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NEW LAMB TEXTS FROM *THE ALBION*? I: "WHAT IS JACOBINISM?"

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The Albion is dead, dead as nail in door, and my revenues have died with it....Mister Perry, in common with the great body of the Whigs!! thinks the Albion *very low*. I find I must rise a peg or so, be a little more decent and less abusive: for to confess the truth, I had arrived to an abominable pitch, I spared neither age nor sex, when my cue was given me....

- Lamb to Thomas Manning, August 31, 1801 (all letters from Edwin W. Marrs, Jr., Vol. II, 1976)

Lamb's "Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago" is essential to my argument - his fascinating account of his first ventures into journalism, in which he celebrates the pleasure of turning back "to the inexperienced essays, the first callow flights in authorship, of some established name in literature." Though Lamb went as journalist to *The Albion* before *The Morning Chronicle* and *Morning Post* rather than after, the account otherwise rings true. A number of pieces he then wrote have since, I think, come to light. For there have recently turned up some copies of *The Albion*, long in hiding (Lucas could find none), dating from Lamb's time on it.

Lamb went to *The Albion*, and *Evening Advertiser* as a part-time assistant to its editor, John Fenwick, some time in June, 1801. This casual, bibulous gentleman had been introduced to Lamb by William Godwin, with whom, having once despised him as an atheist, Lamb had on personal acquaintance recently become firm friends, perhaps partly because Godwin was now on the down track after a period of glory as the author of the Radical bible *Political Justice*, as we shall presently see. Fenwick had long been Godwin's friend and disciple.

Fenwick, Lamb says in "Newspapers" (from which all unattributed quotations will be taken), had bought the newspaper from "one Lovell" (Daniel Lovell, d. 1818), and since the short run of *The Albion* which has now come to light covers Nos. 565 to 575 (the paper did not publish on Sunday), it had been going for nearly two years by the time Lamb joined it, though its fortunes had never been bright: "With this hopeless concern - for it had been sinking ever since its commencement, and could now reckon upon not more than a hundred subscribers - F. resolutely determined upon pulling down the Government in the first instance, and making both our fortunes by way of corollary." The Tory government, of course, insisted upon pursuing the war with France, which most Whigs, and all Radicals, yearned to see ended.

Lamb's need was money. He and Mary had to struggle at this time to make ends meet on his East India House clerical salary - and Coleridge had been pressing him to take up journalism, as he himself had been doing, to provide a supplement. Lamb worked manfully to provide copy, before and after office hours, from June to about August 15 (a Saturday in 1801); he tells Manning on the

22nd (Marrs uses but questions this date) that "last Saturday" marked *The Albion's* untimely end.

Lamb himself claimed to be the cause of the paper's demise - through his vitriolic epigram against James Mackintosh, which until now has been the only piece by Lamb from *The Albion* available to us, since he quoted it in the August 22nd letter to Manning. To understand his hatred of Mackintosh, which is reflected in other pieces I shall try to show were probably by Lamb, we must know that the barrister-journalist had once been a Radical hero as author of one of the most effective answers to Edmund Burke's *Reflections* on the French Revolution. He had also been a close friend of Lamb's new friend Godwin. Burke, just before he died, managed to convert Mackintosh to his own conservative view, and Mackintosh had in 1799 damned Godwin and all his works in a series of public lectures given in London. The Radicals had, one and all, cried "Apostate!" It was thought - probably unjustly - that Mackintosh's rapid reversal had been entirely motivated by a new wish to get on in the world, a suspicion which his 1800 application for a government appointment to India did nothing to dispel. Though the post did not then materialize, Mackintosh in 1803 became Recorder of Bombay.

Lamb in 1801, despising those who changed opinion for "pelf" or "lucre," and even more one who attacked an erstwhile friend now his own friend, had no mercy on Mackintosh. The epigram by which he "killed" *The Albion*, alienating its last wealthy subsidizer, Lord Stanhope, ran as follows:

Tho thou'rt like Judas an apostate black,
In the resemblance one thing thou dost lack;
When he had gotten his ill-purchas'd pelf,
He went away, & wisely hanged himself:
This thou may do at last; yet much I doubt,
If thou hast any Bowels to gush out!

Thus the brief, unhappy history of *The Albion*, which soon disappeared altogether in extant copies for more than a century.

In the course of my work for a biography of the young Lamb, I was wondering, early in 1975, if by now some copies had not been found and how I might track them down. I had been interested in Lamb's early reputation as a "Jacobin" from the start and, quite by chance in the course of some library browsing, I one day came across Carl Woodring's *Politics in English Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), which would, I thought, at least provide further background. To my delight I found in it a short section of trenchant commentary on Lamb himself as political man, with mention of his journalism, to which was appended a tiny note at the back of the book stating that "A few numbers of the *Albion* for Lamb's period survive in the Bath Municipal Libraries." A letter so addressed soon elicited photocopies of the ten "Lamb" issues, which run from June 29 to July 10, 1801 (one is missing), and the information that the British Museum also holds an imperfect run, but from the year 1800, before the time of Lamb's contributions. Eventually I studied the Bath holdings closely in relation to what I now knew of Lamb through 1801. A later letter from the cooperative Area Librarian at Bath, Mr. V. J. Kite, confirmed my hunch (after a search of the scholarly literature) that no one - at least so far as Mr. Kite knew - had as yet subjected the Bath *Albion* run to close scrutiny in search of Lamb.

As *Albion* contributor, Lamb was enlisted by Fenwick to write brief "paragraphs" of the kind E V Lucas culled from Lamb's probable later contributions to *The Morning Post* in his Lamb biography - short humorous comment on politics, personalities, manners, and dress. The following example, from the *Albion* issue of June 29, 1801, page three, seems very likely to be Lamb's. It also concerns Mackintosh:

So, after all, it is not certain that Mr. Lecturer M----- has got the splendid appointment to India, which was mentioned. We heartily wish that every man, whose honesty is *problematical*, may be rewarded with appointments *as problematical*.

But evidence in Lamb's letters suggests that he also wrote longer articles for *The Albion*. He certainly attempted to do so later for the *Post*, which did print "The Londoner" - hitherto the earliest of his published essays known - on February 1, 1802, and one or two pieces of dramatic criticism.* Otherwise (he says in mid-January) "My Editor uniformly rejects all that I do considerable in length." In September, 1801, he is having three fourths of his pieces rejected by *The Morning Chronicle*, "whereas in the old *Albion* the seal of my well-known handwriting was enough to drive any nonsense current." So *The Albion* gave him the freedom to do what he chose and the heady sensation of seeing it almost immediately in print.

Lamb describes the *Albion* office at 197 Fleet Street in a way that suggests he and Fenwick were the entire staff: "Here in murky closet, inadequate from its square contents to the receipt of the two bodies of Editor, and humble paragraph-maker, together at one time, sat in the discharge of his new Editorial functions (the 'Bigod' of Elia) the redoubted John Fenwick." There is the possibility, however, that when Lamb was at his daily clerical grind, another young friend of Godwin's, Ralph Fell, may have sometimes taken his chair. Of this, more hereafter.

