





PETER KOLBEN A.M.

T H E  
P R E S E N T S T A T E  
O F T H E  
C a p e o f G O O D - H O P E :  
O R,

A P a r t i c u l a r A C C O U N T o f t h e s e v e r a l N A T I O N S  
O f t h e  
*H O T T E N T O T S :*

Their Religion, Government, Laws, Customs,  
Ceremonies, and Opinions; Their Art of  
War, Professions, Language, Genius, &c.

Together with

A S h o r t A C C O U N T o f t h e D U T C H S E T T L E M E N T  
A t t h e C A P E .

*Written Originally in High German,*  
By P E T E R K O L B E N, *A. M.*

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*Done into English from the Original*  
By Mr. M E D L E Y .

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Illustrated with C O P P E R P L A T E S .

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L O N D O N :

Printed for W. INNYS, At the West End of St. PAUL'S.

M D C C X X X I .

## ERRATA

**P**AGE 73. line 19. for or, read and. p. 99. l. 5 for *spiræam*,  
read *spiræa*. p. 102. l. 1. after render'd, read it, omitted in  
many of the Books. p. 105. l. 2<sup>o</sup> for *Horse*, read *Horse's*.



*To His Grace*

T H E

D U K E of *M O N T A G U*,

This Translation is most humbly in-  
scrib'd by

*His Grace's*

*most obliged,*

*most obedient,*

*and most devoted*

*humble Servant,*

G. MEDLEY,



T H E

# P R E F A C E.

**A**S I may never hereafter be concern'd in the Publication of History, I take this Opportunity to publish some Reflections on History and Historical Writers, which either have not been, or I have not seen, publish'd by others.

Of all Human Accomplishments there is none so valuable as the Historical Knowledge of Mankind. This, with a good Heart, a clear Head, and some Acquaintance with present Things, fits a Man out for the World. It lets him far into the Oeconomy of Providence, teaches him Submission to her Dispensations, and warms his Bosom with the most generous Passions for his Fellow-Creatures. It clears his

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Mind of the Rubbish thrown into it from *Craft* and *Superstition*; and strengthens and adorns it with a Million of sound and beautiful Ideas. It gives him a full View of the Human Nature, and a very distinct one of Himself. It fortifies with Caution; furnishes Address; and makes an Artist in the Business of Life; a Man who takes every Thing by the right Handle, and bears himself gracefully under all the Dispensations of Providence.

Such a Man discerns the Genius of every Nation, and the Compass of Reasoning and Action allotted to each. Such a Man sees the whole Scale of the Human Nature, from her lowest to her highest Vertues and Vices; from Ignorance and the Glimmerings of Sense to all the Splendors of Wit and Learning. Such a Man sees the *Phantasms* of Happiness with which every Nation, every Humour, is bewitch'd. Such a Man sees distinctly the *Furies* in those Passions and Excesses that shatter and distract the World. Such a Man sees, that *Vicissitude* is a *Law* of the Human Nature: That it extends to every Nation, to every Family, and to every individual Person: That  
Vice

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Vice and Ignorance have every where the Benefit of the *Law of Good* ; and that the *Law of Evil* is no where dispens'd with either in Favour of Sense or Vertue. Such a Man has his Cue for every Scene of Life, and for every Genius and Temper of Men. Such a Man sees the Human Nature through and through, and the Vanity of all earthly Fruitions.

Such is the Discernment of the Man who, with a good Talent at Reflection, is well read in the History of the World,

But there are certain *Ignes Fatui*, call'd *Lies*, which ever present themselves in the Pursuit of Historical Truth, and ever, without the Cautions of Experience in the Chace, lead a Man a long round-about Dance over Hedge and Ditch, and betray him into a Thousand Dangers before he perceives the Delusion. These Meteors flow from the *Ignorance*, the *Knavery* and the *Constitutions* of Writers. There is as much Wantonness and Malice, as much Falshood and Design, as much Ignorance and Ill Breeding in History as in ordinary Conversation ; and Men generally bring their Constitutions equally into one and the other.



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Upon the Ignorance and Knavery of Writers, I have Nothing to add to what has been said over and over, and is known almost to every one upon those Heads. All Ages, since Writing has been known in the World, have produc'd, as does the present, and as, doubtless, will every one to come, Swarms of the *Ignorant* and *Designing* to plague the World with mutilated Fact and Historical Fiction. But few People, I believe, dream of the Evils that are often deriv'd upon History from the *Constitutions* of Authors. Few People apprehend how Truth may be injur'd by the *Melancholic*, the *Pblegmatic*, the *Choleric*, and the *Sanguine* Tempers of Men. Few have any Notion of the Wounds, the Tarnishes and false Beauties she may and does often receive from the reigning *Humour* in an Author. For my own Part I think, that it does not a little contribute to the Discovery of Truth in a History to know the Temperament of the Man who writ it. Some may think I am in Jest here; but I assure 'em, I am very much in Earnest; and could heartily wish, for the Sake of the Generality of Readers, that every Man, who writes and publishes an Original History, was oblig'd to prefix to his  
Work

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Work the Opinion of a Physician, which of the *Four Humours* (in the Dialect of Old, tho' improper) has the *Ascendant* in him. Persons indeed, well acquainted with Men and Books, quickly discover This, and govern themselves accordingly: And I know Some who go so far as to say, they can discover how an Author's Pulse beat when he was upon this or that Part of his Labour. But others, who are not skill'd in Men and Books, are often led by the reigning *Humour* in an Author into very gross Delusions.

