No loneliness can be like that which weighs upon the heart in the centre of faces never ending, without voice or utterance for him; eyes innumerable, that have "no speculation" in their orbs which *he* can understand; and hurrying figures of men and women weaving to and fro, with no apparent purposes intelligible to a stranger, seeming like a mask of maniacs, or, oftentimes, like a pageant of phantoms. The great length of the streets in many quarters of London; the continual opening of transient glimpses into other vistas equally far stretching, going off at right angles to the one which you are traversing; and the murky atmosphere which, settling upon the remoter end of every long avenue, wraps its termination in gloom and uncertainty—all these are circumstances aiding that sense of vastness and illimitable proportions which forever brood over the aspect of London in its interior. . . . . All that I remember is one monotonous awe and blind sense of mysterious grandeur and Babylonian confusion, which seemed to pursue and to invest the whole equipage of human life, as we moved for nearly two hours through streets, sometimes brought to anchor for ten minutes or more by what is technically called a "lock," that is, a line of carriages of every description inextricably massed, and obstructing each other, far as the eye could stretch: and then, as if under an enchanter's rod, the "lock" seemed to thaw; motion spread with the fluent race of light or sound through the whole ice-bound mass, until the subtle influence reached *us* also, who were again absorbed into the great rush of flying carriages; or, at times, we turned off into some less tumultuous street, but of the same mile-long character, and, finally, drawing up about noon, we alighted at some place, which is as little within my distinct remembrance as the route by which we reached it.

—*De Quincey.*

# ANECDOTES.

## Biographical and Miscellaneous.

## BIOGRAPHICAL ANECDOTES OF FAMOUS MEN.

### *SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.*

#### MEMORY.

IT is said that Johnson's wonderful memory displayed itself early in life. When he was a child in petticoats, and had but just learnt to read, his mother one morning put the common prayer-book into his hand, pointed to the collect for the day, and said, "Sam, you must get this by heart." She went up stairs, leaving him to study it; but by the time she had reached the second floor, she heard him following her. "What's the matter?" said she. "I can say it," he replied, and repeated it distinctly, though he could not have read it more than twice.

#### MELANCHOLY.

During one of his college vacations he was affected with such terrible gloom, as to drive him almost to despair. It continued for a considerable period, and finding no relief, he wrote a statement of his case in Latin, and gave it to a physician, his godfather, asking his professional advice. The doctor was greatly amazed at the beauty of the composition, as well as the acuteness of the statement.

From his malady, however, the sufferer only obtained partial relief. Yet it seems that at college he was a general favorite; and while his own heart was secretly torn with a sense of his poverty; while difficulties and troubles clouded

the future as well as the present—and the shadowy horrors suggested by a hypochondriac fancy hung over him—he was esteemed a gay, hearty, and cheerful fellow by his mates! When Johnson was told of this afterwards, he explained it by saying, "Ah! sir, I was mad, and violent; it was bitterness which they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and thought to fight my way by my wit and my literature. So I disregarded all power and all authority."

### Marriage.

While Johnson was living in Birmingham, he became intimate in the family of a silk dealer, by the name of Porter. This man soon died, and Johnson became enamored of his widow, though she was above fifty, and he but twenty-seven years of age. At this period Johnson was a most ungainly figure—lean and lank, seeming to be only a huge skeleton of bones, moving about in the most awkward and ungainly manner. However, the widow accepted Johnson's addresses, and he went to his mother to get her consent to the match. She pointed out to her son the disparity of years, and the apparent folly of such a union, but yet offered no positive opposition.

It was agreed that the couple should be married at Derby, a distance of nearly forty miles, and they set out on horseback for that purpose. It was a singular journey, according to Johnson's own account. "Sir," said he, speaking of the occasion to Boswell, "my wife had read the old romances, and had got into her head the fantastical notion that a woman of spirit should treat her lover like a dog; so at first she told me that I rode too fast, and she could not keep up with me—and when I rode a little slower, she passed me, and complained that I lagged behind. I was not to be made the slave of caprice, and I resolved to begin, as I meant to end. I therefore passed on briskly, till I was fairly out of her sight. The road lay between two hedges, so I was sure she could not go amiss; and I contrived that she should



soon come up with me. When she did, I observed her to be in tears."

Notwithstanding this beginning, Johnson and his wife lived happily together. His affection for her seems, indeed, to have been deep and lasting. She had property to the amount of eight hundred pounds, which may have been one inducement to the match, but he was, nevertheless, a most fond and indulgent husband. After she had been dead nearly twenty years, his diary shows that he still remembered her with the most lively and fond attachment. "I have less pleasure," says he, "in any good that befalls me, because she does not partake of it. On many occasions I think what she would have said or done. When I saw the sea at Brigthelmstone, I wished for her to have seen it with me."

