

## Wordsworth's reading 1800-1815

### 1. A., *Dr. Adam Smith, European Magazine* 20 (Aug. 1791) 133-6

*Suggested date of reading:* by 7 June 1802

*References:* EY 354-5; *Notebooks* i 775

In his letter to John Wilson of 7 June 1802, W mentioned 'Adam Smith, who, we [are] told, could not endure the Ballad of Clym of the Clough, because the [au]thor had not written like a gentleman' (EY 354-5). He had presumably read A.'s *Dr. Adam Smith* in the *European Magazine* for Aug. 1791:

I pled as well as I could for Allan Ramsay, because I regarded him as the single unaffected Poet whom we have had since Buchanan - *Proximus huic longo sed proximus intervallo*.

He answered, 'It is the duty of a poet to write like a gentleman. I dislike that homely style which some think fit to call the language of nature and simplicity, and so forth. In Percy's *Reliques* too, a few tolerable pieces are buried under a heap of rubbish. You have read perhaps Adam Bell Clym of the Cleugh, and William of Cloudelelie?' I answered, Yes. 'Well then,' said he, 'do you think that was worth printing?' He reflected with some harshness on Dr. Goldsmith; and repeated a variety of anecdotes to support his censure. (*European Magazine* 20 [1791] 135)

W may have been referred to A.'s article by C, who mentions this exchange in a notebook entry of Aug. 1800: 'Duty of a Poet to write like a Gentleman. Ad. Smith Europ. Mag. Aug. 1791. 135' (*Notebooks* i 775). The authors of *Lyrical Ballads* would have been as antipathetic to Smith's critical views as they were to *The Wealth of Nations* (see note 359[i]).

### 2. Adam, Thomas, *Private Thoughts on Religion* (2nd edn, York, 1795)

*Suggested date of reading:* 1810-30

*References:* CC *Marginalia* i 9; Shaver 313

This book is now in the British Library. It belonged originally to John James Perceval, 3rd Earl of Egmont, who gave it to Thomas Poole on 15 June 1804. It was in C's possession by June 1807, when he began writing marginalia in it. From 1810-30 it was apparently in W's possession.

### 3. Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator*

*Suggested date of reading:* by 10 Nov. 1806

*References:* MY i 93

On 10 Nov. 1806 W wrote to Beaumont on the subject of winter gardens: 'By the bye, there is a pleasing paper in the *Spectator* (in the 7th Vol., No 477) upon this subject, the whole is well worth reading, particularly that part which relates to the Winter Garden. He mentions Hollies and Horn-beam as Plants which his Place is full of' (MY i 93). This letter was written from Coleorton, and W is so specific in his reference he must have had a copy before him

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as he wrote. The reference is, incidentally, accurate: Addison's paper on winter gardens appears in *The Spectator* (8 vols., 1744), vii 21-5 (no. 477 for 6 Sept. 1712). W refers again to this article in a letter of Dec. 1806 to Lady Beaumont (*MY* i 112), and DW mentions it in a letter of 16 Feb. 1807 (*MY* i 138).

*The Spectator* was prominent in C's thoughts as he prepared *The Friend*. In Feb.-March 1809 he was reading the copy retained by Charles Lloyd at Old Brathay (*MY* i 292), and in Jan. 1810 W and C compared Addison's journal with *The Friend* (Griggs iii 276). C ruminates on it in detail in several letters written at that time (Griggs iii 279, 281). A 1744 edn of *The Spectator* was retained at Rydal Mount (Shaver 4).

**4. Aikin, Lucy, 'Lucy Aikins poems'**

*Suggested date of reading:* c. Feb. 1802

*References:* *Grasmere Journals* 181

The jotted reference to 'Lucy Aikins poems' in DW's journal dates from c. Feb. 1802. Perhaps the Wordsworths had seen her recently published first book - an anthology, *Poetry for Children* (1801) (Jackson 71) - though it is possible that DW refers in fact to Aikin's periodical poetry. I have managed to track down the following periodical poems by her, all published in the *Monthly Magazine* under the initials L.A.: *To the Memory of Miss K.* (5 [Feb. 1798] 123); *On Miss Linwood's admirable Pictures in Needle-work* (5 [March 1798] 287); *Evening* (8 [Oct. 1799] 726); *Sonnet to Fortune, from Metastasio* (8 [Dec. 1799] 890); *On seeing the sun shine in at my window for the first time this year* (9 [May 1800] 364).

