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Editorial

Shame on anyone who missed the exhibition of the work of Benjamin Robert Haydon at the Dove Cottage Museum in Grasmere last summer; it was well worth the journey, and featured a throng of works by that underrated artist, including his impressive drawings of the Elgin Marbles, self-portraits, and, at the other end of the scale, grandiose oils. Brilliantly curated by Robert Woof, the exhibition placed much emphasis on Haydon's relations with the romantics, primarily Wordsworth and Keats. The catalogue is still available, and is essential reading for anyone with an interest in the period. Wordsworth Trust catalogues are lavish affairs these days, and this one is no exception: it boasts two important essays on Haydon by David Blayney Brown and Robert Woof, a chronology, and a detailed inventory of the contents of the exhibition (many of them illustrated), with individual entries on each item. There is also a bibliography and an index. Copies can be obtained from the Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere, at a very reasonable cost of £16.95 plus £2 p+p.

An important Elian bicentenary slipped by without mention in the last *Bulletin*; D. E. Wickham writes: 'We cannot let the date of 22 September 1996 pass without official notice. It was the bicentenary of the day when Mary Lamb stabbed her mother to the heart. From that tragedy, *everything* Elian may be said to follow. (I confirm that Lucas, unfortunately, gives the date as 21 September! However, Claude Prance's *Companion* and Winifred Courtney's *Young Charles Lamb* both say 22 September, and the latter quotes a reference to the inquest sitting on the Friday, the day after the stabbing: that Thursday in 1796 was 22 September.)' The Chairman also brings to my attention the sad death of Geoffrey Dearmer, an erstwhile Elian, on 18 August 1996; a memoir will appear in the next *Bulletin*.

'One that loved his fellow-men':

The Politics of Leigh Hunt

By MARK GARNETT¹

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT was born in 1784 and died in 1858. This life-span should probably be reckoned as the first of several misfortunes to mar his posthumous reputation; he was not old enough to greet the dawn of the French Revolution with immortal verses, and, unlike the respective fates of Shelley, Keats or Byron, his death cannot be regarded as the cruel curtailment of a promising career. In fact, it is often thought that Hunt outlived his potential; although his first book of poetry was received with undeserved praise, only 'Abou Ben Adhem', 'Jenny Kissed Me' and *The Story of Rimini* are much remembered now, and it is doubtful whether the last is often read. In political journalism, Hunt leaped to prominence in the second decade of the nineteenth century, but the devoted liberal audience which he enjoyed at that time was never subsequently recaptured. The essays and anthologies which occupied his later years were popular, but as an essayist he can never match the passion of William Hazlitt or the delightful humour of Charles Lamb. If Hunt had died in Surrey Gaol in 1813, he might now be as well known as his celebrated friends and contemporaries; as it is, very few would place him higher than the second rank in any of his literary activities.

What follows is not designed as an attempt to thrust Hunt back onto an unmerited pedestal. Anyone who has actually read *The Story of Rimini* will acknowledge the futility of that. The present discussion is confined to Hunt's politics, and even here I do not propose to argue that he was of first-rate importance. The intention is to suggest that the prevalent view of Hunt's political record can be challenged on two accounts: firstly that he has been appraised against inappropriate standards, and secondly that the political relevance of his life work has been wrongly estimated. In both these senses, I would like to claim that Hunt has been undervalued, and that there are some important lessons about the nature of nineteenth-century politics which can be learned from a re-examination of his case.

A typical view of Hunt's politics can be drawn from Carl Woodring's introduction to the volume of political and occasional essays which Lawrence and Carolyn Houtchens edited in 1962.² Woodring, a well-known authority on the politics of romanticism, devotes much of a lengthy essay to the struggle between Hunt, assisted by his brother John, and the Prince Regent, obediently supported by an ill-famed Tory government. Through their paper *The Examiner*, the Hunt brothers adopted an aggressively independent stance at a time when the press was increasingly intimidated by the authorities. On several occasions, their campaign against corruption in high places seemed likely to be terminated by prosecution; when Leigh pointed out that instead of being a 'delightful, blissful, wise, pleasurable, honourable, virtuous, true, and immortal Prince', as the *Morning Post* had asserted, the Regent 'was a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in debt and disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demireps, a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim on the

¹ Bill Ruddick originally suggested that I write the present paper, and I wish to record my thanks here for this and many other kindnesses over the years.

² *Leigh Hunt's Political and Occasional Essays* ed. L. H. and C. W. Houtchens (New York and London, 1962) (hereafter Houtchens).

gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity', the government acted.³ It would be satisfying to think that Hunt's publication of Charles Lamb's mischievous poem 'The Prince of Whales' in an earlier *Examiner* helped it to reach the decision to prosecute.

When both Hunts were imprisoned separately for two years and ruinously fined, their position as radical martyrs was at least temporarily secure. Unfortunately, Woodring's introduction shows why this celebrity was not sustained. After a detailed account of *The Examiner's* valiant campaign, there is a section entitled 'Hunt's Later Political Writing' which is little more than four pages long. The implication is that, apart from the short period in 1821 when he was involved with Shelley, Byron and Hazlitt in the production of *The Liberal*, Hunt was never so directly involved in political questions as he was in the *Examiner* period. If the threat of renewed prosecution had not been enough to muzzle him, there was another, perhaps more telling reason why Hunt's achievements did not last. In Woodring's words, Hunt 'could not bring himself to concentrate on either practical politics or abstract theory. He was no philosopher'. In fact, even *The Examiner* 'was more often humanitarian than politically ideological'.⁴

Woodring's account chimes in with the findings of George Dumas Stout, who published a study of *The Examiner* in 1949. Hunt, in Stout's view, was not a political philosopher, 'nor yet a politician'; 'if he thought that he was surveying the general principles underlining specific events, he was self-deceived. He simply could not do it. The power of generalising accurately from particular cases had been denied him. In the same way, he had no real political creed by which to judge particular cases and upon which to base a policy unless it be possible to define as such a commendable wish that every human being should be happy and a deep distrust for the works of Tory ministers'.⁵

There is one rather ironic breach in the happy consensus between Woodring and Stout; Hunt's remark in his *Autobiography* that he knew the constitutional works of de Lolme and Blackstone is regarded by Stout as a boast, while Woodring dismisses it as an 'apology for little history and less law'.⁶ This little hiccup aside, these two critics present remarkably similar portraits of Hunt as a political writer; whatever his merits, he was incapable of philosophical speculation, and his political views were based on feelings rather than a hard-headed ideological programme. Both of these traits are presented by the authors as short-comings, reasons why Leigh Hunt should not be taken very seriously.

I would like to spend the remainder of this discussion assessing these two points. Firstly, it is worth mentioning the most likely reason for the rather condescending attitude betrayed by these two critics—both of whom are clearly quite sympathetic to Hunt as a man. The historiography of early nineteenth-century Britain has, at least until recently, been dominated by the question of Parliamentary Reform. Historical figures have been praised or deplored insofar as they either embraced or rejected this proposition. Stout and Woodring are both guilty of allowing this Whiggish obsession to dominate their views of Hunt. Unfortunately for the latter, while he certainly supported the cause of reform while conducting *The Examiner*, and allowed his boasted impartiality to lapse most notably in favour of the reformist MP Francis Burdett, he was lamentably unaware that future historians would judge him entirely on this one issue. Hence, in the *Autobiography* of 1850 he writes as if the British Constitution had been perfected by the 1832

³ The battle between the Hunts and the Government is summarised by Carl Woodring, Houtchens 10-26.

⁴ Houtchens 66, 51.

⁵ George Dumas Stout, *The Political History of Leigh Hunt's Examiner* (St Louis, 1949) (hereafter Stout), pp. 38-42.

⁶ Houtchens 8; Stout 39.

Reform Act, when, as any Whig historian knows, there was still a lot more democratising to be done. Having said some very rude things about monarchs in his youth, Hunt ended up ruining his radical credentials by eulogising Queen Victoria, and explaining that he had never been a republican. We shall return to this question later, but it was clearly a major inspiration for Stout's remark that Hunt's support for various liberal causes arose 'because of its individual appeal to his sympathies and not as part of a carefully thought-out scheme'.⁷ One suspects that Hunt could have been as sentimental as he liked without provoking such comments, provided that he had stuck to the full Whig agenda throughout his life.

The first point, about Hunt's philosophical abilities, can be dismissed fairly briefly. Hunt laid himself open to this charge to some extent; in the early days of *The Examiner*, he wrote that his detached observations of the political scene 'must be assisted by philosophy'. However, he also made it clear that he regarded this 'in its original and etymological sense, as a love of wisdom'.⁸ The philosopher, according to Hunt, consults the interests of all humanity, and does not devote himself to narrow party spirit. In fact, Hunt clearly wished to be regarded as an advocate of general social improvement; his failure to reach distinction in anything that might be recognisable as our modern, logic-chopping political philosophy would certainly not have bothered him. In short, Stout and Woodring have found Hunt wanting in an undertaking which he never pursued. Hunt's merits as a social observer, of course, are another matter. But his approach—modelled closely on the eighteenth-century *Spectator*—is simply a very unfashionable one today. In particular, his interest in manners betrays a preoccupation with middle-class concerns which modern commentators might regard as a serious limitation of his social vision. This is not to say that his focus was inappropriate, given his overriding intention of promoting behaviour which could serve as a universal example.

The second ground for damning Hunt with faint praise is no more tenable. The notion that Hunt's politics were more coloured by sentiment than by ideology is a very odd one, since students of political commitment have long recognised that feelings lie behind all our beliefs, however rationally they might be presented. For example, it must be doubted whether even the most 'scientific' socialists would support their chosen cause if they did not nurse a hatred of capitalism. Therefore, Stout and Woodring have set up a false antithesis; rather than being incompatible, sentiment and ideology are inseparable.

One suspects that what Hunt's commentators really mean is that he was not programmatic. Stout, for example, chides him for not having devised a blueprint for a possible reform bill. But ideological commitment cannot be measured by the degree to which it is reflected in a worked-out programme; this is just one way in which strong ideological views gain expression. In fact, finding detailed 'reasons for the faith that is in us' might often be a way of suppressing doubts; after all, most people like to think that their creed can be rationally defended. Hunt's refusal to indulge in this kind of activity might be a sign of lukewarm commitment, but equally it might mean that his views were so confidently held that he saw no need to defend them in that way.

To sum up the argument so far: Stout and Woodring focus their discussions of Leigh Hunt's politics around his attitude to Parliamentary Reform, and assert that his views were neither philosophical nor ideological. In opposition to this, it is possible to argue that these critics misunderstand Hunt's notion of philosophy, and by judging him against a more academic definition they have been unfair. Similarly, the reason they offer for regarding Hunt as unideological—that is, the sentimental basis of his ideas—is now commonly regarded as being

⁷ Stout 40.

⁸ Preface to *The Examiner* (1808), printed in *Poems of Leigh Hunt* (London, 1891), pp. 172-3.

the underlying cause of all ideological thinking. The impression that they wish to create—that Hunt was not really a serious political writer—is therefore untenable, at least on the grounds they cite. In fact, their arguments provide very good reasons for examining Hunt's politics, free from the Whiggish notion that a consistent commitment to Parliamentary Reform is the only reason for appreciating any nineteenth-century political writer.

The Politics of Hunt's Autobiography

Given their main interests, it is understandable that Stout and Woodring place most emphasis on the evidence provided by *The Examiner*. By contrast, since it represents the authors' own reflections on his career, it can be argued that a reading of the *Autobiography* provides a more realistic explanation of Hunt's politics. This book, composed when the author was being supported in part by royal generosity, can be (and often is) interpreted as a sad falling-off from radical heroism. Certainly, Hunt was very keen to play down his old connection with the reform movement; this explains why the *Autobiography* features an apologetic statement which would otherwise seem to offer support for the views of Woodring and Stout. Hunt writes in retrospect that much of *The Examiner's* political motivation had been 'rather a sentiment, or a matter of general training, than founded on any particular political reflection'.⁹ When this is read in its proper context, it must be regarded as unfortunate that an apology intended to disarm Victorian critics with long memories should have been endorsed in the following century as an accurate judgement on Hunt's political approach.

In fact, as we have already seen, a political position which is based mainly on sentiment is not necessary a weak one; it is difficult to imagine how any political view could derive from anything else. As Woodring and Stout note, the prevailing 'sentiment' expressed in Hunt's work is benevolence—a desire that human beings might behave better towards one another, and a corresponding opposition to forms of cruelty and injustice. Despite the violence which eventually accompanied the French Revolution, philanthropic feelings like those of Hunt had been advocated by writers associated with the Revolution, notably Voltaire (whom Hunt greatly admired). In Britain, the unhappy results of the Revolution did not destroy admiration for its original ideals, and while advocates of benevolence such as William Godwin subsequently toned down their views, they could not entirely renounce their faith. What Woodring and Stout write off as 'sentiment', therefore, was in fact an important ingredient in the Revolutionary creed. Such a position could hardly be apolitical in the days of the slave trade and barbaric military discipline; it could also lead to support for Parliamentary Reform, in the belief that more equal parliamentary representation would ensure better treatment of the lower orders in society. In fact, one of the first actions of the reformed parliament was to pass the inhumane Poor Laws; in view of this, it is hardly surprising that the philanthropic Hunt was not pressing for further electoral reform by the time he wrote his *Autobiography*. For the humanitarian, in short, the field of political activity is unusually wide—virtually limitless. It is certainly not restricted to questions of the franchise, and to judge Hunt by his record on this issue is to miss the point.

The *Autobiography* hints at another element of Hunt's creed, which is less frequently noticed by commentators. Like Shelley, Hunt had an aesthetic approach to politics, which led him to identify the good with the beautiful. The offence caused to Hunt by the *Morning Post* poem about the Prince Regent is easily explained by this; while the poem eulogised the Regent's physical and moral beauty, Hunt was well aware that its praise was justified in neither respect. The audience

⁹ Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography* (Oxford, 1928) (hereafter *Autobiography*), p. 214.

reached by Hunt's *Examiner* was predominantly middle-class, and in order to interest his readers in the plight of those less fortunate than themselves Hunt was always ready to point out the disfigurement produced in society by injustice. In the cause of social improvement, poetry, drama and art all had important roles to play; hence, as Hazlitt wryly noted, the *Examiner's* theatre criticisms often wandered off into political issues without warning or apology, and Hunt often laced his political observations with literary quotations. This aesthetic impulse was shared by many of the most notable political writers of the century, including Carlyle, Arnold and William Morris.¹⁰ It is now beginning to receive proper attention from scholars, but it can already be recognised that aesthetic considerations are a fertile source of political views, and cannot be dismissed as lightly as Hunt's have been.¹¹

Hunt's politics, then, were based mostly upon aesthetic and emotional judgements, but it is a mistake to imply that they were any less important for that. It is true that he showed no inclination towards programmatic thinking, and he had a horror of statistics, but humanitarian commitments do not necessarily lend themselves to such rationalistic approaches. Instead of being failings, the sources of his opinions should be regarded as strengths which he shared with a number of very effective Victorian political writers.

According to the old view of Hunt's politics, he lost his radical edge as a result of persecution, poverty and the underlying weakness of his original commitment. Attention to the *Autobiography* reveals that this is only partially true. Under the impact of various sufferings, but most importantly because of his speculations during repeated bouts of nervous illness, Hunt developed a religious outlook which he described as 'universalist'. Never orthodox in religion, Hunt reached the conclusion that a benevolent god could not have created hell; instead, all of his creatures were destined to be saved. As he grew older, this approach developed further; no benevolent god could sanction evil, he thought. Therefore what appeared to be evil was really good in disguise. Thus, when Hunt came to discuss war in the *Autobiography*, he considered that 'Wars, like all other evils, have not been without their good. They have pioneered human intercourse; have thus prepared even for their own eventual abolition; and their follies, losses, and horrors have been made the best of by adornments and music, and consoled by the exhibition of many noble qualities'.¹² Part of the providential plan which brought about this coincidence of good and evil was a design for constant human progress. Hence, by the time that he wrote the *Autobiography*, Hunt's benevolent feelings had produced a religious vision which echoes Pope's opinion that 'whatever is, is right'. Unsurprisingly, Hunt's worship for Voltaire did not stretch to his book *Candide*, in which this theory of cosmic optimism was subjected to lacerating ridicule.

Under the influence of this theory, Hunt had come to see that his youthful activities had been misguided. The *Autobiography* is littered with apologies for his behaviour towards numerous old antagonists, including Walter Scott and Tom Moore. Perhaps the most astonishing of these retractions is Hunt's mature opinion that Lord Castlereagh had been 'an intelligent and kindly man in private life', even if he had been a 'cruel politician'. This was certainly not the view of Hunt's closest friend, Shelley. Similarly, while *The Examiner* had been hard on George III, Hunt

¹⁰ On this topic, see Mark Francis and John Morrow, *A History of English Political Thought in the 19th Century* (London, 1994), Chapter 9.

¹¹ In Keats' words, 'from a principle of taste [Hunt] would like to see things go better' (letter to George and Georgiana Keats, October 1818).

