

JOURNAL ON BOARD THE *BANG UP* TO PORTO SANTO

The Journal was copied in 1903 from the original manuscript then in the possession of Senhor João José Vieira by the late Mr. H. E. Gilbert.

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1827

Monday 22nd Oct.

Left Funchal at 4 o'clock p.m. in company with my brother Benjamin, Maria, Louisa and Isabella on board our «Bang Up» (a two-masted lugger of about 17 tons burthen, at least of 44 1/2 feet length of deck, 11 1/2 feet width of beam, 3.9. feet depth of hold, 6 feet height of raised cabin, containing four berths of 7 feet in length by 2 high and 3 breadth carrying four guns and although Portuguese built and manned, bearing English colors). Our crew consisted of pilot (Mestre Francisco and 4 sailors of his acquaintance, besides our man servant Manoel). Our destination was Porto Santo, one of the Madeiras, distant from the Port of Funchal 1 degree. Our sailors not being very skilful, my constant observation and directions were indispensable, and after about an hour's sailing with a very light breeze, we got close under fort S. Jago, where we caught a brisker land

breeze. The private signal of the «Bang Up», (blue and white) were hoisted as also our English colors, and remained up till dusk.

At near 7 o'clock the pilot having entrusted the helm to one of his men, who knew nothing of steering, whilst we were engaged below examining our stores, he allowed the vessel to turn completely round, and we found ourselves within a few yards of the shore approaching every instant. It was necessary, as the only mode of escape, to haul down the sails with all possible expedition and put out our oars (which we were luckily furnished with) and as they were extremely heavy, in doing so one of them fell overboard. The pilot immediately stripped and jumping overboard shortly recovered it. The confusion and danger caused by the accident being over, the pilot and crew received a severe reprimand from me, in which I declared (and would certainly have kept my word), having strong suspicion of their intention to wreck our vessel, that if a repetition of the same neglect took place, the life of the helmsman, whoever it might be, should be the instant forfeit. It unfortunately happened that at the instant of our greatest danger we were passed by a small boat, the crew of which heartily laughed at our awkward situation. Shortly after our departure we perceived the English Packet (Sheldrake) at a short distance off, coming in. At 12 o'clock we retired to bed, our situation being directly opposite the Port of Machico, and having a very fair breeze of five knots an hour, with a continuation of which I expected to reach Porto Sancto early in the morning.

Tuesday 23rd Oct.

At a very early hour this morning we were disturbed by our helmsman, who was making a most dreadful noise, which upon my requesting Ben to desire him to discontinue, he did so with much reluctance, muttering that it was his song — certainly a more discordant one was never heard; it being however concluded we returned to rest. At 10, our servant entered the cabin

and informed us that we were very near Machico, where he wished us to go and anchor as the wind had dropped. Upon going up I found what he had said with respect to our situation was correct (to my great astonishment): as I found that since I had left the deck last night we had scarcely changed situation. At this time there was very little wind, yet I gave strict orders for our course to be continued, stating as my fixed determination that I would go on shore nowhere previous to reaching Porto Santo.

Until near three p.m. we continued knocking about when a slight breeze springing up, we kept on (all sails set) about 4 knots an hour: and shortly, Porto Santo being clear in sight, bearing S.E. and distant 4 leagues, I gave orders for the Ensign to be hoisted. At 4 spied a sail bearing down upon us. At 1/2 past 5 passed very near her, a Brig (I supposed American, though she hoisted no colors). At near 6, the wind having changed, it was necessary to shift the sails and four of our crew gave us a convincing proof of their ignorance and stupidity in the efforts made by them to place one of the oars out, in which laborious operation they spent much time and accomplished at length, having first put it out on the wrong side. At dusk the usual signal (one gun) was fired for the Colors and Ensign to be lowered, which had not been done sooner, as we were in sight of the Fort of Porto Santo, the Governor of which, I was well aware, would keep his up till late. For this purpose I placed myself in readiness at the mainmast and Ben at the foremast, to lower immediately upon the discharge. Our men shewed much cowardness on the occasion it being a matter of serious deliberation amongst them who should fire. At length one, wishing to show more courage than the rest, taking a piece of lighted wood, at least 2 feet in length, approached with much timidity, and in trembling mood, gave the discharge, retreating instantly with great precipitation. Wishing to show these cowards a good example and if possible to animate them a little, I ordered a second to be prepared, which was discharged by Ben with a short stick, whilst I secured the gun in the porthole with my foot. A second we discharged in the same manner,

