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CHARLES LAMB'S "GOLDEN YEAR"

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The first of Charles Lamb's essays signed "Elia" appeared in *The London Magazine* in August 1820 and they continued until 1825. Perhaps the best of them were printed in the magazine during 1821 and, although some of these had undoubtedly been written at the end of the previous year, 1821 has been described by E V Lucas as Lamb's "Golden year". It may be interesting, therefore, to review the events of that year, particularly those which concerned Charles Lamb and his friends and acquaintances, while also mentioning occurrences which he may have seen or heard discussed.

The Prince Regent had come to the throne in the previous year as George IV and the Tory Liverpool Ministry was in power. There were few events abroad likely to cause much discussion in the Lamb circle, except perhaps the start of the Greek War of Liberation, but domestic activity was rife. Measures were afoot for the relief of the Catholics hitherto under disabilities, but no doubt most people's attention hovered around the Coronation of George IV and the attempts of Queen Caroline to attend it, establish her rights as the wife of the King of England and be crowned as the Queen.

This year the Royal Society of Literature was founded; Sir Humphry Davy was President of the Royal Society and Sir Thomas Lawrence President of the Royal Academy. With ephemeral reading matter the Metropolis was well supplied, for it is recorded in Sir Richard Phillips's *Chronology* that in 1821 no less than 13 quarterly and 103 monthly works were regularly published in London, while there were 21 Sunday papers. In the north of England the *Manchester Guardian* was started this year.

Among the minor domestic events, Sir Richard Phillips also notes that a swift conveyance was established between London, Manchester and Liverpool by which two horses ran eight mile stages at the rate of twelve miles an hour; while a Mr Kent of Glasgow invented a machine for walking on the surface of the water at the rate of three miles an hour. During the year gas lights were introduced into nearly every town in Great Britain.

Some of the monthly events are given below under the month in which they occurred:

JANUARY 1821

*The London Magazine* was published on the first of the month and the first item in January was Lamb's essay "New Year's Eve". As he wrote "No one ever regarded the First of January with indifference", but the rather melancholy air of the essay brought some comments from readers. John Scott, the editor of the *London*, possessed the power to draw from his contributors some of their best efforts, and in addition to Elia he was able to print William Hazlitt's "Table Talk" essays, number VI of which "On the look of a gentleman" appeared in January. Scott, himself, wrote much for the

magazine and Lamb praised his contributions. Others whose work appeared this month included B W Procter, Allan Cunningham, Horace Smith, George Croly and P G Patmore, later to become the father of Coventry Patmore.

On January 2 Lamb's old friend, Henry Crabb Robinson, went to Covent Garden to see Sheridan Knowles's tragedy "Virginius" with Macready in the title role. He was pleased with the great actor generally, but was critical of his handling of the last act. The play had been first performed in 1820 and Lamb had written verses to the author printed in the *London* in September 1820. J H Reynolds had written a prologue to the play and "Barry Cornwall" an epilogue. Since audiences of this time were not contented with merely one play, "Virginius" was followed by the Pantomime left over from Christmas. Grimaldi, the famous clown, was now appearing at Covent Garden.

Also on January 2 Lamb wrote from India House to Robert Baldwin, the senior partner of Baldwin, Cradock & Joy, the publishers of the *London*, to thank him for a draft for £20 as payment for essays, and he expressed himself well satisfied, while taking the opportunity to praise the work of John Scott. The next day Leigh Hunt's journal *The Indicator* included a short piece "Holiday Children" which has sometimes been attributed to Lamb by his editors, but Mrs Vincent Novello, the wife of Lamb's musician friend, was the writer.

Another of Lamb's friends, B R Haydon, had just returned from a visit to the north where he had dined with Sir Walter Scott on Christmas Day. Now Scott was writing to him with details of Scottish history and costume for Haydon's pictures.

On January 8 Lamb wrote to Procter asking for orders for his play "Mirandola". This was staged at Covent Garden with Macready, Charles Kemble and Miss Foote and ran for sixteen nights. On the same day Lamb wrote to Dorothy Wordsworth and complained that he is suffering from the festivities of the season; he says his essays are praised in magazines, newspapers and the minor reviews. He concludes with the amusing, but fallacious, information on Mrs Smith "the biggest woman in Cambridge" which he later repeated in his sketch "The Gentle Giantess".

The next day he and Emma Isola, who had been staying with the Lambs for Christmas, wrote a joint letter to Emma's aunt, Miss Humphreys. It tells of seeing wild beasts at Exeter Change, a party on Twelfth Night and a visit to Covent Garden with Mary Lamb to see "The Antiquary" and the Grimaldi pantomime of "Harlequin and Friar Bacon."

Although Charles Lamb may not have been greatly interested in church architecture, it is probable that the fine new church opened on January 14, St Dunstons-in-the East in Lower Thames Street, could scarcely have escaped his attention. The original church was very ancient, but had been pulled down with the exception of the steeple and re-built between 1817 and 1821. The steeple, which still stands, although the church was bombed during the war, is one of the most beautiful in London, for Wren supported the lantern on four ribbed arches, rather like flying buttresses. They give it a look of delicacy, but it is very strong. Lamb had lamented the removal of the clock from St Dunstons, but this was the other church in Fleet Street, St Dunstons-in-the West.

This month a new magazine *John Bull* was started. It was published by Henry Colburn and edited by Theodore Hook and was of no very high standard. Thomas Creevey writing in January 1821 said "Its personal scurrility exceeds

by miles anything ever written before." It occasionally mentioned authors but usually with sweeping condemnation. Another magazine of a very different character which is likely to have appealed much more to Lamb was *The Retrospective Review*, Volume III of which appeared this month. In it James Crossley, who later was to meet Lamb, wrote on Thomas Fuller's *Holy & Profane State*, W J Fox on *The Life of Sethos*, Basil Montagu on Bacon's *Novum Organum* and there were articles on Godfrey of Bulloigne, Herbert's *Poems*, Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier* and Chapman's *Plays*, all of interest to Charles Lamb.

The first play Charles Lamb ever saw in his childhood was "Artaxerxes" and on January 18 it was again produced at Drury Lane with Mary Ann Wilson making her debut as Mandane and Madame Vestris playing the male lead. Miss Wilson was a success in this opera, but one which she did not maintain.

Crabb Robinson was reading Washington Irving's *Sketch Book* this month, although it had been published first in 1819. He thought the essays were unequal but he liked "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle". A few days afterwards he read Lamb's "New Year's Eve" essay to Flaxman, while the artist was drawing, but with some doubts, for Robinson deplored its "unreligious" aspect. Later in the month he read Procter's "Mirandola" but was disappointed.

