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

Swift, Jonathan

London [u.a.], [ca. 1890]

Chapter IV

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been at to instruct me ; he brought me into all company, and made them treat me with civility, because, as he told them privately, this would put me into good humour, and make me more diverting.

Every day, when I waited on him, beside the trouble he was at in teaching, he would ask me several questions concerning myself, which I answered as well as I could ; and by these means he had already received some general ideas, though very imperfect. It would be tedious to relate the several steps by which I advanced to a more regular conversation : but the first account I gave of myself in any order and length was to this purpose :

That I came from a very far country, as I already had attempted to tell him, with about fifty more of my own species ; that we travelled upon the seas in a great hollow vessel made of wood, and larger than his honour's house. I described the ship to him in the best terms I could, and explained, by the help of my handkerchief displayed, how it was driven forward by the wind. That upon a quarrel among us, I was set on shore on this coast, where I walked forward without knowing whither, till he delivered me from the persecution of those execrable *ya'hoos*. He asked me, who made the ship, and how it was possible that the Houyhnhnms of my country would leave it to the management of brutes ? My answer was, that I durst proceed no farther in my relation, unless he would give me his word and honour that he would not be offended, and then I would tell him the wonders I had so often promised. He agreed ; and I went on

by assuring him that the ship was made by creatures like myself, who, in all the countries I had travelled, as well as in my own, were the only governing, rational animals; and that, upon my arrival hither, I was as much astonished to see the Houyhnhns act like rational beings, as he or his friends could be in finding some marks of reason in a creature he was pleased to call a *yahoo*, to which I owned my resemblance in every part, but could not account for their degenerate and brutal nature. I said farther, that if good fortune ever restored me to my native country, to relate my travels hither, as I resolved to do, everybody would believe that I *said the thing which was not*; that I invented the story out of my own head: and (with all possible respect to himself, his family and friends, and under his promise of not being offended) our countrymen would hardly think it probable that a Houyhnhnm should be the presiding creature of a nation, and a *yahoo* the brute.

CHAPTER IV.

The Houyhnhns' notion of truth and falsehood. The Author's discourse disapproved by his master. The Author gives a more particular account of himself, and the accidents of his voyage.

My master heard me with great appearances of uneasiness in his countenance; because *doubting* or *not believing* are so little known in this country that

the inhabitants cannot tell how to behave themselves under such circumstances. And I remember, in frequent discourses with my master concerning the nature of manhood in other parts of the world, having occasion to talk of *lying* and *false representation*, it was with much difficulty that he comprehended what I meant, although he had otherwise a most acute judgment. For he argued thus: That the use of speech was to make us understand one another, and to receive information of facts; now, if anyone *said the thing which was not*, these ends were defeated, because I cannot properly be said to understand him, and I am so far from receiving information that he leaves me worse than in ignorance, for I am led to believe a thing *black* when it is *white*, and *short* when it is *long*. And these were all the notions he had concerning that faculty of *lying*, so perfectly well understood, and so universally practised, among human creatures.

To return from this digression: When I asserted that the *yahoos* were the only governing animals in my country, which my master said was altogether past his conception, he desired to know whether we had Houyhnhnms among us, and what was their employment. I told him we had great numbers; that in summer they grazed in the fields, and in winter were kept in houses with hay and oats, where *yahoo* servants were employed to rub their skins smooth, comb their manes, pick their feet, serve them with food, and make their beds. I understand you well, said my master; it is now very plain, from all

you have spoken, that whatever share of reason the *yahoos* pretend to, the Houyhnhnms are your masters: I heartily wish our *yahoos* would be so tractable. I begged his honour would please to excuse me from proceeding any farther, because I was very certain that the account he expected from me would be highly displeasing. But he insisted in commanding me to let him know the best and the worst: I told him he should be obeyed. I owned that the Houyhnhnms among us, whom we called *horses*, were the most generous and comely animal we had; that they excelled in strength and swiftness; and when they belonged to persons of quality, were employed in travelling, racing, or drawing chariots; they were treated with much kindness and care, till they fell into diseases, or became foundered in the feet; but then they were sold, and used to all kinds of drudgery, till they died; after which their skins were stripped, and sold for what they were worth, and their bodies left to be devoured by dogs and birds of prey. But the common race of horses had not so good fortune, being kept by farmers and carriers, and other mean people, who put them to greater labour, and fed them worse. I described, as well as I could, our way of riding; the shape and use of a bridle, a saddle, a spur, and a whip; of harness and wheels. I added, that we fastened plates of a certain hard substance, called *iron*, at the bottom of their feet, to preserve their hoofs from being broken by the stony ways on which we often travelled.

My master, after some expressions of great indig-

nation, wondered how we dared to venture upon a Houyhnhnm's back ; for he was sure that the weakest servant in his house would be able to shake off the strongest *yahoo*; or by lying down, or rolling on his back, squeeze the brute to death. I answered, that our horses were trained up from three or four years old to the several uses we intended them for ; that, if any of them proved intolerably vicious, they were employed for carriages ; that they were severely beaten while they were young, for any mischievous tricks ; that those designed for the common use of riding or draught were generally trained about two years after their birth, to take down their spirits, and make them more tame and gentle ; that they were indeed sensible of rewards and punishments ; but his honour would please to consider, that they had not the least tincture of reason, any more than the *yahoos* in this country.

