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NOTICE TO READERS.

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MIRAMICHI, FEBRUARY, 1879.

THE SNOWFLAKE:

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A CHARACTER.

Away from the home, and the scenes of his childhood,
 Away from the graves where his forefathers rest,
 Away from the friends of his youth in the wildwood
 A home he had found in the world of the west.
 The morn of his days, with deep sorrow, was clouded,
 Life's blossoms to which his heart fondly would cling,
 Ne'er fruited; his soul—its just meed—was enshrouded
 In gloom, from whose shadows no future could bring.
 But as fertile crops grow from decays of the forest—
 That have fallen in the autumns of ages ago,
 'Tis well when lost hopes, and life's trials the worst,
 From a soil where the virtues of heaven are sown.
 When faith, hope and love—love that fasteth forever
 Spring from faith in man broken, and hope in time, dead,
 And from love whose old fibres could never, oh never!
 Fill the heart, like the plant that is blooming instead.
 A home he had found o'er the far Western Ocean,
 A home nigh to which a vast river rolls by;
 Reflecting each phase of calm, or commotion,
 Of sunshine, or shade, that befeatures the sky.
 And that wooden cot in the heart of the wildwood,
 Away from the land of the mountain and flood,
 Away from the friends of the scenes of his childhood
 Was the home best befitting the taint of his blood.
 We could hear echoed voices that cunningly sounded,
 Their party appealing in church and in State,
 And with grand and wild glories of nature surrounded,
 He despised not the lovely nor envied the great.
 He could study the love of the world's mighty sages,
 Who to know and be wise their full powers piled,
 He could learn how men thought, schemed and lived in past ages,
 How unheeding most were—just as now—that men died.
 And though happiness here is but shaded and fleeting,
 A peace he had gained, he had ne'er gained before,
 And, oft times, his thoughts would be turned to the greeting,
 When friends shall friends meet to be parted no more.

Written for the Snowflake.

New Brunswick, 1879.

CHARLES LAMB.

In the year 1866 there appeared a biography of Charles Lamb, poet and essayist, by his friend and admirer B. W. Proctor, better known to readers of English literature as Barry Cornwall. We at once say that this biography is a most charming and readable book, full of the kind of information about Charles Lamb, which a reader of his literary productions would desiderate. The charms of his writings always kindle a desire in his readers to know something of his personal character and history. This desire finds ample gratification in Barry Cornwall's book, who brings to its composition excellent literary abilities, inspired by sympathy and admiration for its subject. Without such an inspiration the biography, however much its style and arrangements might conform to the canons of literary art, would be wanting in that charm and interest which the vein of brotherly kindness and sympathy running through its every page, gives to it. Barry Cornwall has in this memoir, raised a monument to his friend Charles Lamb which should last, and for which he will receive the thanks of all future admirers of Lamb.

This memoir differs in form from that in which the story of the lives of eminent men has appeared during the past half dozen years. The pages of many recent biographies are over-crowded and needlessly multiplied by the letters of their subjects, which both in matter and manner are not a fair indication of their writers' mental calibre and character.

We are permitted to look at and criticise the weak side more frequently than the story of these eminent men. A Boswellian spirit animates the reading world. They are not satisfied to see an eminent man in his study, in his drawing room, or in the midst of his children, but they must stand at his elbow when he is shaving or adjusting his necktie. Biographers seem to think that they must gratify this prying, curious spirit, and hence their productions are filled *ad nauseam* with letters in whole or in part, extracts of speeches, bits of conversations, touches of humor and wit, chosen with neither judgment nor taste. Consequently such biographers instead of giving us a just, well-defined picture of their subject, simply throw a bottle of ink in our face. The sooner such purveyors of literary food know that the intelligent reading public will only tolerate one "Boswell's life of Johnson," just because the world of letters has thus far produced only one Johnson and one Boswell, the better.

The memoir under review is almost free

of this fault. Letters and sayings of Charles Lamb are only introduced into it, when they elucidate or give point to the narrative. Consequently it is an evenly woven web in which the colours harmoniously blend, and not a mere patchwork. It depicts in simple yet beautiful and touching lines the genial and noble character and true genius of Charles Lamb. The interesting story from the first sentence to the last never becomes insipid or dull.—It is the record of a life by no means eventful or romantic, yet ennobled by a loving purpose from beginning to end, and illuminated by the light of a rare intellect and heart.

