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Travels into several remote nations of the world

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Chap. V. The Author permitted to see the grand Academy of Lagado. The Academy largely described. The Arts wherein the Professors employ themselves.

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C H A P. V.

The Author permitted to see the Grand Academy of Lagado. The Academy largely described. The Arts wherein the Professors employ themselves.



HIS Academy is not an entire single Building, but a Continuation of several Houses on both Sides of a Street, which growing waste, was purchased and applied to that Use.

I was received very kindly by the Warden, and went for many days to the Academy. Every Room hath in it one or more Projectors, and I believe I could not be in fewer than five hundred Rooms.

T H E

THE first Man I saw was of a meager Aspect, with sooty Hands and Face, his Hair and Beard long, ragged and singed in several Places: His Clothes, Shirt, and Skin, were all of the same Colour. He had been eight Years upon a Project for extracting Sun-Beams out of Cucumbers, which were to be put into Vials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the Air in raw inclement Summers. He told me, he did not doubt in eight Years more, he should be able to supply the Governor's Gardens with Sun-shine at a reasonable Rate; but he complained that his Stock was low, and intreated me to give him something as an Encouragement to Ingenuity, especially since this had been a very dear Season for Cucumbers. I made him a small Present, for my Lord had furnished me with Money on purpose, because he knew their Practice of begging from all who go to see them.

I went into another Chamber, but was ready to hasten back, being almost overcome with a horrible Stink. My Conductor pressed me forward, conjuring me, in a Whisper, to give no Offence, which would be highly resent'd, and therefore I durst not so much as stop my Nose. The Projector of this Cell was the most ancient Student of the Academy: His Face and Beard were of a pale yellow; his Hands and Clothes dawbed over with Filth. When I was presented to him, he gave me a very close Embrace, (a Compliment I could well have excused.) His Employment from his first coming into the Academy, was an Operation to reduce human Excrement to its original Food, by separating the several Parts, removing the Tincture which it receives from the Gall, making the Odour exhale, and scumming off the Saliva. He had a weekly Allowance from the Society, of a Vessel filled with Human Ordure, about the bigness of a *Bristol* Barrel.

I saw another at work to calcine Ice into Gun-Powder, who likewise shewed me a Treatise he had written concerning the Malleability of Fire, which he intended to publish.

THERE was a most ingenious Architect, who had contrived a new Method for building Houses, by beginning at the Roof and working downwards to the Foundation, which he justified to me by the like Practice of those two prudent Insects the Bee and the Spider.

THERE was a Man born blind, who had several Apprentices in his own Condition: Their Employment was to mix Colours for Painters, which their Master taught them to distinguish by feeling and smelling. It was indeed my misfortune to find them at that time not very perfect in their Lessons, and the Professor himself happened to be generally mistaken: This Artist is much encouraged and esteemed by the whole Fraternity.

IN another Apartment I was highly pleased with a Projector, who had found a Device of plowing the Ground with Hogs, to save the Charges of Plows, Cattle and Labour. The Method is this: In an Acre of Ground you bury at six Inches distance, and eight deep, a quantity of Acorns, Dates, Chesnuts, and other Masse or Vegetables, whereof these Animals are fondest: then you drive six hundred or more of them into the Field, where in a few days they will root up the whole Ground in search of their Food, and make it fit for sowing, at the same time manuring it with their Dung. It is true, upon Experiment they found the Charge and Trouble very great, and they had little or no Crop: However, it is not doubted that this Invention may be capable of great Improvement.

I went into another Room, where the Walls and Ceiling were all hung round with Cobwebs, except a narrow Passage for

for the Artist to go in and out. At my Entrance he called aloud to me not to disturb his Webs. He lamented the fatal Mistake the World had been so long in, of using Silk-Worms, while we had such plenty of domestick Insects, who infinitely excelled the former, because they understood how to weave as well as spin. And he propos'd farther, that by employing Spiders, the Charge of dying Silks should be wholly sav'd, whereof I was fully convinc'd when he shew'd me a vast number of Flies most beautifully coloured, wherewith he fed his Spiders, assuring us, that the Webs would take a Tincture from them; and as he had them of all hues, he hop'd to fit every body's Fancy, as soon as he could find proper Food for the Flies of certain Gums, Oils, and other glutinous Matter to give a Strength and Consistence to the Threads.

