



T I M B U R K E

Lord Lonsdale and His Protégés: William Wordsworth and John Hardie

THIS ESSAY IS CONCERNED with two poets working in the service of Sir William Lowther, second Earl of Lonsdale, both actively advancing his considerable interests in the politics of northwest England in the 1830s. One of the poets is, of course, William Wordsworth, who had been in the “pay” of Lonsdale since 1813. The other seems to have received nothing by way of financial or indeed any other kind of direct support from the earl, but nonetheless belongs sufficiently within the Lowther family’s extensive sphere of influence to be described as a protégé of sorts.¹ His name is John Hardie (born c. 1782), a cabinetmaker and author of occasional poetry that was collected in a volume published at Whitehaven, thirty miles to the west of Rydal Mount, in 1839.² Both men wrote poems promoting Lord Lonsdale and endorsing the wider “Lowther interest,” with a particular emphasis on the earl as an embodiment of “truth” and the ideal of aristocratic and paternalist masculinity. In so doing, Lonsdale’s poets were trying to counter his very different representation in the hostile radical and reformist press; his political vulnerability after the passage of the reform bills that he had so aggressively opposed was an opportunity for radical opponents to question his honesty and even his noble masculine identity.

Lonsdale was a sometimes shrewd, sometimes far from subtle manipulator of the local press in the Lake Counties. His quest for influence dates back at least as far as 1818, and the election of that year, in which Henry Brougham first stood against the Lowther interest, challenging the complacent assumption that the earl’s sons would be elected unopposed. Lord Lonsdale—like Wordsworth and Robert Southey—saw the urgent necessity of controlling the press. Not unlike the New Labour activists in the 2005 British general election, who filled local newspapers with letters purporting to be from politically neutral citizens concerned about opposition policy, Wordsworth and other Lonsdale supporters packed the pages of the *Kendal Chronicle* with apocalyptic warnings of Brougham’s intentions. These letters are the basis of the pamphlet *Two Addresses*

to the *Freeholders of Westmoreland*, published during the fractious election campaign of 1818. As Stephen Gill notes, behind the scenes Wordsworth was attempting to “browbeat” the *Chronicle’s* editor into renouncing his support for the Whig candidate.³ But perhaps today’s political operatives would stop short of Wordsworth’s suggestion to Lonsdale that he should expand a media portfolio that already included *The Cumberland Pacquet*—“Lord Lonsdale’s mouth-piece,” the *Carlisle Journal* called it—by simply buying out the owners of the *Chronicle*. In the end, Lonsdale established a rival newspaper, the *Westmoreland Gazette*, and Wordsworth was instrumental in Thomas De Quincey’s appointment as its editor in July 1818. When De Quincey’s performance “displeased” the proprietor, Gill observes, Wordsworth was deputed to “lean heavily” on him, too.⁴

The Lonsdale papers were notoriously partial in their reporting of stories that might undermine the Lowther interest. Little or nothing of the various disasters that occurred in the family’s coal mines was reported, and details of the persistent and extensive anti-Lowther riots at Carlisle during the 1826 general election campaign were thoroughly suppressed. But there is a noticeable sophistication in Lord Lonsdale’s technique of media control in the 1830s, as his implacable opposition to the reform bills brought him into conflict with a new generation of liberals and radicals. Lonsdale’s need to manage the media was intensified by Whig incursions into his political territory in the 1830 election, after which the anti-Lonsdale newspapers and printers at Carlisle, Whitehaven, and Kendal lost their former timidity against a now-vulnerable rival. One Kendal printer perhaps discovered the consequences of crossing the Lowthers when in late 1831 Lord Lonsdale arranged to send in his heavies. The printer had dared to publish a handbill, called the “Black List” after the thick band of dark ink framing the page, apparently (since no copies survive) detailing the dubious origins of part of the earl’s income. That the heavies in question were William Wordsworth and Robert Southey does not detract entirely from the sinister implications of what Lonsdale was urging them to do: “It might not be amiss,” he wrote from London in November 1831, “to give a hint to the Keswick printer as to the use to which his press is applied. He must know, as far as regards me in particular, that he is giving currency to a Falsehood—these statements have been contradicted in many of the County Papers—but the Keswick Printer is a true impudent varlet, to put forth such a scandal. I am much obliged to Mr. Southey for the notice he has taken of this Handbill.”⁵

Whatever menaces were employed with the Keswick printer, other hostile presses continued to challenge Lonsdale’s authority. Throughout 1830 and the following two years, three prominent anti-Lowther newspapers—the *Carlisle Journal*, the *Whitehaven Herald*, and the redoubtable *Kendal Chronicle*—were alleging another case of financial misdemeanor: they claimed to have new evidence that Lonsdale had misappropriated monies donated to a charity he had established for the benefit of St. Bees School, on whose board of governors he sat, and had “sur-

reptitiously obtained a lease of certain coal-mines belonging to St. Bees," resulting in "the people of England" being "defrauded of a sum amounting to about 261,380 l."⁶ The drip of evidence about the irregularities, in addition to the regular flow of satire, derision, and complaint against the Lowther family and the earl in particular, had to be stopped. The newspapers were served with a writ for libel, and the trial was heard at Carlisle Assizes from 5 August to 9 August 1833.

