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XIX

THE LAW OF COPYRIGHT

INTRODUCTION: GENERAL

BEFORE the passage of the Copyright Act of 1842 Wordsworth, in letters and conversations, frequently protested against the Act of 1814, which limited an author's copyright to a term of twenty-eight years from the date of publication, or for the remainder of his life if he outlived that term.¹ During a visit to London in the spring of 1836 he made a point of talking to 'leading Members of the House of Commons of all parties' on the importance of an amended law, and Crabb Robinson is no doubt right in saying that it was 'mainly' Wordsworth who urged their mutual friend Serjeant Thomas Noon Talfourd, M.P. for Reading, to introduce a new Copyright Bill in 1837.² Among other changes, the enactment of Talfourd's Bill would have increased the duration of copyright to sixty years following the author's death.³

From 18 May 1837, when the Bill was introduced, its progress in the House must have been encouraging to Wordsworth, for its second reading was carried without debate or division. But, as a consequence of the unexpected dissolution of Parliament following the death of King William, action on the Bill had to be postponed, and another motion to introduce could not be made until December 1837, by which time opposition from the London booksellers had begun to develop. Although this motion was also carried, the prospects for the second reading, which was originally set for 11 April and later deferred a fortnight, were not good.⁴ On 23 March Wordsworth received word from Talfourd that a very strong opposition threatened the Bill and that its supporters 'must muster [their] strength'.⁵ Wordsworth's response was immediate and amazingly energetic, for he wrote within three days 'at least 40 Letters in support of the

¹ See Paul M. Zall, 'Wordsworth and the Copyright Act of 1842', *PMLA* lxx (1955), 132-44; Russell Noyes, 'Wordsworth and the Copyright Act of 1842: *Addendum*', *PMLA* lxxvi (1961), 380-3; and Moorman, *il.* 660-6.

² *L.T.*, p. 836; *H.C.R.*, p. 121; for Wordsworth's own claims for the initiating of legislative action see *L.T.*, pp. 911-12.

³ T. N. Talfourd, *Three Speeches . . . In Favour of a Measure for An Extension of Copyright* (London, 1840), p. 16. For the subsequent history of the Bill we have mainly drawn upon this work and Talfourd's unpublished letters in the Cornell University Library (Healey, items 3158-70).

⁴ For the growing opposition to the Bill see Zall, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5, and Talfourd to Wordsworth, 22 Nov. 1837 (Healey, item 3158).

⁵ Talfourd to Wordsworth, 21 Mar. 1838 (Healey, item 3159). On the 23rd Wordsworth wrote to Gladstone that he had received Talfourd's letter 'this morning' (*L.T.*, p. 919).

Serjeant's motion', and by 14 April the number had increased to 'scarcely less than 50 notes or Letters'.¹

In the midst of all this activity, *The Kendal Mercury and Westmorland Advertiser* reported in its issue of Saturday, 7 April, that the local 'letter-press printers' had expressed their opposition to the Bill by a petition to their representative in the House of Commons; the article concluded by quoting the petition in full. Wordsworth's point-by-point rebuttal (Letter to the Editor—see *Copyright*, 1-156) appeared in the very next issue (14 April). Although he signed the letter 'A. B.', his authorship must have been obvious throughout the district, and later in *The Quarterly Review* Lockhart spoke of the letter as a 'document, which, though published anonymously in a provincial newspaper, at once affiliated itself on a most illustrious pen, and was of course a subject of conversation in most literary circles throughout the country'.²

It was probably on the 13th that Wordsworth learned from Philip H. Howard, M.P. for Carlisle, that 'Mr Serjt Talfourd complains that whereas many of the publishers & the Trade have publicly taken steps to oppose his Bill Authors have taken no steps by Petition at least. . . . Mr Serjt Talfourd stated to me between ourselves that *if Mr Southey & yourself were to send him a petition to present in favor of his Bill it wd. have weight & be something to show*'.³ Writing immediately to Talfourd upon receipt of Howard's letter, Wordsworth referred to Talfourd's desire for a petition, as it had been reported to him, and said, with obvious reluctance, that he would 'endeavour to get over every objection, which I feel to appearing publicly as a Suppliant'; of his letter published that day in *The Kendal Mercury* he remarked: 'I thought the occasion a fair one for bringing forth the facts stated in my strictures, as they concern the men of Letters who live, or have lived in this neighbourhood'.⁴ On the 16th Talfourd replied that he was sorry Wordsworth had been 'annoyed about a thing so foreign to your habits as a Petition', and that he would simply refer in his speech 'to individual cases as illustrative of the principle'.⁵ On the 18th Wordsworth replied: 'Your's reached me while I was preparing rather a long Letter to you on the subject. But

¹ Wordsworth to Crabb Robinson, 26 Mar. 1838 (C.R., p. 296) and to Talfourd, 14 Apr. 1838 (*Some Letters of the Wordsworth Family*, ed. L. N. Broughton (Ithaca, N.Y., 1942), p. 75; Zall, op. cit., pp. 136-7, fn. 9, has corrected the date of the letter to Talfourd).

² *Quarterly Review*, lxxix (1841), 209.

³ Howard to Wordsworth, 11 Apr. 1838 (Healey, item 2861), as published by Zall, op. cit., pp. 135-6; letters from London were almost invariably delivered to Wordsworth two days later.

⁴ *Some Letters of the Wordsworth Family*, pp. 75-6; see also fn. 1 above.

⁵ Talfourd to Wordsworth, 16 Apr. 1838 (Healey, item 3160).

I shall not proceed, and am contented to send you the introduction, of which pray make what use you like; if you think it would at all serve the cause or it would be on any account grateful to you to publish it pray do.'¹

Manuscript fragments, now in the Cornell University Library, and first published by Professor Zall in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 16 October 1953, p. 668, are, we believe, all that survive of the 'long Letter'; they are edited and printed in our Appendix to the *Copyright*. In London, the 'introduction', or *Copyright*, 157-224, was immediately sent by Talfourd to *The Morning Post* and there published on 23 April 1838. In his letter of thanks, written on the same day, Talfourd assured Wordsworth that the publication was indeed 'important to our cause at this crisis, not only as giving your high sanction to the measure, but as explaining the grounds on which authors forbear to petition'.² Wordsworth was glad to hear also from Crabb Robinson that the letter had been 'of great service', and his only regret was that he had not written it 'with more care' and included at least two other points (C.R., p. 360).

On 25 April the motion for the second reading was carried by a division of 39 in favour and 34 opposed. When the House later resolved itself into a committee, the discussion was such that Gladstone, who favoured the Bill, advised Talfourd to withdraw it, with the assurance that it would be again introduced early in the next session. For this session Wordsworth was finally persuaded, apparently through two skilful letters from Talfourd (Healey, items 3164, 3166), to write a petition—a draft of which he began at the end of January 1839, not without some criticism and suggestions from Crabb Robinson (*H.C.R.*, pp. 566-7), who was then visiting him. (The Petition is edited in part III of our Appendix.) Despite the impressive array of petitions,³ and despite the division, on 28 February, of 73 for the second reading and 37 opposed, the passage of the Bill was again thwarted by the manoeuvres of its opponents, and had to be withdrawn for the third time on 8 July.⁴

Although Wordsworth continued to write and speak for an amended law, only one other effort needs to be mentioned here. By means of

¹ Wordsworth to Talfourd, 18 Apr. 1838 (Healey, item 2434), as published by Zall, op. cit., p. 137.

