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THE PEAL COLLECTION OF LAMB LETTERS. *A Revision of the Talk the Author Gave at the Dedication of the W. Hugh Peal Collection, University of Kentucky Libraries, Lexington, October 15, 1982*[1]

Edwin W Marrs, Jr.

W. Hugh Peal, distinguished student, lawyer, rare book and manuscript collector, benefactor, was born in Bandana, Kentucky, in 1898. He was graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1922, having earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and won election to a Rhodes Scholarship--he was one of the first Rhodes scholars from the University of Kentucky--and proceeded to Oxford University. There he earned, in 1924, the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Jurisprudence and, in 1925, that of Bachelor of Civil Law. In 1928 he was admitted to the New York State bar and the federal courts. He received from Oxford University in 1954 the degree of Master of Arts. In 1959 the University of Kentucky conferred upon him an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. For forty-five years he practiced law, from 1955 to 1973 as the senior partner of Hardy, Peal, Rawlings & Werner and its predecessor firm, 750 Third Avenue, New York City.

For more than fifty years he was engaged in building the rare book and manuscript collection, of over fifteen thousand objects, he has given to the University of Kentucky. The *Kentucky Review*, 4, No.1 (1982), which is largely devoted to a description of the collection, shows that the areas of strong concentration in the collection are or include botany, classical Latin literature, British law and politics, bibliography, elegant books, American literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and French and British literatures of the eighteenth and nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The areas of strongest concentration are or include botany and British Romantic literature. The Peal collection of literature of the British Romantic period--particularly the section of the collection formed of the writings of the first-generation Romantics, and whose center is formed of the writings of the Lambs--is among the finest of such collections held by American university libraries.

One of the rare times when Dr. Peal told me about himself occurred as a result of my writing him that I was to speak at this ceremony about his collection of Lamb letters and that I should especially like to include in my talk anything he would wish me to relate about himself and the collection. He replied partly as follows:

> The first question always is [he wrote of journalists who occasionally interviewed him and asked about the library at "Woodburn," lately his and Mrs. Peal's home, glorious and historic, outside of Leesburg, Virginia], how did you get interested in Charles Lamb in the first place. It was due, I think [he answered], to a desire on the parts of my mother and great-aunt to find a counterattraction to keep me away from the horses. I was supposed as a child to bear a strong resemblance to my great-grandfather Jerman J. Wingo, founder of Wingo, Kentucky, and this

> made me a favorite of his surviving children, one of whom was Belle Wingo Bradley, who owned a large stud farm near my home. One day when I was about six, my mother and great-aunt, sitting on the front porch, saw the most feared of the stallions proceeding down the long entrance road bearing me to adventure. Actually the stallion, whose name was Goebel (he was named for the notorious Governor [William] Goebel), loved small boys and kittens and even tolerated puppies, but my assurances failed to convince my elders, and they began to supply me with books, commencing with *Tales from Shakespear*. This was followed by the essays, etc.

Further about himself in that regard Dr. Peal did not go. We know he became an admirer, a student, and a collector of the writings of the Lambs. All of us may not have had the opportunity to know that his collection of the Lambs' letters--which he has placed in its entirety in his benefaction to the University of Kentucky and which that university, in its development of the benefaction, has already increased by one letter--is the second largest in the world. The Peal collection of Lamb letters now comprises ninety-seven letters, four of which are manuscript copies, three of those made for Thomas Noon Talfourd when he was preparing the first (1837) and second (1848) editions of Lamb letters. Of the ninety-three autograph Lamb letters in the Peal collection, ninety or eighty-eight are separate and textually whole, three or five are separate and textually not whole (not whole because of parts, in three instances certainly, having been lost or misplaced), one letter is written on a letter from John Rickman to Charles Lamb, and another is written on a letter to him from Samuel Rogers. This collection of Lamb letters is exceeded only by that at the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, and thus exceeds such other wonders as the collections of Lord Abinger (of Bures, Suffolk), the British Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the New York Public Library, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Philip H. & A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, Mr. Robert H. Taylor (of Princeton), the Victoria and Albert Museum, Dr. Williams's Trust and Dr. Williams's Library (London), and in the university libraries of Brown, Harvard, Leeds, New York State at Buffalo, Princeton, Texas, and Yale.

Mary and Charles were the joint writers of one of the letters in the Peal collection of Lamb letters, a letter to Frances Maria Kelly. Mary was the writer of three of the letters--to Coleridge; Miss Kelly; and Jane Norris, the elder daughter of the Lambs' old friends the Inner Temple librarian and subtreasurer Randal Norris (1751-1827) and his wife, the former Elizabeth Faint (1765?-1843). Charles was the writer of the rest, of ninety-three of the letters. Ten of those are to Thomas Allsop. Seven are to John Bates Dibdin; another seven are to Miss Kelly. The same number are to Charles Ryle, those that Oxford University Press published, in 1931, as *Seven Letters from Charles Lamb to Charles Ryle of the East India House, 1828-1832*. Fewer than that number are to the Lambs' Enfield physician Jacob Vale Asbury (1792-1871);[2] possibly the publisher Robert Baldwin; Bernard Barton; Mary Matilda Betham; William Blackwood of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*; one W.C. Booth; Martin Charles Burney; the surgeon Charles Chambers, once Lamb's schoolfellow at Christ's Hospital; John Childs (1783?-1853), a printer, of Bungay, Suffolk; Charles Cowden Clarke; Coleridge; Mrs. John Dyer Collier, the wife of the journalist; Joseph Cottle; Allan Cunningham; George Dawe; William Godwin; Mrs. William Godwin; John Mathew Gutch; James Augustus Hessey, the partner of John Taylor; Thomas Holcroft's daughter Louisa, who became the wife of Thomas Carlyle's

friend John Badams; William Hone; Thomas Hood; the daughters of the Joseph Humes; Sarah Hutchinson; Mary Lamb's nurse Sarah James; Annette Lane, who was probably a schoolmate of Barbara Betham when they were pupils of Mrs. Thomas Holcroft, she who after Thomas Holcroft's death became Mrs. James Kenney; Thomas Manning's sister Frances Manning; John Mitford of Benhall (Suffolk) and London, a clergyman, a writer, and an editor, from 1834 to 1850 the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*; Basil Montagu; Mrs. Basil Montagu; Edward Moxon; Edward and Emma Moxon; Charles Ollier; Peter George Patmore; Mrs. John Thomas Payne, the former Sarah, or Sally, Burney; probably Richard Peake of the treasurer's office of Drury Lane Theatre, the father of the dramatist Richard Brinsley Peake; John Fuller Russell, the theologian and antiquary, though a student at Peterhouse, Cambridge, when Lamb knew him; John Scott of the *London Magazine*; William P. Sherlock (fl. 1800-1820), an artist best known for his watercolors and engravings, a son of the portrait painter and engraver William Sherlock (fl.1759-1806);[3] Southey; John Stoddart; Talfourd; John Taylor, the partner of Hessey; Taylor and Hessey; and John Tuff (b. 1801?), a pharmacist and an historian of Enfield. Two letters are to persons whose names I do not know.

The earliest of the letters, from Charles to Coleridge, is postmarked August 24, 1797, and the latest, from Mary to Jane Norris, is of Christmas Day 1841. Eleven of the letters are unpublished.[4] Eight of the eighty-six published letters are not in the most recent and most nearly complete edition of Lamb letters, the fourteenth edition, E.V. Lucas' *The Letters of Charles Lamb: To Which Are Added Those of His Sister, Mary Lamb* (London: Dent and Methuen [copublishers], 1935).

