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THE DIARY OF COSTA PEREIRA

COD. $\frac{CXVI}{I-II}$ AND COD. $\frac{CXVI}{I-II}$, EVORA LIBRARY

(Contributed by Rev. JOSEPH J. CROWLEY, D. Ph.)

There are a number of manuscripts of interest to English history in the Evora Library. We have had occasion to write of the Coronation Codex (1), and we have found there a number of letters from Russell, the Bishop of Vizeu, from various agents in England, and much else. The muniment rooms of the Cathedral contain a wealth of manuscripts, some of great antiquity, very well cared for, but wholly uncatalogued. One feels sure that investigation would be well repaid.

There is nothing extraordinary about Cod. $\frac{CXVI}{I-II}$ and Cod. $\frac{CXVI}{I-12}$, two references in the manuscript room of the Evora Library. But a notice in the «Catalogo dos Manuscriptos da Bibliotheca Publica Eborensis» (2), gave promise of exceptional

(1) See «Forma sive Ordination», *The Evora Coronation Codex*, in the *Second Annual Report and Review* of The Historical Association, Lisbon Branch, Lisbon, 1938, p. 92 sqq.

(2) The only existing guide to the Evora Library dates from 1850. «O Catalogo dos Manuscriptos da Biblioteca Publica Eborensis, ordenado pelo Bibliothecario Joaquim Heliodoro da Cunha Rivara, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1850». It is a fine piece of work, and gives very useful indications of the contents and nature of the manuscripts. It is rare and very highly prized.

interest. Cod. $\frac{CXVI}{I-12}$ is described as a «Diário da minha viagem para Philadelphia. Principiada a bordo da Corveta «William», Cap. Quandrill, aos 10 de Outubro de 1798». It is the Diary not only of the voyage, but also of the stay in Philadelphia of one Hypolito José da Costa Pereira, who was the attaché of Portugal there. It is continued until the 27th of December of 1799. It contains many observations made in that country. Cod. $\frac{CXVI}{I-12}$ is «The Transcription and Register of the official letters of Hypolito José da Costa Pereira, while in Philadelphia as attaché of Portugal». It begins with a dispatch to the Minister Dom Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, dated the 22nd of December of 1798, and finishes with a like dispatch dated the 30th of August of 1800, and at the end has the following observation: = The memorandum which tells of the course and result of my commission, was dated the 24th of January of 1801, and I intend to offer it to His Excellency the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (o Ministro da Fazenda), together with the Translation of the History of the Bank of England, which he commanded of me, to-morrow, Thursday, the 5th of February». (An autograph). So Rivara in his «Catalogo» of 1850. His description invested those two references with more than ordinary interest. We found two small note-books, about eight inches long and six broad. The Diary is much more bulky than the Register. This more slender volume shows generally signs of hurry and carelessness, and was intended by Pereira as a personal record.

The Diary was begun «on the 10th of October, while anchored off Boa-Vista, in 24 fathoms of water». There several days were spent waiting on wind and tide. In the meantime he draws Belem Tower and other scenes in his «Caderno de Observações». To this he refers us on occasions for drawings and designs of what he sees. So far we have been unable to trace this third notebook, as likewise the Translation of the History of the Bank of England. It is unfortunate that no record of the notebook can be found in Evora, for it contained a number of drawings of plants, animals, machines, tools, buildings, and the like. Pereira does not speak of having given in the book of drawings with the rest of his report.

The main purpose of Pereira's voyagings was to observe conditions, to obtain information about trade, politics, inventions and general development of this mysterious new country, and above all to collect seeds of as many plants as possible and to send these home without delay. The Diary is interesting. It is easy to read, and we were sorry not to have the opportunity of a more lengthy perusal. But it contains little of real historical interest. It will add hardly anything to our knowledge of the epoch. We can, however, see something of the vivid and energetic life of the young country still spread along the coast, and very far yet from the great march to the West. The days of the struggle against England are very fresh in memory, and Pereira meets many who were bitter enemies a few years before.

His smaller book gives his letters, again not of very great importance. Here come also the lists of seeds which he sends off to the Minister. Pereira was a botanist. Any plant not found in his own country had to enter his collection. He takes the utmost pains in some cases, and so in January of 1799 he can send one hundred and ninety one packets of different seeds, and already in March of the same year nearly two hundred more. Many lesser «Catalogos» of seeds also go. He gives the details of the «Guinea grass discussion», and condemns any attempt to introduce cochineal, — coxinilha — culture into Portugal, for «the cochineal is a plant that does not travel well, much less does the insect». Any new piece of machinery set his fingers itching to get at his pencil, and he refers to the designs he is sending home.

