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COLERIDGE AND LAMB: THE CENTRAL THEMES

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No friend influenced Lamb's artistic and intellectual development more than did Coleridge, as he himself testified eloquently:

I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books, without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. He was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations... LW I 351

In turn, he did much to repay the debt by way of a steady devotion which was by no means uncritical. George Whalley has suggested some of the ways in which Lamb's criticisms assisted Coleridge's maturing as a poet (1); if one turns from literature to life one need only read Lamb's letters to see a constant affectionate yet quizzical watchfulness over his friend's career which is all the more effective by reason of the extraordinary tact with which his occasional criticisms are voiced.

There is no time here to examine all the ramifications of the relationship, ranging as it does from long evenings of conversation and entertainment and with frequent exchange of books and ideas, to mutual consolation in times of unhappiness. It sinks at one point to a regrettable quarrel, rises at others to warm expressions of admiration on either side. As a whole it repays attention as an example of what a good literary relationship can be.

The keynote of the relationship, if one were to seek to isolate it, would emerge as an ironic affectionateness. That in itself is hardly uncommon, however; the true distinctiveness is to be found in the quality of both the affection and the irony. Lamb, who, with all his stress on the importance of human love, was never blind to human failings, found in Coleridge's capacity for the reconciliation of paradoxical opposites, both in his talk and in his behaviour, an extraordinarily rich field for ironic contemplation; Coleridge in turn was not slow to criticise his friend - even when he was faithfully following some principle which Coleridge himself had held up before him. Yet it can also be asserted that the ironies and criticisms served to guard something which both men felt to be of lasting importance - an affection based on recognition by each of unique qualities in the other.

To discover what those qualities were, we need to turn back first to the well-known portrait of Coleridge at school in Lamb's essay 'Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago':

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee - the dark pillar not yet turned - Samuel Taylor Coleridge - Logician, Metaphysician, Bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, intranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young *Mirandula*), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus,

or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar - while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the  
*inspired charity-boy!* LW II 21

This is a portrait which, I believe, deserves to be taken seriously: we should assume, in other words, that when Lamb spoke of hearing Coleridge at school expounding the philosophy of Iamblichus and Plotinus he was remembering accurately. In doing so we may observe that he was not only not given to extravagant mis-statements (Lamb's veracity', said Wordsworth in 1836, 'was unquestionable in all matters of a serious kind' (2)) but that most of Coleridge's former schoolfriends and acquaintances were still alive when the essay was published. None is known to have objected - and indeed Hazlitt, who was by now highly critical of Coleridge, gave a similar account in 1825 (3):

At Christ's Hospital, where he was brought up, he was the idol of those among his schoolfellows, who mingled with their bookish studies the music of thought and of humanity; and he was usually attended round the cloisters by a group of these (inspiring and inspired) whose hearts, even then, burnt within them as he talked, and where the sounds yet linger to mock ELIA on his way, still turning pensive to the past!

Hazlitt was no doubt relying largely on what Lamb had told him, but he would hardly have done so - or used the New Testament imagery of the Walk to Emmaus - had he not been satisfied that Lamb was telling the truth.

The need for cynicism lessens further when we recognize that in Coleridge's time the appeal of Iamblichus and Plotinus (which was being fostered by Thomas Taylor's current translations) was not that of abstruse philosophers, but of men who were asserting the presence of positive powers in man and nature. To those who were excited both by recent scientific discoveries and by the doctrines of Rousseau, the Neoplatonist belief in the soul as an immortal and luminous entity which descended into the body at birth and remained there, chafing at its imprisonment, until released by death was a refreshing one, breathing new life into a view of man that had been deadened by over-attention to mechanistic theories of human behaviour. The same was true of the view of energised nature that pervaded their writings.

A further writer who deserves mention alongside those named by Lamb is Jacob Boehme. Although in later years Coleridge's attitude to the German theosophist was ambiguous, there are various pieces of evidence, such as his own statement that he had 'conjured over' Boehme's *Aurora* while still at school (4), which suggest that he was particularly drawn to Boehme at this time. It should also be pointed out that the full main title of *Aurora* continues 'That is, the Day-spring'. Lamb, it will be noted, uses the same unusual word, 'day-spring', which may represent a verbal recall (conscious or unconscious) from a book that he remembered Coleridge expounding at that time - particularly since there is a further parallel, this time of imagery, between Lamb's subsequent words, 'with hope like a fiery column before thee - the dark pillar not yet turned...' and Coleridge's use of the same Exodus-motif in the *Biographia* to describe his debt to Boehme and the mystics: 'If they were too often a moving cloud of smoke to me by day, yet they were always a pillar of fire throughout the night...' (5).

Iamblichus, Plotinus and Boehme have one particular feature in common which is relevant to the parallels just noted: their common use of an imagery of springs and fountains to express a sense of the creative principle in the

universe. If Boehme differs, it is simply in linking that fountain-imagery more explicitly to the workings of the human heart. He also draws more widely on the imagery of nature in general: in addition, there are grounds for believing that the young Coleridge was particularly arrested by the following passage in *Aurora* (6):

As when a man kindleth a wax *candle* it giveth light, but when it is put out, then is the snuff or candle darkness: *Thus* also the light shineth from all the powers of the Father; but when the powers are perished or *corrupted*, then the light is extinguished, and the powers would remain in darkness, as is apparent by Lucifer.

In God the air also is not of such a kind, but is a lovely, pleasant, still breath or voice, blowing or moving; that is, the *exit*, going forth or moving of the powers is the original of the air, in which the Holy Ghost riseth up.

Neither is the water of such a kind in God, but it is the *source* or fountain in the powers, *not* of an elementary kind, as in this world; if I should liken it to anything, I must liken it to the sap or *juice* in an apple, but very bright and *lightsome*, like heaven, which is the spirit of all powers.

It is Lord Lucifer who hath thus *spoiled* it...

The passage contains several images which appear memorably in Coleridge's later poetry. It seems to be a matter of something more than simple recall - as if Coleridge had seized upon such images of crispness and lucency and gentle flowing, which appeal to memories of sensuous pleasure in childhood, recalling the magical appeal sometimes exercised by the world of sense, as constituting a model for the language of what Keats was later to term 'the heart's imagination'. It was natural for those who were interesting themselves in the idea of an original virtue, darkened and lost in the growing child under the pressures of society, to think about these phenomena with a new attentiveness.

