

The Battle of Lindanisa

ON 15th of JUNE, A.D.1219

By V. VILDER

BY 1219, the struggle of the ancient Estonians against the Teutonic invasion had already lasted more than ten years. A new German order of knights, named the Brotherhood of Christ's Soldiers (or Brothers of the Sword), was formed in Riga. Less celebrated than those of the Holy Land, and more lasting in its effects. The Germans, assisted by Livs and Letts, had made various campaigns to subject the heathen inhabitants of the southern provinces of Estonia, whose cause was considerably weakened after the disastrous defeat at Pala River and the death of their outstanding leader Lembitu in 1217, whereupon they were compelled to accept baptism.

But the inhabitants of Northern Estonia, in their provinces along the Gulf of Finland, were yet independent and would have to be conquered and christianised. "The Historians' History of Scandinavia" characterises them as "proud and jealous of their liberty, they gloried in having always rendered useless the efforts which the Danes, Swedes and Christians in Riga had made at various times to convert them." Sworn enemies of their new hosts, they held them in continual alarm, because their numerous and warlike hordes were often joined by Russian neighbours."

In this conflict of opposed passions, and forces nearly equal, bishop Albert of Riga was driven to appeal for assistance to Valdemar II, the powerful king of Denmark, who then took up the new crusade. "He solemnly engaged," says a contemporary author, who witnessed the greater part of what he writes, "to pass the following year in Estonia, as much for the honour of the Virgin Mary as for the redemption of his soul."

The dimensions of the expedition (called the Northern Crusade) are best illustrated by the fact that the king began by rendering the German frontiers safe by leaving three good garrisons in well fortified strongholds. He also ordered that as many ships as possible should be manned for war in every port. Historians of that day tell us that never before was there seen in the North such a large fleet as the one destined for this expedition. It was composed of fourteen hundred vessels of various sizes, but it appears that he used only a thousand, the others remaining in Denmark for the safety of the kingdom. Of these thousand there were five hundred small ones, none of which carried, beside rowers to the number of twelve, more than one cuirassier and one archer. The other five hundred, called long ships, contained each 120 men. From which one may judge that the armament of Valdemar was really the largest that had been seen in any country. A crowd of ecclesiastics and young warriors, illustrious by birth or exploits, hastened to take part in the glory and merit of this holy expedition. Among the number one distinguished Andrew Suneson, archbishop of Lund; Nicholas, bishop of Schleswig; Peter, bishop of Roeskilde; and the chancellor, Theodorik, bishop designate of a country neither yet converted or conquered; a Wend prince named Wenceslas or Vistlav, with a corps of his troops; and many German generals and soldiers.

On their side the Estonians, says a Scandinavian historian, "were able promptly to raise armies as formidable for numbers as for the fury which animated them." Surprised, however, at the sight of so prodigious an armament as that of the Danes, they could not hinder its descent in the province of Rävälja; nor prevent the ruin of one of their fortresses, called Lindanisa. The Estonians even pretended to have no other resource than the clemency of Valdemar, and while reassembling

their forces sent their chiefs to sue for peace.

The king, not sufficiently on his guard, granted it joyfully; bishops baptised them; they were sent back loaded with presents. But three days afterwards, on 15th of June, a swarm of armed horsemen burst on the camp towards nightfall, attacked it at three different points, and drove back the Danes, who were scattered and for the most part disarmed, with such vigour that their defeat seemed inevitable. But Wenceslas, posted farther afield, had time to range his men in battle array and come to their aid. Then the aspect of affairs changed. The Danes rallied, the Germans joined them, and, uniting their efforts, they soon quenched the impetuosity of the Estonians. These, little accustomed to fight against regular troops, disbanded, and fleeing precipitately left a thousand of their men on the field of battle.

Such are the real facts of a combat concerning which there are many accounts full of exaggeration and marvels. It has been written a thousand times that the Danes, having lost their standard in the thickest of the fight, had begun to give way when there fell from heaven another — red, with a white cross on it (later called Danebrog); and re-animated at the sight of this wonder, they gained a victory over the Estonians.

