

passed to the eastward, the southern coast presented a most conspicuous and pleasing aspect, giving an air to the place which probably would hardly be borne out on landing or making a closer acquaintance.

The next morning we were off the anchorage in the Bay of Funchal (Madeira). This island was discovered soon after Porto Santo, and from its dense forests at that time received this Portuguese name for wood. The lovely and fertile island had no doubt a people and name of its own, but they have passed away, and the footsteps of the civilised discoverer have obliterated every trace of the aborigines. The first act of the adventurers was to set fire to the dense forests, which fed a conflagration that was not fairly extinguished for many years; and when the virgin soil of the land was fully exposed, colonisation was successfully established.

This colony of Madeira was the nursery of two notable things of momentous consequence in the history of all subsequently discovered and colonised western countries. One was the introduction into this island of some growing shoots of a plant obtained by Prince Henry in Sicily, but originally brought from South-Eastern Asia, and spoken of by an old Biblical prophet as the "sweet cane from a far country." Here, then, was organised and established the first sugar-cane plantation, and such was its success that after about five years' experience, 60,000