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THE MUSICIAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE: CHARLES LAMB AND THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

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My early acquaintance with the Elizabethan dramatists was through the Mermaid Dramatists in my school and public libraries - a delight sometimes heightened by the declaration on the title page of certain volumes that they were 'unexpurgated'. One of those instrumental towards the end of the last century in establishing the Mermaid Dramatists was Swinburne and he it was that made the claim, exaggerated though it is, that Charles Lamb was wholly responsible for the resurrection of the Elizabethan dramatists. When we look at the works represented in Lamb's *Dramatic Specimens* of 1808 (more properly, *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Who Lived about the Time of Shakspeare*) and those further extracts he made from the collection of plays in the British Museum formed by David Garrick, and then on to the Mermaid collection at the other end of the nineteenth century, Swinburne seems the link between Lamb and my experience of volumes in the series, such as one I recall with particular pleasure, *The Tragedy of Nero and Other Plays*, which includes Days's *Humour Out of Breath* and *The Parliament of Bees*, Porter's *Two Angry Women of Abingdon*, and Nathan Field's comedies, all drawn on by Lamb.

More recently I have been brought in touch - conscious touch, for as a schoolboy I was unaware of Lamb's work among the Elizabethans - with the *Dramatic Specimens* again. In Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford*, the narrator Mary Smith listens during the Great Cranford Panic while Miss Pole and Miss Matty tell story after story of murder and robbery: Miss Matty, not wishing to be outshone in horrors, capping 'every story with one yet more horrible, till it reminded me, oddly enough, of an old story I had read somewhere, of a nightingale and a musician, who strove one against the other which could produce the most admirable music, till poor Philomel dropped down dead.'[1] Reading an earlier tale of community life, Mary Russell Mitford's *Our Village*, I found the same story known to the narrator there. As she listens 'to a whole concert of nightingales answering and vying with each other in those short delicious strains which are to the ear as roses to the eye', she begins to repeat to herself 'the beautiful story of the Lutist and the Nightingale, from Ford's *Lover's Melancholy*....Is there in English poetry anything finer?'[2] My first thought was that Elizabeth Gaskell had found the incident in Miss Mitford's book, but where then did Miss Mitford find it? Did she read John Ford's play or had she found it in some anthology of Elegant Extracts? Knowing of Lamb's *Specimens*, I turned to it and found the passage exactly as Miss Mitford quotes it: rather than Elizabeth Gaskell borrowing from Miss Mitford, both ladies, it seems, had read their Charles Lamb and took the illustration from him.

This extract from John Ford - a dramatist best known for *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and whom Lamb had told Wordsworth back in 1804 'is the man after

Shakespear'[3] - which so struck his readers, illustrates also many of the things Lamb was doing with the plays from which he was culling specimens; and like so many of his examples helps to show Lamb's thoughts on the Elizabethans. It is true what Ian Jack says: that modern readers who turn to the *Specimens* expecting to find full critiques of the authors represented will have been disappointed. Dr Jack comments: 'In the sense that the *Selections* are admirably made, they show Lamb to be an excellent critic of the Elizabethan drama; but the explicit criticism which they contain would not fill more than fifteen pages.'[4] Dr Jack is right, of course, and how many (or few) pages they fill is clear from Lamb having gathered many of those explicit comments together into the brief sequence, 'Characters of Dramatic Writers, Contemporary with Shakspeare', for publication in his collected works of 1818. But there is implicit comment too both by the choice of extracts and their presentation. It is this kind of implicit commentary, with the help of the essay on Shakespeare's tragedies, that I want to consider this afternoon, touching also on the way in which the compilation of an anthology is itself an act of criticism and a reflection of the compiler.

Neither Miss Mitford nor Elizabeth Gaskell thinks of the passage from *The Lover's Melancholy* as drama: poetry, Mitford says; an old story, Gaskell calls it, and the theatrical element is severely reduced in Lamb's presentation. It is clearly dramatic, since there is a speaker, but who that speaker is (of what sex even), is concealed as is his (or her) story before or after the account. No auditor is indicated and indeed Lamb has removed brief interruptions in the original. The passage opens abruptly but not shockingly and establishes a mood classical in time and pastoral in place, the solitary nature of the speaker being reflective and suggesting a pleasing rather than a bitter melancholy:

> Passing from Italy to Greece, the tales
> Which poets of an elder time have feign'd
> To glorify their Tempe, bred in me
> Desire of visiting that paradise.
> To Thessaly I came, and living private,
> Without acquaintance of more sweet companions
> Than the old inmates to my love, my thoughts,
> I day by day frequented silent groves
> And solitary walks. (IV, 194)[5]

A sympathetic identification with the mood of the speaker is asked for, without us having to worry about why he (or she) is solitary, because there is no suggestion of strong feeling - of raging love or violent jealousy or bitter scorn - to trouble our contemplation of a state of mind. Atmosphere rather than activity is our concern. This tone established, the speaker tells how one morning, struck by 'A sound of musick', he found a youth playing a lute, 'so bold a challenge/To the clear quiristers of the woods, the birds,/That as they flock'd about him, all stood silent,/Wondering at what they heard.' Only a nightingale dares take up the challenge, the youth so answering her song

> That there was curiosity and cunning,
> Concord in discord, lines of diff'ring method
> Meeting in one full centre of delight.
> The bird (ordain'd to be
> *Musick's first martyr*) strove to imitate
> These several sounds: which when her warbling throat

Fail'd in, for grief down dropt she on his lute
And brake her heart. (IV, 194-5)

In remorse the youth smashed his lute, 'guilty of innocent blood', and the narrator takes us back into the dramatic situation, for 'in that sorrow,/As he was pashing it against a tree,/I suddenly stept in.' Clearly what Lamb values here is the intricate description of the music, the pathos of such a contest or duel (a noticeably high proportion of the *Specimens* involves a duel) and the sudden reversal of feeling from the youth's 'pretty anger' at the challenge of the bird to remorse and self-reproach at his unwitting cruelty in killing the creature through excess of his own skill. The youth's character, beyond such capacity for feeling, is not established nor his origins, any more than those of the narrator. The variety and shift of feelings are what count, the sense of an episode complete in itself, which while dramatic in the contest it portrays, is not theatrical: even on the stage, there would be no physical action and movement seems frozen while we listen (despite the making of music), more as though we looked at a tapestry than beheld an action. Only at the end is there a return to movement, something that takes us back to a physical action as the narrator 'suddenly stept in' as though displacing a frame set around what we've been shown - and even that action is within the narration, not on the stage itself.

