



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

Travels into several remote nations of the world

in 4 pt.

Swift, Jonathan

London, 1726

Chap. VI. Of the Inhabitants of Lilliput, their Learning, Laws, and Customs, the manner of educating their Children. The Author's way of living in that Country. His Vindication of a great Lady.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-48497](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-48497)



C H A P. VI.

Of the Inhabitants of Lilliput; their Learning, Laws, and Customs, the Manner of Educating their Children. The Author's way of living in that Country. His Vindication of a great Lady.



Although I intend to leave the Description of this Empire to a particular Treatise, yet in the meantime I am content to gratify the curious Reader with some general Ideas. As the common size of the Natives is somewhat under six Inches high, so there is an exact Proportion in all other Animals, as well as Plants and Trees: For instance, the tallest Horses and Oxen are between four and five Inches

ches in height, the Sheep an Inch and a half, more or less; their Geese about the bigness of a Sparrow, and so the several gradations downwards, till you come to the smallest, which, to my sight were almost invisible; but Nature hath adapted the Eyes of the *Lilliputians* to all Objects proper for their view: They see with great exactness but at no great distance. And to shew the sharpness of their sight toward Objects that are near, I have been much pleased observing a Cook pulling a Lark, which was not so large as a common Fly; and a young Girl threading an invisible Needle with invisible Silk. Their tallest Trees are about seven foot high: I mean some of those in the great Royal Park, the tops whereof I could but just reach with my Fist clinched. The other Vegetables are in the same proportion; but this I leave to the Reader's imagination.

I shall say but little at present of their Learning, which for many Ages hath
 I
 flourished

flourished in all its Branches among them: But their manner of writing is very peculiar, being neither from the left to the right, like the *Europeans*; nor from the right to the left, like the *Arabians*; nor from up to down, like the *Chinese*; nor from down to up, like the *Cascagians*; but aslant from one Corner of the Paper to the other, like Ladies in *England*.

THEY bury their Dead with their Heads directly downwards, because they hold an Opinion, that in eleven thousand Moons they are all to rise again, in which Period the Earth (which they conceive to be flat) will turn upside down, and by this means they shall, at their Resurrection, be found ready standing on their Feet. The Learned among them confess the Absurdity of this Doctrine, but the Practice still continues, in compliance to the Vulgar.

THERE are some Laws and Customs in this Empire very peculiar; and if they were

were not so directly contrary to those of my own dear Country, I should be tempted to say a little in their justification. It is only to be wished, that they were as well executed. The first I shall mention, relates to Informers. All Crimes against the State are punished here with the utmost Severity; but if the Person accused maketh his Innocence plainly to appear upon his Trial, the Accuser is immediately put to an ignominious Death; and out of his Goods or Lands, the innocent Person is quadruply recompensed for the loss of his Time, for the Danger he underwent, for the hardship of his Imprisonment, and for all the Charges he hath been at in making his Defence. Or, if that Fund be deficient, it is largely supplied by the Crown. The Emperor does also confer on him some publick Mark of his Favour, and Proclamation is made of his Innocence through the whole City.

THEY look upon Fraud as a greater Crime and Theft, and therefore seldom fail

fail to punish it with Death; for they alledge, that care and vigilance, with a very common Understanding, may preserve a Man's Goods from Theives, but Honesty has no fence against superior Cunning; and since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual Intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon Credit, where Fraud is permitted or connived at, or hath no Law to punish it, the honest Dealer is always undone, and the Knave gets the advantage. I remember when I was once interceding with the King for a Criminal who had wronged his Master of a great sum of Money, which he had received by order, and ran away with; and happening to tell his Majesty, by way of extenuation, that it was only a Breach of Trust; the Emperor thought it monstrous in me to offer, as a Defence, the greatest Aggravation of the Crime; And truly I had little to say in return, farther than the common answer, that different Nations had different Customs; for, I confess, I was heartily ashamed.

AL-

ALTHOUGH we usually call Reward and Punishment the two Hinges upon which all Government turns, yet I could never observe this Maxim to be put in practice by any Nation except that of *Lilliput*. Whoever can there bring sufficient Proof that he hath strictly observed the Laws of his Country for seventy three Moons, had a claim to certain Privileges, according to his quality and condition of Life, with a proportionable Sum of Money out of a Fund appropriated for that Use: He likewise acquires the Title of *Snilpall*, or *Legal*, which is added to his Name, but does not descend to his Posterity. And these People thought it a prodigious defect of Policy among us, when I told them that our Laws were enforced only by Penalties without any mention of Reward. It is upon this account that the Image of Justice, in their Courts of Judicature, is formed with six Eyes, two before, as many behind, and on each side one, to signify Circumspection;

spection ? with a Bag of Gold open in her right Hand, and a Sword sheathed in her left, to shew she is more disposed to reward than to punish.

