

**VANESSA AND HER
CORRESPONDENCE WITH
JONATHAN SWIFT:
THE LETTERS EDITED FOR THE
FIRST TIME FROM THE ORIGINALS**

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Vanessa and her correspondence with Jonathan Swift: The letters edited for the first time from the originals by A. Martin Freeman

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A. MARTIN FREEMAN

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*THE LETTERS EDITED FOR THE
FIRST TIME FROM THE ORIGINALS*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
A. MARTIN FREEMAN

Author of "Thomas Love Peacock: A Critical Study"

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TO
HANSON ORMEROD

PREFACE

FOR the pleasure I have had in making this book I am indebted to Mr. Robin Flower, of the Department of MSS., British Museum, who indicated the manuscripts to me and suggested that I should edit them, and placed at my disposal the work he had done on them for the official Catalogue. The reader must participate in my gratitude to him for having corrected or confirmed my wavering interpretation of many difficult writings, checked my transcript and subsequently compared certain portions of the proof with the manuscript. His generous collaboration at all stages has enabled me to claim for the text of the letters here printed a degree of accuracy of which, but for association with an expert, it would have been hard to feel satisfied. But in case subsequent transcribers should condemn my readings of "carver" in No. XLIV and "tantony" in No. ii., I here proclaim my sole responsibility for them.

My thanks are also due to Miss Lucy Broadwood for transcribing a letter in the library of Christ Church, Oxford; to Dr. J. S.

Crone, J.P., editor of *The Irish Book-lover*, for information concerning old maps of Dublin and other matters; to the Rev. R. Northridge, Rector of St. Andrew's Church, Dublin, for transcribing an entry in the St. Andrew's Burial Register.

Finally, I have to thank Mr. Shane Leslie for endeavouring to follow up the clues to the later history of the manuscripts mentioned on page 43 of the Introduction. His letter, which reached me too late for me to alter what I had written, tells me that his inquiries have not resulted in any information tending to confirm the theory suggested by the addressed envelope there described. Mr. Leslie writes: "I am afraid there is no proof that the letters were ever at Glaslough. The Miss Leslie was a friend of the Morrisons, with whom she stayed, and probably left the envelope in the book by mistake. . . . Swift was often at Glaslough and wrote poems to the Leslies. My great-grandmother left a tradition that he had preached from the old wooden pulpit destroyed in the seventies." This point, then, like so much else in the history of Vanessa and of her manuscripts, is at present obscure.

Nobody can study any portion of Swift's correspondence without making constant use of the edition in six volumes by Dr. Elrington Ball. My obligations to that work are sufficiently obvious in the annotations to the Miscellaneous Letters in Part III of this

volume. If references to it are less frequent in Part I, this is only because access to the original manuscripts has supplied me with evidence which was not available to Dr. Ball when compiling his valuable edition.

Shortly after Esther Vanhomrigh's death, there was a project for publishing *Cadenus and Vanessa* and her correspondence with Swift, no doubt in one volume. That publication was very properly stopped: the book would have been only too interesting at the time, involving the reputation of several persons still living and providing malice with a weapon after its own heart. It is strange, however, that the project has not been revived for nearly two hundred years, during which time it might be thought that after the spur of personal malice had been shed, the love of gossip which is inherent in most people, though in some disguised as interest in history or literature, would have been sufficiently strong to call for such a volume. But the Swift and Vanessa letters have never even been printed consecutively, except in the edition of Swift's complete works by Sir Walter Scott. The emergence last year of the original manuscripts of the Vanessa correspondence suggested that the materials for the study of this important strand in Swift's biography might now be issued under one cover, together with a latter-day attempt at interpreting them. Almost every possible view of the relations between Swift and Vanessa has already been expressed; and

many writers whose merits claim for them a respectful hearing have been busy with the subject. The excuse for a new summary is that certain details, not always unimportant, now appear more clearly in the light of the autographs. The letters therefore are now printed together, with the addition of a few letters and passages not included in any previous edition, in Part I. Most of the other available documents for the story of Vanessa are gathered together in Part II, while the various scattered allusions to her or her family are utilized in the introductory sketch. The letters in Part III have nothing to do with Vanessa; but since they had remained hitherto unpublished, it seemed advisable to take advantage of the opportunity offered by this edition of printing them in book form.