

A PLEA

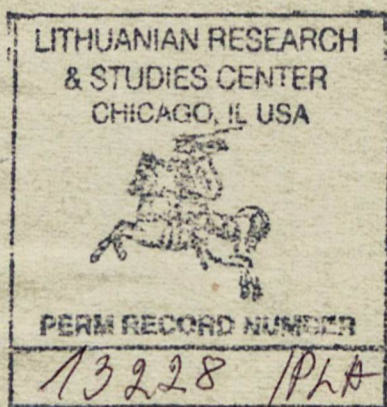
FOR THE

LITHUANIANS

LITHUANIA, like heroic Belgium, was completely devastated; her cities and villages have been reduced to ruins; and her population (over three millions) has been martyred.

The Male inhabitants were forced to take arms, while Women and Children, deprived of shelter, are starving and need urgent relief, not only in the name of Humanity, but also in that of Love for our neighbor.

RETA
KNYGA





VYTAUTAS

Vytautas, Gr. Duc de Lithuanie.

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A PLEA FOR THE LITHUANIANS

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THE STATUS OF LITHUANIA

And a Review of the Social and Economical Changes that Brought it About

In the remote past, beyond the memory of recorded history, in the regions from the Baltic Sea, extending in wide area along both banks of the Niemen to the Black Sea, around which centered all that is pleasant and conducive to progress—an almost ideal climate and a fertile soil, which still yields to the husbandman all products of the temperate zone—there dwelt a blonde-haired and blue-eyed race of Indo-European origin, known as the Letts or Lithuanians.

Their physical features embraced an almost perfect type of vigorous manhood and feminine beauty, which would overthrow all systems of evolution, though based on the theory of adaptability of creature to environment. The Lithuanians were well built and of wonderfully high stature; their faces, mostly elongated, were set with fine features. Set with a straight, pointed nose, lips that assumed beauty's plastic form, and a small, somewhat pointed, chin, the full face presented an almost ideal picture of beauty. The very fair hair, blue eyes and delicate skin characteristic of these people distinguish them markedly from both Poles and Russians. The women

likewise presented the same predomination of pleasant characteristics.

The men were very brave and lived a life close to nature; their chief occupations being agriculture, fishing and hunting, for which the dense Lithuanian forests were especially noted. The women took care of the homes, and the devotion of the mother to her family interest inspired her children with the same degree of love and beauty so characteristic of the Lithuanian women.

The Lithuanians were very hospitable and the friends of all of God's people. Foe or friend was always welcome to their home, and the bounty of their hearts was unlimited.

According to tradition, long before the Christian era, long before history spoke of Teuton or Slav, the Lithuanians were tilling the fields of the so-called Baltic regions, fishing in the waters of the Niemen and hunting wild game in the dense forests of Lithuania.

Though, in early times, its people were not a nation adept to the development of the constructive arts and sciences, yet, with respect to their own industries, the Lithuanians had achieved in agriculture, fishing and hunting a very high degree of skill and knowledge, comparable to the development of other nations along their respective lines. Even today you will hear the Lithuanian speak of the wonderful skill with which they make nature productive in their native land.

However, being a nation that devoted its energies to nature rather than to constructive art, time has not for that reason recorded Lithuania's early history either

by ancient monuments or by architecture. So that today her very early history is only a traditional past, confirmed by her language, her customs and a civilization peculiar to herself.

Notwithstanding this, the tradition of Lithuania is remarkably well preserved for a nation which has undergone so many vicissitudes during her many centuries of peaceful life and which had even been threatened with absorption and internal disruption by her hostile and aggressive neighbors.

Lithuania had thus gone on for centuries in the development of her natural resources when another historical scene was set on the stage of the world's history. At this time another ethnological element is seen to migrate from the south and move as far as the north-east boundary of Lithuania. This was the beginning of the Slavonic migration, the exact date of which is not definitely known, but which is approximated as 1 A. D.

About the same time, or perhaps a little earlier, we hear of Roman militarism, under the person of Julius Caesar, encountering the German tribes, the Cimbri and the Teutoni, off the western confines of Lithuania.

