

**GULLIVER DESCRIBES
A VOYAGE TO THE COUNTRY
OF
THE HOUYHNHNMS.**

CHAPTER I.

I continued at home with my wife and children about five months, in a very happy condition, if I could have learned the lesson of knowing when I was well. I left my poor wife big with child, and accepted an advantageous offer made me to be captain of the *Adventurer*, a stout merchantman of 350 tons: for I understood navigation well, and being grown weary of a surgeon's employment at sea, I took a skillful young man of that calling, one Robert Purefoy, into my ship. We set sail from Portsmouth upon the 7th day of September, 1710.

I had several men die in my ship of **calentures**, so that I was forced to get recruits out of Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, where I touched, by the direction of the merchants who employed me; which I had soon too much cause to repent: for I found afterwards, that most of them had been buccaneers. I had fifty hands onboard, and my orders were that I should make trade with the Indians in the South-Sea, and make what discoveries I could.

These rogues whom I had picked up debauched my other men, and they all formed a conspiracy to seize the ship and secure me - which they did one morning, rushing into my cabin, and binding me hand and foot, and threatening to throw me overboard if I offered to stir. I told them, "I was their prisoner and would submit."

They placed a sentry at my door with his piece charged, who was commanded to shoot me dead if I attempted my liberty.

They sailed many weeks, and traded with the Indians; but I knew not what course they took, being kept a close prisoner in my cabin, and expecting nothing less than to be murdered, as they often threatened me.

Upon the 9th day of May, 1711, one James Welch came down to my cabin, and said he had orders from the captain to set me ashore." I **expostulated** with him, but in vain; neither would he so much as tell me who their new captain was.

They forced me into the long-boat, letting me put on my best suit of clothes and a small bundle of linen, but no **arms**, except my **hanger**. They rowed about a **league**, and then set me down on a strand. I desired them to tell me what country it was. They all swore, they knew no more than myself; but said that the captain (as they called him) was resolved to get rid of me in the first place where they could discover land. They pushed off immediately, advising me to make haste for fear of being overtaken by the tide, and bade me farewell.

In this desolate condition I advanced forward, and soon got upon firm ground, where I sat down on a bank to rest myself, and consider what I had best do. When I was a little refreshed, I went

up into the country, resolving to deliver myself to the first savages I should meet.

The land was divided by long rows of trees, not regularly planted, but naturally growing. There was great plenty of grass, and several fields of oats. I walked very **circumspectly**, for fear of being surprised, or suddenly shot with an arrow from behind. I fell into a beaten track, where I saw many tracks of human feet, and some of cows, but most of horses.

At last I beheld several animals in a field, and one or two of the same kind sitting in trees. Their shape was very singular and deformed, which a little discomposed me, so that I lay down behind a thicket to observe them better. Some of them coming forward near the place where I lay gave me an opportunity of distinctly marking their form. Their heads and breasts were covered with a thick hair, some frizzled, and others lank; they had beards like goats, and a long ridge of hair down their backs, and the foreparts of their legs and feet; but the rest of their bodies was bare, so that I might see their skins, which were of a brown buff color. They had no tails, and were accustomed to sit on the ground. They climbed high trees as nimbly as a squirrel, for they had strong, extended claws terminating in sharp points, and hooked.

The females were not so large as the males; they had long lank hair on their heads, but none on their faces, nor anything more than a sort of down on the rest of their bodies, except about the anus and pudenda. Their dugs hung between their fore feet, and reached almost to the ground as they walked. The hair of both sexes was of several colors - brown, red, black, and yellow. Upon the whole, I never beheld in all my travels so disagreeable an animal, nor one against which I naturally conceived so strong an

antipathy; so that, thinking I had seen enough, I got up, and pursued the beaten road, hoping it might direct me to the cabin of some Indian.

I had not got far, when I met one of these creatures full in my way, and coming up directly to me. The ugly monster, when he saw me, distorted in several ways every feature of his **visage**, and stared, as at an object he had never seen before; then approaching nearer, he lifted up his fore-paw, whether out of curiosity or mischief I could not tell; but I drew my **hanger**, and gave him a good blow with the flat side of it. When the beast felt the smart, he drew back, and roared so loud, that a herd of at least forty came flocking about me from the next field, howling and making odious faces. But I ran to the body of a tree, and leaning my back against it, kept them off by waving my hanger. Several of this cursed brood, getting hold of the branches behind, leaped up into the trees, from whence they began to discharge their excrements on my head. However, I escaped pretty well by sticking close to the stem of the tree, but was almost stifled with the filth, which fell about me on every side.

In the midst of this distress, I observed them all to run away on a sudden as fast as they could; and looking on my left hand, I saw a horse walking softly in the field. The horse started a little, when he came near me, but soon recovering himself, looked full in my face with manifest tokens of wonder. He viewed my hands and feet, walking round me several times. I would have pursued my journey, but he placed himself directly in the way, yet looking with a very mild aspect, never offering the least violence. We stood gazing at each other for some time; at last I took the boldness to reach my hand towards his neck and with a design to stroke it, using the common style and whistle of jockeys, when they are

going to handle a strange horse. But this animal seemed to receive my civilities with disdain, shook his head, and bent his brows, softly raising up his right fore-foot to remove my hand. Then he neighed three or four times, but in so different a cadence, that I almost began to think he was speaking to himself, in some language of his own.

While he and I were thus employed, another horse came up, who applying himself to the first in a very formal manner, they gently struck each other's right hoof before neighing several times by turns, and varying the sound, which seemed to be almost articulate. They went some paces off, as if to confer together, walking side by side, backward and forward, like persons deliberating upon some affair of weight, but often turning their eyes towards me, as it were to watch that I might not escape. I was amazed to see such actions and behavior in brute beasts; and concluded with myself, that if the inhabitants of this country were endued with a proportionable degree of reason, they must needs be the wisest people upon earth.

