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Remarks On The Life and Writings Of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin

Orrery, John Boyle of

London, 1752

His education at school, and at the university of Dublin.

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6 REMARKS ON THE LIFE

Two of them only, GODWIN and JONATHAN, left sons. The descendants of GODWIN are mentioned in GUILIM's heraldry. JONATHAN married Mrs. ABIGAIL ERICK of *Leicestershire*, by whom he had one daughter and a son. The daughter was born in the first year of Mr. SWIFT's marriage; but he lived not to see the birth of his son^a, who was called JONATHAN, in memory of his Father, and became afterwards the famous Dean of *St. Patrick's*.

The greatest part of Mr. JONATHAN SWIFT's income had depended upon agencies, and other employments of that kind: so that most of his fortune perished with him: and the remainder being the only support that his widow could enjoy, the care, tuition, and expence of her two children devolved upon her husband's elder brother, Mr. GODWIN SWIFT, who voluntarily became their guardian, and supplied the loss which they had sustained in a father. Mrs. SWIFT, about two years after her husband's death, quitted *Ireland*, and retired to *Leicester*, the place of her nativity.

The faculties of the mind, appear and shine forth at different ages in different men. The infancy of Doctor SWIFT passed on without any marks of distinction. At six years old, he was sent to school at *Kilkenny*, and about eight years afterwards, he was entered a student of Trinity College in *Dublin*. He lived there in perfect regularity, and under an entire obedience to the statutes: but the moroseness of his temper, often rendered him very

^a Doctor SWIFT was born two months after his father's death.

unacceptable to his companions ; so that he was little regarded, and less beloved. Nor were the academical exercises agreeable to his genius. He held logic and metaphysics in the utmost contempt, and he scarce considered mathematics and natural philosophy, unless to turn them into ridicule. The studies which he followed were history and poetry. In these he made a great progress ; but to all other branches of science he had given so very little application, that when he appeared as a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, he was set aside on account of insufficiency.

You will be surpris'd at such an incident in his life : but the fact was undoubtedly true : and even at last he obtained his admission *speciali gratiâ* : a phrase which in that University carries with it the utmost marks of reproach. It is a kind of dishonourable degree, and the record of it, notwithstanding Dr. SWIFT's present established character throughout the learned world, must for ever remain against him in the academical register at *Dublin*.

Ambition, you will agree with me, could scarce have met with a severer blow. HERCULES found himself set aside for want of strength ; or, if admitted among the wrestlers, admitted only by favour and indulgence ; yet still he must be conscious, that he was HERCULES. Disappointments, the earlier they happen in life, the deeper impression they make upon the heart. SWIFT was full of indignation at the treatment which he had received in *Ireland*, and therefore resolv'd to pursue his studies at *Oxford*. However, that he might