

IN SEARCH OF GULLIVER©

Graham Harris (Civil 1958-61 & 62-63)

Almost everyone has heard of, if not read, the famous classic *Gulliver's Travels*, the authorship of which is attributed to Jonathan Swift.

The first edition of this satirical masterpiece appeared in two volumes in October, 1726, published by Benjamin Motte, London, with the title *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Lemuel Gulliver, first a Surgeon and then a Captain of Several Ships*. It was the fashion of the age to write under a nom-de-plume, and Jonathan Swift was no exception, for rarely did he put his name to any of his own works, one of his least being *A Project for the Advancement of Religion* (1709). However, attributing Swift with the sole authorship of *Gulliver's Travels* appears to be based on shaky ground, which warrants a reconsideration of Swift's role in its authorship. There now appears to have been an actual 'Gulliver', one who, if he did not actually pen *Gulliver's Travels* himself, most assuredly aided its composition.



One of the main arguments for Swift's authorship is based on the fact that in Armagh, Northern Ireland, there exists a first edition of *Gulliver's Travels*, the pages of which carry extensive deletions, notations and additions to the text, executed in Swift's own hand. This certainly suggests Swift played a major part in the revision of the text, but it cannot be accepted as conclusive evidence that he, and he alone, wrote it.

An equally enigmatic publication appeared two years earlier to *Gulliver's Travels*. In May 1724 Charles Rivington published, in conjunction with two associates, Lacy and Stone, a book titled *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* by Captain Charles Johnson. The book was an instant best-seller, for within a few months it had sold out. A second edition was published that same year and others followed in quick succession. The book is still reprinted on a regular basis, its popularity remaining undiminished over the years. It was the first pirate biography ever written, and is still considered the basic reference for numerous books, plays and films carrying piratical themes. But who was Captain Charles Johnson? His true identity has baffled the literary world for almost three centuries. For a time opinion favoured Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*. The argument favouring Defoe's authorship was finally abandoned in 1988, though the title is still ascribed to him in catalogues.

The argument that 'Captain Charles Johnson' was a cunning pseudonym masking dual authorship, was first advanced in *Treasure and Intrigue: The Legacy of Captain Kidd*. Space prevents that argument being reproduced here, but in essence it was concluded that the *General History*, for the sake of brevity, was written by Captain Charles Atkins and Stella Johnson. Stella was the woman who won the heart of Jonathan Swift at a very tender age, but whether they married, or whether that marriage was ever consummated, has intrigued the literary world ever since. Captain Charles Atkins, on the other hand, had a very chequered career and, since his travels in the east occupy the same time frame as Gulliver, there is a strong hint his adventures inspired the writing of *Gulliver's Travels*, and that he is 'Lemuel Gulliver'. From this it should not be assumed he encountered little people no bigger than his thumb, giants who could hold him in

the palm of their hand, flying islands, or horses that talked.

The reader of *Gulliver's Travels* will note the text begins with biographical information relating to Gulliver, information which is totally irrelevant to the satirical thrust of the tale. It has been claimed this was introduced by Swift to impart a sense of reality to the story. This is absurd in a tale about pygmies, giants, and horses that talk! Reality is an ingredient noticeable by its absence in *Gulliver's Travels* which more appropriately, perhaps, might have begun with the phrase "Once upon a time." What this suggests, therefore, is that the biographical information regarding Gulliver could be substantially correct, and valid reasons may have existed as to why he should have wished to mask, but not entirely obliterate, his true identity. Gulliver may have thought to tease or challenge the reader by presenting this information in the way he chose.

It is often said truth is stranger than fiction! It is this man - the man who was Gulliver - that I wish to place before you the reader. As I write the portrait of Gulliver is by no means complete; there remains a great deal to accomplish before his dusty bones are fully fleshed out, if they ever can be as the archival evidence is fragmentary. The names of Charles Atkins and Gulliver are used synonymously in that which follows.

The Early Years

Gulliver's Travels begins with the phrase "My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the third of five sons". Charles Atkins was indeed the third son of Sir Jonathan Atkins, who during his life was Governor of Guernsey (1664/5-1670) and Governor of Barbados (1674-1680). It is not known whether Sir Jonathan had a small estate in Nottinghamshire before he married in 1642, but he likely had a large one afterwards, for he married Mary Howard of Naworth Castle (Cumbria), thereby marrying into one of the most powerful and influential families in England, if not the most powerful and influential. The Howards were foremost among the nobility of the age, holding the dukedom of Norfolk and the earldom of Arundel among other many vast estates in England. The titles they bore were long and ponderous.



