

this we remember the social Wednesday evenings, when Mary was less demure, and Charles, the brightest of a coterie of congenial spirits, gave free rein to his wit, and pun and *jeu d'esprit* were the order of the night. There was a certain, or rather uncertain element of Bohemianism in Lamb, which showed itself most in his choice of friends. The people whom he delighted to gather about him, were chiefly *character* authors, who were sanguine of an audience in the next generation and vaguely denunciatory of the present; actors who indulged in nocturnal rantings to appreciative foot-lights and stage carpenters, and artists who had given up art and taken to cultivating a Byronic air instead, finding it on the whole, about as remunerative and satisfactory. Ah yes! but Coleridge and Wordsworth, Manning, Leigh Hunt, where were they? Often in the Temple enjoying Lamb's inimitable talk over a cup of tea of Mary's brewing, or lingering in the East Indian House. Coleridge, whom he called an "arch-angel a little damaged," always occupied a warm place in Lamb's affections. The friendship of the old days at Christ Hospital continued almost without interruption through life. Lamb, devoted, as he was, to old out-of-the-way authors, did small justice to the moderns, whom he characterized as a class of "*Innutrition phantoms*." Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, Marlowe, in fact most of the Elizabethan writers were his favorites.

The "Essays," the most charming of Lamb's works, are filled with naïve confessions of his literary preferences and although there is an agreeable flavor of originality in all he has written, letters

poems and reviews, the "Essays" streaked with small conceits and filled with autobiographical confidences, as they are, will always be the corner-stone of "*Elia's*" fame. It pleases our vanity to be taken among the quaint people of whom he loves to gossip. We are thoroughly alive to the honor conferred upon us, in being introduced to those old "Benchers of the Inner Temple," which nevertheless does not prevent us from joining *Elia* in a sly laugh at the expense of the supernaturally solemn "Samuel Salt"; we find many affectionate tributes to his unfailing goodness scattered over the essays. In the essay "Mackery End," he says: "We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits, yet so, as with a difference; we are generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings as it should be among near relations." In "Witches and Night Fears" we feel all the superstitious fears of the infant Lamb as we glance over his shoulder at the awful picture of the 'Witch' raising up Samuel, adorning an edition of Stackhouses "History of the Bible." This unique work, Lamb confesses almost made him a "skeptic in long coats. The habit of expecting objection to every passage, set me upon starting more objections for the glory of finding a solution of my own for them."

After all, it is not the matter but the manner of *Elia*, that we love. The old-fashioned charm of his style, the very affectations and marked individuality of his character are sufficient to protect *Elia* from the dust of forgetfulness and to keep him ever a warm place in our affections.

M. L. T.