Charles Lamb was of comparatively humble parentage. In a sonnet entitled "The Family Name," he speaks of his grandfather, but traces his ancestral line no farther back. This pleasant sonnet he concludes with a resolve:—

"No deed of mine shall shame the gentle hand."

which he kept religiously throughout his life. He was born in London in 1775 and when between seven and eight years of age he became a scholar in Christ's Hospital, where he remained until the 23rd November, 1789, being then between fourteen and fifteen years of age. At school he made the acquaintance of one who afterwards achieved a very extensive reputation, namely, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Between him and Coleridge there existed a life-long friendship. When Coleridge died, which occurred a few months before his own death, Lamb's sorrow was unceasing. He was frequently overheard saying to himself, "Coleridge is dead! Coleridge is dead!" Very soon after the death of his friend Lamb too passed away to join him where trial and trouble are unknown. But we are anticipating our sketch. After leaving school Charles Lamb entered the South Sea House where his brother John had a clerkship. From this office he at the age of seventeen years obtained an appointment as clerk in the Accountants' Office of the East India Company, where he served faithfully for 34 years, retiring in 1826 with a pension of £400 a year. Soon after he obtained this situation a terrible domestic calamity fell upon him. His sister Mary had for some time been subject to periodic fits of insanity. One day in the frenzy of one of these fits she stabbed her mother to death. From that sad hour Mary became the special charge of Charles. He devoted his whole life to her care. Without a murmur he sacrificed all thoughts of founding a home and gave all his care to his unfortunate sister. His life was spent in ministering to her, turning whenever this great charge permitted

him to the cultivation of literature. His love and fitness for literary work, with all the fascinations of authorship, were never allowed to interfere with his duty and devotion to his sister. Her safety and comfort were above everything. Noble brother!

Another attractive feature of the book before us is that it introduces us to many of Lamb's famous contemporaries, such as Coleridge, Hazlett, Leigh Hunt, Wordsworth, Edward Dwing, &c. His life touches theirs at many interesting points. He was the friend and companion of them all. Thus we are permitted to look upon that galaxy of stars which were in England's literary world in the first part of the century. In that group of stars there are some of greater magnitude and brilliancy, yet Lamb is there moving in his own orbit and pouring a clear genial ray upon the field of letters.

Space will not permit us to speak of his originality, his humors, his pithy sayings. Suffice it to say that his humorous remarks, his wise saws, have enriched the pages of English literature. Charles Lamb's life and writings are worth studying.

NEWCASTLE.

Lines suggested by a Poem in Chamber's Journal entitled

"MY LOVE" WITH THE REFRAIN,
 "BUT AH! I HAVE NOT FOUND HER YET."

The image in my heart thou wear'st,
 Sweet poet of the graceful mean,
 For when thou life of love prepar'st
 When she shall come to take the throne,
 "The young, white rose," thou hast not found.

"Withm whose heart a blush is set,"
 And should'st thou search the world around,
 Thou canst not, Dreamer, find her yet.

Hast thou forgot that Love is blind?
 Hast thou forgot who is his guide?
 That the will, senseless boy you find,
 With Folly ever by his side,
 Who dealt the small god, it is said,
 A blinding blow, once when they met,
 Folly, henceforth, Love's guide was made.
 Thou canst not, Dreamer, find her yet.

To "win your heart a hundred ways,"
 And "lay a light hand on your arm,"
 And "show in all she does and says,"
 An artless, "deferential charm,"
 Thy Love whose sweet blue eyes with tears
 Of sorrowing tenderness are met,
 When of some mournful tale she hears—
 Thou canst not, Dreamer, find her yet.

Oh! no, this world was never meant
 To yield the heart its highest love.
 Give o'er the search, and be content
 To set thy fondest hopes above
 Where there is real and truer bliss
 Than in thy mind's ideal pet,
 Though found in all her loveliness,
 But oh! thou canst not find her yet

See *Fables of La Fontaine*.

Written for the Snowflake.