

discourse *de omnibus rebus*. The father's *Miscellaneous Dissertation arising from the 17th and 18th Chapters of the Book of Judges* begins with a well written preface on the Bible, and ends with an advertisement of his school and his method of teaching Latin. The son's *Friend* purports to be a methodical series of essays having for its object to assist the mind in the formation for itself of sound principles in regard to the investigation, perception, and retention of truth; yet it contains besides essays joined to the main dissertation by the slenderest connecting links, matter so utterly foreign to the purpose as a description of Christmas within and out of doors in North Germany and the life of Sir Alexander Ball. The same discursiveness appeared in his conversation. Hazlitt said that "his talk was excellent if you let him start from no premises and come to no conclusion."

Like nearly all youngest children Coleridge was petted and spoiled, and the more so on account of the early development of his great abilities. To the unwise over-kindness of his mother whose favourite he was, and the injudicious praise of his abilities by admiring friends, we may safely attribute in part at least his unmanly abnegation of his duty to his family and his general moral weakness in his later life. His precocity was indeed very marked, and it was accompanied by an indisposition to bodily activity, which probably weakened his health and reacted upon his temper.

In his second year he went to a dame's school. In his third he was inoculated, and at its close could read a chapter in the Bible. He remained at the dame's school till he was six, and describes himself as very unhappy during this period, being hated, and thumped, and called ill-names by his brother Frank and his nurse Molly for being his mother's favourite.

"So I became fretful and timorous and a tell-tale, and the school-boys drove me from play and were always tormenting me. And hence I took no pleasure in boyish sports, but read incessantly. I read through all the gilt-covered little books that could be had at that time, and all the uncovered tales of Tom Nickathrift, Jack the Giant-killer and the like. And I used to lie by the wall and mope; and my spirits used to come upon me suddenly and in a flood; and then I was accustomed to run up and down the churchyard, and act all that I had been reading on the docks, the nettles, and the rank grass. At six years of age I remember to have read Belisarius, Robinson Crusoe and Philip Quarles; and then I found the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, one tale of which (the tale of a man who was compelled to seek for a pure virgin) made so deep an impression on me (I had read it in the evening while my mother was at her needle) that I was haunted by