Now to *The Albion* itself. Approximately 12 by 19 inches, it was four pages long and much of the first page was usually occupied by advertising. From the examples in the Bath run its content was not so bad as Lamb makes out; there is nothing in these copies as strong as the Mackintosh epigram. If its circulation was small, the sixpenny price (some 50p, or \$1.00 U.S. in today's buying power) was surely to blame, a price imposed by the high government stamp tax, intended to starve out just such "seditious" publications. Only the *rich* Radical could afford it on top of one of the necessary Whig morning dailies. Clearly it survived only through subsidy and (bad) loans to Fenwick. *The Albion* attempted to be a normal newspaper on the Whig side, revealing its stronger bias - at a time when a number of editors and writers languished in prison for "seditious libel" - only by insinuation, as Lamb states. If "Our

*The review of G F Cooke in *Richard the Third* (*Morning Post*, Jan. 8, 1802) which Lamb claimed as his to Manning on the 14th, is heavy with scattered *italic*, which, as we shall see, marked many of Lamb's contributions to *The Albion* as I identify them. So is "The Londoner" as originally published (*Lamb's Works*, I, 400). The *Lear* review in the *Post* of Jan. 9, which Lucas thinks may also be Lamb's, uses *italic* only for the names of characters; Lamb's own statement (*Marrs Letters* II, 45 - or Lucas I, 293) appears to deny the *Lear* piece, if not unequivocally.

occupation was now to write treason," it must be done subtly, "never naming the *thing* directly," in such a way that "the keen eye of an Attorney-General was insufficient to detect the lurking snake" in its pages. Most of *The Albion* was, therefore, straight reporting, of Parliamentary debates; spicy court cases; local, provincial, European, and war news; coverage of the French press; maritime, agricultural, and commercial information; births, marriages, and deaths; the occasional extended obituary or poem; female fashions; events in high society, including the Royal Family.

Since nearly all opinion was expressed in satire, I suspect that Lamb was pretty well in charge of the treason department. Fenwick must have had his hands full collecting, selecting, and condensing the news, coping with the printer, and raising loans. He must have been happy to leave humor and interpretation to Lamb, who provided (by my estimate) only one or two columns of *The Albion's* sixteen. Though Lamb says that his own work reflected "the right earnest fanaticism of F.," we must assume he shared the "infatuated Democrat's" general point of view, since he was incapable of writing for hire what he did not believe, even if sometimes abusive over what he did believe. And not all that he wrote was satire: *The Albion* carried occasional serious articles, some of which appear to be his. "What Is Jacobinism?" of June 30, is almost certainly Lamb's, as I shall show.

Besides the strong evidence that Lamb wrote this and other articles, there remains the question of who might have written them if he did not, and to assess Lamb's probable authorship we must look at the only two known candidates, Fenwick and Fell. For the latter's participation there is no evidence, only a likelihood from his closeness to Fenwick, Godwin, and Lamb and his status as an obscure writer.

Fenwick and Fell were gay fellows, and all-too-eager drinking companions whom Lamb for the moment enjoyed. He had a low opinion of Fell's writing ability, especially as humorist, at this time, though Fell published a travel book and would later do a life of Charles James Fox and a "Naval Chronicle." As Ralph Bigod, John Fenwick is portrayed with little exaggeration in Lamb's "The Two Races of Men." That he was perennially broke and in debt and often in a sodden condition is confirmed by a contemporary letter to Godwin which complains of "a swindling trick of the editor of the *Albion*, who obtained 5 guineas from me on a false pretence" (see Paul's life of Godwin, 1876, II, 67) and in the letters of Eliza Fenwick, the wife who left him, as edited by A F Wedd. Fenwick came of good family, knew Latin, French, and Greek - he was sometimes a translator - had written a farce produced at Drury Lane, and had probably carried *Political Justice* to France in 1793 for Godwin. Fell followed Godwin's lead in most things; there is no indication (since the question of religion will come up) that either man was a religious believer. Both were shortly to spend time in debtors' prison. This is most of what is known about them at that period: they must have had some bright qualities in youth, for Godwin chose his friends carefully, and Lamb, of course, was attracted to them then.

Close study has convinced me that Lamb probably wrote all the pieces characterized by *scattered italics* in *The Albion's* otherwise chastely roman pages. My detailed reasons must wait for future articles. Suffice it to say that while this style, still used in 1801 to point up satirical "paragraphs," had long since disappeared from serious writing, Lamb was at this time using it in *The Albion* to excess - the result, I think of his devotion to Robert Burton's

Anatomy of Melancholy, of which he had recently done some imitations, and in which the use of scattered italics is characteristic. The imitations appear as "Curious Fragments" in Lucas's *Works of the Lambs*; they had, not surprisingly, been rejected when Lamb in 1800 submitted them hopefully to *The Morning Post*. I believe, too, that a series of short pieces lacking excessive italics and signed "R." are also his, or his in collaboration. (Lamb later signed pieces for *The Champion* "R. et R.").

Here is a complete list of the *Albion* pieces I believe most likely to be Lamb's, probability being rated A - very good, B - good, C - dubious but possible; all but one to be treated in future articles:

Monday, June 29, 1801 Albion, and Evening Advertiser:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| p. 3 | "The Blessings of Mr. Pitt's Administration," signed "R." | B |
| p. 3 | "Emigration to America," unsigned (as are all the following unless signature is given) | A |
| p. 3 | "paragraphs" - 5 inches (unless otherwise noted, this term refers to humorous, scattered-italic paragraphs only) | A |

Tuesday, June 30, 1801:

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|--------|
| p. 3 | "What is Jacobinism?" long article | A plus |
|------|------------------------------------|--------|

Wednesday, July 1, 1801:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| p. 2 | "Glorious Words," signed "R." | B |
| p. 2 | "paragraph" - 3/4 inch | A |
| p. 2 | three satirical paragraphs, no excessive italics (Fenwick's?) | C |
| p. 3 | "paragraphs" - 12 inches | A |
| p. 3 | paragraphs lacking italics - 2 inches | C |
| p. 4 | news item - ostensibly from China (to be subject of comment by "R.") | B |
| p. 4 | "paragraph" - 2 inches | A |

Thursday, July 2, 1801:

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|---|
| p. 2 | "paragraphs" - 7 inches | A |
| p. 3 | "paragraphs" - 4 1/2 inches | A |

(Friday, July 3, 1801 - MISSING)

Saturday, July 4, 1801:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| p. 2 | satirical paragraph lacking italics | C |
| p. 2 | "Ho-xeno and the Grand Impostor," signed "R." | B |
| p. 2 | "P-----y Reform" (a "paragraph") | A |
| p. 3 | "paragraphs" - 5 inches | A |
| p. 4 | "Mr. Pye's Alfred," satirical note, scattered italics, on Poet Laureate | A |

Monday, July 6, 1801:

- | | | |
|------|----------------------------------|---|
| p. 3 | theatre notes - 3 inches | C |
| p. 3 | "Consolidated Fund," signed "R." | B |

- p. 3 quotation from Bolingbroke, with commentary B
 p. 3 note on the death of Lord Petre B

