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To
LISA SOLIANI

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INTRODUCTION

PARADOX ON THE EGOTIST

A PAUSE has come in the routine of daylight, and it is dark at last. The room is a desert : even this boring day has gone by. Nothing is concluded, for nothing has happened. One cannot make out of this day a day. Many petty things, news in the papers, encounters in the streets, some neighbourly familiarities—all desultory, without unity.—Not even a day !

Does not life appear in this incongruous form at any moment, when one looks back at the past and there finds an uncontrollable series of events, without reason, without hope ? Therefore many people ask themselves whether life is worth living. In fact, to the living being, life appears desultory, and therefore seems to lack any significance in itself. Considering life from this standpoint, there appears to be a contradiction, an abyss between living and the rational unity and coherence of thinking, so that the philosophers of our time—the philosophers of the bankruptcy—endeavour to find in the steady flowing of life that reality they fail to see in the rational unity and stability of the mind.

But living and thinking are one. The alleged difference comes from the fact that life must be concluded to appear conclusive—that only when life is come to an end can it be seen as a logical unity. Only eternity makes of a man what he really is,

Tel qu'en lui-mime enfin Viterniti le change.

And therefore not the living being but the biographer only can see in a life that unity which perpetually

eluded the man who lived it. The living man always asks : " Why did I do this ? Why did such a person, such an event meet me of all men ? " He can find no answer. Yet there is a reason : the one-sided reality of life which is dominated by a destiny alone and moved by an unique will.

This will is the living man, but being applied successively, event by event, circumstance by circumstance, it is broken up into single acts of volition that must seem isolated, because his consciousness is exhausted by the immediate experience, and even in retrospect he cannot escape from the standpoint of the moment in which he is living. So that the living man can never take cognisance of his life as an organic whole, nor apprehend the will that is its principle and the real essence of himself—his destiny, in a word.

Whereas the biographer, not being captive of the acts that he surveys, can see them all as a unity, and, at the same time, understand, as the living being understood, the isolated acts. The man and his biographer are mysteriously bound together, beyond time and beyond death, by the fundamental quality of both being human wills.

It would then be an evasion on our part to describe the life of Swift as a succession of events, as these appeared to himself. We know what his destiny was, we know the bitter misery of his beginning and the tragedy of his end ; from beyond his life we can see his damnation. Therefore we shall not be satisfied with *genre* patchwork and Dutch interiors, bristling with painstaking detail.

There has been no lack of such Swiftian criticism. The biographers discussed all the anecdotes, they have endeavoured to find the truth—truth !—for each single day, on the basis of backstairs gossip. Swift has never

been dealt with fairly, neither in the abuse of Johnson and Thackeray, nor in the desperate apologies of his champions,[1] in the sense that he has never been dealt with at all. No one has thought of the man, but only of his separate actions, finding in each single action the ground for excusing or condemning the man.

The attempt to extract significance from every rag of incident is more than ever devoid of sense in the case of a man like Swift, who, both living and dead, cannot be subjected to dispassionate scrutiny. His life was not a spectacle, but a battle. Moreover, he was secretive : he signed no work, he confessed to nothing. He would not speak of things that concerned him deeply, and his contemporaries knew no more about them than we do. They " supposed " and gave out their hypotheses as truths, and these were then taken by the biographers as historical facts. To build up on " facts " the biography of a busy politician, of a fortunate lover, of a satirist, and in brief of a man who cannot be regarded dispassionately, is even more foolish than to hope to ascertain a fact on the ground of the evidence brought into court by the defendant and plaintiff.[2]

For us the truth of this life and its unity lie beyond the evidence of circumstance. Swift's case is indeed a limit-case for biographers owing to the evasiveness of the circumstantial evidence. We shall therefore turn from choice to that which is underlying, to the implications of secondary incidents, of those fortuities of speech and gesture that were neither censored by Swift nor garbled by his contemporaries, because it never occurred that such particulars might reveal something basic. It is in this category of evidence, unexploited and not immediately significant, that we find Swift's literary works.[8]

It is very strange to think that the so many anecdotes, the so prolonged polemics, never led the biographers to refer to Swift's works, to deduce from them some

unquestionable truth. They preferred always immediate evidence and probated documents—as if a book and a pamphlet were not fully reliable documents.

It has become a common practice among novelists to look on the artist and writer—the least interesting types of humanity—as fair game or good copy. But if by common consent the artist has sufficient flesh and blood to go into a book as the hero, why should we not underline the writer in Swift when we endeavour to discover his profound humanity ?

It is true that Swift's works are strictly " contemporary/[5] that is, produced by his varying humours and the varying conditions, the reaction to external stimuli rather than a representation of a principle of interior growth. But even because of this they will reveal the connection of Swift with his time, with his folk and with his external life.

But this connection is another—and it is not the least—difficulty in Swift's life : at first we can hardly hope to speak of Swift without telling again the history of England during his lifetime. Epoch is indeed the background of every biography ; but for Swift events have been more than a mere background. His life and personality impinged upon the greatest economic, political, and ethical problems of his time, and we could not detach Swift violently from his time without reducing him to a mere skeleton.

The same cannot be said to apply to all biographies: there are really lives somewhat apart, isolated men or at least men who were subject only to the general influences of their time. Swift is *real* only in his time, bound as he was on both hands—by the influences he was subjected to and by the influence he exerted—with all men of his country and his time.

Even because of this convolution of Swift and other men, of Swift and two different countries, of Swift and his work, we need to find an unity, a leading thread, which Swift, who yet had the responsibility of his life, could not discern, as no man can discern, in his life.

We are no moralists. We are the first to smile at that effort to judge a man which so many biographers of Swift dared. They endeavoured to value each event from an ethical standpoint, and then to explain away each event or to burden Swift more heavily with each event, as the case might be. They then made up their ledger, so as to decide how far Swift should be blamed, how far excused. Really they gave him no chance—not even the chance to be bad.

From our standpoint it is not so easy to construct a moral judgment, for before judging Swift we think we should judge ourselves. At least we should put our conscience to the highest test to which a human conscience can be put : the knowledge of the soul of another human being, which is not pure theoretical knowledge. It is one thing to consider a man as a natural being, another thing to consider him as a man. And to consider him as a man we need (the question is too deeply philosophical to be developed here) to put ourselves first as men, that is as beings with a moral conscience and character. And the morality of a biographer does not express itself in judging his hero ; it goes deeper and consists in his moral capacity to think of his hero as of a character.

It follows therefore that we can have no interest in making out a case for the novelty, the reliability, the necessity of a new biography—of this biography of Swift. Its documents are no more than scaffolding, an expedient.

But for writing a new biography of Swift, we can justify ourselves by appealing to the mind of our time.

All biography must express this relation, must reconstruct its subject from the contemporary point of view. We might even say that our biography is not a new biography, but is only the biography of Swift by men of our time, with our new ways of thinking, our nobler or baser tastes, our clearer or foggier intellects, our new knowledge and up-to-date ignorance, so that the value of this biography should be as the value of our modern culture.

But it is even more as the value of our moral capacity to form the idea of a character, as we tried to form it by reading Swift, by consulting documents, by taking into account diverging authorities. On this basis our view of Swift will be the leading idea—a fixed idea, perhaps, for particular evidence will not control it, but it will control and explain the particular evidence. In this way only can we hope to offer a biography—not a chronological sequence of events without meaning, as so many biographies are.

But let it be repeated that our idea of Swift's character is a moral awareness, not a moral judgment. For moral judgment a higher Seat has been provided. All we say is that this man was so, because he could not be otherwise, or that he was so because he would be so. But why choose between the two hypotheses ? We should have to choose if Society had invested us with the ermine, the periwig, and the task of giving some petty answer to the social demands : shall we let our morality, our constitution of good and evil be interfered with by this man ? Shall we fine, shall we imprison, shall we put to death ?—But happily we are not judges, and Swift is dead.,

We know Swift—for better, for worse—in what measure we know ourselves, his virtues and defects as we feel them latent in ourselves, his spirit as our own is quickened to respond. We are freed now from the dross of our humanity, from the tangle of our small doings,

good and evil We stand no longer before our confused life—our melancholy day without a unity, filled with events with no dominating meaning. We are with our fundamental truths before a man who was—and now is for ever—a fixed reality. But real only in our consciousness where we can see him as he was—an Egotist.

This term which is to recur so frequently in the following chapters requires to be defined. The task is not easy, for it is usually employed either in a too philosophical sense, or merely to indicate an exaggeration of egotism. As exaggerated selfishness, egotism[4] can only appear as a moral concept, the fundamental asset of a bad character, the Evil in a technical sense, the contrary of the Christian and of all socially praiseworthy virtues. But for us egotism is something more, and therefore it is not a moralistic connotation only.

It means first and foremost the psychological incapacity of seeing anything from a point of view radically different from that of oneself. The egotist is a man in his hide, who cannot go outside of himself. He cannot see the world from an unimpassioned angle, he is always at the centre of the stage, and all the lines of force which go through the world come to their focal point in himself.[5]

From this first asset of an egotistical character, derives as a logical consequence (and now the type is reaching a moral and human stage) a disregard of humanity. At bottom the egotist is not against mankind. He is for himself, not so much because he thinks of himself first and foremost, but because he cannot really see other interests or other points of view.

To decide whether he disregards others because he sees only his own interest or whether he does not take others into account, and therefore mankind is last among his motives, would raise, perhaps, far-reaching issues.

In any case the character of the egotist is more complex than the moral qualification would allow one to suppose.[6]

The ordinary selfish man is, if not a harmless specimen, at least an everyday phenomenon. It is possible to deal with him, for he calculates and even aids others when his interest lies along the same lines. It was no doubt selfishness which Pope and La Rochefoucauld called " egoism," in describing it as a foundation of society, and really ordinary selfishness, however deplorable from a pure moral standpoint, is not anti-social. Love, for instance, which is selfishness *a deux,* is really love : the lovers find their interest in the mutual giving—even without taking. Whereas an egotism *a deux* is a plain impossibility. Two egotists could not even *see* each other.

Yet egotism is in a sense the deeper root of humanity. Love of independence, the struggle towards liberty, obstinacy in one's own opinions, to be open to suggestions without being persuadable : these are fundamental manifestations of human personality, and at the same time egotistical expressions.

But it is very rare to find a character so clearly defined as to constitute an egotist. At bottom the perfect egotist is incapable of living, he is self-destructive.[7] He is ever at a loss in judging the world and the men he meets : he knows well that others are self-interested, but he thinks they consider their interest merely in the same way as he considers his interest. He can never be a very good diplomat, a very good man of action ; he cannot persuade men, for to persuade men, he should endeavour to have access to their innermost being and should not just bully them into being persuaded, but should let them be persuaded by themselves. This is the secret of leadership and power.

The egotist never abandons himself. He cannot give himself up to anything or any person, whereas ordinary

selfishness perpetually seeks sympathy without giving it.

So we come to a strange result. The egotist, the integral egotist, *has no aims.* To put it in another way, whilst the merely selfish man has a very definite purpose in his life and tends to make everyone subservient to his ends, the egotist follows no such straight lines. He does not calculate, for his selfishness is too profound to let him imagine the possibility of opposition from others. He is assured that others must in the last resort depend on himself, and therefore he takes no pains to affirm himself. So Swift fled when he could not have his way, as he did in his love with Vanessa, in his politics after the final clash between Harley and Bolingbroke, and when Stella was near death. The egotist easily tires of effort, because you cannot work with much gusto when you are alone in the world.

Therefore the egotist is cerebral in his understanding of others, for it needs a real sympathy to understand as it were from the internal centre another personality. The egotist does not immediately know persons ; he only knows beings with a series of reactions which he will take into account for obtaining his ends.

It was exactly in this way that Swift understood so many human types. Is he not celebrated for his ability to speak as a mariner, as a draper, and so on ? But this is not the consequence of a real capacity for human, sympathy. Human sympathy is the power of understanding another human being *out* of his social conditions, out of his race and calling. It is sympathy with a human being, where all distinctions and analogies disappear to let the individual man be seen. Indeed it is directly inconsistent with the power of representing a class, a genus of humanity. To have with this or that one of its members a spiritual affinity so close that the whole class can only be

seen as a derivation from the friend who is truly known, would make it impossible to describe the class in such a way as to let everybody think that so and so is the true Drapier, the Old Salt.[8] Indifference towards individuals is the prime qualification for representing a particular type of humanity so as to convince everybody that the average man of the type really acts in that way.

From Swift's assertion that he loathed humanity and yet loved Jack, William, and Tom, we are not to suppose that he loved them for what they were, nor indeed that he had even *knowledge* of them as they were. He loved them in so far as they surrendered to his whim, he loved them for being a sort of extension of himself, other bodies of his overlapping self. He disliked humanity because it was a number of extraneous selves ; the egotist cannot identify himself with a mass. He identifies himself with individuals in so far as they are his servants.[9]

On the other hand, the egotist can be loved by others—especially by women.

The ingenuous Rev. John Mitford[10] laments that no woman ever made love to *him* and marvels at Swift's success as a philanderer. But the egotist does not suppose that women have a soul, and gives them a ready-made soul of his own. The egotist is a man competent to educate women, for he works from the outside and the education of women is largely the bestowal of habits, of reactions unconnected with the real soul. In this sense, just to make love is a process of education, and vice versa women are ready to think that the effort to educate them is a tentative flirtation. Both things are in the last analysis alike : to make love is to make a woman capable of living with some man—of living up to a man. And as, in fact, no woman leads a life wider than the circle of the individuals immediately around her, the " sentimental education " of a woman is at the same time her social education.

It is not possible in this place to enter into those considerations which led us to determine Swift as the typical egotist. Only the complete biography we are now beginning can establish the truth of our diagnosis. We posit this egotism as a working hypothesis to account for the manifold activities of Swift. The hypothesis will prove a sound one if it enables us to give a coherent picture of the man as he manifested himself during his whole life.

Nor, to avoid possible insufficiencies, do we propose to take refuge in the platitude of a saving clause to the effect that Swift was not merely an egotist, thus to enable ourselves to hold to our theory even when he appears to have conducted himself unlike an egotist.

Our theory holds only if it is capable of explaining all the important acts of Swift. Vice versa when the evidence of what took place is uncertain, we shall refer the decision to our hypothesis. Egotism must be the common denominator, and only as a whole can our theory hold its ground. For this is to be a *biography* of Swift. Not an indifferent account of events and dealings with which he was accidentally bound, but the realisation of him, of his deeper reality throughout the various occurrences of his life.

He reacted to events, he created events—in the only way possible to him, being what he was. What interests us are not events, but his *share* in the events. And as all events are made of many things and of many wills, as they are *historical* by not having personal significance, they are not events of *someone,* but just events—natural phenomena. Historical fact is impersonal by definition, and therefore we have to go deeper than history in order to relate events to any human being, as for each man concerned the same event is different. The change of Ministry, Queen Anne's death, are not *absolute* events, and, starting from the assumption that Swift's attitude

to the facts was that of an egotist, we shall find what events they really were in relation to Swift.

Still we can offer in advance, if not a sufficient proof, at least some hints to show we are not working in the void. The first and most valuable indication can be taken from the works of Swift, not in the sense in which we will consider them as documents (as we said before we meant to do), but taking them as the coherent expression of Swift's personality as a writer.

Think of Swift's position in literary history. He is no doubt a great figure, perhaps even more on account of his boldness in telling the truth than for his ability to reveal the beautiful.[11]

A master of exposition, and perfectly familiar with the least exigency of his vehicle, yet there is nothing in his writings, with the possible exception of the early poems (" Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet ! ")—and afterwards not even the poems—that can be regarded as purely literary. The later poems were all satires with a definite end, or amusements : who will ever catch Swift writing under the sudden impulse of what (a little naively) is known as " poetical inspiration," that is, the inspiration of inner necessity ?

Temple Scott issued a volume of Swift's *Literary Essays* —probably as a refuse-heap for all he could not by definition put into the other volumes : but in it are but satires and that *Proposal for Correcting, etc., the English Tongue* which deals with literary matters as if with a political problem.

But there is no need to labour the point, the proof is too simple. This man was never a writer, a literary man, a poet—call it what you will, no appropriate definition of him as a writer will be found. He really wrote for a purpose. And even with no end at all, but he is never caught writing for the pleasure of writing ; he is never interested in writing in itself. When he had nothing in

view he did not write.[12] There was indeed nothing in his soul which compelled him to express himself, he had no pleasure in expressing what he felt—and truly he never expressed what he did feel. His work is mainly objective ; for himself, he had nothing to say.

Read his love poems, read the *Journal to Stella* : when does he give himself away ? They are *personal* only in reference to his bodily infirmities, and lyrical only in their statement of his external circumstance. Characteristic of him is that point in the *Journal* where he describes his return to London when his servant does not await him, and he feels lonely———But where is the description of this sentiment ? Why, he hardly says that he *felt* lonely !

Even the *Journal to Stella,* like the rest of his work, is *occasional.* He needs some exterior impulse, some *reason* to write. Then, he rises to the emergency, but not as the artist, whose first reason for living is his work in itself.

It must not be supposed that we are defending art for art's sake. We simply note that Swift lacked even the impulse coming from the desire to diffuse his way of thinking, that he always needed the stimulus of some incident. He had really nothing to say : this is the profound significance of his saying that he prefers to vex rather than to please the world. Pleasing the world would have been the first idea of a man endeavouring to achieve a work of literature, or at least to bequeath something which posterity might find good, noble, beautiful. No such aim is in Swift.

Somebody may now say that Swift's unconcern with art proves his utter unselfishness, because he did not search for applause or fame, as all artists are wont to do.

But Swift's egotism, as we have tried to explain, went deeper than mere selfishness—than vulgar selfishness, so to speak. He did not think of exploiting his work as a means of material preferment, nor want to satisfy the

public as the first step on the ladder of literary power. Had he had personal truths to diffuse and teach—then it might be enough to say that his writing subserved his thoughts, and that as a thinker he has a place in the history of literature as a distinguished writer. But he followed only immediate aims, certain advantages for his party (his party coincided with himself), he only sought for certain vexatious truths which he could utter with impunity—-just to appease his wrath, to indulge his hatreds.

The work was an utterance of himself, but the original impulse remained hidden within him. A murderous assault does not express personality, and Swift was under no inner necessity to speak of himself.

And expression, artistic expression, is not a selfish impulse. The trees, " searching for an expression" beyond the walls of the prison of Oscar Wilde, are taking up the most unselfish and (we dare say) most objective position possible to a being.

The artist may fairly expect advantages from his work, but the mere possibility of the work is the artist's possibility of communicating with the external world. It is certainly true that he expresses but one thing in the world, his soul. But that soul is open to the world : he can go towards the world, for expression is first and foremost the creation of something which remains when the poet falls. His gift is permanent, a new element—in this world and the next.

Yet surely we can call Swift a man of letters ?—Yes, but only because we cannot define him better. In his time the humanist was slowly fading out of the world. During the Renaissance there had really been a market for the work of a man of letters. Through his patrons he could find a position as business man or secretary or

ambassador to the men in power. Through his patrons, again, he could assure himself of the universal if ignorant admiration of a public accustomed in centuries of ecclesiastical authority to regard pure intellectuality as holding a superior place in society—the place of the divine.

But democracy was growing apace. Everything was shaping into new definite positions in the coming capitalistic organisation of society. The man of letters could no longer adapt himself to such civic duties as might come his way. Under the last Tudors, great Ministers ceased to be princes of the Church[13] and, similarly, when the German and Italian small principalities came to an end, the man of letters was no longer called upon to earn his wages as an ambassador or a secretary of state. In the world of the seventeenth century, politics and administration were becoming a skilled business, and the man of letters henceforth would be only a man of letters for the general public, and would be only able to earn his bread in so far as this had been rendered possible by the discovery of the printing-press.[14] Journalism becomes his only possible " big business," and the man of letters decays into the journalist.

But the fact is that Swift was not even a journalist. He did indeed discover the wide possibilities of journalism, but there is a vast difference between newspapers and pamphlets such as Swift wrote. The journalist does no more than put an interpretation on his chronicles and give them a literary turn, to render them palatable and readable—by romancing them as far as he dares. The pamphleteer *creates* news, builds up arguments and so-called truths ; but even he is not a man of letters because his writing is based on an object in view. He wants not to create works but to create opinions. In contrast with the journalist, he does not relate topical happenings, but forwards certain ideas, certain conceptions, and writing

is only a means to this end. If he could accomplish his task without writing, he would be quite happy.[15]

Such was the position of Swift. He was not a man of letters in the real sense, although he wrote and attained his object by writing. He was not a politician strictly speaking. As a man of letters face him with Pope or Gay ; as a politician face him with Temple; as a journalist face him with Steele or Defoe. Then it becomes evident that he cannot be defined, even from a very external standpoint, the standpoint of his production, of his life-work. We can only repeat that he was Swift an egotist, Swift a writer who was no man of letters, or Swift a politician in a special sense—he was always this or that, but always something more : himself.

At all events the most usual literary production (we might even say the only production) of Swift is satire, but Swift used satire only to destroy. Compare him with Addison in this respect : with Addison satire is only a first step to moral teaching, Addison's aim is to make the world better. Good is confronted with evil ; Addison destroys that he can build.

But the world of Swift's desire—who can say what it was, or could be ? Brobdingnag, Houyhnhnms. But these are Utopias, made up by changing into their opposites the things he hated. He had no interest in making men live better. He hated their ways, and he gave way to his sentiment, needing nothing but to find an outlet, an appeasement : his satire—like all satire perhaps—is no better than outrage. Swift's outrageousness, even when he speaks against mankind in general, is personal.

It is possible that the satirical writer may have impersonal motives for his hatred and dissatisfaction. But when he comes to express these motives, all he does is to discharge the pent-up hatreds and dissatisfactions

themselves. The *sava indignatio* often arises from the moral greatness of a soul, but satire is a production of discontent, a way to mitigate the rending of the heart.

Our case is that satire is not moral propaganda, even if it seems to be. In fact, the writer is trying to give publicity to his insults only to make them more efficacious. —And if the reader never applies a general satire to himself, but always to somebody else—this is perhaps only a natural defensive measure on his part.

In this way we can explain why a satire against all mankind may find easy acceptance : each individual sees himself out of reach.

And when the satire, as commonly with Swift, is personal satire, it appeals in truth to the basest—the strongest—instincts of mankind. That is why it is so successful : everyone except the victim is happy, anybody can amuse himself by seeing somebody else insulted, challenged, morally knocked out. The reader identifies himself with the writer and feels the same satisfaction in persecuting and demolishing the enemy.

Therefore to be a good satirist it is necessary to be deeply selfish—egotist, in fact.[16] The good satirist must not be indulgent, must not see the various sides of a problem, the many-sided reasons of a man. He must be unilateral[17]: his own point of view is the sole reliable basis for such work.

From this point of view Swift's egotism is beyond doubt. He was a great satirist, it is universally acknowledged : that is to say, he was at his best when he satirised.

So we can say, a little broadly, that Swift had no interest in truth—for he had no use for it. It is impossible to demolish something or somebody, and, at the same time, to weigh varying opinions, to debate and to explain. Thought *about* it is not required: personal reasons and the *sava indignatio* are already sufficient

persuasions : the satirist need go no further, if he wants to hit the mark.

It may now be asked whether Swift was a satirist by inner necessity, or whether, finding that his interests and purpose required it, he revelled in satire. But in either case satire was his natural form of self-expression.

The fundamental qualities of the famous style of Swift are exceedingly well suited to satire : thus the style itself should go a long way towards revealing Swift.

Style is a deeper matter than the literary composition preferred by a writer, as satire was preferred by Swift. The writer, as he composes, is always choosing between a number of alternatives, and his work is not constructed on the paper before him, but in the inner spirit. He can correct and change, but in choosing and correcting he follows the line of least resistance, which affords him the most ample and most suitable means to express himself.

Swift, it has been observed, changed his style in letters as often as his correspondents changed.[18] But it was not really that his style became different ; the witticisms, the contents made all the difference. By this means he obliged others to take up the mental attitude which he thought proper to them. But it is not exact to say that he had different styles at his command.

Swift was a writer who " could only preach pamphlets." This amounts to a confession that his style was devoid of eloquence. His stylistic problem was not to find the beautiful turn of an expression and by the music of words uplift the heart. He wanted to act on the hearer (or the reader) by putting facts before him so arranged as to force on him certain consequences. He therefore instinctively avoided eloquence, and wrote

in a style that should speak to the mind not to the heart.[19]

Indeed this egotist is naturally reserved, precisely because he is so sincere and outspoken in expressing his opinions with a total disregard for the feelings of others. The more personal his aims, the more impersonal his means. He stands apart, he calculates the power of an argument, he plays on the sentiments only through the medium of the reason—of this impersonal reason which allows him to reach the universality, and even the impersonality, of a mathematician. He can reason about the best way to reach the heart of others, he can even reason upon the most suitable demonstration of the truthfulness of his demonstration. His procedure goes towards a Q.E.D.[20]

Such is the method of Swift. There is no intimacy between him and the reader. For instance, he does not enlarge on the evils and the sorrows produced by such and such an action, to attract compassion to the victims. He takes the consequence of evil doings as demonstrated. He does not bring to light, for instance, the deep misery, the lasting degradation of the Irish : he assumes these things as a cold fact. It is as if he did not think that evil needs to be felt as evil : he reasons on the basis that as soon as an evil is there, the effort of humanity will go towards destroying it. It is enough to show that such is the evil and such its causes. The rest should follow from ordinary reason, ordinary sentiments, and the common sense of humanity.

Cut away oratory, consider digressions as a disturbance of the smooth development of a rational argument, and images as beside the point (you must not allow the reader to dream, to follow by-paths where he escapes the grip of the writer) : and you have the fundamental elements of Swift's superiority of style, its perspicuity **and** ascetic purity.

Thence comes the marvellous unity of Swift's style : it never pulls up with a jerk, never wanders towards side issues, but runs always in a straight line. It is in this sense *a. plain* style, which never lets the reader be puzzled, never gives him a surprise. A marvel is no sooner announced in *Gulliver* than it is expounded and measured, as if to give it verisimilitude, to make it a part of our familiar world.

It may be said that this is a question of content rather than of style ; but observe how it affects the composition as such. Style can really be an adventure : long periods which introduce new elements to be subsequently accounted for, justified, balanced. The exclamations, the rhetorical questions, the breadth and height of the construction of periods—these are things that open problems, that find their significance only in the whole. Whereas Swift can always be quoted in patches, as all his periods are conclusive in themselves. They suppose nothing beyond what is said.

Therefore Swift was an enemy of what to-day we call *slang* : slang is really adapted to a particular and ever changing world where people have special images and conventions of expression. Swift writes a common English for the typical reader : the good clear English which can be understood by the man in the street, for he wants to be widely read. He is at everyone's disposition, not only at the disposition of a literary class or a social coterie. His language is as standardised as his style.

Swift's hatred of rhetoric, which is the plainness of a fully developed language, his writing for a general rather than a learned public, is shown by the way in which he closes his chapters and his periods. They close easily, without, as it were, a pitching of the voice. They close, we may well say, to perfection, for they close as they run ; and no need arises for a peroration, for a

recapitulation, or for any displacement in the note or style of the composition.

Swift's style is indeed the style of a successful satirist, for the satirist does not see the need of profound enquiry. He cares only for short, succinct demonstrations, and therefore he prefers the simplest and most definite affirmations. Every popular satire (and what can a satire, especially a political satire, be if it is not popular ?) starts from a vulgarisation of what is attacked and defended.

But Swift's warfare was always personal. Not only because he attacked men rather than ideas, but also because impersonal devotion to an idea is never the cause of his quarrels : even in literature he defends Temple not classicism against his enemies, as in politics he sustains Tories not Toryism, and in religion his Church, i.e. himself, against its foes.

We may doubt whether politics can ever be personal and disinterested. By defending a peculiar society, a method of administration, even if no personal advantage is to be expected from the victory of your party (but can this really be ?) you expect that victory will make a world which is better adapted to your conceptions, a life more adapted to your psychological requirements. There is something irrational in politics, a fundamental choice which cannot be explained, *your* choice—and therefore politics start from a fundamental assumption which is taken without more ado as true—it is *your* truth. In the last analysis politics are egocentric, and their ends are selfish ends.

Swift was good at politics. For he did not want to assert ultimate truth, to penetrate below the surface, to attain to self-criticism. There is no disguise even of the " general interest" in Swift's politics. Even general theories

perhaps do not enter into them. Or at least they are not considered as pertaining to anything broader than the interests of himself and his friends.

When he attacked the enemies of Temple, the opponents of the Tories, the destroyers of Ireland, his motive was not a disinterested devotion to the interests of Temple or of the Tories or of Ireland.—His politics like his literature are personal.

He attacks men, not theories, and he defends the men with whom he had identified his interests, his very being. In protecting him his friends become an integral part of his world. In attaching himself to the Tory party, he makes the Tory party the Swiftian party. The more prominent he becomes, the more superficial his politics become, precisely because they are reduced to a defence of himself, now that his interest in the party has become considerable. And he goes into exile on his own account, not as a member of a vanquished party.

As a party man he had party friends, but they had such a sense of his independence, and he so impressed them by doing what he liked and what he thought best, that they thought he was fully indemnified as to his egotism when they ascended—and wholly guilty if they fell. He agreed with them, as it is signified by his offering to share the imprisonment of Oxford ; it was as if he had protested : " How can you punish someone when I was there, a friend of mine who could only do what I advised and proposed ? "

In this connection we recall the very artless question of Thackeray : " Would you have liked to be a friend of the Dean ? "

Oh no, says Thackeray : " If you had been his inferior in parts . . . his equal in mere social station, he would have bullied, scorned and insulted you ; if undeterred

by his great reputation you had met him like a man, he would have quailed before you, and not had the pluck to reply, and gone home, and years after written a foul epigram about you.[5,21]—But this is not even the historical truth, for Swift sometimes liked those who opposed him, and did not always quail before courageous repartee.

But even if the question is absurd (for who can tell what one may like as a pet or as a friend or as a lover ?) Thackeray's answer smacks of ungenerosity. Does one really choose one's friends on the grounds of their social qualities ? The psychology of Thackeray betrays itself as being very close to that of Orrery, a timid friend of Swift as long as Swift lived, and a cold observer afterwards. Orrery indeed had been angered and humiliated by Swift's behaviour, nor was he devoted enough to understand, nor friend enough to love Swift as he was.

Women only could be Swift's best friends, for women always seek for someone to whom they can dedicate themselves, whose actual brutality they can pardon—and ask for more. Or an honest large-hearted nobody like Sheridan : he was only too happy to be the friend of the great man, he failed to see this terrible destiny developing under his eyes, it never occurred to him to criticise and condemn. He understood and indulged Swift's whims, not because he expected advantages from him, but because he really liked to be on such terms of friendship as to be bullied without being humiliated. He felt that this was the only way in which Swift could show his love.

For indeed Swift could *love* his friends. Read the letters to Harley and Arbuthnot, in which he shows a kind of marvellous joy at receiving news from his older friends. A deeply affectionate man because an egotist, his friends were a constitutive part of his world, and he found them again as if he had lost a part of himself. He

did not spare their feelings: virtually, they had no feelings to be spared, because all the loving had to come from Swift's side alone.

To understand this egotistic friendship read the *Journal,* and dwell a moment on the bullying, the teasing, the advising of Stella, how she is reproached for her most innocent pleasure, chided for her dissipation of money during the first years of her stay in Ireland—and all with a confidence that she could not rebel, or even protest. Who is sure that he could dare write in this sense to the woman he loves ?

So with his friends. He never doubts that he is in the right; they are bullied, scorned when they blunder, reproached with every sort of stupidity and even baseness : nor does it seem that they ever thought themselves capable of protesting. They had to accept him as he was, and afterwards conceal that they acted against his advice—for his advice was his command, with penalty of his displeasure. He could even like egregious fools, and around him there were a few.

This grip on his friends in spite of all does give us a reason why Swift could not consult the feelings of others. What he had before him was a sort of scheme of humanity : his friends were men who regulated their lives along what appeared to him to be the only rational lines. Sometimes it might be but a whim or a paradox, but Swift never consulted anyone but himself. The opinions of mankind were not realities, but dreams and phantoms which should be directed, bent, used.

It was not mere selfishness, for sometimes he thought of the interests of his friends, and sometimes he had nothing precise to gain for himself: it was egotism. He could not conceive the possibility of others thinking in a different way from himself. Was he not the only man, the only reality in the world ? To act in a way in which he did not expect or advise was not to act against him but

to act against reason and good sense. He dropped friends who did that, for they were too stupid to trouble about. To be his friend you had to let him lead, to let him decide for you, to let him destroy you—and then to say that everything was going in the best possible way.

But others than his friends received benefits from him, for he liked to protect people, to show his power. Such was the famous disinterestedness of Swift; his interest here was in showing his power, in enlarging the world which depended on himself. The letter to Bishop Stearne indicates that the origins of his enmities were often not personal slights, but disregard of his recommendations : " I have not but once or twice recommended persons to you who were not relations or friends of mine . . . which availed so little that those very persons had the greatest share of your neglect.[5,22]

And the same reason which prevented him from being a tender-hearted friend made him a pitiless enemy. He felt all opposition to himself in a personal sense, and therefore hatred was his passion, only when he hated did he forget himself.

He did not admit blind misfortune, nor did he allow the plea of extenuating circumstance to those who offended him. If a tile fell on his head, he was ready to search from effect to cause until he found a human being who had a hand in the matter. Thus he was discovering the limits of his self-centred world : persons as malignant forces. He regarded them only from the outside, for he was incapable of putting himself in another's place—unable to understand enemies as he was unable to understand friends.

Friends had to be careful not to hamper him, if they wished to remain friends. Even Stella dying was losing something of his affection ; certainly egotism never spoke clearer than when he shunned to be present at the last: " I am determined not to go to Ireland, to find her just

dead or dying."[23] He loves her, but he has not the courage to present himself before death, which is snatching away something he regarded as his property. " I am of opinion that there is not a greater folly than to contract too great and intimate a friendship, which must always leave the survivor miserable."[24]

He mourns—not for her but for himself. He says so openly, for he has no shame.

He dealt in no polite evasions when he had to say what he thought. He was truthful—for he was alone in the world.

This terrible sincerity accounts for his bad manners, for the brutality of which people complained. Since he feared that he, the only important being in the world, might not say all he had to say, he exaggerated and overdid sincerity.

*. For long years he was silent : in Temple's presence he could only express what coincided with Temple's view. Then he exploded, brutally. Independence, love of liberty were mainly valued as opportunities for saying what he chose. This was his absolute attainment, his true reward.

Mankind feared him, for everything was sacrificed to this one object : liberty of saying what he chose—and of concealing what was deeply felt, and therefore might expose him to attacks.[25] The most refined torture that the egotist can be compelled to endure is to be obliged to conceal his opinion.

The first thing that he asked as a reward for his services was the right to speak freely and without regard to the general conveniences. He liked low company which bestowed him respect and before which he could speak his fancy. He wanted to be himself, always and everywhere himself and nothing less. He was really

conquering the world, when he displayed his opinions at ease before Ministers and aristocrats. He was Swift—only a parson, only an upstart who had not attained to any dignity, and yet he could be heard, and yet could be tolerated and petted.

It was his furthest victory. His realisation. Life had compressed a soul ; and his soul, because it had never been slowly modified by environment or by an adjusting education, burst up, savage and distorted as the soul of a child who has not been initiated by mild, gradual preparation into the petty compromises of life.

Such was the soul he showed to his friends—a soul without soft hues, a soul in black and white, suffering by its very hardness.

Perhaps at bottom they pitied him. They could never let him know their pity, for Swift had no use for compassion : he pities himself in his illness and in his sorrows, but he would probably have risen in anger against anyone who had dared to pity him. This maybe was allowed to Stella, to women who are so motherly—and matter so little to one's pride just because of their motherliness.

His friends were before him, as the biographer is now before him—before a destiny, before a life with a deep significance, which yet may be only obscurely understood, for there were in it some fundamental realities, some unavoidable truths, half revealed, half sunk in the deeper mystery of life.

And when this life was at end, came the legend with its doubtful glory. Swift remained for ever before humanity as an unforgettable example, clear cut and mysterious, in a halo of pity and hatred, against a background of light and darkness.

But time has dealt hardly with Swift. After a slow pathetic process of misunderstanding over two centuries, nothing remains but a travesty of the real man.

This is not intended as a thrust at previous biographers. Our endeavour is not to controvert, but to understand. With this incentive we have at times to oppose certain judgments and certain fixed ideas which common opinion cherishes and upon which criticism has dwelt. Our object is not to attract by novelty, but to clear the ground for the architectonic unity which we think a biography should be, knowing full well that we are risking failure, a far worse failure than that of previous biographers, because of our apparently one-sided point of view, the strongly personal presentation and our following of hitherto unbeaten tracks.

But, let us repeat, Swift's biographers were not at fault. None of them indeed had a theory about biography with which to start. Even in the recent outcrop of *vies romancees* it has never been deemed necessary to understand biography in its innermost meaning and logical implications.[26] To-day biography, in the absence of any specific canon, has been assimilated to all the more general forms of human chronicle, such as history, memoir, realistic romance, and so forth. Biography has remained and seems likely to remain, a very free—and care-free—realm, for any writer who can accumulate episodes and anecdotes, and draw inferences at pleasure from that or this document, and place all his materials in the obvious pattern of chronological succession. Simple research, the same research as is needed for history, or for a psychological novel, has been thought sufficient to build up biographies.

But for us biography means much more. It is a knowledge which presupposes an insight into the deeper reality of personality, and culminates in a statement of universal significance, endowed with rational necessity.

It is this biographical conception of being that we will strive to illustrate, as a working possibility, in our book. Therefore our appeal will be direct, to the exclusion of an elaborate art and the graces of persuasion, through the simple force of truth to the moral conscience in itself.

As every man who has an opinion of some dead person, directly or indirectly known, near to him or distant in time, has already formed in his mind the essentials of a biography, the issue here is not merely between us and our numerous predecessors in this field, but between us and all those who have ever given any thought to Swift.

Through all descriptive accounts and through all personal opinions runs a thread, from contemporaries, acquaintances, and friends, on to the first collectors of evidence and to the biographers, and then to the ordinary man of culture.

It is very hard to break this continuity and reverse completely the usual point of view regarding so illustrious a figure.—The greater the figure the harder the task, for interest is then more widely extended and resistance to substantial revaluation becomes more powerful.

With Swift the case is even worse, because never for a moment did he escape observation, judgment, comment. From the time of his early successes Swift's circle could not avoid expressing and registering its opinion of him—before Swift nobody could feel moderate. He was himself too passionate, and all men who knew him had for him either a deep admiration, a sort of dazzled devotion, or a violent dislike. Not casual rumour only, but biographical appreciation followed him step by step, even before he could be looked at as a whole—and these partial estimates formed on partial knowledge of him flowed

directly into the complete biographies of later times and influenced them decisively.

As soon as Swift was dead, biographies began to rain fast upon his grave—very various in intention, starting even with a controversy between biographers which gave the misleading impression that truth was being thrashed out through the conflict of opposite opinions and accounts. On the ground of all this material, carefully treasured, were then built the great efforts of Scott, Barrett, Forster—and the many succcessive distillations of complete popular biographies, or of particular researches on some secondary point, or even—the worst—of amateurish essays, such as Thackeray's.

Some may still think that Swift was very fortunate in being presented with such fullness to the eyes of posterity. Few men have attracted so much interest even during their lives, and it should seem at first sight that Swift's life could then be perfectly known and accurately related.

Again, a high place in the history of British letters was universally attributed to Swift, who rapidly became one of the classics. But, alas, poor classics ! Precisely because they are classics, models, they are so soon cut away from all human interest. How many readers of the present time, and even serious readers, could name more than four of Swift's works ? So many of them were so perfectly adapted to the moment in which they were written that they afford indeed very poor reading to posterity. Out of England, Swift is completely submerged in *Gulliver,* and is definitely considered as a sort of elder Lewis Carroll.

Therefore for all that has been said and thought of Swift, and although everybody knows his name, to approach him outside the greater biographical essays is to fall into inaccuracies and encounter party versions of the authoritative biographies of him. So that for the ordinary educated man Swift's life is now another novel,

a very interesting novel, out of all human proportions, the life of a madman, and of a strange, perhaps impotent lover of many women, and of a miser—of a great man withal, yet so far from all human paths. . . . *Gulliver's Travels* and Swift's life are to-day two fictions.

Where does Swift stand ?

The apparent authority of the immediately posthumous accounts of Swift collapses as soon as we consider that they all proceeded from persons who had known Swift only for a short time and judged of him accordingly. How, for example, could his English friends infer the Irish from the London Swift, or the familiars of his darkened later years reconstruct his whole life from that one-sided experience ?

His contemporaries in obscuring the truth were misled by party motives as his later biographers were misled by moral judgments.[27] For instance, Lord Orrery himself was not at bottom an unfaithful or even adverse biographer[28] ; he was only incurably narrow and philistine. On the groundwork of such judgments of Swift's character, were stitched irrelevant anecdotes, picturesque episodes, or paradoxical and witty sayings—the most effective disguises of truth.

The man was so interesting that many writers thought his life might well be reconstructed on the lines of a novel, and they put into it all possible eccentricities, all out-of-the-way peculiarities—whereas the real fascination and value of Swift's life consists not in its strangeness but in its profound humanity. This we shall endeavour to reveal at all costs—even at the cost of disappointing readers who look forward to a fantastic romance full of odd occurrences.

In accord with this general programme we cut down all the most celebrated or outstanding episodes, nor do

we consider as important only that which is related to Swift's participation in the life of his time. We even dwell on writings of secondary interest so as not to be troubled by anticipatory judgments and the duty of admiring a classic of English literature. We even cut down documentation in describing his life, since we have to prove not this or that episode, but the general character of Swift—and the result has to be given progressively, till in the last chapter evidence comes to be almost unnecessary, because we can expound the life along the general line we have, as we believe, drawn by then.

But even whilst giving the fullest attention to Swift's psychology, we do not aim at a *vie romancie* in the modern vein. Our problem is a philosophical one, rather than psychological in the usual sense. We do not want to explain Swift's life step by step, but to present him as he was—a personality in all moments and episodes of his life.

We may spare ourselves and the reader apologies or arguments and let him decide whether our undertaking, namely a full-length portrait of the man, has been brought to a successful issue.

We do not justify ourselves for our new ideas, for our variations, expressed or implicit, from the bulk of previous Swiftian criticism, for our perhaps hasty judgments and *a priori* deductions. We want to be justified in our conscience. Either our book may fail, which we would acknowledge in the event of its being found inexpressive of our reverence for Swift, or it may not, in which case the reader will at the same time be attracted by Swift and stimulated to oppose us on the ground we choose, that of direct perception of a human personality. There may be a good deal to say about our information and documentation, but our success can be measured only if critics speak from the standpoint of men **and** not from that of the dry-as-dust pedant who is only

interested in correcting particulars or finding that we have forgotten or distorted much evidence.

This latter standpoint would not be unjust, yet its adoption would be humiliating for us. It would mean that we had failed to express our humanity before the tragic destiny of Swift—of Swift the man, not of Swift the hero of a novel constructed to explain his story by a search for some black draught or for some witchcraft, as Mallarme thinks the American did to explain Poe's strange and piteous life.

The purpose of this book is served in so far as it may induce in the reader a feeling of awe before Swift's life and at the same time resist the charge that in facing this towering and tragic figure, we have committed ourselves too far.

It is not a question of *love.* When we analyse our feelings scrupulously, we can find no love for Swift. Some pity, some sadness at his bitter destiny. But no love.

Before Swift's tragic doom, before his life and the misunderstandings he was subjected to afterwards—we feel something akin to religious emotion.

It is not mere pity for his having lost so many years of his life—the nine stifled years in the school, ten years under the spiritual tyranny of Temple, ten years waiting in the ante-chamber of the Whigs ; and the rest, exile in Ireland. All came to nothing, nothing had a significance, nothing could satisfy his aspirations or give him a lasting sense of having succeeded. Except for three or four years in London, the exhilaration of the conquest of Wood, and some other brief gleams, his life was devoid of the consolations of success. Nor had he other consolations. He had not the human sympathy which might make him content with a modest humble life, in the intimacy of a few chosen companions and happy with them.

He was not fitted for a resignation, for a surrender to destiny, for finding a comfort in the dimness and waiting for the light. He ever wanted more and more, he wanted . . . What did he really want that could be reached by a child of man ?

Yet his unhappiness had nothing to do with envy or jealousy, for he had no feeling of inferiority to the rest of mankind. In this perhaps was a redemption of the egotism which constituted his doom, and which took deeper root at every buffet it received, as though Swift had been singled out to serve as an example to mankind of some fundamental truth.

Redemption of egotism.—Because he raged, not for being less, but for being more, and hated mankind not for being happier than he, but for being deficient in the clear-sight and reason which were his—or which he thought were his.

He did not surrender to mankind, for such a surrender would have been for him to make terms with evil. He did not accept the conditions of mankind, and seek success in practicable ways. He remained alone, clear-cut, thrust-out—and encased in a hard armour of rage and indignation.

A moral passion, like the rage which burnt the dry liver of Juvenal. Swift did not tire of it. He complained even of being in torment, but did not seek to forgo the Promethean vulture. Perhaps he saw that he had willed for himself this rending and burning. In any case, he was not a tame seeker for a dull, resigned, broken-hearted happiness.

In that heart there was the sense of a superior wisdom, of a transcendent duty, of an incumbent task. He was an egotist—the poor man ! Are we to ask if this was a sin ? Are we to blame him for not forgetting himself in a search for love and kindness, giving so as to receive ? Perhaps ; but at least he was an egotist of moral

integrity who could not pass conciliatory judgments. He did not compromise—not even with himself. He did not conceal dislike and contempt of mankind under a common, easy gentleness towards men. How many smiling hypocrites there are among us, kind and considerate and socially charming, who yet have a cold contempt buried deep in their hearts, and never allow their enmity to appear, or let their moral judgment impede their petty careers and foolish social successes !

Yes, Swift was no *social* man. A king perhaps would have had the right to be as he was, one invested with power and who should need the skill to command others. Only then would his egotism have been useful and a high social virtue.

But he had no kingdom. Never at any moment did he feel conscious of achievement, even if from his destitute beginnings he rose to be a dictator of public opinion in two countries, and from the closed circuit of his spirit projected a world that will never be lost. He was a man, and even his humble origins have a deep significance in this human story—the significance of a success due to strong purpose. They prove that a man can reach eminence without bending, without stooping to compromise—provided he is strong enough, so strong that this very strength, either employed or unemployed, tears his very heart.

We cannot, indeed, love Swift. We cannot even find his life harmonious or beautiful. Nothing in him appears to explain clearly his profound attractivenesss.

He is like a cold pillar, erect and strong, alone in the midst of ruins, and yet sufficient in itself, as if it had never been meant to be part of a building. When the sun streams on it, on one side lies a deep darkness, whilst the other gives back a blinding light, and they seem to be divided by a clear-cut line.

This is Swift and ever shall be, rising alone in the

midst of the wreckage he wrought about himself, severed from all solidarity with his fellow-men, good or evil as the light falls.—But he himself is deeper than good and evil.

Only God can know whether his truer self was in the shadow or in the light.

CHAPTER I

BORN—NOWHERE

AFTER so many biographies and studies, embracing every detail in Swift's life, we cannot hope to present new facts : the most we can hope is to be exact enough in reporting the facts which have been discovered and established.

This is not a matter for regret, for all the study in the world, the most accurate presentation of names and dates, would never solve the fundamental doubts which lie about all the most important things in Swift's life. Nor would they help us to make clear what we want to know, so that we may be able to say that we are in possession of all the elements of fact on which we can found a positive biography.

And first comes the problem of the true nationality of Swift. On this subject all the writers on Swift are at cross purposes : too often they decide the problem without taking the pains to say what precisely they mean by nationality. Mr. W. B. Yeats in speaking of Swift has perceived this difficulty when he speaks of three ideas of Irish nationality between which we must first of all decide.[1]

But we are even doubtful whether in the case of such a type of humanity as Swift was, an exception in every sense, the fixing of an objective nationality can help us much. Yet Voltaire seems to be right in saying that to understand Swift's work " il faudrait faire un voyage dans son pays." But with his usual superficiality Voltaire fails to inform us whether he considers Ireland or England as Swift's country, and in what way he thought

Swift's country could help one towards an understanding of Swift's work. Probably Voltaire had Ireland in mind when he spoke of Swift's country, as his English contemporaries never seem to have hesitated to call Swift an Irishman. He was born in Dublin and that constituted him an Irishman—literally if not figuratively, as Orrery puts it. If any doubt arose it was because of the stories which were circulated throwing doubt on the place of his nativity. But did he not, asks Orrery, frequently point out the house in Dublin where he was born ? Which shows, Orrery concludes, that in his cooler moments he never denied his country—that is, never denied that he was born in Ireland !

The question becomes almost insolubly complicated through the influence of an uncertain national pride : uncertain because it is a question not of a material nationality but of national culture, and nationality in culture is not so clear a thing as it can be in its other material manifestations. It is not so easy to decide the conditions of a national culture like Ireland's which underwent many changes and in each period presented totally new aspects. A culture is not only the actual production of a race and a folk, it is even more their past ; but in Swift's time the Irish had no clear-cut cultural past, at least in their English production, although a specific Irish culture was slowly forming under the influence of such men as Molyneux. The Irish nationality of such men was, it will be said, not much more than a spatial connotation : they were good citizens of Ireland, but not bound with the Irish past, nor were they the inheritors of Irish culture as the Irishmen writing and orating in English afterwards became.[2]

After the Battle of the Boyne the victorious Protestants tended to rise to the position of a nation delimited culturally, and interested in all sides of the welfare of Ireland—*of their* Ireland at least.[3]

On the whole, therefore, the wrath of Duhigg against the " host of venial and interested biographers " who deny that Swift was Irish[4] is not so strange : Swift did indeed become even in his lifetime a figure in the national legend of both Protestant and Catholic Ireland.

But the protest of Duhigg was unavailing, to judge by the views which most modern commentators have expressed on the problem of Swift's nationality. These refuse to allow that by being born in Ireland Swift was necessarily an Irishman ; and even modern Irish writers do not fail to quote the many passages from Swift's correspondence which go to show that Ireland was not, to say the least, the country of his instinctive election.[5] Certainly the important thing is not what Voltaire, Orrery, or any modern theorist of nationality has thought upon this subject, but what Swift himself thought, and how he directed his action in consequence of his belief.

It is evident that Swift had no conception of an English-Irish nationality in the making, the nationality to which he was to contribute so powerfully. As we shall show later, in his attacks on the abuses of English government in Ireland, he rather exploited than attempted to form and lead the growing sense of an Anglo-Irish nationality. His knowledge of Irish history was not too good : he even thought a little naively that all the best English families in Ireland were not earlier than the reign of Elizabeth, or at least not earlier than the Reformation, as the M.S. commentator of Hawkesworth's Life has noted.[6] There were not even Irish Irishmen of any family for Swift in the first stages of his life[7] : at least he refused to give them any attention. He not only denied himself to be Irish, he also denied that he was a member of the English ascendancy in Ireland. His endeavours, especially as regards the emphasis he put on the recent date of the settlement, have been so

closely followed by some biographers that one of them goes so far as to affirm that Swift had no trace of the Irishman, either as regards race or character ; another even adds that he was, and felt himself to be, " deeply English."[8]

His family was of Yorkshire origin : an elder branch, that of Barnham Swift, had been ennobled in 1627, as Viscounts Garlingford, but did not survive. Swift's grandfather was the Rev. Thomas Swift, Vicar of Goodrich and owner of a small property in Herefordshire.[9]

Swift writes at some length on his grandfather, describing a somewhat singular and whimsical character. The Vicar of Goodrich was the staunchest of Royalists[10] and underwent, as his grandson liked to believe, more for King Charles than any person of like condition in England. His marriage allied the Swift family to the Drydens, his wife Elizabeth being the niece of Sir Erasmus Dryden, grandfather of the English poet.[11]

Swift in the *Anecdotes* tells us that four of the Rev. Thomas's children settled in Ireland—really the number was five, but Swift forgot his Uncle Dryden, who died unmarried and very young, soon after he had emigrated. The five were Dryden, Godwin, William, Jonathan, and Adam, none of whom met with great success in the land of their adoption, with the exception of Godwin.

Jonathan, Swift's father and the seventh or eighth son of the Royalist parson, came to Ireland when on the verge of manhood. Like Godwin he had been brought up to the law, through which he found some employments and agencies. Swift gives him a reputation for integrity and a " tolerably good understanding." Abigail Erick, Swift's mother, was an Englishwoman of Leicester[12] ; nothing is known, however, of the meeting-place of Swift's parents. The father came to Ireland when he

was eighteen years old ; he died at the age of twenty-five after a marriage which had lasted only two years. He left a daughter, Jane, behind him ; Swift was a posthumous child.

Swift's criticism of his parents' marriage as " very indiscreet "[13] is certainly characteristic. He did not really nurse an enmity against his parents : towards his mother his deportment was excellent to the last. His feelings may not seem to have been very warm : but he was sincere in his attachment (he visited her yearly until the last with a dutiful attachment) and in his grief at her death,[14] although he never indulged in the display of his most intimate and dutiful sentiments as many are wont to do. His love for his mother was a personal and a very private question, and in it he sought no applause. Yet this does not imply that Swift either approved all the conditions in which he happened to be born, or considered the physical presuppositions of his being as exempt from discussion. He took his very existence as an axiomatic fact, as though he would have been not essentially different if he had been born in other circumstances.

Even Leslie Stephens[15] perceives that " this quaint assumption that a man's parentage is a kind of removable accident to which may be attributed a limited part of his subsequent career, betrays a characteristic sentiment." But this characteristic sentiment is nothing but Swift's clear assumption of his own existence as the primary ineluctable postulate, on the basis of which all other facts, such as his being born so and not otherwise, are to be judged. Swift's observation is indeed very quaint, since we might well draw from it the conclusion that it would have been better if his parents had not given him his existence in this way, or had let others be

at the pains, but these logical consequences did not occur to him, just because he had never meditated on the origins of that unique necessary being : Jonathan Swift.

This explains the way in which he considered his parentage as something extraneous to him, as a ground for a possible political orientation, for a statement of his aims. He did not feel himself closely bound up with his lineage : but this lineage, and still more Swift's way of describing it, show that his interests were identified with what later on came to be called the " ascendancy," because he dwells on the fact of his family's belonging to a quite recent settlement, and on their being attached to the English Government in Ireland. Swift could not consider himself as other than an Englishman in a strange land, and this was his first conscious, indeed *deliberate,* position towards Ireland.

Swift was born on the 7th of December, 1667, at 7 Hoey's Court, in the older part of Dublin, then residential, and near his future cathedral of St. Patrick's. Godwin, his uncle, had a house not far off in Chancery Lane, and the parish was that of St. Warburgh, in the register of which, however, Swift failed to find any notice of his arrival in the world.[16] Though his mother Abigail lived in a good house in a prosperous quarter, she was in deep financial difficulties.[17] Nor was Swift's life untroubled even at the start. " When he was a year old," as Swift himself narrates,[18] " an event happened to him that seems very unusual ; for his nurse, who was a woman of Whitehaven, being under an absolute necessity of seeing one of her relations, who was then extremely sick, and from whom she expected a legacy, and being at the same time extremely fond of the infant, she stole him on shipboard unknown to his mother and uncle, and carried him to Whitehaven, where he continued for

almost three years. For, when the matter was discovered, his mother sent orders by all means not to hazard a second voyage until he could be better able to bear it. The nurse was so careful of him, that before he returned he had learnt to spell ; and by the time that he was three years old[19] he could read any chapter in the Bible."

The story of the kidnapping is somewhat fabulous, especially when accompanied by the statement that Swift read the Bible at three years of age. We have a glimpse here of the halo with which family legends envelop a child during its first years. It is probably not Swift's invention, as has been supposed. He probably was told about his precocious Bible reading in later years, perhaps after his pitiful career as a student, to show him how he had degenerated.

A posthumous child, taken off from the place of its birth : this had perhaps no direct effect ; but it is symbolical (or at least could become so to the eyes of Swift) of his utter detachment from all possible ties with his ancestors and his country, either England or Ireland.

The whole of the alleged episode can even be given a deeper significance : without having recourse to any psycho-analytical theories about the mind of an infant, we may yet suppose, in a child thus torn away from its mother in its first year, the growth of a dim, infantile sense of solitude, of abandonment, with its consequences of nostalgia, of a grievance against the world where there was no place for him, which might account for later peculiarities of character.

Then another nostalgic effect could well have been produced when, on his being brought back to Ireland, his mother let him go to school as far off as Kilkenny and herself returned to England.

Swift does not speak of this separation, which has puzzled biographers : would he, with his usual cold sincerity and search for a grievance, not have done so,

and accused his mother of a scanty love, if there had been grounds of complaint ? Probably his mother thought that her departure might induce Uncle Godwin to look after the boy for whom she could do nothing. She had, it will be remembered, a daughter to bring up[20] and her resources were as slender as possible.

But we should notice Uncle Godwin here, for upon him came the weight of Swift's maintenance during his school years.

Godwin Swift, as we have said, was the eldest son of the Royalist Vicar of Goodrich : in spite of the political troubles in which the latter for his faith was overwhelmed, this son had at least had a good education which enabled him to study at Gray's Inn and to be called to the Bar in England. He had not his father's quixotry of principle, for, we are told, he became favourably known in the courts during the Protectorate. In Ireland, later, he was an important figure in the law, and married four wives, by three of whom he was enriched. The Attorney-Generalship of the Palatinate with its large perquisites fell to him at Charles IPs restoration, when Ormonde became Lord Lieutenant—his first wife was a cousin of the Duke. His third wife was a daughter of Admiral Deane, the regicide, a portion of whose forfeited estates he succeeded in recovering. Fifteen sons and three daughters were the issue of the four marriages : increasing wealth brought increasing responsibilities, and Godwin, probably about the time of his brother Jonathan's death, turned to the speculative projects,[21] rendered famous by his nephew's angry comments, which were to end in disaster.

In choosing Kilkenny for his nephew's school, Godwin was generous enough. The choice was no doubt determined by the fact that Kilkenny School was under the

patronage of his first wife's relatives, the Ormondes : Thomas Swift, an English cousin, entered the establishment two years later. From both the scholastic and social points of view, the school was the best in Ireland, now and for long afterwards—Congreve and Farquhar and the philosopher Berkeley sat on its benches and played in the meadows, which the great pile of the Ormonde Castle across the river overlooked.

Swift in his *Anecdotes* makes but the most cursory references to the eight long years which he spent at school.[22] Of his studies at this time we know nothing, nor can we suggest that he was influenced by his environment—the most cultured society which provincial Ireland could then show. Possibly the Ormonde point of view, in politics which must have permeated the school, may be traced in some of his Irish writings.

After Kilkenny, Godwin sent the boy to Trinity, and it was fortunate that Swift had already taken his B.A. degree when Godwin fell into a sort of senile decay.

He had really done the best he could for his nephew : yet it is easy to understand why Swift spoke about his " education of a dog." Swift could not be grateful for the education which he *suffered*: a child is not usually grateful even to his father for sending him to school. Godwin, on the other hand, had the consciousness of duty done. Duty, we say advisedly : because he had been the cause of Swift's father coming to Ireland, and not meeting with much success. As a man of the law, he was apt to meet his obligations to the letter, but not to render his benefactions palatable by a display of affectionate feelings, nor probably did he give his nephew enough pocket-money to cut a dash, or even be comfortable at Trinity.

The famous episode of the mariner, as related by Deane Swift, has the ring of truth.—One melancholy afternoon at Trinity, Swift stood at his window, musing over the low state of his finances, when he saw a ship's master gazing about the College court. "Lord," thought he, "if that person should now be enquiring and staring about for my chamber in order to bring me some present from Willoughby (a prosperous cousin in Lisbon), what a happy creature I should be!" The master then approached his rooms and asked him if his name was Jonathan Swift: there was indeed a message from Mr. Willoughby, and it was a large greasy bag full of money. It was from that time onwards, Swift used to declare, that he learned to economise.

Swift attributed the meagre results of his studies at Trinity to his money troubles and to want of encouragement from his family; and it is true enough that when nobody is interested in one's activities they are likely to languish, especially when one is tied down to a fixed programme which allows of little initiative.

The psychological condition of a boy of that age must be well known to everyone who is interested in the problem of youth. Life is seen surging in freedom round the hard rock of the school, and it seems to have no relation to the curriculum. Swift studied because he was compelled to do so, but he did not perceive the possibility of a relation between culture and life, the less so since life was for him even more an unknown quantity than for the majority of his comrades, by reason of his isolated condition. He well realised the arduous struggle which was before him; the beneficence of his uncle, which compelled him to undergo a course of studies and to wait before entering on this struggle, may have appeared to Swift as another of his handicaps.

How could he do well in the circumstances? Yet we may note, as a curious fact, that he was better at the

humanities, in which he did not shine later on, than at theology, although he was to become a clergyman.

The education which was then given at Trinity would in any case have been valueless for the career for which he was destined. Swift became a writer, essentially, not a scholar. He needed the freedom of a general culture, not the uninspired drudgery of the learned specialist.

The problem of his studies at Trinity, then, is of far less importance than the question of his conduct there.

The discipline in his time was rigid enough. Swift used to contrast it later with the discipline at Oxford, where (he used to say) the undergraduates learned nothing but to drink and smoke. An historian of Trinity, the late Dr. MahafTy, on looking over the College censures and Statutes of the seventeenth century, observes that we might imagine that the educators of that day were absolutely ignorant of the possibility of innocent recreation. All games in either the courts or the gardens of the College were entirely forbidden under both Bedell's and Laud's Statutes, which had, however, been so far modified by 1684 as to allow the creation of a bowling-green—that only—within the walls. "The only legitimate reason that a student could allege for visiting the city was to go to service at Christ Church, and yet there the seats reserved for him and his companions were exposed to cold and draught and were so situated that to them the sermon was inaudible. No doubt permission was often given on other pretexts, but the parades of the city, the bull- and bear-baiting, the processions round the circuit of the walls—all such distractions were wholly forbidden and punished by severe measures/*[23] Nor were the severities greatly relaxed once the student had taken his censured for going into

town without a ticket shortly after receiving his B.A. on the 13th of February, 1686. The degree having been conferred, *speciali gratia* implied not misconduct, but neglect of study. Swift takes care to assure us that " he had lived with great regularity and due observance of the Statutes " up till then,[24] He refers to the degree of little honour[25]; but he does not say anything of the following three years.[26] This leads one to infer that his famous dissipations at Trinity took place only during these three years, as indeed his name occurs in the censure lists twenty times between November 1685 and October 1687, mostly in connection with absences from religious services, but also owing to unaccountable disappearances—not into the town, it seems, but into the country.[27] As no Christian name is given in the lists, it has been surmised that Thomas Swift, who followed his cousin from Kilkenny to Trinity, ought to share in the record of delinquencies ; but Thomas, from all we know of him, was the reverse of a wild young man.[28]

While Swift was young and known only among a small circle of pupils, he may possibly have felt humiliation on account of the *speciali gratia.* But we need not wonder if afterwards, when he was a world-wide celebrity, he came to boast of it. It was even a sort of revenge on Trinity.

That he should have acquired an invincible dislike of his tutors and those who had passed judgment on him, was a natural consequence, and the dissipation was perhaps only a way of affirming his superiority, of showing that he cared nothing for the opinion of his superiors, for he could reach a doubtful eminence in other ways, in the ways of an anarchism which opposed itself to the only regular and ordered life which he knew : the school.

This man without parents, without fatherland, without assured future position, was thus cut off from another

lasting association—from the school, where the character of the man is formed.

Between the years of eighteen and twenty-one comes indeed the real crisis of life. We can all observe the effects of the sudden opening of new horizons when a boy leaves school to go to the university. Puberty has arrived : the youth whose being was summed up in a series of childish habits, in the dull round of elementary and secondary studies, finds new worlds and a new life—in short he finds himself. For these are decisive years, with their indication of the coming career, their cutting-loose from the previous life, their discovery of the unimportance of all preceding studies. Contrasting these with the more liberal culture of the university, he is liable to think of his life as wasted up till then. He wants to make up for the lost time, to give his life an increased *tempo,* and therefore he often turns to fast living.

It is true that in Swift's time a boy went to the university much earlier, nor did he find at fourteen the fundamental contrast in the curriculum that a boy now finds when he passes to a university from a public school. But precisely Swift's *speciali gratia* severed him from his earlier student life at Trinity as the change from a public school to a university severs present-day students.

We have no precise knowledge of the character of Swift's dissipation, and can only presume that it was not limited to infringements of school discipline, or at least that these infringements had a deeper significance in Swift's eyes (which is the important thing for us) than such infringements usually have. But on this deeper question of the " devil who can work mischief" if not given sufficient employment (as somebody said to Swift at the time) we will speak again in another chapter.

The certainty is that some impertinences on the part of Swift led to his being obliged to beg pardon on his knees before the Junior Dean, at a date in the latter part of 1688.

The condemnation explains why Swift went to England even before Trinity was turned over to the Jacobites, as happened in the next year, and it may explain his silence in regard to that eventful period in the College history, but of its immediate causes we know little.

Was it perhaps because Swift had a hand in the composition of the *Tripos*[29] recited during the usual end-of-term entertainments at Trinity? The date is July 11th, 1688, when Swift was still at Trinity; and the author of the piece, or at least its reciter, was a John Jones, who was forthwith expelled in consequence of the unheard-of audacity of his satire on the College authorities.

Barrett[30] attributed the real paternity of the satire to Swift, and was followed in this view by Scott; Leslie Stephen calls Swift's collaboration a "bare possibility,[5]' whereas Forster finds it an outrage on Swift's intelligence to saddle him with such a piece of writing.[31]

We think it not unlikely that Swift had at least a hand in the matter. The *Tripos* is really not a great work: it is an assemblage of assonances, of vague accusations clothed in a sort of drunken context. But we must remember that such poor jokes were, even later on, a favourite amusement of Swift. Yet reading the *Tripos* we feel under the poor jokes some strong stream of hatred, of uncouth anarchism, which goes deeper than the superficial and pert fun of such jokes. There is the will and capacity to wound, and above all a directness in the insolence, a mercilessness in the savage laughter which speaks volumes.

How well we can picture this poor student, given to solitary gritting of the teeth, too poor even to cut a figure

in the gay circle of his friends, and already too deeply depressed to find a voice for himself, prompting and aiding a courageous and independent yokel who wanted to make fun of his masters.[32]

The vengeance of Lloyd was a horrible humiliation to Swift; to have to bend the knee was precisely the cruellest punishment he could suffer. Those who are too much on their dignity are indeed commonly scoundrels at heart ; and it was only right that, some years later, in speaking of Lord Wharton,[33] Swift repaid Lloyd by the cold, casual statement of his mean-spirited servility, with some direct, truly Swiftian allusions to the easy morality of his wife.[34]

So the question opened in 1688 was closed in 1711. But this humiliation perhaps spurred Swift to fly before the greater part of the College had gone to England, and his studies were brought to an end a few months before he could apply for the M.A. degree, which was likely to be denied to him.

He was then twenty-two years old : a young man, and without prospects. Even the return to the land of his fathers, even this liberation from an academy where he had felt imprisoned, could not dispel his sense of utter emptiness. At a time when others are embarking on a charted course that leads to a safe haven, he had lost all hopes of reaching security and independence.

He was now at least free—to be more thoroughly enslaved in some months[5] time—but all his past life weighed on the young man with the dead weight of loneliness and exile.

This is the explanation of the problem of Swift's nationality, of his feeling for the land where he was born. Bound to Ireland's soil, he felt himself superior to his comrades, members of Irish families mostly for many

generations back, for his had only recently settled in the land. He felt himself an exile because of his precarious prospects, because of his imprisonment in College, because of his lack of parents. His solitude provided all that was necessary to estrange him from the country where he found himself and to make him desire the land where he could not be.

Although in England he was to suffer more, much more perhaps, than he had suffered in Ireland, he had already made his choice before coming over. He liked England better and hoped more from it.

Expelled almost violently from the bosom of the "ascendancy," he alluded directly to the English in Ireland, speaking of "*optima terra, passima gens.*" But really he did not like even Irish earth. That soil was for him synonymous with Ireland beyond Dublin and the English settlements, with Celtic Ireland, which he saw only dimly—a sort of colony where he was forced to live outside of the motherland. And even this *optima terra* was a poor country[35] : he had this conviction even before making use of it as a political argument against England, even before feeling himself a rat in a hole.

This feeling really dominated his whole life. He felt himself bound accidentally to Ireland, and he did not like Ireland, for he could never contemplate that country objectively. It was not just a sentiment that developed in later years, an effect of the better life which he lived in England. Because even if he liked England better, he never felt himself pure English, English in a national sense.

He had no fatherland : this is perhaps the right solution of his problem. He had only a nostalgic sentiment of solitude in both countries. He desired some land where he could be Swift—whereas he was always either a despised Englishman in Ireland or a colonist on a trip in England.

He could really never feel like a native : not only because of the difficulty of fixing the nationality of the English in Ireland in this time of flux, of the coming and going of influence and power, but because his first years brought to light a deep-implanted nostalgia, a sense of solitude, of being alone in an alien world. Therefore he could seek his fortune egotistically *per fas et nefas,* without regarding wider interests, sentimental interests of race or family (which imply one another mutually), except in so far as they coincided with his personal interests.

The critic may, if he chooses, deduce some theory from his English or Irish nationality. But Swift himself never had a fatherland, felt no blood-tie either with country or family. He was an adventurer in a hostile world, the first man in the jungle.

CHAPTER II

A GENTLEMAN—SPOILED

AFTER a few months with his mother at Leicester, Swift went to Sir William Temple, an old friend of his family.

W. E. Browning[1] relates on doubtful authority that the wife of Temple was in some way related to Swift's family. He wishes to explain why Temple took an interest in Swift; but, in fact, this interest was not very great, as will appear later, and Temple himself in recommending Swift did not hint at any family tie.[2]

At all events, in June 1689, at Temple's residence,[3] two very peculiar characters confronted one another for the first time. We might say that it was the meeting of two egotisms, or rather the meeting of a constructive and battling egotism with a calm and matured selfishness.

We might argue that Temple's example taught Swift to think of himself first and foremost. Here before his eyes was an old man declining in easy security: a spectacle that may well have repelled him, even if he never doubted that the science of life could be learned from the celebrated statesman. It may even have incited him to adopt for himself the position of a fighter.

We have here the ample theme of Swift's evolution in the next ten years. The responsibility of that evolution is with the man of state who avoided responsibility all his life long, and whom Swift now met feeling like "a cadet of Heaven"[4] before that majestic calm and aged assurance.

Although Temple had pleasing qualities, his character as a whole inspires antipathy. This is not only due to Macaulay's disparagements,[6] or to his possibly unfortunate influence on Swift. In Temple we are presented with a type of diplomat who risks nothing for his ideas, retires without protesting when he is wanted no longer, and enjoys a reputation compounded of the right social qualities, and the right personal relations.

At the outset, be it remembered that Temple was born in a Puritan *entourage* : his father had a prominent position in Ireland, first under Charles I, then under Cromwell, so that Temple learned to consider the Irish people, the rebels, as little better than a colonial population.[8]

Temple had been a member of the Convention Parliament in Ireland, and as member of a dominant, overbearing faction, he thought he had a particular aptitude for political activity ; yet, as we shall see later, the only time he had a hand in constitutional arrangements, he made a great blunder.

He accommodated himself easily to the Restoration. He was prepared to change party, because he had no idea of politics in the modern sense. For him politics were essentially the bending and binding to himself of some autocratic power : they were not politics of a nation, but politics of a prominent individual. They were a play of influences in the councils of the great. Nothing was further from his thoughts than the weight of public opinion ; therefore, he never sat in Parliament after leaving Ireland. Elevation to a seat of authority was to him synonymous with royal favour ; and when he lost the royal favour, he retired, not only, as Macaulay thinks, because of his love of peace and his easy-going nature, but because he had never taken any other political factor into consideration.

His celebrity in diplomacy he owed essentially to the personal friendship of De Witt. Before the Triple Alliance

he was an underling, and did only what he was directed to do : he had no hand in the Peace of Breda. It was only later that he was in evidence in diplomacy, and then as a result of De Witt's personal liking for him, which led to the open and fair " brotherly dealings " for which Temple was praised,[7] but which are, on the contrary, precisely the usual make-believes in diplomacy : even Talleyrand struck those who dealt with him by his frank, straightforward manner ![8] No great skill is required to form an alliance which all desire. Macaulay hits the mark when he praises the Triple Alliance on the ground that it was a protection against domestic tyranny, but certainly this was not Temple's motive in the affair, for what mattered to him was only the satisfaction of the King.

Temple was, however, really clever in keeping on good terms with both the Prince of Orange and De Witt : it was the sort of smooth skill of a man who did not take friendship very seriously. He had really no sense of responsibility or of direction in politics. When the Cabal, four years after the Triple Alliance, destroyed the benefits of the latter, he made no attempt to protect the creature of his diplomacy : he retired to his garden at Sheen and grew fruits and flowers. A beautiful gesture for a successful general like Cincinnatus or a disappointed Candide, but it is not very impressive to see a diplomat take a defeat so easily.

When the politics of the Cabal had reached their natural term, he was called in—Arlington had in a moment of sincerity given him the credit of the Triple Alliance[9]—to sign the peace of Nimeguen. But he was really called in on account of Dutch sympathies for him, and, in truth, the drawing up of the articles (very bad articles they were) was not confided to him.—To his credit we can only put the marriage of the Princess Mary and the Prince of Orange.

It was only afterwards that he took a hand in politics. A strange position indeed to be the originator of a reform in an administration which he knew only from the outside, and to disentangle complications in English politics of which he had no direct experience. More strange still was it that Charles II should choose him ; but probably the King wanted cover behind a new man who had not many enemies, and was not suspected by the Commons.

Temple's constitutional reform reveals at once the utterly theoretical character of his politics, and his fundamentally autocratic convictions,[10] and it reveals as well a blind Utopian faith in new constitutions and new orders. Approved in April 1679, after some weeks the whole scheme collapsed because Temple permitted the constitution in the Council of an internal committee of a few members. The four members of the innermost committee, supported by the King, could hold their own against the outsiders, and so reproduced the evils which Temple's reform was intended to remove.

Afterwards Temple sat in Parliament, taking care not to express any opinion, either on behalf of the King, or of the other party. As soon as he could, he retired, being at the same time struck off the list of the Privy Council. So his political endeavour came to an inglorious end.

He would have nothing to do with the second revolution ; he refused any appointment from William III. He restricted himself to giving advice to the King—a very easy way to appear important without partaking of any actual responsibility. He had had his experience. Politics were not so simple as diplomacy, there he had no means of displaying his personal charm and good manners—the only abilities he really possessed. When Swift came to him he had already been in retirement for some ten years. He lived with his celebrated wife, Lady Dorothy Osborne, and that strange sister of his, Lady

Giffard, who had a great share in all his diplomacies, following him in his voyages and accompanying him to the Courts,

We must bear the nature of Temple's life in mind, and see his character in a true light, because his influence on Swift can hardly be over-estimated. We do not go so far as to say with Macaulay that Swift received from him his political education : certainly, Swift, as a political writer, knew more of his subject than most political writers, but is it really necessary to know anything to be a good political writer ? And, on the other hand, Temple had had no political career to teach him the deeper significance of popular sentiments among which Swift moved afterwards at his ease ; the conditions which faced Swift were radically different from conditions in the political world which Temple had known. It would, perhaps, be better to say that Temple's influence lay in his providing Swift with the *historical* intimate knowledge of precedents, which was to be exploited by him in his political writings : but this knowledge was probably less due to personal intercourse than to Temple's publications, which Swift edited.[11]

But from all arguments which Swift possibly learned from Temple, he drew consequences directly contrary to the fundamental tenets of Temple. Their characters were essentially different, and hence their ways of handling questions were utterly opposed. Swift was the reverse of easy-going ; Temple had attained his mediocre ambition to be the recipient of universal respect and recognition early, and with little effort, whereas Swift started from nothing, and could never be satisfied by feeling himself to be a revered, detached authority.

We must also take into account the effects of a direct stirring of the young blood against the old (and Temple

was a most obdurate *laudator temporis acti*—see his *Defence of the Ancients*—and had no patience with the young) ; no wonder with Swift all Temple's tables of value were reversed.