His passage is peculiarly narrative; even so, Lamb admires those passages in the plays above all which allow us to contemplate what is passing: to move at a different rate from a stage action, in which we cannot stop or turn back. The episode of Musician and Nightingale shows what Lamb so much valued, 'that absolute mastery over the heart and soul of man, which a great dramatic poet possesses'[6] - you will recognise that I am now quoting from the essay 'On the Tragedies of Shakspeare'. The essay, published in *The Reflector* in 1811, however perverse at times on the acting of Shakespeare, can nonetheless be seen as in part a retrospective meditation upon Lamb's own principles and practices in choosing out the *Specimens*, rather as Wordsworth's Preface to the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* is a retrospective justification of the first edition of 1798. For Lamb, poetry is an inner process, an apprehension which should never be flashy: in the theatre, we may be put upon, be deceived by a brilliant performance, but the mind will not so deceive itself, and he compares 'the instantaneous nature of the impressions which we take in at the eye and ear at a playhouse, compared with the slow apprehension oftentimes of the understanding in reading' (I, 98). In the theatre we have 'only materialized and brought down a fine vision to the standard of flesh and blood. We have let go a dream, in quest of an unattainable substance' (I, 98).

I don't want to enter into arguments about the theatre of Lamb's own time and how far we would agree or disagree with him from our own theatrical experience. Rather, my interest is in Lamb's concern for the working of the mind which he perceives in the finest passages of dramatic poetry: they are fine because they are poetry and their presence in drama often seems little more than accidental to Lamb - certainly, his process of extraction does imply, as he makes clear often enough, that many parts of the action, characterization and writing of these plays are feeble, disgusting, or contemptible. Such, however, were historical conditions. Lamb does throw out of consideration many theatrical moments, which depend upon the stage picture for their fullest effect or upon the

passage of time in physical action.[7] I would wonder about Lamb's response to such moments, truly realizable only upon the stage, as that in *Coriolanus* when the hero, staunchly refusing all the pleas of friends and family to end the march against his native Rome, finally breaks under the vehement scolding of his mother: it is a terrible moment. Coriolanus is doomed by his loving and immature dependence upon a mother to whom city is more important than son: she has bred him - now she breaks him. The stage direction tells us that he 'Holds her by the hand silent'. It is a scene that needs the contrast of the word spoken and the silent gesture for its true effect; just as does the full horror of the scene in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, where the Duchess, secretly remarried against the wishes of her brother, sits talking to her husband Antonio: as a joke he steals out of the room and unbeknown to him and to the Duchess, who prattles innocently on, his place is taken by her brother, come to spy on her and so made cognizant of her secret. The creeping horror, the shift from domestic comedy to fear, the tension mounting as we wait helpless to see how soon (or how long) it will be before either the Duchess realizes or her brother's fury makes itself known, are effects only fully achievable when the visible exits and entrances of the stage enforce the time trap of Webster's dark imagination. Of course, such things are not entirely lost on Lamb: he presents a lyrical passage from George Peele's *David and Bethsabe* where the King of Israel watches above while Bethsabe bathes, so that her song echoes ironically against his gaze:

> Let not my beauty's fire
> Inflame unstaid desire,
> Nor pierce any bright eye
> That wandereth lightly.

David's first words show how far her wish has been granted, her beauty having wrought the fatal effect she feared (I suspect Lamb of some sense of comedy in his choice from this play; the lady's awareness of her beauty could be felt - as I don't think Peele makes it - to be remarkably self-conscious):

> What tunes, what words, what looks, what wonders pierce
> My soul, incensed with a sudden fire! (IV, 11)

I don't say that Lamb rejects utterly the dramatic moment - many pages of his *Specimens* would immediately contradict me - nor that he does not illustrate the dramatic pattern of an action: but many things that depend upon the physical staging, certainly all the bustle of a stage, all that the Chorus of *Henry V* shows himself aware the theatre does with difficulty, are excluded. For me, this attempt to overcome the resistance of the medium is amongst those very things that give the theatre its power and pleasure, but Lamb seeks an expression that is more inward, more reflective.

It is encounters between a few people, often duologues, or action that illustrates psychology, or the 'inner structure and workings of mind' (I, 99) that Lamb values above all. Of Hamlet the man, Lamb says that nine parts in ten of what he does 'are transactions between himself and his moral sense', in 'silent meditations' which are (and here Lamb may seem to strike at the theatre altogether) 'reduced to words' (I, 100). He talks of the characters' psychology, the mind of Hamlet and the mind of Othello. He seeks to find in the Elizabethans what needs to be released by sympathy, stealth and cunning, none of which to Lamb is part of the actor's capacity.

In the *Specimens* Lamb includes an extract from the early tragedy *Gorboduc*, which to the misfortune of English Literature - or at least of students of English Literature, happens to be our first blank verse tragedy: if it had been the sixth or even the second, its essential tediousness would not be so often pressed upon us by reason of its primacy. Even Lamb seems to have included it as much from a sense of historical duty as from any real delight in it. He observes that it is 'stiff and cumbersome, like the dresses of its time' (IV, 5), but Lamb does turn us back to see whether there is not some passion in it, some impression of the character's mind, a hint of natural feeling unperceived on our first reading. Marcella has told of Porrex, stabbed to death by his mother for having slaughtered his own brother - *Gorboduc* has a stirring enough plot but mediocre execution. Lamb's tailnote concludes: 'Marcella obscurely intimates that the murdered prince Porrex and she had been lovers' (IV, 5). Where is this? Turn back and admidst that 'stiff and cumbersome' verse we find this detail of Porrex's end as Marcella amongst other ladies attempts to staunch his wounds:

> O what a look,
> O what a ruthful stedfast eye methought
> He fixt upon my face, which to my death
> Will never part from me... (IV, 3)

Whether we perceive indications of passion or not, Lamb has performed one vital critical function: to make us strive to find for ourselves what is there.

