

In Brazil.

Helen, her friend Dora and I went to visit Edward and Eva in Brazil. Our journey to Santos was made in the little 6000 ton Royal Mail Steamship "Thames". It took three weeks. The "Thames" called at Vigo and Lisbon but I did not go ashore at either of those places. I remained on deck with Helen and Dora who were not strong enough for explorations. They had both been ill. When we stopped at St. Vincent I landed and paid a visit to the market place. I was enchanted with the sight of the negroes and especially with the negro women in their gay dresses. I was told that St. Vincent was a hole of a place to live in and I could well believe it.

I did not go ashore at Pernambuco although I wished to but I did not feel brave enough to face such an adventure as a landing at Pernambuco would be. I watched a lady passenger who was going there and I felt pity for what she was about to suffer. She was standing on the deck waiting for the word of command. She had on a heavy makintosh and was wrapt up as though she were going to face a northern storm yet it was hot and the sky had a tropical depth of blue. Down below, swept to and fro in the strong tumbling Atlantic sea was a boat like a big barge. Some passengers had already been lowered into it by means of a wicker lift and they must wait, tossed about wildly until

others were lowered. Those who had never been seasick in their lives might be seasick then. I expect the lady was lowered among the last in mercy to her. When all were packed in the barge I watched its progress through the blue, white capped sea and saw the lady wrapping a big woollen scarf tightly round her shoulders to shield her from the flying spray. Now ships are able to anchor close to the town for the entrance is widened and the reef protected harbour is deepened. There is no more need for poor passengers bound for Pernambuco to hover in the air in a quivering basket and be dropped into an unsteady boat.

When the "Thames" reached Rio bay the sun was about to rise. We got up early to see the beautiful entrance to the famous harbour. The ship slipped slowly past the fairy-tale rocks - "Rio's Organ Pipes" - which were outlined darkly against a solemn sunrise. It was brilliant sunshine when we anchored and in a moment hundreds of little boats flew out to meet the ship. They looked like a flock of white birds coming to us over the blue water. Nowadays even the largest ships can anchor in the heart of the city for the docks are close to the Avenida Central which is the Regent Street of Rio.

Edward came on board to meet us in one of the little boats and I went back with him in it to the city. He walked me through the famous Avenida but I was not able to take in the beauty of the street for I was giddy from the effect of treading on solid ground after three weeks sea voyage. I was made giddy too by

the pattern on the pavement which was whirling curves, because the air danced with heat and because the forests on the mountains (which almost come into the city) gave out such a smell of vegetation that I was intoxicated by it. My brother took me to his office and put me in charge of a clerk and we two went up Corcovado by a little mountain railway. That was long before the gigantic statue of Christ was made which now tops the mountain and I am glad that I did not see it.

My brother came with me to the ship and went back with us to Santos, a hundred miles journey from Rio.

When the "Thames" was passing Bahia I was told that I ought to smell castor oil for the people there oil their engines, their tramlines, their Cliff-lifts and their cartwheels with the oil we use as medicine. I was told as we neared Santos that I ought to smell coffee. My nose was not keen enough to smell either castor oil or coffee so far out to sea but when I arrived in the great coffee port of Brazil I found that the smell of the raw bean pervaded the whole town.

We were soon made comfortable and happy in the brown chacara facing the sea where Edward and Eva lived. The garden almost melted into the silver-grey sand being only separated from it by a lawn, a low hibiscus hedge and by a road where the open mule trams ran. On one side of the road, growing in the sand, was a fringe of wild sensitive plants which curled up their leaves as we stepped over them when on our way to bathe in the

300.

sea. What a sea it was ! What sleepily-rolling emerald coloured waves it had. Beyond the horns of the bay the waves would have force of the Atlantic behind them.

The morning after we arrived we sat in the verandah looking at the beauty of the bay. A negro woman entered the garden gate. On her head was balanced a wide shallow basket heaped up with grapes. Her figure with its background of blue sea and scarlet hibiscus flowers - colours that ^{were} harmonised by her purple grapes - remain in my mind as an unforgettable ~~picture~~ picture. Perhaps it was fastened more firmly than it might otherwise have been by our astonishment and disappointment at finding the grapes were not very good to eat though they were excellent for cooking ! Brazil had not then learned the secret of growing grapes for eating.

