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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 The Conduct of the Allies.

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LETTER XVII.

I Have already told you, my dear HAM, that the four first volumes of SWIFT's works were published together, and passed immediately under his own inspection. Not long afterwards came out two additional volumes, both which were supervised and corrected by the author.

The Conduct of the Allies begins the fifth volume. I imagine that *the Publisher's Preface* was composed by the Dean himself, but affectedly written in a bad style. The last paragraph makes me suspect his hand. "It is plainly seen, says the Publisher, that a spirit of liberty is diffused through all these writings, and that the author is an enemy to tyranny and oppression in any shape whatever." This is the character at which SWIFT aimed, and this is the character which indeed he deserved.

Throughout the course of these letters, I have freely pointed out to you all his faults, but I beg you to remember, that with all those faults, he was above corruption. A virtue in itself sufficient to cover a multitude of human failings, since from that virtue alone can flow prosperity to the commonwealth.

The conduct of the Allies was written in the year 1712, and it is preparatory to the peace, which the ministers

were then concerting, and which was afterwards perfected at *Utrecht*. It begins by reflexions on war in general, and then particularly mentions the several civil wars in our kingdom. When I am reading treatises of this sort, I cannot help pitying my unhappy country, torn to pieces by her own sons. A wretched mother of vultures, for whom, like *TITUS*, she produces new entrails only to be devoured.

The papers called *the Examiners*, at least those of which *Dr. SWIFT* is the author, fill up the rest of the volume. They begin in *November 1710*, and they are carried down to the end of *July 1711*. They are written in defence of the new administration, and the particular revolutions at court which had introduced the *Earl of OXFORD*, and had displaced the earl of *GODOLPHIN* and his friends.

Many of *SWIFT*'s *Examiners* are personally aimed at the *General**. In a free country, the power of a general is always to be feared. The greater his military capacity, or the more successful his arms, in the greater danger are the liberties of the people. On this maxim *SWIFT* proceeded; and while he was writing in defence of the commonwealth, he had an opportunity of giving a loose to his own severity, of which *the house of Pride*, and several other allegorical essays are very spirited examples.

But I am fettered in my animadversions on these papers. The present times, and the honour which I bear

* The Duke of *MARLBOROUGH*.