

## Sermons, Sedition, and a Father's Kiss

In Bristol, in the New Year of 1795, STC and Southey, in order to augment their finances in preparation for America, had embarked upon a series of political lectures. STC, who opened the series, had quickly established himself as an incandescent jacobin. Accusations of sedition accompanied by a barrage of verbal abuse and threats of physical violence became the normal accompaniment of his appearances (carefully unkempt, uncombed and scruffy, to create the genuine *sans-culotte* look). That it took considerable courage to face the audiences he faced is certain; by mid-March he could not find anyone willing to risk letting him have a room in which to speak.<sup>1</sup> Southey took over with a series of historical lectures instead.

STC's political lectures, though certainly believed to be treasonable by the audiences who heard them, in their published form read as reflective, balanced and moderate.

However, we do not have to choose between the inflamed seditionist, carried away by the eloquence of his own oratory,<sup>2</sup> and the poised and objective essayist, confidently writing, at the age of twenty-three, in the vein of a polished elder statesman. Which was the real STC? *Both* were the real STC, simultaneously embracing the poles. 'This above all, to thine own self be true.' And true he was – baffling as his way of going about it may seem to us. He spoke in one voice; he wrote in another, and doubtless saw the process as a reconciliation of opposites. (As Hartley would write warningly to his mother, before the appearance of *Table Talk*, 'I hope Henry has been very, very, careful as to what he has recorded. Dear papa often said things which he *would not himself have published; and I have heard him utter opinions both in Religion and Politics not very easy to reconcile with what he has published. Any thing of this sort would be welcomed with a savage exultation by [his critics] . . .*'<sup>3</sup> Proof that STC's career had continued as it had begun.)

In the late summer of 1795, STC and Southey quarrelled. The rupture was serious; they ceased to be on speaking terms. Long years lay ahead of them bound together as brothers-in-law, and conversation between them would be resumed, but theirs would henceforth be an uncomfortable relationship. STC had a fatal habit of (as he put it), 'Letting [his] Wishes make Romances out of men's characters'<sup>4</sup> (this included women and little

children). He could no more cure himself of this failing than he could wean himself from his other lifelong habit of wanting everyone to fall in love with him at first meeting and to prefer his company to that of anyone else.

The STC – Southey friendship had commenced with STC's customary headlong falling in love, romanticising Southey as both republican and poet. To George Dyer STC enthused, 'His [Southey's] Genius and acquirements are uncommonly great – yet they bear no proportion to his moral Excellence – He is truly a man of *perpendicular Virtue – a downright upright Republican!*<sup>5</sup> As for Southey as poet, STC rapturised to him, 'Thou doest make the adamantine Gate of Democracy turn on its golden Hinges to most sweet Music . . .'<sup>6</sup>

Southey was not in the habit of falling in love.<sup>7</sup> However, for a while at least, STC cast a species of enchantment over Southey which persuaded him that in Coleridge he had found a stalwart diehard designed by nature for Pantisocratic pioneering in the back settlements: 'Should the resolution of others fail,' Southey assured his friends, 'Coleridge and I will go together . . . If earthly virtue and fortitude can be relied on, I shall be happy.'<sup>8</sup>

It took Southey the best part of twelve months to discover that Coleridge was the last person to count on as a fortitudinous backwoodsman. Totally disillusioned, Southey announced that he was abandoning Pantisocracy and returning to Oxford to read law. STC denounced him, 'You are *lost to me*, because you are lost to *Virtue*.' Southey, deeply hurt, wrote a letter of reproach, saying that STC had pained him by his 'Cold civility, the shadow which Friendship leaves behind.' To this STC replied with icy deliberation, 'I [have] locked up my heart from you, and you perceived it and I intended you to perceive it.'<sup>9</sup>

With his hitherto closest friend in Bristol and fellow Pantisocrat lost to him, STC cultivated the company of other Bristolians; James Prior Estlin, distinguished scholar, schoolmaster, author and Unitarian minister; Josiah Wade, a staunch radical, Unitarian and tradesman who was to become one of STC's most lasting of loyal friends; Joseph Cottle the printer and bookseller; Thomas Poole, tanner, reformist and philanthropist; Dr Thomas Beddoes, dedicated democrat and celebrated for his innovative medicine. Marriage and honeymooning at Clevedon further preoccupied STC and he barely noticed when Southey departed for a six month stay in Portugal to visit his uncle. Prior to his departure Southey had quietly married Edith, with singular lack of enthusiasm. She did not accompany him to Portugal.

