

Sketches
in
Poland

FRANCES
DELANOY
LITTLE

MELROSE

Sketches in Poland

FRANCES DELANOY LITTLE



H. R. P. Reynolds

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The Warren Farm

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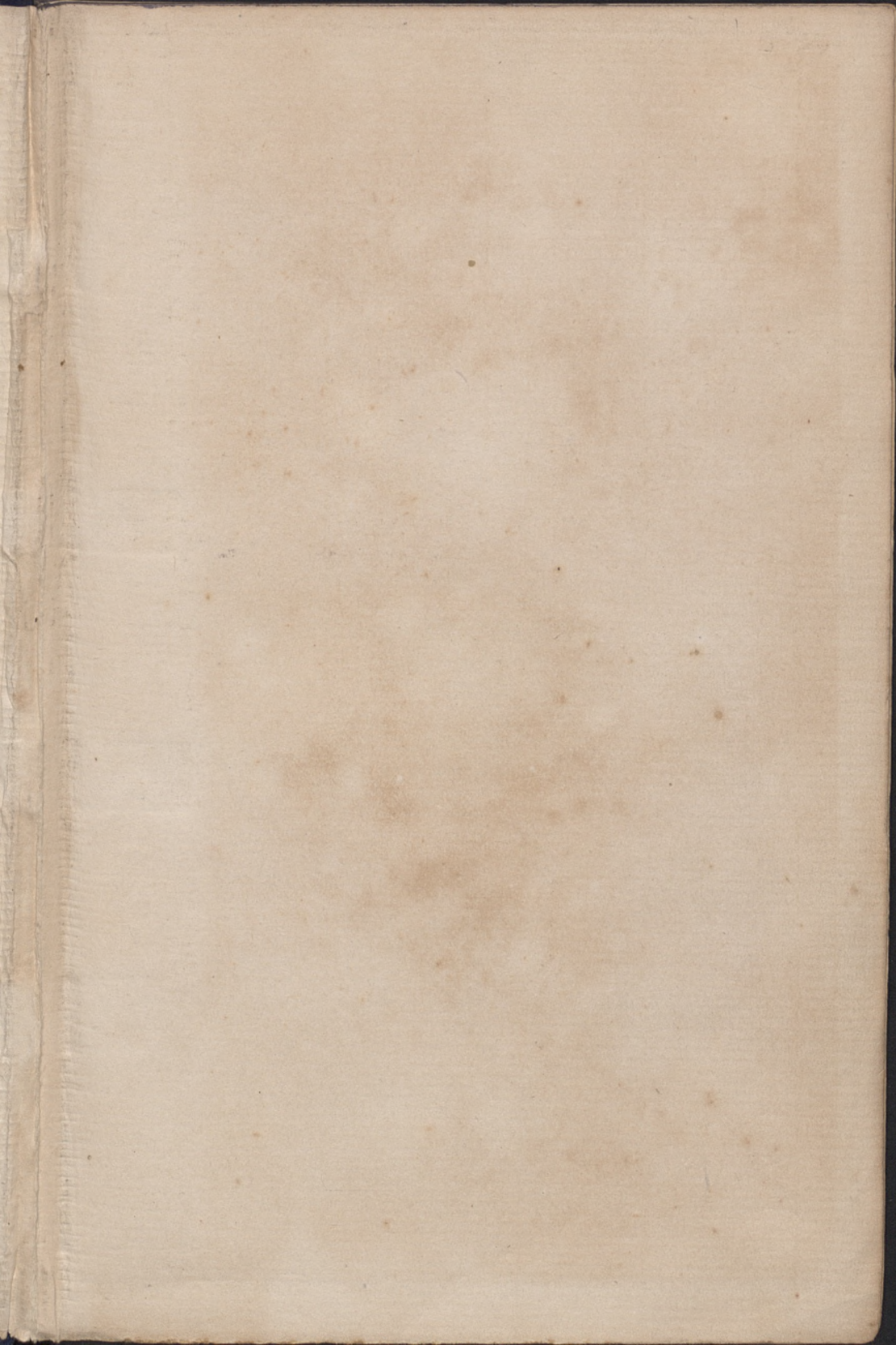
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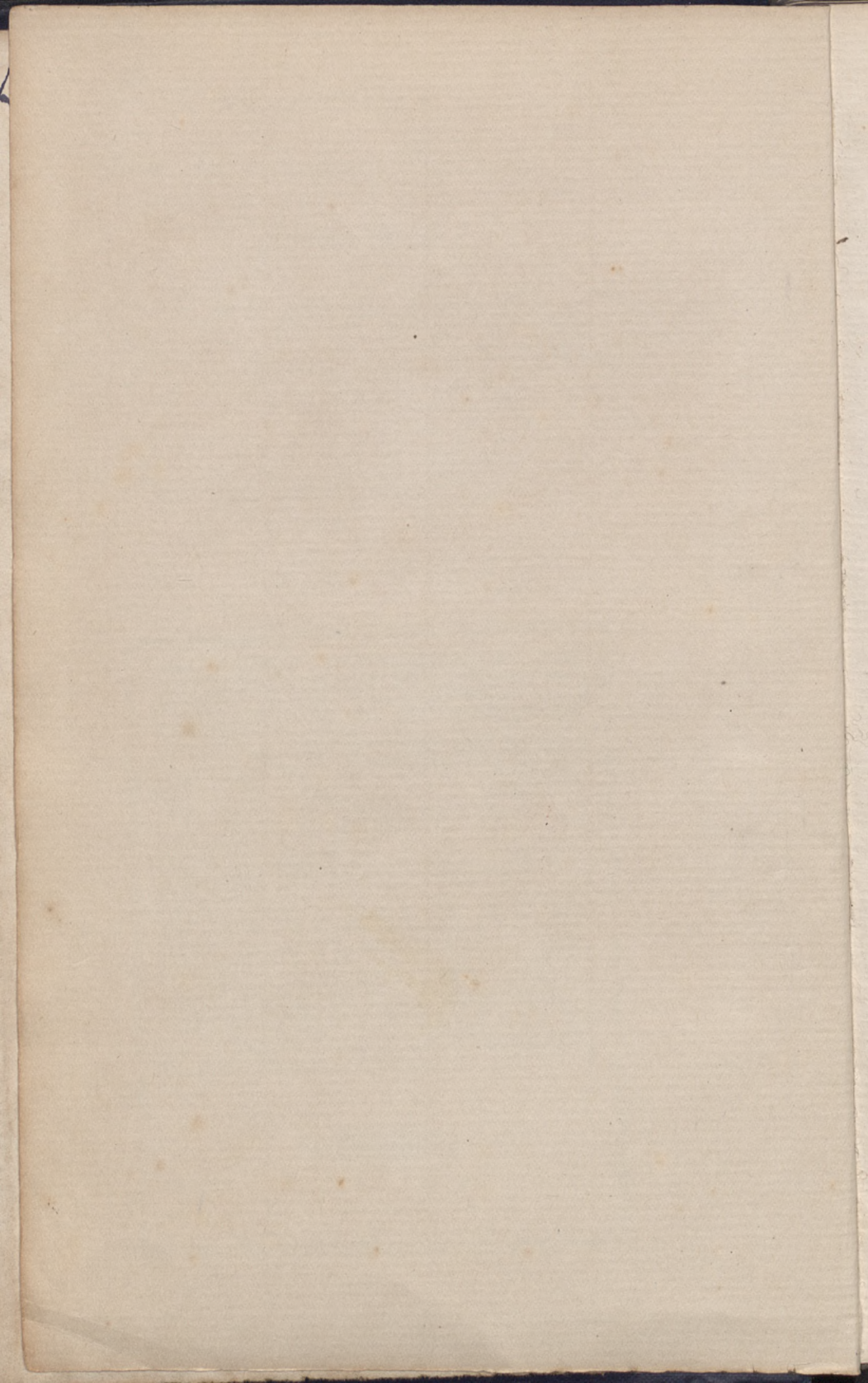
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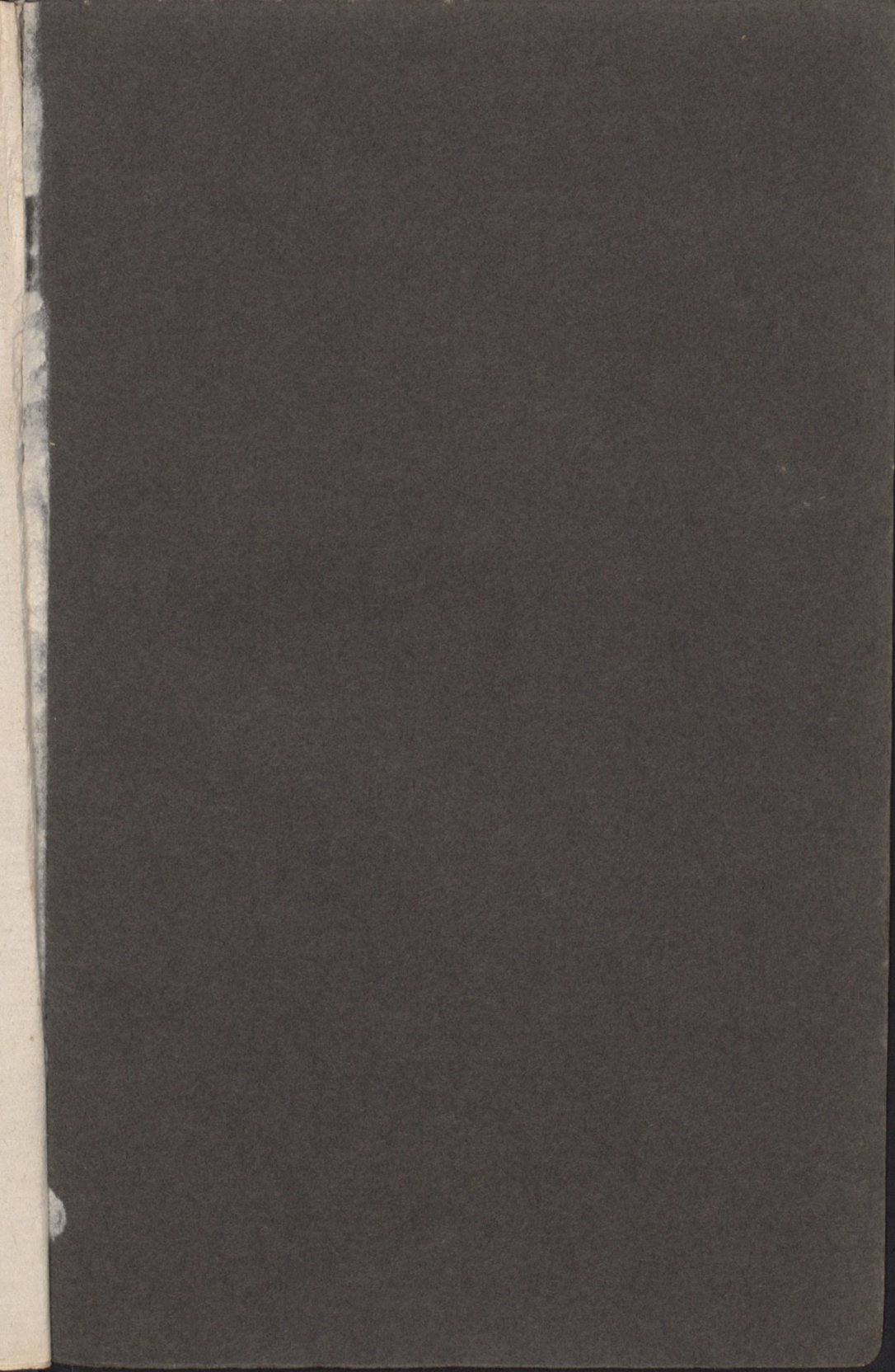
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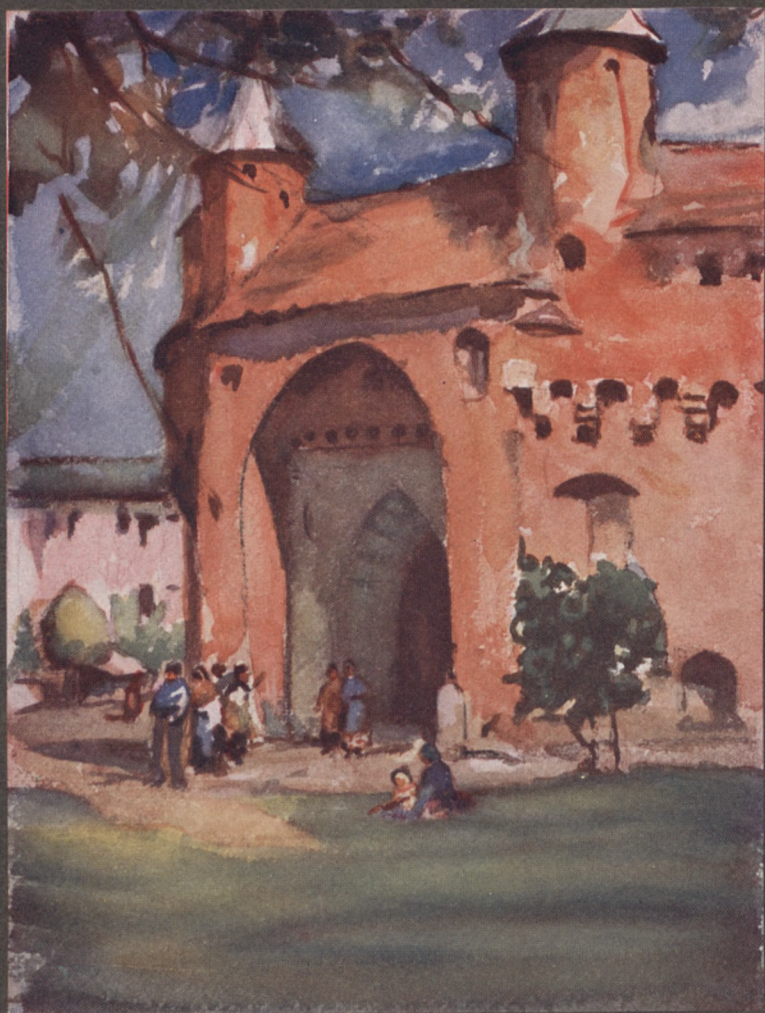
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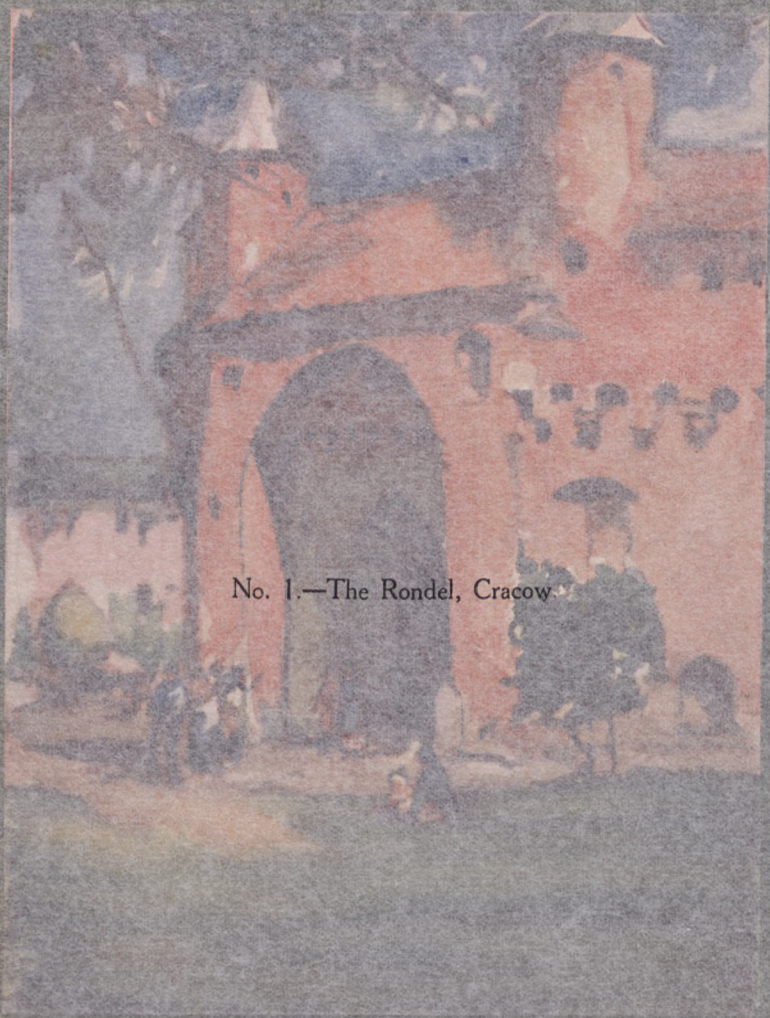
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No. 1.—The Rondel, Cracow

SKETCHES IN POLAND

Written and Painted by
FRANCES DELANOY LITTLE

WITH AN HISTORICAL POSTSCRIPT

LONDON : ANDREW MELROSE, LTD
3 YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.



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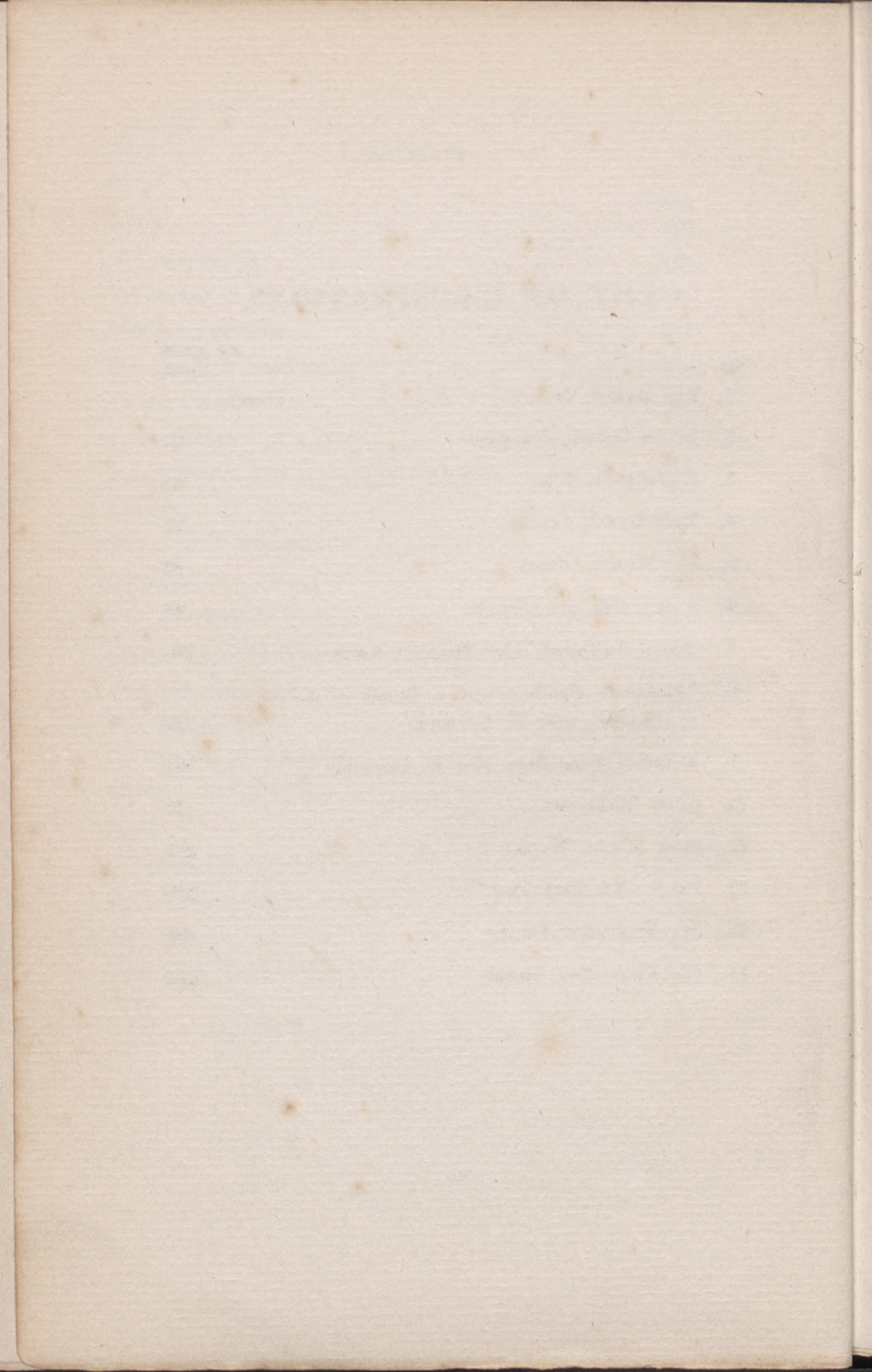
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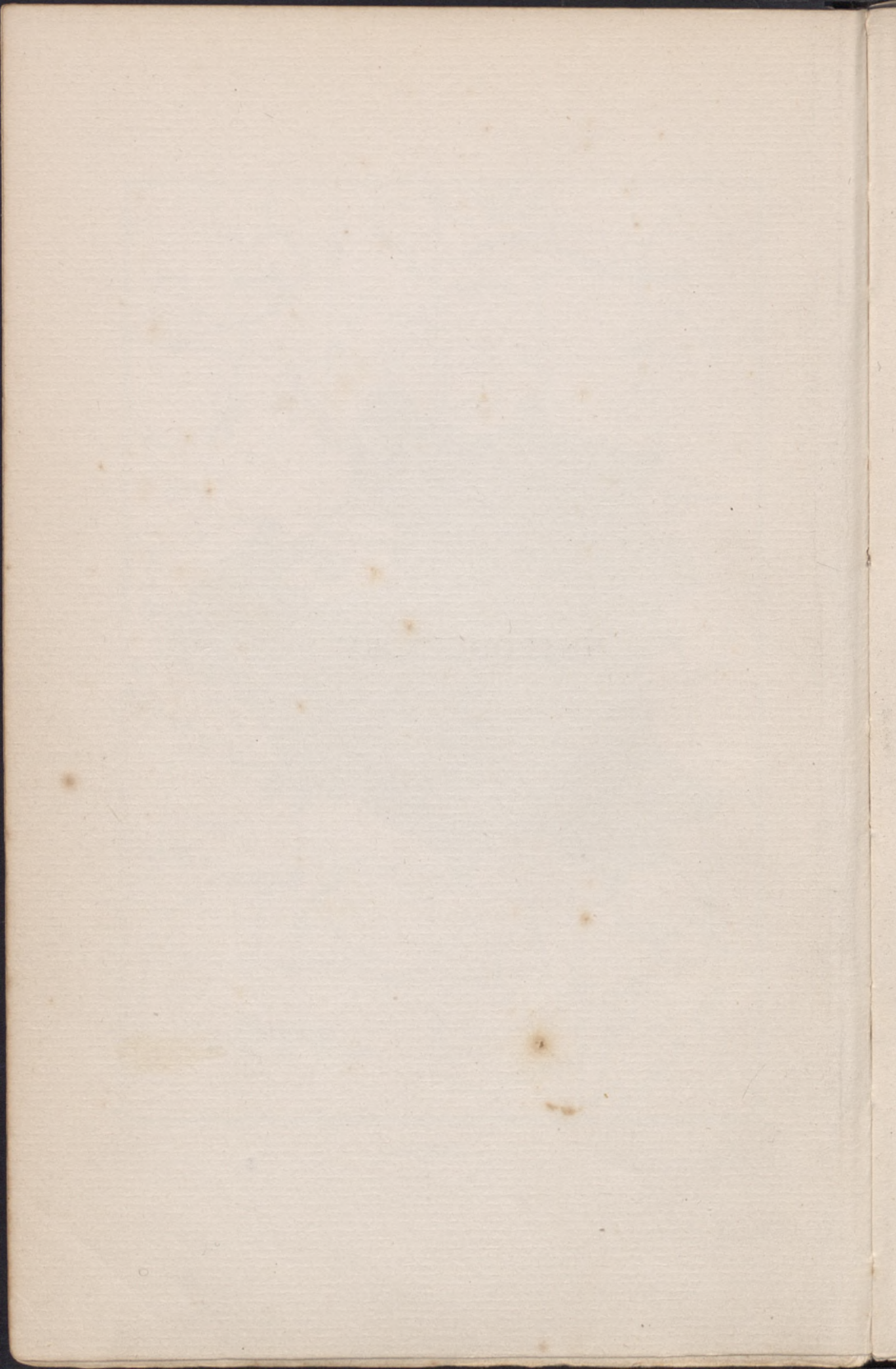


Аляска



POLAND.

INTRODUCTORY



Introductory

WHEN the world that we had lived in passed away, and when the people that we were four months ago had suddenly died, and we stood like newly-incarnated souls and shuddered, though not with fear, on the verge of a new world, then we saw, astonished, that we were still holding in our hands some things we had brought with us out of that past life: they were changed, perhaps, by the shock of fire, but they had not perished, and among them are belief in certain rights and duties, and pity for certain wrongs. Therefore I make bold to show what I carried with me out of that former time. It is the story of my journey in Poland, the country that was lying captive while all we lived at ease, the nation that had "no future" while we were "making progress," that now in our days of peril turns towards us in friendliness and hope, Poland who comes in the midst of death to a new birth, who will live, we believe, even as we shall, in freedom in the new age of mankind.

This book is no grave political, historical or sociological work on Poland. Whatever value it may have lies in this—that it is a truthful record of

what I have seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears, descriptions of the places that I visited, the people whom I met and the impressions that they made on me; sketches, in fact, written as I painted them, with no other motive than that strange human craving we all have that others should see the things that we saw and be saddened by the thing that has made us sorry.

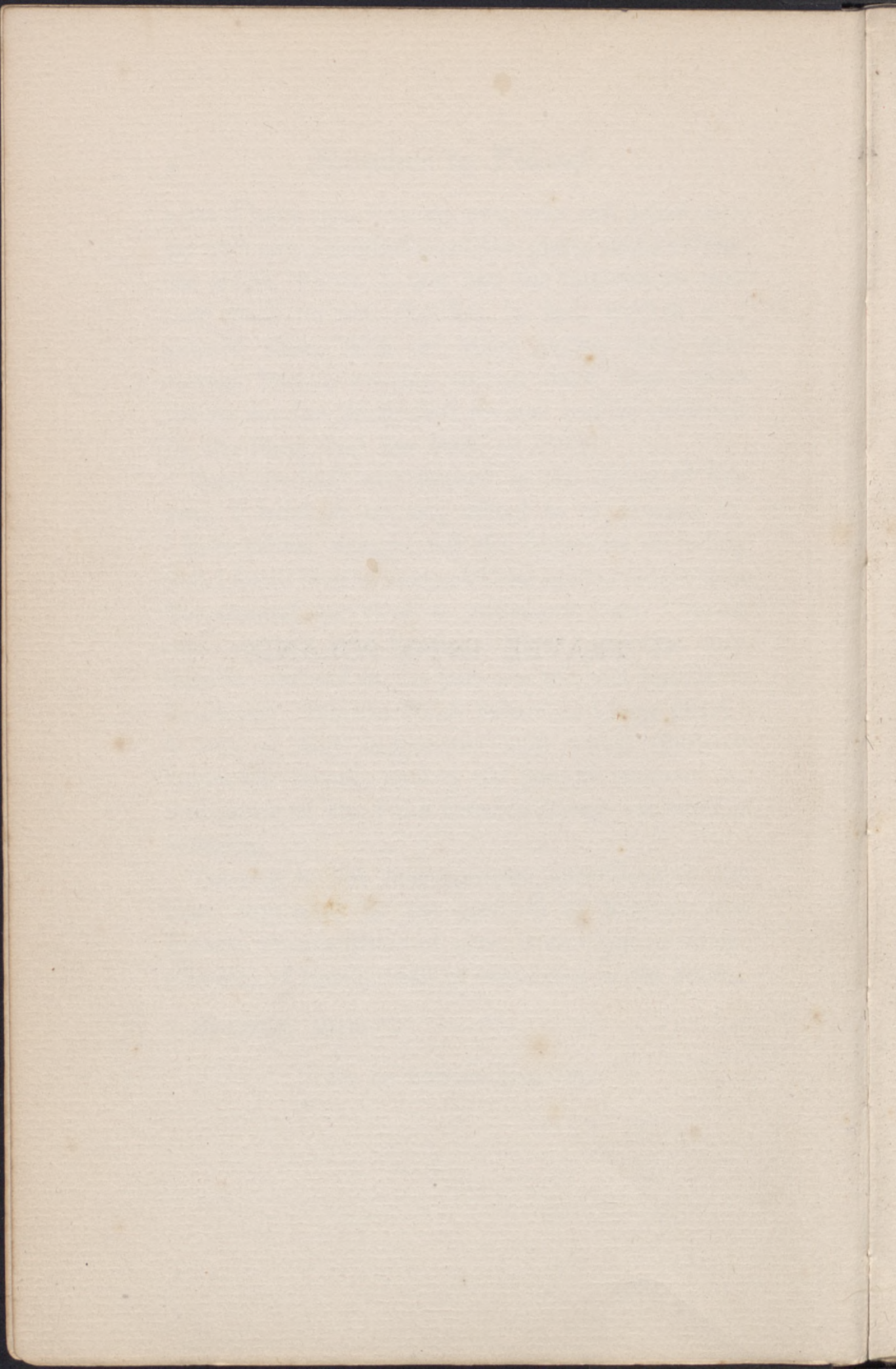
Since the book was finished in the spring of this year I have in no way added to or changed it. I have neither exaggerated the bitterness of feeling that I found to exist amongst Poles against the German Government, nor tried to extenuate what I heard said against the Russian. The oppression and injustice suffered in the past are too well known to be denied. But the Polish nature, as I have noted,¹ is not of that ungenerous kind which cherishes implacable hatred, and at the present moment the sentiments of the Poles towards Russia are rapidly changing.

