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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**

The second volume of Swift's works.

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## L E T T E R IX.

WE are now come, my dear HAMILTON, to the second volume of SWIFT's works. It is filled with poetry: but the poems in general are short and fatirical. The poem of the greatest length, and, I believe, the longest ever composed by Dr. SWIFT, is of a very extraordinary nature, and upon a very extraordinary subject. It is called CADENUS and VANESSA. As a poem, it is excellent in its kind, perfectly correct, and admirably conducted. SWIFT, who had the nicest ear, is remarkably chaste and delicate in his rhymes. A bad rhyme appeared to him one of the capital sins in poetry; and yet it is a sin into which some of our greatest poets have fallen. DRYDEN frequently: POPE sometimes. The former, was embarrassed with a wife and family, and was often under such necessitous circumstances as to be obliged to publish, or to want subsistence. The latter, was in a less confined, and in a much more easy situation: he was naturally judicious, and uncommonly attentive to maintain the dignity of his character. Although his body was weak, his mind was equal to the weight of his laurel crown;

crown ; and he wore it not only with ease, but majesty. Take him as a poet, *we shall not see his like again.* But why do I keep you in suspense ? you are impatient, I dare say, to know some particulars of VANESSA. Her real name was ESTHER VANHOMRICH <sup>a</sup>. She was one of the daughters of BARTHOLOMEW VANHOMRICH, a Dutch merchant of *Amsterdam*, who, upon the revolution, went into *Ireland*, and was appointed, by King WILLIAM, a commissioner of the revenue. Her mother, whose name I forget, was born in *Ireland*, of very mean extraction. The Dutch merchant, by parsimony and prudence, had collected a fortune of about sixteen thousand pounds : he bequeathed an equal division of it to his wife and his four children, of which two were sons, and two were daughters. The sons, after the death of their father, travelled abroad. The eldest died beyond sea, and the youngest, surviving his brother only a short time, the whole patrimony fell to his two sisters, ESTHER and MARY.

With this increase of wealth, and with heads and hearts elated by affluence, and unrestrained by foresight or discretion, the widow VANHOMRICH and her two daughters quitted the illuxurious soil of their native country, for the more elegant pleasures of the English court. During their residence at *London*, they lived in a course of prodigality that stretched itself far beyond the limits of their income, and reduced them to great

<sup>a</sup> The name is pronounced VANNUMMERY.