THE AUTHOR OF "GULLIVER."

FROM PHOTOGRAPH OF ORIGINAL MARBLE BUST OF SWIFT BY ROUBILLIAC (1695-1762), NOW IN THE LIBRARY OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

JONATHAN SWIFT.

THERE are few figures in history, and still fewer in literature, which have occupied so great a place in the world's attention, or which retain so strong a hold upon its interest, as that of Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's. It is considerably more than a century since he died, old and mad and miserable, a man who had never been satisfied with life, or felt his fate equal to his deserts, who disowned and hated, even when he served, the country of his birth, and with fierce and bitter passion denounced human nature itself, and left a sting in almost every individual whom he loved.

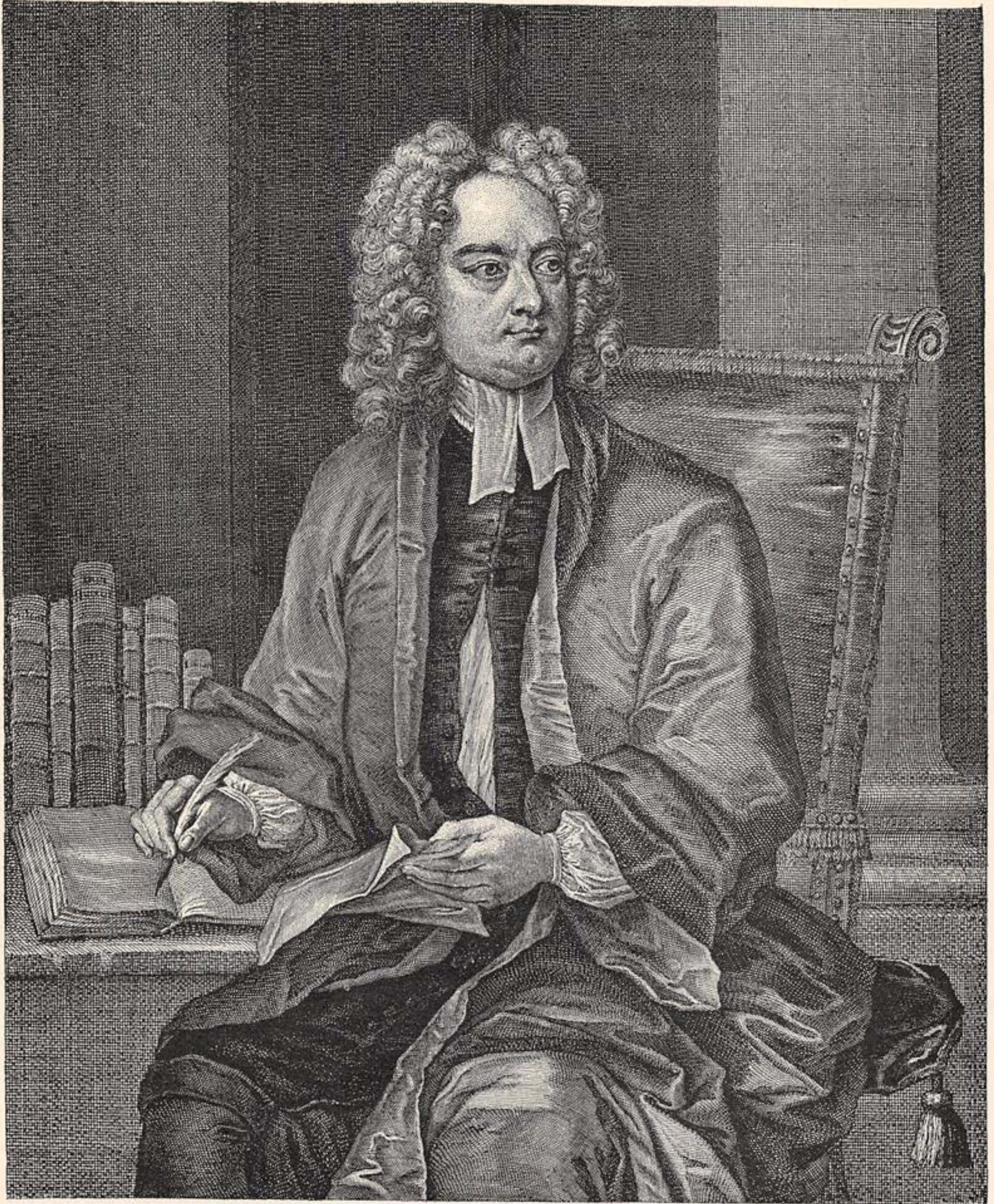
Yet among the many strange examples of that far more than republican power (not always most evident in republics) by which a man of native force and genius, however humble, finds his way to the head of affairs, and impresses his individuality upon his age, when thousands born to better fortunes are swept away as nobodies, Swift is one of the most remarkable. His origin, though noted by himself, not without a certain pride, as from a family of gentry not unknown in their district, was in his own person almost as lowly and poor as it was possible to be. The posthumous son of a poor official in the Dublin law-courts, owing his education to the kindness, or perhaps less the kindness than the family pride, of an uncle, Swift entered the world as a hanger-on, waiting what fortune and a patron might do for him, a position scarcely comprehensible to young Englishmen nowadays, though then the natural method of advancement. Such a young man in the present day would betake himself to his books, with the practical aim of an examination before him, and the hope of immediate admission through that gate to the public service and all its chances; but Swift's age had not learned the habit of utilizing education, and he

was one of the idle youths of fame. "He was stopped of his degree," he himself writes in his autobiographical notes, "for dullness and insufficiency, and at last hardly admitted in a manner little to his credit, which is called in that college *speciali gratia*." Recent biographers have striven to prove that this really meant nothing to Swift's discredit, but it is to be supposed that in such a matter he is himself the best authority.

The life of the household of dependents at Moor Park, where young Swift attended Sir William Temple's pleasure in the library, while the Johnsons and Dingleys, the waiting gentlewomen of a system which now lingers only in courts, hung about my lady, is to us extremely difficult to realize, and still more to understand. This little cluster of secondary personages, scarcely at all elevated above the servants, with whom they sometimes sat at table, and whose offices they were always liable to be called on to perform, yet who were all conscious of gentle blood in their veins, and a relationship more or less distinct with the heads of the house, is indeed one of the most curious lingerings of the past in the eighteenth century. When we read in one of Macaulay's brilliant sketches, or in Swift's own words, or in the indications given by both history and fiction, that the parson,— chaplain perhaps at the great house,— the humble priest of the parish, found his natural mate in the waiting-maid, it is generally forgotten that the waiting-maid was then in most cases quite as good as the parson, a gently bred and well-descended woman, like her whom an unkind but not ignoble fate made into the "Stella" we all know, the mild and modest star of Swift's existence. That a poor widow with her child, like Stella's mother, should find refuge in the house of her wealthy kinswoman at no heavier cost than that of attending to Lady Temple's linen and laces, and should secure thus such a training for her little girl as might indeed have ended in the rude household of a Parson Trulliber, but at the same time might fit her to take her place in a witty and brilliant society, and to enter into all the thoughts of the most brilliant genius of his time, was no ill fate; nor is there anything that is less than noble and befitting (in theory) in the association of that young man of genius, whatsoever exercises of patience he might be put to, with the highly cultured man of the world, the councilor of kings and an ex-ambassador, under whose auspices he could learn to understand both books and men, and see the best company of his time, and acquire at second hand all the fruits of a ripe experience. So that, perhaps, there is something to be said after all for the curious little community at Moor Park, where the young Irish secretary, looking but uneasily upon a world in which his future fate was so unassured, had yet the wonderful chance once, if no more, of explaining English institutions to King William, and in his leisure the amusement of teaching little Hester how to write, and learning from her baby prattle — which must have been the delight of the house, kept up and encouraged by her elders — that "little language" which had become a sort of synonym for the most intimate and endearing utterances of tenderness.

