



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

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

Orrery, John Boyle of

London, 1752

Swift compared to Horace.

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

depth, and of enlarging them to open view. He prefers caustics, which erode proud flesh, to softer balsamics, which give more immediate ease. He aims to be severely useful, rather than politely engaging: and as he was either not formed, or would not take pains to excel in poetry, he became, in some measure, superior to it; and assumed more the air and manners of a critic, than of a poet. Had he lived in the same age with HORACE he would have approached nearer to him, than any other poet: and if we may make an allowance for the different course of study, and different form of government, to which each of these great men were subject, we may observe, in several instances, a strong resemblance between them. Both poets are equally distinguished for wit and humour. Each displays a peculiar felicity in diction: but of the two, HORACE is the more elegant and delicate: while he condemns, he pleases. SWIFT takes pleasure in giving pain: The dissimilitude of their tempers might be owing to the different turns in their fortune. SWIFT early formed large views of ambition, and was disappointed. HORACE, from an exiled low state, rose into affluence, and enjoyed the favour and friendship of AUGUSTUS. Each poet was the delight of the principal persons of his age. *Cum magnis vixisse* was not more applicable to HORACE, than to SWIFT. They both were temperate: both were frugal; and both were of the same Epicurean taste. HORACE had his LYDIA, SWIFT had his VANESSA. HORACE had his MECÆNAS, and

AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 43

and his AGRIPPA. SWIFT had his OXFORD, and his BOLINGBROKE. HORACE had his VIRGIL, SWIFT had his POPE.

After the great names, which I have just now mentioned, it is matter of astonishment to find the same person, who had enjoyed the highest, and the best conversation, equally delighted with the lowest and the worst: and yet it is certain, from SWIFT'S settlement in *Dublin* as Dean of *St. Patrick's*, his choice of companions in general shewed him of a very depraved taste.

From the year seventeen hundred and fourteen, till he appeared in the year twenty, a champion for *Ireland* against Wood's halfpence, his spirit of politics, and of patriotism, was kept almost closely confined within his own breast. Idleness and trifles engrossed too many of his hours: fools and sycophants too much of his conversation. However, let me observe to you, that the treatment which he received, after the death of *Queen ANN*, was almost a sufficient reason to justify a contempt, if not an abhorrence of the human race. He had bravely withstood all hostile indignities, during the life time of that Princess; but when the whole army of his friends were not only routed, but taken prisoners, he dropt his sword, and retired into his fortification at *Dublin*, from whence he seldom stirred beyond the limits of his own garden, unless in great indulgence to some particular favourites.

His attendance upon the public service of the church was regular and uninterrupted: and indeed regularity was peculiar

peculiar to him in all his actions, even in the greatest trifles. His hours of walking, and reading, never varied: His motions were guided by his watch, which was so constantly held in his hand, or placed before him upon his table, that he seldom deviated many minutes, in the daily revolution of his exercises and employments. His works, from the year 1714, to the year 1720, are few in number, and of small importance. Poems to STELLA, and trifles to Dr. SHERIDAN, fill up a great part of that period.

In the year 1720, he began to re-assume, in some degree, the character of a political writer. A small pamphlet *in defence of the Irish manufactures*, was, I believe, his first essay (in *Ireland*) in that kind of writing: and to that pamphlet, he owed the turn of the popular tide in his favour^a. His sayings of wit and humour had been handed about, and repeated from time to time among the people. They had the effect of an artful preface, and had pre-engaged all readers in his favour. They were adapted to the understanding, and pleased the imagination of the vulgar: and he was now looked upon in a new light, and distinguished by the title of THE DEAN.

The flux and reflux of popular love and hatred are equally violent. They are often owing to accidents, but sometimes to the return of reason, which, unassisted by education, may not be able to guide the lower class

^a See Letter 16th.