

CHAPTER ROLL

1953-1954

Adams, W. Lloyd	Humphries, James C.
Albro, C. Hal	Jennings, W. W.
Allen, William R.	Jones, T. T.
Anderson, C. Arnold	Kammerer, Gladys
Baugh, Lucy Gaines	Kaplan, Sidney
Billington, Mary Elizabeth	King, Margaret I.
Boone, Mrs. Anna Bruce	Kirwan, Albert D.
Boyd, Paul P.	Kraehe, Enno
Boyarsky, Louis	McCloy, Shelby T.
Brady, George K.	Mooney, Robert N.
Buckner, G. Davis	Oppenheim, Mrs. Adele S.
Caldwell, Lee	Pattie, Frank
Carpenter, Cecil	Plummer, L. N.
Carr, Wilbert L.	Randall, Frank
Carter, Lucian	Rannels, Edward W.
Clark, Thomas D.	Rea, John
Coleman, Lee	Riley, Herbert P.
Cone, Carl B.	Ripy, Sara
Cooke, Arthur L.	Roberts, George
Cutler, John L.	Robinson, Mrs. Lolo
Dantzler, L. L.	Robinson, Mary
Diachun, Stephen	Sanders, Irwin T.
Didlake, Mary L.	Sears, Paul
Donovan, Herman L.	Server, Alberta W.
Dugan, Mrs. Frances L. S.	Smith, Paul
Dunn, Keller	Snow, Charles E.
Eaton, W. Clement	Spivey, Herman E.
Faust, George	Stahr, Elvis J., Jr.
Hargreaves, H. W.	Thompson, Lawrence S.
Hatch, Maurice	Thompson, Raymond H.
Hahn, Thomas M.	Weaver, Ralph H.
Haynes, William	Webb, William S.
Hegeman, Daniel V.	White, M. M.
Hochstrasser, Donald L.	Whiteside, Frederick
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Humphreys, Margaret Bell	Young, Edward E.

# Phi Beta Kappa

*Alpha of Kentucky*

## University of Kentucky

Lexington



1954

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Twenty-Ninth Annual Dinner

May 4, 1954

Student Union, Blue Grass Room

6 o'clock



Invocation

Introduction of New Members

MARGARET BELL HUMPHREYS

Response . . . . . DIOGENES ALLEN

Introduction of Honor Guests . . . . . CARL B. CONE

Twenty-Ninth Annual Phi Beta Kappa Address

*"In Search of Charles Lamb"*

W. HUGH PEAL

## IN SEARCH OF CHARLES LAMB

The search for Charles Lamb began in my case, as so many searches do, as the result of a gift. The gift was a copy of "Tales from Shakespeare" by Charles and Mary Lamb, and the giver was an aunt who believed that little boys should be introduced to good literature at the earliest and most impressionable ages. The gift was not one which could be classified as a collector's item. It was a small oblong volume bound in green cloth with cheap iridescent decoration. The paper was cheap and the printing would not have been approved by Didot or Baskerville. It was, however, the best copy obtainable from Sears & Roebuck, the only book vendor available to the lady, and she knew that ten year old boys can quickly find the kernel in a nut in spite of the forbidding shell.

Whether children of these days can be interested in the Tales from Shakespeare seems to me doubtful. A good many of the stories were somewhat threadbare and worn renaissance material even in Shakespeare's time, and the plays are readable now only because of the extraordinary beauty of the poetry and the subtleties of the characterization. When reduced to prose, even the artful and urbane prose of the Lambs, and simplified for reading by children, the narratives show signs of age and the characters are wooden and artificial. In my Western Kentucky village, however, we were short of books and amusements and, above all, we had that naivete which springs from a lack of standards of comparison. Having known no great merchants and money-lenders, we accepted the transaction between

Antonio and Shylock as authentic and rejoiced in the ending as a triumph of justice. The deep and tragic role of the Jewish money-lender in an alien and hostile world, so important in Shakespeare's play, is omitted in the paraphrase and we missed it entirely. Similarly we enjoyed "Timon of Athens" as a straightforward tale, credible to us because we were not weighed down by critical standards or modern psychological theories.

The first Lamb item I found for myself was the fable known as "A Dissertation on Roast Pig". It was in a tattered copy of one of McGuffey's school readers which, having been discarded by my eldest brother, became a part of my private library. I had no means then of knowing that I had stumbled on a remarkable literary performance, but I recognized, as generations of schoolboys had done before me, that I had found a delightful story. I also recognized the need for more, and Sears & Roebuck again obliged, this time with the full "Essays of Elia". This was the real beginning of a search which has continued with growing interest and pleasure for more than forty years. For the greater part of this period my acquisitions were necessarily limited to printed material: the second series of the Elia essays, the poems, the plays, the miscellaneous essays, the critical edition of extracts from the dramatists, the letters in the Talfourd, Ainger, Harper and Lucas editions, the biographies by Ainger, Lucas, Procter, Hazlitt, Blunden and others and the great mass of secondary material on Lamb, much of it written by his friends and contemporaries. To these of course were added much material by

or about Lamb's friends and associates, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Lloyd, Hazlitt, Talfourd, Moxon, Cunningham, Kemble, Rickman, Scott, Haydon, Knowles and others. At long last, however, I discovered that divine providence, having removed the great collectors of the past, Campbell, Anderson, Folger, Huntington, Daly, Morgan, Newton, Scribner, North, et al, had made available to me some original manuscripts and letters by and to Lamb and by and to his friends. With your permission I propose to talk about a few of these acquisitions.

Each of the items to be discussed has been chosen as illustrative of an important incident or situation in Lamb's life or work. Perhaps they will serve to make clear to any of you who are not collectors the excitement and pleasure to be derived from handling and investigating these little relics of the past which we call autographs. Sometimes autograph letters seem at first sight to be unpromising material, and of course many of them are of no value. On the other hand, even a short note often gives to the diligent researcher an insight into the actions and motives of the writer or his friends that cannot be gained through finished literary work. Sometimes the key is in the handwriting, as in the last of the Lamb letters which I shall discuss this evening. Sometimes it is in a reference to a third person that fixes an important date or contemporary attitude, as in the case of the first letter I shall discuss. In any event the patient investigator is often rewarded by being transported back into an actual situation where he can see great events or amusing situations as they develop and before they have become shopworn from repetition or distorted

by reflection. The whole process is not unlike that of the modern detective story where the reader knows the denouement but has to piece together the action and motivation from small clues as he goes along.

My first item is a letter written by Lamb to Samuel Taylor Coleridge in August 1797, when Lamb was twenty-two years of age and Coleridge was twenty-five. It deals with an erratic incident in the troubled career of young Charles Lloyd, then aged twenty-two, the protege of Coleridge and friend of Lamb. In itself Lloyd's problem was of small importance, but it produced an exciting moment in a rapidly moving course of events that was to culminate in a year in the most important new work in English literature since "Paradise Lost" and was to result many years later in the emergence of a great new prose writer. I hope that you will bear with me while I attempt to sketch the background of the letter. It involves five young friends who were writing poetry.

In August 1797 Samuel Taylor Coleridge was living with his wife and infant son, Hartley, at Nether Stowey in Somerset. The young family had a very humble home and little money, but Coleridge always thereafter called the period the springtime of his troubled life. For the first and last time he was really happy. After many false starts and impracticable and foolish plans he was settled - or thought he was. His publications were already rather impressive, especially the first and second editions of his poems. Charles Lamb had contributed to both editions and Charles Lloyd had several items in the second edition. Coleridge had also taken a hand in

Robert Southey's ambitious epic, "Joan of Arc". Southey was then twenty-three and at the beginning of a career that was to make him the poet laureate of England at the age of 39. He and Coleridge had married sisters. By August 1797, however, the Coleridge-Lamb-Lloyd partnership and the Coleridge-Southey collaboration, with Lamb as critic, were weakening. Coleridge had drawn William Wordsworth and his gifted sister, Dorothy, into his circle.