Tuesday, July 7, 1801:

- p. 2 "Consolidated Fund," signed "R." B
 p. 2 "paragraphs" - 2 inches A
 p. 2 "The Late Lord Petre," extended obituary A
 p. 3 social and theatrical notes - 2 1/2 inches C

Wednesday, July 8, 1801:

- p. 2 "John Horne Tooke," a tribute A
 p. 2 "Consolidated Fund" (unsigned) B
 p. 2 "paragraphs" - 4 inches A
 p. 2 "Love Letters!" A
 p. 4 "paragraphs" - 3 inches A

Thursday, July 9, 1801:

- p. 1 "Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners in Scotland ...
 by John Stoddart, L. L. B.," book review A
 p. 2 "Consolidated Fund," signed "R." B
 p. 4 Report of Randal Norris's wedding of July 8 - 1/2 inch B

Friday, July 10, 1801:

- p. 2 "Theological Controversy," signed "M." B
 p. 2 theatrical items - 3 inches C
 p. 3 "The Love Letters of the Marquis of Blandford," excerpts
 from book or pamphlet, with commentary A

(End of Bath *Albion* run)

Of course, Lamb may have written some of the "straight" copy beyond what I have suggested above (rated "C," in general), but this would be impossible to identify. Nothing that I have left unlisted bears any indication that he did.

The article I find most interesting, and most certainly his, follows in full. It shows Lamb for the first time writing a serious essay entirely on a political subject. As alleged sympathizers with enemy France, "Jacobins" were by implication little less than traitors; the term was bandied about as freely in Lamb's day as "communist" recently in ours. "Mr. Fox," if anyone is in doubt, is Charles James Fox, leader of the Whig opposition.

WHAT IS JACOBINISM?

We were led into the train of thoughts which follow, by the circumstance of having been amused with a *parrot*, which a bookseller in Pall-Mall has taught to cry *Jacobin* to the passers by. We suddenly found *ourselves* accosted with this opprobrious epithet, and not perceiving at first the source from which it came, were inclined to be angry, and resent the injury; but we laughed heartily, when we discovered, that the voice proceeded from this

green goose, which the ingenious bookseller had instructed to become the vehicle of his own party spleen. It brought us to reflect, what were the common grounds and motives, upon which *men*, not more discriminating than this *parrot*, were led to bestow the uncivil language of party, and brand better men than themselves with Jacobinism. After all, *what is Jacobinism?* These men have set up an universal *idol*, or *idea*, under that name, to which they find it convenient to refer *all evil*, something like the *Manichean principle*. To define the boundaries and the natures of human action, to analyse the complexity of motives, to settle the precise line where *innovation* ceases to be *pernicious*, and *prejudice* is no longer *salutary*, is a task which requires some thought, and more candour. It is an easier occupation, more profitable, and more fitted to the malignant dispositions of these men, violently to force into *one class*, modes, and actions, and principles *essentially various*, and to disgrace that *class* with one ugly name: for *names* are observed to cost the memory and application much less trouble than *things*. *Jacobinism* originally designated a faction of men, who from France newly republicanized, desired to introduce their own improvements, as they thought, among the surrounding nations, at the expence of rooting up of ancient usages, prejudices, and the forms *politie* of old and hoary prescription. Among those who entertained sad apprehensions of the motives, the energies, and the probability of success, of these men, *Jacobinism* naturally became a word of reproach: at least, the propriety of the bare and confined application of it none could deny. - In fact, the *Jacobin Club* had been its own godfather, and christened itself with the name, which it could not blame its adversaries for *adopting* with some degree of asperity. *Names* often associated with hostile and unpleasant feelings, in turn engender and augment those feelings, and the *thing* Jacobinism began to be disliked for the *name* of *Jacobin*. All this was natural, and in the every day course of allowable political warfare. But a *name* was an advantage, not so easily to be exhausted, or so confinedly to be limited. It became, like *John* or *Peter*, general appellatives of vast classes of men, differing *in toto* in all else but the appellation. Was a man of penetrating and almost *prophetic* reach of mind, gifted like Mr. Fox, with a correspondent kindness of soul, desirous to put a stop to the idle waste of blood, in the mad attempt to thrust a code of distasteful principles down the reluctant throat of a Great Nation; the hireling writers of the day had their cue given them, and the exalted name of Mr. Fox was unnaturally and basely leagued with the invidious opprobrium of Jacobinism. Did a man, like Mr. Godwin, of long views, and an ardent thirst for the amelioration of his species, who in exulting visions of the *possible future* sought repose for his mind, wearied and fatigued with the consideration of the *actual state* of mundane affairs, did such a man, in an amiable enthusiasm of speculation, trace in the accelerating operation of a grand principle, a *time*, when vice, and error, and misery, "with all their disgustful circumstances, as they now exist in the world, shall be ultimately thrown off, of (*sic*: or?) the burden greatly diminished; when man shall cease to *walk in a vain show and to disquiet himself in vain*;" did he seek to hasten the progress of these "days of greater virtue and more ample justice," which, as he believes, are to "descend upon the earth," by no violence, by nothing but the silent operation of principle, and trusting to the unarmed and naked truth? *he* too came under the convenient name of *Jacobin*. The author of *The Pursuits of Literature* tuned the *pitch pipe*; the yelping *treble*, and the growling *bass*, of Porcupines, True Britons, and Anti-Jacobin Reviewers, took up the note, and the respectable name of Dr. P---, and the *once* respectable name of Mr. M---h, were not ashamed to be found *hallooing* and encouraging the pack. But the instances we have chosen were distinguished characters, *nomina memorabilia*,

intellectual *Goliaths* [*sic*] against whom these dextrous *Davids* might be allowed to hurl the sharpest stones in their artillery[;] had large views, and ample theories of benevolent purpose to mankind, which these men had neither the mind to *grasp*, nor the soul to *embrace*; their only alternative was to *depreciate*. But what shall we say to their malign attacks upon persons and objects most *foreign* to politics? upon *Methodist meetings*, where the religion or superstition of devout men resort to have their fires *kindled*, and their imaginations *entertained*, and their passions *fed*, with more intense fires, with more earnest appeals, and more highly seasoned food of rhetoric, than they can find in the *cold manner*, and *colder matter*, of established preachers? upon *Sunday schools*, where the children of poor people receive the alms of a little more knowledge, and a little more morality (for is it not a *little*?) than they could otherwise attain, as society is sadly constituted? upon the Unitarian Christian, who believes a little *less*, and the zealous Calvinist, who believes a little *more*, than themselves? upon *Sunday newspapers*, which disseminate among the lower orders of men some knowledge (not to be otherwise attained) of the state of public affairs, of the conduct of men in office, in which they are so deeply concerned; and, *what is more valuable*, by representing the daily occurrences of domestic events, births, and deaths, and marriages, and benefits, and calamities, and sad accidents of individuals or families, with all the multitudinous "goings-on of life," teach their readers to be *men*, by the link of human interest, and human passion, to human affairs; transferring their rude and partial domestic feelings over a wide range of sympathy with *strangers* and persons *unknown*, which is reflected back with accumulated intenseness upon that charity which they are to manifest in relationships *which they do know*: add, that the poor man finds his *consequence* increased, and himself to be *something* in the "list of men," when the power of judging, and reasoning, and censuring public measures, and private actions, is put into his hands. And who would grudge to the poor a consequence so *imaginary*, and an importance so *harmless*, which in some sort repays him for what he is liable to suffer by the insolence of wealth, and assumptions of men in office? But he who *reads*, and he who *vends*, Sunday Prints, is alike branded with the calumniating name of *Jacobin*, and *profane*, and *Atheist*; by scurrilous Ministerial Papers, and abusive sermons. What is religion? is it grimace, and talk, and a solemn face of *abstraction*, which enters not into human interests? or, rather, does not a great part of it *consist* entirely of human interests, the *nil humani alienum* so beautifully expressed by *Terence*? - and what promotes this generous feeling more strongly, than that *humane* and *virtuous curiosity*, which *accounts* of public and private *accidents* in *histories* and *newspapers* (the poor man's *history books*), both excite and satisfy? Are the duties of prayer and attendance upon sermons at all slackened or weakened by the man's having access in the intervals to a newspaper? Ridiculous! as if the assertors themselves of this idle calumny absolutely confined themselves on the sabbath to praying, preaching, and psalm-singing! as if *they* never employed themselves in the profane *intervals* of that day with enquiries and discussions of the affairs of *individuals*, for the purpose of curiosity or *malevolence*!

