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"THAT CURSED BARBAULD CREW" or CHARLES LAMB AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The sixth annual Ernest Crowsley Memorial Lecture, given to the Society by Professor George L Barnett on 30 September, 1978.

In the course of his lengthy satirical portrait of his wife, thinly disguised in the character of Donna Inez, mother of the hero in *Don Juan*, Lord Byron views her as a product of the moral tales for children then in fashion:

In short, she was a walking calculation,
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,
Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,
Or "Coelebs' Wife" set out in quest of lovers,
Morality's prim personification,
In which not Envy's self a flaw discovers;
To others' share let "female errors fall,"
For she had not even one - the worst of all.

-I, xvi

Although Byron vainly denied the resemblance, as he had the autobiographical association with Childe Harold, the allusions to Lady Byron, who recognized herself as the original, are unmistakable. In the complete passage they may be exaggerated, but there is a strong probability that she was brought up on morally edifying tales, such as Miss Edgeworth's *Parent's Assistant*, Mrs Trimmer's *History of the Robins*, and Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*.

Byron's hostility to this kind of education was typical of the culminating reaction to the vogue of moralistic and didactic tales for children that existed at the turn of the century. The eighteenth century began and ended with a conflict between the traditional methods of classical education and the utilitarian training advocated by John Locke and his disciples, with the victory ever on the side of the latter. The early eighteenth-century Puritan distrust and fear of anything false, that led Defoe to mask his fiction as memoir, journal, and autobiography, extended to the fairy tale. A manifestation of a deep-rooted sin complex, this dislike rationalized that the fantastic or primitive was inherently noxious and dangerous. So "Jack the Giant Killer" was banished, and concern for children's well-being came to demand a "moral" in anything that might be read to them. At first, a moral summation was added to fairy tales that were permitted and to Aesop's fables, but then, as home educational systems and the growth of education after 1770 crowded out adventure stories in favor of the moral tale, the lesson was interwoven into the narrative. Natural instincts, such as idleness and pride must be controlled; the child was to be recycled into the image of the adult.

Anti-slavery agitation and concern for humanitarian treatment of animals attracted writers before the middle of the century. Poetry of that period reflects a fuller awareness of the abuses of animals and birds than of

the hardships of poor and orphaned children.

Not only moral but also religious and scientific concerns influenced children's education. Isaac Watts, author of *Divine Songs for Children* (1715), was stimulated by religious ideals. After the middle of the century, the awakening interest in scientific matters prompted Miss Edgeworth, Mrs Trimmer, Miss More, and other writers to produce moral tales incorporating natural science. Mrs Trimmer's *An Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature* (1780) illustrates the effort to simplify and popularize general science. So morality, religion, and natural science were injected into the child's mind, and juvenile literature was transformed from "a treasure house of fancy into a repository of useful knowledge."¹ By the fourth quarter of the century, the moral tale was dominant.

Much of this work is more in the nature of the textbook than literature. Indeed, until the middle of the eighteenth century, children's books are not a clear, recognizable branch of English literature. True, poems had been addressed to children - usually children of quality, but the concern is with childhood, not with the individual. Not until the end of the century do we find the child observed as an individual, often through personal recollection. Furthermore, the opprobrium associated with writing fiction that led to the adoption of pseudonyms or the practice of anonymity among authors of adult novels extended to the attitude that it was unworthy to write for children. Nearly all who did so after 1780 expressed apologies in their prefaces.

One important form of narrative did exist for children, and even that had been originally designed for adults - the chapbook. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, children had appropriated them for their own, and, in spite of the disapproval of the educationists, they came to be regarded as belonging exclusively to children. Fairy tales, nursery rhymes, folklore, and ballads formed their substance; not otherwise preserved in print, most of them would have been lost forever had the chapbook not perpetuated them as it persisted throughout the century. "The Children in the Wood," one of the most popular ballads, was regularly produced in chapbook form; the story was carved in the wooden "chimney-piece of the great hall," according to Lamb's memory of Blakesware in the essay "Dream-Children." Other favorites were "Cock Robin," "Bevis of Southampton," "The House that Jack Built," "Mother Hubbard," "Jack and Jill," "The Seven Champions of Christendom," and "Tom Thumb." To this common stock - some from the folk literature of four centuries - were added new popular works of the day, such as "Robinson Crusoe," "The Arabian Nights," "John Gilpin," and "The Adventures of Philip Quarll."

All were crudely adapted by unknown adapters for use by children; poor English, irrelevant illustrations, ugly print, and omission of publication date were characteristic. Productions were often piratical. Before the chapbook died out about 1820, more responsible publishers were using its format with new type, good paper, and new blocks.

With the advent of the Romantic period, interest in the child as an individual and in childhood as a state of existence intensified. The need for education was not in question; the methods were. Interest in natural science had not slackened, but objections were raised to artificial restraints and organizational routines. In their purification and exaltation of childhood, the Romantic poets instinctively objected to disciplinary education and advocated direct observation of nature.

It is in this Romantic spirit that Charles Lamb, in a letter to Coleridge of 1802, vehemently attacked the practice of crowding miscellaneous facts into a child's mind by means of a narrow didacticism:

Goody Two Shoes is almost out of print. Mrs. Barbauld's stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery; & the Shopman at Newbery's hardly deign'd to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf, when Mary ask'd for them. Mrs. B's and Mrs. Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about. Knowledge insignificant & vapid as Mrs. B's books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the *shape of knowledge*, & his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers, when he has learnt, that a Horse is an Animal, & Billy is better than a Horse, & such like: instead of that beautiful Interest in wild tales, which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to Poetry no less in the little walks of Children than with Men. - Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives fables in childhood, you had been crammed with Geography & Natural History? *Damn them*. I mean that cursed Barbauld Crew, those *Blights & Blasts* of all that is *Human* in man & child. - 2

Goody Two-Shoes, referred to by Lamb as almost out of print, was one of the first publications of John Newbery, who founded his establishment in St Paul's Churchyard in 1745, the date of the first edition. An anonymous book, it has been attributed to Goldsmith, although without any evidence except that he and Johnson both wrote for Newbery. E V Lucas rejected the attribution. In any case, it is regarded as the first piece of original English fiction written solely for children. It is a sentimental story of the career of Margery Meanwell, a poor girl who returns good for evil, marries well, ends wealthy, and helps the poor. She and her group serve as a vehicle for the social ideas of rural England from a democratic, conservative point of view. It is interesting to note that Jane Austen owned a copy of the book as a child; she later gave it to her niece Anna.³ One might speculate upon its influence on her social attitudes.

