CHAPTER - IV

SELF IN THE LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA (1833)

The Last Essays of Elia was introduced by a Preface, suggested to be written "by a friend of the late Elia", but of course from Charles's own hand. In this preface he assumes Elia to have actually died, and after some preliminary remarks on his writings thus proceeds to describe his character and manners:

My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him, hated him; and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionist he would pass for a free-thinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself... I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow; till some unlucky occasion provoking it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit
or miss with him; but nine times out of ten, he contrived by his device to send away a whole company his enemies.... He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech... the ligaments which tongue-tied him, were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statistic. ¹

When a man's account of himself - his eccentricities and peculiarities - is confirmed in minutest detail by those who knew and loved him best, it is reasonable to conclude that we are not far wrong in accepting it. This self-portrait of Lamb's gives an unexpected rationale to the judgements. The peculiarities which Lamb here enumerates are just those which are little likely ever to receive gentle consideration from the world.

Lamb's mention of the "senseless pun" which often "stamped his character for the evening", suggests the subject of his reputation as a humourist and wit. This habit of playing upon words was a part of him through life. Those persons who indulge in it, became an outlet for whatever mood was for the moment dominant in Charles Lamb's mind. When he was annoyed, he made annoying puns, -- when he was frivolous, he made frivolous puns. But when he was in the cue, and his surroundings were such as to call forth his better powers, he put into this form of wit, humour and imagination of a high order.

In his preface, Lamb made it clear that he never wanted to be treated as a grave or esteemed person. He always wished to be associated with people younger than himself. He never believed
in the march of time and as he himself confesses:

He was too much of the boy-man. The
togavirilis never sate gracefully on
his shoulders. The impressions of
infancy had burnt into him, and he
resented the impertinence of manhood.
These were weaknesses; but such as
they were, they are key to explicate
some of his writings.²

Lamb never liked to have "the impertinence of manhood" over
his personality. He wanted to be regarded as boy-man - ever
loving his infancy and boyhood days. The reason seems to be
his early entering into the fray of the affairs of the world.
And he was deprived of that fun and enjoyment that boyhood
could have rendered him. So he was always haunted by the memo-
ries of his infancy and boyhood. It seems to be the case with
his first essay of the last series - "Blakesmoor in H---shire".
The essay shows Lamb's local attachment which is significant to
energize genius into expression. The essay is an account by
Lamb after visiting the place of his infancy with his sister
Mary. He was so attached with the place and buildings where he
used to live in infancy that when he found them destructed on
his grown up visit he says:

Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves
at their process of destruction, at the
plucking of every panel I should have felt
the varlets to spare a plank at least out
of the cheerful store-room, in whose hot
window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grass-plat before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me — it is in mine ears now, as oft as summer returns; or a pannel of the yellow room.  

Lamb was well aware of the surroundings. As a lovely child he roamed about in every apartment of the house and knew every nook and corner. He had the devoted love for the place which he had felt in his childhood. He had a silent affection and admiration for its surroundings.

Lamb felt loneliness of the temple which ever haunted him thus:

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug
firesides — the low-built roof-parlours
ten feet by ten — frugal boards, and all
the homeliness of home — these were the condition of my birth — the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond; and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

The destructed place could not be built again in original manner. No bricklayers can ever restore the impressiveness of that haunted room, where Lamb used to reside, even if they rebuild it.
Lamb opined that one should have the consciousness of being a gentleman, without having been born a gentleman. The pride of ancestry would be cheaper in terms. On the contrary, one should be obliged to think about the race of ancestors. The pride of ancestry will render them a vanity as those who do inherit it. Lamb very rightly expresses:

> What to us the uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not answer within us to a cognate and correspondent elevation?\(^5\)

There would be no interest in ancestry and its pride until and unless there is not a kindred pride in contemplating it. For gentility, what is needed cultivation and not mere ancestry. To be gentle does not depend solely to be born gentle.

Lamb could not control himself after seeing the destruction of the place of his infancy. Everything was demolished and crushed into the mere dust and rubbish -- which he found on his visit when Lamb was grown up. Just like a idol, he worshipped the place:

> Was it for this, that I kissed my childish hands too fervently in your idol worship, walks and windings of BLAKESMOOR! for this, or what sin of mine, has the plough passed over your pleasant places? "I sometimes think that as men, when they die, do not die all, so of their extinguished habitations there may be a hope - a germ to be revivified."\(^6\)
Lamb wonders, was it for the sin of idolatry, that he has been punished by the destruction of Blakesmoor. Lamb suggests that as the Christians believe in the immortality of the soul, so they may perhaps dream of a re-creation in a future life of their beloved earthly haunts.

In his essay, "Detached Thoughts On Books And Reading", Lamb expresses his views pertaining to books and their reading. Lamb had the passion for reading:

I dream away my life in others' speculations.
I love to lose myself in other men's minds.
When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.

Lamb had no literary prejudices. He can lay his hand on any book which could sincerely be called a book for reading. For this selection of a book he had some reservations. The books which could not be admitted to be really books, according to him, are Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books, Draught Boards, bound and lettered on the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacks, Statutes at large, the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, the Histories of Flavius Josephus and Paley's Moral Philosophy. For these reservations only, he could read almost anything. He had the rare taste of catholicity.

Lamb expresses his opinion regarding the books which are in hard covers. He regarded that the clothed books are just like false saints, usurping the place of true shrines, and compelling the genuine ones to leave their legitimate places. He exampli-
ifies his statement that when a reader takes out a well-bound volume, hoping it to be by Steele or Farquhar but to their disappointment it turns to be Adam Smith's *Population Essay*. He further goes on to say:

To view a well-arranged assortment of blockheaded Encyclopaedias (Anglicans or Metropolitans) set out in an array of Russia, or Morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably reclothe my shivering folios; would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look himself again in the world. I never see these impostors, but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.