Charles appears to have been born at Worksop Manor, Nottinghamshire. Due to the English Civil War there is a gap in church records from 1641 to 1663, and the exact date of his birth has not yet been ascertained. Sketches of the manor, made before it was consumed by fire in October 1761, indicate it to have been immense - a veritable palace with over 500 rooms. Charles Atkins was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth - it was a huge golden ladle! His uncle was Henry Howard, the Sixth Duke of Norfolk and Earl Marshal of England. He was indeed fortunate to have such an uncle, premier duke of England connected to the blood royal, for the Duke was well positioned to extricate his erring nephew from the countless misdoings that were to befall him.

Under such fortuitous circumstances of birth it is natural for Charles to have had a good education, being privately tutored before being sent to university to properly equip him for a position fitting his noble birth. Gulliver claims in his *Travels* to having been sent to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, at the age of fourteen. It has been impossible to verify Atkins having attended as colleges took in scholars for private schooling who were not admitted in the normal way, or did not graduate, and consequently the records are scant. However, Cambridge University appears to have been full of Howards during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

with St. John's College boasting more than its fair share, though other colleges were well represented. Some of the Howards achieved fame in war and politics, others were executed on Tower Hill, and as a family they were extremely colourful. Charles Atkins, under more favourable circumstances, might have achieved fame rather than notoriety.

Emmanuel College as a place of education for Gulliver is meaningful, for it was the college attended by Sir William Temple in the years 1644-46, a most virtuous gentleman who features in this tale. Henry Howard, the future Sixth Duke of Norfolk, and his two brothers, were admitted to St. John's College in June 1640, the eldest being thirteen years of age. They were likely, therefore, to have been contemporaries of Temple being boys of a similar age. There is, therefore, nothing unusual in Gulliver's claim that he was sent to Cambridge at the age of fourteen.

The Navy

In view of his scandalous behaviour in the navy it is understandable why Atkins (or Gulliver) should be silent on this period of his life. Any disclosure of his identity would certainly have let the 'cat out of the bag' regarding authorship, whether of the *Travels* or the *General History*. Anonymity served to protect him as equally as it did the reputation of the Howard family, for he was to tarnish the family name.

Charles Atkins joined the navy in February 1671/72 on resumption of Anglo-Dutch hostilities. He was appointed a second lieutenant under Sir John Kempthorne, commander of the *Victory*, a second rater of 1038 tons, 84 guns and 530 men. If, as Gulliver claims in his *Travels*, he spent three years at Emmanuel College and joined the navy directly thereafter, he would have been seventeen years old. This would make his date of birth about 1654. The pay book of the *Victory* reflects Atkins's noble connections, for his name is listed directly beneath that of Kempthorne. As pay books tended to reflect distinctions in seniority as well as class it is certain Atkins was no ordinary officer. Despite his lordly status Atkins was quickly moved to the *St. Andrew*, and from thence to the *Resolution*, a third rater of 885 tons and 68 guns, where he remained two years until April 1674.

The end of 1674 saw Charles Atkins in Barbados, where his father had just taken up residence as governor. What ship, or circumstances, took him to the West Indies is not known, but in November the *Phoenix* arrived from Guinea, its captain dead. The ship had to be taken back to England and Charles Atkins was entrusted with that mission. He fulfilled that trust, the *Phoenix* sailed from Barbados on February 23rd and arrived safely in Plymouth on April 20th. As Gulliver claims in the *Travels* to have learned "navigation, and other parts of the mathematicks, useful for those who intend to travel" it would not be surprising if, after leaving the *Resolution*, Atkins had attended a course at The Royal Mathematical School at Christ's Hospital, which had been founded a year or so earlier for the purpose of cultivating the navigational arts. It was no mean feat for a young man, of no more than about twenty years, to bring back a naval vessel safely across those many miles of ocean in days of uncertain navigation. Charles Atkins deserved promotion!

February 1675/76 saw the newly appointed Captain Charles Atkins taking command of the *Quaker Ketch* of 85 tons and 8 guns, for a tour of duty in Tangier. What exactly happened off the coasts of North Africa is uncertain as no proper account can be found, but Atkins was carrying gold on board, presumably for his own profit, and permitted his vessel to be captured by corsairs without putting up a fight, and towed into port by the Algerines. This incident led to a

resumption of hostilities between England and the Moors, hostilities which had been on and off the boil for several years. Atkins was dismissed in disgrace, together with his servants, on November 28, 1676. Any chance of a reputable career in the navy had vanished. For his craven behaviour his father cut him off without a penny. For the next few years he borrowed money without scruple wherever he could, and consorted with villains (of high and low rank). He also made the surprising decision to apprentice himself to a surgeon!

The Murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey

On October 17, 1678 the body of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey was discovered in a ditch at the foot of Primrose Hill impaled by his own sword. Marks around the neck indicated Godfrey had been strangled as there was no blood on either body or sword. Furthermore, analysis of his stomach proved Godfrey had not eaten for two days prior to being murdered. Some distance from where the body was found were the tracks of a coach or cart, suggesting he had been killed elsewhere, his corpse dumped and his own sword driven into it. The murder of Sir Godfrey was unresolved by the judicial examinations that followed. The crime still remains one of Britain's greatest unsolved mysteries, one which has prompted a number of speculative books on the subject. Charles Atkins was involved in the murder of Sir Godfrey, of that there is no doubt. Whether he killed Sir Godfrey is uncertain, but if he didn't he was an active participant.

Some years earlier, in February 1670/71, a beadle (a constable's assistant) had been murdered by a group of riotous nobles out for a bit of fun. Included among them were Christopher Monck, Duke of Albemarle, and Sir John Fenwick, the latter related to Atkins through marriage. It was the fashion of the age for bands of dissolute gentry, and often well bred young women dressed as men, to swagger about the streets intent on vandalism, mayhem and murder. A poor beadle was helpless when faced by members of this privileged class, and his death of little concern to authority. Albemarle and Fenwick, and the other nobles involved in the beadle's murder, received no more than a mild rebuke. However, Albemarle was to die at an early age from drink (1688), and Fenwick was beheaded on Tower Hill for treason (1697) - so perhaps the beadle's death was avenged after all! The murder of Sir Godfrey, however, was a different kettle of fish to that of a beadle, for he was a prominent member of the upper class and, what is more important, an affirmed Protestant in an age when anti-Catholic sentiment ran high among the populace. The Popish Plot (1678), at the centre of which was Lord Shaftesbury (1621-83), was designed to heighten this public ill-feeling in the interests of dubious politics. There is no doubt the murder of Godfrey was part of that design.

Charles Atkins was examined before a board of enquiry investigating the death of Godfrey. One of the members of the board was another uncle, Sir Philip Howard, an unscrupulous henchman of Shaftesbury, who made several unfounded claims to the board on behalf of his nephew after private examination. It is significant that Charles was not examined either in public, or before the board itself! Charles was duly exonerated from any culpability for the crime - which is understandable in view of his high connections - others were left to face the music!

Immediately after this brush with the law Charles Atkins was given a commission in a regiment raised by his brother-in-law, Sir John Fenwick (the one who enjoyed stabbing beadles). The regiment was disbanded soon after Charles joined as a lieutenant, so his army career lasted no more than about three months. Perhaps the object of this interlude was to remove him from

London!

During this period of his life young Charles Atkins behaved in a totally reprehensible manner, being described as "depraved" and "one who loved wine and women." With intentions of ultimately becoming a surgeon it is hoped he attended to his studies more diligently than to his extra-curricular activities!

The Budding Surgeon

Gulliver writes, "I was bound apprentice to Mr James Bates, an eminent surgeon in London, with whom I continued four years, and my father now and then sending me small sums of money." There was indeed an eminent surgeon in London named Bates at the time, but his name was William not James. He was a graduate of both Clare College, Cambridge, and Leyden where he entered the medical school in 1654. To become a licenced surgeon it was necessary to complete seven years of tutelage under qualified supervision. Gulliver also attended Leyden, and he writes that "at Leyden: there I studied physick two years and seven months, knowing it would be useful in long voyages."

The name of Charles Atkins is listed in Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses* as being granted a licence to practice surgery on August 20, 1683, the entry 'privilegiatus' alongside his name suggesting a privilege of some sort being invoked, or the stringent requirements for qualification being waived. He is listed also under the name of Adkyns. Some doubt must exist as to whether this is indeed Gulliver, but it is doubtful whether two contemporaries carrying the same name could have been surgeons and followed career paths as equally scandalous. Gulliver is very specific about spending two years and seven months at Leyden, which suggests he slipped the bonds of Bates in December or January 1680/81 after spending four years under his supervision. The connection with Leyden is interesting since Bates had studied there earlier. By August 1683 a total of almost seven years had elapsed since being dismissed from the navy, the period mandatory for qualification as a surgeon.