Wordsworth, the son of a Cumberland attorney, was twenty-seven when he joined Coleridge, near Nether Stowey. He had published verses as early as 1787, had graduated from Cambridge in 1791, had traveled extensively in Europe and had sired an illegitimate daughter in France during the Revolution. In 1797 he was an object of suspicion to the police for his radical opinions, England then being the victim of a case of the jitters much like ours in 1954. Wordsworth was a man of great industry and ability and brought a fixed purpose and strong will into the nebulous Coleridge dream world. In return he gained from Coleridge, as he tells us himself, the concept of joy. This is neatly illustrated, I think, by four lines from one of the minor poems written jointly by them at the time, the children's classic, "We are Seven":

"She had a rustic, woodland air,  
and she was wildly clad;  
Her eyes were fair, and very fair:  
Her beauty made me glad."

One of the satisfying rewards of being a collector rather than a scholar is that one can make wild suggestions and leave others to do the work. Perhaps some of the scholars here

assembled would like to dig into the voluminous Keats literature to see whether the tributes to beauty in "Endymion" and the "Ode to a Grecian Urn" were not in fact suggested by a childhood memory of these lines. Keats was three years old when "Lyrical Ballads" was published. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" sounds to me very much like a neo-Elizabethan's expansion of Wordsworth's restrained "Her beauty made me glad".

Robert Southey was living at Burton in Hampshire when Lamb's August 1797 letter was written. Our generation has decided with great unanimity that Southey's books make handsome bookcase furniture when well bound and regularly dusted. In 1797, however, and for a long life thereafter he was regarded as an important poet. He was also a fine and generous person with an open heart and purse for everyone in trouble, qualities sometimes obscured by middle class prejudices and an irascible temper. He was particularly the friend of young lovers and had had a leading part in getting Coleridge married. For his pains he had to support the entire Coleridge family for many years, but he probably didn't realize that in 1797. As will be seen when I eventually read my letter, Lamb and Lloyd laid their problems on his doorstep.

Charles Lloyd was a son of a wealthy and distinguished family. Originally of Welsh origin the Lloyds were among the earliest Quakers. Charles' grandfather, Sampson Lloyd, gave his name to Lloyd's Bank, now one of the great financial institutions of the world. He was a friend of Dr. Samuel Johnson and is mentioned several times by Boswell. Charles' father, Charles Lloyd of Bingley, was in his youth a friend of Benjamin Franklin,



and attempted unsuccessfully to work out a compromise with the American Colonies to avert the struggle that became the Revolutionary War. He also became a distinguished banker and published creditable translations of Homer and Horace. One of his daughters, Priscilla, abandoned the Quaker Faith, married Christopher Wordsworth, brother of the poet, and became the mother of two bishops and grandmother of a third. William Wordsworth was devoted to his brother and to the two sons. Their influence was paramount, I think, in converting him from the radical of 1797 to the tory who was castigated by Browning as "The Lost Leader", but that is a story for another day.

Lamb was the Cinderella of the poetical quintet. His father had been a valet to a barrister and headwaiter at the Inner Temple. The fortunate event of his early life was his nomination to a good boy's school known as Christ's Hospital where he spent seven years and made many friends, including Coleridge. He left the school in 1789, when he was fourteen years of age, and soon thereafter became a clerk in the India House where he was to remain until his retirement on a pension in 1825 at the age of fifty.

Although the Lambs were very poor and lived precariously, young Charles seems to have had a reasonably happy boyhood. The period of about eighteen months before the August 1797 letter was written, however, had been a trying time for him. He had been confined to a madhouse for six weeks in the winter of 1795-6, a calamity which fortunately never recurred. In September 1796 his sister Mary, ten years his senior, killed her mother and wounded her father in a fit of insanity. Her

entire life thereafter was a sad succession of lucid and insane intervals. Had it not been for Charles she would have had to pass the rest of her life in a public madhouse, a terrible fate at any time and worse then than now. Her father was old and broken and her elder brother John was unwilling to care for her, but Charles, then just past his twenty-first birthday, took up the burden and carried it to the day of his death. Only one who has read Lamb's letters with reverence can know what a care and trouble he undertook and fulfilled, but such a one will also know what compensations he found in her devotion, loyalty and good sense.

I think that it would be difficult to maintain that the little volume of poems published by Coleridge, Lamb and Lloyd in the summer of 1797 contained any masterpieces. The work was full of promise and sometimes touching, but effusions and reflections seldom get into anthologies. There was one very happy little note, however, which illustrates the pawkish humor of Coleridge and Lamb. It was customary to insert a Greek or Latin quotation on the title page of a book. Now Coleridge had a soaring imagination and could never have contented himself with the usual little tag from Virgil or Lucretius. This time he soared into fancy and wrote his own quotation, ascribing it to an entirely fictitious author, one Groscollius, the author of an equally fictitious book with an impressive title. This was a type of humor that probably delighted Lamb and troubled the serious and idealistic Lloyd. The quotation can be freely translated as: "Double is the tie which binds us - friendship and a common love of poetry. Would that neither

death nor the lapse of time could dissolve it."

I have both editions of the poems with me and I hope that you will look at them.

In July 1797 Lamb got one of the rare holidays that broke his hard-working routine and visited Coleridge at Nether Stowey. Dorothy and William Wordsworth were also there and thus Lamb began the friendship with them that was to last until his death, an event which produced one of the touching poems of Wordsworth's later years. Unfortunately Coleridge suffered a painful accident and was unable to attend his friends on their country excursions. He occupied his enforced leisure in part by writing a poem about his guests, the famous "This lime-tree bower my prison". I shall quote only a few of the lines relating directly to Lamb:

"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!"

Lloyd was not with the house-party at Nether Stowey in July 1797. His mental disorder or tension had grown on him so much that he had left Coleridge some months before. His activities during the summer of 1797 are somewhat obscure, but at some point he had gotten himself in love with a Miss Sophia Pemberton. De Quincey, with his usual propensity for getting into trouble, stated in his autobiography that Lloyd secured Southey's assistance to carry the lady off to foil the opposition of her parents. This was treated with great scorn

by Lucas and other scholars until the discovery of the July 1797 letter, which I am at last about to read:

"Poor Charles Lloyd came to me about a fortnight ago. He took the opportunity of Mr. Hawkes coming to London, and I think at his request, to come with him. It seemed to me, and he acknowledged it, that he had come to gain a little time and a little peace, before he made up his mind. He was a good deal perplexed what to do--wishing earnestly that he had never entered into engagements which he felt himself unable to fulfill, but which on Sophia's account he could not bring himself to relinquish. I could give him little advice or comfort, and feeling my own inability painfully, eagerly snatched at a proposal he made me to go to Southey's with him for a day or two. He then meant to return with me, who could stay only one night. While there, he at one time thought of going to consult you, but changed his intention and stayed behind with Southey, and wrote an explicit letter to Sophia. I came away on the Tuesday, and on the Saturday following, last Saturday, receiv'd a letter dated Bath, in which he said he was on his way to Birmingham,--that Southey was accompanying him,--and that he went for the purpose of persuading Sophia to a Scotch marriage--

I greatly feared, that she would never consent to this, from what Lloyd had told me of her character. But waited most anxiously the result. Since then I

have not had one letter. For God's sake, if you get any intelligence of or from Cha<sup>s</sup> Lloyd, communicate it, for I am much alarmed.

C. Lamb

I wrote to Burnett what I write now to you,-- was it from him you heard, or elsewhere?--

He said if he had come to you, he could never have brought himself to leave you. In all his distress he was sweetly and exemplarily calm and master of himself,--and seemed perfectly free from his disorder.--

How do you all at?"

