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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 Fragment, or a Discourse concerning the mechanical
Operation of the Spirit.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-49109](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-49109)

But before I quit this subject, give me leave to own how sensibly I felt the force of an arrow directed from his hand. The wound, I believe, was not designed to be lasting. It was given in a passion, and upon an extraordinary occasion: but afterwards he was so desirous to heal it, by a return of the greatest degree of friendship and affection, that he had directed the remaining scar to be entirely erased, when his unexpected and too sudden death prevented the completion of his kind intentions, and the perfection of my cure. With difficulty I survived the shock. As it was not in my power to avoid the severe decree, I obeyed: and, by my obedience, have flattered myself, that I submitted to the will of heaven. However, I have since thought, that I could not offer a more grateful sacrifice to his manes, than by exerting those faculties, which he had, at first, cultivated with so much care; and had depressed, at last, perhaps only to raise them higher. Oh my son! how often have I reflected upon the happiness of *ÆNEAS*, in hearing the ghost of *ANCHISES* say,

*Sic equidem ducebam animo reba; que futurum,
Tempora dinumerans: nec me mea cura fefellit!*

The name of my honoured father has insensibly drawn me into this digression, which, to speak the truth, I look upon as due to his memory, to my own sentiments, and to your filial tenderness.

The Fragment, or a Discourse concerning the mechanical operation of the Spirit, is a satyr against enthusiasm, and those

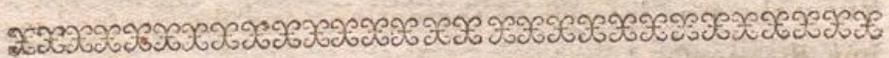
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those affected inspirations, which constantly begin in folly, and very often end in vice. In this treatise, the author has revelled in too licentious a vein of sarcasm: many of his ideas are nauseous, some are indecent, and others have an irreligious tendency: nor is the piece itself equal in wit and humour either to *The Tale of a Tub*, or *The Battle of the Books*. I should constantly choose rather to praise, than to arraign, any part of my friend SWIFT's writings: but in those tracts, where he tries to make us uneasy with ourselves, and unhappy in our present existence, *there*, I must yield him up entirely to censure.

I am, dear HAMILTON,

Your most affectionate Father,

ORRERY.



LETTER XXIV.

DR. SWIFT left behind him few manuscripts. Not one of any consequence, except an account of the peace of *Utrecht*, which he called *an History of the four lost Years of Queen ANNE*. The title of an history is too pompous for such a performance. In the historical style, it wants dignity, and candour: but as a pamphlet, it will appear the best defence of Lord OXFORD's administration,