Grade V 5410 Book No. 2

LAPUTA

THE FLOATING ISLAND

By 5410

N. A. VISALAKSHY



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ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
ERNAKULAM

By

N. A. VISALAKSHY

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LAPUTA THE FLOATING ISLAND

By N. A. VISALAKSHY

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PREFACE

Almost all the students of Standard IX might have read books on the visit of Gulliver to the country of Lilliput. This book deals with an account of Gulliver's visit to the countries of Laputa, Maldonado, and Luggnagg. Much care has been taken to maintain the spirit with which Swift has made fun of the scientists.

Publishers.

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1. GULLIVER REACHES LAPUTA

One morning, Robinson, captain of the ship "Hopewell", came to Gulliver's house and expressed his plans about a voyage to the East Indies. He invited Gulliver to be the surgeon of the ship. A descent salary was also offered considering Gulliver's experience in sea affairs.

Though Gulliver had some difficulties to accept the offer, he agreed at last to be the surgeon of the ship. Preparations were soon made and on the fifth of August 1706, they set out.

They took nearly eight months to reach Fort St. George, where they stayed for a few weeks. Their next halt was Tonquin. There they were forced

to stay for a long time for the goods, they had to buy, were not ready. So the captain bought a sloop and loaded it with the goods, he had. Gulliver was appointed master of the sloop and he was asked to set sail in advance.

The sloop sailed smoothly for three days when it was caught in a storm and the wind drifted the sloop away. However the weather became fair on the tenth day. But something worse was to take place. Two pirates were chasing the sloop and they overtook it soon. The pirates boarded the sloop and took Gulliver and others as prisoners.

Gulliver could not understand their language still he knew that the pirates would throw him and his companions into the sea. One of the pirate ships was commanded by a Japanese captain who could speak a little Dutch. Gulliver talked to him in Dutch and

begged for mercy. The captain promised to spare his life. He put Gulliver in a small canoe with paddles and a sail and left him to his fate. The captain had given him provisions for a week.

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Gulliver set up the sail and directed his boat to the islands which he could see at a distance. He landed in one of them which seemed rocky. He could get some bird's eggs there and with that he had his supper.

The next day he sailed to the next island and then to the next. On the fifth day he arrived at the last island. This seemed to be rocky and he landed in a small creak. He spent the night in a cave.

He got up late in the morning. The island seemed to be desolate. There was no sign of human beings anywhere

near. The sun was shining hot. All on a sudden, Gulliver could see something like a cloud between him and the sun. He looked carefully and saw that it was not a cloud. It was something opaqe and it was moving towards the island. It came down nearer and nearer to the earth and then Gulliver could see that it's bottom was flat, smooth and shining. He could see numbers of people moving on its sides. Really it was a big island floating in the air and it was capable of rising and sinking. It's sides were cut like galleries.

Gulliver waved his cap and shouted in a high voice. Soon he was noticed by the people on the floating island. The people crowded on that side and looked at Gulliver with surprise. Four or five men were seen running in haste up the stairs to the top of the island. In about half an hour the

island was moved to such a position that they could see Gulliver and hear him well. They talked to him in a language which he could not understand. Soon they let down a chain with a seat attached to it. Gulliver occupied the seat and the people drew it up by pulleys.

2. THE FLOATING ISLAND

As soon as Gulliver alighted in the island, people crowded round him. Some of them seemed to be of high ranks. They had a peculiar appearance and strange habits. Their heads were inclined either to the right or to the left; one of their eyes turned inward while the other turned up. Their garments were embroidered with the figures of suns, moons, stars, fiddles, flutes and harps.

There were servants among them. The servants always carried in their hands, a short stick with a bladder fastened to it. In each bladder there was a small quantity of peas. Gulliver saw that the servants often slapped the mouths and ears of their masters. At first Gulliver could not understand why they did so. The masters were so immersed in deep thinking that they

could not listen to others. So when they were in company, the servants flapped the mouth of him who was to speak and the ears of him who was to hear.

Soon Gulliver was taken to the top-most Gallery where he saw the king seated on a throne. There was a large table before the king and on it Gulliver could see a number of globes, spheres and mathematical instruments. The king seemed to be thinking deeply and it took nearly an hour for him to notice Gulliver. Just at this time a servant flapped the kings mouth and right ear. Then the king began to ask a number of questions to Gulliver in a language quite strange, nor could the king understand what Gulliver said.

The king asked his servants to take Gulliver to the next room. Dinner was brought in dishes. Mutton, beef

and bread were all cut into the shapes of an equilateral triangle, a rhombus or a parallelogram.

