

## The Gull's Hornbook

If your worm-eaten father be dead and hath left you 500 pound a year to keep you and an Irish horse-boy like a gentleman, listen to this.

First, have the softest largest down bed; and never rise till your belly grumbles. Midday slumbers are golden: they make the body fat, the skin fair, the flesh plump, delicate and tender. They make a russet colour on the cheeks of young maids and cause lusty courage to rise up in young men. Besides they save us the price of breakfast and preserve our clothes; for while we are warm in our beds, our clothes are not worn.

Next, walk up and down your chamber in a bare shirt or stark naked. If the morning thrust her frosty fingers into your bosom pinching you black and blue with her nails made of ice, creep into the chimney corner and toast yourself till the fat dew of your body trickles down your sides. For then you may say that "You live by the sweat of your brows!"

Then dress yourself. Good clothes are the embroidered trappings of pride. The Spanish slop, the skippers galligaskin, the Switzer's blistered cod piece, the Danish sleeve, the French standing collar, your stiff necked rebatoes, your stockings and your shoes.

For your hair, never allow a comb to fasten its teeth there, but let it grow bushy like a forest or some wilderness, lest those six footed creatures that breed in it are hunted to death, and that delicate pleasure of scratching be taken from you. Besides a head all hid in hair, gives to even the most wicked face, sweet proportion. And put feathers in your hair as do gallants in their hats, for then none can accuse you of sleeping in a field like a beggar, for your feathers prove you have lain on the softest down bed.

Next, to Paul's walk go. But be sure to pick an hour when the main shoal of Islanders are swimming up and down. Be sure to walk in the middle where you may publish your fine suit of clothes. If perchance you should meet a knight of your acquaintance, do not name him Sir such-and-such, but call out Ned or Jack, as this will mightily impress everyone. Before leaving Pauls set your watch by the clock, and if you are hungry you must off to the ordinary. Go in a coach, if possible, to hide from your creditors.

Being arrived in the room, walk up and down as scornfully and carelessly as possible. Select some friend, dressed worse than you, to walk up and down with you. If you but make noise, and laugh in the fashion and have a sour face to promise quarrelling, you shall be much observed. Talk as loud as you can, no matter to what purpose. If you have languages, this is an excellent occasion to show them; if not get some fragments of French or small parcels of Italian, to fling about the table. Never be silent but say how often this lady hath sent her coach for you, or how often you have sweat in the tennis-court with that great lord. After manfully devouring your stewed mutton, goose, or woodcocks, you must ask some special friend of yours to talk with you in the withdrawing room, where you may enquire about which new poems or pamphlets a man might think best to wipe his tail with? In asking this, you may abuse the works of any man, deprave his writings, which you cannot equal, and purchase in time the terrible name of severe critic. Next to dice, and if you lose not your suit of clothes, you must to the theatre.

Once you have paid your pennies to enter, stay not with the groundlings with their garlic sausage and stink, nor go not to the balconies where much new satin is dammed by being smothered in darkness, but advance yourself to the throne of the stage, where like a feathered ostrich you may ignore the hoots and hisses of the scarecrows who spit at you, yea who throw dirt even in your teeth: for by sitting on the stage the essential parts of the gallant are perfectly revealed - good clothes, a proportional leg, a white hand, a tolerable beard.

On the stage you can so rail against the author that you can force him to know you. For doth not the fool, the Justice-of-the-Peace, the cuckold, the captain, the Lord Mayor's son, the stinkard, or the sweet smelling courtier, have equal voice in the play's life and death? Be sure to laugh so high that all the house may hear during the saddest scenes of the terriblest tragedy. If the writer perchance be a fellow who hath flirted with your mistress, or hath epigrammed you, or hath brought your red beard or your little legs on stage, you may disgrace him worse than stabbing him in the tavern, if during the middle of the play you rise with screwed and discontented face from your stool and be gone. And sneak not away, but draw what troop you can with you. The actors will thank you for allowing them elbow-room. And to conclude hoard up what play-scrap you can for the ordinary, the tavern, or your mistress. Then to the tavern.

To choose a tavern enquire out whose masters are most drunk (for that confirms their wholesome wines.) Confine not yourself to any one particular liquor, but partake of all. It is not fitting a man should trouble his head with sucking at one grape, but that he may be able to drink any stranger drunk in his own element.

Keep a boy in fee who underhand shall proclaim in every room what a gallant fellow you are, how much you spend yearly in taverns, what a great gamester, what witty discourse you maintain at table, what gentlewomen or citizen's wives you may have sup with you at any time. Thus all will admire you and think it paradise to be merely in your acquaintance

When the spirit of wine and tobacco walks in your brain, the tavern-door being shut upon your back, hire that boy to be as a lantern to your feet to light you on your way home. On all the way, especially near some gate, talk of none but lords and ladies. Haply, it will be blown abroad that you swam through such an ocean of wine, that you danced so much money away, it will be known, and you will be held in great estimation.

The only danger is if you owe money and your creditors hear of these tales, for they will be thundering at your chamber door the next morning. To counter this, send out your horse-boy for your apothecary. He will contrive such tales of your sickness, that they will be driven into their holes like foxes. Well that is it. A day in my life!