

low giving the interpretation of the sculpture in full. Meanwhile, time, as well as the profound studies made in Maya archæology by various scholars, has contributed to perfecting the work in hand.

Deficient though it may be in many minor parts, I am desirous of publishing my views on this subject without further delay and of thus at last redeeming the pledges given.

#### HUMBOLDT AND BRAZIL.

THE statement is often made, even by Brazilian writers, that not only were express orders given by the Portuguese government to prevent the entrance of Humboldt in Brazilian territory but that a price was set upon his head in case he was found within the limits of the colony. A recent interesting discussion in the columns of the *Jornal de Commercio*, of Rio de Janeiro, has brought to light the official documents relating to the case, which is thus seen to be less discreditable to the Portuguese government than is usually represented. It is to be remembered that prior to the removal of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil, in 1808, the colonial policy was an exceedingly narrow one, and that foreigners were jealously excluded from all the colonial possessions.

A official letter from the minister of the kingdom, Dom Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, to the governor of Para, Dom Francisco de Souza Coutinho, with the date of June 2, 1800, states: "It being reported that a certain Baron Humboldt, native of Berlin, has travelled in the interior of America, has sent home geographical observations of the countries traversed, and a collection of 1500 new plants, and that he intends to direct his voyage to the upper parts of the captaincy of Maranhão in order to examine desert regions up to the present time unknown, and as in the actual state of affairs this voyage without special orders of His Majesty is suspicious, you will cause to be determined with the greatest exactness and care if this or any other foreign traveller is travelling, or has travelled, in the territory of this captaincy, and in the affirmative case you will impede the continuation on such investigations, prohibited not only to foreigners but also to suspicious Portuguese not authorized by royal orders." The letter terminates recommending "the greatest circumspection, communicating at once to His Royal Highness, through this department of state, in order that he may take the steps required by faults of this nature."

In consequence of this order, Dom Diogo de Souza, governor of Maranhão, sent a circular letter, under date of Oct. 12, 1800, to various local authorities, "recommending that if by chance the said Baron Humboldt, or any other foreign traveller, appears in your district, you will have him conveyed, with all his companions, to the capital, without, however, failing to treat him with all decency, nor to give him good treatment and conveniences, only accompanying him and impeding his means of transportation and the making of political and philosophic observations."

Concerning this matter an interesting letter from Baron Eschwege to Humboldt has appeared, in which he communicates that he learned from his friend, Antonio de Araujo e Azevedo, Count da Barca, who had been Portuguese minister at La Hague, Paris, St. Petersburg and perhaps, also, Berlin, where he had probably made the personal acquaintance of Humboldt, and who was afterwards prime minister in Brazil, that learning of this order, he wrote at once to the prince regent, begging not only its prompt revocation in order not to attract the reproval of all Europe, but that orders should be given to aid Humboldt in every way, and that such orders were actually given.

It thus appears that even the narrowest of Portuguese

statesmen did not go to the length that is generally believed by their descendants and countrymen, and that enlightened men like Count da Barca were not lacking in Portugal at that time. Coming to power, a few years later, this statesman was the principal protector of Eschwege and the other foreign travellers that, after 1808, were allowed to penetrate freely in the interior of Brazil.

#### REMARKS ON THE TERNS OF LITTLE GREEN ISLAND, MAINE.

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THE Little Green Island is located to the southwest of Penobscot Bay, about 55° N. lat., 69° 2' W. lon. About a mile north the Northern or Eastern Triangles, a group of sunken ledges, some rising above the surface a little before and after high water, are scattered, noted as fishing grounds, as good gaming places, and as places to be especially avoided by mariners. The place is about seven or eight miles from the nearest mainland, a round rocky island inhabited only by sea birds and such organisms as find a suitable dwelling-place here—excepting the birds, probably nothing higher in the scale than insects. Throughout the year it is visited by gunners and fishermen, who often camp for a few days, or mayhap, throughout the summer season.

This was formerly one of the largest tern resorts in the vicinity, though to-day it is interesting only in a historical sense. It had for years been visited by fishermen, who came on picnics to gather the eggs of the "medericks," or terns, *Sterna hirundas* and *S. Paradisea*. As they killed very few of the birds, and only took the eggs that were sufficiently fresh to sink in a dish of water, no serious reduction in the numbers of the "medericks" was evident, until they were slaughtered for their plumes or breasts.

I first visited the place, and beheld the wondrous beauty and natural fascinations of this great population of birds, from June 16 to 18, 1885. It was a bright, fair day, and we arrived about noon, finding them in the midst of their daily labors. Our approach to the island aroused the solicitude of those nearest the sea, which rose from the ground in companies of considerable size, some to resettle on their eggs or resting places, while others were still rising; some struck out boldly to view us more closely and herald our approach in a strong, shrill voice, and were quickly joined by others coming from the sea, pausing for a moment, then hurrying to land or hanging overhead to vociferate angrily to the unabating numbers round us. Such was our reception, and from daylight until dark, of those days, every movement which we made was carefully guarded by those creatures. We found the nests all over the island, from the windrows of seaweed, left by early high tides, in the gravel and "pobble stones" on the beaches, on the bald, jagged ridges of ledge, projecting seaward, back through the pasture land to the summit of the island.

That year the place afforded pasturage to a large flock of sheep, which kept the grass cropped short, furnishing unlimited nesting sites, as our terns dislike tall grass for breeding places. Some were mere depressions in the sand or grass, others contained a few feathers from the parent, straws, or pieces of seaweed, and occasionally they were quite well lined; and one found in July, which was placed about a foot from a wisp of drift hay, was lined with it to a remarkable degree, being compact and strong, truly a pretty specimen of bird weaving.

While wandering over the island we were accompanied by a restless, pleading throng, seeming like a dome of animated white flakes within the great, impassive dome of outer blue. Those that were more distant were settling