

# FREE POLAND

A SEMI-MONTHLY

*The Truth About Poland and Her People*

Vol. I—No. 5

NOVEMBER 17, 1914

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## NOTES

Paul Soboleski, in the Introduction to his "Poets and Poetry of Poland", writes the following:

"Years ago there existed a great nation—great in achievements—a warlike and chivalrous people, who once commanded the respect and admiration of the world. That nation was Poland. Since she began to play an important role in the history of nations she could count over 1500 literary names, many of which were at the time, and are now, illustrious in the annals not only of Poland, but of the world. Prostrate, partitioned, suffering, and blotted out as it were from existence, she awaits the fulfillment of her destiny. Fate sometimes strikes nations as it does individuals, but hope in her case, though it may seem futile to other nationalities, never forsakes the sorrowing hearts of her children. Scattered though they are throughout the confines of the habitable globe, they have never ceased to wait, to hope, and to trust, that she will once more be resuscitated, resurrected, regenerated, and once more counted among the nations of the earth! And we think that we are not mistaken when we say that there are many noble hearts in all nationalities who would respond to this heartfelt longing with an Amen!"

\* \* \*

And we think that we are not mistaken when we say that there are many noble hearts in America who will respond to Poland's appeal on behalf of her children now suffering from the effects of war.

War-stricken Poland asks for no army, for no instruments of war, but demands that justice be meted out, her wrongs righted, her freedom granted, democracy assured; and, above all, she looks up to that Good Samaritan—America—for sympathy, for a decisive settling, through prestige and powerful endorsement, of the eternal question which rests on indisputable, historic grounds.

\* \* \*

The Appeal of the Polish Central Relief Committee points out the fact that much has been written about the atrocities committed within the confines of Belgium, but very little regarding the situation in Poland—the battleground of Europe. Polish-Americans often receive letters from their relatives in Poland, or newspapers, which vividly describe the horrors of war.

The burning of Kalisz, for example, was attended with cruelties equal to those perpetrated on Belgian territory. Kalisz, which is a provincial seat, had been occupied by the Germans during night, and by mistake the patrols while going the rounds had shot at one another with telling effect. To be sure, the innocent citizens were accused of "sniping". The German commander, Major Preusker, bid his men haul in about 2000 people, who next were ordered to lie face downward on the street before the town-hall; any one who stirred was pommelled with the barrel of a gun into unconsciousness, sometimes with tragic results. The mayor of the city, Zukowski, lay in that position in the anteroom of the town-hall. This expiatory scene lasted for about two hours. To magnify the horror, the chief bailiff of the magistrate, the revenue officer, the cashier of the provincial treasury, and many others, were shot to serve as an object-lesson to the innocent citizens of Kalisz. That, however, was not the end. The mayor was compelled to pay a ransom to the amount of 50,000 rubles. The artillery, having occupied the heights on the outskirts of the city, opened fire, without warning or provocation, upon the hapless inhabitants. The result was that many buildings were destroyed and that many women and children perished in the ruins. The terror of the people it is impossible to describe.... Two days later the Germans again accused the citizens of sniping; and the town was twice bombarded with the effect that the whole of it was in flames. The soldiers completely surrounded the unfortunates, and with their rifles drove those trying to escape into the sea of fire. In this manner many hundreds of women and children lost their lives. The city of Kalisz is utterly wracked and demolished; where formerly was a flourishing town, there today is a heap of ruins. — No wonder, then, that the people have been completely incensed against the Germans, and in no small measure have aided the Russians in their recent victories over the invaders.

\* \* \*

Nor have the Austrians acquitted themselves a whit better in Russian Poland.

Polish members to the Duma, Napiorkowski and Nakonieczny, who have seen the territory harassed by the Austrians, confirm the following:

Austrian soldiers by order of their officers would burn buildings with people inside and shoot at those trying to escape. Many innocent people were killed without rhyme or reason; many women and young girls ravished. The buildings were leveled with the ground, and to cap the climax, the peasants were deprived of their livestock and farming implements. The following villages particularly suffered: Siewalka, Borów, Chodle, Godów, Czuple, Adolina, Majdan Borowski, Huta Borowska, Wiktorya, Lipiny, Niedźwica.—Mr. Nakonieczny testifies that in the province of Lublin the Austrians in a fit of fury or insanity further gratified their beastly instincts by insulting the Catholic Clergy.

\* \* \*

We remind our readers that November 26th marks the 59th anniversary of the death of Poland's greatest poet—Adam Mickiewicz. This number is dedicated to his memory.





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## The Eternal Polish Question

By CASIMIR GONSKI



THE word "Poland" has been spoken and written oftener since the outbreak of the European conflict, than in all the years since the last Polish insurrection in 1863. The very powers who have participated in the rape of Poland and who for many decades past have been anxious to have the civilized world forget that there ever was such a thing as Poland and the Polish nation, now readily speak and write the word formerly to them so hateful. Let it be taken as a good omen, as the precursor of the day, when from this travail of nations will issue a Poland resurgent.

To the Poles in Europe and to their brethren spread throughout the world, it must be alike, confusing and embarrassing to hear the many assurances of good will and honorable intentions on part of those whom the Poles know by bitter experience to be imprinted with the indelible color of enmity toward Poland and the Polish cause.

Grand Duke Mikolajewicz, ostensibly in the name of the czar, has proclaimed the intention of Russia to establish Poland as an autonomous kingdom uniting the Russian-, Prussian- and Austrian-Polish territories under the scepter of the czar.

Prussia, urged on by many pro-Polish voices from the German nation, promises not to forget the sacrifice of blood which the Poles are now enforcedly bringing upon the altar of German patriotism.

Austria, the least cruel of Poland's persecutors, and, perhaps, the shrewdest, for that reason, permits the formation of Polish legions,—at their own expense, to fight in—the Austrian cause.

Small wonder, then, that the Poles are bewildered and know not whom to believe and whither to turn. Their school of experience has graduated them in suspicion, they fear the gift-bearing Greeks, and many a well launched craft of their hopes and ambitions has been wrecked in the tortuous passage between Prussian Scilla and Russian Charybdis.

The czar's proclamation and his assurance that he is the protector of the smaller Slavic na-

tions, may contain a ring of sincerity to the South Slavic people. To the Polish nation, the foremost of the Slavonic race, Russia's history belies the promise and her past deeds give little guarantee for Poland's hope of the future. Russia stands for pan-Slavism, because it means Russian supremacy. The hearts of the Poles have never been in the pan-Slavic movement. While the Poles are Slavs, their consciousness of superiority over the other Slavonic peoples is born out by the history of Poland, by Polish literature and Polish art, admittedly equal to any extant, by the intellectuality and culture of the Polish nation. Russia knows that well and therefore this undercurrent of enmity between these races, which feeling manifested itself with painful clearness upon the recent occasion of the surrender of Lwow (Lemberg), whose mayor, Rutowski, addressing in Polish General Bobrinski, commanding the Russian forces, assured him, that it was largely due to the co-operation of the Poles in Lemberg that the city was surrendered without bloodshed. With truly Russian brutality, General Bobrinski replied in the Russian language, announcing the immediate Russification of eastern Galicia, which he considered as an original Russian territory, whereas in fact, eastern Galicia is as little Russian as is the State of Maine. In faithful adherence to the Russian policy, the Russian troops then made a raid upon the famous Ossolinski library and museum, (the library containing more than two million volumes, and being one of the greatest in the world) and shipped the treasures of literature and art to—Petrograd.

