

the neighbourhood, boasting that "the son of the Canterbury barber was qualified to carry off a classical prize from any aristocratic versifier at Westminster, Winchester, or Eton."

He obtained remarkable honours at Oxford. The Class List was not established till the commencement of this century, and young Abbott took his bachelor's degree in 1785: consequently, there being yet no *tripos*, he was obliged to content himself with all the honours which were open to him. He had gained a scholarship at Corpus after he had been a week in Oxford, and he gained in 1784, the Latin prize essay, subject, "*Globus ærostaticus*;" and in 1786, the English prize essay, subject, "*The Use and Abuse of Satire*—so that, as the Latin essay and English poem were yet unknown, he gained all he could gain.

Abbott lost his father while at the University; his mother then became in a measure dependent on his assistance, and he was obliged, in consequence, to decline an advantageous offer to go as tutor to a rich gentleman of Virginia; his small means were straitened by the performance of his filial duties; he was obliged to dress plainly, to forego the enjoyment of society, and to sustain himself hardly, yet becomingly, on his limited resources.

The first practical result of young Abbott's efforts was his election as Fellow, and his appointment as junior tutor of his college. He was already destined for the church, when he was invited to become tutor to the son of Mr. Justice Buller. This connexion introduced him to the judge, who soon discovered his intellectual powers and peculiar fitness for law, and recommended him to attempt it. The advice was taken; and we have the authority of Lord Campbell for adding that Abbott became the very best lawyer of his generation in England, as he had already become the finest classical scholar. Lord Campbell adds:

"The scrubby little boy who ran after his father, carrying for him a pewter basin, a case of razors, and a hairpowder bag, through the streets of Canterbury, became Chief Justice of England, was installed among the peers of the United Kingdom, attended by the whole profession of the law, proud of him as their leader; and when the names of orators and statesmen illustrious in their day have perished with their frothy declamations, Lord Tenterden will be respected as a great magistrate, and his judgments will be studied and admired." (1)

Lord Tenterden died in 1832, and was buried in the chapel of the Foundling Hospital, of which he was Vice-President. (2) At the extreme entrance to the chapel is a marble bust of his Lordship, and beneath it a Latin inscription, which, after describing his humble origin, and judicial eminence, concludes with these emphatic words: "Learn, Reader how much in this country may, under the blessing of God, be attained by honest industry."

HOW ROBERT BLOOMFIELD WROTE HIS "FARMER'S BOY" IN THE HEART OF LONDON.

CXLIV.

This true poet of nature was born in 1766, at a small village in Suffolk: his father died in the same year, leaving his widow five other children besides Robert. To obtain a maintenance, she opened a school, and taught her own children the elements of reading along with those of her neighbours. Besides this education, Bloomfield was taught to write for two or three months at a school in the town of Ixworth. At the age of eleven he went to work upon his uncle's farm, receiving only his board for his labour. In his fifteenth year he removed to London, to join his two brothers in making shoes, in a garret in Bell-alley, Coleman-street. At this time he read about as many hours every week as boys generally spend in play. He next wrote a few verses, which were printed in the *London Magazine*; and he was observed to read with much avidity a copy of Thompson's *Seasons*, which first inspired Bloomfield with the thought of composing a long poem, such as the *Farmer's Boy*, the idea being favoured by a visit of two months to his native district, where he had often held the plough, driven a team, and tended sheep. He returned to London and shoemaking; but some years elapsed before he produced his *Farmer's Boy*, which he composed while he sat at work in his garret in Bell-alley, with six or seven other workmen; and nearly 600 lines were completed before Bloomfield committed a line to paper. The

poem was published in 1800, was translated into French and Italian, and partly into Latin; 26,000 copies were sold in three years; and it was the dearest of the lowly-born poet's gratifications, when his book was printed, to present a copy of it to his mother, to whom he then had it in his power, for the first time, to pay a visit, after twelve years absence from his native village.

Bloomfield was a little boy for his age. "When I met him and his mother at the inn," (in town) says his brother, "he strutted before us just as he came from keeping sheep, hogs, &c., his shoes filled full of stumps in the heels. He, looking about him, slipped up; his nails were unused to a flat pavement. I remember viewing him as he scampered up—how small he was. I hardly thought that little fatherless boy would be one day known and esteemed by the most learned, the most respected, the wisest, and the best men of the kingdom."

PRECOCITY OF SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE.

CXLV.

We have few instances of the precocious development of talent so striking as are presented by the boyhood of this great artist. He was born in 1769, at Bristol, where his father kept the White Lion inn, and was more noted for his love of poetry, and writing rhyme, than for his success in business. His son Thomas was a very beautiful boy, and had been remarkable from infancy for his sprightly and winning manners. His father taught him to recite poetry; and when the child was only four or five years old, it was common for him to be presented by his parent to strangers who visited the inn at Bristol, and subsequently at the Black Bear at Devizes, whither he had removed. At four years old, young Lawrence could recite the poem of Joseph and his Brethren; at five, Addison's *Nymphs of Solyma*; and at seven Milton's *Lycidas*. He was already able to use his pencil, and to take likenesses, which art he had acquired entirely of himself. The portraits which he thus sketched are affirmed to have been generally successful: among them was a portrait of Lady Kenyon, which was recognised by a friend twenty-five years after. At the age of six, Lawrence was sent to school near Bristol, where he remained scarcely two years; and this, with a few lessons in Latin and French, was all the education he ever received. At the age of eight years, he contributed verses to the magazines; and many of his pieces may be found in the *European* and *Lady's Magazines* from 1780 to 1787. Daines Barrington relates that at the age of nine, without instruction from any one, Lawrence copied historical pictures in a masterly style, and succeeded amazingly in compositions of his own, particularly that of Peter denying Christ. In about seven minutes he scarcely ever failed to draw a strong likeness of any one present, which had generally much freedom and grace. He was also then an excellent reader of blank verse, and would immediately convince any one that he both understood and felt the striking passages of Milton or Shakspeare.

Young Lawrence's early talent soon made him generally known. His father would neither permit him to go to Rome to study, nor to take lessons at home, lest it should cramp his genius. He allowed him, however, to visit the house of some of the neighbouring gentry, where he saw some good pictures, which first gave him an idea of historical painting; he copied several, and at last produced original compositions of his own. When he was ten years old, his father took him from Devizes to Oxford, where the boy's qualifications were announced, and numbers thronged to him to have their likenesses taken. From Oxford they removed to Salisbury, and thence to Weymouth, at both which places the talents of the young artist were very profitable. At last his father settled at Bath, Thomas being then in his thirteenth year. Here sitters came to him in such numbers that he raised the price of his crayon portraits from a guinea to a guinea and a half. He also made copies of pictures; and one of the Transfiguration of Raphael, which Lawrence sent to the Society of Arts, was rewarded with a silver-gilt palette and five guineas. He remained at Bath about six years, and was the sole support of his father and family. They removed to London when Thomas was in his eighteenth year: he became a student of the Royal Academy; was kindly received by Sir Joshua Reynolds; and on his death, in 1792, was appointed his successor as painter to his Majesty and to the Dilettanti Society. Thence his reputation grew steadily till he became the first portrait-painter of the age: he succeeded Mr. West as President of the Royal Academy in 1820. Of his earlier career it has been truly said that Art presents no parallel case of an equal degree of excellence, attained so rapidly, and so exclusively without instruction, or opportunity of study.

(To be continued.)

(1) Lives of the Lord Chief-Justices.

(2) Some verses written by his lordship to be set to music, are annually sung at the commemorative festivals of the Governors of the Hospital.