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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**

A comparison between the writings and manners of Dr. Swift and Mr.  
Pope.

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criticisms will be attended with obscurity: and it would be tedious to consider them in their exact order. I shall endeavour therefore, to take a review only of what seems to deserve your attention. Let us begin with the letters that passed between Dr. SWIFT and Mr. POPE. The correspondence had commenced in a very early part of Mr. POPE's life, and was carried on with scarce any interruption from the death of the Queen. If we may judge of Mr. POPE from his works, his chief aim was to be esteemed a man of virtue. His letters are written in that style. His last volumes are all of the moral kind. He has avoided trifles, and consequently has escaped a rock which has proved very injurious to SWIFT's reputation. He has given his imagination full scope, and yet has preserved a perpetual guard upon his conduct. The constitution of his body and mind might early incline him to habits of caution and reserve. The treatment which he met afterwards from an innumerable tribe of adversaries, confirmed those habits, and made him slower than the *Dean* in pronouncing his judgement upon persons and things. His prose writings are little less harmonious than his verse: and his voice in common conversation was so naturally musical, that I remember honest TOM SOUTHERNE used always to call him *The little nightingale*. His manners were delicate, easy, and engaging: and he treated his friends with a politeness that charmed, and a generosity that was much to his honour. Every guest was made happy within his doors. Pleasure dwelt under his roof, and

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elegance presided at his table. Dr. SWIFT was of a different disposition: To his domestics he was passionate and churlish: to his equals and superiors rather an entertaining than a desirable companion. He told a story in an admirable manner: his sentences were short, and perspicuous, his observations were piercing. He had seen the great world, and had profited much by his experience. He had not the least tincture of vanity in his conversation. He was perhaps, as he said himself, too proud to be vain. When he was polite, it was in a manner entirely his own. In his friendships he was constant and undisguised. He was the same in his enmities. He generally spoke as he thought in all companies and at all times. I remember to have heard, that he dined once at a Lord Mayor's feast in *Dublin*, and was attacked, and teized by an opulent, boisterous, half-intoxicated 'Squire, who happened to sit next him: he bore the awkward railery for some time, and then on a sudden called out in a loud voice to the Mayor, "*My Lord, here is one of your bears at my shoulder, he has been worrying me this half hour, I desire you will order him to be taken off.*" In these last particulars he differed widely from his friend POPE, who could stifle resentment, and wait with patience till a more distant, and perhaps a more seasonable hour of revenge. But notwithstanding the dissimilitude of minds, and manners, which was apparent between these two great men, yet the same sort of friendship seems to have subsisted between them, as between VIRGIL and HORACE. The mutual affection

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of the two English poets appears throughout their works: and therefore in this place, I cannot avoid taking notice of a report very industriously spread, and not without some degree of success, "That the friendship between POPE and SWIFT was not so firm and perfect at the latter end as at the beginning of their lives." On Dr. SWIFT's side, I am certain, it ever remained unalterable: nor did it appear less fervent on the side of Mr. POPE. Their letters are the best evidence to determine the doubt. In one of SWIFT's latest letters to me, not long before he was lost to all human comforts, he says, "*When you see my dear friend POPE, tell him I will answer his letter soon; I love him above all the rest of mankind.*" In my long correspondence wirth Mr. POPE, I scarce received the least billet from him, without the kindest mention of Dr. SWIFT: and the tenderest anxiety for his state of health. Judge by the following paragraphs. The first, dated July the 12th, 1737.

*My Lord, The pleasure you gave me, in acquainting me of the Dean's better health, is one so truly great, as might content even your own humanity: and whatever my sincere opinion and respect of your Lordship prompts me to wish from your hands for myself, your love for him makes me as happy. Would to GOD my weight, added to your's, could turn his inclinations to this side, that I might live to enjoy him here thro' your means, and flatter myself 'twas partly thro' my own! But this, I fear, will never be the case; and I think it more probable, his attraction will*