after which, as I intended to give a salute in the morning, I gave orders for no more to be fired. At about 9 a lighted lantern was hoisted at the mainmast and was no sooner perceived on shore than a large boat came off, and although the wind was blowing from the South, which renders it extremely dangerous at this island for boats to go out, on account of the great distance from shore at which the sea breaks in high ridgy waves, yet it contained the following persons, viz: Snr. Antonio Pedroso (Escrivão of the Island), Dr. Luis (surgeon of ditto), the Constable of the Fort, and Morgado José Sebastião; all of whom I was acquainted with on my former excursions and had boldly ventured out to us. These gentlemen remained on board with us until about 10. We heard from them that our arrival had been anxiously awaited since we first hove in sight, at about noon. The Governor had been pleased to send a polite congratulatory message upon our safe arrival. We observed his residence was lighted and prepared for our reception, but as it was already late, the wind strong, the sea rough, we resolved to remain on board all night, and as a heavy sea was on, had besides our large anchor, two weighty stones sunk. Our visitors partook of a light supper, such as our sea stores would allow, and left us. At about 11 we retired to bed: though previously I took my round and was so disgusted and enraged upon finding that all our crew had retired to bed without permission or even notice, that I called them all up and upon receiving an impertinent excuse from one of them, whom I had ordered to the helm as an example to the rest, I myself chastised him and threatened them all with severe punishment, if I should find the vessel at any time in the night without a vigilant watch of at least one person. I likewise gave orders for our boat to be lowered out and 9 guns to be loaded for a salute early in the morning. The motion on board this evening was extremely rough and disagreeable on account of a South wind which continued increasing all night to such a degree as to make me fearful we might be sent adrift.

The heat was today in our cabin at 90° Fahrenheit.

Wednesday 24th October

Being much fatigued by our exertions of yesterday and having had little sound sleep during the night, it was 9 o'clock before we rose. We immediately proceeded to give the salute which was done in a most regular style, allowing half a minute to elapse between each gun. Our Colors and private signal were then speedily hoisted, and the instant they were up the Portuguese flag appeared waving from the Fort. The wind still continued blowing strong from the South, and I in consequence soon resolved to keep on board, at least till it might subside. The females however who were of our party could not be prevailed upon to do the same, and in compliance with their entreaties, the signal was made for a boat to come out. One was instantly prepared, she was a long time ere she reached us, the sea being so very high as to make the exertions almost useless which were made by the rowers. At length however she came alongside heaving and tossing with every rising wave. We watched our opportunity and through the assistance of the boatmen and the Morgado previously mentioned we contrived to get them safely in and in a very few minutes had the satisfaction of seeing them reach the shore. Now I had nothing to fear but on my own account, and of course my determination of not quitting the vessel became firmer, the more so as some person advised my coming, with my brother, on shore and leaving her and her contents to her fate. The scene which followed was one which far exceeded my expectations and the danger of our situation very considerable.

When a South wind prevails here it is customary for any vessels that arrive to be immediately drawn up on the beach and on this occasion a vessel which had come in from Madeira a few hours before us had been thus treated: this example being before me I was obliged to consent though much against my inclination and opinion, for the same operation to be commenced. I gave immediate orders for all possible assistance from land and we were shortly joined by a number of the crew belonging to the

Porto Santo boat. Upon their arrival on board their first care was to throw the ballast over board; our anchor and two large stones were then drawn up and after several hours of hard labor the «Bang Up» reached the beach with myself and Ben on deck, which post we had retained the whole time in spite of the solicitations used to deter us from it. The Governor Senhor Cosme Damião da Cunha Fidie had come out of his house and approached us. As soon as I perceived him I jumped on shore to speak to him. He received me in a most friendly manner, complimented me upon the way in which I had behaved, and congratulated me upon my landing in safety. He desired my company to dine with him and though I begged to be excused on account of fatigue he told me in a most positive manner that he would admit of none, adding that be it early or late he should expect me and my brother at the table. As soon therefore as we could get our luggage from on board, we repaired to a small house which I had hired and resided in upon my former visits which had a most delightful view, though the interior arrangements were very simple. Here we dressed with all possible haste and went to the Governor's house at about 5 o'clock. During dinner and after his Excellency drank several toasts in compliment to us. Senhores Pedroso and Luis dined likewise at the Fort. We felt confident that our vessel was in security where we had left her and at about 9 o'clock retired from the Governor's house, little anticipating the scene of confusion and difficulty which was destined to take place. We had not been long at home when a person called to inform us that in consequence of the violence of the sea and wind, the Governor not considering the vessel safe where she was, as at high water the sea would have reached her, had given orders that she should be drawn up on the shore and that the Governor was not only present but actually assisting. I was extremely mortified on hearing this and we went down to the spot where we found the vessel exactly where we had left her, though at least 70 men had been for some time and still were making exertions to get her up, the means they adopted being

