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# **The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford**

In Five Volumes

**Walpole, Horace**

**London, 1798**

An Account of the Giants lately discovered

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**Nutzungsbedingungen**

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A N  
A C C O U N T  
O F T H E  
G I A N T S  
L A T E L Y D I S C O V E R E D :

In a Letter to a Friend in the Country.

First Printed in the Year 1766.

A C C O U N T

OF THE

GLAZES  
GLAZES

LATELY DISCOVERED:

IN A LETTER FROM THE

Author to the

A N  
A C C O U N T  
O F T H E  
G I A N T S  
L A T E L Y D I S C O V E R E D.

DEAR WILL.

**T**HOUGH people in the country are enough disposed to believe wonders, yet are they prudently apt to suspend giving credit to all that are sent from London, except of a political cast. You good folks still believe in an uninterrupted generation of patriots; and though they seldom come to years of maturity, you trust in them as fast as they are produced in saint Stephen's chapel. For other monstrous births, you are fonder of them, the farther they come. Ghosts and witches are entirely of your own growth. Excepting the famous ghost of a found in Cock-lane, from which the Methodists expected such a rich harvest (for what might not a rising church promise itself from such well-imagined nonsense as the apparition of a noise?) I think many, many years have elapsed, since the capital could boast of having regenerated a spirit. Your sagacity will therefore incline you to doubt the marvellous account I am going to give you of a new-discovered race of giants.

Perhaps

Perhaps you will take the relation for some political allegory, or think it a new-vamped edition of Swift's Brobdignags. My good friend, it is neither the one nor the other; though I must own a political mystery, and a wonderful one too, for it is really kept a secret.—The very crew of the ship, who saw five hundred of these lofty personages, did not utter a word of the matter for a whole year; and even now, that a general idea has taken wind, can scarce be brought to give any particulars to their most intimate friends.

All that the public can yet learn is, that captain Byron and his men have seen on the coast of Patagonia five hundred giants on horseback. Giants! you will cry; what do you call giants? Why, my friend, not men of fifty or an hundred feet high, yet still very personable giants, and much taller than any individual ever exhibited at Charing-cross. Come, what do you think of nine or ten feet high? and what do you think of five hundred such? Will Mrs. — cry, "Pish! that is no giant, it is only a well-made man."

I am told, for I am no reader of travels, that this gigantic nation was known to exist as early as the discovery of that continent: that sir John Narborough mentions them; and of late years Maupertuis. The Spaniards assert that they have long been acquainted with their existence—so *they*, you see, can keep a secret too. But the reasons given why we know so little of the matter are, that few ships ever touch on that coast, standing more out to sea in order to double the Cape; and that these giants are a roving nation, and seldom come down to the coast; and then I suppose only *to bob for whales*.

You will be eager to know a great deal more than I can tell you; but thus much I think is allowed: That captain Byron, being on that coast, saw a body of men at a distance on very small horses: as he approached, he perceived that the horses were common-sized horses; but that the riders were enormously tall, though I do not hear that their legs trailed much on the ground. This was fine game for a man sent on discoveries. The captain and part of his crew immediately landed, on which messieurs the giants as quickly retreated. Whether this timidity was owing to the terror which the English arms have struck into all parts of the known and, I conclude, unknown world; whether they took captain Byron for Mr. Pitt; whether they took

took our men for Spaniards, whose name must be an horror to all Americans; or whether they had any apprehensions of fire-arms; I cannot tell. Be that as it may, the more the captain and his men advanced, the faster the giants kept trotting off. Seeing this, the captain took a bold and sensible resolution: he ordered his men to lay down their arms and remain stock still, himself alone advancing. I doubt much whether Homer would have cared to venture his Jupiter alone against five hundred Titans.

Captain Byron's Titans had more of the *savoir vivre*, and, seeing him advance alone, stopped. He came up with them, and addressed them in all the languages he knew, and that they did not. They replied in the giant-tongue, which I am told a very reverend critic, upon the strength of one syllable which the captain remembered, affirms is plainly Phœnician. The captain, not being master of that exceedingly useful and obsolete language, had the misfortune of not comprehending a word they said. Had he been a deep scholar, he would undoubtedly have had recourse to hieroglyphics, which the Learned tell us was the first way of conveying instruction: but I must beg leave to observe, that it was very lucky the captain had not so much erudition. I do not know whether he can draw or not, but most probably, if he can, he had not his implements with him; at most, perhaps, a black-lead pencil, or a pen and ink, and the cover of a letter. He could not with such tools have asked many questions; and as the giants are probably not better painters than the Egyptians, he would have understood their answers as little as the Learned do the figures on obelisks. Thus he would have lost his time, and got no information; or, what is worse, to every man but a critic, have made a thousand absurd guesses. The captain having a great deal more sense, and the savages some, they naturally fell into that *succedaneum* to language, signs. Yet I do not hear that either side gained much information.