Some centuries later Lithuania was known to have been moulding herself into a mighty kingdom, and in the Middle Ages she had reached such proportions that she had become a formidable power to invaders. During the Mongolian invasion she had acted as a mighty barrier to the Mongols and stemmed the tide of Mongolian barbarism and its influence on European civilization.

Lithuania, now a mighty and glorious nation, was instrumental in saving the Russians from extermination

by the Mongols at a time when Poland was yet in its infancy.

Thus, for centuries a civilization peculiar to herself was going on in Lithuania, while her neighbors, the Germans and the Slavs, were expanding their territory, gradually drawing closer to the boundaries of Lithuania. Perhaps by migration from the southern part of Europe the Slavs ultimately entered the regions between the boundary of Germany and the western confines of Lithuania. Fortunately for Lithuania, this formed a partial barrier that could resist the German invasions, since Lithuania had no natural boundaries to check her hostile neighbors from aggression and attack from without.

Being without natural protection, ingressions were being constantly made on Lithuanian soil by the invading Germans, who were so successful at one time as to annihilate an entire tribe of Lithuanians, the Boroussi (Lith. Prussai-Prussians), of whom Julius Caesar speaks in his Gallic Wars, and whose name the Germans later adopted, thus giving to the regions, which the Lithuanians once inhabited, the name of Prussia.

However, similar attacks by the Germans were not long destined to take place. In the year 1410, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas, overwhelmed the Teutonic invaders and defeated them at Grunwald. Lithuania was now resolved to strictly enforce her territorial rights by preventing further attempts of aggression by the Germans.

The tide of events began to turn, however, when certain relations sprung up between Poland and Lithuania. "(These) . . . relations between the two nations,"

says Prof. J. Gabrys, in the *British Review*, February, 1915, "date back to the thirteenth century, when Lithuanian troops occupied and devastated Poland, taking prisoners thousands of Poles. In the fourteenth century, Aldona, the daughter of Gediminas, Grand Duke of Lithuania from 1316 to 1340, married Casimir, the son of the King of Poland, and brought with her a dowry of 24,000 Polish prisoners of war set free by her father. These facts are sufficient to prove that Lithuania was a formidable neighbor whom it was not safe to ignore, and from that time the Poles sought to establish friendly relations with her."

These relations reached their climax in the year 1386, when Jogaila, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, married Hedwige, the Queen of Poland. This resulted in a reconciliation between the two countries at a time when Lithuania was three times as large as Poland. "This," as Prof. Gabrys says, "was no more . . . than a dynastic union," that placed Lithuania under no obligations to her foster child, Poland, who had not yet reached her maturity.

However, unfortunately, henceforth Lithuania was destined to lose her ancient prestige and glory. The "Godmother of Warsaw," and the foster child of Lithuania, is soon seen striving to destroy the national spirit and individuality of Lithuania, impregnating her with Polish views and customs, imposing the Polish language on the Lithuanians, and spreading broadcast falsehoods and libels concerning Lithuania; disseminating false literature, and using the public press as a medium of spreading accounts attempting to show the pseudo-

assimilation of Lithuanian with Pole—accounts replete with the arrogance, audacity and aggressiveness characteristic of the Polish nation. And to carry out her sinister object, employing for centuries the cloak of religion, Poland has strained many an effort to achieve the impossible, the assimilation of Lithuanian with Pole; of the arrogance, boastfulness, indolence and calumny of the Pole with the humility, peacefulness, industry and sincerity of the Lithuanian. Two divergent natures as those of the Poles and the Lithuanians are incompatible and irreconcilable to assimilation.

For complete Polonization of Lithuanian many obstacles too stupendous for humanity to overcome had to be eliminated by the Poles. The task, therefore, was too cumbersome for them to accomplish.

But, unfortunately for Polish character, in the darkness of their jealousy, which the Poles always entertained for their Lithuanian neighbor, and which they still preserve in a remarkably wonderful degree, the history of Poland, as written by her so-called patriotic historians, is replete with the blundering efforts and attempts at suffocation of the undying Lithuanian national spirit.

Instrumental in the destruction of the Lithuanian University of Vilna, Poland has used indirect methods to prevent Lithuanians from acquiring an education in her monasteries and universities by making provision for only the Polish nobility to the complete exclusion of the Lithuanians.