Sir Jonathan Atkins returned home from Barbados in 1681 very angry with his son. It is likely Charles's move to Leyden might have been precipitated by a desire to avoid personal confrontation with his wrathful parent. Charles writes from Ireland, where the Howard and Atkins families held estates, to his uncle, Charles Howard, Earl of Carlisle, on December 10, 1681: "I was very much ashamed that the speedy commands of my father after his arrival in England admitted me not to discharge my duty to my best and onliest patron [the Earl] ...which I humbly beg you now to accept though in a manner from a banished man.....I can never hope for my father's favour unless your Lordship will be pleased to intercede for me and I hope by my future carriage I shall deserve this great favour.... Your Lordship's most humble servant and nephew Charles Atkins."

What had Charles done to justify banishment? The affair of the *Quaker Ketch*, and his involvement in the murder of Sir Godfrey, were surely enough. But Charles was a young blade in his early twenties, busy sowing his wild oats. His rowdy cronies, and his penchant for women and wine, undoubtedly would have led him into a number of lustful liaisons. What if he put one girl too many into the 'family way', especially if she was a girl who shouldn't have been touched under any circumstances?

Stella Johnson

One of the mysteries which has baffled the literary world is the parentage of Stella Johnson, the girl beloved by Jonathan Swift. She was baptized Esther (or Hester) Johnson, but is more affectionately known as 'Stella', a name given her by Swift. The only certainty is that Johnson was not her proper name and that she was illegitimate, the name of Johnson being conveniently provided by Bridget Johnson, a servant in the household of Sir William Temple. The best portrait of Stella is given by Swift in a tribute after her death in 1728, titled *On the Death of Esther Johnson*. He writes: "She was born at Richmond, in Surrey, on the thirteenth day of March, in the year 1681 [O.S.]. Her father was a younger brother of a good family in Nottinghamshire, her



Esther Johnson (Stella)
from a picture in the possession of Sir F.P. Tallieron

mother of lower degree; and indeed she had little to boast of her birth. I knew her from six years old ..." Swift's statement of her fatherhood is meaningful for in the first line of *Gulliver's Travels* Gulliver claims his "father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the third of five sons". The suspicion immediately arises that *perhaps* Gulliver was Stella's father.

Stella Johnson was raised in the home of Sir William Temple, first at East Sheen, and later at Moor Park near Farnham, Surrey. It was at Moor Park where Swift first encountered her and her 'constant companion' Rebecca Dingley, after he was appointed secretary to Sir William Temple over the years 1689-99. Stella Johnson, Rebecca Dingley and Jonathan Swift were to become a *ménage à trois* in later life. Rebecca Dingley was fifteen years older than Stella, which prompts the question - what six year old child has a 'constant companion' with such an age difference, unless that 'constant companion' is their mother? If Rebecca Dingley was the mother, who was the father? Perhaps Charles Atkins? The Temple and Dingley families were related by marriage, the Dingley family being more numerous and less well off. The generosity of Sir William Temple in offering a home to the unfortunate Rebecca and her child is perfectly understandable, for this enabled her parents, the Reverend and Mrs. Charles Dingley, to escape the opprobrium of disgrace.

Stella held a place of privilege in the Temple household, so privileged that some have concluded Sir William Temple to have been her father, irrespective of the fact Swift affirms her father to have been "a younger brother of a good family in Nottinghamshire." As mentioned already Gulliver admits to being born in the same county! Swift also writes of her youth "presents of gold pieces being often made to her while she was a girl ... that, in about three years, they amounted to above two hundred pounds. She used to show them with boasting.....". In an age when a working man was hard put to earn more than five hundred pounds from a lifetime of toil, Stella was indeed fortunate to be showered with gold in such profusion. But from whence did it come? It is highly unlikely the gold came with such regularity and abundance from any source within the Temple household, least of all from her so-called 'mother', Bridget Johnson the servant. It is doubtful whether any father, no matter how indulgent, would have allowed a daughter to play with coins on the scale implied by Swift. This leads to the conclusion the gold was 'conscience money' - tribute periodically received by Sir William Temple as compensation for the actions of a philanderer of good stock. In this sense Swift was not denigrating Stella's mother when he described her "of lower degree" - few, if any, could stand higher in society at the time than members of the Howard family!

Early Voyages

Gulliver writes in his *Travels* "after my return from Leyden, I was recommended by my good master ... to be surgeon to the *Swallow*, Captain Abraham Pannell commander; with whom I continued three years and a half, making a voyage or two into the Levant, and some other parts."

