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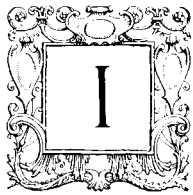
NOVEMBER, 1916

No. DCCXCVIII



Two Mid-Atlantic Isles

BY CHARLES WELLINGTON FURLONG, F.R.G.S.



IN my boyhood I once dreamed that somewhere in the vast sweep of the North Atlantic there bulged over the horizon an island. It was a beautiful, wonderful isle, where I walked among strange buccaneers who were kind to me. It was a setting such as I afterward learned to love in the drawings of Howard Pyle. Half a lifetime later, the port mudhook of our little, black-hulled, rakish schooner stirred the calm in the protecting lee of my isle of dreams. There was the chain's rattle to break the stillness of dawn; there, too, the wild sea-birds, startled shrill-crying from towering cliffs, dark-seared by forested ravines, and waterfalls silver-threaded over the cliff edges. Yes, and the landing-beach, the little town, and all.

To the voyager over great oceans the experience of coming upon deep-sea islands induces a thrill, subtle and indescribable. The *Kitty A*¹ lay "at Flores in the Azores," with twenty-two hundred miles of ocean behind. That daylight we had sailed by Lagens Light-house, our beacon all the previous night. Our anchorage was just south of the island capital, Santa Cruz. Its quaint,

¹The *Kitty A*, fifty-three feet on the waterline, was the schooner in which the "West-African Islands Expedition" sailed from Newport to the west coast of Africa, carrying out various work in the Azores, Madeira, the Desertas, and the Canaries. The expedition comprised Mr. Harry R. Amory, Dr. William G. Erving, Prof. Charles W. Furlong, a mate, three sailors, and a cook.

white, rectangular house fronts with black borders, like so many mourning-cards stuck up on edge, were relieved by red-tiled roofs as they echeloned gently down to meet the sea.

Even the great cliffs are partly terraced by the islanders; while Nature, through the modeling-tool of time, has soft-molded the friable lava soil and given to Flores with her frequent rainfall and proximity to the Gulf Stream the greatest richness and fertility of the Azores. Cultivated lands spread out, and, beyond, the undulating hill country, punctuated by craters, culminates in lofty Morro Grande.

Flores is an isolated part of the volcanic chain of the Azores—a stupendous, nine-by-twelve-mile lava mass which, eons ago, boiled up from beneath the sea. Rimmed with towering walls, with no harbors and but few fair-weather landing-places, Flores is surrounded with a *chevaux-de-frise* of rocks through which swirl dangerous currents, often lashed into fury by Atlantic gales.

At Santa Cruz a thousand souls have set their dwellings on a sheet of verdure-carpeted lava, beneath a juniper-crowned hill. From this little town rise the two Moorish dome-crowned towers of its church—so spacious that half the seventy-three hundred islanders could worship together within its walls, but so little used that grass finds entrance through the crevices of its aisles. A wireless station now gives Flores communication with the outer world; otherwise its only regular connection with the

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MR. JAMES MACKAY, THE BRITISH VICE-CONSUL, AND HIS FAMILY

when short of provisions. During a visit aboard one of these, a northwest gale suddenly sprang up, making his return impossible, and in ten days he found himself in England, but in three more he took the first vessel back, and here he has been ever since.

Late forenoon found us heading down-coast in our large dory toward a cavern called Furna de Fernão Jorge, in an unsubmerged portion of a crater ring whose seaward side had been broken away by storms. We rowed into this great amphitheater, which had once vomited forth a hell of fire and then sucked in the waters of the Atlantic.

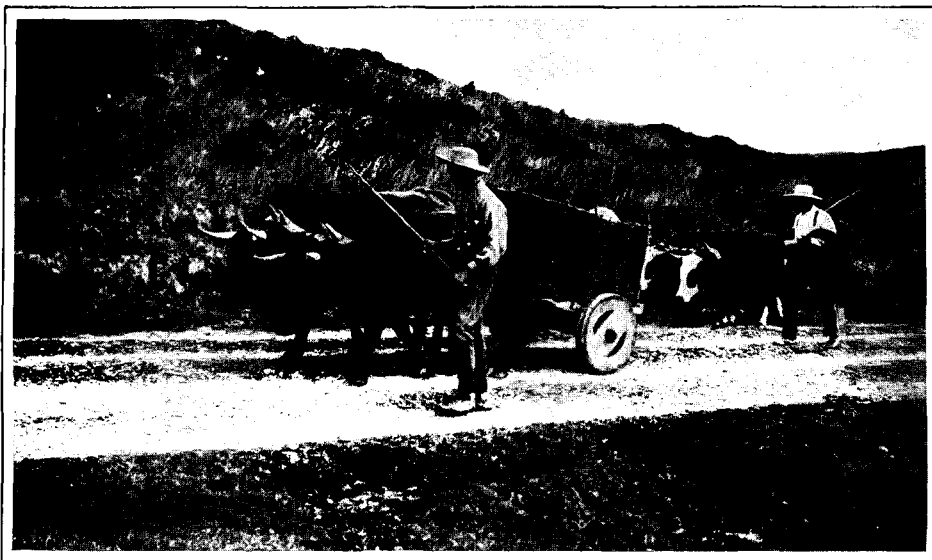
An ever-falling curtain of water from the eaves of the great semi-domed cavern ahead screened the mysterious darkness beyond. Through this shower shot the dory, bringing up on a steep-shelving cave floor of large water-rounded stones. From the arching wall hung festoons of ferns, mosses and small plants grew, reeking in wetness. Tiny olive-green canaries flicked by and were lost in the verdure or darkness. The sputter of Erving's bird-gun, as he brought down two specimens—the first of our collection—had an uncanny, smothered sound; one almost expected its report to bring the tremendous suspended mass crushing down upon us.