In the course of this biography, we shall find many instances of this effect *d rebours* of Temple on Swift. For example, Temple's politics were wholly founded on Dutch sympathies, his career on a Dutch alliance, his very character—his quiet, his love of gardening[12]—had something Hollandish in it. Swift, on the contrary, although he had not very much interest in foreign politics and peoples, is moved by a strong political hostility to the Dutch (as in *The Conduct of the Allies),* and even displays towards them a sort of personal hatred which can scarcely be explained away by Dutch enmity to the English in the East.[13] In *Gulliver's Travels,* Swift makes his chief of pirates a Dutchman,[14] and never has his hero rescued by Dutch captains. Japan is a pretext for him to launch forth on Dutch irreligion and cruelty : in his pages the Dutch live up to the stereotyped libels of their enemies :

Crouching at home and cruel when abroad.
—Dryden.

This general sentiment is reflected in Swift's dislike of William I I I , for which there were indeed direct political and personal reasons, but which was reinforced, as it were, by Temple's friendship with the King.

Another point, to be developed in the next chapter, is Swift's religious coldness, which had perhaps some connection with Temple's irreligion,[15] even if it was not true, as Burnet says, that the old diplomat corrupted in this sense everybody who came near him. But again, the scepticism of Temple was that of an admirer of Epicurus, and of a gentleman who had passed through

the Puritan phase, then experienced a Restoration without religious implications, and known a Court where religion was uncertain. If Temple had any religious preferences, we should suppose that they were towards Protestantism of a dissenting kind, and a toleration so wide as to embrace deism. Liberty for Temple was, in a very broad acceptation of the term, a measure of hygiene, as he says when he speaks of long life.[16]

On the contrary, the same lack of warmth in Swift's religious experience drew him towards an Established Church, a duly controlled and strong legalised set of ceremonies and dogmas, and against all forms of religious liberty.

Last but not least, we contrast their respective expressions in literature. Who can imagine Swift's writing about gardening or making up a theory of popular movements? It may be true that Temple, in writing theoretically on such subjects,[17] was trying to maintain the soundness of his position in politics : but Swift never theorised at all. Temple's discussion was at best a *post mortem,* whereas Swift gripped the future directly. He had no idea of literature as an amusement, an *otium* : it was his calling—and perhaps not literature at all.

Yet he could have learned something of the literary trade from Temple. He could have learned how to put his thoughts in an easily understandable form, although Temple's resounding style is very different from the bluntness of Swift.

But Temple's " counter-influence " is best shown by the party sympathies of Swift. In terms of Swift's politics it is indeed impossible to determine Temple's political preferences. The name Whig was hardly in fashion before Temple had closed his career ; and moreover Temple was a diplomat first, a politician after. But in his view of foreign affairs he was completely bound up with the most rooted shibboleths of the Whigs : alliance with

Holland, admiration of the Prince of Orange, and his continental Protestantism,

Even here Swift quickly showed his opposition. On the hard road which he had to follow he lost the Whig ideas which he could have absorbed from Temple very easily ; and once he was free to play his own hand, appeared defiantly in the Tory profession. But of Swift's politics we shall have much more to say hereafter.

From the great influence which Temple exercised on Swift we must not infer that Swift never left Temple's side in these early days, or that he was attached to him professionally in the capacity of a secretary.

The biographers have inevitably conveyed a wrong impression in this respect, even if they distinguished between a first and second period in the relations. Later Swift himself only spoke of a " position " with Temple, when he enlarged to Stella on Temple's whims as a thing tolerated for a very long period.

Really Temple overshadowed ten years of Swift's life, but not by a constant vicinity nor by a continuous tyranny. In a general sense Swift depended on Temple for ten years, during which he was never able to consider the old gentleman as completely discarded from his life. A position of dependence in every sense, real and unbroken, but for a briefer period, was that of Swift's cousin, Thomas, who became Sir William's chaplain, a better position than Swift's, and perhaps the cause of Swift's overbearing demeanour towards Thomas.

It is worth glancing quickly at the periods of Swift's actual residence at Moor Park, so as to understand Swift's various attitudes towards Temple, and the breadth of Temple's influence on Swift.

It was probably in June 1689 that Swift came to Temple for the first time. He did not remain there for a

whole year, for he hoped to improve his health by returning to Ireland ; Temple recommended him on May 29th, 1690, to Sir Robert Southwell, an important figure in the Irish Government.[18]

But he is again at Moor Park at Christmas 1691 (he says, " on a visit "[19]), he stays on, but there are presumably frequent and often wide interruptions of his residence. He went to Leicester to his mother regularly : we think these journeys signified long absences, and may be related to the famous travels on foot in which he is said to have mixed with the common people, a very much discussed legend, and an unfailing source of inferences for biographers, who find in it a sign of his morbid leaning towards low company. We regard Swift's frequentation of common people as a sort of desperate, fitful struggle towards a liberty to be attained by mixing with persons who knew nothing of him and his position, and therefore imparted to him a pleasant feeling of being master of his life and destiny. The double life appeals to all adventurous spirits—and only by sinking could Swift emerge.

A long interruption of a month at least signified a visit to Oxford, and his taking his M.A. there, on the 5th of July, 1692.—He left Temple definitely in May 1694, going to Leicester and then to Ireland, where he took orders, as we shall see later on. We do not know the exact date of his return to Moor Park, perhaps it was in the summer of 1696[20] and Temple died on January 27th, 1699.

To resume : we may say that in ten years of dependence, Swift was really subject to Temple's commands and in direct contact with him during three sojourns, the first of ten months, a year at the utmost (Swift's " two years " is an over-statement), another of three years and some months, the last of two years and a half.

There has been much ado among biographers (Scott, the first of them) as to the possibility that Sir William Temple " handled " Swift in different ways during his different residences. But—for the biographer—the external evidence in this regard is much less important than the underlying psychological conditions. On the ground of external evidence, we should say that the lord of Moor Park was insupportable from a young man's point of view, and Swift said later, probably thinking of him, that there was no such thing as " a fine old gentleman.[5]'

Swift evidently went to him, not to find a comfortable, lasting job, but to find, through his protection, some good situation. He was at first employed as a sort of common clerk who read and wrote at his Honour's request. It is evident that Temple also regarded the employment as a transitory one, and intended to put Swift in the way of something else, and Swift slipped off at the first prospect of finding some occupation in Ireland. There were no bad words between them ; on the contrary, both were glad to be rid of one another.

Temple's recommendation to Southwell misses fire, Swift's health does not improve in Ireland : he returns to Moor Park, and gradually he falls into the duties of a regular secretary. The position grows on him, as it were ; he is doing something useful, and he himself becomes a habit for Temple.

Yet we should consider attentively the relation between the two selfish individuals. Temple was old, and in station much the superior ; he had become accustomed to the presence of Swift, and needed his small services. But one does not transform a selfish man into a pleasant master by being useful to him. A selfish man will never confess that any of his servants are useful. The more conscious of their utility he becomes, indeed the more he likes them, the more he shows himself insupportable.

These three or four years are the bitter years of Swift's experience. It was probably then that he was treated as a schoolboy.[21] He was in pain should Sir William happen to look cold and be out of humour for three or four days, and used to suspect a hundred reasons.—The old politician did not even trouble to be commonly polite, and so he " spoiled a fine gentleman."[22]

He made the young man debase himself, with propitiatory words and more humiliating silences, into a position of dependence that seared the soul; when Swift recovered again he was no longer a gentleman. He was a cad with a revenge to take, a man who had learned what great virtues and dignified honesty may really connote in intimacy. He had learned to despise the great; whereas in the gentleman there should ever be, if not an actual, a potential hero-worship. Swift could no longer admire anyone to the point of making efforts to become like him.

This was the real position of Swift and his patron, that position which has enabled some biographers and a relative of Temple to say that Swift was in the condition of an underpaid servant (at £20 a year). Whereas, other biographers take up the vindication of Temple and Swift at the same time, by making their intercourse a sort of Alcibiades-Socrates dialogue. It is true indeed that Swift himself, who is very inaccurate or forgetful on this period of his life (he speaks of being twenty-one years old when he was already twenty-six,) says that, already, during what we should call his second stay, that is before 1694, he had inspired some confidence, and was often entrusted with matters of great importance ; for example, that he was acting as a sort of ambassador of Temple, and was commissioned to refer Temple's opinions on the Triennial Bill to the King and the Earl of Portland. This may have happened later on, but, in any case, such a task would not have been inconsistent **with**

subordination in the house, and exclusion from all intimacies. Temple, retired from affairs, had no other secretary to charge with such business. On the other hand, these commissions only conferred on Swift a sort of transitory representative position, as when Temple, incommoded by old age and infirmities, made him play the companion to William III. Temple was ready to diminish Swift again after he had discharged the small duty. Such is the way of the world : to cut off an inferior from all possibilities of intercourse with one's highly placed friends, to remain oneself the only possible intermediary between life and the poor and humble, and alternatively to give to the poor and humble, as a proof of one's favour (which afterwards they will pay for heavily), the duty of carrying out such social duties as the patron cannot himself perform, either because they inconvenience him or reflect on his dignity.

From his intercourse with the King, Swift derived nothing but the offer of a company of horses, some deeper insight into the true character of those in the highest places, and was directed to eat asparagus with their stalks. Even in this personal intercourse Swift was really insignificant, as is best shown by the fact that, some years later, he tried in vain, despite a promise from the King, to gain either direct or indirect access to the royal presence.

Not for a moment did Swift cease to strain under the leash. Temple, however, was not at all disposed to let him go, to accede to the desire which made Swift put up with his patron—the desire of a position. It may even be doubted whether Temple was ever sincere in letting him hope for anything. Certainly he never said that he had no intention to find Swift employment, knowing that, if he had said so, Swift would have searched for himself.

The point indeed that is generally missed by biographers is the reason for Swift's remaining. They

speak as if Swift remained at Moor Park because he had no better way of earning his bread, that, so to speak, he made a calling of being secretary to Sir William. This is false, as his comings and goings show. He was there only in expectation of a place ; and if he did not free himself earlier it was because he would thereby have risked forfeiting all hopes of the good pleasure of Temple, and not because the place of a secretary was the best he could hope for. So much so, that when, after three years, Temple offered him a place (which he could well have offered many years before, for it depended upon his charge as Master of the Rolls) and it was refused, Swift in a few months had himself appointed vicar, a step he could easily have taken very much sooner if he had not hoped for something better from Temple. Swift could have chosen this career earlier, had he really stayed only to get a living ; his mother could easily give him shelter for some months. But even Swift confesses openly that he was not a secretary of Temple, but had gone there expecting a place. He says, indeed, generically he " had lived " with Temple,[23] as before he had said that he was there " on a visit "[24] which was prolonged ; and Lecky[25] sees very clearly that Swift remained at Moor Park in the simple expectation that Sir William " pushed his interest," as in his recommendation even Temple had spoken very vaguely of Swift's functions at Moor Park.

But by this time, Swift perhaps nourished quite another hope for his future, that of becoming a poet, and of gaining a position by means of poetry, as innumerable writers had done at the time[26] : the example of Dryden was before his eyes.

We can measure exactly how far his efforts went. We have evidence of his writing poetry perhaps even before his returning to Temple.[27] In 1693 are dated his last poems of a serious, high-brow kind, and of these he spoke in a wholly professional vein,[28] confessing to be

" very fond of his own writings."[29] By this time, he was working on some translations, which, in all likelihood, remained unfinished, and this was the end of his activity as a poet.

Swift never lost anything that he wrote, even if he rarely signed his works ; therefore more of his poetic efforts would be available if he had continued preparing for a career as a poet. When we find more verses (1698), they are definitely no longer poetry : they are truly Swiftian poems, occasional and light, made up of small trifles and accidents, in the vein of his best efforts in the coming years, which can scarcely be regarded as poetry in a literary sense.[30]

By his earlier efforts he meant, no doubt, to be introduced into the literary world by the usual means : attachment to some recognised man of letters, and by this means gaining the circle of the wits[31] ; he had also in this enterprise some hope of his distant cousin Dryden. But Dryden judged : " Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet ! " Whether this judgment referred only to the *Ode to the Athenian Society* (1691) or to all other odes he wrote until 1693 (Johnson's narrative is ambiguous), it seems certain that he lost in this way his best hope of entering the world of literature. If he made more efforts he made them without confidence, as when he endeavoured to cultivate Congreve, the budding genius, to whom he dedicated an ode in 1693, probably on the occasion of the production of the *Double Dealer*, of which Dryden also wrote :

> *The present age of wit obscures the last . . .*
> *Oh that your brows my laurel had sustained!*

The, as it were, practical import of Dryden's judgment explains Swift's hatred against his illustrious relative. The *Battle of the Books* (1697) and the *Tale* are full of attacks on the poet, and perhaps, in a sense, an attempt

at damaging Dryden may be detected.[82] Before Dryden's death (1701), the debt had been fully paid. There was all the material in Dryden for a disparaging satire : his translations (*Virgil in the hide of an ass),* his pride, his change of religion, even his loss of the poet-laureateship on William's advent.

And yet it was lucky for Swift that he did not proceed in the enterprise of heroic poetry—an enterprise which appears so strange to us who know the special gifts of Swift. From the above letters, as from the poems themselves, we can easily draw the inference that great efforts were necessary on Swift's part in writing poetry. When he could no longer hope for help from Dryden, he felt a sense of liberation in letting poetry go, and in applying for some easier task.

Yet the poems are not wholly bad. Swift's genius could shine even in uncongenial settings. But they are infantile, crude, particularly the first three (1689-91).

The *Ode to the Athenian Society* deserves complete condemnation on these grounds. In its disorder and inconsequence it is almost incomprehensible : the *Athenian Mercury* of which Swift thought highly because of Temple's interest in it, was satisfied with the ode, and Dunton, the publisher of the *Athenian Mercury* published it in the fifth *Supplement.* Swift always felt some little gratitude towards Dunton, and, even in later years, was inclined to spare this Whig as far as he could.[33]

The *Ode to King William* is a series of exclamations :

> *The boundless glory all redounds to thee.*
> *The impulse, the sight, the events were wholly thine.*[34]

And he thus binds his argument:

> *Nor is this all.*

The childishness can be discerned even in the *Ode to Dr. William Sancroft,* made to order, it can truly be said :

Swift seems to be unable to find the way to his theme.

But the odes to Temple, those of June 1689, and those of 1693, are more interesting because of their personal import. The first gives Swift's first impressions on coming to Moor Park. The flattery was partly sincere, so far as it reproduces Swift's feeling of the great social gap between Temple and himself.[35] There is in places a better strain, notably in the third stanza, which has an ample rhythm, and is truly inspired, as W. B. Yeats thinks, possibly because Swift was really moved against the learning which he lacked and the learned who despised him. Poetry was for him a way of rebellion against " school," a finding of a path in the world by means which his teachers disparaged.

In 1693, at the end of his brief poetical career, Swift wrote an ode to Congreve, who had been at Kilkenny with him. Congreve was three years younger, but had already reached a sort of doubtful eminence. He was not really a man Swift could praise : he was a licentious writer, a spoiled child of fortune, Swift's very opposite. In the long flattery with which Swift presented him, we can, however, see at last some sign of the personal spirit of Swift, in that small episode in the plain manner and the fable-tone of his later satires :

> *Last year a lad hence by his parents sent*
> *With other cattle to the city went.*[36]

The poem was certainly composed after Dryden's criticism of Swift, because Dryden is alluded to as Mr. Baynes, the name Dryden received in *The Rehearsal.* And this ode to Congreve is almost occasional poetry, written for a particular end. It perhaps obtained a polite acknowledgment, as Swift never attacked Congreve later on, although Congreve was a Whig, but, on the contrary, helped him to an income of £1,200.[37]

It is more interesting to note that the second ode to

Temple of the same time was also occasional : its subject was Temple's illness and recovery in December 1693.

In it we have only the minimum amount of flattery, and it is all very cold, very dutiful, the muse's farewell :

Where her own Temple was her darling theme.[38]

But the ode, commenced in this manner of high allegory, wanders far from Temple. It describes the grief of Lady Dorothy in that domestic vein of minute observation which, later on, was so dear to Swift, and the poem (perhaps as an implicit *monet* to Temple) deviates to describe Swift's sorrows in a series of verses which are truly signed at last by Swift's rabid and tormented soul —perhaps one of his most intimate confessions either in prose or poetry :

Malignant goddess ! bane to my repose.

Poetry no longer satisfies him :

Say whence it comes that thou art grown of late
A poor amusement for my scorn and hate ?[39]

And Swift proceeds to lay down the law for moral poetry :

Stoop not to interest, flattery or deceit;
Nor with hired thoughts be thy devotion paid.

Good counsels, but they imply the abandonment of poetry as a trade, and Swift knows it :

Madness like this no fancy ever seized,
Still to be cheated, never to be pleased . . .

He renounces imagination :

There thy enchantment broke, and from this hour
I here renounce thy visionary power.™

Swift held to that.[41] Only six years afterwards we can find him writing verses but they are, as we observed

before, verses for a table book, poetry more as a game than as a work of art. Swift has already attained to his crude, disillusioned observation of naked reality, of the contrast between grand words and mean necessity, which is henceforth to be the mode of his poetry—of a poetry which is made precisely of the unpoetic and non-fantastic, which deals with matters even more unpoetic than Swift's prose works.[42]

Between the first and the last ode to Temple a " fine gentleman " had indeed been spoiled : Swift had understood the real position to which he had committed himself in hoping for something from Temple, and Temple, this eminent man, that " spirit so divine," was in Swift's eyes, at least in his gnawing moments of doubt and anxiety, a tyrant, the model of all the deceptions which he would suffer at the hands of superior beings. Between Swift and Temple there was, metaphorically speaking, a condition of blackmail. At first Temple had possibly under-estimated the gifts and particular utility of the uncouth young man, cast upon him from the other shore, full of the inconsequence and indiscipline of the collegian ; Swiftjwas not quick at; realising what precisely Tempie wanted from him. And Temple lets him slip very easily : after a few months he recommends him for a vague unimportant situation.

When Swift returns, Temple adapts himself by slow degrees to the use of this secretary, who is filled with the fear of his displeasure : a revealing fear, for it is not the fear of losing his place, but of losing the hoped-for recommendation to which he has already sacrificed precious time. Temple becomes accustomed to him, and perhaps sees dimly the advantage of letting him hope, and keeping him too as an under- or unpaid secretary. Sir William is a good enough diplomat to know the way

of keeping a hold on a person by promises. It may have been the natural effect of senile selfishness rather than a lucid calculation : a selfishness which is not conscious that anyone can want anything but its own condescension, its own confidence.—Bitter truth, the mean reality of life : men are not usually great sinners and low schemers, but rather they ruin their betters by a mean playing upon hopes and fears. At the same time, the master feels obscurely a need to diminish the dependant as a sort of revenge, because he feels that the exploited party who slowly realises the exploitation fails to give his master the supine love which the latter expects.

So that when Swift (probably more than once) reveals his desire to become independent, denounces (as it were) the mutual and tacit compact—faithful service on the one hand and protection on the other—Temple is really hurt. Was it not enough for Swift to remain in his shadow ? So it was not from devotion that he remained with him ?

Swift recoils from a rupture, recoils until more of his hopes have failed. He is prepared for escape ; he can enter orders and be free. But still he retains hopes of Temple.

Later on, Swift said he was then averse to taking orders just to have a livelihood.[43] Yet this is probably a double-faced truth, because at first he considered[44] the possibility of acquiring a prebendary through Temple's influence. He hoped for this, and also for something better from Temple, but at the time hesitated to select a calling, when Temple did not fulfil his promise of religious advancement, which would settle him in a fixed life and fixed duties. He had a high idea of honour, as all young men have, and a higher than most, because all around him were those petty compromises which a solitary man deems to be worse than crimes : and we cannot measure the extent of the

influence on him of this feeling, and say how his hopes of Temple procuring him some position caused him to remain where he was. Swift never alluded to Temple's " blackmail," but such a thing is never confessed, even to oneself, for to confess it is to confess one's low position and one's discomfiture.

In 1694 the subtle psychological game ends at last in freedom. Swift says that Sir William offered him a place worth about £120 a year, " whereupon Swift told him that since he had now an opportunity of living without Being driven into the Church for a maintenance, he was resolved to . . . take holy orders."[45] Probably the offer was always a little vague, and was repeated more than once until Swift lost hope of receiving even this moderate pension, and, when the offer was renewed, thought it the best policy to say that he was going to be a clergyman, taking the offer as a proposal made by Temple to get rid of him. He called the bluff, in brief, and Temple[46] was enraged, but could say nothing. Had he not, in fact, offered a place to the young man, and by so doing admitted his right to depart? If not, he had been insincere, and did not really mean to help Swift on in life.

Temple " was extremely angry I left him,"[47] for in the last two years he had considered Swift to be " a little necessary to him."[48] The leave-taking was in fact a rupture : Swift was not to be ordained until the autumn, and yet already in May he retired to his mother's house.

What infuriated Temple was that Swift at the end of all was to receive a place by other means than his. He was so angry that Swift had to go on his knees to get a certificate " of his conduct in the family,"[49] which was necessary before he could take orders. With the view of Temple's character which had been vouchsafed him, Swift felt very uneasy about the chances of a testimonial. The tone of the letter does not prove that the relations were those of a tyrant and slave,[50] but merely that Swift

had to behave like a dismissed servant in order to obtain what even a dismissed servant has a right to obtain. We can find no other explanation : Swift's submissiveness does not imply precise faults on his part, as he can only reproach himself for " infirmities " which caused him to fall " from your Honour's esteem."[51] Clearly no crime was imputable to him.

A relative of Temple, perhaps his nephew John, described the letter as penitential ; but it incriminated Temple, rather than Swift.

Swift took deacon's orders late in 1694, priest's orders in January 1695, and, shortly after, he was presented to the Prebend of Kilroot by the Lord Deputy, Capel, who had been Temple's neighbour at Sheen. It seems, however, that any help which Swift had in obtaining his prebendary came from the friends of his own family.

Kilroot was a lonely place on Belfast Lough : there Swift had his first experience of work in the Established Church of Ireland. If a real task was to hand, it was the conversion from dissent of the low Anglo-Scotch, whom he so heartily disliked. We hear of him doing nothing in this line : he enjoyed some social life, however, and received attentions from " ascendancy" families like the Dobbses, and, in the town of Carrickfergus, the Clementses and Lord and Lady Donegal. Dobbs is said to have been the only Anglican in Kilroot itself; but, besides this vicarage, Swift's parish included the Vicarage of Templecorran and the Rectory of Ballynury. He had also as a neighbour Waring, a friend of Trinity days, whose father was Archdeacon of Dromore.

" Growing weary in a few months,"[62] Swift returned to England, not necessarily on a direct invitation from Temple (as Deane Swift makes out), for there was scarcely time for a change in the feelings of Temple, nor

have we the least hint of another " penitential " letter of Swift, It seems hardly possible that a reconciliatory adjustment could have been brought about by correspondence : it needed perhaps a personal intervention of some personage in England.

In any case, we have no evidence that Swift went straight to Temple ; and there is reason to think that he arrived in England uncertain of his future plans. He had a licence of absence from Kilroot, which was presently prolonged to January 1698, at which date, instead of applying for a further licence,[53] he resigned, and helped a certain Rev. John Winder to acquire the prebend.

On the true motives of his resignation there are two legends. The first is that he had been guilty of an attempt to ravish a girl. The story has been shown to be false, but that it should have grown up is interesting for its bearing on the alleged sexual frigidity of Swift.

In the second legend, Swift finds a poor parson burdened with a big family, and, out of pity, hands him the living. Winder had a large family, and Swift did make applications on his behalf (as is proved by the *Corr.),* but Swift did not resign the living until he returned to England (a fact which also disproves the first legend) ; moreover, the research of accurate historians shows that Winder was not so hard up after all.

But the very existence of these legends shows that there were apparently no good reasons for Swift's resignation, and that really people were at a loss to explain it : at the time somebody wrote him to blame his " prudence for doing it before he was possessed of something else."[54] The whole of this evidence shows that it is really impossible to accept the version of Deane Swift, and that the ground of such an apparently inconsequent action can be found only by examining as two distinct occurrences his returning to England and the resignation.

The plain, literal truth is better than all hypotheses.

Swift grows weary of Kilroot : it was really very dull, he had no intimate friends, and the history of Varina[55] was precisely one of these episodes which can only be liquidated by flight. Possibly Swift went off in the expectation that Varina would recall him to Ireland, but Varina was probably the dullest little head possible : she liked to dominate, to refuse, etc., and Swift's act of independence made her more obstinate than ever. She did not write to Swift (who afterwards was obliged to ask somebody what was the matter with her), and, in the meanwhile, Swift (by means of which we are ignorant) was reconciled with Temple.

I

It is evident that now Temple at last understood the real value of Swift. Swift had left him in the middle of the correction of his works, and Temple was too inconvenienced by old age to attend to a very vexatious task, so much so that he did not even take care, in publishing, to complete what he had written, and after having provoked the famous polemic on Ancient and Modern, his rejoinder against his critics contained only stray " thoughts."[56]

On the other hand, Swift now realised how little he could gain without very eminent assistance : only a preferment in a dull, distant county, badly paid, and with no hope of a change for the better. He had had the time to see the most dreadful sight a young man can see : people contented with their small fortune, and employed after twenty or thirty years, working in the same surroundings, and reaching a sort of local importance without reality, without prospects. Far better to wait than have—so little ; better a tedious work under a dull old patron (was Temple so bad as Swift had thought when he escaped him ?), but in contact with a wider life, with wider interests, with better opportunities.[67]

So they came together again, the young man escaping from Ireland in the same spirit as he had escaped from Temple, and as he had earlier escaped from Trinity ; the old man content to find again his familiar secretary, whom perhaps he might have retained by better management.

At first perhaps things were tentative. Swift always had his place in Ireland to which he could fly if the situation was intolerable, and this imposed on Temple a restraint, turned him into an amiable being, a little gruff possibly, but bent on finding a way of making Swift contented with him. This new deportment on the part of Temple, the pleasant feeling that he could escape when he liked, made of Swift's second coming to Moor Park something of a success. It was no longer a prison, and the patron was easier to handle than before.[58]

These are probably the circumstances which brought about the psychological conditions which made so wide a difference between the second and third stay of Swift : the reason for our finding so much contradictory evidence on Swift's position in regard to Temple, whereas externally this position had not altered, nor had Swift a better place or higher exterior dignity. In such conditions, even the renewed promises of Temple took another construction : the exchange of an Irish for an English prebend, which had now been promised (and, as we shall see, was effectively assured to Swift), induced Swift to sit tight. He had reason to think that Temple really proposed to give him an English position, so as to avoid the peril of his sailing off to Kilroot in a fit of discontent.

On the other hand, it is probable that a better, more intimate feeling had dawned upon them both. When Swift resigned, in January 1698, his prebend at Kilroot, the King had possibly already promised Temple to give Swift a prebend at Westminster or Canterbury ; but, be that as it may, Swift and Temple's relations were then

become friendly, as between two collaborators, because between the return to Moor Park and the resignation, Swift had written the *Battle of the Books.* It is not far-fetched to infer that Temple, much pleased to have somebody who could answer the disparaging criticisms of his foes in the same violent style, and with a vengeance, was drawn at last to a real desire to be useful to this young man who could, and would, work for him independently, and do more for him than a simple secretary could do.[59]

By entering into a polemic on the comparative worth of the Ancient and the Modern, Temple had really embarked upon a desperate enterprise for an outsider as he was, who could neither boast of any particular learning in the ancient literatures (it seems he knew no Greek at all), nor of an up-to-date wit and humour. In this polemic Temple was in deep waters : his subject implied a wide range of ideas and interest in wide classes of writers and learned men.

The actual origin[60] of the polemic had been petty : it had been a piece of the usual flattery by the witty Charles Perrault, who declared at the French Academie in January 1687,

> *Que Von pent comparer, sans craint d'etre injuste,*
> *Le sikle de Louis au beau siecle d'August.*

In the next year he went further, grounding this flattery on a *ParallHe des Anciens et des Modernesf*[1] wherefrom he deduced the superiority of the Moderns. In this theory he was joined by the popular Fontenelle,[62] who is fully persuaded[63] that " Pantiquite est un objet d'une espece particuliere, Peloignement le grossit. . . . On met les anciens bien haut pour abaisser ses contemporains."[64]

So started a great polemic[65] which only came to a

provisory end some fifteen years later, with the arbitration of Fenelon, who distributed equitably but mistakenly the blame and the praise. But the question was really then very much in the air. It had no clear-cut outlines, but its importance should be valued in relation to the great work on the theory of art which was proceeding in France, then in Italy and England, then in Germany, and which brought about the foundation of a romantic theory.[66] In fact, the controversy was not a " most idle and contemptible controversy " (Macaulay), and deserves to be judged more earnestly than it was judged by critics who, giving little thought to its implications, took the restricted standpoint of such superficial learning as Temple and Swift could boast.

- Quite clearly, Temple's basic mistake lay in failing to realise that the question had a completely different nature in France (from where he took it) and in England. Hence his arguments remained either abstractions which offered no way of approach to examples and actual judgments, or a vague laudation, founded on exploded legends of ancient, mysterious learning and fabulous achievements. Between Ancient and Modern there was not in England that common ground of widely analogous artistic tenets that there was in France.[67] The English moderns and the Ancient classics were completely unrelated, and their confrontation brought about a sort of imprecision, damnably dangerous to a matter-of-fact valuation.

However, Temple, without feeling, it seems, the " appeal of the older national poetry " as Robertson thinks,[68] enlarged the question, and rendered it more vague by introducing into it, not only the literary problem, but even the wider problem of a superiority of the Ancient to the Modern spirit, so that the question was now completely absurd, because devoid of all possible meaning.[69]

The **old** diplomat, in search of arguments which had not been already treated by his literary betters, and wishing to display the wide scope of his learned interests, thought of answering Perrault directly in his *Essay upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, 1690. A bad move badly conducted[70] : what an opening for the serious scholars and wits searching for employment, of whom England was then so full ! Wotton, the learned Prebendary of Salisbury, answered him directly with the *Reflections*. There was heat in the answer, and the bad temper of a scholar disposed to take Temple's publication as unlawful trespass. Wotton's satire, as Swift recognised[71] subsequently, went home.

But other wits with a more superficial learning, including the young would-be intellectuals of Christ Church,[72] took the side of the old diplomat.

In his search over all possible fields for models of learning, Temple had highly praised Phalaris's letters and *Æsop's Fables*, and the Hon. Charles Boyle thought to make a big " hit " by editing Phalaris's letters as a subsidiary of Temple's thesis. For some petty reason, Bentley, the keeper, refused to let Boyle consult the Phalaris of the St. James's library at his ease : Boyle, in the preface to his edition (1695) lamented the librarian's act. It was very unwise to drag such a man as Bentley into the melee, for Bentley was well-known as a bad character. Self-reliant and savagely scurrilous, as Macaulay says, Bentley was induced to contribute an appendix to the second edition of Wotton's book (1697), in which he demonstrated that the letters of Phalaris were a fake.

Boyle wrote his rejoinder in 1698 ; his book preceded the contemporarily written defence by Swift, and Temple then died without having heard of Bentley's further dissertation. Nor did Swift think fit to publish his own *Battle*; and even later on (1709), he restricted the significance

of this work[73] (possibly being sure by that time that Temple had blundered) by saying that he had written it, not as a piece of literary argument, but only as a reproof to Wotton for having attacked the "great man" at a time when Boyle had to deal with Bentley, and could not offer a defence of Temple.[74]

^ h e *Battle* gives evidence of no critical aim ; and is really the first example, and, as it were, a sort of canon of Swift's satire, his personal form of composition. As in his clerical polemics, as in his Irish controversy and his political pamphlets, in the *Battle* he invents an allegory, and under its veil scatters his bitter satire on the foes of the party or of the man whom he has chosen to defend.

We see him now, as in all other works of this kind, appropriating Temple's dispute, his theme, his tenets, but with a complete disregard of Temple's personality and Temple's own method of defence. Swift overshadows Temple, who appears only as a personage in the allegory. He uses none of Temple's arguments, but only defends his conclusions. There is not the least attempt at proof or discussion : all the writer's basic assumptions are taken for granted, precisely because Swift's work is pure satire, not controversy.

The cause was not Swift's cause : what did he care about the modernists ? Temple had commenced the discussion without asking his leave. But now Swift dashes on to the stage, covers Temple—and pushes him, as it were, out of the scene.

In the same way, all through his life, Swift will take on himself other people's causes, sponsoring them yet only from the outside. What he brings into the dispute is the bitter personal tone, a sort of destructive enmity against the foes of his friend. Swift becomes so deeply

involved in the dispute as to make it *his* dispute, and this, as we may say, secondary enmity develops into a personal hatred.[75]

As is the case in later works, the allegory of the *Battle* shows little flight of fancy : the books fighting together are meant to represent their authors. This not too original image helps to draw the argument on to lines which are easy to follow. Swift's imaginative faculties are sho\yn rather in the exploitation of the fundamental allegory, in the thousand and one incidents which spring from the one essential root.

The allegory is purely instrumental : Swift does not choose it to invest the polemic with romance, but to have the means most adaptecf to his end. Hence Swift's allegories are worthy of being studied on the ground of the consciousness which presides at their choice. This is not a defect, but a result of the peculiar quality of the satire, as a rationalised form of composition, as Juvenal distinctly saw when he said : " *Si natura negate facit indignatio versus"* Swift's allegories are indeed sought for and constructed ; not intuitively invented, poetically inspired. The task of the allegory is only that of covering the satirist by masking this aim : an old expedient with satirists, whose simplest device consists of giving assumed names to their foes. Then they can continue, veiling the argument also with an all-embracing image as with a sort of painted screen.

But the allegory has the task not only of covering the direct invective, but also that of giving a kind of puzzle to be solved (easily solved indeed) by the reader, who, by reducing names and circumstances to their proper value, participates in and annexes the satire. In fact, the reader divines the man under the mask, he acquires a sense of authorship himself, and makes the satire, as it were, his own work.

The well-known feeling of exhilaration which is given

to us all by satirical composition is due to this psychological moment, and not only to the pleasure of an enjoyable joke. The identification of the reader with the author is the real cause why even the most general types of satire are a " sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own : which is the chief reason for that kind reception which it jneets with in the world/[5] as even Swift explained.[76] This, however, in itself, would not be sufficient to account for the pleasure in a satire which ridicules a particular individual.

On the other hand, the comical effect of the satire is the result of the play between the allegorical representation and the truth ; we have no space to dwell on the psychological process, which should be treated in relation to the vexed problem of the comic in general.[77]

But we should observe in this regard that Swift's satirical compositions are not always a satire in the classical sense : usually he chooses a mask, and a transparent one, and hurls epithets at it. It is then a satire only in the sense understood by a savage spirit like Swift.

Far nearer the classic idea of satire would be an ironic thread : even if more likely to be misinterpreted,[78] irony really gives to the satire its full worth. In this respect the *Battle* is not so good as the precedent or contemporary *Tale,* because the first is directly polemic. When Swift is enraged even the mask falls easily, and then the man is directly vilipended, as for Bentley : ". . . the most deformed of all the moderns ; tall, but without shape or comeliness ; large, but without strength or proportion . . . the Modern chiefs . . . laughed to behold his crooked leg and humped shoulder."[79]—It is no longer a book, but a man.

This insufficient adjustment of the particulars to the general line of the piece is a defect to be found

everywhere in the *Battle* : there is really little congruity between the different episodes. The fable of the spider and the bee, for instance, which is readily brought to bear on the argument in hand, is, in the general composition, a sort of aside, whilst the allegorical representation of Criticism is really inserted in the course of the argument.

Another instance of inconsistency : a very good idea, customary at this time with Swift (cf. the *Tale)* is that of inserting intervals and supplying them with remarks like his *Hiatus vale dejlendus* or *Pauca desunt,* reminding one of critical editions of old texts ; but Swift does not pursue the idea by writing the *Battle* in a style of an old book or of a translation from the classics.

And yet the *Battle* reads very well. Its lightness and all-pervading allusiveness are pleasing ; and a warrior's spirit, a free fancy, which cannot take a logical line, inspired it.[80]

Swift wrote the *Tale of a Tub* at the same time that he wrote the *Battle.*[81] He assigned the greater part of it to 1696 (in the *Apology* published in the 1710 edition), and to understand things, it is important to consider the three works together : *Battle, Tale,* and *A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* which have, from the date of the first edition of 1704, always been published together. The *Battle* and the collateral sections of the *Tale,* a series of digressions devoted to literary criticism, are correlated, whereas the principal sections where the *Tale* is told (ii., iv., vi., viii., xi.), constitute a religious satire, and should be read along with the *Mechanical Operation,* a tract against enthusiasm in the strict religious sense, which seems to complete the religious irony by criticising another type of dissenters who could not very well be fitted into the scheme of

the *Tale.* Here we shall only take into account the collateral sections of the *Tale,* as the remainder falls into line with the religious works of Swift, which we will treat in the following chapter.

These " collateral sections " of the *Tale* were written about the time of the *Battle,* but we are justified in presuming that a good deal was added in the years before publication, even if it is impossible to fix precise dates. Anyway, many of the arguments of these sections have the stamp of the *Battle* : they contain more irony on the subject of Bentley and Wotton, or develop on other lines the principal theses of the *Battle.*

They are put in the form of digressions because Swift means to ridicule the habit of most writers of the day, their waste of space on collateral arguments, on compliments to the reader, apologies for the author, senseless asides, and so forth—all very irritating to Swift's temperament. And so he finds a good excuse for putting into the *Tale* all the arguments that spring up in his ready mind, all the absurdities that confront him. They are really a series of independent essays, perhaps wittier than the *Battle* and the *Tale* itself, because more freely selected, making of the *Tale* a *satura,* a mixing-up of various satirical compositions.

Indeed, it is enough to observe that in the *Battle* Swift took up another's cause, and was bound by the arguments of the polemic in question, whereas in the *Tale* he could alight upon other laughable sides of the literary activity of his time. He gives rein to free criticism of all the things that, spiritually and physically, are alien to him : Grub-street hacks, preachers, orators, actors, the learned, and the critics—and the moderns.

It is interesting to realise the psychological position of Swift. He was then a young man who only felt the world as a last wave that came to the backwater of Moor Park, He had had only the most superficial

glimpses of the literary world in which he was to play so great a part—yet he despised it already. It is really very strange to see a man begin his literary career with a lively attack upon the literary world ; but it enables us to see why Swift entered this world as a master.

He came to it not as a timid and respectful provincial, but as a man rude and hard, without reverence, without admiration. He had already dissected the literary world, chartered it completely ; from now we can date the strange confidence which gave him, at his direct beginnings, the tone of a past master. The *Tale* and the *Battle* were composed between twenty-eight and thirty-one, so that he was old enough too to have come to the end of the period of juvenile preparation. Most young men of letters at that age are trying to retrieve past errors, and beginning to see the light. But in his case there was no need of any recantation. The doors had been roughly closed in his face when he had first tried to come before the world as a poet, so that all his efforts to become acquainted with the calling of a writer had been unexpressed and secret, and, therefore, his first work for the world was not tentative, but the end, so to speak, of an attempt which had not been publicly made, and which therefore could not compromise him, or leave him subject to rejoinders. He came into the world invulnerable, in the literary, as well as (though in a less degree) the political sense.

His state of mind when he wrote the *Battle* and the collateral chapters of the *Tale* can best be shown from section ix. of the *Tale,* the " Dissertation on Madness," which contains an accusation against mankind in general, Swift's first charge of madness against the world.

This dissertation has its sources in the *Encomium Moria* : madmen can be made use of in the Commonwealth, more extensively than by making them members of Parliament, as Mr, Shaw recently proposed. Now

what is important to note is that such ideas make a man isolated in the world. It is literally the outcome of deepest solitude because it is perhaps not true (as Mr. Chesterton holds) that who thinks himself sane is mad, but it is true that whoever thinks all the others mad is prisoner in the middle of the world. By seeing society as an asylum, one detaches oneself from it far more than does the hermit in the wilderness.

We are endeavouring here to look beneath the writing and understand the working of Swift's mind ; we are not examining a literary work, and therefore we let many interesting motives escape us, as for instance the first hint of the Academy of Lagado.[82]

To return once more to Temple and the *Battle,* had the book been published at the moment, it would have been a great revenge upon Wotton. Temple must have been much pleased when he heard it read, and Swift through it acquired the place of a collaborator, rather than that of a secretary. Temple perhaps was now really interested in Swift's welfare, and would not consider for a moment the thought of losing him again. So Swift gave up Kilroot.

But by giving up Kilroot, it may be objected, he gave up all his advantages, and this objection was, in fact, made by those with whom he discussed the subject. But Swift thought he could " answer sufficiently/'[83] for Temple had grown more affectionate.

It was probably in the course of 1697, before the resignation of the following January, that Temple made the King promise Swift a prebend of Canterbury or Westminster—better than anything that Swift did get in his whole life !—and the promise is quoted as a sure thing in Swift's memoirs.[84] Meanwhile, Temple bequeathed the young man a small legacy, and made him

his literary executor. It was a complete reversal of all that had gone before (but not to be wondered at, if our explanation holds) : the tyrant, the spoiler of a fine gentleman, had become his " best friend,"[85] who was " so fond of him," as Swift's sister wrote after Temple's death.

William had not fulfilled his promise when Temple died in January 1699. Swift went as soon as he could to London to remind him. But the new intermediary whom he sought (the Earl of Romney) was " an old, vicious, illiterate rake ! "[86] and did not say a word to the King. There was nothing for Swift to do but to seek a very dependent position by Lord Berkeley.

So, at thirty-three years of age, Swift was again at the starting-post, more experienced and more bitter. He had had from his early relations with the man a good cause for a deeply felt hatred against Temple, who had continued the offences of Uncle Godwin and of fortune in general. The discontent of Swift was therefore normal, logical, and balanced. He had already grown bitter during his student years : it was the bitterness of a lonely child with frustrated hopes, in an inferior position in relation to his fellows. His loneliness, his insufficient means (not actual penury and dread of hunger), had given him his hard will to arrive somewhere : his fundamental principle that he alone was worth considering.

Temple's exploitation makes him nourish the deliberate intention to work, as soon as may be possible, for himself alone. He will fly from the imprisoning will of others, he will make his own interest the primary consideration —a tendency that actually became the cause of his being always exploited, of his always working for others without receiving the full price. Again, the very fact that he was always exploited, frustrated, and incapable of happiness, " perpetual possession of being deceived,"[87]

confirmed him in his egotism, the only way, as it seemed to him, to security.

The feeling remains when Temple at last—too late, even if it was so early as Lecky[88] thinks—takes him into his confidence. Then Swift has no longer an obvious foe against whom to harden his will, and to fight for independence and for payment in full. When the obvious foe is tamed, his fear and his defensiveness react upon the world at large, and in this way fix and deepen the fundamental egotism. As a sort of moral lesson, when he had begun to hope and to approach a human being, the human being dies, and even a royal promise miscarries.

He was never, in the later years, very hard on Temple, for Temple had redeemed himself.[89] But the heaped-up bitterness, being now deprived of any definite foe, exploded violently all through his life with accumulated force against every foe, however negligible.Whatever may be the occasion, Swift has always a great revenge to take, and always he feels himself " a fool among knaves."[90] There is indeed no need to make of Swift a madman, first or last, to explain this, which is common human reality.

CHAPTER III

THE CLOTH AND THE FOLD

To SEE what religion really was in Swift's life, we shall not relate the incidents of Swift's career in the Church, for disjointed episodes and anecdotes chronologically ordered are insufficient to display what was the most intimate aspect of Swift's soul. Even if he had lost or changed his faith (and, on the contrary, no man was ever more firm in the one belief, or less troubled with religious doubts)[1] it would still be necessary to discover his religious type, of which his beliefs would then be partial and changing expressions.

To understand a man, it is necessary to form an idea of his religion, and though innumerable men belong to the same confession, each of them has his peculiar view of it. Even in conditions of absolute conformity it would be possible to distinguish men by their personal insight into the common tenets. But unfortunately Swift's religion has always been judged from the point of view either of the personal persuasions of his critics, or from that of the religion which he followed, as it was professed in his day. The critics wanted to know whether he was sincere, orthodox, right or not : a moral judgment which has no value in itself, and which, moreover, cannot reveal Swift's soul.

The error of this method is shown by the wide differences of the judgments. Some critics decided that Swift was not religious at all, and that his history as a churchman is the history of a hypocrite, or little better.

For instance, Sidney Dark says that Swift had no " sentiment of religion," that he arrived " at the end

of his life at a point of view that was the antithesis of Christianity," " a sceptic in a cassock," " believing in very little himself," " resenting other people's faith.[5,2] To Voltaire he is a supreme type of anti-Christian, Another French critic of later date, Tabaraud, disputes with Voltaire on this subject, but says Swift's " originality escapes all definitions," and " Swift's professions of faith in the dogma of Christ's divinity is a bizarre amalgam."[3]

Other writers, ancient and modern, excuse him, accumulating episodes and anecdotes of his sense of religion. G. M. Berkeley says that he concealed his religion out of horror of hypocrisy ; he showed his devoutness at St. Patrick's, and cannot have been a slave to appearances.[4] Somewhat similarly Delany and Johnson find him guilty of the crime of hiding his sound faith as he hid his daily practice of piety.

The historical conditions in Swift's time cannot help us to judge Swift's religion, but they may enable us to recognise the precise significance of the ideas and tenets that Swift accepted and rejected. We shall begin, therefore, with a propaedeutical sketch of the world of belief in Swift's time.

It has often been observed that in the latter part of the seventeenth century theological controversy flourished in England. Defence against free-thinking was an immediate need. There were laws to be interpreted and enforced ; a Church that had again won security, desired to fix its policy and tenets. Therefore this is the great epoch of Stillingfleet, Burnet, King, Tillotson —and, on the other hand, the influence of the great Puritan literature of the immediately precedent epoch now reaches its full effect. Religion still carried great weight in the country, but in another sense than before the Revolution.

From the beginning of the century,[5] throughout the

parliamentary wars and the Restoration, large strata of the population had shown a deep interest in religion ; after 1688 we have no longer the spirit of religious wars, but religious politics. It is no longer an epoch of pioneers, of founders of religion, of enthusiasts, but an epoch of controversialists and pamphleteers, involved in endless and often petty discussions.

The appearance of free-thinking in all its forms added zest to the controversies, but was not itself sufficient to bring about a new religious warfare. Nothing worse happened to free-thinkers than to have their books burned by the common hangman : no great punishment when we remember the elegant use of the pillory, and the ear-cutting which was the lot of immoral writers or of anti-Governmental pamphleteers. Religion was rather a side-issue in politics, and divergences in political opinion were no longer understood in England as divergences of religion, as in the immediately precedent epoch.

It was, then, a definitively established Church in which Swift arrived to play his part—a Church which had fought and won, yet was besieged by dissenters of all persuasions ; a Church, too, with internal divisions, which nearly always coincided with political differences, or, when these paled (as we see later on at the time of the religious polemic of Berkeley), were the outcome of different philosophical conceptions.

Such polemics could not involve Swift in any fundamental way. Owing to the natural bent of his intellect, controversy for him always took its then predominant form, the political : he was himself politically tuned both by inclination and career. Also (it is the profound issue) he despised philosophy in the very core of his soul. His whole life—and by that we mean his whole soul

—justified the first judgment of his teachers who at Trinity qualified him as *negligenter* in theology and *male* in philosophy. Even in later life he confessed that he did not make a point of being learned in theology,[6] considering such learning, it seems, not a necessary equipment for the calling of a clergyman.

It has been affirmed that he made up at Temple's for his College negligence, but even then he had really no time to enquire into the deeper questions of theology (which would have implied philosophy, as the two subjects can hardly be separated)—and if he was learned in divinity, could he have been an adversary of philosophy ? It is vaguely said that he read such authors as Cyprianus and Irenseus ; later on we find him reading Baronius, as he read the *History of the Council of Trent.* It is really not very much, and possibly he read far more ; but the controversial and political turn of these authors (the first a politician in the sense that he sought an early conformity, the second a polemist, the others historians) reveal no speculative bias, even in his ecclesiastical reading.

We happen to find in the catalogue of his library, so carefully examined by Mr. T. P. Le Fanu,[7] a percentage of works of theology which do not even reach the number that we would expect among an ordinary priest's books. Mr. Le Fanu is indeed over-charitable in his reference to " more professional reading than might have been expected." Calvin's *Institutio* and St. Thomas could hardly be absent from a clergyman's library at any time ; alongside them are only authors in whom he was personally or politically interested. Bunyan and Baxter are certainly ordinary items in any English library, and offer no evidence that their reader took a professional interest in theology. It is therefore no matter for surprise if we seldom find signs of deep learning in divinity in Swift's works ; only a few quotations,

and these as slightly related to ecclesiastical meaning as the motto of the *Tale of a Tub.* As if excusing himself, he distinctly maintains that quotations and high doctrine are of little use in the practice of the Church.[8]

As we hinted already, this indifference to high theology is only an aspect of his aversion to philosophy in all its forms. Not that his incapacity at Trinity to put an argument in a regular logical form is any proof. Formal logic repels even people who are vividly interested in philosophy. But if Swift never spares philosophers (as he never spares scientists or, as they were then called, natural philosophers, and mathematicians), it is on account of a fundamental bent of his mind. And it is not only that he was a utilitarian, and in controversy could not conceive the use of profound excavations, when the more immediately efficacious arguments lay on the surface, or could at once be drawn from the visible political consequence of things ; but it is also that his intellectual efforts were really in equilibrium. He went about his business and was interested in it, without caring much for the deeper implications and inner meaning of things and ideas.

An egotistic position in fact, for philosophy starts from the ever-recurring hypothesis of possible error. Who endeavours to know himself is in doubt of the value of himself. Who sincerely and earnestly investigates the mystery of the Universe must care nothing for practical reality, for he must be prepared to have his conception radically overturned, and so lose his accustomed place in the questioned reality. He may indeed detach his ordinary life from his philosophical problems, as Leibniz and Bacon did, or like Spinoza and Kant he may eliminate practical life altogether. Either way he strips his most elevated activity of all immediate import. He is no longer at the centre of the world, as the egotist feels himself to be. He endeavours to live up to the world

instead of making it live up to him. Always he is devoted not to himself but to something else, and therefore he cannot be considered a philosopher who cannot forget present cares, and so allow himself to be absorbed in some superior truth, which is without any obvious utility.

But Swift thought without shame that " too intense a contemplation is not the business of flesh and blood,[55]* as in his life philosophy could find no place. Philosophers were only good to laugh at. He was sure that eternal truths do not need special researches : " Every ploughman knew them well enough before Aristotle or Plato were born.[5,10] But these eternal truths—why, he had even some Platonists in his library !—were for the practical Swift only truths about morality, and it is only on moral subjects that he quotes Plato, often mistakenly.[11] Heathen philosophy can only be confuted on the ground of its errors in regard to the moral problem,[12] as confronted with the moral code current in his time.

So that he had not only no taste for philosophy, he did not even realise what philosophy was about, misunderstanding it even as a sort of casuistic hair-splitting about moral conduct.

So sure was he that he was in the right, that he deemed it impossible to raise questions about what he thought. He had really no problems at all, as all problems lead to philosophy. This egotism explains his constitutional conformism. When the integral conformist judges that one foot out of the road is always out of the road, he closes all doors to the opinions of others. He remains imprisoned in himself, not only as to his creed and Church, but as to his personal acceptation of his creed and Church.

Thus God comes to be an internal reality—mysterious

because never discussed by the believer, never peered into. The ordinary member of a Church will at least discuss the right of others to belong to his Church. He judges between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. But the fine distinctions which are at the bottom of all judgment of orthodoxy postulate the consideration of the Church as a whole, and an endeavour to appreciate its reality in another soul.

For Swift, on the contrary, in all his religious polemics (examples are too many to quote), it is the letter not the spirit which counts. The Church is the body of men who recognise a precise creed, and doubts, when they arise, should be kept private, for personal differences may not indeed be reduced to dogmatic unity, and so brought into accordance with the existing laws. Swift was not apt to recognise personal differences : " The want of belief is a defect which ought to be concealed when it cannot be overcome,"[13] because " you may force men, by interest or punishment, to say or swear they believe, and to act as if they believed. You can go no further.[5,14] In this strange affirmation there is no hypocrisy, but only a conformism, so to speak, of the innermost soul.

It is perfectly true that Swift justifies this position[15] on the grounds of the danger to the State from religious disturbance. He was born, we said, just when the religious wars were at an end, and had a lively fear of them from hearsay. He had, possibly, anxieties, fears, troubles of his own ; but he kept them strictly private. He felt it was not right to disturb the State, the Church, the minds of others, because he felt no need to peer deeper. Internal liberty was all that he thought men needed, for he did not feel the urge to express his most personal sentiments, and would have regarded it as a most improper presumption on the part of others, had they pestered him with their doubts.

There is no need to show that holding to this sentiment, to this attitude, he did not contradict his faith in reason —a reason beyond all doubts, a reason " true and just," even " if the reason of every particular man is weak and wavering "[16] under the influence of self-love, the other pole of the human soul, according to Pope.[17] Therefore he deems doubts to be only momentary whims. As for himself, he found very little difficulty in recovering his internal balance—which he called reason and thought to be the same in all men. What he called " opinion " was the opinion of others : his opinions were for him cold reason. He stripped himself of " as many real prejudices as he could.[5,18] But, beyond the prejudices he saw lying on the surface, he held for reason and common sense, what he found in himself, irreducible and unassailable— what was in truth the fundamental bent of his very soul, his personal preferences.

With him reason was not a faculty of debating, of choosing, of deliberating, a faculty in eternal process of formation, which probed ever deeper and more surely. Reason, on the contrary, was with him the sum of fixed postulates, both moral and theoretical— everlasting truth.[19]

In his own way, then, Swift was influenced by the rationalism of his age and the next,[20] which thought and taught that human reason alone is capable of remedying all evil, political as well as ethical, and that all differences of opinion could be traced to a failure of reason. But whereas the effects of contemporary rationalism on the Church were a latitudinarian movement, which permitted differences beyond the common ground of deistic faith, Swift's reason comprehended worship also, and a determinate way of worshipping—his faith in all its bearings.

Identifying reason and faith, he avoided expressing

his fundamental truths, which he held to be universal. It did not even dawn upon him as a possibility that others might have a different yet reasonable conception of God and truth and of the good : and as there is nothing to be gained by discussion, why speak of the matter ? So he thought himself justified in never expressing what he felt disinclined to express.

The most puzzling side of Swift's soul was indeed his strange shyness about his deeper motives—here was the origin even of his secretiveness in love. Yet this was all a natural effect of the ultimate sincerity which proceeded from his egotism, which made him want to present himself as he was, everywhere and before everyone.

A really sincere man is not communicative—or only communicative of his worst side. He shuns all the usual ways of making himself generally liked or approved : people must admire his worst whims, not his best aspects. He will never speak of his love, or of his God, or of his morals. To speak of these things is only possible when a man feels the need of causing others to enter into himself: whereas a sincere soul is bent on remaining as it is, inviolate—and on violating the soul of the lover, the friend, mankind at large.

It is easy to explain away all this as being the common tendency of the Englishman towards self-suppression.[21] But Swift had no self-control in his worst hatreds and rages. He really enjoyed showing himself in the blackest possible colours—and it was because he wanted to impose himself on the world, not to persuade it. He did not need to be justified before the eyes of the world, because he was already justified by himself, by his own existence. He was so sure he was in the right that he did not feel any need of diffusing or advertising his most intimate and (as he thought) unchallengeable convictions about fundamental truths, which he presumed egotistically to be the same for all intelligent men. To

speak of them would only be an endeavour to communicate universal reason ; but nobody can think except with his reason, even if he can act on the better reason of others.[22] Therefore he bullied and commanded without explanation because reason can modify the acts, but not the intellect, of the bulk of mankind, which is as " well qualified for flying as for thinking.[5,28]

Under his silence in regard to the highest things we find this calm rock of assurance, of self-reliance masked as reliance upon reason. But the motives of Swift's silence were implanted even deeper : he hated enthusiasm. He did not like preaching. His sermons, which he said were only pamphlets, are really only mathematical demonstrations, such as allow for no doubts and divergences of opinion, and are as remote as possible from any outburst of faith or enthusiasm. Hence, when he criticises Quakers and such persons,[24] he feels intensely what he says. He is fighting not only against dissent, he is also fighting for common decency. Enthusiasm and its immodesty are due, he is inclined to think, to some overpowering sexual instinct—to-day we should say " exhibitionism " ; and Swift would have blushed to show himself forth, to confide his innermost thoughts to the world at large.

It was, so to speak, the avarice of egotism. Confession was of no use because it had no effect on others' souls, and enthusiasm dissolved the conscious soul.

Swift, therefore, was against any mysticism. To put it bluntly : Swift could not renounce himself in God, could not let God absorb him. He was always conscious of himself, always held himself in a firm grip. Like all true egotists, he did not search for sympathy : not that he did not yearn for it, but in order to receive sympathy you must first give it. And he sympathised only with himself.

Before God he wanted to remain as Jonathan Swift.

To be in the Presence with open eyes—eyes which saw with the habitual sight of Swift, not of a new creature sprung up in his soul, and going beyond him. He did not need to be transformed and burned in the Eternal Light. Because if an immortality—that immortality of which he never for a moment doubted—was granted to him, it was granted to Swift as he knew himself, as he willed himself to be, himself, ultimate truth, for life everlasting.

Hard as a diamond, and as a diamond incorruptible, this soul, he felt, could not undergo death. Death not only had no fears for Swift, but it also lost its reality—the most sage Houyhnhnm does not even feel death.

But neither the Houyhnhnm nor the Brobdingnagian speak of their religion : Swift refuses to make important religious admissions even through the representatives of his ideal. He had another motive for his silence : the fear of cant, of sentimental display.

In his expressions he seems to follow fully the directions of Pope :

Know then thyself] presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man.[25]

Indeed, he only speaks of God in relation to human actions. Swift's silence on things of religion (we make a sharp distinction between religion and any definite Church) does not prove that he was deficient in religion. On the contrary, it may show that he was religious in a normal, intimate sense.

The idea of religion as an individual connotation, and not as external worship, has been felt by many minds, and it found its ultimate expression in the great teaching of Calvin. Swift could recognise this individual significance of religion, even if he was a violent

anti-Presbyterian : after all, he kept two copies of the *Institutio* in his library. We have hardly any direct proof on this point : indeed, if we had such proof, our theory could not hold its ground ! The best proof consists in assuming it to be true, and in seeing how it works—whether it explains Swift's utterances, and at the same time harmonises with the certainty that an egotist, if religious at all, will form a very personal idea of God, and think of religion as a direct relation of himself with God, scarcely to be divulged because of its individuality and the solitude it implies. (There is no need to prove here that universality of reason does not imply universality of religious experience !)

Doubts on Swift's religion have been occasioned by his disrespect for religious expressions, from his scanty interest in peculiarity of dogma—did he not think that the doctrine of the Trinity was too difficult for the Chinese ?—But all these arguments point directly to a personal, vivid religion, with a transcendentalism so complete as to grow into contempt for all possible opinions of man about God. The real ultimate ground of religion (we need not repeat Otto's theory about the divine) is a lively sense of the mysteriousness, the distance, the sublime in God. The measure of religious consciousness is, roughly expressed, the distance man feels between himself and God. And Swift felt the distance.

He thought of God as infinitely distant from him ; veiled and remote, yet present in a potential way through Grace : ". . . that we may make our great work and business . . . to improve in the Knowledge of Thee, whom to know is Life Eternal. But, Lord, since we know Thee but by often drawing near unto Thee, and coming into Thy presence, which in this life we can only do by prayer . . ."[26]

Swift had suffered too much not to have felt the Hand behind the wound—a sense of destiny which becomes

the sense of the omnipotence and unintelligibility of God. And as he never had mystical experiences, God remained for ever far off. Here we have the ground of the deeply felt sense of the mysterious which confronts us everywhere in the works of Swift. He mocks bitterly at man's endeavours to explain the mysterious, and is assured that either there is mystery, and it cannot be explained, or there is no mystery, and then God is not there. When the truth is such that " mankind cannot possibly comprehend it,[55] then " the whole doctrine is short and plain."[27]

In Swift such principles are brought to their logical end : he was sure of their reasonableness, so that reason, in his acceptation, led up to mystery, reversing the position of rationalistic deism which—since, for the deist, God was true for every reasonable man—taught that reason was the way to dispel all obscurity, and conceived God outside of all revelation, and therefore of all mystery. It was precisely his transcendentalism that could lead Swift to apparently incongruous and irreligious expressions, such as the famous poem on the Day of Judgment,[28] which is so very close to the more developed theory of H. G. Wells,[29] who, however, cannot be considered an irreligious man.

Chesterfield had indeed no right to send this poem to Voltaire as an extreme expression of irreligion. Taking into account Swift's deep hatred of mankind, we see in it rather the appalling effect of the belief in a God totally transcendent, beyond all human science and wisdom, who can very well say, when " The world stands trembling at His throne " :

The world's mad business now is o'er.
And I resent these pranks no more ;
I to such blockheads set my wit !
I damn such fools !—Go, go, you're bit.

Swift did not diffuse such utterances—or at least did not diffuse them under his name, for he was a Churchman.

With some want of Christian charity, many writers have spoken of hypocrisy. However, other divines at that time had written things even more incongruous, and, moreover, Swift, had he lost his place in the Church by his works, could have been sure of great success among the free-thinkers. But the fact is that he was fully conscious of his duties as a clergyman, and always proposed to be loyal to his Church. He did not wish his Church to suffer as a consequence of the doings and sayings of one of its members. He would bear the responsibility alone : from the moment he became a clergyman, he felt in duty bound to all the rightful, lawful—even to the habitual and common ways of the Church.

He respected his Church, and if we can find slight signs of religious feeling in his writing, we find abundant evidence of his interest in the Church. The biographer should hold to the distinction hinted at by Temple Scott, who edited Swift's religious writings as *Writings on Religion and the Church*—but it is not easy to discover therein writings on religion.

Now, keeping this distinction in view, it is necessary to reject the seemingly balanced judgment of Leslie Stephen, who thinks that Swift clung to the doctrines of the Church, not because he could give abstract reasons for his belief, but simply because the Church happened to be his.[30]

This method of judging Swift's religious convictions has been adopted with greater severity by other critics ; but it is founded on a series of sophisms. As Swift had no interest either in philosophy or in theology, he could not see the urgency of finding so-called " abstract reasons" for his belief. He could not consider the

" doctrines of the Church " essential to religion, but only to the legal constitution of the Church, which was for him law not philosophy, as religion in general was for Hobbes.[31]

Religion which he understood as individual was for him a perfectly private business. We can go so far as to say that he did not even consider the relation between faith and constituted Church. The Church was, for him, all individuals having a common way of showing their faith, in their worship and in their actions, the *ensemble* of people handing on definite laws which constitute the Church as a political and ecclesiastical body ; and Swift eagerly desired that this body should become actually catholic, not out of proselytising ardour, but as the only practical means to preserve in its purity the revelation from which religion started, and on which the Church was founded.[32]

The Nonconformist's appeal to individual conscience was therefore of no avail, nor was that of the free-thinker's " reason " which rejected all revealed religion. Nonconformism was for Swift only the deliberate intent to be free from any moral restraint, and the free-thinker was such only because he was a swine.[33] Swift's criticism of Tindal[34] and of free-thinking[35] amounts to an accusation of misdemeanour, but the object of the accusation is not simply to discredit the adversary. From Swift's point of view, near to that of Berkeley in the *Alciphron,* faith in the sense of rightful adhesion to the Church was, it may be said, a matter of common decency.[36]

Swift's greatest argument for his Church is to be seen in the Church Thermometer.[37] The Church is the place in which revelation abides, whereas, in going either towards lukewarmness or towards wrath, man arrives at ignorance. Moral qualifications are the necessary postulates of truth. In Popery and in free-thinking alike there is the same withdrawal from the golden mean of **the**

spirit in equilibrium,[38] which was for Aristotle (who is often quoted in this respect by Swift) the right moral position of mankind.

There are many possible objections to this standpoint. It may be urged that religion is itself a social fact, and that Church and religion should emanate from the same source. But it is tempting to apply the thermometer idea to the Church of England, which has struggled to balance itself between the Lutheran experience of faith and Catholic forms ; a Church formed by experiments in which the idea of divine right has been uncertain, owing to Episcopal authority being in debate.[39]

Moreover, Presbyterianism acted on the spirit of the time, and of the Church (and even on Swift), by its assumption that there is no Church at all, but only an assembly of the elect, without any supernatural existence of its own. Even this train of thought influenced Swift's obscure conviction of being right in treating religion and Church as wholly distinct occurrences.

But he was possibly also influenced by Hobbes, who was well represented in his library.[40] Hobbes could only have influenced him subconsciously, for he directed criticism of a precise kind against this writer,[41] and, besides, he must have been hostile to Hobbes's acceptance of the Commonwealth, and also to his failure to condemn the loose living of the Restoration. Yet from Hobbes came a mighty impulse to consider the Church as purely human, seeing that for him the ecclesiastical authorities " have no power by that title of Christ's ministers to punish . . . but if they have sovereign civil power by political institution, then they may indeed lawfully punish any contradiction of their laws whatsoever."[42] Thus Hobbes's indifference in the matter of ecclesiastical form leaves a loophole for the affirmation of absolute authority of a Church subsisting.

At the bottom of Swift's startling separation of faith Hs

and Church there are two possible ideas : the extreme Calvinistic idea of the purely external aspect of the Church, and the opposite and authoritarian idea of the purely political significance of any Established Church. Swift would have allowed neither to be his,[43] but we can suppose that he was influenced by both, as ideas diffused in the spiritual atmosphere of his time.

But he had reasons for thinking a Church necessary—reasons which came from Lutheran sources perhaps even more distant from his tastes, and produced the conviction that prayer is fundamentally a social task, or, at least, that an assembly of believers gives to prayer its full import, which is, as it were, at once religious and social. So he made his servants pray together, and held the matter secret even from his guests. Hence the prayers he wrote for Stella, which were to be uttered only by a small assembly : " And since Thou hast promised that where two or three are gathered together in Thy Name Thou wilt be in the midst of them. . . .[44]

Therefore we should not wonder at Swift's fidelity to his Church, even if this had no expressed and close relation to his probable religious sentiments. There was indeed in the Church of England a tie he could recognise. It was just this social import of prayer which gives such an importance to the Book of Common Prayer, and is reflected in the theory of the Lord's Supper, where the reality of the Divine Presence is brought about by the presence of faithful members partaking of the Body and Blood : a transcendental significance relative to the accumulated faith of the assembly[45]—consubstantiated (as even Luther would have it) with the physical bread after a heavenly and spiritual manner. But to sum up, this tie does not imply that the Church is by right divine in all its manifestations, nor that the priest is in direct relation with God in his ministry ; political authority

gives him the place and the duties of a faithful servant of the Church which is in the State.[46]

Thus Swift saying in a light mood that he designed to make what endeavours he could for " something in the Church "[47] is not disrespectful. Nor is his plea that before entering the Church one should even take into account the disposition of the world towards the Church.[48] We can even put a good construction on his habit of calling his profession a " trade."[49] He may have been sometimes horrified by the daily round of duties to be carried out at appointed times in a mechanical spirit,[50] yet he thought highly of these duties. It was the effect of the rebellion of a young spirit acquiring a function which implies the higher moral consciousness, and is reduced too easily to a daily commonplace. Therefore he hesitated before entering the Church—not that the Church " happened to be his " eventually, or that circumstances shoved him into it. We have seen already that he made, as it were, excuses for entering the Church, and so justified himself for discussing bitterly the motives of other clergymen and the means to Church preferment.[51]

When he put a deliberate construction on his action in becoming a priest, he showed that he felt the need of excusing himself. This is only another proof that he thought highly of a priest's functions, and that, even if at the time he did not fully feel their solemnity, he did not take them as a matter of course, but always retained a sense of duty—that even if he was not a good minister at first, he became one.[52]

Because, assuming these functions, interpreted as the Church of England interprets them, or at least as Swift thought he could legitimately interpret them, there was no question of a vocation, of special grace, and exceptional divine calling, as in the Catholic Church.

Swift's vocation was rather the Lutheran " calling "

in the sense in which all men rightful before God **are** " called " even to humble offices in society. To be **a** good minister it was necessary to have the consciousness of being inwardly impelled to the ministry, but the calling at the same time must be " according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ and the *due order* of the Realm." There was thus the possibility of choosing between different callings after God's inspiration, and no particular inspiration need precede the acceptance of a clerical career. It was a question for Swift of ordinary conscience, not of a peculiar vocation ; and when his hopes of Temple failed him, he accepted what he thought the more exacting calling—not exacting because he doubted of his faith or vocation, but because the calling bound him to a particular way of life, unadventurous yet spiritually high, exalted yet in poor companionship. From this point of view, he was quite justified in seeking reasonable grounds for his choice.

Fundamentally, rational demonstration and controversy in defence of a Church thus understood can be of no avail ; and, indeed, such demonstration and controversy would have been unpalatable to Swift. The best arguments on behalf of the Established Church had to be found, not in a transcendental intervention in the creation and ordering of the Church, but merely in historical lawfulness and opportunity.

These postulates are the basis of *A Tale of a Tub,* in which Swift had to consider the Church under the category, not of the mystically religious, but of the lawful, and the superiority of the Church of England over all other Churches had to be shown by its capacity to answer to the requirements of a Church based on the absolute truth of the Gospel. All discussions on its transcendental import were to be avoided. It was,

indeed, to be merely demonstrated that " the Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and Authority in Controversies of Faith : and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written."

Such is the very orthodox aim of the *Tale,* but the world failed signally to see the point, as Swift probably expected it to do, and Swift accordingly remained his whole life under the suspicion of being a free-thinker.[53] He thought the *Tale* a good way of providing the Leviathan, i.e. the heirs of Hobbes, who were fighting against the Church, with light entertainment.[54] But it was just the humorous vein which rendered a right judgment of the *Tale* so difficult.

In his heart Swift never disowned the *Tale.* When, much later it seems, he made a gift of the book to Mrs. White way, he was heard to sigh : " What a genius I had when I wrote it." But he had waited long[55] before publishing the book : possibly the appearance of the first edition had something to do with his association with the Whigs. The *Apology,* which appeared in 1710 (it was written in 1709, and perhaps projected in 1708), shows that the book had a worse effect than the author at his most nervous could have expected. It also shows that in self-protection he had to take into account an evident change of opinion in the country, the sympathies of which were now moving towards the Church and Toryism. The anonymity always preserved, even though many later unsigned works were published by him as " by the author of the *Tale of a Tub"* is no argument against the fundamental sincerity of his religion, or of his opinion that the book might be useful to the Church.

Swift disliked putting his name even to productions that could easily be avowed. He wanted to remain, as it were, isolated and alone. By being anonymous, his point

of view became the point of view of nobody and anybody at the same time. It is not perhaps a courageous attitude in a man ; he hurls a stone and withdraws his hand—but Swift did not give his name, even when at the moment of publication there was no doubt of his authorship. It was indeed the usual custom in day-to-day literature (pamphlets, black letters, periodicals)—a sort of general punctilio for such writings, because many authors endured the pillory for works (mainly bawdy) which they openly avowed, well knowing the peril they ran.

But the anonymous publication gives the satirist the full enjoyment of the satire and heightens the effect, by puzzling the reader, not only in regard to the significance of the allegory, but also in regard to the personality of the author : a blow from the void is most efficacious, and the author laughs twice, once at his foes, and then at his readers.

We can be fairly sure that the anonymity did not ensure safety. Intimates at least were allowed to guess at the authorship (Swift took this course in many of his writings, *Gulliver* included), and a denunciation would always be supported by evidence. Swift really enjoyed puzzling people, making them wonder. He liked to hurl a book which would raise a whirlwind of praise, criticism, rejoinder and so on, but at the same time he wanted to remain aloof, with the choice of either defending his work or letting it go under. He did not want to be, as Swift, at the mercy of his first reader : a name on a book makes of it a personal confession, more or less—more in the case of deeply felt satires, of *sava indignatio* belching forth—and he liked to be closed in himself, and in some cases to receive the honour without paying the price.

Very characteristic of the attitude of the time towards anonymous writings, and characteristic too of the conduct of Swift, besides showing how highly contemporaries appraised the book, is the fact that the *Tale* should

have been fostered on many writers whose orthodoxy could not be questioned.[56] But already, some fifteen months after publication, Hearne had traced the *Tale* to Swift.[57] Yet in 1705, in the criticism afterwards always attached as a commentary to the *Tale,* Wotton attributed the authorship to Thomas Swift,[58] and taking the hint, and probably uncertain as between it and the general opinion, the authors of a *Complete Key* to explain all the allegories of the *Tale* (published in 1709)[59] attributed it to a couple of " chaplains to Sir William Temple.[35] Swift was mightily incensed by the attribution, and thought that " that little parson cousin "[60] was the cause of this shifting of credit and of responsibility too. For Swift, though he never allowed in plain words, neither then nor for many years after, that he was himself the author, was angry at his own name being printed (even at the moment that he gave instructions for the fifth edition of 1710, and sent his printer the *Apology),* and angry also because a dunce had had the foolish impudence to present himself in the place which he himself had left void.

The success of this book was really due to its high properties for giving enjoyment. It is a sort of *satura* in the old sense, a series of attacks against the world's folly in general, as we said in the precedent chapter.

But the real *Tale,* i.e. sections ii., iv., vi., vii., xi., tells the allegorical history of Catholicism, Anglicanism, Calvinism, described under the names of Peter, Martin, Jack. Their father bequeaths to each one of them an identical coat,[61] and at the same time he forbids them to make any alteration in the garment. But, in the process of time, and so as to keep up with the world, the three brothers considerably alter the coats, and put personal constructions on the testament (Holy Writ)

of the father, till the overbearing demeanour of Peter causes the brothers to abandon him, and endeavour to restore the coats (Churches) to their original shape : Martin prudently strips his coat of superstructures not strictly necessary, leaving only those which cannot be taken away without ruining the texture of the coat, whereas Jack, in the rage of eliminating all remains of the impure additions, rends the texture, and makes of the coat a bundle of rags.

As a justification for the allegorical meaning attributed to the three coats, Swift narrates that at the time the three brothers went to seek their fortune in the world there was diffused a sect which adored the tailor as God, and maintained that all creatures were only different sorts of clothes, also all forms of culture merely furnished an exact dress, and, for instance, religion was a cloak and no more.

It is a very fair criticism of the world, this taking so seriously all the fashions and handling all ideas along the line of their popular character. But whereas the satire was intended as a criticism of the ways of the world, the fundamental allegory of the *Tale* was precisely in harmony with the tenets of the Clothists (to name them so) who considered religion only as a cloak.[62]

We find here, as we shall find in another sense in Lilliput, a sort of contradiction in the satire.

The allegory in a satire is in so far sound as it affords a very coherent representation of the matter satirised. By making Clothism ridiculous, by laughing at it as at a very foolish account of things, Swift himself takes away value from his satire ; makes it, as it were, ill-fitting. The satire remains efficacious and poignant notwithstanding this, but it acquires a mechanical turn because nobody can consider the comparison between a cloak and religion as due to a serious relation between the **two** things.

By making Clothism ridiculous, Swift thought perhaps to escape the accusation of irreligion : but the true ground for choosing a Clothistic allegory to support the religious claims of his Church merits a deeper examination. It may be that, in the first moment, the comparison between clothes and religion was only intended as a parody of something he wished directly to ridicule in exposing the principles of Clothism. Then, drawn along in his satirical spirit by the beautiful current of the *Tale,* Swift actually forgot whence the idea of clothes as an allegory of the Church had come.

Our theory is, we must allow, far-fetched ; no direct clue to it can be found except the recent enmity towards Dryden, and the direct criticism contained in the *Tale* of *The Hind and the Panther.* " The worst poem that the age produced " (Burnet) is the only really serious book quoted in the *Tale* among some six ridiculous and suppositious books as " the prime productions of our society,"[63] and the conclusions of the *Tale* are directly opposed to those of *The Hind and the Panther,* so as to make a sort of satirical Anglican rejoinder to the serious Catholic allegory—the corruption of a poet generating a critic in a more literal sense than Dryden imagined.[64]

In disliking Dryden's parable Swift was right. The sublime and simple allegory of Bunyan may have caused the sophisticated writer to make beasts representatives of various religious confessions, and to presume too far on the possibilities of the classical fable : to have beasts dispute at length in a serious strain on matters theological was to test rather severely the patience and taste of the reader.

Swift could not think of discussing the matter on its merits. This was not his intention, and he thought he could easily defend his Church by ridiculing his enemy. Dryden had opened the subject in a sentimental vein :

*The Panther, sure the noblest next the Hind***
And fairest creature of the spotted kind ;
Oh, could her inborn stains be washed away.
She were too good to be a beast of prey !

