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CHARLES LAMB AND BLOOMSBURY

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Some months back, this note would have been entitled 'Charles Lamb and Virginia Woolf', and it is the strange resemblances between these two writers which has fascinated me for many years and, I believe, not been previously remarked. When I have explained the nature and extent of this affinity, I shall return to the wider field of Bloomsbury and some treasure which lies in the Society's archives, and which shows the links I have felt in a new light.

Madness of course, was a constant theme and threat for both - not explicit in their writings save for the letters - but felt, experienced and dreaded by themselves and their closest and dearest relatives. Charles Lamb is said to have 'been mad' and in a madhouse for six weeks, though objective evidence other than in his own writings is lacking; Mary clearly suffered from a manic-depressive psychosis, and was 'in care' repeatedly throughout Charles' lifetime; it is striking how humane their society was, when, after killing her mother in an acute episode of illness, she was allowed to recover in her brother's care and home with no formal process of law or medicine. Charles Lamb must have been lonely and fearful for much of his life, kept going by the 'dry wood' of his desk at East India House and the companionship of his fellow-clerks, and that of his literary friends as his reputation and confidence grew. When he had retired early from his post, I suspect he was thankful to die early, having misunderstood the nature of his life.

Virginia Woolf killed herself in reality, during the puerperium of her last book, having repeatedly been depressed to a suicidal degree, and having had paranoid and hallucinatory thoughts at some stages in her life, which were both exhilarating and frightening to her. Throughout her married life, Leonard Woolf watched over her health and her work, just as Lamb watched over Mary, noting every exaggeration, every false emotion, every evidence of strain. In both cases (significant word) one main duty was to fight off friends - too demanding, too harassing, but so necessary.

What did these two create? Legends, atmosphere - certainly; but also each a solid and lasting achievement in literature. In both cases experimental, risky, sometimes failing, but both to me and to so many others, compulsive reading. Each looks at the moment, either past or present, and creates it anew in the light of their own odd vision, throwing some magic over our own sanity. For both, communication is the 'name of the game', and both wrote so well about literature and books. As with George Orwell, it is rare to have to re-read a sentence of Lamb or Woolf. Both dealt with dreams and fantasies, and both invented a totally new style from within themselves (and solidly based too on a very wide knowledge of the English literary heritage).

The extent to which these writers influenced and were themselves influenced

by talk seems significant. Lamb was throughout his life entertaining his friends (and being entertained in turn) and every recollection of those functions tells of excitement and stimulation, in a true creative sense. To have heard Coleridge in full flood - to have watched the whist whilst the Admiral and all that crew held forth - talk of non-sense and of sense, of trivia and of great moment, Shakespeare or some gossamer of the time, this would indeed have been the kind of occasion 'one would wish to have seen'. And so on to Bloomsbury - behold, Maynard Keynes and Lytton Strachey are prepared to talk all night, and many others too; on art, economics, sex (was this ever touched on in Lamb's day, I wonder?) with the girls, Vanessa and Virginia, interrupting from time to time with a barbed comment, just as one imagines the puns p-pattered from Lamb over the 'cold lamb and potatoes' as the firelight flickered on the Wednesday evenings.

Contrast and similarity show clearly in the writings which have been left to us; Virginia Woolf is remembered most for her novels - recreations of childhood and of her friends, attempts to fix the unsaid and the real human being behind the mask. She also wrote essays. Lamb's essays too are recreations of childhood and of his friends, attempts to describe feelings, atmospheres, friendships. He also wrote a novel. Each wrote letters - though we have access to those of Virginia Woolf only up to 1922 (she died in 1941). These two collections are and always will be major literary achievements and sources for the study of their times. Nigel Nicholson has titled the volumes which he edited so well - 'The Flight of the Mind' and 'A Question of Things Happening'; these could be applied equally and accurately to Lamb's essays and to his letters.

There is one small point which for me clinches the analogy. When Virginia Woolf's brother Thoby died of typhoid in 1906 she continued to write to her great friend Violet Dickinson for three weeks as if he was still alive, inventing details of his illness and progress. Nigel Nicholson says that she did not want to distress her friend - I doubt this, and think it more likely that she herself could not face the reality of such a death, so close and threatening. Now recall all of Lamb's invented episodes - I don't mean elaborations of events like the ducking of Dyer - but the pure inventions, often winged off to Manning in China, sometimes published (at least once to the consternation of the legalistic Crabb Robinson, who said 'there would be no defence'). The point to grasp is that both were sometimes (perhaps often) hard put to find a clear line between dream and reality, hope and expectation, the thought in the head and the 'feel of the pavement underfoot'.

I want now to deal with a strange foreshadowing of the affinities which I have discussed. Some time back, a scrapbook was generously presented to this Society by Basil Savage; it has many original letters, press cuttings and matters dealing with Lamb commemorations from 1909 to 1927 and must have been compiled by or for Charles Sayle, Librarian to Cambridge University. Of interest to us are the seating plans of the Lamb Dinners held at the University Arms, Cambridge from 1909 to 1914. Before coming to the Bloomsbury link, I have to say that the volume gave me a marvellous feeling of continuity in learning and literature, since the first names to catch my eye were those of S W Grose, J B Trend and B W Downs who were all Fellows of my own College, Christ's, when I was there as an undergraduate in 1940-42, and who all dined in honour of Charles Lamb in 1912; it was also gratifying to find then also an interest in Lamb by my own profession, Sir Clifford Allbutt (an eminent physician) attending regularly and

and chairing the dinner in 1914. I was thus tempted to look more closely at the guest-lists, to be rewarded by J Maynard Keynes, who was I suspect the introducer of other friends and 'Apostles', since he dined every year and was usually seated at the centre of the men whom I have identified as 'Bloomsbury'. Gerald Shove dined in 1910 and 1911 - he married one of Virginia Woolf's cousins; Walter Lamb was present in 1912 and 1913 - he had proposed to Virginia Woolf once, as had the elder brother of another guest; this was Hilton Young, and his younger brother George is recorded on the plans from 1911 to 1913 (they were a wealthy family, so no doubt the 6/- per dinner each year was not too great a bar!). In 1910 Dominic Spring-Rice was near Keynes - he was a 'Hyde Park Gater' and thus almost preceded Bloomsbury proper. Next year, the group was larger - James Strachey (brother of Lytton) and J T Sheppard were included - the latter was later a don, and during the 1914-18 War lived in the old Stephens house with Maynard Keynes in Gordon Square. Jacques Raverat dined in 1913; he brings in the artistic element, and provides a link with the Darwins through Gwen Darwin, whom he married. Her uncle also attended these dinners and was chairman in 1912 (there are some charming stories about him in Gwen Raverat's completely delightful book 'Period Piece').

