

TRAVELS OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

CHAPTER XVIII

A SECOND TRIP TO THE MOON

A second visit (but an accidental one) to the moon—The ship driven by a whirlwind a thousand leagues above the surface of the water, where a new atmosphere meets them and carries them into a capacious harbour in the moon—A description of the inhabitants, and their manner of coming into the lunarian world—Animals, customs, weapons of war, wine, vegetables, &c.

I have already informed you of one trip I made to the moon, in search of my silver hatchet; I afterwards made another in a much pleasanter manner, and stayed in it long enough to take notice of several things, which I will endeavour to describe as accurately as my memory will permit.

I went on a voyage of discovery at the request of a distant relation, who had a strange notion that there were people to be found equal in magnitude to those described by Gulliver in the empire of BROBDIGNAG. For my part I always treated that account as fabulous: however, to oblige him, for he had made me his heir, I undertook it, and sailed for the South seas, where we arrived without meeting with anything remarkable, except some flying men and women who were playing at leap-frog, and dancing minuets in the air.

On the eighteenth day after we had passed the Island of Otaheite, mentioned by Captain Cook as the place from whence they brought Omai, a hurricane blew our ship at least one thousand leagues above the surface of the water, and kept it at the height till a fresh gale arising filled the sails in every part, and onwards we travelled at a prodigious rate; thus we proceeded above the clouds for six weeks. At last we discovered a great land in the sky, like a shining island, round and bright, where, coming into a convenient harbour, we went on shore, and soon found it was inhabited. Below us we saw another earth, containing cities, trees, mountains, rivers, seas, &c., which we conjectured was this world which we had left. Here we saw huge figures riding upon vultures of a prodigious size, and each of them having three heads. To form some idea of the magnitude of these birds, I must inform you that each of their wings is as wide and six times the length of the main sheet of our vessel, which was about six hundred tons burthen. Thus, instead of riding upon horses, as we do in this world, the inhabitants of the moon (for we now found we were in Madam Luna) fly about on these birds. The king, we found, was engaged in a war with the sun, and he offered me a commission, but I declined the honour his majesty intended me. Everything in *this* world is of extraordinary magnitude! a common flea being much larger than one of our sheep: in making war, their principal weapons are radishes, which are used as darts: those who are wounded by them die immediately. Their shields are made of mushrooms, and their darts (when radishes are out of season) of the tops of asparagus. Some of the natives of the dog-star are to be seen here; commerce tempts them to ramble; their faces are like large mastiffs', with their eyes near the lower end or tip of their noses: they have no eyelids, but cover their eyes with the end of their tongues when they go to sleep; they are generally twenty feet high. As to the natives of the moon, none of them are less in stature than thirty-six feet: they are not called the human species, but the cooking animals, for they all dress their food by fire, as we do, but lose not time at their meals, as they open their left side, and place the whole quantity at once in their stomach, then shut it again till the same day in the next month; for they never indulge themselves with food more than twelve times a year, or once a month. All but gluttons and epicures must prefer this method to ours.

There is but one sex either of the cooking or any other animals in the moon; they are all produced from trees of various sizes and foliage; that which produces the cooking animal, or human species, is much more beautiful than any of the others; it has large straight boughs and flesh-coloured leaves, and the fruit it produces are nuts or pods, with hard shells at least two yards long; when they become ripe, which is known from their changing colour, they are gathered with great care, and laid by as long as they think proper: when they choose to animate the seed of these nuts, they throw them into a large cauldron of boiling water, which opens the shells in a few hours, and out jumps the creature.

Nature forms their minds for different pursuits before they come into the world; from one shell comes forth a warrior, from another a philosopher, from a third a divine, from a fourth a lawyer, from a fifth a farmer, from a sixth a clown, &c. &c., and each of them immediately begins to perfect themselves, by practising what they before knew only in theory.

When they grow old they do not die, but turn into air, and dissolve like smoke! As for their drink, they need none; the only evacuations they have are insensible, and by their breath. They have but one finger upon each hand, with which they perform everything in as perfect a manner as we do who have four besides the thumb. Their heads are placed under their right arm, and when are going to travel, or about any violent exercise, they generally leave them at home, for they can consult them at any distance; this is a very common practice; and when those of rank or quality among the Lunarians have an inclination to see what's going forward among the common people, they stay at home, *i.e.*, the body stays at home, and sends the head only, which is suffered to be present *incog.*, and return at pleasure with an account of what has passed.

The stones of their grapes are exactly like hail; and I am perfectly satisfied that when a storm or high wind in the moon shakes their vines, and breaks the grapes from the stalks, the stones fall down and form our hail showers. I would advise those who are of my opinion to save a quantity of these stones when it hails next, and make Lunarian wine. It is a common beverage at St. Luke's. Some material circumstances I had nearly omitted. They put their bellies to the same use as we do a sack, and throw whatever they have occasion for into it, for they can shut and open it again when they please, as they do their stomachs; they are not troubled with bowels, liver, heart, or any other intestines, neither are they encumbered with clothes, nor is there any part of their bodies unseemly or indecent to exhibit.

Their eyes they can take in and out of their places when they please, and can see as well with them in their hand as in their head! and if by any accident they lose or damage one, they can borrow or purchase another, and see as clearly with it as their own. Dealers in eyes are on that account very numerous in most parts of the moon, and in this article alone all the inhabitants are whimsical: sometimes green and sometimes yellow eyes are the fashion. I know these things appear strange; but if the shadow of a doubt can remain on any person's mind, I say, let him take a voyage there himself, and then he will know I am a traveller of veracity.

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