Robert Southey was far more than one of the Lake poets. Although he is now chiefly known as the Poet Laureate ridiculed by Byron and Hazlitt, Byron himself described the newly appointed laureate in 1813 as "the only existing entire man of letters." This second part of the emerging eight-part online edition of all Southey's surviving letters illustrates the aptness of Byron's unexpected accolade. When the last letter in this 1798-1803 series was written, Madoc was not yet published, and Southey had not yet written Letters from England, his contributions to the Edinburgh Annual Register, his essays in the Quarterly Review, his monumental History of Brazil, his biographies of Nelson and Wesley, Roderick, the Last of the Goths, the Book of the Church, the Colloquies, and The Doctor. Yet the six years during which he wrote these letters--a total of 596, one-third of them previously unpublished--exhibit a remarkable literary output: a second volume of poems (1799), the epic Thalaba the Destroyer (1801), early drafts of the Curse of Kehama, the revision of Joan of Arc, and the continuing rewriting of Madoc.

During the same years, Southey co-operated with Joseph Cottle in a three-volume collection of Chatterton's works and also in abridging an English translation of Amadis of Gaul. He also wrote verses for the Morning Post and was editor and contributor for two
volumes of the *Annual Anthology*. Meanwhile he embarked on major works that he never finished, notably a hexameter epic on Mohammed (in conjunction with Coleridge), a stage play on "Bloody Mary" of Protestant tradition, a history of monasticism, and a multi-volume history of Portugal.

In focusing part two on a six year period, the editors repeat the pattern of part one (online since March 2009): a general introduction is followed by a specific introduction to the years 1798-1803. The letters themselves (both published and unpublished) are arranged chronologically, irrespective of origin, with notes on people named, works cited, and historical or domestic events mentioned; there are also biographical and historical glossaries as well as lists of correspondents and connected locations. Unpublished letters have been newly transcribed from manuscript, while previously published letters have been compared with surviving manuscripts, and the changes or omissions of earlier editors corrected. Southey's eccentric punctuation -- including the shunning of capital letters at the start of sentences and the profusion of dashes -- is preserved. Where the manuscript is torn, the editors properly refuse to suggest the missing word or phrase even when the sense demands it. Such editorial restraint is commendable.

Yet the editors make their mark and are fully recognized for doing so. The textual notes and biographies are admirably executed, and the whole editorial team is credited on the title-page of each part. Lynda Pratt and Ian Packer carried out the detailed editorial work for Part Two. Carol Bolton and Tim Fulford, named as assistant editors (along with Bill Speck), are the main editors for the forthcoming Part Three, while for Part Four the roles will again be reversed. The technical editor Laura Mandell, who supervised teams at Miami University of Ohio and the University of Maryland, is to be
complimented on the electronic format and its effortless site-navigation tools. In the following review of the correspondence, letters previously unpublished are numbered in bold font.

From late 1800 to mid-1801 Southey was in Lisbon, which he had first visited with his uncle in 1795-6. This time his wife Edith went with him. One of their walking companions at Cintra was Mary Barker, whose letters from Southey (half of them newly transcribed here) come from the unpublished Harvard doctoral thesis of the late R. G. Kirkpatrick. It was when writing to Mary that Southey famously described himself as "the shuttlecock of fortune" (612), and in two letters written within a fortnight, he confided his hope of returning to Portugal (830, 835). After the collapse of the fragile Peace of Amiens in May 1803, it seems almost as if Southey's chief wartime concern is whether Bonaparte will cut him off from the Lisbon libraries. He writes to his naval brother Tom: "The worst thing the war can do for me will be to turn the English out of Lisbon -- Zounds what a calamity would that be to my poor history [of Portugal]" (782). Yet by the closing letters of the series, Southey seems reconciled to the prospect of a long war. "Were I an English minister," he tells John May, "I would prepare for a forty years war" (845).

Southey's reactions to the course of the war can be traced in his letters to Tom, more than 20 of them first published here. In early 1798, the year of the Irish Rebellion, Southey foresees a French invasion of Ireland -- "a country which will I expect soon be separated from England" (295). His later verdict on the Irish rebels is that some of them were "virtuous enlightened men," who "any where except in Ireland" would be "among the best & most valuable members of society" (517). Writing of Robert Emmett's failed uprising in 1803, he assures Tom that Irish uprisings are "always too soon or too late" (815), but he would later speak kindly of Emmett to John King, the
Bristol surgeon (842). The Peace of Amiens (March 1802) had taken Southey by surprise (484), and a mere month before hostilities were resumed, he told Tom that he thought "there will be no war because there is so much preparation" (772).

