THE CHARLES LAMB BULLETIN

The Journal of the Charles Lamb Society

NEW SERIES NO.49 *January 1985*

GOLDEN JUBILEE YEAR OF THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY

CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY.

The first meeting of the CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY
will be held on
FRIDAY, 1st FEBRUARY, 1935, at 7.30 for 8 o'clock
in the
Small Hall, Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, W.C.2
(Essex Street is nearly opposite the Law Courts)

A short address will be given on Charles Lamb, the scope of the Society outlined, and a Committee elected. It is hoped to arrange a small exhibition of Lamb's works and books about Lamb.

I trust you will be able to be present.

Yours sincerely,

ERNEST G. CROWSLEY.

RUSSELL HOUSE HOTEL,
GUILFORD STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1.

Kindly note new address

Such was the invitation to the first meeting of the Charles Lamb Society, fifty years ago. Members will find a special celebratory section after the main articles in this *Bulletin*.

A Charles Lamb Exhibition is on until 15 February at the Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London EC2P 2EJ, where our Library is housed.

CHARLES LAMB: A CELEBRATION
A DAY WITH CHARLES LAMB AND FRIENDS

The Society has arranged a Day-Conference at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, 11 South Grove, London N6 6BS, to take place on *11 MAY 1985* from 11.30 am to 5.30 pm. Speakers on Lamb will be

11.30 Barbara Hardy, Professor of English at Birkbeck College, London
3.15 Rachel Trickett, Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford

and, as suits the place and the time, so close to the sesquencentennial of both friends,

2.00 John Beer, Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge, will speak on

'Did Lamb really understand Coleridge?'

There will be a buffet lunch and an afternoon cup of tea, included in the price of ticket for the day, £6. Please apply with sae to Mrs M Wedd, 14 Valley Drive, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1EG. Cheques should be made payable to The Charles Lamb Society.

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB: TALES FROM SHAKESPEAR

The twelfth annual Ernest Crowsley Memorial Lecture, given to the Society by Professor T W Craik on 6 October 1984

Macbeth

> Jagged lightning ripped the lead sky open as it leapt for the earth, and at once the thunder bellowed out, roar on roar, like some maddened beast. Again and again the wild place flickered white with the ghastly flashes, crags and crippled trees leaping momentarily out of the murk in the harsh clarity of nightmare or fever; while the frightful crashing shook the earth without cease from horizon to horizon. In such wayward riot the bewildered senses reeled and lost their grip on reality: the wind rose and fell with the sound of voices, moaned into syllables; the shifting interchange of dark and bright peopled the waste with shapes, which moved as it seemed with their own life, clawing and writhing.
>
> High up on the heath the crags beetled over into a cup, and the trapped wind whined and fretted in a dank gloom. Here, storm and the swirling shadows of rocks and trees took on substance, thickened, were precipitated into voices and the madly cavorting shapes of weird beings, caught in some ritual of chant and grotesque dance - three voices, hardly human, three shapes who might by their aspect be female, too weird to be called women. Words rode above the thunder's brawling and the incessant lash of the storm, wailed and rhythmical from one to the other:
>
> 'When shall we three meet again
> In thunder, lightning, or in rain?'

That highly-coloured word-picture of the opening of *Macbeth*, needless to say, was *not* written by Charles Lamb. His narrative opens much more tamely:

> When Duncan the Meek reigned king of Scotland, there lived a great thane, or lord, called Macbeth. This Macbeth was a near kinsman to the king, and in great esteem at court for his valour and conduct in the wars; an example of which he had lately given, in defeating a rebel army assisted by the troops of Norway in terrible numbers.
>
> The two Scottish generals, Macbeth and Banquo, returning victorious from this great battle, their way lay over a blasted heath, where they were stopped by the strange appearance of three figures, like women, except that they had beards, and their withered skins and wild attire made them look not like any earthly creatures.

What Charles Lamb and the narrator of 1963 have in common is their purpose: to introduce young readers to Shakespeare's plays, by writing in a manner that they will understand more easily than Shakespeare's actual text. The publication of *Tales from Shakespear* at the close of 1806 (the title-page gives the date as 1807) inaugurated a tradition. It might, of course, be argued that the stage versions of Shakespeare from the Restoration onwards had also adapted him to the limited capacity of the adult spectators, but that is hardly how their authors saw them: they imagined themselves to be improving Shakespeare. So the tradition of 'Shakespeare made easy' begins in 1806 with the Lambs. Like all traditions it has some debased branches, notably the 'comic strip' version immortalized in Boris Ford's preface to all the volumes of the *Pelican Guide to English Literature*, a version in

which Lady Macbeth's 'My hands are of your colour, but I shame / To wear a heart so white' becomes 'I fixed everything.' There is a kind of awful daring in penning the phrase 'I fixed everything', and I suspect that it would have pleased Charles Lamb better than the gesticulating and vociferating landscape with which we began; but not very much. The language of the Lambs' version is at the opposite extreme. Every expression of Shakespeare's that can be retained they retain.

> In these conflicts of the mind lady Macbeth found her husband, inclining to the better part, and resolving to proceed no further. But she being a woman not easily shaken from her evil purpose, began to pour in at his ears words which infused a portion of her own spirit into his mind, assigning reason upon reason why he should not shrink from what he had undertaken; how easy the deed was; how soon it would be over; and how the action of one short night would give to all their nights and days to come sovereign sway and royalty! Then she threw contempt on his change of purpose, and accused him of fickleness and cowardice; and declared that she had given suck, and knew how tender it was to love the babe that milked her, but she would, while it was smiling in her face, have plucked it from her breast, and dashed its brains out, if she had so sworn to do it, as he had sworn to perform that murder. Then she added, how practicable it was to lay the guilt of the deed upon the drunken sleepy grooms. And with the valour of her tongue she so chastised his sluggish resolutions, that he once more summoned up courage to the bloody business.
>
> So, taking the dagger in his hand, he softly stole in the dark to the room where Duncan lay; and as he went, he thought he saw another dagger in the air, with the handle towards him, and on the blade and at the point of it drops of blood: but when he tried to grasp at it, it was nothing but air, a mere phantasm proceeding from his own hot and oppressed brain and the business he had in hand.
>
> Getting rid of this fear, he entered the king's room, whom he dispatched with one stroke of his dagger. Just as he had done the murder, one of the grooms, who slept in the chamber, laughed in his sleep, and the other cried 'Murder', which woke them both: but they said a short prayer; one of them said, 'God bless us!' and the other answered 'Amen'; and addressed themselves to sleep again. Macbeth, who stood listening to them, tried to say 'Amen,' when the fellow said, 'God bless us!' but, though he had most need of a blessing, the word stuck in his throat, and he could not pronounce it.
>
> Again he thought he heard a voice which cried, 'Sleep no more: Macbeth doth murder sleep, the innocent sleep, that nourishes life.' Still it cried, 'Sleep no more,' to all the house. 'Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more.'
>
> With such horrible imaginations, Macbeth returned to his listening wife, who began to think he had failed of his purpose, and that the deed was somehow frustrated. He came in so distracted a state, that she reproached him with his want of firmness, and sent him to wash his hands of the blood which stained them, while she took his dagger, with purpose to stain the cheeks of the grooms with blood, to make it seem their guilt.

Throughout the passage we recognize the phrases which are the landmarks of the scene; or, rather, of the *scenes*, because for reasons of economy and

continuity three dialogues of the Macbeths have been run together. No attempt is made to give a point-by-point narrative version of the drama; instead the drama is re-cast into a narrative mould, which shall be faithful to its spirit but not necessarily to its details. Sometimes this freedom goes rather far. It is not important that (at the end of the passage quoted) Lady Macbeth should *send* her husband to wash the blood from his hands while she returns the dagger (not *daggers*) and bloodies the grooms' faces (whereas in the play she returns the daggers and then *takes* him to wash their hands *together*): nor is it important that the next sentence moves the story quickly on with 'Morning came, and with it the discovery of the murder, which could not be concealed.' There is no knocking at the gate, no Porter, and (at this point in the story) no Macduff; but they can all be spared - not, of course, from the *play*, but from the narrative, which is concerned with essentials. But I am not so sure that Lamb was justified in a change he made just before this extract. In the play, after Macbeth's 'dagger' soliloquy and his exit to do the murder, Lady Macbeth enters waiting and listening. In her soliloquy she says

> I laid their daggers ready;
> He could not miss 'em. - Had he not resembled
> My father as he slept, *I* had done't.

- whereupon Macbeth re-enters from murdering Duncan. There has never been any other plan than that Macbeth should strike the blow. But in the tale Lady Macbeth, conscious that her husband's nature is too full of the milk of human kindness, plans to take the deed out of his hands:

> So with her own hands armed with a dagger, she approached the king's bed; having taken care to ply the grooms of his chamber so with wine, that they slept intoxicated, and careless of their charge. There lay Duncan, in a sound sleep after the fatigues of his journey, and as she viewed him earnestly, there was something in his face as he slept, which resembled her own father; and she had not the courage to proceed.

Lamb seems to be introducing an unnecessary complication here, and putting a much heavier emphasis on Lady Macbeth's compunction. In his version she contemplates doing the murder but stops short of it; in Shakespeare's she is so eager for the murder that she is almost carried away to do it herself - a stroke much more consistent with the ruthlessness that she opposes to her husband's moral hesitation.

So far I have talked only of *Macbeth* and only of Charles as narrator. We know from his and Mary's letters how the work was divided between them. Charles writes on 10 May 1806 to Thomas Manning (who had seen some writings of Mary's lying about on his last visit before leaving for China):

> She is doing for Godwins Bookseller 20 of Shakespears plays to be made into Childrens tales. Six are already done by her to wit The Tempest, Winters Tale, Midsummer Night, Much ado, Two Gentlemen of Verona & Cymbeline: & the Merchant of Venice is in forwardness: I have done Othello & Macbeth and mean to do all the Tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people. Besides money. It's to bring in 60 guineas: Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous Pagan Anthropophagi.

(He could not resist adding that if Manning should see 'any of those people whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders' he was to draw their picture.)

A few weeks later (30 May to 2 June 1806) Mary writes to Sarah Stoddart about their progress and their manner of work:

> Charles has written Macbeth & Othello, King Lear & has begun Hamlet. you would like to see us as we often sit writing on one table (but not on one cushion sitting) like Hermia & Helena in the Midsummer's Nights Dream. or rather like an old literary Darby and Joan. I taking snuff & he groaning all the while & saying he can make nothing of it, which he always says till he has finished and then he finds out he has made something of it.

