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A SUMMER IN SINTRA  
100 YEARS AGO

*Contributed by Joan Croft de Moura, owner of the original MS, and edited by Ida Kingsbury; with acknowledgments also to Mrs. W. M. F. Stilwell, a friend and relative of many of the people mentioned below.*

In 1885 a group of young people spent the summer in Sintra (1) and left a diary written between them which has come down to the Croft de Moura family through Cicely Custance (born Nevill), one of the chief characters in the following pages. She had no children so her book was given to her great-niece Joan who kindly suggested that the manuscript might be edited to give a picture of social life in Sintra in what was the high Victorian noon of the last century.

The diary is unpretentiously written for the protagonists alone and, though nothing portentous happens throughout, the interest lies in the local scenes and people of a quiet bygone Sintra bathed in its suns and mists, intertwined with the Monserate of Sir Francis Cook and always echoing with English voices. Sir Francis himself, though an absentee that summer,

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(1) The present official spelling of Sintra is used except in the quoted extracts from the MS where the old-fashioned Cintra, of course, appears.

hovers in the background as a benevolent founder of the feast, for the quintas mentioned belonged to him as did so many more in Sintra at that time.

The diary is written in an exercise book in the several hand-writings of the people concerned whose personalities emerge strongly as the story proceeds, shown too by the penmanship of each one. They will be identified later for they came of families of standing in the social history of the period and their backgrounds deserve to be recorded. In fact there appears to be no other chronicle of day to day life in the Monserrate circle during the lifetime of Sir Francis Cook. He let or lent the properties mentioned here to his friends and relatives, and here the summer frolics of the five young people who are the principal players took place and were recorded. Their parents and a few friends were the extras and onlookers.

The quintas themselves would have been primitive in the style of remote country houses of the time. No electricity or bathrooms, water carried on the head in pitchers, warmth provided by extra clothing and lighting by candles and olive oil wicks. As many will remember, this style of living was quite usual in the countryside up to and even later than World War II. Together these houses made a charming cluster in the foothills of Sintra where the scene is set.

The Quintas de S. Thiago and S. Bento (2) are situated close together down the lane marked in tiles with their names on the north side of the Sintra-Monserrate road about a mile and a half from the town. They are now well-known quintas, still owned by English families, but once formed a single unit as an agricultural dependency or grange belonging to the Jeronimite monks on their wind blown peak of the Pena. The property

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(2) Their history in the 16th century, when they were invaded by the English troops of Queen Elizabeth, is related in documents in the Torre do Tombo (MS. M/4-17). The owners at that time were favourable to Philip II, as were the Pena monks to whom the properties were left.

passed into private hands after the suppression of the monasteries in 1836 and was finally bought into the Monserrate estate.

On the corner of the lane leading to S. Bento and S. Thiago was another quinta belonging to Sir Francis, then called Quintinha, now Quinta dos Arcos, though often remembered by its old name. It was later sold and remodelled into a much larger house. We must imagine it at the time as a small antique building in much the same style as the lower quintas; all with their melting views, old chapels and patios on a bijou scale.

This was the backdrop for the gentle drama unfolded in the day to day sweet-albeit rollicking-nothings of the players; how they lived and how they played a hundred years ago.

An original feature was the Society into which they formed themselves, with statutes and officers, chronicles and fines, amusingly organised for the keener enjoyment of the summer they spent together. Their energy and enterprise were remarkable, distilling the maximum enjoyment from what might seem to our jaded fancies an eventless sequence of days. The young people of today would die of ennui, yet we cannot but enjoy those youthful romps and countrified pleasures so freshly lived and recorded in the diary.

At S. Thiago (3) lived the Nevill family, related to the Nevills of Abergavenny. Mr. William Nevill was a well-known botanist and plant collector and a Fellow of Kew Gardens. He had come to Portugal as adviser to Sir Francis Cook in the formation of his world-wide collection of plants at Monserrate. Nevill's daughter Cicely, Mary her sister and their brother Henry, nicknamed Oisey, all play leading parts. Mary was a kind of honorary member of the Society and never took her full share in the proceedings. She was an original, quaint and eccentric character, remembered for her gift of communication with children and animals. «They loved to be with her,» was the summing up of an old friend, and this without quite knowing why. She was just different.

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(3) The quinta previously belonged to Admiral Sartorius who sold it to Sir Francis Cook in 1873.

At S. Bento we find another interesting family, the Astley Campbells. Mrs. Astley Campbell was a daughter of the famous Admiral Rose Sartorius whose son married Emily Jane, daughter of Sir Francis Cook. The Sartorius family all became prominent in various ways. Astley Campbell himself is known to history as the son of William Smith, British Consul in Lisbon for 32 years and a natural son of William IV of England by a Miss Smith. The name Smith gradually disappeared, except in Portuguese legal documents, and the name Astley Campbell was assumed. Mabel their daughter was a gifted and capable young woman who became a distinguished nursing sister in the Great War, taking Nurse Cavell's place in Brussels after her execution. As a young girl in 1885 Mabel is well to the fore, zestful but perhaps already a disciplinarian. Nothing can be discovered about their guest, Jessica Shields, apart from her Presidency recorded here. She is thought to have been somewhat older than the others, possibly in the household in some kind of chaperone capacity.

