

THE WARSAW WEEKLY

Offices: Szwerynów 4, Warsaw, Poland, Telephone 273-77.
 English Distributors: W. H. Smith & Sons, London
 Subscription rates — zł. 1.75 quarterly, zł. 7.00 yearly.
 Foreign 2/6 or s 0.50 quarterly, 10/- or s 2.— yearly.
 Postal Cheque Account: 29586, Warszawa
 Post Office Account: 615 Warszawa
 Appears on the 1st and 15th of every month.

4th YEAR

WARSAW, AUGUST 1, 1938

No. 21

THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION

The British Upper House, the House of Lords, has lately discussed the advisability of allowing British Ministers to speak in both Houses. The present position is unlike that which obtains in most Continental countries, in that British Ministers can only speak in the House in which they sit. This certainly entails disadvantages. It is possible that an important Cabinet Minister may, if he is the heir to a title, be suddenly transferred to the Upper House by the death of his predecessor in the peerage. This happened lately in the case of Mr. Ormsby-Gore, who on becoming Lord Harlech proceeded to the Upper House, resigning both his seat in the Commons and his portfolio in the Cabinet.

As a general rule, the holders of leading positions in the Cabinet do not sit in the Lords — Lord Halifax's tenure of the Foreign Office is an exception — owing to the importance attached by members of the Commons, and especially by the Opposition, to authoritative answers to the questions raised at "question-time" — that vital hour when the attention of the Empire and of the whole world is concentrated upon the House of Commons. When any Minister sits in the Lords, the questions concerning his Department are answered by his Under-Secretary, or in important instances, by the Prime Minister, who usually holds no portfolio.

On the whole, however, their Lordships did not much favour the new proposal. It was pointed out that the atmosphere of the two Houses was utterly different, that the strain of replying in both Houses, as well as of administration, would be too great for the Minister to bear, and that the present practice was more dignified. One or two peers painted a dismal picture of Ministers running backwards and forwards between the two Houses, and Lord Rankellour, who has 26 years' experience of the Commons, feared that every time there was an important debate, and the Minister was not in his place, the Lower House might echo to ribald cries of "Send for him!"

The relation between the two Houses has been established by a series of typically British adjustments — friction, discussion, and compromise. "With a perfect Lower House," writes the great authority Bagehot, "it is certain that an Upper House would be of scarcely any value". As it is, the Commons exhibits the defects to be found in most transient representative bodies — defects of inexperience, party animosity, hasty legislation, and dependence upon electoral whims. These defects it is the function of the House of Lords to correct, and its permanence as a body gives it stability and experience.

The atmosphere of the two Houses is different indeed. "The Lower Chamber" — to quote Bagehot once more — "is a Chamber of eager politicians; the Upper (to say the least) of not eager ones". The apathy of which he complains has been largely countered in our day by the steady promotion to the Upper House of politicians, distinguished administrators, and others who make the revision of legislation a really valuable and effective service.

It remains true, however, that the calmer tone of the Upper House, and its purely revisionary capacity, make it unattractive to young politicians with their career before them, unless their gifts are rather more academic than suits the atmosphere of the Commons. The promotion of Mr. Baldwin to the Lords is a typical example of the modern practice of giving politicians who wish to retire from the strain of high office, a place where their experience will still be of the utmost value to their country.

The position of the Crown has also been established by a steady evolution, not entirely without conflict, towards its present form of "limited monarchy". How limited that monarchy is, yet how effectual, has been shown by Bagehot, who wrote in 1867: "The Queen has no such (legislative) veto. She must sign her own death-warrant if the two Houses unanimously send it up to her". The principles of Cabinet Government have freed the Sovereign from the burden of executive power and responsibility, and except for the Royal Clemency, now only exercised at the recommendation of the Home Secretary, the Crown plays no judicial role.

What, then, is the function of the King? "To state the matter shortly," writes Bagehot, "the sovereign has, under a constitutional monarchy such as ours, three rights — the right to be consulted, the right to encourage, the right to warn. And a King of great sense and sagacity would want no others." The sovereign stands towards his ministers in a position of great authority, not only on account of his dignity, but owing to his position above parties, and to the wealth of his experience. Cabinets fall, but the King remains.

