

III. *Part of a Letter from Mr. Witsen, Burger-master of Amsterdam, and F. R. S. to Dr. Martin Lister, fellow of the Colledge of Physicians, and R. S. concerning some late Observations in Nova Hollandia.*

**H**ere is returned a Ship, which by our *East-India* Company, was sent to the South Land, called, *Hollandia Nova*. The Master hath brought me Two Shells from that Country, hitherto not sufficiently known, which he found on the Sea side, and I make bold to send you the Draught of them, the Shells themselves being twice as long and broad as the Draught, and indeed I could not bestow them better, than to one who hath the best Knowledge of these, and all other Sea Products.

On this Voyage nothing hath been discovered which can be any way serviceable to the Company. The Soil of this Country hath been found very barren, and as a Desert; no Fresh-water Rivers have been found, but some Salt-water Rivers, as also no Four-footed Beasts, except one as great as a Dog, with long Ears, living in the Water as well as on the Land.

Black Swans, Parrots, and many Sea-Cows were found there; as also a Lake, whose Water seemed to be Red, because of the Redness of the Bottom of it: and round along the Shore there was some Salt. Our People had seen but Twelve of the Natives, all as black as Pitch, and stark naked, so terrified, that it was impossible to bring them to Conversation, or a Meeting: They lodge themselves as the Hottentots, in Pavilions of small Branches

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ches of Trees. By Night our People saw Fires all over the Country ; but when they drew near, the Natives were fled. The Coast is very low, but the Country far from the Sea is high.

Upon the Island near the Coast have been seen Rats as great as Cats, in an innumerable Quantity ; all which had a kind of a Bag or Purse hanging from the Throat upon the Breast downwards. There were found many well-smelling Trees, and out of their Wood is to be drawn Oyl smelling as a Rose, but for the rest they are small and miserable Trees. There were also found some Birds nests of a prodigious greatness, so that Six Men could not, by stretching out their Arms, encompass One of them ; but the Fowls were not to be found.

There was great Store of Oysters, Lobsters, and Crabs ; as also of strange sorts of Fish.

There were also Millions of Flies, very much troubling Men. They saw a great many Footsteps of Men and Children, but all of an ordinary bigness. The Coast is very foul and full of Rocks.

The Subject of this Voyage was to get Intelligence of a Ship having on board Sir *James Couper*, with Three Hundred Men, which we thought to be stranded there ; but since we have understood that the said Ship hath been taken by some Pirates near *Madagascar*, and that the said Sir *James* was by them killed.

*Amst.* 3 Oct. 1698.

*The Two Shells herein mentioned, are Printed in my Synopsis Conchyliorum, the one is the 1st Nautilus, the other the Concha Persica claviculâ radiatâ.*