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

Swift, Jonathan

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Chapter VI

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most despicable in common conversation, avowed enemies to all knowledge and learning, and equally disposed to pervert the general reason of mankind in every other subject of discourse, as in that of their own profession.

CHAPTER VI.

*A continuation of the state of England under Queen Anne.
The character of a first minister of state in European courts.*

My master was yet wholly at a loss to understand what motives could incite this race of *lawyers* to perplex, disquiet, and weary themselves, and engage in a confederacy of injustice, merely for the sake of injuring their fellow-animals; neither could he comprehend what I meant, in saying, they did it for *hire*. Whereupon, I was at much pains to describe to him the use of *money*, the materials it was made of, and the value of the metals; that, when a *yahoo* had got a great store of this precious substance, he was able to purchase whatever he had a mind to, the finest clothing, the noblest houses, great tracts of land, the most costly meats and drinks, and have his choice of the most beautiful females. Therefore, since *money* alone was able to perform all these feats, our *yahoos* thought they could never have enough of it to spend, or to save, as they found themselves inclined from their natural bent, either to pro-

fusion or avarice. That the rich man enjoyed the fruit of the poor man's labour, and the latter were a thousand to one in proportion to the former; that the bulk of our people were forced to live miserably, by labouring every day for small wages, to make a few live plentifully. I enlarged myself much on these, and many other particulars to the same purpose; but his honour was still to seek, for he went upon a supposition, that all animals had a title to their share in the productions of the earth, and especially those who presided over the rest. Therefore he desired I would let him know what these costly meats were, and how any of us happened to want them. Whereupon I enumerated as many sorts as came into my head, with the various methods of dressing them, which could not be done without sending vessels by sea to every part of the world as well for liquors to drink as for sauces and innumerable other conveniences. I assured him that this whole globe of earth must be at least three times gone round before one of our better female *yahoos* could get her breakfast, or a cup to put it in. He said that must needs be a miserable country which cannot furnish food for its own inhabitants. But what he chiefly wondered at was how such vast tracts of ground as I described should be wholly without *fresh water*, and the people put to the necessity of sending over the sea for drink. I replied that England (the dear place of my nativity) was computed to produce three times the quantity of food more than its inhabitants are able to consume,

as well as liquors extracted from grain or pressed out of the fruit of certain trees, which made excellent drink; and the same proportion in every other convenience of life. But in order to feed the luxury and intemperance of the males, and the vanity of the females, we sent away the greatest part of our necessary things to other countries, from whence we in return brought the materials of diseases, folly, and vice, to spend among ourselves. Hence it follows of necessity that vast numbers of our people are compelled to seek their livelihood by begging, robbing, stealing, cheating, pimping, flattering, suborning, forswearing, forging, gaming, lying, fawning, hectoring, voting, scribbling, star-gazing, poisoning, canting, libelling, and the like occupations; every one of which terms I was at much pains to make him understand.

That *wine* was not imported among us from foreign countries to supply the want of water or other drinks, but because it was a sort of liquid which made us merry by putting us out of our senses, diverted all melancholy thoughts, begat wild extravagant imaginations in the brain, raised our hopes, and banished our fears; suspended every office of reason for a time, and deprived us of the use of our limbs, till we fell into a profound sleep; although it must be confessed that we always awaked sick and dispirited; and that the use of this liquor filled us with diseases, which made our lives uncomfortable and short.

But, besides all this, the bulk of our people supported themselves by furnishing the necessities or

conveniences of life to the rich, and to each other. For instance, when I am at home, and dressed as I ought to be, I carry on my body the workmanship of a hundred tradesmen; the building and furniture of my house employ as many more; and five times the number to adorn my wife.

I was going on to tell him of another sort of people, who get their livelihood by attending the sick, having upon some occasions informed his honour, that many of my crew had died of diseases. But here it was with the utmost difficulty that I brought him to apprehend what I meant. He could easily conceive that a Houyhnhnm grew weak and heavy a few days before his death, or, by some accident, might hurt a limb; but that Nature, who works all things to perfection, should suffer any pains to breed in our bodies, he thought impossible, and desired to know the reason of so unaccountable an evil. I told him we fed on a thousand things, which operated contrary to each other; that we eat when we were not hungry, and drank without the provocation of thirst; that we sat whole nights drinking strong liquors, without eating a bit, which disposed us to sloth, inflamed our bodies, and precipitated or prevented digestion. That it would be endless to give him a catalogue of all diseases incident to human bodies; for they could not be fewer than five or six hundred spread over every limb and joint; in short, every part, external and intestine, having diseases appropriated to itself. To remedy which there was a sort of people bred up among us in the profession or pretence of curing the

sick. And because I had some skill in the faculty, I would, in gratitude to his honour, let him know the whole mystery and method by which they proceed.