¹² *Autobiography* 216.

now regarded the old king as 'a more estimable man than many of his enemies, and, certainly, than any of his wholesale revilers'.¹³

A simplistic observer might regard this heart-warming closure of accounts with former foes as a familiar sign of the ageing process; the angry young man has now become a tame middle-aged Royal pensioner. To paraphrase Disraeli, Hunt's youthful liberalism proved that he had a heart, and his later conservatism is evidence that he had a head. However, matters are far more complicated. Hunt's life was relatively happy until his experience of Surrey Gaol; from that time on he was dogged by ill-health, poverty and bereavement. Unable to fully accept misfortune, he revised his world-view so that even tragic events could be seen as essential elements of a benevolent plan. The implications of such a view were far-reaching; if evil is ultimately productive of good, then there seems no pressing reason to fight against it. Hunt's only observation on this subject, in fact, is that 'nature invites us to the diminution of evil; and while it is pious to make the best of what is inevitable, it is no less so to obey the impulse which she has given us towards thinking and making it otherwise'.¹⁴

Thus the sentiment of benevolence which originally fuelled Hunt's liberalism can also be identified as the source of his later retreat from political engagement. Profound love for mankind was once a motive for struggling against abuses, but it could also serve to provide excuses for inactivity. Similarly, while Hunt's aesthetic sense once pointed towards radical political change, the *Autobiography* shows how it could serve a different purpose. Denying that he had ever been a Republican, Hunt expressed the view that limited monarchy was preferable because of its aesthetic attractions; love of the 'poetic ornament' which surrounded monarchy, he claimed, helped to keep him 'within the pale of the loyal'.¹⁵ Queen Victoria seems to have pleased his sense of beauty in rather more complex ways. By contrast, while the anti-monarchical French Revolution alienated Hunt because of its ugly violence, the Republican government of the United States was associated in his mind with an equally unappealing love of money.¹⁶ Hunt explained that he had opposed monarchs when they behaved unjustly, but his quarrel was with the individuals concerned, not the institution.

Hunt ceased to be a radical for two very good reasons: first, because he came to believe that major sacrifices in the fight against perceived evil might be unnecessary, since such perceptions were likely to be superficial; and secondly because the system of limited monarchy which prevailed during his later life satisfied his aesthetic sense better than any realistic alternative. Hence, Hunt devoted the bulk of his energies to illustrating his vision of the good life, developed in his so-called 'philosophy of cheer'. This may be regarded as a rather cloying manifestation of Victorian sentimentality, but it is by no means inconsistent with the benevolence which inspired the politics of *The Examiner*. Hunt's philosophy implied that the public world could be left to correct itself; like *Candide*, however, he was determined to cultivate his garden, and to show others how to attain similar peace of mind. Instead of an extension of the franchise which might or might not make life better for human beings, Hunt's attention was held by the possibility of directly affecting social conduct through the spirit of his essays. Instead of set-piece exercises in political theory, or detailed proposals for reform, Hunt's politics are carried forward by other means, in the numerous social commentaries which appeared in his successive journals and

¹³ *Autobiography* 256, 245.

¹⁴ *Autobiography* 216.

¹⁵ *Autobiography* 258.

¹⁶ *Autobiography* 217.

books. This approach is unfashionable to historians of politics, and its message may seem outdated to us, but it represents a development of his early thought rather than its abandonment.

Although more can be said about Hunt's politics, the argument so far has suggested that they were originally inspired by a love of mankind, and that this remained his motivation in spite of apparent changes. Whether mankind reciprocated Hunt's good wishes is another matter. He is one of those rare characters who manage to set one's teeth on edge at a distance of over a century. His total incapacity in financial matters might have been endearing in a genius, but was simply exasperating in him; rather unfairly, detractors add a drunken wife and too many children to the indictment. Dickens' masterly portrait of Hunt as Harold Skimpole in *Bleak House* indicates his ability to irritate even well-disposed people; Hunt's willing acceptance of Dickens' reassurances on this point at least allows us to understand why pity, rather than respect, was the prevailing attitude of those who remained his friends. Of the great figures who knew him, only Shelley seems to have been reasonably free from mixed feelings. Yet an understanding and appreciation of Hunt's politics does not depend upon a love for his flawed character. There is little doubt that he meant well, and his writings were intended to spread well-meaning as far as his message could reach. At a time when doctrinaire plans for political improvement of all kinds have justly fallen under suspicion, Hunt's approach, if not his precise ideas, might be on the eve of a comeback.

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Hermits, Heroes, and History: Lamb's 'Many Friends'

By DAMIAN WALFORD DAVIES

No one now
Believes the hermit with his gown and dish . . . (Larkin, 'Vers de Soci  t  ')

THE HERMIT of 'Tintern Abbey' is something of an incongruous presence. He is part of an imaginative surmise which reads the

wreaths of smoke
Sent up in silence from among the trees
as giving

some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone. (ll. 18-23)

The figure has been variously interpreted. By 1798, Wordsworth's hermit would have been seen as part of the picturesque furniture of poetry and topographical prose. John Dixon Hunt has shown how landowners would often employ someone 'to do their meditation for them', to act out the role of hermit in a purpose-built hermitage in the grounds of the great estate.¹ Describing Tintern Abbey in his *Observations on the River Wye* (1782), William Gilpin imagines that 'a man of warm imagination, in monkish times, might have been allured by such a scene to become an inhabitant of it'.² Mary Jacobus argues that 'Gilpin's fantasy makes it impossible to dismiss the hermit . . . merely as a picturesque prop' and that Wordsworth would have recognised in that fantasy 'a parallel for himself'.³ New Historicism has read the image as part of the poem's sublimating drive away from social and psychic pressures towards an idealised image of self and Nature: for Marjorie Levinson, the hermit is 'Wordsworth's self-projection' figuring 'the private, meditative poet' who is 'in flight from a dreaded reality'.⁴ She argues that by equating the vagrants with the hermit, Wordsworth 'discredits the factual knowledge' of the state of the poor at Tintern while Kenneth R. Johnston contends that the image removes the 'possibly unsettling associations' of the 'vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods'.⁵

Geoffrey Hartman sees the hermit as 'Wordsworth's prophetic figure *par excellence*', as 'an image of transcendence . . . the symbol, probably, for the pure or imageless vision'.⁶ Harold Bloom reads this 'curiously placed figuration' in terms of Wordsworth's fraught relation to Milton: 'the Hermit stands, through the fixation of a primal repression . . . for the blind

¹ John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape: Poetry, Painting, and Gardening during the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore and London, 1976), p. 8.

² William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye, and several parts of South Wales, &c. relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (London, 1782), p. 32.

³ Mary Jacobus, "'Tintern Abbey" and Topographical Prose', *Notes and Queries* 18 (1971) 366-9, p. 368.

⁴ Marjorie Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 34 and 41.

⁵ Kenneth R. Johnston, 'The Politics of "Tintern Abbey"', *The Wordsworth Circle* 14 (1983) 6-14, p. 8.

⁶ Geoffrey Hartman, *The Unmediated Vision: An Interpretation of Wordsworth, Hopkins, Rilke, and Val  ry* (New York, 1966), pp. 33-4.

contemplative Milton of the great invocations. . . . The Hermit is the synecdoche for Milton's hiddenness, and so for Milton's triumphant blindness towards anteriority'.⁷ With Bloom, Robert A. Brinkley sees the hermit as representing Milton. He also interprets the image as part of the Romantic ideology ('What the imagination seems to displace is a potential engagement with social reality—even as the hermit displaces the vagrants'⁸), but asks:

Is the hermit who appears to displace the vagrants a figure without political commitments? . . . can we interpret the substitution of hermit for vagrants, as a response to, not an evasion of, social and historical realities?⁹

Citing Milton's presentation of himself as a hermit in 'Il Penseroso', he politicises the image by suggesting it embodies Milton's political faith. Nicholas Roe sees the hermit as 'of course thoroughly at home in a picturesque prospect', whereas the 'vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods' 'give more cause for unease'.¹⁰ Roe's touchstone here is his idea of the 'Miltonic Picturesque'—a *frisson* whereby picturesque theory strives to idealise the landscape, to cleanse it of its more uncomfortable aspects, while certain verbal, allusive details pull in the opposite direction and activate the disturbing associations of place 'overlooked in picturesque theory', namely, 'the vicissitudes of human history'.¹¹ The 'vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods' give 'more cause for unease', then, since they embody an allusion to what Roe sees as 'the most impassioned attack on social injustice in English Literature'—*King Lear*:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are . . .
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides . . .
 . . . defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this.¹²

But Roe's discussion bypasses the hermit as a similarly complex figure in the landscape. For Roe, the hermit is wholly of the 'Picturesque' and does not partake of the stringent, more open-eyed 'Miltonic'. I wish to draw attention to the more disturbing significance of the hermit, revealing him to be a profoundly political presence in Wordsworth's mind in 1798.

* * *

Enshrined in the *Liber Landavensis*—*The Book of Llandav*—whose Latin text was compiled between 1120 and 1140 (though some of its documents may be older), is the story of Tewdrig Fendigaid, 'The Blessed', a sixth to early seventh-century king of Gwent/Morgannwg and saint. He is a historical figure around whom many myths have accrued.

The Tewdrig story has been described as 'one of the most beautiful tales in the whole of Celtic hagiography'.¹³ Having 'less regard for temporal than eternal power', the *Book of Llandav* states, Tewdrig 'gave up his Kingdom to his son Meurig, and commenced leading a hermitical life

⁷ Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Haven and London, 1976), pp. 70-1, 81.

⁸ Robert A. Brinkley, 'Vagrant and Hermit: Milton and the Politics of "Tintern Abbey"', *The Wordsworth Circle* 16 (1985) 126-33, p. 126.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 126 and 128.

¹⁰ Nicholas Roe, *The Politics of Nature: Wordsworth and Some Contemporaries* (Basingstoke, 1992), p. 126.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 126-7; *King Lear* III iv 28-33.

¹³ G. M. Doble, *Lives of the Welsh Saints* ed. D. Simon Evans (Cardiff, 1971), p. 224.

among the rocks of Tintern'.¹⁴ Much has been written on the historical and personal resonances for Wordsworth of the subtitle date of 'Tintern Abbey'. That the *main* title—'Tintern Abbey'—embodies history (and more specifically, as we shall see, conflict) has gone unnoticed. 'Tintern' is a corruption of the Welsh *Din Teyrn*—'fort of the king'—the modern Welsh for 'Tintern' being *Tindyrn*.¹⁵ The reference is to King Tewdrig the hermit. Tintern might possibly have acquired its name from the moment Tewdrig retired there.

Tewdrig, however, was soon called out of his contemplative retirement. *The Book of Llandav* relates that while he was resident at Tintern,

... the Saxons began to invade his land against his son Meurig . . . And the angel of the Lord said to him . . . 'Go to-morrow to assist the people of God against the enemies of the church of Christ, and the enemy will turn their face in flight, as far as Pwll Brochwael . . . and afterwards for the space of thirty years they will not dare . . . to invade the country . . . but thou wilt be wounded by a single stroke in the district of Rhyd Tintern, and in three days die in peace'.

. . . and being armed, he stood in the battle on the banks of the Wye, near the ford of Tintern, and on his face being seen, the enemy . . . betook themselves to flight; but one of them threw a lance, and wounded him therewith . . . After his son Meurig returned victorious . . . he requested his father to come with him, who thus said, 'I will not depart hence until my Lord Jesus Christ shall bring me to the place . . . where I shall like to lie after death, that is, in the island of Echni'. And early in the morning, two stags yoked, and ready with a vehicle, were seen before the house where he lodged, and the man of God knowing that God had sent them, mounted the carriage, and wheresoe'er they rested, there fountains flowed, until they came to a place near a meadow towards the Severn. And when they came there, a most clear fountain flowed, and the carriage was completely broken. He then immediately commended his spirit to God, and ordered the stags to depart; and having remained there alone, after a short space of time, he expired.¹⁶

The battle of Tintern probably took place around 595,¹⁷ and although there is no hard evidence of a major battle having been fought there, E. T. Davies admits that while the bare bones of the Tewdrig story 'cannot now be proved or disproved . . . historical probability is in its favour'.¹⁸ What is certain is that a skeleton with a fractured skull ('one of them threw a lance, and wounded

¹⁴ *The Liber Landavensis, Llyfr Teilo, or the Ancient Register of the Cathedral Church of Llandaff* tr. W. J. Rees (Llandoverly, 1840), p. 383 (hereafter LL).

¹⁵ In his *Historical and Descriptive Accounts of the Ancient and Present State of Tintern Abbey* (Monmouth, 1806; no pagination), Charles Heath devotes a brief chapter to the 'Etymology of Tintern': 'In the Monasticon it is spelt Dindryn,—which, according to the definition of an intelligent friend, is an ancient British word, and signifies a *fortified place*'. The 'friend' does not account for the *teyrn*—'king'—element owing most probably to the metathesis in the form with which he was familiar (Dindryn).

¹⁶ LL, pp. 383-4.

¹⁷ See A. R. Utting, *Tewdrig: Saint and Warrior King* (Monmouth, 1988), p. 7, and E. T. Davies, *A History of the Parish of Mathern* (2nd edn.; Mathern P.C.C., 1990), p. 3. See also James Tyrrell, *A General History of England, both Ecclesiastical and Civil* (3 vols., 1697-1704), i. 149; James Baker, *A Picturesque Guide through Wales and the Marches* (Worcester, 1795), p. 15; and John Morris, *The Age of Arthur: A History of the British Isles from 350 to 650* (London, 1973), pp. 229 and 515.

¹⁸ E. T. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Alan Liu in *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford, 1989), p. 215, describes 'Tintern Abbey' as a poem 'that in the past few years has suddenly become a commonplace, and battleground, of historicist and antihistoricist readings of Romanticism' (my emphasis). He is wiser than he knows.

him therewith') now lies in a stone coffin under the chancel of the church at the 'place near a meadow towards the Severn' referred to in the *Book of Llandav*. This place is modern-day Mathern, a few miles below Tintern.

A number of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century guides to the Wye Valley refer to the Tewdrig story. James Baker's *Picturesque Guide through Wales and the Marches*, published in Worcester in 1795 but also sold in London, (mis)quotes 'a wretched scrawl on the plaistered wall, in the chancel of Mathern church'—the plaque erected by Bishop Francis Godwin (1562-1633), Bishop of Llandaff from 1601 to 1617, antiquarian, and friend of Camden:

Here lieth the body of Theoderick King of Morganock, of Glamorganshire, commonly called Sir Theoderick, and was accounted a martyr, because he was slain in a battle against the Saxons, being then Pagans, and in defence of the Christian Religion. The battle was fought at Tintern, where he obtained a great victory. He died here, being in his way home, three days after the battle, having taken order of Maurice, his son, who succeeded him in the kingdom, that in the same place he should happen to decease, a church should be built, and his body buried in the same; which was accordingly performed in the year 600.¹⁹

In his *Historical Tour in Monmouthshire*, published in 1801, William Coxe, whose *Sketches of the Natural, Civil, and Political State of Swisserland* Wordsworth certainly knew in translation, also quotes Bishop Godwin on the Tewdrig story. Godwin, who resided in the Bishop's Palace at Mathern near the parish church, is writing around 1614:

St. Theodoric, as he is usually called, having resigned his crown to his son, embraced the life of a hermit. The Saxons invading the country, Theodoric was reluctantly called from his hermitage to take command of the army; he defeated them near Tintern upon the Wye; being mortally wounded in the engagement . . . he expired at a place near the conflux of the Wye and Severne; hence, according to his desire, a small chapel being erected, his body was placed in a stone coffin. As I was giving orders to repair this coffin, which was either broken by chance, or decayed by age, I discovered his bones, not in the smallest degree changed, though after a period of a thousand years, the skull retaining the aperture of a large wound, which appeared as if it had been recently inflicted.²⁰

Charles Heath in his *Historical and Descriptive Accounts of the Ancient and Present State of Chepstow Castle* (Monmouth, 1801), also refers to the story in a chapter dedicated to 'Matherne'. The old name of the parish was *Merthyr Tewdrig*—'the burial-place, the grave, of Tewdrig'; the present name derives from *man + teyrn*—'the place of the king'. In his *Historical and Descriptive Accounts of the Ancient and Present State of Tintern Abbey* (1806), Heath dismisses the fanciful elements of the *Book of Llandav* account—'we now smile at such fables'—but gives credence to the historicity of the story.²¹

Would Wordsworth have known the story, part history, part myth, before his Wye tour of 1798?

* * *

¹⁹ Baker, op. cit., p. 15.

²⁰ William Coxe, *An Historical Tour in Monmouthshire* (2 vols., London, 1801), i. 8. Tewdrig's bones have been seen twice—by Godwin in 1614, and again during restoration work in 1881.

²¹ Heath, op. cit., no pagination.

