

all the prizes. The influence of the Clarkes upon Keats was strong and formative, particularly that of the younger one, Charles Cowden, who was an usher in the school. In the poem addressed to him he frankly acknowledges this great debt, "you first taught me all the sweets of song."

In 1810 his mother died of consumption, and during a long illness Keats nursed her with incessant devotion.

On the completion of his fifteenth year he was removed from school and apprenticed to Mr. Hammond, a surgeon at Edmonton. The terms of the old indenture as surgeon's apprentice are quaint enough. I have one of my uncle, Edward Osler, dated 1811. The surgeon, for a consideration of £40, without board, undertook the care and education for five years of the apprentices, of whom there were often four or five. The number of specific negatives in the ordinary indenture indicates the rough and ready character of the Tom Sawyers of that date. The young apprentice promised not "to haunt taverns or playhouses, not to play at dice or cards, nor absent himself from his said master's service day or night unlawfully, but in all things as a faithful apprentice he shall behave himself towards his said master and all his during the said term."

We know but little of the days of Keats' apprenticeship. A brother student said, "he was an idle, loafing fellow, always writing poetry." In 1814, in the fourth year of his indenture, the pupil and master had a serious quarrel, and the contract was broken by mutual consent. It would appear from the following sentence in a letter to his brother, that more than words passed between them: "I daresay you have altered also—every man does—our bodies every seven years are completely fresh material'd. Seven years ago it was not this hand that clinch'd itself against Hammond."*

At the end of the apprenticeship the student "walked" one

* The extracts are taken from the new edition of the *Letters* by Forman. Reeves & Turner, London, 1895.