Towards the end of January Byron in Ravenna was writing to John Murray, the Lord Chamberlain and Thomas Moore, to try to stop the stage production at Drury Lane of his tragedy "Marino Faliero". He maintained that the play was quite unfit for stage presentation, as it was. Elliston had, however, got an advance copy of the play and in spite of a partial injunction from the Lord Chamberlain, he persisted and finally produced the play later in the year.

Charles Lamb wrote to Miss Humphreys on January 27 about Emma's return to Cambridge and tells her that Emma "has been a very good girl...with certain limitations" and adds that he wishes to cure her of making dog's ears in books and pinching them on "poor Pompey." On the same day Lamb wrote to Talfourd inviting him for the evening and saying he expected Liston after the play. This month the compiler of *Moore's Almanac* died - the sales had been 430,000 annually.

## FEBRUARY

Lamb's contribution to *The London Magazine* this month was "Mrs Battle's Opinions on Whist", while Hazlitt's "Table Talk" essay "On Reading old Books" was one of his best; in it he takes the opportunity to praise Keats. Other contributions were mostly as in January, but with some verses by Bernard Barton, who was later to become a friend and correspondent of Lamb. This month the magazine had bound in an eight page Statement by John Scott, the editor, on his quarrel with *Blackwood's Magazine*. Early in February Lamb wrote to him to thank him for a copy of the Statement and to say he heartily agreed with Scott's views of *Blackwood's* knavery.

During 1820 John Scott had written in the *London* several articles criticizing *Blackwood's* practice of first praising and then denouncing an author. In November 1820 he had written "their work forms the most foul and livid spot, indicative of an accursed taint in the literature of the day." He wrote again in December calling *Blackwood's* "The Mohock Magazine". The eventual result of the quarrel was that Scott was visited by Jonathan Christie, acting as second for J G Lockhart, thought to be one of the

editors of *Blackwood's*. A challenge to a duel was issued, not by Lockhart but by Scott demanding satisfaction from Christie. This took place at Chalk Farm on February 16 when Scott was fatally injured: he lingered for a few days but died on February 27. Scott's second had been P G Patmore while James Traill acted for Christie.

While tragedy was rife for one of Lamb's acquaintances, another was struggling with difficulties of a different kind. John Howard Payne, the American actor and dramatist, was in prison in London, but nevertheless was able to translate from the French a play which became his "Thérèse". This reached Elliston's hands and the manager planned to bring it out at Drury Lane. Payne managed to leave prison in disguise so that he could attend rehearsals and the play appeared on February 2 and ran for thirty-one nights. Crabb Robinson called it "the best and most affecting melodrama I have ever seen". Both Fanny Kelly and James Wallack were in the cast.

During the month George IV made his first State Visit to Drury Lane. He was accompanied by his brothers, the Dukes of York and Clarence and they saw "Artaxerxes" followed by John Poole's farce "Who's Who". Crabb Robinson tried to get in to see the Command Performance but failed owing to the crowds.

On February 21 Leigh Hunt's *Indicator* contained two short pieces "Old Maids" and "Mrs B" which have been rather dubiously attributed to Charles Lamb by William Macdonald, the 20th century editor of his works. On the same day Crabb Robinson bought at Sotheby's for nine shillings Raphael's "Planets" engraved by Dorigny. After dinner with the Colliers, Robinson took the print to Lamb, but Charles did not seem impressed with it. Hazlitt, who had quarrelled with Robinson, was also there, but the diarist records that they all played whist.

February 23 was a black day for England for John Keats died in Rome where he had gone, attended by the faithful Severn, to try to prolong his life.

John Martin's "Belshazzar's Feast" was his most famous picture. It had been painted in 1820 but in February 1821 he exhibited it at the British Institution. It attracted so much attention that it had to be railed off and the exhibition was extended so that more people could see it. The picture was much praised by the critics, although T G Wainwright, writing in *The London Magazine*, could say little in its favour. Charles Lamb saw the picture which was exhibited for some time. In a letter to Bernard Barton in June 1827 he was somewhat critical and he wrote again on it in his essay in *The Athenaeum* in 1833 "Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in the Productions of Modern Art". Martin also exhibited in 1821, at the Royal Academy, his picture "Revenge", but Lamb does not seem to have commented on this.

On February 14 Leigh Hunt's *Indicator* reprinted Lamb's "Valentine's Day" from *The Examiner* of 1819. At the end of January and again this month the *Indicator* had some playful paragraphs on Lamb's Elia pseudonym. A letter from John Clare this month to John Taylor, the publisher, records the dangers of an editor, for he tells that Drakard of the *Stanford News* had been beaten with a stick by a disgruntled reader.

In addition to the plays already mentioned, James Wallack appeared in Richard III at Drury Lane this month. Covent Garden had "Twelfth Night" and "Don John or the Two Violettas", a play based on Beaumont and Fletcher, with Charles Kemble, Miss Stephens and Liston. Liston also appeared in

"High Life Below Stairs" and delighted Crabb Robinson.

### MARCH

*The London Magazine* contained Lamb's "A Chapter on Ears", as well as a further essay in Hazlitt's "Table Talk" series, while Cunningham, Darley, Barton, Patmore, Procter, Talfourd and Horace Smith were all represented. The editorial section was dated February 26, the day before Scott died, and refers to the duel and the editor's unavoidable absence. On March 2 and 3 the Middlesex coroner held an inquest on Scott at Chalk Farm and a jury gave a verdict of "Wilful Murder against Mr Christie, Mr Traill and Mr Patmore". The latter immediately fled to Calais.

The Queen was very much in the public's eye this year owing to her quarrel with the King. At a charity concert at the Mansion House on March 1, patronized by the Queen, 2,300 people attended, more to see Her Majesty than to listen to the music. The same day the inhabitants of Fulham presented Alderman Wood with a silver vase for his attachment to the cause of the Queen, popular feeling being much in her favour; during the year many addresses of loyalty were presented to her.

Crabb Robinson called on Mary Lamb on the morning of March 3 and found Charles lamenting John Scott's death. They discussed the vacant editorship of the *London* and that Talfourd was thinking of applying for it, but Charles did not think it compatible with his profession as a barrister. In the evening Robinson again visited the Lambs and played picquet with Mary while Charles read.

On March 7 B R Haydon entertained a party to breakfast in his studio, consisting of Sir Walter Scott, Charles Lamb, Wilkie and Procter, and he records that they had a most delightful time. Scott was not then known officially as the author of the Scotch novels, but on a reference to *Waverley* all looked expectantly at him, but Procter says his command of his countenance was perfect. It was after this party that Haydon recorded in his *Memoirs* his view of the differences in character between Scott and Wordsworth, very much to the latter's detriment. "Scott is always cool and very amusing; Wordsworth often egotistical and overwhelming."