Writing to Edward Moxon on 10 August 1833, Wordsworth makes his only direct contemporary reference to the trial, with a passing mention of his "having attended the Assizes at Carlisle."⁷ Wordsworth's involvement in the trial was greater than mere attendance might suggest: he was there to provide affidavits on the identities of the defendants, since newspaper proprietorship was legally registered by the distributor of stamps for Westmoreland, a post (no sinecure) he had held since 1813. He remained in court for the duration of the trial. Scholarly indifference to the trial and its significance is a consequence of several factors: Wordsworth's minimizing of his role in it in the Moxon letter, a general preference for the early phase of the poet's long career, and the credence given to Wordsworth's own recollection of the trial some two years later, in the footnote to a sonnet addressed to Lonsdale that appeared in *Yarrow Revisited* in 1835: "the Earl of Lonsdale, in consequence of repeated and long continued attacks upon his character, through the local press, had thought it right to prosecute the conductors and proprietors of three several journals. A verdict of libel was given in one case; and in the others, the prosecutions were withdrawn, upon the individuals retracting and disavowing the charges, expressing regret that they had been made, and promising to abstain from the like in future."⁸ However, a very different account of the trial, the reasons for the withdrawn prosecutions, the significance of the verdict recorded, and Wordsworth's role in the proceedings can be found in several independent sources: the distinctly partial accounts of the trial and its extended and scandalous aftermath reported in the papers that Lonsdale had sued; a brief note sent to the earl by his son, the day after the trial; the memoirs of Lord Denman, later Lord Chief Justice of England; and most substantively, the correspondence of Edward Rushton Jr. (1795–1851), a young lawyer with radical sympathies who was struggling to establish himself on the northern circuit. (He was the son of an important Liverpool laboring-class poet, but his career eventually prospered with the patronage of Lord Brougham, Lonsdale's long-standing rival.⁹) These versions of events reveal the trial to be more interesting and complex than the 1835 note in *Yarrow Revisited* would suggest. Rushton's account suggests that it offered an at best ambivalent victory for Lonsdale, and the unexpected invocation of Wordsworth's own radical past in court had ramifications for the construction of his own precarious identity as man and poet.

On 7 August 1833, in a letter to his wife, Rushton described how he came to intervene in the case. Realizing that Wordsworth was in court, he advised Sir Cresswell Cresswell, the leader of the northern circuit and the defending counsel,

that exposing the former republican sympathies of Lonsdale's protégé might help to undermine the prosecution case. Rushton tells of how "From memory," he recited for Cresswell many passages written when Wordsworth was "a friend to liberty." Among the Wordsworthian writings cited in court was *The Convention of Cintra*: "I gave the Counsel a passage from one of Wordsworth's pamphlets, which he suppressed, but a copy of which I had got hold of once, and from which I stored in my memory several passages. This passage the Counsel made use of in the close of his speech, stating that 'if printers were not allowed to use the liberty of the Press, we might be made quiet, but we should cease to be free.'"¹⁰ Cresswell also cited, at Rushton's urging, one of Wordsworth's loftiest passages, to force the contrast between the diminutive Lonsdale and the heroic stature of England's historical defenders: "O sorrow! O misery for England, the land of liberty and courage and peace . . . O sorrow and shame for . . . her good men who now look upon the day; — and her long train of deliverers and defenders, her Alfred, her Sidneys and her Milton; whose voice yet speaketh for our reproach; and whose actions survive in memory to confound us, or to redeem!"¹¹

Rushton's retention of long passages from *The Convention of Cintra*, Wordsworth's 1809 indictment of the secret treaty signed by British ministers and generals permitting and aiding the Napoleonic army's withdrawal from Spain, is remarkable (and probably unique). In Wordsworth's long tract, one can detect the thinking of the Tory humanist described by Michael Friedman, but there are also some residual flickers of his early republicanism. As Deirdre Coleman has noted, Wordsworth relives his earlier Jacobin sympathies in imagining the "open field of a republic" in Spain and Portugal as a "sublime possibility."¹² According to Peter Manning, 1809 reprises Wordsworth's revolutionary enthusiasm of 1791, as he once again came to see a "nation's eruption into violence as noble."¹³ "Let the fire, which is never wholly to be extinguished, break out afresh; let but the human creature be roused; whether he have lain heedless and torpid in religious or civil slavery—have languished under a thralldom, domestic or foreign . . . let him rise and act": Wordsworth here, and in his dismay at the "rotten customs and precedents" of the "heads of the British army and nation" who betrayed the heroic Spaniards, sounds rather closer to the radical rhetoric of Thomas Paine than to Edmund Burke.¹⁴ In seeing the Peninsular War as "a purified version of the [French] revolution," and in calling for a county meeting to be held in protest, he certainly risked conflict with Lord Lonsdale.¹⁵ Southey remarked in October 1808 that "if anything is done [about *Cintra*] in Cumberland here it will originate with Wordsworth," and that Lonsdale would "do all he can to prevent a meeting, or oppose anything that may be done at once."¹⁶ Rushton and Cresswell's decontextualized citations from *Cintra* in 1833 are thus an attempt to expose something of the Tory hireling's radical past, and thus cast doubt on Lonsdale's judgment, both in his choice of protégé and his pursuit of the proprietors and editors of the radical press.

