***Los ‘at the Forge’ with Loge***

1.

An epic check is sometimes forged

 By an impertinent sort of person

 Like Chatterton or like Macpherson.

Obtusely by the critics scourged

For an imaginative act

 Of a high order, they give new

 Life to a dead age. Faining’s true

Feigning discovers a strange tract

**Between the Nightmare History’s

 Time and Dream Time: Malvern the place,

 Rowley the monk dwell in a space

That is so purely poetry’s

That they, like Beauty, are their own

 Excuse for being. Call them spurious,

 If ye will, scholars, and wax furious

At having had your ignorance shown,

And dismiss Rowley’s or MacPherson’s

 Work as a literary mockery, full

 Of trumped-up episodes apocryphal—

*And such disreputable persons!*

*‘Tis true, one was a ‘marvellous boy*

 *Who perished in his pride’, but mad.*

 *What nerve this Bristol orphan had*

*To perpetrate this insolent ploy!*

What’s forgery but plagiarism

 Of works that happen not to exist?

 Thus adding a delicious twist

To literary vandalism.

2.

Ah, Chatterton, poor, hungry, lone

 Genius! Each line of verse he forges

 Has that peculiarly gorgeous

Finish that stamps it as his own.

I lectured on you, marvellous ‘whelp’. *‘It is wonderful how the whelp has*

 (My notes were plagiarised; my grief *written such things’.—Samuel Johnson*

 Is real.) Set drifting like a leaf

In London, with so little help,

Prolific in satiric rhymes,

 Too proud to admit your hunger and

 Accept a meal, cursed with too grand

A talent for such prosy times,

For livelihood in vain you cast

 About and, lonely in your garret,

 Struggled on till you could not bear it

And turned to arsenic at last.

So it was left to Shelley, Keats,

 Wordsworth and Coleridge, too late,

 To shower on your gifts, how great!

The honour out of which Fate cheats

Time and again the living poet.

 You, more precocious than Rimbaud,

 Your genius keep in youthful glow *Like Keats and Shelley; unlike*

Who were not destined to outgrow it. *Coleridge and Wordsworth.*

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