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978-0-521-84166-5 - Jonathan Swift: Journal to Stella: Letters to Esther Johnson
and Rebecca Dingley, 1710–1713

Edited by Abigail Williams

Excerpt

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JOURNAL TO STELLA:
LETTERS TO ESTHER JOHNSON AND
REBECCA DINGLEY, 1710–1713

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2 SEPTEMBER 1710

Letter 1

Written on Saturday 2 September 1710 and received on 9 September. Copy text is BL Add. MS 4804, fols. 34^r and 35^v. There is only one small instance of Swift's obliteration of the text, in the final salutation. This is marked in greyscale in the text.

[Saturday] Chestr. Septh. 2, 1710

Jo¹ will give you an Account of me till I got into te Boat, after which the Rogues made a new bargain & forced me to give them 2 Crowns, and talkt as if we should not be able to overtake any Ship; but in half an Hour we got to th Yatcht²; for the Ships lay by wait for My L^d L^ts³ Steward. We made our Voyage in 15 hours just; last night I came to this Town, and shall leave it I believe on Monday. The first man I mett in Chestr was D^r Raym^d,⁴ He & M^{rs} Raym^d were come here about levying a Fine in ord^r to have Power to sell their Estate. They have found every Thing answer very well. They both desire to present their humble Services to You: They do not think of Irel^d till next Year. I got a Fall off my Horse riding here from Parkgate;⁵ but no Hurt, the Horse understanding Falls very well, and lying quietly till I got up. My Duty to te Bp of C^l.⁶ I saw him returning from Dunlary,⁷ but he saw not me I take it ill He was not at Convocation,⁸ & that I have not His Name to My Powers. I beg y will hold y^r Resolution of going to Trim,⁹ and riding there as

¹ Jo: Joseph Beaumont (d. 1731), linen-merchant.

² Yatcht: the government yacht, named the *Charlotte*, was the viceregal ship used by the lord lieutenant of Ireland, and officials of Dublin Castle.

³ My L^d L^ts: Thomas, Earl of Wharton (1648–1715), lord lieutenant of Ireland.

⁴ D^r Raym^d: Anthony Raymond (1675–1726), Church of Ireland clergyman and Irish language scholar.

⁵ Parkgate: a small town on the estuary of the River Dee, between twelve and thirteen miles north-west of Chester. In the early part of the eighteenth century Parkgate was commonly used by passenger traffic between England and Ireland to avoid the mountains of North Wales.

⁶ Bp of C^l: Bishop of Clogher, St George Ashe (1658–1718), Church of Ireland bishop and scholar, and Swift's tutor at Trinity College Dublin.

⁷ Dunlary: Dún Laoghaire, seaport and borough of Co. Dublin, seven miles south-east of Dublin.

⁸ not at Convocation: on the context of the First Fruits and the role of the convocation, see Introduction, pp. xxxix–xli.

⁹ Trim: a market town and seat of Co. Meath, three miles north of Swift's parish of Laracor.

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LETTER I

much as Y can. Let te Bp of Cloghr remind th Bp of Killala¹⁰ to send me a Letter with one inclos'd to te Bp of Lichfield¹¹ Let all who write to me inclose to Rich^d Steele Esqr.¹² at his Office at th Cockpitt, near Whitehall.¹³ But not Md,¹⁴ I will pay for their Lettrs.¹⁵ at S^t James's Coffee house,¹⁶ that I may have them the sooner—My L^d Mountjoy¹⁷ is now in th hum^r that we should begin our Journy this afternoon, so that I have stole here again to finish this Lettr, w^{ch} must be short or long accordingly. I write this Post to M^{rs} Wesly,¹⁸ and will tell her that I have taken care she may have her Bill of 115^{ll} whenever she pleases to send for it, and in that Case I desire you will send it her inclosed & sealed; and have it ready so in Case she should send for it otherwise keep it. I will say no more till I hear whethr I go to day or no, if I do, the Lett^r is almost at an end. My Cozn Abigail¹⁹ is grown prodigiously old—God almighty bless poordeerichar²⁰ Md, & for Gds sake be merry, and gett ee²¹ health—I am perfectly resolv'd to return as soon as I hav done my Commission wheth^r it succeeds or no I nevr went to Engld with so little desire in my Life. If M^{rs} Curry²² makes any difficulty about te Lodgings; I will quitt them, and

¹⁰ *Bp of Killala*: William Lloyd (1648/9–1716), Bishop of Killala from 1691.

