

epitome of the vital principle. The other boy, standing up with the pitcher in his hand, and a crust of bread in his mouth, is scarcely less excellent. His sulky, phlegmatic indifference speaks for itself. The companion to this picture, 324, is also very fine. Compared with these imitations of nature, as faultless as they are spirited, Murillo's Virgins and Angels, however good in themselves, look vapid, and even vulgar. A *Child Sleeping*, by the same painter, is a beautiful and masterly study.—No. 329, a *Musical Party*, by Giorgione, is well worthy of the notice of the connoisseur.—No. 331, *St. John preaching in the Wilderness*, by Guido, is an extraordinary picture, and very unlike this painter's usual manner. The colour is as if the flesh had been stained all over with brick-dust. There is, however, a wildness about it which accords well with the subject, and the figure of St. John is full of grace and gusto.—No. 344, *The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian*, by the same, is much finer, both as to execution and expression. The face is imbued with passion.—No. 345, *Portrait of a Man*, by L. da Vinci, is truly simple and grand, and at once carries you back to that age.—Boors

Merry Making, by Ostade, is fine; but has little business where it is. Yet it takes up very little room.—No. 347, *Portrait of Mrs. Siddons, in the character of the Tragic Muse*, by Sir Joshua, appears to us to resemble neither Mrs. Siddons, nor the Tragic Muse. It is in a bastard style of art. Sir Joshua had an importunate theory of improving upon nature. He might improve upon indifferent nature, but when he had got the finest, he thought to improve upon that too, and only spoiled it.—No. 349, *The Virgin and Child*, by Correggio, can only be a copy.—No. 332, *The Judgment of Paris*, by Vanderwerf, is a picture, and by a master, that we hate. He always chooses for his subjects naked figures of women, and tantalises us by making them of coloured ivory. They are like hard-ware toys.—No. 354, *a Cardinal blessing a Priest*, by P. Veronese, is dignified and picturesque in the highest degree.—No. 355, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, by Annibal Caracci, is an elaborate, but not very successful performance.—No. 356, *Christ bearing his Cross*, by Morales, concludes this list, and is worthy to conclude it.

W. H.

A CHARACTER OF THE LATE ELIA,

BY A FRIEND.

THIS gentleman, who for some months past had been in a declining way, hath at length paid his final tribute to nature. He just lived long enough (it was what he wished) to see his papers collected into a volume. The pages of the LONDON MAGAZINE will henceforth know him no more.

Exactly at twelve last night his queer spirit departed, and the bells of Saint Bride's rang him out with the old year. The mournful vibrations were caught in the dining room of his friends T. and H.; and the company, assembled there to welcome in another First of January, checked their carousals in mid-mirth, and were silent. Janus wept. The gentle P——r, in a whisper, signified his intention of devoting an Elegy; and Allan C——, nobly forgetful of his countrymen's wrongs,

vowed a Memoir to his *manes*, full and friendly as a Tale of Lyddal-cross.

To say truth, it is time he were gone. The humour of the thing, if there was ever much in it, was pretty well exhausted; and a two years' and a half existence has been a tolerable duration for a phantom.

I am now at liberty to confess, that much which I have heard objected to my late friend's writings was well-founded. Crude they are, I grant you—a sort of unlicked, incondite things—villainously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been *his*, if they had been other than such; and better it is, that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. Egotistical they have been

pronounced by some who did not know, that what he tells us, as of himself, was often true only (historically) of another; as in his Fourth Essay (to save many instances)—where under the *first person* (his favourite figure) he shadows forth the forlorn estate of a country-boy placed at a London school, far from his friends and connections—in direct opposition to his own early history.—If it be egotism to imply and twine with his own identity the griefs and affections of another—making himself many, or reducing many unto himself—then is the skilful novelist, who all along brings in his hero, or heroine, speaking of themselves, the greatest egotist of all; who yet has never, therefore, been accused of that narrowness. And how shall the intenser dramatist escape being faulty, who doubtless, under cover of passion uttered by another, oftentimes gives blameless vent to his most inward feelings, and expresses his own story modestly?

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. He too much affected that dangerous figure—irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred.—He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that

pany, 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 this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest *impromptus* had the appearance of effort. He has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested.—Hence, not many persons of science, and few professed *literati*, were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and, as to such people commonly nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge this was a mistake. His *intimados*, to confess a truth, were in the world's eye a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the colour, or something else, in the weed pleased him. The burrs stuck to him—but they were good and loving burrs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalised (and offences were sure to arise), he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, what one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments, which tongue-tied him, were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statish!

to be found out. He felt the approaches of age; and while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him latterly on this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness, which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a school of industry had met us, and bowed and curtsied, as he thought, in an especial manner to *him*. "They take me for a visiting governor," he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like any thing important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The *toga virilis* 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 a key to explicate some of his writings.

He left little property behind him. Of course, the little that is left (chiefly in India bonds) devolves upon his cousin Bridget. A few critical dissertations were found in his *escrutoire*, which have been handed over to the Editor of this Magazine, in which it is to be hoped they will shortly appear, retaining his accustomed signature.

He has himself not obscurely hinted that his employment lay in a public office. The gentlemen in the Export department of the East India House will forgive me, if I acknowledge the readiness with which they assisted me in the retrieval of his few manuscripts. They pointed out in a most obliging manner the desk, at which he had been planted for forty years; showed me ponderous tomes of figures, in his own remarkably neat hand, which, more properly than his few printed tracts,

might be called his "Works." They seemed affectionate to his memory, and universally commended his expertness in book-keeping. It seems he was the inventor of some ledger, which should combine the precision and certainty of the Italian double-entry (I think they called it) with the brevity and facility of some newer German system—but I am not able to appreciate the worth of the discovery. I have often heard him express a warm regard for his associates in office, and how fortunate he considered himself in having his lot thrown in amongst them. There is more sense, more discourse, more shrewdness, and even talent, among these clerks (he would say) than in twice the number of authors by profession that I have conversed with. He would brighten up sometimes upon the "old days of the India House," when he consorted with Woodroffe, and Wissett, and Peter Corbet (a descendant and worthy representative, bating the point of sanctity, of old facetious bishop Corbet), and Hoole who translated Tasso, and Bartlemy Brown whose father (God assoil him therefore) modernized Walton—and sly warm-hearted old Jack Cole (King Cole they called him in those days), and Campe, and Fombelle—and a world of choice spirits, more than I can remember to name, who associated in those days with Jack Burrell (the *bon vivant* of the South Sea House), and little Eyton (said to be a *fac simile* of Pope—he was a miniature of a gentleman) that was cashier under him, and Dan Voight of the Custom House that left the famous library.

Well, Elia is gone—for aught I know, to be reunited with them—and these poor traces of his pen are all we have to show for it. How little survives of the wordiest authors! Of all they said or did in their lifetime, a few glittering words only! His Essays found some favourers, as they appeared separately; they shuffled their way in the crowd well enough singly; how they will *read*, now they are brought together, is a question for the publishers, who have thus ventured to draw out into one piece his "weaved-up follies."

PHIL-ELIA.