At this point it seems appropriate to transcribe a letter by each of the Lambs in the Peal collection.[5] The selection by Mary is the letter noticed a few lines above to Jane Norris (1799?-1891), of Widford, Hertfordshire, afterward Mrs. Arthur Tween. Mary wrote it in the home in which she had been settled since at least mid-July 1841, that of Sarah James's sister Mrs. Parsons. On the letter, in handwritings all different from Mary's writing, which was formed by a trembling hand, are "Miss Jane Norris" and "Miss Lamb/ No 41 Alpha Road/Regents Park/St Johns Wood/1841--/1847 died." The letter has been published, in *The Letters of Charles Lamb* (1935), III, 423, and elsewhere.

Christmas Day [1841]

My dear Jane

Many thanks for your kind presents.-- Your Michalmas goose I thought Mrs Moxon had written to thank you for--the turkey and and nice apples came yesterday.-- --------

Give my love to your dear Mother. I was so happy to find your note in the basket for I am alway[s] thinking of you all and wondering when I shall ever see any of you again. I long to shew you what a nice snug place I have got into--in the midst of a pleasant little garden. I have a room for my[s]elf and my old books on the ground floor and a little bed-room up two pair of stairs. When you come to town, if you have not time to go [to] the Moxon's. An Omnibus from the Bell and Crown in Holborn would [bring you] to our door in quarter of an hour.[6] If your dear Mother does not venture so far, when the spring comes on I will contrive to pop down & see [her]. Love and all seasonable wishes to your sister & Mary &c.-- -- --

I am in the midst of many friends Mr & Mrs Kenney--Mr & Mrs Hood--Bar[r]on Field & his brother Frank [&] their wives &c all within a short walk.

If the lodger is gone I shall have a bedroom will hold two!------------

Heaven bless & preserve you all in heal[t]h and happiness many a long years.

yours Affectionately

M. A. Lamb

The best turkey ever was eaten

The selection by Charles is a manuscript copy made for Talfourd of a letter to Sarah James. Charles wrote the original in his and Mary's home since late September 1827, the house next to the residence and insurance office of Thomas Westwood, Chase Side, Enfield. Named first in the second sentence of the letter is perhaps a sister of Miss James;[7] named second there is Elizabeth Reynolds (d.1832), Charles's old Inner Temple schoolmistress and aged pensioner. The letter has not been published.

March 11th *1829*[8]

Dear Miss James

Mary tells me to write for her this time, as she is up to the ears in a new Novel. She thanks Margaret and she thanks you for your attentions to Mrs.Reynolds. Tis a pity that tumble was not into a coal pit. This is my sentiment not Mary's. For the thinking about her plagues & haunts my Sister, and sometimes makes me not very comfortable. Sometimes I wish God Almighty had a nice vacancy for an old woman. Heaven cannot be full. How she'd flutter up to the sky in a new pair of wings, mincing & fidgetting all the way, & fretting at the length of the journey--. I shall see her earthly remains in a fortnight and then--

Spirit of Burke & Hare[9] assist me--
One pang--there gulph it down--Mrs. Grimshawe,
Mrs. Reynolds wants you to come & lay her out--
She makes a beautiful corpse--

What beauty, good humour, sense, & learning once
informed the lump of clay--.

O cruel death why didst thou take
Eliza Reynolds? For thy sake
Thou shouldst have spared her 7 years more
Or taken me, grim Death, before
Her soul in heaven has its reward.
The rest's in Islington Church Yard--.

When you say Lawyer, I suppose you mean an Attorney. There are two sorts of Lawyers, 1st Barristers or Counsellors and 2nd *Attorneys*, sometimes called Solicitors. The latter are to the former what Apothecaries are to Physicians. The former prescribe Law, the latter make it up in doses according to the forms of the courts.--

Now I will tell you something you dont know. Confinement for Debt is not *for punishment*, tho' it acts as such. Tis a legal fiction or make-believe, by which the person of the Debtor is secured to make his appeara[n]ce in the Courts when he shall be proceeded against for the Debt. Therefore it is that confined debtors can only get a day-rule

or day's holiday in term time, because they are supposed to be answering the claim against them in Westminster Hall. Now as an Attorney is supposed to be always in the Law Courts about his Client's business (a client is a sort of Patient in the hands of his legal advisers) an Attorney cannot be arrested. But you may have your Action for Debt against him in Westminster Hall, by putting your case into any other Attorney's hands.---- If a very small Sum, go to the Sheriff's Court. But the Attorney can tell.

Likewise no Member of Parliament can be arrested *whether Parliament sits or not*, till a Parliament is dissolved, & he is no longer Member. A member of Parliament is supposed to be always busied about the good of the nation.

In Banco means In Bench or on the Bench, where what they call the Court (one Judge or more) is sitting. Tis called kings Bench because tis the king's chief Court of Law. When a Queen is reigning, tis call'd the Court of Queen's Bench. Bancus in Latin is Bench.

Mary is venturing out on her second walk of any length for many weeks, having been laid up with a vile tooth ake.

We both shall be most glad when you can make a holiday & are with many thanks &c.

Yours truly

C.L.

Remember us always kindly to your mother & sisters

NOTES

1 A part of the talk is published in the *Kentucky Review*, 4, No.2 (Winter 1983), 65-69. Parts of that piece are republished here with the permission of the editor and editorial board of the *Kentucky Review*.

2 In an acrostic Lamb wrote to Asbury, Lamb, erroneously, gave him the first name of Joseph. (For that and the acrostic Lamb wrote to Asbury's wife--"To D[orothy] A[sbury]"--see *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E.V. Lucas [New York: Putnam's; London: Methuen, 1903-1905], V, 100 and 101.) Good accounts of Asbury are the obituary of him in the *British Medical Journal*, August 12, 1871, p.195; E.V. Lucas' "Lamb's Doctor," in the *Times Literary Supplement* (London), March 20, 1937, p.222, where there is reproduced a photograph of Asbury; and Graham Dalling's "Enfield in the Time of Charles Lamb," the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, N.S. 34 (April 1981), 32-33.

3 Claude A. Prance has an entry on William P. Sherlock in the valuable work *Companion to Charles Lamb: A Guide to People and Places, 1760-1847* (London: Mansell, 1983), pp.305-306.

4 In the talk, and its adaptation in the *Kentucky Review*, I erred in counting as unpublished a Charles Lamb letter (to W.C. Booth) published in *The Letters of Charles Lamb: To Which Are Added Those of His Sister, Mary Lamb*, ed. E.V. Lucas (London: Dent and Metheun [copublishers], 1935), II, 323.

5 The letters transcribed below are not the same as those transcribed in the adaptation of my talk in the *Kentucky Review*. In each of the transcriptions, I have for the sake of clarity provided, silently, two or three marks of punctuation.

6 The two sentences made one sentence make perfect sense: "When you come to town, if you have not time to go [to] the Moxon's, an Omnibus from the Bell and Crown in Holborn would [bring you] to our door in quarter of an hour." In the last sentence of her paragraph, Mary remembers Elizabeth Norris (1808?-1894), of Widford, afterward Mrs. Charles Tween; and possibly (see *The Letters of Charles Lamb* [1935], III, 377 and 424) a maid of the Norrises.