a very thick cord attached to the extremity of the keel and immense logs of wood placed on the sand to ease her up, for which it was necessary to dig away the sand in various parts to a considerable depth. During the whole of this operation the Governor attended and at intervals gave the signal with a whistle for a long and strong pull. This work was continued until half past 2 without success, and it was therefore determined to leave her where she was till the morning, the men being all exhausted. I returned thanks to the Governor for the trouble he had taken and at about 1 o'clock we returned home. During the whole of the day all the principal inhabitants had been anxiously looking on and many assisted, especially the Morgado, who in the morning had swam several times from the shore on board and back, which served to animate the rest.

Thursday October 25th

We rose late today and at noon had a visit from the Governor. His behaviour was very polite and friendly and he wished me to consider his house as my own during my stay in his Island.

We had several other visits. At about 1 I proposed a visit to a very pretty spot in the Island situated about 2 miles from the Villa. It being my intention to show Ben everything worth seeing here. This place is called «Fonte das Enguias». We went there in the only species of carriage this place can boast of, which is composed of a few boards raised upon two solid wooden wheels drawn by two oxen and accompanied by a boy with a long pole. I was amused at hearing him call out to his oxen to encourage them, naming one of them «Estrella» (Star). We thus went very agreeably and having provided some refreshment we took it with us and took our dinner in the garden of this pretty place. In the evening we had the Escrivão and some other gentlemen at our house. The former had taken upon himself the trouble of paying according to their merits the men who had been engaged in drawing the «Bang Up» from her perilous situation.

Friday 26th October

This being D. Miguel's birthday, early in the morning the Fort gave a salute of 20 guns. After taking an early dinner we went in company with some of the principal inhabitants across the Island to see a place called «Fonte das Areias». The water there is very good, being free from a very nitrous taste which it generally has in the Island. Descended with Ben and Senhor Pedroso the steep and rugged shore where we collected several minerals and marine curiosities. On our way home paid a visit to Senhor Nazario, a person who has very large estates here; waited with him to taste his different wines; and made an engagement to go with him to Pico do Castello (one of the highest points of the Island) tomorrow.

Saturday 27th October

We sent today to some persons of our acquaintance, requesting horses for our intended expedition, and also their company with us, but were rather disappointed upon a message being sent back by which we learnt that the two gentlemen, who had promised to accompany us, were confined in the Fort in consequence of neglecting their military duties yesterday. Their sentence was at first confinement for three days, which however was remitted to one, and finally through my intercession with the Governor and Lieutenant Colonel, they were released immediately: it being mentioned to them as done out of courtesy to me and my brother. The Governor gave us a sample of the best wine the Island produces called «Boal». Our party being made up we proceeded from the Villa at 2 o'clock and at 4 arrived at the summit of the Peak, having travelled through very barren country with hardly a tree to be seen. At about two thirds of the height, the road being very steep and rocky, we were obliged to fasten our horses to largestones and proceed on foot to the top. On arriving there we saw nothing very striking: only the remains of a castle which appears to have been very spacious and separated into small

apartments all built of stone. The former Governor had a great part of the buildings destroyed: from this point the whole circumference of the Island is seen. There is a large cistern for preserving water on the top.

Sunday 28th October.

Took a walk along the shore from the Villa to Calheta: had a most distinct view of Ilheu de Baixo: joined there by several persons and returned home after having a most fatiguing walk over the rocks.

