

# The Charles Lamb Bulletin

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### Editorial

THERE WERE TIMES WHEN, to the untutored eye, Bill Ruddick seemed to resemble the eighteenth-century clergymen about whom he knew so much - and it may well be that all true Elians have that air about them. Nothing, however, could have been further from the reality. He was both a committed and inspiring teacher, dedicated to making our literary and cultural heritage accessible to everyone, and one of the most gifted scholars of his generation. I hope that this issue of the *Bulletin* which he so successfully edited, 1989-94, will lead to a comprehensive bibliography of his work, and to further republication. Only an indication of his achievement can be given here.

This project has its origins in my correspondence with Bill. Just over two years ago, shortly after being appointed Associate Editor, I asked him about his career as a writer. He told me that among the publications of which he was proudest were his reviews for the *TLS* of the Oxford English Novels series. He also singled out his work with Mark Turner, the Keeper of the Silver Studio - in particular, his essays on the suburban villa in literature, and on Joseph Farington. He supplied me with copies of most of these, and they constitute the principal contents of this *Bulletin*. In addition, I am pleased to include, by kind permission of Bill's literary executors, an edited transcription of his lecture at the 1992 Wordsworth

Summer Conference, 'Subdued Passion and Controlled Emotion: Wordsworth's "Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg"'.

For me, the essential Bill is represented by the essay on Farington and the lecture on Wordsworth; in these works, his voice continues to address us with urgency and immediacy. Their distinctive combination of simplicity, clarity, and humanity exemplifies classical virtues that remain the hallmark of good criticism. 'Joseph Farington: An Introduction' is typically thorough and exact, but it is more than a scholarly exercise: Bill brings to life the vicissitudes of the artist's career with vividness and candour, ranging from his relations with his mentor, Richard Wilson, to his political dealings within the Royal Academy. Likewise, the lecture on Wordsworth's 'Extempore Effusion' reveals a sensitive and compassionate understanding of the personal dynamics that underlie one of Wordsworth's finest elegies. It is also an object-lesson in how to achieve that most difficult of critical feats - to write comprehensibly about poetry.

The reviews he wrote for the *Times Literary Supplement* are of enduring interest to the student of Romantic fiction. In many ways, the job suited Bill perfectly. Unambitious for power or recognition, he was free of the vices of the academic reviewer; never does he snipe, score points, or do down someone else in order to promote himself. An experienced editor of romantic texts himself, he was aware of the enormity of the challenge to the textual critic and annotator. And yet, if he treats others' work with generosity, he makes no bones about their shortcomings. The drawbacks of the Oxford English Novels *Jane Eyre* are plainly stated, as are those of Seamus Deane's edition of *Hugh Trevor*. But what makes these reviews permanently useful is that Bill regarded them as an opportunity to articulate his profound understanding of the works themselves, and of the world that produced them. Why was Burney never to reach the heights achieved by Austen? What is the secret of Radcliffe's enduring appeal? What is *Frankenstein* really about? Bill managed not merely to evaluate each work, but to address those questions that will always preoccupy students of the period. I can imagine no better introduction to Romantic fiction than these shrewd, elegantly-written reviews, collected here for the first time.

This collection is long overdue. Bill was too modest to have initiated it during his own lifetime, or to have openly approved its appearance in the journal of which he was editor. But I have often suspected that he hoped that something of this kind would happen one day. He wrote many other essays, richly deserving of republication in book form, and I hope that this initial volley will encourage further collections. The works published here, and the many which I am unable to include, retain their power to educate and to entertain, and should be kept in print.

In addition to Bill's own writing, this issue carries reviews of two volumes in which he had a hand, published during his final months. And Nicola Trott reports on Bill's Memorial Service at pages 126-7.

In my report to the Society's recent AGM I wrote: 'I wish to put on record my gratitude and admiration for the invaluable work done by Bill for the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*.' This special issue of the *Bulletin* is my chief means of doing just that. I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to it, often at short notice.

#### *Acknowledgements*

For permission to reprint copyright material I am grateful to Times Newspapers Ltd.; Bill's executors, T. W. Craik and W. Hutchings; and Mark Turner, Keeper of the Silver Studio at the University of Middlesex.

## In Memoriam: William Ruddick

By MARY WEDD

I FIRST MET BILL in 1977, when he came to the Wordsworth Summer Conference. He was only there for part of the time then and the next year did not come at all. So, in 1979, seeing him at the station on arrival, I was still trying to pin a name to the familiar face when I was caught up in a hug that lifted my feet from the ground. I was surprised - but not displeased! I shared his exuberant joy that we were both back and about to enter into the magical atmosphere that Richard Wordsworth managed to create at those early conferences. This incident was characteristic of Bill's delight in life and of his genius for loving companionship. Of course, a community of interests, which had brought us there, contributed greatly to the friendship which grew between us. As I came to know him better, his modesty ceased to hide from me the width and depth of his learning which left me humbled. He was wonderfully sane and never joined those 'Athenians' of English Literature studies who are interested in 'nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing', but neither did he ever have a closed mind.

I doubt if there was anyone who knew Bill who did not regard him as a friend, and he had a network of contacts in many places and spheres. He took to letting me know if there was a conference coming up in which he thought I should be interested. I think the first of those that we attended together was the Scott Conference at Aberdeen in 1982. Typically, he was an expert, editing and writing on both Scott and Lockhart, whereas I just liked reading and rereading my favourite Scott novels. I did begin to learn some of the esoteric lore at this and a later Scott Conference, but my chief memory of Aberdeen, apart from the good and lasting friendships I made there, is of an outing to Dunnottar Castle. Bill and I paid due and solemn tribute to the unfortunate Covenanters who were put in a dungeon there resembling 'the Black Hole of Calcutta', afterwards given the infamous name of the Whigs' Vault. But it was a beautiful sunny day and soon Bill was calling me to the best vantage-points for my camera and happiness and hilarity took over, as they generally did with him. His apparently effortless wit and his sense of fun made his company a perpetual pleasure.

In 1984 we went to the Conference on Literature and Religion at Durham, the subject of which was 'Coleridge and Schleiermacher'. John Beer, now our revered President of the Lamb Society, gave one of the Major Lectures, on Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*. Bill and I did wrestle manfully with Schleiermacher, faint but pursuing, but it has to be admitted that sometimes in the afternoons we played hookey to go to Evensong in the Cathedral or to walk along the riverbank, admiring the perfect circles made by the bridge-arches and their reflections below. One day, when we had gone up the hill to see the view of the Cathedral and Castle from there, whom should we meet but John Beer on the same errand. Bill chortled with joy that this august figure should be found truanting, just like us. These expeditions always ended up at the Cathedral café, where we celebrated with tea and cakes. It did concern me that perhaps it might be very boring for Bill to have an elderly female always tagging on, but, if so, I knew he was far too kind to let me know it, so one afternoon I suggested we went our separate ways. After my walk I gravitated to the Cathedral tea-shop and there he was, sitting waiting for me.

We regularly attended these biennial conferences at Durham and we also visited St Andrews in 1987 for the celebration of Edwin Muir's centenary. Afterwards, by the kindness of Nick Roe exploring the countryside, we found ourselves in an inn where Wordsworth and Dorothy stayed on their Scottish tour of 1803. Out came Dorothy's Journal and Bill read delightedly

her account of this and of Rumbling Brig, where we stood on the rocks beside the roaring torrent. Dorothy would have scorned my hyperbole about a place 'usually described', she says, 'by people to whom rocks are novelties'!

At each conference we visited we explored the local sights, and Bill was equally knowledgeable about architecture, interior design, the history of art, about music (he was an opera buff), about the eighteenth-century guidebooks, about local history. He generally gave a paper on the subject of the particular occasion, demonstrating his versatility. He was at home in any period of English Literature. His publications ranged from what he called 'a baby's guide' to *Paradise Lost I and II* to the most abstruse unravelling of recent critical theory. Just before he died he telephoned me to tell me with joy that a book on Gray which he had edited with Bill Hutchings, his colleague at Manchester University, was out at last,<sup>1</sup> and corks were popping in the Department there. 'I told them I was with them in spirit', he said. Pick a figure or an area of literature at random - you name it, he was learned in it. For years he was closely associated with and wrote for the *Critical Quarterly*, and reviewed regularly for *Literature and History*, among other journals.

Bill was much entertained by human idiosyncrasy and loved gossip, but he was never malicious. When he first told me about his illness which he met with exemplary courage, he said, 'I don't want sympathy. I want news.' So I took to saving up tit-bits that I thought would tickle his sense of humour. I have not yet quite got out of the habit. Some time ago, pitying my children who will have to clear up after me, I tried to empty my cupboards, one of which was full of Bill's letters. I took them out meaning to throw them away but made the mistake of starting to read them. Soon I was laughing out loud and back they all went into the cupboard. I cannot believe that I shall never again pick up from the mat an envelope with his tiny writing on it. I used to tease him that if it got any smaller it would disappear altogether.

Above all, Bill was kind. He noticed what people were feeling and, without hesitation or self-consciousness, set about gently sharing in or remedying their state of mind, whichever was needed. At the Wordsworth Conference and the Winter School (which grew out of the Conference and started in 1983), his unobtrusive influence could be felt, easing relationships, making sure compatible people met, and creating an atmosphere of approval and friendliness. This was in addition to his masterly introductions and summings-up as Chairman and Senior Tutor, and his prowess on the fells. When I first knew him he did not regard himself as a walker and always joked that his breakthrough came when I got him up Silver How. When eventually 'One got better and the other got wuss' and I began to be afraid to go on the organized walks because I was so slow, he would say, 'I'll walk with you, Mary dear,' which meant being at the tail-end when he could have been at the front. I did not hold him to this but I knew he really meant it. Similarly, at the end of my editorship, when I began to be tired and to feel that I was not doing justice to the *Bulletin*, I confided in him and he said, 'I'll help you with it'. With the aid of a little prod from Tim Wilson, I was able to hand over and the deed was done. In the five years since, Bill has rejuvenated the *Bulletin* and put his own stamp on it.

Bill always stayed close to his roots and, on taking early retirement, lived with his mother in the house which had been allocated to the mine where his father worked. Latterly, they were able to buy it and add a room for Bill's study. I visited them there in 1992 and Bill

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed pp. 120-1, below.

took me for a country walk to the Tyne at Wylam. He also kept in touch with his old university at Leicester and took an active part in the doings of its alumni.

Up to the last minute Bill had hoped to get to this year's Winter School and was talking to me on the phone about arranging the seminar groups, but he had to acknowledge that he was not well enough to come. The wonderful work of the doctors which kept him alive and active for two years had made us dare to hope that he might continue so and it was a great shock when Jonathan Wordsworth had to tell us on the Tuesday night that Bill had died that morning. Giving my lecture the next day and referring to Wordsworth's lines about those 'little, nameless, unremembered acts / Of kindness and of love', I said, 'Where thoughtfulness for others becomes so automatic that it does not register as memorable we recognize a good man', and realized at once that I had described Bill.

He was always dismissive of his own worth and, when planning his funeral service with his parish priest, said that there would be virtually no congregation. In fact, there were some 70 people there. How fortunate we are to have known him and to have had our lives filled with light by his presence.

*Sevenoaks*

## William Ruddick and the Silver Studio

By MARK TURNER

THE PRECARIOUS NATURE of the Silver Studio Collection's finances has meant that we have always been very dependent on voluntary help to carry out our work. Many people have helped us over the years from both within and outside the University but none more so than William Ruddick.

During the early 1970s we had collaborated on a number of exhibitions whilst I was curator of Bolton Art Gallery. When I became curator of the Silver Studio Collection I invited him to help prepare an exhibition for the Museum of London to commemorate the Studio's Centenary. It was for him the start of a love affair with the Collection that was to last until he died. He specialized in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English Literature where the opportunities for entirely new research were limited, so he was overjoyed to be presented with two large rooms filled with designs, letters and diaries that needed cataloguing and collating. He was particularly fascinated by the Silver family and the key position the various members occupied in the artistic life of late nineteenth-century London.

He spent most of his vacations in the chilly first-floor classrooms of the old LCC board school in Edmonton that the Collection then occupied, pounding away on an ancient manual typewriter lent to him by Bobby de Joia. His efforts culminated in a catalogue of the Silver Studio correspondence and an essay on the Silver family for the Silver Studio Centenary exhibition catalogue. He regularly contributed to our exhibition catalogues thereafter, covering such diverse subjects as the role of London suburbia in English Literature and the Silver Studio's contribution to the development of British Art Nouveau. These published essays will always be a lasting memorial to his work at the Silver Studio, but he helped us in so many other ways - from translating a lecture I was to give to the University of Lille into French to wallpapering room sets for an exhibition at Broomfield Museum. Normally the gentlest and mildest of men, he would not tolerate criticism of the work of the Silver Studio from the new breed of design historians whom he felt hid their lack of scholarship behind a mask of jargon and ideology.

Despite suffering great pain he continued to work at the Silver Studio as often as he could. As late as November last year he was working on editing Rex Silver's diaries, which provide a unique insight into the British textile industry in the inter-war years.

Whilst his formidable achievements in the field of English Literature are best recorded by others more qualified than I, his contribution to the academic work of the Silver Studio and thus Middlesex University was very great. His untimely death has entailed the loss of a great scholar and a true friend.

*Silver Studio, Middlesex University*

## Bill Ruddick: A Short Memoir

By D. G. WILSON

BILL BECAME A PART of the Society's scene whilst I was Chairman of the Council: from a small group of interested friends who published what was really a newsletter, we were gradually changing into a more academically orientated body, and were fostering links with other societies with broadly similar aims. David Wickham has recently pointed out some common membership with the Private Libraries Association: the crucial name here is Basil Savage who seemed to know so many eminent literary people, and who, most importantly, began the process of enabling our *Bulletin* to reach a wider audience, and to deserve serious critical attention. Mary Wedd succeeded Basil as Editor, and herself drew in to the work of the Society many who have continued to serve us nobly. Pre-eminent in this number is, of course, Bill Ruddick: I had known him quite some time at our meetings, and in dealings with the *Bulletin*, before it began to dawn on me that in Bill we did indeed have someone very special.

His modesty was of a special kind - in no way affected or emphasized, it was simply that Bill was usually much more interested in what was going on, and what could be achieved together, than dropping names or admitting that he himself has written and published extensively. In truth, we would normally talk much more of his beloved Mother than of himself; as a true Elian (!) I had resisted going to the Wordsworth Winter School for a long time, and when eventually I joined that happy throng, the real stature of our man became apparent. He was always at ease with all those distinguished lecturers, could always introduce or summarize, was masterly in the morning seminars, and, moreover, could usually be relied upon to deliver the crunch quotation or reference. His breadth of knowledge, and by no means only about Romantic Literature, was astonishing, and some measure of his worth can be found, as with Christopher Wren, by looking around the *Bulletin* during the all too short period of his Editorship. I am sure that others better qualified will testify to the achievements of Bill's academic career.

I also want to put on record how much Bill added to the enjoyment of any company 'gathered together'; at our modern version of CL's 'Salutation and Cat', when the *cognoscenti* of the CLS assembled to lunch at the Cosmoba, Bill's arrival invariably was the signal for smiles, and usually also for gales of laughter. Conversation would range widely, from the matter of an erudite article to strange happenings on the journey south - from literature and art to domestic bliss with its little problems - from 'fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute' to that morning's *Guardian* cartoon. We have all lost a real friend, a man who fully lived our 'Elian spirit of friendship and humour', and who represented the best of the life-enhancing aspects of our literary culture. His high regard for the work of the Charles Lamb Society can surely only be matched by the love and friendship which we have all experienced with Bill.

Cambridge

## In Memory of Bill Ruddick

By SIMON CURTIS

That time we took the Rydal 'upper path'  
 To go to Matins down in Grasmere church;  
 That time on Dodd, drenched through by sudden rain;  
 Tarn Hows, that time, in deep snow one late March -  
 I see you gesture, hear your voice again,  
 As now the aftermath  
 Of recollection grows; those good days, gone.  
 Faces and scenes from twenty years come back;  
 'Viewing' Aira Force; Mirehouse walks; Tarn Beck;  
 The *George* at Keswick or the Grasmere *Swan* . . .

You gossiping of Southey, and 'Lodore';  
 Of Rugby's Thomas Arnold at Fox How  
 ('Mere mountain and lake hunting is time lost');  
 The Wordsworths' early days at Windy Brow;  
 Dove Cottage too, and Coleridge as guest -  
 I hear your voice once more,  
 Then see you sat, unwell, two years ago,  
 By Bassenthwaite and silhouetted fells  
 You knew and loved - Barf, Causey Pike, Catbells -  
 The last time we were there; last cameo.

Fleas in the beds at Wythburn when Keats stayed -  
 The funny side of things delighted you;  
 The 'wretched' Liverpoolian called Crump,  
 Who, building Allan Bank, wrecked Wordsworth's view,  
 And put him in the most almighty grump;  
 The poem to a spade . . .  
 The flow of anecdotes streams back, pell-mell;  
 How Wilkie Collins was laid up, quite lame,  
 When he and Dickens (of all people) came;  
 He'd sprained his ankle up on Carrock Fell.

The jokes went with old-fashioned scholar skills,  
 Though 'suits', the 'men in suits', now call the tune;  
 What's 'relevant'? What's 'new'? But not, what's true? -  
 Helm Crag in May, beneath a crescent moon;  
 The lovely *Grasmere* Farington once drew,  
 Or *Skelwith Force*, by Hills.  
 Your learning; lightly worn, was shared, no side,  
 So willingly with friends; one had a sense  
 Of freedom from the grids of relevance.  
 You were rereading Scott the week you died.



With 'suits' now taking over literature,  
The Stokes-Nokes, Hobbs-Nobbs, Boot-Suit theory type  
All fly their lightweight, opportunist kites,  
As learning's lost in fashion and self-hype;  
Students are 'customers'; quotations, 'bytes' -  
You found the 'suits' a bore.  
You'd deprecate the plaudit 'Humanist';  
In truth, Bill, it would well epitomize  
The 'spirit of Elian friendliness'  
You lived for with such humour and such zest.

Simon Curtis is a former colleague of Bill's at Manchester University. He read this elegy at Bill's memorial service at the University's Catholic Chaplaincy on 10 May.

## Joseph Farington: An Introduction

By WILLIAM RUDDICK

JOSEPH FARINGTON, the second son of the Revd William Farington, vicar of Leigh, Lancashire (and later of Warrington) was born on 21 November 1747. The Faringtons were a younger branch of a family which had provided Lancashire with a High Sheriff and fought for the King in the Civil War. They were enterprising and capable in wordly affairs: of the Revd William's seven sons, four (including Joseph) made good marriages, two were successful artists, and the youngest entered his father's profession and duly became the rector of a large London parish.

Joseph Farington probably showed signs of artistic talent as a schoolboy and received encouragement from his parents. In 1763, when he reached 16, they sent him to London to study with the landscape painter Richard Wilson, whose pupil he remained for several years and whose disciple he was proud to be for the rest of his life.