THERE was an Astronomer who had undertaken to place a Sun-Dial upon

the great Weather-cock on the Town-House by adjusting the annual and diurnal Motions of the Earth and Sun, so as to answer and coincide with all accidental Turnings by the Wind.

I was complaining of a small Fit of the Cholick, upon which my Conductor led me into a Room, where a great Physician resided, who was famous for curing that Disease by contrary Operations from the same Instrument. He had a large pair of Bellows, with a long slender Muzzle of Ivory. This he conveyed eight Inches up the Anus, and drawing in the Wind, he affirmed he could make the Guts as lank as a dried Bladder. But when the Disease was more stubborn and violent, he let in the Muzzle while the Bellows were full of Wind, which he discharged into the Body of the Patient, then withdrew the Instrument to replenish it, clapping his Thumb strongly against the Orifice of the Fundament; and this being repeated three or four times,

times, the adventitious Wind would rush out, bringing the noxious along with it (like Water put into a Pump) and the Patient recover. I saw him try both Experiments upon a Dog, but could not discern any Effect from the former. After the latter, the Animal was ready to burst, and made so violent a Discharge, as was very offensive to me and my Companions. The Dog died on the spot, and we left the Doctor endeavouring to recover him by the same Operation.

I visited many other Apartments, but shall not trouble my Reader with all the Curiosities I observed, being studious of Brevity.

I had hitherto seen only one side of the Academy, the other being appropriated to the Advancers of speculative Learning, of whom I shall say something when I have mentioned one illustrious Person more, who is called among

them the universal Artist. He told us, he had been thirty Years employing his Thoughts for the Improvement of human Life. He had two large Rooms full of wonderful Curiosities, and fifty Men at work. Some were condensing Air into a dry tangible Substance, by extracting the Nitre, and letting the aqueous or fluid Particles percolate; others softening Marble for Pillows and Pin-cushions; others petrifying the Hoofs of a living Horse to preserve them from foundring. The Artist himself was at that time busy upon two great Designs; the first to sow Land with Chaff, wherein he affirmed the true seminal Virtue to be contained, as he demonstrated by several Experiments, which I was not skilful enough to comprehend. The other was, by a certain Composition of Gums, Minerals, and Vegetables outwardly applied, to prevent the Growth of Wool upon two young Lambs; and he hoped in a reasonable time to propagate the Breed of naked Sheep all over the Kingdom.

WE

WE crossed a Walk to the other part of the Academy, where, as I have already said, the Projector in speculative Learning resided.

THE first Professor I saw, was in a very large Room, with forty Pupils about him. After Salutation, observing me to look earnestly upon a Frame, which took up the greatest part of both the Length and Breadth of the Room, he said perhaps I might wonder to see him employed in a Project for improving speculative Knowledge by practical and mechanical Operations. But the World would soon be sensible of its Usefulness, and he flattered himself that a more noble exalted Thought never sprung in any other Man's head. Every one knew how laborious the usual Method is of attaining to Arts and Sciences; whereas by his Contrivance, the most ignorant Person at a reasonable Charge, and with a little bodily Labour, may write both in Philosophy, Poetry, Politicks, Law,

Mathemathicks and Theology, without the least Assistance from Genius or Study. He then led me to the Frame, about the sides whereof all his Pupils stood in Ranks. It was twenty Foot square, placed in the middle of the Room. The Superficies was composed of several bits of Wood, about the bigness of a Dye, but some larger than others. They were all linked together by slender Wires. These bits of Wood were covered on every Square with Papers pasted on them, and on these Papers were written all the Words of their Language in their several Moods, Tenses, and Declensions, but without any Order. The Professor then desired me to observe, for he was going to set his Engine at work. The Pupils at his command took each of them hold of an Iron Handle, whereof there were forty fixed round the Edges of the Frame; and giving them a sudden turn, the whole Disposition of the Words was entirely changed. He then commanded

fix

six and thirty of the Lads to read the several Lines softly as they appeared upon the Frame; and where they found three or four Words together that might make part of a Sentence, they dictated to the four remaining Boys who were Scribes. This Work was repeated three or four times, and at every turn the Engine was so contrived, that the Words shifted into new Places, or the square bits of Wood moved upside down.

