

Contents

Dedication	1
<i>Articles</i>	
BASIL SAVAGE: How It All Began	2
MARY WEDD: Industrialization and the Moral Law in Books VIII and IX of <i>The Excursion</i>	5
BONNIE WOODBERY: Lamb's Early Satire of the Economists	26
<i>Reviews</i>	
BILL RUDDICK on <i>Encyclopedia of Romanticism: Culture in Britain, 1780s-1830s</i> ed. Laura Dabundo	31
JEFFREY BAKER on <i>William Wordsworth: Intensity and Achievement</i> by Thomas McFarland	32
DUNCAN WU on <i>William Wordsworth: Selected Poetry</i> ed. Nicholas Roe	34
Society News and Notes from Members	36
Postscript: The Editor Says Thanks	39

Dedication

Twenty years ago this month, in January 1973, the first number of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* (New Series) appeared, planned and produced by its Editor for the reasons, and in the way, which the following pages relate.

Twenty years on, the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* may have grown a little stouter and changed in its appearance somewhat (as can happen to the best of us), but a glance back at that first number shows on what solid foundations the whole enterprise was built. The balance of scholarly articles, informative reviews and society news and notes was precisely the same then as it is today; and it seems unlikely that it will alter in the future, since it gives widespread satisfaction and could hardly be improved.

Twenty years is a long time in the history of most learned journals. Sometimes they flourish, sometimes they wither and die. That the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* (New Series) still commands wide respect for its scholarship and performs the valued service of uniting members of the Charles Lamb Society wherever they may be, as it did from the very beginning, is an additional cause for gratitude to its inaugurator.

And so, on behalf of all Members of the Charles Lamb Society, and with the warm approval of its Council, his three collaborators and successors in the editing of the journal, Mary Wedd, Bill Ruddick and Duncan Wu, dedicate this anniversary number of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* to its 'onlie begetter' and resourceful first editor,

BASIL SAVAGE

in recognition of his achievement, in gratitude, and with our most affectionate good wishes for the years ahead.

How It All Began

By BASIL SAVAGE

(Editor, *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, 1972-77; Joint Editor, 1977-79)

ON SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER 1992, before the first meeting of the new lecture series, Mary Wedd, Duncan Wu and Bill Ruddick, as his associates and successors in editing the New Series of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, entertained Basil Savage to lunch at the Bonnington Hotel and asked him how it all began. We have edited ourselves out of the transcript and Basil has checked it over to make sure we were guilty of no inaccuracies and put no words into his mouth which he would not wish to stand by. The light touch and the entertainingness of his narrative we do, however, despair of recreating. Had we known the restaurant was going to be so free from extraneous noises, we would have recorded a cassette!

How did I start the New Series?

Well, I suppose it was inevitable that I should have become acquainted with Charles Lamb. I was educated in Enfield, and naturally my English master told me about Lamb and his sister Mary. I also became interested in Coleridge rather later. But during the years when I was a civil servant, first as a junior clerk in the Government Actuary's Department and the Home Office, and later as a Principal in the Ministry of Education, and later still as a Principal and subsequently Assistant Director in the Post Office during the time it seceded from the Civil Service, my interest in Lamb and Coleridge remained strong but, perhaps inevitably, a general one, rather than developing into anything that was specialised.

However all that was to be changed when I attended a meeting of the Charles Lamb Society in 1970, called to celebrate the Wordsworth bicentenary. Frankly I had gone to pursue my own interests by publicising two facsimile reprints of nineteenth century books on Coleridge which I had printed and bound in that year, but although I carefully placed leaflets on all the chairs not one was taken up: and I simply didn't care, because I met and experienced the friendliness and 'knowledgeableness' of the Society to which I have been glad to belong ever since.

I suppose I always had been something of an editor *manque*: I had edited my school magazine, and, before that, a form magazine (jellygraphed in thirty copies - those were the days!), and over the years I had edited a succession of official reports of one kind or another. Some whisper of this must have reached the ear of Mr H. G. Smith who edited the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, for one day he invited me to take tea with him at his home in St Albans.

Mr Smith was a remarkable man. He had been Editor of the *Bulletin* for twenty-three years, he was more than eighty five years old, he was now almost blind, and he lived alone. But his house was spotless, and he prepared tea for us without a moment's hesitation. And over tea it became clear that he had asked me to visit him because he expected me to become the next Editor of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*! He never really asked me. It just happened!

So I edited four issues of the old-style *Charles Lamb Bulletin* during 1972. This was a very different production from that which came later. Eight sides of closely-printed double columns, typeset by the printer; no covers, and very miscellaneous indeed in its contents. It was a likeable journal, but aimed directly at the Society's existing members. I soon began to feel that we should be trying to attract a wider audience besides: in particular there must surely be a considerable academic and library public out beyond, whose interest it ought to be possible to engage.

So I planned the New Series of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* and produced the first number in January 1973. I wanted more pages, so a cheaper format had to be found. That meant abandoning professional typesetting, but I hoped it would still be possible to produce something which would look serious and committed to scholarship, without losing the *Bulletin's* traditional function as the means of conveying information about the Society and its activities to our members.

As I had already ventured into private book selling by this time, and had some experience of producing catalogues, I went to the Stanhope Press, whose work I knew and thought well of. They agreed to print the New Series *Bulletin*, and they have continued to be our printers ever since. I knew a professional book designer, and he undertook to produce the now-familiar cover. To save costs I typed out the first six *Bulletins* myself! I went out and bought a second-hand IBM typewriter with golf ball attachments, so I could change these over and have italic printing for book titles and suchlike: the only snag was that it proved all too easy to forget to make the necessary change (or change back again), not to notice, and then find I had half a page or more to re-do! I would start typing after the office on a Friday evening, and on Sunday night the twenty pages would be done. Though there was also the occasional marathon. Claude Prance's 'Charles Lamb and Some Events of 1823' (July 1973) took up my evenings for a whole week!

Eventually I was to be rescued from my labours at the IBM by the ever-helpful Kathleen Coburn. She recommended a typist who had copied Coleridge *Notebook* material for her, and whose principal employment was for Hansard in the House of Lords. One could scarcely have asked for more, and Miss Stephenson was to prove a tower of strength for me, and for Mary Wedd after me, till well into the 1980s.

But I must retrace my steps for a moment. In the summer of 1972 I attended the Wordsworth Summer School (as it then was) at Charlotte Mason College, Ambleside, and I put up a notice to say that the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* had taken on a new lease of life and would anyone like to subscribe to it by joining the Charles Lamb Society? Among those who signed up was Mary Wedd, my future joint editor and successor! *The Wordsworth Circle* had itself not been long established in those days, and Marilyn Gaull, its Editor, was afraid that a New Series *Charles Lamb Bulletin* might prove something of a rival in a situation where finance was precarious. She suggested that as junior editor I might like to suspend operations! But having been assured that our two journals would not be active in the same area, Marilyn proved the fastest of friends, advertising the New Series for us in *The Wordsworth Circle* at a time when all such help was vital.

Richard Wordsworth, having learned about the new *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, also went out of his way to help us. At that time he was touring America with his one-man performance *The Bliss of Solitude*, in which Wordsworth's poetry is interwoven with material from his sister Dorothy's journals, and the letters and reminiscences of his friends, including Charles Lamb: and wherever he went, Richard spread the word about the *Bulletin*.

In those early days I also got hold of the addresses of academic libraries from the list of members of the Tennyson Society, and once I had a specimen *Bulletin* to distribute, I sent it off with a covering letter, obtaining about thirty firm orders as a result. The *Bulletin's* presence in American, Canadian, and now Australian libraries continues to grow even today.

Not surprisingly, the Charles Lamb Society's London members were a little startled by the New Series at first. The old format was so familiar, and the new one probably looked a little forbidding. 'You feel you have to *read* it!' was one very honest comment! But in no time at all surprise gave way to approval, to warm welcomes, and requests for more! Sadly more

was what we could not give in those days when the Society's finances were extremely limited. Frustrating it might be (and was!) but we had to stay at twenty pages, with a very occasional twenty four, for the whole of my time as Editor, and for most of Mary Wedd's editorship after me.

But how did I find book reviewers and contributors? Well, I wrote to people, whether I knew them or not, and asked them to help us. And they did, especially the American scholars, many of whom I had met at the Wordsworth Summer School. The response was marvellous. Roy Park, to name but one willing helper, not only wrote for us himself, but also recruited friends and postgraduate students to work for the *Bulletin*, or to give lectures to the Society which could be published afterwards.

I suppose my proudest memory as the New Series' Editor is concerned with the 'Special Bicentenary Number' for April/July 1975. In this I was able to publish facsimiles of the actual pages in Benjamin Robert Haydon's *Diary* in which he records the 'Immortal Dinner' at which Keats, Lamb and Wordsworth had 'a glorious set to on Homer, Shakespeare, Milton and Virgil' and 'Lamb got excessively merry and witty'. Professor Willard B. Pope, the editor of Haydon's *Diary*, supplied me with glossy photographs of the relevant pages, which alas could not be reproduced by the photolithographic process in the same way as the rest of the *Bulletin*. On the advice of our printer I had photostats made of the photographs and from them, with their matt surface, the Stanhope Press produced admirably clear printed copies.

* * *

Finally, a chance remark of Basil's during the course of what seemed to Mary, Duncan and myself like a truly 'immortal lunch' should be allowed to stand as the conclusion to his account of how it all happened twenty years ago: 'I never join anything without trying to help it.'

Industrialization and the Moral Law in Books VIII and IX of *The Excursion*

By MARY WEDD

A Lecture Delivered at the Wordsworth Winter School, Grasmere, 30 April 1992

IN THE CENTRAL BOOKS of *The Excursion*, in a stable rural community, the village pastor among the graves in the Churchyard tells the stories of their tenants. As Lamb put it,

With heaven above his head and the mouldering turf at his feet - standing betwixt life and death - he seems to maintain that spiritual relation which he bore to his living flock, in its undiminished strength, even with their ashes; and to be in his proper cure, or diocese, among the dead.¹

In these books the Pastor draws mainly on his memories of the past to illustrate, both positively and negatively, what Lamb calls 'the quantity of moral worth existing in the world'. In the following two Books, VIII and IX, Wordsworth turns from the past to present and future.

The Solitary praises the Wanderer's way of life as a pedlar and his function in society and compares him to the Knight Errant of old. We have seen something of this, particularly in the first book of the poem, in the description of his character and in the story of Margaret. In reply, the Wanderer mourns that now his old usefulness 'Is past forever' (viii. 87)² and the remote surroundings in which he travelled are changed, their lonely footpaths replaced with 'stately roads' (viii. 109) and canals, which by miraculous feats of engineering can even flow on raised viaducts or along the sides of hills:

An inventive Age
Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
To most strange issues. (viii. 87-9)

Before the coming of the railways, the making of a network of canals had brought a comparable revolution in transport.

Admirable, in a way, are these effects of man's ingenuity, to which

The Earth has lent
Her waters, Air her breezes; and the sail
Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,
Glistening along the low and woody dale;
Or, in its progress, on the lofty side
Of some bare hill, with wonder kenne'd from far. (viii. 111-16)

It is essential that a nation should make wealth, in order to care for its people. Wordsworth, in a note, refers to 'the excellent and amiable Dyer', whose poem *The Fleece* celebrates 'the influences of manufacturing industry upon the face of this Island. He wrote at a time when

¹ Review of *The Excursion*, reprinted *Lamb as Critic* ed. Roy Park (London, 1980) (hereafter Park), pp. 193-200, p. 198.

² Quotations from *The Excursion* are taken from *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (5 vols., Oxford, 1940-9) (hereafter PW).

machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to augur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baneful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves'.³

Wordsworth would not have turned his back on what we now call 'modern conveniences' but felt that the price paid for them needed to be weighed and controlled:

Meanwhile, at social Industry's command,
 How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ
 Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
 Here a huge town, continuous and compact,
 Hiding the face of earth for leagues - and there,
 Where not a habitation stood before,
 Abodes of men irregularly massed
 Like trees in forests, - spread through spacious tracts,
 O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
 Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths
 Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.
 And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,
 He sees the barren wilderness erased,
 Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims
 How much the mild Directress of the plough
 Owes to alliance with these new-born arts! (viii. 117-32)

One feels like saying, 'So what's new?' These lines could have been written today. Even agriculture has been transformed by technology. Great ships, says Wordsworth, sail to and from Britain's ports serving the useful twin ends of commerce and defence. The country's prosperity and security are indeed desirable goals:

And yet ...
 I grieve, when on the darker side
 Of this great change I look ... (viii. 148, 151-2)

Nature is violated and this will prove to be 'For England's bane'. The Wanderer goes on to show how human beings have also been subjected to the demands of industry. Wordsworth would not have needed to visit such a town as Manchester or Leeds (though of course he had done so) to see a mill and its workers. In any beautiful and countrified valley, where there was a river to provide the water-power, such a building could have been seen. The remains of one was still there in the most picturesque part of the Derbyshire dale where I went to school. Wordsworth mentions passing a mill, on his visit to Askrigg with Dorothy on their way to Grasmere in December 1799.⁴ Only about 15 years before this, three cotton mills were built in the area, at Aysgarth, Askrigg and Gayle, which later changed from cotton to wool.⁵ The Wanderer describes such a one here, contrasting the beauty of the natural

³ *PW* v 469.