So Lamb wanted to clothe his poor tattered old writers in the leather stripped from these modern encyclopaedias. In his opinion, to place Shakespeare or Milton's works into gay bindings would be only foolish ostentation. Because possession of their works is no distinction in itself. And above all, it does not give a feeling of possession of their works in the owner. But for others, he had different views:

Thomson's *Seasons*, again, looks best (I maintain it) a little torn, and dog's eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves, and worn out appearance, nay, the very odour (beyond Russia), if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old 'Circulating Library'. Tom Jones,
or Vicar or Wakefield! How they speak of the thousand thumbs, that have turned over their pages with delight.\(^9\)

Lamb opines that sometimes there may be better books like those of Fielding, Smollett and Sterne but these books little demand binding because the copies are easily available and it is an everlasting process. But rare books, for example, the Life of the Duke of Newcastle, by his Duchess, no binding or casket is safe enough to keep such a precious jewel.

Lamb favours to keep old editions of writers such as Sir Philip Sydney, Bishop Taylor, Milton in his prose works, Fuller safe and intact. He says, on the contrary, he never bothered for a First folio of Shakespeare.

Lamb had a unique fascination for the works of Kit, Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley. To him they were "sweetest names". And Milton and Shakespeare became stale and hackneyed. It seemed to him that they are harping upon the same subject in various ways.

What is more important when and where one reads a book. The Fairy Queene could not be read in the five or six minutes before the dinner is quite ready. For Milton, he says, that his verse produces harmony and brings music. Milton's music of verse produces slavish thoughts and purified ears. For Shakespeare's The Tempest and The Winter's Tale, winter evenings are superb when the world's all activities are silent.
Lamb had his own opinion on an important item such as a newspaper:

A newspaper, read out, is intolerable. In some of the Bank offices it is the custom (to save so much individual time) for one of the clerks— who is the best scholar—to commence upon the Times, or the Chronicle, and recite its entire contents aloud pro bono publico. With every advantage of lungs and elocution, the effect is singularly rapid... Another follows with his selection. So the entire journal transpires at length by piece-meal. Seldom-readers are slow readers, and, without this expedient no one in the company would probably ever travel through the contents of a whole paper.\textsuperscript{10}

So the newspaper is read in piece-meal and all by himself. Then only its reading is enjoyed. Newspaper reading is selective as well as light reading. Like a book it has not to be read completely. It is a very good pass time for a person who had ordered for a supper in an hotel and waiting for it. There these like binded magazines are best accompaniments rather than any other better book.

Lamb was not given to out-of-doors reading. He could not adjust to that kind of reading. Lamb also could not be a street-reader. He recounts about them with affection and the whole process of their reading at the open stalls. He mentions Martin Charles Burney— one of his life long friends— who read two volumes of \textit{Clarissa} (Richardson's novel) at stalls in fragments: 
Venturing tenderly, page after page,
expecting every moment when he shall
interpose his interdict, and yet unable
to deny themselves the gratification,
他们 'snatch a fearful joy'. Martin
S--, in this way, by daily fragments,
got through two volumes of Clarissa,
when the stall-keeper damped his laudable
ambition, by asking him (it was in his
younger days) whether he meant to purchase
the work. M. declares, that under no
circumstances in his life did he ever
peruse a book with half the satisfaction
which he took in those uneasy snatches. 11

Lamb's "Thoughts on Books And Reading" produces an interesting
assessment of his personal views on books and his way of reading.
We could know in which books he was especially interested. He
himself was a voracious reader. But outdoor reading was not
a passion for him. On the other hand, he describes about outdoor
reading with affection. His own friend Martin was given to
such kind of reading. That kind of reading gave his friend
satisfaction in full. It seems that Lamb was quite fascinated
by this kind of reading -- being a devoted reader himself. It
is because of this reason that he describes about this kind of
reading with affection.

"The Old Margate, 'Boy'", is Lamb's, experience of sea side.
Margate is the small coasting vessel which ran between London
and Margate. At the outset Lamb admitted his preference of
passing his vacation at the universities and next to it is some
woody spot but on his cousin Bridget's (his sister Mary Lamb as referred to in all the essays) insistence he agreed:

I am fond of passing my vacations (I believe I have said so before) at one or other of the Universities. Next to these my choice would fix me at some woody spot, such as the neighbourhood of Henley affords in abundance, on the banks of my beloved Thames. But somehow or other my cousin contrives to wheedle me once in three or four seasons to a watering-place... and all because we were happy many years ago for a brief week at - Margate. That was our first seaside experiment, and many circumstances combined to make it the most agreeable holyday of my life.12

Both Lamb and his sister have not seen the sea earlier. So they passed their time in company happily out of doors for such a long time.

Lamb had a graphic view of the vessel in his eyes. The vessel was weather-beaten and sun-burnt captain was there. He further goes minutely into the operation of the vessel and depicts that the vessel rests its burden of passengers to wind and wave - the Hoy being a sailing vessel - and did not require the aid of steam to propel it. Lamb fancifully likened the steam to the smoke of witches' fires, with their incantations and cauldrons of boiling herbs and other ingredients like those in Macbeth. The cauldrons are the prosaic boilers of the steam-engine.
Lamb writes about the crew members and the obvious curiosity of the travellers regarding the different mechanism involved in the movement of the ship. He also talks about the Cook and regards him as the "happy medium":

Can I forget thy honest, yet slender crew, with their coy reluctant responses (yet to the suppression of anything like contempt) to the raw questions, which we of the great city would be ever and anon putting to them, as to the uses of this or that strange naval implement? Specially can I forget thee, thou happy medium, thou shade of refuge between us and them, conciliating interpreter of their skill to our simplicity, comfortable ambassador between sea and land! — ... like another Ariel, flaming at once about all parts of the deck, yet with kindlier ministrations — not to assist the tempest, but, as if touched with a kindred sense of our infirmities, to soothe the qualms which that untried motion might haply raise in our crude land-fancies. 13

Lamb addresses the cook as a capital intermediary or ambassador, as it were, between the passengers and the crew. So "happy medium" is being the equivalent of "the golden mean", the moderation which lies between two extremes. This Ariel was not to assist storm but to render soothness to the travellers who were having the nausea or sea-sickness which the unaccustomed roll of the vessel might excite in their inexperienced landsmen's imaginations. The cook, regarded by Lamb as Ariel, served them exhilarating drinks and still more exhilarating conversation.
Lamb further gives details about the travel. He writes that in addition to crew members and cook there was a dark, Spanish-complexioned young man, remarkably handsome with officer-like appearance. That man had assertion in his way of talking. About him, Lamb expresses:

He was, in fact, the greatest liar I had met with them, or since. He was none of your hesitating, half story-tellers (a most painful description of mortals) who go on sounding your belief, and only giving you as much as they can see you can swallow at a time -- the nibbling pick-pockets of your patience...

