

THE CHARLES LAMB BULLETIN

The Journal of the Charles Lamb Society

NEW SERIES NO. 50

April 1985

ASPECTS OF THE ROMANTIC SUBLIME

A lecture given to a joint meeting of the Turner Society and the Charles Lamb Society on 7 January 1984 by Professor Christopher Salvesen

Announced as *The Sublime in Art and Literature in the Romantic Period*, this talk seems to have a title in itself of rather sublime dimensions. For the sake of something more specific, I might have called it (one of those bright formulations you send to the Secretary and then regret) *Crossing the Alps: Wordsworth and Hannibal*. An alternative title, anyway - and a pairing of famous names, if not quite so piquant as this afternoon's coming together of Lamb and Turner. Both Londoners, to be sure, and with at least some affinities of circumstance and temperament; but Lamb more than any other Romantic someone who seems deliberately, and for good reasons, to avoid the Sublime - and yet, not only because of the all-too-human horror enacted by his sister. Before this, he himself had spent six weeks 'very agreeably in a madhouse at Hoxton' (so he put it); and he went on: 'Dream not Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of Fancy till you have gone mad.' Turner, by contrast, who brings to bear 'all the grandeur and wildness of fancy' through his knowledge of mountains and storms and shipwreck, seems a man almost continually in touch with the Sublime. And yet, madness - or shipwreck - can these be sublime? One of the basic ideas of Burke's *Enquiry* of 1757, Burke on 'the Sublime and Beautiful', gives support to such notions:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible,...is a source of the sublime.

What other attributes does it have? How else can we define it? But - it would be ridiculous to try; it would need a five volume history. Samuel Monk in his standard, and nicely ironical, book on the subject shows how various, and contradictory, opinions were by the end of the eighteenth century. It would be unreasonable to expect the concept to become any simpler in the Romantic period. It is fully operative in Wordsworth's poetic vocabulary ('A sense sublime/ Of something far more deeply interfused'). It lives on in the critical vocabulary of Ruskin.

So, any attempt to summarize the Sublime would be ridiculous; still, saying that does get us started - if only because one common or familiar way of talking about the Sublime is to associate it with the ridiculous.

Aunt Jane observed, the second time
She tumbled off a bus,
'The step is short from the Sublime
To the Ridiculous.'

With Wordsworth and Turner in prospect, that - the late-Victorian sub-sadistic world of the practical joker - may seem, if not in itself ridiculous, at least incongruous and crude. But it has the authority of the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* behind it as well as *Ruthless Rhymes*; and

it illustrates the connection first made apparently by Tom Paine in 1795, in *The Age of Reason* (the context is half-rationalist, half-literary; he is attacking both the authenticity and the style of *The Book of Joshua*):

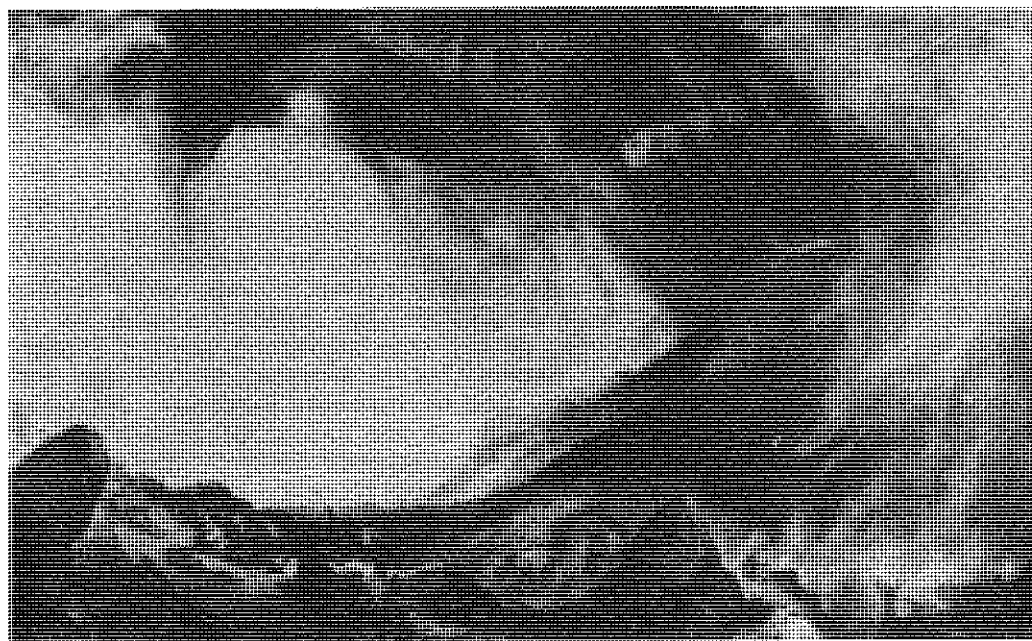
The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related, that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime, makes the ridiculous; and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again.

This (noted, incidentally, by Turner in his Cockermonth sketchbook, 1809) leads to the classic association of the two ideas, made by Napoleon in 1812 during his retreat from Moscow: 'Du sublime au ridicule il n'y a qu'un pas' (though a retreat from Moscow seems a long 'one step'). Now, earlier in that year, in June 1812 (what we will come to shortly), Turner had already exhibited his great, in some ways prophetic and Napoleonic painting of *Snow Storm: Hannibal Crossing the Alps*.

For the moment, what these quotations suggest - what we feel instinctively today as readers, admirers of pictures, historians of ideas - is that there is something awkwardly balanced, something inherently precarious, about the Sublime. As a concept - and not just by virtue of Napoleon and Aunt Jane - it seems accident-prone. As an enormous body of rather overwrought, often exclamatory, theory - all that eighteenth century gentlemanly philosophizing and Bluestocking enthusiasm - it strikes us as being slightly suspect. Of course, as an idea - or is it an emotion? - a force of Nature? - a realm of the imagination? (its proper metaphorical form is elusive) - as an idea the Sublime is a very real presence in Romantic art and literature. But in the case of Turner and Wordsworth their sense of 'ordinary life' - the sense in which Wordsworth uses that phrase in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* - their sense of common life enables them to transcend or, more accurately, to incorporate the Sublime in their work so that we don't need to identify it specifically or categorize it: because we don't feel that they have had this problem. They know the Sublime, and it doesn't bother them. What I want to suggest is that the great Romantic artists - or rather, the greatest, Wordsworth and Turner - avoid the endemic dangers of the Sublime, excessive rapture and generally disproportionate emotion, simply by their being so firmly based in reality; they encompass the Sublime without difficulty - they don't have to strain for it. In fact, to talk of the 'Wordsworthian' sublime or the 'Turnerian' sublime, as commentators do, is to talk about something substantially different from 'the Sublime' itself. If you were to go to a great poet in order to define the Sublime - and it is essentially a literary idea - you would do better to go to Byron than to Wordsworth, just because he has so often that sort of obvious, 'inflatable' grandeur which Hazlitt notices and contrasts with Wordsworth.

The author of the *Lyrical Ballads* describes the lichen on the rock, the withered fern, with some peculiar feeling that he has about them; the author of *Childe Harold* describes the stately cypress, or the fallen column, with the feeling that every schoolboy has about them. The world is a grown schoolboy, and relishes the latter most.

