

STUDENT WORK

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's opium addiction and its influence on five of his major poems

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Abstract

In early November of the year 1791 young Samuel Coleridge sat in his room at Jesus College writing to his brother George. The nineteen-year-old had been at residence in the Cambridge college less than two months, but already he was impressing his professors and fellow students with his ability and personality. He had come to the college on a scholarship which, he tells George, "will be worth to me twenty-seven pounds a year." Moreover, Coleridge has heard a "new regulation at our College" which excites his curiosity: "the man who takes the highest honor in his year of the candidates is to be elected Fellow," he writes. Evidently Samuel Coleridge intended to be that man, for he admits to George that "this will be a bit of a stimulus to my exertions." Thus, in spite of the dreary weather and intensive curriculum, Samuel Taylor Coleridge seemed to be enjoying himself during his first months at Jesus College. The only real trouble, he tells George, is that he has "a most violent cold in my head -- a favour, which I owe to the dampness of my rooms."

Comments

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