A few days later Haydon spent an evening with Mrs Siddons to hear her read "Macbeth". She had retired from the stage by then, but often gave readings and filled her audiences with awe. Haydon says "She acts Macbeth herself better than either Kemble or Kean" and he gives an amusing account of her starting to read again after a break for tea, when all the men slunk back to their seats, their mouths full of toast which they were afraid to bite, and of Sir Thomas Lawrence trying to bite by degrees for fear of making too much crackle, his eyes full of water from the constraint.

*The Morning Chronicle* of March 9 contained a poem "The Repair of St Paul's" which although it was unsigned was from Lamb's pen. The last eight lines were later reprinted in *The Examiner* and included the following:

"Knock, and it shall be open'd," saith our Lord;  
"Knock, and pay two-pence," say the Chapter Board.  
The showman of the booth the fee receives,  
And God's house is again a "den of thieves."

On March 15 John Scott was buried in a vault at St Martin's Church, London. The hearse was followed by fifteen or sixteen mourning coaches and seven private carriages and the streets were crowded to see it pass.

The Lambs were at Dalston by the middle of the month and on March 15 Charles

wrote to Mrs William Ayrton inviting her to a rubber of whist when they returned to Great Russell Street. The last issue of Leigh Hunt's *Indicator* appeared on March 21. Two days later Edward Bulwer, aged 18, sent his manuscript poems to Dr Samuel Parr for his comments.

A pleasing note is struck by an entry in Tom Moore's diary about his beloved Bessy. On March 25 he wrote "This day ten years we were married, and although Time has made the usual changes in us both, we are still more like lovers than any married couples of the same standing I am acquainted with."

On the last day of the month the *Morning Chronicle* published an appeal for subscriptions for John Scott's family. A committee of eight had been formed to deal with the appeal, among whom were Sir James Mackintosh, Francis Chantry, Dr Darling, Horace Smith and Robert Baldwin. A list of subscribers was given and the appeal was subsequently reprinted in the *London Magazine* and *The Times*. Among those contributing were Baldwin, Cradock & Joy, publishers of the *London*, who gave £60, Horace Smith £21, John Braham £5.5s., Taylor & Hessey £5.5s., W C Macready £5 and Charles Lamb £10.

This month Ugo Foscolo, now living in London, printed his "Essay on Petrarch" in a magnificent limited edition of sixteen copies, each of which had a special printed dedication to the various recipients. William Cobbett was starting on his greatest period of literary activity this month. William Hone also published an account of John Hunt's trial for a libel on the House of Commons.

At Covent Garden this month Richard III was produced with Macready, and Talfourd writing in the *London Magazine* in April, remarked that it was according "to the text of Shakespeare." He pointed out that both Charles Lamb and Hazlitt had protested at the interpolations of Tate and Cibber, and it was good to see the original text again. Other plays at this theatre were "The Stranger" and "Love in a Village". At Drury Lane there was "Conscience, or the Bridal Night". The Lyceum had Charles Mathews in "Country Cousins" which seems to have been highly entertaining, at least Crabb Robinson thought so. Rossini's "La Gazza Ladra" was performed at the Kings Theatre, Haymarket, where Lamb's friend, William Ayrton, was then stage manager. Madame Vestris sang in this opera.

#### APRIL

Charles Lamb had no less than four contributions in the *London Magazine* this month. "All Fools' Day" appeared first in the journal, others were "A Quaker's Meeting", "The Confessions of H.F.V.H. Delamore Esq" and a Sonnet "They talk of time...". The publishers were in some difficulty over the death of their editor and perhaps Lamb sent extra items to help. One to whom they turned for assistance was Hazlitt and he may have done some sub-editing for them, although his only known contribution was his usual "Table Talk" essay. The other contributors were mostly as usual. Procter wrote on the death of Keats and the magazine reprinted Byron's letter to John Murray on "Swimming across the Hellespont".

On April 3 Robert Southey wrote to his friend Grosvenor Bedford saying that the King had read his "Vision of Judgement" twice and that he was much gratified by the dedication and pleased with the poem. Hartley Coleridge was given a hint by his mother to praise his uncle's poem and writing to his brother, Derwent, he says he thinks he did pretty well by saying it was not the *best* of Southey's poems. He adds "Seriously speaking, our late

lamented Monarch did not deserve such an insult to his memory." John Drinkwater writing in 1925 called it "the supreme example of inflated banality in English verse." One would hope that George IV's poetic taste was better than his representative led Southey to believe.

At the Old Bailey on April 13 the trial of Christie, Traill and Patmore took place. The two former pleaded not guilty and Patmore was absent. The jury retired for only half an hour and then returned a verdict of "Not Guilty", there being insufficient evidence to identify the prisoners with the occurrence. This was the usual verdict in trials for duelling.

On Saturday, April 14 Sarah Burney, James Burney's daughter, was married to her cousin, John Thomas Payne, at St Margaret's, Westminster; the bride's cousin, the Rev. Charles Parr Burney officiated and the Lambs attended. Charles has given an amusing account of it in his essay "The Wedding" printed in the *London Magazine* in June 1825. Sally Burney when a little girl in 1803 went with her parents and the Lambs to the Isle of Wight, and Charles remarked on her liking for codlings, as he said "no ordinary orchard would be a jointure for her." John Payne was a bookseller in business with Henry Foss in Pall Mall. T G Wainwright was a distant relation of the bride and it is probable that he was also present at the wedding.

On April 18 Lamb wrote to Leigh Hunt about a tentative invitation to spend Good Friday at Hampstead, but Charles asked to be excused as Mary had a cold and they both needed rest.

Byron's play "Marino Faliero" was published by John Murray on April 21 and on April 25 Elliston succeeded in putting it on at Drury Lane in spite of Byron's refusal, but the Lord Chamberlain's injunction delayed its production for a few days afterwards.

Charles Mathews, the actor, had formed a famous collection of theatrical material, about which Lamb was to write in the *London* in October 1822. On April 26, 1821 James Perry, the editor of *The Morning Chronicle*, sent Mathews two manuscripts for his collection, one was the part of Nell in Coffey's "The Devil to Pay" in the handwriting of Mrs Siddons, and the other the part of Aubrey in Cumberland's "The Fashionable Lover" marked by Barry for his own study. Perry was well known to Lamb, who used to play blind man's buff with Perry's daughter. Mathews and Lamb were to meet for the first time later in the year.

One event of considerable interest to Lamb occurred this month. Baldwin, Cradock & Joy had been left without an editor for their *London Magazine* when John Scott died. They were helped by several contributors, but their efforts were fraught with trouble and they decided to sell the magazine. Purchasers were found in Taylor & Hessey and an agreement was signed on April 26 for the sale of the magazine for £500 beginning with the July issue, although they probably were acting as editors before then. They too needed an editor and those considered included Hazlitt and H F Cary, but finally John Taylor assumed the editorship himself.