She has made an almost successful attempt in smoothing over the distinction between Lithuanian and Pole; but, unfortunately for Poland, the present war has

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brought to the relief of Lithuania many intellectual and analytical minds and investigating natures to defend her ancient prestige and her present individual nationality.

The efforts of these men, who have devoted their time to the elucidation and solution of the obscurities which shrouded Lithuania's history and made it a closed book to the world, have disclosed the fact that many of the great men of the past, alluded to as Poles, were in reality Lithuanians. Many of these men have lent glory to the pages of Polish history. Take, for instance, Thaddeus Kascziusko (Lith., Tadeusas Kasciuska), of Revolutionary War fame in the United States, and the so-called Polish patriot, who was a Lithuanian. This fact is attested by a personal letter¹ written in 1784 by Kasciuska himself, in which he states that "the Lord knows anger seizes me, when I think that I, being a Lithuanian, should serve the Poles, when I know you haven't three generals, so that your power is suspended as by a thread."

It was the same Lithuanian race that gave the literary world such contributions as Adam Mickewicz (1798-1855), the Lithuanian who wrote Polish poetry with such perfection that he has merited immortal fame for himself among the Poles themselves; Joseph Ignatius Kraszewski (1812-1887), a Lithuanian equally famous, who also wrote poetry in the Polish tongue; Kondrotowicz, Henryk Sinkewicz and others, whom the Poles themselves extol and of whom they unjustly claim to be the progenitors.²

Thus, for centuries Poland has been inoculating Lithuania with the virus of Polonization so detrimental

to Lithuania. There is no wonder that Lithuania was as a nonentity to the rest of the civilized world. For how could a nation be known when her name and the character and customs of her people were disguised under the "kultur" of the Polish language?

There were, however, other external forces tending to disrupt the Lithuanian nation, among which might be classed the Partition of 1772.

Matters had reached a grave state of affairs in Lithuania, when, with Poland, it was divided in 1772, among Russia and Germany. The burdens of Lithuania now began to multiply rapidly. Politically destroyed, and divided between the Russian and German Governments, her name had been erased from the maps of Europe, while, by virtue of the Russian ukase of 1849, its official use was replaced by the insignificant name, the "North-Western Country."

This marked the beginning of an era of martyrdom for Lithuania, when her former glory and prestige began to wane altogether. Having suffered under the power of Polish usurpation, she was gradually becoming subject to a more and more intense Russification.

The Lithuanian Statutes were substituted by the tyrannous Russian Code; persecutions of various sorts took place; insurrections followed, and, consequently, many Lithuanians were exiled and their estates confiscated.

The year 1864 brought with it the suppression of the Lithuanian press and the substitution of Russian characters in printing instead of the Latin characters. This effort on the part of the Russians was met with great

protests by the Lithuanians, who smuggled into Lithuania books printed in German type. These protests were increased in the year 1883, when a general awakening took place in Lithuania, and the newspaper, "Ausra" (Aurora), established by the great patriot, Dr. J. Basanavicius, appeared. This was soon followed by other newspapers, as the "Varpas" (The Bell) and the "Ukinikas" (The Farmer).

Seeing that the efforts of the Lithuanians to revive their press might prove successful, the Russian officials confiscated the thousands of books printed in Latin characters in Tilsit, and brought to Lithuania, and burned them. On the other hand, the indignant people of Lithuania burned thousands of books in Russian type distributed by the Russian authorities.

The Russians, finally seeing the futility of their attempts to impose the Russian language upon the Lithuanians, in 1904 granted to the Lithuanians the freedom of their press.

It is, however, impossible to retrace all the various forms of oppression against the Lithuanians; yet it is certain that various other forms of oppression were taking place in Lithuania, and, that to escape their severity and rigor, many Lithuanians left the country of their forefathers to seek a haven of refuge in the United States, where they found the widest latitude for education, industry and commerce. In this manner Lithuania, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, gave the United States of America about one million immigrants whom statistics have classed as Poles.

What had been taking place in Russian Lithuania

was also taking place in Prussian Lithuania also. Here the Lithuanian language had been banished from the schools and the German language introduced, while premiums were being offered to instructors and teachers for the Germanization of Lithuanian children. The German language had likewise been introduced in the churches there. This attempt of the Germans to impose their language upon the Lithuanians has reached such vast proportions today that recent reports from Lithuania state that the German Government has suppressed the freedom of the Lithuanian press in German-occupied Lithuania, while, on the contrary, it gives both Poles and Jews in Lithuania and Poland the freedom of their press, subject, however, only to war censorship.