We have not yet exhausted the *hundredth* part of subjects and persons, upon whom this unattaching and stupid accusation of *Jacobinism* has been flung. The judge of *military* tactics, who, judging on *scientific* principles, has discovered, that Bonaparte or Moreau are fine and accomplished *Generals*; that man is a *Jacobin*. The man, who, appreciating accurately the awful

talents, which are required to conduct at a delicate crisis the affairs of a great nation, pauses before he can believe, that a Mr. Add*ngton, or a Mr. P*bus, is competent to the task; he is a *Jacobin*. To enumerate one tythe of instances would exhaust our readers and ourselves: since, in a word, *all* persons, and *all* things, to which these calumniators are *hostile* (and what can bound or describe the *infinite* malice and hostile feelings of hatred and calumny, or *count the number of their dislikes?*) these are *Jacobins* and *Jacobinical*. Not content with *living* names, they persecute and spoil the *dead*, with whom man should *not war*; and pass sentence of *Jacobinism backwards* upon such men as Milton, Sidney, Harrington, and Locke. It is sufficient, that these benefactors to mankind sought the happiness of their species in *ways which they cannot understand*. We have heard of *general lovers*, though we dislike the character: but these men are a sort of *general haters*, and discredit and cry down, at random, all that is *new*, and *good*, and *useful*. - *The Albion, and Evening Advertiser*, Tuesday, June 30, 1801, p.3.

My reasons for attributing this article to Charles Lamb are as follows:

We know that Lamb himself had been attacked as a Jacobin (see my article in the October, 1975, *CLB*). We have not hitherto known his response to this attack, but on several other occasions he reacted strongly to criticism - as in the "Letter to Robert Southey." The Jacobinism article, it may be objected, is not at all in the later Elia vein, except for the story of the parrot, which does strongly suggest Elia the antihero, victim of schoolmasters, married people, and musicians, as well (I think) as impertinent birds. But we know that Lamb had been working hard at his Burton imitations in 1800 and would publish them in 1802. What the essay above *most* resembles is the style of argument of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, simplified and modernized only a little for the contemporary theme and audience. If we look at "The Londoner" in its early form (1802: see footnote above), we note that it also shows the Burton influence and scattered italics.

The curious scholar must look at the *Anatomy* itself - almost anywhere - for examples of lengthy exposition. In the matter of style I have room for only two brief excerpts. From *The Anatomy* (London, 1838, p. 111): "This material *melancholy* is either simple or *mixt* - offending in *quantity* or *quality*, varying according to his place, where it setleth, as brain, spleen, mesaraick veins, heart, womb, and stomach..." And from "Curious Fragments" (Lucas's *Lamb Works* I, 35): "Chiefly I noted the coffin to have been *without a pall*, nothing but a few planks, of cheapest wood that could be had, *naked*, having none of the ordinary *symptomata* of a funerall, those *loculari* which bare the body having on diversely coloured coats, and *none black* ..." No wonder the *Albion* essay sounds so involuted, old-fashioned, and complex in an age when the plain style for journalism was already taking hold! Would Fenwick or Fell have written in this manner? I think Lamb was playing a kind of game as to style, to prove he could get "Burton" into the daily press after all. But he also had the deep and serious intent of defending Godwin and all who were unjustly defamed.

Now to look at the text more closely. First, there is the Burton-style scattered italic already discussed. Second, while the rest of the *Albion* issue is well paragraphed, the author has given his long piece only one break, very close to the end - as in Lamb's long description of the failure of Godwin's tragedy *Antonio* (*Works* II, pp.292-94), where there is no paragraphing for

two solid pages. Like Burton, Lamb often cared not a whit for paragraphing.

Third, the author of "What Is Jacobinism?" early relates anti-Jacobin behavior to "the Manichean principle" - a reference to the ancient Christian heresy. We know from his letters that Lamb took seriously to religious studies between 1796 and 1798, and thought deeply about religious philosophies. Would Fenwick have used such an image? Later in the piece there is a warm defense of Dissenters. We know Lamb considered himself a Unitarian and was sympathetic to Quakers. Would Fell or Fenwick have felt so strongly on this score?

Fourth, "Porcupines, True Britons, and Anti-Jacobin Reviewers" - the pro-government press - were logical devils for Lamb, who had himself felt the sting of the *Anti-Jacobin* as weekly and monthly. (The then Tory William Cobbett's *Porcupine* recurs in Lamb's probable *Albion* contributions.)

Fifth, Lamb was now so close to Godwin as to have provided prologue and epilogue for his failed play, *Antonio*. We know Lamb hated Mackintosh ("Mr. M---h"). Dr. Samuel Parr ("Dr. P---"), also once Godwin's close friend, had now also denounced him publicly, in his "Spital sermon" of April, 1800. (Fenwick, of course, might well have defended Godwin, but Lamb had equal motivation.)

Sixth, Lamb cared deeply about the lives of the English poor, from which he himself was not so far removed: note his description of the pauper's funeral above. And he had a year earlier written, in similar vein, "A Ballad Noting the Difference of Rich and Poor." Seventh, Lamb (like Godwin and Fenwick) was sympathetic to Fox - see, for example, the letter to Manning of "Mid-November, 1802," in which he indicates disagreement with Coleridge's attack on Fox. Addington, also mentioned in the article, was the new Tory Prime Minister and subject of a later epigram by Lamb - a mild one. Charles Pybus ("Mr. P*bus") was one of Pitt's Lords of the Admiralty and reluctant brother-in-law to Sydney Smith.