Towards the end of June both of them write letters mentioning the *Tales*. Charles tells Wordsworth:

> Mary is just stuck fast in All's Well that Ends Well. She complains of having to set forth so many female characters in boy's clothes. She begins to think Shakspear must have wanted Imagination. - I to encourage her, for she often faints in the prosecution of her great work, flatter her with telling her how well such a play & such a play is done. But she is stuck fast & I have been obliged to promise to assist her.

On 27 June Mary tells Sarah Stoddart that Charles is just beginning a month's holiday at home,

> and during the hollidays we are both of us to set stoutly to work & finish the Tales, six of them being yet to do, we thought if we went any where and left them undone, they would lay upon our minds, and that when we returned we should feel unsettled, and our money all spent besides...

She had hoped, she says, to finish the work before the holidays, but found that having left the most difficult tales to the end she got into difficulties:

> I have finished one today which teazed me more than all the rest put together.

That this was *All's Well* appears from the continuation of the letter two days later:

> I am in good spirits just at this present time for Charles has been reading over the *Tale* I told you plagued me so much and he thinks it one of the very best. It is "All's Well that Ends Well."

By 23 October she is 'busy making waistcoats and plotting new work to succeed the Tales.'

Leaving aside, for the moment, Mary's difficulties with *All's Well* and how I think Charles overcame them, I turn to the contents of the volume. Only comedies and tragedies were included in the twenty tales: all the histories, both English and Roman, were excluded. Of the comedies only two were left out, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, perhaps because the former has hardly any plot and the latter hardly any poetry. The only two tragedies left out were *Titus Andronicus* and *Troilus and Cressida*, both for pretty obvious reasons of content. That Charles should take the six remaining tragedies and Mary the fourteen remaining comedies was a fair division of labour, since Charles could write only in the evenings and the holidays; and no doubt the comedies were more appropriate material for Mary to handle than the tragedies (*Macbeth*, with

its emphasis on the physical facts of bloodshed, would have been particularly inappropriate in view of the tragic consequences of Mary's first attack of madness).

Mary evidently found the comedies congenial. Without obtruding her comments, she slips them in so delicately that they impart a wit and a warmth to her narratives. The first tale in Volume I, *The Tempest*, shows this quality as clearly as any of them:

> Prospero kept Ferdinand not long confined within the cell: he soon brought out his prisoner, and set him a severe task to perform, taking care to let his daughter know the hard labour he had imposed on him, and then pretending to go into his study he secretly watched them both.
>
> Prospero had commanded Ferdinand to pile up some heavy logs of wood. King's sons not being much used to laborious work, Miranda soon after found her lover almost dying with fatigue. 'Alas!' said she, 'do not work so hard; my father is at his studies, he is safe for these three hours: pray, rest yourself.'
>
> 'O my dear lady,' said Ferdinand, 'I dare not. I must finish my task before I take my rest.'
>
> 'If you will sit down,' said Miranda, 'I will carry your logs the while.' But this Ferdinand would by no means agree to. Instead of a help, Miranda became a hindrance, for they began a long conversation, so that the business of log-carrying went on very slowly.
>
> Prospero, who had enjoined Ferdinand this task merely as a trial of his love, was not at his books, as his daughter supposed, but was standing by them invisible, to overhear what they said.
>
> Ferdinand inquired her name, which she told, saying it was against her father's express command she did so.
>
> Prospero only smiled at this first instance of his daughter's disobedience, for having by his magic art caused his daughter to fall in love so suddenly, he was not angry that she shewed her love by forgetting to obey his commands. And he listened well pleased to a long speech of Ferdinand's, in which he professed to love her above all the ladies he ever saw.
>
> In answer to his praises of her beauty, which he said exceeded all the women in the world, she replied, 'I do not remember the face of any woman, nor have I seen any more men than you (my good friend) and my dear father. How features are abroad, I know not; but believe me, sir, I would not wish any companion in the world but you, nor can my imagination form any shape but yours that I could like. But, sir, I fear I talk to you too freely, and my father's precepts I forget'.
>
> At this Prospero smiled, and nodded his head, as much as to say, 'This goes on exactly as I could wish; my girl will be queen of Naples.'
>
> And then Ferdinand, in another fine long speech (for young princes speak in courtly phrases), told the innocent Miranda he was heir to the crown of Naples, and that she should be his queen.
>
> 'Ah! sir,' said she, 'I am a fool to weep at what I am glad of. I will answer you in plain and holy innocence. I am your wife, if you will marry me.'

> Prospero prevented Ferdinand's thanks by appearing visible before them.
>
> 'Fear nothing, my child,' said he; 'I have overheard and approve of all you have said. And, Ferdinand, if I have too severely used you, I will make you rich amends by giving you my daughter. All your vexations were but my trials of your love, and you have nobly stood the test. Then as my gift, which your true love has worthily purchased, take my daughter, and do not smile that I boast she is above all praise.' He then, telling them that he had business which required his presence, desired they would sit down and talk together, till he returned; and this command Miranda seemed not at all disposed to disobey.

Besides showing Mary's delightful tone, this passage shows her skill in condensing drama into brief narrative, for like the dialogue between the Macbeths this dialogue is a conflation (of two scenes). The dramatic stroke of Prospero's suddenly appearing visible before them is Mary's own.

The Tempest is perhaps of all Shakespeare's plays the least complicated in intrigue, and Mary simplifies its story even further by omitting both conspiracies, that of Antonio and Sebastian against the King of Naples and that of Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo against Prospero. This elimination of anything like a subplot is a feature of the *Tales from Shakespear*. We have *The Taming of the Shrew* without Bianca's disguised suitors, *Twelfth Night* without the gulling of Malvolio, and *The Merchant of Venice* without the caskets. The story of King Lear and his daughter is not balanced by that of Gloucester and his sons: Edmund has to be included in order to explain the rivalry and deaths of Regan and Goneril, but the 'poor Bedlam-beggar' whom Lear meets in the storm is just what he seems, not Edgar in disguise. A number of other characters, specially comic ones, have to appear in this diminished way. At the rustic feast in *The Winter's Tale*,

> Some lads and lasses were dancing on the green before the house, while others of the young men were buying ribbands, gloves, and such toys, of a pedlar at the door.

This is all we hear of Autolycus (all whose earlier and later knavery must die in oblivion), and we should not hear even this if it did not prompt the conversation between Florizel and his disguised father ('When I was young I used to load my love with presents; but you have let the pedlar go, and have bought your lass no toy.' The young prince, who little thought he was talking to the king his father, replied, 'Old sir, she prizes not such trifles; the gifts which Perdita expects from me are locked up in my heart.') In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the interlude of Pyramus and Thisbe is necessarily omitted: neither its rehearsal nor its performance would have survived transplantation. But since the fairies' enchantments are indispensible to the story, and Titania's lullaby is too lovely to leave out, Mary decided to retain the quarrel between the fairy king and queen (which, since it leads to Oberon's revengeful plan, explains why he had the magic flower ready to hand when he first saw the mortal lovers). Her problem was how to introduce the ass-headed clown while causing his whole context to disappear. She solved it brilliantly. As you remember, Puck had attended the rehearsal not only as an auditor but as an actor, and clapped the ass's head on Bottom while the latter was (so to speak) waiting in the wings for his cue. This is Mary's version:

> Titania was still sleeping, and Oberon seeing a clown near her, who had lost his way in the wood, and was likewise asleep: 'This fellow', said he, 'shall be my Titania's true-love'; and clapping an ass's head over

the clown's, it seemed to fit him as well as if it had grown upon his own shoulders. Though Oberon fixed the ass's head on very gently, it awakened him, and rising up, unconscious of what Oberon had done to him, he went towards the bower where the fairy queen slept.

'Ah! what angel is that I see?' said Titania, opening her eyes, and the juice of the little purple flower beginning to take effect; 'Are you as wise as you are beautiful?'

'Why, mistress,' said the foolish clown, 'if I have wit enough to find the way out of this wood, I have enough to serve my turn.'

'Out of the wood do not desire to go,' said the enamoured queen. 'I am a spirit of no common rate. I love you. Go with me, and I will give you fairies to attend upon you.'

This is an excellent instance of the creative falsification practised by the Lambs whenever necessary.

Besides the technical problem involved in turning drama into brief narrative, the Lambs' enterprise presented them with a moral problem. They were writing for readers living two hundred years after Shakespeare's audiences; and those readers were children. Thomas Bowdler's expurgated edition of Shakespeare, designed for reading aloud in the family circle, did not appear for another dozen years (in 1818), but it is anticipated - it may even, indeed, have been inspired - by this passage from Mary's part of the Preface to the *Tales from Shakespear*:

I have wished to make these Tales easy reading for very young children. To the utmost of my ability I have constantly kept this in my mind; but the subjects of most of them make this a very difficult task. It was no easy matter to give the histories of men and women in terms familiar to the apprehension of a very young mind. For young ladies too it has been my intention chiefly to write, because boys are generally permitted the use of their fathers' libraries at a much earlier age than girls are, they frequently have the best scenes of Shakespear by heart, before their sisters are permitted to look into this manly book; and therefore, instead of recommending these Tales to the perusal of young gentlemen who can read them so much better in the originals, I must rather beg their kind assistance in explaining to their sisters such parts as are hardest for them to understand; and when they have helped them to get over the difficulties, then perhaps they will read to them (carefully selecting what is proper for a young sister's ear) some passage which has pleased them in one of these stories, in the very words of the scene from which it is taken; and I trust they will find that the beautiful extracts, the select passages, they may chuse to give their sisters in this way, will be much better relished and understood from their having some notion of the general story from one of these imperfect abridgments:-

Just so, one imagines, Fanny Price's first acquaintance with Shakespeare may have been overseen by her cousin Edmund Bertram. It is easy to scoff at the expurgation of Shakespeare, but I think Mary makes a most convincing case for it. For most of the time the necessity does not arise. Caliban's attempt (before the action of *The Tempest* begins) to violate Miranda is unexceptionably bypassed as follows:

He took him home to his cell, and taught him to speak; and Prospero would have been very kind to him, but the bad nature, which Caliban

had inherited from his mother Sycorax, would not let him learn anything good or useful; therefore he was employed like a slave, to fetch wood, and do the most laborious offices; and Ariel had the charge of compelling him to these services.

