



Part I.

COSTUMES
OF THE
CANARY ISLANDS.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, AND CO.
65, CORNHILL.

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1829.

NOTA BIOGRÁFICA SOBRE EL AUTOR DE

COSTUMES OF THE CANARY ISLANDS

Alfred Diston nació el 8 de Febrero de 1793 en Lowestoft, Suffolk, Inglaterra, y falleció en abril de 1861 en el Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife.

Se educó en un ambiente con tradiciones relacionadas con la mar. Su abuelo paterno era capitán de la marina, explorador y autor de obras literarias sobre navegación.

Como joven socio de la casa comercial de los señores Pasley, Little & Cía., Puerto de la Cruz, se da cuenta: "Es preciso, sin embargo, advertir que en estos últimos años la baratura de las manufacturas europeas les ha ofrecido a los canarios disculpa para desviarse en cierto grado de sus trajes tradicionales y acaso de unos pocos más sería difícil trazar los originales de estos diseños." Aficionado a las ciencias empieza a reunir datos, dibujar y viajar.

En Londres, en 1829, se publica el fruto de esta labor, bajo el título **COSTUMES OF THE CANARY ISLANDS. Part I.** Sin duda Alfred Diston había planeado varios fascículos más pero abandona la idea y pone su material a la disposición de Barker — Webb y Sabin Berthelot para su **HISTORIA NATURAL DE LAS ISLAS CANARIAS** que se edita en París entre 1836 y 1851.

Su Curiosidad no se redujo al único objeto de los trajes folklóricos o al dibujo de los diversos lugares de las islas. En 1823—24 hace un viaje a Malta para realizar estudios botánicos. Durante más de catorce años desempeñó el cargo de Inspector y Director del Jardín de Aclimatación de la Orotava. La meteorología, después de la botánica, parecía interesar particularmente a Alfred Diston, quien durante años no descuidó anotar diariamente el estado del tiempo y las temperaturas registradas en el Puerto de la Cruz.

Reunía en sus diarios y cuadernos material de gran variedad; tanto notas científicas como anecdóticas, artísticas como mercantiles, y con gran sentido del humor apunta no pocas anécdotas de su tiempo, así como versos festivos que fueron en sus días populares.

Han transcurrido más de 150 años desde la primera edición de esta obra, precursora del folklore canario, y me siento muy satisfecho de haber contribuido a la resurrección de su original.

Per Lillieström

MANTO Y SAYA.

THE Manto y Saya is decidedly, to an eye unaccustomed to its appearance, the most strange and ungraceful mode of attiring the female figure, used in the Canary Islands.

It is worn by persons of the middling rank, such as shopkeepers' wives, and others, and has the appearance of two petticoats made of black bombazeen, fastened round the waist, the lower worn in the usual way, and the upper thrown over the head. The lower is confined tight round the body by six or seven plaited runs with strings, and lined at the bottom with some bright coloured stuff; the upper entirely conceals the arms and hands, which are employed in opening or closing that part which falls over the forehead; this the wearer often does in such a manner, as to bring it nearly to a point with a very small opening through which to see her way.

When viewed in profile the appearance of this dress is really ridiculous.



MANTO Y SAYA . CANARIES .

Published by Smith, Elder & Co. Cornhill, 1829.

Printed by W. Bay, 17, Galt Street.

A. Dixon del.

W. Bay del.

TAPADAS,

Is the provincial term by which women wearing the white flannel, or baize Mantilla, drawn close over the face (as represented in the right hand figure), are designated. The real signification of the word indicates that they are covered or concealed. It is the usual out door habiliment of women of the middling rank in the principal places of the island, and is even worn by ladies in those of the interior : by these it is always used over a black silk or bomba-zeen gown ; by the first mentioned it is worn with their ordinary dress or with a petticoat of stuff of English manufacture. When gracefully put on by a well-made and well-dressed female, it is in the highest degree becoming : and being closed over the face in such a manner as only to leave an aperture large enough to discover a pair of piercing black eyes, shaded by the long projecting point of the Mantilla, gives to the whole appearance of the wearer a sort of mystery well calculated to attract attention and curiosity.

This dress is frequently assumed by the higher class as an incognito on shopping and other parties. On those occasions the Mantilla is worn in the manner of the right hand figure.



TAPADAS, or WALKING DRESS- CANARIES .

A. Dumas del.

W. Fisk lith.

Published by Smith, Elder, & Co. Cornhill, 1829.

Printed by W. Day 17 Gate Street.

HAT-SELLER OF GRAND CANARY.

A seller of hats manufactured in Grand Canary, is the subject of this drawing. There are companies of these men dispersed throughout the adjacent Islands, travelling on foot in all directions with their commodities which are of wool, very coarse and fit only for the lower classes.

The long upper coat, this man wears made of undyed cloth, with a broad cape reaching more than half way down, is peculiar to Grand Canary, and called Beca. A scarlet sash, the folded ends of which serve him for pockets, and blue nankeen trowsers, complete his dress.



HAT SELLER of GRAND CANARY.

A. Dixon del.

Published by Smith, Elder & Co. Cornhill 1829.