Indeed, the right Church for Dryden is :

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged . . .
Without unspotted, innocent within.

Swift took just this image (and if we read all his works we shall see that he is ready to found a far-reaching criticism on a single passage, just as in his humorous commentary on books which he read, he delighted in exposing isolated verses or words to ridicule) and upon it desired to point out that the Catholic hind was spotted and overlaid with stains (or ornaments) far more than was the Anglican panther. But the comical side of Dryden's allegory resides precisely in the making of spots and stains on the hide the representation of internal impurity. Why then the hide ? Why not the cloak ? Spots and stains were not indeed " inborn,'[5] but were brought about by bad practices and loose living.

The train of thought (we can surmise no more) was started,[66] and the first idea of Clothism brought about —this Clothism which was bound to recur, as a humorous exposition of a very sound philosophy, in the immortal thought of Herr Teufelsdrockh.

But beyond the Clothism another element comes in. Had not Dryden supposed a possibility of the panther reaching the right path and abandoning its marks ? Then the hide under the marks, or the cloak in its native state, is sound in both beasts. Religion is fundamentally the same, even though Churches may differ and err to some extent. . . .

On the other hand, a classical allegory was at the disposal of Swift in the novels of Boccaccio, which Dryden

had studied, and even quoted in the preface to the same poem. Swift, at least later on, had some interest in Italian literature, for we find Italian works and vocabularies in his library. It may be that he thus came to a knowledge of the story of Melchisedec the Jew[67] and the tale of the three rings which he told to the Saladin who had asked him what was the true religion, the Jewish or the Mahommedan or the Christian ? A very diffused motive in such literature, because we find even in the *Novellino*[68] and in the *Avventuroso Ciciliano* of Busone of Agubbio the allegory of a father who bequeaths his three sons three rings which cannot be distinguished from one another, to represent the three religions.

But the moral may be not (as in the old tale) that God alone knows the best faith, but that all faiths are fundamentally equivalent. A distinction on the side of men is impossible—if not, as later on Lessing will maintain,[69] the true ring will be known by the moral superiority shown by the proprietor in his actions : a conclusion Swift would not reject, but which he does not draw.

Be this as it may, we have exposed the fundamental sources of the cloth allegory—if future criticism can do no better. And we have, somewhat hypothetically, it is true, accounted for Swift's inspiration in the *Tale.*

Really the argument leads to a very bad consequence. All Churches are corrupted, more or less, whereas the Gospel is always right. What is then to be done ? Abolish all Churches ? Impossible, because (Jack rends his cloak) a Church is necessary, and the abolition of all forms of positive worship rends the Gospel to bits. As the Church is an historical production on the basis of the Gospel, all superfetaneous works have left their mark, and the lawfulness of the Church only allows for its improvement, but not for absolute truth.

In this way the young parson, fresh from his religious

experience in the small world at Kilroot, where he found himself for the first time in contact with Presbyterianism and Catholicism, seen somewhat distantly, had felt himself as the representative, not only of a Church, but of law and order as represented by the dominant Church.[70]

We trust that we have given a general survey of Swift's attitude towards religion, which substantiates our hypothesis by coherence. We were able to omit the exposition of the various works which have a bearing on religion, as their biographical significance had been taken into account. It may be objected that in accounting as a whole for Swift's religion, we altogether disregarded the possibility of an evolution of his religious sentiments—and, moreover, that we simultaneously cited documents of different dates and various aims.

But in all existing evidence we can see no signs of any change of position, as we noted at the beginning of this chapter. All his writings which have a bearing on religious questions are perfectly coherent from first to last, at least in the main outline, in what depends immediately on the tenets, and not on the external and changing conditions. The two volumes of *Writings on Religion and the Church,* with all the suggestions that may be found in other works, form a perfectly compact whole. And it is no wonder : religious sentiments can change either as a result of new mystical experiences or by an evolution of religious thought. Neither event (as we explained) could happen to Swift. On the other hand, his fundamental secretiveness as to the treasure of his soul cut away all possibility that his works could reveal a truly religious process, since he spoke only of ecclesiastical politics. Yet it is not our opinion that he suffered from the doubts that he thought it a duty to conceal. His desperate soul, his illness, his sorrows, were arrested at

the door of this fierce God of his. His discipline in regard to the expression of any innermost doubt produced internal peace, so far as religion was concerned.

Nor did he think he was possibly in the wrong ; he never felt remorse for his actions, for in his reasonableness and his passion he felt that his wars and his vengeances were absolutely justified. Thus not even a moral conflict within himself could intervene to make him question his own righteousness, or even to think upon it. When he suffered, he had never even a passing idea of attributing his sufferings to some wrongful action on his own part, of supposing himself responsible for his sickness and hates, his pains and sorrows. Enclosed in himself and self-contented, he felt all pains as arrows coming from the outside. Against all evil, against even his malady, he battled as with a living enemy. By hating his sorrows only as external realities, he left open no road to reparation, and consequently to a new examination of his position before God.

Not even as regards the Church do we find him hesitating for an instant in his faith to the Church of England. From the moment in which he is fixed in his first position, he never thinks of the Church except in terms of its official policy. Sometimes he differed from and offered counsel on this policy, but he always thought of himself as a member of the Church, without possibility of revolt, even when he held the ways of the Church to be improper, and Churchmen to be a flock of base mercenaries. The older he becomes, the more political his view becomes, and the more earnest. His dignity of manner grew upon him as he thought befitted his duty.[71] In his later years he could not have written on behalf of the Church in the vein of the *Tale*, or of the *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*. He became interested even in the smallest questions of ecclesiastical prerogative and of practical policy : the letting of leases, the powers of

Bishops, the question of non-residence—a true Churchman taking an active part, not only in the welfare of the Church, but also in defence of the Irish Church against the English Church, and of his particular place in that Church,

During the composition of the *Tale,* he was practically outside of the Church, owing to his resignation from Kilroot. When he reassumed his place in it a few years later, he was again at the first stage of an ecclesiastical career. His rapid rise in public estimation in the following ten years was probably due to his most interesting work on behalf of the Church, his tract in favour of the Sacramental Test which was a necessity at the moment, and by which he gained great consideration—although his position in the matter was at variance with that of his political friends of these years. But this man, who described himself as a Whig in politics and a Tory in religion, had really no interest but the Church, and therefore could later on faithfully and effectually embrace the Tory cause. With Whig politics, as we shall see, he had no intimate relations. They were at the utmost only something left over from his youth.

The failure of Temple's recommendation to King William had left him in a very isolated condition. Yet something, perhaps, came to him in the guise of greater renown through his acquaintance with Temple, seeing that his publication of Temple's works[72] later on let some light fall on the obscure clergyman. Possibly, during the months in which he was in London, he made useful acquaintances, but we do not know precisely how he came to know Lord Berkeley, with whom he was to be intimately connected in the following years—he was to live, as it were, under the protection of the family, as he had previously lived under the protection of Temple,

but in a very different way. Swift, thanks to Temple's legacy, could now dispose of a small amount of cash, and could afford to wait—and to deal with would-be patrons more cavalierly than before. So he was induced to go to Ireland with Berkeley, who had been appointed one of the Lords Justices in June 1699. Thus circumstances drew him again to the land from which he had fled some four years before.

It is easy to see why Berkeley gave Swift hopes of being his secretary : Swift had had an excellent training for such a post. Yet, after having for some time acted as his secretary, Swift was not appointed. Probably (we can read between the lines)[73] because Swift had let Lord Berkeley understand clearly that he hoped for preferment in the Church, and the former did not want to make a provisional appointment.[74]

Swift speaks of the Deanery of Derry at this time, and of his rage at not receiving it, in consequence of the intrigues of the secretary.[75] It is odd that he should have been in a condition to consider so exalted a position as his due. Berkeley may have promised it to him. He confesses that he was told that he was too young for the Deanery, and this is certainly a bad excuse : although his career in the Church had hardly yet begun, he was thirty-three years old. In any case, he took leave of Lord Berkeley and his secretary with the truly Swiftian parting shot : " God confound you both for a pair of scoundrels ! " But he received almost at once (it seems) the Rectory of Agher and the Vicarage of Laracor and Rathbeggan (February 24th, 1700). A small pittance, as Swift laments, but it was gilded in the same year by an appointment in the Chapter of St. Patrick. Nor did his anger against Lord Berkeley last long : on the contrary, the best relations were henceforward established between them.

It seems that Swift now proposed to pursue an active

career in the Church through the usual means of ecclesiastical writings. His taking the degree of D.D. a year after going to Laracor suggests this. But such was not to be his destiny : through his active ecclesiastical politics he made many acquaintances, and received protections, but in Church preferment he made no further progress for some fourteen years, and then by means of lay politics, and not through Church work. " *Latebat anguis in herb a* " ; the unavowed *Tale* lay in the midst of his useful ecclesiastical tracts, and the same clergy who had the benefit of his able polemics shied like nervous ponies before the wavering shadows of the Three Cloaks.

CHAPTER IV

KEEPING ON WITH POLITICS

So FAR it has not been possible to ascribe a party to Swift, as he has not confessed to any political leanings. Through Temple he has known a Whig world ; but that is all. Yet he shows from the first a lively adherence to the interests of the Church which were now growing more and more opposed to Whig politics.[1]

Swift reached his thirty-third year before he had any deep-rooted or actively exercised political convictions. Therefore it is no wonder if he developed rapidly afterwards, when he mixed among politicians and parties and acted directly upon them.

We want to draw attention to the very different positions in which Swift stood with regard to politics and religion. His religious convictions did not, as we have said, at any time change, but his politics are quite another matter. The shifting of Swift in politics requires an exact knowledge of his movements and life if it is to be rendered intelligible.

For Swift indeed, politics were often a question of environment, and no wonder ! Between Ireland and England, not only did his conditions of life change essentially,[2] but even party had, if not another meaning, as has been often urged, at least another sound. We should never forget that in Ireland politics were conducted by recent settlers, by Englishmen who were proud of being English, but tended to become " *Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores"* Ireland and England were really two kingdoms with loose relations.

Swift was a man who adapted himself with particular

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ease to change of environment and change in political moods. He was, it is important to remember, an utilitarian. He was very quick to see the nature of politics : a day-to-day occurrence, the choosing of an opportunity, the immediate reference to conditions.

Swift's movements in these years were many and tumultuous, to the point of making him abandon Stella in Ireland, even when, as he says, she had come there precisely in answer to his wish for company. He was burning with a desire to escape from Ireland, so much so that he who was essentially a sedentary man, as his life shows,[3] even thought of procuring a bishopric in Virginia and of going with Lord Berkeley to Vienna. Really he wanted to fly to London. Some five years before he had fled from Kilroot to a more endurable slavery at Temple's, but he had now behind him the more pleasing experiences of Temple's later years, and of the short stay in London. Thus Dublin, where he habitually stayed or often went, was now too far off from the living centre. Even in Ireland he was making, it is true, important connections. Archbishop King, though never his friend, remained a close acquaintance until he died in 1729.[4] Swift was also a frequent guest at the Castle, not only in the time of Lord Berkeley, but also when Ormonde and Pembroke were viceroys, and perhaps in a guarded way during Wharton's regime.

At Laracor he found some society, and dedicated much of his time to improvements of his benefice and the planting of a garden—as if Temple had bequeathed him his love for a " Dutch paradise." Many humbler people moved around him ; too few, he lamented later on, alluding to his first year in Ireland.[5] What he really missed was a wider world and more influence. He wanted neither love nor friendship. He wanted direct power.

Some biographers have endeavoured to attribute Swift's struggles towards preferment or a better position exclusively to his celebrated avarice.[6] But the fact is that till now we have been able to account for everything without taking into consideration either utter destitution, which he never really suffered, or greed, due to the fear of sinking into dependence such as he had in early years experienced at the hands of his uncle and of Temple.

The avarice theory as a method of interpreting peculiarities of Swift's life is already exploded by the fact of his attaining to a sufficient, if moderate, independence at Kilroot, and his then abandoning Kilroot precisely to become again dependent on Temple. Nor did he ever endure hunger or actual want. He could afford to wait for some months, as is shown both by his two flights from Temple's[7] and by his life after Temple's death. He could always hope to receive and did in fact receive some preferment without difficulty : Kilroot and Laracor are the proofs.

He wanted neither to give nor to receive : an egotist and consequently sometimes a miser, not a miser first and last. Therefore he kept accurate accounts of all expenses : so as to be sure not to be cheated, not even by his own mistakes. But he was lavish in charities—a way of showing his power, and so consistent with egotism, but not with deeply rooted avarice. He even lent right and left—taking good care to be paid back.

In any case, it was an avarice which did not deepen with age to any really serious extent, although old men commonly grow avaricious. An avarice without ascertainable greed, for in none of his dealings do we find a trace of pettiness or love of gain, witness Laracor, where he improved the benefice instead of exploiting it.

For a miser this would be terribly inconsistent[8] : the whole theory seems to be a gratuitous hypothesis of his

critics, who wished to account for certain minor episodes, which enter easily either into the common course of human dealings or into the picture of an egotist.

When Swift lamented the poverty of his benefice at Laracor, it was only in mental comparison with the rich deanery of Derry. Also in this case he felt he had been swindled out of something he already considered to be his.

Assuredly, he sought both a richer living and a living in England, but he might even have obtained it without going deep into politics. He really wanted to cut a figure —not only to have more, but to *live* more.

His goings from Ireland to England and from England to Ireland involved him simultaneously in Irish and in English affairs. Hence he gives the impression of having been able to ride two horses at the same time.

From an administrative point of view his comings and goings were not quite regular. Even if bishops were often non-residents at the time, it was not usual for a parson and a prebendary to absent himself so often. Swift somehow managed to do it by various devices, probably at first attaching himself to the various viceroys as chaplain, and then receiving an official ecclesiastical task to be discharged in England.

That it was all somewhat out of order from the point of view of clerical discipline, can be inferred from the way in which he subsequently detailed his presences in the Visitations and Chapters of these years[9]—as if to excuse himself from charges which he considered (as his remarks on Ireland show) serious in the case of others.

Be that as it may, it is not easy to explain how Swift at first, in a comparatively short space of time (1699-1708), emerged from obscurity and solitude into popularity.

It is alleged that his influence was the effect of his first work, *A Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and in Rome*, published in 1701, and generally recognised to be his by 1702. This work gained him important acquaintances in the political world ; but he did not follow the advantage up by sustained political activity, nor did he write anything of importance till 1708.[10] Yet in 1708 he had already made acquaintances, he was already widely known—he already cut a figure.

Perhaps his energetic mode of life affords an explanation. His mobility might, indeed, at first sight, seem to have been a hindrance. It deprived him of the advantage of staying in one place and exploiting his acquaintances and his successes with some consistency. But, on the other hand, he remained completely free. He was bound neither to Ireland nor to England, neither to his ecclesiastical nor to his political career, because he could always escape from one to the other.

The thing to wonder at is just that stern determination to rise. By it he escaped from the worst consequences of a secure and ordered life, or of a settled love-relation perhaps. His skill in finding ways and means to freedom, and in refusing to submit to the growth of habits, to ease and contentment must indeed exact praise.

In this, till later undaunted, energy we find a reason for admiring the man. He had really something more than common humanity seeing that he strove after something outside of his world—he marched to conquer. An interesting comparison is here possible with Berkeley, who was consumed by the same " divine discontent/' the desire for new and useful conquests. Swift served only himself, but with a cold energy which neither flattered nor pleased, but commanded and insulted.

The period of Temple, the period of his subordination, was definitely over ; he could no longer be imposed upon,

and his defence took the aspect of attack. The first advantage he obtained was perhaps a product of his direct insolence to Lord Berkeley.

And this insolence of a provincial young man coming to the witty, sophisticated world of London, and showing that he was neither to be imposed upon nor embarrassed—on the contrary, puzzling and embarrassing the others—was due to his inner maturity. He may have known nothing of the world except that it was a scoundrelly world. He had no antecedents, no claims to respect or consideration. He came, as it were, out of the void, with the face of a man already disillusioned, and the spirit of the *Tale* and the *Battle.*

He presented himself as a man indifferent to comments, as a man already sure of himself and who had a recognised value which allowed him to be casual in his manner and easy in his ways.—That was perhaps something of a bluff, but the world was taken in by it.

Even the kindly Addison fell a victim, if we accept the tale.—Swift had been seen many times in St. James's coffee-house. He walked up and down for half an hour and then went out without having spoken to anyone. They called him "the mad parson,[5,11] and became eager to make his acquaintance, just because he showed that he did not want to be known or to know anybody. Maybe Swift was really timid and dared not intrude, fearing to be snubbed—an insupportable thought for an egotist. Till at last *they* came pleading for his acquaintance : his game had succeeded. Even later on he never showed he wanted to know a person. The great, even, had to beg to be presented to him : he made difficulties to prove that he really wanted to be let alone and did not want to know Mr. Sitwell and Lord Castlerosse. Then, *they* grew curious, *they* made advances, and he entered into the acquaintanceship, master of the situation. It was not fun. It was good mundane politics,

from the rare sallies and the furious promenades in the coffee-house to the handling of peers and Ministers.

These politics had their origin in the hard lessons learned from Temple, and were indeed possibly first applied when Swift returned to Moor Park from Kilroot.

Certainly he was not yet in a position to make use of this method on a large scale, as he did later with great politicians and other personages. But it helped him to make acquaintances on both sides very easily, on the basis, as we have said, of the *Dissensions.*

The *Dissensions* shows that he had not, at this time, made any definite choice of a political party.[12]

We can form no idea what may have been his reasons for choosing this line of argument and taking upon himself an indirect defence of the Whig Peers impeached by the Tory Commons, in consequence of the Partition Treaty which they had signed. It is generally supposed[13] that the *Dissensions* was written at the instance of Lord Berkeley. In any case, it was possibly Swift's idea, not so much to help the Whig party, as to draw upon himself once more the attention of William III. For the Partition Treaty had been directly negotiated by the King, and in this affair the Ministers took on the Crown's responsibility.[14] The King, on this question in any case, evidently stood by his Ministers, among whom was Somers, who had been largely instrumental in procuring him the crown. The cause of these Ministers was far from being desperate, for the Whigs were predominant in the Upper House. Hence Swift, who had no idea of entering politics as a member of the Commons, or of gaining anything through the Commons[15] had every interest in winning protection by taking up the cause of the Lords.

He did not really propose to take up a political

attitude, he wished merely to find patrons. Had he meant the pamphlet to imply a complete adhesion to the Whig party, he would have taken a different line. On the contrary, Swift stands in the centre and judges, by historical examples, not of the merits of the cause but of its possible import for the life of the State. In so doing, he warns the Commons not to condemn Lord Somers and his colleagues, and becomes serviceable to these Ministers.

The *Dissensions,* which has a resemblance to Machiavelli's *Discorsi sulla Prima Deca di Tito Livio* and to Montesquieu's *Considerations sur les Causes de Ia Grandeur et Ia Decadence des Romains,* is not the advocacy of a definite policy, nor a play on popular sentiments ; it is rather a general thesis by way of historical analogy produced for a little group of persons (Commons and Upper House) who effectively direct affairs. This, we shall see, is also the character of the *Letter on the Sacramental Test.* Swift does not address the people, his aim is not now, as it became in the days of Harley's Ministry, to influence public opinion by the popular schemes and methods of persuasion of the " Examiner." He brings forward arguments, it is true, on behalf of the Whig party, but his essential idea is not to forward Whig interests but to please men in power.—If later on these did not pay him for the trouble, he was perfectly justified in abandoning, not the party, which he had never publicly embraced, but the men in whom he had hoped.

Even the arguments brought forward in the *Dissensions* do not permit us to consider him a Whig. He really takes the position of an impartial judge. Even later on, when partiality itself speaks from his mouth, he will still write as the mouthpiece of impartial justice ; but now his arguments are really independent of any party shibboleths.

It has even been maintained that he defends Whigs

with Tory arguments. We do not go so far as to say this, but certainly he uses arguments he had no necessity to disprove even as a Tory.

Politically, his theses are indifferent, he still deals with the abstract. The historical proof, the examination of the evils brought about by dissensions between the people (the Many of old writers) and the aristocracy (or the Few), can be applied to both parties, because it contains a warning against a tyranny of the people as much as against a tyranny of the Few or of the One, the King.

He is averse to every kind of tyranny. England had indeed in the preceding half-century experienced both the tyranny of the people and the tyranny of kings, and Swift's argument went home.

But the love of liberty of which he speaks is not to be taken as a political argument. Liberty in itself is a very tame thing : you cannot catch any party openly advocating tyranny, unless by way of paradox. It is the nuance of liberty which differs from party to party ; love of liberty, as Swift, a yet unripe political writer, here shows, is the common because nebulous aim of all citizens.

It was a very conventional sham, even in those times as much of a vagueness in Tory speeches as in those of the opposite party.[16] It had really no political significance at all, but only a rhetorical value, as in the verses of Addison :

> *' Tis Liberty that crowns Britannia's isle*
> *And makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains smile.*
> *— "Letterfrom Italy."*

This vague liberty, undefined, is guaranteed, says Swift, by the balance of power. A common idea at the time, this balance, and intimately connected with the conception of a tempered monarchy,[17] the definition of

England's constitution which **Swift later on adopted in** his " Examiner " essays.

We do not need to enter deeply into the question. It is enough to observe that this idea of a balance contains a very sound principle, that of a continual change of the internal forces of the commonwealth. Internal peace is not to be understood as static, there is no fixed hierarchy of forces, no fixed places for anybody in the structure of the State. The Constitution is a moving thing, perpetually finding new points of equilibrium : as the strength of any one element increases, a new way is found of ensuing the relative increase of strength in the other powers.

This perpetual change is exactly opposed to the medieval idea of a State determined from on high, of powers appointed to their immovable places by an eternal decree of God. It is a new and historical conception : politics are not to be subject to fixed laws, but are to be governed by a series of provisional arrangements—such was the last outcome of the " Covenant " which from Hobbes to Locke had come to be accepted, at least implicitly and tacitly, as the soundest theory on the origin of States.

Swift's essay reproduces, maybe, certain of Temple's liberal suggestions. The historical culture displayed is not exactly of the first order, it is of the kind that can easily be acquired in a grammar school, and it has something unripe and pedantic about it. Only the application shows some dexterity—although the identification of Aristides with Somers, of Themistocles with the Earl of Orford, of Pericles and Alcibiades with Halifax, is not based on serious analogies of character, and seems to be largely due to the imaginative ingenuity of Orrery and of other critics.[18]

The fact that the work was attributed on its appearance either to **Burnet or to** Somers does **not point to any**

particular skill, either historical or political. In any case, Swift let his authorship be quietly recognised after a very short delay (1702). He had nothing to fear : the *Dissensions* did not commit him to any heterodoxy or to the cause of any party. Various authors of note had been mentioned in connection with the tract before the true author was known, and thus the *Dissensions* brought Swift some renown although he had no profit from the side most interested. Later on, in begging a book from a Whig, he wished him to remember that it was the only favour he had received from that party. The *Dissensions* merely gave him reasons to continue his yearly excursions to London, with the expectation of something better and with growing credit among the wits.

Swift's other publications furnish no objection to the interpretation of the *Dissensions* as a " good turn " to men in power rather than as a profession of Whiggism. Indeed the only publication besides the *Dissensions* before 1708 is the anonymous *Tale*, which had no possible political implications except collaterally, and could even be considered as an " onslaught against Papists, Whigs, and Dissenters."[19]

But even in private Swift does not seem to have avowed any Whig sentiments : in 1700 he spoke (for Ireland) of the Tory party as " our party "—at least as the party of the Church,[20] and the thing signified something even if we allow that, as has sometimes been urged, Tory in Ireland was very much the same as Whig in England.[21] In this case, to put it paradoxically, Swift in London could only be an exiled Tory or a Whig on sufferance.

But he was really detached from party spirit even as late as 1703, when he laughed dispassionately at party frenzies :

It was so universal that I observed the dogs in the streets much more contumelious and quarrelsome than usual; and the very night before the bill went up, a committee of Whig and Tory cats had a very warm and loud debate upon the roof of our house.[22]

And yet it was the " debate " on the Bill on Occasional Conformity which should have interested him as a clergyman ![23]

In his letters (the only ones of this period preserved) to Archbishop King from 1704 on, we find no hint of political interest. It may be replied that King was not precisely a person with whom to boast of Whig feelings, but while Swift speaks openly and perhaps overconfidently of his influence with Somers and Sunderland[24] he gives information on politics merely casually and as a matter of curiosity or only in reference to the practical matter in hand.[25]

The charge of a treacherous change of party has often been brought against Swift.[26] But the making of such a charge shows lack of critical insight on the part of the critic, and is due to the wish to produce a cut and dried thesis, and to inability to take into account individual peculiarities. As an extreme example of this manner of judging things, we can quote the opinion of Philippson (the historian of the century of Louis XIV), who, after having affirmed without more ado that Swift had a lively antipathy for his calling of a priest, goes on to speak of Swift's " moral shipwreck " where he lost honour and sincerity, transforming himself from an extreme Whig into a not less extreme Tory.

The apologists, on the other hand, endeavour to explain a change which never took place. People fancied that they saw a weathercock in a man who formerly was in close relation with the Whigs and thereafter with their adversaries. But Swift was no partisan, he was merely a man who sought favours with very definite ends,

either personal or for his Church ; and, when the men in whom he hoped did not do anything on his behalf, he transferred his attention to other men with whose political ideas he was really in sympathy.

Swift's politics, one must remember, were always personal : he defends this man or that group, not abstract ideas. He had sympathy with many of the ideas of his Tory friends, whereas he had little, if any, liking for any of the ideas of the Whigs, and in any case he did not refer to Whig ideas when he defended Whig personalities.[27] We would even allege that his utter egotism saved him from the imputation of being a faithless party man —he searched for immediate advantages and therefore followed the men in the Government[28] not the governing party, like Talleyrand, who boasted on this ground of his political loyalty.

When Swift's psychology and the posture of political parties in his time are made wholly clear, necessity for the long discussions undertaken by Craik and by Leslie Stephen vanishes.[29] These authors, although they take account of Swift's position in the Church and allow for the special nature of party politics at the time, yet take for granted Swift's initial Whiggism, strengthened by his personal relation with Temple.

Craik's arguments,[30] although favourable to Swift, are not quite sound, for he starts from the assumption that Swift left Whiggism. He duly considers, step by step, the change in the politics of parties in these fateful years ; and he concludes that Swift left Whiggism because it developed views to which he could not adhere, because it seemed to assail the privileges of his Church, because its conduct was factious and intolerant. He then gives as reason for the alleged " change " in 1708 the Whig disregard of Swift's application on behalf of his Church and their seeking to favour the Presbyterians by abolishing the Test.[31] We can add also, perhaps, the Union as

another motive (Swift thought that Scots were dogs). **But** in any case this point of view pays no regard to the fact that Swift's abandonment of the Whigs occurred just when, by the exclusion of all Tory members from the Ministry (the first months of 1708 were the date of the rupture with Harley and Bolingbroke which Swift duly registered[32]), the Whigs seemed to fear no opposition.

To sum up, the fundamental question is : Was Swift ever a Whig ? Was he more than merely friendly with the men in power who happened to be Whigs ?[33] His early relationship with Temple and his hopes of William **I I I** may allow us to suppose he was considered a Whig, but have we evidence of any positive defence of the Whig principle, of the Whig practice, of Whig decisions ?

All these questions have been implicitly answered. The unfavourable judgment on Swift's political loyalty had its origin in the puritanical ethics of certain biographers, who forgot that at that time parties were so variable and were so uncertainly defined that nobody attached much importance to a change of party, like that, for instance, of Marlborough from a Tory to a Whig.[34]

It may perhaps be objected that the case against Swift is then even blacker, since he defended Whigs and their politics, but in such a way as not to take the responsibility of a Whig attitude and without identifying himself with the political ideas of the Whigs.

But party was for most men, even for the leading politicians, a very personal matter in that time : this is not a polemical argument invented by Swift[35] but a recognised truth ; and it was due probably to the rapid changing of party ideas and practice. Parties, says Belloc, were different kinds of men.[36]

If so, we can say that Swift certainly was of the Tory

breed.—But we are not even disposed to lay great stress on his fidelity to Tory principles and men together, up to the end of his life, although this could be brought forward in refutation of his alleged instability. We do not propose to turn our defence into a question of morals as we do not mean to find reasonable grounds for Swift's political persuasions.

It is never in fact necessary. Everybody's choice of party is determined by unconscious motives, and only then he finds reasons—and good reasons—for his party. Party, we submit, is not a philosophical idea and has nothing to do either with ethics or with religious persuasion. Politics are a practical matter ; at least they are the basis of numerous practical decisions, of many matters which have to do with a man's personal welfare. A man cannot let his political convictions be unemployed ; he cannot refer them to the next world, like a religion, nor hold them above everyday life as a philosophy and a morality. Political decisions, whether one's own or somebody else's, have an immediate practical effect.

Therefore it is vain to be morally indignant at men who change party. Life changes, one's interests of to-day are perhaps different from one's interests of to-morrow ; it is not necessary that one should change political opinions when his interests shift, but one's interests alter the landscape imperceptibly and views shift accordingly. There are, it is true, certain gross sorts of change, when the personal interest consciously and immediately causes not a change of opinions but a change of party. But the problem, at bottom, between political loyalty and disloyalty is a problem of greater or less consciousness of the interests which underlie a political conviction, and not a problem of morality, since no one party has a monopoly of disinterestedness or better moral foundations than another.

We do not mean to excuse Swift by such considerations,

but it is necessary to bring them forward, for the question deserves to be treated in a general way. Not to excuse him, but to explain him—and not merely to explain his "change" of political party. Politics were fundamental in his life, and to understand him we need, even before knowing his party, to understand what he could possibly mean and feel by party and what were precisely the parties of his time.

In Swift's time there were no political parties as we now know them. They were in fact in the making,[37] not only because the *names* (not the political programmes, which came later on) were adopted some thirty years before Swift's entry into politics, but because a political party can only exist in a harmonious system of government, when two or more (two thousand to-day) possibilities are open within the limits of the Constitution. When the country sets aside these limits (the Revolution, the Act of Settlement, all other violent or sudden changes in the structure of the State) there cannot be politics in the same sense as before, and parties are bound to change their essential nature. This is not hair-splitting ; politics are a game (with ample opportunities for cheating) and must as such have fixed rules : the fundamental constitution of the realm.

It is indeed recognised on all hands that the English party denominations of Whig and Tory underwent a great change in their significance between the date of their origin and Swift's day ; this necessarily followed from the changes in the Constitution, as Swift recognised in his later polemics. Of course he then made of the fact an argument against the Whigs.[38]

Therefore historians are at a loss to define the terms with exactitude. Mahon thinks the Whig can be defined as the party which feared the King, whereas the Tory

feared the people ; Hallam defines the Whigs by their fundamental assumption that the Constitution can be changed ; Inglis maintains that the Tory is the true heir to the Revolution ; whereas Bagehot gives up the attempt to determine any fixed characteristic, and Todd insists that under Anne and George I Tories were all for Whig principles, that is, for liberty of commerce and against a standing army.

When the names began to be used, about 1680 (to go no further backwards), the real basis of dissension was the position of the Duke of York, an avowed Catholic. The Church had always maintained the principle of passive obedience and already by this time there was a fundamental relation between Tory and Established Church, which, in all the ensuing changes, never really disappeared : thus Swift's idea that Church comes before party is fundamentally right. The Tories maintained that there was no way of avoiding James's succession, whereas the Whigs, full of the remaining spirit of the Commonwealth, in deep sympathy with Presbyterians and Dissenters, implacable enemies of Popery, sought a means of getting rid of the Stuart altogether.

James I I , the most egregious dunce of history, achieves the feat of alienating both parties by his devotion to a Church which was obsolete, at least in England.[39] At first the clergy and the Tory, who are bound by their doctrine of passive obedience, have no way of preventing their principle from degenerating into that acquiescence before arbitrary power against which the Whig is the active rebel, but it was the Bishops who held up James's plans, and for a time the Dissenters united with them in tumultuous manifestations.

This union brings about the first confusion of Tory and Whig principles. When the Houses have to decide on the constitutional way of putting William in the place of the reigning king, the opposition between Whig and Tory

revives, but leads now no longer to a complete antithesis in practice. Even the Tory thinks he can save the fundamental principle of Divine Right by naming the Prince of Orange regent and preserving for James the title of king. Foremost in this project was Sancroft, the Archbishop, later deposed as a non-juror.

The plan miscarries, William becomes king : but his interest and the novelty of his position oblige him to make no distinction of parties and to put both in office.

After the Act of Settlement, which guaranteed the Houses against the unpopular Privy Council, the King was bound to do something to avoid perpetual clashes with Parliament, and he decided to choose his Ministers from amongst the strongest party, which in 1696 was the Whig. The influence of this on party politics can be seen at a glance : party was becoming not only a series of fundamental maxims and general tendencies, but even a definite method of administration and leadership. Parties were brought nearer to practical problems and their intransigent principles were modified by everyday necessities. In this way the programme of a party came to be a confused medley of principles and ambitions and resolutions to be realised so soon as the party came into power. On the other hand, to remain in power the party had to preserve a Parliamentary majority and thus it came to adopt the old policy of the King of gaining support by the giving of bribes and privileges. Thus more and more people came to be interested in party politics.

But the change in constitutional usage which made the Whigs the Government party changed the ideas of the Whigs, and in consequence those of the Tories too. The Whigs were the King's party, because the Revolution had something of the Covenant theory in it, or at least was an open infraction of the theory of passive obedience. Moreover, Continental conditions caused the

Whigs to advocate the maintenance of a standing army : and so came about this "change" denounced by Swift.[40] But in reality both parties were *tendential,* that is, they could even conceive of an extreme goal, the Whig of a new Commonwealth and the Tory of the calling in of the Pretender.[41] This again is not merely a polemical argument of Swift, for there was then a real pressure of both parties against the limits of the Constitution, and it produced instability among parties.

The economic factor came now to have a great importance and much enlarged the scope of English politics. Swift discerns its import with great clarity, although making it a purely polemical argument against the Whigs : "These men come in with the spirit of shopkeepers to frame rules for the administration of kingdoms."[42] And again, of a particular occurrence : "The election of members for this great city, carried contrary to all conjecture, against the united interest of those two great bodies, the Bank and East India Company. . . ,"[43]

But parties were not yet established on the basis of economic interests : this factor exerted its influence side by side with the original religious one. The distinction can perhaps be put in this way : there was a traditional Whiggism (religious and constitutional) and a traditional Toryism (High Church—even though Swift says that the High and Low Church distinction is only an invention of adversaries to divide the Church—and the great landed gentry, potential or actual Jacobites) ; on the other hand, a modern Toryism, representing the interest of landed proprietors, great and small, also of the rural population in general, and a modern Whiggism, free-thinking as the logical conclusion of Dissent, atheistic or latitudinarian in the Church (the residue and transformation of the old religious ideas of the Whig), but first and foremost interested in commerce,

and therefore (this is important) opposed to liberty of commerce, because we are in the age of mercantilism.

This framework is far from being exact, but it helps us to understand Swift's position and his part in politics. It even explains, by the way, the phrase attributed to him, which, however, cannot be taken as a declaration of political faith : " A Whig and one who wears a gown." A strange definition, because we are told there were no High Church Whigs, and yet it explains why Swift, starting from absolute fidelity to his Church, still thought it possible to bring his High Church ideas into accord with Whig practice.[44] He believed that he could support the interests of the Church, and at the same time follow the new current which (he assumed) had no immediate relation with religion.

But when Anne took the place of William and the Whigs had to look round everywhere for support, they extended their electoral basis, and emphasised traditional Whiggism in order to gain the adherence of Dissenters of all persuasions. They acted regardless of the Queen's respect for the Church, which now suffered intensely by the prolongation of the war ; and thus the strain put on the landed interest by the rivalry of commerce and finance became intolerable.[45]

Between 1701 and 1707 Swift is evidently developing gradually a more conscious interest in the welfare of the Church. He is trying to do it useful service and so achieve in it a position of respect and responsibility.

He reached this position when Archbishop King allowed him to help in the matter of the First Fruits and Tenths : old taxes levied on the clergy on behalf of the Crusade by the Pope, and then appropriated by the Crown. The increasing poverty of small clergy brought about an agitation in England, and Queen Anne (1704)

restored the First Fruits to the clergy. Swift seized the occasion to urge Archbishop King to do something to obtain the remission also for the Church of Ireland[46] but King answered indifferently and raised many difficulties.[47] The question, however, was taken up keenly by the Irish clergy. Anxious to prove his loyalty to the Church, and without thinking much of his position with the Whigs (perhaps he meant to make amends by his conduct for the *Tale)* Swift strove once again to engage[48] in the task by offering his English influence on behalf of the Irish clergy, and at the beginning of 1708 he was unofficially charged with the affair.[49]

At the same time, Swift did not forget to promote his own interests. He had expectations of the clergy as well as of his political friends : he hoped through the Dean of St. Patrick's to obtain the curacy of St. Nicholas Without or something of that nature,[50] just as immediately before he had hoped for the Bishopric of Waterford,[61] promised by Whig friends ; but both hopes came to nought.

Only then (late in 1707 or early in 1708), Swift engaged again, in a more ecclesiastical vein, in religious propaganda. *An Argument against Abolishing Christianity* and *A Project for the Advancement of Religion and the Reformation of Manners,* although difficult to date with precision, are to be attributed to the year 1708, a great year with Swift.

The two pamphlets, which were probably written simultaneously, offer obvious occasion for comparison.

The *Argument* is in satirical vein. There is more than once a clear echo of the arguments of the *Tale.*[62] Although he did not avow the *Tale,* Swift was always sure it was a good work, and this harping on the ironical and satirical strain to defend the Church is evidence that

he was really sincere in supposing that he had done the Church a good turn with the *Tale.*

Here the argument goes further than Church and touches religion in its intimate essence, Christianity as a faith. In the *Tale* the principal Christian denominations had been called in question : now, it is against free-thinkers that the blow is directed.

But although going deeper, the satire appears better justified than in the *Tale.* The different Churches had always debated seriously, and to laugh at them was not quite fair play. Whereas free-thinkers found their best arguments in ridiculing Christian faith, and it was only right they should be repaid in their own coin—as, later on, Swift was to repay Collins in his.

The *Project,* on the contrary, is a work not congenial to Swift ; at least it is an earnest work in which we fail to see eye to eye with the author. After having ridiculed incredulity in the *Argument,* he proceeds in this *Project* to propose positive means for the promotion of Christianity, but these means seem to us to be pitiably inadequate. He speaks of the foundation of new Churches and of refusing to loose-livers and loose-thinkers access to courts and offices—morality and religion go together with Swift, as we have already observed.

It is very easy to see how his idea of religion as an external bond enables him to conceive so strangely the notion of a religious reform. As a utilitarian he has no faith in mere preaching ; he treats England as missionaries treat poor savages the world over, imposing on them, by external means, a faith they cannot possibly understand. It is not religion, indeed, that Swift has in mind ; he was not apt in devising ways of introducing religion into a soul which has it not. As he had never questioned his religion, he did not know any possible means of persuading others to religion.

What he sought was a form of wholesale conformity—

of Catholicism at its worst. To extend external worship could *perhaps* bring about interior redemption. By forcing all people to observe the habit of faithful adherents of the Church, they might possibly be compelled to think in a way more or less alike. It would have been a triumph of hypocrisy, of lip service, but that would at least have avoided scandal—the horrid spectre of all conformism, as the practice of Catholicism shows.

It was in effect a reduction of religion to religious politics, a handling of religious problems as if they were political ones. But this was really Swift's turn of mind.

In the same year, in another and more interesting pamphlet, he took up as churchman a definite position towards politics.

Whig politics were indeed moving towards an open clash with the Church. The first one-party Ministry of Anne had been brought about by the elimination of Tory Ministers, and both sides now cleared the decks for action. Swift took up whole-heartedly the cause of his Church, even if it could not serve him well in a moment of Whig preponderance.

The Sentiments of a Church of England Man, with Respect to Religion and Government are an open political confession.[58] No need to enter now into the question of its ecclesiastical significance. Its political import is hardly to be exaggerated, because it is really the first open declaration of Swift, and shows him entering into politics as a churchman.

It is true that Swift takes a central position and tries to be moderate.[54] It is also true that he completely accepts the new position of the Crown after the Revolution[55] in a way which could not be accepted by the Tories at the time of the Revolution—though now this had become the official attitude of Church and Tories. It is true, again, that he says openly that the Church

remains far from the extremes of Whig and Tory alike[60]; yet this shows at least that he never intended to be considered as a Whig, politically bound to the tenets of the party.[67]

But in speaking of the sentiments of a clergyman in relation to the Church[58] he insists that the Church cannot allow any novelty which would impair its privileges as an Established Church. Considering that at this moment the Whigs were moving directly towards concessions to the Dissenters, this declaration, made in a peculiarly hard and earnest tone, dispels all pretence of " political neutrality" in Swift as churchman, and turns the pamphlet into a warning against the natural development of the Whig policy.

But an even clearer declaration in this sense, an open breach not only with Whig politics but with his Whig friends as well was caused by a pamphlet at the end of the same year : *A Letter from a Member of the House of Commons in Ireland to a Member of the House of Commons in England, concerning the Sacramental Test.* This work was not acknowledged at the time, but it was speedily and easily recognised as his, seemingly (Scott) as the result of the inquiries of Lord Wharton[59] who became Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in November 1708.

A Whig effort begun early in the year had made the question of the Test immediately urgent.[60] In April 1708 Swift had written :

" Some days ago my Lord Somers entered with me into discourse about the Test clause and desired my opinion upon it, which I gave him truly, though with all the gentleness I could, because I am inclined and obliged to value the friendship he professes for me, so he is a person whose favour I would manage in this affair of the First Fruits.[61]

In the *Letter* Swift takes up a definite political position on this urgent question. The Whig Ministry, to be sure

of the Dissenters[5] help and to make short work of the Church's latent opposition, were endeavouring to bring about the repeal of the Test Act, a very long tentative business, resumed again and again in later years, and against which Swift was always on guard.[62]

But before stressing the issue in England, the Whig Ministers thought to " try it on the dog first," with the good enough excuse that Irish Dissenters had had much to suffer and had shown their loyalty in an exceptional way by their deportment during the Revolution and its sequel. The Speaker of the Irish House came over to England to make arrangements, and Presbyterians seized the occasion of rumours of another invasion to send in a loyal address to the Queen.

Swift was in London when he published this *Letter* which is one of the best examples of his production in polemics. But his political declarations are even more interesting than the handling of the question itself. Swift proclaims that among the clergy in Ireland are " hardly one in a hundred who are not very good Whigs *in our acceptation of the word."*[63] Swift could not assure us more directly that he was not posing as a Whig in the English sense of the word !

Swift defends the Church directly, *his* Church as an Established Church. If the Test is abolished, Dissenters will aim at becoming the National Church. And Swift puts the argument with elegant adroitness : " We are fully convinced in our consciences, that we shall always tolerate them, but not quite so fully that *they* will always tolerate us, when it comes to their turn. . . ."[64]

It can be said of this pamphlet, even more forcibly than of the *Sentiments,* that it is not a religious pamphlet at all. The problem of the Test is considered as a purely political matter and relates to the protection of the Church in the State. Swift does not pretend to substantiate the claims of the Church by theological

arguments, nor does he even try to prove, in the manner of the *Tale,* the lawfulness of the Church. He simply presents the political position, and enforces his view with arguments drawn from the recent history of the country.

In the *Dissensions* history was handled in an academic fashion and distorted—can there be a history which is not distorted ?—and the aim was that of a convenient comparison. But now history is presented as a legal argument and the distortion is deliberate for opportunist reasons.

It would be extremely inconvenient for the State to repeal the Test : this is what the whole argument amounts to. Swift does not shrink from alluding to the position of favour which the Established Church occupied. He starts from the *jus primi possidentis,* and says in effect : we are and mean to remain in possession. The Dissenters allege their helplessness, and this is actually interpreted so as to make it mean that in the case of an invasion of the Pretender they will, should their wishes not be granted, offer no resistance and refuse to help the State ![65] This very able stroke is one of the most remarkable examples of Swift's utter unfairness in political controversy.

1708 was indeed a great year with Swift. The hitherto rather scanty writer extends the scope of his interests, makes fruitful experiments in all directions ; the *Letter* closes a year of unparalleled activity. While taking up a position in the world of politics, he also puts himself forward in the intellectual world.

It is as if the forties brought Swift suddenly a need to express himself more fully—or as if he thought it was time to make the utmost efforts to be in the van. Till now, his relations had been personal relations, either in the world of wits[66] or the political world. He was already

known, we may say, privately, but now he emerges fully equipped, and his first works to be, at least openly and immediately, avowed, are great successes.

He is now fully conscious of his powers. He has studied his public and extended his knowledge of the world in a practical sense : he is an outsider no longer.

Hitherto he had hardly cultivated the field of literature, or rather that of wit. He had written some poems, but they were not even published.[67] He had a lively distrust of the wits, yet he now understood that he who does not hunt with the wolves is liable to be torn to pieces by them.

Either in 1707 or early in 1708[68] he had already shown his scorn of the wits and the would-be learned in the *Tritical Essay upon the Faculties of the Mind,*[9] which exposed the habit of uncouth and meaningless references and quotations, a parody with not much point in it, for it is really difficult to reproduce utter stupidity and to say nothing in many words.

More successful, and the final weight that tipped the scales and dropped Swift into the centre of the world of wits, was the joke of Bickerstaff, which is so widely known that we need not dwell on it at length.

It was indeed nothing but a practical joke, with a very distinct flavour of what came later to be known as comic Irish. Many critics wax indignant at its frivolity : Swift, it seems, is not allowed to fool—even when, as in this case, fooling served his purpose of bringing him to the footlights. Perhaps it was too drawn-out. Swift kept up the joke as late as 1709, and we have here one of the first examples of his love of the light, rather pointless humour which became more marked in him in later years, so as to seem to some high-brow critics a mark of intellectual depravity. But Swift followed the bent of the age—indeed of all ages. A figure of the salons wins his greatest success with jests, which if printed would call

down the attention of the Commission for Lunacy. The salons were then in competition with the coffee-houses, that is, the whole world of wits was occupied with purposeless and sometimes bawdy jokes. Swift himself dwells on this defect of the times in his parody of *Polite Conversation.*

And yet in Swift's jokes there is almost always a hard quality of direct insolence which distinguishes them from the harmless games of polite parties. The Bickerstaff affair is not, in technique of attack and argument, essentially different from his best political satires. It has a personal quality as if Swift had something definite against Partridge, and this capacity for hating his foes—even when he had started by abusing them with an impersonal end in view, or as part of a system and not as individuals—is precisely one of the reasons for the efficacy of his satire. It is as if a wild cat should find a mouse on which to flesh its fangs, and then nurse a personal grievance against the tormented animal. In truth Swift was obliged to personalise his object if he was to express his spirit, which was full to the brim with a hard consciousness of himself.

In July 1709 Swift returned to Ireland.[70] It is a matter for surprise (as his friends thought at the time) that for a whole year he did not think of returning to England, where his position was now so strong. But a bad attack of giddiness pursued him until very late in the year,[71] and, on the other hand, he had good cause for his absence. It was a retirement somewhat of the type which he practised later on during the estrangement of Harley from Bolingbroke in 1714. In 1709 party feeling ran high and a decision was anxiously awaited. In the meanwhile Swift, who evidently had friends on both sides, had neither an interest in taking up a position

nor a wish to do so.[72] He really had no desire for debates which led no man knew whither. He could not exercise his talents before he knew where he was.

Swift had already begun to contribute to the *Tatler*, where the figure of Bickers taff had been taken up by Steele and had become a sort of bastard of Swift.[73] It is interesting to observe that this collaboration, so far as can be ascertained (from June 1709 to March 1710) is not political—the type of paper prevented that—and even avoids carefully any political innuendoes.

If Swift had been in England it would have been absolutely impossible for him not to talk politics—he would probably have displeased somebody without pleasing anybody. The world was then stirring in a sense directly contrary to that in which it had moved in preceding years. Year by year the war had become a greater burden upon the taxpayers, and the Whigs were declining in the royal favour. The Tindal controversy had shown to what extremes Whig politics could lead. Swift prepared to attack Tindal, but he relinquished the work which he had evidently taken up from ulterior motives : a pity, because what has been preserved is a very elegant piece of satirical word-by-word commentary which, if completed, would have been a nice pendant to his pamphlet of 1713 against Collins.

But Swift applied himself also to many other literary activities, and among them to a quarrel with Lady Giffard about the publication of the third part of the *Memoirs* of Temple. He prepared the *Apology* for a new edition of the *Tale,* and the *Miscellanies*[741] published in 1710 which should comprehend all his writings of these years.

In the meantime, the position of the Whigs was becoming worse every day. The agitation following the Sacheverell trial[75] showed how the wind was blowing.

Now the Whigs themselves, who had promised Swift

so much, both personally and for his Church, commenced to think that they had treated him badly. At the end of 1709 Halifax lets him hope[76] for a prebend, which Swift had endeavoured to procure from him before leaving England,[77] and insists, it seems, on his coming to England again. But Swift, if he had befriended Addison, and had even been intimate with Wharton, during their stay in Dublin, had no intention of losing the advantage of having no obligations to the Whigs.

His absence had also another cause : his mother had died in April 1710, and he was deeply affected. The sincere and poignant phrase : "I have now lost my barrier between me and death,"[78] leads us to suppose that Swift remained a long time at Laracor without wishing to see anybody.

CHAPTER V

THE DOOM

ACTIVE though he was, Swift was always under the shadow of his puzzling sickness, and it becomes imperative that we should now appreciate his physical state. But let us say at the outset that this physical state does not and cannot justify (unless our general attempt to explain him on the ground of common psychology and common morality is to collapse altogether) the long-cherished suspicion that he was a monster—that he was abnormal, either in his mind or in his immediate bodily needs.

He was, we shall find, even more highly strung than the common neurotic, but never *insane,* either in the ordinary or the technical sense, possibly not even in the last years of senile decay. When his illness influenced his mind it was through normal psychological channels, and not by an impairment of his mental balance, nor have we any proof that he was sexually peculiar.—On these lines we have been preceded by critical and medical authorities, first and most notably Bucknill.[1]

But the matter is for us, as his biographers, one of extraordinary importance. We shall not save ourselves the trouble of psychological analysis by explaining away mysterious facts on the ground of abnormality. We want to bring Swift close to our common humanity, to see his genius, as it were, rear itself from our common clay as a solid monument—a ravaged monument of greatness and sorrow, our better because our brother, and because of his black prospect which yet did not prevent him from facing with open eyes his work and his doom.

First, it is important to sum up the available evidence on the earliest attacks of his lifelong illness, in order that we may form a clear anamnesis of it.

Swift relates that in 1689, while he was at Sheen with Temple, he fell sick, after eating a hundred golden pippins, of a giddiness and a coldness of the stomach. He was sent to his native air, as we already know, with no success ; and in 1694, when he was back at Moor Park, he took cold after bathing, and contracted deafness.[2]

These troubles never left him completely. Together or separately, they were the bane of his whole life, varying from time to time in their force and duration, but not giving rise to any actually fresh symptoms until they merged in the senile decay which came on in 1738, and was definitive in 1742 : say fifty-eight years of more or less permanent ills.

The influence that this must have had on Swift's character obliges us to determine the exact nature of the complaint. An exact summary of the symptoms as described by Swift in the various epochs,[3] such as Wilde attempted,[4] without, however, all the evidence that is now at hand, enables us to draw up a tolerable anamnestic table of the complaint.

From the age of twenty on up till forty, Swift suffered from a series of attacks of giddiness, starting with fits which occurred close together, so as to constitute periods of illness of the average duration of a year or a year and a half. At first such periods were separated by many years even of relative well-being: from 1701 to 1709 Swift notes only one year of attacks in his *Memoirs.*

The accompanying symptoms are noises in the ears,[5] not very strong because seldom mentioned[6] ; gastric troubles may be always surmised. After forty and up to seventy, the period of illness is not indicated by bad fits but by a state of giddiness, causing a tottering gait and

eye troubles. Colds do not always seem to have a determining share in the recurrence of the fits,[7] headaches are not much complained of, or were quite different from ordinary headaches[8]; nor does the complaint seem to have been influenced by other general maladies even if of a generally infective character, such as shingles. Rapid turning of the head causes sudden vertigo.[9]

The deafness is considered by the patient as a wholly separate complaint; and it seems that not only at the beginning, but even forty-five years later, deafness and giddiness were distinct.[10] Therefore Swift never attributed them to a common origin, but believed them to be two totally different complaints. The impairment of hearing is not at first so troublesome as the state of giddiness ; later, giddiness seems to have been less felt, whilst deafness establishes itself continuously so as to become a real loss of hearing.

As Swift attributed his first complaint to an ailment of digestive nature, he avoided fruit,[11] gave himself up to violent exercise and an extensive use of stomach tonics, such as bitter pills of various descriptions (asafoetida and other common stomachics), steel draughts, and wine, probably for its " calorific " qualities, as the complaint was, in the style of the age, a " coldness of the stomach."

As these remedies were given by skilled physicians,[12] and the patient was always under expert supervision, it is to be assumed that at the time a digestive disease was really the best diagnosis possible. Physicians never thought of associating deafness and giddiness ; many people at the time were suffering either from the one or the other, but it is not to be presumed that the precise complaint of Swift was common, as it has been affirmed —some of his friends complained of digestive giddiness and others of old-age deafness.

The cure for deafness was always symptomatic **only— Ls**

oils in the ears ; but Swift found a successful substitute in the quack medicine of a clove of garlic dipped in honey.[18]

Until the deafness was definitely established, the attacks often passed away without the use of any remedy ; on the other hand, stomachic remedies against giddiness seem to have brought a sensible amelioration, while some bad diets caused relapses.

Swift's accounts are particularly interesting, because, being a valetudinarian for long years, he came to interest himself much in illness and remedies. He was really afraid of all sorts of maladies.[14] He liked to speak on the subject, and therefore we have numerous notes on it, and probably accurate ones. There grew on him the inclination to think himself worse than he really was[15] and to dwell with special anxiety on the diseases of age.

Critics have often cast doubts on the sincerity of Swift's accounts, assuming that he was either deliberately lying with the aim of concealing a discreditable origin of his complaint, or that he was very stupid in attributing the origin of his malady to surfeit. Johnson, for instance, says : " The origin of the disease is commonly obscure. Almost every boy eats as much fruits as he can get, without any great inconvenience.[5516]

In the attempts to explain Swift's symptoms, on the supposition that he had something to conceal, syphilis, epilepsy and abnormal sexual indulgence have all been mentioned. Modern medical opinion will not accept any of these conditions as the underlying cause of his curious physical state.

In the first case (an auricular syphilis not cured or cured badly) the progression of the malady would have been appallingly rapid, and there could not have been periods of remission and a malady lasting for fifty years

at least without an unmistakable and obtrusive appearance of other phenomena.[17]

The elegant theory of indulgence in sexual autism was created by Beddoes,[18] who was enthralled by the possibility of accounting for Swift's illness, his supposed impotence, his dislike of marriage, and his scatology, at one stroke. Beddoes does not doubt for a moment that Swift's love for Stella and Vanessa was platonic, and that he " hovered with . . . lingering fondness on the honey he could not sip."

If others described the illness as epilepsy, it was simply because Swift spoke a great deal before he was thirty of " fits "—vertigo often develops a pseudo-epileptic aspect.

The right path was found only after the middle of last century, when Meniere (1861) fixed the nature of a complaint of Swift's type. Bucknill[19] was then able definitely to dispel all doubts by recognising Meniere's malady in Swift, a characteristic form of labyrinthism or lesion of the internal ear. In this way was severed all possible connection between the giddiness and the alleged insanity—for it had been thought by many that the strange and puzzling deafness and giddiness were the symptom or foreshadowing of ruined or impaired mental faculties.[20]

BucknilPs diagnosis is, however, no longer satisfactory. The studies of Meniere have been completed by others[21] so that we can form a new idea of the vertigo from which Swift suffered.

It is now known that giddiness frequently has its origin in troubles of the internal ear, whereas at the time of Swift it was always suspected of being caused by a lesion of the stomach. Even to-day it is admitted that half the cases are due to stomach lesions, but we know that the other half comes *ab aure lasa.*

In other words, Swift was truthful in his statements about his malady, because even vertigoes *ab aure lasa* present themselves with the accompaniment of nausea; to-day, however, we know that the reason is not necessarily stomach troubles in themselves but the contiguity of the gastric and hypogastric centres in the *medulla oblongata* to the vertiginous centre.[22]

To the man who suffers from labyrinthic troubles, giddiness seems to affect the eye and not the ear, and therefore he sees no obvious connection, nor did the old physicians think that there might be a connection between deafness and giddiness. So that Swift considered giddiness as an eye-complaint due to the stomach and never thought that deafness and giddiness could have anything to do with each other ; when the attacks begin to coincide unmistakably, he speaks of two friends who have accompanied him almost all his life, and who now " think to come together.[5523]

But if Swift was truthful in exposing his symptoms, as we have every reason to believe, it is odd that he did not notice deafness until he had suffered from giddiness for four or five years, and that the attacks did not always come together ; the characteristic of Meniere[5]s complaint is indeed the three symptoms (i.e. giddiness, deafness, and noises in the ear) together.

The explanation lies possibly in the fact that deafness is seldom complete, at least in its milder stages : for instance, the patient can be deaf only to high-pitched voices or to certain sounds of special intensity or nature, and in this case he can even fail to perceive that his hearing is impaired, should the circumstances of his life not necessitate his hearing sounds of all possible types. It may be Swift perceived his deafness only as the result of very serious attacks and, the giddiness being past, when he could mix anew with people, and be obliged to hear voices variously tuned.

In any case, Swift's malady does not afford a clear case of Meniere's complaint.[24] Moreover, to-day we shall make a new diagnosis, from another standpoint than Bucknill's, because Meniere's malady has even been pronounced non-existent—or better, to-day, it is considered only as a syndrome, that is, a peculiar association of symptoms which can have very different origins.

In any case, we shall consider giddiness only as a symptom,[25] and an obscure one : there can be an objective and a subjective vertigo, and it is not easy to distinguish them in the case of Swift. At the same time, Swift's case was certainly limited and circumscribed, nor did it imply trouble in the central nervous system, i.e. insanity making its appearance, because its nerve-seat, though locally near, is functionally out of the way of the superior centres of the brain.

Swift then, we may say, suffered from attacks of a peculiar complaint, which could easily occur suddenly and be provoked by a state of recurring indigestion.[26] It is uncertain whether the real cause of the symptoms was in the digestive system ; it may be that stomach troubles only brought out a peculiar disposition to irritation of the nervous centres of the *medulla oblongata* which remained as a possibility of recurring attacks. It may even be that the attacks were due not to an impairment of the nervous system, but to a feebleness of the blood-vessels in the labyrinth, which reacted at first spasmodically, then in a chronic way, to any stomach trouble there could be : in this case Swift's malady might be nearer to Meniere's classical complaint as to its origin than in the first case.

In any event, Swift had a perfect right to think of his malady as brought about by stomach troubles,[27] and this is the real result of our analysis. The error of Swift (and of his physicians !) was in thinking that the trouble

resided in the stomach, and had nothing to do with deafness and the brain. In fact, stomachics greatly improved his conditions, until in the old age they were rendered useless by the anatomic ravages of the malady. By then the recurring fits[28] had brought about a degeneration of the labyrinth (and of the hearing apparatus too), which explains the permanence of a vertiginous aura by the existence of a permanent labyrinthitis—a sort of chronical form of the Meniere complaint. Then the destruction of the labyrinth proceeding further, the vertigo was bound to attenuate itself and even to cease, whilst the deafness became more and more complete, even to the right ear (at first, the trouble was limited to the left ear), as there is a greater facility of communicating degeneration from the left to the right ear than vice versa.

Anyway, we insist, the first occasion of all troubles was always in stomach troubles ; and it is not to be wondered at that Swift thought that the mere eating of fruit was sufficient to bring about a bad fit or a series of attacks. Given the elective seat to which all stomach troubles communicated themselves, there could easily be a sort of, we may say, anaphylactic[29] predisposition, so that the least stomach trouble was sufficient to bring out the fundamental irritation of the labyrinth.

But the most important thing of all—and the observation has never been made in connection with Swift's malady—is that the proximity of the vertiginous centres to the gastric and hypogastric centres brings about a state of anxiousness. Swift often spoke of fear of giddiness, then of fear of deafness, and these fears overshadowed his life, even when he had no actual attacks. It is only now that we can be sure that the anxiousness arose from nervous grounds. The so-called " hypogastric " fears are not fears *of something,* but pure, objectless *anxia.* This has nothing to do with cerebral

troubles, even if it often accompanies nervous troubles. Swift sought to find a reason for his anxiousness which should have something to do with his attacks, and therefore felt it as a fear of again becoming giddy and deaf.

But, on the contrary, the same troubles which made him giddy and deaf brought him anxiousness.[30] He tended always to be apprehensive, and his naturally highly strung condition was thereby aggravated. This deepened later on into a truly dark conception of the world ; but it was, emphatically (as Wilde and Bucknill clearly prove), not a question of insanity or of degeneration of the cerebral faculties. Swift remained unimpaired in his consciousness and faculties until very late in life —marvellously late, if we take into consideration all his sufferings, his external preoccupations and sorrows, and his ill-requited labours.

His escape from downright insanity shows him, indeed, to have been a man of exceptional equilibrium and singularly clear faculties. He was, as we shall see in the later chapters, virtually immune from a real impairment of the mental faculties, at least until after the seventies.

In showing that there is no medical reason to suppose that Swift's lifelong malady was the cause of an impairment in his faculties our table is complete. We have now to consider the possible effects on his psychic life of his particular complaints, especially the anxiousness ensuing from them and heightened by a nervous temperament.

Critics have deduced insanity from nervousness. **But** anxiousness is not persecution-mania, nor is misanthropy to be confused with fixed ideas. If they were, the marvel would be that Swift could have remained in the world,

written highly intelligible and coherent works, and given good counsel. If Swift was in the least degree insane, in the sense urged by biographers, his greatest achievement would be that he avoided the madhouse for half a century. Critics have been deceived by his singular interest in madness, and have put a wrong construction on his fears of senile decay, as we shall see later on.

There is no need to go beyond normal psychology. Even in quite normally constituted people, any form of steady deafness brings about misanthropy and need of solitude which can actually go to the extreme of suicide. But it was precisely the discontinuity of attacks which made things even worse in the case of Swift, whose whole life was beset by a recurrent illness, which made him at times unfit for ordinary intercourse and the appearances of which were unforeseeable. At one moment he would be busy at his writing, active in affairs, and the next moment confined to his room for an indefinite length of time.

Swift's life was really not a life, but a series of eager yet weary resurrections.[31] The world in which he moved lacked continuity. Sometimes the remedies brought an improvement, sometimes the hideous complaints persisted as by an irresistible natural force. The uncertainty about the repetition of attacks, the irregularity of the fits, the rather mysterious aspect of the giddiness, the anxiousness—all conspired to give him a sense of impending doom. He often thought that he was free at last; but each relapse was worse, and had the character of an unexpected blow.

The real greatness and the real sanity of Swift are clearly shown by his resistance under the dreadful ordeal. He never thought of suicide.—Only once, when a falling mirror just missed striking him, did he let himself say : " It would have been better.[55]

But he never despaired unto death. He watched the

increase of his sorrows and pains ; he feared old age. He was doomed, indeed, to the worst that old age can bring : labyrinthitis increasing, mental decay with moments in which he saw his utter deterioration. That he lived until his destiny was completely fulfilled is a sign of the interior moral force of which his rages, his hatreds, and blunt candours were mere by-products. It would not have been sane for a man in his condition, a Gulliver surrounded by a smiling stupidity, to have been patient with mankind as it is. And yet the worst accusation against Swift's sanity has been precisely his misanthropy, his hatred of mankind.

And here we should remember that he said he could like Tom and John, but even this only confirms his egotism, because we cannot really say that he felt human sympathy. Rather he loved without human sympathy, as one loves a dog.

But this proves that his misanthropy was not the misanthropy of the insane. He was not morbidly consistent, and, unlike a misanthrope, he could have friends. He hated mankind on grounds of reason and reflection, but on sentimental grounds he made friends with individuals. An insane misanthropy would surely display itself in an exactly opposite fashion.

Moreover, is the sentiment which drove early Christians to take refuge in the wilderness to be deemed insane ? They were escaping from a sinful, incurable world ; and if they feared to be damned by remaining in it, it was because they thought that practically all men in the world were damned. This is a thoroughgoing misanthropy, like that of all philosophers who have declared for the solitary life as the only possible moral life, thereby implying that the bulk of mankind is composed of fools and scoundrels.

For a man who can look dispassionately at the world, two courses only are open : either to hold that mankind is a fundamentally gentle race, and that it is only your misfortune that sometimes (or often) you meet fools and scoundrels, who are then not rational beings—or to hold that mankind is a crowd of dogs without their decencies, and that it is your good fortune to meet sometimes tolerable specimens of this under-race.

The man who stands out by his wit, his strong and unflinching morals, his confidence in the Tightness of his cause, is bound to take the second view—and it is not a bad view either ! He only needs to be self-confident enough to be sure he is on the right path; and as all men travel by separate roads, he will cherish only such individuals as let themselves be drawn along his path—and who will be bullied and scorned openly when they abandon it for a moment. So Swift does not boggle even at reproaching Sheridan with foolishness after his death, or at recalling Stella's foolish expenditures just at the moment when he was in grief by her death.—He could not renounce himself, his conception of the world, even under the shock of the greatest sentimental earthquakes, for he held that he himself was something to be affirmed in all circumstances and before all eyes, even before his own solitary eyes.

For him mankind was the men with whom he had lived in England, where he had power, the Ministers who followed his advice or concealed (as we shall see) what he would not have approved. Then the world had had redeeming features : Swift could bring to it his opinion—that is reason, common sense, common morality. When he came back to Ireland, violently cut off from all possibility of influencing this world, the world without his counsel appears to him as a doomed and damned world.[32] Even when despised Ireland rallies round him, it does so to be taught and defended, and

Ireland is only a Swiftian creation which he has taken on himself to champion. The Irish are miserable fools ; but they are his proteges, and must therefore be screwed up to some sort of decency, extricated from the common fate of mankind by the redeeming influence of Swift. Mankind still remained bad, and grew even worse, because it endangered Swiftian men, Swiftian rationality, Swiftian virtue.

So misanthropy was the logical consequence both of his dreadful solitude and of his disease. We need scarcely show why he had to feel lonely. His egotism bound him to feel lonely rather than depressed, lonely not l&e an abandoned animal, but as a great man is lonely. Behind him were the bitter years of his youth, and before him this malady, which made the conditions of his life very different from those of other men in the world. They lived another life ; and each time Swift fell sick he felt the stream of life pass around him without touching him, leaving him alone. At such times he contemplated mankind as from the highest peak of Himalaya —mankind further away than England was when he contemplated that country from his Irish exile.

He returned to mankind as soon as he was well. But it was like coming back to a world which he must yet do without—which he had learned to despise during his seclusion, if but to comfort himself for being shut out from it.

He could never resume his life as a normal life. His malady was not a long illness which he could shake off and forget. Fear always remained; he must always foresee that he would be excluded again after a brief yet unknown interval of social intercourse and tolerable well-being. It was an exile which threatened him wherever he went and caused his egotism to grow apace. Thus the dire conditions of abandonment he was subjected to in his early youth were made permanent.

As he was at bottom an egotist, he could not take his absences from mankind good-humouredly, and think with equanimity of the world going on its way. The world had for him no significance at all when he was not in it, and yet this world was not thinking of him. Of what worth was that world which could so easily forget him ? He nursed a real grievance against mankind for being capable of living without him.

Remember the poem on his death. There he shows his bitterness at the small place he really occupied in the world. He will be forgotten very easily—as he had experienced being forgotten when he was sick. Well could he depict human callousness to the absent ; who could imagine better than he the effect of egotism, so real and familiar ? But he saw only the egotism of mankind, which made mankind forget him as soon as he fell sick—as it would do as soon as he should be dead :

Indifference clad in wisdom's guise,
All fortitude of mind supplies.[33]

He goes on to speculate as to the effect of his death on each of his acquaintances. The world would go on, as if his presence had had no importance at all. But he was not resigned to being obliterated either temporarily by sickness or decisively by death ; and the poem is the most disconsolate of Swift's documents, because it shows that in the thought of death he could find no comfort.

Hence also his fear of growing old, and losing his hold on the world finally. He hated these people who could eat and breathe when Swift was not there.

The misanthropy is not puzzling ; what is puzzling is its energy, as of a personal grudge against mankind.

But could it be otherwise with an egotist, whose intercourse with other beings is continually threatened by sickness ?

Someone has sought for a psycho-analytical explanation of this misanthropy, and such an explanation is to be considered as distinct from the accusation of insanity, for psycho-analysis leads to the supposition that all men are at bottom potential degenerates. Therefore its methods can be applied even to sane individuals. Psycho-analytical art-criticism, indeed, is giving us a series of judgments comparable to those which arose in the last years of the past century out of the researches of Lombroso and his school : physicians with a second-hand knowledge of literature and literary critics with a second-hand knowledge of psychiatry seek in this easy way to trace the delinquent in the genius and the degenerate in any man above the average. Both like to forget that (as the latest works of Freud clearly show) psycho-analysis implies a general conception of the world and the soul that not all who think themselves psycho-analysts and deal in literary psycho-analysis are ready to accept; on the other hand, the very basis of psycho-analysis, i.e. its psychiatric validity, is still *subjudice,* and is in any case hardly understood by these critics.

It is nevertheless surprising to find Freud's theories applied to the case of Swift. His case appears better adapted to constitute an example for the theories of Adler, who reduces the formation of human character to the vicissitudes of the fundamental self-affirmation interest against social influences.

In any case, we refuse to participate in any psycho-analytical dissection of Swift, precisely because *any* preposterous attempt in this line is possible by reason of the deep mysteries which envelop his sexual life. The psycho-analyst, indeed, reduces the infinite varieties of humanity to a few fundamental sorts of sex-sickness,

whereas we are studying a personality which we wish to explain, not on a universal formula, but by and for itself. Therefore, although Beddoes's innuendoes, translated into the jargon of the Viennese school,[34] would support our theory of Swift's egotism, we must again refuse to believe in Beddoes.

Indeed, the whole work of Swift precludes us from considering him as a man given to solitary dreams and secret fancies. Secretive only out of social necessity and normal shunning of publicity, he expressed himself completely : expressed himself in hate, in self-reliance, without shame or bashfulness, open in avowal of the peculiar turns of his mind. This was not a man who let the world vanquish him without a struggle : he was a warrior overthrown.

Even the very recent explanation of Mr. Aldous Huxley for Swift's misanthropy is influenced by the theory of psycho-analysis.—And yet misanthropy should not appear so abnormal to Mr. Huxley, whose works are indeed not exactly an outstanding example of a benevolent feeling towards mankind !

For Mr. Huxley,[36] Swift's fundamental peculiarity was a " malignant hatred of bowels "—which should then be explained as a reversion to hate from the infantile sexual attraction towards them which Freud assumes. But even without supposing that Mr. Huxley means to go so far in postulating reversions from suppressed liking to downright hate as most psycho-analysts are wont to go, his idea is intended to suggest that Swift had some characteristic of infantile undeveloped sexuality which explains . . . what can be explained on grounds of more sweet-scented, normal psychology.

Without indulging in pleasant (or unpleasant) generalisations based on this malignant hatred, we can see in

them only a literary theory conjured up out of nothing to explain some peculiarity of Swift's works.

The very contrast of Swift with Rabelais, a supposed lover of bowels, which Mr. Huxley suggests, leads to quite different results.

Swift, indeed, had nothing against *Ia bonne chtre.* He was neither a glutton, it is true, nor a sot; but if the contrast with Rabelais is to stand, he ought to have been a pale-faced dyspeptic, seeing that the luxurious scatophil fancy of Rabelais is in direct relation with a Gargantuan appetite.

It may be that some peculiarity[36] was at the bottom of Swift's attention to the scatological. But it is not absolutely necessary to suppose that a personal intensity in this respect found vent in special hatred of the thing ; he might well have merely felt the bowels as comical.

No sane man takes a peculiar pleasure in the bowels ; and yet not all scatophil writers are insane. Really the scatophil is finding the best defence against displeasure : laughter.

And Swift laughs, at least, as much as he abhors. The comparison of Irish and English fundaments,[37] and the fire in the Lilliput palace, are instances of a very unbecoming, but a very sane, humour. Rabelais could not have spoken in different fashion.

Swift's time *was* outspoken.[38] It was more sincere than our own, for one distrusts our elaborate sincerity, which depends on the theory that outspokenness is the way to sanity and perhaps to regeneration, as though there were not immoralists and degenerates in the days of such quite outspoken writers as Anacreon, Ovid, Dante, Rabelais, Boccaccio.

The Augustan public were " free-spoken and to a certain extent foul-spoken,"[39] and Swift in a letter to a Maid of Honour did not fear to refer to, and even

embellish, one of the most disgusting passages of his satire. Swift not only liked to be blunt (he had perhaps learned unashamed allusions from the common people)—he could be very blunt. He could not have published such poems as *The Ladfs Dressing-Room* and *Strephon and Chloe* or the parts of *Gulliver* that are now regarded as unprintable, if the public had not been quite ready to accept his jokes whole-heartedly—as, again, his *Essay on Polite Conversation* shows.

The popularity of an obscene writer reveals an obscene mankind around him. Where then is the fault or the madness : in him who deals with the topics, or in those who delight in hearing them dealt with ?

Mankind is so made : " rude jokes of the Stone Age " (as Kipling styles such humour) are popular in all ages. And the world is not the more degenerate on that account. He is degenerate who finds shame, and therefore illicit pleasure, in such things. But a law of common decency can be broken without going beyond the limits of sanity.

Perhaps there is also in Swift what Dr. Bernard[40] means when he finds a hatred of shams in the outspokenness of Swift, or, better, a necessity to see things in a practical fashion. We may perhaps see in the coarseness of Swift his need to live the whole of his life, not a half—to cut away nothing : then, carried away by his game, as we may suppose, he began to give to the hidden part of everyday life a primary importance.

In Swift we find, perhaps, more seriousness in dealing with such subjects than is usual with coarse writers in any age ; but not a radical difference. He was even appalled by coarseness in others, but this sensibility seems to have lessened in the last years of his life—no need to suppose a peculiar madness, for in old men coarseness is perhaps a normal phenomenon.

The exceptional in Swift which attracted the attention

of persons on the look-out for insanity is perhaps the separation between the licentious and the coarse, as coarse writers are commonly not particular regarding licentiousness.[41]

On the other hand, there is really no reason to praise him for his dislike of sexual jokes,[42] at least in connection with his taste for coarse jokes, for this may have been an expression of his particular sexuality. Perhaps the very secrecy which governed his sexual life was due to his dislike of sexual frankness. But this is not a sufficient reason for thinking that he was incapable of being allured by sex, for in reality persons who are possessed of a strong sexuality are the least apt to make a joke of it.

Be that as it may, the very separation between the lascivious and the foul reacts on the tone of the foul in Swift. Whereas Rabelais associates the two as it were in the same laugh, the association of the two things in Swift gives a horrifying effect, just because he cannot take sex as a jest.

Strange as it may appear, sex is so important, and, at the same time, its representation has to a cold (cold sometimes because scalded !) mind such displeasing effect,[43] that a normal man does not like to speak of it with the same earnestness as he acts it. He is bound to defend himself against the baser implications of the thing either by putting into relief its harmless childlike aspect (romanticism) or laughing openly at obscenity—the normal way of putting a bearable complexion on the repellent.

In this last sense coarseness is inevitable, and therefore lascivious and foul jokes are as old as the world and very easy to make : for both respond to a primary necessity, and there is no other bodily function the representation of which needs such an outlet. Therefore Swift's humour, being coarse without being lascivious,

appals the ordinary mind, for which the two things are bound up together. Mr. Huxley expresses in his elegant and superior fashion the sense of shock to which earlier critics, from Sterne to Dr. Bernard, have confessed.

CHAPTER VI

A MINISTERIAL PAMPHLETEER

WERE IT NOT for the need of binding together the various periods of Swift's life, we might ignore the " four last years of Queen Anne/[5] seeing that biographers have described these years at length, being well-furnished in their regard with incidents and documents.

