

THE CHARLES LAMB BULLETIN

The Journal of the Charles Lamb Society

NEW SERIES No. 7

July 1974

SOUTHEY AND SOMERSET

Berta Lawrence

By inclination and by heredity Southey was a Somerset man. In 1836 he set out with his son Cuthbert on a farewell tour of West Country places once familiar to him, and the weekly newspaper called *The Somerset County Herald* announced: "The celebrated poet Southey is at present on a visit to his friend Thos. Poole Esq. at Nether Stowey near Bridgwater. We are glad to hear that the worthy bard is in excellent health." Southey himself wrote at the start of this tour "It is much my wish to show Cuthbert the scenes of my boyhood and youth," adding later that "while for Cuthbert the tour was pure pleasure" it was for himself an occasion of mingled pain and enjoyment. He recorded his dislike of the Cornish countryside, his opinion that Dorset was a hideous county, and his belief that even Devon had been over-praised, except for its rivers and the "clouted cream" that both he and Coleridge consumed in quantities in Somerset as well as Devon, - because "many of its visitors had slipt through Somersetshire, the county of real beauty."

Cuthbert, it may be noted here, became in the 1860's Vicar of Kingsbury Episcopi, a village situated about five miles west of Ilchester. The splendidly ornate church-tower nearly 100-foot high dominates acres of well-watered land that for many years was dedicated to cultivation of a crop now declining, the green withies, or osiers, for the Somerset basketmakers.

Southey's grandfather who belonged to a family of prosperous clothiers in Wellington, Somerset, settled at a farm in Lydeard St Lawrence, a small remote village under the Quantock Hills. This farm now called Holford Farm was situated in an isolated hamlet called Holford which consisted of three farmhouses and must not be confused with the Quantock village of Holford on the other side of the range where Wordsworth came to live at Alfoxden in 1797. The Southey farm is still approached by hedged and winding lanes filled with cow-parsley, red campions and ferns and where houses have not encroached. In the village proper the sandstone church dedicated to St Lawrence retains, in spite of renovation, the boldly-carved capitals - one with a fox and goose - to its pillars, the carved and painted screen whose colours have faded, both no doubt familiar to the Southeys. Its musicians' gallery has gone. But neither the church nor its churchyard opening on pastures of grazing cattle displays any memorials to the Southeys of Holford Farm. Southey's father always remained homesick for these Somerset places and painted a hare for his sign on the window of his draper's shop in Wine Street, Bristol, where Robert Southey was born. In London the sight of a dead hare had reminded Southey's father of Somerset meadows. Southey's Uncle John was a prosperous lawyer in the county town of Taunton, but showed no desire to help his unsuccessful brother when the youthful Robert paid him a visit with this hope in mind.

There is little evidence that young Southey found his way through the straggling Lydeard St Lawrence lanes to visit his grandfather's farm, yet he would not have needed to go many miles out of his way when he visited

his Aunt Mary in 1799. She lived in the Quantock village of Bishop's Lydeard where the oldest houses, cottages, almshouses, inns are built of the red sandstone quarried in the Quantocks and have weathered to a warm pink like the walls enclosing gardens and churchyard. The soaring, pinnacled, church-tower of red sandstone is one of the most beautiful in the county. On an August morning in 1799 Southey called at his aunt's for breakfast and then journeyed seven miles to Nether Stowey to visit Coleridge, lately returned from Germany, and their friend Tom Poole. He crossed the Quantocks by way of the tiny red-sandstone village of Cothelstone (misspelt Cutherstone in his *Commonplace Book* when he tells a tale of a foxhunt) where he passed the manor-house - then half in ruins - and its gatehouse with shell-shaped niches standing close to the road, and climbed between high banks of beeches to the top of Cothelstone Hill that is crowned by a folly-tower, then fairly new, and makes a viewpoint for a sweep of landscape embracing parts of several counties.

The *Ballads and English Eclogues* which are the most spontaneous of his poems and which he wrote during the happiest period of his life, his early married years spent at Westbury-on-Trym, near Bristol, reflect to a considerable degree both Somerset scene and character as entries in his *Commonplace Book* confirm. Before writing "The Old Mansion House" in which an old village labourer laments the changes a young heir has inflicted on an ancestral home, he wrote in his *Commonplace Book* that he might base his poem on "the fine old house at Stowey" and include such features as the ancient yews in its courtyard, its casement windows, its jessamine-wreathed porch. All these are the ravaged features of the renovated house in the poem, and the house he had in mind was undoubtedly the house called Stowey Court that he saw every time he visited Tom Poole. It stands there still, a mellowed and attractive Tudor manor-house behind a garden wall topped by a yew hedge and a gazebo; the winding road in front of it (A39) recently became a busy by-pass that siphons off the traffic which menaced Coleridge's old cottage (National Trust) and its fellows in narrow Lime Street, the cottage where Coleridge wrote "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison" during Charles Lamb's visit and where he and Sothey jointly composed "The Devil's Thoughts" at the breakfast-table.

"The Grandmother's Tale" has for its central figure an old woman who relates to her enthralled grandchildren the ghoulish story of a cut-throat smuggler who murdered a very poor, uncouth mannish "collier-woman" from the village of Pill. Travelling round with a train of asses this woman named Moll Bees (according to the *Commonplace Book**) sold coals from the Somerset pits to householders and on bitter winter nights was glad to sleep on straw in a customer's stable with her asses. Here she was found murdered. Pill is in the parish of Easton-in-Gordano and not very far from Avonmouth. It has always been a distinctive little place with salt-smelling air. It lay on a tidal creek of the Avon, its place-name being the Somerset word for "creek" up to the present day. The railway destroyed the creek where for centuries the cutters had lain waiting to hurry out, competitively, to a merchantman, for Pill's inhabitants were a confraternity of pilots who guided ships up the Avon to Bristol or out into the Bristol Channel. Cabot had used one of their number. At one point in their history they meted out rough justice to three captured pirates by hanging them upside down on posts in the creek and leaving them for the tide to drown. In his *Commonplace Book* Southey describes with a fidelity almost equal to Dorothy Wordsworth's the passage of a rainbow

