

Johnson's pen was very prolific. He wrote much that will not live. He will always be best known as the author of the dictionary of the English language—about the first of its kind—entitling him to be considered the founder of English lexicography. This appeared in 1755, after eight years of solid labor. The work was of necessity imperfect because of three Teutonic languages—from which comes three-fifths of our English—he knew next to nothing. In 1759, he wrote *Rasselas*, a tale of Abyssinia. It was written during the evenings of a week to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral. This is one of the most touching episodes in the life of the great Samuel, and gives us an insight into his warm-hearted, loving nature which nothing else can furnish.

As Johnson was a great, a very great, man in English literature, so his biography, written by Boswell, is considered by all competent judges to be the greatest work of the kind in the English tongue or, indeed, in any other. "Homer is not more decidedly the first of heroic poets, Shakespeare is not more decidedly the first of dramatists, Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators than Boswell is the first of biographers—he has no second." In 1763, Boswell and Johnson met for the first time, and thenceforward, "Bozzy" as he was familiarly called, was with the great doctor as his constant companion. He lived upon him as a parasite. He was a man of inferior parts but unbounded conceit. He was "one of the smallest men that ever lived." "A man of the meanest and feeblest intellect." Johnson described him as missing his only chance of immortality by not having been alive when Pope wrote his "Dunciad." He was "a bore and the laughing-stock of the whole of that brilliant society which has owed to him the greatest part of its fame." "Servile and impertinent, shallow and pedantic, a bigot and a sot, bloated with family pride, and eternally blustering about the dignity of a born gentleman, yet stooping to be a talebearer and an eaves-dropper and a common butt in the London taverns." "If he had not been a great fool he would never have been a great writer." "In the history of the human intellect no such a phenomenon as this book."

Doubtless, Boswell was a person of imperturbable conceit, and he has been very much ridiculed for it by Macaulay and to some extent by Carlyle, yet candor and justice compel us to remark