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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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CHAPTER VI.

A farther account of the Academy. The Author proposes some improvements, which are honourably received.

In the school of political projectors I was but ill entertained, the professors appearing, in my judgment, wholly out of their senses, which is a scene that never fails to make me melancholy. These unhappy people were proposing schemes for persuading monarchs to choose favourites upon the score of their wisdom, capacity, and virtue; of teaching ministers to consult the public good; of rewarding merit, great abilities, and eminent services; of instructing princes to know their true interest, by placing it on the same foundation with that of their people; of choosing for employments persons qualified to exercise them; with many other wild impossible chimeras that never entered before into the heart of man to conceive; and confirmed me in the old observation, that there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some philosophers have not maintained for truth.

But, however, I shall so far do justice to this part of the academy, as to acknowledge that all of them were not so visionary. There was a most ingenious doctor, who seemed to be perfectly versed in the whole nature and system of government. This illustrious person had very usefully employed his studies in finding out effectual remedies for all diseases and corruptions to which the several kinds of public administration are subject, by the vices or infirmities of

those who govern, as well as by the licentiousness of those who are to obey. For instance: whereas all writers and reasoners have agreed that there is a strict universal resemblance between the natural and the political body; can there be anything more evident, than that the health of both must be preserved, and the diseases cured by the same prescriptions? It is allowed that senates and great councils are often troubled with redundant, ebullient, and other peccant humours; with many diseases of the head, and more of the heart: with strong convulsions, with grievous contractions of the nerves and sinews in both hands, but especially the right; with spleen, vertigos, and deliriums, and crudeness of digestion, besides many others needless to mention. This doctor, therefore, proposed that, upon the meeting of a senate, certain physicians should attend at the three first days of their sitting, and at the close of each day's debate, feel the pulses of every senator; after which, having maturely considered and consulted upon the nature of the several maladies, and the methods of cure, they should on the fourth day return to the senate-house, attended by their apothecaries, stored with proper medicines; and, before the members sat, administer to each of them lenitives, aperitives, abstersives, corrosives, restringents, palliatives, laxatives, cephalalgics, icterics, apophlegmatics, acoustics, as their several cases required; and according as these medicines should operate, repeat, alter, or omit them at the next meeting.

This project could not be of any great expense to

the public, and might, in my poor opinion, be of much use for the dispatch of business in those countries where senates have any share in the legislative power; beget unanimity, shorten debates, open a few mouths which are now closed, and close many more which are now open; curb the petulance of the young, and correct the positiveness of the old: rouse the stupid, and damp the pert.

Again: because it is a general complaint that the favourites of princes are troubled with short and weak memories; the same doctor proposed, that whoever attended a first minister, after having told his business with the utmost brevity, and in the plainest words, should, at his departure, give the said minister a tweak by the nose, or tread on his corns, or lug him by both ears, or pinch his arm black and blue, to prevent forgetfulness: and at every levee day repeat the same operation, till the business were done, or absolutely refused.

He likewise directed that every senator in the great council of a nation, after he had delivered his opinion, and argued in the defence of it, should be obliged to give his vote directly contrary; because if that were done, the result would infallibly terminate in the good of the public.

When parties in a state are violent, he offered a wonderful contrivance to reconcile them. The method is this: you take a hundred leaders of each party; you dispose them into couples of such, whose heads are nearest of a size; then let two nice operators saw off the *occiput* of each couple at the same time, in such

a manner that the brain may be equally divided. Let the *occiputs* thus cut off be interchanged, applying each to the head of his opposite party-man. It seems indeed to be a work that requireth some exactness, but the professor assured us, that if it were dexterously performed, the cure would be infallible. For he argued thus ; that the two half brains being left to debate the matter between themselves, within the space of one skull, would soon come to a good understanding, and produce that moderation, as well as regularity of thinking, so much to be wished for in the heads of those who imagine they come into the world only to watch and govern its motion ; and as to the difference of brains in quantity or quality, among those who are directors in faction, the doctor assured us from his own knowledge, that it was a perfect trifle.