Richard Wilson was 50 when Farington went to him. After beginning life as a portraitist he had gone to Italy in 1750 and there developed into a fine painter of landscape, strongly influenced by Claude in his vision of classic Italian scenery, but differing from his contemporaries in the extent to which he based his paintings on first-hand studies from nature. Instead of turning out imaginary groupings of rocks, woodland and sky in 'ideal' compositions in the manner of Claude, Salvator Rosa or other admired seventeenth-century masters, Wilson offered scenes derived from his sketches of actual sites in the Roman Campagna in which reality might be heightened through a romantic, Claudian sense of light and colour harmonies, or the picturesque groupings of rocks and trees might be exaggerated in order to increase their effectiveness (as they were to be later in the Italian scenes of Turner), but the true beauty of real places lay at the heart of the painter's vision. The need to base landscape painting on actuality was something which he was careful to stress to his students, as Farington's sketchbooks and the *Memoirs* of his fellow-pupil Thomas Jones attest.

Wilson had been back in England for about six years when Farington joined him. He had already painted several views of scenery in England and his native Wales which show a warm Italian light and an essentially Claudian imaginative power being brought to bear on northern landscape. In the years which followed he was to penetrate towards a more profound interpretation of the essential reality of British scenery. It is scarcely surprising that Farington, a pupil who revered his master's methods and achievements, should have developed in a somewhat similar fashion: indeed, for a time, in the late 1760s and early '70s, master and pupil may be seen moving side by side towards a similar change of viewpoint.

Wilson was a good and sympathetic teacher. Traces of his educational methods can be found in Farington's early sketchbooks (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum) and it is clear that, after a certain amount of preliminary copying of designs from the antique (though from books of designs rather than original marbles or plaster casts), through which he was intended to master the technicalities of colouring and shading, Farington was allowed to familiarize himself with examples of successful composition by making copies of seventeenth-century or more modern paintings (including several of Wilson's own) and then to apply his skills to sketching out of doors. Some of his sketches were of places in London, some of old buildings which he saw on short trips by the Thames, and some more grandly picturesque studies of vale and woodland. These are usually framed in a sinuous border of shrubs and overarching trees - a favourite device of Wilson's which Farington had already learned through copying.

Years afterwards, in a *Biographical Note* which he wrote on Richard Wilson, Farington outlined what was essentially the method followed in his own education: 'By Studies made in Tivoli, Albano, Larici, Frascati, Terni, and in the vicinity of Rome, Wilson formed his taste . . . but wherever Wilson studied it was to nature that he principally referred. His admiration of the pictures of Claude could not be exceeded, but he contemplated those excellent works and compared them with what he saw in nature to refine his feeling and make his observations more exact.'

In Farington's case the Claudean influence came via Wilson (whose paintings he thought in many ways superior to those of the earlier master) and, instead of studying at Tivoli and Terni, he sketched in London and on the banks of the River Thames. But the processes of Farington's artistic education were directly derived from Wilson, and his mature topographical studies of British scenery and places may be regarded, for a great deal of the time, as a development of Richard Wilson's methods of landscape study.

Farington and Wilson made sketching expeditions together until at least 1768 (when they visited Oxfordshire, and Farington made a drawing of Oxford very similar to one on which Wilson was working). The sketching trips seem to have been agreeable excursions, with Farington still lively enough after his day's work to make a rapid sketch of his master drawing from nature or the cottage kitchen in which they worked at their drawings of an evening.

The surviving early sketchbooks often show traces of Wilson's correcting hand, with outlines strengthened and shadows deepened in a firm, broad pencil line which is markedly freer than Farington's own. From Wilson he learned to take notes on places of picturesque beauty by making a rapid pencil sketch, often hastily shaded in colour wash of a single shade, and indicating in faint pencil either alongside or on the surface of the sketch the kind (and later the range) of colour which should be used when the rough sketch was redrawn for a larger and more finished version.

Like all good teachers, however, Wilson did not insist that his pupils should follow a single model. In this he was wise, for his own Italianate form of the picturesque did not represent the only kind of tradition open to mid-eighteenth-century landscape painters.

There were, in effect, two main traditions of the picturesque in English art at that moment: Wilson's own, and the Dutch-derived lyrical realism which was practised with such skill by Gainsborough. But in addition there was also a solid English tradition of exact topographical work in which the primary aim of the artist (who was often working for an engraver) was to record what was there, in the form of buildings, townscapes or antiquities, and to invest the painting with harmonious and beautiful qualities only as a secondary means of arousing pleasure in the spectator as he contemplated actuality. The English topographical style had, from the first, owed much to outside influences. In the mid-seventeenth century the engravings of Wenceslaus Hollar and his imitators had fully established the mode. In the early eighteenth century the expanding market for prints of the sights of London, panoramas of cities, views of antiquities and, finally, scenes of natural beauty, encouraged a number of capable minor artists to specialize in topographical painting and sketching. Of these, perhaps the most gifted was Samuel Scott, whose views of the Thames (e.g. his Westminster Bridge paintings of the 1740s) seem to have had a degree of influence on Farington's London river views of the early 1790s. Scott also practised a form of sketching in pencil and wash which bears a distinct resemblance to Farington's: it is unfortunate that direct evidence of Farington's awareness of Scott's work is apparently lacking.

But a powerful new impetus had been given to English topographical painting some 20 years before Farington came to London, when the Venetian artist Canaletto visited this

country and made seminal studies of the Thames and London vistas. Canaletto's monumental but animated panoramas, with their delicate awareness of English colour and light qualities, made an immediate impression on English topographical painters. His works were quickly reproduced by the engravers and as early as 1764 the sketchbooks show the 17 year-old Farington making an effective study of the Thames in the style of Canaletto's *View of Westminster from the Terrace of Somerset House*. Canaletto showed artists how beauty could be derived from the study of actuality without picturesque distortions or alterations by a careful attention to compositional and colour values. His lesson complemented Wilson's teaching (and example) and ensured that Farington was able to take his place in the central late-eighteenth-century realistic tradition where, as Luke Herrmann puts it, 'the classical, the topographical and the Netherlandish naturalistic landscape traditions were all familiar to British artists and connoisseurs'.

Farington's sketch-books of the late 1760s show that he was already interested in native antiquities. Careful sketches of barns, old cottages, farm carts, hoary trees and the occasional ruined abbey or castle exist beside free renderings of woodland scenes which are particularly liable to the operations of Wilson's correcting pencil. Farington was developing the skills of the antiquarian and the topographer, but for the moment he was most interested in his studies of picturesque modes with Wilson. As sketchbook VAM<sup>1</sup> P78 - 1921 (dated 1770) shows, he was also reading Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* in order to increase his understanding of the aesthetic within which he was working. Throughout his life Farington prepared himself thoroughly through note-taking and preliminary studies for whatever commission he was engaged upon, and this thoroughness can be traced back to the years when he was directly under the influence of Wilson.

Farington's early indebtedness to Wilson was profound, and he went on studying Wilson's methods for the rest of his career, as the *Diary* which he started in 1793 makes clear. For at least 15 years after his studies were over Farington continued to work within the conventions of his master's art, framing his compositions with sinuous trees and foliage, seeking Claudean perspectives of distant hills and water, using a delicately graded palette to suggest the gradual recession within a landscape and the spaciousness of light and cloudy sky. It was through Wilson's work that Farington saw and interpreted Claude and the seventeenth-century painters of landscape: though he soon knew many of their works at first-hand (and became a noted connoisseur of Renaissance art), he saw no need to abandon the principles of his master, and it was not until the late 1780s that a different approach to landscape, the outcome of his interest first in Canaletto, and then in historicism and the English topographical school, began to modify significantly his attachment to the sinuous treescapes and picturesque vistas of Wilson's earlier manner and his own Gainsborough-like free sketching style of the 1770s and 1780s.

Like most of the Faringtons, Joseph worked hard and was immediately successful. In 1764-6 he was awarded premiums by the Society of Arts for landscape drawings, and in 1765 he was elected a member of the newly Incorporated Society of which Wilson was a Director. At the Society's exhibition that year he showed his first drawing. He continued to show works at the Society of Artists' exhibitions till 1773, and the titles of the drawings (as well as the surviving sketchbooks from this period) show that he was already settling into his lifelong habit of making holiday tours to places of antiquarian or picturesque interest in the

<sup>1</sup> VAM refers to sketchbooks retained at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Ed.

summer months (September and early October being his favourite period in later years), and working up his rough sketches into more finished paintings during the months which followed. By 1773 Farington had already sketched in North Wales, Lincolnshire and the West Country, in addition to making a short trip to France in 1767. During these years he continued to lodge close to Wilson and presumably to study with him at times. But when Wilson and other important members resigned from the Society of Artists in 1768 and founded the Royal Academy, Farington wisely stayed with the older body and was rewarded with a Directorship in 1772 or '73. Yet at the same time he took advantage of the foundation of the Royal Academy Schools to enrol there as a student in 1769. The future 'Dictator of the Royal Academy' was already showing himself to be a skilful tactician and a true member of the Farington family: as F. Gordon Roe says, 'it is obvious from a survey of his life as a whole, that Farington was gifted with an eye to the main chance'. The marvel is that given his opportunities and the power which he exercised in Royal Academy affairs, he should have remained a man of such obvious fairmindedness and probity.

In the late 1760s Farington was joined in London by his younger brother George, whose instructor he became until George showed gifts as a painter of historical subjects and went on to study with Benjamin West. In 1773 the brothers were commissioned by the well-known art publisher and entrepreneur Alderman Boydell to make drawings from the pictures in the Walpole family's collection at Houghton Hall in Norfolk so that these might be engraved. By 1776 the task was completed and Farington moved to the Lake District (possibly as the result of another commission), where he settled at Keswick and began to contribute to the Royal Academy exhibitions in 1778 with a view entitled *A Waterfall*. He busied himself with topographical sketches of scenes in the Lakes and Cumberland, a number of which were worked up for showing at the Royal Academy in 1779-82, and in 1781 he felt well enough supplied with materials to return to London. There he settled at 35 Upper Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, a house which he was to occupy for the rest of his life. For a short while his former teacher Wilson probably lived nearby, but soon he retired to Wales where, in May 1782, he died.

The prestige of landscape painting was sufficiently advanced by the time Farington came to London as a student, for George Lambert, a distinguished landscape artist, to have been made Chairman of the Society of Artists in 1761, a year after its foundation. In 1765 (the year Farington began to exhibit there) he became its first President. But the degree and kind of public interest in landscape at that moment should not be exaggerated. Just as eighteenth-century poetry persisted in seeing landscape with a Classical, Horatian eye, so connoisseurs preferred landscapes (which were mainly purchased to be mounted over doors or fireplaces as parts of decorative schemes) to imitate the Dutch realists or Claude or the wilder Salvator Rosa. George Lambert was a skilful imitator of seventeenth-century landscape artists and so succeeded. Richard Wilson, who developed a way of looking at English scenery in his last years which is altogether more original (pointing forward, at times, to Constable's oil studies), was unable to find patrons for his pictures of English scenes and had to fall back on repeated versions of his Italian studies of the 1750s to please purchasers with memories of the Grand Tour. Gainsborough, who painted landscapes from the 1740s onwards, was forced to rely on portrait commissions for a living. The way from his front door to his studio was lined with landscape paintings which his sitters scarcely troubled to look at and for which he knew there could be no sale.

It was not until the late 1770s and '80s that English people began to see their native habitat free from neo-Classical or Italianate associations and the pre-Romantic taste for English scenery really established itself. In poetry, the pioneering nature style of Thomson's *Seasons*

finally overcame the grand manner of the heroic couplet, and patriotic, reflective poetry rooted in the Englishman's natural life and surroundings in a country setting emerged with the poems of Cowper. In aesthetics the success of the Revd William Gilpin's picturesque *Tours* (the first of which was published in 1783) and the publication of Gray's letters and travel journals also mark the change. At the same time a flood of guide-books directed travellers towards the most beautiful and historically interesting areas of Britain, while, with an ever-increasing sense of national identity and our national past, readers bought and studied antiquarian accounts of the country's architectural remains.

Picturesque, antiquarian and topographical publications all offered work to artist-illustrators, and Farington was well-prepared to take advantage of such opportunities. He was not without private means, but if he wanted to make money his best plan was to work for the booksellers and publishers of topographical prints. He had the example of Wilson's impoverished last years as a warning: the more imaginative branches of art might advance his reputation at the Royal Academy's exhibitions, but the strong public demand for engravings of scenes possessing local or antiquarian interest meant that he would do well to develop his skills as a topographical draughtsman. During the 1780s Farington established firm links with publishers and engravers. The restrictions which such work imposed upon him were, in fact, congenial ones. He was interested in engraving processes and himself became a skilful amateur in the art. Topographical draughtsmanship brought out his best and strongest qualities and in using simple pen and colour wash techniques which could be copied by the aquatint engraver he refined and strengthened his art.

Although Farington only exhibited a few paintings at the Royal Academy each year his standing within the institution advanced steadily during the 1780s. He was elected an Associate in 1783 and became a full Member in 1785. In the years that followed, he became a respected and, ultimately, a dominating figure in the Academy's affairs. As his *Diary* shows, he was a skilful committee man, and a born manipulator and arranger, who had the dignity and well-being of the Academy at heart, and did much good work in maintaining its financial independence and fostering its concern for younger artists. He helped Sir Thomas Lawrence establish himself during his first years in London, encouraged Constable (who went to him with a letter of introduction in 1795), and was alternately disapproving about Turner's work and fascinated by it from the very beginning. To younger artists Farington could be of use not only in matters relating to the Academy, but also as one who knew much about Wilson's methods of work and could give a clear account of them, as well as having much sensible advice of his own to impart.

Farington's status as a topographical draughtsman also rose steadily during the 1780s. He regularly sold drawings of places to private buyers (usually for between ten and twenty guineas) and also received steady patronage from the printsellers. Some of his views of the Lake District were issued in the earlier 1780s but it was probably the success of Gilpin's book on the beauties of the Lakes, published in 1786, which led to the appearance of Farington's *Views of the Lakes, etc, in Cumberland and Westmorland* in 1789. This edition, which had 20 coloured plates, was enlarged to one with 43 when the book was reissued in 1816. Another folio, the *Views of Cities and Towns in England and Wales*, was published by W. Byrne in 1790, and Farington's best-known set of illustrations, those to *An History of the River Thames* (two volumes, containing 76 aquatints, with text by William Combe, the author of *Dr Syntax*) appeared in 1794 and 1796. This work was dedicated to Horace Walpole, whose family collection of paintings the Farington brothers had copied nearly 20 years earlier.

By 1794 Farington was also related to Walpole through his marriage to Susan Hammond, daughter to a Prebendary of Norfolk who had himself married into the Walpole family. It was a good marriage, both socially and in terms of private happiness. When Mrs Farington died in 1800 her husband was forced to recognize that his last incentive to struggle for worldly success as an artist had gone. He had long been free from financial pressures and for the previous seven years had been spending much time keeping the *Diary* which he wrote until the day of his death, and which has proved an invaluable source of information for art and other historians since its rediscovery in 1921. Royal Academy affairs also took up a lot of his time, and Farington enjoyed a quiet but extensive social life, almost never dining alone.

But the once-held notion that Farington realized he had failed as an artist and gave up in middle life is very far from the truth. Almost everything that is known about him suggests that he was a man with a strongly factual turn of mind (a born enquirer after details, facts and figures, and therefore a born diarist in the Pepysian line), whose natural development, after the picturesque and somewhat Rococo phase of his art (in which Wilson seems rather to have encouraged him) was over, was towards topographical draughtsmanship which he raised, in his best work, towards the classical serenity of Wilson and, increasingly, from the middle 1780s onwards, towards the drama of Canaletto's English paintings. The best of Farington's work is either serene (for example the views of Lancaster and Carlisle) or else invests trees or a mass of buildings with a highly individual sense of strength and power, which is akin to the controlled energy inherent in certain forms of neo-Classical architecture, but has as its subject the most inherently British scenes.

This last point requires explanation. Farington was a man, it seems clear, whose imagination was fed both by the evidence of his own eyes (disciplined by a well-developed sense of harmony and form) and by a sense of place and history which is very much part of the emerging ethos of Romantic historicism. From early youth he had been drawn towards antiquities; to that which revealed the actual past of British civilisation. The sketchbooks of the late 1760s show that he was already interested in British antiquities and had, for that time, an unusually developed awareness of the historical significance of humble vernacular architecture as well as the grander remains of medieval Gothic structures (this dual awareness can still be seen in such mature drawings as those of Caernarvon or the Edinburgh Castle view; in these the might of military architecture is contrasted with the old houses which nestle beneath their protecting walls). Farington also saw the picturesque possibilities of such ancient structures, as any artist of his period was bound to do, but, though perfectly capable of producing the regulation mossy cottage amid encircling trees, he chose to do so but rarely after the first, slightly Rococo, phase of his career. His view of natural and man-made beauty was essentially dual: the same rough sketch might include a freely-drawn woodland setting with swirling lines to delineate the animation of branches and foliage and, in the background, a carefully-drawn outline of a ruin or a group of buildings. The sketch could be developed into a finished drawing in which the picturesque elements predominated, or into an exact topographical view. In looking at nature, the sketchbooks of the period 1765-90 reveal Farington's eye was searching for picturesque material (which was increasingly chosen because of its suitability for engraving rather than for development into finished oil or water-colour paintings) but also for native antiquities. Very early in his career he began to make careful sketches of ancient trees, and, in particular, of that most English of trees (the backbone of England's ships in the eighteenth century) - the oak. The oak is famed for its longevity and an oak might serve as a witness to England's history as well as a castle or an abbey - with the added emotional charge of being a yet-living witness to the deeds of men

long dead. The mood is caught by Cowper's *Yardley Oak*, a poem written in 1791, only two years after Farington's *The Lady Oak, near Cressage, Shropshire* was painted:

Oh couldst thou speak . . .  
 By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,  
 The clock of history, facts and events  
 Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts  
 Recovering, and mistated setting right -  
 Desperate attempt, till trees shall speak again!

The strong pre-Romantic sense of the storm and stress inherent within nature which the 1780s sketchbooks show never developed beyond the confines of his private portfolios: in the more finished work it was calmed into the elegant Wilsonian borders of encircling trees or Dutch prettiness. Farington's earliest sketchbooks (and Wilson's annotations) suggest that he had capabilities in the line of animated nature-drawing which Gainsborough was developing in the 1760s and '70s. The free and vigorous penmanship of his sketches suggests he had a much deeper sense of the energy of creation than his more finished works display. In these, from the beginning, he strove for calmness and repose. But in the late 1780s and early '90s his attitude to nature, and to antiquities, underwent an interesting change and, in the process, revealed a depth of imaginative power which might otherwise have remained unsuspected.