There are two other important literary 'contacts' at these dinners - Bruce Richmond (1912 and 1913) who was later editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, and with whom Virginia Woolf had a 'love-hate' relationship, but for whom she wrote some of her best criticism; and Harold Wright in 1912, who was the editor of 'War and Peace' in which post he was succeeded (amidst many tribulations) by Leonard Woolf. It is rather gratifying to see that Rupert Brooke took the opportunity of dining twice, and on the second occasion, accompanied by Edward (Eddie) Marsh. Having recorded all these well-known and less-well-known names, I finally came upon a sad note. Next to E V Lucas I saw in 1913, the well-remembered Vernon Rendall - well-remembered because he had been a patient of mine for some years, in fact I attended him until his death in the early 1950s. The very picture of a twentieth-century George Dyer, brother of a Winchester Headmaster, he lived in a dusty library, and was a classicist; to my lasting regret, I never knew or realised that he had both Lamb and Bloomsbury interests and links; in fact, E V Lucas himself thanks Vernon Rendall in his 1935 edition of Lamb's Letters for having compiled the index. This article would have been very different had I known this, and taken the opportunity of talking with him - and how he would have relished that. Ah well!

So it appears that the affinities which I see, and which I have discussed here between two such outwardly different authors as Virginia Woolf and Charles Lamb, and which are based essentially on the fact that both represent a Romantic reaction to a rigid Classical form of writing, was apparent even in the very early years of our century, and those who formed and influenced the Bloomsbury 'group' (undefined as it is, we all recognise a Bloomsbury person when we see one) also formed a large proportion of those who did honour to the 'immortal memory' of Charles Lamb at Cambridge from 1909 to the First World War.

I end by remarking one further coincidence; in her 'suicide note' or letter to Leonard, Virginia Woolf said 'I don't think two people could have been happier than we have been'. This of course echoes Lamb's friend Hazlitt's last words 'Well, I've had a happy life' and also serves to remind us that a re-reading of Virginia Woolf's essays on Lamb and Hazlitt (as on many other authors) is both pleasant and rewarding. In the essay on Hazlitt she

says 'He was a two-minded man - one of those divided natures' and contrasts his painting and his writing careers; Lamb and Virginia Woolf were not artists in that sense, but were both surrounded in their circle of friendship by practising artists. The expression of the 'self' was important to both, it was indeed the whole essence of their reaction against that denial of the self which classical purity of art demands. Yet we cannot but pity their divided natures - manic and depressive; inhibited but so expressive; loving both travel and the comfort (and security) of their home; and each so sadly barren but evoking all the excitement and innocence of childhood. Each writer symbolises for me the possibility of reconciling our dreams and our realities, and a knowledge of the works of one continually enhances my pleasure and profit in reading the other.

(Based in part on a lecture given by Dr Wilson to the Charles Lamb Society December 3rd 1977)

CHARLES LAMB'S "GOLDEN YEAR" (Continued)

Claude A Prance

JULY

The star contribution in the *London* in July was Charles Lamb's "Mackery End, in Hertfordshire". A new contributor was H F Cary, the translator of Dante, who sent an essay "On Gray's Opinion of Collins."

This month much attention was focussed on the Queen, and on July 5 she presented a memorial to the King claiming her right to be crowned as Queen. This was rejected by the Privy Council on July 10.

On July 7 Crabb Robinson went to Stoke Newington to see Mrs Barbauld, the poet and writer of books for children and sister of Dr John Aikin. Here he was joined by the Lambs who had come to be introduced by Robinson. They were pleased with her, but during the evening Charles mentioned that he thought Gilbert Wakefield had a peevish face. He was somewhat mortified to be told that Mrs Charles Aikin, who was also there, was Gilbert Wakefield's daughter, but Crabb Robinson says he got out of the scrape tolerably well. Robinson notes in his *Reminiscences* following this date, that it was one evening at the Aikins' that Lamb related the story of the East India House clerk accused of eating man's flesh and remarked that among the cannibals those who rejected the favourite dish would be called *misanthropists*.

When Baldwin, Cradock & Joy established their *London Magazine* in January 1820 a rival *London* was started at the same time. It was published by Gold & Northouse with W F Deacon as the principal contributor. It was far below Baldwin's periodical in literary standard and had languished. So much so that on July 18, 1821 Joyce Gold - Northouse seems to have disappeared - sold his failing journal to Taylor & Hessey for £50 starting with the issue for August, although there seems to have been no change in Taylor & Hessey's *London* and Gold's merely ceased to appear.

On July 19 Captain James Burney, Lamb's old friend since 1803, was promoted Rear Admiral on the retired list. In his early days he had sailed with Captain Cook. He was now 71 years of age and did not survive long. As a boy he had been a pupil of Eugene Aram and Thomas Hood's poem is said to be founded on Burney's recollections of Aram.

Thursday, July 19 long remained in the memory of London crowds, for it was the day of the Coronation of George IV. For this magnificent spectacle

Parliament had voted £243,000 and it came up to expectations. As Joseph Jekyll, Lamb's "Old Bencher", told his sister-in-law, Lady Sloane Stanley, "everything went off properly at the Coronation, the Queen not excepted." This was too literally true, for Queen Caroline, who had been refused permission to attend the ceremony, arrived in her coach of state and attempted to enter Westminster Abbey, but was again repulsed and drove away with her spirit broken. B R Haydon who had a ticket for the Abbey described the splendour inside and says the King "showed like some gorgeous bird of the East." Sir Walter Scott was also there and wrote an account of it to James Ballantyne, who published it in his newspaper. An amusing incident occurred to Scott after the banquet. In returning to his carriage with a friend, they found themselves hemmed in by the crowds. A space for dignitaries was being kept by the Scots Greys and Sir Walter asked if he could pass over the open space, a request curtly refused by a Sergeant of this famous regiment. Meanwhile the crowd became restive and Scott's companion called out "Take care Sir Walter Scott", whereupon the Sergeant exclaimed "What! Sir Walter Scott. He shall get through anyhow!" and he called out to his men "Make room for Sir Walter Scott, our illustrious countryman" and Scott was guided to safety.

On July 17 Lamb had written to William Ayrton postponing their Wednesday parties because of the Coronation. No doubt most of his friends wished to see it and some had been given tickets. John Rickman's family would have had excellent views from their house in New Palace Yard which was covered with crimson cloth, and Anne Rickman wrote a vivid account of it all. Among those who were given good seats at the Coronation by John Rickman was Mrs Burney, who insisted on attending the fair in Hyde Park afterwards accompanied by her reluctant husband and his brother-in-law, Molesworth Phillips, who had also sailed with Captain Cook. There does not seem any evidence that Charles Lamb had a seat anywhere, but no doubt he saw some of the magnificence in the streets and he may have attended what was almost a replica which Elliston staged at Drury Lane in August.

The day following the Coronation Crabb Robinson had tea with the Lambs and spent the evening there. Hazlitt was also there and they played whist, although Robinson records that relations were still strained between Hazlitt and himself. The next day the Lambs went to Robinson's chambers for more whist. Lamb also wrote to John Taylor and said how much he liked Hazlitt's "Table Talk" essays in the *London Magazine*. A few days afterwards he again wrote to Taylor to thank him for two drafts for £20 and an invitation to dinner the following Friday when he was promised venison. This seems to have been the first of the magazine dinners which became so famous.

Lamb certainly attended this one for a couple of days afterwards he wrote to Taylor "Is it to you, or to some other kind unknown, that I owe my safe arrival home on Friday night? I confess I have no knowledge of the manner how, or the time when." Possibly Lamb's kind conductor was Thomas Bennion, Taylor & Hessey's porter, who performed the service on some later occasions.