The mind of the character is not the only mind which Lamb seeks to perceive or to illustrate: talking of Shakespeare, he says that it was 'from his own mind, which was, to borrow a phrase of Ben Jonson's, the very "sphere of humanity," he fetched those images of virtue and of knowledge' (I, 103). It is a very Romantic notion: that the work is a reflection of the author's mind, that we can perceive that mind and in that perception value lies. It is an essentially subjective and expressive idea of poetry - 'the artist himself becomes the major element generating both the artistic product and the criteria by which it is to be judged'[8] - and is rather touchingly underlined by Lamb's hope that Michael Drayton, author of the great poetical survey, *Polyolbion*, a description and a celebration of Britain or Albion, might be the author of the anonymous *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*: it would increase Drayton's fame by a comedy that has much of Shakespeare's manner in it, but the play's sweetness and good-naturedness would also add to the impression, be another feature of, Drayton's mind that Lamb already has pictured from his reading 'of that Panegyrist of my native Earth; who has gone over her soil...with the fidelity of a herald, and the painful love of a son; ...and has animated Hills and Streams with life and passion above the dreams of old mythology' (IV, 46). Again, it is as an act of justice that Lamb, in his choice of extracts from Ben Jonson, aims 'to show the poetical fancy and elegance of mind of the supposed rugged old Bard' (IV, 265). Plays do not materialize from nowhere: they were written by men and those men reveal themselves, whether poets or not, whether imaginative or dull: and the same of course I am claiming for anthologists, gatherers of other men's flowers. The act of reading is a complex one of perception, response, and judgment which not only offers us the pleasure of poetry but also the acquaintance with a personality, a sense of the author himself: such things do not come easily in the rapid transactions of the stage, where, Lamb claims, the plot of *Hamlet* might

very well be rewritten by a playwright like Banks or Lillo, as Nahum Tate notoriously rewrote *King Lear*, with no loss for *stage* performance (I, 101).

Such stage performance allows the exaggeration of the actors and (perhaps worse) their imposition of interpretation. Of course, the actor's art being ephemeral, each interpretation dies with each performance, but an actor may so impose himself that a work or a character is possessed by him for a generation even when he does not act it (we might think of the image Laurence Olivier has stamped upon Richard III for our age - productions are still shadowed by his performances). Lamb's concern was for what might nowadays be called with William Empson, 'ambiguity', or the approach which, in the words of Susan Sontag, is 'Against Interpretation': he perceived that a work is capable of multiple meanings, all of which we have a right (which is also a responsibility to the author) to release and possess. To illustrate what is meant at one level we might take an example not cited by Lamb, but one justly famous, from the final scene of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Cleopatra prepares for death, assuming her robes and crown to join Antony as a royal bride. She applies the asp, her maid Iras dies, she follows, and as Caesar's guards come in they find only Charmian attending her mistress. The guard demands: 'What work is here, Charmian? Is this well done?' To which Charmian answers: 'It is well done, and fitting for a princess/Descended of so many royal kings./Ah, soldier!' - and she too dies. That final exclamation, 'Ah, soldier!', is Shakespeare's own, not taken from his source: but how should it be uttered by Charmian? As an exultant cry of triumph? or a bitter cry of pain? an expression of surprise? or the simple exhalation of breath?[9] All are possible and other ways as well. An actress will have to settle one way or another; whereas the reader can turn over each in his mind, can possess each and allow Charmian to utter each instead of having the actress playing Charmian settle for him. Lamb himself offers an example of imposed interpretation from *Hamlet*, in the Prince's treatment of Ophelia:

> All the Hamlets that I have ever seen, rant and rave at her as if she had committed some great crime, and the audience are highly pleased, because the words of the part are satirical, and they are enforced by the strongest expression of satirical indignation of which the face and voice are capable. But then, whether Hamlet is likely to have put on such brutal appearances to a lady whom he loved so dearly, is never thought on. (I, 103)

This is not quite the same as Charmian's 'Ah, soldier!': yet it deals with the behaviour of the 'harlotry players', who emphasize an immediate effect at the expense of the whole character. The agitation Lamb expresses at a Hamlet acted this way is related also (and here I momentarily part company with him) to a distaste he expresses for the painful anxiety felt during a performance as against our response to reading a printed work, 'where the deed doing never presses upon us with the painful sense of presence: it rather seems to belong to history, - to something past and inevitable, if it has any thing to do with time at all. The sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds in the reading' (I, 106). It is as though being able to hold the book, the completed act grasped in the hands, contains the agitation of mind. Even though I don't agree, the painful sense of a presence is a tribute to Lamb: a reminder of responses to which habit may have dulled us - Lamb himself cites his lack of reaction to the overfamiliar lines of 'To be or not to be': and are we better off because we can bear seeing the last act of *King Lear*

when someone like Dr Johnson confessed that he had been 'so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes' until compelled by the preparation of his edition of Shakespeare?[10] A note of Lamb's to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* is perhaps à propos to the agitation he feels the stage, as opposed to the drama, produces: Bellario, a boy, turns out to be a girl - and of course was played by a boy actor. Lamb comments: 'What an odd double confusion it must have made, to see a boy play a woman playing a man: one cannot disentangle the perplexity without some violence to the imagination' (IV, 295). For Lamb, the ideal state in which to experience the drama, Shakespeare's tragedies above all, but on the evidence of the *Specimens*, Elizabethan poetic drama as well, is without agitation or the incompleteness which comes from the omissions or improper emphasis of scenical representation, is without the exaggeration and falsification of the actors or the distraction of irrelevancies like boy actors or clowning or the necessary demands of stage custom and audience expectation. It is a state very close to Keats's Negative Capability, 'that is, when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason';[11] and I want now to turn to look more closely at how Lamb sought to reproduce those conditions for himself and his readers in the *Dramatic Specimens*.

By drawing upon what Lamb says in the essay 'On the Tragedies of Shakspeare' I have been working backwards: and Lamb certainly made a distinction between Shakespeare and his contemporaries. His conviction is paramount, though, that we can only come to what is great and admirable in the dramatic poetry of Shakespeare's age through reading. The claim is sometimes made that Lamb bowdlerized (anachronistically, of course, since Bowdler's Family Shakespeare only appeared in 1818, a decade later), but it can scarcely be made unless we think that selection is itself bowdlerization. The preface to the *Specimens* lays out the editorial procedures and they enforce Lamb's leading ideas in selection. He does say, 'I have expunged without ceremony all that which the writers had better never have written' (IV, xi), and this does refer in part at least to the sexual looseness of Fletcher, Massinger and others: but the judgement is as much critical as moral. When they wrote immorally they wrote badly or at least unpoetically. Lamb's extract from a comedy (unknown to me except in the *Specimens*), *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl*, may illustrate both the lack of bowdlerization and what Lamb admired. Albert has agreed to help his friend Carracus make a stolen match with Maria. Albert takes advantage of the late arrival of Carracus to climb into Maria's bedroom and enjoy her, then helps the couple to elope when Carracus does arrive. What he has done passes unknown by either Carracus or Maria (who thought he was Carracus), and Lamb's focus is on the exploration of Albert's readiness to betray his friend and his subsequent remorse. Sexually, the scene is explicit, yet Lamb in no way dodges reproducing it, feeling, we may take it, that the psychology is as honest as it would be unacceptable to the stage of his own time - its reproduction a fitting rebuke to the anaemic nineteenth century. Albert's remorse comes on rapidly, even as he descends from Maria's balcony, and in his speech the oppositions of warmth and cold, together with the reinforcing of an abstraction, 'honour', by the concrete, 'bed', emphasize the baseness of his treachery and the force of his growing self-disgust:

> How I have wrong'd by friend, my faithful friend!
> Robb'd him of what's more precious than his blood,

His earthly heaven, the unspotted honour
Of his soul-joying mistress! the fruition of whose bed
I yet am warm of; whilst dear Carracus
Wanders this cold night through the unshelter'd field
Seeking me treach'rous man... (IV, 37-8)

It is not the explicit that Lamb avoids but the false, that in which the authors betray themselves, give way to a false morality, and so are the worse poets for it.

