

DRUIDS

by Th. Bulfinch

The Druids were the priests or ministers of religion among the ancient Celtic nations in Gaul, Britain, and Germany. The information respecting them is borrowed from notices in the Greek and Roman writers, compared with the remains of Welsh and Gaelic poetry still extant.

The Druids combined the functions of the priest, the magistrate, the scholar, and the physician. They stood to the people of the Celtic tribes in a relation closely analogous to that in which the Brahmans of India, the Magi of Persia, and the priests of the Egyptians stood to the people respectively by whom they were revered. The Druids taught the existence of one God, to whom they gave a name "Be' al", which Celtic antiquaries tell us means "the life of everything", or "the source of all beings".

The Druids observed two festivals in each year. The former took place in the beginning of May, and was called Beltane or "fire of God". On this occasion a large fire was kindled on some elevated spot, in honor of the sun, whose returning beneficence they thus welcomed after the gloom and desolation of winter. Of this custom a trace remains in the name given to Whit-Sunday in parts of Scotland to this day.

The other great festival of the Druids was called "Samh' in", or "fire of peace", and was held on Halloween (the eve of the first of November), which still retains this designation in Scotland. On this occasion the Druids assembled in solemn conclave, in the most central part of the district, to discharge the judicial functions of their order. All questions, whether public or private, all crimes against person or property, were at this time brought before them for adjudication. With these judicial acts were combined certain superstitious usages, especially the kindling of the sacred fire, from which all the fires in the district, which had been beforehand scrupulously extinguished, might be relighted. This usage of kindling fires on Hallowe'en lingered in the British islands long after the establishment of Christianity.

Besides these two great annual festivals, the Druids were in the habit of observing the full moon, and especially the sixth day of the moon. On the latter they sought the Mistletoe, which grew on their favorite oaks, and to which, as well as to the oak itself, they ascribed a peculiar virtue and sacredness. The discovery of it was an occasion of rejoicing and solemn worship. "They call it", says Pliny, "by a word in their language which means 'heal-all', and having made solemn preparation for feasting and sacrifice under the tree, they drive thither two milk-white bulls, whose horns are then for the first time bound. The priest then, robed in white, ascends the tree, and cuts off the mistletoe with a golden sickle. It is caught in a white mantle, after which they proceed to slay the victims, at the same time praying that God would render his gift prosperous to those to whom he had given it". They drink the water in which it has been infused, and think it a remedy for all diseases. The mistletoe is a parasitic plant, and is not always nor often found on the oak, so that when it is found it is the more precious.

The Druids were the teachers of morality as well as of religion. Of their ethical teaching a valuable specimen is preserved in the Triads of the Welsh Bards, and from this we may gather that their views of moral rectitude were on the whole just, and that they held and inculcated many very noble and valuable principles of conduct. They were also the men of science and learning of their age and people. Whether they were acquainted with letters or not has been disputed, though the probability is strong that they were, to some extent. But it is certain that they committed nothing of their doctrine, their history, or their poetry to writing. Their teaching was oral, and their literature (if such a word may be used in such a case) was preserved solely by tradition. But the Roman writers admit that "they paid much attention to the order and laws of nature, and investigated and taught to the youth under their charge many things concerning the stars and their motions, the size of the world and the lands, and concerning the might and power of the immortal gods".

Their history consisted in traditional tales, in which the heroic deeds of their forefathers were celebrated. These were apparently in verse, and thus constituted part of the poetry as well as the history of the Druids. In the poems of Ossian we have, if not the actual productions of Druidical times, what may be considered faithful representations of the songs of the Bards.

KCP № 2

THE SONG OF BEOWULF

The first masterpiece of English literature, the epic poem “The song of Beowulf”, describes the historical past of the land from which the Angles, Saxons and Jutes came. They brought the subject over the Continent when they invaded Britain, and it was made into a poem in about the 7th century.