### Value of Literary Labor.

In 1778, his poem of London, an imitation of one of the satires of Juvenal, appeared, and did much to give him reputation. It is but one instance in a thousand to show the difficulty of deciding upon the merit of a literary performance, from an unknown author—that Johnson offered this work to several booksellers, before he could get a publisher; and, at last, obtained for it only ten guineas. It is a curious fact, that he was so timid in respect to it, that he first offered it as the production of another, and humbly proposed to alter any touch of satire that Cave, the bookseller, might not approve.

### Poverty and Tribulation.

In 1752, he lost his wife, whom he most sincerely mourned; the event so far affected his spirits, that he relinquished the *Rambler*. The *Dictionary*, instead of being finished in three years, extended to eight. Johnson's labors were unceasing, yet he was continually haunted with poverty. All he received for this stupendous work was expended in its progress. In 1756, he was arrested for a debt of five pounds, and only

escaped prison by borrowing the money of a friend. In 1759, his aged mother died, and he went down to Lichfield to superintend her funeral. But not having the means to pay the expenses, while his parent lay unburied, he set to work to procure the means of her interment. In a single week he accomplished the task, and the inimitable tale of "Rasselas" was the result. Who can contemplate the scene without emotion—Johnson, with the unconscious body of his mother at his side, toiling to procure the few shillings required to consign her to the grave! What must have been the feelings of his ardent and affectionate bosom during these sad and solemn hours!

### Habits and Appearance.

The Edinburgh *Review*, in speaking of Boswell's life of Johnson, and in illustration of its completeness, and the perfect picture it draws of its subject, says: "Everything about him—his coat, his wig, his figure, his face, his scrofula, his St. Vitus's dance, his rolling walk, his blinking eye, the outward signs which too clearly marked the approbation of his dinner, his insatiable appetite for fish-sauce and veal pie with plums, his inextinguishable thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts as he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange peel, his morning slumbers, his midnight disputations, his contortions, his mutterings, his gruntings, his puffings; his vigorous, acute and hearty eloquence; his sarcastic wit, his vehemence, his insolence, his fits of tempestuous rage, his queer inmates, old Mr. Levett, and blind Mrs. Williams, the cat Hodge, and the negro Frank; all are as familiar to us, as the objects by which we have been surrounded from childhood."

### Death.

In 1783, he was attacked with paralysis, and soon after was swollen with dropsy. His constitutional melancholy, which had haunted him through life, pursued him to his death-bed. His first approach to the grave was with terror. From this, however, he recovered, and as he came nearer his departure, his mind was tranquilized by religious contemplations. On the day of his death, he pierced his legs first with a lancet, and then with scissors, in order to let off the water which had accumulated; but he bled profusely, soon fell into a doze, and expired. This event occurred on the 13th of December, 1784. A short time before he died, he said to his attendant, Mrs. Sasters, "*Jam moriturus*," "I am about to die." His last words were uttered to a young friend, Miss Morris—"God bless you, my dear!"



### Felicity of Illustration.

Of his felicity of illustration, the following are specimens. Speaking of scepticism, he said, "The eyes of the mind are like the eyes of the body, they see only at such a distance; but because they cannot see beyond this point, is there nothing beyond it?" Of memory he said, "In general, a person can remember one thing as well as another; otherwise it would be like a person complaining that he could hold silver in his hand, but could not hold copper." Again, "People are not born with a particular genius for particular employments or studies, for it would be saying that a man could see a great way east, but not west."

### Credulity and Incredulity.

Dr. Johnson's character presents a singular mixture of good and evil. He was so credulous as to believe firmly in ghosts—yet his incredulity in some things was a sort of disease. He said himself that he did not believe in the great earthquake of Lisbon, in 1755, for six months after the news was received and its authority established. He was harsh, sneering and merciless with his tongue; yet he was all tenderness to his cat; he gave protection in his own house for years to blind Mrs. Williams; and when he saw poor children lying asleep on the pavement for a bed,

he put pennies in their hands to cheer them when they awoke.

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## *ROBERT BURNS.*

### Childhood.

"At seven years of age, I was," says he, "by no means a favorite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say idiot piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantive, verbs, and participles. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in reading, was the 'Vision of Mirza,' and a hymn of Addison's, beginning,

'How are thy servants blest, O Lord!'

I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my ear:

'For though on dreadful whirls we hung,
High on the broken wave.'

I met with these in 'Mason's English Collection,' one of my school-books. The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two I have read since, were the 'Life of Hannibal,' and the 'History of the Acts and Deeds of Sir William Wallace.' Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest."

