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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

Some general Remarks upon Swift's Poems.

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Frui paratis et valido mihi

Latoe donec, et precor, integrâ

Cum mentè: nec turpem senectam

Degere, nec citbarâ carentem.

I have already told you, that his pride was so great as scarce to admit any body to the least share of his friendship, except such who could amuse him, or such who could do him honour. To these two different classes, we owe many of his poems. His companions and humble followers find themselves immortalized by the insertion of their names in addresses to STELLA, or in other miscellaneous pieces written in an easy, although not in a careless manner. His more exalted friends, whose stations and characters did him honour, are treated in a different style: and you will perceive a real dignity, and a most delicate kind of wit in all his poems to Lord OXFORD, Lord PETERBOROUGH, Lord CARTERET ^a, Mr. PULTNEY ^b, and I think I may particularly add, in a poem to the Countess of WINCHELSEA ^c, and another to Mrs. BIDDY FLOYDE. These names abetted him in his pursuit of fame. They reflected back the glory which he gave. But, still I cannot recollect one poem, nay, scarce a couplet, to his

^a Now Earl of GRANVILLE.

^b Now Earl of BATH.

^c Under the name of ARDELIA.

noble

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noble patron LORD BOLINGBROKE. In that instance he has been as silent, as VIRGIL has been to HORACE, and yet he certainly had not a grain of envy in his composition.

I think I can discern a third kind of style in his poems addressed to MR. POPE, MR. GAY, DR. DELANY, and DR. YOUNG. When he writes to them, there is a mixture of ease, dignity, familiarity, and affection. They were his intimate friends, whom he loved sincerely, and whom he wished to accompany into the poetical regions of eternity.

I have just now cast my eye over a poem called *Death and Daphne*, which makes me recollect an odd incident relating to that nymph. SWIFT, soon after our acquaintance, introduced me to her, as to one of his female favourites. I had scarce been half an hour in her company, before she asked me, if I had seen the DEAN'S poem upon *Death and Daphne*. As I told her I had not, she immediately unlocked a cabinet, and bringing out the manuscript, read it to me with a seeming satisfaction, of which, at that time, I doubted the sincerity. While she was reading, the Dean was perpetually correcting her for bad pronunciation, and for placing a wrong emphasis upon particular words. As soon as she had gone thorough the composition, she assured me smilingly, that the portrait of DAPHNE was drawn for herself: I begged to be excused from believing it, and protested that I could not see one feature that had the least resemblance, but the Dean immediately burst into a fit of laughter. "You fancy, says he, that you are very polite, but you are
G " much