

THE LITHUANIAN BOOSTER

ABOUT LITHUANIA AND LITHUANIANS

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LITERATURE

DURING the World War Lithuanian poets and writers brought many works of interest demanding freedom they deserve. It is a matter of interest that despite the restrictions in press and education under which the Lithuanians lived for many centuries, up to the revolution of 1905, their literature, as soon as they were permitted to use their own language, made great strides, and thrive with vigor equal to that of literary Western Europe.

Their language, also, is one of the oldest in the history of man. It is the oldest living language in the history of the world to-day. It resembles most the primitive Sanskrit and is older than Greek or Latin.

A NATION

LITHUANIA is located in Europe on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Its neighboring countries are, Russia on the East, Germany on the West, between the devil and the deep sea, so to say, South of Lithuania is our proverbial neighborly neighbor, Poland, and North of us are situated our kinsmen, the Letts.

The area occupied by the Lithuanians at the present is over 50,000 square miles. It is about five times larger than Belgium, about ten times as large as Montenegro and is much larger than Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Serbia and most of the South American Republics.

Lithuanians are neither Slavs nor Teutons, they are a distinct separate race.

The Lithuanian language claims the distinction of being the oldest spoken language in existence. It closely resembles the old Sanskrit and it has not the

slightest resemblance to the Russian, Polish or the German languages. In fact, if anything, it is nearer to English than to Russian or Polish.

The Lithuanian nation is also old, very old. This perhaps may be the reason why Lithuania is so little known. It simply is too old to intermingle with the "younger set" of nations. But, she is old only in experience, she is as young in heart and life as any other liberty loving nation.

In the olden times, and as recently as one hundred years ago, Lithuania was not only free but she was, in the middle ages, one of the largest states in Europe, extending from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, and stretching eastward as far as Smolensk in Russia. They were always democratic and they never developed any imperialistic notions or institutions. The growth of the greater Lithuania was not by conquest, but by liberation of peoples from their oppressors, the Tartars. The country was extremely tolerant to other nationalities and various religious

denominations. This was really the fundamental reason of Lithuania's greatness and strength.

Lithuania lost her freedom through the treachery of her Polanized and corrupted politicians. A most shameless and brazen pact was made with Poland in 1569, called the "Union of Lublin" and this was the beginning of the end. Poland, never sated with her imperialism, fell to a lower, and lower level dragging Lithuania, by means of various impositions with her, until in 1795, Russia, Germany, and Austria the nations characterized as the "three robber nations" divided Poland and Lithuania among themselves. Thus, ending the free and independent existence of the Lithuanians, and starting an era of oppression and persecution, unparalleled in history of any nation. Printed and spoken language were forbidden, all schools closed, the right to be educated restricted, and occupation of any official administrative office prohibited. No industry or trade was allowed or even the very name Lithuania, offi-

cially destroyed.

Men, women and children trying to learn how to read and write their own tongue were mercilessly punished by imprisonment, by flogging, by exile to a certain death into the depths of the wilds of Siberia.

For many who have not known anything but Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity, it is difficult to visualize the actual horrors of the oppression and persecution that the Lithuanians had to suffer, and from personal, individual and collective experience, what it does mean.

During this horrible nightmare of darkness, oppression and persecution, some souls in search of some haven of refuge came to this most blessed country—the United States. That was about fifty years ago. Talk about the excitement of the times of the discovery of the Klondike gold regions, why in less than five years after the first Lithuanian settlers reached America, all Lithuania was aflame with the excitement of the newly discovered mine of jewels, the

mine of American Liberty.