Lamb seems to regard it as belonging to the older sort of juvenile books exhibiting the fanciful qualities he defended. Old it was, but it was closer to the moral tale than Lamb realized - or remembered. Basically, it is the virtue-is-its-own reward type of story. In the words of one authority on children's books, it is "utterly remote from the region of tales and old wives' fables."⁴ Various moral incidents occur, and the reader is told that "the tales of ghosts, witches and fairies are the frolics of a distempered brain."

Just as *Goody Two-Shoes* is remembered as a first, so John Newbery was the first publisher to produce books designed for children. Just as William Lane and the Minerva Press were bywords for the sensational fiction which Mary Lamb devoured from his circulating library, so "Newbery" became synonymous with children's books well before 1800. He held no reasoned theory about them but was a business man who proved that such publications were commercially profitable, thus providing a prime incentive to the growth of that branch of literature. In keeping with the times, he recognized the need to select stories that conveyed a moral; parents would not buy them otherwise. Titles indicate this bias: *A Little Pretty Pocket Book Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy and Pretty Miss Polly* (1744). But, as in *Goody Two-Shoes*, amusement is also

provided. The attempt to please children, as well as to improve them, led Newbery to write many children's books himself.

One reason for his success was the vast improvement of his books over chapbooks. Physically more attractive, using good paper and print, he insisted on plain, respectable English. His collections of nursery rhymes, various versions of fairy tales, and - later - of Eastern tales outshone their chapbook counterparts. The popularity of his productions culminated in the third quarter of the century. When he died in 1767, his son Francis succeeded to the business, which continued producing children's books until 1802, the date of Lamb's letter to Coleridge. Strangely, no other publishers followed Newbery in this area immediately - at least not with his success. John Marshall produced approximately seventy such books, beginning about 1780. And somewhat later, two publishers whose names are associated with Lamb ventured briefly into children's books: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, and Taylor and Hessey. Otherwise, little attempt was made to provide children with reading matter designed especially for them.

Where does "that cursed Barbauld Crew, those *Blights & Blasts* of all that is *Human* in man & child," fit into this history? A member of the Bluestocking coterie and the sister of John Aiken, Mrs Barbauld was, with Mrs Inchbald and Mrs Baldwin,⁵ one of Lamb's three bald women. Having no children of her own, she seems oblivious to the existence of an imagination that longed for something beyond the placid picture of the stable English home. Contemporary events, the newly awakened perception of beauty stirring in poetry, the fanciful world of fairyland were excluded from her writing. Her titles reflect the literal, prosaic quality of their contents: *Early Lessons for Children* (1778), *Lessons for Children, of Three Years Old* (1779), *Lessons for Children* (1780), *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781). In fairness, it must be admitted that in the last-named book she does express the thought that by contemplating nature, a child's thoughts will mount to God, but Lamb's condemnation of her practice of infusing moral instruction in her stories is well founded. Incidentally, on that memorable day when George Dyer forgot to put on his spectacles as he concluded a brief visit to the Lambs and walked out their door into the New River, he was on his way to dine with Mrs Barbauld.

Another Bluestocking writing during the same period was Hannah More, author of *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809), referred to by Byron in our opening quotation. It tells the story of a man's search for a woman who possesses the moral qualities stipulated by his departed parents. "Have you read *Coelebs*?" Lamb questioned Coleridge, "which has reach'd 8 Editions in so many weeks, yet literally it is one of the very poorest sort of common novels with the drawback of dull religion in it. Had the Religion been high and flavor'd, it would have been something. I borrow'd this *Coelebs* in search of a Wife of a very careful neat lady, and return'd it with this stuff written in the beginning

If ever I marry a wife
I'll marry a Landlord's Daughter,
For then I may sit in the Bar
And drink cold Brandy and Water!"⁶

Relinquishing a career as a successful London playwright, Miss More applied her dramatic interests to *Sacred Dramas, Chiefly Intended for Young People* (1782). Other moral works teaching industry, thrift, and content include

Essays on Various Subjects...for young ladies (1777), *Practical Piety* (1811), and *Stories for the Middle Ranks of Society* (1819). William Cobbett called her "the old Bishop in petticoats." Lamb, recounting his and Mary's painful social call on Miss Elizabeth Benger, an acquaintance of Mrs Barbauld, tells how, among other topics introduced by their pedantic hostess, they "discussed Miss More's book /*Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 1799/, which I had never read."⁷

Most explicit in the moral tendency of her stories and in her denunciation of fairy stories was Mrs Sarah Trimmer, the other member of that "cursed Barbauld crew" specifically damned by Lamb. The mother of six sons and six daughters, she was one of those self-appointed guardians of education strongly influenced by the evangelical fervor of Whitefield and the Wesleys. In the very year of Lamb's protest to Coleridge, she founded a periodical, *The Guardian of Education* (1802-1806), with the avowed purpose "to contribute to the preservation of the young and innocent from the dangers which threaten them in the form of infantine and juvenile literature." Earlier, she had written various educational works for elementary and church schools, such as *Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature* (1782) and *The Two Farmers, an Exemplary Tale* (1787), which go to an extreme in their dogmatism.

Among other things, this protagonist of the established church in the nursery explicitly attacked fairy tales, through the medium of her *Guardian*, which was largely self-written. Her reasoning was that they were untrue and unreasonable: "they entertain the imagination rather than improve the heart or cultivate the understanding." *Cinderella* paints the worst passions that can enter into the human heart - envy, jealousy, dislike to mothers-in-law and half sisters, vanity, and love of dress. *Mother Goose* would fill the minds of children with confused notions of wonderful and supernatural events brought about by imaginary beings. Even *Robinson Crusoe*, which had been appropriated by eighteenth-century children, might lead to an early taste for a rambling life and a desire for adventure. Difficult to believe, but pointing up the general agreement of her time, is the fact that Mrs Trimmer's denunciation of fairy stories was supported by a manifesto of the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

Further evidence of the acceptance of Mrs Trimmer's theories lies in the popularity of her best known book, *Fabulous Histories* (1786), later entitled *The History of the Robins: For the Instruction of Children on their treatment of Animals*. The series of stories in the volume is the outstanding example of the moral tale, unabashedly didactic in its intention to convey the consequences of selfishness, disobedience, intolerance. Two editions appeared approximately every three years for a whole generation.

