

When the "singing man" died, his widow being necessitated to "flit," carried the remainder of the fragments to her humble messuage, where they were treated with the same scant ceremony which had been accorded to them in school.

We shall now cite the narrative given to Dr. Glynn of Cambridge, by Mr. Smith, a very intimate acquaintance of our author's family—

"When young Chatterton was first articulated to Mr. Lambert, he used frequently to come home to his mother, by way of a short visit. There, one day, his eye was caught by one of these parchments, which had been converted into a 'bread-paper.' He found not only the writing to be very old, the characters, very different from common characters, but that the subject therein treated was different from common subjects.

"Being naturally of an inquisitive and curious turn, he was much struck with their appearance, and, as might be expected, began to question his mother what those thread-papers were, how she got them, and whence they came. Upon further inquiry, he was led to a full discovery of all the parchments which remained."

Thomas carefully laid up the precious fragments, and seldom permitted any person to handle, or even to look upon the same. The account which he gave of their contents was, that the bulk of them consisted of poetical and other compositions, by Mr. Canynge, and a particular friend of his, named Thomas Rowley, whom Chatterton at first called a monk, and afterwards a secular priest of the fifteenth century.

"Nearly about the same time (says Dr. Gregory), when the paper in *Furley's Journal*, concerning the old bridge, became the subject of conversation, as Mr. Catcott of Bristol, a gentleman of an inquisitive turn, and fond of reading, was walking with a friend in Redcliffe Church, he was informed by him of several ancient pieces of poetry, which had been found there, and which were in the possession of a young person with whom he was acquainted. This person proved to be Chatterton, to whom Mr. Catcott desired to be introduced. He accordingly had an interview; and soon after obtained from him very readily, without any

reward, the *Bristol Tragedy*, *Rowley's Epitaph upon Mr. Canynge's Ancestor*, with some other smaller pieces.

"About this period, Mr. Barrett, a respectable surgeon in Bristol, and a man of letters, had projected a history of his native city, and was anxiously collecting materials for that work. Such a discovery, therefore, as that of Chatterton, could scarcely escape the vigilance of Mr. Barrett's friends. The pieces in Mr. Catcott's possession, of which some were copies and some were originals, were immediately communicated to Mr. Barrett, whose friendship and patronage by these means our young literary adventurer was fortunate enough to secure."

By the above-mentioned gentlemen the boy was supplied with a variety of works, which he could not have obtained in the common circulating libraries, and diligently did he avail himself of the advantages which thus fell to his lot. Mr. Thistlethwaite gives us the following account of his studies during the years 1768 and 1769:—

"One day he might be found busily employed in the study of heraldry and English antiquities, both of which are numbered among the most favourite of his pursuits; the next discovered him deeply engaged, confounded, and perplexed amidst the subtleties of metaphysical disquisition, or lost and bewildered in the abstruse labyrinth of mathematical researches; and these in an instant again neglected and thrown aside, to make room for music and astronomy, of both which sciences his knowledge was entirely confined to theory. Even physic was not without a charm to allure his imagination, and he would talk of Galen, Hippocrates, and Paracelsus, with all the confidence and familiarity of a modern empiric."

It is hardly necessary to state that this wondrous youth dug deeply in the mine of antiquities. We are informed by Milles and Bryant that with a view of perfecting himself in these favourite studies he borrowed Shiner's *Etymologicon* of Mr. Barrett, but speedily returned it as useless, most of the interpretations being in Latin. Benson's *Saxon Vocabulary* was abandoned on the same account. Much pabulum, however, did he extract from Kersey's *Dictionary* and