The first thing, or rather first sign, he said to them in this dilemma was, *Sit down*; which he explained by sitting down on the ground himself. The poor good giants understood him, dismounted and sat down too. It is said, but far be it from me to affirm it, that, when the captain (who I am told is upwards of six feet) rose again, the nearest giant to him, though sitting, was taller than he.

An hour or two was spent in fruitlessly endeavouring to understand one another: all I hear the captain comprehended was, that the giants invited him very civilly to go with them into the woods, where I suppose Gigantopolis stands, and their king resides, who, no doubt, is at least two feet taller than the tallest of his grenadiers. The captain declined the offer; at which these polite savages expressed much concern, but never once, as any still more polite people would have done, attempted to force him.

When he took his leave, they remained motionless, and continued so, as he observed by his glasses, till the ship was out of their sight.

Very few other particulars are come to my knowledge, except that they were clothed in skins of beasts, and had their eyes painted of different colours; that they had no weapons, but spears pointed with fish-bones; that they devour fish raw, and that they showed great repugnance to taste any liquids offered to them by the captain; and that though they were too polite absolutely to refuse his toast, they spit the liquor out of their mouths again; whether from apprehension of intoxication or poison, is not certain: however, it looks as if they had some notion of such European arts. What is more remarkable; the weather being very severe at that season, the whole colossal troop seemed as sensible of the cold, and shivered like us little delicate mortals of six feet high. They had a few giantesses with them; but as the captain did not survey them with the small end of his spying-glass, I do not hear that he was much struck with their charms.

This, my dear friend, is all the satisfaction I can give you. However, I am proud to be the first who has communicated this important discovery to Europe.

The speculations it has already occasioned, and will occasion, are infinite. The wolf of the Gevaudan, that terror of the French monarchy, is already forgotten. Naturalists, politicians, divines, and writers of romance, have a new field opened to them. The scale of being ascends; we mount from the pigmies of Lapland, to the giants of Patagonia.

You will ask, but I cannot answer you, Whether the scale of the country is in proportion to such inhabitants? Whether their oaks are half as lofty again as the British? And such is your zeal for England, you will already figure a fleet built of their timber. How large is the grain of their corn? Of what size their sheep, cows, and poultry? Do not go and compute by Gulliver's measures, and tell me, that a populous nation of such dimensions would devour the products of such a country as Great Tartary in half a year. Giants there are; but what proportionable food they have, except elephants and leviathans, is more than I can tell. They probably do not live upon Bantam-chickens.

As you are still more of a politician than a naturalist, you will be impatient to know if captain Byron took possession of the country for the crown of England, and to have his majesty's style run, George the third, by the grace of God, king of Great-Britain, France, Ireland, and the Giants! You will ask why some of their women were not brought away to mend our breed, which all good patriots assert has been dwindling for some hundreds of years; and whether there is any gold or diamonds in the country? Mr. Whitfield wants to know the same thing, and it is said intends a visit for the conversion of these poor blinded savages.

As soon as they are properly civilized, that is, enslaved, due care will undoubtedly be taken to specify in their charter that these giants shall be subject to the parliament of Great-Britain, and shall not wear a sheep's skin that is not legally *\*stamped*. A riot of giants would be very unpleasant to an infant colony. But experience, I hope, will teach us, that the invaluable liberties of Englishmen are not to be wantonly scattered all over the globe. Let us enjoy them ourselves, but they are too sacred to be communicated. If giants once get an idea of freedom, they will soon be our masters instead of our slaves. But what pretensions can they have to freedom? They are as distinct from the common species as blacks, and, by being larger, may be more useful. I would advise our prudent merchants to employ them in the sugar-trade: they are capable of more labour; but even then they must be worse treated, if possible, than our black slaves: they must be lamed and maimed, and have their spirits well broken, or they may become dangerous. This

\* This was written during the contests on the famous stamp-act.



too will give a little respite to Africa, where we have half exhausted the human, I mean the black breed, by that wise maxim of our planters, that if a slave lives four years he has earned his purchase-money, consequently you may afford to work him to death in that time.