Nor is there any problem with the subject of straightforward marital jealousy such as that of Othello or Leontes, provided that attention is not drawn to the latter's reason for ordering Hermione's baby to be abandoned 'upon some desert shore to perish' (in Shakespeare's play he maintains that it is Polixenes's bastard). The problem arises with the so-called 'bed-trick' situations in *Measure for Measure* where Mariana is substituted for Isabella and in *All's Well that Ends Well* where Helena is substituted for Diana. The situation in the former play Mary confronts, quite rightly, head-on, since the whole basis of the story is that Angelo commits (or thinks he commits) the same offence for which he has condemned Claudio, and that Isabella is asked to pay an impossibly high price to save the life of her brother. The only alteration made in the tale is that Mariana has become, not Angelo's deserted betrothed, but his deserted wife. In *All's Well* Helena really is Bertram's deserted wife, but the bed-trick situation is a more delicate one. This is for the very reason that fornication (or intended fornication) is so small an ingredient in the play's whole design. Shakespeare's Bertram, obliged by the King to marry Helena (his social inferior), immediately deserts her, sending her word that he will never acknowledge her as his wife until she can both get his ring from him and prove that he has begotten a child on her. Mary suppresses this second condition, with no detriment to the story except that the fulfilment of the first condition now raises problems. In Shakespeare's play Bertram is trying to seduce Diana, an honest virgin; Helena gets Diana to demand Bertram's ring as the price of her honour, and to insist that he shall spend only an hour in her bed, neither of them speaking the while; she then duly takes Diana's place. Thus Diana gets the ring for Helena, and Helena gets the child for herself. In Mary's tale Bertram is similarly paying court to Diana, 'and all his suit to her was that she would permit him to visit her by stealth after the family were retired to rest; but Diana would by no means be persuaded to grant this improper request, nor give any encouragement to his suit, knowing that he was a married man.' For Helena's sake, however, she agrees to Bertram's nocturnal visit.

> In the course of that day Helena caused information to be sent to Bertram, that she was dead, hoping that when he thought himself free to make a second choice by the news of her death, he would offer marriage to her in the feigned character of Diana. And if she could obtain the ring and this promise too, she doubted not she should make some future good come of it.
>
> In the evening, after it was dark, Bertram was admitted into Diana's chamber, and Helena was there ready to receive him. The flattering compliments and love-discourse he addressed to Helena were precious sounds to her, though she knew they were meant for Diana; and Bertram was so well pleased with her, that he made her a solemn promise to be her husband, and to love her for ever; which she hoped would be prophetic of a real affection, when he should know it was his own wife, the despised Helena, whose conversation had so delighted him.
>
> Bertram never knew how sensible a lady Helena was, else perhaps he would not have been so regardless of her; and seeing her every day, he

> had entirely overlooked her beauty, a face we are accustomed to see constantly losing the effect which is caused by the first sight either of beauty or of plainness; and of her understanding it was impossible he should judge, because she felt such reverence, mixed with her love for him, that she was always silent in his presence; but now that her future fate, and the happy ending of all her love projects seemed to depend on her leaving a favourable impression on the mind of Bertram from this night's interview, she exerted all her wit to please him; and the simple graces of her lively conversation and the endearing sweetness of her manners so charmed Bertram, that he vowed she should be his wife. Helena begged the ring from off his finger as a token of his regard, and he gave it to her; and in return for this ring, which it was of such importance to her to possess, she gave him another ring, which was one the king had made her a present of. Before it was light in the morning, she sent Bertram away; and he immediately set out on his journey towards his mother's house.

No doubt it was this page of the tale that extricated Mary when she was 'stuck fast'. The emphasis on Helena's wit and charm, and the explanation of Bertram's unfamiliarity with her voice, carry the reader over the stumbling-block of a *tête-à-tête* lasting all night in total darkness. I think Charles may have got the hint, curiously enough, from a very improper situation in one of Ben Jonson's best comedies, *The Alchemist*. Sir Epicure Mammon, visiting the supposed alchemist, gets a glimpse of a handsome lady, and is told that she has gone mad through reading eccentric theological books, but that in her lucid intervals she is 'the most affablest creature', 'so merry, so pleasant'; Sir Epicure (of course with nothing but sensual pleasure in mind) asks

> Is she no way accessible? no means,
> No trick to give a man a taste of her - wit -
> Or so?

But this is only a guess of mine, and cannot be confirmed.

Charles's own tale of *King Lear* is expurgated for a different reason: it is not sexual irregularity but events too distressing that he has excluded. I am referring not to the blinding of Gloucester (an incident which cannot occur because the whole Gloucester plot is removed) but to the hanging of Cordelia.

The reconciliation scene between Cordelia and her father has shown Lamb at his very best, as might be expected. He continues:

> So we will leave this old king in the protection of this dutiful and loving child, where, by the help of sleep and medicine, she and her physicians at length succeeded in winding up the untuned and jarring senses which the cruelty of his other daughters had so violently shaken. Let us return to say a word or two about those cruel daughters.
>
> These monsters of ingratitude, who had been so false to their old father, could not be expected to prove more faithful to their own husbands. They soon grew tired of paying even the appearance of duty and affection, and in an open way shewed they had fixed their loves upon another. It happened that the object of their guilty loves was the same. It was Edmund, a natural son of the late earl of Gloucester, who by his treacheries had succeeded in disinheriting his brother Edgar the lawful heir from his earldom, and by his wicked practices was now earl himself:

> a wicked man and a fit object for the love of such wicked creatures as Gonerill and Regan. It falling out about this time that the duke of Cornwall, Regan's husband, died, Regan immediately declared her intention of wedding this earl of Gloucester, which rousing the jealousy of her sister, to whom as well as to Regan this wicked earl had at sundry times professed love, Gonerill found means to make away with her sister by poison: but being detected in her practices, and imprisoned by her husband the duke of Albany, for this deed, and for her guilty passion for the earl which had come to his ears, she in a fit of disappointed love and rage shortly put an end to her own life. Thus the justice of Heaven at last overtook these wicked daughters.
>
> While the eyes of all men were upon this event, admiring the justice displayed in their deserved deaths, the same eyes were suddenly taken off from this sight to admire at the mysterious ways of the same power in the melancholy fate of the young and virtuous daughter, the lady Cordelia, whose good deeds did seem to deserve a more fortunate conclusion: but it is an awful truth, that innocence and piety are not always successful in this world. The forces which Gonerill and Regan had sent out under the command of the bad earl of Gloucester were victorious, and Cordelia by the practices of this wicked earl, who did not like that any should stand between him and the throne, ended her life in prison. Thus, Heaven took this innocent lady to itself in her young years, after shewing her to the world an illustrious example of filial duty. Lear did not long survive this kind child.

The inference that the reader will draw - as a child I drew it myself, prompted also by the illustration in the Ward, Lock and Company edition of 1919 - is that Edmund put Cordelia in prison, where she gradually pined away. Lear's own death seems to follow Cordelia's after some little time, and not immediately. I have to admit that Lamb's handling both of the events and of the time they take is very clumsy: Goneril's non-Shakespearean imprisonment in particular drags out the action, whereas in the play it is concentrated into the space of minutes. If he groaned over the writing of this page, he had good reason to do so. But his version suggests how painful he found the catastrophe, as Dr Johnson had done and as Keats was to do, and how concerned he was to spare his young readers pain.

By the end of the summer Charles and Mary had finished their *Tales from Shakespear*, and on 5 December Charles writes to Manning: 'Those Tales from Shakespear are near coming out - & Mary has begun a new work' (presumably *Mrs Leicester's School*, a collection of ten narratives of a different kind, three of which were written by Charles). Early in the new year (29 January 1807) Charles writes to Wordsworth saying that he has sent him a copy of the *Tales*. To save his friend the trouble of attributing authorship by internal evidence he admits to writing the tragic tales, the occasional 'Tail piece' or final paragraph, and the last part of the Preface. He adds:

> 'We think Pericles of hers the best, and Othello of mine - but I hope all have some good. As You Like It we like least.

(I am not sure whether that last statement is true; it may be just a rather irresponsible bit of word-play on the title. That particular tale seems to me quite equal to the others.) But the bulk of the letter is an outburst against the copperplate illustrations.

Here a word about the publishers is in order. Charles had told Manning that Mary was doing her tales 'for Godwin's Bookseller', and the publication did

indeed bear that person's name (which was Thomas Hodgkins), but the real publishers were William Godwin and his wife (pithily described by Charles at the time of their marriage, 1801, as 'a Widow with green spectacles & one child', and, in a postscript, as 'a very disgusting woman'). The Godwins had started their Juvenile Library in 1805. They did not want to use the name Godwin because of William's controversial writings on politics and morality.

It was Mrs Godwin, the motive force behind the Juvenile Library, who chose the subjects of the illustrations, Charles tells Wordsworth: Godwin had admitted the fact to Mary. The letter to Wordsworth is vivid in its language:

> You will forgive the plates, when I tell you that they were left to the direction of Godwin, who left the choice of subjects to the *bad baby*, [this was Lamb's hostile pet-name for Mrs Godwin] who from mischief - (I suppose) has chosen one from damn'd beastly vulgarity (vide Merch. Venice) where no atom of authority was in the tale to justify it - to another has given a name which exists not in the tale, *Nic. Bottom*, & which she thought would be funny, though in this I suspect *his* hand, for I guess her reading does not reach far enough to know Bottom's Xtian name——— ———& one of Hamlet, & Grave diggg., a scene which is not hinted at in the story, & you might as well have put King Canute the Great reproving his courtiers - the rest are Giants & Giantesses -.

I am a little puzzled by what he says about the *Merchant of Venice* illustration, partly because he complains of its 'damn'd beastly vulgarity' (it is not a model of refinement, but there is nothing positively indecorous about it, except possibly the fact that Gratiano has not removed his hat when addressing a lady), and partly because he says that 'no atom of authority was in the tale to justify it' (when the tale contains the words 'and Gratiano, wishing Bassanio and the generous lady joy, desired permission to be married at the same time', which are virtually echoed as the title of the plate). Until I looked up the plates I expected this one to show Lancelot Gobbo and his father, who do not appear in the tale and whose recognition scene might have been the occasion of a low-comedy illustration. I wonder whether all the surviving copies of the edition have had the offending plate removed and the existing plate substituted. Bottom's surname, in the sense of a part of the body, was in use by the late eighteenth century (see the *Oxford English Dictionary*), and it is in that sense that Lamb alleges Mrs Godwin thought it funny. (In his letter of 26 June to Wordsworth, while mentioning a visit made by 'the Baby' to 'Mrs. Charlotte Smith Novellist & morals-tainter', Lamb actually remarks, 'These two Ladies have both as you may have *seen* great b*tt*ms.') The gigantic height of the figures is well illustrated in 'Imogen in the Cave of Bellarius' (she must be fully six feet tall in her flat-heeled shoes), in 'Petruchio, Catherine & the Womans Taylor', in 'Antipholis [*sic*] of Syracuse & Adriana' (where the perspective use of sculptured figures in the background is a model of how *not* to compose a picture), and above all in 'The Witches' Cauldron' (where the steeple hats add to the effect in just the same way as the traditional policeman's helmet or guardsman's bearskin). On the other hand, the Old Shepherd who finds Perdita, and (what is worse) 'Othello preparing to kill his Wife', are both decidedly dumpy, an effect enhanced in the case of Othello by his wearing his belt just below his chest. There is something very amateurish about the designs of many of the plates. They are traditionally attributed to William Mulready, but though he was only twenty years old in 1806 I wonder if he could ever have drawn

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Gratiano & Nerissa desire to be married.

so badly as the worst of the plates are drawn, so perhaps there is more to be discovered about their origins. Mrs Godwin may have had an even bigger hand in them than Lamb thought.