It put me to the pains of many circumlocutions to give my master a right idea of what I spoke ; for their language doth not abound in variety of words, because their wants and passions are fewer than among us. But it is impossible to express his noble resentment at our savage treatment of the Houyhnhnm race. He said, if it were possible that there could be any country where *yahoos* alone were endowed with reason, they certainly must be the governing animal, because reason in time will always prevail against brutal strength. But, considering the frame of our bodies, and especially of mine, he thought no creature of equal bulk was so ill-contrived for employ-

ing that reason in the common offices of life ; whereupon he desired to know whether those among whom I lived resembled me or the *yahoos* of his country. I assured him that I was as well shaped as most of my age ; but the younger and the females were much more soft and tender, and the skins of the latter generally as white as milk. He said I differed indeed from other *yahoos*, being much more cleanly, and not altogether so deformed ; but in point of real advantage, he thought I differed for the worse. That my nails were of no use either to my fore or hinder feet ; as to my fore feet, he could not properly call them by that name, for he never observed me to walk on them ; that they were too soft to bear the ground ; that I generally went with them uncovered, neither was the covering I sometimes wore on them of the same shape, or so strong as that on my feet behind. That I could not walk with any security ; for if either of my hinder-feet slipped, I must inevitably fall. He then began to find fault with other parts of my body, the flatness of my face, the prominence of my nose, mine eyes placed directly in front, so that I could not look on either side without turning my head ; that I was not able to feed myself without lifting one of my fore-feet to my mouth ; and therefore nature had placed those joints to answer that necessity. He knew not what could be the use of those several clefts and divisions in my feet behind ; that these were too soft to bear the hardness and sharpness of stones, without a covering made from the skins of some other brute ; that my whole body wanted a fence against heat and

cold, which I was forced to put on and off every day with tediousness and trouble. And lastly, that he observed every animal in this country naturally to abhor the *yahoos*, whom the weaker avoided, and the stronger drove from them. So that, supposing us to have the gift of reason, he could not see how it were possible to cure that natural antipathy, which every creature discovered against us; nor consequently how we could tame and render them serviceable. However, he would, as he said, debate the matter no farther, because he was more desirous to know my own story, the country where I was born, and the several actions and events of my life before I came hither.

I assured him how extremely desirous I was that he should be satisfied in every point; but I doubted much whether it would be possible for me to explain myself on several subjects, whereof his honour could have no conception; because I saw nothing in his country to which I could resemble them. That, however, I would do my best, and strive to express myself by similitudes, humbly desiring his assistance when I wanted proper words; which he was pleased to promise me.

I said my birth was of honest parents, in an island called England, which was remote from his country as many days' journey as the strongest of his honour's servants could travel in the annual course of the sun; that I was bred a surgeon, whose trade it is to cure wounds and hurts in the body gotten by accident or violence; that my country was governed by a female

man, whom we called Queen; that I left it to get riches, whereby I might maintain myself and family when I should return; that in my last voyage I was commander of the ship, and had about fifty *yahoos* under me, many of whom died at sea, and I was forced to supply them by others picked out from several nations: that our ship was twice in danger of being sunk, the first time by a great storm, and the second by striking against a rock. Here my master interposed, by asking me how I could persuade strangers out of different countries to venture with me, after the losses I had sustained and the hazards I had run. I said they were fellows of desperate fortunes, forced to fly from the places of their birth, on account of their poverty or their crimes. Some were undone by lawsuits; others spent all they had in drinking, gaming, and other evil courses; others fled for treason; many for murder, theft, poisoning, robbery, perjury, forgery, coining false money, for flying from their colours or deserting to the enemy; and most of them had broken prison; none of these durst return to their native countries for fear of being hanged, or of starving in a gaol; and therefore they were under a necessity of seeking a livelihood in other places.

During this discourse my master was pleased to interrupt me several times; I had made use of many circumlocutions in describing to him the nature of the several crimes for which most of our crew had been forced to fly their country. This labour took up several days' conversation before he was able to com-

prehend me. He was wholly at a loss to know what could be the use or necessity of practising those vices. To clear up which I endeavoured to give him some ideas of the desire of power and riches ; of the terrible effects of lust, intemperance, malice, and envy. All this I was forced to define and describe, by putting cases and making suppositions. After which, like one whose imagination was struck with something he had never seen or heard of before, he would lift up his eyes with amazement and indignation. Power, government, war, law, punishment, and a thousand other things, had no terms wherein that language could express them ; which made the difficulty almost insuperable, to give my master any conception of what I meant. But being of an excellent understanding, much improved by contemplation and converse, he at last arrived at a competent knowledge of what human nature in our parts of the world is capable to perform, and desired I would give him some particular account of that land which we call Europe, but especially of my own country.

CHAPTER V.

The Author, at his master's commands, informs him of the state of England. The causes of war among the princes of Europe. The Author begins to explain the English constitution.

THE reader may please to observe that the following extract of many conversations I had with my master