¹¹ *Bp of Lichfield*: John Hough (1651–1743), college head and Bishop of Worcester.

¹² *Rich^d Steele Esqr.*: Richard Steele (1672–1729), essayist and politician.

¹³ *the Cockpitt, near Whitehall*: a set of apartments in the palace at Whitehall, where the secretaries of state had their offices. It was built on the site of the old Cockpit Theatre.

¹⁴ *Md*: in Letter 16, of 18 February 1711, Swift states that the ladies 'are called in a certain language our little MD'.

¹⁵ *I will pay for their Lettrs*: in this period recipients of letters, rather than senders, paid the postage fee. As gazetteer, Steele enjoyed the privilege of franking, sending and receiving of letters free of charge. The practice was at first intended only for official government mail, but was in 1654 extended to all members of Parliament. Howard Robinson, *Britain's Post Office: A History of Development from the Beginnings to the Present Day* (Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 101–7.

¹⁶ *S^t James's Coffee house*: a coffee house near St James's Palace, in Pall Mall. The exact location of the house varies from one account to another. In the period before house-numbering, it is commonly described as 'at the corner'. It was later known as no. 87 St James's Street. The coffee house was associated with Whigs, and also Irishmen in London. Lillywhite, pp. 500–2.

¹⁷ *L^d Mountjoy*: William Stewart, second Viscount Mountjoy (d. 1728).

¹⁸ *M^{rs} Wesly*: Mrs Catherine Wesley (d. 1745), wife of Garret Wesley, MP for Trim.

¹⁹ *My Cozn Abigail*: Abigail Swift (1673–1761), daughter of Isaac Swift, merchant. This would have been Swift's first journey down from Chester to London without visiting his mother in Leicester, also called Abigail Swift, who had died in April 1710. See Ehrenpreis, vol. II, p. 380.

²⁰ *poordeerichar*: poor dear little. ²¹ *ee*: you.

²² *M^{rs} Curry*: Swift's former landlady at his lodgings in Capel Street, Dublin. As the address below suggests, the two women moved into these lodgings following Swift's departure for

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pay her from July. 9. last, and M^{rs} Brent²³ must write to Parvisol²⁴
 with orders accordingly. Th Post is come²⁵ from London and just
 going out; so I have onely time to pray Gd to bress poor richr²⁶ Md
 FW FW Md Md Me Me Me.²⁷

Address in Swift's hand:

To M^{rs} Dingley, at M^r
 Curry's House²⁸ over against
 the Ram in Capel-street
 Ireland Dublin

Endorsements: (1) Above address, at the top: Sep^r. 2;

(2) Line below first endorsement: Sep^r. 9th. Receiv'd;

(3) To right, on fold: 1st. MD Rec^d. this Sept^r. 9.

Other notes on cover: (1) An obliterated note in Swift's hand possibly beginning with the word 'Parkgate' and possibly ending with the word 'Engraved', followed by the date 'Augst. 31. 1710'; (2) A note in Swift's hand which reads: 'Letters to Irel^d from Sep^r. 1710 began soon after the change of Ministry Nothing in this'

Letter 2

Written on Saturday 9 September and received on 15 September 1710. Copy text is BL Add. 72710 fols. 1^r, 1^v, 2^v. Large portions of the letter are struck out with a single straight line, probably some time after the letter was sent. Swift also wrote to Archbishop King on the same day (Swift to Archbishop King, 9 September 1710, Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. I, pp. 290–3).

London. Swift alternates in the addresses to which he forwards the correspondence to Johnson and Dingley.

²³ *M^{rs} Brent*: Anne Brent (d. 1735), Swift's housekeeper.

²⁴ *Parvisol*: Isaiah Parvisol (d. 1718), Swift's land-agent and tithe collector from 1702–14.