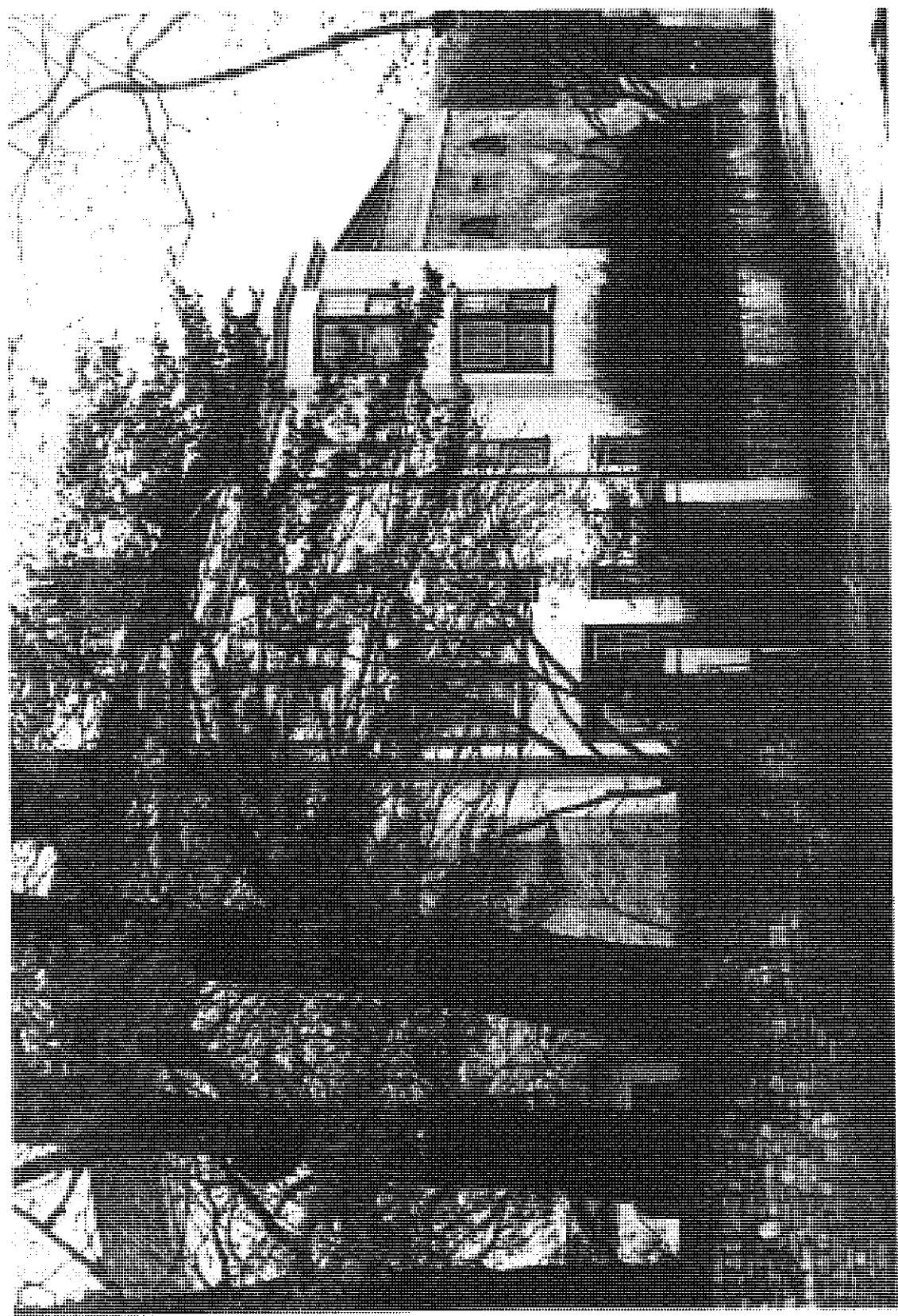
*Bees is still a Somerset surname

moving with the clouds from a point over the sham Walton Castle built on a hill-slope (Walton-in-Gordano) and throwing its colours on the white church at Pill, probably the ruined medieval chapel.

Two separate passages in the *Commonplace Book* point out a brave red hollyhock flaunting among the nettles of a garden of a ruined cottage in the glen below Kingsweston Hill in the same part of Somerset - although not far from Westbury-on-Trym in Gloucestershire that is now an outlying part of Bristol. This garden, this dwelling and the lovely "fallen" girl who once lived there with her grandmother and who drew the eyes of all the youths loitering on the bridge when she passed them on Sunday - a subject Wordsworth could have chosen - are transferred to Southey's poem "The Ruined Cottage" in which the pious grandmother crossing fields to church however cold or snowy the weather in marked contrast to a boy going reluctantly to church and complaining of the cold, is a miniature portrait of Southey's beloved grandmother Hill walking the field-path to St John's Church from the orchard of her Bedminster house that the child Southey loved intensely as the place "where the happiest days of my childhood were spent" although Bedminster itself, now part of Bristol but at that time a Somerset village, was growing ugly and crowded because of the coal-pits developing in its meadows. Southey's poem "The Cross Roads" is based on the story of "a poor parish girl who came up from the west", was betrayed, committed suicide, and was buried at a cross-roads where a nightingale sang near her unhallowed grave. This happened in Bedminster in 1760 and possibly was one of the old tales told to the eight year old Southey by his eccentric uncle William Tyler (his mother's half-brother) who was a repository of Somerset lore and legends - he frequented humble people and never learned to read. Uncle William occupied a garret when he, too, lived at the Bedminster house, yet the house had wainscotted rooms, a "best kitchen" with cherrywood furniture, a yellow room, a green room, a forecourt and a garden both full of fruit-trees and flowers among which bloomed the frail and short-lived evening primrose that Grandmother Hill called mortality. In 1836 Southey revisited this haunt of his childhood, a misguided action as, like many elderly people, he discovered. It had been sold in 1788. He asked stranger-occupants to let him see the orchard trees the boy Southey had climbed, for this house provided the free physical activity he never enjoyed elsewhere; he noted and lamented such "improvements" as bow windows and a small gazebo in the roof and went away saddened because only an old aunt shared his memories of his grandmother's house by the Malago brook. "Bedminster - there is no place in the world I remember with such feelings as that village", he wrote. The house he re-visited in 1836 stood, still charming to look at, in the busy Bedminster of 1936 and even later the field-path from a stile could be traced.

He recorded also his love and attachment for the Somerset home, not far from Bedminster, of his grandmother's relatives. These Hills lived and farmed at Ashton - now called Long Ashton - a fertile vale renowned for its pastures, dairies, strawberry-gardens and cream-and-strawberry picnics. (It became a well-known centre for agricultural research.) One of Southey's sonnets commemorates this place. Here as at Bedminster, "it was quite a different world from that I lived in at other times...here I had wholesome liberty...learnt to take delight in rural sights and sounds." His father's grave is in Ashton churchyard.

From Bedminster and Ashton he roved afield with a servant-boy who was the only familiar companion of his own age that he ever found, for circumstances



made of him a solitary child and, as is well-known, a man too overwhelmingly bookish to excel as a lyric poet. The two boys roamed the banks of the Avon, referred to in several early poems, and on the heights of St Vincent's Rocks above the river, used now by rock-climbers, among woods, rocks and caverns, watching the merchant-vessels glide along far below them, seeking out the bee-orchis, picking violets and cowslips, up-rooting primroses to plant in pots. When in 1844 Wordsworth subscribed to Southey's memorial in Bristol Cathedral, he said that he would have preferred to see it set in some wooded place near St Vincent's Rocks.