It is this same nation on whose soil the fiercest battles between the Russians and the Germans were fought in this great European War, that is suffering today at the hands of both Russians and Germans, her former oppressors; it is this same nation that has suffered from the effects of Polonization. Upon it the tempestuous furies of war and misfortune have been hurled. Lithuania's wealth has perished in the conflagrations that have ensued, while her beloved sons have either been slain in an unjust cause or driven beyond the boundaries of their cherished fatherland.

If we glance at the Lithuania of today, and perhaps the warriors' battlefield of tomorrow, we will see a virtual burying ground. The farmer is no longer able to till the soil and the craftsman to take up his trade; only incinerated remains of factories appear, while commerce has ceased altogether.

Again we look into snowbound Siberia. Here we find thousands of Lithuanians dying from cold and hunger, sacrificing their health, morality and very life, while in all parts of Europe are wandering, tired old men, and worn-out women with their children, crying out in one voice, "Give us bread; we are starving!"

Language is too vague to graphically describe the suffering, grief and mental anguish of these poor, unfortunate creatures. Their appeals demand your charitable attention—just a small contribution to help a most worthy cause is all that they ask for. Dear reader, you will no hesitate to help them at this psychological moment, will you? You will thus do a great work to mankind and learning in the preservation of a nation whose ancient glory and deeds is a credit to humanity, and whose living language forms the keystone to the study of the oldest of languages, the Sanskrit.

M. M. SLIKAS.

'This letter was written to the Russian general Niesiolovski. See *Kronika Rodzinna*, *Pravda*, 1883, No. 17.

'Careful research has also disclosed that Emmanuel Kant, the German philosopher, was a Lithuanian.

'Even today the knowledge of the Polish language is regarded by the Poles as symbolical of erudition—all else to them in Poland and Lithuania signifies ignorance.

WAR AND PEACE

"There will be no peace until persecuted religions and oppressed nations will be freed."

These words like darts of fire rise today from millions of hearts. We cry for peace! But alas! Where can it be found—amid desolation, destruction and misery? Can we find peace in devastated countries, or among nations that are full of antagonism and breathe vengeance against one another? Or, perchance, among the families left fatherless and homeless? No; there is peace nowhere!

Moreover who will give back the natural beauty and wealth to our fatherland? Who will rid society of its false notions about religion, about family life? Who will give back to the widowed mothers their husbands, and to orphans their parents? Who will restore our ruined homes and properties?

Unfortunately, everything is gone! "O, war," cries Shakespeare, "thou son of hell, whom angry heavens do make their minister to throw hot coals of vengeance!" There is no need to turn to the pages of history for a vivid and inspiring picture of war and its recklessness. All we have to do is to turn to our Europe of today. Who, among the warring nations is guided by the principles governing humanity? Perhaps, no one! They are busily engaged in the greatest of wars.

"War," as the great military strategist Napoleon said, "is the business of barbarians." So the age of the highest civilization and culture is, by a strange paradox, witnessing the reign of the lowest kind of barbarism. The holy principles of religion, the sacred rights of humanity, are utterly disregarded in this war.

Let us but recall the slaughter that took place last year in Armenia and Syria. Men and women were killed because they believed in the true God, the Creator of the Universe; while innocent children, unable to defend themselves, were buried alive. Oh! What indescribable terror! Then glance upon the other European countries, which for centuries have been stained with blood and tears. Small and weak nations destitute of self defense, have been bound to servitude by great and powerful nations, with millions of defenders, among whom also number the oppressed.

The more powerful countries, in their desire for conquest and acquisition, have infringed on the rights of the smaller and weaker ones, so that today nearly half of all Europe is weighed down by the burden of the "civilization and culture" of other and more influential nations. Who does not know of the restricted efforts and saddened spirits of the sons of Erin, Alsace-Lorraine, Lithuania, Livonia, Poland, Galicia (Ukraine), and other such countries throughout Europe and Asia?