In the first place, we have the *Journal to Stella* which provides us with a daily account of Swift's life.[1] Had the *Journal* failed us—as it does from June 1713 to August 1714—the documents of English history, Swift's printed works, and his abundant correspondence of the four years, would have offered sufficient evidence of his doings.

But just because of all this wealth of external information the biographer is really in a quandary. He can write a meaningless chronicle, which loses the figure of Swift in a maze of details, or, following what we think the better course, he can attack the subject broadly, without giving too much attention to chronological detail.

The episodic wealth of these years throws little light on the inner man. Swift seems to be too much occupied with his work and his world to give attention to himself, to be himself.

It has often been alleged that the *Journal to Stella* enables us to follow him *intimately.*[2] As Swift sent Stella a daily journal, designed for an intimate friend alone, it has been thought that there he expressed his opinions freely on all the men to whom it referred. The *Journal* should therefore fulfil exceptionally well the conditions

for a real revelation, and by a mere summary **of it** we ought to be able to describe him intimately in these years. Were this opinion correct, we might spare the reader this chapter and send him to the *Journal.*

But this is a strange error, as is seen if we pierce to the core of the matter and discover the truth of Swift's own statement that the *Journal* told nothing but where he dined and the occurrences of the day.[3]

There is noted a difference between *private* life and *intimate* life. The man who narrates everyday occurrences is not confessing anything. He has no perspective in which to place events, and, even if he speaks of himself, a daily " confession " is only a slice of life. To-day he is moody, to-morrow bored with somebody, but this does not give us his real opinions on himself; the soul is not just a reel of momentary whims.

Love-letters, yes. But just because the *Journal* has the intimacy of love-letters, it reveals nothing of the deeper soul of the writer. The precise allusions to love-doings are the only serious intimacy of love-letters. Beyond these we find only a lover's eager pride, and the wish to appear the finest and best man in the world, or even, on the contrary, to appear dejected, so as to be pitied and fondled. Not deliberate lies, but the instinctive presentation of that aspect of his soul which can be best appreciated. To be " understood,[55] as the cant phrase is, you need to explain yourself in the way best suited to the intelligence of the partner.

To reserved English minds, the *Journal* may appear to be shockingly frank, and someone has found that its publication was derogatory to Swift's dignity. But it is a chronicle of the day's work with the addition of some verbal endearments. There is really nothing in it either for the sentimental or the erotic sight-seer, nor even for **the** serious gleaner of historical evidence. **Complete** sincerity, **with never a touch of the intimate, can be**

found only in a diary for nobody : Pepys's for example. But only a half-wit would have the patient folly of keeping a record of his everyday soul.

We shall therefore push through the tropical abundance of information contained in the *Journal,* as in the letters and writings, in the hope of reaching a high-road. We shall not describe the men whom Swift met—all his famous contemporaries—nor his everyday work as journalist and pamphleteer. It would indeed be impossible to make faithful note of all the particulars of Swift's fullest period, his one and only time in politics, for his Irish politics were to be political in a very different sense. His political activity develops in a hesitant way from 1701 up to 1708 ; after a year of suspense at Laracor it blossoms tropically ; in four years' time it is already drooping.

Godolphin's overthrow in the first days of August 1710 may be taken as the date on which Swift's prodigious rise began. As soon as the news reached Ireland, the Bishops, on King's advice, put Swift in official charge, to act in conjunction with the Bishops of Ossory and Killaloe for the remission of the First Fruits.

At first, indeed, the Bishops were not at all sure that Swift was the most suitable person to forward this affair. They thought him at " disadvantage . . . in point of party "[4] ; but Swift was better advised as to his position with the new Tory Ministry. He was really favourably placed. He had not compromised himself, and therefore both parties, or at least certain leading men of both parties, were disposed to look for his services. He could, on the eve of Godolphin's overthrow, write to Addison that he was confidently expectant of either the prebendary of Dr. South or of the place of historiographer from Godolphin, should the latter remain in office.[5]

However this was really only a chance, as he had no direct relation with Godolphin.

Swift crossed in the same yacht with Wharton (or with his steward ?)[6] and on September gth was in London—a conqueror before he arrived.

The Whigs crowd round him[7] but he concedes nothing; he has no wish to be the pamphleteer of the losing party, which is even actually opposed to his Church. All his acquaintances wonder at his long absence ; and this gives him a good sense of his power—and of his absolute liberty to use it in the direction he thinks best.

The Whigs in general recognised that he had been treated badly ; but nobody offered him a place in England, and Godolphin, who had worries of his own, received him coldly. Naturally Swift vowed revenge on him and consequently on all the Whigs who had " caught their fish [Swift] and saved their bait."[8]

The Virtues of Sid Hamlet the Magician's Rod, the celebrated satire against Godolphin, was at once known by many high persons to be by Swift, among others by Harley, and could be taken as a declaration of war against the Whigs.

This slight verse, a little insipid as it now seems, is the true type of political satire ; vague accusations of greed and of corruption, a skilful allusion to the Union, which had been brought about by a political blunder of Godolphin :

In Scottish hill found precious ore,
Where none e'er looked for it before.[9]

The verses helped to clear the position.

Swift now entered into that troubled world as its master. He had boasted to Archbishop King that Harley " formally made some advances to me."[10] Soon

afterwards, on October 4th, Swift " got *himself* represented, which *he* might justly do, as one extremely ill-used by the last Ministry after some obligations, because *he* refused to go certain lengths they would have had *him.* This happened to be in some sort of Mr. Harley's own case."[5,11]

The Under-Secretary Lewis had been the go-between of Harley and Swift, and his friendship with both lasted till the end of life. Harley, future Lord Oxford, on the representation of Swift alone, consented to and obtained the grant of the First Fruits and Tenths almost immediately, although the actual drawing up of the concession took many years, and was the cause of annoyances to Swift, because the Irish Bishops tried to deprive him and Harley of the merit.

The new Ministry needed aid, as many of the famous wits were already in the Whig interest : Steele, Addison, etc. The new Tory journal had to be content at first with chance editing ; Swift was just the man to take up the work regularly. He was therefore cajoled with the specious civilities of electioneers. He was the new man, already known but free from close ties with either party ; a clergyman too as suited the Church party. No wonder therefore that Harley, who as yet had no means of estimating the value of Swift, used his backstairs skill in order to enlist him. Swift on his side jumped at the opportunity. He wanted power and he meant to have it. Power to speak his mind, to deal out vengeance, to protect and to harry.

In fact, Harley did not at first understand Swift; the biographers do not trouble to explain why he should have had the strange idea of offering Swift, in the early weeks of their acquaintance, fifty pounds as a sign of satisfaction with Swift's first services. But this is important because it shows that Harley did not at first rate Swift too highly. He judged him to be a somewhat

dexterous Irish parson, who had some renown in London and could be useful—and easily paid.[12]

Swift was furious, and his wrath had the effect of a clever move. He would not take gold ; by being paid, he would have sunk to the level of a mercenary pamphleteer, ready to support the causes he was told to support with the arguments his master might suggest. Grub-street was not the place of masters but of servants.

Swift aimed higher than at becoming a professional writer. Nor did he seek preferment only, which he could now reach in another way, since the business of the First Fruits gave him strong influence. He sought for a position of wide power, of real influence behind the scenes.

Thanks to this behaviour, he came to be considered as a free lance in Tory politics. The man held the Ministers by reason of disinterested assistance, and was a power in the political world.

But such a position, naturally enough, did not enable him to know the inner thoughts of the men in power.[13] He makes a great boast of knowing all the secrets, but this refers only to the special diplomatic documents which were put at his disposal for the writing of this or that article. It shows moreover that he was ignorant of what really went on under the surface ; nor was it desirable to let him know, as he had to influence the public.

As he had no place in the governing class he had really no influence on the internal policy of the Tory party ; therefore he was not privy to the cabals which were at work.

No man confided in Swift as with an intimate dependent ; Swift felt this later, and said of Harley, expressing a personal grievance, that " too much secrecy was one of his faults."[14] Swift was an independent power,

he was handled as such ; caressed and betrayed, living on the surfaces of things and not knowing more than was good for him to know. Sometimes he perceived that Harley and St. John lied, but he never suspected how much they lied to him.

On the other hand, Swift was not really adept in the deeper side of politics. He considered politics as an outsider considers them, taking them for a display of forces and opinions and so on. He saw that the reality consisted in cajolery of the powerful, backstairs influence, betrayal always near ; but he never understood fully that *great* politics are no more than these petty personal underhand dealings.

Perhaps he was at times the one Tory existing ; as supporter of the party he was not ready to sell himself, to betray the party—the group of interests which he now defended as he had always defended the interests of the Church, his friends' party with whose aims he had completely identified himself.

He was not a man of faction or an intriguer ; to be factious is to bring your personal interest into accord with that of some individual ; it means compromise and abnegation of a sort. Whereas Swift was egotistic ; his position was possible only in so far as the Tories as a whole reigned. He did not serve, he aided ; or rather, he served a party and therefore everybody and nobody in particular. In receiving the friendly attentions of all members of the party, his interest was their common interest. Thus emerged that deep feeling of personal solidarity with the party—from which he gained so little materially. But the Tories gave him something better : respect, apparent gratitude, self-reliance—power. All his recommendations, he boasted later on, carried ; he could have received a Bishopric, and even then he would not have received as much as Harley and the party bestowed on his profound egotism by dispensing

their favours as he directed and so letting him feel that he was always right.

This explains the strange position which he now came to occupy in respect *to* Harley and St. John—and explains how he misjudged them. His first friend was Harley, and he preferred Harley—and yet he was closer to that strange Bolingbroke, the more corrupt of the two, but whose duplicity, owing to a juvenile *insouciance,* did not cut deep like that of the frigid Harley.

Others were there to make requests, and he asked favours for them from the great, as though he advised and grew in importance by asking for others instead of being reduced to a subordinate position by being rewarded himself.[15] In this central position he could remain alone, depending only on himself as long as he asked for others only, as he always did. His overbearing egotism was fully gratified by his being in the centre of the political world.

The cajoleries and compliments of Harley and St. John suggest that they had taken Swift's measure, and knew that his egotism had made him even something of a snob. He liked to be near exalted persons, to be on a footing of perfect equality with them. To chide a duchess, to be outspoken with the country's leaders, to be deposited at the door of St. James's coffee-house by the coach of a Minister—this was for him the fulfilment of life.

He asserted himself; the scene described by Bishop Kennett with natural antipathy, of Swift's deportment in the royal antechamber in 1713 is a very fine piece of character-drawing. To be bowed to, to be asked for recommendations—what more could he desire ? He did not trouble himself about to-morrow ; he was enjoying himself in the immediate present and he was too heated by success to give thought to the future. And it was hard for him to think that on this world, so centred on him,

might come a change of which he would be the sole victim. He was so well satisfied with this life.

It is true indeed that he confessed to an " ambition . .. to live in England and with a competency to support me with honour "[16] and intimated sometimes that lack of means would compel him to give up his work in England. But he forwarded his interests very slowly ; he would have preferred to let present conditions continue indefinitely.

He was perfectly sincere in declaring to King, who had advised him to think of preferment and to publish some theological writings (precisely the most disagreeable course possible for Swift) : " As to the first which relates to my fortune, I shall never be able to make believed how indifferent I am about it. I sometimes have the pleasure of making that of others, and I fear it is too great a pleasure to be a virtue, at least to me."[17] Here Swift, hurt by King's not appreciating his power and superior position, reveals himself.

In fact Ministers were bowing before him.[18] In some months, with his old technique of letting others beg to become acquainted with him, and by being hard to please, and refusing to renounce anything of himself, he was the best-known man in London.

He worked up to this position through his activity as a writer. From the middle of October 1710, some two months after its appearance, he was the leading figure in the *Examiner,* the Tory gazette, which he carried on until the end of July 1711, and this work was completed by an incessant shower of pamphlets, during and after his editorship.

These are no mere mild and learned essays to influence only a small aristocracy of men in power ; at last Swift speaks to the world at large. He has new

weapons and new power. It is no longer the calm demonstration which takes for granted in the reader a learning which can enable him to understand allusions and obscure arguments. All the body politic must understand and consent.

Swift now shows a new aspect of his genius, not to be confounded with the literary satirist or the witty poet; he is the popular pamphleteer[19] of the *Drapier's Letters.*

And this work was for him more difficult than for a journalist of to-day, who can present at the same time his opinions, and news so distorted as to substantiate these opinions. When Swift, " the first political journalist of modern times " (as critics erroneously[20] styled him), appeared, newspapers and journals of opinion were distinct.

Swift could not conceal the fact that he was only endeavouring to direct opinion into a definite course, nor could he speak in the name of public opinion, as it is possible to do to-day in journals which are great anonymous enterprises that give the illusion of being the mouthpiece of widely diffused views. Even anonymous journalism was with Swift and his contemporaries personal, and this exacted greater skill on the part of the journalist.

Swift could repeat as much as he liked : " I hear from many parts . . . The common opinion in the city is . . ." Nobody believed it, and he had not the support of public opinion in his effort to persuade ; he had to face his public alone.

In order to understand Swift's work, it is necessary to understand the nature of the war, which lasted for practically the whole period of Swift's political career in England.

England's participation was somewhat paradoxical. It had its origin in the international far-sightedness of William III and in his Continental pre-occupations,[21] but William had to vanquish the insular tendencies of the English people, and also the distrust due to the scanty results of the Treaty of Ryswick. England thought that her European task was accomplished in the sixteenth century by the overthrow of Spanish hegemony on the seas and in the seventeenth by the resistance to the French Continental hegemony. William III had acted as he pleased in international politics, so that the Partition Treaties (especially that of 1700) divided the Spanish patrimony in such a way as to ensure the escape of Holland from French hegemony. When Louis XIV violated the Treaty, English opinion did not yet see the need of enforcing it by war. This is not merely a polemical argument on Swift's part[22]: William III, whom the English did not love, openly lamented to Heinsius about it: "The blindness of the people here is incredible."

Certainly after so many brawls with Parliament it was audacious for a new king to drag a people into a war which, as they saw it, was a Dutch war. William could persuade public opinion only in consequence of the peril caused by the arrogance of Louis XIV in recognising James III as King of England in 1701 ("the only personal quarrel we had in the war,[55] said Swift later on[23]), and in proclaiming the unity of Spain and France. But when England at last decided for war, the Great Alliance had been already signed. Six months later William died.

Queen Anne had no particular tenderness for William's memory, or for her Hanoverian relations (who were also deeply committed to the war); hence to pursue William's politics there were only the Whigs together with the man chosen by William to carry on the war, namely Marlborough.

For England the war was a sort of colonial war. It admitted of long intervals, campaigns regularly interrupted at the beginning of winter, constant renewal of negotiations. England's only direct interest was in the capture of Toulon, which miserably miscarried in 1707, and in the enterprises in Spain. Louis made great concessions at The Hague in the spring of 1709. Holland advanced her claim to the " barrier " (a series of border fortresses to be occupied by the Dutch), whereas England only wanted recognition of the Protestant succession and the demolition of Dunkirk. The negotiations came to nothing, but the war had no longer an impelling interest for anyone. Yet, strange to say, it was now the Allies and Holland that wanted peace rather than Marlborough and the Whigs ; new negotiations at Gertruydenberg went awry, it seems, only on account of Marlborough. But the Whigs had lost all their influence with the Queen, and the new Ministry entered into secret and separate negotiations, which preserved Gibraltar for England and gave her great colonial advantages, but were an infringement of the Barrier Treaty which she had signed with Holland in 1709. The Tories declared that the country was not bound to the promises of the Whigs, and openly stated their peace policy. Marlborough was dismissed as a consequence, says Swift,[24] of the hatred between the Queen and Harley, and even the coming of Prince Eugene to England (skilfully delayed by the Tories[25]) could not hinder the concession of an armistice and then (in April 1713) the conclusion of a treaty, which gave England many advantages and left some of her Allies still at war with Louis.

Therefore the change of Ministry in 1710 had been already a declaration for peace, but to attain the goal

England had to break the Alliance Treaty. Admirers of Swift have asserted that he loaded the scales on the side of peace. But really the great work in which he was participator and perhaps chief contributor was only that of persuading English opinion of the legitimacy of the peace policy.

But, even thus restricted, his task was difficult. No people appreciated better than the English the gentleman in the man, but at the same time a sense of wholesome egotism dominates England's foreign policy. Bernard Shaw adumbrates this characteristically, turning the profound truth into an elegant and unpleasant paradox :

" . . . But every Englishman is born with a miraculous power that makes him master of the world. When he wants a thing he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, *no one knows how,* a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who have got the thing he wants."[26]

The problem is exactly in the *how,* and it was the problem Swift set before himself. For the position of England was such as to give her behaviour the appearance of a betrayal, unpleasing to the strong moral sense of the individual Englishman. Swift the egotist was just the man to put the national conscience at ease, that is, to persuade the Englishman he was justified in following his interest.[27]

In short, Swift as a popular writer had to *justify* the peace, rather than *persuade* England to it.

Swift endeavoured to show that the war was really being fought for the personal profit of the few. His greatest stroke was indeed the dogmatic idea of appealing to the people over the heads of the wits of the coffee-houses,[28] and of the governing-classes who were enjoying in security a reflected glory from Marlboroughs'

victories. Even Archbishop King, the reticent and remote divine, dreamed of " making a peace with the sword hand"[20] as late as 1713, and Swift expostulated with him on the necessity and righteousness of the peace.[30]

In these letters to King we see that Swift was really convinced of his thesis, and had worked up a cut-and-dried scheme of propaganda. His fundamental point was that the means for protracting the war were at an end[81] and that the taxpayers (landed gentry) could give no more.

The economic motive played a large part in the polemics. It constituted even Swift's chief plaint against Marlborough, England's hero. To defeat the Whig it was indeed necessary to debase Marlborough, and Swift calculates what this soldier has made out of his campaigns, exhibiting him as a financial adventurer and comparing him to Crassus.[32] Swift presents Marlborough as the natural head of the stock-jobbers, city people, financial rogues, a " set of upstarts "[33] heartily hated by him, as by the Tory gentry.

This could, indeed, be easily demonstrated. But how was England to be persuaded that she was morally right in abandoning her Allies ? Even to-day historians find it difficult to justify England's behaviour and to explain away her apparent disloyalty. Patriotism was naturally the common ground of both parties—it is always so. But such a selfish and narrow acceptation of patriotism really needed an egotist like Swift to uphold it.

He started, we may say instinctively, from the assumption that no man and no nation work for anything but their own interest. At the same time, he actively disliked foreigners ; he was too much of an egotist to allow for national differences. The Allies *must* be in the wrong ; this was a matter of course for Swift.

In the *Examiner* from October 1710 to June 1711, Swift had dwelt particularly on the economic side. By June 1711 the *pour parlers* for peace were coming to an end. It needed a last effort to induce Parliament and public opinion to accept an armistice and a conference : by November, Swift handles the moral aspect with the great pamphlet, *The Conduct of the Allies and of the Late Ministry in Beginning and Carrying on the Present War.* The attack on the Whigs had to be renewed if the Allies were to be successfully accused of not keeping their compacts ; otherwise it would not be understood how the Allies could have played fast and loose with England's rights to the extent alleged by Swift.[34]

The pamphlet had a tremendous effect ; before the end of 1711 it was in five editions. It is perhaps too long for a pamphlet of our days, but the question had to be dealt with in the most thorough manner.

The fundamental point is that England, having only a secondary interest in the war, had become a principal in it—for Marlborough's sake. The war should have been for her a war on the sea, as her aim was colonies and liberty of commerce ; instead she had taken on the role of a leader on the Continent.

England, Swift urges, has paid for everybody. She has paid the armies of the small German States, she has paid for the Emperor—and, finally, when Marlborough takes a fortress, the Dutch come to garrison it and hold it for themselves.

The tale of the wrongs done to England, of the Allies' broken promises and their smaller or greater breaches of contract, is too long to narrate ; but it undoubtedly made a great impression on the public, as it revealed all the hidden motives, and exposed cabinet and party plots.

The last and most imposing argument is found in the Treaty of the Grand Alliance itself, where it was laid

down that no separate peace could be made until it was certain that France and Spain should not come under the same king. By taking this literally, Swift is able to show that England has already a right to conclude a separate peace, since, at The Hague and Gertruydenberg, Louis had agreed not to unite the two Crowns. Swift does not take into account the fact that the war had begun precisely because a grandson of Louis had ascended the Spanish throne : an event which in the eyes of the Allies was tantamount to a French domination of Spain.

There was something within Swift himself that made him such a good advocate of peace. He had a great dislike of physical violence—a fear which made him cry out with the mob when it besieged his coach during the elections. This man to whom William I I I had offered a regiment had a real dislike of war and soldiers. He was fundamentally a pacifist[35] ; he ridiculed military exploits, even to the point of setting up money as a better aim than glory, as though people could only be dissuaded from a pride he deemed stupid by base interest :

> It will no doubt be a mighty comfort to our grandchildren, when they see a few rags hung up in Westminster Hall, which cost an hundred millions, whereof they are paying the arrears, and boasting, as beggars do, that their grandfathers were rich and great.[36]

Some months earlier Swift had given free expression to this dislike. Dr. Hare, in a sermon before Marlborough on the surrender of Bouchain, had made veiled charges against the general's enemies and insinuations against the peace. Swift retorted[37] that making Marlborough a general for life was no way out of the difficulty ; the victories brought peace no nearer.

The public in general, after some fifteen months of

Swift's labours, would have liked to see the Ministry proceed towards peace ; but there was a certain hesitation in higher circles, where the question was viewed in the light of political rather than of national interest. Even at the height of Swift's success with the *Conduct of the Allies,* the House of Lords (December 7th, 1711) addressed the Queen stating that " no peace can be safe or honourable for Great Britain or Europe if Spain and the West Indies are to be allotted to any part of the House of Bourbon." Evidently this admonition was directed against the argument of the *Conduct.* But no doubt was expressed of England's moral right to make peace ; it was a question of expediency only. So that Swift's premisses were accepted, and his interpretation of the Alliance was recognised as sound. Two months later, indeed, a motion against the peace in the Commons, brought forward by a member who read passages from the *Conduct,* found no seconder ; and by the end of the year the situation created by the pamphlet (which was virtually a proclamation of the intentions of the Ministry) was considered to be such as to render it safe to dismiss Marlborough.[38]

Swift continued to attack Marlborough in a violent invective, *The Fable of Midas* :

Midas now neglected stands
With ass's ears and dirty hands.[39]

He revelled in the fall, but he was uneasy. He thought of the impression it might have on the Allies[40] ; and he had enough political skill to realise that the general admiration of Marlborough had to be taken into account. He even affected to pity him,[41] saying that " our friends press a little hardly on the Duke of Marlborough,"[42] and that he himself had refrained from publishing many

attacks on him.[43] He was decidedly uneasy in regard to the personal enmity of the Queen and Harley,[44] which made it impossible to detach Marlborough from the Whig circle.[45] The pitilessness of Swift's attacks was perhaps due to his incapacity not to make every quarrel a personal quarrel even when he was not animated by a personal grudge.

This interpretation (which fits Swift's character so well) becomes even more probable if it is true and not a mere boast of Swift that Marlborough, despite the outrageous provocation he had been given, desired to be reconciled with the pamphleteer. But Swift really bore no ill will against the Duke. Now that he was discarded, and even before that, when he had ceased to be a serious obstacle to the Tories, Swift felt something of the popular admiration for the national hero.

Swift's poem on the death of the great general repeats the old accusation of ill-gotten gains, and yet betrays a feeling of the greatness of the man :

His Grace ! Impossible ! What, dead !
Of old age too, and in his bed.

He made his friends weep before he died.[46]

Far more bitter was Swift's attitude towards those against whom he was possessed of a personal grudge, for example, Wharton, who as Irish Viceroy had doubtless found a way of making himself very unpleasant to the clergyman who used to call on Addison at the Castle. Wharton had perhaps discovered Swift's authorship of the letter on the Test, and later he was certainly the moving spirit in the prosecution of the *Public Spirit of the Whigs.* It is a pity perhaps that Wharton died so soon. As the quintessence of Whiggism, he provided Swift with just the irritant he needed.

Swift hoped that his short *Character of Lord Wharton*

might lead to the impeachment of Wharton. His horror of Wharton was due perhaps to some small slight, such as he could never forgive and such as was always followed by a revenge more deadly than if he had been done definite harm. Wharton's Irish policy also moved him to anger—but to speak of this would be perhaps to anticipate Swift's later concerns.

At all events, the *Short Character of Lord Wharton* is the fiercest piece of invective that we can find in Swift's writings. There is no satire, except in occasional passages. The pamphlet is a bundle of insults.

Here Swift's style is really perfect. The invective takes the form of a plain statement of fact, and has the aspect of a bare chronicle, with everything neat, tidy, and frigid. There are no ejaculations of horror or the like : Swift is as calm as a judge.

He expounds systematically, and enforces the effect by touches of the *bon gargon* :

> . . . his Excellency is one whom I personally neither love nor hate ; . . . when these papers are made public, 'tis odds but he will tell me, as he once did upon a like occasion, that " he is damnably mauled " ; and then with the easiest transition in the world, ask about the weather or the time of day ; so that I enter on the work with more cheerfulness, because I am sure neither to make him angry nor any way to hurt his reputation.[47]

Swift proceeds to accuse Wharton of every possible misdemeanour. Liar is the least of his insults ; and he does not hesitate to mention that his victim bears

> the gallantries of his lady with the indifference of a Stoic, and thinks them well recompensed by a return of children to support his family, without the fatigues of being a father.[48]

The time was more outspoken than is ours, but it does seem strange that Swift was not prosecuted, legally or illegally. Archbishop King was horrified by such

insolence,[49] but we have no evidence that it affected others very greatly. In modern eyes it is especially displeasing that Swift should have preserved good relations with Wharton when he was actually writing the *Short Character.*[50]

Nor did the jocular indifference of his foe appease Swift. He continued to repeat his attacks. In *A Letter of Thanks from my Lord W... n to the Lord Bp. of St. Asaph* the character of the sender of the letter is happily portrayed by inference : Swift refrains from direct attacks.[51]

From the allusions of the *Examiner* to Wharton in the person of Clodius, to the open incitement to impeachment by the repetition of Cicero's oration against Verres, which is to be applied to Wharton in regard to his misgovernment of Ireland,[52] this man was the central personal foe of Swift throughout his campaign.

Swift's work on behalf of the internal policy of the Ministry must be treated separately from his part in the agitation for peace. It was a most varied activity, in which he had constantly to shift his point of attack.

If we read beneath the lines in the *Examiner* we shall see that Swift's participation in the progressive development of Tory policy was really slight. The *Examiner* deals with Tory politics as a whole ; it deviates into polemics with enemy pamphleteers, but the theme is always the same—the baseness of the past Ministry and the necessity of ending the war.

It answered fully the need of making the country acquainted with the new Ministry, of explaining its general policy, and contrasting it favourably with the past one. With daily measures Swift had nothing to do. Reading the *Journal,* we notice that he was often uncertain regarding the most important steps proposed ;

probably, as we said above, he was not closely informed of the measures that Harley meant to bring before the Cabinet. He would have been so informed if the task of the *Examiner* had been that of preparing the public mind for particular measures, in the manner of a political paper to-day.[53]

Only in the case of general attacks on the Ministry or when something had already happened or had been done which needed defence, was Swift entrusted with actual questions. Among such were the advice to the Lords on their endeavour to fix upon Harley the blame for the betrayal of his underling Gregg, the pamphlet to calm down the agitation which arose on Prior's secret mission to Paris, but not many more. Pamphleteering was evidently then taken as a *post mortem* enquiry, not as *ballon d'essai* for political practice.

It was due not to the Ministers' suspicion of Swift, but to the general course of politics. These were for the first time coming into contact with public opinion, and yet they still exacted readjustments to the peculiar need of relations between an aristocracy of administrators who had an all but absolute power (at least in so far as they were shielded by the Crown) and an electorate which had so far no voice in the everyday management of the administration.

Of particular significance in this connection is the *Advice to the Members of the October Club,* published in January 1712 on the eve of the opening of the Peace Conference.

The October Club was an association of die-hard High Church and Tory gentlemen who were justly astonished at the slackness of Harley in putting out of office the surviving Whig members in the administration. Its aim was to promote directly the men and interests of the Tory party. Certainly, as late as December 1712, many places were either unfilled or left to Whigs, and

Swift often boasted of having helped Whigs to retain and even to receive positions.

Swift cajoled the October Club ; he allowed that there was some disunion between the Ministry and the party, and he showed the perils of such disagreements. We can easily see that Swift really was not sure of his ground, that he had himself doubts and fears for the stability of the Harley administration—a year and a half after its coming into power !

What was really the position of Harley ?

It has been urged that Harley lacked the stuff of a politician of the first rank, and that his successes were mainly due to his peculiar charm as a man and to his private ability.

Harley's main task, on becoming Minister, was that of bringing about the peace. The peace was now, at the beginning of 1712, clearly on the way, and it was time for Harley to define his policy on other problems.[54] But this was precisely what Harley was incapable of doing. Swift saw this fault clearly when he urged :

Lord Treasurer, for once be quick.[55]

Harley was a hand-to-mouth politician ; he decided only when he was inevitably bound to decide. To all appearance a deceiver ; Swift does not bite his tongue before denouncing both him and St. John as impossible liars. Harley feared to render himself insufferable to the Whigs.[66]

He was a particularly good underhand dealer. The last Tory to leave the Godolphin Ministry, he kept his power a little in reserve and did not persecute the fallen. He was bound up in a complicated game conditioned on his not displeasing anybody, and when he endeavoured to act on his own initiative he received from his party friends the tides of tyrant and dragon !

On the other hand, the Queen—till 1713 perhaps—refused to countenance a one-sided policy,[67] and Harley had (says Swift with clear purpose) " too much compliance with his mistress."[68]

His foundations were insecure. As Mrs. Masham's godchild, he had only gained eminence by the overthrow of the Duchess of Marlborough. He was bound up with that woman and also with a Queen who by her changes of policy largely discounted his own likes and dislikes. And indeed, as we shall see, he arrived, as he departed, through errors in managing these women and backstairs intrigue. He sought to free himself by providing the Queen with other friends, but in this was the cause of his defeat, as he could never really escape from this wretched slavery to women.

As in 1709—when, after busy work for a year or so, he fell silent—Swift's exuberant political activity did not last long. He had worked hard and continuously on the *Examiner* up to June 1711, and then on the various pamphlets till the end of the year (the *Conduct* was published in November). In January 1712 things of a certain importance came from his pen, the *Advice to the Members of the October Club* and a rejoinder to the note of the House of Lords against the peace ; then Swift became less aggressive—some chance shots, but no continuous work.

A general withdrawal was indeed to be expected after the beginning of 1712. His task was at an end once he had completed his great contribution to the peace policy. At the beginning of 1713 he mentions that he is writing a pamphlet, but takes care to add that it has nothing to do with politics.[69] He (we might say) awaited orders and a clear indication of policy in accordance with which to guide the nation ; but no such indication

was yet given. It is true that he published new editions of various pamphlets of the preceding year, that he occasionally contributed to the *Examiner,* and sometimes published some Grub Street broadside or the like,[60] but his activity, as compared with the fourteen or fifteen months before, had sunk to a low level. Even the *Journal* in 1712 is only a half of the *Journal* for 1711 !

Swift, if the surmise be not far-fetched, suffered some discouragement, and perhaps his illness (which became more violent about this time) had something to do with it.

As a political writer he seems to be almost played out. He was still the friend of Ministers and prominent in the brokerage of favours ; but he was no longer the official journalist.

It could not continue thus, as he himself realised. Yet he did not embark on new ventures : go, for example, into parliamentary action. He perceived the close of a period, so much so that he became reminiscent, and undertook to repeat, in the form of a history, the arguments he had lately been offering to the public : a defence of the Queen, her measures and those of her Ministers.

The work was a work of the type of Temple's memoirs ; an uncongenial work, and yet he actively occupied himself with it. Some secret documents were put at his disposal, and he was very busy from the summer of 1712 to January 1713.[61] The manuscript was incomplete, it seems, even a year later ; Swift left it at Windsor,[62] and when he returned, the Ministers would not agree as to the publication.[63]

It was really written more as a pamphlet than as objective history,[64] if only because the information on which it was founded consisted (as Bolingbroke affirmed) of lies told the Dean to direct him in his *Examiner* writing,[65] and not of documents only. The current

opinion at the time **(17**12), and later on too (1737), was that the work was too dangerous to publish.[66] Swift, however, had a great partiality for it, and indeed thought it his great title to fame ; another proof of his want of literary feeling![67]

It was perhaps only in 1712 that Swift began to dwell anxiously on the need of " placing " himself—then he found difficulties.

As we said, there had been no self-sacrifice in his previously petitioning on behalf of others rather than of himself. His success on these lines gave him more power both in the eyes of his exalted friends and of the people whom he recommended—the latter might often be but distant acquaintances. He had to exercise his power if he was to hold it ; and by petitioning on his own behalf he would have ceased to be a moving force in affairs.

But he now saw that his services could not be much longer of use, for the Ministry would be short-lived. He was not even sure of the friends whom he had in the Ministry. Also he feared the risk of putting himself at the disposal of Harley or Bolingbroke alone, as he was aware of the incurable differences between the two statesmen. As early as August 1711 he had patched up a compromise between the two,[68] and then again in September and October of 1712, but real peace was impossible, because St. John evidently desired to oust Harley by the agency of the Queen's favourite, Mrs. Masham.[69] It all went on under the appearance of real friendship and understanding until the very end,[70] whilst Harley's position at the Court was becoming weaker and weaker.

Another element in the situation was the society, afterwards called the Brothers[5] Club (to be distinguished

from the purely literary Scribblerus Club), which was at first (June 1711)[71] composed of persons in the Tory interest, " to advance conversation, and to reward deserving persons with our interest and recommendations," but which readily degenerated into a dining and a punning club. Swift wanted this strange association to become a real power, and to be given employments to distribute,[72] so that when the discords of Harley and St. John came to a head, he would be able to exercise his power without depending on this person or on that, Harley came to pun and to rhyme with the best of them, but bestowed no power, and it was the same with those " regular dinners " at Harley's and St. John's, which seemed at first, as it were, a way of regularising the political influence of the friends of the Ministers.

Swift lost interest in the whole thing.[73] Impending illness and the piling-up of disappointments forced him to think seriously of his own position in the event of the Queen's death.

He was really in a very precarious way, and most uncomfortable in his relation with the *camarilla* at the Court. Matters were so bad that already as early as November 17th, 1712, he had decided to return to Ireland in the following spring : and return he then did, though for specific reasons.

His expectations might have risen at the beginning of 1712, when many deaneries were vacant. They remained long vacant, until the spring of 1713—as if nobody dared to give them away, lest the poverty of Swift's hopes might be exposed.

But he was losing his former patience and becoming fretful. If ever he was to reap where he had sown, he must do so now. The Ministers were embarrassed, and it looked as if they now could give nothing to this strange friend of theirs who had hitherto asked for nothing—as if he expected everything.

But Swift had enemies at Court, and he described himself as

> *. • . by an old [whore ?] pursued,*
> *A crazy prelate, and a royal prude ;*
> *By dull divines, who look with envious eyes*
> *On every genius that attempts to rise.*[74]

The Queen had always been very respectful of the opinions of the Bishops, especially in matters ecclesiastical ; and Swift as *defensor fidei* had no support from the Episcopal Bench. Just at this moment too the enemy pamphleteers were busy accusing him of impiety (hence his rage at Steele's hinting at the same thing), and his " mortal enemy "[75] Sharpe of York had succeeded in representing the author of the *Tale* to Anne as totally unfitted for dignities.

But the principal obstacle in Swift's way, and probably the means of making the Queen hold fast to Sharpens judgment against Swift, was the Duchess of Somerset.

Swift seems to have had no grounds for attacking her except the fear which he shared with Harley that she might take the place of the Tory Mrs. Masham as Queen's favourite.[76] There had certainly been an understanding between the Duchess and Nottingham in an attempt to prevent the peace ; and if we remember that the friendship of Nottingham and Sharpe provoked Harley's anxieties[77] we complete the picture of a cabal at Court which was bound to be fatal to Swift.

In the decisive month of December 1711, Mrs. Masham had advised Swift not to publish the *Windsor Prophecy,* a warning to the Queen against the Duchess ; but some copies of the *Prophecy* were given to friends—and the Duchess was libelled as Wharton had been, or worse, because Swift recalled that as a young woman the Duchess had been suspected of assassinating her first husband :

> *They assassin when young and poison when old.*

But Anne did not suffer any man or any Minister to come between her and her household, and Swift's blow was a bad mistake. To hold a friend of hers up to odium was a direct offence ; even if the Duchess had not spurred her on to follow Sharpens advice, it is probable Anne was offended, although previously, as Orrery says, she had been agreeable to make Swift a Bishop.

So Swift had to wait—and to despair. Only now he realised how determined the Queen was against him.[78] It is true he had never been asked to preach before her, but she had always saluted him in passing, and even sent him medicine. Now he knew that she had fallen to the hostile influences. He judged the Queen " no ill-concealer of her affections "[79] " who understood *most* artificially to disguise her affections."[80]

By the autumn of 1712 Swift threatened to return to Ireland, if nothing was done for him,[81] at the end of the year ; the *History* being near completion, he threatened not to publish it if he was not given something.[82] St. John tried to appease him, by promising him the support of the whole Ministry.[83] But Swift was weary of the Ministers and of their endless quarrels. They needed him, just because he was involved in no secrets and belonged to no coterie ; his utter sincerity made him the only possible bridge-builder.

But now Swift had the means of seeing what enmities his campaign for the Ministry had brought upon him. He was so sure, too, of the feebleness of the Ministry that he wanted to go under shelter before further embitterment occurred,[84] and he urged the Ministers to let him have " more of your lining and less of your dining."[85]

He employed this moment to write and publish *Mr. Collinses Discourse of Free-thinking : put into Plain English, by Way oj'Abstract, for the Use of the Poor,* thinking perhaps that an open declaration against the free-thinking which

he had been accused of might help him towards preferment, and revive the memory of all his publications on behalf of the Church.

The work ridicules Collins's insinuation that all great thinkers of every age have been free-thinkers. The political side, in which Collins is presented as an advocate and protege of Whiggism, is limited to the Introduction ; the work itself is only a witty defence of the Church, which aims at showing the Queen where the true enemies of the Church and religion were to be found.

Of the same period was a single contribution to the *Examiner* on behalf of Lewis, the old friend of Swift who had been accused of dealings with the Pretender.

But it was evident that Swift had abandoned party politics as a constant interest. The peace had been signed in April 1713, and when Parliament met, Swift drew up for Harley the address of the Lords to the Queen, but otherwise remained silent.

His intimacy with the Duke of Ormonde, in which there was a hint of deep feeling on Swift's part, was becoming close, and it was the Duke who was to give him effective help. In March and April many posts fell vacant, and Swift, fully determined to go to Ireland in any case, arrogantly addressed the Ministers. He told Harley outright that he " could not, with any reputation, stay longer here, unless he had something honourable immediately given to *him* "[86] ; and he notified the Duke of Ormonde of his intentions.

Presumably Swift could not become a Bishop, and all the English deaneries were filled. There was, it is true, a canonry at Windsor, but the best hope left was the Irish deanery of St. Patrick, supposing that the existing Dean, Dr. Stearne, were to have a bishopric. Despairing of anything better, and convinced of the impossibility of obtaining preferment in England, where his enemies

might be afraid of him, Swift forwarded the interests of Stearne, by whom he was subsequently treated in very scurvy fashion.

His friends made further efforts to procure him the canonry at Windsor, but this made Swift furious with Harley. He was horribly impatient now and feared all delay. In the second half of April, when he was already starting for Ireland, the decision was taken. The deanery was in the gift of Ormonde, who put through the business.

With Swift's suspense immediately before receiving the warrants signed, and with his rage at the behaviour of Stearne, the *Journal* ends. Swift started for Ireland to take possession in the first half of June, but he was very ill ; so that he remained only a fortnight in Dublin and then retired to his old place at Laracor. He would see nobody, and a month or two passed before he resumed correspondence with his political friends in England.

Swift's position, and the real nature of the services which were expected from him, are well demonstrated by the short note from Lewis on July 9th :

> We are all running in headlong into the greatest confusion imaginable. ... I heartily wish you were here, for you might certainly be of great use to us, by your endeavours to reconcile, and by representing to them [two Lords who menaced to quit the Ministers' interests] the infallible consequences,

and on July 30th :

> My Lord Treasurer desires you will make all possible haste over, for we want you extremely.

It was the right way to persuade Swift to return. He really had nothing against Harley or any of the Ministers. He was sure the fault lay wholly with the Queen's

entourage. He wanted to remain in Ireland until October at least, but the urgency of Harley, who made it a matter of friendship, caused him to leave at the end of August,

He hoped, as he had so often hoped on his returns,[87] that things would go better. His retirement had shown that he was wanted ; perhaps they would obey him now. . . . He returned to show his power ; but he would no longer tolerate Tory futilities.

In London he found himself in the midst of a desperate struggle. Parliament had met and had been dissolved under heavy clouds : moreover, the health of the Queen was bad. Peace had been signed five months before, and now there remained one great and menacing question—the Succession.

It was this question that gave new energy to the Whigs, who openly accused the Queen's Ministers of Jacobitism. Behind the cry of the " Pretender," there was, as we now know, some substance. Fears of an unsettling of the succession were plausible. But Swift was naturally quite in the dark as to the secret sides of Court and Ministerial politics, and therefore thought the alarm was all humbug and due to the perpetual quarrels of Ministers[88] : his words on the subject have undoubtedly the stamp of sincerity.

The country was working up to a crisis—a crisis which the Whigs announced for party reasons. Yet even the Whigs did not anticipate that it would come about as rapidly as, owing to the death of the Queen, it did.

The attempts of Swift to foster a better understanding between all parties concerned were bound to fail. Harley had lost the friendship of Mrs. Masham and was rapidly falling in the estimation of the Queen. He had lost hope and the will to fight. Swift assures us[89] that he

was, in 1714, already prepared to give up his staff; probably solitude and poor health contributed to Harley's discouragement. There came the death of his eldest daughter in November 1713, the occasion of a letter from Swift which is one of the most beautiful specimens of such literature.

There is a real earnest sympathy with a father's sorrow, suppressed, as it were, under a stark effort to represent the thing as a Christian and a clergyman should represent it, and an openness of speech such as only a man really sure of the justice of God could afford to employ :

> Perhaps your Lordship has felt too much complacency within yourself, upon this universal success, and God Almighty . . . thought fit to punish you with a domestic loss. . . ,[90]

The words throw a great light on the utter sincerity of Swift. He is really kind and gentle to Harley in his sorrow, but he does not evade the severity implied in his duty as a clergyman.

In the political whirlwind, Swift could do nothing for his friends by going back to the desk of a journalist. There was now no course but that of a desperate defence. But he found an opportunity of assaulting people whom he really wanted to slay, Burnet and Steele, and indeed in this, his last fight, he was actually to show his polemical ability at its best.

Of Burnet, Swift spoke with some respect later on ; now he saw in him only the enemy of his ideas on the Church and the enemy of his party. The old Bishop had published an introduction to the third volume of his *History of the Reformation,* and Swift begins with an amusing allusion to the small introduction sent as a dwarf before the gigantic third volume, and from that he starts laughing at those Whig principles which dominate

the whole *History*. He throws scorn on the Bishop's pious belief in the Protestant zeal of Henry VIII, he criticises freely and hardly the interpretation which the Bishop puts on the Reformation, recalling Sancroft and other episodes, accusing him of inaccuracy and of all possible defects. He winds up by openly associating him with Collins, Toland and the free-thinkers. He accuses him of literary faults, turns up his nose at a style lacking in grammar, derides bitterly the Bishop's cry for help for the Church imperilled by Jacobites, and counters by insinuating that the Whigs had been privy to designs of putting the Pretender into power.

But it is not necessary to dwell long on this pamphlet. It is merely interesting to point out that both parties, in respect of the Church, were now in the right. The Whig had an extreme wing of free-thinkers, the Tory of Jacobites ; free-thinking and Jacobitism might both lead to the suppression of the power of the Established Church, and the clergymen of each party had good arguments at their command. The Whigs, when they attained office, showed that Tory fears were justified, as was proved by the long and lonely fight the Church had to maintain against Latitudinarianism and the like.

Against Steele, Swift felt deep enmity and a need of vengeance.

Before Swift started for Ireland, Steele had made reflections on him in one of his gazettes. The attack took Swift by surprise.[91] Until Steele had begun to throw discredit upon the Harley administration, Swift had been conscious of having been very fair towards him, as towards other of the discomfited literary allies of the Whigs. Hence the personal blow was unexpected ; Steele aimed at ruining Swift's credit " as a Christian and a clergyman "[92] precisely when Swift was laboriously endeavouring to free himself from suspicion.

Addison did not, it seems evident, rise to the occasion and prevent the quarrel.

But Steele was now totally possessed by the spirit of party, and whereas he had promised, in issuing the first *Guardians,* to hold completely aloof from politics, in August 1713 he had published a violent article on the occasion of the petition from the citizens of Dunkirk for the demolition of the fortress, as ordered by the Peace of Utrecht. There followed a pamphlet, *The Importance of Dunkirk considered in a Defence of the Guardian* . . . insisting on the necessity of the demolition and urging it on the Queen and the Ministry in a very disrespectful tone.

Then Swift came on the scene, Steele's appropriate slayer, and published *The Importance of the Guardian considered* . . .

It is not possible to convey the strong sensation of almost physical assault which this pamphlet gives. It is no longer a calm statement of fact, by an almost disinterested spectator, like the attack on Lord Wharton. Here we hear a superior judging a subordinate with a sniff, as if disgusted at having to touch a filthy animal. Gone are all pretences of justice and argument. Swift really seems to want Steele to be charged with high treason, and insists purposely on his disrespect to the Queen,

The summary of Steele's life is a small masterpiece :

> Mr. Steele is the author of two tolerable plays (or at least of the greatest part of them) ... to take the height of his learning you are to suppose a lad just fit for the university. . . .[93]

And so on and so forth. Steele is held up to contempt as writer, as friend, as man. Swift mixes up important criticism with trifles,[94] but everything tends to display Steele as a vainglorious scribbler, a litde dunce hardly

worth the attention of anybody. Like many of the best things of Swift, **it is meant to hurt—badly** :

but **I** hope few writers will be so " prostitute " as to trouble themselves with the " faults and infirmities " of Mr. Steele's past life. ... A shifting scambling scene of youth, attended with poverty and ill-company, may put a man of no ill-inclinations upon many extravagances. . . .[95]

If we think of Steele's life, besieged by debts, with his fundamental " sweetness of nature and amiable manners,[55] as Thackeray describes him, we understand that only party spirit could have brought him to the attack on Swift and to that rash entry into politics. He was now confronted with a consummate enemy, a character where nothing sweet or easy-going had a place. It is just this that makes the *Importance of the Guardian* a dramatic document.

Swift was completely aroused. He resorted even to poetry ; when he was really serious in argument, we always find a poetic counterpart to his prose pamphleteering. In this case the poems are peculiarly good. They are even in a lighter vein than usual with Swift, but the aloofness is all the more wounding :

Thou must no longer deal in farce,
Nor pump to cobble wicked verse ;
Until thou shalt have eased thy conscience
Of spleen, of politics, and nonsense.™

The *leit-motif* is Steele's political incapacity—the **old hand** deriding the young :

Thy genius has perhaps a knack
At trudging in a beaten track,
But is for state affairs as fit
As mine for politics and wit.[97]

Swift cannot bear to see a stripling dare to enter the political world—*his* world.

Now the political situation became worse and worse, and Steele, who had been returned for Stockbridge, brought forth a pamphlet, *The Crisis,* which made as great a hit as Swift's *Conduct of the Allies.* Then Swift published *The Public Spirit of the Whigs : Set Forth in their Generous Encouragement of the Author of the Crisis,* giving a ridiculous account of the pamphlet, which is described as a great booklet made up of prefaces and extracts of Acts of Parliament. Nothing is good in the eyes of Swift: perhaps he also feels some jealousy at the literary success of the pamphlet and endeavours to demonstrate its utter inconsistencies when poor Steele attempts to reason about politics. He even accuses Steele of reproducing Burnet's arguments : " But this is the spittle of the Bishop of Sarum, which our author licks up and swallows, and then coughs out again. . . ."[98] Swift had no fine feeling when a repugnant image could be conjured up to brand an enemy. At the last he relinquishes the victim with a kick : " I am sometimes in charity disposed to hope that this writer is not always sensible of the flagrant falsehoods he utters. . . .""

Steele was done for. His pamphlet on the crisis was found seditious, and he was expelled from Parliament.

Swift pursued him, at least privately, with a paraphrase of Horace, I. v., where he is represented at a dinner with all the Whigs, in a lurid firework display of innuendoes and insolence.

But Swift did not escape scot-free. In *The Public Spirit* he had attacked the Scotch Lords, emphasising their greed and their blackmail in bringing about the Union wholly in their own interest. And the Scotch Lords extorted from the Upper House a prosecution for libel, had the printer and publisher imprisoned, and offered a reward for the denunciation of the author.

The matter was taken by Swift in dead earnest. As he had to ask for leave of absence, he recommended it

should not be limited to England in point of space[100]—but the Ministers shielded him effectually, and endeavoured even to find somebody ready to declare himself the author.[101]

But the political situation permitted of no hope. The Queen had completely abandoned her first idea of reconciling the parties,[102] for she was enraged by the manifestations of loyalty to the Hanoverians and by the impatience the Whigs showed when she was on the verge of death. Therefore, the representative of conciliation, Harley, already the enemy of Mrs. Masham, of Harcourt, of Lord Bolingbroke, was isolated and only desired to resign. Swift puts the blame completely on the Queen[103] and excuses Harley on the ground of his utter fidelity to the feminine whims of Anne.

It is strange to think that in such a complete disorder of politics, Swift still thought of the situation of an historiographer, and addressed a memorial to the Queen accordingly on April 15th, but with no result, of course. His position was really becoming untenable.[104] His friend Bolingbroke was already urging the overthrow of Harley, and Swift saw the hopelessness of all efforts at reconcilation.

Twice—the last time in 1714—he had them together at Mrs. Masham's, " seriously expostulated with them both "[105] " and told them *he* would retire, for *he* found all was gone."[106] Of Swift's outspokenness there can be no doubt; he had never hesitated to rebuke Harley unreservedly, so much so that Harley called the days of Swift's discontent " whipping days.[5,107]

On this occasion Swift certainly did not fail to convey his anxieties to Harley and to tell him (what he later on emphasised in writing a chronicle of these fateful months) that everybody seemed to think the Queen

was immortal. They should, on the contrary, be uniting against the coming power of the Hanoverians and the Whigs—as they had failed to establish a good understanding with the House of Hanover[108] and it was too late to open negotiations to bring in the Pretender.

This is perhaps the truth to be inferred from Swift's guarded defence of both Ministers. Swift writes : " If they had conceived such a design, it was absolutely necessary to prosecute it from the first year of their ministry."[109] Probably Swift had only now his first glimpse of the mysterious game that had been going on without his knowledge, and the real nature of the enmity between Harley and Bolingbroke.

Bolingbroke,[110] and Ormonde too, had at least held the Pretender as a card up their sleeves, in case the Hanoverian king should be bent on having only Whigs in power (as happened). Harley probably took another line, threatening that he might aid the Pretender unless he received guarantees from the Hanoverians. The flight of Bolingbroke to France later on shows that he was deeply involved with the Pretender ; whereas the fact that Harley was accused and then set free indicates that his accusers had not the courage to drive home the impeachment, because in so doing they would have involved the Queen's reputation. During her illness, the Queen, enraged at the joy of the Whigs and Hanoverians, may have permitted direct dealings with the Pretender to be substituted for Harley's half measures.

Swift saw it all dimly by the end of spring 1714. He could not abandon Harley to follow his rival, nor could he abet Bolingbroke ; a good proof that he was not disloyal to his doubtful friends, who had given him only an Irish deanery !

He could not ignore that Harley was doomed, yet he would not remain neutral, perhaps retire, and then return when Bolingbroke was safely in possession. He

really meant to escape to Ireland in the summer,[111] and we will do best to suppose that he had realised in what direction Bolingbroke was tending. Swift was a loyal servant of his Church and shunned an understanding with a Catholic prince : the negotiations for a change of religion on the part of the Pretender were behind the scenes.

By the end of April,[112] Swift had already, characteristically enough, made arrangements for a visit to an obscure clergyman at Letcombe in Berkshire.[113] He could not return to Ireland, for he had much to do. It is probable that he wanted to watch events to their bitter end, without directly implicating himself in them. He feared to wound any of his friends, now that open hostilities prevailed, but above all he feared to compromise himself more deeply. For a year already, he had been determined not to lay himself open to new enmities ; the attacks on Steele and Burnet had been attacks of old foes, but now high treason (in the special sense then given to the word) was in the air, and he did not like to meddle. At the beginning of June, Swift went to Oxford and then to Letcombe. His whereabouts were eagerly commented upon, and there was really something mysterious about his movements. He said nothing —he just went.

His friends were seriously puzzled ; Harley did not understand, and Bolingbroke, who now felt secure,[114] laughed and sent him wine.[115] Both Harley and Bolingbroke still met,[116] but Mrs. Masham[117] was by now even a worse enemy of Harley than was Bolingbroke. And Swift grew terribly weary in the company of his taciturn host, and wrote long pages of reflection and advice, which were never published, nor even seen, because the end was impending. Mrs. Masham's childish eagerness

to expel Harley brought matters to a head ; on July 25th, Harley was forced to resign—and the Queen gave vent to her womanly passion by saying that he was a drunkard, that he did nothing, and so on.

It is very interesting to observe the great devotion which this strange, uncertain, lukewarm man could inspire. His retirement caused the faithful Lewis real pain and anger,[118] and Swift insisted on offering him his services and company.[119]

But even Bolingbroke could not long enjoy his victory. The Queen died at the end of the month, and with the unexpectedly easy accession of the Hanoverians, the Whigs found themselves in power, Lord Wharton in the van. For the Tories there was no hope—and perhaps much danger.

Then Swift started for Ireland. It was not a flight, for he had decided months beforehand to go. But certainly the departure was opportune—and was to be final, although he did not expect it to be so at the time. All his friends wrote to him, making him the recipient of their mutual recriminations—but he did not even put in an appearance in London.

He went, in the middle of August, silently. His political career—this phase of his life—was at an end.

He had struggled—for what ? He had known power which did not last, and was abolished at a stroke. The conditions under which he had struggled would never return. The political world, where he had made himself so utterly at home, now collapsed like a house of cards.

Another episode—or rather a whole career finally over, a death without resurrection. So it had been at Temple's end, just when he had found a footing at Moor Park. So it had been in 1708 with the notoriety which

he had so laboriously acquired in a sphere of Whigs **and** wits.

And now, as always when he has to abandon his whole past achievement, his refuge, his prison, his doom are—Ireland.

This wonderfully abundant life has indeed a strange monotony of destiny. Destiny does not trouble to find new ways to slay Swift, new devices for stripping him bare ; it repeats itself tirelessly, stupidly, pitilessly. Each act of the tragedy is perfectly cast on the plan of the preceding one, as if his life was directed by an imagination as scanty as that of a film manager.

Once more, as we shall see, will his life—begun anew—come to an end, he will reach eminence even in exile, but this eminence will not endure, and a new activity will close with no permanent results.

Swift had not only one life to live. There were for him many and many deaths, many and many slow hard struggles towards resurrection—and as soon as he rose again the new life painfully won would be taken from him at a stroke.

In any case, his life did not *flow*. It met everywhere obstacles which it could not surmount, and was forced back upon itself.

His sickness interrupted his life continuously. His career was never a continuous progress, but a sort of dreadful steeplechase—at each fence he fell. He got nowhere, because each time he had to start again at scratch ; his past was a weary nullity.

So, after 1714, there will be for him no way back to England. Bolingbroke can be pardoned for his treason, Harley can be released from the Tower ; Swift remained in an exile which was for him worse than a prison.

It was as if he had taken on his shoulders all the sins and errors of the party he had defended, as if he summed up that party in himself.

And indeed there is a sort of justice in this, for, as we call to mind all the phases, all the acts of these crowded years, with their great movements, their whirlwinds of masses and classes and parties, Swift is seen everywhere. But when an uncertain situation deprived foes and friends alike of clear personal outlines, he flies, as he had flown in 1709.

He could do nothing with Courts and cliques, with parties and capitals. He wanted to stand alone in the centre of the field. He wanted not war but duels, to slay his enemies one by one, as a Jack Giant-Killer.

He did not hate on party principles, he did not distinguish the men from the opinions, but hated them solely because they were enemies. And consequently he did not fear to be compromised, though he was appalled by the hatreds which arose against him. To defend a party meant indeed for him to offend the men of the opposite party, as it meant to take on himself the defence of the men of his party. He looms more and more above what he defends—and in the dissolution of the Ministry, in the rapid shifting of parties afterwards, he remains the purest Tory—the only Tory till the end of his life.

CHAPTER VII

HEART AND HOME

THE *Journal* is the first sign of love coming into some relation with the occurrences of Swift's public life. Hitherto his public and his private life have been completely distinct, his comings and his goings were never influenced by what is ironically known as the " tender passion." And not even in 1714 was Swift's solitude alleviated by the horizon's being brightened by a soft smile. " Only a woman's hair " : it was really very little, if by returning to Ireland—and to Stella—Swift felt himself to be

> *Where I am neither loved nor known . . .*
> *My life is here no soul's concern,*[1]

and if near to Stella he dreamed of the " kind Arbuthnot."

This lover is truly a singular problem. So far as we know, only on the eve of his fifties does he give us love poetry of his peculiar kind for Vanessa, and dispassionate verses to celebrate Stella's birthday.

Swift was far more reticent even than the ordinary Englishman. A lover indeed has but two courses: to boast, or to keep his secret. And to show publicly " the least degree of fondness " was for Swift (and he was right) "odious and disgustful."[2] Only hate and rage could come out of Swift as if by a natural force. To speak of a loved woman is, as it were, to put an offering on an altar. Who can imagine Swift being altruistic to such a point ? and disclosing his sentiments in conversation,

when he is reticent even in poems " for private circulation only " ?

Think of Shakespeare's sonnets, and then look at Swift's way of singing love :

However, Stella, be not troubled,
Although thy size and years are doubled. . . .
Since first I saw thee at sixteen
The brightest virgin on the green. . . .
0 would it please the gods to split
Thy beauty, size, and years, and wit?

It is love, love in a peculiar way, but love, together with the need of seeing things as they are. Swift refuses to be deceived, even by his very loving eyes. He asks himself: " Why do I love this woman ? " And as he does not abandon himself to his feelings, and pretend that the beauty of the beloved is the best in the world, he must explain his feelings otherwise :

We think it both a shame and sin
To quit the true old Angel inn.

• • • • • •

Now this is Stella?s case in fact,
A virgin's face, a little cracked.
This drew us in at first to find
In such a form an angel's mind,
And every virtue now supplies
The fainting rays of Stella's eyes.[4]

It may be urged that this is already elderly love. But even elderly love does not admit the decadence of beauty in order to exalt intellectual accomplishments—women are wont to resent such compliments, and they are right too.

Early poems to Stella may have been lost; but we have his love poems for other young women. Love even

in them is an intellectual problem. In *Cadenus and Vanessa,* Swift traces the first steps of love, and sees clearly that his love was an outcome of a woman's flattery, and a bundle of many sentiments :

Love why do we one passion call
When 'tis an assemblage of them all ?[5]

This analysis cannot produce love poetry.

On the other hand, Swift never expresses love in the making, which whether made by the young or the old is always young love. His poetry on women is in the pastoral, Arcadian, Euphuistic style. He ridiculed Philips and his *Pastorals** but his way of paying compliments to women never varied : when he did not indulge in a brutal veracity on the subject of femininity, he dealt in cold images and detached comparisons, in small things, fine and impalpable, like Pope's *Rape of the Lock.* Plays on images, puns about goddesses, a reasoned and reasonable admiration of wit (but it is always understood as manly wit) and of beauty, but always dissected in its elements by long formal descriptions, like the aesthetic analysis of a statue. Such are his love poems—which he dedicated by preference to women he certainly did not love.

And even the rest of his poetry is in this vein. Swift describes, analyses, relates with accuracy—satires, puns, vulgar scatology, there is always this clear cold equal stream of the pastoral, in which the note is never raised and where there is never a dwelling upon a deeper, immediately felt emotion.

We might perhaps speak of an egotistical poetry—if the designation should not sound ludicrous.

Swift as a poet always describes—things as he thinks they are, as he sees them, as it is reasonable to see them, in their immediate reality. He is in truth not facing a

world ; he is facing instruments, objects which are in immediate relation with his personal convenience.

For instance, his most celebrated poem, *A Description of a City Shower* is not even pure description without practical aim. It opens with the enumeration of the signs foreboding a storm, as though it were only a sort of meteorological summary. Thereafter the description never soars, and fails to connect the poet with the world he details. It speaks of dead cats, of the mud, of the darkness, of the peeling walls—as if the first duty of the poet was only to be accurate. Nothing is ugly, nothing beautiful : there is no choice of what is worthy of song, and Swift never enlarges on the beautiful only, so as to give it that large vibration, that interior impulsion which makes of poetry a castle of dreams. Even ancient divinities in Swift's poems are at once reduced to human proportions. They become something one can *grasp.*

Swift even as a poet had no use for contemplation. He only wished to see—and to see clearly. We need not marvel at the baseness of his poetic arguments : a pun and a jest had for him the same aesthetic value as a hymn or a tragedy—does not the true pastoral look at the small, at the minute ? And Swift chisels, he does not cut or construct. A feeble poetry at bottom : an elegant persiflage when he speaks of a woman, as though he had to prove that she should be loved by a sort of mathematical demonstration. And when he loves the woman, as though to excuse himself for it.

Swift never understood the divine inutility of song.

But have we other evidence on Swift's loves, if we fail to find any in his poems ? Yes, we have whole archives of evidence, but the witnesses have prevaricated, the documents are forged, the episodes are made out of nothing.[7]

They remember everything, do these witnesses : **the** precise dates, the circumstances surrounding, the exact words. A judge might smack his lips at this never reticent evidence. But just because of the precision, a biographer should be suspicious. To be near the great is a fine thing if your memory is very clear, and if you have something very interesting, very indiscreet to relate. Therefore we find a quantity of indirect evidence, but no direct proof at all on any particular.

On the other hand, all the evidence refers to Swift at a mature age, as before then Swift was too obscure and his movements too frequent to induce or allow people to observe him and cause gossip to grow. Hence the real bulk of the evidence is of Irish manufacture. A famous man, come from London and his triumphs there to little restricted Irish society, a famous man who is in a mysterious relation to two women, curiously bound to him.—Gossip was inevitable, gossip which endeavoured to find precedents, and rake up forgotten episodes, gossip so flowery as to invent a rape at Kilroot, a son by Stella (the mysterious schoolboy), and so on.

When stories of this kind are seriously set beside evidence, it makes one chary of accepting any of the so-called facts, even when they are not blatantly impossible.

Biographers consented to doubt of Swift's marriage only for reasons, now dispelled,[8] of a temporal impossibility : everything then shows that to prevent legends being taken for facts Swift should provide himself always with an "alleybi," following the advice of Tony Weller.

The gossip was very easily dilated to legend. The imaginative people of Ireland overheard the whispered innuendoes of the gentry, and built up this life-sized portrait of Swift:

Dean Swift was a great man ; very sharp tongued he was, and fond of women terribly. . . . The Dean sent Jack for a woman one night, and it was a black woman Jack brought to the hotel, and the Dean never saw her till morning, and when he did he thought it was the devil. He sacked Jack that time. " What were you sacked for," says Jack's mother. " It is that he sent me for a pullet, and I brought back a hen." There was a son of Dean Swift was a great rider. . . . There was another son of the Dean was called Fireball. . . .[9]

Absurd perhaps, but from universally accepted " evidence " to gossip and from gossip to legend there is insensible progression. The difference between "Evidence" and legend is often only that we have no way of proving the actual untruth of the former. Plausibility is the only foundation, and for most of the information in regard to Swift's love-affairs, we are restricted to one witness only. But *unus testis nullus testis* !

In other words, Swift's amatory life must be reconstructed as a complex on the ground of mere probability, confirmed by the safer evidence, and not composed out of a succession of disputable anecdotes. Collateral hints, involuntary rather than open and deliberate confessions, will be the important thing. It is only when Swift and the others speak without thinking that we can assume that they speak truth.

The biographer must therefore look just to that period of Swift's life where the records are most scanty if he is to understand the history of Swift's loves.

When Swift, then in his thirties, wrote to Varina that he was deep-read in the world, he evidently meant that he was well-acquainted with womenfolk and their ways, ways, which, as a " deep reader " should know, are more unaccountable than the ways of Providence.

Notwithstanding this, in the Puritan idea of Scott—

and of Beddoes too !—Swift had been till then something of a saint in the style of Lewis Gonzaga. But he himself spoke, in his early days at Trinity, of a conjured devil who could work mischief. This can be explained away, as we saw, as indicating a turn for insubordination and schoolboy witticisms ; but it could also imply drink and women. Now there is no special reason for thinking that Swift was inclined to drink ; but even a poor student can find pity and love.

If we were in the presence of an obstinate scholar, absorbed in books and in mental speculation, we might directly infer that his dissipations were bodily diversions. It is intellectuals only who are inexorably inclined to sex-relations : they need such an outlet, and reserve their souls for the soul's business. But Swift had not the constitution of the scholar, his cerebralism fed itself of everything : poetry, punning, love making, all came alike.

He was therefore a predestined philanderer, one who liked to play with women's affections as an intellectual exercise,[10] to study souls and psychic reactions, to make love with the brain, and thus to win from women a terrible and (as he knew) a sinful devotion. It is so easy —and therefore so perilous—to calculate the poor reactions of some girl who does not know where the madness of love and the skill of the lover are driving her. It is so pleasant to have somebody at your feet and to find, when the world is humiliating you, a maternal devotion which makes you feel like God and His Heaven at the same time.

This was the kind of lover Swift was bound to be ; and even when he was a " gown of forty-four," he continued to conquer women, perhaps unconsciously, and the spur was not the pleasure of giving and taking, but an egotistic impulse to impose himself upon another being—to conquer :

His pride began to interpose ;
Preferred before a crowd of beaux !

• • • • • •

So when Cadenus could not hide
He chose to justify his pride ;
Construing the passion she had shown.
Much to her praise, more to his own.[11]

For many individuals this is quite a normal way of approaching women, nor do things remain in the cerebral stage. Therefore we are not looking for a new ground on which Swift's impotence can be demonstrated.

To begin with, a settlement of this debated question will not carry decisive weight in our judgment of the various occurrences of Swift's life. As we said before, his life is not one in which all happenings have an essential relation to love, nor are there in it occurrences of a passional character which would be interpreted very differently in the case that Swift *was* impotent. The effects of Swift's loves were very petty, usual, everyday events—and they could be as well constructed on a bed as on the footpath of some Platonic promenade. Thus the question has a human significance only. It cannot alter positive facts. It can only help one to understand Swift's character, and provide a means of judging the import which some occurrences had in his soul.

The arguments of Beddoes and his like in favour of impotence or recoil from sex have already been treated in Chapter V. And Swift's refusal to marry Stella, the only positive argument for the theory, can be explained by other arguments, as we shall show later on.

As to Swift's saying in his youth that he was of " cold temper," what does this amount to ? Not necessarily to an avowal either of impotence or of lack of sensuality. Such coldness, as we saw, might well accompany promiscuousness.

As for his open dislike of lewd talk, it is not a proof, as we said already, of want of sensuality—it might even indicate sensuality. Nor did Swift abstain completely from lewd allusions, as would have been the case if he had been fundamentally defective in this regard. Moreover, he showed that he considered sexual desire as an unavoidable necessity of human life.[12]

We are limiting ourselves purposely to manifestations of his early life. *Gulliver's Travels,* therefore, can teach us little, if the description of the fine skin of the Lilliputians and the running knowledge of women's intimacy shown in Brobdingnag is not to be attributed to some youthful experience.

As for love-letters, in such of them as have been preserved, we find no direct speech ; but all the correspondence with Stella, other than the *Journal* and an occasional note, has been lost. From the *Journal* we may presume that Swift wrote also on other occasions to Stella. He was probably careful to destroy anything compromising, although by one way or another we have now two love-letters to Varina and a whole set to Vanessa.

It may be surmised that when Swift did not write politics (which was a way he had with women to make them enter into his world, and which alone interested him and showed his importance), he wrote of other things, not suitable to be seen even when all concerned were dead. In truly Platonic relations there is no need for such precautions, nor would Platonic relations enable us to understand his dislike of the publication of the letters to Vanessa. And to return to Stella, in the *Journal* we sometimes find strange blottings presumably made by Swift, precisely in the middle of the salutations in the special love-language at the end of the day.

In any case Swift did not wholly avoid sex allusions even in his preserved correspondence with Stella : " 'Tis still terribly cold. I wish my cold hand was in the

warmest place about you.[5513] And only a man who has some direct experience of love is likely to quote with approval the really sound sentence : " In men, desire begets love, and in women, love begets desire.[5514]

All things considered, the nature of his writings and his calling, we find that Swift's language is not out of the normal. He never directly evades the necessity of speaking of the physical side of love,[15] nor is there a peculiar insistence on speaking of it, which might indicate an attempt to conceal a defect.[16]

The Vanessa correspondence, as we shall see, contains on this point only evidence of indirect value ; but we can surmise a strong case in favour of normality.

On the other hand, the numerous love-cases in Swift's life do not oblige us to presume any special virulence of sex. But certainly an impotent has, even on the outside, something about him which prevents him from attracting women as Swift did. Supposing a constitutional incapacity, there would really be a strange disharmony in what Craik calls " the most masculine intellect of his age,[55] in an active and violent personality.

Why, we should even take the Irish legend into account, and pay more attention to the judgment on such a matter of rough normally constituted men than to that of moralists or scientists of sex !

We will then consider Swift as normal, at least as a working hypothesis, and proceed, with some freedom from presuppositions, to recount the history of his loves.

As soon as Swift went to his mother, after those three years at Trinity, where nothing is clear as to his dissipations, he made love to a certain Betty Jones, a cousin of his mother, whom he remembered even later on,[17] His mother, with the usual maternal simplicity, feared

an entanglement. But Swift went immediately afterwards to Temple ; it is, however, possible that the trouble at Leicester was not ended, nor limited to the harmless Betty. There are hints that during the yearly visits to his mother he indulged in philandering habits.[18]

To this period should probably be ascribed the affair of Eliza.[19] All that is known of it[20] is that Winder in 1698, when presumably everything was definitely ended between her and Swift, found at Kilroot a batch of letters of Swift to her. And Swift directs Winder to burn them.[21]

But at Kilroot, Swift had met Jane Waring, a sister of a school-fellow who belonged to a family of friends of his uncle Adam.

He called the girl Varina—his habit was to give new names to his sweethearts, and with him this was always a first sign of love. In an ironic vein, later on, he actually gave such names to the poor women of his parish, calling them Sacharissa and so on.

He must always rebaptise his mistress after the fashion of so many lovers, merely as an endearment or from love of secrecy. But with Swift this was not an Arcadianism, for he did not select diminutives or childish appellatives. They were just Swiftian names, names for Swift alone : the egotist needs to have the woman all to himself and needs to separate her from all her world, to call her something she has never been called before, as if to draw her into his closed world and imprison her there, detaching her from all relations with her former life.

In the case of Varina there are documents : two letters[22] from Swift of April 1696[23] and of May 1697. There is the usual controversy over these letters : are they really well written ? (they ought to be as it was about this time that Swift wrote the *Tale)* and are they mean or honourable, brutal or chivalrous ?[24] But such judgments have nothing to do with a biography : the

important point is the place which Varina occupied in Swift's life.

We refrain from judging her. Swift from the first knew her in his heart for an insignificant little flirt,[26] appropriate to her dull, gossiping environment. She said she loved Swift, but made a great number of difficulties about marrying him. Yet Swift urged a prompt marriage with an ardour that seems to hint at even the desire for unlawful relations :

> Surely, Varina, you have a very mean opinion of the joys that accompany a true, honourable, unlimited love : yet either nature or our ancestors have hugely deceived us, or else all other sublunary things are dross in comparison . . . To resist the violence of our inclinations in the beginning, is a strain of self-denial that may have some pretence to set up for a virtue . . . for this passion has a property peculiar to itself, to be most commendable in its extreme. . . .

Much fire, we may say, for an alleged impotent !

But Varina makes the passion pass quickly to rage. She says she loves him, but cannot bring herself to give in. Swift protests love is better than gold, but Varina wants security. He tells her he is going to England to improve his prospects, but he is losing patience, as well he may : " By Heaven, Varina, you are more calculating and have less virgin innocence than I . " [26] A little calculating minx she must have been to inspire in a lover such definite indiscretions. Argument and expostulation, rage and passion mingle. Swift is still ready to obey Varina's behests, and, if she commands, to forgo the chance of improving his life. But he is at his wit's end : " Only remember, that if you still refuse to be mine, you will quickly lose, for ever lose, him that is resolved to die as he has lived, all yours."

Varina will not give in, but she probably lamented his flight. The years passed, and Swift remained true

to his word. His pride was up ; and he is definitely cured of love. He was never again to forget himself in passion.

" It requires more charm and address in women to revive one fainting flame than to kindle a dozen new ones," writes Swift to Winder two years later,[27] when the latter knew of the censures Swift had received " in relation to a certain lady."[28] Naturally Varina nursed her resentment. She had imagined in the pride of a little provincial beauty that she could never lose Swift.

When Swift returned to Ireland, Stella was already nineteen years old.—Swift took up again the relations with Varina, but the " style of *his* letters " had altered. He scorned Varina's *entourage*, whatever the cause—probably he despised its common ways and restricted views.

Varina wrote plaintively, in alternate hope and despair, but did not follow Swift's advice about her health and other matters. This made Swift very angry. It was probably not a downright lie when he assured her, " upon the word of a Christian and a gentleman," that his change of style was not " owing to the thought of a new mistress." Stella was then a devoted young friend, an affection growing ; but Swift was now thinking of freeing himself completely from the remains of the old love. It was now *he* who wanted an account of Varina's fortune, and who spoke very seriously of money.[29] He insisted that in marriage, cleanliness in the person and competency of fortune was all that he needed, but confessed that he would not be an easy husband. He had become exacting ; it was a vengeance, but he also wanted to be liberated from Varina in such a way as to be justified in the eyes of the world. The rupture was to come from Varina, and it probably did. Varina never married, and the next year Stella was in Ireland.

Who was the little girl whom Swift had met at Temple's ?[30]

For a certainty we know that Hester Johnson was one of the children of a certain Bridget Johnson, a companion or servant to Lady Giffard, Temple's sister. This Bridget Johnson, we also know, was always in some position of dependence on Lady Giffard, because, when Swift quarrelled with Lady Giffard, he found it difficult to meet Stella's mother, who at some time (just before or just after Temple's death) had married Temple's steward.

Temple styled Stella a servant to his sister, but (it is the first hint of a mystery) left her a settlement in his will[31] The inference that she was a natural daughter of Temple is reasonable enough[32] : to the mother mentioned promiscuously with the other servants, he only left a small legacy and a half-year's wages, and he did not mention the sister (whom Stella does not appear to have met after her nineteenth year) at all.

But there are few hints pointing straight in the same direction, even if the information given in a romantic article in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for November 1757[33] is unsupported by documentary evidence. There remains yet the outspoken certainty on this point of Evans,[34] who in 1723 styled Stella an " illegitimate daughter of Sir William Temple," and an alleged physical resemblance between her and Sir William—how to be appreciated it is difficult to say.[35]

It is not necessary to suppose that Stella was a daughter of Sir William Temple ; the cuckoo in Johnson's nest could well have been another member of the family, but there are a number of psychological indications, and, in Stella's life, a number of coincidences, which can be explained all together only by the supposition of some secret tie with Temple's family.[36]

We take it that Stella was something other than the

daughter of a servant, and was possibly connected by a known or (at least after the opening of the will) a suspected tie with Temple's family—but as a working hypothesis rather than as ascertained fact.

Swift becomes an intimate friend of the girl only after the flight from Kilroot.[37]

The teaching given her by Swift[38] was evidently occasional and volunteered, not regular, but hardly constitutes a normal relation between a clergyman and the daughter of a servant.

