

only twenty-two. From the threshold of that humble little home, where his father lay dead, he looked out upon the cold, bleak world and wondered what fate the future had in store for him.

A short time before his father's death he had gone to Pembroke College, Oxford, but want of means prevented him from completing his academic course there and he never graduated at all.

In after years, when he had mounted the ladder of fame, he received the degree of M.A. and LL.D. as honorary distinctions. After this he became usher of a school in Bosworth, Leicestershire, but this proved only detestable drudgery and he gave it up and tried working for booksellers in Birmingham. Then he married a widow, Mrs. Porter, and with her he received £800 with which he commenced a school, but without success. So that, in 1737, we find him starting out for London, the happy hunting grounds of all adventurous literary characters, in company with the famous David Garrick, his friend and former pupil.

In Garrick's mind the histrionic muse had already more than budded, and although the study of law in Lincoln's Inn was the ostensible object of his mission to the metropolis, yet he was weaving for himself a more romantic career. In his busy brain the orchestra, the footlights and the *dramatis personae* were being more attentively studied than lawyer's briefs and pleadings at the bar.

Johnson's London life was hard and miserable. He could scarcely keep the wolf from the door. In fact a literary life in those days was by no means a sinecure, but full of hardship and want.

For twenty-six long years he toiled, pen in hand. Very often, it is said, he and David Garrick, whose biography he afterwards wrote, were compelled to walk the streets of London all night, having no money to hire even the commonest shelter, and scarcely enough to buy a loaf of bread to keep themselves from starvation. This was, of course, before he became known to fame. Such miseries and want were by no means uncommon among raw literary adventurers of that period. When our hero became famous his society was very much sought after. His *Rasselas*,