The mother-country is not only the first, but ought to be the sole object of our political considerations. If we once begin to extend the idea of the love of our country, it will embrace the universe, and consequently annihilate all notion of our country. The Romans, so much the object of modern admiration, were with difficulty persuaded to admit even the rest of Italy to be their countrymen. The true patriots never regarded any thing without the walls of Rome, except their own villas, as their country. Every thing was done for immortal Rome, and it was immortal Rome that did every thing. Conquered nations, which to them answered to discovered nations with us, for they conquered as fast as they discovered, were always treated accordingly; and it is remarkable, that two men equally famous for their eloquence have been the only two that ever had the weakness to think that conquered countries were entitled to all the blessings of the mother-country. Cicero treated Sicily and Cilicia as tenderly as the district of Arpinum, and I doubt it was the folly of that example that misled his too exact \* imitator on a late occasion. However, the giants must be impressed with other ideas: Bless us! if, like that pigmy old Oliver, they should come to think the Speaker's mace a bawble!

What have we to do with America, but to conquer, enslave, and make it tend to the advantage of our commerce? Shall the noblest rivers in the world roll for savages? Shall mines teem with gold for the natives of the soil? And shall the world produce any thing but for England, France, and Spain? It is enough that the overflowings of riches in those three countries are every ten years wasted in Germany.

Still, my political friend, I am not for occupying Patagonia, as we did Virginia, Carolina, &c. Such might be the politics of queen Elizabeth's days: but modern improvements are wiser. If the giants in question are masters of a rich and flourishing empire, I think they ought to be put under their majesties, a West-Indian company; the directors of which may retail

\* Alluding to Mr. Pitt's speeches against the stamp-act.

out a small portion of their imperial revenues to the proprietors, under the name of a dividend. This is an excellent scheme of government, totally unknown to the ancients. I can but think how poor Livy or Tacitus would have been hampered in giving an account of such an *imperium in imperio*. \* Cassimirus Alius Caunus (for they latinized every proper name, instead of delivering it as uncouthly pronounced by their soldiers and sailors) would have founded well enough: but dividends, discounts, India bonds, &c. were not made for the majesty of history. But I am wandering from my subject; though, while I am talking of the stocks and funds, I could chalk out a very pretty new South-sea scheme, à propos to the Patagonians. It would not ruin above half the nation, and would make the fortunes of such industrious gentlemen, as during the want of a war in Germany cannot turn commissaries.

Command is the object of every man's ambition; but by the impolitic ascent of ages and nations to hereditary monarchy, you must be begotten on a queen, or are for ever excluded from wearing a diadem; except in a very few instances; as in Poland, where the throne is elective; in Corsica, where they will not acknowledge hereditary right in the republic of Genoa; in † Ruffia, where a soldier's trull succeeded her husband the czar, and where there are other ways of succeeding a husband; in Peru, where they are tired of exchanging their gold for tyrants; and in Paraguay, where the ‡ outcasts of the earth, and the inventors of the oath of obedience, have thrown off all submission to their prince, and, having mounted the throne, will probably renounce the oath of chastity too. But it is to England that persons of the lowest birth are indebted for the invention and facility of wielding at least part of a sceptre. Buy but an India bond, and you have a property in the kingdom of Bengal. Rise to be a director, and the Mogul has not more power of appointing and displacing nabobs. Indian sovereigns may now be born in Threadneedle-street.

What the government means by pocketing a whole nation of giants, is not to be conceived. It ought again to draw down the vengeance of their antagonists on the present § ministers. I am sure they have done nothing worse.

\* Cassim Ali Caun.

‡ The jesuits.

† Alluding to the czarinas, Catherine 1st and 2d.

§ This was written before the change of the ministry in July.

Who knows but at this instant they may be preparing to pour in forty or fifty thousand giants upon us? Their love of liberty, their tenderneſs of the conſtitution, their lenity, mildneſs, and diſinterreſtedneſs, their attention to the merchants, in ſhort, all their virtues may be affected, and only calculated to lull us aſleep until the fatal blow is ſtruck. I own my apprehenſions are gloomy; yet, thank God, we have a pretty tall \* oppoſition, who will not ſuffer us to be enſlaved by any thing higher than themſelves.

