

THE VOYAGE
OF
FRANÇOIS LEGUAT
OF BRESSE
TO
RODRIGUEZ, MAURITIUS, JAVA, AND THE
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

TRANSCRIBED FROM THE FIRST ENGLISH EDITION.

Edited and Annotated
BY
CAPTAIN PASFIELD OLIVER,
LATE ROYAL ARTILLERY.

*"Si forte necesse est
Iudiciis monstrare recantibus abdita verum."*

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rejoyn'd us some few days after before Isle *Robben*.¹ At length the Wind being appeas'd, and becoming favourable, we Anchor'd in the Bay the 12th of *February* 1698. Next day we went a-shoar, and every one provided himself with such Refreshment as the time would permit him to get.

Since we are happily arriv'd once more at the *Cape* of *Good Hope*, I'll keep the promise I formerly made, and add some Particulars to what I have before said.²

The Point of the *Cape*, which is, as every one knows, in the 35th Degree of Southern Latitude, advances a great way into the Sea. The violent Storms³ that reign there are so terrible, that the most skilful Mariners are at a loss how to manage them, so that the Bay which seems to be fine, is render'd disagreeable by these Tempests. The Sea-Winds drive in such prodigious Surges,⁴ that no Cables hardly are able to oppose them.

The last Fleet had a sad experience of this, losing many of its Ships, and if the Tempest had lasted but half an hour longer, 'tis probable not one would have escap'd, since those few that did ride it out, did it by the good hold of their last Anchor.⁵

¹ *Robben*, or *Seal Island*, five miles N. by E. from the Green Point, at the west side of the entrance to Table Bay. An infirmary for lepers and lunatics is situated on the south-east part of the island, which has recently been described in *Blackwood's Magazine* for September 1889.

² *Vide supra*, p. 33.

³ "Il s'y élève aussi souvent de furieux tourbillons, qui se précipitent du sommet des montagnes & du milieu des nuës avec tant de fracas, qu'on diroit que le ciel va s'abîmer & la mer rompre ses bornes & inonder toute la terre. Il n'est par sur pour les vaisseaux de tenter l'abordage de cette côte, tant que cet orage dure." (*Dapper's Africa*, French edition, 1686, p. 383.)

⁴ In orig. : "avec tant d'impétuosité," omitted by translator.

⁵ "In the afternoon of the 24th May 1697, the Company's homeward bound ships *Waddingsveen* and *Oosterland*, with valuable cargoes on board, were driven ashore at Salt River mouth in a great gale, and were dashed to pieces at once. Two other ships, out of a large fleet that was lying in the bay, narrowly escaped the same fate. Only seventeen

Ten Leagues from the *Cape* up in the Country, there is a Colony call'd *Draguestain*.¹ It consists of about 300 Souls as well *Hollanders* as *French* Protestants, which last fled from *France* upon revoking the *Edict* of *Nantz*.

This Colony extends eight or ten Leagues about, because the Soil not being equally good everywhere, they were fain to cultivate those spots they found to be good, and which occasion'd them to scatter themselves abroad. The Earth produces here without much Labour, Wheat and other Corn, which yields from thirty to sixty for one. As every Grain shoots up a great many Stalks, they sow here very thin; the Harvest is in the Month of *January*.

The Vine bears Grapes two years after it has been Planted, and that in great abundance without Cultivating, insomuch that in some Places a thousand foot of Vineyard will yield six Hogs-heads of Wine. To speak Truth the Wine is none of the best, being apt to be Green, which proceeds partly from the Peoples not giving themselves the trouble to chuse such Plants as are most agreeable to the Soil and Climate, and partly in that they are not accustomed to support the Branches with a Vine-Prop. They are likewise wanting in not leafing the Vines well, for as the Soil is Rich, they shoot forth Wood and Leaves in such great abundance, that the Sun is not able to penetrate to the Grapes, and this Conjecture is the better grounded, in that I my self have frequently seen and eaten Grapes here, that

¹ The first party of Huguenots left the Netherlands in July 1688, and arrived in Table Bay in January 1689. Shortly after, the refugees were located at Drakenstein and Fransche Hoek, near Stellenbosch. They were without goods or money, and the board of deacons at Batavia sent £1,200 to be distributed amongst them. Among the names of those receiving assistance is that of Isaac Taillefer, with wife and four children, who is mentioned by Leguat. These families intermarried with the Dutch. The number of Huguenots in the colony is stated to have been at this time one hundred and fifty-five souls. In French edition of Leguat it is "trois mille personnes." (Vide *Cape Quarterly Review*, vol. i, pp. 395, 398.)