Despite Lamb's distaste for the intrusion of education in juvenile stories, the moral tale was far from the end of its vogue. The child was emancipated from mine and factory before it was emancipated from the moral tale. The implication persisted that a heaven and a hell existed and a child's conduct led inevitably to one or the other; since salvation was difficult, authors attempted to help save the child from the hell. Not much less explicit in their moral tendency than the stories of Mrs Trimmer are the some three hundred tracts and stories of Mrs Mary M Sherwood. To her credit, the qualities of obedience, patience, and the like are recommended implicitly by the situation rather than in an appended summary or monologue. Further,

no matter how far subordinated to the message, the narrative was substantial enough to appeal to the child. Together with a lucid ease of expression, these qualities mark her as the best story teller of the moral fabulists, with the possible exception of Miss Edgeworth.

Mrs Sherwood's strongly marked religious views, stimulated by her church concerns, are evident in her best known work, *The History of the Fairchild Family, or The Child's Manual, being a Collection of Stories calculated to show the Importance and Effects of a Religious Education* (1818-47). John Ruskin's reading included these improving tales, as well, probably, as her *The Infant's Progress from the Valley of Destruction to Everlasting Glory* (1821), one of the many adaptations of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Another of Mrs Sherwood's undertakings was the editing in 1820 of *The Governess* (1749), a novel by Sarah Fielding, sister of the novelist. In the process, Mrs Sherwood extensively revised and practically rewrote the original, going so far in her zeal to realize her theory as to omit two fairy stories.

Perhaps the most highly skilled writer of the many that wrote for children was Miss Maria Edgeworth, known to adult readers as a regional novelist. Sir Walter Scott admired her and expressed the hope that he could emulate her admirable Irish portraits in *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and other works with his comparable Scottish characters in *Waverley* (1814). Her work exhibits dramatic interest, suspense, competent scene depiction, and - in her children's stories - grace and tender humor. The moral didacticism is always clear but never intrusive; it derives from her father, with whom she wrote *Practical Education* (1798). The only reference therein to fiction was the statement that it must be moral. *The Parent's Assistant, or Stories for Children* in six volumes (1796), *Early Lessons* (1801), and *Moral Tales* (1801) are all outstanding examples of the moral tale. A favorite story, "The Purple Jar," tells of the fascination a little girl contracts for a glass jar in an apothecary's show window. At the same time, she realizes the drastic need for a new pair of shoes. Her mother offers to buy one or the other; the child must choose. Deciding on the purple jar, the impetuous girl is distraught to find that when she empties it of its liquid to fill it with fresh water for her flowers, the color disappears. She regrets her choice, and in the month that must elapse before she can have new shoes she is deprived of walking comfortably at home and cannot join others on their outings because she is "ill-shod."

Maria Edgeworth's didactic morality in her tales illustrates her father's system of education, but that system derived from Rousseau's doctrine of naturalism. That doctrine, enunciated in *Emile*, was the immediate influence on one of the most popular manifestations of the moral tale: Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton, A Work Intended for the Use of Children* (1783-89). Through a series of episodes contrasting the rich and obnoxious Tommy Merton with the poor and virtuous Harry Sandford, Day attempts to impose a sounder morality on Rousseau's thesis. Virtue pays, we learn, and man may be made good by appealing to his humanity and his reason.

The shift in attitude toward children from sentimental regard to practical reforms in their interest found its literary expression in the poems of one who played no part in the history of children's books - William Blake. His acceptance of and reverence for childhood formed a step toward Wordsworth's glorification of that state. His *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and other lyrics were written at the time moral tales were at their height, but he almost never moralizes and is thus the only exception to that

practice. But Blake remained generally unknown throughout his life, in spite of developing an innovative method of engraving and holding an exhibition of his work in 1809. Writing to his friend Barton as late as 1824, Lamb assures him that

Blake is a real name...and a most extraordinary man if he be still living...He paints in water colours marvellous strange pictures, visions of his brain, which he asserts that he has seen. They have great merit...I have seen his paintings... His poems have been sold hitherto only in Manuscript. I never read them; but a friend at my desire procured the "Sweep Song." There is one to a tiger, which I have heard recited, beginning:

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright,
Thro' the deserts of the night,

which is glorious, but, alas! I have not the book; for the man is flown, whither I know not - to Hades or a Mad House. But I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age.⁸

Blake's concern was with freedom from institutional restraint. It was the culmination of humanitarianism, spiritual neglect, effects of luxury, and the revolutionary fervor beginning to sweep Europe. Freedom for the child meant freedom from unnatural systems of education promulgated by "that cursed Barbauld crew." The supreme part played by imagination in his own life enabled Blake to *become* as a little child and enter into the child's spirit. Manifesting an ability to use simple, natural language, he achieved a success that has outlived the temporary repute of his moralizing contemporaries.

In the interest of Blake's consistency, it might be well to forget that he had made the drawings for Mary Wollstonecraft's, the first Mrs Godwin's, *Original Stories* (1788), which has indeed been forgotten. Woven around a Mrs Mason, who rears two motherless girls, the series of stories tells of death and insanity resulting from wrongdoing. Blake could hardly have approved of this kind of moral teaching.

The age of revolution saw the child and childhood attaining an importance equal to that displayed in humanitarianism, naturalism, supernaturalism, sentimentalism, and primitivism. Associated with the last was the supreme confidence that came to be placed by Wordsworth and Coleridge in the intuitive wisdom of the child. Like the peasant, he was identified with the natural scene, a harmonious relationship that Rousseau had first perceived. Blake had enveloped the child in a mystical light. Wordsworth defined childhood as a kind of communion with the spiritual in nature that resulted in a natural moral instinct transcending reason and logic. The child became the idealized example of the simple life - the substitute for, or projection of, the noble savage.

The natural extension of this mounting interest in the child led to a concern for his education and his reading. Some writers of the period seem to have viewed education as a prophylactic against the new era. Others, like Wordsworth, regarded it, rather, as a stimulant of that wondrous age. He called attention to the need for universal elementary education. The first sentence of Rousseau's *Contrat social* reads: "Man is born free, and everywhere is in chains"; Wordsworth, "whose favourite school/ Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes" (*Excursion*, II 28-9), urged a minimum of restraint and guidance. He advocated freedom for children and

the communion with nature that he had experienced.

The imagination develops as the child experiences his senses. The formation of this intuitive sensibility is described in the *Prelude*:

For feeling has to him imparted power
That through the growing faculties of sense
Doth like an agent of the one great mind
Create, creator and receiver both,
Working but in alliance with the works
Which it beholds. - Such, verily, is the first
Poetic spirit of our human life,
By uniform control of after years,
In most, abated or suppressed; in some,
Through every change of growth and of decay,
Pre-eminent till death.

