

6 HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE COLONIES. II

from Ferdinando Camelo, a Portuguese and a native of the Azores, for colonizing the islands. The scheme, however, was apparently never carried out, although an inscription on the main island, containing the figures 1543, has been taken as evidence that Camelo took possession of it at that date.

Hurrying on to and from tropical America and the sunny West Indies, intent on the wonders of Mexico and the gold of Peru, the Spaniards were not likely to take heed of the insignificant islands, which lay in the middle of the stormy Atlantic, almost beyond their beat. They passed them by, as the Portuguese passed by Mauritius on their way to the spice islands of the East, their first discoverer, so the story goes, merely leaving on them a number of pigs for the benefit of after comers¹. Rock-bound, storm-beaten, and desolate, the group was styled by the Spanish sailors the 'isles of Devils,' though 'all the devils that haunted the woods were but herds of swine².' Ships on their way from Havana to the Azores and Spain steered north towards them to take advantage of the Gulf Stream and to avoid the easterly trade winds; but they were warned to keep far away from the islands, and to shun their storms and reefs.

Nor was it the Spaniards only who dreaded and had cause to dread the dangers of the Bermudas. In 1591 three trading ships were sent from London to the East under the command of James Lancaster. On their return voyage they found their way to the West Indies; and at Hispaniola, at the end of 1593, Lancaster sent on one of his followers, Henry May, in a French ship bound for Europe and commanded by a captain named

¹ The Portuguese, in like manner, landed live stock at Mauritius, see vol. i. of this work, p. 163. Bermudez is credited with having introduced the hogs, but they were apparently landed subsequently to the first discovery of the islands [see the *Memorials of the Bermudas*]. May found the descendants of these pigs 'so lean that you cannot eat them.' It is stated that the name Bermudas was falsely derived from an old Spanish word meaning 'black hogs.'

² From a tract published in 1610, and entitled, *A true Declaration of the estate of the colony in Virginia*. It is quoted in the *Memorials of the Bermudas*.