IN chusing Persons for all Employments, they have more regard to good Morals than to great Abilities ; for, since Government is necessary to Mankind, they believe that the common size of human Understandings is fitted to some Station or other, and that Providence never intended to make the Management of publick Affairs a Mystery, to be comprehended only by a few Persons of sublime Genius, of which there seldom are three born in an Age : but they suppose Truth, Justice, Temperance, and the like, to be in every Man's power ; the Practice of which Virtues, assisted by Experience and a good Intention, would qualify any Man for the service of his Country, except where a course of Study is required. But they thought the want of moral Virtues was so far from being supplied by su-

perior Endowments of the Mind, that Employments could never be put into such dangerous Hands as those of Persons so qualify'd; and at least, that the Mistakes committed by Ignorance in a virtuous Disposition, would never be of such fatal Consequence to the Publick Weal, as the Practices of a Man whose Inclinations led him to be corrupt, and had great Abilities to manage and multiply, and defend his Corruptions.

IN like manner, the Disbelief of a Divine Providence renders a Man incapable of holding any publick Station; for since Kings avow themselves to be the Deputies of Providence, the *Lilliputians* think nothing can be more absurd than for a Prince to employ such Men as disown the Authority under which he acts.

IN relating these and the following Laws, I would only be understood to mean the original Institutions, and not the most scandalous Corruptions into which

which these People are fallen by the degenerate Nature of Man. For as to that infamous Practice of acquiring great Employments by dancing on the Ropes, or Badges of Favour and Distinction by leaping over Sticks, and creeping under them, the Reader is to observe, that they were first introduced by the Grand-father of the Emperor now reigning, and grew to the present height, by the gradual increase of Party and Faction.

INGRATITUDE is among them a capital Crime, as we read it to have been in some other Countries; for they reason thus, that whoever makes ill returns to his Benefactor, must needs be a common Enemy to the rest of Mankind, from whom he hath received no Obligation, and therefore such a Man is not fit to live.

THEIR Notions relating to the Duties of Parents and Children differ extremely from ours. For, since the Conjunction of Male and Female is founded upon

upon

upon the great Law of Nature, in order to propagate and continue the Species, the *Lilliputians* will needs have it, that Men and Women are joined together like other Animals, by the motives of Concupiscence; and that their Tenderness towards their Young proceeds from the like natural Principle: for which reason they will never allow, that a Child is under any obligation to his Father for begetting him, or his Mother for bringing him into the World, which, considering the miseries of human Life, was neither a Benefit in it self, or intended so by his Parents, whose thoughts in their Love-Encounters were otherwise employ'd. Upon these, and the like Reasonings, their Opinion is, that Parents are the last of all others to be trusted with the Education of their own Children: and therefore they have in every Town publick Nurseries, where all Parents, except Cottagers and Labourers, are obliged to send their Infants of both Sexes to be reared and educated when they come to the Age of

twenty Moons, at which time they are supposed to have some rudiments of Docility. These Schools are of several kinds, suited to different qualities, and to both Sexes. They have certain Professors well skilled in preparing Children for such a condition of Life as befits the rank of their Parents, and their own Capacities as well as Inclinations. I shall first say something of the male Nurseries, and then of the Female.

THE Nurseries for Males of noble or eminent Birth, are provided with grave and learned Professors, and their several Deputies. The clothes and food of the Children are plain and simple. They are bred up in the Principles of Honour, Justice, Courage, Modesty, Clemency, Religion, and Love of their Country: they are always employed in some business, except in the times of eating and sleeping, which are very short, and two hours for Diversions, consisting of bodily Exercises. They are dressed by Men

till

till four Years of Age, and then are obliged to dress themselves, although their Quality be ever so great; and the Women Attendants, who are aged proportionably to ours at fifty, perform only the most menial Offices. They are never suffered to converse with Servants, but go together in small or greater numbers to take their Diversions, and always in the presence of a Professor, or one of his Deputies; whereby they avoid those early bad impressions of Folly and Vice to which our Children are subject. Their Parents are suffered to see them only twice a Year; the Visit is to last but an hour. They are allowed to kiss the Child at meeting and parting; but a Professor, who always stands by on those occasions, will not suffer them to whisper, or use any fondling Expressions, or bring any presents of Toys, Sweet-meats, and the like.

