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THE TRAGEDY OF LISBON. Graphic Account Incidents and Details of the King's Death

(From *The Standard*, Feb. 18th 1908)

STATEMENT MADE BY
SENHOR GUILHERME PINTO BASTO

I left the office about a quarter to four to go to see the arrival of their Majesties at the Barreiro steamer, Lisbon Quay, where they were due at a quarter past four, but when I got there I found that, owing to the train having run off the line, the steamer was not due until some thirty-five minutes later, so I went to Rua do Ouro, and got back at the station at about 4.40. I spoke to the Princes Manuel and Alfonso and several other friends, who had also gone to meet their Majesties.

At last, just upon five o'clock, the steamer with their Majesties arrived alongside the Quay, and a bridge was run across to the steamer for their Majesties to go ashore. First came Queen Amelia, then the King, Crown Prince etc. As the Queen stepped on to the Quay, a godchild of her Majesty presented her with a bouquet of flowers, and then their Majesties proceeded slowly, speaking to most of the people who were there waiting for them. Their Majesties then came out of the station, and all four got into an open landau drawn by two pairs of horses, the front pair driven by a postilion. One of the horses was very restive.

I went out of the station just in front of the carriage and walked as far as the corner of Black Horse Square, where it comes out more than the rest of the buildings, when I met E. Santos Moreira, to whom I was speaking when the royal carriage passed, and we took off our hats. Their Majesties acknowledged this with their usual nice smile and a little nod.

I then started off after the royal carriage, walking in the middle of the road by the side of Francisco Figueira (captain and adjutant to the King) he, however, had not gone many paces alongside me, holding his sword, when he saw a tramcar and wanted to catch it. Francisco Figueira was some ten paces in front of me, and I was some forty paces behind the royal carriage, there being no one between me and the royal carriage except C. Figueira and two little boys running after the carriage. Then I heard the crack of a shot, followed by others. This was about 5.25.

One man was behind the royal carriage, firing at the King's back, another man with a carbine was on the left, as I stood, firing at the Crown Prince, and I saw at least one other man on the other side of the carriage, but further away with outstretched arms, also firing at the carriage. The policemen then also began to fire, and I considered that at least some thirty or forty shots were fired. The panic was awful and people were rushing off in all directions.

THE POOR KING

I at once went straight to the royal carriage, to see if I could render any assistance. I saw the poor King, however, put his hands to the back of his neck: then they dropped down, and at the same time his head fell forward on his chest. I saw at once that he had been shot dead instantly. His face turned purple at once.

The Crown Prince – such a charming boy he was – was also shot, but yet moved a little, and then fell into the arms of his brother Manuel. The Queen, when they commenced to fire, stood up at once in the carriage, and tried to hit off the arm of the assassin who was

shooting at the King from behind, with the bouquet of flowers she had in her hand which was her only weapon. When the assassin fell back shot, the Queen turned to try to protect her sons, the two Princes, with her body, but it was too late. The Crown Prince had been mortally wounded, and must have died almost instantaneously. Neither the King nor the Crown Prince spoke another word. Prince Manuel was also wounded in the arm, but not dangerously. The poor Queen was calling in great excitement: "Oh, they have killed the King and they have killed my son!" and other such phrases, full of despair.

As I was rushing up to the carriage one of the policemen covered me with his loaded revolver at close quarters, and I only had time to throw up my arms and call to him that I was a friend of the King, and was going to try to give help. The same moment I heard the report of his revolver behind me. He had fired, at whom I do not know. I feel sure that if I had had on an overcoat or a low hat, or carried a walking stick I should have been doomed, as they were firing on all sides. The policeman was in a greatly excited state, and his eyes were starting out of his head. Fortunately, I was only in my cut-away, was wearing a top hat, and had no stick. I helped to hold a second man who was struggling with the policemen, and who, I understood, had also fired, but I went on when three other policemen came up. I heard the man call: "Don't hurt me! Don't hurt me!" I left him struggling with four policemen, and I think they took him to the Municipality, but I heard afterwards that while trying to get away he was shot.

THE FIRST SHOT

When the first shot was fired, and I looked in front of me, the front pair of horses of the royal carriage were just beginning to turn from the square into Rua do Arsenal by the telegraph office, and the coachman and postilion whipped the horses to go as fast as possible. Until then they had been going very slowly, to give time for the carriage with the attendants to come up from the station, but this carriage was not yet in the square, so that the royal carriage was

completely isolated, and there was absolutely no one by the side of it to protect the Royal Family. There were several policemen about, but they did not prevent people from going where they wished till the shots were actually fired. There was no crowd just at that place, and I saw the whole of this most abominable and savage tragedy before my eyes, but I was just too far off to be able to prevent anything. What would I have given to have been some forty yards further on! It would have been enough for any one that was near to have struck the assassin's arms, or to have knocked them over from behind, but apparently, every one remained dazed. Some ran away, and the police began firing, perhaps not too accurately.

