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Why The Alvéloa Bird Received A Blessing

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In the Azores there is a little bird which is loved and protected by every one. Its name is the Alvéloa. It has a gray back, white breast, head and throat, and black and white wings. The tail of this little bird is always in motion. This is the reason:

Long ago when the wicked king Herod ordered all the babies to be killed, the Holy Virgin fled into Egypt with the Christ child safe in her arms. They rode upon an ass.

The Virgin glanced fearfully behind her as they went along the way. At any moment Herod's messengers might come in pursuit. The tracks of the ass showed plainly in the dusty road.

"Oh!" cried the Holy Mother, "Our enemies will see our tracks! They will know in what direction we have fled!"

The Alvéloa was nearby and heard. She spread out her tail like a fan and shook it about in the dusty road. The tracks of the ass were completely brushed away.

The Holy Mother smiled upon her.

"For this kind deed, little bird, your tail shall be always in motion. By this sign you shall be known and your life shall be spared."

To this very day the tail of the Alvéloa is in motion. St. Michael, himself, the patron of the island of S. Miguel, has asked a special protection for the little bird in his island.

The Alvéloa flew all the way before the Virgin, showing her the road into Egypt.

"My blessing upon you, little bird," said the Virgin. "May you always have the strength to slay your enemy."

To this very day the Alvéloa is able to slay birds much larger than herself.

"The Alvéloa kills the hawk," is a saying in the Azores.

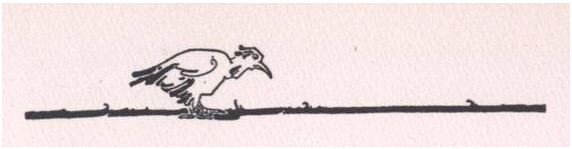
If one wakes in the morning and sees this little gray and white bird before his window he will have a lucky day.

On the way into Egypt the Virgin pointed to the lupine which grew by the

wayside.

"Eat, little bird," she said. "Eat until your hunger is satisfied. Blessings be upon you for your kind deeds to me and to the Holy Child. May good fortune and plenty always attend you."

To this very day this bird blessed by the Virgin is an emblem of good luck.



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