

M. BORGES DE F. HENRIQUES IN THE UNITED STATES

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Summary: This essay collects materials relating to M. Borges de F. Henriques, a native of Flores who lived out the last portion of his life in Boston. These materials include reviews of Borges's book *A Trip to the Azores, or Western Lands* (1867), a hitherto unpublished letter directed to an unidentified recipient delineating the terms and describing the itinerary of a proposed excursion to the Western Islands planned by Borges for the summer of 1870, and newspaper accounts of Borges's suicide in 1873 and the resulting inquest. Mark Twain's original letter regarding the *Quaker City's* visit to the Azores in 1867 is reproduced from the San Francisco *Daily Evening Bulletin* (Aug. 22, 1867) in an appendix.

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Sumário: Este ensaio recolhe documentos sobre M. Borges Henriques, natural da ilha das Flores, que viveu parte da sua vida em Boston. Estes documentos incluem recensões do seu livro *A Trip to the Azores or Western Islands* (1867), uma carta até agora inédita, sem destinatário específico identificado, apresentando as condições e o itinerário de uma excursão planeada por Borges com destino às Western Islands e a realizar no Verão de 1870 e ainda notícias sobre o seu suicídio ocorrido em 1873 e respectivo processo de inquérito. Transcreve-se em apêndice a carta original de Mark Twain relativa à visita do *Quaker City* aos Açores em 1867, reproduzida do jornal *Daily Evening Bulletin* de São Francisco, publicada na edição de 22 de Agosto de 1867.

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Palavras-chave: Flores, Borges, suicídio, processo, *A Trip to the Azores*, Mark Twain.

The literary names a moderately informed outsider would readily associate with the Azorean island of Flores are those of Roberto de Mesquita and Pedro da Silveira. It was by chance that Pedro da Silveira one day remarked that he was related to Manuel Borges, that nineteenth-cen-

tury author of a book on the Azores who committed suicide while living in the United States. He did not mention the fact, which I learned later, that the poet Roberto de Mesquita, born in 1871, two years before the death of Borges, was also surnamed Henriques, as was Borges.

It was my curiosity about the American life of M. Borges de F. Henriques that led me to search through American newspapers and journals of the 1860s and 1870s, available

now in digitized form in “American Historical Newspapers 1690-1922.” The fruit of those searches is much of the material presented here. It may serve to document certain aspects of Manuel Borges de F. Henriques’s days and years in the United States: (1) the reception of *A Trip to the Azores, or Western Lands* (1867), (2) a business plan for an excursion tour of the Western Islands in 1870, and (3) Borges’s suicide in 1873.

I. REVIEWS

In the first months of the year 1867 the news about the Azores in American newspapers was that two companies – one of them English, the other American – proposed to lay new trans-Atlantic telegraphic cables so as to cross through the Azores. The hint was taken up by Lee & Shepard, the Boston firm that published *A Trip to the Azores, or Western Islands*, by M. Borges de F. Henriques, and advertised Borges’s book accordingly: “The Azores, or Western Islands (a famous resort for tourists), are at present attracting considerable attention as the connecting point in the great ocean telegraph project now before the New York Legislature. This volume contains valuable facts and statistics regarding them” (*The Round Table* [May 4, 1867], 5: 274). In fact,

it was the publicity generated by the prospect of trans-Atlantic telegraphic cables that seems to have prompted the notice in *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the earliest of the four notices of *A Trip to the Azores* that I have uncovered to date.

1. “The Azores,” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Apr. 29, 1867), p. 3.

The project of a new telegraphic cable across the Atlantic, making some one of these islands the half-way station, has lent a new interest to the whole group. A native of one of the principal islands, Mr. Borges, though long a resident of the United States, and a thorough master of our language, had, during his recent visit to the Azores, opportunities such as few foreigners could command, of acquainting himself with the inner social life of the people and the economical statistics

of the islands. He gives the following account of Pico [omitted here are six paragraphs quoted from *A Trip to the Azores*].

2. *The Round Table* (May 25, 1867), 5: 331.

Why Mr. Borges – as he is at the pains to explain he is properly called – should have written this little book is satisfactorily accounted for by his prefatory statement that it was the product of leisure hours and was prepared without view to publication. It further appears that it was printed in consequence of the “many questions proposed to him in social intercourse respecting the Azores.” But even in this case we think the author would have done wisely to limit its circulation to a select circle predisposed to admiration; since it contains the minimum of interest for anybody not an Azorean nor a friend of the author, nor ardently desirous to inform himself about the Western Islands, of which classes we presume the first two exist, as may also the last, although we have never seen one. And if there are such, they can learn quite as much about the islands from an average gazetteer or cyclopædia, without being so strongly convinced that the islands are not worth knowing about and singularly uninteresting to see.

To the advantages of his subject the author adds a rare capability for singling out precisely those of its features which are of the least importance. The general reader will care very little about the exploits of Mr. Borges’s schooner, what winds she met, the hour at which on each occasion she weighed or cast anchor, or the trains of thought pursued by Mr. Borges while on board of her. Nor will he

be amused at reading about the length and breadth, population and products of the several islands, the dates of all the volcanic phenomena since their discovery, the ages and size of their churches with the uses now made of them, the places where macadamized roads are being built, the jealousies of the villages over improvements in other harbors than their own, the cost of the author’s friends’ estates, and, just as he fancies he is coming upon something that shall afford an insight into the life of the people, at having such topics dismissed for the reason that they “partake of the peculiarity of the country which makes them, perhaps, interesting to a visitor, though not so in a description” (1). Neither is it entertaining to constantly encounter puffs of people of whom one knows as much as he does of the lamented subjects of eulogistic obituaries in the Methodist papers, to the exclusion of “incidents connected with my residence at Horta,” as their narration “would not probably be productive of interest to the reader, and would likewise be wearisome to myself,” considerations which, we think, might have been applied with great fitness to the entire book.

On the whole we cannot congratulate Mr. Borges on “his labor of love in bringing his country into notices, and adding another to the world of books. The book is merely a guide-book, in which capacity it would have done very well had it been honestly labeled, so as not to inveigle people into reading it under the impression they had a volume of travels. As for the country, there is no possible reason why it should be brought into notice, and if it is nearly as dilapidated and effete as the book leads us to imagine, we hope it may long remain in the obscurity which the present effort does remarkably little to dispel.

