

A TALE OF TWO CLASSICS: NINETEENTH-CENTURY
AMERICAN TRANSLATIONS OF EÇA DE QUEIRÓS
AND JÚLIO DINIS

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“It is said that there are many good realistic novels in modern Portuguese which some English writers who happened to know the language have been adopting without credit,” noted the *Hartford Courant*, a Connecticut newspaper, on October 16, 1900 (page 8). “It seems strange that there should be a literature so near the great centers, London and Paris, comparatively unknown in both.” It is a pity the writer does not go on to name those “plagiarizing” English writers or the Portuguese novels that they have been silently adopting.

But the *Courant* writer might have made his point differently had he realized that a decade or so earlier two Portuguese novels had been translated into English and published in the United States. The two novels are Eça de Queiros’s *O Primo Basílio* and Júlio Dinis’s *Os Fidalgos da Casa Mourisca*.”

O Primo Basílio

On August 3, 1889, in an editorial headed “Talk on the Novel” (pages 2-3), the *Boston Journal* complained that “the surprising amount of foreign fiction which through translation has almost swamped the interest in American productions,” particularly those “translations from the Russian, the Spanish, the

Portuguese, the French.” Oddly, the inclusion of the Portuguese in this list was hardly warranted since its only basis was the publication in translation of a single Portuguese novel to that point. *Dragon’s Teeth*, Mary J. Serrano’s translation of *O Primo Basílio*, was published by Ticknor and Fields of Boston, Massachusetts, on March 23, 1889.

Oddly, Eça de Queirós’s name does not appear on the title-page, though the novelist is amply credited in an unsigned introductory note, quoted here in its entirety:

The name of Eça de Queiros stands at the head of the list of Portuguese novelists. Born in Oporto early in the latter half of the present century, he was intended for the profession of the law by his father, who belonged to a family distinguished in the annals of Portuguese jurisprudence; but he soon abandoned his legal studies for literature, toward which his inclinations impelled him, and which he cultivated with immediate and marked success, the articles from his pen that appeared from time to time in the various periodicals of the day attracting wide-spread and favorable notice.

His characteristics as a writer are,—to quote from the Preface of the Spanish version of the present work,—A vigorous, flexible, and picturesque style, daring and unexpected flights of the imagination, extraordinary judgment, and a marvelous perception of the realities of things, as well as of their comic and sentimental aspects.

His most marked characteristic, however, is the wonderful power with which he treats the humorous and the pathetic alike, moving his readers to tears or laughter at his will, with a magic art possessed only by the great masters in literature. In conclusion, it may be said that the publication of the present work, under the title of *O Primo Basílio*, produced a profound sensation in Portuguese literary circles, as did the publication, by which it was soon followed, of a Spanish version in those of Madrid, and of a French version, by Madame Ratazzi, in those of Paris (pages 7-8).

Mrs. Serrano contributed a rather straight-forward translator’s preface in which she explained some of the choices she felt compelled to make in translating *O Primo Basílio* for an American readership, one whose “taste,” she insisted, was “largely formed on Puritanic models”:

In presenting this graphic picture of Lisbon life to the American public, the translator has assumed the responsibility of softening here and there, and even of at times effacing, a line too sharply drawn, a light or a shadow too strongly marked to please a

taste that has been largely formed on Puritanic models, convinced (without entering into the question of how far a want of literary reticence may be carried without violating the canons of true art) that while the interest of the story itself remains undiminished, the ethical purpose of the work will thereby be given wider scope.

Eça himself was well aware of much or all of this, for he complained (but with more than a trace of pleasure) to his good friend Oliveira Marques on January 26, 1890, as reported in Guilherme de Castilho's *Eça de Queirós: Correspondência* (Vila da Maia: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1983):

A propósito de romances: *O Primo Basílio*, esse *fait-lisbonne*, foi traduzido em inglês, alemão, sueco e holandês, nestes últimos seis meses! Que atroz injustiça para o *Padre Amaro*! O tradutor inglês do *O Primo Basílio* cortou-lhe todas as cenas em que os amantes se encontram, e, em geral, suprimiu o adultério! Deu-lhe além disso o nome de *Dragon's Teeth*!! E o livro teve, em Inglaterra e na América, *une bonne presse*" (volume 2, page 37).

Just how closely Eça followed the American fortunes of *O Primo Basílio*, and how many of the book's reviews were familiar to him, is not known. There is little doubt, however, that in the main he would have been gratified. This is an account of the good press enjoyed by Mary J. Serrano's *Dragon's Teeth* in America.

On March 9, 1889, Alexander Young, in his "Boston Letter" to *The Critic* (New York), relying most probably on information supplied by the publisher, wrote:

Dragon's Teeth, a novel which Ticknor & Co. will publish in about three weeks, is a remarkable story of life in Lisbon, translated from the Portuguese [*sic*] of Eça de Queiros by Mrs. Mary J. Sarrano [*sic*]. The story made a deep impression in Portugal, and its translation into French and Spanish resulted in an equally favorable reception in the literary circles of Paris and Madrid. Eça de Queiros stands at the head of Portuguese novelists, and this story, while depicting the temptation and unfaithfulness of a weak and loving woman, is free from coarseness, and impresses an effective moral. The slow retribution that follows the sin is said to be depicted with a force that recalls Daudet, and the insight into human nature and command over the springs of humor and pathos afford striking evidence of the author's literary mastery (volume 11, page 122).

On March 11, 1889, under "Literary Notes," the *New York Times* noted that "Ticknor & Co. will issue this month *Dragon's Teeth*, a novel translated from the Portuguese of Eça de Queiros by Mrs. Mary J. Serrano" (page 3). On March 16, 1889, *The Literary World* offered the same information, adding only that the volume's size was "12mo," and that it would sell for \$1.50 a copy ("News and Notes," volume 20, page 98); while the same Boston journal, on 13 April, listed the book under "Publications Received" (page 134). On March 23, in Templeton's "Boston Correspondence" in the *Hartford Daily Courant* it was noted that "the Ticknor house has a story translated from the Portuguese for very early issue, under the title *Dragon's Teeth*, treating of fallen women" (page 3). On the same day the *New York Times* listed *Dragon's Teeth* under "New Publications: Published this Day," quoting praise for Eça's novel from two reviews in unidentified journals. The poet Nora Perry wrote that *Dragon's Teeth* "suggests the close detail and nicety of touch that distinguish Daudet. The plot is what we have learned to look upon as peculiarly French, and it is treated with French simplicity and frankness without coarseness. It is a terrible presentation of the sure results of immorality. The slow retribution that follows the sin is remarkably depicted." While Jeanette L. Gilder, well-known as one of the editors of *The Critic*, wrote: "A story of sin and its consequences, powerfully set forth, and withal there is a great deal of humor in the story, a keen insight into the weaknesses of human nature that is delicious. It is wonderfully good. As a work of literary art, as a story, as a picture of life, the book is a model." On March 28 *The Independent* (volume 41, page 18) noted the publication of *Dragon's Teeth*, a novel translated from the Portuguese of "De Queiros." On April 2 the *New York Daily Graphic*, under the rubric "Latest in Literature", published a lengthy, hectoring attack on the "realists" in the guise of a review:

From Ticknor & Co. comes a notable translation. It is from the Portuguese of Eca de Queiros, of whom Mr. Howells has been recently telling us in his Editor's Study. The title of this novel is "Dragon's Teeth," and the translator is Mary J. Serrana [sic]. In a prefatory note this lady explains that she has assumed the responsibility of softening here and there, and even of at times effacing a line too sharply drawn, a light or a shadow too strongly marked to please a taste that has been largely formed on Puritan models, convinced (without entering into the question of how far a want of literary reticence may be carried without violating the canons of true art) that while the interest of the story remains un-

diminished, the ethical purpose of the work will thereby be given wider scope.

It does not seem to occur to the translator that there is a pretty big ethical question involved in this unauthorizedly tampering with a work of art, and it is not probable that there is enough artistic spirit among us, or perceptions of an artist's rights, to bring down upon her head many rebukes, but to this critic it certainly seems that she deserves them. The case is about this: if the book is immoral she had no business translating it at all; if it is a moral and fine work of art, then it belongs to the artist alone to say what his lines and limitations shall be.

But condemnation of the work of the translator ends here: in other respects it is conscientious and able, and freer and easier in its style than are translations usually, though that is damning it with faint praise. The story is utterly moral. It is in the style of the latest phases of realism, bold, strong, dreary, serious and true. It is not so powerful as Tolstoi: its truth is not so subtle and valuable as Zola's often is. It is, indeed, a work of not so high an intellectual order as are the best things by the Russian and the Frenchmen, but in entirely a legitimate way it is modeled on similar lines.

It tells the story of a young married woman, who is unfaithful, whose servant detects her and blackmails her in ways horribly torturing, and who finally dies worn out by the weight of her ugly secret, the brutal indifference of her lover and the cruelty of the woman who knows her story. The book closes with a picture of the insolent indifference and even flattered vanity with which the man who had caused this grim and squalid tragedy hears of her death. The bold, direct style in which it is written aims at a special truthfulness at "stating the fact," and in a way it succeeds; but it is more than doubtful if this sort of truthfulness is the best, the truest sort. It is like a photograph of an out-of-door scene as compared with a fine and sympathetic painting of it. The literal facts, some of them, are conveyed in the photograph, but such main facts as the quality of the light and air, the color and the spirit, are lost. It is an old comparison, but a good one. The authors of this school aim to suppress their own personality, to make a report on the thing as it was; but this can never literally be done; the artist has to select, because a volume would not contain all that happens to and is thought and felt by his characters in the space of two hours if he was going to make a scientific statement of it, and the question resolves itself into the skill of selection; it is the idea of this school, to use that inaccurate term for convenience, to give an appearance of reality by giving much non-essential detail—because non-essential detail takes up so much space in life.

