plays in an admirable manner the desires and cravings of the poor. With much pathos and sublimity he pictures to us the excesses of youth and the bitter regrets thereby entailed upon old age. But what specific does he give for the malady? What is to be man's guiding-star in the pursuit of happiness? Here is the weak point. True, he insinuates that man should turn to God alone for happiness, but he only insinuates it. Had he not merely insinuated—had he insisted that virtue is even in this life the only source of happines, his work as a moral tableau would have been perfect.

As a picture of human character, moreover, the tale is a failure. The chief actors, Rasselas and his sister, are represented as absolutely perfect. They are not only free from all evil inclinations, but also seem unable to conceive how other less fortunate beings may wander from the path of rectitude. As compared with real life nothing could be more false. *Humanum est errare* is a stubborn fact borne out by daily experience. Johnson's delineation of Rasselas and his sister, then, is to be censured as teaching that virtue is inborn rather than acquired and as tending, in consequence, to discourage all efforts for the eradication of evil and the perfection of good in human nature.

Another fault is the pessimistic view which the author takes of life. With the exception of Rasselas and his sister, he represents all men as being either rascals or lunatics. He affirms that all our hopes and endeavors in this life are doomed to disappointment. He seems to insinuate that men are placed on earth merely to drag out a miserable existence. Herein lies Johnson's greatest fault. Such views tend to enervate the strong and to plunge the weak into the slough of dispondency. How different the true Christian picture of life where we see man, weak indeed, often lapsing into error or sin, but ever protected and assisted by Providence, and if persevering, finally attaining a foretaste of the eternal peace awaiting him in the land beyond the tomb! Had Johnson thus portrayed his characters, had he not only made them man and woman convinced of the hollowness of worldly pleasure, but set them forth as entering the path of virtue and finding new joy at every step; had he not stopped at the material, but looked beyond into the bright land of the spiritual, his sketch of life would have been harmonious and complete. As it is, it shows but one side, and that the darkest, of existence. Indirectly, indeed, the other is presented, but we would prefer to have the former less highly colored and the latter more clearly brought out.

Yet, the circumstances in which the tale was written may be adduced in extenuation of Johnson's dismal views of life. It was the work of one week, the object being to defray the expenses of his mother's funeral. The depression of spirits caused by her death would naturally be reflected in any work in which he was then engaged, epecially when the subject was of a nature to easily lend itself to such representation, as is the case with Rasselas. Considering this, we are inclined rather to admire the energy of the man who, under such circumstances, accomplished such a work than to cavil at the manner in which it is executed. His main deficiency is that he has not dwelt with sufficient emphasis upon the manner of acquiring happiness, though, as already stated, he indicates it indirectly. Yet is his work great. His object was to show that man cannot find rest in material things, and, though the picture be somewhat overdrawn, he has well fulfilled his purpose.

To the thoughtless reader Rasselas will have but little to recommend it except a few charming descriptions, but to the philosophical mind it will be of the greatest interest as containing a masterly enunciation of the problem of life.

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Third Form.