Santos is built on what might be called a promontory of the coast. An arm of the sea runs into the land in a slanting direction and meets a river. Before the river joins the sea it runs through a swamp. The town does not face the open sea but across the arm and is directly opposite the wide space of marshland. In the middle of the town is a conical hill with a chapel at the top. I walked up it once following a winding path. At almost every other turn was stationed a man standing by a sugar cane crusher selling glasses of sugar cane juice. I felt that I had to taste it although it did not look inviting. I stopped. A small billet of sugar cane was passed through the

press and I was given a glass of thick greenish fluid. The sip I took was enough. I could take no more. When I was a child I pounded up grass in water to make tea for my twenty two dolls and shared it, strange to think, with them. If it had been very heavily sweetened my grass tea would be like that sugar cane juice but with a much nicer consistency. After my climb I entered the chapel and I was startled and horrified. If the chapel had been still darker than it was it might have served as an entrance to the hall of Eblis. All round the walls hung wax images of parts of the human body - legs, arms, feet, hands, fingers, scalps, noses, ears, eyes, torsos and hearts, placed there as thankofferings for cures. The effect was made worse by so many of them having spots of red painted on them to show where the illness or wound had been. One poor lady after an illness did what was considered a pious act of thanks for her cure and went up to the chapel on her knees. It was too much for her and she died.

But to return to the town. The quays, the coffee warehouses, the offices and the shops were all at the back of the "promotory" facing inland. Nowadays the mule trolley busses have changed to electric trams and motor cars. The fringe of sensitive plants have given place to formal public gardens and instead of lonely stretches of sand with only ourselves to enjoy them the shore is crowded with people all day long.

Santos has become a pleasant, healthy town very different

from the fever-stricken place that it was when my brother first went there in 1891. He sent me then a beautiful photograph of the old quay. It showed that all along the picturesque wood-work was a row of ancient Imperial palms and beyond them the uneven edges of the water looked muddy and uncared for. The town was a hotbed of yellow fever. It was thought that yellow fever was caused by something in the atmosphere. At the corners of the streets were placed barrels of medicated tar arranged to burn and throw out hot vapours. This heated the already sun-heated air until it danced. As a further precaution against the supposed infected atmosphere every one wore handkerchiefs soaked in vinegar tied round their faces shielding the nose and mouth. My brother held out for a time against the fever but succumbed at last and was among the few who recovered and in consequence became of great value to his firm as yellow fever is rarely caught twice. Then came the knowledge of its cause. When the authorities became convinced that their enemy was the mosquito they acted on it. At once the old wood work quay, the nursery of mosquitos, was replaced by cement. The muddy edges of the water were straightened and cemented. The row of old palms was cut down, the ground made hard and clean. The mosquitos died off and the yellow fever became a forgotten illness. The last case was ten years before Helen and I went out. We could watch the lading of the ships with coffee bags without fearing to catch the terrible germ.

Most of the dockmen in Santos and the labourers up country

were Italian or Portuguese. It was marvellous to see them passing along with perhaps two of the heavy sacks on their shoulders ! When they wished to be photographed to show their strength they would even carry three ! It was also marvellous to see them storing the coffee sacks into the warehouses. A man would take a bag run with it and fling it, perhaps more than ten feet up, depositing it exactly in the right place on the rising stack of bags. Now all the work is done mechanically.

We spent a fortnight at the chacara by the sea. We slept in one-storied rooms opening into the garden where grew, close to our doors, a mighty Bouganvilia - a shower of mauve. At right angles to our rooms was the children's day nursery. It had only three walls - the wall that would have faced the garden was non existant.

It was getting very hot. I got up every morning with my hair wet with the night heat for we had arrived there at the end of November - the beginning of the Brazilian summer. We slept under mosquito nets. I was not troubled by bites during the day and Thekla, the Polish maid, saw that the nets were cleared of insects at night. She did not think it was necessary to give me much more attention than that, her interest being with Helen, still a semi-invalid. Eva feared that I might feel neglected, (I did not feel it) and spoke to her. "Ah Madam" Thekla exclaimed, "I cannot do things for Miss Mary. She has no wants in her eyes".

It became too hot. It was time for the move to summer

quarters among the hills, I was interested in the journey to Ribeirao Pires. I had not dared to think that I should ever see a tropical mangrove swamp which I had read of. Yet I saw it, fate being kind to me ! The railway ran on a causeway through the mangrove swamp that lay behind Santos. Rotting trees and twisted roots reared themselves up out of the stagnant pools. The tree branches were half clothed with parasitic plants and they and the strange growths that choked the water formed a scene so dreary that it excited me from the very intensity of its dreariness. It seemed a more poignant expression of despair than words can give.

