The Charles Lamb Bulletin

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Contents

'A merry Season to us all, & auspicious New Year to our London'[1] : Charles Lamb and the Representation of a City

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THE TITULAR QUOTE from Charles Lamb refers to the *London Magazine*, but it could just as easily refer to the city in which he was born and with which he enjoyed a life-long love affair. One of Lamb's most well-known pieces on London is 'The Londoner', first published in the *Morning Post* in February 1802, in which he claims that:

> The man must have a rare *recipe* for melancholy, who can be dull in Fleet-street. I am naturally inclined to *hypochondria*, but in London it vanishes, like all other ills. Often when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into her crowded Strand, and fed my humour, till tears have wetted my cheek for inutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to present at all hours, like the shifting scenes of a skilful pantomime.[2]

A few days after this essay appeared, Lamb received a letter from Thomas Manning, then in Paris:

> I should tell you concerning the external appearance of Paris, that I think it much more grand & imposing than that of London. The houses are grand and massy, seemingly built for eternity; & the Palaces are *very very* far superior to any thing in London. The old Louvre and the pavillions [sic] of Madame Pompadour are of most beautiful architecture.[3]

Lamb makes no overt comment upon Manning's sentiments, but instead replies to him with a long letter in which he rather indignantly reproduces large extracts from his essay.[4] His Johnsonian view of London might appear to offer praise for praise's sake, but with Lamb, of course, things are rarely that straightforward. His writing about London serves a two-fold purpose: firstly, Lamb uses it in order to satirise the contemporaneous cult of the Picturesque and the trend for Picturesque tourism which was popular in fashionable circles at the time; and secondly, his presentations of London can also serve as the tool with which he makes himself the playful—or not so playful—antithesis of his friends Wordsworth and Coleridge.

The notion of the Picturesque gained favour at the end of the eighteenth century, when a number of books were published that dealt with the subject. Picturesque aesthetics were of particular importance to wealthy landowners who wanted to have their country estates landscaped in the way advocated by the writings of Uvedale Price (himself the owner of a large estate) and Richard Payne Knight. The most celebrated landscape gardener of the time was Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, who advocated an extremely stylised approach to estate management; too stylised, according to Price, who complained that Brown's contrived planting schemes resulted in trees 'drilled for parade like compact bodies of soldiers' (Copley

[1] The Charles Lamb Society Collection at Guildhall Library, London, CLS Ms 20. Quoted with permission from the Charles Lamb Society.

[2] *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas, 7 vols. (London: Methuen & Co., 1903-05), I: *Miscellaneous Prose*, 401-02. Hereafter referred to as *Miscellaneous Prose*. All references to 'The Londoner' are to the text of 1802.

[3] G. A. Anderson, ed., *The Letters of Thomas Manning to Charles Lamb* (London: Martin Secker, 1925) 63.

[4] *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb*, ed. Edwin W. Marrs, Jr., 3 vols. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1975 –), II: 54-59. Hereafter referred to as *Letters*.

& Garside p.21). Another contemporary, Joseph Holden Pott, concluded that Brown's 'sole aim' was 'to form scenes for the poet and the painter'.[5]

This craze soon spread beyond the grounds of stately homes and into the countryside at large, as tourists of the Picturesque travelled around Britain (and in some cases, further afield into Europe) in search of the perfect view. There was an increasing demand for a new genre of literature: the guidebook, which Stephen Copley describes as 'one strand in the burgeoning array of contemporary forms of regional loco-descriptive literature'.[6] One author of such literature was the Reverend William Gilpin, who wrote hugely influential books which prescribed tours of the Wye Valley and the Lake District, amongst other places. Ann Bermingham points out the inherent irony of the situation. The Picturesque according to Price and Knight had been once imbued with exclusivity, but now what they had 'defined as the delicate and sophisticated taste of a select few became the popular pastime of the bourgeois'.[7] Hordes of tourists followed the routes described by Gilpin armed with an array of paraphernalia. As well as maps and guidebooks, they—or rather their servants—would be carrying sketch books, pencils, watercolour sets, barometers, pedometers, and Claude Glasses (named after the seventeenth century landscape painter Claude Lorrain), which were special tinted lenses through which the landscape should be viewed. According to Malcolm Andrews, the Picturesque tourist 'pursued his prey with a Claude Glass rather than a gun. He could fix and compose elusive landscape features in a matter of seconds'. Andrews describes the 'manipulative potential' of the Claude Glass as tourists used it to alter the season or time of day:

> The darkened glass, tinted blue and grey, could suffuse a varied afternoon scene with moonlight. The yellow, or 'sunrise' glass, when used at noon, conveniently afforded a glowing dawn view, 'without the obscuration of the morning mist'. . . . Since the tourist was essentially a visitor, with little time to spare, he could reasonably try to condense twenty-four hours of changing light effects into a couple of hours' play with his Glasses. It was a kind of artistic licence.[8]

It was also necessary given the nature of Gilpin's tours, which are whistle-stop to say the least.

The use of such tools of contrivance as the Claude Glass is symptomatic of the mindset encouraged in the tourist by Gilpin. In his *Observations on the River Wye*, he informs his disciples that,

> Nature is always great in design; but unequal in composition. She is an admirable colourist; and can harmonize her tints with infinite variety, and inimitable beauty: but is seldom so correct in composition, as to produce an harmonious whole. Either the foreground, or the background, is disproportioned: or some awkward line runs across the piece: or a tree is ill-placed: or a bank is formal: or something, or other is not exactly what it should be.[9]

As we can see, Gilpin wants to stylise the landscape to an absurd degree. This is demonstrated when he reaches one of the highlights of his tour: the ruins of Tintern Abbey. Although he acknowledges its beauty, he is frustrated that it has been ruined in what he sees overall as an aesthetically displeasing way:

[5] Quoted in James A. W. Heffernan, *The Re-Creation of Landscape: A Study of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Constable, and Turner* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1984) 8.
[6] Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, eds., *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics Since 1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 42.
[7] Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740 – 1860* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1986) 83.
[8] Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760 – 1800* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1989) 67-70. Hereafter referred to as *The Search for the Picturesque*.
[9] William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye, 1782* (Oxford and New York: Woodstock Books, 1991) 18. Hereafter referred to as *Observations on the River Wye*.

> Though the parts are beautiful, the whole is ill-shaped. No ruins of the tower are left, which might give form, and contrast to the walls, and buttresses, and other inferior parts. Instead of this, a number of gabel-ends hurt the eye with their regularity; and disgust it by the vulgarity of their shape.

However, Gilpin has a remedy for this, which he tentatively suggests:

> A mallet judiciously used (but who durst use it?) might be of service in fracturing some of them; particularly those of the cross isles, which are not only disagreeable in themselves, but confound the perspective.[10]

Visitors to the abbey complained that their enjoyment was hindered by its surroundings. 'The outside did not entirely answer my expectations,' says one, 'and this I attribute to the miserable approach through a dirty lane bounded by ruinous huts'. Another tourist remarks that, 'At some trifling expense, the surrounding cottages and orchards might be removed; and then the abbey could stand nobly back'd by woods, and open to the water: at present it is shamefully block'd up'.[11]

Both Coleridge and Wordsworth pass telling comments upon the nature of Gilpin's tourists. In a Notebook entry made during the summer of 1800, Coleridge refers to 'Ladies reading Gilpin's &c while passing by the very places instead of looking at the places'. Around the same time, Wordsworth composed a short poem entitled, 'On seeing some Tourists of the Lakes pass by reading; a practise very common':

> What waste in the labour of Chariot and Steed!
> For this came ye hither? is this your delight?
> There are twenty-four letters, and those ye can read;
> But Nature's ten thousand are Blank in your sight:
> Then throw by your Books, and the study begin;
> Or sleep, and be blameless, and wake at your Inn![12]

Lamb's criticism is, characteristically, less explicit. He resented any form of contemporary literature which attempted to be prescriptive or authoritative and often sought to undermine these discourses with the use of parody, irony, and satire. There are two short pieces on London which seem particularly to treat Picturesque literature in this way. The first is entitled 'A Town Residence', published in *The Examiner* in 1813. Lamb begins by asking: 'Where would a man of taste chuse his town residence, setting convenience out of the question?' He answers himself in terms which would not be wholly out of place in a guidebook:

> Palace-yard, — for its contiguity to the Abbey, the Courts of Justice, the Sittings of Parliament, Whitehall, the Parks, &c., — I hold of all the places in these two great cities of London and Westminster to be the most classical and eligible. Next in classicality, I should name the four Inns of Court: they breathe a learned and collegiate air . . . Next to the Inns of Court, Covent-Garden, for its *rus in urbe*, its wholesome scents of early fruits and vegetables, its tasteful church and arcades, — above all, the neighbouring theatres cannot but be approved of.