I heard a very warm debate between two professors about the most commodious and effectual ways and means of raising money without grieving the subject. The first affirmed the justest method would be to lay a certain tax upon vices and folly ; and the sum fixed upon every man to be rated after the fairest manner by a jury of his neighbours. The second was of an opinion directly contrary : to tax those qualities of body and mind for which men chiefly value themselves ; the rate to be more or less according to the degrees of excelling, the decision whereof should be left entirely to their own breast. Wit, valour, and politeness were likewise proposed to be largely taxed, and collected in the same manner by every person's giving his own word for the quantum of what he pos-

sessed. But as to honour, justice, wisdom, and learning, they should not be taxed at all; because they are qualifications of so singular a kind, that no man will either allow them in his neighbour or value them in himself.

The women were proposed to be taxed according to their beauty and skill in dressing; wherein they had the same privilege with the men, to be determined by their own judgment. But constancy, good sense, and good nature were not rated, because they would not bear the charge of collecting.

To keep senators in the interest of the crown, it was proposed that the members should raffle for employments: every man first taking an oath and giving security that he would vote for the court whether he won or no; after which the losers had in their turn the liberty of raffling upon the next vacancy. Thus hope and expectation would be kept alive, none would complain of broken promises, but impute their disappointments wholly to fortune, whose shoulders are broader and stronger than those of a ministry.

Another professor showed me a large paper of instructions for discovering plots and conspiracies against the government. He advised great statesmen to examine into the diet of all suspected persons, their times of eating, upon which side they lay in bed; and from the quantity they ate form a judgment of their thoughts and designs.

The whole discourse was written with great acuteness, containing many observations both curious and useful for politicians; but, as I conceived, not alto-

gether complete. This I ventured to tell the author : and offered, if he pleased, to supply him with some additions. He received my proposition with more compliance than is usual among writers, especially those of the projecting species, professing he would be glad to receive farther information.

I told him that in the kingdom of Tribnia, by the natives called Langdon, where I had sojourned some time in my travels, the bulk of the people consist in a manner wholly of discoverers, witnesses, informers, accusers, prosecutors, evidences, swearers, together with their several subservient and subaltern instruments, all under the colours, the conduct, and pay of ministers of state and their deputies. The plots in that kingdom are usually the workmanship of those persons who desire to raise their own characters as profound politicians ; to restore new vigour to a crazy administration ; to stifle or divert general discontents ; to fill their coffers with forfeitures ; and raise or sink the opinion of public credit, as either shall best answer their private advantage. It is first agreed, and settled among them, what suspected persons shall be accused of a plot ; then, effectual care is taken to secure all their letters and papers, and put the owners in chains. These papers are delivered to a set of artists, very dexterous in finding out the mysterious meanings of words, syllables, and letters : for instance, they can discover a flock of geese to signify a senate ; a lame dog, an invader ; the plague, a standing army ; a buzzard, a prime minister ; the gout, a high priest ; a gibbet, a secretary of state ; a sieve, a court lady ; a

broom, a revolution ; a mouse-trap, an employment ; a bottomless pit, a treasury ; a sink, a court ; a cap and bells, a favourite ; a broken reed, a court of justice ; an empty tun, a general.

When this method fails, they have two others more effectual, which the learned among them call *acrostics* and *anagrams*. *First*, they can decipher all initial letters into political meanings. Thus, *N* shall signify a plot, *B*, a regiment of horse, *L*, a fleet at sea : or, *secondly*, by transposing the letters of the alphabet in any suspected paper, they can lay open the deepest designs of a discontented party. And this is the anagrammatic method.

The professor made me great acknowledgments for communicating these observations, and promised to make honourable mention of me in his treatise.

I saw nothing in this country that could invite me to a longer continuance, and began to think of returning home to England.

CHAPTER VII.

The Author leaves Lagado, arrives at Maldonada. No ship ready. He takes a short voyage to Glubdubdrib. His reception by the governor.

THE continent, of which this kingdom is a part, extends itself, as I have reason to believe, eastward to that unknown tract of America, westward of California, and north to the Pacific ocean, which is not above a