Tewdrig and 'Tintern Abbey': The David Williams Connection

Having reminded us of Wordsworth's debt in the opening description of 'Tintern Abbey' to Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye*, which Wordsworth and Dorothy carried with them to Tintern in July 1798, Mary Jacobus in her note, "'Tintern Abbey" and Topographical Prose', refers to 'two other descriptions of the Wye Valley which Wordsworth is likely to have known'.²² One is Richard Warner's *A Walk through Wales, in August 1797*, published at Bath in 1798. 'Wordsworth is less certain to have known David Williams' *History of Monmouthshire* (1796)', Jacobus writes, 'but an interesting literary connection makes it possible that he did'.²³ She refers to an article in the *Monthly Magazine* for December 1796, signed 'G.D.', which discusses the relationship between topography and poetry and which, she implies, led Wordsworth to Williams' book.²⁴ She contends that 'it is presumably the work of Coleridge's friend and correspondent, George Dyer'—Lamb's fast friend, Elia's beloved 'G.D.'

The article is unquestionably Dyer's. In 1812 he published *Poetics: or, a Series of Poems, and Disquisitions on Poetry* which contains a chapter on 'The Use of Topography in poetry'. His Preface states that 'Part of Chapter VIII, On the Use of Topography in Poetry, I have improved from two papers communicated by me to the *Monthly Magazine*, in *Essays on Topography*, with the signature G.D. for July 1796, and a following month'.²⁵

Dyer in the December issue of the *Monthly Magazine* quotes David Williams' *History of Monmouthshire*:

'The beauty of Monmouthshire', Mr. Williams justly observes, 'is not dependent on single scenes, or particular features; it is the result of all the circumstances which form the whole surface of the county. . . . The whole county forms one exquisite landscape . . .'²⁶

Wordsworth's 'composite scene' at the beginning of 'Tintern Abbey', Jacobus contends, might owe something to this 'comprehensive' view of landscape. She then quotes Williams himself on Tintern's 'contemplative atmosphere':

The abrupt and lofty banks, clothed with woods, sometimes obtruding barren rocks, dispose the mind to contemplation, to imagine all the possible purposes of this sublime retreat . . . the transition to this sequestered spot, has something like the imagined effect of enchantment . . .²⁷

Although she does not argue for the direct influence of Williams' landscape vision and his description of Tintern on Wordsworth's poem, she does suggest that an emphasis on Tintern's 'contemplative atmosphere' was characteristic of the period's topographical prose and that such an emphasis might be informing Wordsworth's picture of the

steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion . . .

²² Jacobus, op. cit., p. 368.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Monthly Magazine* 2 (1796) 864-7 (hereafter *MM*).

²⁵ George Dyer, *Poetics: or, a Series of Poems, and Disquisitions on Poetry* (2 vols., London, 1812), p. v. See my "'G.D." is George Dyer', *Notes and Queries* 43 (1996) 31.

²⁶ *MM* 2 (1796), p. 866; see David Williams, *The History of Monmouthshire* (London, 1796), p. 9.

²⁷ Jacobus, op. cit., p. 369; *The History of Monmouthshire*, p. 161.

Jacobus does not mention Dyer's earlier (July 1796)²⁸ contribution to the *Monthly Magazine* in which he discusses topographical history, the fine arts and 'the improvement of political society' and speaks highly of *The History of Monmouthshire*. Having discussed the 'uninviting aspect' of some topographical histories, Dyer states that he has before him 'the History of Monmouthshire, by Mr. David Williams',

a writer of distinguished talents. This production is the reverse of those already described. I intend to make one or two remarks on topographical history, in a way of cursory observation, not of regular criticism, on this excellent work.²⁹

William Enfield's 'Brief Retrospect of the State of Domestic Literature'³⁰ in the same July issue also praises Williams' book:

The 'History of Monmouthshire', by Mr. D Williams, recommends itself to general readers by a force of style, and a depth of historical and political research, by no means usual among those dry compilations, which, for the most part, appear under the title of County Histories. It is splendidly adorned with views, excuted [sic] by the Rev. Mr. Gardnor, in *aqua tinta*.³¹

Nor does Jacobus mention the fact that Wordsworth is certain to have read Dyer's discussions of *The History of Monmouthshire* since in March 1797, James Losh sent Wordsworth 'Monthly Magazines from Feby to December 1796 inclusive'.³² The March and April issues carried translations by William Taylor of Norwich of two poems by Gottfried August Bürger—'Lenore', and 'Des Pfarrers Tochter von Taubenhain'³³—which influenced 'The Idiot Boy' and 'The Thorn' respectively, while the September and October issues contained Coleridge's 'On a Late Connubial Rapture' and 'Reflections On Entering Into Active Life' (later retitled 'Reflections On Having Left A Place Of Retirement').³⁴

Dyer's July and December contributions to the *Monthly Magazine* would undoubtedly have attracted the attention of a poet whose only two publications to date apart from a sonnet in the *European Magazine* were the topographical poems *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*. The essays might very well have led Wordsworth to *The History of Monmouthshire*. In the December issue, Dyer announces that his design is 'to show how far the topographer may assist the poet'. The topographer, he remarks, is not 'a mere noter down of places, a reporter of curiosities, or the panegyrist of elegant seats . . . but one who describes the nature of places'.³⁵ All of which leads him to ask: 'What advantage, then, does the poet derive from the topographer?' His answer is that

By local descriptions, [the poet] may be brought acquainted with scenes to which he was before a stranger . . .

²⁸ Lamb's sonnet 'We were two pretty babes' first appeared in this July issue, p. 491.

²⁹ *MM* 2 (1796), p. 468.

³⁰ David Chandler attributes the article to Enfield in a forthcoming article.

³¹ *MM* 2 (1796), p. 487.

³² Losh's diary, quoted in Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading, 1770-1799* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 101. See *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years, 1787-1805* ed. E. de Selincourt, rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford, 1967) (hereafter *EY*), p. 186.

³³ *MM* 1 (1796), pp. 135-7 and 223-4.

³⁴ *MM* 2 (1796), pp. 647 and 732.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 865.

Homer might have written 'from nature, as his original', but does it follow, Dyer asks, that a poet may not enrich his mind from the stores of other observers? The views taken by any individual, in comparison with the whole range of nature, are inconsiderable and confined; and if poets are not permitted to increase their stock, by receiving a little on credit, many must be poor indeed.³⁶

Dyer sanctions this borrowing by borrowing himself from Iago's speech on theft: 'But he that filches from me my good name / Robs me of that which not enriches him / And makes me poor indeed'.³⁷ Topographical writing, he emphasises, does more than unfold to the poet 'scenes that he never saw'. Since '[no understanding] recollects every stage of its enquiries', and since 'no eye embraces every scene', topographical history not only acts as a succour for the memory, a source of reference for the eye that *has* seen its Yarrow, but creatively modifies the poet's own vision:

Topography . . . may assist a poet . . . by retouching, as it were, the objects already pictured in his eye; by completing the picture, and thus, by increasing the sensations, and strengthening the conceptions, the topographer may give energy and precision to the poet.³⁸

Although it is the business of topography to be precise, it may also 'enliven the passions by moderate sallies of the fancy, and occasionally, elevate the mind with moral reflection'. David Williams' book becomes an invaluable companion to the topographical poet drawn, as Wordsworth was, to the fashionable landscape of Monmouthshire:

the modern History of Monmouthshire that has been much admired for its general contents, seems also highly favourable to the views above-mentioned.³⁹

It is at this point that Dyer quotes from *The History of Monmouthshire*. Arguing that the poet should use such works as a companion to his own vision, Dyer's articles might very well have led Wordsworth to Williams' book as an example of topographical history that could be of value to the topographical poet. The work was certainly widely, and for the most part, favourably, reviewed.⁴⁰

What Jacobus does not mention is that Williams' *History of Monmouthshire* repeatedly refers to the hermit-king of Tintern. Appendix XXXVII relates the story in detail:

We find in the book of Llandaff, that, about this time 596, Tudric King of Glamorgan, who was still victorious, is said to have exchanged his crown for an hermitage, till going in aid of his son Mourice, whom the Saxons had reduced to great extremity, taking up arms again, he defended him against them at Tinterne by the Wye; but he himself received a mortal wound.⁴¹

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Othello* III iii 164-6.

³⁸ *MM* 2 (1796), p. 866.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ For a list of reviews of *The History of Monmouthshire*, see J. Dybikowski, *On Burning Ground: An Examination of the Ideas, Projects, and Life of David Williams* (Oxford, 1993), p. 318.

⁴¹ *The History of Monmouthshire*, Appendices, p. 95. The *History*, p. 89, locates the battle *near*, rather than *at*, Tintern; see also Heath, *op. cit.*, no pagination: 'The FORD at Tintern,—Pull Brochuail (now called Brockwear) . . . confirm[s] the fact that such a battle took place. . . . There is also a spot, about a mile from Tintern, called Pont-y-Saison (the Saxon's bridge) . . .'

Tewdrig also appears in *The History of Monmouthshire* as the grandfather of 'the great Arthur of the British History' and as the ruler 'who is said to have first built a church at Llandaff',⁴² a claim reinforced by Appendix XXIII, drawn up for Williams by his fellow Welshman, Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg, the 'Bard of Liberty'), the friend of Coleridge and George Dyer:

Tewdric. See an account of him in Godwin's Account of the Bishops of Landaff: it is probable enough, that he might have built a place of worship at Landaff, which occasioned the Bishop's See to be there established.⁴³

Appendix XVII describes the village of Mathern, the burial-place of Tewdrig, which appears as the gift of Tewdrig's son Meurig to the Bishopric in memory of his father⁴⁴ and as the 'ancient palace of the See of Llandaff'.⁴⁵ The link with Llandaff and its bishops is also made in a number of contemporary guide books: William Coxe states that Mathern served as the Episcopal Palace of the See until the early years of the eighteenth century.⁴⁶ Wordsworth would surely have been interested in the connection between the Tewdrig story and the bishops of Llandaff: soon after his return from France, he had in early 1793 composed his radical, youthful *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, Richard Watson. In 1789, David Williams had anonymously published his own letter to the bishop—*An Apology for Professing the Religion of Nature . . . addressed to the Right Reverend Dr. Watson, Lord Bishop of Llandaff*.

Before considering the significance of the hermit, let me suggest a few connections between Wordsworth and Williams. It is tempting to suppose that a number of other links apart from Dyer's articles in the *Monthly Magazine* led Wordsworth to *The History of Monmouthshire*. Wordsworth would certainly have known of the Welshman David Williams (1738-1816). Born in Waunwaelod, South Wales, nicknamed 'The Priest of Nature' and 'the English Rousseau' by his friend Franklin, with whom he founded the deist 'Thirteen Club' to which Josiah Wedgwood, benefactor of Wordsworth and Coleridge, belonged, and satirised in 1781 in a long poem entitled *Orpheus Priest of Nature*, he was a polymath: preacher, deist (his creed was ironically said to be 'I believe in God, amen'), religious thinker, reformer of dissenting liturgies, educationalist, translator of Voltaire, admirer of Rousseau, interpreter of Montesquieu, disciple of Hartley, political theorist and pamphleteer, and founder of the Literary Fund. He was the author of *The Philosopher* (1771), which the Cambridge liberal John Jebb, one of the founding members of the Society for Constitutional Information, greatly admired; *A Treatise on Education* (1774), which Coleridge borrowed from Bristol Library in 1796; *A Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality* (1776), which was warmly received by Frederick II, Voltaire and Rousseau;⁴⁷ *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782), a classic of eighteenth-century political theory and a defence of the American colonists which Williams claimed influenced the course of the French Revolution; *Lessons to a Young Prince by an Old Statesman* (1790), the second edition of which (1791) contained a lengthy attack on Burke's *Reflections*; *Observations sur la dernière constitution de la France* (1793), an examination of the French constitution of 1791 written at Paris in 1792-3; and, of course, *The History of Monmouthshire* (1796).

⁴² *The History of Monmouthshire*, p. 75.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Appendices, p. 65. For other references to Tewdrig, see Appendices, pp. 31-2, 66, 68.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Appendices, p. 36.

⁴⁶ Coxe, *op. cit.*, i. 7.

⁴⁷ Voltaire wrote to Williams: 'It is a great comfort to me, at the age of 82 years, to see the tolerance openly teach'd in your country, and the God of all mankind no more pent up in a narrow tract of land'.

It was as a political theorist and the author of *Letters on Political Liberty* and the *ad hominem* attack on Burke as an 'eloquent irrationalist' and a 'political Swedenborg' that Williams was invited to Paris in November 1792 to contribute to the debate on the new constitution. He was already much respected in France, owing mainly to the high esteem in which he was held by Brissot de Warville, whom Williams had met in England in 1783-4 and 1788-9. It was Brissot who introduced his Girondin colleagues—Madame Roland amongst them—to Williams' political thought. In his *Biographical Anecdotes*, Williams styled himself Brissot's 'English master', his 'English interpreter' and his 'mentor', stating in his autobiographical *Incidents* that he was 'in some degree an instrument' for preparing Brissot for his role in the revolution. Brissot in turn, Williams claimed, referred to him as his 'oracle'.⁴⁸ In his memoirs, Brissot described Williams as 'of all English men of letters the one who seems to me to have the most universal philosophy and the most detached from all national prejudices'.⁴⁹ From an early stage, Brissot took a strong interest in Williams' work as an educationalist and political thinker and arranged for a French translation of the *Letters on Political Liberty* to be made, for which he was interrogated in the Bastille during August 1784. They corresponded regularly during the early years of the revolution, Williams offering advice on how to strengthen the political position of France. It was through Brissot that Williams, together with Paine, Price, Priestley, Mackintosh, Wilberforce, and George Washington, was granted honorary French Citizenship on 26 August 1792; his gracious letter of acceptance was read out in the Convention on 13 November by Roland. Wordsworth had just arrived back in Paris from Blois. With Paine, Williams was asked to stand for the Convention. Paine accepted; Williams wisely declined.⁵⁰

Williams arrived in Paris as a constitutional adviser during the first week of December 1792.⁵¹ Wordsworth might have left Paris for England as early as late November, but it is possible he was still in the city in early December; it is safe to assume that he had left by 22 December. Both men saw Paris at a crucial stage of the revolution. It was a time of upheaval. 'The general spirit of faction', Williams remarked, was rife:

I had not been in Paris a week when I perceived I could be of no use. The Convention was dividing into factions, while the Commune of Paris was seizing its power and the whole country crumbling into anarchy. The trial of the King, the whole of which I attended, gave me a perfect knowledge of the talents and spirit of the Convention, which proceeding on no principle, either of a constituent, legislative, or judiciary assembly, led the way in the career of criminal confusion, which hazarded the existence of France as a nation.⁵²

Only a few days after his arrival, he found himself in the middle of the Jacobin-Girondin power-struggle. On 7 December, a letter was produced by Chabot in the Convention informing the President that Citizen Williams, amongst others, was demanding that he act as defence counsel to the King. The document caused a great stir. Upon examination, the signatures were found to have been forged. Robespierre, who called Williams a traitor and a hypocrite, became thoroughly

⁴⁸ See Dybikowski, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁴⁹ Quoted by Peter France in his introduction to Williams' autobiographical work (written c. 1802-3), *Incidents in my own life which have been thought of some importance* (Falmer, 1980), p. 2.

⁵⁰ See *Incidents*, p. 27.

⁵¹ See Dybikowski, *op. cit.*, p. 208

⁵² *Incidents*, p. 27.

suspicious of the Welshman.⁵³ Despite the relative secrecy surrounding his business in Paris,⁵⁴ it is clear that Williams had a dangerously high profile in early December.

Amid all this intrigue, Williams was asked to 'write down [his] objections' to the Constitution of 1791. He delivered his report—later translated and published as *Observations sur la dernière constitution de la France*—to Brissot in January 1793. Diplomatic relations between France and England were deteriorating by the day, and Williams was asked by Brissot, Roland and Le Brun to act as ambassador to London. He wisely rejected the offer but agreed to deliver 'in [his] own private character . . . any papers they chose to send into the hands of Lord Grenville, and say everything he would permit me to say to prevent a war'.⁵⁵ At the end of January, Williams was present at a council at Clavière's house to hear a draft of the report on diplomatic relations which Brissot was to deliver to the Convention the following day. He persuaded Brissot to remove 'most of the criminating passages, some of them being mistakes and others impolitic, the council professing a strong desire to avoid the war'.⁵⁶ The next day in the Convention, however, Brissot delivered the report unchanged, the immediate result of the speech being nothing other than the French declaration of war on Britain and Holland. That night at dinner, 'with expressions of dissatisfaction and even fear in his countenance', Brissot explained:

It is done, the Committee would have it; if we had hesitated, the Mountain would have taken the business out of our hands.⁵⁷

On the same evening, it was again proposed that Williams deliver a letter to Grenville. In it, Le Brun, suggesting an alliance between the English Government and the Girondins, revealed how a war might be averted. As Professor David Williams remarks: 'This letter . . . is unique in the history of diplomacy unless there is another example of a foreign secretary on the day on which his country has declared war writing to the foreign secretary of the enemy country to express his regrets and make overtures of peace'.⁵⁸ Williams returned to England with this diplomatic commission in February 1793 but got no further than Aust, the Undersecretary of State. 'I . . . did not press myself uselessly on Lord Grenville', Williams remarks, 'and I did not write to him, that the contents of my letter might not reach France and send the Girondist government instantly to the guillotine'.⁵⁹

Williams and Wordsworth returned to England in a similar frame of mind. Although he had defended a nation's right to cashier and execute its King in *The Philosopher*, Williams was shocked by the execution of Louis and the factional hatred of the Convention. Disillusioned with what he regarded as the Girondins' ignorance of human nature and of the laws governing political society, their rashness, and their failure to establish the government of France on a stable constitutional base that would guard it against Jacobin usurpation, he renounced an active role in revolutionary politics:

I withdrew from the political arena, not from fear, though I had some reasons for fear, not from change of principles or connections, but from despair occasioned by the ignorance and impetuosity of those reformers to whom power seemed to have been delegated only by

⁵³ See J.M. Thompson, *English Witnesses of the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1938), p. 254.

