

There was once a Lady in Lisbon, of such superior ugliness, that she was the jest of the whole city. Mortified by the unfortunate singularity of being ugly where all besides were beautiful, she prayed with unceasing fervor to her patron Saint, St. Vincent. Her prayers were heard, and she beheld herself one morning in her looking glass the most beautiful woman in Portugal. "I say," exclaims Macedo, "that the Saint works many such miracles, for he is much and devoutly worshipped, his benevolence is great, and power cannot be wanting in him, for he dwells in the presence of God; but what convinces me is that without some such miraculous interposition the Portugueze women could not possibly be so beautiful."

Such then, according to those who must be best acquainted with them, are the excellences of the country, the metropolis, and the inhabitants. There are likewise Nine Excellences in the Portugueze language; and these, as quoted from Macedo, are prefixed to the new Dictionary of the Academy.



Excellence the first.—Its great antiquity. One of the seventy-two languages given by God to the builders of Babel, being brought into Portugal by Tubal,

Excellence the second.—It has every quality which a language ought to have to be perfect.

Excellence the third.—Harmonious pronunciation of the Portuguese language.

Excellence the fourth.—Brevity of the Portuguese language.

Excellence the fifth.—Perfect orthography of the Portuguese language.

Excellence the sixth.—Aptitude of the Portuguese language to any kind of style.

Excellence the \*seventh.—Great similarity of the  
Portugueze language to  
the Latin.

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\* Some of the Portugueze writers have amused themselves by composing the two languages at once: “O quam gloriosas memorias publico, considerando quanto vales nobilissima lingua Lusitana, cum tua facundia excessivamente nos provocas, excitas, inflammas; quam altas victorias procuras, quam celebres triumphos speras, quam excellentes fabricas fundas, quam perversas furias castigas, quam feroces insolencias rigorosamente domas, manifestando de prosa de metro tantas elegancias Latinas.

*Manoel Severim de Faria.*

This hymn to St. Ursula and Eleven Thousand Virgins is a better specimen.

Canto tuas palmas, famofos canto triumphos,  
Ursula divinos martyr concede favores.  
Subjectas sacra nympha feros animosa tyrannos.  
Tu Phœnix vivendo ardes, ardendo triumphas.  
Illustres generosa choros das Ursula, bellas  
Das rosa bella rosas, fortes das sancta columnas.  
Æternos vivas annos o regia planta!  
Devotos cantando hymnos, vos invoco sanctas,  
Tam puras nymphas amo, adoro, canto, celebros.  
Per vos felices annos o candida turba;  
Per vos innumeros de Christo spero favores.

The Author says,

Lidos em Latim serão Latinos,  
Lidos em Portuguez são Portuguezes.

Excellence the eighth.—The wide extent of country where the Portuguese language is spoken.

Excellence the ninth.—The commendation which so many authors have bestowed upon the Portuguese language.

A long proof is annexed to each of these propositions, and the whole fills three folio pages.

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GEORGE of MONTEMAYOR has composed a Sonnet which is at once Spanish and Portuguese.

Amor con desamor se esta pagando,  
 Dura paga pegada estranamente,  
 Duro mal de sentir estando ausente  
 De mihi que vivo en pena lamentando.  
 O mal, porque te vas manifestando?  
 Bastavate matarme occultamente,  
 Que en fe de tal amor, como prudente,  
 Podiais, esta alma atormentando.  
 Considerar podia Amor de mi,  
 Estando en tanto mal que desespero,  
 Que en firme fudamento este fundado.  
 Ora se espante Amor en verme assi,  
 Ora digo que passo, ora que espero  
 Sospiros, desamor, pena, cuidado.

All this reminds me of the Esquimaux, who distinguish themselves from the rest of mankind by the title of MEN. \*One of these MEN saw a dried monkey in England, and declared in the utmost agitation that it was a little old Esquimaux !

