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LITHUANIA; OF OLD AND TODAY

THE LITHUANIAN ROOSTER

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VISITORS

THE north wind blew
 As the north wind blows;
 Here and there flew
 Snowflakes all in rows.
 Dancing as they came
 Along on their quest,
 Soon the old house was
 Taken by the new guest.

THOMAS SHAMIS.

NEW LITHUANIA

by
THOMAS SHAMIS

LITHUANIA was once a world power. Its boundaries extended from the Baltic sea to the Black sea. Lithuania was known in all parts of Europe; its gallant army invaded Crimea. Besides Lithuania proper, in its confines were the provinces of Vitebsk, Polotsk, Smolensk, Kiev, Luts, Chernogov and many others.

Lithuania, like other nations, fell prey to political tricksters and in 1772 was finally divided between Russia and Prussia. Patriotism has made a hard nut to crack. For many centuries and immediately following the partition was the trying period of Lithuania. They were oppressed and killed for their love of the Lithuanian language, its modes and its customs. But the scaffold, the cold prisons or the

Siberian ice were of no avail to make Lithuania give up what was so dear, the Lithuanian language.

The Russians and the Germans to their astonishment, seeing that it was impossible to make the Lithuanian forsake his language, thought it would be wise to obliterate it from the written past. So they went into the archives and taking therefrom the history of the Lithuanian people burned it so that posterity would know nothing of ancestors. And they went so far as to tear a page from other works where was written the word Lithuania.

Lithuania will be free and the sooner this blood carnage is over the more hastening the new day will come and Lithuania will step from the chains of persecution and oppressed—new Lithuania, full of new spirit and ambition.

At the beginning diplomats said this was fought for freeing of "the little people's" and that after the war "the little nations" will be given freedom. The prophecy has come true before time. Last month

the German and the Austro-Hungary governments issued a proclamation granting self-government to the Poles, in the newly occupied territory. Immediately after issuing the proclamation to the Poles the German government issued a manifesto that the German government is preparing a proclamation for Lithuania.

Further the manifesto states the German government well knows the differences between the Lithuanians and the Poles. Concluding the manifesto reads that Lithuania will soon be free. Cablegrams state that the Lithuanians will be given the same privileges as the Bavarians. Lithuania will have for its ruler Eitel Frederick, second son of the kaiser. The new Kingdom of Lithuania is made from Russian territory. The second step of the German government is to give freedom to the Lithuanians.

To rebuild Lithuania, the responsibility falls upon the Germans, but they first hope the Lithuani-

ans will organize an army which will help fight the Russians. Now in Lithuania there is a big German army taking care of the occupied territory and by letting the Lithuanians have freedom will mean the release of a large number of soldiers who could be of use on other fronts. This means a great deal to the Teuton cause as it badly needs more men.

Russia or its allies will never recognize the freedom of Lithuania or its autonomy because they would admit defeat and the ending of the war. The neutral governments cannot recognize the new Kingdom of Lithuania because being neutral will not allow recognition before it is time for it. Further it would show that the central powers have achieved victory.

If Russia lost in this war it would be only too glad to recognize Lithuania because Russia would prefer to have her borders adjoin Lithuania than mighty Germany.

If Germany is defeated it will grant total free-

dom to Lithuania because it is far better to leave friends than enemies. As to the future of Lithuania the peace conference will give its final decision. The issuing of the manifesto at this time is very important to the Lithuanians as it gives understanding to the world about the Lithuanians, their aims and ideals. Lithuania's freedom will be one of the most discussed topics in Europe's politics.

Germany's granting of freedom to the Lithuanians without doubt will be followed by Russia because Russian high authorities say that they are fighting for the liberation of "the little nations." The time has come for unlocking the chains and the passing of the bondage of centuries. Come new LITHUANIA.



PROPOSED KINGDOM OF LITHUANIA

by
M. SALCIUS

Secretary, Central Committee for the
Relief of the Lithuanian War Sufferers.
Author "Ten Years in Lithuanian
Culture."

THE peace proposals by Germany in the recent war suggest the establishment of the Kingdom of Lithuania, about which there is very little known by the civilized world, where live some five million Lithuanians.

Lithuania is situated on the Eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, and forms an oblong, being 300 miles long and 200 miles wide. The date when the Lithuanians first settled in their native country is not exactly known, but there is a belief expressed by the German and Lithuanian scientists, that they

came there before the birth of Christ. Lithuania is mostly a low land, but here and there the landscape is broken by picturesque ridges and mountains. The soil varies from poor sandy to rich black loam. The Lithuanians according to German explorers are the descendants of the old Arian Race, speaking a language similar to the old Sanskrit and Ancient Greek. Lithuania is mostly agricultural.