At Covent Garden this month "Hamlet" was produced with Charles Kemble and Miss Dance, while later Macready appeared as the King in "Henry IV Part II" with Kemble, Fawcett and Farren, but the play was put on mainly to introduce a Coronation spectacle. At Drury Lane plays seen were "Rob Roy", "Guy Mannering" and "Spectre Bridegroom", while at the English Opera House Fanny Kelly appeared in "Love's Dream" to Crabb Robinson's delight. This month John Nash's new building for the Haymarket was opened with "The

Rivals", among the cast of which were Daniel Terry and Miss De Camp. Towards the end of the month Edmund Kean returned from America and Elliston had enormous playbills posted over London announcing the fact and that Kean would play "Richard III" on July 23, but a few days afterwards Drury Lane was closed owing to Kean's illness. This month Master Betty, the former child actor, tried to commit suicide but failed.

Among other events in July, John Stuart Mill returned to England from a year's residence in France and Thomas Love Peacock's poem "Rich and Poor" appeared in *The Globe & Traveller* under the pseudonym of "Peter Peppercorn M.D." This poem was founded on a remark by William Wilberforce whose Society for the Suppression of Vice had been attacked as ignoring the rich. While in London for the Coronation Sir Walter Scott had permitted Chantry to finish the bust he had been working on.

AUGUST

This month Charles Lamb's essay "Jews, Quakers, Scotchmen and other Imperfect Sympathies" appeared in the *London Magazine*. Hazlitt continued his "Table Talk", H F Cary had four contributions, and others represented included John Clare, Allan Cunningham, Charles Macfarlane, Barton and George Darley, while Elton's "Epistle to Elia" was printed and J H Reynolds wrote an account of The Coronation.

On August 1 Mrs Inchbald died aged 68. Lamb called her "the only enduring clever woman he had ever known". She had been an actress, a friend of J P Kemble and Mrs Siddons, had refused an offer of marriage from Dicky Suett, and retired from the stage as long ago as 1789, but had devoted herself to literature for the rest of her life.

Much of the domestic interest this month centred around Queen Caroline, who seemed broken hearted after her rejection at the Coronation. On July 30 she had attended Drury Lane but was taken ill there, became worse and died on August 10. The body was carried on August 14 to Harwich to be conveyed to Brunswick and the procession brought demonstrations and riots in which two men were shot by the Life Guards. The King was absent in Dublin. Lamb writing to invite William Ayrton to whist the next day tells him "Closed windows on account of the demise of Her Majesty."

In Italy in August Shelley visited Byron at Ravenna and wrote to Mary Shelley at Pisa telling her of the splendid apartments in which Byron lived in the palace of his mistress's husband (she was divorced). In the house Shelley found two monkeys, five cats, eight dogs and ten horses "all of whom, except the horses, walk about the house like the master of it." Writing to Peacock the same day he added "an eagle, a crow and a falcon." To Leigh Hunt later in the month Shelley wrote to say that Byron invited him to Italy and proposed that they should share in a periodical work - this was to materialize in the form of *The Liberal* which started in the following year.

The great attraction at the theatres this month was Elliston's facsimile spectacle of "The Coronation" in which he played the part of George IV. It is said that he entered into his part so thoroughly that on one occasion, when having taken a little too much wine, he became so affected at the delight of the audience that he gave them his grandest benediction in these affecting words, "Bless you, my people!" So popular was the spectacle that Drury Lane was kept open during the summer and by December it had run for 91 nights. Covent Garden was closed but the Haymarket had several comedies

and at the Lyceum Fanny Kelly was excellent in "The Miller's Maid" supported by T P Cooke.

SEPTEMBER

The London Magazine had two star contributions in September, Charles Lamb's "The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple" and De Quincey's "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater". This was De Quincey's first appearance in the journal and occupied 19½ pages, but he was to send many items during the next few years. A new contributor this month was Charles Wentworth Dilke, later to be the editor of *The Athenaeum*, while Miss Mitford contributed a dramatic sketch.

Lamb's letters written this month which have survived seem to have been mostly to Taylor & Hessey about magazine contributions. One concerns a correspondent who had complained about Elia's facts in his "Old Benchers" essay and brought forth Lamb's reply printed in the November issue of the magazine.

About this time Landor sent Wordsworth a copy of his Latin poems *Idyllia Heroica Decem* published in 1820 and Wordsworth wrote on September 3 a letter of thanks in which he says he has read the dissertation annexed to the poems, but had delayed reading the poems themselves being "seized with a fit of composition at that time."

Shelley was now back in Pisa and wrote on September 25 to Edmund Ollier, the publisher, about Mary Shelley's novel then called "Castruccio, Prince of Lucca", but later published as *Valperga*. He asks also for a copy of Procter's *Mirandola*.

Richard Woodhouse in his "Notes on Conversations with Thomas De Quincey" records under the date of September 28 the story of a discussion between Charles Lamb and the Opium-Eater, in which Lamb's praise of Wordsworth's poetry did not quite come up to De Quincey's own view of its merits and he complained that Lamb did not do Wordsworth justice. He spoke with such warmth that Lamb dryly observed "If we are to talk in this strain, we ought to have said grace before we began our conversation." De Quincey was so annoyed he left the room.

This month Coleridge spent nearly two months at Ramsgate with the Gillmans endeavouring to improve his health. While there Charles Cowden Clarke saw him and, although they had not met, recognized him from S T C's habit of talking "like his own Ancient Mariner". Clarke introduced himself as a friend of Lamb and was welcomed.

At Drury Lane Elliston's "Coronation" still continued to draw crowds. Covent Garden was just about to open, but the English Opera was able to show Fanny Kelly, as the critic in the *London* said, "the soul of the place", in "The Cure for Coxcombs" supported by Lamb's "easy natural Wrench". The Haymarket produced "Venice Preserved" with Miss Brudenell as Belvidera and Daniel Terry as Pierre. A laconic note in James Winston's *Drury Lane Journal* for September 5 states "Band all drunk", but he also adds that there was a new melodrama "Gerald Duval" and a new farce Moncrieff's "Monsieur Tonson."

OCTOBER

Lamb's "Witches and other Night Fears" appeared in the *London* in October as well as the second part of De Quincey's "Confessions". For these the Opium-Eater received forty guineas.

Crabb Robinson had been on a tour of Scotland in September and this month visited the Lake District on the way home. On October 3 he was at Keswick and, although Southey was absent, he met the rest of the family, being greatly impressed with Coleridge's daughter, Sara, as were all who met her. On October 5 he spent the morning at Rydal Mount with Dorothy Wordsworth and later spent some days with her and her brother, and he read the manuscript of Dorothy's journal of their Swiss tour. He returned to London later in the month to find that one of his friends, Mrs Charles Aikin, Gilbert Wakefield's daughter, had died. On the last day of the month he called on De Quincey whom he regarded as tiresome, but of great talent.

On October 10 B R Haydon was married "to a lovely young widow". She was Mary Hyman, an attractive Jewess, who had two children and a jointure of £50 a year. The honeymoon was spent at Windsor and Haydon's *Memoirs* are full of rapture.