Monday 29th October

Dined today with the Governor by special invitation, he having at first given a general one, which we did not choose to avail ourselves of. We were very kindly treated by him and without the least ceremony. During and after dinner he proposed several toasts complimentary to us. In the morning we amused ourselves by taking a walk along the shore as far as a small rock called the «Penedo Redondo». We found many perry winkles and a small shell fish called Lapa which abound here: the latter are eaten raw and have a very fine flavour.

Tuesday 30th October

Went down to the beach to see the «Bang Up» as she is undergoing some repairs necessary in consequence of the injury she sustained upon our arrival here. Afterwards went to see the Fort and Governor's gardens.

Wednesday 31st October

Sent for horses and took a pleasant ride along the sea shore, enjoying a most agreeable fresh breeze. Yesterday Dr. Luis sent us a lamb, the half of which we cooked today, having rather a numerous party to partake thereof.

Thursday 1st November

This being All Saints' Day and amongst the Portuguese a great feast day, upon which they exhibit their generosity towards their friends in the interchange of presents, we, as being held in some respect by the principal inhabitants, received various presents, amongst which were: — a live sheep from Morgado José Sebastião, ten loaves of fancy bread from Senhor Nazario, a large tray of sponge cake from another person, besides raisins, biscuit, etc. These presents have the curious name of «Pão de Deus» (God's bread). One of the most unpleasant occurrences took place today, which has befallen us since our stay here and the only mark of disrespect or negligence that we have met with, which was as follows: — whilst dining with the Governor last Monday, we had an invitation given us by Senhor Pedroso purporting to have come from Senhor Nazario wishing our company at his house today to pass the whole day and in order to do us a still greater honour he requested our guns to be taken up in order to give some salutes, and our English flag which he wished to hoist on the roof of his house, whilst we should be there. We of course received the invitation tho' we considered it somewhat irregular for it to be given thus verbally and abrupt. Senhor Pedroso was likewise invited. From the day we received this intimation we considered ourselves engaged. We were however rather surprised that the person who brought us a present from Senhor Nazario this morning did not say we were expected: however as last night Senhor Pedroso (the person who had given us the invitation) had promised to join us early in the morning, we deferred saying anything of the affair until he should make his appearance. The distance to the house of Senhor Nazario being considerable we had ordered a car to take us there. After waiting in suspense some time we sent to Senhor Pedroso's house who returned answer that he was dressing and would join us shortly. At 2 o'clock we sent a second time and received for answer that he was dining and that after dinner he would come

to us. Immediately upon receiving this message we gave up all idea of going there (at least to dinner). Yet we determined after ordering our dinner at home, to take a ride as far as Senhor Nazario's house in order to show him that we wished to treat him with politeness, and if we found him waiting for us, to explain our reasons for being so late, and dine with him. At this instant Senhor Pedroso came up and said he wished to go with us. We made no objection yet during the ride treated him with a great deal of coldness, and gave him our undisguised opinion of his conduct as well as Senhor Nazario. We arrived there but instead of finding any preparations, Senhor Nazario had gone out having locked up his house. We resolved upon this that all future connection should cease between our hospitable invitor and Senhor Pedroso and therefore returned home to dinner. Several gentlemen dined with us and all were of opinion that we had been most grossly insulted both by Senhores Nazario e Pedroso. In the evening Senhor Pedroso made his appearance: this we little expected, however we entered into conversation and took tea, taking care to show him our disgust at his low conduct. Having proposed going on board our vessel, he wished to accompany us, we therefore all went, I and Ben being still very warm after the insult we had suffered. We got on board and here it was that the finale was put to the numerous petty insults which had been offered us by said Pedroso. He made some rude and impertinent observations respecting our «Bang Up». I was not sorry to have this opportunity of ridding myself for ever of his society, which I effected with much warmth, and upon being exasperated by him put my fist so near his face that had I not had great respect for the Governor whose companion he was, I should certainly have let him feel the weight of it. I made him quit the vessel instantly and resolved never more to admit him to my society. My conduct towards him met with the secret approbation of all present, and many who were not having expressed their astonishment at my tolerating with such good humour his notorious insolence. I determined to represent his low conduct to the Governor.