In such judgement Lamb is reinforcing his point that poetry reveals the mind of the poet: the tainted mind (which is quite different from the all-inclusive mind, that admits sexuality as an element of human behaviour) is to be avoided. Lamb felt at times, I suspect, that he could rescue the poets from themselves: where their false judgement or the crude sensationalism demanded of them by stage conditions led them astray, Lamb could give us what represents the best part of their work and their mind. His choice from Thomas Dekker's *Satiro-Mastix* enforces this suspicion; Sir Walter Terrill has been forced to swear he will send his bride, Caelestina, to the king on the marriage-night. To save her honour, Caelestina's father gives her poison, which she willingly swallows. As the Father seeks with bitter irony to show Terrill the implications of what he is committed to do, the word-play upon 'common' and the play between the cup of poison he holds and the cup in which health is pledged are tragic rather than comic: the paradoxes of poison being medicine ('physic') and the subtle alteration between the speakers of the word 'slave' for the word 'man', all work upon the reader's sympathy and move towards a tragic conclusion:

Father: She's thine, thou call'st her thine,
Thy element, the air thou breath'st; thou know'st
The air thou breath'st is common; make her so.
Perhaps thou'lt say none but the King shall wear
Thy night-gown, she that laps thee warm with love;
And that Kings are not common:...
The King shining so clear, and we so dim,
Our dark disgraces will be seen through him.
Imagine her the cup of thy moist life,
What man would pledge a King in his own Wife?

Terrill: She dies: that sentence poisons her: O life!
What slave would pledge a King in his own wife?

Caelestina: Welcome, O poison, physic against lust,
Thou wholesome medicine to a constant blood;
Thou rare apothecary that canst keep
My chastity preserved within this box
Of tempting dust... (IV, 58)

The extract ends with Caelestina taking farewell of father and husband, having drunk the poison. The episode can stand as a scene complete in itself and, given the Romantic delight in fragments, is perfectly comprehensible with the headnote, to be brought to a fitting tragic conclusion in our imaginations, where we can supply the further grief of father and husband as well as any consequence from the frustrated wrath of the King. Lamb's comment at the end shows why the part is to be preferred to the whole: 'The beauty and force of this scene are much diminished to the reader of the entire play, when he comes to find that this solemn preparation is but a sham contrivance of the father's, and the potion which

Caelestina swallows nothing more than a sleeping draught...The sentiments are worthy of a real martyrdom...' (IV,59). There are problems implicit in what Lamb says: what for instance of a comparable episode in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* where the supposedly dead Imogen has the dirge 'Fear no more the heat o' the sun/Nor the furious winter's rages' spoken over her by grief-stricken companions. Is the emotion then disappointed or indeed lessened because we know beforehand that a sleeping potion has been substituted for the poison originally intended for Imogen? Again, it is partly a question of the intensification within an episode during dramatic performance, for the spectator is involved with Imogen as though she were dead, despite knowing before and after that she is not so. But it is also true that in Dekker's play the Father does not indicate that he knows it to be a sleeping draught. His emotion and understanding are displayed at the same pitch as those of Terrill and Caelestina. In *Cymbeline* the dirge is spoken by those who genuinely believe Imogen to be dead and so their emotion and the emotion that lies behind what they say is real. The Father's emotion over Caelestina's approaching death cannot be real (unlike the response of his daughter and her husband, who do believe it to be poison), yet Dekker chooses to fake the emotion (artistically fake it, since it is an imposition upon the audience when we learn the true state of his knowledge). Lamb cuts off that eventual revelation except in that brief observation, and allows us to read the scene, to participate in its grief, as though it were fully serious: in a way, it is an act of creation on his part, releasing what he conceives as the impression of Dekker's mind at this point, as the poet himself was not fully able to realize it.

This becomes dangerously paradoxical: it might even be thought Lamb's part in the process comes near to the sentimental, since the whole of the play, not just this scene, is indicative of Dekker's mind. By suppressing the subsequent action Lamb has rewritten Dekker: but that is part of my suggestion at least, that to make an anthology is a creative act, just as criticism (though always at its peril) seeks to be a creative act by making visible to us what might have passed unperceived. Lamb's concern elsewhere with the poet's mind (and how could it be otherwise with Lamb?) is not without its humorous side. His incidental comments on John Marston allow him a sly dig at the clergy: 'a worn-out sinner is sometimes found to make the best Declaimer against Sin....No one will doubt, who reads Marston's Satires, that the Author in some part of his life must have been something more than a theorist in vice. Have we never heard an old preacher in the pulpit display such an insight into the mystery of ungodliness, as made us wonder with reason how a good man came by it?' (IV, 55). If this veers dangerously towards biographical extrapolation from the author's work (always a risky task), Lamb shows in distinguishing the styles of Shakespeare and Fletcher, in their collaboration in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, not only a great critical perception but an understanding of the colour of minds as distinct from biographical details (see IV, 341-2).

The mind of the characters and the mind of the authors concerned Lamb: so did the mind of our ancestors. Their conduct and expectations under the code of honour, for example, is emphasized, particularly as relating to the code of a duel; while the Elizabethan fascination with magic and the black arts, shared by the author of 'Witches and Other Night Fears', is amply demonstrated at all levels, whether the obscene, grotesque, macabre, comic or pathetic. Lamb is aware too of his contemporary readers and delights to set up a mirror for them. Various humorous asides cover a scene of

childbirth ('Pope has been praised for giving dignity to a game of cards. It required at least as much address to ennoble a lying-in', IV, 281); a quarrel ('I have selected this scene as the model of a well-managed and gentlemanlike difference', IV, 164); and a truly illuminating comment on the way money has changed its significance, the hint of irony being directed against ourselves rather than our ancestors: 'The passion for wealth has worn out much of its grossness by tract of time.... The substitution of a thin unsatisfying medium for the good old tangible gold, has made avarice quite a Platonic affection in comparison with the seeing, touching, and handling pleasures of the old Chrysophilites /gold-lovers/. A bank-note can no more satisfy the touch of a true sensualist in this passion, than Creusa could return her husband's embrace in the shades' (IV, 245).[12]