'Tis no difficult Matter to shew, that the Constitution of a Man frequently betrays him into a Falshood. The Man of a *Melancholic* Temperament, for Example (I shall pursue this Matter in the old Dialect) frequently takes and reports Shadows for Substances, and airy Suspicions for the best grounded Truths in the World. The *Sanguine* makes every Thing he likes, appear infinitely better than it is: While the *Choleric* makes every Thing he likes not, appear infinitely worse. The *Pblegmatic* is, indeed, excellent at the *Outside* of Things, but good for Nothing at the *Inside*. He gives you a most exact Account of *Fact*; but is strangely short-

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fighited at the *Reason* of it; and sees but Little of the *Good* or *Evil* of any Thing.

He must never set up for Discernment, who has liv'd any considerable Time in the World, and not discover'd his Variations from himself merely by Virtue of Alterations in his Fluids. Every Man, who reflects thoroughly on himself, finds, that his Ideas of Persons and Things often alter without the Intervention of the smallest Reason concerning them. His Idea of a Thing at Noon he often finds to be unlike his Idea of it in the Morning; and his Idea of it at Night to be unlike 'em both; and this merely by the Force of his alter'd Fluids. Vexatious Apprehensions are often remov'd by a generous Meal: And Dangers become contemptible after a Bottle, that appear'd terrible before it. Hence Some make it a Rule (and 'tis, methinks, a very good One) never to ask a Favour in a Morning, if they can have an Opportunity of Doing it immediately after Dinner. A good Repast sweetens all Nature in a Man; lets in the Sun, as it were, upon his Faculties; his Heart is enlarg'd; his Ideas are brighten'd; and then, or never, he is in a Disposition to confer a Favour. I

I cannot help thinking that *Solon*, in his fam'd Saying, Γνωσε σεαυτόν, *Know thy self*, had his Eye in a particular Manner upon the Temperament of the Body; without the Knowledge of which, I cannot see how any Man can properly be said to know himself. The Influence of the Body upon the Mind can hardly be suppos'd to have escap'd that discerning Philosopher: And if he saw it, he saw too, that a great Part of the Human Happiness depended upon its good Government. The Constitution of a Man, before he knows and has learn'd to manage it, I venture to say, is his greatest Deceiver. It clouds his Mind when he has Occasion for her utmost Brightness. It betrays him into false Ideas of Men and Things. It makes him feel Pain where there is no Disease, and see Terrors where there is no Danger. This we call the *Spleen*. In a moist Air, or in rainy Weather, his Humours rise, and his Spirits sink; his Mind languishes; his Ideas fade; and he falls into an Opinion, that those Persons and Things which gave him but now, perhaps, a most reasonable Delight, have Little or Nothing delightful or agreeable in 'em. When the Sun shines out, and licks up the Vapours in the Air, his Spirits are disen-

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cumber'd ; his Ideas revive; he banishes his Whimfies contracted in the Rain, and enjoys his former Opinions. In rainy Weather, Dangers that were few become numerous in his Eye; Difficulties that were small become unfurmoutable ; Things that displeafe him give redoubled Offence, and Things that fright him, redoubled Terror. The Cafe is the fame after a Debauch; and for this I appeal to every Man's Experience.

Where the *Melancholic* Humour, or, as the Phyficians term it, the *Atra Bilis*, has the *Afcendant* (I keep to the old Dialect) the Mind is involv'd in Darknefs and Terror. While the Imagination of a *Sanguine* Man may be faid to refemble a fpacious Area, open to all the Beams of the Sun, the Imagination of the *Melancholic* can be compar'd to Nothing perhaps fo properly as a difmal Cel, from which the Day is for ever excluded, and where burns only a fingle Taper. Sir *Theod. Mayerne* fays, \* *Melancholiam, Sedem, Balneum & Regnum Diaboli effe, fat fcio ; atque Principem iftum tenebrarum, fub atri humoris denfa caligine latitantem, fe fe variis morbis naturalibus immifcere, & fæ-*  
vas