3. "A Trip to the Azores," *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco) (June 8, 1867), p. 2.

The Azores are to ninety-nine hundredths of our people a *terra incognita*. They do not know half as much about them as they do about the wilds of Central Africa; and yet they are within a few days' sail of New York, have a population of 250,000, boast some of the largest volcanoes in the world, get up a first-class article of earthquake, produce some of the best wine ever sipped, and have a history full of romantic interest. The public are under deep obligations to M. Borges de F. Henriques for the pleasant volume from his pen just issued by Lee & Sheppard, Boston. A native of the Azores, he visited them last summer after an absence of 18 years; and he tells us what he saw and heard, how the Islands look, what manner of people inhabit them, what they produce, etc., in a style so pleasant gossip that we read his book through to the last line and regret there is not more of it. Here are a few samples of Mr. Henriques's quality as writer of straightforward English:

The Climate in the Azores

Situated in the best locality of the Northern temperate zone, about 2,000 miles nearly east from the United States, the Azores enjoy a delightful and healthful climate. Its mildness precludes the necessity of fires, and in no room except the kitchen is a stove or fire-place ever seen among the natives. Rains and dampness are the disagreeable inconveniences to be met with; but the sickly heats peculiar to the torrid, and the insufferable colds of the frigid zones, are almost unknown in these Western Isles. Fahrenheit's ther-

момeter rarely shows a temperature above 75 deg. or below 50 deg. Frost is unknown, but is represented by a species of murrain, caused by excessive dampness, succeeded by sudden heat, that attacks and sometimes seriously injures the crops. Snow never falls, except on the peaks of the highest mountains; in fact, it is never seen anywhere but on the summit of Pico, which soars 7,560 feet above the surface of the sea. To the ever-changing aspect of this peak the snow adds a grand effect. It is seldom that thunder-storms rage, hail falls, or bleak winds blow, although in the winter the last are sometimes rather troublesome. While the inhabitants of other countries see, during a great portion of the year, icy deserts beneath their feet, and dark and gloomy skies above, the Azoreans enjoy, in great measure, clear, serene and delightful weather.

The People

Under the salubrious influences of such a mild and healthful climate, the Azoreans are, ordinarily, a vigorous and healthy race. In all the islands stout old men are seen, at the advanced age of 70 or 80 years, still supporting the fatigue and labor of the fields. The females, though budding into womanhood at 13 and 14 years of age, retain their comeliness and bloom a long time, and do not fade into old women at so early an age as they do in this country. Mothers of half a dozen or more children very often look as fresh and youthful as American women of 20 years, although they may have seen their 30 summers or more. They are, in most cases, handsome, or rather lively and interesting, dark in complexion and more resembling the daughters of the sunny South than those of the North.

Not only the ladies of rank and education, but many of the poorer class of girls, are dexterous with their fingers, and evince a deal of patience in executing some very difficult ornamental and useful work. They manufacture shawls, capes, veils and other articles of ladies' apparel, from the fibres of the aloe, in black, white, and red. Open-work hose, of the very finest cotton; tidies and rigolettes; feather flowers; wreaths of sea-mosses and shells; bouquets and other ornamental work, they make from the pith of the fig-tree. In short, they succeed in nearly everything that is possible to be made by female hands, and the finish and perfection of their work are almost unequalled.

Individuals are generally addressed by their Christian names, and sometimes by their middle or family names, as it may be. It is not seldom, too, that the second name is properly the family name, like my own, and the last one or two (for often persons have four or more names) are derived from the grandfathers, a sort of more comprehensive or wide-spread family name. Nicknames are almost universally used, especially among the lower classes, being derived from particular trades, remarkable incidents, places of residence, or striking personal accomplishments or blemishes.

It is not surprising, that, born in a delightful country, with an excellent climate, the Azoreans should be inclined to indolence. They require to be stimulated by necessity to show their aptitude for any kind of application. In the sciences they manifest comprehension, genius and talent; in navigation, intrepidity and firmness to face the fury and undergo the hardships of the stormy ocean; and in mechanics, ingenuity and activity. The reason why they have not attained to greater perfec-

tion in all these, is, that they have not the stimulus to animate and incite them to work, and that in their country have not been founded those institutions calculated to develop their talents and improve their faculties.

They are affable, generous and beneficent; but fond of public amusements, of ostentation, and pleasure. In many of the islands, particularly in country villages, there are still observed among many families that innocence and simplicity of life that characterized their ancestors. The respect they evince for religion is extreme; though among the higher classes many are met with who have a tendency of an irreligious free-thinking.

Costumes of the Different Classes

Although the dress in vogue amongst the higher classes in the Azores much resembles that worn in America, yet there is some diversity; and amongst the middle and lower classes the contrast is quite striking. In Fayal, the costume of the women of these classes, and, indeed, of some of the ladies, consists of a blue-cloth cloak, with a stiff, half-circular hood rising from the shoulders, thus forming an apex over the head, and concealing or showing the face of the wearer at will. It has a rather strange appearance, and is worn more or less in nearly all the islands of the group. The cloak of this style, when worn by ladies, is generally made of broadcloth, to distinguish it from that enveloping the forms of the women of inferior rank.

In Terceira, a fashion, which is almost obsolete at the present day, was a hood resembling that of a water-proof cape attached to a cloak; the shape of the hood, which was so long as to reach below the

waist, was circular, and the nether end was drawn up, forming folds, and presenting the exact appearance of a round bolster-case.

At St. Michael there is nothing remarkable about ladies' apparel aside from the hood worn at Fayal; but upon the men, farmers mostly, is seen a peculiar head-piece. It is a skullcap, with a circular cape that comes down to the turning of the shoulders. A very wide and stiff visor, cut out as a concave, and bent upwards, gives it, at a side glance, the appearance of two horns. As the whole *thing* – garment I was going to call it – is made of thick homespun woolen cloth, it is necessary for comfort, in warm days, to throw up from the face the flaps of the cape, and button them, which by no means adds to its gracefulness.

