

have chosen—if no excrescence or protuberance is visible, we may conclude it is not existent. Finally, the essayist admits his conviction that we do know Johnson, or may know him, after we have read Boswell, and Seward, and Thrale, and

Johnson, and may savour of assurance if one's writing go much beyond an expression of personal interest and reverence. We think we know him; but we are sure that the more we study him the deeper grows our love and respect. Read him again; it is not too late out of this illuminated age to look back into his twilight. The "Ramblers" and the "Idlers," as a whole, may be left upon the shelf; but there are still "London," and "The Vanity of Human Wishes,"—poems that have moved and delighted great souls; and there is "Rasselas," and the "Lives of the Poets," that make you glow with pleasure and burn with indignation. He is our English Plutarch—or would have been, had he dealt with the kings and warriors.

Then there is Boswell. By all means read Boswell—the only biographer. We cannot think him as contemptible as Macaulay painted him; for, if he had been, Johnson never could have endured him. Keep this book of his by you, for it brings you into the best of company; and, if a greater biography was never written, it is also certain

Macaulay, and Carlyle, as well as we may know anybody who was never actually before our eyes, and who has been unseen among men for one hundred and seventeen years.

After all this accumulated store, it is vain for a tyro to write about

that a more impressive character has rarely been portrayed.

"It may be said, and truthfully said," declares Mr. Birrell, "that Boswell was a great artist. So indeed he was, a superb artist, and a self-conscious one." And for a brief survey and vivid literary por-



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