

## **IN PORTUGAL (1912): AUBREY BELL'S DEPICTION OF PORTUGUESE SOCIETY UNDER THE FIRST REPUBLIC\***

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Aubrey Fitz Gerald Bell can be well compared to a “Renaissance scholar” whose interests, talents and activities span a wide variety of disciplines. This extraordinary researcher, translator, literary critic, journalist, editor, geographer, skilful and passionate gardener and keen excursionist in the Iberian Peninsula, must be, before anything else, seen as a premier lusophile and hispanist of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During his lifetime he produced more than a hundred publications dedicated to Spanish and Portuguese literatures, histories, cultures, literary criticism and even geography (always spoken of in his travelogues). Even though we have to consider him a scholar dedicated to both Iberian countries, his commitment does not seem equal; with time Bell became a natural and convinced lusophile, who, thanks to his singular and penetrating insight into the Portuguese character, his first-hand knowledge of Portuguese literature, history, customs and traditions, as well as his empirical observation of everyday Portuguese life (due to his long residence in this country), was able to call the attention of his compatriots to this small Iberian country and assert the position of its literature in the European literary framework.

In his writings Bell promoted the myth of the South, depicting

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both Spain and Portugal as two remnants of a precapitalist era, with underdeveloped societies, old traditions, antiquated cultures and ways of life. He saw civilization and industry as a threat to human liberty, ancient customs, old-standing traditions, as well as to the integrity of each nation. Bell would go against the tide of history, back to the times in which travelers used to go on foot through a desolate country like vagabonds. It is true to say, though, that by defending that reality, the lusophile, beguiled with fantasies and illusions about real life around him, would justify socio-economic backwardness, illiteracy and poverty (Read 180).

Bell and Prestage were the first scholars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to have largely contributed to the promotion of Iberian literatures, treated till then by many as subsidiary and secondary. Bell was a foreigner, an outsider, who would always advocate in favour of Iberian literature; according to César Domínguez, Aubrey Fitz Gerald Bell could not “help seeing space and those who inhabit it through literature” (Aseguinolaza 63). This opinion is confirmed by numerous citations from Iberian Literature provided by Bell in all of the chapters of two of his travelogues (*In Portugal* and *Spanish Galicia*). In the opinion of Malcolm Kevin Read, Aubrey Bell belongs to those early hispanists, “mystics who worshipped before the monuments of the past, the most notable of which is Literature” (179).

For the author the notion of space, distance and geography was crucial to his understanding of Iberian peoples and their literatures. Spanish literature is, in Bell’s view, just like the country’s territory, vast, for it embraces many peoples, regions, dialects and themes. Although, he admits, some Spanish writers and poets would imitate great Italian and French masters, “in its many masterpieces it has a flavour of the soil, a local colouring that it is all its own” (Bell, *The Magic of Spain* 142). Portuguese literature, on the other hand, unlike its small territory, is extensive, rich and complete. Aubrey Bell asserts, “Portuguese literature is the greatest that a small country has produced, except for Ancient Greece” (my translation) (Bell, *Alguns Aspectos da Lit. Port.* 23).

Some of Bell’s publications and opinions prove to be valid and still wield some influence in the field of literature, literary criticism and translation. For Antônio Figueiredo, his work on Luis de León and the Spanish Renaissance is indispensable (10). The same book, in the opinion of Dopico Black, “remains the authoritative biography on Fray Luis,” (51) and *Portuguese Literature* is, according to Dilevko, Dali and Garbutt, “still considered a classic of the field and ... is highly recommended for

its erudite analysis of literary movements and writers from the period 1185-910" (272). Moreover, several translations by Aubrey Bell continued in use for many years and were largely appreciated,<sup>1</sup> mostly for their precision and accuracy (for he would always avoid omissions) (Odber de Baubeta 65).

We learn from Bell that Portugal and Spain, although incomparable in terms of territory, are both regionally diverse, and marked by socio-cultural, linguistic and historical differentiations. Bell captures similarities and differences that exist between the two nations and between specific Iberian regions; differences that are relevant for the comprehension of particular features that define the identity of the Iberian peoples. He looks carefully at the characteristics and behaviours of the Portuguese, Castilians, Galicians, Basques, Catalans and the Valencians, capturing traits that are shared by the members of Iberian cultures and that delineate unique, individual qualities of each group.

In *Spanish Galicia* Bell traces back the origin of the Portuguese nation and illustrates the common roots of Galician, Portuguese and Spanish literature. In various writings dedicated to Portuguese and Galician poetry Bell attempts to define and picture the meaning of the word *saudade*<sup>2</sup> that describes the character of these two populations. Bell actually challenged himself several times to translate this word and explain its meaning to the English reader. According to him, *saudade* may possibly have an Arabic origin, deriving from the word "saudai" (Wheeler 248), however, "para *saudade*," says Bell, "se buscão em vão equivalentes em outras linguas" ("A Palavra 'Saudade' em Gallego" 18).

Bell also examines and compares such questions as the presence of the Church in the life of Iberian peoples, their devotedness or anticlericalism, the political situation, climate, customs and languages that are, in many aspects, remarkably similar in Portugal and Spain, yet some analogies are fanciful and merely superficial, what the author carefully tended to prove along his career path.

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<sup>1</sup> Bell's translation of *The Relic* enjoyed a well-deserved popularity till 1994, when another translation of the book appeared. In the opinion of Richard Sullivan, a reviewer of *The New York Times Book Review*, Bell's translation is "so lively and graceful that it almost suggests that the work had been originally composed in this racy English prose."

<sup>2</sup> V. In *Portugal*, 1912: 7-9, 40; *Studies in Portuguese Literature*, 1914: x, 21, 50, 103, 147, 148, 173, 189, 233, 238; "A Palavra 'Saudade' em Gallego." *A Águia* 49, 1916: 18-20; *Portugal of the Portuguese*, 1917: 5, 10, 48, 94, 140, 262; *Portuguese Literature*, 1922: 103, 132-155, 185, 234, 303, 312, 327, 331, 333, 334, 335, 343, 354; *Spanish Galicia*, 1922: 27, 86, 193.

In *Portugal of the Portuguese* the author reviews the history of Portugal that was continuously disturbed by the uncertainty of the mutual relations between the two nations. Indeed, Aubrey Bell was able to detect and interpret the signs of that particular, bilateral dislike and animosity between the Iberian countries. He observes: "...the Castilian tends to despise the Portuguese, and the Portuguese returns this dislike in flowing measure" (Bell, *In Portugal* 4). This troubled relationship merited, according to Aubrey Bell, a separate chapter of *In Portugal*, which he dedicated to a small piece of land between Elvas and Badajoz, entitled "Where Lusitania and her sister meet."<sup>3</sup> In his belief, that territory is, paradoxically, most typically Portuguese and represents a clear contrast with the near city of Badajoz and people who inhabit it. He comments: "in no part of Portugal shall one find dresses and faces more characteristically Portuguese than here at Elvas within sight of Badajoz and Spain, nowhere is the fundamentally different temper of the two peoples more apparent" (Bell, *In Portugal* 198-199).

At times Bell gives but a tenuous hint of kinship and affinity that he felt more for Portugal than for Spain; about the work of artisans, he says: "indeed, while the Spanish make things for show rather than for use, and the French for a little of both, the Portuguese agrees with the English making them with a regard for comfort and a sublime unconcern for the look of them" (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 21). This fondness also extends to the Portuguese people, whose calmness and patience is boundless. That small border town (Elvas) and the people there made him feel comfortable and relaxed; he reveals: "the general impression is of quietness and good humour, a quietness of voice and word that is not to be found in Spain" (Bell, *In Portugal* 198). However, it must be also admitted that Bell clearly identified with the Spanish rebellious spirit too, being himself a self-exile from his homeland and an exile from society (Read 21). What is more, his dedication to Hispanism made him an acknowledged scholar in the area and, in the opinion of many, one of the leading exponents of the discipline of Hispanic Studies.

Aubrey Bell felt himself well fitted into the societies that were backward and old-fashioned. Rejecting the present and the modern, he would align himself with the past and the archaic. Malcolm Kevin Read concludes that Bell's "journey to the South becomes," in reality, "a journey into the past" (24). Indeed,

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<sup>3</sup> "Where Lusitania and her sister meet" is the first line of the 32<sup>nd</sup> stanza of Canto the First of Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

Aubrey Bell's publications convey a strong air of nostalgia about the past, as well as a deep concern about the present and the future of these two countries; the author sought to capture and preserve the virtues of the traditional Spain and Portugal, he saw vanishing before his eyes.

### **Aubrey Bell and Portugal: from the Republic to the *Estado Novo* (New State)**

Aubrey Bell's "adventure" with Portugal started in 1911, more or less one year after the Republic had been established. Nonetheless, the author must have already had some vague sense of the political life under the First Spanish Republic (1873-1874) from literature, thus his first impressions and ideas of the newborn Portuguese Republic were highly unfavourable. He never recanted any of his views, on the contrary, with time his opinions became even more negative and his critic more acute. The lusophile's hostility and resentment against the Republic and its politicians resulted in his few months' imprisonment in 1912.

The reason and the moment for Bell's arrest were clearly justifiable: after the Republic was founded (5 October 1910), the rightists and conservatives had to turn to conspiracy and go underground. Yet the apparent calmness did not lull the Republicans into a false sense of security, they remained on alert in case of disturbances or a counterrevolution. Bell, though, understood that political behaviour and the measures of precaution as excessive and unfounded. He expresses his criticism in *Portugal of the Portuguese* in the following way: "the chief evil in Portugal has been the imagination of evil, the fear of disease doing much to encourage or aggravate the disease" (220).

There were various causes of the fall of the Monarchy in Portugal, and many of them date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To begin with, some historians connect the fall of the Monarchy with the departure of the King and the Royal family to Brazil upon the Napoleonic invasion in 1808. Due to an unstable political situation in the homeland, their return to Portuguese soil was delayed till 1822. This attitude, however, was looked upon with widespread distrust and, gradually, the institution of the Monarchy started to be considered as dispensable, seeing that the Monarch ceased to represent the nation's will. The concept of popular sovereignty and the principles of universal suffrage started increasingly to come to the fore.

British involvement in the Peninsular War was viewed with deep scepticism and mistrust by the Portuguese, as the Royal

family, in their flight to Brazil in 1808, travelled under British naval protection (and, most importantly, after they had been convinced by British diplomacy to flee from the Old Continent). However, it was the British Ultimatum of 1890 that gave rise to strong anti-British sentiments in Portugal (in the country's capital a mob stormed the British consulate and in Oporto the *Liga Patriótica do Norte* railed at the British citizens residing in this country) (Müller 197). The British Ultimatum put an end to Portuguese imperial ambitions and subjected Portugal to a painful, international humiliation, following a withdrawal of Portuguese military forces from the area between Angola and Mozambique, known as the "Pink Map." To many in the country, yielding to such an embarrassing demand from the British signified the weakness of the Portuguese Crown.

An essential element of the change in the panorama of nineteenth-century Portugal was an emergence of the proletariat demanding social justice and economic equality. The steady growth and agglomeration of the city of Lisbon was reflected by a rapidly increasing number of newcomers who, illiterate and deprived of the right to vote, started to form a new social and political power. This new power (the Partido Socialista, since 1875, the Partido Republicano, since 1876, and the Union forces) started to effectively influence the political life by questioning the old social order and the rotativist methods of election.

Another group that can be identified as a key one in the political agenda of the time was the Carbonária. Aubrey Fitz Gerald Bell dedicates three paragraphs of the chapter "Politics and the Press" in *Portugal of the Portuguese* (Bell 180-182) to describe this group and its status in the political realm. "These devoted defenders of the Republic," (Bell 180) as he calls them, were made up of the plebs of the capital, as well as of students, urban bureaucracy (clerks, legal officers, etc.) and sergeants. It was this group that was directly involved in the assassination of King Carlos I of Portugal and Prince Luís Filipe, Duke of Braganza, his heir to the throne, in 1908. Not disbanded after the Revolution, the "White Ants," as they were sometimes referred to, contributed largely to the political instability in the first years of the Republic, often resorting to terrorist methods of operation.