It is not to be denied that during the last five or six years the Russian government has striven to conciliate its Polish subjects, perhaps with a premonition of the present conflict, when the good will of the Poles may mean so much to Russia. Yet, it must be remembered, that it is not Russia's policy to further the interests of an independent Poland, if we believe that Russia will carry out the program outlined in the political testament of Peter the Great. This document, alleged by Russians to be purely mythical, maintained by others



to be corporeal and to repose in the government's archives, thus deals with Poland under clause IV:

"Poland must be divided by maintaining constant jealousies and friction therein, to win over its leaders by means of gold, to break up legislative sessions and precipitate new elections of Kings, to bring about the nomination of Russian partisans for the throne and protect these partisans by force, to introduce at every opportunity Russian armies into Poland and keep them there as long as possible. If neighboring countries should offer opposition to such occupations, they can be placated by admission to a share in the partition of Poland until such time as the territory thus ceded can be retaken by Russia."

This policy has been followed by Russia with gruesome exactitude, in all its details, up to the very last cause, which advocates the retaking of Polish territories from other countries. Thus, should Russia be successful "cousin" Nicholas will take the eastern province from his "dear cousin" William and Galicia from his "great and good friend" Francis Joseph. And having re-assembled Poland, he will—perhaps—establish the Kingdom of Poland, possibly for the re-application of Peter the Great's rules of conduct.

The Kingdom of Prussia has failed singularly to either assimilate or conciliate its Polish subjects. Not content with the possession of valuable territory wrongfully acquired the short-sighted Prussian government undertook to Prussianize the Poles. Bismarck's policy of extirpation, "Ausrottung", was as short-sighted as it was cruel and utterly unsuccessful. Old King William's sympathies were with the Poles; Crown Prince Frederic William was open and avowed in his friendship for the Poles, and they in turn really admired and loved him. They proved their loyalty to him in the Franco-Prussian war, when the bravery of the Polish troops in the Prussian army won the praise, admiration and promises of Emperor William I, all too soon forgotten under Bismarck's iron rule. When the young King William II "dropped the pilot", the Poles breathed easier and began to hope. Soon it became manifest that a diametrically opposite Polish policy had been adopted. It seemed to be the intention of the new ruler to establish a Polish bulwark against the Russians in the east, and for this purpose he cultivated the friendship of rich and influential Poles. The most prominent instance of such friendship, almost amounting to an episode, was that of Baroness Koscielska, the beautiful and brilliant wife of Baron Koscielski, a member of the Prussian House of

Lords, a man of wealth and culture and a fervent Pole. During their stay in Berlin they were the avowed favorites at Court, and the full glare of the royal favor which shone upon them, did much by reflected light, to further the interests of the Poles in Prussia. However, William II is very erratic in his friendships, and when Baroness Koscielska refused to hoist the German flag from the turret of her chateau in Prussian Poland, and insisted on flying the Polish colors, the imperial countenance clouded up, never to smile on the Koscielskis again. But what was infinitely worse, not only that the Poles lost all they had gained, but Chancellor Buelow re-established the Bismarckian policy of "Ausrottung" finally culminating in that most cruelly vicious piece of Prussian legislation, the compulsory expropriation act.

En passant, a similar fate like that of the Koscielskis, befell the famous Polish painter Kossak, who for years was the recipient of a veritable shower of royal favors from the Kaiser, but who suddenly fell into disgrace because he remained a true Pole, despite royal Prussian preferences.

But to return to the Prussian policy of extirpation. We read in history, that the exactions of the conqueror from the conquered were usually of a material character. Taxation and confiscation of property were the main hardships inflicted upon the subjugated people, who, if not plotting against the government of the conqueror, or rising in armed revolt, were left to their own devices. They could speak their language, retain their local governments, till their own soil and cultivate their national traits, as long as they paid tribute. Not so with the Poles under Prussian domain. They have paid their taxes; not only have they not plotted against the Prussian government, but in three years they have shed their blood for their oppressor, and one glance over the official casualty list of the German army tells of the thousands of Poles who are now being devoured by the Prussian Minotaur. Yet Prussia hates the Poles and persecutes them cruelly. If the Prussian government has not forbidden to think in Polish it has only failed to do so, because it fears to make itself the laughing stock of the whole world.

But they have forbidden everything else that is Polish: Polish language, Polish ownership of property, Polish colors and costumes, Polish songs, Polish names of cities, towns or villages; Prussia has even smelled treason in the kitchen, forbidding the designation of Polish dishes in the Polish language and if a thoughtless restaurateur should print "zrazy" instead of "Rouladen" on his bill of fare, he will pay a fine. It will be easily understood why the Poles do not look to Prussia for their liberation. Pole and Prussian will not blend or har-



monize. Although Prussia owes her very existence, in a large part, to the generosity of Polish kings, (the writer is prepared to verify this statement by historical authorities, and has written on this topic before) nothing can ever bring about a perfect understanding between these two nationalities. Prussia will never, under any condition, restore to Poland the stolen territory. Prussia may be compelled to do it, but will not voluntarily. If it could be left to the decision of the Bundesrath, the law-making body of the German empire, or to a vote of the Germanic countries of Germany and Austria, outside of Prussia, the Poles might have good reason to expect a speedy restoration of their country. With ever increasing frequency the voices of prominent German authors, professors and other representative men are heard in the advocacy of restoring Poland. Even the press is forgetting chauvinism and strives to cultivate the good opinion of the Poles.

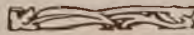
The semi-official "Koelnische Zeitung" pledges the German nation to gratitude for the sacrifices the Poles are bringing in this war, and the "Neues Wiener Tageblatt" speaks of the friendship and good understanding which this war has created between the Germans and the Poles.

It cannot be gainsaid that the attitude of the Austrian government toward the Poles has been a very friendly one and that the Poles of Austria have played an important role in Austrian politics, diplomacy and social life. Members of the house of Habsburg and Polish princes are intermarried, and the unfortunate cause of this terrible conflict, the late Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was educated by count Wadwicki, himself a fervent Polish patriot. The pathetic figure of Francis Joseph has ever been able to rouse his Polish subjects to the utmost loyalty and devotion, and in the present conflict to such an extent, that the Poles of Galicia

have formed several regiments of riflemen, on foot and mounted, equipping and maintaining them at their own expense, and placing them at the disposal of Austria.

