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**Gulliver's Travels into several remote regions of the
world**

Swift, Jonathan

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Chapter VII

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mind run parallel with those of his body, being a composition of spleen, dulness, ignorance, caprice, sensuality, and pride.

Without the consent of this illustrious body, no law can be enacted, repealed, or altered ; and these *nobles* have likewise the decisions of all our possessions, without appeal.

CHAPTER VII.

The Author's great love of his native country. His master's observations upon the constitution and administration of England, as described by the Author, with parallel cases and comparisons. His master's observations upon human nature.

THE reader may be disposed to wonder how I could prevail on myself to give a free representation of my own species among a race of mortals who are already too apt to conceive the vilest opinion of human kind, from that entire congruity betwixt me and their *yahoos*. But I must freely confess that the many virtues of those excellent *quadrupeds*, placed in opposite view to human corruptions, had so far opened my eyes, and enlarged my understanding, that I began to view the actions and passions of man in a very different light, and to think the honour of my own kind not worth managing ; which, besides, it was impossible for me to do before a person of so acute a judgment as my master, who daily convinced

me of a thousand faults in myself, whereof I had not the least perception before, and which with us would never be numbered even among human infirmities. I had likewise learned from his example an utter detestation of all falsehood or disguise; and *truth* appeared so amiable to me that I determined upon sacrificing everything to it.

Let me deal so candidly with the reader as to confess that there was yet a much stronger motive for the freedom I took in my representation of things. I had not been a year in this country before I contracted such a love and veneration for the inhabitants that I entered on a firm resolution never to return to human kind, but to pass the rest of my life among these admirable Houyhnhnms in the contemplation and practice of every virtue, where I could have no example or incitement to vice. But it was decreed by fortune, my perpetual enemy, that so great a felicity should not fall to my share. However, it is now some comfort to reflect that in what I said of my countrymen, I *extenuated* their faults as much as I durst before so strict an examiner; and upon every article gave as *favourable* a turn as the matter would bear. For, indeed, who is there alive that will not be swayed by his bias and partiality to the place of his birth?

I have related the substance of several conversations I had with my master during the greatest part of the time I had the honour to be in his service, but have, indeed, for brevity's sake omitted much more than is here set down.

When I had answered all his questions, and his curiosity seemed to be fully satisfied, he sent for me one morning early, and commanding me to sit down at some distance (an honour which he had never before conferred upon me), he said he had been very seriously considering my whole story, so far as it related both to myself and my country; that he looked upon us as a sort of animals, to whose share, by what accident he could not conjecture, some small pittance of *reason* had fallen, whereof we made no other use than by its assistance to aggravate our *natural* corruptions, and to acquire new ones, which Nature had not given us; that we disarmed ourselves of the few abilities she had bestowed; had been very successful in multiplying our original wants, and seemed to spend our whole lives in vain endeavours to supply them by our own inventions. That as to myself, it was manifest I had neither the strength nor agility of a common *yahoo*; that I walked infirmly on my hinder feet; had found out a contrivance to make my claws of no use or defence, and to remove the hair from my chin, which was intended as a shelter from the sun and the weather. Lastly, that I could neither run with speed nor climb trees like my *brethren* (as he called them), the *yahoos* in this country.

That our institutions of *government* and *law* were plainly owing to our gross defects in *reason*, and by consequence in *virtue*, because *reason* alone is sufficient to govern a *rational* creature, which was therefore a character we had no pretence to challenge, even from

the account I had given of my own people ; although he manifestly perceived that in order to favour them I had concealed many particulars, and often *said the thing which was not.*