So Lamb was in the company of a "thorough-paced liar" and by and by he consumed the patience of the listener. Lamb noticed that he (Spanish looking young man) made sure of his company before he used to tell the fabricated tales. The company should be of such people consisting of not too much wealthy person, not many wise or learned persons. But Lamb here remarks to a very natural behaviour of the listeners -- to go on listening to his gossips as they were in a new world -- world of sea and time and place was such that everything was taken with reception whatsoever was disposed before them.

While having personal experience of sea-travelling, Lamb had another co-traveller who sat upon the edge of the deck and was quite a different character. He was a boy, apparently very poor, weak and patient. He was engrossed in himself and not aware
of his surroundings. He was also not eating or drinking. By personal queries, it could be revealed to the author that he was going to Margate, with the hope of being admitted into the infirmary there for sea-bathing. His disease was a scrofula, which had left nothing in him. He had no friends.

As there are two aspects of Life — happy and sad. So in the same manner Lamb also experienced two different persons showing two aspects of life happy — in the form of a Spanish complexion young man and another a boy who was patient. Lamb writes to say that these memories lingered on with him:

These pleasant, and some mournful passages, with the first sight of the sea, co-operating with youth, and a sense of holy-days, and out-of-door adventure, to me that had been pent up in populous cities for many months before, — have left upon my mind the fragrance as of summer days gone by, bequeathing nothing but their remembrance for cold and wintry hours to chew upon. 15

So, for Lamb sea remains a disappointment. The young man (as the case with the author) could not know anything about sea expect through description. Those descriptions appearing to become larger, as they become more familiar, which our sight can take in all at once. All these descriptions bring their accumulated notions to Lamb's mind all at once, so that he is led to expect something great and extraordinary. All the wonders of the sea as described by others could not be comprehended by the author:
I do not assert that in sober earnest he expects to be shown all these wonders at once, but he is under the tyranny of a mighty faculty, which haunts him with confused hints and shadows of all these; and when the actual object opens first upon him, seen (in tame weather too most likely) from our unromantic coasts -- a speck, a slip of sea-water as it shows to him -- what can it prove but a very unsatisfying and even diminutive entertainment?¹⁶

Lamb loved to be in the company of natural and obvious things of life such as "over-curtaining sky", which is known object and could be seen daily without any horror or surprise as is the case with sea (described in those descriptions). Lamb liked all those things which were free from any kind of wonder or awe-inspiring element. Lamb very emphatically clears his point in the essay:

I love town, or country; but this detectable Cinque Port is neither. I hate these scrubbed shoots, thrusting out their starved foliage from between the horrid fissures of dusty innutritious rocks; which the amateur calls 'verdure to the edge of the sea'. I require woods, and they show me stunted coppices. I cry out for the water brooks, and pant for fresh streams, and inland murmurs.¹⁷

Lamb writes further that he cannot stand all day on the "naked beach" as he calls it, watching all day the often chan-
ging colours of the sea. The change of colour could be compared to the colours of "dying mullet". Lamb feels tired of looking out of this prison like island. He does not consider the place as his home. This place -- the sea, could be a place only for short and hurried visits. Lamb could endure banishment to a remote and uncivilized place rather than to be on the sea. He wants to be on the sea, over the sea and across it. But to stay on sea would be like chaining him with iron. He could even tolerate living with the coast guards, who used to watch the shore to prevent smuggling, marching monotonously to and fro. Ultimately, Lamb, sums up the essay by saying that no town-person or country born can feel the honest homeliness at "these sea-places":

I am sure that no town-bred, or inland-born subjects, can feel their true and natural nourishment at these sea-places. Nature, where she does not mean us for mariners and vagabonds, bids us stay at home. The salt foam seems to nourish a spleen. I am not half so good-natured as by the milder waters of my natural river.18

Lamb preferred swans to sea-gulls and "scud a swallow" to the river of his birth-place, the Thames. Through the essay, it becomes rather clear, Lamb was totally given to town life -- specifically London life, its people and streets and ever popular Thames. He loved to remain among these elements and roamed about on the streets of London as unnoticed spectator of men and manners.
The essay, "The Convalescent", is an account of Lamb's recovering from illness. At the very outset he admits that he would not be able to render to the readers anything else but his illness. Owing to his illness reflecting to any other topic would seem to him "foreign to itself." Lamb reflects over the whole state of sickness just like a dream:

And truly the whole state of sickness is such; for what else is it but a magnificent dream for a man to lie a-bed, and draw daylight curtains about him; and, shutting out the sun, to induce a total oblivion of all the works which are going on under it? To become insensible to all the operations of life, except the beatings of one feeble pulse?\(^\text{19}\)

To a sick man, this world closes on him. He is not involved in any activity of life.

Lamb very realistically deals the topic and says that sick bed is just like having kingly loneliness. The sick person becomes a lord and acts like the despot. He shifts his position in bed. There is a play on the other sense of "to change sides", viz. "to desert one's party, to go over to the opposite party". Lamb very humorously describes his condition to be absolute within the four curtains. This is his private dominion.

During illness, Lamb, feels that the person becomes too much selfish and self-centred. He does not think anything but how to get well. He becomes immune to outdoor as well as indoor activities.
Lamb in a very natural way deals with the state of mind of the sick person. Earlier he was the man who was totally involved in different aspects of life, e.g., in a law suit of his friend and during his illness when his friend loses the case, it does not at all concerns him. The only concern is how to get well.

Although it is Lamb's own reflection over his illness, broadly present the experience of other persons in the similar situation. During illness, the sick person thinks as if his whole personality or body is divided into many parts and every part troubles him:

He makes the most of himself; dividing himself, by an allowable fiction, into as many distinct individuals, as he hath sore and sorrowing members. Sometimes he meditates as of a thing apart from him - upon his poor aching head, and that dull pain which, dozing or waking, lay in it all the past night like a log, or palpable substance of pain, not to be removed without opening the very scull, as it seemed, to take it thence. Or he pities his long, clammy, attenuated fingers. He compassionates himself all over; and his bed is a very discipline of humanity, and tender heart.

