

wisdom, wit, or goodness; but Carlyle claims that it was not vanity that led him to, thus, do homage to Johnson for to be envied is the chief aim of vanity, and Boswell received little else than ridicule for his devotion. The same writer speaks of this same devotion as follows: "His mighty constellation or sun round whom he, as satellite, gyrated was for the mass of men, but a huge ill snuffed, tallow-light and he a weak night moth circling foolishly, dangerously about it not knowing what he wanted." It is also claimed that his recognition of the genius of Johnson was proof of a "celestial spark" of goodness and that his feeling was not one of servility, but of reverence.

Boswell's fame is great and immortal, but as has been said, it strikingly resembles infancy. He delighted in telling to the world all his caprices, hypochondriac whimsies, his vanity and indeed each and every fault was paraded before the public eye with the coolest of self complacency. Yet while all join in ridiculing and despising the man, no one denies that as an author he has given to the world the most complete, fascinating, and perfect biography that has ever been written.

Boswell's life of Johnson is, without exception, conceded to be one of the most highly instructive, interesting, unique and original production of the eighteenth century. Macaulay says, "Homer was the first Heroic poet; Shakespeare, the first dramatist; Demosthenes, the first orator; and Boswell, the first biographer. He has distanced all competitors so decidedly that it is not worth while to place them. Eclipse is first and the rest no where."

In this work the author gives a vivid, truthful, and faithful record of the life and sayings of his idol, together with an account of the conversations and discussions of that renowned club that claimed among its members, the illustrious names of Garrick, Goldsmith, Burke, Reynolds, Gibbon, Percy and Beauchere. It has given to us a thousand precious anecdotal memorials of the state of the arts, man-

ners, policy, and intellectual society of the day. The life like portraiture of persons and events, is one of the principal charms of this work. How vividly one sees the old tavern in Fleet street, the strange dependents upon Johnson's bounty, the blind poetess Anna Williams, Mr. Levitt, the negro Frank, the Cat Hodge, and, towering above all, the gigantic unwieldy form of Johnson. His invariable brown coat, great wig, blinking eye, face, figure, kings evil, St. Vitus dance, his trick of touching posts, his strange fashion of preserving orange peel, his morning slumbers and mid-night controvversies, his puffings and blowings, his ready eloquence, quick wit and vehemence, his voracity, thirst for tea, his ill manners and insolence, each and all are made, through this book, so familiar to one that they are never forgotten.

Nightly Boswell chronicles all that has come to his knowledge, and finally produces a work of which Carlyle speaks as follows: "A more free, perfect, sunlit, and spirit speaking likeness than for many centuries had been drawn by man of man," and still further in his enthusiasm he says, "Scarcely since the days of Homer has the feat been equalled. This also is a heroic poem. The fit *Odyssey* of our unheroic age was to be written not sung; of a thinker not of a fighter."

This work is truly national, and possesses peculiar characteristics of the soil from which it sprang. Its charm is contained in its reality, its truth to its nature, and it is said that this work disregards the law, which insists that the actual must be ennobled into the ideal, for as time of its own accord invests with an infinitude, an idealness whatsoever it has touched so time has done and is doing for this work more than art could ever have done.

The value of the subject matter of this work is due almost, if not entirely, to the quick observation and retentive memory of Boswell, for there is not a single remark of his on literature, politics, relig-