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A Panegyric on Woman.

Read directly, then read first and third, and second and fourth lines of each verse, and lo! the difference:

The bliss of him no tongue can tell,
Who in a woman doth confide;
Who with a woman scorns to dwell,
Unnumbered evils will betide.

They make the daily path of life
A pleasant journey strewed with flowers;
A dreary scene of painful strife,
They quickly change with matchless powers.

Domestic joys will fast decay
Where female influence is unknown;
Where'er a woman holds the sway,
A man is in perfection shown.

She's never failing to display
The truth in all its loveliness;
A heart inclined to treachery
A woman never did possess.

That man true dignity will find
Who tries the matrimonial state;
Who pours contempt on womankind,
Will mourn his folly when too late.

Coleridge.

Day by day the conviction grows upon me, that by far the deepest and noblest mind of which the world has been possessed during the last hundred years, is that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He has left very inadequate monuments of his genius, but all that bears his impress is of a kind so massive, so select, so absolute, that we look in vain for its parallel in any single individual. As a metaphysician he is in the very front rank: as a poet he has few actual superiors, and had exclusive attention been given to poetry, he had capability enough to have mounted to a seat beside the highest name in any department; as a theoretical politician (he never could have descended to the personal exposure and destructive expedients of office-hunting) he is unsurpassed; as a literary critic, I believe it fair to say he has no peer; and as a scholar who died a Christian, he has claim to universal admiration. "I think," most irreverently said Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, "with all his faults, old Sam was more of a great man than any one who has lived within the four seas in my memory." (Life of Arnold, 2d vol.)

To most youth, with immature faculties, the writings of Coleridge are found to be too profound and abstract, for pleasant reading. But I have thought, that by selecting from his writings, at various times, some specimens of his peculiar and original wisdom, I may induce the ablest of our students to attempt the study of books that will yield a finer and truer cultivation, especially of the critical faculty, than any others with which I am familiar.

These two well-recognized canons of poetic style were suggested by Coleridge:

1st. That not the poem which we have read, but that to which we return, with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power, and claims the name of essential poetry. 2d. "That whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction."

In matters of controversy he made it his habit never to drive at his antagonist pell-mell, from the very outset, but "To assign the grounds of my belief, rather than the belief itself; and not to express dissent, till I could establish some points of complete sympathy, some grounds common to both sides, from which to commence its explanation." This is the only way to be moderate, and to convince.

"Praises to the undeserving," he says, "are felt by ardent minds as robberies of the deserving."

Again, "He who tells me that there are defects in a new work, tells me nothing which I should not have taken for granted without his information. But he who points out and elucidates the beauties of an original work, does indeed give me interesting information, such as experience would not have authorized me in anticipating." This does not apply to works not original and meritorious.

He states the principle of Des Cartes system to be, "That contemporaneous impressions, whether images or sensations, recall each other mechanically."

He discriminates between theory and hypothesis thus: "Aristotle delivers a just theory without pretending to an hypothesis; of the other words a comprehensive survey of different facts, and of their relation to each other without supposition."

A remarkable paragraph on the *body celestial* and the *body terrestrial* runs thus: "This authenticated case furnishes both proof and instance, that *religues of sensation* may exist for an indefinite time in a latent state, in the very same order in which they were impressed; * * * that all thoughts are in themselves imperishable; and, that if the intelligent faculty should be rendered more comprehensive, it would require only a different and apportioned organization—the *body celestial* instead of the *body terrestrial*—to bring before every human soul the collective experience of its whole past existence. And this, this, perchance, is the dread book of judgment, in the mysterious hieroglyphics of which every idle word is recorded! Yea, in the very nature of a living spirit, it may be more possible that heaven and earth should pass away, than that a single act, a single thought, should be loosened or lost from that living chain of causes, with all the links of which, conscious or unconscious, the free-will, our only absolute Self, is co-extensive and co-present."