In the mean time, till we know ſomething of the matter, it is to be hoped that all ſpeculative authors, who are ſo kind as to govern and reform the world through the channel of the newspapers, will turn their thoughts to plans for ſettling this new-acquired country. I call it new-acquired, becauſe whoever finds a country, though nobody has loſt it, is from that inſtant entitled to take poſſeſſion of it for himſelf, or his ſovereign. Europe has no other title to America, except force and murder, which are rather the executive parts of government than a right. Though Spain pretends a knowledge of our giants, ſhe has forfeited all pretenſions to their allegiance, by concealing the diſcovery; as is plain from the deciſion of the canon law, *tit. De novis regionibus non abſcondendis*.

The firſt thought that will occur to every good chriſtian is, that this race of giants ought to be exterminated, and their country colonized; but I have already mentioned the great utility that may be drawn from them in the light of ſlaves. I have alſo ſaid, that a moderate importation might be tolerated for the ſake of mending our breed; but I would by no means come into a project I have heard dropped, and in which propagation would not be concerned: I mean the ſcheme of bringing over a number of giants for ſecond husbands to dowagers. Ireland is already kept in a ſtate of humiliation. We check their trade, and do not allow them to avail themſelves of the beſt ſituated harbours in the world. Matrimony is their only branch of commerce unreſtricted, and it would be a moſt crying injuſtice to clog that too.

In truth, we are not ſufficiently acquainted with theſe Goliaths to decide peremptorily on their properties. No account of them has been yet tranſmitted to the Royal Society: but it would be exceedingly adviſable, that a jury of matrons ſhould be ſent in the next embarkation to make a report;

\* The Grenvilles.

and old women for old women, I would trust to the analysis of the matrons in preference to that of the philosophers.

I will now, my friend, drop the political part of this discussion, and inform you what effect this phenomenon has had on another set of men. It has started an obvious and very perplexing question, viz. whether these giants are aborigines; if they are not, from which of the sons of Noah they are descended, and in that case how we shall account for this extraordinary increase of stature?

The modern philosophers are peremptory that these giants are aborigines; that is, that their country has been inhabited by giants from the creation of the world. The scriptures, say those gentlemen, mention giants, but never posterior to the flood; whence we ought to believe that they perished in the general deluge. Neither, add they, are we told that any son of Noah was of stature supereminent to his brethren. Yet we will suppose, say they, that some of their descendants might have shot up to an extraordinary height, without notice being taken of it in sacred writ. Nay, they allow that this increase of stature might not have appeared till after the date of holy writ. Yet, is it credible, say they, that a race of giants should have been formed, and remain unknown to all ages, all nations, all history? Did these monsters pass unobserved from the most eastern part of the continent (the supposed communication by which America was peopled) to the northern parts of the other world, and migrate down that whole continent to the most southern point of it, without leaving any trace, even by tradition, in the memory of mankind? Or are we to believe, that tribes of giants sailed from Africa to America? What vessels wafted them? Was navigation so perfected in the infant ages of the world, that fleets enormously larger than any now existing were constructed for a race of Polyphemes? Or, to come to the third point, is it the climate that has ripened them, as Jamaica swells oranges to shadocks, to this stupendous volume? But north and south of them are men of the ordinary size; nor have the same latitudes produced any thing similar. Natural philosophers cannot account for it, therefore divines certainly can; and when this people shall be better known, I do not doubt but the mystery will be cleared up; for, as these giants have indubitably remained unmixed longer than any other people, we shall probably discover stronger traces of their Jewish origin. Their cult is in all likelihood less corrupted from that  
of

of the sons of Noah, than is to be found elsewhere; their language possibly the genuine Hebrew, not Phœnician; and, if I might hazard a conjecture, these giants are probably the descendants of the ten tribes so long lost, and so fruitlessly sought by the learned; and having deviated less from the true religion of their forefathers, may have been restored to, or preserved in, their primitive stature and vigour. I offer this opinion with much modesty, though I think it more reasonable than any *hypothesis* I have yet heard on the subject.

Whatever their religion shall appear to be, it will be matter of great curiosity. We scarce know of any people, except the Hottentots, or the heroes who lived in the days of Fingal, among whom no traces of any religious notions or worship have been discovered.

If they are not Jews, but idolaters, the statues of their divinities, their sacrificing instruments, or whatever are the trinkets of their devotion, will be great rarities, and worthy of a place in any museum.

Their poetry will be another object of enquiry, and, if their minds are at all in proportion to their bodies, must abound in the most lofty images, in the true sublime. Oh! if we could come at an heroic poem penned by a giant! We should see other images than our puny writers of romance have conceived; and a little different from the cold \* tale of a late notable author, who did not know better what to do with his giant than to make him grow till he shook his own castle about his own ears.