W apparently had an unhappy meeting with Lucy Aikin and her family on 14 May 1815 (*Supp.* 72-3). In 1809 Southey described her critiques on poetry in the *Annual Review* as 'absolutely nauseating' (Curry i 506).

**5. Alfieri, Vittorio, Count, *The Tragedies of Vittorio Alfieri*, tr. Charles Lloyd (3 vols., 1815)**

*Suggested date of reading:* by 18 Feb. 1815

*References:* *MY* ii 201; Shaver 6

W's letter to CW of 26 Nov. 1814 mentioned Lloyd's translation as 'printed', with the suggestion that he had seen the proofs, if not a finished copy (*MY* ii 171 and n4). On 18 Feb. 1815 DW reported to SH that 'The publishing of Alfieri has done him [i.e. Lloyd] no good; and I fear that it will not sell' (*MY* ii 201). The mention of Alfieri in W's letter to R. P. Gillies of 14 Feb. 1815 would support the argument that he was at that time reading Lloyd's translation (*MY* ii 197). On 16 March DW encouraged Catherine Clarkson to buy a copy (*MY* ii 214). It was reviewed by Southey in the *Quarterly* for Jan. 1816.

**6. Allestree, Richard, *The Ladies Calling* [Oxford, 1673]**

*Suggested date of reading:* by May 1812

*References:* *Love Letters* 117; Wing A1141-8

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On 2 May 1812 MW wrote to her husband from Hindwell: 'I have read the "Ladies calling" one of thy books - which pleased me much - it is such a book as Mrs Luff would say would do *her a deal of good*' (*Love Letters* 117; her italics). W must by that date have acquired a copy of Allestree's volume; it is not listed by Shaver.

**7. Amory, Thomas, *The Life of John Buncl* [2 vols., 1756-66]**

*Suggested date of reading:* by 14 Aug. 1811

*References:* MY i 503

On 14 Aug. 1811, DW told Catherine Clarkson that 'I have read nothing since I wrote to you except bits here and there and the Novel of John Bunkle' (MY i 503). Her previous extant letter to Clarkson dates from 16 June, so that her reading of Amory's novel must have taken place between then and 14 Aug. *John Buncl* can be presumed to have been in the Wordsworths' possession, and probably known to W, by 14 Aug. 1811. This title was a favourite of Lamb's,<sup>1</sup> who introduced it to C (CC *Marginalia* i 30; Whalley BC 1).

**8. *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Earl of Abergavenny, East-Indiaman* (1805)**

*Suggested date of reading:* shortly after mid-March 1805

*References:* EY 560-1, 565

There were two pamphlets concerning the sinking of the *Earl of Abergavenny* under JW's captaincy: the second had a preface dated 19 Feb., signed with the initials of William Dalmeida of the East India House. It was from this that Lamb copied details of the inquiry into the sinking in a letter to W of 4 March (Marrs ii 157-60). As a result, DW told Jane Marshall about it and asked her 'to send for it' on 15 and 17 March (EY 561); similarly, W asked James Losh to 'procure the pamphlet' in a letter of 16 March (EY 565). It is not clear whether the Wordsworths ever saw the pamphlet - they would no doubt have found it painful reading - but it is likely.

**9. Anderson, Robert, *The Works of the British Poets. With Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, by Robert Anderson* (13 vols., London and Edinburgh, 1792-5)**

*Suggested date of reading:* end of Jan. 1800 onwards

*References:* Cornell *Poems 1807-20* 527; Reed ii 202-3n; Shaver 8-9; CC *Marginalia* i 37-87

W used two sets of Anderson: that belonging to JW, now at the Wordsworth Library (Whalley's Copy C),<sup>2</sup> and that belonging to C, now at the Folger Shakespeare Library (Whalley's Copy A).<sup>3</sup> His first regular readings of Anderson at DC date from late Jan. 1800, when JW arrived at DC, bringing Copy C with him. C moved into Greta Hall in July 1800,

<sup>1</sup> See his letter to C of 24 June 1797 (Marrs i 112-13). Lamb's copy is now at the Rosenbach Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> See CC *Marginalia* i 37, 76.

<sup>3</sup> See CC *Marginalia* i 39-41.

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from which point Copy A would also have been at W's disposal;<sup>1</sup> it contains a number of notes by W associated with his Chaucer translations (CC *Marginalia* i 40). It was in this knowledge that, on leaving DC in Sept., JW took most, but not all, of Copy C with him, leaving W to borrow the absent volumes from Greta Hall. JW sent the rest of his set to DC in Nov. 1802; it contains notes by both C and W. For a detailed account of this see Reed ii 202-3n. W probably had occasional access to Copy A during his residence in Somerset, 1797-8, when C would have kept it on his shelves at Nether Stowey (see WR 4-5).