The story of Beowulf tells of the time when king Hrothgar ruled the Danes. Hrothgar built a great house for himself and his men. It had a large hall with flat stones in the centre. All the men slept in this hall. There was a great feast when the hall was built. During the feast the songs from the hall were heard by a monster that lived at the bottom of a lonely lake. The gay songs irritated him. When all Hrothgar’s men were asleep, Grendel, the monster, appeared. He seized thirty of the sleeping men, carried them away and ate them. Night after night the men disappeared one after another, until Hrothgar had lost nearly all of them.

One day the men that guarded the coast saw a ship approaching the shores of Denmark from Norway. A young Viking was on board, tall and strong as a young oak-tree. It was Beowulf, who had heard of Grendel and his doings. He had come to help Hrothgar to kill the monster. He was received with great joy by Hrothgar, who gave a feast in his honor. When the men lay down to sleep after the feast, Grendel appeared in the dark hall. He seized Beowulf and a great struggle began. In this struggle the monster lost his arm, but run away. Again there was singing and joy in the hall the next night. But late at night a still more terrible monster, a Water Witch, appeared. She was Grendel’s mother who had come to kill Beowulf but she did not find him and disappeared, carrying away one of the best of Hrothgar’s men. The next day Beowulf went after her and found her at the bottom of the lake, where she lived with her son. He saw the dead body of Grendel. With an old sword of the giants that he found there Beowulf killed the Water Witch and cut off Grendel’s head. Carrying the head he came back to the men who were waiting for him. Later, he returned to his own people with rich presents from Hrothgar.

The second part of the poem tells of Beowulf’s deeds when he was king of Norway. A fiery dragon was destroying his country. Beowulf found the dragon’s cave and a lot of treasures in it. Beowulf saved his country – he killed dragon but the monster wounded him with his fiery breath. Beowulf died and his people buried him on a high cliff by the sea-shore. Over his grave his men raised a mound and rode around it, singing a song of mourning.

Thus, the epic “The song of Beowulf” tells of some events from a people’s history, sings the heroic deeds of a man, his courage and his desire for justice, his love for his people and self-sacrifice for the sake of his country.

The poem is a classic example of Anglo-Saxon poetry. It has no rhyme, but each line has alliteration, which is a repetition, at close intervals, of some consonant in words and syllables. Another interesting feature of the poem is the use of picture names that show the subject in new light. The unknown poet calls the sea a “sail-road” or “salt-stream”, the musical instruments: “joy-wood”, “glee-wood”, the worriers: “folk-troop defenders”, “heroes-in-battle”; the king: “folk-leader”, “friend-lord of folk”; a quarrel: “hot-burning hatred”.

KCP № 3

Lexical-grammar test № 1

1. Use the correct tense-forms of the verbs in brackets:

Dear Mr. Harrison,

Thank you for calling us last week. Right then James (*1. to recover*) from his gripe and constantly (*2. to remember*) his classmates. Now he (*3. to feel*) much better. In fact he (*4. to come back*) to school on Monday and my husband has asked me to explain the situation to you. We would like to ask you to watch over him for a while and not let him take part in games and gymnastics for a week until he (*5. to be*) completely well again. James (*6. to be*) so keen on games that he certainly (*7. to try*) to play before he (*8. to be*) fit enough unless someone (*9. to keep*) an eye on him. We (*10. to provide*) him with all the clothes on the list except the red athletics vests and the blue shorts. He has already grown out of the last year's pair, but we (*11. to discover*) this only yesterday and the local shop (*12. not to have*) any in stock. I (*13. to send*) them by post as soon as I (*14. to buy*) some. We (*15. to be*) very happy that James (*16. to take*) to boarding-school life so well last year and we (*17. to hope*) he (*18. to continue*) to be happy this year. We both (*19. to be*) very grateful to you for being so helpful last year and look forward to having another talk with you when we (*20. to come*) to the parent-teacher meeting next month.

Yours sincerely, K.

Willams.

