



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

Travels into several remote nations of the world

in 4 pt.

Swift, Jonathan

London, 1726

Chap. XII. The Author's Veracity. His Design in publishing this Work. His Censure of those Travellers who swerve from the Truth. The Author clears himself from any sinister Ends in writing. An ...

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-48460](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-48460)



C H A P. XII.

The Author's Veracity. His Design in publishing this Work. His Censure of those Travellers who swerve from the Truth. The Author clears himself from any sinister Ends in writing. An Objection answered. The Method of planting Colonies. His Native Country commended. The Right of the Crown to those Countries described by the Author is justified. The Difficulty of conquering them. The Author takes his last leave of the Reader: proposeth his manner of living for the future, gives good Advice, and concludes.

THUS, Gentle Reader, I have given thee a faithful History of my Travels for sixteen Years, and above seven
seven

seven Months, wherein I have not been so studious of Ornament as Truth. I could perhaps like others have astonished thee with strange improbable Tales; but I rather chose to relate plain Matter of Fact in the simplest Manner and Style, because my principal Design was to inform, and not to amuse thee.

It is easy for us who travel into remote Countries, which are seldom visited by *Englishmen* or other *Europeans*, to form Descriptions of wonderful Animals both at Sea and Land. Whereas a Traveller's chief Aim should be to make Men wiser and better, and to improve their Minds by the bad as well as good Example of what they deliver concerning foreign Places.

I COULD heartily wish a Law was enacted, that every Traveller before he were permitted to publish his Voyages, should be obliged to make Oath before

the *Lord High Chancellor* that all he intended to print was absolutely true to the best of his knowledge; for then the World would no longer be deceived as it usually is, while some Writers, to make their Works pass the better upon the Publick, impose the grossest Falsities on the unwary Reader. I have perused several Books of Travels with great delight in my younger Days; but having since gone over most Parts of the Globe, and been able to contradict many fabulous Accounts from my own Observation, it hath given me a great Disgust against this part of Reading, and some Indignation to see the Credulity of Mankind so impudently abused. Therefore since my Acquaintance were pleased to think my poor Endeavour's might not be unacceptable to my Country, I imposed on myself as a Maxim, never to be swerved from, that I would *strictly adhere to Truth*; neither indeed can I be ever under the least Temptations to vary from it, while I retain
in

in my Mind the Lectures and Example of my noble Master, and the other illustrious *Houyhnhnms*, of whom I had so long the Honour to be an humble Hearer.

*Nec si miserum Fortuna Sinonem
Finxit, vanum etiam, mendacemque
improba fingeret.*

I know very well how little Reputation is to be got by Writings which require neither Genius nor Learning, nor indeed any other Talent, except a good Memory, or an exact *Journal*. I know likewise, the Writers of Travels, like *Dictionary*-Makers, are sunk into Oblivion by the weight and bulk of those who come after, and therefore lie uppermost. And it is highly probable, that such Travellers who shall hereafter visit the Countries described in this Work of mine, may by detecting my Errors, (if there be any) and adding many new Discoveries of their

own, juffle me out of vogue, and ſtand in my place, making the World forget that I was ever an Author. This indeed would be too great a Mortification if I wrote for Fame: But, as my ſole Intention was the PUBLICK GOOD, I cannot be altogether diſappointed. For who can read of the Virtues I have mentioned in the glorious *Houyhnhnms*, without being aſhamed of his own Vices, when he conſiders himſelf as the reaſoning, governing Animal of his Country? I ſhall ſay nothing of thoſe remote Nations where *Tahoos* preſide, amongſt which, the leaſt corrupted are the *Brobdingnagians*, whoſe wiſe Maxims in Morality and Government, it would be our Happineſs to obſerve. But I forbear deſcantiſg farther, and rather leave the judicious Reader to his own Remarks and Applications.