⁴ *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth* ed. Ernest de Selincourt *The Early Years 1787-1805* rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford, 1967), p. 680.

⁵ Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby, *The Yorkshire Dales* (London, 1974), p. 185.

surroundings, the 'soothing darkness' and 'the punctual stars', when 'all things else are gathering to their homes' with the 'unnatural light' which 'Breaks from a many-windowed fabric huge':

And at the appointed hour a bell is heard ...
A local summons to unceasing toil!
Disgorged are now the ministers of day;
And, as they issue from the illumined pile,
A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door -
And in the courts - and where the rumbling stream,
That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,
Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed
Among the rocks below. Men, maidens, youths,
Mother and little children, boys and girls,
Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
Within this temple, where is offered up
To Gain, the master idol of the realm,
Perpetual sacrifice. (viii. 173-85)

Wordsworth contrasts this worship to the perpetual praise of God in older days. He is reminding us that we cannot serve God and Mammon.

Is he exaggerating the tyranny of the mill? Not at all. There is such a quantity of contemporary evidence that it is hard to select from it. Coleridge⁶ and Southey also both wrote protests against the sweated labour in the mills, which was largely of children. In his *Letters from England*, Southey makes his Espriella report his visit to a benevolent Manchester mill-owner, 'a man of humane and kindly nature', who

remarked that nothing could be so beneficial to a country as manufactures. 'You see these children, sir', said he. 'In most parts of England poor children are a burden to their parents and to the parish; here the parish, which would else have to support them, is rid of all expense; they get their bread almost as soon as they can run about, and by the time they are seven or eight years old bring in money. There is no idleness among us: - they come at five in the morning; we allow them half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner; they leave work at six, and another set relieves them for the night; the wheels never stand still'. I was looking, while he spoke, at the unnatural dexterity with which the fingers of these little creatures were playing in the machinery, half giddy myself with the noise and the endless motion: and when he told me there was no rest in these walls, day nor night, I thought that if Dante had peopled one of his hells with children, here was a scene worthy to have supplied him with new images of torment

I asked if so much confinement did not injure their health. 'No', he replied, 'they are as healthy as any children in the world could be. To be sure, many of them as they grew up went off in consumptions, but consumption was the disease of the English'.⁷

⁶ Coleridge's independent protests started in 1818 in relation to Peel's bill. For a detailed account see Charles de Paolo, 'Coleridge on Child Labour Reform', *Charles Lamb Bulletin* NS 47-8 (1984) 187-94, p. 187.

⁷ *Letters from England* ed. Jack Simmons (London, 1951), pp. 207-8.

'I cannot share / His proud complacency', says Wordsworth's Wanderer (viii. 198-9). He does not underestimate the technical achievement, 'An intellectual mastery exercised / O'er the blind elements' (viii. 201-2). He can exult, rejoice and admire at it - but only if he looks forward to a time

When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the might
Of this dominion over nature gained,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need;
Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law. (viii. 210-16)

What is this moral law? Obviously Wordsworth includes in it a concern for humane values which must override even scientific advances and the creation of wealth.

The poet-narrator, intervening at this point, laments the loss of 'The old domestic morals of the land' (viii. 236). Where, he asks, are now those beneficent rituals of family and community life which used to grace the countryside even among those of 'low estate'? The Wanderer replies 'Fled ... / Fled utterly! or only to be traced / In a few fortunate retreats like this', namely the remote Lake District, and even this, he says,

I behold with trembling, when I think
What lamentable change, a year - a month -
May bring; that brook converting as it runs
Into an instrument of deadly bane ... (viii. 252-8)

The process and the fear have continued and increased up to our own day. In my copy of *The Excursion* at this point is a picture postcard sent me by my son. Some years ago, when my grandchildren were little, an older friend recommended an idyllic beach where she used to picnic with *her* children years before. She had not been there recently and spoke with nostalgia. So we followed her advice. The beach was Drigg. There, as we faced the sea, we were confronted by two notices, one on the left warning of a firing range, the other, on the right, behind a high fence, explaining that this was a dump for radio-active waste. 'A delightfully welcoming spot!' said my son-in-law, as we turned our back on it. The postcard depicts a happy figure dancing over the sand and reads, 'Winscale - The Fall-out is so Bracing!' The beautiful Ravenglass estuary, the view of which from the terrace-walk at Muncaster Ruskin called 'The gates of Paradise', is, a recent survey reported, the most irretrievably contaminated with radioactivity of any place in the area.⁸ Progress and the creation of wealth have vindicated Wordsworth's words about 'the baneful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves'. They have destroyed, he says, the environment, the family and the community. The Wanderer goes on to describe the effect of the change on the family. Nobody is at home, except possibly a mother and baby or the father, if he is out of work. 'Domestic bliss' no longer exists. 'That birthright now is lost' (viii. 262, 282). We all tend to think, as we get older, that the world has gone to pot since we were young, even when in many respects this is demonstrably untrue. 'Jesus, the days that we have seen!' However, in the narrator's and the Wanderer's

⁸ Report quoted in *World in Action* 2 December 1991.

analysis here of the changes in their own time social historians of to-day tend to bear them out. For example, speaking of 'the transformation of the labouring poor into the working classes', J. F. C. Harrison says, 'In no respect was this transition more painful than in the changes to which the labouring family was subjected'.⁹ Before industrialization, he says, 'In general terms, the family was both a basic economic unit and the centre of a network of social relationships which had all the force of tradition behind them. Some aspects of this culture were crude, repressive and cruel, but in the main it provided a viable and stable way of life' (pp. 78 and 81).

The Wanderer goes on to draw a vivid picture of the effects of child-labour in the mill. Part of this passage, starting at line 283, was written in 1798-9 not long after Thelwall's visit to Alfoxden in 1797 and the Wordsworths' to him at Liswyn Farm in August 1798. Critics have seen his influence and even direct echoes of his poetry in these lines. Thelwall himself would have agreed with them. Crabb Robinson reports on 12 February 1815, 'Called on Thelwall He talked of "The Excursion" as containing finer verses than there are in Milton and as being in versification most admirable; but then Wordsworth borrows without acknowledgement from Thelwall himself!'¹⁰ I learn from Duncan Wu's invaluable *Wordsworth's reading 1770-1799* (Cambridge, 1993) that Thelwall's copy of *The Excursion* is still extant in a private collection, with his annotations to indicate Wordsworth's borrowings from *The Peripatetic*.

No doubt Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth were all much influenced by Thelwall in the late 1790s but the interesting fact is that they all wrote against child-labour much later, when they have been supposed to be renegades to their early ideals, and that Wordsworth did not reject these earlier lines when preparing *The Excursion* for its publication in 1814. The passage concerned starts with the words 'Economists will tell you ..' Where have we heard that before?

That birthright now is lost.
Economists will tell you that the State
Thrives by the forfeiture ... (viii. 282-4)

The economist particularly concerned here is Adam Smith, whose *Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776. His earlier work *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) promoted the concept of conscience based on sympathy. He understood that, though the strong incentive of self-interest could be put to good use in a capitalist society, economic advance might involve undesirable side-effects. To counter these he called upon another aspect of human nature:

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.¹¹

From this Smith argues the need for two kinds of rules. The first, moral rules, relate to a man's capacity for fellow-feeling and for judging his own conduct thereby. Unfortunately self-deception blinds us from seeing ourselves as others see us, so it is necessary that we

⁹ J. F. C. Harrison, *Early Victorian Britain, 1832-51* (London, 1989) (hereafter Harrison), p. 78.

¹⁰ *Henry Crabb Robinson's Diary* ed. Thomas Sadler (2 vols., London, 1872), i. 248.

¹¹ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations I-III* ed. Andrew Skinner (Harmondsworth, 1986) (hereafter Smith), p. 17.

should have 'general rules of morality' based on repeated exercise of empathy, thought and imagination and 'continual observations upon the conduct of others'.¹² These rules can only be enforced by self-discipline. The second kind are rules of justice which are more cut and dried, designed to prevent us 'from hurting our neighbour' and are enforced by law.

As we shall see, much of what Adam Smith says in these passages has a great deal in common with what Wordsworth propounds in *The Excursion*. Unfortunately, though Adam Smith wished his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *Wealth of Nations* to be thought of together, so that his moral principles should be combined with his economic theory, the beneficent element in his writing came to be overlooked. Indeed, in *The Wealth of Nations* he seems to forget it himself, as, for example, when he says that 'the demand for men, like that for any other commodity, necessarily regulates the production of men'.¹³ He seems to regard with some complacency the corollary of this, that 'poverty, though it does not prevent the generation, is extremely unfavourable to the rearing of children'.¹⁴ The law of supply and demand works perfectly for babies provided nobody interferes to keep them alive. No wonder Wordsworth says, 'Economists will tell you that the State / Thrives by the forfeiture'. Though Smith thought that the role of the State should be minimal, so as not to meddle with the desire of individuals to better themselves, he did consider it necessary for justice and defence to be provided by government as well as certain 'public goods', which we would now describe as 'infrastructure', including the encouragement of education and the arts.¹⁵ Even here it is only to compensate for the 'mental mutilation' caused by the mechanical nature of the work done by 'the labouring poor', so that they may be more useful as citizens or soldiers. The emphasis is still on efficiency achieved by market forces. Perhaps it is not altogether surprising that his more humane principles slipped from notice and his name became associated only with the justification of self-interest as a economic principle and the belief that if everyone were free to work for his own advantage the community as a whole would benefit. His description of how a particular economic system *does* work has been taken to imply that that is how it *should* work.

If even Adam Smith realized that there are some things it is unsafe to leave to the private sector, what of present-day free market economists who maintain that the disadvantaged in society are better protected by voluntary charity than by the state? This is not borne out by history. Despite the cumbersome and often inefficient machinery involved in public welfare and the occasional abuse of it, only the compulsion of *unevadable* law forces those bent entirely on self-interest to submit to any sort of humanitarianism. Fortunately, there are individuals in every age who have the conscience and sympathy to protest and attempt to force governments into necessary reforms. Before the publication of *The Excursion* an act had been passed in 1802 called the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act, an attempt by Sir Robert Peel the Elder in a private member's bill to deal with the practice of taking Poor Law orphans from their home areas to work almost as slaves in textile mills, especially in just such water-driven mills in remote areas as Wordsworth describes, where there was a shortage of local labour.¹⁶ Unfortunately, it was easy for employers to show that these children were

¹² Smith 22.

¹³ Smith 183.

¹⁴ Smith 182.

¹⁵ Smith 81-2.

¹⁶ Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State* (London, 1973) (hereafter Fraser), p. 14.

not apprentices and there was no enforcing inspectorate set up, so that the law was largely ineffective. So much for trusting to the operation of a free market.