Taylor visited John Clare at Helpstone on October 12 and published an account of it in the *London* for November. On October 16 a very old lady in her 98th year died at her home in Adelphi Terrace, Mrs Eva Maria Garrick, described by the *Gentleman's Magazine* as "the venerable relic of the English Roscius." As Mademoiselle Violette, the celebrated Viennese dancer, she had married David Garrick in 1749. In spite of her great age Mrs Garrick was active enough in August 1821 to go to the British Museum where she spent the morning with John T Smith ("Rainy Day Smith") to look at old playbills and engravings relating to her husband left to the Museum by Dr Burney.

Mary Lamb was ill this month, but was still at Dalston with her brother. In this state it was easier for Charles to tell her of the death of their brother, John, which occurred on October 26. Although John Lamb had led his own life apart from his relations, they felt his loss keenly and Charles, as his executor, would have had much to do. Writing to his publisher at the time he said that he did not expect to have much for the magazine in the immediate future, but in fact his contributions continued.

Richard Woodhouse tells us that he spent the evenings of October 28 and 29 at Taylor & Hessey's in company with De Quincey and found that they had been at the same school at Bath although not at the same time. He was impressed with the depth of De Quincey's knowledge and with his acquaintance with the literary men of the day.

At Drury Lane there was still "The Coronation" as well as "Gerald Duval" and "Monsieur Tonson". Covent Garden had Charles Mayne Young much in evidence although not for long.

NOVEMBER

"Grace Before Meat" was Charles Lamb's contribution to the *London Magazine* this month, but the Lion's Head editorial section also had "Elia to his Correspondents" in which Lamb defended himself from a Correspondent who had found fault with his essay on the "Old Benchers". A new contributor this month was Coleridge's eldest son, Hartley, with an essay "On Parties in Poetry", while John Taylor printed his "A Visit to John Clare" with copious quotations from Clare's poems.

On November 3 Woodhouse again spent the evening with De Quincey and recorded more pages about the Opium-Eater in those "Notes on Conversations" which were happily printed by Dr Garnett before the manuscript was accidentally destroyed by fire.

William Hone wrote to Lamb about this time on his essay in the *London* this month and seems to have referred to Jewish graces. Lamb replied on November 9 and said he was not well nor in spirits.

On November 12 Haydon was arrested for debt at the suit of Rennell, the printer, and he applied to Wilkie for bail which was reluctantly promised if Haydon could find someone else to share the responsibility - this proved difficult - and Haydon seemed to think he had been ill treated by his fellow artist.

A few days afterwards Leigh Hunt and his family embarked for Italy, having accepted Byron's invitation, but they were delayed owing to bad weather and had to return to Ramsgate. They seemed followed with bad luck and made several fresh starts, but in December they were only at Dartmouth and did not finally leave England until May 1822. Hunt gave up his editorship of *The Examiner* when he left.

Lamb suffered a further bereavement this month for Admiral Burney died on November 17. Lamb wrote to Rickman on November 20 bewailing his losses. They had started in 1820 with James White's death, then his brother and now the Admiral. In a letter to Wordsworth Lamb said "There's Capt. Burney gone! - what fun has whist now? What matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you?" Crabb Robinson too noted in his *Diary* "He was a fine old man, and I am sorry for his death." Robinson called on the Lambs at Dalston and found them glad of his company in their loss. On November 26 he called again on them and notes he is sorry to learn the Admiral left his family unprovided for, but that Mary Lamb had taken Martin's wife under her protection.

On November 23 Woodhouse dined at Taylor's with Dr Darling, Percival and De Quincey and the latter told them of the enormous quantities of opium taken by Coleridge when he lived in the north of England.

Sara Hutchinson wrote to her cousin Thomas Monkhouse on November 23 that she had been transcribing Wordsworth's poems for him, and she complains that "William kept altering and improving as I went along to the no small *disfigurement* of my M.S. and the delay of the Work." She mentions the Lambs and says it is as well that Charles had written his essay on "My Relations" before his brother's death, for he would not have had the heart to do it afterwards.

On November 24 the proprietors and publisher of *John Bull* were sentenced to nine months imprisonment and a fine of £1,100 for a libel on Lady Wrottesley. Theodore Hook was editor of this paper.

At Drury Lane in November Kean appeared as Richard III and Othello, and there were some new pieces, "Maid or Wife" and Moncrieff's "Lost Life". Crabbe Robinson saw the Coronation spectacle and "dozed over it", but was better pleased with Gattie in "Monsieur Tonson". At Covent Garden Charles Mayne Young was seen in "The Stranger". This translation from Kotzebue had survived from 1798 and was still popular.

DECEMBER

Charles Lamb's contribution to the *London Magazine* was "My First Play", Hazlitt continued his "Table Talk" and there were contributions from De Quincey about John Paul Richter and a letter from him on his "Confessions". This month the magazine completed its fourth volume and the editor took the opportunity to comment on his past efforts and he maintained that never

before had a magazine had such a gathering of men of talent writing for it. He gave details of some of the items to appear in 1822 among which were more Elia essays, more "Table Talk" and interesting contributions from Allan Cunningham, H F Cary, C A Elton, De Quincey, J H Reynolds, T G Wainwright, John Poole and C W Dilke.

On December 2 Richard Woodhouse dined at Peter De Wint's with Taylor, Cunningham and De Quincey. They discussed the failure of Vernor & Hood, booksellers and publishers, and no doubt Taylor thought of the time when he had worked for the firm in the days when Hood's father was a partner. Another dinner was held on December 6 at which Woodhouse was again present. This was at Taylor & Hessey's and must have been one of the famous magazine dinners. Among those present were De Quincey, Reynolds, Charles Lamb, Cunningham, Rice, Hood, Wainwright and Talfourd. Charles Lamb was full of puns. "Mr Lamb" said Taylor "I shall be happy to take wine with you. Is it hock you have before you?" "Hoc est" was the rejoinder. About one o'clock Woodhouse accompanied De Quincey home, but the latter could not get in to his lodgings, so accepted Woodhouse's proposal to spend the night in his chambers in the Temple - they talked until eight o'clock the next morning. De Quincey, writing on the dinner many years later comments that sitting among them was a murderer "cool, calculating, wholesome in his operations". This was T G Wainwright subsequently brought to trial, not for any of his murders, but for forgery, and transported for life.

On December 8 *The Literary Gazette*, of which William Jerdan was the editor, published a notice of Shelley's "Adonais" and introduced into it a disgraceful attack on Keats, dead only a few months previously. This much incensed De Quincey and Keats's friends.

James Perry, a friend of Lamb and the former proprietor and editor of *The Morning Chronicle*, died on December 5 at Brighton in his 65th year. Another death this month was that of Mary Lloyd, wife of Charles Lloyd, senior, the Birmingham banker. Lamb had almost certainly met her when he visited Birmingham many years before and he knew and corresponded with her husband and some of her children.

At the beginning of December Walter Scott's *The Pirate* was published and was well received. On December 13 Murray sent a copy of Byron's *Cain* to Scott to ask if it might be dedicated to him. Sir Walter was delighted and later in the month both *The Two Foscari* and *Cain* were published.

