

# GODWIN FRANCIS

THE STRANGE VOYAGE  
AND ADVENTURES OF  
DOMINGO GONSALES,  
TO THE WORLD IN THE  
MOON

Francis Godwin

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## The Strange Voyage and Adventures of Domingo Gonsales, to the World in the Moon

Before I come to relate our extraordinary Voyage of *Domingo Gonzales* to the World in the Moon, I will make a Halt at St. *Hellens*, or *Hellena*, which is now possess'd by the Honourable *East-India* Company. It is called the Sea Inn, because the *English* and other Nations stop there as a Place for Watering and Refreshment in their long Voyages to *India*. It was formerly seized by the *Dutch*, but retaken *May* 6th, 1673, by Captain *Munday*, with a Squadron of *English* Ships, and three rich *Dutch East India* Ships made Prizes in the Harbour; since which the Company have fortified and secured it, against any future Invasion of *Dutch*, *Portuguese*, or *Spaniards*. It was called *Santa Helena* by the *Portuguese*, who discovered it on St. *Hellen's* Day, being *April* 2.

There is no Island in the World so far distant from the Continent or main Land as this. It is about sixteen Leagues in Compass, in the *Ethiopic* Sea; in 16 Degrees of South Latitude; about 1500 Miles from the *Cape of Good Hope*; 360 from *Angola* in *Africa*; and 510 from *Brasile* in *America*. It lies high out of the Water; and surrounded on the Sea-coasts with steep Rocks, having within many Cliffs, Mountains and Vallies, of which one is named *Church-Valley*, where behind a small Church they climb up to the Mountains. To the South is *Apple-Dale*, so called from the abundance of Oranges, Lemons, and Pomegranates enough to furnish five or six Ships. On the West-side of the Church, Ships have good Anchorage close under the Shore, to prevent the Winds which blow fiercely from the adjacent high Mountains.

The Air seems temperate and healthful, so that sick Men brought ashore there, in a short Time recover; yet the Heat in the Vallies is as intolerable as the Cold upon the Mountains; it commonly rains there five or six Times a Day, so that the Barrenness of the Hills is not occasioned for the want of Water, of which it hath two or three good Springs for furnishing Ships with fresh Water; the Ground of its own Accord brings forth wild Pease and Beans, also whole Woods of Orange, Lemon, and Pomegranate Trees, all the Year long, laden both with Blossoms and Fruit, good Figs; abundance of Ebony and Rose-trees, Parsly, Mustard-seed, Purslain, Sorrel, and the like; the Woods and Mountains are full of Goats, large Rams, and wild Swine, but difficult to be taken. When the *Portuguese* discovered it, they found neither four-footed Beasts nor Fruit-trees, but only fresh Water; they afterward planted Fruit-trees, which so increased since, that all the Vallies stand full of them; Partridges, Pigeons, Moor-hens, and Peacocks breed here numerously, whereof a good Marksman may soon provide a Dinner for his Friends. On the Cliff-Islands, on the South, are thousands of grey and black Mews, or Sea-Pies, and white and coloured Birds, some, with long, others with short Necks, who lay their Eggs on the Rocks, and suffer themselves to be taken with the Hand, gazing at their Surprizers, till they are knocked on the Head with Sticks.

From the Salt-water beating against the Cliffs, a Froth or Scum remains in some Places, which the Heat of the Sun so purifies, that it becomes white and good Salt; some of the Mountains yield. Bole Armoniac, and a fat Earth like *Terra Lemnia*. The Sea will answer the Pains of a patient Fisherman, who must use an Angle, not a Net, because of the foul Ground and beating of the Waves; the chief are Mackrel, Roach, Carp, but differing in Colour from those among us; Eels as big, as a Man's Arm, and well tasted Crabs, Lobsters, Oysters and Mussels as good as *English*.

It is in this Island that the Scene of that notable Fancy, called, *The Man in the Moon*, or a *Discourse of a Voyage thither*, by *Domingo Gonsales* is laid, written by a learned Bishop, saith the ingenious Bishop Wilkins, who calls it a pleasant and well contrived Fancy, in his own Book, intituled, *A Discourse of the New World, tending to prove that it is possible there may be another habitable World in the Moon*; wherein among other curious Arguments he affirms, that this hath been the direct

Opinion of divers antient, and some modern Mathematicians, and may probably be deduced from the Tenets of others, neither does it contradict any Principle of Reason nor Faith; and that as their World is our Moon, so our World is theirs.