⁵⁴ See *Incidents*, p. 28.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵⁸ Quoted by Dybikowski, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

⁵⁹ *Incidents*, p. 31.

chance . . . From this chaos of good and evil, or of principles and passions, I withdrew into my own private circle, attending occasionally to the slow growth of an institution I had commenced for the establishment of a *literary fund*.⁶⁰

'I was received on my return as a partisan of France', Williams remarks. His visit to France made him notorious. His reputation was tarnished, his company shunned, his movements monitored and his servants and neighbours questioned. He was later to consider what his fate would have been had he not remained the staunchly non-party man:

If my name had been found in the lists of any of the societies pretending to be patriotic, I should have been committed to the tower with Hardy, Tooke &c—and the man who first discerned the features of Jacobinism in Europe, who first wrote against it, and who, on that account, had the honour of being calumniated by Chabot in the Jacobin Club of Paris as the messenger of Pitt, loaded with four millions sterling to save Louis XVI, would have been tried in England for high treason, and acquitted, to be spit upon as an acquitted felon by the foul mouth of a sanguinary partisan.⁶¹

A contract with the miniaturist and entrepreneur Robert Bowyer to write a continuation of Hume's *History of England* fell through when Bowyer was informed that Williams had accepted French citizenship. Peter France remarks that the achievement of the *History of Monmouthshire* in 1796 seemed 'a port in the storm'.⁶² Madame Roland's gracious remarks in her *Appeal to Impartial Posterity* (English translation, 1795) did much to rehabilitate Williams' public image in the late 1790s. Wordsworth is certain to have read the *Appeal* shortly after Pinney brought a copy to Racedown in January 1796.⁶³ 'For cool discussion in a committee, or the regular labours of a legislator', Madame Roland states,

I conceive *David Williams* infinitely more proper than [Thomas Paine]. Williams . . . was invited by the government to repair to Paris, where he passed several months, and frequently conferred with the most active representatives of the nation. A deep thinker, and a real friend to mankind, he appeared to me to combine their means of happiness, as well as Paine feels and describes the abuses which constitute their misery . . . Williams is equally fit to fill a place in the parliament, or the senate, and will carry with him true dignity wherever he goes.⁶⁴

If Wordsworth was still in Paris in early December, is he likely to have known of Williams' presence in the city? Might he even have met him there?

Nicholas Roe has argued that Henri Grégoire, President of Les Amis de la Constitution at Blois, whose meetings Wordsworth attended in early 1792, a delegate at the first sitting of the National Convention on 21 September 1792, and later President of the Convention, exercised a formative influence on Wordsworth.⁶⁵ Roe speaks of Wordsworth's 'proximity to—and perhaps his personal acquaintance with—the author of the French Republic', to whom Wordsworth was

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 24 and 37.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶³ See Wu, *op. cit.*, p. 118 and *EY* 166.

⁶⁴ Jeanne Marie Roland de la Platière, *An Appeal to Impartial Posterity, by Citizenness Roland* (London, 1795), Part II, pp. 42-3.

⁶⁵ Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 66-9 (hereafter *RY*).

to refer in the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* as 'A man of philosophy and humanity'.⁶⁶ Grégoire was an admirer of Williams' deist experiments at the Margaret Street Chapel in London (glanced at by Southey in his *Letters from England*⁶⁷), where from 1776-80 Williams established the first public service in Europe based on deistic principles. Williams' *Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality* (1776) influenced the worship of Reason and the Supreme Being in France in 1793 and 1794. Together with Brissot, Grégoire recognised the historic importance of the Margaret Street enterprise⁶⁸ and saw a direct connection between Williams' venture and French theophilanthropy under the Directory.⁶⁹

Hence the inclusion of David Williams in Gillray's cartoon 'New Morality', published in the *Anti-Jacobin* in July 1798. Gillray depicts Williams, in the company of Paine, Holcroft, Thelwall, Coleridge, Lloyd and Lamb (who appears as a toad), as a snake slithering over his 'Atheistical Lectures', paying homage to la Réveillère Lepaux in St. Paul's Cathedral. Accompanying the cartoon is George Canning's poem 'New Morality, or the Promised Installment of the High Priest of the Theophilanthropes, with the Homage of Leviathan and his Suite': 'All creeping creatures, venomous and low, / PAINE, W-LL-MS, G-DW-N, H-LC-FT, praise LE PAUX!' Lamb's poem 'Living without God in the World' might be a response to the cartoon, which carried a footnote describing the Theophilanthropists as 'men without a God'. Grégoire and Williams finally met in December 1792 when Grégoire was President of the Convention. It is not impossible that Grégoire might have expressed his admiration for Williams as a thinker in Wordsworth's company at Blois.

John Oswald might also provide a link between Wordsworth and Williams. We know that Williams knew Oswald, whom he met in London in the early 1780s. In a letter of November 1791 to Brissot, Williams referred to him as 'a man of Talents . . . with whom in England I have had some acquaintance',⁷⁰ and in April and May of the following year, Williams, the founder of the Literary Fund, was to provide financial support for Oswald and his family.⁷¹ It is possible that Oswald translated Williams' *Lessons to a Young Prince* (1790) into French in 1791. David Erdman has argued that Wordsworth might have known Oswald too, and that he might have been involved during the autumn of 1792 in Oswald's plan to lead a cross-channel attack to liberate London.⁷² These possibly mutual acquaintances might have led to Wordsworth hearing of Williams' career.

But it is Brissot who provides the most probable link. On 19 December 1791 Wordsworth wrote to his brother, Richard: 'I was at the national assembly, introduced by a member of whose acquaintance I shall profit on my return to Paris'.⁷³ It has been suggested that this member was Brissot.⁷⁴ Brissot was a likely acquaintance of Charlotte Smith, who provided Wordsworth with letters of introduction before he left for France. J. R. MacGillivray has suggested that on his

⁶⁶ *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* ed. W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (3 vols., Oxford, 1974), i. 32.

⁶⁷ Southey, *Letters from England* ed. Jack Simmons (Gloucester, 1984), p. 400.

⁶⁸ Henri Grégoire, *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses* (6 vols., Paris, 1828-45), i. 359-63.

⁶⁹ See Dybikowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-2. The *Manuel* drafted for the followers of Theophilanthropy closely resembled Williams' own *Liturgy*.

⁷⁰ Quoted by Dybikowski, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

⁷¹ See David V. Erdman, *Commerce des Lumières: John Oswald and the British in Paris, 1790-1793* (Columbia, 1986), pp. 160-1.

⁷² Erdman, 'The Man that was not Napoleon', *The Wordsworth Circle* 12 (1981) 92-6.

⁷³ EY 71.

⁷⁴ RY 43.

return to Paris in October 1792, Wordsworth actually lodged with Brissot and that they were 'under the same roof' when Brissot wrote to Williams on 11 November 1792 inviting him to take part in the constitutional debate.⁷⁵ Barron Field in his *Memoirs of Wordsworth* also claimed that Wordsworth had 'lived in the same house with Brissot'.⁷⁶ Although Wordsworth wrote 'a mistake' and 'There is much mistake here which I should like to correct in person' against this statement, it is fair to assume that Wordsworth at this time was moving among the Girondins with whom David Williams worked closely from early December onwards, and that he had some contact with Brissot in Paris towards the end of 1792.⁷⁷ It is perfectly possible that Wordsworth knew of David Williams' presence in Paris.⁷⁸ Through Brissot, they might even have been introduced.

Both men returned to England disillusioned with the course the revolution had taken and with the indecisiveness of the Girondins. Both were later to comment on the danger in which they left Brissot and his supporters—Williams in the *Incidents* and Wordsworth in *The Prelude*:

I doubtless should have made a common cause
With some who perished, haply perished too—
A poor mistaken and bewildered offering . . . (*Thirteen-Book Prelude* x 194-6)

'Yea, I could almost / Have prayed', Wordsworth says of his time in Paris towards the end of 1792,

that throughout earth upon all souls
Worthy of liberty—upon every soul
Matured to live in plainness and in truth—
The gift of tongues might fall, and men arrive
From the four quarters of the winds to do
For France what without help she could not do,
A work of honour . . . (x 118-24)

Might Wordsworth's knowledge of David Williams' mission to assist the Girondin government in framing a new constitution lie behind this wish? Later in Book X, Wordsworth remarks that while in Paris he had not doubted that

the virtue of one paramount mind
Would have abashed those impious crests, have quelled
Outrage and bloody power, and, in despite
Of what the people were through ignorance
And immaturity (and in the teeth
Of desperate opposition from without),

⁷⁵ *TLS* (29 January 1931), p. 79.

⁷⁶ *Barron Field's Memoirs of Wordsworth*, ed. Geoffrey Little (Sydney, 1975), p. 26.

⁷⁷ Christopher Wordsworth in his *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (2 vols., London, 1851), i. 77, states that Wordsworth would have 'fallen victim among the Brissotins, with whom he was connected' had he remained longer in Paris.

⁷⁸ Although, as Roe (*RY* 81-2) remarks, the address to the National Convention drawn up by expatriate radicals at White's Hotel in Paris on 18 November 1792 was not signed by Wordsworth, he might very well have been present; J. G. Alger, writing in 1902 but citing no sources (*Paris in 1789-1794* [London, 1902], p. 328), states, intriguingly, that Williams was also in Paris at the time but kept away from the gathering at White's Hotel because of its jacobinical tone.

Have cleared a passage for just government
 And left a solid birthright to the state,
 Redeemed according to example given
 By ancient lawgivers. In this frame of mind
 Reluctantly to England I returned . . . (x 179-89)

Clearing a passage for 'just government' and leaving 'a solid birthright to the state' describe exactly the work of David Williams at this time in Paris.⁷⁹ It was in exactly 'this frame of mind', too, that Williams returned to England about a month-and-a-half after Wordsworth. Furthermore, might Williams' great admiration for what he called 'the astonishing genius of Alfred' and the 'perfect political liberty'⁸⁰ of the Saxon constitution (of which he kept reminding Brissot) be informing Wordsworth's wish here to see a constitution 'Redeemed according to example given / By ancient lawgivers'?

'Mean as I was', Wordsworth states of his 1792 self,

and little graced with powers
 Of eloquence even in my native speech,
 And all unfit for tumult and intrigue,
 Yet would I willingly have taken up
 A service at this time for cause so great,
 However dangerous. (x 131-6)

Wordsworth doubtless imagined an active role for himself in the Girondin-Jacobin power-struggle. At the time, he might very well have seen in David Williams a fellow Briton engaged in 'a service . . . for cause so great' with all its attendant tumult, intrigue and danger.

Williams' experience in France certainly dealt a blow to the radical in him. He greatly mistrusted political demagogues, was no political activist, and after 1793 increasingly became 'an abstract thinker on reform',⁸¹ who, viewing politics as a science, cautioned against political risk. But despite the marked falling-off in both his commitment to the revolution (which he had joyfully welcomed) and his involvement in radical politics, Williams certainly remained well-known among the radical circles of the 1790s. His presence in Gillray's cartoon and Canning's poem 'New Morality' on 9 July 1798 should not be understood merely in terms of his connection with French Theophilanthropy and religious reform. Williams is mentioned in Canning's poem in the same breath as Paine, Godwin and Holcroft, and, surrounded in Gillray's cartoon by the foremost radicals of the day, is certainly a 'venomous' *political* presence. A short while after his return from France and his withdrawal from politics, his writings were praised by the young Joseph Gerrald in his *A Convention the only means of saving us from ruin*. After his own return from France, Wordsworth was to become well acquainted with London's radicals. He and Williams would have had a number of mutual radical acquaintances, and Williams and his writings are sure to have been often mentioned. Wordsworth first met Godwin on 27 February 1795 as an ardent admirer of *Political Justice*; Williams had met Godwin while *Political Justice*

⁷⁹ On 24 November 1792, the French agent Noël told Le Brun that Williams would 'contribute by his enlightenment to the edifice of happiness and prosperity which the Convention is about to erect'; see David Williams, 'The Missions of David Williams and James Tilly Matthews to England in 1793', *English Historical Review* 53 (1938) 305.

⁸⁰ See *The Philosopher* (1771), ii. 49; *A Letter to the Body of Protestant Dissenters* (1777), p. 4; *A Plan of Association* (1780), pp. 26-7; *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782), pp. 17 and 29.

⁸¹ *Critical Review* 20 (1810) 13.

was still being written, and the Welshman was one of the radical thinkers with whom Godwin discussed his great work in progress. Godwin wrote in his journal for 1792:

During this year I was in the singular position of an author possessing some degree of fame for a work unfinished & unseen—I was introduced on this ground to Mr. Mackintosh, David Williams, Joel Barlow & others,—& with these gentlemen together with Mr. Nicholson and Mr Holcroft; had occasional meetings in which the principles of my work were discussed.⁸²

His entry for 9 September 1792 runs: 'Dine at Mr. Holcroft's: tea Major Jardine's with Holcroft, D. Williams, Barlow, major Derham'.⁸³ Holcroft, whom both Wordsworth and Coleridge were later to meet, already knew Williams since he had attended Williams' Margaret Street Chapel and its successor, the London Philosophical Society.⁸⁴

George Dyer admired Williams as a political theorist and refers frequently to his political writings in his own work. Williams appears as 'an ingenious writer' in Dyer's *Inquiry* of 1792, which repeatedly cites the *Lectures on Political Principles*.⁸⁵ The *Lectures* are cited again in Dyer's *Complaints of the Poor People of England* (1793) and in his *Memoirs of Robert Robinson* (1796), in which Williams and Edward Williams appear as 'two well-informed' men 'among the modern Welch'.⁸⁶ Wordsworth certainly read the *Memoirs*: he was presented with a copy by Dyer in 1796 and was later to describe the work to Crabb Robinson as 'one of the best books of biography in the language'.⁸⁷ Under the heading 'Poverty and Distress of Men of Letters' in his *Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence* (1795), which Wordsworth is also known to have read,⁸⁸ Dyer wrote:

It is only a year or two that a SOCIETY TO SUPPORT AUTHORS IN DISTRESS was constituted. The plan of this society, is drawn up with much good sense, and, it is hoped, requires only to be more widely known, to be more generally encouraged.

He proceeds to quote the constitution of the 'society'—the Literary Fund—and remarks: 'The above constitution was drawn up by David Williams, the author of many excellent political writings'.⁸⁹ Williams appears once again as the framer of constitutions. Dyer at this time would have known of Williams' trip to Paris in 1792-3; by mentioning both the Literary Fund's constitution and Williams' 'political writings', Dyer's compliment seems deliberately to be raising a few political ghosts.

⁸² Bodleian Library, Oxford, Abinger dep., e. 202; see also C. Kegan Paul, *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries* (2 vols., London, 1876), p. 71. I am grateful to Lord Abinger for permission to publish.

⁸³ Bodleian Library, Abinger dep., e. 200.

⁸⁴ Thomas Holcroft, *The Life of Thomas Holcroft, written by himself* ed. E. Colby (2 vols., London, 1925), i. 198.

⁸⁵ Dyer, *An Inquiry into the Nature of Subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles* (2nd ed., London, 1792), pp. 234, 268, 275, 282.

⁸⁶ Dyer, *The Complaints of the Poor People of England* (2nd ed., London, 1793), p. 25; *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Robert Robinson* (London, 1796), p. 232.

⁸⁷ *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and Their Writers*, ed. Edith Morley (3 vols., London, 1938), i. 4. Dyer cited the *Lectures* again in *The Reflector* 1 (1811) and in his *Four Letters on the English Constitution* (4th ed., London, 1818), pp. 16-17, 53.

⁸⁸ See Wu, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁸⁹ Dyer, *A Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence* (London, 1795), pp. 63-6.

