in all this agony and the secrecy that surrounded it, Coleridge looked desperately for the consolation and companionship of human love. His wife could not provide it, despite the brief bursts of affection in the first years of their marriage, recorded in poems like 'The Eolian Harp'. Sara was an ordinary woman, with ordinary suburban ambitions to see her husband do well. She had married him on the understanding that he was a genius, and that a genius would rise to worldly consequence. She expected to be materially comfortable and secure, with Coleridge showing himself to be as 'steady' a character as her sister Edith's husband, Southey. She was disappointed to find instead someone unstable and pathologically unmethodical, whose hours of reading, scrawling, and messing about issued in no visible return. (63)

Surely Mrs. Coleridge was to some degree disappointed with the man she married, for Coleridge's addiction prevented him from being able to fulfill his commitments to his family and support them properly. Furthermore, the friends he associated with created divisions in his home; both points indicate that he did not give priority to his family life. But this disappointment does not necessarily indicate that Sara Coleridge was unable to love her husband. On the contrary, her disappointment could be read as an outgrowth of her love and respect for her husband; she believed him to be capable of greater things and was sorry to see him fail at his ventures as a result of his drug use, not simply because of the problems it caused for the family, but also because of the toll it took on Coleridge's psyche. Though Mrs. Coleridge refused to enable her husband's poor habits and thus provide him with the type of love and support he believed he needed, she played the part of a loving wife by encouraging him to end his opium consumption.

Mrs. Coleridge's change in behavior did not affect her husband's views about her. He eventually came to the conclusion that Mrs. Coleridge was jealous and unloving, which in his mind gave him sufficient reason to stop loving her and ultimately separate

from her (Lefebure 144). While in our time such reasoning is often used to justify the dissolution of a marriage, in the nineteenth century these decisions were atypical. Marriage was viewed as an indissoluble union, and divorces and separations rarely occurred (Perkin 22, 29). Though Coleridge professed this very view in 1801, neither the prevailing views on marriage, the fact that Mrs. Coleridge was the mother of his children, nor the effects this choice would have on his family influenced Coleridge's decision, perhaps because he had long been aware that he was married to a woman who did not suit him (*CL* 2: 767). So set was he on ending their marriage that he convinced himself Mrs. Coleridge would agree to the arrangement. He was not prepared for her response; she was furious (Lefebure 154). In a letter dated July 29, 1802, Coleridge relates to Robert Southey the discussion he had with his wife on the subject:

> I had made up my mind to a very aweful Step—tho' the struggles of my mind were so violent, that my sleep became the valley of the Shadows of Death / & my health was in a state truly alarming. It did alarm Mrs Coleridge—the thought of separation wounded her Pride—she was fully persuaded, that deprived of the Society of my children & living abroad without any friends, I should pine away—& the fears of widowhood came upon her—And tho' these feelings were wholly selfish, yet they made her *serious*—and that was a great point gained—for Mrs Coleridge's mind has very little that is *bad* in it—it is an innocent mind—; but it is light, and *unimpressible*, warm in anger, cold in sympathy—and in all disputes uniformly *projects* itself *forth* to recriminate, instead of turning itself inward with a silent Self-questioning. (*CL* 2: 832)

Coleridge attempts to indicate that his decision was not made lightly, nor did he come to this conclusion without some suffering. Given his insistence that he put a great deal of thought into his decision to leave Sara, he finds her response to be unreasonably selfish. She only considered her own potential loses, not her husband's needs or desires, Coleridge asserts. Considering all Mrs. Coleridge had to lose, one certainly might conclude that her fears were merited. As a married woman, Mrs. Coleridge had no rights.

Everything that she might consider to be her own, including her children, was the legal property of her husband (Perkin 14). S. T. C. was well within his right to choose to take away their children if he so desired. In their situation, this meant that they likely would be spending their time at Dove Cottage, where the children would be overseen by Dorothy Wordsworth, who had little respect for Mrs. Coleridge, or even by Sarah Hutchinson, Coleridge's love interest. The decision to separate would also have social implications for Mrs. Coleridge. Without her husband as her escort, she would be permitted to enjoy only the company of spinsters, widows, and old friends. All other social interaction was forbidden to a woman in her position (Lefebure 168).

In the same letter, Coleridge goes on to complain to Southey about his wife's character and ultimately seeks to show that he is the victim in their marriage. Coleridge does, however, credit his wife for reforming her ways:

> But as I said—Mrs. Coleridge was made *serious*—and for the first time since our marriage she felt and acted, as beseemed a Wife & a Mother to a Husband, & the Father of her children—She promised to set about an alteration in her external manners & looks & language, & to fight against her inveterate habits of puny Thwarting & unintermitting Dyspathy—this immediately—and to do her best endeavors to cherish other *feelings*. I on my part promised to be more attentive to all her feelings of Pride, &c &c and to try to correct my habits of impetuous & bitter censure—. We have both kept our Promises—& she has found herself so much more happy, than she had been for years before, that I have the most confident Hopes, that this happy Revolution in our domestic affairs will be permanent, & that this external Conformity will gradually generate a greater inward Likeness of thoughts, & attachments, than has hitherto existed between us. (*CL* 2: 832-3)

This letter clearly indicates that as far as S. T. C. was concerned, Mrs. Coleridge was the source of strife in his marriage. The only issue he needed to make amends for was his lack of consideration for his wife's feelings, but one wonders if he truly believed he was inconsiderate or if he was trying to appease his wife. In any event, Mrs. Coleridge

changed her behavior enough to satisfy her husband. These changes probably included fewer complaints about Coleridge's friends and opium habit and fewer arguments. No doubt Coleridge thought he had tamed his wife and that, as long as she remained docile, his marriage could be happy.

Sara Coleridge had played the part of the outwardly calm, inwardly suffering wife before. In 1798, during Coleridge's travels to Germany with the Wordsworths, he had arranged to correspond during his absence alternately with his wife and Thomas Poole, a family friend from their residence at Nether Stowey, with the understanding that the two would share letters with each other (Lefebure 101).[3] During this time, young Berkeley Coleridge became ill. Thomas Poole did not want to upset Coleridge's delicate temperament with bad news from home because he feared it would ruin his friend's ability to learn German, so he instructed Mrs. Coleridge not to tell her husband about the trials she was facing at home (104). In so doing, Poole left her to suffer and bear the burden of her son's illness alone.

The burden was indeed taxing. Berkeley's illness resulted from receiving a defective vaccine for smallpox. Hartley, who had also taken the vaccine, became ill as well, as did Mrs. Coleridge, who made herself susceptible to the illness through worry and exhaustion over her sons (104). Coleridge would know nothing of these trials until much later; instead, Thomas Poole sent him a deceptively cheerful letter, dated October 8, 1798, and instructed him to remain focused on the purpose of his travels:

[3] In *Minnow Among Tritons: Mrs. S. T. Coleridge's Letters to Thomas Poole. 1799-1834*, editor Stephen Potter provides the following description of Thomas Poole: "Coleridge had discovered in Thomas Poole, as others were to discover, an unusual mixture. He was a respected and popular country gentleman, adept in the business and pleasures of an estate, and at the same time a hero-worshipper—as well as a connoisseur—of genius" (xvii).

> MY VERY DEAR COL.—We have received all your four letters . . . and have been made most happy to hear from each stage that you were well. May God preserve your health till you return, and always. This homespun wish is at last the very best we can feel for our friends. We are going on at Stowey just as when you left us. Mrs. C. and the children are perfectly well. Mrs. C. keeps up her spirits, and I believe every one is anxious to make her happy. [. . .] You are now, dear Col., fixed in Germany, and what you have to do is to attend *wholly* to those things which are better attained in Germany than elsewhere. Let nothing divert you from them. (Sandford 277-8, 279)

When little Berkeley finally succumbed to his illness in February of 1799, Sara was once again compelled by Poole to keep quiet on the matter. She was not allowed to inform her husband of the tragedy until March 24, 1799, after Poole had sent an emotionless letter that broke the news to Coleridge (Lefebure 114).

Hence, Mrs. Coleridge was adept at being sensitive to her husband's fragile sensibilities and was able to maintain the peace for awhile. Yet the underlying issues in the Coleridges' marriage—namely addiction and emotional infidelity—were not addressed through her acquiescence. We know from the November 1802 letter S.T.C. wrote to Mrs. Coleridge that the peace did not last long. We can find further evidence of discord in S.T.C.'s letters to her just prior to the birth of their third child. Towards the end of Mrs. Coleridge's pregnancy, S.T.C. left Greta Hall, with his wife's blessing, to accompany Tom Wedgewood on his journey to winter in a warmer climate.[4] Mrs. Coleridge wrote her sister, Edith, and her brother-in-law, Robert Southey, to join her at Greta Hall for the winter and assist her during her confinement (156). Their arrival was delayed by construction on the front half of Greta Hall, so Coleridge requested that his wife enlist the help of a Mrs. Railton, a nurse from Penrith: "I desire, I *command* you, to have her instantly. Heaven forbid we should save a few pounds at this time.—"

[4] Coleridge wrote the condemning letter of November 23, 1802 to his wife while on his travels with Tom Wedgewood.

(Lefebure 156-7; *CL* 2: 890). The expense of hiring a nurse seems to have bothered Mrs. Coleridge, so in later letters, Coleridge offered an alternate solution. On December 4, 1802, he wrote, "For god's sake don't let the expence weigh with you about a Nurse. You ought to think of a Servant. I hope, Sara Hutchinson will be well enough to come in, while you are lying in / both she & Mary Wordsworth are good Nurses.—" (*CL* 2: 892). He repeats the suggestion again in a letter written on December 13:

> I hope, that Sara Hutchinson is well enough to have come in—it would be a great comfort, that one or the other of the three Women at Grasmere should be with you—& Sara rather than the other two because you will hardly have another opportunity of having her by yourself & to yourself, & of learning to know her, such as she really is. How much this lies at my Heart with respect to the Wordsworths, & Sara, and how much of our common Love & Happiness depends on your loving those whom I love,—why should I repeat?—I am confident, my dear Love! that I have no occasion to repeat it. (2: 894)

We must reconstruct Mrs. Coleridge's reaction to her husband's suggestion on our own as we have no written record to guide us. Certainly, the idea that her rival serve as her nurse during the birth of her child was less than desirable. That Coleridge would identify Miss Hutchinson as a suitable helper for his wife shows that he was no longer living up to his promise "to be more attentive to all [Mrs. Coleridge's] feelings of Pride" (2: 832). Furthermore, he presses his wife to enlist Miss Hutchinson's aide for selfish reasons—to compel Mrs. Coleridge to become better acquainted with her and accept her so that he may enjoy his friendship with Miss Hutchinson in peace. Mrs. Coleridge delivered their third child, a girl, under these trying circumstances on December 23, 1802. S. T. C. returned to Keswick the following day and was surprised by the news that he had fathered a daughter. He resolved to call her Sara (Lefebure 158).

In 1803, Coleridge began to accept the fact that opium was the source of his physical distresses and not the helpful remedy he once believed it to be. Perhaps not

coincidentally, he completed his will and took out a life insurance policy. But he could not go so far as to admit he was addicted to the drug (Lefebure 159). He instead determined that he should spend a year abroad, feeling that a change in climate and separation from his domestic concerns was the only way for him to overcome his physical ailments. He left just before Christmas in 1803 and went to London; from there, he would travel on to Malta. Coleridge did not arrive in London until January 23, 1804. The delay resulted from an illness acquired while staying with the Wordsworth family at Dove Cottage prior to leaving the Lake District (161). Coleridge would have to wait another three months before finally leaving England for Malta. He wrote to his wife on April 1, 1804 to explain the delay; he was waiting for the arrival of the Speedwell, which was to depart with a convoy upon the onset of the first fair wind (*CL* 2: 1114). In the same letter, he expresses his affection and care for Sara:

> My dear Sara! the mother, the attentive and excellent Mother of my children must needs be always more than the word friend can express when applied to a woman / I pray you, use no word that you use with reluctance / . Yet what we have been to each other, our understandings will not permit our Hearts to forget!—God knows, I weep Tears of Blood, that so it is!—For I greatly esteem & honor you / Heaven knows, if I can leave you really comfortable in your circumstances, I shall meet Death with a face, which I feel at the moment I say it, it would rather shock than comfort you to hear. (*CL* 2: 1114-5)

Coleridge's comments to his wife indicate that the distance of time and space did much to increase his fondness for her. That same distance also worked to increase his insecurities and doubts about his potential for recovery. He left England not knowing if he would ever return again.

Back at Greta Hall, the Southeys and Mary Lovell, Mrs. Coleridge's widowed sister, and her young son joined Mrs. Coleridge and her children. The Southeys had recently experienced their own heartache; their first child, Margaret, born in 1802, had

died (Lefebure 161). Lacking their own permanent residence, Robert Southey believed his wife would benefit from being close to her sisters during her time of mourning. Also, he thought that the presence of the infant Sara Coleridge would help her to overcome the loss of their child. His plan was less successful than he hoped; the presence of an infant at Greta Hall only served to remind the Southeys of their loss (Storey 160). Southey's September 8, 1803 letter to his brother Tom, written just one day after the Southey's arrived at Keswick, expresses the pain the couple faced in their new home:

> We arrived yesterday. Yours reached me today. I was glad to hear from you;—a first letter after such a loss is always expected with some sort of fear,—it is the pulling off the bandage that has been put upon a green wound. . . . Here my spirits suffer from the sight of little Sara, who is about her size. However, God knows that I do not repine, and that in my very soul I feel that his will is best. . . . Would that you could see these lakes and mountains! how wonderful they are! how aweful in their beauty. All the poet-part of me will be fed and fostered here. I feel already in tune, and shall proceed to my work with such a feeling of power as old Sampson had when he laid hold of the pillars of the Temple of Dagon. (*Life and Correspondence* 226, 227-8)

Indeed, with four children living in Greta Hall, the Southeys could not escape their grief at being childless. However, Southey found consolation in his surroundings and, like Coleridge, he believed that the beautiful countryside could be beneficial to his literary output. He could not have guessed that he and his family would remain in this beautiful setting for the next forty years (Carnall par. 14).

The presence of Robert Southey, Edith, and Mary at Greta Hall eased many of the tensions that had previously existed in the household and allowed Mrs. Coleridge to recover from the strains of her marriage. Furthermore, it enabled her to enjoy the presence of society though her husband was away. With the Southeys as residents of Greta Hall, she could play hostess to a variety of visitors and accept invitations to visit people with them. This new found freedom benefitted Mrs. Coleridge's overall health

and well-being; she regained a healthy figure, and her sparkling eyes were admired by many (Lefebure 168).

As residents of Greta Hall, or "Aunt Hill," as it would later be nicknamed, the Southeys, Mrs. Lovell, and Mrs. Coleridge all shared parenting responsibilities. Robert Southey quickly found himself acting as a father to S. T. C.'s children and making decisions that his brother-in-law neglected. From a letter postmarked to Mrs. George Coleridge, sister-in-law of Mrs. Sara Coleridge, on September 1, 1804, we learn that Hartley had been enrolled at a day school in Keswick (165). The decision to send Hartley, now approaching eight years of age, to school was no doubt encouraged by Robert Southey, who may have felt that his nephew needed a formal education to supplement the so-called "experimental" education he received from his father. Also, the decision does not seem to have been influenced by Coleridge's wishes, as the family received infrequent word from him and his letters were focused more on his own difficulties as opposed to domestic concerns and the welfare of his children.

The Southey family added to its numbers during the first year of their residence in Keswick; Edith May Southey was born to the couple on April 30, 1804. The company at Greta Hall was now a happy little domestic circle complete with a father figure, mother figures, and young children. Southey, whom scholars have described as a family man, thrived in his position as the head of this large household. He enjoyed playing with his children (Storey 181) and composed works for them, including "The Story of the Three Bears" and "The Cataract of Lodore." In the latter piece, Southey provides a lyrical description of how the water comes down at Lodore for his children:

> thumping and plumping and bumping and jumping,
> And dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing;

> And so never ending but always descending,
> Sounds and motions for ever and ever are blending,
> All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar,
> And this is the way the Water comes down at Lodore. (116-121)

Both tales show Southey's understanding of the minds of children and his ability to communicate with them in a descriptive and captivating way.

Besides being a happy family home, "Aunt Hill" housed a rigorous school to educate its growing number of children. Mrs. Coleridge describes the school in a letter to Thomas Poole, dated February 1814:

> we keep regular School from ½ past nine until 4 with the exception of an hour for walking and an half hour for dressing—Mrs. Lovel keeps school in a small room for English and Latin—and the writing and figures—french—italian &c are done with me in the *dining room* with the assistance of Aunt Eliza—and Southey teaches his wife and daughters to read spanish in the . . ? . . and his son Greek—should we not all be very learned! —At Miss Barkers are displayed accomplishments of a different kind—she is a proficient in drawing—plays pretty well at the Harp & Harpsichord—& is (between ourselves) a bit of a poetess—now I give you full leave to laugh at this pompous description of our occupations. (*Minnow* 29)

While Mrs. Coleridge does make light of the ways in which the company at Great Hall occupies its time, we as distant observers need to realize that, joking aside, the school that Mrs. Coleridge describes is unique. The Coleridge, Southey, and Lovell children were taught by a group of exceptionally well educated sisters and a poet laureate, a fact that was unusual in itself.[5] Mrs. Coleridge also indicates that her sons were involved in teaching at Greta Hall; they assisted their sister in her studies when they were home on holidays (*Minnow* 20). The variety of subjects the children were taught is noteworthy. Furthermore, both boys and girls were instructed in academic subjects. At a time when a

[5] Robert Southey accepted the position of poet laureate in 1813 (Storey 223).

formal education was rarely accessible to females and deemed unnecessary by most, the school at Greta Hall represents progressive views on education and gender.

In 1805, Greta Hall finally received word from Coleridge that stated his intention to return to England in a short month's time. The residents eagerly awaited his arrival, having worried continuously about his safety during his absence due to the ongoing Napoleonic Wars on the continent, but he delayed his return until August 17, 1806. Once in England, he remained in London for a full two and a half months before he rejoined his old friends, the Wordsworths, in Kendal (Jones 145-6). They were taken aback by Coleridge's appearance, who clearly had not recovered from his opium addiction during his travels. During their meeting, Coleridge revealed his intention to separate from his wife and agreed to stay with the Wordsworths at Coleorton once he settled matters in Keswick (Jones 146).[6]

Meanwhile, Mrs. Coleridge, who was likely happy to hear about her husband's safe return, waited patiently for him to come back to Greta Hall. Her happiness quickly turned to sorrow when, upon his arrival, Coleridge informed her of his intention to leave and take Hartley and Derwent with him. She was shocked as Coleridge had given her no indication in his letters that he wished to leave her; on the contrary, he only expressed his desire to return home and be with his family again (Lefebure 172). Yet upon his return to England, Coleridge held a different view of domestic life, telling his friends that he could not bear to live with his wife any longer (Jones 146). By the end of November 1806, the couple came to an agreement on the terms of their separation. Hartley and Derwent were to live with their father the majority of the time and visit their mother occasionally, and

[6] The Wordsworth family stayed at a farm house in Coleorton from October of 1806 to June of 1807. During Coleridge's stay with the family, Wordsworth read his recently completed poetic work, *The Prelude,* to his ailing friend (Page par. 37).

Sara was to remain with Mrs. Coleridge (Jones 147). Shortly thereafter, Coleridge and Hartley left Greta Hall to live with the Wordsworths at Coleorton; Derwent remained with his mother at Greta Hall (Lefebure 174). Eventually, Coleridge sent both his sons to school in Ambleside and chose to take up residence in Grasmere with the Wordsworth family (Storey 192).

Robert Southey offered his opinion of the Coleridge separation in a letter to his friend, John Rickman, dated April 1807.[7] In the letter, he confirms the rumors that Coleridge was to separate from his wife and states,

> The seperation is a good thing—his habits are so murderous of all domestic comfort that I am only surprized Mrs. C. is not rejoiced at being rid of him. He besots himself with opium, or with spirits, till his eyes look like a Turks who is half reduced to idiotcy by the practice—he calls up the servants at all hours of the night to prepare food for him—he does in short all things at all times except the proper time—does nothing which he ought to do, and every thing which he ought not. (*New Letters* 1: 448)

Southey goes on to relate Coleridge's plan to live with the Wordsworths and states his belief that they contributed to the downfall of his brother-in-law. Unlike the Wordsworths, Southey holds no illusions regarding the behavior of Coleridge. Fond as he is of his old friend, he does not care to endure the turmoil Coleridge causes when he resides in Greta Hall. Southey rightly holds S. T. C. accountable for the troubles in his marriage and blames him for the needed separation.

The Coleridges' marital strife made it necessary for Robert Southey to decide if Greta Hall was to be his family's permanent home. He wrote to his brother, Thomas Southey, on February 25, 1807, saying,

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[7] John Rickman befriended Robert Southey in 1797. His position as a statistician made him a valuable friend to Southey. Rickman provided him with much of the data he used in his articles for the *Quarterly Review.* Also, Southey's piece on the poor laws in the April 1818 edition of the *Quarterly Review* primarily consisted of Rickman's work (Eastwood par. 5).

> Some arrangements of Coleridges rendered it necessary that I should either fix upon quitting this place—or retaining the house—the last suited me best, and my mind is made up to continue here indefinitely—indeed I know not what could ever induce me to leave this country, unless it were to remove to Lisbon, for the longer I stay the better I like it. Oh that you could see it in snow and sunshine! and in snow and moonlight!—it is even more beautiful than in the finest autumnal evening. We are going to paper the parlour with cartridge paper, to have the abominable curtains there died a deep blue, and to fringe them. To buy a carpet and white curtains for my study—which is of course to be ceiled and plastered—and to have my books round by sea. The outside of the house is to be finished, the walk up the garden is gravelling at this time, with such gravel as is to be got—which is the soil of the river, and I mean to plant some trees which will shut out the lower end of the town, if not in my time, in somebody elses. Every thing is to be made decent, and my study beautiful. Think of the joy it will be to arrange my books, and see them all together, and worship them every day! (*New Letters* 1: 438)

In 1809, Robert Southey further secured his family's position at Greta Hall by signing a twenty-one year lease on the property after the death of the landlord, William Jackson (Speck 136). Thus, the Southeys, who had been drawn into Coleridge family drama when they accepted an invitation to stay with the Coleridges, found themselves in a new position. They now played host to Mrs. Coleridge and her children and occasionally welcomed S. T. C. as a visitor. Consequently, Mrs. Coleridge was no longer the mistress of the house. She was fully dependent on the support of her brother-in-law and sister to make ends meet. Indeed, this was an uncomfortable and even humiliating position for the proud mother of three to be in, but she accepted her fate without complaint, having few options as a woman separated from her addict husband.