“The dory's adrift!”

The subtle surge had worked it from the steep beach into the fast-sweeping current. With a flying leap and plunge John fortunately recovered it, for the lonely cavern was no place to be marooned at high tide.

Farther southward, we again left the bright sunlight and steered into the Furna dos Enchareos—a colossal gash in the side of Flores. At first we rowed in the darkness of night. Then the bases of the arching walls, like the transparent water, took on a peculiar ultramarine—daylight turned to shadow and oxidized by nature. Cautiously for two hundred feet we felt our way into the bowels of the great cliff. Here the cave, narrowing, terminated in an inner chamber. The dory softly heaved to an uncanny, subtle, under-sea motion.

“Back water! Look there!” came from the bow. From the inner chamber issued a peculiar rumbling; before the dory could be backed out of the narrow corridor it became a seething caldron. From its center a geyser shot hissing into the darkness, telescoped, then all was still. We warily reapproached this interesting phenomenon, which, after a few moments' quiescence, recurred again and again. That inner chamber was a weird, uncanny sight, an impres-



HEAVY BULLOCK-CARTS CREAK THEIR WAY OVER ALL THE AZORES

sion of direct connection with another world.

Preparations to cross the island were speedily under way. There being no interior villages, and the coast rugged and mountainous, transportation was along the coast by fishing-boats. Mr. Mackay secured for me the only horse on the island—a beautiful creature, white and diminutive, too dainty to load with the heavy packs. Our outfit comprised Erving, Amory, myself, Medeiro (a young Portuguese from Fayal), José Susanna (the guide), José de Soza (the horse-boy or *arriero*), and a little taggeron, José Cabral—many Josephs, but with coats of one color.

Having left the schooner in charge of the mate, at 6 A.M. we started out through the half-slumbering town. On the outskirts we met country people coming in—young women carrying water-jugs or green fodder on their heads, old men and women bearing fagots. “*Bons dias!*” I greeted one nonagenarian, tottering beneath a load bigger than herself. She kissed the silver-piece I placed in her withered hand, and in so doing blessed me and it.

Climbing upward along the rough-paved, zigzagging road, we passed heavy bullock-carts, such as creak their

slow-swaying ways over all the Azores. The squeak oftentimes rises like the chorus of a thousand pairs of two-dollar shoes; in fact, some owners take pride in cultivating varied squeaks, perhaps to offset the silences of their isolation. But these *carros de bois*, as the carts of Flores are called, have each a certain melodious resonance, which they sing over and over in slow, rhythmic cadence, sometimes with a slight variation, like a high-strung note of a violin or a flute-like tremolo—a number from the island orchestra. The song of the *carros* mingled with the matins of the birds—of the *melro* (a blackbird), the petite wheat-ear, canaries, and purple sandpipers.

Field and roadway, from the schooner, had appeared framed with broad, blue-gray walls of stone, which now proved to be limitless hedges of hydrangeas—*hortensia*, the islanders call them. The blossoms, averaging a foot in diameter, smothered the hedges, often twelve feet high, in light-blue violet.

Not only did they form hedges, but great masses flowed in streams of color into the valleys. Were these floral beauties of five minutes’ journeying under the glass of an American florist, he might retire for life; yet through such a profusion of beauty we could travel for days.

Our schooner, far below, now lay a mere speck, and the island of Corvo, fifteen miles northward, was head-dressed with a swirl of clouds. From the ridge gentle grades undulated inland over a verdant table-land. The road dwindled to a trail over an uninhabited moor and pasture-land country, from which rose the truncated cones of the *calderas* (craters), where here and there the molten island had once bubbled up and the bubbles, bursting, had left hardened rims. We explored a number of these, most of which offered remarkable spectacles, their precipitous sides shunting abruptly down to the edge of opalescent lakes. The tallest crater, 3,037 feet, was Morro Grande, northeast of the island's center, across which our course lay.

In late afternoon we came to where the interior country abruptly ended, and stood on the edge of a sheer, thousand-foot drop.