In 1788 Farington went on a tour of Scotland lasting for over three months as a result of a scheme to publish a volume of engravings of Scottish scenes. During his protracted tour he saw much of the country and worked with his customary thoroughness at mastering Scottish history, learning about the present state of the country and making a large number of sketches and more finished studies. The cultural and aesthetic stimulus of the Scottish visit revitalized his imagination and also provided him with ample opportunities for exercising his skills in all the main areas of his art. Dutch realism shows in his drawings of Edinburgh streets and houses, a Claudean sense of balance in the panoramas of Scottish hill and lowland scenery, and in his drawings of Scottish antiquities he raises exact topographical draughtsmanship to a new strength and dignity. In every area his art was refined and simplified, and in the last area the change was greatest of all.

A careful study of such drawings as those of Stirling Castle shows that while losing nothing of compositional majesty or balance, and while preserving the most absolute accuracy of delineation, Farington has invested the ancient military structure with a Canaletto-like strength and solidity and power. The sense of energy contained in these drawings is partly the result of compositional factors, such as the interplay of horizontal and diagonal forces within the design, but their use of space and colour is related to something which is essentially extra-pictorial: Farington's own sense of history (that is, the feudal might these surviving medieval structures exemplify) and also a sense (which points straight forward towards the Romantic aesthetic in art and literature) of the inherent harmony which links, at best, the works of nature with the works of man. The view of Stirling Castle creates a complex linear and colour pattern which throws its strongest emphasis on the rock immediately beneath the Castle, from which the strong stone walls seem to grow as much as to spring. This powerful sense of the dynamic relationship between art and nature is maintained at full strength in only a handful of Farington's finest Scottish drawings, but it exists in a less dramatic form in several of the best antiquarian topographical drawings of the following half dozen years. The Caernarvon Castle study, the Durham view, and, almost on the level of the Scottish drawings, the fine drawing of Windsor Castle, show his work at its most finely integrated.



Whether Farington himself fully understood what he had achieved in such drawings is not clear; indeed, a close inspection of the Windsor Castle drawing will show that here, as is generally the case with these studies, he actually weakened his own design as soon as he began to ink over the sharp pencil outlines with his highly characteristic broken and dotted pen-line: his penmanship, usually so animating and lively, now seems to distract the spectator's attention from the solid force of the original pencil and wash drawings.

In any case, Farington was drawn back towards picturesque topography by the commissions which came his way in succeeding years. *An History of the River Thames* was followed by Lyson's *Britannia Depicta* (1806) and *Britannia Magna* (1818), the drawings for which occupied the ageing artist over long periods.

Farington's last years were busy and interesting in spite of patches of ill health and a certain degree of nervous trouble. The affairs of the Academy, dining out, conversation and his *Diary* occupied much of his time, and he embarked on various literary schemes such as a life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which was gratifyingly well-received when it came out in 1819, and a history of the Academy which he unfortunately never finished. He was relieved to be clear of all professional commissions when the last of his drawings for *Britannia Magna* was done in 1818, but he went on with private commissions until almost the end of his life, drawing on the large store of preliminary or part-finished sketches which he had built up over the years.

The generally-accepted view has been that Farington soon grew disappointed at his lack of success in the higher branches of art and resigned himself to being nothing more than a commercial draughtsman. The bulk of his sketchbooks and drawings, however, suggest that after some early flirtations with pure landscape he settled down very happily to topographical drawing, and that, with the examples of Canaletto and Wilson to inspire him, he sought to raise the dignity and artistic excellence of what he took to be no insignificant branch of painting. But, in addition, his late sketchbooks show that as he withdrew from active involvement with commercial publications, he returned to pure landscape as a form of art which, in the days of his pupillage with Wilson, had interested him, but which for many years he had virtually abandoned. Now, however, he returned to it in a way which shows the degree to which his study of Wilson's paintings, as well as his awareness of recent developments, had affected his ideas. The late notes on colour tones and the thumbnail sketches which fill page after page of sketchbook VAM P71 - 1921 (1812) show that in place of his early interest in picturesque composition Farington was now fascinated by the problem of suggesting light: its qualities at particular times of day, in particular weather conditions, on particular surfaces such as distant hills or water. The pupil of Wilson, whose best work shares his master's preoccupation with colour tone, even when this is being suggested with only the restricted possibilities of white paper and a single colour wash, seems, in his old age, to have become affected by Turner's preoccupation with light. Sketches entitled *effect, night* or *effect, 7 am, windy morning* even point towards the much later studies of the French Impressionists. But unfortunately the larger, more finished studies for which these notes could serve as starting-points were never made. A lifetime of note-taking seems to have reached its logical conclusion: the notes and tiny sketches could serve as a score serves a practiced musician or a chess diagram one skilled in the game. Farington's interest in this late phase was purely analytical: the analysis once made in his own mind and the problem of tones and harmonies solved, there was no longer any need for the finished picture to be made. His late sketchbooks show an artist who has moved into an area between two mediums, the verbal and the colourist's. They may perhaps be seen as the final, not unhappy, stage of that process of recording reality through words as well as pictures which had been

begun by Wilson's insistence on pictures being exactly annotated, had developed with the notebooks he kept both in preparation for and during his successive summer tours, and had become most marked since he began the writing of his *Diary* in the early 1790s.

Both the *Diary* and Farington's paintings, when taken together, suggest that he was, by nature, a born recorder of actuality and a man whose finest gift was to raise the depiction of reality to the level of art. He was educated, intelligent, and, in his own sober way, a man of strong imagination which found expression through historicism (as can be seen in his fine description of his presence at one of Napoleon's military reviews in the 1802 volume of his *Diary*: Farington's sense of Napoleon as the agent of destiny is as strongly expressed as in the work of the Romantic writers who were 40 years his junior) and an almost neo-Classical search for refined and economical beauty in art. Yet the poise and balance of his Carlisle and Lancaster views, or the lyrical drawings of Windsor from Eton meadows is balanced by his Dutch eye for lively scenes of human habitation: no great figure-drawer himself, he could suggest the interestingness of people through the individuality of the places where they lived. At all times he was an exact and effective draughtsman, and for a few years in the late 1780s and early '90s his combination of scholarship and Romantic awareness raised topographical draughtsmanship to the level of dynamic works of art.

Reprinted from *Joseph Farington: Watercolours and Drawings* (Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, 1976)

## The Suburban Villa in Literature: 1880-1940

By WILLIAM RUDDICK

'IT IS A STATISTICAL FACT that most family people in Britain would rather have a suburban house than any other kind of home', declares Anne Scott-James in *The Pleasure Garden*, published in 1977. She finds the reason for this quite clear: 'A suburban house is compact and private, and it allows the owners to create their own world; its garden has advantages to match'.

But approval such as this was hard to find in literature before the 1970s. In *The Dreaming Suburb* (1958) R. F. Delderfield speaks of an earlier attitude - one which characterizes most books dealing with the suburbs published between 1880 and 1940: 'Suburban is never said without a sneer or a hint of patronage. This is curious, for three-quarters of our population continue to reside in suburbs of one sort or another.' Suburb mockery has its roots in a long, very English, tradition of poking fun at the lower class or less smart areas of Georgian London. Allied to this is a second tradition, going back at least to the days of the Regency, of making jokes about the operations and creations of the speculative builder. One recalls the contemporary jingle about the stucco facades of Regent Street and the Regents Park terraces -

And is not our Nash, too, a very great master?

He finds us all bricks and he leaves us all plaster

- while the plain brick fronts of Wimpole Street were condemned by Tennyson in *In Memoriam* (1850) as 'the long, unlovely street'.

As Londoners moved outwards in the second half of the nineteenth century, the satirists followed them. The early garden suburbs such as Bedford Park and Belsize Park were widely praised for their healthiness, fresh air, good architecture and superior amenities. But the scaled-down versions run up by speculative builders in the 1880s and later (whether in terraced or semi-detached units), and the even smaller houses with gardens which sped in every direction around the great cities in the late 1920s and the '30s, attracted widespread criticism from planners, architectural writers, novelists and poets. Indeed until about the middle of the 1970s, when the swing of taste away from tower blocks and flats back to the individual house stimulated a reappraisal of pre-war architecture and a series of books and television programmes on suburbia, it was hard to find a writer who had a good word for the suburbs or their way of life. The change of tone has been sudden and radical.

The very title of the redoubtable Mrs Panton's *Suburban Residences and How to Circumvent Them* (1896) speaks of a basic disapproval of the size and facilities of the larger suburban villa. In less commodious surroundings, as 'The Laurels', Brickfield Terrace, Holloway, Mr Pooter, the hero of George and Weedon Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody* (1892) had already done his not-very-successful best to improve his 'nice six-roomed residence, not counting basement, with a front breakfast-parlour'. Mr Pooter paints the servant's wash-stand, towel-horse and chest of drawers with bright red enamel (she says she thinks they looked as good the way they were), and then goes on to paint the bath in the same shade, to the consternation of Mrs Pooter who (less adventurous soul that she is) says she's never heard of such a thing. The fact that the house is rented prevents Mr Pooter from altering basic colour schemes: when the old stair carpet turns out to be too narrow for the new house he ventures forth in search of dark chocolate paint to match up with the landlord's paintwork at the sides. A piano is acquired on a three-year scheme of hire purchase, and the

illustrations show the usual white marble chimney piece, pier glass, central table with its plush cloth, horsehair armchairs and wax fruit under a glass dome of Mr Pooter's class and period.

Endless small disasters befall the Pooters, but 'The Laurels' is indisputably a home. Warmth and a basic cheerfulness mark the story of their adventures and (more usual) misadventures at 'The Laurels'. In the main, however, the records of suburbia make for gloomy reading. In an anonymous short story called *The Woes of Mrs Caractacus Brown* published in *Cassell's Family Magazine* for 1892, a young bank clerk with literary aspirations and his loyal country-bred wife endure the discomforts of 10 Alabama Terrace, Islington, for the full term of a customary three-year lease until his sudden success as a writer enables them to escape. Their story can be compared with other accounts of life in the older suburban terraces at that period:

There was a black little kitchen, well-stocked with beetles, earwigs, crickets, mice, white ants and rats. There was a study for Mr Brown at the back of the house, smelling very mouldy, and with the paper peeling off the walls; and a little conservatory for Mrs Brown, which had the signal merit of promptly killing every plant that was ever put into it.

Mr Brown finds it hard to write with dogs barking and parrots chattering in the neighbouring gardens. Mrs Brown finds life lonely after the close-knit community of the country village in which she had lived as a child. They suffer bad health because of the drains (which the landlord refuses to put right), their children are feeble, and their nerves go to pieces after the first couple of years. Their escape to the country is seen as having come in the nick of time.

Such attitudes to suburban life persist into the twentieth century, though with less of a sense of first-hand knowledge; perhaps with more of the feel of snobbish prejudice about them (sometimes social, sometimes political in its origin) as can be felt in two writers as dissimilar as Beatrice Kean Seymour and George Orwell. Beatrice Kean Seymour's novel *Youth Rides Out* (1928) shows a young couple with a moneyed background trying to live on the husband's modest salary in a small suburban house (in Liverpool, admittedly, but the setting is unimportant); it could equally well be in north London.

It was small, but it looked on to the strip of garden in which Lindsay spent his spare time coaxing a lawn to smoothness, and small seedlings and plants to a new independent life of their own.

Small though the house is, the wife, Camilla, who has been brought up in grander surroundings, needs the help of a living-in maid to cook, clean and assist with the new baby. The servant is disorganized, however, the house seems difficult to cope with, and before long Camilla is regretting the 'effortless existence' of her childhood, finding her own little house an annoyance, its walls seeming to close in on her.

Gloomy though this view of suburban living is, a far gloomier one (from the husband's point of view this time) can be found in George Orwell's final pre-war novel *Coming Up for Air* (1939). Orwell's depressed commercial-salesman hero prepares to leave his house in Ellesmere Road, West Bletchley, one very ordinary morning. 'Do you know the road I live in?' he asks the reader, and adds, 'Even if you don't, you know fifty others exactly like it'. He mentions 'the stucco front, the creosoted gate, the privet hedge, the green front door' (the few colours used on houses before the War and the absence of colour wash made the estates much more sombre than they are today). Orwell's hero reflects on how the leasehold system and 16-year mortgages increase the cost of a house such as his by a full half and put fat

profits in the builders' pockets. To him the street is 'just a prison with the cells all in a row. A line of semi-detached torture chambers'. But at the end of the novel he is seen making his way back through Southall to the 'miles and miles of ugly houses, with people living dull decent lives inside them'. Modern England offers no alternative.

Orwell's description of suburban living is not without a note of patronizing contempt which is, of course, partly political, but also owes a lot to rigid social attitudes ('ugly houses with people leading dull decent lives inside them'), snobbery, and simple ignorance. The novelists who deal with suburbia generally show little real knowledge of it; one notices that exact descriptions of the interiors of these 'ugly houses' are scarcely ever to be found. Whether socialist or Tory in their allegiances, writers generally disliked the suburbs and what (they imagined) suburbia stood for.

For several years in the 1930s, John Betjeman (in later years a leader in the new appreciation of suburbia with his *Metroland* and similar television programmes) was the editor of the *Architectural Review*. In 1937 he cast a period eye along the 'interminable avenues' of the suburbs and speculated: 'in twenty years' time, when the Building Societies have got more than their money back' only the carefully-tended gardens would have improved. The actual houses would be in a poor state. 'Bay windows will be falling out, foundations crumbling, plumbing leaking, leaded lights letting in the rain'. By 1957, he concluded, 'Metroland will be rather unpleasant'. Time has shown this to be excessively pessimistic: in the main the pre-war estates have lasted well, certainly far better than most people expected them to do when they were built. And by the time he made his 'Metroland' television feature, over 35 years after the essay just quoted from was composed, Sir John's feelings about suburban architecture had undergone a total change of heart.

But the mood of the 1930s was sharply hostile to the new housing estates: of that there can be no doubt. Betjeman's contemporary, Sir Osbert Lancaster, knowledgeably and wittily satirized the fashions of suburban architecture, and the interior decoration and furnishing of suburban houses in the drawings and text of *Pillar to Post* (1938) and *Homes Sweet Homes* (1939). The comedy of such classifications as 'Wimbledon Transitional', incorporating 'the revival of half-timbering, a method of building which has been allowed to remain in a state of well-merited neglect for nearly three centuries' or its down-market mutant 'By-Pass Variegated' in the former book is matched by the splendours of 'Modernistic' interiors in the latter ('radios lurk in tea-caddies and bronze nudes burst assunder at the waistline to reveal cigarette lighters; and *nothing is what it seems*').

For all the brilliance of such satire the suburban scenes in pre-war books are noticeably lacking in a sense of real life really being lived. It is a positive delight to turn even from witty mockery to the quirky but genuine cheerfulness of Stevie Smith, the poet and novelist who spent most of her adult life in Avondale Road, Palmers Green, with a formidable aunt who features in *Novel on Yellow Paper* (1936) as 'the Lion of Hull'. The richest page of the book concerns Aunt's nightly foraging in the larder: 'No light late-night cup of Horlicks is helping her now, but the cold game pie she found in the larder. . . . Already my Aunt has the feeling "Oh lovely Meal-O, oh blessed food".' The scene is warm and cheerful, with the cheerfulness of the Ealing comedies of London life that were to be made in the immediate post-war years. Unlike almost all the treatments of London suburban life written at that time it has its roots in real knowledge: and it is neither dismissive, patronizing, snobbish, nor doctrinaire.

Subdued Passion and Controlled Emotion:  
Wordsworth's 'Extempore Effusion upon the Death of  
James Hogg'

By WILLIAM RUDDICK

A Lecture delivered to the Wordsworth Summer Conference 1992

AS WE ADVANCE through the second week of the Wordsworth Summer Conference, our days being well filled by lectures, by seminars, by walks and excursions, by nights shortened by those same early morning walks and by midnight conversations, our digestions challenged too, perhaps, by rich and luscious viands - one may be forgiven for feeling at moments a very little tired. When I sit at the front here, I sometimes cast an eye around, and I can see, even during the most uplifting and edifying discourses, that the eager, keen profile begins to sag just a little and is yanked up in the air again. The bright eye is masked or obscured momentarily as the matchstick gives way, and the lid drops down to be jerked back heavenwards once again.

So, making allowance for human fallibility (including my own, as a critic of literature), I thought it might not be a bad idea this evening if I allowed your minds to relax a bit by offering you a lecture in which there will be no firework displays of current critical orthodoxies and unorthodoxies, with all the difficult terminology which usually accompanies these. It is a lecture that harks back to the dim and distant days of De Selincourt (the sort of dim and distant days with which I feel most at home), because what it's going to offer you is really nothing more than some very old-fashioned speculations on how biographical evidence may throw light upon the nature of artistic achievement. It is also going to be a lecture in which the two most complex words will not be mine, but Wordsworth's - that is, the words 'extempore' and 'effusion', which he chose to describe his lament for the death, within a very few years, of a whole generation of his poetical friends and contemporaries.

Wordsworth's prose titles are often notoriously clumsy, but they are not usually inexact. An extempore effusion is precisely what the poem I shall be talking about was. Wordsworth could agonize over his poems, labouring long and hard to complete and perfect them, but, every now and then, one came to him in quintessential romantic fashion - like leaves to a tree, to use Keats's unforgettable words. The fact that 'Tintern Abbey' was composed while he and Dorothy were completing a walking tour in the Wye Valley is very well known: 'Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol' he recorded in the Fenwick note.<sup>1</sup> On 16 April 1802, while he and Dorothy were returning home from the visit to the Clarksons' house by Brothers Water, and Dorothy left him sitting on a bridge while she went to look at the lake, her Journal records that she returned to find William 'writing a poem descriptive of the sights & sounds we saw and heard'.<sup>2</sup> That poem was 'The cock is crowing, the stream is flowing' - two marvellously vivid stanzas in length. And earlier, on 26 March that same year, William had struggled unsuccessfully all evening to alter

<sup>1</sup> *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* ed. Ernest De Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (5 vols., Oxford, 1940-9) (hereafter *PW*), ii. 517. All quotations from Wordsworth's poetry and Fenwick notes are from this edition.

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Grasmere Journals* ed. Pamela Woof (Oxford, 1991), p. 87.

a poem; then, 'While I was getting into bed he wrote the Rainbow'<sup>3</sup> - another good example of Wordsworthian creative spontaneity.

Thomas McFarland's fine, recent study, *William Wordsworth: Intensity and Achievement* (Oxford, 1992), contains a damning chapter on Wordsworth's later poetry, forthrightly entitled 'Wordsworth's Desiccation'. Whether regretfully or otherwise, one has to acknowledge the force of many of his charges. Except that most of us would want to put in a plea for, at the very least, a particular poem here and there from among the later work. Above all, I would want to nail my colours to the mast for the 'Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg' - a poem which, in Mary Moorman's words, reveals, 'as by a flash of lightning', what he felt and how he felt about the poets who had been his contemporaries. Moorman goes on: 'few people, said one who knew him well, know how Wordsworth loves his friends'.