In *The Prelude* (1850 version) Wordsworth speaks of

how dire a thing
Is worshipped in that idol proudly named
'The Wealth of Nations' ... (xiii. 76-8)

and in 'Humanity' he refers to

a weight of slavish toil
For the poor Many, measured out by rules
Fetched with cupidity from heartless schools,
That to an Idol, falsely called 'The Wealth
Of Nations', sacrifice a People's health,
Body and mind and soul ... (lines 86-91)

Can such a sacrifice be justified? Is it 'a price worth paying' for the advantages of capitalism, as a modern economist puts it? The Wanderer illustrates what it really means:

Economists will tell you that the State
Thrives by the forfeiture - unfeeling thought,
And false as monstrous! Can the mother thrive
By the destruction of her innocent sons

Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
A native Briton to these inward chains,
Fixed in his soul, so early and so deep;
Without his own consent, or knowledge, fixed!
He is a slave to whom release comes not,
And cannot come. The boy, where'er he turns,
Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
Among the clouds, and roars through the ancient woods;
Or when the sun is shining in the east,
Quiet and calm. Behold him - in the school
Of his attainments? no; but with the air
Fanning his temples under heaven's blue arch.
His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton-flakes
Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip pale,
His respiration quick and audible;
And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
Could break from out those languid eyes, or a blush
Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,
Is that the countenance, and such the port,
Of no mean Being? One who should be clothed
With dignity befitting his proud hope;
Who, in his very childhood, should appear
Sublime from present purity and joy!
The limbs increase; but liberty of mind

Is gone for ever; and this organic frame,
 So joyful in its motions, is become
 Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
 And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
 Through the whole body, with a languid will
 Performs its functions; rarely competent
 To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
 Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
 The gentle visitations of the sun,
 Or lapse of liquid element - by hand,
 Or foot or lip, in summer's warmth - perceived.
 - Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
 On such foundations? (viii. 284-6, 297-333)

Robert Owen, whose New Lanark village Wordsworth visited in the summer of 1814, attempted to demonstrate that humane conditions did not destroy the economic success of his business. His campaign on behalf of factory children contributed to Peel's Act of 1819. This made it illegal for children under nine to work in cotton mills and those over nine to work more than a twelve-hour day. Just think about that for a minute - children of nine - a twelve-hour day! As with the earlier Act, no inspectorate was set up to monitor it, so it was largely ignored, as was John Cam Hobhouse's 1825 Act which attempted to prohibit night work for children. It was not until 1830, when Oastler wrote his 'Yorkshire Slavery' letters to the Leeds press that the government was persuaded tardily and unwillingly that there were circumstances in which the State should interfere in a free market. He contrasted, as Wordsworth had done in *The Excursion*, the concern shown over Negro slavery with the lack of it where British children were concerned. But, before the work of Oastler and Michael Sadler could be brought to fruition by Ashley (later Lord Shaftesbury) there had to be first a Select Committee Report in 1831-2 and then a Royal Commission in 1833. Lest you should think that Wordsworth was overstating here is an extract from the former, quoted by Fraser (pp. 234-5).

At what time in the morning, in the brisk time, did those girls go to the mills?

In the brisk time, for about six weeks, they have gone at 3 o'clock in the morning, and ended at 10, or nearly half past at night.

What intervals were allowed for rest or refreshment during those nineteen hours of labour?

Breakfast a quarter of an hour, and dinner half an hour, and drinking a quarter of an hour.

Was any of that time taken up in cleaning the machinery?

They generally had to do what they call dry down; sometimes this took the whole of the time at breakfast or drinking, and they were to get their dinner or breakfast as they could: if not, it was brought home.

Had you not great difficulty in awakening your children to this excessive labour?

Yes, in the early time we had to take them up asleep and shake them, when we got them on the floor to dress them, before we could get them off to their work; but not so in the common hours.

Supposing they had been a little too late, what would have been the consequence during the long hours?

They were quartered in the longest hours, the same as in the shortest time.

What do you mean by quartering?

A quarter was taken off.

What was the length of time they could be in bed during those long hours?

It was near 11 o'clock before we could get them into bed after getting a little victuals, and then at morning my mistress used to stop up all night, for fear that we could not get them ready for the time; sometimes we have gone to bed, and one of us generally awoke.

What time did you get them up in the morning?

In general me or my mistress got up at 2 o'clock to dress them.

So that they had not above four hours' sleep at this time?

No, they had not.

For how long together was it?

About six weeks it held; it was only when the throng was very much on; it was not often that.

The common hours of labour were from 6 in the morning till half-past eight at night?

Yes.

With the same intervals for food?

Yes, just the same.

Were the children excessively fatigued by this labour?

Many times; we have cried often when we have given them the little victualling we had to give them; we had to shake them, and they have fallen to sleep with the victuals in their mouths many a time.

Had any of them any accident in consequence of this labour?

Yes, my eldest daughter when she went first there; she had been about five weeks, and used to fettle the frames when they were running, and my eldest girl agreed with one of the others to fettle hers that time, that she would do her work; while she was learning more about the work, the overlooker came by and said, 'Ann, what are you doing there?' she said, 'I am doing it for my companion in order that I may know more about it'. He said, 'Let go, drop it this minute,' and the cog caught her forefinger nail, and screwed it off below the knuckle, and she was five weeks in Leeds Infirmary.

Has she lost that finger?

It is cut off at the second joint.

Were her wages paid during that time?

As soon as the accident happened the wages were totally stopped; indeed I did not know which way to get her cured, and I do not know how it would have been cured but for the Infirmary.

Were the wages stopped at the half-day?

She was stopped a quarter of a day; it was done about four o'clock.

Did this excessive term of labour occasion much cruelty also?

Yes, with being so very much fatigued the strap was very frequently used.

I understand that in India similar conditions of child-labour are still found in the carpet industry.¹⁷

As at the present time, moral questions could not be considered along party political lines. As E. P. Thompson points out, Tories found themselves in 'an embarrassing alliance' with Radicals.¹⁸ Wordsworth has received much criticism for his Toryism in later life; and his fear of the Reform Act and opposition to it does seem extraordinary to us. One would love to have been an invisible witness on the walk Wordsworth took with Thomas Arnold to Greenhead Ghyll when they argued it out.¹⁹ But Wordsworth was not alone in his fear of revolution in England. Harrison says, 'to the Early Victorians it seemed a matter of touch and go'.²⁰ The disillusionment of idealistic humanitarians with the idea of revolution then is somewhat akin to the rejection of Socialism now. The terror of bloodshed and disorder led Wordsworth to turn towards the traditional benevolent dictatorship of the landed families, which, when responsibly stewarded, could give stability and cohesion to a rural community. In the case of Lord Lonsdale after the death of John Wordsworth senior, however, the failure of such a system when corrupt had been glaringly obvious and had doubtless influenced Wordsworth's early republicanism. But there is a risk that, with rejections of past ideals which seem not to have worked, out may go the baby with the bathwater. As Wordsworth says in Book IV of *The Excursion*, 'The two extremes are equally disowned / By reason' (lines 268-9). It is extraordinarily easy for those who at a particular moment find themselves sitting comfortably to adhere to the doctrine, which prevailed then and does now, that free market forces should be allowed, without any regulation, to create the wealth that would be for the good of the nation as a whole, while children, the poor, the sick and the old must manage as they can. It is to Wordsworth's credit that he never fell into this error. Even E. P. Thompson, who is not noted for his charity towards those he regards as apostates, sees that in putting themselves alongside 'Tory paternalism' Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey had not abandoned humanitarian values or 'Rousseau's teaching on the child'. 'The mistake today', Thompson goes on, 'is to assume that paternalist feeling must be detached and

¹⁷ Report on BBC Radio 4, *Today*, 3 January 1992.

¹⁸ *The Making of the English Working Class* (rev. ed., Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 379.

¹⁹ Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography* (2 vols., Oxford, 1957-67) (hereafter Moorman), ii, 487.

²⁰ Harrison 21.

condescending. It can be passionate and engaged'.²¹ To complete the cross-party nature of this concern about child-labour, in the end, it was our Princess of Wales's ancestor, the Whig Lord Althorp, who eventually put through the 1833 Factory Act. Almost twenty years after the publication of *The Excursion*, this Act 'forbade the employment of children under nine. Children from nine to thirteen were limited to an eight-hour day, while young persons under eighteen were restricted to a twelve-hour day. Two hours a day were to be set aside for education and, most important of all, four factory inspectors were designated to enforce the Act'.²² This measure was a turning point though it was only a beginning. In the Fenwick note of 1843, Wordsworth laments that 'Lord Ashley's labours ... have fallen far short of his own humane wishes'. But at least now it was acknowledged, as Adam Smith had recognized long before, that laws *are* needed to prevent us from 'hurting our neighbour'.

Wordsworth shows himself admirably balanced in these books of *The Excursion*. He understands the advantages of technical advances, while regretting the consequent environmental damage and pleading for the victims of industrialization, and he does not deny that there was *rural* poverty and exploitation both before and during the evils of factories. The Recluse speaks up for the rural pre-industrial poor, whose lot was wretched enough;

Yet be it asked, in justice to our age,
If there were not, before those arts appeared,
These structures rose, commingling old and young,
And unripe sex with sex, for mutual taint;
If there were not, *then*, in our far-famed Isle,
Multitudes, who from infancy had breathed
Air unimprisoned, and had lived at large;
Yet walked beneath the sun, in human shape,
As abject, as degraded?...

Shrivelled are their lips;
Naked, and coloured like the soil, the feet
On which they stand; as if thereby they drew
Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,
From earth, the common mother of us all.
Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
Are leagued to strike dismay; but outstretched hand
And whining voice denote them supplicants
For the least boon that pity can bestow. (lines 338-45, 353-61)

Above all, they do not even have the rudiments of learning whereby their intelligence might be liberated;

- What kindly warmth from touch of fostering hand,
What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice?
This torpor is no pitiable work
Of modern ingenuity; no town

²¹ Thompson 378.

²² Fraser 21.

Nor crowded city can be taxed with aught
 Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
 To which (and who can tell where or how soon?)
 He may be roused. This Boy the fields produce:
 His spade and hoe, mattock and glittering scythe,
 The carter's whip that on his shoulder rests
 In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,
 The sceptre of his sway; his country's name,
 Her equal rights, her churches and her schools -
 What have they done for him? And, let me ask,
 For tens of thousands uninformed as he?
 In brief, what liberty of *mind* is here? (viii. 416-33)

This provides the link to passages about education in the next book, but first the four characters make their way to the Pastor's house, where they see two happy boys who demonstrate what childhood *should* be like. Wordsworth, remembering his own, as described in relation to the Pedlar in Book I of *The Excursion* and in *The Prelude*, is devastated by the contrast with the lot of the deprived children he is mainly concerned with here. It is only by the exercise of the Imagination, by feeling oneself into another's experience, that the prevalent complacency of his time and ours can be avoided. A little girl I knew, who was at Primary School, was laughingly telling her mother of the denigration and humiliation being meted out to an unpopular child by the crowd, with whom - as it is so easy to do - she was unwittingly going along. Her mother said quietly, 'I wonder what it feels like to be that child'. It was a lesson the daughter never forgot. Adam Smith speaks of sympathy as the principle which 'leads us to enter into the situations of other men'. Yet he can speak of slaves purely in terms of economic viability. (p. 184)

In the 'Spots of Time' in *The Prelude* Wordsworth tells of the Imagination through Nature forming a bridge to the spiritual world, as an instrument in approaching what Christians would call the first great Commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God'. Here, he shows how the Imagination can assist in working toward the second great commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. Whatever one can say about the uncertain and changing nature of Wordsworth's faith, these commandments ingrained in him since childhood, are the basis of 'the moral law' which he affirms in these books of *The Excursion*. But it is not, of course, necessary to be a Christian in order to empathize or feel compassion, or to have respect for the natural world. These are some of the qualities that distinguish human beings from beasts of prey.

