

ion, or society that is not commonplace or absurd. This book is invaluable as giving a real insight into the history of England at this time for in no work, entitled history, can we find that which men so much desire to know, how men lived and what they thought and did.

The center piece of this group is one of which we never tire. Johnson, in adversity, in prosperity, in poverty, in affluence, has that charm which comes from his whole souled humanity, which could not be entirely concealed under his rough forbidding exterior. One can not fail to respect him for the pride that scornfully rejected the shoes that charity left at his door, and the same pride that later indited his famous letter to Chesterfield, whose aid he scorned since it was withheld so long, and came only after he had won a name and fame. We sympathize with him in his struggles, and there are few things more pathetic than the picture of him and Savage walking the streets of London, all night, homeless and supperless, or his taking his dinner behind a screen at Caves, because he was too ill dressed to sit at the table with the company. Johnson commenced his career at a period that was most unfavorable to literary men. It was a period of transition from the age of patronage by the great, to the time when the support was to come from the people, and had it not been for his indomitable will he could never have succeeded under such trying circumstances.

The impression is often received from his biography that he was admitted into the highest society, but this was not so. His manners were such that he was not universally received among all classes, and for various reasons. He relates how, when a lady invited him to tea, merely to make a show of him and his conversation he revenged himself by drinking twenty-five cups of her tea, without favoring her with as many words.

His fine powers of conversation and controversy are well known, and yet in

his arguments, as in his character and life, he was strangely paradoxical. He was an ardent tory, and firm believer in Divine Right. He failed as a critic, because, though his judgment was strong, his understanding was enslaved. He called history an old almanac, and did not believe in travel. Johnson's style is as well known as Johnson himself. Its stately tread left its imprints upon all the literature, and even the bills and posters affected the high sounding style of the time. His thoughts were simple, energetic and picturesque but he translated it into *Johnsonese*. Goldsmith said to him once, "If you were to write a fable about fishes, you would make the little fishes talk like whales." As samples of his translations we find the original in a letter from the Hebrides to Mrs. Thrale as follows: "When we were taken up stairs a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed on which one of us was to lie." It is translated into the journal as follows: "Out of one of the beds on which we were to repose started up at our entrance a man black as a cyclops from the forge." Sometimes he translated while talking, for instance speaking of the *Rehearsal*, he says: "The *Rehearsal* has not wit enough to keep it sweet." Then after a pause he says: "The *Rehearsal* has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction."

His works, though considered as models in his time, are falling into neglect; and the duration of his fame rests upon his conversation and manners which have been given to a world: but, while it enjoys the result of this labor of love and devotion, it refuses to give any praise to the one who furnishes this rare and delicious treat.

CIRCUMSTANCES.

In forming our opinions of men and women, who have strayed from the straight and narrow way, we are too apt to overlook the circumstances which surround them. While these may not always