After deciding to leave his wife, Coleridge made few appearances at Greta Hall. He and Hartley reunited with the family in June 1807 in order to pay a visit to Thomas Poole and the Ottery Coleridges. While they enjoyed the company of Poole, the family did not end up visiting Coleridge's relatives (Lefebure 182); prior to their arrival, Coleridge felt it necessary to inform his brother, George, of the state of his domestic

affairs (*CL* 3: 7-8). George did not find his brother's claims of incompatibility with Mrs. Coleridge to be a satisfactory reason for separation and urged his brother not to behave rashly. He also informed Coleridge that illness had taken over the family home and that, given both of their circumstances, the family could not be received (*CL* 3: 8n1). Coleridge's next visit to Greta Hall occurred in autumn 1808. The visit was necessitated by Mrs. Wordsworth's confinement and the birth of Catharine Wordsworth. When Coleridge left Greta Hall and returned to Allan Bank, he took his daughter, Sara, with him. The trip was difficult for the five year old girl, who had seen very little of her father during her short life (Lefebure 191).

S. T. C.'s next stay at Greta Hall began in May 1810 and lasted for five months. Once again, a desire to see his family does not seem to have been the motivating factor for S. T. C.'s return. He had been staying with the Wordsworths up to this point, and his once sympathetic friends were now beginning to understand the depth and nature of his opium addiction. Unlike Mrs. Coleridge, they did not treat the situation with delicacy and discussed S. T. C.'s behavior with mutual friends. Coleridge became aware of the situation after speaking with Basil Montagu, one of these friends. He was deeply hurt by the behavior of the Wordsworths and later returned to Greta Hall (Beer, "Coleridge" par. 48). Mrs. Coleridge described the experience of having her husband home again in a letter to Thomas Poole, dated August 3, 1810. She complained that he did not seem to occupy his time with writing, though he claimed otherwise. She did, however, concede that

> he has been in almost uniform kind disposition towards us all during his residence here; and all Southey's friends who have been here this Summer have thought his presence a great addition to the society here; and have all been uniformly great admirers of his conversation: his spirits too, are in

> general better than I have known them for years, and I cannot divine the reason of his passing his hours in so unprofitable [a] manner. (*Minnow* 11-12)

Coleridge's good attitude most likely can be attributed to his change in environment. We can speculate that he was beginning to realize that his home at Greta Hall was not as disagreeable as he once believed it to be. Furthermore, by this point in time Mr. Jackson, the landlord of Greta Hall, had died, and Mrs. Coleridge had taken up residence in his portion of the home, thus ensuring that the two would not cross paths as often as they would were she living in the main portion of the home. Also, Coleridge's falling out with the Wordsworths may have given him new insight into his relationship with Mrs. Coleridge. Though he once claimed that she was unsympathetic and unloving, she never exposed her husband's shortcomings to the censure of the world. To borrow Mrs. Coleridge's words, her husband learned

> that even his dearest & most indulgent friends, even those very persons who have been the great means of his self-indulgence, when he comes to live *wholly* with them, are *as* clear-sighted to his failings, & much *less* delicate in speaking of them, than his Wife, who being the Mother of his children, even if she had not the slightest regard for himself, would naturally feel a reluctance to the exposing of his faults. (*Minnow* 16)

Unfortunately for the Coleridge family, this lesson came far too late to salvage their marriage and create peace in their home. Fifteen years had passed since their wedding day, and those years had been filled with discord that could not be remedied.

Coleridge's 1810 visit to Greta Hall was to be his last. During the family's residence there, the children, who were at the time ages thirteen, nine, and six, had seen their father infrequently. Derwent and Sara in particular, who were both born at Greta Hall, experienced their childhood while their father was away from home. Coleridge's influence on the lives of all three children can best be described as being limited to the

turmoil his presence created during his stays at Greta Hall. All of the children were affected by Coleridge's ever-shifting moods and opium abuse. Hartley suffered the most on this account. They also suffered as a result of his inability to support his family. Mrs. Coleridge received half of her husband's annuity from the Wedgewood family, but it was not enough to cover all of the family's expenses. Furthermore, Coleridge was notorious for telling his wife he would complete various projects and then failing to do so. Mrs. Coleridge relied on Robert Southey to provide the remaining funds so that her family could survive.

We must remember this picture of Samuel Taylor Coleridge when we talk about the children of the great poet, for this is the man and father that they knew. This Coleridge made the immediate impression on their lives and formation. We must also remember the other poet in the lives of Hartley, Derwent, and Sara, their uncle, Robert Southey. Southey assumed the fatherly duties that Coleridge was incapable of performing. Southey ensured that his brother-in-law's children were educated and exposed them to great thinkers and writers of the day. And Southey provided financial support for Coleridge's family, saving them from destitution and enabling them to live comfortably. From this perspective of the Coleridge family, we can examine the life and work of Hartley, Derwent, and Sara Coleridge once again, re-evaluating the assumptions of family influence that have filled earlier biographies.

CHAPTER THREE

Hartley Coleridge, the "Child of Romanticism"

Hartley Coleridge, the eldest son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, has attracted some limited scholarly attention over the years, primarily due to his noteworthy familial ties. As the son of a poet whom many regard as a genius and the nephew of the beloved poet laureate, Robert Southey, scholars would naturally expect that some of their talent would rub off on Hartley, who was raised and educated by both men. Their expectations, however, have not been satisfied; scholars have determined that Hartley Coleridge's literary output is not on par with his famous relatives and have overlooked much of his work as a result.

Hartley was born on September 19, 1796, at the Coleridge residence in Bristol.[1] At the time of his birth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was in Birmingham attempting to secure much needed employment with the Lloyd family as the tutor of their twenty-one year old son, Charles.[2] Mrs. Coleridge, who believed she would not deliver the child for several more weeks, approved of the trip but, to her surprise, went into labor two days after her husband left and was compelled to deliver the child alone as neither the nurse nor the doctor could reach her in time (Lefebure 79-80).

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[1] Hartley Coleridge's full name was David Hartley Coleridge. S. T. C. chose to name his son after the famous philosopher because he revered his ideas. However, at the time of his son's baptism in 1803, his enthusiasm for Hartley's ideas had waned, and so the child's name was shortened to Hartley (Griggs *HC* 4).

[2] Charles Lloyd (1775-1839) was the son of Charles Lloyd Sr. and Mary Farmer. Charles Lloyd Sr. was a Quaker philanthropist and banker who sought a private education for his son and hoped he would enter the family business. Lloyd Jr. did not enjoy banking, however, and pursued poetry instead. He met Coleridge in 1796 and was immediately attracted to his conversational talents. Lloyd Jr. lived with the Coleridges from the end of 1796 to the summer of 1797 (Garnett par. 1).

The arrival of Hartley Coleridge was a momentous occasion in the life of his father. Earl Leslie Griggs describes Samuel Taylor Coleridge's attention to his son as "far exceed[ing] that of the usual father" (*HC* 2). Indeed, Coleridge felt a greater attachment to his eldest son than to any of his subsequent children and, as a result, Hartley enjoyed (or suffered, depending on one's perspective) the intensity of his father's affection. Coleridge related his impressions regarding the surprising news of the birth of his first child in a letter to Thomas Poole:

> I was quite annihilated with the suddenness of the information—and retired to my room to address myself to my Maker—but I could only offer up to him the silence of stupefied Feelings.—I hastened home & Charles Lloyd returned with me.——When I first saw the Child, I did not feel that thrill & overflowing of affection which I expected——I looked on it with a melancholy gaze—my mind was intensely contemplative & my heart only sad.—But when two hours after, I saw it at the bosom of it's Mother; on her arm; and her eye tearful & watching it's little features, then I was thrilled & melted, & gave it the Kiss of a FATHER.— (*CL* 1: 236)

Coleridge is clearly dumbstruck by the birth of his son and at a loss at how to react to him. These feelings do not last long. Hartley soon became a project of sorts for his father, and he proved to be a point of inspiration for the young poet.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's notebooks indicate that he viewed his son as an object of research or study. There, one finds his observations of Hartley in an entry entitled "Infancy & Infants":

> 1. The first smile—what kind of *reason* it displays—the first smile after sickness.—
> 2. Asleep with the polyanthus held fast in its hand, its bells drooping over the rosy face.
> 3. Stretching after the stars.—
> 4. Seen asleep by the light of glowworms.
> 5. Sports of infants—their incessant activity, the *means* being the end.—Nature how lovely a school-mistress—A blank-verse, moral poem—[. . .]

> 9. An infant's prayer in its mother's Lap. (mother directing a Baby's hand. Hartley's love to Papa—scrawls pothooks, & reads what he *meant* by them.—) (*Notebooks* 330)

On one level, Coleridge's observations reveal the wonder and awe with which he observed his firstborn son. He seems compelled to capture even the minutest parts of Hartley's day on the page. But these notes also indicate a certain amount of detachment between father and son. Coleridge is not a participant in the activities of his infant son; rather, he is the distant observer collecting data that will tell him about the nature of childhood. Such distance does not necessarily suggest that S. T. C. did not love his son, but it does show that that he could separate himself from the duties of fatherhood and simply observe his child as he would any child. The fact that Coleridge's remarks on Hartley are interspersed with general observations of other infants further solidifies this point (*Notebooks* 330). Nevertheless, Samuel Taylor Coleridge does play the part of the doting father as well. On February 9, 1797, he writes to John Thelwall: "We are *very* happy—& my little David Hartley grows a sweet boy—& has high health—he laughs at us till he makes us weep for very fondness.—You would smile to see my eye rolling up to the ceiling in a Lyric fury, and on my knee a *Diaper* pinned, to warm" (*CL* 1: 308).[3] These are the words of a father who is infatuated with, not detached from, his child. Hence, a clear contradiction in behavior is present when one examines the manner in which Samuel Taylor Coleridge describes Hartley.

[3] John Thelwall (1764-1834) was a writer, lecturer, and political reformer. He had much in common with Coleridge, and the two became friends through correspondence between the years of 1796 and 1797 (Roe par. 7). Thelwall visited Coleridge and the Wordsworths in July of 1797. Coleridge described him in the following manner: "a very warm hearted honest man—and disagreeing, as we do, on almost every point of religion, of morals, of politics, and of philosophy; we like each other uncommonly well—He is a great favorite with Sara. *Energetic Activity*, of *mind* and of *heart*, is his Master-feature. He is prompt to *conceive*, and still prompter to *execute*—. But I think, that he is deficient in that *patience* of mind, which can look *intensely* and *frequently* at the *same subject*. He believes and disbelieves with impassioned confidence——I wish to see him *doubting* and *doubting*. However, he is the man for *action*—he is intrepid, eloquent, and—honest" (*CL* 1: 339). Overall, this was high praise from Coleridge.

Three months after the birth of Hartley, the Coleridge family moved to Nether Stowey to be closer to their good friend, Thomas Poole. During this time, Coleridge began and completed some of his greatest poetic works, including "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "Kubla Khan," and "Christabel." The latter poem contains references to the child, Hartley. In the conclusion, Coleridge writes,

> A little child, a limber elf,
> Singing, dancing to itself,
> A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
> That always finds, and never seeks,
> Makes such a vision to the sight
> As fills a father's eyes with light;
> And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
> Upon his heart, that he at last
> Must needs express his love's excess
> With words of unmeant bitterness. (*SPP* 644-653)[4]

S. T. C. often used similar terms to describe Hartley in his correspondence. He describes him to Thelwall as "a fairy elf—all life, all motion—indefatigable in joy—a spirit of Joy dancing on an Aspen Leaf. From morning to night he whirls about, whisks, whirls, and eddies, like a blossom in a May-breeze" (*CL* 2: 668). A virtually identical comment on Hartley appears in an earlier letter written to Humphry Davy: "Hartley is a spirit that dances on an aspin leaf . . . . Never was more joyous creature born" (1: 612).[5] Coleridge interjects his perspective of his own son into "Christabel" here. Furthermore, he uses his experience as a father to identify with the hurt Sir Leoline feels towards the

[4] These lines also appear in a letter Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote to Robert Southey on May 6, 1801. They immediately follow a description of Hartley Coleridge and his health (*CL* 2: 728).

[5] Humphry Davy (1778-1829) was a chemist and one of the most important scientists of his day. In addition to science, he had literary interests and was a writer himself. His first poems were published in the *Annual Anthology* in 1799 by Robert Southey (Knight par. 4). Around this time, Davy found himself in Bristol working at the Pneumatic Institution. He was a part of the literary circles there and met Joseph Cottle, who was publishing the work of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. He soon befriended Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who assisted him with his experiments on nitrous oxide. Testimony from Coleridge and others was collected in Davy's first book, *Researches, Chemical and Philosophical, Chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide*, in which he described the potential for using the gas as an anesthetic in minor surgery (par. 11, 13).

end of the unfinished poem. Sir Leoline loves his daughter deeply, but having been enchanted by Geraldine, his love for his daughter falls victim to Geraldine's spell, and he is unkind to his only child. The conclusion serves as Coleridge's attempt to understand how a father could respond with bitterness towards a beloved child and may even reveal what Coleridge understood to be some of his shortcomings as a father.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge also wrote two of his most moving conversational poems while living in Nether Stowey, both of which contain direct references to Hartley. For example, in "Frost at Midnight" (1798), Coleridge observes his cottage while his family rests, and his infant, Hartley, is at his side. Coleridge's attention is drawn to the dying fire before him and the film that flutters on the grate. This image triggers Coleridge's memory, taking him back to his childhood schoolhouse, where, staring into the fire, he daydreamed about his home and his family outside of the schoolhouse walls.[6] After recalling his daydreams, Coleridge addresses his son directly:

> Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
> Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
> Fill up the interspersèd vacancies
> And momentary pauses of the thought!
> My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
> With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
> And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
> And in far other scenes! For I was reared
> In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
> And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
> But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
> By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
> Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
> Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
> And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
> The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible

[6] Born in 1772 in Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was enrolled in Christ's Hospital in London after his father's death. He was just ten years old at the time, and the move was difficult for him as it enveloped him in the inhospitable world of a metropolitan city, a far cry from the natural scenery he enjoyed with his father prior to his death (McKusick par. 5-6).

> Of that eternal language, which thy God
> Utters, who from eternity doth teach
> Himself in all, and all things in himself.
> Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
> Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask. (*SPP* 44-64)

Coleridge finds comfort in the fact that his son will not experience childhood as he did, in the harsh environment of the city. Rather, Hartley will be able to enjoy the wonders of the natural world that surround Nether Stowey, a scenic village nestled at the foot of the Quantock Hills. The choice to live in such a location was intentional on the part of Coleridge. He felt it necessary to raise his children away from the confines of the city, as he indicates in a letter addressed to Charles Lloyd Sr. dated October 15, 1796: "I am anxious that my children should be bred up from earliest infancy in the simplicity of peasants, their food, dress, and habits completely rustic" (*CL* 1: 240). Coleridge sees his son's living situation as advantageous, for it will allow him to better hear the voice of God by placing him closer to the natural world. This, in turn, will help Hartley to become an avid pupil of the "Great universal Teacher" and be molded by him.

Coleridge expresses similar sentiments regarding the potential for Hartley's education through experiencing the natural world in "The Nightingale" (1798). There, he notes that his son would bid him listen to the nightingale's song by placing his small hand to his ear (91-6). Coleridge continues:

> And I deem it wise
> To make him Nature's play-mate. He knows well
> The evening-star; and once, when he awoke
> In most distressful mood (some inward pain
> Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream—)
> I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
> And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
> Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
> While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,
> Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well!—

> It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
> Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
> Familiar with these songs, that with the night
> He may associate joy. (*SPP* 96-109)

The comfort that Coleridge experiences by knowing that his son will grow up among picturesque images in "Frost at Midnight" becomes a driving force for him in "The Nightingale." Here, he asserts a direct wish to use these scenes to educate his son, in essence, to make him a child of nature. He uses a specific example of how the moon comforted a distressed Hartley to indicate that his young son, just two years of age, has already learned to receive comfort from nature. He further hopes, in the context of "The Nightingale," that the bird's song, which so often has been linked to melancholy scenes by other poets, will become a song of joy for Hartley, and Coleridge will teach him to view it in this positive light.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's feelings about the need to educate his son through nature were more than just a momentary poetic expression. He strongly believed that his child should receive an education founded upon nature. As "Frost at Midnight" suggests, we can trace his impulse back to his education at Christ's Hospital. Edmund Blunden states in "Coleridge and Christ's Hospital," "Through the wide calm air, he felt his early days at Christ's Hospital again, his blue clothes, his stern isolation from the home affections; he would have his child grow free and rich in Nature's love" (65). Indeed, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's education at Christ's Hospital could best be described as rigorous. Years after leaving the school, he recalled the educational practices of his Head Master, Rev. James Bowyer, in *Biographia Literaria.* In addition to developing Coleridge's literary tastes, Rev. Bowyer taught him the logic of poetry and appropriate word choice in his own compositions (*SPP* 112). According to Coleridge, "certain

introductions, similes, and examples, were placed by name on a list of interdiction" (*SPP* 112). Bowyer would submit his students' exercises to close scrutiny; after having collected several lessons from a student, Bowyer would question the boy on the appropriateness of individual sentences used to advance a particular thesis. If the student failed to provide a satisfactory response, the lessons would be destroyed, and the student would have to produce another composition on the same topic in addition to any other work that had been assigned (113).

The challenging circumstances the schoolboys experienced extended beyond educational practices; records indicate that they lived under harsh physical conditions as well. In Charles Lamb's essay, "Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago," Lamb provides a veiled commentary on his own work, "Recollections of Christ's Hospital." [7] While the first essay paints a favorable picture of the school, the second discusses the darker aspects of life for a student at Christ's Hospital. He describes the food available to the children there as being tasteless and even repugnant, while the portions were lacking. Only those students whose relatives lived nearby and who cared enough to stop by daily were well fed (406). Discipline at the school was severe. Lamb recollects being woken up and standing in the cold wearing just his nightshirt in order to receive a whipping for talking after going to bed (407-8). Such punishment generally fell upon the younger students, who often suffered for misdeeds they did not commit. As a result, the younger students learned to go without necessities like sitting by a warm fire in the winter or

[7] Charles Lamb attended Christ's Hospital from October of 1782 to November 1789 (Courtney par. 3).

enjoying a drink of water on a summer evening so as to avoid being beaten (Lamb 408).[8] Students who misbehaved also faced a series of punishments. Those guilty of a first offense were placed in fetters (409). A second offense merited a stay in the dungeon, where the boy was left in near darkness and solitude. A third offense resulted in a harsh beating in front of the whole school (410).

This picture of life at Christ's Hospital stands in stark contrast to the education Samuel Taylor Coleridge wished to bestow upon Hartley. For Hartley, he desired an intimate experience of nature, as opposed to a stern classroom environment cut off from family and natural forms from which his son could be educated. John Beer describes S. T. C.'s vision for his son's education in "Ice and Spring: Coleridge's Imaginative Education." Referring to "Frost at Midnight," Beer states, "that train of thought prompts him to project an upbringing for the baby by his side that will fill up the defects of his own early education and teach him, by Wordsworthian methods, to understand the wholeness of nature, seeing it as a revelation of the nature of the God that moves in it" (75). Like all parents, Coleridge hopes to give his son the life he did not have as a child, the life of a child of nature, unencumbered by the hustle and bustle of the city and free to roam the world about him. Coleridge and other Romantic poets viewed the child's connection to nature as the cornerstone of education. Judith Plotz describes the Romantic view of education in "The Perpetual Messiah: Romanticism, Childhood, and the Paradoxes of Human Development." She states that for the Romantics, education

> demands the maximum preservation rather than the maximum obliteration of childhood experience. The Romantics hold human perfection to abide in that adult who remains most in touch with his childhood self, who enters, in DeQuincey's fine phrase, 'upon the whole of his natural

[8] These punishments were experienced by children who were quite young. Lamb himself was only seven years old when he entered the school (Lamb 409).

> inheritance.' Such continuity of consciousness and capacity is crucial to adult fullness of being. To be able to grow up without destroying or maiming the child in oneself is to become the best sort of adult. (Plotz 68)

Such an education is achieved through access to the natural order. Plotz notes that Romantic writers at all stages of the movement agree that children should be allowed to absorb all they can from the world around them, including concrete objects, sights, and sounds. The easiest and perhaps most effective way for a child to be exposed to this world, according to the Romantics, was through play. Hence, both Coleridge and Wordsworth advocated idleness for children as an educational goal (83).

Coleridge's perspective on the connection between nature and education is revealed in his letters. In a letter to William Godwin dated September 22, 1800, he described his son in the following terms:

> I look at my doted-on Hartley—he moves, he lives, he finds impulses from within and from without—he is the darling of the Sun and of the Breeze! Nature seems to bless him as a thing of her own! He looks at the clouds, the mountains, the living Beings of the Earth, & vaults & jubilates! Solemn Looks & solemn Words have been hitherto connected in his mind with great & magnificent objects only—with lightning, with thunder, with the waterfall blazing in the Sunset (*CL* 1: 625)

Perhaps Coleridge had his own childhood in mind when he refers to the "Solemn Looks & solemn Words" Hartley had only experienced as a product of the natural world and he experienced as a matter of course during his own education. In this letter, S. T. C. expresses clear satisfaction with the quality of his son's interactions with nature at this early stage in his childhood. Through interactions such as these, Coleridge believed his son could gain an education. Even an activity as simple as spending time outdoors could provide the foundation for an educational experience. In his notebooks, Coleridge writes:

> Ants having dim notions of the architecture of the whole System of the world, & imitating it, according to their notion in their ant-heaps—& even these little Ant-heaps no uncomely parts of that great architecture—

> Hartley's intense wish to have Ant-heaps near our house / his *Brahman* love & awe of Life / N.B. to commence his Education with natural History— (*Notebooks* 959)

One can imagine S. T. C. roaming around the vegetable gardens at Greta Hall with Hartley, searching for whatever they can find that will capture their attention and imaginations. They encountered ant hills, extraordinary feats of engineering, and by observing them and his son, Coleridge discovered that his young son had a worshipful attitude towards nature and life. He wanted to foster Hartley's connection with nature and began to map out a course for his instruction.

But when one attempts to gain a clearer picture of what exactly this course of instruction was to contain, or how it was to unfold, many difficulties arise. As with many other endeavors in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's life, planning for Hartley's education was a project S. T. C. did not complete. The one formal step Coleridge made for Hartley's education—writing a Greek Grammar—is a fragmentary work. Beyond this text, little evidence exists to show that S. T. C. was serious about educating his son (*HC* 41-2). Nevertheless, Hartley did receive a rudimentary education from his father. Hartley shared his father's love of Greek, and by the time he left Keswick to attend Merton College, Oxford, Robert Southey commented that he had "Greek enough for a whole college" (*Letters by Robert Southey* 112). Hartley also enjoyed reading; by his own account, he enjoyed the Bible, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and stories of adventure and fantasy (*HC* 46). However, it seems that the act of reading was distasteful to him, at least during part of his childhood. In a letter to Sarah Hutchinson, we learn that Hartley told his father, "I love the sweet Birds & the Flowers, & Derwent, and Thinking; & . . . I hate Reading, & being wise, & being Good" (*CL* 2: 804). We may also consider Hartley's observations of nature during excursions or times of play as a part of his education.

Though not generally considered part of education proper, to the Romantics, these experiences provided the best educational opportunities. S. T. C. often supervised Hartley during such occasions and helped to shape Hartley's experience of and thoughts about the world around him. According to Coleridge, "Play fellows are burthensome to him [Hartley] / excepting *me* / because I can understand & sympathize with, his wild Fancies—& suggest others of my own" (*CL* 2: 804). Regardless of his inability to provide Hartley with a clear plan for an education, Samuel Taylor Coleridge did play a significant role in shaping the mental landscape of his young son.