Cold logic compels one to doubt the wisdom of such enthusiasm. To say the least, it is very impolitic to antagonize Russia into reprisals against the Polish nation. As yet, decisive victory has not perched upon the banners of either Entente or Alliance, and the Polish cause will be served best by a strict neutrality of the whole Polish nation, whose activity should be confined to a peaceful propaganda of the Polish idea abroad and here. The press of England, France, Germany, Austria and Russia is either emphatic in the demand for the restoration of Poland or has a friendly inclination in that direction. Numerous and most sympathetic are the voices of the American press. They have been heard from coast to coast, even the "Honolulu Star Bulletin" recently made a notable contribution in its editorial columns.

As yet the fate of Poland is in the balance; whom the fortunes of war may favor, cannot be foretold, but certain it seems to be, that for Poland the decisive hour is about to strike. More than four generations have watched and prayed for that hour, finally realizing that the Polish nation alone cannot break assunder the prison walls with which her enemies have immured her. But should such result be now achieved, by the power of the opinion of the whole civilized world and as a sequence of this war, then even the dreadful cost of this terrible conflict will weigh lightly in the balance as against the fact that one of the greatest crimes in history will have been redeemed, that justice shall have been done and that Poland shall live free again.



## Germany or Russia?



HE principle of nationality and race union must be respected. As the Poles have never relinquished their dream of a restoration of their country, it is but natural to ask which of the Powers will be the first to recognize the blood kinship of the same race, to cease to try to amalgamate race fragments, to give up the idea of compelling large racial units to accept the government which is hateful to them. Both Russia and Germany have been courting Poland in this great

war. The Germans have warned the Poles to make "no truce with Adamzad the bear that walks like a man." The Czar of Russia is credibly reported to have formally promised the Poles national reunion, with home rule, religious freedom and recognition of their national language.

Certain it is that the manifesto was conducive to the utter failure of the Austro-German campaign in Poland. The political "astuteness" of the Prussians, as evidenced in their attempt to conciliate the favor of those whom they have tried



to "civilize" by means of their policies of "Ausrottung" and "Raubritterschaft", is widely discussed in the press. John F. Bass, for example, writes in the *Chicago Daily News*, November 9th:

The failure of the Austro-German campaign in Poland was more than a military check; it was a great political defeat. The Germans believed that the invasion of Poland would be easy, because the people of Poland were in favor of Germany. The crystallizing of Poland's German sympathy was reported and an army was brought into the field under a Saxon royal prince for the purpose of incorporating, after the capture of Warsaw, Russian Poland into the German empire under a Saxon monarch. This kingdom was not to include the Austrian or German Poland of to-day.

Grand Duke Nicholas made the German plans impossible of realization by his famous declaration, declaring that all parts of the old dismembered Poland would be united and granted autonomy if Russia won. After the outbreak of the war public opinion in Poland, excepting that of the Jewish population, developed with astonishing swiftness in opposition to Germany and in favor of Russia. The German invasion met a hostile population and Russia at the eleventh hour determined to defend Warsaw and fight the Austro-German forces in west Poland.

Grand Duke Nicholas now towers up as the greatest Russian figure in the war. He is beloved by the army and is looked upon by the Poles as their savior. Since he allowed the Poles to organize their forces under Polish officers, who use only the Polish language, a privilege forbidden for the last seventy years, a strong feeling has been growing among the Poles that the grand duke is the man to head the new Polish autonomy.

The gist of the correspondence is that public opinion in Poland is entirely in favor of Russia. All students of history think Poland has much to expect from "Adamzad". It is as true that Russia was despotic in her treatment of the Poles as that the bureaucracy of St. Petersburg owed much to North German inspiration through the numerous Germans of the Baltic provinces who took service under the Czar. How much really of Russian policy was suggested from Berlin may never be known... This question the Editors of *Harper's Weekly* partly answer when they say:

Those who doubt Russia's good faith should remember that in the past Russia has proposed to reconstruct Poland, and that Germany has refused....

If Germany and Austria win, their demands will be those of imperialism, following Charlemagne and Napoleon.—If France and England win, and their Russian ally is as reasonable as we believe she will be, the demands will be those which make for national boundaries for smaller countries, for absence of needless injury and for permanent content....

The question has been raised whether *Harper's Weekly* was correct in stating that Germany, not Russia, had been historically the hindrance to a Free Poland. Bis-

marck ought to be a fairly sound authority. He says: "In the Polish question, Austria is confronted with no such difficulties as for us are indissolubly bound up with the reestablishment of Polish independence." These difficulties "even in 1863 made it appear advisable to do our best not to facilitate but to thwart the opening of this question by Russia." And the difficulties to Germany had in his opinion increased since 1863. Therefore Bismarck said: "The re-establishment of the Kingdom of Poland, the tearing away if the Polish speaking provinces of Prussia, would be possible only if Prussia were worsted in war." Russia raised the question during the Crimean War and in 1863, and there seems to be no reason to doubt her seriousness now in a position she has held so long. The organ of the Polish Democratic Party in Russian Poland told the truth when it said: "Poland will re-acquire her independence only (1) after a great war either among the Powers who divided her among themselves, or (2) after a war between one or two of those states and other states in conjunction with so serious a national uprising that it will have to be reckoned with." The first situation is now upon us, complicated by part of the second, and the result in favor of Poland is almost inevitable.

It is, therefore, reasonably certain that the Czar's proclamation marks a whole-hearted reversal of Russia's former policy toward the Poles. Certain it is that the people of Russia would be glad to see a buffer state between Germany and their country. For example, one of their countrymen, Novikow, of Odessa, said in 1906:

If Europe conceded to Roumania, Servia, and Bulgaria, the right of creating independent states, it is unintelligible why she should deny that right to the Polish nation. The apple of discord between Russia and Poland disappeared with the moment when Little Russia and Lithuania, regarded theretofore by each as "subjects for culture and assimilation", began to claim their own national rights. Russia, therefore, is the least inclined to place obstacles before the rise of an independent Poland. It is a different case with Germany. Submerged in her imperialist and feudal infatuation, Germany will never consent to the creation of an independent Polish State, or even to the spontaneous union of Galicia to Russian Poland.

Russian sympathy appeals strongly to the Poles. Prussian repression has been unrelaxed and thorough. If Austria-Hungary is to be broken up as a result of the war, the Poles of Galicia would gladly welcome a reunited Poland. The loser will pay his indemnities in the shape of territorial cessions. Russia will undoubtedly demand Galicia and Bukowina from Austria-Hungary, and Posen and a part of East Prussia from Germany. In that event it would be easy to reconstruct the old kingdom of Poland, minus its independence. How far the promised autonomy would go there is as yet no way of telling. The result in favor of Poland is certain.



