

IV. *A Letter from Dr William Oliver to the Publisher, giving his Remarks in a late Journey into Denmark and Holland.*

THe Colleges and Schools in *Copenhagen*, both as to their Structure and Foundations, are very ordinary : The best I saw there was the Gift of the Learned *Borichius*, and consists of twelve Apartments for as many Students, which are conveniently provided with Stoves for their manner of living in that cold Country. There is in it a small School for publick Exercises, and a little Library belonging to their Colledge ; the rest of the Students, except one hundred maintained by the King in small Colleges, live at Lodgings in the City, as at *Leyden* and other Universities abroad, who when the *Swedes* threaten'd them with a Bombardment in the year 1700, formed themselves into a Batallion, and did Duty there, all the while the Enemy was on the Island of *Zealand*. There are in this University, erected about two hundred years ago, about a thousand Students, and sometimes they have had near fifteen hundred.

The University Library, over one of their Churches, in one large Room, consists of several Libraries, the Gift of particular men which are kept apart, with the Benefactors names over them in Capital Letters. The Royal Library, belonging to the King, consists of a great variety of Books, well condition'd and well chosen, of all Languages ; the Books of each Country being placed by themselves : The Room is large and well built, and has a large Gallery supported by Pillars on each side. If *Gudius's* Library at *Gluckstadt* be added to this, as I was told it wou'd, this Library may

may be reckon'd of the first Rank of the *European* Libraries.

The Kings Chambers of Rarities are in all eight, large and well built over the Royal Library : They are furnished with great variety of Natural and Artificial Curiosities. The first contains Coins and Medals, Gold and Silver ; Modern and Antique ; *Græcian, Roman, Danish* and *Oldenburgh* ; besides other *European* Nations, distinctly kept by themselves, which make altogether a very valuable Collection. Amongst the Natural Curiosities which are in the other Chambers, the most remarkable are ;

1. The Petrified Child : This is the same Child that *Bartholine* makes mention of in his *Hist. Anat. Paræus, Licetus de Monstris, &c.* who at large will acquaint you with the History. This happen'd at *Sens* in *Champaign*, anno 1582. when it was Cut out of its Mother's Belly, where it was supposed to have lain about eight and twenty years.

That it's an Humane *Fetus*, and not Artificial, is visible to our Eye. The upper part of it is of a Gypseous Nature, not so hard as the lower, the Thighs and Buttocks being hard and perfect Stone as can be, of a Red Colour, and of a Grain and Superfice exactly like those I have seen taken out of the Bladder. I had the Curiosity to have it near me ; and touch'd and felt it all over. This was convey'd first to *Paris*, and there bought by a Goldsmith of *Venice* ; from whom at *Venice*, *Frederick* the Third, King of *Denmark*, purchas'd it, and added it to his Rarities.

2. Two Elephants Teeth, that weigh an hundred and fifty pounds apiece.

3. Several Heads of Hares, with divers sort of Horns, brought out of *Saxony*.

4. An Egg, said to be laid by a Woman, of the ordinary size of a Pullets Egg. This *Ol. Wormius* tells us was sent him by very good hands, and Confirm'd by people of Credit : He tells us, the Woman brought forth two, with the

the usual Child-bed-labour Pains ; her Neighbours being call'd in to her assistance, the first they broke, and found a Yolk and a White, as in that of a Hen ; the second was kept and sent to him. *Vid. Mus. Worm. p. M. 312. Jo. Rhod. Cent. 3. obs. 57.*

5. The Horn of a Sea Unicorn, or *Monoceros*, so called by the Learned, because supposed to have but one : But sometimes more are found to grow out of the upper Jaw ; and I was credibly informed at *Copenhagen*, that one *Koens*, a *Hamburger*, brought home from *Greenland* the Head of one of these with two Horns on it. And when I saw this, and Examined it well, I found this Horn (part of the Head and upper Jaw being brought home with it,) not to grow out of the Middle, but Left side of the upper Jaw ; so that 'tis probable there was a fellow, and then they may be said more properly to be his Teeth or Tusks than his Horns : Whither this was only a *Lusus Naturæ* or no, or naturally these carry only one Horn, as they are represented in the Cuts and Figures our Naturalists give us of them, I shall not determine.

6. Several pieces of Gold Oar very rich, and some almost fine, dug out of the Mines of *Norway* and *Hungary*.

7. Several large pieces of Silver Oar, dug also out of the Mines of *Norway*, one of which weigh'd five hundred and sixty pounds, *anno* 1666, five foot and six inches long, and four foot about, valued at five thousand Crowns : Another from *Norway*, also valued at three thousand two hundred seventy two Crowns. I observ'd a great many Silver Threads or Trees sprouting out of these two pieces, and fancy the whole Mass had not above a fourth part of any baser Metal, Mineral or Earth mixt with it. There are several of these Silver Ramifications or Trees, all from *Norway*, which I take to be Virgin Silver and pure Metal.

