

WEST AFRICAN ISLANDS.

BY

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LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL,
LIMITED.

1885.

NOTE.

The materials for this work were notes taken during visits made to the principal islands lying off the West Coast of Africa, in the course of fifteen voyages to and from South and West Africa, between the years 1871 and 1882.

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CHAPTER I.

ST. HELENA.

The Marooned Portuguese—Capture of the Island in 1673—Early Colonists—Loss of Trade—James Town—Jacob's Ladder—Vegetable Peculiarities—An Awkward Mistake—Longwood—A Retrospect—The Legend of Friar's Valley—Refractory Garrisons—Lot and His Wife—Curious Relics—Diana Peak—Napoleonic Souvenirs.

THE island of St. Helena was discovered in 1501 by a Portuguese explorer, who seems to be called, indifferently, João de Nova Gallego, Juan de Nova Castilla, Juan de Nova, or John de Niva, according to the taste of the writer. It was then densely wooded, and its shores abounded with seals and turtle, but he made no attempt to colonise it, and the first inhabitants of the island were some deserters, who were put on shore from a Portuguese ship, some fifteen years after its discovery. These men had,

in accordance with the humane custom of those good old days, been punished by mutilation, having had their noses, ears, and right hands cut off; and, so runs the story, with them was a Portuguese of good family, named Fernandez Lopez, who, having been guilty of some misdemeanour at Bombay, had been mutilated by order of Albuquerque, the Portuguese governor, and shipped for Portugal as a prisoner. This man, not caring to face dishonour in his native country, induced the captain of the vessel to land him with the deserters; the marooned men were given some seed, cattle, and provisions, and the ship continued its voyage to Lisbon. The family of Lopez, on ascertaining his whereabouts, sent him a variety of seeds and plants and a quantity of live stock; the exiles proved industrious, and four years later, when they were all removed by the Portuguese Government, there was a good deal of land under cultivation.

The island remained uninhabited for some years, until a few slaves, of both sexes, escaped from a Portuguese slaver which called at the island for wood and water, and took refuge in the woods. These people multiplied rapidly, and cleared the overgrown plantations of the former deserters; but, after an interval of fifteen or twenty years, the jealous Portuguese landed a party to exterminate them and

their offspring. Some of them, however, must have contrived to have escaped the general slaughter, for when Sir John Cavendish, in his voyage round the world, visited St. Helena in 1588, he found it inhabited, and possessing a small town. His discovery of the island was accidental, for the Portuguese, although they made no attempt to colonise it themselves, had carefully kept its situation a secret from other European nations. At the time of his visit, the natural resources of the island had been increased to such an extent, that he described it as being "extremely pleasant, and so full of fruit-trees and excellent plants, that it seemed like a fair and well-cultivated garden, having long rows of lemon, orange, citron, pomegranate, date, and fig-trees, delighting the eye with blossoms, green and ripe fruit all at once."

In 1645 the Dutch attempted to establish a settlement, but relinquished it to the English in 1651; and in 1668, the commander of a homeward-bound East India fleet of English vessels, took formal possession of it in the name of Charles II. In the same year that monarch made it over to the East India Company. In 1672, the Dutch again obtained possession, through the treachery of one of the inhabitants; but in May, 1673, it was recaptured by Captain Richard Munden, with three ships.

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Almost throughout its entire circumference of twenty-eight miles, the island presents to the eye an unbroken wall of cliffs, varying from five hundred to a thousand feet in height; and there are only two places at which a landing can be effected, namely, James' Bay and Rupert's Bay. The latter of these, having no water supply, is not habitable, but the Dutch had fortified both these positions; and occupying them in force at the approach of the British ships, they considered themselves quite safe. Captain Munden, however, landed two hundred men on the rocks in Prosperous Bay, and one sailor, scaling the almost inaccessible cliffs, let down to his comrades a rope, by which they all climbed to the summit. This feat is still commemorated by the precipitous rock known as "Hold-fast Tom." The Dutch, being thus taken in rear, surrendered; and the island has ever since remained a British possession.

The East India Company invited settlers to emigrate to St. Helena from England; and lands were assigned to them, on the condition that they would be forfeited if not cultivated within six months of the date of being put in possession. Numbers of families, who had been reduced to beggary by the great fire of London, took advantage of this offer; and slaves were also introduced from Madagascar.

A Governor was appointed, with the munificent salary of one hundred pounds a year, and a public table was kept. It was part of the Governor's duty to preside at the daily banquet, and some of the settlers appear to have been such peculiar characters, that he found it necessary to draw up a code for the regulation and behaviour of the guests. One paragraph of this code was to the effect "that nobody ought to sit at table with him that is not cleanly dressed, or that is drunk."

Being situated in the direct track of vessels bound to and from the east, round the Cape of Good Hope, St. Helena became a port of call for a large number of vessels, and the inhabitants rapidly made money by supplying them with fresh provisions; while, on account of its importance in connection with the Indian trade, a large garrison was kept up. From 1787 to 1815, it was also used as a depôt for the recruits of the army of the East India Company; and at one time, nearly twelve thousand men were there stationed. From 1815 to 1821 it was, as everyone knows, the island-prison of the Emperor Napoleon; and in 1822, the East India Company resumed their jurisdiction over it. The island continued to prosper until the opening of the Suez Canal, which, by altering the route to the East Indies, deprived the inhabitants of their means of

livelihood; for there were no exports, and they had never done anything more than supply the passing shipping. This blow was followed by a reduction of the garrison, and of the naval squadron which had been kept up for the suppression of the slave trade; and when I visited the island in 1871 and 1873, the inhabitants were in a very poor way indeed, they having nothing to depend on but the precarious sale of supplies to the American whalers which make St. Helena a port of call. In 1879, however, I found that a small export trade had sprung up, the colonists manufacturing fibre from the *Phormium tenax*, and growing coffee in small quantities.

James Town, the capital of the island, is built in a ravine with almost vertical sides, the height to the east being called Rupert's Hill, and that to the west, Ladder Hill. These two mountains, which almost meet about a mile inland, gradually recede from one another as they approach the sea, and finally end abruptly on the shore in two perpendicular cliffs. The triangular space thus enclosed, on which the town is built, is 350 yards broad at the sea front, and about a mile and a quarter long. On the eastern side of the valley is a carriage-road, called the Side Path, which leads to the interior of the island.

Landing at the sea-wall to the east of the town,

one passes through a small crowd of people of diverse hues, and skirting one or two corrugated iron sheds, arrives at the drawbridge which spans the ditch of the old fortifications which defend the entrance of the ravine. Although there is no necessity for any precaution now, the tradition of the days when Napoleon was here in durance vile is still kept up ; and at night, the drawbridge is raised, and the communication between the town and beach entirely cut off. Inside the defences, a diminutive and neglected public garden is passed, and one reaches the one long and stragglng street of the town, which possesses no buildings of any merit, and whose yellow church is hideous.

The name of Ladder Hill is derived from the steep wooden steps, known as Jacob's Ladder, which lead directly to its summit, 600 feet high. A coloured gentleman, who had attached himself to me in the capacity of guide, said it was the same one that the patriarch saw in his dream ; and I told him I could quite believe it, it seemed so old, dilapidated, and generally unsafe. He appeared annoyed at my remarks concerning its want of repair, indignantly asserted that it was quite safe, and urged me to go and climb up it ; but I replied that I was not one of those persons who will rush in where angels fear to tread, and that the angels did feel nervous when

on that ladder I knew from the pictures. To ascend these steps must be bad enough, but to descend must require an unusually steady head. I saw, however, several negresses coming down them, carrying baskets of vegetables and fruit on their heads; and, such is the force of habit, making nothing either of the perpendicular height, which makes a stranger feel giddy, nor of the fact that in several places two or more of the wooden steps were wanting.

St. Helena is so named because the island was discovered on the 21st of May, a day consecrated to Helena, wife of Constantine, mother of Constantine the Great, and daughter of Coel, King of Colchester, a monarch whose memory is still preserved in that poem which commemorates his convivial tendencies and fondness for violin trios. This young woman, being divorced by her husband, repented and became a Christian. She then made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, there dreamed a dream which led to the finding of the true Cross, and so was canonised. It is true that Gibbon says Helena was the daughter of an innkeeper in Nicomedia; but I have seen an inscription on a tablet, placed in the wall of a chapel in Colchester within the last decade, which informs the world that the building was founded by her; and of course this must be quite satisfactory, and settles the question.

The climate of the island is exceedingly healthy, the death-rate having, in several years, been as low as one per cent.; and if the coloured population of Africans and Lascars could only be induced to adopt more cleanly habits, there seems to be no reason why it should not fall still lower. The levels of land suitable for cultivation ranging from the sea level to 2700 feet in Diana Peak, almost anything will grow, provided that it be planted at an elevation where the temperature suits it. Tree-ferns and cabbage-wood grow luxuriantly on the main ridge of mountains, where there is plenty of mist, while fuchsias and brambles flourish near the water-courses; and lower down, one finds Scotch fir, oak, and larch. Near the sea, however, no vegetation is found beyond a scanty growth of samphire; and this causes the island to appear very barren from the outside. Gooseberry and currant-bushes grow to a large size and become evergreens, but will not bear fruit; and all fruit-trees that depend upon bees for impregnation are also barren, as the bee will not live on the island, and the point of Dr. Watts' celebrated idyll is consequently utterly lost upon the Sunday-school children. The blackberry overran the whole island shortly after being introduced, but, on the other hand, cherries will not grow. The *Conyga gummifera*,

a tree indigenous to the island, is also common to Tristan da Cunha; from which it has been inferred that the two islands were once united.

In the only street of James Town there is a fairly good hotel, named, I think, the Imperial Arms; and on the occasion of my second visit to the island, I enjoyed a share of a rather awkward mistake there. I landed from the steamer quite early in the morning—about six o'clock—and rushed, in company with a crowd of passengers, to order breakfast at the hotel. We were piloted by one of our number, who said he knew the place well; and invading the hotel, we rushed up the stairs before the servants were half up, our pilot conducting us down a passage which, he said, led to the coffee-room. I did not think myself that he was going quite the right way; but, as I had only been there once before and he said he was quite at home, I was too diffident to say anything. He ran to a door, opened it and entered a room, we all following. It was almost dark inside, but, as it was so early, we merely thought that the servants had not yet opened the shutters. In a few seconds, however, our eyes became accustomed to the gloom, and we were horrified at finding ourselves in a bed-room, with a lady and gentleman in bed, both sitting up, attired in white night-caps with frills, and looking at us with a most serious ex-

pression of countenance. It was wonderful to see how the crowd melted away under the stony glare of that middle-aged British matron; and though the gentleman kept demanding what we wanted, and what was the reason of our intrusion, we were all so shocked that we slunk away without finding words to answer. Our guide had not a very happy time of it for the next few minutes; but there was some truth in his remark that people in hotels ought to keep their doors locked.

One of the chief objects of interest in St. Helena is the house at Longwood, in which Napoleon passed his six years of captivity. The plateau of Longwood, which is about 2000 feet above the level of the sea, and bounded by deep ravines, is reached by the tortuous Side Path. It is covered with fine grass, and is one of the best pasture-lands in the island, but is bleak and dreary; though in former days, both it and the plateau of Deadwood were covered with forest, of which at the present time not a vestige remains. It is said that the goats and hogs which were introduced in 1502, and which at the time of Cavendish's visit had overrun the island, destroyed all the young trees then in existence as well as those that subsequently sprung up. The ones beyond their reach arrived at maturity, decayed, and died in the ordinary course;

and there being no others to replace them, about 1724 the forest was in a great measure nothing but a forest of dead trees, and from this the name of Deadwood is derived. In 1731, an order was issued to the effect that all stray animals should be destroyed, but the mischief was then done; and when we consider that the whole island, down to the verge of its encircling cliffs, was densely wooded at the time of its discovery, the number of trees destroyed by these creatures must have been immense.

In front of Longwood Old House are some cultivated fields, passing which one traverses a small enclosed front garden and arrives at a long, low building, which is the one in which Napoleon lived. Beyond one sees the pinnacle of rocks of various colours known as the Flagstaff Hill, and the dark square mass of the "Barn;" close at hand stands Longwood New House, which was built for Napoleon, but being only furnished a short time before his death, was never occupied by him; and a little further off is Marshal Bertrand's cottage. Longwood Old House is now unfurnished and empty, with the exception of a laurel-crowned bust of the Emperor in the room in which he died, and crossed French and English flags over the fireplace in the entrance hall. The place is in good repair, all the havoc wrought

by legions of relic-hunters having been made good, and similar acts of Vandalism now being sternly suppressed. The principal culprits were French sailors, for on the arrival of a vessel of that nationality at the island the whole crew was at once marched up to Longwood, and with the usual demonstrative excitability of Frenchmen, they used to tear the paper from the walls, and cut strips off the doors and windows with their knives. The repairs were carried out by the French Government, who endeavoured to make the rooms as much as possible like what they had been when occupied by Napoleon; and, having with some difficulty obtained specimens of the wall-papers which had been in the possession of an English marauder for more than thirty years, new papers exactly like the originals were manufactured in Paris and sent out to St. Helena.

Napoleon's tomb is in Slane's Valley, about a mile from Longwood, and is well cared for by the French sergeant in charge of it. The body was, as everyone knows, removed to France in a man-of-war by the Prince de Joinville, in 1840, and now rests under the dome of the Invalides, so that only the empty tomb remains in St. Helena. Over the grave itself, which is protected by a railing, is a decrepit willow, which many years ago was planted to replace the one that had been torn to pieces by enthusiastic

relic-hunters, and the present one looks as if it would soon require a successor. The inner railing is further enclosed by an outer one of iron, and the intervening space, covered with turf, is planted with willow, cypress, and other funereal trees. Close at hand bubbles along the limpid stream at which Napoleon used to quench his thirst after his walk from Longwood, to this, his favourite resort.

It is difficult, in the present day, to put oneself in the position of the average Englishman of the year 1815, of the man who regarded Napoleon more in the light of a monster than as a human being, who daily heard him preached against as Antichrist and the personification of evil, who lent a credulous ear to all the ridiculous stories circulated concerning him, and implicitly believed that he ordered his sick and wounded soldiers at Jaffa to be poisoned in order to prevent them falling into the hands of their enemies ; but, viewed calmly after the lapse of sixty-nine years, and with the judgment unbiassed by national animosities, it seems impossible to defend the action of the Castlereagh Ministry, in sentencing the defeated Emperor to life-long exile ; and the British nation, by its tacit approval of this act, accepted the responsibility of it. Undoubtedly the character of the first Napoleon was not one to be admired, and Emerson no doubt sums it up with

great accuracy when he tells us that he was utterly destitute of generous sentiments, and had not the common merit of truth and honesty; but all that should be beside the question. On escaping from Elba Napoleon landed on the shores of a mighty empire, and with only some three hundred followers with which to subdue a nation of thirty-five millions of people. As he advanced his progress resembled a national triumph, the troops sent to oppose him received him with shouts of joy, the hated symbols of the Bourbons were trampled under foot, and he entered Paris without a drop of blood having been shed in his behalf, an exploit which is unequalled in ancient or modern history. In a few weeks he was able to assume an appearance so formidable as again to threaten the destinies of Europe. From this it was evident that the French nation preferred him as a ruler to the other candidates for the throne; but Britain and the allies declined to allow France to enjoy the first prerogative of independence, namely, the choice of a form of government, rejected Napoleon's proposals for peace, and forced upon him a war in which fifty thousand lives were sacrificed. This has been defended on the grounds that there was no security in the Emperor's promises, but the worst was to follow after Waterloo. In Napoleon's letter of the 14th of July to the Prince

Regent, the day before he surrendered himself to Captain Maitland, of the *Bellerophon*, in Aix Roads, he says: "I come, like Themistocles, to seat myself on the hearth of the British people. I place myself under the protection of its Prince and laws, which I claim of your Royal Highness, as the most just, the most brave, and most generous of my enemies." The appeal, however, was made to men more obdurate than Artaxerxes, and Castlereagh had no such idea of generosity. The protection which was sought from Great Britain, and which had always been granted to political exiles and even political criminals, was refused to the greatest military leader that the world has ever seen, and he was sent to break his spirit for nearly six years in the solitude of St. Helena, where his exile was embittered by the petty tyrannies of the Governor, Sir Hudson Lowe. Gibbon says, in speaking of the Romans when they first commenced to degenerate: "When a nation loses its generosity, it is a proof of its being on the decline." It is to be hoped, then, that the ungenerous treatment of our fallen foe was due rather to the influence of the men who governed the country, than to loss of principle in the nation at large, though upon the latter all the odium will necessarily fall.

To the westward of Ladder Hill, whose summit may be reached, by those who do not care to climb

Jacob's Ladder, by a zigzag road, lies Friar's Valley ; so called from an isolated piece of columnar basalt, which, on account of its supposed resemblance to a capuchin, is called the Friar Rock. A legend tells us that the place where this rock now stands was once the site of a church, the incumbent of which was a man universally beloved and of wonderful piety. Naturally such a man would be marked down by the powers of darkness for their prey, and the priest one day met an Arcadian shepherdess, tending her goats on the adjoining hill, now known as "Goat Pound Ridge." Struck by her marvellous grace and beauty, the priest stopped and regarded her with admiring eyes ; and she, encouraged by his kind and benign aspect, begged him in a winning voice to assist her in collecting her flock, which had strayed far over the hillside, and which she was too tired to run after herself. The gallant priest at once went to the assistance of beauty in distress, collected the goats together, and assisted her in driving them part of the way to her home. The shepherdess beguiled the time with artless conversation, and thanked the priest so eloquently with her lustrous eyes, that when he finally left her and returned to his own home, he could think of nothing but the enthralling loveliness of his new acquaintance.

Of course, after this first meeting, the priest

continually met the fair shepherdess by accident in his rambles amongst the hills; and the acquaintance ripened so rapidly under the warm sun of St. Helena, that before long he made a declaration of love. The damsel, however, if poor, was virtuous, and would listen to no amorous appeal which was not backed up by a small golden circlet and the magic word "marriage;" and the infatuated priest at length promised to break his vow of celibacy, and lead her to the altar. The shepherdess, however, then put a new difficulty in his way. She vowed that she could never espouse him unless he renounced his own faith and adopted hers; but what that was, the legend has neglected to inform us. The "easy descent" having been commenced, the priest did not make much difficulty about this new condition, and the wedding-day was fixed.

For some incomprehensible reason the marriage was to take place in the church of which the priest was incumbent, though why they should choose a place of worship belonging to a religion in which she did not believe, and which he had abjured, is not stated; and on the fateful day, the bride, accompanied by her attendant bridesmaids, met the renegade priest at the altar. Perhaps he was going to perform the marriage ceremony himself, or perhaps he had obtained the services of some accommodating

brother professional ; but, anyhow, just as the ring was being slipped upon the taper finger of the shepherdess, a fearful crash resounded, the earth opened, a suffocatingly sulphurous cloud veiled the scene for a few minutes, and when it had cleared away, every vestige of the church and wedding-party had disappeared, nothing remaining but the gaunt figure of the renegade priest, turned into stone.

St. Helena seems to have been particularly unfortunate in the garrisons which were selected for it by the East India Company, for the quiet island was seriously disturbed by four mutinies. The first occurred in 1684, when a portion of the troops mutinied, and, being joined by some disaffected colonists, ventured to attack the fort. They were, however, repulsed ; and the ringleaders being captured, one of them was hanged and four banished from the island. This lenient punishment perhaps contributed to the second mutiny, for six years later, in 1690, nearly the entire garrison mutinied, and murdered the Governor, Captain Joshua Johnson. The mutineers then seized all the adherents of the Government, and confined them on board a ship in the harbour ; and having spiked all the guns in the fortifications and destroyed all the ammunition, they then removed all the specie and spoil upon which they could lay their hands to another vessel,

and sailing away in her, escaped. The third mutiny broke out in 1783, when two hundred of the troops marched with drums beating and colours flying to attack the fort. The guns of that work were, however, so well served by the few men who remained faithful, that the mutineers were soon driven back and dispersed. Ninety-nine of them, being tried by court-martial, were condemned to death, but the sentence was only carried into execution upon ten of them. The fourth mutiny occurred in the early part of the present century, and was not of so serious a nature as the others.

The most extraordinary place in St. Helena is Sandy Bay, with its fantastic masses of rock piled up in chaotic confusion, and unsoftened by any veil of trees or bushes. Yet this sterile bay was once densely wooded also, goats and hogs having wrought the same havoc here as elsewhere, and it is said that the older inhabitants can still remember the time when Sandy Bay was almost covered with groups of dead trees, standing gauntly erect with splintered and broken limbs, and buried knee-deep in the drifted sand. Two of the most striking objects in this bay are Lot and his wife, Mrs. Lot in short; two isolated masses of columnar basalt, the former 197 feet, and the latter 160 feet high. It is not generally known that St. Helena was the scene

of some of the incidents narrated in the Old Testament, but these, and Jacob's Ladder, prove that such is the case. It appears that Mr. Lot, surprised at the sudden cessation of the wagging of his wife's tongue, she having been walking behind, grumbling and carrying most of the household furniture in the way of mats and calabashes on her head, turned round to look after her, and was himself transformed into basalt. The word "salt" in our translations is evidently an error. In the course of years of oral tradition, "basalt" would become corrupted into "baysalt," and finally into "salt." The metamorphosis of Mr. Lot is not mentioned in the book of Genesis, but it is an evident omission, as here he is. The height of the two victims fully bears out the statement that "there were giants in the earth in those days," and is a wonderful refutation of the theories of those hypercritical Hebraists who would have us believe that the word rendered "giants" in the above text does not denote persons of unusual stature, but rather "the fallen" or "the violent," and that the word *γίγας*, which was introduced by the Septuagint translators, literally means "earth-born."

West of Sandy Bay are more relics of those early days, consisting of a stratum of horizontal columnar basalt, forming a titanic wall from fifty to 180

feet high. An isolated portion of this forms a remarkable column, sixty-four feet in height, known as "the Chimney." Archæologists are still at variance as to what these are, one party asserting that they are the remains of the Tower of Babel, and another that they are portions of the encircling wall of one of the Cities of the Plain.

Diana Peak, the culminating point of St. Helena, lies to the southward of James Town, and the road to the summit leads by a narrow path past the "Briars," where Napoleon lived for about a month on first arriving in the Island. It is a prettier place than Longwood, being enclosed on three sides by low cliffs, while on the fourth side, a glimpse of the sea may be obtained between the hills. Still ascending, the path winds over the rocky ground amongst the hills, which are covered with thickets of wild geraniums; while the tall shaft of an aloe in flower stands up prominently here and there from its cup-like base of pale and spiked leaves. The cry of the quail is heard from the grass patches amongst the rocks, and every now and then a covey of the light-coloured partridges of the island whirls over a cactus or pomegranate hedge. The Game Laws are a subject of much dispute in England, but the advantage of living in a Crown Colony, where the despotic will of the Governor is law, was well

exemplified at St. Helena some years ago, in an order which was issued for the preservation of game. A number of the poorer coloured inhabitants used to gain a livelihood by burning a plant which grows on the rocks on the coasts, and selling the soda which they obtained from its ashes; when their means of existence was suddenly taken from them by this order, which forbade the burning of this plant on the grounds that if it were destroyed the partridges would have no cover in which to breed. That several families should be reduced to starvation, appeared to be a small consideration in comparison with the failure of the sport of the wealthier colonists.

To return to Diana Peak. Still ascending, and passing a cleft in the height, through which a view of the Sandy Bay with its grotesque rocks standing out against the blue of the sea is obtained, the road winds along the face of a steep descent, and we finally arrive within about a hundred yards of the summit. This latter part of the ascent has to be performed on foot. Diana Peak is supposed to be part of the lip of an immense crater. Darwin says: "I believe that the central and highest peaks form parts of the rim of a great crater, the southern half of which has been entirely removed by the waves of the sea; there is, moreover, an external wall

of black basaltic rocks, like the coast mountains of Mauritius, which are older than the central volcanic streams."

From the summit of Diana Peak the whole circumference of the island can be seen, with the waves breaking in long lines of surf against its rocky shores; and hill and dale, ravine and mountain, are outspread like a model beneath. Sandy Bay appears again to the south; to the west lies a broken and rugged tract of picturesque mountain seamed with narrow valleys, with here and there the white walls of a house showing amongst the trees; to the north lies James Town, cramped up in its confined gorge; while to the east is outspread a view of softer and more rounded hills and valleys, with cultivated fields, groups of farm buildings, clumps of trees, and, in the distance, a diminutive church upon a wooded hill.

The best scenery in the island is found in the broken and rugged western side, that to the east being tamer and not unlike some parts of England. Compared, however, with other islands, there is nothing particularly beautiful in St. Helena, and certainly no grandeur. It is pretty, though, and with its tiny valleys with houses surrounded with flowering shrubs of various kinds, amongst others the camellia, and its hill-sides covered with geraniums, fuchsias,

rock-roses, gorse and violets, it leaves pleasant impressions upon the memories of those who have been from ten to fourteen days at sea without seeing land.

Nothing so much annoys the coloured native of St. Helena, especially if he be one who gains a living by selling Napoleonic relics to the confiding passengers of mail-steamers and troop-ships which may touch at the island, as to pretend to know nothing of the connection of St. Helena with Napoleon I. In 1871, I was walking with a would-be humourist up the solitary street of James Town, looking idly into the dusty and uninviting shops, when a quadron gentleman, bearing a small tray, covered with wooden paper-knives, snuff-boxes, card-cases, and pen-holders, introduced himself to our notice, saying :

“ Would you like to buy some of these interesting relics of the Emperor Napoleon ? They are all made of wood from the willow-tree which was planted over his grave.”

The humourist at once assumed an appearance of intense interest, and inquired :

“ What was that you said ? His grave ? ”

“ Yes. They are cut from the wood of the tree that was planted over his grave.”

“ But how can that be ? He is not dead yet.”

The quadroon gasped with astonishment :

“How? Not dead? Oh yes, he has been dead many years.”

“My friend,” said the humourist, “you are mistaken. Some evilly-disposed person has been taking advantage of your guileless innocence. The Emperor Napoleon is not dead, or was not, when I left England some three weeks ago. He was then at Chislehurst, I think.”

“Ha! You mean the present Emperor, but I speak of another Napoleon, the father of this man, or the grandfather, perhaps—I do not know which, exactly.”

“Oh! I never heard of him. Did he do anything in particular—was he famous in any way?”

“Yes, he did great things. He lived here in St. Helena.”

“Indeed! A very nice, retired place to live in; quite out of the world. But what did he do?”

“Ah, he was a great man. I do not know exactly what he do, but he lived here in St. Helena.”

Such is fame. Napoleon was only known to this intelligent native because he had lived at Longwood, and he could tell us nothing further about him. We did not purchase any relics because we could see that all the articles upon the tray were not made of willow wood at all; and the quadroon went away highly

indignant, and using language so warm that it must have burned his mouth.

If all the *souvenirs* scattered over the face of the globe; and said to be carved from that willow, were to be collected together, there would be almost enough timber with which to build a ship. I have heard that when captured slave vessels used to be brought in to St. Helena to be sold as prizes, there was always great competition amongst purchasers, portions of the wood being so useful for working up into walking-sticks, boot-jacks, and other trifles, to be afterwards sold at fancy prices as being made of the inexhaustible Napoleonic willow. The predecessor of the present willow must have been a curious variety of *salix*, for I have seen teak card-cases which were said to have been made out of it.

CHAPTER II.

ASCENSION.

Its History—Georgetown—Turtle—Green Mountain—The Hospital—A Precious Beverage—The Water Supply—Vegetation—Relative Rank of Ladies—Island Scenery—Riding School Crater—Fossil Turtles' Eggs—Wide-awakes—The Rollers—An American's Reception.

SOME eight hundred and fifty miles to the northwest of St. Helena lies the island of Ascension, almost triangular in shape, eight miles in extreme length, averaging four miles in breadth, and with an area of about thirty-five square miles. It was discovered on Ascension Day, May 20th, 1501, by the Portuguese mariner, João de Nova Gallego, who discovered St. Helena; but he did not seem to think much of his discovery, and wisely left it alone. Individuals of other nationalities who visited the island, were not more favourably impressed with its fertility and general utility than was the original discoverer, and it still continued uninhabited; but,

in later days, it became a kind of mariner's post-office, and Naverette, the Dominican Friar, who touched at Ascension in 1673, says : "Sailors of all nations are in the habit of leaving letters here, sealed up in a bottle and placed in a certain hole in a rock, which are taken away by the first ship that passes, and is bound in the opposite direction."

Three hundred and fourteen years after the discovery of the island, the fact of it being so near to St. Helena made it of importance to us when we were playing the thankless and ungenerous part of gaoler to Europe ; and as we did not care to have any foreigners, especially Frenchmen, settling down in the vicinity of our gaol, we were under the necessity of occupying it ourselves, to prevent anyone else taking it. From that day to the present we have retained possession of Ascension, at the trifling cost, to the British tax-payer, of some forty thousand pounds a year. Two years ago there was some talk of abandoning it, but to do so now would be a mistake ; for, although St. Helena would be just as useful as a coal depôt, there is every prospect of Ascension speedily becoming fertile. Of late years it has been observed that the lava is rapidly decomposing, and a rich soil is equally rapidly being formed ; vegetation will soon follow, and the judicious planting of trees will no doubt soon put an end to

those long periods of drought which are now the principal cause of the sterility of the island.

Lying in a vessel off Georgetown, as the group of houses and corrugated iron sheds is called by the outer world, though known to the inhabitants by the name of Garrison, you perceive about thirty buildings, white, red, and yellow, straggled along the sea-shore. In front of these is an isolated, black, and perpendicular rock, crowned with a diminutive fortification; to the right of that is a low pier or jetty, with a derrick at its extremity; fill in the background with cinder-heaps of a reddish-brown colour, overlooked by a central conical one of greater altitude, and Georgetown is before you. As the island and everything on it, animate and inanimate, belongs to the Admiralty, no one is allowed to go ashore without first obtaining permission; and, when you are ashore, you cannot stop there, unless you have friends amongst the naval officers, because there is no place where food or shelter can be bought. A would-be settler would have rather a bad time of it in this island, but no doubt the Captain would very properly have him removed to the hospital, on the grounds of his not being sufficiently sane to be suffered to remain at large and unrestrained.

The landing is not pleasant on this inhospitable shore, for a heavy surf sets in that is almost as bad

as the notorious surf on the Gold Coast; and sometimes it is so bad that people have to be hoisted out of the boats by means of the before-mentioned derrick; but the usual landing-place is at a flight of steps, cut out of the projecting black rock, and known as "Tartar Stairs." Landing here, one finds oneself upon a level space rising gently towards the cinder-hills behind, covered with fine yellow dust, and dotted with coal-sheds and store-houses. Passing these, one enters upon the town proper, which consists of barracks and hospitals, a church, and a row of small bungalows. At a little distance, to the right, is a burial-ground, where the white head-stones glare out painfully from the red rocks; while to the left, on Cross Hill, is the residence of the Commander of the island. Vegetation there is none, nor has any attempt at gardening been made by the exiles, unless here and there a withered *eucalyptus*, drying up in half a cask filled with volcanic detritus, may be so called. This, perhaps, is in accordance with the fitness of things, for the whole island is called a ship, and is enrolled in the list of ships in commission under the title of "the tender to H.M.S. *Flora*." This name seems to have originated from the fact that either the existing *Flora*, or a former vessel of that name, was once anchored off the island as a store-ship; a portion of the stores were kept on

shore, and thus the fiction of the "tender" commenced. The discipline of a man-of-war is kept up on board the tender, but the naval regulations are relaxed, insomuch that a few women, the wives of officers and men, are allowed to remain in her, but they also have to submit to routine, and all lights have to be extinguished at 10 p.m.

To the north of Georgetown, and close at hand, are the two turtle-ponds, in which all the turtle, the solitary edible production of Ascension, that are captured are kept. These so-called ponds are large tanks, built of stone, and the sea is admitted by means of sluices too narrow to admit of a captive escaping through them. From December to June, the season at which the turtles come ashore to deposit their eggs, for females alone are here caught, look-out men are stationed on the occasional strips of sandy beach which break the monotony of the rocky shore of the island, to turn them. Half-a-crown is paid for each turtle so captured; and the men are prohibited from noosing them until the eggs, between two and three hundred in number, have been deposited in the sand. About three or four hundred turtles are taken every year, some of them weighing as much as eight hundred or nine hundred pounds. As the turtle is a very slow-growing animal, these large ones must be of great age, and they are popularly known in

Ascension as centenarians. When laying her eggs, the turtle crawls some little distance above high-water mark, and deposits them in three or four holes dug about eighteen inches deep in the sand; where, in about two months' time, the young are hatched out by the sun, whose rays are here so powerful that the sand does not get cool even during the night.

It is about three and a half miles from Georgetown to Green Mountain, the highest point in the island, 2,840 feet high, and about six miles to its summit. There is a good road throughout the whole distance, and on my second visit to Ascension, hearing that a surgeon whom I had known in a happier clime was there staying, I went to see him and the mountain at the same time. The road winds round Cross Hill behind Georgetown, and then crosses a dismal plain, covered with a substance strongly resembling furnace slag, till it arrives at that north-western spur of the mountain which is called the Ramps. Here the road forks, one arm zigzagging up the mountain, and the other leading to some dripping wells, called Dampier's, on account of their being supposed to have been discovered by the celebrated buccaneer of that name. The story says that when, in 1701, after exploring New Guinea and the northern shores of Australia, he was on his

return voyage to England, his vessel, the *Roebuck*, was wrecked on Ascension. Dampier escaped to the shore only to fear that he was doomed to perish from thirst, until, when almost mad from want of water, the happy idea occurred to him to follow a wild goat which he saw at a little distance. This animal, after numerous erratic wanderings, which considerably increased Dampier's torture, at last led him to these drips, and so unwittingly preserved his life.

There is quite a small colony on Green Mountain. About 300 feet from the summit stands the Mountain Hospital. One hundred feet above the hospital is the building known as Garden Cottage, and the quarters of some twelve men, who look after the cattle which are here kept, and attend to the kitchen gardens. The hospital, by a polite fiction, is considered a kind of sanitarium for the seamen of the vessels employed on the West Coast of Africa. To an ordinary mind, a locality in which nothing to eat can be obtained, and to which rations have to be regularly supplied, would appear a curious one in which to establish a sanitarium, especially when such an exceedingly suitable site as the island of St. Helena is close at hand; but it seems to satisfy the Admiralty. Ascension produces nothing but turtles, rats, and wide-awakes. The latter are not very tempting even when disguised by the most skilful *chef*;

Europeans seem to be generally prejudiced against eating rats; while turtle, though a very excellent thing for invalids, aldermen, and other persons who require fattening, is apt to become wearisome when served up thrice daily. There are, it is said, a few wild goats and wild cats in the more inaccessible fastnesses of the island, but a sportsman who bags one of the former per month is lucky; and the latter are not considered in the light of food. Consequently, cattle, sheep, and vegetables have to be imported from St. Helena; two of the sheep are killed weekly, usually just in time to save their lives; a starved bullock is slaughtered on Saturdays, and salt junk, groceries, etc., are served out by the purser's steward. Vegetables are the weak point of the island, and the fortunate possessor of a bunch of carrots or a half-crown cabbage is at once in a position to give a sumptuous dinner. Under all these circumstances it ought not to be so much a matter of wonder that the fever-stricken patients from West Africa do not recover so rapidly as the authorities seem to expect them to.

On arriving at the hospital I inquired of a convalescent seaman where my friend, the surgeon, was, and soon found him reclining in a hammock, attired in a pair of blue serge trowsers—only that and nothing more. He sprang up with an exclamation

tion of surprise at seeing me, shook hands, reached down a coat from a peg and put it on, saying :

“Excuse my not putting on a shirt, will you ?”

“Of course—of course. Take off all your clothes if you’ll feel more comfortable.”

“N-no, it’s not that, but the fact is that I haven’t a shirt clean enough to put on.”

I could only murmur my surprise at this strange circumstance, and endeavour to look sympathetic. He went on :

“I dare say you think it odd that I don’t have them washed ?”

I thought that perhaps there was some difficulty with the laundress or washerman, that he had not paid his last bill, but I could not say that, so I inquired :

“Why don’t you ?”

He then unfolded a horrible tale to the effect that the water supply of the island consisted principally of what was distilled by a condenser, a small quantity being also obtained from Dampier’s Drips and Brandreth Wells. That water was always so scarce that it was served out like the ration of rum, only more carefully, the allowance in prosperous times being two gallons a day per man ; and that when clothes were sent to the wash, the water for washing them had to be sent with them. That the condenser

had now been out of order for some nine or ten days, and everybody on the island had been put on short allowance ; so that they had not enough for drinking, much less for washing, either themselves or their clothes. I said what a charming place Ascension seemed to be, there being nothing to do to pass the time, nothing to eat, and nothing to drink ; and my friend consigned the Board of Admiralty, the island, and the engineer who ought to have taken care of the condenser, to a place which is more remote than Jericho, but which, if clerical gentlemen may be believed, will be visited by many more people than that old Syrian town could accommodate.

Fresh water is the great difficulty at Ascension. With a crew of some two hundred hands, there is no regular supply beyond that furnished by the condenser, which averages about 2,500 gallons a week ; that is, barely enough for drinking and cooking purposes, without taking into consideration washing and water for the sheep and cattle. In Break Neck Valley, a ravine of Green Mountain, between Garden Cottage and the summit of the Peak, are two so-called wells, known as Brandreth Wells, from the name of a lieutenant of Royal Engineers, who was sent to the island in 1830, to search for water after a long-continued drought. Boring in the bed of the ravine, the walls of which are about eighty

feet high, he penetrated a bed of volcanic scoria, and, at the depth of some twenty-five feet, struck a thin bed of clay which had retained the surface water. These wells gave out about 1,100 gallons a day for some time, and the supply then ceased and the wells were forgotten, till in 1877, renewed drought led to their being reopened. For a little time some 200 gallons a day were thence obtained, and then the supply again failed; for there is no spring or natural head of water, and the rainfall that has been kept back by the clay is soon exhausted. With great labour a tunnel, nearly 200 yards long, was cut from Garden Cottage, 400 feet from the summit of Green Mountain, to a tank in Break Neck Valley in which the water from the wells was collected. Pipes were laid in this tunnel, and, by means of a wind-mill, the water was pumped up to the main pipe which conducts the surface water of the mountain, and the scanty supply from Dampier's and other Drips, to Georgetown. This main pipe very nearly follows the course of the road, and along the whole line are tanks to collect the drainage of the gullies and rocky basins.

Green Mountain is, as its name betokens, adorned with a little verdure; but it is the only spot in Ascension on which any vegetation may be seen. Throughout the whole way from Georgetown, until

about half the ascent of Green Mountain is accomplished, not a tree or plant, and not even a single blade of grass, relieves the eye from the monotony of the endless cindery and lava wastes. At about 1,000 feet of elevation a few sickly-looking prickly-pears and aloes may be perceived, a little higher a scanty growth of grass and bushes clothes the earth, and finally the gardens cover that shoulder of the mountain on which the houses are built. The indigenous plants of Ascension are said to be the dandelion, chickweed, forget-me-not, nasturtium, tomato, Cape gooseberry, and some ferns and mosses; but willows, mulberries, bananas, and guavas have been planted, and would do well if they had more water. The hospital has a fairly good garden of Madagascar roses, Indian Pride, and other tropical and English flowers; and in the kitchen gardens a few vegetables are raised. The whole cultivated area, however, is little more than an acre, and the trees, as distinguished from shrubs, are certainly under twenty in number; but some three thousand acres of the mountain is sparsely covered with Bahamas grass, gorse, wild ginger, blackberry, castor-oil shrubs, and the indigenous plants, among which latter the nasturtium is the most common, the rugged slopes of some of the ravines being fairly ablaze with its deep orange-red flowers. After long-continued drought this area

of vegetation becomes greatly circumscribed, and has been known to be reduced by one-half.

My friend the surgeon was apparently a misogynist of the deepest dye, for he told me many amusing anecdotes concerning squabbles which had taken place amongst the ladies, who had been graciously permitted by the Admiralty to share their husbands' exile. According to him, one captain of the "tender," who held the opinion that women were like negative quantities in mathematics, inasmuch that the more there were of them the less they were worth, was so perplexed how to deal with a spirit of insubordination manifested by the female portion of the crew, that he was driven to resign his command. Some tyro, indeed, advised that the husband should be held responsible and punished for the offences of the wife; but the captain knew that that plan, so far from acting as a restraint, would rather encourage insubordination, and wisely rejected the proffered advice. My friend also said that in Georgetown society the wife took precedence according to the rank of her husband; the wife of the captain lording it over the commander's helpmate, and the latter lady snubbing the better-half of the lieutenant. An island tradition says, that there was once a great dispute between two ladies as to which had the better right to the front pew at church.

This knotty point could not be settled by referring to the status of the husbands, for both were of the same standing, one being in the marines and the other in the Navy. The captain was consequently called upon to settle the question, and that born diplomatist craftily decided that it should be settled by the age of the disputants, the elder to occupy the front pew and the younger the second one. This decision was conveyed to them; next Sunday both ladies appeared in the second pew, and the vexed question of precedence was henceforth buried between them.

From the hospital to the summit of Green Mountain, one ascends by a narrow ridge, having on the right the precipitous cliff of Break Neck Valley, and on the left an abrupt descent to the lava-covered plain below. This ridge, fringed with blackberries, gorse, guavas, and other shrubs, leads to the Peak itself, where another attempt to increase the water supply of the island has been made by covering a saucer-like depression with cement, for the collection of the dew. Here there is also a small plantation of trees, all of which are dwarfed, for though the black soil is unusually rich, the strong winds which whistle over this exposed spot, effectually stunt their growth and prevent them thriving.

Green Mountain is surrounded by rugged peaks

of less elevation, having between them deep ravines, filled with pumice and volcanic scoria. Gazing downwards on the island one sees nothing but the traces of volcanic action, harsh, rugged, and forbidding, and unsoftened, even in the deepest ravines, by any screen of vegetation. On all sides the direction taken by the old lava floods in their course to the sea can be distinctly traced, and the tumuli of some forty extinguished craters are plainly discernible. In every direction, except at one point to the east, where the spur of Green Mountain known as the Weather Post intercepts the view, the surf-beaten shores of the island can be seen. To the south the red sugar-loaves of Red Hill and Gannet Hill are prominent objects, to the north extends a cindery waste, broken here and there by the little red cones of the craters; while to the west are Riding School, Dark Stone, and Horse Shoe Craters, beyond which the ashy desert, covered with lava-blocks, and known as Waterloo Plains, extends to the sea.

On the eastern plateau of Green Mountain, between the Peak and the Weather Post, lies Cricket Valley, so named from the number of chirping insects which are there found. It is a tank-like hollow, about 1,100 yards in length, walled in on all sides by almost vertical cliffs averaging some 300 feet in height. In its neighbourhood are traces of the action

of considerable bodies of water, and the surface of this plateau is broken by the depressions of the beds of parched-up lakes, a curious contrast to the remainder of Ascension, in the formation of which fire appears to have been the only agent employed.

I saw some animals on Green Mountain which I was told were cows; they were apparently in a moribund condition, and would have made splendid anatomical studies, for they were nearly half-starved, and never had sufficient to drink. When first brought on board the "tender" these animals supply a small quantity of milk, a beverage considered by the crew to be unwholesome in itself, and prone to produce internal spasms unless generously diluted with rum. It is usually kept for the patients in the hospital; but, on the rare occasions upon which there is a surplus, it is sent down to Georgetown on a mule, to be sold. A bell is rung at seven in the morning to announce that the unusual luxury is for sale, and the female portion of the crew send out hastily to purchase; but, to prevent any wealthy aristocrat monopolising the whole stock, usually about two pints, no person is allowed to buy more than one gill. After a lengthened sojourn on the "tender" the cows cease to supply milk; they are then transformed into beef in turn, and served out as rations.