Yet more impressive evidence of Lamb's authorship is the fact that every one of the *literary* allusions is to be found mentioned in Lamb's letters or essays as authors or works with which he was familiar. They are evidence, too, of greater learning in English literature than we suspect in John Fenwick. Here they are, with the relevant references to Lamb's writings: *The Pursuits of Literature* (by Thomas James Mathias, a long contemporary poem containing attacks on Godwin and Wollstonecraft, among others) - see Lamb's letter to Coleridge of October 28, 1796; Terence - see "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago"; Milton - any number of references: one to his *Traactate on Education* in "The Old and the New Schoolmaster"; Sidney - "Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney"; James Harrington, author of the Utopian *Oceana* (1656) - "Oxford in the Vacation" ("- or, with Harrington, framing 'immortal commonwealths'"); John Locke - "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago" ("as would have made the souls of Rousseau and John Locke chuckle to have seen us"). All except the first author were familiar denizens of Lamb's richly populated interior world.

But the clearly decisive factor, when added to all of these indications, lies in a few items of phraseology, here given in ascending order of importance. "The *Jacobin Club* had been its own godfather, and christened itself with the name" has to me a strong ring of the later Lamb's imagery, as does his musical characterization of the Tory press. "The multitudinous 'goings-on of life'" were what Lamb loved about *London*, as he so often said in similar terms. But further - Mary Moorman (in *William Wordsworth: The Early Years*, p. 499) points

out that "goings-on," in the favorable sense of *activity*, is "a phrase beloved by both Wordsworth and Coleridge." Wordsworth used it in an early version of *Michael* in 1800, and twice in *The Prelude* of 1805; it must have been common currency among all *three* Romantics at the time.

Finally, and most persuasive of all, comes in the last sentence the expression "*general lovers*" as opposed to "*general haters*." Lamb had been working on *John Woodvil*, the tragedy rejected by Drury Lane, for several years now. In a forest scene, Simon Woodvil says, "I have known some men that are too general-contemplative for the narrow passion. I am in some sort a *general lover*" (Lamb's italics). (Note also, in the essay's last sentence, the use of the word "sort.") Margaret, the heroine, asks Simon what it is that *he* loves, and he responds with a few charming lines beginning, "Simply all things that live..." Lamb published this passage of blank verse in the periodical *Recreations in Agriculture* for November, 1800, under the title "The General Lover." That Lamb did not consider *himself* a general lover becomes clear in the essay "Imperfect Sympathies," in which he debates the point with Sir Thomas Browne, whose expression of sympathy with "all things" is quoted as preface to the piece. "For myself," says Elia, "... I hope it may be said of me that I am a lover of my species ... but I cannot feel towards all equally" - and this, of course, is the theme of "Imperfect Sympathies." In *John Woodvil* Margaret answers Simon in Lamb's voice: "I myself love all these things, yet as with a difference: - for example, some animals better than others," and so on.

I believe that the final sentence of "What is Jacobinism?" could not have been written in *The Albion* in 1801 by anyone but Charles Lamb. "What is Jacobinism?" spells out his thoughtful political insights at the age of twenty-six, not abusively but with calm and reasoned clarity (once we accustom ourselves to his "Burton" style - what did his readers make of it?) and throws illuminating light on convictions that were never to leave him. As his earliest published essay known to us it contributes, too, valuable information on his development as a writer. For out of the "inexperienced essays, the first callow flights in authorship" grew the mature work of the "established name in literature," some of whose early flights we now examine for the first time.

Note: "What Is Jacobinism?" has been proofread by the present author.

(To be continued)

OBITUARY

Mr A J Ford died suddenly on October 29th. He was a Foundation Member, and until he left London he was a very active member of the Society. Those of us who can remember the plays presented by the C L S Dramatic Group will recall with pleasure Mr Ford's contributions both as actor and dramatic critic. He was a Corresponding Secretary from 1948 to 1956 writing to Provincial and Overseas Members to keep them in touch with the Society, and he was also a member of the Council. We missed his pleasant company when he retired to Essex but we were able to meet him at the Bi-Centenary Luncheon in 1956. To his wife Kathleen we extend our sincere sympathy in her great sorrow.

F S R

THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY: its History, Aims and Activities, 1935-1956

Ernest G Crowsley

This paper had been intended for issue as a pamphlet in 1956, but did not appear. It was read to the Society, in default of the annual Crowsley Memorial Lecture, by Miss Florence Reeves on 2 October 1976. Let it be noted that the tenses and references are those appropriate to 1956.

History

The Centenary of Charles Lamb's death fell in December, 1934, and during a visit of the Bookman Circle (of which Mr E G Crowsley was a member) to Chiswick in the autumn of that year, the foundation of a Charles Lamb Society was suggested as being appropriate. A letter under the signature of E G Crowsley appeared later in *The Times* asking anyone interested in the suggested Society to communicate with him. The gratifying response resulted in a meeting being held on Friday, 1st February, 1935, in Essex Hall (*Elia* records that Aunt Hetty worshipped there) with Mr Walter Farrow in the Chair. In spite of certain dismal forebodings by some present as to the future success of such a Society, it was resolved that the Society be formed. Mr Walter Farrow was elected Chairman, and Mr E G Crowsley who had been responsible for the initial arrangements was made Hon. General Secretary. A provisional committee was entrusted with the task of formulating the objects and rules of the Society, and these were confirmed at the first ordinary meeting held on 11th March, 1935. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch became the first President and held that office until his death in 1944, when he was succeeded by Lord David Cecil who resigned in 1955, to be followed by Prof. Geoffrey Tillotson /MA, B Litt/. Mr J Lewis May and Prof. Edmund Blunden have been Vice Presidents since the foundation of the Society, and Prof. Basil Willey and Prof. E Leslie Griggs are existing additional Vice Presidents.

Objects of the Society

The objects of the Society originally laid down are as under and these are still the essential aims of all members:

- 1 To study the life, works and times of Charles Lamb and his circle.
- 2 To stimulate the Elian spirit of friendliness and humour.
- 3 To undertake from time to time the publication of papers which may be read before the Society.
- 4 To form a collection of Eliana.

Meetings

To give effect to the first object of the Society, viz the study of the life, works and times of Charles Lamb and his circle, arrangements were made for meetings of members, once a month during the winter period, when papers dealing with some phase of Charles Lamb would be read either by a wellknown figure in the literary world or by a member of the Society, such addresses to be followed by discussion and thus stimulate Elian interest in every way. During the summer, monthly visits to places with Elian and literary interest were to be arranged.

The first monthly meeting was held on 11th March, 1935, at the Chequers Restaurant, Essex Street, Strand, London, when an address on Charles Lamb was given by Mr Vincent Armstrong who was a member from 1935 until his

death in / ? /. This was the forerunner of meetings arranged each winter for the past twenty-one years, and many famous contemporary speakers have freely given of their knowledge and experience for the benefit of members and to the honour of Charles Lamb. Members of the Society have also read papers on specific characteristics of Charles and Mary Lamb and their friends, and much useful research has thereby come to light. Not the least interesting meetings are what might be called Members' Meetings at which short papers are given by more than one speaker: provincial and overseas members have also contributed papers on these occasions.