Trusting in the magnanimous resolutions of the Czar, supported by the goodwill of England and France, their attitude of mind is now one of reconciliation, of loyalty, and of confidence in the future.

November, 1914.

¹ See, for instance, page 186.

I TRAVEL INTO POLAND



I Travel into Poland

THE boat approached Ostend at that moment when on the level of the water the sun had already set, and the sea (for night was beginning there) had turned a dark cold green. But out of it the town rose, glaring golden-white in the last rays; and a thousand windows flashed as if on fire. Above the opaque white of the houses, which looked as though the painter had slapped them in thick with the palette-knife, was the transparent white of huge clouds, flushing into rose, fading into mauve, and the fragment of a rainbow that reached almost to the highest height of heaven—the soaring rainbow of the fallen and disappearing sun.

That was my farewell glimpse of the sea and the west of Europe: my journey's next stage—of which I remember nothing—brought me to Berlin. This is a city which claims, and perhaps justly, to be the cleanest in Europe: it has the air of some rich and well-fed woman who is dressed by the most expensive modistes, and has everything that money can buy, but never the unpurchasable quality of charm. Cracow is her opposite, a lady of ancient and un-

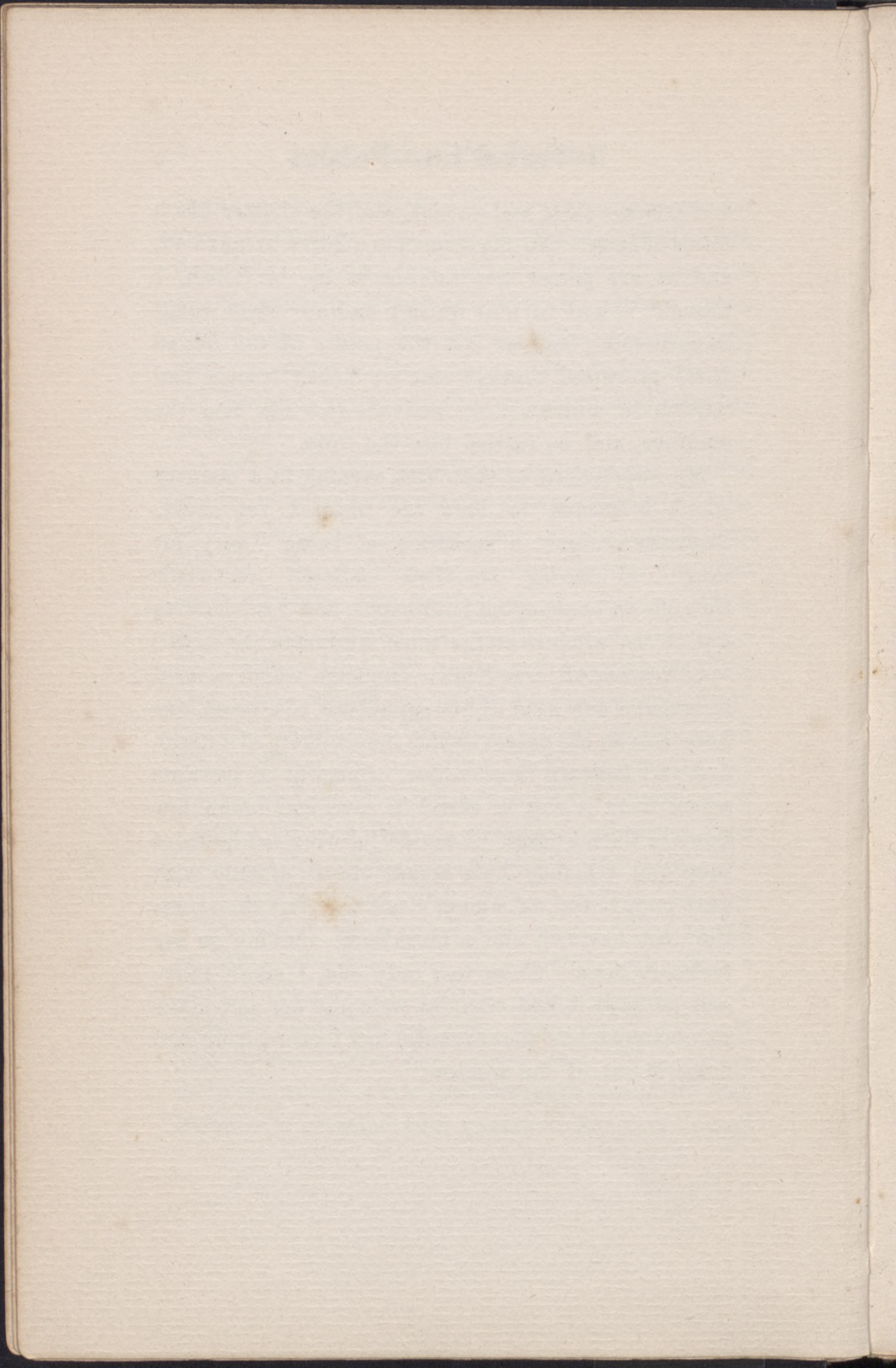
happy race, conscious but uncomplaining of her great adversities: she has fascination, distinction, simplicity. Danzig is a mediaeval burgher who was wealthy among princes and powerful among statesmen in his time: Warsaw a ruined beauty hiding with an artificial laughter her dreadful story and her breaking heart, but Berlin—Berlin is the capital of Prussia.

I left it at eight o'clock one morning and arrived in Cracow some twelve hours later, crossing the Austrian frontier at Oderberg, and there escaping with difficulty the guidance of kindly officials, who, seeing me English and waiting on the platform, came up one after another inviting me to enter the train for Vienna. However, in the end I convinced them that I had bought my ticket for Cracow and really wished to go there. Then I left behind me the beaten track. There was no other English person in the train, and from that moment until six months later I never met an English traveller, and never once heard English spoken by passers in the street.

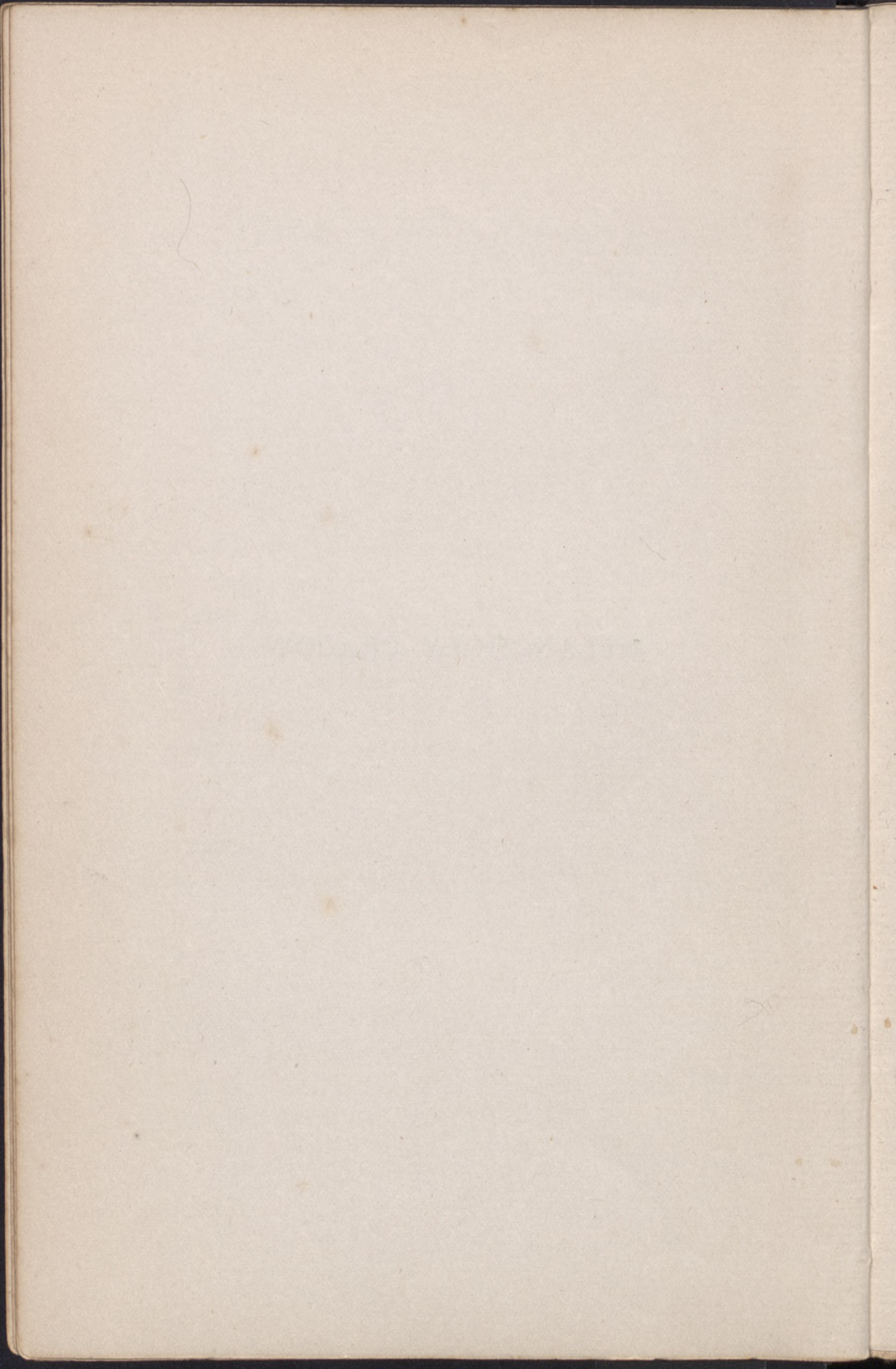
Dusk was falling when the monotonous scenery of the Great Plain of Europe began to be varied by hills and woods, but it was pitch dark when I reached Cracow and alighted, with a beating heart, upon the crowded platform, from which a broad, high staircase descended to the road. It made me think of some stairway in a torchlight picture of Paul Veronese's, crowded with groups of peasants in buff

and cream-colour and scarlet, and the sinister black forms of Jews. No one seemed in a hurry to move off, and as my porter was talking to me in Polish, I thought it best to wait quietly and see what would happen next, and at last the porter of the *Grand Hotel* presented himself—for my Polish friends had written to announce my arrival—put me into the omnibus, and we rattled into the town.

My impressions of that first evening in a country which I learned to love are blurred yet vivid. Immense fatigue, a sensation of being “very far away,” of having travelled endlessly eastwards through an unchanging landscape—had I sat looking out of the window at the same landscape for days?—of hearing all round me a language which seemed to reveal a new kind of human nature, of a great airy hotel like an old palace (which indeed it is), of a dignified and taciturn head-waiter, of crowds of servants whose duty it was to stand in rows and make low bows in the corridors, of wonderful wine-red beetroot soup and delicious little breads strewn thickly with grey poppy-seed, of a good clean bed (but the sheets were too narrow), and a blackbeetle running on my bedroom floor. There was only one, I admit that; and perhaps it had come to welcome me and make an obeisance like the servants, but I swept it up and flung it out of the window.



MELANCHOLY CRACOW



Melancholy Cracow

NEXT morning an artist-friend of my friends came to call on me : the hotel proprietor introduced us to one another and remained, out of politeness, during the interview, of which he understood not one word, as we talked in English. But I was eager to explore the town, so we sallied out, and found ourselves at once in the Rynek.

I quickly saw that here was no danger of losing myself (a thing I am apt to do), for this charming little city is so small that one could easily compass it seven times in a day, walking in the pleasant boulevard called "Planty," where less than a hundred years ago stood the old gates and ramparts.

But, small as it is, Cracow is the heart of Poland, the capital of the country until the sixteenth century, and the last free eyrie of the white Polish Eagle ; for even after the Third Partition it remained an independent republic under the guardianship of those more cruel birds of prey, the Austrian, the Russian and the German, who, having torn their hapless neighbour in three parts, paused, each watchful of the other, till Austria made the final move, and in

1846 the last swallowing wave washed over the last little plot of ground, and the frontiers of the three great empires touched each other. From Cracow Sobieski led the army of those splendid horsemen who by the irresistible fury of their onslaught drove back the Turk from Vienna and saved Europe. From Cracow set out that cavalcade of gentlemen whose magnificence amazed the court of Catherine de Medici, and whose accomplishment in the ancient and modern languages shamed the French nobles ; and to this capital brought back with them Henri de Valois, the king who later fled like a thief from his royal castle by the Vistula. Here people still talk with affection of the beautiful Jadwiga, who, yielding to her subjects' entreaty, renounced love, in order to marry and convert to Christianity the barbarous prince of Lithuania.

To Cracow came the youthful conqueror, Charles of Sweden, and took the city : then, himself conquered by the wise and charming personality of the young envoy of the Diet, Stanislaus Leszczyński, swore he would be his friend for ever ; and in the Cathedral of Warsaw took place the coronation of King Stanislaus, at which assisted *incognito* the foreign invader whose impetuous affection had bestowed on him the crown.

Here in 1791, in a scene of unparalleled enthusiasm, the Polish nobles swore to the new Constitution ; of their own free will renouncing their privileges for the sake of Law, Liberty and the Public Good. Then,

Melancholy Cracow

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with the king Stanislaus Poniatowski, they went in procession to the cathedral of the Wavel to give thanks for the goodness and mercy of Heaven which had brought about the dawn of a new life for Poland. Bitter and tragic irony of fate! Bitter and tragic history of a country turned, too late, to its own good; of Nemesis unappeased; of a people whose heroic hopes were crushed and ruined by their own past, and by the malevolence of powers strong to do evil!

To-day the traveller sees a picturesque and graceful little city, and remarks, perhaps smiling to himself, that it reminds him of Winchester or Bruges. Pleased at finding he is unmolested by any tout or guide, he strolls at will, noting the towers and gateways and innumerable churches, all of the faded colour of that old red brick that looks sometimes a dull orange brown, sometimes, when the low sun shines on it, rose-madder, sometimes the colour of a robin's breast.

Right in the middle is the great square where stands the exquisite Gothic church of Our Lady and a beautiful tower, all that remains of the town hall demolished by the Austrians. There is a covered market with a double row of stalls kept by frowsy and importunate Jews, but in the open are the peasants from the country with their milk and cheeses, vegetables, poultry, wooden toys, and long strings of withered toadstools, the women gay in glorious coloured shawls, the men in long coats, white or

royal-blue or scarlet. A market, the gayest, the richest in colour I ever saw (except in Morocco), far outdoing the Spanish or Italian, "but," I thought, recalling these last, "how silent!" The women do not chatter or scold together; there is no shouting in the streets, and very little rattling of carriages. The painter said the quietness did not strike him, but that can only be because the Poles on the whole are among the least noisy of people. And when I looked at the faces of those around us, the well-dressed citizens, the shop-keepers, the university students, the grey-haired peasants praying in the church, I saw the reason of this stillness. These people are enduring a sorrow—one sorrow. In all their faces pain has set one mark. ("And so would English faces look," I thought, "if England——" for a moment my heart seemed to leap into my throat.) And the town itself, the tall churches, the deep-shadowed streets, the open squares, the pleasant boulevard running round the city, the noble castle of the Wawel on its height above the river, all are touched with inexpressible melancholy. Cracow has an air of resignation, of waiting for something, silently, patiently waiting: or is she only silently musing on the past?

"What a number of beautiful women there are in the town this morning!" I said; and the painter smiled. I might have added, "and good-looking men." It is true I had just come from another city,

and after three days there had asked myself whether I had seen, among the ordinary well-to-do middle-class crowd, one man who *looked* like a gentleman. Here, in the same class, I saw fifty in half an hour. They did not look rich, as the Germans did, but they were capable of wearing a worn suit of clothes with a kind of natural elegance, their faces were expressive, clean-cut, and fine; they knew how to move, they knew how to stand, and as I walked along the crowded pavements I was conscious, somehow, in that good servant-brain that guides our footsteps through the mud, while the other may follow the flight of a comet, that the passers-by were not rude, they were gentle.

“Do the peasants talk German?” I asked, and the painter said, “Of course they learn some German in the schools, but they quickly forget it. You see, Poland has lost nearly everything; it is no longer marked on the map of Europe; we are forced to speak a language that isn’t our own, and to serve in other people’s armies, and to be ruled by other people’s laws. But now they want to take from us all that is left, our language and our literature (which in poetry at least is one of the finest in Europe) and our religion. Not here, in Austria: here they treat us well, and in the University the lectures are given in Polish. But though Prussia and Russia swore to us solemn oaths when we first fell into their power that our language and customs should be respected, now they are trying to wipe them out altogether—

c



well, you will hear enough about it when you go there. But as to religion, the Russians try to force us to be Orthodox because it is the duty of all subjects of the Czar to profess the religion that he does, and in Prussia our priests are persecuted—fined and imprisoned on every possible pretext—because the Government considers—and rightly—that they help to keep alive our national sentiment.”

“When I was at home,” I said rather apologetically, “I thought—and I believe many other English people think—that though of course the partition of Poland was ‘the greatest crime in history,’ and though we know the Poles fought desperately in 1863, and were ruined and banished and massacred and sent to Siberia and endured most horrible sufferings, all that was more or less a thing of the past, and now they were settling down and becoming merged in the other nations.”

“Most English people, I suppose,” he answered, “take their knowledge of what goes on in the world from newspapers, and none of these will embrace our cause—why should they? Now and then a ‘sensational incident’ gets into print, but you will understand that the oppressors don’t exactly smooth the way for the oppressed to make his grievances known. For instance, a friend of mine, a journalist, lately proposed to your most influential newspaper to supply it from time to time with news of Polish affairs: but this newspaper was already receiving a very

handsome subsidy from Russia for printing articles in the Russian interest, so of course the proposal had to be declined." He shrugged his shoulders and smiled. A patient ironic smile, that I was to meet with later, on many Polish faces.

"Of course," he went on, "nothing happens without a cause, and if we have endured great wrongs, we recognize that in the past we were guilty of great errors. You can't read the history of Poland without being horrified at the folly and the cruelty and the selfishness of the nobles, who enslaved their peasants, and made war amongst themselves without any loyalty to the king or any regard for the good of the Republic."

"Then some of the laws," I said. "When you read of them you think indeed that whom the gods wish to destroy they smite with madness."

"Yes; for instance, things were managed in this way. Suppose I had come to your castle and burnt it, and killed your father and your servants, and robbed you of all you possessed. Possibly you might get a judgment in the courts in your favour, and it might be decreed that I was to be beheaded and make restoration of your goods, and my castle was to be razed to the ground. But who was to do it? Why, *you* were! You had the permission to execute the sentence—if *you could!* Then of course there was nearly always a civil war before a new king was elected. Imagine the state of things!"

Sketches in Poland

“ And the *liberum veto* ? ”

“ Shows the mistake of following an impossible ideal.”

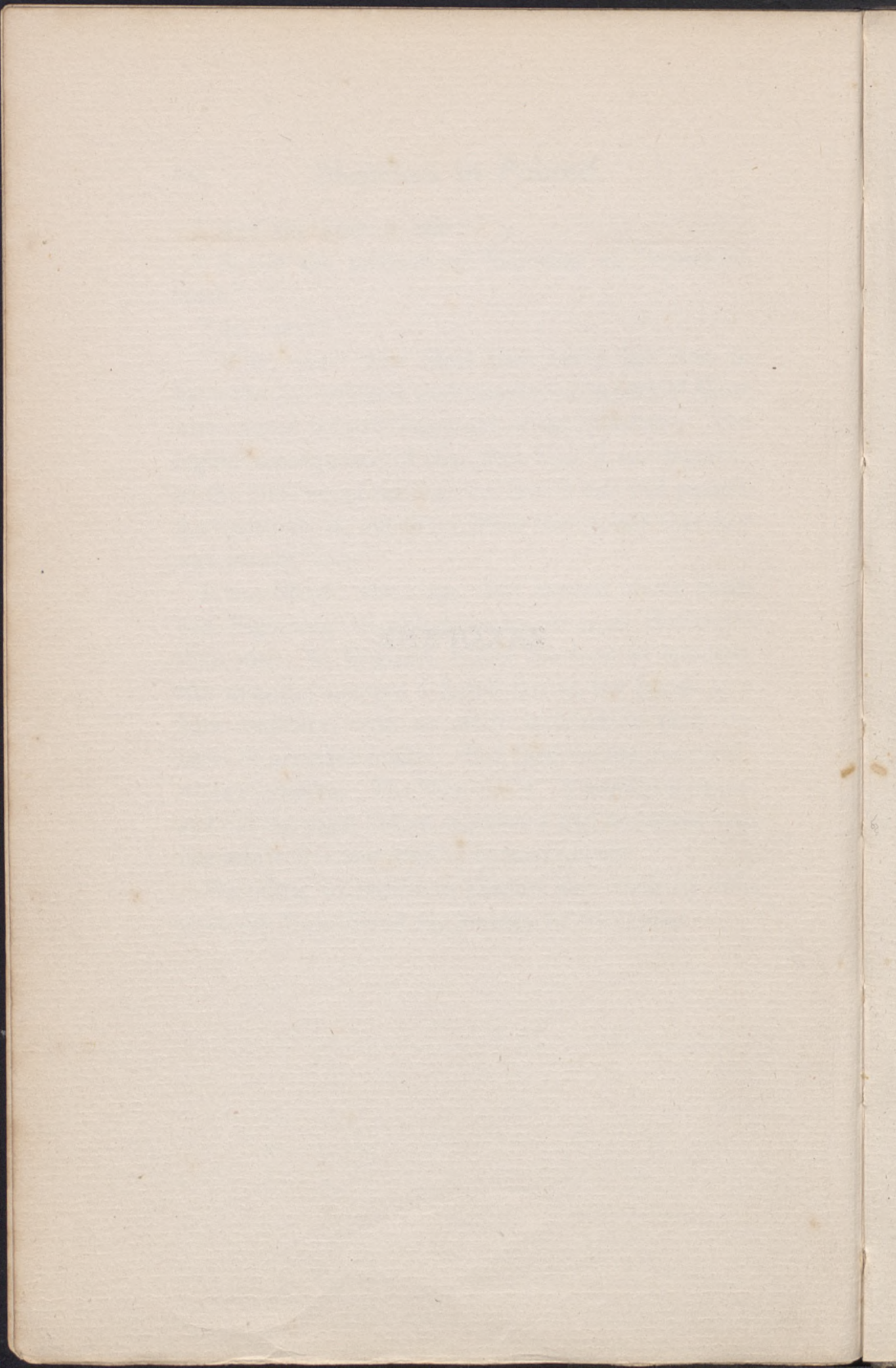
“ An ideal ? ”

“ Why, yes ! The ideal that every law was to have the full and free and unanimous assent of those who obeyed it (serfs being out of the question). The logical consequence of that was, that if one member of the Diet voted against the law it was not passed. And not only it, but every other law passed that day was invalid also.”

I was silent ; thinking. His remark about ideals was beginning to enlighten me in more directions than one. In England, called the land of freedom, the minority accepts a hated law at the hands of a bare majority, with no other satisfaction than the right to grumble freely. But then we are practical : we compromise. The Slav—— ? I wondered again, as I did the night before, whether I had not come into the midst of a new kind of human nature.

Intending to return to Cracow in a week or two, next day I continued my journey to Zakopane.

ZAKOPANE



Zakopane

It lies—a six hours' journey by train—to the south of Cracow, at the foot of the Tatra Mountains (which are a spur of the Carpathians), and close to the Hungarian border. The train struggles uphill all the way amongst broad valleys, and streams, and straggling villages, and Zakopane is the terminus.

I was startled on coming out of the little station with the five or six other passengers, to see, in a sandy open space, a vast concourse of carriages and horses which somehow reminded me of a provincial Irish race-meeting. There were small open cabs, like primitive victorias, light wooden carts, and wagons very light and long, and so narrow that only two people can sit in them side by side. One of the little carriages took me to my hotel.

Zakopane is a health resort, discovered about forty years ago, and entirely built and "made" since then. When I arrived, in the middle of June, the season had not yet begun, and I stayed alone for the first week in one of the large wooden villas. From my balcony I looked down on the right hand

to a little clear and rushing torrent, upwards on the left to a steep hill covered with fir-trees ; southward before me were forest, crag, and mountain, peak beyond peak, the last against the sky-line, bare and jagged, streaked with icy glaciers. Those mountains are above the snow-line, but so steep that snow cannot lie on them. A little lower is the Giewont, which shows from Zakopane the enormous profile and stark breast of a warrior, laid out as if for funeral on the summit of the hills. The peasants say he will awake one day, and blow upon his bugle such a blast as shall rouse all the armies of the dead, and will lead them to deliver Poland.

No one in the hotel knew any language but Polish, except the *patron*, who spoke a little German, and he used to stand and entertain me with polite conversation while I dined alone in the great dining-room. My other meals were brought upstairs by the smiling chambermaid, who saluted me always night and morning with something that sounded like "*Y geronshtki*," to which I replied, "*Y geronshtki*," thinking we were giving each other the *sele* of the day, until I discovered that it meant "I kiss your hands," and though perfectly appropriate from her to me (indeed, it was no empty phrase, for she did kiss them), was not expected of me towards her. However, it is quite safe to say "*Prosze*" at any moment and to any person. I used to ring in the morning and say, "*Prosze, woda garonza*,"



No. 2—In the Church, Zakopane.



and she made some polite unintelligible reply and brought me hot water, and soon after *sniadanie* (breakfast), consisting of *kava*, *chléb*, and *maslo*. Supper was usually fried meat with potatoes and strange mushrooms, and young stewed cucumber, bread flavoured with caraway seeds and embellished with minute chips of rock-salt, cheese, and tea without milk or lemon. Immediately after this odd meal I went to bed, and slept very sweetly till morning.