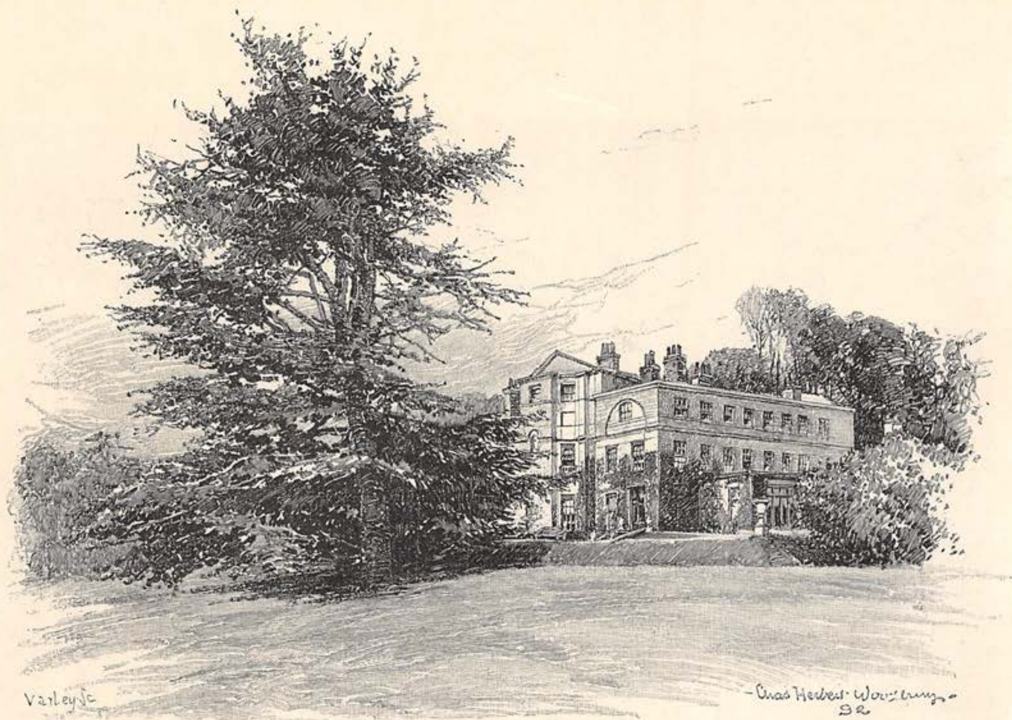
Jonathan Swift left Ireland, along with many more, in the commotion that succeeded the Revolution of 1688, a very poor and homely lad, with nothing but the learning, such as it was, picked up in a somewhat disorderly university career. Through his mother, then living at Leicester, and on the score of humble relationship between her and Lady Temple, he was introduced to Sir William Temple's household, but scarcely, it would appear at first, to any permanent position there. He was engaged, an unfriendly writer says, "at the rate of £20 a year" as amanuensis and reader, but "Sir William never favoured him with his conversation nor allowed him to sit at table with him." Temple's own account of the position, however, contains nothing at all derogatory to the young man, for whom, about a year after, he endeavored, no doubt in accordance with Swift's own wishes, to find a situation with Sir Robert Southwell, then going to Ireland as Secretary of State. Sir William describes Swift as "of good family in Herefordshire." "He has lived in my house, read to me, writ for me, and kept all my accounts as far as my small occasions required. He has Latin and Greek, some French, writes a very good current hand, is very honest and diligent, and has good friends, though they have for the present lost their fortunes," the great man says; and he recommends the youth "either as a gentleman to wait on you, or a clerk to write under you, or upon any establishment of the college to recommend him to a fellowship there, which he has a just pretence to."

His absence from the Temple household, however, was of very short duration, Sir Robert Southwell apparently having had no use for his services, or no means of preferring him to a fellowship, and he returned to Moor Park in 1690, where he remained for four years. It is quite clear, whatever his vicissitudes of feeling might have been, that he identified himself entirely with his patron's opinions and even with his prejudices, and was a loyal and devoted retainer both then and afterward. When Sir William became involved in a literary quarrel with the great scholar Bentley, young Swift rushed into the field with a *jeu d'esprit* which has out-



FROM COPPERPLATE ENGRAVING BY PIERRE FOURDRINIER AFTER A PAINTING BY CHARLES JERVAS.

DEAN SWIFT.



DRAWN BY CHARLES HERBERT WOODBURY. ENGRAVED BY R. VARLEY.

MOOR PARK, RESIDENCE OF SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE AND OF SWIFT.

lived all other records of the controversy. The "Battle of the Books" could hardly have been written in aid of a hard or contemptuous master. Years after, when he had a house of his own and had entered upon his independent career, he turned his little rectory garden into a humble imitation of the Dutch paradise which Temple had made to bloom in the wilds of Surrey, with a canal and a willow walk like those which were so dear to King William and his courtiers. And when Temple died, it was to Swift, and not to any of his nephews, that Sir William committed the charge of his papers and literary remains. He was sent to King William, when Temple was unable to wait upon his Majesty, to explain to him the expediency of certain parliamentary measures, and this was no doubt intended by his patron as a means of bringing him under the king's notice. William would seem to have taken a kind of vague interest in the secretary, which he expressed in an odd way by offering him a captain's commission in a cavalry regiment,—a proposal which did not tempt Swift,—and by teaching him how to cut asparagus "in the Dutch way," and to eat up all the stalks, as the Dean afterward, in humorous revenge, made an unlucky visitor of his own do. But William, notwithstanding these whimsical evidences of favor, neither listened to the young secretary's argument nor gave him a prebend, as had been hoped.

Four years, however, is a long time for an ambitious young man to spend in dependence, watching one hope die out after another, and Swift's impatience began to be irrestrainable, and to trouble the peace of his patron's learned leisure. Although destined from the first to the church, and for some time waiting in tremulous expectation of ecclesiastical preferment, Swift had not yet taken orders. The explanation he gives of how and why he finally determined on doing so is characteristic. His dissatisfaction and restlessness, probably his complaints, moved Sir William — though evidently deeply offended that his secretary should wish to leave him — to offer to him an employ of about £120 a year in the Rolls Office in Ireland, of which Temple held the sinecure office of master. "Whereupon [says Swift's own narrative] Mr. 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 go to Ireland and take Holy Orders." This arbitrary decision to balk his patron's tardy bounty, and to take his own way in spite of him, was probably as much owing to a characteristic blaze of temper as

ENGRAVED BY R. A. MULLER. FROM AN ENGRAVING IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM, AFTER A PAINTING BY SIR PETER LELY.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE.

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER. FROM COPY OF THE ORIGINAL BY HENRY MACMANUS, R. H. A., NOW IN POSSESSION OF PROFESSOR DOWDEN.

HESTER JOHNSON, SWIFT'S "STELLA," PAINTED FROM LIFE BY MRS. DELANY, ON THE WALL OF THE TEMPLE AT DELVILLE, AND ACCIDENTALLY DESTROYED.

to the somewhat fantastic disinterestedness here put forward, though Swift was never a man greedy of money or disposed to sacrifice his pride to the acquisition of gain, notwithstanding certain habits of miserliness afterward developed in his character. Sir William was "extremely angry"—hurt, no doubt, as many a patron has been, by the ingratitude of the dependent who would not trust everything to him, but claimed some free will in the disposition of his own life. Had they been uncle and nephew, or even father and son, the same thing might easily have happened. Swift set out for Dublin full of indignation and excitement, "everybody judging I did best to leave him"; but, alas! in this, as in so many cases, pride was doomed to a speedy downfall.

