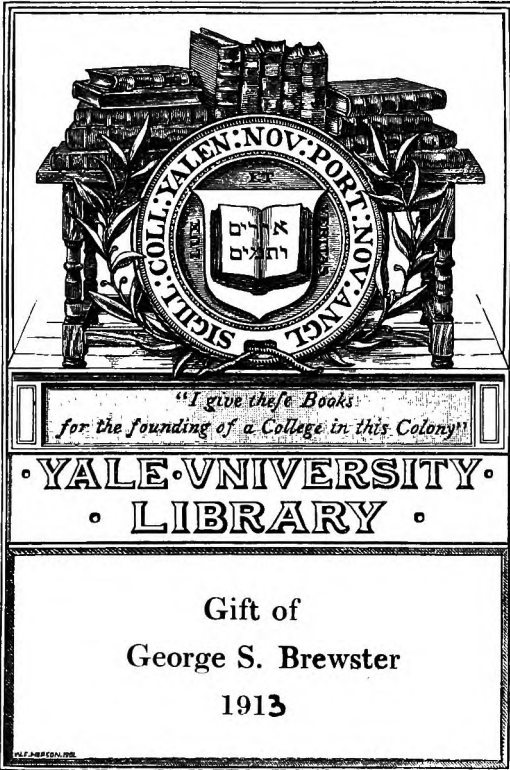

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BRAZILIAN IMPROVEMENTS.

Brazilian
IMPROVEMENTS,

MORE PARTICULARLY

AS REGARDS THE PROVINCE

OF

ESPIRITO SANTO.

BY A WELL-WISHER TO

BRAZILIAN INDEPENDENCE.

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BRAZILIAN IMPROVEMENTS,

§c. §c.



THE rich and extensive provinces of Brazil are now completely severed from Portugal, and, according to all appearances, for ever. The various divisions constituting this new empire are independent, and the strength the central government has already acquired, renders it evident that they are resolved to maintain the important advantages they have gained. They now form a new planet in the political world, and the impotent threats and repinings of those hitherto opposed to Brazilian emancipation, will never shake the orbit in which it moves, or dim the lustre it already emits.

The Independence of Brazil, like that of the other sections of the New World, from the ordinary course and analogy of human affairs,

was naturally to be expected. That country had long ago reached a state of adolescence, and the emigration of the Royal Family from Portugal, by which means it was raised to the rank of a Monarchy and became the seat of government, gave to it all the strength and energies of manhood.

From that moment the fate of Brazil was irrevocably sealed. King John VI. before his departure for Europe, was sensible that the separation from the mother-country was inevitable. Two days previous to his quitting Rio de Janeiro, and when he was preparing his final instructions for his eldest son, Dom Pedro, whom he was about to leave behind him as his representative, in the character of Regent, he said to him—*Pedro, si o Brazil se separar, antes seja para ti, que me has de respeitar, do que para algum desses aventureiros*—“Should Brazil separate, let her rather be for thee, who wilt respect me, than fall to the lot of one of those adventurers.” meaning such ambitious men, as it might be expected, would rise up to contend for so valuable a prize. Subsequently on his arrival in Portugal, and when the separation of

Brazil was less problematical, the King, writing to his distant son, tells him to "guide himself by circumstances, with prudence and caution." (*Guia-te pelas circumstancias, com prudencia e cautela.*)

Events which no human power could have controlled, accelerated that emancipation which the King had foreseen and thus formally sanctioned, by authorizing the son to avail himself of such circumstances as presented themselves, in order to prevent the country from becoming a prey to adventurers. An easy and bloodless transition vested the Sovereignty of Brazil in the son, now emperor; and his subsequent conduct has proved that he is deserving of the confidence his subjects have placed in him. The country has been preserved from anarchy and desolation, whilst the Brazilians have obtained a government suited to their habits and wants, the only one capable of being a bond of union among provinces so distant from each other.