7 "I know all their history," wrote Charles to Basil Montagu of Sarah James and her sisters. "They are four daughters of them, daughters of a Welch Clergyman [of Beguildy, Radnorshire] of the greatest respectability, who dying, the family were obliged to look about them, and by some fatality they all became nurses at Mr Warburton's [private asylum], Hoxton" (*The Letters of Charles Lamb* [1935], III, 263; more about the family is given there and in *Companion to Charles Lamb*, pp. 152, 169, 253, and 339).

8 Underscored twice.

9 William Burke (1792-1829) and William Hare (fl.1829), the murderers who smothered their victims and sold the bodies for dissection. Mrs. Grimshawe, whom Charles names in his next line, is unidentified. He names a Mrs. Scrimpshaw, also in connection with Mrs. Reynolds, in his letter to Sarah James postmarked December 31, 1828, but published in *The Letters of Charles Lamb* (1935), III, 217, under the conjectured assigned date of April 16, 1829.

WORDSWORTH'S LAST RETREAT

Richard Gravil

> Effort, and expectation, and desire,
> And something evermore about to be.
> Prelude 6: 541-2

> Aye, think on that, my Heart, and cease to stir;
> Pause upon that, and let the breathing frame
> No longer breathe, but all be satisfied.
> Home at Grasmere 99-101

Why, after the completion of the Thirteen-Book Prelude of 1805, and the Poems of 1807, did Wordsworth's powers as a poet go into precipitate decline? The question is one of the oldest of critical chestnuts, and perhaps it has been roasted more than enough. In any case, we are rightly more concerned with the prior question: why, between the ages of twenty-three and thirty-eight, was Wordsworth so astonishingly innovative? To have written 'The Ruined Cottage', *Lyrical Ballads, The Prelude* and the *Poems in Two Volumes* is surely enough? By what standard of human creativity could any more be asked of a single poet?

Nonetheless, I propose to give the chestnut a further stir. The greatness of *The Prelude* increases year by year as it is studied under new aspects, and there is something about the nature of its greatness - as a document which has to do with human growth, freedom and creativity, and specifically the retention of such powers in the teeth of temporal attrition - which makes the question more, rather than less, pertinent. A theme of *The Prelude* is that of 'human nature faithful to herself/Under worst trials' (10: 488). Wordsworth speaks of his days as being 'bound each to each by natural piety'. Yet his biography is held, rightly or wrongly, to exemplify a

falling off, an atrophy, even an apostasy, Does it? And if so, how, when, and why?

The question is unanswerable, or course. A full attempt to treat the matter justly would require a volume. One would need to ponder too many imponderables and define too many undefinables. The definitive approach would have to establish the point at which (if there is a point at which) Wordsworth's production of great poetry ceased or faltered. What, in any case, can 'great' mean, objectively? Arnold had some idea what he meant, and he even set signposts around a 'great decade', one of his most influential critical acts. But that decade has proved elastic. Arnold's dates were 1798-1808. For many modern readers, however, Wordsworth's great period begins as early as 1793. Some would extend it to 1815, making a double decade rather longer than Shakespeare's. (The Salisbury Plain poetry of 1793-4, to my eyes, marks a new era in poetry; and on what grounds might one dismiss *The Excursion*, given its standing in the eyes of Keats and Shelley?) Is it possible to say that at some particular point, Wordsworth's life as a passionate and radical being came to an end? Even if we could, what kind of correlation would we expect to see between existential atrophy and poetic decline? For instance, was the man who finished *The Prelude* in 1805 still at the height of his creative powers? still to be trusted with the revision of earlier poetry? still living the kind of imaginative life the poem celebrates?

A number of existing theories would also have to be reviewed. Among them, the critical hare started by H W Garrod that Wordsworth was Coleridge's creation - 'Perhaps, indeed, Coleridge's greatest work is Wordsworth, and like all his other work, Coleridge left it unfinished' - so that the 'decline' and the estrangement from Coleridge are synchronous.[1] This theory is still alive, well, and living in Oxbridge, despite its failure to accord with biography. Wordsworth's output before the intimacy with Coleridge includes the Salisbury Plain poetry, *The Borderers* and 'The Ruined Cottage': the productivity and rising power suggested by these works of 1793-97 continues unabated, in Coleridge's company or not, well into the next decade. One might argue - as indeed did Coleridge - that it was Wordsworth's poetry which fed Coleridge's theoretical flowering, rather than the other way about. Indeed one could point to the profoundly original art of 'The Ruined Cottage' as an illustration of Wordsworth's native powers, and to *The Excursion* as an illustration of what happened when Coleridge undertook to guide him, and argue that Coleridge was Wordsworth's undoing. In some measure, indeed, I will suggest this was the case - without wishing to replace one travesty by another. There is something in Garrod's case, however. Coleridge gave Wordsworth the gift of generous friendship, as *The Prelude*'s choice of confessor testifies. If, after the estrangement from Coleridge, Wordsworth sank 'deeper and deeper into ordinariness', the estrangement may well be part of the explanation.

Another theory - much reviled, but with more to recommend it - is the one put forward by Herbert Read. Read's *Wordsworth* (1930) is built, it is true, on an over-reaction to the then new discovery of a Caroline Wordsworth, but its argument remains interesting. Briefly, Read argues that Wordsworth's affair with Annette Vallon was of great significance in the poet's emotional life; that grief and guilt and helplessness are the principle strands in Wordsworth's emotional crisis; that the poet's political change of heart was caused by a subconscious desire to identify with Annette (who was, of course, a Royalist); that gradually - and F M Todd concurs in this

- he came to associate the revolution and personal liberty with seduction and desertion.[2] As Wordsworth succeeds in attaining some measure of psychological equilibrium in the Alfoxden period, he was also, says Sir Herbert, 'losing Annette, his faith in youth and change, his fundamental honesty'.[3] This theory is certainly not baseless (how else does one account for the extent to which desertion and destitution figure in Wordsworth's poetry?): but it claims to account for too much, too soon, and too simply. Read's Wordsworth suffered an 'extinction of passion', and buried his past in 'a long-sustained hypocrisy' (pp.71, 117). There are those who feel that Wordsworth would have been a more honest poet if he had spent his married life celebrating in poetry his love for Annette, and Read seems to join Salvador de Madariaga in that company. But most of us, I imagine, share Legouis' view of Wordsworth's pleasing frankness in the matter, and would not feel that a poet's integrity depends upon how frankly he chronicles his emotional history in print. A lesser poet might have done so, sparing neither Annette, nor Mary. Mary, incidentally, is another casualty of Read's approach. His book shares the assumption, which is still prevalent, that Wordsworth's marriage was arid. How this view can survive a reading of 'She was a Phantom of Delight' has always mystified me. One can but hope that wider dissemination of the William/Mary letters will dispel the impression that the Wordsworths' marriage was, from its inception, a matter of 'calm of mind, all passion spent' (see *The Love Letters of William and Mary Wordsworth*, ed. Beth Darlington).

Nonetheless, a retreat from impulse and sensual passion is corroborated in too many ways for one to discount it. The self-righteous attitude Wordsworth took towards De Quincey's marriage in 1817 shows a palpable crustiness. Haydon's report of Wordsworth's disapproval of a statue showing Cupid and Psyche embracing may or may not mean something: "After looking for some time, he turned round to me with an expression I shall never forget, and said, 'The Dev-ils'". Haydon could have missed, as most Southerners did, Wordsworth's dour humour.[4] But one must resist the temptation to suppose that if Wordsworth is admirable, and Rabelais is admirable, then Wordsworth is therefore Rabelaisian. Wordsworth in his late forties was no longer committed to the language of the sense as his 'anchor...guide...guardian... and soul of all my moral being'.