Sally Payne and her husband were now in Milan on their honeymoon and on April 26 or 27 her mother, Sarah Burney, wrote to her and mentioned that she and Sally's aunt, Sarah Harriet Burney, had dined with the Lambs a few days before. Sarah Harriet was the author of "Country Neighbours" and Lamb had written a sonnet to her on the tale in 1820. "Mrs Battle" describes Lamb's party where she saw Vincent Novello, Talfourd, Hazlitt's wife and

son and Leigh Hunt. Of the latter she said "I thought by the drapery of his trousers he had petticoats on."

This month at the theatres, in addition to Byron's "Marino Faliero", Drury Lane produced "Jane Shore" and "Giovanni in London" - James Wallack being a performer in these plays. At Covent Garden "Venice Preserved" was revived and other plays were "Undine" with Farley, "Virginius" with Macready and Charles Kemble, and "The Duenna" with Miss Hallande and Miss Stephens, whom when singing together, Hazlitt described as like a pair of nightingales.

Hazlitt's *Table Talk* volume was published this month comprising essays, some of which were taken from the *London Magazine*. A new one "On People with One Idea" gave a portrait in which Leigh Hunt recognized himself and it described some of his friends. After giving some of Hunt's traits Hazlitt concluded that such people "are, in fact, in love with themselves, and like lovers, should be left to keep their own company." Leigh Hunt protested by a letter to Hazlitt on April 20. Hazlitt replied immediately maintaining that he had no quarrel with Hunt and the tone of his letter was such that the latter was mollified.

#### MAY

*The London Magazine* opened with Procter's "A May-day Dream", followed by Hazlitt's continuation of John Scott's "Living Authors" series - No.V on Crabbe. Charles Lamb contributed "The Old and the New Schoolmaster", Hazlitt also had No.X of his "Table Talk" series and a review of Byron's *Marino Faliero*; there was a review by Talfourd of the recently published *Table Talk* volume and a dramatic sketch by Mary R Mitford. The editorial Lion's Head section contained a note assuring a correspondent that "The Confessions of H F V H Delamore" in the previous issue were "the writer's own story", that is, Lamb had told of his own confinement in the stocks at Barnet.

On May 1 Lamb wrote to Coleridge thanking him for an invitation to dinner at Gillman's a few days later, partly to meet Charles Mathews. Next day he wrote to Gillman asking him to find beds for Mary and himself in Highgate for the night. The dinner took place on May 4 and Coleridge and the Mathews waited anxiously for Elia's arrival, the actor acquiring in the meantime for his collection of autographs, the two letters Lamb had written about the function. The Lambs arrived not very punctually, and Mrs Mathews has recorded her impressions in her *Memoirs* of her husband. She was the half sister of Fanny Kelly and they had expected to be impressed, for Coleridge had praised Lamb much to them, too much perhaps, for their first impressions were disappointing. Lamb realizing that he was being exhibited took some delight in being perverse, as Mrs Mathews said 'he became impracticable'. She adds, however, "We knew him better in after-time and coveted and loved his society."

On May 5 B R Haydon called on Francis Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, and found him preparing to have his face cast. Sydney Smith was also there and when Jeffrey's face was covered with plaster he tried to make him laugh. Smith's comment was "There's immortality! but God keep me from such a mode of obtaining it." Also on May 5 Napoleon died on St Helena from cancer of the stomach and the funeral took place on the island four days later.

Early in the month the Burneys stayed at Richmond with James Burney's niece, but they returned to London on May 15. Evidently Lamb was not yet aware of the sale of the *London Magazine* for on May 7 he wrote to Robert Baldwin



asking for space for his contribution and time to complete it until May 18. A famous short note from Lamb to T G Wainwright, which Mrs Anderson dated May 11, referred to John Clare and H F Cary. "The *Wits* (as Clare calls us) assemble at my Cell (20 Russell St, Cov-Gar) this evening at  $\frac{1}{2}$  before 7. Cold meat at 9. Puns at - a little after..." On May 16 Crabb Robinson spent the evening at the Lambs and played whist. He says "Played with Hazlitt, and we now speak a little."

May 19 and 20 saw the sale at Christie's of a collection of pictures by Sir Joshua Reynolds which produced £15,000. Haydon went to the sale and persuaded George Phillips to buy for 400 guineas Reynolds' "Piping Shepherd", a picture about the excellence of which Northcote expressed some doubts the next day to Phillips' chagrin.

On May 22 Lamb wrote to the proprietors of the *London* to say he should be away from East India House for three or four weeks holiday, and in fact went to Margate.

Covent Garden this month produced "The Tempest" with Macready, Miss Foote and Miss Stephens, "The Provoked Husband" with Fawcett, Miss Foote, Emery and Charles Kemble, "Romeo and Juliet" and "She Stoops to Conquer" with Fawcett and Kemble. Drury Lane had "She Would and She Would Not" with Harley and Madame Vestris. Charles Mathews was active in his project for establishing a monument to Shakespeare.

#### JUNE

*The London Magazine* opened this month with Hazlitt's essay on the Pope controversy between Byron and Bowles. Charles Lamb's essay was "My Relations", other contributors were as usual, but there was a poem from John Clare, probably his first appearance there. This month Thomas Hood became sub-editor of the *London*. He was well known to Taylor, who had worked for the firm of Vernor & Hood in his early days and Taylor was happy to repay some of the kindness he had experienced from the poet's father.

On June 1 the freedom of the City of London was presented to Messrs Denman, Brougham and Lushington, the advocates who had represented the Queen. The City seems to have been fairly firmly behind the Queen and it will be remembered that Lamb wrote verses to Alderman Wood on his championship of Her Majesty.

The Lambs were at Margate in June and Charles was "spoiling his holiday", as he tells John Taylor, writing a review of Hazlitt's *Table Talk*. He declined Taylor's request to write on Midsummer Day; the idea of this may have followed from Procter's "May-day Dream" in the May issue of the magazine. While at Margate the Lambs were invited by Charles Cowden Clarke, who was staying at Ramsgate with his parents - his father, John Clarke, who had been Keats's schoolmaster; had retired to the Isle of Thanet.

On June 5 Shelley in Italy wrote to Mr and Mrs Gisborne that he was writing a poem on the death of Keats and on June 8 he told Edmund Ollier he could announce it for publication and it was entitled "Adonais". He had it printed in Pisa later in the month, a small quarto in blue paper wrappers.

Sir Walter Scott wrote to Thomas Frognall Dibdin on June 13 to thank him for a copy of his *Bibliographical and Antiquarian Tour of France and Germany*. Dibdin had asked Scott to convey it "to the author of Waverley". Scott was still not officially recognized as the author, and he replied that these splendid volumes would travel no farther than his own library. On June 16

Scott's friend, John Ballantyne, died. With his brother, James, he had a half share in the book selling business, Scott holding the other half.

