The Province of Sierra Leone

Chapter 1

The name, situation and bounds of this Province and the nature of the land.

We now propose to begin Part Two of our enterprise, and as its main subject is that district we call Serra Leoa (Leonine Hills), we shall speak first about its name. It has this name because of its mountain ranges, its rocks, its valleys, its hills and peaks, with their steep slopes. As for the epithet of 'Leonine' (a) this refers to its caves, not only those of its famous Cabo Ledo, but also those elsewhere in the district. For these caves, together with its multitudinous valleys, produce an echo from the broken waters of its copious streams, as they run by the boulders and outcrops of stony places; as well as an echo from its furious waves, which break not only against its white beaches, but also against the great rocks that gird its shores. And this echo can be heard from very far away, resounding. (Yet) I do not doubt that the name of 'Leoa' is even more fitting because of the lions for which the Serra provides a refuge and a range.

To deal now with its geographical situation. The Serra lies in a North - South direction. But to identify its cape, those travelling from Cape Verga must sail Southwest, in the direction of the Isles of Idols, keeping at a depth of never less than 7 or 8 fathoms. Coming this way, one can obtain a clear view of the Serra, with its cape or headland pointing North - South. Magarabomba lies to the South, and is divided into many separate islands by the various streams and rivers that penetrate or emerge from the hinterland. In this quarter flows the river Bangue, which girdles the Serra on the South. [f.47r] Facing the Serra on the North is the renowned Tagarim Point, which is ringed by the river Mitombo. This river and a tributary which breaks away from it make their way round the Serra in such a way that, at the point where the stream meanders to a halt, it is so near Bangue River that the Serra appears to be a large island. The distance between the two rivers is so little that with great ease the natives can transfer their boats from one to the other. With the same ease, the territory could be turned into a beautiful island, by cutting through the narrow neck of land at this point.

(a) D. Sebastian told me that the land breathed here.
Nature was far from mean to the Province, since it provided it with the ornamentation of several well-situated islands, which between them occupy a large part of the district. Those called the Wild Islands are on the South side, almost facing Cabo Ledo. The name is fitting, inasmuch as they are not inhabited nowadays, yet they deserve less harsh a name. For the name 'Wild' is, on deeper consideration, wide of the mark — as witness the abundance of their Indian fruits, their citrus trees, their palm groves, with a variety of timber for many uses. The three islands called the Islands of Idols are renowned, so it appears, for their fertility. One of them is very hilly, is full of many different kinds of trees, and is crossed and watered by rich streams; and because it is so comfortable for human existence, it has been chosen by the heathen for settlement. The other two, which are not very different, are used by them for their crops and cattle. Strictly speaking, these islands do not belong to the district of the Serra; nor do other islands nearer the Serra, to the North, and divided from that realm only by a river. These latter islands are fertile and full of all kinds of plants, herbs, and vegetables. One of them, Tasso Island, is well-known, and is so suitable for human life that even if one wished to take things easy, this island would never play the cruel stepmother, but would in all respects act as a loving mother.

Coming back to our Serra and its district, the land is throughout so fertile and so responsive to enterprise that the man who has had and continues to have sufficient experience of the area will have erased from his mind all confidence in that ill reputation which envious people have spread about it. This they have done, to the great scandal of our holy faith, because they are a worldly rabble, with their licence and loose habits, are only interested in profits. They lack concern for the great cause of bringing a multitude of souls to Christ. The lives of these wretches exhibit on the one hand an obsession with merely temporal things, which destroys their consciences, and on the other a forgetfulness of Eternal matters and their own salvation.