The loose character of young Hartley's early education did have its drawbacks, though. He was slow to learn to read and write, but his father attributed this to his son's genius:

> Hartley is considered as a Genius by Wordsworth, & Southey—indeed, by every one who has seen much of him—/ but (what is of much more consequence, & much less doubtful) he has the sweetest Temper & the most awakened moral Feelings of any Child I ever saw. He is very backward in his Book-learning—cannot write at all, and a very lame Reader. We have never been anxious about it, taking it for granted that loving me & seeing how I love books, he would come to it of his own accord. And so it has proved. For in the last month he has made more progress than in all his former life. Having learnt every thing almost from the mouths of People, whom he loves, he has connected with his Words & notions a Passion & a Feeling which would appear strange to those who had seen no Children but such as had been taught almost every thing in Books. (*CL* 2: 1022)

At the time this letter was written, Hartley was seven years old, and he was behind his peers in the areas of reading and writing. Coleridge's commentary on the matter reveals his nonchalant attitude towards his son's formal education. He was content as long as his

son was moral, passionate, and good natured.[9] But he was also willing to look the other way when Hartley's behavior conflicted with what other people considered to be appropriate conduct for children. For example, Hartley once struck William Godwin with a ninepin during his visit to the Coleridge home in London. His actions earned Mrs. Coleridge a lecture on childrearing, but S. T. C. dismissed Hartley's actions as boisterous behavior that children engage in (*CL* 1: 553). Coleridge also brushed over Hartley's tendency to throw tantrums in a letter he wrote to prepare Hartley for a visit to his uncle, George Coleridge. In the postscript to the letter, Coleridge states, "I have not spoken about your mad passions, and frantic Looks & pout-mouthing; because I trust, that is all over" (*CL* 3: 11). While he trusts that his ten year old son no longer falls victim to his own fits of passion, he does emphasize Hartley's tendency to "shov[e] aside all disagreeable reflections, or los[e] them in a labyrinth of day-dreams," which, according to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, has led to Hartley's habits of procrastination. Coleridge also warns Hartley against performing a number of "bad habits" that Uncle George would consider "gross Deviations from what is right and proper" (10). Perhaps S. T. C. was willing to overlook aspects of Hartley's behavior because they were so similar to his own habits. This may also explain why he was adamant about warning Hartley against these same behaviors, like his procrastination.

The degree of praise Hartley received for his intelligence, combined with the areas of his education where he lagged behind and the amount of latitude he was given by the adults responsible for him also reveals another element of his childhood—he was quite spoiled. While not a surprising point, we need to take this into account as we

[9] By contrast, Mrs. Coleridge was uneasy about her firstborn's debility in this area and expressed surprise that Wordsworth and Southey were not more concerned about his academic performance ("Letter to the wife of Rev. Geo Coleridge," 1 Mar. 1805).

examine the early life of Hartley Coleridge, for the indulgence he received in childhood lasted well into his teenage and even adult years. Consequently, Hartley's reaction to various situations and trials in his life are colored by his pampered childhood.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's desires for his son's education by nature ultimately fell victim to the volatile structure of the Coleridge marriage and household. No one could escape from the tensions in the home or the horror of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's opium addiction, not even a young boy who could not fully understand what was going on around him. Hartley understood enough to sense that his father was suffering under a severe amount of distress, primarily because Coleridge took out this distress on him. S. T. C. was not unaware of the effect his deteriorating relationship with his wife had on Hartley. In a letter written to Robert Southey in 1801, Coleridge discusses Hartley's reaction after receiving coins to put in his pockets:

> He ran to & fro in a sort of dance to the Jingle of the Load of Money, that had been put in his breeches pockets; but he did [not] roll & tumble over and over in his old joyous way—No! it was an *eager* & solemn gladness, as if he felt it to be an awful aera in his Life.—O bless him! bless him! bless him! If my wife loved me, and I my wife, half as well as we both love our children, I should be the happiest man alive—but this is not—will not be!— (*CL* 2: 774-5)

Hartley was just five years old when his father wrote this letter. While it is clear that Coleridge understood that the quality of his marriage had far reaching implications, this knowledge did not encourage him to work harder on repairing his marriage or improving his relationship with Mrs. Coleridge. Rather, it seems to have had the opposite effect; instead of giving birth to action, it bred further dissatisfaction, namely with his role as a father. An early draft of "Dejection: An Ode," addressed to Sarah Hutchinson on April 4, 1802, reveals these sentiments:

My little Children are a Joy, a Love,
A good Gift from above!
But what is Bliss, that still calls up a Woe,
And makes it doubly keen
Compelling me to *feel*, as well as KNOW,
What a most blessed Lot mine might have been.
Those little Angel Children (woe is me!)
There have been hours, when feeling how they bind
And pluck out the Wing-feathers of my Mind,
Turning my Error to Necessity,
I have half-wish'd, they never had been born!
That seldom! But sad Thoughts they always bring,
And like the Poet's Philomel, I sing
My Love-song, with my breast against a Thorn. (*CL* 2: 797)

One may understand Coleridge's statement as an expression of longing that all parents feel at some stage while their children are young, a desire for a return to the life before the complications of parenthood began, a life where the parent had more freedom, more time, and fewer responsibilities. But in the case of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who addresses these words to Sarah Hutchinson, the woman he pined for, we have reason to be more cynical in our reading of his half-wish. What he describes instead seems to represent the deeper, true desires of his heart. Coleridge wanted a life of freedom that was conducive to his art and open to his whims. Such a life could not be obtained in the midst of household responsibilities and familial duties. To achieve this life, S. T. C. needed to be free to come and go as he pleased, to love whomever he wished, and to study in peace. His children served as a constant reminder that what he desired always would be out of his reach. Perhaps the tension that the Coleridge children stirred in their father provides further explanation for his seeming indifference towards them at various stages of their rearing.

Hartley, more than his siblings, was subject to the shifting moods and whims of his complicated father. On the one hand, he knew a loving father who doted on him and

watched his every move with wonder. On the other hand, he knew a volatile and absent father whose temper constantly fluctuated and who leapt at any chance to be freed from the burden of his family. As Hartley's childhood progressed, the latter father became the more familiar figure in his life. To cope, Hartley found refuge in an imaginary world of his own creation, a world he called "Ejuxria" (Lefebure 136). Derwent Coleridge provides a description of this fantasy world in his memoir on his brother's life:

> Taken as a whole, the Ejuxrian world presented a complete analogon to the world of fact, so far as it was known to Hartley, complete in all its parts; furnishing a theatre and scene of action, with *dramatis personae*, and suitable machinery, in which, day after day for the space of long years, he went on evolving the complicated drama of existence. There were many nations, continental and insular, each with its separate history, civil, ecclesiastical, and literary, its forms of religion and government and specific national character . . . . The names of generals and statesmen were "familiar to my [Derwent's] ears as household words". I witnessed the jar of faction, and had to trace the course of sedition. I lived to see changes of government, a great progress of public opinion, and a new order of things! ("Memoir" xxxvii-xxxix)

Ejuxria was an alternate reality for Hartley. In a world where he could not control the behavior of the adults around him, he could control the goings on in his imaginary world. Ejuxria allowed Hartley to escape from the arguments and erratic behavior that had become commonplace in Greta Hall. As Lefebure notes, Coleridge understood his son's seclusion as proof that he was a joyful, unique free thinker (136). To some extent, Coleridge's analysis is accurate, but he does not sense the necessity for his son's escape into another world, nor does he understand that Ejuxria gave Hartley a place of importance once again, but this time, it was as creator and story-teller, not beloved firstborn son. Derwent in particular was enchanted by his brother's make believe world. Hartley would proudly report, "I have had letters and papers from Ejuxria" and there and then provide his brother with information on the political and social happenings of his

world (Derwent Coleridge, "Memoir" xlv). At this young age, it seemed that Hartley would be a suitable heir of his father's literary talents.

Indeed, Hartley was to some degree an image of his father in the making. Thus, when his father chose to separate from his mother, the implications for Hartley were great. At the time of the initial separation, Coleridge chose to take his eldest son with him to Coleorton, where they would join the Wordsworths. They left in the fall of 1806, and the subsequent year, which father and son spent together, has been described by Derwent as Hartley's *annus mirabilis* ("Memoir" xxxi). During 1807, Hartley, his father, and the Wordsworths traveled to London. Hartley's time there made a great impression upon him; later in life, he wrote about the performances he saw there, his visit to the Tower of London with Sir Walter Scott, and the conversations on science and politics he listened to and participated in (*HC* 37, 39). But the year soon came to a close, and Hartley found himself back at Greta Hall with his mother, siblings, and extended family. Though Hartley had perhaps the greatest experiences of his life during his travels with his father, he likely was happy to return home. The situation at Coleorton must have been uncomfortable for the young child. He was surrounded by people who had little respect for his mother and were vocal about their opinions. Also, being with the Wordsworths put his father in close proximity to Sara Hutchinson, who, according to Lefebure, Hartley decided was the reason for the discord between his parents (181). Being with his father placed Hartley in yet another tense situation, only this time, he could not find refuge in the comforts of his own home.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge returned to Greta Hall only two more times after he and Hartley reunited with the rest of the family. Imagine the sense of abandonment the young

boy must have felt being left behind by the one person who seemed to understand his unusual behavior and personality. Consider also the sense of frustration felt by Mrs. Coleridge and Southey as they worked to put Hartley, the product of his father's singular views on education, on the path to adulthood. During what would become Coleridge's penultimate visit to Greta Hall, he and Mrs. Coleridge made plans to send both Hartley and Derwent to Rev. John Dawes' school in Ambleside (Lefebure 191). Thus, Hartley's formal education began at the age of eleven. Rev. Dawes' school was an ideal learning environment for Hartley. He and his brother lodged in the home of a Mrs. Longmire. There, Hartley had the freedom to play and explore that he had become accustomed to in Keswick (*HC* 48-9). Rev. Dawes was thrilled to have Hartley as one of his pupils; he even returned part of the funds the Coleridges paid for Hartley's schooling and asked S. T. C. if he could continue to instruct him without remuneration (*CL* 3: 289n 2). But like many teacher's pets, Hartley was a misfit in school. He has been described as making strange gestures and having involuntary eccentricities. He seems to have made up for these shortcomings through his gift of story-telling, which captivated his classmates as much as his stories of Ejuxria had captivated Derwent before their school days (Towle 104). Hartley's skills of story-telling did not ease Mrs. Coleridge's fears about him, however. She described him "flying about in the open air, and uttering his poetic fancies aloud," behavior that she knew would alienate her son should he continue to indulge in it (qtd. in *HC* 61). Those closest to Hartley worried about his ability to enter the world on his own.

We can attribute the eccentric nature of Hartley Coleridge the child in part to indulgences he received in his youth. Even apart from his family and close family

friends, he was admired and coddled by the adults responsible for him. Other children might be punished for the behavior that he displayed, but in Hartley, this behavior was considered to be a sign of his brilliance and was largely ignored. Attitudes towards Hartley during his childhood played a significant role in his adult life.

Hartley's education was further enhanced by two great literary minds. The first was William Wordsworth. Because Hartley's school was near the Wordsworth home, he and Derwent spent many weekends there. While there, Hartley had access to William Wordsworth's library, which afforded him ample material for study (Towle 104). The second influence on Hartley's learning was Robert Southey. In 1814, Hartley left Rev. Dawes' school and spent that year studying under the direction of his uncle. These studies were meant to prepare Hartley for life as a college student. Hartley was afforded the opportunity to attend university only through the kindness of friends and family, for his father had made no preparations for his son. Southey, acting *in loco parentis*, took up pen and paper and began soliciting funds for his nephew's education. He was able to cobble together enough funds from several contributors, including William Wordsworth, Basil Montagu, Thomas Poole, and the Ottery Coleridges, to send Hartley to Merton College, Oxford. The group was also able to secure a postmastership for him (*HC* 60).

On May 6, 1815, Hartley registered at Merton College. We know little about his life as an undergraduate because we have few extant materials on this time in his life, and he seems to have been cautious about sharing details regarding this subject. One important detail about his college life has been preserved: Hartley submitted a poem for the Newdigate prize for English verse during his first year as a Merton student. The poem was called "Horses of Lysippus," and it did not win the prize. Hartley was

stunned: “It was almost the only occasion in my life wherein I was keenly disappointed; for it was the only one upon which I felt any confident hope. I had made myself very sure of it, and the intelligence that not I, but Macdonald, was the lucky man, absolutely stupefied me” (“Memoir” lxxxiii). As Hartley’s words indicate, the loss affected him greatly. He tried for the prize two other times, but without success (*HC* 71). His continued inability to achieve success where he felt he had earned it dealt a major blow to his self-confidence. Hartley was unaccustomed to disappointment and failure. He had always been the *wunderkind* of the Coleridge family and, as far as he knew, could do no wrong. Learning otherwise at nineteen years of age proved to be a difficult pill to swallow.

Despite his difficulties to impress the Newdigate prize judges, Hartley did have a relatively successful college career. In 1818, he passed his examination for his degree, earning a second class *in literis humanioribus* (*HC* 72). After taking the exam, Hartley described his uneven performance on the exam to his uncle, George Coleridge:

> In my Logic, Latin composition, Aristotle, and most part of my history, I was respectable; in Divinity and Ethics perhaps rather above par; in my Sophocles I fail’d, chiefly from being put on in a misprinted passage—for the play was one I had studied with more than common attention. In Virgil I stumbled from mere confusion; the passage I had read, and that too carefully—fifty times at least. In Pindar I was not very far amiss; in the O-dyssee alone have real cause for shame, for to tell the truth, I took it up for a make-weight, in the expectation of not being put on it at all. My Iliad, Euripides, Aeschylus, and Horace, were given me on paper. I heard nothing how these were done, but I hope, respectably. (*Letters of Hartley Coleridge* 6)

According to reports by Derwent, there was some debate as to what degree to award Hartley. Some examiners were impressed by his talent and knowledge and wanted to award him a first class degree. Others found him to be deficient in his general scholarship and wished to award him a fourth class degree. If Derwent’s account is

accurate, it seems that Hartley received the second class degree based on a compromise between his examiners ("Memoir" lxxiii). We can agree with Andrew Keanie in noting that the irregularity of Hartley's performance was due, in part, to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's lax attitude towards his son's education (61). The following year, he was offered a Fellowship at Oriel College, much to the relief of his family and friends. It seemed as though they had overcome some of the deficiencies that Hartley had developed during the years he spent with his father. As Derwent reports, all shared in the celebration: "A proud and happy day it was for me, and for us all, when these tidings reached us. Obviously unfit for the ordinary walks of professional life, he had earned for himself an honourable independence, and had found, as it seemed, a position in which he could exert his peculiar talents to advantage" ("Memoir" lxxiii). Hartley, too, was proud of his accomplishment and even surprised that he had received the appointment: "Success has at length crown'd my literary labours, and I am fellow elect at Oriel. After five days strict examination, on Friday last the joyful tidings were announced that I was chosen. Nothing could have been more contrary to my expectation" (*Letters of Hartley Coleridge* 8). While uncertain of his abilities, thanks in part to his earlier collegiate failures, the recognition of others helped Hartley discover that he had valuable skills and talents.

Unfortunately, Hartley's eccentric behaviors cost him the Oriel Fellowship. The first misstep came when he was unable to prepare a student under his tutelage for his exams properly (*HC* 77). Also, his impulsive personality made him a misfit among the other Fellows at Oriel, so he sought the company of undergraduates instead (80). When among the other Fellows, he made the mistake of over-indulging in liquor. While not a habitual drinker, the occasions upon which he did succumb to indiscretion lost him the

respect of his peers (*HC* 83). Hartley furthered the Fellow's aversion to him by directing his attention to a young woman in town. College authorities did not believe a Fellow should be married or romantically involved, and even though Hartley's pursuits never culminated in a full-fledged romantic relationship, the situation was deemed inappropriate (79). Hence, on May 30, 1820, the authorities at Oriel College decided that they would not confirm Hartley as a fellow. Derwent records the incident:

> At the close of his probationary year he was judged to have forfeited his Oriel fellowship, on the ground, mainly, of intemperance. Great efforts were made to reverse the decision. He wrote many letters to many of the Fellows. His father went to Oxford to see and to expostulate with the Provost. It was in vain. The specific charges might have been exaggerated. Palliations and excuses might have been found for the particular instances in which they were established. A life singularly blameless in all other respects, dispositions the most amiable, principles and intentions themost upright and honourable, might be pleaded as a counterpoise in the opposite scale. It was to no purpose. ("Memoir" lxxiv-lxxv)

The loss of the Fellowship was a major disappointment to those closest to Hartley. Not only had he failed to maintain a respectable career, but he was also the first probationary fellow not to receive confirmation. The family tried in vain to have Hartley reinstated. Samuel Taylor Coleridge took up the cause himself, writing and visiting the Provost of the college. But the decision was made, and Hartley received £300 as a consolation (Keanie 70).

The testimony of the Fellows of Oriel College is revealing. It shows us that Hartley's behavior during his period of employment with the college did not befit his new station in life. At the time, Hartley laid the blame for his indiscretion on lack of guidance and mentorship while he was a probationary fellow, failing to recognize that he continued to behave as an undergraduate might (*Letters of Hartley Coleridge* 37). Though the Coleridge family believed that Hartley's "blameless" life should excuse his behavior and

demonstrate his value to the college, the Fellows of Oriel had reason to believe that Hartley could not uphold the college's standards and hence had reasonable grounds to deny him the fellowship. In this instance, the opinion the Coleridge family had of Hartley could not rectify the situation, and he was subject to the judgment of the outside world.

Hartley was devastated. He never fully recovered from his loss. In the words of Earl Leslie Griggs,

> the effect on poor Hartley was life-long. Never particularly sure of himself, inclined to believe himself the victim of an unhappy fate, he lost his hold after his failure. . . . As he was extremely conscious of himself and supersensitive, what could result from such an unsuccessful trial but self-condemnation and self-reproach? Yet, feeling more or less the injustice of the Fellows' decision, he was not to be advised or helped, and he was further inclined to follow his own desires, despite anyone's protests. (*HC* 91)

We cannot deny that Hartley faced a great deal of disappointment and alienation by this stage in his life. As a child, he was abandoned by his father, the one person who could understand his fanciful character. Hartley was an outsider during his schooldays, for his unusual behavior did not earn him many friends. His wide imagination and talent for story-telling helped him to overcome his social awkwardness, but they did not help him during his college years. Rather, what was considered whimsical behavior among the residents of the Lake District proved to be inappropriate in Oxford. There, he experienced the greatest disappointment of all, the loss of a professional career and an opportunity to make a life for himself. That said, he had enough guidance in his life to know that his behavior would not carry him far. He instead chose to be self-indulgent and, as an adult, conducted himself as he had when he was a spoiled child growing up in Keswick. This decision cost him dearly. Nonetheless, he was still a privileged young

man who could locate other career opportunities. But, in Hartley's mind, the loss of the Oriel Fellowship was irreversible, and he lived in accordance to this "self-knowledge."

These disappointments, along with Samuel Taylor Coleridge's influence, are the points we must remember when we examine the poetic work Hartley has left us. Keanie rightly notes that Hartley is not simply "another little aperture through which to admire or disapprove of his father" (35). On the contrary, Hartley Coleridge's life and work offers us much more, not the least of which is a representative, biographically and poetically, of the image of the Romantic child. We have already examined many of the facets of Hartley, the "child of Romanticism"; we must now explore how these childhood characteristics manifest themselves in his poetic work as an adult.

The theme of childhood is prevalent throughout Hartley Coleridge's poetry. In "The *Annus Mirabilis* and the Lost Boy: Hartley's Case," Judith Plotz notes that sixty of Hartley's 390 published poems have childhood or infancy as their subject, while about half of the manuscript poems housed in the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Austin relate to this topic (194).[10] Given the number of poems on this subject, my analysis here will serve only as an overview of what his poetry has to offer on this subject. Perhaps one of the most telling poems on the subject of childhood appeared in Hartley Coleridge's first collection of poetry, published in 1833. This untitled sonnet is autobiographical:

> Long time a child, and still a child, when years
> Had painted manhood on my cheek, was I;
> For yet I lived like one not born to die;
> A thriftless prodigal of smiles and tears,
> No hope I needed, and I knew no fears.
> But sleep, though sweet, is only sleep, and waking,

[10] Hartley also wrote numerous poems on the subject of nature and religion, and many of his poems were addressed to specific people.

> I waked to sleep no more, at once o'ertaking
> The vanguard of my age, with all arrears
> Of duty on my back. Nor child, nor man,
> Nor youth, nor sage, I find my head is grey,
> For I have lost the race I never ran,
> A rathe December blights my lagging May;
> And still I am a child, tho' I be old,
> Time is my debtor for my years untold. (*Poems* 1-14)

Here, Hartley identifies his position as a child/man, a full-grown adult who lives like a child. When one considers the freedom that Hartley was afforded during his childhood and how much he was admired, his desire to remain in this stage of life is understandable. But where most adults would express a sense of longing for a past that is now out of their reach, Hartley describes his present reality, and he does so without a sense of joy. In its place is unmistakable regret. By his account, his life was a failure, "For I have lost the race I never ran" (11). Though still a self-proclaimed child, Hartley has not evaded adulthood or the responsibilities it entails. He has instead postponed the inevitable and failed for lack of trying.

Hartley's own analysis of his situation as perpetual child raises an interesting question regarding the Romantic veneration of the child: is it possible for the adult to maintain his childhood self *and* become an adult in the fullest sense of the word? The Romantics believed that this was the road to human perfection, and the greatest adult could "retain his childhood powers of perception while acquiring the adult's intellect and moral awareness" (Plotz, "The Perpetual Messiah" 69). Hartley Coleridge's descriptions of childhood and infancy in his poetry can provide further insight into this question.

Hartley emphasizes the perfection of the child in his poems. In "The Sabbath-day's Child," he describes the purity of an infant:

> PURE, precious drop of dear mortality,
> Untainted fount of life's meandering stream,

> Whose innocence is like the dewy beam
> Of morn, a visible reality,
> Holy and quiet as a hermit's dream:— (*Complete Poetical Works* 1-5)

A religious element is integral to Hartley's conception of the purity of the child. Being pure, children enjoy a closer relationship with God than do adults, as "To Margaret, on her First Birthday" reveals: "Merely she is with God, and God with her / And her meek ignorance" (9-10). Children are sinless beings in Hartley Coleridge's poetry, untainted by the corrupt world. Accordingly, Hartley finds their presence in the world paradoxical:

> To see thee sleeping on thy mother's breast,
> It were indeed a lovely sight to see—
> Who would believe that restless sin can be
> In the same world that holds such sinless rest? ("The Sabbath-day's Child," *Complete Poetical Works* 23-6)

The thought that a benevolent God could cast an innocent and pure being into the world is so troubling to Hartley that he questions his perception of the child:

> Yet if thou wert so good
> As love conceives thee, thou hadst ne'er been born;
> For sure the Lord of Justice never would
> Have doom'd a loyal spirit to be shorn
> Of its immortal glories—never could
> Exile perfection to an earth forlorn. ("To an Infant," *Complete Poetical Works* 9-14)

Yet he never wavers from his assertion that children are pure, innocent, and perfect beings. For Hartley, children are the "purest abstract of humanity" (3). In Platonic terms, children are the "form" of humanity that all adults ought to model themselves after and strive to become.

