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.

In February 1701 Swift took his D.D. degree at Dublin, and before the close of the year he had taken a step destined to exercise a most important influence on his life, by inviting two ladies to Laracor. Esther, daughter of a merchant named Edward Johnson, a dependant, and legatee to a small amount, of Sir William Temple’s (born in March 1680), whose acquaintance he had made at Moor Park in 1680, and whom he has immortalized as “Stella,”@@1 came over with her companion Rebecca Dingley, a poor relative of the Temple family, 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* (r708). 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. If Whiggism could be proved to entail Dissent, he was prepared to abandon it. 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 to prove that the abolishing of Christianity in England may, as things now stand, be attended with some inconυeniencies* (1708). About this time, too (November 1707), he produced his best narrative poem, *Baucis and Philemon,* while the next few months witnessed one of the most amusing hoaxes ever perpetrated against the quackery of astrologers. In his *Almanac* for 1707 a Protestant alarmist and plot vaticinator styled John Partridge warned customers against rivals and impostors. This notice attracted Swift’s attention, and in January 1708 he issued predictions for the ensuing year by Isaac Bickerstaff, written to prevent the people of England being imposed upon by vulgar almanac makers. In this brochure he predicts solemnly that on the 29th of March

at 11 o’clock at night Partridge the almanac maker should infallibly die of a raging fever. On the 30th of March he issued a letter confirming Partridge’s sad fate. Grub Street elegies on the almanac maker were hawked about London. Partridge was widely deplored in obituary notices and his name was struck off the rolls at Stationers’ Hall. The poor man was obliged to issue a special almanac to assure his clients and the public that he was not dead: he was fatuous enough to add that he was not only alive at the time of writing, but that he was also demonstrably alive on the day when the knave Bickerstaff (a name borrowed by Swift from a sign in Long Acre) asserted that he died of fever. This elicited Swift’s most amusing *Vindication of Isaac Bicker- staff Esq.* in April 1709. The laughter thus provoked extinguished the *Predictions* for three years, and in 1715 Partridge died in fact; but the episode left a permanent trace in classic literature, for when in 1709 Steele was to start the *Taller,* it occurred to him that he could secure the public ear in no surer way than by adopting the name of Bickerstaff.

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 twentieths (“ Queen Anne’s Bounty ”), which brought in about £2500 a year, already granted to their brethren in England.@@2 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 infrequent irony of fate the most imperious and despotic spirit of his day laboured to enthrone a power which, had he himself been in authority, he would have utterly detested and despised. For a brief time he seemed to resume the whole power of the English press in his own pen and to guide public opinion as he would. His services to his party as writer of the *Examiner,* which he quitted in July 1711, were even surpassed by those which he rendered as the author of telling pamphlets, among which *The Conduct of the Allies and of the Late Ministry, in beginning and carrying on the Present War, and Remarks on the Barrier Treaty* (November and December 1711) hold the first rank. In truth, however, he was lifted by the wave he seemed to command. Surfeited with glory,

@@@1 The name “ Stella ” is simply a translation of Esther, Swift may have learned that Esther means “ star ” from the *Elemente, linguae persicae* 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.”

@@@2 The grant of the first-fruits was to be made contingent on a concession from the Irish clergy in the shape of the abolition of the sacramental test. This Swift would not agree to. He ultimately won his point from Harley, and his success marks his open rupture with the Whigs.