Of greatest embarrassment to both Wordsworth and Lonsdale was the further citation, in court, of *Cintra's* precise anatomy of a corrupt ruling class.¹⁷ Lord Denman, who in 1833 was, like Rushton, a young lawyer on the northern circuit, recalled in his *Memoir* that "in [Wordsworth's] presence, Cresswell . . . read an eloquent passage from . . . The Convention of Cintra, stating as the most disgusting proof of moral degradation in any people, that its nobles abuse the charitable funds entrusted to its management."¹⁸ Lonsdale's libel suit was of course an attempt to clear himself of precisely this imputation, and so Rushton eagerly records the poet's humiliation as his words, long since renounced, were rehearsed for the jury: "Wordsworth sat, during the trial, with his face buried in his hands, but when he heard this glowing passage he uncovered his face, which was suffused with a blush which made his ears red . . . Though I had nothing to do with the case, it excited me very much. The most was not made of it."¹⁹ Perhaps Lonsdale blushed, too, since in 1813 he had insisted that in order for Wordsworth to hold a government post, all extant copies of *The Convention of Cintra* must be withdrawn and destroyed. That the repressed—or in the case of print, suppressed—always returns is painfully discovered by patron and protégé here. Rushton's disappointment that "the most was not made" of the Lonsdale-Wordsworth connection is presumably directed at Cresswell, but perhaps also, given Lonsdale's provocative campaign against reform and the volatility of Cumberland politics, toward local radicals who might have better exploited the trial's powder-keg potential.²⁰ In the event, no mobs were mobilized and no riots ensued, but the trial and its aftermath were deeply embarrassing for both Wordsworth and Lonsdale.

Wordsworth's discomfort was intensified when it emerged that he was indirectly responsible for the acquittal of one of the defendants, James Steel, the editor and co-proprietor of the *Carlisle Journal*. The first day of the trial was a scene of confusion, because Wordsworth's affidavit proved inadmissible. His role in court was to confirm that the defendants were indeed registered as proprietors with his office of distributor of stamps. According to Wordsworth's documentation, one William Steel was registered as proprietor; and while the man in the dock was indeed the proprietor, since his name was not William but James Steel, the affidavit was deemed inadmissible and Steel was acquitted on this technicality: "the error was fatal," the *Carlisle Journal* reported gleefully.²¹ The irony of the trial turning on the question of *Who is William?* is delicious. Thanks to Rushton's intervention, it is not just William alias James Steel on trial, but William the Tory alias William the Jacobin Wordsworth, William present, and William past.

On hearing that the case against Steel had collapsed, the earl's son wrote to his father, lamenting the "stupidity" of the mistake.²² (This complaint was not directed at Wordsworth personally, of course, but at the miscommunication between his office and the prosecuting counsel.) Lonsdale's anger can only be guessed at, but there were further embarrassments in store. Steel's co-proprietor,

Francis Jollie, the well-known Carlisle printer, had died before the case came to court, and his wife, Margaret, who inherited his stake in the paper, was in court to answer the libel charge. Of the four defendants, she was the only one found guilty, though even in this instance the jury "recommend[ed] her in the strongest manner to the merciful consideration of the Court."²³ Lonsdale nonetheless pursued her for damages, and in mid-November chose to press for her arrest and imprisonment without bail, pending trial in January 1834. The *Times* editorial of 3 December, possibly composed by Lonsdale's old enemy Brougham, gleefully chastised the treatment of "the widow Jollie" as "a piece of gratuitous harshness, to which there is seldom parallel found."²⁴ The *Whitehaven Herald* also referred ironically to the earl's "manly and charitable purpose of consigning to gaol before sentence, a defenceless female," while the *Carlisle Journal* conjured a sentimental tableau of the five children left unprotected by the earl's ruthless pursuit of their mother.²⁵ Lonsdale's own papers, sensing that the scandal would bring further ignominy, moved to limit further damage to his carefully styled image as a model of Burkean paternalism, a defender of the poor and the vulnerable.²⁶ With the preservation of this reputation in mind, the *Cumberland Pacquet* insisted, in response to whispers of his brutal treatment of Margaret Jollie, that "the Noble Earl does not wage war upon women."²⁷

Some of the tensions that emerge in these exchanges in the months following the conclusion of the trial are anticipated in two sonnets (published in 1835) that Wordsworth wrote immediately after its conclusion, at Lord Lonsdale's country seat, Lowther Castle.²⁸ The first sonnet ("Lowther, in thy majestic Pile are seen") is an apostrophe to the castle, telling the "authentic Story" (l. 13) of the building and its owner. The second is addressed "To the Earl of Lonsdale," and is similarly concerned with the nature and the extent of Lonsdale's authority, which, as in the newspaper debates that followed, depend upon ideas about the proper conduct of aristocratic masculinity. It is cited in full here:

To the Earl of Lonsdale

'Magistratus indicat virum.'