Now this small Tract having so worthy a Person to vouch for it, and many of our English Historians having published for Truth, what is almost as improbable as this, as Sir *John Mandavil* in his Travels and others, and this having what they are utterly destitute of, that is, Invention mixed with Judgment; and was judged worthy to be Licensed fifty years ago, and not since reprinted, whereby it would be utterly lost. I have thought fit to republish the Substance thereof, wherein the Author says he does not design to discourse his Readers into a Belief of each particular Circumstance, but expects that his new Discovery of a *new World*, may find little better Entertainment than *Columbus* had in his first Discovery of *America*, though yet that poor Espial betrayed so much Knowledge as hath since increased to vast Improvements, and the then *Unknown* is now found to be of as large Extent as all the other *known World*; that there should be Antipodes was once thought as great a Paradox, as now that the Moon should be habitable. But the Knowledge of it may be reserved for this our discovering Age, wherein our Virtuosi can by their Telescopes gaze the Sun into Spots, and descry Mountains in the Moon. But this and much more must be left to the Critics, as well as the following Relation of our little Eye-witness and great Discoverer, which you shall have in his own *Spanish* Stile, and delivered with that Grandeur and Thirst of Glory, which is generally imputed to that Nation.

It is known to all the Countries of Andalusia, that I *Domingo Gonsales* was born of a noble Family in the renowned City of *Seville*. My Father's Name being *Therando Gonsales*, near Kinsman on the Mother's Side to Don *Pedro Sanches* the worthy Count of *Almanera*, my Mother was the Daughter of the famous Lawyer *Otho Perez de Sallaveda*, Governor of *Barcellona*, and *Corrigidor* of *Biscay*; I being the youngest of seventeen Children, was put to School, and designed to the Church; but Heaven purposing to use my Service in Matters of far another Nature, inspired me with spending some Time in the Wars; it was at the Time that Don *Fernando*, the renowned Duke *D'Alva*, was sent into the *Low Countries* in 1568; I then following the Current of my Desire, leaving the University of *Salamanca*, whither my Parents had sent me, without giving Notice to any of my Friends, got through *France* to *Antwerp*, where I arrived in a mean Condition. For having sold my Books, Bedding, and other Things, which yielded me about 30 Ducats; and borrowed twenty more of my Father's Friends; I bought a little Nag, wherewith I travelled more thriftily than usually young Gentlemen do, till arriving within a League of *Antwerp*, some of the cursed *Gueses* set upon me, and bereaved me of my Horse, Money, and all; so I was forced through Necessity to enter into the Service of Marshal *Cossey* a French Nobleman, whom I served in an honourable Employ, though mine Enemies, to my Disgrace affirm, I was his Horse-keeper's Boy; but for that Matter, I refer myself to Count *Mansfield*, and other Persons of Condition, who have often testified to many worthy Men, the very Truth of the Business, which indeed was this, Monsieur *Cossey* being about this Time sent to the Duke *D'Alva*, Governor of the *Low Countries*, he informing the Nobility of my Birth, and my late Misfortune, judging it would be no small Honour to him to have a *Spaniard* of that Quality about him, furnished me with a Horse, Arms and whatever I wanted, using my Service, after I had learned *French*, in writing his Letters, because my Hand was very fair. In time of War, if upon Necessity, I sometimes dressed my own Horse, I ought not to be reproached therewith, since I count it the part of a Gentleman to submit to the vilest Office for the Service of his Prince.