At Quintinha the Kantzows were the tenants, evidently great friends of all. Major de Kantzow was Swedish Minister accredited to the Lisbon Court and held a Portuguese title, *Barão de S. Jorge*. His son Sidney and daughter Sophy both took part in the frolics that summer; and Sophy writes them up in her turn in a very neat and well formed Victorian handwriting in faultless though rather stiff English. The other entries are less notable in this respect though more idiomatic and flowing. Oisey's efforts, quite in character, sometimes verge on the careless. These were the *dramatis personae* as they will appear in their several roles recorded by Cicely Nevill in the statutes of the Cintra Variety Society.

#### *The Statutes*

- I. That the Club be called the Cintra Variety Society.
- II. That it be sub-divided into clubs, each having a president.

- III. That the clubs and presidents be as follows:
  - President of the Society: Miss Shields (S. Bento)
  - Swimming and riding: Miss de Kantzow (Quintinha)
  - Dramatic: Miss C. Nevill (S. Thiago)
  - Alpine and picnic: Miss Shields (S. Bento)
  - Sketching: Mr. H. Nevill (Oisey) (S. Thiago)
  - Tennis: Miss M. Astley Campbell (S. Bento)
- IV. That a public diary be kept of the doings of the clubs.
- V. That members write the account in rotation according to ages.
- VI. That the President be voted for.
- VII. That the President have the power of calling a committee.
- VIII. That a general meeting of the Society be held at least once a week, at which the diary of the preceding week shall be read.
- IX. That any member found neglecting the rule shall be fined, first offence 100 reis, 2nd ditto. 200 reis, 3rd ditto. 500 reis.
- X. That all fines be handed over to the president of the Dramatic Club.
- XI. That each member assume a nom-de-plume which are as follows:
  - Miss Shields — Per Hora
  - Miss C. Nevill — Koe
  - Miss de Kantzow — Nathaniel Winkle
  - Miss M. Astley Campbell — Burr
  - Mr. H. Nevill — Coccoloba

Added to these are Mary Nevill as an ex-officio member, Sidney de Kantzow in an honorary capacity, since he consistently refrained from joining, Colonel and Mrs. Astley Campbell, Mr. William Nevill the Fellow of Kew and the Kantzow parents as described. Finally, a small crowd of walk-on parts — the Austrian Minister Count Rosti, Prince Wrede, the Duke of

Palmela, Alfred Petre, who joined them later, and a few donkey boys and servitors in the background. D. Fernando at the Pena also makes a bow and two unexplained characters, Grimes and Mrs. Bowden. The Society's dogs are not forgotten, Spot, Toby, Puppy and Jip, some well behaved, some not, and some acting as the chorus. And so to the Diary itself...

*Saturday July 27 th. An Expedition to the sea.* The entry is signed Nathaniel Winkle (Sophy de Kantzow) president of the swimming and riding club. Although not precisely named, the objective was the Praia de Adraga, on donkey and pony back, starting from the Monserrate gate at 2 and 2.30 p.m. according to the steeds. Not much happened, but the occasion was typical of the *burricadas* popular with summer visitors at the time. Sophy, perhaps one of the least imaginative of the members, seems hard put to it for material but describes the exploration of the rocks and caves followed by tea, with strawberries from Monserrate. On the way back she tells — without humour or *arrière pensée* — of an incident which became almost mandatory for northerners abroad at one time or another: «We came upon a boy riding a heavily laden pony and beating him hard upon the head. Thereupon Mrs. de Kantzow got off her donkey, seized the stick and the boy, frightened, ran away with her after him. It was a good run but uphill and unfortunately the boy got away safely and as it was late we could not wait for another opportunity of beating him for his cruelty.» It is not related what comments, if any, this drew forth at the weekly meeting; but foreigners today would be ill-advised so to act!

*August 15th. Expedition to the Cork Convent.* (4) The Assumption, a holiday then as now. The proceedings are humourously

(4) The Capuchos or Cork Convent was built in 1560 by D. Alvaro de Castro in posthumous fulfilment of a vow made by his father, D. João de Castro, the famous 4th Viceroy of India who had died in Goa 12 years earlier. It was bought by Sir Francis Cook in 1873.

described by Coccoloba (Oisey). The party went mostly on foot by the friars' traditional path through the woods, with a heavily laden donkey to carry the provisions uphill as well as two of the more weighty members of the excursion. «Poor beast», it was conceded, but without much thought of the «cruelty» which had so outraged Mrs. de Kantzow on the way back from the sea! After describing the delights of tea in the green shade, the entry continues: «Part of the club started to view the ruined Abbey (sic) but soon came running with the alarming news that the Austrian Diplomacy was in our wake — the wily Rosti had fore-stalled us!» The club sensibly decided that the best defence was to have tea immediately since, laments Oisey, «our friend had *not* a frugal mind.» This fact had caused the alarm apart from the general unpopularity of the unfortunate Count, always evident in the Diary. To escape him,

we determined to mount the uppermost crag of the rock, our chamois footed President being especially anxious to reach the highest peak

From whence to view with eagle eye  
The harmless Rosti passing by...