2. Use the right article (a, an, the) or no article:

1. If he comes, so much ... better. 2. Peru is ... country in ... South America. 3. ... giraffe is ... tallest of all animals. 4. Do you think ... rich should pay more taxes? 5. ... compass was invented in ancient China. 6. ... Willowbys left ... town as soon as they got married. 7. ... wine we tried yesterday was superb. 8. What ... wonderful weather! 9. That's ... interesting news item. 10. I've asked for ... white coffee and you've brought me .. black one. 11. This is ... very good news. 12. ... man who entered was short and broad. He had ... black hair and ... grey trousers with ... red woolen shirt open at ... neck. 13. His brother is in ... prison, so he wants to go to ... prison to see him.

3. Choose the best variant:

1. When you were younger, we ... to the parties every Saturday.

- a. Used to going b. Used to go c. Use to go

2. They still love each other, they married ... love.

- a. To b. With c. For d. About

3. The landlord and his guest sat down opposite ...

- a. Each other b. The other c. One another

4. He is ... British ... American. He is Australian.

- a. Either ... or b. Both ... and c. Neither ... nor

KCP № 4

Lexical-grammar test № 2

I year

I. Use necessary tense forms:

One Saturday evening Herbert (1. *to say*) suddenly: “Mum, I (2. *to ask*) a young lady to come in to tea tomorrow. Is that all right?” “And may I ask you who she (3. *to be*) and how you (4. *to get*) to know her?” “Her name (5. *to be*) Betty Bevan and I (6. *to meet*) her first at the pictures one Saturday afternoon when it (7. *to rain*). She (8. *to sit*) next to me and she (9. *to drop*) her bag and I (10. *to pick*) it up and we (11. *to get*) talking. “And when all this (12. *to happen*)?” “About three months ago, and we (13. *to go*) to the pictures about twice a week ever since.” “What she (14. *to do*)?” “She (15. *to work*) in a typewriting office in the City.”

Next day Mrs. Sunbury (16. *to arrange*) the tea very stylishly. Herbert (17. *to give*) the tea-table a glance of surprise as he (18. *to usher*) the girl into the sitting-room. Mrs. Sunbury (19. *to cast*) a look at Betty’s make-up and dress and (20. *to take*) an instant dislike to her. But she (21. *to decide*) to behave like a lady... When Betty (22. *to put*) a piece of cake in her saucer, it (23. *to fall*) to the ground. “Oh, I (24. *to be*) sorry,” (25. *to say*) the girl, as she (26. *to pick*) it up. “It doesn’t matter at all, I (27. *to cut*) you another piece,” said Mrs. Sunbury. “Oh, don’t bother. I (28. *not to be*) particular. The floor (29. *to be*) clean. “I hope so,” said Mrs. Sunbury with a smile, “but I wouldn’t dream of letting you eat a piece of cake that (30. *to be*) on the floor.”

Betty (31. *to refuse*) to have more tea. But when Herbert (32. *to light*) a cigarette, she (33. *to say*) him: “Give me one, too, please. I (34. *to die*) for a smoke.” Mrs. Sunbury (35. *not to say*) anything. She only (36. *to raise*) her eyebrows slightly. Finally Herbert (37. *to say*): “Well, Betty, I think it’s time to go. I (38. *to walk*) back with you.” “It (39. *to be*) a pleasure to see you, Miss Bevan, I’m sure,” said Mrs. Sunbury, rising to her feet.

An hour later Herbert (40. *to come*) back and there was a scene between him and his mother. No reference (41. *to be*) made next day to what (42. *to pass*).

II. Choose the right article:

1. She was ... first woman to cross ... Atlantic in ... canoe. 2. ... James Joys I knew wasn’t ... novelist and wasn’t ... English either. 3. We’ll go for ... walk if ... sun comes out. 4. ... French enjoy splendid holidays in ... countryside. 5. Sue bought ... Picasso I was telling you about ... last week. 6. On this record ... twins play ... piano duet. 7. There was ... very difficult crossword in ... Times. 8. This country is officially called ... United Kingdom of ... Great Britain and ... Northern Ireland. 9. Let’s go out. ... weather is nice. It’s so good for your health to go for ... walk in such ... nice weather! 10. Where is ... bread? – I don’t know. I don’t eat bread. – It’s a pity because ... bread I bought yesterday is so tasty.