It can be deduced from the text that this would have occupied the years 1683-1687/8. Exactly where Atkins voyaged in the *Swallow* (if that is indeed the real name of the ship) is unknown, but he turns up in the records of the East India Company at Metchlepatam (now Masulipatnam) in a letter to Fort St. George (Madras) dated March 1687 - "Here is a set of surgeon's instruments which belonged to Doctor Atkins, but for want of good looking after are much spoiled. Some are good and fit for use; so as they are [we] will bring them with us." The records indicate Atkins to have replaced a Dr. Grudgefield, who had died in February 1685/86. The circumstances in which Atkins assumed, and then vacated, the post of surgeon at Masulipatnam are unknown.

Gulliver continues "my business began to fail ...therefore consulted with my wife, anddetermined to go to sea again. I was surgeon successively in two ships, and made several voyages, for six years, to the East and West Indies; by which I got some addition to my fortune." He adds that after returning from these voyages he spent three years on land before commencing the first of his epic voyages in 1699 (the one which landed him in Lilliput). This, therefore, dates his "several voyages" as occupying the period 1690 to 1696. This period is notable for the exploits of the pirate, Henry Avery, whose biography features in the *General History* by 'Captain Charles Johnson'. The phrase "some addition to my fortune" sounds as if Atkins had made 'a good voyage' on a pirate ship.

Gulliver is quite specific in his *Travels* regarding his marriage. He writes, "I married Mrs Mary Burton, second daughter to Mr Edmund Burton, hosier, in Newgate-street." No trace can be found of this marriage, but there is one registered between Charles Atkins and Mary Fox as taking place on August 1, 1699 at St. Botolph's Church, Bishopsgate. This may have been a second marriage if the Charles Atkins concerned is the same man.



Gulliver's Travels

Gulliver's first voyage commences on May 4, 1699 on the *Antelope*. It is pertinent to note that all ships on which Gulliver sails during his *Travels* carry names of vessels belonging to the East India Company. Also, the sailing dates are unlikely to bear any relation to actual dates, as Gulliver notes in his "Letter to his Cousin Sympson" (a preface to the book) "I find....your printer hath been so careless as to confound the times, and mistake the dates of my several voyages and returns; neither assigning the true year, or the true month, or day of the month." Perhaps this confusion is deliberate, if not by Gulliver then by Swift!

Charles Atkins sailed in April 1700 for Gombroon (now Bandar Abbas) in the Persian Gulf, where he'd been appointed surgeon at the East India Company's factory. From Gombroon he wrote a number of letters to James Petiver, a noted botanist. However, it wasn't long before Charles soon blotted his copy book at Gombroon. He is sent to Madras "to prevent any farther scandall and detriment to ye company's affairs." An accompanying letter (April 10, 1703) describes his misdoings as follows:- "...he is become so intimate with ye shaubunder's [dock labourer's] secretary, one Anga Camall, that ... he bring him news of everything that passes which

has cost us no small trouble since ye *London* and *Monsoon* came in.... ye fellow has been all along their observer and endeavouring to manage their business underhand....he is become so notoriously scandalous by his unaccountable lewd and villainous practice in ye place that he is become ye talk of ye whole town and occasions no small disgrace he has always made his chamber in ye factory rendezvous of all ye scandalous fellows it has been possible to pick up and makes it his chief endeavour by all manner of means to debauch every one that comes sober into ye house to perswade people belonging to ships to run away and promote all manner of mischief and debaucheryhe is so intimate with ye moors keeping whores in their houses and constantly amongst them." This letter, which accompanied Charles Atkins to Madras under armed guard on the *London*, ends "to prevent his doing more mischief than he has already we take ye opportunity of ridding ourselves of him." A recommendation is made that he be "sent home to England and so rid ye country of so dangerous a person."

The council at Madras viewed the arrival of Charles Atkins, surgeon, with greater charity than those who had dispatched him from Gombroon. The following entries are in the records:-
 (1) May 27, 1703 - "Mr Atkins surgeon, who was sent by the chief and council at Gombroon on the ship *London* for this place for severall misdemeanors, was this day before us, when what in



"I am coming towards the house a kind of vehicle drawn like a sledge by four yaboo's" Par. 211

.....their letter relating to him was read, which he disowned, and protest his innocencetherein, so twas ordered that he should return to the main guard, and there remain till we had further considered of this matter, unless he would give bail for his good behaviour."

(2) June 10, 1703 - "Mr Atkins sent hither by the chief and council of Gombroon a prisoner on ship *London*, whose crimes they mention in the general letter, surmising that he is guilty ... thereof, and nothing upon oath against him, we thought it reasonable to discharge him with admonitions suitable to his accusations."

(3) August 30, 1703 - "We being advised that Mr Royer, Surgeon at Fort St David [Pondicherry] is dead, and that there is great want of another. 'Tis resolved that Mr Charles Atkins be entertained in that employ and forthwith be sent by land, and to have the salary of him deceased."

