



WILL ALAND ISLANDS BECOME A BALTIC FIUME?

Caught in the swirl of the minor furries that disturb Europe are the remote Aland islands, where Swedes and Finns clashed in a manner suggestive of the dispute between Jugoslavia and the Italians along the Adriatic, according to newspaper dispatches.

For more than 200 years the Aland islands, which are situated like a cork in the wide mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia, have been a sort of Alsace-Lorraine question between the Swedes and the Russians. After having passed back and forth several times, they were finally ceded to Russia in 1500. During the reign of Nicholas I they were strongly fortified, a move most distasteful to Sweden, because the islands occupy a strong strategic position with respect to Stockholm, the Swedish capital, which is less than 100 miles to the southwest from Bornarsund, the chief fortification of the islands.

These fortifications were short-lived. In 1854, during the Crimean war, a Franco-British fleet, under Sir Charles Napier and Buzagway d'Albion, destroyed the works, and after that time the islands were left unfortified, in accordance with an international agreement.

The Aland group, which is separated from the Swedish mainland by Aland bay (Aland Hanf) and from the Finnish mainland by Skiffet sound, is composed of some 300 islands and rocky islets, the total area of which is not more than 530 square miles. The largest island, Aland, a name signifying "land of streams," is almost as large as all the others combined, having an area of 247 square miles, about twice the size of Martha's Vineyard. Cattle raising and fishing are the chief occupations of the 25,000 people who live on the islands. Some cereals (barley and oats) are grown on the thin soil, and there are a few forests of birch, spruce and fir.

Finnish troops recently were reported marching through the streets of Mariehamn. This attractive little bathing resort is the chief town of the islands, having a population of 1,400. In times of peace a daily steamer service is maintained between this port and Abo, the oldest and historically the most interesting city in Finland. The voyage from Abo to Mariehamn takes about 10 hours.

It was in the water adjacent to the Aland islands that Peter the Great's navy won its first important victory, defeating the Swedes in 1717.

Only about 90 of the 300 islands are inhabited, and the fisherfolk, in the main, are of Swedish descent.

Sweden's desire to hold the islands arises in part from the fact that they control the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia, through which most of that kingdom's internal trade is carried on.

LONDONDERRY: "MAIDEN CITY OF IRELAND"

Derry, or Londonderry, in Ulster, known in song and legend as the "Maiden City of Ireland," has the charm of the cheery, busy town and is truly characterized by the stirring marching song which these Irish sing on their days of celebration:

"Where Foyle his swelling waters rolls northward to the main,
Here, Queen of Erin's daughters, fair Derry fixed her reign;
A holy temple crowned her, and commerce graced her street;
A rampart wall was round her, the river at her feet."

These four lines briefly tell Londonderry's story. Along the two-mile quays of the river Irishmen jolly each other as they load and unload the foreign, colonial and coasting trade of the docking vessels. For the Foyle is wide and deep, and large tonnage ships flying the flags of France, Australia, Brazil, the United States, and India bring their wares to her port. Busy looms in the city make linen, and then laughing, twinkly-eyed Irish girls make the linen into shirts before it leaves Londonderry. The salmon fishery on the Foyle is important and the town has timber mills, grain mills, and shipyards.

But Derry has for the traveler a charm greater than its hustle and up-and-doing atmosphere—the story of a past replete with romance, devotion to principle, and the exhibition of indomitable spirit. Columbia, the greatest of the Irish saints after Patrick and Brigid, in 548 looked on the oak-clad hills and coveted them. Here he founded his abbey, known as Dalre-Columbkille, or Columbia's Oak Grove, within the shadow of the great fort on a neighboring hill, the stronghold of the lord of Tyrone, in order that his sanctuary might have the protection of the fort. But in vain did he reckon his chances against the Danes and Saxons who, time and again, pushed their boats against his shores. Despite their plundering and burnings, the settlement, of which he had made the nucleus, grew and maintained its independence until 1009.

Derry was then given to the corporation of London, which sacked on the pretext London. Three years later the Irish society, to which Londonderry and much of the surrounding country had been given, pledged itself to enclose Derry within walls, and these walls, wide enough for a coach and four, are excellently preserved today, perhaps to the inconvenience of the inhabitants, but certainly in accordance with their sentiments and wishes. Any one who expressed a desire that they be taken down would be treated as a traitor. Long ago they grew too small to encompass all the inhabitants of the bustling port, but they stand like a stiff belt around the waistline of the hill on which the city is built. The most inconvenient thing about them is that, though they are more than a mile in circumference, there are only seven gates leading through them. Because the walls defended the city in the siege begun by James II, a busy man must make quite a jaunt out of his way to find a passageway through them, but, true to Irish sentiment, he does it without a murmur. On one of the bastions of the wall an old gun, affectionately known as "Roaring Meg," points her nose over the city.

Here, too, on the hill in the center of a crowded old graveyard stands the quaint, squat cathedral with its queer pinnacled tower. It is called after St. Columba, although it is not on the site of the old abbey built by the saint fourteen centuries ago.

