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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

Queen Anne's chief ministers.

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L E T T E R I V.

UPON the death of King WILLIAM, and the accession of Queen ANNE Dr. SWIFT came into *England*. It cannot be denied, that the chief ministers of that Queen, whether distinguished under the titles of Whigs or Tories, of High Church or of Low Church, were, from the beginning to the end of her reign, encouragers of learning, and patrons of learned men. The wits and poets of that æra, were numerous and eminent. Amidst the croud, yet shining above the rest, appeared Dr. SWIFT.

*Ipse ante alios pulcherrimus omnes,
Infert se socium Æneas, atque agmina jungit.*

It will be impossible, in mentioning the reign of this Princess, or in writing memoirs of Dr. SWIFT, to avoid the frequent use of those cant words Whig and Tory, “two creatures, says a modern author, ^a who “are born with a secret antipathy to each other, and engage as naturally when they meet, as the elephant and “rhinoceros.” In a mixture of these two jarring ani-

^a See the Spectator, No. 50.

AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 25

mals consisted the first ministry of Queen ANN, but the greater share of the administration was committed to the Whigs, who, with indefatigable industry, soon engrossed the whole; enclosing their Sovereign within their own fortifications, and keeping her captive within their own walls. The Queen, whose heart was naturally inclined towards the Tories, remained an unwilling prisoner several years to the Whigs, till Mr. HARLEY, with a tory army, undermined all the whiggish fortresses, levelled their works to the ground, seized the Princess, and during the remainder of her life, surrounded, and defended her with a new set of troops under the command of the Duke of ORMOND.

Dr. SWIFT was known to the great men of each denomination: and although he soon attached himself openly to the Tories, it is certain he had been bred up, and educated with Whigs; at least with such, who, in the Lexicon of Party, may be found ranged under that title. His motives for quitting the lower vallies of Whiggism for the higher regions of Torism, appear throughout his works. The persons who had now signalized themselves as Whigs, had renounced those principles by which the old Whigs were denoted, and had embraced several of those tenets of which their forefathers had either a real, or a pretended, abhorrence. The effects of power and ambition are extraordinary and boundless. They blind our faculties, they stagger our resolution, and they subvert our nature. Not all the metamorphoses of OVID can produce a parallel equal to the change that appears in the
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