Apart from the collected editions of Cuthbert Southey (1849-50), John Warter (1856), Kenneth Curry (1965), and Charles Ramos (1976), published letters include those found in Adolfo Cabral's *Journals of a Residence in Portugal and a visit to France* (1960) and more than 30 letters to William Taylor of Norwich from J. W. Robberds's biography (1843). Half of the Taylor letters feature an exchange of verses and discussion of epic poetry. Others show Taylor keeping an avuncular eye on Southey's spendthrift younger brother Henry, who was studying medicine at the Norfolk and Norwich hospital. Early on, Southey thanks Taylor for his help "in settling Henry" (368), but that does not prevent the future Poet Laureate from criticizing Taylor's style for its abundance of "Germanisms" and Latin or French phrases. Southey is all the more disappointed because "you taught me to write English" (760).

Less accessible published letters brought together here appeared first in the *Times Literary Supplement, Notes & Queries* and the *Atlantic Monthly*; other sources include Cottle's *Reminiscences* (1847), Davy's *Fragmentary remains* (1857), *Letters from the Lake Poets to Daniel Stuart* (1889) and Orlo Williams's *Lamb's Friend the Census Taker. Life and Letters of John Rickman* (1888). Rickman is well represented in earlier edited collections of Southey's correspondence, leaving only eight "new" letters for inclusion here. Rickman not only secured for Southey a brief Dublin appointment as secretary to the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer, but also hospitably housed many of Southey's books, which meant having to send off boxes of specific titles whenever
Southey demanded them (727, 751, 753, 755, 820, 873). In 1800, before leaving Bristol, Southey was taken with Rickman's proposal for "Protestant nunnery" to provide for widows and single women left destitute by the casualties of war (476, 479, 485, 709), and he returns to the idea in his 1819 Quarterly Review article on monasticism. Southey's "new" letters to Rickman offer few if any fresh insights, but unpublished correspondence with Southey's old Westminster school-friends, Charles Wynn and Grosvenor Bedford, is more rewarding.

In 1798, when Wynn was funding Southey's legal studies, the budding law student suggested tackling the misappropriation of charitable funds, as (unlike the postponed abolition of the slave trade) "much might be done -- & the condition of the poor very greatly amended by only restoring to them what is pilfered" (304). Other letters to Wynn confirm that Southey's first visit to Lisbon had already awakened his hostility to Catholicism, which leads him to the subject for a play that he never completes. At first he tells Wynn that he wants to write for the stage, if Wynn will encourage him: "you know with what rapidity I write -- after chusing a subject it would not employ me more than a month" (354). But four months later, having chosen the reign of Queen Mary, Southey reports: "I have the beginning -- but the succeeding scenes do not occur to please me" (388). By November 1799, he announces that he "is going to work at Queen Mary with all the little spirits I now possess" (457), but within a fortnight it is clear that writing Thalaba attracts him more (463). He last refers to The Days of Queen Mary in a letter to Wynn published in both Cabral and Warter, where Southey promises that one act will end "with the light of a martyr-pile seen thro the window -- & the Te Deum at the burning." He adds, "I think you will partake of my hatred of Popery when you see what a systematic plan of roguery it has been" (583). Southey had earlier told Wynn (again in Cabral's collection) that he supported toleration, but that popery was a special case. He could
"no more permit the existence of a monastic establishment, than the human sacrifices of Mexican idolatry" (578). (He is evidently not thinking of Rickman's Protestant nunneries.)

Southey was admittedly writing from Lisbon towards the end of his second visit, but such remarks foreshadow the vehement anti-Papalism that would dominate his prose writing through three decades. More than two years after returning from Lisbon, Southey tells Wynn of the English Quaker, John Perrot, who went to Rome to convert the Pope and--while imprisoned by the Inquisition--contrived to write *Battering Rams against Rome*, which Southey calls "the rarest jewel in all the Bibliotheca Fanatica" (814). But in the last few weeks of 1803, three letters to Wynn focus on *Madoc*, which has "occupied so many of my thoughts & feelings" for 15 years. When it is finally published, he writes, "I shall feel as if my harvest was got in & the winter hard at hand" (851). On 23 December he sounds a similar note of poignancy when he apologizes for not sending the promised fair copy of *Madoc* before Christmas. "My poor eyes have not the strength for that kind of writing," he explains, adding that "after any reading or writing, objects at the other end of the room become quite indistinct" (874). In the very last letter of the 1798-1803 series, which contains verses from *Madoc*, Southey asks Wynn whether he would like to be sent more (877).

