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### **Travels into several remote nations of the world**

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**Swift, Jonathan**

**London, 1726**

Chap. VIII. The Author relates several Particulars of the Yahoos. The great Virtues of the Houyhnhnms. The Education and Exercises of their Youth. Their general Assembly.

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CHAP. VIII.

*The Author relates several Particulars of the Yahoos. The great Virtues of the Houyhnhnms. The Education and Exercises of their Youth. Their general Assembly.*

AS I ought to have understood humane 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 his Favour to let me go among the Herds of *Yahoos* in the Neighbourhood, to which he always very graciously

ciouſly conſented, being perfectly convinced, that the Hatred I bore thoſe Brutes, would never ſuffer me to be corrupted by them; and his Honour ordered one of his Servants, a ſtrong ſorrel Nag, very honeſt and good-natured, to be my Guard, without whoſe Protection I durſt not undertake ſuch Adventures. For I have already told the Reader how much I was peſtered with thoſe odious Animals upon my firſt Arrival: And I afterwards failed very narrowly three or four times of falling into their Clutches, when I happened to ſtray at any Diſtance without my Hanger. And I have reaſon to believe they had ſome Imagination that I was of their own Species, which I often aſſiſted myſelf, by ſtripping up my Sleeves, and ſhewing my naked Arms and Breſt in their ſight, when my Protector was with me. At which times they would approach as near as they durſt, and imitate my Actions after the manner of Monkeys, but ever with great  
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signs of Hatred, as a tame *Jack-Daw* with Cap and Stockings, is always persecuted by the wild ones, when he happens to be got among them.

THEY are prodigiously nimble from their Infancy; however, I once caught a young Male of three Years old, and endeavoured by all Marks of Tenderness to make it quiet; but the little Imp fell a-squalling, and scratching, and biting with such Violence, that I was forced to let it go, and it was high time, for a whole Troop of old ones came about us at the Noise, but finding the Cub was safe, (for away it ran) and my sorrel Nag being by, they durst not venture near us. I observed the young Animal's Flesh to smell very rank, and the stink was somewhat between a *Weasel* and a *Fox*, but much more disagreeable. I forgot another Circumstance (and perhaps I might have the Reader's Pardon, if it were wholly omitted) that while I held the odious Vermin in my  
Hands,

Hands, it voided its filthy Excrements of a yellow liquid Substance, all over my Cloaths; but by good Fortune there was a small Brook hard by, where I washed myself as clean as I could, although I durst not come into my Master's Presence, until I were sufficiently aired.

By what I could discover, the *Taboos* appear to be the most unteachable of all Animals, their Capacities never reaching higher than to draw or carry Burthens. Yet I am of Opinion, this Defect ariseth chiefly from a perverse, restive Disposition. For they are cunning, malicious, treacherous and revengeful. They are strong and hardy, but of a cowardly Spirit, and by consequence, insolent, abject, and cruel. It is observed, that the *Red-haired* of both Sexes are more libidinous and mischievous than the rest, whom yet they much exceed in Strength and Activity.

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THE *Houyhnhnms* keep the *Taboos* for present use in Huts not far from the House; but the rest are sent abroad to certain Fields, where they dig up Roots, eat several kinds of Herbs, and scratch about for Carrion, or sometimes catch *Weasels* and *Lubimubs* (a sort of *wild Rat*) which they greedily devour. Nature hath taught them to dig deep Holes with their Nails on the side of a rising Ground, where they lie by themselves, only the Kennels of the Females are larger, sufficient to hold two or three Cubs.

THEY swim from their Infancy like Frogs, and are able to continue long under Water, where they often take Fish, which the Females carry home to their Young. And upon this Occasion, I hope the Reader will pardon my relating an odd Adventure.

Vol. II.

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BEING

BEING one Day abroad with my Protector, the sorrel Nag, and the Weather exceeding hot, I entreated him to let me bathe in a River that was near. He consented, and I immediately stripped myself stark naked, and went down softly into the Stream. It happened that a young Female *Tahoo* standing behind a Bank, saw the whole proceeding, and enflamed by Desire, as the Nag and I conjectured, came running with all speed, and leaped into the Water within five Yards of the Place where I bathed. I was never in my Life so terribly frightened; the Nag was grazing at some distance, not suspecting any harm. She embraced me after a most fulsome manner; I roared as loud as I could, and the Nag came galloping towards me, whereupon she quitted her Grasp, with the utmost Reluctancy, and leaped upon the opposite Bank, where she stood gazing, and howling all the time I was putting on my Cloaths.

THIS

THIS was matter of Diversion to my Master and his Family, as well as of Mortification to myself. For now I could no longer deny that I was a real *Taboo*, in every Limb and Feature, since the Females had a natural Propensity to me as one of their own Species: Neither was the Hair of this Brute of a red Colour, (which might have been some Excuse for an Appetite a little irregular) but black as a Sloe, and her Countenance did not make an Appearance altogether so hideous as the rest of the Kind; for I think, she could not be above eleven Years old.

HAVING lived three Years in this Country, the Reader, I suppose, will expect, that I should, like other Travellers, give him some Account of the Manners and Customs of its Inhabitants, which it was indeed my principal Study to learn.

