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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

Swift's race with Dr. Raymond.

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made Dean of St. PATRICK'S, he was loitering one Sunday in the afternoon at the house of Dr. RAYMOND (with whom he had dined) at *Trim*, a little town near *Dublin*, of which the Doctor was vicar. The bell had rung: the parishioners were assembled, for evening prayers: and Dr. RAYMOND was preparing to go to the church, which was scarce two hundred yards from his house. "RAYMOND, said the Dean, "I'll lay you a crown I will begin prayers before you this afternoon." "I accept the wager," replied Dr. RAYMOND: and immediately they both ran as fast as they could towards the church. RAYMOND, who was much the nimbler man of the two, arrived first at the door: and when he entered the church, walked decently towards the reading desk. SWIFT never slackened his pace, but, running up the aisle, left Dr. RAYMOND behind him in the middle of it, and stepping into the reading desk, without putting on a surplice, or opening the prayer-book, began the liturgy in an audible voice, and continued to repeat the service sufficiently long to win his wager. To such a disposition it is impossible that the gravity of nonconformists could be agreeable. The dislike was mutual on both sides. Dr. SWIFT hated all fanatics: all fanatics hated Dr. SWIFT. The pamphlet, which now lies before me, is particularly written against *repealing the test act*: and whoever considers himself related to the kingdom of *Ireland*, will find in it some arguments of weight and consideration, in case any such repeal should ever be attempted there.

I cannot help pointing out to you, one particular piece of satyr, that is entirely in SWIFT's own style and manner. In the fourth page, he expresses himself thus. "One of these authors (the fellow that was pilloried, I have forgot his name) is indeed so grave, so sententious, dogmatical a rogue, that there is no enduring him." The fellow that was pilloried was DANIEL DEFOE, whose name SWIFT well knew and remembered, but the circumstance of the pillory was to be introduced; and the manner of introducing it, shews great art in the nicest touches of satyr, and carries all the marks of ridicule, indignation, and contempt. The scoffs and sarcasms of SWIFT, like the bite of the rattlesnake, distinguish themselves more venomously dangerous, than the wounds of a common serpent.

The next tract is, *A Proposal for the universal use of Irish Manufacture in clothes, and furniture of houses, &c.* utterly rejecting and renouncing every thing wearable that comes from *England*. Written in the year 1720. In a former letter^a, I believe I have told you, that, upon looking over the dates of Dr. SWIFT's works, he does not appear as a political writer from the year 1714 to the year 1720. You will probably be curious to know, in what manner he employed his time from the death of the Queen till the South-sea year. Not in poetry, for his poetical pieces, during that period, are in a manner domestic; being scarce any more than trifles to SHERIDAN, or *poematia* to STELLA. How then is

^a Letter VI.