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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**

Remarks upon Hannibal, and Livy the historian.

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may be debas'd and changed by passions which too often attend success and luxury,

*Utique defecere mores  
Dedecorant bene nata culpa.*

It is evident, my HAM, that SWIFT had conceived an absolute disgust to ALEXANDER, whose character he aims to destroy, by touching it in so slight a manner, that he puts me in mind of the visit paid by AUGUSTUS CÆSAR, to ALEXANDER'S sepulchre at *Alexandria*. Upon the Emperor's arrival, the body of the Macedonian hero was found in its full dimensions, but so tender, notwithstanding all the former embalming, that CÆSAR, by touching only the nose of it, defaced the whole figure immediately.

HANNIBAL<sup>a</sup> seems to have been summoned with no other view than to censure LIVY the historian. It is not only improbable, but impossible, that HANNIBAL should have carried a sufficient quantity of vinegar for the purpose related by LIVY: but as vinegar will certainly soften, and dissolve stones, the experiment might have been improved; or so contrived by HANNIBAL, as to appear to make an easy, and expeditious opening through some particular passage, already fitted for the purpose. Such a trial, practised in that age of darkness, and properly managed, might have been universally received as a kind of miracle: so that LIVY could scarce have avoided inserting the report as an acknowledged truth: especially when the fact itself seems to

infer

<sup>a</sup> Page 235.

infer that the Romans were invincible, unless from some supernatural cause. SWIFT (no friend to military men) thinks the *Carthaginian* general unworthy of any farther notice: and hastens to call up the senate of *Rome*. This gives him an opportunity of being very severe upon a certain modern assembly, which he treats in a manner more resembling the Cynic in his cell, than the free humoured *Rabelais* in his easy chair.

POMPEY and CÆSAR only appear to grace the entry of BRUTUS, who is SWIFT's favourite patriot: but as CÆSAR generously confessed to GULLIVER, "That the greatest actions of his life, were not, by many degrees, equal to the glory of taking it away," it would have been a proper alleviation of the dictator's crimes, to have acknowledged him the greatest statesmen, orator, and soldier of the age, in which he lived: an age, fertile of eminent men: an age, when ambition was scarce looked upon as a crime: and when the Roman virtue (once the support and preservation of the commonwealth) was long since lost in vice and luxury: at such a time a single master was become necessary, and POMPEY would have seized the reins of government had not CÆSAR interposed. If the conspirators had restored liberty to their country, their act had been completely glorious, and would have shewed, that CÆSAR, not *Rome*, was degenerated. But if we may judge from the consequences, Heaven disapproved of the deed: a particular fate attended the conspirators, not one of whom died a natural death: and even BRUTUS, perhaps recollecting in his last moments the benefits, which he had received