shunned him; and his society hardly included a single author or wit. He “ continued in the greatest privacy ” and “ began to think of death.” 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 offered no obstacle in 1704 to a match proposed for Stella to Dr William Tisdall of Dublin, 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 1695 he had idealized “ Varina.” Varina was avenged by Vanessa, who pursued Swift to far other purpose. Esther Vanhomrigh (b. February 14, 1690), the daughter of a Dublin merchant of Dutch origin, who died in 1703 leaving £16,000, had become known to Swift at the height of his political influence. He lodged close to her mother, was introduced to the family by Sir A. Fountaine in 1708 and became an intimate of the house. 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 had never set foot. As a friend he must have greatly preferred Stella to Vanessa. Marriage was out of the question with him, and, judged in the light of Stella’s dignity and womanliness, this ardent and un­reasoning display of passion was beyond comprehension. 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 fortuitious 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 to Ireland, taking up her abode at Celbrídgc within ten miles of Dublin. Unable to marry Stella without destroying Vanessa, or to openly welcome Vanessa without destroying Stella, he was thus involved in the most miserable embarrassment; he continued to temporize. Had the solution of marriage been open Stella would undoubtedly have been Swift’s choice. Some mysterious obstacle intervened. It was rumoured at the time that Stella was the natural daughter of Temple, and Swift himself at times seems to have been doubtful as to his own paternity. There is naturally no evidence for such reports, which may have been fabrications of the anti-deanery faction in Dublin. From the same source sprang the report of Swift’s marriage to Stella by Bishop Ashe in the deanery garden at Clogher in the summer of 1716. The ceremony, it is suggested, may have been extorted by the jealousy of Stella and have been accompanied by the express condition on Swift’s side that the marriage was never to be avowed. The evidence is by no means complete and has never been exhaustively reviewed. John Lyon, Swift’s constant attendant from 1735 onwards, disbelieved the story. It was accepted by the early biographers, Deane Swift, Orrery, Delany and Sheridan; also by Johnson, Scott, Dr Garnett, Craik, Dr Bernard and others. The arguments against the marriage were first marshalled by Monck Mason in his *History of St Patrick’s,* and the conjecture, though plausible, has failed to convince Forster, Stephen, Aitken, Hill, Lane Poole and Churton Collins. Never more than a nominal wife at most, the unfortunate Stella commonly passed for his mistress till the day of her death (in her will she writes herself *spinster),* 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 1720, on what occasion is uncertain, he began to pay her regular visits. Sir Walter Scott found the Abbey garden at Celbridge 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 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 and her tenderness with a fondness he never exhibits for any other topic. On the 28th of January 1728, she died, and her wretched lover sat down the same night to record her virtues in language of unsurpassed simplicity, but to us who know the story more significantly for what it conceals than for what it tells. A lock of her hair is preserved, with the inscription in Swift’s handwriting, most affecting in its apparent cynicism, “ Only a woman’s hair!” “ Only a woman’s hair,” comments Thackeray; “ only love, only fidelity, purity, inno­cence, beauty, only the tenderest heart in the world stricken and wounded, and passed away out of reach of pangs of hope deferred, love insulted and pitiless desertion; only that lock of hair left, and memory, and remorse, for the guilty, lonely wretch, shuddering over the grave of his victim.” The more unanswer­able this tremendous indictment appears upon the evidence the greater the probability that the evidence is incomplete. *Tout comprendre c’est tout pardonner.*

Between the death of Vanessa and the death of Stella came the greatest political and the greatest literary triumph of Swift’s life. He had fled to Ireland a broken man, to all appearance politically extinct; a few years were to raise him once more to the summit of popularity, though power was for ever denied him. Consciously or unconsciously he first taught the Irish to rely upon themselves and for many generations his name was the most universally popular in the country. With his fierce hatred of what he recognized as injustice, it was impossible that he should not feel exasperated at the gross misgovernment of Ireland for the supposed benefit of England, the systematic exclusion of Irishmen from places of honour and profit, the spoliation of the country by absentee landlords, the deliberate discouragement of Irish trade and manufactures. An Irish patriot in the strict sense of the term he was not; he was proud