

The women sat down by his side,  
And talk'd as 'twere by stealth.

285

"The Sun peeps thro' the close thick leaves,

"See, dearest Ellen! see!

"'Tis in the leaves, a little Sun,

"No bigger than your ee;

"A tiny Sun, and it has got

"A perfect glory too:

"Ten thousand threads and hairs of light,

"Make up a glory, gay and bright,

"Round that small orb, so blue."

290

And then they argued of those rays,

What colour they might be:

Says this, "they're mostly green," says that,

"They're amber-like to me."

295

So they sat chatting, while bad thoughts,

Were troubling Edward's rest;

But soon they heard his hard quick pants,

And the thumping in his breast.

300

"A Mother, too!" these self-same words

Did Edward mutter plain;

His face was drawn back on itself,

With horror and huge pain.

305

Both groan'd at once, for both knew well

What thoughts were in his mind;

When he wak'd up, and star'd like one

That hath been just struck blind.

310

He sat upright; and ere the dream

Had had time to depart,

"O God, forgive me! (he exclaim'd)

"I have torn out her heart."

290-4. Reference's to C's interest given in AR (CC) 556-7 and at 357 in the phenomenon of the "glory" are *Consistency to an Ideal Object* 306c.

Then Ellen shriek'd, and forthwith burst

Into ungentle laughter;

And Mary shiver'd, where she sat,

And never she smil'd after.

315

*Carmen reliquum in futurum tempus relegatum. To-morrow! and To-morrow and To-morrow!*—

## 156. THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON

[Jul 1797]

The poem centres on an episode in mid-Jul 1797, during the week when CL and ML visited Stowey, where WW and DW were also staying. The Wordsworths had arrived from Racedown on 2 Jul; C's foot was accidentally scalded by Mrs C on 4 Jul; the Lambs were there between 7 and 14 Jul; WW signed the lease at Alfoxden on 14 Jul, and he and DW settled there the same day. It is not certain that C slowed the poem to CL during his visit: when CL wrote afterwards from London, his letter contains references to and a request for a copy of WW's *Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree* (WPPW 1 92-4), which he recalled with affection and had come to associate with the mood of his stay, but no references to C's poem (LL—M—1 117-18).

The literary background lies in a number of C's earlier poems, such as 108 *Composed while Climbing Brockley Coomb* and 138 *To Charles Lloyd, on his Proposing to Domesticate with the Author*. 129 *Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement* appears to be deliberately recalled, and C also had in mind a poem influenced by it, WW's *Yew-tree*, to which the present poem is in some sense an answer (as Newlyn 18-24 explains). CL's enthusiasm for WW's poem might have prompted C to address the present composition to him in 1800, and might explain CL's feeling that this was somehow a satire on him. As a poem silently addressed to WW, it is profoundly serious; the form of a public address to CL concedes an element of exclamatory exaggeration.

MS versions of the poem are contained in letters to RS and Charles Lloyd, and it was quoted in part in a letter to John Thelwall, who came to Stowey as the

318\*. First introduced at the proof corroborated from other sources, e.g. stage of SL. Tr "The rest of the poem has been put off to a later time." The English is from *Macbeth* v 19. title. C's predilection for TP's real existence. bower—or "Jasmine Harbour"—is

other four guests left. Thelwall recorded his visit in *Lines*, *Written at Bridgewater, in Somersetshire, on the 27th of July, 1797* in phrases which overlap with C's (cf *Poems*, *Written Chiefly in Retirement*—Hereford 1801—126–32, and 39–44<sup>BC</sup> below); and Thelwall's sonnet celebrating his time in Newgate, which begins "Within the dungeon's noxious gloom", can be considered another of C's backgrounds. In these mss and other poems the web of personal allusion, shared experience, and private hopes is the substance of what is communicated. Philosophical implications were latent—C noted for RS, apropos of line 40, "You remember, I am a *Berkleian*"<sup>2</sup>—but they were not developed. Political meanings likewise remained implicit.

The poem was not published till 1800, and then pseudonymously in RS's *Annual Anthology* II, in a revised form. Apart from straightforward adjustments and improvements—in particular, lines 3–5 were added and lines 9–27 expanded from what were originally four lines—C changed the emphasis of the poem by addressing it specifically to CL. CL's name was introduced into the title, and into lines 69 and 76, which had originally been addressed to "you, my Sister & my Friends" (i.e. to Mrs C, in panisocratic terms, and DW, WW, CL, ML, and TP; C had no living sister of his own). The poem was collected in SL in its new form, although C tinkered further with lines 39–44, whose orthodoxy continued to seem problematic. The version given here is that of SL, corrected with reference to the Errata.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

In the June of 1797, some long-expected Friends paid a visit to the Author's Cottage; and on the morning of their arrival, he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One Evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the Garden-Bower.