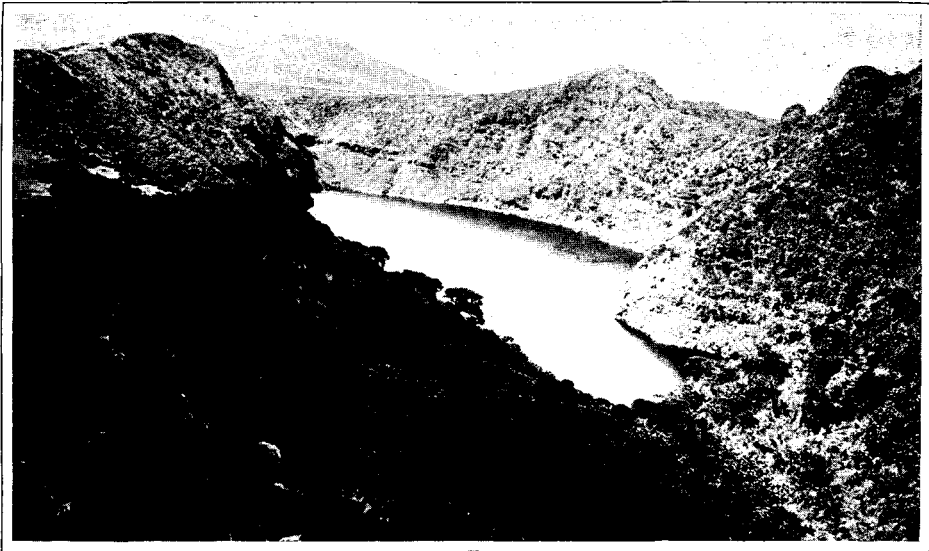
"*Quão magnificacão, Senhor!*" murmured Susanna.

Leaning cautiously from among the cypress and laurel-like shrubs fringing the treacherous edge, we beheld a great amphitheater, rimmed for five miles by precipitous escarpments. Southward nestled the little village of Fajemzinha; on the coast-edge lay that of Fajem

Grande. Far below us, walled fields in neutralized yellows, browns, emeralds, and maroons, made a patchwork seaward, there bound with a band of jagged, glistening jet, selvaged with silver surf which merged through turquoise into the sapphire of the sea.

It was Flores which led Mark Twain to remark that he "did not take any interest in islands at three o'clock in the morning"; and it was the charm of these two hamlets and the surrounding country which overcame this insular aversion and inspired his graphic portrayal of this island, as he and the other "Innocents" huddled sleepily on the deck of the *Quaker City* in a raw, blustering morning of mid-June.

For nearly a mile we followed this edge of wonderland, treading softly on mosses or brushing through ferns and wild flowers or among growing juniper, laurel, and box-myrtle. Without warning, Susanna disappeared over the ridge itself—into a hidden trail. Down the steep, forested cliff-side we clattered; but it was easier going from the cliff's base between lava-walled fields of the villagers and through areas of corn, barley, potatoes, broad-leaved yams, pulse, and tomatoes, growing on an underlay of red lava ash or rich, brown tufa soil.



A CRATER LAKE OF FLORES

In fertile pastures browsed cattle, which give this valley its exporting products—live-stock and butter—some of the proceeds of which go to fill the coffers of the overlords of Portugal.

At the village edge a swarthy, sinewy-built young man approached me. "My name is Francisco Pimeatel; I am a friend of Mr. Mackay's. *Mi case es sue.*" (My house is yours.)

The picturesque inhabitants, following along with us, blocked the eight-foot highway as we halted at Pimeatel's home. Rest and fodder for the pack-horse was my first consideration. We were then conducted to a large, second-story room with the customary sand-scoured wooden floor, simply furnished with chairs, a table, long lace curtains, and a few pictures. From a window could be seen the flat, black, jagged reefs, upon which broke a light surf.

"It is very beautiful," I remarked to Pimeatel's father, a keen and intelligent man who had acquired English in the United States.

"*Si!* but it can be very terrible. Many a good sheep is here wreck-ed. The biggest sheep was a big liner, the *Slavonia*. She smash against a cleef farther south. But only seven weeks ago a women here early in the morning she see a 'fresh man' [stranger]. He come

from the shore with a life-preserv-eer, his clothes all tear. Soon it is light to see the sheep—a French bark—the *Bipard*. The small boats put away from her, when, queek—she break and go down."

Susanna had pointed her masts out to me when we came down the mountain.

"Well, a fair sea was running, 'about like' [as it is now], and vairy cold. The boats turned over; all our people run to the shore; and the strongest men with ropes go over the shoals into the sea.

"Great combers dash the crew, torn and bleeding, on the rocks—like dead feesh. With much dangere, all the twenty-two are rescued, but nine died from beating on the rocks. The captain, Brondell, all his clothes were gone, but a woman queekly put him her dress. Everybody do what they can; some they bring to my house."

"But, Senhor, I hear that your son was the hero."

"Well," and the old man's eyes lighted with restrained pride, "of course he do his part—he save fourteen."

Soon tea, island cheese, and unleavened corn-bread were set before us by Pimeatel's parents, who fully expected us to remain overnight. Our sailing schedule, however, prevented; so about six o'clock we bade our hosts farewell.



LOOKING DOWN ON FAJEM GRANDE

Outside we were met by Padre Bissarra, the village priest, and two other notables, backed by almost the entire population, who trailed a while in our wake. Then Pimeatel, following the old Portuguese custom of seeing a guest on his way, merged his long shadow with ours toward Fajemzinha, and we fell to talking.

"Senhor, do you know the little Senorita Irene?"

"Si, Senhor." And I recalled the pretty, black-eyed Portuguese lass of fourteen, a member of Mackay's household.

"Ah! *Meu amigo!* She is *muito formosa, muito sympathetica*, she is my *futura* [betrothed]. But the law—it make it *dous annos*—two years, Senhor, before we are married."