Book IX begins with a picture of the way things are meant to be, the intended harmony and interdependence of all creation. These lines (1-26) date from 1798-9 and, like the similar passage in 'Tintern Abbey' celebrate what Coleridge called 'the One Life'. The Wanderer asserts that

To every Form of being is assigned ...
 An active Principle ...
 [which] subsists
 In all things ...
 the Soul of all the worlds. (ix. 1-15)

But something has gone wrong. This 'Spirit that knows no insulated spot' is often unrecognized by men,

is revered least,
And least respected in the human Mind,
Its most apparent home. (ix. 18-20)

Why is this? Wordsworth goes on to trace the elements of the good life, which depends on the firm foundation built in early years:

Ah! why in age
Do we revert so fondly to the walks
Of childhood - but that there the Soul discerns
The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
Of her own native vigour ... (ix. 37-40)

With such a childhood to look back on, a man does not so much descend 'into the VALE of years' as ascend 'a final EMINENCE', like one who 'looks

Down from a mountain-top, - say one of those
High peaks, that bound the vale where now we are. (ix. 58-9)

Those who are privileged to reach such an old age should receive

Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,
And hear the mighty stream of tendency
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear sonorous voice ... (ix. 86-9)

In the *Essay on Epitaphs*, Wordsworth uses 'tendency' in relation to the soul tending towards its spiritual home. Hazlitt interprets Wordsworth's phrase 'the mighty stream of tendency' as an expression of belief in the doctrine of philosophical necessity, that progress was inevitable towards the perfectibility of man. No doubt Wordsworth did subscribe to this theory at times, particularly when under the influence of Godwin, but in the context of this book of *The Excursion* the feeling is much more of 'the way things were intended to be' than of 'the way they inevitably will be'. He makes it clear that it is only certain fortunate souls such as the Wanderer who can hear that voice, which is 'inaudible

To the vast multitude; whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the plain below. (ix. 89-92)

If all men were to achieve the 'sublime ascent' in old age, it would be necessary for social conditions to change:

Them only can such hope inspire whose minds
Have not been starved by absolute neglect;
Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil. (ix. 96-8)

Wordsworth clings to his faith in 'kind Nature' and 'the sacred love she bears for all'. He believes that, where 'kindly Nature hath free scope / And Reason's sway predominates', there, under God, 'Country, society and time itself' will all share 'one maternal spirit' and express

'ever-constant love'. Such a desirable state of affairs, however, does not yet exist and the reason for it is not far to seek. Here Wordsworth sums up his message:

Our life is turned
 Out of her course, wherever man is made
 An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
 Or implement, a passive thing employed
 As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
 Of common right or interest in the end;
 Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt. (ix. 113-19)

Some of us may remember Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*. Nowadays a vision flashes on our sight of innumerable rows of galley-slaves enchained to V.D.U.s. The Creator had a different blue-print in mind:

Not for these sad issues
 Was Man created; but to obey the law
 Of life, and hope, and action. (ix. 126-8)

The powers of goodness in the individual can prevail against 'our noxious qualities' if nurtured, but, the Solitary interposes,

by what force
 Of language shall a feeling heart express
 Her sorrow for the multitude in whom
 We look for health from seeds that have been sown
 In sickness ..? (ix. 138-42)

The Wanderer explains that he had emphasized the new problems caused by industrialization

A Little-one, subjected to the arts
 Of modern ingenuity, and made
 The senseless member of a vast machine,
 Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel ... (ix. 157-60)

but he does not forget either

The rustic Boy, who walks the fields, untaught
 The slave of ignorance and oft of want,
 And miserable hunger. (ix. 162-4)

The beauties of nature and the pleasures of intellect were provided and intended for all and the two fortunate boys playing near the Parsonage are an example of this. One a cottager's child, the other a gentleman's, they feel no division and together glory in the freedom of their surroundings and their shared learning at the village school. Nor did God make any distinction in showing what is right or wrong. He did not 'hide

The excellence of moral qualities
 From common understanding. (ix. 232-3)

On the contrary.

The primal duties shine aloft - like stars;

The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man - like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes and good actions, and pure thoughts -
No mystery is here. (ix. 238-43)

One is reminded of the argument that followed the Tyneside riots. On the one hand, in an atmosphere of utter despair what outlet is there but what Wordsworth calls 'sottish vice or desperate breach of law'? On the other hand, even in such circumstances, are not people responsible for knowing the difference between right and wrong? Unemployment may not be as destructive as child-labour in a mill but it is bad enough. It was the cause of Margaret's husband's demoralization and of his desertion of her. One could not find a more sensitive or psychologically truthful account of the behaviour of a man deprived of the means of working to keep his family than in Book I of *The Excursion*. One of the changes consequent upon innovation in the first half of the nineteenth century was male unemployment. 'The Father, if perchance he still retain / His old employments', says the Wanderer in Book VIII (lines 276-8). Wordsworth was equally concerned about those evils which afflict our time as they did his, unemployment and homelessness. As late as 1835 in the Postscript to *Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems*, he spoke out in a way that Crabb Robinson thought would 'make enemies'. In this case, Wordsworth was opposed to the new Poor Law and how right he was. A few lines further on from the passage we have been looking at in Book IX, he makes an overt reference to Thomas Malthus, whose *Essay on the Principle of Population* provided the theoretical excuse for saving money on Poor Relief, which, then as now, was the real object of the exercise. It was true that the old Poor Law needed reform, but to abolish it altogether seems somewhat drastic. Yet this was what the Poor Law Commissioners recommended. With certain minor exceptions, they said, 'all relief whatever to able-bodied persons or to their families, otherwise than in well-regulated workhouses ... shall be declared unlawful, and shall cease ..' They assert that 'Where cases of real hardship occur, the remedy must be applied by individual charity, a virtue for which no system of compulsory relief can be or ought to be a substitute'. This is almost exactly the case made to me recently by a fashionable economist. He wished to abolish the Welfare State in favour of the free market. Isn't this where we came in?

Though Malthus's book was first published in 1798, it went through five more editions by 1826 and was enormously influential. In it Malthus argues against Godwin's idealistic belief in the perfectability of man. Certainly man has made great progress 'from the savage state'. But, says Malthus, - wait for it - 'towards the extinction of the passion between the sexes no progress whatever has hitherto been made'.²³ You can say that again and 'Vive la différence!' say I. His contention, therefore, is that the human population will eventually increase beyond the ability of the earth to support it. He has a point. Have you been to London lately? Let alone Africa or India. So what is to be done? One can plead for late marriages or celibacy - and he does - but, reasonably, he does not have great faith in this method. Birth control, in those days, was not generally accessible, as it is now. When once asked by my students what I thought were the two greatest technical advances of my lifetime, I answered without hesitation, 'Birth control and central heating'.

²³ Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* ed. Anthony Flew (Harmondsworth, 1985) (hereafter Malthus), p. 71.

So, failing these 'preventive checks' to population, we are left with what Malthus calls the 'positive checks', which, he says, are 'misery and vice'. Scarcely what one would think of as 'positive'. It is very hard to be fair to Malthus. He does not actually say outright, 'By great good luck the children of the poor die young and the conditions in which the lower classes live are not conducive to longevity', but this is a strong implication. What he does say is this:

Notwithstanding, then, the institution of the poor laws in England, I think it will be allowed that considering the state of the lower classes altogether, both in the towns and in the country, the distresses which they suffer from the want of proper and sufficient food, from hard labour and unwholesome habitations, must operate as a constant check to incipient population.²⁴

The word 'Hurray!' is felt though not stated. He proposes 'the total abolition of all the present parish laws', which were all the poor laws there were when he was writing. 'The market of labour would then be free ...', precisely what my economist acquaintance advocates in his most recent book, published in 1990. One cannot help hearing the unwritten corollary. As Carlyle put it, 'If paupers are made miserable, paupers will needs decline in multitude. It is a secret known to all rat-catchers'.²⁵

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which Wordsworth was criticizing in his *Postscript*, did indeed abolish all outside relief to the able-bodied and instead set up the Union Workhouses, which were to be made so hateful that no one would resort to them unless he had to. In this they were wholly successful. These were the institutions described by Dickens and with which I was still terrifyingly threatened when I was a child, if I did not do my work as I ought. 'You'll end up in the Workhouse!' said my Granny. To the principle of political economists that nothing should be allowed to interfere with the laws of supply and demand was added the belief that, if people were poor or unemployed or homeless, it was their own fault or even their choice. This we hear to-day too and no doubt it *is* true of some. Long before the new Poor Law, Wordsworth's Old Cumberland Beggar preferred homelessness to the Parish Workhouse. The Report of the Poor Law Commission states that if paupers are given assistance to prevent them from starving, 'Such persons, therefore, are under the strongest inducements to quit the less eligible class of labourers and enter the more eligible class of paupers'.²⁶

Wordsworth has no patience with these views. He affirms 'that *all* persons who cannot find employment, or procure wages sufficient to support the body in health and strength, are entitled to maintenance by law'. He speaks of the 'state of wretchedness ... which is so often endured in a civilized society: multitudes, in all ages, have known it, of whom it may be said:

... homeless near a thousand homes they stood,
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food.²⁷

²⁴ Malthus 103.

²⁵ Quoted Harrison 87.

²⁶ Fraser 237.

²⁷ *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (3 vols., Oxford, 1974), iii. 240.

If it were really true 'that every man who endeavours to find work, *may* find it', he says, and be strong enough to do it, then there might be justification for reproaching him 'as idle, froward, and unworthy of relief ... But alas! it is far otherwise'. Often his situation has been caused by factors quite outside his control, and, Wordsworth says, 'Without hope men become reckless, and have a sullen pride in adding to the heap of their own wretchedness ...' Or, as *The Excursion* puts it, alternatively, they study

how least observed,
 How with most quiet and most silent death,
 With the least taint and injury to the air
 The oppressor breathes, their human form divine,
 And their immortal soul, may waste away. (ix. 148-52)

Wordsworth maintains that there is a higher law than that of political economists, namely that every human being is of value; and that Malthus was propagating an unnecessary fear. As we now know, with hindsight, agricultural methods improved so much in the western world that they produced a surplus; though whether it is really wise to turn so many of our farms into golf-courses is another matter. With better management and distribution of food and with the use of birth-control and if one could persuade men not to make war, it would be possible now to feed the world. In Wordsworth's time colonization was the obvious answer and the one he supports, despite Malthus's gloomy belief that, even with the splendid advantages, for reducing population, of plague, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, the colonials too increase at an alarming rate. Yes, he really does say that - you'll find it in chapter VI. But Wordsworth maintains that childhood must be freed from forced labour and become the firm base for adulthood:

With such foundations laid, avaunt the fear
 Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
 To the prevention of all healthful growth
 Through mutual injury! (lines 363-6)

But how can this be when so many children are not allowed even the basic education of the three 'r's? Wordsworth had long been interested in the subject and in 1811, under the influence of Dr. Andrew Bell, had for a time, according to Sara Hutchinson, taught 'regularly for 2 or 3 hours every morning and evening' at the village school.²⁸ He must surely be given great credit for pleading for universal education so long before it became a reality. We think of Forster's 1870 Education Act, passed more than 50 years after the publication of *The Excursion* as a landmark, and so it was, but it was designed merely to patch together the existing voluntary schools and fill in the gaps. It 'did not provide universal free or compulsory education'.²⁹ Ten years later Mundella's Act (1880) 'made attendance compulsory for children aged between five and ten' but parents still had to pay about 3d or 4d a week per child, which out of a weekly wage of about 15s was not negligible,³⁰ though some School Boards did not insist on the fee for very needy children. It was not until Fisher's Act of 1918 that all fees were abolished in elementary schools and the school leaving

²⁸ Moorman ii. 178.

²⁹ Fraser 80.

³⁰ Harrison 73.

age was raised to 14. The greatest advances since then have been at the end of the Second World War. So we can see how far Wordsworth was ahead of his time.

Like Martin Luther King, Wordsworth had a dream:

O for the coming of that glorious time
 When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
 And best protection, this imperial Realm,
 While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
 An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
 Them who are born to serve her and obey;
 Binding herself by statute to secure
 For all the children whom her soil maintains
 The rudiments of letters, and inform
 The mind with moral and religious truth,
 Both understood and practised, - so that none,
 However destitute, be left to droop
 By timely culture unsustained; or run
 Into a wild disorder; or be forced
 To drudge through a weary life without the help
 Of intellectual implements and tools;
 A savage horde among the civilized,
 A servile band among the lordly free. (ix. 293-310)

Not the greatest poetry, perhaps, but what noble sentiments! It is hard to understand how Matthew Arnold, commenting on these very lines, could have treated them with cheap sneers, when he himself - writing here (1879) after Forster's Education Act, too - was so closely concerned with Education.

Thanks to Wordsworth's friend, Thomas Clarkson, who had risked his life at the hands of those who saw slavery as part of a free market, and to Wilberforce, whom he also knew, Wordsworth could now say, 'The discipline of slavery is unknown / Among us' (ix. 351-2). In 1807 the slave trade had been abolished within the British Empire. But the ills he was deploring among Britain's own citizens still awaited redress. In the Fenwick note, Wordsworth says, 'Reviewing at this late period, 1843, what I put into the mouths of my Interlocutors a few years after the commencement of the century, I grieve that so little progress has been made in diminishing the evils deplored, or promoting the benefits of education which the Wanderer anticipates'.

While lamenting the increase in manufacturing towns, Wordsworth is glad that the coming of steam has diverted the factories from the most beautiful areas of countryside. 'Had it not been for this invention, long before the present time every torrent and river in this district would have had its factory, large and populous in proportion to the power of the water that could there have been commanded'. In our time, we have escaped one threat only to succumb to another. It is noticeable how nuclear power stations are put in the most isolated and beautiful of countryside, a number in places Wordsworth particularly loved, a few miles from Grasmere, Alfoxden and Snowdon.³¹ In general the threat to the countryside and the atmosphere is greater than it has ever been. So much for environmental concerns.

³¹ Sellafield, Hinckley Point and Trawsfynydd.