The idea of a lost landscape of innocence, magnetizing the heart to certain objects then first made known and familiar was, I believe, attractive to Coleridge in his early years. To find any tradition for such a belief, a writer of his time was forced to go back to the seventeenth century, to men such as Boehme and Henry Vaughan. A new feature was now emerging, however: in the wake of Rousseau, this phenomenon was coming to be treated in separation from any conventional religious interpretation. The loss of an innocent sense of the world was no longer felt to be an aspect of human sinfulness, whereby vision was lost through acquaintance with 'the dirty devices of the world', but a phenomenon in its own right, common to all human development and not necessarily to be associated with moral decay.

If we look for such imagery in Coleridge's later verse we turn first to *The Ancient Mariner*, where the Mariner, in the more paradisaical moments of his return voyage hears the sails making

A noise like of a hidden brook  
In the leafy month of June,  
That to the sleeping woods all night  
Singeth a quiet tune (lines 358-61)

and experiences a breeze which makes no sound or motion but which

...rais'd my hair, it fann'd my cheek,  
Like a meadow-gale of spring... (lines 461-2)

The significance of such imagery (all the more appealing because it draws on the phenomena of nature which were currently delighting Coleridge in Somerset) emerges more clearly still in *Frost at Midnight*, where the magnetism of the heart in time and space is an important theme. The warmth of the fire and the fluttering of the stranger on the grate in the silent room evoke memories of his schooldays, when, in turn, a similar situation would summon up images

Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,  
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang  
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day...

In place of those over-heated longings, Coleridge promises Hartley a childhood spent in nature, with constant exposure to all its delights

Whether the summer clothe the general earth  
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch  
Smokes in the sun-thaw...

Although nature had long been a theme in English poetry, this particular kind of response, combining a general sense of love with vivid, sensuous, depiction is new with Coleridge: It is soon to be echoed, however; first by Wordsworth, as in the *Immortality Ode*, and then, more largely, by Keats.

If it is correct to assume that this imagery of the heart's affections appealed to Lamb's mind from the time of his earliest acquaintance with Coleridge, providing a stimulus for the development of his own beliefs and tastes, it should also be observed that it did not emerge into fully overt expression until much later, when he was recalling early years for his first *Elia* essays. In the meantime the imagery had itself undergone a mutation in Coleridge's hands during the 1800s, when he was beset by various troubles and in love with Sara Hutchinson. It became associated with remission from pain and distress, for example: in October, 1799, he wrote to Southey:

I am *harrassed* with the Rheumatism in my head and shoulders not without arm-and-thigh-twitches - / but when the Pain intermits, it leaves my sensitive Frame *so* sensitive! My enjoyments are so deep, of the fire, of the Candle, of the Thought I am thinking, of the old Folio I am reading - and the silence of the silent House is so *most & very* delightful - that upon my soul! the Rheumatism is no such bad thing as *people make for*.  
CL I 539

A few months later he reported that Daniel Stuart had offered him half shares in the *Morning Post* and the *Courier*, whereupon he had replied that he 'would not give up the Country, & the lazy reading of Old Folios for two Thousand Times two thousand pound.' (7). This is the language of the heart's affections in a slightly more self-indulgent vein: the cultivation of such pleasures is now seen as a feature of convalescence. The focus of the imagery, it will also be observed, has moved indoors.

As Coleridge's love for Sara Hutchinson developed during the years that followed, these objects, along with many more, became accreted to the world of that love, forming a growing chain of related images and memories.

Certain sounds valued for their ability to evoke a sense of hidden life - the voice of the stock dove, cooing in the woods, the noise of a fire slowly dying in the silence of the night or the sound of a bee-hive, humming at midnight (8) became part of that associative world. In July 1801 he had stayed with Mary and Sara Hutchinson at Durham for several days, working at books from the Cathedral Library and coming down to join the sisters later in the evening. He recalled the happiness of this time in a note of 1804:

A dear Room with such dear Friends, & such a dear Fire, that I seemed to love the moving Shadows on the wall, for their own sake - *das Schatten volk* - Sara & Mary - all the Time after 9 o'clock of a winter Evening, when I came down from my Study having worked hard and successfully, & surrendered myself up to Love, & innocent Sportiveness of wild fancies - CN I 1718

On one occasion at least, the pleasure of their company induced a peaceful happiness of almost mystical intensity:

It was as calm as this, that happy night  
 When Mary, thou & I together were,  
 The low decaying Fire our only light,  
 And listen'd to the Stillness of the Air!  
 O that affectionate & blameless Maid,  
 Dear Mary! on her Lap my head she lay'd -  
     Her Hand was on my Brow,  
     Even as my own is now;  
 And on my Cheek I felt thy eye-lash play.  
 Such Joy I had, that I may truly say,  
 My Spirit was awe-stricken with the Excess  
 And trance-like Depth of it's brief Happiness

CL II 792-3

In this growing cultivation of the heart's affections there is a continuing link with Lamb, who, coming to recognize that he was committed to a bachelor's life, was during these years building up a way of life associated with old books, old pleasures and old friends. In certain respects he took the cultivation in a different direction. Coleridge may have enjoyed the physical pleasure of reading old folios by firelight, but there was also another side to that reading, involving strenuous pursuit of possible truths which might be buried in them. Lamb tended to read rather for immediate pleasure - including a sense of personal friendship with the author himself - so that even the sensuous experience of handling the old folios (once described humorously as his 'midnight darlings') contributed to the total effect. Despite these variations of emphasis, however, the interests of the two men often ran closely together - particularly where literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was concerned.