To be fair, Byron is better at History than at Nature; in the best of *Childe Harold* he combines the two powerfully - but for the most powerful combination of History and Nature Turner stands supreme. For example: *Snow Storm: Hannibal Crossing the Alps*. Snow storm first - Nature, the weather, predominates: which recalls a well-known episode in Turner's conception of the painting - staying in Yorkshire, at Farnley Hall the home of his friend



Snow Storm: Hannibal Crossing the Alps 1812 Tate Gallery, London

and patron Walter Fawkes, he was walking with Fawkes's son when they witnessed a storm rolling and sweeping over the hills. 'There, Hawkey,' said Turner, 'in two years you will see this again, and call it Hannibal crossing the Alps.' An attractive story, simply because of its realistic approach to how the imagination works: no raptures, just the opposite, Turner takes a playful view of the passing Yorkshire storm and its association with a great and awesome passage in history - and yet it will eventually issue in a sublime painting. Contemporary critics were in no doubt about the picture's sublimity. *The Examiner*, for example, spoke of its delighting the imagination 'by the impressive agency of a few uncommon and sublime subjects in material nature, and of terror in its display of the effects of moral evil...' *The Examiner* suggests how the predominant snow storm brings out the quality of 'the terrible' in Hannibal's army - 'terrible', that is, as an army, an agent of destruction, and as a body of men in danger themselves of being destroyed. The army, it went on, is 'represented agreeably to that principle of the sublime which arises from obscurity', while

An aspect of terrible splendour is displayed in the shining of the sun... A terrible magnificence is also seen in the widely circular sweep of snow whirling high in the air... In fine, the moral and physical elements are here in powerful unison blended by a most masterly hand, awakening emotions of awe and grandeur.

It's a perceptive piece of criticism, responding to the form and manner, the great vortex (Turner's first use of this characteristic whirling composition); responding likewise to the tragic, historical, human content.

Turner's sense of history is an essential part of his sublime effect. In 1802 he had seen David's painting of *Napoleon on the St Bernard Pass* and must have concurred with the view of Napoleon as the modern Hannibal;

which would give an admonitory resonance to the *Snow Storm*. We know that the theme of Hannibal had been present in Turner's mind at least ten years before he exhibited the *Snow Storm*; while Napoleon as an invader seems to have informed Turner's early interest in Edward I invading Wales: to which the large watercolour *Scene in the Welsh Mountains with an Army on the March* is probably connected - as with Hannibal, we see the combination of wild, dominant Nature and man arrayed in the equivocal grandeur of military action. Turner's particular interest in Carthage - Hannibal's or Dido's - becomes more sympathetic later on: during the Napoleonic wars he thinks of Britain as equivalent to Rome, Carthage to France - after Waterloo, he sees the history of Carthage, the great Mediterranean maritime empire, as a warning to his own seafaring nation. He exhibits *Dido Building Carthage* in 1815; two years later, *The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire*, the full title of which is a miniature history lecture in itself. The Virgilian, Claudian, sunset touch - elegiac, certainly; and, yes, sublime as well in the grandeur of its historical, prophetic vision of enervation and decay. Ruskin, marvelling at the extent of Turner's imaginative knowledge, includes Turner's knowledge of death - 'the European death of the nineteenth century': how different, he says, from anything imagined and visualized in earlier centuries by Salvator, say, or Dürer. Ruskin compares the local, temporary violence depicted by the elder artists

to the work of the axe, and the sword, and the famine, which was done during this man's [Turner's] youth on all the hills and plains of the Christian earth, from Moscow to Gibraltar. He was eighteen years old when Napoleon came down on Arcola. Look on the map of Europe, and count the bloodstains on it, between Arcola and Waterloo.

A brief tail-piece here to Hannibal and the Alps - Turner returned to the theme, in vignette form, in illustrating Samuel Rogers's poem *Italy* in the edition of 1830 (the book which introduced the work of Turner to Ruskin). Vignette or no, sublime potentialities are fully realized; though Turner now shows more of the army, elephant, Numidian archer, with the Alps their setting - what Rogers calls 'Those mighty hills, so shadowy' (which just about makes sense), 'so sublime' (what else *could* he call them?). But a couple of lines do seem to have caught Turner's imagination; Rogers goes on:

... the towered elephant
Upturned his trunk into the murky sky,
Then tumbled headlong, swallowed up and lost,
He and his rider.

Turner's pessimistic view of the undertaking is expressed more strongly in another sketch which didn't issue in a vignette: its heap of dead elephants has a disconcerting grandeur. Hannibal's elephants had long ago caught the imagination of Thomas Gray on his Alpine journey; he made a list (which Turner probably knew) of subjects for painters - that for Salvator Rosa, 'Hannibal passing the Alps; the mountaineers rolling down rocks on his army; elephants tumbling down the precipices.' Later, Mrs Radcliffe in the *Mysteries of Udolpho* imagines the same scene - as does Rogers. Is the elephant sublime? Yes, according to some of the wilder reaches of sublime theory, as a huge or monstrous form (though Milton hadn't thought so: for Adam and Eve 'the unwieldy elephant / To make them mirth used all his might, and wreathed / His lithe proboscis.').

The *Hannibal* of 1812 was the first painting to which Turner attached lines

from his fragmentary poem *Fallacies of Hope*.

Craft, treachery, and fraud - Salassian force,
 Hung on the fainting rear! then Plunder seiz'd
 The victor and the captive, - Saguntum's spoil,
 Alike became their prey; still the chief advanc'd,
 Look'd on the sun with hope; - low, broad, and wan;
 While the fierce archer of the downward year
 Stains Italy's blanch'd barrier with storms.

That has a kind of dogged grandeur, something impressively chaotic which surely gives the verse a touch of the sublime. Turner's verse owes most to Thomson - *The Seasons* made a point of exploiting terror in Nature for sublime effect (sharks, say, or a shepherdess struck by lightning): but Turner's incoherent verbal energy, which seems to have informed many of his speeches and lectures as well as his verse, is very much his own thing. He ends his lines here with a look forward to Hannibal's ultimate defeat.

Still on Campania's fertile plains - he thought,
 But the loud breeze sobb'd, 'Capua's joys beware!'



Hannibal Crossing the Alps illustration for Rogers's *Italy*
 watercolour 1829

That Hannibal *crossed* the Alps is the final heroic factor in the story; and in Turner's painting. And here you might invoke, just in passing, the admittedly doubtful etymology of the word 'sublime': *sub limen*, up to the

lintel, or threshold; the sense it contains of reaching and touching a barrier or frontier or *limes*; and then of crossing over into, entering, a new world.



Hannibal Crossing the Alps sketch for Rogers's *Italy*
watercolour 1829

When Wordsworth, with his fellow-student Robert Jones, set out from Cambridge 'Towards the distant Alps', the actual crossing of the Alps must have been one of the major experiences they promised themselves. And yet Wordsworth's account in the *Prelude* of that particular stage of their journey could well form part of a poem entitled *Fallacies of Hope*. You remember how it goes. They travel, in Book VI, through a still-euphoric post-Revolutionary France. They reach the Alps, where Wordsworth survives the characteristically odd disappointment of actually *seeing* Mont Blanc; always distrustful of the eye, 'the most despotic of the senses', he preferred to have the mountain as 'a living thought' in his imagination. But this little disappointment, and the claim made for the imagination, prepares for the next stage, the actual crossing of the Alps. And Wordsworth, after admitting to some fashionable literary melancholy inspired by the scenery, 'Dejection taken up for pleasure's sake', goes on to relate: 'Far different dejection once was mine,/ A deep and genuine sadness then I felt.' Having joined some fellow-travellers 'Along the road that leads to Italy', Wordsworth and Jones get left behind by dallying over lunch at an inn. Trying to catch up, they climb steeply, but are

puzzled when they fail to overtake anyone. They meet a peasant, explain what they want, and are told to retrace their steps to a stream where they will find the path they had missed; and further they are told

that thenceforward all our course
Was downwards, with the current of that stream.
Hard of belief, we questioned him again,
And all the answers which the Man return'd
To our enquiries in their sense and substance
Translated by the feelings which we had
Ended in this; that we had crossed the Alps.

Well - what an anti-climax: is there a touch of the farcical or at least the comic about it? - this characteristically Wordsworthian scene, the reiterated questions and the feeling of being at some sort of linguistic cross-purposes (a little bit like Wordsworth and the Leech-Gatherer)? Some response is needed; and - Wordsworth responds, responds by an immediate apostrophe to 'Imagination'. At this moment of disappointment it comes in surprisingly, an agitated, powerfully reflective passage of some twenty lines. But, after this, Wordsworth resumes his story:

The dull and heavy slackening that ensued
Upon those tidings by the Peasant given
Was soon dislodged.

