

Cape Verde Islands, July 27th to August 9th, 1873.—The ship was off the island of St. Vincent of the Cape Verde group on July 27th, and the islands of Sta. Lucia and St. Antonio were in sight; a heavy mist hanging over the high mountains of the latter. We anchored at Porto Grande, the harbour of St. Vincent.

The island is about 12 miles long by 6 broad. It was an irregularly oval form, and consists of a flat central tract more or less broken by low hills surrounded by a range of high land. The low central district is evidently the bottom of an ancient crater, of the wall of which the high surrounding range is the remains. The range is composed of strata dipping outwards from the ancient centre of eruption. It is cut up by a series of deep valleys, having a general radiate arrangement, into ridges of various heights, which are again cut up by secondary transverse valleys so as to culminate in a series of irregular peaks.

Some of the ridges are of considerable altitude. The Green Mountain is 2,483 feet in height, and one other mountain to the extreme south of the island, 2,218 feet. A break in the encircling range to the north-west forms the harbour of Porto Grande, in the entrance to which lies a small island, called Bird Rock, a fragment of the range, once continuous in this direction.

More barren and desolate-looking spots than St. Antonio and St. Vincent appear as approached from seawards, after they have been suffering from their usual prolonged droughts, it is impossible to conceive of. Their general aspect reminded me of that of Aden or of some of the volcanic islands in the Red Sea. At the time of our visit, no rain had fallen for a year at St. Vincent. Sometimes it does not rain for three years.

The mountains are of black volcanic rock terminating seawards in precipices, in which the numerous dikes, which traverse them in all directions, stand out conspicuously, often projecting far through weathering of the matrix. Between the hill ranges stretches a flat sandy plain covered with sand dunes, and with ranges of low rounded hills of a bright red ochre tint. The white sandy plain terminates at the head of the harbour in a sandy shore, where is a miserable town, composed mostly of mere hovels, and a black coaling jetty.

The whole was glaring in a fierce sun, and appeared almost devoid of vegetation, but from the anchorage some black tufts could be made out with a telescope, which consisted of small bushes of lavender (*Lavandula rotundifolia*), the most abundant plant in the island, and on the summits of the higher hills