In the course of a long reign, the Sovereign will have acquired a stock of invaluable experience upon which a wise minister will frequently draw. He will be able to recall the successes or failures of previous administrations, and warn his ministers accordingly. "He will also be able to encourage. It is not the function of this article to anticipate history, but enough has already been written to show how admirably the late King George V accomplished his

difficult task, through a reign packed with such incidents as the Parliament Bill of 1911, the entry of Great Britain into the War in 1914, the first Labour Government in 1924, and the Economic Crisis of 1931. How much his country may owe to him cannot yet be known, but it is certain that his encouragement had great influence on the formation of the first National Government in 1931.

The essential characteristic, therefore, of the British Constitution is that it reflects the historical development of the British people. It is based, not so much upon a specific political theory, or group of theories, as upon a complicated medley of precedent and tradition which represents the accumulated wisdom of our forefathers. Thus was the Common Law shaped, and the British Constitution in many respects resembles the Common Law. Abstract principles of theory are often made to yield to the concrete requirements of fact, and if, as many excellent critics have found, the British democracy exhibits a number of illogicalities, it has yet been proved, somewhat to the exasperation of these excellent critics — thoroughly sound and workable.

INDUSTRIAL FILMS.

After a falling away at the time when sound films were first introduced, the production of industrial films in Britain has revived in recent years, and there is now a number of films which, while they give publicity to the firms or industries sponsoring them, do so by informing and instructing.

Films of this character recently completed include: "Book Bargain," showing the production of a telephone directory (G.P.O. Film Unit); "A Nation's Health Centre," a film of the Boots factory at Nottingham showing the mass production of chemical products (Strand Films); "From Forest to Fabric," a six-reel film on the production of silk fabrics made for Courtaulds (Revelation Films); "Jubilee," a six-reel film on the history of the Dunlop Rubber Co., showing, also rubber production (Publicity Films); "Vitrolite," a technical film dealing with the manufacture and fixing of opaque glass made for Pilkington Brothers (Spectator Films); "And So They've Modernised," a technical film dealing with the reconstruction of modern gas-works made for the iron works department of the Newton Chambers Co., Ltd. (Spectator Films). Publicity Films have also been responsible for the following: "The Gods Look Down," a film for cinemas for the National Benzol Co., Ltd.; "Sam's Investment," a film made for the Austin Motor Co., with Stanley

EMPIRE EXHIBITION



The Palace of Industry.

EMPIRE EXHIBITION.

The four millionth visitor entered the Empire Exhibition at Glasgow the last day of June, and so far the expectations of the organisers of the Exhibition as to the numbers who would attend which have been averaging 80,000 a day, has been more than realised. This is the more satisfactory in that the weather on Saturdays, when the largest crowds are expected, has been generally poor. With the earlier holiday months, July and August, to come, it is confidently expected that twelve to fifteen million people will have passed the turnstiles before the Exhibition closes at the end of October.

While the purpose of the industrial exhibits is primarily that of prestige for the exhibitor, many overseas inquiries have been received in the industrial pavilions from which orders are expected.

The exhibit which has attracted most attention has been the working model of the Victoria Falls in Rhodesia, which is to be taken to the New York World Fair next year. The Highland Village has also been a great success, and this, too, is to appear again in New York on a larger scale. The Tower of Empire, "Tait's Tower," has been another popular feature.

Scottish trade generally has been benefited by the large number of visitors from other parts of Britain and from abroad. Whatever the financial results of the Exhibition itself, and these are expected to be good, Scotland will undoubtedly have gained.

Holloway as one of the actors; three pictures for the Ford Motor Co. of Great Britain, comprising "The Man who Made up his Mind," and two instructional films for dealers; and "A Spot of Camping," a film made for Camp Coffee.

It is anticipated that several of these films will be available for showing in Poland this winter through the medium of the Anglo Polish Society at Warsaw.

BRITISH AGRICULTURE TODAY.

