

RASSELAS

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Rasselas by Samuel Johnson & A. Raimbach

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SAMUEL JOHNSON & A. RAIMBACH

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THE VISIT OF BASSELAS TO THE HERMIT.

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM MILLER, LONDON, MDCCC.

RASSELAS,

BY

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

WITH

ENGRAVINGS, BY A. RAIMBACH,

FROM

PICTURES BY R. SMIRKE, R. A.

LONDON:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

RASSELAS, Prince of Abissinia, was composed by **Dr. Samuel Johnson**, at a period when experience, not less than philosophy, had taught him the imperfection of earthly enjoyments. The subject, as well as the scenery, of the romance, has relation to the earlier studies of the author. The translator of the 10th Satire of Juvenal must have reflected deeply upon the vanity of human wishes; and in Lobo's History of Abissinia, which Johnson had also translated, he found an account of the seclusion, to which the

jealousy of despotism condemns the younger branches of the royal family of Gondar. With these advantages was combined the natural tendency of the Author's deep and powerful mind to a seriousness not untinged with melancholy; and thus informed and endowed, he seized on a favourite subject with the grasp of a giant. There is, perhaps, no one composition of our great moralist, in which the strong lights, and gloomy shades, which marked his sublime genius, are mingled in more striking and picturesque grandeur than in *Rasselas*: the character of Johnson, his virtues, his profound knowledge of mankind, nay, his very prejudices, are preserved in the discourses of the philosopher, Imlac. Nor is the moral of the tale, though melancholy, un instructive. While the sanguine arise from the perusal with sobered expectation, and moderated wishes, those, whom experience has taught the futility of all sublunary pursuits,

are directed to the "hope which sickens not the heart, and to the wealth, which has no wings to fly."

To a tale, so lofty in conception, and so masterly in execution; so interesting in its progress, and so useful in its moral; those ornaments, which the Arts afford, seem an appropriate tribute. In veneration, therefore, for the illustrious Author, and in admiration of the Work itself, the Editor has studied to present it to the public in a form, which may entitle it to a high place in the first libraries. In this he has been ably seconded by the artists, whom he has employed. The names of SMIRKE and RAIMBACH are a sufficient pledge for the excellence of the Engravings, both in point of design and of execution; and it is hoped that the Printing will do credit to the Press from which it issues.