# Father's Return \*

By A. MICKIEWICZ

**I**T is as true that Poland has a rich literature, as that her literature is poor in popular and legendary poetry. There are no *byliny*, or legendary poems, such as are found among the Russians. When Shakespeare, in his *Winter's Tale* represents Autolycus as offering "Songs for man or woman, of all sizes", he simply emphasizes the fondness for the ballad which had for a long time been developing a taste for poetry in England. There they flourished in the fifteenth century, and were then as much prized as the novel is now, and, like it, they had a story to tell. In Poland the ballad form became popular when Mickiewicz had published his collection of ballads in 1822-3. In this collection among others we find the ballad of *Father's Return*. Its simplicity and its deep faith, combined with childlike naivete, have taught the humblest home to love poetry. — The Editor.

"Go, children, all of you together  
To the pillar upon the hill,  
And there before the miraculous picture  
Kneel and pray with a fervent will.

Father returns not. Morning and evenings  
I await him in tears, and fret.  
The streams are swollen, the wild beasts prowling,  
And the woods with robbers beset."

The children heard, and they ran together  
To the pillar upon the hill;  
And there before the miraculous picture  
Knelt and prayed with a fervent will.

"Hear us, O Lord! Our father is absent,  
Our father so tender and dear.  
Protect him from all besetting danger!  
Guide him home to us safely here!"

They kiss the earth in the name of the Father,  
Again in the name of the Son.  
Be praised the name of the Trinity holy,  
And forever their will be done.

Then they said Our Father, the Ave and Credo,  
The Commandments and Rosary too;  
And after these prayers were all repeated,  
A book from their pockets they drew.

And the Litany and the Holy Mother  
They sang while the oldest led:  
"O Holy Mother", implored the children,  
"Be thy sheltering arms outspread!"

Soon they heard the sound of wheels approaching,  
And the foremost wagon espied.  
Then jumped the children with joy together:  
"Our father is coming!" they cried.

The father leaped down, his glad tears flowing,  
Among them without delay.  
"And how are you all, my dearest children?  
Were you lonesome with me away?"

"And is your mother well, your aunt and the servants?  
Here are grapes in the basket, boys."

Then the children jumped in their joy around him,  
Till the air was rent with their noise.

"Start on," the merchant said to the servants,  
"With the children I will follow on!"  
But while he spoke the robbers surround them,  
A dozen with sabres drawn.

Long beards had they, and curly mustaches,  
And soiled the clothes they wore;  
Sharp knives in their belts and swords beside them,  
While clubs in their hands they bore.

Then shrieked the children in fear and trembling,  
And close to their father clung,  
While helpless and pale in his consternation,  
His hands he imploringly wrung.

"Take all I have!" he cried; "take my earnings,  
But let us depart with life.  
Make not of these little children orphans,  
Or a widow of my young wife."

But the gang, who have neither heard nor heeded,  
Their search for the booty begin.  
"Money!" they cry, and swinging their truncheons,  
They threaten with curses and din.

Then a voice is heard from the robber captain,  
"Hold, hold, with your plundering here!"  
And releasing the father and frightened children,  
He bids them go without fear.

To the merchant then the robber responded:—  
"No thanks—for I freely declare  
A broken head you had hardly escaped with,  
Were it not for the children's prayer!"

"Your thanks belong to the children only,  
To them alone your life you owe.  
Now listen while I relate to you briefly  
How it came to happen, and go.

"I and my comrades had long heard rumors  
Of a merchant coming this way;  
And here in the woods that skirt the pillar  
We were lying in wait to-day.

"And lying in wait behind the bushes,  
The children at prayer I heard.  
Though I listened at first with laugh derisive,  
Soon to pity my heart was stirred.

"I listened, and thoughts of my home came to me;  
From its purpose my heart was won.  
I too have a wife who awaits my coming,  
And with her is my little son.

"Merchant, depart, to the woods I hasten;  
And children, come sometimes here,  
And kneeling together beside this pillar  
Give a prayer and a tear!"

\* ) From Paul Soboleski's *Poets and Poetry of Poland*.



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### To Editors and Publishers

*The Polish Question is a timely one throughout the world. The contents of this publication will furnish, we hope, adequate material for use at opportune moments.*

## Adam Mickiewicz



THE political vivisection of Poland imparted a fresh and passionate impulse to the literature of her people; it intensified that love of country, that pride in the past, that grief at political misfortune, that ineradicable hopefulness—so characteristic of the Pole.

The stirring upheaval following the rape of Poland marked the beginnings of a revolt against the restraint and formalism of the pseudo-classical school. Accordingly, we find the younger poets reaching out in various directions to reclaim for poetry sources of inspiration and modes of utterance which had been long forgotten or forbidden. These poets (like Brodziński) were the vanguard of that great movement for aesthetic freedom, which culminated at the beginnings of the nineteenth century in Mickiewicz, Słowacki and Kra-

siński. The widening of the intellectual horizon brought in its wake a thorough acquaintance with English, Italian and German cultures, so that Shakespeare, Scott Byron, Ossian, Dante, Goethe and Schiller became almost Polish poets. Genuine poets arose who by drawing their material from Polish folk-lore, replaced the ancient gods (so much overwrought by the pseudo-classicists) with hermits, knights and spectres.

Among these, Adam Mickiewicz, who began his literary career with a collection of ballads published in 1822-3, was acclaimed as a leader of the romantic movement in Poland. His sympathetic "return to nature", his perfected technique, his profound insight into the intricacy of human motive and emotion, all combined to make him the real introducer of romanticism in his country.

Adam Mickiewicz was born at Zaosie, near Nowogrodek, on December 24th, 1798. As a boy of 14, he saw the Napoleonic hosts marching through his native village on their way to Moscow; in fact, his father's house was the headquarters of the King of Westphalia. The stirring incidents impressed him most strongly, and were later vividly depicted in his masterpiece, *Pan Tadeusz*,—especially in the eleventh book which describes the events of the year of 1812. At that time Napoleon was hailed as a deliverer, and throughout his life Mickiewicz for Napoleon cherished a most profound reverence.

By 1819 Mickiewicz had finished his college course at the university of Vilna. At that time on the Continent Byronism was a passion, a disease. Słowacki, for example, was an avowed admirer and follower of Byron. Malczewski's superb poem, *Maria*, bears traces of that influence; in fact, Malczewski had met Byron in Venice, and had suggested to him the story of Mazeppa. And even Mickiewicz, despite his strong individuality, was at first swayed by the founder and chief exemplar of the "Satanic school" of poetry; his *Konrad Wallenrod*, for example, is Byronic in tone.

Yet it was Buerger's *Lenore* that inspired the first volume of ballads; and Mickiewicz's *Flight* (*Ucieczka*) is nothing but the poem of *Lenore* revamped. It is to be noted that Buerger's beautiful ballad was a source of inspiration to many poets: it spurred the imagination of Walter Scott; it stimulated the muse of Victor Hugo; and it appealed to the youthful fancy of Mickiewicz.