In the 15 years during which I have attended the Wordsworth Summer Conference, I have never heard anyone speak at any length on the 'Extempore Effusion', so I am in no danger of leading you on a tour of over-familiar material, as I try to reveal the depth of Wordsworth's affections - of how he loves his friends as they are embodied in this poem. I hope that you will be interested to see how this spontaneous, almost the instantaneous filtering and selecting process, which turned very diverse, very disparate memories into a unified poem (very little of which was altered after its first composition), reveals one of Wordsworth's truly great moments of creative - or perhaps I should say recreative - imagination. (What I mean by recreative will emerge as I go along, and, in any case, I will say a word or two more about it as I near the end of this lecture. It's not difficult to understand, I promise you that - so don't worry.) Since it is a poem that isn't widely known, it might be sensible at this point simply to read it. The writers catalogued are James Hogg, Sir Walter Scott, Coleridge, Lamb, George Crabbe and Felicia Hemans.

When first, descending from the moorlands,  
I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide  
Along a bare and open valley,  
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered,  
Through groves that had begun to shed  
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,  
My steps the border minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,  
'Mid mouldering ruins low he lies;  
And death upon the braes of Yarrow,  
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes:

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,  
From sign to sign, its stedfast course,  
Since every mortal power of Coleridge  
Was frozen as its marvellous source;

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,  
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth:

<sup>3</sup> *Grasmere Journals*, p. 82.

And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,  
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,  
Or waves that own no curbing hand,  
How fast has brother followed brother,  
From sunshine to the sunless land!

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumbers  
Were earlier raised, remain to hear  
A timid voice, that asks in whispers,  
'Who next will drop and disappear?'

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,  
Like London with its own black wreath,  
On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-looking,  
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,  
Thou too art gone before, but why,  
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,  
Should frail survivors heave a sigh?

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,  
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;  
For Her who, ere her summer faded,  
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

No more of old romantic sorrows,  
For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid!  
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,  
And Etrick mourns with her their Poet dead.

The early 1830s were sobering years for Wordsworth. As he entered his sixties his own generation of fellow-writers began to die. George Crabbe died in February 1832, Scott in the following September, Coleridge in July 1834, and Charles Lamb in December. Mrs Hemans died in May 1835, and there was one more death to follow before the year drew to a close. But meanwhile, in the spring of 1835, disaster struck hard at Rydal Mount. Sarah Hutchinson, Dora Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth all fell ill together. Dora recovered, but Sarah Hutchinson died, rather unexpectedly, on 23 June, and, though Dorothy did not follow her (as the Wordsworths expected), it was soon clear that her mind had collapsed gravely and, it seemed, permanently. Wordsworth was deprived of his sister's daily companionship almost as totally as if she had followed his beloved sister-in-law into the grave.

In November 1835, Mary Lamb through Edward Moxon the publisher, asked Wordsworth to compose an epitaph for her brother's memorial stone at Edmonton. Wordsworth responded with a direct and moving poem of 38 lines, too long for its intended purpose, but full of powerful and highly-charged feeling.<sup>4</sup> He records Lamb's virtues and then, without

<sup>4</sup> 'Written after the death of Charles Lamb', *PW* iv. 272-6.



specifically dwelling on Lamb's life-long devotion to Mary, concludes with the touchingly heartfelt cry: 'O, he was good, if e'er a good Man lived!' In its first form this epitaph on Charles Lamb was concluded on 19 November.

In December Wordsworth added to it, bringing it to a final length of no less than 131 lines. In this form it does deal at some length (though without going into biographical detail) with the fraternal love which united Charles and Mary Lamb throughout their difficult years together, after Mary Lamb had killed their mother in a fit of mental derangement, and Charles had accepted legal responsibility for her. In Mary's loving presence, Wordsworth asserts, Charles found companionship and recompense for the most complete and perfect relationship that it is possible to imagine. The verse describing this perfect relationship resonates with Wordsworth's own sense of having lost Dorothy's loving companionship. His own pain is absorbed into the celebration of a fraternal love once all-powerful - and of course his compassion for Mary Lamb, the lonely survivor of the now broken bond, is very clear and strong.

In between Wordsworth's composition of the two parts of his elegy for Lamb, another wholly unexpected stimulus to the epitaphic and the elegiac mood was provided by a piece of news which reached Rydal Mount shortly after 21 November. The *Newcastle Journal* of that date carried a notice of the death of the poet James Hogg, and someone either sent Wordsworth a copy of the newspaper, or brought it to the house to show him. The Fenwick note tells us how the 'Extempore Effusion' came into being. It was composed, Wordsworth recalled, 'immediately after reading a notice of the Ettrick Shepherd's death in the Newcastle paper, to the Editor of which I sent a copy for publication.'<sup>5</sup> A fuller account of what happened can be found in the diary of the Revd Francis Kilvert, the Victorian clergyman who met Wordsworth's niece, Elizabeth Hutchinson, in 1871: 'Miss Hutchinson said that once when she was staying at the Wordsworths' the poet was much affected by reading in the newspaper the death of Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. Half an hour afterwards he came into the room where the ladies were sitting and asked Miss Hutchinson to write down some lines which he had just composed. She did so and these lines were the beautiful Poem called *The Graves of the Poets*.'<sup>6</sup> Kilvert gets the poem's title wrong, but everything else rings true, and the story of the poem being composed in half an hour is accepted by Mary Moorman and Stephen Gill, and there seems no reason to question it.<sup>7</sup>

Let's focus on what seems to have happened in those 30 minutes during which eleven four-line stanzas of elegy came into existence. To begin with, Wordsworth's mind clearly filtered out a lot of very human, very understandable personal qualifications, hesitations, doubts, even feelings of disapproval regarding some of the writers who he laments so movingly. To show what I mean, let me turn to the writer whose death triggered off the poem - the Scottish poet, novelist, erstwhile shepherd, latter-day farmer, ballad-collector and miscellaneous writer, James Hogg. Wordsworth didn't know Hogg at all well and he didn't much care either for him or for his writings: 'He was undoubtedly a man of original genius, but of coarse manners and low and offensive opinions', says the Fenwick note frostily.<sup>8</sup> Wordsworth thought that Hogg's poems possessed merit up to a point, but declared that Hogg's best-known poem, 'The

<sup>5</sup> *PW* iv. 459.

<sup>6</sup> *PW* iv. 462.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography* (2 vols., Oxford, 1957-65) (hereafter Moorman), ii. 518; Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford, 1989), p. 376.

<sup>8</sup> *PW* iv. 459.

Queen's Wake', was marred, because Hogg was 'too illiterate to write in any measure or style that does not savour of balladism'.<sup>9</sup>

Hogg and Wordsworth had had their misunderstandings in the past - and Hogg had dared to parody Wordsworth - but it was he who had first shown Wordsworth the Yarrow, that most poetically haunted of Scottish streams, during the Scottish tour of 1814. Hogg's memory seemed precious to Wordsworth now, because it was inextricably bound up with that of a Scottish writer he really did care about: Hogg's friend and erstwhile patron, Sir Walter Scott. Hogg had first guided Wordsworth's steps to the braes of Yarrow in September 1814, and the poem suggests a rather bare, bleak landscape, as Wordsworth reminds us. In September 1831 there was to be another visit which, in the poem, is described in richer hues. This autumnal visit - autumnal in both context and association - the 'Extempore Effusion' recalls, saying,

When last along its banks I wandered,  
Through groves that had begun to shed  
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,  
My steps the border minstrel led.

The 'border minstrel' was Scott, and Wordsworth is recalling the occasion when he and Dora ventured to Abbotsford in an open carriage for what was to be the last time. They were visiting Scott on the eve on the ill and exhausted poet-novelist's departure for Italy. He was going there in search of a renewal of health and strength to enable him to work on towards paying off that massive debt of £120,000, a debt of honour with which he had wrestled since his financial catastrophe of 1826.

From the day they had first met on William and Dorothy's Scottish tour in 1803, Wordsworth and Scott had been fast friends, but Wordsworth had had difficulty in coping with the spectacle of Scott's repeated literary successes with historical verse narratives - *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, *The Lady of the Lake*, and so on - in the years when public acceptance and financial reward obstinately refused to accompany Wordsworth's own publications. He had been disturbed from the start by the way Scott's attitude towards poetry lacked his own high sense of purpose. Scott had declared in 1803 that he could, if he chose, get more money from the booksellers than he could ever wish to have. Wordsworth thought Scott's poetry over-careless, his historical verse narratives successful only in a very inferior branch of art. Wordsworth's own poetic narrative, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, was an attempt to show how Scott's chosen form of the historical narrative in verse could and ought to be used - as a force for spiritual and moral enlightenment, not simply a means of recreating and preserving an historic past, and entertaining the reader with a rattling good story (which, he felt, was Scott's chief aim).

Scott was aware of Wordsworth's feelings, and did not resent them at all. His own admiration for Wordsworth's poetry was unwavering from start to finish, and long before his death Wordsworth's own critical feelings had sunk into insignificance in the face of Scott's heroic attempt to retrieve a financial calamity, and to restore his own standing as a man of honour. The fact that Scott had abandoned verse for fiction since 1814, when he published *Waverley*, must also have helped to relieve the former tensions between the two poets.

In the 'Extempore Effusion', Wordsworth - the man who had declared to Scott that he wished to sign himself 'Your sincere Friend, for such I will call myself, though slow to use

<sup>9</sup> *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years 1806-20* ed. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (2 vols., Oxford, 1969-70) (hereafter *MY*), ii. 180.

a word of such solemn meaning to any one'<sup>10</sup> - offers a noble celebration of Scott's astonishing literary creativity. It also recalls the titles and some of the subject-matter of Scott's first two important publishing ventures - the work he had just published when Wordsworth first met him in 1803, the one he was soon to publish, and much of what he recited from memory to Wordsworth and Dorothy at that time. 'My steps the border minstrel led' looks back to the great ballad collection, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, which brought Scott acclaim in 1802-3. The following stanza with its reference to 'The mighty Minstrel' who lies 'Mid mouldering ruins' is characteristically exact, since Scott was buried in the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey. But it also touches on a scene in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, the poem Scott was composing when Wordsworth first met him. A scene which Wordsworth had reworked in his own *White Doe of Rylstone* was one of the most memorable in the *Lay*, in which the moss-trooper Sir William of Deloraine is sent to Melrose Abbey (not yet in ruins, as the date is pre-Reformation) to open the grave of the great magician Michael Scott, and to obtain from his hand the magic book which contains the record of his powerful spells. The border minstrel of the 'Extempore Effusion' is also a mighty minstrel. The writer of genius harnesses the power of folk tradition to that of modern storytelling:

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,  
 By tales of love and sorrow,  
 Of faithful love, undaunted truth,  
 Hast shed the power of Yarrow;  
 And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,  
 Wherever they invite Thee,  
 At parent Nature's grateful call,  
 With gladness must requite Thee. (*Yarrow Revisited* 65-72)

The power of Yarrow is the power of poetry which is associated with that most poetic of streams. And so all qualifications are lost in love and admiration, and Wordsworth moves from Scott to a second brief reference to Hogg, the shepherd-poet, and thus concludes the first Scottish section of his poem.

And now Coleridge. Wonderful poetry is to come - but what a filtering-out process seems to have taken place in order for it to happen! Let us listen for a moment to Scott's son-in-law, John Gibson Lockhart, writing in 1852 in his capacity as Editor of the *Quarterly Review* to the Revd Whitwell Elwin - not a person to whom one would have told tall stories. Elwin was reviewing Christopher Wordsworth's *Memoirs* of the poet, and Lockhart was sending him some hints for his review, including some stories which he did not expect to be used in the review, but which he thought Elwin might find interesting. Now Lockhart had lived in London, in Sussex Place, Regents Park, for many years, and he recalled how, on one occasion subsequent to Coleridge's death

being quite accidentally at Highgate w a friend in an open carriage it occurred to go into the Church & see what monument had been raised to Coleridge. Behold W.W. & his wife were in the Church for the same purpose. My friend took Mrs. W into his carriage & W.W. & I walked across the fields to this park - he lodging at Miss R's next door to me. He had on a former occasion told me many painful stories about Coleridge - how he was expelled from Greta Hall for getting Southey's maids w child one after another

<sup>10</sup> *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years 1787-1805* ed. Ernest De Selincourt, revised Chester L. Shaver (Oxford, 1967), pp. 413-14.

&c &c and all his horrid courtlessness as husband & father &c &c. But now his strain was very different - he spake w profound admiration respect & regret, & seemed to consider him as having passed his latter years in pious penitences that shd obliterate all errors.<sup>11</sup>

It is generally accepted that after the wretched falling-out caused by Basil Montagu's telling Coleridge what Wordsworth had said about his deplorable habits as a house-guest at Allan Bank in 1810, their friendship never really recovered. True, there had been a six-week jaunt to Belgium, the Rhineland, and Holland, undertaken rather on the spur of the moment in 1828, and that had gone well enough on the whole:

They get on famously, but Mr. C. sometimes detains us with his fiddle-faddling, and he likes prosing to the folks better than exerting himself to see the face of the country and Father with his few half-dozen words of German makes himself much better understood than Mr. C. with all his weight of German literature.<sup>12</sup>

So runs Dora Wordsworth's probably not inexact summary of the trip - but that was a bright interlude, for there had also been real and lasting anger on Wordsworth's part. Crabb Robinson records a most unfortunate meeting in December 1820, their first since 1812, when Coleridge tried to be conciliatory, but Wordsworth could only manage replies showing 'dry, unfeeling contradiction'. When Lockhart's anecdotes concerning Wordsworth and Coleridge first appeared in the *Wordsworth Circle*, Molly Lefebure and I engaged in a most spirited correspondence concerning the supposedly nefarious doings of Coleridge at Greta Hall. Molly's very learned judgement was that, even if you ignore Coleridge's strong moral and Christian feelings, chronological fact dictates that he could have got no more than one of Southey's maids into trouble. And even that seems unlikely if you take into account the probable effects of opium and brandy on his middle-aged constitution.

Allowing for Lockhart's having remembered things wrongly and his undoubted enjoyment of a funny story, we are left with a significant fact. It has nothing to do with whether or not anybody got pregnant at Greta Hall: the point is that, even in Coleridge's latter days at Highgate, Wordsworth could still feel thoroughly irritated by him and strongly impelled to condemn his treatment of his wife and children. Wordsworth had grown closer to Coleridge's children during the years in which they were growing up with his own and those of Southey. Even after Coleridge's death, when Wordsworth's feelings had swung powerfully back towards his early affection for Coleridge, his conclusion is that Coleridge had been guilty of serious moral delinquency, though he had passed his latter years in pious penitences that should obliterate all errors. All may be forgiven but it is not forgotten.

When Henry Nelson Coleridge wrote to tell Wordsworth of Coleridge's death in 1834, Wordsworth remarked that, though 'I have seen little of him for the last 20 years, his mind has been habitually present with me, with an accompanying feeling that he was still in the flesh.'<sup>13</sup> I think many of us have had that experience. What then happens is that the person, as he or she used to be, is the individual who accompanies us in our own thoughts. So it was natural, in the great moments of spontaneous selection, suppression, and release of early

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Richardson, 'Lockhart and Elwin on Wordsworth', *The Wordsworth Circle* 20 (1989) 156-9, p. 158.

<sup>12</sup> Moorman ii. 435.

<sup>13</sup> *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years 1821-53* ed. Alan G. Hill (4 vols., Oxford, 1978-88), ii. 728.

memories which went into the creation of the 'Extempore Effusion', for Wordsworth's mind to leap back to the very beginning of his friendship with Coleridge, that marvellous period culminating in the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, and portrayed by Coleridge in the figure of the poet-visionary at the conclusion of *Kubla Khan*. *Kubla Khan* is the poem which provides the key images in this section of the 'Extempore Effusion'; in fact, it underpins the whole imaginative structure and movement of Wordsworth's poem:

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,  
From sign to sign, its stedfast course,  
Since every mortal power of Coleridge  
Was frozen as its marvellous source;

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,  
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth . . .

This is the poet of the 'flashing eyes' and 'floating hair' who should cause all who see him to close their eyes with holy dread. Scott might have been a mighty minstrel because of his sources of power in the imaginative richness of folk tradition, but Coleridge was in another league altogether - 'rapt' and 'godlike' are the only words adequate to describe him. Little wonder that his remembered power leads us towards the very heart of the poem.

But first, though, a second close connection. We have had Scott and Hogg; now we have Coleridge and Lamb - the lesser artist, no doubt, but a man, unlike Coleridge, with scarcely any fault that mattered. With Lamb, Wordsworth experienced no need for careful selection or suppression of critical feelings to show him at his best, but neither was there any need to speak at length, for Wordsworth had just done so in the first part of his memorial verses and was to do so again quite soon. So Lamb appears briefly now - briefly but poignantly. For the context remains primarily that of those early Somerset years and, in particular, of the time when Wordsworth and Lamb first met:

And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,  
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

The single word 'gentle' carries us straight back to that very first meeting at Nether Stowey, and the 'gentle-hearted Charles' who features in the poem which recalls that visit: Coleridge's 'This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison'. Lamb famously took exception to being called gentle-hearted:

please to blot out 'gentle-hearted', and substitute drunken dog, ragged-head, seld-shaven, odd-ey'd, stuttering, or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the Gentleman in question.<sup>14</sup>

That was a letter, and Wordsworth may not have known of Lamb's reaction; in any case, with Lamb now in his grave, he seems to be thinking above all of his tenderness and fidelity to Mary and Coleridge.

But what of the 'frolic' Lamb? The word is unusual and rather surprising. My own guess is that it looks straight back to what is probably the word's best-known appearance in eighteenth-century poetry - in Thomas Gray's 'Ode on the Spring', at the end of which the short-lived summer insect rounds on the moralizing solitary poet, and declares that at least

<sup>14</sup> *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb* ed. Edwin W. Marris, Jr. (3 vols., Ithaca, NY, 1975-8), i, 224.

insects have the sense to frolic whilst it is May, unlike the moping poet who gets no good out of life. Wordsworth, who knew his Gray very well, is conflating the wifeless, childless poet with the insect who makes the best of what life has to offer; 'the frolic and the gentle' certainly catches Lamb's combination of high-spirits and tenderness. And the underlying pathos is there for all to see in the line which follows, telling how he has vanished from his lonely hearth.

Lamb's solitary state leads us straight towards the poet's own. Elegies for dead writers habitually incorporate a sense of the vulnerability of those who yet survive to write the elegy - think of *Lycidas*, for instance. It is natural enough that, in the seventh verse, Wordsworth should speculate on how much time he himself can expect. But the tone of the lines isn't egocentric or emotionally weighted towards self-pity. The real heart of the 'Extempore Effusion' lies in its powerful sixth stanza, the one immediately preceding the reflections on Wordsworth's vulnerability in time:

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,  
Or waves that own no curbing hand,  
How fast has brother followed brother,  
From sunshine to the sunless land!