The train, after it passed the swamp, reached low ground where wild ginger grew and hilly slopes where cream coloured mimosa-like flowers puffed themselves out of bushes like smoke. We reached the forest-land among the mountains and got out at a country station. We were met by some workmen to carry up our things and by the maid who was told to hurry to the house and heat us some coffee. I watched her up the rough path. I saw her stop. go to a bush, take out a stick and strike at something in the road. She called to the men that I was told meant "I think it's dead. and went on. The men when they reached the object examined it carefully. It was the broken-necked body of a snake that lay in the dust and we all passed on, I wondering at the indifferent way they seemed to treat what, to me, was the

courage and cleverness of the girl.

305.

There was a slight drawback to our living among the hills. Hills are not rocky in that part of Brazil. The soil is very deep and as there are showers nearly every day in the hot season climbing up or slipping down slopes of slimy earth made walking difficult.

After a bigger shower than usual there might be a fog in the afternoon. I am told that fogs are rare things there now; the climate is dryer from the cutting down of the forests but then they often occurred. The common palm trees amused me by their melancholy droop in the mist. They looked so woe-begone that they seemed to be all whimpering for blue sky and sun. The imperial palms were above such small troubles.

In the morning I taught my little nephew his first lessons. After our early lunch I painted portraits of the family. After tea bridge was played in the porch by Helen, Dora, Eva and myself. In the dusk the fireflies began to circle round us. Eva would sometimes put out her hand and catch one after the other and make a coronet round her head. They would remain in her hair for a little while. What a picture she made with the blue dusk background starred also by the dancing fireflies. The Brazilian fireflies are large insects almost two inches long. They are shiny and hard and each carries three lamps in its body, which shine with a greenish light. One is behind each eye and one underneath its body. If it is held over a book of even small print its light is strong enough to enable the book to be

read.

After supper we might take a walk by the light of the moon. It looks much larger in the tropics than it does in England. One night in Ribeirao Pires I went down to the bathing pool at the bottom of the garden. I was alone. The moon, reflected in the black water almost frightened me from my resolve to have a night bathe. I had never before nor have I since jumped into a moon reflection.

When I had time to myself I liked to watch the leaf-eating ants. I would see one carrying a leaf and after I had traced a line of them to the tree they were stripping I would lie down and watch the progress of the army. It was a long thin line of little brown workers each ant laden with half or a quarter or a leaf according to the size of it. They found it difficult to get along when there was a wind. If the size of the burden was not considered large enough by the officer in charge the worker was sent back for a bigger one. No one can stop the army of ant from taking every leaf from their marked-down tree. When that is finished another one is attacked and despoiled. It was interesting to see how soon the tree revived. If it were a rose tree or a fruit tree that was attacked the army must be traced to its head quarters and destroyed. The ant do not eat the leaves but store them. They pile them up and let the heap decay and then "mushrooms" form on them and these tiny "mushrooms" fungus are their food.

The fruits of Brazil would, without any of its other

charms, make me wish to go back to it. The mangos, the abacati pears, loquats (called in Brazil ameixas) oranges, tangarines, bananas (which spoil you for those bought in England) the little garden pineapples and the strange purple plum-like fruits - the jaboticabas - which dont grow on the twigs and small branches of the tree but stick tight on to the trunk and the thick branches. The guavas I missed but I enjoyed the goiabada, the fruit cheese made from them, which we ate with milk cheese every day.

Not only the fruits of Brazil seem to draw me back but the flowers too, especially the flowering trees and among all the flowering trees especially the Quaresma. It is a light and graceful tree that grows on hilly ground. In its season it is covered with blooms like large flat wild roses. It looks like an arranged bouquet for the blooms open white soon to develop a picotee like mauve edge. Then the become^a/sufused light pink all over, change to a deeper and deeper rose tint and drop whole a deep rich crimson colour. The fallen blossoms make a glorious carpet round the tree.

