The History Of English Poetry

From The Close of the Eleventh To The Commencement of the Eighteenth Century

Warton, Thomas

London, 1778

Section VIII. Poems under the name of Thomas Rowlie. Supposed to be spurious.

SECT. VIII.

BUT a want of genius will be no longer imputed to this period of our poetical hiſtory, if the poems lately diſcovered at Briſtol, and ſaid to have been written by Thomas Rowlie, a ſecular prieſt of that place, about the year one thouſand four hundred and ſeventy, are genuine.

It muſt be acknowledged, that there are ſome circumſtances which incline us to ſuſpect theſe pieces to be a modern forgery. On the other hand, as there is ſome degree of plauſibility in the hiſtory of their diſcovery, as they poſſeſs conſiderable merit, and are held to be the real productions of Rowlie by many reſpectable critics; it is my duty to give them a place in this ſeries of our poetry, if it was for no other reaſon than that the world might be furniſhed with an opportunity of examining their authenticity. By exhibiting therefore the moſt ſpecious evidences, which I have been able to collect, concerning the manner in which they were brought to light [a], and by producing ſuch ſpecimens, as in another reſpect cannot be deemed unacceptable; I will endeavour, not only to gratify the curioſity of the public on a ſubject that has long engaged the general attention, and has never yet been fairly or fully ſtated, but to ſupply the more inquiſitive reader with every argument, both external and internal, for determining the merits of this intereſting controverſy. I ſhall take the liberty to add my own opinion, on a point at leaſt doubtful: but with the greateſt deference to deciſions of much higher authority.

About the year 1470, William Cannynge, an opulent merchant and an alderman of Briſtol, afterwards an eccleſiaſtic,

[a] I acknowledge myſelf greatly indebted to the ingenious doctor Harrington of Bath, for facilitating my enquiries on this ſubject.

and dean of Weſtbury college, erected the magnificent church of Saint Mary of Redcliffe, or Radcliff, near Briſtol [b]. In a muniment-room over the northern portico of the church, the founder placed an iron cheſt, ſecured by ſix different locks [c]; which ſeems to have been principally intended to receive inſtruments relating to his new ſtructure, and perhaps to his other charities [d], inventories of veſtments and ornaments [e], accompts of church-wardens, and other parochial evidences. He is ſaid to have directed, that this venerable cheſt ſhould be annually viſited and opened by the mayor and other chief magiſtrates of Briſtol, attended by the vicar and church-wardens of the pariſh: and that a feaſt ſhould be celebrated every year, on the day of viſitation. But this order, that part at leaſt which relates to the inſpection of the cheſt, was ſoon neglected.

In the year 1768, when the preſent new bridge at Briſtol was finiſhed and opened for paſſengers, an account of the ceremonies obſerved on occaſion of opening the old bridge, appeared in one of the Briſtol Journals; taken, as it was declared, from an antient manuſcript [f]. Curioſity was naturally raiſed to know from whence it came. At length, after much enquiry concerning the perſon who ſent this ſingular memoir to the news-paper, it was diſcovered that he

[b] He is ſaid to have rebuilt Weſtbury college. Dugd. WARWICKSH. p. 634. edit. 1730. And Atkyns, GLOCESTERSH. p. 802. On his monument in Radcliffe-church, he is twice repreſented, both in an alderman's and a prieſt's habit. He was five times mayor of Briſtol. See Godwin's BISH. p. 446. [But ſee edit. fol. p. 467.]

[c] It is ſaid there were four cheſts: but this is a circumſtance of no conſequence.

[d] Theſe will be mentioned below.

[e] See an inventory of ornaments given to this church by the founder, Jul. 4, 1470, formerly kept in this cheſt, and printed by Mr. Walpole, ANECD. PAINT. i. p. 45.

[f] The old bridge was built about the year 1248. HISTORY of BRISTOL, MS. Archiv. Bodl. C. iii. By Abel Wantner.

Archdeacon Furney, in the year 1755, left by will to the Bodleian library, large collections, by various hands, relating to the hiſtory and antiquities of the city, church, and county of Glouceſter, which are now preſerved there, Archiv. C. ut ſupr. At the end of N. iii. is the manuſcript HISTORY juſt mentioned, ſuppoſed to have been compiled by Abel Wantner, of Minchin-Hampton in Glouceſterſhire, who publiſhed propoſals and ſpecimens for a hiſtory of that county, in 1683.

was

was a youth about ſeventeen years old, whoſe name was Chatterton; and whoſe father had been ſexton of Radcliffe church for many years, and alſo maſter of a writing-ſchool in that pariſh, of which the church-wardens were truſtees. The father however was now dead: and the ſon was at firſt unwilling to acknowledge, from whom, or by what means, he had procured ſo valuable an original. But after many promiſes, and ſome threats, he confeſſed that he received a manuſcript on parchment containing the narrative abovementioned, together with many other manuſcripts on parchment, from his father; who had found them in an iron cheſt, the ſame that I have mentioned, placed in a room ſituated over the northern entrance of the church.

It appears that the father became poſſeſſed of theſe manuſcripts in the year 1748. For in that year, he was permitted, by the church-wardens of Radcliffe-church, to take from this cheſt ſeveral written pieces of parchment, ſuppoſed to be illegible and uſeleſs, for the purpoſe of converting them into covers for the writing-books of his ſcholars. It is impoſſible to aſcertain, what, or how many, writings were deſtroyed, in conſequence of this abſurd and unwarrantable indulgence. Our ſchool-maſter, however, whoſe accompliſhments were much above his ſtation, and who was not totally deſtitute of a taſte for poetry, found, as it is ſaid, in this immenſe heap of obſolete manuſcripts, many poems written by Thomas Rowlie abovementioned, prieſt of Saint John's church in Briſtol, and the confeſſor of alderman Cannynge, which he carefully preſerved. Theſe at his death, of courſe fell into the hands of his ſon.