The international economic crisis (1890-1891) had a huge impact on the Portuguese economy, which, after several years of increasing inflation rates and decline, suffered bankruptcy in 1891. The monetary crisis significantly influenced Portuguese financial policy, causing many public investments to be postponed, curtailed or cancelled. Nonetheless, the Ministério das

Obras Públicas, Comércio e Indústria (created in 1852) launched a development programme meant to introduce into Portugal the latest technological developments, such as the telegraph, the telephone and the railroad. It is important to observe that, despite major economic difficulties, Portugal was the sixth country in the world to have a public telephone system.

All in all, the last twenty years of the Monarchy were marked by oligarchization, corruption, caciquism and ungovernability, due to the system of rotativism, with two parties always alternating in power: the Partido Progressista and the Partido Regenerador, in both regional and national elections. This practice thoroughly discredited the institution of the Monarchy in the eyes of the Portuguese, for the King played an essential and authoritarian role in that procedure. The Portuguese people began to feel that they ceased to be politically represented, as the rotativist system privileged rural, financial or colonial elites. Even though the situation changed slightly for a short period of time when João Franco formed the third party, the Partido Regenerador Liberal, which purported to dissociate itself from the “political mistakes and vices of the traditional parties,” (Fava 23) the revolution seemed inevitable, as it first and foremost meant a class struggle, suffrage and a fight for the right to education. Before anything else, people considered the old system inadequate for the modern times; secondly, the King’s position in the scheme of João Franco’s dictatorship got him even more political adversaries, following a successful propaganda from the opposition against Royal politics that had been *de facto* involved in the adoption of repressive measures by João Franco.

Even though the majority of the Portuguese blamed their King for all the illegalities of the regime and for all the troubles the empire was facing, *i.e.* corruption, decadence, the policy of rotativism, and the loss of the Southern African regions (the so-called “Pink Map”), King Carlos I of Portugal was, in the opinion of Wheeler and Opello, “a talented diplomat who managed to repair the damaged Anglo-Portuguese Alliance and to promote other foreign policy initiatives” (71). Besides, he possessed many outstanding qualities, acted as a patron of the arts and a protector of artists, and thought of himself as an amateur scientist. In the last years of his reign the King felt himself betrayed and abandoned, as the privileged classes, although committed to defending the *status quo*, seemed to fail to prevent the overthrow of the Monarchy. King Carlos would bitterly describe his country as “a monarchy without monarchists” (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 132). In Tom Gallagher’s view, the elites and the privileged classes: “had concluded that the monarchy was

simply not worth preserving, since it was signally failing to provide stability” (21). Once again, the outbreak of the revolution seemed only a question of time. In 1891, the year of an attempted Republican revolution in Oporto (January 31, 1891), José Falcão wrote: “Só há um remédio e este remédio há-de vir da Revolução. Ou a Revolução é feita pelo Rei ou é feita pelo povo” (*apud* Torres 19).<sup>4</sup>

The idea of the revolution brought together the republican mob of Lisbon, urban communities of the big cities (the petty bourgeoisie elite and militaries) and the elite of the Partido Republicano Português. Years after the party’s foundation, the PRP changed its line from “moderate” to “revolutionary,” heeding and appealing to masses *via* democratic and nationalistic slogans. Before the Revolution the Republican movement of 5 October 1910 would attract various social groups and individuals (free-thinkers, feminists, anti-clericalists, socialists, liberals, and others), as well as different organizations either loosely or tightly connected with the party; the degree of their connection contributed substantially to the destabilization of the political situation under the First Republic.

### **Bell’s testimony of historical events resulting from the Revolution of 1910**

According to Aubrey Bell, the faith pinned on the new governmental system and the new regime soon degenerated into disappointment and disillusionment of both national and international spectators. Problems, says the author, started already when it came to the formation of the government, and afterwards when Parliament tried to create electoral laws and resolve the question of the Church. The shape of the new Constitution also provoked lengthy discussions and negotiations between the Republicans. Disagreements and misunderstandings among members of the Republican Party would intensify with the passing of time; indeed, their differences would reflect the gulf between the Republicans and the society they meant to represent.

Shortly after the Revolution, testifies Bell: “...all the offices of Royalist newspapers were attacked and wrecked, both at Lisbon and in the provinces. At Coimbra and elsewhere the Royalist and the Catholic Clubs were assaulted and plundered” (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 200). Besides the terror infused by the Carbonária, the country was racked by strikes and

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<sup>4</sup> Our translation: there is only one remedy, and this remedy must come from the revolution. Either revolution made by the king or the revolution made by the people.



street violence. The initial promises of peace and reconciliation, informs Bell, were hollow, for the government did not hesitate to adopt measures of open hostility towards Royalists and Catholics. Moreover, already in 1912, after the general strike in Lisbon and the region of Alentejo, the Government declared martial law, followed by the arrest of over a thousand trade unionists and workmen.

After the disastrous defeat, suffered by the Royalists in the 5 October Revolution, the Monarchists, the Royalists and the conservatives joined their forces several times more to oppose the new regime. The first Royalist insurrection broke out in the north of Portugal already in 1911, however, it failed to produce an intended effect, as spies from the Carbonária had been infiltrating the entire country and reporting on everything that was unusual and hostile to the new political order. Another insurrection, from 1912, had also an unfortunate outcome. In that insurrection captain João de Almeida was taken prisoner and then denied his rights to be treated as an officer.

According to the author, the harsh reality of the new regime resembled in many aspects that of the last years of the Monarchy; Bell affirms that the Republican politicians would continually repeat the mistakes of the previous decades by putting the good of their parties<sup>5</sup> over the good of the country. It seems that the new regime could not establish itself without resorting to violence, intimidation, terror or disturbance; these were the Democrats, informs the lusophile, who would incite hatred for the Royalist in society, ignoring the appeals for civic and political dialogue coming from moderate Republicans.

What is more, the new government failed to take the sufficient measures to restore the country's economy to equilibrium after bankruptcy. From *Portugal of the Portuguese* we learn that the finances of the country were in a highly deplorable condition. To prove his point, Aubrey Bell goes on to quote *O Século*, a Portuguese daily newspaper, on the subject: "The politicians of the Republic are personally as honest as may be, but as administrators of the public finances they rank with what was bad in the administration under the Monarchy" (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 205).

The endemic governmental instability, along with protracted, large-scale social conflicts, would lead repeatedly to new

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<sup>5</sup> In the meantime the PRP split into a number of small parties that would remain under the direction of the PRP. The new formations that emerged were: the Evolutionist Party, the Unionist Party and the Democrat Party.

elections,<sup>6</sup> producing a situation that would bring about even more political chaos, economic disruption and anarchy. Another question that bothered the author was an alliance forged between the daily newspaper *O Mundo*, the Carbonária and the Democrats, for he considered this “trinity” to be most “disastrous to the Republic” (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 206).

Aubrey Fitz Gerald Bell attacks the Democrats for their undemocratic behaviour, in his opinion, highly prejudicial to the country: “It is the creed of the Democrats that outside the Republic there are no Portuguese, and outside the Democrat party there are no Republicans. Those who do not belong to the Democrat party can, therefore, scarcely be good Republicans” (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 206).

Another affair that wrecked the country’s peace and civil relations was the mass persecution of the Royalists who were being harassed and punished in various ways: some were caught and beaten on the streets, others were unlawfully imprisoned or deported to far-off places in the colonies, relates Aubrey Bell. The question of framing the Royalists for crimes, riots and bloody disorders, evoking a wave of widespread arrests of the political opponents, is central to the author’s critique of the Republic. What was peculiar in those mass imprisonments, acknowledges Bell, was the very fact that the police were not overtly involved in the plot of the operations. Although they were cooperative, the police were deliberately misinformed about many details, for the government placed in charge of this undertaking the “White Ants” and Carbonários.

Intra-party disagreements, conflicts and divisions reached deadlock in the end of 1913 when the two Chambers got politically distant: while the majority in the Chamber of Deputies supported the Democrat Afonso Costa, the Senate was anti-Democrat. The clash between the two delayed the passing of the Budget. To make matters worse, adds the author, the prevailing conditions in the country were nothing short of disastrous, *e.g.* more and more prisoners (many of them Republicans) would arrive to the already overcrowded prisons, making the facilities increasingly stretched to cater for such big numbers. The Amnesty Bill for political prisoners was passed only in February 1914, when a new government of Bernardino Machado got installed to substitute the dismissal government of Costa. The new government also did not stay long in power, and soon got succeeded by the one of Victor Hugo de Azevedo. This inefficient

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<sup>6</sup> In the course of 1912 the country saw five different governments.

political regime of the Republicans ended up in the *coup d'état* of Pimenta de Castro in the beginning of 1915.

Aubrey Bell fostered a kind of overt genuine sympathy for dictatorship, considering it a desirable form of government in Portugal:

There was a general breath of relief throughout the country, and by an odd paradox this new Government born of a military movement, this "dictatorship", this "tyranny", proved the most moderate Government that Portugal had seen since the Revolution of 1910.... O but, say the Democrats, it was all so unconstitutional! Such a dictatorship! *Of course* it was unconstitutional. The Constitution has been so ordered that the Democrats having installed themselves in power ... could never be dislodged by constitutional means (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 213).

To the critique for the suppression of the democracy, he would answer:

It is quite true that the situation [the dictatorship of Pimenta de Castro] in some respects resembled that of Snr. João Franco's Government, and it is a striking and bitter comment on the seven intervening years that to find a government as good as that of General Pimenta de Castro one has to go back to that of Snr. João Franco. They are like two rocks, and the seven years between a sea of slush and molten fire (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 214).

At times the author would assume the stance of a neutral observer to the events he witnessed; however, more often he would give a very personal assessment of the situation he thought to describe. Unrelentingly, the author would advocate for the abolition of the Republic which, in his understanding, was desperately wicked, powerless, unstable and decadent. The Republic's standing was deplorable; having reached an all-time low, it was, the lusophile maintained, analogous to that of the Monarchy the Revolutionists laboured to overthrow. Bell was branded a counter-revolutionist and a conservative, as in his publications he would issue a more or less explicit appeal to the conservative forces, inducing them to join together in a corporate effort to stabilize the situation of the country, and to resurrect Portugal from chaos. Yet, the author cannot be labelled a fanatic supporter of the monarchical cause. In his prognosis for the future of Portugal he affirms:

It might not be difficult to restore the Monarchy temporarily

by a sudden *coup d'état*: the difficulty would be to maintain it. A restoration brought about by force now would create a very dangerous and unsatisfactory situation.... It is thus essential that the Republicans should be given a free hand to show what they can do (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 242).

The author's content with the new dictatorial government was not long-lasting though. On May 5, 1915, only few months after Pimenta de Castro had reached power, the idea of restoring the Constitution occasioned another revolution. Bell's indignation with the new state of affairs is overtly displayed in the ending paragraph of the chapter describing "Recent Events" in *Portugal of the Portuguese* (214-215). In his belief, the "unconstitutional moderation" was much more desirable for the country's welfare, its economic recovery and growth than the "constitutional tyranny" imposed by the Democrats (213).

Bell's survey of the Portuguese reality also covers such areas as the press and journalism. What might have been surprising to the English reader of the time, informs the lusophile, was the fact that the Portuguese press lacked a newspaper whose editorial views would not coincide with those of some political party. A fundamental flaw of the majority of Portuguese journalists, according to the author, was the absence of impartiality; another weakness of the press was an excessive use of set phrases and French or Latin borrowings. Although a foreigner, Aubrey Bell was a staunch defender of the correct usage of the Portuguese language in the *media*. He asserts that the language spoken by peasants is often "far clearer and more attractive than as it is often spoken at Lisbon" (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 165).

The reality after the Revolution would seriously upset the lusophile. The negative (and sometimes bold) descriptions of what he witnessed prove the author's true mettle, as well as a real caring for this country; he sincerely hoped the Portuguese nation to embark upon the path of progress and development. Bell deeply distrusted the political parties, reckoning that they would spring up in too big numbers and under no necessity after the 5 October 1910. His scepticism also extended to politicians who, in his estimation, were more concerned about their private matters than the general and national interest. Even though Aubrey Bell was an outsider, his knowledge of the language, the country's history, its literature and people would permit him to interpret rightly the reality he moved within.