You may remember that Alph, the sacred river in *Kubla Khan*, runs inexorably through sunshine, until it falls 'Through caverns measureless to man / Down to a sunless sea'; here brother follows brother, 'From sunshine to the sunless land'. In a poem underpinned by fraternal relationships now lost except in memory, the power of 'How fast has brother followed brother' along this sacred river of life and death, of creativity and oblivion, can surely not be missed. One recalls Wordsworth's agony when his brother John died at sea early in 1805, and how he wrote to his brother Richard, 'God keep the rest of us together! the set is now broken'.<sup>15</sup> Wordsworth took fraternal relations very seriously. He is the great poet of the direct simple statement, and I think his lament, 'How fast has brother followed brother, / From sunshine to the sunless land', lies at the very heart of this poem.

But intensity of this kind can't be maintained for long, and it seems very natural that the verse should now modulate back from the deeply-felt towards a still poignant, but somewhat less disturbing, recapitulation of writer-friends past and gone. There are still two to come - one old, one much younger.

First comes the one who died earliest: George Crabbe. Wordsworth had become acquainted with Crabbe's early poetry whilst still a schoolboy at Hawkshead, and he admired the mature works - but, as with Hogg, only up to a point. On 29 September 1808, he told Samuel Rogers: 'nineteen out of 20 of Crabbe's Pictures are mere matters of fact; with which the Muses have just about as much to do as they have with a Collection of medical reports, or of Law cases.'<sup>16</sup> But he did value Crabbe as one of the leaders of what he called the 'natural and sensual school of realists', coming only after Chaucer and Burns in the excellence of his achievement. His own narratives of village life in *The Excursion* Book VII may have been intended to show how such things should be done, in contrast to the way Crabbe had operated in *The Parish Register* of 1807. There does seem to be a parallel here with the way Wordsworth wrote *The White Doe of Rylstone* partly to show what should be done with the kind of historical narrative poem produced by Scott. In both cases, he appears

<sup>15</sup> EY 540.

<sup>16</sup> MY i. 268.

to be using practical methods to criticize what seem to him to be another poet's rather undeserved popularity and insufficient devotion to his art and craft.

But whereas the friendship between Scott and Wordsworth survived everything, the few meetings Wordsworth had with Crabbe seem to have left him feeling that he did not really know what to make of the older man at all. They met several times at Hampstead, as the 'Extempore Effusion' says, and they walked and talked together on the heath. But the Fenwick note suggests a lasting sense of distance from Crabbe. Many questions remained unasked, and Wordsworth was left with strong reservations about Crabbe in the face of Crabbe's evident reticence about his own, rather hard, earlier life, and the present state of his opinions:

Had I been more intimate with him, I should have ventured to touch upon his office as a Minister of the Gospel, and how far his heart and soul were in it so as to make him a zealous and diligent labourer. In poetry, though he wrote much, as we all know, he assuredly was not so. I happened once to speak of pains as necessary to produce merit of a certain kind which I highly valued: his observation was - 'It is not worth while'. You are quite right, thought I, if the labour encroaches upon the time due to teach truth as a steward of the mysteries of God: if there be cause to fear that, write less: but, if poetry is to be produced at all, make what you do produce as good as you can.<sup>17</sup>

As in his earlier dealings with Scott, Wordsworth was disturbed by Crabbe's apparent facility and superficiality as a poet. He felt that Crabbe lacked commitment. But in the 'Extempore Effusion' all these qualifications appear to have been forgotten, as Crabbe's memory is linked with a further image of darkness, representing the extinction of the poet's life:

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,  
Like London with its own black wreath,  
On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-looking,  
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

'Never, perhaps, had he used a more startling image than in the opening lines of the stanza about Crabbe', comments Mary Moorman<sup>18</sup> - and I share her admiration. There is that preciseness of remembered image which characterizes the poem, allied with a grim Blakean resonance. London's smoke is a 'black wreath': even as the two poets look at the prospect of the great city from Hampstead Heath, the emblem of death is seen. Like the clouds that rake the mountain-summits, it calls the two poets to prepare themselves for 'the sunless land'. It should be noted that, though Crabbe's memory leads to one of the imaginative high-spots of the 'Extempore Effusion', Wordsworth's lines contain no echoes of Crabbe's own writing, and no indication concerning his feelings about Crabbe's verses. Just for once, there may be some conscious reserve.

Lastly, in direct contrast to the male poet who died in the fullness of his years, we come to the only female poet to be commemorated - that 'holy Spirit, / Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep' - Felicia Dorothea Hemans. Mrs Hemans' best-known poem does indeed contain references to the ocean deep: members of my audience above the age of 50 years will doubtless remember that old juvenile anthology warhorse, *Casabianca*:

<sup>17</sup> PW iv. 460.

<sup>18</sup> Moorman ii. 519.

The boy stood on the burning deck,  
 Whence all but him had fled;  
 The flame that lit the battle's wreck,  
 Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,  
 As born to rule the storm;  
 A creature of heroic blood,  
 A proud, though child-like form.<sup>19</sup>

Why is Mrs Hemans in the 'Extempore Effusion'? Is she just the token female about whom we hear so much today? One might suspect so, for Wordsworth met her only a few times, when she brought one of her children to stay nearby for a fortnight in the summer of 1830, and caused Sara Hutchinson to confess that she had found the visit 'long'. Yet Wordsworth took to her; again from Sara: 'Mr W. *pretends* to like her very much - but I believe it is only because we do not; for she is the very opposite, her good nature excepted, of anything he ever admired before either in *theory or practice*'.<sup>20</sup>

Mrs Hemans set Sara's teeth on edge, yet Wordsworth liked her. The Fenwick note to the 'Extempore Effusion' indicates why, and the few letters which Wordsworth wrote to Mrs Hemans before her death on 16 May 1835 also show him treating her with evident respect and friendliness. He could see her faults. But he was in no danger of making the mistake of judging her rather a silly woman, as some of her more effusive poetry might tempt us to do. She wrote too much, and some of what she wrote was vapid and sentimental - but the point to be grasped is that she *had* to write. She was a brave woman, a fighter, a wide and a scholarly reader, who used her gifts as a writer to bring up and educate a family of five sons after her husband left her in 1818. She struggled on through steadily declining health for the last eight years of her life, and the Fenwick note records Wordsworth's awareness that Mrs Hemans had shown

delicate and irreproachable conduct during her long separation from an unfeeling husband, whom she had been led to marry from the romantic notions of inexperienced youth. Upon this husband I never heard her cast the least reproach, nor did I ever hear her even name him, though she did not forbear wholly to touch upon her domestic position; but never so as that any fault could be found with her manner of adverting to it.<sup>21</sup>

I think this gives us the key. Mrs Hemans' situation unlocks very deep feelings, sources of lasting concern for Wordsworth: Annette Vallon, the child Caroline, the forsaken wives and widows of the early poetry, the man forgiven - or at least his failure to provide - and buried in a dignified silence. Earlier in the Fenwick note, he recalls that 'there was much sympathy between us, and, if opportunity had been allowed me to see more of her, I should have loved and valued her accordingly'.<sup>22</sup> But opportunity wasn't allowed, so now she receives her own spontaneous poetic tribute, its intensity fed, as the Fenwick note makes plain, by Wordsworth's belief that the sufferings of her final months had purified and exalted her nature:

<sup>19</sup> First published in the second edition of *The Forest Sanctuary and Other Poems* (1829).

<sup>20</sup> *The Letters of Sara Hutchinson* ed. Kathleen Coburn (London, 1954), p. 370

<sup>21</sup> *PW* iv. 461-2.

<sup>22</sup> *PW* iv. 461.



Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,  
 Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;  
 For Her who, ere her summer faded,  
 Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

Wordsworth's tribute may seem all the more touching if we realize that the word 'breathless' has its own quiet ambiguity to offer - a slightly grim one, I'm afraid, because Mrs Hemans died at 42 of tuberculosis. That delicately poetical 'breathless' commemorates and spiritualizes what was probably a rather grim final reality.

The 'Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg' comes to its last stanza, revisiting the Yarrow once more, and echoing 'Yarrow Revisited' once again, with its references to James Hogg, whose death occasioned this lament, and to Scott - the 'old romantic sorrows' of line 41 recalling the 'tales of love and sorrow, / Of faithful love, undaunted truth' (*Yarrow Revisited* 66-7).

In *William Wordsworth: Intensity and Achievement*, Thomas McFarland reminds us of what Hazlitt long ago perceived with characteristic intelligence: that the 'visual infrashape' of the longer romantic lyric was like a flowing stream. He goes on to explain:

To look at a stream, however, is to be aware not only of water moving by, but also to be aware that neither beginning nor end can be seen; and this characteristic dictates the nature of those poems of which we speak. For the longer Romantic lyric must be a poem that cannot be taken in at a single intuition of two open pages. The reader in his progress must at some point lose view, physically and with regard to meaning as well, both of the beginning and of the ending of the poem.<sup>23</sup>

The 'Extempore Effusion', however, works in a way which is precisely the opposite of what McFarland describes. The River Duddon sonnets fit his category to perfection - 'Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide'. But though the 'Extempore Effusion' opens with a stream, it closes with a scene akin to the laments of water-nymphs for dead poets in classical legend, as Ettrick mourns the death of Hogg. All the elements present in the poem move towards extinction: clouds, waves and inland waters sweep towards the sunless land. Memory recalls and energizes a vibrant past, but only within the mind of an elder brother who hears a timid voice asking who next will drop and disappear. Only the poem itself can survive as a memorial to brotherhood, loyalty, and the primary affections. And in a remarkable burst of spontaneous recreation of past friendships and loves, the 'Extempore Effusion' comes into being to do precisely that - to memorialize things sacred to the poet.

When I first offered to talk about Wordsworth's poem this evening my intention was to begin by looking at his 'Essay upon Epitaphs' from *The Friend*, and the unpublished sequels to it; to illustrate what he says there about the duty of an elegist being to state those things which show the character of his subject at its best and most characteristic, and to suppress the rest; to show how precisely this ties in with his notion of biography as he states it in his 'Letter to a Friend of Burns'; and to use quotations from Wordsworth's letters to the biographers of some of the poets he mentions in the 'Extempore Effusion', to show the consistency of his views over the years. But when I came to think about it, I saw that, if I was to do this, I would not be able to preserve what I take to be the most remarkable feature of this poem - its spontaneity, the fact that it really is an extempore effusion. So I just want

<sup>23</sup> *William Wordsworth: Intensity and Achievement* (Oxford, 1992), p. 39.

to give you a single quotation from the first of the 'Essays upon Epitaphs', because it is so peculiarly appropriate to what happens in more than one section of the 'Extempore Effusion Upon the Death of James Hogg':

Let one, whose eyes have been sharpened by personal hostility to discover what was amiss in the character of a good man, hear the tidings of his death, and what a change is wrought in a moment! Enmity melts away; and, as it disappears, unsightliness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish; and, through the influence of commiseration, a harmony of love and beauty succeeds.<sup>24</sup>

I hope you will not feel cheated by my not having concentrated on Wordsworthian theory during this lecture tonight. I think his practice in the 'Extempore Effusion' was spontaneously and completely true to his stated views. It's an instance, if instance is needed, of how Wordsworth's theorizing is the visible surface of a profoundly held and deeply-felt belief or series of beliefs. Wordsworth lives and acts his theories; indeed, sometimes it seems to me that he lives and acts them better than he is able to explain them.

Most of all, I wanted to talk tonight about a wonderful poem, one which gets lip-service paid to it often enough, but which rarely receives its proper due of close attention. I do hope Tom isn't angry with me for joining the ranks of the feeble-minded who try to justify what he vividly describes as 'straggly verse which did not bloom'. I think the 'Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg' does bloom, and a major source of the life and the colour which it possesses is a spontaneous release of powerful feelings about the past, of powerful emotions relating to the primary relationships of brotherhood and sisterhood, and the afterglow of a great period of youthful poetic creativity - his own and that of others, which the arrival of that copy of the *Newcastle Journal* at Rydal Mount, one day in late November 1835, caused to sweep up from the very depth of Wordsworth's being, like clouds that rake the mountain summits, or waves that own no curbing hand.

<sup>24</sup> *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (3 vols., Oxford, 1974), ii. 58.

## The *TLS* Reviews

By BILL RUDDICK<sup>1</sup>

### Terrors masculine and feminine<sup>2</sup>

ANN RADCLIFFE, *The Italian; or the Confessional of the Black Penitents* ed. Frederick Garber. Oxford University Press.

IN SPITE OF 150 YEARS of ridicule Mrs Radcliffe survives. Even Jane Austen couldn't finish her off and now the Oxford English Novels seem to be giving her a minor revival. With all her faults there are less deserving candidates for such an honour.

Frederick Garber, introducing *The Italian*, claims it is Mrs Radcliffe's best novel. This is probably so: it has less artifice than *Udolpho*, is less sensational, and, in the later chapters describing the hero's experiences at the hands of the Roman Inquisition, it shows her narrative gift at its most sustained. It is more unified than the earlier book. Lewis's lubricious novel *The Monk* had appalled Mrs Radcliffe, who probably felt some responsibility for the vogue in sensationalism that Lewis exploited, and she began a new romance in which clerical wickedness (which *The Monk* depicts luridly) would be realistically portrayed and the perils of emotional warmth would be indicted through events of a more sober kind than the ones she had made use of in *Udolpho*. *The Italian* shows restraint, though it wouldn't be by Mrs Radcliffe if it hadn't also its occasional moments of fervid imagination. There is nothing comparable to the famous painted veil, but some of the dramatic moments have the old frantic ring about them. For example, Ellena, the heroine, leans from her convent prison in the mountains to find Vivaldi, the hero and her lover, vigorously playing the flute to attract her attention while 'perched on a point of the cliff below, whither it appeared almost impracticable for any human step to have climbed, and preserved from the precipice only by some dwarf shrubs that fringed the brow'. But such amazing scenes are not frequent.

*The Italian's* main interest lies in contrasted scenes of fear, or apprehension. In arranging these Mrs Radcliffe shows an intelligence and an awareness of her own strengths and limitations which her earlier works would scarcely have led the reader to expect. She was always an obviously eighteenth-century writer, even in her most inventive moments, and though she was sensitive to atmosphere and good at evoking picturesque detail (often directly related to the spectator's state of mind or used explicitly for purposes of pathetic fallacy) she had little skill at characterization and none for character relationships or development. One reason why *The Italian* is so good is that she sidesteps her own limitations in a way that was still possible to writers of her period.

In *Udolpho* the horrors are focussed on the consciousness of a single individual who neither develops nor is changed by her experiences. In *The Italian* the story is so constructed that as the terrors intensify they are divided into 'masculine' and 'feminine' experiences, and the story alternates between the adventures of the hero and heroine who undergo them. Ellena, for instance, must undergo a totally feminine trial, imprisoned in a remote convent presided over by a corrupt and cruel mother superior. Vivaldi is wrongly arrested by the Inquisition and put through a deeply disturbing series of Kafkaesque interrogations during which he is never told the charge against him, and is frequently threatened with tortures which he knows are going on all around him in the darkness behind closed doors. Antithetical situations

<sup>1</sup> These reviews first appeared anonymously.

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted from *TLS* (9 May 1968) 472.

explore the male and female responses to fearsomeness, and the pattern is continued in the account of similar sexually-orientated attitudes to evil. Vivaldi's mother and her villainous confessor Schedoni are conspiring to destroy the love of Vivaldi and Ellena from motives of family pride and self-advancement. Thus neat antitheses in the creation and enduring of evil lie at the heart of the tale, simplifying and easing the necessity for full characterization.

Professor Garber's admirable introduction stresses the unhistorical nature of Mrs Radcliffe's vision, her topographical inaccuracy and various other factors which reveal the extent to which her Italy is a country of the mind. It is interesting to see how that same mind - tidy, restrained in its imaginativeness, full of eighteenth-century bias - advanced beyond sensationalism in *The Italian* to create a sequence of events, characters and scenes which have the archetypal absoluteness and fearful quality which we associate with dreams and fairy stories. The characters of *The Italian* suggest fairy-tale analogies. The settings in which the lovers undergo their severest trials are those of myth and nightmare. Ellena, for instance, narrowly escapes murder by Schedoni (who discovers he is her father: though later events prove he was mistaken and is really her uncle) in a remote house whose inner geography is repeatedly compared to a labyrinth.

On the surface *The Italian* shows us little sense of genuine poetry (the consistent lack of metaphor in her prose is revealing), but underneath an extensive process of ordering and a sustained invention can be felt. These show she has at last tapped the deepest springs of her decorous but genuinely imaginative nature. *The Italian* marks a real advance on *Udolpho*: a minor triumph for late eighteenth-century sensitivity, finding the means to dramatize, with intelligence and sustained effectiveness, those nameless fears which are an enduring element of human consciousness.

### Romantic and Regency<sup>3</sup>

CHARLOTTE SMITH, *Emmeline: The Orphan of the Castle* ed. Anne Henry Ehrenpreis. Oxford University Press.

SUSAN FERRIER, *Marriage, A Novel* ed. Herbert Foltinek. Oxford University Press.

THE SIMULTANEOUS REPUBLICATION of *Emmeline* (1788) and *Marriage* (1818) provides an interesting opportunity for comparing a novel written on the brink of the English Romantic period with one published when the tide of Regency fiction was in full flow. The comparison is instructive. It cannot be said that it freshens one's response to the comic element in *Marriage*, for abrasive comedy never loses its effectiveness: but it does bring back something of the moral and psychological interest which the serious story (that of a young girl's attempt to find a point of balance between her reverence for a bad natural parent and her love for a gentle adoptive one) had for Miss Ferrier's contemporaries.

The comparison with *Marriage* emphasizes Charlotte Smith's misfortune (she had a life filled with them) in writing before the tyranny of the old conduct-book style of novel was broken. *Emmeline* has all the usual disadvantages: a plot inextricably complicated; a dénouement mercilessly deferred; characterization and character relationships trapped in a state of embryonic simplicity by the ceaseless manipulation of events to fit them into an absurd set of sentimental-heroic conventions and defer the obvious ending of the story - the mutual declaration of love by the hero and heroine - through the requisite number of volumes.

<sup>3</sup> Reprinted from *TLS* (10 December 1971) 1541.

Charlotte Smith was a writer of genuine but small-scale imagination. Financial necessity and novelistic conventions drove her to spin out her material: spinning it both too fine and too fast. This is a pity, for the elements of this ultimately wearisome story are often interesting. For example, there are some extraordinary instances (for the period) of the women characters working on the men's gentler feelings to undermine their acceptance of the age's violent codes of duelling and honour. There are good nature passages that foreshadow Mrs Radcliffe, and a general tendency to root the story in real places atmospherically recreated which is rarely met with at this early date. A good account of the countryside near Rouen, for instance, finishes as follows:

But however beautiful the outline, the landscape still appeared ill finished: dark and ruinous hovels, inhabited by peasants frequently suffering the extremes of poverty; half cultivated fields, wanting the variegated enclosures that divide the lands in England; and trees often reduced to bare poles to supply the inhabitants with fuel, made her recollect with regret the more luxuriant and happy features of her native country.