Of the extraordinary talents of this young man more will be ſaid hereafter. It will be ſufficient to obſerve at preſent, that he ſaw the merit and value of theſe poems, which he diligently tranſcribed. In the year 1770, he went to London, carrying with him theſe tranſcripts, and many originals, in hopes of turning ſo ineſtimable a treaſure to his great

advantage.

advantage. But from theſe flattering expectations, falling into a diſſipated courſe of life, which ill ſuited with his narrow circumſtances, and finding that a writer of the moſt diſtinguiſhed taſte and judgment, Mr. Walpole, had pronounced the poems to be ſuſpicious, in a fit of deſpair, ariſing from diſtreſs and diſappointment, he deſtroyed all his papers, and poiſoned himſelf. Some of the poems however, both tranſcripts and originals, he had previouſly ſold, either to Mr. Catcott, a merchant of Briſtol, or to Mr. Barrett, an eminent ſurgeon of the ſame place, and an ingenious antiquary, with whom they now remain [g]. But it appears, that among theſe there were but very few of parchment: moſt of the poems which they purchaſed were copies in his own hand. He was always averſe to give any diſtinct or ſatisfactory account of what he poſſeſſed: but from time to time, as his neceſſities required, he produced copies of his originals, which were bought by theſe gentlemen. The originals, one or two only excepted, he choſe to retain in his own poſſeſſion.

The chief of theſe poems are, The TRAGEDY of ELLA, The EXECUTION of ſir CHARLES BAWDWIN, ODE to ELLA, The BATTLE of HASTINGS, The TOURNAMENT, one or two DIALOGUES, and a Deſcription of CANNYNGE's FEAST.

The TRAGEDY OF ELLA has ſix characters; one of which is a lady, named Birtha. It has a chorus conſiſting of minſtrels, whoſe ſongs are often introduced. Ella was governor of the caſtle of Briſtol, and a puiſſant champion againſt the Danes, about the year 920. The ſtory ſeems to be the poet's invention. The tragedy is opened with the following ſoliloquy.

[g] Mr. Barrett, to whom I am greatly obliged for his unreſerved and liberal information on this ſubject, is now engaged in writing the ANTIQUITIES of BRISTOL.

CELMONDE

CELMONDE *atte Bryſtowe.*

Before yonne roddie ſonne has droove hys wayne
Through half hys joornie, dyghte yn gites of gowlde,
Mee, hapleſs mee, he wylle a wretch behowlde,
Myſelfe, and alle thatts myne, bounde yn Myſchaunche's chayne!
Ah Byrtha, whie dydde nature frame thee fayre,
Whie art thou alle that poyntelle[h] canne bewreene?
Whie art thou notte as coarſe as odhers are?
Botte thenne thie ſoughle[i] woulde throwe thie vyſage ſheene,
Yatte[k] ſhemres[l] onne thie comlie ſemlykeene[m],
Or ſcarlette with waylde lynnen clothe[n],
Lyke would thie ſprite[o] [ſhine] upon thie vyſage:
This daie brave Ella dothe thyne honde and harte
Clayme as hys owne to bee, whyche nee[p] from hys moſte parte.
And cann I lynne to ſee herre with anere[q]?
Ytte cannotte, muſt notte, naie ytte ſhall notte bee!
Thys nyght I'lle putt ſtrong poyſonne yn the beere,
And hymme, herre, and myſelfe attones[r] wylle ſlea.
Affyſt, me helle, lette devylles rounde me tende,
To ſlea myſelfe, my love, and eke my doughhtie friende!

The following beautiful deſcriptions of SPRING, AUTUMN, and MORNING, are ſuppoſed to be ſung in the tragedy, by the chorus of minſtrels.

SPRING.

The boddyng flowrettes bloſhes at the lyhte,
The mees be ſpringede[s] with the yellowe hue,
Yn daiſeyed mantells ys the monntayne dyghte,
The neſhe[t] younge cowſlepe bendethe wythe the dewe;

[h] Pencil. [i] *Soul.* [k] *That.* [o] Soul. [p] *Never.*
[l] Glimmers. [m] *Seemlineſs.* Beauty. [q] *Another.* [r] *At once.*
[n] Perhaps we ſhould read,
Or ſcarlette vailed with a linnen clothe.
[s] The meadows are ſprinkled, &c.
[t] Tender.

The

The trees enleafede, into heaven ſtraught [u],
Whanne gentle wyndes doe blowe, to wheſtlynge dynne ys [w] brought.
The evenynge commes, and brynges the dewe alonge,
The rodie welkynne ſheeneth toe the eyne,
Arounde the aleſtake [x] mynſtrelles ſynge the ſonge,
Yonge ivie rounde the doore-poſt doth entwyne;
I laie mee on the graſſe: yette to mie wylle,
Albeytte alle ys fayre, theere lackethe ſommethynge ſtylle.

Autumn.

Whanne Autumne, blake, and ſonne-brente doe appere,
Wythe hys goulde honde, guylteynge the falleynge lefe,
Bryngeynge oppe Wynterre to folfylle the yere,
Beereynge uponne hys backe the riped ſhefe;
Whanne alle the hylls wythe woddie ſeede is whyte,
Whanne levynne fyres, ande lemes, do mete fromme farr the ſyghte:
Whanne the fayre apple, rudde as even ſkie,
Doe bende the tree untoe the fructyle grounde,
Whanne joicie peres, and berryes of blacke die,
Doe daunce ynne ayre, and calle the eyne arounde:
Thanne, bee the even fowle, or even fayre,
Meethynckes mie hartys joie ys ſteyned withe ſomme care.

Morning.

Bryghte ſonne han ynne hys roddie robes byn dyghte,
Fro the redde eaſte hee flytted wythe hys trayne;
The howers drawe awaie the geete of nyghte,
Herre ſable tapiſtrie was rente ynne twayne:

[u] Stretching. Stretched.
[w] i. e. Are.
[x] A ſign-poſt before an alehouſe. In Chaucer, the Hoste ſays,

—— Here at this *alehouſe-ſtake*,
I wol both drinke, and etin of a cake.

Wordes Host. v. 1835. Urr. p. 131. And in the Ship of Fooles, fol. 9 a. edit. 1570.

By the *ale-ſtake* knowe we the alehouſe,
And everie inne is knowen by the ſigne.

The

The dauncynge ſtreakes bedeckedd heavenne's playne,
And onne the dewe dydd ſmyle wythe ſhemrynge[y] eie,
Lyche gottes[z] of blodde whyche doe blacke armoure ſteyne,
Sheenynge uponne the borne whyche ſtondethe bye:—
The ſouldyerrs ſtoode uponne the hyllis ſyde,
Lyche yonge enlefed trees whych ynne a forreſte byde[a].

But the following ode, belonging to the ſame tragedy, has much more of the choral or lyric ſtrain.

I.

O! ſynge unto mie roundelaie,
O! drop the bryny tear with me,
Daunce ne moe atte hallie day,
Lyke a running river bee.
My love is dedde,
Gone to his death bedde,
Al under the willowe tree.

II.