Lamb then stalls:

[10] *Observations on the River Wye* 32-33.
[11] Quoted in *The Search for the Picturesque* 98.
[12] William Wordsworth, Poems, in Two Volumes, *and Other Poems, 1800 – 1807*, ed. Jared Curtis (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) 535. Hereafter referred to as Poems, in Two Volumes, *and Other Poems*.

> I do not know a fourth station comparable to or worthy to be named after these. To an antiquarian, every spot in London, or even Southwark, teems with historical associations, local interest. He could not chuse amiss. But to me, who have no such qualifying knowledge, the Surrey side of the water is peculiarly distasteful. It is impossible to connect any thing interesting with it. I never knew a man of taste to live, what they term, *over the bridge*.[13]

Before passing his sweeping indictment of the whole of south London on the grounds of taste, Lamb states explicitly that he is not qualified to do so; that his statement stems from ignorance. By identifying this opinion as arbitrary and ill informed, it could be that he is commenting upon the claims and statements of the authoritative travel writers who dismiss entire towns with a sentence or two.

There is a similar piece entitled 'London Fogs' (date unknown):

> In a well-mix'd Metropolitan Fog there is something substantial and satisfying — you can feel what you breathe, and see it too. It is like breathing water, as we may fancy the fishes do. And then the taste of it, when dashed with a fine season of sea-coal-smoke, is far from insipid. It is also meat and drink at the same time: something between egg-flip and *omelette soufflée*, but much more digestible than either. Not that I would recommend it medicinally — especially to persons that have queasy stomachs, delicate nerves, and afflicted with bile; but for persons of a good robust habit of body, and not dainty withal (which such, by the by, never are), there is nothing better in its way. And it wraps you all round like a Cloak, too — a patent water-proof one, which no rain ever penetrated. No; I maintain that a real London fog is a thing not to be sneezed at — if you can help it.
>
> *Mem.* — As many spurious imitations of the above are abroad, such as Scotch Mists, and the like, which are no less deleterious than disagreeable, please to ask for the 'true London particular,' as manufactured by Thames, Coal Gas, Smoke, Steam & Co. — None others are genuine.[14]

On the whole, the text is a rather eccentric one in which Lamb demonstrates his love of London by embracing wholeheartedly even the negative aspects of living in a city. But the final memorandum is the give-away. He uses advertising jargon to portray a natural phenomenon—fog—as a manufactured product, and in doing so, parodies those advocates of the Picturesque who, as we have seen, wish to manufacture the natural landscape and impose contrivance upon it. In particular, Gilpin describes in his *Observations on Cumberland and Westmoreland* the effects of fog, and how although it can be a nuisance in blotting out the landscape, on one occasion this was not unwelcome: 'Tho it is probable some views were obscured, which might have pleased us; it is equally probable, that many of those disgusting features, with which we might have been presented, were softened, and rendered more agreeable to the eye'. However, Gilpin laments that ultimately 'the misty hue was, in general, laid on with too full a pencil'.[15] This is also reminiscent of a passage in *The Prelude*, as Wordsworth describes straining his eyes at the top of Kirkstone Pass, 'as the mist / Gave intermitting prospect of the wood / And plain beneath' (XI: 362-64). For Wordsworth this was an example of sublime nature in his native Lake District, something which the city-dweller Lamb had little time for. He would rather present London fog as being sublime, and in doing so makes himself the antithesis of Wordsworth, who talks of the 'straggling breezes of suburban air' (*The Prelude*, VII: 208).

In *Observations on Cumberland and Westmoreland*, Gilpin also describes at some length the types of people who are suited, in the Picturesque sense, to dramatic landscapes:

[13] *Miscellaneous Prose* 155.
[14] *Miscellaneous Prose* 351.
[15] William Gilpin, *Observations on Cumberland and Westmoreland, 1786*, 2 vols. (Poole and New York: Woodstock Books, 1996), I: 219-20. Hereafter referred to as *Observations on Cumberland and Westmoreland.*

> The characters, which are most *suited to these scenes* of grandeur, are such as impress us with some idea of greatness, wildness, or ferocity; all which touch on the sublime. Figures in long, folding draperies; gypsies; banditti; and soldiers, — not in modern regimentals; but as Virgil paints them . . . are all marked with one or other of these characters: and mixing with the magnificence, wildness, or horror of the place, they properly coalesce; and reflecting the same images, add a deeper tinge to the character of the scene.

Gilpin quotes from Philip Thickness's account of his travels in Spain on the merits of gypsies; but they have to be the right sort of gypsies, 'the genuine breed', as he says: 'They are extremely swarthy, with hair as black as jet; and form very picturesque groups under the shade of the rocks and trees of the Pyraenean mountains'.[16]

Lamb's response is the Elia essay, 'A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis'. Although it is primarily a piece of pre-Dickensian social satire, the ironic sideswipe at Gilpin and Thickness is unmistakable when Lamb presents London beggars as an unmissable tourist attraction:

> The Mendicants of this great city were so many of her sights, her lions. I can no more spare them than I could the Cries of London. No corner of a street is complete without them. They are as indispensable as the Ballad Singer; and in their picturesque attire as ornamental as the Signs of old London. They were the standing morals, emblems, mementos, dial-mottos, the spital sermons, the books for children, the salutary checks and pauses to the high and rushing tide of greasy citizenry.

Furthermore, where Thickness had stressed the importance of the genuine gypsy, Lamb implores his reader not to reject a beggar on the grounds of dubious authenticity:

> Shut not thy purse-strings always against painted distress. Act a charity sometimes. When a poor creature (outwardly and visibly such) comes before thee, do not stay to inquire whether the 'seven small children', in whose name he implores thy assistance, have a veritable existence. Rake not into the bowels of unwelcome truth, to save a halfpenny. It is good to believe him. If he be not all that he pretendeth, give, and under a personate father of a family, think (if thou pleasest) that thou hast relieved an indigent bachelor. When they come with their counterfeit looks, and mumping tones, think them players. You pay your money to see a comedian feign these things, which, concerning these poor people, thou canst not certainly tell whether they are feigned or not.[17]

The differences with Wordsworth are again also clear. In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth describes London as a 'Babel din' (VII: 157) of 'Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense' (VII: 575). It is a 'Parliament of Monsters' (VII: 692) in which nothing is real and nothing can be trusted, including the beggars, whom Wordsworth singles out for their inauthenticity. While Lamb accepts and enjoys this as a part of city life, Wordsworth is disgusted by it. Lamb was often irritated by Wordsworth's dogma, and in this instance he seeks to undermine his high-minded attitude by celebrating the probable falseness of the beggars instead of being offended by it.

However, whilst the respective treatments of the city by the two authors could not be more different, there is at the same time a curious instance of intertextuality. Returning to 'The Londoner', Lamb's description of 'the multitudinous moving picture' which London 'never fails to present at all hours, like the shifting scenes of a skilful pantomime' bears a striking resemblance to a passage in Book Seven of *The Prelude*:

[16] *Observations on Cumberland and Westmoreland*, II: 45-47.
[17] *The Essays of Elia* 133, 137.

> Add to these exhibitions mute and still
> Others of wider scope, where living men,
> Music, and shifting pantomimic scenes,
> Together joined their multifarious aid
> To heighten the allurement (VII: 281-285).

The phrases used by both are surely too analogous for coincidence, but given that *The Prelude* was composed over several years, it is difficult to determine who has influenced whom.