During another visit to Ascension I made an

excursion to Riding School Crater, which lies about three miles to the south-east of Georgetown. It is a round hill, about 900 yards in diameter, having at its summit a saucer-like depression which occupies its whole area, merely leaving an encircling wall, varying in height from three feet at its lowest point to about thirty feet at its highest. This hill owes its renown to the broad rings of various colours, which crop up at different depths in the bed of the basin. Round the edge of the enclosed hollow is a broad white band, like the hoof-trodden course of a circus, and from which the name of "Riding School" is derived; next to this is a circle of a darker hue, then a ring of a light sandy colour, and finally a central circular area of the colour of broken bricks. Darwin, in his journal of the countries visited in the voyage of H.M.S. *Beagle* round the world, says that the Riding School Crater is not a crater at all; and accounts for the rings of different strata by saying that the hollow has, at various times, been nearly filled up by successive layers of ashes and scorixæ of different colours. These showers of ashes of course fell equally over the surrounding portions of the island; but not there having the shelter of the encircling wall, were soon blown away, while the layers inside were hardened and consolidated by rain.

He does not inform us how this hill with a bowl

at its summit, ready for the retention of ashes, came to be formed ; but, if I might venture to put forward a theory, I should say that it was the work of a gigantic geyser. Geysers invariably rise out of spacious basins at the summits of circular mounds, which mounds are themselves composed of the silicious incrustations deposited from the spray of the water. Now Riding School Crater hill, as well as the wall encircling the basin, unlike all the hills and similar walls in its vicinity, which are composed of the brick-red lava of the island, consists of gray silicious stones, containing, a geologist informs me, silica, potash, and alumina. These stones are closely and firmly united, and the hill is not, like its neighbours, a mere heap of loose detritus. In the course of ages, the silicious incrustations of a geyser would, under certain conditions, solidify into such stone ; and the theory gains additional support from the numerous little mud-cones, from one to two feet in height, which rise from the floor of the hollow, and which are like similar mud-cones which appear in the geysers of Iceland. The hill is besides of less elevation and of greater area than the truncated-cone-like mounds in its vicinity.

The volcanic hills surrounding Riding School Crater are of much more recent formation, and the latter was sensibly affected by the great subterranean

convulsions which caused the formation of the former ; for veins of lava, containing a large quantity of iron, have been forced up from below through the fissures of the gray stone, inclined at every possible angle, and about one inch in thickness. Some of these veins present the most curious appearance, and in one place is a circular piece, resting upon a central pedestal of gray stone, like a gigantic mushroom, and sufficiently large to admit of two people sheltering under it. The lava, being harder than the silicious stone, has better withstood the action of denudation, and it projects like shelves in places where the vein is horizontal ; while where it is vertical, or inclined at an angle, it stands up two or three feet above the surface of the ground.

The craters surrounding that of Riding School are true craters. They are seven or eight in number, and the largest ones near at hand are The Ring, Dark Stone, and Horse Shoe Craters ; while more to the south are Red Hill, Round Hill, Booby Hill, Saddle Crater, and South Gannet Hill. Nearly all of these are worn away on the south-eastern side, they are composed entirely of scoria, and the encircling walls, from twenty to fifty feet in height, enclose basins with level beds.

Among the curious things generally shown to the visitor to Georgetown, are the fossil turtle eggs,

which are found imbedded in the limestone that is being rapidly formed at the sandy bays of the island. Concerning these, Sir Charles Lyell says in his "Principles of Geology," Vol. II. p. 580: "Some singular fossils have been discovered in the island of Ascension in a stone said to be continually forming on the beach, where the waves throw up small rounded fragments of shells and corals, which, in the course of time, become firmly agglutinated together, and constitute a stone largely used for building and making lime. In a quarry on the north-western side of the island, about 100 yards from the sea, some fossil eggs of turtles have been discovered in the hard rock thus formed. The eggs must have been nearly hatched at the time when they perished; for the bones of the young turtle are seen in the interior with their shape fully developed, the interstices between the bones being entirely filled with grains of sand, which are cemented together." The popular belief in Ascension is that this rock forms so rapidly, that the turtles' eggs buried in the sand are cemented into it before the sun has time to hatch them. At this rate, something less than two months would be all the time required to transform loose particles of shells and sand into solid rock; but it is much more probable that the eggs, from some cause or another, probably the action of the waves, become buried so

deeply in the sand while the process of incubation is going on, that the rays of the sun cannot penetrate with sufficient power to perfect them, and the embryo or foetus in each, as the case may be, dies from lack of heat. The limestone is found at the depth of from three to five feet in the sand, and the turtle does not bury its eggs more than eighteen inches deep; there is, however, no doubt but that the rock does form with marvellous rapidity, and careful observers state the period required for the cementing of fragments to be only one year.

To the south of Riding School Crater is a broken and rocky tract called Wide-awake Fair, because the Wide-awakes, or Terns, which visit Ascension in thousands every seven or eight months to breed, there deposit their eggs. I was not fortunate enough to see one of these gatherings, but I was told that two or three hundred eggs were usually collected daily, and were much appreciated by the crew of the tender. The Wide-awake lays only one egg, and it is said that if it be taken away she lays another, and so continues until she has succeeded in getting one hatched out. Thus each pair of birds remains in the island until they have a young one old enough to fly away with them, and as those which have several eggs taken away from them in succession naturally stay longer than

those who are more fortunate, the idea has arisen that the birds visit the island at irregular intervals.

To the south of Georgetown, a little beyond the cemetery, is the "Blow-hole;" where, at each successive shock of the in-rolling waves, the water spouts up fifteen or twenty feet high from a circular shaft in the flat rock, about a foot in diameter, which communicates with some subterranean passage; and, when the rollers are in, the display is very fine. The cause of these rollers at Ascension is a vexed question amongst scientific men. Those on the Guinea coast are said to be due to the piling up of the sea waters by the configuration of the African coast-line, as it sweeps in to form the Gulf of Guinea, and the heavy surf is only found between the limits of Cape Mesurado and the Cameroons Mountains; but no such theory will explain the phenomenon at Ascension. As in West Africa, the surf has nothing to do with local bad weather, for the sea may be perfectly calm when the succession of high waves will commence rolling towards the island from the south, to break on the beach in a tremendous surf, in which no boat could live. The same heavy swell sets in on the southern coast of St. Helena, and it may be due to the sudden shallowing of the ocean on the shores of the two islands, which are as mere specks in the vast waste of waters

of immense depth. By different hydrographers the rollers have been attributable to earthquakes, distant storms, and lunar attraction, while a more recent theory ascribes them to the displacement of water caused by the falling of masses of ice, several miles in length, into the Antarctic Ocean. To the unscientific mind this theory seems to be as unsatisfactory as all the previous ones; for, unless the locality in which these ice-slips take place be limited to the longitudes of St. Helena and Ascension, one would expect to find rollers on the southern coasts of Australia, South America, and the Cape of Good Hope; and as the summer heats would presumably produce the same effect all over the Antarctic Region, there does not seem to be any reason for so limiting it.

To return to lighter subjects; an American, whose acquaintance I had made at the Diamond Fields, and who was returning to England in the same steamer with me, gave me an amusing account of his reception at Ascension. I cannot vouch for the strict accuracy of his story, but I tell it as it was told to me. He had gone on board the island, and was walking past the barracks in Georgetown, when he nearly stumbled against a fair young naval officer of forty, with flaxen whiskers, who came suddenly out of a building. The officer raised his

eye-glass, looked at the American with astonishment, and, before the latter had time to commence an apology, called out :

“Simmons.”

A voice replied, “Ay ay, sir !” from the interior of the building, and a bearded seaman appeared on the scene. The officer continued :

“Simmons, do you know what this person wants, or who he is ?”

“No, sir ; I can’t say, I’m sure, sir.”

This absence of ceremoniousness aroused the latent spread-eagleism of my friend, and he began : “Sir, I am a citizen of the United——,” when the naval man, who appeared to be unaware that he was speaking, interrupted him, and asked :

“Simmons, do you think he is a stowaway ?”

“Can’t say, sir, I’m sure, sir,” replied the imperturbable Simmons.

“Is there a merchant steamer at anchor there ?”

“Yes, sir. Cape mail, sir.”

“Well, Simmons, just go to the officer of the watch, and ask if he has given permission to any person to board us. And, er——, see what this person wants.”

The American, now very angry, again began : “Sir, I am——,” when he was again interrupted by the officer, who said :

“Simmons, I am engaged now. I cannot see this person. Perhaps you had better take him to the officer of the watch.” And he went off before my friend could launch all the terrors of the United States at his head.

The seaman grinned respectfully when his commander's back was turned, said, “This way, sir, if *you* please,” and both went to an officer who was down at the landing-place; and with whom, in fact, both the American and myself had come ashore. He, having got rid of the seaman, somewhat consoled the outraged dignity of the American by remarking that the individual who had treated him with such scant courtesy was an ass; but my friend had had quite enough of Ascension, and went on board the mail steamer in a great rage; in which state I found him anathematising all Britishers when I embarked an hour or two later. And it was not until after many cocktails that he could at all view the occurrence in a humorous light.

CHAPTER III.

FERNANDO PO.

Beautiful Scenery—Cocoa Plantation—A Tropical Forest—The Boobies—Their Peculiarities—An Aboriginal Village—A Trying Inspection—Irreclaimable Savages—Nature's Livery—Port Clarence—A Spanish Legend—History of the Island—Its Resources—Political Prisoners—An Ingenious Escape—Tropical Fruit—Padres—Tailed Men—Strange Specimens of Humanity—The Strait—Cameroons Peak—Climate.

ON the morning of Christmas Day, 1879, being on board the indifferent ship *Blank* (I do not know why in narratives the vessel under description should always be termed the "good ship"), I went on deck, about six o'clock, and saw before me at a distance of some ten miles, a vast mountainous mass rising out of the sea. It was the island of Fernando Po, so called from having been discovered by a Portuguese named Fernas do Poo, in 1471. As we drew nearer, one of the most lovely panoramas it has ever been my lot to behold, and which it is utterly beyond

the power of words to describe, was gradually unfolded.

The sun, low in the heavens, but gaining power minute by minute, darted long rays of fire into the bosom of the billowy sea of clouds which veiled the summits of the mountains, and even trailed a feathery canopy over the lower ridges. Minute by minute the mist melted and melted till it became a film of lace, rent here and there by spears of flame; then wreath by wreath it floated off into a sky of cloudless blue, and at last the majestic Clarence Peak, 10,190 feet in height, stood forth unveiled to meet the day, its emerald slopes flecked with gold and purple by sun and shadow.

The surf broke in long white lines upon a beach of dark-red pebbles; and, immediately above, their feet almost laved by the salt sea, stood stately trees, covered with wild vines and flowering parasites, the advanced guard of the tropical forest which stretched back in one unbroken mass of green undulations, so far that the eye could not distinguish where the forest ended and the grass slopes of the higher ridges began. Nestling down on the beach, where a slice had been cut out of the forest, were three or four wooden negro huts—picturesque at a distance; but no other sign of life was to be seen as far as the eye could range, and the primeval forest, un-

disturbed for countless ages, overshadowed and seemed about to swallow up the pigmies who had dared to raise their excrescences at its feet.

Steaming on, we rounded a reef of black and shining rocks, which extended some distance into the small bay, and finally dropped anchor off the negro huts. It was George's Bay. The buildings on shore resolved themselves on a closer inspection into a clap-board dwelling-house and three sheds, and the slice cut out of the forest into a cocoa plantation. I heard that this clearing had been made, the huts built, and the cocoa planted by a Sierra Leone negro, who was now making a good thing out of his plantation; and, as I had never seen such a paradox as an industrious Sierra Leone negro, I went on shore to look at him.

From my inspection I acquired no data for the formation of other industrious Africans. I saw the usual accessories of native life, rum, tobacco, fleas, dirt, hypocrisy, and female retainers, and discovered that this black swan was after all nothing more than a common domestic bird, that he kept a store and traded goods to the natives at exorbitant prices, hired Kroomen to work his plantation and did nothing himself but eat, drink, smoke, sleep, and lounge about. As if any Sierra Leone negro would ever condescend to physical labour!

The soil is wonderfully fertile and the cocoa is said to pay here a year sooner than elsewhere, but there were not more than two acres of ground under cultivation, and the whole of that area was not available for planting, the ground being encumbered with tree-stumps and decaying limbs and branches. I crossed a small stream of beautifully clear water, rippling over a ledge of rock at the back of the plantation, and went with the doctor of the steamer along a narrow path into the forest. Leaving the hot glare of the plantation and plunging into the cool umbrageous depths of the forest was like taking a new lease of life, and here indeed were vegetable giants. One silk-cotton tree (*Bombax*) that I observed was 210 feet high, the first branch springing out at a height of 149 feet above the ground; while ebony, yellow logwood, *lignum vite* and a species of mahogany towered aloft over a dense mass of underwood and feathery bamboo; the whole being matted and bound together by *lianas* and parasitical plants, covered with masses of gorgeous flowers, so as to be quite impassable. Rare blossoms were crushed under foot, splendid orchids reared their banners from the forks of branches and the hollows of gigantic buttresses, and butterflies, measuring from four to six inches across the wings, and of the most brilliant hues,

hovered around. It was the *beau idéal* of a tropical forest.

After walking along the path for about an hour, finding fresh surprises and beauties every minute, we observed several copper-coloured individuals coming towards us. There were some of each sex, both attired in the costume usually attributed to our ancestral relatives Adam and Eve, with this difference, that they wore necklaces of Birmingham beads, and had discarded the fig-leaves. The women, strange to say, in a part of the world where women are usually the only beasts of burden, and transport everything portable upon their heads, were carrying nothing, while one of the men had a bundle of skins balanced on the top of his wool. Two others of the men were armed with those trade-muskets which are supplied by the British trader to the unsophisticated African, and are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made. These ones were of that pattern known as "long Danes," and which stand some six feet high from butt-plate to muzzle: the barrels seemed to be long pieces of burnished gas-pipe (in any case they were mere cast-iron tubes) placed upon stocks sawn out of deal and painted a brilliant vermilion. The warriors handled these unquestionably deadly weapons with manifest pride, and the trumpery

lock of each, a flint action, was carefully protected from wet by a deer-skin cover. Being unprovided with pockets, through the primitive nature of their costume, each man had a ligature tied tightly round the biceps, and under this was slipped the blade of the knife, the stem of the pipe, or any other small article that it was convenient to carry about. Both sexes had their chests, arms, and stomachs covered with patterns of wonderful intricacy, and which had all been made by cuts and gashes with a knife or sharpened stone, for the custom of tattooing, that is, making mere punctures in the skin and squeezing some staining fluid into them, is unknown in West Africa. One or two of the *belles* of the party had their wool and faces daubed with streaks of red ochreous earth, which, though perhaps just as reasonable as the use of rouge, did not, in our eyes, enhance their charms. As is usually the case with savage nations, their figures were all undeniably good.

These gentry were the aborigines of the island, called by the uninquiring British trader "Boobies," on account of their word of salutation, "*Bube*," meaning "stranger." It is now generally accepted that they belong to a race named Aduyah, though according to some authorities Aduyah or Adiya is only the native name for the town of Clarence,

the capital of Fernando Po. These Aduyahs differ both in language and in physical characteristics from the tribes of the mainland, and they are the remnant of a once powerful race, which centuries ago, being driven out of its own territory by the more robust peoples of the Cameroons, took refuge in this mountainous island. They are not of the cigar-colour of the ordinary negro, but of a more red and coppery hue. In the matter of streaking themselves with ochre, plastering their hair with red clay, and in the use of the javelin or assegai, they resemble some of the Kaffirs of South Africa; while in colour and features they approach more nearly the Hottentot type than any other with which I am acquainted. Their language has some slight affinities with one or two South African languages, and, like the Hottentots proper, they are as a rule rather short in stature.

The Aduyahs regard the Spaniards with such hatred and suspicion, the result of years of ill-treatment, and so few persons of other nations have had an opportunity of studying them, that nothing is known concerning their religious belief, and but very little about their manners, customs, and form of government. With regard to the last-named, it has been ascertained that there is no king or supreme ruler of the nation as a whole, and it is supposed that

each village is an independent community, governed by a headman who is called the "Cocaroco," and who is elected by the male inhabitants. They are said to have many peculiar customs, and one, not the least singular, requires that a bride shall remain in her hut for twelve months after marriage, or longer than that period if she does not show any intention of soon increasing the population. When dressing their heads with the red clay, which is mixed to the required consistency with palm oil, they plaster the material on and smooth it down until it becomes a smooth and solid mass; in which state it remains until accident, exposure to rain, or wear and tear has damaged the fabric and rendered a new dressing necessary.

One of the Aduyahs whom we met could speak a little English, which he had picked up from the Sierra Leone trader and his Kroomen, and we learned from him that the party was going to the store to buy rum. Without much difficulty we persuaded him to give up his intended journey for strong waters, and to guide us to his village, which, he said, was not far distant; and away we went up the mountain slope, by a devious path some eighteen inches broad. Presently our new acquaintance, who was leading, crouched down, held out his brilliantly coloured musket at arm's length, and discharged it into a tree

covered with dense foliage that overhung the path. The tremendous report of the piece rolled away in echoes from ridge to ridge of the mountains, until it died away in a kind of sob in the distance; and when the smoke had cleared away we saw a shattered monkey lying in the path, while a swaying of branches and a loud chattering announced the rapid retreat of its terrified but more fortunate companions. The Aduyah turned to us for applause, with a smile breaking out all over his face; and he seemed so elated that I fancy he was not accustomed to make such good shots.

We had ascended for some four miles, and were beginning to feel rather warm, when suddenly the forest on the right hand seemed to be cut away, and we found ourselves upon the brink of a circular hollow, about one hundred yards in diameter, and from two to three hundred feet deep. This crater was doubtless an offshoot of the great parent volcano which had reared the immense cone of Clarence' Peak, and had long been dormant, as the sides and bottom were covered with a dense wood, some of the trees in which were evidently centuries old. The path skirted the brink for some distance, and then again plunged into the forest.

After about another mile and a half of a steeper incline the forest grew less dense, then it ceased

altogether, and, emerging from it, we found ourselves upon a broad and level shoulder of the mountain, which was covered with grass and dotted with immense boulders of rock. Clustering under the shelter of one of these, about the size of an ordinary cottage, were fifteen or twenty huts. This was the Aduyah village.

Our guide heralded our approach by a series of ear-splitting screeches, and the whole population turned out to inspect us. We seated ourselves upon a flat rock, and the people sat down, forming a semi-circle in front of us. It was a very trying moment. There were we two Europeans, clad in the garments of civilisation, and imbued with the prejudices inherent to our bringing-up, placed face to face with some seventy or eighty persons, men, women, and children, of all ages, and all absolutely unclothed—even with a blush. However, I made up so much for them in that respect that the doctor thought I was going to have an apoplectic fit; and I could have furnished each individual in the crowd with a complete suit of blushes, and then have had plenty to spare.

In deep silence the conclave gazed upon us for some five minutes, taking in the minutest details of our clothing and appearance with astonishment and awe. Then a young girl, thirteen or fourteen

years of age, approached shyly, and with trepidation stroked my knee, to feel what kind of unknown skin it was that I had. Next she touched my hand, and finding a radical difference between the trowsers and my flesh, fairly retreated in a fright. As she did so I observed that her left arm, which she had been holding behind her, had the hand wanting.

Presently I saw that a second woman had had her left hand amputated, then another and another, until at last, out of the thirty-five or forty women present, I counted eight who had been maimed in this way. I learned afterwards that infidelity in a wife is, amongst these people, punished by lopping off the left hand; so those I saw were, I suppose, the victims of this barbarous custom. From the large proportion who had thus suffered it seems that physical pain is, with the Aduyahs, just as inefficacious in checking this favourite female method of resenting the restraints and subordinate position imposed by the male animal upon woman, as is the exposure of the Divorce Court and the disfavour of the omnipotent Mrs. Grundy with us.

Our guide was the only native present who knew any English, though one or two of the elders spoke a few words of Spanish, and we gathered from his disjointed sentences that we were the only white men who had ever visited the village, that many of

the people before us had never before seen a white face, and that the children had not, as a rule, even seen clothes. This village was one of the largest on that side of the island, and boasted, I should say, of some 110 inhabitants. The houses were very primitive, and consisted merely of four uprights, filled in with a rough matting of palm-leaves.

Directly the first feeling of timidity wore off, and they had ascertained that we were not carnivorous devils (for the dark-skinned races always describe their demons as being white in colour), the children came pawing us all over to examine us. One small boy, in particular, wanted to know if we were the same colour all over; and when the doctor pulled up his sleeve and showed him the difference between sun-burned and fair skin, his curiosity rose to boiling point, and he could scarcely be restrained from undressing us. In fact I had to take the guide aside and tell him to explain to the elders that it was against our fetish to expose ourselves uncovered in public, and that if they made us do so, some dire calamity would befall them. This had the desired effect, and the inquisitive boy was smacked and led away.

Our Aduyah hosts were so hospitable that they insisted upon our partaking of some dark mystery, which was stewing in an earthen pot over a fire.

As far as we could ascertain, it contained rock-rabbit, monkey, guana, grasshoppers, snails, lizards, frogs, red-peppers, and palm nuts, and we tasted it with fear and trembling; but it was not worse than most made dishes. Then two lads displayed their skill in throwing their spears; having as a target a peeled stake, which they stuck in the earth about twelve yards off. Sometimes they hit it, but more frequently they did not, and the practice did not strike us as being very deadly. Before leaving we distributed a few shillings, and the whole village sang a pæan in our praise; while some of the women were so impressed with our generosity and personal charms that they wanted to go away with us, and stay with us altogether; but the men objected. A large party escorted us for some three miles along the path, and then bid us adieu with much sorrow.

So these were the ferocious Boobies, who are described as being the most irreclaimable savages in West Africa. Probably they are not very friendly with Spaniards, because the Spaniards, until very recently, used to indulge in the pastime of hunting them with bloodhounds; and the child of nature is a good hater, and knows how to nurse a grievance; but I think they are the most inoffensive barbarians I have ever met. They are certainly much lower in the scale of civilisation than most West African

tribes, but then people who are always being hunted about by savage dogs, and shot down in *battues*, have not much time to spare for self-culture. The missionaries are now taking them in hand, and trying to make them give up their primitive costume and habits, so I expect they will soon become as great scoundrels as the inhabitants of the mainland.

I had particularly noticed that day the horror and disgust with which those Aduyah children, who had never before seen Europeans, regarded our faces. Often before I have seen little children scream and run away in an agony of fright at sight of a white man, but these were too old for that. Accustomed as they are to the warm brown tints with which nature clothes man in the tropics, our pale faces must at first appear to them horrible and ghastly in the extreme. Certainly if nature intended man to go about innocent of wearing apparel, a dark skin is absolutely necessary, and I know nothing which seems to outrage the general fitness of things so much as an albino negro walking about unclothed like his compatriots. If the ancient Britons were of the same colour as we are now they were quite right to tint themselves with some dye, though blue is hardly the colour that I should choose. Still on the other hand a naked European does not more offend the eye than does a negro attired in European

garments; for, by adopting such, the latter transforms himself from a bronze statue into a shuffling and grinning ape.

Before going on board the steamer again I wandered along the sea-shore over a beach of pumice and volcanic ash. The hard black rocks which cropped up here and there were covered with curious grooves, about three inches broad, from six to nine inches long, and half an inch deep, the concave surfaces being quite smooth and looking as if they had been recently highly polished with black-lead. I should like to know the cause of these.

Three or four days after this visit to the little-frequented George's Bay, we steamed round the island, and dropped anchor in Clarence Cove, off the capital of Fernando Po. The cove is circular in form, being evidently the crater of an extinct volcano; and on the shore it is walled in by rocky cliffs, from 100 to 200 feet high. On the summit of these stands the town, and the white-washed and green-jalousied houses, crowning the red cliffs, stand out picturesquely against the background of green and purple mountain clothed with forest.

I rather like the town of Clarence. It is a pretty little place, each house nestling in a piece of garden, the streets at right angles with each other, and planted with trees. Most of the best houses stand

on the cliff overlooking the bay, and there is Government House, which is frequently unoccupied, the governorship of the island being vested in the captain of the Spanish gunboat on the station, who is often absent on cruises. Clarence even possesses a theatre, though one would imagine that no dramatic company would ever be insane enough to visit Fernando Po; but performances are sometimes got up by the men-of-war's men. The place was evidently well looked after by the local authorities, and the neatness and order contrasted painfully with the ruin and neglect which are so conspicuous in our own West African colonies. The streets were so clean that the wretched Turkey Buzzards could scarcely find enough to keep body and soul together, and were perched about on the tops of trees and the gables of houses, looking hungry and melancholy.

These scavengers, as no doubt the reader knows, are bald-headed, and the Spaniards have invented a little legend to account for it. They say, that when the waters subsided after the Deluge, and Noah opened the main-hatch of the Ark to let out the passengers, the ancient mariner thought that he would give a parting word of advice to his fellow-voyagers, and, commencing with the birds, said :

“ My children, when you see a man stoop down

as he is coming towards you, fly away from him, for he is picking up a stone to throw at you."

"That's all very well," exclaimed the Turkey Buzzard, "but suppose he has already got one in his pocket?"

At this the early explorer, being non-plussed, became angry; and he decreed that from that moment the Turkey Buzzard should go bald-headed, in token of its unnatural sharpness.

The history of Fernando Po is rather curious. After its discovery in 1471 by the Portuguese, it remained uncolonised till the commencement of the eighteenth century, when a few settlers from the neighbouring Portuguese island of St. Thomas established themselves on the north side. This settlement was, it appears, not sanctioned or recognised by the Portuguese government; for, in 1778, they ceded the island to Spain. The first Spanish officials who were sent to take possession were repulsed by the Portuguese colonists, who refused to acknowledge the right of the mother country to transfer them to another power; but, in 1779, the Spaniards returned in force, and the Portuguese fled to St. Thomas. The climate of Fernando Po proved so unhealthy for the new-comers that more than half of them died in the first year of the Spanish occupation; next the garrison mutinied, and, in

1781, finally left the island with the few remaining settlers; and, no fresh expedition being sent out from Spain, it remained in the hands of its original owners, the Aduyahs, from that date.

In 1827 the English took possession of the island, and in that year established the town of Port Clarence, which was regularly garrisoned by a detachment of the Royal African Colonial Corps. One of the principal reasons of this occupation was that the slave trade which was carried on in the numerous outfalls of the river Niger could be more effectually checked from Fernando Po than from any other place suitable for refitting the vessels engaged in the suppression of the trade; and in spite of the protests of Spain, who asserted her claim to the island, negro settlers were obtained from Sierra Leone, and Clarence became a regular station for the debarkation of slaves from captured slavers. In 1834, however, the British officials were withdrawn and the colony abandoned, the Government, though they still disputed the Spanish claims, being induced to take this step by persons who were interested in the settlement of Sierra Leone, from which great things were then expected, and who, seeing in Fernando Po a possible formidable rival for the growth of tropical produce, feared competition. Although the officials and troops were removed, the Sierra Leone settlers remained in

Clarence, and they were protected from interference on the part of other nations by the vessels of war on the station. This state of affairs continued until 1844, when Great Britain at length acknowledged the right of Spain to the island, and offered to purchase it for the sum of £60,000. This proposal was rejected by the Cortes, and the Spaniards resumed possession, bringing over a staff of officers from Cuba. They changed the name of Port Clarence to Puerto de Isabel, and that of Clarence Peak to Santa Isabel, but as all the inhabitants of the island were, with the exception of the Aduyachs, English-speaking negroes, and no Spanish colonists were introduced, the older names survived, and by them both the town and the peak are still generally known.

Fernando Po is an island with great possibilities before it, for, apart from the wonderful fertility of its soil and its mountainous character, which provides different elevations for the growth of different productions, whenever the Niger is thoroughly opened for trade it will become the great emporium of the Delta, for which its position off the low-lying and swampy shore of the mainland admirably suits it. The Spaniards have made no attempt to develop its great natural resources, and though during the short period of the British occupation, coffee, sugar, and cotton were produced, these industries became extinct

shortly after Spain resumed control of the island. The island is about forty-three miles in length and twenty in breadth, and gradually rises from the sea-shore to a central ridge of mountains some 8,000 feet in height. This central ridge is terminated at each extremity by a peak, Clarence Peak being the one to the north. There are, of course, no navigable rivers, and the principal stream is the Rio Consul which flows into Clarence Cove. Besides George's Bay and Clarence Cove the island possesses a good anchorage at Melville Bay on the east side of the island, where there is a small trading establishment of the same kind as that of the Sierra Leone trader at George's Bay, but there is no cultivation at this spot, and the trade is confined to the palm-oil which is obtained from the numerous oil-palms with which the surrounding forest is dotted. At the southern extremity of the island the land rises more abruptly from the sea than at other parts, and there are several precipitous mountains nearly 3,000 feet high.

The Spaniards seem to use Fernando Po principally as a place of exile for political prisoners. Amongst others, those professors who had a slight difference of opinion with their Government as to what subjects it was advisable to have taught in Universities were located here. They were not in the least grateful for being afforded this unrivalled

opportunity of studying natural history free of expense, and, after a sojourn of one or two months in the island, they arranged with an English trader and the captain of a mail steamer an ingenious plan of escape.

They were allowed full liberty within the island, but were not permitted to leave it, so, one morning, when the homeward-bound steamer was lying at anchor in the cove, they quietly sauntered into the trader's house. Then, when there were no inquisitive strangers about, they were taken down into a back yard, placed each inside a palm-oil puncheon and headed up. Thence they were taken down to the beach under the very eyes of the Government officials, rolled into boats, and hoisted on board the steamer. History does not inform us whether the puncheons containing these wily professors were rolled down the steep incline from the cliff to the beach, as is usually done, or were carried down in a truck. If the former, they must have performed many involuntary acrobatic feats during the descent.

Some hours after the steamer had sailed the fugitives were missed, and as no other vessel had left Clarence that day, a gunboat was despatched to overhaul and search the mail. The British ship was soon overtaken, and the professors wrung their

hands and talked of resisting to the last extremity, but the English captain was equal to the occasion. He ordered them all into their casks again, had them headed up, and then stowed them in the hold under a tier of others filled with palm-oil. This had just been completed when a Spanish officer with an armed boat's crew boarded the steamer and demanded the immediate surrender of the escaped prisoners. He was of course told that there were no such persons on board, and, after vainly searching throughout the ship, was compelled to go away baffled.

One of the sights in the neighbourhood of Clarence is the avenue of mango trees which is said to be five miles in length. I walked along it for more than two miles, with a canopy of green leaves overhead, and the golden fruit hanging down invitingly within reach. But the African mango is not a very tempting fruit. Take a very stringy turnip and let it soak in turpentine and furniture polish for forty-eight hours, then eat it, and nothing will be left for the imagination to picture but the colour and the stone of the real fruit.

It appears to me that most travellers delight in describing to the untravelled reader the lusciousness and delicacies of tropical fruits, and give

highly coloured descriptions of bananas, guavas, pine-apples, passion fruit, paw-paws, mangoes, etc., that make the mouth of the unhappy novice water, and cause him to curse the hard fate which has restricted him to the well-known, and consequently only half-appreciated, fruits of England. Yet there is no tropical fruit at all to be compared with the ordinary fruits of England, except the pine-apple, and the English hot-house pine is far superior to any tropical one, except perhaps the black pine of Cape Coast Castle. What are all the rest? Fill a gigantic bean-pod with sweetened soap, and you have the banana. Scoop out an apple, fill the hollow with raisin pips and pour in raspberry vinegar, and you have the pomegranate; substitute sugar and water, and there is the passion fruit, or diluted essence of almonds and you have the guava. Colour a vegetable marrow with saffron, sweeten it with sugar, and behold the paw-paw. What amongst all these things is there to compare with the greengage, or the nectarine, or the Kentish cherry? Tropical fruit is a delusion and a snare.

As Fernando Po belongs to Spain, Roman Catholicism is naturally the dominant religion there. There are some Protestant missionaries in Clarence, but they are only there on sufferance, are not allowed to have bells rung for their services,

and, if they made themselves too obnoxious to the *padres*, would soon be expelled altogether. Since there are already more Roman Catholic priests in the island than are required for the proselytisation of the natives, it may be wondered why these British and American missionaries do not go to some of the places on the mainland, where there are no teachers of any denomination at all. But the fact is that they do not care so very much for merely christianising the natives; what they want to do is to make them Methodists first and Christians afterwards.

As is usual with rival teachers of conflicting doctrines there is no love lost between these gentry, and the missionaries gladly pour into the willing ear of the Protestant visitor all kinds of scandalous stories concerning the priests, which may, or may not, be true. For my part I received great politeness and kindness at their hands. Most of them are well-educated gentlemen, which cannot be said of the Protestant missionaries, and some of them are men of science. I met one who evidently had a leaning towards the Darwinian theory. He told me that the Aduyals cannot understand each other in the dark, owing to their language being helped out so copiously by gestures, and this would be indicative of a long past age when man had not

language, but communicated his ideas by inarticulate sounds and signs. I have heard of a tribe on the Kroo coast the members of which are in a similar predicament, and, when there is no moon, have to go to bed early to avoid the confusion arising from misinterpreted sentences.

The priest also said that in the Gaboon he had seen three men with short tails. I suppose our remote ancestors all had tails, otherwise the *os coccygis* becomes incomprehensible, and many tribes in West Africa have a way of squatting down on their heels which looks as if it were a relic of old times when it would have hurt them to have sat on their tails. But the belief that tailed-men exist in West Africa is one of very ancient date, and many travellers have testified to their existence. Horneman mentions some, and says they formed a separate tribe which was called Niam-niam. De Castelnau gives us the exact measurement of their tails, and says that the Niam-niams were almost exterminated by the Houssa tribes, because they considered them to be the offspring of an unholy alliance of men and apes. In 1852, also, Doctor Hutsch, physician to the hospital at Constantinople, saw and examined a negress having a tail about two inches in length, smooth and hairless, and terminating in a point. He was informed that she

had been brought from Central Africa, and belonged to a tribe named Niam-niam, all the members of which bore the same caudal appendage.

In West Africa one sees many strange specimens of humanity. There is said to be a tribe, living to the north of Ashanti, who have short horns growing out of their foreheads; I have, however, seen two individuals of this tribe and the so-called horns do not grow out of the forehead, but out of the cheek-bone, under the eye. The excrescence is not really a horn, but a blunt and bony lump, projecting about one inch from the face. Some missionaries endeavoured to explain away this phenomenon by saying that the projections were due to vegetable matter having been placed in cuts made on the cheek-bone, as a native cure for infantile complaints; but both of the men to whom I am referring were carefully examined by five medical men (army and colonial surgeons), and these latter were unanimously of opinion that no incisions had ever been made, and that the excrescences were purely osseous. The old fable of the satyrs was then perhaps not so far-fetched as it is generally supposed to be.

Spotted people are so common in West Africa that one thinks nothing of seeing them. By spotted people I do not mean those who have recovered

from a species of leprosy, and who are covered with white blotches, but those whose skins consist of patches of different shades, such as copper-coloured and brown, yellow and brown, or light and dark brown, more than two shades of colour rarely being found in the same individual. What with these, men with horns, albino negroes, people with elephantiasis, one of the Doko dwarfs which are said to be found in the neighbourhood of the Jeba River, and a boy I have seen about Accra with two stomachs, one might stock a kind of Barnum's museum that ought to pay well. I knew a colonial officer who induced a "horned" man to promise to go to England with him to be exhibited, and actually got him on board the steamer; but directly the phenomenon had received a portion of the money that had been promised him, a want of moral rectitude, of which his unusual excrescences were indicative, exhibited itself, and he hurriedly left the ship in a canoe without waiting to take leave of anybody.

Nineteen miles from Fernando Po is the Peak of Cameroons on the mainland, 13,760 feet high; and this part of Africa presents one of the most remarkable undulations on the surface of the globe, the sea between the two mountains of Clarence and Cameroons being forty fathoms deep. Cameroons Peak,

which is supposed to be the *Currus Deorum* of Hanno the Carthaginian, descends abruptly to the water's edge, and is covered with forest almost to the summit, though there is one bare brown ridge extending from the eastern side towards the sea. It is impossible to conceive a more magnificent sight than that offered from the deck of a vessel passing through the strait, with these two verdure-covered giants towering one on each side. Cameroons Peak, called by the natives *Mongo-ma-Labah*, stands up so boldly from the sea that the descent appears unbroken, and the mountain looks like one vast mass rising into a solitary culminating point from a base the diameter of which is nearly twenty miles. There is, however, a lesser peak, 5,820 feet high, about two miles inland, and called *Little Cameroon*, or *Mongo-ma-Etindeh*.

The rainy season in Fernando Po lasts from June to November, and the Harmattan season, when the dry wind from the Sahara prevails, from December to the end of February. The lower parts of the island are particularly unhealthy, especially towards the termination of the rains, when the sun, increasing daily in power, draws up the moisture which has been pouring down on the earth for months, and stews up the decaying and sodden vegetation into exhalations of malaria. The higher

ridges and shoulders of the mountains should from their altitude be healthy enough, but as they are unexplored, the suggestion that has often been put forward in West Africa that a sanitarium should be established somewhere on Clarence Peak, is *in nubibus* in more senses than one.

The British Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra, who resides in a pretty little house on the cliff overlooking the cove, when he is not away settling some trade dispute in the Niger delta, is an official who has well exemplified the deadliness of the climate. Since 1873 I have met four consuls, and the average duration of life is only some three or four years. There is a story to the effect that an individual, who had recently been appointed to this post, applied to the Foreign Office for information as to what pension or retiring allowance was granted to superannuated consuls for the Bights, and was told in reply, that since the establishment of the consulate, no consul had held the appointment sufficiently long to be eligible for a pension, and that the prospect of anyone being tough enough to last out was so remote, that they did not propose taking the subject into consideration till a case actually occurred.

The pay of the consul is only about £600 a year, with travelling allowances, yet, directly a vacancy

occurs, there are dozens of applicants for the post; each one of whom implicitly believes that although all his predecessors have succumbed to the climate in a very few years, he himself will be sufficiently robust or sufficiently fortunate to escape and live to a green old age.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ISLES DE LOS.

Factory Life—Turning the Tables on a Port-officer—Plague Ships—
Unæsthetic Traders—Animal Life in the Bush—A Domestic
Tragedy—Unadulterated Heathen—The Pioneers of Civilisa-
tion—The Trader and the Missionary—How we Colonise—
Domestic Slavery—Amelia and Aréthuse.

THE Isles de Los, or, as they are sometimes called in old charts, the Idolos Islands, are a group of three small islands on the west coast of Africa, about eighty miles to the north of Sierra Leone. Two of these islands are crescent-shaped, and lie with the horns pointing towards each other, so as almost to enclose, like an atoll, an inner basin, in the centre of which lies the third island. The western island is called Tamara, or Footabar, and is the most lofty of the three, rising in the centre to a knoll some 450 feet high. The eastern is known as Factory Island, and is rather peculiarly shaped, being four and a half miles long but

averaging only a quarter of a mile in breadth. Crawford Island, the middle one, is about a mile long.

The view from the sea as the end of Tamara is passed, and the inner basin, with the rocky headland of Crawford Island in the centre, is opened up, is very striking. All three islands are covered, down to the rocky barrier against which the swell of the Atlantic breaks in long lines of surf, with a dense forest of palms and flowering underwood; the tufted heads of the former standing out against the pale azure of the tropical sky like a canopy of immense ferns; and the three islands together look not unlike a necklace of emeralds with a large emerald pendant lying in its midst.

Rounding the extreme point of Factory Island, which, as its name denotes, is the one inhabited by Europeans, we steam along the shore towards a hulk which is moored off the centre of the island; and presently the red-tiled roofs and white walls of the factory buildings appear peeping out from the foliage of a group of silk-cotton trees which surrounds them.

The name factory as applied to these trading establishments in West Africa is rather a misnomer, and suggests to the English mind a hideous brick building of several stories, with probably three or

four tall chimneys belching forth volumes of black smoke. Nothing could be more unlike the reality. The West African factory consists usually of a one-storied house, surrounded by a verandah, or piazza, and standing in the midst of an enclosure. Nothing is manufactured in these places; and they are, when all is said, shops, in which cotton-prints, rum, gin, powder, beads, and cheap muskets are bartered for native produce, and, sometimes, sold. The traders however speak of themselves as merchants, and though they will sell anything down to a pennyworth of rum, would consider themselves greatly insulted if called shopkeepers. The ground floor of the building contains the shop and stock-in-trade, the agent and his clerks live above, and the casks of palm-oil, and bags of palm-kernels, are stored up in sheds in the yard ready for shipment. There is no busy hum of workpeople. Perhaps a native will arrive at the factory with a canoe full of kegs of palm-oil; he saunters up to the house, has rum lavished upon him by the agent to create a generous spirit, and, after a time, for he does nothing in a hurry, he mentions that he has got so much oil to dispose of, provided that he can get in exchange so many cutlasses, so much powder, and so on. Then a couple of Kroomen lazily roll the kegs up from the beach, gauge them, examine the quality of the oil, and,

in the course of an hour or so, report progress to their employer, the agent. After this a little haggling, such as the climate has left the trader sufficient energy to indulge in, takes place; with the result that the native hands over his oil at a nominal price per gallon, which is about half what it is really worth, and gets paid in goods which are rated and exchanged at about 200 per cent. above their value; so that, in one way and another, the trader makes rather a good thing out of it. In fact, the profits are so large that the firm, in England, can afford to pay its agents and clerks salaries ranging from £300 to £100 per annum, give them the run of their teeth, pay for their washing, and allow them to drink as much alcohol as they please—a liberty of which they not uncommonly take advantage—besides paying all the ordinary expenses of the factory. They even run the risk of keeping running accounts with natives, giving them goods on credit, and trusting entirely to their good faith for payment; as there is nothing to prevent the debtor gracefully retiring to some other part of the country, and returning no more. The profits may be calculated thus: you have some goods, worth, say, £10, and a native has some palm-oil, worth, say, £50; you tell him you will give him £25 for his oil, and in payment you give him your £10 worth of goods, which you call to him £25

worth. It is very simple, provided you have an elastic conscience and have got a confiding native at hand; but in places where there is much trade competition, things are not quite so easy. There bribes are offered in the shape of a "dash," *anglicè* "tip," to be given over and above the stipulated price for the oil; and touts are sent out to lie in wait on the beach, or prowl along the roads by which the natives bring in the produce, to extract a promise of their custom. Sometimes the competition is carried much further, and I have seen two white men rush up to their knees into a lagoon to get at the owner of a canoe full of palm-oil, each hungering to be the one to swindle the unsophisticated negro.

As soon as we had dropped anchor, a boat, resplendent with white paint and brass fittings, shot out from the little bay, propelled by four brawny Kroomen; while languidly reclining in the stern, with the tiller-ropes in his hands, was a Sierra Leone negro, splendidly arrayed in shiny blue cloth and gold lace. This magnificent creature, who was the port-officer, or supervisor of customs, boarded us; and sitting down in the most comfortable chair on deck, he shot his coloured shirt-cuffs over his ebon fingers, and called the purser and the doctor of the ship to his awful presence.

When he learned that we had called at Goree,

where small-pox happened to be raging at the time, he immediately became anxious about his health, and demanded camphor; and then, with much pomposity, announced that he feared his duty to the Government would compel him to refuse the steamer pratique. The captain protested, but it was of no avail. Even the ardent rays diffused from two tumblers of brandy failed to dispel the mists of doubt and apprehension; the sable official was inflexible, and said that there must be no communication with the shore. A chorus of groans and murmurs of disappointment broke from the passengers at this announcement, but some of us were comforted on observing the skipper close his left eye in a peculiar manner when the port-officer was not looking, and smile a sweet smile to himself expressive of secret satisfaction. Then he shouted to the officer of the watch:

“Mr. So-and-so, who are those Krooboys for’ard?”

“B’long to the port-officer’s gig, sir.”

“Bless my soul, have that boat at the gang-way hoisted in at once.”

The black guardian of the Customs interposed hastily: “No, no, I say, cappen, dat’s my boat.”

“Well, Mr. Customs, I know that.”

“Well, cappen, you mustn’t hoist him up.”

“Oh! very well. Just as you like, Mr. Customs.

I only thought it might get damaged towing alongside to Sierra Leone."

"To Sierra Leone!" This with a jaunty air, as if he were kindly humouring some joke which the captain would soon unfold.

"Yes, Mr. Customs, to Sierra Leone. That's my next port."

"But I'm not goin' to Sierra Leone, cappen. I'm goin' ashore, just now, one time, in dat boat."