² Talfourd to Wordsworth, 23 Apr. 1838 (Healey, item 3161).

³ One of the clearest is Thomas Arnold's, while Carlyle's, which Wordsworth characterized as 'quite racy' (Wordsworth to Talfourd, 8 Apr. (Healey, item 2438), quoted by Moorman, II, 653), is certainly the most entertaining to read. Both petitions are printed in Talfourd, *Three Speeches*, pp. 126-9, 136-8.

⁴ The Act which was eventually passed in 1842 extended the copyright to the author's lifetime and for seven years after his death, or for a period of forty-two years from the date of publication, whichever was longer.

several direct appeals he succeeded in persuading John Gibson Lockhart to write an article on the subject for *The Quarterly Review* in 1841.¹ When Lockhart asked for assistance, Wordsworth—writing from Lowther—said he was 'pretty sure' that he had no 'MSS. of value upon the subject', but that he would write again when he got home (*L.T.*, pp. 1099–100). We know that at home he had at least part of the 'long Letter' which he was preparing in April 1838, and which he abandoned in order to send Talfourd the 'introduction' (*Copyright*, 157–224); we also remember that in a postscript to a private letter, 9 May 1838, he had told his correspondent that 'The latter part of this letter is mainly a transcript from what I had prepared to send to some journal or other, in which perhaps it may appear' (*L.T.*, p. 938). Soon after Lockhart's appeal for assistance Barron Field, who was visiting in the neighbourhood, found Wordsworth 'still full of the subject of copyright . . . [and] engaged in communicating arguments to the Editor of the Quarterly Review, for an article on the subject'; Field himself 'assisted' Wordsworth by contributing one paragraph to Lockhart's article.² For *The Quarterly Review* Wordsworth certainly made his own slight revisions in *Copyright*, 1–156, which was appended to the article; conceivably, like Field, he contributed to the main article, but it does not verbally echo any manuscript which we have seen, although one cannot help wondering whether the first two sheets, now lost from the 'long Letter' of 1838, were perhaps 'lost' in the autumn of 1841.³

¹ See *L.T.*, pp. 1023, 1080–1; A. L. Strout, 'Some Unpublished Letters of John Gibson Lockhart', *N. & Q.*, clxxxvii (1944), 208–9.

² Barron Field, *Memoirs*, ii, 96 (Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 41326). Field's assistance is a little surprising, in view of his later unsympathetic comment that Wordsworth's petition and Letters on Copyright showed too much anxiety to make a pecuniary advantage of the reaction in favor of his poems' (*C.R.*, p. 591).

³ See our textual Introduction for a description of the Cornell manuscripts (Healey, item 2436), which are printed in the Appendix to the *Copyright*. We do not mean to imply that the first two sheets, presumably as rough as the others, were sent to Lockhart, but that they might have been withdrawn for revision and transcription.

INTRODUCTION: TEXTUAL

THE text for Wordsworth's first letter on the Copyright Bill (*Copyright*, 1–156) is that appended to Lockhart's anonymous review article on 'The Copyright Question' in *The Quarterly Review*, lxi (December 1841), 186–227. The letter was first published in *The Kendal Mercury and Westmorland Advertiser*, 14 April 1838, p. 3, cols. 4–5. Evidence that Wordsworth himself was responsible for the few verbal emendations in *The Quarterly Review* version (abbreviated *Q.R.* in our textual notes) is given in our Introduction. Textual notes record verbal variants from *The Kendal Mercury* (abbreviated *K.M.*); no manuscript of *Copyright*, 1–156, seems to have survived.

The text for the second letter (*Copyright*, 157–224) is that published in *The Morning Post* (abbreviated *M.P.*), 23 April 1838, p. 2, col. 4. Our single textual note to this letter records a rejected draft of 208–17 preserved in a manuscript now in the Cornell University Library (Healey, item 2435): the draft, in the hand of Mary Wordsworth, fills one side of a loose unnumbered sheet, 6 in. wide × 7½ in. long; the numerous deletions and revisions, especially at the beginning, suggest that the fragment is a first draft; the whole page is finally deleted by a diagonal line drawn from top to bottom.

In addition to the rejected draft of *Copyright*, 208–17, the Cornell manuscript contains two other fragments, which are also in the hand of Mary Wordsworth and on the copyright question. Of these, the longer is almost certainly a remnant of the 'long Letter' which Wordsworth was preparing in April 1838, and which he abandoned on 18 April in order to post immediately to Talfourd the 'introduction' (*Copyright*, 157–224; see our Introduction, pp. 304–5). The fragment, which we edit in part I of the Appendix to the *Copyright*, is written on two loose sheets and one small scrap of paper; the first sheet, 7¼ in. wide × 9 in. long, is numbered '3', and the text is written on both pages; the second sheet, which measured 8 in. wide × 13 in. long before a lower corner, 2 in. × 3 in., was torn away, is numbered '4', and the text is written on the numbered page only; the small scrap, 6¼ in. wide × approximately 3¼ in. long, is numbered '5', and again the text is written on the numbered page only. We assume that the beginning of the fragment was written on two pages now lost, which presumably were numbered '1' and '2'.

The second and shorter fragment is written on one side of the unnumbered sheet which on the reverse side has given us the rejected draft of *Copyright*, 208–17, as described above; the beginning of the

fragment is lost, and the whole page is deleted by a single line drawn from top to bottom; although it consists almost entirely of a short quotation from a letter of William Gomm to Wordsworth (Healey, item 2844), we edit it in part II of the Appendix, on the ground that Wordsworth had perhaps once intended it either for a section of *Copyright*, 157-224, or for a part of the 'long Letter' of April 1838 which he left unfinished.

The three fragments of the Cornell manuscript were published for the first time by Paul M. Zall in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 16 October 1963, p. 668, where he identified them—with some oversimplification—as 'part of the letter that was eventually published in the *Morning Post*, April 23, 1838'. Because he did not recognize the fragments as three disparate pieces, he published them as though they constituted a coherent whole, except for the loss of a single passage. In this respect his text of the fragments differs most markedly from ours. In addition to preserving deletions, which Zall omitted, we have been able to correct a number of misreadings, one of which should perhaps be mentioned, because Zall repeats it in his article in *PMLA* lxx (1966), 158: 'Strippling' (see our Appendix, part I, 6) has been erroneously transcribed 'Simpling'.

Wordsworth's petition to the House of Commons, which appears in Appendix, part III, is based on the official printing of this document in 'Public Petitions—Appendix to Seventh Report, 27 February-1 March 1839', *Appendix to the Reports of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Public Petitions*, Session 1839 (pp. 91-2). To it we attach verbal variants from a manuscript copy of the petition preserved in the Cornell University Library (Healey, item 2288); this manuscript is written on three pages, 8 in. wide × 12½ in. long, of a single folio; the hand is that of Wordsworth's clerk, John Carter, except for the sentence given in our textual n. 70, which is in the hand of Mary Wordsworth. In a note at the bottom of p. [2r], 'W. K.' (William Knight?) refers to the sentence as a 'footnote' (cf. Healey, item 2288), but a caret at the end of a clause within the text indicates to us that it was intended to be there inserted. (In our textual notes the printed document is referred to as *Petition*.)

