

# THE C.L.S. BULLETIN

(Organ of THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY, founded 1935)

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No. 57 (Eighth Year)

With Two Supplements

JANUARY, 1943

## A Greeting and a Report.

The Officers and Council have been enabled to convey seasonable greetings to our members through the twofold kindness of Mr. H. G. Smith, to whom they are indebted both for the terms of the Greeting itself and for its duplication. Copies of the Society's eighth Annual Report and Financial Statement are also circulated with this issue of the BULLETIN.

## On Translations.

By J. LEWIS MAY.

If words were mere counters, colourless, inanimate things, without physiognomy or individuality, like algebraic symbols, without nationality, without history, without associations, "naked names upon the drab pasteboard," then it might be possible to translate a literary masterpiece from one language to another. But stay; even that statement will not hold water, for, if words were such dull, lifeless things, there would be no literary masterpieces to translate. Has anyone ever turned out a masterpiece in Volapuk or Esperanto?

Words are, in fact, instinct with life and colour. They reflect the hues of their native skies and smack of the soil from which they spring. Such they are looked at separately, one by one; and when, in magical combination, they form, say, a line of Shakespeare or Milton, a chorus-ending of Euripides, or an essay of Elia, they are as little interchangeable, as little to be meddled with, as a note of music in a Beethoven Sonata. The perfect piece of writing, be it poetry or prose—I mean, of course, what Keats calls "distilled" prose, such as Sir Thomas Browne's, or Landor's, or Charles Lamb's or Newman's—has reached that "condition of music," that indissoluble blending of form and matter (like the fat and lean of a sucking-pig "so blended and running into each other that both together make but one ambrosian result") towards which, according to Walter Pater, all art constantly aspires; so that to ask anyone to "translate" it would be as though you were to bid him translate a Nocturne of Chopin.

Again, words are steeped in immemorial, slowly accumulated associations; at least they are for the literate. We are not all like Wordsworth's Peter Bell, of whom the poet says,

A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him  
And it was nothing more.



## Obituary.

*" . . . . . Gone before  
To that unknown and silent shore."*

### MILLICENT NANCARROW (1869—1942)

On September 13th there died one of our staunchest members. By her friendly charm Mrs. Millicent Nancarrow had endeared herself to all. In spite of the cares of a large family, she found time for varied literary interests. Her late husband was at one time Secretary of the Kingston Literary and Debating Society, and so she was brought into contact with many lovers of literature. She was also associated with the Bookman Circle. In the course of a tribute to her memory, spoken by Mr. W. Farrow at the October meeting, he said: "Ever cheerful and unassuming, she had the charm of manner that was the outward expression of a goodness of heart and of a lively intelligence. Her knowledge of literature and her happy disposition combined to make her an ideal member. She had now gone from our midst, leaving us the poorer for her absence, but richer in the memory of a life well spent."

### Charles Lamb as a Pioneer in Scientific Discovery

A new tribute to the versatility of Lamb's genius has been paid by Professor Edward Jenks, in his well-known "History of Politics." In the chapter in Tribal Law occurs the following passage:—

"The real origin of customs is often very hard, however, to discover. Sometimes it seems to have been mere accident. The ingenious account of the origin of roast sucking pig, given by Charles Lamb in his well-known Essay, though intended for a joke, may be really a brilliant guess at the truth."

After this eulogy we shall expect that when the British Hall of Fame comes into existence Lamb's statue will be found with those of Locke, Burke and Darwin, rather than with those of Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth.

W.F.