In St. George the skullcap is seen divested of visor and cape. It has a bright-red band around its turned-up edges, and is worn on the back of the head. A tuft of hair protruding from under it in front assumes the place of a visor.

The people of both sexes in Pico wear a straw hat – a skull crown surrounded by a broad brim; while those in Flores wear a party-colored knit woolen cap, in shape like an elongated triangle, with a small tassel at the apex which hangs down upon one side of the face.

Most people of both sexes of the lower class in all the islands go barefoot, except in Pico, where the greater part of them wear raw-hide sandals, fastened round the ankles with leather thongs, probably to protect their feet from the extraordinary roughness of the volcanic scoriae with which the soil is overspread. In Fayal many women wear wooden clogs, or galoshes. Occasionally you see a bare-footed damsel indulging in the luxury of

a hoop-skirt, or a barefooted sire of some country village with a rather rusty beaver crowning his honorable gray head.

4. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "A Trip to the Azores," *Nation*, 5 (Sept. 19, 1867), 231:

There is a virgin charm in one's first foreign country, be it what it may. Horace Walpole found nothing in all in Europe so memorable as his first sight of Calais; and to the untravelled American the Azores are, for a month or two, equivalent to so much of Europe. It is from a straining glimpse at their high outline on the first horizon that he first learns truly that the world is round. On landing, he there beholds his first priests and beggars and barons; he sees orange-groves and a stray palm-tree; he sees tiled roofs over which the Diable Boiteux might have scrambled, and paved court-yards into which Don Quixote might have ridden; he sees girls with water-jars on their heads, and women with vast capotes, who look like monks, but are not; he sees shops without a pane of glass, and almost without contents or customers; he sees little children who can speak the language, while he cannot. In the blue harbor he sees perhaps gorgeous foreign flags beyond his explaining, while behind these towers a volcano, retired from business, and smoking no more but only steaming.

These things he sees, to be afterwards seen, it may be, elsewhere. And by the time these have grown familiar, he has found out other and stranger things, such as the traveled routes of Europe can hardly show. The church architecture of the islands bears everywhere traces of

the Moorish style, and one is constantly upon glimpses of the old Moorish civilization of Portugal. You clap your hand at the inner doorway to summon a servant; and when a good Christian lady wishes to utter a strong ejaculation she says *Oxalá*, which means "Would to Allah!" The gardens are Moorish in arrangement and the windowed chimneys in structure; the boys play a Moorish game of ball, under its original name of *arri*; and the people make butter in oriental fashion, by tying up the cream in a goat-skin and kicking it until the butter comes.

Hence it is plainly desirable to have a book about the Azores, and the merit of this little work is that it monopolizes the ground; there is no other. Bullar's work (London, 1841) is out of print; so is Dr. Webster's (Boston, 1821); and we can think of nothing else in English except an article [by Higginson himself] on "Fayal and the Portuguese," almost elaborate enough for a book, in *The Atlantic Monthly* for November, 1860. Senhor Borges' book is therefore really needed, and it includes a good deal of information, in a compact and rather dry form. The writer was a native of one of the islands, and thus possessed a groundwork of familiarity with their general aspect and with the ways of the people. He had, however, been absent eighteen years, and was by his own confession pretty thoroughly bored when he got among his relations once more. It is probably to this fortunate ennui that we owe his book. Yet which of us can claim to write with infallible authority, even upon the affairs of his native land? Inspecting with that microscope which is supposed to be the proper weapon of critics, we find Senhor Borges mistaken in supposing that, among the Western Islands, snow "is never seen

anywhere except upon the summit of Pico" (p. 22), whereas we have beheld it with these eyes upon St. George. And we must further protest against the too affectionate vagueness with which he leaves it undetermined whether his friend, the Baron da Santa Anna, drove horses or oxen in his family carriage (p. 128). Happily we can resolve the doubt. Ten years ago, at least, the baron sported an ox-cart with a white tilt – for all the world like a butcher's cart, were the latter only drawn by the same animals in a live state which they in turn transport when dead. More than once have we beheld that lordly vehicle awaiting in some *sargão* or courtyard the descent of its mistress from the ball-room, the oxen patiently munching their hay, while the driver snored upon the mattress which formed the only seat of the conveyance.

The Azores are, as is well known, a colony of Portugal; their population numbers some 250,000. The nine islands are divided into three administrative and military districts, each with a civil and military governor. Well do we recall the latter functionary in the central district – a stately man, with a vigor of moustache which in those days of peace appeared unattainable by mere Americans. There being but a few dozen soldiers to command, he turned his attention to the command of languages, and we remember that in his regiment of words there was a little mixture of uniforms. Thus, when we meekly asked him, in what we intended for clear Portuguese, as to how many years he had been in his country's service, he replied in a happy conglomerate, "*Veinte-cinco annos* – vat you call twenty-cinq year."

It is a little surprising that an Americanized Portuguese should have written

several chapters about Fayal, and should have omitted all mention of that untitled prince who resides there, Mr. Charles Dabney, the American consul. He is simply a pacific rajah Brooke, whose energy and foresight have stamped themselves on the whole island, mainly creating its trade, its agriculture, and even the delicate mechanic arts for which its women are now renowned. He and his household have so endeared themselves to the inhabitants by long years of wise benevolence that, even in the furthest villages of that island, they are simply designated as *a família*-“the family,” as if the world held but one. To a visitor from the United States the crowning charm of Fayal for half a century – beyond even its climate and its orange-gardens – has been the beautiful hospitality of one American home.¹