The *Tales from Shakespear* survived their disastrous plates, and a second edition (without the plates) appeared in 1809. Since then, as Dr Wilson's check-list shows, edition has followed edition, and what Mary called (in a letter) her 'poor little baby-stories' or (in her preface) 'these imperfect abridgements' have become classics of children's literature. The closing words of the Preface (written by her brother) may fittingly close this lecture, since they describe not only the plays of Shakespeare (whom Lamb honoured as far as idolatry) but also the tales of Charles and Mary Lamb:

> What these Tales have been to you in childhood, that and much more it is my wish that the true Plays of Shakespear may prove to you in older years - enrichers of the fancy, strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honourable thoughts and actions, to teach you courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity: for of examples, teaching these virtues, his pages are full.

LAMB'S *TALES FROM SHAKESPEAR*

D G Wilson

Professor Craik's choice of subject for his Crowsley Memorial Lecture has provided me with the impetus to explore the publishing history of this fascinating work, and to provide for the Charles Lamb Society a check-list of those editions of the *Tales* which I have been able to trace so far; the materials available are therefore my own collection (60 different editions), the Catalogues of the British Museum/Library and the University Library at Cambridge, the Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, and the two bibliographies of Lamb, those of J C Thomson (Hull 1908) and Renee Roff, incorporating that of Luther S Livingston (New York 1979).

The difficulties begin even with the First Edition 1807, since the two bibliographies state that there were two issues, Godwin's Juvenile Library having moved in the interim from Hanway Street to Skinner Street. I have not seen a copy with the latter title-page. Blake is said to have engraved the plates to this First Edition, from illustrations by Mulready; when the Second Edition was published in 1809, it contained a two page Advertisement indicating that the work was regarded as more suitable 'for an acceptable and improving present for young ladies advancing to the state of womanhood'. They therefore offered two volumes 'prepared with suitable elegance', without the (rather crude) plates, but with a frontispiece depicting Shakespeare's head engraved by Woolnoth from a painting by Zoust (this plate is dated 1 November 1809). Nevertheless, the Advertisement went on to say that 'a few copies have been worked off on the plan of the former impression'; unfortunately, most, possibly all, of these have 1810 on the title-page, leading Roff to call this the 'Third Edition'. The 'real' Third Edition, however, followed in 1816. We might hope for plain sailing after that, but the BM Catalogue notes an edition in 1837 between the Fifth Edition 1831 and the Sixth Edition 1838; furthermore, the Ninth Edition was published in Paris in 1842, preceding the Seventh Edition London 1843. A

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Othello preparing to kill his Wife.

sense of relief is felt after the Eleventh Edition 1856, when further editions are merely called 'new', or have some variation, either by selection or even additions from other authors, together with the whole question of the illustrators, which I propose to deal with on another occasion. A further complicating factor is that these *Tales* are usually, not always, reprinted in editions of *The Works*, though not all editions of the works include them; sometimes only Charles' Tales (the six tragedies) are included, sometimes none.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF EDITIONS OF *TALES FROM SHAKESPEAR*

British Museum/Library Catalogue = BM; University of Cambridge Library Catalogue = UL; my own collection = DGW; CLS Library at Guildhall, London = CLS

1807 First Ed (BM, DGW)	1809 Second Ed [Woolnoth] (BM, DGW)
1810 Second Ed [Blake] (BM, DGW) (CLS)	1816 Third Ed (BM, DGW)
1822 Fourth Ed (BM, DGW)	1831 Fifth Ed (BM, DGW)
1837 (BM) (CLS, 2 edns)	1838 Sixth Ed (BM, DGW)
1842 Germany (BM), '9th' France (UL)	1843 Seventh Ed (DGW), Germany (BM)
1844 (BM, UL, DGW) 1845/6 (2v, CLS)	1847 France, Spain (BM)
1851 Sweden (BM)	1856 Eleventh Ed (BM)
1860 Germany (BM)	1861 (BM)
1862 (BM)	1864 (BM) 1865 (CLS)
1866 (BM) 1870 (CLS)	1873 (BM)
1876 1 vol (BM, UL, DGW); 6 vol (BM, UL)	1877 2 edns (BM) + Germany (BM)
1878 (BM, UL)	1879 4 edns (BM), 2 edns (UL), 1 (DGW) + India 3 edns (BM)
1881 2 edns (BM) + Germany (BM)	1882 (BM)
1883 4 edns (BM), 1 edn (DGW) + Germany (BM)	1884 (UL) + France (BM)
1885 (DGW)	1886 2 edns (BM) 1887 (CLS)
1888 3 edns (BM) + France (BM)	1893 (BM, UL) + Poland, Spain, US (all BM)
1894 2 edns (BM) + US (BM)	1895 (DGW) + Eire (BM)
1899 2 edns (BM), 1 edn (UL, DGW)	1901 2 edns (BM, DGW), 1 edn (UL)
1902 2 edns (BM), 1 edn (UL)	1903 3 edns (BM), 2 edns (DGW), 1 edn (UL)
1904 2 edns (BM)	1905 2 edns (BM), 1 edn (UL, DGW)
1906 (BM) (CLS)	1907 (DGW) (CLS)
1908 2 edns (DGW), 1 edn (BM)	1909 3 edns (BM), 2 edns (DGW)
1910 2 edns (BM, 1 edn DGW) + India & US (BM)	1911 2 edns (BM), 1 edn (DGW)
1912 2 edns (BM)	1914 2 edns (BM)
1915 (BM) + US (BM)	1918 2 edns (BM), 1 edn (DGW)
1919 (BM) (CLS)	1920 US (BM) (2 edns, CLS)
1921 (DGW)	1923 3 edns (BM), 1 edn (DGW) 1924 (CLS) Japan
1925 (BM)	1926 (BM)
1927 (BM) 1928 (CLS) 1929 Italy (CLS)	1932 2 edns (BM) (1 edn CLS) Basic English
1933 (BM)	1934 (BM)
1939 (DGW) (CLS)	1947 Poland (BM) Sweden (CLS) 1947/8 Poland (2v, CLS)
1948 (BM, UL)	1949 (BM)

1950 (BM)
1955 (BM)
1958 (BM)
1960 (BM)
1963 (BM)
1965 2 edns (BM), 1 edn (DGW)
1953 (BM, DGW), Hong-Kong (BM)
1957 (BM)
1959 (BM) + Yugoslavia (UL)
1962 (BM) + US (BM)
1964 2 edns (BM), 1 edn (UL)

There remain five editions in print today - by Collins, Everyman and Everyman Paperback, Longman, Orbis and Purnell Bancroft.

A check-list of British publishers of the *Tales* can be obtained by sending a s a e to Dr D G Wilson, 9 Banham's Close, Cambridge CB4 1HX.

RADICAL GEORGE: DYER IN THE 1790s

Nick Roe
Queen's University, Belfast

'The oftener I see him, the more deeply I admire him'.
Charles Lamb to S T Coleridge, 26 August 1800.

1 *Dyer's Disappearing Acts*

George Dyer usually turns up in a joke. Most of his contemporaries had a funny story about his short-sight and absent-mindedness: Leigh Hunt told a good one about Dyer leaving a dinner with only one shoe, and not discovering his loss until half-way home.[1] Best known, of course, are Elia's two essays 'Oxford in the Vacation' and 'Amicus Redivivus'. The former essay gently sends-up Dyer's pedantic scholarship,

> busy as a moth over some rotten archive, rummaged out of some seldom-explored press, in a nook at Oriel. With long poring, he is grown almost into a book. He stood as passive as one by the side of the old shelves. I longed to new-coat him in Russia, and assign him his place.[2]

In 'Amicus Redivivus' Elia gives an affectionate account of his 'strange sensation'

> on seeing my old friend G.D., who had been paying me a morning visit a few Sundays back, at my cottage at Islington, upon taking leave, instead of turning down the right hand path by which he had entered - with staff in hand, and at noon day, deliberately march right forwards into the midst of the stream that runs by us, and totally disappear.[3]

It's not surprising that when Dyer is mentioned in a serious context, he appears by way of light relief. Lucas's chapter on Dyer in his *Life of Charles Lamb*, for example, is essentially a list of whimsical anecdotes; his footnotes to 'Amicus Redivivus' offer a map of Dyer's trajectory between Elia's front door and his disappearance into the New River.[4]

Winifred Courtney rightly says that Dyer's contemporaries 'including Lamb, were apt to underestimate him', and subsequent accounts of Dyer have tended to follow their example.[5] In this essay I'm going to take a look at the 'other' George Dyer - the political radical of the 1790s who has disappeared in portraits of the accident-prone old man of later years. It's in his political connections and activities during the revolutionary decade that Dyer needs to be taken seriously, and here too that his real status and achievement are to be found.

During the 1790s Dyer published three substantial political pamphlets:

these were the second edition of his *Inquiry into the Nature of Subscription* (1792), *The Complaints of the Poor People of England* (1793), and *A Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence* (1795).[6] They reveal Dyer to have been as radical and militant as Tom Paine in his condemnation of the British government, and thoroughly practical in his proposals for political and social change along lines similar to those advocated by Paine in his chapter on 'Ways and Means' in *Rights of Man, Part II*. Furthermore, Dyer's connections with dissenters and reformists at Cambridge up to 1792, and his activities in London thereafter, meant that he could give Coleridge - and Southey - a direct introduction to metropolitan radical circles with which he was closely involved. Coleridge and Dyer shared a common background; both attended Christ's Hospital and Cambridge University; both were Unitarians and reformists. It wasn't a coincidence that Dyer should have been one of Coleridge's earliest political contacts in London, and that their radical opinions during 1794-5 were strikingly similar. In his relation to Coleridge and in his response to contemporary issues in the revolutionary years Dyer was certainly not a joke, nor was he seen as such by others. It's this part of his life that I want to explore here.