Contention surrounds the relationship between Lamb, Wordsworth, and London. In 1801 Lamb thanks Wordsworth for an invitation to Cumberland, but declines:

> Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't mu[ch] care if I never see a mountain in my life.— I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you **Mountaineers** can have done with dead nature. The Lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, waggons, play houses, all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent garden, the very women of the Town, the Watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; — life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the very dirt & mud, the Sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print shops, the **old Book** stalls, parsons cheap'ning books, coffee houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes, London itself, a pantomime and a masquerade, all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impells me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fullness of joy at so much **Life** — —. All these emotions must be strange to you. So are your rural emotions to me. — But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes? —— [18]

Many of the phrases used in this letter were to inform the text of 'The Londoner'. Lamb is trying to demonstrate to Wordsworth that one man's meat is another man's poison. 'I do not envy you', he continues. 'I should pity you, did I not know, that the Mind will make friends of anything. Your sun & moon and skys and hills & lakes affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects'. However, I do not think that personal preference over town or country is the primary focus here. Elsewhere in the letter Lamb comments frankly upon *Lyrical Ballads* and is critical of Wordsworth's poetic dogma:

> I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the Beggar, that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct and like a lecture . . . An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told, I will teach you how to think upon this subject. This fault, if I am right, is in a ten thousandth worse degree to be found in **Sterne** and many many novelists and modern poets, who continually put a sign post up to shew **where you are to feel**. They set out with assuming their readers to be stupid.[19]

Then Lamb adds what Edmund Blunden deems an 'ironical' postscript: 'Thank you for Liking my

[18] *Letters,* I: 267.
[19] *Letters*, I: 265-9.

Play! !' Although it may appear meek and ingratiating this is, according to Blunden, a further, more subtle 'complaint against Wordsworth's egotism'.[20] I would argue the same for Lamb's promotion of his own surroundings over Wordsworth's. Geographical territory is, in this instance, a metaphor for literary territory. It was obviously still irking him when he wrote to Robert Lloyd a week later, declaring, 'Let them talk of Lakes and mountains and romantic dales all that fantastic stuff' before going on to paraphrase much of the letter to Wordsworth. '**A mob of men is better than a flock of sheep**', he concludes.[21] Thirteen years later Lamb prods Wordsworth with a gentle reminder. He has been reading *The Excursion*, and comments that:

> There is a deal of noble matter about mountain scenery, yet not so much as to overpower & discountenance a poor **Londoner** or South-country man entirely, though Mary seems to have felt it occasionally a little too powerfully, for it was her remark during reading it that by your system it was doubtful whether a Liver in Towns had a Soul to be Saved. She almost trembled for that invisible part of us in her.[22]

A sardonically pompous note attached to Wordsworth's poem, 'By their floating Mill', composed in 1806, suggests that the irritation was a mutual one:

> Suggested on the Thames by the sight of one of those floating mills that used to be seen there. This I noticed on the Surrey-side between Somerset-House and Blackfriars' Bridge. Charles Lamb was with me at the time; and I thought it remarkable that I should have to point out to him, an idolatrous Londoner, a sight so interesting as the happy group dancing on the platform'.[23]

Nonetheless, if we were to take Lamb at his word, the very fact of its location on the Surrey side of the Thames would have been enough to quell his curiosity.

With Coleridge, the situation is inverted. In his 1797 poem, 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison', Coleridge addressed the piece to Lamb in terms which did not find favour with the addressee:

> Now, my friends emerge
> Beneath the wide wide Heaven — and view again
> The many-steepled tract magnificent
> Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
> With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
> The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles
> Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on
> In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,
> My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
> And hungered after Nature, many a year,
> In the great City pent, winning thy way
> With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
> And strange calamity![24]

[20] Edmund Blunden, *Charles Lamb and His Contemporaries: Being the Clark Lectures Delivered at Trinity College Cambridge 1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933) 63, 129.
[21] *Letters*, I: 270-71.
[22] *Letters*, III: 96.
[23] Poems, in Two Volumes, *and Other Poems* 421.
[24] *CC Poetical Works* 1: 179, ll. 20-32.

Lamb's explicit complaint is about the 'gentle-hearted' tag. 'For God's sake (I never was more serious), don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses', he says in his first letter on the subject.[25] A week later he elaborates:

> In the next edition of the Anthology, (which Phoebus avert, and those nine other wandering maids also!) please to blot out *gentle hearted*, and substitute drunken dog, ragged-head, seld-shaved, odd-ey'd, stuttering, or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the Gentleman in question.[26]

The response appears a little overblown, and one wonders whether the comment, 'do it in better verses' holds the key. Is Lamb in reality more irritated by the way in which Coleridge has patronised and seemingly misunderstood him in relation to his city-dwelling lifestyle?

Lamb had no desire to find an Arcadian perfection in his surroundings, unlike his friends, and unlike the advocates of the Picturesque. As he explains in 'The Londoner', those aspects of the city which might render it imperfect as others perceive it are the very same characteristics which, for him, make it so pleasing:

> The very deformities of London, which give distaste to others, from habit do not displease me. The endless succession of shops, where Fancy (miscalled Folly) is supplied with perpetual new gauds and toys, excite in me no puritanical aversion. I gladly behold every appetite supplied with its proper food. The obliging customer, and the obliged tradesman — things which live by bowing, and things which exist but for homage, do not affect me with disgust; from habit I perceive nothing but urbanity, where other men, more refined, discover meanness. I love the very smoke of London, because it has been the medium most familiar to my vision. I see grand principles of honour at work in the dirty ring which encompasses two combatants with fists, and principles of no less eternal justice in the tumultuous detectors of a pickpocket. The salutary astonishment with which an execution is surveyed, convinces me more forcibly than an hundred volumes of abstract polity, that the universal instinct of man, in all ages, has leaned to order and good government.[27]

London (together with all of its faults) is, for Lamb, a landscape not of horror and revulsion, but one just as worthy of attention as the Wye valley, or the Lake District. It is one matter of personal preference which he uses in order to show that other personal preferences, such as literary ones, should be allowed to stand, and that one individual should not have the right to dictate the tastes of others.

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[25] *Letters*, I: 217.
[26] *Letters*, I: 224.
[27] *Miscellaneous Prose* 402.

Hazlitt Against the Law: The Suppression of *Select British Poets*

By GEOFFREY BINDMAN

I HAVE BEEN COLLECTING HAZLITT for about thirty years. My guide has been Sir Geoffrey Keynes' bibliography, first published in 1931.[1] A few of the books had eluded me and one I despaired of finding: *Select British Poets*, the first issue of 1824, with the subtitle *New Elegant Extracts from Chaucer to the Present Time with Critical Remarks*. The title page declares that the book is 'Embellished with Seven Ornamental Portraits, after a design by T. Stothard R.A.' and that it is published in London by Wm. C. Hall and sold by all booksellers. The engraved frontispiece bears the imprint 'London, Published by T. Tegg, 73 Cheapside, June 1824'.

A year or two ago, however, I received a catalogue from a bookseller in York. It was an exciting moment. Not only was there a first issue of *Select British Poets*, but there were other Hazlitt rarities as well. All had the unfamiliar bookplate of Payson G. Gates. I learned more of him later, as I shall describe.

Hazlitt explains in his preface that *SBP* was intended to be an update of one of the best known anthologies of English literature, *Elegant Extracts* by Vicesimus Knox, who was born in 1752. He became a fellow of St. John's College, Oxford and in 1778 succeeded his father as headmaster of Tonbridge School.[2] *Elegant Extracts*, and its companion, *Elegant Epistles*, went through many editions and grew substantially over the years.

The innovations in Hazlitt's version were his critical evaluation of the authors, and, above all, the inclusion of living and recently dead poets, several of whom had not previously been anthologized. The section of the book devoted to living poets included substantial selections from Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Scott, Lamb, Byron, Leigh Hunt, Keats and Shelley. The last two had died in 1821 and 1822, which suggests that the book had been finished well before 1824. No other collection of Keats' poems appeared until the Galignani piracy of 1829. Bloomfield, another poet included as a living author, had died in August 1823. The delay in finishing the book is also confirmed by the watermarking of the printed sheets, the earlier of which is dated 1817 and the later 1820. Oddly, Burns is also included among the living poets, though he had died in 1796.

In 1931 Keynes recorded only three copies of what he described as a very uncommon book, one in his own possession, one in the BM and one incomplete copy belonging to the great Hazlitt editor P.P. Howe. In his revised edition fifty years later in 1981,[3] Keynes says that in 1933 another copy was reported to him by a Mr. Lester F. Lange of New York, but that is all.

Hazlitt himself has made no reference to the book in any of his published correspondence or other writings, with the possible exception of a letter to Galignani in March 1825.[4] The only contemporary reference to the origins of the book is in a letter from Mary Shelley to Leigh Hunt.[5] On 9 September 1823, she wrote after seeing Charles Lamb that he

> said one thing which I am sure will give you pleasure. He corrected a new edition of *Elegant Extracts*, in which the Living Poets are included. He said he was much pleased with many of

[1] Nonesuch Press.
[2] See entry in *Dictionary of National Biography*.
[3] *St. Paul's Bibliographies*, Foxbury Meadow, Godalming, Surrey.
[4] See below, note 24.
[5] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, "To Leigh Hunt," 9 Sept. 1823, *Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, ed. Betty T. Bennett, vol. 1 (Baltimore, 1980) 378.