As regards child labour and universal education, one would have said until recently that in Britain, though not, of course, throughout the world, or even Europe, Wordsworth's dream had come true, and more. One can feel no complacency on a *cosmic* scale while children are being deliberately exterminated on the streets of Brazil, to cite but one of many possible examples. But in Britain? Perhaps some of you saw the television programme presented by Peter Ustinov, in the *Timewatch* series, about Victorian child labour. In a related article in the *Radio Times*, he speaks of 'the damning figures from a survey, which reveal that 43 per cent of British children between the ages of 10 and 16 had a job, that many of them worked more than two hours for every pound they earned and that one boy was found labouring for just 1s. 4d. an hour'. This was not in Victorian England. 'The 1s. 4d. was expressed as 7p. and the report, in *The Guardian* newspaper, referred to Britain in 1991'.³²

While I was preparing this lecture, an article in *The Observer* caught my eye. It said, 'Education in Britain is free only in name, according to a major survey to be published next week. Parents are thought to have contributed £75 million over three years to maintain buildings and ensure adequate supplies of textbooks'. Well, why not? you may ask. People are more affluent now. Well, some are. Certainly it is still a far cry from Wordsworth's time. But, purely on the practical level of not wasting the country's human resources, let alone any moral considerations, a child's education should not be dependent on the wealth of his parents. Since that survey appeared (17 November 1991), the parlous state of education in my own area has been featured weekly in the local paper. Peter Ustinov says, 'After reformers win a fight to bring a wicked practice to an end, we seem to slip slowly back to where we were in the beginning'. This is not a party political matter any more than it was in Wordsworth's time. Every man or woman of goodwill has to remember the need for 'eternal vigilance' and see that governments are not allowed to fail in those laws which Adam Smith said were necessary to prevent us from 'hurting our neighbour'.

Yet we also have a duty not to fall prey to despair like the Solitary. The Pastor's wife says that when she is listening to the Wanderer, whose 'mind gives back the various forms of things, / Caught in their fairest, happiest attitude', she can see as he sees,

.. but when his voice has ceased,
Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as now,
That combinations so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is,
Like that reflected in yon quiet pool,
Seems but a fleeting sunbeam's gift, whose peace
The sufferance only of a breath of air! (ix. 463-73)

G. M. Trevelyan, writing in the early 1940s, commented on Wordsworth's ability during the Napoleonic Wars to 'produce a body of philosophic poetry expressive of "central peace subsisting at the heart / Of endless agitation", a mood,' says Trevelyan, 'which is more difficult to catch and keep under the conditions of modern totalitarian warfare'.³³ Britain during the Blitz was indeed an extreme example but at no time is it easy to 'catch and keep' such a mood, nor did Wordsworth find it so. Confronted by the threatened destruction of the

³² Article by William Greaves, *Radio Times* (November 1991); quotations from Ustinov himself.

³³ *English Social History: A Survey of Six Centuries Chaucer to Queen Victoria* (London, 1942), p. 466.

countryside he loved, by the greed which can countenance such cruelty to children, the complacency which can deny them education, who could find it easy? The subject of *The Excursion* as a whole is the Solitary's disillusionment, which was Wordsworth's own, with the failure of his hopes for social amelioration from the French Revolution and his difficulty in coming to terms with unmerited suffering and the deaths of his family. The passages in Books II and III which describe this personal loss were added after the death of two of Wordsworth's own children in 1812, and Mary's physical decline from the grief. Who, in any period, can look around the world at human wickedness in the inflicting of unnecessary suffering or, closer to home, deal with personal loss and disaster and yet preserve the faith that he still hears

Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation? (iv. 1144-7)

Yet this is exactly what Wordsworth's Wanderer exhorts us to do. Lamb, who had good reason to know the temptation to despair, says, 'The fourth book, entitled "Despondency Corrected", we consider the most valuable portion of the poem'. (Review of *The Excursion*) With his usual shrewdness, Lamb goes to the root of the matter. He sees *The Excursion* for what it is, 'the noblest conversational poem I ever read'.³⁴ It is not meant to be a drama and Wordsworth denies the intention 'formally to announce a system' (*PW* v 2). The Reader, he says, 'will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself'. Coleridge blamed *The Excursion* for not being the kind of philosophical poem he would himself have written if he could but have got round to it - and very dry it would have been, I suspect - but it *is* a philosophical poem and Lamb at least was not blind to its message. He sees it as a counterblast to those who subordinate any humanitarian principles or spiritual awareness to the cold calculation of the most efficient means of material production to make the maximum profit and who, in peace or war, use human beings as mere tools. As Wordsworth says in Book VIII,

how baseless in itself
Is the Philosophy whose sway depends
On mere material instruments ... (lines 223-5)

'The general tendency of the argument', Lamb says, '(which we might almost affirm to be the leading moral of the poem) is to abate the pride of the calculating *understanding*, and to reinstate the *imagination* and the *affections* in those seats from which modern philosophy has laboured but too successfully to expel them'.³⁵ The Pastor pleads that the imagination and the affections, which are the expression of God's two great Commandments, shall flourish:

let thy Word prevail
Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away
The sting of human nature ... (ix. 637-9)

³⁴ *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb* ed. Edwin J. Marris, Jr. (3 vols., Ithaca, NY, 1975-8), iii. 95.

³⁵ Park 197.

We are brought back to that other form of morality which can only be achieved, says Adam Smith, by self-discipline. Remembering the way humankind was meant to be, we can but try to mould ourselves nearer to that prototype, developing those 'active powers' that are 'Strong to subvert our noxious qualities', so that as individuals others will be glad to have known us. Such a man, says Wordsworth

moves

In beauty through the world; and all who see,
Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood. (ix. 135-7)

Perhaps with an increasing number of such personalities humane values will eventually prevail.

I think we have seen how the last two books of *The Excursion*, far from being written off as negligible, are both admirable and still relevant to-day. The poem as a whole faces head on, as any philosophical enquiry must, the problem of evil and seeks for ways of coming to terms with it. Despite some longueurs, which I do not think we can deny it has, *The Excursion* is a brave and humane work which, I think, reveals greater riches the more it is studied. The chief reason for its undeserved neglect is that we have not read it with sufficient care. As we know it better we shall learn to appreciate it more and more.

Sevenoaks

Lamb's Early Satire of the Economists

By BONNIE WOODBERY

IN *THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE*, William Hazlitt captured in print the myth that Charles Lamb had 'succeeded not by conforming to the Spirit of the Age, but in opposition to it. . . . His taste in French and German literature is somewhat defective: nor has he made much progress in the science of Political Economy or other abstruse studies'.¹ Lamb, however, was not as ignorant about economic matters as Hazlitt would lead us to believe. In a letter dated 28 November 1810, Lamb tells Hazlitt that he has sent to him a copy of Cobbett's *Political Register* for 24 November 1810, which contained Hazlitt's letter upon 'Mr. Malthus and the Edinburgh Reviewers'.² (Hazlitt's *Reply* to Malthus had been criticized in the *Edinburgh Review* for August 1810). Lamb says 'I sent you on Saturday a Cobbett containing your reply to Edinb. Rev. which I thought you would be glad to receive as an example of attention on the part of Mr. Cobbett to insert it so speedily'.³ Before closing, Lamb informs Hazlitt that Coleridge is going to write in the *Courier* against Cobbett and in favour of paper money.⁴ This letter suggests that Lamb was at least familiar with Hazlitt's arguments against Malthus as well as with Coleridge's observations on the bullion matter.

The letter also contains Lamb's first praise of roast pig. Hazlitt had sent him a pig which Lamb reports 'hath turned out as good as I predicted. My fauces yet retain the sweet porcine odour. -----'.⁵ Consequently, the economic ideas of Malthus and Lamb's love of meat merge in this letter, a letter that may have been the catalyst for 'Edax on Appetite' and 'Hospita on the Immoderate Indulgence of the Pleasures of the Palate', two of Lamb's early satires. Commissioned by Leigh Hunt in 1810, these essays were published in the fourth number of Hunt's *Reflector* in 1811. In the satires, Lamb targets the popular economic principles of Malthus, Bentham, and the household economy urged by vegetarians whose ideas had recently been codified by J. F. Newton in *The Return to Nature* (1811).

In his *Essay on Population*, Malthus, arguing against the utopian rhetoric of Godwin, theorizes that the cause of social evil stems not from human institutions but rather from what he terms 'the principle of population', which states that 'the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for men'.⁶ According to Malthus, Nature sanctioned this principle that arose from two postulates: that 'food and sexual passion were both essential to human existence . . . and second, that while food increased only in arithmetical ratio, population when unchecked increased in geometrical ratio'.⁷ Further, Malthus also believed that in this natural state, misery and vice (starvation, war, sickness, prostitution) 'were all as much of the essence of the human condition' as the need for food and procreation.⁸ In contrast, Hazlitt found the mathematical computations of

¹ William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age* (London, 1825) (hereafter *Spirit of the Age*), pp. 410, 411, 417.

² *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb* ed. Edwin W. Marris, Jr. (3 vols., Ithaca, NY, 1975-8) (hereafter Marris), ii. 68-70.

³ Marris ii. 68.

⁴ Marris ii. 69.

⁵ Marris ii. 69.

⁶ Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Victorian Minds* (New York, 1968) (hereafter Himmelfarb), p. 90. Himmelfarb provides a basic understanding of Malthusian economics in her chapter 'The Specter of Malthus', pp. 82-110.

⁷ Himmelfarb 90.

⁸ Himmelfarb 90.

Malthus to be anti-humanistic. He believed that the ratios with which Malthus proved his arguments served only to deprive the poor of charity, thereby driving them further into vice and increasing their misery. In his *Reply to the Essay on Population*, Hazlitt heatedly points out that population could be controlled if need be by the will of man: 'Till then, Mr. Malthus has no right to set up his arithmetical and geometrical ratios upon the face of the earth, and say they are the work of nature'.⁹ Hazlitt also argues that any serious attempt to relieve the working classes of their misery was in light of Malthus' theory 'thought to be absurd and counter to the laws of nature' since Malthus had proved that public benevolence could best be served with 'meanness, pride and extravagance'.¹⁰

In addition to the popularity of Malthusian economics, the period from 1808 saw the Utilitarians' ideas 'disseminated until they had become the working creed of industrialism, an inalienable part of the middle class mind'.¹¹ That man seeks pleasure and avoids pain became the cliché of the Utilitarians. Only out of self-interest then does man seek pleasure in power, wealth, sensual gratifications, or moral pursuits. Bentham believed that even hardened criminals could be convinced that it was in their best interest to reform and lead honest lives.

Lamb satirizes the ideas of these economists in 'Edax on Appetite' and 'Hospita on the Immoderate Indulgence of the Pleasures of the Palate'. Edax has a problem; nature has endowed him with an insatiable appetite, not for wealth or sexual pleasure, but for food. And not just any food; although he will eat anything, he particularly craves meat, 'the only legitimate aliment for human creatures since the flood'.¹² The idea of a man who suffers from an appetite which can never be satisfied and moreover who is powerless to correct such an appetite is contrary to Bentham's belief that man always does what is in his best interest: to seek pleasure and avoid pain. After all, the weak side of Bentham's conclusions, according to Hazlitt, is that Bentham has not 'made sufficient allowance for the varieties of human nature, and the caprices and irregularities of the human will.... All pleasure is not ... morally speaking equally a good; for all pleasure does not equally bear reflecting on. There are some tastes that are sweet in the mouth and bitter in the belly; and there is a similar contradiction and anomaly in the mind and heart of man'.¹³

Lamb's portrait of the suffering Edax is in keeping with Hazlitt's criticism of Bentham. Edax, 'following the blameless dictates of nature', finds food sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly since his appetite only grows larger the more he eats.¹⁴ Edax is obviously a different variety of human nature. His inordinate appetite also conflicts with the utilitarian belief that money is a greater pleasure than food. An elderly relative who was to leave the great eater a legacy of 300 pounds a year does not do so due to one of his eating frenzies. When invited to one of her card parties, Edax, in a 'freak' of appetite, 'dispatched the whole

⁹ Quoted Herschel Baker, *William Hazlitt*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1962) (hereafter Baker), p. 163. The original is in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt* ed. P. P. Howe (21 vols, London, 1930-4) (hereafter Howe), i. 243. Baker nicely summarizes Hazlitt's answers to Malthus. He also points out that a full discussion of the Hazlitt/Malthus controversy can be found in William Albrecht, *William Hazlitt and the Malthusian Controversy*, University of New Mexico Publications in Language and Literature, No. 4, 1950.

¹⁰ Baker 161; original in Howe i. 181.

¹¹ Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed* (London, 1979), p. 187.

¹² *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* ed. E. V. Lucas (7 vols., London, 1903-5) (hereafter *Works*), i. 121.

¹³ *Spirit of the Age* 10.