Such an occurrence could not fail to be hailed as an auspicious era in the commercial concerns of Great Britain; indeed in the emancipation

of any portion of the New World from the fetters imposed during its infancy by the nations of the Old, a general concurrence of feeling has prevailed here, during every stage of the momentous contest. Their success has uniformly been hailed by the British People as a triumph of the great principles of freedom which have raised us to the high rank we enjoy among the nations of the earth ; and if a regard to established relations has not allowed us to take an active or decided part in the fruitless struggle between the colonies and the parent states, as freemen ourselves we were impelled to feel a deep interest in the result ; and now that the contest is decided in favor of the oppressed, every consideration of right requires and justifies the formal acknowledgment of the fact by us as a maritime power. The only ties which ever bound Spain and Portugal to America were those of force. They had no common and reciprocal interests—nor were their inhabitants allied by an union of sympathy, or any bonds of mutual advantage. The chain that kept them together is severed—the former colonies of Spain and Portugal are now independent

nations, and as such they are universally considered and treated, even among the more punctilious monarchies of Europe.

Once independent, nothing more was requisite to Brazil than a central government, such a one as the people themselves had been accustomed to, and capable of holding together extensive provinces, thinly inhabited, and separated from each other by desert tracts of land, the want of roads, and various other difficulties. This advantage was gained by possessing the person of Dom Pedro, who, devoting himself firmly and sincerely to the interests of the Brazilians, was besides so situated as not to clash with the doctrines professed and sanctioned by the European powers. Allied to one of the latter by marriage, favored and protected by Great Britain, and enthusiastically proclaimed sovereign by a grateful people, he was thus guarded from external enemies, and enabled to turn the whole of his attention to the improvement and consolidation of his new empire.

His first object was to bestow upon his people a Constitution, suited to their wants, and his next care to introduce the necessary

reforms into the courts of justice and the several departments of the state. He himself set the example of economy, and in a short time the public expenditure was reduced more than one half. A national navy was created, an army organized, and new life and energy prevailed throughout the whole country. The few enemies of Brazilian Independence who still remained in some of the fortified towns, were expelled, and every where anarchy and disorder disappeared. From that moment the Emperor resolved to devote his time to the improvement of the country he was called upon to govern, and among the most important of those plans already sanctioned, is the one about to be noticed.

The province of Espirito Santo is one of the most interesting subdivisions of the Brazilian territory, as well on account of its geographical position, as the mineral riches, salubrity of climate and fertility of soil with which it is distinguished. It extends upwards of 150 miles from N. to S. between the rivers Capapuana and Rio Doce, the former being its southern and the latter its northern limit. Its width from E. to W. is estimated at 100 miles ; but

the interior has hitherto been so imperfectly explored, in consequence of the misfortunes the colony experienced in the first stages of its settlement, and the strong attitude the Indians maintained during a number of years, whilst the attention of the local government was directed to cares of a more pressing kind, that little authentic information has been obtained respecting it.

The geographical position of Espirito Santo is, consequently, the most advantageous that possibly can be imagined, being bounded on the N. by the province of Porto Seguro, on the W. by that of Minas Geraes, on the S. by Rio de Janeiro, and on the E. by the Atlantic Ocean. It is immediately contiguous to the gold district of Villa Rica, twenty years after its discovery reputed the richest place on the globe, and most assuredly it partakes of all the mineral properties by which the latter portion of Minas Geraes has been so long and so justly distinguished.

This portion of the continent was the first visited by the Portuguese, it being on record that Cabral was at Porto Seguro in 1500. It

afterwards became a large factory for Brazil wood and experienced great vicissitudes, owing to the daring spirit of the Aborigenes, whose civilization has been rendered more difficult by the numerous mountains with which their native district is studded, and the extensive forests affording them a safe shelter. Here the several tribes bordering on the ocean have concentrated, as the white population advanced around and behind them, clinging as it were to the favored spot nature had bestowed upon them, and for which they manfully contended during a long period of years, till at length the complete supremacy of the whites reduced them to a few wandering hordes, at present chiefly infesting the margins of the Rio Doce and the headlands of its tributary streams.