Two important speeches, one by the Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, at the country town of Kettering, and the other in the House of Commons, have once more centred attention upon the state of British agriculture.

Mr. Chamberlain made it clear "that although great efforts were being made to improve the agricultural position and to increase production, where that could reasonably be done, there was no possibility of self-sufficiency in the matter of food supplies for a nation situated as Great Britain was." This is a frank admission of a reality. But it is important for those, at home as well as abroad, who have come to think of Great Britain as primarily a manufacturing country, to realise that the gross annual value of British agriculture is zł 6,250,000,000 a figure which exceeds the annual value of the agriculture of any of her Dominions, although Canada, for instance covers a vast territory and puts agriculture in the forefront of her economy.

The evolution of British agriculture has been gradual, without sudden breaks. This is partly due, as one of England's foremost agricultural experts, Sir John Russell, has pointed out, to the fact that the Englishman is very conservative in the matter of food, "beef, bread, and beer," he writes, "were in old time considered necessary and sufficient for an Englishman — his divinely ordained food, one old writer said. And so, throughout our history, wheat or rye to make bread, barley to make beer, and grass to make mutton and beef have been the central product of British agriculture."

Nevertheless the post-war years have a certain change in this "divinely ordained" state of affairs, and that change is faithfully reflected in agriculture. In the first place, the meat-joint does not now hold the primary

(Continued on page 4)

AVIATION

Economics and Finance

'Mercury' Makes Record North Atlantic Crossing

History has just been made again on the projected North Atlantic air route by the first commercial flight. After being launched in midair from its mother-craft *Mata*, the long-range seaplane *Mercury* made a record non-stop crossing from Foyens (Ireland) to Montreal via Newfoundland on the night of July 20th, — 21st., a distance of 2,800 miles. The *Mercury* crossed the 2,000 miles of ocean in 13 hours 29 minutes at an average speed of over 148 m. p. h. — a record for the land to land crossing between Ireland and Newfoundland. This flight eclipsed the previous time of 14 hours 24 minutes set up by the Imperial Airways flying-boat *Cambria* last August.

In addition to her crew and fuel, *Mercury* was carrying approximately half-ton of news reels, photographs and newspapers recording the visit to Paris on the previous day of Their Majesties the King and Queen. After reaching Botwood, *Mercury* was scheduled to fly on to Montreal and New York thus giving the public in Canada and the United States an opportunity of having up-to-the-minute films and papers which had been the first to be rushed across the North Atlantic by air express.

It was in this auspicious manner that Imperial Airways launched the Atlantic-flying programme of 1938, details of which were given in the House of Commons on July 20th, by the Under-Secretary of State for Air, Captain Balfour.

The *Mercury* is scheduled to make three return Atlantic flights. The *Cabot*, an improved type of Imperial flying-boat capable of carrying a bigger load than the flying-boats employed in the 1937 Atlantic tests, will make two return flights and there will be two other flights by the *Albatross* type of land-plane. Another *Albatross* will fly to New York and remain on the other side of the Atlantic to carry out survey flights under winter conditions.

The first *Albatross* will make its crossings early in September and early in October, while the new *Cabot* flying-boat will make its trans-ocean flights towards the end of September and about the middle of October.

Captains and crews for all flights will be provided by Imperial Airways, and the whole programme will be carried out jointly by the Air Ministry and Imperial Airways, the ultimate aim being, of course, the establishment of a regular mail and passenger service on this all-important North Atlantic air route.

Three Million Pound Aircraft Factory

The Birmingham City Council have recently decided to sanction negotiations for the sale of 120 acres of Corporation land for the erection by Lord Nuffield of a factory for production of aircraft.

It is estimated that the expenditure upon the proposed works will total £3,000,000 and that it will provide employment for about 15,000 people.

The land was acquired by the Corporation two years ago for housing purposes and, subject to the Dunlop Rubber Company (from whom the land was purchased) agreeing to waive their restriction for building for industrial purposes on the land, it is understood that work on the building of the new factory will be put in hand immediately.