To the Editor of the Kendal Mercury.

12th April, 1838.

Sir,—Having read in your paper of the 7th instant a petition against Sergeant Talfourd's Copyright Bill from the composers, pressmen, and others employed in the town of Kendal, to be presented to the House of Commons by the representative of that place, I am induced to make a few remarks upon the same, in which I shall endeavour to be brief.

In the first clause the petitioners declare "that they view with alarm and regret the measure to repeal the existing law, and to substitute a law highly injurious to the interests of the community, the literature of the country, and more particularly to the interests of the petitioners." The effect of the extension of copyright proposed in Sergeant Talfourd's bill would, according to the words of the petitioners, be to render works having that privilege "a mere dead letter, or confine them to the hands of the wealthy, and could not be productive of any real advantage to the authors."

If certainties and probabilities be looked at with more discernment than is shown by these petitioners, it will be found that a book for which there is a great demand would be sure of being supplied to the public under any circumstances; but a good book for which there might be a continued demand, though not a large one, would be much more sure of not becoming a "dead letter," if the proposed law were enacted than if it were not. It is well known among the intelligent that the non-existence of copyright for English authors in America is a great hindrance to the republication of standard works. The speculation being left open to unlimited competition, publishers do not risk their capital, fearing that some one may afford to undersell them by sending forth the work incorrectly and meanly executed; and thus they who wish to be possessed of standard works are in many cases 30 disappointed. So much for valuable works becoming, through the proposed bill, a "dead letter."

Further, it is well known that readers in the humbler ranks of society are multiplying most rapidly. Is it then to be supposed that the possessors of copyright would be blind to this fact, and, when a work was in course of becoming an object of request to the people at large, would be so unmindful of their own interests as not to supply a widely-increasing demand at a reduced price? Besides, as long as the privilege

remained in the hands of the author's children or descendants, who
can doubt that they would be peculiarly prompted to extend the
circulation of his works, not merely for their own pecuniary advantage,
but out of respect or reverence for his memory, and to fulfil what
could not but be presumed to be his wish?

In the next clause it is asserted "that the profits enjoyed by literary
men of the present day are of the most ample description; as, under
the present laws regulating literary property, authors of ordinary
talent have acquired both fame and opulence." The petitioners, if they
had looked with care no further than their own neighbourhood,
could not have made this unqualified assertion. The late Mr. Coleridge
resided many years among the Lakes, where his son now resides.
It will hardly be disputed that the father was a man of first-rate genius
and attainments. Fame, indeed, he acquired, but not till many years
after he deserved it; but as to his opulence, if the income tax had
continued till the day of his death, the collectors of it would have had
a sorry recompense for the trouble of calling upon him for his return.
His son, whose powers and knowledge are the admiration of all who
know him, though not inclined perhaps to dispute that gold may have
abounded in the sands of Pactolus, will have no hesitation in affirming
that, if he were to judge from his own experience only, the waters of
Helicon can make no such boast. Has even Mr. Southey, a most
laborious writer and one of high distinction, attained "opulence" by
his works, or anything like it? Yet much the greatest part of these
works would become public property instantly upon the death of the
author, or within less than half-a-dozen years. And what, *till very*
late, have been the gains of another author who was born, educated,
and has grown old in the neighbourhood of the petitioners? The
humblest of the band would blush to hear them enumerated. I forbear
to speak of other highly-distinguished authors who have honoured, or
do honour, this beautiful country by choosing it for their residence.
Not one of them but is too highminded to repine; but the sense of
justice is, I doubt not, sufficiently strong in them all to make them
resent the denial to their posterity or their heirs of that moderate
compensation which a rational view of their interests would lead them
to aim at, and which the public might be ready to bestow.
But the next clause of the petition implies that it would be unreason-
able and unjust for authors to look for such posthumous remuneration,
the words running thus:—"that every book, after its author has

⁴³ wish *Q.R.*: wishes *K.M.* ⁴⁹ unqualified *Q.R.*: not in *K.M.*
⁶²⁻⁴ Yet . . . years. *Q.R.*: not in *K.M.* ⁶⁸ speak . . . highly *Q.R.*: the
only copy of *K.M.* which we have seen is defectively printed.
but it is [sic] *K.M.* ⁷⁰ but is *Q.R.*:

received from the public an equitable remuneration, becomes the
property of the public, who, by affording such remuneration, have
purchased it." An *equitable* remuneration. Here is the Gordian knot of
the question, which the petitioners cut without ceremony. A more than
adequate remuneration comes in the course of a season to thousands of
works intended only for the season. But can the profits of one season,
or ten seasons, or twenty-eight (the utmost term now allowed by
law, unless when the author is still alive), be justly deemed a sufficient
return for two works (I still confine myself to the productions of this
neighbourhood) by Mr. Southey—his "Life of Nelson" and his "Book
of the Church"? They are both of interest, eminently national: the one
will animate our youth to heroic enterprise, strengthen their patriot-
ism, and tend to form and fix their principles, as long as the English
navy shall endure; and the other maintain an enlightened attachment
to the Church of England, as long as Providence shall allow it to exist.

Another clause asserts "that the proposed law would, if carried into
effect, destroy all those useful and hitherto-considered necessary
compilations for the instruction of the young, which have been so
eminently useful in exciting in the youthful mind a taste for literature
and science." Now, so far from there being just reason for apprehend-
ing this consequence, the direct contrary would ensue, inasmuch as, by
extending the term of copyright, authors would be under less tempta-
tion to prevent copious extracts being made from their works. For
even supposing, which we are not warranted to do, that they would
deem it injurious to their interests during their lifetime, they would be
more willing to put up with the loss, if the law allowed it to be possible,
at least for their children or grandchildren to derive an equivalent
from their labours, when they themselves shall be no more.

Still confining our views to this neighbourhood, what is the fact?
There is lying before me a book entitled "Gleanings in Poetry," the
preface to which compilation is signed "Richard Batt," and dated
"Friends' School, Lancaster." This book extends with its notes to 612
pages, of which 25 are from the poems of Mr. Wordsworth. Did Mr.
Wordsworth ever complain of these extracts, which were made
without application for his consent? Or did any other writer, from whom
copious extracts are taken, utter such a complaint? Again—there was
lately published by Mr. Housman, of Lane Bank, near Lancaster, a
Collection of Sonnets, from different authors, filling 300 pages, of
which pages not less than 57 are from the same author. Did Mr.
Wordsworth complain of this liberty being taken? On the contrary,