-II, 255-65

Strong in childhood, usually diminished in age, the imaginative power is impaired by the artificial social restraints attacked by Rousseau in *Émile*, wherein the child of nature is born free and lives a simple life, at liberty to acquire the sensory impressions that nourish his mental life. Like Lamb, Wordsworth deplored the denial of imagination in the works of "that cursed Barbauld crew," which he denounced with Lamb's own word choice as an "evil." "I rejoice," he writes

...that I was reared
Safe from an evil which these days have laid
Upon the children of the land, a pest
That might have dried me up, body and soul.
This verse is dedicate to Nature's self,
And things that teach as Nature teaches; then,
Oh! where had been the Man, the Poet where,
Where had we been, we two, beloved Friend!
If in the season of unperilous choice,
In lieu of wandering, as we did, through vales
Rich with indigenous produce, open ground
Of Fancy, happy pastures ranged at will,
We had been followed, hourly watched, and noosed,
Each in his several melancholy walk
Stringed like a poor man's heifer at its feed,
Led through the lanes in forlorn servitude;

...

-*Prelude*, V, 224-45

The "beloved Friend" of this passage, as of the entire *Prelude*, is Coleridge, of course, who, as seen earlier, was also in Lamb's mind as an example of an imagination that would have been stifled by reading restricted to moral tales. In a letter to Thomas Poole, Coleridge testifies to the value of fanciful tales in giving unlimited range to his conceptions:

...from my early reading of Faery Tales, and Genii etc etc - my mind had been habituated to the *Vast* - and I never regarded *my senses* in any way as the criteria of my belief, I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions not by my *sight* - even at that age. Should children be permitted to read Romances, and Relations of Giants and Magicians, and Genii? - I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed

my faith in the affirmative. - I know no other way of giving the mind a love of "the Great", and "the Whole."⁹

One practical value that Wordsworth associated with romances and fairy tales lay in the experience it provided to cope with reality. This is illustrated in his recollection of his reaction to seeing the body of a drowning victim recovered from Esthwaite Lake:

...some looked
 In passive expectation from the shore,
 While from a boat others hung o'er the deep,
 Sounding with grappling irons and long poles.
 At last, the dead man, 'mid that beauteous scene
 Of trees and hills and water, bolt upright
 Rose, with his ghastly face, a spectre shape
 Of terror; yet no soul-debasing fear,
 Young as I was, a child not nine years old,
 Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen
 Such sights before, among the shining streams
 Of faery land, the forest of romance.
 Their spirit hallowed the sad spectacle
 With decoration of ideal grace;
 A dignity, a smoothness, like the works
 Of Grecian art, and purest poesy.

-*Prelude*, V, 444-59

In contrast, the "modern system" of education - divested of imaginative reading - may be tried, he says in a tone anticipatory of Byron's sarcasm, "by its fruits":

This model of a child is never known
 To mix in quarrels; that were far beneath
 Its dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er
 As generous as a fountain; selfishness
 May not come near him, nor the little throng
 Of flitting pleasures tempt him from his path;
 The wandering beggars propagate his name,
 Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun,
 And natural or supernatural fear,
 Unless it leap upon him in a dream,
 Touches him not...

...
 A miracle of scientific lore,
 Ships he can guide across the pathless sea,
 And tell you all their cunning; he can read
 The inside of the earth, and spell the stars;
 He knows the policies of foreign lands;
 Can string you names of districts, cities, towns,
 The whole world over, tight as beads of dew
 Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he weighs;
 All things are put to question; he must live
 Knowing that he grows wiser every day
 Or else not live at all, and seeing too
 Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
 Into the dimpling cistern of his heart:
 For this unnatural growth the trainer blame,

Pity the tree. - Poor human vanity,
Went thou extinguished, little would be left
Which he could truly love...

-Prelude, V, 299-331

Finally, we see Wordsworth becoming fervent in specifying the imaginative reading he would reinstate for children:

Oh! give us once again the wishing-cap
Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat
Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,
And Sabra in the forest with St. George!
The child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap
One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

-Prelude, V, 341-46

Protests against the moral tales and pleas for the return of the fairy tale were justified. The authors of the former were not true followers of Rousseau: their didacticism and attempts to change character did not have his sanction, and his philosophy of natural goodness finds little expression in their work. With the renaissance of wonder, the denigrated fairy tale - which had never been completely repressed but had persisted in chapbooks and as oral folk literature - eventually emerged triumphant. William Roscoe's *The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast* (1806-1807) set the fashion, selling 40,000 copies in one year. Sir Richard Phillips compiled *Popular Fairy Tales*, all the best stories, in 1818, also a best seller. By 1823, when Grimm's *Popular Stories* were translated into English, a change in taste from moral stories was evidenced in its immediate popularity.

Although still criticized in some quarters for several more years, children's reading had finally been emancipated from the tyranny of morality and instruction. Like fiction generally, it needed no longer to be justified on grounds of utility; entertainment alone sufficed. By 1860, a reviewer of *The Mill on the Floss* could look back and write: "Her description of the child life is unique. No one has yet ventured to paint the child life in all its prosaic reality. It is true that we have long since got out of the Mrs. Barbauld and Miss Edgeworth groove, in which we had contrasted pictures of the good boy and the bad boy, the girl who was lazy and the child who was active. Then succeeded more careful studies of the child nature... 'George Eliot'...has pictured the boy and the girl life with the most amusing fidelity."¹⁰

But the moral tale had been persistent. As late as 1821, Leigh Hunt made the following comment in his *Examiner*:

We recommend the subjoined passage, taken from an article in the last number of the *London Magazine*, to the consideration of those who seem to think that scarcely any books but the Trimmers', the Hannah Moores', and their numerous dull and trashy imitators, are proper to be read by females on this side of five-and-twenty. The able writer, in giving an account of his visit to "Mackery End in Hertfordshire," introduces us to his amiable kinswoman and companion, and thus speaks of her early education: - "She happily missed all that train of female garniture, which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon

that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion."¹¹

Unlike Wordsworth, who wrote only *about* children and individual children, Charles Lamb and his sister Mary devoted a portion of their writing careers to writing *for* children. His attitude toward contemporary juvenile literature has already been noted. His agreement with Wordsworth's sentiments is evident in his review of *The Excursion*:

If from a familiar observation of the ways of children, and much more from a retrospect of his own mind when a child, he has gathered more reverential notions of that state than fall to the lot of ordinary observers, and, escaping from the dissonant wranglings of men, has tuned his lyre, though but for occasional harmonies, to the milder utterance of that soft age, - his verses shall be censured as infantile by critics who confound poetry 'having children for its subject' with poetry that is 'childish', and who, having themselves perhaps never been *children*, never having possessed the tenderness and docility of that age, know not what the soul of a child is - how apprehensive! how imaginative! how religious!