Blacke his cryne[b] as the wyntere night,
Whyte his rode[c] as ſummer ſnowe,
Rodde his face as morning lyght,
Cold he lies in the grave below.
My love is dedde, &c.

[y] Glimmering.
[z] Drops.
[a] There is a deſcription of morning in another part of the tragedy.

The mornynge gynes alonge the eaſt to ſheene,
Darkling the lyghte does on the waters plaie;
The ſeynte rodde beam ſlowe creepethe over the leene,
To chaſe the morkyneſſe of nyghte awaie.
Swift fleis the hower that will brynge oute the daie,
The ſofte dewe falleth onne the greeynge graſſe;
The ſhepſter mayden dyghtynge her arraie,
Scante ſees her vyſage ynne the wavie glaſſe:
By the fulle daylight wee ſcalle ELLA ſee,
Or BRISTOWE's walled towne. Damoyſelle followe mee.

[b] Hair. [c] Neck.

III.

Swote his tounge as the throſtle's note,
Quycke in daunce as thought can be,
Deft his tabor, codgelle ſtote,
Oh! he lies by the willowe tree.
My love is dedde, &c.

IV.

Hark! the raven flaps his wynge,
In the brier'd delle belowe;
Hark! the dethe owl loud doth ſing
To the night mares as they go.
My love is dedde, &c.

V.

See the white moon ſheenes on hie!
Whyter is my true love's ſhrowde,
Whyter than the morning ſkie,
Whyter than the evening cloud.
My love is dedde, &c.

VI.

Here upon my true love's grave
Shall the garen [d] fleurs be layde:
Ne one hallie ſaynte to ſave
Al the celneſs of a mayde.
My love is dedde, &c.

VII.

With my hondes I'll dente [e] the brieres,
Round his hallie corſe to gre [f],
Ouphante [g] faeries, light your fyres,
Here my bodie ſtill ſhall bee.
My love is dedde, &c.

[d] Bright. [e] *Indent.* Bend into the ground. [f] Grow. [g] Ouphan. Elphin.

VIII. Come

VIII.

Come with acorne-cup, and thorne,
Drain mie harty's blodde awaie:
Lyfe and all its goodes I ſcorne,
Daunce by night, or feaſt by day.
My love is dedde, &c.

IX.

Watere wytches crownde with reytes [h],
Bere me to your lethale tyde;
I die—I come—My true love waytes!
Thos the damſelle ſpake, and dy'd.

According to the date aſſigned to this tragedy, it is the firſt drama extant in our language. In an Epiſtle prefixed to his patron Cannynge, the author thus cenſures the MYSTERIES, or religious interludes, which were the only plays then exiſting.

Plaies made from HALLIE [i] TALES I hold unmete;
Let ſome *great ſtory of a man* be ſonge;
Whanne, as a man, we Godde and Jeſus trete,
Ynne mie poore mynde we doe the godhead wronge.

The ODE TO ELLA is ſaid to have been ſent by Rowlie in the year 1468, as a ſpecimen of his poetical abilities, to his intimate friend and cotemporary Lydgate, who had challenged him to write verſes. The ſubject is a victory obtained by Ella over the Danes, at Watchett near Briſtol [k]. I will give this piece at length.

[h] Reeds.
[i] *Holy*.
[k] With this addreſs to Lydgate prefixed.

Well thenne, good John, ſythe ytt muſte needes ſo be,
That thou, and I a bowtynge matche muſte have;
Lett ytt ne breakynge of oulde friendſhippe bee,
Thys ys the onelie allaboone I crave.

SONGE TO AELLE LORDE OF THE CASTLE OF BRISTOWE *ynne daies of yore.*

Oh! thou (orr whatt remaynes of thee)
EALLE the darlynge of futuritie!
Lette thys mie ſonge bolde as thie courage bee,
As everlaſtynge to poſteritie!
Whanne Dacya's ſonnes, whoſe hayres of bloude redde hue,
Lyche kynge cuppes braſtynge wythe the mornynge due,

Arraung'd ynn dreare arraie,
Uppone the lethale daie,
Spredde farr and wyde onn Watchett's ſhore:
Thenn dyddſt thou furyouſe ſtonde,
And bie thie brondeous honde
Beeſprengedd all the mees with gore.

Drawne bie thyne anlace felle [1],
Downe to the depthe of helle,
Thouſandes of Dacyanns wente;
Bryſtowannes menne of myghte,
Ydar'd the bloudie fyghte,
And actedd deedes full quente.

Remember Stowe, the Bryghtſtowe Carmalyte,
Who, when John Clackynge, one of myckle lore,
Dydd throwe hys gauntlette penne wythe hym to wryte,
He ſhewde ſmalle wytte, and ſhewde his weakneſſe more.
'Thys ys mie 'formance, whiche I now have wrytte,
The beſt performance of mie lyttel wytte.

Stowe ſhould be *Stone*, a Carmelite friar of Briſtol, educated at Cambridge, and a famous preacher. Lydgate's anſwer on receiving the ode, which certainly cannot be genuine, is beneath tranſcription. The writer, freely owning his inferiority, declares, that Rowlie rivals Chaucer and Turgotus, who both lived in *Norman tymes*. The latter, indeed, may in ſome meaſure be ſaid to have flouriſhed in that era, for he died biſhop of Saint Andrews in 1115. But he is oddly coupled with Chaucer in another reſpect, for he wrote only ſome Latin chronicles. Beſides, Lydgate muſt have been ſufficiently acquainted with Chaucer's age; for he was living, and a young man, when Chaucer died. The writer alſo mentions Stone, the Carmelite, as living with Chaucer and Turgotus: whereas he was Lydgate's cotemporary. Theſe circumſtances, added to that of the extreme and affected meanneſs of the compoſition, evidently prove this little piece a forgery.

[1] Sword.

Oh!

Oh! thou, where'er (thie bones att reſte)
Thie ſpryte to haunt delyghteth beſte,
Whytherr upponn the bloude-embrewedd pleyne,
Orr whare thou kennſt fromme farre
The dyſmalle crie of warre,
Orr ſeeſte ſomme mountayne made of corſe of ſleyne:

Orr ſeeſte the harneſsd ſteede,
Ypraucynge o'er the meede,
And neighe to bee amonge the poynctedd ſpeeres;
Orr ynn blacke armoure ſtaulke arounde
Embattell'd Bryſtowe, once thie grounde,
And glowe ardorous onn the caſtell ſteeres:

Orr fierie rounde the mynſter[a] glare:
Lette Bryſtowe ſtylle bee made thie care,
Guarde ytte fromme foemenne and conſumynge fyre,
Lyche Avone ſtreme enſyrke ytt rounde;
Ne lett a flame enharme the grounde,
'Tyll ynne one flame all the whole worlde expyres.