The sunset over the sea was really beautiful.... the company artistic as well as Alpine exalted, and commenced promptly singing the appropriate and beautiful air *Sweetly sings the donkey*. I think we must have surprised the natives pretty considerably with our songs and occasionally nearly running into some inebriated festa-loafer or underpaid wine-contractor, but facts such as these are not worth recording in so felicitous a day. At length we reached the Quintinha at about half past eight where two of our number Nathaniel Winkle and Sid left us. The cavalcade now moved on unloading again at S. Bento where our spirited leader and the sprightly Burr declared unanimously that they would not go an inch further. The party now reduced to three soon reached S. Thiago with the donkey which was sent back

to Monserrate and everything having been seen to the great thing was *per hora* and so the last of the Club retired to rest (5).

*August 19th. First Dramatic Representation in Public.* This was given at S. Thiago and is described by the Dramatic Club President and stage-manager, Cicely Nevill. She pays a graceful compliment to the President of the Cintra Variety Society for the «elaborate programme issued, exquisitely (hand) printed by our gifted and highly esteemed President Miss Jessica Shields.» An example of this programme, which in any quantity must have taken many hours to produce and paint, has been conserved with the Diary. Imposingly headed *Theatre Royal, São Tiago*, it specifies the *Tableaux Vivants* presented, with their Scenery and characters. We could have enjoyed «attitudes» from *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Dream of Fair Women, Elaine*; and *A Winter's Tale*, mimed, before the interval. After it came *Queen Esther, The Courtship of Miles Standish* and *Sleeping Beauty*. There were successes and contretemps such as Sidney in his window, embowered in greenery, taking an undisguised nap while the Fair Women filed past. «There was plenty of time remarks the stage manager pointedly.» Elaine, deathly pale, floats down the river on a barge steered by a black-cloaked figure discovered, on reference to the programme, to be Sidney; and it appears that Leontes (Oisey) knelt in real as well as dramatic admiration before Hermione (Jessica).

Cicely adds a word about the audience consisting of Colonel and Mrs. Astley Campbell, Prince Wrede, Count Rosti, Mr. William Nevill and the retiring Mary Nevill who acted as curtain puller. A letter of regret was received from the American Minister, Colonel Lewis; and, comments Cicely, «some of the audience I will not mention by name seemed to forget they were

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(5) Oisey's spelling is often erratic and I have not preserved it. Ed.

not in an Opera House and make remarks trying to the audience (presumably a slip for «actors»). I will say no more but hope that on a future occasion they will make less audible observations about beards, ahem!»

*August 20th. Outing of the Riding Club.* Perhaps the dramatic efforts and emotions of the evening before had exhausted the members for they were not at their best nor particularly expert at horsemanship on this occasion. Misbehaviour, lack of control, even wayward cantering homewards clearly caused tussles and were not concealed. Two of the new horses belonging to Colonel Astley Campbell had hardly been ridden in, says Mabel the chronicler, by way of excuse, so the expected Society pluck saved the day. They got as far as «the new road to Lisbon» (apparently the link between Estefânia and Ramalhao. Ed.) when the mist came down and the Duke of Palmela, driving towards them, loomed out of it. «Whereupon,» writes Mabel, «Gitano quietly trots by the side of his carriage much to the amusement of his Grace, notwithstanding the efforts of Jessica, who, after the space of a few seconds managed to get him to turn back again.» With half trained horses of a certain size, it was perhaps fortunate that worse humiliations did not occur.

*August 22nd. The Ascent of Society Peak.* Sophy's Swimming Club met regularly every morning at 7.30 to disport themselves with aquatic games and races in the beautiful *tanque* at S. Thiago which served as a swimming-pool. This was the preliminary to the strenuous activities of the day which continued at ten o'clock with a meeting of Oisey's Sketching Club in the wood at Pombal (6), two outsiders and three members being present. But the

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(6) The Quinta do Pombal lies above S. Bento in the same lane. The house had been rebuilt by Colonel Astley Campbell as stated in a letter written by his daughter Mabel in her old age. The property was bought by Sir Francis Cook and the tenants of the other houses seem to have had the run of it, but we do not know who was living there at the time.

main event recorded was the afternoon Ascent of Society Peak by the Alpine Club. Situated on the property of Snr. Roma, great grandfather of the present owner of the Vila Roma and its *tapada*, the Pico da Águia was in former times a magnet for climbs and rambles. The ascent proved difficult, almost herculean, including leaps and falls, the floundering of the dogs, and the loss of Mary — all vividly described by Jessica. How it was all managed in Victorian clothing defies imagination. A few extracts will give the flavour of the occasion:

The second ascent of the Alpine Club started at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The Quintinha party were unfortunately unable to come but Puppy came and gallantly surmounted every obstacle though a certain whininess of temper was trying on the other members as was Toby's snappishness. These honorary members are requested to leave their tempers at home on further occasions. Spot set them both a sweet example but it was quite lost on them. We set gaily forward trying to ignore the heat.... through Roma's quinta and then a halt was called. Here a large dog joined the party and proved himself one of the most gallant of the band and.... it was unanimously agreed that the need for provisions had arrived.