R. A. F. Triumphs

The Royal Air Force can now claim for Great Britain the world record for a long-distance non-stop formation flight. This feat was achieved on the 8th of July, when four Vickers Wellesley bombers of the R. A. F. Long-Range Development Unit landed at Ismailia, Egypt, after flying 4,300 miles. This was an improvement on the Italian record by nearly 1,000 miles. The planes started on their journey from Cranwell, Lincolnshire, flew to Ismailia, then to a point on the Persian Gulf, and returned to Ismailia. The total time in the air was approximately 32 hours and the average speed 135 miles an hour. The aircraft flew at an average height of 10,000 feet, and no technical difficulties were encountered throughout the journey. The flight was commanded by Squadron Leader R. Kellert and each machine had a crew of three.

On the 8th of July the R. A. F. accomplished yet another feat. Eleven Hawker - Hurricane fighters created a record for a formation flight to Paris, despite the extremely unfavourable weather conditions, by covering the 235 miles from Northolt to Le Bourget in 66 minutes, an average speed of 213 miles an hour. A few days later — on the 12th of July — the fastest flight yet made between London and Paris was accomplished when these planes returned in formation to London, covering the 235 miles in 51 minutes, at an approximate speed of 260 miles an hour. These remarkable feats afford added proof of the superior quality of British engineering and construction and of the efficiency and enterprise of the personal of the R. A. F.

Work of the International Air Traffic Association

Nineteen years ago, in the summer of 1919, and as a result largely of British enterprise, experts representing pioneer air companies came together at the Hague, in order to consider the formation of an international organisation to promote co-operation between the air-lines of Europe.

It was a British pioneer, the late Sir Sefton Branker, who presided over that first meeting; and as a result, the International Air Traffic Association was formed — an Association to which the air travelling public owe a very considerable debt of gratitude, seeing that its unremitting work has smoothed the way for regular international air travel, and has solved innumerable problems in connection with the making of air journeys from one part of Europe to another.

The other day, flying from all parts of the Continent, members of the I. A. T. A. assembled at Budapest for an annual conference at which many traffic problems were passed under review.

The one or two pioneer organisations which were instrumental in forming the Association in 1919 have grown in numbers until there are now nearly 30 air-line companies who are members of the Association; while the mileage of Europe's airways has increased from a few hundred miles in 1919 to over 80,000 miles in 1938.

Today the Association is actively at work in many important directions, it being the general aim to simplify in every way possible the ever-increasing flow of traffic over the network of European air-lines.

BRITISH INSURANCE RESULTS.

Analysed results now available for 1937 of 29 leading British insurance companies or groups not only show what vast sums of money these institutions control, but also indicate the important part they play in the commercial life of the nation. The fire premium income of the companies in 1937 increased by £767,000 to over 247½ millions, this growth being well spread over business at home and abroad. After allowance for claims and expenses and for a uniform provision of 40 per cent. in respect of unexpired risks, the result was a surplus of over 45 millions, equivalent to about 11 per cent., the corresponding percentage for 1936 having been 9.35 per cent. The premium income for accidents and miscellaneous risks accounts for an even higher aggregate than the volume of fire premium income, and in 1937 it rose to more than 409½ millions, an increase of 44,261,000 compared with 1936. In this branch of insurance there remained a surplus of more than £3,300,000, equivalent to 4.72 per cent., both the total and the percentage of surplus being higher than in the preceding year. There was also an increase in the total premium income from marine insurance.

The aggregate figures for fire, accident and miscellaneous, and marine risks insured by British companies are impressive. The total premium income of the offices in 1937 was nearly £129 millions, an increase of 47 millions over the preceding year, and the total result was a surplus of over 48½ millions, equal to 6.52 per cent. on the premium income.