Preeminently distinguished by so many advantages, it is singular that the provinces of Espirito Santo and Porto Seguro should have remained so long neglected, more particularly as the Rio Doce, flowing between them, is an easy and natural outlet for all the productions raised in Minas Geraes, now brought to the capital or Bahia on the backs of mules, after a

tedious and expensive journey of upwards of two months, according to the relative distances of the places. This remarkable facility for inland communication, hitherto so much wanted in Brazil, was known as early as the year 1573, when an enterprising adventurer, of the name of Tourinho, proceeded up the Rio Doce from its mouth, discovered the mineral riches of Minas Geraes, collected specimens, and afterwards descended by the river Jequitinhonha, a copious stream rising in the vicinity of Tejuco, which, after passing through the most valuable diamond districts, falls into the sea on the N. side of Porto Seguro, where swelled by numerous tributary waters, it takes the name of the River Belmonte.

To the enterprising spirit of the Paulistas, however, Brazil is indebted for the discovery and settlement of those rich lands situated in the rear of Espirito Santo. Penetrating from their own capital and impelled by the animating pursuit of gold, they reached the auriferous mountain of Villa Rica, after braving dangers and hardships of every kind. So great was the value of this discovery that, in 1713, the king's

fifth on the gold brought to the district Mint, and exclusive of what was smuggled, amounted to upwards of half a million, and between 1730 and 1750, to a million sterling per annum.

Notwithstanding this great accumulation of wealth, the valuable line of communication with the great mining districts, through the province of Espirito Santo, and by the means of the facilities afforded by the Rio Doce, remained neglected; one of the hardships arising out of the colonial policy of Portugal to which the Brazilians were so long condemned. The presence of the king among his transatlantic subjects, however gave rise to a scheme for opening the navigation of the Rio Doce, when, in 1819, the royal sanction was obtained for the formation of a Company for this specific purpose, and numbers of the most enlightened natives and foreigners in the country offered to join in the enterprise, by becoming subscribers.

Through a strange fatality this magnificent plan was not then carried into effect, notwithstanding the preparations made and the immense utility of the scheme. Sufficient information was nevertheless obtained to shew that

the intervening obstacles could easily be overcome, as appears from several detached surveys preserved in the public archives, and more particularly from the testimony of Father Manoel Ayres de Cazal, in his *Corografia do Brazil*, of which Henderson's History of Brazil, with the exception of some fragments containing personal narrative, is little else than an abridgement and in some instances a most defective translation. Speaking of the facilities of rendering the Rio Doce navigable from the ocean to the province of Minas Geraes, he states as follows—"The only natural difficulties of the river, which present any impediment to its free navigation, are the Escadinha Falls, met with in its course between the latter province and Porto Seguro. They are three in number and do not extend more than three miles, being nearly together, so that the construction of a railway, or any other and less excellent expedient which the government might be induced to adopt, would connect a conveyance by water to the coast for the produce raised in the interior districts, which at present is sent on the backs of mules, two or three months being

consumed on the journey, and the same period with the return loads." In furtherance of the plan, the government recently established five Indian settlements on the banks of the Rio Doce, and ordered that amicable relations should be kept up with the surrounding tribes. For many years a *presidio*, with a small garrison has been kept up there, for the purpose of preventing smugglers from bringing gold-dust down from Minas Geraes. At the entrance is a good port, accessible to vessels drawing 12 feet water.

Such is the magnificent enterprize reserved for the days of Brazilian Independence, and great must be the glory of a monarch resolved to bestow so inestimable a benefit upon his subjects. By an Imperial Grant, made on the 6th May, 1825, the navigation of the Rio Doce is to be opened, and the immense resources with which Espirito Santo abounds, called into notice.

The population of this province, chiefly concentrated near the coast, is already considerable, and the attention which the Brazilian Government is directing towards its improvement, will

ere long carry thither numerous settlers, natives as well as foreigners. The bay that bears the same name is spacious, and has the advantage of safe anchorage, with water for large ships. The entrance is defended by forts, and on the Western side of a well cultivated island, fifteen miles in circumference, is situated the town of Victoria, capital of the province. Its appearance is picturesque, it is well provided with water, has paved streets, tolerable houses, and several churches and convents. The college of the jesuits is a fine edifice, and is now used as the government palace.