In this way the tale begins—as subsequently the episode of Vanessa was to begin. Stella has around her only servants and old men and women. We must not attribute to her a precocious insight into Swift's future greatness, but she was evidently in something like Miranda's innocent state, and the first man who came near her was a god—and a godsend. Moreover girls are ready to fall in love with anybody—dancing master, fiddle teacher—whoever has authority over them, as Swift himself observed.

Swift could scold and be rude, above all he could give to his pupil his own conception of the world. All he said was gospel.

Sometimes Temple was in a bad humour, and Swift would wonder what was wrong and go with his fears to the girl, near whom he felt masterful and free.[89]

Had Swift been at this time contented and " great," Stella's love might never have grown. But Swift (we saw it with Varina) was wont to bring his sorrows—or his bad tempers, more often—to a devoted person, and then, in the blindness created by the intimacy, he would discharge his pent-up hostility and rage. The knowing and pitying of a loving woman do not matter, bring no humiliation ; here for an egotist is the straightest path to love, still more to enduring attachment, because a

proud man is loath to give up the being to whom he has confided his humiliations, his suffering pride.

It was not a case, we can be sure, of the scanty " virgin innocence " of Varina and her provincial conceit : how could this poor child, who was unwanted either in the hall or the kitchen, compare and judge this lonely man, whose own position at Temple's was also so uncertain and ambiguous ?

She gave herself up. Had she been a mere servant or the steward's relative she would have shown the same submission, for Swift was on a higher footing. But, owing to her tie, certainly felt if not directly known, with the master, she could feel herself in the same class with Swift, thus gaining a deeper understanding of him.

Swift is strangely reticent in regard to Stella personally in this period, not reticent merely on his relations with her. He gives no names, no dates, and the Temples appear only as a family where she " contracted an intimacy with another lady of more advanced years."

In accounting for the years immediately after Temple's death, this revelatory reticence increases. On his visit to her in 1701, he says, " I found her a little uneasy upon the death of a person on whom she had some dependence."[40]

But why should she be uneasy? Because of her mother's second marriage to Mose, the steward of Temple and then of Lady Giffard ? But the other daughter probably remained with the mother, and Swift had no ground to conceal a reason of this order for Stella's uneasiness.

It is possible that Stella did not know what to do, for she could not live with her mother, who was with Lady Giffard, and presumably intended to remain there. The strangest thing is that the mother remained good friends with Swift, after he had prevailed, " having

few friends or acquaintances in Ireland,"[41] on Stella and Dingley, the " lady of more advanced years,"[42] to come over, alleging that the higher interest on money in Ireland would sufficiently supplement her income/[8]

Stella's coming was a riddle for the gossiping provincials :

> The adventure looked so like a frolic, the censure held for some time as if there were a secret history in such a removal; which, however, soon blew off by her excellent conduct.[44]

Excellent conduct—or extreme prudence ? Swift would certainly have been a dunce to offer any hints to the Irish public. It was evident that the two ladies from England had something mysterious and superior about them : ordinarily Irishmen went to England. Gossip was held in abeyance, and Stella became speedily acquainted with all Swift's friends. Her women friends (Swift confesses) were always few.[45] But even Addison (then an official in Dublin) knew her, and her social relations were " principally with the clergy."

Yet Swift's tie with Stella was quickly evident.—There was the strange episode of Tisdall, a young clergman, who came to be presented to the ladies. He was apparently very proud to be in such a circle, as Swift wrote jocularly : " All your little pretensions are owing to the credit you pretend with two ladies who came from England."[46] Swift in his egotism was not open to jealousy, and Tisdall entertained Stella during his absences with long accounts of Convocation's disputes.[47] But at last, in 1704, Tisdall took his chance and proposed to Stella.

From Swift's letter to Tisdall at the time[48] it appears that he would do nothing until Stella gave him leave to

tell her mother. Evidently Stella wanted to leave the decision to Swift. She could not say " N o " to Tisdall, and probably would not say " Yes.[55]

Swift wrote to Tisdall, saying that the latter was very unjust in supposing that he (Swift) was influenced in the matter, because he thought of marrying Stella himself (which shows that Tisdall was in the dark as to the history of the ladies coming to Ireland[49]), that he was ready to forward TisdalPs hopes, that he would speak to the mother, and (most important of all) " that if my fortune[50] and humour served me to think of that state [marriage], I should certainly among all persons in the world make your choice."[51]

Swift then confesses that he had been wont " to converse with women more than is usual to men of my level and of our function "—so as to dispel a last doubt of standing in the way—but takes care to deny any Irish intrigue. And he goes on to state that he has said to all parties concerned that the engagement could not be broken now " without some disadvantage to the lady's credit.[55]

The turn of the letter indeed is such that we fail to understand, first why the marriage never took place, secondly why Tisdall continued to remain on good terms with both Stella and Swift. Probably Tisdall was a gentleman, and realising that he had been trespassing on someone's preserves took his discomfiture good-humouredly.[52]

Swift's little parson cousin was more indiscreet, and wrote to some Irish friends in 1707, asking what Jonathan was about. Had he

been able to resist the charm of both these gentlewomen that marched from Moor Park to Dublin, as they would have marched to the North or anywhere else with full resolution to engage him ?[63]

Deane Swift drew the false inference that the ladies had come to Ireland on their own initiative, whereas in fact the invitation had been Swift's.

It is certain that Stella and Swift did not marry at the time, nor for many years after. We may take Swift's words to Tisdall at their face value. He had something in his soul which was stronger than love for woman : the desire of work, of honour, of power. For these he went to England ; but if he did not always remain long enough in England to follow up his successes there, it is permissible to suppose that it was because there was someone in Ireland he had to care for. On the other hand, he was always obliged to return to England ; circumstances did not permit of a marriage which would fix him in one place. Besides, as we shall see, he was the reverse of a marrying man.

By being now in one place, now in another, he provided a further protection against scandal : a lover who abandoned his mistress so often and for so long would hardly be a lover in the eyes of the vulgar. The love of Swift and Stella was in fact not a continuous love-making, but a series of love-episodes, and with each of them Swift thought to marry next time, when the financial conditions were good enough, or when he was a great enough man to appear in London with a bride of modest origins.—But the possibilities were never good enough.

Thus the problem of marriage could really only arise when Swift was definitely established in Ireland. But Stella was then thirty-three and Swift forty-seven, and both ill, and by that time only personal and political hostility was likely to cause scandal-mongering, as the public should have adapted itself to the situation.[64]

But in any case, Swift felt the wide difference between love and marriage. He thought that

a wise man grows weary of acting the lover and treating his wife like a mistress, but wants a reasonable companion, and a true friend through every stage of his life.[55]

Were the relations of Swift with Stella platonic or not ? The question of the marriage has indeed no actual bearing on this question. Its importance from the biographical point of view may be exaggerated, and in considering it we must bear in mind that Swift thought love the worst excuse for marrying.

It is worth while, however, to examine the attempts to prove that the relations were Platonic, and the reasons for these attempts. When Dr. Evans, Swift's successor at St. Patrick's, assured himself that the " most natural explanation " of Swift's not marrying was that he was " constitutionally unfitted for marriage," we may suspect that he was influenced by the desire to extenuate the long intimacy of Swift and Stella, and to regularise a story with which his Cathedral was associated.

As direct witnesses there were possible only accessaries such as Swift's housekeeper and Mrs. Dingley.[56] Their testimony must be taken with a grain of salt where it concerns the absolute Platonism of the relations. These middle-aged women were financially dependent on Swift (he paid a yearly pension to Dingley, even after Stella's death), and they had an evident interest in concealing truth. In the same case were all the relatives and friends who visited and were on good terms and kept up the pretence that everything was quite regular. Indeed, if there were irregularities which Swift wanted to conceal,[57] circumstances all played into his hands. Had he not written :

> *Bare innocence is no support*
> *When you are tried in scandal's court* ?[58]

Swift and Stella never lived in the same house,[59] and interested witnesses have denied that they ever met in

the morning—all this proves nothing,[60] and the information refers, moreover, to a later period for the most part.

There is also nothing in the fact that Swift always directed the *Journal* to both Stella and Dingley and addressed them both in it.[61] Swift was never sure that his letters might not be opened ; another reason for bringing Dingley in was that Stella's eyes were bad, and unequal to reading lengthy letters in small characters.[62]

When Swift had something to say which was for Dingley in particular, he took care to address her by name ; when he speaks to both of them, he is really speaking always only to Stella.—The thing so grows on the reader of the *Journal* even that he forgets Dingley completely.

The " our language " of the *Journal* is not a way of veiling things from the world ; nor could it possibly be, as we said before, an evocation of Stella's childhood. Such speech is natural in a lover when many years separate him from his mistress. He wants to abolish the age difference in order to reach the utter equality which is a necessity in love-making, but he does not talk to the adolescent as to a small child in order only to make himself younger. His aim is to render love-passages possible : in a sentimental friendship this would not be necessary. And even if Swift and Stella had been of the same age, " our language " would not have been wanted.[63]

It is only in the cases of normal love that we find the man afraid, firstly, lest his advantage in years should make him appear as an exploiter of the relative youth and innocence of the woman, and secondly, lest she, being inexperienced, should fail to respond to his adult expressions of tenderness. Both those fears are in a sense disarmed by the invention of a special language for the endearments, where the atmosphere of frivolous intimacy not only abolishes the discrepancy of age, but extenuates also the brutal reality of physical love. The man, no longer aware of his responsibility as the senior

party, is free to contemplate without shame the act of physical union. Those critics who assume that Swift was impotent,[64] and then interpret the "little language" (which they call the "baby language," as though resolved to confuse the issue by insisting on a sexual infantilism which has never been established) as a proof of degeneration, are apparently blind to its natural sanity as an expedient, of which the love-names are only another aspect, to temper reality to a sensitive egotist.

On the other hand, we have already adduced arguments enough to justify Swift's reluctance to marry. But our contention that he was a man of normal sexual constitution requires us to establish, not only that he had, at each given moment, external reasons for not marrying, but even that he had further reasons, and of a much more profound psychological order, for never marrying at all, or at least for not wishing to live with a woman in relations of absolute intimacy.

Swift knows perfectly well that romance is incompatible with the exigencies of married life :

The little Cupids hovering round,
(As pictures show) with garlands crowned.
Abashed at what they saw and heard
Flew off nor even more appeared.

Authorities both old and recent,
Direct that women must be decent;
And from the spouse each blemish hide
More than from all the world beside.[65]

He proceeds in the following stanzas to consider the nature of marital intimacy, and in a tone which reveals the horror he felt for all the physical obligations of everyday intercourse. For this egotist, intolerant of all but his own most private occasions, a full human relationship

involves functions that he cannot endure. But the intimacy of a mistress is exempt from all such disgusts, the occasional and short-timed intercourse allows her to hide her most animal needs ; whereas marriage compels to a continuous intimacy, and does not allow for an escape from the franker expressions of contingent human vulgarity.[66]

On the other hand, Swift was peculiarly susceptible to smells, and apt to think of them even in relation to love.[67] For the effective incongruities of love proceed, not from gesture or appearance, but from odour. The irony of the *Lady's Dressing-Room*[68] is entirely olfactory. Nor could he ever rid himself of this obsession. To his " cold temper "[69] the reality of connubial intimacy appeared with a clarity that appalled him. What he dreaded was the obliteration of love through malodorous impressions, and he even asked

> *Shall I the Queen of Love refuse*
> *Because she rose from stinking ooze . . . ?*

Looked at in this way, the aversion of Swift to marriage has no outline of mystery ; it can be explained on grounds of common human psychology and by reference to external circumstance.[70] There was every reason why he should not wish to marry until he was definitely established in Ireland ; and when he was settled in Ireland he was forty-seven years old, with illness gaining on him apace. We shall allude later on (in Chapter IX.) to the vexed question as to whether he did or did not marry in later life ; at all events he never submitted to any constant intimacy with a woman. Here and now it is sufficient to repeat that absence of marriage, in the period we have examined, proves nothing abnormal in Swift, nor has it any direct bearing on the progress of his loves.

Loves we say advisedly : in **the** case of Vanessa **the** same problems have, in another aspect, the same outline as in his love for Stella. The critics show more pity for Stella than for Esther Vanhomrigh. Is it because they can have more villains but only one victim in the plot, that they are influenced by the christian obituary-notice of Orrery, who thinks Vanessa a " miserable example of an ill-spent life, fantastic wit, visionary schemes and female weakness " ? Seemingly they consider Stella as Swift's legitimate wife : the rival can only be " ignominiously distinguished."[71] Vanessa has been, as it were, incontestably sentenced by the fact that Swift preferred Stella at the last.

Yet Vanessa can call the dispassionate biographer to her defence—not in pity, but on account of the real earnestness of her love, because she was crushed between two such strong characters as Swift and Stella.

She was born in very different circumstances from those of Stella. She was the daughter of a rich merchant and an irresponsible mother.[72] She had a band of brothers and was surrounded in her youth by London fops. Swift condescended in her care-free, disordered household. Her place was the middle class, whereas Swift dealt on familiar terms with the nobility. Strange to say, the same Lewis, who had been a go-between with Harley, introduced Swift into this household, probably as early as 1708.

The Vanhomrigh world was eccentric enough. It appears (from the *Journal)* that its doors were open to everybody. Lewis, Swift, and other wits and men about town, dropped in for a chance meal as if the house were an inn. Swift kept his wine there, and all friends of **the** family made free with it.

Esther was twenty and Swift forty-one. A big difference which enabled Swift to feel exactly as he **had felt**

before Stella in her teens when he was twenty-nine. She was a pupil ready for use, and Swift began to direct her lessons, and to undertake her unofficial tutorship—men seldom vary in the design of their love-making. Swift should have known what this sort of thing led to, but experience at its best is but making the same mistake as before, without fear—because one thinks that one's experience will enable one to avoid *this* mistake at least.

The story developed on the usual lines. In this case we have Swift's own account, a private account written for the benefit of Vanessa herself,[73] and therefore probably true enough in its main outlines, in spite of the wilful construction designed to show that the fault was all on Vanessa's side—and by implication that she had no claim on him. It is a document which lacks chivalry : but Swift wrote it when he was struggling for freedom and capable of a good deal of nastiness in the effort.

The poem, *Cadenus and Vanessa,* was probably written when love was fading.[74] Cadenus—Decanus : Cad, so Vanessa called Swift, not in our sense.[75] The poem is meant fundamentally as a defence of Swift.

The images of the mythology tend to show that Venus was not deceived in thinking that, in Vanessa,

> *can heavenly wisdom prove*
> *An instrument of earthly love.*[76]

Swift is really working up to his own defence. He dwells soothingly on Vanessa's intellectual attainments, and shows himself—

> *Grown old in politics and wit,*
> *Caressed by Ministers of State,*[77]

so that he had fascinated Vanessa without knowing it. The situation may well have reached a climax at the date given in the poem (1711). By then Swift was no

longer apt, he says, to make love as in his younger years :

He could praise, esteem, approve,
But understood not what was love?[78]

He was certain that he had no sentiments but those of the father or of the tutor, and it may well be true that when Vanessa confessed :

Tour lesson found the weakest part—
Aimed at the head, but reach'd the heart,[79]

he marvelled, and feared that he had been taking undue advantage of the young. Yet in the very pleasure he had in chiding her, making her different, and having her despise common fops, there was already love : the peculiar love of a strong self-centred character, for which to love is to rule.

Swift does not mince matters, but openly says that Vanessa has thrown herself at his head.

Now the problem opens. Swift says that he intended to divert the passion towards friendship, but Vanessa would not hear of it :

The nymph in sober words entreats
A truce with all sublime conceits,[80]

and as Swift has declared—

Love hitherto a transient guest
Ne'er held possession of his breast,[81]

Vanessa sets herself to teach him. His pride (he has said it before) is exalted by this attachment : is that not love already ? And when the woman throws herself at his head, his conscience is appeased.

" Teach love " ? The image may be strained as one wills ; but since Swift was already a past master of

elevated conceits and Arcadian prettinesses, it could only be to teach in a very empiric way.

But what success Vanessa met
Is to the world a secret yet.
Whether the nymph, to please her swain,
Talks in a high romantic strain ;
Or whether he at last descends
To act with less seraphic ends. . . .[82]

There is an evident irony behind the " high romantic strain " and the " seraphic ends."

On the other hand, the considerable correspondence which has been preserved, as we shall see later on, would read damnably in a divorce case, to quote Churton Collins. There is nothing definite : Vanessa in most of the letters is merely entreating Swift to come to see her. But the climax of the affair (whatever its nature) was, at the time of the correspondence, already past, and Swift had grown indifferent, if not impatient. The desperation of Vanessa is not the fear of consequences or of dishonour, it is the desperation of a forgotten woman to whom has been revealed the deeper side of love. Such desperation grows out of the terrible sexual dependence of the woman on her lover. There is a poignancy which can only be felt after the ways of human flesh and blood.

Even in the beginning there may well have been a fundamental sexual admiration on the part of Swift. Hessy was already for him a fair maid in 1709, but everything indicates a new, deeper relation in 1711 : the allusions in the correspondence,[83] the first *billet-doux* in November 1711, Vanessa going in quest of Swift at Chelsea in the summer of 1711. Vanessa was then melancholy, says Mrs. Long,[84] who was sure Swift should have married Vanessa.

This year and the two next are full of incidents which

Swift afterwards remembered all together with later occurrences :

It ought to have been an exact chronicle of twelve years from the time of spilling the coffee, to drinking of coffee, from Dunstable to Dublin, with every single passage since. There would be the chapter of Madame going to Kensington ; the chapter of the Colonel going to France ; the chapter of the wedding, of the adventure of the lost key ; of the sham ; of the joyful return ; two hundred chapters of madness ; the chapter of long walks ; the Berkshire surprise ; fifty chapters of little times ; the chapter of Chelsea ; the chapter of swallow and cluster.[86]

Platonic memories, even the two hundred chapters of madness? And then the recurring item of coffee.[88] " I could not see any marks in the chimney of Dunstable, or of the coffee Hessy spilt there[87] : that is probably the beginning of the history which recounts the first youth of Vanessa in her voyage over from Ireland. But afterwards coffee began to be a sort of love symbol. We do not mean that it had a direct sex significance, but possibly the lovers met together with this excuse of coffee-drinking : " Adieu till we meet again over a pot of coffee, or an orange and sugar in the sluttery, which I have so often found to be the most agreeable chamber in the world.[5588] It is the first *billet* to Vanessa, and it seems to be fairly precise as an indication of a mysterious way of speaking of their love encounters.

Swift entered into this affair with **a** light heart. Stella was in Ireland, and not likely to come over. It was impossible that he could be forced to make a proposal of marriage, and he had no responsibility, since it was Vanessa who had begun the love-making.

The *Journal* proceeds in the same tone **without notable** changes.[89] Swift, **who had first spoken indifferently of**

Vanessa,[90] ceases to allude to her in connection with the customary dinners at Mrs. Vanhomrigh's, and these are not mentioned after the winter of 1712.[91] Stella was the settled love—the as-good-as-a-marriage—and Swift would never have thought of leaving her on Vanessa's account. But it is easy to conduct two loves when the two women are so far away from each other. Even in the very heart of the lover the transposition of passion to the older love and vice versa is the easiest and sincerest thing in the world.

Matters only begin to go astray when Swift speaks of definitely returning to Ireland. Already indeed his first trip to Ireland in 1713 had turned him into a remarkably cool lover.[92] Poor Vanessa, jealous even of his male friends, had begun to put forward pretensions.—In the meantime, the mother died, and left Vanessa free.

As Swift had in 1714 decided to go to Ireland, he wanted to undo all ties. It was not that he thought he would never be back in England ; he did not think this when he left, and therefore we may suppose that he was really weary of Vanessa. But Vanessa was persistent, and Swift was naturally annoyed, for their silent compact had implied freedom. The poor girl clutched at him with both hands—at him, who wrote sincerely and bluntly : " I think, since I have known you, I have drawn an old house upon my head. You should not have come to Wantage for a thousand pounds. You used to brag you were very discreet : where is it gone?"[93] He had lied to her as to the date of his probable start for Ireland, to protect himself from a visit from her in his Letcombe refuge. But she had come, and he now declared that he would only stay in Ireland a little while.

But Vanessa is not so easy to abandon. In the summer of 1711 she had already projected to go to Ireland to look after her affairs, which were now dreadfully entangled by her mother's mismanagement of them.

Now in 1714, after three months' waiting for Swift's return, she follows him there.

Her arrival is received by Swift in a spirit of undoubted boredom : " . . . besides I should not have gone to Kildrought to see you for all the world. I ever told you you wanted discretion.[55] And then his disparaging judgment on Dublin, the Irish climate, Irish places—a desperate attempt to persuade her to go back. "Nor shall you know where I am till I come, and then I will see you. A fig for your letters and messages.[5594]

But Vanessa stayed, and Swift was now a prisoner of his past—the slave of a love into which he had entered because he felt a master.

CHAPTER VIII

WARPATH ACROSS ST. GEORGE'S CHANNEL

EVEN THE dilemmas of love could not affect the course of Swift's life. Neither Stella nor Vanessa had disturbed it up to now ; nor could Swift be deflected from his position, seeing that egotism closed up his soul to all feelings of others. Therefore in considering what is indeed the most puzzling problem of his career, namely his participation in Irish politics, we can for a moment forget his private vicissitudes.

In consequence of the glare that surrounds Swift's achievement in Ireland, a problem pertaining to that achievement has been obscured and has lain neglected. How did Swift transform himself from a party-politician —in the special sense in which we gave this name to him —into a national hero, a polemic beyond party, aiming towards a goal which appeals even now to our most intimate, our least political, sentiments of honour and liberty?

Such will be the real theme of this chapter : how did this man in ten years' time become such a hero, find a noble motive in Ireland, the land of his suspense and exile up to now ? Not without reason Bolingbroke found something unexpected in Swift's interest in Irish agitations.

Because Swift thought of himself as an Englishman, and an Irishman only by accident of birth, it has been customary to explain away by one means or another his appearance as an enemy of the English misgovernment.

His friendly biographers tell us that what he hated was cruelty, misery, and being in Ireland he could do no other than befriend its unhappy people : that we should disregard his momentary outbursts of anger which are cited in the attempt to prove that he loathed Ireland. " Though he did not love Ireland," says Q,. C, " he never ceased to work for her good, he wished to make the Irish and their posterity happy by delivering them "[1] and another of Swift's champions exclaims : " They say he hated Ireland, where all were either knaves or fools. He did not—he hated tyranny and oppression."[2]

But while it is foolishness to say that Swift hated Ireland (the best proof to the contrary is really the fact that he praised Stella for her love of Ireland[3]) we do not wish to diminish the significance of his outbursts of anger by calling them " momentary " : on the contrary, as we have indicated elsewhere, it was for him a deeply felt interest to bring into relief the English side of his character, and his mortification at being settled in Ireland. We may say too that Swift did, in the agitations excited by his Irish pamphlets, respond to a need of the Irish themselves, outside of purely contingent events ; how else could he have established, and for so long, his extraordinary pre-eminence in the Irish imagination, and become, as he did, an intimate part of the Irish drama ? Or again, what could be less like Swift in Ireland, the founder of the modern Ireland of controversy, than that familiar type, the romantic Englishman satirised by Shaw, who champions distressed peoples and thinks he loves every country but his own ?

But in the eyes of other biographers, Ireland was for Swift only a pretext to vent his spleen on the Whig enemy in England. His action as patriot, as his action as churchman, was hypocrisy—it signified only envy and disappointed ambition. The case is strenghtened by the allegation that the Irish interest, the defence of which he

undertook, was simply that of selfish Protestant" ascendancy " now in revolt against English exploitation and its subordination to Walpole's garrison of place-hunters. We think the view is not even plausible : as we have shown, Swift did not wish to be regarded as a member of the " ascendancy " except " in mortification." For example, it is impossible to consider the ferocious critic of the eighteenth-century Irish landlord as a servant of the privileged minority in Ireland. Even could it be shown that Swift wished to extirpate the Irish Catholic religion in the interests of the English State Church,[4] nothing would yet be demonstrated on this head. The fact is rather that he regarded the whole Irish people, from whatever motive, as a people in his care.

To find an equitable solution of the problem, we shall follow the course of Swift's life in Ireland.

Swift came to Ireland in August 1714, not yet thinking that all was lost in England. For Lewis, with Harley's retirement, all was already lost[5] ; but Swift maintained a stern countenance, and " aimed a blow" at the enemy.[6] In his retirement at Letcombe, he had worked on various occasional pamphlets, which could have no meaning unless he had expected his world to continue with a certain harmony. These pamphlets were matter-of-fact directions rather than a summing-up of a closed page of history.

In fact his hopes were not all in the air ; precedents did not point to the closed page, for in the past new kings had endeavoured to conciliate adversaries, and to govern with some continuity. If on this occasion the contrary happened, it was precisely because at the time of Queen Anne's death the Tory administration had come to the end of its tether, and fulfilled its historical task. The new wave of Whiggism, already impending, bore a new king

on its crest; and a fortuitous concatenation of circumstances and a certain non-political eagerness on both sides brought about a total change.

The world of England was going towards fresh positions and new men. During Swift's successive silences, not only will the Whigs attain absolute power, but new figures will completely overshadow the old, and some years later Bolingbroke will formally recognise that the Tory party is dead and buried.

Swift's friends and old foes alike were gone, and some years later he was even able to consort with the son of Lord Wharton, the typical Whig enemy of his whole previous political life.

But it was only after September 1714 that all Tory hopes were lost. Then George I unexpectedly called in a purely Whig Ministry and next year Parliament showed an absolute majority of Whigs : the third change of front since 1709 and one which definitely assured a long lease of power to the Whig Government, thanks to the Septennial Act of 1716.

A new and hostile England faced Swift. There was no longer a royal will to keep parliamentary and ministerial power in equilibrium. George I was not a sovereign in the older sense, he was moving in a foreign country, and this permitted the establishment for the first time of true parliamentary government in England. Swift felt himself really excluded : even his principles of patriotism—the vague patriotism he had used against the Whig—were no longer a trump in the game, as the country was under a foreign prince who did not know the language and brought with him a number of favourites and royal whores to share in the booty.

There was only one way out, as far as English politics were concerned : Jacobitism. But Swift was the last man to embrace that cause which led not to liberty but to another servitude. The Jacobite attempts of 1715-16,

1719 and 1722 miscarried, **and** had no effect but to compromise the Tories. The Pretender proclaimed Queen Anne's leaning towards himself, and in doing so revealed the true basis of Tory politics in the latter part of her reign.

For a similar reason political differences as Swift had known them were completely transformed in the new constitutional constellation. The Whig administration was no longer Whig in the old sense. Whiggism now definitely signified economic politics, although it still incidentally protected latitudinarian tendencies in the Church, allowed all possible liberty to nonconformists of all professions, and even, by implication, forwarded free-thinking and deism. But religion was now no longer a political factor, and Swift was lost sight of in a forgotten world.[7] England was going towards Walpole : through Townsend and Sunderland, the idea of national greatness was becoming the idea of economic prosperity, identified with a commercial hegemony of the whole world.

Thus we can explain Swift's slow and almost unconscious change of front. In 1716 he declares to King[8] that he is himself the best possible Whig : and it cannot be supposed that in saying this he was attempting to curry favour.[9] What Swift meant to say was that he was a real Whig against the false Whiggism now current.

The total change of political factors also enables us to understand why the Whigs could be lenient to the vanquished. They began a sort of desultory vengeance on the Tory ex-Ministers, but desisted easily. History was overtaking the old system and the old feuds were being forgotten.

It was only at first that Swift had any reason to fear

for his personal safety : some of his letters were intercepted and examined by King, now one of the Lord Justices. Swift lit a bonfire on the night of the coronation to " save his windows." King behaved badly towards him, in Dublin hinting at his Jacobitism, in London setting it about that he contemplated deserting the Tories. But Swift maintained an undaunted spirit and when a Whig peer assaulted him on the public road, he took his grievance before the House of Lords.[10] He was even insulted, it seems, by the mob, but of this he does not seem to have complained. " Torn to pieces by the ruling party in Ireland and by libellers and pamphleteers " across the Channel, he was cured, he said, " of loving England."

Yet he did not relinquish his friends—the memory, as it were, of his past greatness—even if it was now perilous to acknowledge them. It was no longer a hope in a new sunrise, but only obstinacy, the wish to demonstrate that he had been right, and that Ministers had done what they did only with the assent and counsel and help of the real force underlying the Ministry : namely Jonathan Swift.

There is here a sort of persistency which could only have come from his deep-felt egotism, from the need of asserting himself even in defeat, and he makes an offer to Harley (sent to the Tower by a very stupid whim of his enemies, who had not the courage to bring him to trial) to come over and share his misfortunes.

It is Swift's last blow against fate, when he writes :

> I don't conceive myself obliged to regulate my opinions by the proceedings of a House of Lords or Commons ; and, therefore, however they may acquit themselves in your Lordship's case, I shall take the liberty of thinking and calling you . . .[11]

Swift against the whole Court of Parliament: the position we should expect to find him in.

At the same time, this is the first hint of a new attitude. He has been forgotten and cut out from the old familiar world which now changes rapidly year by year, and whilst the course of history is a series of unexpected turns of fortune in Whig England's favour (Louis XIV's death, the Alliance, etc.), he becomes the enemy of all things English, in which he has no longer a share and where his friends and party have dissolved into thin air even before they are definitely discomfited.

Isolated in Ireland, few letters come to him from the scene of his past greatness. After two years of suspense and of suspicion against all things Tory, the old ties form again : rare letters, a good many from Lewis, fewer from Bolingbroke, from Harley, from Atterbury. They had not forgotten him ; but it was no consolation, because these letters reveal a sort of disintegration of the old Tory forces. Each man now speaks for himself; none has an opening into the new political world. What must have discouraged Swift most was not the helplessness of his friends but their utter abandonment, their total exclusion from public affairs.

Swift sees the impossibility of helping them ; they do not even want to come again to the surface. They are now nothing but old cronies who meet sometimes around a bottle of wine to remember past greatness and lost possibilities.[12] The picture is appalling, especially for Swift, who has lost nothing of his force and wish to conquer, and who has not directly experienced the successive waves of political ebb-tide which had left his friends lost on a lonely shore.

The conjured devil urges him, he wants a fight, a free fight.

There is the chapter of his cathedral, all Whigs, who promptly vote against him and hinder all his decisions. Swift revels even in this small private war : he writes to Atterbury[13] for information as to ways in which he can

counter this petty opposition, he incites and bullies.[14] He spends months in the country, buying a glebe for his old Laracor; he acquaints himself with that Knightley Chetwoode who is to become the most exalted person of his intimate circle in these days of waiting. Gradually, as fears are allayed, he makes new Irish friends ; but he feels desolate, because he has no prospects of conquest across the Channel.

He hates England, for England has now deserted to the enemy so completely that she does not trouble even to persecute him. Political issues vanish from his mind, his feud is a personal one against England as a whole. And when he looks around at the things near him, he sees only slaves, a poor, insignificant people who have not even the means to create a strong anti-English policy, or to form a conquering army against England.— And so the complaint of Ireland becomes his complaint, principally because he hates this upstart England, as before he had hated his political and therefore personal enemies.

Yet his fine sense of politics directs him rightly. England is now a great commercial State, and politics are the road to big profits : therefore to fight against England's economics is to fight against England's innermost reality.

The war commences.

It was a strange war, because Swift now felt the economic moment more acutely than other moments, religious and political.

The laws against Irish cattle of 1665-80,[15] like the later laws against the Irish woollen trade (1698), had been a counterpart of the Penal Laws : at least they had only been made possible by the prevailing political atmosphere of nervous hostility towards Catholic Ireland.

They were designed to destroy Irish prosperity in the supposed interest of England ; but their aim was disguised and facilitated by exciting the fears of the settlers against the Catholic population.

Molyneux had understood that the war on Irish prosperity was also a war against the Irish settlements of the English : in 1698 he had already perceived what Swift was to perceive a quarter of a century later. But the state of a few isolated minds in 1698 had become by then the state of a large body of the settlers : so much so that the Irish Protestant Parliament, which in 1699 had approved of the laws against the Irish woollen trade, was now ready, in 1724, even before Swift's intervention, to rise against Wood's patent. This shows that Swift's development was the same development as that of the generality of the English settlers, and it is no wonder that before 1720 we find only occasional allusions to Irish policy, such as the *Letter* of 1708 on the Test Act to a member of Parliament in Ireland, the references to Ireland in the *Libel* on Lord Wharton, and the long epistle to King on the subject of the First Fruits.

In the *Short Character of Lord Wharton,* his strictures on English misgovernment had been severe, but they related to a Whig administration. His correspondence,[16] however, shows that in the days of his own influence in English affairs he had brought Irish grievances to Bolingbroke's notice.

But a course of Irish politics forced on Swift a change of orientation which appears shocking when we recall that as a Tory he was ready to subordinate the Irish to the English viewpoint, and did not tolerate displays of Irish independence. Thus he told King in 1713 that any violences on the part of the Irish Commons were " very disagreeable to us here," that her Majesty would " exert her power to the uttermost on any uneasiness given **on your side,"[17] and that** " it was impossible **for the two**

Kingdoms to proceed long upon a different scheme of things."[18] The Whigs were dominant in the Irish Commons, and voiced a hysterical Protestantism, the suppression of which, Swift might plausibly have argued, must be to the general advantage of Ireland. But in collaborating later on in the new Protestant movement of Irish independence, he collaborated in a movement which was chiefly in the hands of the Irish Whigs : in Ireland as in England Whigs were the more *nationalist* of the two parties.

Swift in *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures* (1720) anticipates, if not the creed, at least the method, of Sinn Fein (in its original acceptation) by almost two centuries, for not only does he urge upon his countrymen the duty of cultivating their own garden, but he proposes to nullify English law within the Constitution, and indeed in vindication of the Constitution.

The British legal discouragement in William's reign of the export of Irish woollen manufacturers[19] provides him with his text. As Irish landlords continued to depopulate the land for the feeding of sheep[20] it seemed that the people of Ireland might as well use their native cloth, and resolve never to appear with one shred that came from England—and he quoted with admiration the pleasant observation of " somebody " " that Ireland would never be happy until a law was made for burning everything that came from England except their people and their coal.[3,21]

Some of his passages were plain expostulations directed against obvious scandals, such as Irish rack rents and absenteeism, and in others he could not restrain his habitual Tory feelings, as in his defence of the lower clergy (while the landlords by " immeasurable screwing

of their tenants " cut a great dash in London, poor parsons are happy to afford " Irish crepe and an Athlone hat ") and his ridicule of the project of a National Bank, which without consideration he declares to be a swindle, imported into Ireland by Whig financiers and stock-jobbers.

But the people's friend never absorbs the party clergyman. Only at the moment that the famous Drapier agitation is at its height does Swift's clericalism lie dormant. Only at that moment does he forget " poor old parson Philemon." We recall that Swift's first Irish work was on behalf of the Irish Philemon : his business with the first fruits. These were not remitted, in spite of his efforts over many long years, until 1711, when the Queen granted the whole prayer of his memorial. But while the letter which gave the Irish Bishops an account of how the thing had been done at last was still on the road, the Irish Bishops themselves were engaged in discussing the advisability of continuing the First Fruits Commission as constituted, without allowing Swift himself any seat upon it. It was then that he made his famous remark that he might, on this very question of Church interests, on which the Bishops had withdrawn from him their confidence, have " made his market" with the Whigs. In his anger he easily came to think that his Church in Ireland was subject to the persecution of latitudinarian Bishops.

The public listened to Swift with the keenest attention, although he complained, three years later, that Irish people had failed him in this hour :

About three years ago a little book was written to advise all people to wear the manufacture of their native land. It had no other design, said nothing about the King or Parliament, or any man, yet the poor printer was prosecuted two years with the utmost violence, and even some weavers themselves for whose sake it was written, being upon the jury, found him

guilty. This would be enough to discourage any man from endeavouring to do you good, when you will either neglect him, or fly in his face for his pains.

But what were the facts ? The governing officials, with Broderick, the Whig Chancellor, leading, had indeed moved against the printer with all possible force. Chief Justice Whitshed had directed the Grand Juries of the County and City to present the pamphlet. They were sent back nine times, and at the last the issue had to be left to the Judge himself by what was called a special verdict. Nor did the printer languish in prison, for upon the arrival of a new Viceroy, it was found prudent to enter a *nolle prosequi.*

The doctrine of the *Universal Use* was calculated to appeal to the Protestant minority ; it could not directly interest the repressed Catholics.[22] The Penal Laws were, as Swift well realised, not so much designed to forward the progress of the State Church as to protect the political ascendancy of the landed classes.[23] The Penal Code brought little advantage to the Anglican religion in Ireland. Swift's complaint of the bad condition of his Church—his account of the impropriations, the consequent poverty of many benefices, the frequent union of benefices—was substantially accurate.

Thus he had good reason, on coming to Ireland after the Hanoverian accession, for regarding the Church as being in sore need of a champion. Even the summoning of Irish convocation was now discontinued, owing to suspicions of Jacobite tendencies on the part of the clergy. The new Bishops, all Crown appointments, were generally Englishmen and agents of the Whig oligarchy. They were often astute politicians and sometimes, like Boulter, statesmen. Swift's proteges, the incumbents, were as a rule poor and obscure men, without influence.[24]

In any case, the *Universal Use* was too far-fetched **and** systematic a doctrine to appeal to the masses. To move the people, it is necessary to present them with obvious arguments on a concrete dispute, so that they can take up a position and act forthwith—preferably in a destructive rather than in an ordered or constructive fashion. The opportunity arose only three or four years later.

Up to 1720 English politics moved insensibly in alliance with commerce ; the collapse of speculation about the year 1720 and the difficult liquidation of the South Sea Company brought into prominence a man who was well adapted to incite Swift to hatred and to attack : Robert Walpole.[26]

He had been one of the Whigs who before 1710 had not realised the necessity of placating the Irish parson. During the Harley administration, Walpole had kept his head above water with difficulty ; but he was presently submerged under a condemnation for bribery, and really in those early days he was insignificant enough. Then Harley enjoyed the complete trust of the financial world. When Harley fell the funds fell too, and financiers began to look forward to the Queen's demise, as it alone could remove the financial uncertainty caused by Bolingbroke's Jacobite vagaries.

This moneyed interest had been cautiously protected by Harley. But its natural allies were the Whigs, for Harley was also under the necessity of supporting the landed interest and the Church as well as the financiers. Walpole, on the contrary, could shamelessly avow that the greatness of England depended on her commerce and a favourable balance of trade. Being himself deeply involved in financial enterprises, and good at business, he was evidently the coming man for England. Sunderland and other leading Whigs saw their fortunes vanish with the collapse of the South Sea schemes ; **but Walpole**

after a timely retirement took on the aspect of a saviour when popular indignation marked down the stock-jobbers and their friends. His semi-eclipse in 1717, as a result of Cabinet differences, proved for him a blessing in disguise, and by 1721 he was arbiter of English politics.

His rise was the final demonstration of definite victory —not of the Whigs, but of financial power. 1721 saw the end of the old party alignments ; it saw religion superseded as a motive for political action, and the disappearance not only of Toryism, but of classical Whiggism —those Protestant principles of liberty, mixed monarchy and popular government, which constituted the real faith of Swift, who could, therefore, as against the new order, insist that he was the most loyal of Whigs.

An often absent King, a Parliament curiously independent of any control, either royal or popular, and which therefore—if government was to be possible at all —had to be bought at a great price : everything seemed to Swift to stink of money. It was a world of compromises and of petty dealings : up to now the King and his Ministers had tried to buy the Parliament in advance at the price of a thousand pounds a head ; now members had to be bought time after time. Under George I as under George II about half the parliament was in the pay of the King—that is to say, of the Minister, who not only bribed the members, but reached the point of bribing the King himself, as Walpole did with George II when he advanced that monarch in the Civil List.

There was one country which could not be bribed— Ireland. Ireland, still living in the ideas of the past, ignorant of the new financial play of forces, lay at the mercy of her more progressive neighbours.

It was Swift's opportunity. He had before him a man whom he hated, and also a means of directing the troubled and uncertain consciousness of Ireland. Politics

were again at last an immediate possibility for his invective. In the calm and serious teacher of the *Universal Use* there are signs perhaps of a regathering of high spirits, but now a concatenation of circumstances similar to that which had produced the *Conduct of the Allies* was impending. In the question of Wood the higher officials at the Castle had already pronounced in a national sense. It was evidently Swift's role to drive the argument home, to appeal to general opinion, to promote an agitation. There was a case for an appeal to the public, and Swift appealed with all his force.

Was it a good case or a bad one ?—The only thing that matters is whether Swift was sincere in thinking it so good as to be a sufficient reason for inciting a popular agitation against England which he now hated.

It is to be considered that Swift could not possibly see his subject as now we see it. Economics are the most recent of all sciences, and in Swift's day it was even possible for clever men to approve of the wild theories of Law. To ask whether Swift was right is therefore to ask an absurd question ; money and currency are still mysterious and obscure matters. Swift must have been in full possession of the elements of the science, and also a very skilful economist in advance of his time, to decide whether coining money was a trade which somebody can be paid for, or only a gratuitous stamp put by the State on a piece of metal of real value.

But Swift was surely on firm ground in his conviction that coining is a sovereign right, not to be disposed of without the knowledge or consent of the nation. His argument that Wood's coinage was base, and constituted a swindle on the whole people of Ireland, was only an argument to enforce a main principle on the popular mind, which could not be immediately moved

(and had never been moved) by a question of constitutional right, like that implied by the patent granted to William Wood, a speculative hardwareman from Leicester, in 1722 for the coinage of copper for circulation in Ireland, with fourteen years to run.[26]

The Commissioners of Revenue in Dublin issued a protest against the patent, asserting that Wood's coin was base and would drive good money out of the country. In the view of the merchants and traders of Ireland, there was not the least want of such small species of coin for change,[27] as, notwithstanding this, Wood began to import his halfpence, in the autumn of 1723 the Irish Commons took up the subject ; and again Wood was charged with fraud, as having imported greater quantities of different weights and measures than the patent allowed for, and the Parliament men put forward the doctrine of Irish sovereignty by representing that power of coinage should be withheld from individuals and entrusted to the legislature.

The noise was so considerable that Walpole was already searching for some means of conciliating the Irish when a dauntless Dublin shopkeeper, M. D. Drapier, dropped his first anonymous letter into the post-box of Faulkner, the printer.

In this opening *Drapiefs Letter* Swift recalls his former venture into Irish economics, and gives a history of the occurrence.

Swift made the most of both the objectionable aspects of the Irish patent. Even if Wood's halfpence were good and had been wanted, Irish dignity had been affronted by the circumstances under which the patent had been granted. The Irish Parliament had often vainly petitioned that it should be allowed to establish an Irish Mint ; and now an alleged want of small coins was made the occasion of benefiting, not only a financial adventurer of doubtful integrity, but an ancient mistress

of the King as well—for the real patentee was the Duchess of Kendall, who had sublet her privileges to the " mean hard-ware man " for £10,000.[28]

The damage that this might do was considerable : £100,800, the value of the 360 tons of copper as stated in the patent, was (probably) absurdly in excess of Ireland's requirements in small coinage ; moreover, as Swift remarked in the first *Drapier's Letter,* much more could be sent over by stealth, nor was the patentee under obligation to receive his own coin back in Ireland and to give silver and gold in return.[29]

In Wood's computation, his expenses in the business would have amounted to £95,760 I8J. as against the return of £100,800. In a pamphlet printed in 1723, he put the cost of the copper at *is. 6d.* per pound weight, and his profit after expenses at 5 per cent, which meant only 1½*d.* in the half-crown. It is not possible to accept the figures,[30] nor evidently were they accepted by the Government, which when forced to surrender and to withdraw the patent, compensated Wood with a pension of £3,000 a year.

Sir Isaac Newton at the Mint was required to make an assay of the coinage (April 27th, 1724), and he reported that Wood, if anything, had over-respected the conditions of the patent.[31] Wood, wrote Swift in reference to the report, " takes care to coin a dozen or two half-pence of good metal, sends them to the Tower and they are approved, and these must answer all that he hath already coined, or shall coin for the future."

The common view still is that the agitation over Wood, apart from its sentimental and political implications, was somewhat artificial, and that Swift's economic reasonings will not bear a moment's examination. His arguments, two recent historians, Miss Hayden and Mr. G. A. Moonan, assert, show that he had correctly gauged the mentality of the majority of his readers, the

" colonial *[sic]* patriots." His real purpose, they have it, was to attack, purely in the Anglo-Protestant interest, the English system of governing Ireland.

But was Swift really incorrect in his assertion that Ireland had no need of the currency at all ? Even the judicious Lecky in his essay on Swift[32] holds that the " agitation was right in principle : but the halfpence were unquestionably wanted." It was, however, the opinion of King, whose loyalty to the Hanoverians was not in question, that " the coins were not wanted at all." The current cash in Ireland at the time was estimated at £500,000 ; Wood under the terms of the patent could have turned £100,000 of it into brass. It was the same as if, in the England of that time, a patentee had been given the right to circulate £400,000 of copper coins among the total cash in circulation, then £20,000,000, in that country.

Secondly, we have Swift's assertion that the coins actually circulated were bad. Lecky remarks that " there is no real ground for supposing that they were inferior to the rest of the copper coinage of the kingdom." Possibly not : not much is known, or likely to be known, about the rest of the copper in the kingdom. Miss Hayden and Mr. Moonan say on this point that " no fraud on Wood's part in the carrying out of the contract has ever been proved." They follow the report of the English Council which in 1724 laid great stress on the absence of any concrete evidence against Wood. No witnesses against Wood obeyed the summons to the English Council. The absence of Irish witnesses was explained by Archbishop King : papers to show that the patent had been abused had been laid before the Irish Parliament, but it was at the moment impracticable to carry them to London, and moreover the appearance of Irish witnesses would have implied an abandonment of principle, " as this is a controversy between the Irish

Parliament and Wood.[55] But certain Irish persons did go to London to offer evidence for Wood, and the character of these persons is on record. One of them, said King, had been tried for assault and battery (rape, Swift called it), and the other had robbed the treasury.

But clearly the main case against the coins was speculative and hypothetical. Swift drew a ludicrously exaggerated picture of the harm which the coins at their worst might accomplish ; but it was legitimate propaganda. It is not really so easy as some people imagine to trip up Swift and present him as a purveyor of obvious falsehoods and inaccuracies. Miss Hayden and Mr. Moonan state that he assumed throughout that not only would the new copper be legal tender for any sum, but it would become the sole currency for the kingdom. The truth is that throughout the *Drapier's Letters* Swift is continually drawing attention to the fact that the Irish people have no legal obligation to accept the coins : what he pretends to fear is this, that since the other side has dragged the king into the controversy by accusing him of bringing the royal prerogative into question, the public will be deceived into thinking that they must in loyalty accept the coins. He then proceeds to give his satirical account of a country, the sole wealth of which is debased copper coinage.

There is at least a *prima facie* case against Wood[5]s honesty. Leaving aside the significant size of the pension which compensated him, and also what is known of his life and other undertakings, we have to remember that his Irish contract was an extremely risky one : a possible profit of £20,000 would hardly have tempted him to an expenditure of £80,000—his costs if the imported coins were as good as the ones which Newton tested.[33]

Walpole had at last answered the communications of the Irish Parliament by bringing the subject of the patent before a Committee of the English Privy Council. The Council, as said, found nothing wrong with the coins, but as a concession to Irish anxieties recommended a reduction of the issue to £40,000.

This might perhaps have satisfied Irish opinion if it had not been for Swift, who was now fairly on the war-path. When he published his second *Drapier's Letter* in August 1724, he had before him Newton's report, the report of the Council, and also the fact that Walpole had nominated the friendly Carteret in place of Grafton to the Lord Lieutenancy.

But really the arrival of Carteret in Ireland was Carteret's banishment ; it signified the development of the Cabinet crisis in England in a sense favourable to Walpole. The existence of this crisis may well have been a motive contributing to Swift's reappearance on the political stage.

Hopes of Walpole's discomfiture in England had vanished ; on the other hand, the position in Ireland had, from Swift's point of view, been bettered. Lord Chancellor Middleton, the leader of the Irish Whigs, had been in cabal with Carteret against Walpole : Middleton's disappointment at the failure of the plottings assured Swift that his ground in Ireland would be firmer than ever. In his second and third letters he therefore rejected the concessions in regard to the patent which Walpole had offered, as illusory, being assured that he would now have all classes in Ireland behind him in the continued fight. Had not Walpole's agents reported that there was actually an unhappy intimacy growing up between the Papists and the Whigs ?[34]

The fourth *Letter* is the most celebrated of the series, and the one which brings down the wrath of the Government on Swift. It shows that the case of the coins was

principally a means for Swift of bringing the question of Irish independence to the forefront. He now demonstrates on grounds of history and of natural right that although Ireland and England are united under the one King, or rather precisely because they are so united, the Irish Parliament is in no way subordinate to that of England. He has no particular love for the boorish and anti-clerical Irish Parliament, by which he has been insulted. But only by championing its rights can he confront England with Irish nationalism. The letter tests his own strength as nationalist leader, for he knows that the members of the Irish Government—even those of them who are against Wood—will be obliged to treat its contents as seditious. It also sets before Walpole, who by this time is ready to disembarrass himself of Wood at any price, a problem which cannot be solved by money.

Really this notion of a dual monarchy, in the case of two countries so differently circumstanced as to power and wealth, is somewhat illusory. Swift recognises it when he observes that eleven men well armed are apt to subdue one man in his shirt. With which country will the decision lie if there is a cleavage of opinion in the choice of a king ? But he very cleverly exploits this objection to his own profit in the debate. He pretends that his own people are not all satisfied as to England's loyalty to the House of Hanover, and says with tongue in cheek, that they and he will die in the last ditch for King George, if the Pretender should be introduced into England. His opponents, as he anticipates, fall into the trap, and point out that Ireland is claiming the right to choose her own king, independently of her neighbour. Then Swift (in a later *Letter)* admits that he has erred, but says that his fault is due to too much reading in Whig authors such as Locke and Molyneux.

He had not indeed given Ireland any new doctrine.

The Whig politics—" government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery,[55] which he set out in the fourth *Letter*—had already been applied to the case of Ireland by Molyneux when the latter had defended the Irish Parliament against English encroachments, drawing attention to the limits of monarchy which prevailed in Ireland as well as in England. Swift gives the like instances from history to prove that the Irish never consented to " dependence/[5] that when they obliged themselves to have the same king as England, the English likewise obliged themselves to have the same king as Ireland. It was true that the Parliaments of England had at times assumed a right of binding the Irish kingdom ; but this was only by virtue of an iilegal exercise of superior force.

But on the appearance of the fourth *Letter,* addressed to the " whole people of Ireland " with its constitutional doctrine that " by the laws of God, of Nature, of Nations, and of your country, you are and ought to be as free a people as your brethren in England,[55] Carteret and Middleton were obliged to offer rewards for the apprehension of the Drapier, and Swift's printer Harding was arrested and imprisoned. But the people asked : " Shall Jonathan die ? "—and they continued to sing the Dean's street-ballads.

Everyone knew the author's name, but no one would disclose it, such was the passionate loyalty which Swift now excited among the generality of the people.[35] Middleton and Carteret were themselves on his side, at least in the matter of the coins : Middleton had been one of the first to raise his voice against the patent, though his protest had been regarded in Walpole's circle as an instance of his treachery and guile.

Swift signified his appreciation of the niceties of the

situation by writing a fifth *Letter*,[36] and addressing it to the Chancellor himself, signed J. S. Deanery House, whilst all the other letters had been printed as by M. B. Drapier. If nothing now happened Swift knew that his cause, at least in the one particular, was won—that Wood's patent would be withdrawn. Nothing did happen, except that the Grand Jury, despite Whitshed's savage remonstrances, threw out the Bill against Harding.

Boulter, who had lately come to Ireland as Primate, sent Walpole advice that could not be disregarded. There was no sedition, he said, that did not go unpunished, so long as the author mixed in it something of Wood's halfpence. The system of English government in Ireland was being undermined by that union among Irishmen which the fear of Wood's halfpence had created. Major issues were being sacrificed. Boulter himself had come to Ireland to carry out the policy of a new English interest—but if the business of Wood was not settled in an Irish sense, there would soon be no English interest to consider[37] : the halfpence would scarify the English place-hunters and prevent them from coming to Ireland at all.

On the 14th of August, 1725, therefore, a vacation of the patent was issued, and Lord Lieutenant Carteret in his speech to the Irish Parliament announced that the King had put an entire end to the privileges granted to Wood in respect of Irish coinage.

Swift was now at the height of his power in Ireland. He was given all the credit for the Government's discomfiture. He had become the dictator of Irish public opinion. " I governed Ireland in these years," Carteret used to say, " by pleasing Dr. Swift, and again, to Swift : " I know how much the city of Dublin thinks itself under your protection, and how strictly it obeys all your orders." Swift's word was indeed as infallible as a decree of the

Vatican, None had yet held in the hearts of all the Irish people, irrespective of creed and race, a like position. Dublin was the seat of his power ; but if he travelled abroad in the country, as was his frequent habit, his reception was that of a king. What want of logic there was in this attitude of Ireland has yet to be considered : **the** fact is attested by all the records.

In the later stages of the struggle against Wood, Swift had retired with Stella and Mrs. Dingley to Quilca, the house belonging to his friend Sheridan in Meath, and it was while there that he heard of the resignation of the patent. He continued, however, to write on Ireland, and even composed more *Drapier's Letters,* the last of them, the sixth, being printed at the end of 1724[38] : *annus mirabilis,* as the Irish regarded this year of triumph. There is indeed in all the editions a seventh *Letter {An Humble Address to both Houses of Parliament) ;* but this letter written before Carteret's arrival in Ireland, was not issued until 1735. It is important, because Swift now foresees his victory in the particular of Wood, and sets out his general views on Ireland with a certain dispassionate calm.

The *Maxims Controlled in Ireland* (more political economy) were, on the contrary, written in 1724, and, with contributions to Sheridan's *Intelligencer,* completed what Swift had to say of the land of his birth prior to his English visits of 1726 and 1727.

England, he suggests in his seventh *Letter,* may well afford to be generous in the case of Wood, as she is already in receipt of two-thirds of Irish wealth. That she has these immense profits, he continues to say, is partly due to the folly and crimes of the governing classes in Ireland (he is addressing the " ascendency " Parliament), their screwing up of rents spent in England,

their discouragement of agriculture and of native manufactures. There is one advantage, however, which Ireland possesses over England, namely the absence of incitement to faction—to politics which are, it is cynically taken for granted, only a struggle for place and employment.

What sense have, then, the High Church and Low Church parties in Ireland, seeing that all important places in the Establishment are being filled by Englishmen? Again, are the Dissenters really a subject for Irish faction? They are tolerated. But it is not likely that they will erect a party, or find allies for their further claims: because however indifferent men are towards religion, they are grown wise enough to know that if too much latitude were permitted to the Dissenters, the small employments in the cities and corporations left to "us" will soon fall into other hands.

The Papists only are allowed to have some "principle." It is true they are interested in their "superstition,[55] and would be glad to have it restored under any prince whatever. But they know that the cause of the Pretender is "desperate and indeed obsolete[55] and that they would be made a sacrifice in any attempt towards a change": therefore the men of substance among them and the priests generally have become mildly Whig in their opinions, and are harmless.

Therefore as a result of the distresses of all occasioned by the English oppression, there ought to be concord in Ireland: and as a sequel to the discomfiture of Wood in a united agitation, all should combine to support the manufactures of Ireland, and to do something to prevent the ordinary rules of a good economy from being confuted there, as he describes in his *Maxims.*

There was nothing, said Swift at this time, of Whig or Tory in his Irish work. It might have been more correct to say that there was something in it for both Whig and

Tory. It is true that neither the Irish Tories nor the Irish Jacobites had much to gain from the assertion of popular rights and parliamentary privileges in Ireland—the Tories even favoured the abolition of Parliament : but they too were behind Swift, for they welcomed any event that might embarrass the Walpole administration. Moreover, after the Hanoverian accession England had devised a new policy, odious to all, for the subordination of Ireland ; not only did she maintain the laws against Irish trade and continue the subjection of the Irish Parliament, but she now filled all important offices in the kingdom with English nominees. It was largely thanks to this latter development that Swift was able to combine Whig and Tory for a moment in the national interest.

Hence another famous saying of Swift some years later.[39] There are but two parties worth naming in Ireland, not Popish and Protestant, not High and Low Church,

> but these English who happen to be born in this kingdom (whose ancestors reduced the whole nation under the obedience of the English Crown) and the gentlemen sent from the other side to possess most of the chief employments here.

The saying is to be set side by side with the famous remark on the Catholic Irish population : " inconsiderable as women and children in point of power," " so tame that they would eat out of your hand."[40] This is not a sneer at the Irish Catholics ; Swift's dart is aimed at the Protestants and Whigs, whose terrors of a Papist rising he wishes to put in an absurd light. The aim of Swift is to unify such elements in the population as had any potential influence : the passages cited are therefore far from justifying us in attributing to him, as a reasoned view, an exclusive conception of the people he had taken under his care, or for calling him the leader of a

colonial party : a motive of his (from the historical point of view) somewhat superficial classification of the Protestants as " English in Ireland " was, on the contrary, precisely that by this classification he put English policy in Ireland in the wrong, in logic as well as in morals.[41]

But when all is said, must we not allow that Swift's conception of Ireland is a conception of *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark ? How indeed can he require that government shall be by consent of the governed when he tolerates the refusal of any share in politics to the Roman Catholics who are two-thirds of the population, and actively advocates the continued exclusion of the Dissenters from civil employment ? Perhaps he, as an apologist has remarked, could least of all hope to advocate Catholic emancipation with success.[42] In any case the Penal Laws were accepted, if not directly made, by the Irish Parliament, so that really the kingdom of Ireland did not embrace Catholics, and the Penal Laws were a sign of Irish independence in constitutional matters. Swift involved himself in no contradiction by accepting these laws.

Yet we must not name Swift a leader of Protestant nationalism : his politics in Ireland as in England are always personal. In the Drapier agitation his clericalism is dormant: still his loyalty, his only real loyalty, is to his Church, threatened, as he thinks, by Protestant fanaticism. The abuse which he heaps so often on the " wretched island " is an abuse of Protestant Ireland : the Catholics were without responsibility for the course of affairs.

It is true that the contempt which he throws on Protestant alarms was even part of his policy as the apologist for Bolingbroke and the Jacobite suspects. But, if he ever acquired sympathies in Ireland, we think, as against all his biographers, that these were with the silent and " hidden Ireland " rather than with " ascendancy."

We would cite in this connection his **letter, written late** in life, to Wogan, in which he praises the " exiled gentlemen of Ireland" (the Irish Jacobite soldiers of fortune) for their " valour in so many parts of Europe " which distinguishes them " above all nations " ; he adds that the English should be ashamed of the reproaches which they cast " on the ignorance, the dulness and the want of courage in the Irish native."[43]

These defects, wherever they happen, arising only from the poverty and slavery they suffer from their inhuman neighbours, and the base corrupt spirit of too many of the gentry ... I do assert that from several experiments I have made in travelling over both kingdoms,[44] I have found the poor cottagers here, who could speak our language, to have a much better natural taste for good sense, humour, and raillery, than ever I observed among people of a like sort in England. But the millions of oppressions they lie under, the tyranny of their landlords, the ridiculous zeal of their priests, have been enough to damp the best spirits under the sun."[45]

But in 1726 Swift could still fairly believe that his work had succeeded : popular favour followed him. Vanessa's death in 1724 had not hindered his going straight into the fight with banner flying in the next year ; Stella's health, now so precarious as to cause serious fears, did not distract him from his aims. It was as though he was now preparing for himself something to do in lonely days to come, or wished to absorb himself in a triumph which could overcome even his sense of personal loss.

It was now time to render this Irish victory definite and precise : as it had been a victory over England, it was now time to cross the water to reap laurels, and possibly dictate terms of an Anglo-Irish settlement.

It is true that Swift afterwards asserted that he had come to England to visit old friends, and that the publication of *Gulliver's Travels* which took place between the

visit of 1726 and that of 1727, was sufficient reason for his voyage ; but in both cases he went as a prince tn-*cognito,* in the first as a plenipotentiary of Ireland, in the second as the most celebrated writer of the time. It is evident that he hoped for something : not perhaps something concrete, but for a reappearance at the centre of things, and a putting to the test the power he had won. Irish power meant little to him ; it was only a means towards real power. Real power now meant something precise and definite ; it meant possession of that feeling of absolute personal ascendancy by which Carteret was appalled and Boulter menaced.

Swift made a modest appearance, and went about visiting his friends. He hoped his old diplomacy would again succeed, and waited till the Princess Caroline had invited him nine times before he presented himself at Court. Having arrived in March, he made some visits round London and stayed at Bolingbroke's place at Dawley, then he went to the Court in April. In the same month his old friend Lord Peterborough caused him to be received by Walpole ; a strange interview, full of doubtful innuendoes and cross-purposes.

It is evident Swift really wanted to go to Walpole[46] to reap the fruit of his victory over him, and not for his own personal advantage but for that of Ireland. He wanted to promote a better management of Ireland's affairs, which would have him as go-between and make him an uncrowned King of Ireland.

The plan miscarried ; as we learn from the letter Swift wrote immediately afterwards to Lord Peterborough,[47] Walpole's ideas on Ireland and those of Swift could not agree. Walpole essentially considered Ireland as a subject country, and he took politics into account only on the financial side. It is evident that Swift spoke of liberty and constitutional rights, and Walpole answered by talking of taxation and revenues.

Swift felt the need of a revolution in government: a most displeasing idea for Walpole, whose motto was " *Quieta non moveri"* There was nothing of the theorist in Walpole's nature, and his discomfiture in the case of Wood was for him only an episode to be patched up as it might be, without taking it as a hint that things were radically awry in Ireland.

In May, Swift went to Pope's place at Twickenham, and travelling about with Pope and Gay, he visited Lord Bathurst and Oxford and Bolingbroke. It was a consolation to be at last in congenial company ; perhaps he wanted even to forget his Irish triumphs, which may now have seemed to him a sort of mirage, seeing that they could not be brought to positive obvious results.— *Gulliver's Travels* was put to the test, read among the friends at Twickenham, and received from them the baptism of success.

In August, Benjamin Motte mysteriously received the manuscript, and soon afterwards Swift started for Ireland " to be miserable," principally because of his preoccupations for Stella.

The Irish people welcomed him with bonfires ; but his triumphal return was really, for the poor man, the sign of his doom. He returned to see a friend die and to witness the decay of that generous work for which his efforts in England had been in vain.

But Stella's health improved, and *Gulliver's Travels* enjoyed its almost terrifying success. The next year Swift returned, as he had promised, to England. Walpole was then facing a crisis, and Swift hobnobbed with Pulteney and Bolingbroke, and offered contributions to the *Craftsman.* But all possibilties were to be closed when, following the death of George I, Walpole after many months of suspense regained his former influence.

In the meantime, Swift had made no progress. He was, we can almost say, humbly contented in the

company of Gay and Pope : among the great of the earth his only correspondent and friend was Mrs. Howard, who, as is well known, had no political influence. She could not lead him towards the Court ; her friendship, genuine though it was was useless, and the Queen did not even trouble to give a suitable answer to Swift's civilities.

This visit, Swift's last visit to England, had an end in personal disaster as well as in political disappointment. The old disorder seized Swift at Twickenham, and he renounced Pope's hospitality on the ground that two sick friends were not fit company for one another. He retired to London, constantly suffering, and stayed there until he learned from letters of Worrall and Sheridan of Stella's dangerous condition.

He now flies to Ireland, hoping to restore his health and afterwards to pay a third visit to England. But this hope was unfulfilled. The next year he witnessed the death of Stella, and the national movement which he had aroused foundered slowly—as indeed he had realised must happen after 1726, when it was evident to him that the new oligarchic system of Walpole had lasting quality and could not be manipulated in the Irish interest.

CHAPTER IX

FAREWELLS

DuRiNG the fateful years of his Irish warfare, the intricate position of Swift's private life had also come to its close. As his loves had never interfered with his public activity, so this crisis did not influence his Irish campaigning ; hence his private life and his public one both reach their end, independently, in the sixth decade of his life.

The final crisis in Swift's loves began with the unexpected coming of Vanessa to Ireland in 1714. This arrival annoyed Swift, not perhaps so much on Stella's account as because he had hoped to be freed by distance from Vanessa's passionate possessiveness.

With Vanessa comes London, and London friends regard Vanessa as the only safe means of corresponding with Swift.[1] Another bond with Vanessa—and with a world where Stella had no place.

But he is now deep in the homeliness of this homeless love. He is alone, everywhere around him is suspicion, and only in the intimate circle is he free from subjection to his political past. Near Stella he is still master, and there is nothing to remind him of defeat. In this mediocre life, with the poor struggles in his Chapter, with the improvement of the glebe at Laracor, he has perhaps a sense of relaxation and feels at peace.

Now Vanessa's presence introduces another world, a world of passion which he thought he had left. Those days in London could now appear to him as a *feerie,* where even this too lightly entered into love-history was of a piece with the moving, feverish life.

We have not the least evidence, not even a forged document, to indicate Stella's attitude, to let us know how she felt about Vanessa or to give us an idea of the nature of the triangular relationship. Still, Stella must have known : Vanessa's flight to Swift was even more open than that of Stella fourteen years before, and we have positive knowledge of gossip[2] going its rounds at one period in Swift's *entourage** which by interest or friendship was deeply devoted to Stella.

For in this affair Stella was really in a strong position. She had never pestered Swift, she was a quiet companion, used to his ways, deeply intimate with him and his friends, older than Vanessa but more easy-going ; and Swift had now come not to conquer, but to heal his bruises. Stella was necessary as a repose for the " weary bones " of a " weak old man "[4] as Swift, always given to self-pity, felt himself now to be. Stella had followed and counselled Swift.[5] Stella did not shed tears, although she was not a stranger to a sort of jocular jealousy[6] ; she was made of sterner stuff than Vanessa,[7] and her pride was strong and up in arms. She could even like to see Swift showing his power over another woman, because she never felt it possible that Swift could forget her.

As we have said, we know nothing for certain ; but we can be fairly sure that this situation, and its impending dangers, worried Swift, and was perhaps the cause, together with his political position, of his remaining almost continuously at a distance from Dublin.

But not only by withdrawal did Swift deprive the inevitable gossip of its force. Alone and in adversity he was even more terrible than before. We know no particulars ; but we have under our eyes something more obvious than particulars—the effect of a great personality on the mob. If Archbishop King grows

peevish and whiggish, plays nasty tricks, the company around Stella does not fly.[8] It is a sort of Stella party, against Vanessa, an intruder.

Swift's huge force consists precisely in his dreadful rage, which impressed even later critics with a lively dislike of Vanessa, whilst they made of Stella " one of the saints of English story."[9]

Swift had never allowed women to pester him ; and now his precious liberty was menaced, his privacy was invaded. Vanessa had not kept her word, and had become an entreating, sickly, plaintive woman who declared she depended entirely on him. The marriage with Stella was perhaps a way for Swift to free himself again, to insult the woman who dared to encroach on his freedom and to consider him as being under an obligation to her.

After Vanessa's flight in the wake of Swift, there are in Ireland not two loves of Swift, but a woman who is a friend and a woman who is the worst enemy he can imagine.

The early days must have been terrible for Vanessa. After the disparaging letter quoted in Chapter VII, Swift does not relent, although he visits Vanessa now and again.[10] And Vanessa suffers : " It is impossible to describe what I have suffered since I saw you last; I am sure I could have borne the rack much better than those killing, killing words of yours. Sometimes I have resolved to die without seeing you more."[11]

In truth the preservation of Vanessa's letters[12] puts her at a disadvantage : we see her everlastingly pleading for pity, and she seems to besiege Swift even more tirelessly than she really did. And he tolerated—so as to be free—the daily annoyance which she caused him, acceded at rare intervals to her requests for his presence, extended the position indefinitely by compliments, rare visits, uncompromising flatteries : " Soyez assuree que

personne n'a ete aimee, admiree . . . que vous.[13] She had recourse to a need of Swift's advice (always a good bait for Swift) to bring him again to her side. Her troubles were no doubt real, but much enlarged by her fancy.—This is the position at the end of 1714.

Then up to May 1719 we have no more letters; some were perhaps lost, but even if something were lost, it can be surmised that the whole correspondence could not be very bulky, for (as we shall see later on) Vanessa preserved and left behind her at her death every possible scrap of Swift's writing. It may be that while she remained in Dublin, Swift visited her only at long intervals ; when later on she established herself at Celbridge, he was certainly only her occasional visitor.

He had already been pursued by pamphlets and lampoons in England, especially towards the end of his stay there. Party feuds may now have embittered these attacks, and perhaps the two women came to know about each other through this political publicity. Anyway we may be sure that it was in this epoch that the Vanessa-Stella legend, as accepted by the critics, arose.[14]

As for our evidence over the whole period, we have merely Deane Swift's notes,[15] obviously incorrect, as he is possessed of the fixed idea that the relations of Swift and Vanessa were always what they had been before 1714. Nor can we say that the problem of Stella's complaisance only arises when (1720) the visits to Vanessa at Celbridge began,[16] as it is quite possible that Mrs. Brent was already in 1714 or thereabouts in possession of knowledge of the affair,[17] and gossip was certainly busy in Dublin from 1714 on.

Now, as we have already hinted, we cannot explain this situation by accepting the legendary Stella : a feeble woman, entranced by the Great Man, compliant with his whims, and content to pine away in patient solitude. Pine away in solitude ? In the process she " doubled her years and size ! "[18] Moreover she had all that she really could have had by marrying Swift : the same relations and the same social position. Perhaps she was more acute than those who have complained on her behalf. She saw Swift's deep aversion to marriage, and dared not face him with such a demand, either fearing to lose him by insistence on marriage, or knowing that he would be more remote as a husband than as a lover.

If anybody was victimised it was poor Vanessa, a plump,[19] feeble, passionate woman, who has been victimised even by the biographers. Whereas Stella, to judge by such records as we have of her, either from Swift or from anecdotal friends, does not seem to have been particularly yielding. The masculine courage for which Swift praised her is in itself inconsistent with the image of a weak submissive woman, and so are her outspoken repartees and her poems. Look at her portrait : there is decision and strength in the chin, a certain hardness in the mouth—a masculinity of feature which does not accord with the typical portrait of a victimised woman. We rather think she found her interest—the interest of her love—in the ambiguous relations with Swift, or at least well understood that Swift could only be held by letting him go free : by exacting from him nothing but what his pride could afford to give, and keeping him active in the world. We are told she murmured the words " Too late " on her deathbed ; but this report—and it is easily disproved—is all that is offered to make us suppose that she was discontented with her fate. This fate had grown a part of her, her

dreams and hopes had become those of Swift, and **she** drowsed easily, on the silken bed of time, into quietude and contentment with what existed. She had really never known anything better. Sometimes maybe she sighed for children ; and Swift used to be impatient with her for speaking of the children of their acquaintances. For Swift had no such wish, and therefore he attributes **it** merely to womanly foolishness. He said sincerely :

Although we now can form no more
Long schemes of life as heretofore,
Te t you while time is running fast
Can look with joy on what is past[20]

—a mistake which he would never have made in a poem privately written to Stella, if the question of marriage really was, as has been supposed, a constant source of disagreement between them.

The theory that Stella, at the age of thirty-five, was afraid lest Vanessa nine years her junior, should supplant her in the affections of Swift, who was now a man of forty-seven, presupposes that she was a feeble, devoted woman (a legend we have dispelled), and did not feel for Swift that sort of motherly affection which can even permit to the lover some slight diversions with other women.

Had she anything to struggle for ? Yes, but only for the certainty that she could keep Swift near her, all childish distractions apart. On this view we can place the alleged marriage of 1716 in its proper perspective : after so many hesitations and delays Stella had now both courage and good reason to approach the Dean with a request, and Swift found in the marriage **a** sort of lifebelt to save him from drowning along with **that other** woman whom, already, possibly, **he intensely**

disliked—even if he frequented her (though as little as possible) from motives of prudence, vanity, or sensuality.

The evidence for and against the marriage has been discussed over and over again, and we could not improve on Dr. Bernard's final survey.[21] It is enough to say that the marriage was never publicly recognised and that the circumstances point to the possibility and even the probability of a marriage, but do not afford an absolute proof.

The question of fact is really irrelevant to the purposes of a biography. Swift and Stella's lives did not alter in consequence of it, and Swift was already past fifty at the time, and, like Stella herself, sickly. The marriage could not have psychological effects because it could not give him a new experience of love.

Assuming Swift was married, but would not have it known, we are confronted with the minor enigma of his obstinacy. It may be noted, incidentally, that the explanation that avarice prevented Swift from marrying now falls to the ground,[22] for Swift was now well off, and the two could have lived more cheaply in a single household. They received friends together, and Swift actually contributed to the expenses of the Stella-Dingley household.

But Vanessa's presence in Ireland may have been one of the reasons why Swift did not allow the marriage to be acknowledged. He feared she might go to extremities. But it cannot have been the only reason, seeing that even after Vanessa's death the marriage was kept secret. There was in fact another reason, namely that a marriage between an elderly man and a woman no longer young would amount to an admission of a previous *liaison.* Both Stella and Swift were by now confirmed in single blessedness, and probably felt no real need to live together.[23]

But in considering the problem of Swift's marriage, another fact has been taken into account : that from 1715 to 1719 all documents regarding Swift and Vanessa are lost.[24] Lost or never existent? May be that before the marriage Swift had definitely left Vanessa, who only later on again became an element in his life ? Or shall we suppose that the absence of documents means simply that Vanessa being resident habitually in Dublin during these four years found no need of epistolary communications ?

The question is really unanswerable, and yet its answer would be of the greatest importance. It is certain that angry as Swift was at Vanessa's coming to Ireland in 1714, he was afterwards reconciled to her—to some, if not to an intimate extent. Only two letters without date,[25] which reveal the openness with which Vanessa sought for Swift and Swift's resistance, were evidently written while Vanessa was still living in Dublin ; but it is impossible to guess at their exact date.

The position is clearer in May 1719.[26] It is then obvious that Swift was trying to cool off passion with compliments in French—and in bad French at that ; and even the letter of a year later evinces a jocularity which is quite in accord with a calm and enduring relation—as though friendship had replaced passionate love.

But it may have been only a momentary lull. Swift's next letter is a lamentation on Vanessa's demeanour. She had in the meantime received, it is evident, many proposals of marriage ; they came from clergymen and persons in clerical circles. Swift is now clearly pleased by his power over this woman—a bad case of flattered vanity, which forebodes disaster, and in the very next letter he has long complaints to make of Vanessa's imprudence and her discontents. Vanessa was by then

(1720) established at Celbridge ; and this was perhaps the condition of her last movement towards a deep melancholy. She was very lonely there. She had just passed into the thirties, an embarrassing age at which a woman begins to sum up her past life and to feel the fear of becoming an ageing spinster.

There is no trace of any knowledge of Swift's marriage. When Vanessa grumbles, it is because of Swift's rare visits. She seems to realise that Swift is now able to evade visiting her over long periods, and means to make the most of the opportunity. Vanessa's distance from Dublin does indeed make things much easier from Swift's point of view.

We do not know what success Vanessa had in making Swift her legal adviser in her difficulties about her inheritance, a device to bring about a renewal of love. Yet many critics, on no other evidence apparently, have spoken of a moment of new love after 1714. But even if at any time Swift had comtemplated maintaining intimate relations of some sort with Vanessa, by 1719 he had fully decided in his heart to free himself, and was working up to this. His silences have an evident design, like the rarity of his visits and the excuses he offers, particularly those drawn from the bad health of Vanessa's sister.[27]

But now Vanessa's letters rise to the highest pitch of pathos of which a woman is capable ; the pathos of disappointed love, reminding us of Mariana Alcoforado, the Portuguese nun.

The letters are really very beautiful in their descriptions of the pains of suspense and of a waiting that seems like eternity. Vanessa is indeed definitely enslaved at this moment—the merest smile of Swift is enough. She finds happiness in compliments, verse-making, even memories ; but Swift conjures up the story of their past love only because he regards it as definitely closed.

To him this very coldness in speaking of past love dispels all perils ; and he thinks Vanessa should remain for **ever** content with such ashes from the fire.

But when (in 1721) poor Molly, Vanessa's sister, dies, the hard-won victory becomes insecure. There is no longer any witness to compel Vanessa to some restraint, and to be a sort of chaperon to her, such as Stella had. Therefore Swift entreats her anew to " quit this scoundrel island,"[28] and allays her jealousy by assuring her that he does not drink coffee except in her company.