Another point must now be dealt with, the bounds of the Serra. Here follow the true ones. On the North side, along the coast, the bounds are the kingdom (sic) and lands of the Boulons, Casses, and Calus. Or rather, for Calus substitute Dagunchos, because these were driven out of the Serra by the Manes, and hence have had to settle in foreign lands, lands which seem to have been abandoned and left to them by the natives. Today they live in the valleys and plains of the renowned Serra Macamala, where people
of limited experience assert that there is crystal. We may yet believe these people, if they can convince us that it is found in the copious streams which flow from the base of the Serra, for in such streams that kind of stone may be found. In the same direction, the Serra meets the kingdom of the Logos, whose lands are very large, and which borders in the hinterland with the Pegnes, a very noble and rich people, and with the Limbas, the Fulos and the Souso; and in this direction the land stretches on to Barbary. On the South side is Magarabomba, a patrimony of the crown of the Serra, a land full of little islands. Tausente Island is famous, and from it stretch out the shoals of St. Anne with the well-known Totos (Islands), which are four to five islets to the Southwest. The land possesses palm-groves, ivory and cola; gold is available, and there is good water; the whole land is sandy. Its borders are the lands of a certain heathen people called Baranas, who have great riches; and so it

(b) Magarabomba, a land full of idols.

(c) Beyond this island, the mainland carries on to Cape Mount, the capital of this Province, whose is Daba or Bento Farma, a subordinate of Mandimansa. At this cape Ludovico built his fortress, in order to trade the gold of that great Province. For the shortest route is from here, 40-50 leagues, which is not the case with that from Cantor, see Chapter 1, Book 2. Next come the Coras, hinterland heathen, hill people: they trade country clothes and gold. Ivory they cannot carry away: there is plenty of it. This trade is not open to our people, Daba does not permit it, since the heathen are very suspicious of foreigners. So much so that if the Manes themselves were to come in European dress they would flee. From here the land and the hinterland go on as far as Mecca.
runs on to the Cape of Good Hope. These are the true limits and
bounds of what we call, *strictu sensu*, Serra Leoa. Therefore,
neither the Casses, an independent land before the conquest of
the Sapes, and also called Mabengoma, nor even the kingdom of the Boulon
or the kingdom of the Logos are included, or can be included in
this kingdom or district of Serra Leoa, as their names themselves
indicate. Truth will not allow us to include them. Greed alone will
be the motive of anyone who considers our limits too narrow. And
should there be any desire to extend them wider, we would only agree
to this when the neighbouring kingdoms, such as those of the Boulon
or the Logos, come to accept the improper name of Serra Leoa.

Now let us discuss the third point of our chapter - the nature of
the place and the fertility of the land. Generally speaking the air
is very temperate here, and the water is better and healthier. The land
is very beautiful and pleasant, with a variety of valleys, mountains,
and hills, and with gushing streams which divide up, not only the Serra
itself, but also the hinterland. It has a cover of dense forest, in
whose shady woods the continuous and soft harmony of the many birds
resounds most charmingly. The sea gives the district a pleasant out-
look, the Serra itself being like a balcony over the sea, looking to
the North and South. Its hills and high ranges spread in these
directions, and are surrounded by its various creeks and rivers, all
which are navigable to the natives, who pass up them deep into the
hinterland. Hence the Serra has all that can be desired in the way of
coolness and sea breezes. That is why we consider this Province the
most attractive and most favoured in all Ethiopia; and why we consider
the mountains of the Serra itself to be so kindly in respect of the
health of the human body. Finally, this whole land is so suitable for
those who can be content with the little that is essential for life,
that we know of no other place in these parts where one can live better
or longer.

Turning to the abundance of products, beginning with foodstuffs.
There are different types of rice, the land producing fastest the sort
the natives call 'seven weeks' rice', the apone of the land; then there
is the more common kind, which is produced in great quantities, the
common *funde* of the land. The seven weeks' rice gives a smaller
quantity than our *milho* (millet), and is dark in colour, but is very
tasty, although it stimulates the sanguine humour in man. The land
produces white *milho* and another kind, and also the sort called
macaroca, because it grows on a stem whose tip, where nature produces it, resembles a long spindle. From this grain they make cakes called batancas which we use at table as bread. The land also produces sesame; and tarafe, which grows on medium-sized trees found wild along the edges of rivers, and is used in times of famine, after being cured in water, just as we do lupine in Europe, but this seed is in larger quantity and is greener in colour. Of vegetables there are macarras, although these can only be obtained in small quantity; they are seeds similar to our peas, but there are more of them and they are different in colour, being a light grey. Then there are yams, potatoes, and mafatas which grow on plants under the soil, with leaves like those of the golfao (water lily) although these are much bigger; Calcutta pumpkins green and grey; certain beans; langanhans, which are widely used in the Cigas, and are fruits produced on the stems by a plant like a boerhavia, /f.48 Ar/ in the form of those small sugar hats (?) which are shaped like pyramids; native aubergines called Bete; and also our own kind of aubergine, although cultivated in different way.