At first it was unbelievable, a liberty like land, while all those European monarchs still had their crowns on, could be anything but the truth. The story was too good to be true and the rumors of American Liberty soon began to be looked upon as good rivals of renowned fish stories. But that did not last long. More and more Lithuanians brought back, they had no right to write about it, the corroborative evidence of the actual existence of the Liberty, Justice, and Equality of all in this country. Then the exodus began. Fully 15% of the population migrated, and whole villages were virtually abandoned to the old and weak, everybody sought the freedom, the liberty, the equality, the place where he could learn how to read and write without being sent to prison for it, where one could even read a newspaper in his own language, a new haven of refuge was found and one did not have to die to get into this haven either, and so they flocked.

BOOSTER

Soon books, papers, periodicals, textbooks, histories, novels, began to be printed here. Tons and tons of this printed matter ~~were~~ surreptitiously smuggled into Lithuania, to the delight of the people and the disgust of the autocrats. New life, new world opened itself to Lithuania. Everybody was preaching, talking and writing about American institutions. Children were studying them, the elders were admiring and hoping for a chance to establish them in their own land.

And so, when this world war broke out, the Lithuanians were already fully enlightened and prepared as to with whom they should side, and not withstanding the merciless destruction and the devastation wrought by the war and regardless of the inhumanly bondage imposed upon Lithuania by the German hordes of occupation, Lithuania, nevertheless, resisted the overwhelming German machine and fought and fought until even the Germans had to give in and recognize her independence.

Lithuanians are still fighting and struggling; but this time they are fighting not only their own national battle but a battle of humanity and civilization against barbarity and destruction. They are now the only bulwark between the western civilization and the eastern Bolshevism. They are fighting and they are going to fight until even their own godmother, America, will also recognize her independence.

America owes it to herself and to her faith in Democracy to recognize the Independence of Lithuania.

DEMOCRATIC ARMY

MILITARY men of the old school have always insisted that soldiers must not have any will or initiative of their own, that whatever they have of such gifts must be drilled out of them. The first year or so of a soldier's apprenticeship was devoted to stamping out his individuality and to transforming him into a rigid, unconscious automat acting only by the mechanical click of the part in which he was fitted. The German army was the best example of such an institution. The Russian army was next. All went well with them as long as boots were the most important asset. But when individuals had to act, each one for himself, when brains and personal initiative were necessary, the thing collapsed. Ten thousand of them went unconsciously to victory or death when ordered, but when left alone they were bewildered. They had forgotten how to act independently. When there

was no one in command they surrendered or fled.

The Lithuanian army, now fighting to maintain the independence of their republic, is largely modelled after our own. It is an army of citizens who fight for their country, not because a Kaiser or a Czar willed it so, but because each soldier is conscious that the liberty and welfare of his country depends on him. Though it is not a very large army, only about 250,000 strong, there are among them about 50,000 men who have lived in America and a good many of whom have served in France and on other fronts, fighting the German machine. These 50,000 men are the leaven of the army and they have helped model it on the most democratic principles. Orders are orders, of course, in the Lithuanian Army, but they are given in such a form and tone that they leave no doubt in the mind of the soldier that his superiors look upon him as an equal and not as upon a piece of machinery. The non-com is an elder brother, and not a whip, and the commander is the father of the

military family. This attitude brings about the loving confidence of the soldier in his superiors instead of the blind following of orders demanded by the German and Russian commanders.

It is this democratic spirit of the Lithuanian Army that was and is responsible for the victories against the Bolsheviki soldiers, against considerable odds, and with barely more than their empty hands. It is the axiom of the Lithuanian Army that knowledge of what he is fighting for is worth more to the soldier than years of goose step training. That loving the superior is better than fearing him.

The organization of the Lithuanian Army is indicative of the whole spirit of the country. The Lithuanian is an independent and democratic being of Republican tendencies. Long before the Grecian republic, Lithuania had a republican form of government, rivaling in spirit the most democratic governments of the past and present history. Professional soldiering was never appreciated in Lithuania, and military glory had no standing. Even when the country was one of the largest of Europe, (in the 14th

century) the army was disbanded after a war and the soldiers returned to their peaceful occupations. War was never declared without a referendum. The man who voted for war enlisted for its duration and returned home immediately afterward.