The populational increase astounds him. He finds that new York had only 21,312 inhabitants in 1790, but five years later this number had increased to 52,272. He travels all over New York and Pennsylvania, but makes several unsuccessful efforts to reach Canada, a country which has a strange attraction for him.

One or two pages transcribed from the Diary may be of interest.

His voyage across the Atlantic is most hazardous, but only at the end of the voyage was the ship almost lost. «On the 10th of December at two thirty at night, the cable broke with the

force of the wind : the Capn. and all the rest of the crew were asleep (as is their custom) and awake by the fire in the cabin was the Pilot of the bar in conversation with me, who was lying in my bunk... The wind blew the ship directly towards the shore... and there it grounded. Then the Capn. got up, but did nothing all night not even attempting to warp his ship, although he expected his ship to be dashed to pieces at any moment... It was raining heavily... Ice formed on the rigging and sails, so that they seemed made of ice and could not be handled... In the morning the ship refloated».

«In Philadelphia one is obliged to observe only the Sunday under pain of imprisonment ; on those days if anybody is found drunk in the street he is taken to prison». «Prostitutes in Philadelphia are so numerous that they flood — «inundam» — the streets at night.»

He finds very few permanent bridges. Such as do exist are of wood. The public pay toll, and ferries also have high rates. This money is to be spent on the making of bridges of a more solid nature, but never finds its way to those who should build the bridges, or if it does such bridges are begun but never finished. Indeed the whole tax is just a «goose-trap», and is called so openly in the newspapers. «N. B. But it should not surprise you to find such things in the public gazette, because in Philadelphia and generally in the E. U., when a person wishes for revenge on another, it is the custom to have published in a gazette the most shameful facts which he knows about the life of the other. This person answers in the same manner, and it has happened on some occasions that a quarrel of this nature has gone on for a month and more, with the unmasking of families, personal defects, the frailties of wives and daughters, and so on. I have it on good authority that Mr. Jay, he who made the treaty with England, was burned in effigy one night, and although it was all quite public, yet the authors of the outrage were not punished in any way. Ministers to foreign courts, secretaries of State, and so on, publish all their affairs, when they are dismissed from office, if this proceeding suits their purpose, making public in this manner the innermost cabinet secrets, while for it they receive no punishment of legal nature ; and so in this manner did he who was Minister to France behave, Mr. Monroe, who, to justify

his conduct, and to show that the President acted in bad faith, published the innermost secrets of the whole affair ; and so with many other cases» (3).

He visits various prisons and gives a very detailed description of them and of the condition of the prisoners.

He is fond of reporting conversations. «I heard a remark to-day», 10th March 1799, «which is worthy of note : the revolution in America dates from Charles II of England. Under him all were persecuted, and so the Puritans went to New England, the Quakers to Pennsylvania, and the Catholics to Maryland... All were oppressed, and so all developed a tendency for liberty and religious freedom». This tendency grew with the passage of time, until when further instances of oppression by the home government occurred they were met by a spirit of resistance which broke out into the war of independence.

He is greatly excited by the discovery of the bones of the «mammoth». He will not grant that they are of an animal of the genus of the «megatherium» of Paraguay. Nor will he see in them a proof of Genesis 6, 4, with those who would take them to be the bones of a giant. He quotes, with respect, the opinion of the *Transaction*, vol. 10, p. 262, of the Royal Society of London. But he prefers to follow Stradlenberg, who sees in «mammoth» the same root as the «behemoth» of Job. He must have argued his theory with some heat, for we find him returning time and again to the subject.

(3) This is James Monroe, afterwards President of the United States. He was friendly to France, and as Minister to France did nothing to reconcile public opinion in that country to the Jay treaty. Feeling ran very high, and war was regarded as a possibility. Washington recalled Monroe, who, deeply resentful, accused the President of want of sincerity in the conduct of the whole affair. He sided with the French opinion that the Jay treaty was an open violation of the French treaty of 1778.

Pereira is here referring to the publication of Monroe's vindication, *A View of the Conduct of the Executive in the Foreign Affairs of the United States*. This was published in December 1797, and led to the usual controversy and the publication of a large number of outspoken pamphlets.

The breach between Washington and Monroe was complete.

He meets a number of important persons, but has no intimacy with them and can tell us little enough about them. Even the funeral of Washington had to be read «in the morrow's gazette», because he could not afford to buy mourning. He enters scarcely at all into the American life around him. It seems to frighten him somewhat, and to disgust him also, and he leaves it as he had come to it, a stranger. He gives us the sum of his observations almost at the end of his Diary in a couplet which he writes in English :

«This is the golden age... all worship gold.

Honours are purchased... love and beauty sold.»

One strongly suspects that his estrangement from American life must have been due to a rather slender knowledge of English.