On reaching Dublin, and taking the necessary steps for his ordination, Swift found that it was needful for him to have a recommendation and certificate from the patron in whose house so many years of his life had been spent. No doubt it must have been a somewhat bitter necessity to bow his head before the protector whom he had left in anger and to ask for this. Sir William, however, it would seem, behaved as a philosopher and a gentleman should, and gave the required recommendation with magnanimity and kindness. Thus the young man had his way.

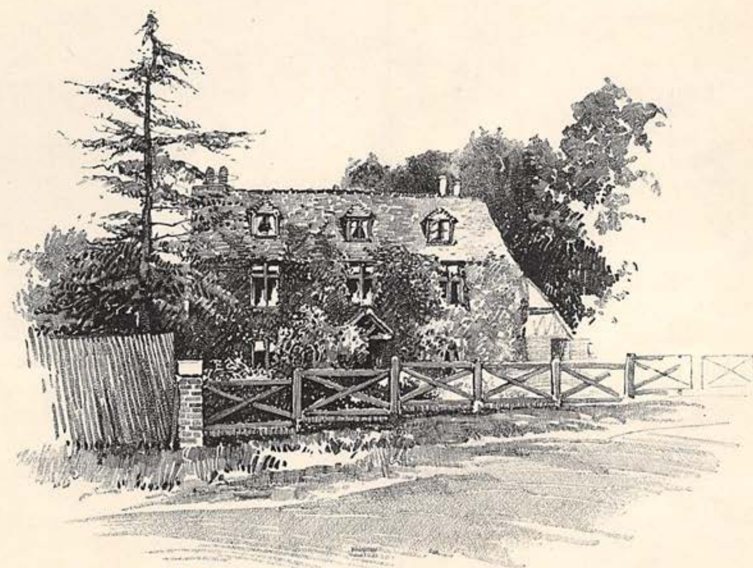
Swift got a small benefice in the north of Ireland, the little country parish of Kilroot, in which doubtless he expected that the sense of independence would make up to him for other deprivations. It was near Belfast, among those hard-headed Scotch colonists whom he could never endure; and probably this had something to do with the speedy revulsion of his mind. He remained there only a year; and it is perhaps the best proof we could have of his sense of isolation and banishment that this was the only time in his life in which he thought of marriage. There is in existence a fervent and impassioned letter addressed to the object of his affections, a Miss Waring, whom, after the fashion of the time, he called "Varina." He does not seem in this case to have had the usual good fortune that attended his relationships with women. Miss Waring did not respond with the same warmth; indeed, was discouraging and coldly prudent. He was still pleading for a favorable answer when there arrived a letter from Moor Park inviting his return, Sir William's pride, too, having apparently broken down under the blank made by Swift's departure.

Hester Johnson was a child of seven when young Swift, "the humble student," went first to Moor Park. She was only fifteen when he returned, no longer as a sort of educated man of all work, but on the entreaty of the patron who had felt the want of his company so much as to forget all grievances. He was not now a humble student, Temple's satellite and servant, but his friend and coadjutor, fully versed in all his secrets, and most likely already chosen as the guardian of his fame, and the executor of his purposes and wishes; therefore it is not possible that Macaulay's reckless picturesque description could apply to either time. Such an easy picture, however, has more effect upon the general imagination than the outcries of all the biographers, and the many researches made to show that Swift was not a sort of literary lackey, nor Stella an Abigail, but that he had learned to prize the advantages of his home there during his absence from it, and that, during the latter part of his life at Moor Park at least, his position was as good as that of a dependent can ever be.

Sir William Temple died, as Swift records affectionately, on the morning of January 27, 1699, "and with him all that was good and amiable among men." He died, however, leaving the young man who had spent so many years of his life under his wing scarcely better for that long subjection. Swift had a legacy of £100 for his trouble in editing his patron's memoirs, and he got the profits of those memoirs, amounting, Mr. Forster calculates, to no less than £600, no inconsiderable present; but no one of the many appointments which

were then open to the retainers of the great, and especially to a young man of letters, had come in Swift's way.

The great household, with its easy and uneasy jumble of patrons and dependents, fell asunder and ceased to be. The younger members of the family were jealous of the last bequest, which put the fame of their distinguished relative into the hands of a stranger, and did their best to set Swift down in his proper place, and to proclaim how much he was the creature of their uncle's bounty. In the breaking up which followed there were many curious partings and conjunctions. Why Hester Johnson, to whom Sir William had bequeathed a little independence, should have left her mother's care and joined her fortunes to those of Mrs. Dingley instead, remains unexplained, unless, indeed, it was Mrs. Johnson's second marriage which was the cause, or perhaps some vexation on the part of Lady Giffard—with whom the girl's mother remained, notwithstanding her marriage—at the liberality of her brother to the child brought up in his house.



DRAWN BY CHARLES HERBERT WOODBURY. ENGRAVED BY S. DAVIS.

STELLA'S COTTAGE, ON THE BOUNDARY OF THE MOOR PARK ESTATE.

Swift was thirty-one, too old to be beginning his career, yet young enough to turn with eager zest to the unknown, when this catastrophe occurred. Sir William Temple's secretary and literary executor must have known, one would suppose, many people who could have helped him to promotion, but it would seem as if a kind of irresistible fate impelled him back to his native country, though he did not love it, and forced him to be an Irishman in spite of himself. The only post that came in his way was a chaplaincy, conjoined with a secretaryship, in the suite of the Earl of Berkeley, newly appointed one of the Lords Justices in Ireland, and just then entering upon his duties. Swift accepted the position in hopes that he would be continued as Lord Berkeley's secretary, and possibly go with him afterward to more stirring scenes and a larger life, but this expectation was not carried out. Neither was his application for the Deanery of Derry, which seems at the moment a somewhat bold one, successful, and all the preferment he succeeded in getting was another Irish living, with a better stipend and in a more favorable position than Kilroot—the parish of Laracor, within twenty miles of Dublin, which, conjoined with a prebend in St. Patrick's, and other small additions, brought him in £200 a year—a small promotion, indeed, yet not a bad income for the place and time. He was naturally, as Lord Berkeley's chaplain, in the midst of the finest company that Ireland could boast, one of a court more extended than Sir William Temple's, yet of a similar description, and affording greater scope for his hitherto undeveloped social qualities.

His stay in Ireland at this period lasted about two years, during which he paid repeated visits to his living at Laracor, and also made trial of existence there. The parsonage was in a ruinous condition, the church a miserable barn, the congregation numbered about twenty persons. Many are the tales of the new parson's arrival there, like a thunder-storm, frighten-

FROM AN UNFINISHED ENGRAVING, IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM, ATTRIBUTED TO DAVID LOGGAN.

GEORGE, EARL OF BERKELEY.

ing the humble curate and his wife with the arrogant roughness of manner which they, like many others, found afterward covered a great deal of genuine practical kindness. One well-known anecdote, which describes him as finding his congregation to consist only of his clerk and beginning the service gravely with "Dearly beloved Roger," has found a permanent place among ecclesiastical pleasantries. In all probability it is true; but if not so, it is at least so *ben trovato* as to be as good as true. There were few claims upon the energies of such a man in such a sphere, and when Lord Berkeley was recalled to England his chaplain went with him. But neither did he find any promotion in London. Up to this time his only literary work had been that wonderful "Battle of the Books," which had burst like a bombshell into the midst of the squabble of the *literati*, but which had only as yet been handed about in manuscript, and was therefore known to few. No doubt it was known to various wits and scholars that Sir William Temple's late secretary and literary executor was a young man of uncommon promise, but statesmen in general, and the king in particular, sick and worn out with many preoccupations, had no leisure for the claims of the Irish parson.

