

Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada

Report of the Annual Meeting

When a Whole Royal Family Came to America

Herbert Heaton

Volume 18, Number 1, 1939

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/300186ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/300186ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0317-0594 (print)

1712-9095 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Heaton, H. (1939). When a Whole Royal Family Came to America. *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association / Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada*, 18(1), 48–60.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/300186ar>

WHEN A WHOLE ROYAL FAMILY CAME TO AMERICA

By HERBERT HEATON
The University of Minnesota

This is a year of royal visits to America. Yet they are all rushing, fleeting affairs, made by tourists, not by settlers. In that respect they differ from the most important trans-atlantic royal passage ever made, for there is one case of a whole royal family transferring itself from Europe to America, not knowing when the return trip would be made, or even whether it would ever be made. I refer to the migration of the Portuguese court from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro in the winter of 1807-8. That event was part of Canning's strategy in the conflict with Napoleon, and was carried out under British pressure and protection. It opened the doors of Brazil to foreign traders. It lifted Rio from the status of a sleepy colonial outpost to the dignity of an imperial capital. It stimulated the development of Brazilian economic life and political self-consciousness, sowed the seeds of nationalist discontent, and hastened the coming of independence. Thus the effect on Napoleon's plans, on British foreign policy and commerce, and on South American history justifies us in examining this chapter in what Professor Hale Bellot would call Atlantic History.

Let me first set the stage. Portugal was a small land with two large assets. The first was her position on the map, which made her a valuable naval base with a good harbour, as well as a military base for attacking Spain. Her second asset was her oversea empire. By 1700 the oriental part was almost gone, but the occidental—which meant Brazil—was rich in gold, diamonds, coffee, sugar, cotton, and dyewoods. Yet Portugal was too small and weak to protect or exploit what she had picked up largely by being first on the spot. Her industries were few and insignificant, except those producing wine, wool, and cork. Her royal family, the Braganza line, was weak physically, mentally, and morally. Inter-marriage between its members was common; nieces wed elderly uncles, aunts married young nephews. Insanity, lethargy, cruelty, and irresolution were outstanding family traits.

Such a country was bound to be dependent for its existence and welfare on the attitude of others: it could have little attitude of its own. Portugal was therefore a pawn on the chessboard of European power politics. If the players were Spain vs. Holland, the Dutch took the oriental empire because Spain had taken Portugal. If the game was between England and Spain, England helped Portugal to regain her independence, and as a reward claimed great commercial privileges in Lisbon and in the colonies. The biggest game, England vs. France and Spain, was played at least three times—in the War of the Spanish Succession, the Seven Years' War, and the Napoleonic War. In all three cases, Portugal found herself in the same dilemma. If she sided with France and Spain, Britain would seize her colonies and blockade her ports. If she sided with Britain, France and Spain would invade her, pushing aside her incompetent army; it would take time for British troops to come to her aid, and meanwhile the country would be overrun and plundered. If she sided with no one and remained neutral—well, she could not do that. The belligerents would not let her. Three-horned dilemmas were not diplomatically recognized.

Faced with two unpleasant alternatives, Portugal always finally came to the same decision—to side with Britain. Several treaties had forged an alliance between the two countries, and given each country economic preference in the markets of the other. By them Britain became Portugal's best customer for wine; Portugal and her empire were among Britain's best customers for cloth and hardware, and for Newfoundland fish. British merchants dominated Lisbon and Oporto, enjoying extra-territorial privileges, shipping in British wares for local consumption or for re-shipment to Brazil, and sending out port wine and Brazilian gold. In effect, Portugal was nearly a British colony.

This dependence annoyed some Portuguese, and during the third quarter of the eighteenth century Pombal, a would-be Colbert, did his utmost to free his country from British control. He achieved some success; the Portuguese market was made less attractive to British merchants, and London therefore turned from Lisbon to Paris. An Anglo-French trade agreement had been wrecked in 1713 by those who said Portugal was more important commercially than France. A similar agreement could be reached in 1786 because France now seemed the better market of the two.

This revolution in British commercial policy was speedily undone by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. The old normal alignment was restored when the curtain rose on the last act of the Second Hundred Years' War. Again Portugal had to ask "What shall I do?" or rather "What will the antagonists force me to do?" The Queen was insane. John, the Prince Regent, was "an obese prince royal who suffered from a chronic case of indecision."¹ The court was divided between pro-French and pro-British cliques. John's wife, a Spaniard, was eagerly devoted to Madrid, and in 1805 she plotted with the pro-French group to have her husband declared insane, so that she could take the throne. John discovered the plot, and went off to sulk in a monastery, eighteen miles from Lisbon.