The Literary Fund, later the Royal Literary Fund, which still exists today, was the brainchild of David Williams. (Incidentally, Lamb's editor, E. V. Lucas, was on the Fund's committee when James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and Edward Thomas received assistance; in 1920 he published a monograph on Williams and the Fund.) Williams had broached the idea of a fund for needy authors as early as 1773, but it was not until the late 1780s that he began to pursue his project with vigour. 'The Friends of the Literary Fund' was established in 1788, and two years later the Fund became a reality. From 1793 onwards, a well-advertised programme of anniversary dinners including the recitation of poems, glees, numerous toasts and a band was devised in order to raise the Fund's profile. In its early years, a number of prominent radicals sat on its Committee, including James Martin, President of the Society for Constitutional Information, John Hurford Stone, Alexander Jardine, and William Friend, Coleridge's mentor at Cambridge, whom Lamb punningly addressed as

Friend of the friendless, friend of all mankind,
To thy wide friendships I have not been blind;
But looking at them nearly, in the end
I love thee most that thou art Dyer's friend.⁹⁰

Subscribers to the Fund included Gilbert Wakefield, Capel Lofft and John Wilkes. John Nichols, the publisher of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, played an important part in the establishment of the Fund and served as its printer. Dyer himself was closely associated with the venture in its early years and knew David Williams well. He did much to publicise the Fund, listed the cases for its brochure in 1795 and occasionally recited poems at anniversary dinners. In late 1801, when, as Lamb light-heartedly records in a letter to Rickman, Dyer was neglecting to feed himself and had become a 'nipt carcass', the Fund 'voted him seasonably £20'. 'If I can help it', Lamb states, 'he shall spend it on his own carcass'.⁹¹ In May 1796 Dyer apprised the Committee of the Literary Fund of the difficult financial situation of a 24 year-old poet whose wife was expecting their first child. The young poet in a financial fix was Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and on 19 May the Fund presented him with ten guineas.⁹² It is significant that only a month later on 13 July, at a time when he was considering various teaching posts as a means of supporting his wife and first child Hartley, who was to be born in September, Coleridge borrowed from Bristol Library Williams' first signed work, the Rousseauian *Treatise on Education* (1774).⁹³ As a prospective teacher and father-to-be, he would have found some pertinent advice in the *Treatise*:

The true idea of a tutor is the substitute of a good father; and the place of a pupil is in his family, and as much as possible as his child.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Quoted in Dudley Wright, 'Charles Lamb and George Dyer', *English Review* 39 (1924) 397.

⁹¹ *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb* ed. E.W. Marris, Jr. (3 vols., Ithaca, NY, 1975-8), ii. 30 (hereafter Marris).

⁹² For Coleridge's letter thanking the Fund, see *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* ed. E.L. Griggs (6 vols., Oxford, 1956-71), i. 220 (hereafter CL). The Fund was to assist Coleridge once again in February 1816 with a gift of £30.

⁹³ See George Whalley, 'The Bristol Library Borrowings of Southey and Coleridge', *The Library* 5th Ser., 4 (1949-50) 123, and Ralph J. Coffman, *Coleridge's Library: A Bibliography of Books Owned or Read by Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Boston, 1987), p. 233.

⁹⁴ David Williams, *A Treatise on Education* (London, 1774), p. 90. Coleridge, who on 1 November 1796 was to announce that 'Bishop Taylor, Old Baxter, David Hartley & the Bishop of Cloyne are my men (CL i. 245), would also doubtless have been drawn to Williams' book because of its Hartleyan flavour.

Dyer published the poem he delivered at the Literary Fund's dinner on 3 May 1798 in his *Poems* of 1801, whose publishing history and lengthy notes so tickled Lamb:⁹⁵

Address to the Society for establishing a Literary Fund for Authors in Distress on Thursday, May 3, 1798, at the Free Masons Tavern*

*[NOTE] For an account of this Institution, as founded by David Williams, author of various political works, and of the History of Monmouthshire, see my Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence

WELCOME, ye generous circle, who, remov'd
From Party's froward bickerings, and the rage
Of the Blood-monster war . . .

. . . here social sit

A little GOSHEN; round whose sacred seats
Benevolence spreads wings, and Pity meek
Sheds, as from heav'n, its gentlest dew-drops down. . . .
Oft have you heard the tale of wild distress
Of suffering genius, by hard fortune gall'd
Death-stung by envy, or, in perilous times,
Heart-harrowed by some tyrant's iron hand . . .⁹⁶

Dyer's reference to 'the Blood-monster war', 'perilous times', and 'some tyrant's iron hand' locates the efforts of the Literary Fund firmly within the political context of 1790s and its increasingly embattled radicalism. Clearly, Dyer's association with the Fund was rooted in his belief in the central importance of compassion and benevolence on which he wrote so sensitively—and for Wordsworth, Lamb and Coleridge, so influentially—in his *Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence*. 'True benevolence', he wrote,

is desirous of advancing human beings to all the innocent comforts of which their nature is capable, and of mitigating those distresses, to which by their own frailties, or the injustice of others, they are exposed—Ignorance, slavery, imprisonment, sickness, disappointment, and old age, have their distinct claims, and form a separate interest in a good man's heart.

(*Dissertation*, p. 21)

The passage could stand as the Declaration of the Literary Fund, which Williams founded specifically to *practice* benevolence and to 'mitigat[e] those distresses, to which by their own frailties, or the injustice of others, [human beings] are exposed'. In Dyer's address of 1798, it is 'Benevolence' that spreads its wings around the Literary Fund's 'sacred seats', and it is no surprise that Dyer quoted the Fund's Constitution in the *Dissertation* and referred with his usual admiration to David Williams. Nicholas Roe reminds us that Dyer was completing the *Dissertation* when Wordsworth and Dyer first met on 27 February 1795 in the company of Godwin, Frennd and Holcroft—all acquaintances of Williams.⁹⁷ Coleridge was already corresponding with Dyer, whom he had met the previous year. Roe conjectures that the subscription organised by Frennd and Losh, amongst others, for the defendants in the recent

⁹⁵ See Marrs i. 222, 226, 229, 262-3, 274; ii. 29.

⁹⁶ Dyer, *Poems* (London, 1801), pp. 140, 142.

⁹⁷ RY 193.

Treason Trials would have been a topic of conversation on 27 February; Dyer was to mention the subscription in the *Dissertation*:

[The author] has been given to understand, that a plan is now forming among some respectable persons, to bring before the publick several of the above cases; and it is to be hoped, the plan will comprehend every case of real distress throughout the country connected with pretended treasons or sedition. (*Dissertation*, p. 58)

Once again, the parallel with the efforts of the Literary Fund are obvious. At this moment, then, David Williams' brainchild represented an interesting literary reflex of the 'plan now forming' among some of the foremost radicals of the day. Dyer's involvement with the Fund was a reflex of his own radical beliefs. With this in mind, it is perfectly possible that that other fundraising body, Williams' Literary Fund, whose aim was likewise to 'comprehend every case of real distress throughout the country', was among the topics Wordsworth, Dyer, Godwin, Friend and Holcroft discussed on 27 February.

The History of Monmouthshire

And so back to *The History of Monmouthshire*, which Joseph Cottle, friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge and publisher of *Lyrical Ballads*, borrowed from Bristol Library from 10-16 September 1799.⁹⁸ It is no ordinary county history. The variety of genres with which it flirts reflects the polymath in Williams. The product of his experience as an educator, preacher, and political theorist, it is audaciously heterogeneous: now a work of history, now of political theory, now of philosophy. William Enfield in the July 1796 issue of the *Monthly Magazine* made a point of praising the depth of Williams' political as well as historical research—'by no means usual among those dry compilations, which, for the most part, appear under the title of County Histories'. The reviewer in the *English Review* found the book to be more the work of the philosopher in Williams than of the historian in him,⁹⁹ while the *Analytical Review* drew attention to the political writings which lie behind the *History*, describing Williams as 'a firm friend of civil and religious liberty'.¹⁰⁰ Theophilus Jones in the *Cambrian Register* commends the absence of 'revolutionary reveries' in the work:

On this rock we expected the man whom the wary old *Franklin* coaxed and amused for his services, by calling him *the English Rousseau*, would have broken his neck. Despotism, priestcraft, and oppression! the very sounds, we thought, would have disordered his imagination, and led him into revolutionary reveries. The tendency of the whole history is of a contrary nature . . .¹⁰¹

Jones also teasingly implies that Williams has learned from his mistakes in France. It is true that Williams' political perspective in the *History* is marked by a commitment to caution in political affairs:

But the lessons of [a wise and benevolent] philosophy must be from history, not from romance . . . the disciples of Montesquieu row along the shore, and are perpetually entangled by shoals and bays; those of Plato and Rousseau sail directly into the ocean, and

⁹⁸ See George Whalley, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁹⁹ *English Review* 27 (1796) 332.

¹⁰⁰ *Analytical Review* 24 (1796) 124-30.

¹⁰¹ *Cambrian Register* 2 (1799) 458.

they all perish. The political compass is not discovered, or it is not generally known; and until the discovery be fully made, the chances of safety will be thought near the shore, and not on the ocean.¹⁰²

Such passages clearly reflect Williams' disillusionment with the rashness of the Girondins and the bloody zeal of the Jacobins. But his concern with social injustice remains very much in evidence throughout the work. Passages of topographical description and historical analysis give way to a more general discussion of the principles of political justice:

The division of labor, is the principle of perfection in all occupations; but it separates men into classes, and is the source of acts of injustice and pretensions of despotism. A species of rotation, in all employments, is probably the true principle and foundation of justice and liberty . . .¹⁰³

Williams' decision to view Monmouthshire's history from the Roman occupation onwards from a philosophical and political perspective afforded him the opportunity of establishing principles of 'justice and liberty' at every turn. The *British Critic* viewed *The History of Monmouthshire* as the work of an opportunist who was using topographical and county history for the purposes of political propaganda: 'We cannot be induced to think that a county history is a suitable field for the insinuation of political theorems or religious prejudices'.¹⁰⁴ In fact, county history in Williams' hands emerges as a surprisingly 'suitable' and effective field for such 'insinuation'.

As well as influencing the 'composite' scene at the beginning of 'Tintern Abbey' and the poem's emphasis on Tintern's contemplative atmosphere, Williams' book might have educated Wordsworth into the deeper historical vision of which the submerged presence of the hermit-king Tewdrig is part. And here, Nicholas Roe's term, the 'Miltonic Picturesque', is again relevant. Dyer, you'll remember, approvingly quoted Williams on the landscape of Monmouthshire in the *Monthly Magazine*:

The beauty of Monmouthshire . . . is not dependent on single scenes, or particular features; it is the result of all the circumstances which form the whole surface of the county. . . . The whole county forms one exquisite landscape . . . hamlets, churches, houses, cottages, and farms are blended into one general and extensive scene, which is wonderfully picturesque . . .

But an important passage follows in Williams' book which Dyer does not quote:

But the contemplation of these scenes, must be exchanged for the occurrences and events that have occupied them; the principal objects of the Author being the good and evil, the light and shadow, of human action.

The turn is striking. Williams' 'but' marks the moment at which the picturesque is exchanged for the Miltonic, the point at which the theorist's unproblematic blending of human and natural detail is exchanged for the historical, humane vision that comprehends the human suffering, the wars, which lie behind the landscape. Certainly, Williams does his bit for fashionable picturesque theory in the *History*, and at one point even counsels the reader faced with the beautiful natural prospect near Caerleon to avert his 'imagination' from 'the views of ruined splendors, produced

¹⁰² *The History of Monmouthshire*, p. 72.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁰⁴ *British Critic* 8 (1796) 269.

by oppression and shaded by the exhalations of human blood'.¹⁰⁵ Here, in contrast, he recognises the need for the kind of landscape vision which, in the words of 'Tintern Abbey', penetrates into 'something far more deeply interfused'. What is called for is a historical view of landscape which links the forms of nature with the human history underlying them. Williams, as Keats did, sees into the 'eternal fierce destruction' behind the natural scene and order. In Book VIII of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth writes of the sense of place to which he is sensitive in the 'vast metropolis':

a sense
Of what had been here done, and suffered here
Through ages - and was doing, suffering, still—
Weighed with me . . . (ll. 781-4)

This historical sense of place is one of the distinctive features of Williams' landscape vision in *The History of Monmouthshire*. Williams' work might have played a part in the educative process which Wordsworth describes in 'Tintern Abbey':

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity . . . (ll. 89-92)

Tewdrig, the hermit-king of 'Tintern Abbey', is part of the historical, humanist vision Williams articulates. Far from being part of the 'elision' or 'displacement' which New Historicism believes to be at work in the poem, the hermit, whose story Wordsworth would have encountered in *The History of Monmouthshire*, is a deeply human, deeply historical, and deeply political part of the landscape—a presence not to be put by. Tewdrig's presence is submerged in the poem, just as 'the light and shade of human action' lie behind the beauty of the landscape. George Dyer's contributions to the *Monthly Magazine*, stressing how valuable the topographical historian could be to the poet, had shown Wordsworth that Williams' work could 'assist a poet . . . by retouching . . . the objects already pictured in his eye; by completing the picture, and thus, by increasing the sensations, and strengthening the conceptions, the topographer may give energy and precision to the poet'. The hermit of 'Tintern Abbey' is a complex figure since he comprises various *personae*: he is an actual historical presence, a poetic self-projection, a representative of the sham hermits of the great eighteenth-century estates, a 'sally of the fancy'. By revealing him to be a historical presence, however, Williams' *History of Monmouthshire* is, in Dyer's words, 'completing the picture' and 'increasing the sensations'.

Though submerged, the hermit's significance as a patriot king called out of retirement to defend his people against foreign invasion complicates any interpretation of the figure as a picturesque prop, an image of tranquil contemplation or an escapist fantasy. Far from figuring the 'private' poet, a man 'in flight from a dreaded reality', this hermit embodies political duty and 'the still sad music of humanity' with all its 'solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief'. The hermit, then, is a more complex self-projection than Marjorie Levinson suggests. Wordsworth locates him seated by his fire. While this initial 'contemplative' state suggests perhaps the Wordsworth of the 1798 tour—a man seeking 'tranquil restoration'—the hermit's future role as warrior king, called out to face 'evil tongues', 'the sneers of selfish men', and 'greetings where no kindness

¹⁰⁵ *The History of Monmouthshire*, p. 48.

is' is a reminder of the active involvement in the revolution contemplated by a former, radical self of 1793, of the writing of his radical *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, and of the role in the revolution played by David Williams, in whose book Wordsworth would have read of Tewdrig. The hermit also embodies Wordsworth's recognition that a poet contemplating the great work of his life—broached by Coleridge in March 1798 and significantly entitled *The Recluse*—ought to be ready to speak boldly from, or even be called out of, his contemplative retirement in order to 'do great good',¹⁰⁶ to oppose the unjust aggression of the great European powers (England included) just as he had opposed what he had perceived to be the aggression of England *against* France in 1793. A French invasion had seemed imminent in April 1798, three months before Wordsworth revisited Tintern, prompting Coleridge to write 'Fears in Solitude'. For Wordsworth in July 1798, the significance of Tewdrig, the patriot king who had defeated a Saxon invasion at Tintern, was surely complex and compelling. The hermit of 'Tintern Abbey' might embody the need Wordsworth felt in 1798 to keep fighting, in Coleridge's words, 'the bloodless fight / Of Science, Freedom, and the Truth in Christ'.¹⁰⁷

Balliol College, Oxford

¹⁰⁶ Coleridge to Wordsworth, c. 10 September 1799, *CL* i. 527.

¹⁰⁷ 'Reflections On Having Left A Place Of Retirement' 61-2.

Major Samuel Butterworth RAMC¹

By CLAUDE A. PRANCE

IN THE LATE 1920s and 1930s, a visit to George Seaford's bookshop was an event to be looked forward to. He dealt with second-hand books from premises in Arundel Street, Portsmouth, and he had at the side a small yard in which he displayed many inexpensive volumes, but the best were inside where the extensive stock sometimes made it difficult to move. Downstairs in the cellar, if you were permitted to descend, it was somewhat chaotic and you were certain to reappear covered with dust and grime, but possibly clutching some treasure you had unearthed. I once ascended armed with two massive folios, Sir Thomas Browne's *Works* 1686 and Thomas Fuller's *Church History* 1655 – but that was a rare occasion.

In 1936, when I became a member of the Charles Lamb Society, I visited Seaford's shop again looking for books by and about Charles Lamb and his circle. Here I was delighted to find a number of inexpensive Elian volumes and when I got them home discovered that they had belonged to the same owner. An occasional signature gave me the identity of Samuel Butterworth.

I returned for more and sought information about Butterworth and found that he had been an ardent collector of Eliana, besides being a notable scholar. He had lived in the 1930s at a house on Clarence Parade, Southsea, my native town. I had not then known of him, although his address was only about a quarter of a mile from my parents' house where I then lived. I think he died in 1934.

In the 1940s, service with the Royal Air Force took me out of England, and when I returned in 1946 I found that Seaford's shop had been demolished by enemy action and his extensive stock had gone also. I later found that Seaford's son had opened a bookshop in Commercial Road, Portsmouth, and I talked there with him about Butterworth.

He told me that following Butterworth's death his son had offered the books to Seaford and they originally sorted out the most valuable with many others. He added that no money passed between them, but that Butterworth's son called from time to time and took what books in the subjects he was interested in until the agreed purchase price was reached. He added that when they realised the extent of the collection, and that it contained also many magazines, some notebooks and files filled with the results of the collector's researches, they returned to attempt to acquire them, only to find that they had been destroyed by the son.