Friday 2nd November

After waiting sometime at home today deliberating upon the blackguard conduct offered to us last night, we determined not to annoy ourselves respecting it or even to go the Governor respecting it. We therefore took a walk to «Fonte das Enguias», one of the prettiest spots here. In our way we went to see the Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Graça which is in an unfinished state, though if perfect would be one of the best buildings in the Island. The work is extremely well executed. The form of the exterior is octagonal. We mounted to the very top, and though a rather dangerous spot there sat and took some refreshment. Upon arriving at the Fonte, we saw the owner, a Morgado, who received and treated us very politely. Today a small boat left this island for Madeira. In the course of our walk today we met with a farmer's son, who had been shooting. Having purchased all his game consisting of three pigeons we sent them home with orders for them to be roasted, but our cook presuming upon his superior knowledge of the gastrick science, and wishing perhaps to give us a little variety, made rather a novel dish, perhaps not known amongst our Gallic and in this science very sophisticated neighbours, which was effected by boiling (more properly *spoiling*) the said pigeons with rice. When we got home and made the discovery, he was a little disconcerted at being obliged by a peremptory order to withdraw them from their ricy beds, with which they had already been sufficiently amalgamated, and commence the more homely, and in our opinion, more preferable mode of dressing them, by presenting their tender frames to the scorching heat of a bright charcoal fire in other words, by roasting them.

Saturday 3rd November

Today we proposed going to see the Ilheu de Baixo, it was however too late to go so far, and after having met Senhores S. Anna & José Sebastião, it was agreed we should take a boat

and go to Ilheu de Cima, or dos Dragoeiros, and leaving the shore at about noon, in half an hour, we reached the rocky coast of this extremely small island which is but one mile in circumference. It was with considerable difficulty and danger we reached the summit, the ascent being very craggy and in some places almost perpendicular. We walked all round it. It has no inhabitants whatever and though the land appears very good, is in a most uncultivated state. The only use made of it by the inhabitants of Porto Santo, is a pasture for goats, which they send there. The plant ursella grows in abundance upon the rocks where we procured some fine specimens. Having thus seen all we could we returned to our boat and having a little breeze with the help of our sail, soon reached the City.

Sunday 4th November

Ben being joined by several gentlemen went early this morning to bathe: the shore is extremely sandy, but as the waves flow into shore very deep and with much force, it is dangerous for persons who cannot swim. After breakfast, having sent for horses, we set out with Senhores Sebastião, S. Anna and Dr. Luis to go to Porto dos Frades. Our ride there was very pleasant. We walked round the little bay and took

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Tuesday 6th November

...rable length, the shore very stoney, and we found several pieces of sponge, some of a very large size. Having secured our horses by fastening them to the rocks, we walked round the port, took some refreshment we had brought with us, and returned home by way of the Fonte das Enguias. Our men were extremely dissatisfied upon examination today to find that the beam which had cost them so much time and labour yesterday and they expected to be a valuable prize, was so old and rotten as to be fit for nothing except to burn for firewood.

Wednesday 7th November

From the extreme scarcity of pasture here it is difficult to obtain many necessaries of life, as milk, good meat, etc. With respect to the latter we have usually taken our chance with the rest of the inhabitants, being satisfied and indeed very pleased if we were able to get a joint of mutton twice in the week. Beef being a luxury seldom or ever to be met with and then extremely poor. Milk is so scarce as not to be purchased, as those persons who have cows find the produce sufficient for their own use only. However we being acquainted with most persons in the Island were always well supplied, the trouble we had being only that of sending for it, which we always had gratis. So few are the persons who even purchase meat that it is customary when a sheep is to be killed for the owner to go canvassing to find sufficient purchasers, in order not to remain with his meat unsold, and it is not until he is successful that the order for execution is issued. Vegetables are also very scarce, the only thing of the kind which grows here in plenty being «lentilha» a small grain in flavour something like peas and makes a pretty good soup. Today early I perceived a small boat coming in which I concluded to be from Madeira, and being in expectation of some provisions and wine, and other necessary articles to keep up the campaign, as soon as she approached I sent Ben down to make enquiries, and as it was some time before the boat could be got up and our things brought up, we were not able to make any excursion today. I therefore proposed visiting the Governor to acquaint him with our intention of sailing on Saturday positively. The same order was made known to our men for them to be in readiness with the «Bang Up» in sailing trim. The governor received us with his usual politeness: This I intended as our last visit save on the morning of our departure, and not to dine with him again except by very particular invitation, especially after the very low conduct which Senhor Pedrosa had shown us, who was everyday at the Governor's table and whom we must necessarily have met.