The first Expedition I was in, was when the Marshal my Friend met the Prince of *Orange* making a Road into *France*, and forced him to fly even to the Walls of *Cambray*: It was my good Fortune to defeat a Trooper, by killing his Horse with my Pistol, who falling upon his Leg, could not stir, but yielded to my Mercy; I knowing my own Weakness of Body, and seeing him a lusty tall Fellow, thought it the surest Way to dispatch him, which having done, I plundered him of a Chain, Money, and other Things to the Value of 200 Ducats. This Money was no sooner in my Pockets, but I resumed the Remembrance of my Nobility, and taking my Audience of Leave from Monsieur

*Cossey*, I instantly repaired to the Duke *D'Alva's* Court, where divers of my Kindred seeing my Pocket full of good Crowns, were ready enough to acknowledge me: By their means I was received into Pay, and in Time obtained Favour with the Duke, who would sometimes jest a little more severely at my Personage than I could well bear, for though I must acknowledge my Stature is so little, as I think no Man living is less, yet since it is the Work of Heaven and not my own, he ought not to have upbraided a Gentleman therewith, and those glorious Things that have happened to me may evince, that wonderful Matters may be performed by very unlikely Bodies, if the Mind be good, and Fortune second our Endeavours.

Though the Duke's Jokes a little disgusted me, yet I endeavoured to conceal my Resentment, and accommodating myself to some other of his Humours, I was so far interested in his Favour, that at his going into *Spain*, whither I attended him, by his Kindness, and other Accidents, wherein by my Industry I was seldom wanting to myself, I was able to carry home 300 °Crowns in my Pocket.

At my Return, my Parents, who were extremely disturbed at my Departure, received me with Joy, which was increased because they found I had brought wherewith to maintain Myself without being chargeable to them, or lessening the Portions of my Brothers and Sisters. But doubting I would spend it as lightly as I got it, they sollicitated me to marry the Daughter of *John Figueres*, a considerable Merchant of *Lisbon*, to which I complied, and putting my Marriage Money, and good Part of my own into the Hands of my father, I lived like a Gentleman many Years very happily: At length a Quarrel arising between me and *Pedro Delgades*, a Gentleman and Kinsman of mine; it grew so high, that when no Mediation of Friends could prevail, we two went alone with our Swords into the Field, where it was my Chance to kill him, tho' a stout proper Man; but what I wanted in Strength I Supplied in Courage, and my Agility countervailed for his Stature. This being acted in *Carmona*, I fled to *Lisbon*, thinking to conceal myself with some Friends of my Father-in-Law, till the Business might be accommodated; at which Time, a famous *Spanish* Count coming from the *West-Indies*, published triumphant Declarations of a great Victory he had obtained against the *English* near the *Isle of Pines*, whereas in reality he got nothing at all in that Voyage but Blows, and a considerable Loss. It had been well if Vanity and Lying had been his only Crimes; his Covetousness had like to have been my utter Ruin, though since it hath proved the Occasion of eternizing my Name I verily believe to all Posterity, and to the unspeakable Benefit of all Mortals for ever hereafter, at least if it please Heaven that I return home safe to my Country, and give perfect Instructions how those almost incredible and impossible Acquirements may be imparted to the World. You shall then see Men flying in the Air, from one Place to another, you shall then be able to send Messages many hundred Miles in an Instant, and receive Answers immediately, without the Help of any Creature upon Earth; you shall then presently impart your Mind to your Friend, though in the most remote and obscure Place of a populous City, and a Multitude of other notable Experiments; but what exceeds all, you shall then have the Discovery of a *New World*, and Abundance of rare and incredible Secrets of Nature, which the Philosophers of former Ages never so much as dreamt of; but I must be cautious in publishing these wonderful Mysteries, till our Statesmen have considered how they may consist with the Policy and good Government of our Country, and whether the Fathers of the Church may not judge the divulging them prejudicial to the Catholic Faith, which (by those Wonders I have seen above any mortal Man before me) I am instructed to advance without Respect to any temporal Advantage whatsoever.