You will note three additional facts from this letter which, I believe, were not clear before its discovery: (i) Lloyd was still attached to Coleridge and thought of returning to him; (ii) Coleridge knew about the love affair; and (iii) Lamb speaks of Lloyd's "disorder" as an established fact which had been previously discussed between him and Coleridge.

Lloyd did not carry off his Sophia to a Scotch marriage but wedded her properly in 1799 and lived happily with her for many years, broken occasionally by his spells of insanity. He and Lamb continued friends, although with occasional disagreements, and published together in 1798 a small book entitled "Blank Verse by Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb". This volume contains Lamb's best known poem, "The Old Familiar Faces", an intensely personal little piece with pathetic references to both Coleridge and Lloyd. They even became well enough known to be coupled as toad and frog in Gillray's anti-Jacobin cartoon

in 1798; and in 1809 Byron described their verse as "childish prattle" in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers". Notwithstanding these efforts, however, which were to continue intermittently for the rest of their lives, the poetical careers of Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb were ended for all practical purposes when Coleridge became the collaborator of Wordsworth.

Viewed in retrospect, I think that the collaboration between Coleridge, Lamb and Lloyd was inevitably of a temporary nature. From the beginning Coleridge and Lamb had diverged radically in their views. Lamb was one of the first critics to admire Burns and Blake and was to be among the first to recognize Keats. Lloyd, even before his mental infirmities overtook him, was only an over-idealistic, wordy and bloodless imitation of his master. Under the new stimulus furnished by Wordsworth, Coleridge wrote within a very few months almost all the poems by which he is remembered, the finest of their type in the language, including "Kubla Khan", "Christabel" and "The Ancient Mariner". In 1798 the two published "Lyrical Ballads". Lamb could have contributed nothing in all this. He was reserved for an entirely different career.

I would like to add two postscripts to this narrative of the young poets. The first is from one of the treasured items from my library, which I have brought for you to see tonight, William Harrison Ainsworth's copy of the first collected edition of Lamb's works, published in 1818 largely through the efforts of Leigh Hunt, a friend of later days. These volumes were dedicated to Coleridge and the following quotation will

show that neither age nor divergence in interests had shaken Lamb's affection for his old school-fellow, hail companion, teacher, collaborator and friend:

"It would be a kind of disloyalty to offer to anyone but yourself a volume containing the early pieces, which were first published among your poems, and were fairly derivatives from you and them. My friend Lloyd and myself came into our first battle (authorship is a sort of warfare) under the cover of the greater Ajax. How this association, which shall always be a dear and proud recollection to me, came to be broken--who snapped the threefold cord,--whether yourself (but I know that was not the case) grew ashamed of your former companions,-- or whether (which is by much the more probable) some ungracious book-seller was author of the separation,--I cannot tell;-- but wanting the support of your friendly elm (I speak for myself), my vine has, since that time, put forth few or no fruits; the sap (if ever it had any) has become, in a manner, dried up and extinct; and you will find your old associate, in his second volume, dwindled into prose and criticism.

Am I right in assuming this as the cause? or is it that, as years come upon us, (except with some more healthy, happy spirits,) Life itself loses much of its Poetry for us? We transcribe but what we read in the great volume of Nature; and, as the characters grow dim, we turn off, and look another way. You yourself write no Christabels, nor Ancient Mariners, now."

My second postscript is a transcript of a note written by Coleridge on his deathbed opposite the poem "This lime-tree bower my prison": "Ch. and Mary Lamb - dear to my heart, yea, as it were, my heart. - S.T.C. Aet. 63, 1834. 1797-1834 = 37 years."

My next exhibit takes us forward in Lamb's life to the year 1799, but it takes me personally back to my boyhood and "The Dissertation Upon Roast Pig". That story begins by alleging that the authority for the tale is a Chinese manuscript read to Elia by his friend "M". Now that is a common type of opening for quasi-folk stories and even in my village we passed it over as an ordinary literary convention, similar to manuscripts found in bottles, tales told by aged sailors, epics recovered from dungeons in ruined castles and the like. In this case we were wrong, however, at least in part. It was typical of Lamb's matured technique to introduce his friends into all his writings, just as the good raconteurs of my own youth made their friends and themselves the heroes or butts of their anecdotes. James White, the author of the Falstaff Letters, was the Jem White of the essay on chimney sweeps, Mrs. Burney, an intimate friend and neighbor, was the Mrs. Battle who had decided opinions on whist. Her husband and daughter were the father and bride of the wedding party, and Lamb himself was the awkward guest. Lamb's father, John Lamb, and his old friend, Randall Norris, were the Lovel and R. N., respectively, of "The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple". Samuel Salt, John Lamb's employer, appears in the same essay under his own name.



Manning and Lamb were introduced by Charles Lloyd at Cambridge in 1799. Manning was then a private tutor there and was twenty-seven years of age. They quickly became intimate friends and correspondents. Another Elia essay, "The Old And The New Schoolmaster", tells of Manning's unavailing efforts to teach Lamb the elements of geometry. In 1807 Manning went to China to perfect himself in the Chinese language. In 1811 he went to Tibet and was the first Englishman ever to visit the sacred city of Lhasa. On his return to England in 1817 he stopped at St. Helena and paid his respects to Napoleon who had befriended him in Paris. He was one of Lamb's constant friends until the latter's death.

From their very first meeting Lamb and Manning began to exchange letters. Lamb's letters to Manning have long been known to scholars, although there was difficulty in getting access to them until they passed into the large but open and generous maw of the Huntington library. It was formerly believed that Lamb had followed his usual practice and destroyed Manning's letters. About 1900, however, thirty-one of the Manning letters to Lamb, covering the period from 1799 to 1834 and including those written from China, turned up in the possession of the Manning family and were sold to Percy Dobell. They were later acquired by Mrs. Gertrude A. Anderson, the greatest Lamb scholar of the last generation, who planned to include them in her projected definitive edition of letters to and from Lamb. She died in 1924, before her editorial work was completed, but P. P. Howe furnished the notes for the Manning letters and published them in 1925. Their reappearance has, to some extent,

put all the older biographies of Lamb out of date. I have them here tonight for your examination, and I hope that you will look at them and recapture some of the joy and feeling of friendship that went into their composition and receipt.

I cannot quite go as far as Lucas, who says that Manning was the "most considerable man that Lamb had met intimately since he left school". It seems to me that Wordsworth and Southey must not be forgotten. In his chief point, however, Lucas is quite right. In the particular circumstances of Lamb's life at the time, the friendship of a man such as Manning was all important. The apprenticeship to Coleridge was over. Lamb needed above all else companionship with men of intelligence and sound judgment who would understand and encourage him. He required also an audience for his developing abilities as a critic of art and literature and a friend who could match his own humor and common sense. All these qualities he found in Manning.

The year 1799 was a turning point in Lamb's life. His father died in that year and he brought Mary back to live with him. Their early housekeeping days are familiar to us from his letters and essays. In the essay "Old China", for instance, he has Bridget, his name for Mary, tell us about their love for the theatre, their economies to buy books, their love of prints and their walks in the fields. At the same time Charles was beginning to write on his own. His chief effort in 1799 was on his poetic drama "John Woodvil", which was a disappointment for him, but he also began to dabble in prose. The year 1800 was the most prolific in letters of his entire life. In the

same year he began to try to write for the newspapers, an attempt which succeeded in 1801. Above all he began to put into words that light and whimsical humor that is his chief charm to us. The pathetic little poet was beginning to gain the audience that has never deserted him. In all these developments, particularly in his humorous sallies, the influence of Manning was great.