Most personal, most poignant, as well as the most evocative, are two poems "The Retrospect" and one to the Corston stream, that sprang from the time seven-year-old Southey spent as a boarder in a private school in Corston village three miles from Bath, nine from Bristol. They speak of his anguished parting from the mother he seldom saw, the veiling tears as he watched his father pass through the school's garden-door when he left Robert with Thomas Flower, the schoolmaster who with his son known to the boys as Charley kept this Dickensian establishment. They taught only arithmetic and a fine Italian penmanship learnt by incessant copying; the more intelligent little boys like Southey helped teach the stupid, Southey contributing some Latin. Flower was a clever man soured and defeated by hopeless circumstances. His second marriage to his drunken maidservant Sarah Parker, who kept the house in a slatternly state, is recorded in Corston registers with many Flower marriages and deaths. Yet cold and comfortless as the premises were, with no provision for personal cleanliness, Southey was not always unhappy for the boys had their games and recreations; a hot cake on baking-days, crab-apples to roast when they had picked them up in the orchard after a gale. This environment is described in his Letters, but "The Retrospect" paints clearly the decayed, crumbling manor-house that housed the decaying school, its remnants of grandeur like the tapestries in the hall and the great stone ball ornaments on the forecourt's gateposts, the brook flowing through the barton, the walnut-trees, the meadow where again he found butterflies and flowers, and flew a kite. Like the sonnet to the Corston stream it tells that he re-visited the place twenty years later to find it even more decayed and weed-overgrown, although in use as a farmhouse. Recollections of his childish experiences and emotions reached his memory as faintly, as fitfully, as the murmur of the brook reached his ear when he stood, a solitary man, surveying on a bleak cold day "the remembered fields", the church where after treading the path "two by two to pray" the little boys had "slept through summer sermons, shivered in winter". In the Letters he paints his picture of Corston and the school with complete realism. In the poems the same places are viewed through eyes misted by sentiment, the eyes of a man surveying the lost land of childhood.

And the Southey places today? Several buses every hour will transport you from Bath to Corston, dropping you off at the old Globe Inn in the parish of Newton St Loe where the stage-coach dropped little Robert Southey for his father, on horseback, to escort to his new school. Several roads meet here, close to fields and trees, and outside the Globe is the space where Southey and the other schoolboys stood waiting to cheer Admiral Rodney passing in a laurel-decked coach on his way to be entertained by the corporation of Bristol, after the victory of the Nile. He thrust out his head and acknowledged the cheers. From the Globe you may walk as Southey did on the

Left : The House of Southey's Grandmother Hill, Parson Street, Bedminster

day of that celebration, a holiday probably, along the lefthand road to Newton St Loe churchyard where he found a supply of the stripey-shelled snails with which the boys played their version of "conkers", the stoutest-shelled snails being known as "conquerors". The righthand road (with Bath behind you) leads to the brown-and-grey village of Corston that lay in tranquillity until modern traffic invaded it so perilously, and in 1972 caused the Somerset County Council to suggest removing the walled-round gnarled trunk of the Hanging Tree on which rebels from the Monmouth Rising were summarily executed and which Southey saw in pride of foliage. He knew its associations better than some of his schoolfellows; his Lydeard St Lawrence grandfather had passed to Southey's own father the sword that a Wellington ancestor used on the Sedgemoor battlefield a century before. Southey's father retained it for many years and narrated to Southey several traditional stories of the battle and the subsequent Bloody Assize in Taunton, not far from Lydeard St Lawrence. Corston inhabitants, by the way, have saved the trunk of their Hanging Tree.

All Saints' Church, Corston, stands on a hillside in a churchyard enclosed by ivy-wreathed stone walls. Since Southey's time it has seen much alteration but the interior is light and pleasant, its white walls bearing the marble monuments of the Haringtons of Kelston nearby, descended from Queen Elizabeth's godson, that the cold and yawning little boys stared up at in Southey's childhood. The former tumbledown manor-house, now Manor Farm, is once again a fine and dignified house of very attractive aspect, with nine sash windows in its upper storey, eight mullioned ones below and a shell-hood protecting its door. The entrance to its forecourt is still flanked by gateposts topped by stone balls, and the stream's murmur becomes audible when a pause occurs in the main street's traffic noise. Manor Farm lies in peace at the bottom of a lane.

During the greater part of his earliest childhood and school holidays Southey lived with his rather peculiar aunt Elizabeth Tyler in Bath and grew up perfectly familiar with the city. Miss Tyler was a well-off spinster nearing forty, with an almost beautiful face "marked by temper". Gainsborough painted her wearing a pink dress, and her house in the higher part of Walcot Street, looked after by two old family servants, a man and a woman, as eccentric as Miss Tyler, contained a strange assortment of possessions, the Gainsborough and various pictures of little value, a beautiful French escritoire and mirrors as well as ordinary furniture. The boy was precocious and privileged in many ways, but in others led a repressed and narrow existence as Miss Tyler forbade outdoor play or any games at all that made him noisy or dirty. He had to stay silent in bed till she got up between ten and eleven; there were no children with whom he could associate. But he read prodigiously, cut out paper models, played with her vast collection of playbills from the Bath and Bristol theatres - for Miss Tyler was a lifelong "fan" of the theatre. Walcot Street today is one of the tragedies of Georgian Bath. Voices are still being raised in the hope of salvaging what remains of it from "comprehensive development". It is difficult to pinpoint Miss Tyler's house but it was one of those graceful, dilapidated, blackened buildings on the right as you climb steep Walcot Street, near the premises of the firm Hayward & Wooster. It lay close to narrow Chatham Row that runs off at right-angles to Walcot Street and is composed of pretty little old houses, with broken Venetian windows, that have become victims of weather and vandals although like several in Walcot Street some of them were specially listed. Whichever was Southey's aunt's house, it lay not very far below St Swithin's churchyard that contains



Fanny Burney's grave. If you walk along Chatham Row you see the backs of the big stone-built houses known to the boy Southey and the tangled, overgrown remains of their walled and terraced gardens dropping steeply to the green Avon flowing just below them. Here goldenrod, maple, thistles, sunflowers, weeds, cabbages, compete for space; Southey remembered Miss Tyler's lower garden being full of lilies of the valley and scented herbs. He remembered sitting on the porch steps bowered in jessamine and looking down the garden and across the Avon to Bathwick fields which in his later years houses started to cover, and beyond them to Claverton Hill with its fir-grove crown and Ralph Allen's new Sham Castle (its present name), a rich man's folly that to the child seemed as romantic and unattainable as the Pyramids. He would have been delighted by our modern view of it, floodlit on a dark night.

During the Corston period he spent his holidays with Miss Tyler at a house she shared in Bath with her friend Miss Palmer. He adored this because just round the corner was the Orchard Street Theatre (it became the Theatre Royal and later the Masonic Hall), where Mrs Siddons and other illustrious players performed and where Miss Tyler and her friend took the little boy every night it was open (generally three times a week) regardless of late hours, so that before he was ten he had seen Cymbeline, Romeo and Juliet, The School for Scandal, The Provoked Wife - as he said, more plays than he ever saw during the rest of his life. The house made part of Galloway's Buildings, now North Parade Passage, although the old name cut into the stonework is still legible; a pleasing group of eight, four each side, opening out of Lilliput Alley near the Abbey. Corinthian pillars frame their doors. No.1 where Southey lived bears a plaque inscribed with the name of John Palmer, (Miss Palmer's brother) who pioneered the mail-coach service. But another Bath house, No.8 Westgate Buildings, where Southey spent some time during his adult life, disappeared, with its commemorative plaque, some years before the last war when Georgian buildings made way for a new Co-operative store. Dr Warren, Professor of Poetry at Oxford, unveiled this plaque on the same day in June 1914 with one commemorating Wordsworth's sojourn at No.9 North Parade, now the Grosvenor Hotel and still displaying the plaque.