Villa Velha (Old Town) once the capital of the province, is built on the skirts of Mount Moreno, a promontory of a conic form, serving as a land-mark to sailors. Benevente is another small town, eligibly situated at the mouth of a river of the same name, having a commodious anchoring place, and enjoying great fertility of surrounding soil. Almeida is built on an elevated ground near the embouchure of the river Reis Magos, from whence a great extent of ocean is discovered. It was founded by the Jesuits, whose expulsion has no doubt retarded

the developement of the many resources seen in this province. They have left behind them several good houses, and some works of public utility. Among the latter is a canal, cut through an extensive valley, for the purpose of opening a communication from the river Jecu, which falls into the sea 10 miles to the N. of Guarapary, and the bay of Espirito Santo, so as to avoid the dangers of passing round Mount Moreno to gain the port. Guarapary is an increasing settlement placed at the entrance of the river of the same name, and 5 miles to the N. of Almeida is Aldeia Velha, chiefly inhabited by civilized Indians. Itapemerin stands on the Southern margin of the river of that name, and, from all appearances, this is the spot to which numbers of the new settlers will flock.

Besides the above, there are several other villages and settlements in the province, principally inhabited by civilized Indians, a hardy and industrious race, when once trained by proper management and urged on by incentives to labour. The whole of this coast, as well as many of the rivers and lakes abound with fish,

which is cured for exportation. Some manufactures of coarse earthenware are to be met with, as well as of *gamellas*, or wooden bowls, used by the gold-washers.

The whole of this interesting district is watered by considerable rivers, flowing to the sea, and swelled by tributary streams, which intersect it in several directions. Most of them are auriferous, and on their margins smiling valleys, of the most inviting kind, are seen to extend. Lofty and luxuriant forests bound them on every side, and frequently cover the mountains to their very summit. They abound in game, and afford ship-timber and ornamental woods of the most variegated and choice kind. Gums and resins, with medicinal and other properties, promise to reward the industry of man, although now untouched and unlooked-for. The indigenous fruits are in the highest perfection, and most of those of European or Asiatic origin, in richness and flavour exceed the parent stock. Culinary vegetables and roots, as well as a variety of other productions of the first necessity, may be planted and gathered every day in the year. The extremes of Summer

heat are unknown, except immediately on the coast, and there the air is refreshed by cooling breezes. In the interior, the whole year is a continued Spring. Not a day passes on which the business of cultivation may not be forwarded. The uninterrupted verdure, the vivid and richly variegated colours of the flowers, adorning the ground and frequently tinging the summit of the loftiest trees, which appear to change their form and aspect every month, fill the most insensible minds with astonishment and admiration.

Heat and humidity being combined in the most favoured proportions, vegetation is astonishingly quick and prolific. The kidney-bean, in general use among the inhabitants, usually yields 250 and 300 for 1, and in some instances, 400. In rice this proportion is even exceeded. The plaintain, which may be considered as the staff of life in every country where it finds a congenial soil and climate, is here luxuriant beyond example, as are also the bulbous roots introduced to add to the comforts of life. The usual return obtained from Indian corn, is 120 and 130 for 1. Some successful

experiments have been made in the coffee-plant, which in two years begins to crown the labours of the husbandman. Several Asiatic spices may also be seen in the gardens of the curious, in a most flourishing state.

It is this favoured spot, situated in the heart of his dominions, that the Emperor of Brazil has resolved to rescue from the neglected state in which it has been sunk for several years, and open its numerous resources to general enterprise. To this effect he has pledged his royal word, and as a commencement in the execution of so useful and magnificent a plan, he has bestowed an Imperial Grant on six Gentlemen in England, which sets forth—"that taking into consideration the benefits to be expected from the introduction of Capital, Artisans, Miners, Labourers, and Machinery necessary for the regular working of Mines, according to the superior practice and principles adopted in Europe, his Majesty has thought proper to grant to the aforesaid permission, through the medium of a Company, to undertake mining operations for Gold, Silver, and other Metals in the Province of Espirito Santo and Mines of

Castello, and to decree, that all the parties therein concerned shall enjoy the full protection of the laws, and have their contracts, rights and property secured, without being molested, or withdrawn from the service of the Company, &c.”