His *Dziady* (In Honor of Our Ancestors) is his own story of his unfortunate love. The poem was never finished, and whatever remains is written in the spirit of *Werther*. The hero of *Dziady*, however, is vastly superior to the sickly sentiment-



talist of Goethe in that he recognizes the guiltiness of his *grande passion*.

In 1824 Mickiewicz was obliged to leave his native soil. He belonged to the Philomathians, a student organization at Vilna, and having taken active part at a patriotic demonstration, he was arrested and sent to St. Petersburg.

In 1824 he was appointed instructor at a high school of Odessa, and the following year he was permitted to visit the Crimea. The splendid Oriental series of **Crimean Sonnets** were the result of this visit.

His *Grażyna* is a poetical story depicting the Lithuanian struggles with the invading Teutonic Knights. With its classic lucidity and reserve, with its purity of style combined with romantic ardor of feeling, with the deep pathos of the situation, with the fire and intensity of the action, with the strong conception of its character, *Grażyna* unquestionably becomes the masterpiece among his shorter poetical stories.

In 1825 he was given a post in the office of Governor-General at Moscow, Prince Galitzin.

Three years later he settled in St. Petersburg, where he was welcomed with boundless enthusiasm by the most cultured circles of Russia. He was on most intimate relations with the leading spirits of the day—with Pushkin, the great Russian poet of the age, and with Oleszkiewicz, the then popular mystic poet. The translations of the **Crimean Sonnets** and of *Konrad Wallenrod* (the latter was published in 1828) created a sensation in St. Petersburg, and indeed, never was a poet more warmly idolized.

In 1829 he left Russia. Through Germany, where he was heartily received by Goethe, and through Switzerland, where he met his two great

Polish contemporaries, Krasiński and Słowacki, he journeyed to Rome, where he formed a close friendship with James Fenimore Cooper, Lamennais and Montalembert.

In 1830, the city of Warsaw rose in revolt against Poland's oppressors. Mickiewicz had foreseen this uprising (for example, in his poem *To the Polish Mother*), and he now hastened to join his countrymen; but when in Posen, he heard the news of the surrender of Warsaw. Broken in spirit,

in 1832 he returned to Paris, where he began his *Pan Tadeusz*, and finally published it in 1834.

*Pan Tadeusz* is the most perfect work of the poet, — and indeed the jewel of all Slavic literature. It is the story of the last raid in Lithuania, and the lawlessness of those civil feuds, so common in former Poland, is painted in vivid pictures. It was the poet's intention to write a pastoral poem in the manner of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*; but the theme grew under his pen into a perfect epic. He made his setting much more national and racy, and he individualized his characters so as to



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make of them a gallery of living portraits of his time. The wondrous richness of the poetic scenes, the imperishable sublimity of the landscapes depicted, the imaginative grandeur of his art, the purity and depth of moral passion,—all reveal a truly great poet in his loftiest moods. Through this poem Mickiewicz has become to Poland what Dante is to Italy, what Homer was to Greece.

*Pan Tadeusz* was his last important work. There are to be mentioned, however, *The Books of the Polish Pilgrimage* and the *Lectures on Slavic Literature*.

"Only that work", he wrote in one of his let-



ters, "is worth something that leads the people to God." His *Pilgrimage* preaches moral perfection in Biblical style and treats of the function of Poland in history and of her mission in the future.

The *Slavic Lectures* were delivered at the College de France and were well attended by the select circles of Paris. The twelfth century especially, the reign of Batory and its literature, and again, the period of Stanisław August, are the most brilliant parts of the work. In his conception of Polish history he is less trustworthy; there persists a certain idealism akin to mysticism which is at variance with the true state of affairs. In his lectures devoted to the literatures of other Slavic peoples he strives to be conscientious and impartial. Russian literature and Servian rhapsodies, for example, are dealt with in brilliant fashion. On the whole, elegance of expression and fertility of fancy rather than depth of scholarship distinguish the lectures,—the first, by the way, to acquaint the culture of Western Europe with that of Eastern Europe.

Scholarly treatment suffered on account of the quickening of his religious sense; about this time he became fascinated by the so called Messianism or the mystic teachings of one Andrew Towianski. His gosselling this "New Religion" cost him his professorship in 1844. The loss of this office was a hard blow to the poet, who, having married the daughter of the celebrated pianiste Szymanowska in 1834, was now the father of a large family.

During the general revolution of 1848, he tried to raise in Italy a Polish legion which, like the famous legions of Dąbrowski during the Napoleonic wars, was to battle for the cause of freedom; the legion, however, later lost its distinctive character and was impressed in the Italian army.

In 1849 he edited "*La Tribune des Peuples*", a publication which was suppressed three months later. Upon the accession of Louis Napoleon to the throne of France in 1852 he was made librarian of the Arsenal Library through the influence of the emperor's uncle, Prince Jerome, former King of Westphalia. During the war in the East Mickiewicz's lifelong reverence for the Napoleons bore fruit in the Latin poem, *Ode in Bomarsundum Captum*, written in honor of Napoleon III.

The ode was his last poetical effort. He was sent to raise Polish legions in Turkey. Travel and camp life alike completely undermined his already weakened constitution, and on November 26th, 1855, at Constantinople he died. His remains were

brought to Paris on January 21, 1856, and interred beside those of his wife at Montmorency; but July 4th, 1890, they were removed to the royal vault at Cracow.

It is remarkable that Mickiewicz, despite his wide knowledge of literatures and languages and despite his cosmopolitan experience, nevertheless stamped his poetry with ardent patriotism. With one wing of his genius (he himself says) he struck at the past, with the other at the future. And the secret of his genius was the perfect balance of his creative, imaginative and emotive powers. The classicist in him existed side by side with the romanticist.

Ethically he is superior to Goethe. Mickiewicz finds the sources of his inspiration in truth and reality; and truth he finally perceives in religiousness and God. Goethe's last words were "More light." The Polish poet found the light and was never in revolt against the Divine power, but at strife only with the sins and evils of humanity.

And morally he is superior to Byron. Byron's muse was not a sane and healthy one. He presents under different names only one hero—himself. The Conrads and Laras and Cains are all proud and lonely souls in revolt. Their mysterious wickedness, their infernal pride, their quixotic generosity, and their ever present melancholy make of Byron's works the most thorough-going negation of the social ideal, to be found in literature. We have seen that if the hero of *Dziady* is at first personal, self-centred, anti-social, he finally subordinates his sorrows to that greater love for unfortunate Poland. The Conrad of *Dziady* basks in the sunshine of religiousness, and lives; the Conrad of Byron wanders in the desert of unfaith and negation, and dies. Mickiewicz's work was one of construction; Byron's that of destruction. That is the reason Mickiewicz is a true seer of his people, satisfying amid misfortune (in Matthew Arnold's phrase) their sense for conduct and their sense for beauty.