These were taken in a nook carpeted with pine-needles and «dogs and all we had a luxurious tea except for the forgotten matches which meant that the tea could not be heated.»

The thickets from now on became more and more impenetrable both for dogs and humans and it almost seemed as if the alpinists would not reach their goal. «There is one singular fact,» writes Jennifer with much perception, «that came home to me with singular clearness today concerning these hillsides, of which sufficient notice has not been taken by former writers. They are made up entirely of brambles and gorse.» 'Of gorse they are,' observes that effervescing punster Oisey who, it becomes

apparent, is always the popular life and soul of the Society. The puns, in spite of simulated distaste, enlivened the time with banter and fun. Jessica continues:

Soon the plants ended and there was nothing but rocks to climb. Hands, knees and eyebrows came into requisition but still we persevered except Mary to whom the folly of our proceedings was much more apparent than it was to ourselves. On! On! we went, the dogs every now and then needing a helping hand, but never giving in though Puppy whined over his difficulties incessantly. The tea baskets more than once caused their bearers to use language which is to be deplored. One member went so far as to «bother» his basket. In future let us avoid using language unnecessarily strong, for the poet tells us: «Such words as bother likewise blow / Are of wickedness the germ.»

The highest rock at last being reached, the party sat in a row on the ridge, surrounded by the four dogs. They had made the ascent but, sadly, the view so much anticipated turned out to be non-existent for the Sintra mist, swirling around in its accustomed way, allowed only a glimpse of Monserrate and the quintas from time to time. After this the disappearance of Mary, the alarm aroused, and her eventual discovery — silent and calm as a cucumber in the shelter of a rock — brought the adventure to an end.

*Sunday, August 23rd* records the meeting of the Swimming Club which could not indulge in aquatic competitions owing to absences, among them the «recalcitrant Sidney» as Koe (Cicely) specifies with truth. It is a wonder that they met at all after the exertions of the day before, and after this they went on to Quintinha for tennis. Cicely, rather short of incident, makes the most of a comical encounter between the dog Jip and a Monserrate donkey reduced to a sitting position as Jip tugged hard at its tail.

*Monday, August 24th.* The entry, in Oisey's hand, records laconically the early morning sports at the *tanque* and tennis in the afternoon. Oisey does not take much trouble with his contributions and the entry is left unsigned.

*Tuesday, August 25th.* An expedition to S. Pedro with visits to quintas. Unfortunately the Society failed to enter Ramalhão in spite of the resounding titles and status of some of the guests. Even Count Rosti as head of Mission failed to pull off a tour of the palace and gardens as had been hoped. Perhaps he lacked that «way with him»; we are often reminded of his unlovable qualities namely greed and lack of consideration for animals. Plans had to be hurriedly altered. Half the party tried «Vallada's Quinta (7) nearby and how they fared is not recorded». The others trotted off on ponies, donkeys and by carriage to Penha Longa determined to force an entrance, if need be, to this model quinta as it then was. After tea taken *sub rosa*, as it were, beneath the trees, Count Gândara, the owner, was bearded in person and finally gave leave to visit the property. The décor seems to have affronted Scandinavian Sophy, late Victorian as she was: «Everything is in the most vile taste; pretty things are made ugly and ugly things frightful. Stone-built walls are painted over in brilliant stripes of blue, white and red, other buildings have the mortar painted red...» This well-kept nightmare was famous around the countryside, and was indeed unique in its spotlessness and order. Sophy writes, and the books tell us, of the special «swimming-bath» for the pigs.

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(7) The Quinta do Marquês de Vallada, once decorated by Pillement, belonged in the 18th century to the Marquês de Marialva, Beckford's friend, and protector. Beckford often visited it on foot when he was spending the summer at Ramalhão. The property now belongs to the pretender to the throne, Dom Duarte de Bragança. The Pillement frescoes have disappeared and the appearance of the house is much changed.

*August 26th.* The Sketching Club meeting in the Pombal woods is described by Burr (Mabel) but without incident outstanding. The successes and failures of sketching and portraiture are quite predictable.

*August 27th.* It is Jessica's turn to write and she begins: «To our great delight Sidney returned to the swimming although he still declines the honour of belonging to the Society. He covered himself with glory by swimming almost the entire length of the tank underwater. Such an amphibious person is certainly out of his place when he is out of the Club, but he would not be convinced.»

In the afternoon there was of what turned out to be an abortive dramatic performance eventually rehearsed at S. Thiago but never getting on stage. «There was mention of consultation held in the drawing room at Pombal as to the advisability of having our next dramatic performance there where the audience could be kept at arm's length (that audience! Ed.). But we all felt that it will be something of a failure...» Probably Shakespeare proved too ambitious for —

not one of the company knew his or her part while Portia, Per Hora and Bassanio, Cocoloba could scarcely repeat a single line of their several parts without making the most atrocious blunders. Then it was suggested by the more frivolous minded that we had done enough work and that we deserved a little play. We pushed aside the dining table and played at French Blind Man's Buff and were soon in shrieks of laughter at the absurd renderings of the noises made by various animals under trying circumstances. The vague squeaks did duty for a bull attacked by a tiger or a slug being served up in a cabbage.

