

THE LITHUANIAN BOOSTER

ABOUT LITHUANIA AND LITHUANIANS

Thomas Shamis, Editor

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CULTURE

THAT the Lithuanian people do not come from a nation that has no literature or culture is plain to everyone who has visited the country or who has made a study of the Lithuanian people. The Lithuanians are the oldest race in Europe. Long years before the culture of England and France and Germany had reached its early stages there thrived upon the shores of the Baltic sea a nation of 6,000,000 inhabitants, little known of until their fight for freedom, who had a literary center and men of letters who rank with the greatest of all times. Christian Donalaitis, among them, wrote works which critics have pronounced equal to Shakespeare's.

RECOGNITION

AMERICA has learned a lesson from the Great War.

If America applies that lesson a new unity comes to us and remains forever.

Apply it now by finding out about Lithuania. When you have found out, you, too, will be urging action. You will realize that if America aids Lithuania now, Lithuanian friendship will be a perpetual asset to America.

Lithuania is not an artificial or political territorial contrivance.

Lithuania is the natural state of a solid one-blood people.

That is why it is imperishable.

That is why Germany failed to make Memel and Tilsit Prussian cities, though they were in the area of Lithuania which Germany held for over six hundred years.

That is why Russia failed to Russianize its Lithuanian domain, although it forced the use of the Russian language and destroyed the Lithuanian schools.

The origin of the Lithuanians is interesting.

The Lithuanians are neither Slavs nor Teutons.

They were on the Baltic coast long before either.

Their racial stamina has been stronger than that of their opponents.

Their language is distinct, more closely resembles the ancient Sanscrit than any modern language, and is undoubtedly one of the oldest living languages.

The birthplace of the race is unknown. Because the language belongs to the Indo-European division, some writers have assumed that the migration was from Asia. Others, on perhaps better grounds, have believed that the first settlements were in the middle of Europe and the south Russian steppes, and that the emigration of a part was from Europe to Asia while another part reached out to the Baltic Sea, and there remained.

The people of the race are divided into two stocks Lithuanians and Letts.

Once there was a third stock, the Prussians or Bo-russians, but it was destroyed by the Germans, except for the name.

That name the Germans took.

It is the name Prussia.

The Lithuanians are a blond race, blue-eyed, and tall.

The purest-blooded approximate quiet closely the Anglo-Saxon model.

Professor W. Z. Ripley of Columbia University, in his book, "The Races of Europe," states his belief that the Letto-Lithuanians and the blond Scandinavi-an type are from the same racial trunk.

The Lithuanians, isolated in their corner of the Baltic, and protected by marsh and river, were the last European people to accept Christianity.

The early customs of Lithuanians.

So authentic history concerning them begins late.

For the last thousand and perhaps several thousand years, all that is known is that generation followed generation, gazing its meager flocks, hunting the forests and fishing the rivers and sea.

In the days of the Roman Empire.

The trade in amber which came from the shores of the Baltic, was bartered from tribe to tribe until it reached Roman outposts. To this day Lithuania remains the world's chief source of amber.

The tragic contact of Prussian Lithuanians with the Teutons is the first of recorded history.

The old Prussians occupied the basin of the Vistula from slightly beyond the present Danzig to the banks of the Pregel River, which empties into the Baltic near the present Königsberg.

The Poles, the Lithuanians' nearest neighbors, first attempted their subjugation in the name of Christianity.

Failing, they called to their aid in 1226 A. D. the Order of Teutonic Knights, a military body whose

descendants are the Junkers of today. It had been organized as a section of the army of the Crusade.

The Teutons were successful, and in the next hundred years scattered the Prussians, some escaping to merge with other Lithuanian stocks and others being so Germanized as to lose their racial identity. The name remained to their conquerors, to be given to West Prussia and East Prussia.

With the coming of the Reformation, the German military monks laid aside their robes, and became secularized.

But as Junkers they retained, under the guise of Divine authority, their ancient spirit of aggression, and the same greed for the conquest, spoliation and exploitation of peaceful and unoffending peoples.