But the humble Vanessa does not abandon him ; she grows humbler and humbler, excusing herself even for her melancholy. And Swift consoles her as an elder brother, in a very puzzling passage, where he reminds her that nine parts in life are riches, the tenth is health and the eleventh drinking coffee, which however can only be drunk aright provided that the two other conditions are fulfilled.[29]

It certainly seems at this moment as if Swift was sure he had in Vanessa a general convenience. He borrows money from her—and excuses himself with a certain aloofness from asking for love.

This is our last letter. It was written in the summer of 1722, and in May 1723 Vanessa died, leaving a will that directly struck at Swift.

The explanatory legend is well known. We need not take note of its variants. Vanessa had written to Stella, entreating to be told whether the latter was really married to Swift, and Swift, shown the letter by Stella, went to Celbridge in a rage, dropped the letter before Vanessa, and departed without saying a word. Whereupon Vanessa pined away, and was dead in a few weeks.

The only reliable account comes from Delany, **who** adds a note to the effect that Vanessa gave herself up to

Bacchus from the day she was deserted[30] ; but this is not in accord with her rapid decline. In other words all we are certain of is a definite desertion on the part of Swift; the remainder of the legend cannot be put to any circumstantial test. Its logicality also arouses distrust ; it looks too like a rational reconstruction of events, not a known fact. The episode alleged accords well enough with all the forthcoming evidence and all reasonable surmises : such as the marriage with Stella, Vanessa's rapid, unexpected (we have no information that she had suffered from any established disease) death, Swift's departure, after her death, on a long trip, as though he were escaping remorse, and so on. It is the episode we might ourselves invent, without any precise evidence, two centuries later, to give a rationally satisfying end to the story.

This should make one cautious about accepting it—just because there is no contrary evidence, nor can there be. Even more than with the problem of the marriage, we are left at a loss, for here no third person is concerned, and no names of witnesses are given.

At the same time, in putting the matter to a psychological test, we can see more clearly its real possibility. Ten months before her death, Vanessa is in a state of subjection so deep that Swift may well have been induced to think that he could break down the relation without danger ; but it was possibly not in his character to do this gently. Vanessa expostulates, and there may be a scene of the type described in the legend. He then, in a rage, threatens her that he will see her no more.

But why should Vanessa have taken such a threat literally, when Swift already, at moments, had escaped her, but she had always caught him again ? Vanessa was not, most decidedly not, the type of woman who would reply immediately to a rage by a rage. Nor was

her psychological disposition towards Swift likely to urge her to irretrievable action. Here is contained the inherent impossibility of the anecdote ; a woman angry enough to make a revengeful will against her beloved is not a woman who is pining away, dying of love under the blow of her lover's desertion. It is really inconsistent : rage and hate are conserving, not destroying, feelings ; are an afErmation of oneself, not an abandonment of oneself to fate.

Everything points to a reasonably long space of time having intervened between Swift's flight and Vanessa's death. Vanessa was so utterly subjected, had shown herself so utterly devoid of the least pride, that we must believe that she did everything possible to draw Swift again to her side. Only time could prove to her that her loss was irretrievable—or a late knowledge of Swift's marriage, not Swift's rage at her knowing it.

This drama was evidently played between October 1722 (when Swift returned from one of his six to seven months' summer absences) and April 1723, when he left Dublin : the fact that Vanessa's will was made in May seems to show that there was no likelihood of intercourse after the early spring of the latter year.[31]

We have then these six months (the end of 1722 and beginning of 1723) in which the last sad phase of Vanessa's life was acted. A habit of drink could not have been very firmly implanted in so short a space of time, and it may be surmised that Delany's statement was a false inference from Vanessa's possibly distracted state after she had realised the loss of Swift. The suspicion of drink was no doubt strengthened by Vanessa's rapid death, but drink does not kill a woman of thirty-five so quickly. Her sudden death a month after the will is signed indicates that she was for a month or a little more suffering from some common acute illness, rendered

more serious by her depression. She probably perceived that her end had come ; the will is really a race against time. Vengeance is left to her executors, to whom she bequeaths unexpected money; she entrusts them, verbally, it is said, with the publication of *Cadenus and Vanessa* and of Swift's letters. Both her desires, if expressed, were unfulfilled. Berkeley certainly had not seen her, at least in these last months, and the legacy came to him as a surprise. If there was a verbal request, it must have been made to the other executor, Marshall.[82]

In this way we may dispose also of the myth which makes Swift, immediately after Vanessa's death, fly his friends and all places where he is known, either from remorse or fear of publicity. It is true that he went for a long visit to the south in June, returning in August; but he had made similar long trips in the summers of the two preceding years. These earlier summer trips, we may suppose, had another motive besides recreation ; he wanted to put a distance between himself and Vanessa at a time of the year when visits to Celbridge would be most convenient. Anyway, they dispel tragical interpretations of his southern voyage in 1723.

This story, like so many stories of passion, ended miserably, even meanly. The tragic lover conjured up by Orrery's obituary of Vanessa, " a miserable example of an ill-spent life, fantastic wit, visionary schemes and female weakness," was really only a woman disappointed in passion. Facing her stands a cooling lover, tired of those clutching hands—a Swift sincere, stern and rabid, but compelled to play the lover, to continue an ancient history, and who was met at each visit by his mistress as a god, but takes his leave amid expostulations and tears, and with a sense of being a blackguard. . . . A sad history, but no more.

But, sad as it was, it had no obvious influence on Swift's general life, as no occurrence of this kind had ever had. He did not allow Vanessa's death to hamper his public career in any way ; nor were his spirits damped by the fear of possible further gossip or the publication of hidden documents. After some months he enters the great contest with Wood, and all that it implies, without showing the least sign of a man bowed down or in any way altered by sorrow or remorse or even practical fears at Vanessa's death. It is as if the egotist, wishing to live his life further without hampering recollections to trouble him, had completely forgotten her in his very heart.

Here we have the interior counterpart of that public career which we described in the last chapter. Swift, a man wholly free from personal cares, giving full expression to his real self, trailing his coat before all and sundry, spoiling for a fight.

He is at the height of his form. He is again the writer of the *Tale,* of the *Conduct of the Allies*—the practical joker who delights to put a sort of magical life into the puppet of the Drapier, and to make a number of real men fight against his puppet as poor Partridge fought against Bickerstaff. It is the position of the satirist, as it were, reversed : instead of fighting a disguised enemy, the fighter disguises himself. The game is certainly unaltered—and beneath the rage appeased, beneath the strong sense of duty, Swift felt essentially the same kind of amusement in this battle as in all previous ones.

The sense of elation from duty accomplished and vengeance taken finds a homely and daily nourishment in the humorous situation which he has created, with its waves of gossip, its preposterous hypotheses, its comic figures of men in authority turning around and about to fight huge windmills.

His witty verses fall like showers. Lampoons and ribald songs fill the air. Unexpected allies rear their heads—and the rabble is beneath his window, taking a part in the great joke.

When he goes to Carteret, and publicly and insultingly reproves him for prosecuting the printer of the *Drapier Letters,* Ireland comes with him. He brings his people—his people because the Irish belong to him not he to them—with him. And the immense bluff succeeds. Carteret smiles, laughs—but apologises. Swift's sovereignty is recognised.

But there is nothing to come—for this man already familiar with so many sterile victories. He is at the pinnacle, a dictator, and—next—he must content himself with retirement and the company of old cronies, of Pope and Bolingbroke. He loses faith. Or rather, he no longer hopes for permanent results from hard fighting. Polemics, he now recognises, are just his way of living. He feels himself, even more than formerly, superior to common mankind, and therefore no longer wants to reform the world, which does not deserve his trouble.

Polemic, then, as pure polemic is now his guiding-star. He will pester the world, demonstrate to the world its baseness and stupidity—debase in the eyes of Swift what Swift had failed to correct. A pure polemic, and therefore a polemic against potential as well as actual foes. His first polemic had had as object some foolish scholars, his next was against a party, his third against a nation : his last is against humanity. The progression which we see in the four parts of *Gulliver* itself is the progression which led to *Gulliver,* the book which had slowly formed in his mind. He had perhaps read the earlier portions to Vanessa, and Stella possibly knew all this work which had grown up out of his petty troubles in the long years of his suspense. At

the end of the last practical activity of life, *Gulliver* is ripe.

This man, deliriously greeted by Ireland on his return in 1726, had perhaps a sour smile on his lips. He had already drawn up his will ; the hero thus welcomed could be the friend of nobody. There were no to-morrows for him, no hopes, nor did he care : the enemy of humanity had prepared a last blow, and it would fall on all alike. What remains ? What has he still to give ? Only puns and jokes, sterner repetitions of the old arguments. Through the mouth of Gulliver he has said his say.

A sort of peace, at least, and a calmed spirit now breathe through his letters. He does not feel defeat with the old bitterness. He had in truth hardly hoped, only for an instant had he thought that his Irish activity would end in results. He makes puns about *Gulliver,* he is pathetically satisfied with the success of his book, and does not even care if its profundities are missed. It is enough that he has readers, that all men speak of him, that his book is translated into many tongues. He does not even trouble to make certain of a correct edition. Anything will do provided that his son Lemuel penetrates everywhere, bringing everywhere his vengeance.

Friends are always around him, but they are only a sort of daily habit without intimacy. During these years the Deanery was the centre of a little society of which he spoke lightly enough, but in which he found some amusement and distraction. When first he took up residence in Dublin, relaxed and defeated, he was inclined to observe the strictest seclusion ; but time had hung heavy on his hands. Riding, sleeping and walking, he told Gay, took up eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, and during the remainder he was engaged on the most trifling subjects with the most trifling people. But he kept two days for receptions at the Deanery, and

soon he had around him a company of tolerable acquaintances and friends, chosen from those who despised the new politics, who had wit, and who could patiently countenance and respond to his humours. Old Tories like Sir Arthur Atchison, Knightley Chetwoode, and Rochford paid him homage, and local wits of little worldly consequence like Delany and Sheridan were at his beck and call. In the summer he would visit the Rochfords at Gaulstown or the Atchisons in the north of Ireland : he even thought of taking a villa on the Atchison estate, but was deterred by the knight's taste for metaphysical discussion.

Orrery's assertion that he sought, while in Ireland, the company of low persons and parasites is scarcely justified, though Swift made it clear in his letters to his English friends that he had been accustomed to better company. But Sir Arthur Atchison and Rochford were men of learning as well as men of fortune ; the Grattan brothers belonged to an eminent professional family in Dublin ; Worrall, the companion of Swift's long walks, was a vicar of St. Patrick's ; Delany and Stopford were fellows of the College ; poor Sheridan was a master of the Classics. Gradually, these Irish friends became for Swift pale provincial reflections of the great men and the men of merit, now submerged, whom he had served and protected in England before the deluge ; even in Ireland there were survivals of a lost civilisation. Then, as his own importance grew, the importance of his Irish friends grew also, he fights for their advancement and the abasement of their foes. In the hour of his triumph, when Carteret, an old English acquaintance, is viceroy, he is again able to confer benefits ; Stopford is nominated Bishop of Cloyne, Sheridan is presented with a small living near Cork, Delany becomes prebendary of St, Patrick's. All these persons, but particularly the schoolmaster Sheridan, the teacher of genius who is the dupe

of every dull worldling, and Sir Arthur Atchison, the former High Tory, who now cultivates his estate, reads the Classics and eschews politics, are admirable foils indeed to set off against the boorish and cunning Whigs, Tighe, Bettesworth, Allen and their like, who are strutting across the Hibernian stage declaiming the terrors of Popery and the Pretender.[38]

Such poor pleasures survived ; but by 1727 his very life had come to an end.

Already in 1726 he was full of fears for Stella's health. She suffered, so far as we know, from no lifelong complaint ; indeed after a sickly childhood she had grown into a young woman with perfect health. But as she reached middle age, unexplained ailments assailed her from time to time. It was really a common physical decay ; but, as was to be expected, some contemporaries and many biographers attributed her decline to anxiety in regard to her social position and to unhappiness at Swift's failure to acknowledge her as his wife.

When Swift suddenly, in 1727, thought of going for a second time to England, Stella was living with him at the Deanery. Her health was evidently not such as to give rise to immediate anxieties ; on the other hand, being a sufficiently elderly invalid, she did not compromise herself by staying under Swift's roof.

His first idea was to go to France to take the waters. Possibly (as his letters of introduction from Voltaire seem to show[34]) he wanted to follow up the success of *Gulliver* with the French public.

He was really opening out again, stimulated by the reports of Walpole's tottering power. Confronted with an instance of Archbishop King's tiresome pettinesses, he retorted with one of his best (because most violent)

letters, and accuses his correspondent openly of ingratitude, of envy, of betrayal, and of a bad conscience. This is the old Swift once more—perhaps a last display of characteristic impatience and arrogance, of that rage which elated him and gave him mastery.

With another man such rage would be an alarming symptom ; with Swift it indicated ease and new satisfaction. He was happier about Stella, and had even hopes for himself.

But the situation does not endure. As we have said already in the last chapter, a new attack of his illness during his stay in England in the beginning of August tears him from the congenial company he is enjoying,[35] and by the end of the month comes a letter from Sheridan, announcing that Stella is in a dying condition.

This month marks, perhaps, the true end of Swift. He will again hope later on, but will never again have these elated hopes, hopes with a driving force, but only vague desires. He is now reaching the sense of his final discomfiture : illness, his political failure to help Ireland, the bitterness of *Gulliver's* success—a literary success is at its best the same success as that of a good joke, and, even if it lasts, the pleasure does not—are all coming to a head in this deep rending.

And under disaster Swift's egotism rises to an epical quality. He simply refuses to suffer. He invents every possible device to avoid too great a sorrow. He resigns Stella, his lifelong companion. As she actually dies, he lets her pass from him, he will not permit himself to be lacerated by her departure.

It is just in this dreadful, outspoken, real defence of himself against grief that we see what Stella had really been, and come to be, for Swift.

She was no longer a mistress, she was not even an old friend. She was something very much more real

than a mistress or a friend can be for anybody. **She** was the only *relative* of Swift.

Whilst the loves and friendships of most men grow in contrast and competition with previous ties of affection and consanguinity, and we must decide in our hearts the ancestral struggle between mothers, sisters, home, and the wife or mistress of our choice or chance, Swift was not faced with such contrasts during the growth of his intimacy with Stella. Stella had been his unchallenged—his first home-mate.

A strange destiny indeed, this man without a mother near him—and yet he loved his mother as a deeply felt reality—who had never known a home, and therefore perhaps in his dire inexperience of family life refused to have a home with the beloved one. This is the last reason—we reserved it till now on account of its strangeness in relation to the everyday experience of everybody —of his living single. He had no knowledge of a home, and to marry or to live in a family relationship would really have been to risk reaching a *terra incognita.* He distrusted his capacity for close life with human beings, distrusted even the reliability and tolerability of home life, with the scepticism of the die-hard bachelor—the ultimate tragedy of solitude, which comes to be need of loneliness.

Some months, some weeks with Stella here and there —this was not family life, even if Swift deluded himself that it was. His family was an immaterial presence, his ties were letters and second-hand information ; and yet Stella had grown in this air of regular meeting, of transient intimacy, to be all Swift's family, to represent for him all the home he had never had, never known, never even desired.

He had described his mother's death as the severing of his last tie with life. Now Stella's going was to be the breaking of his last tie with society, and he felt it even

more profoundly. Stella had been indeed his family, all he knew of family life and feelings. This suppositious family was now dissolved, and as family is the first form of society, and men become enabled to live in society through their most immediate partaking in its fundamental form, the experience of family life, Swift was now definitely severed from society.

In this separation, in this ultimate isolation, brought about by Stella's death, there is a sort of revenge of destiny against the man who, in *Gulliver's Travels*, had openly ranged himself against society, and put himself out of any possible society by describing men as they are, by frankly disavowing his co-responsibility with mankind, smashing in so doing the silent compact of mutual forbearance and general silence on human defects which enables mankind to live together.

The egotist now disposes of death as he has disposed of life. Swift felt the need of letting the tie loosen without a snap, of letting Stella slip away gently as she had gently, insensibly, gradually come closer and closer into his life—as a substitute for the family he had never desired—into this strange home compounded of distance and measured intimacy.

He turns aside. He even seems to excuse himself, as if he felt that his place was by Stella's side, and yet had not the courage to go there.

Not only is his illness an excuse for failing to leave England to be present at Stella's end ; it is even a way of putting himself in the same position as Stella, for " it would have been a reproach to him to be in perfect health, when such a friend is desperate."[36]

It was a constitutional impossibility for him to let Stella be taken from him by destiny ; she had come to be a constituent part of his world, and before her departure he makes himself give her up. He endeavours to defeat death by putting her from him before she is violently

torn away. He is discomfited ; and yet he cannot bow his head. As Stella's state appears to be desperate, he does not think of returning ; he even begs Worrall[87] to get him a new leave of absence, even for abroad, and he urges characteristically that it would be inadvisable for Stella to die at the Deanery because of gossip.

This is really the uttermost revelation of Swift's soul. Critics, apt though they are to take exception to many of Swift's deeds, have overlooked this petty pre-occupation. And yet it is truly something base—something appallingly logical, if our interpretation of Swift holds good. Not a pre-occupation for Stella's good fame, not a sense of his duty as a clergyman ; but the deed of disavowing his responsibility and the hand of death, of putting Stella again out of his life when God was taking her away.

But Swift " reasons "[38] and concludes that he cannot do better than return to Ireland. He is old, in Ireland he has a house and servants and comforts ; illness has bent him. He thinks vaguely of a third journey, in the event of his health being restored, but does not really hope for it.

This last voyage, retarded by foul weather at Holyhead, whence he wrote at length complaining of all the inconveniences of the road, is indeed the apex of Swift's tragedy. He resorts, as it were, to small complaints to dull greater torments,[39] he finds a sort of consolation in the bad fare and bad wine. Proud and unapproachable, he refuses to mix with his fellow-passengers ; he is eager to start, and yet at the same time repelled by the very idea of Ireland :

Remove me from this land of slaves,
Where all are fools, and all are knaves.[40]

What he asks is really a " boon so small."[41] And yet he becomes enraged in a heavy, plaintive fashion, unlike himself. He laughs and puns and rhymes all alone ; his chief enemy is the shifty captain of the detained packet-boat. We see him going for long walks along the shore, under the drizzling rain, addressing the waves and the clouds : a man who expects, a man eager to set forth—and yet nobody and no consolation await him. Yet he longs to be settled, to be compelled to give up even Stella, to be submerged irrevocably.

And then a strange calm succeeds, as soon as he is in Dublin. Even his illness ceases to beset him.[42] Stella is dying, but he accepts the drudgery of everyday provincial life.

He has already made the renunciation. His prayers for Stella's health express a deep resignation to God's will : " Not my will but thine be done." Religion is now coming to his aid ; he can even resign what he had so egotistically grasped, because he surrenders her to God—the only conqueror to whom Swift can yield without too great a bitterness.

Never have we found him submissive as now we find him. Later he sought to take an interest in things, to renew his efforts ; but continuity and the real need of activity had been lost. In this resignation, deepened by advancing old age, lay the real reason of his never again returning to England, which had always been the goal of his ambitions, the flagship of his adventure.

He is entertaining friends at the Deanery when, on Sunday, January 28th, 1728, at about eight o'clock at night, he is apprised of the death of Stella.

But he keeps his friends until late, up to eleven, and

then he goes to his writing-desk and notes down his memories of Stella. He dissects her unrelentingly—he wants to realise, to realise beyond life and death, to see her as she really was, a little too fat, sometimes a fool, but with the clear understanding that Swift had given her. Perhaps all that she had from nature was terribly vitiated by a foolish humanity ; and therefore only her spirit, her " wit " is praised by Swift, because it was his creation. He glories in the idea of this perfect, courageous, sincere, hard mind, where there was no feminine weakness, but a sort of passionate ardour for truth and honour, which was the finest thing in Swift's own self.

She was his greatest success. He had freed her as much as was possible from the pitiable destiny of her sex. He had given her a masculine quality, and at the same time endowed her with the deep distrust of mankind which had enabled her to live as a sensible woman.

A sensible woman. If she really was as the eyes of her creator saw her, Stella was indeed Swift's masterpiece.

He is now calm. He continues to pun and to joke, to write to his friends ; there is no sign in his letters of an enduring sorrow. He has returned upon himself, Swift is again Swift. He abandons the world, he accepts solitude, the solitude out of which he had emerged thirty years before, when he tied Stella's destiny to his.

Even with her he had not attained to real companionship, because even in death Stella is only a part of himself. It was his destiny to find friends only to create them anew, to mould them in his own likeness, so that he had about him only copies of Swift. The fairest copy is taken by God, whilst other friends drop away one by one—either he sends them away or he cannot hold them.

Us

He remains in his loneliness, and cannot see that on himself is already the Hand which can vanquish him, break down his inner hardness, transform the egotist into a creature of God.

CHAPTER X

SWIFT'S ALIAS

IT IS INDEED a hateful task which we have now to fulfil, the task of snatching out of the hands of children a fairy-tale, because it was not meant for them. Not as a redemption, but as a deeper damnation indeed have children clustered at Swift's knees throughout the generations, to hear of far-away countries and desperate voyages from the cold narrator who would not have children near him.

Yet it may be that childish wonder at the phantoms conjured up by a hardly human fantasy is more wise than matter-of-fact criticism.[1] Children are right in finding the appointed place for their dreams in the tracks of Gulliver. Lilliput and Laputa are indeed no shadow lands, but very real countries, only far away from our dull countries, as infantile dreams are only a looking further towards a world where the world is yet the world, but spacious enough to give scope to the terrible adventure upon which they are starting—the adventure of living.

Such was the world discovered by Gulliver, the captain beyond the horizons, a fantastic world not because arbitrary, but because far away—our own world looked at in a mirror.

And further and further went Gulliver, as Swift was deeper and deeper buried alive in his hole, far from any possibility of discovery and losing hope of seeking his fortune abroad. Then he sent his spiritual brother to see the world—when he already knew what the world could be. It was only a sort of tangible confirmation of his experience he was building up, a dream with **open**

eyes disclosing the deeper side of reality—not a dream land, because there his hopes were unfulfilled even more clearly than in the actual world, and his horror went deeper. Gulliver was going towards the world as it is, and therefore far from the actual roads, out of the dimensions of space, so that Swift could find his very truth staring him bitterly in the face.

The matter-of-fact tone, the assurance of Swift, is nothing to wonder at. Gulliver's world was for him indeed the world as it is—not only an image as a satirical allegory would be, but something very real, like the myths Plato offered to substantiate his philosophical theories. Symbols are, indeed, more real sometimes than reality itself: the correspondence between symbols and thoughts expressed by them is not coldly deduced, but felt—and perhaps felt because some symbols correspond better than real things to the innermost heart of the universe.[2]

Before this ultimate show behind the scenes, Swift could be alone, and think that reality was precisely the unmasked, stripped mankind he met there.

Swift had always dealt with mankind as it is, not as it pretended to be ; and this utter sincerity of his reaches its climax in *Gulliver's Travels,* which, from this point of view at least, is more deeply real than any record of matters of fact could be.

For this wandering out of all necessity, this seemingly disinterested building up of air-castles, had a deeper aim, a more internal utility, than the obvious satiric intent. Other allegories might have answered the requirements of a thoroughgoing satire of Courts, human wisdom, learning, mankind. But the very form of imaginary voyages, devised at first to make fun of a common taste of Swift's contemporaries, revealed itself as the best adapted to express the reality of Gulliver's world before Swift's unrelenting criticism.

Perhaps the choice was unconscious, perhaps Swift proposed to construct fantastically, but in his deeper self he felt he was looking at a real world, and he let himself go in what even to him could appear a mad turn of fancy, because in this way he fulfilled an immediate need of his spirit, deeper than all satiric motives he dealt with consciously.

Gulliver's world stands indeed to Swift's satire in the same relation as Dante's next world stands to Dante's satiric and apologetic ends : this world is real because only there is Dante fully expressed. And even now we cannot dispel a feeling of material reality about Dante's Inferno, as probably Dante, although he thought it unreal, felt it more real than if he had seen it with his mortal eyes, bequeathing to us by his deeper conviction a lasting paradigm of the next world.

But the Dante of the travels in the beyond is very near, even at first sight, to the Dante of this world, so much so that they seem to be one and the same person ; whereas Swift has endowed Gulliver with a personal identity of his own, so well-cut and fully particularised that it is not immediately evident that Gulliver is only a mirror-reflex of Swift.

This care to endow Gulliver with a clear-cut independent personality does not prove that Swift thought of Gulliver as a separate person, but only that he meant himself to speak with the mouth of Gulliver, and therefore, as was his wont, desired to disavow any responsibility in the doings and sayings of his representative.

In this way Gulliver came to be the unique character represented in Swift's works. The three brothers of the *Tale* do not ever allow us to think of them as flesh-and-blood persons, and the Drapier is a name over a programme, although he fully answers to what we expect

from a merchant; whereas Gulliver is utterly real and stands gigantic, sufficient unto himself, in the middle of the scene. **All** other personages created by Swift are functional, i.e. they are presented only on the side on which they are important to Swift's purpose of the moment. They are, as we observed before, types and **not** persons—and only as such give us the illusion of being real.

But here we have to deal with a deeper reality. Under the old tar, the marine terms, the technical speech, the coarse clothes, there is some human flesh, a man who is not a mariner in general, but *this* mariner, a character, a man—Swift, the only man Swift could describe fully, and describe with never-ceasing interest, because he was deeply, and yet clear-sightedly, interested only in himself.

And therefore the *Travels* are not meant as a defence of certain tenets, they do not speak on behalf of some cause accepted and owned by Swift, but absolutely, egotistically, on behalf of Swift and of his personal conception of the world, without considering particular utility and any peculiar aim.

It would be strange if Swift had chosen to handle Gulliver as a puppet. He now confronts his enemies, goes towards his world, and therefore needs to be himself. This is indeed an autobiography of Swift ; it is Swift going to the end he wished, and without which he felt he could not be fulfilled.

To give reality to this end, he fancied a travel, although he was very sedentary, not only because of circumstances, but perhaps because of his lively distrust of mankind. Nowhere did he hope for better things, to find a better world. Nor did landscapes interest him, who had no eye for nature, closed up in himself as he was. When he had thought to travel it had been from the need of flight, or because of some object at the journey's end. He had never wanted simply to go to see.

Gulliver's Travels have therefore a pregnant significance, because they are the only means by which Swift participated in the adventure-spirit which moved the best of mankind around him, and appealed even to him, who was indeed an upstart, an adventurer in society.

Even the *Travels* are, then, a result of the opening out of old boundaries, of the discovery of a new world, begun two or three centuries before. Till then, civilised men had dwelt around the Mediterranean as Plato saw them dwell, like frogs around a pond. Learned humanists and scientists contributed less to enlarge horizons than did practical men, who, following missionaries and Crusaders and Venetian merchants, sought and found and sought further, even when there was no longer a practical aim in their quest.

The gentleman runner is the epigone of this discovery, as Newton is the epigone of Leonardo, both directions contributing to the same result : enlargement of vision. In this work, Swift did not follow the way of the learned, but that of adventurers—of travelling as sport and of adventure for adventure's sake. As Berkeley gave to his religion the turn of an Atlantic quest, and Casanova gave to his desire for new worlds the turn of a philanderer's touring trip across old Europe, and the grocer imparted romance to his cupidity by buying South-Sea Stocks—so Swift, who could not feel himself as an epigone of humanism and science, and find in scientific discoveries an appeasement for his need of knowledge, went through *Gulliver* on the side of adventure. He had yet no eye for nature, nor understanding of a world beyond his immediate aims, and therefore, going into the wide world, he is doomed to find only *his* world, but discovered as it were anew by a sort of disinterested exploration.

We can start from this point of view to judge of Swift's originality. Even if Utopias and imaginary voyages were at all times abundant, and particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Swift took hint after hint from all available literature on the subject, he was drawn by a deep internal necessity, and not by imitativeness, to choose the form of a voyage for his " counsells political and moral " and for the bitter results of his " deep reading in the world."

If all Utopists are compelled to give the turn of fantastic voyages to their Utopias, it is merely because they must construct an ideal world somewhere ; they abandon the narrative as soon as possible to expatiate and speculate on laws and customs and so on. But in the case of Swift, on the other hand, we see at every point a real delight in describing and inventing. He reproduces the description of a tempest[3] and details at length incidents on board ship, the peculiar vicissitudes of travel, the new proportions in Lilliput and Brobdingnag. He does not go directly to his speculative aim, but loiters on his road, finding new entertainments for the reader, so that the ethical doctrine is as it were veiled, and has even been disregarded, to make of the *Travels* a book for children. Plato, Campanella, and More are not for children, nor are extracts from De Bergerac or Rabelais, because they are too instructive to be interesting as pure narrative.

All this proves an adventurer's mind in Swift. When we reflect how rapid are his descriptions in all his other works, even in his poems, we recognise in the *Travels,* not another Swift, but a Swift giving vent to some impluse he could not satisfy elsewhere. For the first time we find him as a writer at leisure—it is true even in the literal sense, for he gave years of thought to *Gulliver* whereas all his other works were rapidly conceived and

written. There is the thread of an underlying motive : he tells himself a marvellous tale, he calms some profound yearning of his nature. And for that reason Swift is revealing himself deeper here than he does elsewhere, even if he is unconsciously repeating what he has read patiently for long years, with a pleasure in reading such as we did not expect from him.

His reading of travel-books and his writing a book of *Travels* are alike for us a revelation of Swift's soul, and therefore we are not really interested in *Gulliver's* alleged plagiarisms. The investigation of these in itself would be bare of results in so far as the general character of Swift's work and, in particular, the process of the formation of the *Travels* are concerned.

Be it recalled that accusations of plagiarism rested on all the most important works of Swift. The *Battle,* for instance, was reputed to be an imitation of a French book of the same title and tendency, and the *Tale* was likewise stigmatised.[4] Swift lost no opportunity of defending himself, but his motive was only a strange impersonal need of being right, and fairly dealt with, and not a writer's vanity, since he published almost all his works anonymously.

But even Swift in his defence makes the mistake of considering the imitation of another man's book, its plagiarisation, and its use as a source, all as one. These are three widely different ways in which a book can be influenced by its predecessors. It can be a plagiarism, i.e. essentially literal reproduction. It can be an imitation, or the borrowing only from a general scheme of an earlier book. Thirdly, it can be influenced as to its sources, i.e. by the books which may have led the author to think of his inventions and to set them out in a particular way.

But when these criticisms and accusations are brought to bear on particular passages, on details of a work,

their whole significance changes. For instance, let it be shown that Swift read, say, De Bergerac, and took from him the hint to make of horses[5] the perfection of nature,[6] it is not yet proved that this is a plagiarism. Swift could easily have dealt with horses as he did, without being aware he was taking the idea from De Bergerac, and, on the other hand, even if De Bergerac's idea was completely conscious in his mind, the new construction put on it could have easily transformed what was incidental in De Bergerac into a leading thought for Swift.

Where does the possibility of a book being a source without being directly plagiarised commence, and where does it end ? The limits are very hard to decide with any certainty, and there always remains the possibility of a direct resemblance being due to mere chance.[7]

Now, thanks to the previously quoted pamphlets of Mr. Le Fanu and Mr. Harold Williams, which give us a list of Swift's library, we are in a position to judge at least whether Swift can be fairly supposed to have read the books whose content seems to have a relation to some point of the *Travels**

On the other hand, the endeavour to trace Swift's sources cannot be so easily dismissed as the editor of the *Works* thinks possible.[9] He judges that Borkowski has a " venomous delight " in taking away Swift's reputation for originality. Honncher[10] and Borkowski[11] accomplished a very useful work, and although Borkowski starts from the assumption that Honncher had not destroyed Swift's reputation for originality as he should have done, he himself concludes that the eventual plagiarisms are isolated and that only (but even this is really exaggerated) the influence of De Bergerac bears on the whole scheme of the *Travels* (it bears rather on successive episodes only, even if it does so very often).

It is an idle question, and neither of the learned Germans are original in their inferences. Lord Orrery had already hinted at the *Histoire comique de Ia lune et* ***du*** *soliel* of Cyrano De Bergerac as the first source of *Gulliver.* But on the other hand it is impossible to derive from De Bergerac the whole original idea of the *Travels,* because Cyrano's work is written in **a** spirit directly contrary to the whole spirit of the *Travels.* De Bergerac wanders here and there without object, and is always uncertain between satire and Utopia. The much inferior success of the *Histoire comique* in comparison with the *Travels* may be due precisely to the incapacity of Cyrano to give a coherent picture, with a clear aim and purpose. Even if it could be said that the whole of the *Travels* is taken from the *Histoire comique,* the merit of Swift would be still greater in that he turned a very dull, indifferent narrative, scarcely known to-day, into the entrancing tale and the universal success of the *Travels.*

In this sense, the originality of the *Travels* can hardly be exaggerated, and Borkowski, even if he can be said to have held his ground, might have spared his pains. On the other hand, he is able to provide us with a series of parallel cases, of episodes and so on, from many *voyages imaginaires* of the seventeenth century and other books, from which it can be fairly deduced, as from the catalogue of the library, that Swift had a really wide learning in this literary *genre.* Both in *voyages* purely fantastical and in political Utopias, Swift was very well informed, and no wonder, therefore, that we can find in his work the echoes of very many volumes.

We can indeed be fairly sure that Swift was thinking about the *Travels* for some twelve years at least before their publication, and it can now be surmised that **he** continued also to read works of this kind in the intervals

when he had abandoned the idea **of writing** something **in** the same line : a good hint, if no more, that he found **a** fancy for such reading and revelled in the pleasure of telling his tale. Over and above, then, the many occasional and personal causes we have detailed, we must recognise the real pleasure of a romancer ; and we have good reason for considering this the first and last really literary work of Swift.

On the other hand, our knowledge of this wide reading enables us to suppose that he never directly plagiarised, but had in his mind successive layers of memorised episodes which were bound to come to the surface as soon as he undertook the actual work of composition.

The first idea, indeed, came to him in 1714, when Pope and Parnell and he amused themselves with the Scriblerus Club. The Club was intended to provide a complete parody of the learning of the time,[12] and it is universally admitted that Swift's part was to have been that of parodying the numerous, often very inaccurate and fantastic accounts of real voyages.

It is very easy to infer that he was then insensibly drawn from accounts of voyages meant to be real to *voyages imaginaires* and political Utopias, which often follow the narrative lines of a *voyage imaginaire.* It is not exactly that he had, or that he showed in the *Travels,* any special learning in political theories as has been hurriedly surmised. Indeed, all the political theories of the *Travels,* as Borkowski's quotations show, find their source in Utopias, and not in regular systematic treatises.

Thus we have to deal with three possible kinds of sources ; accounts of real travels and explorations, *voyages imaginaires,* political Utopias. This distinction has till now been somewhat ignored in the discussion of Swift's sources ; and yet it affords us useful help in

accounting for the growth of his preparations for the *Travels.*

Evidently, Swift's first thought was merely that of ridiculing the accounts of voyages in a very matter-of-fact account of the impossible. With this aim in view he proceeded to read a quantity of imaginary travels, and then saw, by these examples, what a good opportunity he had of introducing a satire into his narrative. His *Travels* were to become in this way a satire of accounts of voyages with, running through them, a Utopistic or satiric political and philosophical meaning, as for instance is to be found in Rabelais, who, however, had not started from the idea of ridiculing *voyages imaginaires.*

In this connection Lucian of Samosata deserves attention. His works were in fact in Swift's library, and whilst it has been observed that the *Travels* call his *Dialogues of the Dead*[13] to mind, nobody has quoted his *Truthful History* in this connection. And yet Swift should have been more disposed to take an ancient than a modern writer as his model ; moreover the introduction to Lucian's *History* proclaims intentions which accord well with those of Swift, as they evolved, regarding the *Travels.*

Lucian marvels indeed at other writers' hopes of deceiving their readers when telling about far places ; therefore he announces that he will invent freely, and declares in advance that he is only taking a mad turn of fancy, so as to amuse himself over old poets' lies.

A similar purpose, evidently, caused Swift to think of making an imaginary voyage. He then introduced into his voyage new meanings, whereas Lucian remained true to his first aim, to invent freely without another thought in the world but the burlesquing of old story-tellers. The ultimate significance of Lucian for Swift's *Travels* becomes clear when we find hints of Laputa in the *Truthful History.* Swift's flying island could hardly have

been taken from the solar sphere in which Cyrano travels through the solar system, because Swift's Laputa is not his vehicle, but a new world discovered, precisely as Lucian brought by a whirlwind arrives at

γῆν τινα μεγάλην ἐν τῷ ἄερι καθάπερ
νῆσον λαμπρὰν καί σφαιροειδῆν.[14]

This is inspiration *pure,* so to speak : we can see here the way in which Swift's reading contributed to his work.

We can now avoid a long and useless exposition by referring the reader to the various works on these sources ; did we wish to bring to light ideas, in this place or that, analogous to those of Swift, all we could do would be to reproduce a list of a few well-known and many obscure books. It is certain, however, that De Bergerac, even if we cannot find him in Swift's library, was read by Swift, and that one of the principal sources is Herbert, whose book is to be found there together with abundance of similar literature, from Dampier's *Travels* and *Travels in South America* and Nieuhoff 's narrative on China, to the *Oceana* of Harrington, with which Swift at an even earlier date was well acquainted, and the *Atlantis,* etc., etc.

Such books were really well adapted to allay a need of freedom and liberty, and we can see Swift at Laracor or shut off in Dublin browsing among them, it may be, for years and years, and only, possibly on the eve of his return to political life (in 1720 or thereabouts), commencing to dream on paper—and then it was no longer imaginary travels coldly invented as by De Bergerac, or a Utopia deliberately constructed and deduced from certain laboured theories of government, but something more spontaneous, and which reveals the depths of Swift, at least to us, if it did not to himself.

But in understanding this revelation we shall find ourselves at variance with the common conception of the *Travels.* Criticism has never enquired into the more profound aspects of the book, as we now seek to do in accordance with the general aim of our biography—and for that matter of any biography. Not the literary worth of the book, but its relation to Swift's life and soul, is what concerns us. For this reason we shall be inclined to forget both the fairy-tale and the satire in order to find in the *Travels* their innermost meaning as a symbolical autobiography, where Swift exposes, not only his hates and his fancies, but himself and his very conception of life and the world.

Hence mankind, as Swift contemplates it, is not at bottom an objective mankind, a theoretical study. It is mankind around him, mankind confronting himself, and Swift remains always the true protagonist of his tale.

The title is really exact, these are indeed the travels *of Gulliver.* His landscape is built up around him, that is, refers immediately to him, not only because he appears as the protagonist of the narrative, but also because the landscape is seen and described always as a " function " of him, as a mathematician would put it—that is, in relation to Gulliver and not as a self-subsisting universe.

To put it in other words, we are not confronted with the problem : " How does a world of giants and pigmies and so on appear to a normally constituted man ? " but : " How is it with a man confronted with an abnormal landscape ? " To understand this man, then, it is necessary to look at mankind from his individual point of view : otherwise the Yahoo, for instance, cannot be understood, and appears a mere freakish turn of fancy.

The first thing we find, considering the matter from this standpoint, is that Gulliver appears as the only complete, sane, and normal man in an abnormal world, and therefore his position is that of the perfect egotist- Swift, we mean, does not *invent,* but only reconstructs around Gulliver the world he really knows, because he considers his conception of the world as the only sane one, and will not accept as normal a universe from which his deepest conscience recoils. This fancy world is not created out of nothing, but constructed by materialising the spiritual, by exaggerating proportions, by magnifying details. Swift is at the centre of the stage and lets this world revolve around him and live up to his judgment on it. From Lilliput and Laputa, representations in the main of reality as he disparaged it, to Brobdingnag and Houyhnhnms' land, representations of his ethical ideal, Swift is finding the right position for himself by adjusting the *dicor* till it accords with his very soul. At the end of the cycle, he is able at last to explain himself:

> As soon as I entered the house, my wife took me in her arms and kissed me ; at which, having not been used to the touch of that odious animal for so many years, I fell in a swoon for almost an hour. . . . My reconcilement to the Yahoo-kind in general might not be so difficult, if they would be content with those vices and follies only which nature hath entitled them to.[16]

Precisely because Gulliver is Swift, Swift draws all sympathies to his hero, with his old skill of a political writer. Gulliver becomes the friend of the reader, who participates almost bodily in his combats.

This ingenuity in making his cause the best and most understandable, in placing it within the reach of everyman's sympathy, is the real ground of the success of *Gulliver's Travels,* which was so great as to puzzle critics

and give them good reason for requiring an explanation such as would account also for the lasting fascination of the book. They thought it consisted in the matter-of-fact tone, which is only an incidental consequence of Swift's immediate aims, and on the other hand does not explain the warm, human sympathy Gulliver draws to himself. For not only in Lilliput, but everywhere in the book, Swift's ability in drawing Gulliver and in acquiring the sympathy of the reader is evident, and this is another proof that Swift is defending his own cause, and that Swift's ultimate hidden aim in the *Travels* is his own justification, to be attained by means of a one-sided representation of the facts.—The egotist is speaking now for himself, and with consummate skill.

But what precisely is Swift trying to prove on behalf of himself?

Swift freely confessed his aim, just at the time when he was giving the final form to his *Travels,* at the end of 1725 : " The chief end I propose to myself in all my labours is to vex the world rather than divert it,"[16] and, later on, " Drown the world ! I am not content with despising it, but I would anger it, if I could with safety."[17]

It is a great vengeance, which strikes in the first place at Walpole's England, and, through it, at mankind.[18] But even this aim is in certain respects insufficiently personal to explain the superior polemic happiness of the *Travels.* The matter-of-fact tone itself makes us think that Swift was not only bent on insulting the world at large, but also determined to persuade himself and others that it was really as bad as he thought.

It is not hair-splitting ; the two aims are not correlated, but are somewhat in contradiction with each other. Considering mankind's baseness as **a** way of living

normal for mankind, the direct insolence which was Swift's method in polemics lost much of its point.

It is true indeed that Swift's hate of mankind was becoming more and more generalised, as is shown by the progress of the *Travels* from the first to the last part. But the mere pleasure of vexing mankind was really too vague an aim to appeal to Swift's deeper self.[19] The truth is that Swift felt the need to justify himself, his actual position and conception of mankind and the world, and the need at the same time to justify his failure in face of the baseness of men.

It has been surmised that it was the influence of Pope which led him to his coarseness of language ; it may be suspected with more truth that Pope, the theorist of human selfishness, added force to Swift's misanthropy. But he wanted, on the other hand, by his need of self-affirmation, to distinguish himself from all his friends, who were now, in their private difficulties, moving towards hatred of mankind :

> I desire you and all my friends will take a special care that my disaffection to the world may not be imputed to my age, for I have credible witnesses ready to depose, that it had never varied from the twenty-first to the f—ty-eighth year of my life. . . . I tell you after all that I do not hate mankind : it is *vous-autres* who hate them, because you would have them reasonable animals, and are angry for being disappointed.[20]

Swift is indeed endeavouring to show he was not drawn by private difficulties and sorrows to hate mankind, after the manner of his English friends. He distinguishes his misanthropy from that of Timon[21] just to show there was no personal animus beneath it; and we thus see him proceeding in a contrary sense to his professed intention of vexing mankind. He was only justifying himself, and this was the fundamental point of Gulliver. Gulliver is the man who through his physical

experience comes even to a physical hate of mankind, as Swift through his experience had come to hate mankind in a rational sense. The ground for both was the same : irrationality.

I have got materials towards a treatise, proving the falsity of that definition *animal rationale,* and to show it would be only *rationis capax,*[22]

says Swift, and the Houyhnhnm concludes :

He looked upon us as a sort of animals to whose share, by what accident he could not conjecture, some small pittance of reason had fallen whereof we made no other use than by its assistance to aggravate our natural corruptions, and to acquire new ones, which nature had not given us. . . . That our institutions of government and law were plainly owing to our gross defects in reason, and by consequence, in virtue[23] ; because reason alone is sufficient to govern a rational creature.[24]

It is always the old rationalist who speaks. He wants to affirm himself as a sane man, as the only sane man—that is, the only man endowed with reason and living up to it in a hostile because irrational world, as Gulliver was somewhat different from the Yahoo, because he used his pittance of reason. So that there is a double aim in this polemic which is at the same time a defence *pro domo sua* of Swift : here he proves his right to criticise mankind by his absolute aloofness from personal motives of hatred, so as to assert definitely his rightness in his past life and even in the future.

For we should not suppose that Swift never asked himself whether in hating this noblest of God's creatures, His living and breathing image, he was acting lawfully and in submission to God's designs. As he could not want a justification before the eyes of mankind which **he** so utterly despised, Swift would want to be justified **before God, and to know that he was not traversing the**

Divine plan in putting before men this lurid image of themselves.

The *Travels* are at bottom—we don't say only, but at least in part—inspired by Swift's need to justify his conception of men in the eyes of God, following up his rational idea of religion. He was making, as it were, a complete pendant to the *Tale,* where he had shown how men had vitiated God's revelation ; he showed now how reason itself, God's highest gift, from Swift's rationalistic and egotistic standpoint, could be vitiated by men.

Misanthropy gave him already that very pleasant feeling of superiority which everyone who is doomed to remain alone is liable to-have. This superiority had to be proved, not only right, but rightful in the *Travels.*

We cannot indeed consider the *Travels* as a mere vengeance on an unappreciative mankind. At this moment, even in the last years in which Swift composed and published his *Travels,* he was really in a more favourable phase of his life. It has often been asserted that his book was a far-flung response to men's disparagement of himself; and perhaps past injuries were working in the deep well of Swift's soul. Nevertheless, he may have been speaking the truth when he said that he was against mankind, not for definite evils, but from a deeply implanted misanthropy.

For this reason our explanation of the inner aim of the *Travels* is necessary—until a better explanation can be excogitated. The lack of immediate causes for a sense of failure and consequent hate (just at this moment a whole people was surging in praise around him) makes of the *Travels* a more profound work, something which goes deep into the springs of Swift's whole life, and does not refer merely to certain episodes and to particular resentments.

It is not thereby proved that Swift's misanthropy was

native, in the sense of being an outcome of impending or present madness. It was deeply implanted because it was the product of a long experience during which Swift, beginning with particular instances of folly and vileness, sought for the general reasons for them, until the whole of mankind had been criticised and destroyed.

At this moment, Swift is really isolated. No matter if he says, " I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth."[25] Gulliver's position is one of utter loneliness—a centre of the world because the only reasonable thing in it—precisely because he has only particular loves and a general hate.

The real position of these friends, how little they can break down his solitude, is made apparent by the friends Gulliver finds in his fictitious world. The " considerable person " at the Court of Lilliput,[26] Glumdalclitch in Brobdingnag, Munodi at Lagado, the sorrel nag, correspond precisely, in higher or baser worlds, to these Johns, Peters, Thomases. But consider them : they are quite unable to appease Gulliver[5]s solitude in the strange country. Whether higher or baser beings, they are not of his race. The Lilliputian, the Brobdingnagian, the Laputan, the Houyhnhnm are too strong in them, and on the other hand they are somewhat disparaged or in an inferior position in their own country, so that this inferior position in itself explains their being capable of coming near to Gulliver—their defect in Lilliputism, Brobdingnagism, etc. The power of Swift over his friends was never complete ; society around them and their fundamental humanity made of them, in one part, creatures of Swift's higher plane, in the other, common everyday enemies.

Their community with Gulliver is partial, because

Swift begins to question even his friends, and his very love for creatures depending on himself is besieged by bitter doubts.[27] He does not close his eyes to their defects, in which he sees again hated humanity. In that half by which they do not appertain to Swift they are not merely indifferent, they are inimical.

And thus, just as Swift could never be at one with mankind, he could never be completely at one even with a chosen few.

Only a complete lack of any sympathy with mankind can explain the bitter irony of the Yahoo.[28] It is really impossible to hate mankind to this point, to involve all creatures you know and have dealings with, and even love, in this universal disgust—if you have but a mother or a brother or a mistress you really love—provided you love her or him, not as an appendage of yourself, but as a self-existing reality, and thus feel near to him or her through sympathy. Swift could involve the whole of his nearest neighbours in the universal satire, could feel himself really alone even with friends all around, because he loved without human sympathy from himself outward without losing himself in the beloved. He saw in Stella the Yahoo, in Bolingbroke the Lilliputian—saved only because Swift made of them an element of himself. Gulliver's recoiling before his wife is the symbol of this ultimate doom.

These considerations enable us to understand why Swift chose impossible countries as a frame for the allegory of his ultimate satire.

Even his sources, even the influence on him of the adventurous spirit of his time, do not fully explain why he lay under the internal necessity of postulating improbable beings in order to demonstrate his theories.

It is certainly true that this type of narrative was usual in an Illuministic age. But, for instance, Voltaire's Indian and Lafayette's Huron represent the liking of these men—or of men of a slightly later date—not for monsters, but for natural modes of living, in which Rousseau finds his ideal mankind. Even Robinson Crusoe is of the family, a man " saved " by return to nature.

But Swift's Lilliputians and Laputans are not savages, are not men in the state of nature—aboriginal Emiles. They are highly cultivated beings, with a history behind them, who have attained some degree of civilisation. Swift the rationalist is not an Illuminist in the eighteenth-century sense, holding that man, if he abandoned himself to the natural lights of reason, would be good and noble. His religious conscience again enters to tell Swift that the help of God is needed, even to destroy all necessity for a religion, as in the case of the Houyhnhnms. The natural man for Swift is a Yahoo—hence his originality in an age preparing to fall in love with the savage.

Gulliver, then, is not made to travel in order that he may discover simpler modes of life. The ultimate reason for Gulliver's travelling in fictitious countries is more profound than anything that is suggested in other works of the age and in other Utopias. And considering the *Travels* objectively, as a work of fiction and for their effect on the reader, and not longer (as we have hitherto done) in their subjective significance for Swift, we find another mark of Swift's genius.

Swift makes Gulliver travel and discover new types of rational beings and new lands, because no race of men on our earth could answer to his requirements. He imitated De Bergerac and many others in discovering new lands hitherto untrodden by any feet, and totally new and even unrelated beings ; and the reason was

that he could not otherwise express **fully what he had to** say.

He felt, indeed, perhaps obscurely, that his narrative should be a self-contained whole. He wanted to build up out of nothing something totally new and strange, something totally unrelated to the world and mankind as known. Ordinary men of peculiar sagacities in some far-off land were not enough, as they were for More and Campanella and Bacon ; he wanted both, landscape and people, to be quite new, so as to form a perfectly coherent picture system—coherent in not being hampered or thrown out of harmony by any relations to the known. When Gulliver has passed beyond the known land, his boat sinks, and he enters upon his adventure beyond all limits of the knowable. Only in this way could the reader in his wake forget all he knew and avoid any prevision—because the reader remains very uncertain of the aim of the narrative and is therefore in a position to confront it as it were with a virgin mind. The reader has to do with strange creatures, with a new world, and so cannot think of the improbability of successive developments of this original strangeness. He is not personally taken into consideration ; he has no likes or dislikes to interfere with his role of a reader, of a spectator. He can sit down and enjoy, for he admits the possibility of the strangest occurrences in this strange world where nothing is like the human world he knows and to which he is personally bound by his interests.

But gradually these strange monsters develop **a** sort of dim humanity, which comes closer and closer and becomes ever more human as the narrative proceeds, precisely because of its strong systematic character. So that at a certain point, unaware, the reader is confronted with his very humanity, even **if** in a distorted **form,** either **on** a higher or on a lower plane.—He has

been fully taken by surprise by the logicality of a representation of himself, and now he sees himself as he really is in all his baseness, or as he should be as a human ideal, so that the low monster at last is identical with the reader, and the higher monster is more human than the reader.

Just because Gulliver is Swift, the reader is induced to enter this world by the seduction of Gulliver, as a brother of Gulliver, the most human of mankind—but the familiar world around him is cut away at a stroke. All humanity is ousted when the reader perceives that the monsters *are* humanity—at their lowest and at their best—and for him remains the choice, either to be alone in a hostile world like Gulliver, or to accept as brothers the Lilliputian and the Yahoo, which he contemplated at first as monsters, so that he acquiesced in Swift's conception of them, till it was too late to reject their utter identification with mankind.

The reader had not been allowed to grow suspicious of the ultimate end. Never could he have said : " This is impossible ! " Were they not monsters, not open to objection just because they were logical in themselves, having no reference to common humanity ? But by an intensification of their very *inhumanity* they had come to be deeply *human*, and the reader had at length to allow that the monsters were real as much as he was real or as mankind around him was real. At last, precisely because they are monstrous, they are immediately, inexpressibly true—all that fairyland and that weird new creation is there imprinted with the deep seal of humanity, and convinces one of its utter reality.

And children are right in thinking Lilliput is real, for they confess the feeling which the adult would rather not recognise, and yet cannot escape.

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It is well known that somebody advanced the theory that Gulliver was a real person, who, however, lived at Wapping and not at Rotherhithe.[29] But even the Gulliverians were thought to be, if not really existent, at least not impossible, inhabitants of the universe.

The most important, because fully circumstantiated and developed, theory of D'Amato in this connection has perhaps eluded English critics.[30]

The eighteenth century Italian savant, in endeavouring to show the possible truth to fact of the *Travels,* misses their significance, which consists precisely in the monstrosity of Swift's invention.[31]

D'Amato is defending Gulliver against a certain Filadelfo, a Fellow of some obscure Academy, who was very angry at the thought that Gulliver was making fun of the reader, by imposing on him preposterous inventions. D'Amato endeavours to show the perfect likelihood of the truth of Swift's invention,[32] and opens his case by citing a certain Ferruginer who, in an epistle to Gulliver, defended the actual existence of dwarfs on the evidence afforded by an Eskimo woman. D'Amato insists further that dwarfs and giants are quite possible, bringing in the uncritical evidence which was available in his time.[33]

However that may be, D'Amato evidently considers the *Travels* as the original and honest work of Gulliver. That we should find such discussions on foot in a remote corner of Italy, and only eight years after publication, gives us a fair idea of the success of the *Travels* and of their early interpretation. D'Amato was emphatically sure that the book was not a literary hoax.

But why did Swift choose, of all possible types of plausible strangeness, precisely the monstrosity of dwarfs, giants, apes and so on ? And coming to the first part of the *Travels,* why does Gulliver look at Lilliput through the wrong end of the telescope ?

The Lilliputians are the personal, particular enemies of Swift : people (Queen Anne) who humiliated him and people (Walpole) who despised him, or forgot him in their petty political preoccupations, as the Prince of Wales was to do a year after the publication of the *Travels.* They are, to cut it short, the people who defeated him, and let him be buried alive in Ireland.

But they were too insignificant to defeat Swift one by one ! They had to league together, and by a combination of their petty wills build up his bitter destiny. Swift was always the stronger, but was always alone. Some isolated Lilliputian, Reldresal, supports him, as his political friends did ; but it was Swift himself who saved himself by his overwhelming greatness. And Gulliver crosses the channel between Blefescu and Lilliput as Swift crossed, head high, St. George's Channel, feeling that he carried with him the destinies of nations and had renounced of his own free will his further share in the game and his power of casting his great shadow over countries and history.

In this way Swift excuses his retirement, persuades himself that the giant deliberately decided to leave the pigmies at their infantile games. The political game has sunk far below him. All political men, as he knew them, were short-sighted, wrapped up in petty concerns and stupid ambitions. England without Swift is but a child's playroom, not worth a thought.

This is very easy to understand, but then it is difficult to account for the praises of Lilliput's education and administration. To this insufficient attention has hitherto been given, and the question involves that of the date of actual composition of the various parts of the *Travels.*

In 1722, Brobdingnag was already at least sketched, and we may therefore suppose that Lilliput had by then been written. Yet the reflections on Walpole could not possibly have been made before the combat **over Wood.**

The allusion to Walpole being saved by a cushion of the King calls to mind perhaps occurrences of 1719 or thereabouts, but the criticism against Walpole is made comprehensible by supposing it to have been written after the spring of 1726 ; before then, Swift might indeed have hoped to draw the Minister to his side.

And yet Flimnap's hostility to Gulliver is deeply bound up at least with the second part of Gulliver's adventures in Lilliput, so that it could be supposed that the account of Lilliput was re-written after the complete *Travels* had been already finished in their first draft.

The question is really insoluble on available evidence. But we cannot overlook the fact that the Lilliputian seems to have been intended originally as an example of good politics and right administration of society.

It can even be inferred from internal evidence that at first the *Travels* had been meant to be limited to Lilliput. Lilliput is indeed perfectly sufficient to express Swift's most immediate satirical aims. The introduction of the parody of Walpole, written evidently only after Walpole's definitely coming into power and attracting Swift's enmity, may well be a second thought, to complete Lilliput's history which now embraces England's history from Queen Anne, and even from Queen Elizabeth, to Walpole.

Lilliput, originally the wisest of lands,[34] comes under " the most scandalous corruptions . . . by the degenerate nature of man "[35]—a good parallel to England, with whose glorious past Swift always compared her actual political evils.

This gives to Lilliput a peculiar character, and a patched-up one, so as to make us question whether it is really the best part of the *Travels,* as has been thought till now. The peculiar sympathy for Lilliput is perhaps due to the fact that contemporaries found there a satire of the world immediately under their eyes and were

amused by the numerous innuendoes. Posterity felt the influence of this judgment. The last parts, on the contrary, criticising mankind at large and endeavouring to ridicule science, could not meet with such a favourable reception : therefore the judgment of Arbuthnot, who said the two first parts were the best and the third was the worst, has become the standard opinion on the *Travels.*

But even considering it as a work of art, as mere fiction, Lilliput is too mechanical : it is a very long-drawn-out joke. It is indeed (and much in the *Travels* is such) a pun dwelt upon at great length, and the participation in this of all men of Swift's age[36] shows us that Swift's punning was not a symptom of insanity. The fortune of Lilliput can be compared with that of the Bickerstaff joke, as that of a joke worn out in the applause of the multitude.[37] Children in all ages have found in it the same elements for amusement as the political men of Swift's age. Children like the small manikins who presume to the character and authority of grown-up men, and yet permit them to think the adult are not so sage as they are held to be ; political men felt their failure relieved by the same dwarfing of successful leaders' proportions. He who really draws all sympathies is Swift-Gulliver. Even children do not find their like in the pigmies, but in the dishevelled mariner, a little confused and perturbed before the pigmies, as the politician saw in him his image, because of Gulliver's brute strength opposed to the numbers of his enemies, thus giving strength to Swift's own argument on behalf of himself.

If the first conception of the *Travels* limited them to Lilliput, and only afterwards Swift was drawn by his pleasure in his fantasies to extend the plan, and finally gave to Lilliput some fundamental changes in accordance with Walpole's position, it is to be surmised that the already drawn description of the Yahoo reacted

upon the modifications made in Lilliput. But this does not mean that the Lilliputian was not already at first half Houyhnhnm, half Yahoo. The right interpretation of the Lilliputian as it is described in the *Travels* we have now before us is not that mankind is an inferior species, but rather that mankind, though a sorry lot, making much ado about nothing, can partially correct its fundamental stupidity and helplessness by the use of reason.

When wise laws lapse, when princes and governors play the devil with the body politic, all possibility for good is lost. Swift's old animosity to political parties comes up again ; the formation of parties, either for religious or for baser motives, is the root of all evils. Then indeed the fundamental pettiness of human nature becomes manifest, and even if common folk continue the same, the core of the State is corrupted. So that, under the political satire, and the partial praises for Lilliput, here also is expressed the same thought as in the Yahoos. Mankind is radically bad, as shown both by Lilliput pettiness and by Yahoo baseness. There, reason under its necessary limitations ; here, reason obscured by passions and vices.

To make Lilliput coherent, we had to follow up Swift's meaning, and only now can we understand Brobdingnag, which would have been purposeless if Lilliput, as an exposition of varieties of government, where there is a place for the demonstration of an ideal State, had not been meant to show mankind's fundamental baseness as well as the pettiness of politics.

But what is the real difference between Lilliput and Brobdingnag, when we consider them as dividing between them the whole nature of mankind ?

It has been said already that Swift found his first idea

of the giant as a figure of rational greatness in Juvenal, whose verses contain the maxim followed by Swift even in his treatment of human dwarfishness.

The simultaneous decline of mankind as to virtue and stature is treated lovingly by the Roman satirist, who finds in an old legend a sort of explanation of the base customs of contemporaries :

> *. . . nee hunc lapidem, qualem Turnus et Ajax*
> *. . . sed quern valeant emittere dextra*
> *Illis dissimiles, et nostro tempore nate.*
> *Nam genus hoc vivo jam descrescebat Homero.*
> *Terra malos homines nunc educat atque pusillos :*
> *Ergo deus quicumque adspexit, ridet et odit.*[38]

" Laughs and hates " : the position of Swift before mankind, or, rather, the position of a demigod like Gulliver.

The defender of the Ancients reasserts himself. Swift in the *Travels* appears as a *laudator temporis acti,* as all satirists are wont to be, seeing that close to their dislike and criticism of mankind is the need to feel mankind culpable (otherwise why correct it ?) and therefore to admit an original state of grace.

Such is the scheme of the first two parts of the *Travels.* The Brobdingnagian is Juvenal's giant, man before his fall, and yet the common people (the boy, the Court dwarf, Glumdalclitch's father) show the symptoms of possible degeneration, of fundamental weakness. The Lilliputian is man come down, who preserves some trace of his past greatness, but is in process of debasement.

In the two worlds, the contrast posited by Juvenal in time is made static. They are the worlds before and after, the Ancient and the Modern.

Thus—provided we accept for the moment the point of view of Swift, forgetting our own share of responsibility for mankind, and so avoiding the indignation

which some too socially minded critics feel—we understand even the Yahoo. The Yahoo is Swift's last term in the argument from this initial premiss which could not possibly content him, and the progress from the first to the last part of the *Travels* is really consistent, and not merely a reopening of the problem apparently closed by the representation of a superior race of beings in Brobdingnag. Swift's hatred of mankind, his increasing loneliness, his deep egotism, did not allow him at the last to consider men as of a rational kind like to his kind. In the Yahoo the involution from Brobdingnag to Lilliput is flatly denied, Juvenal is denied : rationality is only a shadow on a base beast, and for him

> . . . instinct is a surer guide
> Than reason, boasting mortal's pride.[39]

Mankind at bottom is not a rational being, actual mankind is not a declension from former superiority. Man is at best *rationis capax,* but even this reason cannot obliterate the ape. There is no evolution, nor coming down : mankind is a species apart, fundamentally alike in all its forms. Gulliver alone is saved through his very dislike of his fellow-men, through his need to be better than mankind, to imitate an unchanging model of wisdom, of rational life (this is the function of the Houyhnhnm), to ape this rationality which in him can only be an exterior thing.

The idea of Juvenal, and that of Swift in the first and second part of the *Travels,* was a human reason to be deducted from an actual declension. The ideal of the fourth part is outside mankind, is an eternal paradigm (remember the ignorance of the Houyhnhnm concerning his history)—truth everlasting.[40]

But it should be clearly understood that all this play of analogies and so on was not fully conscious in Swift,

but only felt in the strain of inspired fancy. It is still the fancy of the rationalist, the fancy of a cerebralist—and evidently a subconscious theory of the origin of evil and of salvation underlies the entire process.

Even here, indeed, we feel in Swift a strong religious impulse.

Swift does not spare religion in its external form : the Houyhnhnm is at bottom a deist, and there is no trace of a religion of Brobdingnag.

In Lilliput, Swift's attitude towards religion is more precise ; the defence of the political position of the Church of England recurs and is rendered carefully, but faith is reduced to its essential—belief in the providence of God. And it is even apparent that the political import of a Test was really for Swift based on the fundamental assumption that a man can only serve his country faithfully when he holds all his acts to be the expression of an all-providing deity.

Like metaphysical efforts in Laputa, religious theories are discarded in Lilliput. But one feels always in the *Travels* a series of rationalised sentiments (the sentiments of Swift, who thought them to be the only possible sentiments in a rational being) which are built on the foundation of a strong belief in the overbearing, all-embracing presence of evil.

The Yahoo is not the sane natural man (the Illuministic ideal), nor a declension from human to sub-human conditions. He is the fallen man, Adam passed out of Eden's gate.[41] And the Lilliputian is doomed to debase himself as soon as fallen human nature finds a weak spot in the rationalised order of society through which it can penetrate. In Brobdingnag, it is not the higher[42] but the lower class which is base, being further removed from the pure rationality of superior minds.[43]

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For the rest, the Brobdingnagian and the Houyhnhnm have only a sort of dreaming reality. They are not real men ; they are (this is interesting) rather childish and simple-minded—a sort of Parsival. This is felt the moment one attempts to realise their spiritual character. They lack something for all their virtue and elevation. They have no actual fight in them, no hostility to evil. They are natively—and therefore artlessly—perfect. In face of our complicated civilisation, the puzzles of law and religion, of politics and technical progress as shown by firearms, etc., they are really at a loss : not only in Swift's skilled presentation, but because they are really incapable of evolution. They are Adams in the eternal peace and static being of men before the Fall[44] who have not in themselves any strife or contradiction. They are pure—and therefore little better than shadows of humanity.

Thus Swift felt, and thus he showed that he could not escape the dilemma : either goodness and immobile peace, or the perpetual defeat of burning, active mankind at war with evil.

Gulliver's final appeasement, on his retiring from society and taking relish in the company of horses, dumb models of rationality—this ultimate asceticism half way between an out-of-reach perfection and a debased and rejected mankind is the symbol of Swift's failure. And it had to have its counterpart in Swift's life, in his resigned acceptance of Stella's death.

He turned away from the fight, he forsook the ultimate duty of man—that of participation in the struggle against evil and his ultimate hope—the all-providing, predestinating Will. He was closed up even against heaven, and only death could bring the solution of the problem of the egotist, who is well aware that there is no redemption, not even in the reason—in his reason which he brought forward to criticise evil, to recognise sin.

But Swift is not capable of abandoning completely this dull, hard, closed reason to take refuge in the irrational suprapersonal Grace.

And here our investigation into Swift's character has reached its climax. Swift was a rationalist, and perhaps the greatest example of the failure of rationalism. It was indeed a strong egotism akin to that of Swift which brought the Illuministic age to grief. In the end the Illuminist relied on reason even against evidence (the cult of reason in the French Revolution), or he confessed his failure but he would not resort to a full-blooded living faith in a God beyond reason.

But the casual reader is unaware of an underlying logic of this transcendental kind, and Swift himself, as we said, perhaps never thought that his strange fancies could so reveal his innermost self. The very unawareness of the reader and of Swift of the deeper laws that govern the *Travels* as a whole is one of the reasons for *Gulliver's* success and of its complete artistic perfection.

The reader is entranced and carried away—he follows Swift because Swift himself perhaps is deeply entranced.

The varied material of his sources overflowed into Swift's imagination. Figures took his fancy, and he followed them unawares. He began to write almost unconsciously, and at a certain point entered without effort the new world which he had set out to discover. —But, looking close, we can find the door through which Gulliver entered his enchanted world.

He enters it *sleeping* always ; the strangeness begins when he awakens at daylight—and this is *not* a common feature of imaginary voyages. It is really something peculiar to Swift.

And then observe how Gulliver awakens :

I attempted to rise, but was not able to stir : for, as I happened to lie on my back, I found my arms and legs were strongly fastened on each side to the ground ; and my hair, which was long and thick, tied down in the same manner. I likewise felt several slender ligatures across my body, from my arm-pits to my thighs. I could not look upwards, the sun began to grow hot, and the light offended my eyes.[45]

It is to be noted that the account is impossible. A man so bound that he cannot move to look, can hardly feel slender ligatures and be sure his hair and arms are bound in the manner described.[46] What Gulliver-Swift really felt on entering the new world was only the impossibility of moving. He felt this morbidly, as is clearly evident from the difference between the subjective sensation and the derived explanation. The sensation is not invented, but taken from the experience of a nightmare. Like a nightmare was also the vague feeling experienced by Swift, in his egocentric pride, in regard to his position at the Court of Queen Anne or his Irish triumphs in the battle with England when he felt his stature grow. The impossibility of reaching a positive success then reacted in dream-form. He saw nothing, he could not see enemies—and on the other hand, with his stature, his egotism prevented him from seeing enemies—and yet he felt hampered.

It would be too easy to indulge in hasty psychoanalytical reflections on Swift's possible sexual peculiarities. We are truly in the presence of a nightmare experience with its object in those deeply felt obstacles set in his way by people whom he profoundly despised, and yet could not vanquish. This perception, mounting with his career, caused him to live in an atmosphere of nightmare and found vent in the peculiar sensation which led Gulliver to the threshold of a new world, where the old obstruction finds an explanation, logical if unreal, in a sort of symbolical representation of the state

of things from which the obstruction arose in reality.

An analogous explanation occupies also the threshold of the world of giants. When the giant reapers are threatening to find Gulliver, he endeavours to escape :

> I kept from them at as great a distance as I could, but was forced to move with extreme difficulty, for the stalks of the corn were sometimes not above a foot distant, so that I could hardly squeeze my body betwixt them. However I made a shift to go forward till I came to a part of the field where the corn had been laid by the rain and the wind. Here it was impossible for me to advance a step ; for the stalks were so interwoven that I could not creep through. At the same time I heard the reapers not an hundred yards behind me.[47]

Even here we have an immediate sensation of impossibility of escape and an elaborate explanation for it.

This is the habitual sensation of nightmare. It cannot perhaps be so clearly felt at the beginning of Laputa, and perhaps an analogy in this case would appear rather far-fetched. Yet even there Gulliver is described " pinioned with strong ropes "[48] ; and when he arrives at the last island of the group, he has no heart to rise at morning, and when he wakes suddenly the sun darkens in some mysterious way.[49] The description at this point does not dwell on the sensations ensuing from these obstructive experiences. Yet, here as on entrance into the Houyhnhnm land, Gulliver's being deliberately abandoned in a boat or on a strand conjures up in itself an idea of constraint, of impossibility of escape, characteristic of nightmare. We do not wish to push the analogy too far : the important thing is to show that, at least in the first two parts, the reader in Gulliver's wake experiences a sensation of nightmare on the very entering into the strange and the impossible.

In this way the reader becomes open to suggestion, precisely because nightmare is not a speciality of a few

high-browed and low-loined sexual patients, but is common to men in general. So that the reader can unconsciously realise in himself the state of mind of Gulliver when he is entering the new world. But an awakening from the nightmare does not immediately follow ; on the contrary, a dream atmosphere remains and overlies the tale. Dwarfs, monsters, giants, come around the dreamer, yet in the light of common day. The reader at first is simultaneously seduced and terrorised.

Later on there comes an appeasement, and the nightmare seems to cease,[60] not because the reader experiences a sudden awakening, but because logic intervenes in the dream, and the nightmare takes the course of a scientific experiment. The proportions are accurately measured, so that the new world constitutes an exact pendant of the known world, moves and lives beside the everyday world. In a play of figures and measures, the nightmare atmosphere vanishes, but the reader continues in his dream and adapts himself to it, feeling the veil of terror dissolve. The reason is that even Gulliver never woke from the charmed dream in which he began and carried out his adventure.

In order to attain to this aim Swift never betrays surprise at unusual appearances. Always he maintains the matter-of-fact tone of a detached account; at the same time, however, he makes the account complete, dealing at length with the new proportions, measuring everything, all the animals and implements exactly, describing thoughts and feelings, with the object of rendering to perfection the monsters[5] conception of life in terms of our own. Swift allows himself to deal with particulars in full, because it is a real necessity that he should do so. All the particulars have a scientific interest, and it is possible to reconstruct a reality on the basis of a quite consequential logic. Thus it is made to seem that

all this copiousness of particulars is meant as an entertainment for the reader ; but Swift has another intention. He wants to lure the reader into continuing, without waking at each moment from the illusion, as would happen were he obliged to reconstruct on his own account this impossible world in all its bearings.

In this way the reader, through a dark channel of nightmare, has reached a live and lucid world—is now a citizen of Lilliput or Brobdingnag. By no awakening will he ever be brought home from these countries. His re-entry into everyday life will be, like that of Gulliver, a series of successive adaptations. He will be slowly re-educated in the ways of the normal world, and it will be as one not fully awake that he will at first live among men of ordinary stature. He will not climb the stairs by which he had first descended into the new world : everyday life flows insensibly from Lilliput to London, from Brobdingnag to England, and both worlds retain their reality, and stand face to face with one another in the reader's mind.

This is the final result of nightmare—a bitter science which Swift could only attain through that anguish which was a consequence of his malady, as we described it,[51] and yet came to be useful to him, in that it enabled him to divide life into two parts, reality and appearance, the world as it is and the world as it is viewed by the vulgar, and then to unify both once more in his criticism.

Truly the *Travels* should be read beginning, not from the title page, but, so to speak, from the birth of Swift. Only thus can one attain to an awareness of the significance of the book. Nor, taking into account a consummate art, Swift's own power of suggestion, the mutual action of his life and the representative position of Gulliver, is

it to be wondered at if the success of the *Travels* bore little relation to any such awareness.

We have no space to dwell on that success[62] or on Swift's strange indifference in regard to the misunderstanding of his intentions.

But how did the *Travels* come to be universally recognised as a book for children? Such is their fame even to-day, and grown-up people themselves are enthralled only by the ludicrous images, and give no thought to the significance of the allegory, as they do for instance when reading Bunyan and Dante. Swift was responsible for this primary error. He himself let the *Travels* pass for a joke, for a pun even, and submitted without question to the persons about him who carried on the pun, calling themselves Yahoos and adopting a sort of Gulliverian language[53]—a good example of the hold which pointless joking had upon the wits of the age. He himself sent to Mrs. Howard a trinket in the form of a small crown, supposed to be that of the King of Lilliput, and wrote to Stella in the character of Gulliver.

He may have felt a need of release from the hard necessity of that Swiftian world which he had conjured up, and may have found a kind of appeasement in divesting it of its bitter significance. Thus the misunderstanding began, with Swift more responsible than anyone else, as his dealings with his French translator, Desfontaines, show.

It was almost automatic that Illuministic France should misinterpret England, notably in the view which the French Revolution was to take of English political theory. In the case of the *Travels,* Desfontaines had to reduce Swift by cutting away all his English character; an impossibility, we must say, because the *Travels* are rooted deep in English life, and also in Swift's very English soul.—And yet in Swift's letters to Desfontaines

we find only criticism of detail, and not Swift " scarcely admitting," as Scot says, the apologies.[54] He is troubled only with such trifles as that Desfontaines called him an Irishman,[55] and he consented to the main transformations frankly enough :

Si done les livres du Sieur Gulliver ne sont calcules que pour les isles Britanniques, ce voyageur doit passer pour un tres pitoyable ecrivain. Les memes vices et les memes folies regnent partout ; du moins dans tous les pays civilises de PEurope : et l'auteur qui n'ecrit que pour une ville, une province, un meme un siecle, merite si peu d'etre traduit, qu'il ne merite pas d'etre lu.[56]

So be it ; but in this way it was that the book came to be considered as something separate from Swift himself. It is possible that Swift wished to give universality to his criticism with the partial object of making that separation—of detaching himself from a work which contained his deep personal anguish.

The modifications of Desfontaines were indeed sufficient to ensure the final misreading of the *Travels.* In the maids of honour scene at Brobdingnag, all the hard, horrified contemplation of Swift vanishes, and in order to add a compliment to the ladies a sort of moral is attached which could not possibly have been Swift's own, as all his experience went dead against it :

Je supplie le beau sexe de mon pays de ne me point savoir mauvais gre de cette observation. Il importe peu aux belles d'etre laides pour des yeux pergants qui ne les verront jamais. Les philosophies savent bien ce qui en est; mais lorsqu'ils voient une beauty ils voient comme tout le monde, et ne sont plus philosophes.[57]

It was rare indeed to find a reader who took the *Travels* in earnest, or who gave the book a true critical attention. Perhaps poor gentle Arbuthnot, so full of

human sympathy, was one of the few who refused to be amused and drawn along with the laughing crowd. He looked for a hidden significance and was therefore horrified by the satire of Laputa, and judged it to be the worst part of the book.

Laputa being of all parts of the *Travels* the richest in fancy, we cannot whole-heartedly give our consent to this view. The marvels of this part are not so much a logical emanation of the initial strangeness of the author's general conception as a spontaneous jet of fancies, directed, as is well known, against all scientists, and Newton in particular, whose favourable reports on Wood's coinage had angered Swift.