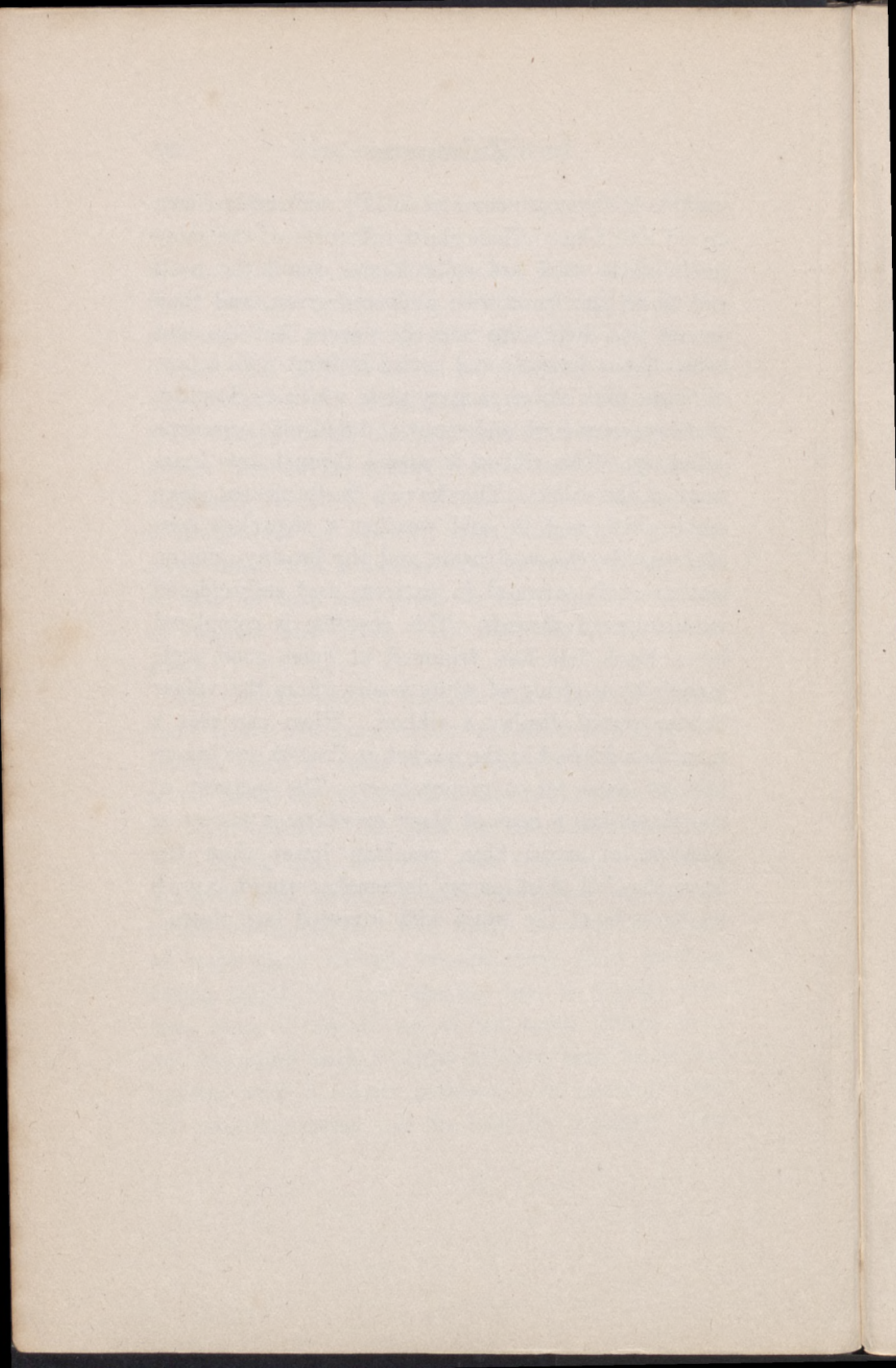
There are two churches in Zakopane—both Catholic of course—one small and old, and built entirely of wood; and beside it is the cemetery—a grove of birch and poplar and plum-trees, full of graves and thick green grass, and rose-trees running wild, and carved stone tombs half hidden by fir-trees, and tall iron crosses. But the new church is very much larger, and stands on a high terrace in the village street.

Every Sunday morning it is crowded with peasants, men on the right hand, women on the left, but many remain kneeling for hours on the steps outside or by the great cross in front of the church. And beside the stone parapet are waiting the wagons of those who have come from a distance. One sees some startling and characteristic types, especially among the older men with their long black hair and dark lean faces; wild they look often, but not coarse. But this crowd of peasants coming out of church is a sight to drive a painter nearly crazy

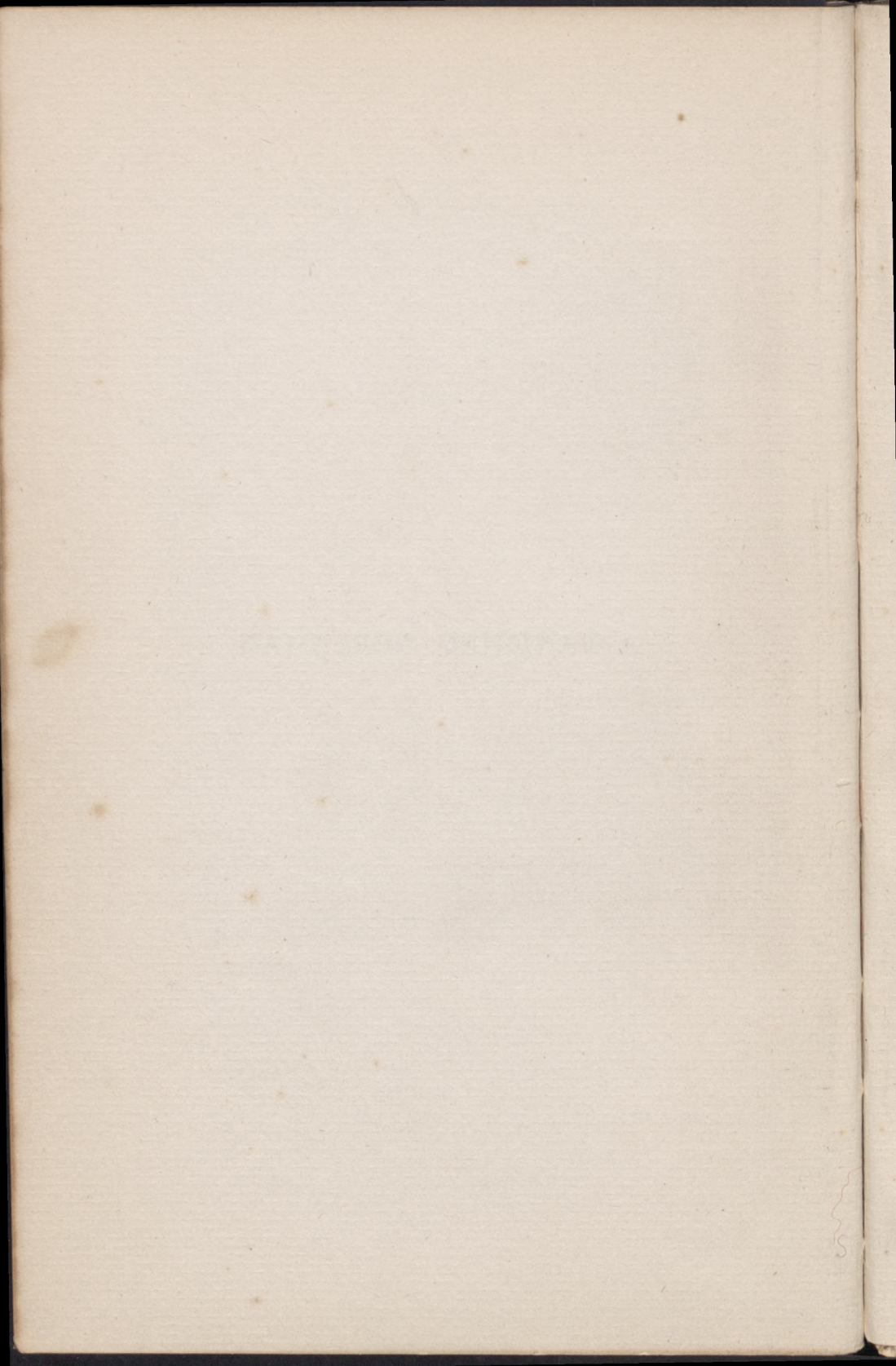
with excitement. The fair-haired girls with broad and placid features, the mountaineers with skins like tanned and wrinkled leather, who are lighting their curious ancestral pipes—the groups of young dandies all in white with their graceful supple movements—the faded maroon of sheepskin coats—the embroideries—the ornaments of brass—the studded belts—the pink and scarlet, black, ultramarine, buff, cream and vivid orange! More and more come streaming out of the church—more unimagined combinations of colour, more charming groups, more faces with a history—one is ready to cry out to each in turn like Faust in his supreme moment of despair and bliss, “*Ach bleibe doch, du bist so schön!*”

The women have a handkerchief closely covering their heads, the usual colour is intense and gorgeous orange, then a check or spotted shawl or perhaps a stiff black sleeveless jacket, and thin cotton sleeves of vivid scarlet. The girls are less handsome than the young men, as every one remarks, but have innocent and candid peasant-faces that are by no means unattractive. The men's clothes are made of some thick whitish blanket-stuff, their trousers fitting tightly to their shapely legs, so tightly that they have to be slit up at the ankle (where they are decorated with a stripe of dark blue braid and finished with a scarlet pompon), and coming down low over the instep and the heel like a gaiter. The

pockets in front are covered thickly with embroidery in red and blue. Their short full coats of the same thick white stuff are embroidered round the neck and down the front with pink and green, and they do not put their arms into the sleeves, but the coat hangs like a hussar's and is tied in front with a bow of bright pink ribbon, sugary pink, which on Sundays is always very fresh and smart and tied with conscious gallantry. This ribbon is passed through two brass rings at the collar. They have a finely pleated clean white shirt, and in cold weather a sleeveless coat of sheepskin, the wool inside, and the brown-crimson leather of it tattooed in patterns and embroidered with coloured threads. This costume is completed by a black felt hat, trimmed in quiet good style merely by a string of white beads where the vulgar bowler would display a ribbon. When one sees a man thus dressed in the market at Cracow one knows him at once for a mountaineer. The peasant of the plains has a coat of black or white or scarlet or perhaps of royal blue, reaching lower than the knee, the full skirt (as my dressmaker would express it) "put in at the waist with inverted box pleats."



A BANISHED NOBLEMAN



A Banished Nobleman

WHEN the Count *— came to this place thirty years ago these peasants were miserably poor, and all of them deeply in debt to the Jews, who by mortgages and so on were gradually obtaining possession of their small bits of land. Now it is a point of honour in this country not to sell land to a Jew, the reason being—so I was told, though it is obviously not *the* reason—that the Jews take all that is possible out of an estate and put nothing in: for example, they cut down forests to the detriment of the place, and through avarice neglect to stub up the roots, to plant new trees or cultivate the ground.

And when this great valley where Zakopane stands was put up for sale, there was excitement and fear all over the country lest the Jews or the "Germans" (i.e. Austrians) should obtain it. But where to find a Pole who was rich enough or bold enough to buy this vast estate? Count *—, who had lately been banished from Posen and settled in this country, after some hesitation, decided to do so: and he has told me that so great was the public anxiety that when it became known what he

had done, strangers used to come up to him in the streets of Cracow or Lwów, to shake him by the hand, and congratulate him in the name of patriotism. He immediately undertook to drain the marshy land, make roads, build houses, schools and hospitals, give employment to the peasants, and help them by every means to pay off their debts and free themselves from the bondage of the Jews; and succeeded so well that when he lay sick of typhoid fever, these latter held a solemn day of fasting and supplication in the synagogue—praying that he might die. Yet he still lives: a man remarkable for his great height and physical strength and energy. And apparently in Poland it is not so rare as it is in England to find the bearer of a great historic name whose distinguished appearance inevitably suggests a Titian "Portrait of a Nobleman." Yet in the manner of his life he by no means conforms to the popular ideal of the "aristocrat." No saintly hermit dwelling in a cave lives more abstemiously, and I have heard him say that once, on an expedition in the mountains, he passed the night in a "refuge" which afforded no sleeping-place but wooden benches. Next morning the peasants who were with him, accustomed to their feather-beds, complained of being stiff and sore, but he awoke refreshed and lively, having from early boyhood practised the habit of sleeping on a table in order to harden himself.

The *——'s have an *hôtel* in Paris, but their home

is in the duchy of Posen—a *château* that they speak of with great affection.

“But why did you leave it?” I asked the Count.

“I was banished from the country,” he answered.

“Banished? But—there was then some plot—some insurrection—they accused you——?”

“No, nothing of that kind. Bismarck wanted to get rid of us because we were Poles, and he wished to make all the country German. So he made a law that no Pole not born a Prussian subject should be permitted to live in the country. So one day I had a letter from the authorities telling me that as I had been born in Paris I must leave my home and never return to it.”

“But,” I stammered rudely, “it’s incredible: there *must* have been something——”

“Yes,” he smiled back at me. “I went to the Governor of the Province to protest, to appeal against my sentence, and asked what I had done in any way to offend or to injure the Prussian Government, and he answered, ‘Oh, nothing, nothing. If you *had* done anything, you would have been banished long ago.’”

“Then the *château* is deserted?”

“No, I have a faithful steward who lives there, and keeps it in order and looks after the estate for me.”

“And you may not visit it?”

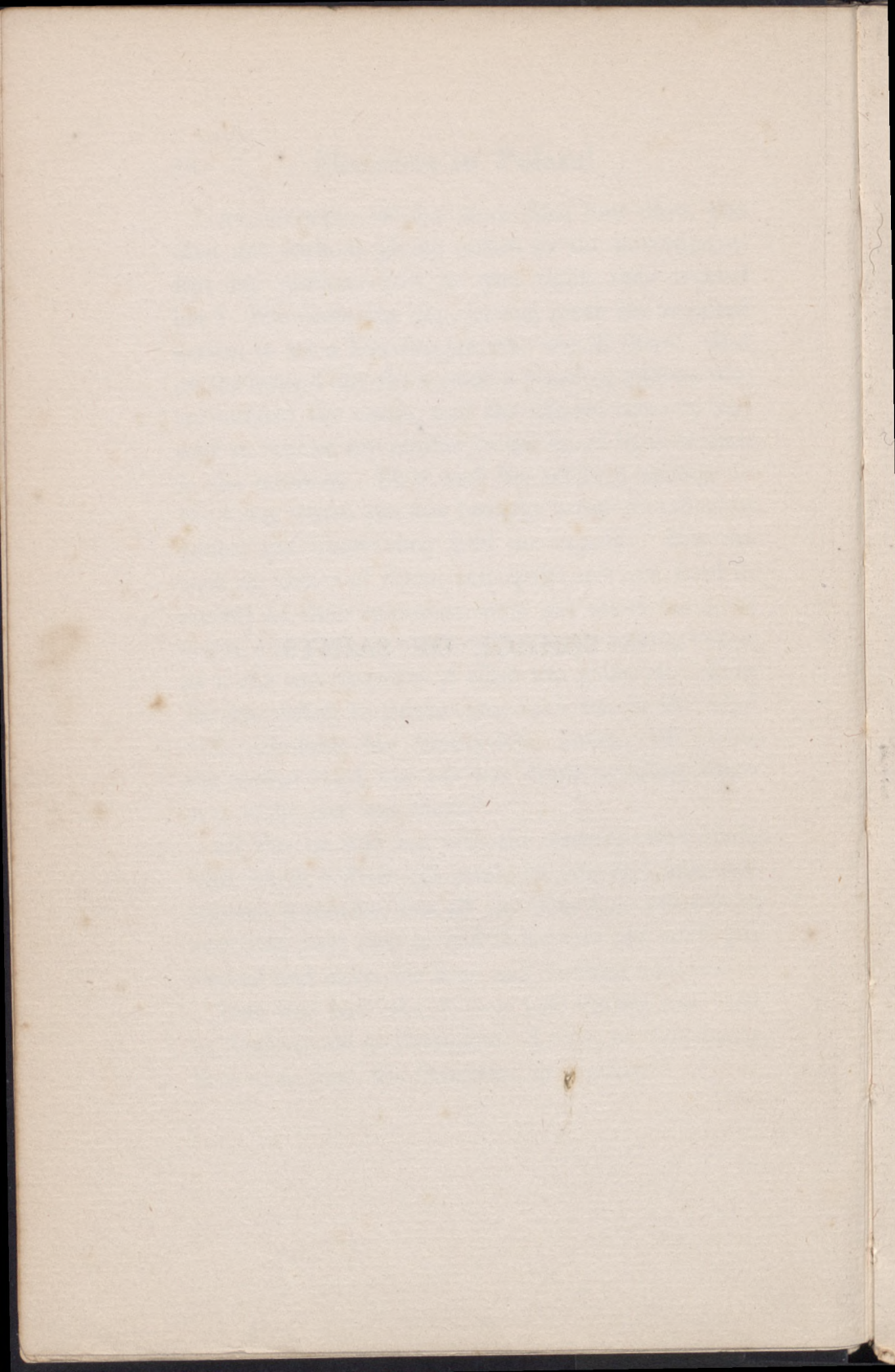
Sketches in Poland

“ At intervals, for not more than four days, and then not without giving notice to the government. But my mother—how do you think they treated her? She came one day, having given the required notice, to see a housekeeper who was ill there. And on the second day there came a guard of soldiers who surrounded the castle, and the officers came in and sent to require my mother to get up at three o'clock in the morning. They took her off in a carriage to the town, where she was brought before an officer of police, and there they held an inquiry. But she took no notice of them, and spoke not one word in answer to their questions, only she asked for some paper, and sat there at the table quietly writing letters as if she was unaware of what was going on. Then she was taken to prison—yes—she was in the ward with criminals for twenty-four hours. Of course she neither slept, nor ate nor drank anything whatever while she was there.”

All this he told me with the amused ironic smile with which a Pole will relate to you the most outrageous tyrannies, but all the time his eyes will be searching your face to find if beneath the smile you discern and share his deep and burning hatred.

This was how the *——s left Prussia and took up their abode at Zakopane. I went to their house, K——, to visit the Countess, his mother.

A SCHOOL OF SAINTS



A School of Saints

THE Countess is a very old and very beautiful and charming lady. I will tell the story of her life as she herself, and later her daughter, related it to me. As a young girl, as a child, she had the most ardent desire to live for her country. A party of children in her father's house were one day playing the game of "wishes." Each child confessed his greatest desire. This little girl of twelve said, "I wish to have as many children as there are stars in the sky." Afterwards her father asked her, "What did you mean by your wish?" She said, "I would like to have a thousand children that I would bring up well—so well! to help Poland." Later she used to say to her mother, "Why is there nowhere *une école de la vie*?" "But what do you mean, dear? You have professors to teach you, and all round you there are schools of every sort, schools of art, technical schools, schools for cookery, dress-making, lectures——" "But it is not that that I want. I want—I want—something—*une école de la vie*."

Then came her marriage, and during the insur-

Sketches in Poland

rection of 1863 she was living in Paris. People used to ask her why—young and beautiful, of high rank and rich—she led a life of great simplicity, and she answered, “How can you expect me to go out *dans le monde* and to dance and amuse myself, when my country is suffering from misery and disaster?” Then little by little she began to build up her “school of life.” “I saw,” she said, with a smile, half humorous, half sad, “that it is not the great and fierce beasts that are a power in the world, not the tigers and the lions, but the very, very little ones, the microbes, and as I am only a very little thing I will be like the microbes.” Fighting had been of no use to help Poland: wrong and suffering were everywhere in the world, and the cause of suffering was sin. So she set herself to make at least one household where every one as one family, from the master to the youngest servant, worked together for an ideal of good. She began her school in Paris, developed it at the country house in Posen. Now, at K——, it consists of nearly two hundred persons, pupils and mistresses. From the furthest parts of Poland in Russian, Austrian or German territory, there come to her young girls just leaving school—girls of the three classes, nobles, merchants and peasants, and they are instructed in the art and practice of household management, cooking, dairy-work, sick nursing, dress-making, embroidery, mending and darning, laundry-work, etc. I was taken to see them at work

together in the kitchens and the work-rooms and the dairy, and even into the cowhouse, over which four little peasant dairymaids sleep in a very simple but clean attic, with the head dairy-woman next door. And I saw the dormitories, all a perfection of cleanliness and neatness, but not alike. For the rich girls pay for their schooling, and do less manual work and have more time for study than the poor ones, who pay nothing at all. There is a little chapel in the house where Mass is sung by a choir of girls' voices led by Mlle.*—— (who has composed anthems and a sacred opera), and where prayers are said night and morning. These girls are also taught to read the Bible, and my attention was called to Bible texts and old-fashioned precepts such as "A place for everything and everything in its place," written up over doors or hung in the dormitories, which I was told were translated from English, and had been learnt from an English lady who was the governess of Mme. *——, herself now more than eighty years old!

I saw the portrait of this lady, who must have been born more than a hundred years ago, and recognized in her a type now seldom met with—Evangelical perhaps, certainly pious, untouched by the Higher Criticism, of an absolute devotion to duty, and incapable of telling the smallest lie to save the life of her dearest friend. And though she must long ago have died, here is her strong character a living influence!

Not only here, but in other great houses I found the tradition of some such far-back English governess, and the Polish nature—generous, and quick to see the good in others—has consciously set itself to learn these English virtues of energy, truthfulness, stability, sense of duty, love of order.

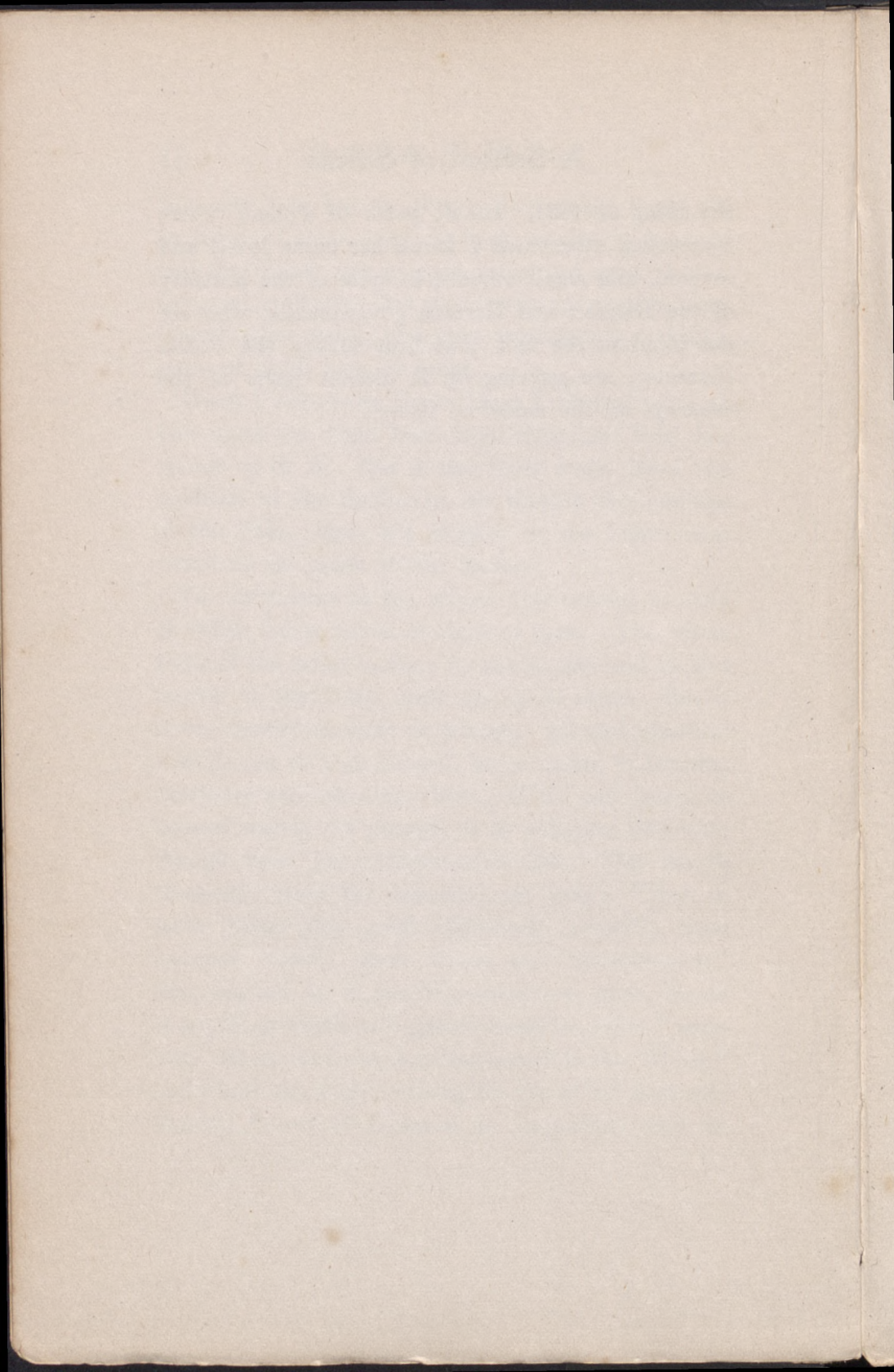
When I was shown these things I blushed to think how much we might learn from them and how slow we are to do it. But if the Poles could have the qualities of the English or the English the qualities of the Poles, then the English or the Polish race would be the finest in the world.

The mistresses in the school now consist entirely of Polish ladies, seven or eight of them. The whole work of the house is done by the pupils, and all is a marvel of obedience, order and good sense. But it is not merely an *école de ménage*. All this practical work is not an end in itself, but a means of forming character and teaching virtue, which can never be learned merely by precept or by religious devotion, though these are indispensable also. "My aim is threefold," said the beautiful old lady; "first to make these girls good Christians, secondly good patriots, thirdly good wives and housekeepers." She received me in her little study—a room devoid of anything which in England would be called "comfort," where she lives, devoting herself to the "Work," and where she is also writing the life of her husband, General *—, who played an important part in

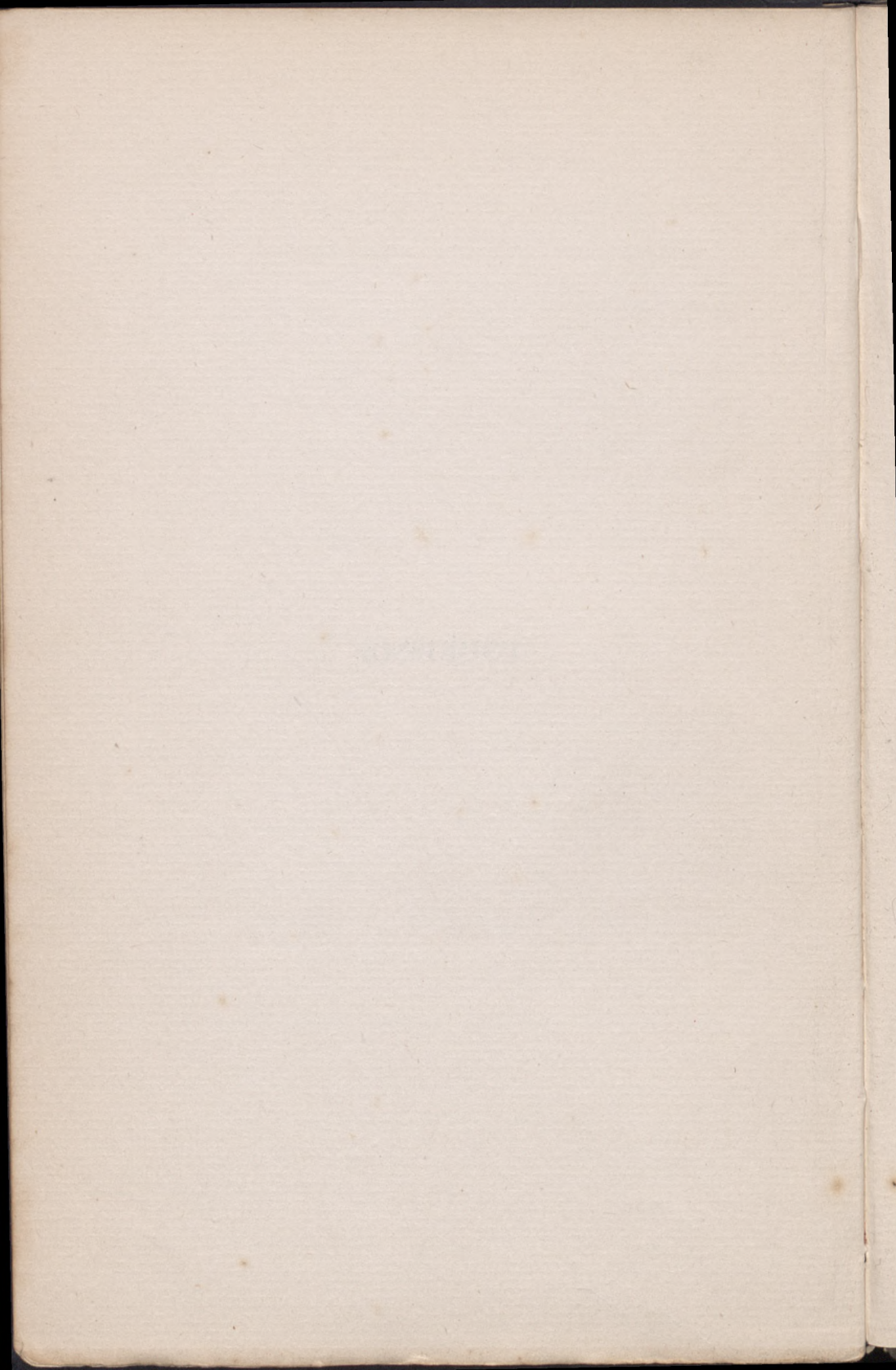
A School of Saints

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the rising of 1831. In all parts of Poland where I travelled afterwards I found her name loved and revered, and small schools, in spite of the hostility of the Russian and German governments, who are not blind to the fact that they fortify the Polish character, are growing up in distant parts of the country, on the model of K——.