The author's disillusionment with the new regime coupled with people's frustration; even some Republican newspapers would call the first years of the Republic a very turbulent time,

characterized by violence, financial desperation of the citizens and political instability. The remedies that Bell proposes to resolve the country's concerns are, first of all, the decentralization of power, a return to rurality, the development of a municipal form of government and a retreat into autarchism; secondly, political parties should, in his opinion, propose simple and practical programmes, and, obviously, any Government ought to remain in office until "satisfied with what it has achieved, not merely to inform the country that it has achieved its object of establishing itself in power" (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 175). In addition, Bell views a potential alliance between moderate Republicans, the Monarchists and the Integralists (*Portugal of the Portuguese* 257)<sup>7</sup> as a recipe for political difficulties. However, the idea of two or three political parties, possibly alternating in power, contradicts his own reasoning of putting an end to the rotativist system of government. None of the concepts prescribed by Bell to deal with the complexities of Portuguese politics got developed in practice though, which is why his frustration with Portuguese political reality only deepened with time.

Bell's views would clearly exercise a certain kind of influence on Portuguese national affairs and public life. Since the newly established Republic of Portugal was yet to be consolidated, the lusophile's harsh critic might substantially undermine the rhetoric of the new regime and jeopardize the credibility of the Republican government in the eyes of foreign observers. As it has already been referred, in 1912 Aubrey Bell was sentenced to a few months' imprisonment for his political convictions and beliefs; a fact which proves that the author was considered to be a menace to the interests of the new regime as well as to its image abroad. It needs also to be emphasised that the reputation of the young Republic was a matter of major concern to the ruling classes, seeing that, in the background of a still predominantly monarchical Europe, Portugal became the fourth European country to have established a republican form of government (after France, Switzerland and San Marino).

It is critical to understand and recognize certain facts that situate the lusophile in an anti-republican context. Bell

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<sup>7</sup> Bell defines the Integralist movement, *Integralismo Lusitano*, as a breath of fresh air on the stagnant political scene of Portugal. This new political party "is inclined to set to work obscurely, gradually, unconventionally, with a view to the actual needs of the people, of the professional working man", informs Bell (*Portugal of the Portuguese*, 257). The ideology represented by Portuguese Integralists appeared to have coincided with the author's value system, as well as with his views of government, for the Integralist theory would underline the notion of traditional values, historical consciousness and the reaffirmation of the legitimacy of religion.

contributed regularly as a correspondent to *The Morning Post*, a monarchist and conservative daily newspaper of London, notorious for its: “posições anti-republicanas e acentuadamente pró-monárquicas (e favoráveis à dinastia de Bragança)” (Silva, “Da Monarquia à República” 229). Besides, he might have been close to the positions defended by the British Protest Committee, known for its firm adherence to the monarchical cause, and possibly linked to the Portuguese exiled royalist circles in London (Silva, “Aubrey Bell e *Portugal of the Portuguese* (1917): uma antevisão do futuro de Portugal no turbilhão político da Primeira República”).

The disappointment the lusophile expresses in his writings has nothing to do with the country itself; his fascination for Portugal, its literature, ethnography and history remained equally unabated and evident throughout his life. *Portugal of the Portuguese* is Bell's testimony of the events that caused him a great deal of anxiety, uneasiness and grief. After all, Aubrey Fitz Gerald Bell had deeply at heart the wealth, prosperity and development of the country in which he planned to reside till the end of his days. Despite political upheavals and social conflicts that were taking place before his eyes, the author had faith in the future of Portugal, hoping that forthcoming events would manifest the destiny of the country, its political system, political culture and state organisation. He argues:

But against the notion of those who say that Portugal is dying, slowly dying, it is necessary to enter a strong protest. If reference is made to Portugal's future, “But has Portugal a future?” ask these sceptics. And the answer is that she has not only a future but a great future. She is in the fortunate position of having accomplished great deeds and having great deeds to accomplish (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 238).

After some years of political unrest and agitation, Portugal returned to a dictatorial rule. However, this time the regime of Sidónio Pais was instituted “in the full republican context” (Gallagher 25), enjoying the support of moderate Republicans and receiving encouragement from conservative sectors of society (i.e. Monarchists, Catholics, some anti-Democrat upper-class partisans and big landowners from the Alentejo), as well as from army officers and the groups that had suffered severe repression under the Democrat government, such as: trade unions and workers. The new dictatorial government lasted for less than a year, until the assassination of Pais in Lisbon, 14 December 1918. Clearly, these events could not be documented

by Aubrey Bell in *Portugal of the Portuguese*, published in 1917; nevertheless, it must be admitted that the lusophile identified himself largely with “Sidonism”, “Decembrism” or “the New Republic”, *i.e.* the Sidónio Pais regime, congruent with right-wing orientation and conservative precepts (Canaveira 311).

British diplomacy regarded the Portuguese democracy<sup>8</sup> as far too fragile and unstable, envisaging thus the possibility of its future collapse (Wheeler 254). Aubrey Bell, along with other British residents and observers in the country received the military *coup d'état* of 1926 with approval. The author welcomed with hope and enthusiasm the newly established dictatorship of Salazar, looking forward to “Salazarism” simply as the restoration to power of an effective governing body (after several years of hiatus, since the overthrow of the “democratic *ditablanda*” of Joaquim Pimenta de Castro and then, three years later, of the New Republic under Sidónio Pais).

Aubrey Bell played a clear role in the anti-Republican propaganda, and then, after the consolidation of the dictatorship of Salazar, the lusophile adopted a political position that was unquestionably favourable to the authoritarian regime of Salazar. He was the co-author of the translation of *Doctrine and Action*, a book by António de Oliveira Salazar in which the dictator explains his plans of economic reconstruction of the country, as well as the principles of its internal and external policy. The author was honoured with the Ordem de Santiago e Espada, in particular for his great service in promoting Portuguese literature in the United Kingdom, but also, according to João Paulo Pereira da Silva, for his: “orientação política e posicionamento ideológico marcadamente conservadores, a sua manifesta oposição aos regimes republicanos e à própria democracia, bem como pela admiração nutrida por caudilhos, estadistas autoritários ou ditadores...” (Silva, “Da Monarquia à República” 229).

### **A detailed analysis of the travel book *In Portugal***

*In Portugal* was Aubrey Bell’s first major publication dedicated to Portuguese themes, and the second to discuss the culture and literature of the Iberian Peninsula. The book is composed of twenty nine chapters in which the author attempts to portray the specificity of each region of Portugal and its peoples,

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<sup>8</sup> Aubrey Bell argued that the First Republic was not a genuine democracy because Portuguese voting rights included only the adult, male and literate population, which corresponded to 15-20% of all Portuguese (*Portugal of the Portuguese* 7, 67).

starting with the south-central region of the Alentejo, then moving to the Algarve, visiting Extremadura and finally exploring the north of the country. The work does not feature any dedication. One of the first pages displays a brief quotation from a Portuguese romance that conveys an exciting flavour of travelling to this country: “Oh quem fôra a Portugal, / Terra que Deus bem dizia!” (Bell, *In Portugal* iii).

*In Portugal* came out in print in 1912 by an English publishing house: John Bodley Head. However, the book had been ready for publication already in July 1911, from when dates the “Preface,” composed by the author in Mirandela, Trás-os-Montes. This fact allows us to infer that the “Preface” was probably written after the book had been completed, as the trajectory of Bell’s travel would come to an end in the country’s north.

1912 was the year of publication of another travel book by Aubrey Bell, *The magic of Spain*, issued by the same editor. This book holds a note from the author that antecedes the actual “Preface.” In this note we learn that the book was compounded of a collection of essays that testify the author’s experience from travelling in Spain, as well as his interest in Spanish literature. *The magic of Spain* does not indicate any sort of comparison nor reference to Portugal, unlike the work on the latter that exhibits some juxtaposition of elements common to the two countries. It confirms our hypothesis that the lusophile first discovered Spain, and only then Portugal with its cultural ancestry. In the “Preface” to *In Portugal* he writes: “the guide-books too often treat Portugal as a continuation, almost as a province of Spain” (v). Thus, in this book Bell undertakes to draw a distinction between Portugal and Spain, by providing interesting and useful travel information about Portuguese places of interest, countryside, customs, traditions, festivals, as well as its cultural, historical and literary heritage. Furthermore, to nature lovers the author guarantees an extraordinary diversity of landscape, despite the country’s relatively small size.

The regions that he admires the most are the ones of the Alentejo, the Province of Beira and Minho. They are probably not as well known as the neighbourhoods of Lisbon or Oporto, and may be far less accessible, but, according to the lusophile, their exploration can prove to be a greatly rewarding experience: “Each of the eight provinces (more especially those of the *alentejanos*, *minhotos* and *beirões*) preserves many peculiarities of language, customs and dress; and each, in return for hardships endured, will give to the traveller many a day of delight and interest” (*In Portugal* vi).



## Portuguese ways and Bell's testimony of gender discrimination

In the first chapter the author tries to capture the spirit and character of the Portuguese people, which might often contrast with that of the Spanish. There is something enigmatical and mysterious in the way these two nations have interacted, worked for the same or opposite causes, competed and acted antagonistically. They are not only separated by the frontier but also by sentiment and history. Springing from a common origin, these two countries indicate various degrees of relationship, they are like chalk and cheese though. The author explains the difference in the Spanish and Portuguese character in this way: "The thoughtful humaneness of the Portuguese is poles apart from the noble rashness and imprudence of the Spaniard; the Spaniard's restless discontent is replaced in Portugal by what might almost be called a contented melancholy..." (Bell, *In Portugal* 4-5).

These two nations hold each other in mutual contempt that results from their long history in which animosities and rivalry played a significant part. According to Bell: "This mutual dislike of Spaniard and Portuguese is not based upon a similarity in weakness, in which case it would be the more easily intelligible, but rather upon an opposition of excellences, a complete divergence of character" (*In Portugal* 4).

The Portuguese is less aggressive and more melancholic. Melancholy or *saudade*, the state in which the past casts its lights to the present and the future, is his fundamental characteristic. Although he has a sense of accomplishment, which is the result of traversing the new, the discovery and exploration of the foreign, this feeling or desire makes him constantly yearn for something indefinite, unfulfillable and impossible. Paradoxically, at the same time he neglects his own traditions that tie him to the past. The Portuguese is more vain than proud (which is the case of the Spaniard); he is religious (but not fanatic), as well as practical, tolerant and liberal.

The first chapter also gives a brief account of popular *cantigas*, sung by ordinary people while performing their duties, and of some of the Portuguese festivals and popular traditions, such as the *janeiras* or the eve of St. John. Bell describes these traditions and practices giving the traveller a little insight into the character of the Portuguese as well as into their spiritual heritage. Here, again, the author evokes the feeling of mournful regret for the past, saying: "the old Portuguese customs and dress and characteristics are doomed to perish, they are already

fast disappearing” (*In Portugal* 17).

While most of travel books of the period hardly ever discuss the status of women in the country visited (with thematic concerns, such as: the situation of women in society, women’s rights and gender inequality, being withheld or simply ignored), in Aubrey Bell’s writings the reader is entitled to go beyond the generalised descriptions of the Iberian Peninsula. In his publications the lusophile communicates his discomfort and empathy with the hard lot of Portuguese women. When travelling through the country, Bell reports that in rural settings women work much longer and harder than men. However, while the evidence examined by the author indicates that the female workload is heavier than that of men, the wage rate fluctuates according to the sex, being manifestly less favourable to women.

### **Travelling in Portugal vs. travelling in Spain**

Aubrey Bell’s personal recommendation to the reader/traveller is to walk, as the best way to get to know the country. However, he sees a slight drawback to travelling on foot in Portugal: “while in Spain the dust and stones and lack of shelter make it often equally wearisome to rest or to proceed, in Portugal the difficulties in walking are of another order. For here cool shade and pleasant streams are never long absent, and the scenery offers an excuse for prolonging a rest from hour to hour” (*In Portugal* 202).

The author also offers some advice to the reader on the most pleasant time to travel in this country, which is in the end of April and the beginning of May, to avoid the summer heat; however, he certifies, in some parts of the country, like *e.g.* in Sintra, the temperatures are moderated by ocean winds. When discussing the weather, Bell records some Portuguese popular sayings respecting the weather and seasons of the year, for instance: “Sol de Março queima a dama no paço” (Bell, *In Portugal* 19).

