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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 critical Essay on the Faculties of the Mind.

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AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 63

chusing to appear candidly serious, rather than to laugh silently under his usual mask of gravity. Read it, and tell me your opinion: for methinks, upon these occasions, I perceive him writing in shackles.

The critical essay on the faculties of the mind, will make you smile.

The letter to the Earl of OXFORD for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English tongue might have been a very useful performance, if it had been longer, and less eclipsed by compliments to the noble person to whom it is addressed. It seems to have been intended as a preface to some more enlarged design: at the head of which such an introduction must have appeared with great propriety. A work of this kind is much wanted, as our language, instead of being improved, is every day growing worse, and more debased. We bewilder ourselves in various orthography; we speak, and we write at random; and if a man's common conversation were to be committed to paper, he would be startled for to find himself guilty in a few sentences, of so many solecisms and such false English. I believe we are the only people in the Christian world, who repeat the Lord's Prayer, in an ungrammatical manner: and I remember to have heard, that when a motion was made in the Convocation to alter the word [which] for the word [who] the proposition was rejected by the majority. This instance may shew you of what sort of men, the most learned, and even the most reverend assemblies, are sometimes composed. But let us consider the conduct of a neighbouring nation. How industrious have the

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