Lonsdale! it were unworthy of a Guest,
Whose heart with gratitude to thee inclines,
If he should speak, by fancy touched, of signs
On thy Abode harmoniously imprest,
Yet be unmoved with wishes to attest
How in thy mind and moral frame agree
Fortitude and that christian Charity
Which, filling, consecrates the human breast.
And if the Motto on thy 'scutcheon teach
With truth, 'The Magistracy shows the Man;'
That searching test thy public course has stood;

As will be owned alike by bad and good,
 Soon as the measuring of life's little span
 Shall place thy virtues out of Envy's reach.

According to Alan Hill, this sonnet "was inspired by the vindication of Lord Lonsdale's character which [the Carlisle libel trial] had produced."²⁹ But in the light of what is now known of this trial, these sonnets no longer look like routine poems of praise, but rather studied attempts by Wordsworth to shore up his patron's challenged integrity and authority.

This attempt at repair is in part undertaken by summoning Edmund Burke's "magisterial" presence and aligning Lonsdale with him. Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) is, as Tim Fulford has shown, the ultimate source of Wordsworth's preferred model of gendered authority: a sublime masculinity that accommodates a paternalistic responsibility to defend the weak.³⁰ The two sonnets composed at Lowther in August 1833 share the vocabulary and the heroizing tone of Wordsworth's famous address to the "Genius of Burke" in the 1850 *Prelude* (a passage composed in late 1832). Burke here is a "vigorous" masculine "oak" with "stag-horn branches;" his "majesty proclaims / Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time," while always defending the more culturally feminized "power of social ties, / Endeared by custom."³¹ In Wordsworth's sonnet "To the Earl of Lonsdale," the earl is vulnerable to "Envy's reach," but possesses the masculine power to counter it—"The Magistracy shows the Man." He nonetheless inclines hearts to "gratitude," and those worthy of his protection are "by fancy touched." In the other sonnet, Lowther Castle is similarly vulnerable—"Hourly the democratic torrent swells" (l. 9) against it—but it, too, is fortified by a Burkean "strength of backward-looking thoughts" (l. 11) and it stands, like Burke in *The Prelude*, "majestic" (l. 1), possessing (feminized) grace and elegance, yet with an aspect of "sterner mien" (l. 3). This last phrase suggestively echoes *The Convention of Cintra*, so recently rehearsed at Carlisle Assizes: a nation, Wordsworth had written in 1809, needs both "the sterner qualities which constitute the appropriate excellence of the male character" and the "gentler and tender virtues which belong more especially to motherliness and womanhood."³² Lonsdale, these sonnets insist, embodies aspects of both of these "general laws."³³

The tortuous sentence that forms the octave of the sonnet to Lonsdale speaks of a desire to testify to, and produce agreement upon, the harmonious marriage of masculine fortitude and more feminine charity in the earl. But the premise that the earl's magistracy is a reliable index to his human and manly qualities is less certainly endorsed in the concluding six lines. The sestet begins with an "If": this provisional tends to invite the reader to place the following reference to a sure vindication under particular scrutiny. Of course, if the motto emblazoned on Lonsdale's armory *does* teach with truth, then his innocence must be conceded

by the "bad" and the "good" alike. The future tense in which this admission of Lonsdale's innocence is phrased is really quite surprising, because we are told that his character *has already* stood its searching, public test: he has just won his court case, at least against Margaret Jollie. (This reduction of the libel case's complexity makes one wonder why the poem needs to be uttered at all if the division of the bad from the good is so obvious.) But the poem clearly states that his Lordship's virtue *will be* recognized, and only after his death, as the final two lines insist: the truth of the motto "*Magistratus indicat virum*" can only be "owned" once "life's little span" has placed Lonsdale's "virtue" out of "Envy's reach." Moreover, by the time the reader gets to this important detail, the rhyme has been so long in coming—"reach" is a long way away from "teach" at line 9, in a rhyme scheme unusual for both Wordsworth and the English sonnet tradition—that its effect is indeed to make us "reach:" we have to reach back through the mazy syntax and ask again, restaging the provisional in lines 9–10, "if the Motto on thy scutcheon teach / With truth."