Except for a few travelling merchants, the roads in Portugal are often deserted and desolate, reveals the lusophile. He maintained that at those times there still existed villages in Portugal cut off from the world, having no road communication with the outside. In connection with this, Bell quotes a popular rhyme regarding the bad condition of the road to Elvas: “Se fores a Elvas segue direitinho, olha não tropeces que é mau o caminho” (*In Portugal* 197). Another difficulty, when travelling in the north of the country, may be the extremely narrow Portuguese mountain roads, that twist like a snake and seem “to separate

rather than connect" (*In Portugal* 141) the neighbouring villages, argues Bell. However, all the inconveniences and fatigues of travel are compensated by the splendid views of plentiful, wild flowers growing by the road-side, and by picturesquely perched villages, beautiful hills and valleys, fertile meadows and shady olive groves.

The author, an experienced traveller to the Iberian Peninsula, considers Portuguese roads to be better maintained than those in Spain. He takes this opportunity to complain that there are too few trains running in Portugal, which significantly slows down the journey's speed; he acknowledges that, comparing to Spain, train benches in Portuguese trains are more comfortable and that the company of Portuguese passengers is far less disturbing. This is not the only Portuguese transport facility that, in the opinion of the lusophile, provides more comfort than its Spanish equivalent though. The Spanish coach is for Aubrey Bell, the least recommendable mode of Iberian transport, if compared to the Portuguese carriage, called a *carro de correio* that proved to be less fatiguing. Even though the journey through Portugal might have been prolonged and a bit tedious at times, Bell confesses: "Portugal is not a country in which it is pleasant to be in a hurry.... It is folly for a traveller in Portugal to hurry; everywhere the exquisite scenery, the wonderful buildings, the pleasant hills and streams, woods and gardens..." (*In Portugal* 26).

When speaking of accommodation, Bell proceeds to compare Spanish and Portuguese facilities; and, many times, this comparison happens to be more favourable to Portugal than to Spain. The author admits though that the traveller may face here many difficulties and should not expect luxury provisions in most of the hotels or inns. In a relatively fair description he pictures the interior of a typical inn (*hospedaria*) and a small hotel, the food served to guests, including an account of the hours of meals in these establishments.

### **"Picturesqueness"**

The author paints the portrait of Portugal and its people with words; his vivid descriptions of the Portuguese landscape, topography, wildlife, individuals and their customs, can stimulate the reader's mind to create visual images of these places, encouraging him/her to identify with the scenes depicted in the imagery of Bell's voyages. Bell the writer mediates between the reader and the foreign, between the images he portrays and the one who interprets them, the one in whose imagination the

scenery, Bell's Portugal, is once again projected and revived.

In many respects Bell's works are still consonant with the nineteenth century models of travel writing. In his publications Aubrey Bell vindicates the authenticity and genuineness of his experience, thanks to four motifs; James Buzard denominates them as: "stillness," "non-utility," "saturation" and "picturesqueness" (177). "Stillness," according to Buzard, refers to the traveller's solitary savouring of the place, its beauty, excellence and importance. Moreover, "stillness" also conveys the sense of places where time has stood still. It is not surprising to find this motif in *In Portugal*. While on his stay in Estremadura Bell says: "The traveller from his bed of heather heaped in his mighty halls of pinestems, may watch through the Gothic arches the marvel of changing colours in the West and all the miracle of the light of a day that dies. All is so still that it seems as if the whole world has stopped to look on, 'breathless in adoration.'..." (*In Portugal* 126).

Another motif, of "non-utility," also recurrent in the work, is related to perceiving nature or city/town architecture as valuable, yet not by virtue of its modern, social or economic utility, but because of being a source of a dream-like, unreal and unique experience. Bell describes Alcácer do Sal, a place not touched nor transformed by modernity, in this way:

Alcacer do Sal is a picturesque old town with its houses of many tints along the Sado; crescent-shaped barges laden with *bilhas* are rowed slowly by men in pointed *gorros*, and large sailing-boats take in a cargo of pinewood or charcoal or cork. The town lies on the side of a hill of cactus and aloes, on the top of which an old ruinous convent is now inhabited only by storks (*In Portugal* 66).

"Saturation," the third motif, also apparent in the work, signifies that the traveller views the place as imbued with cultural, historical and emotional meaning; these features are likely to arouse intense feelings in the observer. On his visit to the monastery of Alcobaça, Bell recalls the tragic love story of Dona Inês e Dom Pedro:

The end of King Pedro's tomb facing that of Dona Ignez represents the last scenes in the King's life ... . The further end is sculptured in the form of a rose-window, marvellously detailed and distinct, hidden away against the wall of the Chapel. It represents the scenes in the life and death of Dona Ignez, Dom Pedro and Dona Ignez reading from one book like the lovers of

Dante ... the death of Dona Ignez at the *Fonte dos Amores* at Coimbra, the execution at Santarem of two of her assassins; and many other tiny scene, all so clearly chiselled and delightfully expressed in stone that here even more than at Coimbra one may feel the full sadness of her fate and the prince's undying sorrow (*In Portugal* 105).

Finally, "picturesqueness" is one of the most recurring motifs in Bell's writings:

The name of the publication	The number of occurrences of the word "picturesque" and its derivations
<i>In Portugal</i>	15
<i>Portugal of the Portuguese</i>	7
<i>The magic of Spain</i>	7
<i>Spanish Galicia</i>	21

Table 1: The number of occurrences of the word "picturesque" and its derivations in the four writings of Aubrey Bell.

"Picturesqueness" is central to the author's description of the natural setting and local life. This motif is primarily identified with the old world, past traditions, and also a specific social and cultural order; it certainly clashes with the world of progress, new trends, modern ideas and blind reformism identified by the author with the Republic. In Anna Jameson's words: "civilization, cleanliness, and comfort, are excellent things, but they are sworn enemies to the picturesque..." (Jameson 279).

The author's application of "picturesqueness" reaches further than the depiction of landscape and architecture; it extends to the descriptions of peasants at work, their way of dressing, speaking, or their temperament. It is important to note that in Bell's writings "picturesqueness" does not always represent a totally positive characteristic or quality. When referring to the town of Beja he calls it "picturesque but unattractive" (Bell, *In Portugal* 52), the villages of Beira Baixa are to the author "picturesque and miserable" (*In Portugal* 122) and the squares of Braga are "picturesquely irregular" (*In Portugal* 175). In *Portugal of the Portuguese*, the lusophile, ironizing about the contemporary Portuguese and Spanish political realities, says: "nowhere have political parties been more numerous and more picturesque in their names and their theories than in Spain

and Portugal” (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 168).

### **Évora, Beja, Faro and Alcácer do Sal**

The first region to look at in more detail is the Alentejo, considered by Bell one of the most interesting of Portugal. He examines carefully the Alentejan peasant style, as well as the traditional architecture of the region. In several passages the author glorifies its unspoiled countryside, its underdeveloped wilderness and its wildlife:

Or the road is bordered by tall eucalyptus trees, and the hanging bark makes a weird flapping against their bare trunks; or on one side lie tracts of corn without hedge or division, while on the other are wide meadow-valleys, or, rather, sloping wasteland, entirely covered with thistles in flowers. The faint purple of their small flowers thus seen in an endless mass is one of the most beautiful sights in Alentejo, and, indeed, in Portugal.... (Bell, *In Portugal* 34).

The first city the author describes more precisely is Évora, focusing, *inter alia*, on the city’s architecture as well as the principal points of touristic interest. One of them, the square of Giraldo, holds a footnote reference that explains the origin of Bell’s literary pseudonym: “Geraldo, or Giraldo, was formerly a very common name in Portugal; the surname Geraldez, or Giraldez, (Fitz Gerald) still exists” (*In Portugal* 46).

Aubrey Bell stands against drawing superficial comparisons between Spain and Portugal that present little attempt to gain any serious insight into the two cultures. At the end of the same chapter the author disavows the similitude between Toledo and Évora, called indiscriminately by some the Toledo of Portugal. He affirms: “Evora is totally unlike Toledo, with which it has in common crumbling walls and ancient ruins and steep, narrow streets” (*In Portugal* 48).

Another city the lusophile looks more closely at is Beja. He starts his description in a slightly harsh way, acknowledging: “perhaps the best advice to those about to go to Beja, the second city of Alentejo, is Don’t” (*In Portugal* 50). The only positive characteristic he recognizes about Beja is probably its picturesque-ness; the recollections he gathered being only rubbish on the streets, an unbearable heat and the ubiquitous poverty.

From the Alentejo he travels to the Algrave, a region which, to Aubrey Bell, conveys in some degree an ideal realm of peacefulness, tranquillity and friendly atmosphere. He uncodifies to

the reader the Algarvian character, distinguished by the following characteristics: talkative, pleasant, calm and serene. The capital of the Algarve, Faro, is described as a charming and attractive town with a fine marketplace, and delightful squares and houses. His experience of the Mediterranean enables him to judge that: "over the whole place [Faro] is the true smell of the sea, which the Mediterranean never has..." (Bell, *In Portugal* 56).

The author describes the way to Alcácer do Sal and the character of the landscape, warning the traveller not to expect too many facilities on the way from the Alentejo to the centre of the country. The travellers planning to stock up are recommended to visit Estremaduran grocery shops, *vendas*, that display a good variety of local products. In one of few shops there, one that also serves hot dishes, Bell sees two farm-servants having a plain meal. After the peasants finish their meal, takes place an interesting ritual of paying, superbly captured by Aubrey Bell:

The inn bills or *contas* of the peasants are often repeated two or three times, with many an *Escute lá* (Listen to me) and *Deixeme fallar só* (Let me speak without interruption). Thus: "One *pataco* of bread and three *vintens* of wine, one *tostão* and *dez réis* of olives and..." and then after discussion the addition begins again; "One *pataco* of bread and three *vintens* of wine, one *tostão*..." (*In Portugal* 65).

Alcácer do Sal leaves a definitely positive impression in the mind of Bell. Nonetheless, although this little town, like many others in Portugal, is rich in life, colour, picturesqueness and human history, it was to the lusophile just a point on his map, just a place to visit and never to reside in:

The little hanging gardens of carnations, the iron balustrades of trailing pink and red geraniums, the vine-trellises and white-washed walls covered with vines, the grass-grown cobbled paths between huge cactus-hedges, the yellow-lichened roofs of brown tiles, and the old crumbling walls, give to Alcacer a charm and fascination, heightened by its direct communication with the sea. Certainly it is a town delightful to look on if it can scarcely be delightful to dwell in... (*In Portugal* 66).

### **Expatriated in Portugal**

Bell belongs to a new generation of expatriates who would flee from the United Kingdom for several motives: some escaped

because they saw a higher level of sexual or intellectual tolerance outside their country, some because they realized that a very good exchange rate could enable them to live on a few pounds, others intended to withdraw from the decadent and hypocritical British society, and, finally, there were also the ones who simply wanted to sate their curiosity about the foreign.

Aubrey Bell resigned from his post as a librarian (1908) and left England as soon as he was offered a job as a correspondent to *The Morning Post*, for which he had to cover both Iberian countries. The new job suited his interests, as it permitted him to explore the two cultures he was so fond of, and probably also meant sufficient financial remuneration. A footnote reference in *In Portugal* to some aspects of Portuguese library service reveals his dissatisfaction with the previous salary of librarian: “thus it appears that the custom of underpaying librarians is not confined to England” (25).

Aubrey Bell is in fact a double traveller: he is an Englishman, an expatriate, with his bag permanently unpacked in Estoril, and at the same time he is a traveller, excursionist, researcher and interpreter of Portuguese and Spanish cultures, at times far away from his new Portuguese home. The author circulates among the Portuguese, studying them from the small fragments of the lives of those he observes. In his writings Bell establishes a connection between his home research in Estoril and his travelling.

Even though the lusophile felt perfectly at home in Estoril, a place where he began to establish new roots (he intended to educate his sons as respectable Manique countrymen), he was always attached to his identity as a traveller. The question of his origin was still meaningful to him even after around thirty years of living in Portugal, with English models, practices and ideas being always a strong point of reference. In *Portugal of the Portuguese* Bell observes: “foreigners may be inclined to smile when they see foreign customs and institutions (as the British parliamentary system) distorted and misapplied in Portugal...” (256).