The benefits derivable from this grant are immense. The mineral riches of the Castello mountains are well known—numbers of adventurers having amassed great wealth by clandestinely washing the sands and pebbles found at the bottom of the water-courses, where the particles of gold have gravitated, when torn from the parent mine by the impetuosity of the torrents. Some years ago, a feeble attempt was made by the Government to work these mines, and a party of soldiers was stationed in the neighbourhood for the protection of the workmen. They were, however, abandoned in consequence of the advance of the Puris and Aimbores Indians, when the prosecution of the works was left to a more suitable opportunity. Favoured by the secluded situation of this district, the Castello mountains have since been the resort of adventurers, lured by the golden harvest that surrounded them.

The direct access to the Castello Ridge is by the river Itapemerin, which falls into the ocean about 8 leagues to the S. of Victoria. From the mouth of this river to a parallel line with the range of mountains, the distance is about 12 or 13 leagues, when the course of the stream diverges to the S. From this landing place to the mountain's base, the distance by land is 5 leagues, so that, at most, the total distance of the mining district from the sea is only about 18 leagues. In ascending this river from the town, which stands on the southern margin, two miles above the entrance, beautiful plantations of cotton, sugar-cane and coffee extend on both sides for the space of about six leagues, after which nothing but the huts of Indians or woodcutters strike the eye.

The southern point of the Castello Mountains is near the road intended to lead from Rio de Janeiro to Ouro Preto, the capital of Minas Geraes, and traced some years ago by order of the government, but never opened. The Northern extreme is about 6 leagues from the Rio Doce, so that this valuable range of territory is situated nearly in the centre of two navigable

rivers, with only a short intervening distance from each. The advantages of such a position are incalculable, particularly when steam navigation is adopted. From some of the mining districts in the interior, a troop of laden mules are three months in coming to the capital or Bahia, and the same time in returning. During a large portion of the road, they are compelled to carry their own corn, and each load usually costs from five to seven pounds sterling. Independent of the expence, the caravans frequently run great risks, even in the vicinity of the capital. The mules sometimes are immersed in swamps, or carried away by the impetuous currents of the rivers they have to cross.

These difficulties and expences will not attend mining and agricultural establishments, formed on the highlands of Espirito Santo, where the outlets to the sea are quick and easy. In the possession, therefore, of so many favorable elements, and enjoying also the immediate protection and support of a powerful prince, this valuable district of country will soon attain a high state of improvement and consequent opulence. Like all the other rich mining dis-

tricts of Brazil, the Castello Mountains were discovered by adventurers, and it has only been after their long and successful efforts, that the wealth they contain has been called into public notice. When once adequate capital is applied to the development of their varied resources, the miners from the remote regions of the interior, where the first riches have disappeared, will join the noble enterprize, in hopes of sharing in the profits that await them. From the very centre of Minas Geraes, they can descend in a few days. The Jiquitinhonha rises in the neighbourhood of Tejuco the capital of the diamond districts, and passing by Tocaya, 35 leagues distant from the former, enters the Rio Grande and empties itself into the sea near Porto Seguro. From Tocaya to the latter port, the distance has been performed in six, and, notwithstanding the rapidity of the current, the same boat returned in fifteen days. In the whole extent of this line, not a single waterfall obstructs the passage. The facilities afforded by the Rio Doce have already been noticed. The mineral wealth of Villa Rica is now nearly exhausted, and numbers of its once industrious

inhabitants are unemployed, and left in a state of penury in consequence of the scarcity of provisions. They have only to embark on the Rio Doce, and in one week they can be landed on the fertile plains of Espirito Santo, where they would find profuse supplies of provisions, as well as of iron, and agricultural and mining implements, the dearness of which in the interior has always retarded the progress of these two great sources of national and individual wealth in Brazil.

