

That he exerted a profound influence on Maurice is doubtless true; but it is certainly fair to question whether Maurice's vagueness and indetermination were not in spite of, rather than because of, Coleridge. And it cannot be forgotten that he was the formative influence in the making of that remarkable scholar, Julius Hare, whose "Mission of the Comforter," with its magnificent defense of Martin Luther, is a classic in evangelical theology. If the school of transcendental thought in New England is thought to be a progeny of his philosophizing, let it be remembered that Christian scholars like Dr. Marsh and Dr. Shedd may be the legitimate offspring, and that New England transcendentalism (whatever that may mean) may after all be only a hybrid product.

A general reason for making the intimate acquaintance of Coleridge's writings lies in the fact that he is in touch with so many sides of life. He belongs to the class of "myriad-minded" men—poet, metaphysician, theologian, political philosopher, editorial contributor to the London *Courier*, one of the three or four conversationalists who have left enduring contributions to English literature—this fact of his many-sided genius creates an interest in knowing something of such a man. His "Table Talk" is one of those suggestive books which can be taken in hand at odd moments, and which is always sure to start valuable trains of thought. Coleridge was fond of the aphorism. The aphoristic vein in him was rich, and many of its choice nuggets could be found in his "Table Talk." Open it at random, and they will appear. His "Miscellanea" in the "Friend" and the "Biographia Literaria" are discussions in philosophy and literature and human affairs which are fragmentary; but notwithstanding their fragmentary character, mentally stimulating. His "Literary Remains" is a body of literary criticism which is the best text-book extant on that subject—all the better for its purpose that it is in structure so different from the ordinary text-book. If literary taste in poetry or prose is anything worth cultivating, it is well worth the while of every clergyman to master its secret as Coleridge has unveiled it. Indeed, one of the great services he rendered the world of English-speaking people was the begetting a style of criticism remarkable at once for "fineness of insight and breadth of comprehension." Any preacher will read his Shakespeare to far better purpose, with higher discernment for the elements of dramatic power, who has made himself familiar with Coleridge's way of looking at the drama, and at the drama as embodied in Shakespeare. In fact, his comments on nearly every writer of note in English literature will be found to have in them a germ of true critical perception.

On his poetry, as a field for clerical study, we must dwell more at length. "The same spirit," says Professor Shairp,\* "which pervaded the philosophy and theology of that era (eighteenth century) is appar-

\* Studies in Poetry and Philosophy. Coleridge, p. 92.