Some other theories are worth recalling. William Minto suggested, very plausibly, that the 'decline' had to do with the slow progress of *The Excursion* (and 'The Recluse') after 1807, and that this work sapped his will and energy.[5] But why should the progress have been slow? Melvyn Rader suggests that poetic power departed along with his 'naturalistic faith'. Harold Bloom finds that a naturalistic faith must necessarily end in 'Ulro' (Blake's state of single vision), so that Wordsworth's problem was his commitment to 'Beulah': his vision could not withstand 'the lengthening shadow of organic mortality'. Bernard Blackstone, in a sympathetic essay on 'The Life of Things', says that Wordsworth became suspicious of feeling. N P Stallknecht argues that the poet became too anxious 'for absolute certainty in matters moral and political'. Most of these ideas, however, describe rather than explain.[6] Only Read attempts to deal with the question 'why?'.

Read's Wordsworth, however, is not the one we find in the biographies. The thorough-going conservatism, the thick shell of convention, and the life-long hypocrisy of his subject are not corroborated by Edith Batho, or Mary Moorman, or F M Todd. Readers of Edith Batho's *The Later Wordsworth* will

remember the variety of testimony given there concerning Wordsworth's "social geniality", his "massive individuality", and - as John Stuart Mill put it, the "sense of freedom" in the poet's home.[7] The tenancity of Wordsworth's loyalty to France, and the startlingly unrevisionist nature of his *Prelude* account of his revolutionary sympathies, are now more widely recognised. Todd's study of Wordsworth's later politics gives evidence of his sustained anti-monarchism, and puts his opposition to the Reform Bill and even Catholic Emancipation in a more favourable light than at first seems possible.[8] Sharing Dickens's suspicion of class-based unions, Wordsworth nevertheless sees that the combinations of masters have to be opposed, and argues, in the 1835 Postscript, that a combination of Owenism with the formation of joint stock companies is the proper strategy. In the same essay, in which the phrase "mere rights of property" recalls his 1798 Goody Blake and Harry Gill sentiments, he argues the necessity for the state to provide for the welfare of the people, and combats two still current myths - that the unemployed are work shy, and that assistance to feed one's children somehow weakens the moral fibre.

If there is less to account for than Read supposes, there is also, of course, more to account for it. The Wordsworth who so disillusioned Keats had lost a beloved brother in 1805, and two children in 1812. He had endured years of critical hostility, and devoted the better part of two decades to a poem that could not be written. In the 1820s and beyond, as Wordsworth began to receive the acclaim that was his due, and learned how to elude the shadow of the Recluse, the signs of siege mentality begin to fall away. It may, of course, be significant that in 1820 the famous meeting took place in Paris between the Wordsworths, Annette and Caroline, and a bemused Crabb Robinson. Certainly it is significant that in the 'twenties Wordsworth indulged his wanderlust on a liberating scale - making five long tours in the company of friends, and many shorter trips of a mere (by this wanderer's standards) two or three months duration. The Duddon, Wales, the Rhine and Italy, again and again in the later poetry, seem to have power to rouse Wordsworth into vision. Away from graveyard memorials, ecclesiastical history, and a landscape over-burdened with names, Wordsworth seems surprised by poetry, encountering afresh some of his earliest and most deeply felt themes.[9]

The residual problem is best formulated by Mary Moorman, who says that Wordsworth's attitude became "governed too much by fear of consequences and too little by hope" (*Wordsworth: Later Years*, p.363), and by Todd, who comments that "A preoccupation with the dangerous possibilities of change, a concentration upon the risk rather than the goal, can of course lead to the most unattractive of political positions" (*Politics and the Poet*, p.204). In a speculation on what is necessary in the pursuance of political truth Martin Buber says something rather similar. One either plunges, or one dies "an inward death". "There is only one chance; but there is no other. The risk does not ensure the truth for us; but it, and it alone, leads to where the breath of truth is to be felt".[10]

Such remarks may well remind us of Wordsworth's own position, in *The Prelude*. There, and indeed in the racier parts of *The Excursion*, too, our life belongs with expectation, with aspiration. An existing individual needs:

> His blind desires and steady faculties
> Capable of clear truth, the one to break
> Bondage, the other to build liberty
> On firm foundations...(*Prelude*, 9:357f).

He is equipped by Nature with "That energy by which he seeks the truth" as well as "that happy stillness of the mind/Which fits him to receive it when unsought" (13: 8f). Even the Pastor recognises that "energy to conquer and repel" declares "the native grandeur of the soul" (*Excursion*, 6:664). The marriage of reason and energy is cooler than Blake's, but equally central.

The Prelude, indeed, seems to me to be a poem which celebrates the autonomy and liberty of the moral subject with epic tenacity. Its first two books recall the gradual realisation by the growing youth of his "magisterial liberty" (3:372). Books three and four attest the authenticity of the subject: its capacity to detect and escape the labyrinths of self-deception and social vanity represented by Cambridge. After a fifth book which generalises about the trustworthiness of instinct and imagination, *The Prelude* exposes its hero to three models of humanity: that of "human nature seeming born again" (6:341); humanity "melted and reduced to one identity" (7:725); and man "wedded to his life of hope and hazard" (8:253). Between the models of France and Cumbria, not even London can overthrow Wordsworth's trust "In what we may become" (8:650).

Phase three (Books 9, 10-11) depicts a crisis both personal and historical. Amid terror and confusion Wordsworth nevertheless speaks "Of fortitude and energy and love, /And human nature faithful to herself, /Under worst trials" (10:488). The fourth phase consists of a triad of affirmation in which Wordsworth progresses from a review of the sources of his own strength (Book 12), to a celebration of "men who are their own upholders" (13:261), which phrase recalls the diverse human cast of the poem, from Gustavus and Wallace of Book 1, through Beaupuy and Louvet in France, the Artificer and the Discharged Soldier, to Newton and the poet himself.

The theme I take to be the autonomy and durability of the human creature, who grows and is sustained in and by a dialectic of liberty and love, in which dialectic the conflict of desire and duty is resolved. The closing theme of *The Prelude*, after all, is Duty, or as Coleridge glossed it (in "To William Wordsworth") "chosen laws controlling choice". I am not, then, one of those who find a contradiction between *The Prelude* and the poems of 1804-6 which are so often taken as expressing a recantation of the longer poem's concept of liberty. The Ode to Duty, the Elegaic Stanzas, and the "Character of the Happy Warrior", indeed, I read as confirming and enriching that concept. "Paramount impulse" may supersede "the weight of chance desires," and "smoother walks" may be spurned for the paths of duty in these poems, but neither chance nor smoothness are conspicuous motifs in *The Prelude*. The Elegaic Stanzas do involve a repudiation, however:

> Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
> Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
> Such happiness, wherever it be known,
> Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But where, in Wordsworth, do we find the heart that lives alone, at distance from the kind? Not in the Salisbury Plain poetry, or *The Borderers*, or the *Lyrical Ballads*, or *The Prelude*. If the embrace of "fortitude, and patient cheer,/ And frequent sights of what is to be borne!" repudiates a poetic self, that self seems to me to be the one which at a particular moment in 1800 expressed the desire to be

> Entrenched, say rather peacefully embowered

and entertained "as in a placid sleep".[11]

Wordsworth's assumption of the station of "a poet living in retirement" was not made without misgivings, as "Home at Grasmere" itself suggests. The withdrawal "from the contemplation of immediate causes, which are infinitely complex and uncertain, to muse on fundamental and general causes, the 'causae causarum'" (Coleridge to George Coleridge, April 1798) is a Coleridgean not a Wordsworthian movement - but I do not wish to blame Coleridge for all of Wordsworth's mistakes. Wordsworth's physical withdrawal from the world may have been motivated by a sense that his poetic integrity would be best served by it. In retirement he could nurse his private sense of the world's need and communicate in all its freshness the vision he had seen (v. lines 885-7). Too much involvement in day to day distractions, or in good causes, may dissipate creative gifts. And what, indeed, *do* his poems have to do with "routs, dinners, morning calls...with a life without love?", as he asked Lady Beaumont in 1807.