### **Lisbon, and the centre of Portugal – its life, architecture and picturesqueness**

The next three chapters concentrate on the character, life, colour, picturesqueness and culture of the capital. In the very first lines the author expresses his astonishment at the steepness of the city’s streets, routes and stairways: “the *Rua do Alecrim* ... is one of the steepest streets of this city of steep streets...” (Bell, *In Portugal* 74). In these three chapters the



author glorifies Lisbon's natural beauty and particular way of life, its variety of cultural amenities, as well as the city and the country's celebrated history. In his narrative Bell provides a vivid description of market places and popular characters, clearly identifiable with the city of Lisbon:

The fishwomen (*peixeiras*) of Lisbon are to be seen in every part of the city.... Their flat baskets, saucer-shaped black hats and large gold earrings, their kerchiefs of black or, more often, of bright gold, yellow, orange or green, flowing down to the waist, their stiffly folding skirts of dull green, mauve or blue, their piercing cries and tired faces render the most curious sight and sound of the city (*In Portugal* 78).

Other unforgettable and vivid scenes may be witnessed in the fish-markets of Lisbon, where the traveller can see the bustle of commerce and business of sellers who call potential clients' attention by crying out prices and names of goods in a ceaseless and repetitive way. Even after having witnessed such scenes, Aubrey Bell still felt that the city of Lisbon had been gradually losing its singularity and becoming too cosmopolitan in its outlook, manner and ideas. This opinion is expressed in *Portugal of the Portuguese* and *In Portugal* respectively:

Indeed, it is one of the charms of Lisbon that beneath all its cosmopolitanism it has succeeded in retaining a certain rustic air (*Portugal of the Portuguese* 44).

It is small wonder that Lisbon should have interested Borrow, since even now, when the city has lost so many of its quaintness, an old street name, a narrow archway, an ancient custom or costume continually disappearing, it has preserved its somewhat baffling and mysterious individuality, often remaining strange and unfamiliar to the visitor, even after a long stay (*In Portugal* 81).

This is not the only problem regarding Portuguese society in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the author identifies though. Aubrey Bell is a politically engaged writer who vehemently disagrees with the political system that prevailed in Portugal after the 5 October 1910 Revolution. The author reveals his dissatisfaction with the pseudo-liberal Portuguese Republic and manifests a political and social discontent with various decisions taken by the Republican government. He also disapproves of the people's widespread indifference towards politics:

[T]hey [people in Portugal] are in fact much more apt to be indolently indifferent, ever ready to say of a government, whether Monarchist or Republican: “*nem é bom nem é ruim...*” The Portuguese peasant preserves a noble independence, and if at an election he votes as he is directed without a thought or murmur, it is that he is practical, and considers the result of an election to be quite immaterial to his affairs.... (*In Portugal* 5).

### **Bell's anti-republicanism**

According to the lusophile, the decisions of consecutive Republican governments lead the country towards an absolute social rupture, chaos, political turbulence, as well as a spiritual and economical poverty. The author's opinions become more severe with time; *In Portugal* evidences the beginning of his critique that initially centres on some general aspects of society's affairs in present conditions, whereas *Portugal of the Portuguese* openly scorns the Republicans for their complete failure in questions concerning the Church, education, economy, international policy, decentralization of power, effective administration and democratization.

Bell sees progress, represented by the Republic, in direct correlation with uniformity, cosmopolitanism, an almost fanatical zeal for change and an inflexible determination to break up with old patterns and traditions. He affirms:

[N]ow the priests are forbidden to wear their cassocks, many of them having but a slovenly appearance in slouching black suits, soft shirts, and bowlers or black squash hats; and by a decree of the Republic the students of Coimbra are not obliged to wear their gowns. Thus Progress extends its dreary net of grey uniformity over the land; and neglect of old traditions is one of the contradictions in the character of a people whose eyes turn willingly to the past.... (*In Portugal* 9)

As we know, Bell suffered imprisonment in both countries, and, in Spain, was once a victim of police coercion. The author did not deposit trust neither in the Republic, nor in the organized civil forces of both Spain and Portugal. It was actually the Spanish Guardia Civil that he blamed for bringing fear and terror to the roads of Spain. According to Edgar Wigram, another English voyager to the Peninsula, the Guardia Civil was actually the only menace to the traveller in Spain (52-53). In Bell's opinion, there was a substantial discrepancy

between the crime, the fault and the punishment in that country which, along with the fugitive act, he strongly disapproved of: "Famishing men are dragged off to prison for rooting up onions on a rich man's estate, and shot down by the Guardia Civil when they try to escape – the official report runs: 'the prisoners attempted to escape, and were overtaken by an accident from which a natural death ensue'" (Bell, *The Magic of Spain* 204).

The lusophile thoroughly criticized the policy of the Republican governments that were, in his eyes, responsible for all the evils of the time, such as: caciquism, corruption, abuse of power and poverty. He would always look down on governmental measures of any kind and despise the majority of the decisions taken by the Republican politicians. In *Portugal of the Portuguese* he argues: "the Democrat party will always be known as the party which, under cover of the World War, raised itself to power over the dead bodies of its fellow-countrymen" (215).

Also, according to Douglas Wheeler, it was Aubrey Bell who in the years 1911-1912 initiated a humanitarian campaign in favour of the political prisoners (Wheeler 98). This subject was touched upon many times in Bell's writings to *The Morning Post*, as well as in *Portugal of the Portuguese* and *In Portugal*. The situation of the prisoners in this country was dramatically grave, informs the lusophile; his accounts report that the number of prisons and detention centres throughout the country outnumbered churches and schools. Indeed, the Republican regime was not prepared for such a large number of political detainees, who got banded together with criminals and juvenile delinquents. A solution for prison overcrowdedness that the politicians agreed upon was to transform old convents and various public buildings into penitentiaries, however, most of the times their internal arrangements were ill-adapted for the purpose.

In the Portugal of the time prisoners were habitually underfed. According to the author, "to give a meal to prisoners is a recognized form of private charity, and stands between them and actual starvation" (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 50). The Republican solution to the problem of street begging was handled in a likewise, violent and unscrupulous way, as beggars would be imprisoned and then deported overseas, "with far less care or concern than a cargo of frozen meat" (*Portugal of the Portuguese* 57), affirms the lusophile. Bell struggled to comprehend that a deep sense of compassion and this "barbaric neglect of prisons and prisoners" (*In Portugal* 10) would make part of the same nation.

Aubrey Bell's viewpoint on the regime was unchangeably radical and hostile. The author would animadvert on nearly every decision of the government, as well as on the shape of every reform programme, its management, form and the pace in which it was to be implemented. This approach reflects a contradicting nature of his character and testimony, *i.e.* the writer can be considered a compassionate person, for he occasionally got distressed by the sufferings he witnessed around him, like that of the prisoners "white and hungry, stretching out their hands through the bars" (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 92), or by the despair of the Monarchists, hunted and beaten on the streets for their political beliefs. On the other hand, though, this sense of empathy did not interfere with his political thinking and judgement, as Bell continuously failed to recognize the merit of political reforms, intended, first of all, to increase the political participation of the citizens, which would eventually lead to political democracy and more social justice. These policies also included the legalization of divorce and encouraged feminine emancipation. Unfortunately, the lusophile's political opinions and convictions define him as highly conservative, one-sided and tendentious.

### **Sintra and Aubrey Bell's "anti-touristic angst"**

The next step on his journey is Sintra. In the chapter dedicated to this quaint and delightful little town, Bell recalls again various legends and anecdotes associated with the Monarchy or national heroes. This literary and historical input makes Bell's writing unconventional and singular.

While it is true that the author seeks to portray the architectural beauty of the magnificent palaces and castles the town is so famous for, he also makes an honest effort to call the traveller's attention to the native flora of the place, as well as to Sintra's cultivated gardens of various types. Sintra has always been a touristic location that enhanced the appeal of a paradise in the imagination of its visitors. In fact, places like Sintra attract travellers and voyagers who, on their part, usually attract commerce that, eventually, makes places lose the qualities that initially attracted foreigners. According to Richard Butler, destinations like this one "carry with them the potential seeds of their own destruction" (4). This possible "metamorphosis" of Sintra absorbs at first the lusophile's thoughts, making him hesitant about forming impressions of his own; however, all in all, he confesses that Sintra appears to have maintained its original status and identity.

The town receives then a well deserved eulogy: "...although it cannot disappoint, but must surprise and enchant all those who go there, it is not a little difficult to write of Cintra, since in the first place it cannot be described, and, secondly, it has been described so often" (Bell, *In Portugal* 90). By adopting the attitude that he did, Bell is likely to be viewed as an anti-tourist. The main objective of anti-tourists is to separate themselves from the masses and to avoid the areas offering a very superficial experience of their country. Such locations are defined by Fussell as "pseudo-places", which means sites drained of any local particularity and character; in addition, it is believed, "pseudo-places" are homogenous, "placeless," and meant to evoke a familiar image (Fussell 43).

Bell's "tourist *angst*" is signalled in the following passage:

Possibly many of those who go to Portugal have a certain prejudice against Cintra, and are even at times inclined to leave it unvisited. They are a little weary of the intervening of its glorious Eden, they have heard it so often praised in verse and prose, the name is so familiar, the beauty recognized by all, it has become like one of those great classics which everyone knows so well but which no one has great curiosity or incentive to read (*In Portugal* 90).

This is not the only anti-tourist sentiment that Bell expresses on the subject of travelling. The author seems to distance himself from conventional tourists and "mass tourism," as well as from the majority of his own compatriots in the Peninsula. Aubrey Bell considers himself a *bona-fide* and long-term appreciator, researcher, critic and traveller, as opposed to short-term visitors and holidaymakers. In his writings the lusophile addresses the reader as "the traveller", encouraging him/her to step off the "beaten track;" he also undermines the irreplaceability of "red books" and argues against the encroachment of "pseudo-places" that eliminate the "real" places. Speaking of Sintra, Bell comments ironically on the reported presence of English tourists: "But the most obnoxious thing in Cintra now, besides the English everywhere spoken, is ... a thing so small that it might escape notice, a sign-board high up on the 'many-winding mountain-way' that leads to the *Castello da Pena* bearing the inscription *Avenida de Candido dos Reis*" (Bell, *In Portugal* 92).

A similar concern is also expressed in *Portugal of the Portuguese* where the author defends Portuguese places of interest from environmentally insensitive and destructive "mass-tourism" industry: "It [Batalha] must ever continue to be one of the chief attractions to those who visit Portugal, and it is to be

hoped that it will ever retain its rustic situation, far from trains, hôtels and all those appurtenances of civilization which usually dog the tourist's footsteps" (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 95).

However, sadly, we may also notice quite a contrary attitude upon the matter of tourism on the part of Aubrey Bell. In the same publication, the author indirectly persuades potential British investors to support the infrastructure projects on the coast of Cascais: "There is a road for part of the way from Cascaes along the coast with sand-dunes, and hollows of scented cistus and many a delightful cove or broader sandy bays, which are now without a house, but might at the whim of fashion – *absit omen* – become favourite and crowded watering-places" (*Portugal of the Portuguese* 78).

Although, certainly, it was far from Bell's intention to help transform the places he had visited in Portugal into "pseudo-places" (e.g. Paul Fussell uses the Algarve as a typical example of a "pseudo-place" (43)), his writings presumably incited many to come to the country, and this fact can brand the lusophile as an accomplice in the development of the tourism industry in this country. James Buzard believes that "while tourists pursue their anti-touristic ends, they fuel tourism's industry and its coercive construction of the foreign" (12).

### **Batalha, Alcobaça and Mafra**

The following section of the book focuses on Portugal's two most famous monasteries: Alcobaça and Batalha (the author also mentions Aljubarrota, the site of a famous battle fought between the royal armies of King John I of Castile and of King John I of Portugal), as well as on the impressive palace-monastery of Mafra. The author makes it explicit that the latter did not impress him most favourably; in directing the reader's attention to certain architectural facts, Bell reports on a record number of workers employed to its construction, the overall cost of the enterprise and the building's countless windows and doors. Indeed, the lusophile seems to have found the life beyond the palace more overwhelming than the monumental architecture itself, preferring to portray such issues as: the countryside around the village of Mafra, its flora and the people met on his way.