⁸⁸ Church? *Edd.*: Church? *Q.R.*, *K.M.* ¹⁰⁶ Still *Q.R.*: Now, still *K.M.*
¹⁰⁷ lying *Q.R.*: now lying *K.M.* ¹⁰⁹⁻¹⁰ book extends . . . pages, *Q.R.*:
Book, with its Notes, extends to 612 p., *K.M.* ¹¹⁵ 300 *Q.R.*: 30 [sic] *K.M.*

when the editor informed Mr. Wordsworth that the publisher of his works had threatened him with an application to the Court of Chancery for an injunction, Mr. Wordsworth's immediate reply was that he found no fault whatever, and the thing was dropped. Now, the petitioners might have known this, for the fact was published in your paper at the time it happened, probably by the editor or some of his friends; and what is thus true of one individual, it may be confidently affirmed, would have been equally so, if a like liberty had been taken with the works of any other distinguished author, who resides, or has resided in this neighbourhood. 120

To conclude. The objections against the proposed bill rest upon the presumption that it would tend to check the circulation of literature, and by so doing would prove injurious to the public. Strong reasons have been given above for believing that these fears are groundless, and that such an extension of copyright would cause the reprinting of many good works, which otherwise, to give back the petitioners their own words, would nearly remain a "dead letter." But what we want in these times, and are likely to want still more, is not the circulation of books, but of good books, and above all, the production of works, the authors of which look beyond the passing day, and are desirous of pleasing and instructing future generations. Now there cannot be a question that the proposed bill would greatly strengthen such desire. A conscientious author, who had a family to maintain, and a prospect of descendants, would regard the additional labour bestowed upon any considerable work he might have in hand, in the light of an insurance of money upon his own life for the benefit of his issue; and he would be animated in his efforts accordingly, and would cheerfully undergo present privations for such future recompense. Deny it to him, and you unfeelingly leave a weight upon his spirits, which must deaden his exertions; or you force him to turn his faculties (unless he is unjust to those whom both nature and law require that he should provide for) to inferior employments. And lastly, you violate a fundamental right, by leaving that species of property which has the highest claim to protection, with the least share of it; for as to the analogy, which has been elsewhere much dwelt upon, between literary property and mechanical inventions and chemical discoveries, it is, as might be shown in a few words, altogether fallacious. 150

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant, 155
A. B.

118 Mr. Wordsworth *Q.R.*: Mr W K.M.
might, and ought to have known K.M.
A. B. K.M.

122 might have known *Q.R.*:
156 A. B. *Q.R.*: 12th April, 1838

THE LAW OF COPYRIGHT.

MR. WORDSWORTH TO SERGEANT TALFOURD, M.P.

Rydal Mount, April 18, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR—A strong opposition, which has manifested itself by public meetings and petitions to the House of Commons, having started up among printers, publishers, and others to your Bill for amending the law of copyrights, and no like counter-movement being made by authors on their part, it has been suggested to me, from quarters entitled to great respect, that it might be of service if, along with a most distinguished literary friend, I should present a petition to Parliament, praying that the Bill may pass, or at least one in favour of its principle. This compliment has no doubt been paid me as one among the oldest of living writers, and one therefore whose heirs must, in course of nature, be injured sooner than those of younger men, if the proposed measure be rejected. You will not be surprised if I feel some scruple in taking a step, though so well recommended, on account of an aversion to appear prominently in any public question, and because I am loth to think so unfavourably of Parliament as to deem that it requires petitions from authors as a ground for granting them a privilege, the justice of which is so obvious. I cannot bring myself to suppose that the mere shadows of argument advanced by printers and publishers against the claims of a class to whom they owe the respectability of their condition, if not their very existence, should avail with any intelligent and disinterested Assembly. Yet further am I averse thus to petition Parliament, because I would not ask as an individual suppliant, or with a single associate, what in equity I consider to be the right of a class, and for a much longer period than that defined in your Bill—for ever. Such right, as you have stated in your admirable speech, was acknowledged by the common law of England; and let them who have cried out so loudly against the extension of the term as is now proposed show cause why that original right should not be restored. The onus clearly rests with them to do so; but they have not attempted it, and are glad to take shelter under the statute law as it now stands, which is a composition or compromise between two opinions; the extreme point of one being, that, by giving his thoughts to the world, an author abandons all right to consider the vehicle as private property; and of the other, that he has the right in perpetuity, that descends to his heirs, and is transferable to those to whom he or they may assign it. This right I hold to be more deeply inherent in that species of property than in any other, though I am aware that many persons, 190

perceiving wherein it differs from acquisitions made in trade and commerce, &c., have contended that the law in respect to literature ought to remain upon the same footing as that which regards the profits of mechanical inventions and chemical discoveries; but that this is an utter fallacy might easily be proved.

From the considerations above stated I decline to petition, as suggested, and content myself, in the silence of others better entitled to speak, with this public declaration of my judgment, so that at least, my dear Sir, you may not be liable to be treated as a volunteer intruding without wish or sanction openly expressed by any one of the class whose rights and interests you have so much to your honour stepped forward to maintain. Here this letter shall close, its purpose being answered, for no general arguments from me, and no statement of facts belonging to my own case, and which have come to my knowledge with respect to my illustrious friends Coleridge, Scott, Southey, and others, would avail to produce conviction where that has not been effected by your unrivalled speech made upon your first introduction of the Bill into the House of Commons, and by reasonings which have lately been set forth with great ability by writers in the public journals, who were more at liberty to enter into details than you could be while treating the subject before Parliament.

Should your Bill be overborne, which I cannot allow myself to fear, by the interested opposition now at work, justice, nevertheless, sooner or later, must triumph; and at all events the respect and gratitude which authors feel towards you and your coadjutors upon this occasion will be cherished by them to the last hour of their lives.

I have the honour to be, my dear Sir, faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

908-17 its purpose . . . Parliament *M.P.*: *MS.* partly *deletes*: that I for one have not courage to do more than touch upon it. Yet I will [not *<Edd>*] let pass the opportunity of saying: *MS.* partly *deletes*: Yet I cannot forbear adding a few words upon the justice & expediency of extending the duration of Copyright [?] against it as have been publicly set forth by the opponents of the Measure. Here again I am crossed by the ability with which [this *<altered to a which is left undelet>*] part *del.*] much of the subject has been treated: *MS.* alters and adds: Yet I cannot forbear adding a few words upon the justice & expediency of the proposed measure tho' both points have [already *del.*] been treated [by yourself with *del.*] on the introduction of the bill with an eloquence that might deter any one from following you & recently by writers who were more at liberty to enter into detail with admirable accuracy & good sense. * Note [:] I refer especially to a succession of articles that have appeared in the Morning Post, in particular in that of the 10th of April, noticing a remonstrance which issued from a meeting in London of Booksellers & Publishers &c. attended by Counsel [sic] & Solicitors. It would be well if extracts from these Articles & others to the same purport from different Journals were collected in a small pamphlet—& along with your introductory speech—they could not but carry conviction to every disinterested & unprejudiced Person: *MS.* writes at the top of the page: its [main *del.*] purpose is answered. For: Striking partly through the word purpose in *MS.* and running diagonally the length of the page is a single line of deletion.