In these wars, too, the Teutonic Knights overran a portion of Lithuania proper, the land between the Pregel river and the Niemen River. This portion of Lithuania proper was included in East Prussia, and is known today as Lithuania Minor.

For 600 years Lithuania Minor has been ruled by Germany with the utmost severity.

Every attempt has been made to Germanize the population, but without success.

The Lithuanians there not only have held tenaciously to their language, but tyranny has welded them closer and closer.

East Prussia is Lithuania.

The Lithuanians politically never acquiesced politically and have persisted in their demand for annexation to Lithuania, to which they will now be restored if Lithuanian independence itself is not lost through the failure of the world to support it.

At the time of the Teutonic invasion the wealth and the culture of the Lithuanians stood high.

They had weapons, farming and industrial tools—spears, swords, iron knives, sickles, buckles, etc.

They had gold and silver ornaments in abundance

Their culture was in no way lower than that of the Teutonic Crusaders.

Although their Prussian brothers were lost, and although they suffered in border territory, the Lithuanians halted the German wave.

Moreover, they extended their own boundary in the East.

Under the leadership of Duke Mindaugas the eastern border was advanced to what is now Smolensk in Russia.

An agricultural and pastoral people, to protect themselves, became a military people.

They fought Germans to the north, Slavs to the east and the Dukes of Galicia to the south.

Duke Mindaugas was baptized a Christian, and received a King's crown from Pope Innocent IV in 1253 A. D.

He died ten years later, assassinated during a campaign against the Germans.

After his death, the local Dukes of Lithuania quarreled over the succession, and there was disorganization until 1315 when Gediminas became Grand

Duke.

He united the nation except for the Lithuanians in the German strongholds at the mouth of the Niemen and along the river Pregel.

Had he then forced his way to the sea, Lithuania would have become inevitably one of Europe's greatest empires.

His successor, Algirdas, had the same or a better opportunity, for the Letts revolted successfully against the Teutonic Knights, and called upon their kinsmen, the Lithuanians for help.

It was not given, and after a time German Knights, came in numbers from Germany to assist the Knights of Riga, and crushed the revolt.

Algirdas had chosen to turn the Lithuanian strength against the Slavs and Tartars.

He was victorious, and made Lithuania a state which covered almost half of modern Russia, extending to Odessa on the Black Sea.

But his error at the North prevented Lithuania

from having an unthreatened Baltic Sea front.

He had gained an immense inland empire, but had left a part of the Lithuanian race in slavery in a strategic area on the sea, and had brought under Lithuanian rule a greater proportion of foreigners than of his own people.

Imperial ambition started.

The story of encircling imperial ambition and basic reads like a chapter from the record of modern Europe.

It remained, however, for Jagello, the son and successor of Algirdas, to encompass the act that kept the Lithuanian nation under the shadow of another crown.

He accepted the offer of the Poles to become their King, wedding at the same time (1386), Hedwig, the young Queen of Poland.

From that time on, Poland adopted the policy of choosing for King whomsoever the Lithuanians chose for Grand Duke.

The effect was that Lithuania was ruled from the Polish capital instead of from its own capital.

The Lithuanians at first had no intention of accepting the situation, and when Jagello yielded to the temptation of a crown and a Polish bride, they chose Vytautas as Grand Duke of Lithuania. Jagello was forced to recognize him, but an agreement of mutual assistance in case of war was made with Poland.

Lithuania was more powerful than ever under Vytautas, who made the Tartar Khans his vassals in spite of an earlier defeat at their hands.

He also deemed himself strong enough to wage a decisive war against the Teutonic Knights.

He spent several years in careful preparation, and induced the Poles to become his ally.

Vytautas drew not only the Lithuanians into this war but the Russians and the Tartars, and hired the army of the Czechs. To the Poles he sent the necessary provisions for the war.