Later in the month Scott wrote to Richard Heber, the book collector, inviting him to visit Abbotsford. Heber had been styled by Scott as "Heber the Magnificent, whose library and cellar are so superior to all others in the world." Heber, who was half-brother to the Bishop of Calcutta, was elected in 1821 as a representative in Parliament for the University of Oxford.

On June 20 Mary Mitford had started to write her drama "The Two Foscari", although it was not published for some years. Her friend and correspondent, B R Haydon, was in difficulty this month having been arrested for debt, although not without unusual features not uncommon with Haydon. The sheriff's officer was invited to enter the artist's painting room in which was exhibited his large picture of "The Raising of Lazarus". When the bailiff saw this he exclaimed "Oh my God! Sir, I won't take you." In the attorney's office later he repeated this and added "though I am liable to pay the debt." So much was he impressed by Haydon's picture.

Charles Lamb wrote to Taylor about this time (Mrs Anderson dates the letter June 30) to thank him for the poem "Epistle to Elia" by Charles A Elton, which Taylor seems to have sent to Lamb in manuscript, for it was not printed until it appeared in the *London Magazine* in August 1821 over the signature "Olen". Elton mildly lamented the lack of religious feeling he thought he read in Lamb's "New Year's Eve" essay, and in his letter Lamb excuses himself. Here he also tells Taylor that the name Elia should be pronounced "Ellia" and adds that the original James Elia, now dead, was an Italian clerk at the South Sea House when Lamb worked there many years before.

This month the Horace Smiths left London to visit the continent, their avowed object being the "economy, pleasure and the acquisition of French and Italian literature." Smith had intended joining Shelley in Italy, but unfortunately Mrs Smith became ill and they eventually settled at Versailles.

At Covent Garden on June 8 Macready played "Hamlet" for his benefit, but the critics did not like him. He also played in "Damon & Pythias" with Charles Kemble. On June 29 Crabb Robinson went to Covent Garden to see "The Tempest" and didn't like it. What he saw was the Davenant-Dryden version which had been "improved" from Shakespeare's text and included a sister for Miranda and a young man who had never seen a woman. Robinson found even the splendour tedious and said that Macready laboured through his part monotonously. At Drury Lane a rival production of "Hamlet" was seen with Mrs Glover as Hamlet; also at this theatre Mrs Bland appeared in "Artaxerxes".

Lamb's friend, James Burney, had the pleasure this month of seeing in print his little book of eighty-seven pages, *An Essay by way of Lecture, on the Game of Whist*. It was printed for the author by John Ebers, the bookseller who was also the lessee of the Opera House in the Haymarket. Undoubtedly Lamb must have read his friend's book with great attention and probably had a presentation copy from the author. It is pleasant to know that it appeared in the same year as Lamb's "Mrs Battle" essay.

(To be concluded)

## CHRIST'S HOSPITAL IN LAMB'S TIME AND MY OWN

Frank Ledwith

"The Religious, Royal and Ancient Foundation of Christ's Hospital. May those prosper who love it, and may God increase their number."

That is the time-honoured toast, used whenever old pupils - "Old Blues" - get together. It is extraordinary how little the school changed *in its essentials* in the 140 years between Lamb's time and mine. In the late 1700's there were, as far as I can check, some 700 boys and 300 girls. In the 1900's it is 800 boys and 300 girls. And still it is a school which preserves its tradition and purpose intact, when many other foundations have radically changed.

Throughout the period, and right up to this year, no child was admitted unless its parents or guardians needed help with its education. Parents with an income above a very moderate figure have not been able to get their children in by any means. Fees have been nominal, or nothing, and cover clothes, as well as board and tuition. For me, in 1918, my father paid £30 a year. It is a proud tradition, maintained since 1552, when the City of London, spurred by King Edward VI, saw the beginnings of three "hospitals", Christ's Hospital as a shelter for the innocent and fatherless, St Thomas's for the sick, and Bridewell for the idle and homeless poor.

Some things have changed. One that has not (or not much) is closely linked with the whole tradition and ethos of the school. The school uniform proclaimed its Tudor origin. As I wore it, it was an ankle-length navy-blue coat of heavy worsted, so close-woven as to be almost weather-proof. Slit up the front to the waist; the upper part lined with yellow baize; a row of metal buttons down the front, showing the Royal founder's portrait. Beneath this, black breeches, buttoned at the knees, and deep yellow stockings. The coat set off by starched cotton bands at the neck, worn on top of each other, not alongside like barristers and some clergy, and fastened (out of sight) by safety pins to the neckband of a buttonless cotton shirt.

Charles Lamb wore the same, except in three respects. He wore a small round black cap (which was abandoned in 1858), and under the blue coat a yellow petticoat. This also disappeared soon after. He also, I presume, wore black shoes with a shining metal buckle. They were phased out in 1918, and I got some of the first black lace-up shoes.

Lamb also records that in his day Grecians (the top form) had certain distinctions in dress. In my time, too, they had 14 buttons on their coats instead of eight, and turned-back, velvet-lined cuffs.

In "Recollections of Christ's Hospital", Lamb speaks of the effect of this dignified and unusual garb in helping to form the distinctive character of the Christ's Hospital boy. "There is pride in it," he writes, "and there is a restraining modesty, from a sense of obligation and dependence... All this proceeds, I have no doubt, from the continual consciousness which he carries about with him of the difference of his dress from the rest of the world." He is a religious character, says Lamb, and he has a strong sense of right and wrong.

When I visited the school last year, I found one characteristic Lamb mentioned as being still very marked, even in this lax and characterless age. The boys are polite! It really was a pleasure to mix with them and speak with them.

Much else has changed, on the surface and at deeper levels. Most important perhaps is the teaching. Coleridge is the best known authority for the teaching when he and Lamb were there. (*Letter to Thomas Poole*):-

I arrived in September 1782 in the second ward, and in the Under Grammar School. There are 12 wards or dormitories, and five schools - mathematical, grammar, drawing, reading and writing. Boys are admissible from 7 to 12 years of age.

Two or three times a year the Mathematical Master beats up for recruits for the King's boys, as they are called, and all who like the navy are drafted into the Mathematical and Drawing Schools, where they continue until 16 or 17 years of age, and go out as midshipmen, and schoolmasters in the navy.

The boys who are drafted into the Head Grammar School remain there until 13; and then, if not chosen for the University, go into the Writing School.

He also speaks of the division of those fit for classical studies, and those who at 14 or 15 will be apprenticed as a clerk or whatever else his turn of mind or fortune shall have provided for him.

Leigh Hunt, in his *Autobiography*, writes:-

I was shown three gigantic boys, young men rather (for the eldest was between 17 and 18) who, I was told, were going to the University. These were the Grecians. They were the three head boys of the Grammar School.

The next class to these, like a College of Cardinals to these three Popes, were the Deputy Grecians.

The Grecians were deep in Sophocles and Euripides. /The Deputy Grecians/ were thought equally competent... concerning Homer and Demosthenes."