I resolved to go forward, until I could discover some house or village, or meet with any of the natives, but the first horse, who was a dapple gray, observing me to steal off, neighed after me in so expressive a tone, that I fancied myself to understand what he meant; whereupon I turned back, and came near to him to expect his further commands: but concealing my fear as much as I could, for I began to be in some pain how this adventure might terminate

The two horses came up close to me, looking with great earnestness upon my face and hands. The gray **steed** rubbed my hat all round with his right fore-hoof, and discomposed it so much that I was forced to adjust it better by taking it off and settling it

again; whereat, he and his companion (who was a brown **bay**) appeared to be much surprised. The latter stroked my right hand, seeming to admire the softness and color; but he squeezed it so hard between his hoof and his **pastern**, that I was forced to roar; after which they both touched me with all possible tenderness. They were under great perplexity about my shoes and stockings, which they felt very often, neighing to each other, and using various gestures, not unlike those of a philosopher, when he would attempt to solve some new and difficult phenomenon. Upon the whole, the behavior of these animals was so orderly and rational, so acute and judicious, that I at last concluded they must needs be magicians, who had thus **metamorphosed** themselves upon some design.

Upon the strength of this reasoning, I ventured to address them in the following manner: "Gentlemen, if you be **conjurers**, as I have good cause to believe, you can understand any language; therefore I make bold to let your worships know that I am a poor distressed Englishman, driven by his misfortunes upon your coast; and I entreat one of you to let me ride upon his back, as if he were a real horse, to some house or village where I can be relieved.

The two creatures stood silent while I spoke, seeming to listen with great attention, and when I had ended, they neighed frequently towards each other, as if they were engaged in serious conversation. I plainly observed that their language expressed the passions very well, and the words might, with little pains, be resolved into an alphabet more easily than the Chinese. I could frequently distinguish the word YAHOO, which was repeated by each of them several times: and although it was impossible for me to conjecture what it meant, yet while the two horses were busy in conversation, I endeavored to practice this word upon my tongue;

and as soon as they were silent, I boldly pronounced “YAHOO” in a loud voice, imitating at the same time, as near as I could, the neighing of a horse; at which both visibly surprised; and the gray repeated the same word twice, as if he meant to teach me the right accent. Then the bay tried me with a second word, much harder to be pronounced; but reducing it to the English **orthography**, may be spelt HOUYHNHM. I did not succeed in speaking this so well as in the former; but after two or three farther trials, I had better fortune; and they both appeared amazed at my capacity.

After some further discourse, the two friends took their leaves, with the same compliment of striking each other's hoof. The gray made me signs that I should walk before him; wherein I thought it prudent to comply, till I could find a better director. When I offered to slacken my pace, he would cry “HHUUN ... HHUUN”: I guessed his meaning, and gave him to understand, as well as I could, "that I was weary, and not able to walk faster;" upon which he would stand awhile to let me rest. Having travelled about three miles, we came to a long kind of building, made of timber stuck in the ground, and wattled across. The roof was low and covered with straw. The horse made me a sign to go in first.

NEXT

GULLIVER LEARNS ABOUT THE LIFESTYLE OF THE HOUYHNHNMS

CHAPTER II.

The horses who held me captive made me signs that I should walk before them; wherein I thought it prudent to comply, till I could find a better director. When I offered to slacken my pace, he would cry "HHUUN .. HHUUN": I guessed his meaning, and gave him to understand, as well as I could, "that I was weary, and not able to walk faster;" upon which he would stand awhile to let me rest. Having travelled about three miles, we came to a long kind of building, made of timber stuck in the ground, and wattled across. The roof was low and covered with straw. The horse made me a sign to go in first. It was a large room with a smooth clay floor, and a rack and manger, extending the whole length on one side. There were three **nags** and two **mares**, not eating, but some of them sitting down on their hams, which I very much wondered at. These seemed but ordinary cattle. However, this confirmed my first opinion, that a people who could so far civilize brute animals, must needs excel in wisdom all the nations of the world. The **gray** neighed to them several times in a style of authority, and received answers.

Beyond this room there were three others, reaching the length of the house. I waited in the second room, and got ready some presents for the master and mistress of the house; there were two knives, three bracelets of false pearls, and a bead necklace. The horse neighed three or four times, and I waited to hear some answers in a human voice, but I observed no other returns than in

the same dialect, only one or two a little shriller than his. I began to think that this house must belong to some person of great note among them, because there appeared so much ceremony before I could gain admittance. But, that a man of quality should be served all by horses, was beyond my comprehension. I feared my brain was disturbed by my sufferings and misfortunes.

The gray horse then came to the door, and made a sign to follow him into the third room where I saw a very **comely** mare, together with a colt and foal, sitting on their haunches upon mats of straw. The mare, soon after my entrance, rose from her mat, and coming up close, after having nicely observed my hands and face, gave me a most contemptuous look; and turned to the horse. I heard the word YAHOO often repeated betwixt them.

The horse, then beckoned me with his head, and repeating the HHUUN, HHUUN, which I understood was to attend him, led me out into a kind of court, where was another building, at some distance from the house. Here we entered, and I saw three of those detestable creatures, which I first met after my landing, feeding upon roots, and the flesh of some animals. They were all tied by the neck with strong **withes** fastened to a beam; they held their food between the claws of their fore feet, and tore it with their teeth.

The master horse ordered a **sorrel nag**, one of his servants, to untie the largest of these animals, and take him into the yard. The beast and I were brought together, and our **countenances** were diligently compared both by master and servant, who thereupon repeated several times the word "YAHOO." My horror and astonishment are not to be described when I observed in this abominable animal a perfect human figure: the face of it indeed

was flat and broad, the nose depressed, the lips large, and the mouth wide; but these differences are common to all savage nations, where the lineaments of the **countenance** are distorted. The fore-feet of the YAHOO differed from my hands in nothing else but the length of the nails, the coarseness and brownness of the palms, and the hairiness on the backs. There was the same resemblance between our feet, and the same in every part of our bodies except as to hairiness and color, which I have already described.

The great difficulty that seemed to stick with the two horses, was to see the rest of my body so very different from that of a YAHOO, for which I was obliged to my clothes, whereof they had no conception. The sorrel nag brought out of the YAHOO'S' kennel a piece of ass's flesh; but it smelt so offensively that I turned from it with loathing. He afterwards showed me a wisp of hay, and a **fetlock** full of oats; but I shook my head, to signify that neither of these were food for me. And indeed I now apprehended that I must absolutely starve if I did not get to some of my own species. The master horse then put his fore-hoof to his mouth, and with a motion that appeared perfectly natural, made other signs, to know what I would eat; but I could not return him such an answer as he was able to apprehend. While we were thus engaged, I observed a cow passing by, whereupon I pointed to her, and expressed a desire to let me go and milk her. This had its effect; for he led me back into the house, and ordered a mare-servant to open a room, where a good store of milk lay in earthen and wooden vessels, after a very orderly and cleanly manner. She gave me a large bowlful, of which I drank heartily, and found myself well refreshed.