(4) September 27, 1703 (A letter to Gombroon) - "When you proceed so rigorously against a person as to send him a prisoner on board ship, we mean Charles Atkins, without so much as letting him get necessaries or collect what small effects he had in, you should have drawn up the charge against him on oath, we believe him to be a wild young fellow but upon his promising great amendment we have made him surgeon at Fort St David. Signed Thomas Pitt et al."

Charles Atkins got off light at Madras, however it wasn't long before he got into more hot water at Pondicherry. A letter was received at Madras, dated February 1, 1704/05 which reads: "We having had complaints from the Deputy Governor and Council of Fort St David of the insolent and saucy behaviour there of their surgeon Charles Atkins, agreed that Mr Supplee who was the New [East India] Company's surgeon at Metchlepatam be entertained in his roome, and that he goes thither by the first opportunity." Charles Atkins was dismissed once again!

The trail of Charles Atkins reappears in the records of the East India Company at Fort York (Bencoolen), Sumatra. The records tell us that he served as a lieutenant in the militia, being awarded the rank of captain of the garrison's forces in 1707 and carrying that rank until 1709. He was also the surgeon. He appears to have been as quarrelsome and irresponsible as before,

leading to dismissal again in 1713 for assaulting a member of the council. Three references in the records of Fort York are of interest:-

(a) May 12, 1712 (taken from a letter of a visitor to Fort York addressed to Edmund Harrison, President of the East India Company at Madras): "The night after Pangran Jangaloo, & Dupatty Jangaloo his brother were taken prisoners I was walking in the fort in company with the Deputy Governor, Mr Henry Griffith, Mr Thomas Lloyd and Capt Charles Atkins, Mr John Hunter came and whispered me in the ear and said he wanted to speak with me ..." He then describes how he was detained for two hours by Captain Atkins, with a Mr Henry White standing guard over him with a sword and a brace of pistols.

(b) September 10, 1713: "Lieutenant Atkins broke for assaulting one of the council, he with his wife gone to Batavia."

(c) February 3, 1713/14: "The widow of Charles Atkins late Lieutenant of York Fort making application to the board by her attorney on account of two hundred dollarsagreed that the above sum of two hundred dollars amount at the usual exchange to one hundred and twenty-five pagodas be repaid to the widow of Lt Atkins or her order."

Tensions could be high among the inmates of a factory, where as few as eight men were cooped up together for years on end. Excessive drinking was a curse and local women an adjunct to factory life. Fort York was located in a pestiferous swamp and in 1685 an outbreak of disease had decimated the tiny community, a report stating "All our servants are sick or dead ...we have no living to bury the dead." Atkins's 'wife' was assuredly not European, and she and any children were abandoned when he sailed for England arriving home some time in 1715, the same year Gulliver returned from the voyages described in his *Travels*. Some years later the name of E. Atkins (one of Gulliver's offspring?) is associated with the Sumatra factory.

Gulliver's first voyage takes him to Lilliput, an island depicted on maps accompanying most versions of *Gulliver's Travels* as lying between Sumatra and the newly discovered continent of Australia. This suggests that possible thoughts of writing the *Travels* first entered Atkins's head while stationed in Sumatra. It may be noted that William Dampier, who first surveyed the northwest coast of Australia, also had been at Fort York many years earlier.

William Dampier

The voyages of Dampier are legendary, for he wrote a full account of them in his various publications, the first of which *A Voyage Round the World* was published in 1697. There is a mention of Dampier in *Gulliver's Travels*, which appears in "Letter to his Cousin Sympson" referred to earlier. The "Letter" is dated April 2, 1727, less than six months after the first edition appeared. Gulliver writes: "...you prevailed upon me to publish a very loose and uncorrect account of my travels; with direction to hire some young gentlemen of either university to put them in order, and correct the style, as my Cousin Dampier did by my advice, in his book called, *A Voyage Round the World*." It should be noted the term 'cousin' as used herein, is interpreted to mean a kinship in the broadest sense of the word and not a specific family relationship.

Although it has been often claimed from this passage that Dampier helped Swift in the writing of *Gulliver's Travels*, what seems more likely is that Atkins helped Dampier. If Gulliver is Charles Atkins, then "Cousin Sympson" is obviously Jonathan Swift. The latter is being reprimanded in the "Letter" for various omissions and inaccuracies about which Gulliver complains.