He crystalized in his poetry the culture of Poland; to her pride, to her hopes, and to her aspirations he gave the highest literary expression. His works represent the varied thought and the varied external spectacle of the actual society in which he moved. Through Mickiewicz the Poles have awakened to a realization of the spiritual achievements of their race and have come to feel the consciousness of their national solidarity.



# Konrad Wallenrod

By ADAM MICKIEWICZ

**K**ONRAD Wallenrod is considered one of the brightest jewels of Polish literature. Written in 1828, it bid defiance to the pseudo-classical school then holding sway in Poland and introduced the golden period of romanticism. Like *Grażyna*, Konrad Wallenrod is a poetical story depicting the Lithuanian struggles against the encroachments of the Teutonic Knights. The ruthless mission of extermination as carried on by the Knights is vividly described in the poem, the *Prelude* of which we herewith subjoin for the benefit of our readers.

The leading character is taken from the chronicles of the Order. Konrad Wallenrod, Grand Master of the Order, the chronicles tell us, was an enigmatical personage who puzzled his contemporaries by his unaccountable deeds. His strange conduct Mickiewicz explains by suggesting that Konrad was not a German, but the Lithuanian named Alf, who while unable to bear the misery of his fatherland, leaves his home upon conceiving a Machiavellian plan of revenge. When in the Holy Land, he kills the real

Konrad Wallenrod and assuming his name becomes a member of the Order. His ability and military achievements had won for him the office of Grand Master. The long coveted moment for vengeance had come at last. He led the Teutons into Lithuania and allowed himself to be defeated. He justifies his act by the words: "Slaves have no weapons but treason!"

Konrad Wallenrod gained a tremendous hold upon the minds of the readers. Some say that the poem together with Mickiewicz's "Ode to the Youths of Poland" was an incentive to the outbreak of the insurrection of 1831. In fact, Novosiltsoff, at that time one of the highest Russian dignitaries in Poland, said: "Mickiewicz was the minstrel, or rather the *Vy-delota*, \*) of the last revolution." — The Editor.

\*) The *Vy-delotas* were priests whose duty was to relate or sing to the people the achievements of their ancestors, at every festival, and particularly during the autumnal feasts of the he-goat.



## PRELUDE \*)

A hundred years the Knights of Cross and Sword  
Had bathed in heathen blood. Borussia's son  
Now owned at last a foeman for his lord,  
Or fled, or fell. Still pressed the Teuton on,  
And captives took, and slaughtered with red hand,  
Even to the verge of Lithuanian land.

There, as a frontier, lordly Niemen flowed;  
Fanes with bright pinnacles on this side gleamed,  
And forests waved, the gods' revered abode:  
On that, the Cross, to heaven high towering, seemed  
Its arms from hill-top o'er the plain to extend,  
With silent threat: Before me all shall bend!

Here Lithuania's youthful bands appear;  
About, in spoils of bear and fox, they go,  
With bow at at back, and darts in hand, and spear,  
Spying each movement of the Teuton foe:  
There, capped with steel, and girt in armor bright,  
Sits motionless on horse the Black Cross Knight.

He tells his beads, or doth his cross-bow bend,  
With steadfast eye fixed on the adverse host:  
Each watches each; the passage both defend.  
No longer Niemen, glorious once, may boast  
The hospitable shores his waters lave:  
'Twere slavery now, 'twere death to cross that wave.

Alone, wild Lithuania's hop,—whose arms  
Towards the tall poplar on the opposing bank  
Stretch fearless o'er, lured by a stranger's charms,—  
Still climbing on, where river-woods grow rank,  
Where bulrush waves, and drooping willow pines,  
In wreaths fantastic round the loved one twines.

Alone—whilst men incessant war divides,—  
The nightingale that Kovno's groves inspire,  
With brethren from Zapuscan hills' dark sides,  
Loads, as of old, the Lithuanian choir:  
Or, from the brake, searing on free glad wings,  
Round Niemen's isles wheels swift in giddy rings.

Borussia, Lithuania, sisters erst,  
Now stand aloof, estranged; nor yields the spell,  
Save when deep love dares o'er the chasm to burst;  
Of two such lovers this my song shall tell;  
And say, O Niemen, how,—while past thy banks,  
In fell array, rush War's destroying ranks;

While the axe wastes thy hallowed shores, nor spares  
A single garland in a single grove;  
While songbirds sweet the voice of cannon \*\*) scares;  
While all the golden links boon nature wove  
Lie sundered by man's hate,—with gentle might  
The *Vy-delota*'s lays two hearts unite.

\*) From *Konrad Wallenrod*, translated by Michael H. Dziewicki, London: Thomas Richardson & Sons, 1883.

\*\*) The time is about 50 years after the battle of Crecy, when cannon were first used.



# Musings of an Outsider

*By the REV. GEO. J. BLATTER*

NOTE—No responsibility is assumed, nor was it asked to be assumed, by the Editor for this impromptu communication.—The Editor.

**P**OLISH patriots who are willing to face the situation as it actually presents itself, are convinced, that neither Russia, nor Austria, nor Prussia will cede any of the annexed Polish territories for sentimental reasons, or without being either forced thereto by the course of events or being induced to it by compensating advantages either territorial or political.

At the beginning of hostilities, the Grand Duke Mikolaewicz, who with a clique of other dukes and duchesses, is the prime instigator of this war of Russia against Germany and Austria, issued a proclamation promising all the Poles autonomy under sovereignty of the Czar. The nucleus of this new Polish state was to be Warsaw; Austrian Galicia and Prussian Posen, and Silesia were to be annexed. Only among those who forget the past history of Russia could such a bragadoccio proclamation raise any glimmer of hope. The constant and invariable policy of Russia has been to suppress all but the Russian language and religion and to stop at no severity or solemn promise in the pursuit of this policy.

The proclamation was not signed by the Czar, the only authority in Russia; it was not authorized by the holy synod, which might under certain circumstances have sufficient influence to force such a measure. Mikolaewicz was trying to sell the hide before the hunt. From the very beginning it was improbable that Russia would have any Prussian or Austrian land to dispose of. The greater prospects were that Russia would lose Warsaw and perhaps a few other Polish and non-Polish provinces. The vaunted successes of the Russian arms are turning out to be mostly inventions of the Russian censors in order to cover up some of their fearful defeats in East Prussia and lately in Austrian Galicia as well as in the duchy of Warsaw.

Fortunately the hope of a Free Poland rests not with such hollow proclamation, but on the final outcome of the war. Whether the Teutons or the Allies be victorious in the end, the flush of victory may stir up a wave of generosity, which may carry along with it a Free Poland. Therefore, it is hard to ask a Pole anywhere in the world to be neutral. Of course, it is natural that the Pole should desire victory for the side which gives

greater prospect of a new Poland. It is also natural that Russian Poles see more prospect with a victorious Germany, and that German and Austrian Poles should see their hopes in a victorious Russia, simply because they each believe that oppression of their countrymen cannot be so bad anywhere else as it is in their own territory.