Strip a Spaniard of all his virtues, and you make a good Portugueze of him, says the Spanish proverb. One who is well acquainted with both countries, and has no prejudices in favour of either, denies its truth ; he says, “ add hypocrisy to a Spaniard’s vices, and you have the Portugueze character.” These nations blaspheme God, by calling each other natural enemies. Their feelings are mutually hostile, but the Spaniards despise the Portugueze, and the Portugueze hate the Spaniards.

Almost every man in Spain smokes ; the Portugueze never smoke, but most of them take snuff. None of the Spaniards will use a wheel-

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\* See Major Cartwright’s Journal.

barrow, none of the Portugueze will carry a burthen : the one says it is only fit for beasts to draw carriages, the other that it is only fit for beasts to carry burthens. All the porters in Lisbon are Gallegos, an industrious and honest race, despised by both nations for the very qualities that render them respectable. An Englishman at Porto wanted his servant to carry a small box to the next house ; the man said he was a Portugueze, not a beast ; and actually walked a mile for a Gallego to carry the box.

The history of the present war will show with what wisdom public affairs are conducted in this kingdom. The Portugueze were engaged by treaty to furnish the English with a certain number of ships, or a certain sum of money, and the Spaniards with troops, or money. The money was expected, but Martinho de Mello, the Minister and Secretary of State, argued, that as the money was to be expended, it was wiser to expend it among their own countrymen, and discipline soldiers and sailors : the ships were therefore sent to Portsmouth, and

troops to Roussillon. Mello's measures were vigorous ; he resolved to place every part of the Portugueze dominions in a state of defence, recalled the General of one of the provinces, appointed him Commander in Chief in Brazil, and ordered him to be ready to depart at an hour's notice ; but Mello was old and infirm, he was taken ill, and during his illness the party who disapproved his measures had the management, and every thing was at a stand. After remaining three months at Lisbon, the General saw no probability of departing, and he therefore sent for his furniture and wife and family to Lisbon. Soon after they arrived the Secretary recovered. Every thing was hurried for the expedition, and the General sent his wife, family, and furniture home again. Again Mello was taken ill, again the preparations were suspended, and again the General called his family to Lisbon. The old man recovered, sent them all into the country, forwarded the preparations, fell ill a third time and died. The measures of the Government have since been uniformly languid, and with a stupidity that almost

exceeds belief, though they had sent ships to England and troops to Spain, they never believed themselves at war with France, till the French took their ships at the mouth of the river.

A Portugueze vessel was taken by the French and carried into the isle of Bourbon. The Portugueze insisted that they were not at war with France, and as the French were not quite certain, they were about to restore the ship, when another prize was brought in ; in searching this they found an English newspaper, with an account that the Portugueze fleet had arrived at Portsmouth. The next French vessel that arrived brought the French newspaper, with a list of the two and twenty nations with whom the Republic was at war.



LETTER XVIII.

A phenomenon has occurred here within these few days, which we sometimes find mentioned in history, and always disbelieve. I shall make no comment on the account, but give you an authentic copy of the deposition of the witnesses before a Magistrate.

Elias Antonio, Juiz Ordinario de Termo de Evora Monte, e Morador na Freguezia de Freixo, na Herdade dos Gayos,—dice

Que no dia 19 de Fevereiro, entre huma para as duas horas de tarde, ouvira doas estallos, semelhantes aos da expulsaon das minas, depois que sentira hum grande estrondo ou rugido, que durava perto de dous minutos, e que observando o horizonte não vira escuridao, nuvem, ou vestigio por donde inferisse a causa da quelle aconticimiento. Porem tinha reconhecido que

o dito rugido corrio do Norte pava o Nascente, estando o dia claro e sereno.