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### Poverty.

On the 12th day of July, 1794, Thompson, the publisher,



received from him a letter, in which he says, "after all my boasted independence, stern necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds; a cruel haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head *that I am dying*, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me in gaol. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a gaol have made me half distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously, for upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds' worth of the neatest song-genius you have seen."

Of course, Burns received the money he desired, but no health returned to enable the high-spirited man to keep this voluntary pledge. He repaired to the Solway, where sea bathing relieved for a time the pains in the limbs, but his appetite failed, and melancholy preyed on his spirits. He grew feverish on the 14th of July, 1796, and desired to be conducted home. He returned on the 18th, and the news soon spread through the town that he was dying. "Who do you think will be our poet now?" inquired, with much simplicity, one of the numerous persons congregated in knots about the street. His wit and good humor broke out in some of his last recorded sayings. To Gibson, a brother volunteer, who sat by the bedside in tears, he said, smiling, "John, don't let the awkward squad fire over me."

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### Death.

It was on the fourth day after his return from the Solway, that his attendant held a cordial to his lips: the poet swallowed it eagerly, instantly rose almost upright in the bed, extending his hands, sprang forward his whole length, and died! He was but in his thirty-seventh year. He was buried on the 25th, with the military honors he had deprecated; Mrs. Burns giving birth, almost at the same hour, to a son, who lived but a short time. The old kirkyard of Dumfries was the poet's burial place. On the 5th of June,

1815, the grave was opened to remove the body to a more commodious place. The coffin was partly destroyed, but the dark and curly locks looked as fresh and glossy as ever. A showy mausoleum, with a Latin inscription, now marks out to the pilgrims who daily visit the place, the spot where the poet lies buried.

Thus lived and died Robert Burns, the first of Scottish poets. "He seems to have been created"—says Allan Cunningham—"to show how little classic lore is required for the happiest flights of the muse—how dangerous to domestic peace are burning passions and touchy sensibilities; and how divinely a man may be inspired, without gaining bread, or acquiring importance, in the land his genius adorns."

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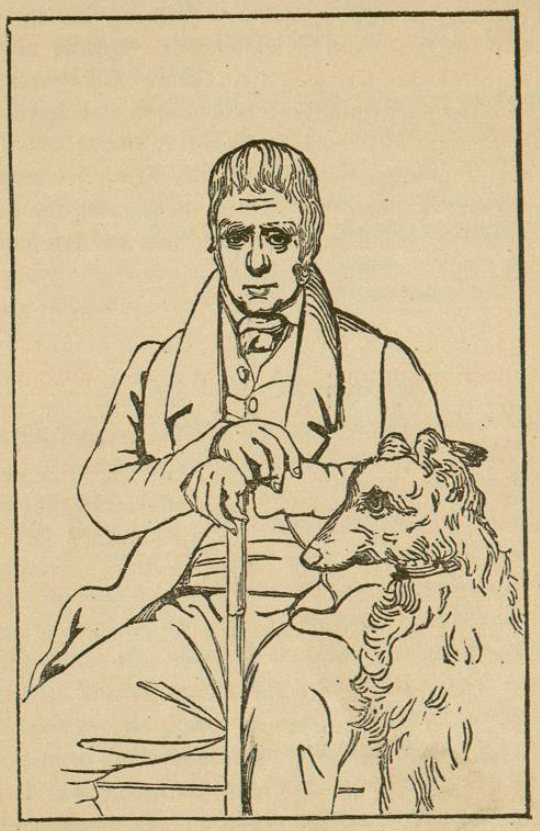
### Address and Conversation.

"I think Burns," said Robertson, the historian, "was one of the most extraordinary men I ever met with. His poetry surprised me very much; his prose surprised me still more; and his conversation surprised me more than both his poetry and prose." "His address," says Robert Riddle, "was pleasing; he was neither forward nor embarrassed in his manner; his spirits were generally high; and his conversation animated. His language was fluent, frequently fine; his enunciation always rapid; his ideas clear and vigorous, and he had the rare power of modulating his peculiarly fine voice, so as to harmonize with whatever subject he touched upon. I have heard him talk with astonishing rapidity, nor miss the articulation of a single syllable; elevate and depress his voice as the topic seemed to require; and sometimes, when the subject was pathetic, he would prolong the words in the most impressive and affecting manner, indicative of the deep sensibility which inspired him. He often lamented to me that fortune had not placed him at the bar, or the senate; he had great ambition, and the feeling that he could not gratify it, preyed on him severely."



SIR WALTER SCOTT.



