*against Abolishing Christianity,* and as great a masterpiece of tragic as the latter is of comic irony. The *Directions to Servants* in like manner derive their overpowering comic force from the imperturbable solemnity with which all the misdemeanours that domestics can commit are enjoined upon them as duties. The power of minute observation displayed is most remarkable, as also in *Polite Conversa­tion* (written in 1731, published in 1738), a surprising assemblage of the vulgarities and trivialities current in ordinary talk. As in the *Directions,* the satire, though cutting, is good-natured, and the piece shows more animal spirits than usual in Swift’s latter years. It was a last flash of gaiety. The attacks of giddiness and deafness to which he had always been liable increased upon him, and his literary compositions became confined to occasional verses, not seldom indecent and commonly trivial, with the exception of his remarkable lines on his own death and the delightful *Hamilton's Bawn,* and to sallies against the Irish bishops, in whose honest endeavours to raise the general standard of their clergy he could only see arbitrary inter­ference with individuals. He fiercely opposed Archbishop Boulter’s plans for the reform of the Irish currency, but admitted that his real objection was sentimental : the coins should be struck as well as circulated in Ireland. His exertions in repressing robbery and mendicancy were strenuous and successful. His popularity remained as great as ever, and, when he was menaced by the bully Bettesworth, Dublin rose as one man to defend him. He governed his cathedral with great strictness and conscien­tiousness, and for years after Stella’s death continued to hold a miniature court at the deanery. But his failings of mind were exacerbated by his bodily infirmities ; he grew more and more whimsical and capricious, morbidly suspicious and morbidly parsimonious ; old friends were estranged or removed by death, and new friends did not come forward in their place. For many years, neverthe­less, he maintained a correspondence with Pope and Boling­broke, and with Arbuthnot and Gay until their deaths, with such warmth as to prove that an ill opinion of man­kind had not made him a misanthrope, and that human affection and sympathy were still very necessary to him. The letters become scarcer and scarcer with the decay of his faculties; at last, in 1740, comes one to his best Dublin friend, Mrs Whiteway, of heart-rending pathos :—

“I have been very miserable all night, and to-day extremely deaf and full of pain. I am so stupid and confounded that I cannot express the mortification I am under both of body and mind. All I can say is that I am not in torture ; but I daily and hourly expect it. Pray let me know how your health is and your family : I hardly understand one word I write. I am sure my days will be very few; few and miserable they must be. I am, for those few days, yours entirely,—Jonathan Swift.

“ If I do not blunder, it is Saturday, July 26, 1740.

“ If I live till Monday I shall hope to see you, perhaps for the last time.”

In March 1742 it was necessary to appoint guardians of Swift’s person and estate. In September of the same year his physical malady reached a crisis, from which he emerged a helpless wreck, with faculties paralysed rather than destroyed. “ He never talked nonsense or said a foolish thing.” The particulars of his case have been investigated by Dr Bucknill and Sir William Wilde, who have proved that he suffered from nothing that could be called mental derangement until the “ labyrinthine vert­igo ” from which he had suffered all his life, and which he erroneously attributed to a surfeit of fruit, produced paralysis, “ a symptom of which was the not uncommon one of aphasia, or the automatic utterance of words ungoverned by intention. As a consequence of that paralysis, but not before, the brain, already weakened by senile decay, at length gave way, and Swift sank into the dementia which preceded his death” (Craik, *Life of*

*Swift).* The scene closed on October 19, 1745. With what he himself described as a satiric touch, his fortune was bequeathed to found a hospital for idiots and lunatics. He was interred in his cathedral, in the same coffin as Stella, with the epitaph, written by himself, “ Hic depositum est corpus Jonathan Swift, S.T.P., hujus ecclesiæ cathedralis decani ; ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit. Abi viator, et imitare, si poteris, strenuum pro virili libertatis vindicem.”

The stress which Swift thus laid upon his character as an assertor of liberty has hardly been ratified by posterity, which has comparatively neglected the patriot for the genius and the wit. Not unreasonably ; for if half his patriotism sprang from an instinctive hatred of oppres­sion, the other half was disappointed egotism. He utterly lacked the ideal aspiration which the patriot should possess : his hatred of villainy was far more intense than his love of virtue. The same cramping realism clings to him everywhere beyond the domain of politics,—in his religion, in his fancies, in his affections. At the same time, it is the secret of his wonderful concentration of power : he realizes everything with such intensity that he cannot fail to be impressive. Except in his unsuccessful essay in history, he never, after the mistake of his first Pindaric attempts, strays beyond his sphere, never attempts what he is not qualified to do, and never fails to do it. His writings have not one literary fault except their occa­sional looseness of grammar and their frequent indecency. Within certain limits, his imagination and invention are as active as those of the most creative poets. As a master of humour, irony, and invective he has no superior ; his reasoning powers are no less remarkable within their range, but he never gets beyond the range of an advocate. Few men of so much mental force have had so little genius for speculation, and he is constantly dominated by fierce in­stincts which he mistakes for reasons. As a man the lead­ing note of his character is the same,—strength without elevation. His master passion is imperious pride,—the lust of despotic dominion. He would have his superiority acknowledged, and cared little for the rest. Place and profit were comparatively indifferent to him ; he declares that he never received a farthing for any of his works except *Gulliver's Travels,* and that only by Pope’s manage­ment ; and he had so little regard for literary fame that he put his name to only one of his writings. Contemptuous of the opinion of his fellows, he hid his virtues, paraded his faults, affected some failings from which he was really exempt, and, since his munificent charity could not be con­cealed from the recipients, laboured to spoil it by gratuitous surliness. Judged by some passages of his life he would appear a heartless egotist, and yet he was capable of the sincerest friendship and could never dispense with human sympathy. Thus an object of pity as well as awe, he is the most tragic figure in our literature,—the only man of his age who could be conceived as affording a groundwork for one of the creations of Shakespeare. “ To think of him,” says Thackeray, “ is like thinking of the ruin of a great empire.” Nothing finer or truer could be said.

Swift’s correspondence is the best authority for his life. Of his contemporaries, we are mainly indebted to his panegyrist Delany and his detractor Lord Orrery. Hawkesworth compiled the parti­culars of his life, and published what was the standard edition of his works till the appearance of Sir Walter Scott’s in 1814. This edition is not likely to be superseded, but might with great ad­vantage be reissued with amendments and additions. The biogra­phy prefixed is based on Hawkesworth, but is far more copiously and elegantly written. At the same time the author’s views are frequently conventional, his judgments superficial, and his good nature has made him too indulgent to his hero. The late John Forster subjected all available records of Swift’s life to the most diligent scrutiny, and in 1875 published the first volume, coming down to 1711, of a biography intended to have been completed