The interest of this visit to England was, however, as great, and told for as much in his life, as if it had brought him a bishopric. It determined that long connection and close intercourse in which Swift's inner history is involved. After he had paid in vain his court to the king, and made various ineffectual attempts to recommend himself in high quarters, he went on a visit to Farnham, where Hester Johnson and Mrs. Dingley had settled after Sir William's

death. Swift found the two women quite undetermined what to do, in an uncomfortable lodging, harassed for money, and without any object in their lives. They had lived together for years, and knew everything about each other; Hester had grown up from childhood under Swift's eye, his pupil, his favorite, his playfellow. She had now, it is true, arrived at an age when other sentiments are supposed to come in. She must have been about twenty, while he was thirty-four. There was no reason in the world why they should not have married then and there, had they so wished. But there seems no appearance or thought of any such desire, and the question was what the ladies should do for the arrangement of their affairs and pleasant occupation of their lives. Farnham being untenable, where should they go? Why not to Ireland, where Hester's property was, where they would be near to their friend, who could help them into society, and give them his own companionship as often as he happened to be there?

This was, then, the time which decided what is called the "sad and mysterious history" of Swift and Stella, a story so strangely told, so obstinately insisted upon as miserable, unnatural, and tragical, that the reader or writer of to-day has scarcely the power of forming an impartial judgment upon it. We have not a word from the woman's side of the question, though she is supposed to have passed a melancholy existence of unsatisfied longings and disappointed love by Swift's side, the victim of his capricious affections, neglect, cruelty, and fondness. That she should have wished to marry him, that the love was impassioned on her side, and that her whole life was blighted and overcast by his fantastic repugnance to the common ties of humanity, are taken for granted by every historian. Appearances of blighted life or unhappiness there are none in anything we know of her. As the ladies appear reflected in that "Journal to Stella,"—which is the dean's only claim upon our affections, but a strong one,—they seem to have lived a most cheerful, lively life. They had a number of friends, they had their little tea-parties, their circle of witty society, to which the letters of the absent were a continual amusement and delight. And it is the man, not the woman, who complains of not receiving letters: it is he, not she, who exhausts every playful wile, every tender art, to keep himself in vivid recollection. Is it perhaps a certain mixture of masculine vanity, and compassion for the gentle feminine creature who never succeeded in getting the man she loved to marry her,—and thus failed to attain the highest end of woman,—which has moved every biographer of Swift, each man more compassionate than his predecessor, thus to exhaust himself in pity for Stella? Johnson, Scott, Macaulay, Thackeray, not to mention many lesser names, have all taken her injured innocence to heart. And nobody notes the curious fact that Stella herself never utters any complaint, nor indeed seems to feel the necessity of being unhappy at all, but takes her dean most cheerfully, laughing, scolding, giving her opinion with all the delightful freedom of a relationship which was at once nature and choice, the familiar trust and tenderness of old use and wont with the charm of voluntary association. We see her only as reflected in his letters, in the references he makes to hers, and in all his tender sportive references to her habits and ways of thinking. This reflection is not in rigid lines of black and white, but an airy and radiant vision, the representation of anything in the world rather than a downcast and disappointed woman. It is not that either of a wife or a lover: it is more like the wilful, delightful image of a favorite child, a creature confident that everything she says or does will be received with admiration from the mere fact that it is she who says or does it, and who tyrannizes, scoffs, and proffers a thousand comments and criticisms with all the elastic brightness of unforced and unimpassioned affection.

One can well imagine, however, when the two ladies arrived in Dublin, where their friend had no doubt represented to them his power to gain them access into the best society, and found that he did not come, and that they were stranded in a strange place, knowing nobody, how some annoyance and disappointment, and perhaps anger, must have been in their thoughts. Insensibly, however, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Dingley found a place and position for themselves. Swift was often away in the following years, spending about half his time in London, and when he was absent they took possession of his newly repaired and renovated house, or occupied his lodging in Dublin, and gathered friends about them, and went out to their card-parties, and played a little, and talked, and lived a pleasant life. When he returned they removed to their own rooms.

As Swift's relations with Stella are the great interest of his life, the subject which occupies every new writer who so much as touches upon him, it is needless to make any excuse for entering into the question with an amount of detail which our limited space would otherwise scarcely justify. The mystery about it lends it an endless attraction, and as, whatever it was, it is the one great love of his life, and represents all the private satisfaction and comfort he got by means of his affections, it has a permanent interest which most readers will not find in the "Tale of a Tub," or any other of the produc-

tions which made this period of his life remarkable. Swift was continually going and coming to London through these years. Though he had begun at once to make Laracor a sort of earthly paradise with a Dutch flavor, such as he had learned from his early master, and though it was "very much for his own satisfaction" that he had invited Stella to come to Ireland, yet neither of these reasons was enough to keep him in the rural quiet among his beloved willows. He hankered after society, fame, and power. He liked to meet great men, to hear the news, to ride over weaker reasoners in society, to put forth his own vigorous views, and to whip, with sharp satire, the men who displeased him. Tradition and habit had made him a Whig, but political names were of easy interchange in those days, and Swift's objects were much more definite than his politics. From the moment of Queen Anne's ascension, when she gratified the Church of England by the remission of certain dues hitherto paid to the crown, Swift's energies were directed to obtaining a similar remission for the Irish Church, and this was the ostensible object of his repeated journeys to London. He had also a purpose still nearer to his heart, which was the advancement of Jonathan Swift to a post more fitted to his genius. For these great objects he haunted the anterooms of Halifax, and Somers, and Godolphin, and did what he could to show them what they were not wise enough to perceive, that he was himself an auxiliary well worth securing. Nine years had passed in these vain negotiations. It was in 1701 that he paid that visit to Farnham which decided Stella's fate, but his own was still hanging in the balance when, after almost yearly expeditions in the interval, he set out for London in the autumn of the year 1710 with a threat upon his lips. "I will apply to Mr. Harley, who formerly made some advances toward me, and, unless he be altered, will, I believe, think himself in the right to use me well." The change was sudden, but it had little in it that could be called political apostasy.

The man who felt himself of sufficient importance to make this threat seems to have possessed already, notwithstanding the neglect of the Whig lords, the rank of his intellect rather than of his external position, and this not entirely because of the anonymous productions which were more or less known to be his.

It is characteristic, however, of the man that he should have tossed into the world without a name a book which made a greater impression than any contemporary publication, enjoying no doubt the wonders and queries, yet scorning to make himself dependent upon so small a thing as a book for his reputation and influence. He was no more disposed than the most sensitive of authors to let another man claim the credit of it, yet proud enough in native arrogance to hold himself independent of such aids to advancement, and thus to prove his scorn of the world's opinion, even when he sought its applauses most. Whether this work had anything to do with his introduction to the society of the coffee-houses, and the wits of London, we are not told.

On a first accost, it would not seem that Swift's manners were ingratiating. The following story, which is told by all his biographers, of his first appearance at the St. James Coffee-house is amusing, and may be true:

> They had for several successive days observed a strange clergyman come into the house who seemed entirely unacquainted with any of those who frequented it, and whose custom was to lay down his hat on a table and walk backward and forward at a good pace, for half an hour or an hour, without speaking to any mortal, or seeming in the least to attend to anything that was going forward there. He then used to take up his hat, pay his money at the bar, and walk away without opening his lips. On one particular evening, as Mr. Addison and the rest were observing him, they saw him cast his eyes several times on a gentleman in boots who seemed to be just come out of the country, and at last advance, as if intending to address him. Eager to hear what this dumb mad parson had to say, they all quitted their seats to get near him. Swift went up to the country gentleman, and in a very abrupt manner, without any previous salute, asked him, "Pray, sir, do you remember any good weather in the world?" The country gentleman, after staring a little at the peculiarity of his manner, answered, "Yes, sir, I remember a great deal of good weather in my time." "That is more," rejoined Swift, "than I can say. I never remember any weather that was not too hot, or too cold, or too wet, or too dry; but however God Almighty contrives, at the end of the year it is all very well." With which remark he took up his hat, and without uttering a syllable more, or taking the least notice of any one, walked out of the coffee-house.

