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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

Dr. Swift's pre-sentiments of his fate.

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happiness or pain: he had not even the power or expression of a child, appearing, for some years before his death, reserved only as an example to mortify human pride, and to reverse that fine description of human nature, which is given us by *Shakespeare* in an inimitable manner: "*What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals.*" Thus poets paint; but how vain and perishable is the picture? The smallest thunderbolt from heaven blasts it in a moment, and every tinct is so effectually obliterated, that scarce the outlines of the figure remain.

SWIFT, as I have hinted in a former letter ^a, certainly foresaw his fate. His frequent attacks of giddiness, and his manifest defect of memory, gave room for such apprehensions. I have often heard him lament the state of childhood, and idiotism, to which some of the greatest men of this nation were reduced before their death. He mentioned, as examples within his own time, the duke of MARLBOROUGH, and Lord SOMERS: and when he cited these melancholy instances, it was always with a heavy sigh, and with gestures that shewed great uneasiness, as if he felt an impulse of what was to happen to him before he died.

Unless I am misinformed, he died worth about twelve thousand pounds, inclusive of the specific legacies mentioned in his will, and which may be computed at the

^a See Letter VI.