The captain turned on him with his face lighted up with a beautiful glow of virtuous indignation, and, shaking his head slowly from side to side, said: "What, Mr. Customs? are you trying to indooce me to neglect my dooty? Didn't you say as how there was to be no communication between this ship and the shore?"

"Yes, cappen, but of course I'm goin' ashore when you leave here."

"I couldn't allow it, Mr. Customs, I couldn't really. It would be as much as my certificate's worth to do it. I shall be sorry to disoblige you, but I'm afraid I shall have to take you on to Sierra Leone."

"Oh, very good, cappen, I shall report your conduct to my friend His Excellency, the Governor, when I get dere. You can't insult a member of

Her Majesty's Government with impunity, and tear him away from his station like this;" and the port-officer blew himself out so with rage that I quite trembled for the seams of his blue cloth clothes.

The captain still came up smiling.

"I can't help that, Mr. Customs, I can't help that. P'raps when you get there the Governor 'll want to know why you came aboard this ship at all, and let your men run about all over the deck catching the infection. In most ports with which I am acquainted, the health officer lies alongside the ship, and looks at the papers. He don't come aboard and drink licker with the passengers, and catch the infection that's aboard that ship, so that he can't go ashore again. I couldn't let you land here, Mr. Customs, after that, I couldn't really."

The face of that official when this mine was sprung on him was beautiful to behold. His vanity, the tenderest point in a negro, was cut to the bone, and he had made himself ridiculous before a number of grinning white men. He knew that to go to Sierra Leone, under the circumstances, would entail the loss of his situation, for his neglect of the regulations; so he could do nothing but go back on what he had said before, and give the ship pratique after all.

This little episode will give the reader some idea of how much the masters of these trading steamers care whether they spread sickness or not. All that most of them care about is to fill up their vessel with cargo, for they get a percentage on the profits of the voyage; and, to avoid being quarantined at any port, they will conceal anything. I know of a case in which a steamer arrived at a port and showed a clean bill of health, although three persons on board had died of yellow fever only a few days previously. These deaths were kept dark, and some passengers, little guessing the true state of the case, embarked in the ship for England. A few days after sailing yellow fever broke out among these passengers, and one died. I know of another case in which a Krooman, belonging to a steamer, was landed surreptitiously at night, when suffering from confluent small-pox, in the midst of a populous district where there was no hospital or medical officer. I wonder what would be done to the master of a ship who was found doing something of that kind in England. In West Africa it forms a topic of conversation for a few days, is then forgotten, and nothing more ever heard of it.

There was only one trading establishment at the Isles de Los, and that belonged to a French firm, who consequently had things pretty much their own

way, and could, to a certain extent, buy and sell at their own prices. Anyone acquainted with West Africa could, on landing, tell at a glance that no English mercantile interest was there represented; for there was an air of neatness about the place, and little things evincing some idea of refinement, such as is never found in the trading soul of the British shopkeeper in that part of the world. To one side of the house was a small garden full of flowers, and evidently well cared for; while roses and flowering creepers were trained up the pillars of the piazza to the verandah above. The British trader has a great dislike to having flowers trained over his building; he complains that they are useless, since he cannot eat or sell them, and they do not add to his comfort. Besides, he has an idea that the fragrance of flowers is unwholesome, that the plants exhale malaria, and that they attract mosquitoes. The smell of a pot of palm-oil is to him better than the perfume of the sweetest violet yet grown; as for a garden—if he were set down in a place where one already existed, he would at once have everything rooted up, and then plant cabbages. He is, before everything, utilitarian; whereas the French trader, while keeping his eye well on the main chance, can still find time to beautify his home in many inexpensive methods.

Leaving the factory to the left, you proceed by a

narrow path, much encumbered with rocks, up the hill, where you find another track following the high ground which forms, as it were, the backbone of the island. On either side is a grove of palms, the feathered fronds of which, arching over towards each other, form an umbrageous roof; while rare ferns spring out from the interstices of the trunks. A shrub, with a flower something like verbena, fringes the path with a thick border; and, beyond the palm groves, a dense growth of tall underwood, sparsely studded with scarlet and white flowers, shuts in the view. A few steps to the brow of the hill, and you look down upon the calm waters of the inner basin, barely rippling against the dull red rocks, with the wooded knoll of Crawford Island in the centre. A number of white cranes are standing at the water's edge steadfastly regarding their feet, each with the air of an old gentleman, with his hands folded under his coat-tails, looking down in a fit of deep mental abstraction; and a couple of fish-hawks are circling overhead, on the look-out to rob some successful gull or pelican of his finny prey.

The branches of a neighbouring tree are swung rapidly, and, looking up, you perceive the black eyes and grotesque face of a little monkey, parting the leaves with a fore-paw, and looking at you inquisitively with his head on one side. He appears so

tame that you step softly towards him to put some salt, if you have any in your pocket, on his tail; but you have scarcely moved your foot before he has gone like a flash of lightning, and you see the tops of distant bushes swaying to and fro, as he hurries off to tell his friends that a big monkey without a tail, with a curious white face, is on view. You are surprised to find so much animal life not three hundred yards from the factory, and you lean against a tree, and keep perfectly quiet, to see what will happen next.

Presently a pretty little zebra-striped mouse comes running about on the path, peering amongst the leaves of the wild passion-flower, and stopping every now and then to nibble at one of the small golden pods. You kick your heel softly against the tree, and he at once sits up in an attitude of attention, turning an ear towards you to listen; for he prefers trusting to his delicate sense of hearing rather than to his eyesight to warn him of danger. Then you hear a great twittering and commotion amongst the yellow palm-birds who have hung their nests upon the drooping plumes of the palms, and, turning round cautiously, you see a beautiful green snake, about three feet in length, glittering in the sunshine, and bent upon dining on a baby palm-bird. Every feathered nursery is in a tremendous

uproar; the papa birds fly round and dart vicious but ineffective pecks at the snake, when his attention is engaged with the champion parent who assumes a pugilistic attitude in front of his head, while the mamma birds puff out their feathers and endeavour to make themselves as much like hawks as possible; every now and then hopping into the nursery to count the children and see that they are all right.

The snake does not seem to care much for the digs he receives from the parental beaks; he takes a couple of turns round the stem of a leaf with his tail, and then, hanging down, curls his head round and pushes it up the funnel-shaped opening of a nest. Violent screams break out in every direction, and horror and dismay reign around, when suddenly a brownish-gray squirrel, with a dark horizontal mark on his side, appears on the scene, having been attracted by the uproar. He at once decides to act as lawyer, or umpire, to these disputants, and, springing from branch to branch, salutes the snake somewhat unceremoniously in the rear. The latter withdraws his head with sudden astonishment from the nest, dragging with him a callow ball of down, *vox* (at least, beak) *et præterea nil*, who falls to the ground; and then, discharging an angry hiss at the squirrel and flourishing his forked tongue towards him, he casts off from the

leaf, and, withdrawing from the case, drops into the shrubs underneath and makes off in an abominable temper. The squirrel, surrounded by grateful fathers and mothers, assumes a dignified attitude, while the papa birds form themselves into a deputation to deliver an address to their protector; when the baby, who is tired of lying on the ground and being neglected so long, sets up a vigorous squall. The keen-eyed squirrel at once sees it, and, springing from the tree, calmly takes it up in its mouth, and retires with it to some quiet corner to lunch; lawyerlike, appropriating the subject of the litigation.

It may be objected that squirrels are not carnivorous, but I only describe what I have seen, and I believe that they invariably eat young birds when they can. But they cannot get them out of the hanging nests themselves, and have to wait till one falls out, or is dragged out by a snake, as was done in this case. Neither monkeys nor squirrels appear to have sufficient *vous* to bite away the grass-rope which suspends the nest to the bough, and let the whole household fall to the ground.

By merely standing still for a few minutes you have made the acquaintance of all these strange creatures, and witnessed a horrible tragedy; yet you will find dozens of people who will confidently assert

that there is no animal life in the bush, and who will tell you that they have walked in it scores of times without seeing anything. Neither would you see anything if you trampled along noisily on a stony path, blowing out clouds of smoke like a locomotive, and roaring out every now and then to your boy to bring up that flask.

Strolling quietly along the path you presently arrive at a cluster of thatched huts, each standing in an enclosure of its own. Cigar-coloured men and women come out and greet you with some unintelligible sounds, which you at once know, from the smiling faces, are indicative of good-will; and naked little children, with enormous corporations that would arouse a pang of envy in the aldermanic bosom, scratch themselves shyly against the posts of the enclosures, and gaze upon you with open mouths. Then the great man of the village, with many genuflexions, invites you by courteous gestures to enter his humble abode, and rest from the heat of the day. You cross his yard, all the inhabitants of the place following, and sit down on a diminutive wooden chair placed on the clean and smooth mud floor of the one room of the house. There is not much furniture to encumber the space: a few sleeping mats of plaited grass, dyed with various vegetable dyes, an earthen pot or two, an old flint-lock musket,

with a deer-skin cover to protect the lock, some gourd calabashes, a few strings of beads hanging to a tie-beam, blackened with the smoke of fires lighted indoors during the rainy season, and a stray fowl or so, form, with the chair on which you are sitting, the entire personal effects of the village chief.

While you have been looking round, a boy has been climbing up the smooth column of a cocoa-nut palm, grappling it with his fingers and toes, and carrying a cutlass between his teeth; and you hear the thump, thump, of the green cocoa-nuts as they fall to the ground. In a few minutes the husks of one or two are struck off with a few skilful blows of the cutlass, and the water, miscalled milk, poured out into a prettily-carved calabash ready for you to drink. As these people do not keep asking for a "dash," are affable and courteous without any aggressive self-assertion, and wear loose Arab-like robes instead of disfiguring themselves in misshapen coats, trousers, and print gowns, you conclude that they have not as yet been much contaminated by missionaries or traders. And you would be quite right. The French clerks at the factory do not interfere with them much, and the missionary is an almost unknown bird of prey in these islands.

The trader and the missionary are what are called the pioneers of civilisation. It does not matter

which comes first, for the other is sure to follow soon, and each pioneers in his own groove. When the trader makes his appearance, he finds the unsophisticated natives living contentedly, and not bothering to do much work, because a bountiful nature has done so much for them. When they want to become a little festive, they go and tap a palm, and extract that sap which is known as palm wine; and at which they have to work hard to get drunk on, as four or five pints are only sufficient to produce a very slight feeling of exhilaration. The trader at once introduces to their notice two new liquids, which he calls ironically rum and gin; he explains their advantages, how a man can get drunk on them in half an hour with a mere half-pint, and points out what a lot of time will now be saved in getting intoxicated with these drinks, instead of going through the old tedious process with palm wine. The natives soon learn to like these "strong waters," but the trader will not let them have them for nothing, so they go prowling out into the forest and collect a few bushels of palm-nuts to exchange for them. Then when their orgie is over and they want more, they, having a strange and new sensation in the head, which we call headache, send out their wives and children to pick up nuts, and thrash them if they do not bring enough. Trade thus goes on,

and the philanthropist in England rubs his hands, and congratulates himself upon the native being at last taught to understand the dignity of labour, and to appreciate the civilising influence of trade.

The trader, also, probably finds the people armed with ridiculous spears, or bows and arrows, which are so innocuous that after a battle has raged for hours there will be no killed, and only two or three slightly wounded. In the interests of humanity, as a pioneer of civilisation, he makes known to them the uses of gunpowder and lead; and sells them muskets which are anything but innocuous, since, if they do not damage the persons at whom they are discharged, they maim and kill those who discharge them. When the men of the village adjacent to the factory have supplied themselves with these deadly weapons, it immediately occurs to them that the people of the next village, who are still grovelling in the bow-and-arrow stage, have some goats and fowls that would be much better looked after if transplanted to their own village. As they want to try their new weapons as well, they take them with them; and, marching out about dusk, they set fire to the next village, and shoot the men, and capture the women and children as they run out of the burning houses. They return home with the goats and fowls, and when they have eaten them, or exchanged them with the trader for

rum, they suddenly remember another village, a little further off, where somebody's aunt was insulted many years ago by a small boy ; and off they go to revenge the deadly insult, and get some more things to exchange for rum and gunpowder. The trader generally takes care that the philanthropist shall not hear about these raids, but sometimes a garbled and totally untrustworthy account reaches him, and he deplores the savage atrocities of the natives, but says that we must not expect too much at once, for the civilising influence of trade has done much to reclaim these barbarians and check village feuds, and will in time establish confidence and friendly relations between man and man, and render such things impossible.

The missionary may arrive at this stage, or he may have had a clear field to himself first ; but it does not make much difference. He finds that the natives do not appear to think much about religion. They believe in one great deity, whom they call the lord of the universe, and whom they consider to be much too exalted a personage to have direct dealings with them, or even to care much about them. They believe that this supreme being has appointed a number of subordinate deities, or fetishes, some well disposed towards man, and some maliciously disposed ; and it is with these

that they most concern themselves, especially trying to propitiate the unfriendly ones. Each of these fetishes is represented by some tangible object, which takes the name of the deity or fetish it represents ; and these objects are worshipped in exactly the same way as the images in a Roman Catholic church are worshipped—no more, and no less : that is to say, the worship is idolatrous, or otherwise, according to the intelligence, education, and imagination of the worshipper.

The missionary is horrified at finding these people contented and happy, and utterly blind to the miseries of their condition. They laugh, and sing, and dance, entirely ignorant of the fact that, because Mrs. Adam eat some apples, a benign Deity has doomed them to never-ending torment. He tries to awake them to a sense of sin, and the horrible future of baked meats which awaits them. He finds this sufficiently difficult, because they have a way of asking direct questions, and following things up to their logical conclusions, that is rather puzzling ; but he finds no difficulty in upsetting their existing simple beliefs. They are inclined to regard the white man as a kind of superior being, and when he tells them anything they go and try it. He says that the fetishes are all nonsense, whereupon Mr. Farama, who is a bold spirit, when passing Mrs. Boye

Banna's corn patch, in which the customary piece of stick and rag is placed to represent the fetish who protects property from thieves, thinks he would like some corn to eat; and as the missionary has told him the fetish is nothing, he goes in and helps himself. After a day or two, finding that no dreadful punishment has fallen upon him from the enraged fetish, he is filled with joy, and blesses the kind missionary who has made it clear to him that he can go and steal anything he pleases, without running any risks beyond the commonplace one of detection by the owner. By-and-by his fellow villagers become equally enlightened; those who possess property find that a rag and stick are no longer sufficient for its protection; they become suspicious of one another, and their simple trust disappears.

At this stage, the missionary, having succeeded, as he thinks, in rooting up their old beliefs, tries to impose a new one on them; but they, having just freed themselves from the yoke of one superstition, are not at all in a hurry to hang another round their necks. Besides, the teaching and belief of years has been upset so suddenly and so rudely that they feel rather at sea, and are disposed to regard every new theory of the supernatural with suspicion. Some of them, however, seeing that the missionary lives in a fine house, has plenty to eat

and drink, and does no hard work, think that perhaps if they do what he tells them they will arrive at an equally happy state, so they profess themselves to be believers of the white man's fetish. After a little time most of them find that they are no better off than they were before, and so leave off pretending: these are described in the mission reports as relapses into heathendom.

When the missionary has succeeded in rallying a few hypocrites round him, he promulgates a most curious doctrine. Because he happens to have been brought up in a part of the globe where people have white skins, which do not look well when uncovered, and where the climate renders tight-fitting clothing necessary for warmth, he lays down the dogmatic rule that the loose drapery of the natives is immoral and indecent. He seems to have an idea that Providence specially designed trowsers to go hand-in-hand with the Gospel, and to be introduced into every country, whether suited to it or not, for the ultimate benefit of tailors. He never pauses to think that what may be all very well in England may be very much out of place in Africa; but because the costume of the negro exposes a little of brown arms, legs, and chests, he at once stigmatises it as improper. Now, as the natives have been accustomed to go about and see each other thus attired from infancy, they think no more of it

than we do of seeing persons dressed in the ordinary manner; and some people might say that when a person goes out of his way to see impropriety where none is thought of or intended and where it does not really exist, it is fairly clear that the impropriety must exist in the mind of that person himself; but of course that would be quite wrong, as no such bad quality could have anything to do with the mental machinery of a missionary. For my part, I often wish, when I am in the tropics, that I could dispense with clothes and attire myself in a striped counterpane; and if I only had a brown skin, instead of a glaring white one, I would do so at once and set missionaries at defiance.

The natives, not being utter fools, are not taken in with all this twaddle about impropriety; and they do not at all see why they should burden themselves with close-fitting clothing in a climate already sufficiently hot, and curb the natural freedom of their limbs with straps, belts, collars, and so on. The missionary, receiving a slight check on this point, goes to work on another tack. He has either found out for himself, or has read, or heard, that negroes are inordinately vain; so, working on this fact, he goes about amongst his proselytes, telling them that they have only to adopt boots and clothes to be as good as white men, and perhaps better. The result of this is

that at every mission-school you see the boys looking like so many monkeys in dreadfully fitting coats and trowsers made of cotton print of the most gaudy and exaggerated patterns, and the girls attired in print frocks with waists up under their arms, and tawdry hats adorned with common ribbons perched on the top of their wool. Vanity is thus encouraged to such an extent that many of the natives squeeze their feet, which are themselves as hard as leather, into boots, although it is perfect torture to them to move in them. To the one-ideaed missionary mind, the picturesque and ample flowing robe and the handkerchief tastefully knotted round the head smack of the devil, and so these are left to the unregenerate.

The missionary next gathers together his flock, and tells them that their old custom of taking a wife without any further ceremony than her consent and that of her parents is a damnable sin, and that if they would escape future perdition they must come to him and have a few words read over them. To begin with, he attacks an aged couple, who have probably grandchildren of their own, and tells them that to atone for their past years of illicit love they must at once be married according to his fashion. The aged couple do not see any advantage to be derived from this book palaver, and want to know if the trader is doomed to a sulphurous future, since Bundoo's daughter

resides with him, and no marriage ceremony beyond the old native one has been performed. This, and the fact that the trader will not attend "meeting," has long been a sore point with the missionary; and he breaks out into a furious tirade against the trader, whom he describes as being much more wicked than his hearers, because he ought to know better; and he prophesies with much complacency that his lot in the next world will not be as comfortable as it might be. The natives are astonished to find that this new religion is not accepted by all white men; and, as the trader is rather better off than the missionary, they at once see that they were quite wrong in attributing wealth and power to the new fetish. The uncomplimentary remarks of the missionary are retailed to the trader, and he at once retorts that the former is an idle ass, who, being too lazy or stupid to make a living in any other way, has adopted that of deluding greater fools than himself with silly fabrications—all this, of course, being expressed in much more vigorous language. This, again, is carried to the missionary, who retaliates by preaching a sermon in which the trader is alluded to, and likened to Judas Iscariot, or any other unfortunate who is commonly held up to the execration of mankind. The natives now begin to ally themselves with one or the other of these adversaries, and this dispute, besides dividing the village into two veno-

mous factions, brings into prominence backbiting and scandal, which pastimes they formerly held in but small esteem, but now, seeing that the white men are such adepts at them, they study the art, through their love of imitating their superiors, and soon the village is filled with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

The missionary, in the mean time, sends home his report, which he has to colour highly to draw subscriptions and keep up the religious enthusiasm. The philanthropist does not care much for this, because he prefers looking after the welfare of men's minds and bodies in this world to making preparations for a doubtful future ; but it is received by the Exeter Hall army with joy, and speeches are made about the glorious work of spreading Christianity ; whereas, as a matter of fact, if that creed consists of anything more than an outward ceremonial, there has not been gained to it one convert, and the natives have been transformed from good heathens, with many excellent qualities, into accomplished liars, hypocrites, and scandal-mongers. This fact is so universally acknowledged by Europeans living on the spot, and accordingly well qualified to judge, that, when one of them wishes to engage a servant, he always asks each candidate for the situation whether he is a Christian, and if he has been taught at a mission school.

Should either of these questions be answered in the affirmative, the candidate is shown to the door, and an unadulterated heathen looked out for.

The missionaries have at the present time the moulding of the character of the rising generation of semi-civilised negroes in Africa entirely in their hands, and, unless we wish that generation to be one of the most detestable that the world has yet seen, it is quite time that this power was taken from them, and some system of Government education adopted. Many, perhaps most, of the missionaries are exceedingly conscientious, but that does not render their proceedings any the less ill-advised. The fact is that liberal-minded men of high culture, and possessed of great tact, are required for such posts, whereas now anyone thinks that he is good enough for a missionary. Too many of them are, besides, of very humble origin, frequently ignorant and bigoted in addition, and, finding themselves suddenly sprung from nobodies into persons of influence, abuse their power and become tyrants of the worst stamp. Such men often become fomenters of strife between tribes, and draw us into numerous petty wars. At Lagos they encouraged the natives to resist the British, and our force sustained a disastrous defeat; and it was at the request of missionaries, the professed teachers of a gospel of

peace, that the town of Old Calabar was bombarded by our fleet. There is always a suspicion of leather about these gentry, for there seems to be something about that material, perhaps the smell, which drives those who work in it into extremes, and your cobbler either becomes a rabid Methodist, or missionary, of the fire and brimstone class, or an atheistical Radical. The Roman Catholic missionaries, being all men specially selected for the duty, and generally gentlemen, do least harm to the natives; but they do not gain many converts, because they are too fond of dilating upon the torments of hell, and the negro does not care to change his supreme deity, who is, at the worst, only indifferent about his welfare, for one who is going to punish him. I once saw a Roman Catholic missionary show to a chief an immense picture showing forth the cooking arrangements and ingenious devices for torture popularly believed to obtain in Hades, thinking to make a great impression on him, and perhaps frighten him into professing Christianity. The chief said:

“Does your fetish order all these people to be treated like that?”

“Yes,” replied the priest.

“What for?”

“Because they have disobeyed his word.”

The chief looked round with an air of pitying superiority, and remarked :

“I would not like to have a fetish like that. We have no fetish so bad as that in this country.”

When the trader and the missionary have between them thoroughly demoralised the natives, some wire-pullers manage to have the territory declared British. A few gunboats appear off the coast, and the natives are made to sign a treaty which they do not understand ; or a chief, who has no authority except in time of war, is bribed with a few puncheons of rum and a hogshead of tobacco to hand over the territory, which is not his property, to the British. Sometimes we take it without going through any preliminary little farce, and in spite of the protests of the natives ; as was done in the case of the Agbosomeh territory on the Slave Coast in 1873. Then all the cadets of good families and broken down men-about-town, who have nothing left but a little interest, go out as colonial officials, and are thus happily provided for out of the sums wrung from the natives in the way of import duties. Next an armed police force is raised to terrorise the natives and put down any popular tumult, and is officered by officers who have, for reasons not to be too closely inquired into, been requested by their colonels to resign their com-

missions in the army. Thus the glorious work of civilisation goes on, until the natives, from being surprised at finding everything thrice as dear as it was when they were independent, become annoyed. Then they try to smuggle; the armed police interfere, and a collision ensues: thus friction is engendered, and at last, finding that their old customs are set at naught, while new customs and strange laws are forced down their throats, and that they are in every way much worse off than they were before, they endeavour to win back the independence which they allowed unwittingly to be taken from them, and rebel. A war ensues, which costs half-a-million or so out of the pockets of the British tax-payer; thousands of lives are sacrificed and homes devastated; the natives are crushed, and all goes on happily again till there is another outbreak. In this manner, in 1861, the Governor of Sierra Leone induced Bey Cantah, the King of Quiah, to hand over his territory to the British. The inhabitants protested, but without avail, and an armed force was sent to occupy the ceded territory. A few days after the entire people rose in arms. A war ensued; the lives of some dozen Englishmen and several hundred natives were sacrificed, and all opposition was crushed. I am glad to say, however, for the honour of my country, that some years

later Quiah was restored to its native owners, and is now independent.

In years bygone the Isles de Los were notorious for the part which they played in the slave trade, for vessels of light draught could lie under the shelter of the land, where no man-of-war could venture, and where the slavers could not be detected unless armed boats actually went in search. In such cases the slave-dealers did not always get the worst of the engagement. The *Camperdown*, a brig of sixteen guns, destroyed the British sloops *Rambler* and *Trial*; the *Paz*, which was under the American flag, beat off the *Princess Charlotte*, and killed several of her crew; and the crew of the *Venganza* resisted the boats sent to take her until the last extremity, when being boarded, they blew themselves up with their assailants. The Sierra Leone brig was the greatest terror to slavers on this part of the West Coast, for she was constantly roving about the Isles de Los and the adjacent rivers, while the men-of-war usually only stayed a short time in that neighbourhood. She captured such a number of vessels engaged in the trade, that two brigs, the *Dolores* and the *Temerario*, were avowedly fitted out for her destruction; but were fortunately captured before they could compass it, the former by H.M.S. *Ferret*, and the latter, which had a

complement of eighty men, by H.M.S. *Bann*, after an action of two hours.

In order to put a stop to the traffic a detachment of troops was stationed at Crawford Island, where the ruins of the barracks, now overgrown by a dense mass of tropical vegetation, are still discernible. The soldiers belonged to the Royal African Colonial Corps, a force which was composed of Europeans, and the mortality amongst them was so excessive, either from the unhealthiness of the situation, or from their own intemperate habits, that in the years 1812 and 1813, more than half the number in garrison died. Even at the present day, long, low, piratical-looking craft, decked over the stern, and with raking masts carrying large lug-sails, may be observed running cargoes of domestic slaves from Sherbro and other localities, into the rivers which here discharge into the sea. If boarded by a Government vessel, the head man in the boat at once declares that the women on board are his wives, and the men, if any, and boys, his sons or servants. So apathetic are the slaves that they do not claim their freedom, but, frequently, when questioned, corroborate the falsehood of the dealer. Owing to this it is extremely difficult to put a stop to this species of slave-trading: for, except on the very rare occasions on which the slaves are found manacled, there is

not sufficient evidence to make a conviction before a court of law a matter of tolerable certainty, and Government officials do not care to run the risk of having to pay heavy damages for the illegal seizure and detention of a craft.

Domestic slavery in this part of the world is, however, very unlike the popular idea of slavery in Great Britain. The slave here is one of the family, and lives on equal terms with its members; a state of things resulting from the fact that all the women are slaves, and that a slave is considered almost as good as a free man. The slave eats with his master, and smokes and drinks at his expense. Should there be any work to be done in the cassava field or corn patch, master and slave work, hoe in hand, side by side. There is here no overseer with a heavy-thonged whip to stir up the lazy and get the utmost work out of the human cattle. The slave has a good deal of time at his own disposal, and can earn money and buy a wife, frequently one of the daughters of his owner. There being no human sacrifices here such as prevail in Ashanti and Dahomey, where a certain number of slaves are always slaughtered at the decease of their master, he has nothing to fear; and he is so well off that he refuses to accept his liberty, which he could obtain at any time by appealing to a magistrate.

I do not know if the negroes in the United States are anything like those described in Mrs. Beecher Stowe's highly-coloured romances, but certainly those in Africa are not hampered much by domestic affection. No heartrending separations of husbands and wives, or parents and children, can take place in Africa, for they care very little for each other. There is no confidence and affection between man and wife, for the wife is simply the property of the husband, as much as his mats and calabashes. He does not treat her well as a rule, making her do all the hard work, beating her when he is in a bad temper, and selling her when she begins to weary him. There are, besides, three or four more wives, so that domesticity, in our sense of the word, is impossible. Like the average European, the male African regards woman as an animal inferior to himself. The former is much too polite to say so openly, though by his actions, customs, and laws he evinces this opinion in a hundred ways; but the African has no such scruple, he loudly proclaims his superiority, and his women, in revenge, give full scope to that genius for intrigue which is so peculiarly the attribute of the negress.

The maternal instinct is not so highly developed in African women as in their European sisters. In common with the lower mammals, they are very fond

and careful of their children while they are little and incapable of taking care of themselves; but this interest gradually dies out as the children grow up. For European parents to sell their offspring to strangers would be regarded as monstrous; but it is a common practice with the African, who sells his sons whenever he may be in want of the wherewithal to purchase rum or tobacco. The girls, in any case, are invariably sold on arriving at a marriageable age, to any suitor willing to pay the "head money."

The opponents of Mr. Wilberforce's bill for the abolition of the slave trade endeavoured to make great capital out of the fact that the majority of the negroes shipped for the West Indies were slaves in their own country, and that those procured from Ashanti and Dahomey would, if suffered to remain in their own country, be liable to be put to death at any time. These premises were denied by the supporters of the bill, but a more extended acquaintance with Western Africa has now shown that they were strictly accurate. The deductions, however, drawn by the opponents were utterly fallacious, for they assumed that the conditions of slavery were the same in Africa and in the West Indies. Now, in the former, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the slave suffered no hardships, and did nothing that could really be called hard work: while in the latter, day after day, he

was subjected to wearying manual labour, than which nothing could be more irksome and hateful to the naturally indolent African. That the abolition of the slave trade was at once followed by an alarming increase in the number of human sacrifices in Ashanti and Dahomey cannot be denied; but, because the kings and chiefs of those two states were addicted to customs of horrible barbarity, was no reason why a nation should sanction the continuance of an unnatural traffic. But none of the beneficial results that were to have followed the cessation of the trade have occurred in West Africa. Slavery still flourishes, internecine strife has not diminished, and the kidnapping of persons still goes on. The mainland opposite the Isles de Los, and the numerous petty states surrounding the British settlement of Sierra Leone, are kept in a constant turmoil of chronic warfare. In the eastern districts of Sierra Leone the traveller continually meets Mendis and Kossus, armed with swords and spears, going about in couples, hunting for slaves. If asked what they are doing, they answer without hesitation that they are waiting to try and catch somebody, and they hold up the roll of braided cord, which they carry to bind their captive, as a proof that they are not common agriculturists, but *bonâ fide* slave-hunters. These men, using the frontier of the colony as a base, kidnap

Timmanees living over the border, carry them across British territory, where their friends or fellow-countrymen dare not follow in pursuit, and sell them to chiefs in the Sherbro country. Some are, it is said, sold to the Mohammedan rice-growers dwelling on the banks of the great rivers between Sierra Leone and the Gambia, where a system of slavery is supposed to prevail similar to that which formerly existed in the British colonies, the slaves being daily driven out to work in the rice-fields, under overseers. I have my doubts as to the truth of this latter, and also of the current belief that the labour is so distressing that such slaves rarely live longer than three years.

It was off Tamara Island that, in 1813, was fought the most sanguinary single-ship engagement of the age, between the British 38-gun frigate *Amelia* and the French 40-gun frigate *Aréthuse*. On the 27th of January in that year the two French frigates *Rubis* and *Aréthuse* arrived off the Isles de Los, where the British gun-brig *Daring* was cruising. The commander of the latter, mistaking them for English ships, allowed them to approach so close that it was impossible for him to extricate his vessel, which, however, to save from falling into the enemy's hands, he ran ashore at Tamara and burned. Proceeding then by boats to the mainland, he and his crew

hastened to Sierra Leone, where the *Amelia* was lying, to report the arrival of the French force.

The crew of the British frigate, which had been some time on the station, were much debilitated from the effects of the climate; however, on the morning of the 3rd of February, she made sail for the Isles de Los, but, owing to head winds and calms, did not arrive there till the morning of the 6th. The French ships were observed at anchor off the north end of Tamara; the *Aréthuse* considerably north of the *Rubis*, which appeared to Captain Irby to be unloading a Portuguese prize, but which really was in a sinking condition, she having, on the 4th, struck on one of the coral reefs in the neighbourhood of the islands, and sustained very serious injury. On observing the British frigate the *Aréthuse* weighed and made sail, but owing to the light winds the day passed without either vessel being able to get within range of the other. At daybreak on the 7th the *Amelia* discovered the *Aréthuse* about eight miles distant to the south-east, but a dead calm kept both vessels stationary. About noon a light breeze sprung up, and Captain Irby made sail, hoping to draw the *Aréthuse* away from the *Rubis*, of whose condition he was, of course, ignorant, so that he might, if possible, engage the enemy in detail. About five p.m. the wind began to fail, and Captain Irby endeavoured to close. It was

not until nearly eight p.m., however, that the action commenced, when, it being a bright moonlight night, with the sea as calm as a millpond, the *Amelia* arrived within pistol-shot of the *Aréthuse*. The latter at once opened fire, which was hotly returned from the British frigate, until, after three broadsides had been exchanged, the *Amelia*, having her rigging damaged, fell on board the enemy. The French immediately commenced a heavy fire of musketry from their tops and mast-heads, and threw several hand grenades upon the *Amelia's* decks, hoping to be able to board in the confusion; but the British Marines kept up so steady a fire, that boarding was impossible, and the *Aréthuse* dropped clear.

About nine o'clock the *Amelia* again got her head towards the *Aréthuse*, but in attempting to cross her again fell on board of her, and the two ships now swung close alongside, the muzzles of their guns almost touching. A scene of mutual slaughter ensued. The two crews snatched the sponges out of each other's hands through the portholes, and cut at one another with their cutlasses. The British endeavoured to lash the two frigates together, but were unable, through the heavy fire of musketry kept up by the enemy, which fire soon nearly cleared the *Amelia's* quarter-deck of both officers and men. The first and second lieutenants and a lieutenant of Marines wer

shot down; Captain Irby was so severely wounded as to be obliged to leave the deck in charge of the third lieutenant, who was almost immediately killed at his post, and the sailing-master finally took command.

The mutual concussion of the guns at length forced the frigates apart, and in the calm state of the weather, they gradually receded from each other, exchanging broadsides till they were out of range. The *Amelia* was much damaged, and had lost forty-six killed and ninety-four wounded (five mortally) out of her crew of three hundred and forty-nine. The *Aréthuse* lost thirty-one killed (eleven being officers) and seventy-four wounded out of a crew of three hundred and forty. At daylight next morning the *Amelia* made sail for Madeira, and the *Aréthuse* stood back to the Isles de Los.

The *Rubis* sank off Tamara from the injuries she had received in striking; and to this day relics in the shape of ringbolts, buttons, buckles, and brass plates are frequently brought up from the wreck through becoming entangled in the hooks and lines of native fishermen.

CHAPTER V.

ST. VINCENT.

Intelligent Port Officials—A Collision—Porto Grande—A Game of Billiards—A Fandango—A Nice Quiet Night—Reasonable Hotel Charges—Famine—The Cape Verde Islands—Derelicts.

TOWARDS the close of the year of grace 1873, I found myself on board a hired transport, bound, with a liberal cargo of army surgeons, for the Gold Coast. Three days out from Madeira we sighted San Antonio, one of the Cape Verde Islands, and, about four hours later, passing a conical rock, 273 feet high, known as Bird Island, and which at a distance looks exactly like a ship at anchor, we dropped anchor in Porto Grande, the principal port of St. Vincent. While we were looking at the straggling street of low, white houses following the curve of the bay, and the cindery-looking hills and barren mountains behind it, the pratique boat, flying the Portuguese flag, and containing two unclean half-castes, who represented the port-officers, came alongside. They went through the

usual performance, pretended to examine the ship's papers, made a few notes, and then, to our intense disgust, told the captain to hoist the yellow flag, and that we were quarantined. Now we were going to coal here, an operation which would occupy at least a couple of days ; and, as we did not want to lie at anchor all that time, looking at a barren volcanic island and longing to stretch our legs on shore, without being able to satisfy that longing, we induced the captain to remonstrate with these officials. He stepped on to the ladder, and said :

“ Here, I say, you Porty-goos. There ain't no call for you to quarantine this here ship. Them papers show that we come from Madeira, and there's no sickness aboard.”

The health officer replied :

“ It would appear from ze papers that you are going to ze Gold Coast.”

“ Yes, that's so.”

“ Well, ze Gold Coast is a vare unhealthy place.”

“ What's that got to do with it? We ain't come from there ; we're a-going there.”

“ Senhor, we are well acquaint with our duty ; we cannot permit ze contagion to be introduce. Good morning.”

As they went away, the captain permanently assigned them to a certain sultry locality ; and we all

felt how exceedingly satisfactory it was for England to have to depend upon islands in the possession of such idiots as these for coaling stations.

All that afternoon and evening we walked restlessly up and down the deck, looking at the sea, the sky, the inhospitable shore, and the neighbouring island of San Antonio, which quite land-locks the harbour of Porto Grande, and wondering what on earth could have been the matter with Nature, when she designed such an animal as a Portuguese. Next morning we did not feel any more resigned; and we positively hated the luckier people who were going ashore from the whalers lying in the harbour, and whose captains, wiser in their generation than ours, had, as we afterwards learned, primed the health officers with brandy; but our deliverance was close at hand.

An English barque, the *Walsgriff*, of Scarborough, that was lying between us and the shore, got under weigh, and drifted slowly down towards us on her way out to sea. The current carried her on to us, and we soon saw that a collision was inevitable. As the barque was barely moving through the water, I thought there would not be much damage done, and stood quite close to the bulwark to look on. She glided up quite gently, and then her bow struck us amidships with a shock that caused our vessel to heel over violently. Then she bumped away towards the

stern, smashing in the iron plating of the side, opening up a row of cabins, and twisting the solid iron davits like wire; while her bowsprit raked away a deck-house, and made matchwood of a boat. Then she drifted round our stern, carrying away the taffrail and a few odds and ends, and went off quietly on her voyage.

When the excitement had subsided, and we had satisfied ourselves that none of the jars of sulphuric acid which were on deck had been broken, and there was no immediate danger of a conflagration, we began to realise the full horrors of the situation. What with the repairs, Board of Survey, and one thing and another, we should most probably be detained a week, and, unless prompt measures were taken, we should be kicking our heels all that time on board. Then the army surgeons came to the front, and drew up a lengthy protest, addressed to the long-suffering British consul, who lived in a house on a spur of the mountains, with a charming view of hill-side covered with boulders in front, and more slope dotted with rocks behind. This missive was handed with a pair of tongs to a half-caste who had been keeping his eye on us from a boat lying near the ship, duly fumigated by him and forwarded to its destination, and in an hour we were informed that we were prisoners no longer.

In five minutes the ship was emptied of all but the crew, and we were pulled ashore. We landed amidst a throng of brown and yellow half-caste Portuguese ladies, who greeted us as familiarly and affectionately as if we had been old and valued friends, and wandered about the town, in which there was nothing worth seeing, until we were tired. Besides a wretched church, two so-called hotels, and a few stores, Porto Grande consists of nothing but a couple of hundred negro hovels, built of loose stones. There are, perhaps, six or seven white men in the place, all the remaining inhabitants having more or less negro blood in their veins. The island is wretchedly poor, and the inhabitants live almost entirely upon the profits they make by selling fresh provisions to the whaling ships; which, on account of the safeness of the harbour, and the smallness of the harbour dues, frequent Porto Grande in large numbers. All the provisions thus sold are obtained from San Antonio, for St. Vincent produces nothing but the orchilla weed, a gray lichen-like plant which grows in the crevices of the rocks, and is used for making a purple dye; while the sale of this is monopolised by the Portuguese Government. In addition to a scarcity of food St. Vincent also suffers from a scanty water supply. Behind the town of Porto Grande, a few wells are sunk through a soft volcanic rock, and,

the supply being limited, are carefully enclosed with whitewashed stone walls, and locked up. Inside these enclosures the few trees of which the island boasts are to be found.

Besides the Governor and two or three white officials, the establishment of the island consists of half-a-dozen black policemen, attired in a grotesque uniform. As for a military force, all the able-bodied men are enrolled in a corps which is denominated the National Guard; and which is evidently intended only for the repression of street riots, since its members are armed with no weapons more formidable than bludgeons. The children run about the streets in a state of nudity, while the adults of both sexes are only half clad; and this scantiness of clothing must not be attributed to the heat of the climate, for the Portuguese negro is just as fond of fine clothes as is the English, but to the poverty of the inhabitants. Taken as a whole it is, perhaps, the most wretched and immoral town that I have ever seen; but what can be expected of a colony which is rated at such a low value, that the salary of the Governor is only four shillings and sixpence a day?

Having observed all the attractions of this delightful town we went to an hotel, which rejoiced in the comprehensive title of "Hotel Brasiliero, Inghilterra, Americano, Español y Francesca;" while,

over the door, a large notice board presented the following polyglot legend to our admiring eyes: *Ici on parl Frances. Man spreucht Deutsch. Man spiks Ingleesh. Aqui se habla Español. Sabe American."*

Having ordered dinner at this place for the whole party, the captain of our ship persuaded me to go and play billiards with him. The billiard table was in a long, narrow, dilapidated room on the ground floor of a building overlooking the bay; and was called a table by courtesy only, for it was really much more like a military model of broken country for the study of minor tactics. A collection of broom-handles, locally denominated cues, graced a rickety rack at one end of the room; and a strip or two of mahogany, dangling from a nail, with here and there the mangled remains of a figure, denoted what had once been a marking board. The half-caste who introduced us to this miserable wreck, told us to call out if we should want anything, and then disappeared. The balls were about the size of old twenty-four-pound shot, and were anything but spherical, but we mechanically put them on the table, and the game began. With my very first stroke I raked up the bed of a ravine, and destroyed a lake of dried wax at its head; the captain made a bold attempt, and the broom-handle, glancing from

the precipitous scarp of a bluff, shot out of his hands. After about ten minutes' play the features of the country were entirely changed, but we had not succeeded in scoring anything. The half-caste looked in, and said :

“You find ze table difficult ?”

“It is rather,” I replied.

“Ah ! zis is not de common table. Even ze best players find zis table not easy.” And he went out again.

After about twenty minutes we put on our coats and started to go out. The half-caste immediately skipped out of a passage and demanded payment. We asked how much he charged per game, and he replied that he did not let out the table by the game, but by the hour. I could quite understand that, because no one could ever finish a game on that table, so we paid him and went back to the hotel.

The dinner would have been tolerable had there been more variety in the viands, which consisted of cat-fish and melons, cooked in a number of ways. We got through it without accident—except that a mulatto waiter considered himself grossly insulted by being called Sambo instead of José—and were sitting round the table, smoking rolled cabbage-leaves, which the ingenious Portuguese manufacture into a semblance of tobacco, when the landlord

bowed himself into the room, and, with many obeisances, announced that a fandango was about to be held in a room below, to which, if it would be agreeable to any of his honoured guests, he would be happy to escort them.

We were ushered into an apartment so full of smoke that at first we could not see distinctly; but, as our eyes became accustomed to the atmosphere, we discovered a large room with glass doors opening into the street, and a crowd of coloured ladies and gentlemen smoking cigarettes. On one side was a table covered with dirty glasses, and bottles of rum, hollands, and *aguardiente*; and, next to the table, was the orchestra, which consisted of a guitar, a violin, and a concertina. They were just going to commence, and I turned my attention to the dancers. The ladies were variously attired; some in dresses of gay-coloured cotton print, with bright handkerchiefs tied round their heads; and some in more costly raiment, with long trains. Some wore shoes and stockings, and some did not; of the latter, two or three were attired in the short muslin skirts usually only seen in England in a ballet, and with which their brown legs and arms formed a contrast which I recommend to the notice of any enterprising theatrical manager. With the gentlemen, coats did not appear to be necessary; nor, apparently, was it

in accordance with island etiquette to remove the hat.

The opening quadrille was followed by a waltz ; and, after a short time, some of the surgeons were sufficiently acclimatised to join in it. As for me, as I do not dance, I entered into conversation with a little black-eyed half-caste, who talked volubly for ten minutes without uttering a single word that I recognised, except *caramba*. Everything was thus going on very nicely, when a furious and semi-intoxicated man suddenly rushed in at the door, and laid violent hands upon a fascinating creature who was dancing with a little doctor. We did not know what was the matter, but he appeared to want to drag her out of the room, and she appeared bent on remaining, clinging to the doctor, and calling upon him to protect her. A collision between these two doughty heroes seemed unavoidable, and I began to fear we should have some serious trouble, when the obsequious landlord craftily intervened with a tumbler of raw spirit, and led the infuriated half-caste to the table. Harmony was thus restored, and the fandango recommenced. By this time, however, the room was very hot, and the noise tremendous ; the stamping and shouts of the dancers, the strumming of the guitar, the shriek of the violin, and the asthmatic wheeze of the concertina, were almost

deafening ; while the odour of the bad tobacco, and the smell of musk, or some such pungent scent, with which all the *senoras* and *senoritas* were perfumed, were overpowering, so I went out into the cooler air of the street. My bed-room being on the ground floor, next to the room in which the dancing was going on, it was useless for me to endeavour to go to sleep, so I went for a stroll along the beach. When I returned, the entertainment was over, and the hotel plunged in darkness.