Notably, Borges’s book on the Azores appeared several months before the American writer Mark Twain accompanied a collection of pilgrim-tourists to the Holy Land by way of Europe on the *Quaker City*, a journey with a first stop in the Azores in the summer of 1867. Mark Twain’s passage on the *Quaker City* excursion was paid for by the *Daily Alta California*, of San Francisco. As a travelling correspondent for the newspaper, his part of the agreement was to file periodic

reports on the excursion. It was from the *New York Tribune*, however, that his letter on the *Quaker City*’s stop in the Azores was picked up by the San Francisco newspaper, the *Daily Evening Bulletin*, which printed it on Aug. 22, 1867 (page one), under the title “Mark Twain’s Description of the Azore Islands” (see Appendix). Whether it is merely coincidental or a matter of influence, but both the review of *A Trip to the Azores* that appeared in the San Francisco *Daily Evening Bulletin* on June 8, 1867 (reproduced above) and Mark Twain’s letter on the Azores single out for commentary the article of women’s wear called the *capote*, the American holding it up to ridicule, the Azorean describing its utility while acknowledging its gracelessness. As he would later explain when looking back on his accomplishment in *The Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain’s intention for these letters was “to suggest to the reader how *he* would be likely to see Europe and the East if he looked at them with his own eyes instead of the eyes of those who traveled in those countries before him. I make small pretense of showing anyone how he *ought* to look at objects of interest beyond the sea – other books do that, and therefore, even if I were competent to do it, there is no need” (Preface to the *The Innocents Abroad* [New York: New American Library Signet Classic, 1966], p. 15).

¹ A Portuguese translation of Higginson’s review appears in Thomas Wentworth Higginson’s *O Faial e os Portugueses*, ed. George Monteiro, trans. Lisa Godinho and Leonor Simas-Almeida (Horta: Núcleo Cultural da Horta, 2009), pp. 103-107.

II. NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF BORGES'S DEATH AND INQUEST

There was national coverage of the death of Manuel de F. H. Borges on Oct. 17, 1873, in Boston, Massachusetts, though often the information was condensed into a paragraph, as, for example, in the Lowell *Daily Citizen and News* of Massachusetts: "Manuel de F. H. Borges, a merchant, and consul of Portugal and vice-consul of Brazil in Boston, committed suicide on Central wharf, yesterday afternoon, by shooting himself. Financial embarrassment is the supposed cause of the act" ("In Brief," Oct. 18, 1873, p. 2). Some notices got his name wrong: "D. E. F. H. Borges, Brazilian consul at Boston, committed suicide on Friday afternoon, by shooting himself with a pistol" ("News in a Nutshell," *Pomeroy's Democrat* [Chicago], Oct. 25, 1873, p. 5). Another notice added a bit about his farewell to his wife: "M. De F. H. Borges, Brazilian consul at Boston, committed suicide on Friday afternoon, by shooting himself through the head with a pistol, probably on account of financial embarrassment, as he has been largely engaged in foreign trade of late. He kissed his wife a few moments before leaving his office, and bade her good-by. He was 55 years old" ("Crimes and Casualties," *New Hampshire-Patriot*, Oct. 22, 1873, p. 3). Borges's death was also noticed in the *Troy Weekly Times*

(New York), Oct. 25, 1873, p. 3; *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* (Ohio), Oct. 18, 1873, p. 8; *Daily Nebraska Press*, Oct. 18, 1873, p. 1; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Oct. 18, 1873, p. 1; *Sioux City Daily Journal* (Iowa), Oct. 18, 1873, p. 1; *Daily State Gazette* (Trenton, New Jersey), Oct. 20, 1873, p. 2; *St. Albans Weekly Messenger* (Vermont), Oct. 24, 1873, p. 7. In December of that year, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, a New York magazine with a national circulation, decided that the occurrence was important enough to merit a reference in its "Editor's Historical Record": "October 17. – at Boston, by suicide, Manuel F. H. Borges, Portuguese consul, aged thirty-nine" (48, Dec. 1873, p. 154).

The earliest and most detailed accounts of Borges's suicide, however, appeared – not surprisingly – in the Boston newspapers. The *Boston Advertiser* piece, for example, provided the basis for the account, "Startling Suicide: The Portuguese Consul in Boston Shoots Himself" (described as a "special dispatch to the *New York Times*"), that appeared in the *Times* on Oct. 18, 1873, p. 1:

Boston, Oct. 17. – Manuel de F. H. Borges, Consul for Portugal and Vice Consul for Brazil, committed suicide near his office, No. 87 Central wharf, this

afternoon. He had been in his office as usual during the day, and appeared in his customary cheery, genial mood. At about 3:30 o'clock his wife called to see him, and soon after breaking off a conversation he stepped out saying he would be back in a few minutes. He was next found dead by passers-by lying in an alley-way leading from the wharf to Central street. He had a terrible wound in his forehead and by his side was a revolver, one chamber of which was empty. The entire roof of his head was terribly shattered, presenting a ghastly appearance. The remains were first taken into the office and viewed by a coroner, and then taken to the House of Reception. He was about forty years old, and was born in Portugal. He came to Boston about ten years ago, and has been prominently engaged in the fruit business ever since, importing from the Azores. He was well educated and master of several languages. Soon after his arrival here he was appointed Vice Consul for Portugal, and two years ago was appointed to the Consulship, and was also made Consul for Brazil. He was the author of a book on the Azores, and has written many papers of merit and value. His character was without a blemish, and he was particularly noticeable for his kindness to the sailors of his own country. Only last Wednesday he was engaged with his friend, Collector Russell, in a plan to help some of his poor countrymen who had drifted to this port. It is supposed that financial embarrassment was the cause of his act.

The longer piece in the *Boston Advertiser* was reprinted in the New Orleans newspaper *The Daily Picayune* on Oct. 23, 1873, p. 3, as "Sui-

cide of a Foreign Consul: Mr. Manuel de F. H. Borges Found Dead Near His Office":

Mr. Manuel de F. H. Borges, the Portuguese Consul and Brazilian Vice Consul and a well-known merchant of this city, committed suicide near his office, 27 Central Wharf, at about 4 o'clock, yesterday afternoon. The circumstances attending the case are somewhat mysterious. He was at his office as usual throughout the day, and appeared, in his customary happy and cheerful mood. At about half-past 8 o'clock his wife called to see him, and soon after, suddenly breaking off a conversation, he stepped out, saying that he would be back soon. He was next found dead, by passers-by, in an alley way leading from the wharf to Central street. He was lying upon the ground, with a terrible wound in his forehead and with a revolver at his side, one chamber of which was empty. The entire top of his head was terribly shattered, presenting a most dreadful spectacle. The remains were taken to the office, where they were viewed by a coroner, and afterwards sent to the house of reception. Mr. Borges was about forty years old, and was born in Fayal. He came to this city when he was a boy. He is well known among printers in this city and its vicinity under his American name of Burgess,² having been foreman at the Riverside Press six or eight years, and of Rand & Avery's

