

mind became unhinged by nervous prostration ending in settled despair. Disdaining all labors unsuited to his self-esteem he would not ask for alms nor even accept hospitality. Locking himself in his bedroom, he committed suicide on the 24th of August, 1770, by taking arsenic. From the stifling chamber of suffering and disgrace on Brooke Street, Holborn, to a pauper's grave on Shoe Lane, where all that was mortal of poor Chatterton was laid, seemed not a wide transition. Between the divine afflatus of the poet and the despairing thoughts of a suicide was an immeasurable chasm.

Chatterton has been referred to by some of his acquaintances as "the mad genius of Bristol." That was but one of the penalties, perhaps, of his being a born genius. Does it not seem one of the dispensations of Providence that youth is not equipped with the powers of the great which it would be so apt to abuse?

Between ten and eleven, this strange boy with the flashing grey eyes and prepossessing face, very reserved, willful, undisciplined, but affectionate, began to write poetry, and while some of his first efforts are of the common order, not a few of them are of surprising merit. Of his acknowledged poems, his "Elegy on the death of Thomas Phillips," "Heccar and Gaira," "Resignation," a political satire; "The Death of Nicon," and "The Resignation," possess undoubted strength and originality. Others acknowledged are much inferior, and some of them reflect upon his morals, one such being partly suppressed on that account, in Keat's edition. A few others might better have gone into the limbo of oblivion also.

The unacknowledged poems written by him, but attributed to the fictitious monk, Rowley, contrary to the amenities of literature, are regarded as superior to his acknowledged poems, in strength, harmony and sustained power. The first of these composed by him. "Elinour and Juga," was written when he was but twelve years old. His "Ælla," a dramatic poem; "The Storie of William Canynge," "The Unknown Knight," "The Tournament," and "Goddyn," a dramatic poem, possess rare merit. But if he had been more patient, wisely restraining for greater achievements his ceaseless energy, he might have far excelled the best he has produced. Nearly all the world's great poets have "made haste slowly" to reach the heights. Although he has not communed so closely with Nature in all her scenes of loveliness and splendor, as some great poets of riper years, the sweet sound of his lyre was often invoked by her with more than happy effect.