Wordsworth and Jones enter a narrow chasm through which they journey 'several hours/ At a slow step'. The remainder of the passage is Wordsworth's description of what he saw and felt and thought:

The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decay'd,
The stationary blasts of water-falls,
And every where along the hollow rent
Winds thwarting winds, bewilder'd and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that mutter'd close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfetter'd clouds, and region of the Heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first and last, and midst, and without end.

In this case, the sublime follows the ridiculous. The farcical accident of crossing the Alps without noticing is, not obliterated, but subsumed by a compensating experience of supreme imaginative intensity. From the ridiculous to the sublime - that may just seem like a way of putting it; and of course it wasn't just one step, it was slow stepping of several hours. But the point is made - Wordsworth's sublime is not something to be sought out or worked up by a tourist - it has little or nothing to do with expectation - it is something *given*.

In the *Prelude* Wordsworth comes back from the Alps and goes to live in London. And for Wordsworth London represents another threshold, very

different, and yet with comparable and contrasting sublimity. In Book VII Wordsworth offers some 'Juvenalian' satire on London. But the great city demands more; and Wordsworth responds in Book VIII: 'Preceptress stern... London to thee I willingly return.' I want to let Wordsworth speak for himself in describing his first entry into London; though I should warn you that in the opinion of Ernest de Selincourt the passage I am going to give is composed of 'Probably the worst written lines in the poem'. There's one touch of awkwardness, certainly (if not quite of *Stuffed Owl* standard) and the whole passage needs careful pointing. But it works, because it expresses a kind of honesty, Wordsworth's half-refusal to attribute sublimity to London; he now finds it hard to admit that he was impressed by London. But, as much of Book VIII shows, that is what happened; and his first entry was a profound experience, momentary, elusive, but 'a thing divine'.

Never shall I forget the hour
 The moment rather say when having thridded
 The labyrinth of suburban Villages,
 At length I did unto myself first seem
 To enter the great City. On the roof
 Of an itinerant Vehicle I sate
 With vulgar Men about me, vulgar forms
 Of houses, pavement, streets - of men and things
 Mean shapes on every side: but, at the time
 When to myself it fairly might be said -
 The very moment that I seem'd to know -
 The threshold now is overpass'd (Great God!
 That aught *external* to the living mind
 Should have such mighty sway! yet so it was),
 A weight of Ages did at once descend
 Upon my heart; no thought embodied, no
 Distinct remembrances; but weight and power,
 Power growing with the weight: alas! I feel
 That I am trifling: 'twas a moment's pause.
 All that took place within me, came and went
 As in a moment, and I only now
 Remember that it was a thing divine.

Crossing the Alps, a threshold is missed (and yet the sublime follows); entering London, a threshold is recognized - a moment of awe and power, almost a 'spot of time', in spite of itself. Amusing, how Wordsworth rather rapidly gives up trying to describe the sublime 'moment'; but, however reluctantly, he recognizes it all the same. History overwhelms him.

'Interart analogies' are always difficult; but I found that reading Book VIII of the *Prelude* and 'The Two Boyhoods' chapter of *Modern Painters* - Wordsworth bringing together London and his native regions, and Ruskin poetically evoking Turner's London childhood - this did at least suggest some Romantic affinities. It would be tempting to do another 'Two Boyhoods' - not Giorgione and Venice contrasted with Turner and Covent Garden, but Wordsworth and the Lake District. Wordsworth states that his theme in Book VIII is 'to retrace the way that led me on/ Through Nature to the love of Human Kind.' And that prompts a question we often want to ask of Turner - how does his 'love of human kind' relate to his 'love of Nature'? In Ruskin's view Turner's sensibility harmonizes the two loves from the start, 'heart-sight deep as eye-sight' - although the material London provides is so unpromising. The human kind that the boy Turner sees is not very ideal -

no knights or ladies, certainly, and their costume 'disadvantageous' - 'depending much on incumbency of hat and feather, and short waists': needing, says Ruskin, a Reynolds to do *something* for them. And he goes on:

None of these things very glorious; the best, however, that England, it seems, was then able to provide for a boy of gift: who, such as they are, loves them - never, indeed, forgets them. The short waists modify to the last his visions of Greek ideal.



Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1775-1851
Drawing by Charles Martin National Portrait Gallery, London

Does this include Turner's own short waist? It's not unduly 'psychobiographical' to suggest that Turner's grasp of reality, with which he 'modified' or rather encompassed the ideal and the sublime and so many other effects is all the firmer because of his sense of himself: an ordinary-looking sort of man: a bit on the short side, but how should that limit in any way the reach of his imagination? It makes him all the more the hero, a Poet and a Prophet in his art. 'Why say the Poet and Prophet are not often united? - for if they are not they ought to be.'

Thus Turner, in a letter from Farnley Hall when *Hannibal Crossing the Alps* must already have been working in his mind.

On Turner's vision of 'Greek ideal' Ruskin continues:

His foregrounds had always a succulent cluster or two of greengrocery at the corners. Enchanted oranges gleam in Covent Gardens of the Hesperides; and great ships go to pieces in order to scatter chests of them on the waves.

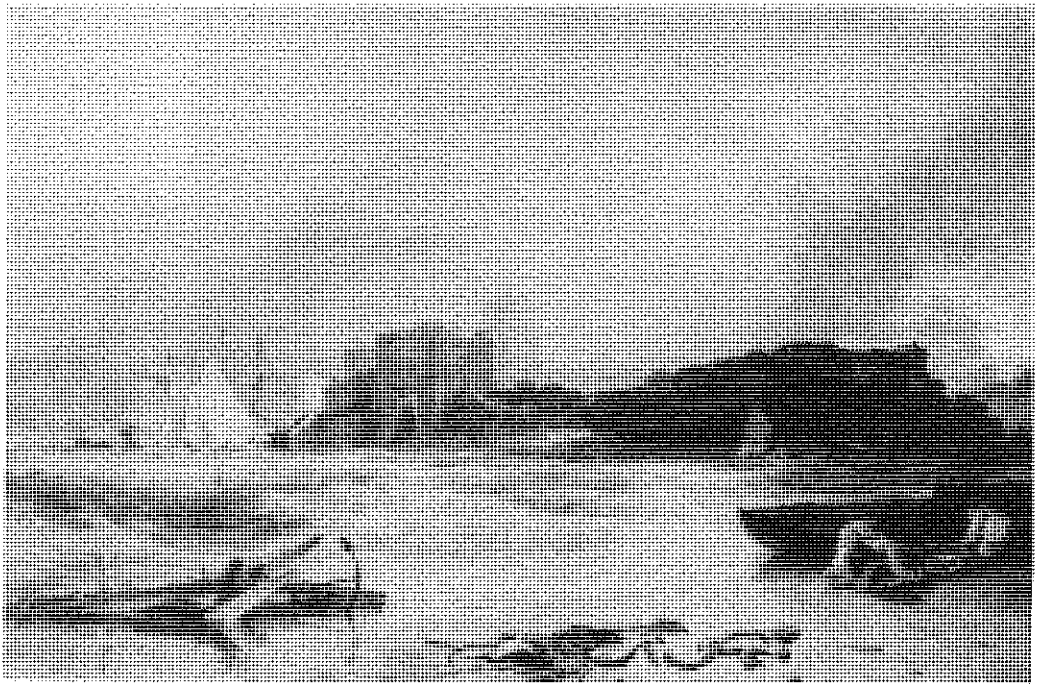
You might think here, for example, of *The Goddess of Discord choosing the Apple of Contention in the Garden of the Hesperides* (1806). In contrast to such a mainly mythological and ideal scene, we can follow Ruskin emphasizing how Turner as a child loves what is ugly and thus learns to value and transform it:

Turner devoted picture after picture to the illustration of the effects of dinginess, smoke, soot, dust, and dusty texture; old sides of boats, weedy roadside vegetation, dung-hills, straw-yards, and all the soilings and stains of every common labour.

