

Curious stories are told of the misadventures by which these endeavours were brought to nought. Once, at least, in 1818, his lectures were not only appreciated by a brilliant assembly of hearers, including Lord Byron, Lamb, and others, but brought him a considerable sum of money. It is useless to dwell longer on these subjects.

Something, however, must be said of that malady which was the curse of what might otherwise have been the best period of Coleridge's life. We refer, of course, to his dreadful opium habit. It seems certain that Coleridge acquired this habit quite unwittingly. He suffered from chronic rheumatism and internal pains; and was recommended to try some Black Drops as a remedy. He did not know that these black drops were made of opium. The habit grew on him from 1810 to 1816. By 1814 he was a complete slave to it. Coleridge seems to have done all that he could do to beat the habit. He prayed against it. He hired men to keep him out of the druggists' shops; but he could not overcome it. Great schemes were marred and his life was maimed in this manner. Yet it is hardly true to say that he did nothing. He did a great deal of arduous, unpleasant, and ill-requited work on the *Courier*; and he wrote (1814-16) one of his greatest works, the *Biographia Literaria*, which was published in 1817.

In 1816, Coleridge, finding his own unaided efforts insufficient to emancipate him from the opium habit, placed himself under the charge of Mr. Gillman, a medical man at Highgate, with whom he remained until his death in 1834. He was then only forty-four, but he was a broken-down, white-haired man. Under the faithful and affectionate care of Mr. and Mrs. Gillman he partly recovered his health and did some considerable literary work, but was perhaps, during that period, best known by his oral utterances which were listened to by a number of highly intellectual men who gathered around him as a kind of oracle. His principal publications were the "*Biographia Literaria*" in 1817, and the "*Aids to Reflection*" in 1825.

Sir T. N. Talfourd, referring to this aspect of Coleridge's influence, remarks: "If he had a power within him mightier than that which these glorious creations (mentioned above) indicate, shall he be censured because he has deviated from the ordinary course of the age in its development, and instead of committing his imaginative wisdom to the press, has delivered it from his living lips. He has gone about in the true spirit of an old Greek Bard, with a noble carelessness of self, giving fit utterance to the divine Spirit within him. Who that has ever heard can forget him? His mild benignity, the unbounded variety of his knowledge, the fast-succeeding products of his imagination, the child-like simplicity with which he rises from the driest and commonest theme into the wildest magnificence of thought, pouring on the soul a stream of beauty and of wisdom to mellow and enrich it forever. The seed of poetry, the materials for thinking, which he has thus scattered will not perish. The records of his name are not in books only, but on the fleshly tables of young hearts, who will not suffer it to die even in the general ear, however base and unfeeling criticism may deride their gratitude."

Of the wonderful conversations of Coleridge, Hazlitt declared, "He talked for-

ever, and you wished him to talk forever." Even Carlyle, although he presented the ludicrous side of the subject, involuntarily becomes eloquent as he speaks of Coleridge as "a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle—attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. . . . a sublime man." Around that "old man eloquent" gathered bright spirits like John Sterling, Edward Irving, Julius Hare, Frederick Maurice and Arthur Hallam. John Mill said he influenced the thoughts of all young men who had any thoughts.

A short time before his death in 1834, he wrote to Charles Lamb, asking his forgiveness if he had seemed to forget or neglect him. We know that Coleridge, with the kindest heart in the world, lacked the energy to keep up frequent communication with friends. Lamb was much touched and wrote: "Not an unkind thought has passed in my brain about you. If ever you thought an offence, much less wrote it against me, it must have been in the times of Noah, and the great waters swept it away. Mary's most kind love. Here she is crying for mere love over your letter." One of the last lines written by Coleridge was in a copy of Beaumont and Fletcher. They are: "God bless you, dear Charles Lamb. I am dying. I feel I have not many weeks left." Lamb died in the same year, 1834, not quite sixty. Coleridge was nearly sixty-two. They had a friendship of fifty years, Lamb said, without a dissension. We hope to return to Coleridge's work and influence.

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PARIS LETTER.