But to proceed: This huffing Captain pretended much Discontent for the Death of *Delgades*, who was indeed some Kin to him; however, he was willing to be quiet if I would give him a thousand Ducats: I had now, besides a Wife, two Sons, whom I was not willing to beggar, only to satisfy the avaricious Humour of this Boaster, and so was necessitated to take some other Course. I embarked in a stout Carrick bound for the *East-Indies*, carrying the Value of two thousand Ducats to trade with, leaving as much more for the Support of my Wife and Children behind, whatever Misfortune might happen to me. In the *Indies* I thrived exceedingly, laying out my Stock in Diamonds, Emeralds, and Pearls, which I bought at such easy Rates, that my Stock safely arriving in *Spain*, (as I understood it

did) must needs yield ten for one. But having doubled *Cape Bona Esperanza* in my Way home, I fell dangerously sick, expediting nothing but Death, which had undoubtedly happened, but that we just then recovered the blessed Isle of St. *Hellens*, the only Paradise I believe on Earth, for Healthfulness of Air, and Fruitfulness of Soil, producing all Necessaries for the Life of Man. It is about 16 Leagues in Compass, and has no firm Land or Continent within 300 Leagues, nay not so much as an Island within an hundred Leagues of it, so that it may seem a Miracle of Nature, that out of so vast and tempestuous an Ocean, such a small Rock or Piece of Ground should arise and discover itself. On the South is a good Harbour, and near it divers small Houses built by the *Portuguese* to accommodate Strangers, with a pretty Chapel handsomely beautified with a Tower, and Bell therein. Near it is a Stream of excellent fresh Water, divers handsome Walks, planted on both Sides with Orange, Lemon, Pomegranate, Almond-Trees and the like, which bear Fruit all the Year, as do also divers others. There are Store of Garden Herbs, with Wheat, Pease, Barley, and most Kinds of Pulse; but it chiefly aboundeth with Cattle and Fowl, as Goats, Swine, Sheep, Partridges, wild Hens, Pheasants, Pigeons, and wild Fowl beyond Credit; but especially about *February* and *March* are to be seen huge Flocks of a kind of wild Swans, (whereof I shall have Occasion to speak more hereafter) who like our Cuckows and Nightingales, go away at a certain Season, and are no more seen that Year.

On this happy Island did they set me ashore with a Negro to attend me, where. I recovered my Health, and continued a whole Year, solacing myself for want of human Society with Birds and brute Beasts; *Diego* my Black moor was forced to live in a Cave at the West End of the Isle, for had we dwelt together, Victuals would not have been so plenty with us; but now, if one succeeded well in hunting or fowling, the other would find Means to treat him, and if both missed, we were fain to look out sharply; but this seldom happened, since no Creature there fears a Man more than a Goat or Cow, whereby I easily tamed divers Kinds of Birds and Beasts by only muzzling them, so that till they came either to me or *Diego* they could not feed. At first I much delighted in a Kind of Partridges, and a tame Fox, whereof I made good Use for if I had Occasion to confer with *Diego*, I would take one of them muzzled and hungry, and tying a Note about his Neck, beat him from me, whereupon he would strait away to *Diego's* Cave, and if he were not there, would beat about till he found him, yet this Conveyance being not without some Inconvenience, I persuaded *Diego*, (who tho' a Fellow of good Parts, was content to be ruled by me) to remove to a Cape on the North-west Part of the Island, being though a League off, yet within Sight of my House and Chapel, and so when the Weather was fair, we could by Signals declare our Minds to each other in an Instant either by Night or Day, wherein we took much Pleasure. If in the Night I would signify any Thing to him, I set up a Light in the Bell Tower, which was a pretty large-Room with a fair Window well glazed, and the Walls within plaistered white, so that though the Light were but small, it made a great Show; after this Light had stood half an Hour, I covered it, and then if I saw any Signal of Light again from my Companion I knew he waited for my Notice, and so by hiding and shewing my Light according to the Agreement betwixt us, I certified him of what I pleased. In the Day I advertised him by Smoke, Dust, and other refined Ways.