TOURISME



Tourisme

WHEN you don't understand the language of a country you are led about like a baby. "Boots" guided me to the yard, and took my ticket in the motor-bus which twice a week goes, weather permitting, from Zakopane to Morskie Oko. Up and up by winding mountain roads we struggled, clattering and groaning, leaving villages far behind, only stopping once at a wayside farm to take up cans of milk as provision for the Morskie Oko restaurant. There, even the fir-trees can grow no longer, only the creeping dwarf-pine; and the air is keen and very pure.

With a last effort ascending a slope that was almost precipitous, we attained a little platform and looked into black transparent water. The lake Morskie Oko (Eye of the Sea) is almost circular in shape. On the far side terrific mountains rise sheer out of it, glaciers like icy serpents wriggle down their ravines and lose themselves at the water's edge in a bank of snow that sunbeams never light upon. It was very still, and so lonely I forgot my loneliness,

and sat down very cheerfully on a boulder to eat sandwiches.

Then I saw that the half-dozen other people who had come in the 'bus were standing near in a little group, and one of them came and said to me in French, "Will you, mademoiselle, join yourself with our society to make a promenade to the other lake?" He had a Cossack face, with eyes obliquely set, and long moustaches. So I said, "*Très volontiers, monsieur,*" and went with them. The rocky path skirted one quarter of the lake, and then zig-zagged up the side to where, in a kind of pocket half-way up the mountain-side, was a still smaller and yet blacker lake.

"*Vous faites beaucoup le tourisme, mademoiselle?*" asked the Cossack, and I said that certainly I was fond of travelling and of seeing new countries. But it appeared that *tourisme* is an English word that signifies Alpine climbing, so I confessed that I thought that mountains were intended by *le Bon Dieu* to be admired from below. But as we clambered on I began to forget this theory, the keen air made me aware of life and energy unused: a small boy-scout of the party left the path and tried a shorter, more adventurous way, and I was doing the same as a matter of course, but the cries and exclamations that broke from all the party of "*Prose! Prose Pannie!!*" and "*Ah, c'est vrai que les Anglaises sont courageuses!*" embarrassed me so that I

returned to the beaten track. The Cossack asked me if I was staying at Zakopane and whether I would do some *vrai tourisme* with him, but I replied politely that I was leaving in a day or two for Cracow. (I have wondered sometimes whether I should have enjoyed myself if I had said yes.)

He pointed to the ridge of mountains above our heads, and told me that was the Hungarian frontier. Until a few years ago Morskie Oko had belonged to Hungary, but the Count *—— had made a lawsuit at his own expense, claiming that it belonged to Galicia. The suit lasted twenty years, but at last by ancient documents it was proved before an international jury that it belonged to "us," and the Hungarian guard was made to *reculer*.

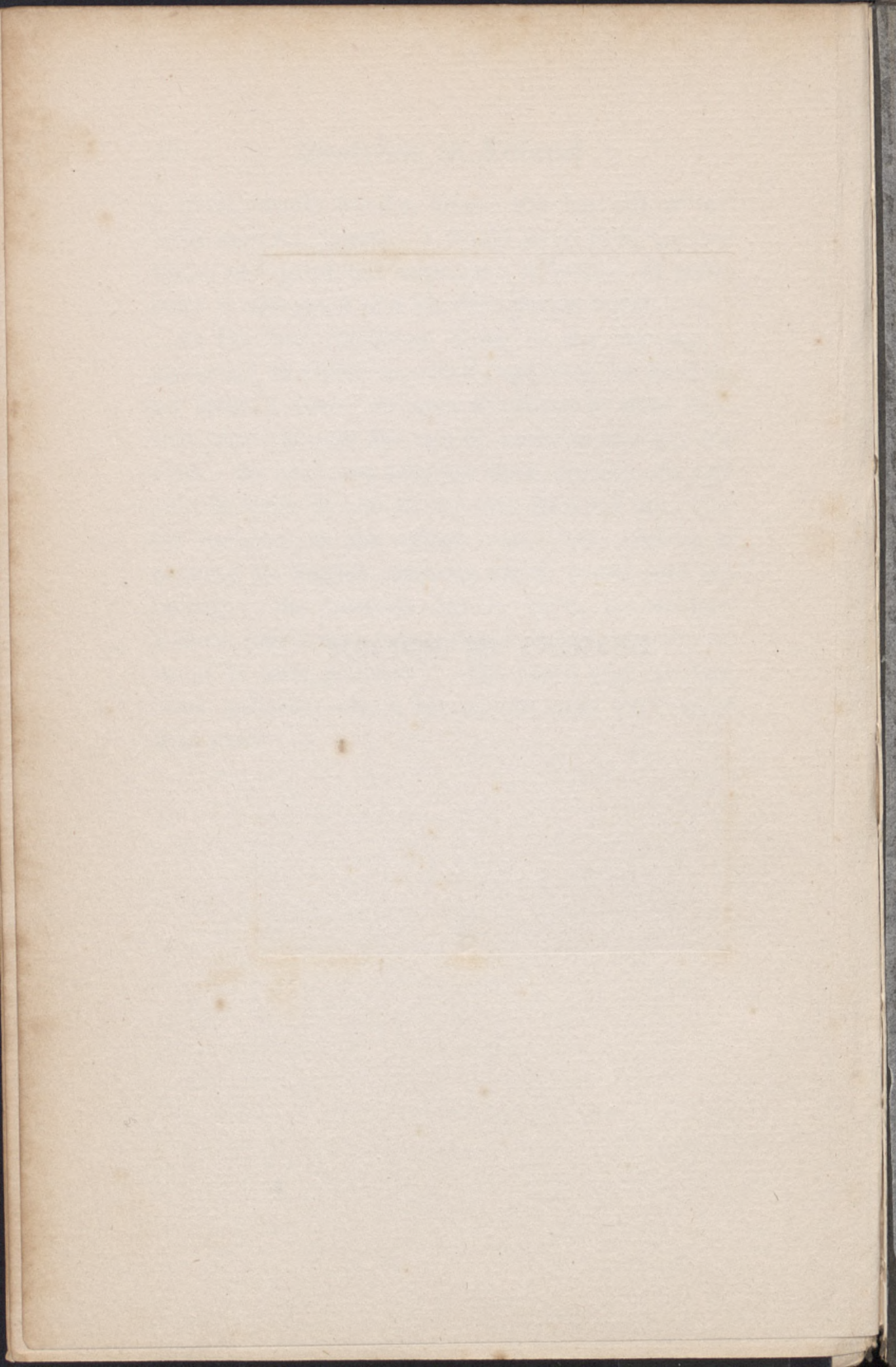
We returned across the lake by boat. I put on a little blue frieze coat which excited the admiration of the whole party. "*Voilà de la belle étoffe!*" said the Cossack, reaching out his hand to feel it. "So warm, see! and so light! Mademoiselle permitted me to carry her coat, and it weighs just nothing at all. Ah! one can buy such stuff in England, but here it would cost the eyes out of one's head."

On the wide verandah of the restaurant overhanging the lake people drink coffee, and I sat and sketched there, waiting for the 'bus. The woman of the place was much pleased to see me, as she said no English visitor had been there before me. It is

a small, simple wooden house, but has one or two bedrooms for guests. I would have liked to stay there, and paint the serpentine reflections of white snow in the green and blackish-purple water.

As the 'bus thundered down in the evening to Zakopane, the little boy-scout slept with his head on his father's knee: we were enveloped in white dust that blew through the canvas curtains and hid the view. My coat was admired again because one had only to strike it and all the dust dropped out of it. On arriving at the village every one, wishing to conform to English manners, shook hands with me politely: the Cossack, hat in hand, bowed low. I shook hands with him and said, "*Adieu, monsieur, merci de votre politesse.*" His beard and the long thick eyelashes above his curious eyes were white with dust.

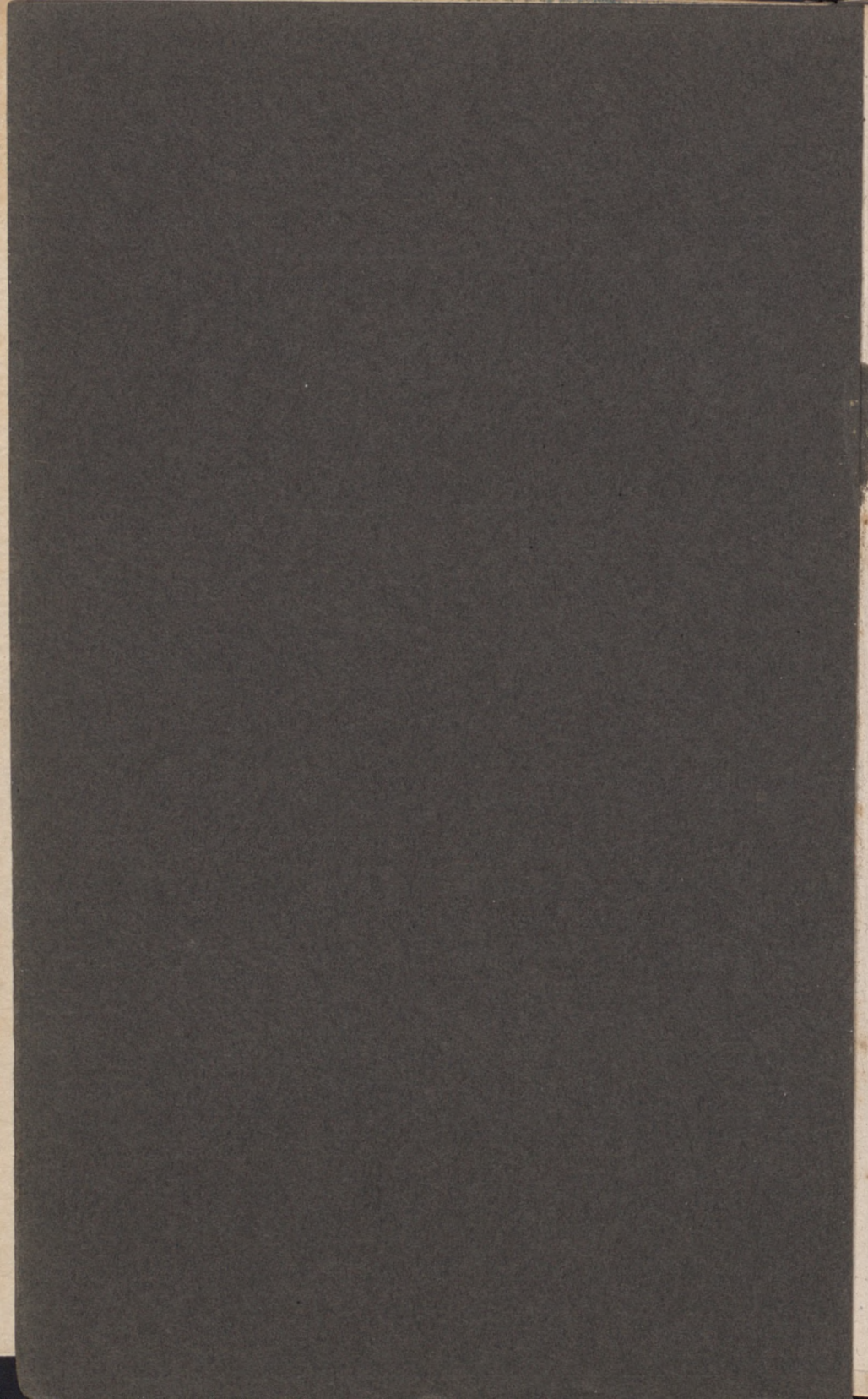
LESSONS IN POLISH





No. 3—A Sheepskin Coat





Lessons in Polish

ON the sixth evening after my arrival at Zakopane the pretty chambermaid came and made me understand, by signs rather than by words, that I was to come to supper downstairs. Other visitors had arrived, and the *patron* introduced us to one another with much ceremony. They were all Pan or Pani, or Panny something or other, ending in "ovski" or "owicz," and I sat down to table not having recognized a single name, not even my own! I was placed where I had been when alone, at the end of the longest table, but now on my right hand I had an old lady from Warsaw, who spoke French, and on my left her grandson—the only one of the company who knew English—and his young wife, who could only converse with me a little in German. She was, like many Polish women, of an almost incredible loveliness—a soft and dreamy beauty, with eyes that in a moment could dance in coquettish laughter or glow with an expression that I can only describe as that of a virgin-saint-and-martyr.

I used to find myself taking a wellnigh voluptuous pleasure in making women of this type talk of the

wrongs of Poland, that I might watch the changing sorrows on their beautiful faces: for it is patriotism, the patriotism of a deeply poetic nature, that has formed them. And Religion, and Pity, and Filial Piety, and the desire to bring up children for a happier day, and all sweet feminine thoughts are bound up inextricably with it. There are no such women's faces in England now: the twentieth century has a beauty of its own, but diverse, and Poland is living still in the eighteenth. But perhaps in the time of Byron? . . . in the time of Nelson? . . . I dreamed. . . My mind went wandering off; for to hear people all round you talking in an utterly unknown tongue is more conducive to reverie and vision than solitude itself, and it seemed to me that Shelley must have known such women—or if he never really met them, he thought he had!

The poetic impression was not in the least dispelled by the strange fact that young Mme. M—wore the dress of a girl-scout. Her husband, a stalwart young fellow, with innocent blue eyes and the complexion of a girl, was dressed also as a scout; in fact, he was on the eve of departure for England with the Polish contingent for the International Meeting at Birmingham, where I heard afterwards they were specially commended by Prince Arthur of Connaught. The Scout movement has been taken up with great enthusiasm in Poland, and I used to meet boy and young men-scouts in Cracow and Lwów,

and feel towards them as I do towards dogs—that here was some one homelike and friendly who, simply by virtue of his species, would understand my language and be kind to me if I were in difficulty.

This “boy-scout,” as I called him in my own mind, brought me next day a little Franco-Polish conversation-book, and began to teach me the language.

We sat in the wide verandah ; at least, I sat, and he stood, uncomfortably stooping to look in the book I was holding, till presently it occurred to me that manners forbade him to sit down beside me until I requested him to do so. A tall young priest was pacing noiselessly up and down, reading in his book of prayers, and the little river was brawling below in a language that sounded very like Polish, all “szch” and “drz,” hissing and lisping and gurgling.

“I am sure,” I said to the boy-scout, “when I have learned Polish I shall be able to talk with the river : can you ?”

“Of course,” he answered, “I can understand it quite well. Didn’t you hear what a pretty thing it said just now about England ? It said——”

“What is this curious ‘l’ with a twiddle at the top ?” I asked him, turning to the book.

“That,” he replied, “is pronounced something between an ‘l’ and a ‘w,’ just like your ‘l’ in ‘difficult,’ or as the uneducated people in England say the word ‘London.’”

I listened in amazement, for it had never struck me before that we had two sounds for the letter "l"; and he continued calmly—

"It is a curious thing that your language is the only one which resembles ours in having this peculiar 'l' as well as the usual one—as in 'lily.' Then there are three kinds of 'z' and four of 'dz,' distinguished by accents, and pronounced with varying degrees of softness, difficult perhaps to an English ear, but 'sz,' which looks so alarming, is simply 'sh'—for example, 'chcesz'—'you want,' pronounced 'htsesh.'"

"Exactly like a sneeze!"

Polish is a fascinating language, because every fresh word one learns—if one is acquainted only with Latin and Teutonic tongues—comes with the shock of something completely new, and makes one jump with surprise. Imagine one's head being called *glowa*, and one's chin *podbrudek*, one's dress *suknia* and a wedding *wesele*.

There is no definite article, but, to make up for that, there are three genders and seven cases, and the number and variety of terminations provided for the nouns is alone sufficient evidence that the Poles are an ingenious and imaginative race.

But it was painful to find among so chivalrous a people a certain rule concerning pronouns. As I said before, there are three genders, but whereas in German, for instance, there are three pronouns

(*er, sie* and *es*), of which the first serves for *all* masculine nouns, the second for *all* feminine ones, etc., in Polish there are *two masculine* pronouns, one for inanimate things, and one for men and living creatures of the male sex. But woman must be content with the same pronoun that serves for "the book, the lamp, the ruler," or any other lifeless noun that happens to be feminine.

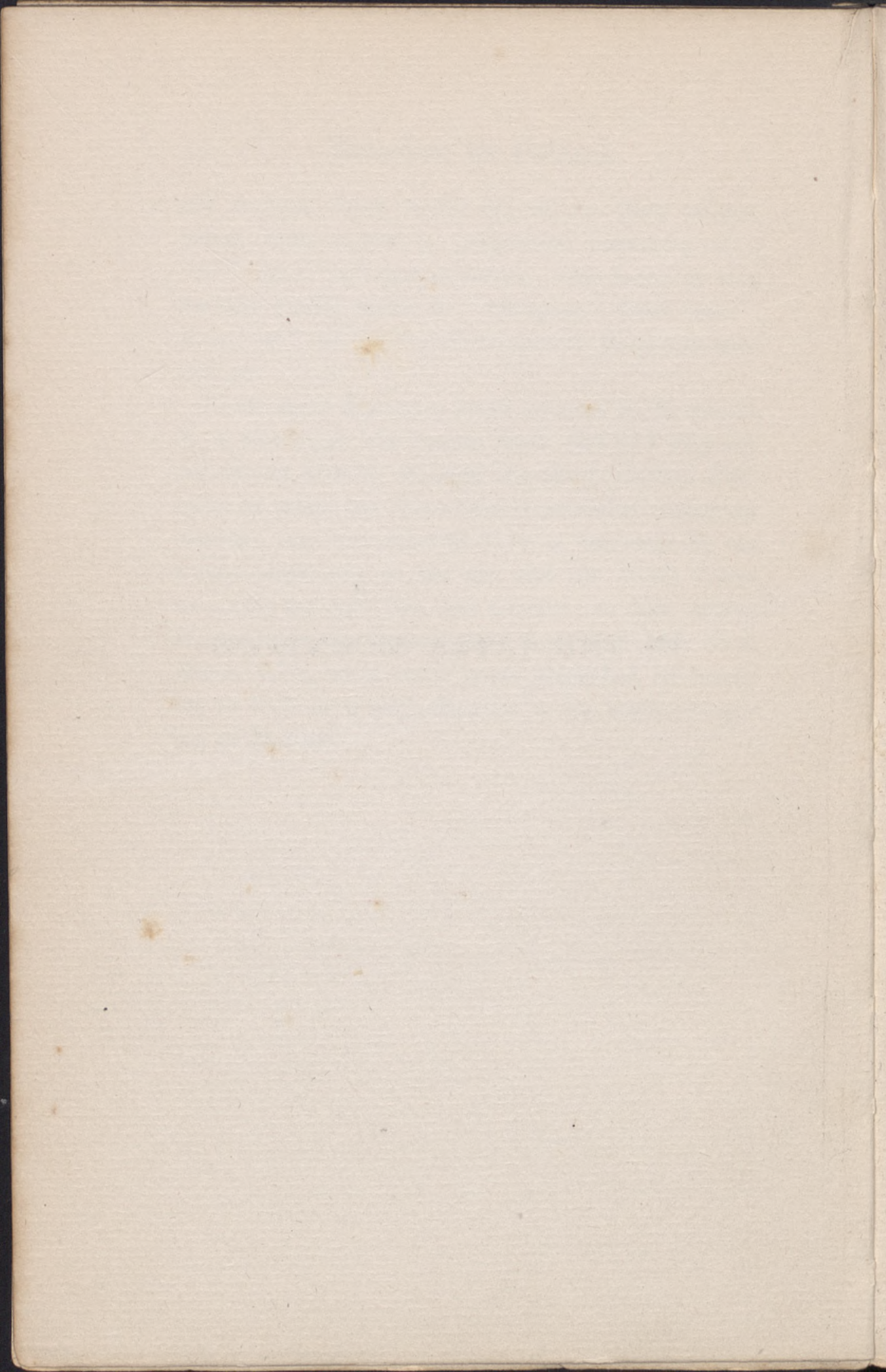
All this the boy-scout explained to me very nicely, and later I began to learn with pride to put the noun in the accusative, and say "I have the pin, I have the box," etc. Then came a dreadful shock, and I nearly fainted when I heard that if you say "I have *not* the pin," etc., the termination of the object changes! *because the verb is in the negative!* Is there any other language, I wonder, that has an invention so diabolical, so obviously "put in to make it more difficult" ? I trow not.

There are many pleasant and clean-sounding words in Polish that once heard are not forgotten, such as *Listopad* (November), *jagoda* (a berry), *niebo* (sky), *potem* (afterwards), *Dolina* (valley), *jutro* (to-morrow), and *obiad*, a nice word meaning "dinner." Others such as *Wrzesion* (September), *Dziękuję* (thank you), *mężczyzna* (man), *zazdrość* (jealousy), *szczęście* (luck), are equally intractable to eye and ear, and entail such a curious forward position of the lower teeth that my jawbone actually ached while I was learning them. As if that were

not enough, there would appear, as often as not, before these nouns a preposition consisting of a "w" or a "z" *pur et simple*. One looks in vain for any kindly vowel to "interpose a little ease"; it is "w" or "z," and requires to be pronounced just so.

I have more than once heard an actor in the middle of a *tirade* get his tongue stuck fast (if I may say so) for an instant, through the sheer physical difficulty of producing these hard consecutive consonant sounds; but nevertheless it is a language by no means unpleasing to the ear, and the Polish voices as a rule are soft, low and musical; so that, taking for example the conversation one may hear at a dinner table, one's ear is never anguished by listening to Poles as it may often be by the harsh screaming of Italians.

IN THE TATRA MOUNTAINS



In the Tatra Mountains

“THE high-well-born-one,” as the German-speaking porter called me, was very cold at Zakopane. Anyone who remembers the summer of 1913 in the East of Europe will pity her. Wrapped in all my warmest outdoor clothes, yet shivering, I used to sit in my window painting the rain-dark mountains, and for three weeks there was no change except that each day was colder and wetter and darker than the last. Suddenly I felt that I could not endure any longer the look of the grey, sad cloud obscuring the mountain, and the million uniformed fir-trees. Spruces! the most exasperating of trees. All seasons are alike to them: when it shines they never smile, and when it rains they don't look wet, and when it blows a gale they scarcely bend. Most unendurable of all is the smug complacent air of the little ones, even the babies ankle-high; so satisfied at being dressed exactly like papa and mamma, and growing in exactly the same uninteresting pattern!

So I resolved to go at once to Cracow, and walked up to K—— to bid good-bye to the Countess *——. But it was not good-bye, for there

I met for the first time her daughter Mlle. D——, who after a short holiday had returned to the duties of the school, to which she also has consecrated her life. We talked. It was one of those meetings when one feels that “something has happened,” so that the same thought came to both of us—Was this perhaps the “reason” of my pilgrimage? What was it that had brought me to Poland, so certain that I *had* to come, so untroubled as to the how or why? She called it Providence. I—well, when I returned to England and the twentieth century I called it Destiny, but there she almost made me believe as she did. “All we have willed or dreamed or imagined of good shall exist.” The things we have rejected all our lives are the things that all our lives, in the inmost depth of being, in spite of our despair, our disbelief, our smiling stony fortitude, we have most deeply cherished, loved and followed after. She did not say these things; simply by being the woman she was, she made me feel them. And, as for me, I do not explain these things: I do not even believe them. I merely relate what happened.

“You must stay here,” she said; so next day my luggage was packed, and piled on one of the primitive victorias, and started on the road to K——. “*Die Gnädige geht zu Fuss?*” said the porter as he kissed my wrist in acknowledgment of my modest tip, and the Gracious One followed a footpath, up beside

the tumbling stream, still babbling passionate legends and fairy-tales in Polish, while the mountain-barrier still rose higher and higher before her and the complacent little fir-trees brushed her knees as she passed them, until she came in sight of the large unlovely building. A house that already stood here was adapted as well as might be, with no other thought than of making it useful to the "Work," and it has no beauty to delight one's eyes. A stone-flagged corridor leads down the length of the house. On the right hand are work-rooms, kitchens and dining-room: on the left at the entrance a little office with a telephone, then class-rooms and one or two small reception-rooms. Here are no soft carpets or easy-chairs, no mantelpieces with ornaments on them, no knick-knacks, no pictures but a series of engravings from Arthur Grottger's scenes of the Insurrection of 'sixty-three. But, lying under glass, there is a large map of Poland stuck with many hundred tiny flags, which indicate the homes of past and present pupils.

My bedroom was in an annexe some hundred yards further up the valley—a large and airy, spotless room looking up to the Tatra Mountains, and down upon a waterfall framed in rocks and dark green fir-trees, which I was expected to seize upon as a subject for my "brush." The bed I remember as the best that I slept in on this pilgrimage, but the mirror discouraged one from vanity. In fact,

I might almost as well have attempted to see my hair reflected in the waterfall.

There would be other guests at supper, I was told, cousins of the *——'s, Count and Countess ——, a Princess —— with her two young daughters. Some instinct prompted me to wear my plainest and simplest frock, and so I took my place in that distinguished company. We ate with boiled potatoes curded milk, a sort of unsweetened junket—they told me it was a national "peasant's-dish"—"cutlets" made of meat minced and then fried, compote, fruit and cakes, followed immediately by tea. No wine appeared either at this meal or at the middle-day dinner. When the tea was served a cup was placed in front of each person, and the servant came round with two teapots. From the small one she poured first a little very strong tea and from the other hot water. It is usual to drink it without milk or lemon. All over the country where I went afterwards, in Warsaw, on the shores of the Baltic and in the Duchy of Posen, except in those few houses which are learning Western ways, supper consists of a meal of this sort. Sometimes at dinner beer is seen, and sometimes sweet Hungarian wine, but very little is drunk besides water.

At table every one talked English or French, for my benefit, lapsing now and then into Polish, with apologies. The Poles have an extraordinary facility for languages—except for Russian and German!

“Do you suppose I know one word of Russian?” the Countess — asked me with a pretty air of indignation, when, knowing that she lived in Warsaw, I asked some question about the Russian newspapers.

The A——s lived in the Duchy of Posen, where the fate of the Poles under the Prussian Government is infinitely more unhappy than in Austria. That same law which banishes the *——’s oppresses equally the poorest.

Princess A—— said, “We had in our house a *bonne* who had taught the elder children, but was now old and infirm; so she stayed on with no other duties than to look after the little ones and be with them while they played in the garden, and of course we intended her to stay with us till she died. One day my husband had a letter stating that it had come to the knowledge of the police that this woman had been born in Galicia, and therefore she must leave the country.”

“But after all you *did* keep her?” said Mlle. —.

“Yes, we did,” she smiled triumphantly, “after a long correspondence, and after assurances to the police that she didn’t teach the children to read or write Polish, but only looked after their physical well-being, we obtained the permission, but only on a sort of monthly lease, and if at any moment they are annoyed with us they may repeal it.”

“Do you know,” she said, turning to me, “that

we are not permitted, in Posen, to have a Polish tutor in the house, but my boys must make all their studies in German? And even for the governesses I may not choose them freely, but must take those who are approved by the police. And at any moment a police-officer may come into my house, and insist then and there on being present at the lessons my little girls are having with their governess. And if there is anything in it that does not please him, I am forced to dismiss her. The only place where the police have no right to come is my bedroom, so the children have lessons there. And we mayn't send the boys abroad to be educated until they have passed the government examination in German. And as for Hania and Irena here," she said, "I was not allowed to send them to their convent school in Austrian Poland until the Prince had assured the authorities that the mountain climate was necessary for their health."