have been incomparably better when exposed to the Sun, than those that lay hid under the Leaves.¹

They have their Vintage about the end of *February*: To this Article I must add, since the occasion presents for it, that the *Company* buys all the Wine at the rate of twenty Crowns the *Legre*,² which contains about a thousand *Mingles*, only furnishing the Cask, so that there is none sold out but what comes from them, as is the practice at *Genoa*.³ The First Offence against this Law is punish'd with a Fine of a hundred Crowns, the Second with Whipping, and the Third with Banishment: This makes the Wine very dear. It is worth twenty *Sous* the *Mingle*, which is near the *Paris* Pint, and *English* Quart. You have likewise in this Country *Ananas*, Water and Land-Melons, Pulse and all sorts of Roots, so that the Inhabitants would have nothing to complain of, were they not incommoded with those bad Winds before-mentioned.

They have in this Country a prodigious number of Deer, many Oxen, Sheep, Roe-Bucks, and Apes. There are also Elephants, Rhinoceros's, Elks, Lions, Tigres, Leopards, Wild-Boars, Antilopes, Porcupines, Horses, Asses, Dogs, and Wild-Cats. But the most fierce of these Animals retire into the Country, so soon as the Countrymen begin to till the Ground. The Lions and Tigres are boldest in coming to search for Prey near the Habitations.

¹ In orig.: "On peut ce me semble juger que ce défaut de maturité dans un país fort près du Soleil, où on ne connoît ni neige ni glace, doit être causé par les raisons que j'ai dites," omitted by translator.

² The Dutch *legger* of wine contains 4 aams, or 126 1-10th imperial gallons. (Theal, *op. cit.*, Pref.)

³ "The Traffick of Genoua consists chiefly in *Velvets*, *Points*, *Gloves*, dry *Confections*, *Anchovies*, and divers sorts of *Fruits*, but is much decay'd in *Trade*; for tho' some private persons are exceeding rich, yet the generality is poor; the Government monopolises the Trade of Wine and Corn, so that the *Tavern* and *Innkeepers* must buy their Wines out of the Cellar of the State, and the Bakers fetch their Corn from the publick Granaries." (Misson, *Voyage to Italy*, Letter XXXII, written from Genoa, 1688.)

As for the *Unicorn*¹ there is no such sort of Beast. The old and most curious Inhabitants of the *Cape*, are well satisfy'd with it, and he that made *Cæsar's Commentaries* was a Lyar, as well as the rest. The Rhinoceros is the true four-footed *Unicorn*, for there are Fish, Birds, and some Insects, that have likewise but one Horn. I could heartily wish to have seen one of these Rhinoceros's, by reason of the many Fables that are told of that Beast, as well as of the Crocodiles, and a hundred other Animals. My Friends that had seen of them, laugh'd at all the Figures the Painters gave of them, and which are here² subjoin'd for Curiosities sake. Certainly nothing can be more Comical, than so many pretended Embossings; all which however is fabulous. The true Rhinoceros has a Hide like to that of an Elephant, and the older he is, the more wrinkled he will be: It is the same with us in that Respect. We may very well affirm that the Rhinoceros has but one Horn, in spite of all the fabulous Relations of those we call Naturalists: This Horn is at the extremity of the Nose. He has a sort of Hair in his Tail that is black, as large as a great Knitting-Needle, and harder than

¹ Unicorns' horns. "There are three or four pretended *Unicorn's Horns* in this Cabinet (that of Manfredi Settala, at Milan); for tho' it be beyond dispute that they are properly no more than the teeth of a certain Fish found in the *Northern Seas*, yet here, as well as in the Venetian Treasury, and other places where they are preserv'd, they retain still the Opinion, that they grow on the Head of that imaginary four-legg'd terrestrial Creature. There are also some *Fossil Horns* exactly like those that grow on Fishes, tho' of a very different matter." (Max. Misson, Letter XXXI.)

"Est bos cervi figura, cujus a media fronte inter aures unum cornu existit excelsius, magisque directum his, quæ nobis nota sunt cornibus. Ab ejus summo sicut palmæ rami quam late diffunduntur. Eadem est fæminæ marisque natura, eadem forma magnitudo cornuum." (*De Bello Gallico*, lib. vi, cap. 26.)

² The figures of the rhinoceros given in the original illustration which accompanies the text are taken from an illustration used by Father Tachard, before quoted (*l. c.*, small edition, p. 82; large edition, p. 104), which is exaggerated in Leguat's reproduction, and from other contemporaneous works.