PREFACE

This volume presents the original versions of three poems that Coleridge wrote in 1802, together with photographs and transcriptions of the principal early manuscripts and a record of variant readings in other contemporary manuscripts and in the versions of the poems which Coleridge published during his lifetime. The three poems are *A Letter to ———*, *Dejection: An Ode*, and *The Day-Dream*.

One of the early manuscripts, containing *A Letter to ———* and *The Day-Dream* in the hand of Mary Hutchinson (later Mary Wordsworth)—both are love poems that Coleridge wrote for her sister Sara—came to light in the summer of 1977, when, as “The Property of a Gentleman,” it was offered for sale at Sotheby’s, together with a mass of Wordsworth family letters and papers. The whole of this material was bought by Cornell University, held for seven months in London, then resold at the purchase price to the Dove Cottage Trust in Grasmere, where it now rests. The manuscript’s history and its whereabouts for the past century remain unknown, but to commemorate its rescue and its brief season in Cornell custody, it is here designated the “Cornell Manuscript,” to distinguish it from the “Dove Cottage Manuscript” of one of the poems, *A Letter to ———*.

Because the Cornell Manuscript has not hitherto been made public, its version of *A Letter to ———* is presented first in the volume in the form of a reading text from which miswritings, overwritings, and scribal idiosyncrasies have been cleared away.

To permit easy comparison, an *apparatus criticus* of the principal variants in the other manuscript is also provided, and at the end of the volume, following photographs of the manuscripts, transcriptions of the two texts are arrayed facing each other.

Coleridge wrote *A Letter to ———*, he tells us in the subtitle, in April 1802, and he later so shortened and reshaped it as to make it an altogether different poem, which he published in *The Morning Post*, 4 October 1802, as *Dejection: An Ode*. This poem is here reproduced in full, with a photograph of the *Morning Post* text, of which only a few copies survive. Between April and July, Coleridge copied out extracts of the *Letter*, with some revisions and additions, to a total of 138 lines, and sent them to William Sotheby, 19 July. These extracts, too, are presented here in full, by way of showing the verse-letter in a transitional stage, on its way to becoming *Dejection*; and a brief *apparatus* shows the variants that appear in another letter, of 29 July, in which Coleridge copied out eighteen lines of his poem for Robert Southey.

After publishing *Dejection*, Coleridge continued to quote, and to print, extracts from his manuscripts of it and its parent poem, *A Letter to ———*. The partial text that he sent to the Beaumonts on 13 August 1803, joined to a copy of Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence*, is here presented in full transcription with accompanying photographs. No complete copy of *Dejection* survives from these years; the earliest is a transcription made in Malta by Sarah Stoddard, probably in 1805, presumably copied from the version Coleridge had with him there. All verbal variants in the Stoddard text, which is fairly corrupt, are here incorporated in an *apparatus* to the *Morning Post* text. They show Coleridge already working toward the version he published in *Sibylline Leaves* in 1817—the first published text without omissions. Three years before *Sibylline Leaves* appeared, however, Coleridge picked up two pieces of his poem, totaling forty-six lines, and put them into a prose essay, "On the Principles of Genial Criticism," which he published on 10 September 1814 in *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*.

The *Sibylline Leaves* text, which constitutes the final stage of the poem, is presented in full, facing the *Morning Post* text, and an *apparatus* records variants in the extracts in *Felix Farley's Bristol*

Journal, as well as variants in later (lifetime) editions of Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, 1828, 1829, and 1834.

After Mary Hutchinson had copied *A Letter to ———* in the Cornell Manuscript, she added another Coleridge poem of thirty lines, untitled, like the first. This poem was published in the *Morning Post* on 19 October 1802 as *The Day-Dream* (not to be confused with another "Asra" poem, *A Day-Dream*); it was never republished by Coleridge, and no other manuscript of it is known. It is presented here first as a clean reading text, then in full transcription, with a photograph. To permit easy comparison of the two texts, the *Morning Post* version is presented facing the reading text.

The Introduction sets forth the context in which these Coleridge poems were composed, tracing events out of which they grew and some of their consequences. Before *A Letter to ———* was known, Thomas Raysor ventured an astute guess as to its existence (*Studies in Philology*, July 1919), and when Ernest de Selincourt published it for the first time, he gave a perceptive account of its origins (in *Essays and Studies*, 1936). Some twenty years later George Whalley, in *Coleridge and Sara Hutchinson and the Asra Poems* (London, 1955), told the story of Coleridge's passion for Sara and reprinted the poems he wrote to her. William Heath, in *Wordsworth and Coleridge: A Study of Their Literary Relations in 1801–1802* (Oxford, 1970), followed some of the later progress of the partnership that had been formed in *Lyrical Ballads*. In 1978 George Dekker, committed to the view that *Dejection* is incomparably greater than *A Letter*, advanced in *Coleridge and the Literature of Sensibility* (London) a supposition that parts of the ode may actually antedate the longer poem, and wrote with tact and learning about the genre and the antecedents of *Dejection*. Finally, Jared Curtis, who had presented a critical history of Wordsworth's great spring of 1802 in *Wordsworth's Experiments with Tradition* (Ithaca, 1971), published in 1983 scrupulously edited and authoritative texts of the pertinent poems in his Cornell Wordsworth edition of *Poems, in Two Volumes*. The definitive record of Coleridge's spring, with all subsequent variant readings, will appear in J. C. C. Mays's forthcoming edition of Coleridge's poems for the monumental Bollingen Coleridge.

Permission to reproduce manuscripts has been generously given by the Dove Cottage Trust (for whom this volume was originally designed, as a companion volume to Beth Darlington's edition of the love letters of William and Mary Wordsworth, *My Dearest Love*), the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Newberry Library of Chicago, and the Department of Special Collections of Boston University Libraries.

S. M. PARRISH

Ithaca, New York