He was the more confirmed in this opinion because he observed that, as I agreed in every feature of my body with other *yahoos*, except where it was to my real disadvantage, in point of strength, speed, and activity, the shortness of my claws, and some other particulars where Nature had no part ; so from the representation I had given him of our lives, our manners, and our actions, he found as near a resemblance in the disposition of our minds. He said the *yahoos* were known to hate one another more than they did any different species of animals : and the reason usually assigned was the odiousness of their own shapes, which all could see in the rest, but not in themselves. He had, therefore, begun to think it not unwise in us to *cover* our bodies, and, by that invention, conceal many of our deformities from each other, which would else be hardly supportable. But he now found he had been mistaken, and that the dissensions of those brutes in his country were owing to the same cause with ours, as I had described them. For if (said he) you throw among five *yahoos* as much food as would be sufficient for fifty, they will, instead of eating peaceably, fall together by the ears, each single one impatient to *have all to itself* ; and therefore a servant was usually employed to stand by, while they were feeding abroad, and those kept at home were tied at a distance from

each other ; that if a cow died of age, or accident, before a Houyhnhnm could secure it for his own *yahoos*, those in the neighbourhood would come in herds to seize it ; and then would ensue such a battle as I have described, with terrible wounds made by their claws on both sides, although they were seldom able to kill one another, for want of such convenient instruments of death as we had invented. At other times the like battles have been fought between the *yahoos* of several neighbourhoods, without any visible cause ; those of one district watching all opportunities to surprise the next before they are prepared. But if they find their project hath miscarried, they return home, and, for want of enemies, engage in what I call a civil war among themselves.

That in some fields of his country there are certain *shining stones*, of several colours, whereof the *yahoos* are violently fond ; and when part of these *stones* is fixed in the earth, as it sometimes happeneth, they will dig with their claws for whole days to get them out ; then carry them away, and hide them by heaps in their kennels ; but still looking round with great caution, for fear their comrades should find out their treasure. My master said he could never discover the reason of this unnatural appetite, or how these *stones* could be of any use to a *yahoo* ; but now he believed it might proceed from the same principle of *avarice* which I had ascribed to mankind : that he had once, by way of experiment, privately removed a heap of these *stones* from the place where one of his *yahoos* had buried it ; whereupon the sordid animal

missing his treasure, by his loud lamenting brought the whole herd to the place, there miserably howled, then fell to biting and tearing the rest ; began to pine away, would neither eat, nor sleep, nor work, till he ordered a servant privately to convey the *stones* into the same hole, and hide them as before : which, when his *yahoo* had found, he presently recovered his spirits and good humour, but took care to remove them to a better hiding-place, and hath ever since been a very serviceable brute.

My master further assured me, which I also observed myself, that in the fields where the *shining stones* abound, the fiercest and most frequent battles are fought, occasioned by perpetual inroads of the neighbouring *yahoos*.

He said it was common, when two *yahoos* discovered such a *stone* in a field, and were contending which of them should be the proprietor, a third would take the advantage, and carry it away from them both ; which my master would needs contend to have some kind of resemblance with our *suits at law* ; wherein I thought it for our credit not to undeceive him, since the decision he mentioned was much more equitable than many decrees among us : because the plaintiff and defendant there lost nothing beside the *stone* they contended for ; whereas our *courts of equity* would never have dismissed the cause while either of them had anything left.

My master, continuing his discourse, said there was nothing that rendered the *yahoos* more odious than their undistinguishing appetite to devour everything

that came in their way, whether herbs, roots, berries, the corrupted flesh of animals, or all mingled together: and it was peculiar in their temper that they were fonder of what they could get by rapine or stealth at a greater distance than much better food provided for them at home. If their prey held out, they would eat till they were ready to burst; after which Nature had pointed out to them a certain *root* as a cure.

There was also another kind of *root*, very *juicy*, but somewhat rare and difficult to be found, which the *yahoos* sought for with much eagerness, and would suck it with great delight; it produced in them the same effects that wine hath upon us. It would make them sometimes hug, and sometimes tear one another; they would howl, and grin, and chatter, and reel, and tumble, and then fall asleep in the mud.