And Charles Lamb writes characteristically in a *Letter to George Dyer in 1832*:-

Writing to you or Coleridge, besides affection, I feel a reverential deference as to a Grecian still.

Thus, the basic curriculum was reading, writing and grammar, leading to classics for some, and for those in the Royal Mathematical School, mathematics especially slanted towards navigation. But most of the boys probably left the House at 13 or 14 to jobs in commerce, shops, counting-houses and the like.

By 1918 the situation was very different. Some of the old names were preserved, Grecians, Deputy Grecians, and below them forms called Great Erasmus and Little Erasmus. However, the curriculum had been changed and widened enormously. There was a vertical division down the school, with two teaching groups, Classical and Modern. The classical side studied Latin and Greek, as well as English, history, geography, mathematics and French. The modern omitted the ancient languages in favour of German, science and for some engineering. "Grecians" could still specialise in Greek and Latin, but also in English, modern languages, history, science, mathematics or engineering. I myself finished as a "Matha Dep," a Deputy Grecian like Charles Lamb, and perhaps for a similar reason. Where he had a speech defect, I was clumsy and very short-sighted. Like him, I never lost my awe of the

splendid Grecians.

There was also in my time an agricultural form, which studied and practised farming (and produced good farmers), and for a term I was in one of two commercial forms, which took bookkeeping and shorthand - an experiment quickly abandoned.

Was it a good education? Excellent, I think. Most of the school sat the London Matriculation examination, a necessary preliminary for a university place. Almost no one failed. It was considered a disgrace to do so. The school had a fine record for winning scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge.

The minimum leaving age was 16.

Games played a big part, mainly cricket in summer and rugby football in winter. When the school owned 1200 acres, there was no lack of pitches, over 20 for rugby and 40 for cricket. This of course was very different from Lamb's days, in the Newgate Street courtyards, inside the locked gates. He writes of leapfrog and "basting the bear", and of days swimming in the New River. Elsewhere it is said that Coleridge spent many hours gazing out of a window, or lying on the roof looking at the sky.

Perhaps the diet did not encourage violent sports in Lamb's day. Coleridge, in the *letter to Thomas Poole*, describes the regime in detail, bread, some bad small beer for breakfast, meat only four days a week, and no vegetables. "Excepting on Wednesdays, I never had a bellyfull," he wrote.

In my time the food was much better. In my first year, it was ex-army cooks, with coarse but fairly plentiful meals. Stew three times a week. Boiled puddings of a remarkable stodginess - and beware the "greasy endy"! Later, a lady superintendent in the kitchens improved things greatly, as the school doctor, Dr Friend, worked out his experiments on schoolboy diet. His researches were later the basis for the special children's rations in World War II. We even had sausages for breakfast occasionally, and sometimes lettuce and fresh apples. Meals were varied and usually attractive, but when the tuckshop opened, there was still a rush for something filling, like doughnuts, for our tuppences.

Food also brings in the question of "Housey slang". Edmund Blunden's book *Christ's Hospital* devotes five pages to listing this specialised slang. It seems now to be dying out, but to me, as to Charles Lamb, bread was "crug", a word that was also used to describe a "Blue" - a boy or ex-pupil. Once in my school holidays (and we had to wear the uniform on holiday, for "townies" - civilian clothes - were forbidden), a man stopped me in a London street, said "Good morning, brother crug", slipped me half a crown, and passed on.

Tea was "kiff" at C H, and we drank it from a handleless bowl. Butter was "flab", until margarine was invented. Then this became "flab", and butter "real flab". Breeches were "brogues", a bolster a "bolio", a penny a "brown". Lamb says that "gag" meant the fat of fresh beef boiled, but we used it for all cold meat. A "fotch" or an "owl" were to be dreaded. One was a full-armed smack on the side of the face, the other a sharp blow with the knuckles on the crown of the head. A "scrub" was an untidy little boy. Prefects were officially monitors and commonly "mons". Only mons were allowed fags, and they were not called fags, but "swabs". To thrash was "to titch". To walk with dignity or at leisure was to "spadge" ("Coming for a spadge?"). Blunden traces this verb to Latin, not to the German "spazieren". And so it went on.

Discipline in Lamb's time was strict, and punishment sometimes ferocious,

but this was of course usual in the last years of the eighteenth century. Leigh Hunt speaks of face-slapping, lifting up by the ears, and flogging, and describes Boyer, the Upper Grammar Master, as "a proper tyrant, passionate and capricious". He adds, "He once knocked out one of my teeth with the back of a Homer." Lamb supports all this, and even reports the use of fetters and small punishment cells for severe offences.

They also speak of the tyranny exercised by older boys, especially the big boys of the Royal Mathematical School.

In my time, discipline was still strict, but based much more on reason, example, and public opinion. But Blunden writes that one master, Leonard Dale, deeply believed that a beating improved both the understanding of classics and idleness in tackling on the football field. Another master was always called "Brushy" Wright, "brushing" being an old word for beating.

I experienced only three official titchings from my housemaster in six years. One was a vigorous six strokes of the cane on that part of the anatomy made conveniently available by bending over a chair, the offence being swearing at a monitor. Another was a nominal two, when we were preparing a junior dormitory melodrama (entirely conceived and carried out by juniors), and left a mess in the dorm, after a rehearsal. A sheet had been a tablecloth and bed rugs stage curtains. The entire cast and stage crew were lined up for punishment. The third was also six and fairly severe when I was rightly accused of pulling the communication cord on the school's special train to London. I had done so more or less inadvertently, clutching the chain as the other boys in the compartment heaved me up on to the luggage rack. But I infinitely preferred the beating to a possible £5 fine.

There was also a good deal of bullying or punishing (official or unofficial) of small boys by large boys. Apart from the fotch and the owl, the usual weapons were a stick or ruler, a slipper, or a wet towel, applied to the seat of the breeches or pyjamas.

Probably the level of punishment in 1918/24 was below that usual in boarding schools of the period, but the discipline was better, not because of limited use of the cane, but because of the character of the school, its staff and boys.

I am tempted to compare the effect on the school of the personalities of James Boyer and his colleagues on the one hand, and my own headmasters Upcott and Fyfe on the other.

Boyer could be brutal, but there were other sides of his nature. Lamb gave great credit to him as an instructor: "Under him were many good and sound scholars bred." And there is affection in both Lamb's and Coleridge's comments on his passing. Coleridge: "Poor J.B. - may all his faults be forgiven, and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys, all head and wings, with no bottoms to reproach his sublunary infirmities." Lamb: "Old Jimmy Boyer is dead at last...lay thy animosity against Jimmy in the grave. Do not entail it on thy posterity." (One of his more subtle puns.)

