

ship of his troops. No selection was ever more momentous. The Spanish army was far superior in numbers and possessed corresponding advantages of every sort. But "the people had confidence in Alvares and Alvares had confidence in himself." Nor was he much moved by the doctrine that would make the morality of a cause depend on the probabilities of success. It was enough for him that his country was in danger and that he was called upon to defend it. Accordingly he unhesitatingly accepted the position of High Constable, and without delay proceeded to show how well placed was the confidence the people had in him, no less than that he had in himself. This is not the place to describe the series of brilliant victories that almost miraculously crowned his efforts—Assumar, Aljubarrota, Valverde, Ceuta—names that still live on in Portuguese song and story. "Whoever is afraid of the King of Castile or of any other King," he said to one of the council who expressed fear of failure, "is out of place in the council. The business of the council is to serve king and country, not to lessen the courage of others by vain fears and idle words."

Before such a man, the idol of his soldiers, the proud Castilian struggled in vain; and ere the century had closed the plenipotentiaries of both countries met at Segovia in June, 1400, to sign a truce, which, though only temporary in words, meant in reality the end of the war and the consecration of the independence of Portugal, which was eventually recognised once for all in 1431. Meanwhile, his wife had passed away; his beloved daughter Beatrix had married into a family that was later on to form the royal house of Braganza; and he had all that the heart of man could desire—wealth, honor, power—when another and a gentler call began to whisper in his ear the words, "vanity of vanities," summoning him to lay aside the High Constable's sword, his wealth and his power, and take up instead the humble cowl of a poor lay Brother of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The day after the victory of Valverde he had made a vow to erect a magnificent church alongside the great convent of Mount Carmel at Lisbon. His vow was carried out without loss of time, and soon the hill above Lisbon was decorated with the most beautiful temple in all Portugal, dedicated to Our Lady of Victories. To take charge of this noble edifice he called in the Carmelite Friars, who entered into possession of church and convent in May, 1397.

Here, on the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1423, the anniversary of his victories at Aljubarrota and Ceuta, Nuno Alvares, Count of Ouren, of Arraiolos and of Barcellos, master of three of the provinces of the kingdom, lord and baron of an infinity of cities and castles, High Constable of Portugal, cast himself at the feet of a statue of Our Lady, and laying aside all his greatness, put on the habit and took the vows of a poor Carmelite lay Brother—the invincible in battle surrendering to the love of God, and taking his place among the community as Brother Nuno of Our Lady. He was then in his 63rd year.

It would take too long to tell of the life he led within the sacred walls which his own piety had raised to heaven. But all immersed as he was in the practices of devotion, obedience, and poverty, the spark of patriotism burned on undimmed in his breast. One day the Castilian Ambassador, desirous of seeing the man who had carved out the independence of Portugal with his strong right hand, and who was now a lowly lay Brother, called on him and was conducted to the poor cell, where the former High Constable received him in his simple habit. At the end of their conversation, the Ambassador asked him if he would ever throw aside that lowly vesture. "Yes," was the reply, "I shall throw it aside the moment the King of Castile declares war on Portugal, and in that event I shall be serving at once the Order I have embraced and the land that gave me birth."

Eight years from the date of his religious profession, October 30, 1431, saw the signing of the definite treaty of peace with Castile, the crowning act of Portuguese independence. The King of Portugal carried the tidings to Nuno Alvares, only to find him on his bed

of death, ready to sing his *Nunc dimittis* now that all to which he had dedicated his brain and his arm had been right worthily accomplished. The news was told him just as the bells rang out in honor of All Saints' Day; and just as the same bells began to toll their mournful dirge that evening in commemoration of the faithful departed, the most faithful of the sons of Adam passed to his reward. "Laid out on the bier, clad in his poor habit of lay Brother, with the crucifix clasped in his lifeless hands, the old warrior lay in the rigidity of death like one in a placid sleep, his white face wearing the calm expression of peace—the one thing missing being the light of those eagle eyes. Poor as was that bier, it was none the less a throne. Never was Nuno Alvares so close to the hearts and thoughts of the people of Portugal as when he passed lifeless through their midst, carried on the shoulders of the highest in the land and followed by the King, the Infanta, a stately cortege of *Hidalgos*, by all that was noble and illustrious in Lisbon. It was the fatherland rendering the brightest honors to the liberator who was also a saint—for in Nuno they recognised two personalities fused into one, the saint and the national hero." From the day his body was laid to rest in the stately church he had erected on the heights above Lisbon, his memory was revered, his deeds sung, his sanctity venerated, by the people of Portugal, who uninterruptedly continued to frequent his tomb and honor his relics and invoke his intercession as that of a saint, down to the day in 1755 when the memorable earthquake that devastated all Lisbon buried also in ruins his Church of Our Lady of Victories. The greatness of Portugal, built up chiefly by Nuno Alvares, met the fate of all things mortal, and slowly passed under the control of Spain; and Spain regarded with ill-concealed jealousy the veneration paid to the memory of him whose example might easily encourage others to do as he had done. The public veneration of Nuno Alvares declined with the fortunes of the country of his love; and this decline was accelerated by the storms that swept over the land in recent centuries. Great and enthusiastic as was the veneration paid to the memory and bones of Nuno Alvares, it had never been officially recognised, chiefly owing to the opposition of Spain. In 1870, however, steps began to be taken with a view to obtaining such recognition. These steps were renewed and intensified in 1895, 1907, and 1909. The evidence taken at various intervals was eventually transmitted to Rome, and examined by the Congregation of Rites, with the result that on January 23 of last year a decree was read and confirmed by the present Pope, formally sanctioning the veneration of Nuno Alvares, and numbering him among those whom the Church has inscribed on the golden book of the blessed.

IRELAND NOW THE ONLY WHITE NATION IN SUBJECTION.

Mr. Erskine Childers, in a letter to the *London Times* on imaginary dangers about Ireland, says:—"Ireland is now the only white nationality in the world (let us leave colored possessions out of the discussion) where the principle of self-determination is not, at least in theory, conceded. It is the last of the 'problems' which were left in 1914, and it is incomparably the simplest. It is simplicity itself compared with those resulting from the collapse of Russia, Austria, and Germany, where the intermixture of races speaking different tongues, and the absence of clearly defined or maritime boundaries do cause difficulties of real complexity."

"Nevertheless, Great Britain is fixing and guaranteeing the boundaries of these new States, of which so little is known here that the Prime Minister can joke in Parliament about his ignorance till yesterday of the position on the map of one of the numerous 'Ulsters.'"

"Is she in the same breath to decline to deal with Ireland, whose uninterrupted historical identity and boundaries nobody can mistake—Ireland, the last unliberated white community on the face of the globe?"