During the Great War the Society continued its meetings which, in spite of aerial reverberations, were well attended and much appreciated. One such meeting was held in the afternoon of 10th May, 1941, at the Chequers Restaurant in Essex Street; the same evening this building with its lovely old rooms was a heap of dust.

Another disastrous incident was the destruction of Christ Church in Newgate Street, London, yet the bronze centenary memorial bust of Charles Lamb fixed in an alcove on the outside of the building was miraculously undamaged. It was removed to Christ's Hospital at Horsham for safe keeping. The bust had been executed by Sir William Reynolds-Stephens, Past President of the Royal Society of British Sculptors, and its conception arose at a meeting of the Elian Society*, a special public appeal being signed by Sir James Barrie, Mr E V Lucas and Mr Edmund Blunden. It was unveiled by Lord Plender on 5th November, 1935, followed by a service in the Church with an address by Mr H L O Flecker, MA, then Headmaster of Christ's Hospital.

No. 2 Crown Office Row in The Temple, Lamb's birthplace "scene of my kindly engendure" also suffered destruction from bombs.

There have for various reasons been changes in venue for meetings over the years; meetings on Monday evenings are now held in Dr Williams's Hall, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1 commencing at 7.0 pm, and on Saturdays in the Library of the Mary Ward Settlement, 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1 commencing at 2.45 pm. The atmosphere at these meetings truly exemplifies the second object of the Society, e.g. to stimulate the Elian spirit of friendliness and humour, for much geniality and friendly conversation is plainly evident there. Social evenings have also been held from time to time bringing members into closer contact with one another in the same social atmosphere.

*A forerunner of the Charles Lamb Society was the ELIAN SOCIETY founded in 1925 by that enthusiastic Elian, the late Mr F A Downing. One of its Rules stated: "The ELIAN shall consist of not more than 59 men, whose aim shall be to promote genial intercourse among themselves, and do honour to the memory, works and example of CHARLES LAMB." The members met on the first Tuesday in each month at 7.30 pm at the OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE, Little Essex Street, Strand, London for supper, followed by a talk and discussion on some appropriate Elian subject, concluding with a toast to The Immortal Memory. These convivial evenings continued until April 1940 after which activities were suspended owing to war-time difficulties. The membership at that date numbered 28, but alas! the Elian has not been revived. The Presidents, in successive order, were Augustine Birrell, J P Collins, E C Fache and J G Wilson, with E J Finch as Vice President, and S M Rich as Hon. Secretary and Treasurer. Many of the members joined the Charles Lamb Society adding thereto their Elian knowledge and enthusiasm.

Visits to Places of Elian and Literary Interest

During the summer months visits have been paid to places associated with Lamb and his circle, and also to others of literary interest even if the connection with Lamb is rather slight. Among many such visits has been one to Christ's Hospital, Horsham, in May 1939 when a memorial plaque to Charles Lamb was unveiled by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch: the plaque was the work of the Hon. Gilbert Coleridge, a great-great-nephew of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and was presented by him to the Society. Other visits of Lamb interest have been to the Temple, to Islington and Colebrook Cottage, to Enfield and the Chase Side houses where the Lambs lodged with the Westwoods, to Edmonton and Lamb Cottage in Church Street where they lived from 1833 to December 1834 when Charles died, and to Edmonton Churchyard where their graves are; also to Blakesware and to Widford Church where Lamb's "Grandame" sleeps; to Button Snap that cottage which once belonged to Charles Lamb and which was sold by him for £50 in 1815; to Mackery End the scene of his visits to cousins, so vividly described in *Elia's* essay *Mackery End*; to Christ's Hospital School for Girls at Hertford; to Cambridge and its scenes of *Oxford in the Vacation*. Many others of lesser Lamb interest have been included in the various summer programmes. Several of a particularly pleasureable kind were to "Falaise", Welwyn, Herts, the residence of the Chairman, Mr Walter Farrow, when he and Mrs Farrow dispensed hospitality in their delightful garden in the summer sun.

The Annual Charles Lamb Birthday Celebration and Dinner

It was only natural that the Society would honour Charles Lamb in some outstanding annual form, and a Birthday Celebration Dinner came to be accepted as a suitable method of doing so, and at which a Toast to "The Immortal Memory" could be proposed, to be held on the Saturday nearest to Lamb's birthday 10th February.

The first Dinner to be held was on 10th February 1936 when Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, President of the Society, was the Guest of Honour, and in his address he stressed the wonderful heritage of Lamb's writings and the example of his most gentle life, a memory to be kept green. The Rt Hon. the Lord Plender was the Guest of Honour on 10th February 1937 and described himself as a wayfarer into Lamb's delectable country, there to find quieting influences, happy companionship, lively but not unkind humour, true chivalry, sensible advice, wise counsel. On the 10th February 1938 Mr Frank Swinnerton in proposing the Immortal Toast stressed the fact that Lamb's friends were all remarkable characters and not mere boon companions, some of them among the greatest writers of their time. The Celebration in 1939 took place on 11th February with the Rt Hon. Viscount Finlay as Guest of Honour who, in sympathy with *Elia's* "Old Benchers" praised Lamb's love of London, of sundials, of fountains; *Imperfect Sympathies* and *Dream Children* were his favourite essays. Mr Samuel Morris Rich, the then Editor of the *Bulletin* was the Guest of Honour on 18th February 1940, and referred to Lamb's gift for cultivating the finer aspects of private life - love, friendship, kindness, hospitality, humour and tolerance.

During the war years owing to food rationing and blackout conditions the former evening Anniversary "Dinners" were transformed into afternoon "Tea parties", and it was not until February 1950 that the former Anniversary Dinners were resumed. Yet the change in no way restricted the geniality and good humour of the participating members, indeed it reinforced their desire to pay homage to the "Immortal Memory", come what might!

To give details of other important Addresses given by notable Guests at the Anniversary Celebrations would occupy more space than can be allotted; mention ought perhaps to be made that the President, Lord David Cecil, was Guest of Honour in 1945, 1949 and 1952. In 1954 a break with tradition was made when it was decided that a lady should be Guest of Honour: Miss Helen Darbishire, MA, who has added so much to the knowledge of the Wordsworths and their writings, gallantly accepted and gave a delightful talk on Dorothy Wordsworth. Prof. Geoffrey Tillotson who was elected President in September 1955 was Guest of Honour in February, 1953.

The Bulletin

The third object laid down for the Society's guidance was "to undertake from time to time the publication of papers which may be read before the Society". From the beginning it was realised that the meetings, necessarily held in London, would be usually attended by members residing in the Metropolitan area. To retain the interest of members in the provinces or overseas it would therefore be necessary to acquaint them with the activities of the Society and with some particulars, though condensed, of papers read. *The C L S Bulletin* was the outcome, to be distributed periodically to all members. The first issue was in May 1935 in roneo duplicated form which continued until June 1941 when it was provided in printed form. Herein are recorded for interest and future reference reports of meetings, fixtures for the summer and winter sessions, names of new members, reviews of books received, obituary notices, bibliographical details of references to Charles and Mary Lamb in books, newspapers and periodicals, and other items of Elian interest or varied activities of the Society. Articles specially contributed have also been included from time to time to add to the interest of the *Bulletin*. For several years the value of the *Bulletin* was enhanced, without cost to the Society, by the inclusion of supplements of particular interest to Elians. In general, the *Bulletin* is the principal propaganda medium of the Society and has proved its value. The 100th number was published with appropriate comment in March 1951.