"The faith which saves and sanctifies is a collective energy, a total act of the whole moral being; its living sensorium is the heart; and no errors of the understanding can be morally arraigned unless they have proceeded from the heart. But whether they be such no man can be certain in the case of another, scarcely perhaps even in his own. Hence it follows by inevitable consequence, that *man may perchance determine what is heresy; but God only can know who is a heretic*. It does not, however, by any means follow that opinions fundamentally false are harm-

less. * * * * The sting of an adder remains venomous, though there are many who have taken up the evil thing and it hurted them not." This is certainly applicable to the Boston school of thought to-day. For those who embrace false systems "with a full view of all moral and religious consequences," that is to say, from preference, Coleridge held that "discipline, not argument," was the only remedy. "They must be made better men, before they can become wiser."
"Veracity does not consist in saying, but in the *intention* of communicating truth." This is the theory of the courts of law, which judge of crime by the *animus*.

"Pedantry consists in the use of words unsuitable to the time, place, and company." All words and technicalities have their own proper place, and therein their use is not pedantic.

"The first lesson of philosophic discipline is to wean the student's mind from the degrees of things, which alone form the vocabulary of common life, and to direct it to the kind *abstracted from the degree*."

"National education and a concurring spread of the Gospel, are the indispensable conditions of any true political melioration."

"Every principle contains in itself the germs of a prophecy;" that is to say, in whomsoever accepts it; as, for instance, the principle of French Philosophy is prophetic of French morals; and the principle of Boston Philosophy is prophetic of Spiritualism and Free Love.

"Motives by excess reverse their very nature, and instead of exciting, stun and stupefy the mind."

"The office of philosophical disquisition consists in just distinction; while it is the privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware, that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical process of philosophy."

"Nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so, and not otherwise." This is a valuable rule of criticism. If an article of literary dress, can be improved, either in meter, or by addition or subtraction, it is clearly defective.

"A poet should avoid science, which is ever in process of change and development, and abide by the fixed and eternal."

"The works of those who have stood the test of ages have a claim to that respect and veneration to which no modern can pretend. The duration and stability of their fame is sufficient to evince that it has not been suspended upon the slender thread of fashion and caprice, but bound to the human heart by every tie of sympathetic admiration."

"It is an excellent remark of Dr. Henry More's, that a man of confined education, but of good parts, by constant reading of the Bible will naturally form a more win-

ning and commanding rhetoric than those that are learned; the intermixture of tongues and of artificial phrases debasing their style." Macaulay worked out the same theory in his essay on Milton.

"Facts are valuable to a wise man chiefly as they lead to the discovery of the indwelling law, etc."

"The best part of human language, properly so called, is derived from reflection on the acts of the mind itself. It is formed by a voluntary appropriation of fixed symbols to internal acts, to processes and results of imagination, the greater part of which have no place in the consciousness of uneducated man; though in civilized society, by imitation and passive remembrance of what they hear from their religious instructors and other superiors, the most uneducated share in the harvest which they neither sowed nor reaped."

"Every man's language has, first, its individualities; secondly, the common properties of the class to which he belongs; and thirdly, words and phrases of universal use."

"The property of passion is not to create; but to set in increased activity."

"The ultimate end of criticism is much more to establish the principles of writing than to furnish rules how to pass judgment on what has been written by others; if indeed it were possible that the two could be separated."

"The office and duty of the poet is to select the most dignified as well as

"The gayest, happiest attitude of things." The reverse, for in all cases a reverse is possible, is the appropriate business of burlesque and travesty, a predominant taste for which has always been deemed a mark of a low and degraded mind." Apply this canon of criticism to John Hay's "Pike County Ballads;" Brete Harte's "Heathen Chinee;" and Lowell's "Bigelow Papers."

"Language is framed to convey not the object alone, but likewise the character, mood and intentions of the person who is representing it." Half the value of any book is in its unveiling the individualism of the author.

"I shall attempt to prove the close connection between veracity and habits of mental accuracy; the beneficial after-effects of verbal precision in the preclusion of fanaticism, which masters the feelings more especially by indistinct watch-words."

The foregoing passages have all been selected from the *Biographia Literaria*. If the student will take them one by one, ponder them, and make them his own, he will have gained much useful matter for the development of taste, and the guidance of opinion. But I shall feel more than rewarded for the labor of selection and copy, if I lead anyone to read the book itself, and to make all that Coleridge wrote an extended and profitable study.
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