NO .ALARM

R EPORTS of large numbers of new cases of influenza should not cause alarm among the people of the United States. It is probable that many of these cases, though formally reported as influenza, are not of that character, but are merely heavy colds or possibly attacks of the old-style grip. This is the season for pulmonary afflictions. People take cold easily in the snow and slush. They wear thin shoes without protection from the damp, and in many cases do not dress properly. Every winter there is a heavy increase in sickness due to these exposures. Presumably physicians prefer to be safe in their reports and class many of these cases as influenza for fear that they may err on the dangerous side.

Thus far there have been so few deaths from pneumonia that great encouragement should be felt on the score of public security from the dreadful vis-

itation that swept the United States a year and a quarter ago.

Calmness of mind is one of the best safeguards against disease, and there is nothing in the situation to warrant any disturbance of the American public, since most of the patients suffering with this affliction are reported to be recovering. Nevertheless the editor believes every precaution should be taken against the spread of the disease.



RECOGNITION

IT WAS a war of Allied Nations against Germany.

And a Battle of Allied Nations.

This battle was fought at Tannenberg in Prussia in the year 1410.

The Teutons were crushed.

But the Poles occupying the Prussian cities immediately claimed those cities for Poland, and by their greediness so alarmed the Lithuanians that they decided it best to give light terms to the Germans, so that they would be strong enough to balance the power of the Poles.

At the Peace Conference at Thorn the Germans gained back the territory they had lost during the war.

The Poles thereupon sought a union on equal terms with Lithuania.

This was in 1413.

Both promised at the death of a Polish King or a Lithuanian Grand Duke to elect a new one in his place, Lithuanian magnates participating in the election of the King, and Polish magnates in the election of the Grand Duke.

The Grand Duchy was three times the size of the Polish Kingdom.

On the death of Vytautas, Lithuanians refused however, to abide by this union, and elected their Grand Duke without Polish participation.

Jagello still lived as a King of Poland.

Eventually his son Casimer was chosen Grand Duke of Lithuania. The Poles invited him to the Polish throne. He was not permitted to decline, but refused for a long time to leave Lithuania.

The Poles persisted and he was crowned at Cracow in 1447.

And so it went on.

The Union was constantly being patched up by the Poles and broken by the Lithuanians at the first

opportunity.

To maintain the tie the Polish politicians kept the two countries from having separate rulers by simple device of accepting each Grand Duke as King, and refusing to have any other.

For a century and a half this was the political history of Poland and Lithuania.

The ideas of two peoples.

The Poles wanted a complete Union, and to make Lithuanians Polish subjects with the same rights and privileges as Poles.

The Lithuanians desired only a defensive alliance with Poland.

Not until 1569, at the conference of Lublin, was the Union made absolute, and even then it sat uneasily. Nor did the Union actually change conditions in Lithuania. The title of Grand Duchy, the officials, the treasury and the army were retained.

Difficulties of religion, due to the effort to Polishize the Lithuanians by placing Polish priests in

Lithuanian parishes, gave bitterness to the ensuing years.

In 1799, at a conference at Vilna, the Lithuanians renounced the relationship with Poland.

But the years had done their work, and the strength to put the words into deeds was lacking.

The political history of Lithuania after the Lublin Union is closely connected with that of Poland, up to the fall of the latter.

In the two centuries before this event the Polish kingship slowly rotted.

Both the Polish and the Lithuanian nobility became corrupted, thinking of little except the laying of taxes upon the peasants below, and of undermining the power of the king above.

Anarchy grew.

Like a flower, Poland in these two centuries reached its full bloom and passed on to complete decay.

Its seizure of Lithuania had given it territory

at the expense not only of Lithuanian nationality but also of Polish nationality.

Rich, weak, and of wide expanse it at once tempted and lay at the mercy of strong and ruthless neighbors.

