

outlying islands of St. Michael and Rat. The surf that breaks everywhere on the main island renders it difficult of access; in fact, one of the ship's boats was capsized in Chaloup Bay, but on Rat Island the landing is much easier.

The island of Fernando Noronha is used as a penal settlement by the Brazilian Government. On it were about 1400 prisoners, 160 soldiers, and 4 officers, besides the Commandant or Governor, who at the time of the visit of the Expedition was a major in the Brazilian service. The prisoners are not confined in large buildings, but each man erects a hut for himself with laths and mud, so that the settlement occupies a considerable area. Its appearance would be much improved were more care taken in laying it out; at present, beyond leaving a clear road, but little attention has been paid to this matter. All the prisoners muster at morning and evening parade, and are "told off" in the morning for their allotted work during the day; some to attend the sheep or goats, others to labour in the fields, and others again to fish. The contrivance used by the fishermen is a kind of raft or catamaran, formed of four or five logs lashed together side by side, with a small stool on the top to keep the occupant dry; the catamarans are usually only large enough to support one man, but on one occasion a large one with three men on it was seen. There are no boats on the island, so that escape is almost impossible, as the catamarans are too small and unsafe to live in the open ocean.

There are plantations of sugar cane, maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, bananas, pumpkins, and melons on the island. The latter, both water and marsh, are remarkably fine, both in size and flavour; they cost about threepence each, and a large store was purchased.

From Rat Island the sea was seen to break over some rocks in Sponge Bay half-way to the Brothers, and the whole place appeared to be foul with rocks.

At about the middle of the northern coast of the main island is a remarkable column-like mass of bare rock, which projects to a height of 1000 feet, and is well known to navigators as "the Peak": it forms a most remarkable feature in the aspect of the island as viewed from the sea, and appears to overhang somewhat on one side. One other hill in the island is 300 feet in height. The southwestern extremity of the island runs out into a long narrow promontory, composed of a narrow wall of rock, in which, at one spot near high water line, a quadrangular opening is visible through which the sea dashes in a cascade. This opening, known as the "Hole in the Wall," can be seen from a considerable distance. At the opposite extremity the island terminates in a low sandy point with sand dunes upon it, beyond which stretch the outlying islets already referred to.

Fernando Noronha is thickly wooded, and appears beautifully green from the sea. The principal trees are what Webster,¹ who visited the island in 1828, calls the "laurelled Bara," which has dark green laurel-like leaves, and an abundant milky juice, the exact

¹ Webster, Voyage of the "Chanticleer," vol. ii. p. 331, London, 1834.