

into magnificent ridges and pinnacles, and has sometimes been almost startled by the sudden unveiling of a majestic peak through a rift in the clouds far up in the sky.

As the islands draw nearer, the hazy blues and purples give place to vivid shades of green, and these, at first blending and indistinct, gradually resolve themselves into a rich and luxuriant cultivation, filling up the valleys with dense woods of pine and sweet chestnut, covering the slopes wherever it is possible to work with orange-groves, vineyards, and fields of maize and wheat; and, even where work is scarcely possible, mitigating the nearly precipitous cliffs, and rendering them available by means of artificial terraces and slopes.

The Açores are situated between lat. $39^{\circ} 45'$ and $36^{\circ} 50'$ N., and long. 25° and $31^{\circ} 20'$ W. They consist of three groups—two small islands, Flores and Corvo, to the extreme north-west; Fayal and Pico, separated by a narrow and shallow channel and forming geologically one elevation, in the centre; and associated with these, spreading to the north-eastward, San Jorge, Terceira (the former seat of government), and Graciosa; while the third group, nearly a couple of hundred miles to the south-westward, consists of San Miguel, the richest and most important of the islands, and the seat of the present capital; Santa Maria; and two curious little patches of naked rocks, the Formigas and Dol-labarat. The climate of the Açores is mild and equable. In summer they are touched by the south-east trades, or rather they are just in the fine-weather edge of the variables. In winter they are subject to heavy gales from the south-west. Their climate is doubtless influenced to a certain extent by the southern deflection of the Gulf-stream, and they are near the northern border of the Sargasso Sea. The mean annual temperature of Ponta Delgada, in San Miguel, is $17^{\circ} \cdot 67$ C., $0^{\circ} \cdot 9$ higher than that of Palermo, $1^{\circ} \cdot 4$ lower than that of Malaga, and $0^{\circ} \cdot 6$ lower than that of Funchal. The mean winter temperature of Ponta Delgada is $13^{\circ} \cdot 05$ C., $1^{\circ} \cdot 8$ higher than that of Palermo, and $2^{\circ} \cdot 7$