
Islands of Opportunity

□ TRISTAN DA CUNHA □

INACCESSIBLE AND NIGHTINGALE ISLANDS



TRISTAN ISLANDERS AWAITING A DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS.

This group of islands lies in the centre of the Atlantic, midway between South America and South Africa, and they have been held by the British since 1816.

The main island is Tristan da Cunha, which has a population of 187. The people are of British origin, and for over seventy years have worked hard to maintain themselves as far as possible with the resources at hand. They are industrious, law-abiding, and deeply spiritual. They have built their houses of island stone, roofed with local timber and thatched with tussock. They line their houses with box boards, and take great pride in their

homes. Their work consists of growing potatoes and vegetables and fishing on every possible occasion. The men and boys are also engaged in getting their wood for fuel and boat-building, whilst the women and girls are busy carding, spinning and knitting their woollen wares; in fact, everybody works, even the small boys go out before daylight to bring the cows home to be milked, and the younger girls knit during their lessons in school, and from early morning to dark we are all busy working, six days a week, with a few days' holiday at Christmas and Easter.

The majority of the work at present is done at Tristan, which has still much scope for development. In the meantime, however, we have started a "Five Year Plan." This plan is an attempt to grow more crops and to extend cattle raising, and altogether to provide a greater supply of food. Last September I took twelve boys and two men to settle on Inaccessible, fifteen miles away. Besides this party, I took over all the men to help to build their house, which is forty feet by twenty feet. This work we finished, and held our first service after four days' work. Then the men and I returned to Tristan, and left the pioneers to begin their work. They work from daylight to dark, and have put under cultivation a large piece of ground, which has already supplied three hundred bushels of potatoes, besides vegetables and wheat. We have also transported from Tristan to this island cattle and sheep. The pioneers returned home at Christmas, looking very fit and certainly very happy, and they decided that their new home was their future lot. They went back after Christmas and continued their work until I went over in H.M.S. *Carlisle*, and after the island and their work had been inspected, and had received great praise from the visitors, they returned to Tristan for my departure. They were hoping to return after a few days' holiday, and I believe next year we shall see even greater success.

As the result of this, another group of boys have volunteered to go to Nightingale Island, twenty miles off, for they feel they are out of it, and they also want to be called pioneers. This, however, has to wait until my return, for lack of tools and tackle.

On my return, which I hope will be about Christmas-time, we are going to take the second group and build a similar house to the one on Inaccessible on Nightingale. There we have the same material at our disposal, and I believe the same success awaits the Nightingale pioneers as that which has attended those on Inaccessible.

I feel sure that when the three islands are worked we shall be able not only to keep ourselves in most things but to have a good deal to barter. I may say that these islands are very fertile, and that there is room for a great deal of expansion. Wood is plentiful, water is very good, fishing is excellent, and the islands are overrun with birds, so that we have enough and to spare both of birds and eggs.

On the mainland during the last three years we have been very busy, for we have built a store house, a lighthouse, and two large huts out in the potato patches, which provide shelter and enable us to cook our meals whilst working on the potatoes. We have also laid the foundations for our new hospital and Chaplain's quarters, mounted an old gun that was used for protection against an attempted landing by Napoleon, made seats along our beaches, improved all sanitary conditions, built bridges over the waterings, and finally, made a landing-place for airmen.

During my three years' residence on Tristan, I have found that the men worked admirably under guidance and supervision, and nothing that I have undertaken has failed to be completed. Their only reward has been a ration of tobacco and a dance, but they themselves and the whole of the inhabitants are so happy to see these improvements that their question is always, "What job shall we do next?" But my answer has to be given in the knowledge that I have to wait for tools and materials, and it is for these that I make an appeal. May I suggest that our friends who want to see us progress will help us with their gifts of money, to enable me to buy the necessary tools and materials? I believe that those who help with their gifts will be amply rewarded when the news returns of the work that we have accomplished.

I have found the Tristan folk a most grateful people, law-abiding and clean, and the chief note of their life is their simple faith, for we have a saying amongst us now, "Where God is there is no loneliness," and that spirit has led us through days of anxiety for the future, for we believe that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

HAROLD WILDE,
Chaplain at Tristan da Cunha.

HOW TO HELP TRISTAN

The stipend of the Chaplain is provided out of the General Fund of the S.P.G.

Gifts are invited in order to supply the Chaplain and his people with stores and to send other necessities—tools, materials, etc.—to the Islanders

Such gifts to the S.P.G. may be sent with the attached form.

The "Tristan da Cunha Fund," administered by Mr. Irving Gane, assists in a similar way, and he invites donations at 2 Temple Gardens, Temple, E.C. 4.

I enclose a gift of £ : : for Tristan da Cunha,
towards the Chaplain's stipend. (Strike out that which is
for the purchase of necessities. not intended.)

Name.....
(Mr., Mrs., or Miss)

Address.....
.....

Cheques, postal orders, etc., should be made out to "S.P.G." and sent to the Treasurers of S.P.G., 15 Tufton Street, Westminster, London, S.W. 1.