About noon, I saw coming to the house a kind of vehicle drawn like a sled by four YAHOO'S. There was in it an old **steed**,

who seemed to be of quality; he alighted with his hind-feet forward, having by accident got a hurt in his fore-foot. He came to dine with our horse, who received him with great civility. They dined in the best room, and had oats boiled in milk, which the old horse ate warm, and the rest cold.

The gray ordered me to stand by him; and much discourse passed between him and his friend concerning me. I happened to wear my gloves, which the master gray observing, seemed perplexed, discovering signs of wonder what I had done to my fore-feet. I reduced them to their former shape, which occasioned further talk; and I saw the company was pleased with my behavior, whereof I soon found the good effects. I was ordered to speak the few words I understood. And while they were at dinner, the master taught me the names for oats, milk, fire, water, and some others, which I could readily pronounce after him, having from my youth a great facility in learning languages.

When dinner was done, the master horse took me aside, and by signs and words made me understand the concern he was in that I had nothing to eat. Oats in their tongue are called HLUNNH. This word I pronounced two or three times. Although I had refused them at first, yet, upon second thoughts, I considered that I could contrive to make of them a kind of bread, which might be sufficient, with milk, to keep me alive till I could make my escape to some other country and to creatures of my own species.

It was at first a very **insipid** diet (though common enough in parts of Europe), but grew tolerable in time; and having been often reduced to hard fare in my time, this was not the first experiment I had made. (How easily nature is satisfied.) And I cannot but

observe, that I never had a day's sickness while I stayed in this island.

I was at first at a great loss for salt, but custom soon reconciled me to the want of it; and I am confident that the frequent use of salt among us is an effect of luxury, for we observe no animal to be fond of it but man. As to myself, when I left this country, it was a great while before I could endure the taste of it in anything that I ate.

CHAPTER III.

My principal endeavor was to learn the language, which my master (for so I shall henceforth call him), and his children, and every servant of his house, were desirous to teach me. I pointed to everything, and inquired the name of it, which I wrote down in my journal-book when I was alone, and corrected my bad accent by desiring those of the family to pronounce it often.

My master was convinced (as he afterwards told me) that I *must* be a YAHOO; but my teachableness, civility, and cleanliness, astonished him; which were qualities altogether opposite to those animals. He was most perplexed about my clothes, reasoning sometimes with himself whether they were a part of my body: for I never pulled them off until the family were asleep, and got them on before they waked in the morning.

In about ten weeks' time, I was able to understand most of his questions; and in three months, could give him some tolerable answers. The word HOUYHNHM, in their tongue, signifies a HORSE, and, in its etymology, the PERFECTION OF NATURE. The HOUYHNHNMS, who came to visit my master out of a design of seeking and talking with me, could hardly believe me to be a right YAHOO, because my body had a different covering from others of my kind. They were astonished to observe me without the usual hair or skin, except on my head, face, and hands; but I discovered that secret to my master upon an accident some weeks later.

It happened one morning early that my master sent for me by the **sorrel nag**, who was his **valet**. When he came, I was fast

asleep. I awaked at the noise he made, and observed him to deliver his message in some disorder; after which he went to my master, and in a great fright. I was now forced to tell my master, “That in the country from whence I came, those of my kind always covered their bodies with the hairs of certain animals prepared by art, as well as for decency as to avoid the **inclemencies** of air, both hot and cold. I then unbuttoned my coat and pulled it off. I did the same with my waistcoat, shoes, stockings, and breeches.

My master observed the whole performance with great signs of curiosity and admiration. He took up all my clothes in his **pastern**, and examined them diligently. He stroked my body very gently, and looked round me several times; after which, he said, it was plain that I must be a perfect Yahoo; but that I differed very much from the rest of my species in the softness and whiteness of my skin; my want of hair in several parts of my body; the shape and shortness of my claws behind and before; and my **affectation** of walking continually on my two hind feet. He desired to see no more; and gave me leave to put on my clothes again.

I expressed my uneasiness at his giving me so often the appellation of YAHOO, an odious animal, for which I had so utter a hatred and contempt: I begged he would forbear applying that word to me, and make the same order in his family and among his friends, to which very graciously consented

Every day, when I waited on him, he would ask me several questions concerning myself, which I answered as well as I could. I told him “that I came from a very far country, with about fifty more of my own species; that we travelled upon the seas in a great hollow vessel made of wood, and larger than his honor’s house; and that upon a quarrel among us, I was set on shore on this coast.

My master asked me, “who made the ship, and how it was possible that the Houyhnhnms of my country would leave it to the management of brutes?”

I assured him, that the ship was made by creatures like myself; who, in all the countries I had travelled, as well as in my own, were the only governing rational animals; that upon my arrival hither, I was as much astonished to see the Houyhnhnms act like rational beings, as he, or his friends, could be, in finding some marks of reason in a creature he was pleased to call a YAHOO. I said “that if fortune ever restored me to my native country, no one would believe that a Houyhnhnm should be the presiding creature of a nation, and a Yahoo the brute.”

My master heard me with great appearances of uneasiness in his countenance; because doubting, or not believing, are so little known in this country, that the inhabitants cannot tell how to behave themselves under such circumstances. He then desired to know, “whether we had Houyhnhnms among us, and what was their employment?”

I told him, that “we had great numbers; that in summer they grazed in the fields, and in winter were kept in houses with hay and oats. I owned “that the Houyhnhnms among us, whom we called horses, were the most generous and comely animals we had; and when they belonged to persons of quality, were treated with much kindness and care, till they fell into diseases, or became foundered in the feet; but then they were sold, and used to all kind of drudgery till they died; after which their skins were stripped, and their bodies left to be devoured by dogs and birds of prey.