The poem's structure loops in a fashion that inadvertently casts doubt on its declared intentions, and even the octave's defense of Lonsdale's character, to which the speaker was happy to "attest," no longer seems so secure. This insecurity is due to the poem's unconventional and rather awkward structure, but to a greater extent results from the radical instabilities inherent in testimonial language itself, which Wordsworth had so recently and painfully encountered in the botched affidavit and the citing of *Cintra* at Carlisle. The poem states, straightforwardly enough, that a guest would prove "unworthy," "if he should speak" about "signs"—specifically the words emblazoned on Lonsdale's escutcheon—and yet be "unmoved" to attest to the harmony of the signifier and the signified in this utterance. Yet the reiteration of Lonsdale's motto does not merely indicate or describe the qualities of Sir William the man; it also reveals the process through which his public identity is constructed. To adapt the model employed by Judith Butler, Lonsdale's authority accrues value from its "citational force."³⁴ His magistracy is predicated on the continued performance of the appropriate model of paternal manliness. Magistracy here does not so much *indicate* as *create* the man, and after the Carlisle trial the need to remake and reiterate that reputation for truth and magistracy was urgent.

The contribution to this project of Wordsworth's sonnets on Lonsdale and his castle is limited. They are instances of what J. L. Austin terms "misfires:" linguistic acts that inadvertently fail in their attempt to performatively produce respect for aristocratic "magistracy."³⁵ This is not just because Wordsworth might have personal reservations about the universal truth of the claim on the Lonsdale armory: as is well known, the earl's predecessor, Sir James Lowther (popularly known as the "Bad Earl"), had fraudulently withheld monies that he owed to his steward, John Wordsworth, William's father.³⁶ In fact, the claims made in these sonnets "misfire" both on their own terms and also because, even

after the Carlisle trial, the anti-Lowther press, uncowed, simply carried on hounding the earl.

Later in the 1830s, poetry still served a purpose in the continual remaking of Lonsdale's authority and identity. John Hardie, a poor cabinetmaker working in remote Whitehaven, on the Cumberland coast, was writing verses that, like Wordsworth's, attempt to bolster Lonsdale's vulnerable power. His "Lines, on the Celebration of the Right Honourable the Earl of Lonsdale's Birth-Day [1836]" is similarly prone to misfire, however. The poem begins unpromisingly, with what sounds like the familiar laboring-class writer's pitch for patronage:

To celebrate great Lonsdale's natal day,
I humbly offer my untutor'd lay;
A plebeian bard dares utter Lonsdale's name,
Not praise: —his worth and merits proudly told his fame.

(ll. 5–8)

The syntax and the meter are, for a self-consciously humble offering, aptly awkward. But Hardie's poem does share with Wordsworth's superficially more confident sonnet a conviction that the magistracy shows the man better than any poem of praise can. Wordsworth, however, whose poem begins with an apostrophe to his patron, does not feel it to be an act of daring to "utter Lonsdale's name."

The rest of Hardie's poem is better wrought, if only in the sense that its speaker goes on briefly but strategically to align himself with Vulcan (who fashions instruments of war from metal), while casting Lonsdale as Jove. In Book I of the *Iliad*, Juno is persuaded by Vulcan to cede her desire for agency in the world of mortals to Jove's remote magistracy. Their reconciliation is toasted with nectar and sky-shaking laughter, a scene revisited in Hardie's birthday poem:

The Poet's song informs us, gods of yore,
Whilst drinking nectar made the welkin roar;
Uproarious mirth Olympus echo'd round,
And Jove's loud laughter shook the solid ground.
Could gods behold us, (but, alas! They're dead,)
They would confess we flourish'd in their stead.
Our nectar copiously o'erflows each bowl,
Then fill your glasses, wine expands the soul,
To celebrate the birth of him we love

(ll. 9–17)

Homer's Vulcan may labor with his hands, but his facility with words as well as materials means he can manipulate the gods for his advantage: Jove and Juno reunited are, in Pope's translation, "Monuments of Vulcan's Art."³⁷ Hardie

resembles Vulcan in both respects. In another birthday poem, "Lines, on the Celebration of the Right Honourable the Earl of Lonsdale's Birth-Day [1837]," he asserts Lonsdale's masculine supremacy as the "noblest chieftain of the noblest line," (l. 20) but he also deploys the power of the artfully artless verse that is the laboring-poet's stock-in-trade, making peace, petitioning for protection and influence, not awed by sublime magistracy but forging relations of "love."