The only letter of Lamb's this month seems to be a note to John Taylor about the Dramatic Fragment "The Dying Lover" to be reprinted in the *London* next month. This was an excerpt from *John Woodvil* as Lamb originally wrote it and had been printed as long ago as 1800 in James Anderson's *Recreations in Agriculture*.

In the early part of the month Crabb Robinson was reading *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering* and thought the latter much the better novel. On December 11 at Monkhouse's he read some manuscript poems by Wordsworth on their tour and was very impressed with them, but when he read them to Lamb later in the month Charles did not seem to relish them, a fact which Robinson attributed to Hazlitt's presence at the Lambs, but as usual they played whist. Robinson had less success with Shelley for on December 28 he read *Prometheus*, but could not get on with it and agreed with the adverse views expressed by the *Quarterly Review*. He notes in his *Diary* "I shall send Shelley back to Godwin unread. Godwin himself is unable to read his works."

On December 28 De Quincey was at Woodhouse's and gave him a lot of information on the Opium-Eater's life at Oxford. The next day De Quincey and Allan Cunningham both went by coach to the north of England, although not together.

During this month Byron in Italy started to give weekly dinners to his male friends, among those who attended were Taafe, Medwin, Williams and Shelley.

At Drury Lane on December 22 Moncrieff's "Giovanni in Ireland" was produced, but it encountered much opposition from the audiences. The reason seems to have been the state of Ireland and the unpopularity of the King's recent visit to Ireland. At the same theatre Kean appeared as Sir Giles Overreach in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" and also in "Jane Shore". At Covent Garden there was "Two Gentlemen of Verona" with Miss Tree and Liston, who Crabb Robinson said were the only pleasing people in the play. There was also a new entertainment "The Two Pages of Frederick the Great." Later in the month Robinson saw Moncrieff's "Tom and Jerry" at the Adelphi and enjoyed it. It was after a *London Magazine* dinner the following year, that Charles Lamb in his black suit and John Clare in his bright green coat and yellow waistcoat, walked home arm in arm to the amusement of the populace, who cried out "Look at Tom and Jerry". Since this was the first play to run for 100 consecutive performances it was much in the public mind.

In the provinces Madame Catalini, the famous soprano, was touring and attended festivals at Bath, Bristol, Glasgow and Edinburgh. At a charity concert in Glasgow she was paid £760 and Braham £250, whereas the charity received only £200. The lady refused £1,500 to sing at Covent Garden and demanded £2,000.

Of Charles Lamb's friends in 1821, Hazlitt was living at Winterslow Hut writing *Table Talk*, Leigh Hunt was living at the Vale of Health but ceased his connexion with *The Indicator* preparatory to leaving for Italy, Hood was living in Lower Street, Islington and John Rickman, who was compiling a very long report of Highland Bridges, Caledonia and the population returns, was appointed Clerk Assistant to the House of Commons at a salary of £2,500 and moved to Palace Yard. Wordsworth was now living at Rydal Mount and was busy with his *Ecclesiastical Sketches* and Allan Cunningham met Sir Walter Scott this year. De Quincey, writing many years afterwards, said he dined with the Lambs more than once in the winter of 1821-22.

Others of note but not well known to Lamb included Horace Smith, who before going to France, was acting as Byron's financial agent in England and Cyrus Redding, now working as the editor of *The New Monthly Magazine*, under the nominal editorship of Thomas Campbell. Hartley Coleridge was in London trying to support himself by journalism and living first with the Montagus and then by himself in Grays Inn. Thomas Love Peacock visited Wales and resumed work on his novel *Maid Marian*.

Books published by Charles Lamb's friends or those known to him in 1821, besides those already mentioned, included Hazlitt's *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* Second Edition, Leigh Hunt's *The Months*, Charles Lloyd's *Desultry Thoughts in London*, John Clare's *Village Minstrel*, De Quincey's *Confessions*, J H Reynolds' *Garden of Florence*, Horace Smith's *Amarynthus the Nympholept*, Southey's *Carmen Triumphale* and *Vision of Judgement*, and a second edition of Barton's *Poems*. Even one who was Lamb's *bête noire*, Miss Benger, published her *Memoirs of Ann Boleyn and Mary de Courtenay*, a novel from the French. A publication which would have aroused

an echo in Lamb's mind was an account of Joseph Ritchie's expedition to Africa issued this year edited by Captain G F Lyon, who took part in the expedition. Ritchie had perished in Africa, but he had contributed to the *London Magazine* and had been at Haydon's famous party in December 1817 when Lamb teased the Controller of Stamps. On that occasion Lamb drank Ritchie's health as that of "the gentleman we are going to lose." Another of Lamb's friends, William Hone, this year published *The Divine Right of Kings to Govern Wrong* - an adaptation of Defoe's *Jure Divinio* - with woodcuts by George Cruikshank.

Of the activities of the theatres something has been said, but in addition, Fanny Kelly had appeared at Bath in the Spring for the benefit performance for her sister, Lydia, and on her return to London played at the Command Performance of "The Heir at Law" and in the same bill as Braham and Madame Vestris. She also had a skirmish with Lord Yarmouth who was too pressing with his attentions. William Oxberry, who although perhaps a mediocre actor, is likely to have been seen by Lamb at Drury Lane had left the stage in 1820, but the following year opened the Craven's Head Chophouse near the theatre. Here he used to tell his guests "We vocalize on a Friday, conversationalize on a Sunday, and chopize every day". In the Spring John Philip Kemble had come from Lausanne and transferred his interest in Covent Garden to his brother, Charles. Another manager, John Ebers, had leased the King's Theatre, Haymarket for the 1821 season, but lost over £7,000 by it. During the year at least six versions of Scott's *Kenilworth* appeared at the theatre. At Drury Lane Elliston struck a special Coronation medal.

Charles Lamb's interest in pictures is well known and this year British painters were active. Constable exhibited four pictures at Somerset House including the "Haywain", and also spent some time with his friend Fisher sketching in Berkshire and Oxford, and later at Salisbury. Sir Thomas Lawrence exhibited at the Royal Academy his famous portrait of Marguerite Blessington which caused something of a sensation. P G Patmore, Lamb's friend, happened to be there when Lady Blessington also attended and he comments on the proximity of the picture and its original. He calls her "the loveliest woman of her day" and recalls how the original "fairly 'killed'" the copy. Also at the Royal Academy were shown paintings by Samuel Palmer and William Blake, while the former and his and Blake's friend, John Linnell, exhibited at the British Institution and Somerset House.

Charles Lamb's writings during 1821 are certainly among the very best of his work. He had appeared in every issue of *The London Magazine* during the year and had actually had printed there seventeen contributions. At the same time he was writing others of almost equal excellence which appeared in 1822; among those printed in the first six months were "Dream Children", "On Some of the old Actors", "Distant Correspondents", and "The Praise of Chimney Sweepers", truly something of which to be proud.

BOOK REVIEWS

Wayne McKenna: Charles Lamb and the Theatre: *Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross, 1978. 134pp. £4.95*

Joan Coldwell Ed.: Charles Lamb on Shakespeare: *Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross, 1978. 175pp. £6.95.*

Members of the Charles Lamb Society will remember Dr Wayne McKenna's two

pieces in the Bulletin in 1977. Now we are able to read his fuller account in the book from which they came, *Charles Lamb and the Theatre*.

