JONATHAN SWIFT

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS





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WELBECK
EDITIONS



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A VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT

CHAPTER ONE



THE AUTHOR

gives some account of himself and his family.

HE ALSO TELLS

of how he came to be a ship's surgeon

AND

how he is wrecked upon the coast of

LILLIPUT

to be made a prisoner

My name is Lemuel Gulliver and I have seen a great many marvellous things and been on remarkable adventures. I was born in Nottinghamshire and I was the third of five brothers. I always dreamed of travelling to mysterious and distant lands so I chose to study as a doctor, knowing that this was a skill that would be of very great use to me on a sea voyage.

My father sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge when I was fourteen years old, where I lived for three years, and I studied very hard; but I had very little money, so I became an apprentice to Mr. James Bates, an eminent surgeon in London, with whom I worked for four years. If I managed to save any money, I spent it on learning navigation, and other parts of the mathematics, useful to those who intend to travel, as I always believed it would be my fortune to do. When my apprenticeship was over, I went to Germany and studied medicine at a very fine school. I hoped I would be able to get a job working as a surgeon on a ship, and, thanks to my good friend Mr. Bates, I got work on a ship called the Swallow. I worked for Captain Abraham Pannel, who commanded this ship, for three years. When I came back I resolved to settle in London, and I received several patients. I took a house and married Mrs. Mary Burton.

But I did not make much money at that and my business began to fail. Having consulted with my wife, I determined to go again to sea. I was surgeon successively in two ships, and made several voyages, for six years, to the East and West Indies, by which I got some addition to my fortune. My hours of leisure I spent in reading the best authors, ancient and modern, being always provided with a good number of books; and when I was ashore, in observing the manners and dispositions of the people, as well as learning their language, for I was gifted with a very good memory.

But then I grew weary of the sea, and intended to stay at home with my wife and family. I moved to Wapping, because there were always a lot of sailors there and I hoped I would get some business; but this too failed.

So it was that on May 4th 1699, I took a position as surgeon on a ship called the Antelope. I sailed from Bristol with Captain William Prichard who was making a voyage to the South Seas.

I will not trouble you with the details of our adventures in those seas; let it suffice to say that as we sailed towards the East Indies, we were driven by a violent storm to the north-west of Van Diemen's Land. Twelve of our crew were dead by hard work and poor food; the rest were in a very weak condition.

On the 5th of November, which was the beginning of summer in those parts, the storm had not yet cleared and the wind was blowing in furious squalls that drove the ship along at a great speed. The seamen spied a rock close to the prow of the ship; but the wind was so strong, that we were driven directly upon it, and the ship broke apart. Six of the crew, of whom I was one, having let down the rowing boat into the sea, tried to get clear of the ship and the rock. We rowed about three leagues, till we were able to row no longer, being already exhausted from sailing through the storm. We therefore trusted ourselves to the mercy of the waves, and in about half an hour the boat was capsized by a sudden gust of wind from the north.

What became of my companions in the boat, as well as of those who escaped on the rock, or were left in the vessel, I cannot tell; but conclude they were all lost. For my own part, I swam as fortune directed me, and was pushed forward by wind and tide. I often let my legs drop, and could feel no bottom; but when I was almost gone, and able to struggle no longer, I found myself within my depth; and by this time the storm had died away. Although I could touch the bottom, I had to walk nearly a mile before I got to the shore at about eight o'clock in the evening.



I was extremely tired, and with that, and the heat of the weather, and about half a pint of brandy that I drank as I left the ship, I found myself very sleepy. I lay down on the grass, which was very short and soft, where I slept sounder than ever I remembered to have done in my life.

When I awoke, it was just daylight. I attempted to get up, but was not able to stir. I had fallen asleep upon my back and now I found my arms and legs were strongly fastened on each side to the ground. My long hair was tied down in the same manner. I felt several slender ropes across my body, from my armpits to my thighs. I could only look upwards. The sun began to grow hot, and the light hurt my eyes.

I heard a confused noise about me; but in the posture I lay, could see nothing except the sky. Then I felt something alive moving on my left leg. It advanced gently forward over my chest and stopped almost at my chin. Bending my eyes downwards as much as I could, I saw it was a tiny man, not six inches high, with a bow and arrow in his hands, and a quiver at his back. There were many small men – at least forty more! – following the first.

I let out such a roar of wonder and fright that they all turned and ran; and some of them, as I was afterwards told, leapt from my sides in their hurry to get away from danger, and hurt themselves. However, they soon returned, and one of them, who was nearest to my face, lifted up his hands and eyes and cried out in a shrill but distinct voice, '*Hekinah degul*'. The others repeated the same words several times, but I did not know what they meant.

I lay all this while, as the reader may believe, in great discomfort. After struggling to get loose, I had the fortune to break the ropes, and wrench out the pegs that fastened my left arm to the ground. At the same time with a violent pull, which hurt me a great deal, I slightly loosened the strings that tied down my hair on the left side, so that I was able to turn my head a little to one side. But the little men were too quick for me, and got out of reach before I could catch them.

There was a great shout in a very shrill voice, that called '*Tolgo phonac*'. In an instant I felt a hundred arrows, like little needles, shot into my left hand. A second volley hit my face, which I covered with my left hand. I lay there groaning with grief and pain.

When I once again struggled to get loose, they fired another volley larger than the first, and some of them attempted with spears to stick me in the sides; but by good luck I had on a buff jerkin, which they could not pierce. The more I struggled, the more they hurt me, so soon I lay still, thinking that perhaps I could free myself when night fell.