It was very pleasant to watch the butterflies and humming birds hovering over the flowers. The hibiscus hedge was sheared every Thursday morning by Manuel, the gardener, so that the hedge should be covered with crimson blossoms on Sunday and "then" the children said "the humming birds would know that it was Sunday". They certainly crowded to their service for almost every flower had its butterfly or humming bird so that the hedge was a glory

to see. The giant blue butterfly is worth a journey to Brazil. The climate among the mountains is very wet in summer. Our daily shower was often a daily thunderstorm but the thunderstorm was not often a bad one. I was to experience what Brazil could offer in that way. I was invited to stay for a week in Sao Paulo with Eva's sister, Kate. When there Kate thought that I should be interested to see the Experimental Horticultural Garden that the Government had started among the mountains. Trials were being made to find out what sort of apple would be likely to acclimatise itself in the State of Sao Paulo. The expedition would take the whole day. We started in brilliant sunshine. We got into the train from a little siding station close to the river. The train crossed the river on a long low bridge and was carried over marshy meadows by a causeway. It soon began to mount hilly ground and wild country. It crossed gulleys and circled round slopes taking us higher and higher until we reached a piece of flattish moorland and I could see above the moorland much higher mountains. The train stopped. Kate must have instructed the conductor and he the engine driver for there seemed no reason why we should stop at that point. There was not only no station and no platform but no pathway to guide us over the moor. When the train moved off and was lost to sight I felt like the man in Browning's "Childe Roland" when there was no path before him and the path behind him had disappeared. However, Kate, after a few moments indecision, struck across the rough ground and Miss Voss, Kate's friend, who came with us, and

I followed. As I passed through the bushes I realized that of course there would be no path. Few people would visit an experimental station and the engine driver would stop anywhere that happened to suit him for those few. Even if he decided to stop always at one bush, herbage grows so quickly in Brazil that a path is slow to form.

As we neared the ~~edge~~ garden we saw a large, dreary looking oblong piece of excavation which would soon be a lake with water flowers in it. Over the black-blue hills behind the yellow upturned soil I noticed a curious thickening of the sky. It did not look like a cloud but I certainly wondered if we were going to have our usual thunderstorm which had not visited us for a few days.

We wandered among the fruit trees, flowers and ferns and had some refreshment. When we started back to catch our train the sky was covered with a queer green-black cloud that I knew meant a bad thunderstorm. I have never seen that particular coloured cloud in England. It was already late afternoon and was growing dark. We hurried over the moor. Kate was anxious lest we might not be able to make the train stop so she arranged us to stand apart. I was in the middle between her, who was twenty yards above me, and Miss Voss who was twenty yards below. We were all to wave our arms and shout when the train came in sight. How suitable then seemed the expression "to catch a train". The thunder and lightning were incessant but it did not

rain. The train did stop for us but we had not gone far before it was held up. Something had happened to the line. We were ordered out much to the excitement of the passengers. A little way in front of our engine was a deep hole. The storm had broken among the mountains and water had rushed down making a new course for itself and in that place had swept away the earth from under the rails which passed over a gully, and so were hanging naked and unsupported in mid-air. However the gully was narrow, boards had already been put across and men were there to help us over the frail bridge. I was glad when I was safely over it. A train came up for us the other side. The passengers were hurried into the train and it was indeed time. Wherever we were standing we clambered in. I landed in my carriage with one foot quite dry and with the other foot quite wet, for the rain descended so suddenly and with such force that it was as if a giant had poured pails of water over us. What a storm it was ! Poor wretches at the few stopping places tried to enter the train. However only a certain number, I gathered, might it carry and when the would-be passengers were refused there were scenes. They tried to board it by force.

We reached the low land by the river. The causeway was slightly flooded over and the train went through the water very slowly. I was not sorry for, from the windows, I saw a sight which made me forget the storm although it was raging worse than ever. The marshy meadows were evidently the home of fireflies

and being flooded out, they hovered and quivered over the water. Millions and millions of little lamps danced above the overflows. In between the flashes of lightning it was as if the water lightened.

When at last we reached the open shed which was the little station on the outskirts of Sao Paulo (our line was a very unimportant one) - the fireflies still hovered about our feet. They did not mount high in the air because of the pouring rain. We went through it, getting very wet and were told at the tram station that a torrent was flowing between us and our home. We must go round another way which, alas would mean changing trams. At the point where we changed it, the storm still raging, made me feel really nervous but Kate was so cheery that I felt ashamed of my fears. Miss Voss said very little. We reached at last the end of our round where Kate's husband was waiting for us. When we got home all Kate's confident encouraging cheerfulness quite suddenly deserted her and she fainted away. I found out that it was really a very bad storm even for Brazil. She had led me to believe it was quite an ordinary happening. I went to bed too tired of lightning to notice it any more.

