

WITH OUR DANISH COMRADES

On the invitation of F.D.F., our Overseas Secretary and his wife visited Denmark in July, and McVicker here records his impressions.



Danish Music

THE friendliness of our reception afforded striking evidence of the F.D.F.'s esteem for the B.B., and in turn I was deeply impressed by the strength and vitality of the Danish movement. To meet the national leaders of F.D.F. was to realise whence much of the vigour sprang. Tornoë, Founder; Valentiner, President; Schou, Vice-President, and Tjalve, Secretary—to mention only a few—are personalities who influence the whole movement.

Visits to two great national events, the Brass Band Festival and the Comradeship Camp, provided opportunities to see F.D.F. from the inside, as well as some of its spectacular outward manifestations. While received as the honoured representative of the B.B., I was quickly made to feel one of themselves.

The *Orkesterstævne*, as it was called, was the fifth held at intervals of several years. 850 young musicians from F.D.F. bands in all parts of Denmark assembled for a week at Odense. Quartered in a large modern school, the atmosphere was that of a big camp. The strengthening of F.D.F. band work was the primary objective, entered into wholeheartedly by all, from the chief conductor to the youngest player. This mammoth band practised each morning, and on five occasions gave public concerts—one of which was broadcast—attended by 30,000 people. The red-letter day was when the Crown Prince paid a visit, and to the surprise and delight of all, mounted the rostrum and conducted the Boys in an unrehearsed piece.

The musical performance, ranging from Beethoven and Elgar to modern Danish composers, was excellent. All Odense turned out as the column, playing its stirring marches, swung along eight abreast, headed by fifty Danish flags massed together in a splash of scarlet and white. Every day the Band marched to various churches for an impressive half hour of morning worship, with glorious hymn-singing which seems second nature to the Dane.

This Christian emphasis likewise ran through the other great national event, the camp or *Kammeratskælejr* as it was called, at Jomsborg attended by 500 members aged

16 to 20. Each morning a short open-air service in the camp, with its cross and altar of silver birch gleaming white against the pines, was followed by an hour's Bible Study in small discussion groups. Evening prayers closed each day round the camp fire, and at the end of the week there was a memorable communion service in which practically all took part.

In addition to F.D.F. topics, the courses of lectures included cultural subjects, such as Danish folk music, and a series of objective expositions of Danish political party programmes. As well as these serious pursuits, there were bathing parades, humorous stunts, camp-fire sing-songs, and in forest country a twenty-four hour exercise, which included a night in the open.

Jomsborg, the scene of the Comradeship Camp, is the oldest of some sixty F.D.F. permanent camp sites, equipped with buildings for sleeping, messing and recreation, as well as space for tents. Another such camp visited was Klinteborg, where a Copenhagen inter-company camp was in progress. This summer, however, cycle-camping tours, in some cases to Norway, had been arranged in many Companies as a welcome change from war-time restrictions.



At the Comradeship Camp

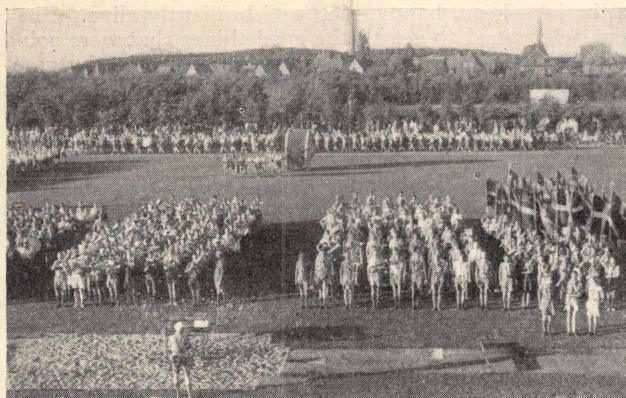
What healthy, happy fellows these Danes are! Reared in a tradition of physical culture and nurtured with the best of food they have a stamina that would make the average British Boy look to his laurels. With their high spirits there seems to go a sober maturity and an amazing relish for speeches. For them gymnastic and athletic prowess take the place of our team games, and camp-craft is the chief summer sport.

While there are many minor diversities in method, due to differences of national outlook and environment, F.D.F. and B.B. are out for the same goal, and have much to learn from each other. Both sides are eager that the link between us should be strengthened.

The *Danske Baptister Drengesforbund*, formed in 1931, after consultation with the B.B., as a Boys' organisation for the small Danish Baptist Church, was holding a training camp at Saebj. When, accompanied by Tjalve of F.D.F., I visited them we received a most cordial welcome not only by D.B.D., but also by D.B.P., the corresponding girls' organisation, and by representatives of Baptist youth work from Norway and Sweden.

So with many happy memories and new friendships we look forward to growing comradeship, built on a common ideal, mutual understanding and brotherly good-will.

W.H.McV.



Enter the Band—850 strong