More romps and more laughter followed, with songs by a certain Epifânio. These were unfortunately halted by «a titter from

Sidney»; very rude of him as the songs were unfeignedly admired. Of *The Merchant of Venice* there is to be no more news.

And so the summer runs its way with sun and mist... By this time we have arrived at the end of August and the days were shortening, without the extra hour of daylight we now have. Tennis at Quintinha was washed out by a downpour of rain and the party accepted Mr. Nevill's invitation to tea and games at S. Thiago. He must have regretted it in the *mélée* that followed. Cocoloba at Blind Man's Buff, continues Jessica —

dashed about in splendid style but the first thing he caught was the cabinet through the glass of which he poked his nose. Sidney was the next to be caught. He romped wildly up and down the room for some time, driving everyone before him, making a grab at the table cloth in the fond belief that he had really caught someone as he upset the decanters and wine glasses. All of a sudden he made another stampede and came a cropper on the step. This stopped the game and then we discovered that it was bedtime. Unwillingly we took our leave (8) and toiled up the marble lane to bed. Signed: Per Hora.

*August 28th. Second Expedition to the Sea.* Koe reports, and this time the objective is defined — the Pedra de Alvidrar, a strange rock formation near the Praia de Adraga, one of the curiosities of the coast where fisher boys would risk their lives for tourist pennies (9).

The party was divided as follows: Per Hora and Burr in the pony carriage loaded with provisions, Sid on his pony

(8) Perhaps to Mr. Nevill's relief, though not the mildest protest or apology seems to have been thought necessary.

(9) For Beckford's description of the Pedra de Alvidrar see *The Journal of William Beckford in Portugal & Spain 1787-1788*, ed. Boyd Alexander (Rupert Hart-David, London 1954), pp. 238-41.

and Mary, Koe, Winkle and Cocoloba on humble jackasses.... All the steeds and equipages were left in a stable at Almoçageme and we, each laden with shawls, baskets of provisions and sketching materials, wended our way down the precipitous and circuitous route leading to the beach..... A grand sea met our eyes but alas, it was high tide and there was no chance of exploring our caves and little bays.

After a succulent meal of duck and pigeon, mixed with sand had been partaken of to the last bone thrown to the two Society dogs present, the climb to view the famous Pedra was tackled. Per Hora, Winkle, Cocco and Koe somehow managed to scramble up the south side of the bay, advisable only for the intrepid, there to behold the precipice of the Alvidrar where «the horrifying feat of climbing down is performed by fishermen.» It should be said that there is another, less hazardous way along the cliff top; but the ways are always dangerous with one unguarded, yawning death-fall to the sea below and the *fôjo*, or cavern, terror of the mist and of the night.

*Saturday, August 29th* is missing, as is *August 30th*. A brief entry by Sophy is inserted here, describing a slow and uninteresting tea party at the Capuchos, one of the Society's non-successes.

*August 31st. Expedition to the Moorish Castle.* On this morning only the strong-minded Mabel Astley Campbell turned up for the 7.30 a.m. meeting of the Swimming Club. She writes somewhat sharply: «I certainly think that a new rule ought to be made that when members do not attend simply from *laziness* that they ought to be severely fined.» It was no joke being a member of the 1885 Club and the more introverted characters seem to have sensed it. In the afternoon the whole Society met for a *burricada* to the Moorish Castle. Mabel writes rather incoherently on this occasion: «Cocky lobby (sic) Koe and Mary were on

donkeys, Wimby and Burr (sic) on ponies and Per Hora and the younger Campbells in the pony carriage.» They reached the top without adventure, though this can only be reached on foot. Then the question arose as to where to have tea. Presumably they had come down again, as the place chosen was the tomb hard by the ruined chapel near the entrance to the park. (10) «Someone suggested the little tower at the top of the tomb where are interred the bones of some Moorish and Christian soldiers whose bodies were found in the mosque there. This place was accordingly fixed upon but all the members could scarcely fit in so some were obliged to sit above the heads of the others. It was here that that terrific punster Coccoloba began making puns with which I will not sully these pages...»

*Tuesday, September 1st.* Jessica was due for a report on the day but it consists only of a lament about Mary's absent-mindedness: «I was not present at the tennis playing but Mary undertook to write the account for me. Unfortunately she forgot to do it until she had forgotten all the incidents and so it was never done. Signed, Per Hora.»

(10) The very early chapel of S. Pedro of the Moorish Castle has a most interesting if mysterious history not yet fully investigated. Dr. Vitór Serrão and Snr. José Alfredo da Costa Azevedo have kindly provided much of the following information. Dr. Serrão has written three closely researched articles in the *Jornal de Sintra* of April 18, 25 and May 2, 1980. The chapel could date from the VIIIth century in spite of many modifications and subsequent delapidation. It served as a place of worship for the small Mozarabe community at the castle and, after the reconquest of Sintra, became one of the four parish divisions formed by D. Afonso Henriques, namely S. Pedro, Santa Maria, S. Miguel and S. Martinho. When the present parish church of S. Pedro was concluded in the XVIIth century, the chapel — too small and distant for the growing population — fell into disuse. When D. Fernando de Saxe Coburg Cotha excavated the site, he found mixed bones, unidentifiable as to religion. This accounts for the Crescent as well as the Cross on the tomb, but that it was ever a mosque is unproven. Those wishing to visit it can enter the grounds through the turnstile above the church of Santa Maria and ascend some 500 metres by a pretty wooded path.