As regards meat, for those that want to keep the rule of Galen and Hypocrates there is no lack of domestic and wild fowl, peacocks, partridges, birds like turtle doves, (d) and chocas which are small and dark grey in colour; also farfanas which correspond to our rabbits, and antelope, similar to our deer. The meat (from these creatures) is very good, but it is necessary to employ hunters to catch them. If one pays less attention to medical advice, there are (other animals which provide meat), elephant, buffalo, wild boar, pangles which are similar to cows with long faces and slightly-curved horns about half a span long, larger deer, and monkeys/apes. It is necessary to be on friendly terms with the hunters of these animals.

As regards fruit, although different from ours, there is no lack of it. There is Indian fruit such as bananas, some of them the smaller ones which are called Figs of St. Tomé - the subject of a discourse by the scholar João Fragoso and which in the opinion of D. Brcado was the fruit with which the devil persuaded our first parents to commit sin, as can be observed by anyone interested - and there are other bananas called centolous, longer and better. There are still longer ones more suitable for cooking than for the table; these are the cultivated ones,

(d) Wailing ducks and others.
which we have in our orchards and which are plentiful in all villages.

The valleys, hills and bushlands are bare and without brush wood for burning, like a good part of Europe. Coming to the variety of timber and trees, there is one tree so large that from a single specimen a canoe able to hold two or three hogsheads of cargo can be made. (Now) let us speak of the very valuable *cabo* (camwood) tree, which is similar to the one in Brazil. The Serra is full of this tree, and also of another kind from which they make dyes, as they do from the *ongo*, from which they make a very fine yellow dye. These woods are not attacked by damp or worms and are therefore excellent for many uses, and the canoes built from them last longer. However the foreign ships only take cargoes of camwood. The *malagueta* (pepper plant), a tree of middling size, is so called because of the fruit it bears, the long pepper, /f.48 Av/ which is very good for health, being hot and bitter. Because of its medicinal qualities, old hands order it to be used in their kitchens and in-dishes: it counters chills and poison. Not only is its wood used to make masts for small vessels, but also its bark is employed to make oakum of a kind better than our linen, to calk the bottoms and those other parts of ships which continually touch the water. Moreover tinder is made from it, which surpasses any other sort. From a tree called *pance* the natives draw a great quantity of tar, by striking the wood and making holes in it, and out of these comes a liquid called *caca* by the natives. This is dried in the sun, and ground into a flour, which can be boiled up like tar when required; the sign when it is ready is that it gives off a fetid smell. If we put on more /f.48 Av/ than tar, the boat becomes so black that it looks as if it has been on fire and has turned to charcoal. To make strong ropes there is plenty of *matampa*, which is not a tree but in the way it spreads looks like a vine-shoot. *Matampa* resembles a fishing rod, but with the knots further apart. It is cut through the middle and very thoroughly beaten, the core is extracted, and after very careful scraping the remaining core is made into rope, the twisting being by hand. This rope is a very necessary item for ships, and on it depends their strength and safety. *Matampa* is very adequate for this purpose, since experience has shown that the ropes made from it are as good as those made from flax. (Ropes can be made from it) only in winter time, on account of the damp that the ropes require and the water that *matampa* needs, as its normal support when growing. Apart from making fittings for vessels, such as halyards and guy ropes, *matampa* is used here for many purposes: they use it in building houses, tying up
the timbers with it, and so on. There is also plenty of nassinho, used for making different sorts of rope and all kinds of cord; these they make daily since they are not long lasting. But in the absence of the flax we have, nassinho cordage is employed for most of the fittings on boats. I must not forget to mention pita, a kind of grass similar to our espadana (Spanish Iris), but the leaf wider and thicker; from this many types of cord are made, and it is employed instead of the thread we use, for mending shoes. Also, it is employed by sailors to sew the sails, or their clothes, and by fishermen to make nets, although more often they use the thread of nacome, which is /f.49r/ made from the tenderest leaf of the young palm tree. For the hoops of barrels used to store water, we do not need withes from Europe, for here they can be obtained in plenty from suitable trees, such as the pau dos arcos (stave-wood), the matampa, and the lirpe, which are long canes, although not like ours, more like Bengal canes; these, when split, are good for the purpose.