There is no country in the world in which ancient mode is so mixed with modern inventions. Throughout the territory will be found small huts built beside the modern dwellings. The wooden household furnishings, such as spoons, dishes, etc., tableware with ornaments in the old style are mixed with those produced in modern factories made of iron, zinc or tin. Most of the clothing, foodstuffs and all agricultural implements are produced at home. However, there are places where everything is produced in the factories, the same as in modern Europe.

The Lithuanians lived in closely settled villages, but in 1864, after the abolition of serfdom, the Lithuanian started to divide their villages into farms, and the cultivation of crops was carried on according to the modern methods. The abolition of serfdom gave an opportunity for the Lithuanian peasants to send their children to the schools and to educate them. Lithuanian is fond of education.

At the beginning of the Nineteenth century there were several mothers in the villages who taught their children by their old methods to read and write, and at the time of the abolition of serfdom there were several men and women in every village who could read and write, and were able to start a new era in Lithuania of modern culture and industry.

Nowadays, education has become so popular that there is no village in the country which has not at least two or three men with the highest education, such as priests, teachers, doctors and lawyers. This intelligency arose from the peasantry and inspired

the desire in all classes of the Lithuanian people to become a free and independent nation.

Lithuania started its historical life at the beginning of the Thirteenth century. Before that time her clans were scattered through the country and each had its own ruler. About this time the German merchants came to Lithuania and discovered a new territory for their commerce, but the Lithuanians were heathens and prevented the German merchants from penetrating into the interior of their country. Therefore the merchants brought with them military powers consisting of the Knights of Cross and the Knights of the Sword. Under the stroke of these orders the Lithuanian clans began to unite into a State and they elected grand Dukes as leaders of military and civil life, and Lithuania formed an independent State from 1201 until 1569, in the latter year it united with Poland in the so-called Polish-Lithuanian Republic. Then her history was merged with that of Poland, and Lithuania lost its identity as an inde-

pendent nation.

In 1795 the united Polish-Lithuanian Republic was conquered by Russia and Lithuania was divided into two parts, viz: the governments of Kaunas, Vilnius and Suvalkai, which were annexed to Russia, and the districts of Königsberg and Gumbine to Germany.

The Lithuanians being united with Poland were forced by the Polish government and the clergy to use the Polish language and Polish schools, and in those centuries Lithuania was Polanized. When Lithuania fell into the hands of Russia she forced the Russian schools, language and culture upon the Lithuanians.

In the first decades of the Nineteenth century there were several prominently educated Lithuanians who propagated the intelligence and freedom of the Lithuanian nation, but in 1864 the Lithuanians took part in the uprising against the Russians and the Russian government decided to take advantage to Rus-

sianize the Lithuanians, and to accomplish this purpose they forbade the Lithuanians to print in their native language, and also the holding of any kind of office by the people of Lithuanian descent.

The Lithuanians under Germany were Germanized, although they had the right to print in their native language. When the forbidding of the Lithuanian printing started in the Russian part of Lithuania it formed the period of the glorious fight of the Lithuanian people for their national existence. This period has the most numerous famed social workers and national heroes among the Lithuanians. There were lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers and priests and they all, offered their lives, wealth, money and time for the fight of freedom of the Lithuanian nation and the right of national existence.

In 1904 during the Russo-Japan War the prohibition of Lithuanian printing was abolished. From this year the Lithuanian nation procured the right to the legal development of their national culture and

industry.

There was only a very short period of ten years, (1904-1914) during which the Lithuanians carried on their advanced ideas in their national culture, because Lithuania became the area of the present war. During this period the Lithuanians established all branches of culture and social life which they needed to become an independent nation.

During the years (1904-1914) the growth of the Lithuanian literature was three times bigger than that of the years (1563-1904). Literature which has achieved universal value among which are: "Blunder," by Dobilas, depicting the dawn of the new era; "Klaida" (Wrong) by Lazdinu Peleda; "Sharunas," by Vincent Kreve, authority on ancient heroes; "Dainaivos Salies Senu Zmoniu Padavimai," by Vincent Kreve, Lithuanian life ably told; among scientific works are to be mentioned: "Prakalbarie Lietuviu Kryziaus Albumo," by Dr. Basanavicus; "Aisciu Studijos" (The Studies of Aestii), by

K. Buga. Lithuania in the short period of ten years developed such literature ranking to that of Shakespeare in poetry, has produced besides the forementioned many contributions to scientific, medicine, narrative, etc., of universal value. What will ten years more show in Lithuanian literature? True, at the same rate the Lithuanian literature will soon rank first, the place it had a right long ago.

