

## Letters.

FROM A FRIEND LIVING FOR A YEAR IN PORTUGAL.

Casa do Arco,  
Rue da Assemblia,  
Cintra, Portugal.

My Dear Sister,—

You see, I give you yet another address, but this time to a house, and not a hotel, for our wanderings have come to a temporary cessation in this pretty village, which is built on a promontory jutting out from the steep and densely-wooded hill-side of the Rock of Cintra. On the very top—about an hour's walk from the village—is the King's palace, to which the Court comes every summer to escape the fierce heat of Lisbon, which, people tell us, is most trying. Every one who can comes away in the summer and many of the rich folk have delightful houses among the trees surrounding Cintra. These houses are empty the rest of the year, so, of course, the summer is the most cheerful and busy time. This year the Court came up on the 23rd of June, and we had a good view of the carriages as they passed our house. The Portuguese do not give their Royalties a very enthusiastic greeting—no cheers and scanty decorations! Only the other day I happened to see the Queen drive past, and the men standing about hardly turned their heads to look. They tell us that Lisbon went wild about our King when he was there in April; but it appears to me rather ill-mannered to cheer other people's kings and take no notice of your own, like being polite to strangers and neglecting your own family.

This house is a funny dilapidated building of three stories. It stands below the level of the main road or street, but immediately above a side street which runs violently off down the hill and which passes in a tunnel right underneath the house. Hence the name Casa do Arco. Cintra is all up and down like this. The hill-side is so steep that for every house and every odd-shaped scrap of garden the ground must be dug out and terraced up. The general effect is very pretty and quaint, and also has a very fatiguing effect upon the legs! Steep cobble-stoned lanes pitching down, long flights of steps climbing up. Our house has a small garden in two parts—the higher is on a level with the second storey windows, and has in it a cherry tree, two loquat trees, a great many flowers and a stone tank of water, in which reside several prodigiously fat gold fish. The lower part is on the ground floor, and is really a large verandah with a stone floor and walls and roof of lattice work grown over by a huge old vine with a trunk like that of a tree. It gives us a charming green roof to sit under; the perfect form and color of the leaves are exquisitely shown against the luminous blue sky. But the sky is by no means always blue, and sometimes the damp mists do not permit up to see out of our vine parlor. Cintra is a very damp place, and hot dry weather lasts for but a few days at a time. There is much