

13th June, 1958.

Dear Lady Harlow,

You may not agree with this all at once, but it will let you know why I was so surprised that you did not like my review.

Sincerely yours,

Enc.

Erasmus Darwin knew well what he was composing - a paean or hymn of praise and gratitude addressed to that Nature which is the object, or subject-matter, of scientific study.

Perhaps he thought that this study would not be made less attractive by such preliminary admiration.

He rather enjoyed his notes. They are intended to clarify allusions in the verse, which might be obscure to the less instructed readers - mostly teen-age girls of good families for whose education he was solicitous. What he thought important he put in the text.

How Coleridge must have hated his eupeptic serenity! - And his cheerful nymphs.

Her lips were red, her looks were free,

Her hair was yellow as gold.

Her skin was white as leprosy. The nightmare life in death

That thickens men's blood with cold. was she,

Horror, disgust, superstitious terror are emotions familiar enough to the human race. Are they worth all this screaming emphasis? The honours seem to be divided between dyspepsia and hashish! (Should I say *laudation*?)

And this is admittedly his best poem;

"The Father of the Horror Comics".

Both Butler and Coleridge had odd addictions. I suggest that in both cases INVIDIA was their most poisonous indulgence.

Envy of celebrity, which each would so dearly have wished for himself, made Coleridge eager to show that Erasmus was a bad poet, as it made Butler eager to show that Charles was both stupid and dishonest as a scientist.