That is a principle that there may be occasion for applying, but it is certainly one a little of which goes a long way. The over-ruling principle is for the artist to have his motive, the point he is there to illustrate clearly in his mind, and forgetting those things that are behind and at the side of him, to press forward to this one mark, with no excursions that do not plainly minister to it. Eca de Queiros does not abide by this golden rule, but there is no denying his considerable achievement without it.

Here is a passage in one of the important scenes between the two central figures of the story:

Bazelio sat down beside her. These tears annoyed him and made him impatient.

“But for heaven’s sake listen to me,” he said.

She turned her eyes that flashed through their tears full upon him.

“Why did you say to me that we might be so happy if I only wished?”

Bazelio rose abruptly.

“But was it your intention to travel with me in a railway car to Paris?”

“I have left my home forever.”

“It would be better for you to return to it then,” he exclaimed angrily. “Why do you want to run away? To avoid scandal? But in doing so we should give greater scandal, irreparable scandal. I speak to you as your best friend, Luiza. * * * All this scandal may be avoided with money. Offer her 300,000 reis if you like; but for heaven’s sake be more careful in future; I cannot afford to pay 300,000 reis every time you choose to be careless.”

Luiza grew livid as if Bazelio had spat in her face. (page 60)

On April 4, the New York City Spanish-language journal *Las Novedades* published a review of Serrano’s translation, defending the translator for the cuts she made in the novel and insisting that the translation is the equal of the original (page 7).

John Wanamaker’s “At the New Book Table” listed “*Dragon’s Teeth, a Novel from the Portuguese*” in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on April 7 (page 8), and on the fifteenth *The Author*, another Boston publication, noted that included in Ticknor and Company’s March list was *Dragon’s Teeth* (“Literary News and Notes,” volume 1, page 48). Eça’s novel also showed up on *Current Literature’s* “Book List—What to Read, Where to Find It” but not until May (volume 2, page 452).

Presumably in April (the exact date is missing from my source) the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reviewed *Dragon’s Teeth* as “A Lisbon Novel”:

Lisbon is the scene of this graphic story, and Lisbon is a field for romance seldom cultivated. Mr. [Edwin Lassetter] Bynner has vividly depicted it in the time of the great earthquake in his "Agnes Surriage" [1886], but with a small attention to the Lisbonese themselves, in his absorption with English and American colonial character there exhibited under the stress of a great calamity. "Dragon's Teeth," however, as its grim title hints, is a photographic picture of later Lisbon on its own merits, or demerits. The story of its degraded phases of life is as realistic as the most philosophically curious reader of Zola or Tolstoi, for the varieties of vice or suffering in them, could desire. The book deals with marital infidelities and infelicities largely, which it may be thought is like bringing coals to Newcastle, in a literary sense, to introduce to readers of American newspapers. Nor is there in the author's dealing with the dark side of life the high ethical aim or spirit which is native to Tolstoi. All is cold-bloodedly exact in representation, cynically so, as if there were no way out of the endless complication of evil for any soul involved in such social disorder as is portrayed. But the technical cleverness and vigor of the realism is indisputable, and perhaps to mirror faithfully the vice of his time and country is as much as any but the highest type of author can be commissioned to undertake. The realists of the day have their work to do, whether in novels or newspapers, which is, always, faithful reporting. The serious among them may be pardoned if they get no further, ethically, than cynical protest against the moral enormities they have to report. Faith in better things may be designed to come later for them. The scenes in Portuguese social life conveyed by the author are sickening enough to a delicate mind, but the interest of the age seems to be to get at all sickness, moral as well as physical, and put it under some sort of sanative treatment, while at the same time taking preventive measures against an increase of it in the physical or the moral world. In this view the mission of a realist like de Queiros, who has caught much of the power of the great masters in moral photography, such as Balzac even, may be compared to that of the surgeon who has the most disgusting wounds to examine even if they be not curable or of the sanitarian who has the uncovering and disinfection of pest breeding places imposed upon him. The book is a very interesting study to the socially and ethically curious.

On April 18, *Life*, the New York publication noted for its humor, which had listed *Dragon's Teeth* under "New Books" the previous week (volume 23, April 11, page 212), now published "A Portuguese Novel," a fairly substantial review by

Robert Bridges, its regular reviewer writing over his familiar pseudonym—"Droch:"

Whether or not *Dragon's Teeth* (Ticknor) is the sort of a novel which Americans want, or ought to have, need not be seriously discussed. The story is translated from the Portuguese of Eça de Queiros by Mary J. Serrano. It reflects a people and a life so entirely different from our own that we cannot impose upon it our standards of taste. Certainly, an intrigue has not yet become for us the supreme situation in fiction, and we still in real life avoid meeting people like *Brazilio* [sic] and *Luiza*, though we may have a growing fondness for them in books. It is wonderful how quickly we suspect the sincerity of any of our friends who act after the emotional motives which we may tolerate, or even admire, in our favorite stories.

The significant thing about this story is its skilful character drawing. The plot is old, and is not managed with any originality, but the characters are clear, well-marked and interesting. The Sunday-night group at *Jorge's*, when "they drank tea and chatted together in a somewhat *bourgeois* fashion," is unusually realistic. *Juliao*, the blue-spectacled physician, who hated provincialism, but loved Lisbon; *Donna Felicidade*, stout, romantic, and in love at fifty; and the courteous *Counsellor Accacio*, who repelled her love-making with a grave bow, as he said, "Senhora, the snows that have accumulated upon the head end at last by settling on the heart"—all these stand clear of the mist which settles around the minor characters in most contemporary fiction.

Juliana, the old servant, who is the villain of the story, if the gay *Brazilio* be counted out, is grotesque, even horrible, yet not beyond our pity. It is an achievement to have portrayed such a character successfully and realistically.

As for *Luiza*, the heroine, we may not waste much sympathy upon her weaknesses. She was a beautiful creature, the product of a queer civilization. Intelligence was no part of her equipment, and would not have added to her attractiveness. Why the author makes her the victim of brain fever we cannot understand. She would naturally have lived a long, careless life, feeding her senses upon sunlight and idleness and the flattery of half-cultivated people. Remorse was foreign to her nature, and the death scene is, therefore, a bit of theatrical machinery. To call it "Expiation" is the cant of melodrama.

Altogether, the novel interests us more as an example of literary art among a people with whom we are unfamiliar than as a story appealing to our sympathies (volume 13, page 228).

Life's review of *Dragon's Teeth* was followed by a notice in *The Literary World* on April 27:

This novel, translated from the Portuguese by Mary J. Serrano, is one of the realistic studies of society in which the Spanish novelists have lately shown themselves masters. In its execution it somewhat recalls *Maximina*, although no two heroines could be more unlike than the devoted *Maximina* and the morbid and light little Luiza of the Portuguese novel. The reader who cares for an agreeable tale with a conventionally happy ending will not enjoy this study of the sowing and growth of a deadly harvest. It is a tragedy, truly imposing in its exposition of the force of common things. The character of Juliana, the malicious serving-woman whose knowledge of Luiza's fault enslaves the mistress and drives her to desperation; the opportune death of the woman; and the sudden dramatic turn of affairs when, at the moment in which Luiza believes herself safe, a letter brought by the prosaic means of the post gives her death-blow—these are triumphs of realistic art. The minor personages form one of those varied and complex groups in support of the principal characters which are more often found depicted in European than in American novels. Mrs. Serrano's translation is smooth, spirited, and readable (volume 20, page 145).

On the same day a longer and even more favorable review of *Dragon's Teeth* appeared in *The Critic*:

Dragon's Teeth, translated from the Portuguese of Eça de Queiros by Mrs. Serrano, must certainly be singled out from the ordinary novels of the day. It is a powerful and dramatic story, with vivid local color, delicate touches of naturalness and of art, and so far as a story of passion, weakness and sin can be said to be moral, is deeply and tragically so in its terrible dénouement and expiation. We have a charming picture at the outset, the attractive young husband, Jorge, honest, manly and sensible, and the wife whom he adores, Luiza, with her seductive ways, her beauty of person, her grace as of a child, and a true child of the South—pleasure-loving, sensation-loving, and with the sleeping fire in the blood that nourishes languid and abrupt desires. Before her marriage, she had a love-affair—a romantic episode of eight months, with a handsome cousin Bazilio, who had amused himself for the time and then thrown her over. Luiza had passed through a heavy period, but after a while she was able to look back and smile at her youthful folly. Three years afterwards she met Jorge.

He fell in love with her blond tresses, her charming profile and her large hazel eyes.... At first she did not find him attractive; she

did not like men with beards. Afterwards she noticed that Jorge's beard was fine and silky; and she began to find a certain charm and sweetness in his glance. Without being in love with him, she felt when with him a languor and abandonment, as if she could be content to rest forever on his bosom, careless of what the future might bring. What joy when he said to her, "Let us get married!" He had caught her hand in his; that warm pressure penetrated to her innermost soul and pervaded her whole being. She answered "Yes," and then remained silent unable to add another word, but with her heart beating violently under the bodice of her merino gown.

