

the curious letter already quoted, relates, that during the year 1768, 'at divers visits, he found Chatterton employed in copying Rowley, from what he still considers as undoubted originals.' Mr. Cary also, another intimate acquaintance, frequently heard Chatterton mention these manuscripts soon after he left Colston's school. Every one of these gentlemen, as well as Mr. Clayfield and Mr. Rudhall, declare unequivocally, from an intimate knowledge of Chatterton's learning and abilities, that they believe him incapable of producing the poems of Rowley.

"III. That a number of manuscripts were found in Redcliffe church, cannot possibly be doubted after the variety of evidence which has been adduced to that purpose. Perrot, the old Sexton, who succeeded Chatterton's great uncle, took Mr. Shiercliffe, a miniature painter of Bristol, as early as the year 1749, through Redcliffe church; he shewed him in the North porch a number of parchments, some loose and some tied up, and intimated, 'that there were things there which would one day be better known; and that in proper hands they might prove a treasure.' Many of the manuscripts in Mr. Barrett's hands bear all the marks of age, and are 'signed by Rowley himself. The characters in each instance appear to be similar; and the hand-writing the same in all.'

"IV. The short time which Chatterton had to produce all these poems, is an extraordinary circumstance. It has been already stated, that he continued at Colston's school from the age of eight till that of fourteen and seven months; that he continued each day in school from seven or eight o'clock till twelve in the morning, and from one till four or five in the evening, and went to bed at eight. There is also reason to believe, that he did not discover or begin to copy these poems, or even to apply himself to antiquities, before the age of fifteen. In about the space therefore of two years and a half, he made himself master of the ancient language of this country; he produced more than two volumes of poetry, which are published, and about as many compositions, in prose and verse, as would nearly fill two volumes more. During this time he must have read a considerable variety of books. He was studying medicine, heraldry, and other sciences; he was practising drawing; he copied a large book of precedents; and Mr. Lambert's business, though not extensive, must have occupied at least some part of his attention. Which, therefore, is the easier

supposition, say the advocates for Rowley, that this almost miracle of industry or ability was performed by a boy; or that Chatterton really copied the poems from ancient documents?

"V. Chatterton is said further to have discovered great marks of ignorance on the manuscripts coming first into his possession. He read the name *Roulic* instead of Rowley, till he was set right by Mr. Barrett. In the acknowledged writings of Chatterton, there are also palpable mistakes, and marks of ignorance in history, geography, &c.; whereas no such appear in the poems of Rowley. But what is of still greater consequence, Mr. Bryant has laboured to prove that, in almost innumerable instances, Chatterton did not understand the language of Rowley, but that he has actually misinterpreted, and sometimes mistranscribed him. Thus, in the 'English Metamorphosis' verse 14—

"Their myghte is *knopped* ynne the froste of fere."

Chatterton having recourse to Chaucer and Skinner, has interpreted to *knop*, to *tie*, to *fasten*; whereas it really means, and the context requires that it should mean, to *nip*. Thus, in the Second Battle of Hastings, 548, describing a sacrifice:

"Roastynge their *vyctualle* round about the flame,"

which Mr. Tyrwhitt himself has allowed ought to be *vyctimes*, and has accordingly cancelled the other word. Thus in *Ælla*, v. 678, we find:

"Theyre throngyng corses shall *onlyghte* the starres."

The word *onlyghte* Chatterton has here strangely applied as meaning to *darken* the stars, whereas Mr. Bryant, by recurring to the Saxon, very reasonably supposes *onlych* to have been the proper word, and the line will then mean to *be like*, or to equal the stars in number. The word *cherisaunei*, which Chatterton has inserted in the 'Introductions to *Ælla*,' never did really exist, and Mr. Bryant shows that the original word was certainly *cherisaunce*: and in the Second Eclogue, Chatterton has explained the word *amenused*, by *lessened*, or *diminished*; whereas the same learned critic shows, that it never had any such meaning, but that it really signifies *accursed* or *abominable*. These and other similar mistakes (of which Mr. Bryant specifies a great number) he asserts could never have happened, had Chatterton been any more than the transcriber of these extraordinary poems.

"VI. With respect to the objection, that Rowley is not mentioned by other writers, it is answered that there existed so little communication among mankind at that time, that Leland,