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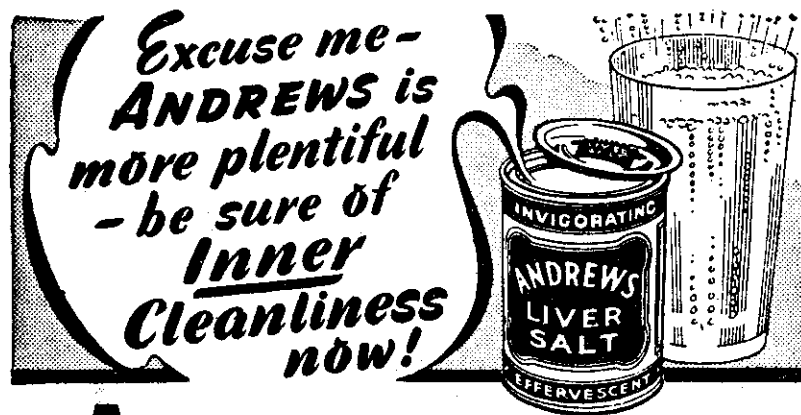
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## AID FROM OUR OLDEST ALLY

### Portugal Lends Us The Azores

IT was announced last week by Mr. Churchill that Portugal had granted Britain "certain facilities" at the Azores for the better protection of Atlantic convoys. That may or may not have surprised most of those who were listening. But three out of four listeners must have been surprised to hear Mr. Churchill add that Portugal and Britain had maintained an unbroken alliance for five and a-half centuries. The Anglo-Portuguese Alliance was, in fact, confirmed in May, 1386 — 557 years ago; and although both parties have passed through desperate years since that event—in Portugal's case, 60 years of subjection to Spain—the friendship has never been broken.

This is an almost sensational fact in the history of international relations. It means, to begin with, that the Portuguese have contrived to remain independent in defiance of the facts of geography. A glance at the map makes it difficult to understand how and why. And it means in the second place that both nations have fulfilled obligations in the teeth of threats and in contempt of bribes.

#### Different From Spaniards

What kind of people are the Portuguese? They are mixed racially, as all European nations are, but authorities still recognise a foundation of Celtiberian stock, by which they mean racial strains that have remained since prehistoric times and given some degree of stability to the type. But Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Carthaginians, Moors, and Goths have all in turn over-run part of the country and left their mark. The point is that the Portuguese are different, recognisably different, from the Spaniards, and have, of course, a different language and culture.

Portugal has been an ally of Britain for 557 years, an independent nation (with one brief break), for about 800 years. The footholds it still maintains in China, Africa, the Malay Archipelago, and India are a sufficient indication, if one were wanted, of the energy it displayed in Europe's colonising days, and there can be little doubt that among the influences behind the new agreement over the Azores have been Japan's violations of neutrality in Timor and Macao.

But the purpose of this article is to indicate how the Portuguese live to-day,



"The humane and lyrical quality of the Portuguese genius is expressed in this picture of a little Minhota peasant with the patient partner of her toil"

what they do and think, and why nothing has disturbed the harmony between Lisbon and London. We conclude therefore, with a quotation from an article written by Rodney Gallop for the *Geographical Magazine* in July, 1940, when Portugal celebrated the double centenary of her escape from Spain and the 800th anniversary of her existence as a separate state. "But for the war," Mr. Gallop wrote, "all the world would have flocked to Portugal to join in commemoration." But the war stood in the way, and most of Portugal's friends had to "participate vicariously." Mr. Gallop ended with this:

#### Varied, But United

"Although its six million inhabitants have been moulded in the crucible of a common experience into a single nation, the country has by no means been reduced to a dull and dreary uniformity. On a smaller scale it reproduces the variety of landscape and human background of the whole peninsula. Each of its provinces has its own character: the vast, tawny expanses of the Alentejan plain; the orchards of Algarve, in February a sea of almond blossom; the bright, miniature charm of the Minho; the bleak uplands, almost a prolongation of Castille, of Tras os Montes, the land 'behind the mountains'; the vine and olive-terraced hills of Estremadura; and the two Beiras separated by the Serra da Estrela, the pines and rocks of Beira Alta and the blue distances of Beira Baixa.

"Yet this variegated Portugal has a unity of its own, distinguishing it from Spain with a sharpness of contrast which only those who know and love both countries can fully appreciate. The opposition between the two peoples is something more than a historical acci-

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