

Existence, ^{sim}ply considered in itself, as Blessing.

From the Lating of Paligenius.

EI

Not wine, ^{as} wine, men chuse, but as it came
From such, or such a vintage; 'tis the same
With life, which simply must be understood
A blank negation, if it be not good, —

But if tis ^{twisted} all — as men decline

And loath the sour lees of corrupted wine —
Tis ^{to} be contem'd. Merely To Be

Do nor a ^{FT} boon to seek, nor ill to flee,

Seeing that every vilest little Thing

Has it in common, from a gnats small wing,
A creeping ^{to} worm, down to ^{the} mole's & stone,

And crumbling bark from trees. Unless To Be,
And To ^{be} ^{blest}, ^{be} one, I do not see

In bare Existence, as Existence, aught

That's worthy to be loved, or to be sought.

C. Lamb

Non vinum, ut vinum, sed tale bonumque
Sic et vita, ut vita, est nil, nisi bona, quod si
Est misera, ut vinum corruptum, despiciatur.
Esse quidem, per se, nec amandum, nec fugien-
[dum est.

Quispe habet hoc quamvis vilissima, Ceculi,
[Vermis,

Musca, lapis, cortex, nihil est optabile demp-
[ta,

Conditione boni: nisi est tale, esse bonumque

Non video cur optari, cur populi amari.

Zod. Vit. lib. 6. apud
finem.

CHARLES LAMB, MS. "Existence, simply considered in
itself, no Blessing," undated.

Existence, simply considered in itself, no Blessing

From the Lating [last letter deleted] of Palingenius.

Not wine, *as* wine, men chuse, but as it came
From such, or such a vintage; 'tis the same
With life, which simply must be understood
A blank negation, if it be not good.—
But if 'tis wretched all—as men decline
And loath the sour lees of corrupted wine—
'Tis so to be contemn'd. Merely *To Be* [both words majuscule]

Transcription from:

Kendall, Lyle H., Jr. *A Descriptive Catalogue of the W.L. Lewis Collection--Part One.*

Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1970.

Is nor a boon to seek, nor ill to flee.
Seeing that every vilest little Thing
Has it in common, from a gnat's small wing,
A creeping to [deleted] worm, down to a [deleted] the moveless &
stone,
And crumbling bark from trees. Unless *To Be* [majuscule]
And *To be Good* [deleted] *Blest*, be one, I do not see [majuscule]
In bare Existence, *as* Existence, aught
That's worthy to be loved, or to be sought.

C Lamb

AMS, 1 page. Double sheet, 17.4 x 12.7 cm. Part of the sheet has
been trimmed off.

Laid paper. Watermark: TUCKER | 1828 [?]

Seal removed.

Address: C. W. Dilke Esq^r | 9 Lower Grosvenor Place | [to]
be forwarded immediately.

Postmark: small portion of evening duty stamp. Postal fee: 3.

Provenance: Gribbell sale, Oct 1940 (tipped in to no. 378, *The
Letters of Charles Lamb*, ed. Thomas Noon Talfourd [2 vols.;
London: Edward Moxon, 1937], I).

First published as lines 17–31 of the poem bearing the same title
in *Athenæum*, 7 July 1832.

Notes: 1. Lamb's lines are on the verso of the address half sheet. On the facing
page are 8 lines in Latin, not in Lamb's hand.

2. The watermark suggests that the lines were written and sent to Charles
W. Dilke, editor of the *Athenæum*, some months before publication.

3. There are no substantive and 6 accidental variations in the Lewis MS
from the text as published in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed.
Thomas Hutchinson (Oxford, 1924), II, 637–638.

LETTERS
OF
CHARLES
LAMB

TALFOURD
—
VOL. I