> your things, with a little of Montgomery and a little of Crabbe. Scott he found tiresome. Byron had many fine things but was tiresome but yours appeared to be the freshest and best of all. These extracts have never been published. They have been offered to Mr. Hunter and seeing the book at his house, I had the curiosity to look at the extracts which pleased Lamb.

The earliest bibliography (and biography) of Hazlitt was that of Alexander Ireland, published in 1867.[6] Ireland was an enthusiastic reader of Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, and, he writes 'gradually became possessor of all [their] writings'. His otherwise comprehensive list of Hazlitt's work omits the 1824 *SBP*. It includes the later 1825 edition which I shall talk about later, but he was clearly unaware of the 1824 volume.

However, Hazlitt's grandson, William Carew Hazlitt, in his memoirs of his grandfather, also published in 1867, says, mistaking the date,[7] 'In 1825, Mr. Hazlitt, assisted by his son, Mr. Proctor, Mr. Lamb, and somebody else whose name I do not recall, prepared for publication a volume of *Elegant Extracts* from the English poets. So', says the grandson,

> it was a somewhat corporate undertaking – a book, as it were, brought out by a Limited Company. Unluckily, some copyright authors were included by one or other of the company, an injunction was procured or at least threatened, by those interested; and the copies were sent to America, or otherwise smuggled. A few had got into circulation and may still be met with though rarely; and the volume was reissued the same year by Mr. Tegg with a new title.

Thirty years later, W.C. Hazlitt added to this account in *Four Generations of a Literary Family*.[8] His uncle Reynell, a printer, was in 1824 working for Whiting, the printer of the 1824 *SBP*. Charles Lamb brought in the corrected proofs. 'For', says W.C. Hazlitt, 'although the title page bears the name of Hazlitt, the latter was abroad just then, and, in fact, did nothing to the work but indicate what was to be printed, and write the preliminary notices'.

W.C. Hazlitt reminds us of the suppression, as he describes it, of the book and its rarity. John Forster, the biographer and literary executor of Dickens, a determined collector, never found one. Nor, he says, had the British Library a copy 'until lately'. 'We had no complete copy ourselves till one memorable morning [March 25, 1869] I looked in at Heath the booksellers in Oxford Street, and he brought me forward a book, remarking that, of course, I must have it. It was the *SBP* of 1824. It had a leaf missing'. When he told Heath, the latter supplied another defective copy out of which W.C. Hazlitt made one complete one. So, he says he 'became master of a rarity for which the late John Forster, Esquire sighed in vain'.[9]

Hazlitt's next biographer was Augustine Birrell, whose book appeared in the series English Men of Letters in 1902. In his preface he lists his authorities, apart from Hazlitt himself, as Ireland and W.C. Hazlitt.

So one would not expect anything new about *SBP*. But what makes his contribution interesting for my purpose is that apart from his work as biographer and essayist, he was a Member of Parliament and an eminent lawyer. As Quain Professor of Law at University College, London, he delivered in 1899 a series of 18 lectures on the 'Law and History of Copyrights in Books' of which the seven most popular, as he put it, were published in the following year. In the Hazlitt biography,

[6] *William Hazlitt, Essayist and Critic* (Frederick Warne, 1867); *List of the Writings of William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt Chronologically Arranged* (1868; reprinted 1970 by Burt Franklin, New York).
[7] *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, vol. 2 (Bentley, 1867) 137.
[8] W.C. Hazlitt, *Four Generations of a Literary Family*, vol. 1 (George Redway, 1897) 276.
[9] Hazlitt 76.

his comment on *SBP* was robust: 'The original plan of the Selection included Living Poets, and one copy at least so complete got into circulation, but the living poets or their publishers foolishly objected and the edition was rigorously suppressed'. He quotes some of the notes to the book, which he describes as 'marvels of terseness, and I should judge, Hazlitt's own'. He cites Edward Fitzgerald as saying in 1832, 'Hazlitt's *Poets* is the best selection I have ever seen'.[10]

Keynes and subsequent biographers have little to add to the accounts of Ireland and W.C. Hazlitt. Keynes, however, speculates that the book was taken over before publication by Thomas Tegg, whose name appears on the engraved frontispiece. 'Presumably', says Keynes, 'it was Tegg, who withdrew the book from circulation and when it was reset for him it was given to another printer, Davison'.[11]

This refers to the publication in 1825 of a new edition, omitting the living poets (except for Burns) and dropping Hazlitt's comments on the living poets (which incidentally would not have been affected by any copyright claim). This second edition bears the name of Thomas Tegg as publisher, and the sub-title *Elegant Extracts* is dropped. Keynes says this 'is a common book compared with the edition of 1824'.[12] There has been no other edition to this day.

Herschel Baker in 1962 records Hazlitt's work in the autumn of 1823 and the early part of 1824.[13] Between September and October he contributed a string of 'Common Places' to Leigh Hunt's 'Literary Examiner'; in October, in a letter to the *London Magazine*, he protested at De Quincey's unacknowledged use of his ideas on Malthus; he continued writing Table Talk for the *New Monthly*. Most important, says Baker, was the sketch of Bentham from which the *Spirit of the Age* was born. After he returned to London at the beginning of 1824, he wrote more sketches for the *Spirit of the Age*, a pair of essays for the *Edinburgh Review*, prepared his essay on the picture galleries for publication, and, says Baker, 'set about completing *SBP* which apparently had been started and abandoned several years before'.

Baker says the book 'poses many problems that, unless new data are discovered, will probably never be resolved'. Subsequent writers, with one exception, have declined the challenge. Of course there is a dearth of information about how Hazlitt embarked on the project, then apparently abandoned it, took it up again, involved Lamb and possibly Proctor and others in getting it ready for publication, and how the book came to be withdrawn, if indeed that is what happened. My interest has concentrated on the last questions.

If there was a copyright problem, why was it not anticipated? Did any of the living poets object to publication? It is unlikely that Lamb would have corrected and delivered proofs if he himself objected. Nor does it seem likely that Leigh Hunt reacted with outrage to the use of his work as described in Mary Shelley's letter. And who was Wm. C. Hall, who had published none of Hazlitt's other works, nor apparently those of any other writer? How far was Hazlitt himself involved? Others may know more than I about Hazlitt's dealings with his publishers but I have read letters from Hazlitt to some of his publishers which demonstrate that he was far from reticent in his relations with them.[14]

The Living Poets occupy about one-third of the book. The Living Poets made the book original and interesting—though one should note on the other hand that Hazlitt in his 1818 lecture on the living poets says,

[10] Augustine Birrell, 'William Hazlitt' (Macmillan, 1902) 199.
[11] Sir Geoffrey Keynes, 'Bibliography of Hazlitt' (Nonesuch Press, 1931) 75.
[12] Keynes 76.
[13] Herschel Baker, 'William Hazlitt' (Harvard, 1962) 429-432.
[14] Charles E. Robinson, ed., 'William Hazlitt to his Publishers, Friends and Creditors: Twenty-Seven New Holograph Letters' (Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, 1987).

> I cannot speak of them with the same reverence [as the dead] because I do not feel it with the same confidence, because I cannot have the same authority to sanction my opinion. I cannot be absolutely certain that anybody, twenty years hence, will think anything about any of them; but we may be pretty sure that Milton and Shakespeare will be remembered twenty years hence'.[15]

Hazlitt had included in this lecture a number of extracts, including the whole of Wordsworth's 'Hart Leap Well', more than 5 pages long. Did he think about copyright then?

At the time, copyright was far from an esoteric subject for authors and publishers.

The mediaeval common law recognized authorship as a property right owned in perpetuity. In the sixteenth century, the Stationers' Company tried to protect their trade by keeping a register of publications, ascribing ownership in effect to the printer and punishing those who reproduced work without his permission. Until its abolition in 1640, this monopoly was protected by the Star Chamber. In practice, it was the printers and publishers, who were also the booksellers, who controlled publication and the authors were entirely dependent on them. Authors sold their works to the booksellers. Royalties were unknown until much later.

