

COLERIDGE

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was born at Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, on October 21st, 1772. His father dying in 1781, the boy was sent to Christ's Hospital, the famous London charity school. Coleridge, at the age of fifteen, sought to relieve the monotony of school life by becoming apprenticed to a cobbler, but luckily an irate schoolmaster stood between him and the realization of this freak. After ten years of somewhat dreary school life, he was, in January, 1791, appointed an exhibitioner at Jesus College, Cambridge. His "discharge" from the school bears the date of September 7th, 1791, and in the following month he went into residence at Cambridge. His life at the University was uneventful, save for one peculiar incident—his erratic enlistment as a private in the King's Regiment of Light Dragoons. His friends eventually bought him out, and he received his discharge in April, 1794. He returned a penitent to Cambridge, where he was publicly admonished by the Master of his College in the presence of the Fellows. In December of the same year he left the University without taking a degree.

Coleridge had never been a systematic student, but had been since his childhood a wide and omnivorous reader, and had evinced a growing enthusiasm for poetry. While at Cambridge he published a drama in verse—*The Fall of Robespierre*—the result of the joint labours of Coleridge and his Oxford friend, Robert Southey.