Yet, even as Wordsworth retreats to Grasmere he is aware of the choice that may be involved. "In this world we have to choose either love, which is suffering, or happiness", says Miguel de Unamuno.[12] The choice of poetry involves - as Keats, ironically, learned from Wordsworth - choosing "the giant agony of the world". That recognition, implicit in passages of "Home at Grasmere", is affirmed in "Peele Castle" six years later, when, also, the "unreproved delight" of the former poem is formally reproved in revision (MS.B. 877). Furthermore, as Minto pointed out in his still vivid essay of 1889, "Solitude may have restored and husbanded his strength...but communion with man seems to have been necessary to quicken his blood".[13] Retirement, or "sloth", as de Unamuno more bluntly says (and as this critic can feelingly corroborate), "while it professes to preserve us by economising our forces, in reality attenuates us and reduces us to nothing".

Neither solitude nor indolence was Wordsworth's conscious aim when he turned to Grasmere. In part he hoped to collect about him what used to be called an intentional community of vital spirits, in which "the true Community" (line 819) of native Cumbrians would be leavened by selected offcomers - "And others whom we love/ Will seek us also" (868-9). There is an argument - albeit a late one, with all that such revision implies - that his sense of mission, in this pantisocracy of the fells, would sufficiently preserve him from attenuation. There would be no want "of foes/ To wrestle with, and victory to complete,/ Bounds to be leapt and darkness to explore." (946-8).

I do not therefore entirely agree with Eugene Stelzig, who sees "Home at Grasmere", I think unequivocally, as one more step toward *The Excursion*'s "sublime attractions of the grave".[14] Nevertheless, this first instalment of "The Recluse" is one of the most alarming, as well as one of the most beautiful things Wordsworth ever wrote. In its first two hundred lines there are enough expressions of luxurious quietism to point clearly to a dangerous self-deception in Wordsworth's choice. Here, he says (and one shares this temptation, too),

> Should be my home, this Valley be my World.(43)...
>
> Aye, think on that, my Heart, and cease to stir;
> Pause upon that, and let the breathing frame
> No longer breathe, but all be satisfied...(99-101)
>
> Embrace me then, ye Hills, and close me in (129)

Certainly, there is beauty, and an overwhelming sense of the loveliness of Grasmere -

> But I would call thee beautiful, for mild
> And soft and gay and beautiful thou art (133-4)

but there is a disturbing sense, too, of exclusiveness; of delight in something "that is here...here only; or in chosen minds/ That take it with them hence, where'er they go" (159-60). Not merely is the sentiment avaricious. It appears to find in Grasmere, most ominously, a substitute for imagination. For it is welcomed as:

> A termination and a last retreat,
> A Centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
> A Whole without dependence or defect,
> Made for itself and happy in itself,
> Perfect Contentment, Unity entire. (166-70)

The trap of Beulah is well sprung indeed, and threatening to become, as Blake thought (in M H Abrams' summary) "an habitual refuge from 'intellectual war', that creative strife of contraries in the strenuous life of intellect and imagination".[15]

Wordsworth's poems of 1805-6 do seem to record in genuine gratitude his deliverance from this trap. But was it a trap from which Wordsworth's imagination could escape in its full power? Let us look at a lengthier passage from the middle section of the poem. "Hail", says Wordsworth, to Grasmere,

> And to whatever else of outward form
> Can give us inward help, can purify,
> And elevate, and harmonise, and soothe,
> And steal away, and for a while *deceive*
> And lap in pleasing rest, and bear us on
> *Without desire* in full complacency,
> Contemplating *perfection absolute*
> And entertained as in a *placid sleep* (390-97)

That procession of verbs involves a faint parody of Wordsworth's more whole philosophy, vitiated by a languor which infects the rhythms of the verse. Where else does Wordsworth express a desire to be deceived? Or to enter a 'placid sleep' so little distinguished from the 'sleep of death'? How feebly that contemplation 'without desire' of 'perfection absolute' contrasts with the essentially Romantic pursuit of "something evermore about to be". The desire expressed in this passage is a ready temptation for poets who contemplate pure Being, but only a temptation, for the quintessentially Romantic plot involves the discovery that man's realm is that of Becoming, to which realm the seeker, chastened, returns. This, Wordsworth told himself (875ff), was his intention.

The temptation, one should recognise, is frequently encountered in Wordsworth's poetry, even, and perhaps especially, when that poetry is at its best. The schoolboy felt - or is remembered as having felt - the call of seclusion, on hearing a wren among the ruins of Furness Abbey:

> -yet still
> So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible bird
> Sang to itself, that there I could have made
> My dwelling place, and lived for ever there
> To hear such music (*Prelude* 2: 131-5).

That impression, however, while not fleeting in itself - as a spot of time

it is timeless - derives its poignancy from the fleetingness of the impressions, themselves repeated, within which it is embedded. In the imaginative structure of this delectable spot, the still point derives its charge from the turning wheel.

The oceanic mood, for Wordsworth, tends to involve a sense of generation. One may be laid asleep in body and become a living soul, but there ("Tintern Abbey") sleep is a threshold, not an end, and the movement is from confinement to liberation. Paradoxically, in those Wordsworthian cleansings of the gates of perception which constitute the spots of time, it is most often the ministry of sense which suspends the tyranny of sense. It is the absence of the critical first term, whether the pressure of sense or the burden of the mystery, that makes the "Home at Grasmere" raptures so disconcertingly sterile. Without the sense of lack, or threat, or disequilibrium, however subliminal, which is so often involved in the inception of Wordsworth's imaginative motions, there is no kinesis. Even the prison motif undergoes a reverse of polarity, from repulsion to attraction.

"Wo geh'n wir denn hin?/ Immer nach hause", says Novalis. The journey home is certainly a Romantic theme, as Abrams has shown. And Heidegger, in the essay "Remembrance of the poet", speaks of Homecoming as "a return to the proximity of the source" by one who has been a wanderer (as Wordsworth, in all his best poetry, most essentially was), in order to experience "what the nature of the Sought-For might be, and thus be able to come back more experienced, as the Seeker".[16] It can be the task of the poet, as homecomer, Heidegger confirms, "to exist in that Joy which preserves in words the mystery of proximity to the Most Joyous". Such, probably, was Wordsworth's intention and ideal. But how confident was he, and on what ground? His finest poetry to date - and beyond - had been that of a wanderer, whether on Salisbury Plain, around the British Isles, or through France and over the Alps. All of the Goslar poetry - including the Two-part Prelude - is a poet's home thoughts from abroad. We have his own confession, too, that the wars and his own lack of means foiled his other, and I think truer, instinct to remain a wanderer. The Grasmere embowerment, so ominously called "a last retreat", was not his first. But earlier retreats find poetic celebration in the opening "escape" motif of the *Prelude*, in terms of expanded - not constricted - choice, and in vernal, not wintry, metaphor.