Still, "War! war!" seems to be the slogan. But, what about peace? "There will be no peace until all these suffering people will be free!" Should not the ruling spirit be found in the words, "Peace be to you" (John 29:19)? How differently these words sound to us today!

The Lord, before His coming, sent the messenger, who announced "peace to men of good will" (Luke 11:14).

Therefore, in these troublesome times, when war is raging all around us, let us turn our saddened hearts to the Prince of Peace. It is He who can understand our sufferings. And let us every day repeat with greater fervor "thy kingdom come..." so that these contrite and humble prayers from millions of hearts will ascend, like the pure odor of incense, to the Almighty, who will have compassion on our misery and suffering in the true spirit of the words, "Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Mat. 11:28).

The increasing misery and suffering, however, only tends to bind each one of us more closely to our fatherland, and with renewed vigor to defend her rights. Who will rise to defend the rights and regain the freedom of one's country, if it is not that country's faithful sons? So every nation's patriotic sons rally to her colors.

Destructive of the works of man like all wars, this war has taken a clearly defined course and dealt deadly blows to many of the European countries of which Lithuania unhappily received an undue share.

For instance, there was first the sad and revolting fact that her sons were conscripted by the opposing armies of Russia and Germany; and, against all the laws of society, thus compelled to massacre one another.

That was the lowest degradation to which an oppressed nation could be subject—the destruction of the lives of its people by self extermination.

Following that came the ruthless devastation of Lithuania by both the Russian and German armies. As the

line of battle shifted, now to the West, and now to the East, several times the grim reaper of death combed its path, until finally the country fell into the hands of the Germans. Together with the men under arms meeting a premature death, the women and children were deprived of food, when the invaders plundered and set fire to the cities and villages, and carried away all the provisions. The people thus made homeless, and with no prospect of relief, have been exposed to all sorts of suffering, both physical and mental. Indeed their condition must excite the pity of the world when it will be clearly made known.

Lithuania is another Belgium, sacrificing itself for the undying principles of honor and justice, and national pride. On the other hand, in view of her longer and more glorious history, she merits for herself even a greater share in the charity of neutral nations; for she is now passing through the most critical period of her life. Lithuania having once protected all Europe from the Mongolian invasion which at one time menaced European civilization, had then achieved renown among all nations of Europe; but today she is made their slave; her country a highway for ravaging armies, while her name has been buried in the oblivion of her deeds in the distant past.

Such a sturdy and distinguished nation as Lithuania cannot be crushed nor assimilated. Mere physical force, exile, hunger, and shame, cannot break its spirit. But nourished by the rich traditions and memories of an historical past, may she pass through these trials like she did in the days of old.

Let us, therefore, firmly hope that this is the ultimate

test to which she, as a nation, will be put, and that it is but the painful prelude to a recovered integrity and a long sought freedom.

The firmness of character of the Lithuanians has, through centuries of struggle, preserved intact their language, their religion, their national customs, and the love for their native soil—in a word, they have preserved their remarkable vitality as a distinct and individual nation.

Lithuania is now perhaps upon the eve of an age in which she will be once more free to develop these latent powers and to fulfill her destiny as a nation.

Lithuania has a right to have her historical status recognized; to have her nominal union with Poland dissolved and her distinction from that country fully recognized; to be reintegrated as a nation and given complete autonomy or the right to govern herself; to have her university restored and to have the use of her language given due consideration, with the widest latitude for her press.

With these rights recognized, Lithuania could be reconstructed on the same adamantine foundations as other permanent governments. To do so Lithuania must have her rights, for they are essential to good government, as the great orator and statesman, Daniel Webster, says: "Let our object be our country, our whole country, and nothing but our country. And, by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a splendid monument, not of oppression and terror, but of wisdom, of peace, and of liberty, upon which the world may gaze with admiration forever."

J. M. SIRVINTAS.

LITHUANIA DEPRIVED OF THE FREEDOM OF HER PRESS

(By request of the Lithuanians residing in German-occupied Lithuania, the following letter was sent through the hands of Mr. Savickas, representative of the Lithuanian Societies at Copenhagen. It is to inform the world of what is taking place in Lithuania).

No doubt, Lithuanians living beyond the boundaries of Lithuania are amazed to learn that in German-occupied Lithuania the Lithuanians have not heretofore, under German rule, been allowed to publish Lithuanian newspapers.