They had been married now for three years. "What happy years!... Both were happy. Even those who did not know them said, "They are a charming couple; it is a pleasure only to look at them!"

In the opening chapters we have a glimpse of the pleasant home, and the confidence and affection between the two. But Jorge is called away from Lisbon on business, and Luiza is left alone. Unaccustomed to solitude, she is a prey to loneliness and *ennui*. She misses Jorge at every turn, "his loud ring at the bell, his step in the hall." And at night, unable to sleep, she is beset with vague terrors and agitation. At this juncture, as fate wills it, Bazilio, after an absence of many years, reappears in Lisbon. In search of some distraction to while away the tedium of his stay in the dull capital, he puts himself on the traces of his pretty cousin, whom he finds more adorable than ever. Her doom is sealed from the first. He makes ardent love to her, convinces her of his constancy and that a cruel destiny has separated them, plays upon every string of her overwrought sensibility, and steeps her in the atmosphere that she loves—the very breath and incense of passion. She is like a bird, spellbound under the eye of the serpent, not even struggling to be free. Her will-power has departed from her, her reason is benumbed and she moves as if in a dream, irresistibly drawn towards something, she knows not what, marvelous and undefined. The memory of husband fades; he seems so far away. All the facts and duties of life lose outline and distinctness in the ambrosial mist in which the whole world is wrapped and where she herself is finally lost.

The awakening is a rude one. Her secret is discovered by a servant who has an enmity to her. She offers to fly with Bazilio, who shows himself now in his true colors, despicable and heartless. Bored by her importunity and by the stupidity and vulgarity of the whole affair, he escapes from Lisbon and leaves her to her fate. And what a fate! The lover goes scot-free, and upon this frail, almost irresponsible creature falls the whole deadly weight of sin. Her husband returns and her heart goes out to him, her

whole being yearns toward him. Never did she love him so well, never did he seem to her so worthy to be loved. But there is a sting and poison in it all. Wild thoughts come into her brain—that he is going to kill her, and that she must run away and hide herself. A dark shadow is always threatening and pursuing her. The servant, Juliana, hounds her footsteps. Her daily life becomes a torture, and inconceivable humiliation and disgrace, until her strength succumbs and she falls ill. A letter arrives from Bazilio which her husband opens. He confronts her with it. The shock goes to her brain and she does not recover. The death-scene is a masterpiece, imbued with emotion, remorse, anguish, expiation, forgiveness, and love that endures and triumphs at the end.

We have chosen to analyze the drama without regard to the methods and plan, which, in our judgment, to a great extent vitiate and vulgarize the whole work. The persecution of the servant, the “laundry-work” to which Luiza descends, is altogether unworthy of the situation. However deeply Juliana may be constructed, she is a monstrosity with which we have no human affiliation. The minor characters are well drawn, with a dash of humor that relieves the book, and the translation reads so smoothly as scarcely to seem a translation at all (volume 11, pages 205-06).

An advertisement in the June 22 issue of *The Literary World* quotes from *The Critic* review to the effect that *Dragon’s Teeth* is “a powerful and dramatic story, with vivid local color, delicate touches of naturalism and art.” In the same advertisement the writer Louise Chandler Moulton is also quoted from what can be assumed to be a review in an unnamed periodical or newspaper recommending: “This tragic and powerful tale. As a piece of literary art it is equal to Balzac at his best” (volume 20, page 1). This advertisement also appears in the *Book Buyer*, 6 (May 1, 1889), 153, a journal that had listed *Dragon’s Teeth* under “Books of the Month,” 6 (May 1, 1889), page 3. The book was also listed as published in the *American Bookseller* (New York), 25 (May 1, 1889), page 171. The *New York Evening Telegram* noted on May 10 that “*Dragon’s Teeth*, a novel from the Portuguese, by Mary J. Serrano, presents a graphic picture of Lisbon life. The translator has softened here and there a line too sharply drawn, but the interest of the story has remained untouched. Eca [sic] de Queiros stands at the head of the list of Portuguese novelists.” (page 7.)

There were several other notable reviews of *Dragon’s Teeth*. On May 16 the *Christian Union*, a journal published in New York, reviewed the book favorably, though balking at what it considered to be its extreme realism:

One of the most successful works of the Portuguese novelist, Eça de Queiroz, has been translated by Mary J. Serrano under the title *Dragon's Teeth*. Its subject is a disagreeable one, the story being that of the temptation, ruin, disgrace, and death of a beautiful young married woman. While it must be admitted that the ethical motive is a good one, and that the truth that "the wages of sin is death" is most forcibly illustrated, yet there is a certain brutality in the realism which is repellent. The translator tells us in her preface that she has very considerably softened the original to suit the taste of English readers, but the treatment is still occasionally too broad. It may also be said, in way of criticism, that the character of the wicked servant whose greed and malignity bring about her mistress's death is so intensely drawn as to be almost unnatural. Apart from these faults the novel is one of marked vigor and originality, strong both in humor and pathos, and giving some agreeable glimpses of Spanish domestic and social life. In this respect it reminds one a little of Valdés's charming story, *Marquis of Peñalta*, to which, however, the present book is inferior (volume 39, page 638).

In June the *Catholic World* weighed in, preaching as it goes along, turning the review into an unidentified scold's harangue:

"There are no wicked women, Senhora; it is the men who are wicked," says Sebastião, in *Dragon's Teeth*, to the faithless wife of his friend. The novel is the work of Senhor Eça de Queiroz [sic], who, according to his translator, "stands at the head of the list of Portuguese novelists." The masculine monopoly of wickedness being so obligingly claimed by "one of themselves," it seems a good deal of a pity that the efforts of male novelists of every tongue to justify the claim, should so often find facile and complaisant feminine pens ready to enlarge the sphere of their noxious activity. It is a woman, Miss Katharine Prescott Wormely, who is putting Balzac into flexible and talking English for Roberts Brothers. And it is another woman, Mary J. Serrano, who explains, in the brief preface to *Dragon's Teeth*, that she "has assumed the responsibility of softening here and there, and even of at times effacing, a line too sharply drawn, a light or a shadow too strongly marked to please a taste that has been largely formed on Puritan[ic] models, convinced ... that while the interest of the story itself remains undiminished, the ethical purpose of the work will thereby be given wider scope." One feels puzzled to know just what manner of "ethical purpose" the average American woman would be likely to discover in this history of mere, vulgar intrigue, nowhere digni-

fied with even the least pretense of any feeling worthy the sacred name of love. Is it necessary to instruct married women “formed on puritan[ic] models,” that if they yield to vanity, caprice, and laziness, if they feed their imaginations on corrupt novels, and then drift into vice rather because there is nothing to hinder their descent than because there is any active force to propel them downwards, it is they who will have to bear finally the heaviest end of the log of retribution? If there is any other lesson taught to women by this novel, we have failed to find it; while as to the “wicked sex” to which Senhor de Quieros [sic] belongs, his most serious and searching advice to them would seem to be that the only safe plan for the husband of a pretty young woman, be she never so virtuous and loving, is never to risk a prolonged absence from the domestic hearth except in her company. The Portuguese novelist shows his close and admiring study of Balzac both in the matter and the manner of his story. The latter is especially clever; but though he is a skilful manipulator, he nowhere gives evidence of the elevation of sentiment and real power which often distinguish his master. We take leave to doubt the accuracy of the translator’s remark that *Dragon’s Teeth* is a “graphic picture of Lisbon life.” Lisbon is a large place, and here and there within its boundaries one must believe, in spite of negative testimony, that there must be a sprinkling of Christian people, sensitive to other motives of action than those supplied by their fleshly appetites. This novel suggests rather what life might be in a perfectly appointed menagerie of selected simian types, kept and described by a hopeful evolutionist in search of the missing link. There is neither religion nor any sense of purely human duty in it, and hence, of love there is nothing but its animal counterpart and ape-like imitation. What higher claim it has to be classed as art than the cleverly illustrated catalogue of such a museum of natural history would have, we fail to see, as also how it could better serve any “ethical purpose” (“Talk About New Books,” volume 49, pages 402-03).

The considerably shorter notice in the June *Atlantic Monthly* also expressed its disapproval of Eça’s novel, though less stridently so:

Although the translator puts her name only on the title-page, she is not wholly unjust to her author, for she gives due credit to Eça de Queiros in a brief introductory note. One enters a Portuguese novel with some hopefulness, but when he comes out of this one he is bound to confess that the Portuguese variety of human nature offers no great surprise or specially new pleasure. There is the same cousin who interferes between man and wife [as

in a novel mentioned earlier]. The flavor of the book is foreign, but that is all (volume 63, page 859).

On June 10 the *Hartford Courant* published a lengthy notice:

Dragon's Teeth, translated from the Portuguese of Eca de Queiros by Mary J. Serrano, is a powerful dramatic story of passion, weakness and sin. The heroine, Luiza, is a true child of the South, pleasing, loving, excitable and easily ennuid. Before her marriage she had been loved and speedily forgotten by her handsome cousin Bazilio. Three years after she met Jorge.