It took but half an invitation to induce him to head with us for Santa Cruz, and but half an eye to see that the lithe young Portuguese was an able walker. As sunset mellowed the fertile valley and saffron-tinted the whitewashed houses of Fajemzinha we passed through its main square. Then came, excitedly scurrying, nearly every man, woman, and child of the place to beset Susanna with questions about "*os Americanos*."

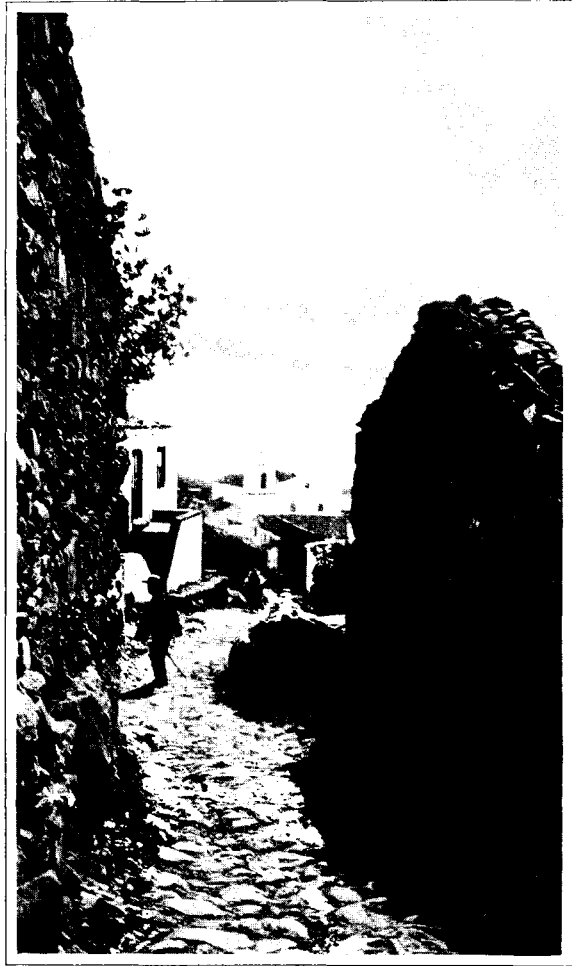
Darkness brought cloud and storm; the trail became more treacherous, causing the party to somewhat string out. So we planned to keep well together, but as the depressed trails muffled sound, in case of separation or difficulty two shots were to be fired.

The *arriero*, who carried my rifle, left it at a spring a half-mile behind, so I went back with him for it. In catching up with the outfit, we came upon a lone, dejected figure seated on a stone at the foot of a steep climb. It was Amory, nursing a strained hip muscle. The wild-blowing wind and rain-gusts in their

sweep across the mountain slope was the only response to the signal shots; so the *arriero* was hastily despatched to halt the expedition and bring back help.

"I can't walk; I'll have to ride the pack-horse," murmured Amory.

Visions of a one-hundred-eighty-pound



THE MAIN THOROUGHFARE OF FAJEM GRANDE

Don Quixote astride a diminutive Roziante, on whom the hard day's journey had already begun to tell, convinced me that that was impossible until beyond this steep, rough climb. After the party located us, we managed in relays to half carry the injured man, stumbling over rocks and through tough, wiry shrubs, to the waiting pack-horse. But he was a

wise little horse, and had left for parts unknown; he was, however, eventually rounded up.

Distributing the packs among the men, we got Amory on, and set off down the steep slopes in darkness and down-pour—an arduous journey even for an unloaded animal. Once he fell. Fearing injury to his rider, as well as to assist the game little creature, I led him the next four hours and a half with my shoulder under his jaw.

Down shrub-arched, narrow ravines, over sharp rocks, large and small, we slipped and slid in intense darkness, the water squirring from our shoes, which worked like suction-valves at every step. To avoid falling headlong down steep declivities and pitfalls, we sent a man ahead with mountain-stock to grope out the trail; and a few treasured matches assisted horse and rider down the most dangerous rockfalls. Occasionally the little animal trod on me; but he was so light and delicate that it was not even annoying, and we seemed to have a perfect understanding. Hour after hour the courageous creature went steadily on thus, struggling under his heavy burden.

The Portuguese, like all the hardy Azoreans, proved to be fast and enduring walkers, while Pimeatel's acquaintance with this section of the island made him invaluable as a guide. Finally, down a long, steep slope and far away in a gap of the coast, came the welcome gleam of Lagens light, and two hours later our little party clumped wearily through the outskirts of Lagens; then between its cottages, gray and still in the misty night. Pimeatel said there was no place to put up here, so he and Medeiro disappeared down a byway to rout out some fishermen to take Amory by boat to the *Kitty A.*

At the village center, to his relief and that of the little horse, Amory dismounted. Wrapped in Erving's warm Peruvian poncho, he ensconced himself on a low wall where we anxiously awaited Pimeatel's return. Half famished as we were, the small piece of unleavened bread I had shoved into the packs at Fajem Grande gave us something to ruminate on.

"The fishermen—soon they come,"

remarked Medeiro as they returned. "Come, we wait in the *case*; eet is to a friend of Senhor Pimeatel." And he led the way to a little drinking-tavern.