How many eyes noticed those bare poles in 1788? To us they are worth a dozen chapters of *Emmeline's* conventional ditherings between truthfulness and masochistic self-denial.

Mrs Ehrenpreis's excellent introduction places *Emmeline* in the context of its period and emphasizes its popularity. This seems to have lasted. One is not surprised to find Scott (who admired *Emmeline* when it was new) echoing some of its situations in *Guy Mannering*, but it is intriguing to find Charlotte Smith providing an anticipation of Jane Eyre's moral struggle and nocturnal flight from Thornfield Hall in pages 146-8 of the present edition.

Between *Emmeline* and Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* Mrs Radcliffe and Maria Edgeworth had shown, in their different ways, how a wider range of materials could be integrated in a story much more realistically and dramatically told. Comparing the two novels gives a revealing impression of how much the mere mechanics of storytelling advanced during the Romantic period. *Emmeline's* plot is choked by its subservience to codes of behaviour. *Marriage* belongs to the Scott-Jane Austen world of what Professor Foltinek, in a good introduction, calls 'the fullness of actual life'. Professor Foltinek rather soft-pedals Susan Ferrier's Evangelical religious leanings and their place in her story, but he copes well with her didacticism while relishing, like all true devotees, the priceless comedy in her tearaway revelations of the absurdities of both fashionable English and Scottish provincial life.

#### Meeting his maker<sup>4</sup>

MARY SHELLEY, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* ed. M. K. Joseph. Oxford University Press.

IN MID-1816 SHELLEY, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (18 years old and soon to be his wife) and Lord Byron were at Geneva. A spell of wet weather kept them indoors so the two poets and their friend Dr. Polidori sat by the fire discussing 'the nature of the principle of life', the myth of Prometheus the life-giver, recent scientific progress, and the feasibility of revitalizing human tissue with galvanic batteries. When conversation flagged they amused themselves with a volume of German ghost stories.

In her preface to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley tells how Byron proposed they should each write a ghost story. She also succeeded, her comrades' conversations on

<sup>4</sup> Published *TLS* (16 October 1969) 1215. Text from Bill's typescript.

life and science having coalesced into a dream which provided her with the central scene in her novel: that is, where Frankenstein the Promethean creator gives life to his creature, then realizes, aghast, his inability to control the monster he has animated.

At the heart of Mary Shelley's visionary book lies a Godwinian fable about social relationships. The monster's ugliness horrifies Frankenstein, yet its nature is gentle and it endeavours to understand and win acceptance from humanity. Its sensibilities are Shelleyan: it suffers and knows the pangs of misunderstanding and loneliness. Rejected by mankind it demands a mate from its maker, whereupon the novel widens in scope to consider the relationship between creator and created, showing how Frankenstein (the 'modern Prometheus' of the title) fails to achieve the vital correlation between spiritual and scientific progress which Shelley's *Defence of Poetry* also insists on so movingly. Frankenstein's urge to create life was irresponsible, resulting from Faustian dreams of scientific power. Once alienated from his creation he has to pay the price of his discovery: the monster grows satanic through disappointment, kills Frankenstein's loved ones then leads him on an obsessive quest for vengeance which ends with his death in the Arctic, symbolically far from natural life and the normal outlets of the emotions.

Contemporary developments have rendered Mary Shelley's fable of the dangers of uncontrolled, self-glorifying scientific progress anything but outdated. Anyone who only half-remembers the book or thinks Frankenstein the monster's name should read this handsome new edition with its very good introduction. Professor Joseph prints the 1831 revised text (though his textual notes seem rather less full than is usual in this series: for instance, his explanatory notes to page 35 indicate textual changes from the first edition which are not included in his life of variants). Useful appendices discuss the composition of the novel and earlier attitudes to the myth of Prometheus.

### Love and friendship<sup>5</sup>

SARAH FIELDING, *The Adventures of David Simple* ed. Malcolm Kelsall. Oxford University Press.

JAMES HOGG, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* ed. John Carey. Oxford University Press.

BY A CURIOUS COINCIDENCE the two latest authors in the Oxford English Novels series both deal with friendship: Sarah Fielding with the need for it, Hogg with the nightmare side it reveals when the bosom companion of a pride-crazed Scottish Calvinist turns out to be no less formidable a person than the father of lies himself.

Both Hogg, the self-educated shepherd-poet who mixed with socially and intellectually arrogant Edinburgh Romantics, and Sarah Fielding, who had to cope with financial difficulties and the knife-edge business of remaining loyal to the mutually antipathetic novelists Samuel Richardson and her brother Henry, knew that life can be difficult. Their novels show existences being blighted by pride, self-assertiveness and duplicity. But the means by which they embody their sombre visions reveal differences which are thoroughly representative of their periods. Sarah Fielding follows her brother's practice of building up a social panorama full of corrupt and threatening elements. Hogg's main character succumbs to the temptations of a devil who externalises the pride and malevolence which religious extremism have nurtured within him.

<sup>5</sup> Published *TLS* (29 May 1969) 589. Text from Bill's typescript.

*The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) tells of a virtuous and benevolent young man's attempts to find 'a real friend' in the London of his day. His adventures and the stories which successive new acquaintances tell him give Sarah Fielding ample scope for delving beneath the surface of life to lay bare the workings of vanity and hypocrisy which, like her brother, she believed were playing a disastrously large role in contemporary life.

Sarah Fielding is well served in this new edition by Malcolm Kelsall. His introduction is stimulating and he appends to it an interesting account of the textual revisions Henry made for the second edition of his sister's book. Indirectly this demonstrates the large extent to which Sarah and Henry shared identical opinions about contemporary society and the function of the new prose form they were creating.

Perhaps, though, it would have been better if Sarah Fielding had mirrored her brother less directly. She shows his tendency to see incidents as the raw material for moral analyses, but lacks his gift for creating continuous narrative. Nor can she illuminate a situation through sentiment as he could. Both the plot and the emotional unity of *David Simple* suffer from her lack of sustaining imagination: she is a miniaturist with an essayist's technique; Mr Kelsall justly compares her to Steele.

In the continuation to *David Simple* ('Volume the Last') which she published in 1753, Sarah Fielding moved closer to the spirit of her friend Samuel Richardson, relying less on plot complications and more on the use of gradually-intensifying feeling. *David Simple* is deprived of family and financial comforts by a long series of catastrophes. He becomes a figure of deep pathos as misfortunes and the caprices of his rich friends hound him towards the grave: each gradation of his distress is recorded with touching emotional simplicity. It is fascinating to see Sarah Fielding absorbing the lessons of Richardson at the same time as Henry was doing so in *Amelia*. In places the situations they create are closely allied in mood and tone. When, for instance, *David Simple*'s wife bravely resolves to sell her wedding ring so that she can buy food for her helpless father the scene could easily pass for one of the touching self sacrifices of Henry Fielding's finest heroine.

Behind Sarah Fielding's novel lies the late Augustan yearning for true friendship, sympathy and real honesty in a world which seemed to have grown corrupt. *David Simple* points the way to Mackenzie, Sterne, and the cult of sensibility. At times, too, one finds Sarah Fielding putting her own experiences across with greater directness than her brother did before the *Voyage to Lisbon*. There are excellent passages about women's education, the lack of respectable careers for a woman (apart from writing, to which Sarah seems to have been in some degree forced) and a cry against the prostitution of money marriages which would not be out of place in Jane Austen's pages.

It seems a pity that no one at OUP thought to tell Mr Kelsall they were preparing a facsimile edition of *The Governess, or Little Female Academy*, Sarah Fielding's pioneering (and delightful) story for children (ed. Jill E. Gray, 1968), which does not appear in his bibliography. Taken together the two books give an excellent picture of this neglected, uneven, but very appealing author.

Hogg's novel never sank into total oblivion and there have been distinguished critics to sing its praises. It is generally accounted a masterpiece by those who have read it and may be strongly recommended to those who have not. As a document in the history of Scottish culture, a tale of the supernatural which haunts the reader all the more for being so firmly grounded among recognisable places and people, and a psychological terror story of how an unbalanced character destroys itself from within, it reveals the highest qualities of imagination. John Carey's introduction is one of the few attempts to link Hogg's life and

work which have ever been made (let alone succeed - which it does), and the link between Hogg's novel and Hoffmann's *Die Elixiere des Teufels* which he indicates does much to illuminate the unusual narrative framework of the story. Like other recent writers on Hogg Mr Carey demolishes the old claim that J. G. Lockhart had a hand in *The Confessions* with needless energy (and, though some of Lockhart's novels are as unsatisfactory as he maintains, 'flimsy melodrama' hardly applies to *Adam Blair*). This apart, the edition is admirable, and it is good to have Hogg's masterpiece available once more in so reasonably priced and handsome an edition.

### Saving face<sup>6</sup>

FRANCES BURNEY, *Evelina; or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* ed. Edward A. Bloom. Oxford University Press.

THIS IS A USEFUL ADDITION to the Oxford English Novels series. Fanny Burney has great historical significance as the main link between Richardson and Jane Austen. Her first book, published in 1778, preserves Richardson's epistolary form, but its subtitle, 'the history of a young lady's entrance into the world', reminds us that it is the first novel to show a process of social education of the kind dealt with by the women writers of the next generation.

*Evelina* enters the world with modesty, morality and the Revd Mr Villars's letters to protect her in her parentless state and the allure of her beauty. As the post comes and goes we are never really in doubt that she will ultimately triumph as a modern version of the Christian heroine, but her social inexperience lands her in some sticky situations, and she is plagued with predatory lords and a pertinacious group of vulgar relations. Her education in the ways of society is not an easy one, and Professor Bloom's notes to the novel show how thoroughly Fanny Burney grounded the story in the real life of the time and its fashionable diversions.

It seems strange that Virginia Woolf never felt drawn to write a few pages about Fanny Burney. She was exactly the sort of enigmatic figure, embedded in her society and yet possessing the kind of temperament which ought to have driven her to go beyond its limits, which the author of *The Common Reader* loved to examine. *Evelina* shows Fanny Burney's conventional side clearly enough. She was snobbish to a degree and had been brought up in an atmosphere of prudery. As Frank Bradbrook pointed out in *Jane Austen and her Predecessors*, Captain Mirvan's nautical language quite defeated his author, despite the fact that one of her brothers had been at sea since he was ten. She seems to have been too prudish (and perhaps too socially rigid) to ask questions about the details of a seaman's profession. A quick comparison with *Mansfield Park* shows how damaging Fanny Burney's conventionality was to her artistic development. Nor had she Jane Austen's gift for seeing her own limitations and staying inside them. The loves of *Evelina* and Lord Orville take up much space in the novel and are structurally important, but Fanny Burney was equally awed by rank and the convention of heroic perfection, so Lord Orville emerges as an idealized elder brother figure and there is no possibility of a true relationship between himself and the heroine, whose respectfulness nears self-abasement. Again, the comparison with Jane Austen is inevitable and damaging.

And yet, *Evelina* is full of good things. Fanny Burney clearly enjoyed writing it, and though she was terrified lest the secret of her authorship should escape, Professor Bloom's excellent account of her behaviour when *Evelina* was published reveals a refreshing

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted from *TLS* (25 April 1968) 418.



ambitiousness for praise and a recklessness in hunting for it which betrays the animated, less conventional streak in her character which society tended to conceal. When her authorship was still unknown, Fanny and her mother drove incognito to the publisher's shop to find out what was being said. She enjoyed Smollett's boisterous comedy, as Evelina's vulgar relations from Snow Hill show. There is an element of social snobbery in their presentation, but they are alive and vigorous, and they throw Evelina into paroxysms of confusion. Her character comes to life when she records her discomfiture in public places, and Fanny Burney's own strength is most apparent in such incidents. When she describes shame and the fear of losing face in society Fanny Burney can hold her own with anybody. Her own self-consciousness and insecurity are analyzed and dramatically utilized. Her set-pieces of shamefacedness are original and firmly grounded in the social occasions which create them. Even a short passage can reveal their flavour. For example, when Evelina records her relatives' discontent at the end of a joyless evening in the gallery at the opera:

'If I had been in the pit', said Madame Duval, 'I should have liked it vastly, for music is my passion; but sitting in such a place as this, it is quite unbearable'. Miss Branghton, looking at me, declared, that she was not *genteel* enough to admire it. Miss Polly confessed, that, if they would but sing *English*, she should like it *very well*. The brother wished he could raise a riot in the house, because then he might get his money again. And finally, they all agreed, that it was *monstrous dear*.

The editing of *Evelina* has been thoroughly done (text of the first edition, 1778) and Professor Bloom's introduction is stimulating.

### Old texts in new bindings<sup>7</sup>

JANE AUSTEN: *Northanger Abbey and Persuasion* ed. John Davie; *Sense and Sensibility* ed. Claire Lamont; *Pride and Prejudice* ed. Frank W. Bradbrook; *Mansfield Park* ed. John Lucas; *Emma* ed. David Lodge; Oxford University Press.

MARY CORRINGHAM, *I, Jane Austen*. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

WITH THE PUBLICATION of five rather sombre rust and dark green volumes, Jane Austen becomes the first major writer to have all her mature work newly edited and made available in the Oxford English Novels series. Amid the riot of cheerfully colourful jackets and bindings with which this series has decked its volumes, one is bound to be struck by the unexpectedly dour garb provided for Jane Austen. Knowing her views on the importance of attire, one itches for a posthumous letter to Cassandra on the sumptuary policy of her publisher. At any rate it is to be hoped that such sobriety was meant not as a tribute to the lady (not all of whose fictions, after all, speak with the stern authority of *Mansfield Park*), but to the critical endeavours of the new generation of her editors and critics.

Coverings apart, these are handsome volumes and one ought to rejoice at having Jane Austen in a legible new library edition. One ought, for no one else so perfectly develops the qualities inherent in English fiction of the period in which this series specializes: and one would, were it not for a degree of puzzlement and uncertainty about the *raison d'être* of the whole operation.

It is easy to see why James Kinsley (who provides the succinct textual and bibliographical apparatus for all five books) should have wished to include Jane Austen in the series of

<sup>7</sup> Reprinted from *TLS* (19 November 1971) 1438.

eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novels of which he is general editor. His individual editors, too, carry off the business of supplying introductions and notes to the novels perfectly creditably. The publishers of a series such as this would usually be eager to include a popular, saleable author as a way to subsidize the more esoteric and specialist items on their list. But the public for a library edition of Jane Austen (who is, after all, cheaply available in various formats, with or without editorial materials) must surely be limited. The publisher of these volumes is the Oxford University Press: and among its treasures is the standard edition of Jane Austen by R. W. Chapman which offers her novels rather more fully annotated, with illustrations, with valuable appendixes on taste, customs and costume - and (to make the mystery truly impenetrable) offers all this at a slightly lower price overall than the new edition does.

The new edition is good, but Chapman's is better. After more than 40 years as the acknowledged basis for all Jane Austen studies, it is not outdated. Miss Mary Lascelles's recent revision of his work brought Chapman up to date while showing how little subsequent research had added to his discoveries; for she found that relatively few changes were needed. Professor Kinsley and his editors also pay tribute to Chapman, for at every stage of their work they acknowledge Chapman's authority, and they make extensive use of his editorial material.

How then can the new edition score? Professor Kinsley overhauls Chapman's and Miss Lascelles's textual apparatus, but a glance at his notes reminds us that Jane Austen does, after all, provide rather few textual problems. The explanatory notes to the novels draw heavily on Chapman and are, by and large, less full than his. There are no illustrations and none of the engaging (and valuable) appendixes which Chapman supplied so generously. The lazy enquirer will miss the index of characters and places which Chapman gave to each novel. Against this must be set the convenience of the up-to-date bibliographies in the new edition and the introductions by the five editors, for which Chapman's edition offers no equivalent.

The introductions, as one would expect, reflect the individual methods and viewpoints of the editors. On the one hand, the reader may feel a lurking regret at not having a single critical viewpoint brought to bear on the whole corpus of Jane Austen's mature writing: but there are, after all, some excellent books which offer accounts of each novel individually and in sequence. What one must regret is the way the series' customary length of introduction seems to cramp one or two of the present editors. Claire Lamont and David Lodge operate effectively within the space at their disposal: but John Davie, faced with the unenviable task of covering *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* in a single essay, writes well on the former and then seems to find a want of room in which to do justice to the latter book. And might not F. W. Bradbrook have welcomed the chance to follow up his interesting account of *Pride and Prejudice* in the perspective of late eighteenth-century fiction with a fuller treatment of the novel itself than he feels able to give?

All in all, then, a mystery. A good edition of Jane Austen has appeared, overshadowed by (and costing more than) a greater: and both are from the same publisher. It is pleasant to turn from such puzzles to Mary Corringham's ingenious and diverting rendering of Jane Austen's autobiography (and often her own words) in the unexpected medium of rime royal. Miss Corringham's Jane, irritated by the royal reception of *Emma*, stands as a warning to the writer of this, or any other, Jane Austen review:

The presentation copy for the Prince  
found favour in a manner that perplexed;  
for evidently he did not evince

as much consideration for the text  
as for the binding. I was rather vexed . . .

### Radicals with stars in their eyes<sup>8</sup>

THOMAS HOLCROFT, *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor* ed. Seamus Deane. Oxford University Press.

'PURPOSE-NOVELS of anarchist perfectibilism' was Saintsbury's terse description of Thomas Holcroft's three works of fiction. But even Saintsbury's High Toryism could only respond with affectionate amusement to the starry-eyed radical thinker whose hero, in the novel now reissued, is capable of arguing his friends out of their desire to pay his innocently-incurred debts and of arguing himself into a debtor's prison on the grounds that immediate incarceration is most likely to stimulate his earning capacity.

*Hugh Trevor* vividly recaptures the touching otherworldliness of so many English radical visionaries in the 1790s. The world is that of Godwin's *Political Justice* (Godwin acknowledged Holcroft's influence on his thinking) in that dawn when it was bliss to be alive, which Hazlitt (who completed Holcroft's memoirs) evokes in 'My First Acquaintance With Poets'. Tears cascade as virtuous men imagine the ultimate victory of truth on the happy day when 'men awaken to a comprehensive view of their own mad and destructive systems'; visionaries hymn the irresistible power of the printed word to correct erroneous views based on class interest and custom; the inevitable episodes are introduced to demonstrate the mysterious sympathies of the human heart. Seamus Deane writes well in his introduction on the ideological sources for Holcroft's belief in human perfectibility, distinguishes the nature of his influence on Godwin (and, through him, on two generations of Romantic poets), and very fairly admits the weaknesses of Holcroft's attempt to embody his beliefs in a work of fiction.