Jonathan Swift

Swift was born in Dublin on November 30, 1667 approximately seven months after the death of his father. There has always been some doubt about the parentage of Swift, particularly with regard to his father. Within a year of his birth young Jonathan was 'kidnapped' under peculiar circumstances. The story is told in his own words: "When he [Jonathan] was a year old an event happened to him that seems very unusual; for his nurse who was a woman of Whitehaven, being under an absolute necessity of seeing one of her relations, who was then extremely sick, and from whom she expected a legacy, and being extremely fond of the infant, she stole him on shipboard unknown to his mother and uncle, and carried him with her to Whitehaven, where he continued for almost three years.....The nurse was so careful of him, that before he returned he had learned to spell; and by the time he was three years old he could read any chapter in the Bible."

The abduction of a child for a period of two years, suggests more than the average kidnapping. The nurse's family is said to have been in Yorkshire, and Whitehaven is far removed from the shortest route between Dublin and Yorkshire. But Whitehaven is intriguing, for Naworth Castle, one of the possessions of the Howard family, lies not far distant. Who was Jonathan Swift's father - one of the Howards, a brother of Mary Howard (Charles Atkins's mother), or another member of the family, or Charles himself? It is pertinent to note that Charles had a brother named Richard, some nine years older than himself, who went to Ireland to handle the family estates. He eventually married in 1670/71, but probably not before sowing his own wild oats. Was Jonathan Swift a nephew of Charles Atkins? Or, more significantly, was he a son?

In support of these possibilities, *Gulliver's Travels* contains a letter in the preface titled "The Publisher to the Reader" wherein is found the following; "The author of these travels, Mr Lemuel Gulliver, is my antient and intimate friend, there is likewise some relation by the mother's side." The 'publisher' is obviously Jonathan Swift. If Charles Atkins is Gulliver, then the 'mother', to whom Swift refers, is not his own but Mary Howard, the mother of Charles Atkins. Gulliver (or Charles Atkins) and Jonathan Swift could have been directly related as first cousins, and that is why Gulliver in his *Travels* can address Swift quite properly as his "Cousin Sympson", Sympson being Swift. If Charles Atkins and Jonathan Swift were not first cousins, then they were possibly either uncle and nephew, born on different sides of the blanket, or what is more probable, and more fantastic, they may have been father and son! The fickleness of fate in deciding his lot surely must have weighed heavily on Swift by being related to one of the great families of England, but for that kinship doomed to remain unacknowledged. He may not have been aware of that true relationship until after his marriage when he was confronted with an even weightier burden.

The Wedding of Jonathan Swift

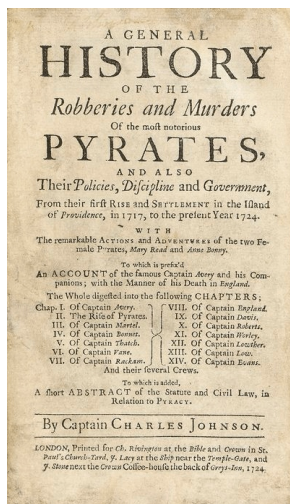
Jonathan Swift and Stella Johnson, according to some sources, were married by the Bishop of Clogher in 1716, however there is some doubt as to whether they were man and wife, or if the marriage was consummated. The day after the supposed marriage Swift received a letter from England the substance of which is unknown, but its receipt caused great consternation. He disclosed its contents to the archbishop, who is reported to have remarked after an agitated Swift had left his study, "There goes the unhappiest man alive." Swift shut himself up in his study for several days thereafter.

In the *Monthly Review* of November 1751 this incident is described as follows: "It has

been asserted, that Swift received a letter from England, the day after his marriage, the purport of which was, that the writer hereof hoped that it would not come too late to prevent the consummation of a match which it was rumoured was intended betwixt Dr Swift and Mrs Johnson." The article goes on to suggest Swift and Stella were brother and sister by the same natural father, which would indicate the possibility, however unlikely, that this father may well have been Charles Atkins. Consanguinity would have presented a most serious obstacle to their marriage! The letter causing this havoc arrived soon after Charles Atkins returned from his travels in the Orient.

Pirates

One observation is worthy of mention concerning the involvement of Charles Atkins (aka Gulliver) in his authorship of *The General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates*. All the pirates, whose lives are included in the first edition, reach the heights of their infamies between 1716 and 1723, the year prior to publication, with one noteworthy exception. That exception is Henry Avery, whose exploits in the Indian Ocean were before 1700.



There is thus a chronological gap in this biographical work between 1700 and 1716, which coincides with the time spent by Charles Atkins and Gulliver in their various travels.