III. Choose the best variant:

1. The ... family is rather big.
a) Smiths b) Smith c) Smith's
2. Please, let my carry ... shopping. I'll help you.
a) a b) the c) –
3. We ... each other for twenty years already.
a) know b) have been knowing c) have known
4. In stressing her ... peasant origin she found it easier to consult her.
a) mother's-in-law b) mother-in-law's c) mother-in-law
5. His mathematics ... perfect.
a) is b) are c) has
6. Yesterday at 7 o'clock I ... a letter.
a) read b) had read c) was reading
7. ... Nile flows right through the city.
a) – b) a c) the
8. ... clothes ... very dirty.
a) this / are b) these / are c) these / is
9. I knew that they ... him about the meeting at once.
a) told b) will tell c) had told
10. I want to ask you if he ... anyway.
a) will come b) comes c) have come
11. Where ... you at 10 tomorrow? – I ... a book then!
a) are / am reading b) will be / will be reading c) were / read
12. Rickets ... a very serious, dangerous illness even now.
a) are b) was c) is
13. When Jack came, Mary ...
a) is crying b) was crying c) cried
14. By the end of next year Mary ... for this shop for 10 years.
a) will work b) will be working c) will have been working
15. Could you tell me when he ... the vase?
a) did ... break b) had broken c) has broken

KCP № 5. Geoffrey Chaucer and his Canterbury Tales.
Questions and tasks.

Read and translate the texts.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Vocabulary

page — in medieval times a young man being trained for knighthood

vintner — a person who sales wine

squire (= esquire) — a young aspirant to knighthood serving as an attendant and armbearer to a knight

Picardy — a region in N. France, formerly a province

doge — the chief magistrate in the former republics of Venice and Genoa

Genoa — a seaport in Italy

Genoese — a native or inhabitant of Genoe

Petrarch — Italian poet and scholar (1304—1374)

Boccaccio — Italian writer and poet, (1313—1375)

JP — Justice of the Peace (or Magistrate)

Text A

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in or near 1343. He was a page in the household of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, wife of Duke Lionel, Edward III's third son. This was at Hatfield, in Yorkshire. John Chaucer, his father, was relatively wealthy, a vintner and collector of wool duties.

When Chaucer was about 15, he was in France as a squire, on a military operation in which he was taken prisoner. The king paid £ 16 towards his ransom. He held a number of positions at court and in the king's service, and traveled abroad on numerous diplomatic missions. French would have been the accepted language at court; the Queen, Philippa of Hainault, was a Frenchwoman. When 25 he accompanied John of Gaunt (the King's fourth son, and with the death of the Black Prince, probably the most powerful man after the King), on a raid in Picardy.

Then in 1372 Chaucer went on a more important and, for his vocation as a poet, very significant journey to Italy. The purpose of the visit was to negotiate with the Doge of Genoa a port of entry in England for Genoese merchants. He went to Florence on the King's business and probably other places — he is reported to have met Petrarch in Padua. Italian literature from then on took its place as a major influence on Chaucer's developing art: the whole of *Troilus and Criseyde* and several of *The Canterbury Tales* have their origins in Boccaccio's work, whom he might also have visited.

After this, Chaucer moved from Westminster to the City, where he became Controller of Customs of wool, skins and hides in the Port of London. His connection with John of Gaunt's household was particularly strong, as his wife's sister became the Duke's third wife, in 1396. Chaucer had probably known John of Gaunt since boyhood, from the time of his service at Hatfield. They were more or less the same age. John of Gaunt's first wife, Blanche, had died in 1368, and Chaucer wrote his first major poem, *The Boke of the Duchesse*, in her honor, shortly afterwards. As John was extremely attached to Blanche, the poem was clearly designed to please him.

In 1382 he was made Controller of the Petty Customs on wines and other goods,

and in 1385 on wool; he was made a JP and member of Parliament as a Knight of the Shire of Kent. From 1374 he lived in a house over Aldgate, in the east wall of the City. There he read and wrote, after his day's work at the wool wharf near the Tower.