It is heartening to know that Lamb's new interests and friends were warmly approved by Coleridge. In fact it was on May 21, 1800 that Coleridge in a letter to Godwin passed a critical estimate on Lamb that has never been excelled: " \* \* he has an affectionate heart, a mind sui generis; his taste acts so as to appear like the unmechanic simplicity of an instinct - in brief he is worth an hundred men of mere talents. \* \*"

It was at this period also that another development occurred that gave rise to an innocent pose by Lamb and a legend that still survives. In the spring of 1800 Mary had another attack of insanity and had to return to her asylum. The neighbors were alarmed, and Lamb had to return to the crowded city where he was given refuge by his old school-fellow, John Mathew Gutch. Lamb made a virtue of a necessity and ever after praised the city as against the country. Both Coleridge and Wordsworth understood the pose and Lamb himself exposed it in his later years by living in the country, but his letters and essays have nourished the fiction until it is unbreakable.

Having already been so prolix about Manning I shall

leave him with two quotations from his letters. The first excerpt is from Manning's letter of March 14, 1801 and constitutes a rebellion against Lamb's critical but on the whole admiring estimate of volume 2 of the Lyrical Ballads. Manning said:

"I perused the Colerigian & Wordsworthian letters. Sheer nonsense, by God. I wonder Coleridge (who I know is a poet--I don't know that W. is not, but I'll be damned if that be poetry he has passed [?] upon us in the 2<sup>d</sup> Vol.)--I say I wonder Coleridge can be taken in by such foolish stuff. By habit one may learn to be excited by any thing--one may live so long with sheep & silly sheperds as to take the Baaing of a Lamb for poetry--but what is that to the purpose--would Shakespear have taken it for poetry?"

The second excerpt is from Manning's last surviving letter to Lamb, dated May 10, 1834:

"Apropos of this I was sitting at the Blossoms public-house not many months ago, talking with the Landlady, when her Daughter Bet brought me a very so-so glass of Gin & W<sup>r</sup>. 'Why, this won't do at all,' says I to the old Lady, 'I have a good mind to pull her ears.' 'Her ears? whose ears?', says the mother, abstracting her attention a moment from certain chalk marks on the Chimney board (I am sorry to say the Carpenter of the village does not pay so regularly as he ought--he has good business too--turned me this table I am writing at) 'Whose? Why Bet's. Would not

it be a good deed?' 'Bet? her let alone,' retorted the mother slowly & with emphasis. I thought it not a bad hit for a country Alewife, although whether she meant it for better or worse, I dont know. I meant no harm."

To this Lamb replied:

"You made me feel so funny, so happy-like; it was as if I was reading one of your old letters taken out at hazard any time between the last twenty years, 'twas so the same." There is sad news of Mary. "She is rising, and will claim her morning picquet. I go to put this in the post first. I walk 9 or 10 miles a day, always up the road, dear London-wards. . . . Do not come to town without apprising me. We must all three meet somehow and 'drink a cup.'"

I know that my audience will be glad to know that my next exhibit takes us forward twenty-three years. Coleridge's great productive days were over, although, as Lamb said to Wordsworth, he could still occasionally arouse himself to his ancient glory, "An Archangel a little damaged". Southey and Wordsworth were still active but were producing little of importance. Lamb, however, had just reached his peak - "Elia" had just been published.

Lamb had developed both as a man and a writer in those twenty-three years. He and his sister had made their home the social center of a brilliant literary group and he had perfected his style in the most exacting of all schools, journalism. One might call him a cockney Addison.

The first series of the Elia essays was begun in 1820, but most of the essays were written in 1821. It was published in book form in 1823. The book was the fruit of Lamb's association with the London Magazine, first edited by John Scott and then by Messrs. Taylor and Hessey. The contributors formed a distinguished and, on the whole, a congenial group, including, among many others, Lamb's old friend, William Hazlitt, the great essayist, John Clare, the poet, Henry Francis Cary, the translator of Dante, Bernard Barton, another Quaker poet, Thomas Hood, essayist and poet, Jonathan Wainwright, a witty reprobate who shocked Lamb's more conventional friends, and Allan Cunningham, a gigantic Scot come to London to make his fortune.

The friendship between Lamb and Cunningham illustrates Lamb's habit of picking up odd and sometimes raffish characters who interested him or appealed to his good nature. Cunningham had started his literary career in Scotland as a collector of old Scotch ballads and, when he found the supply low, had manufactured them to order. In London he worked as a journalist and dramatic writer. Lamb introduced him to the editors of the London Magazine and befriended him in many ways. Of all his great output of prose and verse, the only item remembered today is the song "A Wet Sheet And a Flowing Sea", but he survives in the literary history of the time as a good fellow and friend of many great writers. Lamb called him the "large-hearted Scot".

One of the most deeply rooted conventions of English and Scottish literature of the last two centuries is that each must jeer at the other. Of course the pretended antipathy often

covers the closest friendship and admiration - as that between Boswell and Dr. Johnson. This did not prevent Dr. Johnson from coining his famous definition of oatmeal as a cereal fed to horses in England and to men in Scotland; or the famous reply "Such horses and such men". The convention is still very much alive, as you can see in Barrie's plays and, still more recently, in the delightful and subtle autobiography of James Bridie. Now Lamb, who loved old jokes - the older the better, - was not a man to let such an opportunity slip when he had such a convenient butt as the great, hulking, good natured Cunningham - who was himself a great joker.

One of the common elements of the conventional joke is that each of the races pretends that the other cannot understand a joke. This, of course, was particularly piquant when applied to the jolly Cunningham who had solemnly palmed off his compositions - with the ink hardly dry - as ancient Scottish folk ballads. Another constant is that great seriousness is pretended - we now call it the "dead pan". In fact, a good many serious thoughts and prejudices are introduced under cover of the rail-lery - a characteristic device, especially of the English. We find both of these elements in Lamb's "Imperfect Sympathies", published in the London Magazine in August 1821 and included in the first series of the Elia essays issued in 1823. The following short extracts will illustrate the point:

"I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me--and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. There

is something more plain and ingenious in their mode of proceeding. We know one another at first sight."

\* \* \* "They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development."

\* \* \* "You cannot make excursions with him--for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise, or understand middle actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. 'A healthy book!'--said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Bunce,--'Did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book.' Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr. \* \* \* \* After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he



liked MY BEAUTY (a foolish name it goes by among my friends)--when he very gravely assured me, that 'he had considerable respect for my character and talents' (so he was pleased to say), 'but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions.' The misconception staggered me, but did not seem much to disconcert him."

\* \* \* "I was present not long since at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected; and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way), that I wished it were the father instead of the son--when four of them started up at once to inform me, that 'that was impossible, because he was dead.' An impracticable wish, it seems, was more than they could conceive."

Now no one who knew Lamb could take this essay seriously. He numbered many Scots among his friends, notably Wilson, John Scott, the editor, and Carlyle. His quickness to recognize and proclaim Burns as a great writer showed that he could appreciate his Northern neighbors. In addition the essay goes on to poke fun at the Quakers, whom Lamb had always admired, probably a jest at the expense of Lamb's close friend and fellow-contributor, Bernard Barton. Lamb's true attitude toward the Quakers is shown by his long friendship with the Lloyds and the fact that he may be said to be the discoverer of the fine John Woolman Journal. Fortunately, however, we have even better evidence that the joke was an established one between Lamb and

Cunningham before the first publication of the essay in August 1821. In May of that year Lamb wrote a letter to Cunningham inviting the latter to a dinner with other contributors to the Magazine. This letter ended: "Yours, with perfect sympathy - C. Lamb". As soon as the book was issued Lamb sent a copy to Cunningham with an inscription reading: "Allan Cunningham, Esq. - With Elia's best respects." Cunningham pasted the inscription and the letter in the book; also a portion of a letter from J. A. Hessey, the publisher of the book, containing a copy of an extract from one of Lamb's letters referring to a new book of Cunningham's with "more than an imperfect sympathy". The book became a family treasure and was inherited by a leading book collector in his day and the owner of Lamb's Beaumont and Fletcher, mentioned in the essay "Old China". At Colonel Cunningham's death the book, with its autograph insertions, passed to this country and I have it with me tonight for your inspection. I hope that it will serve as a tangible reminder of the good fellowship and affection that went into the Elia essays.