I suppose my suspicion of the "Home at Grasmere" poetry and temper is based upon hindsight. We who have read - as Wordsworth then had not - *The Excursion*, know how easily the poetry of pastures can degenerate into the poetry of Pastors, especially when complacency of mood becomes associated with complacency of mode. Those who move directly from the experiential confession of *The Prelude* to the "eloquent harangues" and "aptly chosen strains" of *The Excursion* (Wordsworth phrases) will remember the shock - to the ear, especially - of moving from the unutterable to the unspeakable. The poet of Becoming, and of self-inquisition, and of encounter, takes up - without ever, it seems, consciously registering the change - the mode of 'spectator ab extra' and of spiritual adviser to the more select classes of poetical readers.

Not least disturbing, in *The Excursion*, is the ease with which, in Pastoral guise, Wordsworth learns to patronise his earlier self. The Solitary is there to demonstrate the renovation which may be brought to enfeebled power "From this communion with uninjured minds" (9:785). Yet the dialogue of the

poem takes fire only when the Solitary speaks, and brings to the poem a mind in which there are still open questions, and am empirical grasp of the world about him. He imports echoes of a kind of energy which the Wanderer and the Pastor - too uninjured, too smug, and too anxious to bully the Solitary into right thinking - absorb complacently like blotting paper. Reading *The Excursion* one sees too well what Keats meant. The Solitary,

> Shrinking from admonition, like a man
> Who feels that to exhort is to reproach (4:257-8)

brings into focus the complete failure in Wordsworth of self-irony. In the same book the Wanderer pauses to contemplate a scene before him "Through consciousness that silence in that place/ Was best, the most affecting eloquence" (4:414). But he resumes, alas, his speech a violation of place and of the needs of his listener, and of the maieutic deployment of silence which Wordsworth himself once commanded.

You may be familiar with this *Prelude* twilight:

> But, ere the fall
> Of night, when in our pinnace we returned
> Over the dusky lake, and to the beach
> Of some small island steered our course with one,
> The Minstrel of our Troop, and left him there,
> And rowed off gently, while he blew his flute
> Alone upon the rock - oh, then, the calm
> And dead still water lay upon my mind
> Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
> Never before so beautiful, sank down
> Into my heart, and held me like a dream. (2:170-80)

Here is the Excursionary equivalent:

> - Already had the sun,
> Sinking with less than ordinary state,
> Attained his western bound; but rays of light -
> Now suddenly diverging from the orb
> Retired behind the mountain-tops or veiled
> By the dense air - shot upwards to the crown
> Of the blue firmament - aloft, and wide:
> And multitudes of little floating clouds,
> Through their ethereal texture pierced - ere we,
> Who saw, of change were conscious - had become
> Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised, - ...
>
> (*Exc*. 9:590-633, p.284)

The sight itself, though splendid, is optical rather than visionary, and almost clinically devoid of sensation. Its significance is supplied by the Pastor in an all-too-audible transport -

> While from the grassy mountain's open side
> We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent
> On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
> Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
> The Priest in holy transport thus exclaimed:
>
> 'Eternal Spirit! universal God!
> Power inacessible to human thought,

> Save by degrees and steps which thou has deigned
> To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,
> To the infirmity of mortal sense
> Vouchsafed; this local transitory type
> Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
> Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
> The radiant Cherubim; - accept the thanks
> Which we, thy humble Creatures, here convened,
> Presume to offer;... (9: 590-633)

This "vesper service" (as line 755 unironically terms it) runs for a further one hundred and thirty lines. It is - and one says this with commingled sadness and a sense of outrage - perhaps the first recorded instance of noise pollution in the Lakes.

The sixth book of *The Excursion* reaches a high point with the tale of Ellen, a good story well told in the style of Margaret, though not, as the Vicar admits with a nervous glance in the direction of Coleridge, "by me/ Repeated without loss of simple phrase" (6:889). It is a tale of illegitimacy, desertion, and infant mortality. Two judgements are offered on the events described. One is Ellen's own:

> "He who afflicts me knows what I can bear" (6:1046)

It is a moving line, theology apart. Ellen is sickening to death, having lost her child, and as Ellen's state of mind is obviously part of the story we find the utterance true and aesthetically bearable. But the 'blameless' Wanderer joins in.

> He was it who first broke
> The pensive silence, saying:- "Blest are they
> Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong
> Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have erred.

- (his reading in *The Borderers* seems to have left little mark) -

> This tale gives proof that Heaven most gently deals
> With such, in their affliction." (6:1069-73)

"Such", meaning sinners like Ellen.

It is not merely a poetic gaffe one recoils from at this point. One's disgust involves a moral judgement. What revolts one is the degradation of human stories, which once would have become Lyrical Ballads, into 'cases' for pontification. The poet no longer seems able to see without judging. His reverence has given way to sympathy, and patronage.

If my transition from "Home at Grasmere" to *The Excursion* - with the no doubt transparent motive of finding in the mental pose of the one, a key to the revulsion occasioned by the other - seems as yet somewhat arbitrary, my next transition may clarify matters. We read on, from Ellen, and the Wanderer recalls one whose offence was heavier far. Where, he asks the Vicar,

> Where, Sir, I pray you, where are laid the bones
> Of Wilfred Armathwaite? (1078-9)

The answer, as it appears in *The Excursion*, is, if anything, less self-righteous than in its "Home at Grasmere" form. Neither version has much to recommend it, beyond its cautionary moral, but the obtrusiveness of the moralising is greater in the source. There, not merely the adulterous

husband, but the worthless maid, and the showy wife feel the poet's tongue.

> Active, prompt,
> And lively was the Housewife, in the Vale
> None more industrious; but her industry
> Was of that kind, 'tis said, which tended more
> To splendid neatness, to a showy trim,
> And overlaboured purity of house
> Than to substantial thrift.

Time was, when that "'tis said" - in an Alfoxden poem - would have signalled an ironic placing of the speaker.

> He, on his part
> Generous and easy minded, was not free
> From carelessness...

His "decay" occupies some thirty lines of verse, or versified hearsay, before the moral is iambically intoned:

> But this is sure: he died of his own grief,
> He could not bear the weight of his own shame.
> (MS.B.469-532)

In assuming, or trying to assume, "the station of a man in mental repose, one whose principles were made up, and so prepared to deliver upon authority" such moral strictures upon his neighbours, Wordsworth was following his philosophical friend's instructions, as far as he was able. He was also doing himself profound damage as a poet. His best poetry derives from direct experience, recollected at whatever interval, or from imaginative empathy with that of encountered beings. In 1800 he made a choice between - to put it with extreme crudity - living his life, or writing about it. For five years or so he retains the creative sensibility to transform the experience of his more vivid past into great poetry, but in time - as Kierkegaard could have warned him - he came to rue his choice. By 1805-6, when he is fully aware of the threat to his imaginative vitality, it is not merely his experiential 'capital' which is exhausted, but the very power to experience. The poetic fruits of his reappraisal - at least for the next decade - are sparse indeed. One prose fruit is the extraordinary pamphlet on *The Convention of Cintra*, which is perhaps Wordsworth's last poem on the grand scale.