From 1905, after the Russian revolution, in which the Lithuanians took an active part, they began to organize societies of different kinds. Before the war, in 1906, there were organized three societies of education, consisting of about one hundred schools of different grades, among which were schools for preparation of teachers, priests, pharmacists; also several schools of domestic science and professional schools. These schools endured great hardships, because of the suppression of the Russian government, and were endowed only with donations from the Lithuanian people. Besides these schools

the three societies also established in several villages public libraries, for free use by the Lithuanian peasants, and organized a public theatre for the national shows, plays and concerts.

In 1907 the Lithuanians in the ancient capital at Vilnius, organized the Lithuanian Scientific Society, which united all the young Lithuanian scientists. In 1914 this society had 700 members, among which there were professors of almost all the European Universities of Lithuanian nationality, or other nationalities who were in sympathy with the Lithuanians. This society published a scientific magazine in which there were very important articles concerning the origin of the Lithuanian language and the manner of Lithuanian folklore. This society organized the selection of the Lithuanian national songs by the phonograph, and also conducted researches of the ancient tombs and burial places for the purpose of discovering the nature of ancient Lithuanian culture. This society then made collec-

tions of ancient articles they found, and built the foundation for the Lithuanian National Museum, which was to have been located in Vilnius, but on account of the present war the plans for same were interrupted.

1907 there was founded the society of Fine Arts, which united the Lithuanian painters and sculptors, and every year they had exhibitions through all the most important cities of Lithuania, and caused the creation of the Lithuanian national style of fine arts. Among the members of this society was M. K. Ciurlanis, who became a famous artist. His paintings united the Lithuanian national style and composition of colors with the modern methods of the impressionists and the symbolists. He painted about two hundred masterpieces, valued at one-half million dollars. He died in 1912 and was very highly praised by Russian artists and Lithuanian authorities. A brilliant future was prophesy for his paintings throughout the whole world, but the war has delayed

the spreading of his fame.

Just after the revolution in 1905 there was established the Prohibition Society, which contained before the war about 1000 branches with 50,000 members. The Russian government during the last year of the Nineteenth century sold Vodka (Russian whiskey) throughout the towns and villages of Lithuania, and the peasants and poor people in large numbers squandered all their possessions in order to obtain the Vodka, so the establishment of the Prohibition Society saved the poor people from destruction and distress. This society founded many asylums, poor houses and public institutions for the benefit of the Lithuanian people.

Throughout the country was organized the Agricultural and Improvement Societies to raise the standard of the stock and crops, and formed a corporation of modern farming implements, fertilizers, etc.

There was also established co-operative stores,

in Lithuania, which brought in a yearly income of \$30,000 each, so that six million dollars of the total value of the Lithuanian commerce reverted back to the poor classes of the Lithuanians.

There was organized during these ten years two large banks to finance the national industry of every kind, and these banks were employed to purchase land from foreign hands, and to establish factories and mills for the development of Lithuanian national industry.

There were before the war very few railroads and good highways, and the advancing Lithuanians wanted to improve Lithuania by building new railroads and highways, but the Russian government on account of strategical plans prevented the Lithuanians from doing this, because of the close proximity of the German border, and thus the advancement of Lithuanian industry and commerce was suppressed.

Lithuania is rich with large rivers, from which they can obtain their electricity, and there were good

opportunities for the engineers to build dams for the purpose of producing electricity, but the fore-mentioned suppression prevented it.

In the social and industrial advancement the Lithuanians took an important share. The Lithuanian emigrants to the United States returned to their native country and brought with them ideas of real democracy and American industry, and the Lithuanian at home became familiar with the American methods from these emigrants, and had great sympathy for the United States.

Taking into consideration the growth of the Lithuanian nation during the last ten years, it can be plainly seen that this nation is worthy of freedom and should be an independent nation, and I am of the opinion that Germany believes this from the way she spoke about Lithuania in the peace proposals to the Allies, and now it is only natural that the Allies and other neutral nations should understand and realize the desire of the Lithuanian people.

To know Lithuania read

A Sketch of the Lithuanian Nation

by

J. Gabrys

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