

Massey's Illustrated

(PUBLISHED MONTHLY.)

A Journal of News and Literature for Royal Homes

NEW SERIES.]

TORONTO, CANADA, DECEMBER, 1894.

[Vol. 6, No. 12.

En Route to South Africa.

MADEIRA.

BY J. D. PATTERSON.

WE left London early on Saturday, Sept. 22nd, and soon were pushing away on the "Castle Express" through the pleasant South England fields to the seaboard. How glorious the country seemed in the abundant fulfilment of all that spring promised of foliage and fruit and harvest. On that mellow autumn day before the frosts had fringed a leaf no one could not help wondering if when in her gayest spring moods England could be more charming.

Arriving at Southampton, we were without delay transferred to the tender waiting to take us to our steamer at anchor in "Southampton Water," some miles below.

The "Dunottar Castle" is the twenty-first ship built by the Castle Company, and is the largest and in all respects the most perfect of all the vessels engaged in the African Royal Mail Service. Her gross tonnage is nearly 5,500 tons, and she measures 435 feet long by 50 feet wide, and is propelled by triple expansion engines capable of developing between 6,000 and 7,000 horse power. Her every appointment

from the comfortable cabins to the magnificent saloon and sumptuous music room is most perfect.

Some hours were spent in shipping mails and baggage, but at last all was aboard and at five o'clock p.m. exactly we weighed anchor and were off on our long journey to the South. Until darkness came on we had the pleasant English shores in sight, and then until this morning, Sept. 26th, we enjoyed the luxury of absolute rest, no where more possible than aboard a roomy and comfortable ocean steamship.

The swell on the Bay of Biscay was more than usually heavy, but as we had evidently come into the tail of one storm we felt all but sure we should not come into the teeth of another, and so it proved, for the weather all along was delightful. At sunrise this morning we passed the beautiful serrated ridges of the Island of Porto Santo and the desolate square topped rocks known as Desertas before entering the anchorage of the Bay of Funchal, enclosed in its vast amphitheatre of hills. Rising on the brow of the enclosing hills we could see terrace upon terrace of the beautiful white Quintas, the dwelling places of the English residents and of the richer portion of the inhabitants, while at their feet in the foreground are the dwelling places of the humbler inhabitants. Without waiting for breakfast we hurried into the small boats that were waiting to take those of us who wished to go ashore. The temptation to stop to make purchases of fruit and small wares from the bumboat men swarming around the ship was very great, but we remembered that we were promised but five hours ashore and hurried on, unwilling to waste our valuable moments.

The morning was perfect, the limpid atmosphere, the marble whiteness of the dwellings, and the sunny character of the whole scene made one feel how easy it must be to live in such a climate. The struggle for existence seemed almost to have ceased, for all was cheerful, airy and light.

The main thoroughfare leading from the sea shore to the large open square of the town is an avenue of oriental palm trees, whose giant leaves throw a grateful shade upon the houses and pedestrians.

The slow and almost noiseless movements of the bullock sledge con-



A MADEIRA "CARRO."

veying merchandise from the quay to all parts of the town harmonise well with the restful surroundings. The inhabitants show their appreciation of the climate by wearing the minimum of clothing.

All the vegetations of sub-tropical regions and many tropical plants are found here. Bananas grow in the open air, ripe dates fall from the palm trees, Eucalyptus scents the air, and the Magnolia and other shrubs decorate with their glorious blossoms the surrounding gardens. The atmosphere of Madeira is moist. This is every where evident by the luxuriousness of vegetation.

The town on a crescent hill creeps up the side of the mountain, the streets very narrow and well paved with small kidney stones, and there is scarcely a wheel in the city. Sleds, large and small, are practically the only conveniences. Of course, there are small horses, but even small parcels are delivered on small sleds. After seeing the markets and partaking freely of most luscious grapes we chartered a bullock sled with four good bullocks and four attendants and started up the narrow, crooked, clean and pretty streets to the church on the mountain, three miles away. It was a tedious climb, but every foot of the ground had something to show us. The low, quaint houses, the people in their clean linen, beautiful gardens, roses everywhere, rare flowers and glorious creepers lolling over the walls in such beautiful profusion. We did not regret the hour we spent in making the journey. Once there, we stood for a while looking over the city—25,000 or 30,000 people—along the hills out over the beautiful bay. Then how did we come down. We were off with a rush in wicker baskets that would just hold two. These baskets were mounted on small sleds and you cannot imagine how we went; a toboggan would hardly have taken us faster. A man running on each side holding the guide ropes when he could run, hopping on behind and steering with a kick here and a jerk there, when the pace be-



BANANA CULTIVATION, MADEIRA.