FINANCIAL BUOYANCY

According to official statistics recently issued, Great Britain's gold reserves at the end of March this year amounted to over 4835 millions at a valuation of 277 per fine ounce. Of this amount £297½ millions are held by the Exchange Equalization Account and the rest by the Bank of England. While the existence of these immense reserves, which compare with a little over 708½ millions held last year, bears witness to the stability of the country's financial resources, the fact that during the past half-year there has been no reduction in the supply of bank credit is proof of the buoyancy of British financing. During the year ended May 31st. last the Bank rate has remained at 2 per cent., and discount rates at ½ per cent., so that trade has had the benefit of cheap money. At the same time British banking policy has done much to prevent British trade from becoming unduly affected by the tendency to contraction in international commerce. Thus during periods when conditions were less propitious for new capital issues, loans have been available for the country's financial manufacturers. Such banking facilities have undoubtedly mitigated the effects of temporary setbacks in world trade, and, comparing the first five months of the years 1937 and 1938, there was an expansion in bank advances of £27 millions in the latter period.

Meanwhile the internal position of British banking institutions continues to be sound. Two of the leading British banks have recently declared interim dividends of 5 per cent. and 7 per cent., and a well-known London discount house has announced that it is maintaining this year its previous rate of dividend of 7½ per cent.

CONVERSION OF POLAND'S DOLLAR LOANS

The final results of the conversion of several Polish dollar bond-issues, which closed in May, are at present available. The exchange of former dollar bonds for scrip of the 4½ per cent. Internal Loan of 1937 extended to \$ 21,283,700 of the 7 per cent. Stabilisation Loan, \$ 9,233,400 of the 8 per cent. Dillon Loan, \$ 6,885,150 of the 6 per cent. Loan of 1920, \$ 4,759,000 of the 7 per cent. Warsaw Loan, and \$ 6,186,700 of the 7 per cent. Silesian Loan, the total amount presented for conversion being \$ 48,918,000. Bonds of the 4½ per cent. Internal Loan of the total face value of 312,782,300 zlotys were issued in exchange. The total of the issue and details of the redemption scheme will be announced shortly as the first payment on the capital of the loan is due on August 1st next.

DIRECTIONS OF POLAND'S FOREIGN TRADE

During the first five months of this year Germany occupied first place in Poland's foreign trade, Polish exports to the Reich reaching a value of 102,374,000 zlotys, and Polish imports from that country a value of 120,808,000 zlotys. The United Kingdom was second (Polish exports 92,279,000, Polish imports 62,920,000 zlot.). The figures of Poland's trade with the other principal European countries for this period were: Belgium (Polish exports 23,329,000, Polish imports 19,697,000 zlot.), Czechoslovakia (exports 16,830,000 zlot. and imports 19,697,000 zlot.), France (exports 19,929,000 zlot. and imports 17,125,000 zlot.), Switzerland (exports 12,112,000 zlot. and imports 10,507,000 zlot.), Sweden (exports 25,970,000 zlot. and imports 18,507,000 zlot.), Italy (exports 27,006,000 zlot. and imports 14,439,000 zlot.), and the U. S. S. R. exports 359,000 zlot. and imports 5,558,000 zlot.). With the exception of Germany, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, Poland's trade with the above countries yielded balances in favour of Poland.

THE WORLD'S FUR MART.

Recent political and economic developments in different parts of the world have affected the British fur trade in various ways. Refugees from Germany in recent years have included a considerable number of fur-traders, many of whom brought their business connexions, with large circles of customers all over the world, to London. Now a similar transfer of fur-trading activities is being made from Vienna.

The Hudson Bay Company, still the most important fur-trading organisation in the world, laid the foundations of this remarkable business, which has flourished ever since on the banks of the Thames. Between London Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge lies the centre of the entrepot trade in a valuable fur for the whole world, and London today occupies a dominating position in the international fur market. Some of the finest fur designers, who were formerly well known in other capitals, are now working in London. In fur dressing and dyeing the British industry has established its claim to be the most varied and competent of any in the world. It now handles three or four times as many skins as it did before the advent of the Nazi regime to power in Germany. British fur brokers and merchants have a high reputation abroad, as was evidenced by the appointment of two members of a London firm to conduct the Leningrad fur auctions.

RECORD FIGURES OF POLISH BUTTER EXPORTS

Butter exports from Poland during the first half of this year reached a total of 82,364 metric quintals (315 per cent of the quantity exported during the first half of 1937), exceeding the total quantity exported during the whole year 1937 by 3,494 quintals; 84 per cent of this year's butter exports were taken up by the U. K. as against 50 per cent last year; butter exported to Germany remained practically at the same level; more butter was sold to Palestine, while only small quantities were shipped to other countries. Nearly all the shipments (99.4 per cent) were marketed by co-operative dairies, and 88 per cent (72,585 quintals) were of standardized quality. The value of the exports totalled about 21 million zlotys.