15

**advertisement.** In the HEHL copy of PW (1834) C wrote alongside: "Ch. and Mary Lamb—dear to my heart, yea, as it were, my heart, S.T.C. art. 63, 1834. 1797–1834=37 years!" It should be recalled that in London, less than a year before the poem was written (in Sept 1796), ML had stabbed her mother to death and wounded her father. The recollection in lines 28–32 of Milton's description of Satan's release from hell into paradise (PL IX 445–7 etc) is deliberate, and does not exclude humour.

When CL read the first printed ver-

sion of the poem, he protested against the introduction of his name into the title ("Addressed to CHARLES LAMB, of the India-House, London"), and the repetition of the epithet "gentle-hearted" in lines 28, 69, and 76 (LL—M—1 217–18). C's emphasis might have been encouraged by a wish to distinguish CL from the other and less gentle Charles to whom he had addressed poems, Charles Lloyd. In his next letter CL—who continued to be a friend to both men—called the poem "your *Satire* upon me" (LL—M—1 224; cf Allsop 1 219).

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,  
This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison! I have lost  
Beauties and Feelings, such as would have been  
Most sweet to my remembrance, even when age  
Had dimmed my mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,  
Friends, whom I never more may meet again,  
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,  
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,  
To that still roaring dell, of which I told:  
The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,  
And only speckled by the mid-day Sun;  
Where its slim trunk the Ash from rock to rock  
Flings arching like a Bridge;—that branchless Ash,  
Unsun'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves  
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,  
Fann'd by the water-fall! and there my friends  
Behold the dark green file of long \*Lank Weeds,

10

15

\* *Of long lank Weeds.* The *Asplenium Scolopendrium*, called in some counties the Adder's Tongue, in others the Hart's Tongue; but Withering gives the Adder's Tongue as the trivial name of the *Ophioglossum* only.

1. The echo of Henry Vaughan's lines beginning "They are all gone into the world of light! And I alone sit lingering here" (first pub in *Silex Scintillans*—1655) is striking but appears to be accidental.

9–20. The printed texts here enlarge on the ms description of Holford Glen, which had, during the week of the Wordsworths' stay at Stowey, become one of their favourite haunts (WL—E rev—189; DW/1 3–16; Poole 1 233; WPW IV 411–12). It is inside the boundaries of Alfoxden, and not to be confused with St Peter's Well at Upper Stowey. Other places visited on the walk are uncertain, although it is likely that Danesborough was one of the two hilltops.

10. o'erwooded] A Coleridgean coinage; cf 117 *Lines to Joseph Collie* 20.

17fn. Withering *An Arrangement of*

*British Plants* III 761, 766 is of course correct. Hart's tongue (*Scolopendrium vulgare*) grows to heights of a metre in such locations, and is well described as "plummy" or "branchy" (as in C's note in two of the mss), whereas adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) has an upper limit of some 15 cm and is quite differently shaped. DW also confused the two names when she described Holford Glen (DW/1 8), as C had already done in 154 *Melancholy*. These early references suggest that the fern was among the first near-private emblems shared by C and the Wordsworths.

When C came to acquire the edition of Withering he cites here, he associated it with SH (see CW 1 863 and n; C&SH 27n). He was still pursuing the question of nomenclature at the proof stage of SL: in John Evans's copy now at Yale (In C678 817sa p 190) he cites

That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)  
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge  
Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my Friends emerge  
Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again  
The many-steeped track magnificent  
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,  
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose Sails light up  
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles  
Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on  
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,  
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined  
And hunger'd 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! Ah! slowly sink  
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!  
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb  
Ye purple heath-flowers! richer burn, ye clouds!  
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!  
And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my Friend  
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,  
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round  
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem  
Less gross than bodily: and of such hues

James Donn *Hortus Cantabrigiensis*;

or *A Catalogue of Plants, Indigenous and Foreign, Cultivated in the Walks and Garden, Cambridge* (Cambridge 1796).

39–44. C quotes an earlier version of these lines in a letter to John Thelwall of 14 Oct 1797, glossing them as follows: "My mind feels as if it ached to behold & know something great—something *one & indivisible*—and it is only in the faith of that rocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns give me the sense of sublimity or majesty!—But in this faith *all things counterfeit infinity!*—" (CL I 349–

156. *This Lime-tree Bower my Prison* 353

As veil the Almighty Spirit, when he makes  
Spirits perceive his presence. 43

A delight

Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad  
As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,  
This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd  
Much that has sooth'd me. Pale beneath the blaze  
Hung the transparent foliage; and I watch'd  
Some broad and sunny leaf, and lov'd to see  
The shadow of the leaf and stem above  
Dappling its sunshine! And that Walnut-tree  
Was richly ting'd, and a deep radiance lay  
Full on the ancient Ivy, which usurps  
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass  
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue  
Through the late twilight: and though now the Bat  
Wheels silent by, and not a Swallow twitters,  
Yet still the solitary humble Bee  
Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know  
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure,  
No Plot so narrow, be but Nature there,  
No waste so vacant, but may well employ  
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart  
Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes  
'Tis well to be bereft of promised good,  
That we may lift the Soul, and contemplate  
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.  
My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last Rook  
Beat its straight path along the dusky air  
Homewards, I blest it! deeming, its black wing  
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)  
Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory,  
While thou stood'st gazing: or when all was still,

50).