When the people saw I had stopped struggling, they fired no more arrows; but, I could tell by the increased sound of voices that more little people were arriving.

Close to my right ear, I heard a hammering for about an hour. When I turned my head a little that way, I glimpsed them building a small wooden stage. When it was finished, four little men climbed the tiny ladders and stood upon the stage. One of them seemed to be a very important person, for a little page boy was holding up his train. This man gave an order and immediately fifty soldiers ran forwards to cut the ropes that tied my hair on the left side, so I could turn my head easily to the right.

Then this man began to make a long speech. I could not understand a single word but it seemed to me that sometimes this little man threatened, and sometimes he spoke with kindness.

I did my best to show that I would not harm them and I tried to make them understand how hungry and thirsty I was by pointing at my mouth with the fingers of my free hand. I had not eaten a morsel for some hours before I left the ship. The *hurgo* (for that is what they call a great lord, as I afterwards learnt) understood me very well. He descended from the stage, and commanded that several ladders should be set against my sides. Then about a hundred of the little people climbed up and carried to my mouth all kinds of bread and meat. There were shoulders of meat, very well dressed, but smaller than the wings of a lark. I ate them by two or three at a mouthful, and took three loaves at a time. They supplied me as fast as they could, showing a thousand exclamations of wonder and astonishment at my appetite. I then made another sign, that I wanted drink.

They were the most ingenious people. Knowing I would require a large amount of liquid, they slung up one of their largest casks of wine, then rolled it towards my hand. They knocked off the top and I drank it all in one gulp, for there was less than a pint inside. They brought me a second cask, which I drank in the same manner, and made signs for more; but they had none to give me.

When I had performed these wonders, they shouted for joy, and danced upon my chest. They made me a sign that I should throw down the two empty casks, but first warning the people below to stand out of the way, crying aloud, '*Borach mevolah*'.

I confess I was tempted, while they were walking backwards and forwards on my body, to seize forty or fifty of them. But it did not seem very honourable to do this and, besides, I now considered myself as bound by the laws of hospitality, to a people who had fed me with so much expense and magnificence. However, I was amazed at the bravery of these little mortals, who dared to walk upon such a giant body.

Soon another small man, very finely dressed in a brilliant uniform and who seemed to be an officer of a high rank, marched upon my chest and read out what appeared to be a proclamation. He pointed towards something a long way off, and made signs to



me that I would be carried to that place as a prisoner. I asked, in signs, for the ropes to be loosened but the soldier refused. He did allow the soldiers to slacken the ropes on one side, so I would feel more comfortable.

Then some of the little people removed the arrows still embedded in my hand and face, and rubbed each tiny wound with a sort of ointment, very pleasant to the smell, which, in a few minutes, removed all the soreness. I started to feel more comfortable now and I fell into a deep sleep. This was not surprising because, as I learned afterwards, the King's doctors had mixed a powerful sleeping potion into the wine I had drunk.

When I awoke I was sneezing a great deal and I could feel small feet running away from my chest. I wondered where I was. I was still bound but I was no longer lying on the ground. I was very puzzled to find that I was lying on a sort of platform.

Soon I began to realise what had happened. And later, when I had learned some of their language, they told me the story of what had occurred after I fell asleep. Before I had drifted off to sleep I remembered hearing the rumble of wheels and the shouts of many drivers. This, it seems, had been caused by the arrival of a huge kind of trolley, only a few inches high, but almost seven feet long and drawn by fifteen hundred of the King's strongest horses.

They intended to use this contraption to transport me to their capital city. It took nine hundred men and the strongest rope in the country to hoist me on top of this trolley. When they were nearing the city, they had stopped for a while to rest the horses, and that is when I woke up. It seems that one of the officers of the King's Guard, who had not seen me properly before, had climbed with some friends to see my face and he could not resist the temptation of putting the point of his sword up my nose! This tickled me so much that I awoke, sneezing violently.

We made a long march for the remaining part of the day, and, rested at night with five hundred guards on each side of me, half with torches, and half with bows and arrows, ready to shoot me if I should offer to stir. The next morning at sun-rise we continued our march, and arrived within two hundred yards of the city gates about noon. The emperor, and all his court, came out to meet us; but his great officers would not allow his majesty to endanger his person by stepping upon my body.

At the place where the carriage stopped there stood an ancient temple, the largest in the whole kingdom but no longer used very much. In this building it was decided I should lodge. The great gate fronting to the north was about four feet high, and almost two feet wide, through which I could easily creep. On each side of the gate was a small window, about six inches from the ground. Inside the building, the emperor's blacksmiths had fastened many chains which then ran through the little window on

the left side. These were locked to my left leg with six-and-thirty padlocks. Next to the temple, on the other side of the main road, at twenty feet distance, there was a turret at least five feet high. Here the emperor ascended, with many principal lords of his court, to have an opportunity of viewing me, as I was told, for I could not see them. It was reckoned that above a hundred thousand inhabitants came out of the town to do the same; and, in spite of my guards, I believe there could not be fewer than ten thousand, who mounted my body by the help of ladders. But a proclamation was soon issued, to forbid it upon pain of death. When the workmen found it was impossible for me to break loose, they cut all the strings that bound me; whereupon I rose up, feeling as sad as ever I had in my life. But the noise and astonishment of the people, at seeing me rise and walk, are not to be expressed. The chains that held my left leg were about two yards long, and gave me not only the freedom of walking backwards and forwards in a semicircle, but, being fixed within four inches of the gate, allowed me to creep in, and lie at my full length in the temple.