Under the guise of suppressing anarchy, and at the invitation of one Polish faction, the Empress Maria-Theresa of Austria and the Empress Catherine II of Russia, came to the division of Poland as to a feast.

Frederick of Prussia intrigued until he held the carving knife. Then in 1772 the trio sat down to table. Catherine's share was the Lithuanian provinces nearest to Russia.

The second partition followed in 1793, and the third in 1795, when all of Greater Lithuania, except the provinces of Suvalki, was attached to Russia. Napoleon presently took Suvalki away from its recipient, Prussia, and gave it to the Duchy of Warsaw.

After the Napoleonic wars, the Congress of

Vienna, in 1815, transferred the title, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, to Russia, and it had been one of the titles of all the Russian Czars since, including the last, Nicholas II.

Lithuania, under Russian administration, was destroyed politically by being divided into Russian districts.

The climax of tyranny came in 1832, following a period of passive resistance on the part of Lithuanian intellectuals, when the Russian Government suppressed the University of Vilna, and "transferred" it to Kiev.

In 1840 even the name of Lithuania was suppressed.

In 1848 the Statute of Lithuania was replaced by the Russian code.

The magistrates and all Government officials from governor to policemen were Russians.

Railroad, highway and municipal laborers were Russians exclusively.

Russians were colonized on Lithuanian lands.

The restriction of commercial enterprise.

It became practically impossible for a Lithuanian to engage in a commercial enterprise.

Russian schools were opened in 1867 not to spread knowledge, but to enforce the teaching of the Russian language.

Greek Orthodox teachers only, unacquainted with the Lithuanian language, were allowed to teach in the schools.

The Lithuanian press, book and newspaper, was suppressed in 1864, as a punishment for an uprising in which the Lithuanians played a small part.

The use of Latin type letters was prohibited, and Russian characters, not suitable to express the peculiarities of the Lithuanian language, were substituted.

For forty years this prohibition exercised its depressing influence on the Lithuanian people.

They had to rely on such literature as could be smuggled in from other countries. It is notable

that the Lithuanians of the United States prepared and sent most of this literature. And notable also that the percentage of illiteracy in Lithuania is small. So nobly burn the fires of oppressed nationalities.

The renaissance period.

The Lithuanian renaissance began in 1904-5, coincident with the first Russian Revolution.

The freedom of the press was restored to the people, and their liberties unwillingly widened.

Since then the intellectual classes have forwarded the culture and the education of the people with an energy and enthusiasm astonishing to witness.

A new Lithuania came again to the altar of sacrifice, in the Great War.

Over it have rolled the tidal waves of one army after another.

It bore the German yoke from 1915 until the end of the war.

The pseudo-nationality decreed by Germany in the Brest-Litovsk treaty with Russia was only a Ger-

man device to make Lithuania politically and economically dependent upon Germany.

It is miraculous that enough will and energy remained with the Lithuanian patriots to enable them to seize their independence when the German hand was removed.

Germany thought that Lithuania would then drop into the hands of the Russian Bolsheviks.

But Lithuania bravely and sturdily seized its independence and turned to fight the Bolshevik army.

Lithuania is not asking that she be made independent. Lithuania is independent today.

As an independent nation, she asks the right of an independent nation—the brotherly hand and help of other independent nations.

So only does independence grow strong throughout the world—by the joint strength of all.

If the call is unheeded, and the new Lithuania is left to succumb to the army of Russian Chaos has sent against her, national independence throughout

the world will be so much weaker.

It is the duty of the United States to recognize the achieved independence of Lithuania.

It is the duty of the United States to aid Lithuania to set that independence on a high, firm rock.

And if the United States fail of that duty, its own burden of the future will be greater.

Lithuania has done her part in providing a staple provisional Government.

That it has proved by raising troops to fight and to keep on fighting the Russian Bolshevists and by organizing the civilian population.

Representatives of that Government are at Paris.

Representatives of that Government are in America.