We quote a passage to show why she succumbed to his affections:—

He fell in love with her blond tresses, her charming profile and her large hazel eyes... At first she did not find him attractive; she did not like men with beards, Afterwards she noticed that Jorge's beard was fine and silky; and she began to find a certain charm and sweetness in his glance. Without being in love with him, she felt when with him a languor and abandonment, as if she could be content to rest forever on his bosom, careless of what the future might bring. What joy when he said to her, "Let us get married!" He had caught her hand in his; that warm pressure penetrated to her innermost soul and pervaded her whole being. "Yes," and then remained silent unable to add another word, but with her heart beating violently under the bodice of her marino gown.

Three happy years of married life followed, but her husband was called away on a journey which promised to last many weeks. For a while *Luiza*, unaccustomed to solitude, missed and mourned him: excessive ennui followed. She was as dependent on admiration and caresses as a pet kitten on being fondled and noticed. Suddenly the old lover, *Bazilio*, returned from Brazil, where he had resided for many years. He, too, sought distraction, and found it in the pretty cousin, whom more than ever, now that she was buried, he fancied adorable. The memory of *Jorge* day by day grew fainter, until it was utterly effaced by the presence of *Bazilio*. Suddenly her secret is discovered by *Juliana*, a servant who hates her. She offers to fly with her cousin, but he already tired of her, and bored by her entreaties, rushes off to Lisbon, and leaves her to her fate. The pretty frail creature, as defenceless and almost as irresponsible as a bird in a storm flutters to and fro in agony till her husband's return; then flies straight to his kind arms. Content to be soothed and taken care of. In her perfect peace, she loves him with a passionate ardor that she had never before known, but the woman *Juliana* is

hounding her footsteps. Little by little she drives her mistress to a feverish anguish. She is going to tell him, to-night, to-morrow, no moment is safe, and she *Luiza* will be cast out, or perhaps in his fury murdered. There are days of such restless foreboding; her strength fails, she falls ill. A letter addressed to her comes from *Bazilio*, her husband opens it and learns all the awful story. But he does not at once take it to her. He delays a week. During that time he is like one in a dream. He does not let her suspect that he knows any thing. He tends her night and day, he caresses and soothes her, and there are moments when his love bids him forgive her. At last he enters her little flower decked room where she is lying on the white bed, and hands her the letter. Poor *Luiza*! She raises her white hands to her head and falls over smitten down. The death scene, like every other incident in the book is minutely told, so minutely that we wonder that we do not find it tedious. But this is a master's hand and we linger with him, with a feverish anxiety, over the bed from which we know the pretty useless creature will never rise. The last moments are a triumph of pardoning love but from the beginning the reader is not deceived as to *Luiza's* fate. Before him always is the figure of remorseless justice pursuing the flying criminal. Our interest in the plot is the interest the scientist takes in dissecting a dead body. He knows that the knowledge thus acquired will not revive the subject, but he is gratified in his curiosity to know how the disease conquered life. The reader who looks in "Dragon's Teeth" for local color will be disappointed. The American or Englishman who writes a Portuguese novel will be careful to put in color as an essential. But this is a study of human nature, and like most great dramas of human life, could as well have been played in any other part of the world. (page 3)

On June 28, the *Buffalo Morning Express* belatedly listed *Dragon's Teeth* under "New Books" (page 1). On August 4 the *New York Times* published a somewhat dismissive notice of *Dragon's Teeth*:

This romance of de Queiros's treats of Lisbon and of Jorge the engineer, his frail wife *Luiza*, and the machinations of *Bazilio*, *Luiza's* cousin. There is a tragic conclusion to the novel. How could it be otherwise, that being strictly within the shade a true Portuguese coloring would give it? It is the country where the people eat codfish and drink *Collares*. The translator writes that some of the crudeness of the original has been softened. We could hardly, without being overnice, make a character comic suffering from flatulent dyspepsia. The essential merits of *Dragons' Teeth* are hard to discover. We are not well enough acquainted with Portuguese realism (page 12).

The Kansas newspaper *Wichita Eagle*, noted on August 21 ("Literary Lights," p. 3), that "Senhor Eca [sic] de Queiroz, Portuguese, is thought to be a really great novelist. His best work, 'O Primo Basilio,' has made considerable sensation in England under a translation entitled 'Dragons' Teeth.'" *The Nation*, which had listed *Dragon's Teeth* under "Books of the Week" on April 4 (volume 48, page 294), published, on August 29, its thoughtful review, comparing the book with Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*:

Dragon's Teeth is aptly described in the translator's preface as a "graphic picture of Lisbon life." There is a double fitness in this characterization, since the story of sin and sorrow which is here set down with coarse, unrelenting minuteness leaves one impressed rather with the description of life and manners in modern Lisbon than with the profoundness of the tragedy. One involuntarily compares the novel with *Anna Karénina*, where the leading motive is the same, but where the book is closed with a supreme sense of the moral aspect of the story, in spite of there being, as in the Portuguese version, so much to divert the mind of the American reader into a survey of foreign ways of living and thinking. In *Dragon's Teeth* the march of fate is no less terrible, nor is there anything more impressive in either book than the grim flippancy of the final chapter; but the dignity as well as the scope of the Russian novel are wanting.

The crudity of civilization in the Portuguese capital and the low tone of middle-class society make a dreary and repulsive picture, in truth. There is but one character in the book for whom anything like admiration can be felt—Sebastian, the friend of the betrayed husband. The rest are admirably drawn types, but types of ignorance, weakness, or depravity. A pompous counselor is excellently presented; so, too, is the real heroine of the story, the serving woman Juliana, a malignant and revengeful fiend, described with an unsparing pen that might have been dipped in Balzac's inkstand. The empire of this woman over the mistress whose secret she holds, forms the subject of the cleverest and most original scenes in the book. That the whole is the work of an artist in realism is easily conceded. It is another question whether as disagreeable realism as this is the best friend of truth, and not rather of that pessimism which, according to Jules Lemaitre, is "perhaps a fact, but which is none the less in the wrong, and which besides becomes disagreeable and common" ("Recent Novels," volume 49, page 175).

On September 2 the New York *Evening Post* reprinted the *Nation's* review (page 6).

Notably, at an earlier date (July 14) the *Times's* London correspondent, the American Harold Frederic (now remembered as the author of *The Damnation of Theron Ware* and *The Marketplace*) ended his "Cable Communication" from London with a jab at the English, using the translation of Eça's novel as his pretext:

The *Academy* devotes nearly two entire pages to a eulogistic review of *Dragons' Teeth*, a great novel from the Portuguese, translated in America by Miss Serrano and published by Ticknor & Co. It does not mention, however, that America steadily produces ten good translations of valuable Continental books to every one made here in England, and that great numbers of authors like Franzos, Ebers, Heyse, Freytag, and Galdos are well known there whose names have scarcely been heard in England ("Will Parnell Withdraw," page 3).

Frederic's paragraph was picked up by *The Literary World* and reprinted without comment on August 17 ("News and Notes," volume 20, page 278). It also noted, in a separate item, that "the London *Academy* for July 13 devotes nearly two pages to a eulogistic review of *Dragons' Teeth*, the great novel from the Portuguese" (page 279).

Incidentally, indicative, perhaps, of increasing American knowledge of Eça de Queirós is the paragraph in the May issue of *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature*:

A forthcoming literary and scientific magazine, to be entitled *Revista de Portugal*, is looked forward to in intellectual circles in Lisbon with considerable interest. It will probably represent the more advanced critical views of Modern Portugal, the editor being Senhor Eça de Queiroz, a novelist of the ultra-realistic school, and distinctly a man of genius ("Foreign and Art Notes," volume 49, page 718).

By the summer of 1889 journal references to *Dragon's Teeth* had petered out. There are no reports of reprintings or new editions. Yet there is one notable exception. In "Who is to Blame" (*The Independent* [July 18, 1889], volume 41, page 1) the well-known writer from Indiana, Maurice Thompson, scored American reviewers for what he considered to be their enthusiastic reception in America of Eça's novel (never named), along with *Anna Karenina* and the works of Emile Zola—European

works of adultery and moral turpitude. "Looking over American criticism for a few years past, it is startling to note that of the novels approved by it as masterpieces, every one has been immoral in its bearing, and all those most insistently praised have been novels whose central attraction was illicit love," he notes. "One Spanish novel, one Portuguese novel and two Russian novels had led the procession, each with its burden of guilty passion depicted so minutely that no detail of unholy pining and desire was wanting, and each found applause and welcome from even religious (Christian?) journals, whose columns would have been defiled forever if those same novels had been printed therein." The attack does not abate, as he calls those foreign works "masterpieces of adultery made interesting," these "novels of dirty intrigue and marital infidelity," "incomparable Russian or Spanish or Portuguese photographs of lust and infidelity, gilded with a pretense of moral teaching." Interestingly, two years later, in 1891, on the occasion of the publication of Júlio Dinis's *Os Fidalgos da Casa Mourisca* in Roxana L. Dabney's translation, *Dragon's Teeth* was again recalled, this time as an example of "the splendors of Portuguese fiction." In his "Boston Letter" to *The Critic* on March 21 Nathan Haskell Dole wrote:

About three years ago, in a note to Mr. [William Dean] Howells, I predicted that the next great literature to be exploited would be the Portuguese. Unknown to outsiders, that little out-of-the-way corner of the world, Portugal, has of late years developed a remarkable number of powerful novelists.... It looks now as though the splendors of Portuguese fiction had already begun. *Dragon's Teeth*, translated by Mrs. Serrano, was the first, if I mistake not; since then there have been several, and the latest edition [*The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca*] is such a delightfully fresh and wholesome book—not on especially original lines, but with a wonderfully realistic atmosphere, if I may so speak—that it ought to be a precursor to a long list (volume 15, page 155)

Later Dole provides his own list of "Portuguese novels that deserve attention." "I may mention," he writes (the mistitles and misspellings are his), "*A Reliquia*, by Eça de Queiros, *O Primo Brazilio*, *O Crima do Padre Amaro*, and a dozen other stories by Teofilo Braga, Oliviera Martins, Antero de Quental, Tomás Ribiero, and others." He "prognosticate[s] that many of these will be transferred to English before long" (page 156). Dole's observations were picked up by *Current Literature* in May 1891 (volume 7, pages 156-57).