Thursday 8th November

Nothing remaining for us to visit except the Ilheo de Baixo, we resolved to go there today, and for this purpose I sent for a boat to be prepared, provided the wind might serve: however as most of the boats here go out to fish very early, there was not one to be got. Upon this the owner of the boat which came in yesterday from Madeira sent to offer us his, informing us at the same time that it would be necessary to have eight men to man her. This occurred to me as an excellent opportunity to sail round the island, though I had previously done it when here alone. Upon Senhor S. Anna calling, I proposed the plan to him, in which he acquiesced, offering to accompany us. Having invited the Adjutant to dine with us today, I thought it necessary to send and inform him of this our expedition, at the same time begging him to join our party if he could. He shortly after called upon us and expressed his readiness, tho' he hinted he was afraid he should be very sea-sick. This fear however was very soon removed as well as a similar one which Senhor S. Anna expressed. We therefore repaired to the shore, where we found our boat manned and ready. At half past 12 precisely she was lowered to sea: and the wind being contrary as we went towards the east, we proceeded rowing only. When we had proceeded a very little way one of the men perceiving that the blocks of wood used in launching the boat had been left on the shore so that as the tide rose it would reach them, without any ado, he undressed himself, jumped into the sea, reached the shore, removed said blocks, and swam back to us. This caused some slight delay, but as soon as he was safe on board, we continued our course as fast as oars could pull and water float and in 50 minutes reached the Eastern point. (Galé) As soon as we started some refreshment had been taken and having encountered a head sea and contrary wind,

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Friday 9th November

.... Jack and private signal were up all day and the usual signal guns fired at hoisting and lowering same.

Saturday 10 th November

This morning, all being prepared on board, the remnant of our things having been sent early, and our men in readiness, nothing remained but to take our leave of the Governor, previous to which we sent to inform Senhor Sebastião that he must hold himself in readiness and to send his luggage by our men, who we sent for that purpose. We then went to the Fort to visit the Governor. In the course of conversation he observed to us that he thought the wind was too strong for us to go to sea and that we should find it dangerous in the «Travessa» he likewise hinted that Senhor Sebastião would not trust himself with us in such weather. Coming away from the Fort we met him however and tho' he was very unwell, he said he was determined to go, having already sent everything on board he wished to take, and was going to see the Governor after which he would accompany us. We therefore waited for him and went on board together. It would appear that the Governor had communicated his apprehensions to him, as the moment we got on board he complained of indisposition, and every moment his fears, or illness, or both, so much increased that at length he declared he must return ashore. We remonstrated with him, but in vain, and finding that he had determined, we had his things placed in the boat and him sent ashore. It was evident from the stock of provisions, consisting of fowls, etc that he had made his calculation for a very long voyage. After he was safely landed, we gave orders for sailing and at ten minutes past 10 our Colors were hoisted and immediately answered from the Fort, after which we got under way with a brisk N. Easter, which with the foresail only up carried us at the rate of 9 knots an hour, having

reached «meia Travessa» a distance of 9 leagues by 10 minutes past 1. We were unable to hoist more sail in consequence of the little ballast we had, as I had supposed from the commencement, and to guide the rudder 3 and sometimes 5 men were hardly sufficient. We continued going our course and at 4 o'clock p.m. were opposite Santa Cruz. There we gave a salute and hoisted Colors, which was answered by all the small vessels in the port hoisting their private signals. As the wind was not so strong as it had been I was determined to have the main sail hoisted, to satisfy myself and prove to the men what I had maintained all along, that there was insufficient ballast. They were very unwilling to comply, but as soon as the mainsail was hauled up, our halfballasted bark instantly turned completely round, neither helm nor anything else had any influence over her. The only remedy was pulling the mainsail down, which I was obliged to do with my own hands, the men being all too much confused to know even what they were about. Having endeavoured to tack into the Bay of Machico without effect, we lost some time and being close into shore had a very light wind which brought us home to Funchal precisely at 1 o'clock on Sunday morning where we landed, having been absent in all 20 days which we passed most agreeably, having met with nothing to disturb our quiet, save the fracas with Senhor Pedroso. Every person beside whom we met in the Island (as well on the present as on former excursions) having treated us with the utmost kindness and goodwill, and always showing themselves gratified at any little offices of kindness shewn them by us. Amongst these the family of the Teixeiras, Senhor Morgado José Sebastião, Dr. Luis and Senhor João S. Anna & Vasconcelos, deserve particular mention.