A rap; a candle glimmered within, where the boatmen soon joined us. It was a rough, swarthy crowd that grouped itself on keg and counter. The candle's glow, reflected from wet and oily cheeks in flickering high-lights, gleamed from shifting eyes or scintillated from the mugs of *aguardente*. This raw drink, with some tough bread, was brought out to us.

It was nearly midnight before a bargain was culminated with the *capitão* of the five fishermen. Amory's injury required Erving's medical attendance, and the majority of the party decided to go with them. Susanna, the *arriero*, and the little pack-horse were to continue to Santa Cruz along the coast, and with them I cast my lot. "Good lucks" were exchanged, and we set out again, heading north.

This east-coast "going" was the worst yet. The narrow trail eternally twisted and zigzagged across valleys and down and up precipitous gorges.

"*Cuidade! Senhor, cuidado!*" (Have a care!) constantly reiterated Susanna. As we stumbled in almost total darkness by the black nothingness which now and again gaped beside us, from one of these nether worlds came the roar of a rain-swollen torrent on its mad dash to the sea. Our crossing was aided by rocks which, wet and slippery, and often a foot or more under the swift-rushing current, were sounded out with the guide's mountain-stock.

Rozinante vanished in the gloom—swept away, I feared. Splash! the *arriero* followed suit, into a deep-swirling hole; thus in shunning Scylla we fell into Charybdis. A good footing, fortunately, enabled me to drag him out. At last we reached the other side, and there found horse and packs safely awaiting us.

On the ridge above Cabeiro Point we entered another hamlet about 3 A.M. Here we stopped at the home of one of Susanna's numerous cousins, who seemed to emanate from the soil as prolifically as did the *hortensia*. A resounding knock by the *arriero*.

"Who raps?"

"Amigo" (friend). "It is Susanna," answered my guide from a distance in the roadway; "with me is the *cavalleiro, um Americano*. Lend me a lantern; it is hard traveling." From within he made answer, likewise his wife, who was with him in bed; and without bestirring themselves from their respective vantage - points, a detailed conversation as to the journey took place. These informalities over, he arose and gave us the light, because he was our friend.

As we dropped down into the extensive valley beyond Cabeiro Point, far ahead the riding and cabin lights of the *Kitty A* gleamed like yellow pin - points. We knew all were safe aboard, for hundreds of feet almost directly below us, slow-moving on the dull light of the sea, we discerned a tiny dark speck—the returning fishermen's boat.

Dawn - break found us slowly crawling out of the beautiful Cabeiro Valley, fresh - reeking with the spent rain of the night. On grass and trees glittered diadems of dew. From this fairyland the first sweet matin of a bird mingled with the purling of brooks. Below us, violet mist-rivers drifted slowly seaward and lifted from the upper heights over which we toiled.

As we wearily dropped down the slope into Santa Cruz the sun rose out of its bars of crimson and another day burst

upon the world. It was five-thirty when the *arriero* and I unloaded the staggering pack-horse. From sunrise to sunrise the faithful little creature had journeyed, heavily burdened, through storm and darkness, gorge and flood, up and down thousands of feet of steep mountain wall,

having covered fifty miles of rugged and rock-strewn traveling in twenty-three and a half consecutive hours.

Before dawn next morning the schooner was holding toward Corvo, smallest and northernmost of the Azores. Longer grew our turquoise wake, higher ranged the reef-rimmed island before us—one beautiful green slope, culminating in a single stupendous crater, called by the islanders *O Calderon*—the caldron.

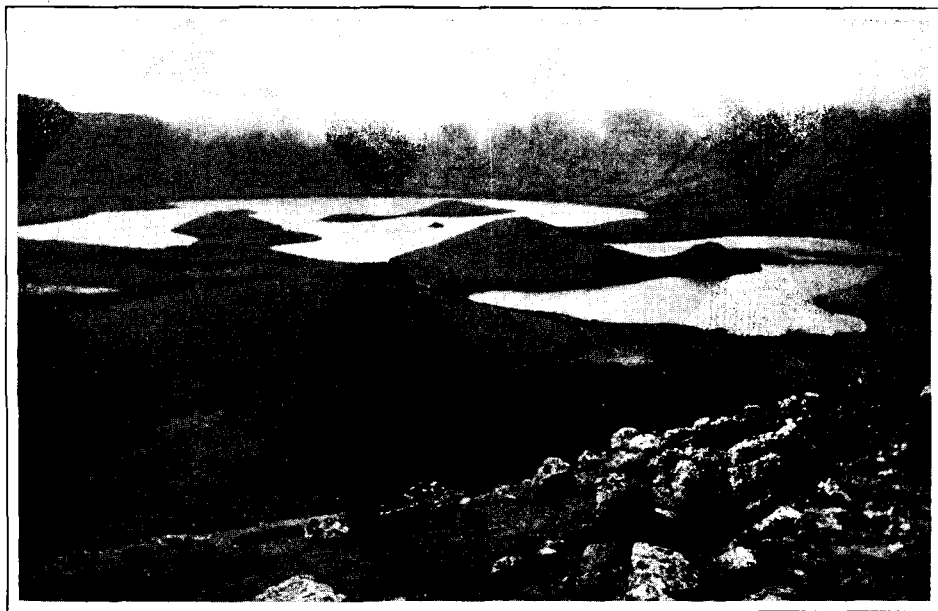
The entire island is one enormous extinct volcano, shunting a half-mile skyward from its fan-shaped, ocean-washed base. In a break in its twenty-mile, cliff-encir-

cling dado, nestled Villa Nova da Corvo, the only settlement. Notwithstanding the official census of seven hundred and forty-six souls, the story persists that Corvo's population is an unfluctuating even thousand, for when some one dies there is always a birth.