The BATTLE OF HASTINGS is called a tranſlation from the Saxon: and contains a minute deſcription of the perſons, arms, and characters of many of the chiefs, who fought in that important action. In this poem, Stonehenge is deſcribed as a Druidical temple.

The poem called the TOURNAMENT, is dramatically conducted, among others, by the characters of a herald, a knight, a minſtrel, and a king, who are introduced ſpeaking.

The following piece is a deſcription of an alderman's feaſt at Briſtol; or, as it is entitled, ACCOUNTE OF W. CANNYNGE'S FEAST.

[a] The monaſtery. Now the cathedral.

Thorowe

Thorowe the hall the belle han ſounde,
Byalccoyle [n] doe the grave beſeeme;
The ealdermenne doe ſytte arounde,
And ſnoffelle [o] opp the cheorte ſteeme.
Lyke aſſes wylde in deſerte waſte
Swotely the morneynge doe taſte,
Syke kene thei ate: the mynſtrells plaie,
The dynne of angelles doe thei kepe:
Thei ſtylle [p]: the gueſtes ha ne to ſaie,
But nodde ther thankes, and falle aſleepe.
Thos echeone daie bee I to deene [q],
Gyff [r] Rowley, Iſchamm, or Tybb Gorges, be ne ſeen.

But a dialogue between two ladies, whoſe knights, or huſbands, ſerved in the wars between York and Lancaſter, and were now fighting at the battle of Saint Albans, will be more intereſting to many readers. This battle happened in the reign of Edward the fifth, about the year 1471.

ELINOUR and JUGA.

Anne Ruddeborne [s] bank twa pynynge maydens ſate,
Theire teares faſte dryppeynge to the waterre cleere;
Echone bementynge [t] for her abſente mate,
Who atte Seyncte Albonns ſhouke the morthynge [t] ſpeare.
The nottebrowne Ellynor to Juga fayre,
Dydde ſpeke acroole [u], with languyſhmente of eyne,
Lyke droppes of pearlie dewe, lemed [w] the quyvrynge brine.

[n] BELLACCOYLE. A perſonage in Chaucer's Rom. R. v. 2984. &c. i. e. KIND WELCOME. From the Fr. *Bel accueil.*
[o] *Snuff up.*
[p] The minſtrels ceaſe.
[q] *Dine.*
[r] If.
[s] Rudborn, in Saxon, red-water, a river near Saint Albans.
[t] Lamenting.
[t] Murdering.
[u] Faintly.
[w] Gliſtened.

ELINOUR.

ELINOUR.

O gentle Juga! hear mie dernie [x] plainte,
To fyghte for Yorke mie love is dyght [y] in ſtele;
O mai ne ſanguen ſteine the whyte roſe peyncte,
Maie good Seyncte Cuthberte watch ſyrre Robynne wele!
Moke moe thanne death in phantaſie I feelle;
See! ſee! upon the grounde he bleedynge lies!
Inhild [z] ſome joice [a] of life, or elſe my deare love dies.

JUGA.

Syſters in ſorrowe on thys daiſe ey'd banke,
Where melancholych broods, we wylle lamente:
Be wette with mornynge dewe and evene danke;
Lyche levynde [b] okes in eche the oder bente:
Or lyke forletten [c] halles of merriemente,
Whoſe gaſtlie [d] nitches holde the traine of fryghte [e],
Where lethale [f] ravens bark, and owlets wake the nyghte.
No mo the miſkynette [g] ſhalle wake the morne,
The minſtrelle daunce, good cheere, and morryce plaie;
No mo the amblynge palfrie and the horne,
Shall from the leſſel [h] rouze the foxe awaie:
Ill ſeke the foreſte alle the lyve-longe daie:
Alle nete amenge the gravde cherche [i] glebe wyll goe,
And to the paſſante ſpryghtes lecture [k] mie tale of woe.
Whan mokie [l] cloudes do hange upon the leme
Of leden [m] moon, ynn ſylver mantels dyghte:
The tryppeynge faeries weve the golden dreme

[x] Sad complaint.
[y] Arrayed, or caſed.
[z] Infuſe.
[a] Juice.
[b] Blaſted.
[c] Forſaken.
[d] Ruins.
[e] Fear.
[f] Deadly, or death-boding.
[g] A ſmall bagpipe.
[h] In a confined ſenſe, a buſh or hedge, though ſometimes uſed as a foreſt.
[i] Church-yard, full of graves.
[k] Relate.
[l] Black.
[m] Decreaſing.

Of

Of ſelyneſs [n], whyche flyethe with the nyghte;
Thenne (but the ſeyncte forbydde) gif to a ſpryghte
Syrre Rychardes forme is lyped; I'll holde dyſtraughte
Hys bledeynge clai-colde corſe, and die eche daie yn thoughte.

ELINOUR.

Ah, woe-bementynge wordes; what wordes can ſhowe!
Thou limed [o] river, on thie linche [p] mai bleede
Champyons, whoſe bloude wylle wythe thie waterres flowe,
And Rudborne ſtreeme be rudborne ſtreeme indeede!
Haſte gentle Juga, trippe ytte o'ere the meade
To know or wheder wee muſte waile agayne,
Or whythe oure fallen knyghte be menged onne the plain.
So ſaieing, lyke twa levyn-blaſted trees,
Or twain of cloudes that holdeth ſtormie raine,
Theie moved gentle o'ere the dewe mees [q];
To where Seyncte Albon's holie ſhrynes remayne.
There dyd theye finde that bothe their knyghtes were ſleyne;
Diſtraughte [r], theie wandered to ſwollen Rudborne's ſyde,
Yelled theyre leathalle knelle, ſonke in the waves and dyde.

In a DIALOGUE, or ECLOGUE, ſpoken by two ladies, are theſe lines.

Sprytes of the blaſte, the pious Nygelle ſedde,
Powre oute your pleaſaunce on mie fadres hedde.
Richard of lyonn's harte to fyghte is gonne,
Uppon the broad ſea doe the banners gleme;
The aminuſedd natyons be aſtonn
To ken ſyke [s] large a flete, ſyke fyne, ſyke breme [t]:

[n] Happineſs. Chaucer, TR. CRES. iii. 815.
[o] Glaſſy.
[p] Bank.
[q] Meads.
[r] Diſtracted.
[s] So.
[t] Fierce.