When STC left the west of England for the Lake Country in 1800, his circle had extended to include the Wedgwood brothers, Josiah Junior and Thomas, William Wordsworth, and Humphry Davy, the last named barely out of his teens but already distinguishing himself in the laboratory of Dr Beddoes's celebrated Pneumatic Institution at Clifton, a select suburb of Bristol.

The Pneumatic Institution was one of the last rallying points of the Lunar Society; the most famous of the many informal dining clubs which flourished in the late eighteenth century. The Lunar Society drew its members from the industrial and dissenting heartland of England, enjoying a radical and scientific influence out of all proportion to its size and nominal status. Eleven of the fourteen members were Fellows of the Royal Society. Leading names included Erasmus Darwin, physician, naturalist and poet (grandfather of Charles Darwin); Joseph Priestley, theologian, philosopher, scientist, Unitarian minister and reformist; Josiah Wedgwood, master-potter and chemist; Matthew Boulton, founder of the renowned Soho Works at Birmingham, specialising in coining and button making and powered by the steam engines of Boulton's brilliant partner and fellow Lunatick James Watt; Richard Lovell Edgeworth, progressive educationalist in the Rousseau tradition; and James Keir, industrial chemist. Associate members included Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Beddoes.

The Lunaticks (as they called themselves) had kept in touch with one another and their offspring had grown up knowing one another; together the two generations formed a remarkable intelligentsia in the truest sense of the word. Industry had brought great wealth to families like the Boultons, the Watts and Wedgwoods and the second generation was eager to use its money to promote further innovative projects connected with industry, science, radical politics and the arts (young James Watt, for instance, contemplated assisting the Pantisocrats, while Tom Wedgwood, prompted by his own ill health, preferred to support Beddoes in his experimental medicine).

STC's reverence for the Lunaticks together with his enthusiasm for Unitarianism found remarkable expression in a lengthy and, in its day, sensational poem, *Religious Musings* (published in April 1796) in which he extolled a band of luminaries whose minds had lightened the darkness of humanity and would carry Man gloriously through to a celestial state of pure intellect following the Millennium: among them Franklin, for proving that lightning was electrical and for having invented the lightning conductor, rather than as one of America's Founding Fathers: the philosopher David Hartley; Milton, Newton, Priestley – this 'blest pre-eminence of Saints . . . swept athwart his [STC's] gaze' in visionary form.<sup>10</sup>

November 1795 saw the introduction of legislation banning seditious meetings and assemblies and levelled against 'Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts' (the Gagging Acts). There was prompt outcry against these measures up and down the country. STC became actively involved: two lively meetings of protest, apparently convened by Beddoes, were held at Bristol on 17 and 20 November, 1795, in the Guildhall. STC was among the speakers. On 26 November, in the 'Great Room at the Pelican Inn, Thomas-Street', he delivered a well-received public address in further protest against the new legislation.

Debarred thus by Parliament from further speaking from public platforms, STC transferred himself to Unitarian pulpits, from which he found it perfectly possible to deliver inflammable sermons plentifully peppered with strong republican sentiments. As he expressed it, ‘The Sacred may eventually help off the profane – and my *Sermons* spread a sort of sanctity over my *Sedition*.’<sup>11</sup>

He had now proved himself too outstanding and valuable as a political agitator for him not to find himself with more to do for the cause. At the close of 1795 he undertook to produce and publish a weekly periodical, religious in tone but reformist in politics and designed for a Dissenting readership. Accordingly he convened his Bristol Unitarian friends one evening to discuss details. It was decided that the periodical should be called *The Watchman* (echoes of Joseph Priestley who, in his farewell address to his Unitarian congregation before he left England, had ‘put them on watch’ for the second coming: in its turn an echo of the prophet Ezekiel, ‘Son of man, I have made thee a watchman’).<sup>12</sup>

