

A Johnsonian sentence:

It is the fate of those who toil at the lower employments of life,

to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than
attracted by the prospect of good;

to be exposed to censure,
without hope of praise;
to be disgraced by miscarriage, or
punished for neglect,

where success would have been without applause, and
diligence without reward.

And even more elaborate one (from the opening of the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare):

That praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that
the honours due only to excellence
are paid to antiquity,

is a complaint likely to be always continued

by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth,
hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox;

or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients,
are willing to hope from posterity
what the present age refuses, and
flatter themselves that the regard which is yet denied by envy,
will be at last bestowed by time.

A couple of typical paragraphs from the Preface:

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authours. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topicks which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this authour is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harrass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered, is the business of a modern dramatist. For this probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions, and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew, that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.