But the common race of horses had not so good fortune, being kept by farmers and carriers, who put them to greater labor,

and fed them worse.” I described, as well as I could, our way of riding; the shape and use of a bridle, a saddle, a spur, and a whip. I added, “that we fastened plates of a certain hard substance, called iron, at the bottom of their feet, to preserve their hoofs from being broken by the stony ways, on which we often travelled.”

My master, after some expressions of great indignation, wondered “how we dared to venture upon a Houyhnhnm’s back; for he was sure that the weakest servant in his house would be able to shake off the strongest Yahoo; or by lying down and rolling on his back, squeeze the brute to death.”

I answered that “our horses were trained up, from three or four years old, to the several uses we intended them for; that if any of them proved intolerably vicious, they were employed for carriages; that they were severely beaten while they were young, for any mischievous tricks; but that his honor would please to consider, that they had not the least **tincture** of reason, any more than the Yahoos in this country.”

It is impossible to represent his noble resentment at our savage treatment of the Houyhnhnm race; he said that “if it were possible there could be any country where Yahoos alone were endued with reason, they certainly must be the governing animal; because reason in time will always prevail against brutal strength. But considering the frame of our bodies, and especially of mine, he thought no creature of equal bulk was so ill-contrived for employing that reason in the common **offices** of life;” whereupon he desired to know “whether those among whom I lived resembled me, or the Yahoos of his country?”

I assured him, “that I was as well shaped as most of my age; but the younger, and the females, were much more soft and tender.

He said, “I differed indeed from other Yahoos, being much more cleanly, and not altogether so deformed; but, in point of real advantage, he thought I differed for the worse: that my nails were of no use. My forefeet were too soft to bear the ground, and that I could not walk with any security; for if either of my hind feet slipped, I must inevitably fall. He then began to find faults with other parts of my body: the fatness of my face, the prominence of my nose, mine eyes placed directly in front, so that I could not look on either side without turning my head; and that my whole body wanted clothing against the heat and the cold, which I was forced to put on and off every day with tediousness and trouble

However, he would,” as he said, “debate the matter no further, because he was more desirous to know my own story, the country where I was born, and the several actions and events of my life, before I came hither.”

During my discourse, my master was pleased to interrupt me several times. I had made use of many **circumlocutions** in describing to him the nature of certain crimes for which most of our crew had been forced to fly their country. This labor took up several days’ conversation, before he was able to comprehend me. He was wholly at a loss to know what could be the use or necessity of practicing those vices. To clear up which, I endeavored to give him some ideas of the desire of power and riches; of the terrible effects of lust, **intemperance**, malice, and envy. All this I was forced to define and describe by putting cases and making suppositions; after which, like one whose imagination was struck with something never seen or heard before, he would lift up his eyes with amazement and indignation. Power, government, war, law, punishment, and a thousand other things, had no terms wherein that language could express them, which made the

difficulty almost insuperable, to give my master any conception of what I meant. But being of an excellent understanding, much improved by contemplation and converse, he at last arrived at a competent knowledge of what human nature, in our parts of the world, is capable to perform.

In obedience to my master's commands, I had many conversations with him, discoursed several times for about two years, on the whole state of Europe, of trade and manufactures, of arts and sciences. I related to him the **Revolution under the Prince of Orange**; the long war with France, wherein the greatest powers of Christendom were engaged. I computed, at his request, "that about a million of Yahoos might have been killed in the whole progress of it; and perhaps a hundred or more cities taken, and five times as many ships burnt or sunk."

He asked me, "what were the usual causes or motives that made one country go to war with another?" I answered that "they were innumerable; but I should only mention a few of the chief. Sometimes the ambition of princes, who never think they have land or people enough to govern; sometimes the corruption of ministers, who engage their master in a war, in order to stifle or divert the clamor of the subjects against their evil administration.

"Sometimes the quarrel between two princes is to decide which of them shall **dispossess** a third of his **dominions**, where neither of them pretend to any right. Sometimes one prince quarreleth with another for fear the other should quarrel with him. Sometimes a war is entered upon because the enemy is too strong; and sometimes because he is too weak. Sometimes our neighbors want the things which we have, or have the things which we want, and we both fight, till they take ours, or give us theirs.

The trade of a soldier is held the most honorable of all others; because a soldier is a Yahoo hired to kill in cold blood as many of his own species, who have never offended him, as possibly he can.

“What you have told me,” said my master, “upon the subject of war, does indeed discover most admirably the defects of that reason you pretend to: however, it is happy that the shame is greater than the danger; and that nature has left you utterly incapable of doing much mischief. For your mouths lying flat with your faces, you can hardly bite each other to any purpose, unless by consent. Then as to the claws upon your feet before and behind, they are so short and tender, that one of our Yahoos would drive a dozen of yours before him. And therefore, in recounting the numbers of those who have been killed in battle, I cannot but think you have said the thing which is not.”

I could not forbear shaking my head and smiling a little at his ignorance. And being no stranger to the art of war, I gave him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carbines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, ships sunk with a thousand men, dying groans, and limbs flying in the air. And to set forth the valor of my own dear countrymen, I assured him, “that I had seen them blow up a hundred enemies at once in a siege, and as many in a ship, and beheld the dead bodies drop down in pieces from the clouds, to the great diversion of the spectators.”

I was going on to more particulars, when my master commanded me silence. He said, “whoever understood the nature of Yahoos, might easily believe it possible for so vile an animal to be capable of every action I had named, if their strength and cunning equaled their malice. But as my discourse had increased his **abhorrence** of the whole species, so he found it gave him a

disturbance in his mind to which he was wholly a stranger before. That although he hated the Yahoos of this country, yet he no more blamed them for their odious qualities, than he did a *gnnayh* (a bird of prey) for its cruelty, or a sharp stone for cutting his hoof. But when a creature pretending to reason could be capable of such enormities, he dreaded lest the corruption of that faculty might be worse than brutality itself. He seemed therefore confident that, instead of reason, we were only possessed of some quality fitted to increase our natural vices; as the reflection from a troubled stream returns the images of an ill-shapen body, not only larger but more distorted.”