¹⁴ *Works* i. 120.

meal intended for eleven persons, - fish, flesh, fowl, pastry, - to the springs of garnishing parsley, and the last fearful custard that quaked upon the board' before suppertime was called.¹⁵ He offers this anecdote as proof that he would never prostitute his gift of nature 'to the enlarging of [his] worldly substance'.¹⁶ For Edax, money is not a greater pleasure than food.

Edax is not even deterred from satisfying his demanding appetite by the constantly watchful 'broad, unwinking eye of the world which nothing can elude'.¹⁷ The eye is reminiscent of the 'invisible eye' in Bentham's ideal prison - the Panopticon - where each prisoner imagines that he is being watched by the unseen oculus.¹⁸ The effect achieved by the eye at the prison is control, which makes possible the prisoner's rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the effect of society's eye on Edax does not help control his appetite. Hospita, spokeswoman in 'Hospita on the Immoderate Indulgence of the Pleasures of the Palate', the essay that follows 'Edax' in the *Reflector* number, despairs because Edax, a relative of her husband, often dines with them in spite of his inability to control his appetite. Hospita observes that even *shame* has no effect on the outrageous behavior of Edax.¹⁹ Here Lamb is possibly satirizing Hazlitt's argument that, contrary to Bentham's beliefs, man submits to the 'hardships, privations, and dangers' of life, not for 'pleasure or profit' but '*for shame*'.²⁰

In these essays, Lamb also satirizes the economic doctrine of Malthus. The great need of Edax for food conflicts with the Malthusian principle that man's need for sexual passions is as great as his need for food. Edax learns moral restraint at a young age from his strict and virtuous parents, a restraint not recognized by Malthus as a check to population growth. Lamb also satirized Malthus' belief that misery and vice are natural checks to population. The peculiar vice of Edax would reduce the food supply rather than check population growth. Hospita wonders about Edax: 'Can he have read Mr. Malthus's Thoughts on the Ratio of Food to Population?'²¹

Hospita, plagued at her dinner parties by Edax, who keeps a joint of meat on the table even after the cheese and fruit are brought in, has serious misgivings about her husband's relative. She and her whole family feed entirely on vegetables, although she stoops to serve her guests animal food 'out of common politeness'.²² According to Hospita, they are vegetarians because 'animal food is neither wholesome nor natural to man'.²³ At her wit's end, Hospita explains to Mr. Reflector: 'Such being the nature of our little household, you may guess what inroads into the economy of it, - what revolutions and turnings of things upside down, the example of such a feeder as Mr. --- is calculated to produce'.²⁴ Lamb has two targets here: dogmatic vegetarians and the comparative anatomists.

J. F. Newton explains the beliefs of vegetarians in *The Return to Nature (1811)*, his tract on the economy and value of a vegetable regimen. In *Queen Mab*, Shelley, a vegetarian on

¹⁵ *Works* i. 123.

¹⁶ *Works* i. 122.

¹⁷ *Works* i. 120.

¹⁸ Himmelfarb 35.

¹⁹ *Works* i. 126.

²⁰ *Spirit of the Age* 21.

²¹ *Works* i. 126.

²² *Works* i. 125.

²³ *Works* i. 125.

²⁴ *Works* i. 126.

medical and moral grounds, summarizes his friend Newton's arguments in a footnote on the value of vegetarianism: 'I hold that the depravity of the physical and moral nature of man originated in his unnatural habits of life.... All vice arose from the ruin of healthful innocence. Tyranny, superstition, commerce, and inequality, were then first known'.²⁵ However, the text of the poem is much more heated than the footnote as man breaks Nature's law and 'slays the lamb that looks him in the face,/And horribly devours his mangled flesh'.²⁶

Support for the vegetarians' arguments came from the comparative anatomists who were studying man and apes to discover their similarities. The anatomists found that man's intestines were identical to those of apes; animals which are naturally herbivorous and eat only fruits and nuts. From these findings, the anatomists concluded that man is naturally a vegetarian.²⁷ Suffering Edax says that he will leave it to the 'anatomists and the physicians' to determine to 'what unhappy figuration of the parts of the intestine [he] owe[s] this unnatural craving'.²⁸ He reflects: 'What work will they make with their acids and alkalines, their serums and coagulums ... and acrimonious juices to explain that cause which Nature, who willed the effect to punish me for my sins, may no less punish them for their presumption'.²⁹ Lamb's criticism of the presumption of the anatomists who imagine they can discover natural causes for Edax' disorder is no less pointed than his criticism of dogmatic vegetarians like Hospita who believe themselves morally superior to meat eaters. Newton and Shelley, both avid vegetarians, argue that man's fall originated from his unnatural eating habits. Lamb counters their argument with Edax' belief that Nature makes him suffer this perverted appetite in punishment for his sins.

Lamb's portrait of the righteously wronged Hospita is subtle in its satire. She worries that the meat devouring Edax will destroy the vegetarian 'economy of her little household' at the same time that she accuses Edax of ignoring the Malthusian argument of the ratio of food to population. Citing the Malthusian cliché, she does not recognize the contradiction here. According to Carl Woodring, vegetarians like Shelley and Newton used a natural law argument for vegetarianism in part to counter the Malthusian argument against the possibility of effective reform.³⁰ The natural law argument concluded that meat eating eventually resulted in capitalism, an economy, according to Newton, based on selfishness and greed. In contrast, the Malthusian argument allows wealthy capitalists to avoid charitable obligations without guilt, thus perpetuating the capitalist spirit of selfishness. For Malthus, reforms have no ultimate effect on a population already regulated by misery and vice.

In *Intervals of Inspiration*, Donald Reiman, in his analysis of 'A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig', wonders what Lamb's attitude is 'towards the moral question of meat-eating as opposed to vegetarianism'.³¹ When 'Edax' and 'Hospita' are read together, I cannot help but

²⁵ *Shelley's Poetry and Prose* ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York, 1977) (hereafter Reiman and Powers), p. 63, fn9. This footnote to *Queen Mab* viii. 218 contains excerpts from Shelley's original footnote plus information on the beliefs of vegetarians and the research of the comparative anatomists around 1810-11.

²⁶ Reiman and Powers 62-63.

²⁷ Reiman and Powers 63 fn9.

²⁸ *Works* i. 123.

²⁹ *Works* i. 124.

³⁰ Carl Woodring, *Politics in English Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970).

³¹ Donald Reiman, *Intervals of Inspiration*, (Florida, 1988), p. 73.

conclude that Lamb has more sympathy for Edax than for Hospita, for meat-eaters than for vegetarians. Hospita is portrayed as righteous and judgmental of non-vegetarians, while the confessions of Edax, although satirical, serve to elicit the reader's sympathy.

Ultimately, then, the juxtaposition of these essays highlights Lamb's argument for acceptance of individual differences. Human weakness, such as Edax' surprising appetite, often places the individual at odds with the moral tenets of a particular economic theory. For example, evangelistic vegetarians promoted their programme as one that would eventually lead to a more perfect human race. Lamb, always tolerant of individual idiosyncrasies, was suspicious of schemes to perfect human nature. Once in 1804, Lamb had joined Coleridge, Holcroft, and Hazlitt at Godwin's house. In the midst of a heated exchange between Coleridge, Holcroft, and Godwin on the subject of 'man as he is and man as he ought to be', Lamb protested 'Give me man as he ought not to be'.³²

So Edax, or man as he ought not to be, pleads for sympathy, a plea that is snubbed by Hospita, whose only worries are how Edax disturbs the 'order and comfort of her meal', the 'economy' of her little household, and the ratio of food to population.³³ Her final high-toned judgments of Edax contrast sharply with Edax' final request for humane consideration from his acquaintances for his peculiarity of constitution which is no crime. According to Edax, it is not 'that which goes into the mouth [that] desecrates a man, but that which comes out of it, - such as sarcasm, bitter jests, mocks and taunts, and ill-natured observations'.³⁴ Yet Hospita ends not with sympathy but with queries for the hapless Edax, who she hopes will read her essay and heed her advice: 'I wonder at a time like the present, when the scarcity of every kind of food is so painfully acknowledged, that shame had no effect upon him.... Can he think it reasonable that one man should consume the sustenance of many?'³⁵ She concludes not by trying to understand or help Edax, but by querelously asking Mr. Reflector to give his thoughts on the subject of excessive eating, especially animal food. Lamb's satiric point is that if Hospita really understood Malthus' theory, she would know that in his system reform does not work, especially reform of a single appetite. Behind her specious argument to save the food supply of the world by denying Edax his 'joint of meat', the reader senses a callous indictment that stems from selfish pecuniary motives and a self-righteous disregard of another's feelings.

E. V. Lucas in his biography of Lamb observes that the *Reflector* essays were 'preliminary training' for the later *Elia* essays, a training that Lamb did not make the fullest use of because 'he was not yet ready to be the chartered egotist that he afterwards became: diffidence, humility, mistrust, stood in his way'.³⁶ Yet while 'Edax' and 'Hospita' may lack the subtlety of his later essays, they do reveal Lamb's thoughts on the economic doctrines in circulation around 1810 and his ability to make satiric use of them.

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³² E. V. Lucas, *The Life of Charles Lamb* (5th ed., London, 1921) (hereafter Lucas).

³³ *Works* i. 125, 126.

³⁴ *Works* i. 124.

³⁵ *Works* i. 126.

³⁶ Lucas 373.

Reviews

LAURA DABUNDO, ed, *Encyclopedia of Romanticism: Culture in Britain, 1780s-1830s*. Routledge: London, 1992. Pp. xviii + 662. £85.00 hardback.

THE GREAT STRENGTH of this new *Encyclopedia of Romanticism* is that it casts its net unusually wide while still giving the impression of having a guiding hand and a directing intelligence in command of the casting. Opening the book, not entirely at random it will be believed, at the section collected under the letter 'L' (curiously enough one of the volume's slimmest sections: not many Romantic writers appear to have had surnames beginning with that letter) I found a gathering of entries which repeatedly seemed to group themselves into illuminating and meaningful sequences. A short article on the Lower Classes proved brief but interesting on the public amusements then available to them, several of which the writers of the day also shared: fairs brought Charles Lamb to mind, and prize fighting inevitably turned one's thoughts to Hazlitt. An article on the Luddites which followed helped explain why so many of the writers of the time were scared stiff of them! A shift of focus led to David Miall's solid account of the Romantic Lyric, a topic wider in its implications than is always recognised, and from this to the *Lyrical Ballads* was another inevitable progression.

Literacy might seem a less obvious prelude to Literary Criticism, but there are links, and both essays are good. The latter's discussion of Coleridge, Lamb and Hazlitt led on to the next generation, including John Gibson Lockhart (like Coleridge a great admirer of the Germans) and the sorry affair of Lockhart's challenge to John Scott, which led to Scott's death after a duel with, of all people, Lockhart's second. This could only prelude a very good account of the *London Magazine* ... At which point the greedy eye and the dipping hand were called to attention, and I opened up the book at the two entries which, of course, had led me to begin with the letter 'L' in the first place; Charles and Mary Lamb.

Joseph Rosenblum pays due tribute to Charles Lamb's achievement in having written so much and so variously when for thirty three years he worked a six-day week of at least nine hours a day in a public office: a fact which is all too often overlooked. He characterises, briefly but justly, the range of Lamb's pre-Elia writings and makes the reader feel the unexpectedness of his great flowering as an essayist after the gathering together of the *Works* in 1818 might have suggested that he felt his chief activities as a writer were over and done. The *Elia* essays are nicely characterised, and we are reminded of the range of the final work, even though no very high claims are made for it.

Mary Lamb's difficult life and the vital nature (for both of them) of her relationship with Charles are effectively conveyed by Kathryn Young. It does seem rather strange, however, that Mary's activity as a writer goes virtually unmentioned. Mary Lamb may have needed strong external stimulus, (usually the desire to help friends in need, or a good cause) to make her think of writing for publication, but once she had nerved herself to do so, she was far from ineffectual. To note only one side of her gift, surely the gentle pathos and imaginative sympathy with children (by no means inevitable then) which distinguished *Mrs Leicester's School* so highly in Coleridge's estimation deserved a mention? It would not be impossible to trace a direct link between Mary's style and the insight into children's minds which one finds so often in the fiction of Mrs Gaskell.

The *Encyclopedia of Romanticism* does well by Lamb's friends on the whole. Phillip Anderson's treatment of Hazlitt is a masterpiece of just compression, and he manages almost

as well with the lengthier life and equally miscellaneous *oeuvre* of Leigh Hunt. Godwin's strange vicissitudes are recorded with sympathy, but also (dare one say it?) with a welcome touch of humour by Richard McGhee: of the second pairing he dryly observes that 'their affection seems, for the most part, to have lasted the 30-odd years of their marriage, although Clairmont was volatile and would periodically decamp ...'

