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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 eighth volume of Swift's works.

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tion VOITURE or BALZAC; and perhaps it was wrong to turn aside into the Roman and the French territories, when I ought to have confined myself to the British islands; but I love to wander about with you, and in writing, as in walking, to peep into every corner that may afford us matter of entertainment.

I am, my dear HAMILTON,

Your ever-affectionate Father,

ORRERY.

P. S. At the latter end of the seventh volume, is a pamphlet written in the year 1714. It is entitled, Free Thonghts upon the present State of Affairs. When you have read it, digito compesce labellum.

LETTER XXI.

My dear HAMILTON,

T is scarce possible to know in what manner to comment upon the last volume of the Dean's works. A general confusion and disorder runs throughout the whole; and one of the first pieces is, what ought to have been the last, Dr. Swift's Will: which, like all his other writings, is drawn up in his own peculiar manner.

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Even in fo ferious a composition he cannot help indulging himself, in leaving legacies that carry with them an air of raillery and jest. He disposes of his three hats (his best, his second best, and his third best beaver) with an ironical folemnity, that renders the bequests ridiculous. He bequeaths " to Mr. JOHN GRATTAN a filver " box, to keep in it the tobacco which the said JOHN usually 66 chewed, called pigtail." But his legacy to Mr. Ro-BERT GRATTAN is still more extraordinary. " Item, " I bequeath to the Reverend Mr. ROBERT GRATTAN, " Prebendary of St. Audeon's, my strong box, on condition of his giving the sole use of the said box to his brother, " Dr. JAMES GRATTAN, during the life of the faid Do-" Hor, who hath more occasion for it." These are so many last impressions of his turn, and way of thinking: and, I dare fay, the persons thus distinguished look upon these instances, as affectionate memorials of his friendship, and as tokens of the jocose manner, in which he had treated them during his life-time.

His monumental inscription, written by himself, and inserted at the beginning of his Will, may confirm to you the observation which I made in a former letter, that he was not an elegant writer of Latin. An harsher epitaph has seldom been composed. It is scarce intelligible; and if intelligible, is a proof how difficult a task it is, even for the greatest genius, to draw his own character, or to represent himself and his actions in a proper man-

ner to posterity.

I am now drawing towards the last scene of his life.

The total deprivation of his senses came upon him by degrees.