My bed-room consisted of a vast Sahara of sandy floor, having for oases a four-post bedstead and a chest of drawers. The former was adorned with black leather hangings, which made it look like a funeral-car ; and the latter suffered from some malformation, which caused it to hold up one leg spasmodically in mid air. A smell of decay pervaded the atmosphere, so I opened the window to let in the cool sea breeze, put out the lamp, and jumped into bed. I was up again in a second, for the mattress appeared to be full of pins ; but, on examination, it proved to be only stuffed with wood shavings, and I spread all the coverlets over it, and tried to go to sleep. In about five minutes I awoke with a start, dreaming that I was falling over a precipice, and found my feet hanging over the foot of the bed. The bedstead was an inclined plane, and I had slipped

down. I rectified this by putting the bolster under the foot of the mattrass, and tried once more to woo slumber.

I was just going off when something tickled my left ankle violently ; I reached down my hand, and the irritation seized my calf. I lighted the lamp and found that a detachment of that pet domestic live stock, which most Portuguese carry about with them, was advancing up my leg. An apparently endless column was streaming down a bed-post to hurry to the fray ; and I could almost hear the roar of the multitude as they congratulated themselves upon having a full-blooded Englishman for supper. Some light cavalry, who were skipping about in the van, soon carried back the intelligence to the main body that the camping-ground of the enemy, though still warm, was empty ; some staff-officers climbed on to the backs of their orderlies to take a good look round, and then clouds of skirmishers were despatched in every direction to get touch of the foe once more. While I was engaged with the first party that had effected a lodgment upon the superior slope of my skin, another division of the army threw themselves upon my right leg, and carried my knee. It was no time for half-measures, so I tore off my sleeping clothes, and a horrible hand-to-hand conflict to the death ensued.

While I was thus occupied I heard a crash of

glass ; and, looking up, observed a half-caste gentleman coming in at my window. Snatching the coverlet from the bed, and enveloping myself in its ample folds, I asked him what he wanted.

He replied : “Vare is my wife ?”

I then saw that it was the same individual who had made a disturbance in the dancing-room, if anything, now more intoxicated than before ; and I endeavoured to explain to him that I knew nothing of his wife, and that he must go away. Instead of taking any notice of my explanation, he advanced to my bed, fell on his knees beside it, raised the hangings, and looked underneath. Finding nothing there that he wanted, he got up once more, shook me cordially by the hand, bowed in courteous adieu, and then went out again by the window.

I was thinking what a nice wife this man must have had, when I heard a noise overhead, as of a battering-ram being run against a door ; and then a voice, which I recognised as the personal property of a burly doctor, shouting that he would open the door. Then I heard the pit-pat of slippered feet traversing the room, the sound of an opening door, a loud exclamation, and then a prolonged banging and crashing as if all the furniture in the room had suddenly taken to dancing Sir Roger de Coverley. I thought perhaps there might be something the matter, and was going

up to inquire, when a dark object shot past my window and fell into the street. I looked out to see what it was, and saw my half-caste friend picking himself up. Then something else flew across the street and jingled on the stones, and a dark object soared up into the air and fell with a dull sound. These were a knife and a hat, which the half-caste had apparently, in the hurry of his departure, left behind. The latter came and stood under the upstairs window, and tenderly caressing with one hand that portion of the body which, in hasty removals from premises, usually comes in contact with the propelling power, he raised his clenched fist, shook it vindictively at some one overhead, and shrieked forth a recitative of high-souled and imaginative blasphemy. This beautiful flow of language was suddenly checked by a volume of cold water which fell upon the poet's head; and, appalled by the new and terrible blood-chilling shock, he uttered a wild scream, and fled up the street, gesticulating like a madman.

During breakfast next morning the burly doctor was full of his combat with the midnight assassin, who, by some strange mistake, perhaps the darkness of the scene of the conflict, had now become doubled; and as he described the sanguinary struggle, the horrified audience hung on his lips with bated breath. I did not take upon myself the duty of correcting his

little error as to the number of his assailants, for I did not consider it of sufficient importance.

The breakfast consisted of the fragments of the dinner of the previous evening. Now melons and cat-fish are very nice things indeed, but even the most select dishes pall upon the jaded appetite if repeated too persistently, so I called for some boiled eggs. A messenger was at once despatched to scour the town for these unusual luxuries, and in the course of some twenty minutes the waiter reappeared with two. I removed the top of one, and a young bird looked up at me with an expression of patient suffering. I tried the second, with the same result; so calling the waiter, and pointing out to him that I had asked for eggs and not for chickens, I made a light and airy breakfast upon the rind of a melon, which was all that the hungry surgeons had left.

While the table was being cleared we asked for our bills, and the smiling and obsequious landlord appeared with a little pile of folded papers, one of which he deposited, with a bow and a grimace, before each of us. I did not look at mine at once, but I noticed that a dead silence ensued, and, looking up, saw an array of pale and anxious faces, where but a moment before had been nothing but smiles and contentment. I opened my bill. The sum total was expressed in *reis*, a small coin of the value of three-

fifths of a farthing, and in which these people like to add up their wealth, so as to make the amount seem larger : reduced to dollars it was as follows :

Dinner	...	...	...	...	\$2
Bed	...	...	...	...	1
Breakfast	...	...	...	...	1
Cigars	...	...	...	...	1
Wine	...	...	...	...	4
Attendance and Linen	...	...	...	...	1
					<hr/>
					\$10
					<hr/>

No wonder that misery was depicted upon the faces of the unhappy surgeons, whose bills were fac-similes of mine.

We all declared that we would not submit to such extortion ; but the landlord only smiled blandly, and replied that he had merely made his usual charges ; and when I ventured to make a remark, he shrugged his shoulders, spread out the palms of his hands, and said that he really had not expected to hear me offer any objection, since I had not even been charged for the fowls which I had had for breakfast, and to which I had called the waiter's attention. There was no help for it, we had fallen into the clutches of this harpy, and it was partly our own fault in not having first asked him what his charges were. So we paid him sorrowfully and left the hotel, vowing that we would never again set foot in it, even if we remained

in the island till doomsday. May our fate be a warning to all others !

There is one little green patch of cultivation in the cindery island of St. Vincent, situated in a valley a mile or two from Porto Grande, and known as the "Melon Beds." I went out to see it, for visitors are generally taken to look at this "lion," and I saw as many as forty melons growing at once. The guide said that it was not the proper time of year for them, and that in the season there were sometimes as many as two hundred, but that, of course, was only a Portuguese figure of speech. Besides consisting in a great measure of nothing but barren rock, the island, in common with the others of the group, frequently suffers from long-continued drought, so that the little arable land that does exist is so burnt up that nothing will grow. The rainfall is always exceedingly small, and famines are not uncommon. In 1832, the inhabitants of nearly all the islands were reduced to the verge of starvation, through the failure of their crops from drought; and, although cargoes of food were sent gratuitously for months from the United States of America, more than eleven thousand persons died of hunger. Portugal, the parsimonious, did nothing to alleviate the sufferings of the inhabitants of her own colonies, beyond sending two or three ships with cargoes of

provisions, to be sold at extravagant prices, cruelly proportionate to the urgent needs of the people, and utterly out of the reach of the poorer classes. But generosity, or even humanity, is not to be expected from the average Portuguese, with whom the old proverb, "Strip a Spaniard of all his good qualities, and you have a Portuguese," still holds good. In England, this famine did not even appear to be heard of.

The Cape Verde Islands are said to have been known to the ancients under the title of the Gorgades, but they were not discovered in modern times till the year 1446, when Antonio Nolli, a Genoese in the service of Prince Henry of Portugal, chanced upon them. They were then most probably uninhabited; for, though there is a tradition to the effect that negroes were found in Santiago when it was first discovered, the Portuguese discoverers make no mention of any inhabitants. The group is named after Cape Verde, the most westerly promontory of Africa, and from which the islands are about three hundred and twenty miles distant. The cape is said by some authorities to have been so named by the Portuguese explorers, on account of the quantity of *sargasso*, or gulf-weed, which they there found; and, by others, on account of the verdure of the cape itself. The latter appears the more probable; for,

though Cape Verde appears rather brown than green to a person whose last glimpse of land has been the Canary Islands, or the thickly forested shores of Sierra Leone or the Gambia, yet, to the Portuguese discoverers, who had been creeping in their caravels for days along the sandy coasts of Morocco and Senegambia, its parched grass must have been quite a relief; and, after the rainy season, there is a greenish hue about the two hills which are called the "Paps" of the Cape. There are also a few baobab trees there growing, but they cannot boast of much foliage, and only appear brown from the sea.

The principal of the Cape Verde Islands, which lie almost in a semicircle, are St. Vincent, San Antonio, S. Luzia, S. Nicolao, Isle de Sal, Boavista, Mayo, Santiago, Fogo, and Brava; and there are, besides, the small islets of Rombo, Razo, Branco, and S. Vialente. Santiago is the seat of government, but Fogo is, perhaps, the one best known to Europeans, on account of its volcano, 9157 feet above the level of the sea. Mayo used to be much frequented by English shipping for salt, which was obtained from the sea-water by evaporation in a species of salt-pan, formed by a sand-bank which runs along the coast for three or four miles. A hundred years ago, the number of English vessels engaged in gathering the salt was so considerable

that a man-of-war usually lay off Mayo for their protection; but, in the present day, few British ships, except whalers, resort to the islands, and they usually go to Porto Grande in St. Vincent, or to Porto Praya in Santiago.

The Cape Verdes are subject to sudden storms, similar to the tornadoes which sweep along the West African coast; and, as all communication between the islands is by open boat, it is not an uncommon occurrence for a boat to be swept away miles out to sea, and perhaps never heard of again. In the spring of 1877, when proceeding from Cape Coast Castle to Sierra Leone in the troopship *Simoon*, we picked up, about one hundred miles from the latter place, a whale boat, containing two Americans who had been driven out from the Cape Verde Islands, then about seven hundred miles distant, by a storm. These men had, fourteen days before they fell in with us, deserted from the *Ellen West*, whaler, at Brava, and attempted to run over by night to Fogo, which was some nine miles distant. In the middle of the passage a tornado struck them, carrying them far out into the ocean; and, at daybreak, the island not being in sight, they tried to make for the African coast, it being impossible for them to hit off the islands again without compass or chart. Fortunately, when leaving their ship, they had put four men's

dinner meals in their boats, and on this they had subsisted for a few days; but, for the last ten days, they had, with the single exception of a dolphin which they had caught, been altogether without food. They were mere famished skeletons when taken on board, and were so weak that one fell into the sea in trying to climb up our ladder, while the other could only lie still on his back, and point feebly to his mouth. The nights had been rainy, and they had been able to catch water in their clothing, otherwise they must have perished.

Government appointments in the Cape Verde Islands are not in much demand in official circles in Portugal. In fact, if one may believe all one hears, such appointments are reserved for civil and military officers, who have made themselves politically obnoxious to the Government. They are given a step in rank, and then sent off in a species of semi-honourable exile to these dreary islands. Few of them are ever permitted to return to their native country; and they live and die in the wretched capitals of these sun-scorched isles, often without having a single European neighbour with whom they can exchange ideas.

CHAPTER VI.

SAN ANTONIO.

The Sail Across—My Fellow Passenger—Strange Fishing—Janella—San Paolo—A Mountain Road—A Timid Bishop—Ribeira Grande—Wine Growers—Motley Troops—The Stick—Mutinies—Santa Cruz—The Biter Bit—Fresh Extortion—A Terra Incognita—Mineral Wealth.

I HAD soon exhausted the sights of St. Vincent, and the vulture-like rapacity of the inhabitants of Porto Grande having given me a dislike to that town, I determined, if possible, to run over to the wooded and fertile island of San Antonio, about fifteen miles distant, and pass a day or two there. By consulting a mulatto who was superintending the coaling of our crippled vessel, I learned that a boat, which had brought over provisions from that island, would return thither next morning soon after daybreak; and I at once engaged a passage in it for two dollars, the boatman promising to bring me back whenever I wished for the same sum; which, I may remark, is

only about eight times the amount usually charged to islanders.

Next morning, soon after six o'clock, the boat pulled alongside our vessel, for I had given up sleeping on shore after the experience of my first night, and I was preparing to go down to it when I observed a bird of ill-omen sitting in the stern, apparently as a passenger. I had no difficulty in seeing at once that he was a missionary, and my experience of such gentry had been so unfortunate that I half thought of giving up my intended journey; but on second thoughts, thinking he might be better than the representatives of his trade that I had met in West Africa, I decided to go on. I stepped into the boat, and sat down on a piece of sacking near the missionary, whose face somehow seemed to be familiar to me. Our men pushed off, and we dropped down with the tide towards Bird Island, at the entrance of the harbour. Our crew consisted of four half-castes, who, when we were clear of the land, hoisted a kind of lug-sail; and with a fresh breeze behind us, but the current against us, we stood over towards the dark mass of San Antonio.

The sea being rather choppy outside, and our boat taking in more water than was pleasant, my fellow-passenger, who till then had sat in solemn

silence, asked me rather anxiously if I thought there was any danger. Strange to say, his voice seemed to me as familiar as his face, and, after thinking the matter over for a little time, I was able to remember all about him. The last time that I had seen my gentleman he had been attired in a suit of livery, and he had been in the habit of waiting at table and opening the doors of a relative's house to me in London, from which he disappeared suddenly, in consequence, I was given to understand, of a difficulty not altogether unconnected with silver spoons. Without thinking of what I was about, I at once said :

“ I think I have seen you before.”

Knowing he was recognised, he replied slowly and unctuously :

“ In my former carnal state of life, when I was receiving the wages of sin from brands who will not be snatched from the burning, I have often admitted you to scenes of ungodliness and wine-bibbing.”

This required thought. Why should a domestic servant's wages be described as “ the wages of sin,” my respectable, middle-aged female relative as “ a brand who would not be snatched from the burning,” and a quiet dinner party as “ a scene of ungodliness and wine-bibbing ” ? It was not polite, to say the least of it ; but then politeness is not to be expected

from this class of missionary. His tongue being now unloosed he held forth upon the error of his former ways, informed me that he was a naturalised citizen of the United States of America, and that he had a call from on high to open the eyes of Papists to a sense of their horrible sin.

This kind of thing went on till nearly noon, when, being by that time close to San Antonio and the wind having dropped, our crew took to their oars, and our steersman made for a small village, which lay at the entrance of a ravine with steep and rocky sides, and which I learned was named Janella. Our proper destination was San Paolo, a village a little further on, but the crew said they would land at Janella and go on to the former village when the tide turned; for the current between St. Vincent and San Antonio is tidal, a fact which it seems was not generally known to hydrographers until the exploring voyage of H.M.S. *Challenger*.

As we neared the shore I saw several people, both men and women, floating about on the tops of the waves, and engaged in fishing. Every now and then one or another of them would pull up a fish, which was at once taken off the hook, and secured in a cleft stick, or in a small basket hung between the shoulders. This curious manner of fishing necessitated inquiries, and the spokesman of the crew said that the people

who live on the sea-shore in this island are such expert swimmers, that they paddle and float about on the waves thus for hours at a time. Being asked if there were many sharks hereabouts, he replied that there were a few, but that the people cared for them so little that they did not even carry a knife or a sharpened stick for defence; and, if one came near, they simply turned on their backs and splashed and kicked till he was frightened away. This may be so, but I am not personally acquainted with any variety of shark that is so easily alarmed.

Janella was a pretty little place embowered in trees, and was a pleasing change from the barren St. Vincent. As the steep sides of the ravine gradually approached each other behind the village, the gorge seemed to be filled up with banana, orange, and cocoa-nut trees; while, where it widened near the sea, rose terrace-garden over terrace-garden of sugar-cane, corn, and vines, and in the centre the little Rio Janella rippled and babbled over the shelves of rock on its way to the sea. Fruit and vegetables were here to be had in abundance, and at the house of a venerable negro lady, who had some strapping black-eyed daughters not much burdened with apparel, I managed to secure a luncheon of fresh fish and fried plantains; to which, as he had not made any arrangements for himself, I was obliged to ask the ex-flunkey

missionary. Before sitting down he commenced a lengthy exhortation upon the evils of Roman Catholicism, as a grace, but, seeing that I was falling to without any further ceremony, and that the good things were rapidly disappearing, he suddenly cut it short, and handled his knife and fork like a Japanese juggler.

There were no white residents in the village; from their colour the inhabitants did not seem to be much contaminated by any Portuguese strain of blood, and were, consequently, good-humoured, hospitable, and fairly honest people. About five in the afternoon we re-embarked in our boat, carrying with us the good wishes of all the Janellites, who crowded down on the beach to see us depart, and reached Paolo, which was about seven miles distant, shortly before dark. There was no hotel in the place, I was glad to learn, and I engaged a night's lodging in a decently-built house in the upper part of the town. As for the missionary, he had disappeared directly after landing, and I hoped I had seen the last of him.

At Paolo a stranger can generally obtain a quadruped of some description, either horse, mule, or ass, to carry him to Ribeira Grande, the capital of the island; a journey which, though tiring and, in a measure, dangerous, is well worth undertaking on

account of the beauty of the mountain scenery through which the road passes. I made my arrangements over-night, and, having engaged the services of a guide and a mule, started for Ribeira Grande, which lies on the north-western side of the island, soon after daybreak next morning. San Paolo is the place of residence of the few so-called Portuguese families in the island, and their houses, surrounded by gardens, plantations, and vineyards, covered the nearer slopes of the hills. Before we were clear of the town my guide was overtaken and stopped by a ragged youth with a small donkey; some conversation ensued, and on my inquiring the cause of the delay I learned that another Englishman was going to Ribeira Grande, and that my guide was going to call for him. Knowing that an Englishman, or indeed any European, was an exceedingly *rara avis in terris* in this island, I wondered what kind of person my companion for the journey would be.

We turned aside, and passing up a narrow lane between vineyards, and enclosed by walls of loose stones, we stopped before a house of rather pretentious appearance, which was surrounded by a luxuriant growth of oranges, bananas, olives, acacias, and laurels. This was the residence of a certain Senhor Manuel, who, I was informed, was one of the leading men of the place; and, while I was looking about,

I was surprised to see my acquaintance the missionary, leaving the house and coming towards us. He then was the other "Englishman" who was going to Ribeira Grande. It appeared that he had been enjoying the hospitality of this half-bred Portuguese grandee, with whom he had, somewhat strangely, considering his mission in the island, scraped an acquaintance; and he had disappeared so mysteriously on landing at Paolo, for fear I should want to accompany him, and perhaps spoil his comfortable quarters by revealing something of his antecedents. He got astride of the little donkey, and after settling down in his seat with some difficulty and much adjustment of stirrups, we finally started.

We ascended by a narrow pathway cut out with incredible labour from the precipitous face of a cliff, which in many places overhung the road, so that the latter was cut out like a gallery ten or eleven feet in height. The scenery was wild and barren; immense rocks which had fallen from above were piled up in chaotic confusion, and except where an occasional landslip afforded a rothold to a few shrubs, no vegetation was to be seen but the lichen-like orchilla clinging to the bare rocks, and a few ferns and grasses springing from their interstices and crevices. Wherever the general elevation of the road was broken by a dip in the ground, in some instances

a bold ravine and in others the bed of a mountain torrent, the road was continued across the gap on a causeway built up of loose stones, about four feet broad at the summit, and with nothing on either side to prevent one falling headlong upon the boulders beneath. In this manner also the path was built up along the steeply-sloping sides of the mountain spurs round which we had to wind; and both on these and on the causeways the slipping of a single loose stone might be fatal, and precipitate one down a height which, in one or two places, was at least 2,000 feet.

At the turning-point of the road before the descent commences, the bridle-path is cut midway along the face of a cliff about 1,000 feet high; the wall-like mountain rising abruptly 500 feet above the head on the one hand, and falling perpendicularly the same distance to the beach on the other. This, the most dangerous portion of the road, is protected on the outer edge by a low wall of loose stones; but the protection of this barrier, although it gives confidence to the rider, is more apparent than real; for the stumble of a horse or the kick of a vicious mule would cause the downfall of several feet of the flimsy structure. Casualties on these mountain roads, even among the sure-footed natives, are not

by any means uncommon, as the numerous wooden crosses that we passed on our way testified; and a proverb of the Cape Verde Islands says that, at San Antonio, to be dashed to pieces on the rocks is a natural death. The descent towards Ribeira Grande was very bad, the road being in some places so steep that the animals slid down on their haunches, and I can never forget the agonised expression of the missionary's face as his donkey slid rapidly down on an inclined rock towards a bend in the road which overhung a cliff, and he vainly strove to extricate his feet from the stirrups and throw himself off. At the distance of about a mile from Ribeira Grande the path quits the mountains, and follows the sinuosities of the sandy beach until the town is reached.

The road from San Paolo is said to have been made at the instance of one of the former bishops of Santiago, who, considering it his duty to visit every portion of his see, once came to San Antonio. He landed at Paolo, and, instead of proceeding to Ribeira Grande by sea, he attempted to reach that place by land, although there was then no path even of the rudest description; and the natives, on the few occasions upon which they found it necessary to cross the mountains, were obliged to ascend and descend the cliffs and broken heights

by means of ropes. When about half the journey had been accomplished, and the bishop had been hauled up a tremendous cliff, his heart failed him at the sight of an equally stupendous one which he would be compelled to descend if he continued in his determination to proceed, and he decided to return. The precipice which now separated him from San Paolo, however, seemed equally terrifying when viewed from above, and he emphatically declined to dangle in mid-air over it again. Being thus unable to advance or recede without risking his valuable neck, he made up his mind to remain where he was. Nothing could shake this determination when once formed; and the mountaineers who had accompanied him left him what food they had with them and went on to Ribeira Grande. The faithful in San Antonio, on learning the awkward predicament in which their spiritual head now was, sent him supplies, clothing, and a tent, which were dragged over the heights by the less timorous peasants, and the ecclesiastical brethren of the bishop at once collected funds and commenced having a road made for his rescue. This was a work which necessarily occupied some years, and before it was completed the timid bishop died; but the inhabitants of San Antonio, finding the road

useful, and more than half of it having already been made, carried on the work on their own account until it was finished.

We reached Ribeira Grande about 11 a.m., and the missionary and I went to the only hotel which the capital of the island boasts, and where we experienced the combined bad fare, exorbitant charges, and discomfort which are typical of Portuguese hostelries in the Cape Verde Islands. The town of Ribeira Grande, which has a population of some 6,000 souls, is poor and dirty, with insignificant houses, or rather hovels, and narrow and tortuous streets. It is situated in a broad valley, watered by a mountain stream, and the country in the vicinity is richly cultivated. The sugar-cane, from which the coarse sugar of the island is manufactured, is principally grown here, but maize-fields and vineyards are also common enough, and the whole breadth of the valley is like a vast garden, rising on terraces at each side till the height is reached at which the earth becomes too sterile to be cultivated profitably. The softness of this valley, with its cultivated plots of varied hues, its groves of plantains, clumps of orange-trees and guava bushes, bounded by the ranges of mountains, glowing purple-red where near and

fading into opal and gray where they recede, is a strange contrast to the savage grandeur of the scenery on the road from San Paolo.

The wine made here, like that of the other islands of the group, is very poor stuff, and vinegary to the taste. It is said that when a wine-grower has a vintage for the first time, it is the custom for him to send invitations to all his acquaintances in the island, asking them to come and taste his wine. They all invariably come, gnawing pieces of salt-fish to create a thirst; and they do this so successfully that, notwithstanding the uninviting character of the beverage, the whole vintage is not unfrequently drunk in the orgie which ensues. When this occurs it must be some consolation to the unfortunate grower to know that his wine was so bad that all his guests must have been very ill after it, and this absurd custom would be quite sufficient to account for a first vintage being always very thin and sour.

Nearly all the inhabitants of Ribeira Grande are people of colour. There are a good many families who like to be considered white, but the "touch of the tar-brush" in them is plain to any one who is accustomed to see people of mixed blood, and almost the only pure whites are some of the Portuguese officials, among them being the

Governor and the Military Commandant. There is a small detachment of troops here, consisting of negro soldiers commanded by white officers. Although badly clothed and worse armed and accoutred, the men seemed made of soldier-like material enough, but their weapons were past absurdity, and to call such troops an armed force is the merest farce. Some of the men I saw had old flint-lock muskets without locks; others carried muskets the barrels of which were bound to the stocks with twine, and two proudly shouldered stocks which boasted of no barrels at all. Either the Portuguese Government must be shamefully swindled by its local officials, and all such have a strong tendency to peculation, or the exchequer of the mother country must be in a most consumptive condition.

The part played by the stick in drill instruction seems strange to English eyes. Whenever an evolution is not performed to the satisfaction of the drill instructor, he thinks nothing of rushing forward with a volley of choice Portuguese oaths, dragging in succession the awkward or inattentive men from the ranks, and applying his stick vigorously to their heads and shoulders in the presence of the whole squad. No negro born and bred in a British colony would stand such treatment for a moment, but these

men seem to take their chastisement as a matter of course, merely trying to avoid the rapid succession of blows, and then rubbing their heads sheepishly and falling in again in their places.

Tradition says that a soldier of the Cape Verde Islands wears nothing but a cocked hat. I did not myself see any attired in so primitive and inexpensive a uniform; but, though all the soldiers I saw at Ribeira Grande were provided with kepis, some had no coats or shirts, their belts being slung over their naked shoulders, and none had any boots. The missionary said he had seen men on parade without trowsers, and, as usual, attributed this horrible scandal to the incubus of the Papacy, but I saw nothing so shocking myself. The troops are not often paid, but they are patient and long-suffering, and, it is said, eke out an existence by plundering the gardens and plantations at night, and sometimes by combining the profession of house-breaker with that of soldier. After a garrison has been some two or three years without receiving any pay it generally mutinies, considering that it has exhibited sufficient patience; and, if the local Government does not compromise the matter or come to terms, the Governor and his officers, who have probably robbed the men of their pay, have to seek a refuge in another island, till a Portuguese war-

vessel comes to their assistance. One or two of the ringleaders are then hanged, the rest of the mutineers are told that through their misconduct they have now forfeited any arrears of pay that might have been due to them, and they return to their duty, and all goes on well till the next military strike takes place. The manner in which Portuguese colonies are managed may well excite the derision of the whole civilised world; but there is a certain method in their madness, and these periodical mutinies in the Cape Verdes, since they furnish the Government with a pretext for withholding the pay of the negro troops, are economical.

At Ribeira Grande I learned that Santa Cruz, the principal seaport of the island, was only three miles distant, and as I should have to return to San Paolo early next morning, and wanted to see as much as possible of this little-known island, I went on to it about four in the afternoon. Directly the valley of Ribeira Grande was lost sight of, all vegetation seemed to come to an end, and the road led over a barren, rocky, and mountainous tract which produced nothing. The village of Santa Cruz is situated on Ponto do Sol, or North Point, a low, sandy cape extending from the lofty cliffs which here frínge the shore. With the exception of a church, a custom-house, and three stores, there are

no houses, properly so called, in Santa Cruz, but there are numerous huts, built of stones uncemented together with lime or mud, and thatched with palm-branches. These are inhabited by fishermen, for fishing is the chief industry of this "seaport;" and the sea abounds with fish of all descriptions, while turtle frequent the shores. I doubt if many whalers call in at this port during the course of the year, for water is scarce, and food supplies cannot be obtained at any price, the inhabitants themselves having to obtain everything edible, except fish, from Ribeira Grande, and the post of customs officer here must be almost a sinecure. I was shown at this place a species of pink coral, which I was told was found off the island. It was not of a very good quality, and red coral is much more common. The fishermen find it entangled in their nets, and sell it to the peasant girls to be worn in the shape of ornaments, but beyond this haphazard method of obtaining it there is no coral fishery in these islands.

I got back to the hotel at Ribeira Grande just at dusk, and was changing my clothes after my hot ride, when somebody tapped at my door. In a moment of thoughtlessness I said, "Come in," and a good-looking brown girl, with a tray full of strings of coral, sidled into the room. I said:

“What do you want? Go out. Don't you see I'm not dressed?”

She only replied: “You want buy zis?” and then sat down, with a winning smile, which exhibited her white teeth to the best advantage, upon some of my clothes which were lying on a chair. I said:

“Will you go out, please? I don't want to buy any of your rubbish.”

“No compran, senhor.”

“Will you go out? I want those clothes you are sitting on.”

“No compran, senhor.”

While I was in this painful dilemma, and did not know how to get rid of this intrusive person without violence, I heard the voice of the missionary outside in the passage, and knowing that he would put the worst possible construction upon the presence of this female in my room, I pulled her off the chair and ran her towards the door, which she had left open on coming in. It was, however, too late to put her outside without throwing her into the missionary's arms; so I pushed her behind the door, put my finger to my lips, and transfixed her with a hideous grimace to enforce silence.

The missionary came in and looked around suspiciously, for there was a strong smell of the pungent

scent, musk or whatever it may be, which the coloured people in these islands habitually use; and I could see that he was prepared to work himself up into a state of moral indignation at the smallest provocation, and read me a homily, which, perhaps, I should not have been able to listen to patiently, knowing what I did about him. He sniffed distrustfully, but seeing nothing which would afford the pretext he was seeking, he came to business, which was to invite me to subscribe towards the good work which he had undertaken, and, indirectly of course, furnish him with the means of purchasing the good things of this life for a few days.

I was in the act of explaining that I had scarcely enough money with me to carry me back to St. Vincent, when the woman behind the door uttered an unmistakable cough. The missionary started and looked at me with a lowering brow, while the absurdity of the situation sent all the colour up into my face. With a countenance expressive of a legion of texts, the missionary sighed, shook his head sorrowfully, and turned his eyes up to the roof, and then walking towards the door, pulled it forward and discovered the woman with the coral, who laughed in my face. I thought to myself, "Now I am in for it," when to my surprise the missionary recoiled, while the woman suddenly exclaimed:

“Ah! my nice little mans—you come back?” and tried to impress an amorous kiss upon his pious cheek.

This was too much for me. I never saw the tables turned more completely, and I burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter, while the missionary, without finding a word to say, hurriedly disappeared.

Leaving Ribeira Grande next morning at day-break I reached San Paolo before noon, and sent my guide to tell the boatmen that I wanted to start at once. He presently came back with them, and the spokesman of the crew inquired how much I would pay them for the passage. Now, as I have already said, when I had first engaged a passage over to San Antonio it was on the understanding that I should be taken back to St. Vincent for the same sum, two dollars, so I knew at once what this question meant. It meant fresh extortion on the part of these amiable islanders. They knew that it was absolutely necessary for me to return to Porto Grande that day, otherwise my ship would sail without me; and being masters of the situation they were determined to make the most of my necessity. The argument lasted a long time, but after abating their demands from twenty dollars to ten, and then, finding that I appeared obdurate, and indifferent about catching my vessel, to eight, we finally arrived at

a compromise of five dollars, and I was glad enough to get off so cheaply. The matter was no sooner settled than the boat was launched and we set sail, reaching the harbour of Porto Grande about eight in the evening. Next morning I bade adieu to the Cape Verde Islands.

Less is known of San Antonio than of any of the other islands of equal size in the Cape Verde group, and very little is known of them, with the exception of Santiago, which was visited by Bowdich and by Darwin, both of whom have left a short account of their observations. San Antonio has, as far as I can discover, never been described by any European who may have visited it. The coast-line is of course known to the masters of whaling vessels, and has been surveyed and laid down in Admiralty charts, but the interior of the island is still a *terra incognita*. It is generally supposed to be densely wooded, but though I saw trees, vegetable productions not to be seen in the other islands, they were not in any great numbers, and there was certainly nothing that could be called a wood in the part of the island I saw. The highest point, the Sugar Loaf, is said to be 8,000 feet high, but this is mere conjecture. The natives say that somewhere in the centre of the island there is the crater of an extinct volcano, of such immense depth that the eye cannot fathom it, and from this

sometimes rush out gusts of wind which are so violent as to blow back anything, however heavy, which may be dropped into the abyss. The island is volcanic, and rises generally in basaltic cliffs from the sea without any beach, except where the heights are broken by ravines, valleys, and the beds of mountain torrents.

Lead is said to be found in San Antonio, and other metals are supposed to exist, amongst them gold, though in small quantities only ; but the people are too indolent to open up any mining industry, and the easy acquisition of wealth seems to be no incentive to them. The tradition that gold is to be found in the Cape Verde Islands is one of very old date. In Santiago it is said to be found in a bed of clay, and Bowdich, in his short account of that island, published in 1825, says that an American vessel, trading to Santiago, returned home half laden with the clay in which the gold is found, by way of experiment. It yielded so much metal that the vessel, accompanied by two others, returned for a full cargo ; but the Portuguese Government, learning from this proceeding that the gold existed in paying quantities, forbade any further exportation, although it seems that they never worked or made any use of the clay themselves.

The climate of the Cape Verde Islands is, not-

withstanding the intense heat, wonderfully healthy. The months of August, September, and October are called the wet and unhealthy season, the remainder of the year being the dry season ; but, as I have already said, it frequently happens that in some years there is no wet season at all, and consequently no unhealthy one. A peculiarity of these islands is the reddish haze which so often hangs over them, and which has led some observers to suppose that the climate is damp. It is supposed to be due to the Harmattan, or wind from the Sahara, which carries fine particles of sand with it far out into the ocean.

CHAPTER VII.

GOREE.

How to get there—Motley Inhabitants—French Polish—The Negro World of Fashion—The Citadel—Governor Wall—A Barbarous Sentence—Climate—A Sanguinary Revolution—French Aggression in Western Africa.

THE island of Goree cannot be described as being of great extent. It is only three-quarters of a mile in length, and a quarter of a mile in breadth at the widest point, that is in the middle, from which it gradually tapers down to a point at each extremity. It is in fact a mere rock of black basalt, rising to the height of 300 feet, and sheltering in the bight round the corner of the West African promontory of Cape Verde, from which it is little more than a mile distant. The whole available surface of the rock is, however, covered with buildings of various sorts, fortifications and houses, and it is computed that some 3,000 souls live on the barren islet. It belongs to France; and it would be difficult to find any other European power willing

to lavish life and money on such an inhospitable and useless possession.

There are three lines of steamships by which the traveller in search of a country unknown to tourists may reach Goree; namely, the *Messageries Maritimes*, and two English ones, the vessels of which sail from Liverpool. With the former every one is acquainted; and of the two latter it is difficult to recommend which to travel by, for it is hard to say which is the least uncomfortable. The ships of both are virtually little more than cargo boats, and the passenger is regarded as a useless encumbrance, from whom the uttermost farthing of profit is to be extracted. The food is generally execrable, and the wines always poisonous. When the *vin ordinaire* at six shillings a bottle is all used up, the passenger is restricted as to choice between a brandy of a new and curious kind, which fortunately, in the interests of humanity, is not yet known in England, and highly expensive sparkling gooseberry wine. The officials on these steamers have no sense of humour. I once heard a long-suffering traveller inquire:

“Steward! Is there any champagne left in the ship?”

“No, sir—but we have some lemonade.”

There was no covert sarcasm in that speech; the man merely meant to state a fact.

Goree, as seen from the sea, is not picturesque. All the houses being built of the black basalt of which the island is composed, the town presents rather a sombre appearance, and there are no trees, bushes, or turf to relieve the monotony of colour. On landing, however, one is surprised at the motley crowd which is assembled on the jetty. Here is the turbaned and burnoused Arab, carrying a brass-bound matchlock nearly as long as himself; and the black Mohammedan Mandingo in his loose toga-like robe, covered with leathern-covered amulets, and followed by the slave, who bears the curved scimeter of his master, in a scabbard of stamped and embossed leather, while the satchel purse, containing probably a transcript of the Koran, is slung over his shoulder. There is a sallow and emaciated French Resident, looking after a cargo of ground-nuts; a little chattering artilleryman, whose corps furnishes the garrison of the island; a wiry Zouave-like *Tirailleur Indigène*, from one of the local corps on the mainland; or a tall and stately Jolloff (the only really black race in West Africa), armed with a tufted spear, and wearing his hair twisted into numberless little ringlets, each of the diameter and length of an ordinary lead pencil. Here are hideous splay-featured negroes from Sierra Leone, Jolloff women, Sierra Leone women, men and women in European

clothing, men and women in native dress, black, white, brown, and yellow people, and all attired in costumes of the most brilliant colours.

Making your way through this crowd, you find yourself upon a promenade in front of the Governor's house, in the garden of which three or four cocoa-nut palms and a few bananas dispute with some half-a-dozen paw-paw trees in the gorge of the citadel, the honour of representing the vegetable kingdom in Goree. Turning up a narrow street, well paved, clean, and in excellent order, and enclosed by substantially-built houses, principally shops, you walk a couple of hundred yards or so, and there again is the sea. You have crossed the island. Looking towards the mainland, which is about four miles distant, you perceive a lighthouse, a mole, with the masts of several ships lying behind it, and numerous buildings crowning the low rocky cliffs, and standing out against the ranges of sand-hills which close in the picture. This is the recently established French settlement of Dacar, from which now, as from St. Louis on the Senegal River formerly, the inhabitants draw their food supplies.

Goree has been called by some authorities the key of West Africa, but as it possesses no harbour or safe anchorage for vessels, depends upon other settlements for the means of existence, and could be starved out

in three or four days by a blockading ironclad, it is difficult to understand how they arrived at their conclusion. The original settlers, the Dutch, occupied it because it was a convenient depôt from which to carry on trade with the Mohammedan natives on the mainland, whose warlike and predatory propensities would, in those days, have made the establishment of a trading station on the mainland an expensive and dangerous experiment. Being captured by the French, it was ceded to them by the treaty of Nimeguen, and kept by them for the same reason that had led the Dutch to colonise it. The approach to St. Louis being frequently, for weeks at a time, rendered impassable, owing to broken water on the bar of the Senegal River, while Goree was nearly always accessible, the latter, in the course of time, became the great entrepôt for all the French trade in that part of West Africa. With the rise of Dacar, however, Goree will probably decline, for the principal reason for its maintenance will have disappeared.

The result produced by grafting French manners upon the negro is curious, but rather pleasing. The men never address Europeans or each other without first bowing; and, when speaking to each other, instead of prefacing their remarks with "Hi, you dam nigger!" they say "*Monsieur.*" The women, too, instead of going about, as do those of Sierra Leone,

in one voluminous cotton-print garment without any waist, wear dresses, made in the latest Parisian fashion; while on their heads are hats on which a perfect conservatory of artificial flowers seems to have sprung up, or an aviary of brilliant-hued birds been plucked. In the matter of names the English-speaking negro is nowhere. Who, for instance, would think of comparing such names as Maria Smith, or Martha Brown, with that of Mademoiselle Cornélie D'Anville? During one of my visits to Goree, a young mulatto lady came on board the steamer in which I was a passenger, to take passage to the Gambia, bringing with her her wardrobe and personal effects packed in an old and battered gin-case. I saw a long address written on this novel trunk, so approached surreptitiously and read: "Mdlle. Sophie Clotilde Anastasie Louise Marguerite d'Orsac. Passenger to Bathurst." That was all the name she had: there was no more of it.

When the military band plays on the promenade in front of the Governor's house, the French polish on the negro may be observed to the best advantage. Young negro dandies, in tight blue frock-coats, tall glossy hats, and nankeen trowsers, walk up and down, swinging their tasselled canes, and trying, with elegantly-gloved hands, to fix the eye-glass in the eye, or the double eye-glass on the nose; the former

an exceedingly difficult problem in the absence of any prominence of brow, and the latter an equally perplexing feat in the absence of any bridge to the nose. How they ogle and bow to the brown and yellow *demoiselles*, who lounge back in unstudied attitudes on the wooden seats, exposing to the admiring eye the neat little patent-leather shoe, with its bright steel buckle, and the tight-fitting pink cotton stocking; or with what a Parisian air they sip their glasses of *absinthe* at the little tables outside the *café*, and smile over the shocking pages of *Le Petit Journal pour Rive*. Alas! What a pity it is that it is only polish! Not even the best-cut nankeen trowsers can disguise the fact that the shin-bone is curved like a sickle, or the most personally excruciating shoe the melancholy truth that the leg springs from the centre of the foot, leaving almost as much heel protruding behind as there is instep in front.

Perhaps, in the midst of this whirl of fashion, a haughty Mandingo chief, armed with scimeter and dagger, will stalk along the promenade, followed by a retinue of servants and slaves; regarding with true Mohammedan contempt, as so many masquerading monkeys, the dandies who consider themselves the *élite* of Goree fashion; and comparing, with ill-concealed satisfaction, his own stalwart and un-

trammelled limbs with their padded and strapped figures. But he does not enjoy a monopoly of this pleasing sensation. The votaries of fashion affect to stare at him as if he were some strange animal; and if the son of nature should chance to brush against them in the crowd, they shrug their shoulders and look at each other with raised eyebrows, as if to say: "Dear me, what wretched manners this barbarian has!" As for the young ladies, they look modestly over the edges of their fans, pretend to shudder, and say to one another: "Bare legs!!! Oh, how dreadfully shocking! It really ought not to be allowed." And they would blush if they only could.

Now all these gallant men and lovely women, on returning to their own homes, take off all their finery and go about their houses attired in nothing but one linen garment, which is worn by both sexes, and has only one name in the French language; for a negro always feels uncomfortable in clothes and boots, and only puts them on at all to gratify his own vanity, and to raise up envy in the breasts of his not-so-well-dressed acquaintances. The negro is a great imitator. If he be born in a British colony, he becomes an exaggerated copy of an Englishman; when born in a French colony, he out-Frenches the Frenchman; and, in a Spanish possession, he is more of a Spaniard than the

hidalgo himself. Any individuality of type which he may have originally possessed at once disappears under this assumed character, and colonial negroes, dropping their own nationality, style themselves Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Spaniards, as the case may be. One is not obliged, however, to scratch very deeply to find the negro under his disguise.

The citadel of Goree is a much less antiquated work than those commonly to be seen in our own sixth-rate colonies, and it mounts guns that are not quite so fit for a museum of ancient ordnance as are those of our own West African fortifications. It would probably be able to hold its own against the best vessel in our West African squadron; while the most insignificant gunboat could knock Cape Coast Castle, our strongest fort, into pieces in a few minutes. Within the walls of the citadel the summit of the rock is levelled so as to form a diminutive parade-ground, in the centre of which is an exceedingly deep artesian well. The labour in boring this well, sunk as it is through the solid rock from the highest point of the island, must have been very great. The water is exceedingly pure and wonderfully cold, and forms, with the exception of that which is caught in cisterns during the rains, the entire supply of the island.

Goree has on more than one occasion fallen

into the hands of the British. It was captured by us in 1759, and restored to France by the peace of 1783. In 1800 we again captured it, and though the French succeeded in wresting it from its small garrison on the 17th of January, 1804, it again fell into our hands on the 7th of March of that year. At the general peace in 1815, it was once more returned to France, and, since then, has remained undisturbed.

It was in 1782, while it was a British possession, that the notorious Governor Wall flogged three soldiers to death. Joseph Wall, a colonel and an Irishman, was Governor of Goree, the garrison of which island was composed of the Royal African Corps, into which bad characters from line regiments were drafted as a punishment. Some little difference of opinion arose between the paymaster and men concerning certain arrears of pay; and the latter, hearing that the former was about to leave for England with the Governor, proceeded to his office in a body to demand a settlement. Colonel Wall met these disaffected men, at the head of whom was a sergeant named Benjamin Armstrong, and ordered them back to their quarters, saying that he would at once inquire into the matter. They went back; but as, after an interval of an hour or two, nothing had been decided about their pay,

and the vessel in which the paymaster was to leave the island was about to sail, they started again to interview him, and, again being ordered back by Governor Wall, again returned to their quarters. The garrison was then paraded, and the Colonel, after a long harangue on the subject of mutinous conduct, sentenced Sergeant Armstrong and two private soldiers to receive 800 lashes each. This barbarous sentence was at once carried into effect, and the men were flogged with a rope one inch in diameter instead of with the ordinary "cat"; while, as the drummers, who in the ordinary course would have administered the punishment, were considered by Wall too enfeebled by long service in that pestiferous climate to lay on the lashes with the energy he required, some strong negroes were pressed into the service, each, as his arm grew tired, being relieved by a fresh man.