But enough of dipping and tasting. The temptation with a book of this kind is, indeed, to let the eye wander at will and to leaf through the pages, just seeing what may next turn up. And as a browsing book the present volume is most engaging. But used seriously, as an aid to research, it is useful too. It benefits from a firmer shape and a clearer plan than are usual with works of this kind, and it will merit its place on any library shelf, whether the library be academic or the more modest footage of the private reader. The *Encyclopedia of Romanticism* is rendered all the more useful and 'user-friendly' by some remarkably effective and stimulating cross-referencing in its final index pages.

Crawcrook

BILL RUDDICK

THOMAS MCFARLAND, *William Wordsworth: Intensity and Achievement*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1992. Pp. xv + 176. £25 hardback.

TO HEAR Thomas McFarland speaking his mind about nonsense is almost as enjoyable as doing so oneself. In his first chapter his analysis of Marjorie Levinson's reading of 'Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey' is civilised, precise, and terminally effective. Levinson, fortified by Derrida's attack on logocentricity and 'the metaphysics of presence', assumes that the short form 'Tintern Abbey' is actually the title of the poem, and therefore should also be its subject. This being so, it is the abbey's absence from the poem, not the presence of all that is actually there, that really matters, especially because at the time the poem was written the ruin was the home of beggars and the wretchedly poor. Poverty, injustice, oppression and the French Revolution are also not there, and the poem must now be read and judged with reference to these absences. With admirable lucidity and economy Professor McFarland exposes the weakness of this kind of critical procedure. Conceding that any *determinatio*, in Derrida's terminology, implies a totalising *negatio*, he comments;

in that apprehension Levinson's attempt to join the French Revolution, the sociology of the poor, the rise of urban pollution and the history of monasticism to Wordsworth's poem would be valid, but so would the relation of the poem to Virgil's *Georgics* or to the construction of the Parthenon - all these things could ultimately be traced from the poem, but at the same time they would be critically null, for their absence, to utilise the phrase of Hegel, inhabits a night in which all cows are black.

The point made here is both important and alarming - Levinson's essay has already been twice cloned in *The Wordsworth Circle*. More germanely for review purposes, however, the manner in which Professor McFarland deals with the matter demonstrates very clearly his particular kind of excellence - erudite, well-informed good sense.

The second chapter is something of an anticlimax, partly because Professor McFarland tries to do too many things: the hapless Levinson is given a supererogatory swat, the New Critics are reprimanded, and the sense of streaming is offered as the characteristic 'infrashape' of

Romantic poetry. In trying to discern this infrashape in the Tintern Abbey lines, the author makes a curious mistake which, while not invalidating his argument, makes it more difficult than need be. The sense of streaming in 'Tintern Abbey', he seems to suppose, may be thought to be interrupted by the lines 'These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines / Of sportive wood run wild'. The assumption is that 'no matter how long one looks at hedgerows, they never in fact are seen as little lines of sportive wood run wild'. Having created this difficulty for himself, the author appears to solve it by supposing that the streaming infrashape is maintained by a movement of the mind from seeing (hedgerows) to reverie (sportive woods). There is simply no need for this. English hedges are not all homogeneous and scrupulously maintained, they contain many different species, and are often neglected, or, in parts at least, deliberately left to grow. There are hundreds of examples in England, and if Professor McFarland hasn't seen one, he will undoubtedly accept the evidence of George Eliot on the subject: 'But everywhere the bushy hedgerows wasted the land ... it was worth the journey to see those hedgerows, the liberal homes of unmarketable beauty - of the purple blossomed ruby-berried nightshade, of the wild convolvulus climbing and spreading in tendrilled strength till it made a great curtain of pale green hearts and white trumpets Such hedgerows were often as tall as the labourers' cottages ...' (*Felix Holt*). No reverie here, only acute observation.

Having in his first two chapters disposed of two unsatisfactory critical approaches to Wordsworth, the author devotes the rest of the book to defining and establishing his own understanding of the nature of the poetry. Wordsworth's excellence consists in his intensity (a particular application here of Keats's famous dictum). He takes 'Ruth' (surprisingly as it first seems) as a paradigm case of such intensity - in this case the intensity of pain inflicted casually by one human being upon another by rejection. The opposite intensity, unalloyed joy, has but one exemplar in Wordsworth: 'Home at Grasmere'. More characteristic of Wordsworth is the contrast of the two, the remembrance of joy and the awareness of loss. In establishing this point, Professor McFarland offers a much more acceptable and fruitful version of the Derridean 'clamour of absence', than Levinson's unlimited prospects. The great passages in *The Prelude* recalling the visionary moments of childhood and youth seem vividly present, but the very tense of the verbs modifies this perception - 'the heart is *almost* mine', says Wordsworth, but, implicitly, not quite what it was *then*. The great moments consequently are, as Professor McFarland points out, 'characteristically in the past, and really exist as absence'. This seems to me a most stimulating insight, as is its corollary that we have the unmistakable voice of intensity when 'these absences are reclaimed to presence, and take the shape of a "spot of time"'.

Not everyone will agree with the postulate of Chapter Four that when Wordsworth's poetry loses its intensity it becomes 'desiccated', and the point surely cannot be established simply by contrasting 'Surprised by joy' with 'The Triad'. Nonetheless this chapter is greatly stimulating by virtue of its fine critical analysis of the sonnet on Catherine's death. Chapter Five at first seems to offer only a rehearsal of familiar ideas about Wordsworth's difficulties with *The Recluse*; however, Professor McFarland's insistence on the importance of Milton's precursorship leads to a characteristically fresh and stimulating perception. If we read the first 23 lines of the Prospectus without due care and attention - encouraged to do so by their strong and obvious resemblance to the opening of *Paradise Lost* - we shall imagine Wordsworth to be offering to fulfil Coleridge's hopes by singing of Man, Nature and Human Life. However he is not, he is merely musing on these impressive concepts. If we read more

carefully from line 14 onwards, we see that the poet is proposing to sing of far more characteristically Wordsworthian themes.

Similarly enlightening points are made in the rest of the book about the apparent paradox of a man proposing himself as a prophet whose gaze is perpetually fixed on the past, and the possibility that Rivers, in *The Borderers* is a rejected Wordsworthian self. The latter point is particularly thought-provoking, though the Solitary may seem to some readers the more likely candidate for such a role.

The book as a whole is lucid, original, and stimulating to the highest degree, for this author always has something to say that is worth listening to.

St Francis Xavier University

JEFFREY BAKER

NICHOLAS ROE, ed, *William Wordsworth: Selected Poetry*. The Penguin Poetry Library. Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1992. £5.99 paperback.

NICHOLAS ROE HAS APPROACHED the editing of the new Penguin Poetry Library's *William Wordsworth: Selected Poetry* with evident relish, and has produced a pithy, judicious new selection that reflects the last twenty years' fervent activity in Wordsworth studies. His admirers will not be surprised at the emphasis he places in his Introduction on Wordsworth's revolutionary and Godwinian years. There is a healthy degree of provocation here; take for instance the assertion that 'Wordsworth's imagining of essential humanity during the revolutionary decade ... initiated his life as a poet.'

While Roe's goading of the reader in the Introduction is stimulating, it is to his credit that his selection is not, on the whole, controversial. The poems of 1798 and 1802 are fairly represented here, and to the cluster of late poems usually published in anthologies of this kind he adds one or two lesser-known but worthy candidates (*Upon the Sight of a Beautiful Picture, Gold and Silver Fishes, in a Vase*). The selection does have its quirks - all of them to the good. It is refreshing to find *The Baker's Cart* at the beginning; this early fragment has not been anthologized before and, placed immediately before *Old Man Travelling* and *Lines left upon a seat in a yew tree*, its status as a proto-Lyrical Ballad looks increasingly plausible. *The Ruined Cottage* is represented by MS.B (1798) as opposed to the more widely-known MS.D (1799), with its pantheist conclusion. While noting that it is also available in Philip Hobsbaum's Routledge *Wordsworth*, it's good to see signs that MS.B is becoming as widely circulated as its better-known descendant. Most useful of all, Roe includes the *Two-Part Prelude* (1799), thus providing us with the spots of time, the skating episode, and the infant babe passage in their earliest forms. All that plus extracts from the *Thirteen Book Prelude* of 1805, including the crossing of the Alps (Book VI), the Blind Beggar and Bartholomew Fair (Book VII), the September Massacres (Book X), and the Climbing of Snowdon (Book XIII). Extracting passages from *The Prelude* is a thankless task because it can only excite the knowing disagreement of one's peers, but Roe has selected precisely the passages I would wish to show anyone new to Wordsworth.

This is a fine anthology, and it will provide general readers with an excellent introduction. Those of us who work with the poetry on a regular basis will find it a good portable selection for research trips, conferences, and the like. All the same, there are a number of criticisms

that will be made of it, and it is only fair to give some indication of them here. Like Stephen Gill in his Oxford Authors *Wordsworth*, Roe publishes the 1807 text of 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' minus the famous and much-loved stanza added to the 1815 version of the poem. The concern that one of Wordsworth's best-known works is now presented typically without some of its most beautiful lines is understandable, and perhaps editors might consider including the additional stanza among their notes. Roe is no doubt prepared for the inevitable, and unfair, accusation that some much-loved poems make no appearance here - among them, *The Pedlar* (1798), *Peter Bell* (1798), *Home at Grasmere* (1800), *Benjamin The Waggoner* (1806), and *The Excursion* (1814). Each of these works has their respective fan club, who will no doubt fume at their exclusion. All the same, at just over 300 pages this volume is one of the largest in the Penguin Poetry Library, and given its parameters Roe's selection seems to me unbeatable.

The only major reservation I have about the volume concerns the paucity of its annotation. Roe is one of the best Wordsworthian scholar-critics in the business, and having appointed him as editor of this vital addition to their new Poetry Library Series it seems exceptionally self-defeating that Penguin should have allowed him a mere 28 pages in which to annotate 274 pages of poetry - some of it extremely difficult. Can justice really be done to the *Two-Part Prelude* in just over a page of notes? Presumably Penguin envisage a readership made up largely of those either new or recently acquainted with Wordsworth. If this is so, would it not have been wiser to allow Dr Roe free reign with his annotation, so as to provide a more comprehensive editorial guide? It is hard not to feel that his talents have been straitjacketed by purely economic factors. Perhaps he might be allowed to expand his notes in future editions.

I ought also to mention some extremely minor cavils of a scholarly nature. Two are concerned with statements Roe makes in his Introduction about *The Prelude*. Firstly, he says that, when first composed in 1799, *The Prelude* was 'intended as a preliminary to *The Recluse*'. This is not so; as a number of scholars have observed, Wordsworth regarded *The Prelude* initially as a distraction from *The Recluse*, quite unrelated to it. Not until 1814 did Wordsworth publish the claim on which Roe's statement is based. Secondly, Roe says that *The Prelude* was 'completed at Dove Cottage ... in May 1805'. But this phase of composition continued until at least February 1806, and the poem as a whole continued to evolve for over 30 years during which eleven further versions were produced. This is one of the most striking features of the poem, and deserves to be made clear to readers new to Wordsworth.

I detect also a minor error in the arrangement of the selections. Since the poems are ordered according to dates of composition the 'Genius of Burke' extract from the *Fourteen-Book Prelude* is incorrectly placed at the end of the volume. It was composed in 1832 and should appear between *On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford* (1831) and *Airey-Force Valley* (1835).

It should be emphasized however that these are the smallest of hiccups, and make no dent on the overall usefulness of the volume. Dr Roe is to be congratulated on having provided us with a (relatively) cheap paperback anthology reflecting current scholarship. Not only will it provide novices with a representative introduction, but experts now have a refreshing new perspective on a familiar body of work. It is an ideal gift for anyone susceptible to conversion to the best verse by the poet Seamus Heaney calls 'the Master'.

St Catherine's College, Oxford

DUNCAN WU

Society News and Notes from Members

Future Dates in Our Programme

As advertised in the last *Bulletin*, the 1993 Charles Lamb Birthday Luncheon will take place on Saturday 30 January, when Professor Jonathan Bate will be Guest of Honour.

On 6 March, we regret that Richard S. Tomlinson will not be able to speak to the Society on 'Coleridge's *Opus Maximum*'. We very much hope that he will be able to lecture at some not too distant date. In the meantime, Seamus Perry of St Catherine's College, Oxford, has kindly offered to address us on 'Charles Lamb and the Cost of Seriousness'. We look forward to hearing him speak on this intriguing (indeed slightly mystifying?) topic very much.