The following is a short notice of the Island, the original of which was lent us by the Governor. The language and observations are, therefore, not to be considered as ours, with the exception of such as are marked and enclosed between brackets.

BREVE NOTÍCIA DA ILHA DE PORTO SANTO

A Ilha do Porto Santo está situada aos 33° 1' de latitude Setentrional, e aos 16° 20' de longitude. 80 legoas ao Oeste da Costa d'África, 9 ao N.E. da Ilha da Madeira, 10 ao NNE das ilhas Desertas. Tem do N.E. ao S.O. quasi 3 legoas, e 2 1/2 milhas na sua maior largura vindo por esta forma a ter de circunferência pouco mais de 22 milhas. Tem pela parte do Sul uma magnífica praia de fina e delicada areia amarela, como a das costas de Portugal, de comprimento de quasi 6 milhas de E. ao S.O. com 150 passos na sua maior largura. Tem a Ilha alguns montes ou picos, dos quais os mais consideráveis são: — o Faixo que tem d'altura desde as fraldas até acima, 230 toises; — do Castelo 215; — Branco 200; — Juliana 160; — e Anna Ferreira 150; — tem além d'estes outros outeiros, a quem se não dá o nome de Picos por serem supostos altos, muito compridos: — que são o do Espigão, Caeciras, Ferteiras, etc..

A Villa está colocada próxima da praia, porém tão mal edificada tanto nas casas como em arruamento, que se não encontra uma só casa, nem rua com regularidade, crescendo que essas mesmas chamadas ruas, que são sete, nem calçadas, excepto um mau e pequeno bocado que vai da praça até ao Forte de S. José, pelo da vila passa uma ribeira ou escavação chamada do Tanque: a qual serve também de uma principal rua e mesma Villa: e de caminho até o Pedregal, uma legoa da Villa. Além desta tem a Ilha diversas pequenas aldeias, taes sam a do Tanque, Farrabo, Camacha, Areias e Ponta, e outras menos consideraveis, como Serra de Foro e Dentro, Ferteiras, Campo de Cima, e Lapeiras, Pedregal, Cazinhas, Pedras Pretas, e Campo de Baixo, e Esmoitadas: As cazas sam muito mal construidas, cobertas (em toda a Ilha) de barro amassado com palha, e quasi todas com

tantas portas quantos são os repartimentos das mesmas cazas, não tendo outras fechaduras senão ferrolhas e algumas de pao, por isso que qualquer outra he mui rara, salvo as que são cobertas de telha que tem sobrado: estas sam mui poucas entre ellas se contam seis menos mas, e o resto sam igualmente pessimas como as de barro: as portas são sempre para o lado oposto à rua ou caminho, e a maior parte d'ellas com hum muro de pedra solta adiante para que quem passe pela sua frente lhe não devasse o interior das taes chossas. O número de seus habitantes chega a 1 630; tem uma so parochia da Invocação de N. S. da Piedade com Vigario, hum cura e quatro beneficiados, hum dos quaes serve de Sacristão; tem mais quatro ermidas que são Espirito Santo, S. Pedro, Santa Catharina, e Misericordia. A Terceira diz-se ser antiga parochia da mesma ilha: ha mais as paredes d'uma capella no sítio das Ferteiras que dizem ha-de ser da Invocação de N. S. da Graça: — e junto à mesma são as ruinas de outra antiga capella da mesma Invocação que diz-se ter sido tambem antiga parochia: e consta por tradição que a primeira Igreja que houve na dita Ilha foi no Pico de Juliana, o qual se acha só metade d'ella a baixo e no cimo desse resto que escapou ao ímpeto do Vulcão existem as pequenas ruínas da mesma Igreja. Ha tambem dois moinhos de Vento: hum do Conselho, e outro particular, o primeiro supposto fosse construído (na conformidade do Alvará de 1770 relativo aquella Ilha) para beneficio do público, porem he so para meia duzia, e essas de Governança que foi quem arrematou em praça: o que lhe he contrario nos Alvaras de 6 de Dezembro de 1603 e 23 de Julho de 1776: dos quaes elles abuzarão em prejuizo do mesmo publico. Tem a ilha hum Governador Militar, que reside no forte de S. José, cujo he defendido por cinco peças de calibre 12 e huma de calibre 6: este está muito mal situado e construido de forma que não serve de defesa nenhuma à Ilha, não sendo nem offensivo nem defensivo; tem mais um terrapleno com 8 peças de calibre pequeno, as quaes de nada servem pellos produsissimos reparos alem da pessima muralha que so consta de huma pouca de pedra arrumada.