But this is not enough to explain Laputa—nor is it sufficient to remember (with Scott), in connection with the Academy of Lagado, Rabelais's Court of the Queen Quinte Essence.[58] Here we find a satire directed against science which is conceived as yet one more peril to the reason—the peril that comes from a too close examination of futile questions. For Swift this unnatural use of the reason (he never put his own reason to such use) is far worse than the lack of reason in the Lilliputians because more anarchistic, more destructive in its bearing on common virtue and society.

Laputa is at bottom a satire also on the new economics, as is signified by the allusions to the South Sea Bubble, and on the tendency of the new era towards that highly specialised science which Swift despised.

His predicament is that in which he found himself as the author of the *Battle.* He had never been a bookworm, and was rather at a loss in face of the complicated theories which now agitated the world. New philosophy and new science were for the public taking the place of the literature which Swift had all his life thought to be culture itself, the quintessence of human wit.

This new science was becoming a highly technical

thing. No ordinary cultured man could understand it, because it involved new modes of thought which required a professional training, and left the intelligent amateur at a loss. It was on this rock that even Berkeley's criticism of science foundered.

In Swift as a political man, ignorance led to open hostility, because for the political man science as a higher culture in all spheres, as a technical intellectual interest, is a perilous enemy. The political man must be prepared for all emergencies, must be ready to settle all possible difficulties. A high scientific culture produces new conditions in which the political man loses the upper hand, and by which his influence is cut off from the great part of the world.

Newton's diversions are indeed satirised in the diversions of the Laputians[59] and the unworldhness of the scientists at the Academy of Lagado. But so is the whole attitude of higher culture towards mankind and the State. Swift alluded only to mathematics and science, because he failed to see that even in philosophy there was a growing technicality, which was soon to make it caviare to the general man. Had he not already said in his youth :

> *Philosophy as it before us lies,*
> *Seems to have borrowed some ungrateful caste*
> *Of doubts, impertinences, niceties,*
> *From every age through which it passed,*
> *But always with a stronger relish of the last**[0]

And he sneers and jests, turns scientists into common cuckolds, research workers into cold madmen. They are men, Swift thinks, cut off from common mankind and doomed to self-destruction and to the destruction of the world.

For a political man such a position is essentially sound or at least sincere. We see this quite clearly

to-day ; allowance made for some vulgar, ostentatious Maecenas, the governing class feels a need to debase culture, to cut it off from its source of life. Only the practical side of science is encouraged. For constituted society, culture at its highest means very little ; and scientists and learned men are praised only when a stupid pride intervenes, and one of them becomes a national glory, like the member of a successful cricket team.

Swift expresses the matter with great honesty. A world of culture is essentially a world closed up in itself, a world where a special language is spoken, and a particular standard of honour is respected. As soon as the cultured man goes over to politics, he is virtually dead to science : this is not a " *trahison des clercs*" but is merely a consequence of the fact that mind at its best is irrelevant to ordinary society.

On the other hand, were culture to be given a primary importance, then all society should be controlled by a very restricted aristocracy of thought. There is no middle course : the philosophers are either to be banished from society or endowed with all the power. This is the profound wisdom Swift reached, starting from his juvenile criticism of Bentley and the learned high-fliers.

The fundamental equilibrium and compactness of even this apparently desultory section of the *Travels* is well indicated when, following the criticism of high-flying science in Lagado, where even philosophy (the logic hated so by Swift at Trinity) is criticised, comes the evocation of the ancients at Glubbdubdrib.[61]

The inherence of the third part in the unity of the *Travels* is seen to go even deeper when we reflect upon the fact that the Houyhnhnm is the opposite of the Laputan as well as of the Yahoo. In fact the Houyhnhnm is too far removed from the Yahoo to constitute a counterpart to this creature. His real counterpart is the Laputan.

So this section should not, we insist, be taken as something isolated, inserted by Swift to appease his desires of vengeance, desires of sufficient strength to give rise to a large construction like Laputa and the further lands. Laputa has its appointed place in the whole scheme of the work.

The third voyage indeed leaves no enduring trace on Gulliver. He has not even to re-adapt himself to reality, for this world is closed to the real world even geographically, as it is contiguous with known places and Japan. From it by insensible degrees Gulliver returns to England : just because Laputans are not meant for actual monsters, but only as slightly exaggerated cases of common humanity, such as might also be seen in England, at the Royal Society.

As if to redeem the balance created by the plausible humanity of the Laputans, the fourth voyage had to be the most distant of all—so distant that from the land of the Houyhnhnms the reader will be never let return. He has now seen the ultimate inner truth, *postscenia vita.* In his soul Gulliver never comes back ; he wanders lost in the Yahoo world.

He wanders alone. None approaches him, as after his other voyages, to see the small sheep or the great tooth. He has not completely returned because his very brothers are in the stables. He is closed up in his hard egotism, he cannot look at the world with the eyes of men.

He is now turning from a monstrous inconquerable world towards his dreadful home. Although no wife is expecting him, no son, no friend, yet human eyes are fixed on the homing ship. He is expected home—whereas he thought perhaps he had gone so far in the world and in hate that men would never find him more.

But inevitably he is found. Men come to trouble his growing solitude and they wake in him a dull desire of opening to the world. But as the years pass these grow scarcer and scarcer. They are shut out when his deafness returns ; when they can again make themselves heard, they trouble the incorporeal silence in which he had encased himself for his better isolation as he went farther and farther in Gulliver's world. Every land explored by Gulliver had furnished a new plate for his armour, an armour forged by the increasing dislike that was deepening Swift's incapacity to live in a community of men. So that every going down of the sun, as it stretched across Swift's window a great wall of darkness, increased his sad hope that no light would ever again penetrate, nor force upon him the necessity of living among men for another disconsolate day.

CHAPTER XI

THE RAT IN THE HOLE

ON THE THRESHOLD of 1728 Swift's own end is announced in a triple explicit : the death of Stella, the collapse of his final political adventure in England, and the summing up of his desperate philosophy in *Gulliver's Travels.*

A few pages will be all we need for the many years to come before his death. His life was at an end, and even if he did not realise this, yet he was already drawn, without knowing it, to announce his end. He dwells even more deeply than heretofore upon death, and after 1728 works only fitfully in a last spurt of polemical activity, which gradually exhausts itself in the course of eight years. He continues indeed to publish pamphlets, to write verses, but with a sort of desolate inconclusiveness in which we see nothing but a vague aim of pestering the world. He no longer hopes to correct the world. He is merely drawing the conclusions of his former tenets when he applies his leading ideas on Irish or Church politics to various happenings. It is not because he cares, but because it is less trouble to carry on the game, and to deal out the cards mechanically. The best he can do is to cut his losses.

The old times and battles of long ago, apologies for what he has written, particular ideas scarcely developed, these are the make-up of all his ensuing work :

I mention this passage (perhaps too much forgotten) to show how dangerous it hath been for the best-meaning person to

write one syllable in the defence of his country, or to discover the miserable condition it is in. . . . The distresses of the Kingdom are operating more and more every day, by very large degrees, and so have been doing for above a dozen years past.[1]

It is the acknowledgment of defeat. What is the spent warrior to do? Grumble, then pester and hurt " this vast and terrible world" where his influence has remained a voice without an echo. He sticks to the line given in *Gulliver*—definite attacks against specific enemies culminate in a general discontent with the world in contempt of foes and friends alike.

It is thus that the *Modest Proposal,* as Moriarty observed, may be said to be Gulliverian.

Here the children of Ireland are regarded as mere young, Yahoo young, beasts of the field, and to be treated as such. Absorbed now in the conprehensive contempt of their sometime patron, the futility of the Irish is assimilated to that of the Struldbrugs, and pulverised by that same hard, casual venom that distinguished *Gulliver's Travels.* The Irish, because they held aloof from his undertaking, and would not, or could not, take fire from his enthusiasm on their behalf, were no better than beasts, " *taxable et corveable a merci* " : fit for nothing but to be fattened for the table of their " oppressors." They had deserted from his ideal of the free man and his rights, they were Yahoos. The *Modest Proposal* is directed as much against the Irish as against the English, because for Swift the Irish had become an alien people ; the " brother subjects " of yesterday, they had seceded from his egocentric world, they were an incongruous order of creation with whom no serious relation was possible, they existed only as animals.

The *Modest Proposal* does not even give us the creeps ;

it is too dry for that. To feel its inhumanity, we need to meditate a moment after having read it, to see the contents as Swift, writing with such precision, self-possession, and persuasiveness, could never have seen them. He saw only a market for some very special kind of cattle, or exotic birds, whereas we incline to see in the first place mothers' tears, butchered babies, and a new Massacre of the Innocents. Ireland had become for Swift a far-off island of very strange, very stupid animals, which had only one way of maintaining themselves. He laughs at nobody, for there is nobody who could take such a joke with a light heart. It is no longer satire, nor even a strange flight of fancy. Swift really, for a moment at least, was drawn to regard his *proposal* as (in reason) irrefutable.

A long-drawn-out joke, *Ia bagatelle* erected into a system : in the *Modest Proposal* we see the deep influence of Swift's love of punning (a subject on which we have not yet dwelt, because we do not regard it as merely frivolous and occasional, or as significant of impaired mental condition) on his real work. We are now able to observe that such a taste is not a sign of impending madness, as many critics surmised.

It is odd indeed to find Swift turning to merriment at the time of Stella's death. But may we not conclude from this that the thing was not done for mirth's sake, or at least that he did not merely see in it a " good joke," something to laugh at ? It is stated indeed that at the best he only smiled, but never laughed outright.

In its most elementary form, this diversion appears as the famous mock language which he called " Latin-Anglo " and " Anglo-Anglo," i.e. :he making up of English sentences composed of ostensibly Latin words

Ys

which read like English, or of English sentences composed of senseless words, which yet carry the sounds of regular words with a meaning. A very stupid joke, in which, however, Sheridan played up to Swift,[2] and which is in direct relation to Swift's taste, so frequently criticised, for low punning. It is punning without a comic note. This enables us to maintain that Swift's "mirth" was love for the intellectual joke, a game with which to occupy his powerful and unemployed intellect, and if the habit of mirth grew on him, and took on worse forms in his old age, it was because by then he had no longer any useful way in which to use his intellect.[3]

Indeed we hardly realise how short of amusement Swift may have been. Everybody has the need of some amusement congenial to his mentality: Swift naturally sought for a diversion adapted to his highly cerebralised nature, such as a man of his type might nowadays find in a game of skill, like chess or bridge—and we are not sure that other men of genius may not have had even lower pleasures in the intellectual line.

On the other hand, puns and practical jokes are very near allied: we can see, for instance, a close proximity to the Bickerstaff joke in the lowest of the rhymed puns perpetrated in the company of Sheridan. It is only their total irrelevance and their deficiency in either literary or practical significance that distinguished these low puns from the fundamental idea of some of his best works, from the basic current of the *Tale*, of *Gulliver's Travels*, and the *Modest Proposal*. They are, we repeat, instances of cerebralism: the premisses of the allegory are fixed, and the necessary consequences are deduced.

By a bad pun we mean a pun without any real relevance, an allegory or a verbal image which remains

purely verbal. Swift's puns are a sort of satire failed, or, rather, an inferior potential nucleus of possible satirical works.

It is therefore possible to consider the *Modest Proposal* as a long-drawn-out joke, where the cruelty of the idea and the frigidity in its development are only strange because they are tragical. This cruelty, this development, show indeed that Swift had already lost, not his reason, as has been hurriedly surmised, but his hope.

At an earlier date Swift had described his fear of dying in Ireland in a rage like a rat in a hole.[4] We would do well to reflect on the terms of this figure—the poor brute endeavouring to come out, and being always thrust back into its hole. He struggles, since he cannot emerge, to enlarge the limits of his prison, but it is of no avail. At last he feels both his trap and the outer world as a mysterious power : he no longer feels the reasonableness of fighting against a coherent world and human wits, but, as it were, feels as though he were fighting against an obscure hostile force. He is not mad until he attributes substance to this adverse force, and yet he is deeply severed both from his prison and external things, and he gradually cultivates such a feeling of difference as prevents him from considering either as a part of his clear, logical world.

The life of the small town, the restricted society of country places, often has this effect on a spirit full of initiative which will not bring itself to compound with pettiness and decay. For such a spirit the provincial people around grow really inhuman ; they cease to represent a common reality, they are mysterious because incomprehensible, and therefore strange beings—inhuman beings, in a word. When the victim feels himself trapped and exiled to this point, and gives vent to his feeling, the little people around him are apt to think

him mad, as the Irish did Swift. And even the world at large which has no direct experience of the horrors of small town-life, its kindergarten mentality, provincial cant, may denounce as a madness the conception which a sane man forms of it all,[5] the more so if that sane man is as unrelenting and energetic as Swift was in the face of that life and that mentality.

To a finer conscience outside, the prisoner in the hole is terribly in the right. The satisfied inhabitants of the hole are indeed scarcely human as we understand humanity, because they have lost the first condition of humanity : initiative, the faculty of development, action, continual movement towards higher forms. They are resigned because they *have* resigned—they have withdrawn from the commonwealth of men.

But even this position is too vital to be Swift's at the end of his career. From the bitterest satire ever aimed at two countries together, Swift lapses in a few years into mechanical punning, the end of all his endeavours. When he had lost all interest, he was bound to find in his past inventions and his new inventions a passing amusement : the explosions become mere fireworks. A firework is that *Examination of Certain Abuses, Corruptions, and Enormities in the City of Dublin* where restrictions in the spirit of the irony correspond to Swift's superficial sense of social welfare, as shown in the essays on particular subjects of slight importance which were the works of his last years. We really feel that the pen of the craftsman is tired. He writes a few lines, either of praise as from an aloof authority, or of insult from an open and a bitter, a despairing and a despising, enemy.

But he could still be stimulated by one last question of public interest.

It was a question with which he was familiar from of

old, and which he treats, at least in part, in a series of constructive and coherent pamphlets. After some twenty-five years, the old dispute about the Test rouses him to a last display of energy. In 1719 a Toleration Act, such as obtained in Scotland, had been carried into law, with the assistance of Walpole's Irish Bishops ; it greatly relaxed the grievances of the Irish Dissenters. But Walpole, urged by his English Nonconformist supporters, was anxious to do something more for Irish Dissent. Swift retorted with all his old powers of satire, lampooning Walpole, and discrediting the sects in his *Verses on Brother Christians and Fellow Christians,* and *Reasons for Repealing the Test in Favour of the Catholics,* in which, as Scott points out, there is more than a suggestion that the Catholics are better deserving of relief than the Nonconformists.

At the opening of this period of his life there was no one whom he could trust in political matters. Old Archbishop King, who had always stood out against the claims of the Dissenters, if only on the grounds that it was essential to maintain the legal identity of the English and Irish Establishments, was dead at last. Hoadly, a famous Latitudinarian, occupied the See of Dublin, and an avowed Arian was Bishop of Deny.[6] Ireland seemed to be fated to become the *corpus vile* of experiment in religious toleration. In 1731, the Irish Bishops introduced two Bills into the House of Lords, the one to enforce clerical residence, the other for the sub-division of small livings. To what extent these measures were well meant must remain doubtful. Compulsory clerical residence, however, as Swift showed, would have empowered the Bishops to ruin a country clergyman with a stipend of £55 by forcing him to erect a manse house at a cost of £77. It is true that the more ambitious clergy used frequently to desert their country cures, and come to Dublin, the only place where they could hope to

further their interests. But as Swift had already pointed out in 1723, in his *Arguments against the Power of the Bishops in Enlarging Leases,* the charge of non-residence in the majority of cases was a mere technicality. The poor parson, unable to live on his glebe, had no choice but to take lodging in the nearest village, whereupon he was deemed non-resident.[7]

The Commons, largely as a result of Swift's expostulations in his *Considerations upon two Bills* (1731-2), rejected the Bishops' proposals. But the Lower House was the next victim of Swift's wrath, when it introduced a measure for settling the tithe of hemp and flax by a modus. This Bill seemed designed to encourage the linen manufacture (largely in the hands of the Ulster Dissenters) at the expense of the Church, which was to lose two parts in three of the legal tithe in hemp and flax. There had been a feud of long standing between the clergy and the landlords over the tithe of agistment ; the Commons supported the landlords, whereupon Swift composed his ferocious verses on the Legion Club, and asserted furthermore that " every squire, almost to a man is an oppressor of his clergy, a racker of his tenants, a jobber of all public works, very proud, and generally illiterate." The tithe of agistment ceased to be exacted, which cost the Irish Church more than all Swift's efforts had gained for it in Anne's reign. Swift now viewed the Irish Parliament with loathing, and washed his hands of Irish nationalism.[8]

No later than 1732, he began to look upon all his former zeal as the most utter folly. Although he had succeeded " absolutely in one article" (the matter of Wood's halfpence), all that remained to him was " the love of the Irish vulgar," and " one or two signposts of the Drapier in this city, besides those that are scattered

about in Irish country towns, and even these are worn out." He thought of Ireland only as a place where his own Church and the entire poor community were called upon to suffer a peculiar misery.

Yet at times he seems to be verging on his old leaning towards " ascendancy/[5] exempt from all spirit of nationality. " Some," he writes to a friend in England, " are grieved to find you make no distinction between the English gentry of the Kingdom, and the savage old Irish, who are only the vulgar, and some gentlemen who live in the Irish parts of the Kingdom ; but the English colonies . . . are much more civilised than many counties in England.[5,9] This does not mean that he is reconciled to England, but rather the reverse. When he writes for local readers we find him denouncing the same " English of this kingdom " as illiterate. His purpose here is to make a distinction between the gentry of England and that of his own country, to the disadvantage of the former ; just in the same way in his letter to Wogan quoted elsewhere, he extols the " savage Irish " at the expense of the English lower classes. The offence to English arrogance is explicit in either case.

It is true that Swift's last years coincided with a considerable growth of culture and of public spirit among the upper and middle classes in Ireland.

What interests remained to him now, beyond the defence of his Church and this cultivation of old and frequently conflicting antagonisms ? He was reading books as late as 1739, criticising them ably, and even doing occasional writing. But his old English friends were fast vanishing. Gay died in 1732, Arbuthnot, Lady Masham, and Peterborough in 1735, Bolingbroke and Pope remained, but his only relation with them was through the medium of a scanty correspondence.

Already the literary vultures were in position, the first

grisly brood of biographers and memorists : Delany, Mrs. Pilkington, Orrery, Amory, Deane Swift, the gossips who were to descant on his habits, manners, and state of mind during the last years. But these, with the exception of Delany, who was an old acquaintance, were not real friends, but parasites, sycophants, and self-seeking intruders. Sheridan, having lost the living in Cork which he had obtained through Swift's credit,[10] settled for a time in Dublin, and then left to take up his appointment as principal of the Free School in Cavan. Here Swift paid him a visit, and caused a great flutter in the corporation, whose advances, however, he repulsed without ceremony. Sheridan was Swift's chief Irish favourite, and when, after a brief term of office, he sold his school he continued to be made welcome at the Deanery until Mrs. Whiteway's intrigues caused a breach between him and his patron.

The country friends, such as Atchison and Rochford, gradually dropped out of his life, as his health confined him more and more to the Deanery.[11] Stopford, whom he continued to esteem, was Bishop in far-off Cloyne. But at least he still had Delany, Chancellor of Christ Church, who, like Sheridan, owed his preferment to Swift, and was duly grateful.[12] Delany had been left well-off by his first wife, and his second wife, the famous Mrs. Pendarves, added lustre to the hospitality which the Dean enjoyed at Delville, near Dublin. Though Swift always sided with Sheridan when he quarrelled, which was frequently, with Delany, yet he continued to dine with the good-natured theologian, and even to act upon his recommendations, as when he organised a subscription for the ridiculous poems of Mrs. Barber, wife of a woollen draper. This lady was pleased to represent her failure to take London by storm as yet a further affront to Ireland, and one deeply resented by Swift. The Pilkingtons, an obscure clergyman and his pretty and

dissolute wife, were involved in this grotesque affair. Scott damns this couple as " deficient in common decency, impudent and undisguised profligates " ; but at least Mrs. Pilkington was a better poetess than Mrs. Barber, and Swift did not cast her off until her final social disgrace. Her portrait of him[13] respects all the *chiaroscuro* of his temper, oscillating between the pleasantly eccentric and the ferocious, and visiting her little acts of insubordination with every degree of " severe pinch.[55] But she vindicates him as an Irishman (" He thought it a great blessing that all his hopes of preferment were at once cut off in so much that he had nothing to tempt or mislead him from Patriotism "), and as a man of religion (" Part of the Dean's behaviour on this occasion, a service at St. Patrick's, was censured by some as favouring Popery, which was, that he bowed to the Holy Table ; however, this circumstance may vindicate him from the wicked aspersion of being an unbeliever, since 'tis plain he had the utmost reverence for the Eucharist").

He is pestered by his relatives, but he sends them away, mindful of his old maxim not to have his kin about him. The peculiarities of his domestic life are the talk of the town, the cringing and flattery which he exacts from all and sundry. Amory, who afterwards made a name for himself as a fantastic writer, would not enter the house, but, being curious to meet the Dean and " study his soul," contrived to join him on his rides and walks " without seeming to know that he was the Dean." He was " proud beyond all other mortals that I have ever seen," yet seemed glad to " have any rational man to talk to," and especially when the conversation turned on people and parties and the civil and religious history of England.[14]

But now Swift, full of years and infirmities, is beginning to require intimate attendance, and he is reluctantly obliged to admit certain members of his family. " The young gentleman who delivers you this lies under one great disadvantage, that he is one of my relations, and those of are of all mortals what I despise and hate, except one Mrs. Whiteway and her daughter."[15] This passage occurs in a letter of introduction that he gave to Deane Swift. All his intercourse at this period is through the medium of Mrs. Whiteway or (more rarely) Deane Swift, and of necessity, for his memory is greatly impaired, to what extent no one realises better than himself. There can be no question of the lucidity of a mind that is able to measure the decay of its own faculties.

For all the homage that is paid to him, as to an ancient half-obliterated monument, he himself is cut off from the world. To him now, as he enters the nadir, appears the punctual raven, Lord Orrery, an obtuse and malignant young man, who, having gained access to Swift by exploiting his weakness for puns, proceeds to furnish himself with letters of introduction to London celebrities.

But it is clear from Swift's last letters that he was not taken in. The letters of recommendation he wrote for Orrery are a sufficient testimony to the accuracy with which he had taken the measure of the vulgarian. But even an Orrery was better than nothing in the solitude of the last years.

For no doubt he retained, up to the final collapse, a capacity to enjoy the company and conversation of his friends and the glimpses they afforded of a receding world ; but it was overridden by the giddiness, the deafness and loss of memory, which precluded the possibility of any kind of intercourse except the most momentary.

The solitude closes round him. The final episode of his

relations with poor Sheridan is proof conclusive that his household were determined to keep his friends away from him. The expulsion of the ailing Sheridan from the Deanery by Mrs. Whiteway is a flagrant instance of her culpability in this respect.

This creature in the place of Stella ! Poor Presto ! She contrives to flatter herself in her letters, and yet she emerges at best from them as the trivial common intruder.[16] She looks after the Dean's correspondence, and weeps for him copiously in public. But everything she says and writes is rank with a stupid pride at having secured the monopoly of protecting the great old man. She throws herself so forward that the tributes of most of her contemporaries may be set aside as valueless. Swift's last letter is dated 1741 ; but for some years previously she had been Swift's only means of communicating with his friends. She darkens the last years of his life, and was no doubt responsible for the more obscure transactions of this final period.

Swift was decaying fast—the upshot, according to various critics, of the insanity which they allege was lurking in his mind for many years.

But this is a view which we have been at particular pains to refute throughout this biography, and, we make bold to assert, successfully. So that now we need only pause to enquire into the grounds, if any, for supposing that these signs of decay represent the sudden outburst of an insanity which had only been waiting for an occasion to declare itself.

In the first place, we should remember that he had now reached a great age, and that it is normally a matter of admiration when a man well past seventy has retained his mental faculties unimpaired. Even total loss of memory is compatible with perfect mental lucidity ; we

see examples of it every day. Loss of memory is not loss of mental balance.

Furthermore, it was not merely loss of memory that precluded Swift from human intercourse, but deafness as well. And it was natural that this enforced isolation should have had an effect on his behaviour, precisely as it would have done in the case of a man still in his prime.[17]

The issue is confused by the fact that Swift, in many of his letters and conversations during his last years, is understood to have expressed a fear of madness. As far back as 1717 we find the incident recorded by Dr. Young of Swift's behaviour in the course of a walk near Dublin : he suddenly stopped short and " was seen fixed as a statue " in contemplation of a venerable elm " which in its uppermost branches was much withered and decayed." He pointed and said : " I shall be like that tree, I shall die at the top.[55]

This episode has been grossly misconstrued. What he feared was idiocy, senile decay,[18] not actual insanity. This appears in his own words : "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.[5519] His founding a hospital for the insane is not to be taken as another reference to his fear of madness. The poem in which he announces Ireland's need of a Bedlam is nearer the truth :

He left what little wealth he had
To build a house for fools and mad ;
And show by one satiric touch
No nation needed it so much.

He was so far from being preoccupied with a premonition of raving insanity that he actually referred to his illness as the one " which will at last cut me off,[3,20] and

this is what happened in effect, for even his final incapacity for speech may simply have proceeded from an inability to remember the sounds of words, as often happens in cases of deafness.

With regard to the rages of his old age, on which contemporaries and subsequent critics founded their diagnosis of insanity, it would be well to remember that Swift was never precisely a sweet-tempered man. We have the reminiscences of his friends and his own epitaph to bear witness to the ferocity of his temper.

These furious rages were a fundamental element of his passionate nature, and when the tremendous tension of mind and will which had hitherto kept them in check was once relaxed, it was inevitable that they should break forth. The expression " mad rage " is a figurative one. A man in a rage may be sane, however insane he may appear.

A pitiful destiny for this intractable spirit to have been misrepresented to such a point by posterity, and dominated in his old age by his close companions, as witness the Wilson episode.[21]

The legal interdiction laid on Swift as a result of this sordid affair has contributed in no small measure to the theory of his madness. It is really more ironical than absurd to think that Swift was accused of madness by posterity, which justified in this way his aggressor and exploiter. It is reasonable to suppose that all Swift's associates were interested in having him put under the guardianship of the law. Wilson was called on to make some technical reparation for his senseless brutality, while Mrs. White way, who would naturally benefit by the guardianship of Swift, was careful to withhold his circumstances from even his closest acquaintances.[22] It was in August 1742 that a Commission *de lunatico inquirendo* was called, and Swift declared incapable of

taking care of himself and his estate, as being " a person of unsound mind and memory."

This may be insanity in law, but it is very far removed from insanity in fact. Swift was only utterly decayed, an old man and even incapable of speech. This lamentable condition was the outcome, not of an unbalanced mind, but of years of solitude. When a man is shut away from all human intercourse by incessant deafness and giddiness, when his memory is gone and his surroundings uncongenial, he is bound to suffer more profoundly from senility than the man whose old age takes a normal course. The report of the Lunacy Commission shows that he was considered *a responsible person*^ capable of attending to his business, until May 20th, 1742 ; that is to say, after half a century of giddiness and deafness, and some years of total loss of memory, alone in a hostile world, his friends long lost, and the aims of a lifetime defeated. The sanest of men might go mad in such circumstances.

There is practically no hint of real madness in the findings of the Commission, nor yet in those of the *post mortem* and the final examination of the skull, which revealed no definite signs of pathological abnormality.

Note.—In 1745, the skull was opened by Mr. Whiteway, in the presence of Dr. Nichols, surgeon-general to St. Steevens[5] Hospital, and of Dr. Battan, both of whom are mentioned in Swift's will. Dr. Lyon describes the sinus of the cranium as being loaded with water (MS. notes to Hawkesworth's copy). Ninety years later, at a time when the foundation of St. Patrick's were flooded, the tomb of Swift and Stella was again opened, and a second phrenological examination made. Houston found inequality in the thickness of the walls, and deep marks of the arteries of the dura mater on the arch of the cranium, indicative (he thought) of a constitutional abnormality of the brain, and a chronic cerebral affection. Hamilton was of the same opinion. Skal believed that Swift's skull passed

through various modifications of structure, and degenerated in the latter part of his life. *(London Medical Gazette,* October 24th, 1835.) Sir William Wilde's book, *The Closing Years of Swiff s Life,* appeared in 1849. He studies Swift's letters, and those of such friends as Lyon and Delany, and finds no grounds for a diagnosis of madness, hereditary taint, or venereal disease. His malady led to paralysis, and it was only then that " the brain, already weakened by senile decay, at length gave way. . . . It was simply an accidental, organic disorder which—though defying treatment—was perfectly localised."

Moreover, the record of his last years, composed of the testimony of ignorant and interested persons, is necessarily suspect. Consider, for example, the grotesque anecdote of Swift's eye swelling out of the orbital cavity, causing him such agony that he had to be restrained by sheer force from tearing it out. Finally, it seems, the eye returned into its place.[23]

Yet it is on the strength of such evidence that Scott asserts that his " first state was of violent and furious lunacy . . . of outrageous frenzy."[24] Now it may be shown, by a closer examination of dates, that there is no place for a period of frenzy.

Dates and events have come down to us in the most appalling confusion, as is evident in Leslie Stephen's treatment of this very point. He surmises, for instance, that Swift was already mad when he wrote his famous letter of July 26th, 1740 ; but, at the same time, he allows that the writer was still subject to " momentary gleams of his former intelligence "[25] ; thus accounting for the witty epigram on the building of a magazine :

Behold a proof of Irish sense !
Here Irish wit is seen !
When nothing's left that's worth defence
They build a magazine.

It is as good as anything of Swift's—and, at the same time, the work of a dangerous lunatic !

Furthermore, this supposedly frenzied madman was only brought before a Lunacy Commission two years after the alleged frenzy. In the meantime, he was left free, as appears in the *Exhortation* of January 28th, 1741, to administer his estate and Chapter. In this *Exhortation* it is the old Swift at his best, enjoining the Chapter to give a wide berth to a certain " Club of Fiddlers." Yet this *Exhortation* has actually been adduced as evidence of his madness ! It is obvious to the most casual reader that it is, on the contrary, a most sensible, opportune, earnest, and dignified protest against a stupid abuse practised by his ecclesiastical inferiors.

On the other hand, Swift's decay left him a prey of many wretched vexations. There was perhaps no actual exploitation, but he was certainly the victim of many base and shady tricks. The incident of his reconciliation with Mrs. Whiteway, following a quarrel that seems to have originated in her dismissing certain of his friends,[26] shows that she managed things without consulting the Dean, and renews in us the suspicion that Swift's silent consent had not been obtained when she sent away the unfortunate Sheridan, as has sometimes been alleged. The theory is that Swift contrived the dismissal in such a way as to obviate any charge that might be brought against him as the responsible party ; whereas, in fact, we have every reason to suppose a direct action on Mrs. Whiteway's part. Hers was the last assistance on which he could count, and she forced him to choose between it and Sheridan's company.

The interested testimony of the people who were about Swift in his decline are definitely out of court. These people were in one way or another all bound to Mrs.

Whiteway. Read her letters to Orrery, stinking of secrecy and *entre nous.*[21] She disposes of Swift's own correspondence as she sees fit, not that he was incapable of deciding for himself, but in virtue of her self-assumed prerogative to overrule the wishes of a failing man. Thus she writes : " I hope there is an end of this vexatious affair, if blabs will not mention it again to the Dean, who has quite forgot it"[28]; and she repeats "once more . . . my concern, that I have not power enough to prevent their being given to Mr. Faulkner,"[29] and she boasts of the Dean's permission—which makes it clear that it was Swift's loss of memory and his infirmities of old age, not his insanity, which enabled her to have her way.

Such was the position up to 1741 : an old man in a terrible condition of suffering and decay, who may have fallen into justified passions when he perceived the exploitation and the secret intrigues to which he was subjected. We cannot avoid the suspicion that all the available witnesses spoke of mad outbursts, because the real interest of Mrs. Whiteway and her fellow-ravens was to palliate the provocation which drew Swift, in the rare moments of lesser deafness and of returning memory, to say what was in his mind. The polemic after his death on Orrery's *Remarks on the Life of Swift* was due not only to a spirit of justice on the part of Swift's friends ; it was a conjuring up of contrary evidence against the version of Swift's last years given by Mrs. Whiteway and her party.

The hard fate of Swift, pursuing him even beyond death, is now clearly visible. Even his apparent champions had an interest in deeming him insane—and yet he did not have, while he lived, the attention and care which are usually given to a madman.

When Mrs. Whiteway narrates : " I was the last person whom he knew, and when that part of his memory [?]

failed, he was so outrageous at seeing anybody, that I was forced to leave him. ... So that all the attendance which I could pay him was calling twice a week to enquire after his health.[30]

But this is incomprehensible. Why did Mrs. Whiteway abandon the Dean ? Merely because he was outrageous ? Are we then to suppose that he was left completely alone, or did someone remain to attend to his humbler needs ? If such an office was possible, as should have been the case, who was more fitted for it than Mrs. Whiteway ? Then why did she not remain ? Because the very sight of her was sufficient to send him into a rage ? It is quite possible that Swift could tolerate the presence of some impersonal retainer, but not of an individual who had slighted and offended him so grievously as Mrs. Whiteway.

There was no actual insanity. There was an increasing debility of memory which, aggravated by his deafness, gradually destroyed his faculty of speech. The probabilities of his case have already been sufficiently defined by Bucknill,[31] who speaks of dementia with aphasia. But dementia here is to be understood as a form of idiocy, and not as madness ; it does not imply an actual, lasting, complete, steady obliteration of all the mental faculties. It was not an actual aphasia,[32] because Swift still spoke in a sometimes comprehensible way. It was a genuine case of pure loss of memory, resulting in a full senile movement towards complete imbecility. Those who have spoken of madness have been led astray, either by interested evidence, or by insufficient medical knowledge. And we have even a precise indication of the truth in the letters of two men who were really acquainted with his condition : thus Orrery, writing to Deane Swift in 1742, only speaks of the " effects of his loss of memory.'[533]

We insist that Swift's decay did not involve impairment or deviation of the higher faculties, but only made their expression impossible, and so led to their gradual obliteration.

Consider the testimony in regard to his last years. In 1743, says Delany, he tries to find words to speak to Deane, but " at last not being able, he fetched a deep sigh, and was afterwards silent." In 1744 he tried to speak, and failing, said at last, " I am a fool." He was able to order his servant to bring him his watch, and when his servant tried to break a large coal, he could say, " That is a stone, you blockhead."

Aphasia, but not organic. He could not recall the way to produce the sound of words, he had lost the mechanical memory of words. It is even probable that his imbecility appeared more extensive than it really was. His memory alone was really impaired, and from such a loss there can ensue every appearance of the greatest decay.

This is indeed Swift's greatest tragedy. Possibly at the end he was able to think and yet unable to express himself ; certainly he was better able to think than he was to speak. All the other concomitant symptoms—his solitary eating, his maniacal ceaseless movements—are clearly marked signs of decay, but are not pure madness. It may be that he was actually incapable of remaining quiet, or that the automatism of a nervous march was gaining upon him.

We see this man going to his appointed doom. . . .

He was alone, and he was still a man. He could even perhaps reason when this loss of memory, this aphasia, this decay, had cut him off definitely from any intercourse with mankind.

It is perhaps mysticism, but we cannot help thinking that the egotist was attaining in this way to his ultimate

fulfilment. Had he been mad, he would not have *been*. He would have gone completely out of humanity. Whereas he remained a man—alone. Terribly alone. Closed up in his hard rock, closed up in himself. He had cut out the world, but, as he could no longer dominate the world, he was himself cut out of it, to inhabit a void. It was a sort of hard lesson on the need to live up to mankind in order to remain one of its members. On the threshold of the chamber of the decaying solitary stands the old curse : *Va soli*.

As he had willed to stand alone because he could not encounter the world with patience, with sympathy, with humanity, he lost all that he had fought for, and even his last grip on the world ; he lost the divine gift of words. And when we consider the deep congruity between his egotism and his doom—his egotism, as it were, fulfilled against himself—we cannot think that this is a mysticism due to a one-sided view of the man.

We may be invited to make his fulfilment consist with his punishment ; but this would indeed be an incursion into mysticism. There is nothing left for us but to view his life closing in a rhythmic motion with his deeper self, his perdition corresponding with his deeper reality.

The man who wished to possess all, even the innermost souls of his friends—the man who would be master and king—died (quietly and without the least pang or convulsion, on the 19th of October, 1745) the poorest man in the world. He was destitute even of man's most fundamental power, the attribute of speech.

The directions he left for his funeral, though written many years before, are no less congruous with his irretrievable reality.

In his final egotism he had refused to be covered before death. He would have no perfume between him and death corruption. He would affront death, master death, alone.

And from the depth of his bier he stares in the face of death. As a poor man, as a beggar, he lies down—this which he perhaps thought to be the extreme challenge to fate, was only the expression of a bitter truth : he had awaited death terribly alone and terribly naked.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Notice that the most outstanding biographers (Scott, Thackeray and their followers) were either romantics, or dwelt in the romanticised and moralised atmosphere of the past century : they were thus better fitted to misrepresent a congenital anti-romantic like Swift.

2. The necessary culmination of this method is in such a revelation as, for example, that Swift was a " bundle of paradoxes " (E. Gosse, *Short History of Modern English Literature,* p. 220).

3. All our textual references are to the *Prose Works of J. S.,* ed. by Temple Scott, London, Bell : 12 vols. ; *The Poems of J. S.,* ed. by W. Ernest Browning, London, Bell : 2 vols. ; *The Correspondence of J. S.,* ed. by F. Elrington Ball, London, Bell : 6 vols. ; abbreviated respectively as W., P., *Corr.,* with volume and page specified.

4. We do not make a distinction between egotist and egoist, but only between egotism and selfishness. A vague suspicion of this characteristic of Swift has dawned on many biographers, but they see only the most obvious side of it, i.e. selfishness (see, for instance, Leslie Stephen, *Swift,* London, 1902, p. 164).

5. We are far from being in agreement with what Mr. Santayana has said in his war-essay ; but the egotism he there attributes to German philosophy is nearly related to our own conception of egotism.

6. The distinction is implicit in the person of Elmer Gantry, who " assumed that he was the centre of the universe and that the rest of the system was valuable only as it afforded him help and pleasure." The assumption is that of an egoist, the deduction to self-pleasure typical of the merely selfish man.

7. Swift's life might be taken as an illustration of this, in a special sense.

8. It should be remembered that Swift had literally neither friends nor near acquaintances in the classes which he represented with most success : the Drapier, the astrologer, the superior scholar, the sea captain and so on.

9. As final proof of this we might quote the sermon on brotherly love (W. IV. 138 ff.) which deals with every conceivable matter except brotherly love. The nearest Swift approaches to it is in his abhorrence of party spirit—on practical grounds, and he even attributes the brotherly love of early Christians to external circumstance.

10. The editor of the Aldine edition of the poems of Swift.

11. Gf. the ludicrous exegesis of Swift's works by the anonymous author of the *History of England in a Series of Letters,* London, 1766, IL 154.

12. Hence the long breaks in his productive activity, when he had no immediate aims.

13. England under the Tudors witnessed the appearance of a new generation of lay ministers of common birth : perhaps the last clerical diplomat was Robinson, Bishop of Bristol, at the Treaty of Utrecht. For the reason that it offered less scope, the profession of a clergyman was not so eagerly adopted as heretofore, particularly after 1688.

14. " Up to this date (1688) English literature had grown and flourished chiefly in the sunshine of Court protection and favour ; the public appreciation and sympathy were not yet sufficiendy extended to afford it the necessary warmth **and** shelter " (Craik, *History of English Literature,* ed. Tauchnitz, Vol. IL, p. 84).

15. Hence Swift was " the most inattentive to literary reputation " of perhaps all authors (adv. to Scott's ed., 1814), publishing almost all his work anonymously.

16. Swift*s saying that satire, even when motivated by the personal satisfaction of the writer, has not personal malice for its object, seems a sort of justification : even in satire due to public spirit Swift *had* personal malice (see W. X I . 318).

17. Horace himself was aware of the " superficiality " of satire *(Sat.* I. 4).

18. *Corr.* I. xxxii.

19. It is a style which does not play on sentiments : Johnson failed to see *(Lives of the Poets,* Aberdeen, 1847, p. 463) that not only " on common occasions " but even in writings meant for the public he " dictates more than persuades."

20. His idea of a good style is indeed *functional:* " proper words in proper places" (W. I I I . 200-1).

a1. Thackeray would have preferred Johnson as a friend. We can only say that tastes differ.

22. *Corr.* V. 15 ff.

23. *Corr.* I I I . 318.

24. *Ibidem.*

25. Just because he was an egotist, he never confessed his deeper feelings : this must be insisted on. He was sincere about others and in giving his opinion, but he never gave *himself* away. Altruists talk a good deal about themselves, precisely in consequence of their altruism, of their search for sympathy, as Mr. Chesterton says *(The Poet and the Lunatic).* But Swift never meant to talk about himself.

26. The lectures of M. Maurois on the aspects of biography are, it is scarcely necessary to remark, of no avail for this purpose.

27. In the sense previously mentioned.

28. W. X I . 115, note 1, for instance.

CHAPTER I

1. *Dublin Magazine,* Oct.-Dec. 1931.

2. Molyneux, however, used to speak of the superior antiquity of the kingdom of Ireland : his son even took an interest in the Gaelic language.

3. Moreover, there was already, even before Swift's time, an Anglo-Irish as distinct from the pure English or pure Irish. It was sometimes called " new English," yet it embraced many of Celtic name who had adhered to the Reformation, as well as many of the old English who had remained Catholic, and intermixed to some extent with the original Gaelic population. Trinity College, where Swift was to be educated, was already in the latter part of the seventeenth century producing the modern Anglo-Irish type, noted for its qualities of versatility and many-sidedness, as MahafTy points out *(An Epoch of Irish History,* p. 323).

4. *History of the King's Inn,* Dublin, 1806, p. 216.

5. So that he no longer inspires different nations with a contention for his birth : his aim, as Orrery ingeniously explains. Yet at least in their methods of controversy the modern Irish Chauvinists do not escape Swift's influence, so deep laid is this in Ireland.

6. Forster, 579, p. 7 of the volume.

7. But in a letter of his later life addressing Wogan, an Irish Jacobite exile, he seems to regard Wogan's class, " old English " Catholics, as the " true gentlemen of Ireland." Cf. Chapter VIII., p. 278. On the other hand, he often describes the English Protestant ascendancy as the " Irish nation." He had a political object in calling Irish Protestants Englishmen, as it made the conduct of the English Government towards them less excusable.

8. Prevost Paradol, *Etude sur Swift,* Paris, 1888, p. 8 ; Emile Pons, *Les Annies de Jevnesse,* p. 112 et seq. The later critics have, however, mostly contented themselves with observing that Swift did not want to be regarded as Irish. " He took unnecessary pains," says Mr. Walter Lewin, " to show that being of English parents, he was an Englishman, notwithstanding the circumstances of his birth " (edition : *The Prose Writings of Swift,* London, 1886, p. xviii.). And Sir William Temple describes Swift as English *(Corr.* I. 2).

The younger branch had moved to Canterbury in the latter part of the sixteenth century we partially reproduce the pedigree to avoid the necessity of further references

Thomas Swift, collated to the territory of St. Andrew, Canterbury, in 1569; d. 1592, aetat 57 — m. Margaret——(?)

William Swift m., 1592, in Kent, and succeeded to his father's rectory ; d. 1624 — Mary Philpott, an heiress

Thomas Swift, vicar of Goodrich and also of Bridstowe, both in Herefordshire ; d. 1658 — *m.* Eliz. Dryden — Catherine — Margaret

Godwin Swift of Ireland *m.* 4 times — Thomas *m.* a daughter of Sir Wm. Davenant — Adam — William — Martha : Mrs. Whiteway — Dryden — JONATHAN d. 1667 m. Abigail Erick; **d. 1710**

Willoughby Deane Honoria : Mrs. Swanton — Deane : author of the *Essay* — 13 other sons and 3 daughters — Thomas (the "little parson cousin "), rector of in Surrey ; d. 1752 — Jane : Mrs. Fenton Puttenham — JONATHAN : DEAN SWIFT

Emily Eliza Sarah Kathcrine

10. Pons says of Swift's own account of his family *(Anecdotes of the Family of Swift,* in W. X I . 367 ff.) that so far as it treats of ancestors, it is drawn up like a judicial document : simple facts chronologically placed except in the matter of the Rector of Goodrich, into whose portrait is put all the affectionate admiration of his grandson *(Les Annies de Jeunesse,* p. 112 n.). Deane Swift, in his *Essay,* writes at large on the family, and gives abundant details of its earlier history, not all reliable. He corrects Swift's *Anecdotes,* which represent William Swift as having been the Prebendary of Canterbury ; it was Thomas Swift, who died in 1592, who moved to Kent from Yorkshire.

11. On the question of Swift's relationship to Dryden see *Corr.* V. 452.

12. Swift describes his mother as from Leicester, and says she was descended from Eric the Forester, a noble Saxon warrior, a great commander who raised an army to oppose the invasion of William the Conqueror, by whom he was vanquished, but afterwards employed to command that prince's forces ; and in his old age retired to his house in Leicestershire, where his family had continued ever since, but declining every age and " now in the condition of very private gentlemen." The name Erick, sometimes spelt Heyrick or Herrick (the poet Herrick, d. 1674, was of this family), is a Leicestershire name, and it had ancient origins. But it is possible that Swift's remarks on the " declension " of his mother's people are somewhat deceptive. Some investigators hold that Abigail Swift was really the daughter of a butcher, Thomas Herrick, of Wigston Magna in Leicestershire

(" On Dean Swift's Mother," in *Trans, of the Leicestershire Archaological Society,* V. 26, by Rev. W. J. Dimock Fletcher).

13. W. X L 375.

14. W. XI. 387.

15. *Swift,* Macmillan, London, 1902, p. 3.

16. MS. note to p. 11 of Hawkesworth's *Life* in Forster, 579. Deane Swift says that the birth took place in Godwin's house *(Essay,* p. 22) and his version is repeated by Nichols, Spence, and others. Deane, grandson of Godwin, only knew his illustrious relation later in life. He may have wished to defend his grandfather against the charge of meanness brought by Swift. An unreliable biographer, largely preoccupied with the exaltation of himself and his family.

17. Her husband had been nominated Steward of the Law Society before his death, but when he died his widow had only a provision of £20 a year, and debts to meet. She petitioned the Law Society for assistance to recover a debt of about £120 due to her husband's estate for commons and cost commons from members of the Inn ; her brother-in-law William Swift had already exerted himself in this matter, but had been told that he had no authority to receive the money. In answer to her argument and appeal, the Benchers only agreed to balance a sum of money owed by the late Jonathan for commons to the new Steward of the Society against an equal sum from their late Steward's arrears : as to the £100 or thereabouts remaining, three-fourths of which were for commons served at their own bench table, its recovery was left to the " diligence " of William Swift (Duhigg, *History of the King's Inn,* Dublin, p. 216).

18. These notices are to be found in Swift's account of his family (see note above) and his first years. Deane Swift originally published the sketch written by Swift, saying that it had been given to him by Mrs. Whiteway, Swift's companion in his old age. Swift's MS. was copied by Cobbe, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, and used by Lyon (probably at Swift's request) about the year 1738 (Lyon was then engaged in researches concerning the Swift family) : it differs in some respects from Deanc Swift's publication. In both MSS. Swift appears as a reader at three years old : in his own MS. Swift wrote " two " in the first place, substituted " almost three " for this : then erased the " almost."

19. See Note 1, W. XL 376. Swift's changes on the MS. seem to show that he was uncertain about the legend and uncertain how to make it seem credible.

20. Whether she actually took this daughter Jane with her to Leicester is unknown. Jane was certainly in Ireland later on, for it was in Dublin that she made her unfortunate marriage with Fenton, the bankrupt of Bride Street.

21. In the *Essay on Barbarous Denominations in Ireland* Swift alluded to one of these " projections," an iron manufactory at Swandlingbar, Co. Mayo : " It was a most witty conceit of four gentlemen who ruined themselves with this iron project. SW stands for Swift, A N D for Sanders, L I N G for Darling, and B A R for Barry. Methinks I see the four loggerheads sitting in consult like *Smectymnus,* each gravely contributing a part of his own name, to make up one for their place in the iron work : and I could wish that they had been hanged, as well as undone for their wit " (W. V I I. 347). There is still a town, Swanlinbar, in Mayo.

22. He told, when an old man, a story of childhood, which we may place among his experiences at Kilkenny ; boys, said the school prospectus, could bathe and fish within the precincts of the College, and Swift certainly fished (it was his amusement later at Laracor) : " I remember when I was a little boy, I felt a great fish at the end of my line, which I drew up almost on the ground, but it dropped in, and the disappointment vexes me even to this day, and I believe it was the type of all my future disappointments."

23. Op. cit., pp. 190-1.

24. W. X L 376.

25. There is some controversy about the meaning of the *speciali gratia.* Originally it meant that what was substantially merited should not be refused because

of a failure in some requirement of the Statutes ; Swift, however, himself calls it a discreditable mark.

26. He continues simply : " The troubles then breaking out, he went to his mother " (loc. cit.).

27. Is this Flach's reference when he says that Swift travelled much in Ireland during his youth ?

28. " That this Swift was sometimes Thomas ... is quite possible, nevertheless what we know of Thomas later, his cleverness and prudence, his slight jealousy, his avidity for esteem and easy success lead us to attribute the greater part of the pranks to the future author of *The Tale of a Tub* " (Pons, op. cit., p. 131).

29. To be found in Vol. I . , p. 142, of the MS. *Whimsical Medley* compiled by Lord Newton Outler, in Trinity Library MSS. 879 ; published in appendix to the first edition of Scott's *Life.*

30. *Essay on the Earlier Part of the Life of Swift,* 1808.

31. An interesting point in the Jones or Jones-Swift production is the appearance in it of one Ridley, who was an informer against priests, and had been hanged : his carcase, anatomised, was in the College library, and the *frater scoundrellis* of the satire discovered in his remains is made to bear the freemason mask :

" *Unhappy brother, what can be*
In wretchedness compared to thee
Thou grief and shame of our society ?
Had we in due time understood
That thou wast of the brotfierhood,
Nor shameful tree nor dismal noose
By pardon for thee had got loose"

Cf. intr. chapter, by G. W. T. Chetwoode Crawley on Swift and Irish Masonry, to *Masonic Reprints,* by Henry Crawley, 1898.

32. For possible relations between Swift and Jones see *Corr.* I. 45.

33. W. V. 12-13.

34. Needless to say that perhaps all the facts of the case are distorted. Swift speaks of Lloyd not being made Bishop of Cork on account of public scandal, whereas some years later he wrote to Stella (W. IL 411) that Brown was chosen in the place of Lloyd on the ground of the opposition of the former to Lord Wharton, so that the whole affair was not a question of morality but of party politics.

35. *Corr.* I. 201.

CHAPTER II

1. Leslie Stephen (op. cit., p. 13) says the mother of Swift was a relative of Temple's wife.

2. *Corr.* I. 2 and note 2.

3. In 1690, Swift was with Temple at Sheen *(Corr.* I I I . 414, and Forster 579) ; afterwards Temple was established at Moor Park.

4. p. 1.13.

5. See *Edinburgh Review,* Oct. 1838.

6. The grandfather, Sir William Temple, had been Provost of Trinity (1609-26), and his appointment to that post brought the Temples to Ireland. Sir William's father was the bitter enemy of the Irish Catholics (see Chapter VIII.).

7. Had it been true, Temple might have been but a very poor diplomat : but it may be suspected that he was a hypocrite, as he was certainly considered insincere about religion.

8. Cambon, *Le Diplomate,* 1926, pp. 54-5.

9. As Temple himself says in his *Memoirs.*

10. The autocratic aims of the reform are evident from Temple's saying that he intended to give a preponderance to the royal interests *(Memoirs,* IL 40). Of the fifty members of the former Council, only a limited number (the Cabinet) constituted the real and secret Government of the country, and this had furnished a grave example of the perils of a restricted administration always liable to be purchased in block. The Cabal had discomfited Temple's whole diplomatic life, and it was against any possible Cabal that Temple now acted by restricting the number of the members, making them all responsible for the administration, and choosing them as to *one* half from the officers of the Crown, and as to the other half from the members of both Houses. In this way he gave to the Houses the sensation of an effective share in the government, and lessened the opposition of the Houses to the measures of the Crown. But this last advantage was cancelled by letting the members of the Council vote against the deliberations of the Council, and by taking no account of the possible divergences of the members of the Council. The fundamental item of this reform was the financial question : the persons chosen to constitute the Council were to have a combined income almost equal to the total income of the members of the House of Commons. The idea was not bad : since Parliament's most cherished principle was control of taxation, it was only just that the height of its income should give to the Council a superior authority. Theoretically, there are few defects : but it is very easy to see the impracticability of the whole scheme in the actual conditions of politics and administration, as Macaulay (loc. cit.) and Todd *(Pari. Gov.* VIII. 1) show.

11. Temple dedicated his *Memoirs* to his son (a very pleasing, dull young man he must have been ; his end shows this, and his father praised him for not asking from his parent more than what the parent was disposed to give), but it was **Swift** who appropriated this lesson.

12. See, for instance, *Corr.* I. 3.

13. W. VIII. 159, note 1.

14. W. VIII. 158.

15. Deane Swift affirmed that Temple revised the *Tale* (see in *Diet, of Nat. Biog.,* art. " Swift ").

16. *Essais,* French transl., Amsterdam, 1744, P. 125.

17. Loc. cit., p. 37.

18. Swift was in Ireland, it is thought, when the Battle of the Boyne was fought (June 1690), staying perhaps with his Uncle, William Swift, the " best of his relatives."

19. *Corr.* I. 7.

20. Leslie Stephen, 25.

21. W. II. 148.

22. This may really refer to a later period, for Swift speaks of it to Stella as **a** well-known occurrence (W. II. 149).

23. W. XL 378.

24. *Corr.* I. 7.

25. W. I. xx.

26. Collier, in his *History of English Literature,* notes, indeed, that in Swift's time poetry was a paying job, whereas it had ceased to be so by the second half of **the** eighteenth century.

27. *Ode to King William on His Successes in Ireland* (P. I. 14-15).

28. *Corr.* I. 361 ff. and 367 ff.

29. *Corr.* I. 364.

30. In Chapter **VII.** this question is more fully discussed.

31. This is shown by his *Ode to the Athenian Society.* He made **the mistake of rating the** literary importance of this society somewhat highly.

32. Sec particularly W. I. 179.

33. **W. V.** 316 especially.

34. P. I . 15.

35. Similar declarations can also be found later on ; but they were probably expressions of loyalty, so that nobody could inform Temple against Swift (sec *Corr.* I. 365).

36. P. I . 27.

37. *Corr.* **I I I . 118.**

38. P. I . 31.

39. P. I . 33.

40. P. I . 34.

41. Swift's contempt for poetry is best shown in *A Letter of Advice to a Young Poet* (W. X I . 93 ff). He could not even read verses passably (W. IL 88).

42. On this aspect of Swift's poetry see Rossi's " Essay on the Character of Swift " in *Life and Letters,* VIII. 46, pp. 352 ff. and further in Chapter VIII.

43. W. XI. 379.

44. *Corr.* I. 10.

45. W. XI. 379.

46. " A temper not naturally good, but under strict command," says Macaulay.

47. *Corr.* I. 12.

48. *Corr.* I. 10.

49. *Corr.* I. 13.

50. *North Br. Rev.,* L I . 388.

51. *Corr.* I. 14.

52. W. XL 379. It was perhaps a stay of eighteen months. Scott, p. 40, gives 1695 as the date of Swift's departure from Kilroot. But we have a letter written to Varina Waring from Belfast or its neighbourhood on April 29th, 1696.

53. *Corr.* I. 24.

54. *Corr.* I. 22.

55. Then coquetting in an insupportable way, *Corr.* I. 15.

56. See *Penstes,* etc., in the quoted French edition, and Swift's preface in W. **I. 218.**

57. " I am once more offered the advantage to have the same acquaintance with greatness that I formerly enjoyed, and with better prospects of interest," writes Swift in April 1696 *(Corr.* I. 18).

58. It was not a very deep affection, as the words of Swift at Temple's death might lead one to suppose : as Leslie Stephen (op. cit., p. 29) observed, these words are too conventional to correspond to a deeply felt sentiment.

59. This is further proved by Swift's being mentioned in a codicil made shortly before Temple's death, and not in the will made in 1696 *(Corr.* I. 59).

60. The comparison of the Ancient with the Modern was not altogether new as an argument of literary polemics : it is already dealt with in the 10th book of various thoughts of the Italian critic Alessandro Tassoni, published in 1620 (see in Tassoni's *Prose,* Bari, Laterza, 1930, pp. 298-340).

61. The second edition appeared in 1692, and the third in 1697.

62. *Digression sur les ancients et les modernes.*

63. See the dialogue between Socrates and Montaigne in Fontenelle's *Dialogues Des Morts.*

64. The same argument is to be found in Tassoni (op. cit. p. 300).

65. The polemic was exhaustive and implied a century of discussions : we reproduce here a bibliography not easily found. The polemic had already started with Du Bellay, *Defense et ill. de Ia langue franfaise* (sixteenth century). After the Perrault period Madame Dacier, *Preface de Vlliadc,* 1711 ; *Des causes de Ia corruption*

du gotity 1714, wrote on behalf of the Ancients. Terrasson, *Diss. crit. sur VWade,* and Fontenelle wrote on behalf of the Moderns. A middle way was followed by La Motte, *Discours sur lapoSsie,* 1707 ; *Disc, sur Homhre,* 1714 ; *Reflexions sur Ia crit,* 1715. The decision of Fenelon is contained in *Lettre sur les occupations de VAcadimie,* 1716. A right position was assumed by l'Abbe de Pons, *Lettres sur l'lliade de La Motte,* 1715. The last fires of the polemic : Vauvenargues, *Discours sur le caracUres des differents siecles,* 1745 ; Turgot, *Second disc, sorbonnique sur le progris de l'esprit,* 1750 ; Marivaux, *Le miroir,* 1755 ; Voltaire, *Les anciennes et les modernes, ou Ia toilette de Madame Pompadour,* 1765 ; D'Alembert, art. " Gout " in the *Encyelope'die.*

66. The quarrel between ancient and modern was inextricably oound up with this work as can be seen in Robertson's very interesting book on *The Genesis of Romantic Theory,* Cambridge, 1923.

67. Art criticism was dominated, in the second half of the seventeenth century, by classic models. Such were the leading aesthetics of Boileau in France and, with some mitigation, of Dryden in England. But whereas in France the great literature of the *siecle d'or* was mainly guided by ancient models and classical laws, so that praise of the Ancient coincided with valuation of at least the artistic form of contemporary writers, in Italy and England, the great literature of the immediately foregoing periods had grown out of all relation to firm classical laws. Praise of the Ancients, of their form and of their literary schemes, could not in England, for instance, account for Shakespeare, who yet overshadowed as a big, uncouth, unlawful form, the whole of English literature, even when he was scarcely read or played. At the same time, Bacon, opening, or, better, prospecting a new road to human thought, with the famous paradox that the Moderns are really the Ancients because they have at their disposal a longer space of time of experience and meditation, had fought for the pre-eminence of the modern spirit.

68. Op. cit., p. 237.

69. Note, by the way, that it was just the reduction of the question to a purely literary significance that brought about, even in England, a renovation of artistic theory through Addison : but, when he interested himself in this, Swift, although Addison's friend, had no vision of the subject, and did not perhaps even see that the new ideas of Addison had any relation to his *Battle.*

70. No need to repeat here the ridicule to which Macaulay exposed the work in the essay on Temple quoted above.

71. W. I . 19.

72. W. I I . 354-5.

73. A line that was also taken up by the French translator who in 1757 affirmed that the question was still *sub judice* (ed. La Haye, 1757, 3 vols.).

74. W. I . 19.

75. Of course, he then explains the hostility against the Ancient by the Modern's petty jealousy, as Boileau did against Perrault, saying, " Qu'il peut fort bien arriver . . . qu'un autcur vivant soit jaloux d'un ecrivain mort plusieurs siecles avant lui " (*Riflexions critiques sur quelque passages du Rhiteur Longin).*

76. W. I . 160.

77. Rossi deals with the rational side of the comic in his essay in *Riv. di Psicologia,* Bologna, 1926.

78. W. I . 16.

79. W. I . 182.

80. In the eighteenth century it was considered something of a success, as by the authors of the *Lettere piacevoli* (Venezia, Storti, 1792, p. 163).

81. The same persons are indeed satirised, and in the same vein, as for instance, Bentley, although (in the *Tale,* V. xi. 126) he does not fit so well.

82. W. I . 122.

83. *Corr. I.* 23.

84. W. I . 380.

85. *Corr.* I. 30.

86. W. I . 380.

87. W. I . 119.

88. W. I . xix.

89. Some twenty-five years later, Swift described his conditions with Temple, and gave an exact account of what he had gained through him ; he wrote disparagingly, but did not directly accuse Temple of ill will *(Corr.* **III.** 301).

90. W. I . **121.**

CHAPTER III

1. On the other hand, Swift's religious expressions begin somewhat late : the *Thoughts,* on which we shall base our reasoning later on, were written in 1706, when Swift was already approaching the forties.

2. Sidney Dark, *Five Deans,* London, Cape.

3. Tabaraud, *Histoire Critique du Philosophisme anglais,* 1806, cited by Pons, p. 43.

4. *Poems of George Monck Berkeley, with Preface,* The poet was grandson of the philosopher Berkeley.

5. Before Elizabeth, as Macaulay observed in the essay on Lord Burleigh, religion was deeply felt only by a few people.

6. W. III. 210.

7. *Journ. of the Pros, of the R.S. of Antiquarians of Ireland,* p. 2, Vol. VI., 5th series, pp. 113 ff., and *Proc. of the R. Ir. Acad.,* XXXVII., Sect. C, No. 13, pp. 263 ff. The more exhaustive work of Mr. H. Williams recently published *(Dean Swift's Library,* Cambridge, 1932) does not alter in any way our conclusions. Moreover, the formation of Swift's culture is better revealed by an early catalogue, like that given by Mr. Le Fanu, than by one giving the later composition of Swift's library.

8. W. III. 211 and *passim.*

9. W. I . 210.

10. W. III. 212.

11. W. III. 174-5.

12. W. I . 295.

13. W. III. 308.

14. W. III. 307.

15. W. III. 309.

16. W. IV. 135.

17. W. I . 12.

18. See particularly *Essay on Man,* II. 2.

19. Gosse (loc. cit.) speaks of " the passion of an isolated intellect."

20. Yet Swift did not accept the Illuministic tendency to " illuminate " everything by stripping it naked : his deep conformism was against it, as it is shown in W. I. 275, 8th paragraph. There was in Swift something of a middle-class morality in this sense.

21. Of this national peculiarity Mr. Jones *(Almanack fur Psychanalyse, 1*930) gives a sexual explanation which is very odd and therefore cannot be produced to account for Swift's deep " Englishness " in this regard.

22. W. III. 307.

23. W. **III.** 182.

24. In the *Mechanical Operations of the Spirit;* see also W. IX. 20.

25. *Essay on Man,* **II.** 1.

26. **W. III.** 316.

27. W. IV. 136.

28. P. **I.** 213.—Cf., for the origin of this **apparently incongruous idea, W. I. 275, 1** st paragraph.

29. *A Vision of Judgment.*

30. *Swift,* London, Macmillan, 1902, **p.** 45.

31. *Seven Philosophical Problems.*

32. W. III. 122.

33. W. II. 214.

34. W. III. 81 ff.

35. W. III. 66 for instance.

36. W. IV. 256 for instance.

37. W. IV. 254.

38. See also W. **III.** 62.

39. Swift's opinion on the problem is to be seen in W. **III.** 121.

40. See Nos. 153, 255, 506 (No. 255 with Swift's remarks) in the sale catalogue of 1745, reproduced by Mr. H. Williams in *Dean Swift's Library.*

41. W. III. 67.

42. *leviathan,* III, XLII. And Swift does not decide the theory of the divine right of Episcopacy (W. **III.** 54).

43. On the argument cf. W. IV. 11 ; W. IX. 137 and 230. He was against the " religion of magistrates," and had never thought of his Church as a critic of Bacon said of the philosopher, that for him the Archbishop of Canterbury was **a** sort of Minister for Divine Affairs.

44. W. **III.** 3.4.

45. Two or three members are necessary at least : see Swift's prayer quoted above.

46. Swift's ideas were perhaps only a little in advance of the times : in 1756, Warburton, in *The Alliance Between Church and State,* will say that the State must consider religion in relation to convenience and not to revelation.

47. *Corr.* I. 12.

48. W. III. 199.

49. P. I. 39.

50. The " hard duty " of a curate : P. I. 295.

51. W. III. 291.

52. A *living* minister of the Church, somewhat contrary to the common parson of the celebrated poem *Baucis and Philemon* (P. I. 66).

53. " Swift was to lose a bishopric in one generation because a piece of writing was thought too witty to be fathered on anyone else, and in the next he was to lose the credit of having written the piece because it was thought too witty to be fathered on him," says Forster, *Life,* 156-7, relating Johnson's doubts of Swift being the author of the *Tale.*

54. Swift thought it " a high point of wisdom to get the laughers on our side " (W. IX. 318).

55. Remember that we can exactly fix the moment of its composition : it was in the main written before or immediately after the *Battle*—say in 1696-8, and was possibly meant for private reading only. Yet it may well be that in the publishing something was adjusted, but not all. Swift, in the later *Apology,* gave 1696 as the definite date, and there is no evidence to disprove this statement, even if it seems designed, by insisting on the author's youth, to excuse him in some **degree** from the responsibility of having written it.

56. And yet Voltaire praised it as a Rabelaisian fancy : a strange judgment,

indeed, if **we take** into account Swift's **dryness, and the** absence **in the *Tale* of** luxuriant fancy in the sense of Rabelais.

57. *Corr.* I. 184, note 3.

58. W. I. xcv.

59. W. XII. 199.

60. Note that the Rev. Thomas Swift may have gone to Temple's only when Swift was at Kilroot, and that he did not remain there till Temple's death, so that the association of both cousins at Temple's was a very brief one *(Corr,* I. 59, note 2).

61. It can be observed that the choice of such an image for the Gospel shows that Swift had never the idea of an *internal* revelation.

62. W. I. 162.

63. W. I. 55.

64. W. XI. 289, note 1.

65. Thank you for nothing, Swift would have said, you must choose the one or the other : shall we compare Churches on this footing of equality ?

66. From a psychological standpoint, our endeavour to trace the intimate origin of Swift's idea is more interesting than the tracing of isolated allusions from various sources, as seemingly Guthkelch and N. Smith did in their edition of the *Battle* and of the *Tale,* which we had no opportunity to consult directly (see quot. in Williams's *Dean Swift Library,* p. 86). Our leading ideas about sources will be expounded further on in Chapter X.

67. *Decameron,* I. 3.

68. LXI.

69. *Nathan der Weise,* **III.** 7.

70. The only serious obstacle to our point of view on the *Tale* would be the attribution to Swift of *The History of Alar tin.* It appeared for the first time, as an appendix, in an edition of the miscellaneous writings of Swift in 1720 (W. XII. 135) : this edition is called by Nichols (W. I. xcvi.) the " Dutch edition." It expounded further the history of the Church of England, and cannot with any plausibility be attributed to Swift, who had completely and perfectly closed the *Tale.* It has never been imputed to him, and it is only a sort of summary of the successive sections, which have to deal in anything but a kindly way with the Kings and the Church of England. The satire on Henry VIII is perhaps consistent with Swift's opinion of this monarch (W. III. 304), but not the hard judgment on Charles I, whom Swift, perhaps only for political reasons, tended to admire (W. IV. 190). From the *History,* Jack, i.e. Calvinism, emerges best ; and if we consider that in this narrative (as in the authentic *Tale)* is inserted the summary of a digression on wars and so forth, we incline to the conclusion that this work is by the hand of some wit well acquainted with Hobbes's theories and more inclined to Calvinism than Swift was. The Calvinistic tendency is evident in the quotation of the famous bigamy case as the reason of the rupture of Luther with the Swiss Reformation. On the other hand, there is not even a proof of Swift's authorship in the resemblance to his style : we can discern in the style of the *History* something mechanical, as might be expected in an imitation. Further, Swift's allegory is only externally maintained : the rest of the story is based on other inventions, and Clothism goes astray. In the last lines there is an allusion to the author which Swift could not possibly have written ; and as a proof, either that the printer received **a** very imperfect MS., or that he saw the necessity of substantiating the authorship' of Swift, is the note that there were a number of gaps in the MS. to be filled in later. The only (but in fact insufficient) argument for Swift's authorship would be the use of the surname " Huff " which Swift later on gave to Vanessa in consequence of her bad temper *(Corr.* **III.** 56).

71. W. IX. 31.

72. The first volume was published in **1**700.

73. **W. XI. 381.**

74. W. XL 381. A hint of this can be found in the counsels of the secretary to Lord Berkeley.

75. A certain Bush, on whom he revenged himself in *The Discovery* (P. I. 42 ff.).

CHAPTER IV

1. Even William **I I I** did not at first base his politics on the Whig—and Marlborough was a Tory at the beginning of his career (Erdmannsdorfer, *History of Germany,* **IL).**

2. Swift says outright that he felt better in London because there he was handled apart from his administrative position in the Church : " When I am on this side, **a** certain pride seizes me, from the very different usage I meet with " *(Corr.* I. 228). He always confessed his ambition to live in England *(Corr.* I. 254), and even later on thought of retiring to Wales, instead of returning to Ireland *(Corr.* IL 312).

3. Sec in Chapter X.

4. Strange relations between a superior and an inferior, and especially for a man like Swift, so inclined to take offence at any superiority of tone in intercourse, **yet** this relation was not definitely impaired until 1727.

5. W. X L 128.

6. Avarice is not so simple a passion as it has seemed to critics to be. See Toussain, *Les Passions Humaines,* Paris, Flammarion, and his description of various types of misers. Swift does not answer to any of them.

7. It may be noted that Swift himself said his mother had " little or no fortune " (W. XL 375) ; something in any case, to enable her to live at Leicester, without Swift's regular contribution till later on.

8. For Swift's indifference, even to considerable losses of money, see W. IL 318.

9. His information in his *Memoirs 0/ the Family of Swift* (W. XL 381-2) is a little inaccurate ; and even with it and the help of his notes and letters it is not easy to retrace his movements with certainty, yet they are important as showing how much time he had to make acquaintances in Ireland and to assert his interests and his personality in England. Scott speaks of three voyages to England in 1701, 1702, 1703 (after the first with the nurse and the three to Temple's) ; Sheridan speaks of " yearly visits " to London (W. I. 332) in this period ; Temple Scott speaks of a visit totally devoted to his mother from May to September 1701 (W. XI. 128, note 1) whereas at another point (W. I. 228) he says that he went to England in company with Lord Berkeley. Yet it seems that he usually visited his mother first and then went to London (W. XL 381 for 1707). We have very few letters of this period, and only in 1707 the regular correspondence with King begins, by which we can observe his movements ; from 1 708 and more from 1711 we have a plethora of documents, and, as it were, a daily account of his doings.

To impose some order on the material :

From 1699 (June to July) till at least February 1700 he remained in Ireland.

In 1701 he went away to England (see Temple Scott ; from April to September, says Lyon) because he says that only from October of the same year he '* continued " in Ireland : so from October 1701 till April 1702 he was in Ireland : D.D. degree.

From April 1702 he says that for " near a year " (probably till October) he remained in England (from April to October, says Lyon), yet in January 1703 he had already returned to Ireland, and we can surmise that till the middle of April (he says he was present at a Visitation) he did not move.

Before the end of 1703 he went again to England : we find letters of December 16th, 1703, February 3rd, and April 20th, 1704, from London and this puts us **in a** serious difficulty, because Swift affirms that he " appeared " at the Visitation **of** January 10th, 1703-4. (Some doubts may arise as regards the letter to Tisdall **of April 20th, 1704, which is assigned by Scott to July 20th, 1706 ; but this does not**

mend the matter : in view of the precision on this point of Swift's dates, he had probably under his eyes the registers of Visitations and Chapters. No deduction can be made from the fact that the *Meditation on a Broomstick* was written in London in 1704.) Be that as it may, he was again in Ireland in August 1704.

From August 1704 he remained in Ireland, or went on a very short visit to England, because we find him at Trim in December 1704, then present at a Visitation and Chapters in January, February, March 1705. (It is to be surmised that Swift could have remained a whole year at a time in Ireland, because only once it can be presumed he did not make the " yearly visit " to his mother, as we have evidence of his mother visiting him at Laracor; see MS. notes in Forster, 579.)

From March 22nd, 1705, when he was at Dublin till the visit of January 1706 we have no record of his movements : but we cannot exclude a possible visit to England in the second half of 1705.

In 1706 we have evidence of his being in Ireland in January, April, June, August : if the attribution of the poem *Baucis and Philemon* to the year 1706 holds, and the occasion of the poem (two yew-trees at Chilthorne) implies Swift's presence there, he was probably in England, say in the autumn of this year.

In 1707 he was in Ireland till November (he quotes his presence to the Visitation in January and at Chapters in April, June, July, August).

Sailed for England on November 28th, 1707, and certainly remained there continuously till June 29th, 1708. He was then probably considered ** absent on the public business of the Church " *(Corr.* I. 252).

Returned then to Ireland, we find evidence of his remaining there. Although Swift notes that he was excused at the Visitation of January 1709 (that should be 1710), from the letters we cannot deduce that he went to England. He was present also in February, July, and August 1710.

In August 1710 he sails for England, where he stays for many years. He crosses to Ireland for some months (June-August 1713), when he is invested with the Deanery of St. Patrick's. His return takes place in August 1714, and from then on he will remain a disgusted guest of Ireland till his death except for two brief travels to England in 1726 and 1727. In any case, we are now dealing with his life till August 1710, and remit to another chapter the developments of his life and political activity from then till August 1714.

10. The *Tale,* published in 1704, was not widely known as his work, even if it was already attributed to him in 1 705, and, while a peril to his position in the Church, it had no effect on politicians.

11. On such accidental impressions and idle witticisms was built the conviction that Swift was *really* mad, as we shall see in Chapters V and X I .

12. This is universally recognised ; see even in *Diet, of Nat. Biog.,* art. " Swift,"

13. As by Lecky, in W. I. xxv.

14. We speak on the authority of Todd *(Pari. Govt.),* who urges that William I I I alone handled foreign politics.

15. The idea of politics as a play of influences by the great rather than play on popular opinion may possibly have been inspired by Temple,

16. A difference in party-acceptation of the term " liberty " begins only after the French Revolution, urges De Ruggiero in his *History of Liberalism.*

17. At bottom, that *"monarchic mixte "* of Montesquieu which De Ruggiero *(History of Liberalism)* styles an aristocratic republic. In the case of England before the establishment of the Hanoverian monarchy De Ruggiero's definition can hardly be applied.

18. W. I . 242.

19. G. Macaulay Trevelyan, *Blenheim,* 1930.

20. *Corr.* I. 33.

21. We have it also from Swift himself: " I remember when I was last in England I told the king that the highest Tory we had with us would make tolerable Whigs here " *(Sacram. Test,* W. I V . 15). See also Scott 97, and in *Corr.* I I I . 119.

Also in another place : " **The** generality of the citizens and gentlemen **of Ireland are** looked on as friends to the Whiggish interest " *(Corr.* I. 261).

22. *Corr.* I. 38.

23. And even in 1706 Swift speaks of party spirit (he who was **to** become such **a** die-hard Tory) with dislike and horror *(Corr.* I. 57).

24. *Corr.* I. 61.

25. See as revelatory the passages in *Corr.* I. 62 and 73.

26. The origin is to be found in Irish gossip about 1711 (W. IL 47), and the Bishop's doubts, of which more later on.

27. For the rest, Somers was the only man with whom he had any real intimacy (W. V. 337).

28. This is only an exaggerated way of exonerating Swift. His egotism caused him to enter into relation with Tories, and as his other interests were more in conformity with the party, and such was his tendency, he remained utterly loyal to the Tory party and his Tory friends.

29. *Swift,* London, 1902, p. 61 ff.

30. In *Life of Swift,* 2 vols., 1882.

31. Craik noted yet another direct and interesting reason for Swift's open rupture with the Whigs : the question of improvement of hemp and flax manufacture, which was being resolved to the disadvantage of the clergy. Some of Swift's struggles in later years had to do with similar cases.

32. *Corr.* I. 74.

33. We find evident traces even then of a friendly attitude to Tories : see *Corr.* I. 76 for the sympathetic judgment of Harley.