At a crossroads of the hamlet Marshmills in Over Stowey parish, off the Bridgwater - Minehead road, A39, the attractive Marshmill House, cream-washed, brown tiled, close to the mill-stream, facing the blue line of Quantock Hills, has been skilfully renovated. Here in 1794 Southey came with Coleridge both of them on university vacation, and with them two young Pooles and the older Tom who would become their lifelong friend. It was their first visit to Tom Poole who mistakenly brought them to meet his Tory parson-cousin John. Their wild, enthusiastic talk on political matters greatly offended the latter who set them down as atheistic and revolutionary - Southey, "a mere boy," shocked him particularly.

After a visit to Nether Stowey in 1799 Southey, after a stay in Minehead, went on to tiny hidden Porlock, "the end of the world", driving the six miles in the carriage of John Cruikshank who two years before had communicated to Coleridge his dream of a skeleton ship. In spite of the building of new villas, the route has changed little; the same high-hedged lanes under hanging woods, red fields, glimpses of wild high Exmoor empurpled with heather in August, the month when Southey went. But nowadays in August the tourist influx fills the lanes with traffic and chokes Porlock's narrow streets. To see Southey's Porlock one needs to go in late autumn when sometimes it again feels like "the end of the world" tucked

between russet-brown Exmoor and the sea. Up a steep side-lane mounting to Porlock Hill is the Ship Inn where Southey lodged and which he would not find greatly changed in appearance, except that the adjoining red sandstone stables have been converted into dwellings. It has white walls, grey thatch, a square, white exterior chimney, and in front of its rustic porch a pavement of irregular cobblestones. A little window looks on the street from the chimney-corner where Southey sat, as a plaque inside informs the visitor, writing his sonnet "Porlock, thy verdant vale" (published that same August in the *Morning Post*) to while away the rainy hours. "Southey's corner", they call it. His bedroom under the thatch and its plain furniture of dark oak and mahogany that reminded him of Spain, contented him well enough. At Porlock they introduced him to the curious local delicacy called "laver", pronounced "lava", a species of liverwort gathered along the coast of Porlock Bay and pickled in vinegar, to be eaten with fried bacon. At Porlock and Watchet - the tiny port Southey despised - it is still sold in pots to tourists. Coleridge, on his last visit to Tom Poole in 1807 remembered Southey's weakness for laver and wrote that he would send him some from Porlock.

Wootton House at Butleigh, a village close to the Polden Hills and a few miles from Glastonbury has for several generations belonged to the Hood family, so illustrious in English naval history. In 1798 Captain Alexander Hood commanding HMS *Mars* fought a fierce action against the French *Herecule* and, like the French captain, fell mortally wounded. Hood was carried below to die, his French adversary's sword being placed in his hand. He was buried in the churchyard at Butleigh where in spring the white cherry flowers not far from his imposing tomb bearing an inscription headed "Dulce et Decorum est", which recounts his heroic exploit. Southey's young brother Tom, midshipman on the *Mars*, was seriously wounded in this same action, which he describes in one of his letters to Southey. In the Hood chapel inside the church one of the monuments commemorates three Hood brothers and their naval achievements. Arthur, died 1795, Alexander, died 1798 (above) and Sir Samuel, died 1814. It is inscribed with a very long and grandiose epitaph composed by Southey. He also wrote a sonnet that he called Epitaph for a Monument in Taunton. This unidentified monument had been raised to the memory of the misguided Westcountrymen who fought for Monmouth in 1685 and met a terrible fate at Judge Jeffreys' hands. Their story is deeply implanted in Somerset folk-memory and Southey himself never forgot it.

THOMAS HOOD: "TWO PARTS METHODIST TO ONE OF HUMOURIST"

John I Ades

It would be pleasant to announce that there is a revival of interest amongst the literati for the works of Thomas Hood, or, failing that, that there is one presently expected. A recent re-reading of generous portions of Hood's poems, prose pieces, puns (would there were another "p" to complete this Agnew-ian alliteration!) suggests, however, that it is otherwise - even after reading through the handsome 703-page edition of Hood's letters recently published by Peter F Morgan.*

This is not, of course, to suggest that Hood has either been ignored or fallen into decline: merely to note that by consensus he is not demonstrably in the first rank as (loosely) a "Romantic" writer of the early 19th century. Hood has been given good marks by William Empson, W H Auden,

**The Letters of Thomas Hood* (Toronto, 1971; Edinburgh, 1973). Pp xxviii + 703, £6.

and Alvin Whitley, as John Clubbe points out in the introduction to his recent study, *Victorian Forerunner: the Later Career of Thomas Hood* (1968); and members of the Lamb Society will recall the generous appreciations of the late Edmund Blunden. But Ian Jack, in *English Literature 1815-1832*, rightly warns us that we must not confuse an attractive person with a first-rate artist.

In *The English Romantic Poets: an Anthology* (1970), the late Marius Bewley included only Hood, Southey, Clare, and Beddoes in the immediate next rank below the six major figures in the period from Blake through Shelley. But Dr Bewley remarks in his introduction to the Hood selections that in "The Last Man" (Hood's best poem, according to Bewley), he cannot deal significantly with the tragic situation and must be content therefore to leave his reader with the macabre or grotesque, covering up with grim humor what required tragic vision. It is as if the very thought of *the last man* had teased Hood out of thought. The criticism is just, I believe, for it is the low-voltage of Hood's vision in general that places him in the second rank even when he was dead serious and not just indulging in amiable high-jinks - keeps the bulk of his art from the enduring significance that we usually attribute to visions, whether comic or tragic.

Professor Clubbe modifies this judgment by arguing that "since equivocation came easily to his nature, Hood was, through puns, provided with a defense mechanism by which he could easily shy away from the full implications of his vision" (p. 16). A judgment between these two views will have to rest with the reader, but whether Hood was unequal as artist to his vision or simply insufficiently supplied therewith, the lack is a shortcoming in his art. It is possible that the capsule of his character that appears in the title of this essay (from Hood's own pen) points to the combination of the two characteristics that were seldom brought into sufficient balance to sustain serious artistic achievement. We read, on the one hand, "The Song of the Shirt," which ran like wildfire in the context of class injustice in early 19th-century England, and, on the other, "The Sausage-Maker's Ghost" or the jocosities of "Faithless Nelly Gray."

The point may be pursued, by way of illustration, in the sobriquet Lamb applied to Hood, "that half-Hogarth." The phrase, from a letter to Charles Ollier (Lucas, *Letters* III, 32) is a reference to Hood's recently-published engraving, "The Progress of Cant" (conveniently reproduced in Clubbe's study noted above). The engraving is indeed derivative of Hogarth - a street scene parading a variety of contemporary banner-slogans become humbug through the irony of the individual bearer. But the plate lacks focus (as it lacks artistic composition - being pretty much a clutter); and the true Hogarthian touches - a savage-faced boy carrying a banner "United Schools" impaling a contemporary carrying a banner proclaiming "Peace to the World," or a member of the Tract Society advancing a scroll on "Eternity" to a derelict having "Parity of Elections" on his hat and his posterior firmly planted on a post labelled "Under Government" - are blunted by jocular adverts for a Covent Garden prayer meeting on the same bill as "Much Ado about Nothing," or a banner declaring "Nobody Is To Be Saved During Divine Services" hung out from a Perfumery, or an amorous young man preparing to cross from a window of Seneca House Academy for Young Gentlemen to the arms of a young lady across the court in a window of Prospect House Ladies School, &c. &c.