## Report of Recent Meetings.

### Tracking the Lesser Eliana.

On October 10th Mr. S. M. Rich gave an address on "Tracking the Lesser Eliana." Mr. A. F. Bishop presided and Mr. H. G. Smith opened the meeting by reading a passage from Lamb's writings. Messrs. Walter Farrow, Stephen K. Jones, F. E. Sandry, H. G. Smith and E. G. Crowsley took part in the discussion. Mrs. J. Underwood expressed the meeting's thanks to the speaker, and Mr. F. V. Hallam to the Chairman. The following note on the proceedings has been received from Mr. E. F. Lewis: "What fun it is!" said Mr. Rich, in effect, as he captivated us with his account of some of his discoveries; "what fun it is to amble along, picking up fruits like these from the stalls; just a few pence here, and a shilling or two there, and the harvest is reaped." But these berries are gathered only as the result of applied knowledge and devotion. There are thistles in the path, and snares, and deluding appearances, that hide the real fruit. We also, on occasion, have sought, but we have not found. Doubtless, in our ignorance, sometimes, we have not known the berry for what it was. And too often our patience has not been equal to the pursuit. The love and the learning necessary to this seeking and finding are rare; let us be grateful that they are also Rich. But his object was to make us sharers in the harvest. Its garnered intellectual life, and illumination, are communicable—if one can talk

delightfully, as Mr. Rich does. The best reward to him is to assure him (as we can) of the encouragement and the stimulation he has brought to us. He enlightened us on the value of the study, through researches like his, of Lamb's influence on other minds. We shall be less unworthy Elians for having heard him.

### Charles Lamb—Some Random Reflections.

On November 14th, a numerous company gathered to hear our Vice-President, Mr. J. Lewis May, address the Society. He entitled his most pleasant discourse: "Charles Lamb—Some Random Reflections." No mere report can do justice to the unique blend of wisdom, wit and whimsicality which delighted the audience. Who could forget the moving words in which Mr. May developed the theme that memory, the mother of the Muses, transforms everyday events by means of her heavenly alchemy, making it possible for a master of prose such as Lamb, *when the necessary years had elapsed*, to show us on the walls of the South Sea House "dusty maps of Mexico, dim as dreams, and soundings of the Bay of Panama"? Fortunately, Mr. May was being "took down," although he did not know it, and a typescript of his talk is available in the Society's archives. At this memorable meeting Miss Margaret Brown gave the reading and Mr. Walter Farrow was in the Chair. Professor W. Connely and Mr. S. M. Rich spoke on Mr. May's address, and a hearty vote of thanks to him was proposed by Mr. H. G. Smith and seconded by Mr. F. A. Brooks.

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## CURRENT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES LAMB.

FROM FEBRUARY 1st, 1935 (contd.)

(a) **Books and Pamphlets.**

SUBURBAN GENTLEMAN / THE LIFE OF / THOMAS GRIFFITHS WAINEWRIGHT / POET, PAINTER AND POISONER / by / John Lindsey / illustrated / (5 lines of verse) / T. G. WAINEWRIGHT / Rich & Cowan / London: New York: Melbourne // Pp. 127. 13 illustrations. Published 29.10.1942. (Price, 12/6)

(b) **Articles.**

THE COMPASSIONATE PUBLISHER (*Times Literary Supplement*: 7.11.1942).  
\*ON CHARLES LAMB'S "ingenuous Hone," who died on November 6th, 1842.

(c) **Reports of Lectures and Meetings.**

"ELIA" AND THE CITY (*City Press*: 10.9.1942).  
\*J. P. Collins's address to the C.L.S. on "THE PRESS OF CHARLES LAMB'S DAY."

(h) **Short Notes.**

"THE PARTY AT HAYDON'S" (*Radio Times*: 13.11.1942).  
\*Broadcast on 21.11.1942: previously broadcast, 14.9.1941.  
LAMB AND DOLLARS IN ENGLAND (*Notes and Queries*: 21.11.1942).  
\*Signed V.R. On a passage in "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist: a five-dollar stake."  
MARY LAMB PORTRAIT (*Daily Telegraph*: 18.11.1942).  
\*Half-length in oils, by Samuel James Arnold: c.1815.  
LAMB ON REVISIONS: AN UNCOLLECTED LETTER (*Notes and Queries*: 7.11.1942).  
\*Signed John H. Birss. The letter is to Baldwin and Cradock, and is dated 10.1.1831.  
SOME REMINISCENCES OF MUDIES (*Publishers' Circular*: 17.10.1942).  
\*By W. Harcourt Mathews. Anecdote of an encounter between Lamb and Charles Edward Mudie in 1835.

The Editor will be grateful for items or news of items for inclusion in this Bibliography. The co-operation of overseas members is especially solicited. Cuttings should be addressed to Mr. S. M. Rich, 77, Cricklade Avenue, London, S.W.2.