"But as for that law about Prussian subjects," said the Countess —, "I must tell Mademoiselle the story of the sculptor. A cousin of ours, the Princess —, was enlarging her country house, and she had a young French sculptor from Paris to make designs, and do carving for the portico and the doorways. While he was there—it was an affair of several months—he fell in love with the daughter of the steward and married her. Immediately the police wrote to say that as she had become

by her marriage a French subject, she must leave the country."

"Her husband too?" I asked.

"Of course not; Frenchmen, English, Hottentots, anyone is free to live in Prussia but a Pole. Perhaps you don't know that at the railway bookstalls Polish newspapers are forbidden to be sold. French, English, Italian, yes, but not ours. Well, this poor little bride—she was a simple young girl who had never left her home, and couldn't speak a word of anything but Polish—how could her husband send her away to live alone in Paris? My cousin did all in her power, wrote here and there, protested, begged even for a few months' delay. No use! So the sculptor was obliged to throw up his commission, leave his carving unfinished, and take his wife into France. With us in Warsaw it is better," she continued, "the Russian laws are just as oppressive, but, thank God, the administration is corrupt! A banknote here, a few roubles there—the only thing is to know just how many." She laughed.

"But if you haven't the roubles?"

"Ah, then of course it goes hardly with you," said one of the party, as we left the little dining-room and walked out of the house into the moonlit valley. The garden was lost in shadow. Steep mountain-walls closed in before and on each side of us, showing their jagged outline on the sky: they were velvet black in the darkness, but near the torrent

where the moon shone the ranks of tall fir-trees glimmered a greenish-grey.

We walked up and down, wrapped in thick cloaks, for, though the month was June, it was very cold, and we talked about the Polish boys at the Russian universities. Some of them had been arrested lately, and imprisoned for several months, because they met in a friend's rooms—four or five of them together—and sang old Polish ballads.

“The object of Russian education,” said the man who was walking beside me, “is to prevent intellectual growth and to obliterate character. For this reason a student who leads an honest and virtuous life diminishes his chances of obtaining his degree.”

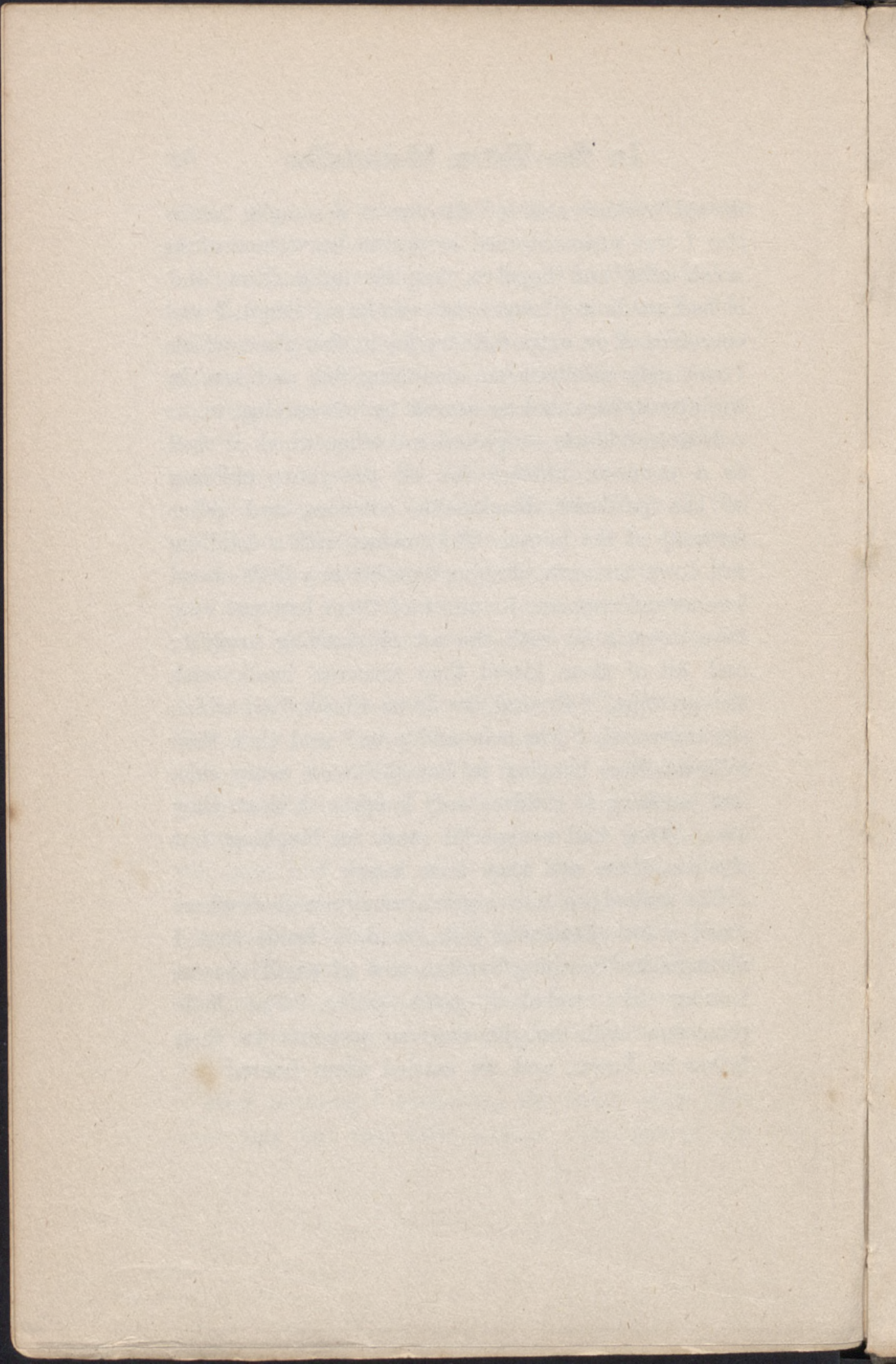
I had already learnt how naïve is the English notion that if a young man gets bad marks for his examination paper it is because he is weak in Classics or Mathematics. And I understood that there are countries where those who please the government will pass, and those who—sing the wrong songs, for instance—will fail. But the things that in this conversation I was told, of the encouragement of vice among the young Poles in the Russian universities, for the purpose of debasing the national character, I pass over in silence, because in England they would not be believed.

Next morning I walked up the valley with Mlle. — and her two little cousins. In spite of the

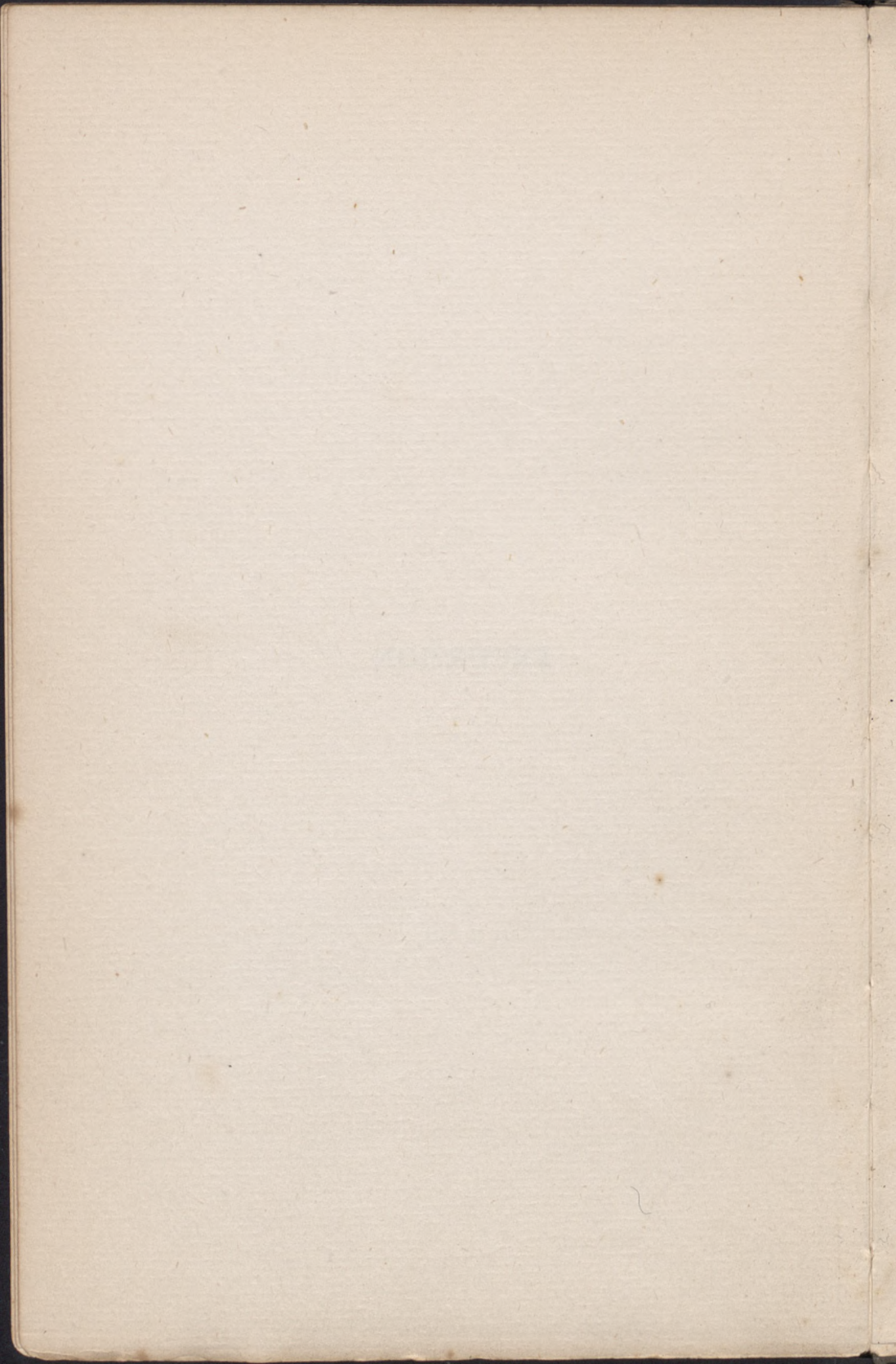
dismal weather and sad dreams of the night before (for I was unaccustomed as yet to be witness of so much grief and hopeless, helpless indignation, and it had made my heart ache even in my sleep), I was conscious of an extraordinary joy in this place, which I can only attribute to something fine and rare in the atmosphere, not measured by meteorologists.

Near the house we passed a cottage which is used as a common nursery for all the young children of the gardener, blacksmith, cowman, and other servants of the house. They came, with a toddling run down the path, clinging together in a little crowd for mutual support, for most of them had not long been acquainted with the art of standing upright; and all of them kissed their mistress' hand, with the greeting, "Praised be Jesus Christ," to which she answered, "For ever and ever," and then they followed her, hanging to her skirts on every side, and laughing as children only laugh with those they love. They had no special cause for laughing, but she was there and they were happy

We walked up into a green mountain-glade where stood a few shepherds' huts, so dark inside that I distinguished nothing but the row of small cheeses looking like unbaked *petits pains*. The little princesses each bought one, as presents to their father in Posen, and we carried them home.



EXCURSION



Excursion

STILL it rained, and still each day was colder and wetter and darker than the one before. "*Comment? Vous partez demain?*" said the old Countess. "*Mais mon fils guette le beau temps pour vous montrer Koscieliska*"; and when I protested I must go it was decided to make the expedition that afternoon.

Two splendid horses drew the long, light, narrow, springless wagon in which we sat on benches two and two—Mr. *——, the two children and I. The sides of the wagon were of basket-work, and there were hoops arched overhead on which were drawn canvas curtains to shield us from the rain. We descended the road to Zakopane, bordered with fir-trees, and every one crossed himself on passing the little shrine that marks the place where last winter a bobsleigh party had upset, and a lady, young, charming, and the mother of a little girl of five, had been killed on the spot. Through the town and out into the country on the other side we still followed a new good road, and my host pointed out the sanatorium for consumptives at a distance, the

Sketches in Poland

marshy fields he was draining, the new forests planted where old ones had been cut down; and the crops in which he was experimenting. We stopped half an hour to talk to the engineer of a bridge that the Count was building over the river. Then we turned up into a valley that gradually narrowed into a rocky gorge: the stream and the road ran side by side; above it were crags like fortresses, and towers whose tops were lost in the grey streaming cloud or shone upon for a moment by a gleam. Brigands used to live here in a cave accessible only up the face of a precipice, and here they defended themselves with ease, and kept great stores of plunder, and sometimes held wicked feasts and sometimes starved.

We passed a heap of burnt wood scattered on the blackened ground. Here in long past ages died a robber famed for his desperate wickedness and enormous strength: he had wagered he would carry up the cliff a huge stone with which the brigands ground up gold and silver ore that were then found in the mountains, but before he reached the appointed place he fell, and was crushed to death by the weight of it. His evil spirit never departed from the spot, and is appeased to this day by fire. Every one who passes throws a log or a stick upon the pile, and from time to time some one sets a light to it.

We stopped at a deep clear pool, as clear as glass, where a spring rises that feeds three streams that flow away in different channels. Near by is a smooth-faced

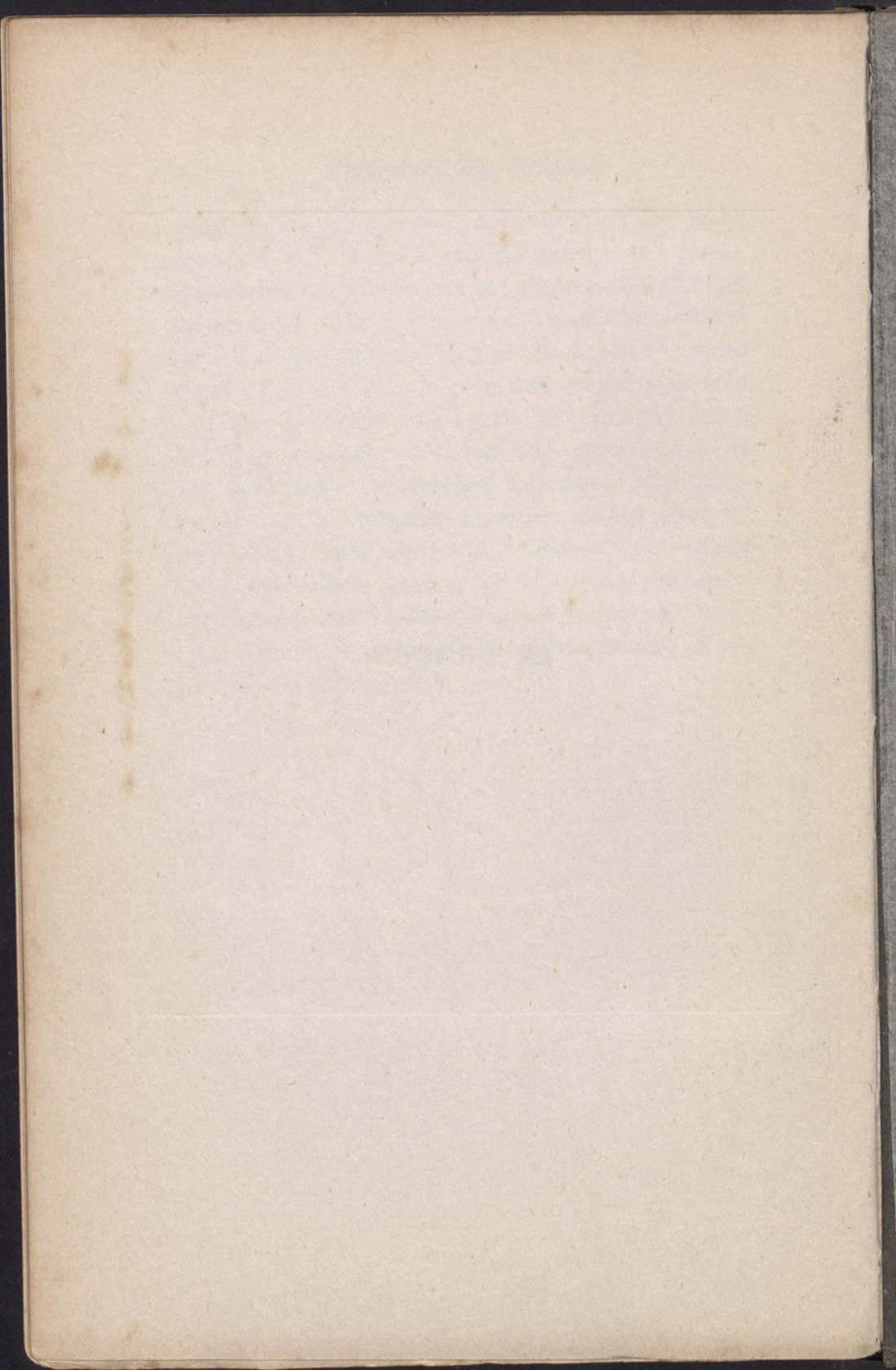
perpendicular grey rock, in which is the strangest example I ever saw of the way in which Nature amuses herself sometimes in imitating the handiwork of man. I saw a Gothic window in the rock, and in it were piled a Grecian helmet, maces, battle-axes and breast-plates. It did not surprise me to be told that knights lie sleeping here who will one day rise for a great war, and that if you put your ear to the ground you may hear strange noises in the heart of the mountain like the shoeing of horses, which is surely preparation for the conflict.

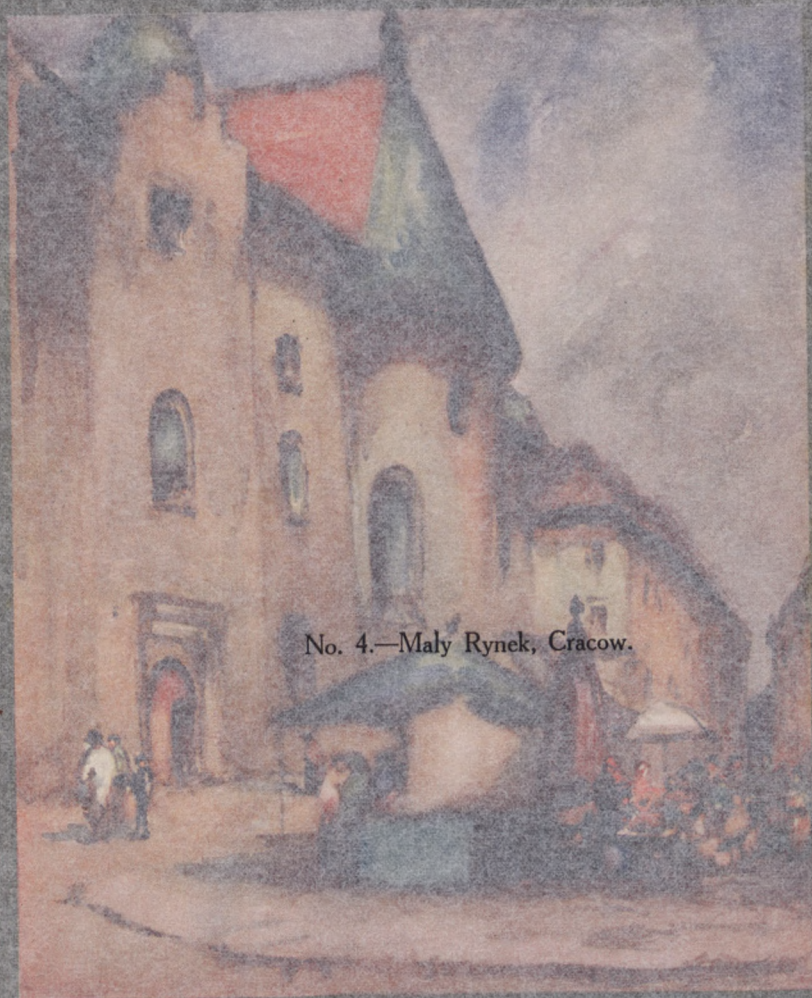
The Count wished to consult about the road with the engineer who had come with us, so the little girls and I left the wagon and scrambled up a cleft in the rock which is called the Dragon's Cave—in Polish "*Smocza Jama.*" (In Cracow the new scientific dust-carts are called "*Smok*" because they open an insatiable gullet and swallow, exactly as a dragon does.) When we came back to the carriage, the engineer told us a bear had been seen that afternoon and had killed two sheep in the mountains, but he had hidden himself again, and to our disappointment we caught no glimpse of him.

On the way back we stopped at a lonely wooden house, a shelter and place of refreshment for tourists; the empty dining-room looked so dark and dismal that, cold as it was, we leaned on the verandah and waited while there was cooked for us a meal of trout which, only an hour or two before, had been swim-

ming in the river a few yards away. Then, much refreshed, a little dried, and the good horses rested, we climbed once more into the wagon. We still had many miles to go; the wagon jolted and clattered on the stones, the rain blew in through the curtains on every side, the little princesses looked very cold and blue in their convent-capes of thin black serge, but they gallantly protested they were warm. It was dark before we reached the house; the moon looked like a drowning swimmer washed over by grey billows, submerged and sinking, yet not utterly lost; everywhere was the scent of earth and rain, the sighing of forest-trees, and the roaring of water, and Count —— in the darkness was talking of the past glories of Poland.

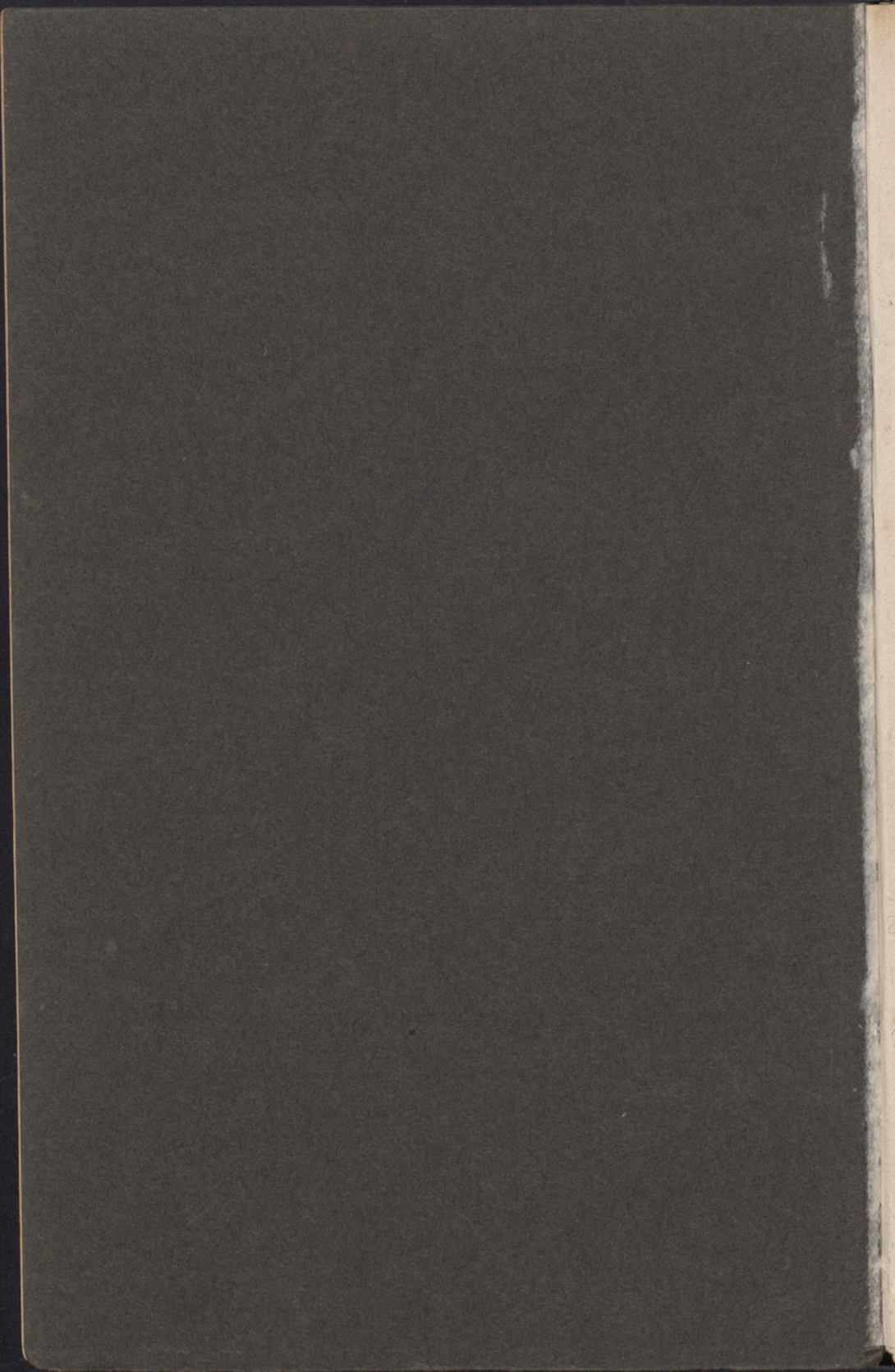
IN CRACOW





No. 4.—Maly Rynek, Cracow.





In Cracow

THE Princess went to Cracow a day or two before me, and it was arranged that the children should come with me, whereat I was flattered, as they had never journeyed before without their mother. She had asked me which class I preferred, and I had replied modestly that I had come second, but—"Would you mind going third?" she asked, and of course I said I should be delighted, and after all it was much the most sensible way of travelling, as the third-class carriages were without cushions and therefore contained just so much less dust than the second.

We reached Cracow about four, and went at once to the Czartoryski Museum, which, naturally, was closed to the public at that hour; but we were not the public, and one of the guardians showed us round, and the little girls with untiring courtesy translated everything he told us into English.

This collection is a mine of gold for historians, but for the idle vagabond it is sheer joy to see those ornaments and caskets and furniture, those gorgeous saddles, the armour, the costumes, the scimitars taken from the Turks in battle, the lances of the

Polish cavaliers, the extraordinary "wings" of eagles' feathers worn by hussars who fought under John Sobieski, the great swords, and the delicate ones exquisitely chased, with their rich scabbards, and the long two-handled ones like that with which Pan Longin smote off the heads of three Turks at a blow as they scaled the wall at the siege of Sbaraj, and so fulfilled the desire of his life. (He was very modest about it afterwards, I remember, and said they had happened to be in a good position.)

Among the most characteristic things are the sashes woven of silk, and gold and silver tissue. They are immensely long and broad, and have two designs and two colours running lengthwise down each side, so that when they are folded double and wrapped round the waist, four different effects may be obtained, appropriate to various occasions, such as a wedding, a funeral, a dance, a trial for high-treason, etc. They date from the sixteenth century, but are still used. While I was staying at Lwów, the Countess *— showed me some little kodak snapshots of her sons and grandsons at a wedding which took place in the family a few months before. The men had long sleeveless coats of coloured velvet or fine cloth, with collars of rich fur, their shirt sleeves were cloth of silver, their caps were adorned with tall feathers, their buttons were enormous jewels, and they wore sashes of this kind round their waists. In fact, a young man's outfit for a wedding (even though it be none of his)

is as costly as that of an American bride, but of course it is usually provided out of the family wardrobes.

The Czartoryski Museum is in an old house adjoining the city wall close to the Florian Gate, which, built in the fifteenth century, of red brick, and standing four-square, with the great white Polish Eagle and the three towers of Cracow in sculptured stone over the archway, forms an entrance to the town that strikes one pleasantly as "right." Just outside the gate is a circular red-brick fort called the Rondel, which must have been once a very effectual defence, and even now is apparently considered of some significance, for when I was sketching it early one sunshiny morning, a young sentry came up to me, and, blushing, with a "regret-my-painful-duty" sort of air, requested to see what I was doing. However, after regarding my water-colour critically, he seemed to conclude that it was not sufficiently good to warrant my arrest, and that time I escaped scot-free.

But to return to that evening in Cracow. I safely delivered my "young charges" into the hands of their mother, and they left that night for the Duchy of Posen, assuring me many times that they hoped to see me there shortly.

The Poles, apparently, are so hospitable that they need only to see one and they invite one to their houses; indeed, as I was presently to prove, they don't even need to see—to *hear* of one is enough! and when, after staying with them several weeks,

one writes a polite note of thanks for the "delightful visit," one receives soon after a letter of thanks for the kind things one has said, and the pleasure it has been to receive one. And so it goes on until the English traveller, perceiving that in this duel of courtesy his opponent is ten thousand times more accomplished than himself, drops his weapon and owns himself defeated.

