

with them one day, when Goldsmith said, that he thought that he could write a good fable, mentioned the simplicity which that kind of composition requires, and observed that in most fables the animals introduced seldom talk in character. 'For instance,' said he, 'the fable of the little fishes, who saw birds fly over their heads, and envying them, petitioned Jupiter to be changed into birds. The skill,' he continued, 'consists in making them talk like little fishes.' While he indulged himself in this fanciful review, he observed Johnson shaking his sides, and laughing. Upon which he smartly proceeded, 'Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales.'"—*Boswell*, ii., 231.

XXX. (Page 300.)—A pathetic interest attaches to this number of the *Idler*. It was written two or three days after the death, at Lichfield, of Dr. Johnson's mother, at the advanced age of ninety; an event which, according to Boswell, "deeply affected him," since his "reverential affection for her was not abated by years, as indeed he retained all his tender feelings even to the latest period of his life."

XXXI. (Page 305.)—Writing to Dr. Burney, in the last year of his life (1784), Dr. Johnson says:—"I struggle hard for life. I take physic, and take air; my friend's chariot is always ready. We have been this morning twenty-four miles, and could run forty-eight more. *But who can run the race with death?*"

XXXII. (Page 310.)—DR. JOHNSON TO MRS. THRALE.  
"LONDON, May 1, 1780.

"DEAREST MADAM,

"... Never let criticism operate on your face or your mind; it is very rarely that an author is hurt by his critics. The blaze of reputation cannot be blown out, but it often dies in the socket; a very few names may be considered as perpetual lamps that shine unconsumed."

XXXIII. (Page 326.)—[1772.] "Dr. Johnson went home with me to my lodgings in Conduit Street and drank tea, previous to our going to the Pantheon, which neither of us had seen before. He said, 'Goldsmith's *Life of Parnell* is poor; not that it is poorly written, but that he had poor materials; for nobody can write the life of a man but those who