

**ANIMA POETÆ FROM THE  
UNPUBLISHED  
NOTE-BOOKS OF SAMUEL  
TAYLOR COLERIDGE**

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Anima poetæ from the unpublished note-books of Samuel Taylor Coleridge by Ernest Hartley Coleridge

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**ERNEST HARTLEY COLERIDGE**

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# ANIMA POETÆ

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED NOTE-BOOKS  
OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

EDITED BY

ERNEST HARTLEY COLERIDGE



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WHEN shall I find time and ease to reduce my pocket-books and memorandums to an *Index* or *Memoria Memorandorum*? If — aye! and alas! — if I could see the last sheet of my *Assertio Fidei Christianae, et eterni temporizantis*, having previously beheld my elements of Discourse, Logic, Dialectic, and Noetic, or Canon, Criterion, and Organon, with the philosophic Glossary — in one printed volume, and the Exercises in Reasoning as another — if — what then? Why, then I would publish all that remained unused, Travels and all, under the title of Excursions Abroad and at Home, what I have seen and what I have thought, with a little of what I have felt, in the words in which I told and talked them to my pocket-books, the confidants who have *not* betrayed me, the friends whose silence was *not* detraction, and the inmates before whom I was not ashamed to complain, to yearn, to weep, or even to pray! To which are added marginal notes from many old books and one or two new ones, sifted through the Mogul Sieve of Duty towards my Neighbor — by ESTHER.

21 June, 1823.





## PREFACE

*Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, which the poet's nephew and son-in-law, Henry Nelson Coleridge, published in 1835, was a popular book from the first, and has won the approval of two generations of readers. Unlike the *Biographia Literaria*, or the original and revised versions of *The Friend*, which never had their day at all, or the *Aids to Reflection*, which passed through many editions, but now seems to have delivered its message, the *Table Talk* is still well-known and widely read, and that not only by students of literature. The task which the editor set himself was a difficult one, but it lay within the powers of an attentive listener, possessed of a good memory and those rarer gifts of a refined and scholarly taste, a sound and luminous common sense. He does not attempt to reproduce Coleridge's conversation or monologue or impassioned harangue, but he preserves and notes down the detached fragments of knowledge and wisdom which fell from time to time from the master's lips. Here are "the balmy sunny islets of the blest and the intelligible," an unvexed and *harborous* archipelago. Very sparingly, if at all, have those pithy "sentences" and weighty paragraphs been trimmed or pruned by the pious solicitude of the memorialist, but it must be borne in mind that the unities are more or less consciously observed,

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PREFACE. alike in the matter of the discourse and the artistic presentation to the reader. There is, in short, not merely a "mechanic" but an "organic regularity" in the composition of the work as a whole. A "myriad-minded" sage, who has seen men and cities, who has read widely and shaped his thoughts in a peculiar mould, is pouring out his stores of knowledge, the garnered fruit of a life of study and meditation, for the benefit of an apt learner, a discreet and appreciative disciple. A day comes when the marvellous lips are constrained to an endless silence, and it becomes the duty and privilege of the beloved and honored pupil to "snatch from forgetfulness" and to hand down to posterity the great tradition of his master's eloquence. A labor of love so useful and so fascinating was accomplished by the gifted editor of the *Table Talk*, and it was accomplished once for all. The compilation of a new *Table Talk*, if it were possible, would be a mistake and an impertinence.

The present collection of hitherto unpublished aphorisms, reflections, confessions, and soliloquies, which for want of a better name I have entitled *Anima Poetae*, does not in any way challenge comparison with the *Table Talk*. It is, indeed, essentially different, not only in the sources from which it has been compiled but in constitution and in aim.

"Since I left you," writes Coleridge in a letter to Wordsworth of May 12, 1812, "my pocket-books have been my sole confidants." Doubtless, in earlier and happier days, he had been eager not merely to record, but to communicate to the few who would listen or might understand

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the ceaseless and curious workings of his ever-shaping imagination, but from youth to age notebooks and pocket-books were his silent confidants, his "never-failing friends" by night and day.

More than fifty of these remarkable documents are extant. The earliest of the series, which dates from 1795, and which is known as the "Guteh Memorandum Book," was purchased in 1868 by the trustees of the British Museum, and is now exhibited in the King's Library. It consists, for the most part, of fragments of prose and verse thrown off at the moment, and stored up for future use in poem or lecture or sermon. A few of these fragments were printed in the *Literary Remains* (4 vols., 1836-39), and others are to be found (pp. 103, 5, 6, 9 *et passim*) in Herr Brandl's *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the English Romantic School*. The poetical fragments are printed *in extenso* in Coleridge's *Poetical Works* (Macmillan, 1893), pp. 453-58. A few specimens of the prose fragments have been included in the first chapter of this work. One of the latest notebooks, an unfinished folio, contains the Autobiographic Note of 1832, portions of which were printed in Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*, pp. 9-33, and a mass of unpublished matter, consisting mainly of religious exercises and biblical criticism.

Of the intervening collection of pocket-books, notebooks, copy-books, of all shapes, sizes, and bindings, a detailed description would be tedious and out of place. Their contents may be roughly divided into diaries of tours in Germany, the Lake District, Scotland, Sicily, and Italy; notes for projected and accomplished works, rough