During the first war, 1793-1802, Portugal sought to be neutral and yet retain her alliance with Britain. She thereby offended France, and in 1793 Paris discussed the question of attacking her and her colonies. In 1796 the Lisbon court and counting houses wondered what they could do "should the Rascals visit Portugal." In 1801 Spain finally said John must choose one side or the other, and when the usual choice was made Portugal was invaded. But peace came in time to spare the country from serious damage.

During the brief truce of Amiens, John announced that if the war was resumed he was going to be neutral. He promised to pay France a subsidy, and Napoleon replied, in effect, "That's a good boy; I'll guarantee and respect your neutrality, and here's the Legion of Honour." Easier said than done; for when hostilities began, Portugal said she was neutral, but British ships used her harbours, and British merchants still ran most of her foreign and imperial trade. To Napoleon this seemed a queer brand of neutrality, and he determined to deal with John when the right time came. It soon came. Defeated at sea but victorious everywhere on land, Napoleon launched his Continental System to strangle British trade on the continent. That meant closing the ports, and soon there was only one door open between Gibraltar and Scandinavia. In 1807 Napoleon decided to slam it shut.

¹A. K. Manchester, *British Pre-eminence in Brazil: Its Rise and Decline* (University of North Carolina Press, 1933), p. 54.

Events now moved rapidly to a showdown. In August the French and Spanish ambassadors in Lisbon demanded that Portugal join them. John must declare war on Britain. He must close his ports to British vessels, imprison all British residents in the country, confiscate their property, and let his fleet join the Franco-Spanish navies. The deadline was September, and meanwhile Junot and his army of the Gironde were at Bayonne, ready to march.

This blunt demand made any further display of real or sham neutrality impossible. Portugal must go one way or the other, but the court was divided concerning the direction, and John was often away hiding in the monastery. Strangford, the British Ambassador, worked hard on him and on the ministers, and Canning told him that if he resorted to bribery, any bills he drew on the Secret Service Account would be honoured. The story is a tangled one, but the essentials can be told briefly. John was willing to go part of the way toward Paris. "There is . . . but one prudent line of conduct to follow," he said, "that of following the System of the Continent." He would close the ports to British ships: he would forbid Britons to leave—after having given them a quiet hint to get out quickly; he would seize their property—after having given them plenty of time to get their movables away. But he would not declare war on his "ancient and royal ally," or add his fleet to that of France and Spain.

This compromise pleased neither side. France said "Either you declare war on Britain or we will declare war on you." Canning said, in effect, "If you close the ports, that would be tantamount to a declaration of war on us; but in view of your peculiar circumstances, of your deficiency of the means of resistance, and of the remembrance of our ancient alliance, we will let you close the ports without retaliating. If, however, you go a single step beyond this line of modified hostility by imprisoning our nationals or taking their property, we shall be forced to the extremity of actual war. We shall blockade your harbour, and take your fleet and colonies. If France declares war on you, we shall still take the fleet and colonies in order to prevent them from falling into French hands; and we shall then be indifferent as to your own fate. But if you will transfer your government to Brazil, we will help you in carrying out 'this noble resolution'; we will restore Portugal to you at the end of the war, and we will never recognize as king any prince who is not the legitimate heir of the House of Braganza. Therefore do please get out of Europe; the sooner the quicker."

This unwelcome advice John was loath to take, and his ministers were even more reluctant. Perhaps, after all, Napoleon could be placated and exile might be averted. At least it was worth a trial. On November 8, therefore, John, or his ministers, closed the ports to British ships; forbade the remaining British residents to leave; ordered the confiscation of such property as was left; and asked Strangford to go. The Ambassador had expected the first decree, but not the others; he was so angry at this abandonment of "modified hostility" that he took the British coat of arms off his gate and asked for his passports. Yet he continued to urge evacuation. He knew well the pressure to which John was being subjected by those who wished him to stay. Monks were having visions, nuns were pouring out prophecies. The women in the royal household were exposing the hapless ruler to "*criaillerie continuelle*," which the dictionary translates

as "bawling, squalling, clamouring, outcry, scolding." In the streets outside the palace placards and manifestoes "of the most threatening nature" appeared on the walls. Eventually, Strangford despaired of being able to get the Regent away. He therefore quitted Lisbon on November 16 in a fishing boat, and after thirty hours of stormy weather climbed aboard the flagship of Sir Sydney Smith.