THE Pension from each Family for the Education and Entertainment of a
H 2 Child

Child, upon failure of due payment, is levied by the Emperor's Officers.

THE Nurseries for Children of ordinary Gentlemen, Merchants, Traders, and Handicrafts, are managed proportionably after the same manner; only those designed for Trades, are put out Apprentices at eleven Years old, whereas those of Persons of Quality continue in their Nurseries till fifteen, which answers to one and twenty with us: but the Confinement is gradually lessened for the last three Years.

IN the female Nurseries, the young Girls of Quality are educated much like the Males, only they are dressed by orderly Servants of their own Sex; but always in the presence of a Professor or Deputy, till they come to dress themselves, which is at five Years old. And it be found that these Nurses ever presume to entertain the Girls with frightful or foolish Stories, or the common Follies practis'd

practis'd

practised by Chamber-Maids among us, they are publickly whipped thrice about the City, imprisoned for a Year, and banished for Life to the most desolate part of the Country. Thus the young Ladies there are as much ashamed of being Cowards and Fools, as the Men, and despise all personal Ornaments beyond Decency and Cleanliness: Neither did I perceive any Difference in their Education, made by their difference of Sex, only that the Exercises of the Females were not altogether so robust; and that some Rules were given them relating to domestick Life, and a smaller compass of Learning was enjoined them: For the Maxim is, that among People of Quality, a Wife should be always a reasonable and agreeable Companion, because she cannot always be young. When the Girls are twelve Years old, which among them is the marriageable Age, their Parents or Guardians take them home, with great Expressions of Gratitude to the Professors, and seldom without Tears.

of the young Lady and her Companions.

IN the Nurseries of Females of the meaner sort the Children are instructed in all kinds of Works proper for their Sex, and their several degrees: Those intended for Apprentices, are dismissed at nine Years old, the rest are kept to thirteen.

THE meaner Families, who have Children at these Nurseries, are obliged, besides their annual Pension, which is as low as possible, to return to the Steward of the Nursery a small monthly share of their gettings, to be a Portion for the Child; and therefore all Parents are limited in their Expences by the Law. For the *Lilliputians* think nothing can be more unjust, than for People, in subservience to their own Appetites, to bring Children into the World, and leave the Burthen of supporting them on the Publick. As to Persons of Quality, they give Security to appropriate a certain

certain

certain Sum for each Child, suitable to their Condition; and these Funds are always managed with good Husbandry and the most exact Justice.

THE Cottagers and Labourers keep their Children at home, their Business being only to till and cultivate the Earth, and therefore their Education is of little consequence to the Publick; but the Old and Diseased among them are supported by Hospitals: for Begging is a Trade unknown in this Kingdom.

AND here it may perhaps divert the curious Reader, to give some account of my domestick, and my manner of living in this Country, during a Residence of nine Months and thirteen Days. Having a Head mechanically turned, and being likewise forced by necessity, I had made for myself a Table and Chair convenient enough, out of the largest Trees in the Royal Park. Two hundred Sempstresses were employed to make me Shirts,

and Linen for Bed and Table, all of the strongest and coarsest kind they could get; which, however, they were forced to quilt together in several Folds, for the thickest was some degrees finer than Lawn. Their Linen is usually three Inches wide, and three Foot make a Piece. The Sempstresses took my Measure as I lay on the ground, one standing at my Neck, and another at my Mid-leg, with a strong Cord extended, that each held by the end, while the third measured the length of the Cord with a Rule of an Inch long. Then they measured my right Thumb, and desired no more; for by a mathematical Computation, that twice round the Thumb is once round the Wrist, and so on to the Neck and the Waste, and by the help of my old Shirt, which I displayed on the Ground before them for a Pattern, they fitted me exactly. Three hundred Taylors were employed in the same manner to make me Clothes; but they had another Contrivance for taking my Measure. I kneeled
down,

down, and they raised a Ladder from the Ground to my Neck; upon this Ladder one of them mounted, and let fall a Plum-Line from my Collar to the Floor, which just answered the length of my Coat; but my Waste and Arms I measured myself. When my Clothes were finished, which was done in my House, (for the largest of theirs would not be able to hold them) they looked like the Patch-Work made by the Ladies in *England*, only that mine were all of a Colour.