Aubrey Bell manifests a very different view on the Alcobaça Monastery, pronouncing an especially flattering opinion on the monastery's church: "The interior of its church, over three hundred feet long, is of a severe and marvellous beauty, the perfectly plain pillars, twenty-four in number and over sixty feet high,

going up to the very roof and dividing the nave from two very narrow side aisles" (*In Portugal* 103). Unlike in Mafra, Bell studies here with scrutiny the monastery's architecture and history, including the tragic love affair of Inês de Castro and Prince Pedro of Portugal. The lusophile takes advantage of the fact that dozens of poets and writers dwelt upon the story of these unfortunate lovers, resolving to incorporate a few citations of Camões and Garcia de Resende into his work. The author's discourse on the Batalha Monastery is packed with a number of descriptive adjectives that reflect his admiration for the unique beauty of the building. Aubrey Bell seems to truly appreciate the detail and nuance of the Manueline arches, pillars and framed windows.

At the end of his visit Bell expresses his genuine desire for these three places (Mafra, Batalha, Alcobaça) to remain untouched by "mass tourism", simultaneously wishing them to maintain their identity, authenticity, as well as local culture and tradition: "It is no slight charm of Batalha, as of Alcobaça and of Mafra, that the village has an appearance of being still as it were a dependency of the Convent, and has not acquired any pretensions of its own" (*In Portugal* 113).

### **Leiria and Tomar**

On the occasion of describing the town of Leiria, Bell presents a portrait of King Dinis. The author reminds us that it was Dinis who ordered the construction of Alcobaça's cloister, as well as the planting of the pine forest in the neighbourhood of Leiria, and on whose order its castle was erected. The little town charmed the author with its steep cobbled streets, the richly coloured fabrics that characterise the clothes of the locals, the town's countless gardens, a fascinating entrance-arch to a local church, and, obviously, its graceful castle. The very last lines of this chapter depict the evening busy life of Leiria observed by Bell from the castle walls. The author leaves the town behind with a feeling of genuine but melancholic satisfaction: "Everywhere was a sense of peace, and even in these narrower streets a feeling of the open country. For, lying among wooden hills, many of them crowned by a white church, Leiria has an air and scent of many trees and open fields, a little town pleasant in itself and in the country that surrounds it" (*In Portugal* 117).

The next stage of Aubrey Bell's journey leads him to Tomar and Beira Baixa. The lusophile commences his narrative by giving a brief account of the road that joins Leiria and Tomar, "illustrating" life in the local countryside; only then, he introduces the description of Tomar. We are informed by Bell that

Tomar's most important characteristic is a significant number of small churches from different periods dotted around the town, as well as ancient rough-cobbled streets with small shops that crown the main square, the Praça da República. However, the author's main interest must lie in the Convent of Christ. Bell recognizes the beauty of the Manueline architecture in the construction of the church, as well as in the multi-form decorative motifs and naturalistic symbols of the sea featured in the Convent's interiors.

The three last though extensive paragraphs of this chapter characterize the countryside in the town's neighbourhood. Bell shares his enthusiasm for the enchanting scenery of this region, revealing himself to be a true nature-lover, delighted in the local wilderness, virgin landscapes and forests.

### **Bell's proximity to nature and the *topos* of Nature in his publications**

The lusophile's affection for Nature in its unspoiled state is also reflected in the following chapter, entitled the "Pinewoods of Extremadura." Aubrey Bell gives here an expression of a truly Romantic insight into the natural world and rural life. The countryside of Portugal is perceived as an attraction on its own, eliciting the same attention as the country's most impressive monasteries, castles and monuments. This is in the Iberian countryside where the author situates his *locus amoenus*, an uncorrupted environment, an ideal place for rest and meditative reflection.

Inspired by Romantic poetry, Aubrey Bell would seek the picturesque in nature, with mountain landscapes, moorland and forest sceneries becoming the *locus* of a sublime experience. In addition, the writer would always attempt to interpret that mysterious, softly tinted, beautiful Iberian sky that marvelled him greatly. It is worth to emphasise as well that in his writings the lusophile deploys a range of motifs characteristic of Gothic fiction, *i.e.*: a nostalgia for the medieval past, a recreation of wild and natural scenery, decaying structures (for instance, Bell's fascination with the Convent of Santa Cruz at Buçaco), and the preference for distant, catholic southern countries.

### **Aubrey Bell and his South**

Even though the lusophile chooses to reveal in his publications certain aspects of his thought, making quite explicit his political opinions, his preoccupations with Iberian societies, as



well as his enthusiasm and delight in Iberian literature, nature and rural life, he essentially confines himself to a narration devoid of any form of autobiographical material. Still, from some of his observations we may infer that he knew, like so many of his contemporaries, the Mediterranean world (Italy, Sicily, Greece and France), and was also familiar with the Swiss countryside.

It is generally known that the South (the Holy Land and Palestine) and the Mediterranean (especially Italy and, in the second place, Greece) were considered by the Victorians and the Edwardians (namely, the upper and middle classes) the cradle of humanity and civilization. This is perhaps what partly explains why so many of them were regular visitors to those countries. John Pemble characterizes the South of that period as “the haunt of the British artists, academics, and literati” (4).

Although it is a fact that the entire Mediterranean region would receive large numbers of travellers on a yearly basis, it was mainly Italy that continued attracting massive attention. The British looked upon that country with awe and veneration; it is significant to note that at the time Italy was the only country the English were willing to assume as a point of reference in the fields of art, music, literature and painting (Pemble 60). In the “Preface” to *The magic of Spain* Bell acknowledges:

It is not easy in a few words to account for the strange Oriental spell that Spain has exercised over many minds nor to explain the potency of its attraction. For indeed the great Peninsula possesses a special spice and flavour. It has not the immemorial culture of Italy, nor the pleasant smiling landscapes of France with her green meadows and crystal streams. (vii)

Unlike in the era of the Grand Tour, these travellers would pay annual visits to the Mediterranean (in particular to Italy and the south of France), often enjoying their stay from autumn till Easter. The time of their departure was thus deliberately chosen in order to avoid the months considered inadvisable for travel in the southern countries (Pemble 41). Aubrey Bell also expresses his concern for the well-being of the traveller, providing hints on the best season for voyaging to the Peninsula. In *Portugal of the Portuguese* the author issues an opinion that supports this view on the matter of travelling: “The Estoril climate even excels that of Lisbon, being slightly warmer in winter and cooler in summer. It is a little surprising that more foreigners do not settle temporarily or permanently in this region, which is so easy of access and has so many advantages” (*Portugal of the Portuguese* 80-81).

Travel literature on the Iberian Peninsula has its roots well into the late Middle Ages, (Payne 9) and yet notwithstanding, at the time of Bell, Spain and Portugal still held the status of a region lying off the “beaten track.” The key reasons for this neglect may be traced back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, for neither Spain nor Portugal had been included in the itineraries of the Grand Tour. This tendency continued till the end of the nineteenth century, hence keeping these countries remote for the majority of Victorian and Edwardian travellers.

“In Italy strangers seem to be at home and the natives to be exiles,” observed in 1854 an American voyager to that country (Hillard 184). Indeed, Italy and southern France were appealing to the traveller because their popular tourist resorts would evoke the familiar cultural and social frame of reference, thanks to British fashions, manners, services and facilities available (Pemble 43). Surprisingly, even though some writers, like for instance Aubrey Bell, sought in the South values or components of life different to the ones that define the modern world and a complex, advanced society, they would not renounce some little comforts provided for travellers abroad. The lusophile informs his reader about the services (un)available in Estoril:

Gambling, on a large scale, and great luxury, it is true, he [the Englishman] will not find, but cleanliness and ordinary comfort are to be had at the existing hôtels, and any other deficiencies are amply compensated for by the excellent climate and the charms and interest of the surrounding country, and by the courtesy and helpfulness of its inhabitants. It is not often that travellers can live in a comfortable hôtel, have English newspapers, English books [...], English tinned foods and tobacco, all the delights and none of the drawbacks of a southern climate.... (*Portugal of the Portuguese* 81)

Another characteristic of Victorian and Edwardian travelogues, also evident in Aubrey Bell’s writing, is the justification of travelling. It was believed that travel, and especially to the South, had to be purposeful. According to James Johnson, “long residence in foreign countries tends to sap or at least to weaken the force of British patriotism” (272). Travellers only adopted a more relaxed form of behaviour after the Great War, argues Pemble (54).

Taking into account his writings, Aubrey Bell could never be accused of being unpatriotic; however, the causes for his and his family’s absence in the homeland had always been clearly specified. While his mother’s reason to leave the United Kingdom and

settle in the south of France was her poor health, Bell's motive to live in a foreign country was his work as correspondent, as well as a desire to pave the way with his publications for a better comprehension of the Iberian countries, cultures and peoples. In the "Preface" to *Portugal of the Portuguese* he writes: "Great Britain has everything to gain from a better understanding of a people with which she has so many dealings, and which is in itself so extraordinarily interesting and attractive" (v-vi).

### **The north of Portugal**

In his escapade to the country's north, Bell discovers the Serra da Estrela, to which he dedicates an entire chapter. In this section of the book the author provides a general geographical and anthropological outline of the northern part of the country, developing special interest in its inhabitants, their way of dressing, as well as their routine activities; however, it was the great natural features of that region that caused the most profound impact on the lusophile, becoming the object of his keen attention.

Local markets would always rivet Bell's interest, which is why the information concerning their location, the days they operate, as well as a range of goods on offer, were considered by the writer as particularly relevant for travellers who wished to sample local products and witness actions in which different socio-economic needs meet; these were, to Aubrey Bell, the small centres of economic activity through which flow innumerable varieties of commodities and which bring together hundreds of colourfully dressed people. Aubrey Bell reports:

Twice a week, on Thursdays and Sundays, there is high market at Covilhã. Then the *Praça do Municipio* is from an early hour filled with women sitting on the cobbles in front of huge baskets of broa..., selling them at a *vintem*, a *meia tostão* and a *tostão*. Immediately above, in a second *praça* is the market of fruit and vegetables and of large flat cheeses. The women wear their kerchiefs entirely covering the hair and tied beneath the chin, of every conceivable shade of blue and green and yellow, red, orange, purple, brown; some of them with a pattern of flowers, and nearly all of delicate soft dyes, so that the open, densely crowded market of moving colours in this *praça* is a sight extraordinarily beautiful. (*In Portugal* 133)

The following chapter concentrates on the quiet daily life of two villages in the Serra da Estrela, Verdelhos and Manteigas.

In his description of these two pleasant rural areas, Aubrey Bell focuses on such aspects as: the scenery, architecture, local outfits and hospitality. On the occasion of the author's mentioning a small square in Verdelhos, the reader is reminded again of his political standpoint. Thus, Bell associates the travelogue with the literature of political protest. John Pemble claimed that some British writers:

[S]ignified in their accounts of journey to the South a hostility towards the values of the modern world and a desire to withdraw from its problems and complexities. They wrote less as the representatives of their society than as its casualties and defeated rebels. Their work proclaims the sadness and the anger of men who were at odds with contemporary life, and who were looking not for action but for rest. (12)

### **Bell's defence of the Church**

As regards this description, Bell may be considered an enemy of modern society that runs afoul with its own traditional values, and aspires to develop cosmopolitan and hybrid identities. The lusophile never hesitates to show hostility towards the Republic and social progress, hence, rejecting the inevitability of modernity.

One of the causes the author strongly defended was the religious question. He claimed that Portugal had never been an anti-clerical country, certifying that the new radical movement was a mere echo of the slogans of the French Revolution. Bell argued that the measures adopted by the Republicans to deal with the Church were inappropriate, far too repressive and reactionary in their nature. Aubrey Bell, a member of the High Church, was conservative and contra-revolutionary. The lusophile, like many of his contemporaries, believed in religious instruction based on the Holy Bible; however, while many authors kept their personal beliefs private, Bell's religious convictions were always genuinely pronounced.