Of all the trees, the highest and the thickest, and the one with most branches, is the tree called poulan. It is planted over a puppy dog, whose blood has first been poured into the ground; so the tree, as it grows, is regarded as an idol by the heathen, and serves as a boundary mark for villages. No walnut tree or chestnut tree in Europe, however large, is as big as the poulan. It is a refreshing tree, under whose shade a great crowd of people can take shelter. Except on younger trees and higher up on old ones, the bark is covered with thick thorns similar to those on our brambles. Its fruit is like cotton; it can be used as stuffing for mattresses, and when the tree sheds its fruits it is ready for blossoming again. Of the many different trees here, there is no bigger, and it is the one which is planted to mark the boundaries of land.

Let us now consider fruit trees, before we deal with grasses and bushes. The palm tree is the main one, producing chaveo, as was said in Part One Chapter. The ancien tree, and the one of most immediate interest, is the cola tree, of which the Province is full. Trade in cola fruit is the most regular and common trade. Cola grows in husks like our chestnuts; and cola trees to some extent resemble chestnut trees, inasmuch as both are large trees. The manipoleros (sorb-apple trees) bear manipoles, which look like yellow Saragossa plums, although the stone of this fruit is very large. These plums are so good that they would seem to be closely related to Saragossa plums. The machicas are like docase cherries. Some of the malillas are like sorb-apples. The foles, a very sweet fruit, grow on small trees, in
a kind of husk. (Other fruit trees are) abenche, sweet plums, black plums, the velvet-tree, and jagatu. The wild grapes, even if grafted or cultivated, never became as good as ours, etc. Without discussing here the real palm tree, let us refer to the false palms. One sort is called poche, which is used to roof houses and from which wine is drawn; and another sort is called tara de bordão, and from this a large quantity of maguenche is drawn, which is also used as wine here. From this tara de bordão they make the gudenhos or containers for cola, the baskets to sift and clean rice in the same way as we do with our sieves, asref, and straw mats. The nachul used to weave these goods is obtained from the leaves of the tree.

Now let us speak of the medicinal trees. Amongst these is the cedar, the animpo, a tree producing copal, an effective poultice for chills of any part of the body. The bark of the mana, dried in the sun and ground into a powder, is good to alleviate headaches, when laid on the temples; also for itch and many other disorders. A very tasty medicinal oil, good for chills, is made from majuta. The oil made from the stone of the chaveo is very fine, and a bitter oil important for various uses is extracted from the fruits of a tree called into: the fruits grow in husk.

Now it is the turn of the citrus-trees, such as orange-trees, lemon-trees, and lime-trees. The land is fairly well-stocked with these, although everything to do with their cultivation was brought here by foreigners who lived in the country in former times. The same applies to a quantity of sugar canes that are here. Even though the woods are full of all sorts of trees, plants, and poison herbs, the number of health-giving and medicinal ones is almost infinite, and if the local herbalists were able to write, they could write great tomes about them. Of spices, although there is no Malucca clove or Ceylon cinnamon, this Province has mantevilha, which can be used instead of saffron; red and black malagueta, which are used as pepper and as clove, and are so health-giving that the heathen use them in their medicines and on occasions with their food; cola, whose coolness lessens the burning taste of the peppers and which acts against poison, although here they employ even more commonly raça. This is the bark of certain small tree used for seasoning, normally with cola, but sometimes

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(e) Perhaps they would be as good as ours if grafted.

