

# The South Sea House

Abolish the poet

by Charles Lamb.

Elia opens by addressing the reader, asking if on her way from the bank to the "Flower Pot", she ever noticed a magnificent but decrepit old building with a brick and stone edifice. This, says Elia, is a former house of trade, and he describes its decorations elaborately, with stately porticos and a map of Panama. This building was the South-Sea House, home of a historic and infamous bubble. Elia explains that he worked there 40 years ago. He talks of dust and decay that has settled on the building since that time, not just literally, but also figuratively, as the South-Sea Bank now enjoys a legacy of prebentive a fantastic hawk.

He reflects on the early days of the prosperity that England now enjoys, which grew from this bank as well as his other job at the India House.

The building is not just a monument to an infamous scam, but to the origins of finance that England now operates by. He reminisces on the library the building used to have as well as its pen-knives, and then moves on to a wistful recollection of the various employees who worked at the South-Sea Bank.

Most of them were bachelors, since the job didn't pay so well, and all of them had a great sense of humor. Elia considers them a bunch of "odd fishes," alluding to Noah's Ark as if the bank contained two of every kind of peculiar man. He describes a sickly man, Evans, who worked as a Cashier. He was melancholic during his job, always fearing that accounts would default, but a mirthful storyteller when the workday was done.

Working under Evans was Thomas Tame, who had the air of a nobleman but a totally dull mind. There was also John Tipp, who considered accounting the most important work in the world, and himself the greatest accountant. Tipp was a loner who so rejected the Company or help of others that Elia took it for a form of timidity. Finally, there were the men who perpetrated the hoax. Henry Man was the author of the South-Sea Bank, and he always made sure to give people a hard time for showing up late or leaving early.

Man was aided by Plumer, an aristocratic fellow who did little to stop and seemed pleased whenever it was furthered.

The essay concludes with Elia suggesting that every person he has just recollected may have been a fabrication, a hoax much like the South-Sea Bank's own work. He tells the reader he could be a witness to the South-Sea Bank, that his own existence could make the importance of the institution a little more material.

### Analysis

This essay is historically significant for a few reasons. Most pertinent to Charles Lamb's literary history is the fact that this was the first essay he ever published under the Elia pseudonym, preceding the collections Essays of Elia by several years. Elia was a man he worked with at the South-Sea Bank, even though Elia is not mentioned by name in this essay. And while Lamb spent much of his adult life working white-collar yet relatively low ranking jobs in financial institutions, "The South Sea House" is among the few of his essays that actually speaks of his professional life.

about this aspect of his essay is that it concerns the site of one of the most infamous scams from the dawn of capitalism, and Lamb had a unique opportunity to write an essay on a matter that would have been quite interesting to the public at the time.

As famously described in Charles Mackay's encyclopedic *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, the South Sea Bubble occurred when Brits were given the opportunity to purchase stock on future trade in South America, despite the fact that there was little chance Britain would ever do any trade with South America. After a stock buying frenzy, the bubble collapsed and the South-Sea Bank's actions were recognized as fraudulent.

There's only one problem with Elia's account here, though. The South Sea Bubble occurred in 1720, and Lamb wasn't born until 1795. So indeed, as the end of the essay suggests, he had been fabricating a story just as the South Sea Company fabricated a business opportunity. Once again, we see Lamb using the essay as an opportunity to fictionalize some aspect of his past, but here he does it in a rather clever way whereby he constructs a story that we as readers buy into just as, perhaps, those unfortunate stock holders bought into the South Sea Company's story about

## The South Sea House

by Charles Lamb.  
(Feb-10 1775 - 1834) Dec-21

Charles Lamb was an English poet, essayist, antiquarian. He was called "Elia". He was famous for his personal essays. He was a prominent figure of major literary circles in England. He was a friend with notable literary celebrities such as Robert Southey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Hazlitt, and William Wordsworth. His important works are —

was called as  
since of  
essayists

Bank of these  
Poems (1798)

1. The Essays of Elia - 1833 ✓
2. Tales From Shakespeare - 1804 ✓
3. The Adventures of Ulysses - 1808 ✓
4. The Last essays of Elia - 1833 ✓
5. Time of Shakespeare - (1808) ✓

The South Sea House :

"Essays of Elia" is a collection of Essays written by Charles Lamb. It was first published in book form in 1833 with a second volume. The essays in the collection first began appearing in The London Magazine in 1820.

"The South sea house" stands on the north side of Threadneedle Street not far away from the Bank of England. Once it was a house of Trade. Now its importance is gone. Lamb was a clerk here for a short time before he went to India House. Lamb was ~~is~~ speaking of the South - Sea house forty years back ✓

It was a glorious centre trade and commerce.  
It used to remain crowded with big businessmen,  
average merchants and industrialists.

~~But now, this building has lost its soul and life.~~  
Charles Lamb was working as  
clerk in South sea house. In this essay  
he describes buildings, streets and South  
sea house and his childhood memories.  
He dis explains his co-workers in South  
sea house.