The *Specimens* reflects not just the Elizabethans; it reflects upon nineteenth-century society and includes a commentary, implicit as well as explicit, upon the feebleness of drama in Lamb's own day (the failure of *Mr. H—* may have lent force to the work's revulsion from the contemporary theatre): the choice of material is underlined by remarks like 'The insipid levelling morality to which the modern stage is tied down would not admit of such admirable passions as these scenes are filled with' (IV, 114); or 'A poor man on our stage is always a gentleman; he may be known by a peculiar neatness of apparel, and by wearing black. Our delicacy, in fact, forbids the dramatizing of Distress at all' (IV, 126). We are on the borders of the world of Sheridan's Mr Puff, where Tilburina enters 'stark mad in white satin, and her confidant stark mad in white linen' (*The Critic*, III.i.) or those modern Italian performances of *Lucia di Lammermoor* where Lucia, having stabbed her husband, is not allowed to have blood on her nightdress.

I don't want however to emphasize the *Specimens*' negative virtues, but to show some of the things Lamb admired about the Elizabethans and strove to bring before the reading public. In talking about the Musician and the Nightingale passage from Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy* I have already suggested how some excerpts are self-contained and largely static: more like narrative pictures than dramas. Many of the extracts, though, are duologues, where one mind challenges or intensifies the response of another: here generally Lamb's practice is to emphasize the psychology and unify the mood by excision of detail, whether of minor characters or even the particularity of time and place, thus letting the episode 'float'. In *Lust's Dominion*,[13] the Queen of Spain is desperately in love with Eleazar, a Moor. She attempts to woo him by music and by the enticement of her two pages to wait on him. Eleazar's part in the *Specimens* is confined to short rebuffals that call forth yet more impassioned responses: the agony of the Queen is enforced by her ecstatic invention of winning delights:

> Queen: Why dost frown?...
> ...for each contracted frown
> A crooked wrinkle interlines my brow:
> Spend but one hour in frowns, and I shall look
> Like to a Beldam of one hundred years...
> Smile on me: and these two wanton boys,
> These pretty lads that do attend on me,
> Shall call thee Jove, shall wait upon thy cup
> And fill thee nectar...
> Bestow one smile, one little little smile,

And in a net of twisted silk and gold
In my all-naked arms thyself shalt lie. (IV, 13-14)

The Queen's suffering and sensual imagination are placed before us: the original play, concerned with story and the preparation for subsequent development, opens by stressing Eleazar's moodiness, his withdrawal, as well offering something mildly comic in the detail of his servants' activity (or lack of it). The original stage direction announces: 'Enter Zaracke, Baltazar, two Moors, taking tobacco; musick sounding within: enter Queen Mother of Spain with two Pages, Eleazar sitting on a chair suddenly draws the curtain.' The domestic detail and the surprise of Eleazar's appearance (compounded by the visual fact of his blackness)are lost in the *Specimens*, though the reader is immediately placed by Lamb in his headnote within the context of love and scorn: instead of a discovery that proceeds with the play's action and which may be impeded by 'two Moors, taking tobacco' or by uncertainty about the relationship between the woman and the Moor behind the curtain, we are allowed to partake fully of the Queen's passion in its unnatural frenzy.

Perhaps what I have said so far too much gives the impression that Lamb thought what was theatrical or even dramatic a regrettable weakness of the Elizabethans.[14] He himself, though, speaks in the Preface of choosing to to give entire scenes, and even successive scenes where possible, 'having found single passages and detached beauties wearisome in reading selections of this nature' (IV, xi), and he does not avoid the violent effect, whether it is a man at the point of execution, visited by his wife; or the Duchess of Malfi, mocked by having her husband and children shown dead to her; or the workings of revenge in John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*. The scene Lamb chooses from this last, of Antonio beginning to placate his father's ghost with blood, shows violent, indeed horrible, action. As a first step, Antonio determines to murder Julio, the young son of his chief enemy, the Duke of Venice - the child is innocent and Antonio is besides betrothed to his sister, Mellida. In the night at his father's tomb, Antonio sees the opportunity to slaughter Julio, yet is constrained by pity and by love of Mellida. Marston is well aware of the pathos of the scene and Lamb well aware how on the stage an actor might stress the horror or the revenge, and lose the pathos. Julio is a child akin in his prattle to Shakespeare's young Macduff or Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale*, not a depiction entirely to my taste; but the horror is reinforced by the child's innocent response and by Antonio's own vacillation between filial duty and disgust at the deed. Only his father's voice from the tomb (in the play, the appearance of his father's ghost) eventually brings him to his terrible if pious duty:

Antonio: O, that I knew which joint, which side, which limb
Were father all and had no mother in it;
That I might rip it vein by vein, and carve revenge
In bleeding races! but since 'tis mix'd together,
Have at adventure, pell-mell, no reverse.
Come hither, boy; this is Andrugio's hearse.

Julio: O God, you'll hurt me. For my sister's sake,
Pray you don't hurt me. And you kill me, 'deed
I'll tell my father.

Antonio is urged on by his father's cry for 'Revenge!' and exclaims:

Come, pretty tender child,
It is not thee I hate, or thee I kill.
Thy father's blood that flows within thy veins,
Is it I loathe...
...Abandon fears:
Whilst thy wounds bleed, my brows shall gush out tears.

Julio: So you will love me, do even what you will. (IV, 64)

The mixed emotions of this scene, that call for a subtlety of representation Lamb claimed not to find upon the stage, where our sympathy should remain with Antonio, despite his slaughter of Julio, are represented constantly in the *Specimens*, though not usually under so violent a guise. Indeed, it is the plays' delicacy, or the need to understand in them what is implied as well as what is stated, which Lamb so admired, that he also felt was the bar to their theatrical success. *A Fair Quarrel*, by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, concerns the niceties of honour and the code of the duel, complicated by the emotions of a quarrel between friends. A Captain, in a dispute with a Colonel, his friend, is called 'Son of a Whore': a challenge is given and accepted, but the Captain before going to fight (it is with his friend, after all) seeks to be certain from his mother of her honour. The first extract is the interview of the Captain and his mother, the course and outcome of which Lamb fully anticipates by his headnote: the Lady 'being questioned by her son, to prevent a duel, falsely slanders herself of unchastity' (IV, 104) - so there is no theatrical turn or surprise when we read the scene, none of that sense, which Lamb deprecated in stage performance, of 'the deed doing' pressing 'upon us with the painful sense of presence'. Rather we are allowed to trace the son's questioning of his mother (and to think within ourselves of what must be his state of mind as he does so); to see the mother's initial outrage and then her agonized realization of what this colloquy means, with her heroic determination to save her son even if it means slandering herself. The range of feeling is important to Lamb, which he thinks half lost if we are unprepared for it: the scene is complicated by the son pretending that a foul-mouthed villain made the aspersion and that his friend the Colonel took up the quarrel on his behalf, so that he needs to find out the truth to save his friend's life, if necessary:

Captain: Now what's the friendly fear that fights within me,
Should his brave noble fury undertake
A cause that were unjust in our defence,
And so to lose him everlastingly,
In that dark depth where all bad quarrels sink
Never to rise again, what pity 'twere,
First to die here, and never to die there!