Smith had been sent out by Canning to do one of two things: either to help the exodus or to blockade the harbour and capture the fleet. When Strangford came aboard, the two men agreed that the second task must be undertaken at once, and Smith sent a sloop up to Lisbon to inform John that his harbour was now blockaded. But Strangford, hoping against experience, decided to go back with the sloop for one last appeal. Smith agreed, and the ex-ambassador went off under a flag of truce.

When he reached Lisbon on the night of the 27th, he found that no appeal was needed. Napoleon had succeeded where he had failed. During the ten days which had elapsed since Strangford's departure, John had learned three bits of bad news: first, that Junot had crossed the border with 23,000 men and was approaching fast by forced marches without meeting with any opposition; second, that Napoleon had published his decision to dethrone the Braganzas; and third, that France and Spain had signed a treaty partitioning Portugal between themselves. John had therefore been forced to decide to emigrate a few hours before Strangford arrived; and when the Ambassador was given an audience he found the Prince Regent "directing all his apprehensions to a French army and all his hopes to an English fleet." Would Britain forgive, forget, and help him even at 11.59? Strangford replied with a smile, and with the most explicit assurance that "His Majesty would generously overlook those acts of unwilling and momentary hostility to which His Royal Highness' consent had been extorted."

The pace now became *prestissimo agitato*. By bedtime on the 27th, the Prince Regent, his mad mother, his Spanish wife, his seven children, and other members of the royal family—about fifteen in all—were on board. They were joined "by a multitude of faithful subjects and adherents," of nobles, servants, officials, and hangers-on. The total number of *émigrés* was 8,000 according to the lowest estimates and 15,000 according to the highest; but I suspect even the lower figure is far too high. Some palace furniture was shipped; so also were some archives, and the royal treasury was emptied, though I find it hard to accept the estimate that \$60,000,000 of precious metal was put aboard. On the morning of the 28th John issued a pathetic proclamation, announcing and explaining his departure to his sullen, disillusioned, and bitter subjects. On the 29th the fleet of thirty-six warships and merchantmen left Lisbon and moved toward the mouth of the Tagus and the open sea.

The emigrant ships passed through Smith's squadron, and, wrote Smith, "salutes of 21 guns announced the friendly meeting of those who but the day before were on terms of hostility, the scene impressing every beholder . . . with the most lively emotions of gratitude to Providence that there yet existed a power in the world able, as well as willing, to protect the oppressed." On the Prince Regent's ship was Strangford: he "had the honour to accompany H.R.H. in his passage across the Bar, having resolved not to lose sight of H.R.H. until the measure of departure should

be thoroughly accomplished." When the bar was passed Strangford returned to Smith's flagship, and that night penned an eloquent despatch to Canning, vivid in its narrative and realistic rather than modest in its estimate of the part played by its author. "The Prince Regent has effected the wise and magnanimous purpose of retiring from a Kingdom which he could no longer retain except as a vassal of France. This grand and memorable event," and so on, till the pen ran dry of capital I's.

If John and his fleet had delayed their departure another day, or even another two hours, they would have been unable to get out; for the wind changed, and a storm swept the Tagus estuary for two or three days. They escaped literally at the very last possible minute, for as the ships began to move, Junot appeared on the hilltops beyond Lisbon. In his forced march he had shed most of his 23,000 men; only a vanguard of fourteen and a regiment of 1,200 staggered and scrambled up the last slope separating them from a view of the doomed capital. From that vantage point Junot saw the fleet moving out to the Narrows and heard the salute from the British guns. The birds had flown.

As the fleet approached the open waters of the Atlantic the storm battered and scattered it. When calm returned, Smith gathered the ships together, helped to repair them, transferred some of his provisions to them, detailed four British warships to escort them, and then bade them god-speed. Strangford went aboard the Regent's ship for a last word. He found the exiles "suffering the greatest distress and inconvenience. It is not possible to describe the situation of these illustrious personages, in want of every comfort, yet bearing all with patience and resignation. The Prince Regent said he submitted to destiny without a murmur." Had John known what Strangford thought of that destiny he might at least have groaned: for in a final despatch summing up the whole episode Strangford wrote: "I know his mind and turn of temper and his feelings of gratitude towards His Majesty, and I am convinced that by calling them forth on this occasion I have intitled England to establish with the Brazils the Relation of Sovereign and Subject, and to require Obedience to be paid as the Price of Protection." Strangford probably chuckled as he wrote this; and Canning certainly did as he read it.