All three men died from the effects of the flogging, and Colonel Wall proceeded to England as if nothing had happened. Much to his astonishment and disgust, however, he was arrested shortly after his arrival; but he contrived to escape almost at once, and fled to the Continent. In 1802, full of conscious innocence, he returned to England and surrendered himself. He was at once brought to trial, but, in those good old days, judicial investigations

seem to have been managed in a curious manner. Wall's counsel was not allowed to address the jury for the defence, while, on the other side, the Attorney-General made a most able speech; and, although it was well known that the prisoner was so deaf that he could not, from his position in the dock, hear the evidence, he was refused permission to sit in the body of the court, where he could have heard the witnesses. He pleaded the necessity for strong measures to nip in the bud any mutinous symptoms in such a disorderly corps; but the facts that no court-martial had been held on the men, and that, after their deaths, no report of the matter was made to the authorities at home, told against him, and being found guilty of murder, he was hanged on the 28th of January, 1802.

Since those good old days public opinion has so changed, that now twenty lashes is considered too severe a sentence for a mutinous soldier, and the punishment of flogging has disappeared altogether. Difficulties about the pay of the men seem to have been of frequent occurrence in West African Corps in those days; and even as late as 1862, the Gold Coast Artillery mutinied, because some of the officers preferred gambling with the men's pay to putting it to its proper use.

The climate of Goree and that of the French

settlement on the Senegal appear to be much worse than those of the British possessions in Western Africa, for, almost yearly, these places are visited by epidemics of yellow fever and small-pox; while the former is almost unknown at Sierra Leone and on the Gold Coast, and the latter, though always present, does not take an epidemic form. Yet the French are much more particular than we are in matters sanitary, and their coloured subjects are better fed, housed, and clothed than are ours, because they will not allow any natives to enjoy the advantages of living under their rule, unless they can show that they have some trade or other means of earning a livelihood. In consequence of this law numbers of the Jolloffs at Dacar and elsewhere have set up as market gardeners; and the market at Goree is supplied with luxuries which are surprising to one who has been accustomed to the scanty food supply of our own West African colonies, in which, as no negro is compelled to work, none do work, and nothing is grown. This, no doubt, makes our rule more popular than that of the French, but it does not tend to the advancement of the natives.

The inhabitants of Goree are exceedingly patriotic. According to an Englishman who was living in the island in 1870-1, when the news of the disaster of Sedan reached the settlement, the populace rose

like one man, and demanded to be led to Berlin. They surrounded the Governor's residence, the guards, as usual, fraternising with the people, screaming with rage and bristling with warlike ardour; but, as there was no transport ready to convey this vast multitude of some four hundred men for the immediate annihilation of the Germans, they gave a vent to their rage by burning the Emperor in effigy.

The scene must have been rather amusing. After a number of bombastic orations had been delivered by excitable gentlemen of colour, a lean pig, attired in an old dress-coat, and with a gilt-paper crown on its head, was led forward amidst the kicks and execrations of the crowd. A placard, attached to the garment of the animal, announced that this was Citizen Louis Bonaparte, sentenced to death for betraying *la France*. A noose was immediately placed round his neck, and a hundred manly hands, grasping the other end of the rope, ran him up, amidst terrific cries of "*à la lanterne*," and left him hanging to a lamp-post. Tremendous shouts broke forth as the traitor kicked and struggled; and when the corpse was lowered, and the body cut up, so that the handkerchiefs of the patriots might be dipped in his gore, the island fairly resounded with shrieks of delight.

A heavy shower of rain which then came on, dispersed the assembly, or, at all events, that portion of it which was sober enough to disperse. The fragments of the Emperor's body disappeared most mysteriously; but the prevailing odour of roast pork that night led some persons to suppose that the mob carried their detestation of him so far as to devour his remains, in order that they might effectually be denied Christian burial.

Next morning, three or four mulatto gentlemen met in committee and drew up a proclamation, calling upon their fellow-citizens to rally round the Goddess of Liberty, and abolish religion, marriage, and the possession of property. Unfortunately for the success of their scheme, most of these compatriots had severe headaches, resulting from the orgie of the previous night. The abolition of religion and marriage was an act of superfluity that did not interest anybody, since these were already entirely ignored; while those who had property took alarm at the third proposition, and, going to the authorities, had the committee arrested and marched off to the citadel. Thus terminated the sanguinary revolution of Goree.

During the last six or seven years the French have been making great progress in this part of Africa. Advancing from Senegal and Dacar in an

eastern and southerly direction, they have overrun an immense extent of territory, annexing some kingdoms, establishing protectorates over others, and forcing treaties of trade upon a third class. Their object seems to be to form a vast African colony extending from Algeria on the north to the peninsula of Sierra Leone on the south, and, in order to prevent any other nation influencing the natives, they are doing their best to isolate the British possessions on the Gambia River and at Sierra Leone. They have been particularly active in the numerous rivers which open up the country between these two colonies, forcibly occupying some points, and sending small missions far inland to extend the sphere of French influence.

In 1882, in the Mellicourie River, they forced a treaty upon the chiefs, which virtually rendered nugatory the one entered into between the latter and the British in 1855; and then, having induced the natives to sell or grant a small piece of land for the erection of buildings for trading purposes, they commenced to establish a military station in the neighbourhood of the town of Malageah. The natives resisted this annexation; the new buildings were burned, and the French officials compelled to seek safety in flight. In a few months, however, they returned with a larger force, and, since then,

there has been an almost unbroken continuance of petty hostilities.

Working up these rivers, the French send embassies to the Mohammedan States lying to the north and east of Sierra Leone, hoping to induce the kings to engage to trade only with them, and intending, in course of time, to work round behind our possessions. This they have already succeeded in doing in the Gambia, the trade of which river is entirely in French hands; and in the rivers more to the southward their aggressive policy is gradually producing the same results. The natives, however, do not want to have anything to do with the French. They have learned, from bitter experience, that their traders are soon followed by officials, then troops appear on the scene, and finally the flimsy disguise of extension of trade, under which they were first suffered to introduce themselves, is thrown aside, and the full scheme of conquest and annexation stands forth. So well do the chiefs know this that, no sooner do French war-vessels appear in their rivers, than they apply to the Governor of Sierra Leone for protection, and generally express a wish to become British subjects. The Governor, however, has no power to render them any assistance; he is obliged to refer the matter to the Colonial Office in London, and, by the time that an answer to his

despatch has been received, the opportunity for a protest has gone by, and the French have already obtained a footing, from which, after a time, they make a further advance.

So eager are they to extend their Colonial Empire, that, in 1879, they actually occupied with an armed force the island of Matakong, a British possession, close to Sierra Leone; nor would they acknowledge our right to it until much correspondence on the subject had passed between London and Paris. Again, in 1880, some French officers ascended the Rio Nunez, and succeeded in reaching Timbo, the capital of Futa Jallon, a large and most important Mohammedan Foulah State to the north-east of Sierra Leone. Though the alimani, or king, was in constant friendly communication with the Government of Sierra Leone, and every day some of his people came to Freetown to trade, these officers did not hesitate to seek to induce him to sign a treaty binding himself and his subjects to trade only with the French. They asked him to sell some land on which they might erect buildings, requested permission to make a railway for trading purposes between Timbo and the Rio Nunez, offered him a considerable sum of money to swear allegiance to the French, and promised that French merchants would buy everything that the country produced. The king, how-

ever, had heard too much about the doings of the French in the territories to the northward of his dominions, and declined to be dazzled by their promises and their bribes, under which he suspected annexation to be lurking.

In consequence of this extraordinary attempt to injure our trade and alienate from us our most powerful native neighbour, the British Government determined to dispatch a mission to the upper waters of the Gambia, to endeavour to counteract any inimical influence. The mission, of which the administrator of the Gambia Settlements was the chief, consisted of three Europeans and about 100 natives. It left Bathurst on the 22nd of January, 1881, proceeded in boats to Bady, some 500 miles up the river, thence marched through Garboo country to Futa Jallon, and reached the coast of Sierra Leone on the 21st of April. The mission was well received at Timbo, and the king signed a treaty with the British.

Unfortunately the party did not visit the great rival State of Falaba, through which lies the direct route from Sierra Leone to the Niger, Farabana on that river being only some fifty miles from the town of Falaba; nor were any friendly relations entered into with the natives of the gold-producing districts of Bambouk and Bourré. This is so much the more

to be regretted, because, during the last and the present year numerous French emissaries have been dispatched from Sierra Leone and Porto Lokkoh to those places, with the result of an enormous increase in the French trade on the Porto Lokkoh branch of the Sierra Leone River, and a proportionate decrease of English influence. In fact, if the Government do not soon adopt some measures for putting a stop to these insidious practices on the part of the French, Sierra Leone and the Gambia will be British in nothing but the name, and will simply become two isolated spots in a vast French colony. The reader may perhaps think that it will not be of much moment if this does occur; but this portion of West Africa is not covered with impenetrable forest and inhabited by barbarians as is the Gold Coast, but is an open grass country, peopled by tribes who are sufficiently civilised to read and write Arabic, and who have some knowledge of working in metals. It is opened up by numerous large rivers, and will, in course of time, consume annually an enormous quantity of European manufactured goods. It remains for the Government to decide whether these shall be the product of English industries or of French.

CHAPTER VIII.

GRAND CANARY.

Las Palmas—The Cathedral—The Islanders—Discovery of the Islands—The Spanish Conquest—Atrocities—The Aboriginal Inhabitants—Their Origin—Mummies—A Canarian Prejudice—Canaries.

LYING off the African Coast, in the vicinity of Cape Blanco, between twenty-seven and twenty-nine degrees of North latitude, and thirteen and eighteen degrees of West longitude, is that group of islands known in former days as the Fortunate Isles, and in modern times as the Canary Islands. Irrespective of such mere rocks as Allegranza, Graciosa, Lobos, and Santa Clara, the islands are seven in number, namely Tenerife, Grand Canary, Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, Palma, Gomera, and Ferro. Of these the two first-named are the most important in point of size and population: they are all Spanish possessions.

The island of Grand Canary is about thirty-four miles long by twenty-nine broad, and, like all the

islands of the group, is of volcanic origin, and very mountainous. In fact it may, in a measure, be considered to consist of one mountain, since, from all sides, the land rises towards the culminating central peak of El Cumbre, 6,648 feet above the sea. In approaching Grand Canary from the north, the steamer rounds the rocky peninsula of Isleta, which is connected with the main bulk of the island by a sandy isthmus two miles in length; and, passing the sandy bay of Isleta, with its white hermitage dedicated to St. Catherine, and a small fort mounting a few obsolete guns, steams some three miles along the shore till it comes to an anchor in the open roadstead opposite the city of Las Palmas, the capital of the island. From the sea, the shore appears barren and sterile to the last degree; for, though in the writings of the earlier historians of the Canaries, we read that the mountains were covered with fine timber, the same short-sighted policy which has deprived South Spain of its forests, and consequently of its rainfall, has here prevailed; and the early settlers wielded the axe with such pertinacity, cutting down everywhere but never planting, that now scarcely a tree is to be seen along the whole coast.

Las Palmas has a semi-oriental appearance as viewed from the deck of a steamer; the houses being

all flat-roofed, rectangular, and white structures, rising one above another on the slope of the bare gray mountain, whose flat summit is crowned by the long and low wall of a fortification; while the numerous spires and domes of the churches and chapels might very well be minarets and mosques. The landing at this place is bad, for a heavy swell sets in on the shore; and though a mole has for years been in course of construction, it is not yet sufficiently advanced to afford any shelter. The whole island is difficult of access, and, even in fine weather, such a surf beats upon the rocky shore, as to make a landing impossible, except at the capital, and some half-a-dozen smaller ports.

After having been put ashore, with or without a wetting, one has a walk of nearly a mile, along a long and straggling shadowless street of white houses, to reach the principal part of the town, which is of considerable size, and is divided into two portions by a deep ravine, spanned by a bridge of some architectural merit. A stream flows along the boulder-encumbered bed, and by it may daily be seen scores of brown-armed women in bright dresses, wearing over their heads the white or yellow square of alpaca or gauze which in these islands takes among the lower classes the place of the national mantilla, reducing linen to pulp in

the process which they ironically call washing. To one side of the chasm is the cathedral, a magnificent building; and, on the other, the steep face of the mountain is marked with the dark entrances of hundreds of caves, in which the poorer inhabitants of the place live, and which were the habitations of the strange people who owned the island before the advent of the Spaniards. The houses which overlook the road along the side of the ravine are fairly imposing; and, as they are lavishly embowered in groves of orange, banana, and palms, the view of this part of the town, as seen from the higher ground above, is exceedingly attractive.

The cathedral, dedicated to Saint Anne, was designed by the celebrated Spanish architect, Diego Montande, and the interior is less marred by tawdry upholstery than is usually the case with places of worship in these islands. The altar and communion table are formed of beaten silver, and, amongst others, there is one silver lamp of beautiful filigree work. Another thing which at once strikes the eye is a candlestick ten feet in height, and which I should imagine could never be used, because it would require a candle of the girth of a palm-tree to fit it, and I doubt if they have a mould of that size in the island. The cathedral, the theatre, and the Palace of Justice would do credit to any European

capital; but the rest of the buildings of Las Palmas, with the exception of those I have mentioned as overlooking the ravine, are not ornamental, and the majority of them even insignificant. There are two small public gardens in the town, and one of them, being well stocked with trees and flowers, is rather pretty. The name of the place in full is delightfully simple, being only La Real Ciudad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; a title which is of course much more convenient than such a one as "Paris," or "London."

Although, with the exception of those engaged in the wine trade and in the cultivation of the cochineal insect, almost the whole of the peasantry of Grand Canary are small market-gardeners, the island is, generally speaking, very rocky and barren. It is, however, well watered by numerous mountain streams, and, with a little labour, might be made most fertile; but the islanders are content with raising their crops in the narrow beds of the ravines and valleys, and, indeed, would regard such an interference with Nature as the turning the course of a stream for purposes of irrigation, as almost a sacrilege. The pine, palm, wild olive, laurel, aloe, and prickly pear are indigenous; and the climate is so equable that both the fruits of the temperate and torrid zones arrive at great perfection, the

oranges of Grand Canary being particularly good. The cultivated area is, however, so small, that the peasantry wisely confine their enterprise to the raising of fruit and vegetables for sale in the market of the capital; and they entirely depend upon the other islands, especially upon Lanzarote, for bread-stuffs. Their wants are but few; the wool of their own sheep, spun by the women of the family, supplies them with clothing; and their food consists principally of salt fish and gofio; of which the former is caught on the banks on the opposite coast of Africa by the Canary fishermen, while the latter is a kind of kous-kous or damper, made of parched flour mixed with a little water. As they can neither read nor write they have no literary needs to satisfy, and a *fiesta* on a saint's day, with an occasional cock-fight, supplies them with all the amusement they require. They are in fact as ignorant, as unenterprising, as isolated, and, I may add, as priest-ridden a people, as it would be easy to discover in this progressive nineteenth century.

Canary sack, the wine produced in Grand Canary, is a rather fiery fluid, and is not nearly so good as the wine of Teneriffe. As it was held in such high estimation in former days, one must either suppose that Falstaff and our ancestors had stronger heads than we now have, or that the wine now contains

a much larger percentage of alcohol than it did formerly. Wine, cochineal, orchilla weed, and a little barilla are the only exports of the island; of the former about 20,000 pipes are exported annually, principally to England and the United States, where it is doctored to suit the Anglo-Saxon palate and sold under the name of sherry. With a little capital, and the removal of the absurd export duties, the trade of Grand Canary might be very easily doubled; and, as the island is so well adapted for fruit-growing, it might soon supply Western Europe with tropical fruits, which now have to be brought from the much more distant Azores and West Indies, at a consequently greater expense.

The Canary Islands are said to have been discovered by the Carthaginians, who, in the celebrated expedition of Hanno, about 250 years before the Christian era, sailed along the African coast, till they arrived within five degrees of the equator. According to Pliny, the Carthaginians found the islands uninhabited, but saw in every direction the ruins of great buildings which had been erected by former inhabitants. In more modern times the Canaries became first known in Europe in 1326, when a French ship was driven there in a storm, and they were doubtless afterwards visited by other vessels of that nationality; for Labat, in his "History

of the Western Coasts of Africa," states that the Normans traded to the coast as far as Sierra Leone as early as 1364, and refers, in proof of this statement, to a deed of association between the merchants of Dieppe and Rouen, dated 1365.

The first record, however, of any communication between Europeans and the aborigines of the islands dates from 1385, when Fernando Peraza, of Seville, sailed for the Canaries with five ships, and landed at Lanzarote, the most northerly island of the group. The Spaniards at that time were the legalised buccaneers of Europe, under license granted by His Eminence the Pope; and, according to the good old humane manners of the age, this party of adventurers, without receiving any provocation, at once fired upon the inoffensive natives who came crowding down to look at them, killed and wounded several with their arrows, and so terrified the remainder that they ran away. The invaders then marched to the town where the islanders lived, sacked it, carried off everything of value upon which they could lay hands, and embarked again for Spain, covered with glory, and taking with them 170 of the inhabitants whom they had kidnapped. This was the first introduction of the pagan and barbarous islanders to the polite, civilised; and Christian Spaniards.

Several other expeditions were subsequently

undertaken, but it was not until 1405 that any descent was made upon Grand Canary; when the Spaniards, under John de Betancour, were so severely handled by the natives, who by this time had learned how to appreciate such visits, that they were glad to seek safety in flight and re-embark. In November, 1406, John de Betancour made a second attempt, but met with no better success than on the first occasion; and the island remained unmolested till 1461, when the Spaniards endeavoured to obtain by fraud that foothold which they were unable to obtain by force of arms.

In that year Diego de Herrera and the Bishop of Rubicon arrived off Gando, on the south-east of the island, with a flotilla; and, when the Canarians assembled as usual to resist the invasion, the bishop informed them that he and his party came as friends, and with no other purpose than that of trading peacefully. The natives, satisfied with this statement, allowed the Spaniards to land unarmed; and Diego de Herrera at once took formal possession of the island in the presence of the natives—who of course had no idea what the ceremony meant—the bishop, and the other filibusters. After this, highly delighted with his scheme, he returned to Lanzarote, over which island the Spaniards had now obtained full sway. Next year, the bishop, filled with an ardent desire to

gather his scattered sheep at Grand Canary into the fold of the Romish Church, went over to Gando with 300 armed men, who were doubtless intended to aid in the pious work of conversion. To his great annoyance the natives persisted in their absurd refusal to permit armed men to land, and he was obliged to return to Lanzarote.

In 1466 Diego de Herrera landed in force and endeavoured to conquer the island, but was repulsed and compelled to retire. The year following he again had recourse to unscrupulous diplomacy, and, proceeding to Gando, he and the bishop, under the pretence of having a place of worship for such Spaniards as might come to the island to trade, obtained permission from the islanders to build a fort at Gando. The simple natives so little suspected bad faith that they assisted the Spaniards in their work, bringing them timber from the mountains, and transporting stone for them, so that in a short time the fort was completed. Herrera, leaving a garrison in it under Pedro Chemida, returned to Lanzarote, having instructed his lieutenant to divide the natives by fomenting quarrels between them, and to neglect no opportunity of making himself master of the island. All this reads strangely like the doings of the French on the West African coast at the present day, and if we omit the bishop,

and make trade the pretence instead of religion, the description will be exact.

The Canarians soon discovered that they had been entrapped. Secure in their fortress, which the light-armed islanders could not venture to attack, the Spaniards committed unheard-of outrages, and made frequent sallies against their unfortunate victims. Stratagem, however, was met by stratagem, and the fort fell into the hands of the natives in the manner narrated in the following account, taken by Captain Glas from a Spanish manuscript found in the Island of Palma, towards the close of the last century.

“It happened soon after that, as some of the garrison were out on one of these marauding parties, the natives designedly drove some cattle in their way, as it were by accident, and thus drew them by degrees to a considerable distance from the fort, into an ambush that had been prepared for them, while another party of the natives was posted in such a manner as to cut off their retreat to the fort. On a signal concerted between them, those in ambush suddenly fell upon Chemida’s men and killed a great number of them, and the rest, who upon this fled to the fort, fell into the hands of the other party, who killed some of them and took the others prisoners, so that not one escaped. The Captain Mananidra, who had the command of this enter-

prise, stripped the Europeans, both living and dead, of their clothes, which he made one half of his own men put on, and placed the other half in ambush very near the fort; he then ordered some of the Canarians in their own proper habits to chase those dressed like Spaniards towards the fort. Pedro Chemida and his men who remained there, seeing this pursuit and believing their party was worsted, sallied out to the relief of their supposed countrymen, leaving the gates open; when the party who were in ambush perceiving this, rushed into the fort, while the disguised Canarians fell upon the Spaniards and made them prisoners. After this manner was the fort of Gando taken; and lest another garrison should be sent from Lancerota, they burnt the wood of the fort and razed the walls thereof to the ground."

The prisoners, instead of being put to death after the usual manner of savages, or made slaves after the fashion of Spaniards, were treated with kindness and humanity, fed with the best the natives had, and finally released by them without ransom or conditions.

Towards the close of the year 1476, Ferdinand and Isabella decreed that Grand Canary, Teneriffe, and Palma—being too powerful for Diego de Herrera to master, and it being absolutely necessary that they

should be mastered in order that the natives might be made Christians—should be added to the crown of Spain; and, in lieu of his rights (?), Herrera was compelled to accept the munificent sum of five millions of maravedis, that is to say, about £3,000. On the conclusion of this agreement the Spanish monarchs fitted out an armament for the reduction of their new purchases. It sailed from Andalusia, under Juan Rejon, on the 23rd of May, 1477; and arrived off the peninsula of Isleta, at the north-eastern extremity of Grand Canary, on the night of the 22nd of June. That sterile and sandy portion of the island being uninhabited, the Spaniards landed next morning without opposition, and started to march along the shore, with the intention of proceeding to Gando. On arriving, however, at the spot where the city of Las Palmas now stands, the site appeared to Juan Rejon so propitious, abounding in water and wood (which latter has now entirely disappeared), that he determined to stop there, and at once commenced building defences. After the lapse of a few days, the Spaniards were attacked with great fury by the natives; but, in the action which ensued, the latter were routed, owing principally to the Spaniards having now learned the use of fire-arms, and being assisted by a body of cavalry, whose horses struck the simple Canarians with terror. This battle was called

Guinigada, and the natives, withdrawing to the mountains, closely blockaded the Spanish camp.

For three or four years the invaders made no progress. Reinforcements were sent from Spain, but their endeavours to penetrate into the mountains were almost uniformly disastrous, and even their fortress at Las Palmas was attacked. About 1482, however, a reinforcement of the Holy Brotherhood of Andalusia arrived, and then the war of extermination of the islanders commenced. The mountain strongholds were stormed; men, women, and children were slain, others threw themselves over the precipices to escape falling into the hands of their conquerors, and the survivors were hunted like wild beasts from their caves and hiding-places. These measures succeeded so well, that on the 29th of April, 1483, the remnant of the Canarians, who were assembled at the supposed impregnable mountain fastness of Ansite, were induced to surrender; and their young leader and an old warrior, filled with despair, threw themselves over a precipice and were dashed to pieces on the rocks.

It is difficult, even after the lapse of four centuries, to read, without a shudder, of the horrors committed by the Spaniards in these islands. In Gomera, the Governor, Hernando Peraza, was, in revenge for an outrage committed by him on a Gomeran girl, attacked and killed by

her relatives. Upon this, the natives, conscious that the Spaniards would exact a terrible vengeance, rose in arms; and, after a fruitless attack on the citadel of Gomera, during which their leader was killed, shut themselves up in a fastness of the mountains, named Garagonohe. Pedro de Vera, the then Governor of Grand Canary, being informed of these occurrences, hastened to Gomera with reinforcements; and, immediately on his arrival, issued proclamations commanding all the Gomerans, on pain of death, to come to the church at the town of Gomera, to be present at the funeral obsequies of Hernando Peraza. Those of the natives who had taken no part in the rising, having nothing to fear, came on the appointed day, and were all made prisoners. Most of them were sentenced to be banished, and a number of these, who were being transported to Lanzarote, were thrown overboard on the passage, by order of Alonzo de Cota. Vera then marched against the insurgents at Garagonohe, and at length induced them, by a promise that he would do them no harm, to surrender. Having thus got them into his hands, he brought them to Gomera, where he condemned to death all the males of the provinces of Agare and Orone who were above fifteen years of age. This sentence was carried out with great barbarity; some of the unhappy wretches being hanged, others drowned, and

a large number torn asunder by horses. Of the remaining captives, the hands and feet of several hundred men were cut off, and the wives and children of all those who had been put to death were sold for slaves. After these atrocities Vera returned to Grand Canary, where, being informed that the Gomerans who were in that island expressed approval of the action of their countrymen in murdering Hernando Peraza, saying that they were prepared to do the same to any Spaniard who might dishonour their wives or daughters, he ordered all the Gomerans residing in Grand Canary to be arrested in one night. This was done, and about two hundred men, women, and children were seized. The men were put to death, the women and children sold for slaves.

Various theories have been given birth to concerning the origin of the people who inhabited the Canary Islands at the time of the Spanish conquests. The islands appear to have been peopled by two different tribes, namely, the Guanches in Teneriffe, and a second tribe, whose name has not been handed down to posterity, in all the other islands of the group. The Guanches spoke a language that was entirely distinct from that spoken in the other islands, where one tongue, with slight dialectic variations, prevailed. The inhabitants of Teneriffe were lighter in colour, and had fairer hair than the

other islanders, whom Edris, the Mohammedan historian, describes as being of a reddish colour, with thin and long hair, and the women of great beauty. The wonderful similarity between the habits of the Guanches and the other inhabitants, however, seems to show that both were derived from the same stock. Both inhabited cave dwellings, embalmed their dead, used the javelin in warfare, and wore tunics and head-coverings of dressed goat-skin. Neither of them could work in metals, and their weapons were made of pitch-pine, hardened by fire, although, like the Aztecs, they had knives made of obsidian, with which they slaughtered their sheep and cattle, and cut and worked timber. As for the religions of the two tribes, the pious Spaniards were in such haste to extinguish any superstitions that did not agree with their own, that there is no record of them preserved sufficient for forming a just comparison.

Some writers have endeavoured to prove that the islanders were the ubiquitous lost ten tribes of Israel, and others that the islands were peopled by Norsemen, driven southward by storms. Instead, however, of going so far as Asia Minor or Scandinavia to look for the ancestry of the inhabitants of the Canaries, it seems more natural to turn to the neighbouring coast of Africa, over which the Sultan of Morocco claims, but does not exercise,

sway. Cape Negro, in the island of Fuerteventura, is only fifty-two miles as the crow flies from Cape Blanco, on the African coast; and, in clear weather, the island can be distinctly seen from the continent. Nothing is more probable than that during the successive convulsions in Mauritania, which transferred that country from the Romans to the Vandals, from the Vandals to the Greeks, and from the Greeks to the Arabs, some of the inhabitants sought an asylum in these islands, from which the ancient port of Asiffi was not far distant. The strange similitude between the customs of the Canary Islanders and those of the inhabitants of Northern Africa lends additional support to this supposition. Pottery and household utensils have been found in the cave catacombs of the Canaries, similar to those now in use in Morocco and Algeria; and, when preparing their mummies, the islanders opened the body at the side, as did the Egyptians, with the same kind of sharp stone that was used in Egypt. *Gofio*, the staple article of food in the Canaries, is almost identical with the *kous-kous* of the Berbers; and the Moors to this day fatten their daughters with milk before giving them in marriage, as did the Canary Islanders. But the strongest proof lies in the remarkably large number of words common to the dialects of the Canary Islands, with

the exception of Teneriffe, and the language of the Shillha tribe of Berbers; which, taken with the colour of the inhabitants, seems to establish beyond doubt that they were descendants of the fair-haired Berbers. That the islands were so peopled before the Arab wave of conquest swept over Northern Africa, is evident from the fact of there being no trace of Mohammedanism in the ceremonies or beliefs of the islanders; and there is a tradition in the Canaries, still extant, that when Africa was a Roman province, some of the inhabitants of Mauritania, having rebelled, were put on board vessels, supplied with grain and cattle, and shipped to the Canary Islands as a punishment.

Embalmed bodies of this singular people are frequently discovered, even at the present day, by the peasantry in the remoter and more sparsely populated districts of the islands. The celebrated cavern of the Barranca de Herque, in Teneriffe, contained several thousand corpses, most of which were used by the peasants as fuel, although several which were rescued from this fate are now to be seen in the museum at Santa Cruz. These mummies have hair of a reddish-brown colour; the men are laid out with their hands close to their sides, and the women with the arms crossed on the breast. Some, too, have been found with the body doubled

up into a sitting posture. When discovered, the bodies are invariably found swathed in wrappers of dressed goat-skins, tied with leathern thongs, which the peasants esteem so highly that they at once take them for their own use; and, such is the wonderful dryness of the climate, that both the mummies and the goat-skin garments frequently found with them are quite clean and fresh, although several centuries old. The islanders used to employ a particular class of persons who were set apart for the process of embalming; women only being permitted to prepare the corpses of those of their own sex, and men only those of males. The method appears to have been simple. After being disembowelled, the body was washed carefully for several days, and sprinkled with the dust of resinous trees and pumice. After being a short time under this treatment, it became perfectly dry, and was then swathed and put away in the family mausoleum.

Some of the later Spanish writers have asserted that the islanders had anticipated the Malthusian doctrine, and, to keep down the price of food, did not allow any woman to bear more than one child, all after the first-born being put to death. The origin of this story may be traced to a general agreement arrived at by the inhabitants of Grand Canary, during a long and severe famine which

occurred shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards, to kill all the female children that might afterwards be born, except the first-born. The famine was, however, as usual, immediately succeeded by a pestilence, which is stated to have carried off two-thirds of the inhabitants; and, there being no longer any reason for the practice of infanticide, it was at once discontinued. As for the fable that polyandry flourished in these islands, each wife being allowed by law three husbands, who enjoyed her society in rotation for a month at a time, it seems to have no foundation of any kind.

The loathing with which the Canarians regarded the trade of a butcher is curious. None but the dregs of the people could follow this pursuit, which was considered so shameful that no butcher was allowed to enter a house, touch any property, or keep company with any one not of his own trade. If a butcher required anything, he was obliged to point at what he wanted with a long pole, standing some distance off; but, as a set-off against this general opprobrium, the natives were obliged to supply the butchers with food and everything they required. They do not appear to have carried their detestation of butchery so far as to become vegetarians.

Canaries do not cost much more in Grand

Canary than they do in England, but this need not be a matter for surprise, for labour is cheap, and educating canaries is not that kind of hard work which is offensive to the dignity of a Spaniard. Most people seem to imagine that the canary is a song-bird by nature, but nothing could be further from the truth. The canary in its wild state can utter no sound more melodious than a shrill chirp, something similar to that of our common house-sparrow; and the song with which he favours us when he becomes educated is not even an improvement of his own tune, but an entirely new composition. Wild canaries, when first trapped, are placed in cages near those of birds already trained to sing; and, when they have become resigned to their confinement, they soon commence to try to imitate their educated fellow-captives. They do not of course learn the song at once. They try a few notes at first, and then attempt higher flights. In fact they work very hard at it, and it is pitiful to see how downcast they seem at their frequent stumbles and failures. Time after time they will go back to correct a mistake, and then, when they have at last mastered the difficulty, they sing it over and over again, filled with a proud joy.

It seems to me that this bird has been sadly neglected by the Christian moralist. The ant and

the bee have been so often used to point a moral that the repetition has grown monotonous ; besides, those insects only labour with the intention of making themselves comfortable homes, and storing up food for their own future delectation. In fact they are actuated by selfishness, whereas the labour of the canary is purely unselfish, and, in addition, what a magnificent moral example of the results of perseverance he offers ! Really some divine ought to take this matter up, and do the bird justice.

There being always a large stock of trained canaries on hand, the teaching of wild birds is now a matter of no difficulty ; but it would be curious to inquire who first discovered the remarkable aptitude for mimicry possessed by them, and from what bird the original trained canary learned his song.

CHAPTER IX.

GRAND CANARY.

Doramas—The Cave Village of Atalaya—Pleasant Society—The Pulex—Epidemics—Sanitation—San Isidro Labrador—A Curious Service—The Image of Terror—An Optical Illusion—The Miraculous Island of St. Brandan—Veracious Testimony.

IN the interior of the Island of Grand Canary there are no towns or even large villages, but numerous small hamlets, embowered in verdure, nestle down beside the green terrace gardens in the fertile valleys. The hills are rugged and steep, and the scenery wild and picturesque, but the absence of foliage renders the sameness of the local colouring monotonous; for the lower slopes are destitute of trees and the upper totally barren, not even grass growing upon their rocky faces. There is, however, one mountain which forms an exception to the general rule, and which appears to have escaped the ravages of the axe in the early days of the Spanish colonisation. It is about six miles from the city of Las Palmas, and is called

the Mountain of Doramas, from the name of a warlike Canarian chieftain, who was one of the principal leaders in the battle of Guinigada, and who afterwards made his name a terror to the Spaniards by his perpetual surprises and ambuscades.

During one of the attempts of the Spaniards to open up the island, a party of infantry and cavalry penetrated as far as this mountain, on which Doramas happened to be with a few followers. Observing the approach of his enemies, he sent a messenger to challenge any one of them to single combat, which challenge was accepted by a cavalier named Juan de Hocés. The struggle took place upon a level shoulder of the mountain, where all the advantage lay upon the side of the Spaniard; since he had room to manage his horse, was clad in complete armour, and armed with lance and targe, while the bold chieftain carried nothing but his darts of hardened pitch-pine, and had no covering more defensive than his goat-skin tunic. The great personal strength of Doramas, however, and an unerring aim, gained him the victory, for he hurled his first dart so truly and with such force, that it went through the Spaniard's shield and coat of mail, and, piercing him to the heart, struck him from the saddle, in the presence of the two opposing parties. The leader of the Spanish detachment, Pedro de Vera,

the author of the massacres of Gomera, who, whatever his crimes may have been, did not lack courage, seeing the fall of his champion, himself spurred forward to meet Doramas, who prepared to engage him. Receiving the first dart upon his target, from which it glanced, and stooping down so that the second whistled harmlessly over his head, Pedro de Vera closed with the chief before he had time to throw a third missile; and, piercing him in the side with his lance, threw him to the ground mortally wounded. The natives, enraged at the fall of their leader, rushed upon the Spaniards, and a desperate conflict ensued, in which the former were compelled to retreat. Doramas, who died soon after the termination of the skirmish, was buried on the top of the mountain, and a circle of stones is still shown as the spot where the most valiant of the Canarians rests. The mountain is covered with chestnut and pine, through which numerous limpid streams, fringed with rare ferns and wild flowers of brilliant hues, leap and sparkle over their stony beds on their way down to the valleys beneath. The lulling splash of the broken water, the rustle of the branches of the trees in the balmy mountain air, the soft coo of the ring-dove, and the occasional sharp detonation of the pine bark cracking under the ardent rays of the

sun, are the only sounds that break the stillness of this cool and umbrageous solitude, which forms such a delightful contrast to the sun-scorched and bare mountain sides that environ it.

One of the most curious places in Grand Canary is the cave village of Atalaya. It is a circular, bowl-like valley with steep sides, and is evidently the crater of some extinct volcano. In the basaltic sides of this valley are hundreds of caves, some large and some small, arranged in regular tiers one above the other. These caves, which were formerly inhabited by the Canarians, are now the homes of a colony of Spaniards of very unprepossessing appearance, and who ostensibly earn a living by the manufacture of pottery, while really gaining a livelihood by means far from unquestionable. It is a curious sight to see the unkempt and half-clad children playing about the gloomy entrances of these caverns, and in the interior to catch a glimpse of a sparkle of a fire, a few poor household utensils and articles of furniture, with sturdy amazons engaged in their daily avocations; but it is not wise to visit this place except in parties of some strength, for these people possess a very unenviable reputation.

In spite of warnings, I was once foolish enough to visit the village alone, because I could not find

any one willing to accompany me ; and, though I got back to Las Palmas safe and sound, it was more due to good fortune than to good judgment. No sooner had I ridden into the valley than I was assailed by scores of huge dogs, which flew out of the caves yelping and baying, with blood-shot eyes and bristling hair, and surrounded me, snapping and snarling, as if they had had nothing to eat for days, and were anxious to commence dining. These domestic pets would prove very disagreeable to a man on foot, and, as it was, I had some difficulty in protecting my legs from their threatening jaws. The noise made by these animals at once brought out their owners, who thought perhaps that the gendarmes had at last come down upon them ; but seeing only one man, and that a foreigner, they drove away their pets with volleys of large stones, and, to the number of two or three dozen, came towards me. For villainous countenances it would be difficult to surpass those of the gentlemen who now surrounded me ; and their ragged clothes, their coarse and tangled hair, and their general appearance of dirt and ruffianism, did not lessen their repulsive aspect. They at once began begging, and that not in the servile manner of the beggar of the town, who requests you for the love of God to present him with half a real or a real, but with

mocking laughter and defiant glances. Two of them seized the bridle of my horse, while the others, crowding round, reiterated their demands for money with half-concealed threats and meaning gestures, one of these brigands drawing the blade of his knife across his throat in a significant manner. I had no weapon of any description with me; even if I had had one it would have been madness to resist; I was in their power, and I had to comply. I had a good many of the worthless copper coins of the place in my pockets, and taking a handful of these and some small English silver money, I threw them over the head of my horse on to the stones. A general scramble ensued; the two men who held my reins, not wishing to lose their share of the spoil, let go their hold, and I was free. Without losing a moment, I turned sharp round and went down the stony path at full gallop, being saluted with a shower of stones and a volley of execrations as the courteous adieu of these polished gentry; who, no doubt, had not anticipated parting with me until they had pillaged me entirely.

Next time I went to see this curious village, I made one of a party of eight, and we had no unpleasantness of any kind. The dogs came at us and were dispersed by volleys of stones as before; but the men did not come to us. We saw them

slouching about their caves and basking in the sun, but they apparently confined their personal demands for money to smaller parties, and only sent down the younger and more attractive of their female kind to try and wheedle small coins out of us.

On my return to Las Palmas after my first visit to Atalaya, I found that I had inadvertently brought away with me many living souvenirs of my contact with the so-called potters. I do not like the agile *pulex*, not only on account of his irritating habits, but because I consider him to be the personification of ingratitude. For months and months a Spaniard may take care of him, provide him with food and shelter, and make a constant companion of him; yet, directly an Englishman comes in his way, the ungrateful insect will desert his benefactor without a word, and strike up an intimate acquaintance with the well-fed stranger. In England, it is not considered polite to talk about this active little creature in public, but in these islands, it is as common a topic of conversation with the inhabitants as the weather is with us, and it is a subject which much interests everybody. In fact the islanders are great practical entomologists, and they have unrivalled opportunities for studying their science. Not only does the *pulex* occupy an honourable position in the social life of these people, but it is

even referred to with honest pride in amorous ballads and poems; and no lover is ever certain that his suit will be favourably received, until he has been invited to join in the chase of the lady's humble but constant companions.

I should imagine that the habits of the inhabitants of these islands were such as to make epidemics take to them very kindly, for they are certainly not of the opinion that cleanliness is next to godliness; or, at all events, they do not act as if they held that opinion; while, as for sanitation, no Canary-islander could even explain what the word meant. Once, in trying to introduce the cultivation of tobacco from Cuba, they introduced some yellow-fever; the former did not do at all well, but the latter succeeded beyond the worst expectations. In 1811, the date of the last outbreak in Teneriffe, the yellow-fever carried off every fifth person of the population of Port Orotava. The last epidemic occurred in Grand Canary in 1851, when an outbreak of cholera decimated the island. None of these visitations, however, have made the people careful as to the purity of the water they drink; nor has it led them to abandon the patriarchal custom of throwing out animal and vegetable refuse into the streets, in the lower parts of the towns.

In the inland villages the peasantry seem to

regard the mountain streams, upon the banks of which their houses stand, more in the light of natural sewers and laundry works than as affording a pure water supply. Sometimes three or four villages are watered by one stream, and the people of the one that is the nearest to the sea have the advantage of having their drinking water impregnated with all the offal, soap used by washerwomen, and filth of the villages above. But they do not mind, for they know nothing of the danger they are running. And it is not probable that they will become more enlightened for some time to come, for the priests are well aware that the ignorance of the peasantry is the best possible security for the tenure of their sway; and they are very careful to screen their flocks from any knowledge of modern scientific discoveries, describing cholera, yellow-fever, typhus, and such scourges as visitations sent by an offended Providence, because some ceremony or rite has been neglected or omitted. The climate, however, is so wonderfully healthy, that but very little evil ensues, and this is particularly the case with Grand Canary. The summer heats there are rarely more intense than those of England, while, in the winter months, the temperature might be compared to that of May. In fact, except when the wind blows from the neighbouring Sahara, and parches up the land with

its hot and stifling breath, the weather in Grand Canary is always charming; and these Harmattan winds, as they are called further down the African coast, neither occur frequently nor last long.

Grand Canary being a Spanish possession, *fiestas* and saints' days occur frequently, and the people seem nothing loth to be idle and to take advantage of these numerous holidays. The most popular saints with the peasants are the agricultural ones, Isidro Labrador and Maria, his wife. The *fiesta* of these celestial luminaries takes place at Whitsuntide. On Whitsunday the two images are removed from their niches in their various hermitages or chapels, and carried in procession round the villages, escorted by bands of music, priests, legions of superstitious peasants, and, in districts where there are any stationed, by detachments of soldiers, who are lent by the authorities to swell the pageant. In the evening the images are replaced in their chapels, there to remain amidst dust and cobwebs until the next year. As this saint is not much known out of Spain and her colonies, the following history may be new to the reader.

In the tenth century there resided at Caravanchel, near Madrid, a wealthy landed proprietor, whose name has, very properly, not been handed down to posterity. This man had in his employ a certain farm labourer named Isidro Labrador, who was remarkable for his

extreme piety, in that he never neglected the welfare of his soul, or the duties of the Church, to labour for his employer. Thus, often when his master imagined that Isidro was driving the plough, or hoeing up the weeds in the fields, that zealous son of the Church might be found sunk into sweet spiritual contemplation in the cool shadow of a neighbouring chapel. And so earnest was he in the performance of his devotions, that every day he passed two or three hours in prayer in the chapel; but, being of a modest disposition, and not seeking commendation from man, he never mentioned this praiseworthy custom to his employer when he went to him to receive his weekly wages. Such, however, is the depravity of the world that men will turn even the most estimable virtues into causes of accusation; and it happened that certain slanderers informed the land-owner of Isidro's pious habit, so distorting the truth as to make it appear that it was through idleness and hypocrisy that he went to the chapel, so as to avoid his just labour in the fields. The master was much enraged when he heard this, and it would have fared badly with Isidro had not the saints warned him of his danger; so he fled to the chapel and remained in adoration there till nightfall. That very night the saints caused the land-owner to dream, that every day, while Isidro was discharging his religious duties at

the chapel, the plough that he had left was guided by angels wearing silver crowns ; and, as he was not an utterly impious and abandoned man, he was satisfied in his mind by this dream, and troubled Isidro no more. Thus was the saint miraculously preserved from persecution. Not long after this the proprietor was walking over his estate, watching his men at work and looking at his crops, when he suddenly felt thirsty, and none of his people had any water to give him. Isidro, hearing his complaints, took pity on him ; and, returning good for evil, led him to a fertile valley which lay in the lower part of the estate. There digging a pit with his shovel, a miracle was at once performed, for water appeared in it, and the deeper he dug into the earth the more water flowed into the pit. Upon this the master at once perceived that Isidro was a saint, and, his fame and his miracles being bruited abroad, he was held in great reverence.