In the course of dinner Gulliver managed to ask the several names of things in their language. This helped him to ask for more bread or drink and such things

Immediataly after the dinner the king sent a tutor to teach Gulliver their language. This continued for a few days and by that time Gulliver became able to speak their language. He learned that the island was called 'Laputa'. Now Gulliver could easily talk with the king.

In the meantime the king gave orders to move the island in the north -east direction to reach the vertical point over Lagado, the capital city of the whole kingdom below, upon the

earth. During their journey towards Lagado, the island stopped above certain towns and villages; so that the king could receive petitions from his subjects. People had to send these petitions by fixing the papers on threads which were hung down from the island.

Quite unlike the men of Laputa their women were not interested in Mathematics,astronomy and such things. On the other hand they had a strong dislike to their husbands. Some of the women even stole themselves to the kingdom on the firm earth and never returned.

3. THE FLOATING ISLAND EXPLAINED

Nearly a month passed after Gulliver's arrival in Laputa. He decided to see the curiosities of the island for which the king granted him permission. His tutor acted as his guide so that he could get full information.

The first thing Gulliver wanted to learn was about the motion of the island. The floating island was exactly circular, its diameter being nearly four and half miles. The bottom of the island was an even plate of adamant. At the centre of the island there was a cave which they called the astronomer's cave. Twenty lamps were continuously burning in this cave and the reflection of these lamps caused a strong light into every part. There was a big

lodestone nearly six yards long, kept in the island. It was by means of this lodestone that the island was made to rise or fall and move from one place to another. The lodestone had an attracting end and a repelling end. When the attracting end faced the earth below, the island descended. On the other hand when the repelling end faced the earth the island ascended. But this island could not be moved beyond the boundaries of the king's dominions below as the movement of the island depended on the lodestone. It's positions were directed by the monarch.

The scientists of Laputa spent most of their time in observing the heavenly bodies. They had powerful telescopes and by using them they had catalogued nearly ten thousand fixed stars and ninety-three comets.

The kingdom below was managed by lords. If any town or village

engaged in rebellion, the king suppressed them by anyone of the following two methods. The fisrt one was to keep the floating island still over the island in order to deprive them of the sunlight and the rain. This will be followed by pelting of great stones. Another method was to let the island drop directly upon the town. This meant total destruction of the town. The second method was seldom used due to two reasons. This might destroy the king's estates and also it may endanger the adamantine bottom of the floating island.

4. ON FIRM GROUND AGAIN

As the people of the island was interested only in Mathematics and music, Gulliver was neglected. He could only talk with the women, tradesmen and the flappers. Naturally Gulliver wished to leave the island. He moved this matter through a lord who was related to the king. The request was granted and Gulliver took leave of the king and his court. At the time of his departure the king gave him some presents and a letter of recommendation to a friend of his in Lagado.

Gulliver was sent down from the lower gallery in the same way as he was taken up. When Gulliver reached the firm ground he walked to the city. He delivered the letter to the king's friend who was a great lord by name

Munnodi. He welcomed Gulliver warmly and entertained him in his house.

In the next morning the lord took Gulliver round the town. Most of the houses were very strangely built and out of repair. The people walked fast and looked wild. Labourers were seen working in the fields with different kinds of tools. But Gulliver found that cultivation was very poor. He could see neither corn nor grass.

The next day the lord took Gulliver to his country house which was some twenty miles away. On reaching the estate Gulliver found that the estate was well-cultivated and well kept.

Gulliver openly asked the lord why his estate looked different from the ill-cultivated land of others. The lord explained the difference thus: A few

years ago some people went to Laputa and returned with a very little smattering in Mathematics and planned to establish a new system of life. They started an Academy of projectors in Lagado. In this Academy professors worked out new rules and methods of agriculture and building construction. They claimed that by following such methods manual labour could be reduced and yields from the ground could be increased, a hundred fold.

When their projects were tried they could not bring it to perfection. As a result the people began to suffer for want of food and clothes. Still the professors were not ready to give up their projects and anyone who criticised the schemes was considered as an enemy of the country. But lord Munnodi was not ready to accept the schemes. Though he was considerd as

an enemy by the authorities of the academy, he maintained his estates in the old level. Now Gulliver expressed his desire to visit the Academy, for he himself was a projector in his younger days. Lord Munnodi soon made arrangements for the visit.

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5. THE ACADEMY

The next day Gulliver was taken to the Academy, where the projectors were at work. It was not a single building, but a street with several houses.