Yet as in Wordsworth's sonnet, the more Hardie's daring plebeian voice tries to articulate Lonsdale's noble masculinity and the repose of "truth" on Lonsdale's name, the more it seems likely to misfire. The rhetoric threatens to unravel, to reveal instead a vulnerability, in both Lonsdale and his supporters, to "vile traitors" and reproving dissent:

Who dare condemn us or who dare reprove?
 Here friendship freely its kind soul discloses,
 And on its fellow's truth firmly reposes;
 Here care disturbs not, pleasure fills each breast,
 And no vile traitor rears his hateful crest

(ll. 18–22)

The deictics in this passage refer to a precise location: the poem's occasion is the scene of its first public reading, in the dining rooms of the Hensingham Inn, in which Lonsdale's supporters and employees had gathered, as they did every year on 29 December, to toast his birthday. Throughout the county, similar annual celebrations were taking place: the *Lonsdale paper the Cumberland Pacquet* reported of the 1838 festivities, "at all these places the meetings were kept up with great spirit and glee, and all present were delighted with the manner in which the evening was spent."³⁸

Poems like "Lines, on the Celebration of the Right Honourable the Earl of Lonsdale's Birth-Day [1836]" guaranteed Hardie's *Poems on Various Subjects* a favorable review in the *Pacquet*, even if it passed without notice elsewhere: it was "the first work of the kind . . . ever written and published in Whitehaven and on that ground, independent of its literary merits . . . entitled to a passing notice at our hands."³⁹ Hardie is praised in terms familiarly reserved for laboring poets: he possessed, the *Pacquet's* reviewer thought, a "lively fancy, and considerable strength of imagination" that would "do credit to bards of much higher pretensions than our author." "Upon the whole," the review concludes, "the volume does Mr Hardie infinite credit; we congratulate him on its appearance, and trust the public will not be backward in rewarding the literary labours of our talented fellow-townsmen."⁴⁰

Hardie was not a native of Whitehaven, however; he was born in Glasserton, in southwest Scotland, in or around 1782. He belongs to a long tradition of Scot-

tish laborer poets who moved to England and published their work there. He refers to himself as the “Bard of Glasserton” in the prefatory remarks to *Poems on Various Subjects*, and dedicated it to Stair Hathorn Stewart Esq. of Glasserton: the “magical fire of poesy was kindled within my soul” in childhood, he says, and “fond and undying recollections of the blissful scenes of my early youth—the unimpaired veneration for the memory of your honoured ancestors—together with your own amiable and endearing qualities, prompt me to dedicate to you the first effusions of the Bard of Glasserton. Honoured by your patronage, and favoured with your name, my untaught sympathetic song may cheer the sad and calm the gay.”⁴¹ Where Hardie’s admiration for Lonsdale works to cement his masculine status as ultimate chieftain who nonetheless cultivates the “kind soul” of “friendship,” relations with Stewart are characterized by a more consistently social (and thus culturally feminine) vocabulary. Amiability, endearment, sympathy, and calm are the key terms here.

Hardie’s styling of himself as a lower-class agent of peace, genuflecting all the same before Lonsdale’s complex masculinity, was a winning combination in the specific circumstances of the late 1830s. A volume of poems by a literary laborer was a pleasant distraction from other, less happy stories about the laboring classes that appear in the *Cumberland Pacquet*’s pages in late 1839. With Westminster in crisis and a general election seemingly imminent, the rise of Chartism and its popular appeal is a recurring concern, as is the looming shortage following a poor autumn harvest: serious riots at Cockermonth (Wordsworth’s birthplace) are blamed on Chartists agitating locals fearful of rising prices. It is tempting to connect the promotion of Hardie’s *Poems*, and the appearance of poems like anonymously written stanzas addressed “To the Peasantry of England,” which also appears in the 5 November issue, with the *Pacquet*’s editorial eagerness to calm the mounting political tension: the honest English poor are, the anonymous poet exclaims, “The sinews of old England! / The bulwarks of the soil! / How much we owe each manly hand / Thus fearless of its toil!”⁴² There is no secure evidence that the poem is Hardie’s work, but its expression of dependency upon the masculine prowess of the physical laborer makes it unusual among the many *Lonsdalian* paeans to an old England, travestied by reform, that appear in the late 1830s.

Lonsdale’s influence is also felt and announced in another poem in Hardie’s 1839 collection. “Lines, Addressed to The Editor of the Whitehaven Herald” does not disguise its partisan position as the voice of the “Yellows” (the color associated with supporters of the Lowther interest), but displays a tolerance not always evident in Wordsworth’s private and public comments on Lonsdale’s rivals:

The Herald I peruse with partial pleasure,
Its colour chang’d, ’twould be a real treasure.
’Tis well conducted, venture I to say—

From dullness free, although both grave and gay,—
 Thy hand in friendship I shall shake some day,
 Thou social, kind, good-natur'd, clever fellow—
 At once, to make thy fortune, turn a yellow.

(ll. 7–13)

Hardie's admiration for the well-edited *Herald* is premised on its balanced reluctance to create *Dunciad*-esque mayhem in the charged political atmosphere of the later 1830s. But no less than Wordsworth, whose sonnet predicts that Lonsdale's manly magistracy "will be owned alike by bad and good" at some future moment, Hardie anticipates the time, "some day," when even the *Herald* will support Lonsdale. This will happen, and indeed ought to happen "at once," because its editorial line is essentially social and kind (and hence there is no call for Hardie to employ Popean satire), but also because if the editor is as clever as he seems, he will surely make his political and financial fortune by turning yellow; in other words, by recanting the *Herald's* anti-Lowther stance.

