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Travels into several remote nations of the world

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Chap. IV. Mildendo the Metropolis of Lilliput describ'd, together with the Emperor's Palace. A Conversation between the Author and a principal Secretary, concerning the Affairs of that Empire. The ...

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CHAP. IV.

Mildendo, the Metropolis of Lilliput, described, together with the Emperor's Palace. A Conversation between the Author and a Principal Secretary concerning the Affairs of that Empire: The Author's Offers to serve the Emperor in his Wars.

THE first Request I made after I had obtained my Liberty, was, that I might have licence to see *Mildendo*, the Metropolis; which the Emperor easily granted me, but with a special Charge to do no hurt, either to the Inhabitants, or their Houses. The People had notice by Proclamation of my design to visit the Town. The Wall which encompassed it, is two foot and an half high,

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high, and at least eleven Inches broad, so that a Coach and Horses may be driven very safely round it; and it is flanked with strong Towers at ten foot distance. I stept over the great Western Gate, and passed very gently, and sideling through the two principal Streets, only in my short Wastecoat, for fear of damaging the Roofs and Eves of the Houses with the Skirts of my Coat. I walked with the utmost Circumspection, to avoid treading on any Stragglers, that might remain in the Streets, although the Orders were very strict, that all People should keep in their Houses, at their own peril. The Garret-windows and tops of Houses were so crowded with Spectators, that I thought in all my Travels I had not seen a more populous Place. The City is an exact Square, each side of the Wall being five hundred foot long. The two great Streets which run cross and divide it into four Quarters, are five foot wide. The Lanes and Alleys which I could not enter, but only viewed them as I passed, are from
twelve

twelve to eighteen Inches. The Town is capable of holding five hundred thousand Souls. The Houses are from three to five Stories. The Shops and Markets well provided.

THE Emperor's Palace is in the Center of the City, where the two great Streets meet. It is inclosed by a Wall of two foot high, and twenty foot distant from the Buildings. I had his Majesty's Permission to step over this Wall; and the Space being so wide between that and the Palace, I could easily view it on every side. The outward Court is a Square of forty foot, and includes two other Courts: In the inmost are the Royal Apartments, which I was very desirous to see, but found it extremely difficult; for the great Gates, from one Square into another, were but eighteen inches high, and seven inches wide. Now the Buildings of the outer Court were at least five foot high, and it was impossible for me to stride over them, with-

out infinite Damage to the Pile, though the Walls were strongly built of hewn Stone, and four Inches thick. At the same time the Emperor had a great desire to see the Magnificence of his Palace; but this I was not able to do till three Days after, which I spent in cutting down with my Knife some of the largest Trees in the Royal Park, about an hundred Yards distant from the City. Of these Trees I made two Stools each about three foot high, and strong enough to bear my Weight. The People having received notice a second time I went again through the City to the Palace, with my two Stools in my Hand. When I came to the side of the outer Court, I stood upon one Stool, and took the other in my hand: This I lifted over the Roof, and gently set it down on the Space between the first and second Court which was eight foot wide. I then stepped over the Buildings very conveniently from one Stool to the other, and drew up the first after me with a hooked Stick

By this Contrivance I got into the inmost Court; and lying down upon my Side, I applied my Face to the Windows of the middle Stories, which were left open on purpose, and discovered the most splendid Apartments that can be imagined. There I saw the Empress, and the young Princes in their several Lodgings, with their chief Attendants about them. Her Imperial Majesty was pleased to smile very graciously upon me, and gave me out of the Window her hand to kiss.

BUT I shall not anticipate the Reader with farther Descriptions of this kind, because I reserve them for a greater Work, which is now almost ready for the Press, containing a general Description of this Empire, from its first Erection, through a long Series of Princes, with a particular account of their Wars and Politicks, Laws, Learning, and Religion: their Plants and Animals, their peculiar Manners and Customs, with other Matters very curious and useful; my chief design

at present being only to relate such Events and Transactions as happened to the Publick, or to myself, during a Residence of about nine Months in the Empire.