It is interesting to note the further marvel related to this battle, which the legend describes as follows: Valdemar, seeing the vast legions of Estonians, was disheartened and intended to return immediately. But Bishop Peter, who was with the king, encouraged him and said: "Do not fear, I dare say, God will help you, if in future you won't listen to the will commands of your priests. In the olden times, the king, Valdemar, was a pious man, and he had a vision of the Virgin Mary, who said to him: 'I will be with you in this battle.' In his despair the king promised all that and swore: If God will reach the age of twelve years, shall help me now, then, in remembrance of this day, every Dane, who has fast every St. Lawrence Night." Then the combat began. The enemy (Estonians) attacked fiercely and the Danes got into great trouble, they began to retreat and were put to flight. Then the archbishop Andrew raised his arms towards the open sky and in a loud voice he began to plead for heavenly aid, as Moses did at Raphidim. Fortune, so ran the story, favoured the Danes, as long as the archbishop held his arms raised, but when from weariness he let them fall, she deserted his countrymen. Finally the other bishops lent their support in keeping the old man's hands in the attitude of blessing till the victory of Valdemar was complete.

According to other sources a standard was said to have been sent by the pope, as was a custom in religious wars, and the archbishop inspired the Danes with courage, persuading them that the banner, which the pope had sent, had fallen down from heaven; to which statement, and the effect produced by it, the successful issue of the battle, and the conquest of the whole Estonia are chiefly to be ascribed.

This is said to be the origin of Danebrog, the famous battle standard of the ancient Danes, of which we now hear for the first time. Henceforth it was to precede the Danish armies to victory till its capture by the Dittmarscher, three hundred years later.

The victory at Lindanisa was followed by the foundation of the stronghold which the Danes called Revel (after the name of the province) on the site of the old fortress, henceforth to be known as Tallinn (Taani—Danish; Linn—castle). A Christian bishop made the new town his metropolis. The king left there a strong garrison, generals and many

Baltic Diplomatic Representatives Met

Diplomatic Representatives of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania met in London for consultation which lasted from June 27-30, 1952.

The following took part in these consultations:

E. Balutis (Lithuania), J. Kaiv (Estonia), R. Kampus (Latvia), S. Lõzovaitis (Lithuania), T. Ozolins (Latvia), K. R. Pusta (Estonia), A. Rei (Estonia), E. Sarepera (Estonia), A. Torma (Estonia), P. Zadeikis (Lithuania).

The assembled representatives reviewed in detail the international situation, particularly all its aspects which may influence the position of the Baltic states and the re-establishment of their freedom and independence.

They noted with satisfaction that the close collaboration which the Baltic States have maintained without interruption since they regained their independence — particularly since the conclusion of the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation signed between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 1934 — has rendered valuable results and has proved of advantage to the three countries. The assembled representatives therefore considered it necessary and desirable that their collaboration should be further developed and intensified.

bishops who were to work in concert to advance his interests and those of the church. The wretched natives were baptized by detachments of the Revel garrison. But the Danish designs were strongly opposed to the bishop of Riga's views. This prelate claimed the greater part of Estonia as a conquest effected by pilgrims devoted to the church, and by the Brothers of the Sword, his vassals. He, too, sent missionaries there, trying to win as many neophytes as he could from his rival. Amosity concerning baptism was carried to such a pitch that an Estonian chief was slain by a Danish priest. The king, Valdemar, showed no more moderation. The Estonians began to think that the God of the Danes was not that of the Germans. The issue of the Battle of Lindanisa in 1219 had determined the fate of Northern Estonia. In the following year all the province of Rävälja was gradually subdued, then the neighbouring Virumaa and Läänemaa occupied, and finally the inhabitants of Saaremaa defeated and brought to submission.

King Valdemar, henceforth known with the surname 'the Victorious' was now the most powerful potentate in the north of Europe. He soon declared the whole of north-west Estonia, including the islands of Hiiumaa and Saaremaa to be a Danish province, though the natives of the conquered country were not yet disposed to leave him in peaceful possession of the conquest (e.g. the great attempt of liberation in 1222-27).

The Danish Royal insignia—the three lions passant gardant are preserved on the coat-of-arms of Estonia till the present day—much in the same way as the same design which appears on the British coat-of-arms is a reminder of the Conquest of England two centuries earlier.