*Wednesday, September 2nd.* September was seen in by the once again solitary Mabel representing the Swimming Club at 7.30 a.m., but as the other members were suffering from various ailments, no mention is made of fines. Even Mabel was not feeling her best, so, writes Cicely, a group consisting of Sophy, Oisey and herself tackled «the inaccessible mountain of Mrs. Bedell (sic), the idea of scaling the summit of which, had long made the mouths of the Club water.» In reality this much climbed landmark on the Monserrate property in only apparently inaccessible if the easy face is taken. The Cook family called it Monte Bedell but in Portuguese maps it is marked Monte Rodelo. Cicely's description of events is full of the usual fun and of the inevitable mishaps. «Koe's hat would not keep on, Cocco lent his belt which buckled it on securely; next Winkle stuck between two rocks out of which predicament it seemed impossible to extricate her owing to her laughter and.... after sundry pushings, haulings and jumps we all reached the top which was enveloped in mist.» The descent proved even more hazardous, and Koe lost her footing and came a cropper in the furze, while Winkle's «drapery» descended and «Cocco tied it into a knot like a cut puppy dog's tail. We were all rather dishevelled but had a lovely scramble and only wished all the club had been with us.»

*Tuesday, September 3rd.* It was Oisey's turn to write and he obliges with a few lines about Mabel reigning again in solitary glory in the *tanque* and the subsequent afternoon tennis at Quinta. After the game, he adds irrepressibly, «a cup of tea was ti-lightful.» His sister feels it necessary to append an excuse for his brief and careless writing, not the first example in the Diary.

*Friday, September 4th. Expedition to the Sea.* This was quite a grand, all-day outing with servants to lay the lunch on sand tables, and yet it was registered by Jessica as «the least interesting picnic we have had yet... a preternatural solemnity pervaded the whole performance while the meal itself might have been a

funeral feast everyone was so depressed.» No reason is given for this except that Koe was suffering from severe toothache. The occasion, however, included the hazardous exploration of the Adraga caves by candlelight, and the gallant rescue of Mabel from the waves by Sidney, the ever present but honorary member. After these adventures the «frabjous sound of tea was heard», but the melancholy atmosphere described by Jessica could hardly be said to have dispersed:

Although there was no military parade, the deep and subtle Cocoloba would insist on speaking of it as a rank day; perhaps it was because he was bent upon acting the word peerage as a charade. If these suggestions do not explain the word I give it up. He is such a singularly deep young man.

*Sunday, September 6th.* The Club made an expedition to the Quinta do Carmo, a beautiful double cloistered convent, now a private house, above Colares. The church contains at least one tomb which has a link with Monserrate though few people are aware of it and the excursionists of the Diary do not mention the connection (11).

*Monday, September 7th.* The arrival of Alfred Petre is announced and he is at once introduced into the Club activities. He appears to be staying at S. Thiago.

*Tuesday, September 8th.* Oisey should have written this entry but he only signs his sister's account of swimming «at the coffin

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(11) The tomb in question is said to be that of the 36th Viceroy of India, Caetano de Melo e Castro who created the entail of Monserrate in 1718. The tomb is in the crypt according to Dr. Manuel Corte Real, an expert on the history of the quinta, but is unmarked by any inscription so absolute proof is lacking. (See also Vol. II *Monumentos e Edifícios do Distrito de Lisboa* published in 1963 by the Junta Distrital de Lisboa, p. 20). The tomb of Caetano's father, Antonio de Melo e Castro, 29th Viceroy of India, can be seen in the upper church with a clear inscription.

tank, which is six times as large, 14 times as deep and 20 times as jolly as the S. Thiago one.» This could have been the water storage opposite Quintinha and Pombal, now probably modified.

*Wednesday, September 9th.* Sophy's entry in her neat and precise handwriting: «The Sketching Club met in the Cascade Valley where Per Hora tried painting in water colours and Cocoloba made his first attempt in oils..... in the afternoon Burr, Sid and Winkle rode up to the Pena to ask after Dom Fernando.» (12)

*Thursday, September 10th.* It is edifying to record that attendance at the swimming-pool had improved, and that energy was not lacking for the grand ride to Mafra with an overnight stay at the inn — the highlight and centre-piece of the Diary. Cicely is the diarist, writing ten detailed pages on this marathon expedition lasting from early on the Thursday until late into the evening of the next day. «At 8 a.m. Koe, Cocoloba, Winkle, Sidney and Alfred Petre started on ponies from Quintinha for Mafra.» Jessica was the only absentee, possibly because she was a single, unchaperoned girl, the other two being under the protection of their brothers. After some solid riding, «Cocoloba and Alfred having been sent on to *bargain for water* bought a bottle of V.P. (vinho puro) which, when we had gone a hundred yards broke, the bottom giving way and dousing Cocoloba who was carrying it. A halt for lunch was called at Monte Lavar and we then proceeded to Mafra riding through the King's park and reaching the inn at about 1 p.m.» The horses having been put up, lunch was ordered but long delayed so time was passed, rather regrettably, at the expense of three harmless Portuguese priests at the same table. It transpired that they understood some English but laughed good-naturedly at jokes about them, or so asserts Cicely.