I was at much pains to describe to my master the use of money, the materials it was made of, and the value of the metals. I explained that “when a Yahoo had got a great store of this precious substance, he was able to purchase whatever he had a mind to: the finest clothing, the noblest houses, the most costly meats and drinks, and have his choice of the most beautiful females. Therefore, since money alone was able to perform all these feats, our Yahoos thought they could never have enough of it to spend, or to save, as they found themselves inclined, from their natural bent either to profusion or **avarice**; that the rich man enjoyed the fruits of the poor man’s labor, and the latter were a thousand to one in proportion to the former; that the bulk of our people were forced to live miserably, by laboring every day for small wages, to make a few live plentifully.”

I enlarged myself on these, and many other particulars to the same purpose; but his honor was still puzzled, for he went upon a supposition, that all animals had a title to their share in the productions of the earth.

I was going on to tell him of another sort of people who get their livelihood by attending the sick, having upon some occasions, informed his honor that many of my crew had died of diseases. But here it was with the utmost difficulty that I brought him to apprehend what I meant. “He could easily conceive, that a Houyhnhnm, grew weak and heavy a few days before his death, or by some accident might hurt a limb; but that nature, who worketh all things to perfection, should suffer any pains to breed in our bodies, he thought impossible, and desired to know the reason of so unaccountable an evil.”

I told him “we fed on a thousand things which operated contrary to each other; that we ate when we were not hungry, and drank without the provocation of thirst; that we sat whole nights drinking strong liquors without eating a bit, which disposed us to sloth, inflamed our bodies, and precipitated or prevented digestion; that prostitute female Yahoos acquired a certain malady, which bred rottenness in the bones of those who fell into their embraces; that this, and many other diseases, were propagated from father to son; so that great numbers come into the world with complicated maladies upon them; that it would be endless to give him a catalogue of all diseases incident to human bodies, for they could not be fewer than five or six hundred, spread over every limb and joint and every part, external and intestine, having diseases appropriated to each.

Chapter IV

I had formerly, upon occasion, discoursed with my master upon the nature of government in general, and particularly of our own excellent constitution - deservedly the wonder and envy of the whole world. But having here accidentally mentioned a minister of state, he commanded me to inform him, “what species of Yahoo I particularly meant by that **appellation**.”

I told him, “that a **first or chief minister of state** was a creature wholly exempt from joy and grief, love and hatred, pity and anger, but had a violent desire of wealth, power, and titles; that he applies his words to all uses, except to the indication of his mind; that he never tells the truth but with an intent that you should take it for a lie; nor a lie, but with a design that you should take it for a truth; that those he speaks worst of behind their backs are in the surest way of preferment; and whenever he begins to praise you to others, you are from that day **forlorn**. The worst mark you can receive is a promise, especially when it is confirmed with an oath; after which every man retires and gives over all hopes.

It may well be wondered how I could prevail on myself to give so free a representation of my own species, among a race of mortals who are already too apt to conceive the vilest opinion of human-kind, from that entire congruity between me and their Yahoos. But I must freely confess, that the many virtues of those excellent **quadrupeds**, placed in opposite view to human corruptions, had

so far opened my eyes and enlarged my understanding, that I began to view the actions and passions of man in a very different light, and to think the honor of my own kind not worth managing.

I was daily convinced of a thousand faults in myself, whereof I had not the least perception before, and had learned, from my master by his example, an utter **detestation** of all falsehood or disguise; and truth appeared so amiable to me, that I determined upon sacrificing everything to it.

I had not yet been a year in this country in fact before I contracted such a love and veneration for the inhabitants, that I entered on a firm resolution *never* to return to humankind, but to pass the rest of my life among these admirable Houyhnhnms, in the contemplation and practice of every virtue, where I could have no example or incitement to vice.

When after several conversations I had with my master during the time I had the honour to be in his service, he sent for me one morning early, and, commanding me to sit down at some distance, he said, “he had been very seriously considering my whole story, as far as it related both to myself and my country; that he looked upon us as a sort of animals, to whose share, by what accident he could not conjecture, some small pittance of reason had fallen, whereof we made no other use, than by its assistance, to aggravate our natural corruptions, and to acquire new ones, which nature had not given us; that, as to myself, it was manifest I had neither the strength nor agility of a common Yahoo; that I walked infirmly on my hind feet; had found out a contrivance to make my claws of no use or defence, and to remove the hair from my chin, which was intended as a shelter from the sun and the weather: lastly, that I could neither run with speed, nor climb trees like my

brethren,” as he called them, “the Yahoos in this country. “That our institutions of government were plainly owing to our gross defects in reason, and by consequence in virtue; because reason alone is sufficient to govern a rational creature; which was therefore a character we had no pretence to challenge, even from the account I had given of my own people; although he manifestly perceived, that, in order to favour them, I had concealed many particulars, and often **said that thing which was not.**

He was the more confirmed in this opinion, because, he observed, that as I agreed in every feature of my body with other Yahoos, except where it was to my real disadvantage in point of strength, speed, and activity, the shortness of my claws, he found as near a resemblance in the disposition of our minds. He said, “the Yahoos were known to hate one another, more than they did any different species of animals; and the reason usually assigned was, the odiousness of their own shapes, which all could see in the rest, but not in themselves. He had therefore begun to think it not unwise in us to cover our bodies, and by that invention conceal many of our own deformities from each other, which would else be hardly supportable. But he now found he had been mistaken, and that the dissensions of those brutes in his country were owing to the same cause with ours, as I had described them. For if,” said he, “you throw among five Yahoos as much food as would be sufficient for fifty, they will, instead of eating peaceably, fall together by the ears, each single one impatient to have all to itself; that if a cow died of age or accident before a Houyhnhnm could secure it for his own Yahoos, those in the neighbourhood would come in herds to seize it, and then would ensue such a battle as I had described, with terrible wounds made by their claws on both sides, although

they seldom were able to kill one another, for want of such convenient instruments of death as we had invented.