8. A great variety of very large pieces of Amber ; some dug out of the Island of *Anaker* near *Copenhagen*, and some when they were opening the Ditches for the Fortifications of

of *Copenhagen* : Some of these weigh about forty or fifty ounces, and were found every where sticking fast to pieces of black Timber like Ebony. Whither Amber be of the Vegetable or Mineral Kingdom, would be too long a dispute at present to be determin'd ; all I shall say at this time on this matter is, That the Observations I made, when in *Poland* and *Prussia*, where I have seen great quantities fished out of the Sea every day, and dug out the Earth, incline me to the former ; nor can I conceive how those Animals, that are found intomb'd in Amber, and are most of them, if not all, Inhabitants of the surface of the Earth, shou'd be caught in it, if it were only a Liquid when in the Bowels of the Earth.

9. A numerous Collection of very large Branches of Coral, White and Red, and one Black.

10. A large pair of Stags Horns growing out of a piece of Wood, after a very strange manner.

11. Another Branch of a Stags Horn, with a large piece of Wood naturally adhering to the top of it ; the top of the Horn piercing the very body of the Wood, and growing some Inches beyond it.

12. A Sheep, with a Horn growing out of its side about a foot long.

13. I measured the Thigh-bone of a Humane Body I suppose, that was three foot and three inches long ; the Head was two foot and five inches round, and the middle of it was nineteen inches and a half about.

14. Two very large Scollop Shells, that weigh two hundred twenty four pounds each.

15. A piece of Marble, with a Natural representation of a Crucifix on its outside, mightily valued by the *Lutherans*. And I remember Dr *Hartman*, who wrote *de Succino Prussico*, in the year eighty five, shew'd me at *Königsberg* in *Prussia*, a piece of Whitish Amber, having a Woman with a Child in her Arms, prettily represented by variety of Colours on the Superfice ; I suspected it to be Artificial,

al, but he assured me the contrary, and kept it very Religiously.

There were besides these a great many more Natural Rarities, which my short stay there would not permit me to examine.

Among the Artificial Curiosities,

I observ'd,

1. A Skeleton made of Ivory in imitation of a Humane Skeleton, two foot and six inches long, so Artificially and Curiously put together, that any one well skill'd in Osteology may take it for a Natural one.

2. Two Crucifixes of Ivory, with the whole History of our Saviour's Passion, extremely well carved and exprest, and are both a very pretty Curiosity: I saw there a great variety of Nicknacks made of Ivory, curiously wrought on the outside: A small Man of War of Ivory, with Silver Guns in it; several small Sloops and Galleys of the same, and one of the Unicorns-Horn, with a Gold Anchor.

3. A Watch made of Ivory, with all its Wheels and Motions. Several other Utensils made of Ivory and Unicorns Horn, prettily Carved and Turn'd: Besides some others of Ebony, Heart Oak, Box, Amber, Silver, Brass, &c. which are kept together for the Curiosity of the Workmanship.

4. In another Chamber there is nothing but the Garments, Arms, and Utensils of *Indians, Turks, Greenlanders*, and other Barbarous Nations, which for their number and Variety entertain the Eye with a very agreeable Pleasure.

5. A Perspective of the late King of *Denmark's* Family, the Queens Face being in the middle, and eight Princes and Princesses round her, yet all Club to make the Face of the King, thro a hole of a Glass Tube.

6. Six Golden Sepulchral Urns, found in the Island of *Fueneren*, anno 1685. by a Boor there, as he was plowing his Land; they were full of Ashes or a greyish Earth when found. The biggest is two ounces and a half, the other five about two ounces and a drachm. This confirms the accounts given us by *Saxo Grammaticus*, *Olaus Wormius* and others, that it was a very ancient Custom among the Northern Nations to burn their Dead, and then bury their Collected Ashes in Golden Urns. They were very thin, and had three Rings of Gold round their Necks, and several Circles one within another, with one Common Center carv'd on the outside round the body of the Urn. They held between four and five ounces of Liquids.

7. Another Sepulchral Urn of Crystal, of a Conical figure, found near *Bergen* in *Normay* about thirty years since, with a Gold Wire about it, that weighs eight ounces.

8. I saw in another Chamber several *Urne Lachrymales*, in which were collected the Tears of Friends, which afterwards the old *Romans* mix'd with the Ashes of the Dead: These were some of Glass, and some of Earth, and of several sizes. Brass Lamps of several Magnitudes and Shapes; some of other Metals, others of Earth, in the Shape of Animals or Idols, that were worshipp'd by the Antients. The *Stilus Aeneus* of the *Romans*, the one end sharp, the other blunt, the first to write with, the other to rub out what was written.