Lamb's glorification of the child and association of imagination and religion with that state of existence is typical of the Romantics. It is also peculiarly distinctive of Lamb. Speaking of "the child Elia," in "New Year's Eve," he writes: "I know how honest, how courageous (for a weakling) it was - how religious, how imaginative..." The very phrases, coined six years earlier, are repeated. "I was a lonely child," he writes in "Blakesmoor in H----shire," "and...wondered and worshipped everywhere." Such solitude, he explains, "is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration." So Lamb *admired* and wove illusions about his ancestry.

In much the same way that Wordsworth and Coleridge had lamented the passing of "the visionary gleam" and the "shaping spirit of Imagination," keenly felt in childhood, so Lamb protests the passing of its attributes. "Lawyers," he supposes in "Old Benchers of the Inner Temple," "were children once...Why must every thing smack of man, and mannish? Is the world all grown up? Is childhood dead? Or is there not in the bosoms of the wisest and the best some of the child's heart left, to respond to its earliest enchantments?"

One of the enchantments of childhood was the ability to dream - in Lamb's view, a function of the imagination. Stimulated by his fascinated perusal of the vivid picture of the Witch raising up Samuel in Stackhouse's *History of the Bible* - admittedly not a children's book, Lamb recounts how "All day long, while the book was permitted me, I dreamed waking over his delineation, and at night (if I may use so bold an expression) awoke into sleep, and found the vision true." Now, he continues in "Witches and Other Night-Fears":

For the credit of my imagination, I am almost ashamed to say how tame and prosaic my dreams are grown. They are never romantic, seldom even rural.

...
and I have again and again awoke with ineffectual struggles of the inner eye... The poverty of my dreams mortifies me. There is Coleridge, at his will can conjure up icy domes, and pleasure-houses for Kubla Khan, and Abyssinian maids, and songs of Abara, and caverns,

Where Alph, the sacred river, runs,

to solace his night solitudes - when I cannot muster a fiddle. Barry Cornwall has his tritons and his nereids gambolling before him in nocturnal visions, and proclaiming sons born to Neptune - when my stretch of imaginative activity can hardly, in the night season, raise up the ghost of a fish-wife.¹²

Thus, Lamb's nostalgia for his childhood, one of several forms of the past that compelled his muse, was not a simple lament for days gone by but a pensive regret for the loss of the wonder, the imagination, the dream. "Ghost-like, I paced round the haunts of my childhood," he sings in "The Old Familiar Faces." In "New Year's Eve," he admits, "In a degree beneath manhood, it is my infirmity to look back upon those early days." Somehow, Charles and Mary escaped the stultifying moral tales that flourished in those early days. Perhaps the wise supervision of their mother was responsible, as in the case of Wordsworth, who gives credit to "My honoured Mother, she who was the heart/ And hinge of all our learnings and our loves." Perhaps Samuel Salt's generosity in permitting them to browse at will among his books played a part.

But even if Lamb had been subjected to stories of moral utility, it is somewhat less than certain that he would have taken the lessons aright. "When a child," he writes in "All Fool's Day"

with child-like apprehensions, that dived not below the surface of the matter, I read those *Parables* - not guessing at their involved wisdom - I had more yearnings towards that simple architect, that built his house upon the sand, than I entertained for his more cautious neighbour; I grudged at the hard censure pronounced upon the quiet soul that kept his talent; and - prizing their simplicity beyond the more provident, and, to my apprehension, somewhat *unfeminine* wariness of their competitors - I felt a kindliness, that almost amounted to a *tendre*, for those five thoughtless virgins. - I have never made an acquaintance since, that lasted; or a friendship, that answered; with any that had not some tincture of the absurd in their characters. I venerate an honest obliquity of understanding.

The loneliness of childhood as a stimulus to the imaginative turn of mind has its parallel in the restricted society of Christ's Hospital, where Lamb was further molded. In "Recollections of Christ's Hospital," he ascribes to the Blue-coat boy not only "an over-belief in matters of religion," but

a turn for romance above most other boys. This is to be traced in the same manner to their excess of society with each other, and defect of mingling with the world. Hence the peculiar avidity with which such books as the Arabian Nights Entertainments, and others of a still wilder cast, are, or at least were in my time, sought for by the boys. I remember when some half-dozen of them set off from school, without map, card, or compass, on a serious expedition to find out *Philip Quarll's Island*.

A modern student of Coleridge takes the view that it was the perennial hunger that afflicted the Christ's Hospital boys that was responsible for stimulating the imagination. He quotes Coleridge: "My whole being was...to crumple myself up in a sunny corner and read, read, read - fancy myself on Robinson Crusoe's Island, finding a mountain of plum-cake, and eating a room for myself, and then eating it into the shape of tables and chairs -

hunger and fancy!¹³

Whether parental direction, unrestricted reading, loneliness as a child, or the close or hungry society of Christ's was responsible, Lamb's identification with the child engendered a love, a respect, and an understanding beyond the ordinary. Even while he is engaged in writing, the noises of children outside his window "inexpressibly take from the labour of my task. It is like writing to music. They seem to modulate my periods. They ought at least to do so - for in the voice of that tender age there is a kind of poetry..." ("The Old and the New Schoolmaster"). Again, he finds that "the form...of the benediction before eating has its beauty at a poor man's table, or at the simple and unprovocative repasts of children. It is here that the grace becomes exceedingly graceful" ("Grace before Meat"). Aside from generalizations, he regarded children, not in the abstract, but as individuals: "I know that a sweet child is the sweetest thing in nature," he writes. "But children have a real character and an essential being of themselves: they are amiable or unamiable *per se*...A child's nature is too serious a thing to admit of its being regarded as a mere appendage to another being, and to be loved or hated accordingly: they stand with me upon their own stock, as much as men and women do" ("A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People").

