

A Life for Mary

English essayist Charles Lamb (1775 – 1834) was once deeply in love with a woman, but he never married.

Instead, he willingly chose to fill the role of “guardian angel” of his childhood home, and especially of his sister Mary, who, at times, was mentally deranged. He saw his foremost responsibilities in life as those of son and brother.



Mary, 11 years older than Lamb, taught him to read and, later, helped him produce the children’s book *Tales from Shakespeare*. Lamb is best known for his *Essays of Elia*.

After Mary stabbed their mother to death in one of her mad spells, Lamb turned away from any pursuits that might have furthered or enhanced his own life, and for 38 years he watched over Mary with tender care. A friend told how he sometimes would see the brother and sister walking hand in hand across the field to the old asylum, their faces bathed in tears.

The story of Charles Lamb is a sad story, yet a grand one. He had a purpose in life, he had a role – and it was never left empty.

In our self-centered world, we tend to dismiss the greatness of people like Charles Lamb. And yet, without those who make such sacrifices, there is little we could count as noble or admirable in our culture.

It is the willingness to take on responsibilities that require selfless giving that truly makes a person great.

Thank God, we see every day in the work of Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home associates who demonstrate remarkable and sacrificial love to those entrusted to them.

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant (Matthew 23:11).

– Beecher Hunter