Six hours a-day the young Students were employed in this Labour, and the Professor shewed me several Volumes in large Folio already collected, of broken Sentences, which he intended to piece together, and out of those rich Materials to give the World a compleat Body of all Arts and Sciences; which however might be still improved, and much expedited, if the Publick would raise a Fund for making and employing five hundred such Frames in *Lagado*, and oblige the Managers to contribute
in

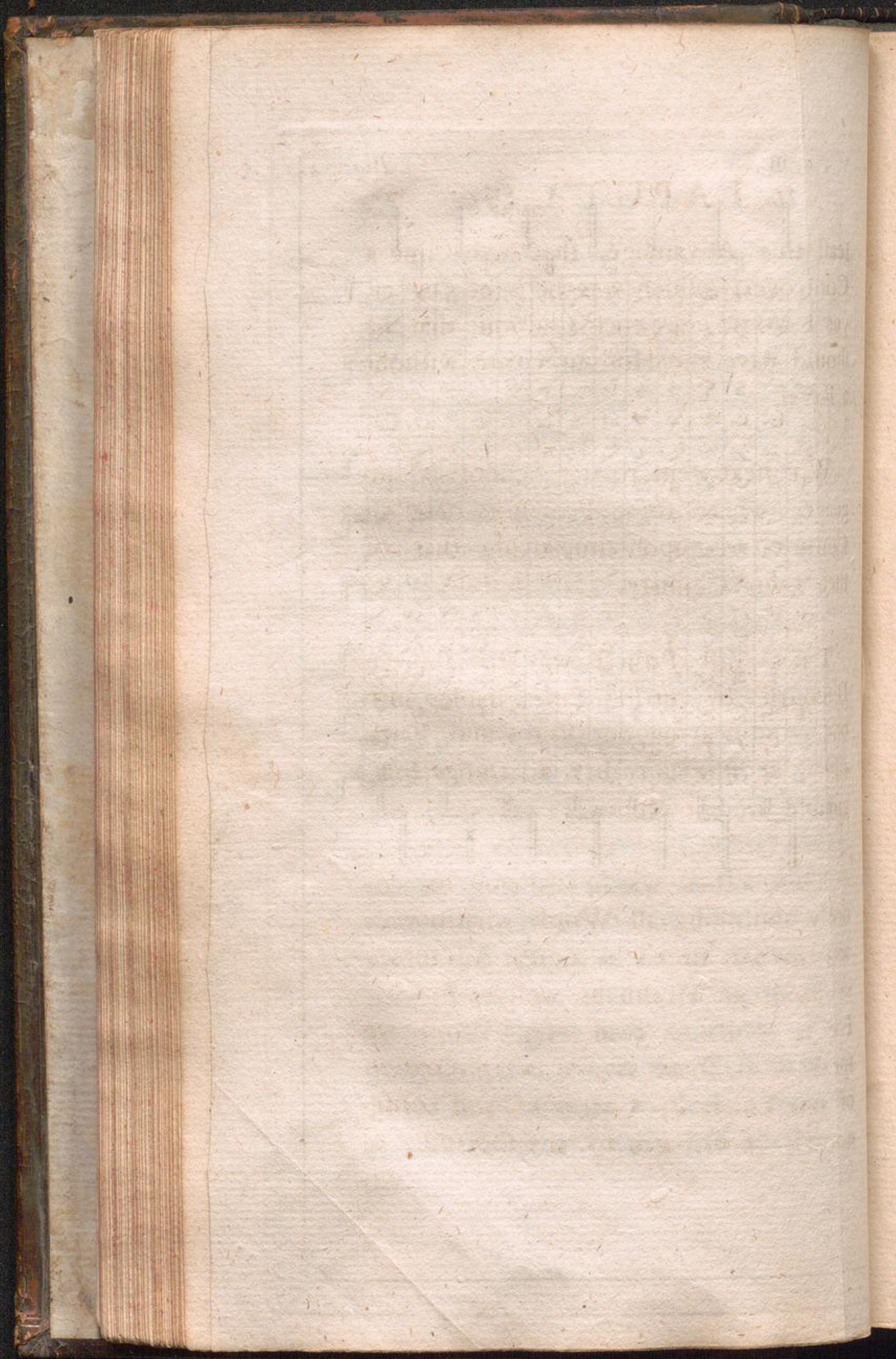
in common their several Collecti-
ons.