Another key element of Hartley Coleridge's poetic depiction of children is the presence of death in these poems. In the sonnet, "The First Birthday," Hartley links the newborn's weeping to its instinctual awareness of its mortality: "Poor mortality / Begins to mourn before it knows its case, / Prophetic in its ignorance" (*Complete Poetical Works*

8-10). In another poem dedicated to a child on her first birthday, the happy occasion leads Hartley Coleridge to consider his own mortality and state that they may only enjoy each other's company again in heaven,

> But shall I see thee on the farther shore,
> Clad in thine infant robes of innocence,
> Pure even as now, baptised from all offence,
> A spirit mature—yet with no more to fear
> Than the sweet infant of a single year. ("To the Same, on her First Birthday" 34-8)

The mother figure in "On Infancy: A Fragment" also considers mortality when looking upon the face of her child. Her figure when watching over her child is poignantly described:

> Mute as the statue bending o'er the tomb
> That seems to watch the endless sleep of death,
> She views the slumbering cherub of her womb
> And notes the varying of his honied breath. (5-8)

In "'Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven," a poem that describes the child as the most blest of all of fallen humanity, a child's sleep is related to death.

> O sleep, sweet infant, for we all must sleep,
> And wake like babes, that we may wake with Him,
> Who watches still his own from harm to keep,
> And o'er them spreads the wings of cherubim. (17-20)

Though the child in Hartley Coleridge's poems enjoys the distinction of being innocent and pure, these characteristics cannot save her from the lot of all humanity—death. Children have this in common with adults; they cannot overcome their fallen nature on their own.

Paradoxically, Hartley's emphasis on death in his poems about children also emphasizes the uniqueness of childhood. During this state, the child can maintain perfection though fallen. The ability to do so is not a result of the child's ignorance;

rather, it has been bestowed on the child as a gift from God. Out of all humanity, children are a remnant of Eden here on earth, if only for a brief period.

> OH what a wilderness were this sad world
> If man were always man, and never child;
> If nature gave no time, so sweetly wild,
> When every thought is quaintly crisp'd and curl'd
> Like fragrant hyacinth with dew impearl'd
> And every feeling in itself confiding,
> Yet never single, but continuous, gliding
> With wavy motion as, on wings unfurl'd,
> A seraph clips the Empyreal! Such man was
> Ere sin had made him know himself too well.
> No child was born ere that primeval loss.
> What might have been, no living soul can tell:
> But Heaven is kind, and therefore all possess
> Once in their life fair Eden's simpleness. ("Childhood," *Complete Poetical Works* 1-14)

The childhood described in this poem sounds much like the childhood Hartley experienced, unbound and free. In this childhood experience, the child has the freedom to explore the world, to discover what it has to offer, and to determine its significance. This is paradise on earth, and it belongs to the child. What, then, can the adult know of this life, having already passed through this stage?

According to Hartley, the presence of a child can allow the adult to return to his childhood:

> the babble of sweet babes, . . .
> Which works such witchery on a parent's heart,
> Turning grave manhood into childishness,
> Till stoic eyes with foolish rheum o'erflow,
> And fluent statesmen lisp again ("A Task ad Libitum" 36-40)

Hartley clearly believes the effect that children can have on adults is powerful. Children enable adults to reenter the state of innocence and purity and become the direct opposite of what they are. The change that the adult undergoes when in the presence of a child is wrought by love, "for love / Will catch the likeness of the thing beloved" ("A Task ad

Libitum," *Complete Poetical Works* 41-2). In an untitled sonnet, the link between the child and love is further expounded in a single line, "True love is still a child" (13). Described in this manner, the child is love personified; it is pure, innocent, and good, and it transforms the people it comes in contact with.

While the child can help the adult return to his childhood, the transformation is not permanent. It is fully dependent on the child's presence. Eventually, the adult must come to terms with his fallen state. Nowhere does the reader encounter an example of an adult who maintains the paradise of childhood in Hartley Coleridge's poetry. Instead, we find an adult Hartley Coleridge who characterizes himself as a child who has failed in life. This is an interesting commentary on the Romantic emphasis on the child and on the poet's ability to maintain a childlike nature into his mature years. As the model of the Romantic child, Hartley Coleridge himself was unable to be both man and child concurrently, and he could not bring this image to life in poetic form, either. Rather, he claims that such skill belongs to Poesy:

> I have no charm to renovate the youth
> Of old authentic dictates of the heart,—
> To wash the wrinkles from the face of Truth,
> And out of Nature form creative Art.
>
> Divinest Poesy!—'tis thine to make
> Age young—youth old—to baffle tyrant Time,
> From antique strains the hoary dust to shake,
> And with familiar grace to crown new rhyme. ("Poietes Apoietes" 21-8)

Hence, if we view Hartley Coleridge as the model of the "Romantic child" and consider his poetry to be a commentary on this figure, we find that such a person simply cannot exist, at least not in the manner envisioned by the Romantics, for a contradiction exists between the child and the man. Furthermore, childhood is a fleeting state, not a

permanent station. It must be passed through so that a man can come into being where once there was a child. When one attempts to maintain the state of childhood fully during the adult years, the outcome is clear: the individual will find that he has let life pass him by, just as Hartley Coleridge did.

While I do acknowledge that Hartley Coleridge is the embodiment of the concept of the Romantic child – to deny this would mean disagreeing with Hartley's own assessment of his life – I cannot agree with the prevailing argument that his life was "scripted" by his father or that he functions as a perpetuation of his father's life and work.[11] Undeniably, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was a significant factor in Hartley's early life and is, to some degree, responsible for the man he became. But his direct influence on his son was limited to the first ten years of Hartley's life. After that period, the figures who shaped Hartley's life were wide and varied—Mrs. Coleridge, Robert Southey, the aunts of "Aunt Hill," the Ottery Coleridges, Rev. Dawes, William Wordsworth, and Mrs. Wilson were just a few of the people who had an impact on his life during the years leading up to his departure to Oxford. With the assistance of these individuals, Hartley carved out a life for himself. Despite the best efforts of those closest to him, his mother and Robert Southey in particular, they were unable to break him of the idiosyncratic habits that later became his most recognizable characteristics. Robert Southey's comments to Hartley's cousin, John Taylor Coleridge, on this subject are telling: "having discovered that he is awkward by nature, he has formed an unhappy conclusion that art will never make him otherwise, and so resigns himself to his fate. My endeavors have not been wanting to remedy or rather palliate this; but it is bred in the bone—and you

[11] See Anya Taylor's article "'A Father's Tale': Coleridge Foretells the Life of Hartley," *Studies in Romanticism* 30.1 (1991): 37-56 and Judith Plotz's article "The *Annus Mirabilis* and the Lost Boy: Hartley's Case," *Studies in Romanticism* 33.2 (1994): 181-200.

know the remainder of the proverb" (*Letters by Robert Southey* 110). Clearly, Hartley lived a life of his own choosing, not one that was chosen for him. Until we recognize this point about Hartley Coleridge, we cannot fully appreciate the life he lived or the work he left us. Any fruitful examination of his work must begin here. And from this vantage point, we can use Hartley Coleridge's life to help us understand what the Romantic child might look like as an adult; he is not the confident artist, as the Romantics expected, but the insecure, overgrown child, paralyzed by his own perceived weaknesses. We can also reexamine Hartley Coleridge's work, not to find his father there, but to recognize the extent to which Hartley determined his own future.

CHAPTER FOUR

Derwent Coleridge, S. T. C.'s Forgotten Son

Being most unlike his father and lacking a significant body of creative literary work has led to the complete neglect of Derwent Coleridge in nineteenth century studies. His sermons, tracts, and poetry are rarely studied today, and his contribution to his age is not widely known. Nevertheless, he is a figure that deserves a second look, for his career as an educator and his role as an editor both prove that he is an important person of the nineteenth century. Such an investigation, however, is incomplete without first reviewing significant events in the life of Derwent Coleridge. By the time of Derwent Coleridge's birth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge seems to have recovered from the shock of fatherhood that he expressed upon Hartley's birth. He recorded the event in his notebooks with a brief entry: "Sunday Night ½ past 10, Septemb. 14, 1800—a boy born/Bracy?" (*Notebooks* 1: 806). He wrote to William Godwin on September 16, 1800 and mentioned the event, "my wife presented Hartley with a little Brother. She is as well as any woman in her situation, & in this climate, ever was or can be——the child is a very large one" (*CL* 622). Two causes that immediately present themselves may account for the indifference with which Coleridge seems to relate the event. First, the Coleridges lost their second son, Berkeley, to complications resulting from a small pox vaccination the year prior to Derwent's birth. Surely, Derwent's birth, while a joyful event, reminded the family of their loss and possibly caused them anxiety as a new, fragile life entered their

home.[1] More immediately, S. T. C.'s letter to Godwin indicates that the family was facing financial difficulty, for the purpose of the letter is to seek out a 10£ loan from his friend. Coleridge ends the letter by asking Godwin to stand as Derwent's godfather, perhaps as a scheme to place more pressure on Godwin for the funds.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge likely drew his inspiration for his son's name from the Derwent Water, which sat just south of Greta Hall.[2] The scene Samuel Taylor Coleridge could view from the home is described in *The Unknown Coleridge* by Raymonde and Godfrey Hainton:

> Most often . . . he looked south along the whole length of island-dotted Derwent Water to the narrow jaws of Borrowdale, beyond the guardian fang of Castle Crag and the white gleaming Lodore Waterfall, to the distant curtain wall of the central fells, Glaramara, Scafell and Great Gable. It was a view whose elements of water, land and air were differently compounded not only with the changing seasons but with the changing light and weather of a single day – 'endless combinations as if heaven and earth were for ever talking to each other'. Above all he delighted in Derwent Water itself, of all lakes the most perfectly framed in mountains, the most capricious, responsive to sun and cloud, to wind and rain. (5)

Coleridge's attraction to the Derwent Water is clear: it provided a sublime scene that could feed the poet's imagination. It was also a symbol of the Lake District, which, for better or for worse, was linked to the work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge via the criticism of Francis Jeffrey and Lord Byron. The name Derwent provided S. T. C. with one further

[1] Derwent did fall ill shortly after his birth, much to the chagrin of his mother. S. T. C. related the situation to Daniel Stuart, printer of the *Morning Post*, to which Coleridge was a contributor at the time, in a letter written on September 28, 1800: "My wife has given me another Son—but alas! I fear, he will not live. She is now sobbing & crying by the side of me" (*CL* 1: 626). His health was so poor that they saw fit to baptize him right away, "Sept. 27. 1800—The child being very ill was baptized by the name of Derwent/The Child hour after hour made a noise exactly like the Creeking of a door which is being shut very slowly to prevent its creeking" (*Notebooks* 813). By early October, Coleridge informed Thomas Poole that "Mrs. Coleridge & Child are well" (*CL* 1: 634).

[2] Derwent was also the name of the river and could have been the source of little Derwent's name; however, the visibility of the lake from the Coleridge home makes it the more likely source.

advantage, so far as the poet was concerned; it was unique. Coleridge explained the choice of this name in a letter written to Josiah Wedgwood on November 1, 1800:

> My *littlest* One is a very Stout Boy indeed—he is christened by the name of 'DERWENT'—a sort of sneaking affection, you see, for the *poetical* & the *novellish* which I disguised to myself under the Shew, that my Brothers had so many children, Johns, James, Georges, &c &c—that a handsome Christian-like name was not to be had, except by incroaching on the names of my little Nephews. (*CL* 1: 646)

While the name struck the fancy of Derwent's father, it was not well received by all members of the family. According to Derwent, "A Christian name my uncle Southey would never allow it to be. Accordingly he always called me John – John Derwent when he was serious" ("Recollections"). Nevertheless, the locals happily accepted the new addition to their community, and the day after his birth, they offered up their congratulations to Mrs. Coleridge and bid "li'le Darran" a good morning from beneath his mother's window (Hainton 7).

As happens in all families, the second son provided a point of contrast to his older brother. And, as so often happens in families, Derwent was judged to lack some of the finer qualities that his brother possessed. On December 5, 1803, his father wrote,

> Derwent is a large, fat, beautiful Child, quite the *Pride* of the Village, as Hartley is the *Darling* – Southey says that all Hartley's Guts are in his Brains, and all Derwent's Brains are in his Guts – Verily, the constitutional Differences in Children are great indeed. From earliest Infancy Hartley was absent, a mere Dreamer, at his meals; put the food into his mouth by one effort, and made a second effort to remember that it was there & to swallow it—With little Derwent [it] is a time of Rapture and Jubilee—and any Story, that has no Pie or Cake in it, comes very flat to him. (*CL* 2: 1022)

The description of Derwent given to Matthew Coates in the above letter is far less debasing than the description given to Thomas Poole on October 14 of the same year:

> He is a fat large lovely Boy—in all things but his Voice very unlike Hartley—very vain, & much more fond & affectionate—none of his

> Feelings so profound—in short, he is just what a sensible Father ought to wish for—a fine, healthy, strong, beautiful child, with all his senses & faculties as they ought to be—with no chance, as to his person, of being more than a good-looking man, & as to his mind, no prospect of being more or less than a man of good sense & tolerably *quick parts*. (*CL* 2: 1015)

We must take note of the date this letter was written, for Derwent was only three years old, a mere toddler, when his father reached this conclusion about his future prospects. When we consider Derwent's age when these statements were made and recognize the fact that Samuel Taylor Coleridge was by no means a "sensible" father, it seems that his second son was less than Coleridge hoped he would be. Derwent was not thoughtful, or smart, or a metaphysician in the making. In the end, Coleridge preferred the intellectual dreamer, Hartley, to the practical, down-to-earth Derwent.

Having already developed a sense of Derwent's capabilities, S. T. C. sent young Derwent to a day school in Keswick run by a Unitarian preacher named Grattan (Hainton 13). During the years he was there, 1806 to 1808, Coleridge began to write to Derwent about his studies. These letters reveal that S. T. C. was concerned that Derwent be a diligent student committed to his studies, particularly those subjects that his father most enjoyed. A poem that Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote for Derwent on the subject of study is most illuminating:

> If Derwent be innocent, steady, and wise,
> And delight in the Things of Earth, Waters, and Skies;
> Tender Warmth at his Heart, with these metres to shew it,
> With sound Sense in his Brains, may make Derwent a Poet!
> *May* crown him with Fame, and *must* win him the Love
> Of his Father on earth, and his Father above.
> My dear dear Child!
> Could you stand upon Skiddaw, you would not from it's whole Ridge
> See a man who so loves you, as your fond S. T. Coleridge (*CL* 3: 6)

The letter contains a lesson on poetic meter immediately prior to this poem. Considered together, we can see that S. T. C. uses the above lines to provide Derwent with reasons to commit himself to the study of poetry. Perhaps the most compelling reason he offers lies in his statement that such study will earn Derwent the love of his father. We can only imagine the effect this poem had on the psyche of the five-year-old Derwent, assuming he understood it fully. At that tender age, he was faced with the realization that his father's love was contingent, at least in part, upon his performance in his father's profession. Since his father had already determined that he did not possess the capacity for deep feeling or thought, it seems that Derwent was destined to fall short of his father's desires and his love.

In September of 1808, both Hartley and Derwent were sent to Rev. John Dawes' school in Ambleside.[3] Many years later, Derwent described the school as a place that may have been unfit to handle his older brother's genius due to the quality of the school's master:

> Elsewhere he [Hartley] might have had higher advantages in the way of scholarship; for his master, an excellent and in many respects a remarkable man, was a native of the place, and had been educated after the fashion of the north-country, where little attention is paid to the niceties or graces of classical learning, and though possessed of a vigorous understanding, by no means disposed to repair his deficiencies by severe study in after years. ("Memoir" li-lii)

This is not the only deficiency of Rev. Dawes that we learn about from Derwent. In a letter to J. J. Morgan, S. T. C. recounts a complaint that Derwent made to him against his teacher:

> Poor Derwent . . . has complained to me (having no other possible grievance) that Mr Dawes does not *love* him, because he can't help crying

[3] Hartley did not join Derwent at Grattan's school in Keswick because he was traveling with their father, who had just separated from their mother.

> when he is scolded, & because he an't such a genius, as Hartley—and that tho' Hartley should have done the same thing, yet all the others are punished, & Mr Dawes only *looks* at Hartley, & never scolds *him*—& that *all* the boys think it very unfair [—but] he *is* a genius! This was uttered in low spirits & a [bitt]erness brought on by my petting—for he adores his Brother. (*CL* 3: 375)

Even when away from home, Derwent could not avoid being compared to his brother and regarded as inferior. Presumably, he shared the complaint with his father because he hoped that the situation might be remedied in some way, but Coleridge only confirmed what Rev. Dawes believed, and Derwent was compelled, with some sullenness, to agree as his one recourse for managing the situation was less successful than he hoped. No other option was left for him because, as his father confirms, he did love Hartley, and he could not disagree with the adults in his life, who all shared the same opinion of Hartley's skills.

Nevertheless, Derwent was an accomplished student and a quick learner. Coleridge almost exclusively recounts Derwent's academic skills in a letter to Mrs. Coleridge, dated April 29, 1810,

> You will be pleased to hear, that after repeated examination, I was quite surprized with his process and with the accuracy of his Knowledge in Greek—There lay upon my table a list of words from the original Greek of the Wisdom of Solomon (in the apocrypha) all of which were either new-compounds peculiar to that Work, or at least very unusual—the skill, with which Derwent *went about* each word, to analyse it into it's component parts, and the number of them that he made out the meaning of, was truly admirable. (*CL* 3: 289)

S. T. C. goes on to describe Derwent's adeptness at translating a portion of a theological work and one of the Pauline epistles. He concludes the letter by assuring his wife that "Derwent is a very clever Boy—the rapidity, with which he reads & comprehends, is extraordinary" (3: 290). Coleridge seems surprised by his son's skills and finds that he

must revise his perception of Derwent's abilities. Perhaps he realized that the sentiments he expressed about Derwent to Thomas Poole in 1803 were hasty and without merit.

As was the case with Hartley, Derwent was left without provisions to enable him to receive a university education. His father was too far into the clutches of opium addiction to attend to their educational needs. In 1816, just a year after Hartley left Greta Hall for Oxford, Samuel Taylor Coleridge placed himself under the care of Dr. Gillman in order to recover from his addiction (Hainton 23). Robert Southey wrote of Derwent's situation to Grosvenor Charles Bedford on October 29, 1817[4]:

> Without affecting any love for Derwent, I feel much compassion for him: it is a truly pitiable situation; for his father not only does nothing for him, but stands in the way of having any thing done, because there is not that claim on his relations to bestir themselves, which there would be if he were an orphan. I can contribute nothing toward placing him in College, if such a scheme were set on foot, because there are much nearer claims which take from me all I can spare, which are likely to grow heavier, and which will continue as long as I live. (*New Letters of Robert Southey* 175-6)

Southey places all the blame on Coleridge for Derwent's difficult situation, suggesting Derwent's situation might be improved were Coleridge dead. Such was not the case, however, and Derwent had to wait until the funds could be gathered to further his education.

Mrs. Coleridge was optimistic that Derwent would be cared for by friends and family just as Hartley had been. In June of 1817, she wrote to Thomas Poole, "every body is good and kind to my dear children, & for this, when I am inclined to murmur at my misfortunes I reserve a feeling of thankfulness & gratitude" (*Minnow* 55). She also stated that Derwent had found employment to assist him in his attempt to collect funds

[4] Grosvenor Charles Bedford (1773-1839) met Robert Southey as a boy at Westminster School. He worked with Southey on *Specimens of the Later English Poets* (1807). Bedford was a civil servant and wrote miscellaneous texts during his lifetime (Pratt par. 11).

for college. He had been hired as a private tutor to the children of Mr. Hopwood, and he was to prepare them for their upcoming studies at Eton (*Minnow* 51). He moved into the Hopwood home at Summerhill, approximately thirty-five miles south of Keswick, and stayed with the family until the end of 1819 (Hainton 24). While there, he was exposed to the lifestyle of a wealthy family and made painfully aware of his deficiencies in manners and social standing (24). This period of separation from his family was important in Derwent's life, for it helped him to understand—and perhaps begin to resent—his place in the world as the son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

As 1818 came to a close, Derwent found that he needed a more immediate source of money to enable him to attend college. He found a potential source of income with the help of Uncle Southey, who suggested that Derwent translate Martin Dobrizhoffer's Latin text, *An Account of the Abipones, an Equestrian People of Paraguay* (1784). Soon, he was sending proofs to his uncle for correction (Durrant, "The Lives" 117). Sara Coleridge, the youngest of the Coleridge children, wanted to assist her brother with the project and so began translating volume III while he worked on volume I (Hainton 25). Derwent was still employed by the Hopwood family at this time, and they wanted him to continue as their sons' tutor for another year and a half. But Derwent was set on attending university, so the Hopwoods tried to secure a scholarship for him so that he could attend an Oxford college (Durrant, "The Lives" 119).

While Derwent worked to ensure that he would receive a university education, his father learned that he was employed and attempting to provide for himself. Hurt that he had not been involved in the plans, Coleridge wrote to Derwent and asked if he would join him at Highgate, where he had taken up residence with Dr. Gilman and his family,

for a visit. His letter to his son suggests that he felt some regret for not yet being able to provide funds for Derwent to attend college and a sense of duty to remedy the situation. Nevertheless, the assurances he offered to Derwent regarding funds that will soon be in his possession are less than encouraging.

> Mr and Mrs Gilman have been true friends to me—or I could not indeed have stood up against the cruelty of—say, the World. I know not in what respect I can lessen my expences; and my actual expences, what I actually *cost* them, these and nothing beyond will my friends here receive from me—a determination which they made the moment, they became acquainted with the real state of my means and chances. They are as anxious almost as I myself am, that I should be enabled to lay by 200£, little by little, in the course of the next year, for you—if I should succeed in my Lectures and if my acquaintances should exert themselves in procuring me Subscribers for a work, to be published in weekly numbers, of which I shall soon publish a Prospectus and Specimen . . . I shall be able to do this: and if I should, I might then safely rely on getting one hundred pound the year after—so that the money of the first year being safely lodged with your mother, there can, I trust, be no objection to your being sent to Cambridge, before your 19th year. (*CL* 4: 799-800)

We can imagine Derwent's reaction to receiving this letter from his father. He had last seen his father in 1812, when he was still a child. In the years that had elapsed, he had grown into a man without the guidance of his father. Derwent was no doubt aware of Coleridge's inability to provide for his mother and siblings both before and after his permanent departure from Greta Hall. He also likely knew about his father's habits of procrastination and his consistent failure to complete projects. So when Coleridge expressed that the funds he expected for Derwent's education were dependent on writing projects, Derwent surely understood that this money was not likely to materialize.