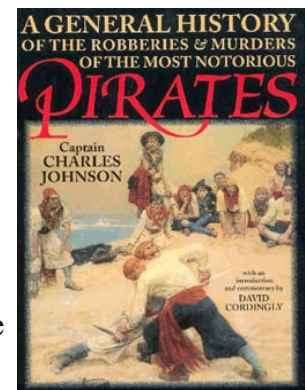
Was Atkins personally known to pirates? Was Atkins a pirate himself? It has been often speculated that the author of the *General History* was not unfamiliar with members of the pirate fraternity, and the same can certainly be said of Charles Atkins. Atkins's character is one of blatant disrespect to law, order, and morality - he was a pirate in all but name! The phrase Gulliver uses "by which I got some addition to my fortune" as remarked earlier, suggests he may well have made 'a good voyage' on a pirate ship. That ship was likely to have been Avery's *Fancy*, for there are a number of observations made by Johnson regarding Avery's life, the legendary prize he captured, and life at the pirate haven on Madagascar, that give the impression the

writer was an active participant in the events so vividly described. Furthermore, on returning to Ireland some of Avery's pirate crew go to Cork, where the Atkins family happened to own large estates!

Retirement

In *Gulliver's Travels* in "The Publisher to the Reader", Swift writes "About three years ago, Mr Gulliver growing weary of the concourse of curious people coming to him at his house in Redriff [Rotherhithe], made a small purchase of land, with a convenient house, near Newark in Nottinghamshire, his native county; where he lives retired, yet in good esteem with his neighbours."

Charles Atkins's cousin, Lady Mary Fenwick (whose beadle-stabbing husband was beheaded for treason) died in October 1708. Her estates at Newark were subject to legal wrangling up to about 1724, two to three years before the publication of *Gulliver's Travels*. It is pure speculation, but the evidence suggests Charles Atkins may have been a beneficiary of Lady



Fenwick's will. Lady Fenwick had much in common with cousin Charles and, but for her sex, Lady Fenwick may well have proved as formidable - but that is another story.

In 1734 there appeared a composite biography, carrying a long and unwieldy title, which included the lives of the pirates as contained in the *General History*, together with the lives of various highwaymen. The latter first appeared in a volume by Captain Alexander Smith, published in 1714. Authorship of the composite work was claimed by 'Captain Charles Johnson'. Whether this was a case of blatant plagiarism is unknown, but this dates the death of Charles Atkins as likely occurring after 1734. He appears to have lived to a good old age of at least 80 years spanning the period 1654 to 1734. Sir Jonathan Atkins (his father), and Jane Atkins (his sister) each lived to reach their centuries. Interestingly enough Jane Atkins married into the Austen family, which later produced Jane Austen, the authoress of *Pride and Prejudice* and other notable works.

Lemuel Gulliver - Nom-de-plume

One interpretation of the name 'Lemuel' is (from the Hebrew) 'God is with them'. Similarly 'gulliver' may be interpreted as 'I have gulled'. Thus, "Lemuel Gulliver" becomes "God is with them I have gulled". An appropriate nom-de-plume for the rebobate that, in real life, was Captain Charles Atkins! Perhaps it is a mark of contrition in his advancing years.



In Conclusion

The case for Charles Atkins having been Gulliver is not conclusively proved by the evidence presented herein. The field of enquiry is unusually wide, and the evidence is knotted and tangled where it can be found. As we are dealing with activities that took place three centuries ago, by a man who was an outcast from one of the most influential families of the age as a result of his countless wrong-doings, the archival trail is not easy to follow. A great deal of further research remains to be done, and it is likely, even probable, that the thesis presented herein will be substantially modified before it can be finalized. However, the evidence points to the existence of an intriguing triangular relation that has bequeathed the English-speaking world with two unique works of literature. This alone merits greater attention by the literary community. Sherlock Holmes said, "If the facts don't fit the thesis, change the thesis." Thus far the facts fit!

Acknowledgements

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Graham Harris took Civil Engineering at Imperial College (1958-61 and 1962-63), thereafter specialising in practical soil mechanics on large projects in the mining industry in Canada, Africa, Australia and the Middle East. Since retirement in 1993 he has been involved in various

research studies related to piracy, and technical aspects of Oak Island, Nova Scotia, the renowned site of 'the world's greatest treasure hunt'. The Imperial College Engineer (Spring 2002) carried his article 'Recovering the Oak Island treasure'.

Other publications include (1) The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: a geotechnical perspective (co-authored) which was used by the BBC as the basis of a documentary in their series Ancient Apocalypses: (2) Treasure and Intrigue the Legacy of Captain Kidd: (3) Oak Island and its Lost Treasure (co-authored) and (4) The Golden Reef of Sir William Phips.