EXTRACTIONS from:

The Historians' History of the World, Encyclopaedia Britannica. Parijõgi jt.: Eesti ajalugu algkoolile. Prof. Sinding: History of Scandinavia from the Early Times.

LETTERS

Johannes Sorglepp Ilmar Varua
Leonard Aavik Eduard Raha
Hugo Köster Salme Pöbla
Arent Saar Mr. A. Leichter
Endel Udusse Miss Lya Mägi
Mr. R. Nõmm Voldemar Oun
Miss Salme Helde Optik Amos
Mr. Mälv Valentin Köder
Viktor Plats Miss Edlind Maasik
Mrs. H. Arviko Yello Pruu
Elmar Päts Karl Tõnisson
Miss Ivi Aas Mrs. Betty Taan
Veera Hajast Mr. M. Laaman
Maie Sarik Väino Kask
Maie Tamme Miss Leida Ots

It rests with the Baltic peoples themselves to decide on the form in which a yet closer union is to be established between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania after their liberation. However, the assembled representatives expressed their conviction that this union should be very close and should seek every possible co-operation with other countries within the framework of a United Europe. They also stressed the desirability of this conception of close union being widely publicised and becoming generally accepted by their compatriots.

They further reviewed the co-operation with free representatives of other Soviet-dominated nations to which they attach great importance.

They noted with gratitude and great satisfaction the understanding and sympathy shown to the Baltic nations by Great Britain, the United States of America and other Western countries where so many Baltic nationals have found refuge. In this connection they took note with grateful appreciation of the telegram sent by the President of the United States of America to the Baltic States Freedom Committee in New York in which the President expresses his sympathy for the Baltic peoples on the 12th anniversary of the invasion of their countries by the Soviet Union in breach of international law and re-affirms the non-recognition by the United States Government of this act of aggression.

They unanimously expressed the hope that the Convention concerning Genocide would soon become an effective instrument for the protection of human rights and that the United Nations would find ways and means to stop the terror and deportations of the civilian population to which the Baltic and other countries are exposed under Soviet occupation.

They pay homage with deference to their nations now suffering under Russian domination and remember in their prayers the victims of the Soviet terror.

They express their firm conviction that the rights of the Baltic Nations will ultimately prevail and that the freedom and independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as the other Soviet-dominated countries will be restored.

IN THE PRIME OF YOUTH

Gustav Suuts

There's time for laughing and time for weeping,
There's time to wipe the falling tears—
There's time for working and time for sleeping,
There's time to meet the grave in coming years.

What are the early years of life?
That's not the time for praying, not time for fasting
Nor to vex the spirit in languidness.
It's time for blooming, time for pleasure lasting,
It's time to love and live in happiness.

MEIE KODU

Australian-Estonian Weekly

Responsible Editor and Licensee: ALEKSANDER PEEL.
Editor-in-Charge: PEETER LINDSAAR.
Estonian House,
141 Campbell Street, Sydney, N.S.W.
Telephone: M4800.

Üksikuubri hind sh. 1/-
Aadressi muudatused sh. 2/-
Tellimise hinnad herilist postiga:
Australias, Uus Meremaal ja ülemeremaile (sama hind):
3 kuud sh. 13/-, 6 kuud £1.6.0, aastaks £2.10.0.

Uus Meremaal (vastavalt kursorile):
6 kuud NZ/10.0, aastaks NZ/22.

LENNUPOSTIGA saates:
Australias 3 kuud £1.6, 6 kuud £2.5.0;
Uus Meremaal 6 kuud NZ/11.4.9;
Ülemeremaile (saatekahju 2/6 numbrit, saadame 2 järelevalde numbrit koos) 1 kuud sh. 9/-, 2 kuud sh. 18, kolm kuud A\$1.7.0 jne.

Advertising rates: 10/- each inch on s/c, among text 50 per cent more, on first page 100 per cent more.

Advertisements of Address: 1/- a line. Kuulutuste hinnad: sh. 10/- tall, teiniste 50% ja esiküljel 100% kallim. Omandus — ja föötoainesse, ning korteri ostmise ja korteri pakkumise kuulutused 6 d. sõna.

Address: kuulutused: 1 shill. rida.
Printed by Publicity Press (1952) Pty. Ltd., 71-73, Regent St., Sydney.