Lady: Why, what's the quarrel, speak, Sir, that should rise
Such fearful doubts, my honour bearing part on't?
The words, whate'er they were -

Captain: *Son of a whore.*

Lady: Thou liest:
And were my love ten thousand times more to thee,
Which is as much now as e'er mother's was,
So thou shouldst feel my anger. /*Strikes him*/.
Dost thou call
That quarrel doubtful? Where are all my merits?...

Captain: Now blessings crown you for't;
It is the joyfull'st blow that e'er flesh felt
(IV, 105-106)

It seems a moment of triumph for the Captain, but the *reader* sees that he is now imperilled by the duel and (by the help of the headnote) can anticipate how the mother will react. The oblique way in which the Captain approaches what is such a delicate subject and the way in which he involves the Colonel, demands some concentration, a moment's faltering of which in the theatre will lose all the effect, while the reader can delight in the mother's blow and her son's paradoxical joy, even as he still remembers that the conclusion is not yet reached: the mother senses all is not well, discovers the quarrel is her son's quarrel, and proceeds to slander herself. Questions of honour, friendship, and love twine themselves so tightly that each new tug seems to twist the conflict tighter. The interplay of statement and meaning - the Captain feigning to find out a truth, then his mother feigning in her turn; the reader's grasp simultaneously of what each means as well as what each says - such passionate psychology Lamb felt too good for the stage he knew. The modern concept of 'subtext' in a playscript, of finding what is meant as well as what is said, suggests how far stage practice today enforces the criticism Lamb was making of his age's response to such psychic dramas.

Here in *A Fair Quarrel*, with two extracts - in the second, the Captain feels he cannot fight, until the Colonel, amazed, calls him 'coward' and so gives ground of honour on which the Captain can fight him with certainty - Lamb has displayed the sweep of a dramatic action. As he announced in the preface he presents not mere beauties. By a skilful arrangement he can often give the sense of a micro-drama, a miniature play, carved out of the rough quarry of the original: so that the shape lies before us in a few pages, a half hour or less of reading. I wish to conclude by referring to one of these micro-dramas, which again shows that Lamb valued the dramatic powers of the Elizabethans, though he often preferred to take that drama at its key moments rather than with all the encumbrances of story, to take the character rather than the mechanics of the plot. I have already mentioned Lamb's fascination with witchcraft in these plays and *The Witch of Edmonton*, by Thomas Dekker, William Rowley and John Ford, is one such study. The play's portrait of the witch, Mother Sawyer, is remarkably sympathetic: she is ill-treated simply because she is old, ugly and poor, and not unreasonably takes advantage of the Devil's appearance, in the shape of a black dog, when she is cursing. As Tom or Tomalin the dog becomes her familiar. Eventually the devil deserts her and Mother Sawyer, though repentant, is executed. The heartless treatment of the old woman and her response, the substance of Lamb's first extract, clearly reminds us of Wordsworth's 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' and is surely so meant to remind us:

Mother Sawyer: And why on me? Why should the envious world
Throw all their scandalous malice upon me?
'Cause I am poor, deform'd and ignorant,
And like a bow buckled and bent together
By some more strong in mischiefs than myself;
...Some call me Witch
And being ignorant, of myself, they go
About to teach me how to be one...

BANKS, *a Farmer enters*

Banks: Out, out upon thee, Witch.

Sawyer: Dost call me Witch?

Banks: I do, Witch, I do:
And worse I would, knew I a name more hateful.
What makest thou upon my ground?

Sawyer: Gather a few rotten sticks to warm me.

Banks: Down with them when I bid thee, quickly;
I'll make thy bones rattle in thy skin else. (IV,145)

Such is Mother Sawyer's unhappy case that she is left wondering how one becomes a witch, since 'Tis all one/To be a witch as to be counted one.' The next extract shows her, now a witch, meeting with her dog (who being a familiar, can talk). She is enjoying her power and the sense of revenge against those who scorned her. The third and final extract marks the beginning of her end. Her familiar has absented himself for three days. Mother Sawyer calls for him in terms of distressed affection:

Oh, my best love
I am on fire (even in the midst of ice)
Raking my blood up, till my shrunk knees feel
Thy curl'd head leaning on them.

But when Tom appears, he is now all white and declares:

My whiteness puts thee in mind of thy winding-sheet.
(IV,147)

Mother Sawyer's meagre time of triumph has run: it has not been so wonderful after all: a matter of laming horses, nipping babies, and preventing the butter from coming (significantly, in the complete play she is involved with darker matters). Lamb shows the course of her tragedy and suggests an Elizabethan mind capable of sympathy and capable of seeing a play of passions within a dramatic action. It is a fragment that Lamb gives, rather than a complete drama, as so many Romantic dramas were fragmentary either in their writing or in their publication. In many ways Lamb helped by such work to confirm the Romantics in the idea that they were the 'Romantic Revival' of glories lost after the Civil Wars and only with difficulty being recovered. His anthology reveals his own personality and an implicit set of criticisms, as well as offering explicit ones and a rich harvest of poetry. To any one who has not read the Elizabethan Drama or (and do I need to say it in the present company?) who has not read the *Dramatic Specimens*, I end with Lamb's own jocular remark to Bernard Barton: 'I am...amused with your knowledge of our drama being confined to Shakspeare and Miss Bailly. What a world of fine territory between Land's End and Johnny Grots have you missed traversing. I almost envy you to have so much to read.'[15]

Notes

1 Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford*, ed. Elizabeth Watson, London 1972, p.92.

2 Mary Russell Mitford, *Our Village*, introduction by Anne Thackeray Ritchie, London, 1893, pp. 134-5.

3 *Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb*, ed. Edwin W Marrs, Ithaca & London, 1976, ii, 147.

4 Ian Jack, *English Literature 1815-1832*, Oxford, 1963, p.284. Lamb's comments are discussed by Wayne McKenna - 'Charles Lamb as Critic of Dramatic Literature', in *Charles Lamb and the Theatre*, Gerrard's Cross, 1978, but he says little about the handling of extracts.