These weaknesses are obvious enough. Holcroft tends to manipulate behaviour in accordance with his theories rather than to satisfy any true sense of characterization. He tries to work in too much and to cope with too great a variety of materials. His technique is too rudimentary to cope with what is, in theory, a rather ingenious scheme: to launch a head-on attack on existing institutions while exemplifying through certain of his characters the possibility of leading a life according to the straightforward dictates of justice, honesty and love. In particular, he fails to show his hero's character evolving towards self-knowledge and self-control in a way that is clearly essential if the parallel story of Hugh's reclamation of the rascally Wakefield from a life of imposture to one of virtue is to seem the meaningful act of therapy which Mr Deane skilfully shows it is intended to be.

These are drawbacks, but the book is still packed with interest. Holcroft may have run into difficulties with the positive part of his programme, but his demolition job on vested interests and corruption is carried through with tremendous panache. The story of Hugh Trevor's search for a career brings him into contact with the university, the church, the law and politics: the professions that exerted the strongest control over eighteenth-century public opinion and most fiercely upheld conformist traditionalism. No theories blind Holcroft to the realities of place-seeking and corrupt practices. Passages in the novel describing electioneering, episcopal procedure, university malpractice and a wealth of other subjects cry out for quotation by social historians. The book is packed with interesting detail: Mrs

<sup>8</sup> Reprinted from *TLS* (13 July 1973) 800.

Siddons in tragedy, Mrs Jordan in comedy losing the battle for Hugh's attention to a forward young lady who is pressing her knees against his under the bench, a Pre-Tractarian sermon rolling doctrinal, sound and dry in the mortified presence of Hugh, who had ghosted it for the bishop and expected it to eclipse memories of Tillotson. Always the saturnine, accurate eye observes and the reality is captured in vigorous, Smollett-like prose.

Mr Deane's introduction concentrates on the philosophical background to good effect, but rather ignores literary influences which also played a major part in the evolution of Holcroft's ideas. There are, in fact, two recent novelistic influences healthily active in *Hugh Trevor*: the analytical realism of Smollett (with whom Holcroft shares a fascinated horror at the capacity for morally corrupt characters to destroy themselves through physical excess); and the benevolent sentimentalism of Henry Mackenzie, whose belief in the power of enlightened sympathy is important to the understanding of Holcroft's development. The link with Mackenzie is brought out particularly clearly by some remarkable passages reflecting on the immorality of warfare and the British concept of the Empire as a source of plunder which are almost as powerful as Mackenzie's own outburst in *The Man of Feeling*.

The bibliography could well have mentioned Harrison J. Steeves, who writes excellent sense on *Hugh Trevor* in *Before Jane Austen*. Mr Deane's notes are helpful and scholarly.

### Why, and for whom?<sup>9</sup>

CHARLOTTE BRONTË, *Jane Eyre* ed. Margaret Smith. Oxford University Press.

FACED WITH A NEW EDITION of *Jane Eyre* in hard covers costing £4.50, a reviewer is bound to ask two related questions: why has it been done, and who will buy it? *Jane Eyre* is, after all, easily obtainable. You can get it in Penguin for 30p with Q. D. Leavis's introduction; there are other adequate paperbacks, and some well-produced, modestly priced hard-covered editions on the market. If a handsome format is required, there is the Folio Society *Jane Eyre* (part of an elegant-looking complete set of the Brontë novels), and if scholarship is wanted there is a big Clarendon edition.

The present edition of *Jane Eyre* in the Oxford English Novels series misses the mark in a number of respects. It is not cheap, its format is utilitarian rather than handsome, and, though its scholarship is excellent, the apparatus is, in one important respect, less than complete. Its editor, Margaret Smith, worked on the Clarendon *Jane Eyre* with Jane Jack. She now reprints the Clarendon text which, unlike most modern editions, is based on the first edition collated with the manuscript and Charlotte Brontë's subsequent revisions. The text of the first edition was a good one (Charlotte Brontë praised it to her publishers) and the total number of revisions involved from manuscript to third edition (the last to have authorial emendations) is not, apparently, at all great, if we set aside the matter of punctuation, on which Charlotte Brontë was content to accept the conventions of her publishers as 'more correct and rational' than her own.

It would, therefore, surely have been possible to give a full table of textual variants as is the usual practice with the Oxford English Novels series, and, by doing this, the potential usefulness of the volume to Brontë students would have been much increased. As things stand the reader will find an extremely interesting account of Charlotte Brontë's revisions in Mrs Smith's 'Note to the Text', but if he wishes to check whether a specific passage was altered he has no means of doing so except by combing Mrs Smith's 'Note' with the

<sup>9</sup> Reprinted from *TLS* (13 July 1973) 800.

disturbing awareness that only major variants or those revealing particular artistic processes in Charlotte Brontë's revision are likely to be recorded. Since the Clarendon *Jane Eyre* is (if anything) less fully informative in this respect than the new Oxford one, the textual scholar or the student in search of exact detail illustrative of Charlotte Brontë's artistic concern at specific points in the story is not ideally served. It does seem a pity, then, that the usual practice of this series in the recording of variants was not followed in the present instance.

The general reader of *Jane Eyre* is unlikely to be troubled by such matters, but since he is also unlikely to care which text of the novel he has in front of him when none of them are markedly inadequate, he will ask what else the new edition has to offer. Its excellent notes might be an inducement, and the resuscitation of Bessie's and Mr Rochester's song is welcome. The bibliography is thorough (though somewhat kind to the startling inaccuracies of the Shakespeare Head Brontë Letters). Mrs Smith's carefully-written introduction may also prove helpful, though, as its scrupulous indication of sources suggests, it is essentially a selection of salient points from other modern critics. The selecting has been sensitively done, but it is unlikely to inspire anyone who has advanced far into Brontë criticism. Where Mrs Smith's interest (and the reader's) really kindles, is in the 'Note to the Text' which has already been mentioned: despite its disadvantages as a tool for detailed scholarly exploration, it is, in itself, a compact survey of Charlotte Brontë's editorial procedures, and it provides a first-class account of the artistic principles behind the revisions which she made to the manuscript and the text of the first edition. This part of Mrs Smith's work is outstandingly well done (better indeed than the corresponding section of the Clarendon *Jane Eyre*) and is well worth having. But whether one would prefer it in its present setting or as part of some future collection of Brontë essays is a different matter.

As with their collected Jane Austen, the Oxford English Novels editors do not yet seem to have found the right format in which to present standard works of nineteenth-century fiction where cheaper and often well-edited competitors are available. The new *Jane Eyre* seems a doubtful speculation; but it would be a pity if Margaret Smith's good book on Charlotte Brontë's editorial procedures were lost sight of.

## Reviews

*Thomas Gray: Contemporary Essays* ed. W. B. Hutchings and William Ruddick (Liverpool English Texts and Studies Vol. 25) Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993. Pp. vi + 279. £29.50 hardback.

LOOKING DOWN from Helm Crag onto Grasmere, with all its memories and literary associations, the words that involuntarily come to my mind are, surprisingly, not those of Wordsworth, but Thomas Gray's description of 'this little unsuspected Paradise'. Gray had a remarkable talent for articulating (as he called them) 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn'. The 'Elegy written in a Country Churchyard' and the 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College' are two of the most memorable and quotable poems in the English language. Yet Gray was attacked for the obscurity or elaboration of his poetic diction - waspishly in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, and in specific detail by Wordsworth in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. For Matthew Arnold 'Gray a born poet, fell upon an age of prose', and 'he never spoke out'. Gray's poetic reputation has survived the strictures of three of the most influential critics, but the contrast between his memorability and the critical attacks on him is one of the many contradictions about him explored in this fascinating and informative collection of contemporary essays. They are of wide interest - to those who want to know more about 'one of our finest and most memorable poets', as W. B. Hutchings describes him in a concise and illuminating opening chapter, and to those who enjoy the underrated poetry of the eighteenth century, particularly that of what Northrop Frye called the Age of Sensibility, sandwiched between the Augustans and the Romantics. To readers of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, and the wider circle of friends and students of Bill Ruddick, the book will have a special appeal and poignancy, because it is the last he helped to edit, and his sympathetic and touching chapter on Gray's travel writing must be the last substantial piece that he wrote. It is as erudite, enjoyable and informative as his writing (and conversation) always were, and is also the essay which tells us most about Gray's personality.

Gray never intended to be a travel writer, but he was a compulsive traveller who also felt a great need to share his experiences with absent friends, seeing landscape through their eyes, and writing to tell them about it. And what letters! His description of the Grande Chartreuse in 1739 anticipated Burke's definition of the sublime by nearly 20 years. Gray's most famous and influential travel description arose from the accident that his companion for a tour to the lakes, Thomas Wharton, was seized with severe asthma at Brough, and could not proceed. So Gray described the journey to him in a series of letters, which were published in Mason's *Life* in 1775, and then incorporated as an addendum to West's *Guide to the Lakes* in 1780. What became conveniently but inaccurately known as 'Gray's Journal' strongly influenced the aesthetic discovery of the Lakes; in particular it conditioned Wordsworth's and De Quincey's responses to Grasmere. Gray's Journal has had its detractors, who ridiculed him as a timid and unadventurous traveller. They are gently but decisively sent packing by Bill Ruddick, who convincingly shows that Gray was no ordinary picturesque viewer - he looked with his own eyes, and he was really interested in, and got to know, the Lakeland folk. Bill's chapter tells this story lovingly and wonderfully entertainingly.

The *Bulletin's* reviewer will be forgiven on this occasion for concentrating on one out of this excellent and varied collection of essays, all of them enjoyable and full of insights, and all informed by a sympathetic view of their subject. Vincent Newey's masterly exposition of the Churchyard Elegy and the Eton College Ode shows how they reach towards, without quite reaching, a Romantic exploration of self. Paul Williamson contrasts the earlier Eton

manuscript version of the Elogy with the published version, to show Gray moving from the more comfortable Christian theology of eighteenth century graveyard poetry to an austere Virgilian pastoral. David Fairer also has Gray looking to the past, comparing him with Thomas Warton (not to be confused with the asthmatic would-be traveller Thomas Wharton, nor with his own brother Joseph Warton, who was headmaster of Winchester and translated Virgil. This book is an rare opportunity to get these muddling W(h)artons straight at last).

Richard Terry lucidly explains the nature and purposes of poetic diction, but cannot wholly exonerate Gray from Wordsworth's assault on it, though Newey effectively defends the 'Sonnet on the Death of Richard West', which was at the centre of the fuss about diction. Angus Easson uses the Morecambe Sands episode of *Prelude* Book X to demonstrate that Wordsworth admired and was influenced by Gray. Johnson, the Pindaric Odes which so upset him, Gray's humorous verse, Akenside, and Byron, all get a fair hearing. Malcolm Hicks closes with an intriguing chapter of literary critical history - in addition to Matthew Arnold's criticisms, the Victorians could not take Gray altogether seriously as a poet, because he did not write enough.

Bill Ruddick's essay ends: 'in Gray's constantly-reiterated need to show his discoveries to (indeed almost to make them in the company of) an absent but imaginatively-present companion, a brother self, he prefigures that longing for sharers in revelations concerning nature and humanity which remains among the most distinguishing and attractive features of Romantic art.' And of Bill and his writing.

London

ROGER ROBINSON

*Reflections of Revolution: Images of Romanticism* ed. Alison Yarrington and Kelvin Everest. London: Routledge, 1993. £35 hardback.

AS ECCLESIASTES once remarked, 'of making many books there is no end': is it *quite* impossible that he had a sideline as a romanticist? For here is another collection of essays, based on papers given at another conference (no end to those either), this one at Leicester in 1989. It focusses, as that date suggests, on the impact of the French Revolution - hardly a new subject, but here presented with a new, or newish, interdisciplinary twist, being the work of both literary critics and art historians.

Well, everyone deplores over-specialization: declaring yourself in favour of interdisciplinary approaches is as uncontentious as saying you're a supporter of motherhood. The problem comes in practising what you preach, for it calls at least for double expertise. And indeed, in this collection the interdisciplinary noises actually make very little difference - of the eleven essays the first seven are pretty much literary critics doing their thing, the last three art historians theirs, and David Bindman's (very good) essay on Blake falling somewhere between the two, as essays on Blake have to. But not to grumble: the (monochrome) reproductions enliven the book and the mixture of professions makes for variety, even if it destroys much sense of overall coherence. (It must have made the conference more entertaining too.)

Inadvertently, I suppose, this book presents a snapshot of romantic studies: particularly, it shows the signs of the 'return to history' we are currently supposed to be enjoying after the '70s, ruled - the myth goes - by the Francophile formalists of Yale. One essay here, Fred Botting's, goes through the less inspiring of these old routines, finding the monster in *Frankenstein* a kind of *avant la lettre* Derrida, deconstructing our unthinking polarities and the like. His essay ends with some specious stuff about the 'differences' of 'reading' (reading is, needless to say, 'monstrous') entailing the 'monstrous' transgressions of literature, and thus

the liberating transgressions of different 'politics'. Just what remains to judge one politics better than any other after this merry demolition job of 'polarity' is obscure as ever; but Botting sounds curiously archaic already.

They tend to order these things differently in England, and in some ways better. A native tradition of historians, E. P. Thompson at its head, and with modern representatives like John Barrell and Nicholas Roe, continues its work. This volume bears mostly the firm fruit of that stock. The art historians in particular seem to me, an outsider, particularly good. William Vaughan's essay on J.-L. David and English painting is a model of its kind, cogently demonstrating a subtler influence than the denunciation of David's republican neo-classicism might suggest. And Claudine Mitchell's de-coding of images of the murder of Marat by Charlotte Corday, including Mme. Tussaud's waxwork, is fascinating: she discovers the apparent 'naturalism' which typically characterizes such works to be, in fact, ingeniously organized contrivance, designed to put over the frightened middle-class's ideological point that Marat was simply wicked, his proletarian sympathies included.

Among the literary critics, several essays show similar virtues. Chris Jones offers a scholarly overview of the left-wing use of that apparently conservative cult, 'sensibility'; Angus Easson observes how Carlyle's rhetorical association of revolutionary action and cannibalism re-emerges in the fraught imaginings of his admirer Dickens during the politically turbulent mid-1850s; and Gavin Edwards cleverly shows how ideas of regicide, appropriately re-imagined within the household, recur in Crabbe's *Tales*. Bindman's essay on Blake's ambivalence towards Paine - a fellow revolutionary but a deist - is, as I have said, first rate; and Nigel Leask manages the feat of finding something to say about the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* by interpreting the poets' move to the Lakes as a kind of default version of Coleridge's American Pantisocracy, the Preface being a covert declaration of anti-Burkean principles befitting the new northern republic. (Incidentally, if there is someone a critic cannot afford to omit these days, it is Burke; and, after a period of respectability nurtured by David Bromwich and James Chandler, he seems back in the rôle of a Bad Thing.)

Finally, I should draw readers' attention to one other contribution, a subtle, meditative, and quite unostentatiously erudite piece on the iconography of trees - French Liberty Trees and English Oaks - in the post-revolutionary period. The essay is a mixture of enviably wide-ranging reference and uninsistently suggestive speculation; it is original; and it is also, in a quite unprecious way, beautifully written. It is one of the last published works of the late editor of this journal, Bill Ruddick, whose death was announced in the January number. His closing sentence reads, 'Hopefully my own brief investigation may serve to stimulate further exploration of the subject': no better nor more hopeful words for a scholar and teacher to leave with.

*St Catherine's College, Oxford*

SEAMUS PERRY



## Society News and Notes from Members

### *Obituary: REGINALD WALTER HOWELL*

After a long illness, 'Reggie', as we all knew him, died on 19 March.

A long-standing member of the Society (he joined in 1946), he was also for many years a valued member of our Council. We all appreciated his quiet good sense in his contributions to Council meetings and his support of the Society's activities during the last half-century. It was a great pleasure to meet so many of Reggie's friends amongst his guests at our annual luncheon.

It is sad that during his last months ill-health prevented his attending meetings. Typically, he never failed to send apologies for absence and to express his continued interest in the Society's progress. Almost his last letter to the Secretary was to decline re-election to the Council but looking forward to keeping in touch with the Society through the *Bulletin*.

Reggie got a First at Cambridge, spoke eight languages, was a member of the Unitarian Church, and an active worker for the Liberal Party and for Amnesty International. It was on his initiative that the Society made a donation to MIND in memory of Mary Lamb.

With Reggie's death and that of Bill Ruddick we have lost two members and friends who, in their different ways, expressed the abiding spirit of Charles Lamb.

Madeline Huxstep

### *Meeting at Edmonton, 9 April 1994*

On 9 April we had a delightful day at Edmonton, where our member Sandra Knott and her family entertained us right royally at Lamb's Cottage, showed us over the house, and provided a delicious buffet lunch. We much enjoyed, too, exploring their garden, an oasis amid the busy streets. Warm thanks are due to our kind hosts at the cottage for all they did to make our visit such a real pleasure. We then adjourned to the Hall, where Professor Carolyn Misenheimer introduced us to Southey's letters to children. As always, she charmed us, both with the manner and the content of her talk, and quite persuaded those who were not already converted of the affectionate, humourous, kindly nature of the man his niece Sara Coleridge called 'dear Uncle Southey'. What could have been better as the centrepiece of this enchanted day? Afterwards, Nick and Cecilia Powell, as if by magic, even conjured up a cup of tea! Yes, we did visit the Churchyard to pay our respects at Lamb's grave, which the Society had recently had repaired. We were sorry our wonderful Secretary Madeline Huxstep could not be with us in person but, in the fact that everything went like clockwork, her presence was felt, if not seen.

Mary Wedd

[For the Chairman's earlier, private visit to Lamb's Cottage, see pages 128-9, below. Ed.]

### *The Alliance of Literary Societies, 23 April 1994*

The 21st birthday of the Alliance of Literary Societies was acknowledged at the Alliance's AGM and annual Conference on 23 April in Birmingham. However, despite the occasion only about a half of all the affiliated societies (numbering over 40) were represented, though as always the Charles Lamb Society sent its delegate (me) and there was at least one other Elian in the shape of an agent from the Gerard Manley Hopkins Society.

The CLS also had a stall, this time featuring an elaborate photo-collage, and (happily) a good deal of interest was shown by other delegates in the publicity material on display. If the turn-out was again disappointing, the proceedings this year were at least enlivened by the

almost spontaneous birth of another society. The sudden announcement, by the great-great grandson (or was it nephew?) of eccentric medico Thomas Lovell Beddoes, that a new society to promote the writer's life and work had been formed half an hour before, caused amazement even among those delegates who had actually heard of Thomas Lovell Beddoes. It is to be hoped that this new arrival will grow into something healthy, if only for the sake of present and future Elians - after all, Thomas Beddoes, the poet's father, was a friend of Southey and Coleridge.

At the AGM all officers were re-elected without opposition, but there is now a vacancy on the Council, which meets twice a year in Brum. Among the successes of the 1993, the literary weekend was singled out. Although not a financial triumph, it proved to be a thoroughly enjoyable event, and one which is likely to become a permanent fixture in the ALS calendar. In fact, it was resolved to amalgamate the 1996 AGM with a second literary weekend. *Chapter One*, the ALS's fanzine, was distributed as usual, and Elians should notice that the latest issue contains a brief notice of Bill Ruddick, who died in February. Other, perhaps more cheerful, CLS news is always welcome at the *Chapter One* office, whose 'phone number is 0606 891303.