The Latin epigraph on the title-page of both volumes of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) was drawn from John Selden's foreword to Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbia*n as reprinted in Anderson (see Cornell *Lyrical Ballads* 377).

**10. Anderson, Robert, of Carlisle, *Ballads in the Cumberland Dialect* (Carlisle, 1805)**

*Suggested date of reading:* by May 1814

*References:* PW v 441; Shaver 71

It appears that Anderson's *Ballads* was the source for a MS draft for *The Excursion* Book V composed by May 1814 (Reed ii 24, 684); see PW v 441. It is likely that W had seen Anderson's volume well before 1814.

**11. *Annual Anthology* (Bristol, 1800)**

*Suggested date of reading:* 31 July 1800 and thereafter

*References:* *Grasmere Journals* 15; Reed ii 76; Shaver 9

DW's journal records that in the afternoon of 31 July 1800 'Coleridge came very hot, he brought the 2nd volume of the Anthology'. It contained, among other things, the first printed text of *This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison*; see WR 31. For contents and contributors see Kenneth Curry, 'The Contributors to *The Annual Anthology*', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 42 (1948) 50-65.

**12. *Annual Register***

(i)

*Suggested date of reading:* by 6 Nov. 1810

*References:* MY i 444 and n1

On 6 Nov. 1810 DW wrote to Robinson: 'Can you procure any Spanish, Portuguese or French papers for Mr Southey? He writes the historical part of the *Edinburgh Annual Register* and they would be of great use to him' (MY i 444). Robinson replied that he hoped to open 'one or two important channels' to Southey (*Robinson* i 63). Southey doubtless gave the Wordsworths copies of the *Register* in which his work appeared, 1809-13.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that C had left one volume of Copy A in London. Lamb took it to Longman on 6 Aug. 1800, who in turn sent it to Keswick (Marrs i 217).

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**(ii) *Annual Register* (1761) 19-22**

*Suggested date of reading:* between Sept. 1811 and Nov. 1812

*References:* *Prose Works* ii 438; *PW* iii 508-22

W's information on Robert Walker, referred to in the *Unpublished Tour* (*Prose Works* ii 299-300), and mentioned at greater length in a note to *The River Duddon* (*PW* iii 508-22), came from the *Annual Register for 1760* (1761), as noted by Owen and Smyser, *Prose Works* ii 438. The materials relating to Walker consist of four letters, prefaced as follows:

The following Letters being authentic deserve to be inserted, as a remarkable instance of the happy effect of indefatigable and chearful industry. But though they do honour to the very excellent man who is the subject of them, they reflect a heavy disgrace on that part of our national establishment, which makes so wretched and scandalous a provision for great numbers of the most learned and blameless body of ecclesiastics in the world, by which means that industry must be often exerted to procure a scanty livelihood, which ought solely to be employed in their sacred studies, and the work of their ministry.

(p. 19)

The *Unpublished Tour* was composed between Sept. 1811 and Nov. 1812.

**13. Anon. (attributed to Chaucer)**

**(i) *The Floure and the Leafe* (Anderson)**

*Suggested date of reading:* Dec. 1805-Jan. 1806

*References:* *Cornell Poems 1800-7* 405

W quotes this poem in a note to *Character of the Happy Warrior* (*Cornell Poems 1800-7* 405), composed Dec. 1805-Jan. 1806; he mentions it again in a letter to Lady Beaumont of Dec. 1806 (*MY* i 117). Although, as Curtis points out, 'Modern scholarship disproves attribution of this poem to Chaucer', it was published as his in Urry, the 1782 Bell (see note 38), Anderson, and Chalmers. It is likely that W read it in Anderson, *British Poets* i 532-7. Skeat argues that both this poem and *The Assemble of Ladies* are by the same author - a woman writing in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

**(ii) *The Assemble of Ladies* (Anderson)**

*Suggested date of reading:* by Dec. 1806

*References:* *MY* i 117-18

W mentions this poem in a letter to Lady Beaumont of Dec. 1806; evidently he had read it before that date. It was published as Chaucer's in Urry, the 1782 Bell (see note 38), and Anderson. In 1810 Chalmers published it under the heading of 'Poems Imputed to Chaucer'. I suspect that W read it in Anderson, *British Poets* i 455-61.

