

ORIGIN OF THE NAME «LANCASTER»

(Communicated by Miss E. Moore)

In an old parish register belonging to the Sé I found «Dalemcastro» and «Dalemcrasto». The modern Portuguese rendering is «Lancastre» and «Lencastre».

The first, and I am much inclined to think, the only *real* Lancaster in this country, was Philippa, — daughter of John of Guant, Duke of Lancaster, son of Edward III of England — who married John I of Portugal, and died in 1410. Her sister married the King of Castille. I should like to know if the name still exists in Spain.

The family of the Visconde Taveira was asked how they got the name of Lancastre. The reply was that they were the King of England's cousins ! I remember when I was young meeting a family from Norwich named Bolingbroke who had known and been good to my father when he was a boy. I was told that they were the descendants of Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, later Duke of Lancaster, and still later, Henry IV of England. I was in Norwich last year, for the first time of my life, and the name was still there.

A short time ago I picked up a Portuguese history and only found the name «Lencastre». «Portugal», Dicionario Historico, Chorographico, Biographico, etc., published in 1906 makes no mention of the name Lancaster, while Lencastre's abound : priests, nuns, bishops inquisitors, soldiers, statesmen, ambassadors, etc. In the Portuguese «La Rousse» published in 1928 the name is Lancastre under Philippa's portrait only, and Lencastre for a Portuguese doctor.

John II, 1481, the great-great-grandson of John & Philippa, had an illegitimate son — George. His mother was Anna de Mendonça, lady-in-waiting to the Queen. When John II died at Alvor she left the Court and went into the Convent of Santos where she died in 1545. To this illegitimate son John II gave the name of Lancaster (in one of its forms) in memory, it is said, of Philippa, and made him Duke of Coimbra — a title used for the first time in Portugal by John I — and given to his second son, Pedro, after the taking of Ceuta.

Dom Luiz de Lencastre, Commendador-Mor of Aviz, according to «Portugal» was taken prisoner at Alcaçer Kibir, was ransomed, and died in 1613. He had an only grandchild, a girl, D. Isabel de Lencastre who married Manoel de Tavora. As the name came from the mother's side it should have been lost centuries ago, but the Counts of Alvor, descendants of Manoel & Isabel still use it, as also do the Counts of Alcaçovas of Louzã and other titled families. The first Conde de Alvor was nephew of the first Marquis de Tavora and both titles terminated in 1759 on the scaffold erected by the Marquis of Pombal at Belem on January 13th of that year. There is still a Conde de Alvor, descendant of the Tavoras, but how he acquired the title I don't know.

The beginning of this year a friend sent me a cutting from the «Diario de Noticias» and under the heading of «A historia d'uma Rainha que casou com um Gendarme» I read: «Moheli, no Oceano Indico, descoberto em 1591 pelo Navegador *Lencastre*, d'onde provem os *Lencastres* portugueses». Perplexing, isn't it!

La Rousse speaks of Sir James Lancaster, an English navigator who died in 1620, and of the Comoro Islands, of which Moheli is one, as having been discovered by the English navigator Lancaster in 1591 and visited by other nations afterwards. He visited Ceylon and Sumatra in 1591, and returned to England two years after. In 1600 he again went in the direction of India, made a brilliant voyage, and captured many Portuguese vessels. His name has been given to a Strait at the north entrance of Baffin's Bay.

I have failed to unearth Lancaster as a discoverer, but between 1500 and 1505 the Portuguese were at the Comoro Islands although they did not stay long. Hakluyt mentions the memorable voyage of James Lancaster begun in 1591. He then rounded the Cape of Good Hope, coasted the eastern side of Africa and went to Malaca. In an account of Lancaster's voyage he quotes «We used our Portugal boy which we had taken before, for our interpreter», but this can refer to another island and not to Moheli. So the name may have been brought by the Portuguese on their return to their native land.

A Portuguese gentleman has informed me that not half of the Portuguese families use their own names. On making enquiries I find that he is right.

(to be continued)