During the period of sickness, the sick does not want many visitors and he is "the best sympathiser of himself. The sick only welcomes one person heartily, i.e., the nurse.

For the world's business, the sick is dead. He is absolutely indifferent to current events. The sick man does not perceive
that the lines of care on the doctor's brow are due to his anxieties for many patients, not for any special individual. The doctor who visits the patient or sick man also takes adequate precaution not to disturb the sick. For this, Lamb had a very interesting episode to narrate. It is, or was, customary to have the doctor's fee, usually in the form of a sovereign and a shilling, wrapped up in tissue paper, and laid ready for him in some conspicuous place. The doctor would take it up carefully, so that the rustling of the paper should not attract the patient's attention or disturb him. The sick man desires that the same routine should be repeated the next day. The house-hold servants walk as softly as possible and it seemed as if they were walking on a velvet so as not to disturb the sickman.

When a person is sick, Lamb says, he enjoys the privileges of a monarch:

To be sick is to enjoy monarchal prerogatives. Compare the silent tread, and quiet ministry, almost by the eye only, with which he is served -- with the careless demeanour, the unceremonious goings in and out (slapping of doors, or leaving them open) of the very same attendants, when he is getting a little better - and you will confess, that from the bed of sickness (thron[e] let me rather call it) to the elbow chair of convalescence, is a fall from dignity, amounting to a deposition. 21

The convalescence dethrones the sick person from his position of a monarch. That is his breaking the regal web he made around
himself during his illness and bringing him again to the realities of life. During illness, he has become a mere gossipping old woman. The sick person who is now convalescing bids farewell to everything which made his sickness pompous and full of show.

At the time when Lamb was in process of shedding his vanity inculcated during illness, the editor's note reached him. Lamb feels that it was cruel on the part of the editor to ask a man, who is at his last gasp, to write for the press. It is just reconnecting oneself with the trivial interests and duties of life, forgotten during his illness:

... which I had lost sight of; a gentle call to activity, however trivial; a wholesome weaning from that preposterous dream of self-absorption - the puffy state of sickness - in which I confess to have lain so long, insensible to the magazines, and monarchies of the world alike; to its laws and to its literature. The hypochondriac flatus is subsiding; the acres, which in imagination I had spread over ... and for the giant of self-importance, which I was so lately, you have me once again in my natural pretensions -- the lean and meagre figure of your insignificant Essayist.\(^{22}\)

It was the Editor, at last, who became an instrument in putting Lamb - recovering from illness to reality - the real figure of him as the lean and meagre. Ultimately his morbid vanity being puffed up with self-importance during his sickness
came to an end. The reader finds himself entrapped in the essay - "The Convalescence" and comes out with the author. The reader's trap also ceases with the author's coming to reality. Such is the charm of Lamb's way of writing that he takes the complete attention of the reader while he becomes busy projecting his 'self' in the essay.

Before coming to "The Superannuated Man", it would be worthwhile to examine the letter written by Lamb to Wordsworth on the 6th of April, 1925:

I came home for ever on Tuesday in last week, the incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, i.e., to have three times as much real time -- time that is my own, in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holidays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys: their conscious fugitiveness; the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holiday, there are no holidays. I can sit at home, in rain or shine, without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irk-some to have had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.
The situation after his retirement was totally changed. He found himself in an altogether new condition. Now he had to lead a retired person. Earlier, he craved for that kind of life but now he was placed into it. There remains a mark of distinction between the two - to go on dreaming about a thing and to face a reality. Lamb was finding such kind of condition. He was thinking about holidays with keen desire but now when he was having holidays, he finds himself unable to enjoy them. Because now he was thinking how to enjoy it - he had ample time at his leisure. Earlier he was left with little time even during holidays. Still, he was compelling himself to take the most optimistic outlook regarding the change in his life, and the essay on the "Supernumerary Man", that appeared a month later in the London, elaborates with excellent skill the feelings which he wished to cultivate and preserve:

A man can never have too much time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. 24

This is Lamb's observation after retirement that man should not have too much time because he finds himself unable to cope with it. Man should have reasonable time to act. He finds for himself after his retirement - a life of contemplation.

Lamb opens his autobiographical essay "The Supernumerary Man" with Virgil's words: "Sera tamen respexit Libertas." 25 (Liberty
hath remembered me though late.)

Lamb bemoans liberty which had come in the form of retirement very late in his life as he had passed his youth - the golden years of his life in the troublesome days in the office. The office life was just like prison for him continued till his manhood and ultimately up to that age when his hair started getting grey. This kind of life continued till he started adjusting himself to the notion of no holidays or rest.

Lamb reflects how he started his office life with which he was not happily satisfied:

It is now six-and thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing-lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant play-time, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a day attendance at a counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content - doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages. 26

Lamb says that the sundays were holidays but they were gloomy because on that day there would not be any activity in the city. On the other hand, Lamb always wanted to live a life full of noise and vigour. Those sunday church bells depressed him. On sundays, he could not idle away his time on book-stalls that he always loved to. The very appearance of business having an attraction for him, in contrast to his temporary idleness. On
knew a clerk would only be summoned to appear before the partners in their private room for some serious cause. He thought that his time has come -- that is of his dismissal. But that was not the matter. It was altogether contrary:

He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary -- a magnificent offer! 

Lamb retired on a pension of £ 450 a year from which £ 9 a year were deducted towards an annuity for his sister, should she survive him. To this offer, Lamb made a faltering reply, which consisted of little more than a bow. He was full of gratitude for the directors of his management of East India Company. So at just ten minutes after eight he went home for ever.