My next two exhibits take us forward almost to the end of Lamb's life. Lamb's great work was done and his last years were an after-climax - like those of Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey. During those years certain of Lamb's earlier tendencies continued to develop, especially his love of alcohol, about which Carlyle wrote so vividly. He had developed new affections and relationships, however, and had assumed new responsibilities.

While on a visit to Cambridge in 1820 Charles and

Mary Lamb had discovered a young orphan, Emma Isola, then aged eleven. She was the granddaughter of a well known Italian, Agostino Isola, who had been a Cambridge professor in Wordsworth's time there. Both Charles and Mary loved children. The essay "Dream Children" is one of Lamb's best, and Mary was an excellent tutor of children as well as a writer of books for them. Emma then lived with her aunt, a Miss Humphreys, who had many responsibilities and was probably glad to have others provide for the child, In any event the Lambs gradually took over all responsibility for Emma's education and care. She became Charles' constant companion in his long walks and leisure hours. His letters in his last years are full of references, often whimsical, sometimes tender, to his "nut brown maid".

In 1824 Edward Moxon, a young Yorkshireman who had become a publisher's clerk in London, presented himself at Lamb's door with some unpublished poems. Perhaps his accent and origin recalled for Lamb the young Wordsworth of 1797. He became an intimate of the house and eventually built a great career as a publisher on the contacts and knowledge gained from Lamb. His authors in the early years are the list of Lamb's friends, Wordsworth, Southey, Cunningham, Procter, Samuel Rogers, Knowles, Landor and Talfourd, plus of course Lamb himself. Later he added on his own many other now well known names, including Tennyson, Browning, Disraeli, Shelley, Milnes, Patmore and Harriet Martineau. Even after his death the business published Swinburne and Tennyson. It was he who was prosecuted for blasphemy for publishing Shelley's Queen Mob, and his counsel was Thomas Noon Talfourd, protegee and executor of Lamb, to whom

Dickens dedicated his "Pickwick Papers" and who was the original of Tommy Traddles in "David Copperfield".

With Emma, ripening into an Italian-type beauty, in the Lamb household and the susceptible poet bustling in and out, the usual situation developed. They were married in July 1830, Lamb giving the bride away. As usual, he got a little tipsy and, again as usual, he said that he was turning over a new leaf. The new leaf didn't last long as he wrote to his friend Ryle on August 26th that he was sick from some cheap wine. I regret to say that he called it a "rot-gut dose".

There was one real difficulty about the Moxon-Isola marriage. Moxon had sprung from a social position as humble as that of Lamb but with even more dependent relatives. One of these, Moxon's sister, was also a friend of the Lambs. Emma's aunt, Miss Humphreys, seems to have objected to this sister and Lamb was appealed to to help keep the peace. This happened, I think, at a time when Lamb had been at the cheap wine again. He responded with an almost incoherent letter written in an irregular hand. I shall read only the first paragraph:

"Mary, who has more sense, and worse spirits, than all three of us, says, it must be a quarrel. After that letter to your Sister, which is absurd to the brink of insanity, I see no hope. I see no middle way--I wish to God I did--between poor Emma's breaking off with her, and her riding triumphant over you. Tis a sad alternative. But let me witness,

and to the whole world I am ready to do it, that in point of gratitude & obligation Emma has never, never failed in one instance. I have been scolded again & again by her, when I have whispered against the other. She has repaid, on my conscience I believe, more (tho' that is much) than she is indebted. Why, a mother, a real mother, had no right to write such a letter. What I possibly can do in it, I see not. I have no communication with her, even by Letter. But I can only say; express your joint pleasures to me, and, at the hazard of losing all her good opinions, and all her friends' in the bargain, I will write or speak any thing. But can I do it, Dearests, now, without it's being palpable to come from you? I fear, Dearest Emma, that you cannot keep the love of your Aunt with your love of our dear M----. Tis a terrible conflict. You have been a good Neice, I would tell any body. But she had no right, whatever her feelings were, to write such a damnable letter to Miss M----. She must be too insane (I will call it) to make it necessary for you to consult her feelings at all. I will answer that you have had for her every feeling that a Neice, or adopted Daughter, ought to have. But when She, or when a real Mother even, intrudes upon the sacredness of married life, the bonds of daughtership are snapt asunder. You must cleave to your husband. Moxon, excuse me for schooling your Emma thus. And, Emma, think not I set light by the obligations you acknowledge to your ancient

friend, all that you can remember of a Parent. But divided Duties cannot stand. I see, as plain as prophecý, that unless She can get a perfect ascendancy over you, there is no peace for your dear mind. I do not believe that if you invited her one, two, or three months, to your house, she would be satisfy'd. I think, Emma, you understand me. I mean, that she would plant herself in your way, & be a thorn endlessly--".

I have here some other specimens of Lamb's handwriting of the same period for comparison, including a first edition of the "Biographia Literaria" with a page in Lamb's clear and handsome autograph.

The education and training of Emma had strained the finances of the Lambs. He may eventually have helped the young publisher with some capital, but at the time of the wedding he was short. His wedding gift to the bride, however, was magnificent, nothing less than the best known portrait of John Milton. It graced Moxon's shop for many years and is today one of the glories of the New York Public Library. I hope that a few of the millions who have seen it there will get some of the inspiration it gave its former owner.

Lamb's benevolence to the young couple was not exhausted by the rearing of the bride and her dowry. He furnished the material for Moxon's first publication. My last exhibit is a copy of the book, in which is inserted Lamb's original autograph letter of dedication to Moxon.

It must be admitted that "Album Verses" is rather

poor material for a poet who had once collaborated with Coleridge and whose gifts were admired by Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, but the book was a labor of love and was generally received with charity. Perhaps the most interesting incident about it is what happened to the brash young William Jerdan who ventured to hint that it was far from Lamb's best.

My talk tonight started with a description of five young poets who were friends. As Coleridge states so emphatically in the "Biographia Literaria", they were intimate friends before they became known as authors. Notwithstanding the ravages of the years and occasional quarrels among themselves, they were still friends in 1830. Poor Willie Jerdan, later to be the bosom friend of Charles Dickens, didn't know this. He found it out when Southey, the handsome and peppery poet laureate, took up his pen and published a reply in the London Times of August 6, 1830. Southey had not scrupled to criticize the "Lyrical Ballads" and the Elia essays himself, but he couldn't permit an outsider to touch one of the sacred group. His verses must have delighted Lamb, especially the slightly improper pun in the last line.

"TO CHARLES LAMB

On the Reviewal of his Album Verses in the Literary Gazette

Charles Lamb, to those who know thee justly dear,  
For rarest genius, and for sterling worth,  
Unchanging friendship, warmth of heart sincere,  
And wit that never gave an ill thought birth,  
Nor ever in its sport infix'd a sting;  
To us who have admired and loved thee long,  
It is a proud as well as pleasant thing  
To hear thy good report, has borne along  
Upon the honest breath of public praise:  
We know that with the elder sons of song,  
In honouring whom thou hast delighted still,

Thy name shall keep its course to after days.  
The empty pertness, and the vulgar wrong,  
The flippant folly, the malicious will,  
Which have assailed thee, now, or heretofore,  
Find, soon or late, their proper meed of shame;  
The more thy triumph, and our pride the more,  
When wittling critics to the world proclaim,  
In lead, their own dolt incapacity.  
Matter it is of mirthful memory  
To think, when thou wert early in the field,  
How doughtily small Jeffrey ran at thee  
A-tilt, and broke a bulrush on thy shield.  
And now, a veteran in the lists of fame,  
I ween, old Friend! thou art not worse bested  
When with a maudlin eye and drunken aim,  
Dulness hath thrown a Jerdan at thy head."