²⁵ *The Post is come*: at this point Swift was having his post directed to the Whiggish St James's coffee house. His growing association with the Tory ministry and infrequent visits to the coffee house meant that from April 1711 onwards he ordered his post to be sent to Erasmus Lewis (see 18 April 1711, Letter 21).

²⁶ *to bress poor richr*: to bless poor little.

²⁷ *Md FW* . . . *Me Me*: the meaning and even the precise form of these abbreviations is difficult to determine. They recur repeatedly at the end of the *Journal* letters, and 'MD' and 'MC' also feature in the *Account Books* as a form of shorthand for the ladies. Although the editors of the *Account Books* argue that many of the transcriptions of 'Me' at the end of the letters should be read as 'MC' (*Account Books*, p. xxxvi), the distinction between the two forms is almost impossible to determine. Within the present edition, the abbreviation has been transcribed as 'ME' or 'Me'.

²⁸ *To M^{rs} Dingley, at M^r Curry's House*: the majority of the letters are addressed to Dingley, rather than Johnson. As the addressing of this letter suggests, deliveries were made to individual householders, rather than numbered addresses.

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LETTER 2

[Saturday] London. Aug. 9. 1710

I got here last Thursday¹ after 5 days travelling, weary the 1st, almost dead the 2^d, tollerable the 3^d and well enough te rest, & am now glad of te Fatigue, which has served for Exercise, & I am at present well enough. The Whigs were ravisht to see me, and would lay hold on me as a Twig² while they are drowning (you had my Lett^r from Ches^{tr}) and the great Men making me their clumsy Apologies &c. But My Ld Treasr received me with a great deal of coldness,³ which has enragd me so, I am almost vowing Revenge. I have not yet gone half my Circle, But I find all my Acquaintance just as I left them. I hear My L^dy G—⁴ is much at Court, and L^dy Whartn⁵ was ridiculing it tother day. So I have lost a Friend there. I have not yet seen her, nor intend it; but I will contrive to see Tpt's muddle⁶ some other way. I writt to te B Cl. from Chest^r. and I now write to te A. B. of Dublin.⁷ Every thing is turning upside down, Every whig in great Office will to a man be infallible putt out. and we shall have such a Wintr as hath not been seen in Engld.⁸ Every body asks me how I came to be so long in Ire^{ld}, as naturally as if here were my Being, but no Soul offers to make it so. and I protest I shall return to Dublin and th Canal at Laracor⁹ with more Satisfaction than I

¹ *last Thursday: Account Books*, p. 113, provides details of cost and staging of the journey.

² *would lay hold on me as a Twig*: cf. Swift to Archbishop King, 9 September 1710: 'Upon my Arrival hither, I found myself equally caressed by both Parties, by one as a Sort of Bough for drowning Men to lay hold of; and by the other as one discontented with the late Men in Power.' Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. I, p. 291.

³ *My Ld Treasr. . . coldness*: Sidney Godolphin, first Earl of Godolphin (1645–1712), politician. Swift had tried, unsuccessfully, to negotiate with Godolphin for the repeal of the First Fruits in 1708. See Introduction, pp. xl–xli.

⁴ *My L^dy G—*: Martha, Lady Giffard [née Temple] (1639–1722), sister of Sir William Temple.

⁵ *L^dy Whartn*: Lucy, Marchioness of Wharton [née Loftus] (1669/70–1717), second wife of Thomas, first Marquess of Wharton.

⁶ *Tpt's muddle*: ppt's mother. She was Bridget Johnson (d. 1745), housekeeper at Moor Park.

⁷ *A. B. of Dublin*: William King (1650–1729), Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin (1703–29), and Swift's immediate superior in Ireland.

⁸ *hath not been seen*: for the political context of the ministerial rout in London in the autumn of 1710, see Appendix A.

