
TO THE
COUNT DE GYLLENBORG.

Dublin in Ireland, Nov. 2, 1719.

SIR,

IT is now about sixteen years since I first entertained the design
of writing a history of *England*, from the beginning of *William*
5 *Rufus* to the end of queen *Elizabeth*; such a history, I mean, as
appears to be most wanted by foreigners, and gentlemen of our
own country; not a voluminous work, nor properly an abridgment,
but an exact relation of the most important affairs and events,
without any regard to the rest. My intention was to inscribe it to the
10 king your late master, for whose great virtues I had ever the highest
veneration, as I shall continue to bear to his memory. I confess it is
with some disdain that I observe great authors descending to write
any dedications at all: and for my own part, when I looked round

The present text is taken from the British Library copy (633.f.22) of *Letters Written by the Late Jonathan Swift, D.D. ... From the Year 1710 to 1742: Collected and Revised by Deane Swift*, large 8vo (London: C. Bathurst, *et al.*, 1768), VI, 307-448 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 88). It has been collated with *Letters Written by the Late Jonathan Swift, D.D. ... From the Year 1710 to 1742: Collected and Revised by Deane Swift*, 4to (London: C. Bathurst, *et al.*, 1768), IV, 253-320 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 87); *The Works of the Reverend Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin: Collected and Revised by Deane Swift*, 8vo (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1765-70), XIX (1768), 279-438 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 47); *Letters Written by the Late Jonathan Swift, D.D. ... From the Year 1710 to 1742: Collected and Revised by Deane Swift*, 3rd ed., small 8vo (London: C. Bathurst, *et al.*, 1769), IV, 209-310 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 90).

on all the princes of *Europe*, I could think of none who might deserve that distinction from me, besides the king your master; (for I say nothing of his present *Britannick* majesty, to whose person and character I am an utter stranger, and like to continue so) 5 neither can I be suspected of flattery on this point, since it was some years after that I had the honour of an invitation to his court, before you were employed as his minister in *England*, which I heartily repent that I did not accept; whereby, as you can be my witness, I might have avoided some years uneasiness and vexation, 10 during the last four years of our late excellent queen, as well as a long melancholy prospect since, in a most obscure disagreeable country, and among a most profligate and abandoned people.

I was diverted from pursuing this history, partly by the extreme difficulty, but chiefly by the indignation I conceived at the 15 proceedings of a faction, which then prevailed; and the papers lay neglected in my cabinet until you saw me in *England*; when you know how far I was engaged in thoughts and business of another kind. Upon her majesty's lamented death, I returned to my station in this kingdom; since which time there is not a northern curate 20 among you who hath lived more obscure than myself, or a greater stranger to the commonest transactions of the world. It is but very lately that I found the following papers, which I had almost forgotten. I publish them now, for two reasons; first, for an encouragement to those who have more youth, and leisure, and 25 good temper than I, towards pursuing the work as far as it was intended by me, or as much further as they please; the second reason is, to have an opportunity of declaring the profound respect I have for the memory of your royal master, and the sincere regard and friendship I bear to yourself; for I must bring to your mind 30 how proud I was to distinguish you among all the foreign ministers, with whom I had the honour to be acquainted. I am a witness of the zeal you shewed not only for the honour and interest of your master, but for the advantage of the Protestant religion in *Germany*, and how knowingly and feelingly you often spoke to me

upon that subject. We all loved you, as possessed of every quality
that could adorn an *English* gentleman, and esteemed you as a
faithful subject to your prince, and an able negociator; neither shall
any reverse of fortune have power to lessen you either in my
5 friendship or esteem: and I must take leave to assure you further,
that my affection towards persons hath not been at all diminished
by the frown of Power upon them. Those whom you and I once
thought great and good men, continue still so in my eyes and my
heart; only with a * * * * *

10 *Cætera desiderantur.*