W. Hugh Peal



### SOME FOOTNOTES TO LUCAS' LAMB

Just twenty years ago the Elians of the world were dancing in the streets. The late E. V. Lucas had published his enlarged edition of the letters of Charles and Mary Lamb, a worthy culmination of a century of effort by noble editors and biographers, Talfourd, Fitzgerald, Procter, Hazlitt, Singer, Campbell, Macdonald, Harper and Mrs. Anderson.

Lucas, himself, was probably the first to strike an off-key note. In his preface he pointed out that he had been unable to locate the originals of a considerable number of letters, including those to Southey. In his private correspondence, still unpublished I believe, he further emphasized his difficulties with the texts and his regret that the sales of his edition were too small to justify the expense of further revised editions. I have one such characteristic letter with me tonight.

As Lucas foresaw, new letters have turned up, and individual collectors have located some of the originals which eluded Lucas. In addition, some of our academic friends have shown that Lucas was a little careless in transcribing and, perhaps, a little free in his editorial corrections. In this connection I hazard a guess to the effect that he had not learned to be sufficiently stern in insisting on receiving photostats. Perhaps the tough-minded collectors of the Lucas generation had not learned that a request by an editor for a copy means "a photostat and no foolishness, please."

Lucas' conclusions have also undergone many challenges. This was inevitable in view of the subject matter. Lamb and Coleridge

were two of the most complex personalities in literary history. Wordsworth, Southey, Hazlitt and Lloyd would have been remarkable in any society. All six of them were eccentric almost to the point of insanity, and Lamb, Lloyd and probably Hazlitt were over the edge at times. Some of these latter-day critics are merely enjoying Freudian day dreams. Others, such as Mr. F. V. Morley in his "Lamb Before Elia," have in my opinion added some valuable comments.

I hope that what I have said will justify my temerity in talking to you tonight. It should also be made clear, however, that, for the present at least, Lucas is the great authority on the Lambs, although scholars may differ on minor details.

My first specimen is Lamb's letter to Coleridge, post-marked August 24, 1797. This letter came into my possession from the Ernest Dressell North collection, and Lucas and North were old friends and correspondents for many years. The printed text is accurate except for some fussy but unimportant liberties with punctuation and the substitution of the word "and" for Lamb's commercial symbol. My quarrel is with the first sentence of the editorial comment which says that the letter is unimportant except in showing Lamb's power of sharing his friends' troubles.

The letter reads as follows:

"Poor Charles Lloyd came to me about a fortnight ago. He took the opportunity of Mr. Hawkes coming to London, & I think at his request, to come with him. It seemed to me, & he acknowledged it,

that he had come to gain a little time & a little peace, before he made up his mind. He was a good deal perplexed what to do--wishing earnestly that he had never entered into engagements which he felt himself unable to fulfill, but which on Sophia's account he could not bring himself to relinquish---. I could give him little advice or comfort, & feeling my own inability painfully, eagerly snatched at a proposal he made me to go to Southey's with him for a day or two. He then meant to return with me, who could stay only one night. While there, he at one time thought of going to consult you, but changed his intention and stayed behind with Southey, & wrote an explicit letter to Sophia. I came away on the Tuesday, & on the Saturday following, last Saturday, receiv'd a letter dated Bath, in which he said he was on his way to Birmingham. That Southey was accompanying him,-- & that he went for the purpose of persuading Sophia to a Scotch marriage--.

I greatly feared, that she would never consent to this, from what Lloyd had told me of her character. But waited most anxiously the result. Since then I have not had one letter. For God's sake, if you get any intelligence of or from Cha<sup>s</sup> Lloyd, communicate it, for I am much alarmed.

C. Lamb

I wrote to Burnett what I write now to you,--  
was it from him you heard or elsewhere?--

He said if he had come to you, he could never  
have brought himself to leave you. In all his  
distress he was sweetly & exemplarily calm and  
master of himself,--and seemed perfectly free from  
his disorder.--

How do you all at?"

This letter, it seems to me, is an important one for  
several reasons. As Lucas somewhat grudgingly admits, it supports  
De Quincey's statement in his Autobiography to the effect that  
Lloyd had secured Southey's assistance in a project to carry Sophia  
off to a marriage opposed by the lady's family. In his "Charles  
Lamb and the Lloyds," published in 1896, Lucas had expressed his  
disbelief in De Quincey's statement, on the ground that one "cannot  
quite see Southey thus engaged." In view of Southey's activity  
in promoting and almost forcing Coleridge's marriage, it is not  
too difficult for me to see Southey in the role of a matchmaker.  
The letter also throws some light on Southey's residence and activ-  
ities in the year 1797, thus clearing up some inaccuracies and  
confusion in the Dictionary of National Biography. It also shows  
(i) that Lloyd was still attached to Coleridge in August 1797 and  
thought of returning to him; (ii) that Coleridge knew about the  
love affair with Sophia; and (iii) that Lamb and Coleridge had  
previously discussed Lloyd's "disorder." These facts are also, I  
think, missed or slurred over by the biographers of both Coleridge

and Lamb. The real importance of the letter to me, however, is that it is the last known attempt by Lamb to preserve the elder-brother or master and apprentice relationship between Coleridge, Lloyd and himself, a relationship already shaken by Coleridge's impatience with Lloyd, by Lloyd's erratic behavior, by a growing diversity in taste between Coleridge and Lamb and, above all, by Coleridge's preoccupation with the Wordsworths. The attempt failed and Lamb struck out on his own.

The August 1797 letter was written a few weeks after Lamb's return from a week's holiday spent with Coleridge and William and Dorothy Wordsworth at Coleridge's little house at Nether Stovey, just below the Bristol Channel. I think that we can make two important observations about that visit. One is that Coleridge's affection for Lamb as a friend was undiminished, as shown by the little poem he then addressed to Lamb and which is known to us as "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison." It was in these lines that Coleridge used the epithet, "My gentle-hearted Charles," that stuck to Lamb ever after, much to his disgust. The second observation is that Lamb saw for himself that Coleridge was fascinated with the Wordsworths and had no further interest in continuing the poetic collaboration with Lamb and Lloyd.

Coleridge's shift in interest had come very quickly, and Lamb was justified in trying to recall Coleridge to his old friends. The second edition of Coleridge's poems, with important additions by Lamb and Lloyd, had just appeared. That little volume bore on its title page a Latin quotation purporting to be from a book with a pretentious title by one Groscollius, both being entirely fictitious. The quotation may be freely translated as "Double is the tie which binds us - friendship and a common love of poetry. Would that neither death nor the lapse of time could dissolve it." The tie of friendship did indeed survive until severed by death, despite a few misunderstandings, but Lamb, sitting by his senile father in their squalid London rooms, visiting his beloved insane sister in her hospital and toiling over his big ledgers, must have often pondered bitterly over his broken partnership in poetry and the uncertainties of his own future. He could hardly have foreseen that Coleridge's defection to Wordsworth would result in a little more than a year in the publication of "Lyrical Ballads" and an entirely new direction in English poetry, but it can be said to his great glory that he was among the few to recognize and acclaim the book when it did appear.

The final words on the events of 1797 are those of Lamb himself, quoted from his dedication to Coleridge in the first collected edition of Lamb's works published in 1818.

"It would be a kind of disloyalty to offer to anyone but yourself a volume containing the early pieces, which were first published among your poems,

and were fairly derivatives from you and them. My friend Lloyd and myself came into our first battle (authorship is a sort of warfare) under the cover of the greater Ajax. How this association, which shall always be a dear and proud recollection to me, came to be broken--who snapped the threefold cord,--whether yourself (but I know that was not the case) grew ashamed of your former companions,-- or whether (which is by such the more probable) some ungracious bookseller was author of the separation,--I cannot tell;-- but wanting the support of your friendly elm (I speak for myself), my vine has, since that time, put forth few or no fruits; the asp (if ever it had any) has become, in a manner, dried up and extinct; and you will find your old associate, in his second volume, dwindled into prose and criticism.