⁹ *th Canal at Laracor*: Swift's parish, made up of the parishes of Laracor, Agher and Rathbeggan. The underdeveloped state of the vicarage at Laracor, and the one acre of glebe land attached to it, gave Swift much scope for improvement. He had an extensive garden laid out, which had as its boundary the Knightsbrook River, in which he enlarged the current and smoothed the banks so as to turn it into a canal in the Dutch style of Moor Park. Along the river bank he planted regular ranks of willows in double rows, cherry trees, apple trees and a grove of hollies. See James Reynolds, 'Jonathan Swift: Vicar of Laracor', *Riocht Na Midhe*, 4 (1967),

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ever did in my Life. The Tatler expects every day to be turnd out of his Employnts,¹⁰ & te D. of Orm^{d11} th say will be L^t of Ire^ld. I hope you are now peaceably in pdfrs Rodgings;¹² but I resolve to turn you out by Christmas, in which time I shall eithr do my Business, or find it not to be done. Pray be at Trim by te Time this Lett^r comes to You. and ride little Johnson,¹³ who must needs be now in good Case¹⁴—I have begun this Lett^r unusually on te Post night, & have already writt to te ABp;¹⁵ & can not lengthen this. Henceforth I will writt something every day to Md; and make it a sort of Journall,¹⁶ & when it is full, I will send it; whethr Md writes or no; and so that will be plitty,¹⁷ and I shall always be in Conversation with Md, and Md with Pdfr. Pray make Parvisoll pay y th 10^{ll} immediatly, so I orderd him: They tell me I am grown Fatter, but look bettr, and on Monday Jervis is to retouch my Picture.¹⁸ I thought I saw Jack Temple¹⁹ & his Wife pass by me to day in their Coach, but I

41–54; *Account Books*, p. 29. On the history and geography of Laracor, see Richard Haworth, 'Jonathan Swift and the Geography of Laracor', *SSStud*, 24 (2009), 7–26.

¹⁰ *The Tatler*. . . *Employnts*: at this point, Steele was gazetteer and editor of *The Tatler*.

¹¹ *D. of Orm^d*: James Butler, second Duke of Ormonde (1665–1745), army officer, politician and later, Jacobite conspirator. Appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland from 1703–7, and again in 1710 upon the Tory ministerial rout. Widely and mistakenly believed by many Irish peers to have been behind the granting of the First Fruits.

¹² *Rodgings*: lodgings.

¹³ *ride little Johnson*: on Swift's conviction of the medicinal value of exercise, and in particular, riding, see Ehrenpreis, vol. III, pp. 34–6.

¹⁴ *in good Case*: in good physical condition, cf. 'Their *Horses* large, but extremely out of Case'. 'Battel', *CWJS*, vol. I, p. 148.

¹⁵ *already writt to te ABp*: William King, Archbishop of Dublin. On the contents and delay of this letter, see Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. I, p. 314.

¹⁶ *sort of Journall*: this suggests that previous correspondence with Johnson and Dingley (now lost) had not taken journal form, although the previous sequences seem to have been numbered. The *Account Books* record the cost of earlier letters sent to MD, while Swift was in England. See, e.g., *Account Books*, pp. 61, 63, 67.

¹⁷ *plitty*: pretty.

¹⁸ *Jervis*: Charles Jervas [Jarvis] (1675–1739), portrait painter and translator. Jervas painted Swift on several occasions, but Swift did not like being painted: in a letter to Thomas Walls of 4 October 1716, he writes: 'I hate to be in Town while [Jervas] is there.' Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. II, p. 182. The painting referred to here is now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. See frontispiece. Swift was only ever painted by two men: Jervas and Francis Bindon, and seems to have remained reluctant to have his likeness taken – unlike Alexander Pope, who had over eighty portraits painted, by a dozen artists. For further discussion of Swift's attitude to portraiture, see Joseph McMinn, *Jonathan Swift and the Arts* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2010), pp. 142–5.

¹⁹ *Jack Temple*: second son of John Temple (1632–1705), nephew of William Temple.