Again Hardie shows a Vulcan-like facility for deploying words to facilitate peace: an urgent necessity, since the poem was written in the context of violent exchanges between the Yellows and the Blues (supporters of the Whig party), reports of which appear regularly throughout the 1830s in both the pro- and the anti-Lonsdale papers. Lord Lonsdale would presumably have approved of this attempt to recruit the *Herald* to the Lowther ranks, but he was never Hardie's patron in any conventional way. In fact, there is no evidence that he ever heard of John Hardie: *Poems on Various Subjects* is not listed in the inventories of any of his libraries nor in any of the cash books from his various estates; Hardie is not mentioned in the extant correspondence; and no subscription list appears in the 1839 volume (his final public appearance, after which the trail goes cold).⁴³ But Hardie, no less than Wordsworth, can be aptly characterized as a protégé, though of a distinctly attenuated kind. His pro-Lonsdale productions earned him favorable notices in Lonsdale's *Cumberland Pacquet*, and his volume of *Poems* was published by Richard Gibson, the *Pacquet's* printer. The connection might appear slight, but an extensive and efficient network was in place across the north of England to ensure the protection and promotion of the Lowther interest. Patronage by proxy, as well as by hundred-guinea annuities and dinners at Lowther Castle, was part of Lonsdale's strategic operation. John Hardie, no less than William Wordsworth, was in the protection, and therefore deserves to be called a protégé, of Lord Lonsdale.

The archive is still yielding new information about Wordsworth's relations of clientage with Lord Lonsdale, but John Hardie, as an obscure poet in a remote coastal town, and the author of occasional poems in newspapers and one slim collection of verse, has left far fewer traces.⁴⁴ Unlike Wordsworth, he did not figure highly in Lonsdale's strategies of media manipulation and political control. That said, for a time in the mid-1830s there was perhaps a use for a laboring-class

poet in the Cumberland papers, endorsing, contra Brougham, the Lonsdale-Wordsworthian position on reform and the poor law, and like Wordsworth, reiterating Lonsdale's status as the paternalistic alpha male of Lakeland politics. Writing in the 1830s, when Southey's *Lives of Uneducated Poets* was intensifying the romantic association of plebeian authors with an authentic experience of nature and poetry, Hardie's poems might have seemed, to the few who read them, to have an air of authenticity and integrity that Wordsworth's attempt to "teach with truth" cannot match.⁴⁵ But no less than those of his fellow protégé, Hardie's attempts to bolster, by reiteration, Lord Lonsdale's magisterial and paternalistic masculinity were doomed to misfire in a decade in which such forceful opponents as Henry Brougham and Edward Rushton Jr. challenged and dismantled his authority.

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Notes

1. On the Lowther family's domination of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century political culture in northwest England, see Hugh Owen, *The Lowther Family: Eight Hundred Years of "A Family of Ancient Gentry and Worship"* (Chichester, Eng.: Phillimore, 1990); J. V. Beckett, *Coal and Tobacco: The Lowthers and the Economic Development of West Cumberland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
2. John Hardie, *Poems on Various Subjects* (Whitehaven, Eng.: Printed for the author by R. Gibson, 1839). Further references to Hardie's poetry are to this edition and are given by line number only in the text.
3. Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 329.
4. *Ibid.*, 330. See also John Edwin Wells, "Wordsworth and De Quincey in Westmoreland Politics, 1818," *PMLA* 55, no. 4 (1940): 1080–1128, and Arthur Aspinall, *Politics and the Press, c. 1780–1850* (London: Home and Van Thal, 1949), 354–60.
5. Lord Lonsdale to William Wordsworth, 14 November 1831, Wordsworth Library, WLL/Lonsdale and Lowther/29.
6. *The Times*, 10 August 1833, 4. The "l" is short for Libra, apparently a nineteenth-century term for the pound. See also Peter Manning's shrewd chapter, "Wordsworth at St. Bees: Scandals, Sisterhoods, and Wordsworth's Later Poetry," in his *Reading Romantics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 273–99.
7. *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Later Years, Part II: 1829–1834*, 2nd ed., ed. Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 633.
8. *Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems* (London: Longman, 1835), 236. See also William Wordsworth, *Sonnet Series and Itinerary Poems, 1820–1845*, ed. Geoffrey Jackson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 637. Alan Hill's gloss on the 1833 letter to Moxon essentially rehearses Wordsworth's version here.
9. Edward Rushton (1756–1814) was a firebrand radical and a significant contributor to Liverpool's burgeoning provincial literary culture. See Tim Burke, ed., *Eighteenth-Century English Labouring-Class Poets, 1780–1800*, vol. 3 of *Eighteenth-Century English*