For the first or two days of his retirement, Lamb was overwhelmed. He was rather confused as to how to act after his retirement. His condition was like the prisoner of the old state prison Bastille, suddenly released after forty years' confinement. He got his great wealth in the shape of leisure, which was like some vast landed estate. He was at first uncertain as to what to do with ample time which was at his disposal after retirement but in course of time things seemed to him settling down. Those
"giddy raptures" are subsiding, giving place to comfort and familiar realisation. Now he knew the trick - how to enjoy his retired life thus:

If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do not walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away, but I do not read in that violent measure with which, having no Time my own but candle-light Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in by-gone winters. I walk, read or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me.29

Lamb was not left as a pleasure-seeker but now pleasure used to come to him. It depends on one's mental outlook and way of thinking. Now Lamb's mind was accustomed to that kind of pleasure -- that whenever he felt at a loss what to do, he could pass the time in walking, reading or writing hastily.

Lamb says that he lived till date for fifty years but there were hours which he lived for other people and that is how he was still a young fellow:

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For that is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that
which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me three-fold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum. 30

Lamb's life did not quite extend to ten years from this date. He died in December, 1834.

Although Lamb retired from his place of work but he could not easily reconcile himself to think of it as an affair of yesterday. He was so closely associated with the partners and fellow clerks that he visited the place once or twice after leaving the place. There he saw his old desk and his hat stand. It was used by another person now. This was quite obvious but Lamb could not take it smoothly. Ultimately he took leave from his "old cronies" with their permission to visit them again and again. At last he could reconcile himself to this separation. But still Time stands before him as a very big questionmark:

Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday
nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, & c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same.\[31\]

Sunday -- its importance has gone and gone with it the load that was there on this holiday of other six days. This load told upon his enjoyment of Sabbath day. Now he has ample time to do anything -- either going to church or visiting a sick friend. Ultimately, Lamb while concluding his essay, comes to the same point with which the analysis of this essay began that a man should not have much Time. He should neither too much Time nor too little -- meaning by that time should be such which could be manageable.

Lamb, in a reconciled manner, says that now the cumbersome desk had been removed. He was a "Retired Leisure" now meaning that he should not be known as Mr. So-and So, clerk to Such-and such a firm, but the gentleman at ease. Now he was free from care. Now he no longer walked with an object, straight to his work or away from it, but sauntered about casually. An air of dignified leisure had begun to develop in him:

I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the Opera. Opus operatum est.
I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task work, and have the rest of the day to myself.\[32\]

So Lamb's task or assigned work was over. Now he was free just like a bird to fly or like a school boy who has completed his task-work. His work is finished. Now the remainder of his life was his own to pass it as he thought fit or liked. Now will began his contemplative period - giving thought to what he has done in the past and what he intends to do in future.

The essay, "The Wedding", shows Lamb's feelings and emotions while attending his friend's daughter marriage. He was quite happy to be invited in the marriage. He wanted to attend every ceremony that would help the old like him to flash back on their young age:

...which to us old people give back our youth in a manner, and restore our gayest season, in the remembrance of our own success, or the regrets, scarcely less tender, of our own youthful disappointments, in this point of a settlement. On these occasions I am sure to be in good-humour for a week or two after, and enjoy a reflected honey-moon.\[33\]

As Lamb was having no family of his own but when he was attending the marriage of his friend's daughter, he felt as temporary relationship with his family. At that season he felt as having temporary relationship of cousinhood or uncleship.
Lamb participated in every social ceremony of his friend's community. Lamb left for a short period his lonely bachelorship. Lamb felt unkindly if left out, even when funeral procession is being held in his dear friend's house.

Although Lamb himself was a bachelor but he wrote on the subject - wedding quite intensely, giving interesting details to the readers about marriage, love and courtship. He also talks about stern attitude of fathers in the case of lovers and that became the theme of romance writers:

The hard-heartedness of fathers is a fine theme for romance writers, a sure and moving topic; but is there not something untender, to say no more of it, in the hurry which a beloved child is sometimes in to tear herself from the paternal stock, and commit herself to strange graftings? The case is heightened where the lady, as in the present instance, happens to be an only child. I do not understand these matters experimentally, but I can make a shrewd guess at the wounded pride of a parent upon these occasions.

Lamb was unable to understand the action of a lovely child of a father leaving her home and entrusting herself to an untried stranger - her husband. This action of a child hurts the sentiments of a parent. Mothers are easily got over in these cases. Their principles are too flexible. He was preaching all this and airing his views while his friend's daughter came to threshold.
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jest to the tristful severities of a funeral. 36

This was the only misbehaviour Lamb did. But he could not help it. Because it was his brain work. Nobody can stop his mind's working. And his mind acted in this negative way only because Lamb was placed in such serious and solemn atmosphere at that moment.

Miss Thomas, a handsome lady, there noticed another anomaly in manner of dress of Lamb. Lamb was wearing a black suit and giving the bride in that colour. That was an impropriety. Bride's mother would have been satisfied if he had come in any other colour. But Lamb was witty enough to come with an appropriate fable and taking excuse that he had no other suit:

But I got over the omen by a lucky apologue, which I remembered out of Pilpay, or some Indian author, of all the birds being invited to the linnets' wedding, at which, when all the rest came in their gayest feathers, the raven alone apologised for his cloak because 'he had no other'. This tolerably reconciled the elders. 37

With the young, it was all merriment, joy and congratulations all around. Lamb describes the whole event very beautifully and heartily that the young ladies were kissing the bride's tears, and she kissed in return. All this went on till a well-experienced friend of bride came to her rescue saying, with half open eye on the bride groom, that if it goes on at this rate, she
would have none to spare for her husband.

Lamb visited his friend's house many times earlier also. But now there remained a difference that his daughter would be missing:

The Admiral still enjoys his pipe, but he has no Miss Emily to fill it for him...
He bears bravely up, but he does not come out with his flashes of wild wit so thick as formerly. His sea songs seldom escape him. His wife, too, looks as if she wanted some younger body to scold and set to rights.
We all miss a junior presence. It is wonderful how one young maiden freshens up, and keeps green, the paternal roofs. Old and young seem to have an interest in her, so long as she is not absolutely disposed of. The youthfulness of the house is flown. Emily is married.

This depiction by Lamb showed unnoticingly of Lamb's personality that if married and father of a daughter then he must have proved a very affectionate and loving father. Because the enthusiasm, love and pains with which he narrated the whole episode is remarkable and praiseworthy. And notice the concluding lines of the essay - the charm of the house, i.e., the youthfulness has taken flight and "Emily is married".