The Americans of Lithuanian descent are themselves the guarantee of the stability of Independent Lithuania.

America therefore should be the first of the nations to recognize Lithuania.

DRY DAYS

HOW can we, as citizens of the United States prevent the ungodly manufacturing of intoxicating liquor and greater still the shameful use of these vile intoxicants. Some folks boldly say, "Why, we could not exist in the country if it were not for the enormous revenue collected on liquor." Take that vast amount of money from our treasury and where would we be? We would still live, dear Boosters, exactly as well as we do now and further, be entirely rid of one of the greatest curses overshadowing our land. Take for instance, a habitual drunkard, one having a wife and family. How does his family fare either in the home or socially? You can answer this question from personal observation. If that same man has anything at all in the form of a heart and discontinues his lawlessness, what is the result? Not only himself but his family also, fare better in nearly every way.

To use a true expression. The dark cloud of drink is swept aside and in its stead the sunbeams of prosperity shine supreme. If this is true of individual, why not also true as a nation?

LITHUANIANS BEWARE!

POLISH press is reeking. It is poisoning the poor Polish reader with stupeficient story that Poland is Lithuania and Lithuania is Poland, and Ukraine is Poland and Poland is Ukraine and etc. All was and is I — P —.

LITHUANIA IS A BIG STATE

LITHUANIA, which asks the world for recognition of her entity as a nation, has an area of 33,430 square miles. Other long recognized European states have less.

Denmark has only an area of 13,580 square miles.

Switzerland of 15,976 square miles.

Belgium of 11,373 square miles.

Holland of 12,650 square miles.

Portugal of 34,234 square miles

Lithuania has a population of 6,000,000.

Denmark has a population of only 2,775,000.

Norway of only 2,392,000.

Switzerland of only 3,781,000.

Sweden of 5,600,000.

Of its 6,000,000 population, sixty-five per cent. are pure Lithuanians in blood. The remaining thirty-five per cent. is divided between fourteen per cent. Germans and twenty-one per cent. miscellaneous.

If Lithuania should follow the natural law of blood and form a confederation with Lettland (Livonia and Kourland) the combined state would have an area of 58,400 square miles and a population of 8,123,000.

**IF A LITHUANIAN AINT A LITH-
UANIAN WHAT KIND OF A LITHUA-
NIAN IS THE LITHUANIAN.**

A LITHUANIAN TALE

THE mystic properties with which the Lithuanians invest their trees, their flowers, their rivers, lakes and even their skies, exert a visible and practical influence on their lives. Their national flower is the ruta, a green fernlike growth. It is the most commonly cultivated flower in the land, and this is not because it is the most beautiful, but because the ruta symbolizes to them the innocence of young girlhood.

Likewise Southernwood, called in Lithuanian 'dievmedis' or god's tree (*artemisia abrotanum*) is very profuse throughout the whole of this Baltic nation. This god's tree is held in peculiar regard by everybody. It is a small green bush which is commonly supposed to bloom once in a lifetime, on Saint John's night. Fortune attends the man who can get a blossom. For if he watches very carefully on St. John's night for the blossom to appear, and can

pluck it before the black powers who are eagerly waiting to seize it, he will have god's wisdom. He will know where the hidden wealth of the world lies and where everything else is that he wants to know.

Once upon a time there was a shepherd who lost his cattle. He rushed through the forests looking for them. And he pushed through dievmedis bushes. And as fortune would have it, it was St. John's night. But he did not know it. And he did not see the flower blooming on one of the dievmedis bushes. He brushed it off in passing, and it caught in his sandal. He did not know that, either. But he did know, all of a sudden, where his lost cattle were. He went directly to the spot, and took them home. And he started to go to bed, wondering all the time why he was so wise, and why all of a sudden he had known where his cattle had been, and why his mind was filled with things he never thought of before. And he undressed himself slowly. He took off his sandals and tossed them aside, and with them went the flower.

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