

vociferations proceeding from them became once more as insignificant as the clamour of birds. The Flying Island, however, for so I shall continue to call the main bulk of this aerial system, now descended somewhat and moved to a position directly over me, those upon it having perceived my intention or being apprised of it by signals; a chain was let down from the verge, with a seat fastened to the bottom, to which I fixed myself and was drawn up by pulleys into the royal city of Laputa.

## CHAPTER II

AT my alighting my first concern was to inquire of those nearest to me what might be the meaning of the concourse of islands which I had witnessed from below. A civil person of the better quality answered me that these platforms, as he called them, were indeed new-fangled and illegitimate in their nature, being an entrenchment upon the royal prerogative; for, according to the ancient government of that kingdom, the people had no leader but the King himself, and it was not tolerated that his lieutenants or deputies should make for themselves platforms, except it were each in his own garden or park, where he was at home among his proper friends. But of late, as I now heard, it had come to this, so many Ministers, so many platforms, and each of them moving from place to place more rapidly and incessantly than the others, with danger to the State and much injury to private persons. For whereas at my first coming among this people I observed that their heads were all reclined either to the right or the left, with one of their eyes turned downward and the other directly up to the zenith, I was now shown how that the most part were no longer so, but carried their heads at all manner of strange angles, and some even twisted once and twice round upon their necks. And this, as it appeared, had arisen from the efforts which they made to follow the movements, counter-move-