The first Editor was Mr Samuel Morris Rich who retired in December 1947 owing to ill-health; he was succeeded by Mr H G Smith. Mr Rich unfortunately died suddenly in August 1949 to the great regret of all members.

Membership

In the first three months of the Society's life the membership rose to 75, and by the end of June it was 100: progress steadily continued and at the present date the total number of members is between 450 and 500. Although the majority of these reside in the United Kingdom the membership has a world wide distribution, as will be seen from the following: United States of America 56, Canada 11, New Zealand 8, and smaller numbers in Australia, South Africa, France, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Singapore, Jamaica and West Africa.

Of course Father Time keeps swinging his scythe among the ranks of mortal men and women, but to compensate almost every issue of the *Bulletin* contains the names of new members. Happily there are still with us 39 members who joined in 1935.

Corresponding Secretaries

As a means of preserving the continued interest of members in the work of the Society two Corresponding Secretaries were appointed in January 1945 whose duty was to correspond periodically with provincial and overseas

members; this number was increased to four in January 1948, a suitable quota being allotted to each. The result has fully justified the experiment and replies received from members shew keen appreciation of the chatty and personal letters they receive from time to time.

The Dramatic Group

At the end of 1945 it was decided to form a Dramatic Group within the Society for the reading of plays by or on Lamb or referred to by him, and eventually for the presentation of such plays. The first reading to be undertaken was *The Man without a Foe*, a play by Phyllis G Mann (first broadcast by the BBC in February 1945). Since that time much success has followed the activities of the Group, and the following plays have been produced for members and friends only at various small theatres:

July 1946	<i>The Wife's Trial</i> by Charles Lamb
November 1947	<i>The Pawnbroker's Daughter</i> by Charles Lamb
January 1948	<i>A Convivial Evening at Charles Lamb's</i> by F V Hallam
October 1948	<i>Charles and Mary</i> by Joan Temple
March 1949	<i>What a Lass (Fanny Kelly)</i> by Basil Francis
April 1950	<i>Mr H... A Farce</i> by Charles Lamb
April 1951	<i>Chinese Crackling</i> by Basil Francis
April 1952	<i>She stoops to conquer</i> by Oliver Goldsmith
March 1953	<i>Charles and Mary</i> by Joan Temple
April 1954	<i>Harriot</i> by Basil Francis
October 1955	<i>The Magpie or the Maid</i> by Isaac Pocock

Many readings from appropriate plays and poems of Lamb interest have been held to the infinite pleasure of the participants. This activity of the Society is worthy of commendation and is open to any member who has a liking for amateur dramatics. The Group is admirably served by Miss Edna Philpot, the Hon. Secretary, and Miss Annette Park is the accomplished producer whose work has brought so much success and enjoyment to the presentation of every play and reading.

Branches of the Society

Branches of the Society were formed in 1946 in Bradford and Glasgow for the benefit of members in those localities and they functioned with success for some time. Unhappily deaths of members and removals put a brake on their usefulness and towards the end of 1952 further activities were postponed until more favourable conditions prevailed.

The Society's Library

After the formation of the Society in 1935 items of Eliana gradually accumulated and in October 1935 the Edmonton Libraries Committee agreed to accommodate the Society's collection in the Central Library, Fore Street, Edmonton, in the care of the Chief Librarian Mr F E Sandry, a member of the Society, and from whom any particular book could be borrowed. As the years went by gifts of books from members and other donors flowed in and a catalogue was issued in January 1949. Substantial gifts arrived as under:

- a) J M Turnbull Collection. Mr Turnbull of Pretoria, South Africa, became a member in 1947 and bequeathed his valuable collection of Eliana to the Society. He died in June 1950 and his collection was received by the Society in 1952. This includes many first editions and a set of the *London Magazine*.
- b) E J Finch Collection of Prints, etc. Mr E J Finch, a member from 1935, possessed a remarkable collection of hundreds of prints, engravings,

sketches, etc. illustrating Lamb's writings, his friends and contemporaries and the period, each item being suitably endorsed as to its original reference. In 1952 he donated his collection to the Society, a valuable gift.

- c) The George Wherry Collection of Eliana. Annual Charles Lamb Dinners were held in Cambridge in the years 1909-1914, and Dr George Wherry was largely responsible for the organisation of these functions - accounts of the Dinners are contained in his book *Cambridge and Charles Lamb* published in 1925. Dr Wherry before his death naturally gathered together much Eliana. In April 1951 his daughter, Mrs Oldfield, gave this Collection to the Society: it includes menu cards and correspondence connected with the Cambridge Dinners, twelve water colours by Paul Braddon of "Haunts of Charles Lamb", a portrait in oils of Mary Lamb by F S Cary, and many other items.
- d) The Samuel Morris Rich Collection. The most substantial addition to the Society's Library was the Samuel Morris Rich Collection of Eliana. Mr Rich, who was the founder Editor of the *Bulletin*, Vice Chairman and later Vice President, was an inveterate collector of Lamb from his youth, and eventually his Library contained about 750 items. At his death in 1949 the collection was bequeathed to his son Mr Sydney F Rich, who in turn generously gave it to the Society as a memorial to his father. Apart from the numerous editions, and volumes by other authors concerning Lamb's life and writings, there are twelve volumes of cuttings from newspapers and periodicals, and what is important these are all indexed in a final volume, a veritable mine of information for the research worker and of enormous general interest.

The Charles Lamb Room at Edmonton Central Library

The Society naturally desired a permanent home for its Library, and Edmonton, where Charles Lamb lived for about eighteen months before his death in December, 1834, was inevitably the most suitable location. Negotiations were entered into with the Edmonton Libraries Committee for a room to be set apart as a Charles Lamb Room in the Central Library in that Borough. With their willing co-operation and with financial assistance from the Society this was accomplished in 1955 when the Charles Lamb Room was officially opened on 10th September. The room is tastefully decorated with appropriate shelving and bookcases, and provides a quiet retreat for browsing and for research by Lamb students. The fixtures, etc., were provided from a handsome donation from Mr T Edward Carpenter as a memorial to his brother Gilbert. The Chief Librarian, Mr F E Sandry, will willingly help anyone desiring to see and use the collection there, at present comprising about 1600 items.

For the benefit of members attending the meetings on Monday evenings at Dr Williams's Hall, Mr S K Jones, the Society's other Hon. Librarian, makes available a representative selection from the library for issue on loan. These are housed in a bookcase provided as a memorial to Mr E F Lewis who was Hon. Treasurer from January 1938 to January 1946: he died in May 1946 and the bookcase was unveiled in January 1947.