The crossing was a long-drawn out misery. The ships had been hastily prepared and provisioned. The Prince's vessel carried 1,600 passengers, packed like sardines, and the other ships were no better off. The water supply ran out, the provisions were inadequate, and plague appeared. The fleas and lice were so harassing that the ladies cut their hair short in order to reduce the hunting area. When they reached Rio the colonial women thought that bobbed hair was the latest fashion, and followed it. A storm scattered the fleet. The Prince's ship and some others reached Bahia on January 21, 1808, seven weeks after leaving Lisbon; but the rest of the fleet sighted Rio on January 17, and promptly set to work to prepare for its ruler's arrival. The Viceroy's house was not fit for use as a palace, so the mint, a prison, and a Carmelite convent were united and renovated to provide a makeshift royal residence. No local vehicle was good enough for a royal coach; but a chaise had been rushed on board in Lisbon. When John arrived on March 8, some semblance of a welcome could therefore be attempted. Two bony mules were harnessed to the chaise; an old

retainer took the reins, and a troop of ragged soldiers, mounted on unshod, lame, blind, or galled horses provided a bodyguard.

What John thought of his new home we do not know. By July he was saying that he did not expect to return to Europe. If he ever indulged in such an expectation, Strangford, who had followed him across the Atlantic, threw cold water on it. Canning had told him to do so in a most forceful despatch. "You will endeavour on all occasions to direct the attention of the Brazilian government to the care and cultivation of those ample and improveable resources which its American dominions afford rather than encourage them in looking back with unavailing regret to their European territory, or in indulging an expectation not likely to be realized, of recovering it from the grasp of the enemy." Canning in 1808 felt, as Kitchener is said to have felt in 1914, that peace was a long way off, and John was diligently guided to the same conclusion. If this be true, then there was much to be done to make Rio bearable and Brazil productive.

Society and government, as John found them, possessed mingled elements of *opéra comique* and outright farce. The viceroys had been proud but poor, firm on etiquette but weak on efficiency. Their subjects had been taught to show outward respect for authority, and no civilian dare pass even a common soldier or read a public notice without performing some act of obeisance. But provided the motions were made, the individual had wide latitude in matters of personal conduct. When the police went into action they alternated between slow motion and still life. The customs service we will inspect in a moment. The army can be described by recounting one episode. The troops went 800 miles up country to fight some rebels. A supply of ammunition was sent after them and eventually caught up with them. But when the soldiers faced the enemy they found that the shot were too large for the muskets. To fix bayonets and charge an enemy that was mounted and skilled in the use of the lasso was impossible. The battle was lost—and so also was the best park of artillery in Brazil—without the firing of a single shot, and three months elapsed before a supply of proper missiles reached the front.

From the few descriptions which are available we get a tawdry picture of social and domestic life. The population was said to be gay and pleasure-loving. European fashions were copied by the *élite*; the stores abounded "with every species of British manufacture": and the wearing of swords, cocked hats, breeches, and buckles on formal occasions was popular. But most of the descriptions harp on the less pleasant aspects of relaxation. Then meals were eaten without cutlery, and the meat and vegetables were rolled into balls by using fingers. Ladies searched without ceremony for vermin in each other's hair, and "filled their vacant hours with this elegant entertainment." Nearly all men suffered from "a certain cutaneous disorder," which led them to scratch themselves almost incessantly, forced tailors and shirtmakers to provide adequate apertures, and made long pointed thumbnails fashionable. Elephantiasis was wellnigh universal, as British hosiers discovered when the stockings they sent out failed to fit or find buyers. Of the five religious houses, none was said to be remarkable for its austerity.

The task of turning this grubby outpost into an imperial metropolis was bound to be long, costly, and arduous. Yet when John left Rio to return to Lisbon in 1821 he could claim that much had been accomplished.

Gradually the social life of the city acquired some polish. The court took on magnificence. Levees became frequent and dignified. Court dress became general, and servants obtained better liveries. A nuncio from Rome reformed the church, religious festivals and ceremonies became more lavish, and the combined effect of court and church was reflected in cleaner houses, better furniture, more fashionable clothes, neater vehicles, improved theatres, a widening range of comforts and luxuries, better manners, and a narrowing range of untidy *déshabillé*. A royal library was built up and thrown open to the public. Botanical gardens were laid out. An operatic troupe was imported from Italy, and a party of French artists, landscape gardeners, and skilled craftsmen was given free bed and board. The police began to protect the innocent and catch the guilty. The first steps were taken toward a public health service, and the army obtained better training as well as new uniforms.