After an excellent Introduction, stressing and illustrating Lamb's seriousness as a critic, the strength of his mind and the soundness and independence of his judgement, Dr McKenna's first chapter gives valuable background information about the state of the English theatre from 1737 to 1843, the period of the Licensing Act. This virtually restricted the production of "legitimate" drama to the two theatres which held a "Royal Patent", Drury Lane and Covent Garden, though there were ways of evading this limitation, which are entertainingly described. Dr McKenna traces the history of these two important theatres during the period, including Garrick's management of Drury Lane, the deterioration following on Sheridan's succeeding him there and the rebuilding in 1791 into a much larger theatre. This brought about greater emphasis on spectacle than on the finer points of acting and facial expression, which both Lamb and Hazlitt praised, because they could no longer be seen from the more distant seats.

We are shown how the development of the "star-system" affected both the lesser actors and the dramatists, to their detriment, and led to a good deal of competition and indiscipline in the theatre. Nevertheless there were serious actors who, whatever their faults, showed dedication and devotion to their profession, for example Garrick in the eighteenth and Macready in the nineteenth century, who were both also managers, and there were fine comic actors and clowns. In spite of the need to pander to unruly audiences of doubtful taste and excessive sensitiveness to any moral or political unorthodoxy, in spite of the consequent emasculation of Shakespeare and in spite of the difficulties writers of great talent but no "connections in the theatre" had in getting their plays put on, there were nonetheless fine actors of strength and dedication both in the schools of "classical" and of "natural" acting, which formed the basis of the contrast so clearly made in Lamb's criticism.

Dr McKenna goes on to demonstrate how these conditions of the theatre of Lamb's time illuminate his contribution and help us to assess it more justly than some earlier critics have, perhaps, managed to do. In Chapter II, Lamb as Critic of Dramatic Literature, which deals with Lamb's *Specimens* and *Extracts*, it is emphasized that, as "he never witnessed stage performance of these plays", it is not so much, as F V Morley argued, that he "encouraged a nineteenth-century distinction between plays as poetry and plays as drama" as that "the circumstances which surrounded publication of the *Specimens* and *Extracts* forced this distinction... To read a play in the study was to perform an act of literary and not theatrical criticism". Later in the chapter "This comparison between the reading and the theatrical response" is related to the essay 'On the Tragedies of Shakspeare', a subject to which we return in the last chapter.

The vexed question of Lamb's claim to be "the first to draw the Public attention to the old English Dramatists" is dealt with very fairly, as is "His decision to illustrate the moral sense of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists". Dr McKenna argues against George Watson, who affirmed that the "moral assumptions" of Lamb's criticism "are conventional, a part of that continuum of English prudery that has its roots in eighteenth-century middle-class piety and looks forward to the great Victorian censorship". Certainly those tastes of the contemporary audience or reading public which had preferred Tate's version of *King Lear* might well have influenced

Lamb here. "The bowdlerization which he admitted in the preface perhaps sought to overcome the obstacle of the prejudice of his potential readers against the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists; and this helped the practical matter of selling the book"; but that he did not share these tastes there is ample evidence to prove. Dr McKenna instances the fact "that unlike the majority of his contemporaries he did not find the morality of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* objectionable". Moreover, of course, his essay 'On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century' makes it clear that "he did not accept the idea that the theatre should be required to reflect the moral standards of its audiences".

Lamb is also defended from the disparagement that he is "impressionist": "Lamb certainly produced personal impressions in his criticism, and his judgements reflected the insight of an intuitive mind, but this formed only a part of his criticism". As well as sensibility, he had critical judgement based on reason and his "taste rested upon the basis of wide and intelligent reading". This chapter ends with Coleridge's praise of the "excellent Taste" of the *Specimens* and his statement in an earlier letter that Lamb's "taste acts so as to appear like the unmechanistic simplicity of an Instinct - in brief, he is worth a hundred men of mere Talents".

In the next chapter, Lamb's own plays are carefully examined, a rare and useful exercise. We see how, although "In his composition of plays he could not embody those principles which controlled his comments in his criticism", yet in the words of J E Morpurgo, Lamb's "dramatic efforts added to his academic knowledge, and gave to his criticism an element of practical appreciation that is rare save among exponents".

Chapter IV deals with Lamb as a Critic of Theatrical Performance and examines Lamb's view of stage illusion and its relationship to artificial and natural acting in "certain kinds of comedy" and in tragedy respectively. Bensley's acting of Malvolio is discussed here and how far Lamb's view of it is contradicted or supported by other contemporary accounts. His delight in the acting of Munden and Dodd is compared with Hazlitt's opinions of the them, as is Lamb's view of Fanny Kelly and Mrs Jordan. Their "natural" acting is contrasted with the occasionally artificial mode of Palmer and Bannister, which leads into a discussion of 'Artificial Comedy'. Critics' objections to Lamb's essay are referred to and Dr McKenna concludes that "Lamb did not produce good criticism on Restoration comedy, but he did develop a sound analysis of audience reaction in the theatre and of the different effects which dissimilar acting techniques created on him".

In the final chapter, on Lamb as Critic of Shakespeare, comparison is made with Coleridge. "Lamb, Hazlitt and Coleridge rejected the eighteenth-century adherence to the 'ut pictura poesis' theory, and when the theatre emphasized scenery and the physical characteristics rather than the 'moral or intellectual attributes of the character' it provoked these men to their distinction between reading Shakespeare and seeing his plays performed on the stage." Dr McKenna mentions interestingly more recent critics who "have shared this view" and quotes Eliot's assertion that "it is precisely in that drama which depends upon an actor of genius, that we ought to be on our guard against the actor". Some aspects of this discussion seem as relevant to-day as in Lamb's time. Dr McKenna tells us: "When Lamb wrote his essay on Shakespeare in 1811 he could never have seen *King Lear* performed in the original version, and he expressed his anger at the way in which Shakespeare's plays had been altered". We no longer give the play a happy ending and marry Cordelia off to Edgar but when it comes to cuts and

rearrangements or to production, on which Lamb also scathingly commented, some of us may feel a start of recognition. Dr McKenna says of the productions Lamb criticized that "They wasted energy on trivial and superfluous details, and by drawing so much attention to those things they obstructed the audience's appreciation of essentials". He concludes that "The success of corrupt acting versions turned Lamb's wrath against audiences, so that in addition to his contempt for the arrogance of Shakespeare's alterers, he had scant respect for a public that could be so grossly deceived".

However, it was not just "Bad productions and corrupt texts" that formed Lamb's and Hazlitt's opinion; they both "acknowledged a fundamental limitation of the theatre", that its physical, visual effects could not convey the spiritual and poetic vision which was the essence of Shakespearean tragedy. "For Lamb the critical interest of a Shakespearean character centred on that character's inner being", and Dr McKenna illustrates this by detailed reference to the essays and their comments upon the ways in which particular plays were performed and characters interpreted by the actors of his time.

