

spectres whenever I was in the dark; and I distinctly recollect the anxious and fearful eagerness with which I used to watch the window where the book lay, and when the sun came upon it, I would seize it, carry it by the wall, and bask, and read. My father found out the effect which these books had produced, and burned them.

"So I became a dreamer and acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity; and I was fretful and inordinately passionate; and as I could not play at anything, and was slothful, I was despised and hated by the boys: and because I could read and spell, and had, I may truly say, a memory and understanding forced into almost unnatural ripeness, I was flattered and wondered at by all the old women. And so I became very vain and despised most of the boys that were at all near my own age, and before I was eight years old I was a *character*. Sensibility, imagination, vanity, sloth, and feelings of deep and bitter contempt for almost all who traversed the orbit of my understanding, were even then prominent and manifest."

During the next three years, or until he was nine, he was a pupil in his father's school. His principal reminiscence of this period is concerned with a quarrel with his brother Frank, which resulted in Samuel's running away and sleeping out of doors one stormy October night. When he was nearly nine years of age his father suddenly and unexpectedly died, and the poet's home training was brought to a close. During this period his father's influence had been much more potent than his mother's. In fact the latter seems to have impressed herself less upon her famous son than is usually the case with mothers of men of genius. But of his father he writes, thirty years after his death: "The image of my Father, my revered, kind, learned, simple-hearted Father is a religion to me."

In his tenth year, that is in 1782, the influence of a friend and former pupil of his father procured for Coleridge admission to Christ's Hospital, an old and famous school in London. Here he remained for eight years, and here began what was destined to prove a life-long friendship with Charles Lamb, the humorous author of the *Essays of Elia*. The diet of the boys was not satisfactory, and Coleridge afterwards thought that its scantiness had injured his health. They had "every morning a bit of dry bread and some bad small beer; every evening a larger piece of bread and cheese or butter, whichever we liked; for dinner—on Sunday, boiled beef and broth; Monday, bread and butter, and milk and water; Tuesday, roast mutton; Wednesday, bread and butter, and rice and milk; Thursday, boiled beef and broth; Friday, boiled mutton and broth; Saturday, bread and butter, and ~~pease~~ porridge. Our food was portioned, and, excepting on Wednes-