Some three hundred subscribers were found in Bristol alone. On 9 January, 1796, STC set out on a subscription-raising tour, proposing to visit Worcester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Lichfield, Derby, Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool and London. Among the memories of his past which allegedly presented themselves to STC in panoramic review as he lay dying, one would surely have been of the young man he vividly and movingly described in the *Biographia Literaria*, taking his place in a crowded stage coach on that cold Sunday morning, to promote *The Watchman* (its motto,

That all might know the truth, and that the truth might make us free!). ‘With a flaming prospectus, “Knowledge is Power”, “To cry the state of the political atmosphere,” and so forth, I set off on a tour of the north . . . preaching by the way in most of the great towns; as an hireless volunteer, in a blue coat and white waistcoat, that not a rag of the woman of Babylon might be seen on me . . . O! never can I remember those days with either shame or regret. For I was most sincere, most disinterested! . . . Wealth, rank, life itself, then seemed cheap to me, compared with the interests of (what I believed to be) the truth, and the will of my Maker. I cannot even accuse myself of having been actuated by vanity; for in the expansion of my enthusiasm I did not think of myself at all.

Pen-portraiture which breathes the stamp of authenticity.

Whose money it was that financed the tour we do not know; certainly it was not STC’s own; he was penniless. The question of who was behind *The Watchman* in terms of hard backing has never been seriously investigated; perhaps it is now too late. Estlin and other Unitarian ministers efficiently

organised introductions and hospitality for STC throughout the journey, but several of the names he threw around in his letters written during the tour were formidable in terms of industrial and financial calibre: Barr of Worcester, partner in the pottery firm of Flight and Barr; Jedediah Strutt of Derby, inventor of the stocking-frame and former partner of the great Sir Richard Arkwright who revolutionised the spinning industry and virtually invented the modern factory system; Dr Peter Crompton, also of Derby, son and heir of a rich banker and an enthusiastic reformist prepared to spend money on his enthusiasm (he was a member of an old Puritan family related to Bradshaw the regicide); John Fellows, silk merchant and banker of Nottingham. That these men concerned themselves with *The Watchman* and Samuel Taylor Coleridge indicates that the project was seen as a serious gesture in the face of oppressive government and Coleridge as a figure of rising importance in republican circles. They would not have wasted time or money on him had he merely been what he would later claim to have been, a naive youth playing with a 'squeaking baby-trumpet' of sedition.<sup>13</sup>

From Worcester, his first stop, STC wrote to Josiah Wade (who was acting as a kind of anchor man) that though Mr Barr, STC's host, was kindness itself, there was scant hope of obtaining subscribers in Worcester, which was a nest of aristocrats (as the Dissenting reformists called the opposition) and he proposed hastening on to Birmingham. This he did. Here he was entertained at an introductory party, held in the drawing-room of the Reverend John Edwards, Unitarian minister of the New Meeting.

Although STC's monologues (they could scarcely be termed conversation) had not yet expanded to the Brobdingnagian proportions to be associated with Esteesee in his later years, already here was unmistakably a talker, not a listener. When deprived of the opportunity to talk (someone else having at last managed to sneak a word in edgewise) STC would let his mind drift away to other things, while contriving to keep up an appearance of earnest concentration upon what was being said. Robert Southey was to recall, 'The word which Coleridge uses as a listener when he is expected to throw in something, with or without meaning, to show that he is listening, is, or, used to be, as I well remember, "Undoubtedly"':<sup>14</sup>

We must imagine STC in Mr Edwards's drawing-room, dazzling the assembled gentlemen with the flow of his incredible talk and, when at intervals obliged to be silent, fixing the speaker with his large and luminous eyes as if absorbing every syllable being enunciated while occasionally giving utterance himself to a hearty 'Undoubtedly'. That first evening in Birmingham was a foretaste of the rest of the tour; wherever he went, as he informed Wade, he was 'the figurante of the circle'.<sup>15</sup>

At Derby his host was Jedediah Strutt, who gave STC several noteworthy introductions, one of which resulted in his being asked to dine with Joseph

Wright, the celebrated painter. There was also an interview with Erasmus Darwin, a firm non-believer: 'A wonderfully entertaining & instructive old man,' pronounced STC loftily, but 'an infidel.' A heavyweight in every sense of the term, possessor of a keen brain, a shrewd eye, a poetic heart and a strong sense of humour, Dr Darwin made sure that the bumptious young visitor, spouting moral and religious sentiments with undisguised self-confidence, was left in no doubt that he had met his match. We glean, unmistakably, reading between the lines of STC's account of the meeting, that the seventy-one year old Darwin, without the least effort and with a nice touch of banter, deposited his visitor on the metaphorical mat.<sup>16</sup>

Darwin apart, STC's tour continued to be one dazzle of success; in drawing-room after drawing-room he charmed and scintillated; in pulpit after pulpit his sermons brought him 'huge acclaim' from excited congregations packing the pews to overflowing.