The first projector Gulliver saw, was working to extract sunbeams out of cucumbers. He hoped to supply to the gardens sunshine in sealed vials. But he complained that he was not succeeding for want of encouragement. Gulliver gave him some money and passed on to the next room.

In this room a man was working on a scheme to make gun powder out of ice. Passing on to the next room Gulliver saw an engineer. He had devised a method to build houses by

beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation. He said that the whole idea was based on the work of the bee and the spider.

Another projector claimed that he had found a device for ploughing the ground with hogs. According to him this method was cheaper. His idea was to bury some dates and nuts in the ground and hogs are driven into the field. They would soon root off the ground in search of food. This would give the same effect as of ploughing the soil.

Gulliver was told that the academy was trying to make silk out of spider's web. A number of similar attempts were going on in the academy. It will be too much to describe all those. However a scheme which attracted Gulliver most cannot be left unmentioned. It

was the mathematical school of the Academy.

The master of the school taught his pupils in a strange way. He wrote the theorems and prepositions with a particular kind of ink. The students were asked to swallow the written material. The master claimed that on digestion the ink would carry the matter to the brains of the students. However he did not succeed and according to him the failure was due to the wrong composition of the ink.

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6. IN THE ISLAND OF GLUBDUBDRIB

Now Gulliver began to think of returning home to England. Lord Munnodi arranged for his journey. Two mules were arranged to carry Gulliver's luggage. The Lord gave him rich presents and sent a guide to take Gulliver to the port of Maldonado.

Unfortunately there was no ship in the harbour bound for Luggnagg. Gulliver was told that he had to wait for a month for the next ship. However a gentleman of the place became a friend of Gulliver. He suggested Gulliver to make a visit to the island of Glubdubdrib. It was only five leagues away from the port of Maldonado. A small boat was arranged for Gulliver's journey and Gulliver set

sail to the island with his friend and another companion.

Glubdubdrib was an island of magicians. The Governor of the island possessed uncommon supernatural powers. He was able to call any from the dead and to command their service for twentyfour hours.

On reaching the island Gulliver and his companions went to the Governor's palace. They were taken to the Governor's room where they were given a warm welcome. Rows of guards were seen in the Governor's room. When Gulliver looked at their faces he was filled with horror for they were spirits and not real men. The governor talked to Gulliver and his companions for a long time and requested them to stay with him for a few days. Gulliver was astonished to see that the governor dismissed all

the guards with a turn of his finger. In a moment they vanished. At the request of Gulliver a private house was arranged for their stay. They spent nearly ten days in that island and by this time Gulliver grow familiarised to the sight of the spirits. The governor asked Gulliver to call up a few dead persons by name so that he could ask questions to them. He assured Gulliver that he could rely on the answers fully for lying was of no use to the dead people.

Gulliver took his seat along with the governor in a chamber and first he desired to see Alexander the Great. The governor motioned his fingers and there appeared Alexander the Great.

Gulliver found it very difficult to understand what he said for he spoke in Greek. He assured Gulliver that

he was not poisoned as many people believe, but he died of fever.

Gulliver then desired to see Julius Caesar and the Roman senators. They came into view within a few seconds. Gulliver talked to Caesar and Brutus for some time. They disappeared and Gulliver was able to see some more heroes and learned men of the past. Homer and Aristotle were also called.

The talk with the dead heroes of the past helped Gulliver to realise the truth. He felt that what the historians had recorded was utter falsehood.

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7. GULLIVER IN LUGGNAGG

The day of departure came and Gulliver took leave of the governor of Glubdubdrib and returned to Maldonado. A ship was ready to sail for Luggnagg and Gulliver got on board.

The ship took nearly a month to reach Luggnagg. They cast anchor near the port of Clumegnig. The custom house officer came to the ship and examined the passengers. Gulliver gave a short account of his travels but he pretended that he was a Hollandar, because his idea was to visit Japan. He knew well that the only Europeans permitted to enter that kingdom were the Dutch. The officer kept Gulliver in custody till he received instructions from the court. However the officers arranged a good lodging for Gulliver

and treated him with humanity. In the meanwhile Gulliver hired a young man to be his interpreter, as this youth knew both the languages of Luggnagg and Maldonado.

In a fortnight orders came from the court. The king ordered to take Gulliver to his court. At the appointed time Gulliver was taken to the king's palace. Every visitor of the king had to lick the dust before his foot-stool. Gulliver was commanded to crawl upon his belley and lick the floor as he advanced. But as it was the case of a stranger the floor was made clean But in the case of those who had powerful enemies at court the floor would be strewed with dust. Visitors were not allowed to wipe their mouths in his majesty's presence, as it was supposed to be criminal. There was another custom in that country. When

the king desired to put any of his nobles to death, he ordered to put a kind of brown poisonous powder on the floor, which being licked up, killed the person.