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(12) D. Fernando of Saxe Coburg Gotha died that autumn.

The high spirits of these old-time but far from staid boys and girls could not be repressed for long and, after a tour of the Convent, the ringing of bells and playing on the Queen's pianos, a boisterous game of Blind Man's Buff was indulged in among the majestic pillars of the Mafra colonnade. Night fell and it was time to return to the inn for tea. Here there was no romping, one is thankful to record, but much joviality at games of «Consequences» and «Proverbs», leading to a rebuke from the landlady whose would-be sleeping guests were disturbed by the noise. There was nothing to do but go to bed, Cicely implies. The rooms and beds proved to be clean and comfortable; but the early start for a donkey ride to Ericeira did not materialise: «We had intended getting donkeys and coming back to Mafra for the ponies but there was no such animal (donkeys) to be had so we agreed to go to Ericeira and then cut across country home.... The road was good but hot and dusty and the prospect of a bathe delightful.» The «dresses» they were obliged to hire, however, proved too voluminous for swimming.

The start towards Sintra was inauspicious, nobody knowing the way across country and the road being too long and twisty to be attempted. They attacked the obstacles from the beach where they discovered what they thought to be an arm of the sea but in reality the river Lisandro which flows through the bay. There was a near disaster as they tried to cross the river, Sidney's pony plunging into a swim, rider and all, and Cicely's mount, although she was riding side-saddle, backed and refused with such energy that she fell off heavily, luckily without breaking any bones. After many attempts up and down stream, the party finally discovered that it was possible to cross the sandstrip at the lower end and so climb to a view of the distant Sintra hills. They used these as their only «compass», cantering gaily across fields and properties, Sidney knocking down walls regardless as they went. It was not an expedition remarkable for considerate manners but we must excuse them for their youth and high spirits. «All

returned home safely,» concludes Cicely, «Having had a glorious time.»

*Saturday, September 12th.* Only just pausing for breath after their late arrival from Ericeira, all the members met for their early swim with the exception of poor Cicely who was suffering from stiffness. The sketching activities were not skimped either and were followed by the usual vigorous sets of tennis. After all this, Cicely reports:

As the dramatic performances of the Society have gone back badly of late, it was determined to act some charades that very night at S. Thiago and Major and Mrs. de Kantzow kindly came down and helped to swell the audience. At first some of the actors were rather nervous notably the three gentlemen but they soon warmed to their work and did splendidly. Some of the words *earwig, gunpowder, candlestick* etc. were very good.... the state of Koe's room which had served as a dressing and retiring room can more easily be imagined than described, wild rushes being made into it after every act and costumes flying here there and everywhere. However that was part of the fun and I think though quite impromptu our charades were very good.

*Sunday, September 13th* has a mysterious entry by Jessica who «went to Mass with Koe, Cocoloba and Mary in order that she might help and support poor Koe in her subsequent interview with Mr. Alexander.» This is left unexplained as is the part played by «Grimes» *tout court*, who smoked a pipe, owned a pony and stayed to dinner at Quintinha.

*Monday, September 14th.* This day was notable for a remarkable burst of energy as they romped down to the ruined Quinta do Cosmo (now wrongly known as «do Cosmé») on Monserrate property in Galamares. Vaulting and jumping were practised on the way, writes Sophy with more of a sense of humour than

usual, and there was the customary hilarity as they swung in turns over water wells.

Mary was the best joke of all. She swung into the air and was lowered down; presently a cry came and those below hauled up — not Mary but her dress. She below, called out stop! but the others would not or could not hear her and continued to pull up leaving the owner below. It was a splendid sight.

*Tuesday, September 15th* is left blank.

*Wednesday, September 16th.* A climb to Peninha in fog and mist so thick that they all returned to the Cork Convent where Jessica, who signs the entry, tried to jump the fountain but in her long, narrow skirt inevitably fell in. «She scrambled out with the help of Cocoloba amid shrieks of laughter as she stood dripping from every garment and hair.... the fog was so thick on our return that it is a wonder we returned at all.»

*Thursday, September 17th* consists of a rather disjointed entry by Cicely recording their bathing in the coffin *tanque* up the hill and tennis at Quintinha, after which all were invited to tea at S. Bento where the usual rowdy games were played until 11 p.m.