When Isidro was well stricken in years he married a young and buxom damsel ; and, although she was exceedingly virtuous and discreet, he was much troubled in mind about her. For they had not been married many months when the saint discovered that his wife put into his evening porridge of lentils certain potions to make him sleep soundly ; and then, in the night, she would silently quit the

nuptial couch, and, leaving the house, not return till nearly daybreak. Much disturbed in mind, Isidro sought the advice of his brother saints as to how he should act in this matter; and they counselled him to say nothing about it to his wife, but to watch her and follow her when she left the house. Accordingly, next evening, while pretending to eat his porridge as usual, he poured it under the table; and then, in the dead of the night, when his wife slipped noiselessly from the bed and went out without waiting to put on any clothes, he got up and followed her. Although the night was dark, he observed that she bore in her hand the *alcuza*, or vessel containing oil, which was reserved for use in the house. On leaving the house his wife walked to the banks of the river Manzanares, where Isidro saw a young and rubicund priest, waiting for her with a small boat. The young priest assisted her into the boat, and they both crossed the river to a shrine which was upon the opposite bank; but as Isidro had no boat he could go no farther, so he sat down on the bank and waited. Before cock-crow his wife and the young priest recrossed the river, and the latter, wishing her farewell and promising to meet her again next night, went away. Directly he had gone, Isidro came out from the bushes where he had been hiding, and, confronting his wife, asked her what took her to the

shrine at night. She at once answered, without hesitation, that she went there to replenish the votive lamps with oil; and, in proof, she showed her *alcuza*, which was now empty. Now as the holy man well knew that all wrong-doers are covered with confusion when suddenly interrogated concerning their conduct, he at once saw that his wife was speaking the truth, and that she also was a saint; so he confessed to her his unworthy suspicion and entreated her forgiveness, which she gave very readily. After this they lived for the remainder of their days in great harmony and mutual confidence, and Isidro gave his wife permission to go out at night and replenish all the lamps at all the shrines in the neighbourhood. She, being a pious and excellent woman, gladly availed herself of this liberty and looked after all the shrines; but the one by the banks of the Manzanares was her especial care, and the one she visited most frequently. Thus her reputation grew great, and the fame of herself and her husband spread so far that the Pope gave orders for their canonisation, and their names were inscribed in the calendar of the Church as San Isidro Labrador and Santa Maria de la Cabeza.

After death, Isidro performed another miracle, which is thus described. The Queen, Isabel la Catolica, having recovered from a serious illness though his

intercession, made a pilgrimage to his tomb to return thanks. One of the maids of honour with the Queen, when kissing the foot of the saint, bit off his great toe, and held it in her mouth to keep as a relic; thinking thereby to show the great respect in which she held him. But the saint was displeased, and she was instantly so far deprived of speech as to be unable to articulate sufficiently clearly to be understood. Being frightened at this, she ejected the holy morsel; and, by a second miracle, the power of speech was restored to her. All this was seen and testified to by many witnesses.

Apparently the principal thing aimed at by the clergy in their religious services in these islands is theatrical effect. Strolling into the cathedral of Las Palmas one morning a little before noon, I found the altar, which stands back from the body of the building in a kind of recess, completely veiled by a black curtain, which was drawn across the proscenium, like the drop-scene of a theatre. Behind this screen, hidden from the few people in the cathedral, were some persons, priests probably, intoning in Latin; and the responses were taken up at the further end of the cathedral by choristers, who were also hidden from view, in a little edifice built on acoustic principles. The building was dimly lighted with tapers, and the atmosphere faint and heavy with the odour of incense

which was being burned somewhere out of sight; and the reverberations of the voices of the concealed performers, as they now rose and now fell in waves of sound which rolled round the vast central dome, certainly had a very striking effect; which, taken in conjunction with the dim, mysterious light, and the stupefying narcotic of the incense, seemed to strongly affect some hysterical women who were kneeling on the marble pavement. I do not know if similar services are common in Roman Catholic places of worship, or if they are ever held in Europe; but it was quite new to me, and, for a moment, I almost imagined I was standing in an Egyptian temple, assisting at some mystic rite in honour of Osiris; and the whole performance seemed to me to strongly resemble a theatrical incantation scene.

Among other extraordinary clerical effigies in this island is a most strange one in the church of Teror, a small but picturesque village, about eleven miles from Las Palmas. It is a wooden image, covered with gems, and furnished with four arms; and which any one acquainted with the deities of India would suppose to be intended to represent the Hindoo god Vishnu. It is, however, only meant for the Virgin, and tradition asserts that it was found miraculously nailed to a pine tree in a neighbouring wood, some centuries ago. Why, though, she should have four

arms is a riddle which I doubt if even a priest could solve satisfactorily.

The etymology of the word Canary is a subject of some dispute. Pliny said that the island was so named on account of its abounding with dogs of a very large size; yet, when the Spaniards first had intercourse with the island, the dog was an animal unknown to the inhabitants. The epithet of Grand was added by John de Betancour in 1405, not on account of its size, for it is not the largest of the group, but because of the warlike nature of its inhabitants. This addition, however, has led to a very natural error; and, in most encyclopedias, Grand Canary is described as being the largest of the Canary Islands, whereas that distinction really belongs to Teneriffe.

Any description of the Canaries would be incomplete without some reference to that strange optical illusion, which caused the islanders to fancy they saw an island out in the ocean to the westward of the group. Washington Irving says: "One of the most singular geographical illusions on record is that which, for a while, haunted the imaginations of the inhabitants of the Canaries. They fancied they beheld a mountainous island, of about ninety leagues in length, lying far to the westward. It was only seen at intervals, though in perfectly clear and serene

weather. To some it appeared one hundred leagues distant, to others forty, to others only fifteen or eighteen. On attempting to reach it, however, it somehow or other eluded the search, and was nowhere to be found."

This miraculous island was called St. Brandan, and was supposed by some to be a terrestrial paradise, in which Enoch and Elijah resided in a state of beatitude; being attended by a retinue of ravens, attired in shovel hats and half-clerical habiliments of rusty black, and having a chariot of fire at hand, ready to supply that carriage exercise so suitable for their advanced age. Others maintained that it was the fabled island of the Seven Cities, where, in days bygone, seven bishops, with a large following of monks, had taken refuge from the Moors; each prelate founding a city for himself and his particular followers, who contrived, in some extraordinary manner, to perpetuate their species without the assistance of any of the fairer half of creation. It was also said to be the Atlantis of Plato, the Antilla of Aristotle, and the Garden of Eden, in which the brothers of Adam, who do not appear to have had a morbid craving for fruit, still existed in a state of primitive ignorance; but the belief which became most current was that the island was one on which a Scotch abbot, named St. Brandan, had landed

in the sixth century. In course of time it became known by his name, and was actually laid down to the west of the Canaries in maps.

Various expeditions were despatched by the Spaniards in search of this island, one as late as 1721; naturally all were without result. In 1570, persons were not wanting who were ready to swear that they had landed on the isle. These witnesses were generally Portuguese, a nation endowed with a highly imaginative character combined with a startling disregard of probabilities.

Pedro Vello, the pilot of a Portuguese vessel, declared that his ship was driven in a storm close to St. Brandan; and that, anchoring in a bay, he went ashore with several of the crew. A limpid stream ran down to the bay from a wooded valley, close to which they discovered the footprints of an individual who must have had unusually large feet, since they left an impression in the sand thirty-six inches in length. They naturally found a piece of the true cross, and then, perceiving some sheep at a distance, two of the party proceeded to hunt them with the stimulating spear. These sheep were, no doubt, holy; for, while this sacrilegious act was being perpetrated, the heavens began to darken, and a violent tempest arose. Two men on board the ship calling out that she was dragging her anchor,

Vello got into his boat, and went on board in such a hurry that he neglected to call in the gallant sportsmen. Directly he set foot on board, the day became obscured, the sky lowered angrily, and the island suddenly disappeared; while, as the ship was whirled away in a terrific hurricane, a deep and ominous voice was heard pronouncing upon his two companions a doom which may be rendered in this modern equivalent: "All persons found trespassing in pursuit of game will be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law."

An inquisitor of Grand Canary, with that aptitude for extracting information from witnesses which so distinguished his kindly class, gleaned some further particulars concerning the island from one Marcos Verde, whom he had summoned to appear before him. He deposed that he was sailing from Morocco to the Canaries, when, somehow or other, he chanced on the island, which lay quite out of his proper course. Filled with honest pride, he landed with several of the crew, and directed two men to cut down a tree, so that he might carry it to the Canaries, as a proof that he had visited St. Brandan. This tree, like the sheep, was also holy; for no sooner had the sacrilegious axe bitten into the trunk, than the heavens assumed a dark and threatening aspect, and the terrified mariners hurried to their vessel, just in time to reach her

before she was swept miles out to sea by a furious tempest.

Another Portuguese, whose name has been lost to fame, asserted that, being driven out of his proper course by a gale, he had lighted upon St. Brandan. He attempted to land upon the island, which was but of small extent; but the beach of smooth black rock was so steep and slippery, that it was with the utmost difficulty he could clamber up. Having reached the summit of the isle, he commenced boring a hole in the ground with an auger, intending to plant therein a pole bearing a notice to the effect that the island had been taken possession of in the name of His Most Christian Majesty; when he was horrified and filled with dread at observing a blood-red fluid flowing from the hole. At the same moment he felt the earth under his feet move as in the shock of an earthquake, and, his hair standing on end, he fled to his boat and cast off from the island. Scarcely had he pulled half-a-dozen strokes from the shore, when a violent convulsion of nature ensued. Vast cascades of water were hurled into the air from a submarine volcano at one extremity of the island, while a promontory at the other extremity was reared up on end; then the entire island slowly sank in the ocean and disappeared from view.

Since the last expedition sent in search of St.

Brandan in October, 1721, under the command of Don Gaspar de Dominguez, who was accompanied by two friars with holy water to exorcise the unquiet spirit of the island, the mysterious isle has been seen several times. A record of the testimony of persons who have seen it is preserved in a book in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, from which I have extracted the following.

“Pero Diaz, monk of the holy order of San Francisco, deposeth: That, at 6 a.m. on the third day of May of this year of grace (1759), he observed, from the village of Alaxero, in the island of Gomera, the enchanted island of St. Brandan; the general mountainous outline of which appeared to him to be marvellously like unto the head and shoulders of the blessed St. Anthony, playing upon a dulcimer.

“Fernando Correa, fisherman, deposeth: That, at the same hour and place, the saints graciously permitted him to partake of the said manifestation; but, to his more carnal eyes, the island assumed the appearance of the head of a mule, playing upon a flute.”

Here follows the name of Antonio Josef Manrique, curate of Alaxero, and those of thirty-nine other persons, who were summoned by Pero Diaz to observe the miraculous isle.

“This day, the 5th of June, 1801, Thomas Smith,

an Englishman, deposeseth: That he resides in the island of Palma; that seventeen days ago, when returning to his abode by night from a merry-making in the city of Santa Cruz de la Palma, he saw distinctly, about forty leagues to the westward, two unknown islands rising out of the ocean. His Holiness the Cardinal Archbishop is of opinion, that the unusual spectacle of two islands may be designed by the blessed saints as a warning to this follower of a pernicious heresy to recant his errors, and take refuge in the bosom of the true Church."

The next entry is in 1825, when Pedro Gomez, a muleteer, saw St. Brandan, at dawn, from the summit of the Peak of Teneriffe, to which place he had resorted to fill his panniers with snow. He described it as lying about three hundred miles to the west of Teneriffe, and resembling a roast kid stuffed with *gofio*.

"In this year, 1841, it is reported that three blind men, in the vicinity of the Convent of Our Blessed Lady of Grief, in the island of Palma, distinctly saw the enchanted island of St. Brandan, about one thousand miles to the west, during a momentary miraculous recovery of their sight. Being pressed to describe its appearance, they averred that the vision had lasted such a short duration of time, that they were incapable of delineating its form."

This is the last entry recorded ; but it is announced that the island has been seen many times since by favoured individuals, full of the spirit of grace and *aguardiente* ; and the existence of St. Brandan is still an article of faith among the credulous peasantry of the Canaries.

CHAPTER X.

TENERIFFE.

Santa Cruz—Spanish Soldiers—Plaza de la Constitucion—The Town
—The Alameda—The Cathedral—Nelson's Repulse at Santa
Cruz—Our Lady of Candelaria—Comparative Superstitions.

TENERIFFE, as seen from the outside, is rather grand than picturesque. Rounding Anagra Point, the most northerly point of the island, with its white lighthouse standing on the summit of the dark cliff, a rugged and majestic view is opened up. Trees there are none, and but a scanty verdure clings to the stony faces of the mountains; but there are stupendous precipices and craggy heights, piled up one above another, and intersected by deep and dark ravines that appear inaccessible to man. The chaotic confusion of the volcanic rocks is astounding, and where the base of the mountain has been worn down by the ceaseless fretting of the waves into bald scarps, the traces of mighty convulsions are patent. Here and there molten treams have been shot up from below, forcing the

superincumbent rocks into all kinds of unusual positions, sometimes vertical and sometimes diagonal; while at the cloud-capped summits of the heights, the ragged outline assumes the appearance of Titanic fortifications, forming a chain of ruined turrets and walls.

Gliding closely past this wild and gloomy coast, we come to an anchor in the roadstead of Santa Cruz. In the foreground is the mole, over which the masts of small vessels lying under its shelter project like a clump of spears; while behind the batteries which fringe the shore, the town stretches back in a gradual ascent of gray and white buildings with red roofs. Landing behind the mole, where the sea still sets in with a heavy swell, we leave the square fort of St. Philip on the left hand, and passing a number of warehouses, customs offices, and *cafés*, ascend a flight of stone steps and stand upon the Plaza de la Constitucion, the principal square of the city. It is early morning; the church and cathedral bells are ringing musically for matins, dark-eyed Spanish women in *mantillas* are coming and going from prayers, peasants attired in long *ponchos* are arriving from the country districts with fruit and vegetables, carried on mules in pack-saddles decorated with strings of bells that jingle pleasantly down the quiet street; while townswomen of the working

class, with white shawls thrown over their heads, and whose ruddy brown cheeks, reddish hair, and gray eyes seem to indicate a preponderance of Guanche over Spanish blood, pass to and fro in parties of two and three.

The sentries come out of their tent-shaped sentry boxes, painted with vertical stripes of alternate green and white, which stand in front of the Governor's house on the right of the Plaza. They yawn and stretch themselves after their nap, and proceed to roll the matutinal cigarette, giving their rifles to a friendly idler to hold in the meanwhile. Presently more soldiers come strolling round; the linesmen attired in immensely long and immeasurably shabby old blue tunics, embellished with green worsted epaulettes, and in trowsers of coarse red serge that are, on the other hand, far too short; while the artillerymen rejoice in short blue shell-jackets, adorned with diminutive pointed tails. From the general air of shabbiness about the uniforms, you infer that the exchequer is in a consumptive condition; and you account, in your own mind, for the undue length of the one garment and the scantiness of the other, by the theory that a certain quantity of cloth is served out to each man, and that as the Government were short of the red material, they made up the deficiency by issuing

an extra yard of the blue. The home-made appearance of the uniforms lends this supposition additional weight. Notwithstanding the absence of that smartness which is so dear to the British officer, these soldiers are evidently made of good stuff. They are bronzed, bearded, and sturdy men, averaging apparently from twenty-five to thirty-five years of age; and they look as if they could march four miles for every two that could be accomplished by the boys who form the first line of our own army, which, as the success of campaigns depends at least as much upon legs as upon arms, is a matter of some importance. The whole available force in the Canary Islands is, including the militia, said to be about 20,000 men.

I cannot sufficiently admire the wisdom of the local authorities in designating their square, Plaza de la Constitucion. The first time that I visited Teneriffe it bore the legend "Plaza del Rey;" at my next visit it was called "Plaza de la Republica," and on the third occasion it again rejoiced in the appellation of "Plaza del Rey." Now this perpetual alteration of the sign, in compliance with the rise and fall of the numerous mushroom Governments in the mother-country, was so expensive that at last, to the disgust of all sign-painters in Santa Cruz, who vainly attempted to get up a *pronuncia-*

miento, the authorities wisely fixed upon the title of "Plaza de la Constitucion;" constitution being a comprehensive epithet which suits any kind of Government, whether monarchical, republican, or dictatorial.

The streets of Santa Cruz, like those of Funchal, the capital of Madeira, present a sombre appearance, owing to the windows on the ground-floors of the houses being small, and grated with heavy iron bars, and the buildings constructed of a dark volcanic stone, which is hewn into huge blocks. Large carved doorways, frequently arched and ornamented with sculpture, and sometimes sufficiently lofty for the ingress and egress of a carriage, open on to the stone footpaths. Entering such a doorway, one traverses a stone-flagged hall, and emerges upon an inner courtyard, or *patio*, in the centre of the house. Piazzas run round all four sides of the quadrangle, and on these open the doors and windows of the principal apartments. Flowering shrubs, flowers, and creeping plants adorn the square, the latter climbing up to the piazzas, and twining from post to post, so as to form cool and shady retreats from the hot noonday sun. Frequently a small fountain is found in the centre of the court, giving forth that soft lulling plash of falling water which is so refreshing in a hot climate.

All the rooms on the ground-floor are store-rooms or cellars, and the inmates live in the upper rooms, to which a staircase from the *patio* leads. The principal apartment, a kind of reception-hall, usually overlooks the street and occupies the entire frontage of the house, the bed and other rooms being distributed on the three remaining sides. To the English eye they all appear bare and comfortless. The furniture is scanty, grass mats are dotted about like oases in a vast desert of carpetless floor, and curtains are rare. As for ornaments and those little nicknacks which enliven and make a room pretty, they are never seen; and the few pictures that hang upon the whitewashed walls are invariably execrably executed and tawdry tinsel-covered prints of hideous saints. Art is at a very low ebb in the Canaries; but everything is remarkably solid, and the wooden lattices of the windows are frequently curiously carved.

The streets are paved with blocks of volcanic stone, beautifully squared, and regularly set. Although years old, they appear quite new; and, were it not for the grass that springs up everywhere from the interstices, one might imagine that the pavement had only been put down a day or two before. In the lower parts of the town cobblestones are used, and there too, especially in the

direction of the fortress of San Juan, at the southern end of Santa Cruz, the streets are anything but clean, offal and refuse of every kind being thrown into them by the poorer inhabitants.

The public garden, or Alameda, of Santa Cruz, is a curious little place, about fifty yards square, furnished with seats, trees, sub-tropical flowers, and a fountain. Its principal attraction in the eyes of the natives appears to be a kind of temple, brilliant with stained glass and paint, where poisons in the shape of eau d'or, absinthe, and parfait amour are vended by the presiding high-priest to the votaries. Here may be seen the frolicsome Spaniard sadly taking his pleasure with his wife, or the wife of somebody else; walking round and round the gravelled foot-paths with a stern and careworn air, as if the woes of existence were almost too much for him. Even the little children partake of this gloomy character, and one never sees them running about, laughing and playing like English children. They promenade up and down with a staid and dignified air, attired in the choicest flowers of their wardrobes, like premature men and women; and the little girls manipulate their fans, and imitate the coquettish airs of their elders, as if to the manner born. This kind of priggish precociousness is not pleasant to see in children, and whenever I

observe a young Spaniard, of the mature age of nine or ten, bowing and scraping, and bending over the hand of a woman old enough to be his grandmother, with his hand on his heart, and a *blasé* look on his face, I always feel inclined to box his ears. I suppose it would outrage the dignity of these young dons to play at such rough games as cricket and football.

Santa Cruz positively swarms with Government officials, who may always be recognised by their arrogance, and by the fact that the legion of beggars never importunes them for alms. The Governor of the Canary Islands resides in Teneriffe, while an *audiencia* administers the government of Grand Canary. The Governor is supported by an enormous staff of satellites, whose chief duty seems to be to keep an eye on the political prisoners, generals and other dignitaries, who have been unfortunate in their *pronunciamientos*, and who abound here.

The cathedral of Santa Cruz is considered one of the sights of Teneriffe, though it possesses no architectural merit, nor anything inside worth a second glance. There is, however, a large array of wax dolls, carefully preserved in glass cases, before which one may see the ignorant peasantry bending in pure idolatry; for their intellect is not sufficiently cultivated to enable them to draw the fine line of

distinction between worshipping an actual image and worshipping the idea which it represents. Some of the saints look sadly depraved characters, and the waxen image of San Jago appeared admirably suited for Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors. The raiment of these saints is absurdly grotesque. Those of the fairer sex are attired in ruffs and stomachers, after the fashion of the last century, and the male saints are dressed in costumes ranging from the trunk-hose and doublet to red morocco boots and cavalier hats and feathers. Besides these, there are immense pictures of allegorical scriptural subjects, in which the drawing and treatment is vile; and which, I should think, were purchased by the foot, since they never could have had any value beyond the cost of the canvas and paint. Some of them are perfect pictorial enigmas, which no one but a Spanish priest could solve. An African trader, whom I once met in this cathedral, said that looking at these pictures made him feel as if he had had too much to drink; and I never met a man better qualified by experience to recognise that feeling. But the whole building is fitted up in the very worst taste, and, instead of being satisfied with honest mahogany, teak, or yellow-wood reading-desks, pulpits, and other ecclesiastical upholstery, the priests must needs have all the wood-

work painted in imitation of lapis-lazuli, malachite, jasper, and other stones; painted too so badly that it would not deceive the veriest novice, even at a long range.

In the same building are two small English boat-flags, which are carefully preserved in a glass case, and further protected by a railing. The Spaniards are quite right to take such care of them, for they have not many such trophies, and could not easily obtain others like them. These flags were lost during the action in which Nelson lost his arm, and the intelligent Spanish guide points them out with much pride to the casual Briton, remarking that that hero has been greatly overrated, as he was easily beaten, and these trophies wrested from him, by the gallant militia of the island.

The story of this engagement has been already told a hundred times; but it may be new to some of my readers, so, at the risk of being wearisome, I will insert it. In the early part of July, 1797, the Earl of St. Vincent detached, from the fleet cruising before Cadiz, a squadron consisting of three sail of the line, three frigates, and a cutter, to make an attack on Santa Cruz, and attempt the capture of a galleon anchored in the bay. This service was entrusted to Nelson, who arrived off Teneriffe on the 15th July, and made immediate preparations for landing the

seamen and marines. A heavy gale of wind prevented an attempt which had been fixed for the 20th, and on the 22nd a body who had been landed to carry the heights of the Paso Alto, to the north of the town, had to be re-embarked, that position being found too strong for the force available.

The long interval that had elapsed since the arrival of the squadron off the island had naturally been well utilised by the Spaniards, who had got several new guns into position, and concentrated all the militia and troops in the island at the point of threatened attack. On the evening of the 24th the frigates anchored about two miles to the north of the town, as a feint, to draw off a portion of the garrison in that direction; and about 11 p.m. about 1,100 men embarked in boats and the *Fox* cutter, to endeavour to carry the mole. The extreme darkness of the night and the rough state of the weather rendered it impracticable for the boats to keep together; and about half-past one on the morning of the 25th, only the cutter, Nelson's boat, and a few others arrived off the mole. They thought they were undiscovered, but the alarm was suddenly sounded, and a fire opened from more than thirty guns and a considerable body of troops who were stationed along the shore. By this fire the cutter was so injured that she immediately went down with ninety-seven men, a

shot struck Nelson on the right elbow and so disabled him that he was obliged to be carried back to his ship, and another boat was sunk with eight seamen. In spite of all this opposition the British effected a landing, and immediately stormed and carried the mole-head, which was defended by 300 men and six twenty-four pounders. Having spiked these guns, our men were about to advance, when they were checked by a most destructive fire which was opened from the citadel and houses near the mole.

In the meantime, Captain Trowbridge, with the division of boats under his command, being unable to reach the mole, pushed on shore under the battery close to the south of the citadel; but the surf was so heavy that many of the boats put back, and those that did not were immediately swamped, so that the men's ammunition was destroyed. Collecting a few men, however, Captain Trowbridge pushed on to the Plaza, the appointed place of rendezvous, and, not meeting any of the other detachments, he sent a summons to the citadel to surrender. No answer was received to this summons, and Captain Trowbridge, being joined by a few men who had landed further to the south, found himself at daybreak with a body of 340 men, confronted by a force of some 8,000 Spaniards, who, with several field-pieces, commanded all the streets. The boats being all stove in, and

there being no possibility of receiving a reinforcement, he sent a flag of truce to the Governor, offering to capitulate on condition that the British should be allowed to re-embark with their arms. They were to take their own boats, if any were saved, and, if not, the Spaniards were to provide others. In case of compliance with these terms, he engaged that the ships should not further molest the town, nor attack any one of the Canary Islands. This astonishing proposal was accepted by the Governor, and the men marched to the mole-head and embarked in boats furnished by the Spaniards. The Governor liberally supplied the retreating invaders with biscuits and wine, removed their wounded to the hospital, and even gave them permission to send on shore and purchase any provisions the squadron might require. Amongst the wreckage of the boats washed up on the steep beach were found the two boat-flags, which are now so carefully preserved in the cathedral. The British loss amounted to 114 killed and drowned, and 105 wounded.

The only other occasion upon which we have made a descent upon the island was in 1657, when a fleet, under Admiral Blake, came off Santa Cruz and destroyed the Spanish fleet of galleons which had put into the roadstead. The inhabitants say that the town was then defenceless, whereas, at the

time of Nelson's attack, the fortifications must have been formidable, although the guns mounted in the batteries of San Cristoval and San Pedro are now obsolete. A few years ago the town would have been at the mercy of a single gun-boat, but in 1881 an armament of modern heavy artillery was sent to the island, and a work of considerable strength has since been constructed near the Paso Alto.

The country in the immediate neighbourhood of Santa Cruz being very sterile, nothing much is produced but the prickly-pear, which is grown in terraces on the hill slopes for the cultivation of the cochineal insect. In the spring of the year each leaf or lobe of the prickly-pear is swathed in linen; and a plantation so adorned looks, at a little distance, like an array of bandaged hands. The reason of this practice is that at that season the queen cochineal insect, so to speak, is placed on the plant; and the linen wrappers are to keep her from being washed off by rain, or blown off by wind. This work is principally performed by women, who are themselves bandaged up from head to foot, like mummies, to escape being lacerated by the poisonous thorns.

The way in which every little piece of alluvial soil is scraped up and carried off to a garden is marvellous to behold. Long processions of camels, each with a large box full of earth on its back, may be

seen almost daily coming into the town; and this earth is used for making terrace gardens. The camel is not a nice animal to meet in a narrow street, for he has an unpleasant habit of reaching out his telescopic neck, and taking a mouthful of coat and trowsers out of you. They move so quietly that you cannot hear them coming behind you, and I know few things more startling, than when you are quietly strolling along, to suddenly feel a hot breath down the back of your neck. When they do not do this, they nibble unexpectedly at your elbow; and they are quite cunning enough to know where the funny-bone is, and how to get most agility and amusement out of you. Some people say these animals are indigenous to Fuerteventura, but I have been unable to find that any of the earlier Spanish writers mention them as being there when the island was first occupied, although they speak of goats and cattle.

About eleven miles to the south of Santa Cruz, on the sea-shore, is the shrine of Our Lady of Candelaria, one of the most celebrated of Spanish saints, and the patroness in particular of Canary Island fishermen. The shrine consists of a cave with a chapel, and is richly endowed with votive offerings, being, perhaps, the most wealthy in the island. The image in this shrine is about three feet

in height, made of a dark-hued wood of a reddish colour; the face and hands are unpainted, while the garments are coloured. It appears either to have been the figure-head of a small vessel, or one of those images of saints with which, in days long bygone, the poops of Spanish and Portuguese caravels were adorned; and the legend connected with it bears out this supposition, as it is said to have been found on the beach at Candelária. In 1464, when the Spaniards first visited Teneriffe, they took away with them a Guanche youth, whom they of course converted to the Roman religion, and baptized by the name of Antonio. This boy, observing the great reverence with which his captors regarded the various images of saints that were on board the caravel, informed them that there was an image of the same kind in Teneriffe, which had been washed ashore after a storm. From his description of it the Spaniards told him that it must be an image of the Virgin Mary. Some time after Antonio escaped to Teneriffe, and, happening to see the image again, he informed his fellow-countrymen that it represented the mother of the Lord of the universe. The Guanches had not treated it hitherto with any greater respect than they paid to other wreckage, but, on hearing this account of it, they set it up in a cave and treated it with much reverence.

The foregoing is the history of the miraculous image, and, besides being both possible and probable, it may be observed that it is the one given by the Spanish historians who wrote before Our Lady of Candelaria had acquired such a widespread reputation. Naturally, when the island was subdued, the Spanish priests took advantage of the veneration in which the image was held, and turned it to their own account; building up, on the above slight foundation, a mass of fabrications which are accepted by the credulous and ignorant peasantry and fishermen as unquestionable truths. According to the history, as narrated by the priests, the image arrived in the island in the year 1390, that is to say, about one hundred years before the Spanish conquest. They say that, one morning, when two goatherds were driving their flocks towards a cave in the ravine at Candelaria they saw the holy image standing upon a rock on the sea-shore, at the mouth of the ravine. These goatherds mistook it for a living woman, which, however, it does not in the least resemble; and, as the goats would not pass it, they made signs to it to move. As it took no notice of them, one of them picked up a stone to throw at it, when, strange to say, his arm became fixed, and he could not drop the stone. The other goatherd, seeing this, went towards the image and tried to cut off its hand with his obsidian knife, still labouring under the

strange delusion that a living woman was before him ; but, instead of harming the image, he only cut his own hand. Enraged at this, he made another attempt to mutilate it, but only succeeded in cutting himself again. Upon this the goatherds concluded that the image came from heaven, a place of which they had no idea, and, going to the king of the district, told of what had happened. The latter at once assembled all his people, and the entire population proceeded to the ravine, where, finding the image still in the same position, they were greatly struck with admiration and reverence. The king, however, ordered the two goatherds to carry it to his cave. They took hold of it accordingly, and immediately upon touching it were cured, to the no small astonishment of the spectators. The image remained in the king's cave till about 1465, when Diego de Herrera, the Governor of Lanzarote, was so moved by the descriptions of the above-mentioned Guanche convert, Antonio, that he despatched some Guanches who were in his service to steal it. On its arrival in Lanzarote the valuable prize was received with great demonstrations of joy, and was carried in solemn procession to the church of Rubicon, where it was carefully deposited on the altar. The image apparently did not like its new abode so well as the cave of the Guanche king, for next morning it was found with its face turned to the

wall ; and, although turned round again every day, was always found in that position in the morning. The people were panic-stricken at this marvellous sign of the displeasure of the image, and Diego de Herrera, imagining that it was unwilling to remain in Lanzarote, sailed to Teneriffe and restored it to the natives, who received it with much pomp, and put it back in its cave.

Since then the image has gained great celebrity as the protectress of seamen—a reputation which, it seems to me, may be very easily earned. Hundreds of fishing boats go out annually to fish on the banks off the African coast. When a squall or a storm comes on, the fishermen implore the protection of Our Lady of Candelaria, and promise her candles and pretty little things to hang up in her shrine. If the boat goes down, nothing more is heard about its crew, and nobody can say that the image failed its worshippers in the hour of need. On the other hand, if the boat lives through the storm, the fishermen at once attribute it to the powerful protection of their patroness, and, returning on shore, spread her reputation far and wide. On the girdle, skirt, neck, and sleeve-band of the image are certain Roman characters, which are evidently of much more recent date than the figure itself. The priests, having put these on themselves, are of course able to interpret

their meaning ; which they do in the manner best suited for deceiving their gullible parishioners, and for keeping up the popularity of the shrine.

There is a strange resemblance between the grosser forms of Roman Catholicism, as seen in these islands, and the fetish worship of the negro tribes in the Gulf of Guinea. Both these islanders and the negroes profess to believe in one mighty and omnipotent deity, whom, however, they both practically ignore, worshipping subordinate gods, fetishes, or saints instead. These lesser deities are represented by tangible objects. The Spaniard, being a better workman, has images of wax or wood, made in imitation of the human form, and attired in clothing such as he wears, or his ancestors used to wear. The negro, being a poor modeller, makes a grotesque clay image, round the waist of which he ties a strip of rag, to represent such scanty clothing as he himself wears ; while, in districts where clay is scarce, or where there are no modellers at all, a cone of mud or a piece of wood suffices to give his idea both substance and form. Both, if questioned, will unhesitatingly assert that they do not worship these tangible objects, but the persons whom they represent ; and, if asked what then their use may be, they reply that they are useful to keep them in mind of their religious duties.

Each has his own particular deity, of whom he thinks better than of the others; for the Spaniard has his patron saint, and the negro his household or family fetish. Many of these supernatural persons have specialities of their own; thus some cure lameness, some prevent sickness, some remove barrenness, and others, like Our Lady of Candelaria, preserve sailors from the perils of the sea. So too the fetish Tegba, if propitiated, cures sterility; Bo preserves soldiers from injury; So protects from lightning, and Azoon from fire. The Spaniard, to propitiate his fetish or saint, gives him wax candles, cheap mirrors, crucifixes, and other trifles; while his wife thinks her welfare is secured when she hangs her last season's ball-dress on the shoulders of her particular patroness. The negro, having none of these things, offers that which to him is of much more value, namely food and drink, and pours over his clay or wooden image palm-oil, eggs, palm-wine, and rum. Both are so superstitious, and a belief in these fetishes or saints is so much a part of their daily lives, that any attempt to challenge or eradicate it is futile. The negro fetish-priest meets his neighbour and says: "I saw Azoon in the bush the other day. He is much pleased with that palm-oil you gave him; you will be quite safe from fire for some time." While the Spanish priest says to his dupe: "St. So-and-so appeared to me

in a vision last night. I think if you will burn tapers before his shrine for the next fortnight, the safety of your cargo will be assured." In this way, always hearing these supernatural persons spoken of, and frequently meeting people who profess to have seen them, the belief becomes so engrafted into their natures, that they believe in them as implicitly as they do in their own existence; and all goes well for the class who make a living by imposture.

Any person without bias must acknowledge that these two worships, or superstitions, are practically the same, the very slight difference between them being due to the different degrees of civilisation, and their consequent different modes of thought and trains of ideas. Although the Roman Catholic is wilfully blind to this fact, and would never acknowledge that there is the least similarity between the two, the negro is not afflicted by any such mental obscurity. Not very long ago, some Roman Catholic missionaries settled at Whydah, the seaport of the negro kingdom of Dahomey. Intelligence was at once conveyed to the king, at Abomey, the capital, that new white fetish-men had come to the sea-shore, and that they had brought their god with them. The king expressed his surprise at this, it being contrary to what he had heard before concerning the religion of white men, and at once sent

orders for the new god to be brought to him. The missionaries, regarding this as a good opening, sent a number of images of saints, madonnas, and crucifixes to the king, who, when he received them, said he was glad to see that the white man's worship was like his, since they had many gods and so had he, and what they had sent him were very much like his, only better made. He then had the images transported, with much ceremony, beating of drums, and firing of guns, to a fetish house which he had had purposely built for them.

To the student of human nature it will not appear strange that an ignorant and debased peasantry should place full credence in such bugbears as saints, visions, and apparitions, but that men of culture and education should lend their support to bolster up such a belief is indeed a sad spectacle. It is curious to trace the history of such appearances, and to observe how, with the change of religious belief, the nature of the supernatural visitors also changed. The Greeks and Romans used to see apparitions of Bacchus, Minerva, Venus, and others of their deities; but no one has ever heard of any of those mythical personages appearing to man since the downfall of the Greek gods, because, since then, the world has ceased to believe in them. Similarly, when England was a

Roman Catholic country, visions and apparitions of saints occurred as frequently there as they now do in Spain and her colonies; yet no Protestant in England is, in these days, ever troubled by a visit from a saint, whether of his own or the Romish Church. All he sees, or fancies he sees, are solitary spectres, who appear to delight in inhabiting damp and unwholesome houses, attired, even in the most inclement weather, in nothing more substantial than a shroud or sheet; and he fancies he sees these things because he still has a lingering belief in supernatural appearances. In fact, in all ages, when the man of a nervous temperament, with a disordered liver and a quick imagination, has imagined he has seen an apparition, it has been an apparition of something which he has vaguely believed to exist; and how intelligent and educated persons can, in the present day, lend a credulous ear to such absurdities as the manifestations of spiritualism, ghosts, and visions of saints, is one of not the least wonders of the age.

CHAPTER XI.

TENERIFFE.

Its Early History—The Massacre of Centejo—San Cristoval de la Laguna—The Perspiring Portrait—Orotava—El Puerto—Festas—The Orotava Murder—Garachica—The Great Lateral Eruption—Island Tradition—Storms.

IN the preceding chapter I have said that the Spaniards first visited Teneriffe in 1464. In that year Diego de Herrera and the colonising bishop, who had been foiled at Grand Canary in 1462, arrived at the island, and, finding the inhabitants prepared to oppose a landing, assured them that they were only actuated by a desire to cultivate their friendship and trade with them. Being permitted to land on this understanding, Diego went through the farce of taking formal possession of the island, and then returned to Lanzarote. Some years later Sancho Herrera obtained permission to build a tower and fort at Anaso, where the city of Santa Cruz now stands, under the pretext of it being merely for

trading purposes; but the Spanish garrison committed so many outrages that the Guanches rose in arms, razed the buildings to the ground, and put to death the whole garrison except five men, who contrived to escape to the shipping in the port.

The first real invasion took place on May 3rd, 1493, when Alonso de Lugo, having completed the conquest of the island of Palma, arrived with the armament that had been there employed at the port of Anaso, which, on account of the day, the festival of the Holy Cross, he named Santa Cruz. At this time the island was torn by internecine strife, war being waged by the king of Taora (now called Orotava) against the kings of all the other districts of the island.

Disembarking his troops, Alonso de Lugo marched up to the plain where the city of Laguna now stands, and, proceeding as far as the hermitage of Garcia, there encamped. Here he had interviews with the other kings, formed an alliance with them, and then commenced to move against Ventomo, the king of Taora. The latter, hearing of his approach, came to the Spanish camp, accompanied by only 300 picked men, and asked Alonso what he came for. The Spanish leader replied that he came merely to seek his friendship, to request him to embrace Christianity, and to persuade him to become

a vassal of the King of Spain. To these modest proposals the Guanche king proudly replied that as for his friendship, he accepted it most willingly, for it should never be said that he refused that of any man; but that, being a free-born man and subject to no one, he intended to live and die free; that he did not know the King of Spain, but in any case he would not become his or any other person's vassal, while, as for embracing Christianity, he did not know what that meant. "This answer," says a pious historian, "plainly showed the stiffneckedness of this stubborn heathen, who thus continued guilty of the horrible sin of remaining ignorant of the tenets of the true faith."

Having thus answered, the haughty islander at once left the camp with his trusty body-guard, and retired to his own district, into which Alonso de Luga immediately advanced, penetrating as far as Orotava without meeting with any resistance. The numerous herds of cattle in the valley were swept in by his cavalry, the crops were destroyed, such caves as the Spaniards could find were pillaged, and he then, with a vast cavalcade of booty, prepared to thread the narrow and difficult passes which lay in the way of his return to Santa Cruz. Despising the uncivilised islanders, and unconscious of danger, the Spaniards straggled along in a lengthy train, without order,

and mixed up with the flocks and herds which they had taken. No sooner, however, were they well within the mountains, and moving along a narrow defile, whose bed was much encumbered with huge boulders which had fallen from the cliffs that towered above, than a loud cry was raised, and they were fallen upon by the warriors of Ventomo. The surprise was complete, and the Spaniards, entangled with the flocks, were thrown into confusion; while the agile mountaineers, leaping from crag to crag, rained down showers of darts and hurled vast masses of rock upon them. Some of the horsemen endeavoured to spur their steeds up the steep face of the mountain and close with their foes, but only to fall back or be dashed down by the boulders detached from above, and choke the narrow pathway with a crushed and struggling mass of men and horses. Encumbered with the weight of their armour, and entangled in the fastnesses of an unknown country, the Spaniards knew not which way to turn. Every moment men were struck down and trampled under foot, or immense stones, bounding down the steps, ploughed lanes alike through the ranks of the soldiery and the crowds of the bellowing and terrified cattle; until at last, panic-stricken and unable to resist, they sought safety in a precipitate flight, in which

they were closely followed by the victorious Guanches. The pursuit continued for miles; every *barranca* and mountain glen resounded with the din of arms; and the defiles were strewn with the corpses of the vanquished Spaniards. Alonso de Lugo himself narrowly escaped capture. Being struck off his horse by a stone, which knocked out several of his teeth, he was surrounded by a number of Guanches, when an old soldier named Pedro Benitez rushed to his assistance, and cutting down four of his opponents, succeeded in placing his chief upon another horse, and escaping with him from the scene of conflict. In this action the Spaniards lost 600 men, the bulk of their force, and this slaughter had been effected by the 300 Guanches only who formed Ventomo's guard, the remainder of the men of the district, who had been called out, not coming up in time to take part in the battle. The spot where the Spaniards were first attacked was near the village of Centejo, and the defile where the greatest loss occurred is still pointed out as the scene of "*la Mantanza de Centejo.*"

The fugitives, arriving at Santa Cruz, escaped on board the shipping, from which boats were immediately despatched along the coast to pick up any survivors. At one place they found ninety

men clinging to a rock at some distance from the land, to which they had escaped by swimming. After a few days, Alonso de Lugo, having collected the remnant of his scattered force, attempted another landing near Santa Cruz. They were at once met by the natives, who, encouraged by the success which had attended the arms of the king of Taora, had buried their own differences and united to repel the invaders; and, in the action which ensued, the Spaniards were driven back to their ships, with a loss of over a hundred men.

This second defeat so crippled Alonso that he could not again venture to land, and he accordingly returned to Grand Canary, from whence he sent to Spain for assistance. Some merchants of Seville, who had assisted him with money in his expedition to Palma, sent him a further supply, with which he raised troops in Grand Canary. The Duke of Medina Sidonia also sent six caravels, having on board 650 men and forty horses; while Inez, the widow of Diego de Herrera, sent a reinforcement from Lanzarote. Thus assisted, Alonso de Lugo now found himself at the head of about 1,100 men, of whom seventy were cavalry, and with this force he at once sailed for Teneriffe. The troops disembarked at Santa Cruz, and marched to the plain of Laguna, where they had a slight

skirmish with the Guanches. Thence they moved in two columns into the district of Taora, where several indecisive engagements with the united islanders took place. The latter, however, disheartened at not obtaining a complete success, and surprised at the return of their enemies so soon after their defeat and heavy loss at Centejo, began to think of coming to terms. They accordingly asked for a cessation of arms in order that they might hold a conference, the result of which was that they submitted to be Christianised and to become subjects of Spain, on condition of being allowed to remain in peaceable possession of their lands and property.

About four miles from Santa Cruz is the old town of San Cristoval de la Laguna, the former capital of Teneriffe, and which was founded by Alonso de Lugo, immediately after the pacification of the island, on the 25th of July, 1495. The town is situated on one side of a plain of about four square miles in extent, and derives its name from a lagoon which lies behind it, and which dries up in the summer. There is a gradual ascent to it from Santa Cruz by a magnificent raised road of volcanic stone, which, if it depended upon Laguna for traffic, would be but little used; for that town is like a city of the dead, most of the houses being

deserted, and the streets grass-grown and empty, with scarce a sound to awake their echoes. Everything betokens decay and neglect. Splendid houses with sculptured fronts are dropping to pieces; shattered doors, once richly carved, hang flapping to and fro on their rusty hinges in the strong breeze; grass and moss grow everywhere, on the summits of the walls, in the crevices of the sculpture, on the stone steps, and even on the window-sills, while rank vegetation fringes each side of the desolate streets. It is a place to give one the horrors, being gloomy and depressing to the last degree; and when wandering along the damp and silent thoroughfares, where one's footstep seems to reverberate strangely from the empty buildings, one instinctively thinks of old-world stories of populous cities suddenly devastated by a pestilence, and half expects to see mouldering coffins or unburied corpses inside each tottering doorway or ruined arch.

Of course the place has a few inhabitants, about one to every ten houses, I should think, and how they can exist there without being driven to commit suicide is marvellous. Occasionally you will see a black figure gliding along a mildewed street like a ghost, and treading carefully as if any noise would awaken some ghastly echo—that is an inhabitant. There are several churches and chapels in Laguna,

and three convents of friars; and, where these are, there will be priests and monks, who form the majority of the population. Perhaps one reason of its being deserted by its former inhabitants is that being exposed, from its high situation, to the strong north-west trade-wind, it is, for the latitude, extremely cold in winter; although the removal of the large staff of Government officers, judges, and clerks to Santa Cruz would, of course, partly account for its decadence. It used to be the head-quarters in Teneriffe of that humane institution the Inquisition.