This need for a more explicit legal framework to protect authors and booksellers from piracy became gradually apparent and in 1709, the first copyright statute, said to have been drafted by Swift, was enacted. It gave authors and their heirs sole right to print their work for 14 years after publication and if they were still alive at the end of 14 years, the period was extended by a further 14 years. Publication still had to be registered with the Stationers' Company to secure this protection. The main purpose of the statute was to provide protection against piracy and the method was by injunction, a costly and cumbersome remedy which had to be obtained from the Court of Chancery. The statute, as had the common law, applied only to publication in Britain.

In 1824, the law had been recently strengthened in two ways. In 1810, the civil remedy of damages was extended to infringement of copyright, and in 1814, the period of protection was extended. Authors were given copyright in their works for life or 28 years from publication, whichever was longer. But popular authors, whose influence and earning power had grown considerably, began to clamour for copyright in perpetuity. They also clamoured for the extension of copyright outside Britain. Piracy of English books had become a problem particularly in America, where they could be copied and sold with impunity. The campaign was supported by Southey and Wordsworth, Carlyle and others, though it did not make headway until the 1830s, culminating in a new copyright statute in 1842. An Anglo-American copyright treaty was signed in 1854 but it did not come finally into effect until 1891.[16]

Generally, infringement of copyright meant copying the whole of a work. Quotation was permitted but how far did that go? Lord Eldon decided in Mawman v. Tegg in 1826[17] that quotation was necessary for the purposes of review but not further. Tegg had copied articles from another magazine into his *London Encyclopedia*. He settled the case evidently because he was afraid of losing it. Doubtless at the time he became involved with *SBP* around 1824 he was aware of the problem. Later it became clear that including separate works in an anthology without permission would infringe copyright.

[15] William Hazlitt, 'Lectures on the English Poets', lecture VII (Taylor & Hessey, 1818) 287.
[16] On the quest for an Anglo-American copyright agreement, see James J. Barnes, 'Authors, Publishers and Politicians' (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974).
[17] 38 English Reports 380.

I have found no reference by Hazlitt to copyright. There is no entry, for example, in the index volume of Howe's collected works. But it would be very surprising if he did not have a general idea of the basic principles, as I have described them. When he decided to include the living poets in his anthology he may have thought he was covered by the exception for quotation. If the various poets or their publishers were asked for permission to copy their work, there is no evidence of this. Though it is highly unlikely that Lamb or Hunt would have objected, their publishers might have had a different view. Usually, one imagines, the whole question of copyright permission would be sorted out between publishers.

Hazlitt's publisher was the mysterious Wm. C. Hall? Did Hazlitt ever have any contact with him? There is no evidence that he did. Yet it does seem that Hazlitt had a copy of the book in some form. On 12 February 1825, Leigh Hunt wrote[18] to Elizabeth Kent, his sister-in-law and daughter of Hunter, the publisher who was offered the book and, evidently, turned it down. Hunt says, 'Mr. Hazlitt came here the same day as Marriott. I sit with him and his wife in a little comfortable English-looking room, & fancy myself among my old parties . . . . He is to show me today, when I dine with him, his *Elegant Extracts*'. In what form Hazlitt had the book we do not know. It could have been in manuscript or it could have been a set of the printed sheets. Could it have had the Hall title page?

I said at the outset that I would come back to Payson G. Gates, the former owner of my copy of *SBP*. Mr. Gates, it appears, was a banker with the Bankers' Trust Company of New York. I looked him up on the Internet. He had been a board member of the Keats-Shelley Association of America. He died in 1955, evidently leaving a fine collection of books. He also left an article entitled 'Hazlitt's *Select British Poets*: An American Publication'. He had submitted it to the Association's journal but it remained in its files until it was published, at the instigation of Gates' daughter, in 1986.[19]

Mr. Gates' researches throw a remarkable light on the 1824 *Select British Poets*. His first discovery was that, for a book virtually non-existent in Britain, there were several copies in the United States.[20] He traced more than two dozen copies, nearly all of which were in typically American bindings.

Even more telling was his identification of Wm. C. Hall as an American importer of English books. One copy of *SBP* in the United States has a penciled note to this effect. A W.C. Hall is recorded as having arrived in New York on 16 August 1824 aboard the packet ship Hudson, which had left Cowes on July 9th. On 4th October, an advertisement appeared in the Boston Patriot under the heading 'London Cloths and Hat Warehouse, 34 Broad Street'. It was not by W.C. Hall but by Benjamin Hall, offering books for sale, including '*Select British Poets*, gilt, $5.50'. Much earlier, on 30 March 1824, Benjamin Hall listed in an advertisement in another newspaper a number of 'London books' for sale and added, 'The above were selected by William C. Hall from manufactories in England, for Cash, which enables Benjamin Hall to sell them as low as can be purchased in this place, at cash prices'.

Mr. Gates comments: 'Our elusive "London Publisher" William C. Hall, seems to have been an enterprising Yankee trader'.

[18] The letter is in *Leigh Hunt: A Life in Letters* (Falls River Press, 1999), edited by Eleanor M. Gates (daughter of Payson G. Gates). I owe this reference to Quentin Bailey.

[19] Payson G. Gates, 'Hazlitt's *Select British Poets*: An American Publication', *Keats-Shelley Journal* 35 (1986): 168-182.

[20] Before I came upon Mr. Gates' article, this fact was pointed out to me by Professor Michael Jaye, who drew my attention to the presence of copies in a number of American libraries, including Harvard, Stanford, Cornell, and the New York Public Library.

One further piece of evidence seems conclusive: a notice in the *Columbia Sentinel* of Boston on 19 March 1825 headed 'London Books':

> William C. Hall, being about to embark for Europe, and having determined to relinquish, during the present high duties, all further importation of books into this City has transferred the remainder of his stock to Munroe and Francis, 128 Washington Street, who will sell at a small advance, some very valuable books such as . . . .

He then gives a list which includes Hazlitt's *British Poets*.

What does this all add up to?

We know the book was printed in London—we have the authority of W.C. Hazlitt's first-hand account of his uncle Reynell's description of his direct involvement in the production of the book. We also know from Mary Shelley's letter to Leigh Hunt of the difficulties in finding a publisher. We also know of the early involvement of Thomas Tegg, whose name appears on the engraved frontispiece. We can also be fairly sure that there was no London publisher called Wm. C. Hall and that the individual of that name identified by Mr. Gates took all or nearly all copies of the book to the United States, where they were bound and sold. Doubtless the title page bearing his name was produced to give the book the cachet of a London provenance but it is significant that contrary to the custom of London publishers of the time, it gives no street address.

Was any serious effort made to publish the book in Britain? The copyright problem may not have worried Hazlitt or the authors whom he quoted, but it may have worried some of the publishers, like Mr. Hunter and the various other publishers who had published books of Hazlitt, such as Taylor and Hessey, John Hunt and Henry Colburn. It would certainly have worried Thomas Tegg.

We know of Tegg's involvement because his name is on the frontispiece. Keynes' view that Tegg took over responsibility for the book becomes more plausible in the light of Mr. Gates' discoveries.

The book trade was a rough trade in the 1820s and Tegg was one of its roughest practitioners. He described himself as 'the broom that swept the booksellers' warehouses'.[21] His speciality was reprinting and remainders. His image was that of 'a brash newcomer and opportunist, lacking the dignity and professionalism of a Longman, Murray or Blackwood'. Unfortunately most of his records and correspondence have not survived. In 1840 he said, 'My line is to watch the expiration of copyright and then produce to the public either current works at a cheaper rate or to revive works of merit which have been lost to the public by the perversity of the authors'. It is entirely credible that he got hold of the sheets of *SBP* and sold them to his American contact Wm. C. Hall for sale in America. He may well have thought this a more profitable option than seeking permission to publish the extracts from the living poets, which would have entailed a laborious process of communication with their various publishers and certainly the payment of fees. And of course he still had the means of reprinting the book without the risky living poets and selling it in Britain, as he did in 1825. He was also able to maximise the prospects for his 1825 edition by arranging joint publication in Glasgow, Dublin and Paris.[22]

There is no evidence of any contact between Hazlitt and Tegg. Hazlitt was preoccupied with his impending marriage to Isabella Bridgewater in the spring of 1824. Stanley Jones says the marriage

[21] My knowledge of Tegg is largely derived from an article by John J. Barnes and Patience P. Barnes: 'Reassessing the Reputation of Thomas Tegg, London Publisher, 1776-1846' (Book History, vol. 3, 2000, Pennsylvania State University Press) 45-59.