In the *Cintra*, with whatever hesitation, he did two things, both essential to his poetic existence. He committed himself to the current of the world, and spoke with passion of his own identity in a risk-for-truth. The work is possessed by vigour of thought and vigour of rhythm in a way *The Excursion* never rises to except in similar political argument. I give a few instances:

> The first end to be secured by Spain is riddance of the enemy: the second, permanent independence: the third a free constitution of government...
>
> The cause of the people...is safe while it remains not only in the bosom but in the hands of the people...
>
> The whole people is their army, and their true army is the people, and nothing else.[17]

The effect is of a resurrection of a Wordsworth who had not stirred since the early 1790s, a pamphleteering version of one of those heroes whose

names roll off the tongue in Book 1 of *The Prelude*.

At the end of the tract is a passage which rises, as the prose often does, to a philosophic view of man. It includes one striking sentence of some 300 words, in answer to the charge that the hearts of men "languish" and are slow "to answer to the requisitions of things". But, says Wordsworth:

> The history of all ages; tumults after tumults; wars, foreign or civil, with short or with no breathing-spaces, from generation to generation; wars - why and wherefore? yet with courage, and perseverance, with self-sacrifice, with enthusiasm - with cruelty driving forward the cruel man from its own terrible nakedness, and attracting the more benign by the accompaniment of some shadow which seems to sanctify it; the senseless weaving and interweaving of factions - vanishing and reviving and piercing each other like the Northern Lights; public commotions, and those in the bosom of the individual; the long calenture of fancy to which the Lover is subject; the blast, like the blast of the desart, which sweeps perennially through a frightful solitude of its own making in the mind of the Gamester; the slowly quickening but ever quickening descent of appetite down which the Miser is propelled; the agony and cleaving oppression of grief; the ghost-like hauntings of shame; the incubus of revenge; the life-distemper of ambition; - these inward existences, and the visible and familiar occurrences of daily life in every town and village; the patient curiosity and contagious acclamations of the multitude in the streets of the city and within the walls of the theatre; a procession, or a rural dance; a hunting, or a horse-race; a flood, or a fire; rejoicing and ringing of bells for an unexpected gift of good fortune, or the coming of a foolish heir to his estate; - *these demonstrate incontestibly that the passions of men* (I mean, the soul of sensibility in the heart of man) - in all quarrels, in all contests, in all quests, in all delights, in all employments which are either sought by men or thrust upon them - *do immeasurably transcend their objects*.

What is wrong, he contests, is that "the demands of action...so rarely correspond with the dignity and intensity of human desires". The sentence possesses a rhythm that is the rhythm of mounting insight, set down as though in the experiential form in which the data surged through the receptive mind. It gives, as *The Excursion* does not, a simultaneous sense of a passionate and comprehensive intelligence, and of the vivid inexhaustible world on which that intelligence is acting. Released, temporarily, from his role as a fugitive and cloistered poet, his revivified powers may strike us as assuming too baroque- too Miltonic - a style for his own age or for ours. But in what other guise could he risk evading Coleridge's prohibition against involvement again in that world which is the world of all of us, wherein we find our happiness or not at all?

Elians may notice in that Wordsworthian eulogy of human variety - especially if its rhythms are listened for - a resemblance to a well-known text by their patron cherub. I mean the 1801 letter in which Lamb declines an invitation to the Lakes.

> But I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a Journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life.
>
> I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you mountaineers can have done with

> dead nature. The Lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses, all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden, the very women of the Town, the Watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles, - life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the very dirt & mud, the Sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print shops, the old book stalls, parsons cheap'ning books, coffee houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes, London itself a pantomime and a masquerade, -

Is there not a structural, rhythmic and thematic kinship? Was Wordsworth's ear remembering?

I find that letter, sometimes quoted in evidence of Lamb's lack of sympathy with Wordsworth, the most beautifully turned of compliments. For Lamb's arguments are couched in terms which show a perfect sympathy with the Wordsworthian psychology of how the mind and its environs interact. He goes on:

> - all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me, without a power of satiating me.
>
> ...But consider, what must I have been doing all my life not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?
>
> ...Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the Mind will make friends of anything.

Wordsworth's most consistently perceptive and genial critic could not have penned that letter without knowing how it would delight its recipient. While the *Cintra* is sterner stuff, it may be seen as repaying, with usury, that instalment of Elian zest. Take away the sense of involvement in human affairs, Wordsworth concedes, "and the moral being would die within us". Did the course and demands of poetic retirement, then, fail to correspond with the dignity and intensity of the poetic calling? If so, it is not in 1815, or in 1807, but in 1800, as Wordsworth turns aside from "the tribes/ And fellowships of men" (1016-7) that we may find the origins of his poetic occlusion.

NOTES

1 H W Garrod. *Wordsworth: Lectures and Essays*, 1923, p.30.

2 F M Todd, *Politics and the Poet*, 1957, p.41.

3 Herbert Read, *Wordsworth*, 1965, p.97.

4 See Mary Moorman, *Wordsworth: Later Years*, and *The Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, ed. Willard Bissell Pope, vol.2. If Haydon's implication is correct, and if the statue was - as is conjectured - that by Canova, Wordsworth's remark is so inept as to call into doubt his moral as well as aesthetic judgement.

5 Minto's essay is collected in A W Thomson, ed., *Wordsworth's Mind and Art*, 1969.

6 Melvyn Rader, *Wordsworth: a Philosophical Approach*, 1967, p.204. Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company*, 1962, p.26. Blackstone's essay is collected in A W Thomson above. Newton P Stallknecht, *Strange Seas of Thought*, 1945, p.30.

7 Edith Batho, *The Later Wordsworth*, 1933, pp.10-11, 37, 15.

8 Todd, pp.183-6, 192-3.

9 See Geoffrey Hartman's essay "Blessing the Torrent: Wordsworth's Later Style", *PMLA* for a remarkable study of this phenomenon in the sonnet "To the Torrent at Devil's Bridge".

10 *Between Man and Man*, translated by Ronald Gregor Smith, 1961, p.95.

11 *Home at Grasmere*, ed. Beth Darlington, 1977. Quotations from the MS.B text, with the exception of "Entrenched...", MS.D. line 76.

12 *The Tragic Sense of Life*, 1962, p.204.

13 Thomson, p.24.

14 Eugene Stelzig, *All Shades of Consciousness*, 1975, pp.187-9.

15 *Natural Supernaturalism*, 1971, p.261.

16 "Remembrance of the Poet", translated by Douglas Scott, in *Existence and Being*, 1949, p.278-9.

17 *Prose Works*, ed. W J B Owen and Jane Smyser, 1974, vol.1, pp.322, 318, 233.

Based on a lecture given to the Society on 6 November, 1982. Dr Gravil is on the staff of the English Department at the College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth, and was Co-Editor of the Macmillan Casebook on The Prelude.

BOOK REVIEW

Claude A Prance: *Companion to Charles Lamb*. London: Mansell 1983. £18.50. Distributed in the United States and Canada by The H W Wilson Company, NY 10452.

Members will give a particular welcome to this book, both because it is by Mr Prance, a long-standing and respected member of the Charles Lamb Society who has over the years contributed generously to the pages of this *Bulletin*, and because the book itself is what we have always wanted and needed: what we might call 'an encyclopaedic survey of the Elian ambience'.