2 *The Cambridge Connection*

During the 1780s and '90s dissenters from Cambridge had a marked influence on the development of the movement for parliamentary reform in London. This happened in two stages. During the 1770s Dr John Jebb of Peter House repeatedly petitioned the university senate for removal of subscription to the thirty-nine articles at graduation, but without success. He resigned his church living in 1775, and the following year moved to London where he became a 'constant attendant' at Theophilus Lindsey's Unitarian chapel at Essex Street, which Jebb and Joseph Priestley had helped to establish in 1774. He subsequently became actively involved in liberal and reformist politics in London, campaigning for Fox's election as MP for Westminster in 1780, and in April that year was 'one of the most zealous' founder members of the Society for Constitutional Information - along with his colleague from Peter House, Capel Lofft.[7]

The connection between Cambridge dissent and parliamentary reform established by Jebb is most important. His departure for London and membership of the SCI offers a precedent for the second stage of Cambridge-London influence in the movements of George Dyer, William Frend, Coleridge and others, between 1792-5. Like Jebb, all three were Unitarians; they were attracted from Cambridge to the radical intellectual circles of London, and each identified with the democratic reform movement represented by the London Corresponding Society. But while they shared with Jebb a common movement towards metropolitan reformist groups, the political atmosphere of the 1790s was much more highly charged than in previous decades. The obvious reason for this was the French Revolution which gave fresh impetus to the reform movement after 1789 while alarming others less convinced of the need for social and political change in Britain.

The membership of the SCI was limited, and its activities confined to circulating pamphlets and the peaceful petitioning of parliament. The aims of the London Corresponding Society were more radical, and were based upon Paine's pro-French and republican *Rights of Man*. Although the Corresponding Society always disavowed violence and avoided the issue of Paine's republicanism, it followed him in denying the existence of a British Constitution and asserting the natural right to universal suffrage. Dyer doesn't appear to have joined this society, but he was closely involved with

its activities. William Frend actually became a leader of the society during 1795, and addressed its final mass-meeting of 7 December that year. Given these links it's hard to believe that Coleridge was 'insulated' from the reform movement to quite the extent that he later claimed to have been.[8] The presence of Dyer and Frend in London during 1794-5 is of crucial importance in establishing Coleridge's radical identity at that time. Their bearings, in turn, had originally been set by a small group of liberal dissenters at Cambridge back in the 1780s.

Dyer was born in 1755 into a working-class family in East London, his father being a watchman at Wapping. He went to Christ's Hospital in 1762, and in 1774 to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1778. After working as an usher at Dedham grammar school, he returned to Cambridge to live in the house of the Baptist minister Robert Robinson, 'not simply as tutor to his family, but with the view of profiting by his doctrine and learned conversation'.[9] Those conversations with Robinson were to have a profound influence on Dyer's religious and political opinions, and his political career in London during the 1790s.

Robert Robinson supported John Jebb's graces to the university senate and in 1780 he founded the Cambridge Constitutional Society, the object of which was identical to the original society,

> Established in London by Dr. Jebb, major Cartwright, Capel Lofft and others. On the foundation of the London constitutional society in 1780, Capel Lofft sent Robinson a copy of their proceedings: these served as models for the constitutional society at Cambridge.[10]

The Cambridge-London link was therefore decisive in establishing Robinson's Constitutional Society, which was to act as a focus for liberal opinion in Cambridge and its neighbourhood during the 1780s. Dyer's presence in Robinson's house placed him at the centre of dissenting and reformist activity in the town and this inevitably influenced the way in which his political and religious opinions developed during the decade.

In 1784 Robinson published *A Political Catechism* in which he defined his idea of 'a perfect form of government': a monarch, a 'select council' of aristocracy, and 'democratic' representatives of the people who would exert their rightful influence after a reform of the present exclusive system of representation. The *Catechism* is a series of letters in which a father explains politics to his son, who is called George: 'When we speak of administration, George, we speak of what *is*; but when we speak of representation, we speak of what *ought to be*'.[11] George certainly did profit from his conversations with Robinson, which confirmed him as a dissenter and reformist. Sometime in 1781 he preached 'with no very happy results' to the Oxford Baptist Congregation, but during the following years both Dyer and Robinson moved towards Unitarianism. Joseph Priestley was convinced that Robinson was 'of the unitarian faith' when he died while on a visit to Birmingham in 1790.[12]

During the 1780s Robinson's activities at Cambridge complemented those of Jebb, Lofft, Price, Priestley and others in the Constitutional and Revolution Societies of London. Three applications were made to Parliament for repeal of the Test Acts: in March 1787, May 1789 and March 1790. In Cambridge, too, the senate were again requested to abolish subscription in a grace of 11 December 1787. The repeated failure of such graces encouraged Robinson and Lofft to plan a dissenters' college at Cambridge to avoid the 'theological shackles' of the university. Dyer was proposed as a tutor, but the whole

scheme fell through.[13]

It was the dissenters' participation in political controversy in the 1780s coupled with the welcome for the French Revolution in 1789 that were so successfully misrepresented by Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and in the House of Commons. In his speech in the debate of Fox's motion for repeal of the Test Acts on 11 May 1792 Burke announced that the petitioners urging repeal were 'not confined to a theological sect, but (were) also a political faction'. He warned the House against being 'dictated to...by the Constitutional, the Revolution, and the Unitarian Societies':

> the dissent on their part is fundamental, goes to the very root: and it is at issue not upon this rite or that ceremony, or this or that school opinion, but upon this one question of an establishment, as unchristian, unlawful, contrary to the Gospel, and to natural right, popish and idolatrous. These are the principles violently and fanatically held and pursued - taught to their children, who are sworn at the altar like Hannibal. The war is with the establishment itself, no quarter, no compromise. As a party, they are infinitely mischievous: see the declarations of Priestley and Price - declarations, you will say, of hot men: likely enough, but who are the cool men, who have disclaimed them?[14]

One person cool enough to answer Burke was George Dyer in the second edition of his *Inquiry into the Nature of Subscription* which appeared late in 1792. His immediate purpose had been to make 'copious remarks' on Burke's 'extremely ill-informed...misrepresentation' of the French Revolution in *Reflections*, but finding that Paine, MacKintosh and Priestley had already done so, 'dropped (his) original design'.[15] Nevertheless, the *Inquiry* is Dyer's first declaration of his political opinions in the 1790s. Just as Revolution in France and reaction in Britain led Dyer and others into conflict with Burke and the government, in Cambridge the same course of events led to William Frend's prosecution in May 1793 for publishing *Peace and Union*, and to his banishment from the university.

The defeat of Fox's motion on 11 May 1792 dispelled hopes of removing the Test Acts by petitioning Parliament. But dissenters still had much to gain by participating in the campaign for a more far-reaching reform of representation.[16] This explains why Dyer and Frend were attracted to the democratic reform movement led by the London Corresponding Society, and by the ideas in Paine's *Rights of Man*. The reaction forced by Burke, the increasingly repressive policies of the government, and the deterioration of events in France were all decisive factors in Dyer's and Frend's arrival on the London scene in 1792-3, and in determining the character and direction of their radicalism in the following years.

3 *Coleridge's 'very very worthy Friend': The Development of Dyer's Radicalism, 1792-5*

Dyer's political development during 1792-5 moves along a middle-way between the radical careers of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Like Wordsworth in 1792, Dyer was a republican, and anticipated that 'the present convulsions' in France 'will terminate in a complete republic' - which of course they did in September of that year.[17] Not only was he sensitive to the state of the French Revolution, he took the French example as an ideal model for change in Britain and claimed that nothing 'short of a national convention (could) remedy the evil' of unequal representation.[18] Dyer's *Inquiry* is republican,

sympathetic to France, and reveals the influence of Paine's *Rights of Man*. As such, it's close to Wordsworth's position in his *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* written in 1793, and the similarities with Wordsworth continued during the next three years in which both responded favourably to Godwin's *Political Justice*. Dyer was among those present when Wordsworth first met Godwin at William Frend's house in February 1795.

Coleridge detested Godwin's atheism, and saw *Political Justice* as a serious threat to the success of the reform movement. Dyer would have differed with him over Godwin, whom he regarded as 'a sensible writer', even though he shared Coleridge's Unitarianism and his belief in the equality of humanity in God. 'By considering the relation, which all men bear to the common Parent', Dyer wrote in his *Inquiry*, 'I immediately see the relation, which subsists among all mankind, as a family'.[19] This is close to Coleridge's position in 1794, for whom 'private Attachments' were a 'necessary *habit* of the Soul' and also the principle of 'Concretion' that assimilates 'all mankind' into a whole.[20] The idea of 'mankind, as a family' was the foundation of Dyer's ideal of society in which,

> there would be no opposition of interests; no exclusive privileges would be enjoyed; no invidious distinctions kept up. In proportion to the smallness of these societies, and the narrowness of their territories, the fraternal spirit would exert itself in all its simplicity and glory.[21]

Two years later Dyer's 'fraternal spirit' reappears in Coleridge's scheme of Pantisocracy, in which a small community would be established in America 'on the principles of an abolition of individual property'.[22] The similarities between Dyer's 'fraternal society' in his *Inquiry* and Coleridge's Pantisocracy explain why Dyer should have been 'enraptured' with the project when he first met Coleridge in August 1794, predicting that Priestley would wish to join as well.[23] It all came to nothing, of course, but Pantisocracy was evidently the initial catalyst of Coleridge's and Dyer's friendship - and this was to have important consequences for both during the next year or so.