² It is possible that "M. M. Burgess" referred to in the following note and M. Borges de F. Henriques are one and the same person: "Boston has a Portuguese benevolent association, of which M. M. Burgess is president. It was founded four years ago, and has

office in this city for about two years. He was also a clerk in the Adjutant General's for two years prior to his appointment from Portugal. Of late years he has done a large business in the importation of fruit from the Azores, having his office on Central wharf, and was a joint owner of the barque Kate Williams now due here with a large cargo. He was well educated, being master of several languages. Soon after his arrival here he was appointed Vice-Consul for Portugal and two years ago he received the appointment of Consul, and was also made Vice-Consul for Brazil. Among his literary efforts was a very interesting work entitled "The Azores," with which he was most intimately acquainted. His character was without a blemish, and for charity, especially in aiding those who came within the province of his position, he was noted. It was only on Wednesday last he called on Collector Russell, one of his most intimate friends, in relation to devising means to assist a poor Portuguese sailor. He was a good Christian and a professed Romanist, though his religious ideas were broad. The cause of his act is unknown, but it is supposed to be financial embarrassment. His death will be deplored by the many who have so long known him. He was twice married.

over three hundred Portuguese members, and a fund of \$1,625 in bank, which is used for the relief of their sick and the burial of the dead" ("Miscellaneous Items," *Flake's Bulletin* [Galveston, Texas], [Feb. 12, 1870], p. 8).

Manuel Borges's status as local consul for two countries and well-known merchant may have been enough to make his death news in Boston but that he died a suicide made it newsworthy throughout the land. That interest did not extend to curiosity about the inquest into the manner of Borges's death dutifully conducted the next week, for the inquest provided no new information. Here, for the record, are the accounts of that inquest that appeared in the *Boston Evening Journal*. On Oct. 23, 1873 (p. 3), it reported, under the rubric "The Death of the Portuguese Consul":

An inquest was begun on Tuesday evening into the causes of the death of M. de F. H. Borges, the Portuguese Consul, who shot himself to death in a passageway near his place of business on Central street. Friday, Oct. 17. The witnesses were his widow, her sister, Mrs. Nancy L. Madigan, Calvin C. Bailey, and Sergt. Foster and Officer Hathaway of the 2d Police. There was nothing new brought out except to show that his mind was in a somewhat unsettled condition on account of business matters.

"The Borges Inquest: The Verdict" followed the next day, the 23d, on page 3:

Deputy Collector John M. Fiske was examined this afternoon in the continued inquest by Coroner Fove relative to the cause of the death of M. de F. H. Borges, Portuguese Consul.

He testified that he had known deceased for some time past, for the past three week he had missed him from the places where he had been accustomed to see him, but on the day of his death he was very much surprised to see him at the Custom House between the hours of twelve and one o'clock. Witness asked him what the cause of his absence had been, and the reply was that he had had typhoid fever. Borges called to see witness relative to the clearance of a vessel. He seemed to be so much oppressed that witness made the remark to those in his office, at the exit of Borges, that he must have some trouble on his mind. The first witness heard of his death was by reading a notice of it on the bulletin board of the *Boston Post* next morning, and on

recalling previous circumstances he did not experience as much surprise at learning of his death as he should have felt otherwise.

With this testimony the examination closed, and after a brief examination the jury returned the following verdict. That the said Manuel de F. H. Borges died in the archway running from No. 14 Central wharf Central street, Friday, Oct. 17, 1873, about half past four o'clock P.M., by reason of a pistol shot wound of the brain, self-inflicted. The jurors further find that said Borges had but partially recovered from an attack of typhoid fever, that he was depressed by care and overwork to such an extent as to render him irresponsible for his acts.

III. THE LETTER

In 1870, "M. Borges de F. H." placed the following advertisement in (presumably) a Boston newspaper:

Pleasure Excursion, By Steam to the Azores or Western islands, Including a visit to Fayal and the Hot Springs of St. Michael.

Having made arrangements with responsible parties to furnish a suitable vessel, the undersigned proposes to send during the coming hot season, (about July 15th.) a first-class steamer, well adapted to the comfort and pleasure of the excursionists who may wish to take a run across the ocean to visit this very interesting group of Islands. But as great expenses to the projector are unavoidable, and to successfully complete all necessary arrangements, it is desirable to have all the names registered at an early day, say June 1st, by

which time, if sufficient encouragement has been awarded to the enterprise, the ultimate arrangements will be published. Any information in regard to the excursion will be cheerfully given, personally, or by letter by

M. Borges de F. H.
130 Commercial street

This advertisement is quoted from an undated newspaper clipping now kept in a copy of Borges's book, *A Trip to the Azores or Western Islands*, in the Geisel Library, Saint Anselm College, Manchester, New Hampshire. With the Geisel Library copy as well is a handwritten letter by Borges to an unnamed recipient. It is transcribed here with the Library's consent.

Boston, April 26, 1870.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of yesterday is before me; in lieu of a circular I submit the following programme for the trip to the Azores.

Steamer to leave Boston about the 15th July next and proceed to the island of Flores, sail around and between it and Corvo, and stay a whole day at the town of S^{ta} Cruz. Thence to Faial round the north point into the channel between St. George and Pico; stop at the town of Velhas one day; steam up and down the channel and thence go to Faial and stop three days.

Leave Faial by the south passage and coast along Pico to Terceira having sighted Graciosa. At Terceira stop three days, and then proceed to St. Michael sighting St. Mary.

Stop at Ponta Delgada, St. Michael eight days to give the passengers an opportunity to visit the Furnas or Hot Springs.

After leaving St. Michael touch under steam at the islands previously visited, to take what passengers there may be.

Excursionists will consider the steamer their home, having the privilege of staying at eight points touched until the return of the vessel homeward bound.