[22] The 1825 issue lists the publishers as follows: 'Thomas Tegg, 73, Cheapside; R. Griffin and Co., Glasgow; also R. Millikin, Dublin; and M. Baudry, Paris'.

could not have taken place later than 9 April.[23] Hazlitt and Isabella were in Scotland, and although they were in London in July, at the end of August they left for France. His only reference to *SBP* after that was in his letter from Florence to Galignani in Paris on 11 March 1825.[24] 'What', he says, 'is the *Select Poets of Great Britain* I see advertised at the end of your last month's magazine?' Evidently this was a reference to Tegg's forthcoming second issue. This again suggests that Hazlitt was not being kept informed of what Tegg was up to.

My title is perhaps slightly misleading. While it seems certain that Hazlitt's work was impeded by conflict with the law, it is unlikely that Hazlitt had much to do with problems of publication at any stage. Certainly any direct confrontation with the law seems to have been avoided. There is no evidence that proceedings for breach of copyright were ever commenced, or even contemplated, though Birrell seemed to think there was a threat of proceedings.

It would be interesting to know whether Tegg ever paid Hazlitt for his work. I rather doubt it. The true story could be a rather sordid one of exploitation of the great writer by the unsavoury Tegg. The mystery remains.

One small footnote. I mentioned my interest in *Select British Poets* to Dr. Robert Woof while visiting the Dove Cottage Library. He directed me to a copy of *Elegant Extracts* by Vicesimus Knox—a late edition dated, coincidentally, 1824. Among the long list of publishers was none other than Thomas Tegg. So in the same year Tegg comes upon Hazlitt's book claiming to improve on the plan of Knox's work, Tegg is publishing a new edition of Knox. Another reason perhaps for not trying too hard to get *SBP* published in the same year? Yet another unanswered question!

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[23] Stanley Jones, *Hazlitt: A Life* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989) 361.
[24] Included in the collection referred to in note 14. My thanks to Quentin Bailey for this reference, also.

Cragsman and *Mountaineering*: The Romantic Poets Add to the Language

By MARK ENGLISH

IN THIS NOTE, tracing the early histories of the words *mountaineering* and *cragsman*, I shall argue that the noun *cragsman* was popularized but not coined by Walter Scott, and that S.T. Coleridge and Robert Southey coined but failed to popularize the verb *mountaineer* and verbal noun *mountaineering*.

OED defines sense 1 of the noun *mountaineer* as 'A native of or dweller amongst mountains', citing its first usage from *The Tempest*, though the word was also used repeatedly in act 4 scene 2 of *Cymbeline*. Both plays are of course among Shakespeare's last, dating probably from 1610-11. Further citations in *OED* dated 1625 and 1630 show the noun coming quickly into fairly common use.

The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary gives a slightly different definition of sense 1: 'A native, inhabitant, *or frequenter* of mountains' (my emphasis). Boswell used the word to mean 'a frequenter of mountains' in a letter of September 16th 1774 when he told Dr. Johnson, 'You will have become quite a mountaineer, by visiting Scotland one year and Wales another'.[1] The noun expanded further into ever more extended senses. Walter Scott wrote to Maria Edgeworth in 1830, refusing the proposed gift of a wolf-dog. 'I am the happy owner of two of the noble breed', he explained, 'each of gigantic size, and the gift of that sort of Highlander whom we call a High Chief . . . and I should have grave doubts whether the mountaineers would receive the Irish stranger with due hospitality'.[2] Ruskin even took the word into the vegetable kingdom, declaring that 'the wild rose is also a mountaineer, and more fragrant in the hills'.[3]

To turn from the noun *mountaineer* to the verb we must go back to August 1st 1802, when Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'the first of the fellwalkers', began his historic walk around the Lake District, arguably the earliest fellwalking holiday in England, in the course of which he made the first known English rock-climb, and the earliest recorded ascent of England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike.[4] On the very day that he completed his epoch-making tour, August 9th, he wrote Southey a letter telling him all about it. After detailing his itinerary of the first day, this account goes on to say that he 'Spent the greater part of the next Day mountaineering, & went in the evening thro' Egrement to St Bees & slept there'.[5] From the fuller account of this day's journey which he sent to Sara Hutchinson it is clear that his mountaineering consisted of a stroll from the farmhouse of Long Moor, along the water-side to the head of Ennerdale Water, where he admired the surrounding fells, and then back to Long Moor again.[6] In other words, he had coined this verb to bear the sense 'to walk among mountains', rather than 'to climb mountains'.

Coleridge did not send Southey this neologism in vain. The following year Southey wrote a letter to his friend C.W. Williams Wynn describing his progress on *Madoc*: 'Last night I finished my Bardsey book . . . My mountaineering recollections are to come in the next book; some images I

[1] George Birkbeck Hill, and L.F. Powell, eds., *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Pres, 1924) 284.
[2] H.J.C. Grierson, ed., *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott 1828-1831* (London: Constable, 1936) 366.
[3] E.T. Cook, and Alexander Wedderburn, eds., *The Works of John Ruskin*, vol. 6 (London: George Allen, 1904) 422.
[4] Molly Lefebure, *Cumberland Heritage* (London: Gollancz, 1970) 131, 142; Alan Hankinson, *Coleridge Walks the Fells* (London: Fontana, 1993) 19 *et passim*.
[5] Earl Leslie Griggs, ed., *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956) 846.
[6] Griggs 836-7.

learnt by Llanberris'.[7] Here the verb has become an attributively-used verbal noun, formed on the analogy of *engineering*, *parliamenteering* and so on. In July 1804 Southey used the verb again, in a letter to William Taylor:

> I wish you could mountaineer it with us for a few weeks, and I would press the point if Coleridge also were here: but even without him we could make your time pass pleasantly; and here is Wordsworth to be seen, one of the wildest of all wild beasts, who is very desirous of seeing you.[8]

Reading this letter Taylor, not an outdoor type, could have felt no impulse to pack his walking boots: he was being invited for a purely social visit, in which *mountaineering it* would simply consist in spending time in the vicinity of mountains.

But in the following year there was a final semantic shift. On September 2nd 1805 Southey wrote to Charles Danvers:

> I myself shall go to Grasmere in about a week – dine one day with Lloyd, and return with Domine and Wordsworth along the top of Helvellin, which will in all probability compleat my mountaineering for this year, which thanks to your Indefatiguableship has been a sharp campaign.[9]

Since he was writing from his home in Keswick, and had no plans to move, he could not have meant that he would end his frequenting of mountainous districts; rather, the practice of climbing mountains had at last found a name. The verb *mountaineer*, including the verbal noun *mountaineering*, now bore two different senses, but it existed only in manuscript and, being no more than a piece of *Koteriesprache* used between Coleridge, Southey and their friends, it soon fell into disuse. To enter the language it would have to be re-coined, this time in print.

The increasing popularity of fell-walking and mountain-climbing at this period led to the emergence of the new occupation of mountain-guiding. Cumbrian sheep-farmers and Alpine chamois-hunters could earn a little extra money by helping the more adventurous tourists to the summit of Skiddaw or Mont Blanc. In contemporary accounts these men were often referred to as mountaineers, but it is seldom clear whether this word should be interpreted as 'one skilled or occupied in mountain climbing' (*OED* sense 3), or whether sense 1 is intended. In this typical passage we are again on Hevellyn:

> Partridge, who acts as *guide*, as *boots*, *postilion*, and *boatman*, at the Salutation Inn, might have brought us down an easier descent; but as he had been out with a chaise all night, he was perhaps induced, from fatigue, to take us the nearest way . . . He meant no wrong, for he is so bold a mountaineer, he can go any where that a sheep can; and I dare say thinks every person can do the same.[10]

[7] John Wood Warter, ed., *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856) 247.
[8] J.W. Robberds, ed., *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1843) 516-17.
[9] Kenneth Curry, ed., *New Letters of Robert Southey*, vol. 1 (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1965) 399.
[10] [Joseph Budworth], *A Fortnight's Ramble to the Lakes in Westmoreland, Lancashire, and Cumberland* (London: Hookham and Carpenter, 1792) 158-9.

There was a less ambiguous usage by J[oseph] D[ornford] in the April 1821 number of the *New Monthly Magazine*: 'When we resumed our march, the veteran mountaineer, Favret, accompanied us about three hours higher up to the edge of the glacier, to carry his son's knapsack . . .'.[11] This Favret had been a guide on the second successful ascent of Mont Blanc, in 1787. The adjective *veteran* usually qualifies an agent-noun, which would rule out sense 1 here: would anyone be described as a veteran lowlander?