Helen and Dora were now quite strong and when we had an invitation to stay for a week at Rio Claro, near the coffee fields, further up country than Sao Paulo, we accepted it and Eva, Helen, Dora and I were guests in the house of Herr von Frankenberg and his wife. Rio Claro was then a typically

Brazilian country town with little houses coloured royal blue, lemon orange, green or pale blue. The von Frankenberg's house was a large white, moorish looking building. The roof was hidden behind decorative open work that ran round the top of the walls. In the garden near the entrance was a beautiful group of Imperial palms. Deeper in the garden were many flowering and fruit trees. Amongst the latter were huge bread-fruit trees. Their enormous brown loaves hanging in the upper branches made me nervous lest they should fall. One did fall, so we incautiously tried to eat it. Our lips and even our teeth became glued together with a horrible tenacious stuff inside. We were very uncomfortable for a time. I know now that the fallen fruit was immature and in any case needed cooking.

An expedition was planned for us to visit a show Coffee Fazenda in the district. It was not only a show coffee farm but it was also a show pig farm. We started very early in the morning the party being conveyed in two carts, so called "trollys", The carts were very lightly built. I could see the ground between the slates of wood that formed the floor. The roads in Brazil in those days were unmade and a ~~stone~~ ^{stone} whirled round in a little loose cup of earth during a storm soon whirled round in a hole as big as a washing bowl, then in a hole like a bath and perhaps, before long, it may be lost in a gully large enough to hold a horse and cart. And so, all horses and carts must needs skirt the former road the where the land, bordering it,

has enough herbage to keep the soil together until that also becomes unusable. 313.

As we neared the Fazenda, I saw what I thought was a long hedge which ran along for such a distance that it shut off the horizon. At intervals trees grew in it that looked like elms. I thought we were quite near the hedge but it proved to be a long way off and not to be a hedge at all but the sharp beginning of a bit of virgin forest with Jacarandas in it. A Jacaranda is about three times the height of an elm tree and has much the same manner of growth. We had our lunch under one of these trees not yet cut down. It stood just outside the forest and on the border of a young coffee plantation. Coffee plants flourish best in soil where the forest has been freshly cleared. The trees and growths are felled and burnt as they lie. Ashes cover thickly the red soil and among the ashes the coffee is planted. The skeletons of the forest giants lie with them for they are too big to burn or cart away. We stood round our standing Jacaranda - six of us - and hand in hand with stretched out arms we could not encircle its trunk.

I tried to put at least a foot into the virgin forest but I could not do it. Prickly lianes came from above, prickly growths rose thickly from below and I could not put a foot in any more than I could put a foot into a brick wall. Perhaps deeper in, where there would be less light there might be less undergrowth.

Lunch over we went to where the coffee in bearing grew.

I gazed over the scarlet soil of the slopes of the hills dotted over with regular rows of ten foot high trees of shining green. The plantation stretched as far as I could see. It had one long break in it. I was told that the Tropic of Cancer passed through that gap. I sketched the scene and made the worst sketch I have ever made. Coffee, as a crop, is not for the landscape painter.

The we went to the piggery which was just a palace. A large well designed building stood on a high bank. In front of it was a courtyard paved with cement which was so clean that it looked like marble. We entered the building and found it divided up into a number of sties - sties is not the word for such a luxurious piggery - I should say pens. A little railway ran round the inside - opening to the pens so that the pigs could have their food, not only quickly, but hot. A negro herdman must have just fed them for the pigs were all inside. They were all nice, pink, fat creatures. The negro cracked his whip and the pigs tore out to the courtyard. He again cracked his whip. The pigs squealed, whether from joy or irritation I do not know, and rushed at once through a pool. At another crack of the whip they again squealed and swam through the second. They then found the entrances to their own pens wondering perhaps why they had had to have an extra bath that day.

We visited the cemented courts where the coffee berries lie to shake off their outer husks and we went to the mills where the beans are graded and handsorted and by the time we had seen all, we were tired and very dusty. Not only were our

hands and faces red but the scarlet dust had penetrated our clothes to the skin, and our hats could not protect our hair. On our way back our carts had to cross the Rio Claro, which ran in broad shallow rivulets over the fording place. The cart in which Eva was driving lurched and she fell into the red stream and struggled out through the red mud. Her appearance, so different to her snowy freshness in the morning, is unforgettable. We reached the house to find that there was a water shortage so Eva had to wash herself as well as she could in doda water. Our clothes were all taken away to be washed somewhere - somehow. We did not get rid of the dust on our skins completely for a day or two.

Helen and Dora returned to England before I did. I remained in Brazil for another three weeks partly in Ribeirao Pires and partly in Santos, until my brother carried Eva and me off to Argentina for a "holiday".