(f) Maguenche is an inferior palm-tree from which is drawn the best wine.
without; it is also good to quench thirst, on account of its juiciness, and it was used by the Manes (g) on their journeys when they were conquering these and other parts.

The thick bush shelters a great many animals and beasts of various sorts, /½.50r/ apart from the ones I named before. We will deal now with the others, and begin with the elephant, because of certain characteristics of this great animal. It is the most fearsome and terrible of all beasts. There are many of them in this Province and hence there is a large amount of ivory. This is another commodity commonly traded in the Province. The best cola is so appreciated by the heathen that it is carried by Mandinga merchants as far as Mecca; and there is no heathen sacrifice in which it does not play a part. As for the elephant, let us speak about the natural charity these animals have towards each other. When a companion happens to fall into the traps which are dug in the woods to catch them, they pull it out; and if one of them is wounded, they take branches in their trunk, which serves as a kind of hand, and with these they fan away the flies from the wound and drive away other small creatures. With this 'hand', which is pierced on the palm, they pluck fruit and carry it to their mouth, and through its hole they drink or suck up water. Though this animal is so frightening, a mere mosquito can kill it: the mosquito gets into its trunk, which it then shakes so much, hitting it against trees, that the trunk swells and the elephant dies. Other animals here are leopards, lions, wolves and deer, although these are different from ours, also various sorts of gazelles, and numos. The numos live in streams which produce slime, and on this they feed: when they move they walk backwards: their meat is very tasty. Pangles I have mentioned; and there are rhinoceroses, but these belong to the land of the Limbas, in whose ranges of mountains one can see at night great burning lights, as if of fires; and there are many other kinds of land animals.

(g) The Manes carried raga and by keeping it in their mouths they were able to go a long time without eating.
The smaller animals include the dari, which is amusing to see though one cannot admire its appearance. This creature is almost human. Even though it does not normally walk upright, its face, eyes, nose, mouth and other parts are more like those of a human being than those of a beast. Its beard, which is full of white hairs even if the dari is only two months old, is worth seeing, and this, taken together with its flat very wide nose and its frankly hideous upper lip, is enough to amaze anyone! The cries it makes as it twists its mouth to produce high and low notes, now higher now lower, are unique. Think of this hairy head appearing in a theatre in Europe! The sight of all the animal does would bring its owner a good supper and better dinner! These animals have no tail. The females have breasts like women, located in the same /f.50v/ place. When they walk they go on the backs of their hands, placing them on the ground. They have two hands and two feet, and on each five fingers with long nails. It is such a well-built and strong animal that it can tear out the palm cabbage from a palm-tree, hence they ruin the trees in those parts of the forest where they alone feed. They are great fencers, and when they meet any human being they go through the motions very enthusiastically. Ten or eleven years ago, a dari met certain blacks of Tombo, a village of the Boulons, and when it caught one of the men it gave him a hiding with a stick. The man was so badly treated that even today he has not recovered completely. They are fond of wrestling, chest to chest. If the female animal gives birth to a female, she abandons it in disgust; but a male offspring she always nurses and cossets. They are great enemies of elephants. Wherever elephants go, they flee from the dari, because if the dari see them it means that they go up to them with their sticks and give them a hard time. However, this more often happens when dari find a dead elephant in the forest, for they hit it such great smacks and blows with the sticks they seize for this purpose that it is a sign that an elephant is dying when one hears these blows and bellowings of the animal.

Daris are robbers, to an extraordinary extent. It has been known to happen that they have even stolen children from their parents. During the period of the one took a little girl and hid her in the bush, feeding her for six days by bringing her fruits, until it was observed taking her the food, when she was rescued. What is especially amazing in this animal is that it climbs up a palm tree
with its baby, and will go from branch to branch, without hurting the baby, and indeed looking after it with loving care. (h) A dari takes a small quantity of chaveo (palm nuts) and with a stone in its hand breaks the nuts and eats them. If someone hurts it, it will cry; it is usual to punish dariis for their robberies and misbehaviour, as their mothers do in the bush. They even steal clothes which have been overlooked, from slave women and from anyone else they can, in order to cover themselves with at night. They look after themselves so well that instead of sleeping rough, like the other animals, they prepare their place in the forest; they sleep in the trees, on twigs and leaves that serve them as mattresses. At meal times, if they are denied anything they cry throughout.

