establishing the Scriblerus Club, writing *Martinus Scrib­lerus,* his share in which can have been but small, as well as *John Bull,* where the chapter recommending the educa­tion of all blue-eyed children in depravity for the public good must surely be his. His fugitive productions during this period are very numerous, and mostly distinguished not only by pungent wit but by overflowing animal spirits. The most celebrated are the cruel but irresistibly ludicrous satires on the astrologer Partridge, a man in fact respect­able for his sincere belief in his art, and no mean writer. Many of his best poems belong to this period. A more laboured work, his *Memorial* to Harley, proposing the regulation of the English language by an academy, is chiefly remarkable as a proof of the deference paid to French taste by the most original English writer of his day. His *History of the Last Four Years of Queen Anne* is not on a level with his other political writings. To sum up the incidents of this eventful period of his life, it was during it that he lost his mother, always loved and dutifully honoured, by death ; his sister had been estranged from him some years before by an imprudent marriage, which, though making her a liberal allowance, he never forgave.

The change from London to Dublin can seldom be an agreeable one. To Swift it meant for the time the fall from unique authority to absolute insignificance. All share in the administration of even Irish affairs was de­nied him ; every politician shunned him ; and his society hardly included a single author or wit. At a later period he talked of “dying of rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole”; for some time, however, he was buoyed up by feeble hopes of a restoration to England. So late as 1726 he was in England making overtures to Walpole, but he had no claim on ministerial goodwill, and as an opponent he had by that time done his worst. By an especial cruelty of fate, what should have been the comfort became the bane of his existence. We have already mentioned his invitation of Esther Johnson and Mrs Dingley to Ireland. Both before and after his elevation to the deanery of St Patrick’s these ladies continued to reside near him, and superintended his household during his absence in London. He had frustrated a match proposed for Stella, and, with his evident delight in the society of the dark-haired, bright­eyed, witty beauty, a model, if we may take his word, of all that woman should be, it seemed unaccountable that he did not secure it to himself by the expedient of matrimony. A constitutional infirmity has been suggested as the reason, and the conjecture derives support from several peculiarities in his writings. But, whatever the cause, his conduct proved none the less the fatal embitterment of his life and Stella’s and yet another’s. He had always been unlucky in his relations with the fair sex. In 1694 he had idealized as “Varina” a Miss Waring, who then discouraged his attentions, but two years later made him advances in her turn. Swift’s mind had also changed, and he could find no better way out of the difficulty than an insulting letter affecting to accept her proposal on terms which he knew must put it out of the question. Varina was avenged by Vanessa, who pursued Swift to far other purpose. Esther Vanhomrigh, the orphan daughter of a commissioner of Irish trade, had become known to Swift at the height of his political influence. He lodged close to her mother, and was a frequent guest at her table. Vanessa insensibly became his pupil, and he insensibly became the object of her impassioned affection. Her letters reveal a spirit full of ardour and enthusiasm, and warped by that perverse bent which leads so many women to prefer a tyrant to a companion. Swift, on the other hand, was devoid of passion. Of friendship, even of tender regard, he was fully capable, but not of love. The spiritual realm, whether in divine or earthly things, was a region closed to

him, where he never set foot. As a friend he must have greatly preferred Stella to Vanessa ; and from this point of view his loyalty to the original object of his choice, we may be sure, never faltered. But Vanessa assailed him on a very weak side. The strongest of all his instincts was the thirst for imperious domination. Vanessa hugged the fetters to which Stella merely submitted. Flattered to excess by her surrender, yet conscious of his binding obligations and his real preference, he could neither discard the one beauty nor desert the other. It is humiliating to human strength and consoling to human weakness to find the Titan behaving like the least resolute of mortals, seek­ing refuge in temporizing, in evasion, in fortuitous circum­stance. He no doubt trusted that his removal to Dublin would bring relief, but here again his evil star interposed. Vanessa’s mother died (1714), and she followed him. Unable to marry Stella without destroying Vanessa, or to openly welcome Vanessa without destroying Stella, he was thus involved in the most miserable embarrassment ; still, for a time he continued to temporize. At length, unable to bear any more Stella’s mute reproach and his own consciousness of wrong, he gave a reluctant consent to a private marriage, which, as at least the weight of testimony seems to prove, though there is no documentary evidence, was accordingly performed. This was in 1716. At the same time he insisted on their union being kept a strict secret, justifying a demand really dictated by tenderness for Vanessa, and perhaps by the unavowable reason to which allusion has been made, on the most futile and frivolous pretexts. Never more than a nominal wife, the unfortunate Stella commonly passed for his mistress till the day of her death, bearing her doom with uncom­plaining resignation, and consoled in some degree by unquestionable proofs of the permanence of his love, if his feeling for her deserves the name. Meanwhile his efforts were directed to soothe Miss Vanhomrigh, to whom he addressed *Cadenus [Decanus]and Vanessa,* the history of their attachment and the best example of his serious poetry, and for whom he sought to provide honourably in marriage, without either succeeding in his immediate aim or in thereby opening her eyes to the hopelessness of her passion. In 1717, probably at his instance, she retired from Dublin to Marley Abbey, her seat at Celbridge. For three years she and Swift remained apart, but in 1720, on what occasion is uncertain, he began to pay her regular visits. Sir Walter Scott found the Abbey garden still full of laurels, several of which she was accustomed to plant whenever she expected Swift, and the table at which they had been used to sit was still shown. But the catastrophe of her tragedy was at hand. Worn out with his evasions, she at last (1723) took the desperate step of writing to Stella, or according to another account to Swift himself, demanding to know the nature of the connexion with him, and this terminated the melancholy history as with a clap of thunder. Stella replied by the avowal of her marriage, sent her rival’s letter to Swift, and retired to a friend’s house. Swift rode down to Marley Abbey with a terrible countenance, petrified Vanessa by his frown, and departed without a word, flinging down a packet which only contained her own letter to Stella. Vanessa died within a few weeks. She left the poem and corre­spondence for publication. The former appeared imme­diately, the latter was suppressed until it was published by Sir Walter Scott.

Five years afterwards Stella followed Vanessa to the grave. The grief which the gradual decay of her health evidently occasioned Swift is sufficient proof of the sin­cerity of his attachment, as he understood it. It is a just remark of Thackeray’s that he everywhere half-consciously recognizes her as his better angel, and dwells on her wit