I am not a Pole: yet, with every fairminded man, I think it is certainly time that Russia, Austria and Prussia make a restitution of at least a part of the lands unjustly taken from the Poles, that France and England, who have stood listlessly by in the commission and protraction of this crime, should begin to show that their protests are at least partially sincere. They can show it by strongly insisting, that a Free Poland is an indispensable article of the coming treaty of peace. But in regard to this matter, we must clearly distinguish between the sentiments among the fairminded common people and the political and diplomatic views of the governing element in all the nations. If it depended merely on the feelings of the common people in Germany, Austria and perhaps even Russia, a Free Poland would have been established long ago, and at the end of this war there could be no doubt but that it could be had for the asking, no matter who were victor. But as it depends upon the political and governing elements of each nation, Poles can expect nothing at all of the defeated side and must rest all their hopes upon the victor, because the latter can afford to be generous towards his former oppressed subjects.

Taking an impartial view of this situation, where should the sympathies of a friend of Free Poland lie? If I were a Russian, a Frenchman or a Briton, I suppose I would have to say: Of course your sympathies should be with the Allies. If they win, you will have a Free Poland. But I am not Russian, French, English, nor am I Austrian or Prussian, or Belgian, all of which does by no means say that I am a neutral. For one reason I am not neutral: I would like to see a Free Poland and a Free Poland, mighty enough to give a deciding vote in the councils of nations for justice, freedom and religion. Nevertheless I take the liberty of examining the loud claims or as yet silent claims of all the contestants.

Russia is the original arch-plotter and ring-leader in the spoliation of Poland. She started annexing Polish territory as soon as her fanatic orthodox faith had gathered in enough of Tartar



and Cossack hosts to unite the Polish Kief with the principality of Moscow, and kept on annexing until 1772, the year of the first division, climaxing it with the great theft in 1793, the final partition of Poland. Shortly before 1772 Catherine II had entered a secret understanding with Frederic II of Prussia to divide what was left of Poland, but they could not well consummate the theft without sharing with Austria. Through all these transactions Russia proceeded with the most cynical and open disregard of justice and right. Prussia, and more so Austria, advanced at least plausible grounds for the annexation, and they certainly had this reason, that Russia would inevitably have taken all of Poland and would have only laughed at any scruples about the theft on the part of Prussia and Austria. Besides, Russia tyrannized over the Poles without any compensating advantages in education and material prosperity; whereas the tyranny of Austria and Prussia was at least well meaning as far as education, religious liberty and material prosperity were concerned.

In the light of these facts, what chance would there be of a Free Poland in a victorious Russia? Adding thereto the tyranny of its autocratic government, ruthlessly suppressing any but the Russian language and fanatically cramming its orthodox faith down the throat of its subjects, what prospects have the intensely Catholic Poles for a free autonomous government under such a master? Such an alliance would have to be bought with sacrifices intolerable to such a Catholic, patriotic and religious people as the Poles, and the alliance would soon again lapse into a slavery worse than the present. There is no doubt a victory of Russia in this war will be the death of a Free Poland forever.

But perhaps France and England would coerce Russia to a fair deal? France will let ten Polands sink into everlasting oblivion rather than forego one acre of Alsace and Lorraine. Honor demands that she restore Belgium before thinking of Poland. Her governing classes are infidels, they will show little sympathy for Catholic Poland. If France had wished to do the right thing with Poles, it would have set Leszczyński back on the Polish throne instead of the Russian puppet king that sold it to her enemies; it would also have prevented the partition of Poland by her simple veto; it would have supported the Poles in their uprisings, thus showing at least some gratitude for the 100,000 Poles that bled on the battlefields of Europe for France.

And England? Since the reformation, has there been any unselfish and generous act on record in English history? For 300 years England has used the world as her chessboard, on which

her statesmen, the shrewdest and most conscienceless of all nations, have played their game for world supremacy in trade and barter. Never was England moved by any project, which did not clearly promise commercial advantage. Her interest in a Free Poland is summed up in a few verses of her poets and in the private utterances of her statesmen. What advantage could she reap from a Free Poland, especially under control of Russia? It will rather oppose such a Free Poland. England, even if victorious, will safeguard her control of the commerce of the world and will lend a very unwilling ear to any sentimental projects of justice and right: she has always left that to her poets and orators, while her statesmen attended closely to practical results.

What will the Allies do for a Free Poland, if they are defeated? France will then lose more territory or pay an immense indemnity. England will probably then be invaded by Germany, her colonies will be in rebellion. Russia will probably lapse into the same or a worse state of anarchy and helplessness than that after her Japanese war. This is the only bright spot showing in the defeat of the Allies for the Poles; if Russia then does not propose a Polish state, let the Poles in all Russia rise and shake off their yoke; they will certainly have the approval and at least some encouragement from the victorious Germans and Austrians.

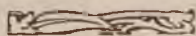
But what chance is there for a Free Poland with a triumphant Germany and Austria? First of all, Austria is waging war principally in order to curtail Russian control over the Slavic neighbors in the Balkans. In self-defense Austria must be ready to snatch Slavic territory from the very maw of Russia, even by bloody conquest. Therefore, Austria would gladly see Warsaw and a half dozen other Polish and non-Polish provinces of Russia and her own Galicia with probably Silesia or Posen established as a Free Poland, especially if one of her Austrian archdukes were elected as ruler. She could keep Serbia to indemnify her for Galicia. Independent Poland would be of immense advantage to Austria and Germany, as she would act as a buffer against Russian aggression and policy of territorial expansion.

As for Germany, Germany is really warring only with England, France and Russia are in war with her only as per accident. In the beginning, of course, Germany had to stand by Austria against Russia; then she had to attack France as the belligerent ally of Russia. Both of them would by this time be suing for peace, if England had not interfered. The secret encouragement of England for years has been fooling France and Russia into the hope of defeating Germany;



France and Russia are not astute enough to see that they are really serving the secret ends of wily Albion. In the event of England's defeat, Germany, as a generous victor, might give Posen for Belgium, and help to wrest Warsaw and other Polish provinces from the overglutted and subdued Tartar. Germany, preferring the seaports of Belgium to her Polish provinces, would also readily recognize the advantages of a buffer state on her eastern boundaries.

A Free Poland is being discussed in high circles in Austria as well in Germany. The Germans as a race have always condemned the partition of Poland. Victorious, the Germans, in the gladness and generosity of triumph, may so evidence this sentiment, that the eyes of even Prussian and Austrian statesmen may be sufficiently opened to see the advantage of a great, flourishing Polish Kingdom as a wall against further Tartar aggression.