As to learning and government, my master confessed, he could find little or no resemblance between the Yahoos of that country and those in ours. He had heard indeed some curious Houyhnmns observe that in most herds there was a sort of ruling Yahoo who was always more deformed in body and mischievous in disposition than any of the rest; that this leader had usually a favorite as like himself as he could get, whose employment was to lick his master's feet and **posteriors**, and drive the female Yahoos to his kennel; for which he was now and then rewarded with a piece of ass's flesh. This favorite is hated by the whole herd, and therefore, to protect himself, keeps always near the person of his leader. He usually continues in office until a worse can be found; but at the very moment he is discarded, his successor, at the head of all the Yahoos in that district, young and old, male and female, come in a body, and discharge their excrements upon him from head to foot. But how far this might be applicable to our courts, and favorites, and ministers of state, my master said *I could best determine.*"

CHAPTER V

I often begged my master's favor that he would let me go among the herds of Yahoos in the neighborhood that I might better understand their nature. His honor graciously, being perfectly convinced that the hatred I bore these brutes would never suffer me to be corrupted by them; and he ordered one of his servants, a strong sorrel nag, very honest and good-natured, to be my guard; without whose protection I durst not undertake such adventures. I had failed very narrowly, three or four times, of falling into their clutches, when I happened to stray at any distance without my **hanger**. And I have reason to believe they had some imagination that I was of their own species, which I often assisted myself by stripping up my sleeves, and showing my naked arms and breasts in their sight, when my protector was with me.

Being one day abroad with my protector the sorrel nag, and the weather exceeding hot, I entreated him to let me bathe in a river that was near. He consented, and I immediately stripped myself stark naked, and went down softly into the stream. It happened that a young female Yahoo, standing behind a bank, saw the whole proceeding, and inflamed by desire, as the nag and I conjectured, came running with all speed, and leaped into the water, within five yards of the place where I bathed. I was never in my life so terribly frightened. The nag was grazing at some distance, not suspecting any harm. She embraced me after a most

fulsome manner. I roared as loud as I could. The nag came galloping towards me, whereupon she quitted her grasp, with the utmost reluctancy, and leaped upon the opposite bank, where she stood gazing and howling all the time I was putting on my clothes.

This was a matter of **diversion** to my master and his family, as well as of mortification to myself. For now I could no longer deny that I was a real Yahoo in every limb and feature, since the females had a natural propensity to me, as one of their own species.

As the noble Houyhnhnms are endowed by nature with a general disposition to all virtues, and have no conceptions or ideas of what is evil in a rational creature, so their grand maxim is to cultivate reason, and to be ruled by it. Neither is reason among them a point **problematical**, as with us, where men can argue with plausibility on both sides of the question.

I remember it was with extreme difficulty that I could bring my master to understand the meaning of the word *opinion*, or how a point could be disputable. Controversies, wranglings, and disputes are evils unknown among the Houyhnhnms. Friendship and benevolence are their two principal virtues. A stranger from the remotest part is equally treated with the nearest neighbor, and wherever he goes, looks upon himself as at home. They will have it that nature teaches them to love the whole species, and it is reason only that maketh a distinction of persons, where there is a superior degree of virtue.

Temperance, industry, exercise, and cleanliness, are the lessons equally enjoined to the young ones of both sexes; and my master thought it monstrous in us, to give the females a different kind of education from the males, except in some articles of

domestic management; whereby, as he truly observed, one half of our natives were good for nothing but bringing children into the world.

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Every fourth year at the **vernal equinox**, there is a representative council of the whole nation, which meets in a plain about twenty miles from our house, and continues about five or six days. Here they inquire into the state and condition of the several districts; whether they abound or be deficient in hay or oats, or cows, or Yahoos; and whenever there is any want (which is but seldom) it is immediately supplied by unanimous consent and contribution. One of these grand assemblies was held in my time, and my master went as the representative of our district. In this council was resumed their old debate - indeed the only debate that ever happened in their country - whereof my master, after his return, gave me a very particular account.

The question to be debated was, “whether the Yahoos should be exterminated from the face of the earth?” One of the members for the affirmative offered several arguments of great strength and weight, alleging, “that as the Yahoos were the most filthy, **noisome**, and deformed animals which nature ever produced, so they were the most **restive** and **indocible**, mischievous, and malicious. They would privately suck the teats of the Houyhnhnms’ cows, kill and devour their cats, and trample down their oats and grass.” He took notice of a general tradition, “that Yahoos had not been always in their country; but that many ages ago, two of these brutes appeared together upon a mountain; whether produced by

the heat of the sun upon corrupted mud and slime, or from the ooze and froth of the sea, was never known.

Several others declared their sentiments to the same purpose, when my master proposed an expedient to the assembly, whereof he had indeed borrowed a hint from me: “He approved of the tradition mentioned by the honorable member who spoke before, and affirmed that the two Yahoos said to be the first seen among them, had been driven thither over the sea; that coming to land, and being forsaken by their companions, they retired to the mountains, and degenerating by degrees, became in process of time much more savage than those of their own species in the country from whence these two originals came. The reason of this assertion was that he had now in his possession a certain wonderful Yahoo (meaning myself) which most of them had heard of. He related to them how he had first found me: that I was an exact Yahoo in every part, only of a whiter color and less hairy; that in my own country, the Yahoos acted as the governing rational animal and held the Houyhnhmns in servitude; that among other things, I mentioned a custom we had of castrating Houyhnhmns when they were young in order to render them tame; and that this invention might be practiced upon the younger Yahoos here, which besides rendering them tractable and fitter for use, would in an age put an end to the whole species, without destroying life.

This was all my master thought fit to tell me at that time of what had passed in the grand council; but he was pleased to conceal one particular, whereof I soon felt the unhappy effect, and from whence I date all the succeeding misfortunes of my life.

I could, with great pleasure, enlarge further upon the manners and virtues of this excellent people; but intending in a

short time to publish a volume by itself, expressly upon that subject, I shall in the meantime, proceed to relate my own sad catastrophe.

CHAPTER VI.

I had settled my little economy to my heart's content. My master had ordered a room to be made for me, after their manner, about six yards from the house: the sides and floors of which I plastered with clay, and covered with rush-mats of my own contriving. I had beaten hemp, which there grows wild, and made of it a sort of ticking; this I filled with the feathers of several birds I had taken with springs made of Yahoos' hairs, and were excellent food. I had worked two chairs with my knife, the sorrel nag helping me in the grosser and more laborious part. When my clothes were worn to rags, I made myself others with the skins of rabbits, and of a certain beautiful animal, about the same size, called *nnuhnoh*, the skin of which is covered with a fine down. I often got honey out of hollow trees, which I mingled with water, or ate with my bread. No man could more verify the truth of these two maxims, "That nature is very easily satisfied;" and, "That necessity is the mother of invention." I enjoyed perfect health of body and tranquillity of mind. I did not feel the treachery or inconstancy of a friend, nor the injuries of a secret or open enemy. Here were no gibbers, censurers, backbiters, pickpockets, highwaymen, housebreakers, attorneys, buffoons, gamesters, politicians, murderers, cheating shopkeepers, bullies, drunkard ranting, expensive wives, stupid proud pedants, roaring and conceited companions; no scoundrels raised from the dust.