Now began sweet silver days of solitude and freedom, varied by the golden visits of new acquaintances, new friends, each more kind and courteous than another. Sometimes I went to tea in some elegant and pleasant flat (recalling modern Paris)—that of a fashionable portrait-painter—whose pictures of peasants are well known in England for their delightful colour and accomplished draughtsmanship, and whose charming wife is the daughter of a Polish refugee brought up in England; or of the young Baroness, who showed me the enchanting little clay models of the sculptured animals her husband was exhibiting in the Salon; or sometimes I sat in long twilight hours with a woman, an artist of yet more spiritual force than these, looking at her mysteriously fascinating portraits, while the dusk gathered in her high grey studio and she talked to me in her weary, pearl-grey voice of how the soul remembers its past lives, and dies, and is born again into sorrow.

Sometimes two or three people would arrange together to take me to the Wawel, fortress, royal

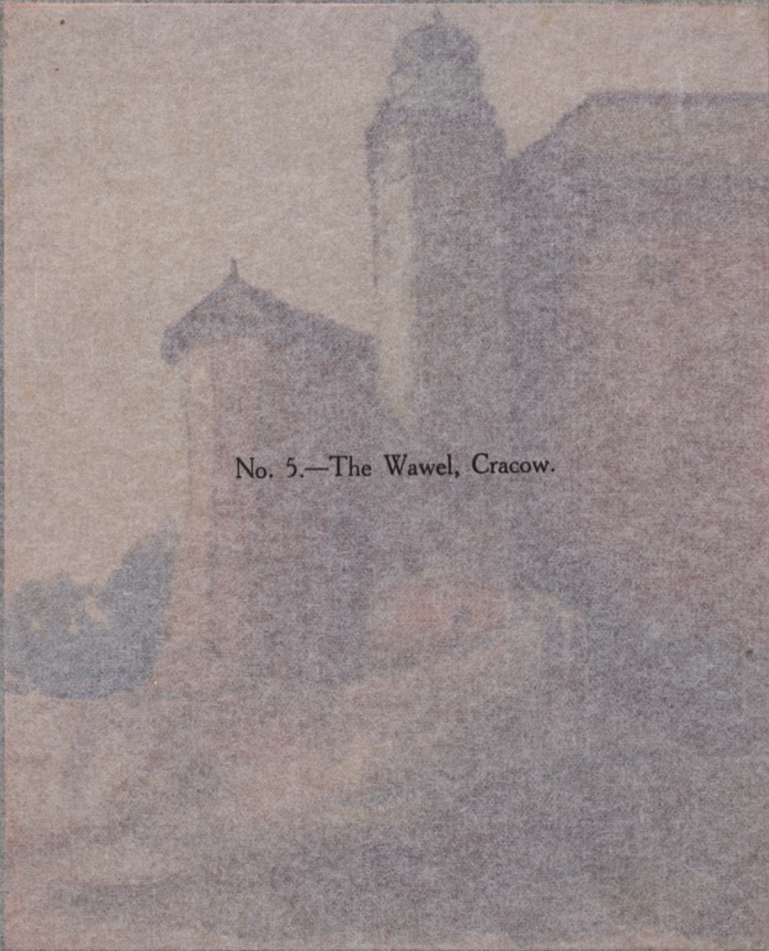
palace and cathedral in one. It reminded me a little of Windsor by its situation, and by the colour of its brick walls, rising from the steep hillside, of the fortress of Alhambra. The cathedral is Gothic, with Baroque chapels and shrines, and cupolas of green copper. In it are the shrine of St. Stanislas (the Becket of Poland, murdered by King Boleslaw), and huge tapestries taken from the Turks at Vienna: in the crypt beneath I saw the coffins of Sobieski, Kosciuszko, Joseph Poniatowski, and the great poet Mickiewicz. In the royal apartments, on the great stairs, in the inner court with its Italian arcading, workmen were busy clearing piles of broken rubbish and restoring what was falling into ruin.

Imagine England a conquered country, and imagine Windsor Castle a barracks of the foreign masters, and one guesses at the feelings of the Poles since the Austrian soldiers were quartered here in 1796. A few years ago a national subscription was raised to buy back from the Austrians what they had seized. But the Poles, well knowing that they would not be permitted to keep the Wawel for themselves, made known their intention of presenting it to the Emperor. Under these conditions they were allowed to buy it, present it, and repair the damage the soldiers had done.

Magnificent marble chimneypieces and carved doorways had been wantonly defaced, but much had been saved. For there was an old steward of

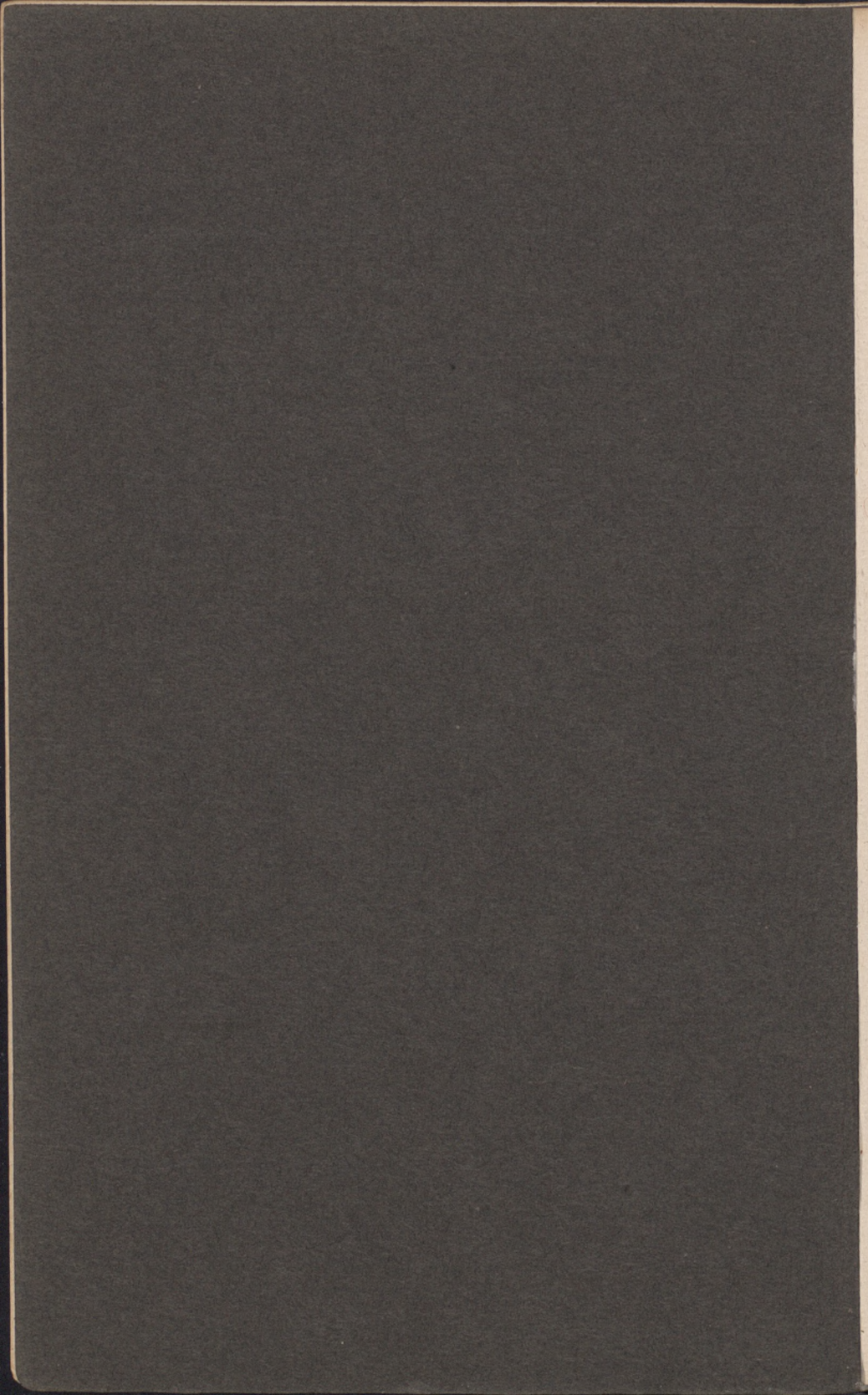
some sort in the castle who, knowing what was to be the fate of it, hastily, at his own expense, before the soldiers were brought in, covered a great marble staircase with wood, and plastered over some of the colonnades. These are now being brought to light. The Polish workmen labour with enthusiasm, and the citizens constantly visit the castle, bringing their children with them. Even the youngest children are well acquainted with Polish history, and imagine the old time vividly, passionately, talking of Queen Jadwiga, Casimir the Great, Sigismund III, the brave Stephen Batory and the handsome, weak, unhappy Stanislas Augustus, as they might of their aunts and uncles. Altogether there is about the Wawel an intense national feeling, and even in the little guide-book prepared for the use of English visitors one reads discreet emotion in the words that the castle "is since 1905 successively evacuated of the Austrian military, and at present fundamentally renewed."

But if the Wawel is the sepulchre of a dead kingdom, the Church of the Virgin in the Rynek is the home of a living faith. Whatever Credo one may say, or leave unsaid, in one's own heart it is impossible to enter this church without feeling the assurance that it lives. It is not only in the beauty of the building or the gorgeous windows, or the dim yet deep and glowing colour of the painted walls, or the care and the perfect taste in all the details of the



No. 5.—The Wawel, Cracow.





chapels and altars, but, I think, in the ceremonies, and in the music, and in the silent prayers of the people who are praying and have prayed there, that one knows the presence of a Faith that lives and breathes, and is so strong that it bears up death-stricken Hope in its arms.

During the whole morning on Sundays, when one mass is celebrated after another, and the service between twelve and one that takes place in absolute silence, the great church is crowded with people, old, young, and rich and very poor, who remain there motionless, kneeling or standing hour after hour: the peasants in their brilliant-coloured clothes are almost always reading devoutly in some old book of prayers. It occurred to me once, when I was standing in the nave, to reckon up the people immediately surrounding me, and I counted fourteen women and fifty men, most of them young: women and older men, about equal in numbers, filled the seats.

But at Evensong on other days there was music, and rich colours fading in the dusk: only the altar glimmered, and the people knelt, hidden in deep shadow. I remember a peasant-boy in Austrian soldier's uniform, on his knees, singing in his pure untutored bass the Polish Litany to the Virgin.

In the doorway of the church one morning, as I stood to watch the crowds of people who streamed out, still silent, still with that absorbed, abstracted

look in their sad eyes, I recognized my friend the little painter, and we walked together across the square to the Sukiennice (the Cloth-Hall). There in an archway he showed me what I had not noticed before, an antique murderous knife that was hanging to the wall by a chain; then turning to look back at the two tall dead-rose-colour towers of the church, he said, "Two brothers built them. One finished his tower with all those little pinnacles and turrets clustered round the spire, but the second built his more slowly and more solidly; but when it was done, as you see, it was much the more beautiful of the two. And when the first builder saw it, he was enraged, and he killed his brother. And this is the knife he did it with."

At the very summit of the taller tower is a gilded ball; inside it—so I was told by a less romantic person than the painter—were found documents placed there in the fifteenth century, just as we bury a *Times* newspaper beside a foundation-stone, to give our news of this morning into the hands of some yet unconceived to-morrow. Beneath the little turrets is a platform, from which every hour, before the great clock strikes, a trumpeter blows a gay ethereal bugle-call that rings out over the city, inciting the inhabitants to work or pleasure; only at six o'clock in the morning he blows a strange, sad, wailing air—so sad that the young day enters, sighing to hear it.

SCARLET AND BLACK

Scarlet and Black

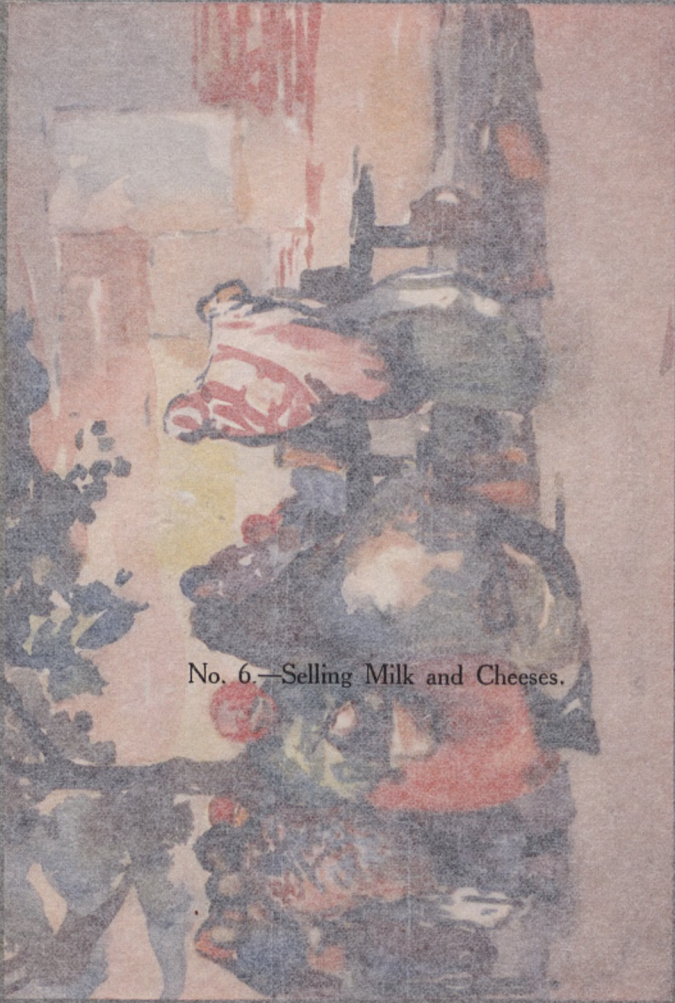
THE Emperor Joseph II is said to have destroyed sixty churches in Cracow, but, as he left fifty-three still standing, the most casual observer is able to perceive that it is not a heathen city.

Behind the Church of the Blessed Virgin are an old courtyard, a group of ecclesiastical-looking houses, and a deep archway giving entrance into Mały Rynek, the Little Market ; and here the masonry, as though it could not help itself, shapes itself immediately into the form of a church once more—the dark shrine of St. Barbara, bearing in its outer wall a fifteenth-century sculpture representing the Agony in the Garden. Close by again, in the middle of the market, one sees a low greenish dome, and underneath it the little squat square church, the oldest in Cracow, of St. Adalbert, who came here from Bohemia to preach Christianity to the heathen. He is the favourite saint of the cabdrivers ; their piety provides the flowers for his altar, and keeps his tiny church in repair.

I was never tired of wandering up and down here

in the Rynek among the market-people, and the gentleness of their manners, no less than the gorgeous colours of their dresses, endeared them to my affections. I couldn't buy their geese or curded milk or toadstools, but they always gave me a friendly smile as I prowled among them with my sketch-book, and made me feel that I was not unwelcome.

White and scarlet are the colours of the Polish flag. Scarlet and buff—scarlet and rose—pink and orange—vermilion and lavender—dust-colour, bronze and scarlet meet one at every turn. Most beautiful of all the market is that corner—how well I know my way there!—where stands the long line of women selling soured milk and curds behind narrow trestles that are crowded with bowls and pans and tall jars and pitchers made of wood. They are enveloped and swathed in shawls which hide their shape, and give to their figures something of the modesty and mystery of the Oriental women, and an Indian-patterned kerchief tied low over their foreheads covers their hair. Many of the shawls are Persian, others have broad and bright-coloured plaids and stripes: one sees underneath them the wearer's green velvet jacket sewn all over with embroidery and sequins, and round her neck strings of large white and vermilion-coloured beads. Unless she happens that day to be going bare-foot, her magnificent top-boots, reaching to the knee, are well seen beneath her short full skirt of white cretonne powdered with little

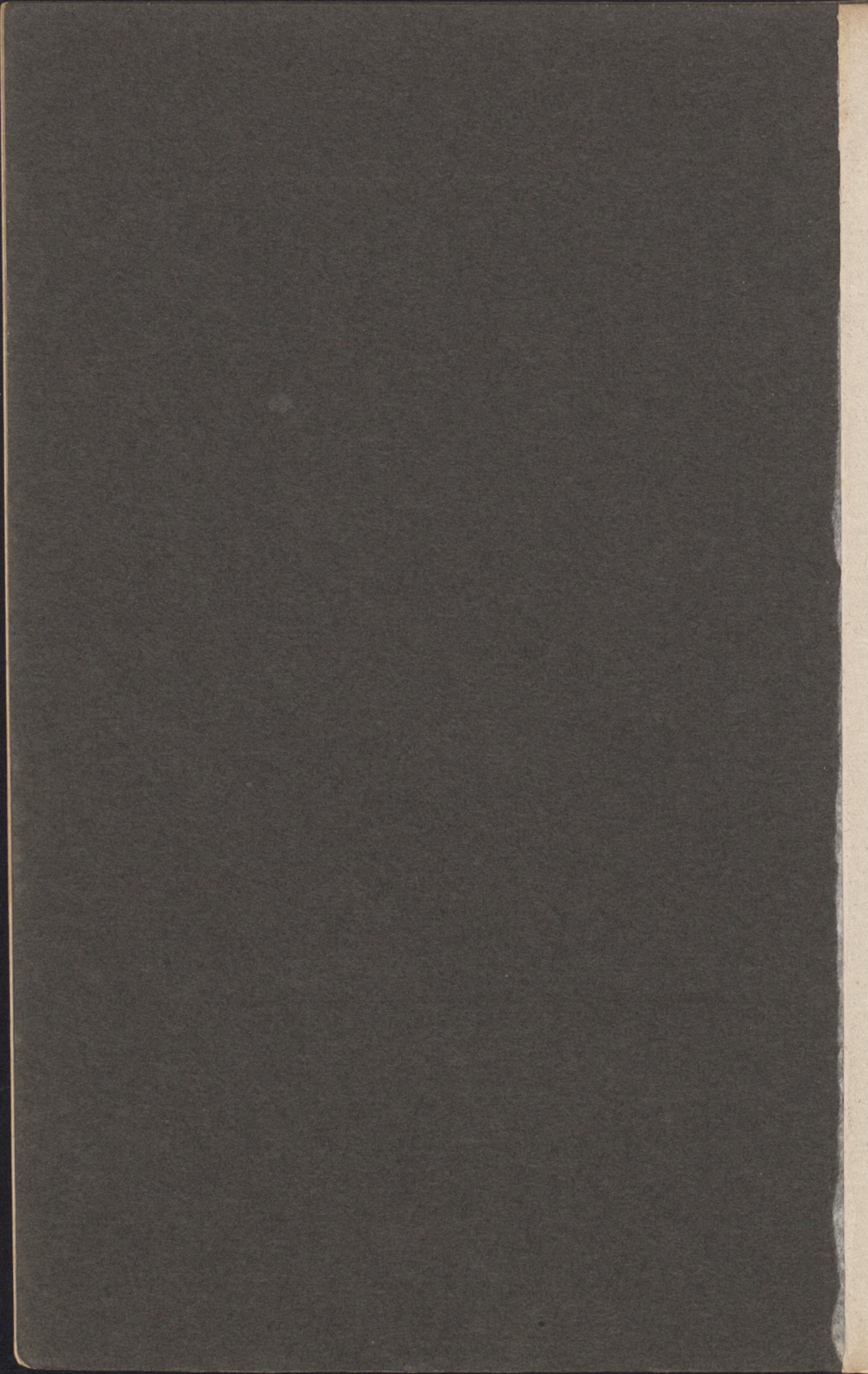


No. 6.—Selling Milk and Cheeses.

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flowers: or sometimes she has a skirt of pink cotton, but always it is very fresh and clean.

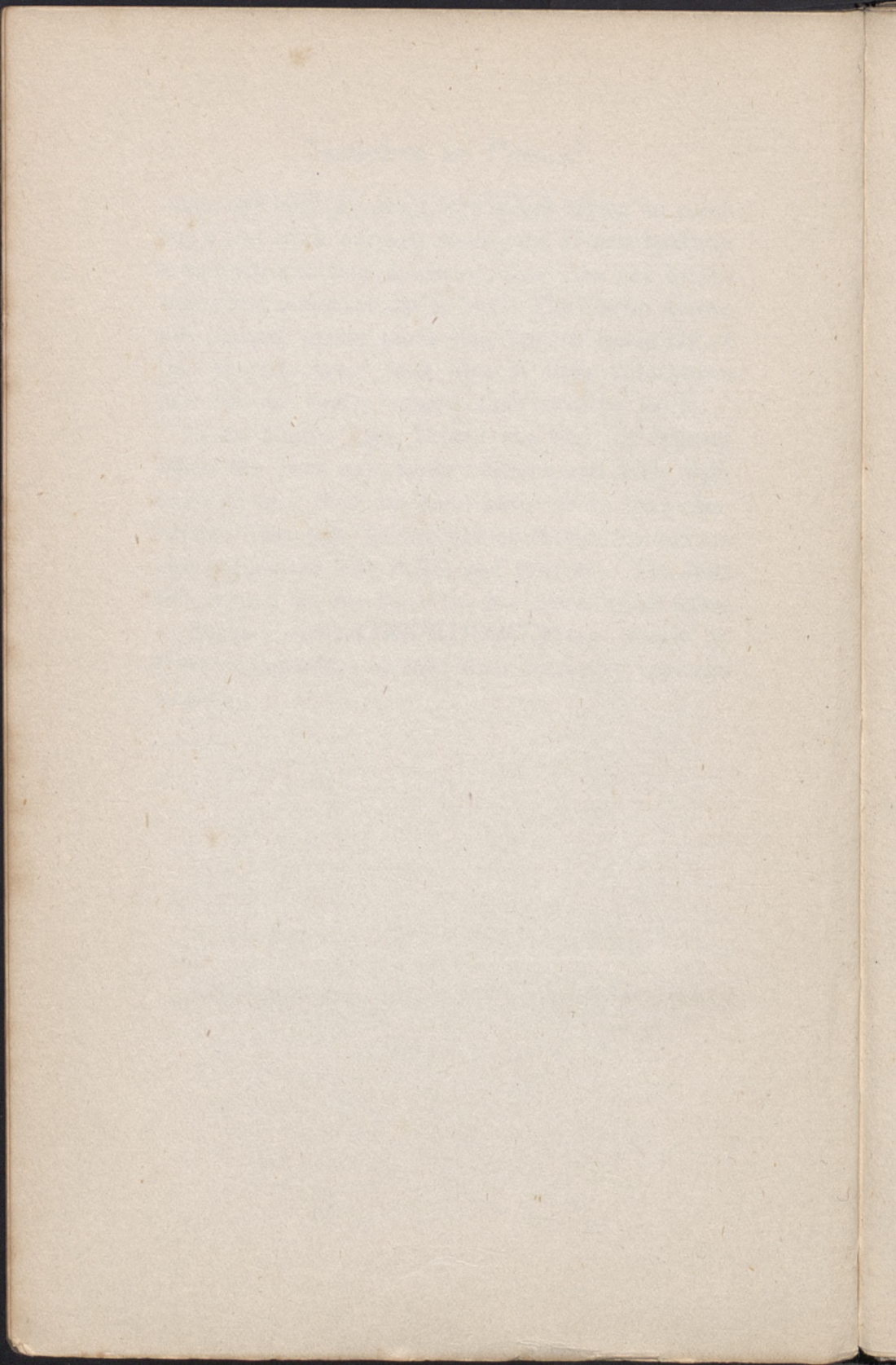
Whether it be pure accident or their deliberate approval of that combination, I do not know, but I noted very often the delightful effect of rose-pink with vivid scarlet. The secret, of course, lies in the purity of the tints, and the harmony gained by the dust-coloured setting. I saw a lady in the Planty once with a pink hat and a red dress, which was frightful.

Passing, but not mingling, amid these gay and cleanly hues, are figures of a dirty and a greasy black. A close-buttoned, shapeless, yet tight-fitting garment of some thin shiny black stuff clothes the Jew from neck to heel. Apparently he imagines that "black does not show the dirt." On his head is a black cap; his black and unwashed hair hangs in two ringlets on his cheek. Sometimes he is lean and hollow-chested, sometimes he has an air of oily prosperity: always his head is extremely large in proportion to his body, and he looks up at one, as he passes, with alien and obsequious eyes. At street-corners, in the market, in the doorways, Jew stands talking with Jews, Christian with Christians. Inside the arcades of the Sukiennice, so dark that they are often lighted with lamps in the daytime, are stalls where are sold ribbons and beads and toy belts and pouches, made in imitation of those the peasants wear. All these

stalls are kept by Jews, who stand trying to catch one's eye by a cringing smile, and if one hesitates a moment and then moves on, they seize one by the sleeve and scream to one to buy. The Jewish women are dressed pretty much like English townfolk of the poorest class; their wigs of filthy light-brown hair are not pretty against their swarthy skins.

In the Middle Ages, Poland was the only country where the Jews were made welcome and fairly well-treated; now they are more hated there than elsewhere. They talk Yiddish among themselves, but are also acquainted with Polish and German. The Jews live beyond the Wawel, in the Kazmierz, which forms a distinct quarter of the city. Many people go there on Saturdays to hear their extremely beautiful singing.

KOSCIUSZKO



Kosciuszko

ON that side of the Rynek where the flower-market is, lies embedded in the ground a flat huge stone which bears an inscription to the memory of Kosciuszko ; for here he stood to harangue the peasants and enrol them as volunteers to fight in defence of their country. Before his time, the Polish army had consisted only of nobles and cavaliers. But Kosciuszko loved the peasants, and he taught them that they too were worthy to struggle in a glorious cause.

It was in 1793. At once after the new and most admirable Constitution had been sworn to by Stanislaus Poniatowski, Catherine II moved troops into Poland to declare her displeasure and command that it should be annulled. Frederick William II, on the contrary, wrote a letter of congratulation to the happy monarch of an enlightened state, but at the same time he protested that the tender heart of Prussia had been so wounded by the conduct of Poland, who had presumed to reform herself "without the knowledge or participation of the neighbouring friendly states," that he also felt compelled to

move troops into the country. And he and Catherine arranged between them the Second Partition of Poland. Then took place the rising under Kosciuszko—but everybody knows that piteous story, and its ending.

I walked out alone one morning to the “Kosciuszko Mound”—a steep pyramid of earth on the top of a hill, which may be seen conspicuous against the sky-line on the west side of Cracow.

The painter had warned me not to go sketching there.

“It wouldn’t be safe,” he said.

“Rough and lawless people about?”

“No, I mean there are a great many police round there,” he answered.

