

Editorial

THE APPEARANCE OF A SPECIAL ISSUE devoted to Thomas De Quincey is uniquely fitting for *The Coleridge Bulletin*. As Robert Morrison and other scholars have previously explained, when De Quincey's 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater' first appeared, anonymously, in the *London Magazine* in 1821, the author styled himself in the image of Coleridge, for the figure of the 'opium-eater' applied as much to himself as the English poet and philosopher he named only a few pages into his article. De Quincey was, of course, an early admirer of Coleridge. He supported him financially with a loan and befriended his family in Keswick. Soon after, De Quincey developed a friendship with Wordsworth, too, and became a trusted intimate of his family (he even resided at Dove Cottage after the Wordsworths moved to Allan Bank).

Personal troubles soon disrupted these relationships. De Quincey's opium addiction and unfortunate marriage—by the account of his friends, at least—was symptomatic of a deeper moral failing, undermining his potential. As Stephen Gill describes these years in *William Wordsworth: A Life*, 'De Quincey was beginning to resemble Coleridge', and the Wordsworths 'were not prepared a second time to become involved' (300). They soon distanced themselves from the young man, pushing him away, and his later attacks on Coleridge's personal life and literary plagiarism (scandalously in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 1834) seemed, as Hartley Coleridge suggested, a vile treachery from one who had once enjoyed such an intimate relationship with these families.

Two centuries later, De Quincey's reputation for controversy has often overshadowed his intellectual accomplishment. As guest editors Brecht de Groote, Tim Fulford, and Matthew Sangster note in their introduction to the seven fascinating articles in this special issue, De Quincey was 'irrepressibly present as a key reference' and 'central, or, at the very least, centring' to the various literary circles of the times. Furthermore, his work remains highly productive for scholars today, with forays into literature, psychology, and much more. In this way, De Quincey's work belongs to Coleridge's reception history even as he stands on his own as an author worthy of ongoing critical attention. I am grateful for their work in editing this collection for readers.

In addition to the De Quincey articles, this issue also presents nine new book reviews. These studies consider a wide range of topics related to Coleridge's life and thought, along with various topics in British Romanticism broadly. Commencing with a review of *The New Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, which celebrates and memorializes 250 years since Coleridge's birth, Anya Taylor explains in detail why the 'new' *Companion* serves as an energizing and hopeful complement to the publication of the first *Cambridge Companion to Coleridge* nearly two decades ago. Other reviews take up Coleridge the walker, enlisting the help of Euclidian geometry to describe his rambles; Coleridge's brief tenure in Malta, engaged in official legal proceedings on behalf of the British government; and Coleridge in connection to a wide network of friendships, translations, and theoretical perspectives that will helpfully direct readers to the latest scholarship in the field.