The plate, in short, lacks the biting edge of Hogarth's mind, as it lacks, for the most part, Hogarth's skill in individualizing a face. As Professor

Clubbe remarks in another context, "because his indignation was terribly sincere, Hood did not write effective satire...He had difficulty in presenting a logical argument without either getting off the subject or breaking his thought with a pun; his mind was too undisciplined, his temper too easy going, to maintain the sustained indictment satire requires. Nor could he get sufficiently outside his subject to view it with perspective" (p. 114). When Lamb called Hood "that half-Hogarth," he may well have hit the mark, as he often did, with an incisive phrase: here were some of Hogarth's mordent wit, sense of incongruity, humanistic impulse, and social protest - but without the master's bite and focus and tone. The single figure in "The Progress of Cant" that seems best to catch the character of Hood's satire is a lad - almost in dead center - with a top hat, a preposterous frock-tailed coat, a composed and tranquil face, and a banner labelled simply "No Popery." He is immediately behind a banner reading "The Church in Danger," but the "D" in *Danger* is crossed out by another banner reading "Converted Jews." It isn't Hogarth, but it has its own amusing force.

Whatever Hood's literary merits, Professor Morgan's new edition of the letters, meticulously edited and annotated, gives us a solid view of a remarkable human being and a fascinating life. Hood was known as far as America as the compassionate author of "The Song of the Shirt," for when Longfellow came to visit Dickens in London in 1842, he asked immediately to be taken to meet the author of this poem. (See Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* /New York, 1952/, I, 435.) We see, behind the comic exterior he most frequently exhibited to a public that consumed his puns and jests and comic annuals, a devoted family man, a loving husband, a sincere humanitarian, an affectionate friend, an energetic publisher - and an improvident manager hardly capable of conducting his economic affairs this side of ruin, partly because of his lackadaisical nature, partly because of his life-long ill health.

While Hood's letters may lack the verve of Byron's, the stunning intimacy of those of Keats or Lawrence, the intellectual scope of those of Coleridge, or the charm and steady good sense of Lamb's, here is nevertheless a body of letters which are honest, candid, self-searching, often hilarious, and sometimes touching. (Readers of Lamb will be distressed to note that while there are sixteen letters from Lamb to Hood in Lucas's edition, there is but a single one in this collection from Hood to Lamb - and that merely a note.)

There is no resisting Hood's judgment on the great Cham of empiricism: "Lock /sic/ on the Human Understanding...effectually defied my picking" (p. 156); or his report of the time a jar of claret jelly got loose in Mrs Hood's bag, making his watch a "stopwatch by gumming up the works - glued Jane's pocketbook together & fuddled a letter to Dr Yates" (p. 156); or his remark to the young Elliot children on vacation that he heard "at Sandgate there used to be lobsters; but some ignorant fairy turned them all by a *spell* into bolsters" (p. 625); or his acknowledgment that a bust done of him was "a correct likeness: two parts Methodist, to one of Humourist, and quite recognisable in spite of the Hood all over the face" (p. 647).

He could be witty about German money - "You might fell an ox with a long purse that had a pound translated into Prussian at the other end of it" (p. 197) - and about his own ill-health - "My stomach is like a house where the washing is done at home - all slop, hot-water, and tea" (p. 615). But there is, as he remarks, "more of T Hood than you could gather from a Comic

Annual" (p. 163), and he begins one of his very long letters to Charles Wentworth Dilke with the touching report, "Here I sit, solus, in that large drawing-room, with a sick wife upstairs - a sick child in the next room to this... and a fly-load of company has just departed...As a true Philosopher I have found comforts in the three predicaments...yet hath her illness this relief in it, that it hath hastened away the aforesaid fly with its living lumber" (p. 161).

Hood's well-known capacity for punning is amply displayed in his letters, often showing his virtuosity in stringing one pun after another. In a letter to Thomas Gent, a minor poet, Hood writes: "On behalf of an Annual, for which I am literary *Agent*, I apply to T. *Gent*, for the favour of a contribution. Be pathetic, if you like, as on the Daughter of the *Regent*, or jest, if you please, & be Pun-*gent*, but, pray be diligent, and for this cogent reason, that time is ur-*gent*" (p. 104). A form of punning that cuts a good bit deeper is seen in a letter to Thomas Lawrence, describing Brighton - well-known for both shipwrecks and frequent visits by King George IV: "I am told by the Brighton people that ship disasters are not uncommon here - they have often had Georgus Rex" (p. 114).

Many a modern reader may indulge himself in a groan at such a species of wit; but let Hood's friend, Lamb, have the judgmental word: "I remember but one pun in all the *Evangel*, and that was made by...our master: Thou are Peter (that is Doctor Rock) and upon this rock will I build &c; which sanctifies Punning with me against all gain-sayers. I never knew an enemy to puns, who was not an ill-natured man" (*Letters*, III, 49). Hood was in fact the occasion and recipient of one of Lamb's finest puns - and a bilingual one at that (Reader, hast thou thy Latin about thee?): to the report from Hood that he and his bride were staying at the Priory in Hastings, Lamb retorted, "What dost thou at the Priory? *Cucullus non facit Monachum*. English me that" (*Letters*, II, 434). "A hit, a very palpable hit," as Osric might have said - and did. (The relationship between Lamb and Hood was always genial, as this jest suggests; and Lamb could even forgive Hood the time Hood printed a piece in the *Gem*, "A Widow," to which Hood signed Lamb's name. The style had some glimmer of Lamb's - imitation was common in the Lamb circle - but Lamb would never have undertaken a burlesque of widowhood, and the parody fell pretty much of its own weight. Lamb addressed a letter to Hood in reply to this fabrication: "Dear Lamb," Lamb began, waggishly turning the tables on Hood, "You are an impudent varlet; but I will keep your secret" (*Letters*, III, 183). But in a later letter Lamb discussed this serious lapse of judgment in Hood and concluded: "Having exhausted all my ill blood in the above, let it be as it had never /has ever?/ been, & us old friends to the latest day as ever" (*Letters*, III, 197).

Hood's letters document fully his fortunes as editor, especially the situation at the end of his life when increasing ill-health was seriously preventing his running *Hood's Magazine*. He objected quite rightly to some of the policies of his associate editor, Frederick Oldfield Ward - notably Ward's desire to print the correspondence between Hood and Prime Minister Robert Peel, in which a pension for Hood was granted, rejected by Hood, and then finally in desperation accepted. Hood also quarreled with Ward over the issue of whether nudity was to be condoned in the performance of a French ballet that introduced "La Polka" to London. Ward had asked, "Is villanous /sic/ calico better to behold than graceful woman's neck?" Hood's reply is a good index of his character, with its combination of wit and earnest morality:

There can be no doubt of the immodesty of one who goes half naked...Your argument...certainly reads like a recommendation to carry the costume & capers of the public Ballet into private life...You remind me that Eve 'as example of perfect purity did without even a fig leaf.' Yes, but if she polked she also did without a circle of spectators, including perhaps a few of Young France...as loose in their lives as in their trowsers. And you shall be welcome to dance naked on the same terms.

