

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA REVIEW

Vol. XII.

OTTAWA, ONT., NOVEMBER, 1909.

No. 2

Entered at the Post Office at Ottawa, Ont., as Second-Class Matter.

Thomas Chatterton, the Boy Poet of Bristol.



THE relations between Mr. Lambert and his apprentice were mutually unpleasant, as might be expected from the incompatibility of their ambitions and purposes. It appears the master had not the least sympathy with the literary aspirations of the servant, and that while strictly insistent on his own rights he was disposed to treat him merely as his drudge. The servant heartily despised the censorship of his overbearing master, but is credited with having faithfully performed all his duties. Pride, according to a confession made by Chatterton himself, in a moment of distraction, was nineteenth-twentieths of his nature. It is not hard to conceive, therefore, that the only tie which really bound the apprentice to the office was his love of literary work, for which his clerical duties left him much leisure. He was, however, at last getting daily more impatient with the routine of office work and more ambitious to attain success by his pen. On December 21, 1768, he wrote the following letter to Dodsley, a London publisher:

"Sir,—I take this method to acquaint you, that I can so procure Copys of Several Ancient Poems; and an Interlude, perhaps the oldest dramatic Piece extant; wrote by one Rowley, a Priest in Bristol, who lived in the Reigns of Henry 6th and Edward 4th. If these Pieces will be of any service to you, at your Command Copys shall be sent to you by

Yr most obedient servt.

D. B."