9. The large *Danish* Horn of pure Gold, weighs an hundred two ounces and an half, is two foot and nine inches long, and holds about two quarts of our measure: This Horn was found anno 1639. accidentally by a Country Girl in the Diocese of *Rippon* in *Jutland*: 'Tis, no doubt, some *Runick* piece of great Antiquity by the Figures carv'd on the outside, which seem to be Hieroglyphicks, Monstrous Shapes of Devils, Hobgoblins, &c. perhaps some of these might represent their Gods, and probably this Horn was used in their Sacrifices, as of old among the *Assyrians* and

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other ancient Nations, who were wont on Solemn occasions to Entertain the Croud with mighty noises of Horns and Trumpets, or rather to drink out of at their Solemn Treats.

10. The *Oldenburg* Horn of pure Silver, gilt with Gold, and variously Enamell'd with Green and Purple Colours, and weighs about four pounds. The *Danish* Antiquaries tell us strange Fabulous Stories of this Horn, which I shall omit at present; only observing, that whereas they say this Horn was given to Earl *Otho* of *Oldenburg*, anno 989, by the Workmanship of it 'tis plain it cannot be of that date; for the Figures and Characters Engrav'd and Emboss'd on its outside are Modern; which, with the Enamelling and other Ornaments, all curiously done, please the sight mightily, and make a very fine, as well as valuable Curiosity. I found in the same Chamber a great many Horns of this kind, some in Metal, some of *Bullocks* Horns tipp'd with Gold about the Edges, others of *Ivory*, *Unicorns* Horns, &c. all prettily wrought on the outside with a great variety of Emblematical Fancies, according to the humours of those Countries and Times they were made in; which were so many Cups to drink out of at their Solemn Entertainments; and this of *Oldenburg* was finer than the rest, because design'd for the Royal Table. 'Tis said to be made by Command of *Christian* the First, who lived in the fifteenth Century, and did it in honour of the three Kings of *Cullein*.

I went one day ashore on the Island of *Weenen*, which our Sailors call *Scarlet Island*, from a Tradition, that *Q. Eliz.* offer'd as much *Scarlet Cloath* for it as wou'd cover it. This Island is now an appendix to *Schonen* in *Sweden*, not above half a league from the Main Land. Here I observ'd the Ruins of *Tycho Brahe's* Castle, which he built on this Island, given him by King *Ferdinand*, who supplied him with Money for the carrying it on in the year 1567. This Castle was built in the middle of the Island, but is now demolish'd,

molish'd, and quite raz'd to the Ground, and all the Vaults and Under-ground Works fill'd up except the large Observatory, which *Cassendus* tells us, in the Life of this Noble Dane, was distinguish'd from all the rest of his Apartments under-ground, that were very many, by a solid round Stone Wall, part of which remains still. This was his great Observatory, and was call'd by him *Stellæburgum*, or the City of Stars; as the Castle was *Uraniburgum*, or the City of the Heavens. The Situation was pleasant no doubt, it being on a very little rising ground, in the middle of a plain Island, not above three miles round. The same Author tells us, the King of *Denmark's* Liberality was so great towards this Learned man, that the best Workmen were employ'd about it, and every thing well contriv'd both for pleasure and conveniences of room, for Instruments and Astronomical Observations above and under ground, besides noble Gardens, Fish-ponds and a Park: But the Fate of War between *Sweden* and *Denmark*, sometimes one being Master, and sometimes the other, of this Island, no one Stone is left of this Magnificent Superstructure. His Instruments, that were very fine, are now scatter'd up and down in *Germany*, and some few remain in *Copenhagen*; his own Cœlestial Globe I saw there in the *Rown* Tower, which was six foot and three quarters in Diameter.

This Tower was built 1601. for the making Astronomical Observations, near the Royal College in *Copenhagen*, and is above a hundred and fifty foot high, whose Area on the top is sixty foot diameter: The passage up to it is large enough for two Coaches, and the Ascent so easie and hardly perceivable, that it serv'd for a place of Parade for their Gentry, when they had a mind to take the Air in their Coaches, riding up to the top, and so round the Ring, as well as for an Observatory.

But Monsieur *Romer*, the great Mathematician and Astronomer of the present Age, has converted the upper part of this Tower now to other uses, where in a dark Room he

has his Instruments for observation. Here I saw his Machine for observing the Stars by day : There is a Pole eight or ten foot long, erected perpendicular in the Center of an Equinoctial Plain ; on the top of this Pole is fasten'd a Telescope, not much above three foot long, which runs thro' the Roof of the Chamber, whose Elevation is directed by an Astronomical Dial upon the Equinoctial Plain, with an Index fitted to it for that purpose, which determines it to the Star he has a mind to observe at any time.

He is said to be the Inventer of two other Machines of great artifice and use : By the one he will shew at any time the Station of any Planet, according to the *Copernican* Hypothesis ; by the other he will demonstrate all the Eclipses of Sun or Moon past or to come.