On a high, inaccessible hill in the distance, looms the stronghold of the lords of Tyrone. It is said that St. Patrick came to the fort to baptize Owen, who first set himself up to rule over the province of Tyrone, and St. Columba visited it before his exile.

Here, too, captive Danes who had threatened the peace of the city were dragged in triumph.

Though every trace of the old castle has been obliterated, the massive stone wall fourteen feet thick and eighteen feet high, resembling the handwork of a cyclone, has stood out grimly against the centuries. A small iron gate hangs across a two-foot doorway, the only entrance to its huge amphitheater-like interior, which reveals further devices designed for the protection of the inmates.

OLD LETTERS REVEAL LOST CHAPTER IN WORLD HISTORY

Lava preserved the secrets of Roman civilization in Pompeii; tombs protected the records of ancient Egypt's culture; and now there is prospect that some long neglected letters may reveal one of the most fascinating chapters in the historic trail of the Jewish people, and incidentally show that Africa loomed larger in the middle ages than modern historians have realized.

Hitherto Africa has figured not at all in medieval history. It still was a "dark continent" when Stanley and Livingstone penetrated it less than a century ago. Yet, in view of a remarkable documentary discovery made by Charles de la Ronciere, librarian of the national library in France, it would seem Jews of the fifteenth century had trading posts in northwest Africa, and carried on a vast commerce with the natives from the Sahara to the Atlantic and from Algeria to the Niger.

Antonia Malfante, a Genoese citizen, traversed this region and wrote his descriptive letters, in 1447, from Timbuktu and Tount. Timbuktu was the Chicago of the west African plains; and Tount the center of the camel caravan traffic that exchanged the wheat and barley of Egypt for the powdered gold of Timbuktu and the precious salt from Teghazza.

All the places visited by Malfante were so well known to the Jews of his time that they were listed in a Catalan atlas prepared three-quarters of a century earlier for Charles V, according to M. Ronciere. But shortly after Malfante's visit the Jews were driven out of Spain, and since the Jews were the only ones in Europe who knew of the Nigeria country and apparently permitted no Christian to enter there except Malfante the Jewish knowledge was lost in Europe. Not until Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs began his explorations in Algeria and Morocco in 1860 did the rest of the world again form a contact with the extensive regions of Malfante's travels.

Landing at a point west of Algiers, Malfante worked his way south to Tount, which Rohlfs believed himself to have been the first European to visit. Yet Malfante dated his first letter from there four centuries earlier.

Tount was an oasis, containing from 150 to 200 villages, which together formed a vast commercial center. Each had a chief. Travelers became the guests of these chiefs and Malfante reported their protection superior to that in states like Temecen and Tunis. One of these towns was Tametit, now a decayed village, whose people still recall the Jewish epoch. Arabian invaders earlier had routed the Jews, who were masters of the Sahara and whose empire extended south to the Niger. Tametit, Malfante wrote, sheltered both Jews and Mohammedans, who lived in harmony.

The native negroes valued copper highly, Malfante stated, and used it for money. Profiteering, apparently, is not a modern vice. Malfante complained, "The people here do not want to transact any business if they do not make a commission of 100 per cent." And their business was on a big scale, at that. Half a million head of cattle, to mention but one item, were brought to market in the caravan season.

Pushing on to Timbuktu, Malfante's host was the brother of a captain of

desert industry, a man of great wealth and possessed of trade information concerning all of north Africa. From him Malfante learned of such flourishing places as Teghazza, famous for its salt mines and unique for its architecture. The houses were made of rock salt. Malfante noted that it never rained there, or the houses would have melted away.

GUNNING FOR PROFITEERS AN ANCIENT PRACTICE

Profiteering in foods and high wage demands by labor are far from being ultra-modern problems.

Ancient Egypt flogged its profiteers in the market places and medieval England passed maximum wage laws, according to a communication by Ralph A. Graves to the National Geographic society, which says:

"Following the devastation of the Black Death in England in 1348-1349, cultivation of the fields was utterly impossible and there were not even enough able-bodied laborers to gather the crops which had matured. Cattle roamed through the corn unmolested and the harvest rotted where it stood.

"Out of the situation which resulted from the impoverishment of the labor resources of the kingdom grew the first great clash in England between capital and labor. The peasants became masters of the situation. In some instances they demanded double wages, and whereas formerly land-owners had paid one-twelfth of every quarter of wheat as the harvesting wage they were now forced to pay one-eighth.

"Parliament hurriedly passed drastic laws in an effort to meet the new condition. Statutes provided that every man or woman, bond or free, able in body and within the age of threescore years, not having his own whereof he may live, nor land of his own about which he may occupy himself, and not serving any other, shall be bound to serve the employer who shall require him to do so, provided that the lords of any bondman or land-servant shall be preferred before others for his service; that such servants shall take only the wages which were customarily given in 1347 (the year prior to the first appearance of the plague).

"The first ordinance in English history, designed to curb the greed of the middleman, was passed nearly a century earlier (in 1258) when there was a bountiful harvest, but destructive rains caused the heavy crops to rot in the fields.