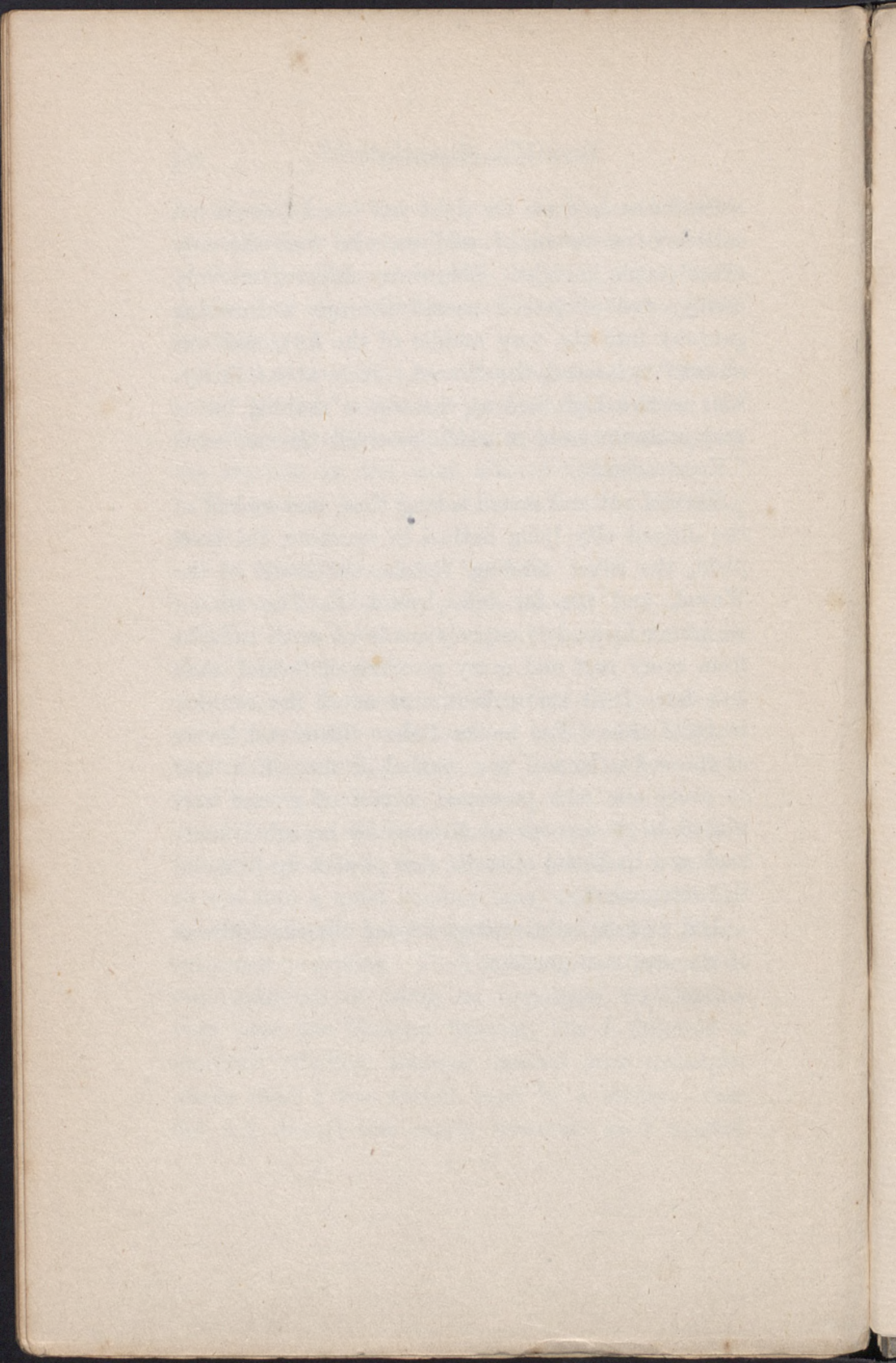
It seemed to me an odd idea that the presence of policemen should make one feel unsafe, but I didn’t neglect his warning, and was careful not to take even a note-book with me.

I did not go the short and easy way by the road, but walked over a wide marshy meadow, crossed a stream into a quiet country lane, and then climbed up the hill-side until I came to a plateau where soldiers were drilling. It all looked rather formidable and conscious of being an important fortification very near the Russian frontier, but I followed a footpath winding amongst barbed wire entanglements until I was turned back by a sentry. This did not disturb me much, however, as I wanted

some one to show me the right way—and I could not ask it of a squad of soldiers, who were the only other people in sight. The sentry directed me very civilly, and at last I passed through a frowning gateway into the very middle of the fort, and was allowed to ascend the Mound. It is about thirty-four metres high, and at the top is nothing but a grey unhewn stone in which is carved the one word “Kosciuszko.”

There I sat and rested a long time, and looked at the distant city lying bathed in sunshine, the level plain, the silver winding Vistula, the castle of the Wawel, and the far hills beyond it. The Mound on which I stood is entirely made of earth brought from every part and every province of Poland, near and far. It is an ancient custom of the country to build thus. For to the Poles—tillers and lovers of the soil—the soil is a symbol of their life; and so every one who possessed a plot of ground and wished to do honour to Kosciuszko brought a cart-load or a basketful of earth, and piled it up to make this monument.

And now it is the stronghold and the watch-tower of the Austrian garrison.



SKETCHING IN CRACOW

PRINTED BY G. B. BROWN

Sketching in Cracow

IN the hotel I was known to the staff as Angielka¹—"the Englishwoman"—so rare are my compatriots in Cracow. Yet although I was so rare, and taller than the average of women, and the only one condemned by Fate to walk about Planty with a sketching-bag and an easel, I was never once rudely stared at or followed; no horrid boys pointed at me, calling out "Mees!"—they don't even know the hateful word!—and when I remembered the insults one has to suffer in France or Belgium, or even Italy and Spain, my heart swelled with gratitude towards this, the most gentlemanly people in Europe, while I painted, and the passers-by stood still for a minute at a distance of several yards to glance at my sketch, and then walked quietly away; or the children stood whispering—actually *whispering*—near me, and moved backwards at the merest motion of my hand.

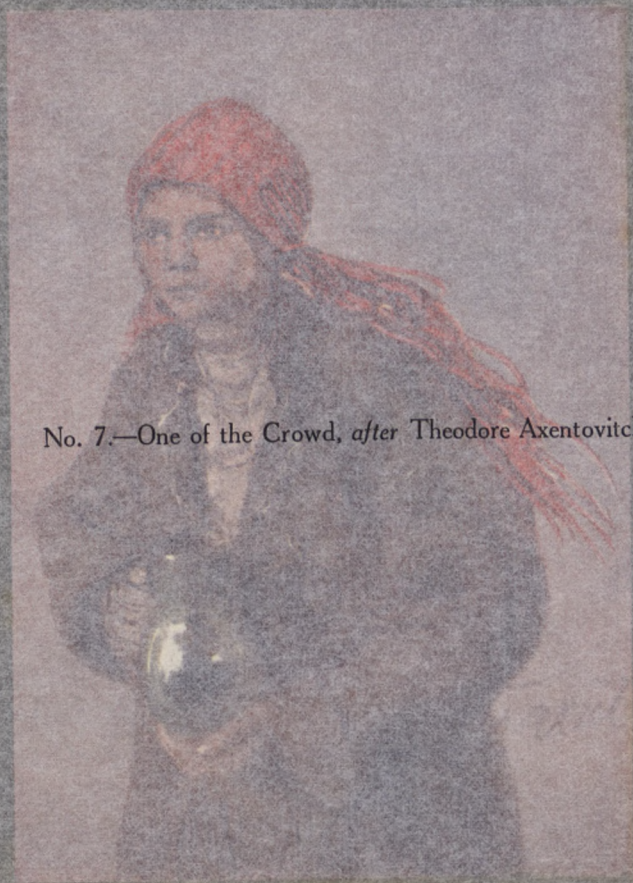
But in the streets, amongst the very poor and ignorant, although I never met with rudeness, I was sometimes driven to despair. One afternoon

¹ Pronounced "Angelka," the "g" hard as in "angle."

Sketches in Poland

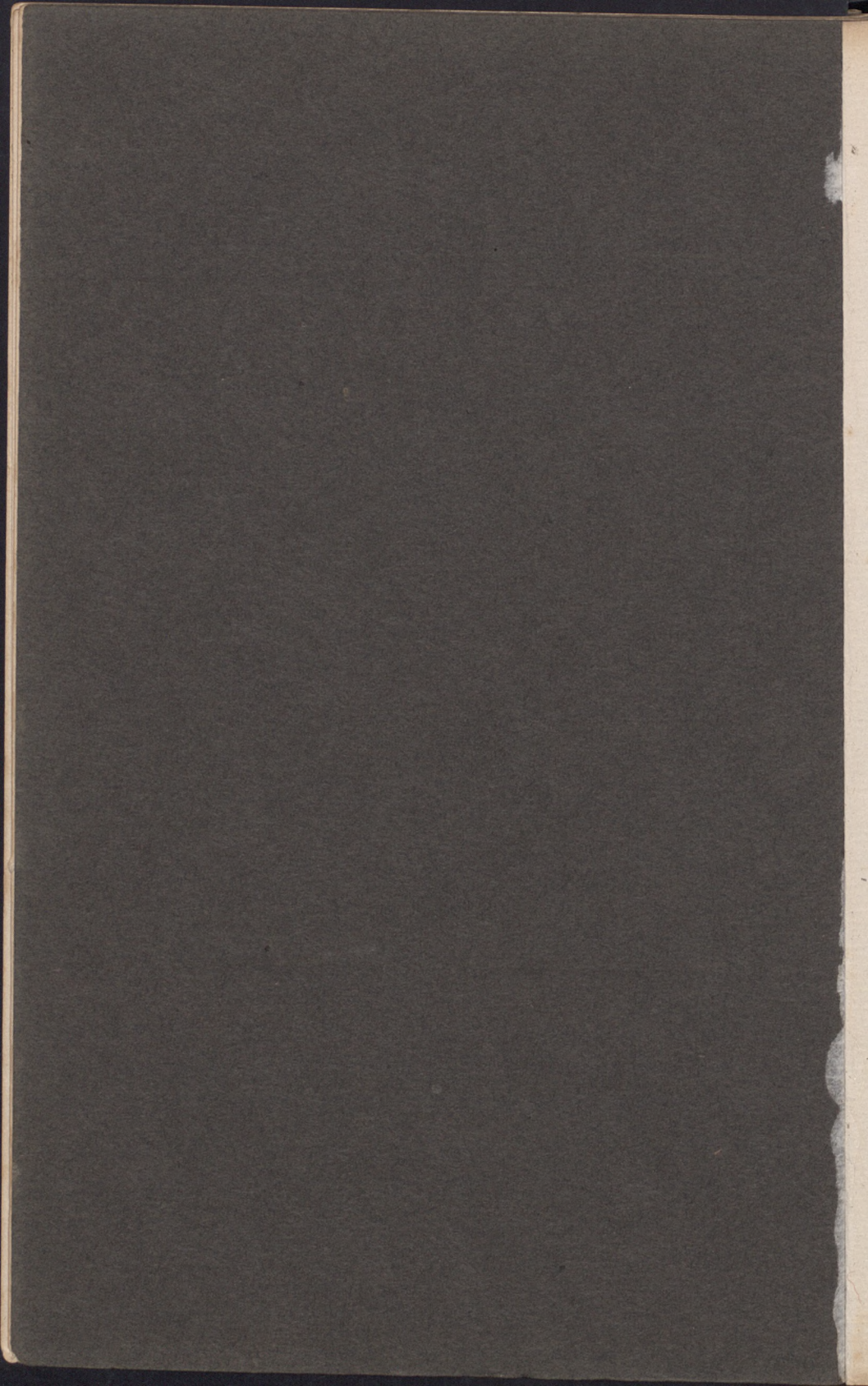
I sat down to sketch in the Rynek when the whole square seemed empty, but in five minutes there were fifty people round me. It was not a wicked crowd, but every moment it grew denser, and the situation was the more difficult for me because these peasants, who were conscious of no intent to annoy me, met my feeble protests with an air of injured innocence. Those who stood next me and jugged my elbow and made me hot, were justified no doubt by being pushed on by the others who stood twelve deep behind them, and these felt themselves excused for pressing forward, for how else could they see what the *Panny* was doing? while those who placed themselves before me and blocked my view were forced to do so, as that was their only means of beholding me. The nearest (but not dearest) to me begged me piteously to be careful—did I not see that while I painted I was splashing their nice clean aprons? (An old device, if they had but known it, of that vicious beast, the artist!) I replied in English, but in vain, that if it were so they had the remedy in their own hands. Patiently I endured for half an hour.

On a sudden a wave of intense anger seemed to flow all over me. I was conscious of enormous physical strength, and something told me that I could fight half a dozen of these weedy-looking lads and hurt them in eleven places. My fingers clenched themselves in a manner not conducive to fine art; so I



No. 7.—One of the Crowd, *after* Theodore Axentovitch.





sprang up, jumbled all my things together, and strode into the café behind me where happy people who didn't want to paint were eating ices. Several waiters flew to meet me, and of them I demanded a policeman. In countries where I had been before, a painter can have a policeman for the asking, and I thought of the Guarda Civilla allotted to me in Algeciras, who looked like a cross between a Field Marshal and a Poacher of melodrama: the town was full of soldiers waiting to be shipped for Morocco, and while I painted in the Cathedral square, he had stood by me with a drawn sword and a musket, and kept at bay two regiments and half the population. So when I was told to apply at the police station, I made my way there full of hope.

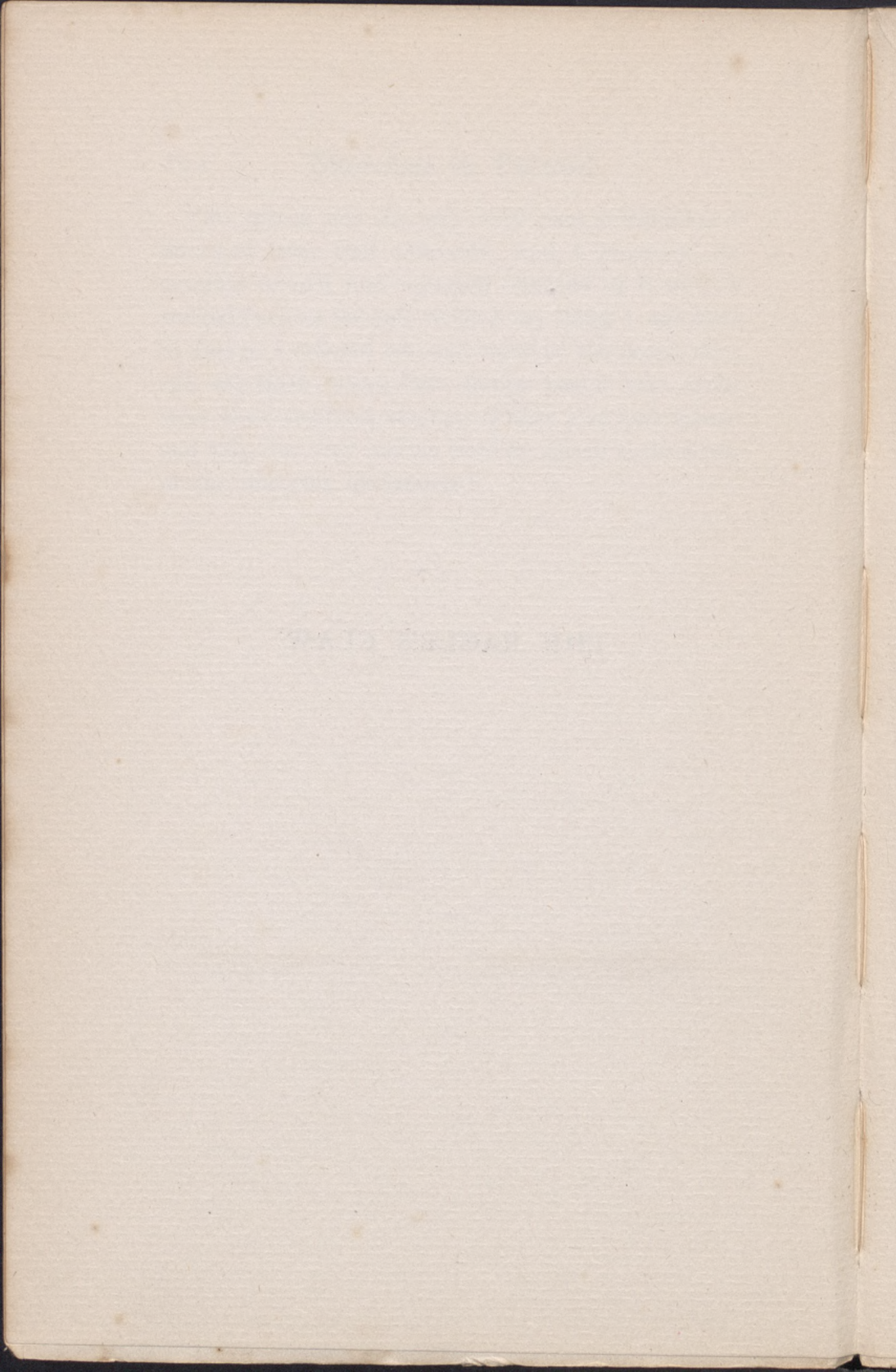
(Little did I dream that far, very far, from finding protection at the hands of the police, and being avenged of mine adversary, I should soon be playing myself the rôle of The Criminal!)

In the dark and dungeon-like police station the officer listened to my complaint, and then said he could do nothing for me. "*Es ist erlaubt,*" he kept repeating, feebly. People were allowed to stand in the street and gaze at what they thought interesting. When I understood that he would do nothing whatever, I asked him if he were a Pole, and on hearing that he was, I said: "You surprise me very much, for every Pole I have met hitherto has been both intelligent and polite."

Sketches in Poland

This speech was the only, very poor, satisfaction I obtained from that interview, and I pondered on possible revised and enlarged editions of it while I walked back to the café to fetch my things ; and here in despair I ordered tea, and watched the people who still sat there eating ices—happy people who could wear their smartest summer clothes and look serene and tidy, for they had no need to splash themselves, or the innocent bystanders !

THE EAGLE'S CLAW



The Eagle's Claw

I DIDN'T try sitting down any more, but I spent many happy and peaceful days making rapid drawings in a note-book, or standing to paint where I had a wall behind me, and there was no room for a crowd to assemble. Then came the moment when I got into *woda goranza*.¹ I stood in a side-street doing a large water-colour of the Church of St. Andrew, which I had sketched already from various points. There was a rich golden light on the façade, and a rather interesting shadow cast by some scaffolding round a tall new house that was being built or repaired just in front of the church. It was an ugly, ordinary-looking house, but I was rather pleased with myself for being able to "see it decoratively." I had my easel in front of me and a wall behind; the crowd was civil and quiet, and nothing disturbed me but the presence of some dirty Jew boys, who made me glad that I was tall enough to breathe fresh air above

¹ *Woda goranza* is what you ask for when you first ring your bell in the morning.

their heads. A policeman or a soldier—I don't know which, as all the police are soldiers here—was marching up and down with a musket on his shoulder, and I hoped he would tell the Jew-boys to move on, but instead of that he came and looked suspiciously at me, then, regardless of smears, put his large finger on my painted scaffolding and said it was *verboten*. Why it should be forbidden to draw a few tall poles that were casting a decorative shadow I couldn't guess, but I smiled deprecatingly and said I wouldn't do any more, and flew upon the two jolly green-copper towers. But he still stood by me, rather scowling, and consulting in Polish in low tones with another soldier, while I continued painting, and the crowd pressed round me as before.

Presently I packed up and prepared to move off, when the soldier made me understand that I was under arrest and must not stir from the spot. It seemed they had sent for some one; so we waited. I leaned against the wall and felt a little pale, because I was tired with standing, but I tried not to *look* pale; the soldiers waited beside me, and the crowd looked on. Soon another soldier appeared, and intimated I was to go with him to the *Polizei-Direktion*, so I was marched off between two of them, and the large, but I think not unsympathizing crowd followed me in silence down the street until we came to the police station near the Wawel. We entered, and the big doors closed behind me. It

was very dark and dismal, and in a corner I saw a truckle-bed—I felt sure “truckle” must be the right word—covered with a brown rug, and wondered if I should have to pass the night there.

They took me into a gloomy office, and there an official in uniform, very grave, but with the nice blue Polish eyes that I can't help liking, began to ask me a string of questions. So I said I was rather tired and would like to sit down, and he very politely gave me a chair, and then he asked me my name and age, and whether I had a *Mann* (I didn't understand the question at first, and wondered for a moment whether I had!), how long I had been in Cracow, why I had come there, at what hotel I was staying, whether I had my meals there, whether I had any means of subsistence, whether my money was inherited from my father or my mother, and what their Christian names were. When he had written down the name of “Edward Delanoy” and I had thoroughly explained to him the diphthong in “Lætitia,” he seemed to feel he was getting to the root of the matter, and then he carefully examined my paint-box, my easel, and all the contents of my sketching-bag. Then I was told I was free to depart, and was even permitted to take my painting things with me! But not the picture: that was confiscated. The new ugly house was a military building, a government office of some kind, and my sketch must be sent at once to the chief of police. I might get it

back—perhaps—if I went to the central police court to-morrow.

I felt it would not be becoming to show that I thought the whole thing a tremendous joke. Besides, I was not quite sure that I *did*. Was it, I asked myself—was it just possible that I felt a little pale? I, the ardent Vagabond, the Seer of Pictures in the fire of life, the Pursuer of New Sensations? Well, for these last, I had had one. The soldier's arm stretched out to bar my escape—the gleam in his eye that meant that if I tried to move he would hold me—he'd hold me by force, by physical force! Yes! it was a quite *quite* new sensation!

When I reached the hotel I felt that I wanted some kind person to whom I could tell what had happened. I especially wanted a *woman*, and if the chambermaid had known any language that I knew, I should have made some excuse to ring for her. I called to mind all my pleasant new acquaintances, but by this time they had left for the country, but as I turned over a pile of visiting-cards and looked at the unreadable names, I remembered one man who might perhaps still be in town. I had only seen him twice, but he looked so kind, and so very big and strong, and so sure that the world was a jolly place; besides that, he talked English so well and his name was so easy to pronounce; he was altogether a splendid person to be chosen as a champion. So I made the hotel-porter telephone to his address, and in about

ten minutes he came tearing round to the hotel—apparently ready to stand by me no matter what the crime was—and when I had related everything to him, I felt assured that it really was a very good joke indeed.

He said that he couldn't come with me to-morrow, but would send a friend of his who should help me to recover my picture.

So next morning early they both appeared, and examined my passport, much impressed to see the signature of Sir Edward Grey, who with his usual admirable prescience "required and charged all those whom it might concern" to allow me to pass "without let or hindrance," and afford me "all the protection and assistance" of which I might stand in need; and then they begged to hear the story again, and listened, thoroughly appreciating the drama of the situation. It is one of the charming characteristics of the Poles that they always understand when you're playing a game. I don't know whether they noticed I was wearing a very simple grey frock, with a black velvet band and a muslin collar—exactly what the Heroine puts on when she is starving in a garret or being condemned for murder. Perhaps that was more than one could expect of them even though they were Poles; but at any rate it was a very great support and satisfaction to myself.

I went with the friend, and we spent two hours calling and waiting at various government offices,

Sketches in Poland

but learned that my picture was still being examined by some high Director of Fortifications, and in fact I didn't get it back for three days. For mine was no common police-court crime, but a grave political offence. England was the ally of Russia, and Russia was the enemy of Austria, and I had drawn a military building! Anything less capable of giving information to an invading army than my impressionist sketch of the scaffolding it is not possible to conceive, but I felt no anger against the official. Poor man, he was not an artist, and so of course he was led astray by words, and fed his starving mind on hollow phrases. Whether it was a surveyor's plan or an impressionist sketch, the same words "drawing of a military building" served for both, and so he saw no difference.

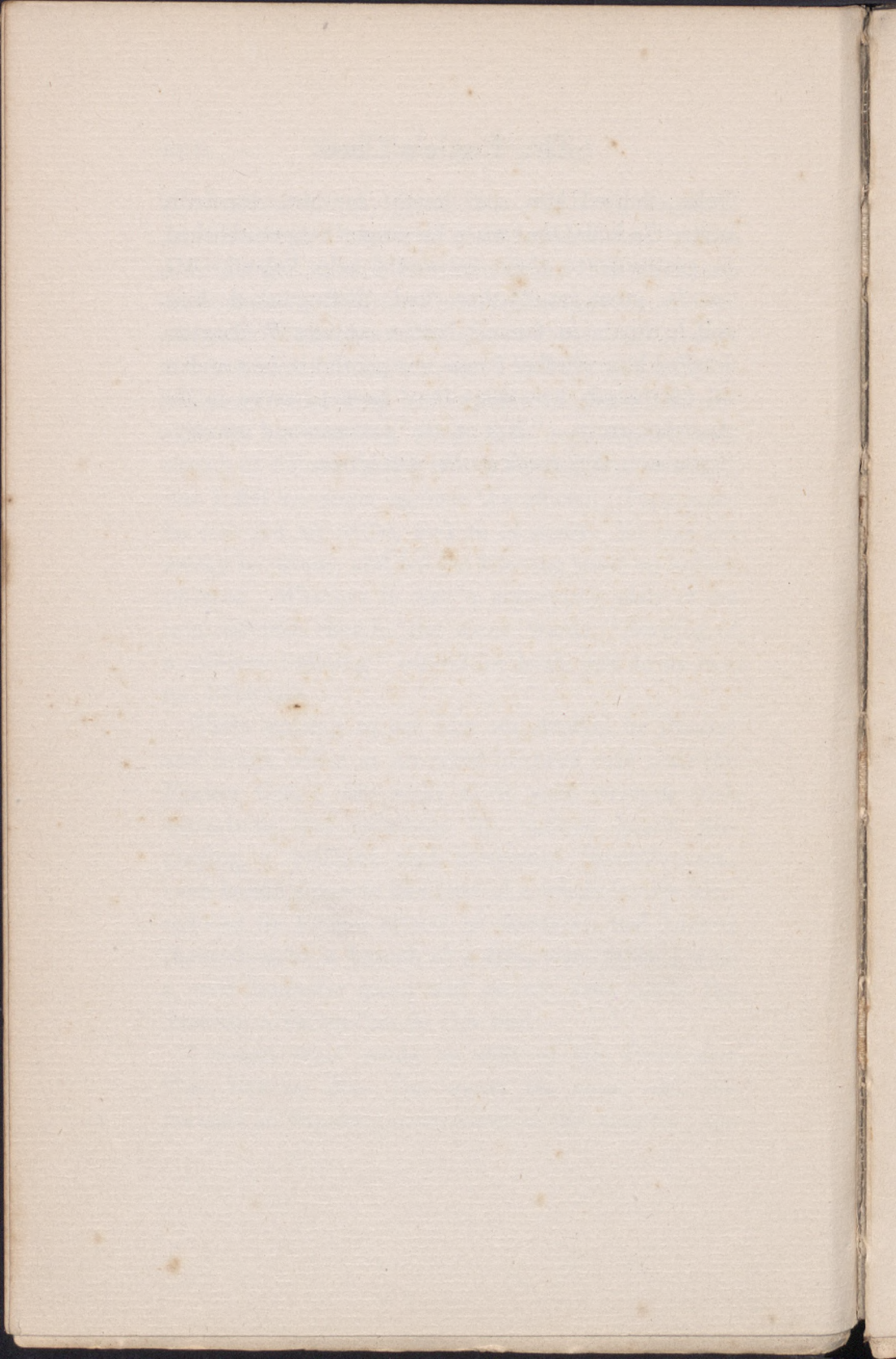
While waiting to see him we strolled in Planty, and drank coffee at an artist-haunted café near the Florian Gate; the walls of it were covered with caricatures and paintings by various hands displaying a brilliant and exuberant inventiveness: even horrid subjects like that of a whole family who, reduced by hunger almost to skeletons, had hanged themselves on a branch of a tree, were treated with a wild fantastic grace and an art that made the drawing a decoration to the wall.