Victorian and Edwardian societies, being intensely religious, would strongly advocate the teachings based on the Bible. It was insisted that children should read it for their daily instruction, as a means of developing regular habits of disciplined reading of the Holy Book. The Holy Word, it was firmly believed, was expected to be read literally, non-critically, with pastors obliged to refrain from any denominational comment when providing and coordinating religious education (Davie 15). John Pemble explains: "the Scriptures were a fetish. It was an age of family

Bibles, Bible commentaries, framed and illuminated biblical texts, Biblical classes, Bibles on lecture in railway stations, and the Bible, as an essential part of childhood experience" (56). In *Portugal of the Portuguese* Bell says: "In a land of few industries, where a large majority of the inhabitants live by agriculture and fishing, there is but little need for book-learning, nor is there any universal book to be found in peasants' houses, as the Bible in England" (71).

### **Aubrey Bell, a solitary traveller in *In Portugal***

The next step in Bell's journey is directed to the *Cercal* [sic] of Buçaco and a small village that lies below the woods, named Luso. However, the old Carmelite Convent, set in a landscape of wild beauty and in glorious isolation, seems to have been the main purpose of the author's excursion. Fleeing from urban environments, civilization, the world of progress and the impersonal, Aubrey Bell finds himself walking in the woods and exploring the ruins. The relaxing atmosphere invites the traveller to contemplate the unfortunate decline of the convent, as well as the wild beauty of the untamed nature that surrounds the edifice. He appears to have found there, like in many other places in the Portuguese countryside, spiritual solace and comfort. This is where the author discovers innocence, peace, retreat and meditation, the qualities that allow him to channel in the best way his enthusiasm for Portugal. Aubrey Bell liked to live and work in silence and solitude, and the Portuguese nature would open this silent wonder to him. In the end of the chapter he writes: "The sunset sky appears through the trees cut into little globes of intense flame-coloured light, as though the branches were hung with a magic splendour of myriad oranges. Probably nowhere in Europe are there so many cedars as at Bussaco..." (Bell, *In Portugal* 146-147).

Aubrey Bell belongs to the group of travellers who looked for refuge away from cosmopolitan "pseudo-sites," haunted by others for the purpose of socialization, health recovery or cultural education. The author enjoyed and highly appreciated the timeless, sparse, unspoiled countryside, deserted roads, small village temples, rural monasteries, as well as the sturdy, sociable and genuine country people.

### **Coimbra and Oporto**

The author, ascribed a non-academic identity, dedicates three and a half pages to Coimbra and its University. In this

section of the travelogue Bell employs again his admirable qualities of projecting in the reader's mind the pictures and images that occur to their perception with the freshness of first impressions. Thanks to the vivid and elaborate descriptions of the architecture and the scenes of life that the writer witnessed, his readers can see them with their eyes shut, *i.e.* with the eyes of imagination. The lusophile observes:

The water [of the Mondego] is green and exquisitely transparent; a pine-covered hill farther up stream across the line of the river seems to block its course, and along a white curve of sand carts drawn by dark-brown oxen are being loaded, and women wash clothes from dawn to dusk, standing in the water. (Bell, *In Portugal* 160)

The city of Coimbra leaves a definitely indelible imprint in the reader's mind and memory. Bell asserts: "From the court of the University, close to the entrance of the Library, there is a view of the fruitful valley of the Mondego and of the hills beyond, which is one of the most beautiful views in Portugal, and that is not saying little, in this land of 'goodly prospects'" (*In Portugal* 154).

Located in the heart of Coimbra, the only university of the country is portrayed as a lively centre meant to benefit society, for this is where governmental officials and public authorities would "initiate" their political careers. As we are informed by Bell, it counts among its graduates many famous figures from the Portuguese literary world, *e.g.* Camões and Almeida-Garrett. However, in the times of Bell the academic climate was marked by increasing political tensions and conflicts between conservatives and Republicans (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 58).

Architecturally, the most interesting buildings of the city, according to his relation, are the University, the *Sé Velha* and the Old Convent that houses a famous legend featuring Queen Elizabeth of Portugal as protagonist; namely, in her apron occurred the miracle of transforming the bread, carried for the poor, into roses, which allowed the Queen to avoid the anger of her husband, King Dinis.

From Coimbra the author proceeds to Oporto. The lusophile projects a very positive picture of the city, what seems rather peculiar for someone who always seeks to experience in the first place the countryside and nature, *i.e.* the environments where he hopes to seize the real spirit of the country and its people. The reason for this exception lies in the fact that Oporto is much

more industrial and far less sophisticated than the Portuguese capital. What Bell discovers in the labyrinth of Oporto's steep streets is the busy life of an energetic and prosperous city centre that remained decidedly uncosmopolitan.

In his works Aubrey Bell recalls several times the figure of the Duke of Wellington.<sup>9</sup> This historical personage is associated with the Peninsular War and the city of Oporto, where on May 11<sup>th</sup> took place a daring passage of the river Douro by Wellington and his army in order to capture the city from the French. In a brief passage the author praises the general's tactic and strategic skills in carrying out that successful *coup de main* operation: "it is from the high bridge of Dom Luiz I that one may best realize how deep and steep the gorge is, and the immense difficulty of throwing an army across the river" (Bell, *In Portugal* 160).

In Oporto, just like in many other places visited by Bell, we are made able to "spectate" quaint scenes involving daily life activities of common people, such as women washing clothes in the river or people selling goods on the street or in small, local stores.

### **The preference for the unfamiliar**

It is important to bear in mind that the lusophile preferred to step outside the familiar, which was not the case of so many of his fellow travellers journeying to the South in that period. Having received a classical education or having completed a long period of preparation for the travel, scrutinizing countless volumes of handbooks, guidebooks and history books, containing information concerning their destination, these travellers would set off with high expectations and pre-established opinions. John Pemble argues: "Few tourists can have reached the level of academic expertise...; but many aimed at it and went on their way overloaded with information and judgments about art and history which determined both the things they saw and how they saw them" (70).

These anticipations gave them the comfort of being familiar with the visited places before they actually saw them; in other words, this kind of approach was likely to generate the feeling of *déjà vu*, recognition, familiarity and recollectiveness. In fact, the sensation of affinity would also help to simplify the South and the experience of the South (Pemble 113-120). This attitude

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<sup>9</sup> V. *In Portugal*, 1912: 142, 160; *Portugal of the Portuguese*, 1917: 129, 194.

was certainly far from Bell's intention though. The author must have, obviously, planned his trips; however, a touch of surprise was always present. Bell always cherished the moments of harmony, relaxation and joy when being in union with nature:

When the north wind has driven every cloud from the sky, one seems here to have come to a heavenly undiscovered country: at the back a huge uninterrupted semicircle of mountains, their steep lower flanks covered with pinewoods; at the north end of this semicircle the purple crags of lofty Pindo outlined on the soft turquoise sky; in front glimpses through pines of the sapphire bay, foam round an islet of rock and in an inner lagoon of pale turquoise separated from the sapphire by a white tongue of sand. (Bell, *Spanish Galicia* 92)

### Attention to colour

Besides the great awareness of nature, the colour-sensitivity of the lusophile is another characteristic of his writing resonant with Romantic influences. This facet of his thought gives Bell's style a peculiar glow and animation that may intensify the reader's sympathy with the depicted world.

The name of the publication.	The number of words "colour" and its derivations.
<i>In Portugal</i>	49
<i>Portugal of the Portuguese</i>	19
<i>The magic of Spain</i>	51
<i>Spanish Galicia</i>	62

Table 2: The number of occurrences of the word "colour" and its derivations in the four writings of Aubrey Bell.

As far as *In Portugal* is concerned, out of the forty nine occurrences of this word throughout the travelogue, twenty two have to do with the colours of textiles and fabrics dyed in the clothes of common people Bell happens to meet on his way, with female kerchiefs and dresses being the garments he discusses most frequently. The weather and the scenery (landscapes, habitats, wildlife, houses and marketplaces) are other aspects of the rural environment explored by the author through the use of colour.



## **The motif of light and a peasant woman**

Another important feature that reappears frequently in the travelogues on the Mediterranean is light (Pemble 150). Due to the fact that London and other British cities had succumbed to the effect of pollution, making the atmosphere and the air quality poor and unhealthy, many of the tourists found the Mediterranean light delightful, charming and, most importantly, translucent. This nostalgia for light is also characteristic of Bell. Even though the author does not make any reference to the situation in his home country, he clearly shows a preference for the southern setting. In numerous passages we shall encounter expressions like: "blue sky," "clear blue sky," a sky of "soft light blue," "the softest imaginable blue," of "clearest turquoise," "clearest green," "intense light," "soft and beautiful," "cloudless" and "glowing." Even the winter sky proves attractive to the lusophile: "the winter sky, clear and luminous, is not less beautiful, and reappears after rain in a fresher radiance" (*In Portugal* 73), he writes. We can conclude that in Aubrey Bell's writings light evokes a comfortable feeling of safety, well-being and life: "... often the summer sky in Portugal by night scarcely seems to lose its clear softness of day; the stars appear lightly set without intensity, a faint mist of sprinkled silver sinking into a yielding woof of grey rather than, as, for instance, in Andaluçia, hard knobs of glowing gold thronging in a sky of deepest blue" (*In Portugal* 126).

Bell's valuable insight into the female way of dressing is evidenced in the work. He observes that Portuguese peasant women dress in a very picturesque way, using bright and vivid colours, with their heads always bound in brilliant kerchiefs and, in the region of Minho, draped with gold jewellery that makes part of their traditional outfits. The jewellery that adorns each woman is supposed to show their families' wealth, however, no doubt, some scenes, depicted by the author, can provoke a smile from the reader: "...all the ornaments... of real though perhaps not very fine gold, are thick and heavy, and many of them curiously worked, so that it is strange to see these gilt peasant-women barefoot, chaffering over the price of a lettuce or a chicken" (*In Portugal* 168-169).

## **The uniqueness of the north and Iberian hospitality**

The Province of Minho is the next step on Aubrey Bell's journey. As a matter of fact, the chapter under this very title is the

longest in the book, which may reflect a certain degree of affinity towards this region. The more the lusophile advances towards the north, the more the countryside resembles to him that of a northern country, evoking, perhaps, a nostalgic memory of his homeland. In Matosinhos Bell recalls a poem by Francisco de Sá e Meneses about the stream of Leça in which the lyrical subject discovers the idyllic landscape of that river and enjoys the atmosphere of pastoral peace. The author presents an interesting panorama of the rural life of the Minhotans, with peasants being in the focus of his attention. The author observes that women use their heads to carry all the loads and that an umbrella is a frequent requisite to occupy idle hands; other elements, such as peasant outfits, also do not escape his attention.

The author enumerates elements and characteristics that distinguish Minho and Trás-os-Montes from the rest of the country, and these are: religiousness, the way of speaking, yokes, *cangas* or *mulhelhas*, and capes of *caroça* used by peasants to protect against strong winter rains. Bell's eye never tires of looking at picturesque valleys, hills with vine-clad slopes, appealing gardens, orchards and fruit yards, small, neat churches half hidden among trees, as well as lovely but solid, grey granite houses.

Bell was delighted with Portuguese hospitality, politeness and flattering kindness. The author noted that strangers are treated here with honour, consideration and respect; and any foreign traveller is always welcomed and received indoors as a person of great importance. He acknowledges: "And these peasants, living in isolated houses or tiny villages, will offer their house (*a minha casa*) and their food (*é servido*) like Castilians, or spend much trouble and time in preparing a meal for the stranger, scouring the village for coffee or eggs, for which they will charge but a few *vintens*" (*In Portugal* 69-70).

Indeed, Portuguese and Castilian hospitality are characterized as most generous and exemplary out of all Iberian peoples (the lusophile observes that Basque and Galician hospitality is less lavish and sumptuous). Aubrey Bell cherished the courtesy and civility of the Portuguese towards strangers considering it genuine and innate:

The serviceableness of the peasants who crowd the inn and their hospitality to the stranger are unfailing, one going out into the burning sun to fetch icy fresh water, another to look for a loaf or a part of a loaf of yellow maize-bread, a third offering cigarettes, another going hundreds of yards to point out the way across the *serra* to Manteigas. (*In Portugal* 138)

However, on the other hand, the author notices that hospitality in Portugal may not be entirely disinterested, being biased by other interests and advantages. In Bell's opinion, the Portuguese, in his friendly attitude towards an outlander, can manifest an egoistic desire to: "stand well in the eyes of the stranger" (*Portugal of the Portuguese* 12); moreover, the Portuguese also beneficiates from the mutual cultural exchange, with Bell being a "broker of contacts among cultural domains" (Leed 15), for instance, teaching local peasants that "England is not Oporto" (Bell, *In Portugal* 24) and communicating knowledge of this country to his compatriots in England.