His whimsical humor, and love of making the spectators stare, remained a characteristic of Swift all his life.

These beginnings of social life were, however, past, and no one was better known or more warmly welcomed, when he appeared with his wig new curled, and his azure eyes aglow, than the Irish parson, waiting upon Providence and the Whigs, whose political pamphlets, and papers in the "Tatler," and malicious practical joking with poor Partridge the astrologer, made him at each appearance a more notable figure to all the lookers-on. His eyes must have been on fire under those expressive brows when he came to London in 1710, resolved this time to be put off by Whig blan-

dishments no longer, but to try what the other side would do. The other side received him with open arms, and the most instant appreciation of what he was worth to them and what he could do.

Swift seems, at all events, to have had a real affection for the shifty minister who received him in so different a fashion from that of his former masters. He flung himself into all the backstairs intrigues, and collogued with Abigail Masham, and took his share in every plot. When Harley was stabbed, Swift felt for him all the anxiety of a brother. He threw himself into the "Examiner," the new Tory organ, with fervor and enthusiasm, and expounded the principles of his party, and set their plans before the public, with a force and clearness which nobody but he, his patrons declared, possessed. The two statesmen, Harley and Bolingbroke, who were so little like each other, so ill calculated to draw together, were alike in this, that neither could be flattering enough or kind enough to the great vassal whom they had secured. He seems to have thought of himself that he was a sort of third consul, an unofficial sharer of their power.

This extraordinary episode in the life of a man of Swift's profession, and so little likely to come to such promotion, lasted three years, and the history of it is not less remarkable than the fact. It was a period of the greatest intellectual activity and brilliancy in Swift's career, and besides his hard political work in the "Examiner" and elsewhere, he flung from him, amid the exhilarating appreciation of the great world and his patrons, a number of the best of his lighter productions. But nothing that he ever wrote can be compared to the letters in which the story of this period is told. If it is the true man whom we see in these unpremeditated and careless pages, written before he got up of a morning, or in the evening when he came home from his entertainments, with the chairmen still wrangling over their sixpences outside, how different is that man from the other who storms, and laughs, and mocks humanity, and sees through all its miserable pretenses without a thought of pardon or excuse! The journal letters addressed to the ladies in Dublin, Madam P. P. T. and Madam Elderby, the two women who shared his every thought, now so well known as the "Journal to Stella," are of all Swift's works the only productions that touch the heart. They are not to be numbered among his "works" at all; publication of any kind never seems to have occurred to him, while writing; they are as frank as Pepys, and far more simple and true. They are English history, and London life, and the eighteenth century, with its mannerisms and quaintness, all in one; and beyond and above every circumstance, they are Swift as he was in his deepest soul,—not as he appeared to men,—a human being full of tenderness, full of fun and innocent humor, full of genius and individual nature, but, above all, of true affection, of the warmest domestic love. The "Tale of a Tub," the "Battle of the Books," retain a sort of galvanic existence, but are for the greater part insupportable to the honest readers who have no tradition of superior acumen and perception to maintain. But when we turn to the "Journal," the clean and wholesome pages smile with a cordial life and reality. If there is here and there a phrase too broad for modern ears, it is nothing more than the language of the time, and has not a ghost of evil meaning in it. The big, arrogant wit—not unused to bluster and brag, to act like a tyrant and to speak like a bully—meets us there defenseless, with the tenderest light upon his face, in his nightcap and without his wig, smiling over little M. D.'s letter in the wintry mornings, snatching a moment at bedtime when he is already "seepy," and can do nothing but bid "nite deelest dea M. D. nite deelest loques," making his mouth, he says, as if he were saying the broken childish words, retiring into the sanctuary of the little language with a sense of consolation and repose.

Stella grew old, but never outgrew the little language, and every young woman has something in her of the sprightly creature that loved to do his bidding, the P. P. T. who held her own, and put him upon his best behavior often, yet never was other than the "deelest little loque," whom he bantered and laughed at with soft tears of tenderness in his eyes. "Better, thank God and M. D.'s prayers," he says among the private scribbles of his daily diary, which neither she nor any one was ever meant to see. Nevertheless, even while he was writing this journal, which is the record of a tender intimacy so remarkable, Swift was meddling with the education of another girl incautiously, foolishly, who was not of the uninflammable nature of Stella, but a hot-headed, passionate creature who did not at all imagine that the mere

> delight he took
> To see the virgin mind her book

was all Dr. Swift meant by his talk and attention. Swift says nothing of this pupil in the journal. He mentions his dinners at Mrs. Vanhomrigh's, and her handsome daughter, but he does not tell Madam P. P. T. that he had given one of his usual caressing names to this girl, whose early beauty and frank devotion had pleased him. There is indeed no shadow of "Vanessa" anywhere visible, though the brief mention of her name shows that the

second story, which was to be so fatally and painfully mingled with the first, had already begun.

The three years of Swift's stay in England were the climax of his life. They raised him higher than ever a simple parson had been raised before, and made of him (or so at least he believed) a power in the state. It has been doubted whether he was really so highly trusted, so much built upon, as he thought. The great lords, who delighted in Swift's talk and called him Jonathan, did not perhaps follow his advice and accept his guidance as he supposed. He seems to have constituted himself the patron of everybody he knew, really providing for a considerable number, and largely undertaking for others, though it was long before he got anything for himself. The following anecdote gives an unpleasant view from outside of his demeanor and habits. It is from Bishop Kennet's diary during the year 1713, the last of Swift's importance.