There are no known surviving texts of these sermons given during the *Watchman* tour. William Hazlitt, however, as a youth heard STC preach before a Unitarian congregation in Shrewsbury in January 1798 and has left us a famous account.\*

The organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done, Mr Coleridge rose and gave out his text, 'And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE', as he gave out this text, his voice 'rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,' and when he came to the last two words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me . . . as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe . . . The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war; upon church and state not their alliance, but their separation – on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. He talked of those who had 'inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore. . . .' To show the fatal effects of war, [he] drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd-boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the haw-thorn, piping to his flock and the same poor country-lad . . . turned into a wretched drummer-boy . . . and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood . . . [As] for myself, I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together. Truth and Genius had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of Religion.<sup>17</sup>

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\* William Hazlitt, *First Acquaintance with Poet*, first published in *The Liberal* No 3, 1823

This Shrewsbury sermon was given two years after *The Watchman* tour. However a good sermon, like a good lecture, is rarely aired on but a single occasion, and we may be fairly confident that this sermon, or variations upon it, with possibly stronger political inflexions, were preached at some point by STC during his tour. Moreover, during the winter and early spring of 1796 STC had still been deep in the final throes of the composition of *Religious Musings*, and it is hard to suppose him not thrilling his congregations with excerpts from that incredible work, resonant with image and allusion-packed declamatory music, transposing poeticised biblical passages within the context of contemporary events, such as this inspired republican dig at the might of majesty borne aloft above subject multitudes, presented in the tropic imagery of Bruce's *Travels*.

Where oft majestic through the tainted noon  
 The Simoom sails, before whose purple pomp  
 Who falls not prostrate dies! And where by night,  
 Fast by each precious fountain on green herbs  
 The lion couches; or hyaena dips  
 Deep in the lucid stream his bloody jaws;  
 Or serpent plants his vast moon-glittering bulk,  
 Caught in whose monstrous twine Behometh yells,  
 His bones loud-crashing!

Moving at last to a peroration on the final happiness of all men, concluding on a thrilling personal note,

. . . Till then  
 I discipline my young and novice thought  
 In ministeries of heart-stirring song,  
 And aye on Meditation's heaven-ward wing  
 Soaring aloft I breathe the empyreal air  
 Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,  
 Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul  
 As the great Sun, when he his influence  
 Sheds on the frost-bound waters . . . <sup>18</sup>

The preacher's voice sinks into silence . . . followed by an impassioned responding crescendo of 'Allelujahs' and 'Amens' bursting from the throats of the enraptured congregation and resounding among the rafters overhead.

With the accolades of successive congregations ringing in his ears, STC whirled away blithely anticipating further triumphs in the pulpits ahead of him. On Monday 1 February he set out for Sheffield, from thence proposing to go to Manchester, from Manchester to London by sea (a customary

route then), and from London to Bristol by coach. However, at Sheffield he learned the news that his wife was badly ill with a fever and, flooded with anxiety for her, he curtailed the final stages of the tour and hurried back to Bristol by Manchester and Lichfield. His energy and buoyancy had suddenly deserted him and he plunged into one of those black holes of dejection and anxiety which were in such stark and perplexing contrast to his normal high ebullience. 'I verily believe no poor fellow's idea pot ever bubbled up so vehemently with fears, doubts and difficulties, as mine does at present . . . I am almost heartless! My past life seems to me like a dream, a feverish dream! All one gloomy huddle of strange actions and dim discovered motives! . . . For shame, I ought not to distrust God! but indeed to hope is far more difficult than to fear!' This lament was posted off to Wade together with the sonnet, 'The Fox, and Statesman subtle wiles ensure . . .' containing the revealing lines,

Oh, Nature! Cruel step-mother and hard  
To thy poor, naked, fenceless child the Bard!  
No Horns but those by luckless Hymen worn,  
And those (alas! alas!) not Plenty's horn!

