

same time the reader can hardly conceive my astonishment to behold around it in every direction a number of opaque bodies of similar movement and appearance, but smaller in size by many degrees ; and to hear proceeding from all of them a noise which for emptiness and monotony resembled the cawing of rooks or the bleating of sheep.

The principal island had now become stationary at a distance of about two English miles, but the others advanced nearer, and, as though animated by some feeling of emulation, descended upon me all together. This gave me, I confess, some inward motions of alarm, but I soon perceived that their approach was in no way hostile to me. Upon each of them stood a crowd of people surrounding a single individual, who appeared to be in a position of authority, for on looking circumspectly I could see that when he shouted those about him shouted more loudly, and when he raised or lowered his arm they all with one consent waved their hats and handkerchiefs. I found by their gestures that I was plainly visible to all of them, and it soon appeared that it was the determination of each of the leaders that I should join that particular band by which he was surrounded, in order, as I afterwards discovered, that I might add my voice to swell his own peculiar cry ; for I could now distinguish several different noises or notes among them, but mainly two, which I have already described.

I conjectured, however, by the energy which they displayed in their gestures that in proportion as I made myself acceptable to one or other of these parties, so I should be an object of hatred to the rest. I decided, therefore, to attach myself at first to none of them, but to procure a footing, as I had formerly done, upon the principal island itself. I had acquired during my stay there a tolerable proficiency in the language and manners of Laputa, and I now made bold to proclaim in the loudest voice I could command, that my business was with his Majesty the King.

At this the several crowds turned again to their various leaders, and the whole of the smaller islands retired until the