I had three hundred Cooks to dress my Victuals, in little convenient Huts built about my House, where they and their Families lived, and prepared me two Dishes a-piece. I took up twenty Waiters in my Hand, and placed them on the Table, an hundred more attended below on the Ground, some with Dishes of Meat, and some with Barrels of Wine, and other Liquors, slung on their Shoulders; all which the Waiters above drew up as I wanted, in a very ingenious manner,

ner, by certain Cords, as we draw the Bucket up a Well in *Europe*. A Dish of their Meat was a good Mouthful, and a Barrel of their Liquor a reasonable Draught. Their Mutton yields to ours, but their Beef is excellent. I have had a Sirloin so large, that I have been forced to make three Bits of it; but this is rare. My Servants were astonished to see me eat it Bones and all, as in our Country we do the Leg of a Lark. Their Geese and Turkeys I usually eat at a Mouthful, and I must confess they far exceed ours. Of their smaller Fowl I could take up twenty or thirty at the end of my Knife.

ONE day his Imperial Majesty being informed of my way of living, desired that himself and his Royal Consort, with the young Princes of the Blood of both Sexes, might have the Happiness (as he was pleased to call it) of dining with me. They came accordingly, and I placed 'em upon Chairs of State on my Table, just
over.

over-against me, with their Guards about them. *Flimnap* the Lord High Treasurer attended there likewise, with his white Staff; and I observed he often looked on me with a sour Countenance, which I would not seem to regard, but eat more than usual, in honour to my dear Country, as well as to fill the Court with Admiration. I have some private Reasons to believe, that this Visit from his Majesty gave *Flimnap* an opportunity of doing me ill Offices to his Master. That Minister had always been my secret Enemy, though he outwardly caressed me more than was usual to the Moroseness of his Nature. He represented to the Emperor the low condition of his Treasury; that he was forced to take up Money at great Discount; that Exchequer Bills would not circulate under nine *per Cent.* below Par; that in short I had cost his Majesty above a million and a half of *Sprugs*, (their greatest Gold Coin, about the bigness of a Spangle;) and upon the whole, that it would be adviseable in the
Emperor

Emperor to take the first fair Occasion of dismissing me.

I am here obliged to vindicate the Reputation of an excellent Lady, who was an innocent Sufferer upon my account. The Treasurer took a fancy to be jealous of his Wife, from the Malice of some evil Tongues, who informed him that her Grace had taken a violent Affection for my Person; and the Court-scandal ran for some time, that she once came privately to my Lodging. This I solemnly declare to be a most infamous Falshood, without any Grounds, farther than that her Grace was pleased to treat me with all innocent marks of Freedom and Friendship. I own she came often to my House, but always publicly, nor ever without three more in the Coach, who were usually her Sister and young Daughter, and some particular Acquaintance; but this was common to many other Ladies of the Court. And I still appeal to my Servants round, whether

they at any time saw a Coach at my Door without knowing what Persons were in it. On those occasions, when a Servant had given me notice, my custom was to go immediately to the Door: and, after paying my Respects, to take up the Coach and two Horses very carefully in my Hands, (for if there were six Horses, the Postillion always unharnessed four) and place them on a Table, where I had fixed a moveable Rim quite round, of five Inches high, to prevent accidents. And I have often had four Coaches and Horses at once on my Table full of Company, while I sat in my Chair, leaning my Face towards them; and when I was engaged with one Sett, the Coachmen would gently drive the others round my Table. I have passed many an afternoon very agreeably in these Conversations. But I defy the Treasurer, or his two Informers, (I will name them, and let 'em make their best of it) *Clustril* and *Drunlo*, to prove that any Person ever came to me *incognito*, except the Secretary *Redresal*,

AND

dresal,

dresal, who was sent by exprefs Command of his Imperial Majesty, as I have before related. I should not have dwelt so long upon this Particular, if it had not been a point wherein the Reputation of a great Lady is so nearly concerned, to say nothing of my own; though I had then the Honour to be a *Nardac*, which the Treasurer himself is not; for all the World knows he is only a *Glumglum*, a Title inferiour by one Degree, as that of a Marquis is to a Duke in *England*, although I allow he preceded me in right of his Post. These false Informations, which I afterwards came to the knowledge of, by an accident not proper to mention, made *Flimnap*, the Treasurer, shew his Lady for some time an ill Countenance, and me a worse; and although he were at last undeceived and reconciled to her, yet I lost all Credit with him, and found my Interest decline very fast with the Emperor himself, who was indeed too much governed by that Favourite.

C H A P.