In short, STC had a suspicion that Sara's illness was a symptom of pregnancy and the prospect of the responsibilities of fatherhood did not thrill him. Hence the dejection.

He arrived back at Bristol on 13 February to find his wife still extremely unwell at her mother's apartment on Redcliff Hill. A week later further complications arose; it was thought that Sara had had a miscarriage. STC adopted a philosophical note. 'From the first fortnight of Pregnancy she has been so very ill with the Fever that she could afford no nourishment to the Thing which might have been a Newton or a Hartley,' he told a friend; obviously he assumed that not only would any offspring of his automatically be a male but would also run a good chance of being a genius into the bargain.

Faced with the basic, starkly squalid details of miscarriage, STC found it extremely difficult to maintain a faith-inspired stance. He felt himself being impelled towards the comfortless intellectual territory of Dr Darwin. Mused STC, as what appeared to be the final vestiges of a possible Newton or Hartley were born away in a chamber-pot, 'I think the subject of Pregnancy the most obscure of God's dispensations – it seems coercive against Immaterialism – it starts uneasy doubts respecting Immortality, & the pangs which the Woman suffers, seem inexplicable in the system of optimism.'<sup>19</sup>

But as it turned out, hope of having a Newton or Hartley did not have to be deferred after all. By April Mrs STC's expanding waistline left no doubt that she had not miscarried.



In April 1796, following the failure of *The Watchman*, STC had sent a letter of self-introduction to John Thelwell (imprisoned in the Tower for treason in May 1794, tried and acquitted the following December). Thelwell's own publication, *The Tribune* had been forced to cease publication shortly after the demise of *The Watchman*; STC, as from one kindred spirit to another, wrote, 'Pursuing the same end by the same means we ought not to be strangers to each other'.<sup>20</sup> A lively correspondence sprang up between the two men; from the surviving letters it seems clear enough that they were proposing to carry on with political activity in Bristol despite the Gagging Acts. They had recognised, each in the other, a hard-core revolutionary spirit (or supposed that they had). However Thelwell found STC a more jacobinical jacobin than he himself would ever be. Twenty years later Thelwell was to recall STC as having been 'far from Democracy, because he was far beyond it'; a deep-dyed 'downright zealous leveller & indeed in one of the worst senses of the word a jacobin, a man of blood.' Thelwell had castigated STC 'for the violence and sanguinary tendency of his doctrines' Whether STC voiced these bloodthirsty doctrines in letters to Thelwell (since lost) or on the occasion when they met and talked sedition together at Nether Stowey in 1798 we do not know.

As it turned out Thelwell did not visit Bristol in the summer of 1796. Differences of opinion concerning religious belief, it seems, held them apart. STC summed it up; 'We run on the same ground but we drive different Horses. I am daily more & more a religionist – you, of course, more & more otherwise. I am sorry for the difference, simply because it impoverishes our sympathies: for indeed it does not lessen my esteem & friendship.'<sup>21</sup>

Thelwell spent the summer of 1796 attempting to deliver a series of 'historical lectures' (designed to 'revive discussion') in East Anglia and the Midlands, but met with such violent opposition that he was obliged to give up. In the meantime STC's dissenting friends in the Midlands did their best to find him employment: tutorships; a private day school in Derby, sponsored by Peter Crompton, which would involve only four hours teaching a day (thereby leaving STC with plenty of time for literary composition) with the initial income guaranteed by Crompton. (When, in due course, STC introduced Sara to his friends in the industrial Midlands and the North, she fitted in perfectly. She felt at home with them; she shared their interests, spoke their language, aspired to their aspirations. It is interesting to note that when, in later life, STC dropped the friendships made in *The Watchman* days, his wife was still a welcome guest at the homes of the Cromptons and the Strutts. Nor had she lost her interest in social welfare: In 1826, while on a visit to Joseph Strutt and his family at Derby, we find her attending a course of lectures on 'Mechanics' Institutes'.)