Lamb contrasts with Boyer the personality of Matthew Field, the Under Grammar Master, "in equal proportions the gentleman, the scholar, and the Christian." But "the remembrance of Field comes back with all the soothing images of indolence, and summer slumbers, and work like play, and innocent idleness."

William Wales, the Mathematical Master, is praised by all the writers, even

though some of his charges were rough and tyrannical. Leigh Hunt calls him "a man well known for his science, who had been round the world with Captain Cook. He was a good man, of plain simple manners, and a benign countenance."

Perhaps the general mix of the staff was a happy one in those days, and I like to think the same was the case in my own.

My first year was the last of the headmastership of Dr A W Upcott, who replaced the celebrated "Dicky" Lee when the school moved to Horsham in 1902. To me, a boy of 11, Upcott was a remote and daunting white-bearded figure in clerical black. Formality, austerity, and a thorough-going Anglican tradition are what I link with him. Perhaps this was because of the words he wrote for our grandly singable Founder's Day hymn:-

Praise the Lord for our foundation,  
Praise Him for our holy name.

Blunden writes that Upcott was deeply hurt by the deaths of so many of his boys in the bloody battles of the First World War. It could well be that I only recall the last shadow of the man, for he certainly made, or helped to make, a strong and stable school.

Hamilton Fyfe (later Sir William) was a very different type, a layman, not a cleric, and suspected by us boys of (hush!) a tendency to socialism. He was constantly to be seen about in tweeds or flannels, and wore a gown, we thought, with reluctance.

He and Mrs Fyfe asked boys of all ages to tea, not merely Grecians. He set out to know as many of the boys as possible. I had little personal touch with him and I did not return to the school after I left for eight years. Yet on that day I happened to meet him in the cloisters. He hesitated, put out a hand, and said, "Ledwith, isn't it? You went into business, I think." He often used to take one or other of the upper classes for a period or two. Once he marked the English essays of the matha depts., and discussed them all with us. Picking up one, he said, "Ah, yes," and mentioned the boy's name, "Well, yumor is very well when it's yumorous, but when it's not, it's the very devil." And he restored it to the pile.

He respected the school's religious tradition, but I always felt his attitude leant towards practical religion, the moral rather than the spiritual. One visiting preacher he invited was the Rev. "Tubby" Clayton, founder of Toc H, who arrived on a motorcycle, wet through, and had to borrow dry clothes from the Head. In those formal times, we goggled to see below the cassock some inches of green tweed trousers and purple socks.

Fyfe cherished the good from the past, but was always ready for innovation. Hence the agricultural form (a success) and the commercial (not). Some of the new masters he brought in, pipe-smoking jazz-playing hearties, were a great contrast to some of Upcott's academic old gentlemen.

Fyfe also encouraged the school away from monastic seclusion to take active interest in the current world. He encouraged some boys on leaving to emigrate to the Empire (as we called it then). This backfired on him in the end, for he was invited to be principal of the Queen's University in Ontario, and thought it would betray his own ideas to refuse.

For decades after this, even when he was blind and frail, he kept in touch with hundreds of old boys, and he ends the commemorative gramophone record of Christ's Hospital with the words:-

my mature and unshakeable conviction that Christ's Hospital is the best school in the world.

The ultimate test of a school is, I suppose, the question, "What kind of citizens does it produce?"

The time of Lamb and Coleridge is referred to by historians of Christ's Hospital as The Golden Generation. It produced a remarkable galaxy of scholars, writers and others. In addition to Coleridge, Lamb and Leigh Hunt and classicists less known today, one can mention Edward Thornton who became a celebrated diplomat, Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, the first Anglican bishop of Calcutta (his monument is the biggest and perhaps the ugliest in St Paul's Cathedral), Thomas Barnes, for 25 years editor of *The Times*, Sir Brook Watson, MP, Lord Mayor of London and deputy governor of the Bank of England, and Admiral Troubridge, one of Nelson's captains.

Besides these, there was doubtless an abundance of worthy, useful shopmen, clerks and so on. And there was a leaven of adventurers, using the word in the sense less limited and pejorative than we often do today. In that century, though not in that decade, the school produced such men as Gabriel Jones, the lawyer in Virginia and close friend of George Washington, and two former scholars of the Royal Mathematical School founded the Moscow School of Navigation. Warren Hastings, though not in fact a Blue, studied at Christ's Hospital as a private pupil.

In my time the canvas is broader, the details finer, the great names fewer. Blunden of course left some three years before I arrived, going straight into the army and very soon into the Flanders trenches. The best known names, I suppose of my contemporaries are Michael Stewart, Constant Lambert the composer, and John Hunt the pianist. Stewart, while still at school, was Labour candidate in a mock general election, went on to be President of the Union at Oxford, MP for Fulham for 30 or 40 years, Minister of Education, and Foreign Secretary.

The bulk of my generation seems to have gone into business and the professions. They are administrators, accountants, actuaries, soldiers, priests. From my own boarding house, L W Smith became a colonial judge, Sir Arthur Tandy ambassador to the European Community, another a director of a national grain firm, another a merchant banker, another the secretary of the Oxford University Appointments Board.

To get a more representative sample, I need to cast backwards and forwards for a decade or two. Sir Barnes Wallis, designer of airships, aeroplanes and bombs, is one of the great engineers of the century, just as Russell Brock became one of the great heart surgeons. Sir William Glock was director of music at the BBC, and Colin Davis is a great orchestral conductor. Donaldson of the RAF once held the world air speed record, and Turner, as first officer of HMS "Cossack", led the boarding party on to the prison ship "Altmark" in a Norwegian fjord, shouting down the hatch to the captives the immortal words "The Navy is here."

It is a school which is proud of its history. Its boarding houses are named after distinguished old boys. Prizes are still awarded annually at boys' and girls' schools in memory of Charles Lamb.

It is still, I feel, a school to be proud of, and I will end as I began:-

May those prosper who love it and may God increase their number.

*Based on a talk given to the Charles Lamb Society on 5th November 1977.*



## BOOK REVIEW

Kenneth Curry: *Sir Walter Scott's 'Edinburgh Annual Register'* Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1977 viii + 217 pp \$13.95

It is not surprising that with Kenneth Curry's *Sir Walter Scott's 'Edinburgh Annual Register'* we have still another study of Scott as man of letters. Scholars continue to explore, even at this late date, the byways of Scott's career, while the poems and novels go begging. Like so many of the volumes about Scott on our shelves, this one does nothing to explain the secret of his art or to teach us how best to appreciate it. But Curry's is a modest enterprise from which scholars of British Romanticism as well as students of Scott can modestly benefit. Besides, it is gratifying to see that university presses are still willing to publish ancillary scholarship of this sort.

