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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

The Examiners.

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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*.

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to many noble families, descended from persons mentioned in *the Examiners*, make me willing to take as slight notice as possible even of the wittiest passages in those papers, because many of those passages arise from personal reflections, or party sarcasms. In general, the several points relating to the national debt (alas! how increased since the year seventeen hundred and ten) the too long continuance of the war, and other public topics of complaint are melancholy truths, justly becoming the pen of a man who loves his country.

Within these last forty years, the political treatises have been so numerous, so various, so local, and so temporary, that each new pamphlet has succeeded its predecessor, like a youthful son to an antient father amidst a multiplicity of followers, admirers, and dependants, whilst the antiquated Sire having *strutted and foamed his hour upon the stage, is heard no more*, but lies silent, and almost entirely forgotten, except by a few friends and cotemporaries, who accidentally remember some of his just observations, or prophetic aphorisms, which they have lived to see accomplished. Thus has it fared even in my time, with the *EXAMINERS*, the *FREEHOLDERS*, and the *CRAFTSMAN*: and the same fate will attend most writings of that sort, which being framed to serve particular views, fulfill the purport of their creation, and then perish: while works of a more liberal and diffusive kind are acceptable to all persons, and all times; and may assume to themselves, a certain prospect of surviving to the latest posterity.