In 1836, two years after Coleridge's death, Dyer recalled how

> when Mr C. and Dr. Southey were young Men & first came to London they were in the habit of calling upon me & I remember introducing the former to Mr Gilbert Wakefield.[24]

By 1794 Dyer was well established among London dissenters and radicals. The previous year he had published his *Complaints of the Poor People of England*, which follows Paine's *Rights of Man Part II* in its demands for a wide-ranging reform of government and society. Dyer's *Inquiry* had been limited to problems of representation and freedom of conscience, whereas the *Complaints* consider these fundamental issues as part of a broader restructuring of society to alleviate the misery of the poor:

> In a country where one man possesses three or four magnificent houses, and sixty or eighty thousand a year, or perhaps more, while many of the industrious poor can scarcely get the necessaries of life; in such a country, I say, the government must be defective.[25]

Parliamentary reform would be followed by changes in taxation, the legal system, prisons, poor-rates, workhouses, schools, the army and navy. The *Complaints* demonstrates Dyer's compassionate commitment to reform, and also the extent of his involvement with contemporary politics. The pamphlet

concludes with a lengthy 'Address to the Friends of Liberty' which considers the problems facing the reform societies caused by the government's policy of prosecution and repression. He defends the Corresponding and Constitutional Societies, and three men recently prosecuted for their political opinions - Thomas Muir, William Frend, and Thomas Fysshe Palmer. He concludes by reaffirming his own position:

> Yes! ... I approved, and still aprove the doctrine of the Rights of Man; and the french revolution I contemplated, and still contemplate, as the most important aera in the history of NATIONS. - But because men rejoiced to see so many millions of people enslaved struggling for liberty, does it follow, that they are enemies to their country?[26]

Between 1793-4 Dyer was actively involved with the Constitutional Society, and 'almost constantly attended one of their committees'.[27] He published pamphlets, and helped organise subscriptions to defray the expenses of the defendants at the treason trials in October-December 1794. He was acquainted with Godwin, Holcroft, Thelwall, Frend, and other prominent intellectuals, radicals and dissenters in London, both in and out of prison. The man that Coleridge and Southey 'were in the habit of calling upon' was therefore ideally placed to introduce both to the political and intellectual circles of London, and also to act as a London 'agent' for their writings. At his first meeting with Coleridge he offered to find a publisher for *The Fall of Robespierre*, which he 'liked hugely'. He called upon Robinson, Joseph Johnson and Kearsley, and offered to take fifty copies of the play himself - though this was later reduced to twenty-five. When Coleridge started lecturing at Bristol in February 1795, it was to Dyer that he wrote about the 'furious opposition' of the 'Aristocrats', adding that he was '*obliged*' to publish his *Moral and Political Lecture* 'it having been confidently asserted that there was Treason in it'.[29] In the same letter he begs Dyer's 'acceptance of as many Copies as (he) may choose to give away' and mentions that he has seen Dyer's *Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence* advertised and has placed an order for ten copies with Joseph Cottle. A month later in March 1795, Coleridge wrote again enquiring about the possibility of work on a projected political journal, *The Citizen*, thanked Dyer for his comments on *A Moral and Political Lecture*, and sent his 'respects' to Gilbert Wakefield.[30]

After the correspondence of February and March 1795 there are no more surviving letters for over a year, when Dyer's name reappears in connection with Coleridge's financial crisis following the failure of *The Watchman*. On 10 May 1796 John Thelwall wrote advising Coleridge that London booksellers would 'gladly' do business with him, adding that Coleridge's 'old, & very very worthy friend Dyer ... will give (him) something like similar advice'. Later in the month Coleridge wrote thanking Dyer for a gift of money, 'amply sufficient to extricate me from my difficulties, and to provide for my expences till such time as my literary Industry will ... find employment -'.[31] Coleridge, it appears, was rescued by Dyer's generosity.

Coleridge's early friendship with Dyer was based upon shared political and literary interests, and was encouraged by Dyer's willingness to find a market for Coleridge's productions in London. Their thinking about society coincided at their first meeting in 1794, and mutual influence would explain the continuing similarities in their ideas during the following year. In 1795 Dyer and Coleridge were both moving towards a belief in the 'one life' of the universe, whose beneficent power was mediated through

nature which necessarily possessed a power to moral good. 'It is melancholy to think', Coleridge wrote to Dyer in March 1795,

> that the best of us are liable to be shaped & coloured by surrounding Objects - and a demonstrative proof, that Man was not made to live in Great Cities! ... - The pleasures, which we receive from rural beauties, are of little Consequence compared with the Moral Effect of these pleasures - beholding constantly the Best possible we at last become ourselves the best possible. In the country, all around us smile Good and Beauty ... [32]

Dyer identifies the 'Moral Effect' of nature as the 'universal voice' of Benevolence. His *Dissertation on...Benevolence* was probably published in February or March 1795, and contains passages that are strikingly close to Coleridge's thinking at this time. 'In whatever part of the universe we take our stand', Dyer writes,

> and to whatever spot we turn our eyes, how fertile and glowing the landscape! In a system so contrived, that one part sheds its influence on, and promotes the harmony of, the others, this cannot be otherwise: There is a kind of voice that speaks through the universe ...[33]

- and its moral effect is beneficial - for some, at least:

> The GOOD MAN from the appearances of nature derives tender affections, genererous principles and humane conduct. From the glowing and variegated scenes around him he derives something which warms his heart, and throws a smile over his countenance. The imbecility of the beings, to whom by his very nature he is related, does but strengthen his heart, and when he takes a gloomy view of things, the exertions of benevolence raise his spirit. The good man thus acquires universal tenderness.[34]

Dyer's 'good man' is alive to the 'kind of voice' speaking through nature, much as Coleridge's 'Elect' in *Religious Musings* are responsive to the universal presence of God, 'Nature's Essence, Mind, and Energy'. The common influence on both was Priestley's philosophic materialism, and Dyer and Coleridge, in turn, were to transmit some aspects of their inheritance to Wordsworth. Given Wordsworth's acquaintance with Dyer in London during 1795, and Coleridge's subsequent influence on Wordsworth in 1797-8, it's not surprising that Dyer's *Dissertation* should in some ways foreshadow passages of *Tintern Abbey*. This appears perhaps most clearly in Wordsworth's 'feelings .../ Of unremembered pleasure',

> such, perhaps,
> As may have had no trivial influence
> On that best portion of a good man's life;
> His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of Kindness and of love.

Wordsworth's concern is to suggest the hidden workings of 'unremembered pleasure' to 'unremembered acts/ Of Kindness', - *Kindness*, that is, in the sense of human kinship. During 1797-8, Wordsworth's 'one life' offered a vision of transcendent democracy which, as Coleridge put it in *Religious Musings*, 'fraternises man' as 'Parts and proportions of one wond'rous whole'.

The connection between personal faith and radical politics was implicit in Coleridge's and Dyer's dissent, and was a characteristic of their writings

during the revolutionary years. Between 1795 and his meeting with Wordsworth in June 1797, Coleridge's great achievement was to redeploy the political motive to change and progress as an act of faith, specifically in the relation of mind to nature and an omnipresent God. The fruits of this redefined radicalism were the great poems written by Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1797-8, and the scheme for *The Recluse* as a philosophic counterpoise to the failure of the French Revolution. Its seeds were present as early as spring 1795 in Dyer's *Dissertation*, and in some respects this pamphlet represents the point at which Dyer - like Coleridge, Wordsworth and other contemporaries - turned away from politics to define an alternative possibility of progress. The first section of the *Dissertation* offers a theory of universal benevolence which 'directs its energies to alleviate the distresses incident to humanity, and to remedy the evils forced on the world by a vicious state of society'.[35] Three years previously, he had expected the same from a republican government, and a national convention instead of a parliament. The second part of Dyer's *Dissertation* examines the consequences of repression in 'the cases of those, lately put on their Trials for Treason or Sedition; which, though the last in the order of this Dissertation, were the first in (his) mind'.[36] The *Dissertation* looks two ways: to the past, in its survey of the ruins of the reform movement and to the future in its identification of a tendency to good in the nature of things.

Although there are interesting parallels between Dyer and Coleridge and Wordsworth between 1795-8, at this point it is necessary to differentiate his achievement from theirs. It hardly needs saying that Dyer didn't go on to write an *Ancient Mariner*; he did, however, write a Life of Robert Robinson which Wordsworth considered one of the best biographies in the language. As a poet Dyer is a very minor figure, and his literary reputation rests on the products of the dusty research that Elia teased about in 'Oxford in the Vacation', that is, his *History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge*, (1814) and *The Privileges of the University of Cambridge* (1824). Much of his time was taken up by hack-work and reviewing for magazines and journals, and his editorial work on Valpy's extensive edition of the ancient classics contributed to his blindness as an old man. It is from this time of his life that most of the anecdotes about George Dyer date, recounted by people who had not known him in the early 1790s. Unlike Wordsworth and Coleridge who went on to greater things, it was in these years that Dyer was at his most impressive. Compassionate and committed in his opinions, he was also actively involved in contemporary events; although without much talent for poetry himself, he was alive and responsive to the work of other young writers such as Coleridge, and did his best to promote them. Charles Lamb probably first met Dyer in 1796, and it was doubtless these qualities Lamb had in mind when, four years later, he told Coleridge that the 'oftener' he saw Dyer 'the more deeply (he) admire(d) him'. That admiration lies behind Elia's later stories about his 'old friend G.D.'. It transforms what might have been a laugh at Dyer's expense into a celebration of his eccentric genius.

I should like to thank Winifred Courtney; Professor Richard Clancey; and Frank Stubbings of Emmanual College, Cambridge, for their help in tracking down some of the material used in this essay.

Based on a Lecture given to the Society on 7 April 1984.

NOTES

1 E V Lucas, *The Life of Charles Lamb* (4 ed., 1907) 162.
2 *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E V Lucas (7 vols, 1903-4) ii. 10. Cited in future as *CLW*.
3 *CLW*, ii. 209.
4 *CLW*, ii. 433.
5 Notable exceptions being Winifred Courtney, *Young Charles Lamb, 1775-1802* (1982), and M Ray Adams, *Studies in the Literary Backgrounds of English Radicalism* (1947), 227-66, both of whom take Dyer seriously.
6 Dyer also wrote the 'Preliminary Remarks' to George Thompson, *Slavery and Famine, Punishments for Sedition* (London, 1794).
7 Details about Jebb from the 'Introductory Memoir' in *The Works of John Jebb*, ed. J Disney (3 vols. London, 1794) i. 1-227.
8 For example in his letter to Sir George and Lady Beaumont, 1 October 1803, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E L Griggs, (6 vols, Oxford, 1956-71) ii. 998-1005. Cited hereafter as *CL*.
9 Obituary of Dyer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* NS. 15 (May 1841). 545. This obituary was based on Dyer's lost ms. autobiography.
10 George Dyer, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Robert Robinson*, (London, 1796), 193-4. Cited in future as *RM*.
11 Robert Robinson, *A Political Catechism* (London, 1784), 57.
12 For Dyer at Oxford see E A Payne, 'The Baptist Connections of George Dyer', *The Baptist Quarterly*, NS 10 (1940-1) 265; for Priestley on Robinson, *RM*, 397-8.
13 Graham Hughes, *With Freedom Fired; The Story of Robert Robinson Cambridge Nonconformist*. (London, 1955), 92.
14 *Parliamentary History of England*, 29. (London, 1817), 1385, 1392.
15 George Dyer, *An Inquiry into the Nature of Subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles*. (2 edn, London, 1792), vii-viii. Cited hereafter as *Inquiry*.
16 This point is made by Albert Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty. The English Democratic Reform Movement in the Age of the French Revolution*. (London, 1979), 98.
17 *Inquiry*, 285.
18 *Inquiry*, 276.
19 *Inquiry*, 13.
20 *CL*, i. 86.
21 *Inquiry* , 13.
22 *CL*, i. 96.
23 *CL*, i. 98.
24 George Dyer to Rev. Mr Carey 24 May 1836, from the collection of letters to and from Dyer in the Archives of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.
25 George Dyer, *The Complaints of the Poor People of England* (2 edn, London, 1793), 16. Cited in future as *Complaints*. Cf passage quoted with Paine, *The Rights of Man Part II*. (London, 1792), 240:

> the resources of a country are lavished upon Kings, upon courts, upon hirelings, imposters, and prostitutes; and even the poor themselves, with all their wants upon them, are compelled to support the fraud that oppresses them.

