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LITERARY AND ARTISTIC CELEBRITIES.

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THOMAS CHATTERTON.

Familiar as a household word, to all who possess the most superficial knowledge of Anglo-Saxon literature, is the name of Thomas Chatterton—

*“The marvellous boy,  
The sleepless soul that perished in his pride.”*

Though eighty-five years, however, have barely elapsed, since his attenuated remains were consigned to the churlish shelter of a pauper's burying-ground, comparatively few, there is reason to conclude, are, at the present day, acquainted with the short but striking annals of the “brilliant forger's” earthly curriculum. His creations are admired on credit, his fate deplored on trust. Need we add another word, by way of prologue to this paper?

Thomas Chatterton, the posthumous son of “a singing man of the Cathedral of Bristol,” and “master of the free-school in Pyle-street” in the same city, was born on the 20th of November, 1752.

Touching the ancestry of our author, one of his biographers, the Rev. G. Gregory, D.D. thus writes:—

“The family of Chatterton, though in no respects illustrious, is more nearly connected with some of the circumstances of his literary history than that of most other votaries of the Muses. It appears that the office of Sexton of St. Mary Redcliffe, in Bristol, had continued in different branches of the family

for more than one hundred and fifty years, and that John Chatterton, the last of the name who enjoyed that office, was elected in March, 1725, and continued Sexton till his death which happened in the year 1748.” This John was grand-uncle of our celebrity. Soon shall we have occasion to refer more specifically to the church of which he was a functionary.

The “singing man” died without leaving a shilling, no uncommon catastrophe—and, lacking metallic ballast, young Thomas was roughly tossed about at the commencement of his life-voyages. Indeed, for that matter, few, and far between are the pages of his log which chronicle sunny or genial days. Little else was written therein except lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

When the fatherless boy had attained the age of five years, he was sent to the school in which his sire had once wielded the ferula, where, however, his sojourn was but brief. Either his faculties were as yet dormant, or the pedagogue wanted the skill to discern and foster them, and after the lapse of a few months he was sent home to his widowed mother as a dull boy, incapable of improvement. What a precious nugget was wrapt up in that seeming lump of despised and useless clay!

Ere long the gold began to shine, though but dimly, through the crust of earth.

Ranging about the house in search of pabulum for amusement, the moral waif and stray lighted upon an ancient French musical manuscript, adorned and “decorated” with illuminated capitals. With this *the-*