For a time, Coleridge tried to draw Sara Hutchinson to share his pursuit of lost truths. In a notebook he recorded one welcome by-product of his efforts:

Endeavouring to make the infinitely beloved Darling understand all my knowlege I learn the art of making the abstrusest Truths intelligible; & interesting even to the unlearned. CN I 984

When, in 1804, he sent her a folio volume of Sir Thomas Browne's writings (recently bought on his behalf by Lamb, who of course shared his admiration)

he enclosed a letter describing his enjoyment of the older writer:

...he is quiet and sublime Enthusiast with a strong tinge of the Fantast, the Humourist constantly mingling with & flashing across the Philosopher, as the darting colours in shot silk play upon the main dye! So compleatly does he see every thing in a light of his own, reading Nature neither by Sun, Moon or Candle-Light, but by the Light of the faery Glory around his own Head, that you might say, that Nature had granted to him in perpetuity a Patent and monopoly for all his Thoughts -

...Thank you, my dear Sara! that there ever was such a reason given before for going to bed at midnight / to wit, that if we did not, we should be acting the part of our ANTIPODES!! - and then 'The Huntsmen are up in America!' - What Life, what Fancy! - Does the whimsical Knight give us thus a dish of strong green Tea, & call it an *opiate*? -

CL II 1081-3

The full extent of the network of ideas and impressions built up around his love for Sara Hutchinson emerges, however, only when we turn to a long note set down some years later. He had been arguing, he says, with an 'idolater of Hume and Hartley', who had been supporting the view that all mental processes proceeded by association of ideas. Coleridge, as was his wont, countered this with the assertion that there must also be some organizing principle at work, a gravitational principle, so to speak, by which the ideas were alike drawn. Nevertheless, he says, in order to show that he was in no way ignorant of the force of the associative process, he embarked upon a process of free association to produce a run of linked impressions, all of them associated with Sara Hutchinson:

...to shew him that I was neither ignorant, nor idle in observing, the vast and multifold activity of the *Associative Force* I entered into a curious and fanciful yet strictly true and actual, exemplification. Many of my Instances recalled to my mind my little poem on *Lewti*, the Circassian / and as by this same force joined with the assent of the will most often, tho' often too vainly because weakly opposed by it, I inevitably by some link or other return to you, or (say rather) bring some fuel of thought to the ceaseless Yearning for you at my Inmost, which like a steady fire attracts constantly the air which constantly feeds it / I began strictly and as a matter of fact to examine that subtle Vulcanian Spider-web Net of Steel - strong as Steel yet subtle as the Ether, in which my soul flutters inclosed with the Idea of your's - to pass rapidly as in a catalogue thro' the Images only, exclusive of the thousand Thoughts that possess the same force, which never fail instantly to awake into vivid flame the for ever and ever Feeling of you / - The fire / Mary, you, & I at Gallow Hill / - or if flamy, reflected in children's round faces - ah whose children? - a dog - that dog whose restless eyes oft catching the light of the fire used to watch your face, as you leaned with your head on your hand and arm, & your feet on the *fender* / the fender thence / - Fowls at Table - the last dinner at Gallow Hill, when you drest the two fowls in that delicious white Sauce which when very ill is the only idea of food that does not make me *sicker* / all natural Scenery - ten thousand links, and if it please me, the very spasm and drawing-back of a pleasure which is half-pain, you not being there - Cheese - at Middleham, too salt/horses, my ride to Scarborough - asses, to that large living 2 or 3 miles from

Middleham/ All Books - my Study at Keswick / - the Ceiling or Head of a Bed - the green watered Mazarine! - A Candle in it's socket, with its alternate fits & dying flashes of lingering Light - *O God! O God!* - Books of abstruse Knowledge - the Thomas Aquinas & Suarez from the Durham Library / ...  
CN III 3708

Charles and Mary Lamb knew Sara Hutchinson and corresponded with her. It is possible that Coleridge made Lamb the confidant of his hopeless love - even that he showed him some of the notebook entries concerning her. Whether through direct or indirect association, however, it is noticeable that a passage in Lamb's essay 'New Year's Eve', first published in 1821, contains some surprisingly sharp resemblances to the one just quoted:

Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fire-side conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and *irony itself* - do these things go out with life?

Can a ghost laugh, or shake his gaunt sides, when you are pleasant with him?

And you, my midnight darlings, my Folios! must I part with the intense delight of having you (huge armfuls) in my embraces? Must knowledge come to me, if come at all, by some awkward experiment of intuition, and no longer by this familiar process of reading?

Shall I enjoy friendships there, wanting the smiling indications which point me to them here, - the recognisable face - the "sweet assurance of a look" -?  
LW II 29-30

The sentiments expressed here had long been brewing in Lamb's mind. They can be found, very briefly sketched, in a letter to Charles Lloyd of November 1798 (8A) - sent, interestingly enough, five days after the defence of 'The Ancient Mariner' to Southey which we shall discuss later. The importance of the passage arises not, ultimately, as a matter of influence one way or the other between the two friends, but as testimony that their common sensibility had come to include many of the same objects. There is further evidence, however (including the fact that the Lambs had traditionally paid a New Year's call on Coleridge during these years (9), to suggest that Coleridge was prominently in Lamb's mind when he wrote it. A persistent strain of reference is to be traced in the two preceding essays. 'Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago' and 'The Two Races of Men' both contain long accounts, the first of the schoolboy Coleridge, pining for the countryside which he had left behind him, the second of Coleridge the borrower, whose depredations had left many gaps in Lamb's own shelves.

'New Year's Eve' itself includes a quotation early on from Coleridge's 'Ode to the Departing Year'; and I think there may be a further, more involved reference to his friend in the quotation which concludes the extract just quoted: 'the sweet assurance of a look'. The phrase itself comes from a poem about Sir Philip Sidney which was a favourite of Lamb's. When he came to write his essay 'Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney', he opposed Hazlitt's criticisms of Sidney and quoted several lines from the poem in question, which he took to be by Sidney's friend Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke:

When he descended down the mount,  
 His personage seemed most divine:  
 A thousand graces one might count  
 Upon his lovely chearful eyne.  
 To hear him speak, and sweetly smile,  
 You were in Paradise the while

*A sweet attractive kind of grace;  
 A full assurance given by looks;  
 Continual comfort in a face,  
 The lineaments of Gospel books -*

I trow that count'nance cannot lye,  
 Whose thoughts are legible in the eye.

LW II 219

The poem is now attributed to Matthew Roydon, but Lamb stated that he believed it to be by Greville 'from internal testimony'. That internal testimony was presumably provided for him by the quality of the feeling evinced.

Lord Greville, it should be noted, had been at school with Sir Philip Sidney, just as Lamb had been at school with Coleridge, and the account of Sir Philip Sidney's eloquence and charm in the poem may be paralleled with Lamb's own accounts of Coleridge - not only the description of him at school quoted above but the well-known and more rueful description of him many years later:

...his face when he repeats his verses hath its ancient glory, an  
 Archangel a little damaged. LL II 190

A sentence from his posthumous tribute is also relevant

He would talk from morn to dewy eve, nor cease till far midnight; yet  
 who ever would interrupt him - who would obstruct that continuous flow  
 of converse, fetched from Helicon or Zion? LW I 352

The first phrase runs together the figures of Raphael, the 'affable archangel' who talked from midday to sunset with Adam and Eve, and Mulciber, the fallen angel ('from morn / To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve, / A summer's day...') who designed the great palace for his fellow fallen angels, built (like the visionary pleasure dome of 'Kubla Khan') with 'the sound of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet' (10). This is then followed by imagery of the mountain-top of inspiration, sacred or profane.