In spite of an impression to the contrary, perhaps given by Lamb's *Specimens*, "In his criticism of Shakespeare he showed an awareness of the principle of the organic unity of a work of art, a principle which formed so vital a part of Coleridge's critical thinking". Scenes, characters, individual speeches, the juxtaposition of comic and tragic, poetry and action, all are "integrated in order to form a whole". This integration is performed by the "secondary imagination" and the "Sanity of True Genius". "The imaginative artist endowed his work with a coherent form and compelled our judgements to regard his presentation as credible". The visual nature of stage presentation got in the way of this faith. Dr McKenna sums up: "He did not confound theatrical criticism and the criticism of dramatic literature. The change of medium altered the critic's response, and thus Lamb distinguished between the reading and the staging of Shakespearean tragedy, but he did not advocate one to the exclusion of the other".

Dr McKenna's serious and careful examination of Lamb's writings in relation to the theatre not only puts them into the perspective of his time but has implications for a reconsideration of the subsequent history of dramatic and particularly of Shakespearean criticism, stemming from or in reaction against the Romantic mode which he helped to initiate. This book makes the reader aware once again of the value and relevance of these writings both to Lamb's world and our own.

Joan Coldwell's *Charles Lamb on Shakespeare* makes an excellent companion-piece to Wayne McKenna's book. Professor Coldwell has collected together "under one roof" not only such complete essays as deal with Shakespeare in the theatre and those of the *Tales from Shakespeare* that Charles wrote, but also relevant extracts from other essays and from letters, as well as notes of conversations, made by J P Collier and H Crabb Robinson.

There is an admirably succinct Introduction, which says a great deal in a little space; about Lamb's early and continuing experience of the theatre, about his "intuitive grasp" of Shakespeare's meaning based on a close and continuous reading of the texts, about the fact that "Like Coleridge, Hazlitt and De Quincey, Lamb held that Shakespearean drama is best appreciated in the reader's own imagination and can only suffer diminution on stage", and that "his views were shaped in part by the far from ideal

conditions of the early nineteenth century theatre, where Shakespeare's own texts were seldom if ever used". Nevertheless, Professor Coldwell says, it is an aspect of the Romantic view of Shakespeare in general to consider his characters as products of his imagination and so "best approached through the imagination of a reader"; "The imaginative understanding of character is Lamb's chief contribution to criticism and he was one of the first to explore the many-sidedness of Shakespeare's characters". She quotes Lamb's contemporaries to support the high esteem in which his criticism was held and ends with the anecdote about Lamb's pointing to De Quincey, "whose essay 'On the knocking at the gate in *Macbeth*' is probably more widely known than any of Lamb's criticism", and saying, "Do you see that little man? Well, though he is so little, he has written a thing about *Macbeth* better than anything I could write - no - not better than anything I could write, but I could not write anything better!" She concludes, "It is for such qualities of honesty, clear-sightedness and a confidence based on knowledge and experience that Lamb's criticism is still to be valued".

The book is divided into sections: *Richard III*, The Tragedies, The Comedies, General, and *Tales from Shakespeare*. Each is introduced by a brief background and there are useful notes at the end. The period illustrations are a delight.

Finally, the publishers are to be congratulated on the beautiful production of these books. It is a real pleasure to see black, good-sized, accurate type on fine quality white paper, so that one starts to read with eagerness instead of, as too often these days, with effort and distaste. We have here two books for the Lamb enthusiast to enjoy both for their content and their design.

M W

Edwin W Marris, Jr.: *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb, Vol. III: Cornell University Press, 1978 xix + 274pp \$35.00 or £24.50*

One sad note on an otherwise welcome occasion: the American price of the volume has gone up by 40 per cent. Volume III of Professor Marris's invaluable work carries the Lambs from March 29, 1809, to about October 1817, and except for a few early months at other addresses, is a complete record of the time they spent at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, a sort of bower among the tops of the lime trees of Hare Court. Originally they had two rooms on the third floor and five above, with an inner staircase. The seven were miraculously increased in the winter of 1813 when the cries of a cat caused them to force a door and discover four more rooms - or eleven in all, a rather grand setting for the poor India House clerk. (He became a prosperous one in this period and could abstain from writing lottery puffs.) The Lambs seem often to have had a cat (they retained their benefactor), and at one time three kittens - "all to be kept," writes Mary, who would like to give away one or two: Charles, then, liked cats.

These years were quiet and rather frustrated ones in Lamb's life, when he was for a long time overworked at the office and highly nervous as a result. When the overworking ceased, a reduction in holidays was decreed, and the abolition of the free postal privileges with which Lamb had obliged his friends. He did little significant writing ("Elia" was still to come), endured Mary's periodic absences under private care, missed his dear friend Thomas Manning, still in the Far East, but kept reasonably cheerful, cheerful enough to compose some lying letters - quite harmless, all of them. Manning might be alarmed to hear that Mary had been dead for years (in a

Christmas Day letter of 1815) until he read that most of his other friends were dead too, St Paul's was "a heap of ruins", and the Monument reduced by decay. Manning would know to disbelieve even did he not receive Lamb's corrective (soberer?) letter of Boxing Day. Manning, whose own sense of humor was very like Lamb's, was not a very good correspondent and Lamb was writing rather desperately into the void.

Mary Lamb comes through in this volume marvelously, and its supreme contribution to scholarship is her letter of May 22, 1815, to the Morgans, owned by the Pforzheimer Library and never before published. This describes in *her* way the experiences Lamb wrote about in "Mackery End." Her way, of course, is always straightforward, interesting, very clear, and warm in assessment of people and places. Hazlitt said that she used her mind like a man's - then a great compliment - and elsewhere (1810) she minces no words when she says "Charles was drunk last night and drunk the night before" - to Sarah Hazlitt - but with humor, not censure. Crabb Robinson on the occasion "professed himself highly indebted to Charles for the useful information he gave him on sundry matters of taste and imagination, even after Charles could not speak plain for tipsyness." The Mackery End letter contains a new Wordsworth vignette, an amusing one - he was in the room as she finished writing. Lamb adds a wry postscript.

Fanny Kelly, the actress, Lamb's wife if she would have had him in 1819, comes in for first mention by Mary, who knew she would be taken to see Miss Kelly in any new play she appeared in. The second Mrs Godwin is well damned by Lamb and her prying ways made clear. William Godwin is, however, as "dear" to Lamb "as any person on earth" in a letter to him requesting no forenoon visits for the sake of Mary's health. It is a time of regular Wednesday "evenings" when friends come in for whist, drink, a cold joint, and conversation. How broad were Lamb's contacts now is indicated by the number of correspondents - the Wordsworths, Coleridge, Charles Lloyd the elder (whom Lamb helps with cogent criticism of his Classical translations), Hazlitt, Godwin, Southey, and many others. If these letters are not Lamb's most brilliant, there are fine things in them - the famous word pictures of Hazlitt and of Coleridge (the Archangel a little damaged), for example.

Of the hundred letters included, only twenty are noted by Professor Marrs as "unrecovered" - i.e. dependent on the E V Lucas 1935 text or other source rather than the original letter. Of the hundred, sixteen are wholly or partly Mary's. Fourteen letters did not appear in Lucas - seven never before published, seven published but hitherto uncollected. Second in interest among the fourteen is another of Mary's, also to the Morgans, chiefly about a visit to Cambridge, again with an appendage by Charles. There is further evidence of Lamb's readiness to help people in two moving letters about a Christ's Hospital friend, an epileptic with a family, for whom he seeks aid. There is an amusing short recipe (by Charles) for cleaning marble.