I had the favor of being admitted to several Houyhnhnms, who came to visit or dine with my master; where his honor graciously suffered me to wait in the room and listen to their

discourse. I freely confess, that all the little knowledge I have of any value, was acquired by the lectures I received from my master, and from hearing the discourses of him and his friends; to which I should be prouder to listen than to dictate to the greatest and wisest assembly in Europe.

At first, I did not feel that natural awe which the Yahoos and all other animals bear toward them; but it grew upon me by degrees, much sooner than I imagined, and was mingled with respectful love and gratitude, that they would condescend to distinguish me from the rest of my species.

When I thought of my family, my friends, my countrymen, or the human race in general, I considered them as they really were, Yahoos in shape and disposition, perhaps a little more civilized, and qualified with the gift of speech; but making no other use of reason than to improve and multiply those vices whereof their brethren in this country had only the share that nature allotted them. When I happened to behold the reflection of my own form in a lake or fountain, I turned away my face in horror and **detestation** of myself, and could better endure the sight of a common Yahoo than of my own person. By conversing with the Houyhnhnms and looking upon them with delight, I fell to imitate their gait and gesture, which is now grown into a habit; and my friends often tell me in a blunt way, “that I trot like a horse;” which, however, I take like a compliment.

In the midst of all this happiness, and when I looked upon myself to be fully settled for life, my master sent for me one morning a little earlier than his usual hour. I observed by his **countenance** that he was in some perplexity, and at a loss how to begin what he had to speak. After a short silence, he told me, “he

did not know how I would take what he was going to say: that in the last general assembly, when the affair of the Yahoos was entered upon, the representatives had taken offence at his keeping a Yahoo (meaning myself) in his family more like a Houyhnhnm than a brute animal; that he was known frequently to converse with me, as if he could receive some advantage or pleasure in my company; that such a practice was not agreeable to reason or nature. The assembly did therefore exhort him either to employ me like the rest of my species, or command me to swim back to the place from whence I came: that the first of these expedients was utterly rejected by all the Houyhnhnms who had ever seen me at his house; for they alleged, that because I had some rudiments of reason, it was to be feared I might be able to seduce them into the woody and mountainous parts of the country, and bring them in troops by night to destroy the Houyhnhnms' cattle, as being naturally of the ravenous kind and averse to labor."

My master added, "that he was daily pressed by the Houyhnhnms of the neighborhood to have the assembly's exhortation executed, which he could not put off much longer. He doubted it would be possible for me to swim to another country; and therefore wished I would contrive some sort of vehicle, resembling those I had described to him, that might carry me on the sea. He added, "that for his own part, he could have been content to keep me in his service as long as I lived, because he found I had cured myself of some bad habits and dispositions by endeavouring, as far as my inferior nature was capable, to imitate the Houyhnhnms."

I was struck with the utmost grief and despair at my master's discourse; and being unable to support the agonies I was under, I fell into a swoon at his feet. When I came to myself, he told me

“that he concluded I had been dead;” for these people are subject to no such imbecilities of nature.

I answered in a faint voice, “that death would have been too great a happiness; that although I could not blame the assembly’s exhortation, or the urgency of his friends; yet, in my weak and corrupt judgment, I thought it might consist with reason to have been less rigorous; that I could not swim a **league**, and probably the nearest land to theirs might be distant above a hundred: that many materials, necessary for making a small vessel to carry me off, were wholly wanting in this country; which, however, I would attempt, in obedience and gratitude to his honour, although I concluded the thing to be impossible, and therefore I looked on myself as already devoted to destruction;

My master, in a few words, made me a very gracious reply: he allowed me the space of two months to finish my boat; and ordered the sorrel nag to follow my instruction. In his company, my first business was to go to that part of the coast where my rebellious crew had ordered me to be set on shore.

I got upon a height, and looking on every side into the sea; fancied I saw a small island toward the north-east. I took out my pocket glass, and could then clearly distinguish it about five leagues off, as I computed.

Let it suffice to say, that in six weeks time with the help of the sorrel nag, who performed the parts that required most labour, I finished a sort of Indian canoe, well stitched together with hempen threads of my own making. My sail was likewise composed of the skins of the same animal. I laid in a stock of boiled flesh - of rabbits and fowls - and took with me two vessels, one filled with milk and the other with water.

I tried my canoe in a large pond near my master's house, and then corrected in it what was amiss; stopping all the chinks with Yahoos' tallow, till I found it staunch and able to bear me and my freight.

When all was ready, I took leave of my master, my eyes flowing with tears, and my heart quite sunk with grief. But his honour, out of curiosity, and, perhaps, (if I may speak without vanity) partly out of kindness, was determined to see me in my canoe, and got several of his neighbouring friends to accompany him. I was forced to wait above an hour for the tide; and then observing the wind very fortunately bearing towards the island to which I intended to steer my course, I took a second leave of my master: but as I was going to **prostrate** myself to kiss his hoof, he did me the honour to raise it gently to my mouth. I am not ignorant how much I have been censured for mentioning this last particular. Detractors are pleased to think it improbable that so illustrious a person should descend to give so great a mark of distinction to a creature so inferior as I. Neither have I forgot how apt some travellers are to boast of extraordinary favours they have received. But, if these censurers were better acquainted with the noble and courteous disposition of the Houyhnhnms, they would soon change their opinion.

I paid my respects to the rest of the Houyhnhnms in his honor's company; then getting into my canoe, I pushed off from shore.

CHAPTER VII

I began this desperate voyage on February 15, 1714, at nine o'clock in the morning. The wind was very favorable, and I ventured to set up my little sail; thus, with the help of the tide, I went at the rate of a **league** and a half an hour, as near as I could guess.