The essay, "Old China", had begun by declaring Lamb's partiality for Old China:
I have an almost feminine partiality for old China. When I go to see any great house, I enquire for the China-closet, and next for the picture-gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying, that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit to our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when China jars and saucers were introduced to my imagination.

From which after a few paragraphs he diverges, by a modulation common with him, to the recollection of his past struggles. And "Old China" portrays his autobiographical feelings. He had been taking tea, he says, with his cousin (under this relationship his sister Mary is always indicated), using a new set of China, and remarking to her on their better fortunes which enabled them to involve now and again in the lavish habit of such a purchase. Then all of a sudden Lamb saw the effect of his passing reference on the brows of his companion - Bridget. Lamb was quick to deduce it and she said,

'I wish the good old times would come again', she said, 'when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state', - so she was pleased to ramble on, -- 'in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we
coveted a cheap luxury (and O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the for and against, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it." 40

So Bridget dwells in the past and very reasonably puts forward before Lamb the sweetness of the past. Then she reminds Lamb of his brown suit which was out-worn and she humorously narrates further how he hanged it over himself rather wearing it and looked like as if it were a scare crow, on which old ragged clothes were made to hang. That suit grew threadbare - because of that 'folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which he dragged home from Barker's. And how she repaired some of the loose leaves with paste. Then she refers to the present state of theirs when he could afford clean black suit and money to buy books whichever he liked. But she asked the searching question if he was feeling the "honest vanity" which he used to feel by wearing that brown out-worn suit or could he buy worth those nice purchases now.

Then she reminded Lamb of those pleasant walks to Enfield and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when they had holidays. They both enjoyed those days with fun and merriment. But all are gone, now that they are rich. Now there is a difference in enjoying. First of all - the day when they go on for enjoyment rarely comes. If it all comes - they ride the half way and go into a good looking
Inn and order the best of dinners – never thinking or debating for the expense. For Bridget it never produced any relish. She, on the other hand, liked those country hasty meals.

Lamb’s cousin Bridget goes on revolving in the past. Now she started talking about the theatres and the plays they witnessed and enjoyed together. She rendered the account thus:

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the Battle of Hexham, and the Surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the Children in the Wood -- when we squeezed out our shillings a piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery – where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me – and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me – and the pleasure was the better for a little shame – and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the court of Illyria? You used to say, that the Gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially ... Now we can only pay our money, and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then – but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty." 41

This is how Bridget gave a total account of a year. In the changed background of financial position, Lamb was happy to see
they could meet both ends meet at the end of the year. But she reminded Lamb of earlier days when the 31st of December came then he used to say that they had to curtail this or that to meet the expenses during the year. And all pros and cons of the matter was minutely thrashed out. In this way they used to welcome the 'coming guest' - the New Year. Now they have no calculation of any sort at the end of the old year. And no promises to have which of the coming New Year could do better for them.

Lamb admitted that it was not easy to interpret Bridget when she gets into "rhetorical vein". Lamb had no option but to smile over the phantom of wealth that her imagination had built up of meagre income - hundred pounds a year. Lamb tried to pacify his cousin by saying that it is true that they were happy when they were poorer. But at that time they were younger. He said that they had to put up this excess money because throwing away the superfluous portion of our income will not change them. They had to struggle hard to grow up and for this they must be grateful. This growing up process united them more closely in the bond of affection. Lamb further argued thus:

We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power - those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten - with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride, where we formerly
walked: live better, and lie softer — and shall be wise to do so — than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of.42

Lamb very realistically asked his cousin whether those old days could return or if they could afford now to walk thirty miles a-day. Lamb very logically pinpointed his arguments and said if they could go for one-shilling gallery days — never, but on the contrary what they would do was — having calm arguments by the side of well-laid carpet fireside and sitting on a comfortable sofa. It was beyond them to struggle over those inconvenient staircases and pushed and elbowed through while getting a place at the top most stair there and say - "Thank God, we are safe" as done by Bridget formerly.

Bridget account of the past could be termed as emotional and sentimental. To her, past memories were all loving and rendering happiness and mirth. She was, it seemed, unable to find a balance between past and present. But that seems not to be the case with Lamb. Lamb appreciated her sentiments and feelings. Lamb himself always haunted in past and drove out pleasure from the past. But in this particular essay we notice a change in approach. That is a change in the matter of physical and monetary comforts. Lamb opined that a sufficient income is to elderly people like an additional supply of truth. Lamb admitted that natural expansions or courageous rising of the spirits of youth, which circumstances cannot check, had long passed away. They had to accept the reality. Past is after all past. It cannot repeat itself. What is passed cannot return. They should, better, treat those
days as dreams. Ultimately what comes to their rescue - a sufficient income. This will keep their old age smooth and would act as an additional supply of youth - meaning that sufficient money had the ability to keep the old ones as young because they had not to worry all the time for money and this feeling will keep the old ones young and free from old age worry about their welfare. Their carefree life in old age would force them to think and feel as young. Thus the whole essay is a reflection on Lamb's self and his personal views on past and present state of affairs in the concluding part of the essay. "Old China", in a manner, is a true picture of their unified life.

"Confessions of a Drunkard", can not be unnoticed. A peculiar kind of interest is attached to this essay. It had been originally written by Lamb, at the request of a friend, as one of a series of Temperance Tracts. In this capacity it had been quoted in an article in the Quarterly, for April, 1822, as a scared portraiture of the results of not having self-control which the reviewer went to say that they have reason to understand it as a true account. In order to render the author the chance of contradicting the statement, the tract was reprinted in the London in the following August, under the signature of Elia. To it were printed a few words of chiding with the Quarterly reviewer for assuming the literal truthfulness of these confessions, but accompanied with certain significant admissions that showed Lamb had no right to be seriously blamed for. He writes:

It is indeed, a compound extracted out of his long observations of the effects of
drinking upon all the world about him; and this accumulated mass of misery he hath centred (as the custom is with judicious essayists) in a single figure. We deny not that a portion of his own experiences may have passed into the picture (as who, that is not a washy fellow, but must at some time have felt the after-operation of a too generous cup?); but then how heightened! how exaggerated! how little within the sense of the Review, where a part, in their slanderous usage, must be understood to stand for the whole. 43

Lamb was in fact writing his tract with border-line facts, and could have hardly complained if these facts turned against himself. It would be those who knew Lamb very well and the circumstances of his life at its best would be inclined to accept these confessions as true. But later in life, his gin-and-water and its consumption became more and more a habit. He mixed with this habit was his taking of tobacco - considered by him as "sweet company". He took the help of these things as the increasing need to stimulant to set his wits to work. The buffoonery indulged under its effects could easily be noticed by a friend. Lamb, no doubt, renders an exaggerated account, and the drunkard's utter collapse and misery are described in a style which, as applied to himself, was absurd.