Coleridge himself had long shown a keen interest in Sir Philip Sidney. In April 1801, he referred to the conferences which he and Fulke Greville had held behind closed doors with Giordano Bruno, the visionary philosopher who was later to be charged with heresy (11). In November, a flurry of further notebook entries marked his reading of an early biography prefixed to *Arcadia* (12). A little while later, he recorded a dream in which he saw 'a Lady, made up of Sir Charles Grandison's lady and Sir Philip Sidney's, talking with her Maid concerning Sir P Sidney' (13). In 1809 Lamb recovered his copy of the *Arcadia* from him, 'enriched with manuscript notes' (14). Coleridge quoted Sidney's political principles with approval in *The Friend*, and, in *On the Constitution of the Church and the State*, where he was still deploring the principles among influential men of his day, recalled how Sidney had communed with Spenser on the Ideas of the Beautiful; and



and the younger Algernon with Harrington, Milton and Nevil on the Idea of the State (15). If, then, we suppose that Lamb saw in the friendship between Fulke Greville and Sidney an analogue for his own relationship with Coleridge, we may further argue that the idea was strengthened by Coleridge's known feeling for Sidney.

Simply to align Lamb with Fulke Greville as a straightforward hero-worshipper, however, would be to do less than justice to the full situation. The context of his quotation suggests that if he found the passage particularly relevant to Coleridge he was also applying it to affectionate love as it is to be found in many friendships. In this respect, his ideas were shared with Coleridge, who believed that such affection was often strongly associated with the recognition of an 'illumination' in the person loved. This was so, physically, of his love for Sara: he was fond of recalling lines which he had written about just such an experience of her, concluding

She, she herself, and only she  
Shone in her body visibly

CN II 2441 and n

He also felt something of the kind to be characteristic of Lamb himself as writer and conversationalist:

...he has an affectionate heart, a mind sui generis, his taste acts so as to appear like the unmechanic simplicity of an Instinct - in brief, he is worth an hundred men of *mere* Talents. Conversation with the latter tribe is like the use of leaden Bells - one warms by *exercise* - Lamb every now & then *eradiates*, & the beam, tho' single & fine as a hair, yet is rich with colours, & I both see & feel it. CL I 588

There is another curious echo, this time in the *Table Talk* of September 22, 1830:

Nothing ever left a stain on that gentle creature's mind, which looked upon the degraded men and things around him like moonshine on a dunghill, which shines and takes no pollution. All things are shadows to him, except those which move his affections.

This passage, the images of which bear a generic resemblance to that in the letter describing Browne, is supposed by the editor to refer to Charles Lamb. Whether or not that is the case, it should be considered alongside Lamb's own description of Sir Philip Sidney (16):

In the sweetly constituted mind of Sir Philip Sidney it seems as if no ugly thought nor unhandsome meditation could find a harbour. He turned all that he touched into images of honour and virtue.

Again, however, the chief importance of the resemblances is that they show tacit agreement between the two men concerning a certain type of virtue.

To discover more about Lamb's attitude to Fulke Greville, we may turn to an external source: Hazlitt's account in 1826 of an evening, twenty years before, during which various well-known people of his circle discussed the person whom they would most have liked to meet. Lamb chose Fulke Greville as one of his two figures (17):

L--- then named Sir Thomas Brown and Fulke Greville, the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, as the two worthies whom he should feel the greatest pleasure to encounter on the floor of his apartment in their night-gown and slippers, and to exchange friendly greeting with them. L--- then (as well as I can remember a conversation that passed twenty years ago - how

time slips!) went on as follows. 'The reason why I pitch upon these two authors is, that their writings are riddles, and they themselves the most mysterious of personages...As to Fulke Greville, he is like nothing but one of his own "Prologues spoken by the ghost of an old king of Ormus," a truly formidable and inviting personage: his style is apocalyptic, cabalistical, a knot worthy of such an apparition to untie; and for the unravelling a passage or two, I would stand the brunt of an encounter with so portentous a commentator!' - 'I am afraid in that case,' said A----, 'that if the mystery were once cleared up, the merit might be lost;' - and turning to me, whispered a friendly apprehension, that while L--- continued to admire these old crabbed authors, he would never become a popular writer.

We have already referred to the enthusiasm which Coleridge and Lamb shared concerning Browne; Greville had also been a subject of discussion. When Coleridge returned from Malta in 1806 he spent some time with Lamb and read his copy of Fulke Greville's works (18). Greville's sonnets to Coelica seem to have evoked the pains and pleasures of his own hopeless love: he adapted one of them, substituting 'Love' for 'Cupid', among other changes, and published the adaptation in the *Courier* under the title 'Farewell to Love'. In his notebooks he also extracted several pieces from the dramas, including some lines from the Prologue mentioned by Lamb; (that prologue also includes a passage on 'Privation' as an essential quality of Hell which may well have provided a germ for his lines on Privation in 'Limbo') (19). Later he wrote down, as a suggested motto for Greville's tragedies and poems, with their contorted expression, a quotation from Cowper's 'Fragment on the Old Oak at Yardley':

A Quarry of stout Spurs and knotted Fangs  
That crook'd into a thousand Whimsies, clasp  
The stubborn Soil - CN III 3713

This appears just after the long passages on images associated with Sara Hutchinson and is surrounded by some further extracts from Greville, chosen for their insight into human affairs (20). (Perhaps Coleridge found in his ability to move from hopeless love to perceptive comment on public matters a model for the course that he was trying to follow in *The Friend*.) In the year of his death he was still praising Greville's prose (21); the year before, visiting Trinity College, Cambridge, and expatiating at some length on the virtues of Sidney, who he believed to have studied there at one time, he continued (22):

...His tutor at Oxford wished it to be written upon his grave that he had been the instructor of Sir Philip Sidney; and Lord Brooke thought his highest claim to future distinction consisted, not in having been the servant of Elizabeth, or the councillor of James, but the bosom friend of the author of the *Arcadia*.