And after all, who are to strip? The masses - or only a select few - only the lovely & symmetrical & artistical - or who so conceit themselves? A, or Anne, may be chaste but clumsy - B, or Betsy, delicate minded but dumpy and dowdy - C, active and fond of dancing but ugly - F, feminine in feeling but fat and fubsy. Must they therefore cover up? Must only Grace, Beauty, & Agility *go cool* whilst Fat swelters and Fubsy faints? If so, may there not be an exclusiveness in Polka as in Piety - & a monopoly of nakedness as of righteousness - a Socialism that is Selfishness at bottom? (p. 639)

There you have Hood as moralist, wit, logician, and, in that final inspired pun, as humanitarian. (A mere American academic may wonder whether there is anything new under the sun - as he lately watches undergraduates "streaking" across the campus, "bottoms out," as you might say.)

The letters give additional specificity to Hood's championing the effort for copyright for authors, a cause in which he joined forces with Dickens (with whom he was on friendly terms), especially after the uproar Dickens had caused about copyright during his triumphant tour of America in 1842. "/Dickens/ told me that two American prints have attacked me for my Copyright Letters in the Athenaeum - so I shall procure them as a treat for 'Jane'" (p. 486). Something of Hood's fervor on this subject is seen in a letter to Lamb's and Hood's friend, the lawyer, Thomas Noon Talfourd:

You will, I know, acquit me of any selfish motives in urging a personal case. But I feel strongly that Literature and its professors have had more of their share of public neglect & the world's contumely - that Authorship has been treated like a slave-ship...Literature, too, has had its achievements which have shed an everlasting lustre on our country - but where is its Blenheim - its Strathfieldsaye? Far be it from me to begrudge either Duke his Palace & estate - but fain, fain, fain, would I see only a cottage & a paddock entailed on some distinguished Author - & held by the honorary tenure of delivery, yearly, a play, or still better a yearly volume...to the Sovereign...A literary man...writes for bread - and gets short weight. ... At last he sickens, as he well may, & can write no more...And so he dies - a beggar perhaps - with the world in his Debt. Being poor of course - he is buried with less ceremony than Cock Robin. Had he been rich enough he might have bought 'snug lying in the Abbey' of the Dean & Chapter of Westminster: - but even then...they would have put him - were he the greatest & best of poets - where the mother puts her least & worst of Children - namely into a *Corner*!

There is a sketch for you - not at all exaggerated - for our Country is illustriously disgraced by the biographies of its literary men. For the least of us are men - but all your Warburtons & Co /radical supporters of the Anti-Corn Law League/ want is to have our brains at a cheap rate, as if they were sucking at the heads of so many shrimps! (p. 445-6)

That is powerful advocacy and very well put. Professor Morgan's note to

this letter indicates that Talfourd introduced a copyright bill in Parliament but it was defeated, "thanks to the powerful eloquence of Macaulay and 'the attractions of dinner' (Wordsworth's phrase)."

The end of Hood's life, as documented in these letters, is as sad as he was courageous in facing it. His early financial woes, which caused him to flee his creditors and live in Germany and Belgium from 1835 to 1840 (his Belgian creditors allowed Hood to return to England in 1840, but held his two young children from embarkation for surety of payment of Hood's debts!), cannot match his later physical decline for sheer pathos. Writing, as he often did, to his physician, William Elliot, he describes, time after time and in great detail, his afflictions in almost clinical fascination with himself. At one point, bed-ridden yet still eager to participate in the publication of his beloved magazine, he describes his application of leeches to his own bloated abdomen (a result of cardiac failure and dropsy); and in another letter we find, "My last attack of spitting blood came on the moment after going down the stairs; and...I caught rheumatism and had leeches on my foot, which bled all night" (p. 304).

At the very last, Hood was reduced to writing to his friend, B W Proctor, "I have never been quite alive for some years...As one of my earliest literary friends, come and say good-bye to, Yours, ever truly, Thomas Hood" (p. 683). He wrote also to Prime Minister Peel, who had settled a pension on Hood and claimed to have read everything Hood had written, "We are not to meet in the flesh...In this extremity, I feel a comfort for which I cannot refrain from again thanking you, with all the sincerity of a dying man" (p. 682). To G B Webb he wrote, "As I am about going I know not where, if you want another Autograph, you must apply to my Heir (p. 685).

The final letter that survives is to David Moir: "Dear Moir, God bless you and yours, and good-by! I drop these few lines, as in a bottle from a ship water-logged, and on the brink of foundering, being in the last stage of dropsical debility; but though suffering in body, serene in mind. So without reversing my union-jack, I await my last lurch. Till which, believe me, dear Moir, Yours most truly, Thomas Hood" (pp. 685-6).

One does not have to search very deep to find the tears below this courageous surface figure of humour, and the combination simply increases the pathos. Like Keats, who remarked in his heart-breaking last letter that he had summoned more puns in a week of quarantine than in any other year of his life, it may be that Hood also "made an awkward bow."

BOOK REVIEW

Molly Lefebure: SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE: A BONDAGE OF OPIUM (*Victor Gollancz, 1974. 518 pp £6.*)

Molly Lefebure's new book is a detailed, partly psychoanalytical, biography, presenting Coleridge "as it seems that he really was - a junkie." It covers the period from his birth in 1772 to April 1816 - the period of his opium bondage. Thereafter until his death in 1834 he was domiciled with Dr and Mrs James Gillman in Highgate, still a drug-reliant addict but living in comparatively tranquil circumstances under constant medical supervision with his intake of laudanum kept at a minimum maintenance level so that he could function at the maximum of what remained of his damaged physical and intellectual powers. This book is the first comprehensive biographical study of Coleridge to draw on the latest scientific understanding of the effects

of morphine reliance, i.e., to draw on that understanding in detail so as to compare Coleridge's behaviour in detail to what modern medical observers have to come to recognize as classic behaviour of morphine-reliant addicts.

Miss Lefebure's thesis is that Coleridge's morphine reliance (a technical term for the later stage of addiction by which the body's chemistry has undergone an irreversible change so that the body thereafter requires a certain intake of the drug) had a more fundamental and destructive effect than has been realized, had the effect sooner than has been realized, and so must constantly be the background against which Coleridge's behaviour is to be understood. Coleridge's predicament, Miss Lefebure explains, "was not simply a matter of a sapped will. S T C's imaginative powers and concentration were literally destroyed by the drug; his intellectual capacity was fearfully eroded" - even his ability to distinguish fantasy from reality; and "his sense of truth hopelessly distorted (one of the major effects of morphine addiction)."

To the question how this view of Coleridge as a junkie affects our ultimate assessment of him, Miss Lefebure replies that it must "very greatly increase our respect for him," for he was one of a very small number of people "to succeed in breaking a truly fearful bondage," morphine reliance (the number today, she says, "is placed by some optimists at 2 per cent: sterner realists place the figure at nil"). "The story of how he succeeded," she concludes, "is a tremendous tribute to his courage, his deep basic integrity, and...his unquenchable spirit of faith and endeavour."