In 1895 the Serrano translation of *O Primo Basilio* re-emerged on its publisher's list. On 9 March, with Ticknor's backlist now absorbed by Houghton Mifflin—an acquisition that occurred just about one month after Ticknor had issued *Dragon's Teeth* in March 1889—Eça's novel was reissued in the Riverside Paper series at 50 cents ("News and Notes," *The Literary World*, volume 26, page 79). On the same day *The Literary World* (page 66) carried an advertisement for *Dragon's Teeth*, as did *The Dial* a week later (March 16, volume 18, page 196). In April the book appeared on *The Bookman's* "List of Books Published During the Month" (volume 1, page 211). It could hardly have been expected, of course, that in its new 50 cent, paper form *Dragon's Teeth* would attract many, if any reviews, and it did not. In 1896 the book was reprinted in New York by R. F. Fenno & Co. The only known copy of this reprint is at the University of Minnesota.

In 1898, the war in Cuba and Puerto Rico prompted the *New York Times* to publish "Spain, History and Description," a list of books, recommending, under fiction, two Portuguese novels, *The Hidalgos* [sic] of *Casa Mourisca* and *Dragon's Teeth*—the latter of which is described as being about "Modern Life in Portugal" (April 23, 1898, page BR274. Two years later, on October 6, 1900, the Serrano translation was mentioned in the *New York Times* when the paper of record took notice of Eça de Queirós' death in France ("Books and Authors," page BR8). The paragraph it devoted to the matter was lifted, without acknowledgement, from the September 22 issue of the London *Athenæum* (W. H., "Senhor d'Eça de Queiroz," no. 3804, page 386). Only the first sentence was original to the *Times*:

Even the diligent reader of book notes might fail to detect that there was such a thing as a distinctive Portuguese literature—one which had, withal, proved a rather valuable mine for certain English writers who happened to know the language. What is generally admitted in Portugal as the most eminent novelist of that country has just passed away at Neuilly, near Paris, bearing the name of Senhor J. M. d'Eça de Queiroz. His first work of any note, *O Primo Basilio*, 1878, remains his greatest. It has been translated into French under the title *Cousin Basile*, by Mme. Ratazzi; into German as *Eine wie Tausend*, and into English for Ticknor of Boston, in 1889, by M. J. Serrano, under the title of *The Dragon's Teeth*. This study of Lisbon life certainly proves him a powerful artist in realism—a style which he practically introduced into Portugal. *O Mandarin* [sic] appeared in 1880, and ran into more than one edition; and his other publications included *Scenas* [sic] *da Vida Devota* [*O Crime do Padre Amaro*], 1880, *A Reliquia*,

a dream study of the passion, 1887; *Os Maias*, or *Episodios da Vida Romantica*, in two volumes, 1888, being a pungent attack on Portuguese society. He was for some time director of the *Revista de Portugal*. At the time of his death he was Consul General for Portugal at Paris, and resided at 35 Rue de Berri. In addition to his own books he had an amiable weakness for writing prefaces to those of other people. He performed this task for the *Aquarellas* of João Deniz, 1889; for the *Azulejos* of Pinheiro Pindellas, 1896, and also for the *Almanach Encyclopedico*, 1895 (page BR8).

(It is notable, too, in regard to Eça's presence in the American press, that "Prophetic View of the Kaiser Written 23 Years Ago," a translation of Eça's essay from *A Capital* in 1891, was reprinted in the *New York Times* on January 3, 1915 (page SM5). It was first printed in the *London Times*, as was duly noted in the American newspaper. A follow-up article in the *New York Times*, "Was Kaiser's Divine Right Bought?"—taken from Professor Christian Gauss's book *The German Emperor as Shown in His Public Utterances*—draws on Eça's analysis [February 14, 1915, pages SM910]. Also of interest is "A British Pathologist's Analysis of Mono-Ideism as the cause of the World Crisis" [*Current Opinion*, volume 58, February 1915, pages 105-06], which concludes by quoting from Eça's essay on the Kaiser.)

Over the years *Dragon's Teeth* was pretty much forgotten. One critic, Ernest Boyd, used the occasion of the publication of Aubrey Bell's translation of Queiros' *A Reliquia* in 1925, to complain that up to that point only such atypical works of Eça's as *Perfection*, *The Sweet Miracle*, and *Our Lady of the Pillar* had been translated into English. "Nobody observing the succession of these little books would guess that Eça de Queiroz is the outstanding figure in contemporary Portuguese fiction, although he died in 1900," wrote Boyd (*Studies from Ten Literatures* [New York: Scribners, 1925], page 190). But he, too, took pains to run down *O Primo Basilio* in terms that were mild echoes of Maurice Thompson's attack thirty-six years earlier:

O Primo Basilio, which is highly esteemed by Portuguese critics as "a masterly, almost perfect book," is actually nothing more than an average specimen of the French Naturalistic school, and Cousin Basilio might have been a creation of Maupassant's, in a Portuguese setting, a more restricted *Bel Ami*. But whereas Maupassant's sensual imagination does not really exceed the limits of Anglo-Saxon decorum, in this book Eça de Queiroz does not shrink from refinements of eroticism worthy of Zola, or rather d'Annunzio, for he is not so crude in his perverse allusions (page 194).

If Boyd had no knowledge of the existence of *Dragon's Teeth*, the fact that Mary J. Serrano had once translated *O Primo Basilio* was not entirely lost in time, for it surfaced in 1953. When announcing the publication of *Cousin Bazilio*, in Roy Campbell's translation, the *New York Times* noted that "fifty years ago" Eça's novel had "appeared here in an expurgated edition under the title *Dragon's Teeth*" (October 5, page 25).

In 1972 Greenwood Press issued a reprint of *Dragon's Teeth*. Currently the book is available as a "Book-On-Demand Reprint," reprinted from microfilm of the original 1889 text.

Os Fidalgos da Casa Mourisca

During her lifetime the American Julia Parker Dabney was the acknowledged artist and best-known writer in the Dabney family that for over a century maintained a presence in the Azores, principally on the island of Fayal. Yet it was not Julia Dabney but Roxana Lewis Dabney (1827-1913) who undertook the daunting task of compiling three volumes of the *Annals of the Dabney Family in Fayal* (Boston: Alfred Mudge and Son, n. d.), beginning her work in 1880 and not reaching its conclusion until the turn of the twentieth century. This work was not translated into Portuguese until a century later when it appeared as *Anais da Família Dabney no Faial* (Horta: Instituto Açoriano de Cultura e do Núcleo Cultural da Horta, 2005). What the Dabneys meant to the Azores throughout the nineteenth century is stated succinctly by Francisco Cota Fagundes, in his introduction to *Stormy Isles: An Azorean Tale* (a translation, published by Gávea-Brown in 1998, of Vitorino Nemésio's *Mau Tempo no Canal*): "The Dabney family of Boston, American consuls and ships' agents from beginning to end of the last century—in addition to being philanthropists and true friends of the Azores—invested a significant portion of their wealth in the construction of attractive little palaces and generally raised the cultural level of the island. They were responsible for introducing the coastal-whaling industry in the Azores" (page xxii).

Given Roxana Dabney's keen interest in setting down the details and course of her family's largely Portuguese history, it seems fitting that she complemented her work on the *Annals* with two published translations. Her first try, in 1867, was a Portuguese version of Mary Botham Howitt's *Strive and Thrive: A Tale as Quem Trabalha Tem Alfaias* (Lisboa: T. Quintino Antunes, 1867), a children's book that tells the story of "a family, suddenly reduced from competence to poverty, and of the

manner in which the reverse is borne by the different members.” *Strive and Thrive* was “trazudido em vulgar por uma senhora,” it is stated on the title-page, but the “senhora” goes nameless. A notation on the catalogue entry for the copy in the Widener Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts indicates that the “translation is attributed to Roxana Lewis Dabney.”