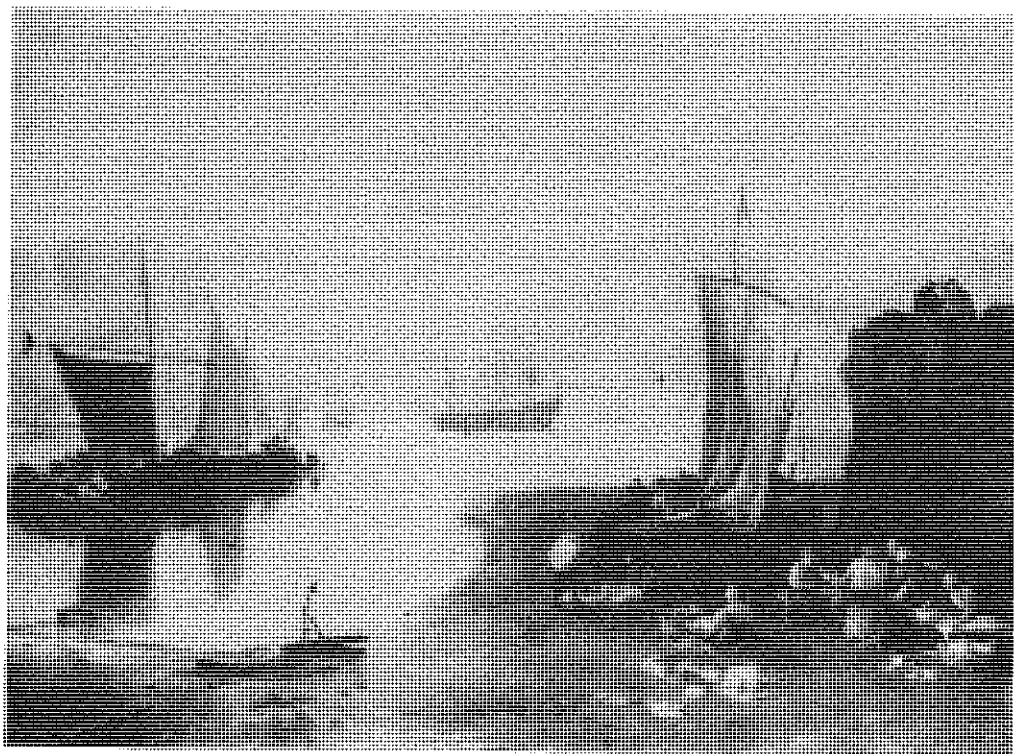
You may feel Ruskin gets a little carried away; but his stress on Turner's low and 'ordinary' subject matter - and on Turner's understanding of and regard for labour, and the poor (what Ruskin calls 'the second great result of this Covent Garden training') - this stress is a right, and in many ways Wordsworthian, one.

Ruskin is very keen on his Covent Garden idea. Turner, he goes on,

not only could endure, but enjoyed and looked for *litter*, like Covent Garden wreck after the market. His pictures are often full of it, from side to side; their foregrounds differ from all others in the natural way that things have of lying about in them.



Pembroke Castle, South Wales: Thunder Storm Approaching 1801 watercolour



Sun Rising through Vapour: Fishermen Cleaning and Selling Fish 1807
National Gallery, London

Let's interrupt Ruskin here, and the play of words generally, to look at one or two paintings which bear out what Ruskin is saying: which show (I hope without too much further commentary) the connections between Turner's sense of Nature and his regard for man at work; how the grandeur and sublimity of Nature is modified or mediated by his view of man and ordinary things. The watercolour *Pembroke Castle* (1801) combines storm and still-life - a still-life of fish: the sublime plus 'litter' - in this case a kind of Billingsgate. *Sun Rising through Vapour: Fishermen Cleaning and Selling Fish* (1807) unites Nature and labour; a maritime version of the Wordsworthian 'common dawn' of *Prelude* IV (1.337). *Ploughing up Turnips, near Slough* (1809) sounds almost risibly, or polemically, mundane, and perhaps it even did in Turner's day: but what a marvellous combination - the Covent Garden effect of 'litter' of the turnips, the humanity of man at work in the earth, the 'sublime', almost unearthly presence of Windsor Castle on the horizon.

Ruskin again:

Even his richest vegetation, in ideal work, is confused; and he delights in shingle, debris, and heaps of fallen stones. The last words he ever spoke to me about a picture were in gentle exultation about his St Gothard: 'that *litter* of stones which I endeavoured to represent'.

Here, another Swiss example: *Goldau* (1843) - Turner's 'late' sublime (actually well beyond the Romantic period) fulfils itself in Switzerland. 'That *litter* of stones' - interesting, in connection with the Sublime, how in those distant days when mountains were still regarded with fear and

contempt - rather than with fear and delighted wonder - they were referred to in similar terms: to John Evelyn the diarist, for example, the Alps were 'the rubbish of the earth' - but, what a distance, what a profound change in how men see the world, between his view and Turner's. An early, historically-speaking Romantic, Swiss scene, the *Lake of Thun* (1806), shows a combination of storm, work going on, foreground vegetation and litter. In conclusion, two watercolours and a Wordsworthian coda: another storm, one of Turner's most sublime in its mysterious mixing of elements - in the lightning's destructive course, the ruins, the 'litter of stones' (and lintels too?) of the dead Druidical religion, the dead shepherd of a Christianity at least notionally current: *Stonehenge*, from *Picturesque Views in England and Wales*, of the late 1820s. The pastoral element, as Ruskin observed, 'the shepherd life as a type of ecclesiastical', is brought out in the companion piece *Salisbury*, from *Old Sarum Entrenchment*. With Ruskin, we see the great cathedral, storm and 'the rain of blessing' too, a shepherd currently at work.

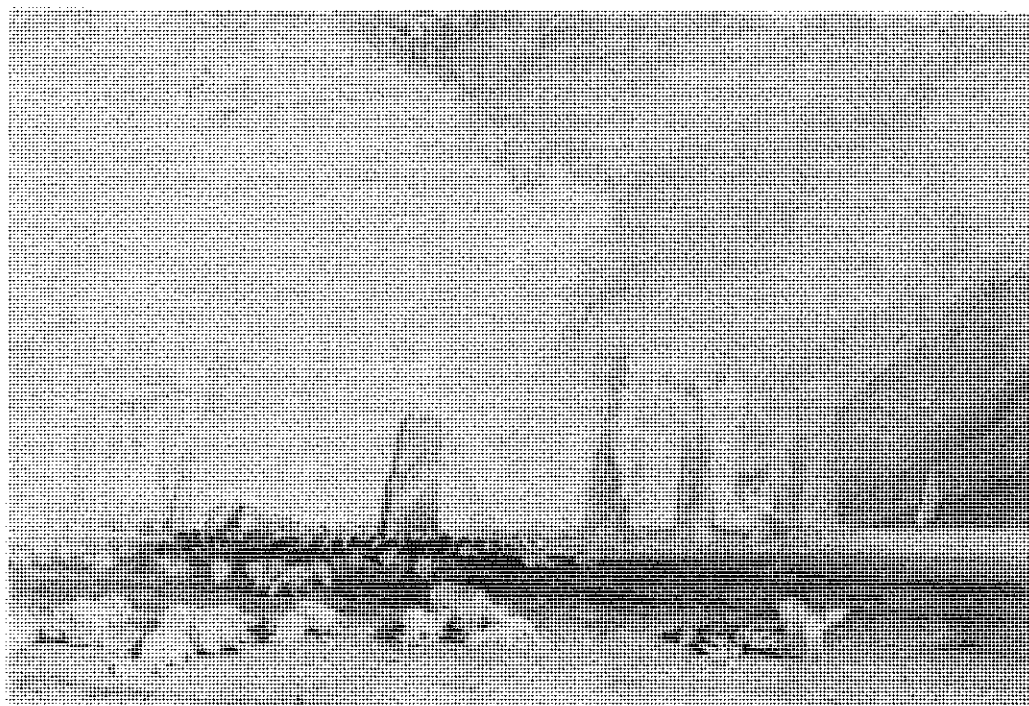
Wordsworth's sense of work - of work as that which most truly mediates between man and Nature - is embodied specifically in the form of the Shepherd. Wordsworth sees the Shepherd both in his sublimity and in his ordinariness. 'Shepherds were the men who pleas'd me first', he says because the Shepherd is a solitary, independent figure whose work naturally takes him into the mountains and the heart of Nature; and yet, he is social man as well, a worker going about his business. Wordsworth describes in *Prelude* Book VIII how