Button Snap

In the Elian essay *My First Play* Lamb recounts how "I came into possession of the only landed property which I could ever call my own...three quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst." This was in August 1812 and the "commodious mansion" was a small thatched cottage named Button

Snap inherited by him on the death of his godfather Francis Fielde, the oracular oilman of Holborn. Lamb kept it until February 1815 when he sold it for £50 to Thomas Greg, and Elia continues "the estate has passed into more prudent hands." It remained in the Greg family until 1927 when Mrs M Greg presented it to the Royal Society of Arts. Having given up the care of historical buildings the Royal Society offered the cottage to the Society, and in 1949 the property was purchased. Tenants were immediately forthcoming, and it was let to Mr and Mrs Cocksedge who now occupy the cottage, which has become a real and beautiful home to them. The Society is proud to have been the means of preserving the only landed property that once belonged to Charles Lamb, though he never lived in it.

The cottage is in excellent condition, and members can pay a visit there on prior intimation to Mr and Mrs Cocksedge.

There was already a plaque on the outside of the cottage provided by Mrs Greg bearing the following inscription:

From the 21st August 1812 To 25th February 1815
This Cottage and Garden of "Button Snap"
was the property of CHARLES LAMB, The Essayist,
ESSAYS OF ELIA. "My First Play."

On 25th September 1954 another plaque of similar design with inscription as under was provided by the Society and unveiled:

This Cottage was acquired from the
Royal Society of Arts
by the
Charles Lamb Society
And dedicated to Elia's Memory
3rd September, 1949

Lamb Cottage, Edmonton

Charles and Mary Lamb moved from Enfield to Bay Cottage (now called Lamb Cottage) in Church Street, Edmonton, in May 1833 to enable Mary to be under the care of Mrs Walden. Charles Lamb died there on December 27th 1834. Members of the Society have visited the Cottage on several occasions, and it is still a pleasant house. On representations from the Edmonton Borough Council - encouraged by the Society - the house has been included in the List of Historical Buildings under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, which will ensure its preservation from extensive structural alteration or demolition.

Grave of Charles and Mary Lamb, Edmonton Parish Churchyard

Charles and Mary Lamb were buried in Edmonton Parish Churchyard not far from Lamb Cottage. For some years the upkeep of the grave and tombstone was paid for by Mr E V Lucas, and under the provisions of his will (he died 26th June 1938) he directed his friend Mr C W Berry to continue the upkeep from certain proceeds of his estate. Mr Berry who died in 1941 in his will gave to the Council of the Almoners of Christ's Hospital the sum of £200 to be invested, the interest to be applied for the perpetual upkeep of the grave. The Society periodically inspects the grave and communicates with Christ's Hospital if necessary.

Mary Field's Grave at Widford

Charles Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field, the "Grandame" of his poem, was

buried in Widford Churchyard, and the Society undertakes the care of the grave.

Exceptional Gifts to the Society

As previously mentioned the Society has received many gifts of books, pamphlets, prints, etc., from time to time. One other interesting item received deserves mention, e.g. from Mr S E Winbolt, MA, the Charles Lamb Silver Medal awarded to him in 1886 when a Grecian in the Newgate Street premises for the best English Essay. The medal bears a striking profile relief of Lamb in his early manhood, and the reverse shows the school's motto and arms, and around the edge is engraved the winner's name with the date 1886. Mr Winbolt was later a Classics Master at Christ's Hospital after its removal to Horsham. In 1920 he published an anthology linked with Christ's Hospital, *Coleridge, Lamb and Leigh Hunt*, which include representative selections from their writings with a biographical record of the trio - in many ways the most illustrious group in Blue Coat annals.

Elian Booklet No. 1

In 1950 the Society published *Elian Booklet No.1* entitled *Charles Lamb and Emma Isola*, a study by Dr Ernest Carson Ross, a member for many years, of the relationship between Charles Lamb and the adopted daughter Emma Isola. During recent years some writers have raised doubts as to whether Charles Lamb's attitude to Emma was more than paternal; Dr Ross assembles the facts, the reader can draw his own conclusions, but the evidence favours the line that the relations were nothing more than normal.

* * * * *

Such are the main features of the Society and its activities during the past twenty-one years; there were anxious times during the war period but the Elian spirit and the desire to honour Charles Lamb prevailed, and in addition, as Prof. Edmund Blunden puts it:

"We have had incomparable devotion on the part of men and women inspired by his memory to undertake the constant labours needed by so large and active a Society."

A happy Society.

A Final Word (Miss Reeves says: "I think contributed by Mr H G Smith")

As compiler of the foregoing information it is one's bounden duty to place on record the outstanding services rendered to the Society by Mr Walter Farrow as Chairman, and Mr E G Crowsley as Hon. General Secretary, from its foundation to the present time. Mr Farrow has brought a long business experience to the consideration of all matters raised at meetings of the Council, and his shrewd and wise counsel have been of immense help. Mr Crowsley initiated the first meeting at which the Society came into existence, and as Hon. General Secretary has brought to his task pertinacity and a nice judgment in arranging speakers for the monthly meetings, whilst detailed arrangements necessary for all activities of the Society have been meticulously made without thought of the labour and anxiety often entailed. May they both be long with the Society.

BOOK REVIEW

Claude A Prance: *The Laughing Philosopher* London: Villiers Publications, 1976 £4.50

P hilosophy and gentle humour
R eviews, and 'books on books' -
A ll these make up his shelve'd room. A
N atural charm from Selbourne's nooks
C onsidered, calm; my friends -
E ssays like these can cheer us all.

Acrostical constraints (even if we do baulk at Claude and A) should have no place when we pay tribute to our member's latest collection of essays - a modern 'Friendship's Offering', and a nice illustration of the universal links which literature can build between men. Reading this volume makes me regret not having met the man - why did I join the Charles Lamb Society just when the author was removing to Malta?

The material covers a wide field within his sub-title "Books, Booksellers and Book Collecting" - Gilbert White, Lamb (of course), Hood and Peacock; also names less well known to me - Capern, Edward Thomas. This book has the merit that it makes one want to read and to re-read, to sample the new, and to go back to the old. I cannot resist commenting on the glorious circularity of some books on books, for example, Prance writes well on the 'Retrospective Review', which is itself a series of book-reviews, some of the books reviewed in it being reviews of books (if you see what I mean!).

I do not feel I can praise this book more than by saying that I cannot imagine any of our members who are wise enough to obtain and to read it, being disappointed. I have said enough - now to re-read the essay on Lamb's illustrators, and to compare his notes with my volumes, and no doubt, as always when one picks up *Elia*, to re-read the Essays themselves. I hope and believe that this reaction of mine would give pleasure to Mr Prance.

D G Wilson

MISS KATHLEEN COBURN

We announce with pleasure that Miss Kathleen Coburn, the eminent Coleridge scholar, has accepted the Council's invitation to become a Vice-President of the Society.

Miss Coburn has devoted her life to Coleridge, and her edition of the Notebooks is now in its later stages. She is also General Editor of *The Collected Coleridge*, initially sponsored by the Bollingen Foundation and now in process of publication by Princeton University Press and Routledge. Many of the Coleridge scholars are members of The Charles Lamb Society, but we are especially honoured to have Miss Coburn as a Vice-President and welcome this new evidence of the imperishable link between Coleridge and Lamb.