If it is true that Coleridge and Lamb each saw in the other at times qualities which could remind them of the illumination and sense of nobility that Fulke Greville had seen in his schoolfriend Sir Philip Sidney, it is not necessary to treat the issues involved over-solemnly. While their common cultivation of the heart's affections involved an aspiration after the kind of nobility that Sidney had shown, they were also aware of human failings which called for a counterpointing irony and humour in their relationship. Both were capable of switching abruptly from seriousness to humour: Coleridge, in particular, enjoyed turning an amused gaze on things that he had discussed very seriously at another time. We need think only of

his 'Sonnets attempted in the Manner of Contemporary Writers' or his capacity for self-mockery at the end of an otherwise serious letter (23). His mischievousness could extend to hatching with Lamb a scheme whereby he might versify some prose translations of German poems which Coleridge would then insert under his own name in the *Morning Post* (24). Crabb Robinson records a comment by Wordsworth on this aspect of the relationship, starting with an assertion that Coleridge did not know how he would end *Christabel*; he associated the origin of it with their own schooldays (25):

Talking of dear Charles Lamb's very strange habit of quizzing and of Coleridge's far more equivocal incorrectnesses in talk, Wordsworth said he thought much of this was owing to a *school habit*... 'I believe that at the school the boys had a habit very unfavourable to the practice of truth'.

Just what Wordsworth was referring to is hard to say: if he was thinking, say, of practical jokes such as that which Lamb played on his friend Gutch in a letter to him (26), alarming him with various domestic disasters and then turning the page to reveal that it was all a fabrication, then it is a kind of 'quizzing' which is popular in many schools and similar institutions. But the existence of this other side to the relationship cannot be denied: we can perhaps best put it in perspective by juxtaposing two remarks by Lamb about his friend. The first comes in a letter of 28 January 1798:

In my brief acquaintance with you in London, your conversations won me to the better cause, and rescued me from the polluting spirit of the world. I might have been a worthless character without you; as it is, I do possess a certain improvable portion of devotional feelings, tho' when I view myself in the light of divine truth, and not according to the common measures of human judgment, I am altogether corrupt and sinful. This is no cant. I am very sincere. LL I 118

The second occurs five years later, in a letter of April 1803. After a lighthearted discussion of smoking (when one should smoke, how much and so on) and a defence of wine in moderation, he continues:

Bless you, old Sophist, who next to Human Nature taught me all the corruption I was capable of knowing... LL I 345

An appreciation of the relationship between these two tributes takes one far towards an understanding of the nature of the friendship that could produce them.

Whatever view one takes of the element of shared roguery (and a charitable observer would note the extent to which their jokes often served to relieve strong emotional pressures from elsewhere) it can be argued that the sense of a serious core to their relationship was always uppermost, and that it grew with the years. It may also be suggested that Lamb's long acquaintance with Coleridge, stretching back to the time of his early visionary eloquence, sometimes enabled him to see more clearly into his poetic achievements than did later collaborators such as Wordsworth and Southey. One thinks not only of his comments on Wordsworth's criticisms of *The Ancient Mariner* in 1801, but of his rejoinder to Southey's characterization of the same poem, in a review of 1798, as a 'Dutch attempt at German sublimity' (27). The term 'Dutch' would seem to be a compressed form of 'High Dutch', for 'obscure' (the term 'double Dutch' is, according to OED examples, of later provenance) and it is just possible that he may have picked up,

unsympathetically, a whiff of Boehme and recalled that the first English edition of *Aurora* contained the information that it had been corrected from the 'High Dutch' version (28) - a phrase about which he might have joked with Coleridge at the time of their collaboration. Whether or not that is so, however, Lamb penetrated immediately to the heart of the poem in his reply:

So far from calling it as you do, with some wit, but more severity, "A Dutch Attempt," &c, I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity. You have selected a passage fertile in unmeaning miracles, but have passed by fifty passages as miraculous as the miracles they celebrate. I never so deeply felt the pathetic as in that part,

"A spring of love gush'd from my heart,  
And I bless'd them unaware" -

It stung me into high pleasure through sufferings. LL I 136

It was the Behmenist image of the heart as spring that Lamb picked on immediately; and that, we may argue, is an effect of his having known Coleridge in the heyday of his speculations, before the more sceptical and cautious phase at Bristol (29).

This capacity for graphic evocation of Coleridge's earliest and most eager phase not only makes Lamb a valuable commentator on Coleridge's achievement but also seems to have been beneficial to his own development, giving to his own work at its best a clarity and vividness (particularly in evocation of the past) which mitigates any charge of sentimentalism that one might otherwise consider bringing.

It can be argued, in other words, that Lamb was Coleridge's first disciple in that philosophy of 'the heart's imagination' which he had expounded in youth - and that in many respects he excelled his old friend in the practice of what he had learnt. Coleridge acknowledged his constancy in a private inscription to 'This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison', entered in the last year of his life:

Ch. and Mary Lamb - dear to my heart, yea, as it were, my Heart -  
S.T.C. Aet. 63, 1834... PW I 178n

After his death Lamb was deeply affected. John Forster gives an account of his characteristic behaviour (30):

Some old friends of his saw him two or three weeks ago, and remarked the constant turning and reference of his mind. He interrupted himself and them almost every instant with some play of affected wonder, or astonishment, or humorous melancholy, on the words 'Coleridge is dead'.

Nothing, perhaps, could recapture more surely the range of the relationship - and the consequent varieties of the loss which he was feeling. When he did finally set down an extended tribute in a friend's album, however, it was to stress his sense of admiration and, once again, intense affection:

His great and dear spirit haunts me...Never saw I his likeness, nor probably the world can see again. I seem to love the house he died at more passionately than when he lived...What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel. LW I 351-2

A few months later Lamb himself died. The death of Coleridge had, according to Wordsworth, hastened the event: and in view of the evidence presented in

this article, it is perhaps no coincidence that at his death a copy of Phillips's *Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum* was discovered, folded down at the page relating to Sir Philip Sidney (31).

*A shorter version of this article was given in the form of a lecture to the Wordsworth Summer School at Ambleside in July 1975 as part of the School's Bicentennial commemoration.*

#### Abbreviations

- BL S T Coleridge *Biographia Literaria* ed. J Shawcross, 1907.  
 CL *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford 1956-71).  
 CN *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* ed. Kathleen Coburn, 1957-.  
 LL *The Letters of Charles Lamb to which are added those of His Sister Mary Lamb* ed. E V Lucas, 3 vols (1935).  
 LW *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* ed. E V Lucas, 7 vols (1903-5).  
 PW *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* ed. E H Coleridge, 2 vols, Oxford 1912.