1. Evans: The Cashier, a welshman.

He was the head cashier. He was  
a man of melancholic mood and irritable nature  
but by heart, he was gentle. He used to  
keep long hair, used to apply powder so he  
looked like Maccaronies. He was an honest  
cashier. He was like a store of information as  
he knew everything about old Streets, Old  
church, Old theatres and legends. Evans  
dressed like a 18<sup>th</sup> century man. Evans has a  
wide knowledge of topography of London. He was  
stiff and forbidding at counter. They made a  
trade with the South American colonies.

2. Thomas Tame:

Thomas Tame is the deputy  
Cashier under Evans. He was deputy accountant  
He had the air and stoop of a noble man  
but he was poor by birth. He had master  
the art of conversation and language which  
helped him developing friendly relations with  
the customers. Thomas Tame and his  
wife behave as a rich.

### 3. John Tipp :

He was an accountant. He believed that the community of accountants is the greatest community and he himself the greatest among them. But he never extends this belief to others. He utilized his leisure time in playing upon fiddle. He never discussed anything like romance or politics or newspaper at office hours. He had mastery over the art of figuring and he had used to prepare the annual account of the company single-handed. Even Lamb was also helped by him in figuring. He was suffering from a notable fear of Death so he remained away from the parapet of wall, railing of balcony, or never looked down a precipice or go for swimming or let off a gun. He was worried over the smallest figure and hated the politics.

\* John is fond of music. He is the trust of friend's family.

### 4. Henry Man :

He was deputy secretary with good sense of humour and wit. He used to write for periodicals. He wrote two volumes which contained his satirical remarks and jokes. Though years passed, yet it's fresh and appealing. He is a clerk and journalist. He wrote about war.

# New Year's Eve

by Charles Lamb.

"New Year's Eve" essay was written by Charles Lamb. "New Year's Eve" is one of the Charles Lamb's essays from "The Essays of Elia". This essay is about a combination of illustrations. He recalls his olden days and he thinks about his elderly feature that brings a gloomy note to him. It is published in London Magazine in 1821 as autobiographical.

Charles Lamb says, there are two birthdays, one is one's own birth day another is of new year. It is celebrating one's own birthday is out of date. or children only celebrate but they prefer it for delicious food. New year is celebrated in grand manner.

When he hears bells, he recollects his actions, achievements, failures of the departing year. but some people are happy ~~are~~ on new year. For Lamb, sorrow is the departing year which is greater than new year's. He does not like new books, new faces, new years. He is happy upon the past life and past failures, he recollects seven year he loved Alice Winterton was failed.

Lamb feels that every new year makes him ~~self~~ realise that he is reaching nearer his end. And does not want to die so early. As he loves this green earth. He wants to be remain as a child.



But not as rich, not as handsome not as young man but simply to live. He wants to die in summer. He never welcome and cares of death, Finally he listens the Cotton's poem. And ends.

Development of thoughts ('New years eve')

- \* Universal Birthday
- \* Love of the old and past.
- \* Memories of childhood.
- \* Reasons for his love of the Past.
- \* Thoughts of Death
- \* cheerfulness re-establishes itself:

Universal Birthday:

The New Year is like a common birthday to all mankind. One's personal birthday is not celebrated as one grows older; it is celebrated only when one is child. Children do not think upon the true significance of a birthday. They are only concerned with the eatables. The birth of the New year is the birthday of our Common Adam. Lamb finds the occasion of the departing of the old year solemn, though others around him enjoy it. The sound of the bells ringing out the year makes him melancholy and he thinks of all that passed in last year.

2. Love of the old and past :-

Lamb by nature loves old things and is disinclined to approve of anything new. whether it is a new book or a new year. Even Unpleasant incidents of the ~~late~~ past take a pleasant view.

In retrospect, disappointments lose their sting, and enemies can be forgiven or defeated in imagination. He would not like even the unhappy events of his past changed, for they gave him experience which he values. He is glad to have loved Alice Winterton even though his love was hopeless. He is glad that their family lost the money that they did through a fraudulent lawyer called Dorell; otherwise he would not have had the opportunity to have met such a remarkable cheat.

### Memories of childhood:

Lamb loves the child Eli and this kind of Self-love, he feels, is excusable, because he was so different as a child. He does not like his present self, which is full of faults. He recalls with sympathy, the various misfortunes that befell him as a child. The incidence of smallpox at the age of five, and how he would lay his fevered head on the pillow at Christ's Hospital.

### Reasons for his love of the past:

The reason for his tendency of looking too much into the past could be a sign of morbidity. Another reason could be that having no child of his own, he has no one to play with or to pay attention. As a result, he looks to his own image as a child for comfort, and adopts him for heir and successor.

If the readers are too impatient with Lamb for such musings, he will hide himself behind that protective disguise of Elia.