This year the Conference was hosted by the Francis Brett Young Society and delegates were treated to some cautionary tales that illustrate the current state of interest in the Midlands novelist among the general reading public. Apparently, in the good old days, early and even first editions of the novels could be picked up for a couple of bob. Now, in the age of *Nintendo* and the politically-correct head teacher, shoals of the Uniform Edition are being chucked into skips along with the Eden Phillpotts and the L. P. Jacks. At these revelations, delegates of the Mary Webb and Leo Walmsley Societies blanched. Your own delegate - fantasizing at the unlikely prospect of finding first editions of Lamb in skips - just smiled.

Next year the Keats Society will celebrate the poet's bicentenary by hosting the Conference. This seems rather prophetic. Keats, as everyone knows, is an anagram of steak. Well, could steak be followed by Lamb in 1996?

R. M. Healey

*The Bill Ruddick Memorial Service at Manchester University, 10 May 1994*

On Tuesday 10 May, a Memorial Service for Bill Ruddick was held at the Catholic Chaplaincy of Manchester University. Thanks to Father Boardley, who conducted the Mass beforehand, and to the organizers, Bill Hutchings and Shelagh Aston, the Service was truly memorable. It was a moving and joyous occasion, cram-full of Ruddickian incident and humour.

Under the genial direction of Bill Hutchings, six speakers presented their recollections of Bill and the myriad-mindedness of his life and learning. The works they had selected by way of illustration aptly caught the enthusiasm, vividness, and diversity of the man. Tom Craik read from Bill's edition of *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1977), Malcolm Hicks from Dr Johnson, Angus Easson from Wordsworth's *St. Paul's*, Grevel Lindop from his River Duddon 'Afterthought', Mary Wedd from Lamb's letter on giving up drink. In their own words, and in the passages they had chosen, there, once more, was Bill - as student and teacher, as academic and extra-muralist, as opera-lover and reading-party leader, gossip and raconteur, Elian and friend, and, last but not least, as letter-writer.

Simon Curtis's 'In Memory of Bill Ruddick', printed in this number, pages 84-5, brought back memories of Bill through the medium of his voice and the places he cherished. By way of an ending, we were treated to some of Bill's Choice Howlers (read by Bill Hutchings in lieu of Chris McCully, who was unfortunately struck down by a virus). These were the

solecisms Bill diligently collected from the scripts of hapless finalists over many years of examining; the 'escalator' of *Middlemarch*, in particular, will be treasured by everyone present.

Among the audience were numerous members of the English Department at Manchester, several members of the Charles Lamb Society (Jeffrey Baker, Duncan Wu, and myself), Frank McManus, who knew Bill from the Wordsworth Winter School, and Professor J. R. Watson.

Bill's genius for friendship was brought home to me in an unexpected way. The person I was sitting next to during the service turned out to have started giving Bill lifts to work when he saw him waiting for the bus, and said to me afterwards, with admiration and surprise, 'I never knew he meant so much to so many people'.

Mary Wedd spoke for all when she introduced her hilarious letter from Lamb by stating, simply, 'I loved Bill'. In reading the Duddon 'Afterthought', Grevel Lindop put me in mind of Bill's enormous and inspiring powers of resilience. (In the last week of his life, apparently, he had begun re-reading Scott.) Grevel also paid tribute to Bill's unshakeable modesty. He was indeed, as the Wordsworth sonnet beautifully suggested, 'greater than he knew'.

On behalf of the Charles Lamb Society, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Bill Hutchings and Shelagh Aston for a remarkable and wholly appropriate celebration.

Nicola Trott

#### NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

##### *Annual General Meeting 1994*

The 1994 Annual General Meeting was held on 12 May in unusually elegant surroundings in a suite at the Guildhall Library and we are most grateful to Ms Irene Gilchrist for arranging this.

The Chairman, Mr D. E. Wickham, presented his Report for 1993 (circulated with the April *Bulletin*) and referred to the great losses sustained this year by the deaths of Bill Ruddick and Reggie Howell.

The Treasurer (Mr N. Powell) presented the 1993 Accounts, which showed that our expenditure exceeded income by nearly £6,000 - largely accounted for by the printing of booklets and leaflets and archive storage, research and cataloguing. As the cost of the *Bulletin* alone exceeds our subscription income and as our policy is to maintain our reserves (resulting from the sale of Button Snap), it was agreed to increase subscriptions from 1 January 1995 (unchanged for the past seven years).

Written reports were received from the Editor of the *Bulletin* and the Alliance of Literary Societies' representative. The Membership Secretary reported a welcome increase in members to 362. The subcommittee responsible for administering the Charles Lamb Bursary was pleased at the excellent quality of applications this year and had selected Aveek Sen of Churchill College, Cambridge, whose doctoral thesis is on Keats. For further details, see Editor's report, page 128 below.

The Officers and Council for 1994-5 were re-elected without opposition. After the meeting, members were able to examine a fascinating exhibition of treasures from our library arranged by Deborah Hedgecock, as well as enjoying a glass of wine and Elian conversation together.

##### *Dinner/Luncheon Menus*

Can you help to fill gaps in our Archives with Menus for 1940, 1942-9, 1964, 1966, 1979, 1983, and any for 1991 onwards? Please contact the Secretary if you can help.

*Never out of date*

A recent telephone call about a 1977 *Bulletin* (NS 20) containing an article about George Burnett enabled us to put our enquirer in touch with Berta Lawrence (still happily contributing to the *Bulletin*).

## FROM THE EDITOR

*The Charles Lamb Bursary 1994*

It is with great pleasure that the Society announces the award of the Charles Lamb Bursary 1994 to Aveek Sen of Churchill College, Cambridge. This year the Bursary covers the full registration and attendance fee at the Wordsworth Summer Conference 1994. With nine applications, some of a very high standard indeed, the subcommittee responsible for the award reached a decision only after much thought and discussion.

As Elians who have attended it will know, the Wordsworth Summer Conference has for many years provided an invaluable opportunity for graduate students to meet with established literary critics. Like Michael Newton, who received the Bursary in 1992, Mr Sen will contribute to the academic proceedings of the Conference as the reader of a paper; his title is 'Keats' Grecian Urn and Academic Hellenism', and he will speak on Thursday 11 August at the Red Lion, Grasmere. We wish him well with it.

*Romanticism*

Nicholas Roe, a frequent contributor to this *Bulletin*, is one of the editors of a new journal forthcoming from Edinburgh University Press entitled *Romanticism*. It will contain critical, historical, textual and bibliographical essays and notes, reflecting the full range of methodological and theoretical debate. An extra dimension will be the substantial reviews section, covering major new studies in depth with shorter notices of a variety of other relevant materials. Articles in the first two issues will include John Barnard, 'Keats' Belle Dame and the Sexual Politics of Leigh Hunt's *Indicator*' and Jane Stabler, 'Pit-Bull Poetics: One Battle in Byron's "War in Words"'. Subscription enquiries should be directed to Edinburgh University Press, 22 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LF; offers of contributions may be directed to Dr Roe at University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9AL.

## NEWS AND NOTES FROM MEMBERS

*Lamb's Cottage, Edmonton, For Sale*

A friend has sent me a cutting from the *Enfield Independent* of 11 March 1992. Lamb's Cottage, Church Street, Edmonton, London N9, the Waldens' house, where he died, is for sale again.

Early 18th century Grade 2 listed building of special interest set in Edmonton Conservation Area. This was the home of Charles Lamb, poet, playwright, critic, essayist, and close friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth. A unique property less than 20 minutes from central London, retaining all its original features and charm. A spacious 5 bedroomed house with 3 reception rooms and large hall area, kitchen/diner, 2 bathrooms, gas c/h, fitted carpets, 150' picturesque garden, viewing highly recommended via Sole Agents. They are William H. Brown, 43 Silver Street, Enfield. Tel: 081-367 9300.

I visited the house when it was last up for sale and have a distinct memory of rather a lot of cream emulsion, rather a lot of internal walls which had been removed, and a price tag of £60,000 but perhaps memory is playing me false.

Five bedrooms would make a splendid home for the Society's collection and library, while the treasures could be put on public view. The price is OIRO (Offers in the Region of?) £200,000. Potential fairy godparents may contact any officer of the Society.

*Note:* The house has since been sold.

D. E. Wickham

#### *Availability Of Approved Texts*

Members may recall how I have been known to become heated about a series of remarks by Geoffrey Grigson in *Country Life* some years ago, to the effect that there were no second-hand bookshops like there used to be and no copies of editions of Lamb like one used to find on every shelf. I wrote and offered to show him the bookshops and a fair quantity of editions of Lamb. There was no reply.

During the summer of 1993 I visited the bookshop known as Camilla's in Eastbourne. One shelf carried an unbroken run of no less than twenty-two copies of *Essays of Elia*, every one in a different edition and binding.

D.E. Wickham

#### *For the Record*

Theodore Watts-Dunton, the friend of Swinburne, wrote a book entitled *The Old Familiar Faces*. It was published by Herbert Jenkins in 1915 and includes essays on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, Christina Rossetti, George Borrow, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Lord De Tabley, etc. Not a lot of people know that.

D. E. Wickham

#### *How Are The Mighty Fallen!!!*

Charles Lamb said that the best sort of acid is assiduity. Those who read the *Bulletin* NS 79 (1992) 255-7 with assiduity may remember my unkind but honestly-felt review of Barbara Rosenbaum's *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, Vol. IV, 1800-1900, Part 2, Hardy-Lamb. Retail price: £225.

In April 1992 I went to a Remainder Book Sale, one of those where an agent hires a church hall, plays the Top Fifty Heavy Metal hits on a radio all day, and offers cut-price, though not necessarily cheap, copies of titles on subjects like *How to Ice Birthday Cakes for your Pets*, *Favourite Pot Plants of the Waffen SS*, and *Knit Your Own Royal Family*.

On this occasion my eye fell upon a book which looked as out of place as a duchess in a doss-house. It was an earlier volume in the series and I think it covered the period 1625 to 1700. Admittedly one gathering had been repeated in error, so the binding was the right size but the book lacked about 60 pages. Thus you might have missed the entire catalogue of the works of Bishop Henry King and the introduction to whoever followed him alphabetically, but 18 or 20 other authors were complete (I checked) and these included people like Bunyan and Dryden and Bishop Richard Corbet ('Farewell rewards and fairies'). Retail price: £7.95.

This stimulated me to quite a bit of philosophical contemplation, I can tell you. Pearls before swine. Prophets without honour. Poe's *The Purloined Letter*. Few clichés of literature went unrevolved. However, I truly did not want the book and could not think, off-hand, of any Dryden scholar who might be blackmailed into buying it from me at any sort of profit. So I left it.

A month later I returned to the next sale-date at that venue (as we in the jargon call it), fearful of how I would react if it were still there, its glassy eyes fixed upon me, its little

hands reaching out to me, and its beseeching cries sending me into agony, all no less avoidable for being invisible and inaudible to others.

I am glad to say (I think I am glad to say - yes, I *must* be glad to say) that the book was no longer there. I do hope that someone has given it a comfortable shelf. But, cor luvaduck, £225 and £7.95. It makes yer fink, dunnit? [Cf. Charles Lamb and the Cockney School of Literature].

D. E. Wickham

*For the Record - Charles Lamb's Birthday*

Charles Lamb shares his date of birth, 10 February, with the following historical figures: Samuel Plimsoll, the 'sailors' friend', 1824; Boris Paternak, poet and novelist, 1890; Harold Macmillan, 1st Earl of Stockton, prime minister, 1894; Bertolt Brecht, dramatist, 1898.

Celebrated living people who celebrate their birthday on that date include Larry Adler, mouth organist (what became of 'harmonica player?'); Danny Blanchflower, the former footballer; Dr Alex Comfort, physician, poet and novelist; Leontyne Price the soprano; Mark Spitz, former Olympic swimmer.

An astrologer might have a fair problem sorting out similar characteristics for those people.

(Persons who died on that date include Pushkin; Lister, the pioneer of antiseptic surgery; Röntgen, the discoverer of X-rays; and Edgar Wallace.)

D. E. Wickham

*Desk Research on Eliana, or That's (not) the Way to do it*

In October 1992 I bought a scrappy autograph note from Charles Lamb. 'No place, no date', as the dealers say - i.e. no writer's address and no date in the top right-hand corner, and the note begins 'Dear F'. The only other useful 'internal evidence' is that Charles Lamb mentions being 'at Islington' and refers to 'your Brother'. The dealer identified the addressee as Frederick or Francis John, brothers of Barron Field.

How could I confirm the addressee's name? 'Dear F'. Was the note dateable? One of the F. Fields is all very well, I thought, but there is Barron Field himself - or John Forster or Francis Stephen Cary, certainly addressed by Charles Lamb in the odd late letter as 'Dear F'. The reference to Islington does not mean that he was living there when he wrote. Can it be proved that Forster or Cary had a brother?

From Claude Prance's *Companion* I learned that Francis John was a Clerk at East India House with Charles Lamb and that Frederick was at Christ's Hospital after him. Professor Marrs does not print the note in his first three volumes of the *Letters*, nor does it appear in Lucas' complete three volumes of the *Letters*. I tried a couple of editions of Lucas' *Life*, indexes first, then a reasonable search of the likely entries. Then I tried Will D. Howe's *Charles Lamb and his Friends*. Nothing of any use but various interesting and time-consuming by-ways.

Stalemate. Total frustration. Mere suppositions, that the note was unpublished and written to a colleague during the Colebrook Cottage years, 1823-7, and all based on - what, a dealer's guesswork? Then, for the first time, *I turned the note over* and found that Charles Lamb had addressed it to 'F. Field, Esq.'.

D. E. Wickham

*Charles Lamb - Screenwriter*

I recently attended a National Film Theatre showing of the 1946 movie (definitely the correct word) *Night and Day* - not so much a biopic as a fictional story with music about a composer who happens to be named Cole Porter.

The actor Monty Woolley, 'The Man Who Came to Dinner', was billed 'as himself'. He played a chief supporting role, Professor Woolley of the Yale Law Department. Far less interested in teaching law than in hearing the tunes 'this young fellow Porter' was writing, Professor Woolley was reproached for arriving late at every one of his classes during the past week. Ah, he replied, but I shall make up for it: see how early I go.

Hardly had that registered before someone appeared to say 'I'll be seeing you in all the old familiar faces'.

Thereafter I was agog. I sat through a Park Lane which was ten feet of tarmac lined with facades from Colonial Williamsburg built opposite Central Park, a newspaper placard advertising Gatwick Races, a policeman's helmet which took its silhouette from the Mack Sennett comedies, a red omnibus which was not *quite* right, and a busking sequence accomplished by three cutesy Pearlies speaking that incomprehensible lingo which American actors assume for any working class part between the Tower of London and Belgrave Square. But in all the rest of the film, cor, blowmedown and luvaduck, lidies and gents, there weren't no more Lamb references, not no'ow.

*Paris - Not a Diary of Lamb's Visit?*

The following handwritten letter, which has turned up in the Archives of *The Elian*, the forerunner of The Charles Lamb Society, is transcribed for what it is worth and for the record. On 25 March 1925 a Mr Harry Wilson wrote from 10 Limerston Street, Chelsea, SW10, to Mr F. A. Downing, who was in the last throes of arranging the Emancipation Dinner, to be held in Inner Temple Hall on 30 March 1925 to mark Charles Lamb's superannuation on 29 March 1825.

Seeing you are about to have a Dinner on behalf of the Late Charles Lamb:

I thought perhaps you or one of [the] Company would like to read at the Dinner a Diary of his of his [*sic*] First Visit to the Continent 1835 it was written by himself and I think it would entertain the company a little if you also think so I would send it to you on condition you returned it if you let me know.

The giveaway date of 1835 has unfortunately been corrected, perhaps from 1830 or 1833. At the risk of offending those for whom the penny has not dropped, Charles and Mary Lamb visited Paris in 1822 and he was dead before the end of 1834. If the letter has any validity, it shows that there were other Charles Lambs about in the world (as we already knew) and that the diary may be perfectly genuine but not the work of *our* Charles Lamb.

D. E. Wickham

*For the Record*

Mr Barrett of Wimpole Street, the father of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, died in 1857 of various medical conditions but the final weakening attack which caused him to sink was one of erysipelas.

Erysipelas was, of course, what killed Charles Lamb after he had tripped over and grazed his face.

D. E. Wickham

*Membership Drives - You Mad*

Like (nearly) everyone in (nearly) every society, I am instinctively 'in the numbers game', where more seems to mean better. We must find more members, more members made a better society, and so on.

When a Charles Lamb Society membership drive was suggested recently, I asked that we should at least consider whether we did really want more members. It is always good to have some new blood and to replace natural wastage, but a substantial increase would cause administrative difficulties, i.e. too much extra work for the same faithful few. Should we necessarily feel guilty that the membership list is not increasing hourly?

Some remarks by Joseph Connolly about the Beatrix Potter Society in *The Times* of 7 November 1990 were thus of particular interest.

He pointed out that, although Beatrix Potter's mass popularity began soon after the publication of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in 1901, the BPS is now only just approaching its 10th anniversary, remains comparatively unknown, and has an international membership of (merely) 800.

Yet the society . . . is not interested in attracting members. 'The society was founded by a small group of people to demonstrate that there is a great deal more to "B.P." than most people think, but most of all to further research into all aspects of her work', says chairman Judy Taylor, the author of two books on Potter and editor of her letters. The society is a registered charity, and wholly self-financing, yet all those concerned seem reluctant to expand the venture. 'We don't actually discourage membership', says the publicity officer, Audrey Parker, 'but we only want people who are seriously interested'.

D. E. Wickham

**New Members**

It is with great pleasure that we welcome the following new members of the Society, who have enrolled since January this year:

Peter Simmonds	Ms I. Joannides	Mary Hillier
Ms N. Faroozi	James Hawkes	Professor Frederick Burwick
Gordon Douglass	James Juroe	Charles Vallely
Ben Colbert	Miss M. Massey	Dr Pamela Clemit
Miss M. Clark	Dr Grevel Lindop	

**50 Years Ago: from *CLS Bulletin* No. 63 (Tenth Year) July 1944***Obituary*

We record with deep regret the death on 12 May 1944, of Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch (Q), President of this Society.

*New Members*

Mr. L. A. G. Strong; Mr. E. M. W. Tillyard

*Charles Dickens to 'Barry Cornwall', Gad's Hill, 13 August 1866:*

My dear Proctor, I have read your biography of Charles Lamb with inexpressible pleasure and interest. I do not think it possible to tell a pathetic story with more unaffected and manly tenderness. . . . Let me, my dear friend, most heartily congratulate you on your achievement. It is not an ordinary triumph to do such justice to the memory of such a man. And I venture to add that the fresh spirit with which you have done it, impresses me as being perfectly wonderful.