



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

A letter from Deane Swift, Esq; to the same purport, dated April 4. 1744.

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

AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 91

About a year and a half afterwards, I received a letter from another of his relations, DEANE SWIFT, Esq; in answer to a report, which I had mentioned to him, of Dr. SWIFT's having viewed himself (as he was led across the room) in a glass, and crying out, "O poor old man!" The letter is written long after the Dean had been totally deprived of reason.

Dublin, April 4, 1744.

My LORD,

AS to the story of O poor old man! I enquired into it. The Dean did say something upon his seeing himself in the glass, but neither Mrs. RIDGEWAY, nor the lower servants could tell me what it was he said. I desired them to recollect it, by the time when I should come again to the deanery. I have been there since, they cannot recollect it. A thousand stories have been invented of him within these two years, and imposed upon the world. I thought this might have been one of them: and yet I am now inclined to think, there may be some truth in it: for on Sunday the 17th of March, as he sat in his chair, upon the housekeeper's moving a knife from him as he was going to catch at it, he shrugged his shoulders, and, rocking himself, said, I am what I am, I am what I am: and, about six minutes afterwards, repeated the same words two or three times over.

His servant shaves his cheeks, and all his face as low as the tip of his chin, once a week: but under the chin, and about

about the throat, when the hair grows long, it is cut with scissars.

Sometimes he will not utter a syllable: at other times he will speak incoherent words: but he never yet, as far as I could hear, talked nonsense, or said a foolish thing.

About four months ago he gave me great trouble: he seemed to have a mind to talk to me. In order to try what he would say, I told him, I came to dine with him, and immediately his housekeeper, Mrs. RIDGEWAY, said, Won't you give Mr. SWIFT a glass of wine, Sir? he shrugged his shoulders, just as he used to do when he had a mind that a friend should spend the evening with him. Shrugging his shoulders, your Lordship may remember, was as much as to say, "You'll ruin me in wine." I own, I was scarce able to bear the sight. Soon after, he again endeavoured, with a good deal of pain, to find words to speak to me: at last, not being able, after many efforts, he gave a heavy sigh, and, I think, was afterwards silent. This puts me in mind of what he said about five days ago. He endeavoured several times to speak to his servant (now and then he calls him by his name) at last, not finding words to express what he would be at, after some uneasiness, he said, "I am a fool." Not long ago, the servant took up his watch that lay upon the table to see what o'clock it was, he said, "Bring it here:" and when it was brought, he looked very attentively at it: some time ago, the servant was breaking a large stubborn coal, he said, That's "a stone, you blockhead."

In a few days, or some very short time, after guardians had been appointed for him, I went into his dining room, where

where he was walking, I said something to him very insignificant, I know not what; but instead of making any kind of answer to it, he said, "Go, go," pointing with his hand to the door, and immediately afterwards, raising his hand to his head, he said, "My best understanding," and so broke off abruptly, and walked away. I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

and most humble servant,

DEANE SWIFT.

These two letters will not probably occasion in you very chearful speculations. Let us return back therefore to the *Lilliputians*, and the *Brobdingnaggians*; where you will find many ridiculous adventures, even such as must have excited mirth from HERACLITUS. Where indelicacies do not intervene, the narrative is very entertaining and humorous. Several just strokes of satyr are scattered up and down upon political errors in government. In some parts, GULLIVER seems to have had particular incidents, if not particular persons, in his view. His observations on education are useful: and so are his improvements on the institutions of LYCURGUS. Upon reading over the two first parts of these travels, I think that I can discover a very great resemblance between certain passages in GULLIVER'S voyage to *Lilliput*, and the voyage of CYRANO DE BERGERAC to the sun and moon.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC is a French author of a singular character, who had a very peculiar turn of wit and humour, in many respects resembling that of SWIFT.