*September 18th.* Now we are nearing the last scenes of this happy, hilarious summer. A final expedition to the sea took place on this day, across country to Azenhas do Mar. As they were one donkey short, Mary had to walk; and since Sophy neglected her literary duties, Mabel and Jessica join in trying to remember the facts of the day. «We went across the plain by Cosme's quinta. In passing by the washerwoman's house, in front of which was an open sewer, the saddle on which the provisions were fastened came off and the basket fell into the mud!» (If Sophy had been writing, we should not have had that exclamation mark). Needless to say one of them, Sophy, did the same herself amid ringing laughter, a typical sound in the face of misfortune. At the Azenhas there were no tourist amenities as there are today, nothing

but huge rocks made for scrambling, and this they did for its own sake as children do. «It was hands and knees all the way,» writes Jessica, «until we came to an impassible bay where the water was seething at the foot of the cliffs.» Dramas were notably homely — shrieks of laughter when it was discovered that, once more, an indispensable item had been forgotten, this time the spirit kettle, and the tea had to be heated in a jam-jar. There were various sprawls on the way home, stirrup leathers giving way, and a row between Oisey and Sidney as the donkey kicked them off. «Notwithstanding Sidney's ill temper, we were all in such good spirits that we enjoyed our return ride considerably and only grieved to think it would be the last one.» Sidney is clearly the only one to show annoyance when inconvenienced.

*September 19th.* Mabel's entry. The Swimming Club met as usual at 7.30, but without the Nevills since Oisey was to leave for England on the morrow. It must have been a sad occasion for the sun in late September hardly touches S. Thiago at the swimming hour, nor could the Sketching Club meet without its President: but «in the afternoon the whole Club met down at S. Thiago there to spend.... the afternoon; the first game proposed was a tug-of-war the first trial of our strength.» It was girls v. boys, with ropes broken in the process, many tumbings, and surely the usual shrieks of laughter preceded the «quiet games», until it was time to go.

*September 20th.* This Sunday was zero hour, and Jessica's words transmit to us the melancholy of this occasion:

Per Hora and Burr were just finishing their mournful breakfast (at S. Bento) when they heard a faint coo-ee in the lane. Breathless, they rushed to the door regardless of everything and here they beheld the departing Cocoloba clothed in sacrificial garments.... for he was making enormous sacrifices in leaving Cintra and all its joys. About ten minutes later Mr. Nevill and Mary passed up the lane and..... Per Hora

walked with them and waited by the Swan pond until the arrival of the carriage. Then we all went on to Quintinha where the whole party turned out with one pitiful exception. Dare we mention that the Effervescer was not present at this painful parting? No, we dare not; cart horses and chain cables shall never drag this atrocious fact from our wounded hearts...

The last good-bye, with its tragic flavour, should have ended more happily with a hint of distant wedding bells for Oisey and Jessica. But the admiration of Leontes for Hermione — real and not dramatic — in the performance of August 19th, came after all to nothing. Oisey died young and unmarried in Brazil, nursed by his sister Cicely who lived until 1957, aged 91. There can be no romantic ending to the Society's merry summer.

The final words of the Diary are flat and dispirited as Jessica «tries to drive dull care away» by writing up the Club doings; but nothing holds any flavour, not even tea at Quintinha which unexciting event would once have been made the most of, nor the viewing of old lace shown by Mrs. de Kantzow. The terrace by moonlight was tried but Mabel had begun a bad cold and they were forced indoors. It was good-bye to summer.

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*Extremum Mundi* is the ancient name for these coasts, lands unequalled for golden sunsets and the very Portuguese *saudade*. Evening is their moment as the *astro-rei* sinks regally into the ocean turning the vale of Colares into a bowl of burnished light, all disfiguring modernity blessedly veiled. The pages of the old diary come to life for a brief moment before they fade with the oncoming twilight. Inevitably, the words come to mind:

Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Sintra, Autumn 1981.

I. K.

TABLE SHOWING HOW THE DIARY CAME INTO THE POSSESSION OF THE CROFT DE MOURA FAMILY

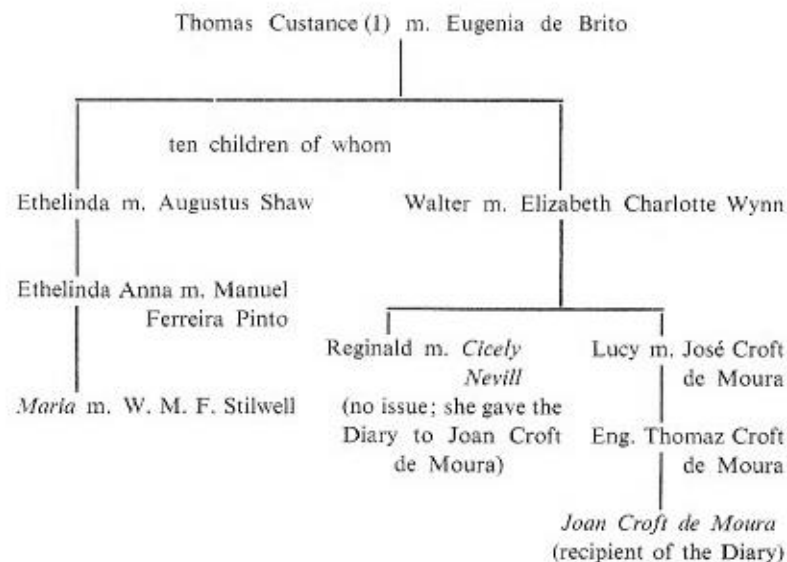


Table showing the Cook-Astley Campbell connexion