26 *Complaints*, 83.
27 *Complaints*, 81.
28 George Dyer, *A Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence* (London, 1795), 76-106, for Dyer and the treason trials. Cited in future as Dyer, *Benevolence*.

29 *CL*, i. 152.
30 *CL*, i. 154-6. *The Citizen* may have been a provisional title for *The Philanthropist*, published in 43 issues by Daniel Isaac Eaton between 16 March 1795 and 25 January 1796. Coleridge's letter is postmarked 10 March 1795, six days before the first copy of *The Philanthropist* appeared in London.
31 *CL*, i. 218. For Thelwall to Coleridge, see W E Gibbs, 'An Unpublished Letter from John Thelwall to S T Coleridge' *MLR* 25 (January 1930), 85-90.
32 *CL*, i. 154.
33 Dyer, *Benevolence*, 15.
34 Dyer, *Benevolence*, 19.
35 Dyer, *Benevolence*, 23.
36 Dyer, *Benevolence*, 76.

1935-1985 GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY

In this, our fiftieth birthday year, we would wish to do honour to the founders and active spirits of the early days of the Society, who have made us what we are, as well as expressing gratitude to present members who continue their work and traditions.

ERNEST G CROWSLEY AND WALTER FARROW

Ernest George Crowsley and Walter Farrow - here be names to conjure with, for on 1 February 1935, at a meeting initiated by Mr Crowsley, the Charles Lamb Society was formed with Mr Crowsley as its Secretary, and Mr Farrow as its Chairman. They both remained in office for the rest of their lives: Mr Farrow died in his 96th year and Mr Crowsley in 1970.

The Society was fortunate in having two such Officers, both were warm-hearted men, and Mr Crowsley's cordial handshake for everyone on arrival at the meetings set people at ease and created a friendly feeling which is still apparent today. With Mr Farrow's wise guidance as Chairman and Mr Crowsley's organizing ability a high standard of lectures and summer visits was attained. A Dramatic Group and two Provincial Branches at Bradford and Glasgow were formed during their term of office. Overseas Members were entertained and taken to places of Lamb interest by Mr Crowsley and numerous enquiries from them were answered by him. Our Bristol member Bertram Davis, who wrote Ernest's obituary said of him 'In himself he epitomised the appeal and aims of the Charles Lamb Society, and while we are the poorer for his passing, we are the richer for having known and loved him and having profited from his organising ability'.

'Mr Farrow's business acumen was invaluable in guiding the Society to success in the many phases of its work. This was particularly noticed at Council Meetings which invariably ended with a humorous anecdote' wrote Mr H G Smith. On four occasions the members were entertained at Falaise, the home of Mr and Mrs Farrow. During the years of his Chairmanship more than 2000 letters passed between the two Officers. Mr Crowsley stated that Mr Farrow's handling of the meeting on 1 February 1935 'was remarkable. He was indeed, the right man in the right place, at the right time.' In a letter to the Secretary he wrote 'The bond of friendship provided by the Society is a great consolation to me in the evening of my life. Nothing can be happier than the way we have worked together over so many years and our enduring friendship is to me the happiest memory of a long and pleasant

life'.

Based on such foundations the Society continues to provide a high standard of lectures and maintains the warmth and friendliness evident throughout the years.

Florence Reeves

S M RICH

S M Rich was founder and for many years editor of the Charles Lamb Society's *Bulletin*, which has always provided a valuable link with those members who live too far away to attend meetings regularly.

His ready wit and love of London would have endeared him to Lamb, even though, as he often used to say, he embodied two of Lamb's 'imperfect sympathies' as he was both 'Pedagogue and Jew'!

His whole teaching life was spent at the Jews' Free School, then in the East End, and I am still approached by quite elderly and often very well-known men, who, regardless of the passing of time, mistake me for my Father, and are anxious to assure me of their gratitude for his wise teaching. His little book of sonnets 'From a Teacher's Desk' published in 1923 poignantly expresses his feelings.

He was founder and for over twenty years Lay Minister of the South London Liberal Synagogue, which is now a thriving community with three generations of the family taking active part.

At his death in 1949 his extensive collection of Eliana was bequeathed to the Society, and was housed, first in the Library at Edmonton and is now in the Guildhall. His own anthology, 'An Elian Miscellany' was published in 1931. He would have been happy to know the Society is so flourishing and to congratulate it on its first fifty years!

Sidney F Rich

H G SMITH

'In 1901 I joined the Evening Classes at Belle Vue school in Bradford where I took English Literature, French and Shorthand. The first evening on English Literature the teacher, a hard-bitten Yorkshireman, commenced by saying, "Can any of you chaps tell me what is a Mutual Improvement Society?" - these were very popular in the north of England and were the forerunners of what came to be known as Literary Societies. Of course, no one answered and he said, "Well, I will tell you. It's a lot of chaps who know nowt trying to learn one another." That put us in our proper places.

He then picked up a book from his desk and without mentioning the title or author, he read a chapter. It was one of Elia's Popular Fallacies about that redoubtable character, Mrs Conrady. He then said the author was a very fine essayist and though at first we might not take to his writings, in later years we would enjoy them. The next morning I bought a copy in the World's Classics edition - one shilling. And that is how I became acquainted with Charles Lamb - later I bought E.V.Lucas' Life of Charles Lamb in two volumes, 6/6 d. at Boots' sale.'

This extract from some of my father's 'Early Memories' tells of his introduction to the writings of Charles Lamb and the beginning of over 70 years enjoyment of them, which was later enhanced by his association for nearly 40 years with those of similar enthusiasm in the happy fellowship called the Charles Lamb Society.

In 1945 HGS became one of the Corresponding Secretaries with Provincial and Overseas Members; this resulted in some of those in Australia and New Zealand becoming permanent 'penfriends'. Three years later HGS took over the Editorship of the *Bulletin*. The preparation of each issue was a labour of love which continued for twenty-four years, until at the age of eighty-eight, failing eyesight compelled him to retire. Among the articles he wrote, perhaps, the one with which he was best pleased was 'Charles Lamb and his Bible' which was read at one of the monthly meetings and later printed as a booklet for circulation among his friends.

Joan Mead

ARTHUR FRANK BISHOP - 1888-1970

Among my early recollections of my father, is his invariable absence from home on Saturday mornings when he would disappear to browse among the bookstalls of Church Street, Paddington (now alas, sadly changed) finally returning at lunch-time triumphantly with some new treasures - a thoroughly Elian pursuit! Sixpence was, I think, his usual outlay on a book, rarely one shilling. Consequently his home in Maida Vale was crammed with a catholic assortment of books, pictures and curios.

His leisure interests embraced literature, architecture, travel and history. He was an active member of the St Marylebone Society and was instrumental in having a blue plaque affixed to B R Haydon's studio in Lisson Grove. After retirement from teaching, he shared his interests with others as an Evening Institute lecturer and as a travel guide.

He was among those thirty or so founding fathers of the Society who responded to the invitation to a meeting on Friday 1 February 1935 at Essex Hall, Strand when the Society was formed. From then until his death in 1970 he was a loyal and enthusiastic member of the Society as Council member, Vice-Chairman and finally as Chairman for six years - he presided at the April 1970 AGM only a month before he died.

Edmund Blunden wrote about him 'May his work for the Society's happy spirit go on through the enthusiasm of many others, a memorial which he would be glad of and which would - and will - carry on a thankful memory of his Elian spirit and a memory too of the many benefits that it has bestowed on many who otherwise had no such retreat from "the way of the world".'

Madeline Huxstep

EDMUND CHARLES BLUNDEN - 1896-1972

My first acquaintance with the poets, in the person of Edmund Blunden, occurred by chance, but entirely appropriately, at a cricket match when we happened to be sitting next to each other watching in the gathering gloom Yorkshire and Middlesex play. My copy of his *Undertones of War* is inscribed in his 'fair Roman hand'

Madeline Bishop
wishing her all happiness
Edmund Blunden
The Oval: Last Match of the Season 1937

I was then a pupil at Christ's Hospital - Edmund's old school - and his friendship with me and my family continued up to and through the war, and beyond. He was a marvellous correspondent in the true Lamb tradition; even

a postcard accepting an invitation to tea would be graced with some quirky and entirely individual asides (usually about cricket!).

His poetry, and his many perceptive works of criticism on Lamb, Clare, Shelley and others have become part of our literary heritage. The Society was indeed fortunate in having him as a Vice-President from its inception in 1935. This was much more than a nominal office as his regular contributions to the *Bulletin* and the frequent references to the Society in his correspondence bear witness. He would rejoice that the Society he did so much to nurture is still flourishing in this its Golden Jubilee year.

Madeline Huxstep

ANNETTE PARK

Naomi Lewis wrote of Annette Park:

> Besides being a Foundation Member, she was on the Council for twenty-two years ... and was Vice-Chairman from 1956 to 1963. But her most personal achievement within the C.L.S. was in her own field of theatrical production. It was she who initiated the C.L.S. Drama Group in 1946, an original enterprise which she ran with her own rare verve and style until her move to Birmingham in 1964. The plays produced were (by the terms of the Charter, if that is the word) of three kinds: those written *by* Charles and/or Mary Lamb (such as *Mr. H.*, *The Pawnbroker's Daughter*), those *about* the Lambs (such as *What a Lass* by Basil Francis, *Charles and Mary* by Joan Temple, *The Man without a Foe* by P Mann, *A Convivial Evening at C.L.'s* by Frank Hallam) and those he actually saw (*She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Maid and the Magpie*, *Lovers' Vows*, *Modern Antiques*, *Tom Thumb the Great* and others).There were also theatre visits, play readings, and an annual supper with a guest of honour. For most of this period she was teaching (and producing plays) on the Essex edge of London; as a C.L.S. member has pointed out, it was no small undertaking, even with the aid of loyal and willing helpers, to assemble and train the cast as well as find props, clothes, and premises for rehearsal and final show. But enjoyment was had by all, including the audiences. And the ventureshad real value, in bringing the Lamb world near.