I AM not a little pleaſed that this Work of mine can poſſibly meet with no Cenſurers: For what Objections can

be

be made against a Writer who relates only plain Facts that happened in such distant Countries, where we have not the least Interest with respect either to Trade or Negotiations? I have carefully avoided every Fault with which common Writers of Travels are often too justly charged. Besides, I meddle not with any *Party*, but write without Passion, Prejudice, or Ill-will against any Man or number of Men whatsoever. I write for the noblest End, to inform and instruct Mankind, over whom I may, without Breach of Modesty, pretend to some Superiority from the Advantages I received by conversing so long among the most accomplished *Houyhnhnms*. I write without any view towards Profit or Praise. I never suffer a Word to pass that may look like Reflection, or possibly give the least Offence even to those who are most ready to take it. So that I hope I may with Justice pronounce myself an Author perfectly blameless, against whom the

Tribes of Answerers, Considerers, Observers, Reflecters, Detecters, Remarkers will never be able to find Matter for exercising their Talents.

I CONFESS, it was whispered to me, that I was bound in Duty as a Subject of *England*, to have given in a Memorial to a Secretary of State at my first coming over; because whatever Lands are discovered by a Subject, belong to the Crown. But I doubt whether our Conquests in the Countries I treat of, would be as easy as those of *Ferdinando Cortez* over the naked *Americans*. The *Lilliputians*, I think, are hardly worth the Charge of a Fleet and Army to reduce them, and I question whether it might be prudent or safe to attempt the *Brobdingnagians*. Or whether an *English* Army would be much at their Ease with the Flying Island over their Heads. The *Houyhnhnms*, indeed, appear not to be so well prepared for War, a Science to which they are perfect Strangers, and espe-

especially against missile Weapons. However, supposing myself to be a Minister of State, I could never give my Advice for invading them. Their Prudence, Unanimity, Unacquaintedness with Fear, and their Love of their Country would amply supply all Defects in the Military Art. Imagine twenty thousand of them breaking into the midst of an *European* Army, confounding the Ranks, overturning the Carriages, battering the Warriors Faces into Mummy, by terrible Yerks from their hinder Hoofs. For they would well deserve the Character given to *Augustus*; *Recalcitrat undique tutus*. But instead of Proposals for conquering that magnanimous Nation, I rather wish they were in a Capacity or Disposition to send a sufficient Number of their Inhabitants for civilizing *Europe*, by teaching us the first Principles of Honour, Justice, Truth, Temperance, Publick Spirit, Fortitude, Chastity, Friendship, Benevolence, and Fidelity. The

YEVV

A a 4

Names

Names of all which Virtues are still retained among us in most Languages, and are to be met with in some modern as well as ancient Authors; which I am able to assert from my own small Reading.

BUT I had another Reason which made me less forward to enlarge his Majesty's Dominions by my Discovery. To say the Truth, I had conceived a few Scruples with Relation to the Distributive Justice of Princes upon those Occasions. For instance, a Crew of Pyrates are driven by a Storm they know not whither, at length a Boy discovers Land from the Top-mast, they go on Shore to rob and plunder; they see an harmless People, are entertained with Kindness, they give the Country a new Name, they take formal Possession of it for their King, they set up a rotten Plank or a Stone for a Memorial, they murder two or three Dozen of the Natives, bring
away

away a Couple more by Force for a Sample, return home, and get their Pardon. Here commences a new Dominion acquired with a Title by *Divine Right*. Ships are sent with the first Opportunity, the Natives driven out or destroyed, their Princes tortured to discover their Gold; a free Licence given to all Acts of Inhumanity and Lust, the Earth reeking with the Blood of its Inhabitants: And this execrable Crew of Butchers employed in so pious an Expedition, is a *modern Colony* sent to convert and civilize an idolatrous and barbarous People.

BUT this Description, I confess, doth by no means effect the *British* Nation, who may be an Example to the whole World for their Wisdom, Care, and Justice in planting Colonies; their liberal Endowments for the Advancement of Religion and Learning; their Choice of devout and able Pastors to propagate *Christianity*, their Caution in stocking
their

their Provinces with People of sober Lives and Conversations from this the Mother Kingdom; their strict Regard to the Distribution of Justice in supplying the Civil Administration through all their Colonies with Officers of the greatest Abilities, utter Strangers to Corruption; and to crown all, by sending the most vigilant and virtuous Governors, who have no other Views than the Happiness of the People over whom they preside, and the Honour of the King their Master.