HOME COMFORTS OF LITHUANIA

THE women of Lithuania have always applied themselves with great skill to the making of simple medicines from the roots and herbs of their own farms. These roots were steeped in alcohol, often for months at a time. Small snakes were soaked, too, in water and alcohol, and the resulting potion was drunk by the Lithuanians. The recent discovery of scientists that the essence Vitamine exists largely in snakes and eels proves the excellence of this Lithuanian method even though the discovery was the result of experiment and practical observation.

To light his home the Lithuanian peasant used home-made candles, not showy, but solid and long-burning, which gave a large and excellent light for carving, weaving, reading. Another light was supplied by a resinous pine taper, three or four feet in height, which served both as a light and a timepiece.

These tapers were cut so as to burn approximately 15 minutes between notches.

From the oldest literature and folk-songs, and the simple tales of Lithuanian peasantry, we find that linen manufacturing as a home industry was very elaborate and popular. Indeed, there was scarcely need for a single public loom or shop. Recent excavations, especially those of Prussian Lithuania, clearly show that a high degree of textile accomplishment was achieved by the Lithuanians as far back as 700 to 1000 years B. C. Excellent examples of heavy woolen cloth and beautiful linen pieces of a surprisingly fine texture have been uncovered. Laces, too, have been found, of a curious and exquisite design and of a type distinctly its own.

INFLUENZA

IN looking back over the year just closed, to the Editor, there is one fact which stands out most conspicuously as a reason for great gratitude. The country has been spared a return of the epidemic that a year ago was just ending after a terrible scourging of all sections. When the influenza outbreak waned last winter there were many who felt sure of its return this season. With the exception of a very few cases, however, there have been no signs of renewal. These few cases have been so promptly treated that the disease has not spread from them, and for weeks no sign of the disease has appeared.

There was no adequate explanation of this peculiar wave of disease sweeping westward from the battle torn fields of Europe across the Atlantic and throughout America. It was doubtless a war disease, generated by the conflict, but how and just why it came in

1918 rather than in one of the earlier years of the war is one of the mysteries yet unsolved. To us it seemed to spread westward, though, in fact, it went in all directions. It was without exception the most fatal epidemic disease that ever visited the United States of America, and the country prays that never again will it have such an experience as that which made 1918 one of the most agonizing times in its history.



FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

FOR our own doughboys the war is over. The war is over and they return to us to re-enter civil life, to continue the pursuit of happiness which they interrupted while they were away and fighting the Germans to make the world safe for Democracy.

But 50,000 doughboys, men of Lithuanian descent will continue to fight in their homeland until they have established at home that for which they have been fighting to obtain for the rest of the world.

When we entered the war and the call was given for volunteers the greater part of these 50,000 men did not wait for a second call. They ran to the colors. They knew that fighting for Uncle Sam meant fighting for their own country which suffered more than any other country from its oppressors, the Germans and the Russians.

Out of a population of 100,000,000 in the United

States, we raised an army of 4,000,000, which is four percent of the total population. But the percentage contributed by the Lithuanians living in this country to the great army was double that, in proportion to their population.

These 50,000 soldiers are now returning to their own homeland to fight for the freedom of their country. Their country has emerged from this war an independent Republic which now asks recognition in the United States. During the war Lithuania was the battlefield on which the German and Russian armies disputed their supremacy. Cities, towns, and villages passed four and five times from the hands of one to the hands of the oppressors. And each time one of the armies entered a city it destroyed what the other one had left standing. Some of the places were completely razed to the ground and the inhabitants killed, some by the Germans and at other times by the Russians.

And now, when our own boys are returning home,

these 50,000 American Lithuanians have before them another period of strenuous fighting. On the one side they must fight off the invading Bolshevist armies. From another side Lithuania is menaced by imperialistic Poland, who wants to deny them the freedom which was obtained for the Poles by our fighting doughboys. They also have to rebuild what was destroyed by the enemies. In a way they have a double task before them. They must fight and build at the same time.

These 50,000 men will bring to Lithuania the spirit of the United States. The constitution of the new Lithuanian Government was framed after that of the United States. Commerce, industry, and state and municipal governments are framing themselves after American patterns. All the new laws of Lithuania are patterned after the American laws. The men who have lived for years in America are trying their best to introduce there what they regarded so highly here.