The spectacle in the carriage was horrifying. The Queen was still standing up in great lamentation, and Prince Manuel had his dead brother leaning over him. The carriage continued its way by Largo do Pelourinho, and was already passing the door of the Arsenal, when I saw the coachman looking back, as if to enquire what to do. Remembering that inside the Arsenal there was an ambulance room, I called out to him to turn round back into the Arsenal, which he did at once. When inside, the Queen and Prince Manuel got out on their side of the carriage, while I, Henrique Rollin, Francisco Figueira, Alfredo Monteverde and another person (I do not remember who) took out of the carriage first the Crown Prince, as someone said they thought he was still alive, though as I took him up I saw at once that he was dead. We carried him into the ambulance room and put him on a sort of operating bed. Then we went back and fetched in the body of the King, and laid it on a mattress that was brought in hurriedly and placed on the ground. They put up another bed, to which the body was afterwards transferred. We began undoing the clothing, and Dr. Moreira certified at once that both were dead. We then proceeded to take off their clothes down to the waist, and had to cut off their vests. We took off their overcoats, coats, waistcoats, shirts and vests to see where the shots had entered, and in this we were also helped by one of his Majesty's adjutants, Captain Leotte Tavares, and one or two other Court people. It was seen that the King had two bullets in him, one just below the neck, on a line with the shoulder, in the middle of

the spine. The other was on the right side of the back, further down, some ten or eleven inches from the first wound. Both were mortal.

The Crown Prince had a bullet hole in his right chest and another in his left cheek. This latter bullet had come out at the back of the head. Both were mortal. In the first moments when there were no doctors or any towels etc., they wanted to wash the face of the Prince, and, as they were asking for some kind of cloth or otherwise, I offered my clean handkerchief, and it was used for that purpose. I now keep this as a precious relic of this awful tragedy; also the cuffs of my shirt that remained saturated with blood from the two royalties. When helping to hold up and wash the wounds of the King I had to hold a piece of wadding over the spine bullet hole to stop the blood coming out.

ATTENDING THE DEAD

The poor Queen and Prince Manuel, who had remained outside with several persons, who had gradually arrived, wanted to come into the ambulance room but were dissuaded from doing so and were afterwards taken to another part of the Arsenal. Later Queen Maria Pia also came, but did not go into the ambulance room. Meantime Dr. Bossa went to attend to the arm of Prince Manuel. Then the two Queens and Prince Manuel were taken away to the Palace, going out by the door that opens to the Caes do Sodré, and escorted by cavalry. Presently the private attendants of the King arrived from the Palace with fresh clothes, which were put on to the bodies. I helped to take everything out of the pockets, and handed the things from the King's pockets to Viscount Asseca, and those of the Prince to his aide. Among these were the King's small revolver, which had not been discharged, his platinum watch, some cigars etc. The Prince's automatic Belgian revolver was found in the carriage as we took him out, with two cartridges still in it. I have found out since that his attendant had loaded it in the morning at Vilaviçosa with six cartridges, so it has been surmised that the Prince must have fired four shots before he was shot himself. In my mind there is no doubt that it was the Prince who shot the King's assassin, as the Prince was sitting right in front of the King in the carriage, and, therefore, facing

the assassin, and would be the first person to see. Some people say the assassin shot himself, but I have not met anyone who actually saw him do so. All they know is that he fell back dead after shooting the King, and to me there remains no doubt that it was the poor Prince who did it to try to save the life of the King, who had been shot by the other assassin with a carbine. I had the carbine in my hand. It was an automatic repeating rifle that could fire some seven or eight shots consecutively by simply pulling the trigger. It was not a Colt rifle as had been stated.

When we were washing the wound of the dead King we noticed that Francisco Figueira had a lot of blood on his leg, and that his trousers were torn, showing a big bullet hole. A bullet had pierced his leg in the hip. We suppose he was shot by the man with the carbine, as Figueira tried to take it away from him, making some thrusts at him with his military sword. So Figueira was sent off to Dr. Moreira's consulting room for the wound to be dressed, and he will have to stop in bed for about a month.

No foreigners touched the body in any way; it was all done by loyal Portuguese subjects – attendants or personal friends of the dead royalties. It was a miracle that the Queen was not shot also.

Later in the evening the corpses which had each been covered with the Portuguese national flag, were taken to the Necessidades Palace in carriages escorted by the military. Thus I saw the end of this awful, criminal, and cowardly assassination of my most beloved King and Crown Prince, two noble and true friends.

(Signed) GUILHERME PINTO BASTO

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Taken from the Journal of the English College, Lisbon, 1908