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As these noble *Houyhnhnms* are endowed by Nature with a general Disposition to all Virtues, and have no Conceptions or Ideas of what is evil in a rational Creature, so their grand Maxim is, to cultivate *Reason*, and to be wholly governed by it. Neither is *Reason* among them a Point Problematical as with us, where Men can argue with Plausibility on both sides of a Question; but strikes you with immediate Conviction; as it must needs do where it is not mingled, obscured, or discoloured by Passion and Interest. I remember it was with extreme Difficulty that I could bring my Master to understand the meaning of the Word *Opinion*, or how a Point could be disputable; because *Reason* taught us to affirm or deny only where we are certain; and beyond our Knowledge we cannot do either. So that Controversies, Wranglings, Disputes, and Positiveness in false or dubious Propositions  
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remotest Part is equally treated with the nearest Neighbour, and wherever he goes, looks upon himself as at home. They preserve *Decency* and *Civility* in the highest Degrees, but are altogether ignorant of *Ceremony*. They have no Fondness for their Colts or Foles, but the Care they take in educating them proceeds entirely from the Dictates of *Reason*. And I observed my Master to shew the same Affection to his Neighbour's Issue that he had for his own. They will have it, that *Nature* teaches them to love the whole Species, and it is *Reason* only that maketh a Distinction of Persons, where there is a superior Degree of *Virtue*.

WHEN the Matron *Houyhnhnms* have produced one of each Sex, they no longer accompany with their Consorts, except they lose one of their Issue by some Casualty, which very seldom happens: But in such a Case they meet  
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again, or when the like Accident befalls a Person, whose Wife is past bearing, some other Couple bestow on him one of their own Colts, and then go together again till the Mother is pregnant. This Caution is necessary to prevent the Country from being overburthened with Numbers. But the Race of inferior *Houyhnhnms* bred up to be Servants is not so strictly limited upon this Article; these are allowed to produce three of each Sex, to be Domesticks in the noble Families.

IN their Marriages they are exactly careful to chuse such Colours as will not make any disagreeable Mixture in the Breed. *Strength* is chiefly valued in the Male, and *Comeliness* in the Female, not upon the account of *Love*, but to preserve the Race from degenerating; for where a Female happens to excel in *Strength*, a Consort is chosen with regard to *Comeliness*. Courtship, Love, Presents, Joyntures, Settlements,

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have no place in their Thoughts; or Terms whereby to express them in their Language. The young Couple meet, and are joyned, merely because it is the Determination of their Parents and Friends: It is what they see done every Day, and they look upon it as one of the necessary Actions of a rational Being. But the Violation of Marriage, or any other Unchastity, was never heard of: And the married Pair pass their Lives with the same Friendship and mutual Benevolence that they bear to all others of the same Species, who come in their way; without Jealousy, Fondness, Quarrelling, or Discontent.

IN educating the Youth of both Sexes, their Method is admirable, and highly deserves our Imitation. These are not suffered to taste a Grain of *Oats*, except upon certain Days, till eighteen Years old; nor *Milk*, but very rarely; and in Summer they graze two Hours  
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in the Morning, and as long in the Evening, which their Parents likewise observe, but the Servants are not allowed above half that time, and a great part of their Grass is brought home, which they eat at the most convenient hours, when they can be best spared from Work.

TEMPERANCE, *Industry, Exercise,* and *Cleanliness,* are the Lessons equally enjoined to the young ones of both Sexes: And my Master thought it monstrous in us to give the Females a different kind of Education from the Males, except in some Articles of domestick Management; whereby as he truly observed, one half of our Natives were good for nothing but bringing Children into the World: And to trust the Care of our Children to such useless Animals, he said was yet a greater Instance of Brutality.

BUT

BUT the *Houyhnhnms* train up their Youth to Strength, Speed, and Hardiness, by exercising them in running Races up and down steep Hills, and over hard and stony Grounds, and when they are all in a sweat, they are ordered to leap over head and ears into a Pond or a River. Four times a Year the Youth of a certain District meet to shew their proficiency in Running, and Leaping, and other feats of Strength and Agility, where the Victor is rewarded with a Song made in his or her Praise. On this Festival the Servants drive a Herd of *Taboos* into the Field, laden with Hay, and Oats, and Milk, for a Repast to the *Houyhnhnms*; after which, these Brutes were immediately driven back again, for fear of being noisome to the Assembly.

EVERY fourth Year at the *Vernal Equinox*, there is a Representative Council of the whole Nation, which meets  
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in a Plain about twenty Miles from our House, and continues about five or six Days. Here they enquire into the State and Condition of the several Districts, Whether they abound or be deficient in Hay or Oats, or Cows or *Yahoos*? And wherever there is any Want (which is but seldom) it is immediately supplied by unanimous Consent and Contribution. Here likewise the Regulation of Children is settled: As for instance, if a *Houyhnhnm* hath two Males, he changeth one of them with another that hath two Females: And when a Child hath been lost by any Casualty, where the Mother is past breeding, it is determined what Family shall breed another to supply the Loss.