Roxana Dabney’s second translation was a version, into English this time, of *Os Fidalgos da Casa Mourisca*, Júlio Diniz’s fictional family saga, published as *The Fidalgos of the Casa Mourisca* in 1891. Dabney prefaces her translation of Diniz’s novel with an account of the author’s life and literary reputation:

Joaquim Guilherme Gomes Coelho was born in Oporto in 1839. In 1856 he matriculated in the Medico-Surgical School, from which he graduated with honors in 1861. His over-sensitive nature, aggravated, undoubtedly, by the fatal malady which even in his student days caused him much suffering, prevented him from ever practicing his profession. Two of his brothers had died of the same—pulmonary consumption—which may have accounted for the sadness of his first verses, published in 1860, under the pseudonym of “Júlio Diniz.” In 1861-62 he published his first novel, “An English Family,” and from that period until his death, in 1871, he published various tales and romances—mostly of village life—which were highly appreciated, not only for their intrinsic worth, but because they offered a certain novelty to the Portuguese public, nationalizing, as it were, the modern British romance, unknown in Portugal up to that period.

He has been criticised by some of his countrymen for his too great admiration for that school, but foremost among his admirers stands the great Alexandre Herculano; and two of his romances have been dramatized, and are among the Standard Plays of Portugal; the *Rector’s Pupils*, and the *Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca*. This last he wrote in Madeira, in two successive winters, in which he vainly sought for relief from the disease with which he so manfully wrestled. It was while correcting the proof sheets of the *Fidalgos* that he finally gave up the battle—September 12, 1871. One of his contemporaries writes: “The soul of Gomes Coelho was as pure and ingenuous as the scenes he so delicately depicts. His spirit is embodied in his works and will live as long as we know how to appreciate the beautiful in art” (pages iii-iv).

On March 6 the *New York Times* listed *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca* under “Books Received,” and on 14 March, both *The*

Dial (Chicago) and the *New-York Daily Tribune* listed it under, respectively, "Publications Received" (volume 15, page 148) and "Books of the Week" (page 8). A week later, in his "Boston Letter" to *The Critic* (New York), Nathan Haskell Dole devoted several paragraphs to the book and its translator, along with a prediction about the future for the publication of Portuguese literature in America:

About three years ago, in a note to Mr. [William Dean] Howells, I predicted that the next great literature to be exploited would be the Portuguese. Unknown to outsiders, that little out-of-the-way corner of the world, Portugal, has of late years developed a remarkable number of powerful novelists. Then there is the great empire of Brazil,—now a republic,—with its own tremendous problems of emancipation and revolution, both worked out peacefully and without bloodshed. Such epoch-making changes have an influence on literature, and the crop of writers which has been springing up during the past decade will be reinforced in the ten years to come.

It looks now as though the awakening to the splendors of Portuguese fiction had already begun. *Dragon's Teeth*, translated by Mrs. Serrano, was the first, if I mistake not; since then there have been several, and the latest edition is such a delightfully fresh and wholesome book—not on especially original lines, but with a wonderfully realistic atmosphere. If I may so speak—that it ought to be a precursor to a long list. I refer to Miss Roxana L. Dabney's translation of Coelho's *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca*, a work which has been dramatised and is a stand play in Portugal. The Dabneys have long been identified with Portuguese Fayal. Miss Dabney's grandfather, her father, and now her brother have successively acted as United States Consul at Fayal. Through Mr. Hastings Hughes, brother of "Tom" Hughes, I learn that Mr. Dabney's father was one of the most unselfish American patriots during the Civil War. In order to prevent blockade-running of the Southern ports he bought up the entire coal supply of Fayal, and refused to sell to Confederate cruisers, thereby incurring the enmity of Capt. Sumner of the Alabama, and obliging himself to sail his ship Azores under the British flag and a different name. This same ship carried free the full freight of coin sent to Fayal by Boston philanthropists during the famine there twenty years ago. By such acts Mr. Dabney made his name dear to every peasant on the island.

Miss Dabney, to whom Portuguese is almost a native tongue, and who is familiar with Portuguese habits and customs, makes an admirable interpreter for "Júlio Diniz," as Senhor Coelho calls himself. Her English is simple and fluent, though not with-

out a certain touch of quaintness which only adds to its charm.

But there are many more Portuguese novels that deserve attention: I may mention *A Reliquia*, by Eça de Queiros, *O Primo Brazilio*, *O Crima do Padre Amaro*, and a dozen other stories by Teofilo Braga, Oliviera Martins, Antero de Quental, Tomás Ribiero, and others. I prognosticate that many of these will be transferred to English before long. D. Lothrop Co. are much pleased with Miss Dabney's work" (volume 15, pages 155-56).

Several observations about Dole's remarks are in order. Obviously he does not know that *Dragon's Teeth* was the title given to Mary J. Serrano's translation of Eça de Queirós's novel *O Primo Basílio*, published by Ticknor in Boston in 1889. As for the statement that there were translations of several other Portuguese novels published in America between 1889—when *Dragon's Teeth* appeared—and 1891—when *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca* was published, there were, to the best of my knowledge, no English-language versions of any other Portuguese novels published in the United States. Too obvious to be singled out and named, moreover, are the mistakes Dole makes in setting down the names of Portuguese writers and the titles of their books are obvious and need not be singled out.

On March 23 the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published a review of the Dabney translation titled "Charming Portuguese Romance":

D. Lothrop Company, the Boston publishers, are to be congratulated in finding the very charming Portuguese romance, "The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca," by Júlio Diniz, the English translation being made by Roxana L. Dabney. "Júlio Diniz" was the pen name of Joaquim Guilherme Gomes Coelho, who was born at Oporto in 1830. He studied medicine, graduating in 1861, and died in 1871 of consumption. He died, in fact, while correcting the proof sheets of this novel now introduced to American readers. Several of his romances have been dramatized, and have a permanent place upon the Portuguese stage. The present novel, it is evident, readily lends itself to dramatization, it being one of the author's agreeable methods not to linger long enough upon a situation or episode to exhaust its interest. He passes swiftly, almost simply from one episode to another. "The Fidalgos" is a pastoral romance, an idyll of Portuguese country life. The old Portuguese aristocrat is portrayed in Don Luiz; the change from the old order to the new, after the revolution and the constitution granted by Don Pedro, is illustrated in his son Jorge, who, with the assistance of the farmer Thome, restores the family estates by the earnest study and industrious practice of agriculture. The love between Jorge and the

beautiful Bertha, daughter of Thome, culminates, in spite of family pride and prejudice, in the union of the old order and the new.

"The Fidalgos" is a first and easy lesson in democracy for the Spanish aristocrat.

To the American reader, aside from the charm of a simple and unaffected love narrative, it is interesting because it portrays the strength of the caste feeling in Portugal and Portuguese rural life. It is a genuine romance, without, we had almost said, being romantic, if such thing can be. (page 8)

On March 26, under "Books Received," the *Christian Union* (New York) listed *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca* (volume 43, page 416). Two days later Diniz's novel was reviewed in *The Literary World* (Boston):

Roxana L. Dabney has done good service to novel readers in translating this story by Joaquin G. G. Coelho, whose no de guerre was Júlio Dinos [sic]. Delicate and simple in his literary tastes, he depicted the village life of his country as it might be if English industry conquered Portuguese pride of ancestry and indolence. His emphasis on character in opposition to rank was delightful to the middle-class people of his land, who regarded his novels as harbingers of equality. The directness and vivacity of this tale remind the reader of Jane Austen, and there is sufficient plot to offset the prosy conversations; these, however, are always short. The book treats a life so different from our own that it well repays perusal (volume 22, page 111).

On March 30 *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca* was favorably reviewed under "New Novels" in the *New-York Daily Tribune*:

The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca is a Portuguese novel, written twenty years ago by Gomes Colebo [sic], a popular author in his own country, under the nom-de-plume of Julia [sic] Diniz. It introduces us to quite a new field of fiction. On the one hand we find a class of ancient nobles, whose obstinate adherence to feudal ideas has thrown them back upon themselves, ruined their estates, and left them only pride and poverty; on the other hand is shown the new Portugal, based on thrift, energy and sense, which is rapidly transferring the wealth and influence of the Nation to a young generation having no claims of blood, but a very hearty faith in self-help and liberal doctrines. The principal characters here are an old, proud and impecunious fidalgo and his sons, and a prosperous former retainer of the decayed nobleman, who has risen while his old master was sinking. Love plays an important part in the

story, and in the end acts as a universal solvent. The author writes well and strongly, and invests the unfamiliar scenery and action with an interest sufficient to overcome this strangeness. It is evidently drawn from and to the life, and it proves that Portuguese fiction in its higher rank has no apologies to make or allowances to claim in competing with the literature of other countries (page 30).

An advertisement in *The Nation* (New York) on April 9 quotes the *Brooklyn Times* to the effect that *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca* "can be read with interest alike for the story's sake, the refined manner of its telling, and the fact that it is one of the first and one of the best of modern Portuguese romances introduced to American readers" (volume 52, page iv). *The Nation* had listed the novel as one of its "Books of the Week" on March 26 (page 272). On April 11, under "News and Notes," *The Literary World* reported that the father of Miss Dabney, the book's translator, was the Consul of Fayal, "who gave free freight in his vessel to the cargo of corn sent by Boston friends during the famine" and who, during the Civil War helped to "prevent blockade-running" (volume 22, page 133).

On April 25 *The Literary World* ran Lothrop's advertisement for *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca*, quoting from *The Literary World's* own review of March 28: "The directness and vivacity of this tale remind me of Jane Austen" (volume 22, page 150), as well as the publisher's own puff: "In Portuguese literature we have a new and unexplored field, and the very freshness and novelty lend zest to the reader. *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca* presents in most attractive form the best phases of Portuguese life, and shows the struggle between the old aristocratic ideas that formerly held sway and the progress of modern thought" (volume 22, page 150).