BRITISH MOTOR INDUSTRY

1937 was a new peak year for the British motor industry. Recorded production showed an increase of 10 per cent. over 1936, while the increase over the base year 1924 was no less than 246 per cent., equal to a growth in production of over 361,000 vehicles. The British motor industry now gives direct or indirect employment to over 1,300,000 people, in that total being included those engaged in goods vehicle transport, in the operation of public service vehicles, taxicabs, the oil and tyre industries, general distribution and garages. Apart however from this important contribution to employment, the motor industry through direct taxation and duties provides a sum equal to one-eleventh of the total national revenues. Thus in the relatively short period of 50 years since the first beginnings of motor traffic, mechanical road transport has grown to be one of the three leading industries in the United Kingdom.

INDEBTEDNESS OF POLISH BANKS ABROAD

At the end of last year the indebtedness of the Polish banks with foreign credit institutions totalled 187.6 million zlotys, while the balances of these banks with the same institutions amounted to 75.9 million zlotys. The resulting balance of 111.7 million zlotys against the Polish banks was 27.4 million zlotys less (14.1 per cent) than at the end of 1936. The reduction of the sums receivable by Polish banks from credit institutions abroad came to 1.6 per cent for last year. In the U. S. A. there was a favourable balance of at the end of last year 7.6 million, those in all the other countries being against the Polish banks, the biggest one, 34.0 million zlotys, with French banks. During last year the adverse balance with Italian institutions was substantially reduced, while that with the English banks showed an increase.

Bank Amerykański w Polsce Sp. Akc.

Królewska 3 — Warszawa

All kinds of Banking and Foreign Exchange business transacted Bonds and Stocks bought and sold.

Safe deposit vault equipped according to the most modern technical requirements. Private Safes from 6 zł. a quarter.

Aleksander Gierymski (1850—1901)

With the opening of its new edifice, the National Museum of Warsaw has introduced an interesting innovation. Several rooms of the rez-de chaussé of the building are specially prepared for temporary exhibitions, which will constantly take place.

Already the first temporary exhibition of the National Museum has become the artistic sensation of Warsaw. It is dedicated to one of the most brilliant painters in Poland, ALEKSANDER GIERYMSKI (1850—1901), who with Józef Chełmoński, Leon Wyczółkowski, Jacek Malczewski and few others was one of the leaders and first creators of modern Polish art. This exhibition for the first time permits the public to understand the great artistic rôle, played

by Gierymski in the history of the Polish modern plastic art; and to admire his scope and possibilities. The organization of the exhibition, the number and selection of the painter's works show the development, changes, impressions and results of Gierymski's art and life. A good and richly illustrated catalogue, edited by the National Museum and prepared by Juliusz Starzyński, with a short biography, is a valuable guide for visitors.

ALEKSANDER GIERYMSKI was born in Warsaw at 1850. He began his art studies at the Warsaw School of Design, and in 1868 went to Munich, where was his elder brother, Maksymilian. His studies were finished in 1873, when he exhibited his painting of the trial scene from "The

Merchant of Venice" (created under the impression of Italian XV cent. art, and especially of Carpaccio).

In the year 1873 he visited Italy for the first time and in 1875 returned to Warsaw, going back to Rome in May of the same year; staying there with a short interval until 1879. In that epoch he was influenced by Titian and Tintoretto and produced "Arbour" and "Italian Siesta", which are counted among his finest works.

At the end of 1879 he was again in Warsaw. During 1882 Gierymski enriched his portfolio with pictures of Warsaw and with designs and views of Kazimierz, Putawy, and other Polish scenes.

From 1888 he was at Munich, studying at Schleissheim, and during the summer of 1889 at Kufstein. Apart from the paysages, this period gave interesting views of Munich by a lateral light. Some of these night-pictures must be counted among the masterpieces of the painter, so impressively does he operate with the effect of light and dark.