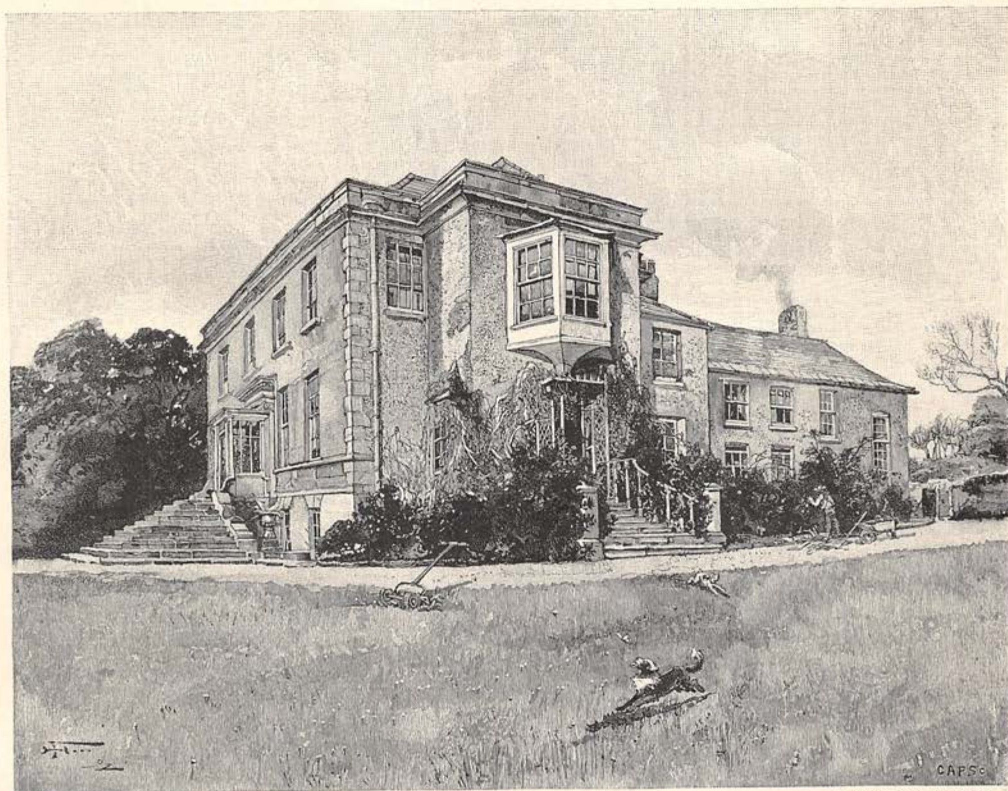
> Swift came into the coffee-room, and had a bow from everybody save me. When I came to the ante-chamber to wait before prayers, Dr. Swift was the principal man of talk and business, and acted as minister of requests. He was soliciting the Earl of Arran to speak to his brother the Duke of Ormond to get a chaplain's place established in the garrison of Hull for Mr. Fiddes, a clergyman in that neighborhood, who had lately been in jail, and published sermons to pay fees. He was promising Mr. Thorold to undertake with my Lord Treasurer that according to his position he should obtain a salary of £200 per annum as minister of the English Church in Rotterdam. He stopped F. Gwynne, Esq., going in with the red bag to the Queen, and told him aloud he had something to say to him from my Lord Treasurer. He talked with the son of Dr. Davenant, to be sent abroad, and took out his pocket book, and wrote down several things as *memoranda* to do for him. He turned to the fire, and took out his gold watch, and, telling them the time of day, complained it was very late. A gentleman said, "It goes too fast," "How can I help it," says the Doctor, "if the courtiers give me a watch that won't go right?" Then he instructed a young nobleman that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope (a papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, for which, he said, he must have them all subscribe. "For," says he, "the author shall not begin to print it till I have a thousand guineas for him." Lord Treasurer, after leaving the Queen, came through the room, beckoning Dr. Swift to follow him; both went off just before prayers.

Amid the many disappointments of his life he had these three years of triumph, which are much for a man to have. If there was a certain vulgarity in his enjoyment of them, there was at the same time a great deal of active kindness, and though he might brag of the services he did, he yet did service, and remembered his friends, and helped as he could those hangers-on and waiters upon Providence who, in those days, were always about a minister's antechamber. One thing is evident, that while he served others he got nothing for himself; the bishopric so long wished for did not come, nor even a fat English deanery, which would have been worth the having, and would have kept him near the center of affairs.

At last, just before the fall of Harley, preferment was found for the champion who had served him so well. It was the last that Swift would have chosen for himself, a kind of dignified banishment and exile from all he loved best.

When the issue of the conflict between Harley and Bolingbroke became too evident to be doubted, Swift showed the softer side of his character in a very unexpected way. He ran away from the catastrophe like a nervous woman, hiding himself in a country parsonage till the blow should be struck and the calamity be overpast: a very curious piece of moral timidity or nervous over-sensitiveness, for which we are entirely unprepared. It was less extraordinary that he should write to offer himself to Harley as a companion in his solitude when the minister was fairly ousted, although even then Bolingbroke was bidding eagerly for his services. But whether Swift would have accepted these offers, or would have carried his evidently genuine attachment to Harley so far as permanently to withdraw with him from public life, was never known. For the victory of Bolingbroke was short indeed. "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday, the Queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does Fortune banter us," writes Bolingbroke. It was such a stroke of the irony of fate as Swift himself might have invented, and Bolingbroke applauded with the laughter of the philosopher. There was an end to political power for both, and the triumph and greatness of Swift's reflected glory was over without hope of renewal.

He had now nothing to do but to return to Ireland, so long neglected, the country of his disappointments, which did not love him and which he did not love, where his big genius (he thought) had not room enough to breathe, where society was small and provincial, and life flat and bare, and only a few familiar friends appreciated him or knew what he was. How he was to make himself the idol of that country, a kind of king in it, and to gain power of a different kind from any he had yet wielded, was as yet a secret hidden in the mists of the future to Swift and everybody around. His account of himself when he got home to his dull deanery, "a vast, unfurnished house," with a few servants in it, "all on board wages," is



DRAWN BY HARRY FENN. ENGRAVED BY C. A. POWELL.

DELANY'S HOUSE AT DELVILLE, WHERE SWIFT STAYED.

melancholy enough. "I live a country life in town, see nobody, and go every day once to prayers, and hope in a few months to grow as stupid as the present situation of affairs will require"; but, he consoles himself, "after all, parsons are not such bad company, especially when they are *under subjection: and I let none but such come near me*," a curious statement in which the great satirist, as often before, gives a stroke of his idle sword at himself.

But Swift was not long left in this stagnation. Extreme quiet is in many cases only a cover for brewing mischief, and the dean had not long returned to Ireland when that handsome daughter of Mrs. Vanhomrigh, of whom he had said so little in his letters, found herself, on her mother's death, drawn to Ireland and the neighborhood of her tutor and correspondent. That Swift had a heart large enough to admit on his own terms many women is very evident, and that he had a fondness for Vanessa among the rest; but how far he was to blame for her fatal passion it is scarcely possible to decide. The story of their connection, as told from his side of the question in the poem of "Cadenas and Vanessa," shows an unconsciousness and innocence of purpose which takes all the responsibility of her infatuation from the dean, and shows him in a light all too artless.

> The innocent delight he took
> To see the virgin mind her book,
> Was but the master's secret joy
> In school to hear the finest boy.

But this was not the light in which the headstrong young woman, who made no secret of her love, and filled him with "shame, disappointment, guilt, remorse" by the revelation, regarded his attentions. Their correspondence went on for nearly ten years. It is a painful correspondence, as the outpouring of a woman's passion for a man who does not respond to it must always be, but Swift never seems to have fostered that passion, nor to have done anything but discourage and subdue a love so embarrassing and troublesome.

And now comes in the mystery which everybody has discussed, but which none have brought to any certain conclusion. In 1716, two years after Swift's return to Ireland, it is said that he married Stella, thus satisfying Stella, as the notion goes, and putting himself at once out of all possibility of marrying Miss Vanhomrigh, which might have been a motive. Scott receives the statement as proved; so does