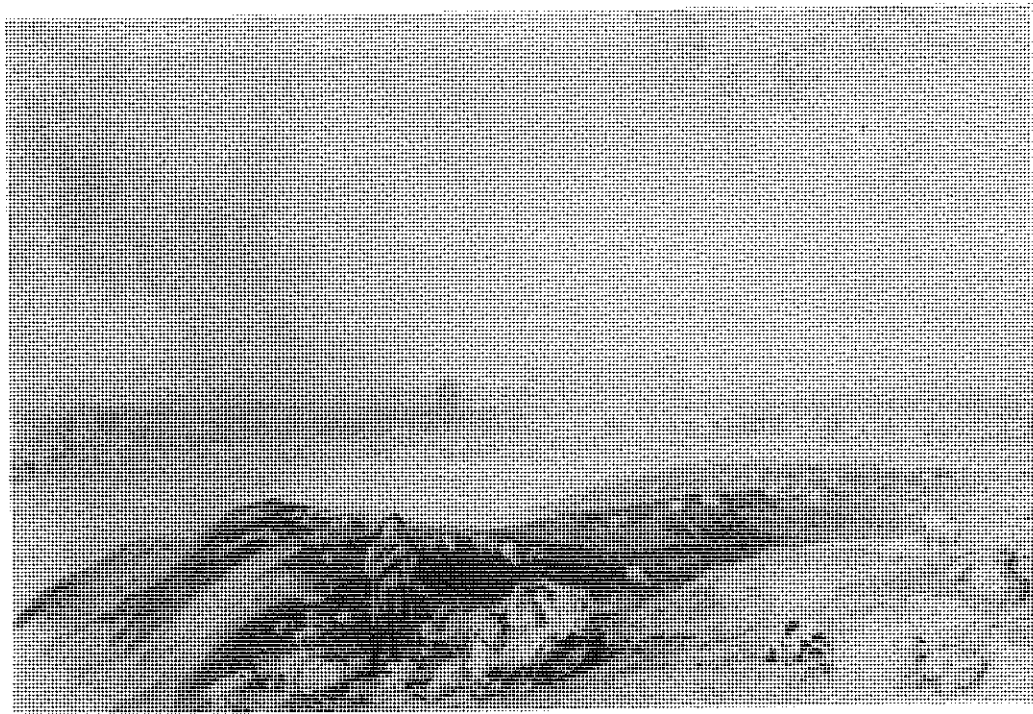
Ploughing up Turnips, near Slough 1809 Tate Gallery, London



Lake of Thun 1806 watercolour



Stonehenge c.1828 watercolour
Picturesque Views of England and Wales



Salisbury, from Old Sarum Entrenchment c.1828
watercolour *Picturesque Views of England and Wales*

A rambling Schoolboy, thus
 Have I beheld him, without knowing why
 Have felt his presence in his own domain,
 As of a Lord and Master; or a Power
 Or Genius, under Nature, under God,
 Presiding; and severest solitude
 Seem'd more commanding oft when he was there.
 Seeking the raven's nest, and suddenly
 Surpriz'd with vapours, or on rainy days
 When I have angled up the lonely brooks
 Mine eyes have glanced upon him, few steps off,
 In size a giant, stalking through the fog,
 His Sheep like Greenland Bears; at other times
 When round some shady promontory turning,
 His Form hath flash'd upon me, glorified
 By the deep radiance of the setting sun:
 Or him have I descried in distant sky,
 A solitary object and sublime,
 Above all height! like an aerial Cross,
 As it is stationed on some spiry Rock
 Of the Chartreuse, for worship.

And yet Wordsworth recognizes - almost comically, concedes - that this 'sublime' figure is just like any other man: 'this Creature' - 'an imaginative form' though he may be - 'Was not a Corin of the groves...

But, for the purposes of kind, a Man
 With the most common; Husband, Father; learn'd,

Could teach, admonish, suffer'd with the rest
From vice and folly, wretchedness and fear ...

Wordsworth's 'sociological' concession ('for the purposes of kind') in no way compromises the essential majesty, or (not to avoid the idea, since Wordsworth doesn't) the essential sublimity, of his Shepherd. If we think of the Sublime as something experienced primarily in the presence of Nature, then Wordsworth and Turner are never more sublime than when they reconcile their sense of awe and wonder in Nature with a realistic and compassionate view of man. They know that the Sublime is worth little without a corresponding emphasis on humanity, on ordinary life and man at work. One basic affinity between the art of Wordsworth and the art of Turner lies in the way that both men find it possible to harmonize a love of Nature and a love of Human Kind.

SPEECH GIVEN TO THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY AT THE BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON ON
9 FEBRUARY 1985 by MISS F S REEVES

Mr President, Members and Friends,

When I agreed at the Annual General Meeting last May to be the Guest of Honour at this Birthday Luncheon, I said I would give a potted history of the Society, as it was to be a celebration to mark its Fiftieth Birthday. However it was suggested to me that I should make it a little more personal, so I decided to indicate too what the Society has done for me.

So to begin at the beginning we go back to the year 1934, when in the autumn of that year a letter appeared in *The Times* suggesting the formation of a Charles Lamb Society, under the signature of Ernest George Crowsley. This resulted in a meeting held on Friday 1 February 1935 in Essex Hall when Walter Farrow was elected Chairman, with Ernest George Crowsley as Honorary General Secretary. The first Ordinary Meeting was held on 11 March, when the objects of the Society were conformed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch became its first President and remained in that Office until his death in 1946. He has been followed by Lord David Cecil, Professor Geoffrey Tillotson, Professor Ian Jack and Professor John Stevens.

Now here I introduce the first personal note. It was the custom of my friend Margot Pichon and myself to revive ourselves after a week's teaching with a visit to a theatre on Friday evenings, and in 1938 one of these visits took us to the Everyman Theatre at Hampstead to see the play *Charles and Mary* written by Joan Temple. I was so moved and impressed by it that I joined the Charles Lamb Society, my friend having become a member in 1937. Little did I know what was in store for me!

The objects of the Society were (1) to study the life, works and times of Charles Lamb and his Contemporaries, (2) to stimulate the Elian spirit of friendliness and humour, (3) to publish papers read to the Society, (4) to form a collection of Eliana. Monthly meetings were arranged during the winter months, and during the summer visits to places of Elian and literary interest took place, thus fulfilling Object No.1. To stimulate the Elian spirit of friendliness the Society held a Dinner (it was a Dinner then!) on 10 February 1936, with the President as Guest of Honour. Subsequent Guests were Lord Plender, Frank Swinnerton, Viscount Finley, Samuel Morris Rich, Lord David Cecil and during the ensuing years other famous names appeared on the Dinner Programmes. In 1954 a break with tradition was made, when it was decided that a lady should be the Guest of Honour. Miss Helen Darbishire

gallantly accepted and gave a delightful talk on Dorothy Wordsworth. During the war years the Dinner became a Tea Party and Dinners were resumed in 1950. The Celebration eventually became a Luncheon held for some years at Simpson's in the Strand and for the last three years here at Frederick's.

Summer visits were made to the houses where the Lambs had lived or stayed, and rambles in the country associated with them in Hertfordshire and Cambridge. Most of these were arranged by members and very pleasant they proved to be.

Now we come to the third Object, the purpose of which was to acquaint Provincial and Overseas Members with the Society's activities, and provide condensed particulars of some of the Papers read, and here I become personal again. I had been enormously impressed by the quality of the Papers given by Members, and when Mr Crowsley asked if I would take part in a Members' Evening and give a short Paper on John Woolman, I was flabbergasted! But one did not say 'No' to Mr Crowsley. I was quite ignorant on this subject and very fearful, and I had to do quite a bit of investigating, and as I was in Cornwall at the time it wasn't easy. However I survived the ordeal and having broken the ice, as it were, during the following years I wrote papers on Madame Malibran, Madame Catalani, Sara Coleridge, John Wordsworth and short papers on Hester Savory and Ann Wilson for the Dramatic Group. So I am in favour of Members' Meetings.