The rehearsal of a universal suffrage vote or plebiscite, irregularly called a referendum, seems to be the coming new factor for gauging public opinion on important political issues. It possesses the merit of showing how the wind blows. The real referendum exists in Switzerland, where, after a bill has duly passed through the federal legislature, it is submitted for final ratification, before being promulgated as law, to the manhood vote of the electors of all the cantons. The Scandinavians have recently held an unofficial referendum to feel the pulse of the electorate on some political reforms; the Belgians have just followed suit, to ascertain the strength of the current in favour of universal versus restricted voting; fifty per cent. of the electors on the existing registers took part in the amateur polling, and the recorded votes were as 5 to 1 in favour of universal suffrage. The Government cannot shut its eyes to this spontaneous verdict. True, fifty per cent. of voters abstained in the case of the Belgian experiment; but in Switzerland and France, from 23 to 30 per cent. of the electors never vote at all. The drink bill of the Gladstone Cabinet, in leaving to two-thirds of the parochial or district electors, the right to close or keep open pubs and rum holes, is a referendum. The latter will be largely employed next October at the general elections in France, to weed out superfluous or obstructive candidates, and so get rid of that cumbrous and irritating safeguard—the second ballot.

The physiological feat of walking one thousand miles in as many hours, has been paralleled by cycling 1,000 kilometres, about as far as from Paris to Marseilles,

in 42 hours, being a consecutive wheeling at the rate of nearly fifteen miles an hour. Terront beat his competitor Corre, by nearly six miles. The cycling came off in the Machinery Hall of the late exhibition—evidence that the retention of that relic serves some purpose. The gate money amounted to 34,000 frs. The initial stakes, planked down by rival bicycle fabricants, were 2,500 frs. The men were in excellent form, and the admiring crowds, during the night as well as days, sustained and stimulated their endurance by applause. The race can have no very practical importance; the cycles have no need now to be popularised; they are accepted as necessities, and simply "wants long felt in the hygienic and business worlds. The contest marks the supremacy, the domination of mind over matter. It is the head, the brain, not the feet or the muscles that have to meet the strain. A psychological reporter avows, it is "a great victory for the spinal marrow, the true seat of the will;" the ancients localized the latter in the stomach. Not sufficient justice has been done to Corre; he commenced to fall behind when the moiety of the distance was wheeled, and, convinced he could not recover the odds, he rolled along to his close with bull dog obstinacy, even when his victorious rival having completed his ride, had descended and walked around the arena, bowing to the spectators and gathering up showered bouquets like a prima donna.

As lions of the day, Terront and Corre, cut out M. Jules Ferry. Terront aged 36, is an experienced velocipedit and much of his victory is due to scrupulously adopting the dietary regime of his doctor; no solid food; meat soups thickened with eggs; cocoa wine; a little brandy, caffeine to drive away sleepiness, and much blis-muth. Corre devoured 15 mutton cutlets, a roast fowl, and some pears before starting. Both men had their faces sponged with vinegar and water at every turn of the arena, and applied an eye wash or ointment to numb the irritation from the dust raised. On completion of the race both men took a Turkish bath and a massage; ate as usual, slept fairly, but only experienced brain fatigue. It is estimated that 250,000 coups de pedals were given by each during the race. Only during the first three hours the rivals perspired Terront, to protect himself against the chill night currents, wore over his jersey, a paper breast plate; Corre not having done so caught a cold.

The elevation of M. Jules Ferry to the Presidency of the Senate, though unexpected, is not viewed as time elapses, to be pregnant with the political disturbance that was at first attached to it. By nature he is a parliamentary pugilist; neither giving nor seeking quarter; thus he made many enemies, that a sly and ingenious politician would avoid. However, M. de Freycinet embodied the latter strategy, and see where he is now? Jules Ferry has paid for his crookedness in his Tonkino-Chinese policy eight years ago, the penalty of a severe ostracism and a terribly organized unpopularity. He is as opportunists, a party that has been wrecked by Panamaism. A man of M. Ferry's intelligence cannot but have profited by the lessons of the past and present, and the fire-brandism which the advanced republicans accuse him of, must