Printed by W. Day 17. Gate Street.

W. Fisk lith.

LANZAROTE.

A NATIVE IN HIS WINTER DRESS.

THE winter dress of the men of Lanzarote consists of a long coat of blue cloth reaching almost to the ground lined throughout, and trimmed with red baize, worn over their ordinary apparel.

The natives of this Island are in general strong, muscular men of dark complexion, and many of them with features that mark a great mixture of Moorish blood with that of the Spaniards, which their frequent intercourse with the coast of Africa has occasioned. They are a very untrustworthy people, fierce and vindictive in the extreme: but fortunately the use of the knife is almost unknown to them, their favourite weapon being the long pole or Garote, so generally borne throughout the Island; this they wield with great address, seizing it by the middle with both hands, and striking or parrying with much skill and force.

The principal produce of Lanzarote, like that of Fuerteventura, is Barrilla, made by burning the ice-plant or glass-wort, which thrives best in the arid sandy soil of these two Islands. It is used in Europe in the manufacture of glass and soap, and in the bleaching of linen. Considerable quantities of wheat and barley are also raised for the supply of the Canaries. Their most serviceable beast of burthen is the Camel, or more properly Dromedary, of which they have many, living on the worst and scantiest food; they are capable of bearing loads of eight or ten cwt. for a long distance.



WINTER DRESS of A NATIVE of LANZAROTE.

A. Dixon. del.

W. Pickers.

Published by Smith, Elder & Co. Cornhill, 1829.

Printed by W. Day 17. Gate Street.

NATIVES OF FUERTEVENTURA.

MAJORERO, is the name by which a native of Fuerteventura is known in the Canaries, and is derived from their using a kind of sandals called **Majos**, bound on the feet with leathern thongs. Their dress, in warm weather, consists of a shirt and a pair of short drawers made very wide, and confined round the waist by a parti-coloured sash. On particular occasions, however, they wear a blue cloth jacket and smallclothes, &c., as shewn in the right hand figure, but more commonly a blue waistcoat scalloped on the back, is put on. Hats are entirely unknown to them; and their place is supplied by a cap called **Montero**, of blue cloth lined with red or yellow: so contrived that the lower part, which when loosely put on hangs behind the head, can at pleasure be drawn over the face in such a manner, as to leave only the eyes and nose visible; in this manner it is used in winter, or on any occasion when the wearer chooses to disguise himself, which is too often the case; for the **Majoreros** are a very wild and fierce race of men, and upon the least provocation, eight or ten of them with their faces hidden in this way, will set upon an individual and beat him sometimes to death with their **Garotes** and short thick sticks, or **cachiporros**, having a large knob at one end often loaded with lead, iron, nails, &c., which they carry hanging by a string from the wrist.

The vicinity of this island and **Lanzarote** to the coast of **Barbary**, and the frequent invasion of them by the **Moors** in former times, together with the intercourse yet kept up between them, have given to their inhabitants many of the terms, the customs, and even the looks of the natives of **Barbary**. The distance between them is so small, that they have an old adage which runs,

“ De Tunege a Berberia

“ Puedes ir y volver en un dia.”

signifying that from **Tunege**, on the south east coast of the island to **Barbary**, you may go and return in a day. Their manner of sitting balanced on the balls of their feet, with their hams resting on their heels, is evidently a **Moorish** custom.

The natives of **Fuerteventura** are bony, well-set men, but spare and dry and very swarthy. They are excessively dirty in their persons and habits, are possessed of much strength, and can bear great fatigue, but will work no longer than necessary to satisfy present wants, and are besides incorrigibly dishonest.

In soil and produce, **Fuerteventura** differs in no essential point from **Lanzarote**, except that water is even yet scarcer than there, only one spring being known in the whole island; so that the inhabitants are obliged to use the brackish water obtained by sinking wells in the sand, and such as they can collect in cisterns during the rainy season; but when a winter has been more than usually dry, they are under the necessity of sending vessels to **Canary** or **Tenerife** for a supply.



NATIVES of FUERTEVENTURA.

A. Ingham del.

Published by Smith, Elder & Co Cornhill. 1829.

Printed by W. Day 17 Gate Street

W. Fisk. sc.

MILITIAMAN OF GRAND CANARY.

THE uniform of this militiaman, needs little description, being nothing more than a shirt and white linen drawers of great width, with a Montero instead of a hat or helmet, in other words it is the common dress of the countrymen with the addition of a soldier's belt.

The Militia throughout the Island is of the worst description, badly disciplined, and worse accoutred. In the year 1811, when the Duke del Parque, then Captain General of the Province, was forcibly deprived of his command, several companies of militia from Realexo, Rambla, and other places on the north side of Tenerife, turned out and marched to Laguna, with scarcely any other arms than their long Garotes or poles, used for travelling, which in their hands would probably have proved far more formidable weapons than the ill conditioned muskets a very few of their comrades were provided with.



A. Dixon del.

MILITIAMAN of GRAND CANARY.

Published by Smith, Elder & Co. Cornhill, 1829.

W. Day lithog. 717. Oude Stee!

W. Fisk. lith.