Mr. Craik, Swift's last, and a most conscientious and careful, biographer. The evidence for it is that Lord Orrery and Dr. Delany, the earliest writers on the subject, both assert it ("if my informations are right," as the former says) as a supposition universally believed in society; and that the fact was told by the Bishop of Clogher, who performed the ceremony, to Bishop Berkeley, who told it to his wife, who told it after her husband's death, and long after the event, to George Monck Berkeley, who tells the story. But Bishop Berkeley was in Italy at the time, and could not have been told, though he might have heard it at second hand from his pupil, the Bishop of Clogher's son. We wonder if an inheritance or the legitimacy of a child would be considered proved by such evidence, or whether the prevailing sense of society that such a thing ought to have taken place has not a large share in the common belief. At all times, as at the present moment, wherever a close friendship between man and woman exists (and the very fact of such rumors makes it extremely rare), suggestions of the same description float in the air. Nobody supposes, if the marriage took place at all, that it was anything more than a mere form. It was performed, if performed at all, in the garden without any formal or legal preliminaries. Supposing such a fictitious rite to have any justification in Irish law, we wonder what the authorities of the church would have had to say to two high dignitaries who united to perform an act so disorderly, and so contrary to ecclesiastical decorum if to nothing else. It is totally unlike Swift, whose feeling for the church was strong, to have used her ordinances so disrespectfully, and most unlike all we know of Stella that she should have consented to so utterly false a relationship. However, the question is one which the reader will decide according to his own judgment, and upon which no one can speak with authority. Mr. Forster, of all Swift's biographers the most elaborate and anxious, did not get so far in his work as to examine the evidence, yet intimates his disbelief of the story. We do not need, however, to have recourse to the expedient of a marriage, to explain how the story of Vanessa might have been a pain and offense to Stella. Swift had not in this particular been frank with his friends, and the discovery so near them, of a woman making so passionate a claim upon his affections, must have conveyed the shock at once of a deception and an unpardonable intrusion to one who was proudly conscious of being his most trusted confidant and closest companion. Whatever were the rights of the case, however, nobody can now know. Whether Vanessa had heard the rumor of the private marriage, whether she conceived that a desperate appeal to his dearest friend might help her own claim, or whether mere suspicion and misery, boiling over, found expression in the hasty letter which she wrote to Stella at the crisis of her career, is equally unessential. She did write, and Stella, surprised and offended, showed the letter to Swift. Nothing can be more tragic than the events that follow. Swift, in one of those wild bursts of passion which were beyond the control of reason, rode out at once to the unfortunate young woman's house. He burst in without a word, threw her own letter on the table before her, and rode off again like a whirlwind. Vanessa came of a short-lived race, and was then, at thirty-four, the last of her family. She never recovered the blow, but, dying soon after, directed her letters and the poem which contained the story of her love and his coldness to be published. It was nearly a century before this was done, and now more than a half of another has gone; but the story is as full of passion and misery, as unexplained, as ever. This was one of the occupations of Swift's stagnant time. He fled, as he had done at the moment of Harley's fall, that at least he might not see what was going to happen.

Five years after the tragical end of Vanessa, Stella too died, after long suffering. There is a second story of equally doubtful authenticity, and confused and extraordinary details about a proposed tardy acknowledgment of the apocryphal marriage; but whether it was he or she who suggested this, whether it was he or she who found it "too late," whether there was any reality in it at all, no one has ever determined. Stella's illness grew serious while Swift was absent, and his anguish at the news was curiously mixed with an overwhelming dread lest she should die at the deanery, and thus compromise her reputation and his own; perhaps, too, lest the house to which he must return should be made intolerable to him by the shadow of such an event. That he should have kept away, with his usual terror of everything painful, was entirely in keeping with his character. But the first alarm passed away, and Swift was in the deanery when this great sorrow overtook him. He who had kept a letter for an hour without daring to open it, in which he trembled to find the news of her death, now shut himself up, heartbroken in his solitary house, and, somewhat calmed by the irrevocable, proceeded to give himself what consolation was possible by writing a "Character," as was the fashion of the time, of "the truest, most virtuous, and valuable friend I, or perhaps any other person, was ever blessed with." The calm after the storm, but a calm of sober despair and dead, unreal composure, is in this strange document. He

wrote, he says, till "my head aches, and I can write no more," and on the third day resumed and completed the strange and melancholy narration:

This is the night of her funeral, which my sickness will not suffer me to attend. It is now nine at night, and I am removed into another apartment that I may not see the light in the church, which is just over against the window of my bedchamber.

DRAWN BY HARRY FENN. ENGRAVED BY R. C. COLLINS.

MARLEY ABBEY, THE RESIDENCE OF VANESSA, NOW CALLED SELBRIDGE ABBEY.

She was buried in his own cathedral by torchlight, as the custom was; but he would no more bear the glimpses of that awful light through the window than he could witness the putting away of all that remained of Stella in the double gloom of the vault and the night. In that other apartment he concluded his sad panegyric, the story of all she was and did, showing with intense but subdued eloquence that there was no fault in her. "There is none like her, none"—this is the burden of the old man's self-restrained anguish, the tragedy of his age, as it is the young lover's pæan of triumph. The truest, most valuable friend that ever man had—and now her beautiful life was ended, to be his consolation no more. He had a lock of her hair in his possession somewhere, either given him then or at some brighter moment, which was found after his death, as all the world knows, with these words written upon the paper that contained it, "Only a woman's hair." Only all the softness, the brightness, the love and blessing of a life; only all that the heart had to rest upon of human solace; only that—no more. He who had thanked God and M. D.'s prayers for his better health had now no one to pray for him or to receive his confidences. It was over, all that best of life, as if it had never been.

It is easy to expand such a text, and many

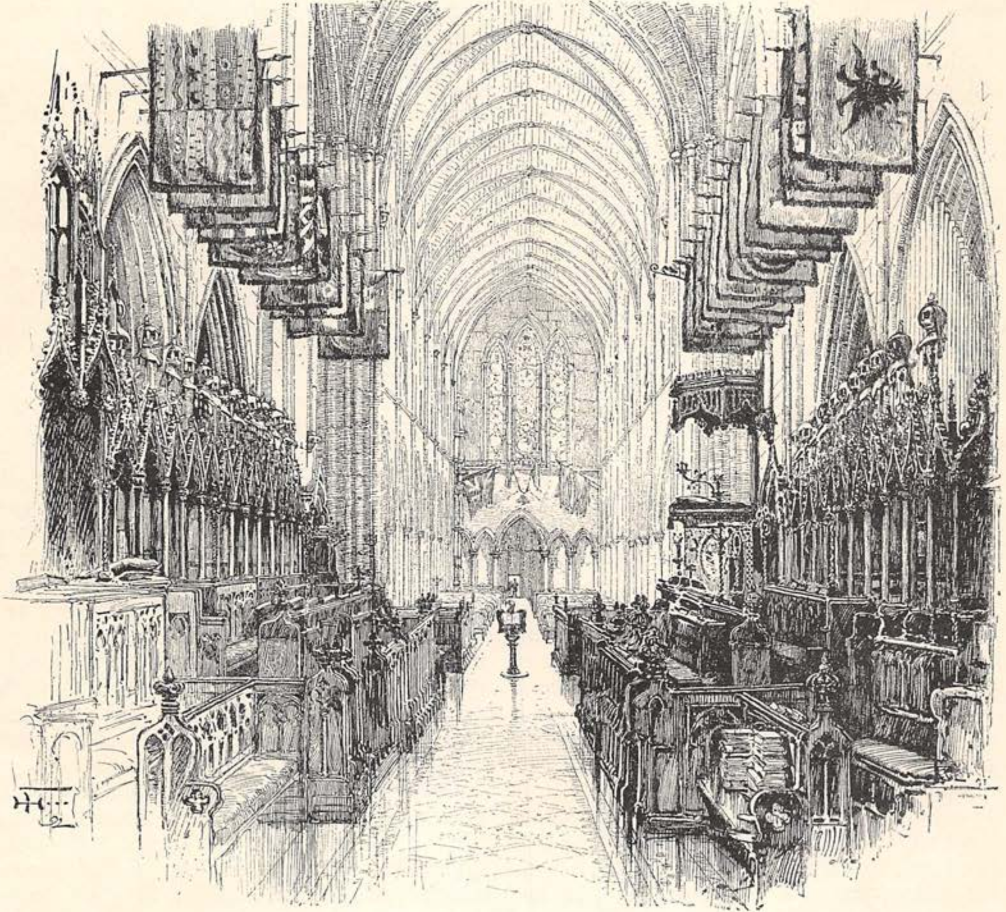
DRAWN BY HARRY FENN. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, DUBLIN. ENGRAVED BY C. A. POWELL.

have done it. In the mean time, before these terrible events had occurred, while Vanessa's letters were still disturbing his peace, and death had as yet touched none of his surroundings, he had accomplished the greatest literary work of his life, that by which every child knows Swift's name — the travels of the famous Gulliver. The children have made their selection with an unerring judgment which is above criticism, and have taken Lilliput and Brobdingnag into their hearts, rejecting all the rest. That Swift had a meaning, bitter and sharp even in the most innocent part of that immortal fable, and meant to strike a blow at politicians and generals, and the human race with its puny wars, and glories, and endless vanities and foolishness, is evident enough; and it was for this that the people of his time seized upon the book with breathless interest, and Duchess Sarah in her old age chuckled, and forgave the dean. But the vast majority of his readers have not so much as known that he meant anything except the most amusing and witty fancy, the keenest comic delineation of impossible circumstances. That delightful Irish bishop, if ever he was, who declared that "the book was full of improbable lies, and, for his part, he hardly believed a word of it," is the only critic we want. "'Gulliver's Travels' is almost the most delightful children's book ever written," says Mr. Leslie Stephen, no small authority. It had, no doubt, been talked over and read to the ladies, who, it would incidentally appear, had not liked the "Tale of a Tub."