When the old Queen died in 1815 John turned the colony into a kingdom, and by that date it had shed many of its colonial characteristics. Commercial life was quickened by throwing the ports open to direct trade with all friendly nations; by the demands for goods for the immigrants; by the expanding production and export of cotton, sugar, coffee, gold, hides, dyewoods, etc.; and by the influx of foreign merchants. Until 1815 these merchants were nearly all British; but when peace came, traders from Spanish America, the United States, France, Germany, and Italy added life and variety to the port. The British stuck to wholesale trade; but the French were unable to make much headway in that field and turned to retail trade. They filled a whole street in Rio with French shops, brought out female shop assistants to operate them, and gradually won the Portuguese back to their old love of French wares. Swedish miners penetrated to the gold-fields, Swiss came to develop the dairy industry, and Americans arrived to buy sugar and coffee. Roads were constructed, harbours were improved, and coastal trade grew. When John left, most internal transportation was still conducted on the heads of humans or the backs of mules; yet many of the one-time impenetrable barriers to trade and transport had been surmounted, and many great estates had abandoned that self-sufficing economy in which they had produced all the things they needed except slaves, agricultural implements, and luxury goods. To Rio by land came mule trains bearing goods which might have come 300 to 1,000 miles from the interior; to Rio by sea came 450 merchant vessels in 1821, against possibly one-third that number in 1808.

Of that merchant fleet of 450, nearly 200 were British; 125 were Portuguese; and the rest were American, French, Hanseatic, Swedish, or Dutch. If we had figures for 1808 or 1814 we should find that nearly all the ships then were British or Portuguese; and I want to devote the rest of my time to describing the British political and economic domination of Brazil during the early years of the exile. Napoleon forgot John when the Prince Regent slipped through his fingers; but Canning did not. John in Lisbon had been a threat of military or naval loss; John in Rio was a promise of economic gain, and Canning was not too busy with Europe to consider how Brazilian commercial policy might be framed to benefit British trade. Commerce between Britain and Brazil might be even greater and more profitable if it was carried on directly than it had been when it was run through Lisbon. The opportunity for side trips into Spanish

American markets might be richer. And if Brazil could be persuaded to give British traders a substantial preference over rivals from other nations, the exodus might prove to be a smart stroke of business as well as of strategy.

The Prince Regent began to enunciate his trade policy as soon as he set foot on Brazilian soil. At Bahia in January, 1808, he issued a proclamation opening all the ports of the country to the commerce and navigation of friendly foreign ships and traders. It was a remarkable document, for it swept almost the whole colonial system into the discard at one stroke. Goods could be imported from anywhere, in foreign or in native ships, on paying a duty of 24 per cent. Natives and foreigners could export most kinds of Brazilian produce to any part of the world on paying an export duty of 4 per cent. This freedom of export did not extend to dyewoods, gold, and a few other commodities which were the subject of royal monopolies; and there were some limitations on imports in order to protect the Portuguese East Indian interests. But the old restriction of traffic to the Brazil-Lisbon route vanished, and the navigation laws were virtually scrapped, since foreign-borne and native-borne goods paid the same duty. This act of liberation was apparently inspired by a Brazilian civil servant and ex-professor, who had studied Adam Smith and written about commercial freedom. He got at John's ear while the Regent was in Bahia. But when John reached Rio and was surrounded by his old ministers and a swarm of Brazilian merchants, the decree seemed too revolutionary. It was therefore amended to admit imports in Brazilian ships at 16 per cent, against 24 per cent on goods which arrived in foreign ships.

The first decree pleased the British consul in Rio, though he said it would have "afforded greater satisfaction" if it had "authorized the admittance of British vessels and British manufactures on terms more advantageous than those granted to other foreign nations." The second decree, reviving preference to goods carried in native ships, made Canning very angry. "I cannot sufficiently express my astonishment. . . . Make the most forcible representations, and signify His Majesty's just expectation that the decree [be repealed], and that such commercial regulations as may replace it may be consonant to that liberal policy which has been observed by this government towards the commerce of the Brazils."

Canning made his general desires very clear in a remarkable series of instructions which were handed to Strangford when that hero of the exodus was sent as ambassador to Rio. He wanted low tariffs on British goods going to Brazil. He would like preferential rates for them, since that "would undoubtedly be advantageous." "Yet if the exaction of such a stipulation appears likely to excite much repugnance," don't press it. It would be enough if Britain secured most-favoured-nation treatment and low duties; and "low" meant something far less than the 24 per cent rate now prevailing. There was no reason why Brazil, which had no manufactures to protect, should charge prohibitive duties. Plentiful imports would mean abundant customs revenue, especially if the country became "an emporium for the British manufactures destined for the consumption of the whole of South America." Goods would flow through Brazil on their way to entry, legal or illegal, into Spanish America; and this traffic with the Spanish colonies would be helped if John would establish a free port on some island

off the coast, in which British ships could meet Spanish buyers for extra-legal trade.