A Bulletin was published, the purpose of which was to acquaint Provincial and Overseas Members of the activities of the Society and to provide condensed particulars of some of the Papers read. From 1935 to 1941 this was roneoed and after that date it was printed and for several years Supplements of interest were included at no cost to the Society. Six Bulletins a year were provided. The first Editor was Samuel Morris Rich, who retired in 1947. He was succeeded by H G Smith who remained in office until 1971. These two editors did much to enhance interest in the Society and it became our principal propaganda medium and we owe them a great debt. They recorded accounts of the meetings, gave book reviews, and obituaries, and topographical details of references to Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb in books. In 1972 the Bulletin was changed from leaflet form into the Quality Magazine with which we are now familiar, with the Lamb Portrait on its grey cover and is published quarterly. Basil Savage edited this for five years, later assisted by Mary Wedd who took complete charge in 1979. Thanks to these two Editors the Bulletin is now much sought after by Libraries and Universities the world over and does much to foster interest in Lamb and his Contemporaries. Mr Rich and Mr Smith I am sure would be gratified to see the blossoming of the Paper they nursed through its early years.

Two other activities were arranged in the years between 1945 and 1952. Corresponding Secretaries were appointed to keep in touch with Provincial Members. Branches were formed in Bradford and Glasgow, with monthly meetings at Bradford and Luncheon meetings at Glasgow until 1952.

In 1946 a new venture began which was very successful, for in that year a Dramatic Group was formed with Miss Annette Park as Producer and Miss Edna Philpot as Secretary. Each year a play was produced, and readings were arranged of plays by Lamb and his Contemporaries, and others which were written by members of the Society, Basil Francis and Phyllis Mann, and included among the Players was Richard Meadows White. A very high standard was achieved. At this point I become personal again, for although I was no actress I could sing, and so I found myself singing a group of songs at the

Dramatic Group's *Conversaciones*, at the Coming of Age of the Society, and to illustrate lectures given by Miss Elizabeth Fordham. I was thus able to use a talent given me, for which I was grateful. We owe a great debt to Miss Park, Basil Francis and Richard Meadows White, for they brought to our notice a truly formidable number of plays that would never have been seen on the legitimate stage and if I may be frivolous for a moment Miss Park had a wonderful collection of hats - which we always enjoyed seeing at the meetings and those who saw would remember!

Soon after the formation of the Society, items of *Eliana* gradually accumulated and were housed in the Edmonton Library under the care of the Librarian Mr F E Sandry. One outstanding gift from Pretoria in 1952 was the J M Turnbull Collection which included many First Editions, and a set of the *London Magazine*. In the same year Mr E J Finch donated his fine collection of Prints. Dr George Wherry's collection of *Eliana* which included twelve watercolours by Paul Braddon of the Haunts of Charles Lamb, a portrait of Mary Lamb by F S Cary and other items, was given by his daughter, Mrs Beatrice Oldfield. The most substantial gift was of the Samuel Rich Collection of *Eliana*, of about 750 items. At his death in 1949 the collection was bequeathed to his son Sidney F Rich who gave it to the Society in memory of his father. Included are twelve volumes of cuttings from newspapers and periodicals, all indexed in the final volume. Last of all we had a vast collection from Ernest Crowsley which made the Library too large to be housed in the Edmonton room. It is now housed in the Guildhall Library in the care of Mr Melvyn Barnes, and work has begun on mending and rebinding from money subscribed by the Society. It has found its proper place and can be consulted by students if due notice is given.

So far I have spoken of the past. What of the present? As I sat thinking of this I had a flight of fancy! I saw hovering above me the faces of Mr Farrow, Mr Crowsley, Mr Rich, Mr Smith and Miss Parsons and I overheard their conversation. Mr Farrow began with 'Did you see how well the President and the Chairman organized that Cambridge visit? Quite up to our standards, don't you think?' 'Admirably so,' responded Mr Crowsley, 'they work well together on all occasions it seems to me - quite Puckish the Chairman can be at times too.' 'What do you think of the Lady Secretary Mr Crowsley?' asked Miss Parsons, 'at one time you used not to favour women in such posts.' 'I couldn't do better myself,' Crowsley declared. 'Praise well earned,' commented Mr Smith. 'Now Rich what do you think of the *Bulletin*?' 'It's quite remarkable when you think of our four page production - it is elegant and full of good writing,' Rich answered. It was agreed by them all that with such officers in charge of the Society it looks set for another fifty years.

Here the Membership Secretary came down to earth! and remembered that several other Officers of the Society should receive mention - Mr Bishop acted as Chairman for six years after the death of Mr Farrow. Mr Sidney Hall then took over the post for two years, and was succeeded by Dr Wilson, happily still with us after ten years of Service. May he continue for another ten. In 1970 the post of the Honorary Secretary was accepted by Mr Angus Cheyne, a daunting task succeeding Ernest Crowsley. We owe him a great debt, for he kept the Society alive and flourishing during a difficult period and it was he who chose Simpson's for the Luncheon Venue and later introduced us to Frederick's. He was always ready to welcome visitors to his house, Lamb's house in Colebrook Row.

There have been six Treasurers over the fifty years - Miss Coltar, Mr E F Lewis, Mr S Huxstep, Mr J Cargill, Miss Parsons and Mr R H Wallace, all of

whom have kept us solvent. Our gratitude is due to them all, particularly to our present one, Mr Wallace, who has filled the post for ten years and has helped us through some difficult patches.

Our present Honorary Secretary, Mrs Madeline Huxstep, deserves a very special 'Thank you.' The daughter of Mr Bishop she became the third Honorary Secretary and has proved to be extremely capable in arranging lectures and visits, and under her guidance the Society is flourishing and happy.

And lastly, a 'Thank you' to Mr Claude Prance for his invaluable help to Lamb lovers with his book *Companion to Charles Lamb*, to Professor Edwin Marrs for *Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb* and Mrs W Courtney for *Young Charles Lamb*.

Before I bring this address to a close I must say a few words about Membership - after all I am the Membership Secretary. At this date we have about 350 members. This includes eighty-four Libraries (mostly Overseas), and sixty-eight Overseas Members from New Zealand, Nova Scotia, Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands, West Germany, India, Japan, USA, Canada, Australia, Tasmania, and Korea. Being Membership Secretary has brought me many pleasures. I have visited many of the Provincial Members, and have had, and still have lively contacts with Overseas Members. I look back with gratitude on thirty-seven years of friendly intercourse with people the world over, and I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to say 'Thank you'. The Toast is rather a long one.

I give you, Charles Lamb, The Charles Lamb Society coupled with the names of Walter Farrow, Ernest Crowsley and Samuel Morris Rich - the founders of the Feast.

THE CHARLES LAMB BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

Despite the very bad weather, we had an almost full house for the luncheon in this our Golden Jubilee year, to hear Miss Reeves propose the toast in the words printed above. We were again at Frederick's on 9 February, presided over by Professor Stevens, and had with us both girls and boys from Christ's Hospital. Next year they will be coming from the same site at Horsham when the two schools amalgamate. The Grecians who were present this time were Richard Smith and Patrick English. Mr Donald Potter proposed the toast to Provincial and Overseas Members and Mr William Ruddick replied to it.

Since she paid tribute to so many others who have been or are active in the Society, we must complete the record by expressing our great gratitude and affection for Miss Reeves herself, whose membership of the Charles Lamb Society spans almost its whole history and who is still a corner-stone of it.

FAMOUS MEN

In continuation of our Golden Jubilee Commemorations in the last number, we include the following further memoirs.