The

The barkis heofods coupe the lymed [u] ſtreme:
Oundes [w] ſynkyng oundes uppon the hard ake [x] riſe;
The waters ſlughornes wyth a ſwoty cleme
Conteke [y] the dynninge [z] ayre, and reche [a] the ſkies.
Sprytes of the blaſte, on gouldenn trones aſtedde [b],
Powre oute your pleaſaunce on mie fadres hedde!

I am of opinion, that none of theſe pieces are genuine. The EXECUTION of SIR CHARLES BAUDWIN is now allowed to be modern, even by thoſe who maintain all the other poems to be antient [c]. The ODE TO ELLA, and the EPISTLE to Lydgate, with his ANSWER, were written on one piece of parchment; and, as pretended, in Rowlie's own hand. This was ſhewn to an ingenious critic and intelligent antiquary of my acquaintance; who aſſures me, that the writing was a groſs and palpable forgery. It was not even ſkilfully counterfeited. The form of the letters, although artfully contrived to wear an antiquated appearance, differed very eſſentially from every one of our early alphabets. Nor were the characters uniform and conſiſtent: part of the ſame manuſcript exhibiting ſome letters ſhaped

[u] Poliſhed. Bright.
[w] Waters.
[x] *Oak.* Ship.
[y] Contend with.
[z] Noiſy.
[a] *Reach.*
[b] Seated.
[c] It contains 98 ſtanzas, and was printed at London, in the year 1772. 4to. I am told, that in the abovementioned cheſt, belonging to Radcliffe-church, an antient Record was diſcovered, containing the expences for Edward the fourth to ſee the execution of ſir Charles Baldwin; with a deſcription of a canopy under which the king ſate at this execution. This Record ſeems to have given riſe to the poem. A bond which ſir Charles Baldwin gave to king Henry the ſixth, I ſuppoſe about ſeizing the earl of Warwick, is ſaid to have been mentioned in one of Rowlie's manuſcripts, called the YELLOW ROLL, perhaps the ſame, found in Cannynge's cheſt, but now loſt. See Stowe's CHRON. by Howes, edit. fol. 1615. p. 406. col. 2. And Speed's, p. 669. col. 2. edit. 1611. Stowe ſays, that king Edward the fourth was at Briſtol, on a progreſs through England, in the *harveſt ſeaſon* of the year 1462. And that he was *moſt royally received.* Ibid. p. 416. col. 2. Cannynge was then mayor of Briſtol. Sir Charles Baldwin is ſaid to have been executed at Briſtol, in the preſence of Edward the fourth, in the year 1463. MS. Wantn. Bibl. Bodl. ut ſupr. The ſame king was at Briſtol, and lodged in ſaint Auguſtine's abbey, in 1472, when he received a large gratuity from the citizens for carrying on the war againſt France. Wantner, ibid.

according to the preſent round hand, while others were traced in imitation of the antient court and text hands. The parchment was old; and that it might look ſtill older, was ſtained on the outſide with ochre, which was eaſily rubbed off with a linen cloth. Care had alſo been evidently taken to tincture the ink with a yellow caſt. To communicate a ſtronger ſtamp of rude antiquity, the ODE was written like proſe: no diſtinction, or termination, being made between the ſeveral verſes. Lydgate's ANSWER, which makes a part of this manuſcript, and is written by the ſame hand, I have already proved to be a manifeſt impoſition. This parchment has ſince been unfortunately loſt [d]. I have myſelf carefully examined the original manuſcript, as it is called, of the little piece entitled, ACCOUNTE OF W. CANNYNGE'S FEAST. It is likewiſe on parchment, and, I am ſorry to ſay, that the writing betrays all the ſuſpicious ſignatures which were obſerved in that of the ODE TO ELLA. I have repeatedly and diligently compared it with three or four authentic manuſcripts of the time of Edward the fourth, to all which I have found it totally unlike. Among other ſmaller veſtiges of forgery, which cannot be ſo eaſily deſcribed and explained here, at the bottom are added in ink two coats of arms, containing empalements of Cannynge and of his friends or relations, with family-names, apparently delineated by the ſame pen which wrote the verſes. Even the ſtyle and drawing of the armorial bearings diſcover the hand of a modern herald. This, I believe, is the only pretended original of the poetry of Rowlie, now remaining.

[d] At the ſame time, another manuſcript on parchment, written, as pretended, by Rowlie, was ſhewn to this gentleman: which, tallying in every reſpect with the ODE TO ELLA, plainly appeared to be forged, in the ſame manner, and by the ſame modern hand. It was in proſe; and contained an account of Saxon coins, and the riſe of coining in England, with a liſt of coins, poems, antient inſcriptions, monuments, and other curioſities, in the cabinet of Cannynge abovementioned. This parchment is alſo loſt; and, I believe, no copy remains.

As

As to internal arguments, an unnatural affectation of antient ſpelling and of obſolete words, not belonging to the period aſſigned to the poems, ſtrikes us at firſt ſight. Of theſe old words combinations are frequently formed, which never yet exiſted in the unpoliſhed ſtate of the Engliſh language: and ſometimes the antiquated diction is moſt inartificially miſapplied, by an improper contexture with the preſent modes of ſpeech. The attentive reader will alſo diſcern, that our poet ſometimes forgets his aſſumed character, and does not always act his part with conſiſtency: for the chorus, or interlude, of the damſel who drowns herſelf, which I have cited at length from the TRAGEDY of ELLA, is much more intelligible, and free from uncouth expreſſions, than the general phraſeology of theſe compoſitions. In the BATTLE OF HASTINGS, ſaid to be tranſlated from the Saxon, Stonehenge is called a Druidical temple. The battle of Haſtings was fought in the year 1066. We will grant the Saxon original to have been written ſoon afterwards: about which time, no other notion prevailed concerning this miraculous monument, than the ſuppoſition which had been delivered down by long and conſtant tradition, that it was erected in memory of Hengiſt's maſſacre. This was the eſtabliſhed and uniform opinion of the Welſh and Armorican bards, who moſt probably received it from the Saxon minſtrels: and that this was the popular belief at the time of the battle of Haſtings, appears from the evidence of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who wrote his hiſtory not more than eighty years after that memorable event. And in this doctrine Robert of Glouceſter and all the monkiſh chroniclers agree. That the Druids conſtructed this ſtupendous pile for a place of worſhip, was a diſcovery reſerved for the ſagacity of a wiſer age, and the laborious diſcuſſion of modern antiquaries. In the EPISTLE to Lydgate, prefixed to the TRAGEDY, our poet condemns the abſurdity and impropriety of the religious dramas, and re-

commends SOME GREAT STORY OF HUMAN MANNERS, as moſt ſuitable for theatrical repreſentation. But this idea is the reſult of that taſte and diſcrimination, which could only belong to a more advanced period of ſociety [e].