Besides writing to Wynn, Southey frequently corresponds with Grosvenor Bedford, another friend from his schooldays. Among newly published letters, a request to Bedford for some "sugar parsnips" ends with "yrs for ever and ever" (300). And in September 1801, Southey concludes even more affectionately: "God bless you Grosvenor Bedford -- my old schoolfellow, my old friend!" (608). Soon afterwards he writes anxious letters about his friend's health (632, 635). Earlier he urges Grosvenor not to judge friends too harshly: "We are with friends
like Astronomers, who when they discover a spot on the sun look at nothing else" (425). And earlier still, when only 24, Southey tells Bedford what to do about his literary remains if he dies prematurely: "Excepting letters, you will not find much to burn, for I have made magnificent bonfires." Madoc must not be published "for at least ten years" (378). Bedford seems to have served him as a sounding board. In April 1799, Southey offers to bring and read to him at Brixton--12 of the 15 books of Madoc (402). By September 1801, Southey is responding to Bedford's criticisms of Thalaba (609), and soon afterwards asks whether he has seen the British Critic's review of it (621). Writing to Bedford the following year, Southey lists his literary employments: "Madoc in correction. Kehama writing. A History of Portugal & all its appurtenancies -- about six volumes in quarto" (685). Three months later he blames the History for slow progress on Kehama: "it goes against me sorely to spare any time from the history which will pretty evidently be my opus majus in all points of view" (710). While assuring Bedford that "I shall & will go on with Kehama," he confesses that "history has almost monopolized me" (723). And in replying to Bedford's criticism of the first book of Kehama, Southey admits that he has "acquired a relish for the research -- & the reasoning, & the authoritative tone of history that threatens to blast many a laurel bud" (731).

Southey reveals his growing involvement in history -- at the expense of his poetry -- even more starkly in hitherto unpublished letters to his friend Charles Danvers, the Bristol wine merchant. Early in 1802 Southey reports: "Madoc grows slowly. Kehama stands still." Meanwhile, "I read valiantly & gut folio after folio for all imaginable purposes, but with a main reference to my History." Aided by his Unitarian acquaintances Belsham and Barbauld, he uses Dr. Williams's Library -- "the main mine from whence I dig my ore" (652). By the spring, he complains that "my poetry is quite dead in London. it will
not thrive in this atmosphere." He has not written a line of poetry since the new year, and explains that "historical labour so satisfies indolence & all industry at once, that it weans me from other pursuits" (668). A week later he tells Danvers: "I am hard at work, surrounded by documents -- folios & quartos, one open upon another collating, comparing, picking hemp out of all & twisting it into one cord" (669).

Even letters to Charles Biddlecombe, who rented a Devon cottage to Southey, confirm the picture. By June 1802 Southey confesses: "my employment is almost exclusively history." He has written so little poetry in the past 18 months that he is "half unwilling to write any more lest I feel a decrease of power & should have grown awkward from disuse" (686). But Southey does not abandon the revision of Madoc. Nine months later he tells Biddlecombe, "Madoc comes slowly but surely on." He expects to publish it sooner than he intended, but will not do so "while my ways & means can be supplied without it." Meanwhile "history continues my favourite pursuit" (763). Yet by autumn 1803, with Madoc still unfinished, he needs the money that its publication would bring. To Coleridge, his fellow ex-pantisocrat (to whom he is now reconciled) he writes: "I hardly look forward, my hopes have been so often prolonged & are now so blasted -- but my wish is to finish & publish Madoc that I may have wherewith to return to Portugal" (838). On the same day he wrote to Tom Southey in similar vein (837).

Unpublished letters to Coleridge are rare for these years, but in December 1799, Southey promises Coleridge that "Mohammed occupies a corner of my brain -- one of the chambers -- my heart is in the hexameter business!" But he adds: "I had purposed a prose work - - the History of Portugal -- this requires a residence there" (459). Madoc was published in 1805; war in Spain prevented a return to Lisbon; the History of Portugal was never finished. In 1804 it was
Coleridge--not Southey--who went to sunnier climes as secretary to the Governor of Malta.

Few users of this magnificent online edition will read the letters in strict chronological sequence, but doing so reveals unexpected continuities and foreshadowings. The editors are right to claim that the *Collected Letters* "restore wholeness to this most fragmented of Romantic period writers." Posterity will be grateful.