

Mary Ann Lamb: A Romantic Poet

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ABSTRACT

Mary Ann Lamb is a Romantic poet whose work in the literature of English was in the shadows, though she was the sister of Charles Lamb. This diminished image of Mary could also be because of her being caught hold of the Bipolar Disorder, on one such onset she stabbed her own mother Elizabeth Lamb. It was her brother who was her guardian and also brought her into the field of writing. The works done by Mary was always in collaboration with Charles. This collaboration made the sister and brother to bring three major works for juvenile literature which are namely *Tales from Shakespeare*, *Mrs Leicester's School*, and *Poetry for Children*. This paper is done in order to establish and explore the poem "The End of May." to show the writing style of Mary.

Works Consulted

Lamb, Charles. *Poetry for Children by Charles & Mary Lamb*. Edited by William Macdonald.
Vol. VIII, J. M. Dent & Co., 1903. XII vols.

Mary Ann Lamb, a Romantic poet whose work in the literature of English was in the shadows, though she was the sister of Charles Lamb. This diminished image of Mary was due to her being caught hold up by the Bipolar Disorder, on one such onset she stabbed her own mother Elizabeth Lamb. It was her brother Charles Lamb who was her guardian and also brought her into the fields of writing tales, short stories, and poetries. The works done by Mary was always collaborated with Charles. This made the sister and brother to bring three major works for juvenile literature which are namely *Tales from Shakespeare* which simplified Shakespeare's

dramas into tales, which is like an introduction on Shakespeare to children and Mary worked with comedies and Charles worked out with the tragedies, *Mrs Leicester's School* is a short story collection of ten short stories where seven were written by Mary, and *Poetry for Children* is the most innovative works from the Lambs. This paper is done in order to establish and explore the poem "The End of May." (TEM) (Lamb 1903 42-44) to give the writers the feels and tastes of the writing style adopted by Mary, this poem also seems to replicate the real life of the Lambs with alternate scenarios. It can be said so since the poem has the certain characteristics which correlates with the behavior the Lambs.

Poetry for Children is mentioned above to be as an innovative work since it is a collection of poems of various genres. The most fun filled part of this work is that the poems do not have the name of who had which poem, and some poem have penned by both the Lambs by passing the papers to each other. Wherein one stanza would be written and passed to the other, this brought in the concepts of dual authorship of single poem. The poem, "The End of May." is a poem of fifteen stanzas with four lines each which totals up to sixty three lines. This poem is long and is a sad poem.

This poem is written like a drama and it can be split into seven parts. This poem if converted into a drama would have the place of the setting of a school. The poem begins with a voice which says to one of the protagonist of the poem that, "'Our governess is not in school, / So we may talk a bit; / Sit down upon this little stool, / Come, little Mary, sit'" (TEM. 1-4); the next stanza gives the description or the exposition of the characters within the poem as in how one of them is dressed as, and again the narrator speaks to the protagonist by asking a question in a dialogue form as:

"And, my dear playmate, tell me why

In dismal black you're drest?

Why does the tear stand in your eye?

With sobs why heaves your breast? (TEM. 5-8)

It is only in the third stanza the protagonist speaks by saying, ““When we're in grief, it gives relief / Our sorrows to impart; / When you've told why, my dear, you cry, / 'Twill ease your little heart” (TEM. 9-12). in the fourth stanza the protagonist again says that they, would see their father soon, either by the latter end of May, or by the first of June. The next stanza is again is talked by the narrator which states that, the end of May was yesterday and they, all were in their best clothes who were dressed,. The following stanza of the poem talk of the emotions that had been filled by the mother of these children which is written as ““Come all, and let us think,’ said she, / ‘What we can do to please / Your father, for to-day will he / Come home from off the seas” (TEM. 33-36). The overjoyed mother also calls on her son and says to tell about the prize he got at school, due to be excelling in writing a poem and she asks him that he had “... made a poem, nearly / All of your own invention: / Will not your father love you dearly / When this to him I mention?” (TEM. 41-44) here the boy may mean to indirectly refer to Charles Lamb and the next four lines of the poem states that, “... Mary, she can say / Your poetry by heart; / And to repeat your verses may” (TEM. 45-47) these stanza explains the joy that is being possessed by the mother towards her children, this sheer happiness is still spread unto the next stanzas of the poem. The sixth part starts by the fourteenth stanza which bring in a twist which is said by the wife or the mother of the children which is written as:

““O hark!’ said James; ‘I hear one speak;

’Tis like a seaman’s voice.’-

Our mother gave a joyful shriek;

How did we all rejoice!

“‘My husband’s come!’ ‘My father’s here!’

But O, alas, it was not so;

It was not as we said:

A stranger seaman did appear,

On his rough cheek there stood a tear,

For he brought to us a tale of woe,-

Our father dear was dead.” (TEM. 57-63)

It is only in the end the reader come to know that the husband, or the father of the children is dead. The suspense in this poem is maintained till the end. For a young reader this poem would be the first ever to introduce the concept of death. The twist and turns in this poem looks like a one as seen in stories written short or like a closet drama written with only one act. This poem has a much dramatic touch than all the other poems that are in found in the poetry collection. The sense the poem brings out is a kind of a happiness, but in the end it all breaks down to be something so sad. The feelings it intends to bring is suspense. The tone is dramatic in nature, and the intention of this poem is almost intended to say the lives lived by the Lambs which was always in parallels or it lied between the seas of happiness and sadness.

The poem also reveals certain amount of elements that are concerned to the family of the Lambs, such as needlework, writing of poetry, and so on. Where Mary was well versed in needlework and also was so in poetry so was Charles too. Thus this paper gives an introduction or a taste of enjoying Mary’s writing.

Works Cited

Lamb, Charles. *Poetry for Children by Charles & Mary Lamb*. Edited by William Macdonald.
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