### Thoughts of Death:

When young, one knows of death as an inescapable entity but can still ignore it. But as time passes on, death becomes more and more relevant to one, personally. New Year's Eve brings the thoughts of death and makes Lamb sad. He thinks more of the year that has passed than of the year that is going to come. He does not want to leave this earth which, for him, holds great joys. He would like to stop time's movement, for the charms of maturity do not appeal to him. He is horrified to think that with death he would lose all the joys of life like the solitary walks, the sun, the breeze, the sky and the good food and drink.

He feels worse when he thinks that death will deprive him of his favourite books. In Summer, the thoughts of death are thrust away and one even entertains ideas of immortality, but winter's cold winds bring back the thoughts of Death. Lamb does not consider death to be a refuge from the storms and troubles of life or as a pleasant escape. Death is an ugly phantom to be hated by mankind and banished like a criminal. No antidote can be effective against his fear of death.

## Two Races of MEN

by Charles Lamb

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In the essay Two Races of men, Charles Lamb explains two distinct races of the human species

- i) One race of the hu includes men who borrow, or borrowers. and
- ii) the another race consists of the men who lend, or lenders.

He also says that there are several kinds - Celtic tribe, Gothic tribe, White men, black men and red men; there are also Parthians, Mades and Elamites. But Lamb includes all of them into his two divisions - borrowers and lenders. Lamb opines that the people belonging to the first category, borrower, are superior than the second. Their superiority is seen in their appearances and behaviours. These men are open-minded and generous; they can be trusted. On the other hand, lenders are born degraded they are thin in their appearance and are very suspicious.

Lamb mentions the names of the greatest borrowers. They are Alcibiad, Sir John Falstaff and Sir Richard Steele and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Lamb tells us that the borrowers have generally the smooth behaviour. They have reliance on providence.

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D D M M Y Y Y Y

They contempt money be - Cause they have noble disregard for the private property. They make no distinction between 'mine' and 'thine'. Actually, the borrowers consider 'neighbours' property as theirs. But they cannot think the opposite of the proposition.

Lamb compares the borrowers with Tax collector. A tax-collector collects money from all the people of this world. Similarly, a borrower borrows from every lender on this world. But there is ~~no~~ difference between Emperor Augustus and the poor citizen who paid the taxes. The borrower demands money in a delightful way. He gives no receipt for the money. There is no particular day of borrowing money. A borrower can borrow money in any day. He is like the sea which has no tide, but which has current. He gets money from everybody he demands. A lender should not hesitate to borrow money, because he must lend. So lenders should give money cheerfully and smilingly.

Ralph Bigod was a borrower who died on a wednesday evening. He lived without trouble and died without trouble. He claimed that he descended from the royal family and his behaviour and action reflected this. He had a lot of wealth. But he considered wealth as burdensome luggage and he exhausted his wealth completely and then he started living by borrowing money from others.

Lamb describes that Bigot was a person who borrowed money from one-tenth of the whole population. He borrowed this money the course of his journeys. Lamb also accompanied him several times and he met the people from whom Bigot and he borrowed money. Bigot did not feel discomfort in meeting with them. Rather than he took pride in counting them from whom he had borrowed money.

Bigot Borrowed money from lenders. But his pocket was always vacant. He believed that money should not be kept more than three days in the pocket because if it was kept, it gave foul smell. So he spent money in fresh condition. He spent his money by drinking wine; he also spent it by giving it to others, and he threw away the remaining into the holes and into the ponds. When he had money with him, he cast it out like Ishmael who was cast with his mother by Abraham. He did not regret for the money he threw away because he obtained money from endless sources. Bigot had a cheerful open exterior, jovial eye and a bald forehead. He requested for money in such a way that the lenders could not but helped him with money. Lamb thinks that Bigot was superior than the people who lent him money.

Apart from the people who borrow money, there are people who borrow less. Lamb feels disturbed with the thought of the less

because he had a lot of collection of books in his room. He considers that "book-borrowers are more dangerous than the people who borrow money". When a ~~more~~ man borrows a book from the shelf, it has been disturbed and the borrowers spoils the serial number of books on that shelf. Then Lamb refers Coleridge as the book-borrower who is given the name of Comberbatch.

Lamb describes that Coleridge borrows books from him. Once Coleridge borrows the works of Bornventura. As a result a wide-gap was created in the bottom shelf. The books which were in both sides of those books were like the dwarfs beside the giants. Then Lamb expresses "Coleridge's theory that a man who uses the better power to understand and appreciate a book has a better right of that books". Lamb also opines that if Coleridge went on actively upon his theory, the shelves of many people would be vacant.

Then Charles Lamb mentions names of the books which Coleridge borrowed from him. Coleridge borrowed some books in thinking that he was more suitable for those books than Lamb. Lamb opines that Coleridge deserves credit when he borrows books. In fact, when Coleridge takes away some books from Lamb, he also leaves some books which he borrows from others. Lamb thus used to gather some books in his collection. He considers these books as orphans and twice deserted; he also welcomes those books heartily. Lamb thinks that there is no harm in collecting 'those orphan' books on his shelf.