Perhaps a more brilliant prospect than the one afforded by the united advantages of this highly-favored spot, never before beamed on the enterprise of man, or one more deserving of the encouragement of the British public. The scope for the advantageous investment of capital is also nearly unbounded. The work of civilization is already far advanced along the secluded margins of the rivers above noticed, and few efforts and a trifling expence would reduce the Indians roving in the interior to a state of industry. By those who have recently explored the province, they are represented “as tractable and well-disposed, at present satisfied for their

services with any little article of hardware given to them." Several new settlements of Indians have, within the last year, been formed on the Rio Doce by order of government, and with most of the tribes amicable relations exist. They require only incentives to labour, when soon they would be converted into useful members of society. When trained, they are the best gold-washers, being endowed with extraordinary patience, and extremely quicksighted. If once concentrated and in the enjoyment of regular supplies of food, their services may be turned to immense account, either as miners, agriculturalists, fishermen, woodcutters, or bargemen.

With such a basis, the establishments about to be undertaken in the province of Espirito Santo cannot fail to succeed, if their management is only confided to suitable persons. One of the most distinguished men Brazil has produced, speaking on this very subject, expresses himself as follows. "The resources of the country are great—the only difficulty is in the Company knowing how to choose men of creative minds, possessing theoretical and prac-

tical knowledge, accustomed even to great corporal labour, and who do not bring over with them the fond recollection of European pleasures, sensible that they are coming to see and observe nature as she came out of the hands of the Creator, or as she remained after the last great catastrophe—considering themselves sufficiently well compensated for the loss of pleasure and luxuries by the simple and engaging charms, and often majestic spectacle of nature, which even herself cannot always wear a smiling aspect, and by the interest they may derive from compelling her to open her bosom to them.”

This is the language of truth, uttered with an evident sincerity of heart, and suggested by an anxious wish for the success of an enterprise, which the same individual has pronounced the most brilliant that possibly can be commenced in Brazil. Men at the head of such a scheme must have minds fertile in resources, and be prepared to meet every disappointment and redress every casualty that possibly can occur. On their address and judicious conduct the concentration of Indian population materially

depends, and they alone will be accountable for its preservation. Prudence and foresight must guide all their actions, and, above all, they must avoid the errors of the previous adventurers who braved all kinds of dangers in the pursuit of mineral riches. Mr. Mawe, the most enlightened and candid traveller who ever visited the interior of Brazil, was struck with astonishment at the neglected state of agriculture, and the consequent scarcity of even the necessities of life. The whole attention of the people seemed absorbed in mining pursuits, whilst the real and substantial means by which alone they could be supported, were completely overlooked.

In the province of Espirito Santo, therefore, the plantation and depot of provisions must accompany all mining speculations, and the facilities it presents in this respect, may be duly appreciated from what has already been said. Liberality and justice will then attract workmen, and the riches with which the earth teems, both vegetable and mineral, will amply repay those who are intelligent and courageous enough to develop them. All consequently depends on the goodness of the plans proposed,

and the careful manner in which they are carried into execution. "Reverting back to this grand affair," says the writer of the letter above quoted, "clever people—men of capacious minds—are alone wanted to explore the country and lay the foundation of this great edifice. Nature would seem anxious to hide her treasures from man, and almost always covers them with a thick veil, or possibly rather the Creator wished to compel the human being to exercise his industry, by placing him in an immense theatre, with every means to display his faculties."

In the province of Espirito Santo does this "immense theatre" open to the enterprise of man. Every production that can minister to his wants or indulge his appetite for riches, may be met with on this interesting spot. The country is finely wooded, abounds in springs, is intersected by beautiful valleys, and watered by valuable streams. In the water-courses, descending from the hills, beds of gold are found in every direction; but the parent rocks from which it has been washed are entirely unexplored. Amethysts, topazes and other precious

stones have been picked up, and no doubt when the interior has been visited by men of science, many new sources of wealth will reward their toil. The fruits of the country are remarkable for their variety and abundance. Those of Europe and Asia flourish together, besides a number of other plants, still in their natural state, which require only the industry of man to make them be numbered among the comforts of civilized life.

THE END.

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