APPENDIX

I (Healey, item 2435)

I seems therefore only to remain for me with the view of strengthening a cause so just to point to & bring forth a few facts which tend to shew that of good & great literature—which it is to be presumed we would all wish to see rise up among us—*Time* is the only infallible judge. Time considered for the future, & not as a fresh & light-footed Stripling of a Year, or a few lustrums but with his accustomed grey locks, his wrinkled brow, his hour-glass in one hand—his destructive sythe in the other. I would also add to these insignia, a sort of pilgrim's bottle attached to the Old Man's body from which he might water in his progress such of the young plants about him as he knows are destined for immortality. But Printers & Publishers & cold-blooded Doctrinaires will think I am betraying the cause by taking this flight & I must descend. The fate & fortune of books is in many respects most remarkable.—Some that on their first appearance have been extolled in courts, & by universities & academies—have quickly forfeited that kind of favour without ever making their way to the public or deserving to do so. Others have been eagerly received by the middle & humbler ranks of the community, while they were disregarded by the upper classes, & have continued to be dear to the many, tho' centuries perhaps may have passed away without their obtaining the sanction, except in rare instances, of those who value themselves upon a cultivated taste. Take for example the Pilgrim's Progress: Cower the Poet being prompted to speak [what] he thought & felt of that beautiful Allegory more than 120 years after its publication says in the course of his panegyric:

"I name thee not lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame."

And who but must be struck with the clouds that darken for a time the splendour of those productions whose merits were at first

2 which *MS.*: which the disinterestedness to *MS.*: that *MS.*: 5 as a *MS.*:
as the *MS.* 10 as he knows *MS.*: which he should *MS.* 11 [? fish]
is inserted above cold but no deletion is made; *Zall* reads fresh 14 After
Some that *MS.* deletes: have been applauded in Courts by academies & universities
on their first appearance have been disregarded by the people both 19 tho'
MS.: while *MS.* 21 rare *MS.*: very rare *MS.* 22 for *MS.*: as
an *MS.* 23 being *MS.*: has been *MS.* what *Edd.*: *MS.* spoils the
grammar by altering his [own <?> *del.*] [opinion *del.*] thought [of the <?> *Work>* *del.*]
to be thought & felt of that 27 Should *Edd.*: "Should *MS.* 28 Before
And *MS.* deletes: In his preface to his Art of Poetry Byshe

acknowledged in the highest quarters. In Ch[arles] 2^d days 10 plays 30
of [Beaumont] & F[letcher] were acted for one of Shakespeare.

Bysshe in his Art of Poetry, published about the same period,
writes thus of Chaucer & Spenser. Their language is now become so
antiquated & obsolete that most readers of our age have no ear for
them. Nor I must confess is the case of Chaucer to be wondered at, but 35
Bysshe immediately adds, & this is the reason that the good Shake-
spear himself is not so frequently cited in this collection as he would
otherwise deserve to be—in fact he is rarely cited at all. Dryden,
Cowley, Otway, Rowe, Blackmore, & Butler are the Writers from
which his extracts are almost exclusively taken, there being very few 40
even from Milton. Again books the production of true genius some-
times, when they first appear, obtain general circulation for their
faults—such as I have elsewhere noticed was the case with Thomson's
Seasons which was admired for its sentimental flourishes & its foolish
or ill told tales—when the nobler movements of the Poet's imagination 45
were unfelt, as they seemed not to have been, till a critic directed
attention to them 40 years afterward.

The fate of Dr Johnson's Rambler is not to be overlooked.—In his
concluding No he thus expresses himself: "I am far from supposing that
the cessation of my performances will raise any enquiry, for I have 50
never been much a favourite with the public". He then proceeds to give
some high-minded reasons why he does not complain of neglect &
to shew that he did not obtain immediate favor because he "seldom
descended to the arts by which it is obtained." Yet I well remember
that 45 years ago an intelligent bookseller contrasting the slow 55
progress to public notice made by the Rambler compared with its
rival periodical papers the Connoisseur & the World, observed that
Ed[itions] of the Rambler were then constantly called for while the
circulation of the other two works, after being popular on their first
appearance, could scarcely float at all except by the aid of collections. 60
The Rambler was published in 1750. When it was thought expedient

32 Bysshe *Edd.*: Bysshe MS. 33 writes thus MS.?: [?] writes] MS.: tells us
that the language of MS.?: 35 must confess MS.?: may say is that of Sh MS.
36 Bysshe *Edd.*: he MS.?: Bysshe MS.?: 38 deserve *Edd.*: deserves
MS. 39 from MS.?: upon MS. 40 taken, there *Edd.*: taken, There MS.
41 *After* Again MS. *deletes*: as I have elsewhere noticed in the case of Thompsons
Seasons 43 Thompson's *Edd.*: Thompsons MS. 45 the nobler MS.?:
the high raptures & nobler MS. the Poet's MS.?: his MS. 46 they
seemed MS.?: appears MS. 48 *Before* The fate MS. *deletes*: But it is need-
less to pursue this part of the subject 57 *After* that MS. *deletes*: of the
[?] former] 58 constantly MS.?: in the course of being constantly MS.
59-60 works . . . collections MS.?: works [?] confined to collections MS. 61 The
Rambler . . . 1760 MS.?: Johnsons book had then been published more than
40 years. The term of Copy right [in his *del.*] till after his day was only 14 years
MS. 61-5 When . . . refused] *A corner torn from the bottom of the page*

for the sake of his declining health, his age, & his [?] oppressed]
spirits he should travel abroad, his friends might have been spared the
necessity of applying to Govern^t in his behalf & escaped the mortifi-
cation of being refused. This by the bye. Endeavouring to shew that 65
time is the only judge in literature that can be absolutely depended
up[on] *[tear]* to the *[tear]*

II (Healey, item 2436)

"Burke says," as in a letter was lately observed to me by a much
esteemed friend, "that between certain services that he had rendered to
the State & money, there was no common measure of comparison—
that they are qualities incommensurable"—this applies with tenfold
force my friend goes on to say, in the case of sound literature in as 5
much as the services here rendered [are] for all states & for all time.
Still there has always appeared to me, something monstrous in the
existing relation between Author & Bookseller or Publisher, as
regards remuneration of this sort—a positive reversing of the natural
order of things, as we find it obtains in all matters else—a subser- 10
vience (pro tanto) of the spiritual to the material".

III

('Public Petitions—Appendix to Seventh Report, 27 February-1 March
1839', *Appendix to the Reports of the Select Committee of the House of
Commons on Public Petitions*, Session 1839 (pp. 91-2).)

The humble Petition of William Wordsworth, of Rydal, in the
county of Westmorland,
Sheweth,

*makes it possible to read only incomplete phrases, all of them deleted, we record a few
examples: Who but must wish that when age & [?] infirmity or infirmities] had made
him desire to travel abroad for: might not have found themselves: for his relief to
enable him to do so &: circumstances compelled him to live from [?] day]: allowed
an extended Copyright of: deleted from the top of the next page is: might have been
reserved for the support of his advanced years, & his friends
62-3 declining . . . spirits] MS.?: health & spirits MS. The caret marking the
insertion would seem to make the revision read: health declining, his age, etc., but the
intention was probably as we have given it. 62 oppressed] Zall reads
depressed 65 Before Endeavouring MS. *deletes*: I have adverted*

II. 1 *Before* "Burke MS. *deletes*: esteemed friend of mine thus expresses himself
[by *del.*] in a letter [on this *del.*] which I have rec within these few days 6 are
Edd.: all MS. 11 material] MS. omits the opening quotation marks.