But, above all, the caſt of thought, the complexion of the ſentiments, and the ſtructure of the compoſition, evidently prove theſe pieces not antient. The ODE TO ELLA, for inſtance, has exactly the air of modern poetry; ſuch, I mean, as is written at this day, only diſguiſed with antique ſpelling and phraſeology. That Rowlie was an accompliſhed literary character, a ſcholar, an hiſtorian, and an antiquarian, if contended for, I will not deny [f]. Nor is it impoſſible that he might write Engliſh poetry. But that he is the writer of the poems which I have here cited, and

[e] It would be tedious and trifling to deſcend to minute particulars. But I will mention one or two. In the ODE TO ELLA, the poet ſuppoſes, that the ſpectre of Ella ſometimes appears in the *mynſter*, that is Briſtol-cathedral. But when Rowlie is ſuppoſed to have lived, the preſent cathedral of Briſtol was nothing more than an Auguſtine monaſtery, in which Henry the eighth eſtabliſhed long afterwards a biſhop, and a dean and chapter, in the year 1542. *Minſter* is a word almoſt appropriated to Cathedrals: and I will venture to ſay, that the church of this monaſtery, before the preſent foundation took place, never was called *Briſtol-minſter*, or *The minſter*. The inattention to this circumſtance, has produced another unfortunate anachroniſm in ſome of Rowlie's papers. Where, in his panegyric on Cannynge he ſays, "The favouryte of godde, the fryende of "the chyrche, the companyonne of kynges, "and the fadre of hys natyve CITIE, the "grete and good Wyllyamme Canynge." Briſtol was never ſtyled a CITY till the erection of its biſhoprick in 1542. See Willis's NOTIT. PARLIAMENT. p. 43. Lond. 1750. See alſo king Henry's Patent for creating the biſhoprick of Briſtol, in Rymer, dat. Jun. 4. A. D. 1542. An. reg. 34. Where the king orders, "Ac quod tota "*Villa* noſtra Briſtolliæ *exnunc* et *deinceps* "imperpetuum ſit *Civitas*, ipſamque CI-"VITATEM BRISTOLLIÆ appellari et "nominari, volumus et decernimus, &c." FOED. tom. xv. p. 749. Briſtol was *proclaimed* a CITY, an. 35 Henr. viii. MS. Wantner, ut ſupr. In which manuſcript, to that period it is conſtantly called a *town*.

The deſcription of Cannynge's feaſt, is called an ACCOUNTE of CANNYNGE'S FEAST. I do not think, that ſo early as the year 1470, the word *Accounte* had loſt its literal and original ſenſe of a *computus*, or *computation*, and was uſed in a looſer acceptation for *narrative* or *detail*. Nor had it even then loſt its true ſpelling *accompt*, in which its proper and primary ſignification is preſerved and implied.

[f] He is alſo ſaid to have been an eminent mechanic and mathematician. I am informed, that one of Rowlie's manuſcripts diſcovered in Cannynge's iron cheſt, was a plan for ſupporting the tower of the Temple-church in Briſtol, which had greatly declined from its perpendicular. In a late reparation of that church, ſome ſubterraneous works were found, minutely correſponding with this manuſcript.

which

which have been ſo confidently aſcribed to him, I am not yet convinced.

On the whole, I am inclined to believe, that theſe poems were compoſed by the ſon of the ſchool-maſter before mentioned; who inherited the ineſtimable treaſures of Cannynge's cheſt in Radcliffe-church, as I have already related at large. This youth, who died at eighteen, was a prodigy of genius: and would have proved the firſt of Engliſh poets, had he reached a maturer age. From his childhood, he was fond of reading and writing verſes: and ſome of his early compoſitions, which he wrote without any deſign to deceive, have been judged to be moſt aſtoniſhing productions by the firſt critic of the preſent age. From his ſituation and connections, he became a ſkilful practitioner in various kinds of hand-writing. Availing himſelf therefore of his poetical talent, and his facility in the graphic art, to a miſcellany of obſcure and neglected parchments, which were commodiouſly placed in his own poſſeſſion, he was tempted to add others of a more intereſting nature, and ſuch as he was enabled to forge, under theſe circumſtances, without the fear of detection. As to his knowledge of the old Engliſh literature, which is rarely the ſtudy of a young poet, a ſufficient quantity of obſolete words and phraſes were readily attainable from the gloſſary to Chaucer, and to Percy's Ballads. It is confeſſed, that this youth wrote the EXECUTION OF SIR CHARLES BAWDWIN: and he who could forge that poem, might eaſily forge all the reſt.

In the mean time, we will allow, that ſome pieces of poetry written by Rowlie might have been preſerved in Cannynge's cheſt: and that theſe were enlarged and improved by young Chatterton. But if this was the caſe, they were ſo much altered as to become entirely new compoſitions. The poem which bids the faireſt to be one of theſe originals is CANNYNGE'S FEAST. But the parchment-manuſcript of this little poem has already been proved to be a forgery. A circumſtance

cumſtance which is perhaps alone ſufficient to make us ſuſpect that no originals ever exiſted.

It will be aſked, for what end or purpoſe did he contrive ſuch an impoſture? I anſwer, from lucrative views; or perhaps from the pleaſure of deceiving the world, a motive which, in many minds, operates more powerfully than the hopes of gain. He probably promiſed himſelf greater emoluments from this indirect mode of exerciſing his abilities: or, he might have ſacrificed even the vanity of appearing in the character of an applauded original author, to the private enjoyment of the ſucceſs of his invention and dexterity.