Hotel expenses on shore to those who prefer it on their own account will be about a dollar in gold per day.

It is expected the trip will last about 6 weeks; every island of the group will be seen.

The steamer's capacity is 1000 tons, with accommodations for 75 passengers.

Cost of the trip \$300. currency; it will require 60 passengers to pay expenses, with which result I shall be satisfied.

Passage out will be about 7 days. The climate is moderate even in August; very different from what we experience in the

States. "A Trip to the Azores" published by Lee & Shepherd for me, gives a fair description of these Islands.

Hoping to have the pleasure of enrolling your name as an excursionist I am

Respectfully Yours,
M. Borges de F. H.

P.S.

Do you think it would pay to advertise in New York? If so, please advise and oblige me.

Borges.

Nothing further is known of this "steamer" or the proposed excursion to the Azores in the summer of 1870. Later on, Borges became a part-owner of the clipper ship "Kate Williams." Its regularly scheduled sailings and arrivals, under the command of Captain L. R. Hale, are reported under the headings "Marine Journal" and "Shipping News" in the Boston and New York newspapers. Also reported are the ship's mishaps. A business loss is reported under "Sale of Sicily Fruit," a paragraph in the *Boston Daily Journal* for Mar. 19, 1872 (p. 4):

The cargo of fruit per barque Norah from Messina, was sold at auction today, the oranges bringing from \$3.69 to \$3.80 per box, and the lemons \$3.80 to \$3.90. The fruit was in good condition, notwithstanding the protracted voyage. The cargo of oranges brought by the barque Kate Williams from St. Nicholas [sic] was also sold at from 45 to 55 cents per box, the fruit being in poor condition. Prime Sicily fruit commands good prices in this market at the present time.

As for another kind of problem involving the “Kate Williams,” a good example is the report from Fayal, Jan. 3, 1873, in the *New York World* for Feb. 4, 1873 (p. 10):

The Insulano(s), Machado, from Lisbon, did not arrive here till Dec. 27, owing to continued heavy gales from the 20th. The weather did not allow her to communicate with St. George, but the Kate Williams (American bark), which had gone there to load fruit for Boston, was seen at anchor apparently abandoned and with masts gone close to the deck. The Flores cutter left here Dec. 28 with spare sails, spars, &c, to try to bring her here under jury masts. The Flores arrived here from St. George Dec. 31, and reported that the Kate Williams had rigged jurymasts and intended starting for this place as soon as the weather permitted; she had on board 2,600 boxes of oranges.

A week later, on Feb. 11, the *New York World* reported: “Fayal, Jan. 16 – The American bark Kate Williams, of and for Boston, two days from the Island of St. Jorge (oranges), put in

here yesterday with loss of fore and mainmasts by the deck” (p. 10). That the “Kate Williams” survived this contretemps (as she had others, one presumes) is apparent from reports of successful later voyages, including one completed on Oct. 31, 1873, just two weeks after its owner’s death.

Footnote. On June 2, 1875, some twenty months after the death of Manuel Borges de F. Henriques, there appeared the following advertisement in the *Boston Daily Journal* (p. 1), under “Excursions”:

A Trip to the Azores. The Clipper Barque KATE WILLIAMS, L. R. HALE, Master, will sail for the above Islands about the 15th of June next.

An excellent opportunity is here offered to the public with little expense, to enjoy an ocean voyage and visit these interesting Islands, thereby avoiding the heats of our summer months. For passage or freight apply to J. J. ALVES, No. 295 Hanover street, or E. S. CUTTER, 85 Devonshire street, Boston.

APPENDIX

Mark Twain on the Azores

[It’s a good bet that none but the Portuguese (particularly the Azoreans) have taken much offense at Mark Twain’s comic and satiric characterizations of the Azorean people in *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). Epitomizing his disdain for the community of Fayal even before he has disembarked, Mark Twain describes the first people he sees as “a swarm of swarthy, noisy, lying, shoulder-shrugging, gesticulating Portuguese boatmen, with brass rings in their ears, and fraud in their hearts,” and their community as “eminently Portuguese – that is to say, it is slow, poor, shiftless, sleepy, and lazy.” Supporting such generalizations are anecdotes told

at the expense of the Fayalense as well as incidents reported, such as donkey rides leading to general chaos when the natives, who know no English, fail to understand the American tourists, who, for their part, know no Portuguese. On a more serious note, Mark Twain also attacks what he calls “the flourishing Jesuit humbuggery,” which he blames for what he considers to be the irrational beliefs and consequent silly behavior of the typically superstitious Azorean.

The Innocents Abroad draws heavily on the letters Mark Twain had posted to the *Daily Alta California* and the handful that appeared in the *New York Tribune* or *New York Herald*. He did incorporate those letters verbatim, making stylistic changes and occasionally changing a word or two. In the chapters on the Azores, for instance, he substitutes “unclean” for “dirty” (introducing, perhaps, a religious or ritualistic note) and “procession” for “gang” – and while adding a good deal of new material throughout the book, he also excises some. In the pages he devotes to the Azores, for example, he drops his account of having mistaken the actions of an old woman beggar in a *capote* for an attempt at seduction. Whether it was the sexual nature of the narrator’s response – which might have offended the church-going readers of his book – or whether he had simply realized that his joke – labored, over-blown and flat – just did not work, those paragraphs did not make it into *The Innocents Abroad*. Insertions and changes made in the letter when incorporated in the book are indicated below by curved brackets ({}), with the originals enclosed within square brackets ([]).]

“Mark Twain’s Description of the Azore Islands.” *Daily Evening Bulletin*
(San Francisco), Aug. 22, 1867, p. 1.