Aubrey Bell felt himself perfectly safe on the roads and in the urban centres of the Iberian Peninsula, where he came to witness political demonstrations of mass society. The common people the author crossed with on his trips were generally helpful, civil and attentive, he confesses. Many of the travellers to the South saw the civilized ways and the behaviour of peoples of the South in contrast with the rude, rough and aggressive nature of the northern people, especially when they gather in a crowd (Pemble 143-144). Indeed, Bell never found the Iberian crowd menacing; he attests that in Portugal most of the times people seem to assemble out of sheer curiosity, listen to political speeches and then look upon the events with indifference, because in Portugal "the mass of people is equally unfanatic" (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 63).

Those who travelled to the South feared revolutions, republican anticlericalism and anarchy (Pemble 138), which explains why the Iberian Peninsula could possibly have been avoided by many Victorian and Edwardian tourists. To the hesitant British travellers, the author responds saying that Portugal is a safe destination (Bell, *Portugal of the Portuguese* 81).

An opportunity of testing Portuguese hospitality occurred to Bell in a small inn on his way to Trás-os-Montes. The lusophile dedicates one brief chapter to describe the inn's interior, the habits of its guests, the food served, and the persons of the inn-keeper and his wife. We learn from Bell that places like this one are among the ones the traveller should definitely explore, because it is in these exciting environments that the traveller can enquire into the true Portuguese character as well as into the various components of the local culture. "In winter especially," he recalls, "the *lareira* becomes a gathering-place where laughter and song, legends and wise saws and proverbs find their natural expression" (Bell, *In Portugal* 181).

## The mobility of a “passing stranger”

Aubrey Bell's journeying started with his discovery of the Iberian culture and literature when still a child in the Basque Country. However, the physical and mature journey to the Peninsula began with his departure as a correspondent to *The Morning Post*. Ever since then he had been a solitary wanderer, enjoying the silence and freedom on desert Iberian roads and trails. His mobility, that special force responsible for “shaping human history” (Leed 21), brought him back to the Iberian Peninsula after his studies at Oxford and the apprenticeship served in the British Museum. Bell's journey structure was abundant in departures, passages and arrivals, which reflects his commitment to the self-assigned role as a hispanist and lusophile.<sup>10</sup>

Having in mind Aubrey Bell's experience of travel, we may deduce that he was not very much attached to the place where he was born, nor was England the destination of his returns. It was in Portugal, where he resided for almost thirty years, and it was his house in Estoril that he considered his home place and where he wanted to raise his two sons. Estoril was a place where he could breathe the air of liberty and, simply, it was a place he identified with.

The absence of references to any travel companion lets us assume that he was a solitary traveller in his tours in the Iberian Peninsula. In *Spanish Galicia* Bell quotes “the guide” speaking of the convent of Osera, however, all indicates that it was a travel book (had it been a hired guide, the quote would, in all likelihood, have appeared in Galician or Castilian, supplemented with the English translation).

The lusophile was willing to cross the boundaries of the unknown and the unfamiliar. His great advantage as a traveller lied in his perfect command of Iberian languages and the very fact that he was not a conventional “passing stranger” (Leed 61),<sup>11</sup> but a stranger with a wide knowledge of the countries'

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<sup>10</sup> The sequence of his motion draws up the following scheme: departure from England > passage through France and the Basque country > arrival in the Basque country > departure for England > arrival in England > stay in England > departure for the Peninsula > passage through Spain and Portugal > arrival/residence in Portugal, Estoril (in the meantime he changed the place of residence but continued living in Estoril) > departure for the exploration of Portugal in 1911 > Portuguese landscape and urban spaces > arrival in Estoril > departure for Galicia > passage through Portugal and Galicia > arrival in Estoril (*Spanish Galicia* was published in 1922) > departure for Canada in 1940 (where he also changed house once).

<sup>11</sup> Leed, Eric J. coins that expression to explain that whatever the traveller ob-

literature and history. His journeying *via* Portugal was not accidental; it was a culmination of his work and research, as well as the expression of his interests and dreams.

The author would record what he saw with words and with images, which is the case of *Portugal of the Portuguese* that contains thirty illustrations and *Spanish Galicia* that includes seven. Besides, in *Spanish Galicia* the reader is introduced to nine Medieval Galician lyrics (all translated into English), fifty two popular quatrains (also translated into English), to seven modern Galician poems and to musical notations of three traditional musics. Moreover, the lusophile also provides a literary review in the last chapter of *In Portugal*, dedicated essentially to a Portuguese modern poet, Guerra Junqueiro, whose soul, as we have the opportunity to find out, is filled with *saudade*. It is important to observe that some of the poems and lyrics incorporated into Aubrey Bell's publications are the merit of his own translation. Taking in consideration these facts, it would be highly misleading to call his travelogues superficial.

Even though one should be very careful in making comparisons between the countries he had seen, making comparisons is an instinctive component of every scholar and scientist. Leed advocates: "The comparison is the way in which the traveller calls up a base of familiarity before the spectacle of the new and the strange, which is perceived as such only in relationship to the known. In doing so one may diffuse the anxiety normally associated with the strange and unusual" (68). Cross-cultural comparisons are also present in Bell's writings; however, these comparisons are not merely visual, they evidence that the lusophile possessed a penetrating insight into the Iberian values, life patterns and behaviours. Clearly, he is not objective in his judgments, because by means of generalization the traveller loses absolutes; on the other hand, though, this generalizing activity can "become a source orientation for the passenger and an anchor in the flux of passage" (70), says Leed.

The countryside of Trás-os-Montes renders some familiar images, making the writer recall his homeland landscape of Dartmoor, as well as the dark colours of the Spanish *sierra*, distinguished by the following colours: "dull green, brown and blue" (Bell, *In Portugal* 186). Bell's description also captures small, picturesque villages that he discovers meandering through the quiet, northern countryside of Portugal. The next stage in the lusophile's journey is the capital of the province, Vila Real,

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serves are just superficial images "glimpsed in passing," *op. cit.*, 61.

called by the author “a delight.” After a visit to Vila Real by diligence, Bell travels to Murça where he happens to get to know the mayor; the author employs a sly touch of irony in the lines describing the faineance of the city official: “it was in the cool of the morning, and the walk would have been a pleasant one had dignity permitted” (*In Portugal* 190), he joked.

Bell would act on his own advice; he was an unhurried traveller journeying through the Iberian Peninsula. Heading for a certain destination, the traveller would take his time to explore the countryside, always hankering to identify authentic local flavours, traditions and idiosyncrasies. The author’s relaxed attitude, mixed with humbleness of mind and unhurriedness in his manners allowed him to appreciate the simplicity and serenity of the Portuguese countryside and its people.

The lusophile, a solitary wanderer in the open fields and lonely roads, had a discerning relationship towards the natural world; receptive of sights, sounds, colours, smells, and respectful of the lives of simple, uneducated people, Bell perceives things that often pass unnoticed to other travellers. He compares the unknown of Portugal with the known of Spain, proving to the reader a great wealth of information stored in his memory. Unfortunately, Bell’s writings contain only few personal anecdotes recording his travels, and these are not meant to amuse, but to illustrate the author’s point, *e.g.* asking the way to local peasants may prove, according to Bell, slightly discouraging:

Here [in Portugal], as in Spain, *nã ha atalho sem trabalho*, there is no short cut without long toil, and one may distrust all the peasants’ shortcuts, while their vaguer directions, such as that one may arrive *à tardezinha*, in the little afternoon or *à noitezinha*, at the little nightfall, or that the village is *perto, lá acima*, or *lá embaixo*, or that one has *um bocadinho* still to go, should fill one with dismay (*In Portugal* 205).

### **The Portuguese language and Portuguese modern poetry**

What makes Aubrey Bell’s travel book unconventional is the juxtaposition of Portuguese and Spanish words in order to identify, compare or contrast them. Bell uses notoriously native Portuguese and Spanish words that sometimes, in spite of their superficial similarity, have non-harmonious meaning. Other reasons for this procedure might be the lack of a precise equivalent in English, the lusophile’s intention to familiarize the traveller with useful foreign words or to give a colourful perspective of these “exotic” countries. The author’s usage of Portuguese

words also gives some linguistic verisimilitude to his portrait of Portugal. Nevertheless, unlike in his other titles, *Spanish Galicia* and *Portugal of the Portuguese*, he does not provide any glossary of foreign vocabulary in the end of the book.

In the final section of the travelogue Bell draws an essential distinction between the Spanish and Portuguese languages, the latter ignorantly called by some “a dialect.” This part is especially useful for travellers planning to learn a few foreign words and phrases before actually visiting the Iberian Peninsula. The author gives the reader a quick guidance to the Portuguese pronunciation; his empirical correlation analysis between the pronunciation of Spanish, French and Portuguese may be particularly useful for some speakers.

The author’s knowledge of the Portuguese reality permits him to criticize the Gallicism of the national press; he goes to lament on the number of words and expressions that are being transplanted daily into the Portuguese language. The lusophile is convinced that peasants are the true guardians of the past in the present, and not only of traditional outfits, folklore, habits or values, but also of the language, as the language, in their use, remains uncontaminated by French modes of speech. He closes the chapter demonstrating a particular liking for diminutive forms typical of Spanish and Portuguese that increase softness in these languages.

In the very last chapter of the travelogue the author presents the figure of Guerra Junqueiro, “a modern Portuguese poet,” and looks at the content of a few of his poems. The main objective of Aubrey Bell was to familiarize English readers with different writers than they were used to. Bell admits that to an average English reader other names than that of Camões had been meaningless for too long, which is why he aimed to extend the reader’s knowledge of and sympathy for Portuguese modern poetry and literature.

Guerra Junqueiro’s poetry, as we learn from Bell, is marked by a deep sadness that reflects the sheer misery of common people such as peasants, toilers, fishermen and shepherds. It is noteworthy that several times in his writings (Bell, *Portuguese Literature* 331; Bell, *Studies in Portuguese Literature* 221-222) the author compares Junqueiro to Victor Hugo, underlying these poets’ revolutionary attitudes and genuine compassion for the miserable, misguided and weak. Guerra Junqueiro is considered by Bell: “the Portuguese Victor Hugo” (*Portuguese Literature* 331) and “the greatest of Portugal’s living poets” (*Studies in Portuguese Literature* 222).

## Conclusions

*In Portugal* projects a broad picture of every region of the country. The author proceeds from the south to the north, where the journey ends. The narrative of the journey into Portugal abounds in useful and interesting travel information, as well as in practical hints addressed to those disposed to follow his footsteps. The author also provides rich descriptions of human diversity and landscape, including all the relevant information concerning towns and localities of interest that are always distinct in their features in every region.

Bell's impressions of Portugal are sufficiently favourable. The lusophile holds idealized positive images of the country's rural life as well as the countryside where he seeks the true Portuguese way of life and the genuine Portuguese spirit. The countryside dwellers are, in his mind, the guardians of the country's heritage and traditional culture. Bell's gaze is also fascinated with the scenery; the picturesque character of the settings he passes through is essential in his discovery of Portugal.

The lusophile's reflections upon political subjects left him disappointed; his major accusation being against the Republican government that it was unable to preserve law and order in the country, and that it consisted of people who continually failed to respond to the country's needs and emergencies. Another aspect of Bell's criticism centres on the predominance of Gallicism over Lusophilism in styles, tastes and fashions. His harsh judgement on Lisbon is motivated by the city's rage for imitating foreign manners, rendering the city destitute of identity and character.

The author's attitude towards tourism seems to condemn the superficiality of the tourist experience; his disregard for tourists is displayed in the manner Bell speaks about Sintra, the well-known red covered guides and the "beaten tracks." Portugal and Spain represented to Aubrey Bell the last vestige of traditional values and a certain familiar order of things, already lost in the modern, developing world; this perception of reality was, in all likelihood, responsible for Aubrey Bell's doubleness of vision: on the one hand, the author was determined to protest against the decline of the traditional organization of society, but, on the other, he understood its replacement with the modern idea and spirit as inevitable. He resignedly accepted that the process of democratization, development and modernization of society through education would gradually help the country restore its former wealth, prosperity and greatness.



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