In this Province, not so long ago, there was a dari which belonged to Estevão da Costa, from Algarve. When food was being served, it would immediately bring its own feeding dish and its drinking vessel. This dari was called Pilot. As soon as it saw £1.51r/ an ear being carried to a canoe, it would board the canoe at once, sitting at the prow. If it was told to get out, it became very upset and began to scream to an extent that is almost unbelievable. When Costa had guests, those that were nice to the dari it would allow to come back another time; (but) the others it would not allow in, seizing sticks to beat them with, and slamming the door on them.

Duris are good musicians. In the forest, they make such an extraordinary thundering sound that it seems that we hear war drums being played. Usually it is said that they bang their bellies; other people say that they bang their feet on the ground, all together. When they are alone in the bush, they normally put their hands on their heads and walk on their feet. A person who sees their foot prints will not recognize them, thinking they are human. A sight worth seeing is a dari eating an orange like the natives, by sucking it, after making a hole in it with its fingers. To watch them 'poaching'...

(h) They have natural compassion. I ordered a boy from this Serra, who looked after one of our dariis, to be punished. The animal persistently refused to allow the boy to be punished. It attacked, making ferocious faces, and so they had to release him, out of fear.
is even more interesting! They like honey very much, so they remove it from the tree trunks that act as hives here. They approach the hole and blow into it, and out come the bees. Then they cover their faces with one hand and with the other take out the honey combs, passing them to their companions close behind them. These take them to a place where they eat the honey when the poaching is over. The older people say that, in the times when the natives lived in peace, dari were used to fetch water and firewood. But one had to be careful to lift the loads off their heads when they reached the houses, because if this was not done, they would break everything. Similarly they say that they used to grind food, but I considered this far-fetched. So is what I heard about a dari from the Serra which went to Rio do Nuno, where it worked as a ship's boy. It kept watch on the boat. Once, when the boat went aground, it tried with all its might to push it out again; but as it could not do this alone, when it saw a youth it caught hold of him, to make him help it, which the youth did. In return, the dari afterwards looked after the youth's boat, to prevent this one running aground. Anyone who has seen this animal will believe anything of it, even the most incredible things. When in former times they used to grind in a mortar, there would be trouble if the human partner gave rice from the mortar to children, for the dari would get angry and spank them. Being so versatile, this animal is the most dangerous to have around and bring up. It is very sensitive. But as yet these animals have not lost their dirty habits. They wash the tip of their nails in the flow from their noses and in the stream from their lower parts.

(i) There are heathen that claim to be descendants of this animal, and when they see it they have great compassion: they never harm it or strike it, because they consider it the soul of their forefathers, and they think themselves of high parentage. They say they are of the animal's family, and all that believe they are descended from it call themselves Amieu.
Turning to the different kinds of monkeys, their ruler and leader has four fingers on its hand. It is called /f.51v/ it does not touch the ground. When it has to drink, it does so from a tree hanging over water, and close enough to the water for it to drink from it. When it shouts, all the others keep silent. (j) When it goes among the others, they all make way for it and show respect, after their fashion. There are other monkeys called sancchos, who live in mango trees, and are very playful. When they see the children whose job it is to help in the fields, by guarding the crops when they are most open to damage, the monkeys seize their sticks, frighten the children with their grimaces, and make them run away. They do this in order to get into the young rice. Other monkeys called jgalacet, the most attractive and the longest lived, are so tame that they never forget the homes where they have been reared. They too are very versatile. Near here, there are others with stars on their coat, others with a white tail; others grey, and so on. Saninhas, which are the size of a small cat, have bushy tails. The tudos, with a body like a dormouse, are great enemies of all sorts of snakes, and by fighting them, they help us to find an antidote to their venom. The compulsous, which are the size of a cat, are not liked by the wine tappers, because they go up palm trees and drink the wine out of the vessels in which it is collecting. These vessels resemble a narrow mouthed pitcher, but they are cut away a little on the top in order to make them fit more closely to the hole from which the wine is drawn.