I have obſerved above, that Cannynge ordered his iron cheſt in Radcliffe-church to be ſolemnly viſited once in every year, and that an annual entertainment ſhould be provided for the viſitors. In the notices relating to this matter, which ſome of the chief patrons of Rowlie's poetry have lately ſent me from Briſtol, it is affirmed, that this order is contained in Cannynge's will: and that he ſpecifies therein, that not only his manuſcript evidences abovementioned, but that the POEMS of HIS CONFESSOR ROWLIE, which likewiſe he had depoſited in the aforeſaid iron cheſt, were alſo to be ſubmitted to this annual inſpection. This circumſtance at firſt ſtrongly inclined me to think favourably of the authenticity of theſe pieces. At leaſt it proved, that Rowlie had left ſome performances in verſe. But on examining Cannynge's will, no ſuch order appears. All his bequeſts relating to Radcliffe-church, of every kind, are the following. He leaves legacies to the vicar, and the three clerks, of the ſaid church: to the two chantry-prieſts, or chaplains, of his foundation: to the keeper of the PYXIS OBLATIONUM, in the north-door: and to the fraternity *Commemoracionis martirum*. Alſo veſtments to the altars of ſaint Catharine, and ſaint George. He mentions his tomb built near the altar of ſaint Catharine, where his late wife is interred. He gives augmentations to the endowment of his two

two chantries [g], at the altars of ſaint Catharine and ſaint George, abovementioned. To the choir, he leaves two ſervice-books, called *Liggers*, to be uſed there, on either ſide, by his two chantry-prieſts. He directs, that his funeral ſhall be celebrated in the ſaid church with a *month's mind*, and the uſual ſolemnities [h].

Very few anecdotes of Rowlie's life have deſcended to poſterity. The following MEMOIRS of his life are ſaid to have been written by himſelf in the year 1460, and to have been diſcovered with his poetry: which perhaps to many readers will appear equally ſpurious.

" I was fadre confeſſour to maſteres Roberte and maſtre William Cannings. Maſtre Roberte was a man after his fadre's own harte, greedie of gaynes and ſparying of alms deedes; but maſter William was mickle courteous, and gave me many marks in my needs. At the age of twenty-two years deceasd maſter Roberte, and by maſter William's de-

[g] Compare Willis, MITR. ABB. ii. 88.

[h] This will is in Latin, dated Nov. 12. 1474. Proved Nov. 29. It was made in Weſtbury college. Cur. Prærog. Cant. Regiſtr. WATTIS, quatern. xvii. fol. 125. Beſide the bequeſts mentioned in the text, he leaves legacies to all the canons, the chaplains and deacons, and the twelve choriſters, of Weſtbury college. To the ſix prieſts, ſix almſmen and ſix almſwomen, founded in the new chapel at Weſtbury by Carpenter, biſhop of Worceſter. To many of the ſervants of the ſaid college. To the fabric of the church of that college, xl*s*. To rebuilding the tower of the church of Compton Graynefield, xl*s*. He alſo makes bequeſts to his almſhouſes at Briſtol, and to the corporation of that town. He remembers ſome of the religious foundations, chiefly the mendicants, at Briſtol. He ſtyles himſelf, *nuper mercator villæ Briſtoll, et nunc decanus collegii S. Trin. de Weſtbury*. The ſubdean of Weſtbury college is one of the executors. In this will the name of ROWLIE is not mentioned. Compare Tanner, NOTIT. MONAST. p 484. And Atkyns's GLOUCESTERSH. p. 802.

Biſhop Carpenter, about the year 1460, was a conſiderable benefactor to Weſtbury college. He pulled down the old college, " and in the new building, enlarged it " very much, compaſſing it about with a " ſtrong wall embattled, adding a faire " gate with divers towers, more like unto " a caſtle than a colledge: and laſtly, " beſtowed much good land for augment- " ing the revenew of the ſame." Godwin, SUCCESS. BISHOPS, pag. 446. edit. 1. ut ſupr. And Leland ſpeaks much to the ſame purpoſe. " Hic [Carpenter] ex ve- " teri collegio, quod erat Weſtberiæ, no- " vum fecit, et prædiis auxit, addito pin- " nato muro, porta, et turribus, inſtar caſ- " telli." ITIN. vol. viii. fol. 112. a. And hence it appears to be a miſtake, that Cannynge, who was indeed dean while theſe benefactions took place, rebuilt the college. As Dugd. WARWICKSH. p. 634. edit. 1730. Atkyns, GLOUCESTERSH. p. 802. ſupr. citat. p. 140.

ſyre

ſyre, bequeathd me one hundred marks; I went to thank maſter William for his mickle courteſie, and to make tender of my ſelfe to him.—Fadre, quod he, I have a crotchett in my brayne that will need your aide. Maſter William, ſaid I, if you command me I will go to Roome for you; not ſo farr diſtant, ſaid he: I ken you for a mickle learnd prieſt, if you will leave the paryſh of our ladie, and travel for mee, it ſhall be mickle to your profits.

" I gave my hands, and he told mee I muſt goe to all the abbies and pryorys, and gather together auncient drawyings [i], if of anie account at any price. Conſented I to the ſame, and purſuant ſett out the Mundaie following for the minſter of our ladie [k] and Saint Goodwyne, where a drawing of a ſteeple, contryvd for the belles when runge to ſwaie out of the ſyde into the ayre, had I thence, it was done by ſyr Symon de Manibrie [l], who in the troubleſomme rayne of kyng Stephen devoted himſelfe, and was ſhorne.

" Hawkes ſhowd me a manuſcript [m] in Saxonne, but I was onley to bargayne for drawyngs.—The next drawyings I metten with was a church to be reard, ſo as in form of a croſs, the end ſtanding in the ground, a long manuſcript was annexd. Maſter Canning thought no workman culd be found handie enough to do it.—The tale of the drawers deſerveth relation.—Thomas de Blunderville, a preeſte, al-

[i] I much doubt, if this word now exiſted, in the modern, or any, ſenſe. Indeed, the phraſe *to draw a picture* might have been now known: but to *draw*, in its preſent uncombined uſe, had not yet acquired this meaning. So late as the reign of James the firſt, a Painter was often called a *picture-drawer*. In antient inventories of furniture, a *drawing* never occurs as any ſpecies of production of the art of deſigning: it became a technical and diſtinguiſhing term when that art began to attain ſome degree of maturity. *Pictures*, although this word is now confined to a preciſe ſignification, would not have been improper here. Yet the word *Picture* was not antiently uſed in its preſent ſenſe and manner: but, a *picture with a cloth, a table with a picture*, &c.

[k] I ſuppoſe, Worceſter cathedral.

[l] Or Malmeſbury.