The show church in Laguna is that dedicated to *La Virgen de la Concepcion*. In it is a painting which is said to be a Murillo, and which may be the truth for all any one can see to the contrary; for the picture is more like a slab of mahogany that has been blackened by the smoke of a century of candles, than anything else. It is supposed to represent the Assumption of the Virgin, but, to the profane eye, it much better represents neglect and dirt. I have heard that the priests oil it annually before some festival, and then have the church swept, so as to allow the dust to settle on it and give it a good tone; the consequence being that the tone is now about an eighth of an inch thick, and the picture looks like the work of a very old master indeed.

This church also contains another painting, which is said to possess miraculous powers. The legend is to the effect that in May, 1648, when a priest was celebrating high mass over a corpse which was extended before the high altar, he observed the picture, which was painted on pitch-pine, to be covered with drops of moisture. The service being at an end, he asked the sacristan if he had sprinkled water upon it when he was laying the dust in the church, and, as that individual declared that he had not, the reverend father at once smelt a miracle, and ordered the bells to be rung to celebrate the joyful occurrence. The townspeople soon hurried in to ascertain what was the matter, and with them came the Vicar-General, the Inquisitor, and many other salaried pillars of the Church. It at once occurred to these latter that the laity, being unfortunately only too prone to receive miraculous manifestations in a carping and incredulous spirit, were not proper persons to inquire into the matter; so they ordered them to be turned out, and then, locking the doors of the church, proceeded to make a most careful examination. Strange to say they could discover nothing which might reasonably account for the extraordinary moisture; but, to make sure there was no deception, they had the picture, and two others which were next to it, well sprinkled with water, and then withdrew from the building,

locking all the doors, and placing sentries over them.

After some hours the reverend fathers, accompanied by the Captain-General, reopened the church, and they found, as they had expected, that the miraculous picture was still perspiring, while the others, that had also been wetted, were quite dry. The townspeople were accordingly marched in, so that they might have ocular demonstration of the miracle; and the Captain-General, who was an exceedingly devout man, obtained permission from the priests to touch the drops with his fingers. He then, with the utmost devotion, anointed his eyes with the moisture, and, keeping them closed while he offered up a short prayer, he was surprised and horrified at its conclusion to find that he was unable to open them. The populace were much struck by this extraordinary circumstance, and the Captain-General was not able to open his eyes until he had bathed them copiously with warm water. Two wicked men who were in the crowd, having observed that every fly that inserted its profane proboscis into the sacred fluid remained stuck to the picture, were bold enough to assert from this, and from the miracle that had happened to the eyes of the Captain-General, that the miraculous perspiration was nothing more than a resinous exudation from the fresh boards of

pitch-pine on which the picture was painted. Fortunately for the honour of the saints, and the welfare of the Christian religion, the Inquisitor heard the remarks of these scoffers, and perceiving that they savoured of an abominable heresy, and that these men were setting themselves up above the authorised expounders of the true faith, he called several familiars appertaining to his office, and had these doubters removed, in order that they might be subjected to the question, and have their spiritual condition inquired into. After that he asked the remainder of the townspeople if any of them had any doubts about the genuineness of the miracle, and they all hastened to declare that they had no doubts. The miracle was then of course beyond question, since no one could venture to say afterwards that it was a piece of priestcraft, when so many independent witnesses had openly attested to its genuineness. However, to put the matter beyond dispute, even to the most abandoned heretic, the Vicar-General ordered cotton wicks to be moistened with the sacred drops. Lights were then applied to them, and they burned brightly in the sight of all men. This was entirely conclusive, as, if the moisture had been resinous, the wicks would naturally not have burned at all, whereas everybody knows that there is nothing so inflammable as perspiration, which partakes largely of the nature

of turpentine. A solemn mass and an act of thanksgiving were at once performed, and the ungodly scoffers expiated their crime at the *auto-da-fé* held in the market-place in the ensuing week. It was afterwards observed that the picture did not perspire so copiously in cold weather, which was a further proof that it was not a fraud, as no person perspires so much when he is cold as he does when he is hot; and as it advanced in years the perspiration gradually ceased, showing that as the saint grew old the juices of the body dried up. It has now not perspired for more than two hundred years.

The most pleasant town in Teneriffe is Port Orotava, generally called *El Puerto*, to distinguish it from the village of Orotava proper, which lies back some three miles from the sea. A species of *diligence* runs from Santa Cruz to these places at fitful intervals, and the journey offers some of the most beautiful views of mountain scenery to be found in the island. The road leaves the western extremity of the plain of Laguna and descends into broken and mountainous country. At about half-way between Santa Cruz and Orotava, the village of Centejo, near the defile where the Spanish defeat took place, is passed; and beyond the hermitage of Nuestra Senora de la Victoria, where the treaty with the Guanches was concluded, the valleys appear

dotted with houses, while on the right are some large villages. The view of the valley of Orotava as seen from the mountain road is most striking, the white houses of the port standing out picturesquely against the blue waters of the sea, while from the neck of the mountain the ground falls away, first rapidly and broken up into rugged chasms, then more gradually and covered with cultivation and groves of trees.

The village of Orotava is a quiet dreamy place, built on the slope of a hill, with a mountain torrent bounding it on one side. The houses, though of some pretension, are all dreadfully dilapidated; for this village, which was once the favourite resort of the island grandees, has now gone out of fashion, its marble *patios*, and groves of orange and banana, alone testifying to its former grandeur.*

Port Orotava was once a commercial town of some note, and was celebrated for its Canary Sack; but a great part of its trade left it some fifty years ago, and its grass-grown streets are not now much disturbed by mercantile bustle. The smiling valley in which it stands would, however, make amends for a great deal of dulness. A curious contrast

* The place is buried in flowers; pomegranate, fuchsia, jasmine, heliotrope, and hundreds of other plants growing and clambering everywhere in wild confusion.

to the sterility of the neighbourhood of Santa Cruz, this part of the island is a perfect garden. Vineyards, cornfields, orchards, plantations of prickly-pear, and groves of orange and banana cover the ground, forming, when seen from the hills above, a patchwork of various brilliant colours. Here and there the white walls of a chapel or farmhouse gleam out from amid clumps of trees, and the profusion of wild flowers of every hue that clothes the earth baffles description. Below the mountain ranges which enclose the valley are wooded hills, on which are the groups of houses of distant villages, the church spire of one, Realixo, being a prominent object; while far above all towers the majestic mass of the Peak. Nor is softness the only characteristic of this valley. It is intersected by deep and rocky *barrancas*, at the bottoms of which mountain streams leap and sparkle over the boulders, while the sides are covered with dense vegetation and sweet-scented blossoms.

Like Santa Cruz, Port Orotava also possesses a Plaza de la Constitucion, sometimes known by the less aristocratic title of "Shrimp Square." It is rather a pleasant place, being a rectangle surrounded on three sides by well-built and picturesque houses, and open to the sea on the fourth. The footpath is shaded by plane-trees, and numerous stone seats

are provided for the use of loungers. Standing down on the sea front here, where the surf breaks heavily below the old battery of rusted cannon, one sees on either side a small bay with a beach of shining black sand. These are the anchorages of the port, and are so much exposed to sudden gales, that it is not probable that the curious little fort which protects the one, nor the infantry bastion which defends the other, will ever be called into requisition to repulse a hostile armament.

On saints' and feast days this *plaza* is thronged with the peasantry of the surrounding country, who there exhibit their poor finery to their neighbours and the townspeople after mass. On these occasions stalls are erected in the square, at which eatables, drinkables, tin saints and similar rubbish are sold; and the street near the church is decorated with flowers and the branches of trees. In the evening there are dances, and the twanging of the guitar and the reedy piping of the flute draw out crowds of idlers from every street. Here may be seen performed the grave and stately saraband, the lively fandango, and, occasionally, the canario, the dance of the ancient Guanches. As the night wears on and the fun grows faster, couples stand up and perform the zapateo, a dance which at a certain epoch in civilisation is or has been common to all countries

and nations, and which is called hornpipe by the English, sheh-sheh by the Mandingoes, hula-hula by the South Sea Islanders, adunkum by the Fantis, and jig by the Irish. In the United Kingdom, although the dance has been retained, modern ideas of refinement have caused the gestures and motions to be so modified as to be inoffensive; but there can be no doubt as to what it was originally intended to represent, and in countries where the people are not much influenced by motives of decorum, it may still be seen undisguised. While these dances go on squibs and crackers are let off, in honour of the saint, by more earnest Christians, and salvoes of cheap rockets shoot up into the midnight air. The inevitable *monte* table is of course not wanting, but the peasantry do not seem to care so much for gambling as the townspeople, and the banker usually only reaps a small harvest of copper coins.

The costumes of some of the peasants are picturesque, but, as a rule, the peasants themselves are neither clean nor handsome. In pictures, the Spanish peasant girl is always depicted as a sylph-like creature, in short petticoats, with wonderfully small feet, slim ankles, ravishing black eyes and hair, and a face of wondrous beauty. As far as these islands are concerned, the only portion of the picture

which is true to nature is the short petticoat, usually of a brilliant red; for these peasant girls have bulbous ankles and feet like giantesses', and which are more frequently covered with red mud and dust than with shoes and stockings. In place of the face of surpassing loveliness one sees countenances absolutely expressionless, and suggestive of nothing but coarse animalism. One does see sometimes the sparkling black eyes and the raven hair, but the former of a grayish blue and the latter of the colour of the reddish dust of the island are just as common. I wonder if the travellers who have described all these things as being beautiful really thought so, or only said so to make their readers envious. It is true that in the Canary Islands this falling off from the accepted standard may be due to the large admixture of Guanche blood; but then Edris described the women of that race as possessing great personal attractions, and a Moslem is usually a good judge of such things. The men, when young, are far better-looking than the women; but in old age, on the other hand, their faces become still more satanic than those of the fairer sex, and both are repulsive enough to frighten an English child into a fit.

There are a few English residents in Orotava, and there is also an English boarding-house for the accommodation of visitors who may not care for the *cuisine*

of a Spanish hotel, which usually consists of soup made of vegetables, pork, goat and garlic, and the olio, that is, the ingredients of which the soup is made, served up as a second course. But Orotava has not been popular since the murder, in January, 1879, of Mr. Morris, although that crime had theft for its object, and was not in any way indicative of hostility to Englishmen. The murderers of this unfortunate gentleman were discovered, strange to say, through a swarm of flies. Mr. Morris was employed in a mercantile house in Port Orotava, and two Spaniards, intimate friends of his, knowing that he always carried with him the key of the safe in which the money was kept, induced him to go out for a walk one evening to an unfrequented spot near the cemetery. There they stabbed him to death, and carrying the body into the cemetery, opened a tomb and threw it in. Unfortunately for them, in replacing the slab of stone which covered the vault, they broke a small piece off one corner; and, four days after the murder, the attention of some people who were attending a funeral was called to a swarm of flies that was passing through the aperture thus left. The authorities caused the stone to be raised, and the body was found. Suspicion at once fell upon the two Spaniards, who had in the meanwhile robbed the safe; and they were arrested, tried, and sentenced to death.

The delay which then ensued is a good instance of how slow-moving is the legal machinery of Spain. For two years and a half these men remained in prison, awaiting confirmation of their sentence from Madrid. Several petitions were presented to the Government, praying for the remission of the sentence, on the ground that it was only a heretic who had been killed; and, had it not been for the incessant efforts of the British Consul at Santa Cruz, they would probably have got off. The confirmation at length arrived, however, and they were put to death by the antique process of garroting, at the spot where the murder was committed, on the 2nd of July, 1881. On the eve of the execution, the murderers confessed that, among other minor peccadilloes, they had committed seventeen robberies, assassinated one of their fellow countrymen, and twice set fire to the house of an unfriendly judge.

The mountains which enclose the valley of Orotava are honeycombed with the caves in which the Guanches used to live. Many of them are very spacious, particularly the one on the crest of the hill over which the road to Santa Cruz passes, and which is pointed out as being the state residence of the warrior king Ventomo. Several of them are still inhabited by the poorer peasantry, and I have no doubt they are nice and cool habitations for a hot climate.

About six miles to the west of Port Orotava is the town of Garachica, which possessed formerly the best harbour in the island, until, during the great lateral eruption of the Peak in 1704, it was filled up by streams of molten lava. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and the trade that was thus driven away from Garachica sought refuge in Port Orotava, which then first commenced to be of importance. The former place, however, is now looking up again, for it is still a town of moderate proportions, with the usual large number of churches and conventual establishments, and the district has now so far recovered from the devastating lava floods, that, although houses now stand where vessels formerly anchored, a few ships have of late come into the remnant of the harbour, and loaded with the wine and brandy that the place produces.

The eruption of 1704 commenced on the 24th of December with an earthquake. The first shocks were moderate, and although twenty-nine were felt within the space of three hours not much damage was done; but as the day wore on they increased in violence, until the inhabitants were compelled to abandon their tottering habitations, and seek safety in the open country. The earthquakes continued till the 31st, when the terrified people observed a dull red glow on that spur of the Peak which is called the White

Mountains. The light rapidly grew brighter and brighter, until they could see that two new conical hills had been thrown up, which belched forth fire, stones, and lava, and soon covered the whole mountain-side with flames. The terror-stricken and superstitious inhabitants imagined that the end of the world was at hand, brought out all their saints in processions of great pomp, promising them all kinds of possible and impossible things if they would only avert the calamity ; and endeavoured to atone for the past by fasting and continual prayer.

After the formation of the two vents for the pent-up subterranean fire a lull took place, and the people were beginning to think that their saints had prevailed and that the danger was past, when, on the 5th of January, such a tremendous eruption took place that the sun was totally obscured by the clouds of flame and smoke ; and darkness, broken only by the fitful gleams from the volcanoes, fell upon the island. Before nightfall another volcano burst out to the west of the town, and from thirty different craters, within a circumference of half-a-mile, vomited forth streams of liquid fire, which rushed burning and roaring down the hill slopes with the rapidity of mountain torrents, and covered the country for miles around. It is difficult to picture the awfulness of that night. As far as the eye could reach, in every

direction were fiery floods, pouring down the ravines and valleys, and completely surrounding the devoted town; the mountains, the sea, and the clouds above glowed red in the lurid glare of the fires; while the volcanoes, amid the roar of explosions which reverberated from cliff to cliff and ridge to ridge, and were distinctly heard more than twenty miles off at sea, threw up unceasing showers of red-hot stones, ashes, and lava, and tall columns of flame and smoke that seemed to scorch the heavens. To add to the horrors of the situation, several violent shocks of earthquake supervened, throwing down numbers of houses in the town, and driving out the miserable inhabitants into the vineyards, where they were menaced by falling stones and rocks, and knew not but what at any moment some new crater might open under their very feet.

From the third volcano that had burst forth, a torrent of lava rushed towards the town of Guimar, all the houses in which had been thrown down by the earthquakes, and the violence of the eruption then commenced to moderate. On the 2nd of February, however, a crater opened in the town of Guimar itself, entirely swallowing up the ruins of a church which had been thrown down by the earthquake shocks; and it was not until the 23rd of that month that the convulsion was at an end. The loss of life

was not so great as might have been supposed ; but thousands of people were rendered homeless and reduced to the most abject state of misery, and nine miles of smiling mountain slope, which had been covered with vineyards and corn-fields, were turned into a scorched and cindery waste.

According to a tradition of the island, the ruin which thus overtook Garachica was the result of the imprecation of a priest. The story runs thus: the priest in question was a family or domestic priest, domiciled in the house of a wealthy Garachican, and the latter, discovering that the reverend father was too familiar with his wife, summarily ejected him from the house. The priest, finding himself thus suddenly found out, and deprived of a comfortable home, was naturally annoyed, and before leaving the town he solemnly cursed it in the following terms: "*Garachica pueblo rico, mal cascajo te esconda,*" which, being interpreted, means: "Rich town of Garachica, may a bad stone bury you." A very few days after this dreadful curse the eruption commenced, and, as a large number of the houses were buried in the lava streams, the people considered that the imprecation had borne fruit. From this it happened that the religious order to which the priest belonged (he was, I believe, a Franciscan) became highly honoured in Teneriffe; and all the islanders

outvied each other in donations and votive offerings to propitiate all Franciscan friars, and were extremely careful never to give any one of them any cause to be offended.

These islands are subject to strong gales in the winter months, which do a great deal of damage, and are dangerous for shipping, the bay of Santa Cruz being much exposed to easterly winds, and that of Orotava to north-westerly. On the 24th of November, 1879, when I arrived at Teneriffe for the sixth time, so heavy a sea was running that it was impossible to communicate with the shore; and by about 4 p.m. the gale had increased in violence to such an extent, that the master of the steamer considered it advisable to steam off and lie under the shelter of the land about two miles round Point Anagra. There the sea was comparatively calm; but tremendous gusts of wind swept down the ravines, gathering strength as they came, and struck the vessel so violently as to cause her to heel over, and render standing on the deck impossible. The storm continued increasing all the evening, and about 9 p.m. we could see the lights of another steamer which had also sought this shelter, and which proved to be the *Waldensian*, belonging to the Allan Line. Next morning at day-break we made an attempt to go round to Santa Cruz; but, before Anagra Point was well opened, such heavy seas swept

the ship from stem to stern, that the captain put back again. Even under the land there was a high sea running, and the spray drifted past in thick clouds, in which numerous small but completely circular rainbows were formed by the rays of the sun. After noon the gale moderated, and we succeeded in reaching the roadstead of Santa Cruz. The appearance of that port was quite changed. The little kiosque-like lighthouse that, two days before, had stood at the extremity of the mole, had now disappeared, and with it some thirty or forty feet of the solid masonry of the mole itself. The latter, though more than sixty feet broad at the bend of the curve, and standing from twelve to fifteen feet out of the water, had two clean breaches made in it, where the waves still broke over a shapeless mass of blocks of concrete, and the stores, sheds, and warehouses at the landing-place were unroofed. Next morning we were able to land, and learned that three vessels which had been lying under the shelter of the mole, had, on the night of the 24th, dragged their anchors and been driven ashore and splintered to pieces on the steep, stony beach near the Paso Alto. Great damage was done in the interior of the island, and the road to Orotava was rendered impassable for some days.

CHAPTER XII.

TENERIFFE.

Ascent of the Peak—El Pino del Dornajito—A Useful Shrub—
La Estancia de los Ingleses—Improvisatori—Early Rising—
The Mal Pais—La Rambleta—The Cone—The Crater—Bird's-
eye Scenery—The Descent—The Ice Cave.

DURING one of my visits to Teneriffe, I determined, in company with a fellow passenger, whom I will call Smith, to attempt the ascent of the Peak. It was the height of the summer, the best season for the climb, and the weather was propitious; so, landing our effects from the steamer, we decided to stay for a week in the island, and proceed by a vessel belonging to the same company, which would be due in seven days' time. The same morning we proceeded to Port Orotava and commenced our preparations.

Firstly, we learned that we should have to delay the attempt for two days, when the moon would be at the full, that being the only period at which the ascent was ever undertaken; and, secondly, that

everything depended upon the weather. According to our informants, in cloudy weather the undertaking would be impossible, and, if the weather appeared unsettled or the barometer commenced falling, no guide or mountaineer would venture to attempt it; as, if the party were caught in a storm or squall, it might be belated for days on the mountains, and, in the more exposed situations, perhaps blown by the gusts of wind over a precipice. Without any difficulty we succeeded in engaging the services of three mountaineers as guides; and the head man of these hired for us, at a rate probably not much more than double that usually paid by the islanders themselves, two muleteers and five mules. Of these latter, two were saddle mules, two sumpter, and one for the conveyance of water. On the eve of the day fixed for the start, we laid in a supply of tinned meats, eggs, bread, coffee, and various drinkables, sufficient, in case of accident, for ourselves for four or five days; and, our men having, according to agreement, made their own arrangements for their own food, our departure was fixed for five in the morning.

At the appointed hour next morning we rode through the silent streets of the sleeping town of Port Orotava, and, taking the road to the village of Orotava proper, we passed through that wilderness of flowers and decaying houses, traversed the splendid

wood of chestnut-trees which crowns the hill behind it, and then commenced ascending. About seven o'clock we arrived at a lonely house, built upon the brink of the precipitous descent of a wild ravine. This spot, at which we breakfasted, and where the mules were indulged with a last drink of water, was called *El Pino del Dornajito*. I thought, at first, that it was so termed because there was no pine-tree there, on the same principle that new villas in the suburbs of London, which rejoice in the possession of a few scrubby evergreens in their front gardens, are denominated "The Firs," "The Elms," or "The Beeches;" but the guides said there used to be an unusually fine tree there, which had been blown down long since. Near the watering place was a large wooden cross, and the guides and muleteers here made their peace with heaven before finally cutting themselves loose from civilisation.

Leaving *El Pino* we rode on along a shadowed path through a magnificent wood till about midday, when we found ourselves at the entrance of a rocky ravine. The track here was much impeded by masses of rock, and stunted laurels and heaths fringed the sides so thickly as to brush our knees as we passed. Here and there we saw a wooden cross, which, the guides told us, marked the spots where the bodies of persons, who had been frozen to death in the

winter snowdrifts, had been found. Our pious men invariably added each a stone to the little heap which lay at the foot of every rude cross, and which denoted the number of prayers said for the repose of the soul of the deceased; but though they thus increased the piles, I did not observe that they went to the trouble of saying any prayers.

We next crossed a sandy plain, scattered with white pumice like shingle, and called the "Retama," from the number of plants of that name which there flourished. This shrub, like the "rhinoster" bush of South Africa, possesses the peculiar property of burning with a bright flame when quite green and freshly torn up by the roots, and it is with it that the mountain peasantry ordinarily build their fires. It grows to the height of about six feet, and, during summer, is covered with white flowers which are rather pretty.

About three in the afternoon we lunched under a pile of rocks, called the Estancia de la Sierra, from which place we had our first view of the base of the mountain we were about to assault, rising from the arid desert of *las Cañadas*, or the glens, which, like a gigantic moat, some fourteen miles in circumference, entirely encircle the Peak. As it was getting rather late, and we had not much time to spare if we wanted to reach our quarters for the night before dark, we

made but a short halt, and again proceeded. The ashy bed of *las Cañadas* was covered with large blocks of obsidian, which had evidently been thrown out from the crater of the Peak; everywhere were traces of comparatively recent volcanic action, and, on the further side of the glens, old streams of lava, which had cooled on their way down the steep slope, could be distinguished.

About five o'clock we arrived at the foot of the mountain, and commenced the ascent at a point called the "Wheat Heaps," from a large mound of pieces of white pumice which is there found. The path was sandy and very steep, winding backwards and forwards like a corkscrew; while to the left of it was a deep chasm, down which an old lava flood had poured on to the desert we had just traversed.

Continuing the ascent, we encamped shortly before sunset on a small level shoulder which stood out from the mountain, and which was the usual halting-place for parties making the ascent. A few large black boulders were scattered over it, and under one of them was a kind of *corral* built of loose stones, for the accommodation of the animals. This spot, which is nearly 10,000 feet above the sea-level, is called the *Estancia de los Ingleses*, or "Englishman's camping-ground," a name which proves that the ubiquitous and enterprising Anglo-Saxon more fre-

quently makes the ascent of the Peak than do individuals of other nationalities.

The muleteers unloaded the animals, and, coralling them inside the wall of stones, made fires of retama behind two immense rocks, where they were sheltered from the wind, which now blew strongly. The plain below us was dark with the shadow of the mountain and the gathering shades of night, while we were still in sunlight; but in a few minutes the last gleams of gold died away from the summit of the mountain, and the waning daylight faded slowly until it imperceptibly blended with and finally disappeared in the light of the moon. The air was very cold, so we sat down close to one of the fires, and discussed our evening meal by the light of some pitch-pine torches which we had brought with us, while the guides and *arrieros* squatted round the other, eating their salt-fish and *gofio*. It was quite chilly enough to render hot grog acceptable; and, as we had brought some *aguardiente* with us for the men, we brewed them a jorum of punch in the kettle, and so introduced to their palates a beverage of a kind hitherto unknown to them. They seemed to take to it very kindly. Only one guide had any scruples about drinking it, but he remarked that there were only two occasions upon which a man might be permitted to drink spirits, namely, when he had eaten salt-fish

for dinner and when he had not; and that as this was one of those too rare occasions, he might allow himself to taste it. After this grave Spanish jest, he poured himself out a tumblerful of steaming fluid, and seemed to enjoy it as much as the others did.

We were soon punished for our wickedness in making these unsophisticated Spaniards drink such potent liquor, for they began singing the most lugubrious ditties and making the most horrible discord. It was a species of part singing, in which it seemed to be the duty of each performer to sing in a different key, utterly regardless of harmony; and the noise was frightful. Having once commenced, they went on and on until it became quite unbearable; but presently there was a pause in the singing, and Smith whispered to me excitedly:

“By Jove, they’re going to begin improvising now!”

A vision at once swept across my mind’s eye of gallant young men in tight-fitting continuations, wearing little caps adorned with tall feathers, and posing in graceful attitudes while they strummed upon mandolins. According to the descriptions of travellers, these romantic youths, when they once opened the flood-gates of their poetical souls, launched forth streams of soul-stirring poesy of such beauty, that could a shorthand writer be only

on the spot, take them down at once and translate them afterwards into English verse as his own composition, he would be placed in the first rank of poets, living or dead; and I therefore expected to hear something good. A piratical-looking muleteer, with a face of the colour of untanned leather, and a head covered with long and tangled black hair, hemmed twice to clear his throat, and then gave birth to a verse which may be rendered in English as follows :

Oh, my pretty little mule is the nicest little mule ;
Should any one not think so, then he must be a fule.

And the rest of the party sang “ fule, fule, fule,” each in any key that seemed good unto him, as a chorus. The *improvisatore* smiled upon us with a smile of sweet satisfaction, and reclined gracefully against a rock; while another laureate was seized with the divine afflatus, and broke forth with :

Thanks to the English señors, we have plenty
Of a-a-a-g-u-a-r-d-i-e-n-t-e.

This gigantic effort was greeted with rapturous applause, and the first poet was obliged to invigorate himself with some refreshment. Then, returning to his original subject, he shrieked :

Oh! my pretty little mule is of all the mules the best ;
Should any of you question that—well—may you be blest.

And at the concluding word he soared up into a shrill falsetto, like a boatswain's whistle. He did not say "blest," though, really; he said something quite different; but I would rather run the risk of spoiling the sentiment of the poem, than shock any of my chaste readers.

Heavens! and was this rubbish the kind of stuff over which travellers have gone into rhapsodies, and led us to believe it to be full of beauty of more than mortal kind? Was this the wonderful performance of the *improvisatori*, in which one knew not whether most to admire the extraordinary fertility of rhyme, or the simple and yet touching pathos of the narrative? Alas! here was another illusion exploded.

The men went on with their wretched performance as if they really enjoyed it, and were proud of their accomplishments. After a time the effect it began to have on me was curious. I caught myself humming their lugubrious air under my breath, and I was seized with an uncontrollable desire to make childish rhymes. Smith appeared to be similarly affected, for, after sitting silent for some time, he suddenly said to me:

"Ellis, will you pass the brandy? I see you've got it handy."

I at once advised him to go to sleep, that being the only thing I could think of to preserve his brain

from tottering entirely; and he followed my advice. He evidently did not possess a sensitive ear, for, a few minutes after he had rolled himself in a blanket, although the chorus of guides and muleteers was still in full swing, he was snoring a beautiful, though somewhat irregular, trombone accompaniment to the singing. I wanted to go to sleep too, because I knew we should have to get up very early next morning; but it was useless to try while the improvising was going on, and I was afraid it might offend them if I asked them to stop. At last, however, the discord became so unbearable, and the poetry was so rapidly working me up to a pitch of frenzy, that I ventured to interfere. I approached the subject with care, saying that the verses they sang were beautiful, almost too beautiful for an Englishman, unaccustomed as he was to such poetical effusions, to listen to and live; yet, I said, there ran through them a vein of sadness which made my eyes fill with tears, and recalled to my mind the sweet little ballads of my innocent childhood. Therefore, as it was so unpleasant to feel sad, I hoped—nay, I implored—that they would stop; otherwise, who knows? Smith had finished the brandy, and I might lay violent hands upon myself in a moment of melancholy madness.

They said they would stop at once, so I thanked them, and going and wrapping myself in a striped

blanket, I lay down with my feet to the fire, with a pack-saddle for a pillow ; trying to persuade myself that it was much nicer to sleep out in the open air, in a cold wind, on a knobbly couch of angular stones, than in a comfortable bed ; and that I really liked the romance of it, and the change.

It seemed to me that I had only been asleep about ten minutes when a guide came and kicked me, and said it was time to get up. I protested, saying that I did not want to get up, that I did not care about seeing sunrise from the Peak, and that I was going to sleep for a little longer ; but he kept on worrying me, and I had at last to get up. I looked at my watch, and found it was 3 a.m. Could there be a more improper hour for a respectable young man to rise at ?

There is nothing I dislike so much as early rising. As I have no faith in Mr. Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy, I care nothing for such proverbs as "Early to bed and early to rise," and I find I can be quite healthy and wise enough for my own small wants by getting up at eight in the morning. Who is it that has invented all the current rubbish about it being a kind of moral duty to get up early ? Why, old fogies who cannot sleep in the morning themselves. When any of these venerable impostors remonstrate with me for not being up at

six, and say, with a stern air of duty, that they never remain in bed later than that hour, I know exactly where the shoe pinches, and what is the cause of their bitterness. They cannot sleep later than six, and they would give half what they are worth if they only could.

Following the example of these people, as I had been roused up myself, I went and shook Smith till his teeth chattered, called him a sluggard, reproached him for his laziness, and instanced myself as a glorious example of early rising. He got up, but he was not grateful. It was still moonlight and bitterly cold, our thermometer, a Fahrenheit, standing at 38° , and the sudden transition from the tropical heat of Port Orotava on the previous day to this temperature, was most trying. By the time that we had finished a light breakfast of hot coffee and biscuit, the muleteers had packed the *alforjas*, so we mounted our mules and started.

We rode up a steep and narrow pathway of pumice and volcanic ash, on which the mules, sure-footed as those animals are, frequently slipped and stumbled. An icy wind rushed past us, chilling us to the bone, and it was so cold and unpleasant that I sighed for my comfortable bed in Orotava. At one part of the ascent, the path was bordered by a chasm so deep that even the powerful rays of

the moon failed to illumine its depths; the track here was worse than elsewhere, the mules frequently slid back on the slippery rock, while the wind struck us in wild and furious gusts, as if some enraged Titan were blowing at us through a funnel, and trying to carry us over the precipice.

After about an hour of this break-neck path, we reached the Alta Vista, 680 feet above the halting-place where we had passed the night; and here the guides said we should have to leave the mules, and make the rest of the ascent on foot. I was really very glad to hear it, for besides having more confidence in the sureness of my own footing than in that of any mule that was ever bred, it is not cheering to know that the slipping of a girth, or the breaking of a rotten strap, would precipitate one into eternity.

The route above Alta Vista was not pleasant. There was no road and no earth or volcanic *débris*; nothing but a chaotic pile of lava blocks, none of which were less than three feet broad, and some fifteen or twenty. These stones were generally flat on the top, and the heap apparently extended some distance downwards; for the masses of rock were not close to one another, and in some places there were holes that appeared to have no bottom. Some of the boulders were so loosely balanced, or placed against

others, that they trembled when touched, and made our hearts jump into our mouths at the thought that several tons of lava were about to topple down on our heads. Yet from such rocks we had to jump to others, perhaps equally unsafe and certainly slippery, and we naturally had several falls. In fact Smith slipped into a crevice up to the waist, and we had great trouble in getting him out without disturbing some loose blocks and crushing him. The guides called this part the *Mal Pais*, or the "bad country," and I had no fault to find with the name. I have not the least idea how they found their way across this wilderness of rocks, for there was nothing to mark the proper track, and every group of boulders seemed alike. We were now getting up so high that the air became rarefied, and I experienced a tightness across my chest, as if my waistcoat had been suddenly shrunk.

The *Mal Pais* extended for about half-a-mile, and, after crossing it, at the expense of no small exertion and several scrapes and bruises, we reached a small flat space, covered with ashes and sprinkled with lava blocks. This was called *La Rambleta*, and is 11,680 feet above the sea. From it rose the final cone of the Peak. The cold here was, considering the latitude, almost incredible. Our hands and feet were numbed, breathing became difficult, and a furious and

chilly blast careered over the mountain with such violence as to compel us to hold on to the rocks to keep ourselves from being blown away.

It was now about 5 a.m., and a faint light began to appear in the east. Then the light gained strength moment by moment, and deepened to orange and crimson, while long fingers of light strayed across the heavens to draw back the curtains of night. Then, in an instant, the sun seemed to spring into the sky, tinging with gold the summit of the Peak, while we were still in twilight and the island below in darkness. Swiftly the light ran down the cone, then a red glow struck us, and, looking down, we saw the darkness rolling back like a shroud as the sun rose higher and higher, until at last only the deeper valleys and ravines were left in shadow.

The height of the actual cone of the Peak above the little shelf of La Rambleta is 512 feet, and the ascent is only practicable on the south-eastern side. It is very steep, and the ground being loose, and giving way under the feet, makes it very fatiguing work to climb up. We went up in single file, sinking ankle-deep in ashes and sand at every step, and making frequent stops to recover breath. Here and there during the climb I noticed jets of steam issuing from the ground, and the guides always gave such spots a wide berth.

On arriving at the summit, breathless and exhausted, we found it crowned by a circle of large rocks, heaped one upon another in chaotic confusion, and forming an apparently impassable barrier. The guides, however, led us to the south-eastern side, and showed us a small opening through which we could pass. Inside this chaplet of rocks we found a slight depression, which represented the old crater, and was about 140 yards long and 110 yards broad. From this hollow, or cauldron, jets of steam issued in all directions, and the ground was covered with an efflorescence of sulphur, which gave forth a most unpleasant perfume. Many of the sulphur crystals were of the most brilliant hues—scarlet, green, blue, violet, and yellow—and we tried to carry away with us some specimens as mementoes of our excursion, but they were all so brittle that they broke to pieces in our hands.

I do not know what the temperature of the rocks that fringe the crater may be, I only know that it is sufficiently high to render sitting down upon a block a painful practice, as I found to my cost. In the crater itself the heat is in some places so great as to burn one's feet through the soles of the boots; and sticks that are thrust down into the softer parts are reduced to charcoal in a very few minutes. In fact the volcano of the Peak is not extinct, but, rather,

dormant; and is now in the state of a solfatara, that is a volcanic vent from which sulphur, sulphurous vapours and gases are emitted, but no lava or solid matter. It may, perhaps, break out into full activity at any moment, and the spectacle of such a lofty mountain in full eruption would be magnificent. It was belching forth volumes of flame and smoke when Columbus put into the island of Gomera to repair the *Pinto* on his voyage to the discovery of America; and it had such an effect upon the frightened sailors, that they clamoured to return to Spain, saying that no voyage could prosper which commenced with such omens of disastrous portent.

The rocks which form the ring at the summit are all so loose and so delicately balanced, that to endeavour to step on them will sometimes bring them down with startling suddenness. In climbing up over some on the north-eastern side, which is the highest point of the Peak, I accidentally detached one, weighing about half a ton, and it toppled down the face of the cone, almost perpendicular on this side, nearly carrying me with it. When it was going at full speed down the slope, it struck against some lava blocks; and, leaping high in the air, went thundering on, accompanied by a cloud of dust and two new satellites.

I do not care much for views from the tops of

high mountains, they are too comprehensive and you do not get enough detail ; but, for any one who likes bird's-eye scenery, the Peak possesses great natural advantages. The island of Gomera, eighteen miles distant, seemed to be only a peninsula belonging to Teneriffe ; Palma appeared to be separated from us by a mere ditch, and the town of Ycod, engulfed in its dark forests of pine, seemed to lie so directly underneath that one would almost think a stone could be dropped on it. Turning to the southern side, Orotava lay at our feet ; and out in the ocean was Grand Canary, over whose ranges of mountains, nearly 7,000 feet high, the sea could be seen beyond. More to the east lay Fuerteventura, a mere blur on the pale blue of the waters ; and, still further off, the guides said they could see Lanzarote ; but I could not, although my eyesight is unusually good. It was, however, only 153 miles away, and that distance is not much for an imaginative guide.

Although I do not believe any one can see Lanzarote from the Peak, because the former is not sufficiently lofty, yet I must believe that people can see the Peak from Lanzarote, because Humboldt says so. That distinguished traveller has divided the Peak into five zones, called the region of vines, the region of laurels, the region of firs, the region of the spartium or bloom, and the region of grasses. The

first extends from the sea level to a height of about 1,500 feet, and in it, besides vines, grow the euphorbiæ, dragon's-blood trees, mesembryanthea, and other tropical species. The second zone includes the forest trees which crown the hills, and an indigenous olive. The region of firs commences at a height of 5,400 feet, and terminates at about 7,200 feet. Above this are the regions of broom and grass, and above these again grow lichens. He says that twelve minutes and fifty-five seconds elapse between the time of the sun being first visible on the Peak and on the plain. It did not appear to me so long, but then we were not at the summit of the Peak at sunrise, and we had no means of taking accurate observations.

The Peak itself, by-the-way, is locally termed Teyde, that being its old Guanche name, which the Spaniards have adopted in the form of El Pico de Teyde. The name of Teneriffe itself is derived from two words in the ancient dialect of Palma—*thener* (mountain) and *ife* (white)—and which was given to the island by the Palmans on account of the white appearance of the Peak when covered with snow. The inhabitants of Teneriffe called the island Chineche, and themselves Vincheni, which latter name the Spaniards corrupted into Guanche.

The descent of the cone was a much easier matter

than the ascent. The guides simply sat down, and then slipped downwards by slides of seven or eight yards at a time. That was all very well for people who wore leathern continuations, but when Smith tried it the result was such that I had to blush; and I thanked heaven that we should get back to Orotava so late, that it was not probable there would be any ladies about. This accident warned me against attempting this sliding descent, so I went down with cautious strides, sinking up to the ankle at every step, and then bringing heaps of ashes and clouds of dust down with me. We should have liked to breakfast at La Rambleta, but the men had left the *alforjas* with the mules at Alta Vista, and we were obliged to postpone our appetites. In any case they would not have allowed us to stop, for they hurried us along at an unconscionable pace, saying that they did not like the appearance of the weather. Knowing nothing of the locality and local signs, we were unable to detect any trace of threatening disturbance, and the clouds below us, spread out like a vast sea of cotton-wool, seemed quite unbroken by any storm. However, we hurried on, and commenced the passage of the Mal Pais.

The descent of this heap of masses of lava, which were doubtless thrown out of the crater of the Peak

during some great convulsion, was rather worse than the ascent; but we got over it in safety, and, even when half-way down, turned aside for ten minutes to look at a cavern which the guides called the "Ice Cave." This cave was in a mass of gray basalt which cropped up from among the black lava of the Mal Pais. Its entrance was about eighteen feet broad, and ten feet high; while the surface of the water, which was frozen round the edges, was about ten feet below where we stood. A ladder led down to a ledge close to the surface of the water, for many muleteers make a living during the summer months by coming up to this cave and filling their panniers with ice to sell in the towns below. From the foot of this ladder we could see that the cavern extended inwards for some distance; but, as the only light we had was that of a match, we could not see far. The roof of the cave formed a natural arch, and from it depended a forest of icicles and stalactites, which made it look like the upper jaw of some gigantic animal. The water near to where we stood was about eight feet deep; but a guide said that a few yards from the mouth no bottom could be reached, and that hundreds of fathoms of lead-line had been let out without touching anything. I accepted that statement at a considerable discount, because I did not believe that any one ever dragged

hundreds of fathoms of line over the Mal Pais merely to try and find the depth of the pit; and also because it was not clear to me how, without a boat, any one could reach that otherwise inaccessible spot concisely described as "a few yards inside." Of course in the autumn and winter the water would be a sheet of ice, but then at those seasons the ascent of the Peak is impracticable. Another guide, who did not seem to know that water was a fluid and usually found its own level, said it was well known that the cave was filled from the sea, and that the water in it rose and fell with the tide.

No sooner had we reached Alta Vista and lighted a fire to warm ourselves, than the guides were proved to be good prognosticators of weather; for a dense cloud swept across us and enveloped us in a darkness as complete as that of a London fog of the worst description. In a very short time we were wetted to the skin, and our fire was spluttering in the last agonies of dissolution. As we could not see more than a few yards in any direction, to attempt to continue the descent was out of the question; and we had to sit still, wet and shivering, and wondering if our detention on this bleak spot would be a matter of hours or days. However, we had many things to be thankful for. We were in a comparatively safe part, and had our supplies at hand, so that, even if

we were compelled to pass a day or two on the mountain, we should have nothing worse than discomfort and exposure to undergo; whereas it would have been a very different matter if we had been overtaken by darkness above or on the Mal Pais.

Fortunately, about noon, after two hours of cold and suspense, the cloud began to grow less and less dense, then it thinned away into a silvery mist, and finally rolled away altogether. We at once started for the Estancia de los Ingleses, and, walking down the steep and rugged path, for the rocks were so slippery with moisture that we did not consider it advisable to trust ourselves to our mules, reached it in about half-an-hour, by which time our clothes were quite dried by the warm rays of the sun. After a very short halt we mounted our animals, and, descending much more rapidly than we had come, reached Port Orotava about 10 p.m., without suffering any ill effects from our trip other than a slight attack of African fever on my part, the result of the cold and wet to which we had been exposed.

The strange absence of tourists from the Canary Islands is a wonderful instance of how gregarious is the Briton. Hundreds of English people visit Madeira every year, and though Teneriffe is, so to speak, only next door, hardly one of them out of every hundred ever cares to go on to it. Yet for

chest diseases the climate is just as beneficial as is that of Madeira; it is easy of access from that island, one steamer, and sometimes two, making the passage every week; and in the Calle de la Marina, at Santa Cruz, there is even an English hotel. In Teneriffe one can ride and drive, two modes of locomotion which are next to impossible at Madeira; and the scenery is almost unequalled for majesty and grandeur; while, for those who like such things, there is a theatre in Santa Cruz, bull-fights take place occasionally, and *fiestas* and balls frequently. It is, besides, not an expensive place; the highest charge for board and lodging at the English hotel was, at my last visit, only two dollars a day; and if any one chose to take a house and provide for himself he could live for half that sum.

CHAPTER XIII.

MADEIRA.

Coast Scenery—Birds of Prey—Funchal—Fire-eaters—A Night's Romance—Nossa Senhora do Monte—A Novel Slide—Fruits and Flowers—Festivals—Wines—Wine-growers—The Grand Corral—Mountain Roads—S. Vincente—Santa Anna.

THERE are few prettier sights displayed to the landsman weary of salt water than the island of Madeira. Many years ago, when it first gladdened my eyes, it seemed to me to be a terrestrial paradise ; and though I now regard it with something of that indifference born of the frequent renewal of my acquaintance with it, I know no island, except perhaps Fernando Po, that looks so well from the sea. Indeed the panorama, as Cape Lourenço, with the white lighthouse on the detached rock Ilheo de Fora, is rounded, and the south-eastern coast comes into view, is quite enough to recompense one for a bad passage through the Bay of Biscay, even in a West African steamer. In the foreground is a chaotic pile of purple rocks, or the frowning bluff

of a dark-red cliff; and beyond lies the slope of the mountains, marked with bands of varied hues—vineyards, orange-groves, olives, and plantations of sugar-cane. Here and there are houses, whose gleaming white walls glisten amidst the surrounding foliage, and higher up the heather and the pine throw a dark mantle over the peaks; until, some 5,000 feet above the sea, the mountains join hands with the white canopy of clouds which crowns them. As the steamer ploughs along, a ravine, with precipitous and rugged sides that yawn far back into the bosom of the hills until they are veiled in misty distance, is opened up; or a hamlet of toy houses, with white walls, green shutters, and scarlet roofs, nestling down in an emerald valley, comes into view; till at last the Bay of Funchal, with the smokeless town lying back in the amphitheatre of the mountains, lies before you, and you have eyes for nothing else.