Ultimately the problem was solved when Charles Lloyd, the twenty-nine-year-old epileptic son of the Quaker banking family, expressed a strong desire to be domiciled with STC in order to be privately tutored by him. His father was agreeable and offered a generous fee for these privileges for his son; eighty pounds a year, inclusive of board, lodging and tuition. This offer Coleridge accepted.

Meanwhile the young Coleridges moved into a house of their own in Oxford Street, Kingsdown, on the outskirts of Bristol. Here it was anticipated that their expected child would be born in mid October. On Saturday September 24 (1796) STC wrote a long, and dramatic letter to Thomas Poole;

Last week I received a letter from Lloyd informing me that his Parents had given their *joyful* concurrence to his residence with me; but that if it were possible that I could be absent for three or four days, his Father wished particularly to see me. – I consulted Mrs Coleridge who advised me to go – saying, that she should not be ill [confined] for three weeks. Accordingly on Saturday night I went by the Mail to Birmingham – was introduced to the Father . . . & he expressed himself ‘thankful to heaven’ that his son was about to be with me. He said he would write to me concerning money-matters after his Son had been some time under my roof. – On Tuesday Morning I was surprised by a letter from Mr Morris, our medical attendant, informing me that Mrs Coleridge was delivered on Monday September 19 1796 at half past two in the Morning of a SON – & that both she and the Child were uncommonly well. I was quite annihilated by the suddenness of the information – and returned to my room to address myself to my Maker but I could only offer up to Him the silence of stupefied Feelings – I hastened home & Charles Lloyd returned with me – When I first saw the Child, I did not feel that thrill & overflowing of affection which I expected – I looked on it with a melancholy gaze [later he was to confess that he had been dismayed by its resemblance to a ‘purple rabbit’] but when two hours after, I saw it at the bosom of its Mother; on her arm; and her eye tearful & watching its little features, then I was thrilled & melted, & gave it the Kiss of a FATHER. –

Mrs Coleridge was taken ill suddenly – and before the Nurse or the Surgeon arrived, delivered herself – the Nurse just came in time to take away the after-birth & then when the whole was over, Mr Morris came. – My Sara had indeed (God be praised) a wonderfully favourable time – and within a few hours after her delivery, was excepting weakness, perfectly well. – The

Baby seems strong & the old Nurse has *over persuaded* my Wife to discover a likeness to me in its face – no great compliment to me – for in truth I have seen handsomer Babies in my Lifetime. – It's name is DAVID HARTLEY COLERIDGE.<sup>22</sup>

Charles Lloyd wished to know how STC felt when the Nurse first presented the infant to him. Resultantly STC composed for Lloyd the sonnet,

Charles! My slow Heart was only *sad*, when first  
I scann'd that face of feeble Infancy:  
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst  
All I had been, and all my Babe might be!  
But when I watch'd it on it's Mother's arm  
And hanging at her bosom (she the while  
Bent o'er it's features with a tearful smile)  
Then I was thrill'd & melted, and most warm  
Imprest *a Father's kiss!* And all beguil'd  
Of dark Remembrance and presageful Fear  
I seem'd to see an Angel's form appear –  
'Twas even thine, beloved Woman mild!  
So for the Mother's sake the Child was dear,  
And dearer was the Mother for the Child!<sup>23</sup>

All had righted itself, the image of Mother as Angel had become resurrected; an Angel's form, divine yet tangible, was returned to his life; she smiled once more as she held him in her arms, as he, miraculously, held their child in *his* arms. With pride and joy he wrote his son's name, David Hartley Coleridge, and the date of birth in the Bible that Joseph Cottle had given Sara and Samuel on their wedding day.

In the autumn of 1796 STC decided that he must quit Bristol and politics in exchange for reclusive and poetical rusticity in Nether Stowey: a new tide was flowing for him. Thelwell had objected strongly when he had first learned of the move; STC was deserting him, leaving him to carry the torch of democracy and freedom alone. STC did his best to reassure Thelwell; the day would dawn, he vowed, when they would join forces again. 'I doubt not that the time will come when all our utilities will be directed in one simple path. That Time however is not come; and imperious circumstances point out to each one his particular road . . . I am not *fit* for *public* life; yet the Light shall stream to a far distance from the taper in my cottage window.'