Their fundamental is that all diseases arise from *repletion*. Their next business is, from herbs, minerals, gums, oils, shells, salts, juices, sea-weed, barks of trees, birds, beasts, and fishes, to form a composition, for smell and taste, the most abominable, nauseous, and detestable they can possibly contrive, which the stomach immediately rejects with loathing; and this they call a *vomit*. Or else, from the same storehouse, with some other poisonous additions, they command us to take a medicine equally annoying and disgusting, which drives down all before it; and this they call a *purge*.

But besides real diseases, we are subject to many that are only imaginary, for which the physicians have invented imaginary cures. These have their several names, and so have the drugs that are proper for them; and with these our female *yahoos* are always infested.

Our great excellency in this tribe is their skill at *prognostics*, wherein they seldom fail: their predictions in real diseases, when they rise to any degree of malignity, generally portending *death*, which is always in their power, when recovery is not; and, therefore, upon any unexpected signs of amendment after they have pronounced their sentence, rather than be accused for false prophets, they know how to approve their sagacity to the world by a seasonable dose.

They are likewise of special use to husbands and wives who have grown weary of their mates, to eldest sons, to great ministers of state, and often to princes.

I had formerly upon occasion discoursed with my master upon the nature of *government* in general, and particularly of our own *excellent constitution*, deservedly the wonder and envy of the whole world. But having here accidentally mentioned a *minister of state*, he commanded me some time after to inform him what species of *yahoo* I particularly meant by that appellation.

I told him that a first or chief minister of state, who was the person I intended to describe, was a creature wholly exempt from joy and grief, love and hatred, pity and anger; at least makes use of no other passions but a violent desire of wealth, power, and titles; that he applies his words to all uses except to the indication of his mind; that he never tells a *truth* but with an intent that you should take it for a *lie*; nor a *lie* but with a design that you should take it for a *truth*; that those he speaks worst of behind their backs are in the surest way of preferment, and whenever he begins to praise you to others, or to yourself, you are from that day forlorn. The worst mark you can receive is a *promise*, especially when it is confirmed with an oath; after which every wise man retires, and gives over all hopes.

There are three methods by which a man may rise to be chief minister. The first is, by knowing how with prudence to dispose of a wife, a daughter, or a sister; the second, by betraying or undermining his

predecessor ; and the third is, by a *furious zeal* in public assemblies against the corruptions of the court. But a wise prince would rather choose to employ those who practise the last of these methods ; because such zealots prove always the most obsequious and subservient to the will and passions of their master. That these *ministers*, having all employments at their disposal, preserve themselves in power, by bribing the majority of a senate or great council ; and at last, by an expedient called an *act of indemnity* (whereof I described the nature to him) they secure themselves from after-reckonings, and retire from the public, laden with the spoils of the nation.

The palace of a *chief minister* is a seminary to breed up others in his own trade ; the pages, lacqueys, and porter, by imitating their master, become *ministers of state*, in their several districts, and learn to excel in the three principal *ingredients of insolence, lying, and bribery*. Accordingly they have a *subaltern* court paid to them by persons of the best rank ; and sometimes, by the force of dexterity and impudence, arrive, through several gradations, to be successor to their lord.

One day, in discourse, my master having heard me mention the *nobility* of my country, was pleased to make me a compliment, which I could not pretend to deserve ; that he was sure I must have been born of some noble family, because I far exceeded in shape, colour, and cleanliness, all the *yahoos* of his nation, although I seemed to fail in strength and agility, which must be imputed to my different way of living from those other brutes ; and, besides, I was not only

endued with the faculty of speech, but likewise with some rudiments of reason, to a degree, that, with all his acquaintance, I passed for a prodigy.

He made me observe, that among the Houyhnhms, the *white*, the *sorrel*, and the *iron-grey*, were not so exactly shaped as the *bay*, the *dapple-grey*, and the *black*; nor born with equal talents of mind, or a capacity to improve them; and therefore continued always in the condition of servants, without ever aspiring to match out of their own race, which, in that country, would be reckoned monstrous and unnatural.

I made his honour my most humble acknowledgments for the good opinion he was pleased to conceive of me; but assured him, at the same time, that my birth was of the lower sort, having been born of plain honest parents, who were just able to give me a tolerable education; that *nobility* among us was altogether a different thing from the idea he had of it; that our young noblemen are bred from their childhood in idleness and luxury: and when their fortunes are almost ruined, they marry some woman of mean birth, disagreeable person, and unsound constitution, merely for the sake of money, whom they hate and despise. That the production of such marriages are generally scrofulous, rickety, or deformed children; by which means the family seldom continues above three generations; that a weak diseased body, a meagre countenance, and sallow complexion, are the true marks of *noble blood*, and a healthy robust appearance is disgraceful in a man of quality. The imperfections of his

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