After having thrown all your small change into the sea, to be dived for by the yellow-skinned boys who clamorously surround the steamer in their little boats, you descend into a boat with a prow like the beak of a Roman galley, with a few vigorous strokes are run up high on the steep beach of black pebbles, and are ashore at Funchal. You step up upon the low sea-wall of the public promenade, called the *Praça da Rainha*, and are at once surrounded by a

score of unkempt and unwashed would-be guides, who suggest all kinds of proper and improper amusements to you with great eagerness in broken English. You reject their proposal with scorn, and walk on, hoping to escape from them. As you go along the procession moves with you ; a part of it strides beside you and gesticulates violently ; another portion leads the way, turning from time to time to address incomprehensible remarks to you ; and a third section straggles along behind and treads on your heels. Minute by minute the cavalcade gains strength : boys, with the inevitable cigarette in their mouths, and who have apparently no school to go to, come and give you the benefit of their company ; *burroqueros*, or horse-boys, come and lead their weedy steeds in front of you, so as to tread on your toes ; cripples and beggars, covered with sores, hop alongside, thrusting maimed hands and distorted limbs into your face ; and if you turn to go along any particular street the entire crowd vociferate a thousand reasons for going another way. Then, if you happen to be acquainted with any Portuguese expletives you discharge them into the mob, tentatively and single-barrelled at first, to see how they are received ; then you deliver whole broadsides of abuse ; and, finding that the multitude only regard you with a pitying expression, as if you

were an escaped lunatic, you abandon the field and take refuge in the English hotel.

After waiting in your sanctuary what you consider a reasonable time for allowing your pursuers to disperse, you venture to look forth. There they all are, smoking, scratching, yawning, and looking as if they had nothing to do but wait for you till doomsday. You retreat once more to the *penetralia*, and if the hotel should happen to have a back door, you go out by it rejoicing, leaving the pack of idlers, etc., ambushed round the front gate. This is usually the experience of one's first day at Funchal; after that the natives seem to consider you unworthy of so much attention, and you are allowed to wander about in peace.

All these importunate people live upon the passengers of steamers which call at Madeira, and they regard every stranger as a nice fat pigeon sent specially by Providence for them to pluck. Some six or seven steamers call at Funchal during the week, so they have plenty of opportunities for keeping themselves in practice; and if you object to the process of plucking they become quite annoyed, and look upon you as a mean sort of person for endeavouring to cheat them out of their just dues. They take parties of strangers to shops, where they get a commission,

and insist upon purchases of feather flowers, work-boxes, and Madeira work being made; and the strangers have the pleasure of buying all these things in a romantic foreign country for very little more than double what they would have to pay for them in London, and they think it cheap at the price.

These birds of prey are naturally very fond of the English, who usually travel with full purses. One of them once said to me :

“Portygoose like English vare mooch, but English no like Portygoose vare mooch at all.”

Although the trading community like us, yet, if English residents may be believed, the official class would be only too glad to prohibit English people from resorting to the island at all. They actually complain that their *siestas* are sadly disturbed by the pop-guns which are fired by the steamers on arrival and departure.

Wheel carriages of any kind are out of the question in Madeira, for every road and street is more or less an inclined plane; and they are besides paved with cobble-stones in a manner that almost breaks the heart of a man who suffers from tender feet. Consequently one's mode of conveyance is limited to a choice between bullock-sleds, horses, or hammocks. The bullock-sled crawls along at the rate of a mile and a half an hour, and would be a

very comfortable vehicle in which to take a *siesta*, were there not a number of jingling bells attached to the yokes of the oxen, and did not the driver keep encouraging his animals with melancholy howls. The roads are so steep, and the runners of the bullock-sleds have so polished the cobble-stones with which they are paved, that, if you ride, you can only do so at a walk; the hammock, which depends from a pole borne upon the shoulders of two men, is hot and uncomfortable, so the Briton who is not an invalid usually trusts to his own legs for locomotion.

The town of Funchal looks better from the sea than it does upon a nearer inspection. Lying out in the bay you see to your left the diminutive fortress on the detached Ilheo, or Loo Rock; while in front the yellow habitation of the Governor, half palace and half castle, is a prominent and picturesque object. To the right of that is Bangor's Pillar, a stone column which some eccentric genius reared with the idea that a crane might be worked from the top of it for unloading boats; then the custom-house, and the fort of St. Jago, with the church of the same name above it. Behind these are a mass of red-tiled roofs and little square turrets; and, over all, the gray walls of the old castle. Going on shore you find a town of narrow and intricate

streets, closed in with gloomy-looking houses, the windows on the ground-floors of which are without glass, but guarded by iron bars and network, as if house-breaking were rather a common event. Where there are not houses the street is closed in with high stone walls, over the tops of which flowering shrubs clamber in wild profusion. Three streams traverse the town and discharge into the sea, viz., the San Lazaro, Santa Luiza, and Joao Gomez. They form rather picturesque ravines, clothed with gorgeous vegetation; and, looking down from the bridges which span them, you observe women pounding clothes on flat rocks with pieces of stone, and that, too, with a vigour that no longer leaves it a matter for wonder why your shirts should always come home from the laundress with the cuffs and collars frayed out into a curious imitation of lace.

The garrison of Portuguese troops wear a uniform not unlike that of our Rifle Brigade. They seem good-natured and fatherly kind of men, and any day you may perceive the sentries smoking their cigarettes and lounging in the shade, while they lend their rifles to the little children to play at soldiers or hobby-horse with. One sees officers, too, in the streets—in fact, there appear to be more officers than soldiers—all looking suspiciously waspish about the waist, and with trowsers that seem to be distended

about the upper part of the thigh with small crinolines. They carry rapiers, which flap against the thigh at every step, and to see them promenading on the diminutive *prada*, under the trees, when the band is playing, with their moustaches curled up to the corners of their eyes, and one hand resting jauntily on the hip, is a sight to make the craven heart of a Briton tremble. For they are fire-eaters indeed. Ah! how they scowl at the unconscious Saxon who inadvertently nearly strides over them; how they splutter and rage round him like little bantam-cocks, as he begs pardon and explains that he did not see them; with what disdainful grace they shrug their padded shoulders, and, twirling their moustaches furiously, once more pass on and turn their bewitching glances upon the fair *senoritas*, who are entranced by so much gallantry and courage.

I shall never forget my first night at Funchal. It was the first time that I had ever been out of England, and I had been running about all day in a state of wonderful excitement; now stopping to stare at a shovel-hatted priest, a peasant in his carapuce, or conical blue cap, a green lizard on a wall, or the bunches of ripe grapes which hung everywhere from trellised vines; so that I went to bed thoroughly tired out, but far too excited to sleep. I had only been in bed some ten minutes, thoroughly realising from the

dead silence, and the earthy smell which seems peculiar to every tropical or sub-tropical climate, that I was at last in a foreign country, when I heard the twanging of a guitar or machette,* in the neighbouring street, and presently a high, thin Portuguese tenor broke out in quavering song.

Ah, here was romance indeed! I thought of the student of Salamanca—stay, though, was it he of Salamanca, or of Cadiz, who was famed for his skill upon the guitar?—and a thousand visions of *mantillas*, fans, lavender satin boots and delightfully wicked black eyes, floated before me. No doubt another cavalier, muffled in a long black cloak and bursting with jealous rage, was standing round the corner stiletto in hand, waiting to see if the dark-eyed *senorita* would open her lattice, or accord any token of favour to the warbling rival, who sang on, unconscious of danger.

Suddenly the romantic strains were interrupted by a kind of crash. Heavens, what was it? Was it a struggle to the death between the two fiery lovers? I sprang out of the sheets, and was at the window just in time to see the skinny and wrinkled arm of an old woman withdrawing into a neighbouring casement a basin, or some homely utensil of that kind, which,

* A small instrument like a diminutive guitar with four strings, peculiar to the island.

in the patriarchal custom of the country, she had been emptying into the street. I looked up and down the road. It was a bright moonlight night, and I could see even the grass that was growing in the interstices of the round stones of the pavement, and the flowers on the shrubs nodding over the high wall of an adjacent garden. Ah, there was the serenader, leaning up against the side of a house, dissembling under a slouched hat, and perfectly *en règle*, even to the broad black riband which suspended the guitar! He came a little nearer to me, and commenced his amorous ditty once more. It did not sound quite so well at a closer hearing; there did not seem to be much variation in the tune; and, by some absurd train of thought, I remembered the querulous music our old tom-cat used to indulge in, when shut out in the garden at night. As if there could be any comparison between that prosaic sound, and this song sanctified by the halo of romance! Presently I heard a shutter forcibly jerked open, and a man's voice raised as if in anger. Ha, ha! No doubt this was the jealous husband, who had arrived home unexpectedly, and thus been aroused by the fond and flattering couplets that were intended only for fairer ears. Yes, there could be no doubt of it. The man at the window, in a white garment, poured forth a string of voluble sentences, gesticulated

violently, and then shut his shutter with a bang, while the unhappy lover slunk off with a sad heart up a neighbouring alley. I waited a little time to see if he would return, but nothing more happened, and I went to bed full of serene happiness.

Next morning I said to the manager of the hotel :

“Somebody was playing the guitar under my window late last night.”

He replied :

“It’s that confounded boy José again. I hope he didn’t disturb you. The young wretch is our scullery boy, and I’ve had to speak to him about it before.”

Thus was the halo of romance rudely dispelled.

For the visitor who has only one day to devote to the island, one of the expeditions which will give the best idea of the mountain scenery is to climb up the *Allegria*, then cross to the church of *Nossa Senhora do Monte*, descend into the stupendous ravines to the east, and come back by the *Roxinha* road. At the convent of *Our Lady of the Mount* there are nuns to be seen who, in defiance of the accepted belief to the contrary, are not in the least alarmed at the presence of the male animal. However, no visitor to *Mount Church* will have any desire to commit sacrilege by running away with one of these holy women ; quite the contrary, for the recluses are as plain as goody-goody people usually are. I know the proverb says,

“as ugly as sin;” but my experience goes to show that sin is not as ugly as it ought to be, to keep up the reputation of proverbial philosophy. These nuns entreat the casual heretic to buy feather flowers, baskets, and a species of embroidery which much rejoiceth the female mind, and for which fabulous sums are asked.

If there should chance to be a bullock-sled at the church, and you do not mind risking your neck, you may return to Funchal in a very expeditious manner. The drivers take the oxen out of the sled, and start the vehicle sliding down the steep incline, they hanging on behind with long poles, with which they steer the sled, and prevent it attempting to climb over the low walls of loose stones. The ascent to the church occupies nearly two hours in a bullock-sled, but you come down the whole 2,000 feet of altitude in about twenty minutes; and the pastime much resembles tobogganning, with the exception that you have walls, stones, and rocks to fall upon, instead of a nice soft snow-drift. Accidents, however, do not occur so frequently as one might imagine.

One of the first things that attracts the notice of the visitor to Madeira is the profusion of fruits and flowers of all descriptions. From its situation and equable climate, the fruits of both Europe and the tropics thrive in the island; but neither attain the

perfection at which they arrive in their own proper latitudes, and, in my opinion, the fruit of Madeira is much overrated. The peaches, plums, nectarines, and other wall-fruits cannot for a moment be compared with those of England, and the apples are tasteless and almost uneatable; while as for tropical fruits, neither the pine-apple, the banana, the guava, nor the passion-fruit, though cultivated with care, is so good as those which grow almost wild upon the Gold Coast and in Western Africa generally. Figs, melons, grapes, oranges, and pomegranates, being more in their proper latitude, are perhaps the best productions of the island. For flowers, however, Madeira is unsurpassed. Even the hedges are made of myrtle, rose, honeysuckle, and jasmine, all in perpetual bloom; and every garden is filled with tropical and sub-tropical flowers, which are only seen at home in conservatories. The hills are covered with lupin, larkspur, and fleur-de-lis; and, in the spring, the upper slopes of the mountains are fragrant with the perfume of acres of sweet violets. Of forest trees the principal are the pine, chestnut, cedar, and African oak. It is worthy of note that, though Madeira unites the vegetation of Europe with that of Africa, the euphorbiæ and mesembryanthema, which are so characteristic of the latter, and which are found in the Canaries, are here wanting.

Saints' days and festivals are, of course, of frequent recurrence in Madeira, but they are not observed with the same ceremony as in the Spanish islands; and processions and displays of cheap fireworks are comparatively rare. On Good Friday all the flags in Funchal are hoisted at half-mast, the churches are draped in black, and on every side are heard the enlivening strains of the "Dead March." On the day following an effigy of Judas Iscariot is hanged in public. The Portuguese appear to have strange ideas regarding the costumes which were in vogue nearly nineteen hundred years ago, for, on the only occasion upon which I saw this ridiculous spectacle, the effigy wore an old tall black hat, from which a portion of the roof had been removed—perhaps for ventilation—a knitted under-shirt of white wool, a swallow-tailed blue coat, ornamented with brass buttons, and trowsers of white jean. A mask covered the bunch of grass which represented the head of the culprit; and, from the colour of the nose, it appeared that he had been trying for the last eighteen hundred years to drown remorse in strong drinks.

Christmas Day is celebrated in a less sensational manner. The people simply stay indoors and eat as many meals as they can of roast pork and garlic, employing all the time they can spare from the duties of the table in throwing squibs and crackers out of

their windows into the streets. No one but a Jew or a heretic would on that day abstain from devouring the flesh of the unclean animal; and, shortly after noon, the odour of roast pig pervades the whole town. In the evening there are more squibs and crackers, of a very feeble character; and bands of the citizens parade the streets, playing on guitars and machettes, and singing songs which happily are very different indeed, both in time and sentiment, to our droning Christmas "waits."

English people who visit Madeira usually think it their duty to drink the wine of that name, and are much disappointed with it. New Madeira I should certainly call dear as a wine, but, as a spirit, it is cheap; for adulteration is as thoroughly understood here as in any city of Europe, and the wine is invariably liberally "treated" with brandy. In former days, when Madeira wine earned for itself a world-wide reputation, the best French brandy was used for "treating;" but the exceedingly high import duties have now led the wine-merchants to substitute the fiery and destructive brandy of the island, and this has, probably, nearly as much to do with the present inferior quality of the wine as has the deterioration of the vine. The best and purest wine is technically known to the wine-merchants by the name of "mother wine," and from one pipe of this,

eight or nine pipes of Madeira for exportation are made by the addition and judicious mixture of inferior vintages. "Mother wine" itself is seldom exported, and, in fact, very little good wine finds its way out of the island, or is even offered for sale in it, all being at once snapped up by connoisseurs for their own tables. That intended for the English market is usually of a very inferior description, and, to give it a fictitious age, it is exposed in large vats for several days to a heat of 105° or 110° . Besides Madeira proper, the island also produces *Vina Tinta*, a kind of thin and sweet Beaune. It is made from black grapes, and obtains its colour from their skins, which are placed in a vat with the expressed juice and there allowed to remain for several days. The *Sercial* is another brand, distinguished by a slight flavour of opium; and *Malmsey* is also made in small quantities.

The slopes of the mountains around Funchal are covered with vineyards up to the limit at which the vine will grow, which is about 1,800 feet above the level of the sea; and wine produced on this side of the island is worth three times as much as that made on the northern side. The vines are usually grown and tended by tenant peasants, who, besides paying the Government a tenth of the produce of the vintage, have to hand over to the owner of the soil one-half of the remainder as rent. The business is so profitable,

however, that, even on these hard terms, the actual wine-growers manage to do very well. The bunches of grapes, when picked, are placed in a rough wooden trough, and then trodden down by the naked feet of the labourers; any juice which may remain after this being expressed by means of a squared log. The quality of the wine is fixed almost as much by smell as by taste. The very worst kind is distilled into brandy, and the next, a thin and acid wine, is reserved for the poorer classes. The wine obtainable on the island by the ordinary Englishman who is not a millionaire, is a headachy, sweet, and potent fluid, and I should imagine that the less one drank of it the better.

From Funchal to the north there are two roads, namely, one to S. Vincente and one to Santa Anna. By going by the one and returning by the other, three or four days may be profitably expended in seeing all that is best worth seeing in the island. S. Vincente is about ten hours' journey from Funchal. The road, paved with cobble-stones, and enclosed by loose stone walls, at first follows the cliffs along the coast to the west, till the ravine of the Socorridos river is reached, when it turns upward by a steep ascent, on which your horse, if you are mounted, slips about in quite a startling manner. It is early morning, and numbers of peasants of both sexes are

met coming down to Funchal, some bearing on their heads bundles of firewood or fodder for horses, for sale in the town; and others carrying on their shoulders skins full of wine.

After passing the limit of the vineyards the road is unenclosed, and traverses broad mountain heaths and woods of chestnut. This is called the Jardim de Serra, or Garden of the Mountains, and is a wild and luxuriant scene. On one side are lofty rounded spurs of the mountains, and on the other are deep valleys choked with vegetation, amid which the dragon-tree, the palm, and the pale-green banner of the banana may occasionally be seen. The expanse of heath extends as far as the Jardim Quinta, or villa, leaving which to the left the ascent is continued by narrow and dangerous paths till the Grand Corral is reached.

Quitting the path and ascending a hill to the right, you look down suddenly upon the vast hollow of a crater, 2,000 feet deep, the broken and rugged basaltic sides of which are clothed from foot to summit with laurels and other evergreens. The abyss is broken up into deep valleys and ravines, by rocky ridges extending from the surrounding cliffs; and though to all appearance inaccessible, the white walls of cottages are seen gleaming amongst the vineyards, with the church tower of Libramente

above them; while a little river that traverses one valley, sparkles in the sunlight like a glittering silver thread. Returning to the road, it then follows a narrow ridge, only a few feet in breadth, with the immense depth of the Corral on one side, and the thickly-wooded and precipitous ravine of the Serra d'Agoa on the other. In front is the abrupt height of the Pico Grande, and to the right, across the Corral, tower the Pico Arriero and the Pico Ruivo—the latter distinguished by the verdure which extends to its summit. To the right of Pico Ruivo, which is 6,056 feet in height and the highest point in Madeira, are several castellated crags, which are called by the natives the *Torrinhas* or “Turrets.” People who have not strong nerves usually prefer walking here to being swung half over a precipice in a hammock, or bruised against the rocks by a jibbing horse; for, for some distance, the narrow path is hewn out of the face of the cliff, which overhangs it in places so as to barely admit of the passage of a single horseman. Perhaps, while riding along cautiously, and keeping as far from the edge of the precipice as possible, the tinkle of mule-bells will be heard ahead, and in a moment half-a-dozen mules, laden with produce for the capital, will appear round a sharp corner, moving along at a slow trot and followed by a shouting muleteer. You think it is

impossible for them to pass you without accident, and squeeze as close as you can to the wall-like cliff, so as to make sure that you will not be the one to go over ; but almost before you know it they have passed you, and except for the brushing of a pannier or two against your knee, you have not been touched. The islanders think nothing of such meetings on these dangerous paths ; but it takes a long time for a man, unaccustomed to ride on the top of a brick wall, to view them with equanimity.

Winding round the Pico Grande, the road traverses the mountains for several miles, every turn opening up fresh vistas of rugged beauty ; until, descending through cool and fragrant plantations of fir and birch, the valley of S. Vincente is reached. On this, the northern side of the island, the vine, instead of growing on trellis-work, is trained on trees, principally the chestnut. These trees are planted at regular intervals ; and, as the road leaves the woods and enters the region of vineyards, one rides along under a canopy of foliage, formed of vines, which, clambering from branch to branch, have spread across the track. Through this roof of leaves an occasional ray of sunlight finds its way to chequer with light and shadow the stony path ; and, looking up, one sees between the bunches of grapes and the soft green surface of the vine-

leaves, the gnarled limbs of the chestnuts stretching overhead. The banana, palm, and cactus do not flourish on this side of Madeira, for, in the winter months, severe cold is often experienced, and snow sometimes lies on the hills and lower shoulders of the mountains for weeks. But while the furious north wind is raging along this coast, and the *serras* are impassable through hail, snow, fog, and tempest, Funchal, sheltered in its rugged mountain amphitheatre, remains quite tranquil; and a stranger, wandering about its warm and sunlit streets, would never guess, from the dark clouds which roll along the mountain tops, what an angry and chilly blast is shut out by that barrier.

From S. Vincente to Santa Anna is about seven hours' journey. Leaving the fields of flax in the valley, from which the rough cloth of the island is manufactured, the road follows the sea-shore the greater part of the way; sometimes on a narrow shelf between the rocks and the sea, and sometimes on the summit of a cliff. At one part it is cut in the face of a precipice, at a considerable height above the sea; and every half-mile or so it zigzags down one side of a narrow and steep ravine, to ascend again on the further side in the same circuitous manner. As one draws near to Santa Anna the road trends away from the sea, and crosses

the gentle, and here unbroken, slope of the mountain; which, being all under cultivation, appears tame after the rugged grandeur of the scenes passed through in the earlier part of the journey from S. Vincente. Taken as a whole, however, the coast scenery on this side of the island is much more grand than that on the southern side; the ravine of Sao Jorge, and the village of Ponta Delgada, being particularly magnificent.

Between Santa Anna and Funchal are many "bits," which, were they in any other island, would be considered almost unrivalled. The journey between the two towns occupies about nine hours; and, during the descent of the mountains on the southern side, one has a good view of the rocky islands, lying off in the ocean, and which are commonly called the Desertas; namely, the ship-like Sail Rock, the table-topped Chao Island, Bugio Island, and the rugged Deserta Grande.

CHAPTER XIV.

MADEIRA.

Masked Balls—A Crushing Misadventure—Discovery of the Island—The Fossil Forest of Caniçal—Excursions—The Waterfall—Corral das Freiras—The Poul de Serra—Camera de Lobos—Brazen Head—Santa Cruz—Hunting the Statesman—A Wicked Jest.

FUNCHAL is occasionally enlivened by masked balls, principally during the Carnival, and, though the company is not always very select, one can extract a good deal of harmless amusement from them. English ladies are, as a rule, much too strait-laced to patronise them; but they send their male belongings, and expect them to bring back voluminous reports of all the little wickednesses they may have detected.

Usually the Briton does not go in costume, but, should he do so, you can at once detect him; because he is quite conscious that he is making a fool of himself, and exhibits that self-consciousness; while the Portuguese think much too highly of themselves to entertain any such an idea for a moment.

An acquaintance of mine once met with a most unpleasant adventure at one of these gatherings. He was walking about in the crowd, looking at the dancers, and admiring the costumes, when he received a tap on his arm from a fan ; and, looking round, discovered a charming little mask, in a black gauzy kind of dress, standing close beside him. He could speak Portuguese fairly well ; and as he perceived that the mask had a pair of very wicked black eyes, and a little red mouth that was evidently made to be kissed, he immediately opened a conversation. She responded so amiably that my friend, knowing the romantic tendencies of these hot-blooded Southern nations, at once guessed that it was a case of love at first sight ; and having heard that Portuguese women had a *penchant* for fair men, he blessed the fortunate accident which had endowed him at his birth with dust-coloured hair, and eyes of a pale gooseberry green. He danced two or three dances with her, supplying her with ices and champagne in the intervals ; and all the time such a bewitching prattle of naughtiness fell from the pouting red lips, that, in his delight, he scarcely knew whether he was standing on his head or his heels.

At last, after the sixth dance, and the third bottle of champagne, he ventured to suggest that, as the crowded rooms were rather warm, they should go out into the cooler air of the garden. The fascinating

mask at once acquiesced, and in a few minutes they were seated on a bench in a fragrant bower of flowers. Then, somehow or other, my friend suddenly found his arm round the taper waist of this enchanting angel; next, her head somehow reclined upon his shoulder, and, in a voice husky with emotion, he implored her to remove the odious vizard, and allow him to gaze upon her much-to-be-loved features. She said he must untie it for her, and, as he was so doing, their hands accidentally met; and, by the time that the mask was removed and the sweetest little face in the world upturned to his, he felt himself in Paradise, and wondered what he had ever done to deserve being thus richly rewarded by fortune. They were sitting upon the bench, fallen into a delightful reverie, and my friend's heart bursting with love, when a harsh, strident voice interrupted the heavenly dream; and, starting up, he saw a man before him, convulsed with some strong emotion. He at once smelt jealousy in the wind, and, knowing the Portuguese character, began to look about for some weapon with which to parry the blow of the avenging knife, when the furious rival, recovering himself with a mighty effort, again spoke. He said:

“If the English gentleman has quite finished with my little brother I will take him home, as it is time for him to go to bed.”

“Your what?”

“My little brother, senhor.” And the rival exploded in a violent fit of laughter, in which, to my friend’s horror, the charming mask joined uproariously.

Then she got up, and, making a little curtsey, said :

“Thank you very much, sir, for the nice ices and the delicious champagne. My brother says it is time to go home. Good-night.”

And they both went off screaming with laughter, while numbers of dim figures might have been observed amongst the shrubs, all with handkerchiefs pressed convulsively to their mouths, and with their shoulders shaking as if they had the ague.

As for the victim of this fraud, he stood there bursting with indignation. He was of a rather parsimonious nature, and when he reflected upon the money which he had wasted in refreshments for that boy, he broke out, I am sorry to say, into violent execrations. Then he thought of what people would say when they heard the story at the club; and, feeling himself unable to face the ridicule to which he would certainly be exposed, he rushed to the hotel, packed up his belongings, and went on board a steamer which was to sail at daybreak.

Madeira is said to have been discovered in 1334,

by an Englishman named Robert Macham. According to the legend that esquire was enamoured of Anne, daughter of the Earl of Dorset; but, while the lady regarded her suitor with favour, the father did not consider him a sufficiently eligible *parti*, and so married his daughter to a baron, of name unknown, who resided in the neighbourhood of Clifton, near Bristol. Not long after the marriage Anne eloped with her lover, and, with some trusted friends and followers, embarked in a vessel lying in the river Avon, intending to seek a refuge in France. The ship was unfortunately driven out of its proper course by a violent tempest; and, after thirteen days' buffeting upon the stormy billows, the sailors discovered an unknown island, covered with forest down to the edge of the water. They steered towards it, and anchored in a wooded bay. The lovers and their friends, delighted to set foot once more on shore, immediately landed, built sylvan bowers, and for three days roamed about the woodland solitudes. The calm of the third night was broken by a furious storm, and at daybreak they found to their dismay that the vessel, on board of which the crew had remained, had disappeared. Anne, imagining that this disaster was in punishment of her offence, died of remorse in a few days, being soon followed to the grave by her disconsolate

lover ; and their friends and companions, setting sail in the boat in which they had come ashore, put to sea, hoping to reach some known and inhabited part of the globe. After much exposure and suffering they were wrecked on the coast of Morocco, where they were made prisoners and slaves by the cruel Moors. Notwithstanding, however, the hardships of their captivity, they struggled on to a green old age ; since the legend says that, in 1418, that is, eighty-four years after their discovery of Madeira, they imparted that discovery to Juan de Morales, an experienced pilot of Seville, who saw them in Morocco. Morales at once carried the information to Prince Henry of Portugal ; and, in the same year, the island was taken possession of by that prince.

Another account, less legendary, says that Prince Henry, ambitious of discovering a route to the East round Africa, fitted out a single ship and despatched it, in 1418, under Tristan Vaz and Gonsalez Zarco, two gentlemen of his household, with orders to double Cape Bojador, and steer onwards towards the south. They endeavoured to carry out their instructions, and commenced sailing along the coast of Morocco ; but a sudden storm drove them out to sea, far out of sight of land. The gale continued raging, and they were momen-

tarily expecting to be engulfed in the waves, when they were carried to an unknown island, under which they ran for shelter, and which, in commemoration of their providential escape, they named Porto Santo. Directly the weather became favourable they returned to Portugal, to report their discovery; and, in the year following, Prince Henry sent out three ships, under the two above-named commanders and Bartolomeo Perestrello, to take possession of and colonise the newly-discovered island. After the colonists had been some weeks in Porto Santo, they noticed a stationary object, like a small black cloud, on the horizon to the south; and, imagining that it might be land, despatched a ship towards it. This ship discovered it to be an uninhabited island, which, on account of its being covered with forest, was called Madeira. This account is probably true in the main facts; but as Madeira is distinctly visible from Porto Santo, from which it is only twenty-six miles distant, its discovery must have been immediately consequent upon the discovery of the latter island.*

In 1420, Prince Henry sent a colony of Portuguese to Madeira, and supplied them with sheep, cattle, poultry, plants and seeds. The wines of Cyprus being

* According to Cadamosto, *Collecção de Noticias*, Madeira was not discovered until three years after the settlement of Porto Santo.

then in great repute, he obtained cuttings of the vine from that island, as well as sugar-cane from Sicily; and, both these doing well in Madeira, it rapidly became prosperous. In order to clear the ground the more easily, Zarco, the first governor, ordered the colonists to set fire to the forests, which then covered the island, and the fire is said to have raged with such fury that all the inhabitants, men, women, and children, were compelled to seek refuge in the sea, where they remained for two days up to the neck in water, and without food. The forests burned for upwards of six years, and, either from this cause or from injudicious felling, the wood of the island was exhausted about one hundred years ago, and the rainfall began to diminish. About 1800, however, the inhabitants planted those pine-woods which now cover the more accessible parts of the mountains, and they now understand the economy of nature sufficiently well not to cut down in one place without planting in another. Pine-tree growing is besides a most profitable undertaking, for firewood is always in demand, and the trees are fit for the market in twelve or thirteen years.

Near the eastern extremity of Madeira, between the village of Caniçal and Cape St. Lourenço, is a curious forest of fossil trees. Caniçal is about fifteen

miles from Funchal, and, on the way, one passes the hamlet of Machico, said to be named after Macham, the traditionary English discoverer of Madeira. It possesses a church which is rumoured to have been built in memory of him ; and in which the remains of a cedar-wood cross are shown to the visitor, who is gravely assured that it is the one that was placed by Macham over the grave of the unfortunate Lady Anne. It is a picturesque village, surrounded by lofty peaks, and nestling down in the little bay which here breaks into the cliff-guarded shores. It is noted for its chalybeate spring.

Canical is a poor place, and would be unknown to Europeans but for the fossils in its neighbourhood. The stone forest is found about a mile and a half beyond the village, in a sandy, saucer-shaped plain. Buried in the sand upon this plain are trees, the trunks still standing in their natural position, and having the branches attached, which spread out over the ground like a network of roots. It is evident that the small forest which grew here was overwhelmed by the sea, which would form a kind of lagoon in the depression of the plain ; for marine shells are found mingled with the sand, and the trees are erect, not scattered prostrate here and there, as would be the case if they had been drifted to this spot at haphazard. In some instances the wood has disap-

peared, and nothing but the empty casts of the vanished trees remains in the agglutinated sand ; but, in most cases, it still exists, transformed into a flinty lignite. Some of the trunks stand about a foot out of the sand, and there are several nearly a foot in diameter. Most of the trees are very perfect, and even the twigs on the branches have been preserved. This fossil forest occupies nearly a square mile ; the depth of the sand in which it is buried is not known.

Among other places which may profitably be visited in Madeira may be mentioned the Waterfall, the bottom of the Corral, the Poul de Serra, and Camera de Lobos. The first of these is to the west of Funchal in the ravine of the San Luisa, which, higher up, is called Ribeira do Torreao, and, to reach it, one can either ascend the mountain slope until the parish of San Roque is reached—that is, for about two miles—and then descend into the bed of the torrent ; or enter the latter from the commencement, and clamber over the shingle, sand, and blocks of basalt till the fall is reached. The ravine is in some places enclosed by cliffs 500 feet in height, and the brink of the stream, which is filled with water-cress, is covered with laurels and ferns, among which may be seen the purple blossoms of the foxglove, the white and gold of the arum, and the occasional pink of the dark-stemmed belladonna lily. As one ascends the

ravine becomes narrower, and the frowning walls of cliff are unbroken. Turning suddenly a sharp bend in the gorge, one catches a first glimpse of the fall through the foliage of the trees which fringe the bases of two low and projecting rocks; and, looking back after a few paces, one appears to be hemmed in on every side by unscalable heights in a pit from which there is no exit. The fall is about 300 feet high, but is broken at about two-thirds of its height by a shelf of rock, and the body of water, which plunges in sheets of spray into the deep pool beneath, is not large.

The best time for visiting this fall is, of course, after rain, when the volume of water is greater than usual; but not after too heavy a rainfall, or one might run the risk of being carried away by a freshet. The rainy season of Madeira may be said to extend from October to January, both inclusive; but the rain falls generally in showers, there are as many fine days as wet ones, and the incessant downpour of the tropics is unknown. The annual rainfall of Madeira is estimated at about thirty-five inches, and during the rainy season the three torrents which traverse the town of Funchal sometimes overflow their banks. In 1809 there was a very disastrous flood. No rain had fallen for months, until one day in October a heavy downpour commenced at noon. About eight

o'clock in the evening the freshets came down, carried away all the bridges, and swept away several houses in the eastern quarter of the town. One of them is said to have been carried out into the bay entire, and to have been seen there for some minutes with the lights still burning in the upper windows. Upwards of 400 lives were lost, and the streets were choked with dead cattle, sheep, ruins, and rubbish. This flood was supposed to have been caused by a waterspout, which, it was imagined, broke above the town.

To reach the bottom of the Grand Corral, or, to give it its local designation, the Corral das Freiras, one has first to ascend by the S. Vincente road, till it runs along the western side of Pico Grande, which towers up between the Corral and the ravine of the Serra d'Agoa. There the road forks, and the branch that winds down to the eastward leads to the bottom of the Corral. For about three miles the road zig-zags down on the summits of the precipitous, wall-like spurs, which, rising to a height of some 2,000 feet from the depth of the valley, separate the more rugged southern half of the Corral from the softer northern half. At the commencement of the descent the Pico Ruivo is directly opposite, and its towering heights seem to threaten momentarily to crash down upon the passer-by, who is moving cautiously along

on the verge of a precipice. One continues descending, past enormous masses of rock, like Titanic towers and fortresses, which have fallen from above and stand boldly up from the laurels and broom at their feet, some apparently so delicately balanced that a touch would suffice to dislodge them; past sparkling cascades and babbling streams, and past rocky heights clothed from head to foot with flowering heaths. Sometimes the road is carried across a rude stone causeway which connects two ridges, at others it is hewn out of the face of a cliff, or winds sharply round a precipitous spur, until a torrent spanned by a bridge is reached, and we have arrived at the bottom. On inquiry, this stream turns out to be the Socorridos river, which discharges its waters into the sea to the west of Funchal, and it is the only outlet of the Corral. In the smiling valley are vineyards and plantations of all kinds; but the cottages of the peasants are poor, and might even be called squalid, while the interior of the church of Libramente exhibits even worse taste than one is accustomed to see in Portuguese places of worship.

The valley is 2,000 feet above the sea, and it is the highest point at which the vine is cultivated in the island. The road from above to the hamlet of Libramente was the work of a Portuguese engineer named Jose d'Alfonseca. It is said to have occupied

three years in making, for it is cut out of the solid rock, and in many cases the work could only be carried on by men suspended on stages swung from above, or raised on scaffoldings built up from below. Every man in the island was compelled to work at this road for two days, or contribute, in lieu, a dollar towards the expenses. It was completed in 1817.

The Poul de Serra is a sandy plateau, covered with broom and heath, on the summit of the mountains a little to the west of the centre of the island, and is about nine miles in length, three in breadth, and 5,000 feet above the sea. It is good pasture land, but is avoided, as a rule, by the peasants, except those who dwell in its immediate vicinity, for it is popularly believed to be haunted by spectres and malignant demons; and strange tales are told of the unearthly shapes which are seen, and the weird sounds that are heard on the solitary moor, when, as is frequently the case, it is enshrouded in mist. Careful observers have noticed spectral illusions in this mountain solitude similar to those of the Brocken, and consisting, when the Poul de Serra is clear, and mists are rising perpendicularly from the valleys and lower mountain slopes opposite the sun, of a gigantic reflection of their own persons and horses. To this phenomenon most of the stories of apparitions may be traced, the remainder being either

invented, or evoked by the excited imaginations of terrified and superstitious peasants who have been belated.

Apart, however, from the evil reputation due to its imaginary perils, the Poul de Serra is, in the winter months, when covered with snow and rendered gloomy with fog, a dangerous tract to traverse; and almost yearly some few peasants, who have lost their way in the semi-darkness of the clouds, are frozen to death on its bleak and exposed summit. Even in the summer there is something uncanny about the stillness of this central plateau, and the peasants from the northern side of the island (who are distinguishable by their scarlet capes, those living on the southern side wearing blue ones) who find themselves obliged occasionally to cross the Poul de Serra, do so at the top of their speed, and with many uneasy glances around and behind, to see that no spectre be creeping towards them unawares. These coloured capes, both kinds of which are trimmed with a light blue, form, with the blue funnel-shaped cap, lined with red, and named the *carapuce*, the only distinctive costume of the peasantry of Madeira. The cap is worn by both sexes, but the capes by the women alone, and then usually only on saints' days, or when they are visiting the capital. As a rule, the men appear dressed in dirty white or yellowish shirts and

trowsers, and the women in the ordinary skirts of civilisation, perhaps worn a little shorter than in the British Isles. Both sexes are unmistakably plain in youth, and hideous in age; but it is doubtful if they are of pure Portuguese blood, several hundred negroes and captured Moors having been sent to Madeira as slaves some four centuries ago, who have since become blended with the original Portuguese population. The seizure of the inoffensive inhabitants of Morocco by licensed Portuguese corsairs was carried on to such an extent that, in 1509, it was made a subject of formal complaint to King Manuel; a Portuguese named Diego de Azambrya having recently kidnapped a number of wealthy Moorish and Jewish merchants, and sold them as slaves to the brother of the Governor of Madeira.

Camera de Lobos lies to the westward of Funchal. The road to the diminutive village follows the windings of the coast, affording in turn picturesque views of hill-side covered with vineyards, of broken and rock-bound shores, and wide stretches of blue ocean. Crossing the turbulent stream in the valley, near which are some magnificent cacti, from fifteen to twenty feet high, a sudden bend brings us to the village. To the west a cliff, 1,600 feet in height, and marked from foot to summit with dykes of basalt, rises rapidly till it forms the headland of

Cape Girain; and towards its western extremity a stream falls down the whole height of the cliff, in three steps, close to the vineyards of Fazenda dos Padres which lie at its base. This piece of cultivated land between the precipice and the sea is a land-slip, and to arrive at these vineyards, and the volcanic aperture which is the attraction of this neighbourhood, one has to proceed by boat from the village of Lobos, unless prepared to descend the cliff by means of the precariously fixed posts used by the fishermen and peasants in ascending and descending. Landing near the small and half-ruinous fort, and clambering over the rocks between it and the small bay, one suddenly arrives at the brink of a hollow, almost circular in shape, about thirty-five feet deep, and some sixty yards in diameter. At the bottom of this bowl is a shaft, about twenty-four feet deep and five feet broad, and, descending the steeply-sloping side of the upper cavity, one can perceive the sea rushing in to the depths of this vertical tube, some fifty feet down, while the hoarse roar of the waves, gathering volume as it bellows up the well, strikes loudly on the ear. Besides this crater there is only one other in a good state of preservation in Madeira. It is situated on a conical mound on the slope of the mountain about 2,500 feet above the sea, and

some eleven miles to the east of Funchal. It is nearly seventy yards in diameter, and in the centre reaches a depth of about fifty feet; being always half-filled with rain-water, it is known by the name of the Lagoa.

The bold promontory, called by the English "Brazen Head," and by the Portuguese "Garajao," which is such a striking object as its vertical height is rounded by the steamer before entering Funchal bay, is within easy reach of Funchal, and there is a good road for the whole distance. The less abrupt declivities of the Head are covered with rose-bushes, ivy, fig-trees, and numerous wild flowers, and the curious dragon-tree may be seen here and there. It is joined on the western side by a lofty cliff, from the summit of which the village, fort, and bridge in the ravine below seem like mere toys, and the cacti which spring from the ledges of the rocks below scarcely appear stouter than blades of grass.

Between Brazen Head and Machico is the town of Santa Cruz, lying in a broad valley with Pico Camacha to the west, and the wooded Pico Moraynya and the more lofty Pico de Neve, with its bald summit, behind. The town, which has a population of some 2,000 souls, is one of the oldest in the island, and is said to have been formerly of some importance. With

the exception, however, of the picturesque ruins of a convent, there are no signs of Santa Cruz ever having been more extensive than at present, or having suffered a diminution of former state. The high cliffs which extend along the coast from Brazen Head to the point where the valley of Santa Cruz opens upon the shore, are marked every hundred yards or so with rude crosses, which record the fate of peasants who have fallen and been dashed to pieces while endeavouring to ascend or descend. As the cliffs rise generally sheer out of the water it might be wondered what object any person could have in trying to scale them; but their precipitous descent is frequently broken by ledges and shelves which have arrested the fall of soil from above, and which, being fertile, are cultivated by the indefatigable and poorer peasants. At almost any hour of the day some of them may be seen clambering down the almost impracticable precipices—clinging here to a bush, there to a rock, moving along sloping projections which hardly appear to afford a foothold, and at every moment risking their lives for the sake of some vegetables, worth at the most a few shillings. Here and there ropes hang from projecting rocks to assist them in their passage to and from their little terrace gardens; and as, no matter how worn these may be from rubbing against the rocks, they are never renewed until they have

been broken, they are a very common cause of accidents, and a new rope is usually a sign that a neck has been recently broken.

From something that I once witnessed at Funchal, I should say that the gratification of being a public man has many compensating drawbacks. I arrived there, during a year that shall be nameless, in a steamship which boasted amongst its passengers the Governor of one of our miserable West African colonies; and the hotel "tout" who boarded the vessel informed us, among other things, that a certain political personage—say, for instance, Lord C——n—was staying in the island. No sooner did the Governor hear this than he ran about the deck, saying to each passenger in turn: "I say, my old friend Carny is stopping here."

When he made this remark to me, I said: "I beg your pardon, whom did you say?"

"Carny; my old friend Carny. Lord C——n, you know!"

"Oh, really! You must be very intimate with him to call him Carny."

"Oh, yes; I know him very well. We are great friends."

Now, as we afterwards learned, this man had no acquaintance with the exalted personage at all; but he seized the pretext of the latter having once been

Secretary of State for the Colonies to go and hunt him about, and deprive him of that peace and rest from political turmoil which he had come to Madeira to enjoy. The Governor raged round from hotel to hotel in search of his prey; and then, having casually heard that the illustrious statesman lived up the mountain, he mounted a weedy steed and went off in full chase. He had not been gone long before his unconscious victim sauntered into the club, where he was at once told of the search that was being made for him. The victim expressed great surprise, declared that, to the best of his recollection, he had not the honour of the Governor's acquaintance, and, after a short interval, went out again.

Then some wicked wags thought they would have a little amusement at the expense of the statesman hunter, and, when he returned from his fruitless ride, they had the intelligence conveyed to him that the man he sought was in the reading-room of the club. The Governor at once hurried into the room, and, discovering a middle-aged and bearded man reading *The Standard*, rushed towards him and commenced:

“How do you do, Lord C——n? I have much pleasure in paying my respects to you in person, my lord. My name is Blank, my lord, and I received my appointment during your tenure of office as Secretary of State for the Colonies. For many years, my lord, I

have watched with much pleasure, not unmixed with awe, your wonderful career; and—and, my lord, can only say that my opinions coincide with yours in every particular. As a servant of the State myself, my lord, I trust you will allow me to express the great satisfaction with which your appreciation of my capabilities has been viewed by the inhabitants of the colony which you have entrusted to my care. My lord, I trust that in venturing to follow the illustrious example which you have set me, I may also hope, at some future day, to reap a reward proportionate to my more humble merits. My lord, I again greet you with the most profound respect.”

During the whole of this harangue the middle-aged man with the beard had been regarding the speaker with a look of blank amazement, till, hearing at its termination a half-suppressed titter from a young man who was intently studying *The Times* newspaper, held upside down, he seemed to grasp the situation. He smiled, and said:

“I am afraid, sir, that you have made a mistake.”

“Oh! I trust not, my lord. I trust from my soul, my lord, that my zeal and profound respect for your great qualities have not led me into committing any indiscretion, such as the—er—er—violation of an incognito, my lord.”

“No, I mean that you have mistaken your man. I am not Lord C——n.”

“Ha! ha! yes. A very good joke indeed. Capital, capital. I quite understand your lordship’s meaning.”

“And my name, sir, if you care to know it, is Brown.” And the middle-aged gentleman got up and walked out.

As for the Governor, when he learned the trick that had been played him, I never saw a man so crestfallen in my life. He left the club like a whipped cur, and at once slunk on board the steamer; where the passengers heard no more about “my old friend Carny” from him again.

THE END.

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