5 Quotations of the *Specimens* from *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E V Lucas, vol.IV, London, 1904.

6 I, 97-98. Quotations of 'On the Tragedies of Shakspeare' from *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E V Lucas, vol.I, London, 1903.

7 It is an interesting comment on Lamb's own earlier ignorance of these plays, even while it illustrates their inaccessibility, that he says the entrance of Marlowe's Tamburlaine, drawn in a chariot by conquered kings ('Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!/What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day?'), he knew only from its parodies by Shakespeare's Ancient Pistol: 'Till I saw this passage with my own eyes, I never believed that it was anything more than a pleasant burlesque of Mine Ancient's. But I assure my readers that it is soberly set down in a play which their Ancestors took to be serious' (IV, 16).

8 M H Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, New York, 1953, p.22.

9 The point is not original to me: Christopher Ricks discusses this example in his lecture on 'Tone in T.S. Eliot's Poetry': I cannot find that this has yet been published.

10 Samuel Johnson, *Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur Sherbo, *Works* (Yale edition), New Haven & London, 1968, viii, 704.

11 To George and Tom Keats, 21, 27 December 1817.

12 Very much images of Lamb's own mind are his comments on descriptions of Heaven (IV, 271) and his extraordinary comparison of scenes from John Ford's *The Broken Heart* with Calvary and the Crucifiction (IV,218).

13 Wrongly attributed by Lamb to Marlowe; it has been identified with *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy* by Dekker, Day and Haughton: see *Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, Cambridge, 1961, iv, 117.

14 As a corrective and a useful survey generally, see N W Bawcutt, 'The Revival of Elizabethan Drama and the Crisis of Romantic Drama', in R T Davies and B G Beatty (eds), *Literature of the Romantic Period 1750-1850*, Liverpool, 1976, pp. 96-113 (pp. 102-105 cover Lamb). I might question a little the sense in which Bawcutt claims the *Specimens* 'helped to make the plays more easily available' (p.102): more generally known, but except as extracts, not available.

15 23 December 1822; *Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E V Lucas, 3 vols, London, 1935, ii, 356.

BOOK REVIEW

Frank P Riga and Claude A Prance: Index to the London Magazine: *Garland Publishing Inc., New York and London, 1978*. 8vo. pp.xlviii. 324. Price $35. Cloth bound. Vol. 103 in the Garland Reference Library of the Humanities.

Members of the Charles Lamb Society will be particularly interested in this book, both for its obvious intrinsic usefulness to students of Lamb and because of its authorship. In collaboration with Professor Frank P Riga of Canisius College, Buffalo, New York, our member and contributor to the

Bulletin Mr Claude A Prance has compiled this Index to *The London Magazine*. Mr Prance has been a member of the Charles Lamb Society since 1936 and is the author of two other books and many articles. He has just completed a Lamb Companion, which we shall hope to see published in due course, and is now working on a book on Thomas Love Peacock. He is a much valued member of our Society.

The Index is introduced by "A Brief History" of *The London Magazine*, 1820-1829 and its vicissitudes under its four editors. Scott's needless death following the duel that took place on 16 February 1821 was a disaster for the Magazine, "for it was never to have as good an editor again". Nevertheless, during the first years of Taylor's editorship there was still a star-studded cast of illustrious contributors, including Lamb, De Quincey, Clare, Cary, Allan Cunningham, C W Dilke, Reynolds, Hazlitt and Hood. In 1823 Hazlitt's review of *Peveril of the Peak* "spoke in such terms of Walter Scott as seemed without doubt actionable". Fortunately a libel suit was staved off but by the end of 1823 "Taylor's shortcomings as an editor... began to affect the quality of the magazine". By the time Southern took over at the beginning of 1825 "Almost the only survivors from the great days were Lamb and Darley". From January to August 1825 Lamb had contributions in every issue but by the end of the year "Elia, the pride of the *London*, could no longer be counted among the Londoners". From then on the magazine was "a sinking concern". But, the authors sum up, "during its best period, from 1820 to 1823, *The London Magazine* included the work of some of the foremost prose writers of the day and, for a time, gave vigorous competition to its rivals. The accomplishments of this brief period place the *London* high among the best literary periodicals of the nineteenth century".

The *Index* attempts to trace the authors of the many anonymous contributions and is similar to the big *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*, but devoted to one journal. Professor Riga and Mr Prance have included some points not in the *Wellesley Index*: all the poetry and a list of the book reviews under both author and title, which should be of great help to students of the period. Since "nothing like complete publishers' lists or marked files" appear to exist, the compilers of this *Index* have had to attempt the identification of writers by "more difficult, time-consuming methods of research" and they are to be congratulated on what has evidently been the meticulous work of many years. In addition to the discoveries made by previous scholars, such as T Rowland Hughes and E L Brooks, to whom they make acknowledgement, Professor Riga and Mr Prance have had access to "newly discovered or hitherto unused manuscript material", which has enabled them to "identify hundreds of new items and to correct others wrongly attributed". They acknowledge that, despite their search for Southern's papers, even "to South America, where Southern spent his later years", they have had to conclude that these records have perished. Nor have they been able to discover the papers of Knight, the last (co-)editor. For these reasons the percentage of identifications is high for the first six years of the *London* but less so for the later years. However, these early years are the ones of most importance and interest to students of the period and the *Index* should prove an invaluable aid to them. Even where attributions are uncertain, the actual listing of contents in each issue should save scholars hours of work in locating particular items.

The entries are admirably set out and cross-referenced to provide the reader with the maximum of information with the minimum of complication. As regards

attribution, the names of the writers appear in three different forms according to the degree of certainty, and the evidence and reference to where it may be found are also provided. There is a Bibliography at the end of the volume and a List of Illustrations in *The London*. The compilers warn of the fallibility of attributions, even where they seem reliable, and cite the horror-story of Alaric A Watts in illustration. In every instance Professor Riga and Mr Prance have carefully scrutinized and weighed the evidence. "Even after such painstaking and time-consuming evaluations, the validity of all our attributions cannot be guaranteed though we feel certain of most. In all instances, however, we believe the evidence leads clearly to the conclusions we have made." Readers can surely feel the fullest confidence, after such careful qualification, that the compilation has been made and the attribution considered with the most scrupulous care. This book should prove an essential aid to students of the period.