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*vas excitare turbas in diversis subjectis, experientia multiplici compertum habeo.* That is, I am satisfied, that Melancholy is the Seat, the Bath, and the Kingdom of the Devil; and have found, by manifold Experience, that that Prince of Darknes, concealing himself under the thick Mist of the melancholic Humour, has a Hand in various natural Diseases, and stirs up cruel Disorders on sundry Occasions. I know Nothing of the Devil's having any Thing to do with the Melancholic Humour: But this I know, that the Melancholic Humour, where it abounds, makes (if my Reader will pardon me the Expression) the Devil of an Historian. He deals in Omens, Apparitions and Haunted Houses; in Battle, Murder and Sudden Death. His Pages swell with Sins, Judgments and Catastrophes. His Style is the plaintive, thick set with Interjections, as the *Ab!* the *Alas!* and the *Oh me!* He dwells for ever on the *dark* Side of Things, and knows not how to exhibit 'em on the *bright*. He mourns for Evils that never *happen'd*, and mourns for Evils that never *will*. He finds in the lightest Matters Enough to make the Heart ache; and the gayest Story, from him, affects you like a *Passing* Bell. All his Lies are full of  
Ter-

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Terror, and all his Truths are very *sad* ones. If you are not aware of the delusive *Humour* that prompts him, he will make you out of Love with your self and every Thing about you.

The *Sanguine* Temperament is as opposite to the *Melancholic* as Light is to Darkness, and runs, in History, into the contrary Extremes. The *Melancholic* makes every Evil more frightful than it is. The *Sanguine* hardly sees the Half of any one. The *Melancholic* dwells for ever on Calamity; the *Sanguine* skips over it. The *Melancholic* oppresses the Heart. The *Sanguine* charms the Fancy. The *Melancholic* preaches; the *Sanguine* laughs; and hardly brings you to the serious Consideration of any Matter. The *Sanguine* Writer is very awkward at exhibiting an ugly Truth; but very handy at a beautiful one. He stays not long on sorrowful Matters, but dwells for ever on such as are delightful.

There is but little Occasion to say any Thing of the Illusions of *Choler* in History. Every one knows 'em in Ordinary Life, where they are much the same. The Historian of a *Cholerick*  
Com-

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Complexion, who has not the Art of Guarding against its Deceptions, neither shews nor sees any Thing that displeases him in a true Light. His Style is clamorous and unequal. He calls Names. Every one, whose Conduct he likes not, is Knave or Fool; and every Thing is monstrous with which he is dissatisfied. Such an Author ought never to be read without an Abatement of, at least, Two Thirds of the Fire of his Conceptions.

The *Pblegmatic* Writers certainly excel all others in Accounts of Fact. The *Pblegmatic* have no Eyes, indeed, for the *Inside* of Things; but they have excellent ones for the *Outside*; and give a Detail of a Thousand Particulars there which escape Men of other Complexions. They relate every Thing they see and hear, with the most religious Exactness, not omitting the smallest or most indifferent Matter or Circumstance, they remember, tho' it be of neither Use nor Entertainment, nor any Thing at all to the Purpose. They are neither ravish'd with Beauty, nor frighted at Deformity; neither elated with Success, nor depress'd with Misfortune. They are subject to none of those  
Flur-



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Flurries of Imagination that transport and bewilder other Men. Their Phlegm keeps that Faculty under so tight a Rein, that it never runs away with 'em, or throws 'em out of their Road. The Mischief of 'em is, that they are dull and tedious, and, in Point of Reasoning, apt to forget and involve themselves in Tautology and Contradiction.

Of the Class of *Phlegm* I reckon my Author, Mr *Kolben*, a Gentleman still living at *Nuremberg* in *Germany*, and in great Esteem there for his Integrity and Learning. I have not the Honour to know him : But I am satisfied, from his Manner of Writing, that he is not subject to Transports of Imagination, and that *Phlegm* (to keep to the old Dialect) has the *Ascendant* in him. This, I think, adds not a little Credit to the following History, since, as I have observ'd, the Sons of *Phlegm* are the exactest Relaters in the World of What they see; and in History of this Kind an Author has little else to do.

For the following Work, I must acquaint the Reader, that it is not so properly a *Translation*

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*lation* as an *Abridgment* of Mr *Kolben's* History. He is very tedious in some Relations, and here and there runs out in Reflections that are neither very entertaining, nor very much to the Purpose. In those Places I have abridg'd him; yet in such Manner, I trust, as to preserve every Thing he intended his Reader should see. His Reasoning is sometimes very bad, and often very tedious. I have therefore retrench'd him in that Article too, and here and there alter'd him. His Method is likewise a Thing in which I could not always resolve to follow him. I have here and there forsaken it, and brought many Things together in the following Work that lie at a great Distance from one another in the Original.

I am likewise to acquaint the Reader, that there are in the Original three or four little Contradictions in Point of Fact, with Relation to *Hottentot* Matters. These I have not conceal'd in the Translation. 'Twere easy for me to have done it; but That, perhaps, would not have been judg'd Fair; tho' they are arrant Trifles, that do no Injury to the Story, and are not to be seen, perhaps by the Majority  
of

of Readers. Mr *Kolben* says, he lost some of his Papers relating to the *Hottentots*, and was oblig'd to supply that Loss by his Memory. It may be those little Defects were owing to that Misfortune, and to his sending the Book, perhaps, a little too hastily to the Press.

I have only to add, that the *Original* is in great Esteem abroad, as the exactest History of the *Hottentots* the World has yet seen.

GUIDO MEDLEY.





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