- Labouring-Class Poets, 1700–1800*, 3 vols., gen. ed., John Goodridge (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), 3:9–38. Thomas Clarkson testifies to the importance of his *West-Indian Eclogues* to the abolitionist campaign in *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament*, 2 vols. (London, 1808), 1:372–73, 410. He was also the author of a poem on Chatterton that the young Coleridge greatly admired: see Paul Magnuson, “Coleridge’s Discursive ‘Monody on the Death of Chatterton,’” *Romanticism on the Net* 17 (February 2000).
10. W. L. Rushton, ed., *Letters of a Templar, 1820–50* (London: 1903), 169.
 11. *Ibid.*, 170, citing *The Convention of Cintra* [1809], in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 vols., ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 1:288.
 12. Deirdre Coleman, “Re-living Jacobinism: Wordsworth and the Convention of Cintra,” in *The Yearbook of English Studies: The French Revolution in English Literature and Art* 19 (1989), 161.
 13. Manning, *Reading Romantics*, 174.
 14. *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 1:294, 300.
 15. Manning, *Reading Romantics*, 174.
 16. Cited in *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 1:197. It is worth noting that Southey was already an able manipulator of opinion via the local press: in the same letter he promises that “he [Wordsworth] & I & Coleridge will set the business in its true light in the county newspapers.”
 17. See especially the passages in *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 1:300, 305–07, 321–28.
 18. Joseph Arnould, *Memoir of Thomas, First Lord Denman, Formerly Lord Chief Justice of England*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, 1873), 1:86.
 19. Rushton, *Letters of a Templar*, 169–70.
 20. Carlisle had a reputation for violent radicalism in the early 1830s. Wordsworth feared that his “son William . . . gone to Carlisle as my sub-distributor, is likely to come in for a broken head, as he expects to be enrolled as a Special Constable, for the protection of the Gaols and Cathedral at Carlisle, and Rose Palace, the Bishop’s country residence, which has been threatened” (Letter to Samuel Rogers, 7 November 1831, in *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Later Years, Part II: 1829–1834*, 448).
 21. *Times*, 10 August 1833, 4, and 26 November 1833, 5 (citing the *Carlisle Journal*, 26 November 1833).
 22. Carlisle Record Office, Lonsdale Papers: D/Lons/L1/2/93.
 23. *Carlisle Journal*, 26 November 1833, 3.
 24. *Times*, 3 December 1833, 4.
 25. *Whitehaven Herald*, 26 November 1833, 2; *Carlisle Journal*, 26 November 1833, 3.
 26. Lonsdale’s newspapers regularly and loudly announced his many acts of charity and mercy, especially in the late 1820s and early 1830s, when notices such as the following, in the *Carlisle Patriot*, began to appear with noticeably greater frequency: “Lord Lonsdale, with that consideration for the wants and comforts of the humbler classes, for which, as a nobleman, he is so pre-eminently distinguished, caused to be distributed, at Lowther, as usual, on St. Thomas’s day last, three carcasses of prime beef, together with a quantity of warm clothing” (5 January 1833, 2).

27. *Cumberland Pacquet*, 3 December 1833, 3.
28. It was customary for Lonsdale to invite all the circuit lawyers to dine at Lowther after the close of the Assizes—the guest list for 1832 reveals that both Edward Rushton Jr. and Wordsworth had been among them—but there seems to have been no gathering after the 1833 fiasco. See Carlisle Record Office, Lonsdale Papers: CRO D/Lons/L1/2/148.
29. *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Later Years, Part II: 1829–1834*, 633n.
30. Tim Fulford, *Romanticism and Masculinity: Gender, Politics, and Poetics in the Writings of Burke, Coleridge, Cobbett, Wordsworth, De Quincey, and Hazlitt* (Basingstoke, Eng.: Macmillan, 1999), 177–84.
31. William Wordsworth, *The Prelude; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind* (1850), Book VII: 519–20, 525–26, 527–28.
32. *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 1: 259.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 51.
35. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 25.
36. Kenneth R. Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth* (London: Pimlico, 2000), 13–21; see also Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford: University of California Press, 1989).
37. Alexander Pope, trans., *The Iliad of Homer*, Book 1: 779.
38. *Cumberland Pacquet*, 8 January 1839, 4.
39. *Cumberland Pacquet*, 5 November 1839, 3.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Hardie, *Poems on Various Subjects*, ix.
42. *Cumberland Pacquet*, 5 November 1839, 4 (ll. 9–13).
43. The inventories appear to be incomplete, however, since several works by Wordsworth, Southey, and Samuel Rogers that one would expect the earl to possess are not listed.
44. Hardie was not among the freeholders of Whitehaven entitled to vote in the 1832 election; his name does not appear in *The Poll Book of the Election of a Representative in Parliament for the Borough of Whitehaven* (Whitehaven, 1832).
45. Robert Southey, "Introduction: Lives and Works of Our Uneducated Poets," in *Lives of Uneducated Poets, To Which are Added, Attempts in Verse, by John Jones, an Old Servant* (London, 1831).