[m] This was not an Engliſh word at this early period: it was not uſed, and for obvious reaſons, till after the invention of printing. So again we have below, " the " Saxon *manuſcripts*." Theſe, at this time, would have been called *books*.

though

though the preeſte had no allows, lovd a fair mayden, and on her begett a ſonn. Thomas educated his ſoon; at ſixteen years he went into the warrs, and neer did return for five years.—His mother was married to a knight, and bare a daughter, then ſixteen, who was ſeen and lovd by Thomas, ſon of Thomas, and married to him unknown to her mother, by Ralph de Meſching, of the Minſter, who invited, as cuſtom was, two of his brothers, Thomas de Blunderville and John Heſchamme. Thomas nevertheleſs had not ſeen his ſonn for five years, kenning him inſtauntly; and learning the name of the bryde, toke him aſyde and diſcloſd to him that he was his ſonn, and was weded to his own ſiſtre.—Yoyng Thomas toke on ſo that he was ſhorne.

" He drew manie fine drawyings on glaſs.

" The abott of the minſter of Peterburrow ſold it me, he might have bargaynd twenty marks better, but maſter William would not depart with it. The prior of Coventree did ſell me a picture of great account, made by Badilian Y'allyanne, who did lyve in the rayne of kyng Henrie the firſt, a mann of fickle temper, havyng been tendred ſyx pounds of ſilver for it, to which he ſaid naie, and afterwards did give it to the then abott [n] of Coventriee. In brief, I gathered together manie marks value of fine drawyings, all the works of mickle cunning.—Maſter William culld the moſt choiſe parts, but hearing of a drawying in Durham church hee did ſend me.

" Fadree you have done mickle well, all the chatills are more worth than you gave; take this for your paynes: ſo ſaying, he did put into my hands a purſe of two hundreds good pounds, and did ſay that I ſhould note be in need, I did thank him moſt heartily.—The choiſe drawyng, when

[n] This ſhould have been *Prior*. An *abbot* was never the title of the ſuperiour in cathedral-convents. The PRIOR OF COVENTRY muſt have been a dignitary well-known by that name, as he ſate in parliament.

his fadre did dye, was begunn to be put up, and ſomme houſes neer the old church eraſed; it was drawn by Aflema, preeſt of Saint Cutchburts, and offerd as a drawyng for Weſtminſter, but caſt aſyde, being the tender did not ſpeak French.

" I had now mickle of ryches, and lyvd in a houſe on the hyll, often repayrings to maſtere William, who was now lord of the houſe. I ſent him my verſes touching his church, for which he did ſend me mickle good things.

" In the year kyng Edward came to Briſtow, Maſter Cannings ſend for me to avoid a marriage which the kyng was bent upon between him and a ladie he neer had ſeen, of the familee of the Winddivilles, the danger where nigh, unleſs avoided by one remidee, an holie one, which was, to be ordained a ſonn of holy church, beyng franke from the power of kynges in that cauſe, and can be wedded.—Mr. Cannings inſtauntly ſent me to Carpenter, his good friend, biſhop of Worceſter, and the Fryday following was prepaird and ordaynd the next day, the daie of Saint Mathew, and on Sunday ſung his firſt maſs in the church of our ladie [o], to the aſtoniſhing of kyng Edward, who was ſo furiouſly madd and ravyngs withall, that maſter Cannings was wyling to give him three thouſand markes, which made him peace again, and he was admyted to the preſence of the kyng, ſtaid in Briſtow, partook of all his pleaſures and paſtimes till he departed the next year [p].

" I gave maſter Cannings my Briſtow tragedy [q], for which he gave me in hands twentie pound, and did praiſe it more then I did think my ſelf did deſerve, for I can ſay in troth I was never proud of my verſes ſince I did read maſter Chaucer; and now haveing nought to do, and not wyling to be

[o] Moſt probably Worceſter cathedral.

[p] See above, p. 153.

[q] That is, the poem called the EXECUTION OF SIR CHARLES BAWDWIN, mentioned above, p. 153. What is there ſaid concerning this poem, greatly invalidates the authenticity of theſe MEMOIRS. Rowlie might indeed write a poem on this ſubject; but not the poem circulated as his.

ydle,

ydle, I went to the minſter of our Ladie and Saint Goodwin, and then did purchaſe the Saxon manuſcripts, and ſett my ſelf diligently to tranſlate and worde it in Engliſh metre, which in one year I performd and ſettled in the Battle of Haſtyngs; maſter William did bargyin for one to be manuſcript, and John Pelham, an eſquire, of Aſhley, for another. — Maſter William did praiſe it muckle greatly, but adviſd me to tender it to no man, beying the mann whoſe name where therein mentioned would be offended. He gave me twenty markes, and I did goe to Aſhley, to maſter Pelham, to be payd of him for the other one I left with him.

" But his ladie being of the family of the Fiſcamps [r], of whom ſome things are ſaid, he told me he had burnt it, and would have me burnt too if I did not avaunt. Dureing this dinn his wife did come out, and made a dinn to ſpeake by a figure would have over ſounded the bells of our Ladie of the Cliffe; I was fain content to gett away in a ſafe ſkin.

" I wrote my Juſtice of Peace [s], which maſter Cannings adviſd me ſecrett to keep, which I did; and now being grown auncient I was ſeizd with great pains, which did coſt me mickle of marks to be cured off.—Maſter William offered me a cannon's place in Weſtbury collige, which gladly had I accepted, but my pains made me to ſtaie at home. After this miſchance I livd in a houſe by the Tower, which has not been repaird ſince Robert Conſull of Glouceſter repayrd the caſtle and wall; here I livd warm, but in my houſe on the hyll the ayre was mickle keen, ſome marks it coſt me to put it in repair my new houſe, and brynging my chattles from the ould; it was a fine houſe, and I much marville it was untenanted. A perſon greedy of gains was the then poſſeſſour, and of him I did buy it at a very ſmall rate, having lookd on the ground works and mayne ſup-

[r] A Norman family. [s] I know nothing of this piece.

ports, and fynding them ſtaunch, and repayrs no need wanting, I did buy of the owner, Geoffry Coombe, on a *repayring leaſe* for ninety-nine years [1], he thinkying it would fall down everie day; but with a few marks expence did put it up in a manner neat, and therein I lyvd."

It is with regret that I find myſelf obliged to pronounce Rowlie's poems to be ſpurious. Antient remains of Engliſh poetry, unexpectedly diſcovered, and fortunately reſcued from a long oblivion, are contemplated with a degree of fond enthuſiaſm: excluſive of any real or intrinſic excellence, they afford thoſe pleaſures, ariſing from the idea of antiquity, which deeply intereſt the imagination. With theſe pleaſures we are unwilling to part. But there is a more ſolid ſatisfaction, reſulting from the detection of artifice and impoſture.

[1] I very much queſtion, whether this technical law-term, or even this mode of contract, exiſted in the year 1460.

SECT.