Saturday 3 April is 'View the Archive' day at Putney United Reformed Church. Madeline Huxstep reassures timorous readers that 'contrary to popular belief, Putney is easy to reach: fast trains from Waterloo, then bus 337 to the Northumberland Arms (or a pleasant walk across the Common from Barnes Station) will give you a rare opportunity to see our treasures, perhaps buy a book or two, and enjoy a delicious buffet lunch and a convivial drink.' A booking form giving full information is enclosed with this *Bulletin*.

And last, but far from least, Saturday 8 May brings the Society's A.G.M.

Future Plans

As announced in the October 1992 *Bulletin*, one of our 1993 issues will be devoted to William Godwin and the Lamb-Godwin connection. Offers of articles, or suggestions for such, to the Editor please.

Offers of material, ideas for articles and suggested names for speakers will also be welcomed in connection with a topic which Madeline Huxstep has raised, and which has already elicited considerable enthusiasm. We hope to concentrate on Charles Lamb's *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets* in the lecture programme for 1993-4, and to have lecture texts and independent articles featured in the *Bulletin*. Either overviews or narrower studies of Lamb's attitude to individual authors, or themes, will be suitable; so if you have a proposal for material (by yourself or some other writer) which might appear in the *Bulletin*, please contact the Editor. Ideas for lecturers, or offers to speak to the Society will be equally welcome to the Hon. Secretary.

Present and Future Format

The *Bulletin*'s Assistant Editor, Duncan Wu, has masterminded the new typeface and styling which distinguishes the present number. Either he or the Editor will be very pleased to hear from any reader who wishes to comment on the new house style, or has suggestions for future improvements.

HON. SECRETARY'S NOTES

British Library 'Adopt A Book' Scheme

The Society has contributed £200 towards the preservation of a book associated with Charles Lamb. We have 'adopted' an edition of *Tales from Shakespeare* illustrated by W. Mulready, second edition, London 1807. This book needs the full conservation treatment, which will cost £200.

New Dictionary of National Biography

Professor Colin Matthew (St Hugh's College, Oxford) is in charge of this mammoth undertaking. We have asked Duncan Wu, of St Catherine's College, Oxford, to collate our responses. Please contact him if you have a contribution to make.

The East India Company

A visit to South India (including Madras) reminded your Secretary at every turn of Charles Lamb's long employment by the East India Company. How strange that at his desk in Leadenhall Street he should have recorded the cargoes brought safely home - tea, indigo, cottons and silks. Even the sign 'Godown', still used for a warehouse, reminds us of Lamb's times. Charles Lamb would have been conscious of the struggles with Tipu Sultan (regarded in India as a 'freedom fighter') until Tipu's death in 1799.

Two Mysteries

First of all, *The Guardian* for 26.11.1992 reports in a Profile of our latest Heritage Minister, Peter Brooke, that this fortunate gentleman is the current owner not only of Dove Cottage, but also of eighty per cent of the Wordsworth manuscripts still extant, having inherited these from his great-grandfather, the Revd. Stopford Brooke! No doubt the Wordsworth Trust will have leaped in with a correction by now, but any reader who still has a copy of the relevant issue of *The Guardian* lying about the house might like to preserve it as a 'curiosity of literature' second to none! [The Revd. Stopford Brooke was one of the first Trustees of Dove Cottage; whence the confusion, no doubt. Ed.]

Curiosity number two. A few days earlier, and less startlingly, *The Guardian* had printed, in its 'Another Day' section, a letter from Wordsworth to Charles Lamb dated 1816, in which the poet told of how, some years earlier, William Hazlitt had painted rather fearsome portraits of Coleridge and himself. 'My portrait', says Wordsworth firmly, 'has been burnt', and Coleridge's 'is not produceable for fear of fatal consequences to married ladies' [I assume he means it would throw them into premature labour? Ed.] 'But', he goes on, '[it] is kept in a private room, as a special treat for those who may wish to sup upon horrors.'

Perhaps the full story of these remarkable portraits is well known to Wordsworth and Coleridge experts: but those of us who aren't familiar with it would surely find it fun. Would any reader who has the details at his or her fingertips care to oblige?

Oh Clever!

Latest crossword clue: 'Essayist has affinity with innocent little creature.' Answer? 'Lambkin' of course!

Charles Lamb Society Bursary

As reported in the October 1992 Bulletin, the annual Wordsworth Summer Conference at Dove Cottage will take place between 31 July and 14 August 1993. The Charles Lamb Society's Council has again agreed to offer a Bursary of £500 towards attendance at the Conference by a postgraduate student of Romanticism from any institution of higher education within the United Kingdom.

Further information may be obtained from Duncan Wu, St Catherine's College, Oxford OX1 3UJ. Applications should be submitted in writing by Saturday 27 February 1993.

The More We Are Together

The Editor, as is only proper, shares Charles Lamb's views on most important topics, but in spite of coming from a remote region once periodically harried by them, he does not feel our author's wariness towards the Scots! So for the weekend of 20-22 November 1992 he (which means I: I trust that's clear!) ventured over the Forth Bridge (always thrilling) to St Andrews (always beautiful), there to attend a one-day conference organised by our fellow-member and *Bulletin* contributor Nicholas Roe; its theme being 'Romanticism: Work in Progress'. The conference achieved the seemingly impossible by shoehorning ten conference papers, a full-length lecture and a generous amount of eating and drinking into a single morning and afternoon session, without producing any visible signs of physical or mental collapse on the faces of any of the 40 or so participants. But equally memorable, in a somewhat different way, was the preceding evening's dinner party at the home of Nick and Jane Roe, where a small reunion of usually-distant Elians took place, the unofficial guest of honour being the normally furthest-flung Elian of all, Professor Thomas McFarland of Princeton University. Long before the end of an evening of rare hilarity and good fellowship at least one participant had achieved a more vivid understanding than ever before of what an 'immortal dinner' can mean, and just how much warmth of affection must have graced both those classic scenes and the fondly-remembered succession of Charles and Mary Lamb's 'at homes' for their friends.

BARS

No, *not* that sort!

The British Association for Romantic Studies has issued its third *Bars Bulletin and Review*, which is once again so packed with information on the Society's own activities, those of related societies overseas, and conference plans almost worldwide during 1993, that it genuinely enters that narrow category of journals which one thinks of as 'indispensible'. BARS Secretary is Dr Philip Martin, Department of Humanities, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, P.O. Box 220, The Park, Cheltenham GL50 2QP.

But Some Things Never Change ...

When Mary Wedd showed me how the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* should be edited, she ended by handing over a file of illustrations, originally collected by Basil Savage, which could be used to fill up odd half pages at the end of a number. I glanced through them and saw an engraving of Coleridge which I didn't recognise (it was actually copied from a portrait by Matilda Betham). Some instinct made me turn it over, and I found that the back of the picture carried a ghostly impression, in reverse, of what had originally been the page of print which followed. With the help of a mirror we deciphered it, and went off into fits of laughter, but with hindsight I now know that I should have seen our discovery as a portent, or awful warning to myself, and been more humble, for it illustrates the disasters which have overtaken editors in all ages since the printing press was first invented.

Who the editor of the *Cabinet* (second series) was in 1809 no one seems to know. Reference books are silent, and even Mr Claude Prance was unable to help me. But the poor man, who clearly belonged to the Christ's Hospital, Lamb and Coleridge circle, had his troubles. His 'to Correspondents' page begins by confessing that 'the Picture of Mr Kenny [the dramatist, Lamb's friend; it should really be spelled Kenney] could not be prepared in time for the present number.' He picks himself up, however, to crush two would-be contributors by informing the world that 'Mr CAREY's new communication does not suit our publication. The same remark applies to the communications of W. of Gosport.' And he also shows that editorial experience has taught him a necessary degree of wariness by relating how

'An apostrophe to the River Nish, by John Mayne, has been transmitted to us in print. If the contributor of it will assure us that it has not been *published* as well as printed, we shall be glad to give it a place in the *Cabinet*, otherwise not.'

Alas, after this display of professionalism the rest is downhill all the way. 'We are under the necessity of omitting half a sheet in the present number', the editor confesses, adding hopefully that 'it shall be duly made up in our next'. Famous last words those! But the worst is still to come. I quote it verbatim, since comment would be superfluous:

The hurry of preparing the first number of a periodical publication has occasioned the Editor to overlook the following errors in that number of the New Series of the *Cabinet*, and he intreats the reader to correct them with his pen.

P.	P.
32 - 15 from bottom for XXXIII read XXIII	51 - 25 for hradani read Eridani
41 - 6 line for pendent read pendant	65 - ult for ? read !
46 - 16 from bottom, from troplet read tropic	65 - 8 from bottom, for political read poetical
ib. - 20 for overblown read overflown	70 - ult read between tragedy and comedy
ib. - 22 for this read his	ib. - 7 from bottom, for divided read decided
ib. - 28 for se seire poc read te scire hoc	75 - 9 for soso read solo
51 - 5 for hec read nec	80 - 1 for Mrs Eyre read Mr Eyre

HAPPY NEW YEAR, everyone, which is probably more than the editor of the *Cabinet* was having in 1809! I wonder if Charles Lamb saw those errata and chuckled? It seems quite possible.

Postscript: The Editor Says Thanks

Editing the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* is by no means a single-handed concern. If the Editor had to do it alone, each member of the Society might (if lucky) receive a hand-written newsletter (like one of those seventeenth-century predecessors of modern newspapers) about once every ten years or so, which would do little to advance the cause of Elian friendship and good cheer!

To begin with, there are our contributors; and on behalf of earlier Editors as well as Duncan and myself I should like to say 'thank you' to everyone who has provided material of admirable quality and interest for the New Series *Bulletin* and kept its reputation so high these last twenty years. I should also say thanks to our reviewers, who, like the lecturers who allows their talks to be published and all other providers of articles short or long, always give us of their best.

And without the Officers of the Charles Lamb Society, who furnish material for the 'Society News and Notes from Members' section time after time, as do other good friends of the Society, one would be very badly off indeed.

Then comes the production side. Basil Savage tells us how he found his first typist, Miss Stephenson, and Mary Wedd has grateful recollections of the way they worked together in the days of slim *Bulletins* and very great pressure on space. When Miss Stephenson retired, the typing was undertaken by T.S.U. Office Services of Tonbridge, and when I came on the scene I soon discovered that the word 'typing' in relation to the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* also

included the words 'sub editing', for that was, in effect, what Mrs L. Nash of Tonbridge was doing with each number, as she juggled the typescripts together, estimated lengths, and generally worked out which of the 'fillers' and other bits and pieces could go into the final section each time. As an innocent in the world of editing I learned a great deal from Mrs Nash's patient explanations, and the *Bulletin* of that period also owes much to her husband, who used voluntarily (and unpaid) to check the typescripts an extra time before they were sent to me.

With the inauguration of word processing, the typing moved 'in house', and I must repeat my thanks once more to Gill Somerville and the staff of T.S.U. for spotting any number of tricky situations and coping with them so admirably. When I remember how the copy for last October's *Bulletin* went to Tonbridge as a pile of assorted typescripts, some following American conventions, some British, all covered in pencilled notes by me, and with a mass of suggestions concerning what might fit in or act as an alternative, and how the finished product was a joy to read and has earned golden opinions, I can only utter yet another expression of thanks from which the sigh of relief has still not wholly evaporated!

Practical necessity has resulted in some changes of method with the present number, as the altered layouts and appearance of the typeface will indicate. I trust the new arrangements will continue as happily as they have begun; I am filled with admiration for Duncan Wu's expertise in all matters to do with layout; and at the same time I am in no danger of forgetting my numerous debts to generous helpers hitherto.

At Stanhope Press, our excellent printers since 1973, continuity of the most remarkable kind is to be found. Mr Alan Wheeler informs me that in addition to himself, 'my brother Glen, Geoffrey Beard, Jim Langman, Laurel Campbell, and Pat Allwright have all worked on the various issues.' Alan also notes that 'it was not until 8 January 1976 that the price of the *Bulletin* exceeded £100 by £2.76'! That really does make the 1970s suddenly seem far away! Warmest thanks to you all, ladies and gentlemen.

Have I forgotten anyone? I do hope not, as I want to say thank you to everyone involved in the achievement of these last twenty years. So much kindness, so much goodwill, so much generosity of time and spirit. So much evidence of the 'Elian Spirit of friendliness and humour' too. I think Charles Lamb would have been pleased with us. I'm sure Mary would have looked up from her *Waverley Novel* and smiled our way. Happy Anniversary, everyone!

BILL RUDDICK