GERMANS IN LITHUANIA (1915-1918)

GERMAN glut poured gall into Lithuania.
The peasant himself was allowed neither eggs, flesh, milk nor butter.

The product of poultry yard and dairy had to be accounted for and turned over to the German masters.

The peasantry lived upon black bread of the poorest quality—a mixture of straw and the refuse of rye and grains.

The sale of a goose to a fellow Lithuanian meant a fine of 6,000 marks or six months in prison.

Geese were particularly treasured by the Germans because of their feathers, flesh and grease—the last particularly valuable and useful.

If a hungry peasant killed a chicken for food, the punishment on discovery was a fine of 50 francs and the confiscation of the food—if it had not been eaten.

The farce of paying for requisitioned products

with memo notes was carried out. The promise was that at some future time Germany would make good these military promises. These bits of worthless paper are all that Lithuania has today to represent the labor and the harvests of three years.

What Lithuanians bought, they had to pay for in gold and silver, whenever the Germans could force it.

In this way, the last of the small silver was extracted from the country.

Taxes were made payable in gold.

Confiscation followed non-payment.

An ingenious device was employed to get the cash funds of those who had been well-to-do, and who had still managed to hide a little money. The Germans made a rule that petrol, sugar and salt would have to be paid for in gold. The Lithuanian would-be buyers assumed that the ban against the use of gold was thereby raised. The Germans nursed them along selling them gold for notes (at an extor-

tionate German-profitable rate of exchange). Then when the Lithuanians appeared with gold to buy petrol and sugar the gold was seized as interdicted contraband. Thus Germans had the paper notes, the petrol, the sugar and the gold. It was a fine joke—to the Germans.

They laughed loudly.

The confiscation of property.

Here are some (only a few) of the German regulations:

“The commandant of each district and his agents are authorized exclusively to buy and to sell the following:

“Leather, skins, wool and wool products, oils, grease, tanning bark, bone, wire, down and feathers, shrubs, boxes, paper, rags, rubber, melted metals, grains, fruits, resin, cork, cereals of all kinds, vegetables, potatoes, flax, hay, straw, eggs, butter, poultry lard, ham, sausage, smoked meats, and other provisions.

“Those that possess these articles must make a declaration at a place designated by the commandant.

“The disobedience of these regulations will be punished by a fine of 3,000 marks, or six months imprisonment, or the two penalties can be jointly applied.

“The penalty must at least correspond to ten times the value of the goods not declared.”

Another:

“The slaughter of veal is prohibited.

“Disobedience of this ordinance will be punished with a fine of 3,000 marks or six months imprisonment.”

Another:

“The killing of poultry or geese is prohibited.”
(Same penalty.)

Another:

“All the harvest of the year 1916 will be sequestered.” Penalty, applicable either to seller or buyer, fine of 6,000 marks or six months imprison-

ment.

Another:

“The use of cream, or of sugar to sweeten drinks, is forbidden. Disobedience will be severely punished.”

Another:

“Owners of horses are ordered to bring them for inspection to the commission for the inspection of horses.”

(This was an order of confiscation.)

Another:

“The Agricultural Commission is authorized to proceed to the exclusive purchase of beef animals and mutton, even against the will of the owner. The owner of the animals is ordered to sell to the Agricultural Commission at the prices the Commission desires to pay.”

Nothing was overlooked.

The food ration.

In March, 1917, the following was the food ra-

tion permitted to Lithuanians by the Germans:

225 grams of bread apiece a day.

200 grams of other cereals apiece a day (generally unobtainable).

200 grams of potatoes apiece a day.

75 grams of oats apiece a day (generally unobtainable).

Animals also were rationed.

For a horse one and a half pounds of oats a day.

For cattle being fattened, two and a half pounds of oats or barley mixed with one-third additional quantity of bran.

For sheep one third of a pound of oats and barley mixed with an additional third of bran, but not more than 60 pounds a head during the period of fattening.