There are various other small animals, with coats of different colours. The musk-cat, which is so valuable - the Serra is full of them. Chameleons are found here, and snakes of various kinds. The black ones, called simply this, are so venomous that their bite kills

(j) God allows such animals among us so that the devil may keep these people in their firm belief. When one of the heathen dies, the animals hold a great mourning near the village of the deceased. I had an argument with this family and they realised that they were not descended from the animal.
unless an antidote is applied immediately. Refo is a kind of viper. Kangwereko, which is yellowish in colour, has a deadly venom for which there is no remedy. Aboro is black and thick. Tran can swallow a deer or a buffalo up to its horns, but by sucking in these animals it becomes so enlarged that it dies. It is not venomous. In sum, there are large numbers of these poisonous creatures.

Of birds there is a great variety: sparrow-hawks, bastard eagles, peacocks, parrots, and others like blackbirds; there are even some which look like nightingales. There are two kinds of sparrows. Some are small, and more like our sparrows: these usually go about in flocks. Others are yellow in colour, with a black head and neck. They undo each other's nests to steal the straw. Birds of another sort make their nests so skillfully that, though they are nearly one covado long, they are placed with such care on the trees that however hard it rains, the water cannot damage them. To conclude, the birds are innumerable, and they display such a range of colours that they can give occasion for thoughtful people to contemplate the skill and art of the Supreme Creator.

Before I go on to talk about the sea and its contents, I would like to discuss the camosel. This is a large land lizard which makes its home in holes, especially holes in the towers of the bagabaga (that is, in ant-hills). The largest camosel is about one covado long. These animals are very fond of hens and birds, and to catch them they hide in the most convenient places. They will eat anything, even human flesh. To the natives, this animal is the symbol of messages from the Enemy of all truth, just as the devil took the shape of a snake to deceive our first parents. And to prove it, they tell how a wonderful thing was seen in those parts from which the Manes emerged. The Enemy of the human race entered into the animal living in the towering hill of the bagabaga, and shouted 'Bei o Bei!', meaning 'Help the King!' Now there was a village on each side of the animal. The people came running because of the screeching and uproar, which was the devil's work, and the two villages fought each other. Each side had many deaths, without either knowing what had caused the alarm. After they had eaten the corpses, something else happened. An old woman was gathering firewood in the bush near the camosel. She heard the cry, 'Help the King!' She went to investigate, and was amazed to see an enormous lizard. When warriors started arriving, the old woman
said to them, 'Stop! Don't fight! But dig up this place!' They found the abominable creature, which was so large and gross that they were horrified. They put an end to all this evil by killing it. (k) This is the story the Manes tell. (The moral is this). The intriguer and liar teaches and incites evil deeds. But he hides himself away, avoiding the public view, as the camosel does. For this creature only ranges its terrain in the secrecy (of night). It is indeed only in secrecy that falsehoods can prosper, can succeed, and can become profitable. So says Job:

'An evil man suits madmen.'

Let us conclude by discussing the baga-baga. This is a kind of ant. Its king is one of the same kind, but bigger, that is, longer and thicker. The society of this animal is a well organized natural republic. The royal palace is a mound of earth like a pyramid, almost a small hill, filled with cells inside. The female subjects serve their leader by surrounding him in the centre of the tower. Among them is to be found the heir and successor to the monarchy, an ant which has a smaller body than the king, but which has the capacity to grow larger, in order to attain like him to the sceptre and royal dignity. This superior ant is served with all respect and all the signs of natural love. It never leaves the ant-hill; the others bring it the delicacies of mother nature. These ants make war on another kind of ant, a smaller sort.