Over the years I have sought information on Major Butterworth, but without much success. E. V. Lucas in the Introduction to his edition of the *Letters* 1935 states Butterworth corresponded with Mrs G. A. Anderson, that careful Elian scholar, and gave her much help in her researches. He also mentions that Butterworth had intended to edit the letters of Thomas Manning, but like Mrs Anderson, was prevented from the task by illness, and it was eventually carried out by P. P. Howe. Lucas adds that it is a pity that the notebooks filled with Lamb material cannot be traced. It appears that some did escape destruction, for Samuel Rich told me he possessed two of them; I believe they passed to the Charles Lamb Society. Lucas adds also that Butterworth wrote to him several times regarding his shortcomings, and was usually right. He also states: 'I am told, his enthusiasm for Lamb paled and he worshipped at another shrine.'

Edmund Blunden once told me that Butterworth was his Commanding Officer in the Border Regiment in the 1914-18 war. Butterworth is said to have administered pills to his troops with

¹ This is an extension of the entry on Samuel Butterworth in my *Companion to Charles Lamb* 1983.

one hand, for he was a Surgeon Major, while explicating the works of Charles Lamb with the other.

He contributed frequently to magazines in the early part of the century, including *The Academy*, *The Athenaeum*, *Notes and Queries*, *The Bookman* and *Cambridge Review*. Some of his contributions were numerous and I have traced in *The Bookman* between 1914 and 1923 fifty nine items by him, generally book reviews, into most of which he managed to include a reference to or a quotation from Charles Lamb. A few were essays, the result of his researches, such as 'Charles Lamb. Some New Biographical Details' (July 1921 and March 1922) and 'The Old London Magazine and Some of its Contributors' (October 1922).

Butterworth also wrote Chapter XI on 'William Hone and Charles Lamb' in F. W. Hackwood's *William Hone. His Life and Times 1912*. The *Charles Lamb Bulletin* No. 13 for September 1936 contains reference to Major Butterworth's papers, among which had been found an essay entitled 'Charles Lamb at Edmonton' from *The Globe* of 10th February 1875. It is suggested that this was probably *The Globe's* 'turnover' for the first Lamb Centenary. A reprint of the essay was distributed to members as a Supplement to the *Bulletin*.

Major Butterworth seems to have been willing to help those interested in Charles Lamb and among those who acknowledged assistance were Edmund Blunden, E. V. Lucas, Mrs G. A. Anderson, Walter Jerrold who wrote on Lamb and Hood and R. W. King the biographer of Henry Francis Cary.

Books from Major Butterworth's Library

It was Major Butterworth's custom to write in pencil a date in some of his books, presumably that on which he acquired them. Many have also notation in his careful handwriting in the margins or on the endpapers, where he jotted down with the page number points which interested him or which he wanted to mention if he was reviewing the book.

In 1940 Samuel Rich told me that in the 1930s Seaford had offered the Butterworth Collection to him for £50, but since he would not supply a list the offer was rejected as he was unable to go to Portsmouth. He added that later he acquired from the Butterworth Collection over one hundred loose newspaper cuttings about Lamb. No doubt these went into the fifteen bound volumes of his famous collection of newspaper cuttings now in the Charles Lamb Society collection at the Guildhall Library. Seaford's son told me that the most valuable books had gone to a London dealer, passing through the hands of Joseph of Charing Cross Road. Eventually I traced a Francis Edwards Catalogue which in June 1936 had offered the 'Major Butterworth Collection of Books, Manuscripts, Excerpts, Cuttings &c' for £125. They comprised 137 volumes and I have been told that they went to America.

Over the years I have seen a few of the books which remained in Britain. In August 1949 I visited Wisley Gardens of the Royal Horticultural Society with other members of the Charles Lamb Society at the invitation of John Gilmour, the Director of the Gardens, to see his collection of books about *The London Magazine* circle, prominent among which was Thomas Hood (CLSB No. 92. November 1949). One of the Hood volumes shown was, I think, Ainger's life of Hood which bore notes in Butterworth's handwriting. Again I once found his annotations in letters to John Scott, first editor of *The London Magazine*, in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, while Ernest Crowsley once showed me Butterworth's annotated copy of Lucas's *Life of Lamb*.

I give below a list of those books formerly belonging to Major Butterworth which I acquired from George Seaford's shop.

- 1 *AINGER, ALFRED. Lectures and Essays.* 1905. 2 vols. Date 28.7.21 on front endpaper of Vol. 1. Vol.2 which contains essays on Charles Lamb has references and page numbers on back endpaper.
- 2 *Charles Lamb* by Alfred Ainger. 1888. Front endpaper has 16.6.16 and a note in Butterworth's handwriting 'From the Library of Sir Theodore Martin'.
- 3 *ALLSOP, THOMAS. Conversations and Recollections of S.T. Coleridge.* With a Preface by the editor Thomas Allsop. Third edition. 1864. References on the endpapers.
- 4 *BIRRELL, AUGUSTINE. In the Name of the Bodleian.* Second edition. 1906. Bookplate of the Revd. C. H. Davis, Petersfield. Date on back endpaper 'R 15.11.34'.
- 5 *Obiter Dicta.* 1885. The essay in this book on Falstaff is by George Radford.
- 6 *Obiter Dicta.* Second Series. Fourth edition. 1893. Date 3.11.09. on blank page. Also book label of W. Metcalfe.
- 7 *BROWNE, SIR THOMAS. Religio Medici, Urn Burial and Christian Morals.* With an illustrated memoir. 1894. References and paper numbers on endpapers. Loosely inserted are six newspaper cuttings concerning urn burial. Printed list of subscribers at the end does not include Butterworth's name.
- 8 *CHRIST'S HOSPITAL. Christ's Hospital. Recollections of Lamb, Coleridge and Leigh Hunt.* Edited by R. Brimley Johnson. With some account of its foundation. 1896.
- 9 *Annals of Christ's Hospital* by E. H. Pearce. 1901.
- 10 *COLERIDGE, HARTLEY. Poems by Hartley Coleridge.* With a Memoir of his Life by his brother. 1851. 2 vols. Date 25.3.08 on front endpaper. A few references and page numbers at the end. Inserted at page clii is a cutting from Waller's Catalogue No. 139 1884 offering ALS of Hartley Coleridge. (Printed as No. 69 to Moxon in *Letters of Hartley Coleridge* by Griggs 1936.)
- 11 *COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR. The Poetry and Prose of Coleridge, Lamb and Leigh Hunt (The Christ's Hospital Anthology).* Selected and edited by S. E. Winbolt. Illustrated 1920. Has note inserted 'Received from *The Bookman* 6.10.20'. Numerous pencil notes throughout. Winbolt was a Master at Christ's Hospital.
- 12 *COLERIDGE, SARA. Phantasmion.* London: Pickering 1837. Inserted is a letter from Lord Coleridge to Thomas B. Allen Esq thanking him for praising his cousin's book. It is dated 1891. Also inserted is a manuscript sheet, in an unknown handwriting, containing a poem 'L'envoy to *Phantasmion*' initialled S.C., said to have been written in a copy of *Phantasmion* by the author about the year 1845.
- 13 *COTTLE, JOSEPH. Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey* by Joseph Cottle. Second edition 1848. A few references in the margins and on the endpapers.
- 14 *COWDEN-CLARKE, MARY. My Long Life* by Mary Cowden-Clarke. Second Edition 1896. Date 1.6.04 on end paper and references and page numbers.
- 15 *CRADDOCK, THOMAS. Charles Lamb* by Thomas Craddock. 1867. A few markings on margins.
- 16 *DE QUINCEY, THOMAS. Personal Recollections of Thomas De Quincey* by John Ritchie Findlay. 1886. Dates on front endpaper 2.5.16 and 5.5.16.
- 17 *FIELD, MRS JAMES T. A Shelf of Old Books* 1894. Date on endpaper 'June 1911' and 4.9.11.
- 18 *GILFILLAN, GEORGE. A Gallery of Literary Portraits* 1845. Front endpaper has note in Butterworth's handwriting 'Charles Lamb' p. 338. Signature 'Algar Geo Farrow, Highgate'. Some pencil notes but not in Butterworth's handwriting.

- 19 *HALL, S.C. A Book of Memoirs of Great Men and Women of the Age. From Personal Acquaintance.* Second edition. 1877. Front end page has date 22.2.10. Page facing half title has 'From Sir G.G. Stokes Library' in an unknown handwriting.
- 20 *HAZLITT, W. CAREW. Essays and Criticisms by Thomas Griffiths Wainewright.* Collected with some account of the author by W. Carew Hazlitt. 1880. Date on endpaper 15/12/20. The Introduction contains many notes by Butterworth, mostly corrections of facts, and additional information, such as that Mrs Abernethy's will was drawn by B. W. Procter. The end pages are covered with references.
- 21 *Offspring of Thought in Solitude* by W. Carew Hazlitt. 1884. Date on blank page 22.12.12.
- 22 *HONE, WILLIAM. The Table Book.* 1827. 2 volumes in 1. Bookplate of Edward Watkin Edwards.
- 23 *HUNT, JAMES HENRY LEIGH. Table-Talk to which are added Imaginary Conversations of Pope and Swift.* 1851.
- 24 *LAMB, CHARLES. Poems, Plays and Rosamund Gray.* Edited by William Macdonald. 1903. Page xxii has note by Butterworth giving date of 20 May 1820 for Lamb's 'To a London Steeple'.
- 25 *Critical Essays and Sketches.* Edited by William Macdonald. 1921.
- 26 *Essays and Sketches.* Edited by William Macdonald. 1903.
- 27 *A Dissertation upon Roast Pig.* With Illustrations by C.O. Murray. Printed by Edmund Evans in colour. N.D. Has signature 'S. Butterworth Mauritius 18.6.96.'
- 28 *Eliana being the hitherto uncollected writings of Charles Lamb* by J. E. Babson. 1864.
- 29 *Fancy and Humour of Charles Lamb* (The Elzevir Library Series). Selected and edited by George Sampson. 1908. Has date of 2.11.07 P.
- 30 *The Letters of Charles Lamb.* Edited with introduction by Alfred Ainger 1904. 2 vols. Date on front endpaper 'June 21st 04'. Inserted note addressed to Major Butterworth from the editor of *The Academy* asking for a review of 500 words. Vol.I has notes making corrections and noting references. Vol.II corrects date of a letter on page x (to Hone), and page xii that of a letter to Coleridge.
- 31 *Mrs Leicester's School and Other Writings in Prose and Verse.* With introduction and notes by Alfred Ainger. 1885. Signature on half title 'S. Butterworth Clearrata (?) July 2nd 90'. A few notes, mostly corrections of dates.
- 32 *Poems Plays and Miscellaneous Essays.* With Introduction and Notes by Alfred Ainger. 1884. Pasted in on front endpaper is a label stating 'From the Library of A. C. Swinburne. Sold by Messrs Sotheby June 19th-21st 1916.' The date 15/8/16 has been added to the front endpaper. In the Introduction to this volume Ainger acknowledges his debt to Swinburne for being permitted to examine Lamb's manuscript annotation in the interleaved copy of Wither in Swinburne's possession. This volume contains Lamb's essay 'On the Poetical Works of George Wither' which is taken largely from the notes in the interleaved copy. The corner of page 396 has been folded in as a marking place: this is opposite Ainger's editorial note on the Wither book. Possibly this book was given to Swinburne by Ainger.
- 33 *LAMB, CHARLES. Poetry for Children.* Illustrated by Winifred Green. With a Prefatory Note by Israel Gollancz. Date 4/7/07 and 'First edition 1898' written on front endpaper.
- 34 *Prince Dorus.* Nine coloured illustrations in facsimile. Introduction by Andrew Tuer. 1890-1.

- 35 *Rosamund Gray and Barbara S.* York Library Edition published by R. Brimley Johnson. N.D. No. 16 of edition of 25 copies on Japanese Vellum. Bound in vellum. Date 5/10/12 on endpaper.
- 36 *Toasted Leaves or 'Tudoces Fragens'*. An Essay on the Origin of Tea by the Shade of Charles Lamb. Humorously illustrated by W. G. R. Browne. Engraved and printed in colours by Edmund Evans 1890.
- 37 *LEWIS, J. G. The Evolution of Lamb's 'Ballad from the German'*. By J. G. Lewis. 1897. Ye Nottingham Sette of Odde Volumes. Opusculum VI. Bookplate of Francis Edwin Murray and inscription 'Frank Murray Esq. With Compts J.G.L.' Lewis was the author of *Christopher Marlowe: His Life and Works*. Portrait of Schiller. A pamphlet of 24 pages. F. E. Murray compiled a bibliography of Austin Dobson in 1900.
- 38 *LORD, ALICE E. The Days of Lamb and Coleridge. A Historical Romance.* New York 1893.
- 39 *MACLISE, DANIEL. The Maclise Portrait Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters.* With Memoirs by William Bates. 1898. Bookplate of Prince Albert College, Auckland showing it was a school prize given to Frances Gill in 1899.
- 40 *NOVELLO, CLARA. Clara Novello's Reminiscences.* Compiled by her daughter Contessa Valeria Gigliucci. With a Memoir by Arthur D. Coleridge. 1910. A few pencil references on the endpapers.
- 41 *RICH, SAMUEL MORRIS. The Elian Miscellany.* Edited by S. M. Rich 1931.
- 42 *RICKMAN, JOHN. Lamb's Friend the Census-Taker. Life and Letters of John Rickman* by Orlo Williams. 1911. Date 6.7.21 on back page.
- 43 *ROBINSON, HENRY CRABB. Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson.* Selected and edited by Thomas Sadler. 1872 Third edition. 2 vols. Title Page has signature of F. C. Owlett. The front endpaper has 21/5/14 and 22/5/14 P and there are many annotations in Butterworth's handwriting. At page 407 in Volume I which mentions Henry Taylor, is pasted in part of a letter dated 1 July 1869 to Mr or Mrs (?) Pollock taken from the *Correspondence of Sir Henry Taylor*. This mentions Lamb's pun concerning Taylor and a turban, but the letter states Robinson spoils it in the telling. The handwriting of the copy appears to be that of Butterworth. Crabb Robinson was friendly with Sir Frederick Pollock, Chief Baron of the Exchequer and there was another Sir Frederick Pollock (B. 1845) who edited *Macready's Reminiscences*, but the Pollocks were a large family of lawyers. Vol. II also has many annotations. F. C. Owlett was the author of *The Spacious Days and Other Essays* which contained 'The Eulogy of Marlowe'. He also wrote *Shakespeare and Charles Lamb* reprinted as a pamphlet by Herbert Joseph from the lecture given to The Elian Club on 17 March 1938.
- 44 *ROGERS, JOHN. With Elia and his Friends. In Books and Dreams* by John Rogers. 1903. Signature on half title 'S. Butterworth, Carlisle April 22nd/03'. Page 16 notes a quotation from Thomas Westwood not allocated in the text, page 29 identifies a quotation from P. G. Patmore, page 64 suggests that Mary Lamb's eyes were grey not brown as stated in the text, page 70 identifies a quotation from George Daniel and page 71 one from Thomas Allsop.
- 45 *ROGERS, SAMUEL. The Poetical Works of Rogers, Campbell, J. Montgomery, Lamb and Kirke White.* Paris: Galignani. 1829.

- 46 *Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers to which is added Porsoniana.* Second edition. 1856. Preface by Alexander Dyce. The endpaper has note in Butterworth's handwriting 'Sneyd author of lines in Lalla Rookh 280.'
- 47 *STODDARD, RICHARD HENRY. Personal Recollections of Lamb, Hazlitt and Others.* Edited by Richard Henry Stoddard. New York 1875. Half title has signature of E. C. Stedman'. A few annotations in the text, on page 37 it identifies the 'young lady' as Louisa Holcroft. Many other annotations. Loosely inserted in a sheet with a manuscript poem by P. G. Patmore quoted from *Blackwood's Magazine* January 1818. The handwriting could be that of Major Butterworth.
- 48 *SYNGE, JOHN M. The Tinker's Wedding, &c.* 1911. Date 15.6.21 on endpaper.
- 49 *WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM. Memoirs of William Wordsworth* by Christopher Wordsworth. 1851 2 vols. Date 5/6/18 on endpaper. Annotations in both volumes. The following ALS to Butterworth were found in the book:
 4 June 1918. From Gordon Wordsworth at Ambleside. Butterworth appears to have been living at Carlisle at this time.
 22 May 1918. From the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
 5 July 1918. From C. W. Privie Orton of S. John's College Library, Cambridge concerning portraits of Wordsworth.
 20 June 1918. From the University of Durham.
 10 June and 12 June 1918. From the Keeper of the Archives, The Museum, Oxford. (Reginald L. Poole).
 29 May 1918. From the Royal Irish Academy.
 All the above letters refer to Wordsworth's academic honours. Major Butterworth contributed an article to *The Bookman* in November 1918 entitled 'Wordsworth's Academic Honours'.
- 50 *GILLMAN, JAMES. The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* London: Pickering. 1838. Vol. I all published. Notes on endpapers.