## Remember!!

The Niobe of nation is once more the battle-ground of Europe.

In all of war-stricken Europe there is no land so miserable as the provinces of dismembered Poland.

The Poles are all exiles in their own land!

The Poles have been oppressed as no other people in Europe.

Their own schools, their own newspapers, the use of their own language have been strictly forbidden.

Expropriated and not allowed to engage in any political business, they are simply slaves, abject slaves, in their own land!

It is true that the Belgians are in dire distress and that their lot is pitiable.

But they have an avenue of escape to France and to England, where the fraternal hand of charity is freely extended, where among them food and clothes are liberally distributed.

But Poland occupies a most unfortunate geographical position: it is in the war zone along the German, Austrian and Russian frontiers, hemmed in with hostile armies or military law.

It is, therefore, impossible for the Poles to get out of the continent of Europe and go where they could still have hope of relief.

Homeless at home, they have nowhere to seek an haven of safety.

Abuse, cold, hunger, starvation await the unhappy people of Poland.

Their homes are leveled with the ground by the instruments of war.

Many of them are first accused of sniping and then put to death without any ceremony.

Many of their women and girls are ravished and tortured.

For example, Napiorkowski, member of the DUMA, reports a woman whose breast was cut off, and who was sent to Petrograd to give at least one ocular proof of the horrors of war.

Many of the farming villages have terribly suffered.

The peasants have been deprived of their livestock and farming implements.

Fire, shell, bomb, bullet, rapine are all about. There is none to help; there is no place to go.

The war means nothing to the Poles but added suffering and misery.

At the close of the present human butchery there will be nothing left but tears and prayer.

\* \* \*

On another page is published Mickiewicz's beautiful ballad—Father's Return. The children's prayer saves their father.

Will our prayers save the destitutes of Poland? Can you give anything else besides "a prayer and a tear?"

Can you help the children of war-stricken Europe?

Remember that their fathers are all unwilling soldiers.

Remember they are made to fight each another at close range at the very doors of their homes, if they may be said to have homes.

Remember their children are deprived of food, clothing and shelter.

Remember that they are in extreme poverty and destitution.

Remember that they cannot escape, hemmed in as they are in the terrible maelstrom of war.

Remember that starvation threatens them, caught as they are in the throes of war.

Remember that their homes and farms are afire, everything of value to them destroyed.

Do not forget your debt to Kosciuszko and Pulaski.

See what you can do for the countrymen of these heroes.

Remember half their misery can be extin-



guished by compassion, benevolence, humanity, charity.

Remember the business of mankind in this life is rather to act than to know.

Therefore, act, act now, and ever have your mind move in charity.

Do not have your strict neutrality mean strict selfishness.

There is a dependence of one man on another. The interests of the whole world are more or less interwoven.

"Dependence", says one writer, "is a perpetual call on humanity, a greater incitement to

tenderness and pity than any other motive whatsoever."

It is true that there is poverty here, and that "charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool."

But by comparison the misery in Poland is greater and intenser.

Remember, then, Christmas is coming — the time of good will and good cheer.

You have the opportunity to help brighten the Christmas-tide of these children of sorrow and despair, the most helpless and hopeless in all the world.



## The Polish Question in the American Press

Chicago Journal:—In the judgment of most Americans, talk about "Slavic savagery" and "Russian barbarism" has been rather overworked. Russia is far from being the most enlightened land on earth, but she is still farther from being savage. The Slavic peoples are less highly organized than nations with Latin or Teutonic types of speech, but, even if organization and civilization mean the same thing—which is somewhat open to doubt—the Slavs are a long ways on the sunny side of barbarism.

Bohemia has been the center of a high type of culture since the middle ages. Poland, most unfortunate of nations, has shown a virile persistence and patient endurance which forbid any association of barbarism with her name; while Sienkiewicz, Chopin and Mme. Curie show what Poles can do in three widely separated fields of civilized endeavor.

Nor is the case of Slavophobes much better against Russia. Russia has persecuted the Jews, to be sure, and that was a wicked and senseless act—but far worse religious persecutions have stained the annals of nearly every country in western Europe at a time when the civilization of those countries admittedly stood high. The percentage of illiteracy is disgraceful in Russia—and likewise in some parts of the United States. The Russian government is an antiquated autocracy—but everyone knows that the government of Russia is the least Slavic thing in the country. It is an imported institution, built on foreign models, and maintained by a governing caste largely of foreign blood.

Tolstoy, Turgenieff, Dostoevski, Gorki, Mendelev, Metchnikoff, Tschaikowsky—these are not the names of barbarians. They are the standard-bearers of a great people, a people whose civilization may be imperfect, but who already have rendered splendid services to the world.

It would be well if other countries that England could take to heart Lord Robert's injunction not to slander one's enemies.

\* \* \*

Walter J. Ballard in Los Angeles Times: — Hope springs eternal in the heart of Poland. There has been a thousand proofs of it in the century and a quarter since Poland was torn from the Poles and divided among the surrounding kingdoms. The present war has revived the passion for independence to a degree that has not been

felt since 1795. One of the evidences in this country is "Free Poland", a semi-monthly magazine devoted to the interests of Poland and her people.

Some of the leaders of the Polish people, in Europe itself, though not in Poland, insists that as one of the outcomes of the war Poland must be accorded her absolute independence. The proposition of the Czar is to give Poland her freedom in fact, but what is called suzerainty left in Russia, that is, a sort of string to pull if the Polish legislation were unfriendly to the interests of Russia.

There are between 20,000,000 and 30,000,000 Poles on the ancient territory of that kingdom. Perhaps a few are in Russia and the rest partly in Austria and partly in Prussia. If those provinces are under one head as a kingdom subsidiary to Russia, that plan, according to the promise of the Czar, would be within the purpose of Russian statesmanship.

The practical question, of course, is whether Poland would be wise to accept the proposition of the Czar as the beginning and then go forward through the use of its own language and customs and the enactment of such laws as were desired by the Polish people, to work out gradually a state of independence as a sort of intermediate state between the three great rival empires.

Leaders of Polish thought assure the world that the lessons learned by Poland in the last hundred years and more will never be forgotten and that the people have learned the habit necessary to the practice of ordered government.

Poland came to her destruction through excess of freedom, the right, in other words, of every member of the lawmaking body to interpose his personal veto and thereby to paralyze the nation itself. Such a system could not endure and it did not, though Poland was at one time the bulwark of Europe and its king saved Europe from the dominion of the Turk by winning the great battle under the walls of Vienna as long ago as 1689.

Every lover of genuine independence will sympathize with the aspirations of the Poles to have a government of their own, so that they may resume their place in the family of nations. "Free Poland" is the proper title for the publication just begun on behalf of Poland and her people, because they should aim at nothing less than the highest, even if they resort to arms to realize it at once after they have been accorded the rights and the privileges promised by the Russian Emperor.



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