Am I right in assuming this as the cause? or is it that, as years come upon us, (except with some more healthy, happy spirits,) life itself loses much of its Poetry for us? We transcribe but what we read in the great volume of Nature; and, as the characters grow dim, we turn off, and look another way. You yourself write no Christabels, nor Ancient Mariners, now."

No one today can regret a course of events that gave us a great new school of lyric poetry and that turned Lamb to that prose in which he set new and enduring standards as an essayist

and critic. We can, however, as we ponder over the earlier work of Coleridge, with its Kiplingesque imagery, and the mocking and melancholy verse of Lamb, wonder what might have been. We gained an Ancient Mariner, a Christabel and a new approach to verse. May we not have lost a new Canterbury pilgrimage?

My next specimen is Mary Lamb's letter to Coleridge, undated but written about the middle of September 1806. It came to me from the John Gribbel collection. The printed text is adequate, but incorporates editorial punctuation which is not always too happy and rearranges a few words. I have selected this letter because it shows the complete reversal in nine years of the relative positions of Coleridge and the Lambs. Coleridge, now almost a waif, is clinging childlike to the Lambs. Mary, who was in a private madhouse in 1797, has become the fond but sometimes scolding mother of her difficult charges.

The letter as written reads as follows:

"DEAR COLERIDGE

I have read your silly very silly letter & between laughing & crying I hardly know how to answer it. You are too serious and too kind a vast deal, for we are not much used to either seriousness or kindness from our present friends and therefore your letter has put me into a greater hurry of spirits that (? than) your pleasant Sagar did last night for believe me your two odd faces amused me much more than the mighty transgression vexed me. If Charles had not smoked last night his virtue would have



not lasted longer than tonight, and now perhaps with a little of your good counsel he will refrain. But be not too serious if he smokes all the time you are with us--a few cheerful evenings spent with you serves to bear up our spirits many a long & weary year. And the very being led unto the crime by your Segar that you thought so harmless, will serve for our amusement many a dreary time when we can get no letter nor hear no tidings of you.

You must positively must write to Mrs. Coleridge this day, and you must write here that I may know you write or you must come and dictate a letter for me to write to her. I know all that you would say in defence of not writing & I allow in full force everything that (you) can say or think, but yet a letter from me or you shall go today.

I wanted to tell you but feared to begin the subject how well your children are how Pypas thrives and what a nice child Sara is and above all I hear such favourable accounts from Southey from Wordsworth and Hazlitt of Hartley.

I have got Wordsworth's letters out for you to look at but you shall not see them or talk of them without you like--Only come here as soon as you receive this, and I will not teize you about writing, but will manage a few lines Charles and I between us

but something like a letter shall go today.

Come directly

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB."

This letter is obviously a valuable bit of direct evidence on the thorny question of the relations between Coleridge, his wife and Sara Hutchinson. With great self denial, however, I leave the problem of Samuel and his two Sares to Dr. Griggs and Miss Coburn who really know something about it. What I do venture to say, paraphrasing the editor of Mrs. Coleridge's letters, is that the triton's aversion to the minnow is understandable even to me. It had begun to develop many years before. A youngster who, besides writing Christabel and Kubla Khan, has just published "The Rise of the Ancient Mariner" and, with Wordsworth's assistance, jostled English poetry out of the rut it had been pursuing for a century and a half, is certainly entitled to a little appreciation from his ever-loving spouse, especially when he is in foreign parts and a little homesick. Mrs. Coleridge's comment on that occasion was perhaps the shortest and yet the most complete in literary history: " \* the Lyrical Ballads are not liked at all by any."

My next specimen, which is postmarked Aug. 9, 1815, is one of the long missing original letters to Southey which Luce had to reprint from Talfourd. I am unable to give you its provenance back of my dealer. Collectors acquire with fanfare and glee. When they have to sell, they prefer anonymity. The letter as Lamb wrote it is as follows:

"DEAR SOUTHEY,

P.S. My kind love to Mrs. S.,  
Mrs. C. & to all. I hadn't  
room at the end.

Robinson is not on the circuit, as I erroneously stated in a letter to W. W. which travels with this, but is gone to Brussels, Ostend, Ghent, &c. But his friends the Colliers whom I consulted respecting your friend's fate, remember to have heard him say that Father Pardo had effected his escape (the cunning greasy rogue) and to the best of their belief is at present in Paris. To my thinking it is a small matter whether there be one fat friar more or less in the world. I have rather a taste for clerical executions, imbibed from early recollections of the fate of the excellent Dodd.

I hear Bonaparte has sued his habeas corpus, and the twelve judges are now sitting upon it at the Rolls.

Your boue-feu (bonfire) must be excellent of its kind. Poet Settle presided at the last great thing of the kind in London, when the Pope was burnt in fern. Do you provide any verses on this occasion?

Your fear for Hartleys intellectuals is just and rational. Could not the Chancellor be petitioned to remove him? His lordship took Mr. Betty from under the paternal wing. I think at least he should go through a course of matter-of-fact with some sober man after the mysteries. Could not he spend a week at Poole's before he goes back to Oxford? Tobin is dead. But there is a man in my office, a Mr. Hedges, who presses it away from

morning to night, & never gets beyond corporal & material verities. He'd get these crackbrain metaphysics out of the young gentlemen's head as soon as any one I know. When I can't sleep o' nights I imagine a dialogue with Mr. H. upon any given subject, and go prasing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer.

I am going to stand godfather. I don't like the business; I cannot muster up decorum for these occasions. I shall certainly disgrace the font. I was at Hazlitt's marriage, & had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Any thing awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral. Yet I can read about these ceremonies with pious & proper feelings. The realities of life only seem the mockeries. I fear I must get cured along with Bartley, if not too inveterate.

Don't you think Louis the Desirable is in a sort of quandary?

After all, Bonaparte is a fine fellow, as my barber says, and I should not mind standing bareheaded at his table to do him service in his fall. They should have given him Hampton Court or Kensington with a tether extending forty miles round London. Qu. Would not the people have ejected the Brunswicks some day in

his favour? Well, we shall see.

C. LAMB."

It will be noted that Talfourd's transcription was an accurate one by the editorial standards of his time. He allowed himself too much latitude, however, in changing the paragraphing and inserting new punctuation. Lamb spelled Bonaparte's name quite correctly. The transcription got it "E-i-o-n-a-p-a-r-t-e," possibly by a slip of the pen. It also seems to me that the suppression of the pleasant little postscript shows a heavy hand.

If the letter seems somewhat cynical about young Hartley Coleridge, I beg you to remember that Southey had made himself responsible for the boy's education. Both Southey and Lamb feared the influence of the father on the boy and, in the event, they were justified. Lamb at a later date said to H. C. Robinson that Coleridge should not have had a wife and children but "a sort of diocesan care of the world - no parish duty." Coleridge seemed in August 1815 to be at about the bottom of his fortunes, still planning great works that come to nothing and pestering his friends for loans. In fact, however, he was about to make a turn for the better. The very day after the letter was written the first installment of the *Biographia Literaria* was sent off to the printer.

The reference to Napoleon, one of several in the same vein in Lamb's letters, shows, I think, the influence of Hazlitt on Lamb. Hazlitt was a difficult friend, even for Lamb, but there was always some kindness between them. It seems to me that Lamb's

refusal to follow Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge into narrow orthodoxy may be traceable to some extent to the influence of the younger essayist. No Brownings, Byrons or Emersons ever rose up to smite Lamb as a turncoat.