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of the arguments concerning the attribution of both works see Eleanor Prescott Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* (1933), pp. 423-4, 408-9.

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**14. *An unfortunate Mother to her infant at her Breast***

*Suggested date of reading:* probably 1801

*References:* Reed ii 705; Moorman *N&Q* 402

Reed judges that C copied this poem into the Wordsworth Commonplace Book (DC MS 26, 30r-30v) during early 1804, before 25 March.

**15. Arbuthnot, John, *Miscellaneous Works* (2 vols., 2nd edn, Glasgow, 1751)**

*Suggested date of reading:* by 27 Sept. 1807

*References:* MY i 166

Advising Walter Scott on his edn of Dryden, W told him that Arbuthnot had commented on *MacFlecknoe* 'in an Essay . . . printed in the Glasgow edition of his works, and entitled "Upon the art of selling Bargains"' (MY i 166). The 2nd edn of Arbuthnot's *Miscellaneous Works* was later at Rydal Mount (Shaver 11), and may have been acquired by 27 Sept. 1807.

**16. Ariosto**

**(i) *Orlando Furioso***

*Suggested date of reading:* 7-c. 19 Nov. 1802

*References:* Reed ii 201

W translated Ariosto at a rate of nearly 100 lines a day during this time, and covered, apparently, 'two Books' (LY iv 8). What little survives of those efforts appears in Cornell *Poems 1800-7* 594-7. It is likely that he was working from the copy of Ariosto's *Opere in versi e in prose, italiane e latine, con dichiarazioni* (4 vols., Venice, 1741), later retained at Rydal Mount, which contained 'Charles Lloyd's Book-plate and Laureate's Autog.' (Wordsworth SC 458). Lloyd moved to Ambleside in 1800, and the Wordsworths visited him occasionally from then onwards. They were in the habit of borrowing each other's books (see also note 9), and it is reasonable to suppose that W borrowed Lloyd's handsome edn of Ariosto when he began the translations of 1802. It would have remained in his possession because he probably continued to tinker with his rendering for years after the bulk of work was complete. He appears to have read his translation to De Quincey in London shortly before 25 March 1808 (Jordan 90).

Even if W was not using Lloyd's copy of the *Opere* in 1802, it had almost certainly passed into his possession by 1804: C quotes from vol. 4 in a notebook entry of 15 Sept. 1805, made in Malta (*Notebooks* ii 2670 and n). This indicates that C took at least vol. 4 when he left DC prior to his Mediterranean tour on 14 Jan. 1804. See also *Notebooks* ii 2770.

**(ii) *Orlando Furioso*, tr. John Harington (2nd edn, 1607)**

*Suggested date of reading:* by May 1813

*References:* Shaver 11

This volume is now at the Wordsworth Library. It is imperfect in its present state, lacking six leaves, and bears the ownership inscription 'W<sup>m</sup> Wordsworth / Rydal Mount' on the flyleaf.

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However, the inscription may be misleading: although it may have entered Wordsworth's library shortly after his removal to Rydal Mount in May 1813, my guess is that it came into his possession before that time.

In Oct. 1808 Derwent and Hartley Coleridge began to attend Revd. John Dawes' school in Ambleside, spending most weekends with the Wordsworths at Allan Bank. Hartley, Derwent later remembered, particularly enjoyed his time in the Allan Bank library. This copy of Ariosto contains a number of scribblings by young Hartley on the endpapers, and page 347 has been torn by Hartley and sewn up by Mrs Southey. The various marginalia cannot be firmly dated, but it is evidently that of a schoolboy rather than that of an undergraduate, and on that basis it seems likely that it was entered during Hartley's teens. It was thus almost certainly in W's possession by the time he moved to Rydal Mount in May 1813.

As regards the flyleaf inscription, Wordsworth sometimes entered his name in books years after acquiring them, as he probably did in this case.

**17. Aristotle, 'From Aristotle's Synopsis of the virtues and vices'**

*Suggested date of reading:* probably just before 12 March 1805

*References:* Reed ii 707; *EY* 557-8

From Aristotle's Synopsis of the virtues and vices

It is the property of fortitude not to be easily terrified by the dread of things pertaining to death; to possess good confidence in things terrible, & presence of mind in dangers; rather to prefer to be put to death worthily, than to be preserved basely; & to be the cause of victory. Further, it is the property of fortitude to labour and endure, and to make valorous exertion an object of choice. *But* presence of mind, a well-disposed soul, confidence and boldness are the attendants on fortitude: - and besides these industry & patience

This extract from Aristotle was copied into the Wordsworth Commonplace Book (DC MS 26, 45r) by DW probably shortly before it was copied by W into a letter to Lady Beaumont of 12 March 1805. In his letter to Lady Beaumont, W says: 'I will here transcribe a passage which I met with the other day in a review' (*EY* 557). His source has not been traced, though I can at least reveal that it was not John Gillies' translation of Aristotle's *Ethic and Politics*, as Shaver suggests (*EY* 558n1).

