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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 on Pope's Ethic Epistles, and his Essay on Man.

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But to return more closely to SWIFT. He has perfectly studied the drama of human life, and particularly the tendency and irregularities of its different characters. He has chosen, (as I dare say I have mentioned in former letters) to recommend virtue, by representing vice in a disagreeable and ridiculous light. As his temper was naturally full of acrimony, a certain innate severity runs throughout all his letters. You will find him, in the advice, which he offers to his friends, and in the general account which he gives of his own conduct, too close an œconomist. This parsimony proceeded from a desire of being independent: and since that was the cause, he will be forgiven, or, at least, excused by all honest men.

Mr. POPE had different talents from his friend SWIFT: his imagination was fine and delicate: his fancy was ever on the wing. In his earlier time of life, his way of thinking was diffusive, and consequently his judgement was unconfined. As that judgement ripened with years, he shewed the full strength of it in his *Ethic Epistles*, and his *Essay on Man*. There the poet has almost yielded to the philosopher; and his moral system has charmed more by the force of truth and reason, than even by the numbers with which he adorned it.

I cannot avoid thinking, that, in this particular branch of learning, Mr. POPE owed the exertion of his talents to Lord BOLINGBROKE, who had studied the procedure, and limits of the human understanding, as exactly as SWIFT had considered the irregularities of
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