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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

Sir William Temple's kindness to him.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-49109](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-49109)



LETTER II.

I Am happy, my dear HAMILTON, to find that the task, which I have undertaken of placing together some memoirs of Dr. SWIFT's life, will be an acceptable present to you. In my last letter, you may remember, that I conducted Dr. SWIFT from his birth, in the year sixteen hundred and sixty seven, to his taking his degree of Master of Arts at *Oxford*, in the year sixteen hundred and ninety one. Curiosity may induce you to know, in what manner he could subsist, or by what channel the springs of his revenue were supplied, at a time when both kingdoms, but particularly *Ireland*, were in great confusion. You will almost tremble for him, when I tell you, that in the year of the Revolution, his uncle GODWIN SWIFT had fallen into a kind of lethargy, or dotage, which deprived him by degrees of his speech and memory; and rendered him totally incapable of being of the least service to his family and friends. But, in the midst of this distressful situation, as if it was ordained, that no incident should bereave mankind of such a genius, Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE (whose Lady was related to Dr. SWIFT's mother) most generously stept in to his assistance, and avowedly supported

supported

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supported his education at the University of *Oxford*. Acts of generosity seldom meet with their just applause: Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's friendship was immediately construed to proceed from a consciousness, that he was the real father of Mr. SWIFT, otherwise it was thought impossible, that he could be so uncommonly munificent to a young man, no ways related to him, and but distantly related to his wife. I am not quite certain, that SWIFT himself did not acquiesce in the calumny. Perhaps, like ALEXANDER, he thought the natural son of JUPITER would appear greater than the legitimate son of PHILIP.

But I must not omit to tell you, that another of his father's brothers, WILLIAM SWIFT, assisted him when at *Oxford*, by repeated acts of friendship and affection. I have a letter now before me, which, tho' torn, and imperfect in several places, shews his gratitude and devotion to the uncle, whom I have just now mentioned, and whom he calls *the best of his relations*. I will transcribe this epistolary fragment, since at least it is so far curious, as it gives us a specimen of SWIFT's manner of writing and thinking, at that period of his life.

Moore