It is clear today, says Miss Lefebure, that "some kind of personality disturbance or inadequacy must be present for a person to resort seriously to drugs," although other factors are variously involved as well, as can be seen in Coleridge's case. Although "his addiction may well have had its roots in an illness during his last year at school, for which laudanum was prescribed," more important were his "highly neurotic personality," his history of "repeated collapse under pressure," his easy access to laudanum, his close association with a circle of drug-oriented persons, and the debilitating physical and psychological effects of chronic illness (complicated, of course, by the effects of opium).

Miss Lefebure explains the two stages of drug addiction and traces their development in Coleridge's experience. In the "sweet honeymoon" stage "the addict is positively elated by his drug experience" and is able to manage his dreams or "trips." But when the addict has entered the reliant stage, he experiences "disillusionment, despair and disintegration," and his dreams become unmanageable nightmares. In his poem *The Pains of Sleep*, written during his tour of Scotland in 1803, Coleridge gives "an almost clinical description of what happens to the junkie when his sweet drug-honeymoon turns sour and horror takes the place of delight." By this date Coleridge "had become fully morphine-reliant." In this condition, his "approach to opium was made in thrall and was deeply guilt-ridden," and in his sleep he was forced to confront "the truths of his fearful bondage" from which "no control of thought, no force of will-power" could free him.

On the question of veracity, Miss Lefebure points out that for the addict, "lying and, indeed, deception of all kinds become habitual." Coleridge's lying, however, pre-dated his opium addiction, although the effects of the drug "accentuated the habit." But "the purpose of his lying was not deception, in the popularly understood sense," she explains, "but the evasion of stress." Nonetheless, it cannot be said of Coleridge that the

truth was not in him, for, "if the letters are those of a man who could not prevent himself from practising deception, the notebooks, on the other hand, show STC paradoxically engaged in a lifelong pursuit of truth."

After her four-part, 65-page introduction - "a preliminary scrutiny of STC's reputation as an opium-eater, of his medical history, of his drug-reliance, of his family background, of his earliest recorded personality traits and of the shaping years of infancy, boyhood and adolescence" - Miss Lefebure presents in great detail (about 16 pages per year) the story of Coleridge's life from his arrival at Cambridge in October 1791 to his entering the house of Dr Gillman in April 1816. She draws most heavily on the notebooks and letters, of course, but also on a host of other pertinent original records, documenting her sources. In her interpretations she takes into account the factors given preliminary scrutiny in her introduction.

Her whole presentation is clear-eyed, unsentimental, without evasions, but nonetheless sympathetic - and not merely warmly so but passionately so, from a conviction that for the most part in the past Coleridge has been inadequately understood and improperly judged. She insists that Coleridge "was responsible neither for his predisposition towards certain kinds of disease, nor for his neurotically inadequate personality which required constant propping." Accordingly, the perspective by which he is usually viewed - "a perspective which assumes that a man reliant upon morphine can be subjected to the same kind of biographical scrutiny and critical analysis as a man involved in drugs" - is one that "should by now stand as wholly outdated."

How different is Molly Lefebure's book from Norman Fruman's *Coleridge the Damaged Archangel* (1971, reviewed in the Bulletin, 1973, p. 65)! That - whatever its author's protestations to the contrary - must be read as a massive attack on the integrity of Coleridge. Fruman's perspective is precisely the outdated one Miss Lefebure is trying to counteract. His tone is firmly, often emotionally, condemnatory. He is a prosecutor presenting every bit of evidence (established and circumstantial) for a series of minor and major crimes, with an occasional show of sorrow that he has been forced to present the case - in the name of Truth - and so bring the criminal to justice. Miss Lefebure, on the other hand, suggests clearly that Lamb's metaphoric characterization, "an archangel a little damaged," is inappropriate because of its implications of sin and guilt. Coleridge's feelings of guilt about not freeing himself from morphine reliance were unjustified, for no man could accomplish that liberation. He was a victim of physical forces on which his will could have no effect. A more fitting metaphor would be one drawn from Greek tragedy, by which we see Coleridge as a man caught in the clutches of whimsical gods, the central figure in a tragedy of fate, doomed to inescapable disaster. Such a man we may admire intensely. He is not to be condemned but to be loved, in the fullness of an understanding mind and a sympathetic heart. It is for us, Miss Lefebure seems to be saying, to try to understand Coleridge and so to achieve some catharsis of the pity and fear aroused in us by the tragic spectacle of his fate.

Fruman's book is valuable for its record of the facts - the details of Coleridge's plagiarisms (a term, however, which Fruman applies far too inclusively) and other deviations from veracity. But as a document about a valuable human being, it is both grossly misleading and seriously destructive. Every person who presumes to say anything about Coleridge that might be taken seriously must prepare himself by a study of Molly

Lefebure's book. If, then, he needs the kinds of fact Fruman provides, he can go to Fruman's book as the authoritative repository of such facts, without, however, accepting his misapplied moral judgments.

Of the many particulars of Miss Lefebure's book deserving notice, space permits reference only to a few. Though hers is not primarily a work of literary criticism, her commentaries on Coleridge's poems are always instructive. Throughout the book she makes effective use of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* to illuminate events in Coleridge's experience that it prefigured (the poem provides the part and chapter headings of the last half of the book), and in the process she also produces a highly enlightening commentary on the poem. This commentary, her explanation of the circumstances of composition and publication of *Kubla Khan* ("a small masterpiece of confidence trickery" but withal "a uniquely beautiful and strangely moving poem"), and her analysis of the 4 April 1802 verse letter to Sara Hutchinson (which was revised to become *Dejection: An Ode*) - and of other poems as well - in the light of the influence of opium, demonstrate the wisdom of her caveat: "To study Coleridge from any aspect without taking opium into constant consideration is to ignore the clue without which there can be no correct understanding or interpretation."

Miss Lefebure also offers valuable new insights into secondary characters in this tragic drama. Her rehabilitating characterization of wife Sarah is unusual, salutary, and satisfying, making the reader feel better not only about Sarah but also about the man who married her (he wasn't an absolute dolt for doing it, after all!). In her presentation of the incestuous relationship of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Miss Lefebure has entered a region of speculation where apparent angels heretofore have feared to tread; but she has made that region seem much less speculative by her clear discussion of the facts and likelihoods that scholars so far have not much discussed in print.

This must have been a most sorrowful book to write, particularly the later chapters. But it is entirely an impressive performance, and immensely readable. Even a long-time Coleridgean reads it in a state of absorbed suspense. A bald recital of the circumstances of Coleridge's life is harrowing enough. But Miss Lefebure's story makes the reader empathize deeply with the principal characters. Her re-creation is to the life, moving the reader to involuntary gasps, exclamations, visceral constrictions, and tears. It is a fearful tale of destruction, positively Grecian in dimension, which has a tremendous cumulative effect, leaving one almost overwhelmed at the end. It is a book - indeed, an experience - to be sought out, not to be missed.