III. 1 The humble Petition: To the Honorable the Commons of the United
Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled. The humble MS.

That your Petitioner is on the point of attaining his seventieth year; that since his first literary production was given to the press forty-six years have elapsed, during which time he has at intervals published various original works, down to the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five.

That the Copyright in all these works is unassigned, but that in a considerable part of them, under the existing law, that exclusive right is already contingent upon the duration of his life, and the same would be the case in a very few years with much the larger portion of the remainder, including the most important of these works, a poem entitled "The Excursion," which, in the event of his decease, would become public property in less than four years from the present time.

That the short term of Copyright now allowed by the law is a grievance common to all authors whose works are not liable to be superseded, but your Petitioner takes leave respectfully to represent that this grievance falls still more heavily upon those who, like himself, have engaged and persevered in literary labour, less with the expectation of producing immediate or speedy effect, than with a view to interest and benefit society, though remotely, yet permanently.

That it has happened to your Petitioner, in consequence of having written with this aim, that his works, though never out of demand, have made their way slowly into general circulation; yet he may be permitted to state a fact bearing obviously upon the Bill for the extension of the term of Copyright now before your honourable House, that within the last four years these works have brought the author a larger pecuniary emolument than during the whole of the preceding years in which they have been before the public. This advantage would have in a great measure been lost to his family had he died a few years since.

That your Petitioner ventures to submit to your honourable House his conviction, that the duration of Copyright, as the law now stands, is far from being co-extensive with the claims of natural affection: a hardship which will be still more apparent when the condition of distinguished authors is viewed in contrast with that of men who rise to eminence in other professions or employments, whereby they not only acquire wealth, but have patronage at command, or obtain the means of forming family establishments in business, which enable them to provide at once for their descendants, or for others who have claims upon them. He also trusts, that to the wisdom of the House it will appear that the law, while it fails to pay due regard to the reasonable claims of natural affection, is also at variance, in an

9 in [first] *Petition*: of MS. 18 respectfully MS., *Edd.*: respectively *Petition*. 30-1 would . . . been *Petition*: must in a great measure have been MS.

unwarrantable degree, with the principles that govern the right of property in all other matters, mechanical inventions and chemical discoveries only excepted, between which, however, and works in several of the highest departments of literature, there is in quality, circumstance, mode of operation, and oftentimes in origin, a broad line of distinction, as was shewn when the subject in the preceding session was under the consideration of Parliament.

That in answer to the objection that the proposed measure would check the circulation of books, it may be urged, first—that to a great majority of publications the measure would be indifferent, they being adequately protected by the law as it now is; that the works which it would affect, though comparatively few, must be presumed to be of superior merit, and therefore to be those that most deserve or require the aid which the Bill proposes; further, that from the daily increase of readers, through the spread of education and the growing wealth of the community, it must become more and more the interest of the holders of the Copyright to sell at a low price, and to prepare editions suitable to the means of different classes of society, and that consequently the apprehension of a prolonged privilege being injurious to the people, is entitled to little or no regard.

That it is highly desirable that the printing of works should be under the control of their authors' representatives, however long those works may have been before the public, in order to secure copies correctly printed, and to preclude the sending forth without the author's recent or last additions or emendations, by those publishers who are ready to seize upon expiring Copyrights.

That finally (and to this, above all, your Petitioner respectfully entreats the attention of your honourable House) the Bill has for its main object, to relieve men of letters from the thrall of being forced to court the living generation, to aid them in rising above degraded taste and slavish prejudice, and to encourage them to rely upon their own impulses, or to leave them with less excuse if they should fail to do so.

That your Petitioner therefore implores your honourable House that the Bill before it, for extending the term of Copyright, may pass into

46-7 inventions . . . discoveries *Petition*: discoveries and chemical inventions MS. 49 circumstance *Petition*: circumstances MS. 57 that *Petition*: that

either MS. 61 the Copyright *Petition*: copyright MS. 69 additions MS., *Edd.*: editions *Petition*. 70 In MS. a *cart* after Copyrights. indicates that

the sentence written in Mary W ordsworth's hand at the end of the last page should have been inserted. And not less important is this prolongation of Copyright needful for preventing the republication of such productions as the mature judgment of their Authors may have rejected, & which unconsentaneous Publishers may push into sale by advertizing their own edition as the only complete one of a deceased Author's writings.

a Law; a prayer which he makes in full faith that in this, as in all 80 other cases, justice is capable of working out its own expediency. And your Petitioner will ever pray.

Signed

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

81 cases MS., *Edd.*: causes *Petition*.

82 pray MS., *Edd.*: pray *Petition*.

COMMENTARY: COPYRIGHT

3-5. in your paper . . . Kendal] *Kendal Mercury*, 7 Apr. 1838, p. 2, col. 7. In effect, the petition is 'against' the Bill, but the final clause states 'That, in the opinion of your petitioners, such important alterations in the Law of Copyright as are contemplated by the said proposed Bill ought not to be made without the fullest inquiry; and your Petitioners therefore humbly entreat that it may please your Honourable House to postpone your sanction to the said Bill, and to appoint a Committee to inquire into its merits and tendency'.

In his quotations from the petition Wordsworth sometimes alters very slightly the phrasing, but he nowhere alters the substance; we shall quote the petition only where his omissions might be regarded as significant.

18-17. The second clause of the petition reads: 'That the attempt to extend the benefit of copyright to the term of the natural life of an Author, and Sixty years beyond (which, united, would in many cases amount to One Hundred years), is granting a privilege which is not at present, and ought not to be, enjoyed by productions of a literary character, as the effect of such privilege would be to render such works a mere dead letter' etc., as quoted by Wordsworth.

24-31. It is . . . disappointed] Wordsworth's information about American publishing seems to have been derived from conversations and correspondence with well-informed persons (*C.R.*, pp. 348-50; *L.T.*, pp. 830, 835-6; *Wordsworth and Reed*, ed. L. N. Broughton (Ithaca, N.Y., 1933), pp. 4-5).

33-43. Cf. Wordsworth to Thomas Wyse, 3 May 1838, *L.T.*, pp. 937-8.

49-50. The late . . . resides] Although his family resided for 'many years' at Greta Hall, Keswick, Coleridge himself resided 'among the Lakes' only about six years: July 1800-January 1804; September 1808-October 1810 (*C.L.* i. 607-8; ii. 1035; iii. 120, 296). Hartley Coleridge had returned to the Lakes in 1823; in April 1838 he was living in Grasmere (*Letters of Hartley Coleridge*, ed. G. E. Griggs and E. L. Griggs (London, 1936), pp. 74, 212, 221).

53-5. as to his . . . return] At his death Coleridge 'left his property, of which there was little more than the assurance policy, now worth £2,560, and the publishing rights in his manuscripts and letters . . . in trust for his wife and after her his children' (E. K. Chambers, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford, 1938), p. 330). The Income (or Property) Tax, imposed as a war tax in 1797, was repealed in 1816; on incomes of £200 and upward it had been two shillings per pound (William Smart, *Economic Annals of the Nineteenth Century* (reprinted, New York, 1964), i. 36-7, 113, 468).