EDMUND BLUNDEN. I first met Edmund Blunden in 1952. At John Gilmour's suggestion, Rosalie Glynn Grylls, the author of books on Mary Shelley and her circle, was kind enough to give a luncheon in May of that year at her flat in London. There were only four of us, John, Edmund Blunden, myself

and our hostess and one object was to ask Edmund Blunden's advice on ways of getting my book on *The London Magazine* published when I had completed it. I remember enjoying the occasion greatly, and later met him again at an evening party at the same flat.

My most frequent meetings with him, however, were out of doors: at the book-barrows in Farringdon Road. Edmund Blunden was then Assistant Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* and used to walk to the barrows at lunch time from Printing House Square, while I would walk from my City office to the same venue - much too frequently I used to be told by my family and colleagues. Here we would both work systematically through the barrows, frequently finding treasures. How we enjoyed it! He told me that nearly all he ever wanted turned up on the barrows in time. I was very sorry when he went abroad again and our meetings there ceased. Sometimes he would point out to me particular treasures worth acquiring.

I have a few letters from him in his beautiful script. The first one was official accepting a short piece I had written for the *TLS* on the discovery of Lamb's piece 'Cockney Latin'. Others after he had left the *TLS*, some of which were from the Far East, were mostly about things I had written.

I always found him most helpful with suggestions and advice on any literary matters I was working on, for his knowledge was vast. I have enormous admiration for his writings and have a fairly large, although by no means complete, collection of his poetry and prose, some copies autographed by him.

C A Prance

STANLEY LAWRENCE GRAHAM HUXSTEP, 1905-1969. 'Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you' - such was Lamb's wise advice to Bernard Barton in January 1823 when Barton was thinking of abandoning his job and devoting himself to 'literature'. Even more urgently Lamb writes 'Throw yourself rather...from the steep Tarpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes.'

Stanley must have early on absorbed this recipe for a contented (and secure) life. For most of his adult life he worked for a leading American bank, until ill-health forced an early retirement, while maintaining a close association with the Charles Lamb Society - secured by his living a couple of doors away from Ernest Crowsley in the same Residential Club in Tavistock Square. From 1945 to 1955 he was Treasurer of the Society during which period the Society increased considerably in membership and launched the successful appeal for the purchase of Button Snap from the Royal Society of Arts.

Stanley was a talented pianist, a keen student of literature, a conscientious officer of the CLS and other societies. He particularly appreciated contacts with Elians in the USA - an old friend was Payson Gates (also of Bankers' Trust Company) whose daughter, Eleanor, has recently contacted us in connection with the publication of her father's writings on Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt.

M R H

BOOK REVIEWS

Ian Jack: *The Poet and his Audience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. pp.198. £20. (£6.95 paperback)

Clear, direct and sensitive prose is always delightful. Ian Jack writes it all the time in this engaging study of 'how certain good poems came to be

as they are.' Though he says his book has 'no thesis', it is clear from his choice of poets and the way he treats them that he believes the creation of great poetry is most likely when a writer is healthily aware of his contemporary audience and either trying to live up to its best expectations or else trying to find ways to influence its judgment and sense of values so as to lead it in the direction which he himself wishes to take.

Professor Jack begins with Dryden, a poet sensitive enough to be troubled when Shadwell criticised the morality of his comedies, for Shadwell 'was pointing to his failure to live up to the high ideal with which he had set out.' His need for an audience, his desire to broaden it below the level of the Court in his later works and his shrewdness in adapting his talents to the most lucrative market while writing with undiminished sensitivity and assurance are clearly demonstrated. By comparison, Pope's steady movement up market to become the spokesman for a small group of progressively-minded aristocrats and their values (while the general public deserted him for the more accessible poetry of Thomson's *Seasons*) is cleverly argued, as is Byron's skill at being all things to all men while still maintaining his rôle of privileged aristocratic commentator. In total contrast, the next chapter, on Shelley, shows what happens when a poet is blindly oblivious to the nature and expectations of his audience. Ian Jack's neat deployment of Shelley's notions of his successive works' appeal set against the cold statistics (seven copies of *Swellfoot the Tyrant* sold, for example) is affectionate but richly comic: Shelley's own words on *Adonais*, 'I wrote, as usual, with a total ignorance of the effect that I should produce' seem to sum up the whole chapter.

Chapters on Tennyson's relationship with his Victorian public and the Irish bias of Yeats's consciousness complete this wise and sharply-written study, the accessible style and manner of which bear witness to Ian Jack's belief that critics, like poets, are at their best when concerned to be approachable and persuasive for their readers. It is not a long book, but it offers a wealth of original and rewarding insights.

Bill Ruddick

Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800-1807, by William Wordsworth, ed. Jared Curtis: Cornell University Press (Ithaca, NY), 1983. \$95

Jared Curtis has produced a magnificent edition of Wordsworth's *Poems in Two Volumes*, 1807, and triumphantly achieved all that he set out to do. My only criticism is from the most irrelevant of all standpoints - that I wish he'd decided to do something different. The Cornell Series was designed to produce photographs, transcriptions and reading-texts of the many long and medium-length poems that Wordsworth either didn't publish himself, or published in versions that had been heavily revised. The assumption of the Series has been until this moment that early versions tend to be best, and that they should be edited in their own right, rather than broken down (as in the Oxford *Wordsworth*) and treated as variants of their own later selves. Now that so many of the longer poems have been edited, it was natural that the Series should turn its attention to collections of the shorter ones. Working-drafts of Wordsworth's lyrics rarely survive; but in addition to less important sources, there are in the background of *Poems in Two Volumes* three major faircopy manuscripts - *Sarah's Poets* and *MS.W* of 1802, and *MS.M* (the collection that Coleridge took to Malta) of 1804. Dr Curtis himself in *Experiments with Tradition*

(1971) had drawn attention to early versions of *The Leech Gatherer* and other poems of 1802, and everything seemed to suggest that in his Cornell volume he would adopt the customary emphasis on the earliest surviving material. Instead he has chosen to edit *Poems in Two Volumes* not as a collection of earlier work (deriving mostly from 1802 and 1804), but as a printed text. His concern has been first and foremost to purify what appeared in 1807 by reference to the printer's copy (the *Longman MS.*, recently published by Hylton Kelliher for the British Library); and though scattered early versions have been included as reading-texts or photographs, for the majority one has to rely on that ancient implement of torture, the *apparatus criticus*. It can hardly have been the intention of this 'late' Dr Curtis to promote his own earlier versions, but I take it that many readers will go back to the poetry of 1802-4 as presented from *Sarah's Poets* and *MS.M* in *Experiments with Tradition*.

Jonathan Wordsworth

Gerald Monsman: *Confessions of a Prosaic Dreamer: Charles Lamb's art of autobiography*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984. pp.165. \$27.75

Gerald Monsman offers his basic belief on both the dust-jacket and p.13 of his book. 'More than Lamb himself could ever know' he asserts, 'the creation of Elia as his personal artistic voice was his way to endure the memories of September 22, 1796.' He uses close reading of individual essays and a careful consideration of the language of the Elian essays overall to show how Lamb coped with his traumatic experience of horror on the day when Mary killed their mother.

Professor Monsman's line of argument seems plausible. The ever-present memories of death and insanity (Charles's own breakdown had, of course, preceded Mary's tragic attack of mania) were kept fresh by Mary's returning fits of madness and the constant sense that 'we are in a manner marked'. They demanded a degree of conscious suppression which made the possibility of expressing them obliquely through his fictions highly valuable for Lamb. How conscious he was of the significance of the old benchers, the old authors in the Bodleian and other groups of old men, together with the old women figures who became linked with them in the Elian essays to form re-enactments of the nocturnal terrors which he had experienced in childhood after poring over the picture of Samuel and the Witch of Endor in Stackhouse's *New History of the Holy Bible* it would be impossible to say. But Professor Monsman's demonstration of the prevalence of these aged emblems of mystery and death in the *Essays of Elia* is impressive. Their disturbing features probably do relate to the troubling memory of the fates of Lamb's parents and their contemporaries in and around the Lamb household. And in due course Lamb entered the ghostly ranks of death-linked seniority himself. His children had been mere spectres of wish fulfilment. His own retirement stimulated the reflection that 'we are already half acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the world... Our clock appears to have struck.'