Thelwall had spent the week following the event described in the poem at Stowey, and had gone on the very same walk on almost the same day that C that sent the first extant version to RS (*Poole* I 232–3), which might bear on C's explanation. But C's tinkering with subsequentms and printed versions manifest his unease at the pantheistic implications of the lines.

41\*. Line 42 is omitted here, in accordance with the *SL Errata* (see vol II).

69–75. C's lines echo passages extant in a version of the poem sent from RS's recently published *Poems* to RS, from whom C was still partly (2nd ed Bristol 1797) 52, 79; and it should be recalled again that the first

\*Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm  
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom  
No Sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

75

157. SONNET: TO WILLIAM LINLEY, ESQ.,  
WHILE HE SANG A SONG TO  
PURCELL'S MUSIC

[Sept 1797]

The poem was written on the last day of C's visit to William Bowles, who lived at Donhead St Mary, near Shaftesbury, Dorset. There he met Linley, the brother of the first Mrs R. B. Sheridan, who had died in 1792. (Sheridan's second wife, whom he married in 1795, was sister to C's Captain Ogle, of the Light Dragoons.) Linley shared in the management of DL with Sheridan in the 1790s, and corresponded with Sheridan during the ensuing months about *Remorse*.

Linley (1771–1835) was a composer and author of some note in his time, and had a reputation in his youth as a charming singer. A letter which sets the tone of his acquaintance with Bowles is included in Garland Greever *A Wiltshire Parson and his Friends* (Boston & New York 1926) 154–5. A contemporary

\* *Flew creaking*. Some months after I had written this line, it gave me pleasure to observe that Bartram had observed the same circumstance of the Savannah Crane. "When these Birds move their wings in flight, their strokes are slow, moderate and regular, and even when at a considerable distance or high above us, we plainly hear the quill-feathers; their shafts and webs upon one another creek as the joints or working of a vessel in a tempestuous sea."

75fn. Verbatim from William Bartram *Travels through North & South Carolina* . . . (Philadelphia 1791) 221=(2nd London ed 1794) 219, with some slight difference in punctuation. C's line 70 echoes Bartram's description of the savannah cranes, "beating[ ] the dense air" (Philadelphia ed p 146=2nd London ed p 144). C appears to have borrowed his copy of Bartram from J. W. Tobin in Bristol some time during 1797 (CM—CC—

1 226; cf 89–90n), and he drew on it in Nov and later for 160 *The Wanderings of Cain* and 161 *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The note also deflects attention from the discordant rook, which, as a disharmonious element in nature's symbolic chorus, almost constitutes a topos in 18th-century poetry (Thomson *Spring* 610–12; Cowper *The Task* 1 200–9; etc).

note in a copy of *SL* identifies the song as "The frost piece in King Arthur"—from act III of Purcell's opera to a libretto by Dryden, first performed in 1691. The text given here follows the slightly improved printed version of 1800, giving Linley's name in the title and line 3, where the original has initials only. The sonnet was included in subsequent collections with very little change.

While my young cheek retains its healthful hues  
And I have many friends who hold me dear,  
Linley! methinks, I would not often hear  
Such melodies as thine, lest I should lose  
All memory of the wrongs and sore distress,  
For which my miserable brethren weep!  
But should uncomf'orted misfortunes steep  
My daily bread in tears and bitterness;  
And if at Death's dread moment I should lie  
With no beloved face by my bed-side  
To fix the last glance of my closing eye,  
O God! such strains breath'd by my angel guide  
Would make me pass the cup of anguish by,  
Mix with the blest, nor know that I had died!

10

5

158. SONNETS ATTEMPTED IN THE  
MANNER OF "CONTEMPORARY WRITERS"

[Aug–Nov 1797]

The sonnets were first published together in the *Monthly Magazine*, each over the signature "NEHEMIAH HIGGINBOTTOM" [also HIGGINBOTHAM]. This is the version given here. When C included them in *BL*, he accentuated the element of ridicule by several slight changes. He never included them in his own collections of poetry.

C described the sonnets to Joseph Cottle, before their first appearance, as follows: "I sent three mock Sonnets in ridicule of my own, & Charles Lloyd's, and Lamb's, &c &c—in ridicule of that affectation of unaffectedness, of jumping & misplaced accent on common-place epithets, flat lines forced into poetry by italics (signifying how well & *mouthis[hly]* the Author would read them) puny pathos &c &c—the instances are almost all taken from mine & Lloyd's poems—I signed them Nehemiah Higginbottom. I think they may do good to our young Bards—" (CL 1 357–8; [c 20 Nov 1797]). None the less, the poems