The funds for Derwent to attend university were eventually gathered. His father's friends, J. H. Frere and Lady Beaumont, offered the necessary monetary support (Hainton

27).[5] On September 28, 1819, S. T. C. reported the news to Francis Wrangham with the enthusiasm of a proud parent:[6]

> DERWENT I am about to send to Cambridge, two or three of *my* connections (as distinguished from those in the North & from those of his own name in the South) having promised such a sum annually during his undergraduateship as with strict economy he *may* live on. . . . Now at what College should I enter him, with the best chance of exhibition or scholarship at present, and of a fellowship, on the presumption that he entitles himself to one by an honorable degree. Pray, give me your advice by return of post. (*CL* 4: 951)

Though Coleridge could not offer Derwent the support he owed him, he was happy to take credit for arranging Derwent's university education and decide what was best for Derwent in regards to where he should matriculate. The decision was made, and on May 10, 1820, he entered St. John's College, Cambridge (Hainton 27). Having access to the needed funds, Derwent stopped work on the translation of the Dobrizhoffer text (Durrant, "The Lives" 141).[7] In June of the same year, John Taylor Coleridge wrote to his uncle, S. T. C., to inform him that Hartley lost his fellowship at Oriel (Hainton 27).

Hartley's misfortune affected Derwent's life as a student. Not wanting Derwent to follow the path of his older brother, Mrs. Coleridge and S. T. C. took a special interest in Derwent's performance at Cambridge. They wanted to ensure his success as a student (Hainton 28). Those in the Wordsworth circle shared their concern; on September 22,

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[5] John Hookham Frere (1769-1846), writer and diplomat, often provided Samuel Taylor Coleridge with financial assistance (Barker par. 5). Coleridge's close friendship with Sir George and Lady Beaumont began in 1803, after the couple visited him at Greta Hall. In the winter of 1806, Coleridge briefly lived with the Wordsworths at the Beaumont's home in the Lake District, Coleorton Hall (Owen and Brown par. 3).

[6] Francis Wrangham (1769-1842) was a clergyman in the Church of England and a writer. His first book of poetry contained Coleridge's translation of one of his Latin poems (Kaloustian par. 8). Wrangham could provide Coleridge with good advice on where to send Derwent because he was a Cambridge alumnus and competed for a divinity fellowship at Trinity Hall (par. 3).

[7] Sara Coleridge continued the translation project on her own and published the three volume text in 1822. She offered Derwent the money she received from the publisher for his college education, but he refused to take it from her (Durrant, "The Lives" 141).

1820, Mary Wordsworth wrote to her sister, Sara Hutchinson, "I hope his [Hartley's] example will do good to Derwent" (Wordsworth 66). Derwent, upset for his brother's misfortune, likely did not appreciate becoming an object of focus as a result of Hartley's failings. But when he arrived at St. John's College, Cambridge, he was separated from the family gossip at Keswick and Highgate and afforded an opportunity to establish himself.

He befriended his cousin, Henry Nelson Coleridge, who was attending King's College. Henry was an Eton graduate, and through him, Derwent was introduced to a wealthy, refined group of Eton alumni, including John Moultrie, who was Derwent's lifelong friend, Winthrop Mackworth Praed, Henry Malden, Chauncy Hare Townshend, and Charles Austin (Durrant, "The Lives" 144).[8] Derwent's experiences in the Hopwood home helped him to move in these wealthier circles without appearing awkward or self-conscious (143). Derwent's interaction with this group also contributed to the debt he accumulated during his college days. In a diary entry in 1822, he believed his debts amounted to £21.10s. Approximately one-fifth of the total was devoted to personal care, clothing, grooming, and the like. Derwent also recorded his clothing needs and an inventory of his current wardrobe, indicating a significant level of concern over the quality of his dress (Hainton 36). Coleridge sensed that his son might be living beyond his means and alarmed Mrs. Coleridge with the news, though he lacked concrete evidence of his son's habits: "I have no proof of Derwent's *Extravagance* from his Bills: tho' of course we began to fear, lest it might be so" (*CL* 5: 209). It seems that though three years had passed since Hartley had lost the Oriel Fellowship and Derwent was now

[8] John Moultrie (1799-1874), poet and Church of England clergyman; Winthrop Mackworth Praed (1802-1839), politician and poet; Henry Malden (1800-1876), Greek scholar; Chauncey Hare Townsend (1798-1868), poet; and Charles Austin (1799-1874), barrister and Parliamentary orator.

comfortably settled in at Cambridge, Coleridge still feared that Derwent might end up making some of the same mistakes his brother did. Perhaps Coleridge had reason for questioning Derwent's attention to his studies; in 1821, Derwent requested permission to transfer to Trinity College, where, he argued, he would be better able to compete for a Trinity Fellowship. Derwent's petition was likely influenced by the fact that several members of his circle, John Moultrie included, attended Trinity, and, drawing from his own difficult university experience, his father probably guessed that other reasons besides competing for a Fellowship might underlie his son's request (Durrant, "The Lives" 149).

Indeed, Derwent did not attend to his studies as closely as he could have. Instead, he partook of the student life and enjoyed activities like debating at the Cambridge Union Society and contributing to the *Knight's Quarterly* (145,147). Published under the pseudonym Davenant Cecil, Derwent's contributions to the magazine consisted primarily of love poems. Derwent was well aware that his skill as a poet was minimal, for the composition of poetry was not a natural skill (148-9). Yet he did not trouble himself about his lack of skill as a poet; he had other talents, including a sharp intellect and great powers of perception, which made him well suited for the other ventures he pursued after leaving Cambridge (148).

Another significant event in Derwent Coleridge's life during his Cambridge years was his loss of faith over the course of his college education. He shared this experience with his closest friend at Cambridge, John Moultrie, who suffered from a loss of faith as well. Derwent attempted to explain the form of his religious belief to Moultrie by declaring, "I am not a Godwinite, a Wordsworthian or a Shelleian or any other kind of unchristian religionist, because they are all a religion and a worse one than that of Christ -

whom I almost worship. If anyone believe one thing and do another he is a silly fool ("Letter addressed to John Moultrie"). Moultrie, who was Derwent's senior, left Cambridge in the fall of 1822 and struggled to determine what his career path should be. Moultrie's father wanted him to become a lawyer, but after a period of consideration, Moultrie decided instead to take Holy Orders, having regained his faith in the interim (Hainton 39). Derwent was hurt by the news of Moultrie's conversion and the "high tone of moral superiority" he perceived in the communications he received from Moultrie after the fact ("Letter addressed to John Moultrie"). Moultrie's choice to enter the church led to a quarrel between the two that lasted through the fall of 1823, Derwent's final term at Cambridge (Hainton 39). The disagreement came to a head when Derwent wrote to Moultrie saying "In one word I cannot bear the feelings you entertain towards me, or the language you couch them in. Farewell, you lose nothing in me but a few pleasant associations" ("Undated letter addressed to John Moultrie"). Derwent, who had had his fair share of judgment during his lifetime, did not need to endure further scrutiny by a person whom he at one time considered to be his closest confidant. The change in Moultrie was more than he could tolerate, and so he broke off the friendship.

The stress over his quarrel with Moultrie seems to have contributed to Derwent's uneven performance during the last two years of his Cambridge career. According to information supplied by F. P. White, librarian at St. John's College, he placed fifth in first class in June of 1822, and by December, he missed a first class placement but was eligible for prizes should he gain a first class placement at the next examination. In May of 1823, he was not classed because he had missed part of the exam (*CL* 5: 194n2).

Despite his struggles in 1822 and 1823, Derwent received a pass B.A. degree from Cambridge on January 24, 1824 (Hainton 42).

Though Derwent had made many friends at Cambridge and thoroughly enjoyed the life of a student, he must have been relieved to complete his studies. His last year at Cambridge had been a difficult one; he lost an important friendship, and he did not perform as well academically as he would have liked. Also, Derwent's residence at Cambridge put him closer to his father's residence at Highgate. Consequently, he was able to observe his father's habits and behaviors more closely and draw his own conclusions as to the kind of man Coleridge really was. Derwent did not like what he saw. He resented his father's criticisms of his habits as a student, especially since many of the criticisms were for weaknesses that Coleridge suffered from as well (Durrant, "The Lives" 165). For his own part, S. T. C. was aware of and hurt by his son's opinion of him. In his letter to Derwent on January 11, 1822, Coleridge wrote, "I am not angry Derwent!- but it is calamitous that you do not know how anxiously and affectionately I am your Father" (*CL* 5: 194). But by this point in time, the damage had already been done, and Coleridge had already proven his worth as a father to his sons. In spite of S. T. C.'s poor performance as a father, Derwent remained loyal to him out of respect to the other members of his immediate family, Hartley in particular (Durrant, "The Lives" 165).

Notwithstanding his family loyalties, when an opportunity arose for Derwent to distance himself from his father and the residents at Greta Hall, he embraced it. With the help of one of his Cambridge friends, he was offered a position as Third Assistant Master at the new Proprietary Classical and Mathematical school in Plymouth (Hainton 43). The only thing Derwent needed to secure his post was his father's permission to take the job.

For Derwent, an independent young man who spent little time under his father's supervision, this caveat was more than a little irritating, especially given his father's tendency to put off important tasks (Durrant, "The Lives" 171-2). Nevertheless, by the beginning of 1824, Derwent was settled in Plymouth, where he could begin a new chapter in his life.

Setting out on his own was not easy for Derwent; he still had a number of debts to take care of in Cambridge, and his father continued to criticize his choices and lifestyle (215, 218). Things began to change for Derwent when, in late 1824, he met Mary Simpson Pridham. Mary, the eldest daughter of five children, was seventeen years old when they met (219). Her father was the director of the Naval Bank, and her mother, who was an orphan and had been raised and well educated by her aunt and uncle, had a small independent income. Mary's parents saw to it that she received a good education; she enjoyed contemporary poetry and had even admired some of the work of Davenant Cecil in the *Knight's Quarterly* (Hainton 49-50). By Christmas of 1824, Derwent was very much in love with Mary (Durrant, "The Lives" 220). But, as is the case with many courtships, theirs was a tumultuous one. In addition to his debts, which negatively affected Derwent's prospects of earning the admiration of Mary's family, he was unsure of her feelings towards him. He feared that she was engaged to another and then learned that this was not the case (Hainton 53). By the following spring, he was confident that her affection belonged to him (56).

In Mary, Derwent found a person with whom he could share his religious doubt. Also, his respect for her and his desire to remain true to his intellectual convictions necessitated honesty, for Mary was a person of deep religious conviction, and, when the

two met, Derwent was not (Hainton 63). In an apparent response to a request from Mary for an expression of the nature of his religious doubt, Derwent wrote,

> My convictions must be the natural growth of my own mind: of what nature they may be let none enquire. I must be here my own confessor. I have given proof that I shall act in honour and love: hereafter I hope to give fresh ones. To make my fellow-creatures happy, to do good according to the measure of strength, - above all to make thee happy, my only-beloved, as the duty imposed on me from on High - Your last letter has called for this reply . . . . Indeed, indeed I write in the spirit of meekness. More I cannot add but that I love thee, Oh! But believe – my brain is whirling round, and my hand trembling ("Undated letter addressed to Mary Pridham")

The letter illustrates the mental anguish Derwent underwent as he continued to struggle through the nature of his religious belief. No doubt his relationship with Mary threw his crumbled faith into a new light and gave him a greater sense of urgency to determine the nature of his belief. Derwent's struggle continued until, in November of 1825, he wrote to his friend, Henry Malden, to enquire about how his Cambridge debts had been settled and to indicate his intention to take Holy Orders (Hainton 65). In her unpublished dissertation, "The Lives and Works of Hartley, Derwent, and Sara Coleridge," Cherry Durrant suggests that Derwent's decision to enter the church was likely a pragmatic one, designed to make him a suitable husband for Mary (223). Hainton, on the other hand, indicates that Derwent came to accept the religious belief of his father, namely, that "the truths of religion are evolved from within, from man's need for a God who comes to meet and redeem him" (64). Indeed, the church did offer Derwent the practical means he needed to secure his future with Mary, but his commitment to his own intellectual convictions suggest that he would not enter the church without first having some form of Christian belief. We can infer that Derwent was coming to terms with his religious doubt at this time, though the nature of his belief is unclear. This process was a pivotal moment

in Derwent's life because it led to his participation in two other professions that are an intrinsic part of his legacy, education and editing.

Derwent entered Cambridge in January of 1826 to pursue an MA in divinity (Durrant, "Coleridge, Derwent" par. 3). He arrived at Cambridge a different man from the twenty-year-old he was just six years prior, an independent, spirited youth who sought to establish himself in the world. This time, he was an engaged man who longed to start a family with the woman he loved (Hainton 66). Derwent committed himself to his divinity studies and other intellectual pursuits, and he was able to mend two rifts that had developed when he first attended Cambridge. He made an outward gesture to affirm his renewed faith by taking communion for the first time in seven years. Also, he saw Moultrie again, and they rekindled their friendship (76-77).

In October of 1826, Derwent sat for his divinity examination and was ordained as a deacon in the Church of England by the end of the month. At the suggestion of his cousin, James Duke Coleridge, he took the curacy at Helston in Cornwall, which offered Derwent the advantage of having a school foundation.[9] When Derwent arrived, he found that the school needed a great deal of work, but he saw this as an opportunity rather than an obstacle (Durrant, "The Lives" 232). Derwent's experiences up to this point, including the schooling he received from his family at Greta Hall, his formal childhood education, and his experience as a private tutor for the Hopwood family and for other Cambridge students while a divinity student, gave him ample opportunity to observe various educational processes and consider the overall nature of education. Derwent was

[9] James Duke Coleridge (1789-1857) was the eldest son of James Coleridge. His youngest brother, Henry Nelson Coleridge, was married to Derwent's sister, Sara, in 1829 (Matthew par. 1).

very interested in the education field, so the chance to develop a school of his own must have been an enticing prospect.

The bulk of Derwent's legacy comes from his years as an educator. He worked tirelessly to transform Helston Grammar School, which had only two students at the time of his arrival, into a prosperous and thriving center of education (Durrant, "The Lives" 232). His first year in Helston was difficult. Derwent's days were filled with teaching, preaching, and leading Sunday School. In addition, he was still studying to complete the ordination process.[10] Derwent had much less time to correspond with Mary, who was miles away in Plymouth (Hainton 91-2). The busy schedule was worth the effort, though. In April, the school was endowed with a house, and in December, Mary and Derwent were finally married (Durrant, "The Lives" 234-5).

With Mary in residence at Helston, Derwent had someone to manage the domestic facets of the school (Hainton 114). He could now consider adding boarders and expanding. By June 1832, Derwent's letters indicate that thirteen boys were in attendance. Seven months later, his letters make reference to twenty boarders and a number of day students (121). Within ten months' time, Charles Kingsley, then fourteen years of age, and his brother Herbert, age thirteen, were included among the students (123). The future novelist, clergyman, and reformer proved to be a handful as a child. Derwent wrote to Henry Nelson Coleridge, who was now his brother-in-law, on March 29, 1834 and described the behavior of Charles, "The elder Kingsley is a sort of Montagu, without however his fierceness – in short, half mad" ("Letter addressed to

[10] Derwent was fully ordained on July 15, 1827 and became the Master of Helston Grammar School (Durrant, "The Lives" 233).

Henry Nelson Coleridge").[11] Nevertheless, given the successes of Charles Kingsley as an adult, he serves as a living symbol of Derwent's accomplishments as headmaster at Helston Grammar School. As a student at Helston Grammar School, Kingsley was interested in botany and geology. His interests in these subjects were encouraged by Charles Alexander Johns, who was appointed as Assistant Master in March of 1831 and who had a proclivity towards botany himself (Hainton 122-3). The two would venture off on long expeditions to Lizard Peninsula to examine the vegetation (125). Kingsley also had the advantage of having access to Derwent Coleridge's extensive library, which, combined with his botanological expeditions, no doubt helped him to develop his skills as a writer.

Kingsley left Helston Grammar School in 1836 after his father was given the living of St. Luke's Chelsea. He was sorry to leave Helston, with its beautiful surroundings, for there he had been "quite settled and very happy" (qtd. in Kingsley 8). In Chelsea, he found very different scenery. He quickly grew tired of suburban life and the constant "clerical conversation" that surrounded him (Kingsley 9). Kingsley continued his education as a day student at King's College, London. Two years later, he entered Madalene College, Oxford and had a successful first year. He received firsts in both classics and mathematics. Twenty-six years later, he wrote to Mary Coleridge and attributed his academic success to his early education at Helston Grammar School:

> I feel more and more how much I owe to you and Mr Coleridge; for your human kindness and forbearance at a time when I needed them very much: and for his [tact] in putting me in the way of books and thoughts which I

[11] Frederick Montagu, son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's friend Basil Montagu, also attended Helston Grammar School and was a problem student for Derwent. He frequently engaged in fights, both with students and townspeople, and caused injuries as a result. Also, he ran off to London, leaving his headmaster with his debts. Derwent frequently corresponded with his mother, Anna Dorothea Benson Montagu, to relate the latest escapades of Frederick (Hainton 116-7).

> could not have fallen in with at a common school, and which have been of quite inestimable use to me, as putting me, from the time I was 17, before the thought of my generation instead of behind it, like most public school boys. (qtd. in Hainton 126-7)

By the time Kingsley had written this letter to Mary Coleridge, he had had an active career as a clergyman, professor, reformer, and writer. As a clergyman, he moved from small country parishes to being appointed as the chaplain to the queen in 1859 (Vance par. 3, 11). As a professor, Kingsley held two part time positions, the first as professor of English at Queen's College for Women in London, and the second as regius professor of modern history at Cambridge (par. 5, 11). Kingsley was involved in the Christian Socialist Movement, which sought to provide a voice for the oppressed working-class people (par. 5-6). He was also a prolific writer. In addition to contributing to a variety of magazines and publishing lectures, he wrote novels, including *Alton Locke* (1850), *Hypatia* (1853), *Westward Ho!* (1855), *Two Years Ago* (1857), and *The Water-Babies* (1863). By Kingsley's own account, the success and variety of his career owes a great deal to the Rev. Derwent Coleridge. Kingsley's education at Helston Grammar School provided him with the necessary foundation for his numerous achievements.

Derwent's success in transforming the school from its meager state when he arrived to a successful center of education was greatly hampered by the school's remote location. He had difficulty recruiting the number and quality of students he wished to have; as a result, and the school fell into financial trouble. Hence, Derwent began to search for other positions. Help came from Henry Nelson Coleridge, who told Derwent of a newly formed teachers' training college in Chelsea that was in need of a principal. This school was the first of its kind; no formal establishment dedicated to educating and training teachers existed prior to the founding of St. Mark's College (Durrant, "The

Lives" 313). Derwent was resistant to taking the position at first because the school was owned by "The National Society for promoting the education of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church." Derwent feared that the National Society's role with this school would interfere with the independence he believed schools ought to have (Hainton 159). But the need to secure more profitable work soon overruled Derwent's reservations about the position, and he sent off his application. He was accepted for the position on February 3, 1841 (170-1).

Derwent's talent as an educator and school manager was displayed during his tenure as principal of St. Mark's College. When he arrived, he had much to accomplish in order to get the school up and running. He had to select the members of his staff, choosing two former colleagues from Helston Grammar School, Mr. Crank and Rev. C. A. Johns, to aid in managing the school. Within a month's time, he began recruiting students by advertising the new school in newspapers (176). Derwent was also responsible for determining the basis for admitting students, setting up exams, designing curriculum, choosing teachers, and teaching courses (179). Furthermore, Derwent provided the National Society with annual reports on the standing of the school (Durrant, "The Lives" 371). These reports thrust Derwent's educational beliefs onto the national stage, and under the microscope, giving him a voice in the national conversation on education.

Derwent's educational beliefs are worthy of extensive investigation. Here, I will highlight his core beliefs. A report by the first government inspector of St. Mark's gives insight into the emphasis Derwent laid upon the connection between religion and education:

> The Church being regarded as the teacher of the nation, she can have no end in view short of, or wholly apart from, the training of the young in the principles of true religion. At her hands they are to be enabled, as far as human instruction might avail, to profit by the reading of Holy Scripture. No school knowledge can be recognised as useful which may not, directly or indirectly, contribute to this end. To bring up a child in the way in which he should go, and to furnish him with the weapons of his heavenly warfare;—this is not a *part* of his education, rather it is the sum and substance of the whole. (qtd. in Seaborne 332)

Derwent believed all education was the responsibility of the Church. Hence, he incorporated morning and evening prayers, study of the Scriptures and the Articles of the Church of England, and choral practice into the daily activities of the students of St. Mark's (Hainton 187). Religion also played an integral role in the purpose of St. Mark's as an institution for teacher training. The immediate aim of the college was to provide well-trained teachers for the numerous working class children who were not receiving an education. Derwent expressed the duty to educate the poor in a letter to Rev. John Sinclair on June 14, 1842, "To what end do we seek to educate the poor man's child? Is it not to give him just views of his moral and religious obligations – his true interests for time and eternity, while at the same time we prepare him for the successful discharge of his civil duties?" (qtd. in Hainton 182).[12] Recognizing the elements of Derwent's personal understanding of the relationship between education and religion, we can understand that for him, education was his chief duty, and the goal of this responsibility

[12] Rev. John Sinclair (1797-1875) was appointed as the secretary of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in 1839. In this powerful position, he led the National Society in its successful campaign against proposed government involvement in the appointment of school inspectors in 1839 (Murphy par. 1).

was to produce morally sound people who understood their position in relation to their Maker and their community.[13]

Derwent's view on the interrelationship between education and religion eventually came into conflict with a governmentally instituted educational reform that was put into effect in 1862. In the mid 1850s, the government, at the time under the leadership of Palmerston, became concerned about the Parliament's expenditure on education and thus created a new government position, Vice-President of the Council. The Vice-President was to report the activities of the Committee of Council on Education to the Parliament. In 1859, Robert Lowe held the position (Hainton 255). Wanting to avoid wasteful spending of public money, Lowe and Ralph Lingen, the Secretary to the Committee of Council, drafted the Revised Code of 1861. The code decreed that governmental grant money would be allocated based on student performance on examinations that tested students' reading, writing, and mathematical skills. These exams were to be administered by government inspectors (Parry par. 7). In addition, the Revised Code abolished government funding for student teachers and teacher salaries (Hainton 256).

The Revised Code was unpopular with teachers, school managers, and principals alike. Derwent spoke out against the proposed legislation in *The Education of the People: A Letter to the Right Hon. Sir John Coleridge,* published in 1861. He notes that while the present system has its problems, it has also enabled much progress and development in the area of education. As a result of the current system, the number of school buildings increased, nearly meeting the needs of the population (*Education* 9).

[13] It is worth noting that Samuel Taylor Coleridge expressed quite similar sentiments about the role of the Established Church in society in his last published work, *On the Constitution of the Church and State.*

School attendance increased significantly, "bring[ing] up the attendance of school children to the highest per centage upon the population ever attained without compulsory measures in any European community" (*Education* 9). Also, and perhaps most importantly, the current system of governmental grants to schools allowed "free play to the religious element in education" (8). Given Derwent's views that religion was the cornerstone of education, this was no small point in his argument.

Derwent shared his conviction in the connection between religion and education with the Tractarians, John Keble in particular. In his study on the Oxford Movement, James Pereiro reveals the central element of Tractarianism, "ethos." "Ethos" was not precisely defined by any one figure involved in the movement, but it generally referred to one's character or spirit (81). John Keble believed that the goal of education was to develop right ethos, for the search for truth inevitably necessitated moral integrity (86, 96). Hence, religious education and moral training were both foundational to Keble's understanding of academic education (87). Interestingly, Pereiro draws clear parallels between John Keble and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's thoughts on the subject, but he also shows that Keble arrived at his conclusions independently (98).