Mark Twain has been engaged by the *New York Tribune* as its “Special Correspondent” on the great Excursion to Europe and Palestine. In his first letter, dated “At Sea,” June 23d, he thus describes the Azore Islands and experience there:

At 3 o’clock on the morning of the 10th of June, we were awakened and notified that the Azore Islands were in sight. I had only been in bed an hour and a half, and did not take any interest in the Islands. But another persecutor came, and then another and another, and finally, believing that the general enthusiasm would permit no one to slumber in peace, I got up and went sleepily on deck. It was 5½ o’clock, and a raw, blustering morning. The passengers were huddled about the smoke-stacks and fortified behind ventilators, and all were wrapped in wintry costumes, and looking sleepy and unhappy in the pitiless gale and the drenching spray. The island in sight was Flores. It seemed only a mountain of mud standing up out of the dull mists of the sea. But as we bore down upon it, the sun came out and made it a beautiful picture. It was a mass of green farms and meadows that swelled up to a height of 1,500 feet, and mingled its upper outlines with the clouds. It was ribbed with sharp, steep ridges, and cloven with narrow cañons, and here and there on the heights, rocky upheavals shaped themselves into mimic battlements and castles, and out of rifted clouds came broad shafts of sunlight, that painted summit, and slope, and glen with bands of fire, and left belts of sombre shade between them – the aurora borealis of the frozen pale exiled to a Summer land. We skirted around two-thirds of the island, four miles from shore, and all the opera-glasses in the ship were called into requisition to settle disputes as to whether mossy spots on the uplands were groves of trees or groves of weeds, or whether the white villages down by the sea were really villages or only the clustering

tombstones of cemeteries. Finally, we stood to sea and bore away for San Miguel, and Flores shortly became a dome of mud again, and sank down among the masts and disappeared. But to many a seasick passenger it was good to see the green hills again, and all were more cheerful after this episode than anybody could have expected them to be, considering how sinfully early they had gotten up.

But we had to change our notions about San Miguel, for a storm came up, toward noon, that so pitched and tossed the vessel that common sense dictated a run for shelter. Therefore we steered for the nearest Island of the group – Fayal (the people there pronounce it Fy-all, and put the accent on the first syllable.) We anchored in the open roadstead of Horta, half a mile from the shore. The town has 8,000 to 10,000 inhabitants. Its snow-white houses nestle cosily in the sea of fresh green vegetation, and no village could look prettier or more attractive. It sits in the lap of an amphitheater of hills which are from 300 to 700 feet high, and carefully cultivated clear to their summits – not a foot of soil left idle. Every farm and every acre is cut up into a little square inclosures by stone walls, whose duty it is to protect the growing products from the destructive gales that blow there. These hundreds of green squares, marked by their black lava walls, make the hills look like vast checker-boards.

The islands belong to Portugal, and everything in Fayal has a Portuguese characteristic about it. But more of that anon. A swarm of swarthy, noisy, lying, shoulder-shrugging, gesticulating Portuguese [sic] boatmen, with brass rings in their ears, and fraud in their hearts, climbed the ship's sides, and various parties of us contracted with them to take us ashore at 25 cents a head – silver coin of any country. We landed under the walls of a little fort armed with batteries of 12 and 83-pounders, which Horta considered a most formidable institution, but if we were ever to get after it with one of our turreted monitors they would have to move it out in the country if they wanted it where they could go and find it again when they needed it. The group on the pier was a rusty one – men and women, and boys and girls, all ragged and bare-footed and uncombed and [dirty] {unclean}, and by instinct, education and profession, beggars. They trooped after us, and never more, while we tarried in Fayal, did we get rid of them. We walked up the middle of the principal street, and these vermin surrounded us on all sides, and glared upon us; and every moment excited couples shot ahead of the [gang] {procession} to get a good look back, just as village boys do when they accompany the elephant on his advertising trip from street to street. It was very flattering for me to be part of the material for such a sensation. [Presently an old woman, with a fashionable Portuguese hood on, approached me.] {Here and there in the doorways we saw women, with fashionable Portuguese hoods on.} This hood is of thick, blue cloth, attached to a cloak of the same stuff, and is a marvel of ugliness. It stands up high, and spreads far abroad, and is unfathomably deep. It fits like a circus tent, and a woman's head is hidden away in it like the man's who prompts the singers from his tin shed in the stage of an opera. There is no particle of trimming about this monstrous *capote*, as they call it – it is just a plain, ugly, dead-blue mass of sail, and a woman can't go within eight points of the wind with one of them on; she has got to go before the wind or not at all. The general style of the *capote* is the same in all the islands, and will remain so for the next 10,000 years, but each island shapes its *capotes* just enough differently from the others to enable an observer to tell at a glance what particular island a lady hails from. [Well, as we came along we overhauled a bent, wrinkled and unspeakably homely old hag, with her *capote* standing high aloft. She was becalmed; or rather, she was laying-to, around a corner, waiting for the wind to change. When

she saw me she drifted out and held out her hand. Such friendliness in a strange land touched me, and I seized it. I shook it cordially, and said:

“Madame, I do not know your name, but this act has graven your – your – peculiar features upon my heart, and there they shall remain while that heart continues to throb.”

She drew her hand away and said something which I could not understand, and then kissed her palm to me and curtsied. I blushed, and said:

“Madame, these attentions cannot but be flattering to me, but it must not be – alas, it cannot be – I am another’s!” (I had to lie a little, because I was getting into a close place.)

She kissed her hand again and murmured sweet words of affection, but I was firm. I said:

“Away, woman – tempt me not! Your seductive blandishments are wasted upon one whose heart is far hence in the bright land of America. The jewel is gone – you behold here naught save the empty casket – and empty it shall remain till grim necessity drives me to fill the aching void with vile flesh, and drink, and cabbage. Avaunt, temptress!”

But she would not avaunt. She kissed her hand repeatedly and curtsied over and over again. I reasoned within myself. This unhappy woman loves me; I cannot reciprocate; I cannot love a foreigner. I cannot love a foreigner as homely as she is; if I could, I would dig her out of the *capote* and take her to my sheltering arms. I cannot love her, but this wildly beautiful affection she has conceived for me must not go unrewarded – it *shall* not go unrewarded. And so I said, “I will read to her my poetical paraphrase of the Declaration of Independence.”

But all the crowd said, “No; shame, shame, shame; the poor old woman hasn’t done anything!”