In May, under "Brief Comment: Literary Doings," *Current Literature* alluded to Nathan Haskell Dole's prediction of "a speedy exploitation of Portuguese literature by translators" (volume 7, pages 156-57). On May 3, the *Morning Olympian* (Olympia, Washington) published the following notice:

"The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca," a pleasing love romance and an agreeable story, is translated by Roxana L. Dabney from the Portuguese of Gomes Coelho. This was the last novel of the author, who died 20 years ago at the age of 32. He admired the modern English fashion of story telling, and imitated and introduced it in his own country. He is better known, perhaps, under the pen name of "Júlio Diniz." The story is well calculated to interest American readers in the best phrase of Portuguese literature and can be read with interest alike for the story's sake, the refined

manner of its telling, and the fact that it is one of the first and one of the best of the modern Portuguese romances to be introduced to American readers (page 2).

On May 30, under "Recent Fiction," *The Critic* published a short review of *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca*:

Translated from the Portuguese of Joaquim Guilherme Gomes Coelho ("Júlio Diniz") by Roxana L. Dabney, is spoil for the English novel-reader taken from comparatively fresh territory. The story itself is one of provincial life amid the changing political and economic conditions of a half-century ago in Portugal. The love parts of it strike one as peculiarly unsophisticated, passion at first sight, and declaration almost, being as common as in a fairy story. The characters of Thomè, the farmer, and Don Luiz, the decayed nobleman, are drawn with the most distinctness. The translation, aside from some slight inconsistencies in the rendering of proper names and titles, appears to be thoroughly good. The reader will find in Mr. Dole's Boston letter in *The Critic* of March 21 some interesting facts about Miss Dabney, the translator (volume 15, page 286).

In "Recent Books of Fiction," an omnibus review in the June issue of *The Dial*, William Morton Payne wrote approvingly:

One more novel from the Iberian peninsula claims our attention, and directs it to a literature almost unknown to English readers,—that of Portugal. The name of Coelho is as unfamiliar as a name well can be, and yet, to judge from *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca*, it is one to conjure with. This work is a beautiful example of a type common enough in Continental fiction,—the type which aims to depict the conflict between conservatism and liberalism, between aristocracy and democracy, between old ideas and new. For the current of that Revolution which has swept away the old order of things in France and Italy, and which is fast sweeping it away in the Teutonic North, has not passed by the lands beyond the Pyrenees; and even Portugal, perhaps the last of European countries to feel the influence, has awakened to the consciousness that "God fulfils himself in many ways." But the course of the current there, as elsewhere, has not been unimpeded, and many a feudal custom, many a proud family, has long resisted the invading flood of the modern spirit. To describe such a family, with its characteristic modes of life and thought, was the task of Senhor Coelho in this story, as the title indicates, for "fidalgo" is obviously the Portuguese form of "hidalgo," and the term "Casa

Mourisca” is used in the sense in which Jules Sandreau made “La Maison de Penarvan,” the title of one of his most charming stories. Indeed, we have often been reminded of that work in reading Senhor Coelho’s novel. For the Portuguese romance has the same grace and simplicity of style, presents the same sort of ideals, and offers the same contrast between the aristocrat, on the one hand, and the industrious, self-made, self-respecting farmer, on the other. And in both stories alike, the younger generation puts an end to the estrangement of feeling characteristic of the elder, and the old spirit becomes wedded, both literally and symbolically, with the new (volume 12, pages 52-53).

Lothrop’s advertisement in *The Critic* for June 13 quoted from both *The Literary World* (“The directness and vivacity of this tale remind the reader of Jane Austen”) and the *Chicago Times* (“An example of the best modern Portuguese fiction very fluently and very cleverly Englished”) (volume 15, page 1). (The advertisement is repeated in *The Literary World* [November 21, 1891], volume 22, page 457.) *The Fidalgos of Casa Mourisca* was listed as one of “The Best Books of 1891” by *The Literary World* in its issue for January 2, 1892 (volume 23, page 8).

But its favorable reviews and its appearance on *The Literary World*’s year-end list did not bring Diniz’s novel an American success. It did not help, moreover, that its publisher, the D. Lothrop Company, according to the *New York Times* on January 6, 1894 (page 1), failed in the early days of January 1894. The fate of Roxana Dabney’s *Fidalgos of the Casa Mourisca* was to be entirely forgotten. But there were two exceptions. In 1898 it was one of two Portuguese novels (Eça’s *Dragon’s Teeth* was the other) recommended by the *New York Times* as useful reading to anyone interested in “Spain, History and Description” (April 23, page BR274); and in 1902 remaindered copies of the novel were being sold at New York City’s Wanamaker Store for twenty cents apiece (*New York Times*, September 16, page 4).

Appendix

The review mentioned by the American novelist and journalist Harold Frederic in his report from London for the *New York Times* was published in the July 13, 1889 issue of *The Academy* (volume 36, pages 15-16). Its author was Oswald Crawford (1834-1909). A diplomat with extended service in Lisbon, Crawford published three books about Portugal: *Travels in Portugal* (as “John Latouche”) (1875), *Portugal Old and New*

(1880) and *Round the Calendar in Portugal* (1890). Crawford's sympathetic review is especially remarkable for its willingness to distinguish Eça de Queiros's talents and achievement from those of the literary Naturalist Zola or his followers.

"A Portuguese Novel"

Dragon's Teeth. A Novel from the Portuguese of Senhor Eça de Queiroz, translated by Mary J. Serrano. (Boston: Ticknor; London: Trübner.)

If the "naturalists" go on much longer on their present lines, if they refuse to abate anything of the full rigour of their theories, they will go some way to push the novel out of sight and mind altogether, and let in that ancient enemy of the novel—the drama. No moderate-minded critic, indeed, can deny the great service that is being done to fiction by these realistic innovators—even by the most narrow and intolerant of them. It seems to me that they have done, and are doing, for literature what the Pre-Raphaelites did for painting. There is certainly a realistic Slough of Despond to be waded through before we can reach to firm ground beyond; and the novelist and his readers must do this penance and suffer this expiation for a good deal of weak, false, and over-sentimental fiction that has lately been in favour.

In the mud of this same Slough the weakling sticks, the strong man shall win through. For the present, therefore, we must put up with dirty ways and rough traveling; but there is a limit. There are, we all know, many honest, moderate, and intelligent readers whom no theorist shall ever persuade that the art of fiction is not something beyond a mere demonstration of the pessimistic theory of human life, and who will have it that a story should be something more than a photographic representation of the acts and deeds and motives and talk of commonplace mean-minded men and women. No argument, no mockery, no clever writing of realistic novels, with nothing unsavoury and disagreeable in life left out, shall persuade these moderate-minded readers and critics that fiction, rightly considered, is not an interpretation of life through art methods, rather than a minute reiteration of its meaner details. Such critics will never allow that the higher fiction is not a seizing of the essential and salient points rather than a conglomerate of everything. The Zolaists claim to know everything of the ways of this world, and to set down all they know; but, granting for argument's sake that they are omniscient, it may be urged that omniscience, recording all it knows, would achieve an absolutely unreadable novel, unreadable for length and monotony. The

Zolaists, to do them justice, have never gone quite so far as this. Their novels are not mere photographs. To a considerable extent they are, in spite of their author's theories, selections of salient points, often admirable presentments of life—of such life as has been passed through the mental alembic of men of undoubted literary talent. It is the alembic itself that there is some reason to quarrel with. It is the imperfect vision, the extraordinarily limited vision, that seems to those who do not accept all their methods, or perhaps share all their blindness, to vitiate their best work.

M. Zola and his disciples have treated all schools and all methods but their own with such contumely and contempt that it is difficult in our turn not to be contemptuous of their intolerance. To take but one point in the new doctrine—the Zolaistic abhorrence of the hero and the villain. Is it really a fact that there are no men who, in the drama of life, act atrociously, none who play their parts nobly and well? My personal experience is quite the other way, and I express it the more confidently because a chain of great men from Shakspeare to Victor Hugo are dead against M. Zola on this point. I absolutely refuse to believe that M. Zola and his young friends of the Paris Boulevards know more of life than Shakspeare and Molière, Dickens and Balzac. Everyone of these greater writers admits the existence of that neutral tint of meanness and self-seeking, which is the dominant colouring on the Zolaists' canvas, but everyone of them has shown that he is aware too of a soul of good in the world as well as a soul of evil. To make a true report of life they personify the one as a hero and the other as a villain.

Now, in examining the work of the great Portuguese novelist, Senhor Eça de Queiroz, it is well to bear this particular point in mind. The Portuguese novelist is a "naturalist" of the school of M. Zola, but he is hardly a follower. It will presently be shown how he has refused to accept this particular tenet and many others of his master. He is so extreme a realist that it would be easy in this very novel to pick out a passage or two that would, should, bring a blush to the cheek of M. Zola himself, if, since *La Terre*, that eminent writer has not got beyond this particular demonstration of emotion. This, the realists will say, is a performance to be proud of; but Senhor Eça's hardest critic will admit that in his pages, though he never shirks plain speech, there is never "Dirt for Dirt's Sake."