#### Notes

- 1 'Coleridge's Debt to Charles Lamb', *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association* (n.s.XI) 1958, 68-85.
- 2 E J Morley (ed.) *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, 1938, II 487.
- 3 Hazlitt, *Works* (ed. P P Howe) XI 31.
- 4 CL IV 750-1.
- 5 BL I 98.
- 6 Aurora, ch. viii, 14-17. For evidence that Coleridge knew and responded to this passage, see my essay, 'Ice and Spring: Coleridge's Imaginative Education' in *Coleridge's Variety* (ed. Beer) 1974, pp 61-66.
- 7 To Poole. CL I 582.
- 8 See, e.g. CL II 792; CN I 1635; 'A Day-Dream' (PW I 385-6).
- 8A LL I 138.
- 9 See Coleridge's letter of 14 January 1820 to Green (CL V 11).
- 10 *Paradise Lost* v, 298, viii 653 and i 732-51. For further angel imagery in connection with Coleridge, see my *Coleridge the Visionary* 1959, pp 34-6 and Reeve Parker, *Coleridge's Meditative Art* 1975, pp 226-31.
- 11 CN I 928 f27.
- 12 CN I 1011-1015.
- 13 CN II 1998.
- 14 LL II 75.
- 15 *On the Constitution of the Church and the State*, 1830, p 67. Cf. *The Statesman's Manual*, Appendix E.

- 16 Note on *The Maid's Tragedy*. LW IV 285.
- 17 Hazlitt, 'Of Persons one would wish to have seen', *Works* (ed. Howe) XVII 123-4.
- 18 CN II 2918n.
- 19 PW I 402n; CN II 2914-2932.
- 20 CN III 3709-3719.
- 21 *Table Talk* 5 July 1834.
- 22 R A Willmott, *Conversations at Cambridge*, 1836, pp 35-6. It is interesting to notice that in the same conversation Coleridge cited some phrases from the Roydon poem - ascribing them (if Willmott's record is correct) to Spenser.
- 23 See, e.g., CL II 697.
- 24 See Lamb's letter to Coleridge of 11 October 1802 (LL I 321-324). For a more hostile discussion, see Norman Fruman: *Coleridge, the Damaged Archangel*, 1972, p 41. Fruman also discusses the Wordsworth comment cited below.
- 25 E J Morley (ed.) *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, 1938, II 487.
- 26 This rather terrifying joke letter was sent to J M Gutch some time in 1800. LL I 195-6.
- 27 LL I 239-40; *Critical Review*, October 1798, p 201. See also my *Coleridge the Visionary* 1959, p 147 and n.
- 28 A note accompanying the list of Errata just before the preface to the 1656 edition explains that they are so numerous because a more correct copy in High Dutch arrived just after the English version had been printed. It also exhorts the reader to make the various corrections involved, since this will make the contents of the book much clearer - a point which might well have amused Coleridge and Southey if they looked over *Aurora* together at or before the time when Coleridge entered various phrases from it into the Gutch notebook (CN I 272, items u to x and 273). My statement in *Coleridge's Variety* (1974, p 60), implying that the phrase 'translated from the High Dutch' actually appears on the title-page turns out to be incorrect and must have been due to a trick of memory; the main point, however, is not affected.
- 29 The evidence would suggest that Southey found Boehme a dangerously extravagant writer and that Coleridge, when in conversation with him, himself tended to veer towards a more sceptical point of view. See, e.g., Southey's MS letter to Grosvenor Bedford of May 1807, in which he speaks of a scheme in North Germany for proselytizing to Roman Catholicism by bringing people to believe Boehme - after which 'they can believe anything else'. (Quoted, G Carnall, *Southey and his Age*, Oxford, 1960, p 69). Southey goes on to say that Coleridge (whose attitude to Boehme was in any case considerably modified by this time) had informed him of this, claiming to have spoken to the head of the propaganda in question at Rome.
- 30 E Blunden (ed.) *Charles Lamb: his Life Recorded by his Contemporaries* 1934, p 241.

- 31 LW VII 942-3nn. H F Cary, owner of the volume, wrote a graceful poem comparing Lamb and Sidney which is also printed at this point.

#### IN MEMORIAM

EARL LESLIE GRIGGS, 15 April 1899-26 November 1975

*We were grieved to receive in January the following message from the University of California: "I regret to inform you that Professor Earl Leslie Griggs lost his life on 26 November 1975. He was waiting to cross the street when a speeding teenager driving a pickup truck skidded and struck him. Professor Griggs never regained consciousness." Professor Griggs was a Vice-President of the Society, and a very active member as his visits and lectures to us will witness. At our request Professor Walter Crawford of California State University, Long Beach, has written the following notice.*

The international community of scholars has lost a much-admired pioneer in modern Coleridge studies; the University of California has lost one of its most outstanding faculty leaders; the Charles Lamb Society has lost a distinguished Vice-President; and all who have had the privilege of personal association with Earl Leslie Griggs have lost a happy, loving, Christian friend.

Born in New York City, Earl began his undergraduate education at Princeton University and received his BA from the University of Colorado in 1922. He received his MA from Columbia University in 1923 and was married to Grace Evelyn Riley in the same year.

While in England working at the University of London on his PhD (received in 1927), he began his lifelong friendship with the descendants of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. A H B Coleridge, present head of the family, when notified of Earl's tragic and sudden death, said, "I have known and loved Earl for fifty years. We have always thought of him as a member of the Coleridge family, and his death is an unbearable loss to all of us."

Earl's academic life included teaching at the Universities of Minnesota, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and California (Los Angeles), 1923-62. At the latter he chaired the Academic Senate. He was Dean, Graduate Division, University of California at Santa Barbara, 1962-67. In 1967-69 he was stationed in London as Director of the University of California Education Abroad Program in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The many honours received by Earl include a Fellowship in the Royal Society of Literature, London, 1952; an Honorary D Lit from University College, University of London, 1956; and an Honorary Fellowship in Jesus College, Cambridge, 1972.

