

Extract from:

“A New Voyage  
ROUND THE WORLD.

Describing particularly, The Isthmus of America, several Coasts and Islands in the West Indies, the Isles of Cape Verd, the Passage by Terra del Fuego, the South Sea Coasts of Chili, Peru, and Mexico; the Isle of Guam one of the Ladrões, Mindanao, and other Philippine and East-India Islands near Cambodia, China, Formosa, Luconia, Celebes, &c. New Holland, Sumatra, Nicobar Isles; the Cape of Good Hope, and Santa Hellena.

THEIR

Soil, Rivers, Harbours, Plants, Fruits, Animals, and Inhabitants.

THEIR

Customs, Religion, Government, Trade, &c.”

By William Dampier.

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Chapter XX, Pages 545 to 550.

Notwithstanding this boisterous Sea coming thus obliquely upon us, we had fine clear weather, and a moderate gale at S. E. or between that and the East, till we came to the Island Santa Hellana, where we arrived the 20th day of June. There we found the Princess Ann at an Anchor, waiting for us.

The Island Santa Hellena lies in about 16 Degress South lat. The Air is commonly serene and clear, except in the months that yield Rain; yet we had one or two very rainy days, even while we were here. Here are moist seasons to plant and sow, and the weather is temperate enough as to heat, tho so near the Equator, and very healthy.

The Island is but small, not above nine or ten leagues in length, and stands 3 or 400 leagues from the main Land. It is bounded against the Sea with steep Rocks, for that there is no landing but at 2 or 3 places. The Land is high and Mountanius, and seems to be very dry and poor; yet there are fine Valleys, proper for cultivation. The Mountain appear bare, only in some places you may see a few low Shrubs, but the Valleys afford some Trees sit for building, as I was informed.

This Island is said to have been first discover'd and settled by the Portugese, who stock it with Goats and Hogs. But it being afterwards deserted by them, it lay waste, till the Dutch, finding it convenient to relieve their East India Ships, settled it again; but they afterwards relinquished it for a more convenient place; I mean the Cape of Good Hope. Then the English East India Company settled their Servants there, and began to Fortify it, but they being yet weak, the Dutch about the year 1672 came thither, and re-took it, and keep it in their possession. This news being reported in England, Captain Monday was sent to re-take it, who by the advice and conduct of one that had formerly lived there, landed a Party of Armed Men in the night in a small Cove, unknown to the Dutch then in Garrison, and climbing the Rocks, got up into the Island, and so came in the mornings to the Hills hanging over the Fort, which stands by the Sea in a small Valley. From thence firing into the Fort, they soon made them surrender. There were at this time two or three Dutch East India Ships, either at Anchor, or coming thither, when our Ships were there. These, when they saw that the English

were Masters of the Island again, made sail to be gone; but being chased by the English Frigots, 2 of them became rich Prizes to Captain Monday and his men.

The Island hath continued ever since in the hands of the English East India Company, and hath been greatly strengthened both with Men and Guns; so that at this day it is secure enough from the invasion of any Enemy. For the common Landing place is small Bay, like a Half Moon, scarce 500 paces wide, between the two points. Close by the Sea side are good Guns planted at equal distances, lying along from one end of the Bay to the other: besides a small Fort, a little further in from the Sea, near the midst of the Bay. All which makes this Bay so strong, that it is impossible to force it. The small Cove where Captain Monday landed his men when he took the Island from the Dutch, is scarce fit for a Boat to land at; and yet that is now also fortified.

There is a small English Town within the great Bay, standing in a little Valley, between two high steep Mountains. There may be about 20 or 30 small Houses, whose Walls are built with rough Stones: The inside furniture is very mean. The Governour hath a pretty tolerably handsome low House, by the Fort; where he commonly lives, having a few Souldiers to attend him, and to guard the Fort. But the Houses in the Town before-mentioned stand empty, save only when Ships arrive here; for their Owners have all Plantations farther in the Island, where they constantly employ themselves. But when Ships arrive, they all flock to the Town, where they live all the time that the Ships lye here; for then is their Fair or Market, to buy such necessaries as they want, and to sell off the produce of their Plantations.