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LETTER 2

took no notice of them. I am very glad I have wholly shook off that Family.²⁰ Tell te Provost²¹ I have obeyd his Commands to te D. of Orm^d, or let it alone if y please. I saw Jemmy Lee²² just now at the Coffee house, who askt after you with great Kindness. He talks of going in a fortnight to Ire^{ld}. My Service to te Dean²³ & Mrs Walls & her Archdeacon.²⁴ Will Francklyn's²⁵ wife is near bringing to bed, and I have promisd to Christen the Child. I fancy y had my Chest^r Lett^r te Tuesday after I went. I presentd D^r Raymd to L^d Wharton at Chestr, Pray let me know when Jo getts his money²⁶ – Tis near ten, and I hate to send by te Bell man;²⁷ Md shall have a longer Lett^r in a week; but I send this onely to tell I am safe in London; and so farewell deedeedeerichrdeepoorich^{r28} Md FW FW FW FW Me Me Me—

Address in Swift's hand:

To Mrs Dingley, at Mr Curry's House over against
 the Ram in Capel Street.
 Dublin
 Ireland.

Endorsed by Rebecca Dingley: 2^d, Sept.^r 15.th

²⁰ *shook off that family*: Swift quarrelled violently with the Temple family after Sir William Temple's death. He fell out with Temple's sister Martha, Lady Giffard, in 1709 following her accusation that Swift had published the third part of her brother William Temple's *Memoirs* from an unfaithful copy, and without authorisation.

²¹ *te Provost*: Benjamin Pratt (1669–1721), provost of Trinity College Dublin from 1710 to 1717. Swift satirised his marriage in Williams, *Poems*, vol. I, p. 289.

²² *Jemmy Lee*: James Leigh, landowner from Westmeath.

²³ *te Dean*: John Stearne [Sterne] (1660–1745), Dean of St Patrick's and later Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher and benefactor, very friendly with Johnson and Dingley.

²⁴ *Mrs Walls & her Archdeacon*: Mrs Dorothy Walls [née Newman] and her husband, Rev. Thomas Walls (c. 1672–1750).

²⁵ *Will Francklyn*: William Frankland, comptroller of the inland office at the post office.

²⁶ *Jo getts his money*: Joseph Beaumont had an interest in mathematics and was given an award by the Irish government for his development of sleying tables for linen-weaving. A sley is an instrument used in weaving to beat up the weft.

²⁷ *te Bell man*: an employee of the post office who collected mail on particular routes throughout the city, so that householders did not have to go to the post office. He rang his bell to signify his location. Swift preferred not to pay the small cost incurred by the service, and to deliver his letters if possible to the postal sub-stations distributed throughout the city, or, on occasion, to the central post office on Lombard Street. Helen Molitor, 'Swift's Bellmen in *The Journal to Stella*', *American N&Q*, 24 (1985), 40–1.

²⁸ *deedeedeerichrdeepoorich^r*: dear dear dear little poor little, with a pun here on 'poor' and 'rich'.

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Letter 3

Written between 9 September and 21 September 1710. Copy text is *Letters* (1768), vol. IV, pp. 8–18. An extract from the letter had earlier appeared in Deane Swift, *Essay* in 1755.

[Saturday] London, Sept. 9, 1710.

After seeing the duke of Ormond, dining with Dr. Cockburn,¹ passing some part of the afternoon with sir Matthew Dudley² and Will Frankland, the rest at St. James's Coffee-house, I came home and writ to the archbishop of Dublin and MD, and am going to bed. I forgot to tell you, that I begged Will Frankland to stand Manley's friend with his father in this shaking season for places.³ He told me his father was in danger to be out; that several were now soliciting for Manley's place; that he was accused of opening letters;⁴ that sir Thomas Frankland would sacrifice every thing to save himself; and in that I fear Manley is undone, &c.

10. To-day I dined with lord Mountjoy at Kensington; saw my mistress, Ophy Butler's wife,⁵ who is grown a little charmless. I sat till ten in the evening with Addison⁶ and Steele: Steele will certainly lose

¹ *Dr. Cockburn*: William Cockburn (1669–1739), Swift's physician.

² *sir Matthew Dudley*: Sir Matthew Dudley (1661–1721), MP and minor official.

³ *I begged . . . places*: Isaac Manley (d. 1735), postmaster-general in Ireland from 1703. As a Whig, Manley feared he might lose his place with the rise of the Tory ministry, since his position was dependent on the goodwill of Frankland, who was prepared to sacrifice his Whig subordinates to save his own position. See Molitor, 'Jonathan Swift and the Post Office', pp. 71–2.