Minimal government oversight of and interference with schools was necessary to maintain this type of educational vision, namely, ensuring that students received an education that taught them moral truths and religious obligations. For Derwent, education was the province of the Church, and the government should not dictate to the Church what was to be taught in the schools of the nation. The Revised Code of 1861 put the religious independence of schools in jeopardy by using examination scores to determine funding. Derwent knew that the new system would put pressure on teachers

and schools alike to perform to preset government standards. He expressed the situation the Revised Code would create in the following manner: "It separates secular from religious studies, thus introducing a false and dangerous principle, encouraging the former by bounties while it protects the latter only by penalties, inoperative except in extreme cases" (*Education* 7). Restated, the new system encouraged school managers and teachers alike to focus on specific facets of education, those that their students would be tested on. Derwent feared that religion and moral education would fall to the wayside in the name of ensuring the financial security of schools. He was right; the Revised Code was put into effect in 1862. Due to the lack of necessary funds, schools began to teach their students how to pass the government inspector's exams. Subjects not included on the exam, like grammar, history, and geography, were overlooked, and standards for student success were lowered to ensure that greater numbers would pass (Hainton 266).

The Revised Code also undermined the humanistic element that was a critical part of Derwent's view of education. As the principal of St. Mark's, Derwent worked to provide well-trained teachers to educate the children of the working class. He did not believe that the kind of education these children received should be any different than the education pursued by the higher classes, so he developed curriculum at St. Mark's that would make his students well-rounded, knowledgeable teachers in a variety of subjects, including mathematics, philosophy, geography, history, religion, English, and Latin (Durrant, "The Lives" 372). Often criticized that his students would be unfit to teach the lower classes after having received an education at St. Mark's, Derwent argued that the standards of education must be raised for all classes of people in order to produce better citizens and better Christians (Hainton 196). The Revised Code effectively forestalled

Derwent's efforts to raise the station of his students, and his students' students, by lowering educational standards across the board. Hainton states the government believed the "'3 R's' were quite sufficient for children who would go to work at the age of 11. The teachers of the labouring poor should also be given the minimum education to enable them to instil the '3 R's'" (270).[14] Indeed, the Revised Code proved that, as far as the government was concerned, educating the people was good, so long as it proved not to be a financial drain and it did not overextend itself. The implementation of the code was the last major event of Derwent's career as an educator and the undoing of much of his hard work to establish a school based on his own educational principles.

Derwent's legacy as an educator no doubt suffered at the hands of government regulation. The other half of his legacy, his role as an editor, has simply been overlooked. For Derwent, editing was a labor of love. He edited the work of his brother, Hartley, and his friends, Winthrop Mackworth Praed and John Moultrie after their deaths. He also finished editing his father's works, a task begun by his sister, Sara, after her death. While Samuel Taylor Coleridge is the only writer among those listed that is still widely read today, Derwent's editorial work for Hartley, Praed, and Moultrie is not insignificant.

Had Derwent not undertaken the task of organizing and editing Hartley's poetry, essays, and notes and drafting a touching memoir of his elder brother, we might have been left with an inaccurate and disjointed picture of Hartley and his accomplishments. Shortly after Hartley's death on January 6th, 1849, Derwent began organizing Hartley's papers. He ran into some difficulty because many of his brother's poems were in the

[14] The age of the children is significant not simply because many of them began working when they turned eleven. The Revised Code also dictated that test results for children above eleven years of age would not count towards determining funding for the school (Durrant, "The Lives" 418).

possession of one of Hartley's acquaintances, a surgeon from Hawkshead by the name of Joseph Burns. Burns saw Hartley's death as a money making opportunity and quickly put together a collection of Hartley's poetry, to which he affixed a hastily written memoir (Durrant, "The Lives" 393). He tried, unsuccessfully, to publish the work. Burns also attempted to blackmail Derwent. Derwent sought legal council and was able to avoid an extended legal dispute and gain possession of Hartley's poems by settling with Burns for the sum of £20. We can be glad that Burns' edition of Hartley's poetry never reached the press; his memoir was full of inaccuracies, and it portrayed Hartley as a man of questionable character (395). Given the circumstances surrounding the preparation of the memoir, we can understand Derwent's early commentary there: "A false, distorted, partial record is indeed to be deprecated; and this consideration might of itself be sufficient to overcome the scruples by which those who alone are able to save the memory of a departed friend or relative from misrepresentation are not unfrequently withheld from undertaking the task" ("Memoir" xvi). Derwent could best reproduce his brother's life for the consideration of others, without disparaging his memory or disregarding his weaknesses, and he happily undertook the task as a last act of love for his brother.

The overt purpose of Derwent's "Memoir" is to shed light on the work of Hartley through an accurate portrayal of his life ("Memoir" xvii). He believed that Hartley's extant published works failed to offer an adequate image of who Hartley was: "They present an image of the man, but broken and imperfect as a reflection upon troubled water. It seemed desirable to complete the picture. They point to 'a foregone conclusion.' It seemed better that this should be stated faithfully and distinctly, than that

it should be supplied by vague conjecture and uncertain report" (xix). Derwent is careful to reveal his brother's strengths and weaknesses, emphasizing the generosity of his character while highlighting his tendency towards vanity and procrastination. He includes both personal remembrances and the accounts of others to show Hartley the man to his readers. Derwent provides limited commentary on the quality of his brother's poetry, and while he questions if Hartley's poetry will withstand the test of time, he does not comment on the subject, stating that such conclusions must be left to an "infallible judge, who listens to no advocate, and from whom there is no appeal" ("Memoir" clxxiii). While contemporary readers of Derwent's edition of Hartley's poetry do not fit the qualifications for judging that Derwent lays out, they will find much fruitful insight in Derwent's "Memoir" that can advance the existing scholarship on Hartley Coleridge in new and unexplored ways. Derwent's "Memoir" serves as an invaluable tool to the contemporary scholar.

The editions of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's works completed by Derwent provide a useful contrast to his edition of Hartley's poetry. Derwent produced several editions of his father's works, including *Notes on English Divines, Notes: Theological, Political, and Miscellaneous, The Dramatic Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Poetical and Dramatic Works of S. T. Coleridge, Lay Sermons,* and *Aids to Reflection.* Two of these texts, *Notes on English Divines* and *The Poetical and Dramatic Works of S. T. Coleridge,* are almost entirely the work of Sara Coleridge, and they bear her brother's name at her insistence, for he was the one to see them through to publication. Derwent's prefaces to his father's work provide us with little insight into the man Samuel Taylor Coleridge was, but such information was unnecessary as other editions of S. T. C.'s work produced by

the Coleridge family bore this information. Nonetheless, the prefaces do provide insight into the commentary Derwent believed was necessary to shed light on his father's texts and on his skills as an editor of these texts. In *Notes: Theological, Political, and Miscellaneous*, Derwent admits to being unfit to comment on the notes related to physical science, thus revealing his shortcomings as an editor ("Preface" vii). He does not seem to encounter the same difficulties in other texts, though. *Lay Sermons* in particular is a text Derwent is well suited to comment on, and his preface reflects his background on the subject. He defends the ideas his father presents there by explaining that the religious ideas themselves are not problematic; rather, the politics in which Coleridge frames his ideas are the stumbling block that prevent many readers from accepting the ideas he sets forth ("Preface," *Lay Sermons* viii).

The contrast between Derwent's editorial work for his brother and his father is stark. Whereas Derwent used his edition of Hartley's poetry as a means of clarifying who his brother was, he approached his father's texts in a more professional manner, seeking instead to provide faithful editions with accurate notes.[15] The difference may be explained by the fact that the primary reason he completed editing his father's works was to please his sister, not his father. Sara had started the project, and her life came to an end before she could finish it. By taking on the task, Derwent ensured that the major work of her life came to fruition. It is doubtful that he would have pursued the venture had Sara not started it.

[15] In his prefaces to *Essays and Marginalia* and *Lives of Northern Worthies*, Derwent dispenses with recollections of Hartley's life, instead referring readers to his "Memoir" to establish the circumstances surrounding the publication of each work. As a result, these prefaces are similar in style to the ones Derwent offers for his father's texts.

Derwent's editions of Praed and Moultrie's poetry are more like his edition of Hartley's poetry in so far as they attempt to reveal the character of two of his dear friends. Unfortunately, the Praed text was a frustrating venture for Derwent. It took eleven years for the text to reach the press, and Derwent encountered numerous copyright issues during the process (Durrant, "The Lives" 415). In addition, Praed's family was very selective about the material they wished to be included in Derwent's opening memoir. The memoir of Praed that was included in the text, published in 1864, ultimately gave a limited and superficial view of its subject, according to the desires of the Praed family (424). Derwent did not encounter these same difficulties when preparing a memoir of Moultrie for his edition of Moultrie's poetry. Instead, he offered a touching picture of John Moultrie the man. Derwent worried that he might not be objective when describing Moultrie and expressed his concern in the memoir itself:

> From earliest manhood to the last hour of his life I was John Moultrie's most intimate and confidential friend, associated with him not only in his joys and sorrows, but in all the deeper workings of his mind and intellect. It is this which has doubtless determined his representatives in their choice of a biographer: it must not however be regarded as an unmixed advantage. ("John Moultrie, Pastor and Poet" v-vi)

Derwent's fears of tainting Moultrie's biography with his own affections for the man did not materialize; instead, his intimacy with Moultrie proved to be advantageous as it provided readers with a perspective on Moultrie's life that they would not otherwise receive.

Derwent's editorial work not only reveals the character of the subjects of the texts, but it also reveals the character of the editor. Derwent was a man to whom people and relationships were important. He was loyal to those closest to him and wished to preserve them for posterity. Had he not had close bonds with Hartley, Sara, Praed, and

Moultrie, he likely would not have undertaken editorial ventures on top of all his duties as a schoolmaster and cleric. These texts also show us that he valued family, a point that should be underscored in light of Derwent's attempts to separate himself from them as a young man. Though he may not have matched his family's ideals of childhood excellence, he loved them and was loved by them. He never abandoned them fully. Furthermore, Derwent's editorial works leave scholars with material ripe for exploration, especially his memoir on Hartley. These works deserve closer examination to further the study of nineteenth century poetry.

Derwent has been neglected by the critics for reasons that have no bearing on his life or the works he produced. Rather, this neglect can be attributed to the critics' sense that the more the child is like the father, the more worthy of study he is. Indeed, Derwent could not have been more different than Samuel Taylor Coleridge. But within these differences, we find the reasons why Derwent was successful in his life and the contributions he made to his age. The extent of his contribution is varied, spanning the subjects of literature, religion, and education. Only by considering his perspective on the relationship of these subjects can we begin to appreciate Derwent Coleridge as an important figure of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER FIVE

Sara Coleridge, the Writing Mother

When Sara Coleridge was born, the event was recorded in the Coleridge family Bible as the birth of her siblings had been. But there was a distinct difference in the manner in which her name had been written:

> My Father has entered his marriage with my mother and the births of three brothers with some particularity in a family Bible, given him, as he also notes, by Joseph Cottle on his marriage; the entry of my birth is in my dear Mother's hand-writing, and this seems like an omen of our life-long separation; for I never lived with him for more than a few weeks at a time. He lived not much more, indeed, with his other children, but most of their infancy passed under his eye. ("[The Autobiography of Sara Coleridge]" 249)

Indeed, Sara Coleridge spent the least amount of time in her father's presence during her childhood and came to know him only as an adult, when she, along with her husband, Henry Nelson Coleridge, and her brother, Derwent, began the arduous task of editing Samuel Taylor Coleridge's works. This project, which helped to protect S. T. C.'s particular brand of genius and ensure that he is still widely read today, has drawn scholars to Sara Coleridge. They have cast her as the dutiful daughter of a major figure of English Romanticism. Later scholars have seen her as a woman tied to her father's legacy who could only exercise her own intellectual gifts in the service of a male relative. They believe that as a result of the social constructs of the day, she was unable to make a name for herself as a writer and chose instead to protect her father's name.[1]

[1] See Earl Leslie Griggs' *Coleridge Fille: A Biography of Sara Coleridge* and Virginia Woolf's essay, "Sara Coleridge," in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays.*

Studies have also been done that focus on Sara Coleridge herself and attempt to understand her life as a wife and mother. Consistently, these studies find that she was not suited to these roles; she was an intellectual at heart and could not easily abandon her love of books for the menial duties that attending to a household entailed. Scholars who take this line argue that many of Sara Coleridge's "illnesses" or "nervous attacks" during her marriage were actually revolts against her role as wife and mother and enabled her to pursue her studies without being questioned or drawn back into her domestic duties.[2] My interests in Sara Coleridge lie in the latter vein; I wish to understand what her life was like apart from the widespread identification of her as the brilliant editor of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's works. Clearly, the domestic sphere is the place we must examine to discover Sara Coleridge's other, often overlooked contributions to her age. Further investigation suggests that while she did see her domestic life as restrictive to her intellectual pursuits, motherhood in particular offered Sara Coleridge an acceptable avenue for written expression that she molded to her own purposes.

Sara Coleridge's experiences as a mother and a writer are best understood in the context of her childhood and coming of age; hence, a review of the relevant events of her life is in order. She was born on December 23, 1802. During this period, her father was traveling with Thomas Wedgewood but remained in contact with her mother, sending her suggestions for what to name the anticipated addition to the family and encouraging her

[2] See Bradford Keyes Mudge's biography, *Sara Coleridge, a Victorian Daughter: Her Life and Essays.*

to secure Sarah Hutchinson as a nurse during her confinement.[3] Upon the event of her birth, Coleridge wrote to Robert Southey, saying,

> I arrived at Keswick, with T. Wedgewood, on Friday Afternoon—that is to say, yesterday—& had the comfort to find that Sara was safely brought to bed, the morning before—i.e. Thursday ½ past six, of a healthy—GIRL! I had never thought of a Girl as a possible event—the word[s] child & man child were perfect Synonimes in my feelings—however I bore the sex with great Fortitude—& she shall be called Sara. Both Mrs Coleridge & the Coleridgiella are as well as can be—I left the little one sucking at a great rate. (*CL* 2: 902)

Coleridge's earlier letter to his wife suggests that he may have over-exaggerated his disbelief at being the father of a girl. Nevertheless, he was surprised to see a girl in Mrs. Coleridge's arms when he returned to Greta Hall. Of the seven names he recommended to Mrs. Coleridge in his December 5, 1802 letter, the girl was named Sara, a pick that deserves further scrutiny. One may be inclined to believe that the Coleridges favored a family name for their daughter, which would then explain why the newest addition to the Coleridge family shared her mother's name. But given that their sons did not have family names and S. T. C. voiced a preference for poetic names when Derwent was born, this seems unlikely. Rather, by 1802, the name Sara was synonymous with Coleridge's ideal of womanhood, which he developed as a result of his relationship with Sarah Hutchinson. Hence, the choice of the name Sara for their daughter must have had significant import for Mrs. Coleridge. By this time, she was well aware of her husband's feelings for Sarah

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[3] Coleridge had a number of suggested names for his wife to consider. In a letter written on December 5, 1802, he wrote,

> Don't you think, Crescelly Coleridge, would be a pretty name for a Boy?—If a Girl, let it be Gretha Coleridge—not *Greta*—but—Gretha—unless you prefer Rotha—or Laura. What do you think of Bridget?—Only it ought to end with a vowel. You may take your choice of Sara, Gretha, or rather Algretha, Rotha, Laura, Emily, or Lovenna.—. The Boy must be either Bracey, or Crescelly.—Algretha Coleridge will needs be a beautiful Girl.— (*CL* 2: 892)

These suggestions, combined with Coleridge's insistence that she take her rival as a nurse, could not have been welcome news from Mrs. Coleridge's traveling husband.

Hutchinson. Naming their daughter Sara could have reinforced the competition that Coleridge created between the two women. It may also have served as further evidence to Mrs. Coleridge of her husband's preference for another woman. While we do not know how the final decision to name the first Coleridge daughter was made, we can infer that it was another symbol of the rift between Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his wife.

A year after Sara's birth, S. T. C. left Greta Hall and traveled to Malta. Upon his return in 1806, he officially separated from his wife. Hence, Sara Coleridge grew up and was educated under the watchful eye of her mother, her uncle, Robert Southey, and her aunts, Edith Southey and Mary Lovell. Thanks to the efforts of her mother and the resources of her uncle, Sara received an excellent education in her home and proved to be a diligent student (Mudge 19-20). The schooling she received was structured, with scheduled times for daily lessons (*Minnow* 29). Kathleen Jones describes the school at Greta Hall, emphasizing the quality of education received by the Coleridge, Southey, and Lovell children:

> The children were taught by their parents. Lessons were 'short and easy, and made almost as much [a] matter of sport as of business.' Southey and Mary Lovell gave instruction in Greek, Spanish, Latin and English, Sarah in mathematics, French and Italian, and Miss Barker – the Senhora, Edith's friend from Portugal who had come to live next door at Greta Lodge – taught them music and drawing. Sarah also taught handwriting and needlework. The boys, as soon as they were old enough, were sent off to school at Ambleside, but the girls and Southey's delicate son Herbert were all educated at home, to an extremely high standard. Not one of the boys, and very few other young people in England of either sex, could boast the kind of education gained by the young Sara Coleridge, who had inherited her father's insatiable mind. (Jones 171-2)

Sara was encouraged in her studies by her mother most of all, who seemed to believe that an education would shield her daughter from some of the trials, including social and financial struggles, that she underwent during her marriage (Mudge 19). Sara's brothers

also contributed to her education, taking the time to teach her during their school holidays (*Minnow* 20). Her father even played a part; he returned to Greta Hall for several months after his falling out with the Wordsworths and spent part of his time teaching his wife and Sara Italian (12). He was pleased with his daughter's progress, writing on February 23, 1812, "[li]ttle Sara does honor to her Mother's anxieties, reads French tolerably & Italian fluently, and I was astonished at her acquaintance with her native Language" (*CL* 3: 375). Educating young Sara was one of the few things each member of the Coleridge family had in common.

Despite everyone's best efforts to shape Sara into a learned young woman, Coleridge was not satisfied with her progress as a young girl and, after his separation from Mrs. Coleridge, he took Sara, then six years old, to live with him at the Wordsworths' residence at Allan Bank. Sara recalls the experience in her autobiography:

> That journey to Grasmere gleams before me as a shadow of a shade. Some goings on of my stay there I remember more clearly. Allan Bank is a large house on a hill overlooking Easedale on one side and Grasmere Lake on the other. Dorothy, Mr. Wordsworth's only daughter, was at this time very picturesque in her appearance with her long thick yellow locks, which were never cut, but curled with papers, a thing which seems much out of keeping with the poetic simplicity of the household. I remember being asked by my Father and Miss Wordsworth, the poet's sister, if I did not think her very pretty. No, said I, bluntly; for which I [met a] rebuff which made me feel as if I was a culprit. (260)

Sara's point about the poetic simplicity of the Wordsworth household is significant, for it brings to light one of the major differences between the Coleridge and Wordsworth residences. In this instance, the difference is illustrated in a matter of appearance. Dora Wordsworth is offered to Sara as an image of girlish beauty, but Sara refuses to agree that she is beautiful. Unknowingly, Sara maintains a long-standing competition between the Wordsworth and Coleridge women with her comment. In the early years of the

Coleridge marriage, Dorothy Wordsworth offended Mrs. Coleridge by helping herself to the contents of Mrs. Coleridge's closet after returning from walking tours drenched with rain (De Quincey 64-5). Dorothy donned one of her dresses to mock Mrs. Coleridge's interest in dressing fashionably (Lefebure 93). Young Sara Coleridge, who had not been raised to appreciate Wordworthian standards of beauty, insulted Miss Wordsworth and her father with her honesty. In her youth, she could not understand the complexities of the relationship between her family and the Wordsworths, nor could she appreciate the nature of the competition between the two homes.

By Sara Coleridge's own account, competition was the primary reason that her father chose to take her away from Greta Hall:

> My Father's wish it was to have me for a month with him at Grasmere, where he was domesticated with the Wordsworths. He insisted on it that I became rosier and hardier during my absence from mama. She did not much like to part with me, and I think my Father's motive at bottom must have been a wish to fasten my affections on him. . . .
>
> I have no doubt there was much enjoyment in my young life at that time but some of my recollections are tinged with pain. I think my dear Father was anxious that I should learn to love him and the Wordsworths & their children, and not cling so exclusively to my mother and all around me at home. He was therefore much annoyed when on my mother's coming to Allan Bank I flew to her and wished not to be separated from her any more. I remember his showing displeasure with me, and accusing me of want of affection. I could not understand why. The young Wordsworths came in and caressed him. I sate benumbed; for truly nothing does so freeze affection as the breath of Jealousy. The sense that you have done very wrong, or at least given great offence, you know not how or why—that you are dunned for some payment of love and feeling which you know not how to produce or to demonstrate on a sudden—chills the heart & fills it with perplexity and bitterness. My Father reproached me & contrasted my coldness with the childish caresses of the little Wordsworths—who felt but lightly, and easily adopted any ways of affection that were required with lively but not deep feeling. ("[Autobiography]" 260-1)

Sara could not compete with the Wordsworth children who, by S. T. C.'s own account, had become "replacement" children to him after spending so much time separated from

his own children.[4] Nor could Sara manufacture feelings that she did not have for a father she barely knew. Undoubtedly, Sara's one month stay with her father was difficult for her; all the details she offers readers about her experience are painful memories.

Though Sara's time away from Greta Hall was difficult, she spent the vast majority of her childhood at "Aunt Hill" and was quite happy. Her various intellectual pursuits seem to have been the most rewarding activity she engaged in. In his biography of Sara Coleridge, Earl Leslie Griggs explains her intellectual prowess by offering the Wordsworths' impressions of her. He states that while they admired Coleridge's daughter, they were not eager to recognize the level of her accomplishment (*CF* 125). We can assume that their reluctance stemmed from the ongoing competition between the two houses. The Wordsworths were likely loath to admit that Mrs. Coleridge and her family were capable of producing a child with the intellectual skills Sara possessed. Indeed, the quality of education provided by the home school at Greta Hall is nothing short of remarkable, and contemporary scholars have praised it not only as a rigorous informal school, but also as a unique center of female education.[5] In spite of the Wordsworths' general disinclination to approve of the products of Greta Hall, Sara's

[4] On April 4, 1804, Coleridge wrote to the Wordsworths, "O dear dear Friends! I love you, even to anguish love you: & I know no difference, I feel no difference, between my Love of little Sara, & dear little John. Being equally with me, I could not but love them equally: how could I—the child of the man, for whom I must find another name than Friend, if I call any others but him by the name of Friend—Mary & Dorothy's own Darling—the first *free* Hope of you all!—" (*CL* 2: 1117-8). The sentiments S. T. C. expresses in this letter, while unseemly, are not surprising when one recognizes the limited amount of time he spent with his daughter compared to the time he spent with the Wordsworth family.