The only newspaper that is being published there at the present time is a paper called the "Dabartis," published by the German government. This paper is therefore made to suffice as a news medium for the entire Lithuanian population.

On the other hand, the Lithuanian refugees in Russia have at least four newspapers in which they freely defend their rights; whereas, the inhabitants of Lithuania have no medium to maintain their rights.

It is said, that for some time after the German occupation of Kaunas and Vilnius, the editors and the correspondents of the then published newspapers, the "Viltiso," "Lietuviu Zinios," and others, remained behind and petitioned the German government to permit the con-

tinuation of the papers. These petitions were vigorously renewed now and again from various quarters, but always without effect.

Not only is the publication of Lithuanian newspapers forbidden, but other literature as well is not allowed by the German government to be published, so much so that we may say that Lithuania has another denial of the freedom of her press similar to that imposed by the Russian government from 1864 to 1904.

On the contrary, it is stated that these suppressive measures of the Germans are very stringent. For instance, no literature of any kind, in the Lithuanian language, printed in the United States, is permitted to enter Lithuania.

Nor is the sale in Tilsit of newspapers printed in Gothic type allowed—a measure which not even the severe Russian government dared to take at the time of the suppression of the Lithuanian press by it.

The government newspaper, the “Dabartis,” which is being published at Kaunas by German officers and uniformed German soldiers, has for its purpose, as the Germans say, the establishment of confidence in them; but its real object is well-known to be antagonistic to Lithuanian interests.

It is, however, unfortunate for the Germans that they did not learn a lesson from the suppression of the use of Moravian “capitals.” If they had, they would not have committed such a gross error; for their newspapers tend directly to sow the seeds of discontent and disbelief.

It is said that a person will even eat food fit only for swine when forced to do so by starvation. Therefore,

since there are no Lithuanian newspapers during the war, the Lithuanians will have to read something though they must do so with dissatisfaction. Moreover, in many instances, they directly boycott the "Dabartis" by reading Polish newspapers, just as they boycotted Russian newspapers at the time when Russia denied Lithuania the freedom of her press.

Despite this attitude toward the Lithuanian press, even a small number of Poles in Lithuania are allowed to have a Polish newspaper published at Vilna. It is true that this newspaper is censored, still it is not published by the government as the "Dabartis."

On the other hand, the Poles are allowed to receive newspapers from beyond its boundaries, as, for instance, from Posnania.

The odium the Lithuanian people entertain for the newspaper "Dabartis" is also manifested by information from various other sources. Even the residents of the villages have learned to read the Gothic print in order that they might not be compelled to read the "Dabartis." It is due to this latter fact that even newspapers printed in Gothic letters are forbidden by the German government to be received in Lithuania.

The need of a press in Lithuania at the present time is indeed very great, and its suppression is a severe blow dealt to the Lithuanians by the exponent of "Kultur."

Although it is a strange plight that they will have nothing to read during the war, yet it is important for us to have some medium of communication with the inhabitants of Lithuania, to counsel and encourage those helping the starving, to aid the sick and injured, and to

take up the question of rebuilding structures that have been destroyed—just reflect reader, all these necessary matters to be adjusted at a time when everything is tied up and paralyzed.

The Lithuanians residing in Lithuania have therefore requested that protests be made against the German acts in denying the Lithuanians the freedom of their press.

The Poles in Poland, and the Jews, in Poland and Lithuania, in nearly all of the larger cities, have at least one newspaper. It is only the Lithuanians that have been denied this right—an act, which in view of the above facts, reflects the gross injustice done the Lithuanians by the Germans. Moreover, as a result of their act, in all probability, the Germans will later on say that the Lithuanians have no literature and are illiterate people unworthy of autonomy, when we know that Lithuania's spirit and literacy has remained intact under similar, or perhaps greater, burdens than this. MMS.

WHAT OTHER NATIONS SAY ABOUT LITHUANIA AND HER SUFFERING

The "Lietuviu Balsas," at Petrograd, says that the Catalonians are undertaking the support of the Lithuanian cause. The casual reader undoubtedly knows who the Catalonians are. They are a nation closely akin to the Spaniards. The greater part of the Catalonians occupy a portion of Spain, the smaller part live in France.

