



*A VIEW OF  
ST. VINCENT*

AN EXTRACT FROM

*THE ENGLISH EMPIRE IN  
AMERICA*

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## CHAP. XVI.

*A View of St. Vincent.*

**S**T. *Vincent* lies in 16 Degrees North, and is about 24 Miles long, and 18 broad, wherein are several high Mountains, and very fruitful Plains, yielding abundance of Sugar Canes, who grow naturally without planting; it is well water'd with Rivers, and hath several good Harbours and Bays for Shipping; the *English* have here some Plantations, but are neither considerable nor powerful, it being the most populous of *Caribbeans*, of any possessed by them, who have here many fine Villages, where they dwell pleasantly and without any Disturbance, and tho' jealous of the Strangers about them, and stand on their Guard, when they come to their Roads, yet they do not deny Cassavy Bread, Water, Fruits, and other Provisions growing in their Country to them that want them, taking in Exchange Wedges, Hooks, and other Implements of Iron, which they much esteem. Their Simplicity is very remarkable in several Things, as in admiring our Fire Arms, but especially Fire-locks, to which they see no Fire put as to Muskets, and therefore believe *Maboya* or the Devil sets them on Fire; when the Moon is eclipsed, they believe the Devil eats her, and dance all Night making a Noise with Gourds, wherein are many Pebble Stones; when they smell any evil Scent, they cry, *Maboya, or the Devil is here, let us be gone from him.*

They have a natural Sentiment of some Divinity, or Superior Power, that hath its Residence in Heaven, when

which they say is contented to enjoy quietly the Delights of its own Felicity, without being offended at the ill Actions of Men, and is endowed with so great Goodness as not to take any Revenge even of Enemies; from whence they render Heaven neither Honour nor Adoration, interpreting its Liberality and Long-sufferance, an Effect either of its Weakness or Indifference toward Mankind; yet they believe there are a Number of good and evil Spirits; the good are their Gods, and every one imagines one of them is particularly designed for his Conduct, yet will not acknowledge them Creators of the World, and when the Christians tell them, we adore that God who made Heaven and Earth, and causeth the Earth to bring forth Fruits and Herbs, for Nourishment, they answer, *It is true thy God hath made the Heaven and the Earth of France (or some other Country that they name) and causes the Wheat to grow there, but our Gods have made our Country, and cause our Manioc to grow: The Manioc is a Root of a small Tree or Shrub, whereof the Caribbeans make Bread.* When they recover of some Disease, they set a little Table at the End of their Huts, and upon it their Offerings, but without any Adoration or Prayers yet invoke their false Gods when they desire his Presence, but this is done by the Priest, upon four Occasions, *To demand Revenge, To be healed of Diseases; To know the Event of their Wars, To invoke them to drive away the great Devil or Maboaya;* for they never pray to him; this Invocation is by singing some Words and burning Tobacco, the Smoke whereof is so pleasant, that it makes this little Devil appear, and when several Priests call upon their several Gods together, as they speak, these Gods or rather Devils rail, quarrel, and seem to fight with each other; these Dæmons shelter themselves sometimes in the Bones of dead Men taken out of the Graves and wrapped in Cotton, and thereby give Oracles, saying it is the Soul of the deceased Person, they make

of them to bewitch their Enemies, the Sorcerers wrapping up these Bones with something that belongs to the Enemy.

This cursed Spirit inflames them to act such Cruelty upon their Enemies taken in War, in relating whereof we need dip our Pen in Blood, being to draw a Picture which must raise Horror in the Beholder; in this there appears nothing but Inhumanity, Barbarism, and Rage; to see rational Creatures cruelly devouring those of the same Kind, and filling themselves with their Flesh and Blood, a Thing which Pagans heretofore thought so full of Execration, that they imagined the Sun withdrew himself because he would not give Light to such bloody Banquets. When these *Cannibals* or *Eaters of Men* have brought home a Prisoner of War of the *Arovagues*, he belongs of Right to him who either seized him in Fight, or took him running away: Being brought to this Island, he keeps them safe in his House, and after he has made him fast four or five Days, produces him upon some solemn Day of Debauch to serve for publick Sacrifice to the immortal hatred of his Countrymen toward that Nation. If any of their Enemies die on the Place of Battle, they eat them there before they leave it, designing for Slavery only the young Maids and Women taken in the War. They have tasted of all Nations that frequented them, and by Experience affirm that the *French* are the most tender, and the *Spaniards* the hardest Flesh of Digestion, but now they feed on no Christians at all.