I did indeed observe that the *yahoos* were the only animals in this country subject to any diseases; which, however, were much fewer than horses have among us, and contracted, not by any ill treatment they meet with, but by the nastiness and greediness of that sordid brute. Neither has their language any more than a general appellation for those maladies, which is borrowed from the name of the beast, and called *Anea-yahoo*.

As to learning, government, arts, manufactures, and the like, my master confessed he could find little or no resemblance between the *yahoos* of that country and those in ours. For he only meant to observe what parity there was in our natures. He had heard, indeed, some curious Houyhnhnms observe that, in

most herds, there was a sort of ruling *yahoo* (as among us there is generally some leading or principal stag in a park), who was always more *deformed* in body and *mischievous in disposition* than any of the rest. That this *leader* had usually a favourite, as *like himself* as he could get. This *favourite* is hated by the whole herd; and, therefore, to protect himself, keeps always *near the person of his leader*. He usually continues in office till a worse can be found; but the very moment he is discarded, his successor at the head of all the *yahoos* in that district, young and old, male and female, come in a body and insult him. But how far this might be applicable to our *courts* and *favourites*, and *ministers of state*, my master said I could best determine.

I durst make no return to this malicious insinuation, which debased human understanding below the sagacity of a common *hound*, who hath judgment enough to distinguish and follow the cry of the *ablest dog in the pack*, without being ever mistaken.

My master told me there were some qualities remarkable in the *yahoos*, which he had not observed me to mention, or at least very slightly, in the accounts I had given him of human kind. He said that the males would quarrel and fight with the females as fiercely as with each other; a practice of such brutality as no other sensitive creature ever arrived at.

Another thing he wondered at in the *yahoos* was their strange disposition to dirt; whereas there appears to be a natural love of cleanliness in all other animals.

As to the two former accusations, I was glad to let them pass without any reply, because I had not a word to offer upon them in defence of my species, which otherwise I certainly had done from my own inclinations. But I could have easily vindicated human kind from the imputation of singularity upon the last article, if there had been any *swine* in that country (as, unluckily for me, there were not), which, although it may be a *sweeter quadruped* than a *yahoo*, cannot, I humbly conceive, in justice, pretend to more cleanliness; and so his honour himself must have owned, if he had seen their filthy way of feeding, and their custom of wallowing and sleeping in the mud.

My master likewise mentioned another quality which his servants had discovered in several *yahoos*, and to him was wholly unaccountable. He said a fancy would sometimes take a *yahoo* to retire into a corner, to lie down, and howl and groan, and spurn away all that came near him, although he were young and fat, wanted neither food nor water; nor did the servants imagine what could possibly ail him. And the only remedy they found was to set him to hard work, after which he would infallibly come to himself. To this I was silent, out of partiality to my own kind; yet here I could plainly discover the true seeds of *spleen*, which only seizeth on the *lazy*, the *luxurious*, and the *rich*; who, if they were forced to undergo the *same regimen*, I would undertake for the cure.

His honour had further observed that a female *yahoo* would often stand behind a bank or a bush, to gaze on the young males passing by, and then appear

and hide, using many antic gestures and grimaces, and when any of the males advanced would slowly retire, looking often back, and, with a counterfeit show of fear, run off into some place, where she knew the male would follow her.

At other times, if a female stranger came among them, three or four of her own sex would get about her, and stare, and chatter, and grin, and then turn off with gestures that seemed to express contempt and disdain.

Perhaps my master might refine a little on these speculations, which he had drawn from what he had observed himself, or had been told him by others: however, I could not reflect without some amazement and much sorrow that the rudiments of *coquetry* should have place by instinct in womankind.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Author relates several particulars of the Yahoos. The great virtues of the Houyhnhnms. The education and exercise of their youth. Their general assembly.

As I ought to have understood human nature much better than I supposed it possible for my master to do, so it was easy to apply the character he gave of the *yahoos* to myself and my countrymen: and I believed I could yet make farther discoveries from my own observation. I therefore often begged