The plight of the Catalonians, like that of the Lithuanians, has been neither a pleasant nor a desirable one. Therefore they are in a position to realize the suffering of the Lithuanians; for, it is said, only the hungry, and not the satiated, can realize what hunger is.

On April 12, 1916, the Catalonians published an article concerning the suffering of Lithuania, in their newspaper, "La Ven do Catalunya," under the heading, "The Unhappy Nation." The following is an extract from the same:

"This nation (Lithuania), which, previous to the outbreak of the European War, was, practically all, under the iron-handed oppression of Russia, is now under the control of the German military power. To the utter disregard of Lithuanian rights, the Prussians are desirous of annexing Lithuania, while the Poles are absolutely demanding it for themselves, despite the fact that Lith-

uania is so mutilated that her losses are inestimable and her sufferings indescribable.

This nation (Lithuania), was for centuries a free and independent nation. However, having once entered into a confederation with the Poles, though retaining her own laws, she has wonderfully preserved her language in its original purity, and maintained her nationality—a nationality possessing nothing in common with either the Poles, Russians, or Germans.

At the present time people speak about the revival of Poland, and all the warring nations, both the Central Powers and the Allies, agree to a free and independent Poland. But no one seems to recall unhappy Lithuania—that stretch of territory, between Prussia, Poland and Russia, which was once the cradle of a civilization that had expanded throughout the regions bordering on the Baltic Sea.”

MMS.

HELP THE SUFFERING LITHUANIANS

In Russia and Germany there are hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians, who, driven from their country, were deprived of the homes that marked their birthplace, forced to abandon all their worldly possessions, and leave their native land—some in virtual exile from their fatherland; others, forced to fight in the ranks of opposing armies and shed their precious blood for an unjust cause.

Heretofore, the Lithuanians of the United States have generously aided their suffering brothers in Europe, and, in part through their generosity, the Lithuanian Relief Fund Committee was, to some extent, enabled to take care of the poverty-stricken war sufferers in Lithuania by using the contributions to buy clothing and food for many.

A great number, however, received nothing. Many of these are now between exile to the snow-bound deserts of Siberia and poverty, while others are on the verge of actual starvation.

It is known that the generous aid given them does not meet their urgent needs. Furthermore, the prospect of another year of suffering is facing them; but happily it comes when our great country is prosperous and the hearts of our people are still filled with charity and kindness.

At the present time, contributions to the Lithuanian Relief Fund Committee have practically ceased, so that the relief work is much hampered. Again, conditions are more serious now than at the beginning of the war when a fortunate brother was able to render aid to his poverty-stricken fellow. Today, even the women are forced to beg on the streets for their daily bread.

Many contributions from English-speaking Americans have been received with unbounded gratitude, and the Relief Committee hopes that still further contributions will add support to the charitable work of helping these sufferers.

The situation is more aggravated at present than is commonly thought. Recently, the Lithuanian people were notified that they had no right to claim ownership of their own homes. They were thus prevented from mortgaging their homes to tide them over the difficulties of this war. As the situation is bitterly hard, the victims of the war are in need of urgent relief even more than ever before. Therefore, with true Christian spirit, let us remember the words: "I was hungry, and you gave me naught to eat; thirsty, and you gave me naught to drink; naked, and you covered me not."

The hungry wolf has long been knocking at Lithuania's door, and her poorly clad children have been appealing for clothes and shelter. Therefore, let us help in this great and just cause (for, indeed, Lithuania's cause is a just one) and come to the aid of the needy and suffering Lithuanians.

A. E. BAKUNAS, MMS.

Contributions for the Relief of the Lithuanian War Sufferers will be received at the following relief centres :

Rev. J. J. Kaulakis, 324 Wharton Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

Rev. Joseph Sestokas, 568-570 Broome Street, New York City, N. Y.

Dr. A. K. Rutkauskas, 2302 South Leavitt Street, Chicago, Ill.

Rev. Thomas Zilinskis, 50 West Sixth Street, South Boston, Mass.

Mr. B. Vaisnora, 1514 Carson Street, S. S., Pittsburgh, Penna.

This relief work has been highly commended and endorsed by Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York; the Most Reverend George W. Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago, and by many other ecclesiastics of the Catholic Hierarchy.

