

man and whenever he appears behind the scenes or near the green-room, we read that the "actresses drop him their pretty curtsies," and look upon him with a species of awe, which only true goodness can awake in the breast of the frail and the fallen. One wonders how a man of such disparaging appearance could have gained the position he occupies, but down beneath the rough exterior, underlying the uncouthness is enshrined, the genuine diamond which all the homage and smiles of fashion and wealth have not been able to dim in lustre. But it has not always been prosperous with our table companion—the proverbial "silver spoon" was not the receptacle from which he withdrew his first material supplies—no, poverty was his father, want his mother, and scarcity his boon companion. His father gave him all he could—a liberal education, which he supplemented by entering as a Servitor—a menial position at Pembroke College, Oxford. His academic course seemed neither to have been brilliant nor satisfactory, for peniless, proud, diseased and uncouth, he had to bear the insults and railings of his more wealthy and less clever companions, which deeply augmented his morbid melancholy, which he declared "made him mad half his life." Soon after leaving *Alma Mater*, his father died, and at 22, alone and uncared for, he stepped into the cold hard world trudging on foot from Lichfield to Market Bosworth in Lincolnshire, where he became usher in a school. Leaving this we find him at Birmingham, translating for a bookseller, at a pittance scarcely able to keep body and soul together, and then on a moonlight night in the year 1736, we might have seen two figures travelling along the road to London—ill-assorted seemed the companions, the one possessing all the graces of manner and appearance with which the classic writers endow Jove—while the other possessed the graces with which we credit the Hippopotamus or an Antediluvian Mammalia, yet there were links that seemed to bind them together—misfortune and genius. Yes—you have guessed right—they were Samuel Johnson and David Garrick—Davy coming nominally under the pretence of entering the Middle Temple to split

hairs, yet all the time dreaming prophetically of the foot-lights, and the applauding auditorium.

Arriving at the Great Metropolis—their paths diverge—the one to leap upon the stage and astonish the admiring audience, and the other friendless, forsaken to grasp from the hands of that most fickle of ladies *Dame Fortune*, not by an easy triumph but by long continued and desperate conflict, the wreath of laurels which though long denied even by his persistent attacks were at length wrested from her grasp; but the twenty years of struggle had left behind them their mark, and who shall wonder if at times the great King of Literature shall thunder forth his dogmatic invective.

But my *Chere Confrere* we are growing absolutely sad,—'tis no new tale, these struggles of genius against envy, prejudice and ignorance, why Sir, one generation had not passed away when fratricide was recorded amongst the annals of crime, and envy had coined herself an image to which all succeeding generations have paid their homage. Let us at least be glad, that the divine spark of genius has burned with such force in the breasts of some of our number, that they have compelled an unwilling world to render them their just need of praise, though I question much if they have not grown so indifferent to it by the time it has been accorded them, that the pleasure has been all on the givers and none on the receivers side.

'Twas so in the case of Johnson, and his letter to Chesterfield, declining his patronage is one of the most famous of the great Lexicographer's productions, characterized as it is by an absence of verbosity and three barrelled adjectives, it stands out as a splendid specimen of English composition, and we cannot but rub our hands with delight when we think how every telling period must have made that "man of the world," (another name for contemptible humbug), wince. And now had come the evening of Johnson's life, when nature had asserted her claims, when the ponderous frame at last refused to bend to the imperious will—when a morbid melancholy enshadowed his life, and his body was racked with pain and disease.