Picking an anchorage off its rock-studded coast was difficult; our large dory was headed cautiously toward the



STREET COSTUME OF MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN



LOOKING DOWN TWELVE HUNDRED FEET INTO THE GREAT CRATER OF CORVO

nearer of the two charted landing-places. Cries were faintly borne "down wind" from a group of gesticulating figures, clinging like barnacles to a rocky peninsula. It was well that they motioned us around this point, to what was now the only landing-place, for even in this comparatively mild weather the sea surged dangerously into this pocket, at whose rock-littered end it broke in a smother of foam.

The sturdiest onlookers climbed down a small cleft.

"*Aqui! aqui!*" (Here! here!) chorused the excited islanders as they judged the passing seas. We backed cautiously in on the lift and fall of the heavy surge.

"Hold her!" The oars bent as the sailors held on the rise of a comber for a brief moment; two of us sprang over the gunwale and were dragged by the islanders up the rock. The dory dropped into a wave hollow, shot by, was again rowed out and the same procedure repeated until all, with kits, were landed.

The bulky Corvoan pilot, with best intent, bent on a visit to the schooner, took a flying leap from amid the spectators into the dory. He was unfamiliar with the idiosyncrasies of this New

England coast craft—one resentful twist on its part, a splash, a gurgle, and all but the pilot's broad-brimmed straw hat disappeared, our two sailors nearly following suit. Unceremoniously they hauled him in, dripping and bedraggled, then pulled for the schooner, the warmth of the forecabin, and a suit of the mate's clothes.

We labored across a reach of rough scoria, to which a lot of barefooted youngsters adhered. These sea-urchins followed us through a rock passageway into a unique and toylike hamlet, most of whose streets one could span with outstretched arms. The houses of volcanic cinders, smoothed down a bit, were mostly early eighteenth century. Outside stairs lead to the living quarters—usually on the second story, the lower floor being used as a store-house and quarters for fowls, pigs, or cattle.

The somber gray of the village was brightened by the early sunlight playing over its picturesque ramble, and enlivened by warm-tiled roofs and the colorful dress of its inhabitants, who turned out from every nook and doorway to see the *estranjeros*.

The Portuguese government steamer

calls but quarterly, and the *Kitty A* was the only foreign craft to land here for at least four years. Not only has lack of ports and distance from the other islands caused Corvo to be neglected by its home government, but even nature, by furious gales and tremendous seas, has isolated it from the rest of the world for five months at a time.

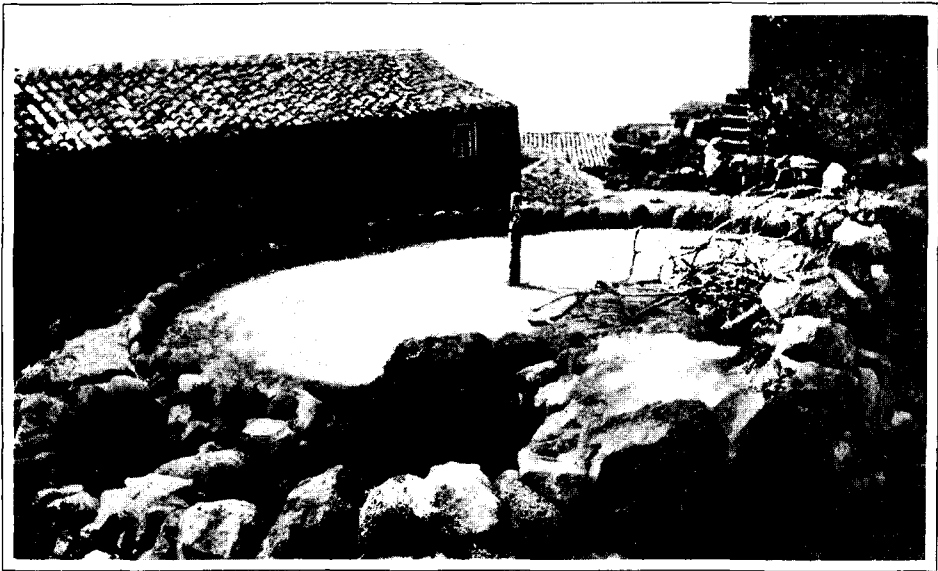
Many Corvoans have made round-the-world voyages, have culled wealth from the cranberry bogs of Cape Cod or the fruit vales of California and returned to stay a spell in little Villa Nova. But the only habitable world for most of its people is the sides of its extinct volcano, whence they look only on sea, sky, and distant Flores, some occasionally journeying in small craft to their metropolis, Santa Cruz.

Thus Corvo has two classes, those who go away and those who never go away, but according to Don César they resolve into one big class—*os pobres* (the poor). However, if we concur with the philosopher that a man's wealth consists in the fewness of his wants, how rich are these people—each with his house, such as it is, a cow or a pig, and a few fowls.