But suppose Brazil asked reciprocity and sought the same easy access for her produce into the British market as she was asked to give British wares in her own? The rub there was that some Brazilian products would compete with British East Indian goods on the one hand and British West Indian staples on the other. Such competition could not be allowed; yet it would be limited to sugar and coffee, and the rest of Brazil's staples would be non-competitive. "Cotton we should welcome in any quantities at a moderate duty," while hides, timber, tobacco, drugs, dyewoods, hemp, and other raw materials, far outweighing sugar and coffee in value, would find in Great Britain an unrestricted and almost unlimited market. We should be willing to reduce almost to vanishing point the difference between the duties on these goods when carried in Portuguese or in British ships. The sale of these goods in Britain would be further aided if John would abolish the monopolies sold to Portuguese traders or granted to them in return for loans, and let British traders handle the goods now in the hands of the monopolists. If the Regent says he cannot do without the money obtained from the monopolists or is unable to repay his debts to them, suggest that he might be helped to raise a loan in London which would enable him to rub out the debts and the monopolies.

If Strangford could secure all these concessions, he need not insist on the full measure of extraterritoriality which had been enjoyed by the British "factory" in Lisbon. That factory was the counterpart of the Hansards' Steelyard in London or the Italian *fondaci* in medieval trading outposts; and the large measure of self-government which its members enjoyed had roused resentment among patriotic Portuguese. There need be no factory in Rio, provided that British residents were given the same protection as the factory had afforded them. They must have a special court to deal with cases in which they were involved; their property must be safe if they died intestate; and they must be allowed to worship free from "all interference by the Tribunals of the Inquisition." These essential safeguards must be retained; they are already enjoyed by Portuguese living in England, not by the existence of a special court or factory, but "by the acknowledged excellence of the British jurisprudence."

As you read Canning's instructions to Strangford you feel that the Ambassador was being given a task calling for the combined qualities of Hercules, Joe Louis, the Serpent, and Machiavelli. Yet he succeeded, or rather he exceeded; for the treaty which was signed in early 1810 probably went far beyond the expectations of the Foreign Office, and was secured in face of bitter opposition and countless distractions. The opposition of the anti-British faction at court was persistent and grew in strength, though the minister in charge of the negotiations was friendly to London and to Strangford. The Brazilian and Portuguese merchants in Rio fought every suggested concession to their British rivals. The nuncio threatened John with "the most terrible exertions . . . of the vengeance" of Rome if he agreed to let Protestants worship publicly. Many natives resented their exclusion from all public office, disliked the complete domination of the Government by the *émigrés*, and therefore felt that one bunch of Europeans was bargaining with another without any thought for the welfare of Brazil.

In addition to fighting these opponents, Strangford often had to turn aside to cope with delicate and annoying situations, many of them created

by his own fellow-expatriates. For instance, there was the trouble caused by Sir Sydney Smith, who was now on the Brazilian coast. He had little to do, and the devil therefore took pity on his idle hands by tempting him to cut a big figure at court. His "audacity and imperious demeanour, his interference in all public affairs, his avowed contempt for the usages of this Court, and above all the circumstances that are supposed to attend that intercourse with the Princess, which is indiscreetly and vainly paraded with a needless publicity"—all this worried Strangford. The Admiral and the Princess—who was John's wife—apparently spent much time together discussing foreign affairs, and decided it would be pleasant and profitable to capture some of the adjacent Spanish colonies. The Prime Minister, de Souza, agreed with them, and much time and money were spent trying to capture parts of the Argentine by military action. But Strangford knew that London would oppose any use of the British navy for such a goose-chase, and spent painful hours trying to discipline Smith and dissuade de Souza.

Or again, there was de Souza's constant harping on his need for money and a British loan. The Treasury was always nearly or quite empty, and London was expected not merely to refill it with a good large loan but also to advance money in anticipation of a formal flotation. Strangford had to speak bluntly on the matter, and Canning set him the example. "You will have no scruple," said one despatch, "in stating that the moment when the trade of this country with Brazil is burdened with extraordinary and depressing imposts is not a moment peculiarly propitious for negotiating pecuniary assistance." De Souza had to be told this, and was. There is probably some connection between the loan of £600,000 which was eventually made and the level of duties which was fixed on British goods.

