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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

He is made Dean of St. Patrick's, in Ireland, in the year 1713.

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nature would permit; but as a minister of state he ever appeared mysterious and ænigmatical, delivering his oracles, like the Delphian Deity, in occult terms and ambiguous expressions.

A man always appears of more consequence to himself, than he is in reality to any other person. Such perhaps was the case of Dr. SWIFT. He found himself much indulged by the smiles, and conversation of the Earl of OXFORD. He knew how useful he was to the administration in general: and in one of his letters (I think the same which I have last quoted) he mentions, that the place of historiographer was intended for him; but I am apt to suspect that he flattered himself too highly: at least it is very evident, that he remained without any preferment till the year 1713, when he was made Dean of St. *Patrick's*. In point of power and revenue, such a deanery might be esteemed no inconsiderable promotion; but to an ambitious mind, whose perpetual aim was a settlement in *England*, a dignity in any other kingdom must appear (as perhaps it was designed) only an honourable, and profitable banishment.

But, my HAMILTON, I will never hide the freedom of my sentiments from you. I am much inclined to believe that the temper of my friend SWIFT, might occasion his *English* friends, to wish him happily and properly promoted, at a distance. His spirit, for I would give it the softest name, was ever untractable. The motions of his genius were often irregular. He assumed more the air of a patron, than of a friend. He affected rather to dictate than advise. He was elated
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with the appearance of enjoying ministerial confidence. He enjoyed the shadow: the substance was detained from him. He was employed, not trusted; and at the same time that he imagined himself a subtil diver, who dextrously shot down into the profoundest regions of politics, he was suffered only to sound the shallows nearest the shore, and was scarce admitted to descend below the froth at the top. Perhaps the deeper bottoms were too muddy for his inspection.

By reflexions of this sort, we may account for his disappointment in an *English* bishoprick. A disappointment which, he imagined, he owed to a joint application made against him to the Queen by Dr. SHARPE, Archbishop of *York*, and by a Lady of the highest rank and character. Archbishop SHARPE, according to Dr. SWIFT's account, had represented him to the Queen, as a person who was not a Christian; the great Lady had supported the aspersion; and the Queen, upon such assurances, had given away the bishoprick, contrary to her Majesty's first intentions. SWIFT kept himself indeed within some tolerable bounds, when he spoke of the Queen: but his indignation knew no limits, when he mentioned the Archbishop, or the Lady.

Business and ceremony, (two commanders, that I hope you will list under, much more willingly than I can) call me away from my letter, although nothing can ever call away my thoughts from you, or interrupt the tenderness with which I am, dear HAMILTON,

Your affectionate Father,

O R R E R Y.

L E T.