Between 1714 and 1726, for a dozen years, Swift remained in Ireland, without intermission, altogether apart from public life. At the latter date he went to London, probably needing a change of scene after the shock of Miss Vanhomrigh's death, and the grievous sense he must have had that it was he who had killed her; and it was then that Gulliver was published. The latter portions of it, which the children have rejected, we are glad to have no space to dwell upon. The bitterness, passion, and misery of them are beyond parallel. One would like to have any ground for believing that the Houyhnhms and the rest came into being after Stella's death; but this was not the case. She was only a woman, and was not, after all, of such vital importance in the man's existence. Withdrawal from the life he loved, confinement in a narrow sphere, the disappointment of a soul which felt itself born for greatness, and had tasted the high excitements of power, but now had nothing to do but fight over the choir with his archbishop, and give occasion for a hundred anecdotes in the Dublin coteries, had matured the angry passion in him, and soured the sweetness of nature. Few people now, when they take up their Gulliver, go beyond Brobdingnag. The rest is like a succession of bad dreams, the confused miseries of a fever. To think that in a deanery, that calm

seat of ecclesiastical luxury, within sound of the cathedral bells and the choristers' chants, a brain so dark and distracted, and dreams so terrible, should have found shelter! They are all the more bitter and appalling from their contrast with the surroundings among which they had their disastrous birth.

The later part of Swift's life, however, had occupation of a very different and nobler kind. The Ireland he knew was so different from the Ireland with which we are acquainted, that to contemplate the two is apt to give a sort of moral vertigo, a giddiness of the intellect, to the observer. Swift's Ireland was the country of the English-Irish, ultra protestant, like the real Ireland only in the keenness of its politics, and the sharpness of its opposition to imperial measures. It was Ireland with a parliament of her own, and many of the privileges which are now her highest aspirations; yet she was not content. Swift, in speaking of the people, the true Irish, the Catholic masses, who at that moment bore their misery with a patience inconceivable, said of them that they were no more considerable than the women and children, a race so utterly trodden down and subdued that there was no need for the politician to take them into account. The position of the predominant class was almost like that of white men among the natives of a savage country, or at least like that of the English in India, the confident and assured rulers of a subject race. Nevertheless these men were full of a sort of national feeling, and ready to rise up in hot and not ineffectual opposition when need was, and reckoned themselves Irish, whereas no sahib has ever reckoned himself Indian. The real people of Ireland were held under the severest yoke, but those gentleman who represented the nation can scarcely be said to have been oppressed. Their complaints were, that Englishmen were put into vacant posts, that their wishes were disregarded and their affairs neglected — complaints which even prosperous



DRAWN BY HARRY FENN, FROM PHOTOGRAPH BY W. LAWRENCE.

INTERIOR OF ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, DUBLIN.

Scotland has been known to make. They were affected, however, as well as the race which they kept under their feet, by the intolerable law which suppressed woolen manufactures in Ireland, and it was on this subject that Swift first broke silence and appeared as the national champion, recommending to his countrymen such reprisals as the small can employ against the great, in the form of a proposal that Irishmen should use Irish manufactures only.

The commotion produced by this real and terrible oppression was nothing however to that called forth by an innocent attempt to give to Ireland a copper coinage, the most convenient of circulating mediums. Nothing could have been more harmless, more useful and necessary in reality, and there is no reason to suppose that dishonesty of any kind was involved. But the public mind was embittered by the fact that the patent had been granted to one of King George's German favorites, and by her sold to Wood, an Englishman, who was supposed to be about to make an enormous profit out of the country by half-pence not worth their nominal value. Such an idea stirred the prejudices and fears of the very lowest, and would even now rouse the ignorant into rage and panic. Whether Swift shared that natural and national, if unreasonable, outburst of indignation and alarm to the full extent, or whether he threw himself into it with the instinct of an agitator foreseeing the capabilities of the subject, it is difficult to tell. But his "Drapier's Letters" gave to the public outcry so powerful a force of resistance, and excited the entire country into such unanimity of opposition, that the English government was forced to withdraw from this attempt, and the position of the Irish nation as an oppressed yet not unpowerful entity, still able to face its tyrants and protest against their careless sway, became distinctly apparent. It is strange that a man who hated Ireland, and considered himself an exile in her, should have been the one to claim for her an independence, a freedom, she had never yet possessed, and should have been able to inspire at once the subject and the ruling race with the sense that they had found a champion capable of all things, and through whom for the first time their voice might be heard in the world. To Swift the immediate result was a popularity beyond bounds. The people he despised were seized with an adoration for him, which was shared by the class to which he himself belonged — perhaps the first subject on which they had agreed. "When he returned from England in 1726 bells were rung, bonfires lighted, and a guard of honour escorted him to the deanery. Towns voted him their freedom and received him as a prince. When Walpole spoke of arresting him a prudent friend told the minister that the messenger would require a guard of ten thousand soldiers." When the crowd which had gathered to see an eclipse disturbed him by the hum they made, Swift sent out to tell them that the event was put off by order of the dean, and the simple minded people dispersed obediently! Had he been so minded, and had he fully understood and loved the race over which his great and troubled spirit had gained such power, much might perhaps have been ameliorated in that unfortunate country, as cursed in her friends as in her foes, and much in the soul consuming itself in angry inactivity with no fit work in hand. But it would have taken a miracle indeed to have turned this Englishman born in Ireland, this political churchman and hater of papists and dissenters, into the savior of the subject race.

But Swift, unfortunately for himself and her, loved Ireland as little when he thus made himself her champion as he had done throughout his life. At all times his longing eyes were turned toward the country in which were life, and power and friends and fame. Though he was aware that he was growing old, and ought to be "done with this world," he yet cries aloud his desire "to 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," a terrific image, and one of those phrases that burn and glow with a pale light of despair. But he never got into that better world he longed for. The slow years crept over him, and he lived on, making existence tolerable by such expedients as he could, a wonderful proof how the body will resist all the frettings of the soul, yet growing more angry, more desperate, more subject to the bitter passions which had broken forth even in his best days, as he grew older and had fewer reasons for restraining himself. At last the great dean, the greatest genius of his age, the man of war and battle, of quip and jest, he who had thirsted to be doing through all his life, fell into imbecility and stupor, with occasional wild awakenings into consciousness which were still more terrible. He died, denuded of all things in 1745, having lived till seventy-eight in spite of himself.

Ubi saeva indignatio
Cor ulterius lacerare nequit

is written on his tomb. No more can fiery wrath and indignation reach him where he lies by Stella's side in the aisle over against his chamber window. The touch of her quiet dust must have soothed, one would think, the last fever that lingered in him even after death had done its worst.

M. O. W. Oliphant.