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COLLECTANEA

FIRST SERIES

WITH A PREFACE

BY

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THE VAN RIEBEECK SOCIETY,
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Breelunus

Extract from "A Voyage to Borneo in 1714," by Captain Daniel Beeckman, published in London, 1718. From the Copy in the Mendelssohn Library.

ON Sunday the 23rd January 1714, about Eight in the Morning, I sail'd from thence [Java] towards the *Cape of Good-Hope*. We stood away to the Southward with the Wind W.N.W. and W.S.W. mostly in hopes of meeting the S.E. Trading Wind in the Latitude of 12 or 13 Deg. South, as in other parts of that Sea, but found the contrary; for the Monsoon blows between this Place and *New-Holland* six Months one way, and six another, viz., from *October* to *April* between the W.N.W. and W.S.W. and from *April* to *October* again at E.S.E. nearest. We got into the Latitude of 20 Deg. South, but saw no Land; therefore do find the Coast of *New-Holland* to be laid down in all our Cards, near 20 Leagues more Northward than it really is. I was almost out of hopes of getting into the South-East Trade-Wind time enough to save my Passage round the Cape, having spent so much time in beating to the Windward, but in vain; for we met with very hard Gales: Therefore I tack'd to the North Westward on the 19th of *February*, having the Wind at S.W. and S.W. by W. and on the 21st following, in the Latitude of 18 Deg. South, (having gain'd 270 Miles to the Westward of the South East End of *Java*) I met with uncertain Winds; and on the 23d, I met with the fix'd South-east Trade-wind, stout Gales, which held us till the 24th of *March* following, to the Latitude of 33 Deg. 48 Min. South, and 4323 Miles to the West of the South-east End of *Java*. This made us amends for the former loss of time, running us to the rate of 140 to 170 Miles in 24 Hours time.

Now our fair Trade Wind had left us, and we had nothing but Uncertainty to depend on, being 780 Miles distant from the Cape; and our Water falling short, we were forc'd to allow but a Quart each Man for 24 Hours. On the 4th of *April* we came to anchor in *Table-Bay*, at the *Cape of Good-Hope*, in the Latitude of 30 Deg. 00 Min. South, and Longitude from *London* 16 Deg. 30 Min. Our Men were most of them sick and down with the Scurvy, occasion'd by the length of our Passage; so that we had scarce Men enough to furl the Sails, and bring the Ship to an Anchor without great trouble and risk. We spent here 38 Days, being oblig'd to have our sick Men ashore; however, the Repairing our Ship, which had suffer'd very much in beating betwixt the Streights of *Bally* and *New-Holland*, and also Re-victualling our Ship,

was the occasion of our tarrying here so long. During our stay here, I bury'd my Chief Mate (which was no small loss to us, for he was a very good Officer) and my Cooper.

This Place, for its Pleasantness, Fertility, Wholsom Air, and convenient Situation, for the Supply of both homeward and outward-bound East India Ships, is not to be parallell'd; whereof the *Dutch*, to whom it belongs, are not a little proud. The town is situated on a small ascent on the side of the Bay, and consists of about 2 or 300 Houses built with Stone, about two or three stories high, having pleasant Rows of Trees before the Doors. There was formerly a Drein of Water that ran through the Town: This they have lately turn'd into two Canals, and built the sides up with Stone, which adds much to the Beauty of the Town. Here is one large Church, a handsom Hospital, and a pretty large Castle, garrison'd and kept in good repair, which commands the Bay: It is not very strong, but sufficient to answer the Design it was built for. The Governor has a handsom Dwelling-House therein. At the upper-part of the Town, is a very large fine Garden belonging to the *Dutch East India* Company, which is surrounded partly with a Wall, and partly with a Ditch, consisting of many very beautiful Walks, and several Banks and Canals, which have indeed been lately neglected, and are much run to Ruin; but the then present Governor was about repairing them. Here is great abundance of good Fruit, and variety of Physick-Plants and Trees, as *Alloes* of different sorts, *Dragons-Blood* and *Camphire* Trees, with several others past my Observation. In this Garden is likewise a House, built for that purpose, wherein are kept a Collection of the Skins of a multitude of strange Beasts which *Africa* is famous for, so artificially and nicely stuff'd, that at first you would be surpriz'd at them, and would believe them to be really live Creatures, viz. Lions, Tygers, Leopards, Elephants, Rhinoceros's, wild Cats, Antelopes of several sorts; many large unsizable Deer, and a Creature call'd a *Striped Ass*, which they say can never be tam'd, though taken young: It is a beautiful Creature, resembling a fine little Horse with an Ass's Tail, and is striped and colour'd like a Tyger. There is also an amphibious Creature, call'd by them *Manitee*, or a Sea-Cow, which when alive, could weigh no less than 25 or 30 hundred weight. She comes up the fresh Rivers in the Night-time, and then gets on Shore to graze: She has a large Body, a Belly hanging low almost to the Ground, short thick Neck and Legs, and seems to be a very unweildy slow Creature: Her Teeth are large, with huge long Tusks, which are counted good Ivory. They say the Flesh of the young ones makes excellent Bacon.

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