HE assured me, that this Invention had employed all his Thoughts from his Youth, that he had employed the whole Vocabulary into his Frame, and made the strictest Computation of the general Proportion there is in the Book between the Numbers of Particles, Nouns, and Verbs, and other Parts of Speech.

I made my humblest Acknowledg-
ment to this illustrious Person for his
great Communicativeness, and promi-
sed if ever I had the good fortune
to return to my native Country, that I
would do him Justice, as the sole In-
venter of this wonderful Machine; the
Form and Contrivance of which I de-
sired leave to delineate upon Paper
as in the Figure here annexed. I told
him, although it were the Custom of our
Learned in *Europe* to steal Inventions
from each other, who had thereby at
least

The table contains 14 rows of Arabic script characters, organized into 10 columns. The characters are arranged in a grid pattern, with decorative interlocking lines forming a border around the text. The script appears to be a historical form of Arabic, possibly used for cryptographic or linguistic purposes. The characters are arranged in a regular grid, with some variations in spacing and alignment between rows and columns.

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least this Advantage, that it became a Controversy which was the right Owner, yet I would take such Caution, that he should have the Honour entire without a Rival.

WE next went to the School of Language, where three Professors sate in Consultation upon improving that of their own Country.

THE first Project was to shorten Discourse, by cutting Polysyllables into one, and leaving out Verbs and Participles, because in reality all things imaginable are but Nouns.

THE other was a Scheme for entirely abolishing all Words whatsoever; and this was urged as a great Advantage in point of Health as well as Brevity. For it is plain, that every Word we speak is in some degree a Diminution of our Lungs by Corrosion, and consequently contributes to the shortning of
our

our Lives. An Expedient was therefore offered, that since Words are only Names for *Things*, it would be more convenient for all Men to carry about them, such *Things* as were necessary to express the particular Business they are to discourse on. And this Invention would certainly have taken place, to the great Ease as well as Health of the Subject, if the Women in conjunction with the Vulgar and Illiterate had not threatned to raise a Rebellion, unless they might be allowed the Liberty to speak with their Tongues, after the manner of their Ancestors; such constant irreconcilable Enemies to Science are the common People. However, many of the most Learned and Wise adhere to the New Scheme of expressing themselves by *Things*, which hath only this Inconvenience attending it, that if a Man's Business be very great, and of various kinds, he must be obliged in proportion to carry a great Bundle of *Things* upon his Back, unless he can afford

afford one or two strong Servants to attend him. I have often beheld two of those Sages almost sinking under the Weight of their Packs, like Pedlers among us; who, when they met in the Streets, would lay down their Loads, open their Saddles, and hold Conversation for an hour together; then put up their Implements, help each other to resume their Burthens, and take their Leave.

BUT for short Conversations, a Man may carry Implements in his Pockets and under his Arms, enough to supply him, and in his House he cannot be at a loss: Therefore the Room where Company meet who practise this Art, is full of all *Things* ready at hand, requisite to furnish Matter of this kind of artificial Converse.

ANOTHER great Advantage proposed by this Invention, was, that it would serve as an Universal Language to be understood in all civilized Nations,

tions, whose Goods and Utenfils are generally of the same kind, or nearly resembling, so that their Uses might easily be comprehended. And the Embassadors would be qualified to treat with foreign Princes or Ministers of State, to whose Tongues they were utter Strangers.

I was at the Mathematical School, where the Master taught his Pupils after a Method scarce imaginable to us in *Europe*. The Proposition and Demonstration were fairly written on a thin Wafer, with Ink composed of a Cephalick Tincture. This the Student was to swallow upon a fasting Stomach, and for three days following eat nothing but Bread and Water. As the Wafer digested, the Tincture mounted to his Brain, bearing the Proposition along with it. But the Success hath not hitherto been answerable, partly by some Error in the *Quantum* or Composition, and partly by the Perverseness of Lads,

to

to whom this Bolus is so nauseous, that they generally steal aside, and discharge it upwards before it can operate; neither have they been yet persuaded to use so long an Abstinence as the Prescription requires.