When Corvo was first visited is as obscured in the mists of time as the island itself when enshrouded in its veil

of cloud. But about 1460 and later the Flemings touched here. Moroccan captives were exiled to work its land under Portuguese overseers, and, though in the throng about me a blonde stood out conspicuously here and there, the prevailing dark-haired, regular-featured type, with rich olive complexions and a pink tinge to the cheek, bespoke the Moor. A half-century ago there was not a glass window or a chimney in the place; the only pair of shoes belonged to the priest, affectionately known as "Father of the Island." His was the only watch—the town clock—preserved in a stout leather case which reposed in numerous linen bags.

From all appearances *os pobres* who crowded about us did not lack nourishment, notwithstanding their staple diet of corn-bread, milk, and potatoes. Strange to say, they do not seem to care much for fish, which abound; and though milk is plentiful, they make no butter, preferring cheese. The island delicacy, their specialty, is smoked pigs' tongues. Nearly every family may indulge in pork two or three times annually, but some eat meat but once a year—on the *Festa Espirito Santo*. At this time the population gathers about the church in the heart of Villa Nova on a Saturday.



A THRESHING-FLOOR OF CORVO IN THE HEART OF VILLA NOVA

Two men called *cabeza da festa*, selected from the islanders by the brotherhood *Irmandade de Espirito Santo*, distribute meat and bread. Next day occurs the *Festa da Igreja* and the *Coração* (Confirmation), and on Monday the festa continues. At this annual carnival these simple folk appear in their island dress, woven from their native flax: the women in white kerchief head-dress, dark jackets, and full, blue skirts edged with a peculiar border of blue, red, white, or yellow stripes, varying from a half to four inches in width; the men exchange their blue home-spun trousers for white-linen knee-breeches, but retain their coarse brown coats studded with huge horn buttons, while their round caps, with triangular, blue-edged side-pieces, complete these distinctive island costumes.

From accounts of these people, their isolation, and consequent inbreeding, I

expected to find them small-statured, ill-nourished, and degenerate. Instead, they were, as a whole, a fine physical type, many having a peculiarly sweet and attractive expression about the mouth. Some, however, did not grasp ideas over-quickly; possibly through lack of association, limitation of experiences, and having had a more circumscribed basis for the simultaneous association of ideas than outsiders. Then, too, as there was no place to incarcerate mental defectives, such were more in evidence.

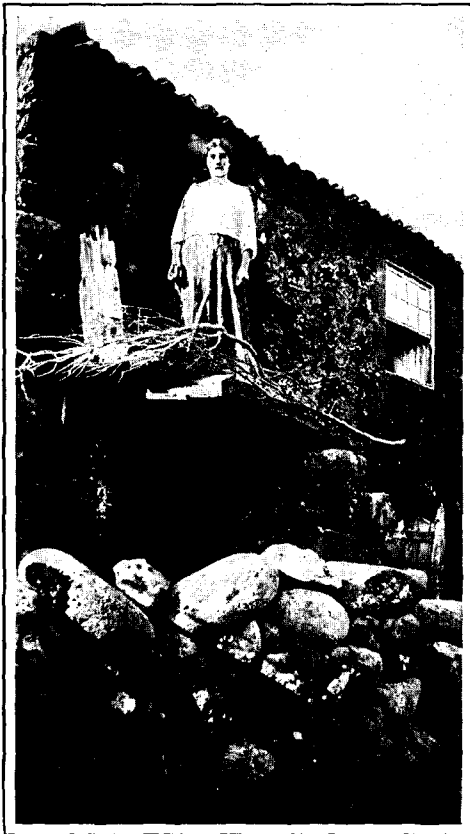
Until we became acquainted with these folk they were very wary of the camera; pointing it at them was the surest way to open an avenue through the narrow street. Our objective was the *Calderon*, and we were soon ascending through cultivated fields and vineyards which terraced like colossal steps—the rise, grayed by lava walls; the tread, greened by vineyards and fields of corn, melons, potatoes, or yellow-splurged with wheat and flax, while the red and brown tiled roofs, like a Turkish rug, spread out at their base. On Rosario Point the settlement threshing-floors shone like miniature craters filled with quicksilver, and the sails of the white, hive-domed windmills lapped lazily in the morning air.

Here the expedition divided—Amory, with the young Medeiro, to roam the fields for wild pigeons; Erving, Medeiro Sr., Nunez (the customs guard), and I headed for the crater rim. As there was not a horse or donkey on the island, we took along a young islander, Ignacio Fraga, as guide and pack-bearer.

A number of birds were secured; one is locally known as the *tintilhão*, a large, pretty blackbird which here abounds. Although the island is named Corvo, not a crow has ever been seen on it, but the similarity of the *tintilhão* to his larger cousin may be responsible for the appellation.

Continuing up the trail, we eventually reached the crater crest, over which ripped a cold, mist-soaked wind, bringing great masses of cloud which obscured the view.