Lamb knew from experience the importance of imagination in the child's life, and his regret for a child brought up in a poor family is not only that it is "transformed betimes into a premature reflecting person", but that "It was never sung to - no one ever told to it a tale of the nursery...It had no young dreams" ("That Home is Home though it is Never so Homely"). "Children," he wrote, "love to listen to stories, about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditional great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw" ("Dream-Children"). Adult explanations, he alleged, "crush the faculty of delight and wonder in children...We take them to the source of the Nile, and shew them the scanty runnings, instead of letting the beginnings of that seven-fold stream remain in impenetrable darkness, a mysterious question of wonderment and delight to ages" ("Play-House Memoranda").

Lamb had experienced that same "wonderment and delight," and it had not been crushed by the futile efforts of his Christ's Hospital band "to trace the current of the New River...to its scaturient source..." ("Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago"; see also "Amicus Redivivus").

On one point in regard to the influence of imaginative reading, Lamb seems to differ from Wordsworth, who found that romances prepared him for reality. Lamb felt that stereotyped romantic pictures of evil served to prejudice us against an impartial judgment of reality:

The tales of our nursery, - the reading of our youth, - the ill-looking man that was hired by the Uncle to dispatch the Children in the Wood, - the grim ruffians who smothered the babes in the Tower, - the black and beetle-browed assassin of Mrs. Ratcliffe, - the shag-haired villain of Mr. Monk Lewis, - the Tarquin tread, and mill-stone dropping eyes, of Murder in Shakespeare, - the exaggerations of picture and of poetry, - what we have read and what we have dreamed of, - rise up and crowd in upon us such eye-scaring portraits of the man of blood, that our pen is absolutely forestalled... The fiction is blameless, it is accordant with those wise prejudices with which nature has guarded our innocence, as with impassable barriers, against the commission of such appalling

crimes ("On the Danger of Confounding Moral with Personal Deformity").

"Had I a little son," Lamb wrote wistfully after his retirement, "I would christen him *Nothing-to-Do*; he should do nothing" ("The Superannuated Man"). Perhaps it is as well that Lamb never had a son although one can imagine what a delightful and loving father he would have been. His and Mary's adoption of Emma Isola in 1823 testifies to his love of children, and her life testifies to their practical ability to discharge their responsibility. Beyond this experience, the practical application of their theories on children's reading lies in the handful of works they wrote to be published in the Godwins' Juvenile Library.

William Godwin is known to have favored children's books that promulgated imagination rather than knowledge, but Mrs Godwin, his second wife, who dominated the business and tried to bolster the sagging family finances, was more strongly motivated by commercial considerations than by personal theories. Disliked personally by Lamb - who called her the "bad baby" - as well as by others, it was she who approached the Lambs and solicited their efforts. I submit that it was Mrs Godwin who was responsible for the moral didacticism that, in contrast to Lamb's professed beliefs, figures strongly in some of their works, which are not, consequently, the practical answer to contemporary children's books that they might otherwise have been. Lamb's venture into children's books was motivated in part by hope of profit. "I must do something for money," he wrote Coleridge, and revealed the constraint under which they wrote by a reference to *Poetry for Children* as "task-work...by an old Bachelor and an old Maid."¹⁴ Again, writing to Wordsworth, he says of *Tales from Shakespear*: "You will forgive the plates, when I tell you that they were left to the direction of Godwin, who left the choice of subjects to the *bad baby*..."¹⁵

In spite of Mrs Godwin's predilections, Lamb, the most illustrious author who wrote for children, managed to compromise. Some books have no moral expressed or implied: *The King and Queen of Hearts* (1806) is one such. Aside from the subtitle, *Prince Dorus, or Flattery Put Out of Countenance* (1811) is not blatantly moralistic; including an enchanter and a fairy, the story tells how the Prince's "nose of monstrous length, to his surprise, / Shrunk to the limits of a common size" only after its owner confessed the "painful truth, which Flattery long conceal'd." The three stories written by Charles for *Mrs. Leicester's School* (1809) attain real imaginative power, free of any explicit moralizing. The moral of *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808) is suggested only in the Preface, which speaks of "a brave man struggling with adversity," a "wise fortitude," and his "inimitable presence of mind under difficulties." Its importance lies in the fact that it was the first time since the translation of Plutarch into English that anyone had introduced a great figure of classical literature to the consciousness of children.

Poetry for Children (1809), that piece of "task-work" possibly written to order, is pervaded with the implication of the traditional moral tale that the child must be helped to escape the evils and find the bliss that are ever vying for his attention. The obvious intent of the poems, of which Charles wrote a third, was to inculcate such admirable traits as charity, faith, neatness, docility, tolerance, and generosity. One example will suffice:

Neatness in Apparel

In your garb, and outward clothing
 A reserved plainness use;
 By their neatness more distinguish'd
 Than the brightness of their hues.

All the colours in the rainbow
 Serve to spread the peacock's train;
 Half the lustre of his feathers
 Would turn twenty coxcombs vain.

Yet the swan that swims in river,
 Pleases the judicious sight;
 Who, of brighter colours heedless,
 Trusts alone to simple white.

Yet all other hues, compared
 With his whiteness, show amiss;
 And the peacock's coat of colours
 Like a fool's coat looks by his.

Lamb's children's books, then, are not entirely consistent with his theory opposing moral didacticism. Expediency required concession. While they exhibited a prettiness, a dramatic dimension stemming from dialogue, a nostalgic charm, a variety of metrical patterns, and a number of subjects - the only feature Lamb commended to Coleridge, neither Charles nor Mary succeeded as Blake had done in becoming a child and entering the child's spirit. This absence of inspiration is reflected in the fact that, with one exception, their books were received without enthusiasm; no second edition of *Poetry for Children* was called for.

