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STOCKHOLM

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ESTONIA

RIGA

LATVIA

KLAIPEDA

LITHUANIA

GERMANY

DENMARK

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VI

KLAIPEDA AND PALANGA

AT DANZIG we were joined by Major Valusis and Miss Masiulyte, the Lithuanian Scouter and Guider who had been sent to spend the night on board and to discuss with us their plans for the following day.

When we anchored off Klaipeda early on Thursday, August 17th, we were joined on board by Dr. Alekna, the Chief Scout; Colonel Sarauskas, the Chief Commissioner; Madame Sophie Ciurlionis, the President of the Guides; Miss Elena Barciauskaite, the Guide Chief Commissioner; and other Scouters and Guiders.

The uniform of the Lithuanian Guiders is almost the same as that of the British, but their Guides wear khaki blouses and yellow ties with their blue skirts. The Brownies wear dark blue with red ties.

We landed soon after 10 a.m. at Memel, which is now called by its Lithuanian name of Klaipeda. A public holiday had been decreed by the Government in honour of our visit and a large number of townspeople had gathered on the quay to see our arrival. In the foreground were rank upon rank of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides standing at attention with their Colours, which they dipped to the Chief Scout: their discipline was perfect.

We were met by a number of Guide interpreters, each bearing a label, "Speaks English," in red letters or "Spricht Deutsch," in yellow. Everyone was given a card with crossed Lithuanian and British flags to indicate the number of their bus.

We at once entered the waiting buses and were driven to Palanga, the chief seaside resort of Lithuania, twelve miles away along a road running through fields, mostly of oats and potatoes, and finally entering a pine forest, in which was situated the Scout and Guide camp.

While the British Scouters and Guiders were being taken round the camp, the Chiefs and their staff drove on to the entrance of the village. Here was erected a triumphal arch, and the Mayor, a fine old man with a white beard and speaking perfect English (he had lived for years in America while exiled by the Russian authorities) made an eloquent speech of welcome to Lord and Lady Baden-Powell. He invited the Chief Scout to open a street in Palanga, which is to bear his name. Lord Baden-Powell, in a short speech, expressed his sense of the honour done him,



Photo)

THE LITHUANIAN SCOUTS' SALUTE

(M. Crowley



Photo)

THE CHIEF SCOUT OPENING THE STREET CALLED AFTER HIM, PALANGA

(M. Crowley



[Photo]

A LITHUANIAN GUIDE AT THE DOOR OF THE TENT PREPARED FOR THE CHIEF GUIDE

[D. M. Bull]



[Photo]

MODEL OF A LITHUANIAN WELL

[M. Crowley]

and cut the ribbon which barred the entrance to the street. A beautiful model of amber was presented to him as a memento of the occasion.

The Chiefs and their party were then taken for rest and refreshment to a large country house in a beautiful private park, belonging to a very charming lady, Countess Tyszkiewicz, and her children. After spending a delightful half-hour there they went to call on the President of the Republic and his wife in their summer villa at Palanga. The President, Mr. Antanas Smetona, is Honorary Chief Scout of Lithuania, and Major Valusis, the International Commissioner, is his son-in-law. His Excellency takes a deep interest in the Scouts and Guides of Lithuania and is much beloved by them.

After a short time spent in conversation, the Chiefs and their party were invited to enter the carriages awaiting them. The President and Lord Baden-Powell drove first, in a high barouche drawn by a pair of horses, and Lady Baden-Powell came in the next one with Madame Smetona. The horses were driven with a long, loose rein, in the Russian manner. They drove at a hand gallop across the sand dunes and then for about a mile along the very edge of the Baltic, the horses' hooves making no sound on the sand.

On alighting from their carriages they mounted a stand which had been erected on the shore, facing the sea, and on which members of the suite were already standing. The British Scouters and Guiders were lined up on either side of the stand and the Lithuanian Scouts and Guides were standing in serried ranks (over 2,000 of them) with their backs to the tideless sea.

In front of the stand was a military band. A trumpet sounded, at which the Wolf Cubs and Brownies gave a yell and rushed in to form a semi-circle, each waving a small flag: the first group had red flags, the second group green, and the third group yellow (the colours of the Lithuanian flag). The trumpet sounded again, and the Scout Standard-bearers formed up behind. A third blast was heard, and then followed an unforgettable scene, as hundreds of Guides rushed in from the left and hundreds of Scouts from the right, helter-skelter, yelling and cheering and throwing their caps in the air. Last, more sedately, came a company of older Guides who came through to the centre—beautiful girls, wearing with grace and dignity their national costume: each had a necklace of amber, which is one of the chief products of Lithuania.

This immense concourse formed a close horseshoe, punctuated at intervals by the brilliant colours of the Lithuanian flag, which added greatly to the beauty of the scene.

In the background was the grey-blue expanse of the Baltic, lapping at the very heels of the Scouts and Guides, and on either side of the picture, as far as eye could see, stretched the belt of white sand.

The multitude stood at attention while the Lithuanian and British flags were broken. Both National Anthems were played, and we were immensely touched to

find that the Lithuanian children had taken the trouble to learn all three verses of "God Save the King" (which had been given them in a phonetic version) and sang them much better than most of us. It was a very moving episode, and many of us felt more stirred by our own national hymn than ever before.

The President then spoke, in simple and beautiful words, which were translated into English by Miss Avietenaite, the International Commissioner of the Guides. He expressed the pride of his people in having become, after centuries of oppression, a free nation. Love of country, he said, was one of the finest and noblest of passions, so long as it was not aggressive. People should learn to honour other people's countries just because their own is so dear to them. In the old Lithuanian story, the pirates had ravaged the country, destroying every plant except the humble wild lily, the national flower, which they had passed without noticing it: so the spirit of Lithuania had survived and was now ready to blossom freely.

The Chief Scout and the Chief Guide both spoke, their words being translated into Lithuanian. The President then turned to Lord Baden-Powell and invested him with his own Silver Wolf; he also presented to Lady Baden-Powell and to Mrs. Mark Kerr the highest grade of the Scout order, the Lithuanian Lily. Each member of the staff was given the Scout or the Guide badge in amber (the Guide badge is the three-lobed "ruta," a plant rather like the trefoil), and each British Guider and Scouter received a special medal, struck for the occasion, bearing on it the emblem of the rising sun, with the date, and the initials of the President and of the Chief Scout.

While these presentations were being made, the Scouts and Guides had fallen in for the march past, and as the band began to play they advanced with swinging step and smiling faces, greeting the President and the Chiefs as they passed them with the "Roman salute."

At this moment Lady Baden-Powell had one of her inspirations: "Couldn't the British march past, too?" she whispered, and in a couple of minutes Colonel Murray and Mrs. Janson Potts had called out their Scouters and Guiders and had marshalled them so that they were ready to follow on the last column of Lithuanians. The British rose to the occasion and swung past in very good style, helped by the splendid rhythm of the music to overcome the difficulties of marching on sand. The Lithuanians were delighted at this and their enthusiasm knew no bounds: the President was so much moved that the tears ran down his face. Since then a letter has come from the Boy Scouts Association of Lithuania to thank the British Scouters and Guiders for their "magnifique défilé" in front of His Excellency the President.

After this we adjourned to the camp which was close by in the pine-woods. It is impossible to convey any idea of this camp to those who did not see it. It occupied a considerable area, as there were separate sections for the Scouts, Guides, Wolf Cubs and Brownies, and for hundreds and hundreds of yards through the woods there were



Photo]

THE RALLY ON THE STRAND, LITHUANIA

[Walsham, Ltd.



Photo]

THE MARCH PAST, LITHUANIA

[M. Crowley