In 1386 he lost his job due to a change of favor under the new young King Richard II, John of Gaunt's nephew. John of Gaunt was out of the country and new men were in favor, opposed to the king's powerful uncle. Then Chaucer's wife died, and the poet began to devote himself and the rest of his life to organizing and completing *The Canterbury Tales*. In 1389 Richard II decided to favour the poet, making him Clerk of the King's Works responsible, that is, for the building and repair of all the King's properties (the Tower of London, Westminster Palace and eight royal manors). He performed this duty for two years, and then received the sinecure of a forestry officer for Petherton in Somerset. He was over 50, and virtually in retirement. The last year of his life was spent in a new house close to Westminster Abbey, where he died on 25 October 1400, and was buried in the Poets' corner.

Vocabulary

Inner Temple (the) — one of the four voluntary legal societies (Lincoln's Inn, Inner Temple, Middle Temple and Gray's Inn) which have the exclusive privilege of calling candidates to the English bar after they have received such instructions and taken such examinations as the Inns provide

allegory — a symbolical narrative

Boethius — Roman philosopher and statesman (475—525)

King Richard II — king of England (1377—1399)

Wycliffe - English theologian, religious reformer and Biblical translator (1320-1384)

Text B

Chaucer, Geoffrey (1340?—1400). Poet. Born in London, son of John Chaucer, a prosperous wine-merchant, and his wife Agnes. He was in the household of Prince Lionel, Duke of Clarence, by 1357, fought in France 1359—1360, was taken prisoner and ransomed. During the 1360s he probably studied at the Inner Temple and may have visited Spain. About 1366 he married Philippa, whose sister Katherine Swynford was mistress and later third wife of Lionel's brother, John of Gaunt. An esquire of the royal household in 1367, in 1368 he went to France and in 1372—1373 to Italy (where he may have met Petrarch) on diplomatic missions which brought him into contact with continental and Renaissance culture. He had probably begun to write with a translation (some of which survives) of the great French model of psychological allegory, *Le Roman de la Rose*: but his earliest certainly dateable work is *The Book of the Duchess*, an elegy for John of Gaunt's beloved first wife Blanche, who died in 1369. Italian influence appears in *The House of Fame* (?1379—1380). Living in London over Aldgate in 1374—1386, he was first Controller of the customs for wool, and in 1382 also Controller of the petty custom on wines, with a permanent deputy. In 1386 he lost these posts, but represented Kent in Parliament. During these years he translated the classic medieval work on free will and predestination, time and eternity, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, and wrote a number of works, including Troilus and Criseyde and *The Parliament of Fowls*, and some drafts of stories later to appear in *The Canterbury Tales* — whose prologue he seems to have begun in 1387, when it was probably first conceived as a single work. In 1387 he was in trouble for debt, but in 1389 he was appointed (perhaps by the direct influence of King Richard II, who assumed control of affairs in that year) Clerk of the King's Works, a post in which he

was active, and in the performance of which he was assaulted and twice robbed. In 1390, he composed for his 10-year-old son Lewis (a student at Oxford) a scientific work, his *Astrolabe*. In 1391 he resigned the Clerkship, but was made deputy forester in the royal forest of Petherton in Somerset. He was in some trouble for debt between then and his death, but also received a number of grants from Richard II and from John of Gaunt's son Henry IV. He probably died on 25 October 1400, in a house leased by him in the gardens of Westminster Abbey, and he was buried in the Abbey. His son Thomas was also later a distinguished public servant.