ONE Morning, about a Fortnight after I had obtain'd my Liberty, *Keldre*, principal Secretary (as they style him of private Affairs, came to my House attended only by one Servant. He desired his Coach to wait at a distance, desired I would give him an Hour's audience; which I readily consented to, on account of his Quality and personal Merits, as well as the many good offices he had done me during my Solicitations in Court. I offered to lie down, that he might the more conveniently reach my Ear; but he chose rather to let me hold him in my Hand during our Conversation. He began with Compliments on my Liberty, said he might pretend to some Merit in it: but, however, added that if it had not been for the present

Situation of things at Court, perhaps I might not have obtained it so soon. For, said he, as flourishing a Condition as we may appear to be in to Foreigners, we labour under two mighty Evils; a violent Faction at home, and the Danger of an Invasion by a most potent Enemy from abroad. As to the first, you are to understand, that for above seventy Moons past, there have been two struggling Parties in this Empire, under the Names of *Tramecksan*, and *Slamecksan*, from the high and low Heels on their Shoes, by which they distinguish themselves. It is alledged indeed, that the high Heels are most agreeable to our ancient Constitution: But however this be, his Majesty hath determined to make use of only low Heels in the Administration of the Government; and all Offices in the Gift of the Crown, as you cannot but observe; and particularly, that his Majesty's Imperial Heels are lower at least by a *Drurr* than any of his Court; (*Drurr* a Measure about the fourteenth Part

of an Inch.) The Animosities between these two Parties run so high, that they will neither eat nor drink, nor talk with each other. We compute the *Trampan*, or High-Heels, to exceed us in number; but the Power is wholly on our side. We apprehend his Imperial Majesty, the Heir to the Crown, to have some tendency towards the High-Heels; at least, we can plainly discover one of his Heels higher than the other, which gives him a hobble in his Gait. In the midst of these intestine Disputes we are threatned with an Invasion from the Island of *Blefuscu*, which is the other great Empire of the Universe, almost as large and powerful as this of his Majesty. For as to what we have heard you affirm, that there are other Kingdoms and States in the World, inhabited by human Creatures as large as you, our Philosophers are in much doubt; they would rather conjecture that you are seen from the Moon, or one of the Stars, because it is certain, that an hundred

tals of your Bulk wou'd, in a short time, destroy all the Fruits and Cattle of his Majesty's Dominions. Besides, our Histories of six thousand Moons make no mention of any other Regions, than the two great Empires of *Lilliput* and *Blefuscu*. Which two mighty Powers have, as I was going to tell you, been engaged in a most obstinate War for six and thirty Moons past. It began upon the following Occasion. It is allowed on all hands, that the primitive way of breaking Eggs before we eat them, was upon the larger End: But his present Majesty's Grandfather, while he was a Boy, going to eat an Egg, and breaking it according to the ancient practice, happened to cut one of his Fingers. Whereupon the Emperor his Father published an Edict, commanding all his Subjects, upon great Penalties, to break the smaller End of their Eggs. The People so highly resented this Law, that our Histories tell us there have been six Rebellions raised on that account; wherein one Emperor lost his Life, and

another his Crown. These civil Comotions were constantly fomented by the Monarchs of *Blesfusen*; and when they were quelled, the Exiles always fled for refuge to that Empire. It is computed that eleven thousand Persons have, several times, suffered death, rather than submit to break their Eggs at the small End. Many hundred large Volumes have been published upon this Controversy. But the Books of the *Big-Endians* have been long forbidden, and the whole Nation rendered incapable by Law of holding any Employments. During the Course of these Troubles, the Emperors of *Blesfusen* did frequently expostulate by their Embassadors, accusing us of making a Schism in Religion, by offending against a fundamental Doctrine of our great Prophet *Lustrog*, in the fifty-fourth Chapter of the *Blundecral*, (which is their *Aloran*.) This, however, is thought to be a meer strain upon the Text: For the words are these; *That all true Believers shall break their Eggs at the convenient*

End: and which is the convenient End, seems, in my humble Opinion, to be left to every Man's Conscience, or at least in the power of the chief Magistrate to determine. Now, the *Big-Indian* Exiles have found so much Credit in the Emperor of *Blefuscu's* Court, and so much private Assistance and Encouragement from their Party here at home, that a bloody War hath been carried on between the two Empires for six and thirty Moons with various Success; during which time we have lost forty capital Ships, and a much greater number of smaller Vessels, together with thirty thousand of our best Seamen and Soldiers; and the Damage received by the Enemy is reckon'd to be somewhat greater than ours. However, they have now equipped a numerous Fleet, and are just preparing to make a Descent upon us; and his Imperial Majesty placing great confidence in your Valour and Strength, hath commanded me to lay this account of his Affairs before you.

I desired the Secretary to present my humble Duty to the Emperor, and let him know, that I thought it would not become me, who was a Foreigner, to interfere with Parties; but I was ready with the hazard of my Life, to defend the Person and State against all Invaders.



C H A

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