After a while I grew weary of it as too painful, and again used my winged Messengers, upon the Shore, about the Mouth of our River, I found Store of a kind of wild Swans feeding upon Prey, both of Fish and Birds, and which is more strange; having one Claw like an Eagle, and the other like a Swan. These Birds breeding here in infinite Numbers, I took thirty or forty of them young, and bred them up by Hand for Recreation; yet not without some Thoughts of that Experiment which I after put in Practice. These being strong and able to continue a great Flight, I taught them first to come at Call afar off, not using any Noise, but only shewing them a white Cloth; and here I found it true what Plutarch affirms, That Creatures which eat Flesh are more docible than others. 'Tis wonderful to think what Tricks I taught them ere they were a Quarter old, amongst others I used them by Degrees to fly with Burdens, wherein I found them able beyond Belief, and a white Sheet being displayed to them by *Diego*, upon the Side of a Hill, they would carry from me to him Bread, Flesh, or whatever I

pleased, and upon the like Calf come to me again. Having proceeded thus far, I consulted how to join a Number of them together, so as to carry a heavier Weight, which if I could compass, I might enable a Man to be carried safely in the Air from one Place to another. I puzzled my Wits extremely with this Thought, and upon Trial found, that if many were put to the bearing of one great Burthen, by reason it was impossible all of them, should rise together just at one Instant, the first that rise finding himself stayed by a Weight heavier than he could stir, would soon give over, and so the second, third, and all the rest. I contrived at last a Way whereby each might rise with only his own Proportion of Weight, I fastened about each *Gansa* a little Pulley of Cork, and putting a String of a just Length through it, I fastened one End to a Block of almost eight Pounds Weight, and tied a two Pound Weight to the other End of the String, and then causing the Signal to be erected, they all arose together, being four in Number, and carried away my Block to the Place appointed. This hitting so luckily, I added two or three Birds more, and made Trial of their carrying a Lamb, whose Happiness I much envied, that he should be the first living Creature to partake of such an excellent Device.

At length after divers Trials, I was surprized with a great Longing to cause myself to be carried in the same Manner, *Diego* my Moor was likewise possessed with the same Desire, and had I not loved him well, and wanted his Service, I should have resented his ambitious Thought; for I count it greater Honour to have been the first *Flying Man*, than to be another *Neptune* who first adventured to sail on the Sea. Yet seeming not to understand his Intention, I only told him, that all my *Gansas* were not strong enough to carry him, being a Man though of no great Bulk, yet twice heavier than myself. Having prepared all Necessaries, I one Time placed myself and all my Utensils on the Top of a Rock at the River's Mouth, and putting myself upon my Engine at full Sea, I caused *Diego* to advance the Signal, whereupon my Birds, twenty-five in Number, rose all at once, and carried me over lustily to the Rock on the other Side, being about a Quarter of a League, I chose this Time and Place, because if any Thing had, fallen out contrary to Expectation, the worst that could happen was only falling into the Water; and being able to swim well, I hoped to receive little Hurt in my Fall. When I was once safe over, O how did my Heart even swell with Joy and Admiration at my own Invention; how often, did I with myself in the Midst of *Spain*, that I might fill the World with the Fame of my Glory and Renown? Every Hour I had a longing Desire for the coming of the *Indian* Fleet to take me home with them, which then staid three Months beyond their usual Time: At length they arrived, being three Carricks much weather-beaten, the Men sick and weak, and so were constrained to refresh themselves in our Island a whole Month. The Admiral was called *Alphonso de Xima*, a valiant, wise Man, desirous of Glory, and worthy better Fortune than afterwards befel him; to him I discovered my Device of the *Gansas*; being satisfied, that it was impossible otherwise to persuade him to take many Birds into his Ship, who for the Niceness of their Provision would be more troublesome than so many Men; yet I adjured him by Oaths and Persuasions to be secret in the Business, though I did not much doubt it, alluring myself he durst not impart the Experiment, to any before our King were acquainted therewith. I had more Apprehension left Ambition, and the Desire of gaining to himself the Honour of so admirable an Invention, should tempt, him to dispatch me. However I was forced to run the Risque unless I would adventure the Loss of my Birds, the like whereof for my Purpose were not to be had in Christendom, nor was I sure ever to bring up others to serve my Turn.

It happened all these Doubts were causeless, the Man I believe was honest, but the Misfortune we met with prevented all these Thoughts. Thursday, *June 21*, 1599, we set Sail for *Spain*, I having allowed me a convenient Cabin for my Birds, and Engine, which the Captain would have persuaded me to have left behind, and it was a Wonder I did not, but my good Fortune saved my Life, for after two Months Sail we met with an *English*

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