Chaucer's interests were all-embracing: he knew the world and read omnivorously. Among his personal friends were such great men as John of Gaunt, poets such as the Frenchman Eustace Deschamps, John Gower and the philosopher-poet Ralph Strode. His face in a contemporary portrait seems shrewd, benevolent and quizzical. He portrays himself in his books as shy, naive, a lover of solitude and daisies, bookish and unhappy in love and marriage. But, though this may represent an aspect of him, the very techniques he uses in self-mockery reveal underlying it a sophisticated artist, a subtle psychologist and a brilliant thinker and master of words. To understand the irony with which he treats himself is to begin to appreciate the humility, sympathy and humor with which he treats the rest of humanity, and indeed the whole universe. As in other books of his time (e. g. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*) this vision has a religious basis in the theology of penitence and self-knowledge: and it issues ultimately in a kind of humor of the sublime.

Answer the questions.

1. Give the main facts of Chaucer's life.
2. What were the sources of Chaucer's creative work?
3. What is his masterpiece?
4. When did Chaucer die?
5. Where was he buried?
6. Describe the framework of the Canterbury Tales.
7. Speak on the characters of the Canterbury Tales as typical representatives of their time.
8. Speak on the subject and forms of the tales.
9. Comment on the state of the English language at the beginning of the 14th century and Chaucer's contribution to the development of the English language.
10. Speak on Chaucer's place in English literature.

**THE SEQUENCE OF TENSES
TEST**

1. She admitted that she the job here a month before.
a) started b) starts c) had started d) would start
2. Jane asked if anybody to the party tonight.
a) go b) would go c) went d) had gone
3. I couldn't believe that Pete English for a year.
a) learns b) learnt c) is learning d) had been learning
4. We got a letter confirming that they to transfer the money as soon as possible.
a) were planning b) plan c) have planned d) would have planned
5. He assured us that the contract the day before.
a) concluded b) was concluded c) had been concluded
6. Jane told me that every summer she English in London, so she had to leave me.
a) studied b) was studied c) will study d) had studied
7. I was worried that the little kid sick after so much sweets.
a) gets b) would get c) will get d) would have got
8. I heard they for our department for three weeks.
a) worked b) have worked c) had been working d) are working
9. It was obvious that he lonely here, with no relatives or friends.
a) is feeling b) was feeling c) feels d) had felt
10. They faxed us informing that they to accept our proposal.
a) decided b) are deciding c) had decided d) have decided
11. A week ago Joe thought that he never In love again. But now it happened.
a) fell b) would fall c) falls d) will fall
12. Ann had to admit that she about that a week before.
a) was informed b) informs c) was informing d) had been informed
13. Yesterday he mentioned they this project at that moment.
a) are supporting b) supported c) were supporting d) had supported
14. I felt he what he had told.

a) regrets b) will regret c) regretted d) had been regretted

15. He admitted that he had committed the crime

a) six months ago b) six months before

16. He answered that he couldn't find him

a) here b) there

17. They promised that letters would be delivered next morning.

a) these b) those

18. I knew that the concert had taken place

a) yesterday b) the previous night

19. I could find out that they were developing a new project

a) at that moment b) now

20. They officially informed us that our father died

a) two months ago b) two months before

KCPN№7. From the history of English Literature.

Make a report on the life and creative work of William Shakespeare. Throw light upon the following questions.

1. When and where was William Shakespeare born?
2. What did his father do?
3. How many children did John and Mary Shakespeare have?
4. What do we know of Shakespeare's education?
5. What must have influenced powerfully the poet's imagination?
6. When did he marry Anne Hathaway? How many children did they have?
7. What do we know about the first period of Shakespeare's life in London?
8. When did he become a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company of actors?
9. When did Shakespeare return to Stratford-on Avon?
10. When did he die?
11. How many plays and sonnets did Shakespeare write?
12. What are the periods of Shakespeare's creative work?
13. Name his best comedies. What are their characteristic features?
14. What is a Shakespeare sonnet?
15. What plays were written in the second and third period?
16. What problems does he present in the tragedies?
17. Talk about the language of Shakespeare's plays.
18. Name the most important phrases which have become part the everyday speech of the English.
19. Comment on Shakespeare's contribution to world literature.

KCPN^o8. *Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift.*

Read and translate the passage from the text.