[5] Molly Lefebure succinctly describes the Greta Hall school as a place where "the daughters [were] educated beyond the capacity of any outside educational establishment for young females" (219). If we accept Mudge's argument that Mrs. Coleridge was most concerned that Sara receive a quality education and remember that she, along with her sisters, all of whom were harshly criticized by members of the Wordsworth circle, were deeply involved in the Greta Hall school, we find further evidence that the Wordsworthian assessment of them was based on negative perceptions of Mrs. Coleridge and her family, not factual circumstances (Mudge 19). Far from being "ordinary" or "small minded," the Greta Hall school shows Mrs. Coleridge was an enterprising mother concerned about the success of her children (Christiansen 63; Mudge 19).

clear intellectual gifts forced them to recognize that she was superior even to their own children (*CF* 125).

Hartley was generally agreed to be the most intellectually gifted of the offspring of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey, but even he recognized that Sara challenged his position, stating that Sara was "the inheritrix of his [Samuel Taylor Coleridge's] mind and of his genius, Neither Derwent nor I have much more than the family cleverness, which with hardly an exception accompanies the name of Coleridge" (*Letters of Hartley Coleridge* 84). Perhaps Hartley's recognition of his sister's genius explains his tendency to avoid contributing to Sara's education and discourage her in her studies (Mudge 21). Mrs. Coleridge relates some of Hartley's comments in a letter to Thomas Poole, dated September 20, 1819, "Hartley always discourages his sister's erudite propensities, and tells her that *Latin* & *celibacy* go together; but she playfully answers, 'Not the less for this, cease I to wander where the Muses haunt'" (*Minnow* 82). In keeping with Hartley's desire to maintain his position as Coleridge's favored child, Hartley's attempts to deter Sara from academic pursuits may have been a means of securing his position as the genius of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's children and, by extension, his status as Coleridge's intellectual successor.

In her youth, Sara pursued a variety of scholarly activities that, in some circles of the day, would not have been considered proper occupations for women. When Derwent was seeking funds to attend university, Southey recommended that he work to publish a translation of Martin Dobrizhoffer's Latin text, *Historia de Abiponibus*. Derwent was not enthused about the project but desperately needed the funds. Sara, on the other hand, saw the project as an opportunity to help her brother and to pursue a scholarly activity that she

enjoyed, so she eagerly offered to help Derwent (Mudge 25). In the end, Derwent left off the translation because he secured funds to attend university from another source. Sara continued the project on her own, and she published the text anonymously in 1822. She was nineteen at the time (26). The following year, she began her second translation, the memoirs of Chevalier Bayard, also upon the suggestion of Uncle Southey. This time, however, plans were already in place for John Murray to publish the text upon its completion (33). Sara found the work immensely enjoyable and admitted to her cousin, John Taylor Coleridge, that she was "quite enamoured" with her hero ("Letter addressed to John Taylor Coleridge" 20 Jan. 1824). Within eight months, she completed a full draft of the text and was correcting proofs (Mudge 36). Murray published the text in 1825. Sara had taken on a third translation project by then, the "Memoirs of Jean de Troye," but this time, Southey did not encourage her to work towards publication. He insisted that she pursue it as an amusement, not a literary venture (38). Sara's energies were thrown into a number of similar "amusements" in 1825 and 1826, including the study of theology, an attempt to translate Cervantes, and tedious work on a catalog of Southey's library, which included roughly 6,000 volumes (38-9).

Sara Coleridge's intellectual pursuits were impressive and made her a progressive example of the ever evolving role of women in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, traditionalists still believed that, while reading in itself was not an inappropriate amusement for women, some texts were preferable to others. In *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A dangerous recreation*, author Jacqueline Pearson identifies some of these preferred texts: devotional works, the Bible, biographies, memoirs, Shakespeare,

and scientific works on botany. [6] Sara Coleridge's course of study, which included Latin and works of philosophy and metaphysics, certainly did not fit into the parameters described above. In spite of shifting views of the role of women during this time, or perhaps because of them, the young Sara was well received and loved by those who met her and had the privilege of experiencing her vast intellect.

While what was traditionally considered "proper" for women certainly did not deter Mrs. Coleridge, her sisters, or Robert Southey from providing their daughters and nieces with a top rate education, it did put Mrs. Coleridge on the defensive when Sara's education was a topic of discussion. In her letters, Mrs. Coleridge often insisted that Sara was not studying too much, and her health problems were not related to her study habits. Mrs. Coleridge's November 7, 1821 letter to Thomas Poole on the subject of the publication of the Dobrizhoffer text provides a good example of her defensive posturing. She relates the process by which Sara took over the translation, saying,

> When Sara found a stop was put to it, she felt disappointed, and said, she liked the employment 'of all things', and her uncle approving of her specimen, said, if she chose, to finish it, at her *leisure*, she might, but she must not be disappointed if nothing was gained by it, and she must *not work too hard.*
>
> My dear M[r] Poole you must not imagine that Sara's health has suffered from too intense application to this work, for I am happy to say she is at present in better health than I have ever known her, and so fond is she of literary employments that she feels quite at a loss for her last winter's amusement. (*Minnow* 89-90)

Mrs. Coleridge seems overly concerned that outsiders may view Sara's studies negatively. Her overt attempts to prove otherwise suggest that she needed to convince herself of the benefit of Sara's work as much as she wanted to convince others of the truth of her statements.

[6] See Pearson, pages 43-4, 52, 58-9, 62, 67, 69, 77, and 82-3.

Sara Coleridge did indeed experience good health while engaged with the Dobrizhoffer translation. Such was not the case, however, when she translated Chevalier Bayards's memoirs. During this time, she developed an eye infection that prevented her from extensive study. Mrs. Coleridge described the illness to Thomas Poole: "She has been afflicted for the last 6 months with a weakness in her eyes, which, to her, is one of the greatest afflictions that could befall her, inasmuch, as she is not permitted to use them above half the day, so that the other half is passed in dejection and sometimes in tears, which increases the weakness" (*Minnow* 110). While the cause of Sara's eye infection is unknown, the condition certainly was not improved by her extensive reading, and we can only speculate as to why it lasted for so long. Nevertheless, it seems likely that Sara's studies were at least partially to blame for her illness.

Inevitably, Sara attracted criticism for her scholarly studies and the apparent toll they took on her health. Dorothy Wordsworth complained,

> She is extremely thin. I could not but think of a lily Flower to be snapped by the first blast, when I looked at her delicate form, her fair and pallid cheeks. She is busy with proof sheets,—a labour that she likes,—yet I should be glad if it were over, and she could be employed and amused at the same time without exercising her mind by thought and study. (*Letters of William and Dorothy* 274)

Try as she might, Mrs. Coleridge could not cover up the fact that Sara's health was suffering and that the most obvious cause of her suffering was her studies. Perhaps as Sara's mother, Mrs. Coleridge understood better than anyone that separating Sara from her studies could have far worse effects on her daughter's health than the studying itself, so she persisted in insisting that academic pursuits were not the root cause of Sara's suffering. She only made a direct link to Sara's condition and her scholarly activities by

noting that whenever Sara worked for too long, her otherwise invisible eye condition became apparent (*Minnow* 95).

Between translation projects, Sara and Mrs. Coleridge visited London. The purpose of the trip was to acquaint Sara with her father, whom she barely knew. This journey was destined to be a turning point in young Sara's life; not only did she come to know Samuel Taylor Coleridge better, but she also charmed his friends and met the man who would become her husband, Henry Nelson Coleridge.

Little remains in the Coleridge family letters to inform us the nature of the reunion between father and daughter. In Coleridge's letters, we discover that the pair was with him at Highgate on January 3, 1823 (*CL* 5: 267). He does not reveal more information, but this is understandable given that Sara and Mrs. Coleridge had just arrived. Likewise, Mrs. Coleridge says little about the visit. She does inform Thomas Poole that their meeting produced "the greatest satisfaction to all parties," but this is the extent of her commentary (*Minnow* 99). Coleridge mentions his visitors two more times in his letters, and both times, he begs the recipient's forgiveness for not visiting during his wife and daughter's stay (*CL* 5: 267-8, 5: 271). The later letter, written on March 25, 1823, indicates that Coleridge spent little time with Sara and Mrs. Coleridge, perhaps because their presence reminded him of his marital woes and his inability to support his family. Young Sara's accomplishments certainly attested to the fact that Coleridge's children did not need him to ensure their successes in life.

Sara likely did not miss the companionship of her father during her visit to Highgate. While there, she met two of her cousins, John Taylor and Henry Nelson Coleridge, who had decided to visit their uncle after the Christmas holiday and stayed

long enough to meet the cousin they had heard so much about (Mudge 29). John Taylor and Henry were two sons of Colonel James Coleridge and his wife, Frances Drake Taylor. Henry was born to the couple on October 25, 1798. In 1905, Baron B. J. S. Coleridge described him as "the most brilliant and captivating" son of Colonel Coleridge and stated he had "an irresistible wit, sparkling and pointed, and possessed an ardent love of scholarship and learning, combined with a strong poetic vein" (138). Henry's academic achievements certainly support these claims; he distinguished himself at Eton College and King's College, Cambridge. While at King's College, he ranked second for the university prize in 1819, he won Latin and Greek Ode prizes in 1820, and he won the Greek Ode prize again in 1821. He also earned a fellowship at King's College (138).

Henry was quite struck by his young, beautiful cousin and recounted their meeting in a playful letter to his sister, Fanny, suggesting that a romantic attachment could develop between himself and Sara: "I will engage five to one, she commits waste in the heart of the Special before a week is over; and truly let not the Special despair; he will find this little sylph of Ulleswater sufficiently susceptible, if I do not mistake" (qtd. in Mudge 30). Assuming that Henry is "the Special," he suggests to Fanny that he will pursue Sara, and she will accept his advancements. Henry's statement proved to be accurate; the following March, he wrote in his journal that he and Sara were secretly engaged and decided not to announce their engagement until they were certain their families would not prevent them from marrying (Mudge 30).

Henry Nelson Coleridge revealed the engagement to his father in the summer of 1824, when illness caused him to diverge from his planned visit to the Lake District to see Sara; he was forced to head home to Ottery St. Mary instead. While Sara had

impressed Colonel James Coleridge during her visit the previous spring, he did not approve of the engagement on financial grounds. He knew his brother well enough to know that Sara would be left with nothing, and his son was not in the position to marry a penniless maid (*CF* 48). James Coleridge insisted that Henry break off the engagement, and John Taylor Coleridge was given the task of communicating the news to Sara (Mudge 35). Sara's reaction was not to concede defeat:

> I may be disengaged, but my own feelings will never permit me to think myself so—in the eye of the world I might be justified in bestowing my affections elsewhere, since Henry cannot assure me of his hand as well as his heart; but after what has passed between us, after the vows that we have interchanged, I must ever think that for either of us to make such a transfer while the attachment of the other party remains undiminished, would be a faithless and falsehearted thing . . . . [W]hen I gave my heart to him I gave it for good and all and never will I take it back till I perceive that he is weary of the gift—then I certainly will never trust any of his sex with it again. . . . Such being my feelings . . . nothing that may be said by any one with regard to this affair can have the slightest power to weaken or strengthen them. ("Letter addressed to John Taylor Coleridge" 17 Aug. 1824)

The determination Sara displays in her letter to John Taylor Coleridge is reminiscent of the attitude Mrs. Coleridge took when dealing with S. T. C. in the early years of their marriage. Like her mother, Sara stood by her word and would not be dissuaded from her commitment. Her reaction against the wishes of Henry's family was so strong that they ultimately had to abandon their attempts to separate the couple and accepted the engagement (Mudge 36).

The circumstances of Sara and Henry's engagement and their extended separation during this period created tension for both parties and their families.[7] Three months after responding to John Taylor Coleridge's letter, Sara wrote to Derwent and discussed the

[7] Sara Coleridge and her mother left London on March 5, 1823 to visit family and friends in Ottery St. Mary, Exeter, Bristol, and Nether Stowey. They returned home by the end of June (Mudge 32-33). Sara and Henry were unable to meet again until the end of 1826 (46).

possibility of the two of them living like Charles and Mary Lamb, unmarried siblings who shared a home (Mudge 37). Perhaps she felt doubtful that she and Henry would ever be able to marry. Or maybe she began to understand what the constraints of married life would be like, as Bradford Mudge suggests (37). Whatever the motivation for Sara's statement might have been, it indicates a degree of uncertainty on her part over her impending marriage.

Around this time period, Henry left for the West Indies with his cousin, William Hart Coleridge, who had been appointed as the Bishop of Barbados (*CF* 51). Henry published an account of his travels, *Six Months in the West Indies,* in 1826. This text exacerbated the tension surrounding the young couple, and both families disapproved of the work. In 1826, Hartley wrote to Derwent,

> *Entre nous*—I wish the 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. Ever[y] lover, who has had the education of a gentleman, must be delicate, but our Sariola will require delicacy in a husband. . . . The *Six Months*, is very clever, and tolerably sensible, but there is flippancy, a vulgarity about it, which I cannot esteem. It might have past in a magazine article, written in a feign'd character, but surely it suits not the accredited confidante and relative of a Bishop. Neither do I think he feels sufficiently the moral enormity of the slave system—tho' he has taken a just view of its political tendencies, and suggests many useful palliatives to the evil, which perhaps the wisdom of man cannot totally remove. At all events, he writes temperately, and practically. (*Letters of Hartley Coleridge* 28)

Six Months in the West Indies forms the foundation of Hartley's disapproval of Henry as a mate for his sister. Considering the lack of success in his own love life, Hartley's comments are not those of a man experienced in romantic relationships, but of a concerned brother. Not wishing to end his discussion of Sara's fiancé on a negative note,

he offers Henry the greatest praise he can muster, but his less than enthusiastic praise of Henry's text does not supersede his overall judgment about Henry's suitability for Sara.

Henry's travelogue surprised another member of Sara's family—her father. He had not been informed about Sara's engagement, so one portion of the text caused him alarm. Henry wrote, "I love a cousin; she is such an exquisite relation, just standing between me and the stranger to my name, drawing upon so many sources of love and tieing them all up with every cord of human affection—almost my sister ere my wife" (117). Coleridge confessed his concern over how this passage might be construed to Mrs. Gillman, who revealed that she had heard that Henry and Sara might be romantically involved (*CL* 6: 589). Coleridge quickly sent off a letter to Greta Hall to learn the truth and received answers from both Mrs. Coleridge and Sara. The news was unsettling to him; he did not believe cousins should marry, and, having had his own difficult marriage, he did not want to see his only daughter condemned to the same fate (6: 589-90). But, having separated himself from his family, Coleridge's input was neither invited nor valued in this situation.

Once Sara's engagement was public knowledge, her life began to change. In particular, she was treated differently by her uncle. Always the supporter of her scholarly pursuits, Southey's encouragement began to wane after learning that Sara was to be a married woman. Evidence of Southey's change in attitude lies in his insistence that Sara not attempt to publish her third translation project, the "Memoirs of Jean de Troye"; instead, it was to be an amusing activity, nothing more (Mudge 38). Two reasons could explain Southey's change in attitude—he was concerned about the health of his niece, who had suffered from a variety of ailments while working on the memoirs of Chevalier

Bayard, and he believed that the domestic sphere, not the intellectual realm, was the proper place for a married woman. While we cannot ascertain which of these two issues weighed more heavily upon Southey's mind, he does mention the latter issue in his correspondence. On April 15, 1825, Southey reported the completion of the Bayard text to John Rickman, "Bayard is, as you have guessed, translated by Sara Coleridge, who gives herself wholly up to such employment—not a little (in my judgement) to the disqualifying herself for those duties which she will have to perform whenever she changes from the single to the married state" (*New Letters* 2: 280). He feared that Sara, who preferred study to any of the traditional female vocations, was not ready to fulfill all the tasks required of a wife and likely wanted to avoid exacerbating the situation.

Southey was not the only person concerned about Sara's ability to step into her newly chosen role. Sara herself seemed to be aware that her interests might interfere with her duty to her husband. She wrote to Henry in 1827, "My childish and girlish castles in the air are now exchanged for others which have you for their object—to contribute to your daily comfort and pleasure—that is the early goal towards which all my hopes and wishes are turned" ("Letter addressed to Henry Nelson Coleridge"). Just prior to their marriage, she expressed similar sentiments, saying, "hereafter it will be my pride as well as my duty to comply with your wishes, and you, beloved, will, I trust, be happier and more satisfied than you have hitherto had cause to be" (qtd. in *CF* 63). Over the course of the two years that these letters span, Sara worked to reassure Henry that she would be fully committed to her husband as a married woman. Her concern is not surprising; inevitably, the fears of those around her would raise questions in Sara's mind about her

fitness in the domestic role. She clearly felt that she needed to alleviate any concerns Henry might have, and perhaps relieve her own fears.

The concerns about Sara's domestic abilities did not prevent her from finally marrying Henry Nelson Coleridge on September 3, 1829, six years after their engagement. By this time, their families had come to accept their decision to marry, and Henry had secured employment, thus proving his ability to support a wife (Mudge 50). Mrs. Coleridge was the only member of Sara's immediate family who attended the wedding; she described her daughter's wedding day in a letter to Thomas Poole approximately three weeks after the event:

> Henry is . . . full of thankfulness for the manner in which everything was conducted to do them honour on the important day, which happened to be fair, *all through* for a wonder; M^{R} John Wordsworth performed the ceremony—M^{R} Southey gave the bride away—M^{R} Senhouse with his 4 young ladies, (bride's maids) Gen^{l} and M^{rs} Peachey with my sister Martha and all our girls, making 8 brides maids including Dora Wordsworth. (*Minnow* 153)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was too sick to make the journey to the Lake District for Sara's wedding, and the event received only a cursory mention in his correspondence.[8] Two years prior to the Sara's wedding, however, he received a presentation copy of Virgil's *Georgics* from William Sotheby. Writing to thank Sotheby for the gift, he also revealed his future intentions for the text,

> it shall be . . . a[n] Heirloom in my Family; which I shall, D V, deliver to my Daughter on her Wedding Day—as the most splendid way, that I can command, of marking my sense of the Talent and Industry, that have made her Mistress of the Six Languages comprized in the Volume, and of the fine Taste and genial sentiment which will ensure her selecting the English and the German Versions, as (in the only two legitimate kinds of poetic translation) carrying the transfusion of the Spirit and Individuality of a Poet, each in it's kind, to the highest point of Perfection—. And I shall

[8] In September of 1829, he mentioned that his nephew, Henry Nelson Coleridge, was now his son-in-law (*CL* 6: 819).

> make this Bequest the more willingly, that in all present probability my dear Sara, whose worst fault is that of tempting her Parents to be proud of her, will change her maiden state (whenever that may be) without changing her maiden name. (*CL* 6: 691-2)

While Coleridge was not present to deliver the *Georgics* to Sara on her wedding day, he looked forward to delivering the text to his newly married daughter, paying tribute to her intelligence, accomplishments, and tastes and memorializing the occasion of her wedding. His sentiments revealed the pride he felt for the daughter he barely knew and suggest that he believed she would continue with her intellectual pursuits after she was married.

Sara's life changed dramatically after her marriage to Henry Nelson Coleridge. She moved from her childhood home in the Lake District to the bustling city of London. Separated from family and lifelong friends, she found that she was disconnected from the intellectual life she enjoyed in her home at Greta Hall. To Mrs. Coleridge, Sara's new living conditions were most distressing; she shared her concerns with Thomas Poole prior to Sara's marriage, saying,

> it seems her lot to dwell [in town]; which w^{d} be no matter of regret to either of us, if she were a strong woman, and had not such decided habits fitting her for a quiet life in the country. A Barrister's wife sees but little of her husband, so that Sara will be transported from a *too* bustling family, to one of utter loneliness, except from occasional visitors—she thinks she shall find plenty of employ, and amusement, for her leisure and I pray that she may find it so. (*Minnow* 147)

While Sara had indeed quitted the "quiet life in the country" in order to marry Henry, she was not alone in London for long. Sara learned that she was pregnant several months after her marriage. Desiring the assistance of family to help her through this major life change, she sent for her mother, who was living with Derwent and his wife Mary in

Helston at the time. Pregnancy became a defining element of Sara's life during this period; she was pregnant six more times over the course of ten years (Mudge 55).

Scholars have speculated that these pregnancies, and the many new responsibilities that accompanied her roles of wife and mother, caused the other defining element of Sara's life at this stage—physical and mental deterioration.[9] After joining Sara and Henry in London, Mrs. Coleridge was able to observe firsthand the new life of her daughter: "house orders, suckling, dress and undress, walking, serving, homing visits and receiving, with very little study of Greek, Latin, and English, (no weeping) make up the role of her busy day—and her dear little soul lays down a weary head at night upon her peaceful pillow" (qtd. in *CF* 77). Indeed, Sara must have been wearied by the numerous responsibilities that comprised her day. She may also have felt weary as the result of not engaging in the intellectual activities to which she had become accustomed. In 1832, her situation turned severe and she experienced a mental breakdown. Sara's doctor recommended that she be removed from her home, so the whole family traveled to the sea. The trip itself was more than Sara could bear; by her mother's account, she fled from the carriage at each stop and paced in distraction. Sara consumed numerous doses of opium to help alleviate her suffering once settled at their destination in Brighton, but, according to Mrs. Coleridge's reports, it seemed to do her more harm than good.[10] Her appetite was minimal, as was her ability to care for her family in this state (*Minnow* 170-1). Sara ignored her children on family outings Henry arranged for them on the heath (172). Try as they might, Mrs. Coleridge and Henry could not help Sara overcome her

[9] Sara Coleridge gave birth to a healthy boy, Herbert Coleridge, on October 7, 1830 (*Minnow* 163). A second child, Edith, was born on July 2, 1832 (*CF* 74).

[10] Like her father, Sara became dependent on opium as the result of using it to treat a variety of physical ailments.

mental breakdown. Business ultimately called Henry away from Brighton, and Hebert and Edith were sent away to be cared for by servants. Mrs. Coleridge was left alone to tend to her daughter and accompany her back to London when her health stabilized (171).

The following year brought no improvement in Sara's condition. She and her mother were still separated from Henry and the children. An attempt to move Sara proved unsuccessful; her body was too weak to endure travel (175). When Mrs. Coleridge was finally able to take her daughter home, she reported a newly discovered "resource" that she hoped would assist in Sara's recovery:

> we brought her [Sara] home in an horizontal position which fatigued her less than on going: she Is still in a very weak and low condition; utterly helpless; always on the Sofa, & reading from morning to night. Of course, so much reading is bad for the eyes if they sh[d] get as bad as they, once, were she must give up this last *resource* an[d] if she should get any weaker than she now is, she will not be able to hold up the books: we shall be broken-down, *indeed*, if this shd. happen. (178)

Mrs. Coleridge hoped that study would help Sara to return to the state she was in prior to being overwhelmed by domestic concerns. In her invalid state, Sara is able to devote the better part of her day to her studies as she once did before she left Greta Hall. Reading becomes an acceptable treatment for Sara's illness and escape from the monotony of her daily life and domestic duties.