Gregorio Calado, lavrador na Herdade do Pazo, Termo do Redondo, dice, sentia o estrondo referido, e que passado hum pequeno espaço de tempo, hum criado seu, chamado Joze Fialho, lhe apresentara huma pedra de corde chumbo, que pesava, 10 arrateis, scudo a sua figura irregular. Cuja pedra foi conduzida pelo dito Joze Fialho, que se achava em huma folha da dita herdade denomina Tasquinha no Termo de Evora Monte, para ter observado que depois dos estallos e estrondo, tinha cahido perto delle, hum corpo grave, e inda procurar achava a dita pedra, cravada na terra ainda morna, e a terra, movido de fresco. O mesmo affirmarão mais quarto mozos que estavam na quelles contornos.

Elias Antonio,\* Ordinary Judge of the Term

\* Justices of the Peace were perhaps a proper translation, but I have thought it better to Anglicize the Portuguese words, than substitute English ones whose meaning may not be precisely the same.

of Evora Monte, and Inhabitant of the Parish of Freixo, in the Herdage of Gayes, says,

That on the 19th day of February, between one and two o'clock in the afternoon, he heard two reports, similar to those of the explosion of mines; after which he perceived a great rumbling noise which lasted about two minutes. Looking up to the horizon it was not obscured, neither was there any cloud or appearance from which he could conjecture the sound to have proceeded. He recollects likewise that the rumbling ran from North to East, the day being clear and serene.

Gregorio Calado, Labourer in the Herdade of Pazo, and Term of Redondo, says, that he heard the above-mentioned sound, and that a little while after, one of his servants, called Joze Fialho, brought him a stone of the colour of lead, weighing \* ten pounds, and irregular

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\* The Arratel weighs sixteen ounces.

in its figure, which stone the said Joze Fialho had found in a meer of the Herade called Tasquinha, in the Term of Evora Monte; for after the two reports and the rumbling sound, he heard some heavy body fall near him, and found this stone sunk into the ground, still warm, and the ground freshly moved. Four boys who were in the same part affirmed the same.

If you walk the streets of Lisbon by night, it is not only necessary to know the way, but to be well acquainted with all the windings of the little channel that runs between the shoals and mud banks. There are no public lamps lighted except before the image of a Saint; and if you have a flambeau carried before you, you are sometimes pelted by persons who do not wish to be seen. I know an Englishman who has been thus obliged to extinguish his light.

There are lamps however, but they are never lighted; and I mention them to remark two peculiarities, which it would be well to adopt in England. They are made square, or with

six sides, so that the expence of mending them is comparatively little ; and instead of the dangerous and inconvenient method of lighting them by means of a ladder, the lamp is let down. One of the English residents found the lamp at his door so frequently broken, that at last he placed a Saint behind it ; the remedy was efficacious, and it has remained safely from that time under the same protection. It is pleasant to meet with one of these *enlightened* personages, for they are indeed lights shining in darkness.

But the streets of Lisbon are infested by another nuisance more intolerable than the nightly darkness, or their eternal dirt ; the beggars. I never saw so horrible a number of wretches made monstrous by Nature, or still more monstrous by the dreadful diseases that their own vices have contracted. You cannot pass a street without being sickened by some huge tumour, some mishapen member, or uncovered wound, carefully exposed to the public eye. These people should not be suffered to mangle the

feelings and insult the decency of the passenger ; if they will not accept the relief of the hospital, they should be compelled to endure the restraint of the prison. Perhaps you may think I express myself too harshly against these miserable beings : if I were to describe some of the disgusting objects that they force upon observation, you would agree with me in the censure. I do not extend it to the multitude of beggars who weary you at every corner with supplications for the love of God and the Virgin ; these wretches, so many and so miserable, do indeed occasion harsh and ungentle feelings, not against them, but against that depraved Society that disinherits of happiness half the civilized world.