They abstain from several Cruelties formerly used before they killed their Enemies, for whereas at present they think it enough to dispatch them with a Blow or two with a Club, and afterward cut them into Pieces, and have boil'd them and so devour them. They heretofore put them to several Torments before the mortal Blow, of which themselves have given this deplorable Relation; the Prisoner of War who had been

so unfortunate to fall into their Hands, and was ignorant that he was designed to receive the most cruel Treatment which Rage could suggest, armed himself with Constancy, and to express how generous a People the *Arovagues* were, marched very chearfully to the Place of Execution, neither bound nor dragged there, and presented himself with a mild and steady Countenance in the Midst of the Assembly, which he knew desired nothing so much as his death, and not fearing their Abuses and bitter Discourses, he prevented them in these Terms.

*I know well enough upon what Account you have brought me to this Place; I doubt not but you are desirous to fill yourselves with my Blood, and that you are impatient to exercise your Teeth on my Body; but you have not so much Reason to triumph to see me in this Condition, nor I much to be troubled thereat; my Countrymen have put your Predecessors to greater Miseries than you are able to invent against me; and I have done my Part with them in managings, massacreing, and devouring your People, your Friends, and your Fathers; besides that I have Relations who will not fail to revenge my Quarrel with Advantage upon you, and upon your Children for the inhuman Torments you intend against me: What Torment soever the most ingenious Cruelty can dictate to you, the taking away my Life is nothing in Comparison of these my generous Nation prepares for you, therefore lay not the utmost of your Cruelty any longer, and assure yourselves I both slight and laugh at it. Somewhat of this Nature is that brave and bloody Bravado which we read of a *Brasilian* Prisoner ready to be devoured by his Enemies: Come on boldly, said he to them, feast yourselves upon me, for at the same time you will feed on your Fathers and Grand-fathers, who served for Nourishment for my Body; these Muscles, this Flesh, and these Veins are yours, blind Fools as you are; do you observe that the substance of the Members of your Ancestors*

are yet to be seen in them, taste them well and you will find they taste of your own Flesh.

The great Soul of our *Arovagues* was not only in his Lips, but shewed itself also in the Effects which followed this Bravado; for after the Company had a while endured his Menaces and arrogant Defiance without touching him, one among them came and burnt his Sides with a flaming Brand, another cut great Gobbets of Flesh out of him, and would cut bigger if the Bones would have admitted it, then they cast Pepper into his Wounds, others diverted themselves in shooting Arrows at the poor Patient, and every one took a Pleasure in tormenting him, but he suffered with the same unconcerned Countenance, and expressed not the least Sense of Pain; after they had thus sported a long time with the poor Wretch, at last growing weary of insulting and out-braved by his Constancy, which seemed still the same, one of them came and at one Blow dispatched him with his Club. This is the Usage wherewith the *Caribians* heretofore treated their Prisoners of War, but now they think it enough to put them to a speedy Death. As soon as this unfortunate Person is thus laid dead upon the Place, the young Men take the Body, and having washed it cut it in Pieces, and then boil some Part, and broil some upon wooden Frames made like a Gridiron for that purpose. When this detestable Dish is ready, and seasoned according to their Palates, they divide it into so many Parts as there are Persons present, and joyfully devour it, thinking that the World cannot afford any other Repast equally delicious; the Women lick the very Sticks whereon the Fat dropped, not so much for the Deliciousness they find in that kind of sustenance, as from the excessive Pleasure they conceive in being reveng'd in that Manner of their chiefest Enemies; and to heighten this Rage and Hatred against the *Arovagues* they save the Fat that comes from it, and keep it carefully in little Gourds to pour some  
few

few Drops thereof into their Sauces at their solemn Entertainments, so to perpetuate as much as lies in their Power, the Motive of Revenge.



## C H A P. XVII.

*A View of Antegoa.*

**A** *Ntegoa* lies in the Latitude of 17 Degrees between *Barbadoes* and *Desiderado*. In Length about 20 Miles, and much of the same Breadth. The Access to it is dangerous for Shipping by the Rocks which compass it. It was conceived heretofore not to be inhabited upon Presumption there was no fresh Water in it, but the *English* who planted it have met with some, and made Ponds and Cisterns to supply that Defect, it being inhabited by near 900 Persons. The Commodities this Island affords are *Sugar*, *Indico*,  *Ginger*, and *Tobacco*. It abounds in tame Cattle, and all Sorts of Fish, among which the *Spark Fish* deserves remark: It is a Kind of Sea-dog or Sea-wolf, the most devouring of all Fishes, greedy of Man's Flesh, and dangerous to those that swim; he lives altogether by Prey, and follows Ships to feed on the Filth cast into the Sea: These Monsters seem yellow in the Water, some of a vast Length and bigness, so that they are able to cut a Man in two at one bite; their Skins is so rough that Files are made of it to polish Wood; their Heads are flat, and the opening of their Mouth not just before the Snout but under it, so that they are forced to turn their Bellies almost upward when they seize their Prey; their Teeth are very sharp and broad jagged out like a saw, of which some have 3 or 4 ranks in each Jaw-bone, they lie with within his Gum