Finally, there was Gambier, who had been consul-general in Lisbon and now occupied the same post in Rio. In Rio he developed a grandeur complex, and tried to secure the privileges reserved for the *corps diplomatique*. He bombarded the Prince Regent with letters asking for admission to court levees. When he was refused he crashed the gates of the palace on two or three occasions and made scenes in the royal presence. Strangford could not restrain him, and therefore sent Canning a pathetic appeal for help. Canning replied with a letter to Gambier, rebuking him, and warning him that if he offended again "I have reason to believe that I shall receive His Majesty's commands to signify to you your recall from Brazil."

But Gambier's real offence was that he was vigorously and bluntly backing the British merchants in their crusade for better harbour facilities and more liberal customs regulations. The merchants had come out in droves, and the goods had arrived in mountains; between them they had strained to breaking point the leisurely small-scale red-taped machinery of a sleepy colonial port. The merchants had descended on Rio even more heavily than they had dropped on Montreal and Quebec sixty years before, for they were desperate as well as eager. Napoleon had shut them out of the Continent: Lisbon was closed, and the Embargo Act of 1807 foreshadowed the collapse of demand from the United States. The transfer of the royal family to Rio was therefore a well-timed godsend, or what I believe psychologists used to call a compensating fantasy. One Yorkshire mill-owner records in his diary that the clothiers of his village "are sending upwards of £10,000 of goods to the Brazils. It makes people venture very

hard now, as there is no port scarce open but it for cloth." Huge shipments went out with the first convoys in the spring—shipments far beyond the possible effective demand of the new capital. Yet before the unwelcome news of a glutted market could be got back to England, a second flood of goods was despatched. During the last five months of 1808, \$3,000,000 of British goods went out in British ships alone. The whole first year's shipments may have been worth at least \$5,000,000.

With them or ahead of them went British merchants and commission agents by the score. By September, 1808, it was possible to get sixty-two British firms in Rio to sign a petition; yet these comprised only "a very large majority of the respectable merchants resident here": so if we add the minority and the non-respectables, we may reach a total of a hundred firms in Rio, plus many in other ports. They came from all parts of the British Isles; some of them were refugees from Lisbon; and one of them was Canadian born. He was Carleton Allsopp, son of the George Allsopp who had come to Quebec nearly sixty years before. George had christened him Carleton in honour of the new Governor, but must have regretted this when the time came to fight the merchants' cause against Carleton and Haldimand. Here was a case of like father like son, for Carleton Allsopp was soon in the thick of a fight to improve the commercial conditions and procedures in Rio.

Those conditions certainly needed improvement. There were no wharves fit to receive ocean-going vessels, and cargoes must be brought ashore in lighters. There were only two lighters, both owned by the same person. Vessels might therefore have to wait days, even weeks, piling up heavy anchorage dues, before their turn came to be unloaded. When the lighters reached the solitary ramshackle wharf, the goods were lifted ashore by an old wooden crane, and carried to one of the three small customs warehouses; but if these were full the overflow was left in open sheds, on the beach, or in the street. There were no warehouse officers to receive or discharge goods, and a merchant who wished to get at a bale knew only that it was "somewhere in the warehouse, buried perhaps among ten thousand others."

Then came customs inspection, conducted by officers in full vestments—gala uniform, cocked hats, small swords, and powdered hair or wigs. They did their work in an upper room, approached up a flight of twenty steps, and up those stairs all goods had to be carried. Here the containers were completely emptied; every single article was examined and a lead seal was attached to it. No pair of socks, no roll of tape, ball of wool, or bottle of wine could be displayed for sale unless it had this seal affixed. Before sealing, the imports were valued and the duties levied. Invoice prices might mean little, for some official might remember that he had seen a similar article on sale in a store at such and such a price; and on that retail price the duty might be fixed. It must be paid in cash before the goods were released.

From the upper room the goods were carried downstairs to a shed; here every article was re-checked, re-counted, and then passed out into the street, there to be packed up, and carried to the merchant's warehouse or store. In busy times there was a scarcity of packers and porters, and as the goods emerged from inspection they lay on the street, "part of one mingled mass of cassimeres, muslins, lace, butter, fish, and oil." When

they reached the merchant's warehouse they might enjoy a long rest, for the glut of goods depressed prices, and those dealers who were not willing to sacrifice their wares at bargain prices or at auction had large stocks left on their hands. What to do with these unsalable wares they scarcely knew; but they did know that still more goods were at that moment speeding across the Atlantic, and that the arrival of the next convoy would demoralize the market still further. Perhaps these wares could be sent on to some other market or returned to England. Excellent idea, said the customs officers; but first you will pay the 24 per cent import duty on them and then the 4 per cent export duty.