There is besides all these, in the Kings House in the Garden at *Copenhagen*, a Royal Throne all of Unicorns Horn, on which all the Kings of *Denmark* are seated at their Coronation ; but this, when I was there, with the rest of the Regalia, was secured and carried away, because they wou'd have been too much expos'd had the King of *Sweden* Bombarded this Town, as it was fear'd, when he landed on the Island, being but a little within the Wall towards the Land side.

In the year 1685. I was at *Koningsberg* in *Prussia*, where I saw the Knife which was swallow'd by a *Prussian* Boor ; who being Crop-sick one morning, thrust the Haft of his Knife down his Throat, in order to make himself discharge what offended his Stomach ; but forcing the Knife too far, it slipt down his Gullet into his Stomach : from whence it was taken out by an Incision on the Left side, a little below the Short Ribs, with that success, that he lived several years after it in very good health. This happen'd in the year 1635. The Operation was perform'd by Dr *Daniel Swab*, a Physician and Surgeon, and the Knife is kept in a Velvet Bag in the King of *Prussia's* Library, where I saw it. I measured it by an *English* Foot Rule I had then in my Pocket,

Pocket, and found it to be of our measure but six Inches and about a half long, as 'tis express'd in the Cuts given us of it. What their Authors mean, by saying the Knife was *decem transversos digitos longum*, I don't know; but this has made the Story ridiculous to a great many people, who will hardly be perswaded, that any body can pass through the *fornix palati*, or Vault of his Mouth, a Knife of that length in a right line.

I made enquiry concerning it, and was very well assured by several people of the Town the matter of fact was true; and 'tis hard to think, the King of *Poland*, who was then at *Koningsberg*, the Government of the City, and the College of Physicians, who were consulted upon the Operation; and, together with his *Polish* Majesty, were Eye-witnesses of it, shou'd by the Certificates they have publish'd of it in Print, Contrive to impose a Cheat upon the World. And I remember, talking one day with one Mr *Taylor*, a *Scotch* Merchant in *Koningsberg*, he told me, that *Andrew Grunheide*, for that was the mans name, was his particular Friend and Acquaintance; that he saw his Wound several times when his Surgeons dress'd him, and was Godfather to one or two of his Children after his Recovery.

When I was last in *Amsterdam*, I had the Curiosity to go to a Tavern, where the Master was very Curious in Birds, and had a great variety of some very uncommon ones; amongst which, in a Chamber by itself, he shou'd me a Cage with a Bird in it a little bigger than a Capon, which he valued as a great Rarity, and told me it cost him near a hundred pounds Sterling: He takes a Groat from every body that is admitted to see it. I must needs say I never saw a more beautiful Creature in all my life; in Body somewhat like a Hawk, but its Head and Neck bald like a Vulture, only a few short Feathers over his Eyes like Eye-brows, his Eyes were pretty large, and the *Iris* of a very fine bright Pearl Colour, which gave a great beauty to this Bird. The Colour

Colour of his Feathers is so curiously mixt with that variety that no Painter can imitate them, and entertains the Eye with a great deal of pleasure : His Bill and Head in shape are more like the Eagle than the Vulture, tho I take it to be of the kind of the latter, but of the lesser sort.

This Bird came from *Carthagena* in *America*, and may be describ'd thus : *Vultur Americanus minor Carthagenæ Corpore Eleganti & plumis admodum Concinne variegatis*. I presume this Bird can hardly be of the same kind with those *Vulturs* *Monardes* tells us of in the Islands near *Lima* in *Peru*, that prey'd on their living Cattel in the Fields, if not carefully watch'd by their Keepers.

I did not see the Cherry-stone in the King of *Denmark's* Cabinet, which I was told had some hundreds of Heads engraved on the outside of it ; but I remember an *English* Gentleman shew'd me once in *Holland*, in the year 87, a Cherry-stone of this kind with a hundred and twenty four Heads on the outside of it, so that you might distinguish with the naked Eye, Popes, Emperors, Kings and Cardinals, by their Crowns and Mitres. 'Twas bought in *Prussia*, where it was made for three hundred pounds *English*, and is now in *London*, there having been a Law-suit not long since commenc'd about it in *Chancery*. Whither this or any Artificial Curiosities before-mention'd of Ivory, &c. may compare with *Homer* in a Nutshell ? or the Ivory Ants and other small Creatures said to be made by *Callicrates*, whose parts were so very small, that no body cou'd see them, so as to distinguish one from another, but he that made them ? or the Ivory Chariot made by *Mermecides*, which a Fly cover'd with his Wing, and a Ship of the same hid under the Wing of a Bee ? And if those things be true, as *Pliny* and *Solinus* tells us, whether the Ancients have not out-done us in such kind of Impertinencies, I submit to your Judgment.