Notes

In my efforts to find biographical information about Major Butterworth I have collected details of others of the name who might possibly be related, but without much success. Possibly the information might be of help to future researchers.

1. Joshua Whitehead Butterworth FSA erected a memorial to William Cowper and Charles Lamb in Edmonton Church in 1888 to commemorate the visit on 26 July 1888 of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, of which he was Vice President. He then lived in Fleet Street and was the proprietor of Butterworth's publishing house. He was also one of the founders of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He died in 1895. (*See Notes by the Way* by John Collins Francis 1909 page 72.)

2. In a footnote to his *Christ's Hospital. A Reprospect* 1923 Edmund Blunden states on page 161: 'An eloquent portrait of Leigh Hunt in youth. Probably by John Jackson, has recently been presented to the Hospital by Lady Dorothea Butterworth'. Barry Webb states in his *Edmund Blunden. A Biography* 1990 p. 338 that Lady Butterworth inherited the papers of Thornton Leigh Hunt from her aunt Alice Bird, whose brother George Bird was Leigh Hunt's doctor. An account of George Bird is contained in Ernest Rhys's 'A Friend of Leigh Hunt's (Dr George Bird)' in *The Hampstead Annual* for 1903. Edmund Blunden in the Preface to his *Leigh Hunt* 1930 acknowledges help from Lady Butterworth in preparing his book.

3. A Colonel Reginald Francis Ambhurst Butterworth lived at Fareham, Hants. He was born in 1876 and had one son and one daughter. Fareham is near Southsea where Major Butterworth lived in the 1930s. He might have been a relation.
4. A Miss Adelaide M. Butterworth published a book entitled *William Blake, Mystic* in 1911. It was reviewed in *The Bookman* in April 1912, but the review is not signed.
5. A portrait of Frank Butterworth ('Peter Blundell') appears on page 3 of the April 1920 issue of *The Bookman*. He was awarded the Werner Laurie prize for his novel, *Mr Podd of Borneo*.

Editorial Note

Since the above article was written Claude Prance has sent me the following details:

A friend, the Revd. Robert Willson of Canberra, has done some additional research for me and has found the following details: in *Commissioned Officers in the Medical Services of the British Army 1660-1960* (A. Peterkin and William Johnson), 1968, I. 529, Samuel Butterworth is listed as born at Rochdale, Lancaster, 21 June 1857. He served in the army in the Sudan 1885, South Africa 1899-1902. Was employed when on the Retired List at Carlisle 1904 and during the Great War 1914.

He also contributed to *The Times* letters as follows:

- 23 September 1904. Concerning Charles Lamb and Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle.
- 13 September 1917. Concerning Samuel Johnson and Shakespeare.
- 20 March 1919. Refers to Mrs G. A. Anderson, Mary Shelley and 'Monk' Lewis.
- 14 April 1921. Refers to Charles Lamb and 'Rainy-Day' Smith.

Canberra

83, High Street, Marylebone, London, W.1. 43

ENGLISH LITERATURE OF 19th & 20th CENTS.—continued.

Charles Lamb

- 665 THE MAJOR BUTTERWORTH COLLECTION OF BOOKS, MANUSCRIPT NOTES, EXCERPTS, CUTTINGS, etc., relating to CHARLES LAMB, including a PRESENTATION COPY OF COLERIDGE'S REMORSE, amounting to 137 volumes, mostly 8vo., 1795-1880. £125

SOME OF THE CONTENTS:—

- Coleridge (S. T.) REMORSE, Third Edition, 1813, PRESENTATION COPY FROM CHARLES LAMB, with inscription in his hand, "BARRON FIELD; FROM HIS FRIEND, CHARLES LAMB"
- Coleridge (S. T.) POEMS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS, FIRST EDITION, with half-title, leaf of advertisements and errata leaf, contemporary calf
- Thirteen Albums, containing LETTERS, DEEDS, NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS, REVIEWS, EXCERPTS, &c.
- Lamb's ELIA, 2 vols, 1835
- Cottle's POEMS, 1805
- Poetical Recreations of the CHAMPION and his LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE, 1822
- Falstaff's LETTERS, by J. White, 1877
- East India Register, 1805
- Hood.—PLEA of the MIDSUMMER FAIRIES, 1827
- Myfins.—FIRST BOOK OF POETRY, 1811
- Specimens of ENGLISH DRAMATIC POETS, 1808
- Recollections of a BLUE COAT BOY, 1829
- Observations on WORKS of FICTION, 1813
- Coleridge and Lamb's POEMS, Second Edition, 1797
- Coleridge.—POEMS, 1803
- Mrs. Leicester's School, 1814
- Some INQUIRIES into the EFFECTS of FERMENTED LIQUOR, 1818
- The "Friend," Nos. 1 to 26, in one vol
- Lucas.—WORKS of LAMB, 7 vols—and others.

Complete List will be sent on application.

Above: from Francis Edwards Ltd., catalogue 594 (June 1936)

Bernard Barton, Edward Moxon, and the Publication of Lamb's Letters

By R. J. DINGLEY and C. E. LAWSON

THE FOLLOWING LETTER from Bernard Barton to Edward Moxon once formed part of the extensive autograph collection of Sir Henry Parkes, five times Premier of New South Wales between 1872 and 1891. It is now held in the Mitchell Collection, State Library of New South Wales.¹

The letter was clearly written in response to a lavish gift from Moxon to Barton's daughter Lucy, but its chief interest lies in its extensive discussion of the preparation of Lamb's letters for publication in Talfourd's two-volume edition of 1837. It is directed to 'E Moxon/Book-seller & Publisher/44 Dover Street', and is franked 6 October 1835.

Woodbridge 10th/5th 1835

My dear M——

Many thanks on behalf of my Daughter in her absence, for the beautiful Volume received yesterday. I had seen the work once before at a [?frd's] house, but only in Boards—the binding of the one thou hast sent my daughter is I think about the most beautifully and chastely elegant I ever saw—it is almost too beautiful a Book to be read, though I must allow its binding seems as durable as it is exquisite—I have a copy of the *Italy*, in boards, which if I should ever have done enjoying it as a *reading* Book, a contingency I suspect not very likely to happen, I may be a suitor to thee to get it bound in a similar style—at the present time its boards are in nearly as good plight as when new.²

Now for our friend Lamb's Letters—I am very glad that my quota of those contributed please thee & hope they will please my old friend Talfourd as well—(I call him such at the risque of his having forgotten ever meeting such a recluse as myself) I quite agree with him in the undesirableness of printing any thing which could give a moment's pain to Miss Lamb's feelings—but one of the most beautiful and touching Letters in my budget, though it contains a few passing and incidental allusions to her indisposition, I should almost regret to have delayed—I think *those parts* might be left out without much if any diminution of its deep and thrilling interest—I refer, of course, to the Letter so minutely dated³—not having either Original or transcript to refer to I can only speak from the powerful impression of it on my memory—but unless that greatly deceives me the passages which positively speak of Mary are such as might be omitted, & yet the picture of an acutely susceptible mind suffering under a feeling of loneliness, preserved⁴—I never read a letter

¹ ML A8; CY Reel 2222.

² Barton's reference to his copy of Samuel Rogers's *Italy* suggests that Moxon's gift to Lucy was another work by the same author—perhaps the edition of Rogers's *Poems*, illustrated by Turner, which Moxon published in collaboration with T. Cadell in 1834.

³ The letter to which Barton refers was dated by Lamb 'Saturday 25 July A.D. 1829.—11 A.M.'; Lamb commented 'There—a fuller plumper juicier date never dropt from Idumean palm' (*The Letters of Charles Lamb* ed. E. V. Lucas [London, 1935], iii. 223).

⁴ When the letter appeared in Talfourd's edition it was, following Barton's suggestion, shorn of the two sections in which Lamb referred directly to Mary (i.e. in Lucas's transcription the passages 'Dear B.B.—Your hand writing has conveyed much pleasure . . . I have past in Town' and 'Less than a month I bope I will bring

which comes more home to every heart—how new and how striking is that part in which he laments even the loss of his ill tempered old maid, who with all her faults was yet a record of better days—how original, yet in what perfect truth to Nature is that remark that scolding & quarrelling have something of familiarity which implies old-standing acquaintance—they are *of resentment*, which is *of the family of the dearnesses*—how quaint his description of the cross old maid's successor—she is good, & quiet & attentive, *but nothing to me*—I can neither scold at, or quarrel with this *insignificant implement of household services*—she is less to me than a Cat and duller than a Deal dresser—Pray look at that letter again, and see if its Brotherly allusions, or *what the Public must know to be such*, cannot be omitted—it strikes me as too good to be laid by till the interest recently and now excited by the author, shall have run the risque of cooling—I might say as much, to a [?]⁵ in Part of one or two others in which allusions occur to Mary but my memory is less tenacious of their contents than of this—which painful as its interest is, I think is deeply interesting, as honourable to the head & heart of the author as any one I ever received.

I am sorry the old Dutch Schoolmistress is gone—it was just the Memorial, associated as it is with [?the]⁶ friend to whom he refers, which I should have liked to have hung up on my wall a memento of him—but n'importe; I could not well have a better, of that sort, than he once sent me with some curious and characteristic Verses, printed, if I mistake not, in thy Album Verses, & Other Poems—a Mother teaching her little Boy to read⁷—If I were to tax thee with furnishing me with any token of remembrance of one whom we can neither of us forget I think it would be a little Seal, not a heavy ponderous one, with a Lamb cut on it, and the words '*In Memory of*' engraved above it—If such a thing could be got by thee without levying an exorbitant outlay, I think I should duly estimate it—but do not put thyself to any unreasonable cost or trouble about such a trifle—we neither of us really need any other Memorial than our recollections of himself—

thine ever

BB

University of New England, New South Wales (R. J. Dingley)

Australian Defence Force Academy, Australian Capital Territory (C. E. Lawson)

home Mary . . . twelve or thirteen weeks every year or two'). The only other significant cuts which Talfourd made in Lamb's text were a reference to the *Blackwood* publication of *The Pawnbroker's Daughter* ('In the ensuing *Blackwood* will be . . . 'tis useless to write poetry with no purchasers') and a brief and possibly facetious allusion to Barton's industriousness ('I pity you for overwork, but'); see *The Letters of Charles Lamb, with a Sketch of his Life* ed. Thomas Noon Talfourd (London, 1837), ii. 241-4. Talfourd, of course, openly acknowledged his omission of 'personal references, which, although wholly free from any thing which, rightly understood, could give pain to any human being, touch on subjects too sacred for public exposure' (op. cit., i. ix).

⁵ Illegible word in manuscript.

⁶ Manuscript torn at this point.

⁷ The poem to which Barton refers, first published by Moxon in *Album Verses* in 1830, is 'To Bernard Barton with a Coloured Print' ('When last you left your Woodbridge pretty'); see also Lamb's letter to Barton of 11 June 1827 (*Letters* ed. Lucas, iii. 96-9). Barton describes his small collection of pictures, including Lamb's gift, in his poem 'Fireside Quatrains: To Charles Lamb' (*Selections from the Poems and Letters of Bernard Barton* ed. Lucy Barton (2nd ed., London, 1850), pp. 218-19). The 'old Dutch Schoolmistress' to which Barton refers is presumably another print from Lamb's collection.

The Politics of Southey's 'Chariot': A Further Note

By DAVID CHANDLER

HAVING RECENTLY appeared in these pages as (at least taken to be) an antagonistic critic of an essay by C. J. P. Smith, it is pleasant to be able to support a later argument of the same writer. In his note 'The Chariot in Southey's "The Widow"',¹ Smith suggests that the chariot in that poem 'is of some cultural and political interest to Southey's theme, because it constitutes a thinly-veiled swipe at those people who could afford the (jolting) comfort of wheels, the aristocrats'. In this, I believe, he was absolutely right, and his note suffered only from want of contemporary illustration. But perhaps the best evidence for this radical view of the 'chariot' is found in John Pitchford's essay 'Some Reflections on the Present Unequal Division of Property' (1795).² Pitchford, in discussing 'the disastrous influence produced by inequality of property on the mind', noted:

Here its operation is two-fold, in the few, it produces insensibility, arrogance, injustice: in the many, servility, moral depravity, ignorance, mental perversion, all those cringes which belong peculiarly to the poor, and which, like a hydra, have eternally budded fresh heads for the axe of the criminal law. See the man of wealth driving with heedless haste and smearing the child of adversity with the dust of his chariot wheels. If these two men think at all, what must be their sensation? The one must be sensible that a hundredth part of the wealth that he is dissipating would render his fellow-man happy, that the very skirt of his coat would cover his nakedness,³ that the very gilding of his chariot would feed his hunger. Do you not hear the groan uttered by the other? That groan made up of the rage, the envy, the unutterable anguish, he must feel when he reflects, that the man whose prosperity thus insults him, is no other than his equal, his fellowman, no more entitled to happiness than himself.⁴

Pitchford's essay appeared in *The Cabinet*, a radical periodical published between 1794 and 1795. I have found no documentary evidence of Southey's reading *The Cabinet*, but it must be considered far from unlikely given his political views and acquaintance. It is interesting to note that Southey met Pitchford when he visited Norwich in May-June 1798.⁵ Pitchford (1772/3-1839)⁶ was one of five children of John Pitchford, a Roman Catholic surgeon, apothecary, and botanist who settled in Norwich in 1769;⁷ he was educated at Douai University. Back in Norwich, Pitchford worked as a chemist.⁸ By 1793 he was secretary of the Tusculan Society, a

¹ *CLB NS* 91 (1995) 161-2.

² Published anonymously; identified (on certain grounds) as Pitchford's by Walter Graham, 'The Authorship of the Norwich Cabinet', *Notes and Queries* 162 (1932) 294-5.

³ There seems to be an allusion here to Ezekiel 16.8: 'Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness . . .'

⁴ *The Cabinet* (3 vols., Norwich, 1794-5), iii, 287.

⁵ J. W. Robberds, *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich* (2 vols., London, 1843) (hereafter Robberds), i, 307.

⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine NS* 12 (1839) 213: 'July 24. At Bromley, aged 67, [died] John Pitchford, esq. formerly of Norwich'.

⁷ James Edward Smith, 'Biographical Memoirs of several Norwich Botanists', *Transactions of the Linnean Society of London* 7 (1804) 294-301.

⁸ *Dr. Rigby's Letters From France &c. in 1789* ed. Lady Eastlake (London, 1880), pp. 14-15.

⁹ Augustus J. C. Hare, *The Gurneys of Earham* (2 vols., London, 1895), i, 82, 86.

radical discussion group that went on to publish *The Cabinet* the following year. He was unique in this group in considering himself a Christian.¹⁰ Pitchford was a friend of William Taylor, the Germanist, who gave him gratuitous German lessons in the 1790s.¹¹

Corpus Christi College, Oxford

¹⁰ Tusculan Minute Book, Norfolk Record Office.

¹¹ Robberds i. 90.

Southey's 'The Three Bears': Irony, Anonymity, and Editorial Ineptitude

By CAROLYN MISENHEIMER

IN ANOTHER AGE, Robert Southey might well have received more attention and achieved a higher status. Because he was a contemporary of such literary greats as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats and Shelley, he stands in the second line of literary figures of that era with such worthies as Lamb, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and Thomas Hood. In every literary genre upon which he concentrated, Southey was immensely prolific. His political works fill six volumes, his poetic works fill ten volumes, and his letters (the one genre he never intended for publication) fill eight volumes. He wrote constantly, always conscious of two paramount issues. One was his own need to maintain his personal integrity by writing well and accurately. The other overriding force was his perpetual need for money, caused not by profligacy or greed but rather by his noble assumption of financial responsibility for Coleridge's family as well as his own.

Despite his failure to attain the first rank of literary greatness, Southey must always hold an important place in literary history for four distinct achievements. First, for thirty years he was Poet Laureate. As such, he fulfilled without fail his obligation to write a poem to commemorate each significant event. Second, he wrote the magnificent and still definitive biography of England's nineteenth-century naval hero Lord Nelson. Southey's *Life of Nelson* is a classic; according to David Perkins, 'his prose . . . equals any written during the period, and it has qualities that are refreshing and unexpected—a direct simplicity, a manly and honest frankness.'¹ Third, Southey had a close, continuing though at times difficult relationship with Coleridge. The fact that they had married sisters probably accounted for Southey's willingness to assume the financial support of the Coleridge family. Certainly Southey admired Coleridge's genius and felt his great charm, but eventually he had to acknowledge the flaws in Coleridge's character which indeed injected much pain into his life. That he bore the burden of the Coleridge family's welfare with patience and fortitude attests resoundingly to the true nobility of his character.