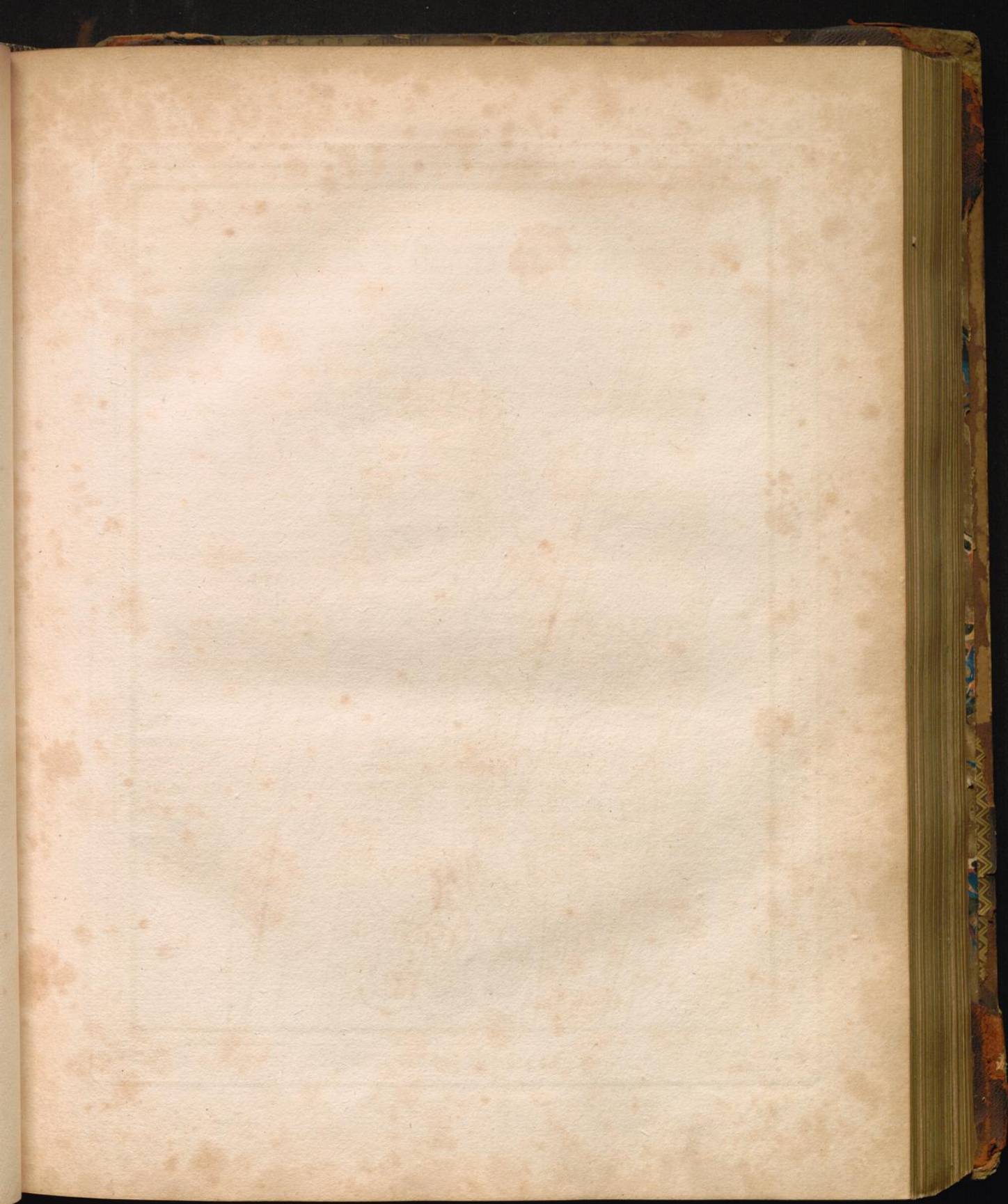
In short, my good friend, here is ample room for speculation: but I hope we shall go calmly and systematically to work: that we shall not exterminate these poor monsters till we are fully acquainted with their history, laws, opinions, police, &c. that we shall not convert them to christianity, only to cut their throats afterwards; that nobody will beg a million of acres of giant-land, till we have determined what to do with the present occupiers; and that we shall not throw away fifteen or twenty thousand men in conquering their country, as we did at the Havannah, only to restore it to the Spaniards.

July 1, 1766.

Yours,

S. T.

\* The Castle of Otranto.





Verrie delin.

KING RICHARD the III.

Grignon sculp.