Lamb opens the essay, "Confessions Of A Drunkard", with the remark that water-drinking critics always preach solemn dissuasions from taking strong liquors. But to the patient - who takes
these strong liquors, these pleadings have little effect. The
cure of it is very simple — to abstain from taking it. But it is
not so simple to abstain from it till one has the strong will to
do so.

It is not easy to abstain from drinking. Lamb narrates a
case of whose state he knew very well. The person who tried to
abstain one evening and knowing fully the implications of it —
firstly its enchantments and deepening of his sorrow and gloom
rather than brightening it. But knowing all this, he could help
crying and screaming for it. He had painful struggle inside
himself. So it is not a joke to leave it all of a sudden.

Lamb in further lines shaked off his unidentified character
in this manner:

Why should I hesitate to declare, that the
man of whom I speak is myself? I have no
puling apology to make to mankind. I see
them all in one way or another deviating
from the pure reason. It is to my own nature
alone I am accountable for the woe that I
have brought upon it.

Lamb very truly writes to say that he could depict about
himself because one's own nature and habits one can account
honestly and sincerely. There are persons who were having strong
constitutions and strong will and to whom wine if taken in an
excess, would not do any harm. These discourses are having no
effect on such persons. But a weak brother — who is having no
strong will cannot imitate such persons. In the further lines,
it seemed, as if he projected himself:

It is to a very different description of persons I speak. It is to the weak, the nervous; to those who feel the want of some artificial aid to raise their spirits in society to what is no more than the ordinary pitch of all around them without it. This is the secret of our drinking. Such must fly the convivial board in the first instance, if they do not mean to sell themselves for term of life.\textsuperscript{45}

This was frequently the case with Lamb himself, who suffered much from long moods of depression and melancholy. That is why such persons like Lamb yield to drinking.

Lamb's account of self sets in onwards. He writes that twelve years ago he had completed twenty-sixth year. After leaving his schooling, he had most of the time passed in loneliness. His companions were books. And whatever faculty rendered by God to him had not remained unused.

At that time, Lamb writes, that he found himself in the company of persons who were rough, violent, sitters during nights, persons having disputes, and drunken but noble persons. They bandied about the wit. The author possessed a larger quantity of wit in them. Lamb felt encouraged by his friends and acted as a professed joker. But Lamb admits his draw back in truthful manner thus:

I, who of all men am least fitted for such an occupation, having, in addition to the
greatest difficulty which I experienced at all times of finding words to express my meaning, a natural nervous impediment in my speech! 46

Lamb advised the readers that if they were possessing such nerves as of his then they should not aspire for the character of wit. If the flow of ideas, emotions, imagination is setting in after seeing bottle and glasses then do not pour them into it - i.e. in wine and glasses but divert the direction towards writing an essay, pen a character or description but not like the author whose tears were coming down over his cheeks. That he had wasted them in wine or in his moods of sorrow or melancholy.

Lamb admitted that his witticisms amused foolish listeners. He had to provoke mirth to find malignant malice. He had to swallow drops of life destroying wine and its intoxication be so subtly converted into fleeting words to amuse foolish listeners. Thus pledging the next morning to misery for the sake of a night of insane revelry. These friendships of Lamb could not be considered as stronger but mere boon-companionship.

Lamb writes that he was lacking in courage to say good bye to such pornicious thing. But he indulged in drunken orgies and felt involved in the name of exaggerated notions of the demands of good fellowship. Thus, his former passion rekindled into a permanent inclination for drink.

Lamb in an exaggerated tone writes about his drinking habit thus:

It were impertinent to carry the reader through all the processes by which, from smoking at first with malt liquor, I took my degrees through thin wines, through stronger wine and water, through small punch, to those juggling compositions, which, under the name of mixed liquors, slur a great deal of brandy or other poison under less and less water continually, until they come to next to none, and so to none at all. But it is hateful to disclose the secrets of my Tartarus. 47

Lamb further writes to inform his readers how tobacco influenced him. Lamb was a great smoker. Lamb rather toiled after it as some men toil after virtue. About his habit of tobacco and pipe he referred to it very stoically:

How a pipe was ever in my midnight path before me, till the vision forced me to realise it, - how then its ascending vapours curled, its fragrance lulled, and the thousand delicious ministerings conversant about it, employing every faculty, extracted the sense of pain. 48

Lamb felt as if his pain - sorrows and glooms have gone with it temporarily. It turned to be a lively consolation, it became a mere relief, without positive attraction. Lamb admits the facts - its bad after effects and also not good for health yet he found himself clinging to it rather than withdrawing from it. On the contrary, it became a part of his very being.
About his state, Lamb, confessed that nothing could be done. He could not be withdrawn from those black depths. But he tried to warn those people who had just started towards these things — i.e. drinking and use of tobacco. For the first time its taste will be enchanting. One feels as the new vistas were opened before him and he had found new paradise but in a long run its effect is destructive in all the ways — i.e. physically, mentally and economically. But the person who had gone deep into this habit is like those persons who witness their own "self-ruins" — self destruction.

Lamb cites his own case to teach others as to what it made of him:

Behold me then, in the robust period of life, reduced to imbecility and decay. 49

In his robust period of life, he was reduced to stupidity and destruction.

Lamb reminisces his position twelve years ago. Then he was healthy both in mind and body. He was not having any malady at that time. There was not having anything the matter with him. But now he was losing himself into the sea of drink. Now he had to bear uneasy sensations bodily and mentally. It was worse than any definite pain.

Earlier when he woke up, he felt refreshed after having sound sleep but now he felt like lying down to that extent which is just
possible. Now he regarded the day as wearisome.