56-60. His son . . . boast] The irregularity of Hartley Coleridge's life had long been a concern to the Wordsworths (see *L.T.*, pp. 349, 451-6, 465, 532, 530); Wordsworth's public praise of him here may have sprung from a desire to encourage him in his comparatively recent work, which included *Poems* (Leeds, 1833) and *Biographia Borealis, or Lines of Distinguished Northerns* (Leeds, 1833). In the Preface to his edition of the latter Derwent Coleridge says, 'Mr. Wordsworth thought so highly of the work, that he recommended the present publisher to omit no opportunity of obtaining an interest in the copyright' (*Lives of Northern Worthies* (London, 1852), i. xi-xii). In his petition of 1839 to the House of Commons, in support of the Copyright Bill, Hartley Coleridge's first clause reads: 'That your petitioner is the eldest son of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and has, in common with his brother and sister, no other patrimony than what may accrue from the literary works of his deceased father' (T. N. Talfourd, *Three Speeches . . . In Favour of a Measure for An Extension of Copyright* (London, 1840), p. 133).

58. the sands of Pactolus] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xi. 134-45.

60-2. Has even . . . like it] Southey's last years were made financially easier only by a bequest of £1,000 from the estate of Dr. Andrew Bell in 1832 and a government pension of £300 granted him in 1835 (*New Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. Kenneth Curry (New York, 1965), i. xix; ii. 383-4, 422).

64-7. And what . . . enumerated] Cf. Wordsworth's letters urging support of the Copyright Bill written to Gladstone, 23 March 1838, *L.T.*, p. 920: 'within the last three years or so my poetical writings have produced for me nearly 1,500 pounds'; and to Peel, 3 May 1838, *L.T.*, p. 936: 'I have gained much more from my long-published writings within the last five or six years than in the thirty preceding'. On Wordsworth's income from his published writings see *H.C.R.*, p. 486; Owen in *The Library*, 5th Ser. xii (1957), 93-107; Moorman, ii. 546-6, 552.

68-9. other . . . residence] In 1839 Thomas Arnold, Harriet Martineau, and John Wilson, who had residences in or near Ambleside, wrote or signed petitions in favour of Talfourd's Bill (see Talfourd, *Three Speeches*, pp. 126, 146-6).

80. purchased it:] The petition continues: 'The work ought then to be as widely circulated as possible, in order that society at large may be improved by the diffusion of that information which it contains.' Wordsworth has answered this point in 33-43.

87-92. his 'Life . . . exist] *The Life of Nelson* (London, 1813) has had nearly sixty editions, the most recent being that edited by E. R. H. Harvey (London, 1953); *Book of the Church* (London, 1824) has had perhaps ten, the most recent being an edition of 1885.

92/93. Wordsworth has been taking up each clause of the petition in succession; he omits the fifth:

That the present liberty enjoyed of extracting from books is not prejudicial to the authors of such books, inasmuch as those books which have been most liberally

extracted from have enjoyed the greatest sale; and that to forbid such extracts being made would be productive of great injury to the community, who, from their generally impoverished condition, are unable to purchase original and expensive works.

107-12. There is . . . consent] Richard Batt, *Gleanings in Poetry, with Notes and Illustrations*, First Series (London, 1836). In the Preface Batt writes:

In conclusion, I cannot do otherwise than state that my grateful acknowledgments are due, and are hereby respectfully offered to the three distinguished poets—Robert Southey, William Wordsworth, and James Montgomery, who have so kindly and liberally permitted me to "glean" in the rich harvest-field of their labours. . . . The appearance of a second series . . . will . . . depend upon the reception given to the present series . . . among the mass of matter that thus awaits my disposal, I feel enriched by the possession of a number of other choice pieces of composition by the distinguished authors to whom I have just referred [pp. xxxvi-xxxvii].

Batt appears not to have published a second series. In the first, James Montgomery (d. 1864), with eighteen pages, appears to be Wordsworth's nearest rival, while Felicia Hemans (d. 1835) and Sir Walter Scott (d. 1832) tie for third place. Wordsworth's poems are scattered throughout the volume.

113-24. Again . . . friends] R. F. Housman, *A Collection of English Sonnets* (London and Manchester, 1835), xxxi, 333 pp. Wordsworth's sonnets fill pp. 119-75; for the sake of comparison see Shakespeare, pp. 21-46; Milton, pp. 73-89; Hartley Coleridge, pp. 221-7; R. C. Tregent, pp. 286-96. In reading *The Kendal Mercury*, we have not found the item about the threatened injunction.

131. given above] i.e. 18-43.

151-4. as to . . . fallacious] In 195-201 this analogy is similarly dismissed, but Wordsworth was soon compelled to treat it at some length. Writing to Talfourd, 3 May 1838, he quoted from a letter which he had just received from Sir Robert Peel: "'I confess to you that I do not see my way clearly. If the right of the author to such extended protection be admitted, can we refuse it in the case of Patents? and of every discovery mainly owing to the ingenuity or skill of the discoverers'" (*L.T.*, p. 933). In part, Wordsworth answered Peel's objection by transcribing for him a portion of Talfourd's recent speech as reported in *The Times*, 26 Apr. 1838, p. 3, cols. 4-5, and he then added: 'Of the broad distinctions I may not, perhaps, be an impartial judge, as I have had the honour of hearing them adopted from suggestions of my own, and they appear to have made an impression upon the public' (*L.T.*, pp. 934-5).

160-8. A strong . . . principle] Wordsworth is summarizing Philip Howard's letter of 11 April 1838, part of which is quoted in our Introduction. On 2 April *The Times* (p. 5, col. 1) reported that at meetings held on 26 and 27 March the London booksellers and publishers adopted a petition against the Bill and appointed a committee to watch over it in

Parliament: on 6 April *The Times* (p. 3, col. 1) reported a similar meeting of master printers.

171-83. You will . . . a class] For Wordsworth's petition submitted to the House of Commons in February 1839 see Appendix.

184-94. Such right . . . assign it] In his introductory speech Talford first reviewed the history of perpetual copyright as recognized by the common law of England, and then argued that any statute limitation is a compromise 'between those who deny that the creations of the inventive faculty, or the achievements of reason, are the subjects of property at all, and those who think the property should last as long as the works which contain truth and beauty live' (*A Speech Delivered By Thomas Noon Talford, Sergeant at Law, In the House of Commons on Thursday, 18th May, 1837* (London, 1837), pp. 2-4, 8).

196-201. though I . . . proved] Cf. 151-4 and n.

202-8. From the . . . maintaining] In his speech made two days after the publication of this letter Talford said:

It has, sir, been asserted, that authors themselves have little interest in this question, and that they are, in fact, indifferent or hostile to the measure. True it is, that the greatest living writers have felt reluctant to appear as petitioners for it, as a personal boon; but I believe there are few who do not feel the honour of Literature embarked in the cause, and earnestly desire its success. Mr. Wordsworth, emerging for a moment from the seclusion he has courted, has publicly declared his conviction of its justice [*Three Speeches*, p. 62].

214-16. reasonings . . . public journals] From textual n. 208-17 it is clear that Wordsworth is thinking primarily of articles in *The Morning Post* by William Johnston; see Zall, *PMLA* lxx (1955), 138.