In 1824 Thomas Wilkinson used *mountaineer* quite unequivocally in sense 3, describing the ascent of Ben Lomond:

> . . . I found on the summit of the mountain a paper fastened to the ground, addressed to the finder, importing that two gentlemen, one from Edinburgh, the other from Glasgow, had visited it the day before: they requested to have it returned, specifying by whom and when found: the request was borne in mind and the paper in my pocket-book, till I fell in with a friend of one of my brother mountaineers.[12]

In some dedicatory lines which he dated 1842 the poet F.W. Faber wrote

> . . . And while
> I listened, like a practiced mountaineer,
> To my own voice rebounding from the heights
> Of song . . .[13]

One S.T. Speer gave in 1846 an account of his ascent of the Wetterhorn, declaring that 'Of the guides who dwelt in [Grindewald], only two were good mountaineers . . .'.[14] By the 1850s Alpinism was becoming an established sport, entering on what is often called its Golden Age, with the result that the noun *mountaineer* was so frequently used in the modern sense as to make further quotation impracticable.[15]

These beginnings of popularity raised the problem of what the climbing of mountains was to be called. The word *ascent*, meaning the act of scaling a mountain, had been used in a 1742 translation of Xenophon's *Anabasis*: 'They spent the whole Day in the Ascent of the Mountains, and the Descent from thence into the Villages'.[16] *Mountain-climbing*, a word first recorded by *OED* in 1872, was in fact coined at least as early as 1850 when the Scottish fellwalker Thomas Grierson confessed that 'mountain climbing, and wandering among their dark recesses, have unquestionably all along constituted a marked feature of my idiosyncrasy'.[17] But the existence of the noun *mountaineer* in the modern sense made it possible for a corresponding verbal noun to be coined, or rather re-coined. The

[11] *New Monthly Magazine*, 2nd series, 1 (1821): 454.
[12] Thomas Wilkinson, *Tours to the British Mountains* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1824) 16.
[13] Frederick William Faber, *Sir Lancelot* (London: Francis & John Rivington, 1844) xv-xvi.
[14] *The Times*, Supplement (January 17, 1846): 9.
[15] Usages include 'C.G.F.', *Fraser's Magazine*, 52 (1855): 5; Alfred Wills, *Wanderings Among the High Alps* (London: Richard Bentley, 1856), 144, 265; [Herman Merivale], *Edinburgh Review* 104 (1856): 446; *The Times* (October 6, 1856): 8; Charles Hudson and Edward Shirley Kennedy, *Where There's a Will There's a Way* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856) 1; Thomas W. Hinchliff, *Summer Months Among the Alps* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, & Roberts, 1857) 142; 'E.O.', *The Times* (July 30, 1858): 9; *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 86 (1859): 457; [John Ball], *Fraser's Magazine*, 60 (1859): 233.
[16] Xenophon, *The Expedition of Cyrus*, trans. Edward Spelman, vol. 2 (London: Richard Wellington, 1742) 240.
[17] Thomas Grierson, *Autumnal Rambles Among the Scottish Mountains*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Hogg, 1856) 2.

credit for doing this can be given to the notable Alpinist Thomas Hinchliff, who used it attributively in 1857, observing that '. . . the best mountain guides look with great suspicion upon everybody except the English and their own countrymen in a mountaineering point of view . . .'. For good measure, he coined the participial adjective, referring to 'M. Inseng, the Mountaineering Curé'.[18] The same writer contributed an essay to the first series of the Alpine Club's *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers* in which he mentioned 'a council of war in which we sketched the plan of about a fortnight's mountaineering'.[19] This book had the good fortune to be reviewed anonymously by its own editor, John Ball, in *Fraser's Magazine*. Ball wrote that 'properly speaking mountaineering, *per se* and apart from its objects, is a new sport . . .'.[20] Another review of the same work, headed 'Mountaineering. – The Alpine Club', announced that 'the great discovery of the day is a species of sport to which its devotees have given the not unapt name of Mountaineering'.[21] By 'its devotees' the reviewer meant the Alpinists – not Coleridge, and not Southey.

The history of the noun *cragsman* forms a complete contrast. In August 1814, Walter Scott visited the remote and isolated Fair Isle while voyaging among the Orkneys and Shetlands. He described in his diary 'the favourite but dangerous occupation of the islanders, which is *fowling*, that is, taking the young sea-fowl from their nests among these tremendous crags', and observed that 'Like all other precarious and dangerous employments, the occupation of the crags-men renders them unwilling to labour at employments of a more steady description'.[22] The following year Scott used the same word as a piece of Lowland dialect in *The Antiquary* (chap. 7 *in med.*). His Fifeshire beggar Edi Ochiltree boasts, '"I was a bauld craigsman . . . ance in my life, and mony a kittywake's and lungie's nest hae I harried amang thae very black rocks . . ."'.

In 1821 he drew on his memories of the 1814 voyage, and on his journal of it, in writing *The Pirate*. The hero, Mordaunt Mertoun, is said (chap. 2, *in med.*) to have 'often joined those midnight excursions upon the face of the giddy cliffs, to secure the eggs or the young of the sea-fowl'; he therefore proudly reflects (chap. 4, *ad init.*) that '"I am more of a cragsman than to mind fire or water, wave by sea, or quagmire by land"'. Scott's 1829 novel *Anne of Geierstein* opens with the English hero, cragfast on an Alpine cliff, being rescued by the Swiss heroine. They exchange words (chap. 2, *ad fin.*):

> 'Know, stranger, that I do not stand on my uncle's hearth with more security than I have stood upon precipices, compared to which this is a child's leap. You, too, stranger . . . must be well entitled to call yourself a cragsman'.
>
> 'I might have called myself so half an hour since . . . but I think I shall hardly venture to assume the name in future'.

Finally, when Lockhart published his biography of Scott in 1837-8 the 1814 journal was included, so putting Scott's mention of the Fair Isle cragsmen into print.

Did Scott coin this word himself? *OED*, the *Scottish National Dictionary* and the *English Dialect Dictionary* all cite *The Antiquary* for their first usage. When Jamieson published the first edition of his *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* in 1808, he did not mention the word, but in

[18] Thomas W. Hinchliff, *Summer Months Among the Alps* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, & Roberts, 1857) 118, 160.
[19] *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, ed. John Ball, 1st series, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859) 335.
[20] [John Ball], *Fraser's Magazine*, 60 (1859): 240.
[21] *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 86 (1859): 457.
[22] J.G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1882) 4: 236.

the 1825 *Supplement* an entry for *craigsman* was included, with quotations from *The Antiquary* and *The Pirate* only. In sum, all dictionary evidence points to the word being unknown before 1815; and yet we have seen Scott using it in 1814 when describing, on the spot, the customs of Fair Isle. I suggest that he had heard the Fair Islers describe their fowlers as "cragsmen', that he adopted the word, and then, by putting it into Edie Ochiltree's mouth, boldly transplanted it to a part of Scotland where it did not belong. This hypothesis is supported by an 1866 dictionary of Shetland and Orkney dialect, which lists it as a Shetland word, and by an 1844 description of fowling in the Orkneys which tells us that 'here, in these wild isles, the cragsman is in full activity'.[23]

The first usage of the word by any other author, so far as I have been able to discover, came as early as 1817. *The Falls of Clyde*, a melodrama by George Soane which pillaged freely from the first three Waverley novels, includes these instructions to a character stranded on a cliff:

> Canny lad; canny now; tak tent, and tak time; your foot on that muckle braid stone. Varce well. And now to that wee bit black point – nae, nae, not that; ye'll fa'! that's right; dinna be in a hurry; vera well – Ah, ye are a bauld craigsman.[24]

Much of this speech, including the last phrase, is taken from *The Antiquary*.