As literary scholar, Earl published eighteen volumes and many articles. His Coleridge studies were always assisted by the wholehearted cooperation of the poet's descendants. His books include *Coleridge Fille* (1940), his biography of the poet's daughter Sara; his biography *Hartley Coleridge* (1929); and his edition of Hartley's poems (1942). *Letters of Hartley Coleridge* (1936) was edited by Grace Evelyn Griggs and Earl. Earl also edited two collections of essays: *Wordsworth and Coleridge* (1939) and, with his friend Edmund Blunden, *Coleridge* (1934). The capstone of his scholarly career, however, is the magisterial six-volume *Collected Letters*

of Coleridge (1956-71), superseding his two-volume *Unpublished Letters* (1932). His many journal articles about hitherto unpublished letters supply invaluable background information that could not be included in the notes in the collected edition. Shortly before his death, Earl had completed work on a selected edition of the letters.

Earl also published a life of the great English abolitionist, Thomas Clarkson (1936), and with Clifford Prator a book studying the relations between Clarkson and that flamboyant leader in the Haitian struggle for independence, the former slave Henry Christophe (1952).

In early manhood Earl seriously considered entering the Episcopal priesthood, and even though he turned to an academic career he continued an active and devoted Christian worker. His early ambition began to be realized in June 1972 when he was ordained to the Diaconate, after which he served St Alban's, Westwood, as an Assistant Minister. At the time of his death he was nearing completion of his studies for the priesthood. The Reverend Dr Griggs had only recently moved nearer to St Alban's so that he could devote full time to his ministry, when he was struck down in the street by a speeding motorist and killed almost instantly. *In pace requiescat.*

#### JANE AUSTEN BICENTENARY EXHIBITION

Members of the Charles Lamb Society, who are sharp on minutiae, will know that Jane Austen was born on 16 December 1775, some ten months after their eponymous hero. To mark the occasion the British Library mounted an exhibition which was open from 9 December 1975 to 29 February 1976.

Writing this, as I do, on the veritable 200th birthday I ponder whether there is really any relationship between her situation and that of Lamb. They came from very different classes of society, they never met (and if they had might not have made much of each other); and yet it is impossible to think of the literature of the period without taking both into consideration.

At any rate, the exhibition has done Jane proud. I was especially interested in Volume the First (borrowed from the Bodleian), Volume the Second, and Volume the Third, those depositories of juvenilia and scraps which have each been published by the Clarendon Press during the period 1933-51 (I remember being presented with Volume the Third by my then current girl-friend; she married someone else, alas, but I still have the book). There were books from her library - she is noted as a subscriber in Volume I of Fanny Burney's *Camilla* - and there was *The History of Goody Two Shoes* which she possessed as a child and later handed on to her niece Anna. There were some letters, of course, including the verse letter of 26 July 1809 to her brother Frank complimenting him on the birth of a son:

"Thy infant days, may he inherit,  
Thy warmth, nay insolence of spirit; -  
We would not with one fault dispense  
To weaken the resemblance."

It is clear that Jane was no poet.

There were views of houses in which she had lived, her school at Reading, places associated with her and her work. And of course an amplitude of editions of the novels, each surrounded by appropriate illustrative



material. The catalogue of the exhibition traces the publishing history: how *Sense and Sensibility* was published at the author's risk and fortunately made £140 on the first edition; how she sold the copyright of *Pride and Prejudice* for £110 and it went into three editions; how *Mansfield Park* was published by her original publisher, Egerton, also at author's risk, and sold out the first edition of 1,500 copies in the six months between May and November 1814; how she transferred her business to John Murray (she wrote: "He is a rogue, of course, but a civil one"); how she was obliged to dedicate *Emma* to the Prince Regent (the specially bound copy of the first edition presented to him was lent by The Queen) and it sold a first edition of 2,000, half of them within the year; how Murray's print order went up to 2,500 for *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* in 1817. There were later editions of the works, the manuscript of *Sandition*, and the three separate publications by the Clarendon Press in 1925-27 of *Sandition*, *The Watsons* and *Lady Susan*.

There wasn't much in the way of portraits to be shown, apart from the well-known drawing by Cassandra from the National Portrait Gallery. There was, however, a beautifully fresh water-colour study, also by Cassandra, of Jane sitting on the bank of a stream with a three-quarters back view. Anna referred to this as "a sketch which Aunt Cassandra made of her in one of their expeditions /from Tenby/ - sitting down out of doors on a hot day with her bonnet strings untied". It is now part of a volume of family history, in the possession of the family, known as the Lefroy Manuscript.

The catalogue, already referred to, was more than adequate to the occasion and may be had from the British Museum for 50p. Mr John Barr and Mr Hilton Kelliher of The British Library are to be congratulated on having assembled and laid out both exhibition and catalogue so well.

BS

#### BOOK REVIEWS

Edwin W Marrs Jr: *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb; Volume I, Letters of Charles Lamb, 1796-1801* Ithaca and London: *Cornell University Press*, 1975 pp xcv, 292

Ever since Professor Marrs told us in 1972 about his projected edition, we have been looking forward to this first volume with eager anticipation. In an article published in the *Bulletin* in April 1973 he set out the publishing history of Lamb's letters, and this forms a prominent part of the introduction to the new work. I am happy to say that our expectations have been handsomely met, and that Professor Marrs and the Cornell University Press are to be congratulated.

Let me first do my best to *describe* this volume before I try to evaluate it. It is what I might call a typical, handsome volume from an American university press, bound in green cloth, in format 9 1/4 inches by 6, or royal octavo. It has an introduction of 71 pages, followed by 278 pages of letters and notes covering the period 27 May 1796 to a conjectural 21 February 1801, and by a 14 page index. For the purpose of comparison the first volume of Lucas's 1935 edition covers the period to 13 March 1806 in 432 pages. The volume has a portrait frontispiece and eight other illustrations, which are the less good in that they are printed by the offset process and lack clarity; but they are well-chosen.

The introduction consists of a biographical note - and in view of the

amplitude of information available at the present day it is a difficult, almost impossible task to compress this elegantly into a mere thirty-eight pages - the publishing history of the letters, and an explanation of the edition's *modus operandi*. Some space is devoted, unavoidably, to the shortcomings of Lucas's edition, first generally exposed by Professor George Barnett: intrinsic evidence of the shortcomings is provided by the texts in this first volume.