The fourth achievement for which Southey must be remembered seems to be a fact not widely known even among those universally acclaimed as authorities in English literature. I refer, of course, to his authorship of 'The Three Bears', which appeared as a part of a much larger work, a miscellany called *The Doctor* which was first published 1837-47.² It was with a real sense of shock bordering on outrage that I noted in the contents of Volume Two of the child's icon of my youth, *Childcraft*, the volume of Stories of Fact and Fancy, published in Chicago by W. F. Quarrie and Company in 1931, in the place where the author of 'The Three Bears' should be listed, there is a blank space.³ Indeed, it is the first entry under the grouping titled Folk and Fairy Tales. The only justification for this unabashed display of ignorance by supposedly reputable experts in the field of children's literature which I consider credible is that by the time *Childcraft* first appeared in 1923,⁴ 'The Three Bears' had become so widely known that it was thought to

¹ *English Romantic Writers* ed. David Perkins (New York, 1967) (hereafter Perkins), p. 536.

² Perkins 536.

³ *Childcraft, The Child's Treasury* ed. Edward Farquhar (7 vols., Chicago, 1931) (hereafter Farquhar), ii. ix.

⁴ Farquhar ii. ix.

be in a position similar to a number of other truly anonymous folk and fairy tales and to such other parts of literature for children as Mother Goose Rhymes.

Sad as it is to think that Southey does not always receive credit for his famous children's story, it is perhaps a compliment that even erstwhile scholars sometimes assume that 'The Three Bears' has been a part of our literary heritage for so long that its origin has been lost in the passage of time. In true Elian spirit, Mr Southey, we salute you as a modest, yet powerful and continuing purveyor of pleasure to children throughout time.

Indiana State University

Stepping Stones to the Future

By JAMES BUTLER

STEPPING STONES: super name for an old house beside a rock-strewn stream in the English Lake District.

But, in truth, it is just an ordinary-looking building on a one-car-wide country lane, a house made even more commonplace by its distinguished neighbors. At Fox How, a turning of the stream down from Stepping Stones, Victorian poet and social critic Matthew Arnold spent his holidays, recovering there from his ruminations about a culture's rush toward anarchy. Between Stepping Stones and Fox How lived Thomas De Quincey, who in the last century wrote in awe of the mixed exhilaration and trepidation produced by new technology—in this case, the furious speed of the horse-drawn English mail coach. Anchoring this country lane near where it rejoins the main road is Rydal Mount, home for his last four decades of Poet Laureate William Wordsworth, passionate for change in the eighteenth century and distraught with it in the nineteenth.

What chance for renown, then, for just plain Stepping Stones? Only this: nowhere else is it more appropriate to contemplate what the cybernetic revolution will mean to the remnants of a writing life, to those fits and starts of the composing process that have produced the pages you now hold.

After William Wordsworth and his wife were both dead, the principal manuscript archive of the English Romantic movement was transferred in the 1860s to a spare room in their son's home at Stepping Stones: 90% of Wordsworth's papers and nearly all of his much-revised creative manuscripts, all of Dorothy Wordsworth's work (including her then unpublished *Grasmere Journals*), significant holdings of the manuscripts of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. At Stepping Stones, the son and eventually the grandson, Gordon Graham Wordsworth (1860-1935), for many decades tended the manuscripts, dealt as gatekeepers and counsellors and holders of literary rights with those people who wished to consult the papers, and in general cultivated the Poet Laureate's fame and name.

'An unabashed nineteenth-centurion', Gordon Wordsworth described himself in a letter to a friend, and in 1928 had 'neither car nor wireless nor telephone nor gramophone'. World traveller, pall-bearer at Tennyson's funeral, wicket-keeper for the Ambleside Cricket Club, Gordon also lived with the terrible family secret that he found in those manuscripts: Queen Victoria's Poet Laureate, one of the three or four major poets in the over thousand-year history of the kingdom, *his grandfather*, had in France during the Revolution fathered an illegitimate child. For all Gordon knew, he might even have French cousins (as it turned out, he did). Gordon burned some manuscripts in the Stepping Stones fireplace and hoped for the best.

Sixty years after Gordon Wordsworth's death (at which the manuscripts went to the nearby Wordsworth Library in Grasmere), I spent a weekend at Gordon's beloved Stepping Stones. Of no value to Gordon had been such twentieth-century gadgets as the wireless, the telephone, and the gramophone; he would not have been pleased that I carried into his old bedroom my notebook computer, my power-pack with British converter, and one high density three-and-a-half-inch disk. From Stepping Stones Gordon had written sixty letters to a Princeton University professor who in 1915 had found out about Wordsworth's illegitimate child. Cagy at first, then angry, despairing, and finally accepting, Gordon's letters survive almost forgotten at Princeton's library. That single three-and-a-half inch disk contained my transcriptions of all these letters. Gordon's words now returned to Stepping Stones for the first time since they were written, and I placed the disk on the mantle in his bedroom. Next door was the spare room which had for three-quarters

of a century housed manuscripts whose revisions reveal William Wordsworth's creative process, his stumbling gropings toward what we can now more confidently define as English Romanticism.

I sat in the growing darkness in Gordon's bedroom, beside his fireplace, and thought of archival records and computers. What words will survive of us, what secret records of our licit and illicit loves, what fragments of our struggles to write? Or, rather, what bytes will last? Who will be the acolytes, as Gordon was for his grandfather's manuscripts, of the computer records we will leave behind? It might seem that a flood of new records will be unleashed: after all, this file (CHASLAMB.DOC, of course) is saved on my home PC and my university Local Area Network (and on a disk to carry between): three files and three back-up files. But each saving of the file preserves only one back up; all other data about the creation of CHASLAMB.DOC are forever gone. No loss, of course, to literary scholarship in my case, but thank God William Wordsworth did not have a word processor.

Probably even those meager records on disk will perish—sooner or later. Several times at the request of survivors I have cleared out dead colleagues' offices. Some personal papers I destroyed, some I preserved for the family; with their permission, I passed on to libraries manuscript letters and drafts of works sent to my colleagues by well-known writers. Will I even bother to read them when I instead find the random, frequently-unlabelled disks (or cryptically-named files on hard disks or network drives) that we now accumulate, those new tallies of our lives, our saved electronic mail and downloads? Will anyone's grandchildren be elated to find in the attic a shoebox filled with grandma's and grandpa's old floppies?

I suspect most important writers of the late twentieth century have made the same adjustments in record-keeping as the rest of us. In my case, the flotsam of my pre-1985 life is hither and yon in boxes and file cabinets which claim order but whisper and occasionally shriek of chaos. But I know that it is all there somewhere, and someone will have to deal with it someday. After the mid-1980s my paper flow slows to the trickle of a stream gently parted by stepping stones; instead, I have 3,741 files on my section of our Local Area Network. What will happen to those files when I die? I asked our university computer guru. Wiped, he told me. No 'Undo' here; nothing Norton Utilities can fix about that one. The Big Delete. At my death everything is reformatted (including me).

In the early 1800s, William and Dorothy Wordsworth wrote letters referring to Caroline Vallon, William's illegitimate child. Even though Gordon Wordsworth destroyed what evidence was at Stepping Stones, other letters at the British Library eventually revealed the secret. Suppose William Wordsworth had instead E-Mailed Coleridge, who downloaded his E-Mail files onto a disk. Would this disk be preserved for over a century? Is there any possibility that someone finding a 125 year-old disk in a library could find a way to read it? Will we in fact lose these records in less than a generation, as the ancient computer hardware preserved in university Rare Book and Byte Rooms (and the geriatric rememberers of Windows 95) fail?

Whether it would be a tragedy for the world to miss knowing of Wordsworth's illegitimate child seems debatable. What I lament is the loss of records which illuminate a major poet's thought process as he or she creates a revolution in cultural history. We have such manuscripts for Wordsworth and Yeats and Heaney; odds are we will have no such information for whatever writer now slouches toward the twenty-first century to create its ethos.

Middle of the night at Stepping Stones in Gordon Wordsworth's bedroom: a rush of wind, a sudden coldness in the air, a loud bang, and a blinding light shock me from sleep. After a moment of chilling and inexplicable fright, the explanation seems logical enough, I guess. An open window, a door blown shut, the moonlight shining on the metal clip of the computer disk

which I had left on Gordon's mantle, too much late-night thought accompanied by a whiskey or two. Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote two centuries ago in *The Ancient Mariner* of moonlight glistening on water-snakes and of the blessing that came from that revelation. But my vision left me not blessed but—whether by my anxieties or by Gordon or by the furious onrush of the twenty-first century—warned.

La Salle University, Philadelphia

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Review

THOMAS MCFARLAND, *Romanticism and the Heritage of Rousseau*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. ISBN 0 19 8182872. Pp xxiv + 331. £35 hardback.

THE AIMS OF THIS BOOK are, first, to refute the argument that Romanticism is a 'false consciousness' whose ostensible topics are in reality 'displacements' of contemporary events, and second, to redirect attention to what is actually there in Romantic literature, rather than what supposedly ought to be there, but isn't. What is there is the heritage of Rousseau.

Thomas McFarland touches on all aspects of this legacy, but is chiefly interested in imagination, feeling, and revolutionary politics. The exploration of self he deals with briefly, saying, in one sentence, virtually all that need be said: 'Neither De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, nor Lamb's *Confessions of a Drunkard*, nor Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris*, nor Wordsworth's *Prelude* is thinkable without [Rousseau's] *Confessions*'. Enthusiasm for Nature is noted almost in passing by comparing Wordsworth's Gondo Gorge passage in *The Prelude* with a similar passage from *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Much greater attention is given to revolutionary politics. The notion of 'displacement' implies an apostasy from liberal principles, and McFarland, taking Coleridge as the prime exemplar, argues convincingly that the supposed apostates were innocent in that they never endorsed Jacobinism's programmatic violence. Indeed, as McFarland implies, Hazlitt's refusal to acknowledge the reality of the massacres and the terror was a far more culpable kind of 'displacement'. The Romantic promotion of imagination is seen as a needful victory over a long tradition of hostility and distrust; the emphasis on feeling as a necessary corrective to Enlightenment's mechanical insistence on reason.

In all this McFarland is excellent, his chief virtues being magnanimity and erudition. He generously concedes, for example, the brilliance of Alan Liu's analysis of Wordsworth's Simplon Pass lines in *The Prelude*, before equally brilliantly refuting it. He quotes copiously and pertinently from an impressive range of literary, philosophical and historical scholars, including, with scrupulous fairness, his opponents.

There are, however, certain flaws in the book, one of the more obvious being a too generous partisanship, particularly towards Shelley. For example, we are offered the following extraordinary understanding of Shelley's abandonment of his first wife:

How could this kind and sensitive man act like such an unfeeling blackguard? The answer *must be* [my italics] that in Shelley's confused psyche there existed no true knowledge of what marriage was; Harriet was merely another sister, and though abandoned as a wife when he eloped with Mary, was never, in Shelley's own bizarre awareness of the situation, abandoned in her primary rôle as sister.

This 'must be' the explanation only if we shrink from anything more probable. But such partiality reflects a more serious flaw—a failure of balance. The index lists only ten references to Keats (and two of these really refer to Shelley). A general essay on Romanticism which aims to show what is really present in the literature ought not to treat so great a poet marginally, particularly in the discussion of imagination. It is in Keats that we find imagination at the end of its tether, seeing lank-ear'd Phantoms in Hyperion's palace, and predatory Nature in the Teignmouth waves. It is imagination that spoils the singing of the nightingale. And directed imagination as a moral force is more powerfully realized in the Moneta episode in the second *Hyperion* than in Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*. Nevertheless, Professor McFarland has achieved his principal objective. Throughout this book he displays a humane breadth of awareness that puts New

Historicism into a rational perspective: 'Historical considerations change and vary; existential realities—birth, death, childhood, age, love, hate, hope, anxiety, aspiration—are a constant'. This is Romanticism's greater heritage, the music of humanity, inaudible only to those for whom the clamour of absence has become tinnitus.

Chester-le-Street

JEFFREY BAKER

Society Notes and News from Members

FROM THE HON. SECRETARY

John Clare in his Time and Ours

A conference is being held at the Dalton-Ellis Hall, Manchester University, 4-6 July 1997. Fee £95 residential; non-residential places available. For details and bookings please send SAE to the Hon. Secretary, John Clare Society, Mrs Mary Moyses, The Stables, 1a West Street, Helpston, Peterborough PE6 7DU.

The Wordsworth Trust

Weekend Book Festival (24-6 January 1997); Wordsworth Winter School (9-14 February 1997); details available from Sylvia Wordsworth, Dove Cottage, Grasmere, Cumbria LA22 9SH. Telephone (day) 015394 35544; (evenings and weekends) 015394 35748.

Charles Lamb's Birthday: Celebration Luncheon 15 February 1997

Booking forms were enclosed with the October 1996 *Bulletin*. If you have not yet obtained your ticket please do so *at once* as I shall be unavailable from 16 January to 5 February 1997.

Edmund Blunden (1896-1974)

Members and guests much enjoyed Barry Webb's talk as part of the centenary celebrations on 2 November 1996. We were delighted to welcome Claire Blunden, as well as Mrs Carol Rothkopf (co-editor with Barry Webb of the Blunden/Sassoon correspondence), and Mr Yuichi Midzunoe and Mr Tommy Kawano from Japan, here for the Blunden centenary celebrations. The Hon. Secretary represented the Charles Lamb Society at commemorative readings in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, on 31 October.

Room at the top

We are urgently seeking members to fill important offices in the Society. Our Chairman, David Wickham, has indicated that he will not be seeking re-election at the AGM on 10 May 1997; our Treasurer, Nick Powell, is relinquishing his office due to pressure of work; our Membership Secretary, Audrey Moore, is unable to continue in this office (see next notice). Please discuss with me or the other officers what contributions you might be able to make.

Membership Enquiries

Our Membership Secretary, Audrey Moore, is unable to continue in this office. Until a new Membership Secretary is appointed, correspondence on membership matters, such as changes of address, should be directed to the Hon. Secretary, 1a Royston Road, Richmond TW10 6LT (0181 940 3837).

Joint Meeting with the Keats/Shelley Memorial Association

This is on 12 April 1997 at 2.30pm. Mary Wedd will speak on 'Charles Lamb on Some of his Contemporaries' at the October Gallery, Old Gloucester Terrace (round the corner from the Mary Ward Centre).

FROM THE EDITOR

James Beattie: A New Edition of the Works

It is with enormous pleasure that we announce the publication of James Beattie's complete works, as edited by one of the advisory editors to the *Bulletin*, Roger Robinson. The significance of this profoundly important eighteenth-century writer, particularly to the romantics, is slowly becoming clearer, thanks largely to the labours of Professor Robinson. *The Works of James Beattie* is available as a boxed set, lavishly bound in maroon cloth, and is published by Routledge/Thoemmes Press, London, at £850 (ISBN 0 415 13326 2). It comprises 2 volumes of Sir William Forbes' *Life of Beattie*, 6 volumes of Beattie's prose, one of his poetry, and one volume of miscellaneous writings, some previously unpublished. It is an important contribution to eighteenth-century literary studies, and is indispensable for anyone seriously interested in pre-romanticism.

Thomas Poole and his Friends: Back in Print

Elizabeth Sandford's indispensable volume, *Thomas Poole and his Friends*, has for over a hundred years been a primary source of material for information about early Coleridge and his circle. It is also a highly entertaining read, and has for far too long been out of print. Happily, Reggie Watters has helped make it available once more, by writing an invaluable new introduction, drawing on hitherto unknown letters of Sandford's. It will be reviewed in the April *Bulletin*; the informed Coleridgean will not wish to wait for the reviews. Copies are available from Coleridge Books, 11 Castle Street, Nether Stowey, Somerset TA5 1LN, at a cost of £12.95 plus £2.00 p+p.

NOTES AND NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Kilve Court Study Weekend, 6-8 September 1996

The Friends of Coleridge chose 'The Romantic Child' as a subject for their fourth study weekend at Kilve Court, and a rich topic it proved to be. In the opening lecture on Friday evening, David Fairer vividly painted in the background to Blake's 'Holy Thursday' from his own research into the circumstances of Charity children in the eighteenth century.

Reginald Watters on 'Coleridge and the Child', and John Powell Ward on 'Children and Wordsworth', illustrated the two poets' conviction of the importance of childhood, for good or ill, both in their own lives and in observation of and concern for their children. Roger Robinson gave a most wise and discerning account of Hartley Coleridge, his achievements as well as his expectations on him. Raymonde Hainton, whose book *The Unknown Coleridge* was shortly due out, eloquently filled in for us the story of the useful career of Derwent Coleridge, which was of particular interest to those members of the audience who had close links with the College of St Mark and St John.

On the last morning Graham Davidson made sure that the programme ended with a bang and not a whimper. Despite the reported interruptions to composition by his own children, he managed a tour de force for the final lecture, in which he examined the idea of transcendence in relation to Wordsworth's concept of childhood and Coleridge's contrasting view, based on their own experience of it.

We were lucky with dry weather and some sunshine for our walks, though the distant views were hazy. Everything conspired to give us a superb weekend and our thanks are due to Shirley and Reggie Watters, their helpers, and the staff of Kilve Court for all their work to make such a gem of an experience. Any of you who thought of coming and did not should kick yourselves - hard!

Mary Wedd