Against these slow, arbitrary, and vexatious procedures the merchants revolted. Private bribes could work wonders; but public protest must also be made. The merchant class had learned the technique of protest in Boston, Quebec, London, Lisbon, and a score of British provincial towns. If there had been a *Who's Who* in the early nineteenth century, many a merchant would have described his recreation as "Attending public demonstrations, going to committee meetings, and signing petitions." So it was at Rio. A committee was soon formed, and another one came into being in London. Each brought pressure to bear on the Brazilian and British ministers and officials, and each reported to the other. By April, 1808, the men in Rio were complaining, and by September they had a standard list of grievances that must be redressed. It included the scarcity of lighters, quays, and warehouses; the delays in unloading, the lack of warehouse keepers, the heavy anchorage bills, the ridiculous procedure of inspection, the arbitrary methods of valuation, and the demand for import as well as export duties. Gradually, with painful slowness in face of official resistance and inertia, they obtained redress. By June, 1809, one Yorkshire merchant was able to write, "I am happy to say that the English have become masters of the Customs House, that they regulate everything, and that orders are given for the officers to pay particular attention to the directions of the British consul." This verdict was far too optimistic, for the gap between a decree and its administration was often wide; but at least some progress had been made.

For this triumph Gambier, the aggressive Consul-General, had been largely responsible, but his bullying and blustering tactics had often offended Strangford and de Souza. Yet the Ambassador's own triumph was not long delayed, for in early 1810 a treaty of commerce and navigation was signed in Rio. It was full of good things for British traders. The chief boon was a reduction of the tariff from 24 per cent to 15 per cent. Since foreign traders continued to pay 24, and since goods coming in Portuguese ships paid 16, the preference was substantial over foreign rivals and even prevailed in a small degree against native ships. Special magistrates were provided to deal with cases involving British residents. Valuations were to be made by a joint committee of British and Portuguese merchants. Goods could be re-exported on payment of only a transit duty. The island of St. Catherine's was made a free port, from which trade with Spanish America could be conducted. Religious freedom was granted, and places of public worship could be erected. But these must be built in such a manner as externally to resemble dwelling houses; bells must not be rung; and preachers must neither proselytize nor declaim publicly against the Roman Catholic Church on pain of deportation.

Portugal got some concessions, but not many. If treaty-making is horse-trading, Strangford got by far the better animal.

With the achievement of the merchants' programme and the signature of the trade agreement, we can hurry the story to its close. The treaty was resented by the anti-British exiles and by the Portuguese and Brazilian merchants. In 1811 the friendly de Souza died, and his successor disliked Strangford intensely. The Brazilians were becoming increasingly hostile to the British colony, and only a little less so to the *émigrés*, since the latter had kept tight hold on all public posts. Strangford therefore decided that John ought to return to Lisbon, now free of French troops, since he would be more easy to handle there. John said he would go home, and a British convoy was sent for. But by the time the ships arrived the ministers had persuaded John to change his mind and to stay. Strangford was so angry that he shook the dust of Rio off his shoes and returned to England. John made Brazil a kingdom in 1815 and apparently was ready to end his days there. But in 1820 a rising in Spain started one in Portugal. John's friends in Lisbon sent urgent pleas to him. "If you don't return you will certainly lose Portugal." But could he hold Portugal even if he went back? And if he went, leaving Brazil under the regency of his son, Pedro, could he hold Brazil? John was accustomed to facing such dilemmas, but not to reaching voluntary conclusions. So it was this time; but as he swayed now this way, now that, a combination of Brazilian ministers and the British Ambassador virtually seized him by the scruff of the neck, hustled him aboard a ship, and sent him home in 1821.

Rio thus reverted to its old status of colonial capital. But not quite. The past fourteen years could not be undone. National self-consciousness had grown too strong. Hence when Lisbon tried to deprive Portugal of her status as a co-kingdom and to push her back under parental control, she rebelled. Pedro placed himself at the head of the uprising, and by 1824 was Emperor of an independent Brazil. In 1825 Britain recognized that independence, and other nations followed suit. If Brazil feels grateful to those who contributed to her freedom, she will have to erect many statues. One of them should be of Napoleon, who pushed the royal family out of Lisbon. The other should be of Canning, who pulled it out and landed it on American soil. And there ought to be at least a bust of Strangford.