Professor Marrs corrects some Lucas errors: a son of William Hazlitt called William *did* die in infancy; a later William survived. He is also able to correct a few errors of his own (or of his printer) in earlier volumes. He continues to provide exhaustive, accurate notes detailing the life and careers of every person mentioned in the text; cross-references to related items in earlier or later volumes of his work; verbatim quotations from other works, such as Procter's description of Lamb's library; a short piece about Manning from *The Champion*, which may be Lamb's; detailed accounts of his office companions; and a great deal more - which should save Lamb researchers endless lookings-up.

Since a critic who does not carp at all is suspect, I may say that an account of Thomas Holcroft's many children by four wives which occupies a page and a half (166-67) of small-print notes pretty well lost me, but if one seeks information on a Holcroft child it is surely *there*. There are some other instances of over-generosity, and yet one is glad to have the latest scholarship so readily available. I interpret Hazlitt's account (in his *Life of Holcroft*, which I sought out) of the suicide of young William Holcroft at sixteen as due not to the shame of having *stolen* from his (adoring) father but to the shame of having been tracked down by that father, to be taken home from the ship he'd been hired to sail on. And George Dyer's wife was apparently not a laundress, as pointed out on good authority by Crabb Robinson's first editor Thomas Sadler (*Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson*, Boston, 1869, ii, 472n). She was the widow, in comfortable circumstances, of a solicitor, and HCR was misinformed. (One imagines that before wedlock she may sometimes have taken things to *be washed* - he was notoriously unkempt as a bachelor.)

But these small matters have little to do with Lamb: they were all I could find to quarrel with in a desperate search. Professor Marrs is a wonder, and the care he has taken with his text beyond praise.

Winifred F Courtney

THE CHARLES LAMB BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

At the Birthday Luncheon, held at Simpsons' in the Strand on February 10th, 1979, about a hundred members and guests gathered to celebrate most enjoyably this our special occasion.

The toast to the Immortal Memory of Charles Lamb was proposed this year by Mr Reginald Watters, Head of the English Department at Christ's Hospital at Horsham. In a delightful talk, Mr Watters made us better acquainted with Charles Lamb's remarkable friend, Thomas Manning. Crabb Robinson said of him, "Lamb spoke of his friend Manning as the most wonderful man he had ever known, - greater than Coleridge or Wordsworth. Yet he had done nothing and tho' he travelled in China that produced nothing. Him I knew afterwards - an interesting man, but nothing more". But Lamb, with his talent for friendship, understood him more deeply. "A Man of great Power - an enchanter almost. Far beyond Coleridge or any man in power of impressing... Only he is lazy and does not always put forth all his strength; if he did, I know no man of genius at all comparable to him."

Mr Watters took us with him on some of Manning's adventurous journeys, first to France to pursue his Chinese studies, then to China itself. There, he spent years in Canton, "hoping to penetrate to the court of the Emperor at Peking without success". In 1810, Mr Watters said, "this led to his most remarkable exploit of all, his single-handed attempt to travel to Peking by way of Bengal and Tibet, then, as now, the 'forbidden country'. He reached the capital, Lhasa - and was the first Englishman to do so, presenting the Dalai Lama with a curious assortment of gifts, including a bottle of genuine Smith's lavender water, which the awkward servants dropped and broke as it was handed over." Crossing the Himalayas, he simply notes, "I find going uphill does not agree with me, perhaps because naturally I am going downhill". He practised medicine in Lhasa, where feeling the pulse of some of his female patients "rather disordered my own". In spite of joining Lord Amherst's Embassy, Manning never did get into the presence of the

Emperor and returned to England a disappointed man. Although he was reputed to know fifteen languages and to be the first Chinese scholar in Europe, Mr Watters said, Manning only produced one book on the East in his life, and that was *A Paper on the consumption of Tea in Bhutan, Tibet and Tartary* (1817)!

Yet he had charm and a gift for friendship, which Mr Watters illustrated by quotation from the last exchange of letters between him and Lamb in May, 1834, and it was "in the spirit of friendship" that Mr Watters proposed the toast and we drank it - to the memory of Charles Lamb.

Thanks for the address were given by our President, Professor Ian Jack, this year in the Chair again. The toast to Provincial and Overseas Members was proposed by Mr D E Wickham and replied to by Miss Andrea Sheh, whose home is in New Jersey. J M Granger and G J Bohane, Grecian and Monitor of Christ's Hospital, said Grace "before and after meat".

OBITUARY

We were very sorry to hear of the deaths of Mr and Mrs Roderick Benton of Marcellus, formerly of Skaneateles, where Mr Benton ran the Wolcott Book Shop from 1942 to 1971. Mr Benton was one of the most widely known collectors of rare books in Central New York and his wife shared his tastes. They had been members of the Charles Lamb Society for many years and, as their son tells us, delighted in the Bulletin. They used their retirement to read and re-read their favourite classics of English literature until the pages of some books were almost worn away. How Charles Lamb would have loved them! They died in their eighties within a few months of each other.

NEWS

Mrs Winifred Courtney writes that "a welcome new addition to the New York scene is the Charles Lamb Restaurant - or, as is written on its corner double-storefront at 88th Street and First Avenue, New York City, "Chas. Lamb, Innkeepers". She mentions an "enormous portrait of Charles Lamb... visible from the front door" and tells us that the proprietor first served Roast Suckling Pig, and then, "being a bookish sort of fellow as well as experienced commercial host, Charles Lamb seemed the logical next step and he redid his décor on this theme." She has visited the restaurant and it sounds a delightful place and its owner, Mr Wiederspiel, who wrote to her "Floreat Agni!", "an innkeeper after Lamb's own heart".

If any members know of instances of a composer either setting words by Lamb or using a sentence or two of his as title or epigraph, the information would be gratefully received by two Canadian scholars who are compiling a catalogue of such use of texts, by writers of the Romantic period, in musical composition: Bryan N S Gooch and David S Thatcher, English Department, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2Y2.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Charles Lamb Society will take place on Saturday, 5th May, at the Mary Ward Centre, 9 Tavistock Place, London WC1,

at 2.45 pm. Nominations are invited for the vacancies on the Council arising from those members retiring in accordance with the Society's rules. Nominations should be sent to the Hon. Secretary as soon as possible, after ensuring that the nominees are prepared to stand.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1979

In preparing his Financial Statement, the Hon. Treasurer needs your up-to-date subscriptions. If any members have not yet paid, may we please jog your memories?

NEW MEMBERS

University of Arizona Library, Serials Dept., Tucson Az 85721, USA
Mrs MacLeod, "Ganymede", Lower Station Road, Henfield, Sussex BN5 9UG
Mr Hugh Paine, Flat D, 7 Tite Street, London SW3 4JR
Mr S E Wickham, c/o 116 Parsonage, Manorway, Belvedere, Kent
Mrs N L Wickham, c/o 116 Parsonage, Manorway, Belvedere, Kent