After Scott's death, usages become more common. So, from an 1837 drama of the English civil war called *The Parole of Honour*: 'Yes, he's getting bravely down the cliff; it's a pleasure to see such a cragsman'.[25] From Sir Francis Hastings Doyle's poem of 1840, 'The Eagle's Nest':

> Five hundred feet of sheer ascent,
> As metal darkly smooth and bare,
> No jutting stone, no twig is lent
> To help the cragsman there.[26]

And from Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Carter Hall's *Ireland*, published in 1843:

> The cragsmen are chary of their legends; they think the beings of another world who made the basaltic columns and masses of crude rock their toys, are not only far too mighty to be trifled with, but to be spoken of . . .[27]

As early as 1840 Thomas De Quincey coined *cragswoman* in describing an enterprising clamberer among the rocks about Aira Force, near Ullswater:

> For half an hour or more, she continued to ascend: and, being a good 'cragswoman,' from the experience she had won in Wales as well as in northern England, she had reached an altitude

[23] Thomas Edmondston, *An Etymological Glossary of Shetland & Orkney Dialect* (London & Berlin: Asher, 1866) *sub verbum*; William Hamilton Maxwell, *Wanderings in the Highlands and Islands*, vol. 2 (London: A.H. Baily, 1844) 301.
[24] George Soane, *The Falls of Clyde*, act 2, scene 3.
[25] Thomas James Serle, *The Parole of Honour*, act 1, scene 3.
[26] Sir Francis Hastings Doyle, *Miscellaneous Verses* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1840) 161.
[27] Samuel Carter Hall, and Anna M. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character, &c.*, vol. 3 (London: Jeremiah How, 1843) 146.

> much beyond what would generally be thought corresponding to the time. The path had vanished altogether, but she continued to pick out one for herself amongst the stones . . . .[28]

Cragsman began to appear in mountaineering literature at much the same date that mountaineering itself did. John Ball wrote in the 1859 *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers* that 'an experienced cragsman will find no difficulty in fine weather in ascending alone from Courmayeur to the summit of the Col du Géant', and in another contribution to the same work that 'a good cragsman may go alone up and down the steepest pinnacles of rock'.[29] Again, in 1862 Leslie Stephen reported that 'we had simply a steady piece of rock-climbing. Christian Michel, a first-rate cragsman, led the way'. From then on the word had an established place in the lexis of mountaineering.[30]

The sequence of usages given above, beginning with Scott and his plagiarist Soane, and continuing with other writers from 1837 onward, suggest to me that the spread of this word's circulation is mainly attributable to Walter Scott's powerful influence. Scott had his own ideas as to where that influence was exerted. 'I am sensible,' he wrote, 'that if there be anything good about my poetry, or prose either, it is a hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers sailors and young people of bold and active disposition'.[31] He would certainly have found nothing surprising in the idea that the founders of the Alpine Club, men of unmatched boldness and activity, had read his works and picked up this pet word.

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[28] Thomas De Quincey, *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets*, ed. David Wright (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978) 344.

[29] *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, ed. John Ball, 1st series, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859) 56, 493.

[30] *Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers*, ed. Edward Shirley Kennedy, 2nd series, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Grene, Longman, and Roberts, 1862) 8. This is also an antedating of *rock-climbing*. It is perhaps worth noting that the word *cragsmanship*, unrecorded by the *OED*, was used in 1922 by E.R. Eddison in his romance T*he Worm Ouroboros*: '. . . by good cragsmanship spurred by cold necessity he gat him down at last' ((London: Pan/Ballantine, 1975) 208).

[31] *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. W.E.K. Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 159.

Society Notes and News from Members

By Duncan Wu

I FIRST MET ROGER ROBINSON at the Wordsworth Winter School in 1991. He had recently taken early retirement from Guy's Hospital Medical School where he had been a distinguished Professor of Paediatrics, responsible in part for the establishment of the School as a leading centre in paediatric cardiology, nephrology and neurology.

The theme of the Winter School that year was *The Excursion*, and among the various scheduled outings was a walk to Blea Tarn which I led. It was an overcast and rather damp day—indeed, if I recall correctly it was raining for much of the time—but the fact that we were journeying to somewhere that played an important part in the poem greatly mitigated the long haul from the valley floor, and by the time we reached the banks of the tarn were ready not just for our pack lunches but for the very pleasant prospect of reading to each other from *The Excursion*. Roger knew exactly which sections were to be read out, and he organized the readings.

There was something peculiarly moving about reading from Wordsworth's great epic at that spot on such a day—which remained cloudy throughout. That was something on which Roger commented, both then and much later; indeed, the experience was quite invigorating, and we set off with pleasure and expectation, stopping to look at the house at the side of the tarn before returning to the valley.

The walk concluded with what for most of us was the first we had seen of Delmar Banner's painting of the principal characters from the poem gathered round the tarn which hangs in the Dungeon Ghyll Hotel, to whose bar we resorted while waiting for the bus that would return us to Grasmere. It was the perfect end to a magical walk, and one that Roger and I often had cause to remember.

That experience as much as anything else drew me to Roger, who was then at an interesting point in his literary pursuits. Having been first interested in Hartley Coleridge, he began to study Wordsworth, and *The Excursion* in turn led to an interest in James Beattie's poem *The Minstrel*, which exerted an important influence on the Romantics generally.

Roger may to some have appeared eccentric in wishing to devote time and energy to a poet whose work had fallen into total neglect. But when Wordsworth was a young man Beattie was a major writer, not just for his poetry but for his prose writings. Indeed, he was a major figure of his time, extraordinarily well connected, whose life was a barometer of eighteenth-century culture. What Roger embarked on when he turned to Beattie, whether he knew it or not, was a project of intellectual and cultural recovery that would turn him into an expert in the field, and which would be the occasion of some remarkable work.

His first and most obvious achievement was to gain a doctoral degree at Aberdeen University for his edition of Beattie's poetry. This was no mean feat. In pursuit of texts, Roger completely rewrote the bibliography of Beattie's works, discovering many new works, as well as re-attributing a number of published poems not previously identified as his. Roger mastered the rudiments of editorial theory and practice with ease, and produced a remarkably accomplished piece of literary scholarship. The apparatus of the edition incorporated all known variants with an enviable degree of scrupulousness. It should certainly have been published, but for some unknown reason the academic presses decided against it. That was a great shame, as it delayed the reassessment of Beattie's work that was so long overdue, though not for long.

Roger must have found the response of the publishers bemusing, but he was resourceful and soon made contact with the excellent Thoemmes Press in Bristol, for which he edited and introduced a

new 10-volume edition of facsimile reprints of Beattie's major prose works in 1999. This was a major achievement which has done much to raise Beattie's profile among philosophers and other academics. It is of value not just for the fact that it made available, once more, some vitally important works in the history of human thought, but for Roger's helpful introductions. I am now re-reading his introduction to Beattie's *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, which is packed with scholarly insights that only he could have supplied. Roger outlines the biographical and intellectual hinterland out of which the *Dissertations* came, before embarking on a learned and helpful account of each of the essays in turn. Along the way he quotes from published and manuscript sources, drawing on materials to which only he had access. There was nothing casual about his approach to the job. He was as hard-headed and erudite a scholar as Beattie could have wanted, more than equal to the job of introducing his work to a modern readership. If ever there was a vindication for Roger's decision to retire early and turn to literature, this was it.

Except, of course, that this wasn't the end. One of Roger's projects was the assembly of a complete listing of Beattie's correspondence. Some of the letters had been published in corrupt form by biographers during the nineteenth century, but no one had any notion of how extensive—or revealing—the complete correspondence was. No one, that is, except Roger. He never stopped looking for letters, and indeed was finding them right up to the time he died. The final listing at which he arrived is the most complete there has ever been, and it forms the basis of his four-volume selected edition of the correspondence which Thoemmes will publish in June 2004. This was the last great labour of Roger's life, and one to which he devoted himself with unstinting energy, even after he was diagnosed with cancer in the late summer of 2003. It is a revealing and important work of scholarship, which establishes beyond question Beattie's centrality within eighteenth-century culture, showing in intimate detail his relationships with such figures as Mrs Montagu, James Boswell, and George III. It is bound to open up areas for further study.

This obituary has concentrated on Roger's scholarly work, but of course it was only a part—and a comparatively small part—of a packed life, in which much else took place. I have not said anything here about his career in the medical profession because it has been covered elsewhere.

Those who remember him at the Charles Lamb Society meetings in London will recall him as a welcoming and reassuring presence, responsible for an excellent lecture on Beattie. He was also a good friend, and one I count myself fortunate to have made. He always made time to talk, even in the midst of a schedule that never let up, and his advice could be relied on absolutely. He was above all one of the kindest, most generous people I think I have known, and will be much missed.

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This picture of Roger Robinson was recently published in the British Medical Journal, *which has provided permission for this reprint of the picture. The complete obituary, which appeared in the* BMJ, *can be found on the Internet at the following address: http://bmj.bmjjournals.com/cgi/content/full/327/7421/992*