"But England did not originate food control measures. A low Nile in 907 A. D. resulted in a famine the following year, which swept away 600,000 people in the vicinity of the city of Fostat, G'awhar, a Mohammedan Joseph, founded a new city (the Cairo of today) a short distance from the stricken town and immediately organized relief measures.

"The Caliph Mo'izz lent every assistance to his lieutenant, sending many ships laden with grain; but price of bread still remained high and G'awhar, being a food controller who had no patience with persuasive methods, ordered his soldiers to seize all the millers and grain dealers and flog them in the public market place. The administrator then established central grain depots and corn was sold throughout the two years of the famine under the eyes of a government inspector."

MINSK: AN INCUBATOR OF BOLSHEVISM

One of the least interesting among Russian cities in its physical aspects, Minsk has an economic history that helps in understanding how bolshevism spread so readily among the Russian people.

The industrial history of Minsk, where the Poles and the bolsheviks met to discuss peace terms, is especially significant in view of present conditions in Russia. It was one of the centers where ideas long germinated which blossomed forth so suddenly into bolshevism under the hot-house influences of war distress. There, in the early nineties of the last century, a group of dilettantes formed a Working Man's union, later more accurately termed the Union for Struggle. Pronunciation of literature, smuggled into the country or printed in secret, was a major activity of this group in Minsk. Few workmen belonged to it.

In the course of five years these groups, working in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Minsk, had accumulated a number of followers, few of whom agreed. They gave wide publicity to the doctrines of Marx, mixed indiscriminately with every variety of radicalism, native and imported. With such a diversity of aims little was accomplished, and it was with the hope of formulating a definite program that the Union for Struggle and a committee of the Jewish bund held their notable convention at Minsk in 1908. From that meeting arose the Social Democratic Working Men's party.

Minsk is built upon the Svislotok river, nearly 500 miles southwest of Moscow by rail, and has a population of 105,000, fully half of whom are Jews. It was the capital of the old Russian government of Minsk, which included some of the least fertile and least developed regions of the fallen empire.

The annual fair, held in March, furnished the chief event in the town's life. Its trade, mainly in corn, lumber and leather, gained perceptibly when it became the intersection point of the railway from Moscow to Warsaw and that from Libau to Khar'kov. Formerly it maintained a municipal pawnshop.

Girl Olympic Winners Receive Decorations



When the American Olympic team was received by Mayor Hylan of New York, the victorious athletes were decorated by him. He is seen here pinning the medal on Margaret Woodbridge.

Camp of the Retreating Russian Soviet Troops



View of a camp of the Russian Red army where the troops were able to get a little rest during their retreat before the Poles.

Playground Is Presented to Prague



President Masaryk of Czecho-Slovakia at Prague, accepting a playground given by the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian associations, on behalf of the city of Prague. The Young Women's Christian association president who made the presentation is shaking hands with President Masaryk.

OFF FOR A LITTLE JAUNT



Milton Weinstein and Seymour Grauer, assistant scoutmasters of the Boy Scouts of America, leaving the city hall, New York, for a hike across the country to San Francisco and return. The boys will follow the southern route and walk all the way. They expect to work en route to pay their expenses.

White House Stables May Be Revived



The once famous White House stables, which have fallen from their high estate in these days of gasoline. Where at times have been sheltered the ponies and riding horses of the Roosevelt family and the shining, beautiful bays of President McKinley, are now six big high-powered automobiles and one electric coupe. Not a single horse is now credited to the property list or pay roll of the White House. However, older residents who fondly recall the days when the horse came into prominence as a part of the White House attractions are hoping that with the coming of a new administration horses will be included with other changes necessarily entailed. They have been told that both Senator Harding and Governor Cox are lovers of horses, and in all likelihood will see to it that there are several on hand for use.

CONDENSATIONS

The west coast of Lower California abounds in pearl oysters. One central station in Germany is supplying electricity for light and power for 168 villages.

The Alps mountains harbor more than 1,000 glaciers.

The lily of the valley does not belong to the lily family. Japanese wives of the middle and lower classes frequently blacken their teeth to please a jealous husband.

MADE WAY TO HIGH PLACE

Spectacular Rise of Horse-Boy to Position of Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Less than 15 years ago a ragged little chap asked for a job of horse-boy with a group of American travelers in Mexico. He wore a ragged pair of trousers, was bare of foot, and almost bare of body, as his cotton shirt was little more than a rag. He got the job, and the next three months spent his time currying and caring for the travelers' mounts. He told them his name was "Candido," or "The Simple."

The same horse boy is today Candido Aguilar, minister of foreign affairs for Mexico, and son-in-law of the former president Carranza. Investigation showed that the horseboy had gathered a little band about him several years ago, and that as it increased in size it became the ruling force in Vera Cruz. Carranza took the young leader to Mexico City, where he became commandant of the capital troops, a general, and then on up to his present high office. He had learned to read and write on the way up—also how to make love, for his marriage with Carranza's daughter came soon after his arrival in Mexico City.

Outclassed.

"The man you introduced me to had an ugly look I didn't like."
"Then you just ought to see his wife."