In October 1890 Gierymski arrived in Paris, where his first works were "The Opera" and "The Louvre" by night. From 1891—2 his works show great change in character and style. He was influenced by Corot, Courbet, Boudin, Lépine, Manet up to the impressionists, which latter style he adapted to his own, remaining in some measure always faithful to the realistic and naturalistic style of his works.

The years 1893—5, spent in and near Krakow introduce impressionism into Polish paysages. At that time Gierymski created two excellent pictures at Bronowice (a village near Krakow).

In 1895 he is again at Munich, and in 1897 in Italy, working on several of his great works: the



Aleksander Gierymski, "Rococo Lady".

Doges-Palace in Venice, Basilique of San Mark's, Cathedral of Siena, etc., counted among his masterpieces, treated with naturalism and realism, and in impressionistic style, which makes the pictures even to-day, astonishing in their freshness and perfection.

In 1899 he was at Rome, Paris and finally in 1900 at Verona, where he made several paysage sketches, justly counted by Juliusz Starzyński as among his finest works.

Worn out by a life of intensive work, the painter died in his 51-th year in Warsaw on March 8.1901.

Visiting to day the exhibition of Aleksander Gierymski's works one can understand and appreciate his rôle in the development of Polish art. One can find satisfaction in the admirable Italian paysage, another in the masterly execution of the interiors or in the characteristic paintings of old Warsaw. But in our opinion above all Gierymski will remain as an unsurpassed master, who deepened the impression and expressiveness of the lights and shadows to extremes, making of them the most artistic element of his painting.

AUSTRALIAN LETTER

by Helen Heney

Anxiety is being felt in Australia over the deadlock in London over the trade talks, since their collapse, which is a possibility which cannot be overlooked would have not only unfavourable reactions within the empire, but would be regarded by nations outside it as of grave significance. Some of the points at issue are however so important to both countries that neither side can easily give way. The outcome is being anxiously awaited both here and at home.

Particulars of a new trade agreement between Japan and Australia for a year, have just been made public. It is regarded as a stop gap measure, since Japan is in a state of economic uncertainty, and will be followed in due time by a completely new agreement.

The two chief items differing from the previous agreement are the inclusion of staple fibre piece goods in the artificial piece silk goods quota, and a lessened quantity of Australian wool for Japan. The Consul General for Japan, Fr. Wakamatsu, stated officially that it was a cause for great congratulation that trade relations between the two countries had now been put on a new basis, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Lyons also expressed satisfaction. This attitude is important in view of the very strained trade relations prevailing not long ago, and also of the anti Japanese feeling shown since the early days of the Chinese Japanese war.

A new shipping agreement was settled at the same time, which provides for the pooling of all cargoes to and from Japan, and lays down the proportions of that total between the various shipping companies.



ALEKSANDER GIERYMSKI.
Basilique of Saint Mark's, Venice.

Count Beniowski's Visit to Japan in 1771

By Aleksander Janta

The British Museum, Department of Manuscripts, contains under the number 5359 — 5362 the holograph memoirs of Mauritius Augustus Count de Beniowski, a very unusual character, soldier, adventurer and explorer who in 1771 sailed from Kamchatka to Macao, touching on his way at several points the shores of secluded Japan, unknown and rather uninviting to foreigners at that time.

Very few memoirs, very few books indeed have had so much influence on writers as the first edition of Count Beniowski's memoirs which appeared in two volumes first in English, London 1790, followed closely by the text of the original French version which was also published by Messrs. Robinson, of Paternoster Row. The book became extremely popular, and was translated into many other European languages, creating enormous interest and sensation especially in Poland, a legend also, rapidly growing around the personality of the Count, who after returning to Europe organized a private expedition to found a colony in Madagascar and was shot down by French troops on the 23rd of May, 1786. Poets and novelists have written about his life, which from the field of history became more and more that of a literary personality. The newly published Polish Biographical Encyclopedia contains one and a half quota pages in small type enumerating books and publications on Beniowski. A sufficiently eloquent illustration! At the same time very few historical facts except his own

narrative and despite many learned commentaries, are known to exist, especially as far as his trip to Japan is concerned. This is due to the fact, that no European commentator has up till now made use of the existing Japanese documents on his visit.