**18. Armstrong, John, *The Art of Preserving Health* (1744)**

*Suggested date of reading:* c. 1800-2; certainly by 30 May 1812

*References:* *Supp.* 97 and n1

Although W's earliest reference to Armstrong's poem occurs in a letter to MW of 30 May 1812, his first reading of it must date from c. 1800-2 at the latest, as it appeared in Anderson, *British Poets* vol. 10 (W was reading vol. 10 in 1802; see note 362[i]). He may even have known the poem since childhood. He was particularly keen on Armstrong partly because he

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regarded him as a borderer (*LY* i 402). A first edn of *The Art of Preserving Health* is listed by the Shavers as present at Rydal Mount (Shaver 12); this was given to him in Dec. 1835 by David Laing (*LY* iii 136). W also owned a copy of Armstrong's *Sketches; or, Essays on Various Subjects. By Launcelot Temple, Esq.* (1758). W included a short extract from *The Art of Preserving Health* in the album he compiled for Lady Mary Lowther in 1819 (*Album* 55); Lyon believes it to be a source for *The Excursion* (Lyon 33).

**19. Arnold, Samuel James, *The Devil's Bridge; or, The Piedmontese Alps***

*Date of performance:* 12 May 1812

*References:* *Supp.* 67

On 9-13 May 1812, W wrote to MW: 'Miss Lamb looks far better than could be expected and enjoyed herself much at the play; a stupid opera, called "the Devils Bridge," but the Farce, "High Life below Stairs" was very entertaining; it is an excellent Piece' (*Supp.* 67). W accompanied the Lambs to the double-bill of Arnold's *Devil's Bridge* and Townley's *High Life* at the Lyceum Theatre on the Strand on Tuesday 12 May 1812. The double-bill was advertised in the *Morning Chronicle* that day as follows:

THEATRE ROYAL, LYCEUM

This Evening will be performed, a grand new Operatic Romance  
 in three acts, called The DEVIL'S BRIDGE

The Principal Characters by Mr. Braham, Mr. Raymond,  
 Mr. Lovegrove, and a Young Gentleman; Miss Brereton, Mrs.

Dickons, Mrs. Bland.

After which, HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS.

The Drury Lane Company had been resident at the Lyceum since 1809, under the direction of Samuel James Arnold. *The Devil's Bridge* was first performed on 6 May 1812.

**20. Ashe, Thomas, *Travels, in America, performed in 1806* (3 vols., 1808)**

*Suggested date of reading:* probably by early Nov. 1809

*References:* Reed ii 49; *Prose Works* ii 9, 35-6

In his *Reply to 'Mathetes'*, W refers the reader to Ashe's *Travels*, a volume not listed as present at Rydal Mount in later years, and which was therefore probably borrowed - perhaps from Southey, who did own a copy, and who W saw during the summer of 1809 (Reed ii 433). Coe (1952) 431 notes that Ashe was an influence on *The Excursion*.

**21. Bacon, Francis, Lord Verulam**

(i) *Of Studies*

*Suggested date of reading:* by 29 April 1804

*References:* Cornell *13-Book Prelude* 178

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Reed finds an echo of Bacon's *Of Studies* at *Thirteen-Book Prelude* vi 27-8. W had presumably read this work well before 29 April 1804, by which time these lines were composed (Reed ii 13). C had embarked on a serious study of Bacon by Feb. 1801, and probably communicated his enthusiasm to W - which probably led in turn to W's recommendation of Bacon's *Essays* and *Advancement of Learning* to Catherine Clarkson in Dec. 1805 (*EY* 662). Whalley adds: 'There can be little doubt that between 1802 and 1804 Coleridge rediscovered Plato through Bacon and discovered his own Platonism in Bacon' (Whalley PhD ii 152). See also *WR* 8 and Potts 372-9.