34. Another instance, the change over of Lord Cholmondeley, which merely provoked a little indignation from his previous comrades *(Corr.* I. 195).

35. W. IX. 288.

36. Lingard's *History,* Continuation by H. Belloc, Vol. XL, p. 48.

37. Characteristic is this passage, referring to the change in 1711 : " All who were for turning out the late Ministry, we now generally call Tories ... " *(Corr.* I. 254).

38. W. IX. 88 and 289.

39. Swift, observing things as it were from the outside, says that the " cant " words Whig and Tory were dropped in James's reign (W. IX. 285).

40. See quotations in preceding notes.

41. W. I. 289.

42. W. IX. 132.

43. W. IX. 154-5.

44. " ... as an Irish Protestant, he was not wholly typical of the English High Churchmen. He was more of a Williamite and continued to the end more heartedly hostile to the Pretender than many of his English Tory friends " (G. Macaulay Trevelyan, op. cit.).

45. Swift puts the thing thus : " I ever abominated that scheme of politics now (in 1721) about thirty years old, of setting up a moneyed interest in opposition to **the** landed" *(Corr.* III. 121).

46. *Corr.* I. 50.

47. *Corr.* I. 52.

48. See for instance *Corr.* I. 72.

49. *Corr.* I. 61, 64, etc. His efforts with Whig Ministers, it may be said in advance, miscarried because Whig promises " proved only **a** mouthful of moonshine " ***(Corr.* I. 222).**

50. *Corr. I.* **72,** note **1.**

51. *Corr.* **I. 70 and W. III. 3.**

52. In the *Tale* the *tub* is devised **to** amuse **free-thinkers** and **keep them out of** mischief: here Christianity has the same *tub* function, by keeping quiet potential enemies of the State.

53. Note the references on important points of the theory of State and Church to Hobbes, in relation to what we inferred in the previous chapter.

54. W. III. 63.

55. W. III. 69.

56. W. III. 75.

57. Writing at this time to Philips, he specifically denied that he was inclined to " free Whiggish thinking " *{Corr.* I. III.).

58. W. III. 56.

59. Who now possibly first gives occasion for the terrible enmity of Swift.

60. Therefore we can presume that the Whig policy was directly aimed at even in the *Sentiments,* of which the exact date is unknown.

61. *Corr.* I. 86.

62. *The Presbyterian's Plea of Merit,* 1733 5 *A Narrative of the Several Attempts made for the Repeal of the Sacramental Test,* 1733 ; *Queries* of 1732 ; *The Advantages Proposed by Repealing,* etc., 1732 ; *Reasons . . .for Repealing,* etc., 1733, etc. See Chapter X I.

63. W. IV. 16.

64. W. IV. 21. Liberty of conscience, yes, says Swift, but Dissenters shall never be " entrusted with power " (W. IV. 145).

65. W. IV. 20.

66. Congreve possibly helped to introduce him : see Leslie Stephen, op. cit., p. 56.

67. His reported handing *of Baucis and Philemon* (1706) to Addison for correction is significant of this status of a learner.

68. There is some uncertainty (W. I. 291, note 1) : Swift himself places **the** first publication in August 1707.

69. It was by some thought very good, so much so that the Count Algarotti in 1745 sent it to Italy as a proof of the excellence of Swift, styled by him an English Lucian *(Opere* of Algarotti, Venezia, 1792, Vol. IX., p. 55).

70. See chronological note above.

71. See Chapter V.

72. And in fact at the end he found himself*' disengaged in these revolutions " (W. IL 19).

73. *Corr.* I. 183.

74. *Corr.* I. 185.

75. Swift, perhaps, had not taken part, as he was in duty bound to do, because he judged Sacheverell an ignoramus, and thoroughly despised him (W. IX. 44).

76. *Corr. 1.* 165.

77. *Corr.* I. 156.

78. W. X L 387.

CHAPTER V

1. In *Brain,* Vol. IV., January 1882.

2. All Swift's declarations on the subject broadly agree. There are a few divergencies of date which do not prove that he was concealing the real truth, and which have no bearing on the nature of the malady. In his memoirs he does not speak of definite deafness, and only says : " Before twenty years old, by a surfeit of fruits, **[he** happened] to contract a giddiness and coldness of **stomach** . . . **and this**

disorder pursued him with intermissions of two or three years to the end of his life " (W. X I . 377). To Mrs. Howard in 1727 he writes : " About two hours before you were born I got my giddiness by eating 100 gold pippins at a time at Richmond, and when you were four years and a quarter old, bating two days, having made a fine seat . . . there I got my deafness " *(Corr.* I I I . 413-14). In 1736 he wrote : " I got a giddiness by raw fruit when I was a lad in England, which I could never be wholly rid of, and it is now too late . . ." *(Corr.* V. 300). And in 1737 : " In England before I was twenty [an inexactitude easily explicable] I got a cold which gave me a deafness. . . . Although it came but seldom and lasted but a few days, yet my left ear has never been well since . . ." *(Corr.* V I . 13). It can be easily seen that all these testimonies agree. It would take too long to provide the collateral evidence which points to the same date and symptoms of the beginning of the malady.

3. We take up Wilde's task anew, endeavouring to be more precise, but it must always be remembered that much evidence has been lost owing to the fact that only some of Swift's letters have been preserved. Of long periods we have no records at all, but his later statement, that he was never wholly rid of his complaints, enables us to surmise that in the chasms between documents things were going in the same way. The important thing is to determine the current of the malady, not to enumerate attacks :

In 1704 (February 3rd—*Corr.* I. 44) : " . . . so long and so frequently pursued with a little and paltry ailment of a noise in my ears " (probably a residuum or forerunner of an attack).

In 1708 he was taken by giddiness in fits (see W. X I . 382, *Corr.* I. 129, 147, 153), which, after false recoveries in the first months of 1709, continued later in the year, as he speaks (October 30th) of " a downright sickness, which, after a year pursuing, now, I hope, begins to leave me."

In 1710 till October he was well (W. I I . 41) ; at the beginning of November he had some fits of giddiness (W. I I . 43).

In 1711 the uneasiness continues, but the giddiness seems to have changed its character : after a fit in January he is giddyish, a little disordered in the head, but has no fits. The same conditions continue till April : he totters a little but can " make shift to walk " (W. I I . 100 to 166). It seems (from the *Journal* of April 1711) that deafness occasionally came (for Swift) at the same time as giddy fits. Only in September Swift notes that a little turning of the head makes him giddy : but till October we have no more fits. Continuing deafness on the left side (W. I I . 237).

In 1712 till February his head is very much out of order, but no fits (W. IL 330-42). Then a prolonged complaint of shingles *(Corr.* I. 325, W. I I . 332, etc.). Giddiness again in September : not violent, as he notes that after twenty-three years he has no more fits although more frequent giddiness (W. I I . 382-8). In November probably a relapse : in December for the first and only time he notes that a cold gives him giddiness (W. I I . 406).

In 1713 the old conditions continue (W. I I . 420-7). In March there appears to have been some relief *(ibidem,* 436), but the complaint recommences as he is going to Ireland, and is so bad that it incapacitates him from work until July at least *(Corr.* I I . 46, 48, 52, 55).

In 1715 only " cruel cold besides the common pains " (?) (December 15th).

In 1718 he appears to have been sick the whole year *(Corr.* I I I . 20).

In 1719 a remission perhaps after April *(Corr.* I I I . 29).

In 1720 he was sick of deafness for three or four days together every half month *(Corr.* I I I . 53). In October giddy too *(Corr.* I I I . 69) : Stella visited him at his house, and this suggests a bad condition and long privacy (P. I I . 32).

In 1722 " noise in the ears and deafness," which lasted a fortnight *(Corr.* I l l , 123).

In 1724 the deafness was insistent, and we find *the first hints* of giddiness coming together with deafness in September-October *(Corr.* I I I . 219) and December *(ibidem,* 225).

In 1725 both together in April *(Corr.* I I I . 234) ; some passing fits of deafness in May, July and August *(ibidem,* 236, 250 and 261).

In August 1727 he directly mentions giddiness and deafness and notes their coming together for the first time *{ibidem,* 413-14,439), although the giddiness seems the less persistent (W. X I . 398).

In 1728 deafness only on occasions *(Corr.* I V . 15, 19), but later in the year he had six attacks in eight months : the thing endured until March (not extreme deafness : *Corr,* I V . 54).

In 1729 partial relief: some deafness (May 17th) and never quite free from giddiness (August 11 th—*Corr.* I V . 89).

In 1730, but late in the year, the giddiness returns in full force (August 28th—*Corr.* I V . 161), and then becomes better as before *(ibidem,* 179).

In 1731 he mentions the continuance of this light sort of giddiness since two years *(Corr.* I V . 202, 233). It seems that later in the year he was worse *(Corr.* I V . 39°)-

In 1732, after the end of the attacks in the first months *(Corr.* I V . 390-404), there remains a little giddiness *(ibidem,* 409) and even later a swimming, but the hearing seems to have recovered much earlier.

In 1734 giddiness and deafness come together (W. I V . 265, note 3), and usually last a month *(Corr.* V. 95).

In 1735 there is evidence of long conditions of giddiness, and, for the rest, of good health ; fear of giddiness.

In 1736 the deafness is so bad as to disqualify him for all conversation ; giddyish state continuing.

In 1738 the giddiness seems less strong and there are still remissions in the deafness *(Corr.* V. 414, 433 ; V I . 5, 9, 13). By the half-year, all symptoms are aggravated, deaf and giddy ; for some months he is confined *(Corr.* V I . 42).

In 1 739 the deafness is without remission ; the giddiness comes only at moments. Then loss of memory and complete deafness, but not of constant intensity.

4. In *The Last Tears of Dean Swift.*

5. *Corr.* I. 44.

6. See note above for 1715.

7. W. II. 264.

8. This peculiarity alone is sufficient to make one doubt the existence of Meniere's complaint : see further on.

9. W. II. 234.

10. See note for 1727.

11. W. II. 382.

12. But Bath waters brought no betterment, whereas he was commonly cured by purging and vomiting *(Corr.* V. 37). See Arbuthnot's cure (Corr. I I I . 22).

13. *Corr.* I I I . 123.

14. Very interesting is his fear of having the gout in 1711.

15. For instance, Orrery and Mrs. Whiteway found him very well just when he was writing to some friends that he was sick.

16. *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets,* Aberdeen, 1847, p. 443.

17. Pane, in 1585, proclaimed that " les veroles vexes par Ia grosse vero!e perdent l'ouie par une grande douleur de tete." Syphilitic neurolabyrinthitis has a very rapid evolution in the secondary stage (Ramadier, *La syphilis auricolaire,* Paris, 1928). As for a tertiary stage, the troubles can then assume the aspect of Swift's complaint and have periods of remission and intermittencies, which would precisely bring about the increasing of the deafness lamented by Swift (op. cit., 32), either by a sort of angiospasmodic disturbance of the blood-vessels (76) or by the deafness being a sort of hysteric deafness (77), but such was not the case with Swift's deafness. Even tertiary syphilis cannot last so long without bringing about some deeper complaints. Errecart *(Revue Midic. Latino-Amer.,* No. 150, 1928) says that luetic neurolabyrinthitis is characterised by a sudden beginning and *deepening* gravity. He thinks deafness is the worst symptom, but in Swift's case this developed only later and did not cause loss of hearing by an acute process but by a slow one.

18. If the youthful habits that Beddoes attributes to Swift really had such appalling results, we should see more people than we do tottering about the streets in the manner of poor Swift. The characteristic nervous exhaustion from such habits is not limited to giddiness, nor does it endure as Beddoes supposed. He probably had the charitable aim of rinding occupation for more women than were available in his puritan time by offering an awful example of this particular abnormality 1 It is true that, supposing Beddoes is right, many things are explicable ; and Pons (op. cit., 58) praises Beddoes as being the first person to take into consideration, on this question of the malady, Swift's works, with the help of philosophical observation. But even Pons ought to bury this theory definitely. (Beddoes, *Hygeia, or Essays Moral and Medical,* pp. 187 ff.)

19. In *Brain,* 1882.

20. It is enough to say at the moment, on the authority of Bucknill, that giddiness in itself is not a symptom of madness, nor could a malady which lasted so long as Swift's lasted, that is, for his whole life, bring about conditions of insanity. If Swift was really morbid, we should seek for another cause.

21. Our authorities for this are Heimann, *U Oreille et ses maladies,* Paris, 1914 ; Bonnier, *Le Vertige,* Paris, 1904 ; Grasset, " Le Vertige," in *Revue Phil.,* Mars-Avril 1901 ; K. Petren and S. Ingvar, " Vertiges," in *Nouveau traiti de midicine,* fasc. XVIII., Paris, 1928 ; Citelli, *Malattie dell'orecchio,* UTET, Torino. Only during the correction of the MS. have we been able to control our results with the masterful summing up of actual notions on vertigoes contained in *Les Annales d'Oto-laryngologie,* Paris, January 1933 (No. 1), which confirms our point of view completely.

22. In the vertigo *ab aure Icesa* the trouble goes from the ear through the vertiginous centre to the stomach through the gastric centres, whereas in vertigo *a stomacho Iceso* (characteristic of drunkenness) the trouble arisen in the stomach goes to the gastric centres of the medulla and thence mounts to the true seat of vertigo, that is to the semi-circular channels through that branch of the nerves of the VIII pair which energises the vestibule.

23. *Corr.* III. 413-14.

24. A classic case of M6niere would be due possibly to hemorrhage in the labyrinth (Bonnier, 236). But Laurens *{Pricis d'oto-rhino-laringologie,* Paris, 1931, p. 424) states definitely that the classical Meniere malady undergoes a very rapid evolution which was not evidently Swift's case. And Petren-Ingvar declare that it is really out of date to speak of a Meniere complaint as a specific disease (39) : Meniere attributes all vertigoes to lesions of the labyrinth, whereas to-day the fundamental nature of the disease is recognised as a nervous complaint in relation to the system of orientation and equilibrium that has its pcriferic organs in the internal ear. Bonnier (82) decides the question by attributing all vertigoes to a primary or secondary irritation of the vestibular nuclei of the protuberance (Deiter's nucleus, 82 and 227). From this irritation can come many sorts of troubles : either of the stomach (descending by way of the *medulla oblongata),* or of the ear (giddiness by disturbance of the equilibrium of the labyrinth and afterwards, by progression of the degeneration, deafness), should the irritation pass from the aptitude centre (in the medulla) to the hearing centre, and from the internal ear to the medium ear. Therefore giddiness has also been observed as the consequence of a dilated stomach and of nephritic troubles (Bonnier, 242 and 248, 254), so that practically all cases of gastric intoxication can bring about some of the Meniere phenomena, or even all of them together by progressive and then definite installation of the irritation and ensuing degeneration of the nervous internal ear's apparatus.

25. The *Annales* above quoted consider it precisely in this sense. The vertigo is considered there, not as a pathological unity, but as due to widely different causes which are very hard even to classify with precision.

26. Only once Swift states that a sudden turning of his head caused a momentary attack of vertigo : the cause of the attacks, then, was not presumably in the head.

27. In the *Annales* we find a precise diagnosis of a case of vertigo which can be

immediately considered as analogous to Swift's case, thus proving finally that Swift was right in all his ideas about his complaint, and that the physicians too were right in the line taken to cure him : " The primitive troubles [concludes the writer] seem to be of gastro-intestinal origin. By reflex action they act on a somewhat altered, or by nature too excitable, vestibulum, and thence comes the vertigo as secondary manifestation. The fundamental disease is yet in the stomach, and it is the stomach which should be cured."

28. From these " fits " some writer, as we observed, concluded that Swift was epileptic. The accesses of vertigo often appear in a pseudo-epileptic aura, by sudden loss of direction and capacity to stand, and loss of reaction to external stimuli. Only when the ravages are deeper, we have the vertiginous aura described by Swift, in the second stage of his malady, as a swimming of the head *(Corr.* IV. 424), and fits cease.

29. The word is here used, of course, not in a technical sense.

30. Bonnier (176-98) speaks of the conditions of anxiousness in the vertiginous, which present resemblances to the downright epileptic ; whilst P£tren-Ingvar (29) decide that giddinesses are accompanied by a sense of malaise, of anxiety, which in the graver cases becomes an indomitable anguish.

31. Resurrection is not a pleasing experience anyway, as the very fine analysis by D. H. Lawrence in *The Man Who Died* shows.

32. For this later evolution see in Chapter VIII.

33. P. I. 254.

34. Freud would provide, we grant, an autistic explanation of Swift's mind, but would not explain why autism brought Swift to *Gullivers Travels,* whilst it brings others to the common madhouse.

35. *Essays,* 1929.

36. Such as a special intensity of olfactive sensations, of which more later on.

37. W. VII. 270.

38. The Italian Baretti observed (in a famous phrase which contains the whole knowledge of Continental Europe on Swift) that " few Englishmen are ready to confess that a side of Swift's fancy was smeared with filth " *{Opere,* Milan, 1813, Vol. I., p. 322).

39. Leslie Stephen (p. 180) endeavours to extenuate this, in order to show Swift's coarseness in darker colours. But yet he finds a very normal explanation for it—an explanation which is at bottom the same as Mr. Huxley's but does not go beyond the limits of the reasonable.

40. *Corr.* I. xlviii.

41. But we should always consider that Swift as a clergyman was expected to give an example of morality, and in his strong sense of his duty he would refrain from open lewdness, whereas there were no such impediments to coarseness.

42. To which his age was particularly given : see the poems of Vanbrugh, whom Swift personally knew.

43. Displeasing not in itself but in its side-lights : a fundamental fact against which D. H. Lawrence's theory of the obscene as mere convention is of no avail.

CHAPTER VI

1. For the critical questions related to the MS. of the *Journal* and its preservation, see Fr. Ryland's introduction to the Bonn's ed. of the same (W. IL). The *Journal* as now extant covers the period September 2nd, 1710, to June 6th, 1713. Stella carefully preserved the letters, and Swift used them as a memorandum of the events of the described period.

2. Just think, for a moment, of the *intimacy* of love-letters dealing chiefly with politics—and even in his letters to Varina Swift dealt in politics ' Its not being meant for publication does not imply that the *Journal* is so completely intimate and sincere as some of the critics assume (Leslie Stephen, 80 fF.). Its lack of real intimacy explains why the secretive Swift, after using it as a sort of general reference book, allowed it to be preserved, so that it has come down to us in its almost original form with slight erasures only.

3. W. II. 397.

4. *Con.* I. 216. See also *Corr.* I. 220, 222.

5. *Corr.* I. 190.

6. W. II. 3.

7. W. II. 5 ; a pardonable exaggeration of Swift in displaying to Stella how highly he was praised by Whigs and Tories " all about him."

8. P. II. 135.

9. A good hit against the poor, greedy Scots, whom Swift hated.

10. *Corr.* I. 193.

11. *Corr.* I. 205. For Harley's dismissal from Godolphin's Ministry, see above.

12. Some suppose that Swift's fame as a leading writer was so great as to make Harley eager to secure him. But this could not possibly have been.

13. Gosse (op. cit., p. 220) says somewhat inaccurately of him : " A n ardent politician who was but a fly on the wheel."

14. W. V. 424.

15. He was convinced " that a man must be got many degrees above the power of recommending himself, before he should presume to recommend another " *(Corr.* **I I I .** 404).

16. *Corr.* I. 254.

17. *Corr.* I. 29.

18. The Duke of Argyll (who came to be his enemy) was " the first and last great man for whose acquaintance [Swift] made any great advances " *(Corr.* I. 249)-

19. In this activity he hit the right moment. The English were becoming the insatiable readers at whom the Italian Baretti, Secretary to the Art Academy, marvelled some fifty years later : " It is then necessary to know that in England, and particularly in London, book writing has become so completely a profession that the English use currently the phrase, ' the trade of an author.' The never to be quenched thirst for reading something new needs continual pabulum. Therefore 4 thousand and more quills in London alone are engaged in supplying it with more than 30 large journals " *(Opere,* Miiano, 1813, I. 317).

20. See in the Introduction our reasons for styling Swift a pamphleteer and not a journalist.

21. European politics impinged on his Dutch interests and his Orange domain, which was indeed to be the object, at William's death, of a War of Succession involving many Continental potentates.

22. W. V. 68, 98.

23. W. V. 69.

24. W. II. 310.

25. *Corr.* I. 314.

26. *The Man of Destiny.*

27. Debts were mounting up in a way that England had not bargained for in entering the Grand Alliance (W. V. 66), as we shall sec later on.

28. W. V. III.

29. *Corr.* **II.** 8-9.

30. *Corr.* **II. 3, 17.**

31. This was a reality (sec W. IL 42) : Lewis, twenty-seven years later, pointed to the " calamitous state of our debts " *(Corr.* VI. 41). For a full and able account of the financial situation, see W. V. 113.

32. Swift's opinion of Marlborough is justified; even Macaulay affirms that Marlborough " loved lucre more than power or fame." On his ambition, see W. II. 87, but Swift was ambitious himself and could not be hard on that quality.

33. W. V. 66.

34. Really Harley would have been wholly justified in impeaching the Whig Ministry on this ground, and the October Club (of which more later on) was in the right in urging such measures against the Whigs. The case was so clear that Harley was on the horns of a dilemma. Either he should have contradicted the construction put by Swift on the matter, or he should have refrained from following his habitual shifty or dilly-dallying game, and impeached the Whigs.

35. See the friendly letter to the Irish soldier Wogan, in which he confesses to his very slight esteem of the military profession *(Corr.* IV. 327).

36. W. V. 113.

37. This ambition of Marlborough had been the first cause of his fall. It implied a standing army, a very unpalatable thing.

38. W. IL 337.

39. P. IL 155.

40. W. IL 310.

41. W. IL 87.

42. W. IL 97.

43. W. IL 324, 411.

44. W. IL 97, 310.

45. W. IL 87.

46. P. IL 187-8.

47. W. V. 8.

48. W. V. 10.

49. *Corr.* I. 233-4.

50. W. IL 6, 8.

51. " I " (says the supposed Lord Wharton) "conclude with a short prayer (although praying, I confess, is not my talent) " (W. V. 268).

52. W. IX. 100 ff.

53. It is enough to refer to the scene of December 26th, 1712, as revealing the way in which Swift was kept in the dark (W. IL 405). Bolingbrokc openly declared that Swift told and was told lies ; see note in W. IX. 259. Swift's activity differed essentially from that of the modern political journalist, even in this sense of not having to follow everyday affairs in his journalistic campaigns.

54. A report, indeed, was spread that after the peace he meant to declare for the Whigs *(Corr.* IL 15).

55. P. IL 167.

56. If we accept what Berkeley reports (see in *Corr.* IL 16, note 1), Swift **was** sometimes privy to underhand dealings of Harley with the Whigs. Clearly Harley had too much to do with Whigs, apart from Swift recommendations.

57. W. V. 421-3.

58. W. V. 449.

59. W. IL 418.

60. W. IL 377-9.

61. Sec *Journal.*

62. *Corr.* VI. 20.

63. *Corr.* VI. 21 and 37.

64. *Corr.* VI. 78.

65. W. IX. 259, note 1.

66. W. II. 417 and *Corr.* VI., *passim.* All the friends of Harley were against publication, even when Bolingbroke was preparing another history in which he attacked Harley.

67. It is odd that he should have fancied himself as an historian. Yet already under the Whig administration he had sought the place of historiographer at the Court, and he sought for it again before the death of the Queen.—When Swift called *The Last Years of Queen Anne* his " grand business " and " the best work he had ever written," he may have been judging from a political rather than a literary standpoint, as certainly he thought politics were more important than literature. The *Hutory* is interesting as containing Swift's explicit reflections on the new capitalism, which had originated after the expulsion of the Stuart dynasty, when a Scotchman received a charter for founding the Bank of England in return for raising a loan to the State at 8 per cent interest. Thus " emerged the common custom to pay the rich to lend their money, instead of taking it by taxation " *(A Modern History of England,* by G. R. Stirling Taylor, p. 160). Swift, of course, sets it forth that the new finance took away all power from, and must ruin, the landed gentry entirely ; actually the new system gave the landed gentry a new lease of life—into our own time at least—however hardly it may have borne on the rural population generally.—The *History,* 160 pages in folio (W. II. 397), was at last printed in 1738, on the insistence, it is said, of Swift's publisher ; but Swift hoped really to make money by it *(Corr.* VI. 161).

68. And said even that " the Whigs whisper that our new Ministry differ among themselves " (W. II. 232).

69. At the end of 1712, Swift declared he had been " too much engaged in patchwork already " (W. II. 399).

70. W. V. 439 and *Corr.* VI. 20.

71. W. IL 195.

72. W. II. 418, 421.

73. *Corr.* II. 18, note 3.

74. P. II. 163.

75. W. II. 460. Probably Sharpe had played him false, because Swift had been counselled, before the change, to prevail on Sharpe to present the Queen with the famous *Project for the Advancement of Christianity.* Sharpe was now the principal instrument in setting the Queen's mind against Swift. He may have been persuaded by more directly interested enemies of Swift, for when the whole matter was ended he promised that he would never again speak against Swift (W. V. 461–2)

Poor York ! the harmless tool of others' hate,
He sues for pardon and repents too late.
- P. IL 163.

76. The Duchess had the key to the Queen's closet from March 1711 and the Queen could never be prevailed upon by the Tories to put her out of office (W. IL 332).

77. W. IL 326.

78. We scarcely think that Scott's observation *(Lives,* Warne, London, p. 59) that Swift was not really angry with Queen Anne is legitimate.

79. W. V. 422.

80. W. V. 367.

81. W. II. 383.

82. W. II. 406.

83. *Corr.* II. 4.

84. W. II. 417.

85. W. I L 433.
86. W. I L 456.
87. One is reminded of the return to Temple.
88. W. V. 408.
89. W. V. 453.
90. *Corr.* IL 88.
91. In 1710 there had been already some encounters (W. IL 65).
92. *Corr.* II. 35.
93. W. V. 287.
94. W. V. 292-3.
95. W. V. 303.
96. P. II.172.
97. P. II. 174-
98. W. V. 324.
99. W. V. 350.
100. *Corr.* II. 126.
101. *Corr.* II. 129.
102. W. V. 463.
103. w. v. 456-7.
104. Characteristic of his desire for peace is the imitation of Horace, P. IL 167 ff.
105. *Corr.* V I. 20.
106. *Corr.* V I. 21.
107. And Swift was extraordinarily tickled by being called his " governor " (W. I L 256).
108. W. V. 467 ff.
109. W. V. 460.
no. We do not dwell on this widely known (and vilified) figure. The hardest judgment can be found in Taine, *Hist, de Ia Litt. Angl,* Paris, 1882, p. 258.
in. *Corr.* II. 147.
112. *Corr.* II. 134.
113. In January 1712 he had already decided to retire for six months and then steal over to Ireland (W. IL 315).
114. *Corr.* II. 168.
115. *Corr.* II. 172, 177—8.
116. *Corr.* II. 182.
117. *Corr.* II. 190.
118. *Corr.* II. 199.
119. *Corr.* II. 197-8.

CHAPTER V I I

1. P. II. 180.
2. W. XI. 115.
3. P. II. 26.
4. P. II. 27.

5. P. II. 20.

6. Gay's *Beggar's Opera* may have come from Swift's anti-Pastoralism, See *Corr.* IL 330.

7. To show the stuff out of which Swift's love history has been composed, it is sufficient to recall all the disquisitions on Stella's words to Swift: " Too late ! " The reporter (it is evident) could not (she was in the next room at the moment) have heard distinctly. She heard something and (on the basis of what she already thought of the Swift-Stella relation) gave a logical meaning to a scarcely caught flutter. So far so good ; but unhappily it was then pointed out that the reporter, Mrs. Whiteway, was not even at that time in Swift's household. (See also for this episode in Chapter IX.)

8. See on this point : Marguerite Hersey, *New Light on the Evidence of Swift's Marriage,* in " Publications of the Modern Language Association of America," Vol. XLII., 157-61 ; *Berkeleys American Sojourn* by Benjamin Rand, 1932 ; J. M. Hone in the *New Statesman,* February 8th, 1929.

9. Lady Gregory, *The Kiltartan History Book,* pp. 56 ff.

10. He says outright that women are an outlet of his cerebral activity : when he was alone, it turned all " into speculation and thought " *{Corr.* I. 4). Such was probably his " coldness " I

11. P. I. 19-20.

12. In the *Tale,* for instance, he satirises the inclination of certain authors to " deducing similitudes, allusions, and applications, very surprising, agreeable and apposite, from the pudenda of either sex, together with their proper use " (W. I. 104), and he continues with details which show that he had read with some gusto certain passages from classical authors. He satirises women as the particularly obscene sex, and in the *Tatler* (W. IX. 5) the question is dealt with in such a way as to make Nichols speak of the " licentious imagination of Swift." A lover is here disappointed by his sweetheart's Platonism, and Swift gives him hints which show that he was capable of feeling what he said : '* She will fall in with the necessities of human life, and condescend to look with pity upon an unhappy man, imprisoned in so much body and urged by so violent desires " (*Ibidem,* 10).

13. W. II. 113.

14. W. II. 392.

15. Swift seems to distinguish clearly between *impotentia caeundi* and *impotentia generandi* (P. I. 144 ff.), and even seems to think that old age brings only the latter. Possibly, his disease and high nervousness brought about old-age impotence *before* the usual time. He shows a sort of impatience with Stella when she dwells on common friends having children, which can be interpreted in various ways, but does not seem to point to personal impotence in Swift, however taken, but only to his not being disposed to have children.

16. A thing an impotent can hardly be expected to do is to laugh at others' impotence as an evident inferiority, as Swift does in *Apollo, A Problem solved* (P. I. 211).

17. Corr. V I . 56.

18. *Corr.* I. 4.

19. Swift says his letters to Eliza were written " in his youth." For a man of thirty, youth is any time between fifteen and twenty-seven. Although Eliza may well be Elizabeth and therefore refri to Betty Jones, we are not certain of the identification made by Elrington Ball. Winder must have read the address on the letters, where the real name would naturally have appeared.

20. *Corr.* L 29.

21. Evidence that there were letters which Swift destroyed : he only preserved letters that had no intimate meaning, indeed it was only later that he began to keep letters at all.

22. *Corr.* I. 15 ff. and 31 ff.

23. The history commenced before this. There is evidence of a lost letter of December 1695.

24. *Corr.*, loc. cit., notes.

25. Both letters should be read through, as evidence of this. The striking difference of tone between them is a proof of their authenticity.

26. Is there not in this a clear hint of some experience on the part of Varina, if not shown to Swift in her love-making, then at least supposed by gossip ?

27. *Corr.* I. 26.

28. *Corr.* I. 22.

29. He even speaks of his poverty and so provides the critics who would have him a miser, with a new argument. But the aim of freeing himself from Varina is so clear that in writing to her he probably undervalued his income.

30. Swift says he knew Stella when she was six years old (W. XI. 127). But a problem arises as a consequence of Swift's inaccuracy about dates, for in the poems he says he saw her first at sixteen (P. II. 26). We may perhaps assume, as is generally done (Pons, op. cit., 149) that Swift on his first visit found her at Moor Park. (She would then have been eight years of age, and Swift's mistake in making her six when he was writing hastily and under the emotion of her death is comprehensible.) Then on returning from Kilroot he saw her for the first time as a *woman* (she was then fifteen). By saying that Swift taught her to read and write Leslie Stephens confuses things, for to teach to spell is not a teaching limited to a child. As for Swift's varying statements of having known her for thirty-five or thirty-three years *(Corr.* IV. 450-1), and in another place *(Corr.* III. 415) thirty years, we do not take these into account, although they would make Stella twelve or fifteen years old, not six. " Known " does not convey an exact meaning, and Swift is always obviously inaccurate with dates. He had a bad memory for numbers, and this also explains why he kept close accounts of his expenses. The lessons in spelling and so on should, we think, be referred to the later period. She never learned to spell, as she should have done, if she had been under instruction from eight up (W. II. 266 and *passim).* Swift too records more than spelling essays, for he speaks of having directed her reading and of having instructed her in the principles of honour and virtue : a thing he could hardly have done before fifteen. But in any case the legend that the " little language " of the *Journal* had something to do with Stella's childish prattle is effectively dispelled. At eight a child can speak well, even if a woman of thirty may not be able to spell.

31. Not a large one. As the editor of the *Corr.* discovered, Swift was giving her £50 a year *(Corr.* IV. 452). She had from Temple the lease of a small property in Co. Wicklow.

32. The notice given by Deane Swift of Stella being in the position of a servant is taken directly from the will, and has therefore no value as evidence.

33. Signed G. M. P. G. N. S. T. N. S. The writer makes the mistake of saying that Stella left for Ireland before Temple's death, and on Temple's initiative, whereas she only went to Ireland in 1700, and then on Swift's advice. The legend (not given in the *Gentleman's Magazine)* that Swift was the natural son of Temple is gratuitous as a hypothesis ; but it has been used to explain Swift's reluctance in marrying Stella. The fact that Temple was nowhere near Swift's mother at the time disposes of this hypothesis.

34. W. XII. 95. Even Leslie Stephen would have been convinced (op. cit., p. 28 and note) had he been confronted with this evidence.

35. Swift says (W. XI. 127) that Stella was " one of the most beautiful, graceful and agreeable young women in London after her sixteenth year " (till then she had been " sickly ") : a direct proof that the mysterious letter of 1698, so intimate and condescending, was written to Stella when she was staying at Temple's house in London, for it is known that Stella was never afterwards in London, except perhaps in 1706, and then for a very brief period (see allusion in W. IL 199), Her being brought to London and introduced into society is, we think, an argument of some force in favour of her having some family connection with the TempleSt

36. Temple's age (fifty-two), the illness of Lady Temple, the isolation in the country may be noted as offering favourable conditions for some sort of low, back-stairs intrigue on Temple's part. Positive points are :

1. The absence of any intimate relations between Stella and her mother after Temple's death.

2. Her living her own life without family ties.

3. A certain dislike between her and Lady Giffard, to whom her mother remained a faithful servant and intimate. Just so, a prudent old lady might pardon a servant, but resent having under her eyes the living proof of an unfortunate incident in the family history.

4. The lifelong companionship of Dingley, who was a relation of Temple *(Corr.* V. 416).

5. The respect she always met with, as though her position was better than that of the offspring of a servant. " There seemed to be a combination among all who knew her, to treat her with a dignity much beyond her rank " (W. X I. 129), says Swift.

6. Swift's speaking to Stella of Temple with some sorrow, but never disrespectfully. The allusions are rare too, as though the subject were a barred one between them. Swift merely accuses Temple of excessive pride, the only criticism an unrecognised daughter would be likely to allow.

7. Her acting as if she did not expect to be married. Both Swift and Stella may have had subconsciously in their minds (through her) a prejudice against marriage.

8. Swift's assuring us so often that he did not so much teach her as instruct her in the principles of honour and virtue : an instruction usually given to a girl by her mother, when the mother is not reputedly unadapted to the task.

37. Here two of our hypotheses meet. Swift's improved position with Temple and his being allowed to consort intimately with Stella, not a bad arrangement, by the way, for anybody who had an interest in the future of Stella (then sixteen years old, a good age for marriage at that time, with a man of thirty) that a poor parson should be used to raise an inconvenient relative above her mother's servile station. Sir William's will seems to be directed towards protecting Stella from servile associations.

38. Dr. Bernard speaks of a " childish playfellow " at that age ! (W. X I I. 86).

39. " . . . Moor Park, which no time will make me forget and love less " *(Corr.* I· 57)-

40. He could not think of putting on paper the secret of the dead. However, he dispels the pitiable evasion of the will, where Stella is described as a dependant not of Temple but of Lady Giffard.

41. As we observed in Chapter IV., Swift had friends and relations and acquaintances ia Ireland, but no intimates—at least once he had discharged Varina. The letter to Varina quoted above falls significantly into the general chronology. Swift comes to Ireland, rids himself of Varina, goes to England on a visit, and settles for Stella's appearance. It might be inferred that Swift was pretty sure Stella would accept.

42. The character of a chaperon. But why Dingley, a relative of Temple, and not some relative of Johnson ?

43. But this looks like a mere pretext, if Swift from the first paid Stella £50 a year, and a fixed allowance to Dinj.ey who had even less.

44. W. X I. 128.

45. A merit in the eyes of Swift (W. X I. 118).

46. *Corr.* I. 71.

47. W. I L 36.

48. *Corr.* I. 45 ff. An earlier letter of Tisdall asking Swift to intervene with Stella's mother has been lost.

49. A bad example of Tisdall's " incurable absence of mind " of which Swift complained much later when they had some disagreement.

50. The word " fortune " has been seized on by the critics who want to prove that Swift was dominated by avarice. But Swift clearly refers to the " reverse " of " prudence and temper and love of peace and settlement," which, as he says at the end of the letter, " has been the great uneasiness of my life."

51. *Cort.* I. 46.

52. Later on, it seems that Swift and Stella pretended to think that Tisdall had been the victim of their little joke : they used to speak playfully of him. Swift supposed that Stella retained a partiality for him : " Tisdall is a pretty fellow, as you say " (W. I I . 437), and speaking of Tisdall's wife, he asked (for him) playfully : " Her husband is a puppy. Do his feet stink still ? " (W. I I . 464). Later on he wrote the lines—

Were Tisdall the same way to blow out his breath,
Such a whiff to the living were far worse than death.
Any man with a nose would much rather die. . . .
Whenever he dies he must die with a stink.

—*Corr.* I V . 479.

53. *Corr.* I. 59.

54. In this connection the line struck out of a letter of a recent acquaintance to Swift is interesting (1714) : " Since you, the world says, may command a very agreeable visage ana yet defer it " (*Corr.* I I . 249).

55. W. XI. 116.

56. Swift gives us a portrait of Dingley and Mrs. Brent, which makes it difficult to see these ladies playing the rdle of chaperons :

Dingley and Brent
Wherever they went
Ne'er minded a word it was spoken.

And of Dingley :

Always she will go
To seek an old rag in a closet.

- P . II. 44-

We already know that Dingley's means were narrow enough to keep her " in a fixed state of dependancy and conformity to Swift and Stella's will " *(Corr.* V I . 205). She was really a sort of housekeeper—to both ? (W. V I I . 76-7).

57. We can quote many suggestions of intimate or at least very tender relations (for instance, W. I I . 35). We must remember that many letters of Swift to Stella existed. The only one left is endorsed so as to fit into a *recueil (Corr.* I I I . 80, see also *Corr.* I I . 321).

58. P. I. 161.

59. In fact, this is not true at all : in the country they often resided together, at a friend's house (at Quilca, for instance), and perhaps Stella was the reason of Swift's long country visits.

60. It has even been put forward as an argument that there is no evidence (that is, there are no witnesses) that Swift and Stella ever remained alone together.

61. The *Journal* was meant to be shown about, or at least preserved. That there existed letters to Stella only, is known (see *Corr.* I I . 321), and these are gone.

62. W. I L 14, 35, etc., etc.

63. It was not pure written sentimentalism : " When I am writing in our language, I make up my mouth just as if I was speaking it " (W. I I . 134). And immediately afterwards, Swift, to put up an alibi, speaks of Dingley who appears " young in May."

64. Even on this ground, Mr. Aldous Huxley considers Swift a " sentimentalist of the worst kind," whereas for Thackeray the " little language " is the only redeeming feature of Swift. Mr. Huxley (in *Essays,* 1929) holds that Swift was a

puritan at heart, who therefore developed a reverse sentiment and dwelt on disgusting subjects. For Mr. Huxley the " little language " is an outlet for Swift, a way of being what he really was—an obscene impotent. But, as we observed in Chapter V., if Swift remained sexually childish, he should have been attracted by bowels and not repelled, as Mr. Huxley admits.—And then, Vanessa . . . ?

65. P. I. 208.

66. When in 1699 he proposes maxims for his old age, the first is never to marry a young woman, and the next is to have the utmost care for cleanliness. To Varina, he says that cleanliness shall be the first care of the woman he loves ; to a young woman just married, he discourses at length on the importance of cleanliness (W. XL 117) ; he praises Vanessa for her cleanliness (P. I I . 5) ; the ideal woman is Chloe before marriage (P. I. 203). Personally he was much in advance of his somewhat unclean age, washing his feet every second day, etc. The great uneasiness he felt at being left without a toothbrush must have marked him off from most men and women of his time.

67. The tendency of Swift to associate them in his mind is evident in the *Problem* (P. I. 44 fF.). The thing is very important ; it *is* all over his poems and letters and works. When he speaks of filthy things, his fancy always turns to the olfactory side of the coarse, not to the visual. Gf. the *City Shower* :

> *Returning home at night, you' Il find the sink*
> *Strike your offended sense with double stink. . . .*
> - p . 1.79.
> *Filth of all hues and odour seem to tell*
> *What street they sailed from. . . .*
> —*Ibidem,* 80.

There is again the odour of the Yahoo, the terrible stink of sweat on Brobdingnagian maids, which makes Gulliver assure the reader that everybody told him he did not stink as much as other human beings, and other instances (for instance, W. I I . 48) too numerous to mention. The human race may have been fundamentally for Swift an evil-smelling race.

68. P. I . 193.

69. Even in love, to follow Mr. Mencken's theory (" On a Tender Theme " in *Prejudices),* Swift could not overcome all " disgusts.*'

70. But we cannot accept as an explanation Swift's " avarice," to which we had to refer as to an exploded legend. Note, for instance, his relative indifference to the peril of a big money loss in W. I I . 318. As for a possible relation of avarice to his delay in marriage, it is sufficient to remark that he already had to meet the expenses of two households, and when he hoped for a deanery he promised Stella that he would divide the proceeds, as if it were settled that he had to provide for both. The " avarice " in Varina's case is really comic to think of, as we said before.

71. Johnson, *Lives,* Aberdeen, 1847, p. 453.

72. She left most complicated debts at her death, and failed to notice that a bawd occupied the same house where she took lodgings.

73. It appears Vanessa liked the account, and therefore recognised its truthfulness : she was much pleased to hear that Swift meant to polish it up later on.

74. There is no reason for doubting Swift's statement in 1726 *(Corr.* I I I . 306) that the poem was written some fourteen years earlier at Windsor ; but it was possibly revised in 1719, when Swift was already a Dean.

75. The word *cad* was first used 'n its present meaning many years later.

76. P. II. 8.

77. P. II. 13.

78. P. II. 14.

79. P. II. 16.

80. P. II. 20-1.

81. P. II. 20.

82. P. II. 21.

83. *Corr.* III. 459.

84. *Corr.* I. 307.

85. *Corr.* III. 62.

86. So many critics have searched for damning evidence against Vanessa. But we must not make too much of the strange recurrence to allusions to coffee-drinking. Coffee, it seems, was then an idiomatic expression to signify secrecy or minding one's own business : " We have enough of the dirty business ; we had better drink our coffee and talk our politics " (King, cited in W. 17, note 2). In the *Progress of Marriage* (where the argument might induce the use of coffee as a sexual symbol) the word is employed innocently :

The Dean desires his coffee soon,
She rises at her tea at noon.
- p. i. 115.

Yet sometimes it undoubtedly signifies keeping company for Swift—in what sense, if by conversation only or more, cannot be decided. " Drinking coffee " is at all events recognised by him as a direct necessity of life (see in Chapter IX.).

87. *Corr.* II. 45.

88. *Corr.* I. 299.

89. It is not true that the " little language " diminishes towards the close of the *Journal,* as Scott thinks, surmising that Vanessa's love must act on Swift and cool him (Chandos ed., p. 79).

90. There are also one, two or three allusions in February and August 1711.

91. The name of Mrs. Vanhomrigh only appears in the *Journal* twice afterwards.

92. See both letters in *Corr.* II. 40 and 52 ff., and compare with Vanessa's restrained passion in her letters of the same period. Stella's proximity had the usual effect on Swift: the Vanessa affair became a mere adventure without a future.

93. *Corr.* II. 234.

94. *Corr.* II. 252-3.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Q,. C, *Essai Historique sur le Docteur Swift,* Paris, 1808, p. 66.

2. *Dean Swift,* by Sophie Smith.

3. " She loved Ireland much better than the generality *of* those who owe both their birth and riches to it " (W. XI. 136).

4. One commentator says, " Swift would have extirpated the Irish papists "—this man who worked himself into anguish over the condition of the Irish poor. There is a difference between hoping for the extirpation of Irish Roman Catholics and hoping for the extirpation of Roman Catholicism in Ireland, and Swift would obviously have welcomed the adhesion of the Irish majority to the State Church, for the sake of the uniformity which he rated so high as to sympathise with the measures taken in France against the Huguenots.

5. *Corr.* II. 199 ff.

6. This was not only an opinion of Swift's friends, but a positive hope of his own *(Corr.* II. 236).

7. Even the rest of Europe had detached itself (as Swift observed ironically later on : *Corr.* V. 143) from " the Gothic system of limited monarchy."

8. *Corr.* II. 353-4.

9. King himself was moving towards Irish Nationalism, and was presently (in May 1722) to tell the Archbishop of Canterbury that England had always exploited Ireland.

10. Scott, ed. 1834, PP- **190-1.**

11. *Corr.* II. 293-4.

12. In this sense the letter of Arbuthnot of August 1715 *(Corr.* IL 296 ff.), is very touching.

13. *Corr.* II. 308 ff. and 311 ff.

14. In *Corr.* II. 321 we find a very fine specimen of Swift's deeper self when he presents a stern, open countenance to the shifty Archbishop King.

15. It is interesting in connection with Swift's entry into Irish politics and economics to recall that his early patron, Sir William Temple, wrote on *The Advancement of Irish Trade* in a letter addressed to the Lord Viceroy Essex (July 22nd, 1673) and reproduced as an essay in the *Miscellanea* which Swift brought to his first Irish parsonage at Kilroot and lent to Mr. Dobbs as a " good book." The essay was written during the reign of Charles II, and set out objections to the Act against the Transportation of Irish Cattle into England. Temple foresaw that this Act must have for logical sequel the penalisation of the Irish woollen trade. He was also concerned over the scarcity of coin in Ireland.

Temple's essay, where there is a mingling of feudalistic conceptions and mercantilist doctrines, has been praised even by modern economists, for example by Schulze-Gavernitz (in his work on great enterprises and economic progress), who maintains that Temple followed Petty and, moreover, was inspired by De Witt in his ideas of stimulating the poor to work by low salaries, or (as in Temple) by high taxation.

In the *Essay* Sir William stated his economic principles as follows : " The true and natural ground of trade and riches is the number of people in proportion to the ground they inhabit : this makes all things in life dear and forces men to industry and parsimony." Swift would have agreed. But whereas Temple argued that the English attack on Irish trade and riches defeated its purpose (which was to bring about a rise in English rents and prices), Swift insisted on regarding the two neighbouring islands as competitors : he expressed no doubt that Ireland to be free and strong must " disoblige " England, and was sure that England's wealth had been hitherto Ireland's poverty.

Swift would then, when at Temple's, have often heard debate on the subjects of Ireland and of political economy.

The Irish associations of the Temples had been important. Sir William's grandfather (the first Sir William) had been Provost of Trinity, and was widely known also as a contributor to the new logic of Ramus. He is said to have given the impression of a rather worldly person, and to have neglected the interests of the State Church, which, as an early rationalist, he probably regarded as little better than the old Papal creed. (See *An Epoch of Irish History,* by J. P. Mahaffy, p. 145 et seq.) His son, Sir John, father of Swift's patron, became Master of the Rolls in Ireland, and went to prison in 1644 rather than countenance Ormonde's concessions to the Irish Catholics.

16. In 1711 there had been much uneasiness about Irish yarn *(Corr.* I. 248).

17. *Corr.* II. 79.

18. Letter to King, *Corr.* II. 110. The only leader of the Irish interest with whom Swift was in early contact was Archbishop King. Phipps, the Irish Lord Chancellor under the Tory Government, made efforts for the abolition of Irish parliamentary government altogether (Lecky, I. 446). Swift was in friendly correspondence with Phipps, who was attacked by King and defended by Delany. On the other hand, some of the Irish Tories of Swif acquaintance were in Anne's reign in correspondence with Jacobite agents who promised a nationalist settlement in Ireland (liberty of trade and the independence of the Irish Parliament) in return for Irish Protestant adhesion to the Stuarts and the admission of Roman Catholic claims to equality.

19. The Acts of William **III,** c. **10,** entirely prohibited the export of Irish woollen goods.

20. The behaviour of the landlords was not so absurd as Swift supposed. By **the**

Act of Charles I I , c. 2. 18, and Charles I I , c. 2. 32, the importation into England of all live animals from Ireland, cattle as well as sheep, was forbidden. This export had previously been the chief source of Irish revenue, and it was as a result of the Acts of Charles I I , not as a result of the Act of William I I I (as Swift suggests for sarcastic effect), that the Irish gentry turned their lands into sheep runs. Swift's proposals would not have directly benefited the Catholic mass of the population. " The Catholics,*' says Mr. George O'Brien *(Economic History of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century,* p. 221), "were not ill-pleased at the check to the woollen manufactures ; they regarded the sheep as occupying their place on the land." The same writer adds that Swift's Irish writings show no desire to benefit any of the inhabitants of Ireland except the Protestants. We controvert this view later ; here it is sufficient to remark that the *Universal Use* shows that Swift did not favour depopulation, if that indeed was the " Protestant " policy.

21. The " somebody's " famous observation was reported by Synge, Archbishop of Tuam. Was Swift himself this Somebody ? The observation is popularly attributed to Swift ; he added in the second edition, " Nor am I for lessening the exceptions." In later editions he substituted the sentence, " I must confess that as to the former I should not be sorry if they would stay at home ; and for the latter I hope that in a little time we shall have no reason for them."

22. Before the woollen trade began to decline as a consequence of hostile legislation, thousands of weavers and other good tradesmen filled the " Liberties," where Swift had been born. There were not, it is said, four masters of Papist families dwelling in all this district. That it was Swift's aim to restore this industry to its pristine vigour and make it the basis of Irish prosperity is shown by the number of tracts which he wrote on the subject of the woollen trade : *A Letter to the Archbishop of Dublin Concerning the Weavers, The Case of the Woollen Manufactures of Dublin,* etc., etc.

23. He styled them, not Irish Protestants, but the " English settled in Ireland " (Scott, ed. Chandos Classics, p. 98).

24. See *The Reformed Church in Ireland,* by the Rt. Hon. J. T. Ball, p. 164 *et seq.*

25. Recall Swift's friendship for Gay and his probable contribution to the *Beggar's Opera,* where Walpole himself is aimed at, as Taine has observed.

26. The whole quantity coined was not to exceed 360 tons, whereof 100 only were to be coined in the first year, and 20 in each of the last thirteen. The said farthings and halfpence were to be copper of such quality and size as should not be converted into more halfpence and farthings than would make 30*/. by tale. The money was to pass as current money, among such as " would voluntarily, but not otherwise, receive the same."

27. Admittedly there was a shortage of silver.

28. The apology for Walpole is that his intentions were good, as Ireland needed copper coinage : and, if the Duchess had her pickings, a job of this kind was all in the day's work in England, which prospered on Walpole's cynicism. In a recent work by an admirer of Walpole, it is pretended even that the Irish uproar over the coinage was due to susceptibilities on the subject of matrimony (G. R. Stirling Taylor, *Walpole,* 1931).

29. The private persons who had been given rights of coinage for Ireland in the reigns of Charles II and of James II were under this obligation.

30. The pamphlet is in the Haliday Collection in the Royal Irish Academy. The costs are thus given :

	£	s.	d.
Copper prepared for the coinage at H.M.'s Mint, costs per lb. wt.	0	1	6
Coinage of the lb. wt.			3
Waste and charge of remitting			1½
Yearly payment to the Exchequer and Controller			1
Allowed to the purchaser for exchange			5
	2		4½

31. Newton found the specimens to be worth one shilling per pound weight in the market, and the halfpence and farthings were " of the same value and goodness with the copper of the King's Mint " : unfortunately the assayists had for trial coins coined between March 1723 and March 1724, which were never imported into Ireland.

32. *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland,* p. 88.

33. Thus Miss Hayden and Mr. Moonan say : " It certainly appears strange that Wood could afford to spend such large sums if he hoped only for legitimate profits *(History of Ireland,* p. 383).

34. In any case the concession on close examination did not amount to much. It was proposed to limit Wood to £40,000, but subject to a later review of the needs of the kingdom—a review by whom ? Besides, Swift had shown that £40,000 was double the whole Irish need of copper.

35. Even the beggars were warned by the Drapier that they in particular would be Wood's victims, since the coins to be adulterated were the halfpence and farthings.

36. The fifth *Letter* was not printed in 1724, but it undoubtedly reached Middleton in the autumn of that year. It is printed by Scott as the sixth Drapier's *Letter,* and that to Lord Molesworth has generally been called the fifth. But it was written prior to the letter to Molesworth, and in the Temple Scott edition is printed in the proper chronological place.

37. Swift himself had produced this argument in his fourth *Letter,* and even applied it to the particular case of the new Archbishop of Armagh. " The gentleman," he wrote, " they have lately made Primate would never quit his seat in an English House of Lords and his preferments at Oxford and Cambridge worth £1,200 a year for four times the denomination here : therefore I expect to hear he will be as good an Irishman, upon this article, as any of us who have had the misfortune to be born upon this island.'*

38. As later on will be emphasised, even now the activity of Swift seems to exhaust itself within the space of a year : the same peculiarity which we noted in previous phases of his career.

39. *In Advice to the Freemen of the City of Dublin,* written in 1733 (W. V I I . 312).

40. *In Advice to the Freemen of the City of Dublin.* In his early correspondence with King, Swift used to vex the Archbishop by treating the vision of the Irish " ascendancy " party into Whig and Tory as a joke. These imitations on the part of Irish people of English faction seemed to him senseless. King argued against him that Irish party politics were much less unreal than English. " Our divisions," he wrote, *' are founded on the right of our estates . . . nothing can restore them [the estates] but the Pretender, whereas your [the English] contests are for employments which you have with or without the Pretender. Remove the fear of the Pretender, and you [the English Tories] may lead them [the Irish Protestant party] like a dog on a string " *(Corr.* I I . 116). Swift takes up these hints in his later Irish writings, when he points out that fear of the Pretender (and therefore of loss of estates) has been effectually removed : Irish Protestants have now no excuse for subserviency to the English Whig and financial oligarchy.

41. To regard the Protestants as Irish would have been to admit that they belonged to a subject race, therefore not entitled to the privileges enjoyed by British citizens. What then were they ? Colonials. But, if colonials, they were dependants, and therefore liable to the economic treatment which England at that time meted out to her colonies. The economic exigency obliged the " ascendancy " to declare itself " English in Ireland " and at the same time an independent nation. But as an independent nation, it had to seek roots in a native Irish past : St. Patrick and St. Columba presently became saints in the Irish Protestant Calendar, and a sort of cultural nationalism grows up in the " ascendancy " in this roundabout manner.

42. Gerald P. Moriarty, *Dean Swift and his Writings,* 1893, p. 37.

43. The " native Irish " felt, says Q,. C. *(Essai Historique sur le Docteur Swift),* that

" he wished to deliver them from oppression and make their posterity happy." They made him a God of their Gaelic Olympus, and even imagined that he was secretly of their faith. The following, written in the seventeenth century in English, and later put into Irish, is in some Irish MS. called Dean Swift's Creed :

I own for faith
What Rome's Church saith.
What English Church allows
My conscience disallows.

In another MS. the application (with the reverse intention) is to Brady, a priest who turned parson in the eighteenth century.

44. In connection with this we remember Flach's statement that Swift travelled a great deal in Ireland in his youth. Flach also says that he was " touched by the poetry of the Irish people, appreciated the language and manner of talk of the poor, and made use of it in his writings." In his later life, when Dean, he often made visits into the " Irish parts of Ireland " ; on one such occasion he had an Irish poem of local renown translated to him *(The Feast of the O'Rourke),* rendering it subsequently into English verse. By the way, Flach's theory is that the contradictions in Swift's nature account for his influence on the Irish people.

45. *Con.* IV. 328.

46. *Con.* III. 307.

47. The most important letter *(Con.* I I I . 308 ff.) to Lord Peterborough (an old friend) shows that Swift had really a precise programme for the welfare of Ireland, which must be put into practice before he could consider that he had accomplished his work.

CHAPTER IX

1. *Corr.* I I . 277.

2. A fair idea of Dublin gossip is ironically given by Swift in *The Intelligencer* (W. I X . 315).

3. *Corr.* I I I . 443.

4. W. II. 3.5.

5. See, for instance, W. I I . 156.

6. *Corr.* I I . 248.

7. See further on for our opinion of the true character of Stella.

8. Even before this, Swift had decided on keeping company only with Stella's " club of Deans and Stoytes " (W. I I . 170). See also W. X I . 134.

9. Thackeray, *English Humourists,* ed. Tauchnitz, Leipzig, p. 42.

10. *Corr.* II. 260.

11. *Corr.* II. 403.

12. Although we use this correspondence largely, the fact should not be suppressed that the vicissitudes of the letters and the somewhat mysterious manner of their emergence lay their authenticity open to a partial or a complete suspicion.

13. Cf. Swift's resorting to French when he has to say something passionate to appease Vanessa in the letters *(Corr.* I I I . 33 ff.).

14. The amplest document of this legend on the triangular relation is a much later pamphlet, published, it seems, a year after the death of Stella *(Corr.* I V . 65 and 154), and which Swift made a show of treating as a fable, hardly worthy of notice. There is however a fact which shows that this pamphlet (of which only the first part is now extant, in the Irish Academy and the British Museum) had perhaps some historical interest : a promise to produce some original letters of the Dean, Nobody remarked that the letters might be the then lost and unknown letters of Vanessa. *Some Memoirs of the Amours and Intrigues of a Certain Irish Dean : who lived and Flourished in the Kingdom of Ireland not many Hundred Tears since. Interspersed with*

the Gallantries of two Berkshire Ladies . .by a Lady, who in those days was well acquainted with him. Part I. (London. Printed for J. Roberts in Warwick Lane) have a remarkable air of good information romanticised. The mention of two Berkshire ladies makes one recall the letter of twenty years before of Swift's " small parson cousin," and on p. 50 we find an allusion to Temple's chaplain. Be that as it may, the second part is announced as having for subject Swift's coming to Ireland, and the most interesting information is therefore not forthcoming. In the published first part, in the middle of a complicated love-history after the taste of the time, the only clear reference is to Polidore, who is Swift, having intrigues at large in England with many ladies, among whom are Satira (and here we have probably more of fable than of fact), Sapho, Leonora until (p. 81) Polidore has a preferment abroad, and the romance is suspended. Yet already in this part we see a hint of later occurrences ; probably the writer was well acquainted with some episodes in Swift's life at Moor Park and was in possession of further information from Ireland. To build up the case of Swift's gallantries, the writer could do no better than reproduce for an earlier stage of Swift's life the same dilemma from which he was supposed to suffer in Ireland : in consequence he makes Sapho refuse to marry Polidore because of his inferior position (p. 50, a possible allusion to Varina), whilst Satira becomes troublesome on Polidore's refusal to marry her : an anticipation of the position of Vanessa. It is really difficult to discover precise allusions in such a complicated love-story as this ; and yet the writer seems to be informed of many previous facts in Swift's life, as we have shown. The clearest fact to be gathered from the book is that it was written " at the request of a lady, who had suffered by him " : certainly not Stella, but possibly Vanessa, because the principal role (in the second part of the book) is to be sustained by the Vanessa of a celebrated poem (the *Cadenus and Vanessa,* published before Stella's death), towards whom, says the book, the Dean conducted himself" very ill." The author assures us that she meant no harm to the Dean, although he was a " Man of Gallantry, and so are some of our best," saying further : " Everybody who ever heard of the Character of the Dean, will not be surprised to find him seldom with less than two or three Intrigues at a time." The fact that the booklet was published in London indicates that it was mainly Irish gossip that had come over : Gulliver by then had rendered Swift's name famous, and all such gossip was certain of a very good reception in England. The information in Part I. possibly comes from a source close to Vanessa (in Vanessa's circle it was very early thought that Swift should marry her : see the letter of Mrs. Long, *Corr.* I. 307). It can be surmised that some friend was now endeavouring to take vengeance on her behalf, and perhaps to convey to the public the famous correspondence (which might easily have been forwarded to London either by herself before her death, or, if the story of the executors is true, by them), with such hints as to enable us to interpret these puzzling letters rightly and to dispel the mystery surrounding Vanessa's and Stella's behaviour.

15. Op. cit., 275.

16. *Corr.* III. 462.

17. *Corr.* III. 433.

18. P. II. 26.

19. This was Swift's taste, even if he disparagingly remarked on Stella's fatness.

20. P. II. 52.

21. W. XII.94ff.

22. We have proved that the avarice theory is untenable even for the earlier period. For the later period, even Bernard, who considers the possible avarice of Swift as a major factor in the problem, is at a loss.

23. The *Letter to a Very Young Lady on her Marriage* (W. XL 115 ff.), shows Swift in a pitiable state of ignorance on all matters connected with marriage. He sees only the outside, gives a long string of advices which for the most part might be given to anyone, not only to a married woman !

24. There are some *billets* without dates ; but these cannot with certainty be referred to this gap, as they fit easily into the situation of 1714 or of one of the two successive years, or into that of 1719 onwards.

25. *Corr.* **I I I .** 442, **443.**

26. *Corr.* **I I I .** 33 ff.

27. *Corr.* **I I I .** 60.

28. *Corr.* **I I I .** 85.

29. *Corr.* **I I I .** 132.

30. Delany, 85.

31. In the letters of Vanessa we find her complaining hysterically of these " bitter words " of Swift, which are killing her. This *is* a possible source, not of the anecdote, but of its being accepted as plausible. Once again, the anecdote in its circumstantial form seems to be disproved. Vanessa receives Swift in a place where she and he could be seen at large ; Swift throws the letter at Vanessa's feet and departs without a word. But the date of the incident is winter, when Vanessa would scarcely have been lounging in the open air at the moment that Swift's unexpected visit surprised her.

32. The tale that she gave instructions for her vengeance by word of mouth reposes, then, exclusively on Marshall's evidence, which may well have been invented by him in order to excuse himself for having disclosed the secret documents of Swift and Vanessa. Before it was published, some years later, the poem was widely known in manuscript ; the letters may have been destroyed, but at least copies were taken, and Scott began to publish them. Evidently, either Berkeley was not apprised of their existence, and Marshall held them as a private curio, showing them about (see above, our note on the pamphlet on Swift's amours) ; or they both agreed to keep the secret, perhaps destroying the originals of the letters. In the latter case Marshall preserved a copy, did not observe the compact as regards the poem, and left the letters behind him after his death. Both hypotheses explain why Swift did not quarrel with Berkeley, whereas he was evidently enraged against Marshall. Some new letters of the philosopher *{Publications of the Royal Irish Academy,* Dr. Luce, 1933) show that Berkeley had a lively distrust of Marshall.

33. See especially Swift's later masterpiece in irony, *A Vindication of Lord Carteret,* in which Swift computes with great solemnity and in detail the cash value of the emoluments and employments acquired by the Tories during the Carteret administration. The amount is estimated at *£111 {£100* being Sheridan's salary, and £11 the profit to Atchison on a grant of a barracks on his land, after all expenses are carefully deducted).

34. *Corr.* III. 395.

35. For his frequent visits and friendly intercourse with the Princess of Wales and Mrs. Howard, see *A Pastoral Dialogue* (P. I. 155 ff.).

36. *Corr.* III. 417.

37. *Corr.* III. 418 ff.

38. *Corr.* III. 421.

39. He notes only that he is " *impatient* [! !] for the condition of our friend " (p. 21 of the MS. diary now preserved in Forster, 519).

40. W. XI. 393.

41. P. I . 292.

42. *Corr.* III. 434.

CHAPTER X

1. We will not hint, as Leslie Stephen somewhat naively seems to do (op. cit., 171), that the *Travels* might legitimately be taken as a children's tale. Our business in this chapter is in fact to show the reality (in a special *sense)* of Gulliver's world for Swift.

2. To make what we mean better understood, we could auote the too extreme view of D. H. Lawrence (to which we do not of course adhere) on the reality-value of ancient symbols : " It was a great depth of knowledge arrived at direct. ... It was a knowledge based, not on words, but on images " *(Apocalypse),*

3. Parody for Scott; the description of a tempest in the first chapter of Brobdingnag has been proved a copy of a passage in Samuel Sturmy's *Mariner's Magazine,* first by Knowles *(Notes and Queries,* March 7th, 1868, 4th series, p. 223), then by Borkowski (see further) and Williams *(Swift's Library,* p. 93).

4. See W. I. 20.

5. Animal-idolatry arrived at through misanthropy is very natural, as the celebrated phrase shows : " Plus je connais les hommes, plus j'aime les bfites."

6. " Sans cela, pourquoi serions-nous plus longtemps dans le ventre de nos meres que tous le reste des animaux si ce n'etait qu'il faut que notre embryon recoive trois actions distinctes ? . . Je sais bien que le cheval ne s'acheve qu'en dix, douze ou quatorze mois. ..." (De Bergerac, *(Euvres,* ed. Gamier, Paris, p. 249).

7. The sources of *Gulliver* are sometimes very far to seek, as is shown in the probable derivation from Paracelsus of the most repellent academician of Lagado (see W. I. 115), so that the nearest analogy can sometimes lead to error.

8. In regard to the very wide influence of Rabelais (interesting especially for the comparison between Rabelais's and Swift's mentalities, on which see Chapter V.) we find a copy with remarks by Swift in the sale catalogue, n. 42, but we have already a direct proof that Swift was reading it extensively in 1719 *(Corr.* III. 28). On the other hand, the presence of books in the catalogues is not to be considered as a direct proof of Swift's having read them, nor their absence of Swift's having no knowledge of them, as Mr. Harold Williams seems inclined to think ; urging that as Cyrano's *Voyages* are not to be found in the catalogues this weakens the evidence adduced to prove Swift drew many hints from them *(Swift's Library,* p. 90). But the number of these hints, as detailed by Borkowski, is too numerous to permit one to speak of coincidences : Mr. Williams's argument might pass if we had been presented with a unique allusion, but before the number of coincidences it is impossible to appeal to chance.

9. W. VIII. xxiii.

10. *Anglia,* V. 397-427 and 428-56.

11. *Anglia,* XV. 345-89. Recent contributions to the question of the sources of the *Travels* are that of Mr. Eddy *(A Critical Study of Gulliver's Travels)* and of Mr. Harold Williams (notes to his edition of the *Travels,* 1926), which we had no occasion to consult directly. Yet it seems (from a quotation of Mr. Williams, op. cit., p. 91) that Mr. Eddy refers to Berkeley's *Theory of Vision* for the relativity of magnitude in Lilliput and Brobdingnag ; we cannot take any such line in the consideration of sources, and, moreover, the very spirit of Berkeley's theory, the absolute subjectivity of magnitude, is very far from Swift's construction*of a really gigantic and a really Lilliputian world. Swift's construction contains no hint of the Berkcleyan relation between distance and magnitude.

12. The *Dunciad* of Pope has something to do with Scriblerus. And the *Miscellanies* by Pope, Swift, and others, published contemporary with the *Travels,* are an outcome of Scriblerus.

13. They are quoted in Swift's correspondence. For detailed examinations of Swift's indebtedness to Lucian's *Icaromenippus* and *Dialogues,* see Eddy (quoted in Williams's *Library,* p. 90).

14. I., p. 10.

15. W. VIII. 301, 307.

16. *Corr.* III. 276.

17. *Corr.* III. 292.

18. The process of generalisation goes on, not only through the *Travels,* but very definitely throughout the works of Swift, who had hitherto attacked either theories

or particular men (Marlborough, Somerset, Godolphin, Wharton, etc.), so that it can be fairly assumed that the process of the *Travels* reproduces a process informing Swift's whole life, as we observed in Chapter IX.

19. He had already, many years before, criticised all the attitudes possible to man in regard to the world's censure, finding it most usual (and therefore, necessarily, not completely satisfying to him !) to return the censure (W. I. 276, 1st paragraph).

20. *Corr.* III. 293.

21. *Corr.* III. 277.

22. *Ibidem.*

23. Here begins this dreadful cant about *vertu,* which is to cost so many noble heads during the French Revolution.

24. W. VIII. 270.

25. *Corr.* III. 277.

26. W. VIII. 68.

27. For the outcome of clear-sightedness when applied to those closest to him, see Swift's portraits of Sheridan, perhaps the man he loved most (W. II. 153 ff. and 161 ff.).

28. Borkowski hints at their having been suggested by Herbert, whose *Travels* Swift had in his library.

29. Scott, op. cit., 126.

30. Parere del P. M. Fr. Elia d'Amato carmelitano . . . Intorno a'Viaggi de' due Gulliver Inglese, 1735. Printed in 1737 in *Raccolta d'opere scientifiche e Jilosofiche,* Tomo XVI, Venezia, 1737. The " second Gulliver " refers not to the apocryphal "third volume," published in 1727 plagiarising directly from the *Histoire des Sevarambes,* but to Desfontaine's continuation " Le Nouveau Gulliver," purporting to be by John Gulliver ; a purely imaginary voyage in countries of fantastic peoples, ruled by women, etc.

31. Before we begin to show the purpose of each monstrosity, we shall refer to this strange defender of Swift for evidence that Swift may well have taken the fundamental idea for the monstrosity from any of the authors whom d'Amato quotes to show Swift's verisimilitude. But this does not absolve us from the duty of revealing the significance of the monstrosity, just as the finding of the sources for Swift's various episodes and the general ideas of Utopistic travels still left us with the duty of showing why Swift chose to imitate this form.

32. The idea is not so preposterous, it seems, for we even find Leslie Stephen (171) countenancing it : " Swift's peculiarity is in the peculiar sobriety of fancy which leads him to keep in his most daring flights *upon the confines of the possible* " (! !).

33. D'Amato also explains away the Struldbrugs, by saying that probably Gulliver was taken in by their describing themselves as immortals. In regard to Laputa, D'Amato thinks Gulliver is alluding to some islands which were noted on ancient charts although non-existent, and in regard to the Houyhnhnms, he speaks of countries where men drive chariots in the place of horses.

34. W. VIII. 59 ff.

35. W. VIII. 61.

36. The Yahoos themselves, whom we cannot but consider with a certain seriousness, were made a society-joke by Swift's friends and contemporaries.

37. From this came the admiration for Swift's political acutcness as revealed in Lilliput—a very disproportionate admiration, shown even by Lady Marlborough as well as by all discontented men of the time.

38. XV. 65-71.

39. P. I. 179.

40. The rigid reason of the Illuministic thought.

41. Swift has to have recourse to an explanation founded on the Christian theory of evil. In all his ideas he is directly at variance with the notion of an original state

cither of pure good or of pure evil. The Hobbesian theory of *homo komini lupus* is denied in the Houyhnhnm, who need neither law nor a Leviathan to keep them good, and also in the Yahoos, on whose base instincts the sage Houyhnhnm regulations have no redeeming effect. Therefore the " social covenant " could make no deep appeal to a clear-thinking politician like Swift (even if, following the current philosophy of his time, he employed its implications in his political writings), precisely because it postulates either Hobbes's natural beast or Rousseau's natural angel.

42. And the king is the very ideal of Swift—" a patriot king," as Scott styles it (Chandos ed., p. 121).

43. In either case the duty of Government of making mankind a tolerable genus, and its responsibility in relation to mankind and to God, is evidently at the back of Swift's mind.

44. As evidence that Swift had unconsciously before him such a model for the Houyhnhnms, we may note their lack of sexual modesty, their not feeling sex as an impurity—like Adam before the Fall. (The actual idea was perhaps taken from De Bergerac.)

45. W. VIII. 20.

46. So much so that only later on Gulliver can discover " the methods they had taken to bind me " (W. VIII. 20-1).

47. W. VIII. 88.

48. W. VIII. 158.

49. W. VIII. 160.

50. To give a better idea of this " clearing of the ground " to convey an impression of reality, we suggest a comparison with a writer deliberately conjuring up, on the contrary, an impression of terror and strangeness by keeping the reader awake in a darkening atmosphere : H. G. Wells, for instance, does this in the *Island of Doctor Moreau,* the comparison of which with the *Travels* is instructive in many respects.

51. In Chapter V. see Bonnier, 212 ff. and Pctren-Ingvar, 29.

52. As a proof of this, and of the relative rapidity of the *Travels* in becoming a classic, we may remark that an early German edition in English, perhaps not widely known, appeared in 1800 at Dresden, published by G. and F. Walther with a strangely inverted title.

53. See, for instance, *Corr.* III. 362, 370-1, etc., etc.

54. See his first ed. of Swift's *Works,* Vol. I. , p. 344.

55. *Corr.* III. 406.

56. *Corr.* III. 407.

57. Ed. *Bibl. Nat.,* Paris, 1888, pp. 162-3.

58. *Le cinquiesme et dernier livee,* etc., chaps, xxi. and xxii.

59. Of Swift's enmity to Newton, Scott (122, note) gives interesting evidence.

60. P. I. 22.

61. W. VIII. 204 ff.

CHAPTER XI

1. W. VII. 194-5.

2. Many examples of this interchange have been preserved in the correspondence between the two, and in various MS. dictionaries found among Swift's relics.

3. Swift's cry, " Vive Ia bagatelle," does not signify a final breach with serious interests, but the continuance of a spurious activity when circumstances cut him off from serious aims.

4. " . . . It is time **for** me **to** have done with **the** world ; and **so** I **would** if I could get into a better, before **I** was called into **the** best, **and not die here in a** rage like a poisoned rat in a hole."

5. Dr. Rossi's bitter personal experience of **nine years spent in a small town** confers particular authority on this passage.

6. But Rundle was better than most of the Bishops :

Rundle a Bishop well he may ;
He's still a Christian more than they !
(On Mr. Rundle, Bishop of Derry : 1734-5.)

7. Archbishop Synge wrote : " In three parts of Ireland out of four in this kingdom the parochial clergy either have no glebes at all, or so small a spot, and so inconveniently situated as to make it impossible for them, in the sense of the law, to reside " *(Account.* Dublin, 1723). Cf. Lecky on this subject (op. cit., Vol. IL, 202 *et seq.).* Lecky allows that there was something in Swift's protest. " It **is** popularly supposed," he writes, " that the Irish Catholics and the Irish Dissenters were all sacrificed to the members of the Established Church, and that these at least were the pampered members of the State. But a more careful examination will much alter this impression. The wealth of the Church had been for a long time diminishing. . . . The revenues of many parishes had been appropriated by laymen. . . . The tithe war had not yet begun, but the poverty of the Catholics . . . and, it must be added, the hostility of Protestant Episcopalian landlords, made the real income of the clergy much less than was supposed."

8. Moriarty imputes to Swift in his old age the opinion that the Irish question could only be settled on the lines of an enlightened despotism.

9. *Corr.* V I . 32.

10. Preaching in Cork on the occasion of King George's birthday, he chose the unfortunate text : " Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Tighe informed against him, and he was struck off the Castle lists.

11. He spent almost the whole of 1728 at Market Hill; but this seems **to have** been his last visit to Atchison.

12. The only Dublin friends included in the list which he drew up at the end of his life under the three heads of the grateful, the ungrateful, and the indifferent, were Sheridan, Delany, and the Grattans. All are marked " grateful."

13. *The Memoirs of Lcetitia Pilkington,* Dublin, 1748. This book, abounding **in** anecdotes concerning Swift, appeared before the first biography, that of Orrery.

14. *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain,* 1755.

15. *Corr.* V I . 113.

16. e.g. *Corr.* V I . 161.

17. See Chapter V. for the misanthropy and impatience normally **consequent to** deafness.

18. He may have remembered the sad spectacle of Temple's old age.

19. Orrery's *Remarks,* p. 188.

20. *Corr.* I I I . 416.

21. Francis Wilson, Prebendary of St. Patrick's, invited Swift to dine with **him** at Newlands, near Dublin. An altercation took place during the drive home. Swift's servants and coachman deposed that Wilson initiated the disturbance, having first tried to intoxicate the Dean. In an affidavit (July 13th, 1742), Wilson swore that Swift had struck the first blow, exclaiming that " Wilson was **the devil** and bid him go to hell " *(Corr.* V I . 179).

22. *Corr.* V I . 185.

23. Delany, quoted by Scott, op. cit., 167.

24. *Ibidem.*

25. Op. cit., 208.

26. Scott, 166.

27. *Corr.* V I . 166.

28. *Corr.* V I . 169.

29. Corr. V I . 172.

30. Corr. V I . 185.

31. Sec the pages already quoted from *Brain* in Chapter V.

32. According to a strange report, he was already swearing and cursing incessantly in 1 743.

33. *Corr.* V I . 187.

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