Count Beniowski, an aristocrat of Hungarian origin joined in Poland a catholic confederation against the protestants, who were supported by Russia. He was taken prisoner in a battle and exiled as far as Kamchatka. Here his restless and adventurous spirit did not let him remain too long. According to his own relation he staged a revolt in Bolchievick, where he was staying, captured the corvette St. Peter and Paul, and with 85 fellow prisoners set sail on the 12-th of May 1771. After navigating the Behring sea and claiming to have touched even the shores of America (namely the Isle of Kodiak south of Alaska) we find the vessel, flying a Polish flag, on the Eastern coast of Japan. According to Count Beniowski's memoirs, he discovered an island which he called Isle of Liquor from whence he proceeded to the shores of Japan, found himself in a gulf which he calls Usilpatchar, actually somewhere in Japan, was received very courteously by a high official whom he took for a king and whom he called Ulikamby. He claims to have obtained from him permission to return to Japan and to open up a trade in furs. The next point Beniowski's vessel touched in Japan appears to have been

Tousa. He afterwards anchored off the coast of Tacasima Island, almost lost his ship in a storm as it grounded at the shores of an isle which he called Usmay Ligon, and finally reached Formosa, where he fought a battle as an ally of one of the chiefs of a tribe. This being successful he signed with the head of the victorious tribe a treaty of friendship, "accepting the commission of the province of Havangsin, on condition that I should support him against the Chinese, until they were driven out of his dominions." With the idea of returning to Formosa and founding there a colony he set sail for Canton and on September 21-st arrived at Macao. Many volumes have been written about this voyage, discussing the veracity of Beniowski's account. His memoirs were, written in Europe where he returned early in 1777. A writer by temperament and an untired adventurer who on the ground of his tales of travels and discoveries in the East wanted to persuade either the French government or private personalities (in this he succeeded finally) to finance his expedition to Madagascar. Monsieur Beniowski did not always faithfully observe the truth, and what his memory did not retain, this he added from imagination, making his story as colourful and himself as heroic as possible. His story was received with suspicion, and immediately commentaries followed, altogether not too favorable to the Count, who in the mean time having perished miserably, failed in his ambition to become king of Madagascar. His financial backer Mr. J. Hyacinth de Magellan, a descendant of the discoverer who was ruined thereby,



A contemporary print of Beniowski's visit.

getting in return nothing but the documents of Beniowski and Mr. W. Nicholson, a Fellow of The Royal Society finally prepared the memoirs for publication.

It was too difficult at the time of publication to verify the amount of truth which those memoirs contained. Beniowski's share in the troubles of Poland was a recent business. "We are not in the dark with regard to the land passage across the Russian dominion in Asia, etc.," writes Nicholson. The only part of the Count's adventures which cannot be readily compared with collateral testimony of others, consists in the visitation of the islands of Japan, Liquelo and Formosa."

Such verification, which was impossible at the time of the publishing of Beniowski's memoirs, has never yet been seriously attempted in an exhaustive manner which would, in the light of Japanese testimony establish once forever what can be regarded as trustworthy in Beniowski's

memoirs. Captain Passfield Oliver, who prepared the English Edition of Beniowski's memoirs, published in 1898, says in his conscientiously written preface to this work: "It is possible that some day in the archives of the Netherlands Trading Company, which may have been preserved in the old factory of Desima at Nagasaki records will be found which may throw light on the visit of Count Beniowski to Japan. There can be no doubt, that Beniowski's adventure, belongs to the most daring exploits of those early travellers and adventurers on the coast of Japan. Here is a man with very little knowledge of navigation, with vague ideas about geography, embarking on a small sailboat, with a gathering of dangerous men, some of them convicts, some of them prisoners, who were escaping just like him, some of them, like the captain of the ship, just drunkards, to whom in general no joke would seem too tough and no proposition too bold or too daring."

(To be continued).