The exception calls out for notice, the collaboration on *Tales from Shakespear, Designed for the Use of Young Persons* (1807). Aside from the wisdom inherent in the plays, no moral purpose is discernible here. The congeniality of the work is reflected in its immediate and continued popularity. The *Critical Review* called it "essentially valuable" and compared the tales with *Robinson Crusoe* for their appeal to all ages of readers. It continued:

We have compared it with many of the numerous systems which have been devised for rivetting attention at an early age, and insinuating knowledge subtly and pleasantly into minds, by nature averse from it. The result of the comparison is not so much that it rises high in the list, as that it claims the very first place, and stands unique, and without rival or competitor... In these times of empiricism and system building, the world has been too credulous to the profession of old women of both sexes, who hold the reins of government over the education of children. We have grown so very good of late, that none but devotional books or moral tales, as they are called, are entrusted into the hands of our children. The former teach all the cant, without any of the mild spirit of religion; the latter, all the cold austerity, without any of the amiable urbanity of virtue. They both in general represent some one little being, who has committed an error in the wildness of youth, some unlucky child, as an object for the eternal abhorrence and persecution of what are called the upright and pious. Their morality and religion tend alike to give a child of good disposition a distaste for both; or, if he be a convert, to render him

an unforgiving hypocrite. We will not scruple to say, that these little volumes are more calculated to conquer the distaste in children for learning, than any, excepting the excellent work of De Foe above mentioned which have yet appeared; that in suppressing the bad passions "envy, hatred, and malice," and in humanizing and correcting the heart, they will effect more than all the cant that ever was canted by Mrs. Trimmer and Co. in all their most canting and lethargic moments.¹⁶

So Lamb's excursion into juvenile literature was not without one signal success, but the greater value of his children's books lies in the experience itself, which crystallized his consciousness of the distinctive attributes of childhood. With this sharpened awareness of the child's perception and imagination, the essays of Elia are the beneficiary. Without the infusion of the dream and the imaginative vision that supplement his natural inclination toward nostalgia for childhood, they would not possess that magical charm that holds us fascinated. Lamb came to apprehend a world removed from adult complacency and to share with Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge the Romantic glorification of childhood.

So strong was the appeal of youth as to appear a weakness to him. Writing of his character in the "Preface" to the *Last Essays*, he says:

He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The *toga virilis* never sate gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses; but such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.

Children figure prominently in Lamb's essays as a vital aspect of his predilection for the past, which produces, in its conflict with the present, that wonderful dramatic tension pervading his writing. They are also essential to the reflection of his fancy, his imagination, on which the essays depend. Far from being a weakness, Lamb's lifelong sympathetic affinity with childhood enabled him to recollect the "mysterious pleasure it was to witness /the chimney-sweeper's/ operation! to see a chit no bigger than one's-self enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the *fauces Averni* - to pursue him in imagination..." It enabled him to recreate the autobiographical dreams so vividly described in "Witches, and Other Night-Fears," which Geoffrey Tillotson calls "the best extended account in our literature of child psychology...that exists before Dickens." "Lamb," he affirms, "is one of the first writers to discover the child's psyche as a substantial matter for literature."¹⁷

Not only "Witches, and Other Night-Fears" but also many other essays display the imagination - that "poor plastic power" that Elia laments. "Only a lover of children could have created the 'tender novices' of 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers,' the 'young maiden' of 'Valentine's Day,' the eleven-year-old girl of 'Barbara S____,' the 'angelet' of 'The Child Angel: A Dream,' and the little Alice and John of 'Dream-Children.'"¹⁸

The author of a recent essay entitled "Images of Eden in the Essays of Elia" distinguished two contrary responses to the condition of modern man in Romanticism: the desire to find a place of rest and the zeal to explore new worlds. He suggests that the essays of Elia belong to the first category

and offer a substitute for the lost paradise, a temporary solace for those who still yearn for the innocence of childhood.¹⁹ The conclusion of "Old Benchers of the Inner Temple" permits Charles Lamb to speak for himself - as no one else could:

Let the dreams of classic idolatry perish, - extinct be the fairies and fairy trumpery of legendary fabling, - in the heart of childhood, there will, for ever, spring up a well of innocent or wholesome superstition - the seeds of exaggeration will be busy there, and vital - from every-day forms educing the unknown and the uncommon. In that little Goshen there will be light when the grown world flounders about in the darkness of sense and materiality. While childhood, and while dreams, reducing childhood, shall be left, imagination shall not have spread her holy wings totally to fly the earth.

Footnotes

- 1 Richard D Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago, 1963), p.138.
- 2 23 October 1802. *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb*, ed. Edwin W Marrs, Jr, II (Ithaca and London, 1976), 81-2.
- 3 Basil Savage, "Jane Austen Bicentenary Exhibition," *CLB*, n.s., no.14 (April, 1976), p.124.
- 4 Frederick J Darton, *Children's Books in England* (Cambridge, 1932), p.131.
- 5 Godwin's own juvenile books were issued under the pseudonym "Edward Baldwin" to avoid the stigma attached to the radical thinker.
- 6 7 June 1809/10. *The Letters of Charles Lamb: To Which Are Added Those of His Sister Mary Lamb*, ed. E V Lucas (London and New York, 1935), II, 75.
- 7 16 or 17 April 1800. Marrs, I, 199.
- 8 15 May 1824. Lucas, II, 424-25.
- 9 16 Oct. 1797. *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl L Griggs (Oxford, 1966), I, 354.
- 10 Eneas S Delles, "The Mill on the Floss," *The Times* (19 May 1860), pp. 10-11
- 11 *Examiner*, XIV (15 July 1821), 446.
- 12 In a letter to Thomas Poole, Coleridge relates a similar experience of being distraught by childhood books and associating his experience with dreaming: "At six years old I remember to have read Belisarius, Robinson Crusoe, and Philip Quarle - and then I found the Arabian Nights entertainments - one tale of which (the tale of a man who was compelled to seek for a pure virgin) made so deep an impression on me ...that I was haunted by spectres, whenever I was in the dark... So I became a *dreamer*..." - 9 Oct. 1797. Griggs, I, 208.
- 13 Quoted from James Gillman, *Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1838), p.20, by John Beer, "Ice and Spring: Coleridge's Imaginative Education," in *Coleridge's Variety: Bicentenary Studies*, ed. John Beer (Pittsburgh, 1974), p.57.

- 14 June, 1809. Lucas, II, 74-5.
 15 29 Jan. 1807. Lucas, II, 256.
 16 *Critical Review*, XI, n.s. (May, 1807), 97-99.
 17 "The Historical Importance of Certain Essays of Elia," *Some British Romantics: A Collection of Essays*, ed. James Logan (Columbus, Ohio, 1966), p.96.
 18 George L Barnett, *Charles Lamb* (Twayne Publishers; G K Hall, Boston, 1976), p.107.
 19 James Scoggins, "Images of Eden in the *Essays of Elia*," *JEGP*, LXXI (1972), 198-210.

OBITUARY (Reproduced from *The Times* by permission)

PROFESSOR BASIL WILLEY

Contribution to the study of English thought

Professor Basil Willey, King Edward VII Professor of English Literature in the University of Cambridge from 1946 to 1964, died on September 3 at the age of 81.