Three other lady members of the Society should have special mention in the *Bulletin* for our Bi-Centenary Year. DR ELSIE SMITH who was a member from 1944 to 1977, lived in Salisbury and was an Honorary Librarian of the Cathedral Library, and it was due to her efforts that the Library was rearranged so that research workers could work undisturbed, and during the war she guarded its contents which included the safety of the Magna Carta housed there. Members will remember the two delightful visits she arranged for us to George Herbert's church at Bemerton, and Longford Castle with tea at her lovely Georgian house in the Close. Her lectures to the Society, 'Charles Lamb in the West Country' and 'Izaac Walton and his Influence on Charles Lamb'.and 'The Furniture of Charles & Mary Lamb' were much appreciated, and in 1967 she was the Guest of Honour at the Birthday Luncheon. She died in 1967, and is buried in the Cathedral Grounds.

MISS PHYLLIS MANN was a Literary Detective! For her work in this area she was made a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists. The Charles Lamb Society was interested in her play *The Man without a Foe*, a study of Charles Lamb

which was read at the Annual Meeting in 1946. In 1968 she gave us an intriguing paper on 'Adventures in Research' and she produced articles for the *Bulletin* which shewed how deeply involved she became in the Elian Era. She had many other literary interests.

The last of the three is MISS FREDA PARSONS who was for many years a careful and painstaking Treasurer. Overseas Members will remember her for the correspondence she had with them, she was ready always to find information and relay it in a chatty friendly way. Her outlook was wide-ranging, for she belonged to many other societies, and she was a valued member of the Lamb Society.

F S R

Our member, Donald Potter, recently received the following letter from MR G E HARRINGTON

Dear Mr. Potter,

A neighbour passed to me, a short time ago, an extract from "The Gazette Diary" ("When Enfield was in the Country and the Lambs were in Town"). From this extract I was very gratified to learn that the Charles Lamb Society was still in existence and flourishing. I was the third joining Member of the Society when it was formed and attended the Annual Dinner at the Chiltern Hall, Baker Street, when the late Sir Arthur Quiller Couch was the Guest of honour. Mr. Hallam was the President of the Society at the time. At the outcome of the last world War I lost touch with the Society and thought that perhaps it had been disbanded. I have now passed my eightyfifth birthday and cannot be active in the affairs of the Society but I would appreciate the receipt from you of any literature indicating any of its activities to-day and in the recent past.

Meantime, I send you my kindest regards and extend my sincere wishes for success and happiness in the affairs of the Charles Lamb Society.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) George Edwin Harrington

NOTES BY CLAUDE A PRANCE

ERNEST GEORGE CROWSLEY. Although I joined the Charles Lamb Society in 1936 I was then living on the South coast of England and did not actually meet any members of the Society until I came to work in London in 1949. However from 1936 onwards I carried on a fairly considerable correspondence with Ernest Crowsley in which we exchanged information on Elian matters. From 1949 we met many times. I remember his fine collection of Lamb books and particularly envied his two volume set of Lamb *Letters* (Lucas) which had been annotated by Major Butterworth, for I had a number of books of Lamb's circle with the Major's careful and valuable notes. I believe the volumes passed to the Society's Library.

It was through his generosity that I was able to complete my set of *The London Magazine*. I had twenty-two of the twenty-three volumes, Ernest had about six volumes, but they included my missing volume. He agreed to give this to me in exchange for a duplicate of mine which he did not possess. Eventually we agreed that he should have two of my duplicates in exchange for his volume and both of us were satisfied.

in honour of the sesquicentennial year. In the morning Dr John Beer took the chair for a session in which we heard and discussed two admirable papers, which will appear in a future *Bulletin*. Jonathan Bate spoke on 'Shakespeare and Lamb' and Dr Geoffrey Day on '*The Anatomy of Melancholy* and Lamb'. A sumptuous lunch was provided by the College and during a golden afternoon we visited according to choice one of the Colleges associated with Lamb's friends, Jesus College (Coleridge), St John's College (Wordsworth) or Gonville and Caius College (Manning).

After tea an entertainment of delightfully rendered readings from Lamb by Gillian Beer and Richard Wordsworth was interspersed with songs of the period sung by Richard Frewer. His beautiful tenor voice, clear enunciation and charm of manner, as well as the choice of songs, seemed perfectly suited to this Elian occasion. We were interested to hear him mention that one of the songs was a favourite with Braham, of whom Lamb said, 'I follow him like as the boys follow Tom the Piper ... I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense'. Our President accompanied at the piano and it greatly enhanced our pleasure to see and hear him 'going to town' in certain onomatopoeic or rumbustious passages.

Altogether a perfect end to a perfect day and we are most grateful to our Chairman, Dr Wilson, and our President, Professor Stevens, for arranging it for us.

AN EVENING WITH CHARLES LAMB

Members may be interested to know that Richard Wordsworth has made a one-hour tape with this title, which includes 'Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist', 'A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People', 'A Dissertation upon Roast Pig', and selections from letters to Coleridge, the Wordsworths, Miss Kelly, Bernard Barton and Mr Cary, as well as one of the Popular Fallacies - 'That Handsome is as Handsome does'. This programme received the equivalent of a standing ovation when it was given at the 1984 Summer Conference at Grasmere.

The tape costs £4.50 per cassette, plus 50p for packing and postage and may be obtained from The Book Shop, Dove Cottage, Grasmere, Cumbria LA22 9SG.

LAMB AT THE U S COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

Dr Joseph E Riehl of the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, LA 70504, has arranged for a section on Lamb at the College English Association to be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, on 25-7 April 1985. It is hoped that this section will be continued in future years.

BUTTONSNAP

As most members will already know, our tenant Mrs Tickle left the cottage in May 1984. The Council were faced with the difficult decision of advising the Trustees of the course of action which would be in the best interests of the Society. In view of the very large sums involved in repairs and the low fixed rent, it was decided after much heart-searching to sell the cottage. It was felt that this was the only way of ensuring that the cottage was properly maintained and of enabling the Society to support financially projects in furtherance of Elian studies. The cottage was put on the market in July and negotiations are proceeding.

M R H

MR AND MRS WALLACE NETHERY

We had great pleasure in welcoming Mr and Mrs Nethery to our gathering at Cambridge this autumn and would like to give them warm thanks for donating a copy of their *Charles Lamb's Town and Country Revisited* to the Charles Lamb Society Library at Guildhall.

THE ERNEST CROWSLEY MEMORIAL LECTURE

Our lecturer this year, Professor T W Craik of Durham University, gave us a delightful afternoon on 'Lamb's Tales' and, in the discussion after his lecture, drew from us the admission that few of us had read these 'Tales' recently, though to most of us they had been our first introduction to Shakespeare. Professor Craik rearoused our interest and sent us scurrying back to repair our omissions.

NOTES FROM MEMBERS

FROM MR FRANK LEDWITH

Mr Ledwith draws our attention to a note in *The Blue*, Lent Term 1984, concerning 'Old Bamber Gascoyne' who, in 'Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago', was one of the governors present at the public flogging of a boy who had for the third time run away, and who was an ancestor to Bamber Gascoigne of 'University Challenge' fame. David Young of the C H Office wonders whether Lamb remembered Gascoyne because he was acquainted with the family and the Editor asks whether one of the members of the Charles Lamb Society can throw any light on this.

FROM DR D G WILSON

Our Chairman protests mildly at some of the statements made by our distinguished Vice-President, George Barnett, in his charming 'little' review of Wallace Nethery's new publications. Referring to 'Poetry for Children', Boston 1812, Mr Barnett says that the 'two extant copies of the original' are in an American library. The implication that these are the *only* two extant copies is happily disproved by one in the Chairman's possession, which may be seen at the Guildhall Exhibition until 15 February 1985. There is one further obscure statement; 'Mr Nethery has managed to include the nine poems in the thirty pages ...'. To what does 'the nine poems' refer? The book contains eight-four poems, of which about a third were written by Charles, according to his own mention of the work. No matter, anything that revives interest in an actual re-reading of forgotten and neglected work is of value; how fascinating to find in 'Conquest of Prejudice' a little verse about dealing with colour prejudice in school, even if the treatment suggested is perhaps a fraction impracticable?

CHARLES CARTWRIGHT (Auditor General of the East India Company)

We have received an interesting letter from Mr R M Reilly (4 Clifford Court, Forest Hill 3131 Victoria Australia) asking for help in tracing any connections between Charles Cartwright (1753-1825) or his wife Sarah (Marquis) and a Lt Col. John Moor and his wife Mary Anne Price (Sealey).

Mr Reilly has sent us several pages of information about the Cartwright/ Moor families gleaned from C H and other archi ves (too long to summarize

here). If any genealogically-minded member can help please contact the Secretary.

(Cartwright is mentioned in Lamb's letter to Coleridge - 1 July 1796 - as having objected to Lamb being given leave).

SOCIETY NOTES

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION LUNCHEON

Saturday 9 February 1985 - 12 noon for 12.45 pm

1985 is the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the Charles Lamb Society on 1 February 1935 and it is fitting that for this very special celebration our Guest of Honour should be our Membership Secretary, FLORENCE REEVES. We look forward to enjoying the company of fellow-Elians and the excellent cuisine at FREDERICK'S, Camden Passage, N1. Camden Passage is two minutes' walk from Angel (Northern Line) Station, and many omnibus routes; parking (meters up to 1.30 pm) in the Duncan Terrace area.

Tickets from Madeline Huxstep, 1a Royston Road, Richmond, TW10 6LT (01-940 3837) at £12 each. This includes three-course meal, coffee, and wine or soft drinks. (Pre-prandial drinks and port/liqueurs are *not* included.) Please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope with your application and, as most seating will be at tables for 8/10, indicate your preferred table companions. If you wish for a vegetarian meal please indicate.

(Those applying for Luncheon tickets may include their Annual Subscriptions and Donations on the same cheque. Cheques for subscriptions *only* should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer.)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1985

Personal:	UK	(single)	£6.00
		(double)	£9.00
	Overseas		US $12.00
Corporate:	UK		£9.00
	Overseas		US $18.00

Cheques, due on 1 January, should be made payable to the Charles Lamb Society and sent to the Hon. Treasurer, R Houston Wallace, Flat 3, 47 Sussex Square, Brighton, Sussex BN2 1GE unless they are included when paying for Luncheon tickets.

DONATIONS

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