Lack of space forbids reference to many other aspects of Gerald Monsman's study of the preoccupation with dread, death, illusions of life that actually deny it (the discussion of Lamb's account of his disappointment when a second visit to the theatre denied him the transcendent experience offered him by his first is particularly illuminating in this respect) and other related themes. His study is rich in suggestive interpretations of fine detail (though his own language is, alas, sometimes rendered opaque by

patches of the scientific-looking jargon which makes reading some young American critics like an exercise in decoding) and though narrow in range because of its preoccupation with Lamb's subconscious fixation in a traumatic moment of past time it is certainly illuminating on the extent to which Elia offered Lamb a means of easing the dark and painful pressures within his own imagination.

Professor Monsman is far from humourless (his introductory chapter on the problems of teaching Romanticism is, indeed, a virtuoso piece of comedy in its way) but his thesis necessarily leaves out much of Lamb's wit and humour. Sometimes there are casualties. Sarah Battle, for example, surely means more to Lamb than one who 'lacks humanizing involvement with actual life'. Her solid choice of those values which suit her perfectly and her sheer style are surely matters for rejoicing to her creator. And structuralist etymological analysis, though often successful, can also backfire. Whatever Lamb's motive for joking about Lambeth, it is unlikely to have been because of a contemporary quarrel over the word's derivation (p.76). But the over-ingenuities do little harm, and they cannot spoil the effect of an interesting and thought-provoking book.

Bill Ruddick

A Descriptive Catalogue of the Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb in the W. Hugh Peal Collection: University of Kentucky 1984. \$15.

This forty-eight page pamphlet is No.7 of a series of Occasional Papers published at Kentucky. If I start by saying 'compiled by Edwin W Marris', we shall all know that quality is assured, though I do not intend to follow him in using the word 'thusly'!

No one would, I think, have expected hippophily to leave us such a legacy; W Hugh Peal, 'distinguished student, lawyer, rare book and manuscript collector, benefactor' was addicted to horses in his youth. Believe it or not, he was weaned off this 'dangerous' pastime on to Lamb's *Tales from Shakespear*. To such accidents do we owe much of our literary heritage and knowledge, and this collection proudly heads the British Library, the V & A, Rosenbach and Pierpont Morgan, the Folger and others in the size of its Lamb collection; only the Huntington has greater resources in this field. Such a list, incidentally, should make us hang our collective head in shame, though in fairness to our transatlantic friends, they do make full and scholarly use of these riches.

This pamphlet is an adjunct to 'proper' books; it adds a fascinating gloss to the standard editions of the *Letters*, though it is tantalizing to have some of the ten previously unpublished (out of ninety-four in total in this collection) given only as first and last lines. May I plead with Professor Marris to stop fiddling about with pamphlets and quickly give us the remaining three volumes of his masterly and definitive edition of the complete letters. Lucas's edition of 1935 is fine, but too much has happened since then for us to use Lucas without caution and much additional research. I was also pleased to see acknowledgement made by Marris to Claude Prance's *Lamb Companion* in more than one place - I can never resist a puff for this book - how did we ever manage without it?

D G Wilson
Chairman CLS

NOTES

WREATH-LAYING AT EDMONTON PARISH CHURCH. On 29 December 1984 a short ceremony was held at the grave of Charles Lamb and afterwards in Church, in the presence of the Mayor of Enfield. The Service was conducted by the Rev. Eric Rees and readings were given by Mrs Huxstep, Miss Reeves, Mr Donald Potter, Mr Charles Branchini and Mr David Wickham. In laying the wreath, our Chairman, Dr Wilson, said,

This laurel chaplet honours Lamb's place in English letters and his place in our affections, while the blue and yellow flowers symbolize his attachment to his school, Christ's Hospital.

CELEBRATIONS AT CHRIST'S HOSPITAL. In November 1984, Christ's Hospital commemorated the sesquicentennial of Coleridge and Lamb and the bicentary of Leigh Hunt. A delightful art exhibition of the boys' work on these themes and readings arranged by the English Department showed the full involvement of present pupils of the school, while their distinguished predecessors were also remembered in a series of lectures.

27 November 'Coleridge - the man and the achievement' by Professor William Walsh (University of Leeds)

29 November 'Charles Lamb - Friend and Critic' by Mrs Mary Wedd (late of Goldsmiths' College, University of London)

4 December 'The importance of Leigh Hunt' by David Jesson Dibley (Extra-mural Department, University of London)

CHARLES LAMB 1775-1834 EXHIBITION AT THE GUILDHALL LIBRARY. This Exhibition was opened by the Chairman of the Society on 10 December 1984 and closed on 15 February 1985. We are grateful to the Chairman of the Libraries Committee, to the Director of Libraries and to his staff, especially Mr J Wisdom, for all their help in mounting such an attractive display. We are also grateful to our Chairman, to Mr David Wickham, Mrs Muriel Cheyne and the Governors of Christ's Hospital for lending Elian items.

COMMEMORATIVE ALBUM. I am compiling an Album of newspaper cuttings, photographs etc. of events connected with the 150th Anniversary of Lamb's death and the Golden Jubilee of the Society. I shall be very grateful for any contributions (especially photographs) to go in the Album, kindly donated by Mrs Alice Bishop (who celebrated her ninety-fourth birthday on 31 December).

Madeline Huxstep

NATIONAL ART COLLECTIONS FUND. Not least of Elian pleasures is happening on Lamb-associated references in unexpected places. In the December 1984 NCAF magazine in an essay 'The sad story of the Indian Collections' I read

By 1796 the East India Company had accumulated such a mass of antiquities, curiosities and manuscripts from its servants in India that it had allotted part of its house in Leadenhall Street for a Museum and Library soon to be in charge of the great scholar Sir Charles Wilkins (1769-1836). The new Museum was described by visitors as 'small, dark and dingy' situated in a low almost subterranean quarter, and the rooms in which the other curiosities are deposited present by no means an attractive appearance.'

Did Lamb ever muse among these early evidences of the British Raj?
In the same magazine on a later page in an article on jewellery at the British Museum...

The Badge of the Anti-Gallican Society from the Hull Grundy Gift... is now accompanied by another recocco-style Anti-Gallican Badge which belonged to William Plumer of Blakesware (d.1767).

The names 'Plumer' and 'Blakesware' remind us of Lamb's 'Blakesmoor in H ... shire' and of William Plumer (son of the elder William) employer of Mary Field, Lamb's maternal grandmother. MRH

LAMB ON RADIO AND IN PRINT. On 27 December BBC Radio 4 broadcast the play *The Dream Child* by Dr Richard Mullen, and an article on Lamb by Dr Mullen was published in *The Listener* on 3 January 1985.

Mr David Wickham contributed two articles on Charles Lamb which were published in *The City Recorder* in January 1985.

In the January issue of the *Hertfordshire Countryside* magazine Camilla Maddox wrote on Lamb in the first of a series of articles on writers with Hertfordshire links - the article was illustrated with a delightful drawing of Button Snap by Ronald Maddox.

An 'In Memoriam' notice appeared in *The Times* on 27 December and a paragraph entitled 'Lamb to the slaughter' in *The Daily Telegraph* on 29 December.

COLEBROOK COTTAGE. Mrs Cheyne tells us that she is putting Lamb's House, at Duncan Terrace, London N1, on the market. Enquiries to the agents, Normans, 298 Upper Street, London N1. Tel. 01-226 2487.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. The Annual General Meeting of the Charles Lamb Society will take place at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, South Grove, London N6, on Saturday 11 May at 10.30 am. (Please note change of normal time and venue.) Nominations are invited for Officers and Members of the Council, and should be sent to the Honorary Secretary as soon as possible, after ensuring that nominees are prepared to stand.

DAY CONFERENCE ON 11 MAY. As space is limited, will anyone still wishing for a ticket please apply as soon as possible.

CHARLES LAMB QUIZ. Have you sent in your answered quiz?