**Gulliver's Travels
Chapter III**

The Author sent for to Court. The Queen buys him of his master the farmer, and presents him to the King. He disputes with his Majesty's great scholars. An apartment at Court provided for the Author. He is in high favour with the Queen. He quarrels with the Queen's dwarf.

The Queen became so fond of my company, that she could not dine without me. I had a table placed upon the same at which Her Majesty ate, just at her left elbow, and a chair to sit on. Glumdalclitch stood upon a stool on the floor, near my table, to assist and take care of me. I had an entire set of silver dishes and plates, and other necessities, which, in proportion to those of the Queen, were not much bigger than what I have seen of the same kind in a London toy-shop, for the furniture of a baby house these, my little nurse kept in her pocket in a silver box, and gave me at meals as I wanted them, always cleaning them herself. No person dined with the Queen but the two Princesses Royal, the elder sixteen years old, and the younger at that time thirteen and a month. Her Majesty used to put a bit of meat upon one of my dishes, out of which I carved for myself, and her diversion was to see me eat in miniature. For the Queen (who had indeed but a weak stomach) took up at one mouthful as much as a dozen English farmers could eat at a meal, which to me was for some time a very nauseous sight. She 'would craunch the wing of a lark, bones and all, between her teeth, although it were nine times as large as that of a full-grown turkey; and put a bit of bread into her mouth, as big as two twelve-penny loaves. She drank out of a » golden cup, above a hogshead at a draught. Her knives were twice as long as a scythe set straight upon the handle. The spoons, forks, and other instruments were all in the same proportion. I remember when Glumdalclitch carried me out of curiosity to see some of the tables and court, where ten or a dozen of these enormous knives and forks were lifted up together, I thought I had never till-then beheld so terrible a sight.

It is the custom that every Wednesday (which, as I have before observed, was their Sabbath) the King and Queen, with the royal issue-of both sexes, dine together in the apartment of his Majesty, to whom I was now become a great favourite; and at these times my little chair and table were placed at his left hand, before one of the saltcellars. This prince took a pleasure in conversing with me, inquiring into the manners, religion, laws government, and learning of Europe; wherein I gave him the best account I was able. His apprehension was so clear, and his judgment so exact, that he made very wise reflections and observations upon all I said. But, I confess, that after I had been a little too copious in talking of my own beloved country, of our trade, and wars by sea and land, of our schisms in religion, and parties in the state, the prejudices of his education prevailed so far, that he could not forbear taking me up in his right hand, and, stroking me gently with the other, after an hearty fit of laughing, asked me whether I were a Whig or a Tory. Then turning to his first minister, who wailed behind him with a white staff, near as tall as the mainmast of the Royal Sovereign, he observed how contemptible a thing was human grandeur, which could be mimicked by such diminutive insects as I: and yet, said he, I dare engage, these creatures have their titles and distinctions of honour, they contrive little nests and burrows, that they call houses and cities; they make a figure in dress and equipage; they love, they fight, they dispute, they cheat, they betray. And thus he continued on, while my color came and went several times with indignation id hear our noble country, the mistress of arts and arms, the scourge of France, the arbitress; of Europe, the seat of virtue, piety, honor

and truth, the pride and envy of the world, so contemptuously treated.

But as I was not in condition to resent injuries, so, upon mature thoughts, I began to doubt whether I were injured or no. For, after having been accustomed several months to the sight and converse of this people, and observed every object upon which I cast my eyes to be of proportionable magnitude, the horror I had first conceived from their bulk and aspect was so far worn off, that if I had then beheld a company of English lords and ladies in their finery and birth-day clothes, acting their several parts in the most courtly manner, of strutting, and bowing, and prating, to say the truth, I should have been strongly tempted to laugh as much at them as the King and his grandees did at me. Neither indeed could I forbear smiling at myself, when the Queen used to place me upon her hand towards a looking-glass, by which both our persons appeared before me in full view together: and there could be nothing more ridiculous than the comparison; so that I really began to imagine myself dwindled many degrees; below my usual size.

(J. Swift. *Gulliver's Travels*. -London: Penguin Books, 1994.)