My design was, if possible, to discover some small island - uninhabited, yet sufficient with my labor to furnish me with the necessaries of life, which I would have thought a greater happiness, than to be first minister in the politest court of Europe; so horrible was the idea I conceived of returning to live in the society and under the government of Yahoos. By six in the evening I spied a very small island about half a league off, which I soon reached. It was nothing but a rock with one creek naturally arched by the force of tempests. At that same moment, I caught sight of a sail to the north-north-east, which appearing every minute more visible, I was in some doubt whether I should wait for them or not I drew up my canoe and hid myself behind a stone.

The ship came within half a league of this creek, and sent out her long boat with vessels to take in fresh water; but I did not observe it till the boat was almost on shore. The seamen at their landing observed my canoe, and rummaging it all over, easily conjectured that the owner could not be far off. Four of them, well armed, searched every cranny and lurking-hole, till at last they found me, flat on my face behind the stone. They gazed awhile in **admiration** at my strange uncouth dress, from whence they

concluded, I was not a native of the place, who all go naked. One of the seamen, in Portuguese, bid me rise, and me asked who I was.

I understood that language very well, and getting upon my feet, said, “I was a poor Yahoo banished from the Houyhnhnms, and desired they would please to let me depart.”

They were at a loss to know what I meant by *Yahoos* and *Houyhnhnms*; and at the same time fell a-laughing at my strange tone in speaking, which resembled the neighing of a horse. I again desired leave to depart, and was gently moving to my canoe. But they laid hold of me, desiring to know, “what country I was of and whence I came?”

I told them “I was born in England, from whence I came about five years before, and then their country and ours were at peace. I therefore hoped they would not treat me as an enemy, since I meant them no harm, but was a poor Yahoo seeking some desolate place where to pass the remainder of his unfortunate life.”

When they began to talk, I thought I never heard anything so unnatural; for it appeared to me as monstrous as if a dog or a cow should speak in England, or a Yahoo in Houyhnhnm Land. The honest Portuguese spoke to me with great humanity, and said, “they were sure the captain would carry me **gratis** to **Lisbon**; that two of the seamen would go back to the ship and receive his orders; and that unless I would give my solemn oath not to fly, they would secure me by force.

I thought it best to comply with their proposal. In two hours, the boat returned with the captain’s command to fetch me on board. I fell to my knees to preserve my liberty, but all was in vain,

and the men, having tied me with cords, heaved me into the boat, from whence I was taken into the ship.

The captain's name was Pedro de Mendez; he was a very courteous and generous person, and spoke so many obliging things that I wondered to find such civilities from a Yahoo. However, I remained silent and sullen, and was ready to faint at the very smell of him and his men.

He desired some information, and I gave him a very short relation of my voyage; of the conspiracy against me by my own men; of the country where they set me on shore, and of my three years residence there. All which he looked upon as if it were a dream or a vision; whereat I took great offence; for I had quite forgot the faculty of lying, so peculiar to Yahoos, in all countries where they reside.

Our voyage passed without any considerable accident. In gratitude to the captain, I sometimes sat with him at his earnest request, and strove to conceal my **antipathy** to human kind, although it often broke out; which he suffered to pass without observation.

We arrived at Lisbon, Nov. 5, 1715. At our landing, the captain forced me to cover myself with his cloak, to prevent the rabble from crowding about me, as I had refused to strip myself of my savage dress, **abhorring** to wear anything that had been on the back of a Yahoo.

I was conveyed to his house, where he finally persuaded me to accept a suit of clothes newly made. His whole **deportment** was so obliging that I really began to tolerate his company; and after a week I was at last bold enough to walk the street in his company,

but with my nose well stopped with rue, or sometimes with tobacco.

In ten days, he put it upon me as a matter of honor and conscience, “that I ought to return to my wife and children.” He told me, “there was an English ship in the port just ready to sail, and he would furnish me with all things necessary.” It would be tedious to repeat his arguments, and my contradictions. He said, “it was altogether impossible to find such a solitary island as I had desired to live in; but I might command in my own house, and pass my time in a manner as **recluse** as I pleased.”

I complied at last, finding I could do no better. I left Lisbon on the 24th day of November, in an English merchantman, but who was the master I never inquired. Don Pedro accompanied me to the ship, and lent me twenty pounds. He took kind leave of me, and embraced me at parting, which I bore as well as I could.

During the voyage, I had no commerce with the master or any of his men; but kept close in my cabin. On the fifth of December, 1715, we cast anchor in the Downs at about nine in the morning; and at three in the afternoon I got safe to my house.

My wife and family received me with great surprise and joy, because they concluded me certainly dead; but I must freely confess that the sight of them filled me only with hatred, disgust, and contempt.

As soon as I entered the house, my wife took me in her arms, and kissed me; at which, having not been used to the touch of that odious animal for so many years, I fell in a swoon for almost an hour.

It is five years since my return to England. During the first year, I could not endure my wife or children in my presence; the very smell of them being intolerable; much less could I suffer them to eat in the same room. To this hour, they dare not presume to touch my bread or drink out of the same cup.

The first money I laid out was to buy two young horses, which I keep in a good stable; and next to them, the groom is my greatest favorite, for I feel my spirits revived by the smell he contracts in the stable. My horses understand me tolerably well, and I converse with them at least four hours every day. They are strangers to bridle and saddle; they live in great amity with me and friendship to each other.

Thus I have given a faithful history of my travels for sixteen years and above seven months, wherein I have not been so studious of ornament as of truth. I could, perhaps, like others have astonished 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.

I now return to enjoy my own speculations in my little garden at Redridden, and to apply those excellent lessons in virtue which I learned among the Houyhnhnms. I began last week to permit my wife to sit at dinner with me, at the farthest end of a long table. The smell of a Yahoo still continues very offensive, and I always keep my nose well stopped 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 neighbor Yahoo in my company, without the apprehensions I am yet under of his teeth and claws.

My reconciliation to the Yahoo kind in general might not be so difficult if they would be content with those vices and follies only which nature had entitled them to. I am not in the least provoked at the sight of a lawyer, a pickpocket, a colonel, a politician, a traitor, or the like; 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 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 appear in my sight.