A Força militar consiste em hum Batalhão d'Artilharia de Milicias com exercicio tambem d'infantaria, o qual é composto de quatro companhias e total de 170 praças, sem disciplina nem forma alguma por onde se collija que são Militares, nem a maior parte dos mesmos Officiaes.

A Câmara he composta de hum juiz ordinario, como presidente e quatro vereadores, todos geralmente parentes, dois Escrivães, hum da Câmara e outro do Geral. Orfãos, Almotaceria e Notas: e quanto a Administração da Justiça pellos empregados se pode colligir tal ella será.

A Ilha não é tão escassa d'aguas como dizem os seus desresoados habitantes, porque uma Ilha tão pequena com 32 nascentes d'agua grande parte d'ellas magníficas, além de querendo abrir poços nas planícies, acham água a 4 ou 6 braços, de certo está conhecido que o desmancho he dos habitantes pelos seus poucos ou nenhuns conhecimentos não so agrícolas como de todos os ramos. (Fallando a respeito das aguas dessa Ilha será falta de justiça a diligência e actividade do actual Governador (Snr. Fídie) deixar de fazer menção d'um chafariz elegante de gosto clássico, com 4 bicos que ele (sempre trabalhando por o bem público de sua Ilha) está agora fazendo debaixo de suas direcções perto do Forte e que promette ser de grande utilidade aos habitantes e que será uma lembrança eterna de seu governo. (F E B O)

Não ha árvores fructiferas senão figueiras e bebereiras de muito boa qualidade e gosto muito bom. Pecegueiras, pereiras, macieiras, e marmeleiras em pouca quantidade: muitas amoreiras que produzem mui bem, assim como todas as outras, cuja propagação não está aumentada por inercia dos habitantes, e infructiferos ha arvores chamados do Paraizo, os quaes não tem de bom senão o nome, pois são nocivos a todas as plantas tanto pela sua pessima sombra, como pelos raizes crescendo que a qualidade de seu pao he muito fraco, pois cria logo caruncho. Ha tambem Espinheiros cujas qualidades são todas oppostas as das antecedentes, assim como alguns alamos, e outros muitos arbustos,

e a todos os habitantes tem declarado total perseguição. Tem boas planícies, tanto de terra, como d'areia, são pouco productivas em razão de mau amanho que lhe fazem excepto a vinha que dá muita uva, principalmente Listrão, e sopposto que os habitantes estejam capacitados de que são bons agricolas, o seu uso os desacredita.

Os arados de que se servem para abrir a terra são tamanhos que com Esportão e Canga o seu pezo não excede a 30 libras, e por isso não profundão a terra mais de 5 ou 6 pollegadas quanto tanto: e por esse motivo as Searas não resistem nem as estações calmozas nem invernozas; porque como não podem profundir o raiz seccam com qualquer pequeno calor, e pelo mesmo motivo o Inverno leva para o mar as Searas, e a terra, e por isso a mesma Ilha, daqui a poucos annos ficara reduzida a Escavações alem das muitas que ja tem, das quaes as mais consideraveis são as do Tanque, Penedo, Cochim, Salgado, Barbeiros, Porto dos Frades, Espigão ao Rio Fundo. Os caminhos são na realidade maos pois que a Camara fracas vistas emprega nisso assim como em tudo o mais.

Produz a Ilha, hum anno por outros 850 pipas de Vinho de 12 e 14 graos em mostra (o qual sendo bem maduro, 25 almudes produzem 65 a 66 canadas d'aguardente de 27 graos).

150 a 200 moios de bom trigo branco
40 moios de centeio
700 moios de cevada

Quanto a lentilhas se não podem calcular pela desigualdade das colheitas, pois que ha anno de 40 moios e anno de 40 alqueires.

Assim como o Milho, e alguns chicharros e ervilhas, generos que na dita ilha abundarião muito se não

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