BUT, as those Countries which I have described, do not appear to have a Desire of being conquered, and enslaved, murdered or driven out by Colonies, nor abound either in Gold, Silver, Sugar or Tobacco; I did humbly conceive they were by no means proper Objects of our Zeal, our Valour, or our Interest. However, if those whom it may concern, think fit to be of another Opinion, I am ready to depose,

pose, when I shall be lawfully called, that no *European* did ever visit these Countries before me. I mean, if the Inhabitants ought to be believed; unless a Dispute may arise about the two *Tahos*, said to have been seen many Ages ago on a Mountain in *Houyhnhumland*, from whence the Opinion is, that the Race of those Brutes hath descended; and these, for any thing I know, may have been *English*, [which indeed I was apt to suspect from the Lineaments of their Posterities Countenances, although very much defaced. But, how far that will go to make out a Title, I leave to the learned in Colony Law.

BUT as to the Formality of taking Possession in my Sovereign's Name, it never came once into my Thoughts; and if it had, yet as my Affairs then stood, I should perhaps in Point of Prudence and Self-Preservation, have put it off to a better Opportunity.

HAVING

KAOS I

HAVING thus answered the only Objection that can ever be raised against me as a Traveller, I here take a final Leave of all my courteous Readers, and return to enjoy my own Speculations in my little Garden at *Redriff*, to apply those excellent Lessons of Virtue, which I learned among the *Houyhnhnms*, to instruct the *Taboos* of my own Family as far as I shall find them docible Animals, to behold my Figure often in a Glass, and thus, if possible, habituate myself by time to tolerate the Sight of a human Creature: To lament the Brutality of *Houyhnhnms* in my own Country, but always treat their Persons with Respect, for the Sake of my noble Master, his Family, his Friends, and the whole *Houyhnhnm* Race, whom these of ours have the Honour to resemble in all their Lineaments, however their Intellectuals came to degenerate.

I BEGAN

I BEGAN last Week to permit my Wife to sit at Dinner with me, at the farthest End of a long Table, and to answer (but with the utmost Brevity) the few Questions I ask'd her. Yet the smell of a *Taboo* continuing very offensive, I always keep my Nose well stop't with Rue, Lavender, or Tobacco-leaves. And although it be hard for a Man late in Life to remove old Habits, I am not altogether out of Hopes in some time to suffer a Neighbour *Taboo* in my Company, without the Apprehensions I am yet under of his Teeth or his Claws.

MY Reconcilement to the *Taboo*-kind in general might not be so difficult if they would be content with those Vices and Follies only, which Nature hath intitled them to. I am not in the least provoked at the Sight of a Lawyer, a Pick-pocket, a Colonel, a Fool, a Lord, a Gamester, a Politician, a Whore-master, a Physician, an Evi-
dence,

dence, a Suborner, an Attorney, a Traitor, or the like: This is all according to the due Course of Things: But when I behold a Lump of Deformity, and Diseases both in Body and Mind, smitten with *Pride*, it immediately breaks all the Measures of my Patience; neither shall I be ever able to comprehend how such an Animal and such a Vice could tally together. The wise and virtuous *Houyhnhnms*, who abound in all Excellencies that can adorn a rational Creature, have no Name for this Vice in their Language, which hath no Terms to express any thing that is evil, except those whereby they describe the detestable Qualities of their *Yahoos*, among which they were not able to distinguish this of *Pride* for want of thoroughly understanding humane Nature, as it sheweth itself in other Countries, where that Animal presides. But I, who had more Experience, could plainly observe some Rudiments of it among the wild *Yahoos*:

But

BUT the *Houyhnhnms*, who live under the Government of Reason, are no more proud of the good Qualities they possess, than I should be for not wanting a Leg or an Arm, which no Man in his Wits would boast of, although he must be miserable without them. I dwell the longer upon this Subject from the Desire I have to make the Society of an *English Yahoo* by any means not insupportable, and therefore I here entreat those who have any Tincture of this absurd Vice, that they will not presume to come in my Sight.

F I N I S.

But the Honorable who live un-
 der the Government of Reason, are no
 more proud of the good Qualities they
 possess, than I should be for not want-
 ing a Leg or an Arm, which no Man
 in his Wits would best of, although
 he must be miserable without them. I
 dwell the longer upon this Subject from
 the Desire I have to make the Society
 of an English Trade by any means not
 insupportable, and therefore I here en-
 treat those who have any Tincture of
 this absurd Vice, that they will not pre-
 sume to come in my Sight.

F. A. W. 18.