⁴ *opening letters*: mail was routinely opened on suspicion, in search of designated letters, or under orders from undersecretaries of state. Irish letters were usually opened by a confidential clerk from Dublin Castle, on warrants from London (Ellis, *The Post Office in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 63–4). Many Tories believed that Isaac Manley had intercepted and opened mail on behalf of the Whig government. A letter from Archbishop King to Swift of June 1708 conveys his fears of the opening of mail at the post office. See King to Swift, 12 June 1708, Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. I, p. 196. Once Swift had returned to Ireland in 1713, Manley was at least indirectly involved in seizing two letters sent to Swift. See Peter Ludlow to Swift, 10 September 1718, Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. II, pp. 271–2, and also Molitor, 'Jonathan Swift and the Post Office', p. 71, and Appendix XI, 'Correspondence Relating to the Intercepted Letters', in Williams, *Corr.*, vol. V, pp. 230–3.

⁵ *Ophy Butler's wife*: Emily, Lady Newtown-Butler [née Stopford], wife of Theophilus Butler (c. 1669–1724), MP.

⁶ *Addison*: Joseph Addison (1672–1719), essayist, poet and statesman. Swift may have met him on his previous visit to London. See Plates 6 and 7 in Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. I, pp. 78–9, and Williams, *Poems*, vol. I, pp. 89–90.

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LETTER 3

his Gazetteer's place,⁷ all the world detesting his engaging in parties. At ten I went to the Coffee-house, hoping to find lord Radnor,⁸ whom I had not seen. He was there; and for an hour and a half we talked treason heartily against the Whigs, their baseness and ingratitude. And I am come home rolling resentments in my mind, and framing schemes of revenge: full of which (having written down some hints) I go to bed. I am afraid MD dined at home, because it is Sunday; and there was the little half-pint of wine: for God's sake be good girls, and all will be well. Ben Tooke⁹ was with me this morning.

11. Seven morning. I am rising to go to Jervas to finish my picture, and 'tis shaving day,¹⁰ so good morrow MD; but don't keep me now, for I can't stay; and pray dine with the dean,¹¹ but don't lose your money. I long to hear from you, &c.—Ten at night. I sat four hours this morning to Jervas, who has given my picture quite another turn, and now approves it entirely; but we must have the approbation of the town. If I were rich enough, I would get a copy of it and bring it over. Mr. Addison and I dined together at his lodgings,¹² and I sat with him part of this evening; and I am now come home to write an hour. Patrick¹³ observes that the rabble here are much more inquisitive in politicks, than in Ireland. Every day we expect changes, and the Parliament to be dissolved. Lord Wharton expects every day to be out: he is working like a horse for elections; and, in short, I never saw so great a ferment¹⁴ among all sorts of people. I had a miserable

⁷ *Steele . . . place*: as the editor of the *London Gazette*, Steele was supposed to refrain from party-political comment in *The Tatler*. However, during the course of 1710 he published a series of essays defending the Whig ministry (see *Tatler*, vol. I, pp. xxi–xxiii). He subsequently resigned as Gazetteer in October 1710, and concluded *The Tatler* in January 1711.

⁸ *lord Radnor*: Charles Bodvile Robartes, second Earl of Radnor (b. 1660), politician.

⁹ *Ben Tooke*: Benjamin Tooke (1671–1723), bookseller.

¹⁰ *shaving day*: Swift's usual practice was to shave every other day.

¹¹ *dean*: John Stearne (1659/60–1745), Dean of St Patrick's.

¹² *his lodgings*: Addison lodged at this time in St James's Place, Westminster.

¹³ *Patrick*: Swift's personal servant, much criticised throughout the *Journal* for his lax and drunken behaviour.

¹⁴ *so great a ferment*: Swift had arrived in London just as the political tide was turning against the Whigs. The summer had seen the queen's replacement of the Whig Junto by a Tory ministry, led by Harley. Wharton's visit, referred to here, had been hastened by the dismissal of Godolphin on 8 August, and he had come to London to try to shore up the sliding political fortunes of the Whigs. His mission had little effect, and the general election, held between 2 October and 16 November, was a landslide victory for the Tories.