

## THE IDLER.

XXV. (Page 282.)—"Johnson's own superlative power of wit set him above risk of such uneasiness. Garrick remarked to me of him, 'Rabelais and all the wits are nothing compared with him. You may be diverted by them; but Johnson gives you a forcible hug, and shakes laughter out of you, whether you will or no.'"—*Boswell's Life*, ii., 231.

XXVI. (Page 292.)—Twenty years after Johnson wrote this phillipic we find, from the following conversation, that his prejudice was still as deeply rooted:—"The celebrated Mrs. Rudd being mentioned. *Johnson*: 'Fifteen years ago I should have gone to see her.' *Spottiswoode*: 'Because she was fifteen years younger?' 'No, Sir; but now they have a trick of putting everything into the newspapers.'"—*Boswell*, iii., 330.

XXVII. (Page 294.)—The greatest living authority on the life and times of Johnson—his nineteenth century Boswell, in fact—Dr. Birkbeck Hill, thinks that in Mr. Sober we have a portrait of the Doctor, drawn by his own hand. There is unquestionably much in the sketch to warrant such a conclusion.

XXVIII. (Page 294.)—Dr. Johnson's repugnance to early-rising is well known. He struggled manfully, but unsuccessfully, against what was in reality a constitutional infirmity. When at the height of his fame, the "Sultan of English Literature" was a man who was known to be never ready to go to bed, and once there, never ready to get out.

XXIX. (Page 297.)—Dr. Johnson unconsciously describes himself in a phrase which occurs in this essay—"the ponderous dictator of sentences, whose notions are delivered in the lump, and are, like uncoined bullion, of more weight than use." The racy vigour and brilliant incisiveness of his reported talk, heightens the contrast which exists between it, and the "terrific diction" which marks his published works. Johnson often played the part of "candid friend" to Oliver Goldsmith, and sometimes the light-hearted poet ventured to pay him back in his own coin, as the following incident shows:—"Goldsmith was often very fortunate in his witty contests, even when he entered the lists with Johnson himself. Sir Joshua Reynolds was in company

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