(k) Alciato refers to this: he relates that a lioness and a boar fought each other under a tree above which was a vulture. The vulture was delighted because if the lioness won it would not be able to eat up all the boar, and so the vulture said, 'The spoils of victory are coming to me.' What does the evil care if you destroy each other? Or the, judge if the evil woman, etc.
These are the main (living) things among the many produced in this land. Because of its full rivers, and because there is no lack of people interested in agriculture, who can cultivate the land, and improve it, by fertilizing it with the water and detritus of the rivers, there is no grass, vegetable, fruit, seed, plant or animal in the world that does not give promise of great increase here, not only in the Serra but in all parts of the hinterland. Thus, as the knowledge of agriculture and the interest in it spread among those who are going to settle in this land, so the handsome profits from all the activities which will develop in their time will expand too. The plants and the land will reward their labour with the fertility of their fruits and with all kinds of livestock and other animals, both domesticated and wild. I mentioned knowledge and interest because agriculture here (faces pests such as the bagaba baga which destroy everything, a particular grass which instantly kills cows which touch it, the plant-louse, the cagerta, etc. I have said that everything gives promise of great increase here because our (European) vegetables grow very well, parsnips, turnips, cabbages, lettuces, etc.; and so do our herbs, basil, etc. Turning to fruits, there are excellent melons, cucumbers, pumpkins, pine-apples, etc. All types of cotton grow here, and the same can be said of sugar-cane. If some imported plants have not grown it was the result of careless handling.

Certain fanciful dreams about the country have been repeated, dreams concerning pearls, mineral gold and carbuncles. But we can only be sure about the presence of iron, saltpetre and loadstone. A Portuguese captain found a pearl here, but only one. Anyone who disagrees with us can entertain his fancies, that is his right. But our duty is to tell the truth about what we have seen, so that those who are eager to obtain knowledge may feed their minds upon it, a fit and proper task for such worthies. I do not deny that those commodities that a certain person likes to spread stories about may exist here, but in a place like this, where greed reigns, surely they could not have been hidden away so long.

(1) Some say there is silver, but not in the Serra itself. As for pearls, the King of the Serra has supplied reliable information. There are mines of bronze.
Now let us discuss the sea. It is full of different kinds of fish, which are so good and nourishing that they could maintain life better than any other foodstuff, if the natives were to show more interest in catching them. There are momos, red fish very similar in taste to our hake, conger-eels, duradas (catfish), xaraz, skate, cacapes, bicas, barracudas which are very tasty, needlefish, jewfish, mullets, chapescabentes called cock-fish (moonfish), hunchbacked and small but very tasty, and guitar fish, similar to mullet but with a saw-mouth and called 'king of the fishes'. Also dog-fish, the least attractive sort, as they are covered all over with spines and have dog's teeth. Booze, whose flesh is the colour of pork, are very large. The fish-horse (hippoctamus) has hoofs on the left side which make very effective medicine for haemorrhoids. The hard parts of the head of the booz and the conger are equally good for stone in the bladder. The shellfish include oysters which are excellent in summer, being collected from rocks, others gathered in creeks from the younger stems of mangrove as mentioned earlier; also mussels, cockles, larger brubigoes, several kinds of shrimps, some of them prawns, others common shrimps, and very good crabs. A great variety of birds make their home in the islands in the sea: pelicans, herons of different kinds, guinchos, and ducks. All these birds take their food from the sea, some from the rocks, some from the beaches, some from the sandbanks where the others join them. They repay this plenty and generosity with their song, which they utter in flocks morning and evening, cheerfully or sorrowfully, so that their voices are never silent.

(m) 'The ostrich and the heron have similar feathers.' Secretum: the heron has many feathers, little meat.' Here there are herons in the sea, but on land only ostriches. 'Allegorically, I may say.' Low carnal ones. 'There are many corporals but no captains. See number
What shall I say of the ports, particularly of the one in the Bay of Serra Leoa, which is so suitable for docking ships? Here the foreigners regularly careen, build and repair their ships. The port gives them refuge by protecting them and defending them from fierce storms, and they repay this by leaving their names as a memento. They carve them on the flat stones and the boulders of the famous Harbour of the Watering-place and on the trunks of trees there. Thus they offer perpetual thanks to the place for the kindness in the aspects of nature with which they were received. /c.53/