### A Man's a Man for a' That.

Burns paid little deference to the artificial distinctions of society. On his way to Leith one morning, he met a man in hoddin-gray, a west country farmer; he shook him earnestly by the hand, and conversed with him some minutes. All this was seen by a young Edinburgh blood, who took the poet roundly to task for this defect of taste. "Why, you fantastic gomeral," said Burns, "it was not the gray coat, the scone bonnet, and the Fanquhar boot-hose I spoke to, but the man that was in them; and the man, sir, for true worth, would weigh you and me, and ten more such, down any day."

### Discernment.

His discernment was great. When Scott was quite a lad, he caught the notice of the poet by naming the author of some verses describing a soldier lying dead in the snow. Burns regarded the future minstrel with sparkling eyes, and said, "Young man, you have begun to consider these things early." He paused on seeing Scott's flushed face, shook him by the hand, saying, in a deep tone, "This boy will be heard of yet!"

## *SIR WALTER SCOTT.*

### Reverence for Religion.

Scott would never indulge in an oath, and was very strict in saying his prayers at the stated times. Often his brother Thomas, who went to school with him, and was required to be his guardian, would hurry Walter, and when the latter was longer at his prayers than Thomas' patience could bear, the latter would go to his door and say, "'Deed Wattie, canna ye come awa?" "I canna come till I hae said my prayers," replied Walter. "Why can ye no pray when ye come hame to breakfast, man?" was the answer.

### Recognition of Friends by Means of Horse Shoes.

Scott had himself a knack of recognizing horse-shoes, and he had learned to know, at sight, the track of every horse in the neighborhood, by the size and shape of the impression his shoe made in the path. This art he had also taught Mrs. Lockhart.

On one occasion, Southey, the poet, had come to pay Sir Walter a visit at Abbotsford. The two were walking at a distance of some three or four miles from Abbotsford, when coming to a bridle path, Scott saw the track of a horse that he knew. Saying nothing of his observation or his art, he stopped, and assuming a mysterious air, said to Southey—"We Scotch pretend to second sight. I foresee that we shall have a friend to dinner; and I think his name will be Scott!"

"It is some invited guest, I suppose," said Southey.

"I assure you, not," said Sir Walter; "the man himself shall tell you that I could not know of his visit before this moment."

The two passed on, and when they arrived at Abbotsford—behold, there was one waiting—a remote kinsman of Sir Walter, who had come to pay him a visit! On inquiry, he stated that this was accidental, and that Sir Walter knew nothing of his intention. Mr. Southey's wonder was greatly excited, but it was finally appeased by Sir Walter's telling him that he had been able to prognosticate the arrival of the stranger, by recognizing the foot-prints of his horse, leading in the direction of Abbotsford.

When Mrs. Lockhart had finished the anecdote, Sir Walter, who had heard it, stated that he found his kinsman Scott in his library, when he returned with Mr. Southey. The old man was engaged in poring over a volume of Johnson's quarto dictionary.

"I am afraid," said Sir Walter, "that you are reading a very dry book."

"Na, na!" said he, "they be bra' stories—but unco' short!"



### Literary Labor.

Scott's fame increased, attended by an uninterrupted tide of prosperity; he appeared to be a most happy man. His life proceeded with the splendor and brilliancy of a gorgeous dream. It has seldom fallen to the lot of man to hold a position so enviable, and yet be so much beloved. Beneath this fair seeming, however, the elements of trouble were gathering for the tempest. His expenditures had been enormous; all he received for his works was lavishly expended upon Abbotsford—in the construction of the vast edifice, and in filling it with wonderful collections of curiosities and antiquities of every kind—in its furniture—its library—its entertainments. But this was not all. In 1826, the Ballantynes and Constable went down in a crash of bankruptcy, bearing Sir Walter with them; and he, as a partner, was left to pay debts to the amount of seven hundred thousand dollars!

It cannot be denied that Scott had incurred these tremendous responsibilities somewhat presumptuously. He had not speculated merely upon his popularity, but he had even put at hazard all his possessions, as well as health and life itself. But to his honor be it spoken, he shrunk not from the fearful crisis. "Give me time," said he to his creditors, "and I shall be able to pay you every farthing." Having relinquished his property to his creditors, he said to a friend, in a deep, thoughtful tone, "It is very hard thus to lose all the labors of a lifetime, and be a poor man at last. But if God grant me life and strength a few years longer, I have no doubt I shall be able to pay it all."

He set to work in good earnest; and, during the three years that followed the events we have just detailed, he performed an amount of literary labor, and reaped an amount of profits, probably altogether unparalleled. In three years, that is, from 1827 to 1830, he produced about thirty original volumes; making more than ten a year. Nor is this all. During this period, he was editing an edition of his novels,