The rifting clouds in silent steadiness dropped like waterfalls over portions of the crater rim. One marveled why they



A TYPICAL CORVOAN HOUSE



TERRACED FIELDS OF CORVO, WITH CIRCULAR THRESHING-FLOOR IN CENTER

failed to fill the colossal concavity. As they suddenly dispelled, there opened up a superb view of this vast, flat-bottomed crater bowl, rimmed by two leagues of cliffs sheering down over twelve hundred feet below. Here the Lagoa Limos d'Agua, a lake of shimmering sapphire, was emerald-studded and broken with peninsulas and islands. As their relative sizes, shapes, and positions suggested the Azorean archipelago in miniature, each had been given its respective island name—all but the ninth; this missing one they say is Graciosa, which as yet has not had the grace to appear.

The lure of this little velvety green world below enticed me, with Ignacio, down to where pigs, sheep, and cattle browsed on its soft, rock-speckled sward.

"Vete!" (Look!) "*un corrida de toros!*" (a bull-fight!). A quarter of a mile below, two bulls, a black and a brindle, with locked horns struggled for supremacy. We hastily joined the interested and critical spectators—a half-dozen milch cows—who circled about the combatants and moved with the fight.

The hoofs of the great brutes struck big clods of earth into the air as they charged. Then, drawing back, pausing, they pawed the ground, as with ominous moans the fierce breath of fight wheezed

from their red, dilating nostrils. Mighty roars of rage, a mad rush, and these living dynamos, surcharged with power and cunning, met head on again and again. Finally the brindle conceded the laurels to the black, who then joined the milch cows, while the brindle browsed alone.

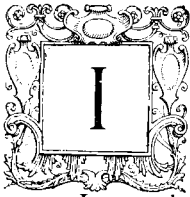
My principal interest was to make a collection of Corvo's limited flora, found principally in the mosses which filled the damp, wheel-rut-like water-courses, which in time of rain feed the lake. This minute flora was scarcely visible, but the most prominent plant was a sedge, which in scattered tufts grew over the slope and in large masses fringed portions of the lake. This carex is cut and used as fertilizer by the islanders.

Somewhere along the lake edge grew the *Isoetes azorica*, a little aquatic plant found nowhere else in the world. With meager description I searched in the limpid shallows for specimens of it, and when the results of the expedition's collections are worked up our possession of this little plant may be verified.

In the last red glare of the sun we sailed away from Corvo, so soft-clothed by time and nature, but in reality a great frozen bubble of one of earth's last gasps of heated hell.

Emma Blair

BY KATHARINE FULLERTON GEROULD



I WAS excited and depressed, the last night out—excited because at dawn we should lift that wondrous headland of which I had heard; depressed because I was looking for health, and health, which is the most decent thing in the world to possess, is the least decent thing in the world to look for. Or, at least, so I've always felt. Travel for pleasure, for gain, for idleness, for revenge—all those motives are plausible. But to crawl about, expecting the planet to resolve itself into a pill—no, that's not done. It jaundices the beauty of high heaven. A sick man should stop in his hole. But, like every one else, I had obeyed physicians; and there I was. The vast, inhuman wastes of the Pacific were supposed to be tonic, and even more tonic the haven where I should presently be. I am not prepared to say that the Pacific was not tonic, but that night there was fever in me. I spent the long hours on deck, fully dressed; and before dawn I had fought my disgust to a finish—sent it to the mat in a bloody crumple. I would not pretend that my illness was interesting, but I would fight for exceeding fitness. Then I would fold my arms and nod, comrade-wise, at the wonders of nature. I would mix in crowds again and shrink from no man.

We landed in the very early morning, and I found myself liking it almost as a healthy man may. Never mind the island or the port; if you'll permit me, I'll be geographically vague. You may think of me as anywhere between the equator and the Tropic of Capricorn. Tahiti, Samoa, Fiji, the Cook Islands—anywhere will do. Plain, seaworthy little steamers go to all of those places, as you know. I betook myself to the hotel, and a very decent place it was—small, and by no means vacuum-cleaned, but comfortable and airy and extremely

well victualed. It was kept by a Frenchwoman, the widow of the late landlord, who had been, I believe, a British subject—with a touch of the tar-brush. The place had improved, I was told, since his death. I do not know whether my destination had been guesswork on the part of my physician. If so, it was a guess of genius. After three nights I began to sleep under my mosquito-bar as in many a long month I had not slept at home.

Curious what the tropics do to you! If you know that you don't have to stay forever, that is. As an interlude they are very convincing. I found myself ready to recline on the bosom of Nature in almost Wordsworthian fashion, though before long I began to understand . . . and I sat up straight very quickly. Of course, if Wordsworth had ever seen the tropics, he would have run away at once. It is easier, you see, to find God a little above Tintern Abbey than in Polynesia—if only because He was put there a long time ago. I soon realized that my favorite poets had met Nature only at afternoon tea, and that it was too idiotic of them to pretend to know her character. Her character, I have come to believe, is very unsavory. That is why I said, just now, that the tropics were all right if you knew you weren't going to stay—if you didn't intend to make it a permanent relation. White men have arrived in the South Seas; they have even lingered there; they have left strange and touching monuments to themselves; but they have not been there long or numerous enough to tinge the atmosphere. Nature is still dominant, and she is no more to be trusted than the obscure Venus of the Hollow Hill.

That is a digression, of course. And yet it isn't, wholly. If I had not come to my adventure by just the ways I took, it would have tasted differently to me. That I know. I was eventually ripe for