Basil Willey, son of William Herbert Willey, was born on July 25, 1897. From University College School, Hampstead, he won a scholarship in history at Peterhouse, Cambridge, in 1915, but like others of his generation he donned a subaltern's uniform instead of a scholar's gown and served with the West Yorkshire Regiment from 1916 to the end of the war. His experiences in the Army are vividly recorded in his first volume of autobiography, *Spots of Time 1897-1920*. Having taken a first in History in 1920, he moved on to the newly-established English Tripos in the following year and was placed in the first class with Gerald Bullett, Edward Davison and F.R.Leavis. He won the Le Bas prize for an essay on Renaissance Literary Theory and was appointed a University Lecturer in 1923. At that time many colleges still regarded the English Tripos with some distrust and were slow to make fellowship elections in the subject. In 1935, however, Pembroke, sadly bereft of the brilliant Aubrey Attwater, elected Willey to a fellowship and there like Thomas Gray before him, he found friends and happiness.

Outside the University, Willey was not widely known until in 1934 he published *The Seventeenth Century Background*. This book, which was to become virtually required reading for degree and sixth form courses in the following thirty years, was based on lectures which were, in fact, the outcome of Quiller-Couch's insistence on the "English Moralists" as a Tripos subject. Willey made this part of the Tripos peculiarly his own and in a characteristically modest preface apologised for trespassing beyond the supposed limits of "literary" criticism. What he was primarily concerned to do was to show how poetry and religion were affected by contemporary "climates of opinion" and his study of the background of ideas against which men of the seventeenth century lived was recognized at once as original in design and fascinating in treatment. The final chapter of the book "Postscript: On Wordsworth and the Locke Tradition" was significant. Wordsworth was a poet who made his poetry "out of the direct dealings of his mind and heart with a visible universe" and it was with Wordsworth's poetry that Willey developed a permanent and vital sympathy. Encouraged by the success of his first book, he went on to treat of *The*

Eighteenth Century Background (1940) of which the central theme was the "divinization of Nature" which culminates in Wordsworth. This was followed by two volumes of *Nineteenth Century Studies* (1949 and 1956), the second of which dealt with "a group of honest doubters".

Meanwhile in 1946 Willey's contribution to the study and interpretation of English thought had been recognized by his election to the King Edward VII Professorship of English Literature in succession to Quiller-Couch and his inaugural lecture (*The "Q" Tradition*) was at once a spirited defence of the Cambridge school of English and a tribute of genuine affection to his predecessor. Before his elevation to the professoriate, one thought of Basil Willey as essentially a private person; but when in his own words, he had recovered from the shock of surprise at his appointment, he quickly recognized that he had public duties. In 1946 he delivered the Warton Lecture, being elected a Fellow of the British Academy the following year. He was visiting professor at Columbia in 1948-49 and at Cornell in 1953. For 12 years he was chairman of the Dove Cottage Trustees.

All this outside activity did not weaken his attachment to his own university and his own college. In the English Faculty, where he had often to grapple with controversy, his efforts were always directed towards peace-making. In Pembroke he seldom missed a college meeting, and was elected President (Vice-Master) of the college in 1958 and an Honorary Fellow in 1964, both distinctions which gave him great pleasure.

Fundamentally he was a religious man. A Wesleyan himself, he approached the problems of Christianity with an open mind and an open heart. When he was invited to deliver a set of open lectures in the Faculty of Divinity he took as his subject *Christianity, Past and Present*, and with complete sincerity confessed his doubts as well as his beliefs. He gave valued advice to the translators of the *New English Bible*, of which (with characteristic generosity) he presented a finely-bound copy for use in Pembroke chapel.

In his retirement he remained active, publishing two volumes of autobiography (the account of his early years in *Spots of Time* being of particular interest), visiting his cottage in the Lake District, entertaining his children and grandchildren, and indulging his lifelong love of music. As his bodily strength waned he was supported, as he had always been, by the devotion of his wife, Zélie Murlis Ricks, whom he had married in 1923 and by whom he had two sons and two daughters.

Professor Willey had been a member of the Charles Lamb Society since 1950 and a Vice-President since 1951. He was Guest of Honour at the Birthday Celebrations in 1948 and 1962 and he gave the first Ernest Crowsley Memorial Lecture in 1972. Members will remember him not only for his academic distinction but also for his personal kindness - answers to letters from the Editor by return of post and in his own hand - and for the active and generous interest he took in the Society.

NEWS

We had great pleasure this year in welcoming Professor George Barnett and Mrs Barnett, most fortunately over here from Indiana on a visit, to our meeting on September 30th, when we very much enjoyed hearing Professor Barnett deliver the Crowsley Memorial Lecture. We are happy to be able to print this in full here.

Particular thanks are due to Miss Ezard, in whose debt we *always* are, for managing to get the last Bulletin out early so that members were informed in time of the fact that Professor Barnett would be the lecturer on that day.

The second part of Mr Prance's article, as well as some outstanding book reviews, will be held over till our next issue.

CONGRATULATIONS to Mr A M Davidson on winning the first prize for a poem in a competition set by the Scots Language Society. It was in the Doric of the north-east of Scotland - the title in English would be *The Tinker's Whistle*. Mr Davidson has also composed several songs, as members of the Dramatic Group will recall with pleasure.

Will members please note that the date of the Annual General Meeting on the new Programme should read 5 May, the Saturday, *not* 3 May.

THE ANNUAL BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

The Birthday Luncheon falls this year on the birth-date itself, February 10th. It will be held at Simpsons-in-the-Strand at 12 o'clock for 1 o'clock. Tickets will cost £6 and can be obtained from Miss Reeves, Flat 3 24 Elsworthy Road, London, NW3 3DL. The Guest-Speaker at the Luncheon will be Mr C R Watters, Head of English at Christ's Hospital and author of *Coleridge* in the Literature in Perspective Series.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS for 1979

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 1979 fall due on 1 January. The rates of subscription for 1979 are as follows:

Corporate Members Overseas	\$10
Other Corporate Members	£5
Individual Members - London	£2.50 (doubles £3)
- Provincial	£1.50 (doubles £2)
- Overseas	\$5

Unfortunately our expenses have risen very substantially in the last year, due to inflation, so may we ask again that any members who feel they can would generously add some small donation to their normal subscription? We were most grateful for kind help given in this way last year.

If it is convenient, members ordering tickets may include in their cheques sent to Miss Reeves for the Luncheon the amount of their annual subscription, but *not* unless they are ordering tickets please. Otherwise, subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, The Charles Lamb Society, 28 Park Drive, Rustington, Sussex BN16 3DY.

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs A M Lonsdale, Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane, Oxford
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