COMMENTARY: APPENDIX

Part I

4-6. *Time* . . . judge] Cf. *E.S.* 843 ff., and Wordsworth to the Revd. Robert Montgomery, Feb. 1835: 'Posterity will settle all accounts justly . . . works which deserve to last will last' (*L.T.*, p. 731).

8. sythe] An accepted nineteenth-century spelling.

8-9. pilgrim's bottle] The 'antiquarian designation' of a costrel, 'a flat bottle with a ring on each side of the neck for the insertion of cords by which it may be hung and carried' (*O.E.D.*, s.vv. 'costrel'¹ and 'pilgrim' 8b).

12. Doctrinaires] Cf. Talford to Wordsworth, 21 Mar. 1838 (Healey, item 3159): 'the Doctrinaire party are inclined to support them [the book-sellers], and Wordsworth to Gladstone, 23 Mar. 1838 (*L.T.*, p. 919): the

booksellers 'will be supported by the Doctrinaires (who are they? Warburton and Grote and id genus omne, I suppose)'. In the House of Commons Henry Warburton, George Grote, and Thomas Wakley did, in fact, lead the opposition against the Copyright Bill.

13-47. The fate . . . afterward] The thesis is developed at length in *E.S.* 208-664.

14-17. Some that . . . do so] Cf. *E.S.* 190-2: 'numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them.'

26-7. *Tirocinium: Or, A Review of Schools*, 141-2, in *The Complete Poetical Works of William Couper*, ed. H. S. Milford (London, 1913), p. 246.

30-1. In . . . Shakespeare] In taking dictation Mary Wordsworth perhaps misheard 'two plays' as '10 plays'; see *E.S.* 251-2 ('Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakespeare's') and n. ad loc.

32-8. Byshe . . . be] Edward Byshe, *The Art of English Poetry*, 4th edn. (London, 1710):

I have inserted . . . the most Natural and Sublime Thoughts of our Modern Poets on all Subjects whatever. I say of our Modern; for tho' some of the Antient, as *Chaucer*, *Spenser*, and others, have not been excell'd, perhaps not equall'd, by any that have succeeded them . . . yet their Language is now become so antiquated and obsolete, that most Readers of our Age have no Ear for them: And this is the Reason that the good *Shakespeare* himself is not so frequently cited in this Collection, as he would otherwise deserve to be [*The Preface* on unnumbered pages. Cf. Rydal Mount Catalogue, lot 485].

43-7. such as . . . afterward] i.e. *E.S.* 397-485; see especially 467-81 and n. to 478-9 and fn.

48-54. In his . . . obtained] No. 208 (14 Mar. 1752), except that Johnson writes 'of the public' (51) and 'by which favour is obtained' (54).

55. 45 years . . . bookseller] Probably Joseph Johnson (see our Introduction to *Llandaff*, i. 21, 24).

56-7. its . . . the World] *The Connoisseur*, 31 Jan. 1764-30 Sept. 1766; *The World*, 11 Jan. 1763-30 Dec. 1766.

61. The Rambler . . . 1760] The first number was 20 March 1760; the last, 14 March 1762.

61-5. When . . . refused] In 1784 Boswell and Reynolds tried unsuccessfully to get Johnson a grant from the government that would have permitted him to spend the winter in Italy; they met, as Johnson said, with a 'cold reception' (*Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill and L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), iv. 326-8, 336-7, 348-50).

Part II

1-11. To Wordsworth's appeal for support of Talfourd's Bill among his 'parliamentary Friends' (*L.T.*, p. 920), William Gomm replied, 30 March 1838 (Healey, item 2844):

... although I feel [?] assured, that Burke's Estimate of Some Services that he had borne a part—and a very large one—in rendering to the State—"That between money and *such* Services there is no common measure of Comparison:—they are Quantities incommensurable"—applies with a tenfold force in the Case here adduced: inasmuch as the Services here rendered are for all States and for all time.—Still, there has always appeared to me, something monstrous in the existing Relation between Author and Book-seller or publisher, as regards Remuneration of this sort:—a positive reversing of the Natural Order of Things, as we find it obtains in all matters else:—a Subservience (pro tanto) of the Spiritual to the Material.

Mainly by omissions, Wordsworth mends Gomm's tangled syntax, but neither he nor Gomm quotes accurately the passage from Burke's *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796): 'my exertions, whatever they have been, were such as no hopes of pecuniary reward could possibly excite; and no pecuniary compensation can possibly reward them. Between money and such services, if done by abler men than I am, there is no common principle of comparison; they are quantities incommensurable' (*Works* (Bohn's Standard Library, 1886), v. 114).

For Gomm's career and his friendship with Wordsworth see de Selincourt's n., *L.T.*, pp. 699-700.

Part III

1-84. Wordsworth's, which is the longest, is the first petition to be printed among those in favour of the Bill; the second is signed by twenty-one Scottish authors; the third, by thirty-four English authors (e.g. Browning, Carlyle, Dickens, Thomas Hood, Leigh Hunt, Harriet Martineau, Samuel Rogers). When Talfourd (*Three Speeches* (London, 1840), pp. 141-4) printed the petition of Thomas Hood, he said that this petition 'was thought too richly studded with jests to be presented to the House of Commons'; presumably Carlyle's individual petition (*Three Speeches*, pp. 136-8) was omitted from the *Appendix* ... on *Public Petitions* for a similar reason. Besides Wordsworth's, only six other petitions printed in the *Appendix* (pp. 91-7) bear single signatures.

5-8. since ... thirty-five] *An Evening Walk* (London, 1793); *Tarrow Revised, and Other Poems* (London, 1835).

21-2. to interest ... permanently] Cf. *P.L.B.* 29-30.

28-30. within ... public] Cf. *Copyright*, 64-7 and n.

50-1. as was shewn ... Parliament] See our n. to *Copyright*, 151-4, and Talfourd, *Three Speeches*, pp. 56-62.

52-64. Cf. *Copyright*, 18-43, 128-38.

70. textual n. Two short paragraphs in a letter from Wordsworth to Crabb Robinson, 19 Feb. 1839 (*C.R.*, p. 379) not only elucidate for us the odd appearance of this sentence as an after-thought to be inserted in a carefully copied manuscript, but also, more importantly, help us to identify the Cornell manuscript as Wordsworth's personal copy of the petition; by the time he dictated the insertion to Mary Wordsworth, Talfourd had already received the petition 'upon parchment' for presentation to Parliament. (It will be recalled from our Introduction that Robinson was visiting Wordsworth when the draft was being drawn up.)

I sent up, as you know, a draft of the Petition adding in a letter to the Sergeant that my fear of being lengthy had prevented my inserting two or three clauses—which I mentioned, & as he rather recommended the incorporating these I did so.—He expressed his satisfaction of the whole, when it was returned to him upon parchment—I still regret however the omission of one clause, which did not strike me at the time—viz—

That the amended Bill would take away from vernal Publishers the liberty of re-publishing such things as the Author might have discarded—whereas, as the law now is, when an Author who has begun early and lived to a good age dies—they can reprint those Pieces & pass off *their* injurious editions as the only complete collection of the Writers Works—The fear of this, absolutely prevented Southey from throwing overboard in his last Ed: several minor pieces that were written merely for the newspapers when he wanted money.