This city is supplied only from hand to mouth ; in bad weather when the boats cannot pass from Alentejo, the markets are destitute ; a few days ago there was no fuel to be procured. The provisions here are in general good, and of late years they have introduced the culture of several English vegetables. It is not twenty years since a cauliflower was a usual present from

England, and the person who received it made a feast; it is now one of the best productions of the Portugueze garden. The potatoe does not succeed here. Mutton is the worst meat they have; a leg of mutton is a very agreeable present from Falmouth, but the other passengers generally conspire against it, summon a court martial on false suspicions, and produce the accused, whose appearance secures a sentence of condemnation.

Every kind of vermin that exists to punish the nastiness and indolence of man, multiplies in the heat and dirt of Lisbon. From the worst and most offensive of these, cleanliness may preserve the English resident. The muskitoe is a more formidable enemy; if you read at night in summer, it is necessary to wear boots. The scolopendra is not uncommonly found here, and snakes are frequently seen in the bed-chamber. I know a lady who after searching a long time for one that had been discovered in her apartment, found the reptile wreathed round the serpentine fluting of the bed-post.

Lisbon is likewise infested by a very small species of red ant that swarm over every thing sweet; the Portugueze remedy is to send for a Priest and exorcise\* them. The superstition of this people in an age of credulity is astonishing; about sixteen years ago one of the royal musicians here died in the odour of sanctity; though if the body of this dead gentleman did emit a delightful fragrance, it is more than any of his living countrymen do. There was some idea of canonizing this man, but the age of canonization is over; however a regiment of soldiers about to embark for Brazil, visited the corpse, and stroked the feet of it with their swords to hallow them! When the image of the Virgin Mary is carried through the streets, some of

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\* A similar remedy was made use of by the Spanish navigator Maurelli, whose journal is printed with the voyage of the unfortunate Perouse. "We found millions of cockroaches in the bread room, says the Spaniard. It is necessary a man should have seen them with his own eyes to have an idea of the number of these insects. These pests had so much infested the ship, that the holy father, who officiated as chaplain, was obliged to have recourse to exorcisms more than once." This was in 1781.



the devout think they catch her eyes, and exclaim in rapture, "Oh! she looked at me—the Blessed Virgin looked at me!"

There are now a purality of Goddesses; the Virgin Mary is the Roman Catholic Goddess, Nature the Atheist's Goddess, Liberty a French Goddess, and Truth the Metaphysician's Goddess, in pursuit of whom they would fain send every body on another Pilgrim's Progress, but the misfortune is that none of these adventurers ever get beyond Doubting Castle.

It is, however, one sign of improvement, that Superstition predominates less in the metropolis than in the provinces. Ten years ago the English Clergyman at Porto never officiated at a funeral, such were the prejudices of the natives. The body was carried about a mile down the Douro, and buried in a common on its banks without any monument. The funeral service was read by the Consul, till at length he thought it beneath his dignity, and appointed the Vice Consul; this office was fre-

quently held by a foreigner, and he deputed it again, so that at last it devolved upon a watch-maker. This poor fellow drank very hard, and one evening at the grave he mumbled at the service, and turned his book first one way and then the other, till a bystander had the curiosity to look over him, and found that instead of a prayer book he had brought the History of the late War! The prejudices of the populace are wearing away; within ten years the English have enclosed a burial ground at Porto, and the funeral service is now performed by the Chaplain.

We had a little snow on the 29th of February. A Portugueze Clerk, who was going out on business when it began, refused to leave the counting-house, because he did not understand that kind of weather. It is fourteen years since the last snow fell at Lisbon. Dr. H. was in his chaise when it began, the Driver leapt off: you may get home how you can, said he, as for my part, I must make the best use I can of the little time this world will last, and away he ran into the next church.

One of the Irish Priests here preached a sermon in English a few days ago : it was extempore, and like most extempore sermons, consisted of a little meaning expressed in every possible variety of indifferent language. In the middle of his discourse the Orator knelt down, the Congregation knelt with him, and he besought St. Patrick to inspire him ; but alas ! either he was talking or sleeping, or peradventure St. Patrick was in Ireland, for the sermon went on as stupidly as before.