

which were worn by children mostly, but others by teen-aged girls and a few by some of the younger women. While I think of it let me tell you about one picture which I did not take, because I had run out of film. It would have been one of three peixeiras (fish women) dressed in their daily costumes but much cleaner and brighter than usual. Before I leave here I want to get a good pictures of a group of them. There was a girl with them, too, who was quite dressed up for Carnaval. She was the daughter I would gather of one of the peixeiras (peixe is the word for fish. Peixeira signifies fish carrier of the feminine class. Or fish woman). Before I ran out of film I got shots of several attractively gowned little misses in colorful Carnaval costumes.

I described somewhat the dresses to Ruby. Now I can do the same for you. But first, to elaborate a little more on the word and the festive occasion, Carnaval. I have used it a number of times, but have not told you anything about it really, except that it comes just before the season of Lent begins in the church calendar. February 8th the Portuguese call Domingo Gordo, or Fat Sunday. Probably, tho I'm not sure of this, the fat refers to the fat on meat. Carnaval begins on that day, and Carnaval is the season of eating meat before the fast season of Lent commences. The word comes from carne (meat) and the ending indicates a festival. That is. I am told this by one of our teachers. I see that in the dictionary the origin of the word is given as Italian and signifies the dance before the period of fasting. Well, all in all the Carnaval here is a combination feast and dancing observance. Like other customs it changes from time to time but during a generation remains pretty much the same. During three days, from Sunday through Tuesday, people celebrate by parties, masquerading, simple fireworks, noise-making, and taking a day off. To us it seemed something like Fourth of July, Hallowe'en and April Fool's Day rolled into one, with perhaps a touch of New Year's and Thanksgiving. About the latter, however, I'd guess that most people do not spend as extravagantly for turkeys as they do at Christmas time, rather than at Thanksgiving, as in the States. But the masking and costuming is like Hallowe'en, the funmaking like New Year's Eve funmaking, and the noise a little like the night before the Fourth. The greater part of this goes on during the day Tuesday, but we gather that there were parties from Sunday night on through Tuesday. We heard pre-celebration noises, as before our Fourth, and Hallowe'en. And the youngsters were using their squirt guns for two weeks before the actual days of festival. I took a picture of a costume one week before February 8, and other from Sunday on. I saw none after Tuesday. Tuesday I completed the taking of what few costumes I saw.

For fireworks the youngsters had a rather dangerous kind I thought. They were using the kind of material which the bombs we used to call torpedo bombs were made of. It's the kind of explosive which can be thrown and will explode, or can be scratched like a match and will give off fire and smoke. I can't remember the name, but am sure that the material is what I describe it to be. Noisemakers were in wooden ratchet type whirling devices and the whistles of ballons, or rosined strings with cardboard and thin paper amplifiers of cup shape. Probably at some of the parties there horns and other kinds of noise makers, but we saw none in the streets. For quiet playthings, knickknacks there were wooden snakes with four or five joints, serpentinhas (ribbons of vari-colored paper), bright balloons and confetti. Then of course the squirt guns, plastic boxes with a little valve inside through which water could be taken in and then squeezed out with some force. Some older young people used perfume in their squirters. Kenneth wanted one of these, but we managed to escape buying him one this time. Perhaps when he comes again to Lisbon...