Their Plantations afford Potatoes, Yames, and some Plantation and Bonanoes. Their stock consists chiefly of Hogs, Bullocks, Cocks and Hens, Ducks, Geese, and Turkeys, of which they have great plenty, and sell them at a low rate to the Sailors, taking in exchange, Shirts, Drawers, or any light Cloaths; pieces of Callico, Silks, or Muzlins: Arack, Sugar, and Lime-juice, is also much esteemed and coveted by them. But now they are in hopes to produce Wine and Brandy, in a short time; for they do already begin to plant Vines for that end, there being a few French men there to manage that affair. This I was told, but I saw nothing of it, for it rained so hard when I was ashore, that I had not the opportunity of seeing their Plantations. I was also informed, that they get Manatee or Sea-cows here, which seemed very strange to me. Therefore enquiring more strictly into the matter, I found the Santa Hellena Manatee to be, by their Shapes, and manner of lying ashore on the Rocks, those Creatures called Sea-lyons; for the Manatee never come ashore, neither are they found near any rocky Shores, as this Island is, there being no feeding for them in such places. Besides, in this Island there is no River for them to drink at, tho there is a small Brook runs into the Sea, out of the Valley by the Fort.

We stayed here 5 or 6 days, all which time the Islanders lived at the Town, to entertain the Seamen; who constantly stockt ashore, to enjoy themselves among their Country people. Our touching at the Cape had greatly drained the Seamen of their loose Corns, at which these Islanders as greatly repined; and some of the poorer sort openly complained against such doings, saying, it was sit that the East India Company should be acquainted with it, that they might hinder their Ships from touching at the Cape. Yet they were extreemly kind, in hopes to get what was remaining. They are most of them very poor: but such as could get a little Liquor to sell to the Seamen at this time got what the Seamen could spare; for the Punch Houses were never empty. But had we all come directly hither, and not touched at the Cape, even the poorest poeple among them would have gotten

something by entertaining sick men. For commonly the Seamen coming home, are troubled, more or less, with Scorbutick Distempers; and their only hopes are to get Refreshment and Health at this Island, and these hopes seldom or never fail them, if once they get footing here. For the Islands afford abundance of delicate Herbs, wherewith the sick are first bathed to supple their Joints, and then the Fruits and Herbs, and fresh food soon after cure them of their Scorbutick Humours. So that in a weeks time, men that have been carried ashore in Hammocks, and they who were wholly unable to go, have soon been able to leap and dance. Doubtless the serenity and wholesomeness of the Air contributes much to the carrying off of these Distempers; for here is constantly a fresh breeze. While we stayed here, many of the Seamen got Sweetheart. One young man belonging to the James and Mary, was married, and brought his wife to England with him. Another brought his Wife to England with him. Another brought his Sweetheart England, they being each engaged by Bonds to marry at their arrival in England; and several others of our Men were over Head and Ears in love with the Santa Hellana Maids, who, tho they were born there, yet very earnestly desired to be released from that Prison, which they have no other way to compass, but by marrying Seamen, or Passengers that touch here. The young Women born here, are but one remove from English, being the Daughters of such. They are well shaped, proper and comely, were they in a Dress to set them off.

My stay ashore here was but two days, to get Refreshments for my self and Jeoly, whom I carried ashore with me: and he was very diligent to pick up such things as the Island afforded, carrying ashore with him a Bag, which the people of the Isle filled with Roots for him. They flockt about him, and seemed to admire him much. This was the last place where I had him at my own disposal, for the Mate of the Ship, who had Mr. Moodi's share in him, left him entirely to my management, I being to bring him to England. But I was no sooner arrived in the Thomas, but he was sent ashore to be seen by some eminent persons; and I being in want of Money, was prevailed upon to sell first, part of my share in him, and by degrees all of it. After this I heard he was carried about to be shown as a Sight, and that he died of the Small-pox at Oxford.

But to proceed, our Water being fill'd and the Ships all stocked with fresh Provison, we sailed from hence in Company of the Princess Ann, the James and Mary, and the Josiab, July the 2d, 1691, directing our course towards England, and designing to touch no where by the way.