The edition, when completed in perhaps six volumes, is to contain "more than 1150" letters of Charles and Mary Lamb, against the "1027" published by Lucas in 1935 (1021 in my copy). In Volume I there are 102 letters against 100 for the same period in Lucas. The difference is accounted for by Marrs having made one of Lucas's two letters of 5 and 6 July 1796 to Coleridge, and added letters of January 1798 sending Marmaduke Thompson the first draft of "The Old Familiar Faces" (mentioned by Lucas also in a note), of about 5-10 April 1800 to Coleridge about the manuscript of his translation of Schiller's *The Piccolomini*, and of a line, dated conjecturally 24 January 1801 to Charles Lloyd: "I am desperate because I have not heard from you".

This makes no great difference, although it is good to have matters put right. The redating of some of the letters has led to changes in the order of printing, and this is a help to clarity; and of course the text has been corrected where the manuscript has survived and it has been possible to go back to it (Professor Marrs tells us that about 80% of the letters to be contained in the whole edition have been transcribed from manuscript, and that 7% overall have not been published previously). Lucas, for example, was careless of his "and" and "&", sometimes "correcting" the latter to the former and sometimes not; Professor Marrs has distinguished, by printing in bold face, those words which were written by Lamb in larger characters than those near them, apparently for emphasis (Lucas ignored this). Lucas habitually "corrected" the punctuation and Professor Marrs has done less of this, in particular leaving Lamb's characteristic dash at the end of a sentence. Let me give an example from the letter of 9 December 1796 to Coleridge (No. 16 in Marrs, 17 in Lucas). Lucas first:

In truth, Coleridge, I am perplexed, & at times almost cast down. I am beset with perplexities. The old hag of a wealthy relation, who took my aunt off our hands in the beginning of the trouble, has found out that she is 'indolent and mulish' - I quote her own words - and that her attachment to us is so strong that she can never be happy apart. The Lady, with delicate Irony, remarks that, if I am not a Hypocrite, I shall rejoyce to receive her again; and that it will be a means of making me more fond of home to have so dear a friend to come home to! The fact is, she is jealous of my aunt's bestowing any kind recollections, on us, while she enjoys the patronage of her roof. She says she finds it inconsistent with her own 'ease and tranquillity' to keep her any longer, & in fine summons me to fetch her home. Now, much as I should rejoyce to transplant the poor old creature from the chilling air of such patronage, yet I know how straitend we are already, how unable already to answer any demand which sickness or any extraordinary expence may make. I know this, and all unused as I am to struggle with perplexities I am somewhat nonplused, to say no worse. This prevents me from a thorough relish of what Lloyd's kindness and yours have furnished me with. I thank you tho from my heart, and feel myself not quite alone in the earth.

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in truth Coleridge, I am perplexed & at times almost cast down - I am beset with perplexities - the old Hag of a wealthy relation, who took my Aunt off our hands in the beginning of trouble, has found out that she is "indolent & mulish" I quote her own words, & that her attachment to us is so strong that she can never be happy apart - the Lady with delicate Irony remarks, that if I am not an Hypocrite! I shall rejoice to receive her again, - & that it will be a means of making me more fond of home, to have so dear a friend to come home to! - the fact is she is jealous of my Aunt's bestowing any kind recollections on us while she enjoys the patronage of her roof - she says she finds it inconsistent with her own "ease & tranquillity" to keep her any longer - & in fine summons me to fetch her home -. Now much as I should rejoice to transplant the poor old creature from the chilling air of such patronage, yet I know how straiten'd we are already, how unable already to answer any demand which sickness or any extraordinary expense may make - I know this, & all unused as I am to struggle with perplexities I am somewhat non plused to say no worse - this prevents me from a thorough relish of what Lloyd's kindness & yours have furnish'd me with; I thank you tho' from my heart, - & feel myself not quite alone in the earth -

There is little doubt about which is truer to Lamb.

There would be almost as many views as readers about what an editor should cover in his notes. Professor Marrs does not declare his policy, but he takes an independent line, not annotating all the points covered by Lucas but sometimes including notes on points which Lucas thought self-evident. He has the advantage of forty further years of discovery in a period in which interest in the Romantics is flourishing, and he might be expected therefore to do rather better than Lucas did. He is indeed more precise, and his annotations are attached to specific passages in the letters and do not follow Lucas's discursive style. Perhaps, though, I may be allowed to wonder why both Lucas and Marrs should pass by Lamb's statement in Letter I (to Coleridge) "I am somewhat glad you have given up that Paper-" without explaining that the paper concerned was *The Watchman* which had ceased publication with the appearance of No. 10 on 13 May 1796. Reference to that, and to Lamb's statement in his next letter a day or two later "I am glad you resume The Watchman-" is made in the introduction to Professor Lewis Patton's edition of *The Watchman* in The Collected Coleridge. Of Coleridge's early letters to Lamb only two have survived - the "religious letter" after the family tragedy, and the letter of May 1798 which evoked Lamb's "Theses Quedam Theologicae" of the following month - and it is not possible now to determine in what circumstances Coleridge thought *The Watchman* could be resumed, nor why at one moment Lamb thought it was a good thing for Coleridge to free himself from it, and at the next to congratulate him on resuming it. However, there are corresponding rewards, among which I remember with gratitude a potted biography of Manning on pages 173-4 and a lucid account of the 1798 estrangement between Lamb and Coleridge on pages 129-30.

When all is said, this is an edition which all who profess a serious interest in Lamb and his circle will have to possess. No doubt at £16.25 it is expensive but this is clearly now the definitive edition of Lamb's letters and the one which will be referred to in any serious context. So close up your worn copies of Ainger and Macdonald and Lucas and promote them to an honourable superannuation on an upper shelf. Marrs I, 191 is in the notation of the future. In his preface Professor Marrs mentions with

appreciation the Charles Lamb Society and certain of its officers in connection with the preparation of the work. May we say in return that we are grateful to him and to his publishers for so fine an example of Lamb scholarship.

Basil Savage

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are reminded that the Annual General Meeting will be held at 2.45 pm on Saturday 3 April. This will consider *inter alia* the programme for 1976-77 and the level of membership subscriptions for 1976.

#### NEW MEMBERS

University Library, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701,  
USA

Mr M F Baird, Lee House, Tilsmore Road, Heathfield, Sussex

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Miss N Marino, Flat 3, 14 Marylebone Street, London W1

Mr K H and Mrs F M B Nask, 69 Southcote Lane, Reading RG3 3AQ

Dr N F Whitney, Flat 6, 49 Greencroft Gardens, London NW6