Walter B Crawford

LAMB IN THE SALEROOM AND ELSEWHERE

Two interesting items came up at Sotheby's Bond Street saleroom on 25 March 1974. A lot consisting of the first London editions of *Elia*, 1823 (with the three leaves of advertisements but title page unspecified), and *Last Essays of Elia*, 1833 (with the two leaves of advertisements and half-title), bound in uniform light brown morocco by Sangorski and Sutcliffe was bought by Messrs Howes of Hastings for £160. The (published) letter of 7 February 1834 to William Hone encouraging the latter to apply for a grant from the Literary Fund went to Mr H G S Groves at £320. Laughably, the Sotheby catalogue refers to Lamb's "life at Edmonton with his wife Mary".

Mr Howe Bancroft, of Alexandria, Virginia, writes describing copies of *Elia* and *Last Essays* recently acquired by him from The Seven Gables Bookshop. Both have passed through the Esher and Hugh Walpole collections; the *Elia* is the first issue of the first edition, but it is the *Last Essays* which is the more interesting. Although not the first edition - this is the one brought out in 1835 - it is inscribed "To Mrs Morgan and Miss Brent from their dear friend Mary Anne Lamb". More interestingly the following words are written in the same hand above "PREFACE. BY A FRIEND OF THE LATE ELIA" - "This Preface was written by Charles Lamb himself, when he considered his literary life to be at an end". Mr Bancroft describes the handwriting as "clear, beautiful, old-fashioned, and written with an extremely narrow nib". Mrs Morgan was of course the widow of John Morgan, an old friend of Coleridge and Southey from their Bristol days, whom Southey and Lamb helped to support during his later years from 1819 until his death in 1832, each paying £10 a year. Miss Brent was Mrs Morgan's sister.

NOTES

Professor Duane Schneider (Department of English, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701, USA) is preparing a bibliography of Lamb studies 1900-1973. He will appreciate information about items which might otherwise be overlooked because of their appearance in unusual or obscure places.

We are delighted to announce that the new edition of Lamb's letters (Bulletin, April 1973) prepared by Professor Edwin W Marrs Jr, has been accepted for publication by Cornell University Press. If all goes well the first volume will appear in the autumn of 1975, the bicentenary year, and the remaining four or five volumes will follow at one or two-year intervals.

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Society Mrs N Halliday retired from the Council. Mr Hall also retired in rotation and was re-elected; and Mrs J A Day and Mr N F Ledwith were also elected.

We have received a gift for the library, a very interesting volume consisting of ten pamphlets published in the period 1829-31 bound up together. Most are illustrated by George or Robert Cruickshank, and they include "The Real Devil's Walk, not by Professor Porson" (Effingham Wilson, 1830), "Satan in Search of a Wife" (Moxon, 1831) and Tom Hood's "The Epping Hunt" (Tilt, 1829). The donor is Mr D G Lewis of Kew. He says:

"I am a cockney bred and born (in Islington about a mile from Colebrook Cottage) and until I was made redundant about two years ago (at my own choice) I worked for over forty years for a firm connected with the betting industry (strange occupation for a member of the C L Society).

At the time I joined the Society, in 1945 I believe, I was living in Horsham, Sussex, and there used to be an old junk shop in the road to the station, whose stock in those days would earn a fortune today. I was looking through the usual array of secondhand books when, no doubt because of my business interests, I was attracted by the old style printing and title of the enclosed book. As the first item was about a racehorse, and by Charles Dibdin, I promptly purchased it for the nimble sum of 2/- (old coinage).

When I got it home, because of the early title imprints I thought there might be something of further value in what was obviously a made up volume of old ballads, broadsheets, call them what you will.

One of them "Satan in Search of a Wife" had Edward Moxon's very early imprint, 1831, on the title page, and as I had been reading Lucas's "Life of C L" fairly recently, the name clicked. I also by reference to Lucas's 3 volume collection of letters, checked that there had been correspondence between Lamb and Moxon in 1831 concerning this potboiler, which was not selling well and, I believe, was never reprinted. Therefore I believe this to be an original of Lamb's work."

Thank you, Mr Lewis; we are most grateful.

Miss Parsons asks that all members should search their consciences as to whether they have yet paid their subscription for 1974. The Annual General Meeting decided that for 1975 the subscription should be advanced to £2.00 for individual members living in London (£2.50 for families), and £1.50 for others (£2.00 for families). The overseas individual subscription will be \$4.50 and Library subscriptions £2.00 or \$6.00. Miss Parsons has written to all individual members who pay by banker's order, and she begs that amended orders should be returned to her as soon as possible.

Members will learn with regret that Frieda Parsons has at last decided that she must give up the Treasurership. She has served the Society devotedly for many years (since 1957 as Treasurer), but all will be sympathetic with her decision and join in conveying the Society's heartiest thanks, already shown in part by her election as an Honorary Life Member last year. At the time of going to press no successor has been appointed.

OBITUARY

On Easter Sunday 1974 the death occurred of Mrs Beatrix Oldfield. She had been a member since 1951, and older members will remember a happy day spent at her home in Cambridge during a visit to that city in 1952. Present and future members will have cause to be grateful to her for the generous gift of her father's collection of Eliana - a note on which was printed in the January 1974 Bulletin. Her daughter writes: "My mother was always happy in her association with the Charles Lamb Society, which she inherited from her father. Indeed, I remember exploring the wilds of New Zealand with her in search of some of your members." We shall remember her kindness and generosity - a truly Elian lady.

We have to report also the death of Mr M C Costin, an Old Blue, and Mr Kerrison Preston, the Blake expert and a member since 1945. We send our condolences to their relatives.

PROGRAMME FOR 1974-75

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| October 5 | The Ernest Crowsley Memorial Lecture: Professor R A Foakes of the University of Kent at Canterbury |
| November 2 | Vera Watson: Charles Lamb and the British Museum |
| December 7 | John Field: Robert Southey |
| *January 11 | W L Kitney: English Education in Elia's Time |
| February 8 | The Charles Lamb Bicentenary Luncheon. Guest of Honour:
<i>to be announced</i> |
| March 1 | To be announced |
| April 5 | Annual General Meeting |

** please note that this is not the first Saturday in the month*

All meetings except the Luncheon will be held at the Mary Ward Centre, Tavistock Place, London WC1 and will start at 2.45 pm.

NEW MEMBERS

Baker Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755, USA

Miss K Bell, 36 Tatchbury House, Tunworth Crescent, London SW15 4PF

University of Colorado Libraries, Boulder, Colorado 80302, USA

Harriett Irving Library, University of New Brunswick, Federation New Brunswick, Canada

Miss E V Blunt, 12 Ely Court, Chichester Road, London NW6 5QR

Mr P J G Ilesley, 226 Oxford Road, Reading, Berks RG3 1AB

University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa 52242, USA

The Library, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa 50010, USA

Miss M R Leach, 3 Mansfield Drive, Merstham, Redhill, Surrey RH1 3JX

McKissick Memorial Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C. 29208, USA

Stanford University Library, Stanford, CA94305, USA

University of Toronto Library, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A5

Mr and Mrs H F Tunbridge, Soane Cottage, 14 Castle Gardens, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1NY

General Library, University of Western Ontario, London 72, Ontario, Canada

Carl B Ylvisaker Library, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota 56560, USA