The Azorian at Home.
(Read before the Society of '88.)

Here are few Techs who are aware of their proximity to one of the choicest and most unique spots that it has ever been my good fortune to visit.

On the placid bosom of the Atlantic, hundreds of miles from either continent, and isolated by language and custom from all commercial nations of the day, lie nine little islands, green all the year around, and inhabited by a class of people as unique and interesting as are the islands themselves. Situated in the Gulf Stream, the even warmth of whose waters is well known to all, the Azores rejoice in a climate not excelled, if equaled, by any other part of the globe. February is the month of the orange, while in June we pluck the ripe fig. Flowers and trees of all descriptions grow in profusion everywhere throughout the whole year, and the bare foot of the peasant requires no protection from cold or heat from one year's end to another.

The Azores are of volcanic origin, and the simple Isanders tell marvelous tales of other Azores that every now and then suddenly pop their heads up from under the sea, only to retire again as suddenly within its bosom. That the Islands are volcanic, however, cannot be doubted. The general shape of their many hills, together with the lava, pumice-stone, and boiling springs, are undeniable proofs to that effect.

Everything in regard to these islands is strictly Azorian,—their ideas, customs, dress, tools, and in fact everything.

Perhaps a word on the Portuguese language would not be inappropriate. It is, as you know, a sister to Italian and Spanish, and a first cousin to the French, but, to my mind, much more graceful and harmonious than either. For instance, there is only one nasal sound in the entire language. The final o, which, as is the case in Spanish, ends two thirds of their words, is very soft.

The Government is Portuguese; and the least said of this the soonest mended, for most of the laws seem so utterly absurd, and so little adapted to the requirements of the people. For example, there is a heavy duty on ice, and education is almost prohibited.

Red tape envelops the post-office, the postmaster publishing a paper before distributing the mail, that he may get ahead of the other publishers; and in the custom house the influential Portuguese carry everything ashore without its being examined. But these are Portuguese rather than Azorian characteristics. They prevail throughout Portugal and all Southern Europe. As I have said, the Azores are nine in number, but in our trip we will pass by the first two,—Corvo, the most eastern and smallest, and Flores, the greenest,—stopping at Fayal, the most Americanized, only long enough to call upon Mr. Dabney, the American consul, and taste his wine, large glasses of which are offered to his American visitors, and to buy some of the Fayal lace, so beautiful in texture, and far surpassing the Spanish in beauty and delicacy of workmanship, and very cheap. Mr. Dabney is an Englishman, but he married an American wife, which renders him worthy of American sympathy, and of the American consularship, which he immediately received upon accomplishing that feat.

Fayal is a small island of little importance, save for its lace and basket work,—in the shape of ornamental baskets,—and hats. Opposite Fayal is Pico, about six miles off. This is the highest of the group, being 7,500 feet above the sea. Very fine wine is manufactured here; but we have no time to stop if we would wish to reach our destination to-night. We pass also St. George, the longest of the group, Graceosa, the most graceful or symmetrical in form, as the name indicates, and Terceira, or third, which is the capital, and richest of the group, till we come to St. Michaels, situated nearly two hundred miles to the east of Fayal.

St. Michaels is the largest and most populous