Now life lost its meaning to him. In it he found much disorderliness, the trouble and hidden complexity - just like an ill dream. During day time, he felt like one who had lost his way in the mountains by night.

Lamb noticed his state as miserable and pitiable:

My favourite occupations in times past, now cease to entertain. I can do nothing readily. Application for ever so short a time kills me. This poor abstract of my condition was penned at long intervals, with scarcely any attempt at connection of thought, which is now difficult to me. 50

The history or poetic fiction formerly delighted Lamb but now few weak tears tickle down his cheeks, and look like the tears of old man in their second childhood. He regularly found tears for any apparent cause or reason. His state had become such which could not be expressed and this weakness led him to humiliation and constant feeling of destruction.

In the concluding lines he puts a question to the readers that this account of his would be sufficient or to render more about his weakness. Lamb very truthfully summed up the essay thus:

I am a poor nameless egotist, who have no variety to consult by these Confessions. I know not whether I shall be laughed at, or heard seriously. Such as they are, I
commend them to the reader's attention, if he find his own case any way touched. I have told him what I am come to. Let him stop in time. \(^{51}\)

Lamb felt no shame in confessing about his weakness. He had the purpose behind it, i.e., to the correct or advise those people who had just started taking wine. Ultimately it would render them helpless.

So "Confessions of a Drunkard", written as we know for a definite purpose, precedes by many years much of his most beautiful writing. This essay is strong proof of the disease latent in his nature. It was rather his nature that he could not write happily for any length of time. The darker side of life influenced itself upon his attention.

At last we can say that the criticism that the tract had in it a biographical truth is harmful, as some of Lamb's apologists have done, is not less foolish. The essay has enough reality in it to live as a very powerful plea for the virtue of self-restraint, and it may continue to do good service in the cause. The essay was a genuine description of the state of the writer.

In "Popular Fallacies", Lamb did not show a wayward pleasure in taking up a new and fantastic view of things, but that sympathetic insight which is necessary to enable us to see things as they really are. In the collection of "Popular Fallacies", there is one short essay - "That We should Rise With The Lark" in which his self is projected. When he was studying in "Christ's
Hospital", he had to rise up at six in the summer and seven in the winter. Perhaps this is what made him dislike rising up early in the morning. Lamb, in his later years especially after his retirement from his profession, disliked getting up early. In this essay, he wrote with an assumed name of Elia that he did not like the idea of rising with the lark:

... why should we get up? We have neither suit to solicit, nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut us up at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect, but in a short time a sick-bed, and a dismissal. We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords ... We once thought life to be something; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?\(^5\)

This is how Lamb advocates his plea of rising late. He very logically and convincingly puts up the case before us. We should not waste our time by getting up early. This drama of life will end soon so why to waste time in getting up early. He had written it after his retirement. So he opined that life had lost its meaning to him now. Then why should he not idly pass his time in visualizing visions. Now the sun did not produce any kind of aim in him. Then why should he not live idly with his visions?

The word Elia may be closely related to Charles Lamb but not in any sense identical. When it came to authorship, there were two Charles Lambs. If not that, there was one Lamb who wrote in
two styles so different. Lamb had a distinct public and a private manner of writing. He did not write to his friends as he wrote for the magazines. Although in either case existed a natural-born essayist, and a matchless critic of books and man; his style, which was always intimate, altered according to whether his pen or a printer was to be the transmitter of his words.

In his essays, the illusion of direct communication is maintained. His essays consisted of small details, the great agonies, the first impressions, the play of mind and the play on words, the reflections by means of which a particular instance is lifted into a generality, the tastes of food, the smells of London, the anecdote just heard, this day's sadness, the next day's gaiety—they are all there, caught hot, caught frankly and transferred without effort by a pen scratching swiftly against stolen time at the office. The difference between the letter-writer who signed himself C.L. and the essayist known as Elia is the everlasting difference, in short, between impromptu and planned.

In the essays, his mood is ruminative, his mind associational. For all the amusement to be had from the contentments of his observations, his was an essentially tragic nature. He was a tragedian who smiled instead of crying. This not only deepens his humour but insures his humanity.

On the subject of his family, his youth, London, the places he had visited, his vision was detailed. What he was fond of
reviewing was not last night's or last week's play but his memories of twenty or thirty years ago. Although this was all a part of his being unable to make present times present to him. It has never prevented him from making times past present to us. If Lamb proves little, he almost always proves delightful. In his case, that is enough. Having sought pleasure, he renders it. Lamb himself written to admit that it was not his method to impose pain but to leave that to heaven.
NOTES

1. Lamb, Charles
   Essays of Elia And Last Essays,
   pp. 219-220.

2. Ibid.,
   p. 221.

3. Ibid.,
   pp. 222-223.

4. Ibid.,
   p. 224.

5. Ibid.,
   p. 225.

6. Ibid.,
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7. Ibid.,
   p. 248.

8. Ibid.,
   p. 249.

9. Ibid.,
   p. 250.

10. Ibid.,
   pp. 252-253.

11. Ibid.,
   p. 254.

12. Ibid.,
   pp. 255-256.

13. Ibid.,
   pp. 256-257.

14. Ibid.,
   p. 257.

15. Ibid.,
   p. 260.

16. Ibid.,
   p. 261.

17. Ibid.,
   p. 262.

18. Ibid.,
   p. 264.

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   p. 265.

20. Ibid.,
   p. 266.

21. Ibid.,
   pp. 267-268.

22. Ibid.,
   p. 269.

   Charles Lamb; Macmillan & Co., Ltd.
   St. Martin's Street, London, 1932,
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Ibid.,</td>
<td>p.278.</td>
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<td>26.</td>
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<td>27.</td>
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<td>29.</td>
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<td>pp.282-283.</td>
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<td>32.</td>
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<td>pp.286-287.</td>
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<td>33.</td>
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<td>pp.344-345.</td>
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<td>p.347.</td>
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<td>36.</td>
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<td>p.348.</td>
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<td>38.</td>
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48. Ibid., p.139.
49. Ibid., p.142.
50. Ibid., p.143.
51. Ibid., pp.143-144.
52. Ibid., pp.169-170.