geniality of the orator. He himself characterized his discourses as “pamphlets,” and, if meant to imply their arid and argumentative character, the criticism is just. The author of the *Tale of a Tub,* which he had had by him since 1696 or 1698, must have felt conscious of powers capable of far more effective exercise ; and his resolution to exchange divinity for politics must appear fully justified on a comparison of these inconclusive essays with another performance of the same period. The *Discourse on the Dissensions in Athens and Rome* (September 1700), written in the Whig interest, “ without humour and without satire,” and intended as a dissuasive from the pending im­peachment of Somers and three other noblemen, received the honour, extraordinary for the maiden publication of a young politician, of being generally attributed to Somers himself or to Burnet, the latter of whom found a public disavowal necessary. Three years and a half later appeared a more remarkable work. Clearness, cogency, masculine simplicity of diction, are conspicuous in the pamphlet, but true creative power told the *Tale of a Tub.* “ Good God ! what a genius I had when I wrote that book ! ” was his own exclamation in his latter years. It is, indeed, if not the most amusing of Swift’s satirical works, the most strikingly original, and the one in which the compass of his powers is most fully displayed. In his kindred productions he relies mainly upon a single element of the humorous,—logical sequence and unruffled gravity bridling in an otherwise frantic absurdity, and investing it with an air of sense. In the *Tale of a Tub* he lashes out in all directions. The humour, if less cogent and cumulative, is richer and more varied ; the invention too, is more daringly original and more completely out of the reach of ordinary faculties. The supernatural coats and the quintessential loaf may be paralleled but cannot be surpassed ; and the book is throughout a mine of sugges­tiveness, as, for example, in the anticipation of Carlyle’s clothes philosophy within the compass of a few lines. At the same time it wants unity and coherence, it attains no conclusion, and the author abuses his digressive method of composition and his convenient fiction of hiatuses in the original manuscript. The charges it occasioned of profanity and irreverence were natural, but groundless. There is nothing in the book inconsistent with Swift’s professed and real character as a sturdy Church of Eng­land parson, who accepted the doctrines of his church as an essential constituent of the social order around him, battled for them with the fidelity of a soldier defending his colours, and held it no part of his duty to understand, interpret, or assimilate them.

Before the publication of the *Tale of a Tub,* Swift had taken a step destined to exercise a most important influence on his life, by inviting two ladies to Laracor. Esther Johnson, a dependant of Sir William Temple’s (born in March 1681), whose acquaintance he had made in the latter’s family, and whom he has immortalized as “ Stella,”@@1 came over with her chaperon, Mrs Dingley, and was soon permanently domiciled in his neighbourhood. The melan­choly tale of Swift’s attachment will be more conveniently narrated in another place, and is only alluded to here for the sake of chronology. Meanwhile the sphere of his intimacies was rapidly widening. He had been in England for three years together, 1701 to 1704, and counted Pope, Steele, and Addison among his friends. The success of his pamphlet gained him ready access to all Whig circles ;

but already his confidence in that party was shaken, and he was beginning to meditate that change of sides which has drawn down upon him so much but such unjustifiable obloquy. The true state of the case may easily be collected from his next publications—*The Sentiments of a Church of England Man,* and *On the Reasonableness of a Test* (1708). The vital differences among the friends of the Hanover succession were not political, but ecclesiastical. From this point of view, Swift’s sympathies were entirely with the Tories. As a minister of the church he felt his duty and his interest equally concerned in the support of her cause ; nor could he fail to discover the inevitable tendency of Whig doctrines, whatever caresses individual Whigs might bestow on individual clergymen, to abase the Establish­ment as a corporation. He sincerely believed that the ultimate purpose of freethinkers was to escape from moral restraints, and he had an unreasoning antipathy to Scotch Presbyterians and English Dissenters. One of his pamphlets, written about this time, contains his recipe for the promotion of religion, and is of itself a sufficient testimony to the extreme materialism of his views. Censorships and penalties are among the means he recommends. His pen was exerted to better purpose in the most consummate example of his irony, the *Argu­ment against Abolishing Christianity.* About this time, too (November 1707), he produced his best poem, *Baucis and Philemon,* which, as he frankly tells us, owes very much to the corrections of Addison.

From February 1708 to April 1709 Swift was in London, urging upon the Godolphin administration the claims of the Irish clergy to the first-fruits and tenths (“Queen Anne’s bounty”), already granted to their brethren in England. His having been selected for such a commission shows that he was not yet regarded as a deserter from the Whigs, although the ill-success of his representations probably helped to make him one. By November 1710 he was again domiciled in London, and writing his *Journal to Stella,* that unique exemplar of a giant’s playfulness, “ which was written for one person’s private pleasure and has had indestructible attractiveness for every one since.” In the first pages of this marvel­lously minute record of a busy life we find him depicting the decline of Whig credit and complaining of the cold reception accorded him by Godolphin, whose penetration had doubtless detected the precariousness of his allegiance. Within a few weeks he had become the lampooner of the fallen treasurer, the bosom friend of Oxford and Boling­broke, and the writer of the *Examiner,* a journal estab­lished as the exponent of Tory views (November 1710). He was now a power in the state, the intimate friend and recognized equal of the first writers of the day, the asso­ciate of ministers on a footing of perfect cordiality and familiarity. “We were determined to have you,” said Bolingbroke to him afterwards ; “ you were the only one we were afraid of.” He gained his point respecting the Irish endowments ; and, by his own account, his credit procured the fortune of more than forty deserving or un­deserving clients. The envious but graphic description of his demeanour conveyed to us by Bishop Kennet attests the real dignity of his position no less than the airs he thought fit to assume in consequence. The cheerful, almost jovial, tone of his letters to Stella evinces his full contentment, nor was he one to be moved to gratitude for small mercies. He had it, in fact, fully in his own power to determine his relations with the ministry, and he would be satisfied with nothing short of familiar and ostentatious equality. His advent marks a new era in English political life, the age of public opinion, created indeed by the circumstances of the time, but powerfully fostered and accelerated by him. By a strange but not unfrequent

@@@1 The name “ Stella ” is simply a translation of Esther. Swift may have learned that Esther means “ star ” from the *Elementa Linguæ Persicæ* of John Greaves or from some Persian scholar ; but he is more likely to have seen the etymology in the form given from Jewish sources in Buxtorf’s *Lexicon,* where the interpretation takes the more suggestive form “Stella Veneris.”