



THE ANTIQUARY.

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“There’s a lean fellow beats all conquerors.”

DECKER’S OLD FORTUNATUS.

THE Antiquary, wrapt in busy dreams
 Of old world things, the dead alive he seems,—
 The living record of the time gone by,—
 The chronicle of the first century :
 His eye faint glimmering ’neath o’erhanging brow,
 Bespeaks entire forgetfulness of “now :”
 To modern lore he makes but small pretence,
 And drops the present for the preterite tense.
 Ask of his garb ?—He wears the same cut coat
 Dryden might wear when Dryden lived and wrote.
 His politics ?—To state and country true ;
 Beyond, he knows or cares no more than you.
 His mansion’s chequered walls attract the eye,
 And round his roof ancestral ravens fly.
 Within—but none save he that now may know
 The wealth of that prodigious raree-show ;

There in his day-dreams, blest, he musing sits,
And roams o'er every by-gone age by fits ;
Pores o'er the forms heraldic labours tend,
Or pens a prosing letter to a friend :
For Anno Domini writes A. U. C.,
Or heads his letter with a kind S. D.
In fancy o'er the Via Sacra walks,
Or with a Pliny or a Strabo talks ;
At Horace' Villa culls his early beans,
Or in Etruscan kettles boils his greens.

With rising pride he views his swelling store
Of wonders never mortal owned before ;
Strange relics of all tribes that spoke or speak—
Assyrian, Turkish, Jewish, Roman, Greek.
Busts, statues, images, involved in dust,—
Swords, helmets, javelins, precious in their rust ;
Black-letter books, some grass from Trojan's park,
An ephod, and a piece of Noah's ark.
Whatever useless rarity you name
Of ancient date, look here, you find the same :
These he collects, these gathers night and day,—
For these, pounds, shillings, pence, he flings away ;
And though reputed in his senses sound,
He for a Roman penny gives a pound.

But say—what prize, what treasure meets his sight
Unseen before,—what promise of delight?

A shield of price! with rust corrosive traced,
The true aurigo of an antique taste.

“And whence,” he cries, “the gift? What gen’-
rous friend

Has fate propitious tempted this to send?

Say, say from whom?” his rapture stays his breath;

Brief the reply—“From *me* it comes,” quoth DEATH.

He starts—he sees upon the shield his name,

And feels a tremour stealing through his frame;

Beholds the grinning messenger with fear,

And grieves to find ANTIQUITY too near;

He drops the shield with fearful import rife,

And quits at once his treasures and his life.

CHEVIOT TICHBURN.