After this formality Gulliver raised himself gently upon his knees and spoke to the king. The king asked him a number of questions and at Gulliver's reply he was much pleased. The king liked Gulliver much and asked him to stay in his palace for a few months. The invitation was accepted and Gulliver stayed there for nearly three months.

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8. BACK TO ENGLAND

At the time of Gulliver's departure the king honoured him with a letter of recommendation under his own hand, to the Emperor of Japan. He gave Gulliver five hundred large pieces of gold.

Gulliver managed to get a vessel bound to Japan and in about fifteen days he reached Xamoschi in Japan. When the authorities of the town saw the recommendation letter, they received Gulliver as a very important person. They took him to the emperor who too welcomed Gulliver warmly.

Gulliver with the help of an interpreter told the emperor that he was a Hollander, shipwrecked in a distant country. He requested his majesty to help him to reach his country. The

king promised to help him and soon arrangements were made for Gulliver's journey to Nangasac.

Here Gulliver fell into company with some Dutch sailors bound to Holland. The captain of the ship was happy to know that Gulliver was a surgeon and he was ready to take Gulliver at half the usual rate. They took a few months to reach Amsterdam.

From Amsterdam Gulliver set sail to England and on 16th April 1710 he reached his native country to see his wife and family, in good health.

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QUESTIONS

Chapter 1.

1) Why was a decent salary offerd to Gulliver ?
2) Why was the ship forced to stay for a long time in Tonquin ?
3) What happened to the sloop under the charge of Gulliver ?
4) What was the punishment given to Gulliver by the pirates ?
5) What was it that appeared like a cloud to Gulliver ?
6. How did Gulliver reach the floating island ?

Chapter 2.

1. Why did the people of the floating island look peculiar ?
2. What was the work of the flappers ?
3. How did Gulliver understand the taste of the islanders in mathematics and music ?
4. How did the king receive petitions from his subjects below ?

Chapter 3

1. How did the island float? And how was it controlled ?
2. What do you know about the scientists of Laputa ?

3. How did the king punish a town or village engaged in rebellion?

Chapter 4

1. Why did Gulliver wish to leave the island?
2. Why did the estate of Lord Munnodi look better?
3. What according to Lord Munnodi was the reason for the failure of the projectors?

Chapter 5

1. Give a brief account of the project planned to extract sunbeams out of cucumbers?
2. What was the new device for ploughing soil?
3. Give a brief account about the new way of teaching in the mathematical school and what according to them was the reason for the failure?

Chapter 6

1. What was the supernatural power of the Governor of Glubdubdrib?
2. Why was Gulliver filled with fear when he saw the guard?
3. What according to Alexander the Great, was the reason for his death?

Chapter 7

1. Why did Gulliver pretend to be a Hollander?

2. What was the peculiar custom in the palace of the king of Luggnagg
3. How did the king use this custom to kill his enemies?

Chapter 8

1. Why did authorities of Xamoschi treat Gulliver as a very important person?
2. How did Gulliver reach back his native country?

WORD LIST

CHAPTER 1.

Surgeon	=a doctor
Sloop	=a light boat
Pirates	=sea-robbers
Canoe	=a small boat
Paddle	=an oar
desolate	=lonely
Opaque	=a thing that will not allow light to pass through

CHAPTER 2.

Peculiar	=strange
to slap	=to give a gentle blow
immerse	=to engage
beef	=flesh of the ox as food
Rhombus	=an equilateral four-sided figure

CHAPTER 3.

adamant	=a very hard substance
loadstone	=a magnetic iron ore

monarch = king
to catalogue = to arrange as a systematic list.
comet = a heavenly body with a luminous tail.
pelt = throw repeatedly

CHAPTER 4.

smattering = shallow
projector = one who promotes schemes
a hundred folds = a hundred times
maintain = to keep up a standard

CHAPTER 5.

vile = mean
devise = to compose
hogs = a kind of pig
dates = a kind of fruit found in Arabia.

CHAPTER 6.

mules = a kind of ass
supernatural = spiritual
vanish = disappear
familiar = to have a thorough knowledge
rely = to be trustworthy

CHAPTER 7.

interpretor = one who translates between two parties.
appointed time = time fixed early
strew = to scatter loosely.

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