In an alphabetical list we have everything we want to know about Lamb, his friends and the places connected with him. Indeed, the sub-title of the book is 'A Guide to People and Places, 1760-1847' and that is most accurate. You will note that the dates, if not quite those of Mary Lamb's birth and death, at least cover the whole of her life, and that is a guarantee that she has not been overlooked: as Lamb's best and dearest friend she takes a central place in the book. As one might expect, among the people, theatre folk figure almost as largely as literary ones. Frances Abington is the first entry in the alphabetical index and Charles Mayne Young the last, and in between there are Barrymore, Delpini, Munden and many others. Mr Prance's index lists just over 150 entries. Indeed it is hard to fault him, unless perhaps in that, among the literati, de Quincey is rather scantily treated. In fact he gets rather fewer lines than his brother 'Pink', who is recorded as having met Lamb only once, and who is remembered only for having, in the presence of Charles and Mary, squirted a mouthful of tobacco juice at a Salvator Rosa picture he didn't like. But everybody who matters seems to be there, from the great and famous even to Becky the too-faithful servant and Dash the dog.

Topographically, all the places one can think of are covered, although in terms of numbers of entries people naturally score well above places. I was particularly interested in the note on Enfield and to see that Mr Prance had found room for the Rev. Daniel Cresswell, Vicar of Enfield from 1822 to 1844. He must have done some teaching, since it was a Church school, in the Enfield Grammar School, which stands just across a pathway from the parish church, and which I entered as an undistinguished pupil in 1929, just over 100 years after the Lambs had settled in Chase Side.

Mr Prance does not exclude more modern matters: he has dedicated his book to the Charles Lamb Society, coupled with the memories of his friends the late Ernest Crowsley and the late Herbert Smith, and the index includes many references, both to articles which have appeared in *The Charles Lamb Bulletin* and its predecessor and to other matters relating to the Society and its activities; and also to the work of many other writers who have taken Lamb as their subject over the years.

Mr Prance includes an admirable sixteen page Chronology of the lives of Charles and Mary Lamb as an appendix, and also some useful family trees and maps; and there are indexes of entries relating to the theatre, art, contemporaries of Lamb, and latter-day writers about him and his period, as well as of non-biographical entries.

In his preface Mr Prance tells us that work on the *Companion* began thirty years ago. That it has been thirty years well-spent I think all will agree: that those years, many of them occupied by a full-time job, were not devoted only to this purpose is testified by the list of his own published writings which he has given in an entry under his name in the alphabetical index. (Mr Prance is a modest man, and it must have cost him quite a struggle to do this.) These include 26 full essays contributed to the *Bulletin*, seven to other periodicals, and three published books, apart from the *Companion*, the last, with Professor Riga, the admirable *Index to the London Magazine*. And, even as I have been writing, the postman has delivered the current number of *The Private Library* which contains yet another absorbing Prance essay, this time on Dorothy Osborne. This is a very honourable record, one for legitimate pride in which our Society can surely share on behalf of its member, and it is crowned by this unique and indispensible new book.

Readers will notice Professor Marrs' complimentary reference to this 'valuable work' in the notes to his article at the beginning of this *Bulletin* and praise from him is praise worth having. Surely this *Companion* is an essential addition to the libraries of any students of the Romantic period and particularly of lovers of Charles Lamb.

Basil Savage

YOUNG CHARLES LAMB 1775-1802

Our contrite apologies for an inexplicable oversight in the review of Mrs Courtney's book, by which we gave the wrong English publisher. It is, of course, Macmillan. The American price is $30 and the book has 411 pages. We regret the errors.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At this meeting, held on 7 May 1983, after the usual business, discussion centred on the Society's deficit, as shown in the Annual Accounts. The following report of the outcome has kindly been written for us by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr R Houston Wallace.

At the Annual General Meeting members gave very careful consideration to the question of future subscription rates. The cost of producing and distributing the *Bulletin* now works out at almost £6 per subscription, whereas UK subscribtions are less than this and considerably so in the case of Country Members.

As almost the whole of the general expenses of the Society is accounted for by the cost of the *Bulletin*, which applies to Country Members as much as to Town Members, it was agreed that in future the distinction between Town and Country Members should be abolished. It was further agreed that for 1984 subscriptions for UK Members should be as follows:-

Individual Members	£6 (Doubles £9)
Libraries and Institutions	£9 (previously £7.50)

Overseas subscriptions paid in dollars to remain unchanged at $12 for individuals and $18 for Libraries and Institutions, the value of these subscriptions having been considerably increased as a result of the fall in the value of the pound.

Members were very conscious of the fact that this involves doubling the subscription of Country Members but it was thought to be unrealistic to continue to provide the *Bulletin* at not much more than half its cost and members felt sure that this would be fully understood by those concerned.

NOTES

Miss E L Aveyard - a long-time member from Cheshire - has written about her volume of *The Complete Works of Charles Lamb* (ed R H Shepherd 1878) with portraits and facsimile page of 'The Dissertation on Roast Pig'. She wonders if any member would like this treasured volume as a gift. Would anyone interested please contact Madeline Huxstep (01-940 3837)? The lucky recipient may like to make a suitable donation towards the repair of books in our Library!

REGINALD L HINE, FSA, FR Hist.S (1883-1949)

We are in correspondence with Mr P R Meldrum, BA, Dip.Lib., who is researching the life and work of our late and much-loved member, Reginald Hine. Elians particularly appreciate his splendid *Charles Lamb and his Hertfordshire* but a wider public still enjoys his *Confessions of an Uncommon Attorney* and other books.

Mr Meldrum, who will be speaking to the Society on 3 March 1984 on Reginald Hine - especially with reference to Charles Lamb - will be glad to hear from members who can contribute to his researches. Mr Meldrum's address is: 12 Bowershott, Letchworth, Herts.

THE CROWSLEY MEMORIAL LECTURE

Please make a note in your diaries that the Crowsley Lecture for 1983 will be given on 1st October by Dr Robert Woof of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, who will speak on 'The Lambs and the Stoddarts'.

BOOK MARKET - From Mr D E Wickham, 116 Parsonage Manorway, Belvedere, Kent.

Wallace Nethery: Charles Lamb in America to 1848. Published in 1963 in America and in an edition of 500 copies only. 72 pages. Immaculate but for two very slightly bumped corners. £5.00 plus postage, or collect at a meeting. Please take 'no reply' to mean that the item has been sold.

At the Annual General Meeting members gave very careful consideration to the question of future subscription rates. The cost of producing and distributing the *Bulletin* now works out at almost £6 per subscription, whereas UK subscribtions are less than this and considerably so in the case of Country Members.

As almost the whole of the general expenses of the Society is accounted for by the cost of the *Bulletin*, which applies to Country Members as much as to Town Members, it was agreed that in future the distinction between Town and Country Members should be abolished. It was further agreed that for 1984 subscriptions for UK Members should be as follows:-

Individual Members	£6 (Doubles £9)
Libraries and Institutions	£9 (previously £7.50)

Overseas subscriptions paid in dollars to remain unchanged at $12 for individuals and $18 for Libraries and Institutions, the value of these subscriptions having been considerably increased as a result of the fall in the value of the pound.

Members were very conscious of the fact that this involves doubling the subscription of Country Members but it was thought to be unrealistic to continue to provide the *Bulletin* at not much more than half its cost and members felt sure that this would be fully understood by those concerned.

NOTES

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