And they gave the old hag some Portuguese pennies like shuffle-board blocks, and hustled her away, averring that she was begging, and not making love; and thus, by the well meaning stupidity of my comrades I was prevented from implanting a secret memory in the soul of one who may now go down to the grave with no sacred thing upon the altar of her heart but the ashes of a hopeless passion – and yet a stanza or two would have made her so happy!] {Omitted.}

Speaking of those prodigious Portuguese pennies reminds me that it takes 1,000 *reis* (pronounced rays) to make \$1, and that all financial estimates are made out in *reis*. We did not know this until after we had found it out, and we found it out through Blucher. Blucher said he was so happy and so grateful to be on solid land once more, and that he wanted to give a feast; said he had heard it was a cheap land, and he was bound to have a grand banquet. He invited nine of us, and we ate an excellent dinner at the principal hotel. In the midst of the jollity, produced by good cigars, good wine and passable anecdotes, the landlord presented his bill. Blucher glanced at it and his countenance fell. He took another look to assure him that his senses had not deceived him, and then read its items aloud, in a faltering voice, while the roses in his cheek turned to ashes:

“‘Ten dinners, at 600 *reis*, 6,000 *reis*!’ Ruin and desolation.”

“‘Twenty-five cigars at 100 *reis*, 2,500 *reis*!’ Oh, my sainted mother!”

“‘Eleven bottles of wine at 1,200 *reis*, 13,200 *reis*!’ Be with us all!”

“‘Total, 21,700 *reis*!’ [Great Caesar’s ghost] {The suffering Moses}, there ain’t money enough in the ship to pay the bill! Go – leave me to my misery, boys. I’m a ruined community.” I think it was the blankest looking party I ever saw. Nobody could say a word. It was as if every soul had suddenly been stricken dumb. Wine glasses descended slowly to the table, their contents untasted. Cigars dropped unnoted from nerveless fingers. Each man sought his neighbor’s

eye, but found in it no ray of hope, no encouragement. At last the fearful silence was broken. The shadow of a desperate resolve settled down upon Blucher's countenance like a cloud and he rose up and said: "Landlord, this is a wretched, mean swindle, and I'll never, never stand it. Here's \$150, sir, and it's all you'll get – I'll swim in blood, sir, before I'll pay a cent more!"

Our spirits rose and the landlord's fell – at least I thought so; he was confused at any rate, notwithstanding he had not understood a word that had been said. He glanced from the little pile of gold pieces to Blucher several times, and then went out. He must have visited an American, for, when he returned, he brought back his bill translated into a language that a Christian could understand – thus:

10 dinners, 6,000 reis, or	\$6.00
25 cigars, 2,500 reis	2.50
11 bottles wine, 13,200 reis, or	13.20
Total, 21,700 reis, or	\$21.70

Happiness reigned once more in Blucher's dinner party. More refreshments were ordered.

I think the Azores must be very little known in America. Out of our whole ship's company there was not a solitary individual who knew anything whatever about them. Some of the party, well read concerning most other lands, had no other information about the Azores than that they were a group of nine or ten small islands far out in the Atlantic, something more than half-way between New York and Gibraltar. It was all. These considerations move me to put in a paragraph of dry facts, just here [, which I might not venture to if I were writing about worn-out and written-out Europe] {omitted}.

The community is eminently Portuguese – that is to say, it is slow, poor, shiftless, sleepy and lazy. There is a civil government appointed by the King of Portugal, and a military governor, who can assume supreme control and suspend the civil government at his pleasure. The islands contain a population of about 200,000, almost entirely Portuguese. Everything is staid and settled, for the country was 100 years old when Columbus discovered America. The principal crop is corn, and they raise it and grind it just as their great-great-grandfathers did. They plow with a board slightly shod with iron; their trifling little harrows are drawn by men and women; small wind-mills grind the corn, ten bushels a day, and there is one assistant superintendent to feed the mill and a general superintendent to stand by and keep him from going to sleep. When the wind changes they hitch on some donkeys, and actually turn around the whole upper half of the mill till the sails are in proper position, instead of fixing the concern so that the sails could be moved instead of the mill. Oxen tread the wheat from the ear, after the fashion prevalent in the time of Methuselah. There is not a wheelbarrow in the land – they carry everything on their heads, or on donkeys, or in a wicker-bodied cart, whose wheels are solid blocks of wood and whose axles turn with the wheels. There is not a modern plow in the Islands, or a threshing machine. All attempts to introduce them have failed. The good Catholic Portuguese crossed himself and prayed God to shield him from all blasphemous desire to know more than his father did before him. The climate is mild; they never have snow or ice, and I saw no chimneys in the town. The donkeys and the men, women and children of a family, all eat and sleep in the same room, and are unclean, are ravaged by vermin, and are truly happy. The people lie and cheat the stranger, and are desperately ignorant, and have hardly any reverence for their

dead. That latter trait shows how little better they are than the donkeys they eat and sleep with. The only well-dressed Portuguese in the camp are the [three or four] {half a dozen} well-to-do families, the Jesuit priests and the soldiers of the little garrison. The wages of a laborer are 20 to 24 cents a day, and those of a good mechanic about twice as much. They count it in reis at a thousand to the dollar, and this makes them rich and contented. Fine grapes used to grow in the islands and excellent wine was made and exported. But a disease killed all the vines 15 years ago, and since that time no wine has been made. The islands being wholly of volcanic origin, the soil is necessarily very rich. Nearly every foot of ground is under cultivation, and two or three crops a year of each article are produced; but nothing is exported save a few oranges – chiefly to England.

{in *Innocents Abroad* (1871) Twain inserted a half dozen pages or so, including more about Blucher and the others on a donkey ride through Horta, an attack on the Jesuits, the religious superstition of the people, the good quality of the roads, the dirtiness of the poor, the clean town of Horta, etc.}

The mountains on some of the islands are very high. We sailed along the shore of the Island of Pico, under a stately green pyramid that rose up with one unbroken sweep from our very feet to an altitude of 7,613 feet, and thrust its summit above the white clouds like an island adrift in a fog.

{Insertion: “We got plenty of fresh oranges, lemons, figs, apricots, etc. in these Azores, of course. But I will desist. I am not here to write Patent-Office reports. We are on our way to Gibraltar, and shall reach there five or six days out from the Azores.”}

MARK TWAIN.