For hogs, not more than three quintal a head of oats and barley mixed, for the period of fattening.

The fattening stock (for German use) fared better than human beings.

The forests were raided with the same exceeding care.

The Berlin Lokal-Anzeiger was able to express as early as December, 1916, its satisfaction that "the exploitation of the rich forests of Lithuania had not been neglected by the German Administration."

It had not, indeed.

The plan that failed.

The German plan was first to improvish the land and break both the hearts of the people and their ability to resist; then in the day of War victory over the world to throw away the figment of separate government it had given Lithuania under the Brest-Litovsk treaty with Russia, and "incorporate Lithuania in the German Empire."

The day of "German Victory" was indeed a Day of German Defeat.

Lithuania, with a wealth which would go far toward rehabilitating Germany, could Germany come to possess it again through any blunder of the United

States or of the Allies, is forever lost to Germany if the world is intelligent enough not to blunder.

There is no excuse for blundering.

The world is well warned.

The action necessary is simply to help Lithuania to hold the independence it already has vigorously grasped.

For all the injuries and injustices brought down upon their country, the Lithuanians want no other recompense than the recognition of their inherent right to be free and independent in their own country.

They ask for nothing that is not rightly theirs.

They ask for the right to live as an independent nation.

They ask for the right to mould their own destiny. They desire only that they may have the opportunity to carry on the work of culture in their native land, and to contribute thereby to the assurance of lasting peace, as a nation enslaved and oppressed could not do.

Lithuania asks the United States to recognize the

Independence of Lithuania.

One million Americans of Lithuanian birth or descent pledge their adopted land that Independent Lithuania will uphold the faith of Democracy.



THE LITHUANIAN TYPE

WHAT manner of man, what manner of woman, physically, is the Lithuanian? Of many nations we have the image always at our call—a ready-made, more or less fallacious image, but there. The Swede is tall and yellow haired; the Italian stocky and swarthy; the Frenchman thin and nervous; the Dutchman heavy, fair and sluggish; the Spaniard slim, dark, with a melancholy cast of countenance. Of course such generalizations are largely nonsensical, but they help along, as often by their falsity as by their truth! Now, what does the typical Lithuanian look like.

Perhaps the best answer to that question has been given by the Lithuanian writer Vidunas, who takes up the matter in some detail.

The true Lithuanian type is slender and in height rather above the medium. It is marked by blue eyes, fair hair, and a fresh and healthy complexion.

To characterize it there is a whole series of expressions in Lithuanian. Above all the complexion of the young Lithuanian women strikes one particularly. It is white and delicate, with a beautiful rosy color on the cheeks. The lips are exceptionally fresh. Women in good health who lead a regular existence preserve all this splendor to a ripe age, whether they are married or not. People with black hair and eyes also have this white and delicate skin. The stranger is often inclined to think that make-up is used, while the real Lithuanian woman, instead, relies on fresh air, clear water, and her chaste and pure blood.

Besides blue eyes, black eyes and yellow eyes are often observed. Often it is even difficult to define the color which, generally gray, has greenish and yellowish reflections. Brown eyes often have light amber reflections.

The face is longish with a broad and prominent forehead, the lower part of the face being often very