M W

THE BOY AND THE SNAKE

Henry was every morning fed
With a full mess of milk and bread.
One day the boy his breakfast took,
And eat it by a purling brook
Which through his mother's orchard ran.
From that time ever when he can
Escape his mother's eye, he there
Takes his food in th'open air.
Finding the child delight to eat
Abroad, and make the grass his seat,
His mother lets him have his way.
With free leave Henry every day
Thither repairs, until she heard
Him talking of a fine *grey bird*.
This pretty bird, he said, indeed,
Came every day with him to feed,
And it lov'd him, and lov'd his milk,
And it was smooth and soft like silk.
His mother thought she'd go and see
What sort of bird this same might be.
So the next morn she follows Harry,
And carefully she sees him carry
Through the long grass his heap'd-up mess.
What was her terror and distress,
When she saw the infant take
His bread and milk close to a snake!
Upon the grass he spreads his feast,
And sits down by his frightful guest,
Who had waited for the treat;
And now they both begin to eat.
Fond mother! shriek not, O beware
The least small noise, O have a care -
The least small noise that may be made,
The wily snake will be afraid -
If he hear the lightest sound
He will inflict th' envenom'd wound.

She speaks not, moves not, scarce does breathe,
As she stands the trees beneath;
No sound she utters; and she soon
Sees the child lift up its spoon,
And tap the snake upon the head,
Fearless of harm; and then he said,
As speaking to familiar mate,
"Keep on your own side, do, Grey Pate:"
The snake then to the other side,
As one rebuked, seems to glide;
And now again advancing nigh,
Again she hears the infant cry,
Tapping the snake, "Keep further, do;
Mind, Grey Pate, what I say to you".
The danger's o'er - she sees the boy
(O what a change from fear to joy!)
Rise and bid the snake "good-bye";
Says he, "Our breakfast's done, and I
Will come again to-morrow day":
Then, lightly tripping, ran away.

How many of us Lamb-lovers have read recently the poem *The Boy and the Snake* from Charles and Mary Lamb's *Poetry for Children*, published by Mrs Go dwin, the "bad baby"?

MR A M DAVIDSON draws our attention to an interesting article by Alan Temperley in *The Scots Magazine* for August 1978 called *The Boy and the Adder*. Lucas tells us of a letter from Jean D Montgomery printed in *The County Gentleman* in August, 1907, which recounts a Kirkcudbrightshire story of the child, Douglas Crosbie, of the farm of Newlaw, who was born in 1782. It was on his relationship with an adder which shared his porridge and milk, until his mother discovered it and had it killed, that Lamb's (or Mary's) poem seems to have been based, though another similar story from Hungary is recorded. Alan Temperley explains that "grey beardie", as he writes it, "Grey Bairdie" as Lucas quotes it, is in Scots phrase a stickleback or minnow or other small fish and that the boy no doubt thought of the snake in similar terms. This has become in the poem a "grey bird" or "Grey Pate", which really does not make nearly so much sense.

Sadly, the boy, who was about four at this time, died three years later and his grave is close to the ruins of Dundrennan Abbey. Mr Temperley thinks the story probably travelled by sea from the then thriving ports of Galloway to London, where Lamb, with his connections, might easily have heard it. There is much more detail, of course, in Mr Temperley's article, which we commend to interested readers.

Lucas tells us that "This poem was the subject of the frontispiece to Vol.I of the original edition", which is extremely rare. However, Mr Temperley says that this particular poem was "for many years a standard in junior school anthologies".

NEWS

MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

On 6 October, 1979, we had the great pleasure of welcoming to our meeting this year's Crowsley Lecturer, Professor Angus Easson of Salford University,

and we are happy to be able to print his lecture in this issue. Members very much enjoyed his talk and commented that this was a neglected area of Lamb's work, we had never before had a discussion on it, and, indeed, we think Professor Easson's treatment of it adds something new to the study of Lamb.

On 3 November, too, we had a most enjoyable afternoon, when Mr Stanley Brett, lately Lecturer in Librarianship at the North London Polytechnic, spoke to us about Book Publishing in Lamb's time. We hope to persuade him to let us have something for the Bulletin.

At the time of going to press, we are looking forward to our next meeting in December, when Miss Molly Lefebure, author of *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Bondage of Opium* and *Cumbrian Discovery*, among others, is to talk to us about Mrs Coleridge under the title "Dear Sara".

PLAYWRIGHT'S SUCCESS

Congratulations to our Council members, Mr and Mrs Sydney Hall, on their son, Roger's play *Middle-aged Spread*, which opened in London's West End Lyric Theatre in October. "The Stage" describes Roger as New Zealand's foremost playwright.

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE!

Your Council is considering seeking advertisements from publishers, booksellers and the like to help with the ever-increasing cost of the Bulletin. It would be helpful if any member with some expertise/contacts in this field would volunteer to be our "Advertising Manager". Please contact the Hon. General Secretary, Madeline Huxstep (01-748 5461) if you can help. Would members who are book-collectors like the chance to advertise their wants in the Bulletin? Please let Madeline know your reactions.

BOOK SALE

A future issue of the Bulletin will contain a list of books which are duplicates in our Library (now housed in the Guildhall Library of the City of London), which the Council have agreed to sell on behalf of the Society. These will be sold strictly on a 'first come, first served' basis, after a closing date which will give our overseas members a fair chance of purchasing the bargains on offer. Watch this space!

THE ANNUAL BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

The Birthday Luncheon will be held this year on Saturday, 9 February 1980, at 12.30 for 1 o'clock. The Council have decided on a new venue, the Ivanhoe Hotel, Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1. In spite of increases in VAT we have managed to keep the price of a ticket at £6, no small achievement in these inflationary times. Requests for tickets (accompanied by an SAE and cheque) should be sent to Madeline Huxstep, 9 Baronsmead Road, London SW13 9RR.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1980

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 1980 fall due on 1 January. The

rates of subscription for 1980 are as follows:

Corporate Members Overseas	$10
Other Corporate Members	£5
Individual Members - London	£3 (doubles £4)
- Provincial	£2 (doubles £3)
- Overseas	$7 (doubles $10)

May we again ask that any members who feel they can would generously add some small donation to their normal subscription? We were most grateful for kind help given in this way last year. Do as we may, it does not seem possible to keep our expenses down, even with all the voluntary work done so ungrudgingly by our members.

If it is convenient, members ordering tickets may include in their cheques sent to Mrs Huxstep for the Luncheon the amount of their annual subscription, but *not* unless they are ordering tickets please. Otherwise, subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, The Charles Lamb Society, Flat 3, 47 Sussex Square, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 1GE.
PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR HON. TREASURER HAS CHANGED HIS ADDRESS TO THE ABOVE.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr H Mann, 19 Leatherhead Road, Ashtead, Surrey

Mr Donald Reiman, The Carl H Pforzheimer Library, Room 815, 41 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017, USA