**(ii) *Works*, ed. David Mallet (4 vols., 1740)**

*Suggested date of reading*: 1808-9; by 3 May 1809

*References*: *Prose Works* i 372; Jordan 192-5; *MY* i 328

A passage from Bacon's *Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England* provided the motto for W's *Convention of Cintra*; W also refers to the *Meditationes Sacrae* in a passage deleted from the *Convention* (see *Prose Works* i 324-5; 401). The motto as he wished it printed derived from Mallet's edn of 1740 - which he did not possess. As De Quincey observed: 'it has . . . occurred to me as possible (though not very likely) that Mr. Wordsworth quotes from the M.S. extract made by Mr. Coleridge, or even from memory. - My only reason for thinking this . . . is, that Mr. Wordsworth said that the reason why he did not send me the extract was that he did not exactly know where to look for it' (Jordan 195). De Quincey may be correct: W may have been referring to C's notes, or to C's copy of Mallet's *Bacon*, bought from Dyer the Exeter bookseller in 1799 (Griggs i 530 and n3; *Notebooks* i 913n). W had asked De Quincey to send him a copy of Bacon's *Works* on 7 July 1808 (*MY* i 257), but I doubt whether De Quincey had done so - in fact, De Quincey goes out of his way to note their rarity in his letter of 31 May 1809: 'if I were to send out one man to collect *Bacons* - and another to collect *Kangaroos* - I verily believe the Kangaroo man would be the most successful' (Jordan 194). W copies out the correct text of the motto in his letter to Stuart of 3 May 1809, providing a terminal date for his reading of Bacon; I suspect, however, that W consulted C's copy of Mallet's edn on numerous occasions during 1808-9. There was certainly a copy at Allan Bank in Jan. 1809, because C transcribed some of its contents for Basil Montagu (Griggs iii 161).

**(iii) *On Revenge***

*Suggested date of reading*: by 18 May 1812

*References*: *Supp.* 82 and n2

In his letter to MW of 17-18 May 1812 W alludes to Bacon's *On Revenge*; no doubt it had been known to him since his schooldays.

**(iv) *Of Atheism***

*Suggested date of reading*: by 1815

*References*: Cornell *White Doe* 77

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Bacon's *Of Atheism* provided the epigraph for W's *White Doe of Rylstone* (1815). Dugas reveals that it was 'entered in MW's hand' in the printer's MS (Cornell *White Doe* 77). In the *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface*, W remarks upon Shakespeare:

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made but little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to him.

(*Prose Works* iii 68)

From this it may be deduced that a copy of the *Works* was close at hand, if not on the shelves of Rydal Mount. *Essays, Moral, Economical, and Political* (1819), bearing the inscription 'D Wordsworth', is now in the possession of Christopher Wordsworth (see Shaver 290).

**22. Bampfylde, John Codrington, *On the Evening* and *Written at a Farm***

*Suggested date of reading:* May 1808

*References:* see note

On 1 May 1808 Beaumont wrote to W: 'My dear Friend I have sent two sonnets by John Bampfylde that have not been published, I think you will like their simplicity, I knew him, a more artless unworldly soul never breathed' (Wordsworth Library WLL/Beaumont, G. H./27).<sup>1</sup> He then transcribed two of Bampfylde's sonnets, both of which had in fact been published in *Sixteen Sonnets* (1778), the first as *Sonnet V. On the Evening*, the second as *Sonnet XII. Written at a Farm*. Although he did not apparently own a copy of *Sixteen Sonnets*, Beaumont apparently possessed a MS of Bampfylde's works, which he probably showed W in due course. I am unaware of any readings by W of Bampfylde prior to this; however, it is significant that not only were C and Southey enthusiastic readers of *Sixteen Sonnets* by 1799, but that they had by that year befriended Bampfylde's associate, William Jackson, who allowed Southey to transcribe nineteen of Bampfylde's sonnets and *To the River Teign*.<sup>2</sup> It would be astonishing had W not discussed Bampfylde with Southey and seen his transcription at some point during the ensuing years. Southey included four of Bampfylde's poems in vol. 3 of his *Specimens of the later English Poets* (1807). For Beaumont's transcription see Appendix V.

**23. Barbauld, Anna Laetitia**

**(i) *Hymn to Content***

*Suggested date of reading:* by Feb. 1808

*References:* Morley i 62; *CC Literature* i 406-7; *Robinson* i 53

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from this letter was first published by Denys Sutton, 'Unpublished Letters from Sir George and Lady Beaumont to the Wordsworths', *N&Q* 175 (1938) 146-9.

<sup>2</sup> For more on this see Griggs i 533; *Life of Southey* ii 26-9; and Roger Lonsdale's introduction to *The Poems of John Bampfylde* (1988).