Bradford Keyes Mudge describes this period of Sara's madness as one of the means she employed to revolt against the restricting confines of matrimony and motherhood and justify intellectual pursuits that normally stood outside the bounds of acceptable female employment. But within this period of psychological decline, we also find that she undertook, for the first time, writing projects that directly related to her duties "feminine duties" as a wife and mother. Sara spent the spring and summer months of 1834 writing educational poetry for her children and, upon her husband's insistence,

chose a number of them to publish in a small volume of poetry entitled *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children.* The book, published in September of 1834, was a success and went through five editions in five years (Mudge 65). Baron B. J. S. Coleridge stated that it was the "most delightful of child's books, which fascinated a whole generation of the English young" (149). An examination of this work for children will show us how she adapted her new roles as wife and mother to her interest in scholarly pursuits. Furthermore, it stands as evidence that she did indeed establish herself apart from her father's legacy and her editorial labors to preserve his works.

Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children is an outgrowth of Sara Coleridge's motherly duties. The volume, which is dedicated to her eldest child, contains poetic lessons on Latin, the seasons, days of the week, spelling, and the like.[11] It also contains numerous moral lessons and guidelines for behavior. For example, "The Usurping Bird," who steals the home of a toad to make its nest and ends up losing his eggs, his mate, and his life, teaches readers "'Tis wicked to injure the meanest of creatures; / Tyrannical tempers we all should control, / Nor even expel an old Toad from his hole" (38-40).[12] Other lessons reflect specific concerns that Sara Coleridge had about Herbert's behavior; in "Behavior at Meals," he receives the following instruction:

> At meals my dear boy must be good and obedient,
> Nor must he be ever requesting to taste
> Each savoury dish and expensive ingredient,
> Nor play with his dinner and half of it waste.
>
> At table he never must whisper and giggle;

[11] One of Sara poems from this collection is still popular in our day. "The Months" was republished as a children's book under the title of "January Brings the Snow" in the late 1980s.

[12] The final line also contains a clever play on words. "Toad in the hole" also refers to a dish of sausage baked in batter that was popular with children and is another name for various games, including hide-and-seek.

He gently may smile but not noisily laugh,
Nor fidget about and reach over and wriggle,
Nor must he expect wine and porter to quaff.

Content he must be with plain nourishing diet,
His drink must be water, and milk from the cow;
He ought to be thankful to those who supply it—
He's not even able to earn his salt now.

Poems such as these reflect a mother's concern for the manners and welfare of her child. Through them, Sara Coleridge attempts to ensure that her son's conduct is suited to that of good children. These concerns are distant from the concerns she had before marrying, when her days were taken up with leisurely study. Nevertheless, Sara still finds that, as a mother, she can voice her interests in print. She surely did not apply as much intellectual prowess to her volume of poetry as she did to her translations, but her educational verses did permit her to maintain an authorial identity and remain an active member of the literary marketplace.

This newfound authorial identity also allowed Sara to communicate more than educational lessons for Herbert; she used this new channel of expression to convey her own fears and insecurities. "Poppies" best exemplifies how her educational poetry becomes personal. In the poem, Sara contrasts Herbert's indifferent regard for poppies to her view of the flower.

O! how shouldst thou, with beaming brow,
With eye and cheek so bright,
Know aught of that gay blossom's power,
Or sorrows of the night?

When poor Mama long restless lies,
She drinks the poppy's juice;
That liquor soon can close her eyes,
And slumber soft produce:

O then my sweet, my happy boy

Will thank the Poppy-flower,
Which brings the sleep to dear Mama,
At midnight's darksome hour. (13-24)

Like her father, Sara struggled with opium addiction. She began experimenting with the drug after she suffered an eye ailment during her work on the Bayard translation (Mudge 36). Her letters from this period reveal both her guilt over using the drug as a sleep aid and her thankfulness for its assistance in comforting her through her illnesses (37). By the mid 1830s, however, the period of Sara's mental collapse and her composition of *Pretty Lessons in Verse*, she was fully addicted to the drug and feeling guilt for her inability to discontinue its use (63-4).

In "Poppies," we find that Sara both fears and respects the drug. By comparing her opinions of poppies to those Herbert has of the plant, she can see an appropriate, innocent response to poppies, a perspective that she desires to have. Through the course of the poem, however, she seeks to educate Herbert on her need for opium instead of adopting his disinterested views. She assures Herbert—or, more appropriately, she assures herself—that if he had any understanding of her nocturnal suffering, he would praise the drug along with her. Presumably, Sara seeks Herbert's approval to validate her own guilty indulgences.

Bradford Keyes Mudge argues that "Poppies" "suggests a causal relationship between Herbert's health and his mother's illness, between his pampered innocence and her misery" (66). He sees the poem as a sort of accusation against Herbert and a chance to educate him on the cost of his youthful happiness. While the contrast between mother and son that Mudge emphasizes is clear, the lesson Mudge believes this poem offers Herbert seems less so. Rather than linking her suffering to her son's innocence, Sara widens the gulf between them by creating a contrast. Herbert represents what Sara

desires to be—carefree and happy. If Sara cannot achieve his state of innocence, she believes she can at least win his approval and acceptance of her growing drug habit and find relief from her ambivalence, just as opium brings her relief of her physical suffering.[13]

The contrast between Sara's suffering and Herbert's carefree bliss recurs throughout *Pretty Lessons in Verse.* She returns to the topic in "The Happy Little Sleeper," where she reflects upon how quickly Herbert can fall into a deep slumber. This subject leads Sara to reflect upon her own experience of sleep, "In vain she shuts her eyelids close, / For cruel sleep still flies" (7-8). Sara finds solace from her sleeplessness by reflecting on her son.

> O then, at midnight's silent hour,
> What can her thoughts employ?
> She thinks of him she loves so well—
> Her little joyous boy:
> She prays, that he, for many a year,
> Thus cozy in his nest,
> May sweetly sleep, and cheerful wake,
> With health and spirits blest. (9-16)

The solace available to Sara in these recollections does nothing to remedy her circumstances. Her insomnia remains, but she seems to find comfort in the fact that Herbert can rest happily. His peace validates her efforts as a mother, proving that she has ensured the maintenance of his innocence, in spite of her own struggles with addiction and mental deterioration. She can look to Herbert and see an image of success among her many struggles.

[13] Ironically, Sara's choice to include "Poppies" in *Pretty Lessons in Verse* did not win Sara the approval of her family. They feared the thinly veiled references to drug use would further damage the family name, which had already been tainted by S. T. C.'s widely known struggles to give up his own opium habit. Sara later came to regret her choice to include this poem in the volume (Mudge 67).

The theme is repeated in "The Blessing of Health." But here, illness is experienced by the child, not the mother. Sara creates an imagined scenario where the child is confined to his bed, and the experience causes him to appreciate what he has lost, his ability to enjoy nature, to breathe fresh air, and to wander through the meadows. Sara notes that these pleasures belong to the healthy and happy. She urges Herbert to make the most of his youth and health: "Then Herbert, my child, to the meadows repair, / Make hay while it shines, and enjoy the fresh air, / Till age sets his seal on your brow" (28-30).

For Sara, the lessons of "The Blessing of Health" were not simply aimed at helping Herbert to appreciate his youth, happiness, and health. The lessons were personal as well. In her youth, Sara was able to revel in nature. She was raised in the Lake District, and she, more so than her son, could attest to the joy that nature imparts. The onset of her physical ailments deprived her of this enjoyment. In her case, her loss came at a young age. "The Blessing of Health" attempts to spare Herbert from the unpleasant realizations she faced by bringing the pangs that accompany lost health and physical freedom into his consciousness before he has to experience these circumstances for himself. Sara hopes that her exhortations to her son will help him appreciate his youth.

Sara's position as the experienced teacher, in contrast to Herbert's role as the carefree child in the poem, also communicates Sara's feelings of envy. A sense of longing to return to the days before illness and confinement characterized her world is present throughout "The Blessing of Health." We might be tempted to interpret her envy as resentment toward Herbert and those like him who cannot fully understand the gift that youth and health gives them. While a case can be made to demonstrate that she resents her child, I return to the final lines of the poem, where Sara attempts to educate Herbert

on his blessed state. These lines reflect Sara's motherly concern that Herbert experience his childhood to the fullest. She does not deliver her final message with irony, but with the expectation that Herbert will take advice from an older and more experienced, trusted adult from whom he has much to learn. In this poem, as in our other examples, the concerns of a mother outweigh the feelings of jealousy that accompany them.

The final poem in *Pretty Lessons in Verse* provides a good summary for Sara's expressions of suffering and grief in and among these educational verses. "Childish Tears" contrasts the sorrow that children and adults experience. For the child, grief requires simple solutions—a kiss, a hug, or encouraging words. The same is not true for the adult.

> Tears that fall from older eyes
> From a deeper source arise;
> When those bitter waters flow
> May my child his Saviour know—
> May he find the best relief
> For the worst of earthly grief!
>
> Man was made to mourn and weep,
> Doom'd the fruits of toil to reap;
> When my child has learnt the truth
> Of his heritage of ruth,
> May he humbly, meekly pray,
> "Jesus wipe my tears away!
>
> Teach my heart a worthier sorrow
> Strength and comfort let me borrow
> For the bitter strife within—
> Strife of weakness and of sin;
> Gracious Master, make me prize
> Happiness beyond the skies!" (13-30)

While the title indicates that the contrast between a child and an adult's suffering is the central focus of the poem, the final stanzas show us a different focal point. There, Sara Coleridge reveals humanity's true purpose: to mourn. This message explains why Sara

continually underscores Herbert's carefree state and why she encourages him to revel in it; eventually, he must come to terms with an adult reality that is full of suffering and grief. Sara hopes that, in this state, Herbert can turn to prayer and lean on his God for comfort. She also wants her son to be able to appreciate happiness during adulthood, when his spirits cannot be so easily revived by the things he enjoyed as a child.

To reduce Sara's personal revelations in *Pretty Lessons in Verse* to accusations against Herbert or to simple expressions of envy is to misunderstand the overall message the collection conveys to him, namely, that childhood is fleeting and must be enjoyed to its fullest before it slips away. Furthermore, while the adult does not easily attain happiness, it is possible to reach through faith and prayer, and memories of a happy childhood can supplement the adult's experience of joy in an otherwise sorrowful world. Such a message represents a mother's concern that her son grow to be a faithful man who is not consumed by the world, but who understands how to function in it.

The popularity of *Pretty Lessons in Verse* has already been demonstrated through its publication history. But as a collection intended for a specific audience, young Herbert Coleridge, its success as a book of educational poems depends, more specifically, on his educational progress. He followed in his father's footsteps and studied at Eton, where his uncle, Reverend Edward Coleridge, was headmaster. While there, he won the Newcastle scholarship and other prizes for accomplishment in classics (J. D. Coleridge 57). Of his abilities, cousin John Duke Coleridge said, "He had a great power of rapid and accurate apprehension, and a very strong memory. And thus, as a boy at school and a young man at college, he surprised his contemporaries by the vigorous grasp with which he held an amount of classical and other learning altogether unusual in one so young"

(57). Herbert went on to Balliol College, Oxford after Eton and received a double first-class in mathematics and classics in 1852 (E. Coleridge par. 1).

After leaving Balliol, Herbert pursued law and was called to the bar in 1854 (J. D. Coleridge 58). He used his free time to pursue his interests in philology, studying languages as varied as Icelandic and Sanskrit. Herbert became a member of the Philological Society in 1857, and, after hearing a paper on the deficiencies in the standard English dictionaries written by Samuel Johnson and John Richardson, he offered his services to help produce a supplement to these dictionaries. He was appointed as the editor of the literary and historical portion of the project and produced the *Glossorial Index to the Printed English Literature of the Thirteenth Century* (1859) with the help of a number of volunteers (59). Herbert described this work as "the foundation-stone" for the Philological Society's ongoing project (E. Coleridge par. 2). In addition, he coordinated the various contributions to the text and created a list of modern words to be added to the dictionary (J. D. Coleridge 59).

Herbert Coleridge's involvement in the Philological Society's venture to update the extant English dictionaries should not be underestimated. His enthusiasm for the work ultimately resulted in the accumulation of duties equivalent to those of a general editor (E. Coleridge par. 2). And while he did not live to see the completed project, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles; Founded Mainly on the Materials Collected by the Philological Society*, falling victim to consumption in 1861, he was one of the chief architects of the work (J. D. Coleridge 59). This dictionary was later known as the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

The brief life of Herbert Coleridge clearly illustrates his academic prowess, which he owed, in part, to the efforts of his mother to educate him as a young boy. It also demonstrates that Sara Coleridge's home school curriculum, of which *Pretty Lessons in Verse* is an example, was successful as an educational tool for children. It achieved its purpose for Herbert's early education and laid the foundation for future success. As with her earlier forays into the world of academic publishing, Sara Coleridge found a niche in the world of publishing that was accessible to educated married women surrounded by people of influence, as she was. She was perhaps more successful as a poetess of educational verses because her work had a wider appeal than the translations she completed as a young woman. Such opportunity was granted to her as a result of her new roles of wife and mother, not in spite of them. And while Sara Coleridge may not have felt comfortable in these roles, she found that she was still able to pursue activities she enjoyed, though to a lesser degree and for a new purpose, educating her children.

Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children represents a much overlooked facet of the authorial work of Sara Coleridge. By and large, critics have been interested in her editorial labors on her father's work, what new information it reveals about S. T. C., how it has served to rescue him from his detractors, or how it speaks to Sara's status as an editor. Others interested in her editorial labors reference this work to draw attention to the plight of women in the nineteenth century, claiming that the only avenues of expression available to them were in the service of male relatives and using Sara Coleridge as an example of a gifted writer who did not have a voice of her own. While the work she performed in service of her father was invaluable, it was not the only mode of expression available to her, nor did it narrowly define her authorial life. Pulled out

from underneath her father's shadow, we find that Sara Coleridge's contribution to the nineteenth century extended beyond her editorial labors. Her accomplishments were limited, no doubt, by her position as a woman in the nineteenth century, but to lesser degree than the average woman of her day. Also, the potential limitations posed on her by her roles of wife and mother did not cause her to give up her academic interests, nor did they prohibit her from written self-expression. Indeed, *Pretty Lessons in Verse* is a unique expression of Sara Coleridge's individual talents as a thinker, as a writer, and as a mother that has been widely overlooked.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Rethinking our perceptions of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the avenues by which we have come to know him as a writer, a thinker, and a person is a work in progress. The process was initiated by Molly Lefebure's *The Bondage of Love*, which reexamined the relationship between Coleridge and his wife. In the process, Lefebure opened scholars' eyes to the numerous inconsistencies that existed in S. T. C.'s portrayal of his wife to his friends. Scholars can no longer simply view Mrs. Coleridge as the nagging, unsympathetic woman he described. Rather, we now know her as a long suffering woman who wished to maintain her family and keep her husband out of the clutches of opium addiction.

Similar revisionary work must be done to correct scholars' misperceptions regarding the relationship between Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his children. The Coleridge children were raised in the shadow of their father, a Lake Poet in his own generation and a major figure of what would be later called Romanticism according to the Victorians' estimation of his work. His reputation was also tainted by allegations of plagiarism and his well-known battle with opium addiction. This legacy was passed on to Coleridge's children, who, while they bore his name, barely knew him. Their experience of him was limited to the early years of their childhood, when he entered and exited their lives on a whim. As the children neared adulthood, they depended on the

kindness of family friends to secure their future. Their father had abandoned them, and others fulfilled his role.

Nevertheless, the children of Samuel Taylor Coleridge were expected to live up to the standards that their father had set. In their own lifetimes, those closest to the Coleridge family believed that the children had inherited their father's genius and escaped from his vices. As a result, they were expected to succeed as thinkers and writers. One by one, however, the children fell short of these expectations; Hartley lost his Oriel fellowship, Derwent chose to break ties with his family and go his own way after college, and Sara experienced nervous breakdowns and suffered from opium addiction. By all appearances, the Coleridge children did not live up to the legacy of genius that their father had left behind.

Scholars have made similar assumptions about the Coleridge children. Having wholeheartedly embraced Samuel Taylor Coleridge's importance to literary history, scholars have attributed many of the accomplishments and failures of his children specifically to their father. None of the children have shown themselves to be comparable to their father in their literary output or prose works. Hence, they have been largely ignored in literary scholarship, or their value has been based on the degree of information they can reveal about their father's career and successes. Even those few scholars who have taken a specific interest in one or more of S. T. C.'s children are guilty of relegating them to a secondary position behind the genius of their father.[1]

[1] In *Hartley Coleridge: His Life and Work*, Earl Leslie Griggs deems Hartley's poetic output to be inferior to his father's. Sara Coleridge was treated in a similar manner; Griggs called her a minor figure in *Coleridge Fille: A Biography of Sara Coleridge*, and even Bradford Mudge portrays her as a figure who did not achieve a full degree of success because her literary career was established in service to her father's literary achievements.

While the tendency of scholars to link the work of Hartley, Derwent, and Sara Coleridge directly to the legacy of their father is understandable given the immediate bonds of heredity and family life that are present, this tendency has done a disservice to our understanding of the value and importance of Coleridge's children to the Victorian age. Also, it overlooks the facts of the dynamics of the Coleridge family. Recognizing that S. T. C. had little interaction with his children and preferred the company of his friends, and their children, should by no means cause us to value Samuel Taylor Coleridge's work less, nor should it lead to feelings of pity for his family members. On the contrary, while none of the Coleridges had a perfect life, they all experienced success of varying degrees during their lifetimes and were fondly remembered by those close to them when they died. These successes and the contribution each made to his or her age, apart from our presumptions of what "success" and "contribution" mean for the children of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and as opposed to the information Hartley, Derwent, and Sara might contribute to our understanding of their father, should be scholars' point of focus. We now understand that this information is limited at best, and it will contribute little to scholarship on the Coleridge family.

In this dissertation, we have learned much about the Coleridge children that has remained hidden or received little attention from contemporary scholars by breaking the presumed associations between father and child. Hartley, who has commonly been conceived of as his father's mirror image, conditioned by his father's influence but becoming a lesser poet than his teacher, remains the awkward son lacking in self confidence. Of all of S. T. C.'s children, he was least successful at breaking away from his father's shadow. We see, however, that this state was the result of Hartley's personal

choice to be a perpetual child. He preferred this stage of life to any other because it represented a period when he was adored by all and had no responsibilities, where failure could not harm him and he could not disappoint those closest to him. In Hartley's poetry, we find the literary expression of his choice and the consequences he is unwilling to accept. Hartley is the quintessential image of the child who refuses to become an adult, preferring instead to remain under his parents' wings.

Thus, Hartley provides us with unique insight into what the "Romantic child" might be like. While no Romantic poet was able to maintain his child self into adulthood, Hartley intentionally did so, at least in so far as behavior is concerned. His poetry reveals he had mature powers of analysis, however, that allowed him to evaluate his position as a man/child. One of the shortcomings Hartley reveals in his reflective moments was that he was limited in his ability to communicate mature expressions of emotion through his poetry, a skill the Romantics valued, suggesting that a balance between childhood and adulthood in the poet may not be as desirable as the Romantics envisioned. Furthermore, Hartley's analytic moments in his poetry lead him to conclude that he was a mediocre poet and caused him to discredit his own work. He relegated himself to a secondary status behind his literary fathers, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. Literary scholars have happily followed suit and studied him not because of the quality of his work but because of his family connections and personal quirks. Hartley's work has only very recently been considered worthy of closer examination.[2]

Derwent chose a different path from the one his brother took. He left home as soon as he was able, eager to break ties from the father who left him without provisions

[2] Andrew Keanie attempts to demonstrate the value of Hartley Coleridge's poetic work and his place within Romanticism in his revisionary work, *Hartley Coleridge: A Reassessment of his Life and Work.*

for his future, and eventually settled into a career in education. His decision to leave home and be an educator, not a writer, have led literary scholars to overlook his life and work as an object for study. Unfortunately, Derwent's contribution to other Victorian literary figures, Charles Kingsley in particular, has been all but forgotten as a result. Furthermore, the role that he played in the development of the English education system has been little explored and undervalued. Derwent was also indirectly involved in literary production during his lifetime as an editor of the literature of friends and family. Had he not wished to pay tribute to those he loved, history might have forgotten or misunderstood the literary works of Hartley Coleridge, Winthrop Praed, and John Moultrie.

Considering the reach of Derwent Coleridge's influence and the role he played as an educator and an editor during the Victorian age, it appears that his decision to remove himself from the Coleridge family circle for a time was a wise choice. He gave himself the opportunity to forge his own path into the world without all the trappings of family expectations tied to it. Furthermore, distance from Greta Hall and Highgate ensured that Derwent had the ability to focus on the difficult tasks before him, schoolmaster, clergyman, husband, and father, apart from the stresses that often accompanied his position as a child of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In choosing to fend for himself, Derwent carved out a successful life.

Sara Coleridge faced more challenges than her brothers did. While she clearly inherited the intellectual gifts of her father, her position as a woman imposed limitations on her ability to exercise these intellectual gifts and form an authorial identity. While many women had successful literary careers in the nineteenth century, they sometimes

faced mixed reviews for transgressing traditional gender roles. In addition, some women felt pressured by their own family circles to live up to preconceived ideas of feminine behavior. Sara Coleridge was no exception. Scholars, referencing the criticism she faced as a female intellectual and writer, have tended to argue that Sara was compelled to edit her father's works, not simply to salvage and establish his literary reputation for the Victorians and beyond, but to meet the social demands of her gender.

This argument has led scholars to conclude that Sara's editorial labors caused her to sacrifice an authorial identity apart from her father. But we have seen that this is not the case. Rather, she was able to enter into a new authorial role as a direct result of her position as a wife and mother, and she experienced much success with the primary work she produced, *Pretty Lessons in Verse.* Through it, she established herself as a legitimate author with a legitimate poetic voice, enabling her to push the bounds of what was considered appropriate topics for children's educational works. Sara was able to appropriate the text to her own desires, communicating her weaknesses, struggles, and desires for her own children in a manner that was palatable to the reading public.

Drawing the Coleridge children out from under the shadow of their father reveals that they accomplished much in their individual lives. The role they played in repairing and defining their father's status as a writer and thinker has received the most attention by scholars and, consequently, has contributed to their relative obscurity today. Nonetheless, scholars can and should revise they approach they take to Hartley, Derwent, and Sara Coleridge, for their individual accomplishments are worthy of further investigation and will contribute to our understanding of the Romantic and Victorian ages. It is time to move past questions of influence related to the Coleridge family name

and look forward to the individual merit and value of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's children.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

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Portion of a letter from Derwent Coleridge to Moultrie, where Derwent ends his relationship with Moultrie, Derwent Coleridge MS
Portion of an undated letter from Derwent to Mary Pridham, an attempt to describe the nature of his religious faith, Derwent Coleridge MS
Letter dated 29 March 1834 to Henry Nelson Coleridge, quote line in reference to Charles Kingsley, Derwent Coleridge MS
Letter dated 20 Jan 1824, Sara Coleridge to John Taylor Coleridge, quote portion where she describes her infatuation with the hero in the Bayard translation, Sara Coleridge Coleridge MS
Letter dated 17 Aug 1824, Sara Coleridge to John Taylor Coleridge, quote in response to family's attempt to end her engagement with HNC, Sara Coleridge Coleridge MS
Letter dated 9 Feb 1827, Sara Coleridge to Henry Nelson Coleridge, quote stating she is wholly committed to being his wife, Sara Coleridge Coleridge MS

Please provide publication information below:

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