Curry's purpose is to provide a brief account of the neglected *Edinburgh Annual Register* (1808-1826; published 1810-1828) in the nine years when Scott was closely associated with it (1811-1820) as contributor, part-time editor, and promoter, and to reprint six uncollected essays by Scott, including the "rare" Prospectus, as evidence of the *Register's* more than passing interest. Curry has also been able to identify some of the other contributors. A bonus for the reader is Curry's extensive knowledge of Southey, who as author of the historical part for the first four years (1808-1811) was the single most important member of the staff. Of particular value is Curry's analysis of the books, principally Southey's *History of the Peninsular War* (1823-32) and Scott's *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* (1827), derived from material which first appeared in the *Register*. If the project was never itself a success, several successful books originated in its pages.

The picture of Scott to emerge from Curry's study is not new. Indeed, the basic outlines are all too familiar. Moreover, the rise of the *Register* is contemporary with the rise of the *Quarterly Review*, an oft-told tale. But, as Curry makes clear, its competition in the market was not the *Edinburgh Review* but the London based *Annual Register* and *New Annual Register*, the former a flourishing publishing venture since 1758. Once again we see Scott acting from a complex mixture of motives - political, economic, literary, personal, see him misjudging the market, and see him drawing upon his own magical energy and infectious enthusiasm, not to mention his copious knowledge and multiple talents, rather than let the undertaking die a premature death. In the hope of boosting subscriptions and selling off back volumes Scott himself took over the historical review for the two years of 1814 and 1815. (Southey had resigned the job in 1813 because he had not been paid for the 1811 volume.)

Divided into two departments, 'The History of Europe' and 'a potpourri of poetry, surveys of the arts and sciences, letters, and documents of literary, historical, and antiquarian interests', it is the second part - the miscellany - that modern readers are likely to find most readable. And it is this section which over the long haul most occupied Scott. One of his pet projects in 1807, abandoned in favor of the *Register*, was a miscellany that 'might in some respects be a continuation of the Harleian, on a better plan'. Years later, with *Chronicles of the Canongate*, he again had a go at the miscellany. Curry's book underscores Scott's obsession with this popular eighteenth-century genre. A writer of varied talents himself, Scott could not be satisfied for long, it seems with just one or two forms of literary

activity. In any case, it is Scott's talents as essayist that Curry asks us to appreciate in the six examples reprinted here. Besides the Prospectus, he gives us Scott on the living poets of Great Britain; on the French order of battle, particularly in the campaigns of Buonaparte; on the present state of periodical criticism (two essays); and on proposed and adopted changes in the administration of justice in Scotland.

The essay 'On the Living Poets of Great Britain' will remind some readers of Hazlitt's essay of similar title and intent, but except for like views on the theory of the *Lyrical Ballads* the resemblance is superficial: Scott reveals none of Hazlitt's fine wit or penchant for figurative language and dense allusion. At times, too, Scott echoes the sentiments of Blake and Shelley on the moral bond between poetry and society. Scott scholars unfamiliar with the essay will want to compare it with the celebrated self-review of 1817 in the *Quarterly*, for Scott ranks himself with Southey and Campbell as 'the three most successful candidates for poetical fame'. Scott's account of his poetic virtues and vices holds no surprises. Of some interest, however, is his insistence on active imagination in the reader of his own poetry. Unless the reader engages in imaginative collaboration with the poet, he argues, the poetry cannot succeed. Coleridge asked for no more!

With 'good courage, and St George to speed' Scott encounters 'the magicians of the maze of Criticism'. His subject is the revolution in periodical criticism within the last ten years; his imagery implies a change as radical as the political revolution in France. Concerned to distinguish the new reviews from the old, he is also concerned to say his piece on the issues the new reviews have raised, e.g., anonymous criticism, politically motivated criticism, and criticism as art, or at least as entertainment. The latter subject, especially, takes Scott into the Coleridgean arena of principled versus unprincipled criticism. The critic as artist in his own right, the critical review as vehicle for displaying the genius of the critic rather than the merits of the author - 'the art of criticism' as practised by the new reviewers in the early 1800's can only remind us just how venerable are our own controversies about critics and criticism. The second of the two essays is in the form of a letter which purports to recount a dream. 'The Inferno of Altisidora' is proof positive that Coleridge was not the only Romantic projector guilty of creating imaginary correspondents in order to attract subscriptions. Like the young Wordsworth in Book V of *The Prelude*, Scott's waggish correspondent, by name Caleb Quotem, falls asleep over a volume of *Don Quixote*, which supplies the imagery of a dream, in this case to be read as a satire of contemporary critics, of whom Jeffrey and Gifford are the most conspicuous. Unhappy with the tastes and opinions of the new critics but unfortunately intimidated by them, Quotem masks his feelings with a dream-vision, much as Scott criticizes the critics by means of a persona-author. Even the critic figures in the dream 'all wore vizards'. Together these essays make it quite clear that in his own mind Scott associated in motive and function the anonymous author of poems and novels and the anonymous reviewer of the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*. He justifies the latter here with the same parable he used in 1827 to justify the succession of masks - 'Author of Waverly', Peter Pattieson, Lawrence Templeton, Chrystal Croftangry - by which he had systematically hidden from his own readers: 'Every one has heard of the celebrated harlequin, who could not go through his part with spirit unless when he wore the usual mask, although conscious that his identity was equally recognized whether he used it or not; and we cannot help thinking

that those critics whose opinions are best worth hearing will be most ready to deliver them under the modest disguise of an anonymous publication, although they know that in many cases it is a secret which all the world knows, and in others, one which any party interested may discover if he pleases'.

The essays on Napoleon's battle strategy and Scotland's new judicial procedures are indeed evidence, as Curry suggests, of Scott's literary versatility. I cannot think, however, that any but the most ardent student of Scott will find them engrossing. The former comes provided with a diagram, though Curry neglects to tell the reader where it is to be found. Both essays reflect Scott's habit of arguing from national character, with the usual attendant biases; and both include a light moment or so. Two of Napoleon's generals, prevented by Spanish patriots from maintaining communication, are described as seeming 'to have known little more of each other's motions, than if they had been next door neighbours in London'. Spoken like a Romantic - especially, a Scots Romantic!

Frank Jordan

#### OBITUARY

It is with regret that we report the death on May 21st of Mark Sussman after a severe heart attack. He attended the meetings regularly and often came when he was far from well. His cousin writes "Knowing in what esteem he held the Society, and the great deal of pleasure he received from the Society over the years, I feel sure he would like me to thank all of you."

We shall miss his quiet presence, and, like Charles Lamb, his delight in some volume he had purchased, his warm cordial friendliness, and his contributions to the discussions. Our sincere condolences are sent to his cousin, with thanks for his kind letter.

FSR

#### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1979

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 1979 fall due on 1 January. The rates of subscription for 1979 are as follows:

Corporate Members Overseas	\$10
Other Corporate Members	£5
Individual Members - London	£2.50 (doubles £3)
- Provincial	£1.50 (doubles £2)
- Overseas	\$5

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