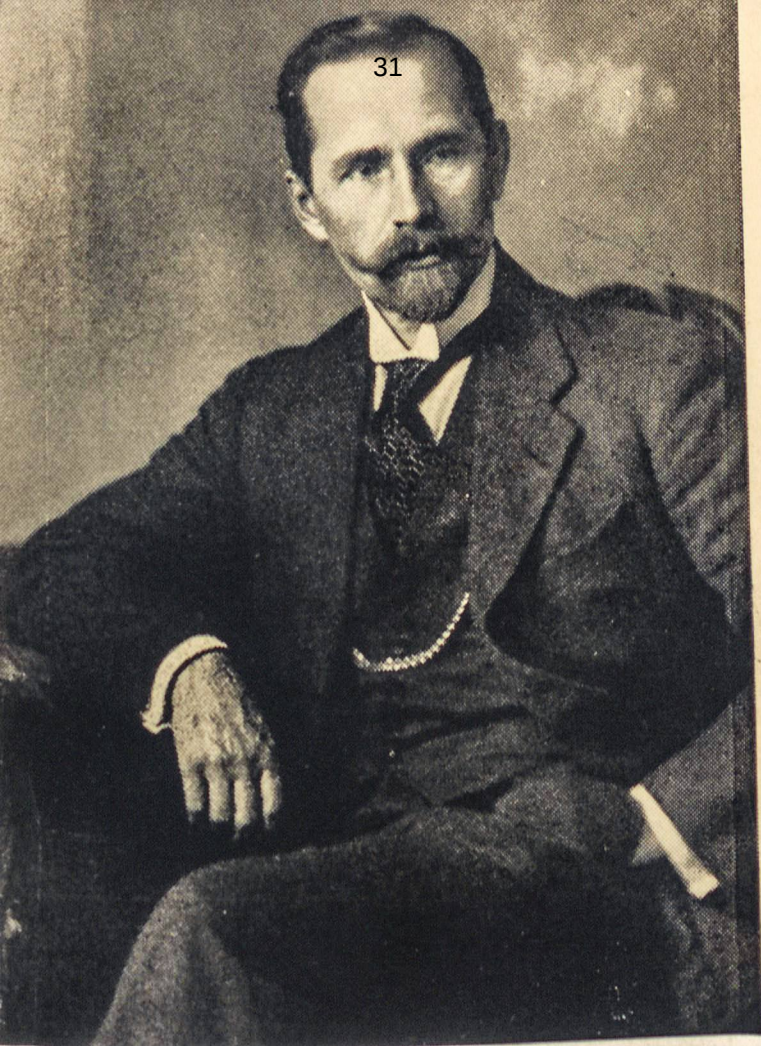
small and narrow; the jaws, on the contrary, stand out. That characteristic is probably due to a Mongolian admixture in the race. A remarkable thing and one frequently met with is the classic profile with the straight line of forehead and nose.

The limbs are long and loose, the foot well arched whence comes the Lithuanian's light and easy carriage. In his language there is a whole series of expressions for that. He is also by nature skillful in all sorts of work, thanks no doubt to a special aptitude in his muscles and his members, without which the skill of the Lithuanian workman would not have become proverbial.

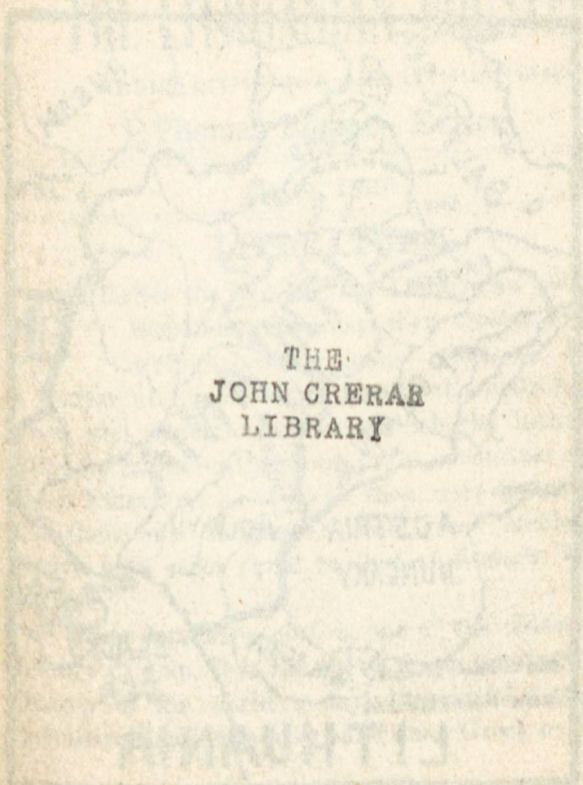
ANTANAS SMETONA

President of Lithuania

President Smetona's biography appeared in January, 1920 issue.



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