An old saying, once honored in academic circles, was to the effect that no speech was a really bad one if it included a quotation from Aristotle. It is a conviction of mine that any talk about Lamb can be saved by some discussion of the Elia essays. My next specimen, therefore, is a copy of Elia presented by Lamb to Allan Cunningham, the burly and jovial Scot who was one of the group assembled by the editors of the London Magazine and who became a crony of Lamb's later days. Bound up with the little volume are Lamb's pleasant inscription to Cunningham, a short undated letter (or "notelet" as Lamb would have called it) from Lamb to Cunningham and a portion of a letter from Hessey to Cunningham. The little book passed on Allan Cunningham's death to his son, Colonel Cunningham, who built up a fine library, including the beloved folio Beaumont and Fletcher which Lamb described so feelingly in "Old China." The Beaumont and Fletcher went to the British Museum at Colonel Cunningham's death, but the Elia came to America and eventually to me by way of the Werth collection. Lucas did not see the book himself, but relied upon Mrs. Anderson's notes.

Lamb's little letter is undated. It is an invitation to dine with other contributors to the London Magazine at Lamb's home. It ends "Yours, with perfect sympathy." The letter from Hessey is only a fragment but bears a notation in another hand reading Fleet

Street, April 15, 1822. It consists largely of a quotation from a letter of Lamb to Hessey, the original of which is now in the Huntington Library. Lucas printed the Lamb letter, apparently from a transcript made by Mrs. Anderson and dated it April 15, 1822. Lamb occasionally acted as a publisher's reader for Taylor and Hessey, and the quotation refers to Cunningham's poetic drama "Sir Marmaduke Maxwell," which was published later in the same year. Lamb said:

"Pray make my acknowledgments to Mr. Cunningham. Maxwell is full of all good things, good poetry, good nature, good feelings. Assure the author I have more than an imperfect sympathy with it. The incidents are nevertheless too easy to be foreseen etc. for acting."

Lucas thinks that Lamb's letter to Cunningham was written in May 1821 because of its similarity in wording to an invitation to Procter written about May 10, 1821. It seems to me much more likely that it was written about the same date as the Hessey letter. Both letters show that the essay "Imperfect Sympathies" was a standing source of humor, and that essay was not published until August 1821. Lucas did not overlook the point, but says that the question had very likely been discussed in advance between Lamb and his friends. It is true, of course, that Lamb kept jokes alive for years, polishing and reusing them over and over again. My difficulty in this case is that Cunningham was at best a very new friend in May 1821; and Lamb was somewhat formal with new friends. It also seems to me that Lamb's little letter, a mere invitation to dinner,

would hardly have been preserved so carefully had it not been associated in some way with that of Hessey, which was of great importance to the hopeful author. I like to think that Lucas would have agreed if he could have seen the volume.

This little attempt at erudition serves to excuse some quotations from the essays which illustrate Lamb's curious combination of gentle humor and mockery. He has been called an English Montaigne, but he might also be called a modern Swift. The following extract from "Imperfect Sympathies" will illustrate his sterner mood:

"I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me--and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. There is something more plain and ingenious in their mode of proceeding. We know one another at first sight."

\* \* \* "They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development."

\* \* \* "You cannot make excursions with him--for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise, or understand middle actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have



the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. 'A healthy book!'--said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Bunce,-- 'Did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book.' Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonarde da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr. \* \* \* \* After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he liked MY BEAUTY (a foolish name it goes by among my friends)--when he very gravely assured me, that 'he had considerable respect for my character and talents' (so he was pleased to say), 'but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions.' The misconception staggered me, but did not seem much to disconcert him."

No one who is familiar with Lamb's life and writings can take too seriously Lamb's strictures on Jews, Scots and Quakers. He always said that he had a Jewish cast of features and knew and admired some Jews. He was also one of the first Englishmen to

recognize and appreciate Burns and he had other close Scotch friends. He may almost be said to be the first important critic to acclaim Woolman. Cunningham and Barton knew that the essay was a jest and both of them loved and admired Lamb as long as they lived. It remains true, however, that the essay is somewhat sharper in tone than those dealing with close friends. Compare it for instance with the essays dealing with Coleridge, the younger John Lamb, the Burneys, Dyer, Morris, White and Salt. Perhaps the neatest illustration is the long-standing joke at the expense of Coleridge which is developed so fully in "The Two Races of Men."

Possibly Lamb's oldest and most irritating joke was his contention that Coleridge was a despoiler of his friends' libraries. Coleridge protested and even called on Robinson and De Quincey to vouch for him. It was all in vain. Whenever Lamb was tipsy, which Coleridge said was all too often, the old stories were repeated. It is told with trimmings in the "Two Races" essay, but note that the harsh words are directed at Camberbatch, the alias of the young Coleridge, while the mature S.T.C. is said to return books even before the appointed times. Here is Camberbatch -

"To one like Elias, whose treasures are rather cased in leather covers than closed in iron coffers, there is a class of alienators more formidable than that which I have touched upon; I mean your borrowers of books--these mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd

volumes. There is Comberbatch, matchless in his depre-  
dations!"

"The slight vacuum in the left-hand case--two  
shelves from the ceiling--scarcely distinguishable but  
by the quick eye of a loser--was whilom the com-  
modious resting-place of Brown on Urn Burial. C. will hardly  
allege that he knows more about that treatise than I  
do, who introduced it to him, and was indeed the first  
(of the moderns) to discover its beauties--but so have  
I known a foolish lover to praise his mistress in the  
presence of a rival more qualified to carry her off  
than himself.--Just below, Dodsley's dramas went their  
fourth volume, where Vittoria Corombona is! The re-  
mainder nine are as distasteful as Friar's refuse sons,  
when the Fates harrowed Hector. Here stood the Anatomy  
of Melancholy, in sober state.--There loitered the Com-  
plete Angler; quiet as in life, by some stream side.--  
In yonder nook, John Bun-  
cle, a widower-volume, with  
'eyes closed,' mourns his ravished mate.

One justice I must do my friend, that if he some-  
times, like the sea, sweeps away a treasure, at another  
time, sea-like, he throws up as rich an equivalent to  
match it. I have a small under-collection of this  
nature (my friend's gatherings in his various calls),  
picked up, he has forgotten at what odd places, and  
deposited with as little memory as mine. I take in

these orphans, the twice-deserted. These proselytes of the gate are welcome as the true Hebrews. There they stand in conjunction; natives, and naturalized. The latter seem as little disposed to inquire out their true lineage as I am.--I charge no warehouse-room for these deadends, nor shall ever put myself to the ungentlemanly trouble of advertising a sale of them to pay expenses."

Here now is the punctual enricher, S.T.C. -

"Reader, if haply thou art blessed with a moderate collection, be shy of showing it; or if thy heart overfloweth to lend them, lend thy books; but let it be to such a one as S. T. C.--he will return them (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury; enriched with annotations, tripling their value. I have had experience. Many are these precious MSS. of his--(in matter oftentimes, and almost in quantity not unfrequently, vying with the originals)--in so very clerkly hand--legible in my Daniel; in old Burton; in Sir Thomas Browne; and those abstruser cogitations of the Greville, now, alas! wandering in Pagan lands.--I counsel thee, shut not thy heart, nor thy library, against S. T. C."

I have used Lamb's words as the obituary to the poetic collaboration between himself, Coleridge and young Charles Lloyd. It should be remembered, however, that the Groscollian motto proclaimed a double tie, friendship and a common love of poetry. And

the strand of friendship held to the end, precariously as to  
Lloyd but firmly as between Coleridge and Lamb. In 1834, when  
Coleridge was on his deathbed, he took a copy of his poetical  
works and wrote the following words in the margin against "This  
Line-Free Bower My Prison": "Ch. and Mary Lamb - dear to my heart,  
yea, as it were, my heart. S. T. C. Aet 63, 1834. 1797-1834 =  
37 years."