Dragon's Teeth is the translation into fair English of Senhor Eça de Queiroz's best novel, *O Primo Bazilio*. The translator's title appears to be an invention of her own. It is, perhaps, a tolerably taking and appropriate title from the lending library point of view, but in dealing with a masterpiece it would have been a hundred times better to stick to the book's true name.

Senhor Eça de Queiroz is at present not only the most eminent novelist of Portugal, but of the whole Peninsula; and what is odd is that he has found favour with the reading public of Spain and Portugal by literary methods which are the reverse of those followed in either of these two very literary nations. To a northern taste, the fault of Peninsular prose literature is an over-rhetorical tendency. Senhor Eça de Queiroz is a close student of both English and French literature; and he is as direct and concentrated as a good English writer, as logical and pointed and graceful as a Frenchman. In strength, in manly directness, and in literary charm, M. Guy de Maupassant comes nearest to Senhor Eça de Queiroz of any Frenchman of his school. In general power, in knowledge of life, in breadth, in tolerance (not a common trait among the Naturalists), I should be inclined to place him above every living disciple of the eminent half-Italian Pessimist who is at the head of French realistic fiction.

It is strange, therefore, that Senhor Eça de Queiroz, notwithstanding a French translation of one of his novels, should be so completely ignored as he is in France, when he has so many great qualities that should recommend him there. In Spain, in spite of the jealousy between that country and its Atlantic neighbour, his merits are generously confessed. The Spaniards praise his fluent and flexible style, his narrative power, his ease, his strength, his pathos, and his humour: on the latter point (a delicate one to handle) I shall presently have something to say.

O Primo Bazilio is a tragedy interspersed, as life's tragedy itself is interspersed, with comedy passages. Jorge is a young mining engineer happily married to a beautiful girl, Luiza. She is gay, gentle, bright, affectionate, and loves her husband dearly. As the book opens, he is about to leave her for a month on business; and she reads in a newspaper that her cousin Bazilio is returning to Lisbon from Brazil. Bazilio has been her first love, the hero of an innocent boy and girl flirtation long before her marriage. Compelled by poverty to leave her and his country, he has made his fortune by speculation in Brazil, and is on his way home after a stay in Paris. She is pleased to think she will see him again, recalling this romantic episode in her life somewhat contemptuously, steadfast in her love for her husband. He goes and Bazilio comes. He is handsome, distinguished, knowing the world, the merely mercenary world of Paris. He can speak to her of things—art, literature, and the easy, social ethics of the world—which, for the commonplace, excellent Jorge has no existence. Slowly his influence grows upon her, the old illusion revives. She does not guess the man's true character—his heartlessness, his disloyalty, his meanness, still less his contempt for herself in his mental comparison of her with the stars of the

Parisian *demi-monde*. Then comes a realistic tale of seduction: his false wooing; her weak yielding. Their secret is discovered by her servant, Juliana; and thenceforward the plot turns on what is a more frequent motive in French than in English stories, the “black-mailing” of the mistress by her servant. But the woman Juliana is a good deal more than a mere extortioner; it is more than the wringing of money from her mistress that she wants. In all realistic fiction perhaps no such villainous and hateful character exists. She sinks so far below the average low level of naturalistic commonplace iniquity that in common fairness of moral adjustment the reader needs a counterpoise in the direction of heroism, but he gets none. Juliana is a thin, hard-featured woman of forty, suffering from chronic heart disease. She concentrates all her envious hatred of mankind upon the person of her gentle and pretty mistress. This awful female villain accumulates in her own wretched person pretty nearly every vice that has won the loathing of men since the ages began—perfidy, meanness, cruelty, and greed: She is a liar and a bully, and hideously ill-favoured. For the first time in her own miserable life she feels delight as she persecutes the helpless Luiza: she sings, rubs her hands, and laughs out at times suddenly with secret glee. Mistress and servant almost change places: the maid compels the unhappy lady, under threats of exposure, to perform menial services: to wash, sweep, iron; and in this long passage of the story, the revolted pride, the agony of continual terror, the unceasing humiliations of the persecuted woman are depicted with a force, a painful realism, and a truth that are beyond praise—in their kind.

Before this, Luiza has had recourse to her lover to save her. Bazilio absolutely refuses to move in the matter. In a powerful scene his true nature is revealed to her. The scales fall from her eyes, and she sees his dishonourable cowardice, his disloyalty, his baseness, and his utter selfishness. Her illusions end, her love turns to hatred and contempt. She has to bear all the cruel tyranny of Juliana unhelped. Bazilio, under a false pretext, too mean himself to discover that he can have failed to come up to his mistress’s standard of right doing, and still believing himself loved, has gone to Paris. The husband returns. The letters are recovered without scandal by a friend from the woman Juliana, who, in her excitement, dies suddenly of a spasm of the disease that has threatened her all through. The old love and liking for her husband, Jorge, return to the vacillating Luiza. She is nearly happy again, wrapped in a false sense of security, when an accident reveals the intrigue to the husband. For a time he suffers in silence, nurses his wife through an illness, still loving her at heart, and is generous to the point of condonation, but more through weakness and complaisance than any action of those higher or nobler motives of toler-

ance that lead to true pardon. She recovers, and he tells her he is aware of her secret, and, in the same breath, offers to forgive her; but the blow is too heavy. She gives way, is struck with brain fever, and dies miserably. Such is the plot of this remarkable work; and it is told with a concentrated strength, a dramatic power, and an ease that can come only from a master's hand.

The Spanish critics find wit and truth in the passages that satirise some national and some Peninsular habits and methods of thought. A foreigner can hardly enquire very closely into the truth or propriety of these sarcasms, but there is no doubt whatever about their power. Senhor Eça de Queiroz's humour, too, has been praised. There is nothing upon which men so differ as the causes which stir them to laughter; but to the present writer the Portuguese novelist's humour seems to dwell too much upon the inevitable defects and misfortunes of mankind to be very laughter-moving. Some things are surely too pitiful to be laid bare. *Sunt lacrimae rerum*; and disease, and defect, and deformity are not fit subjects for ridicule. We all know them too well. We mark them, we pity, or pass on. We do ill to laugh.

Such a book is not easy to translate. Apart from the literal rendering which Miss Serrano has done creditably—she does not seem well acquainted with Portuguese ways of life. A few notes would have been useful, but there are none but such as relate to the value of Portuguese money in American dollars. Portuguese is the most crabbed and difficult of all the Romance tongues, and the one most remote in construction from English; but that is no reason why certain Portuguese words should be left standing in the English rendering. *Um conto de reis* occurs a dozen times over. It has no sense for English readers, but its plain rendering, "a million of reis," is quite intelligible. At times Senhor Eça de Queiroz uses strong expressions; but they have all perfect English equivalents, and the translator of a realistic novel should not pare down such a book as this into a false propriety. There was no compulsion on her to touch the work at all. Miss Serrano, in her preface, says that she has "assumed the responsibility of softening here and there, and even of at times effacing a line too sharply drawn, a light or a shadow too strongly marked to please a taste that has been largely formed on Puritanic models." She has indeed! Her Puritan hand has been very busy. I will not say too busy in every case; but it should be remembered by prim translators that the architecture of fiction is delicately built up, and that it is of masonry most lightly poised. It is possible to take away one single stone and bring ruin on the whole structure.

In the last sentence of the last page the translator has removed one such master-stone. Bazilio has returned from Paris,

and, knowing nothing of the tragedy that has occurred, knocks at Luiza's door. He learns the story of her death. He is shocked, and for a moment or two dumb-founded. The reader is not aware of the full heartlessness, grossness, and baseness of the man till he turns to his companion with the remark: "Que ferro! Podia ter trazido a Alphonsine!" This phrase the translator has not rendered. Better to have left the whole work untranslated! It is the keystone of the arch.

Although Senhor Eça de Queiroz, as will have been seen, is a professing follower of M. Zola, he is too good a novelist to substitute in his pages a theory of life for life itself. The Zolaistic groove is too narrow for him, and he is for ever leaving it, daring at one time to be dramatic, at another to be deeply pathetic, sometimes even to be indignant with vice and meanness after a very un-Zolaistic fashion. Senhor Eça de Queiroz is still, fortunately for himself and us, a young man: he has a promising future before him. He has been well advised, perhaps, to enlist as a recruit under M. Zola. But these aforesaid great qualities show that he has no need of a leader, and when he comes to add to them some little enthusiasm for what is high and noble, he will desert the realistic colours altogether and fight, as in literature every strong man should, for his own hand.

A final bibliographical note about *Dragon's Teeth*. That the copy of the book Crawford is reviewing is identified as having been co-published by Ticknor (Boston) and Trübner (London) suggests that Trübner imported books or sheets of *Dragon's Teeth*. The title-page of any copy of this "English" edition might well answer the question, especially if the title-page itself is a cancellation. Interestingly, Trübner's advertisements in *The Athenæum* during the months January through August 1889 fail to mention *Dragon's Teeth*. Perhaps the absorption of Ticknor's by Houghton Mifflin that spring has something to do with Trübner's apparent lack of interest in the novel. In any case, Trübner goes unmentioned in Guerra da Cal's description of the 1889 publication of *Dragon's Teeth* (*Lengua y Estilo de Eça de Queiroz* [Coimbra: Por Ordem da Universidade, 1975], volume 1, page 48).