I forget what made us talk of the Peninsular War, but we did. One meets the name and the portrait of Napoleon everywhere in this country: the

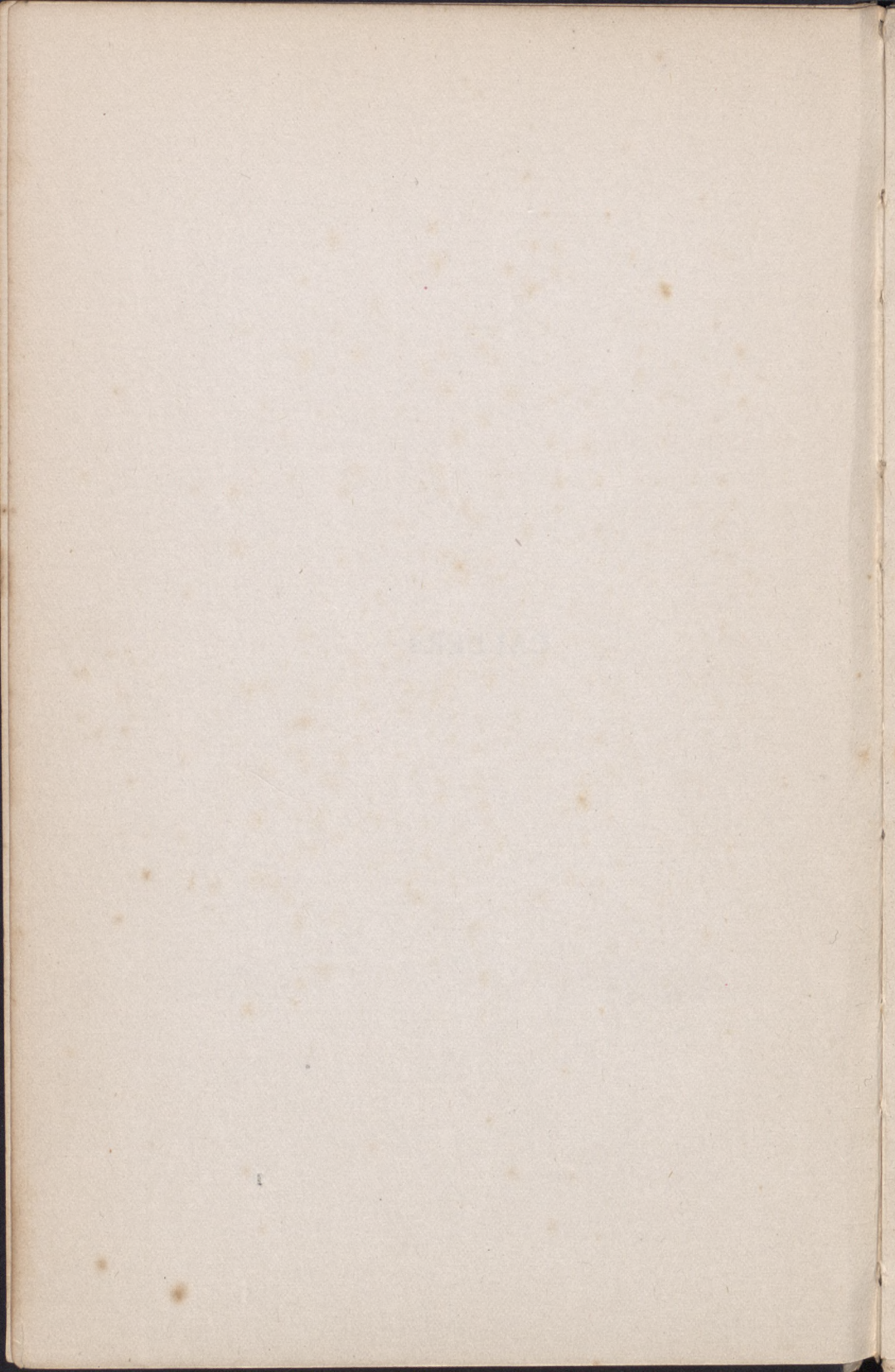
The Eagle's Claw

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Poles idolized him, and fought for him devotedly under the belief that when his empire was established, in gratitude to them he would help Poland. Mr. ——'s great-grandfather had distinguished himself in Spain in famous battles against Wellington. I asked him whether it was not painful to him and to all his friends here that they have to serve in the Austrian army. "Not at all," he answered gravely: "you see, *they teach us the art of war.*"



CALLERS



Callers

At this time I was no longer at the *Grand Hotel*, but in another where I had a large airy room at the top of the house that looked across a wide *Platz* near the theatre to the red-brick Northern Gothic Church of the Holy Cross. It is a very old and interesting church, the roof supported inside by a single pillar in the centre. I tried many times to sketch it, but interesting things are not necessarily picturesque, and this one was so high and narrow, and stood so alone, that every attempt I made had the coldness and dreariness of an architectural drawing. At last one day, from my window, I began to see how the commonplace houses near might "build up" in good lines and masses to balance it; then how to tie the whole thing in a knot by the flowing ribbon of cloud and tree-line, and wrap it all together in a few large shadows.

I was at work at this one afternoon when there happened one more instance of Polish kindness, a little thing but very characteristic. Count — had come in to call. (In most of the hotels here there is no salon of any sort, and when a caller comes he

is told the number of one's room, and just walks up and knocks at the door.) I was glad to see him, and we talked a long time—of course about Poland—he pouring out stories with inexhaustible eloquence until the July afternoon had faded and I was growing hungry for dinner, and then came another tap at the door, and in the dusk at the end of the long room there stood an old woman, mumbling something in Polish that I didn't understand, and carrying a box on her arm. I looked at my visitor inquiringly, and he said, "Oh, it's the laundress with your clean linen"; so I said, "Excuse me," and he said, "Can I be of any use?"—and, as it happened, he *could*, for the week before had not been paid, and I, naturally, had lost the list. So he acted as interpreter between us, and added the two weeks' bills together, while I put away my petticoats and camisoles and blouses. Such a little thing!—but again I felt an odd sort of gladness. Something like a breath of that high cool air of quietness and truth in the mountains seemed to come in by the wide-open window, while the old woman stood toothlessly mumbling in Polish, and in the dim light the grey, distinguished head of Count — bent over the scrap of paper. After he was gone, I remembered that this was a great and powerful noble, who stays with the Duke of Norfolk when he is in England, and is so important that he has enemies who lie in wait to kill him in the lonely mountain-places, and I wondered whether he *knew*

that the incident was rather amusing and un-English, and his beautiful good-breeding enabled him so perfectly to conceal that he knew it: or whether in a still more beautiful simplicity he thought it all quite natural.

A few days after this incident there came another tap at my bedroom door, and this time my callers were two young Polish people I had seen last in a boarding-house in London. I had been filled with trouble and anxiety about them, for in this country it seems that letters go astray as often as not, and so we had heard nothing of one another for two months. The Poles feel no surprise when this happens; indeed they have so little faith in the post that they often neglect to answer the most urgent questions, but it takes an Englishman some time to get used to the customs of the country. Sickening suspense, silence, anxiety; sudden and rapturous meetings—after all, it is only in the last half-century that such is no longer the way of things in England. And maybe our meeting was all the more rapturous now because I had expected them a month ago, and had never heard why they failed to appear.

Their sensitive kind faces that had seemed strange in London—Wanda, with her air of something very innocent and beautiful and young that has grown up under the shadow of a tragic doom—here in their own country at once I felt that I knew them and

understood them. They told me that I was now well known in Cracow for the story of my arrest. It appeared to have excited amusement, sympathy, but no surprise: indeed, the general feeling was that I was lucky in not having been kept under arrest for some days.

We went out and walked in the Rynek, in Planty, to the foot of the Wawel, then in the old lovely court of the University; and by the little turret-chamber in the Jagellonian Street, where dwelt the wizard-scholar who pledged his soul, as Faust did, to the Devil.

Fair and perilous Cracow! Dying, rose-red, melancholy towers! I was sad at heart to leave you, even though I went with Wanda; to stay with Wanda's mother in the Polish cornland.

I CROSS THE RUSSIAN FRONTIER

I cross the Russian Frontier

A LITTLE country-line runs through five or six stations, then, about sixteen miles from Cracow, comes abruptly to a terminus, still in Austrian territory.

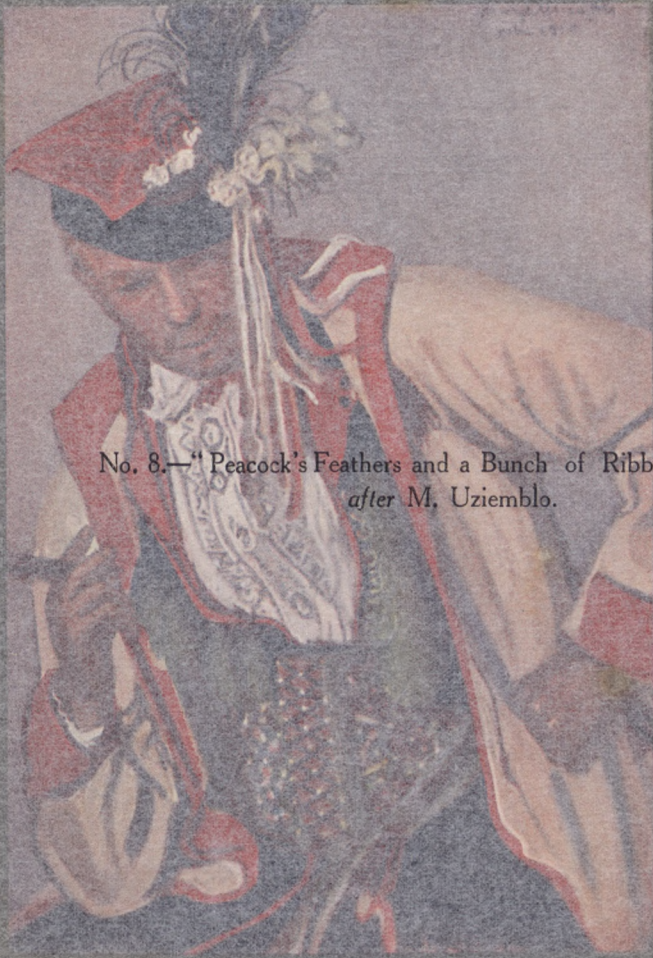
It was a forlorn and muddy little station, but there the family coachman was waiting for us in a high light carriage—a sort of Stanhope—with two strong horses. Wanda and I were packed in with most of our luggage, and then drove slowly over a vast flat open expanse of muddy ground—deep soft mud and pools of muddy water—towards the beginning of a road—if it *was* a road?—that was barred by a huge pole painted white and black. Here was the frontier of Russian Poland, here the peasants who went every day to market at Cracow showed their passports coming and going. Wanda and I and the coachman all got down, and entered a dreary outhouse where two officials in uniform spent half an hour examining my passport, and recording in an enormous book the fact of my existence and my entry into the country. Wanda's passport also and the coachman's being duly pro-

Sketches in Poland

duced and signed, our boxes were thoroughly searched, and then we climbed into the carriage again, and the drive to G—— began.

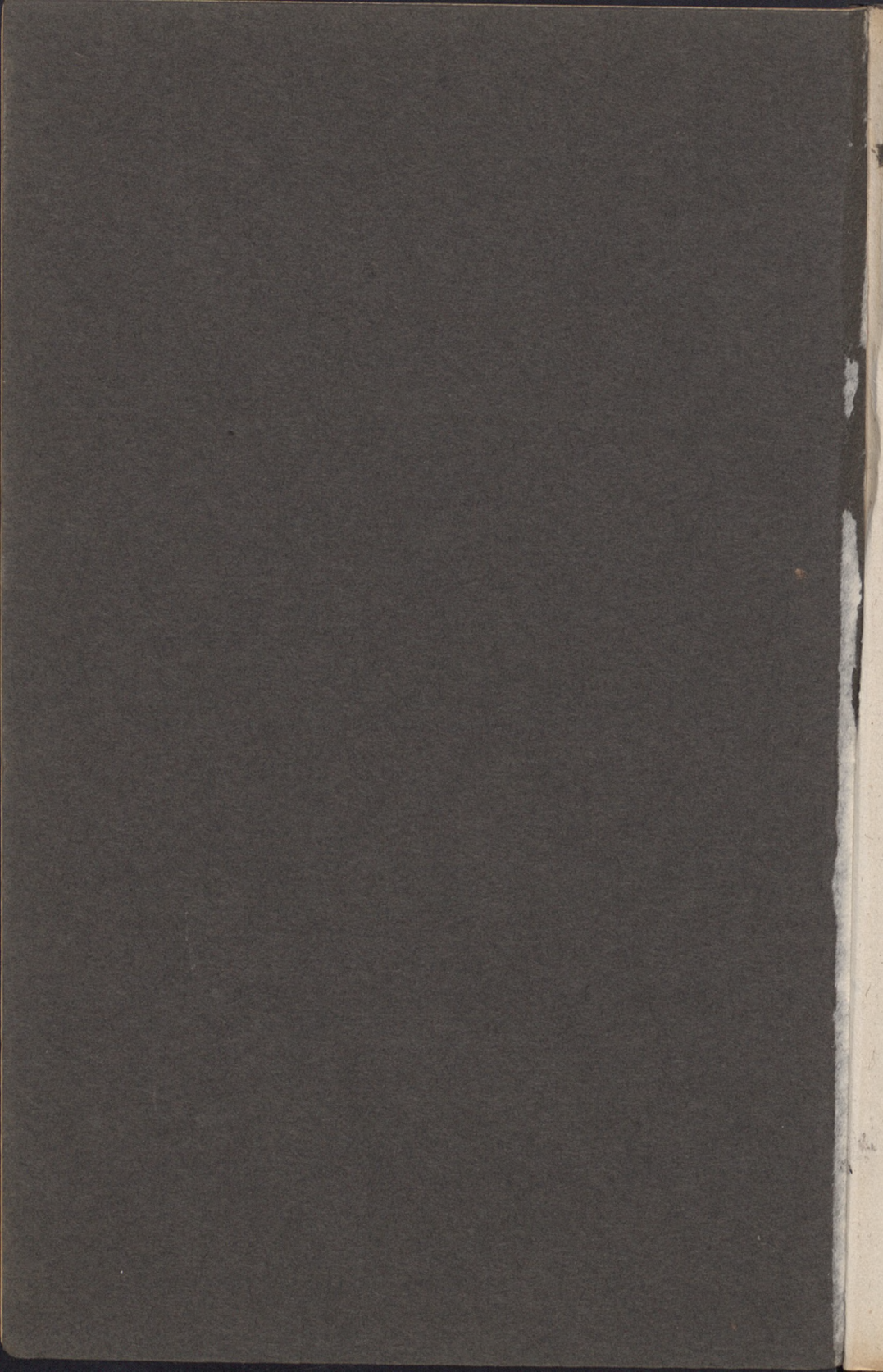
Heavens! What a drive!

In all my journey through Poland this was the only occasion on which I really had need of courage; on which I felt the approach of a horrible wish *to be somewhere else!* Imagine the worst road imaginable, and then imagine another far, far worse. That other was the road we were in—not *on* it, but *in* it. Immensely wide, not bordered by hedges, but sunken by its own traffic far below the level of the fields, it consisted of black and slippery mud, four or five feet deep, hollows filled with water, and steep ridges that slanted across the way diagonally, so that at one moment the shoulders of the near horse were on a level with the knees of the other, the next, he was sliding and scrambling in his efforts to climb a smooth bank of mud while his fellow struggled in a pool, of depth unknown and soft and unsure bottom. The carriage, lurching and plunging, appeared each moment on the very verge of overturning; and, wrapped up round the knees as we were and wedged among the baggage, it seemed that when it fell we must be pinned underneath it. Once or twice, without Wanda seeing me, I unwound the rug and put my feet over the side of the carriage, ready to spring clear, but I was immediately so splashed with mud that I settled



No. 8.—“Peacock’s Feathers and a Bunch of Ribbons” (Kielce),
after M. Uziemblo.





down again, preferring present cleanliness, with possible death, to certain dirt and probable safety. When the next bit of road before us was too awful to look at, I fixed my eyes on the back of the coachman sitting on the high seat before us, for he was well worth looking at. He had a brown pointed cape almost covered with scarlet embroidery dotted with little sequins, all old and delightfully faded; round his body was an immensely broad deep belt of leather, studded with brass, from which there hung, and covered his left hip, a kind of chain armour made of leather thongs passed through brass discs and ornaments, and plaited together. On his head a cap of faded scarlet cloth, bordered with black sheep's-wool curled like astrachan, was adorned with a tall aigrette of peacock's feathers and a bunch of pink ribbons that fell over his right ear. In spite of the dangers of the road, he never failed to uncover his head each time that we passed a wayside shrine or crucifix, weather-stained and broken, among the ragged bushes in the tall bank. But I could not refrain from admiring his skill as a driver. And what is the art of driving, in England, compared to this? Here indeed it requires nerve, and a keen eye and a rapid unhesitating judgment.

The distance we had to go was four or five miles, but it took us two hours to do it. Little do English people imagine the terror and fatigue to man

and beast that is here involved in the simple phrase "sending to meet you at the station."

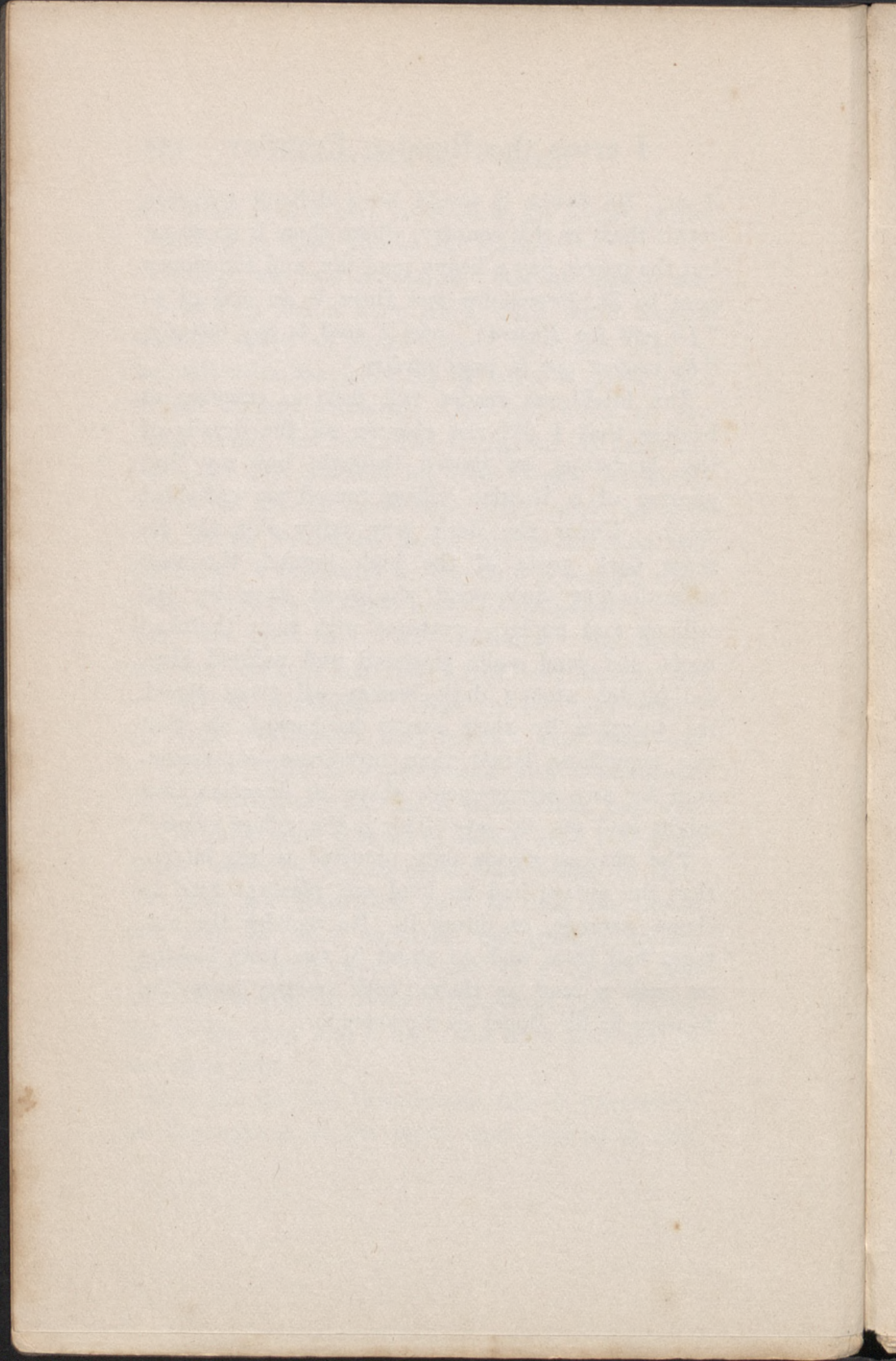
Wanda was not frightened. She sat beside me, "breathing like a little child, amid some warlike clamour lulled to sleep"; only now and then in her soft voice she called my attention to some point in the distant landscape. She said little or nothing about the road, and I followed her example, but next day she told me that people not accustomed to driving here were often made actually sick, partly by fright, partly by the lurching and plunging. I remarked to her that it seemed marvellous that the carriages never overbalanced. "Oh, but they *often* do!" she answered. She herself and her brothers and sisters had been thrown out on several occasions. "But in all that mud," she said, "it doesn't hurt much." But there was a dreadful story of a gentleman with a coachman driving two horses on one of these roads, not here, but in some other district of Russia, only two years before, when in a soft place they began to sink. The men got down and tried to drag the horses out, and all were engulfed, and perished in the mud. And there was another of a driver with four horses who, to avoid a dangerous hole, turned out of the road into a field, and they also died in the same way.

It is the Russian Government that is responsible for the upkeep of the roads, and nothing is ever

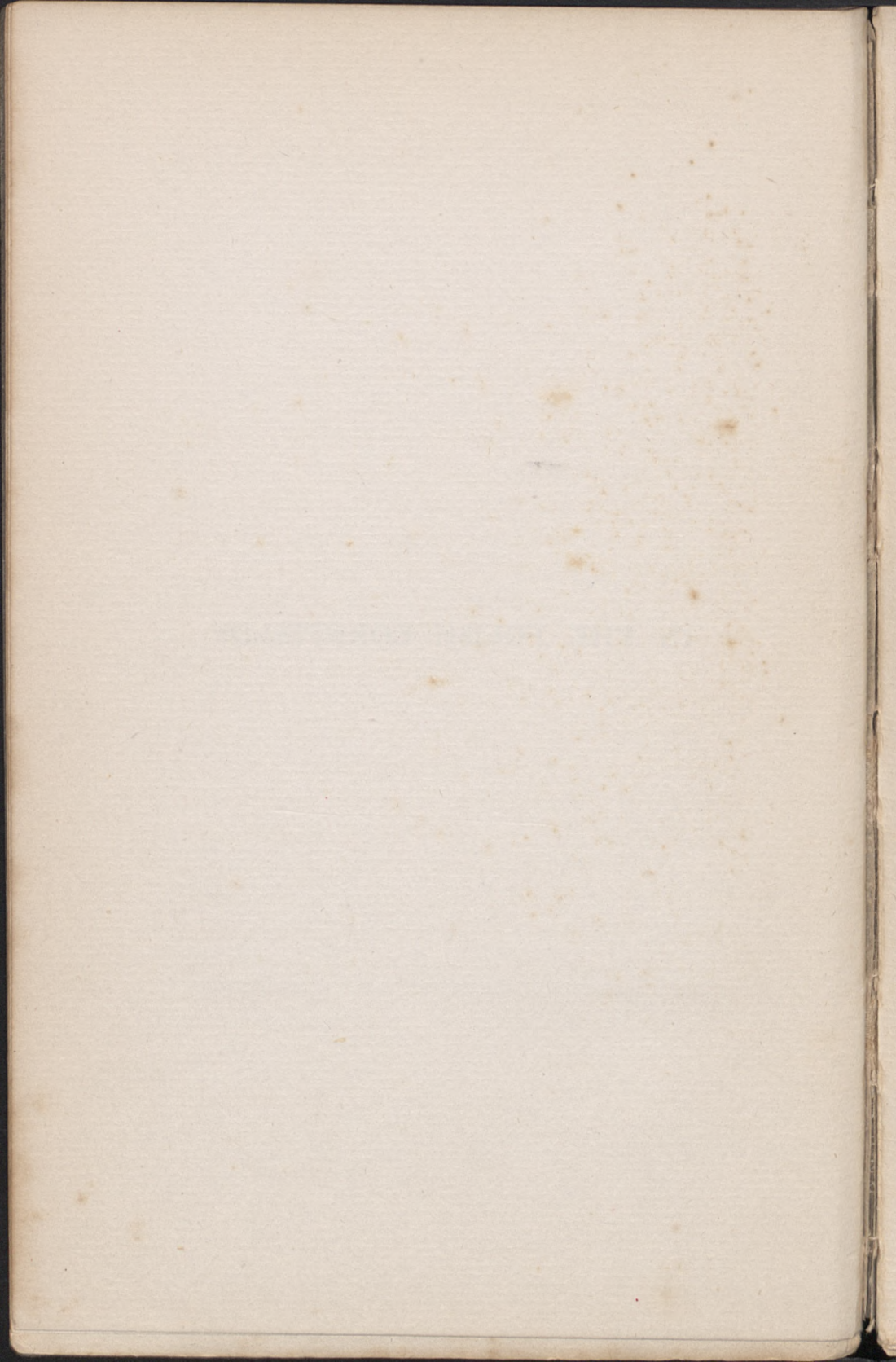
done. No doubt it would be a difficult thing to repair them in this country, where there is no stone, but the people pay a heavy road tax, and the money goes to St. Petersburg and there is an end of it. "*Ce sont les Russes!*" people used to say bitterly, "*ils veulent que le pays périsse.*"

The intelligent reader will feel no surprise at hearing that I did not observe all the details of the landscape we passed through, but my first glimpse of a Russian village roused my enfeebled mind. Under the dark grey rainy sky, the intense dark green of the high ground, the vast sullen-looking duck-pond shadowed over by tall willows and poplars—cottages with their thatched roofs, and mud walls plastered and painted blue, half-hidden among dark bushes—all these struck me together by their casual haphazard air that was something larger than untidiness—an unconcern for any arrangement, shape or direction that might lead one to say "This is the village street."

The obvious reason only occurred to me later—that the village had no kind and pleasant road to shape, arrange, or direct it. No wonder the cottages had little wish to stand in two rows looking on such a road as theirs, with smiling faces like dancers in Sir Roger de Coverley!



IN THE POLISH CORNFIELDS



In the Polish Cornfields

CLOSE to the village we turned, and entered the garden of a long, low country-house.

And of course our welcome was just what it is all over the green earth where gentleness and goodness make their dwelling. Kind people on the doorstep, bright, eager faces of young girls who ran to hug their sister, the kind, shy face of a hostess a little anxious at the meeting with her foreign guest—although she knew no word of English, I felt sure she was saying, “Come in, poor dears!—how tired you must be!” In a long, low room that had three windows on the garden we sat at the dining-table and had tea and ate rye-bread and honey. Although the tea was poured from a samovar on a sideboard, and though the young girls were chattering in Polish, and the hostess and I were a little shyly making one another’s acquaintance in French, and although she bore a name which I could neither spell nor pronounce, it was still very like an English country rectory.

The large, untidy garden too, with its pinks and roses, and apple-trees on the lawn, and the row of

tall lime-trees leading to the kitchen garden and the orchard, seemed one of the big old-fashioned rectory gardens in East Anglia, translated into Russian; and the house with its rick-yards and the farm-life about it was strangely like the country-houses I stayed in as a child, before the race of English "gentlemen-farmers" was exterminated. The likenesses to England seemed more surprising than the differences, and struck me first; then I noticed the bare-footed servant-girl in her striped scarlet skirt, white chemisette and many bead necklaces; and then I was taken to my bedroom. The greater part of the house was built of one storey only, and there were seven or eight rooms, with no corridor to connect or divide them, and that same un-English air that I observed in the village here reappeared in the mutable, irresolute character of the rooms. Any one of them, it seemed, might be rearranged as a bedroom or a salon, and assigned to a guest or a child of the house, according to the caprice or convenience of the moment.

On the first night after my arrival, in the dawning light about four o'clock, I was wakened by an uneasy sense of some one or something moving about the room, and opened my eyes to see a form like a grey shadow slide out by one of the doors, with the peculiar soundless movement of those who walk barefooted. It seemed to me so odd, that anyone should enter my room at that hour, that

I mentioned at breakfast what I had seen, but, I was told, it was only the servant come to take my shoes to be cleaned. Four a.m. is the usual hour for servants and peasants to set about their day's work. After this very early waking I was careful to set my shoes outside my door, but the question was which? The west door into a little drawing-room? the east door into the children's room? or the south from which most of my untimely visitors entered? I decided on the last, pushed them boldly every evening into the bedroom of the son of the house, and was only disturbed by having them brought in between five and six.

At breakfast we all sat round the big table again, and again ate delicious home-made rye-bread that makes you feel it contains all the nourishment necessary to life, and that English bread compared to it is artificial, tasteless, unreal stuff. It was the feast of St. Angela, the fête-day of Wanda's vivacious blue-eyed little sister. She and the fifteen-year-old Marie, and her friend from the convent school at Cracow, wore their fête-day-dresses, little sleeveless velvet jackets embroidered with silks and sequins and beads, white, fine, embroidered chemisettes, full skirts of white chintz patterned with small flowers, and muslin aprons bordered with bright ribbons. Long streamers of gay embroidered ribbons hung down their backs

from the cleverly knotted handkerchiefs that covered their fair heads; strings of white and green and scarlet beads were round their necks. It was the peasants' dress, only a little finer and more dainty. They wore these pretty frocks all day; playing in the garden and the cornfields; and on Sunday they wore them in church, sitting in the family pew—the Squire's pew, close to the altar—while the brilliant-coloured crowd of the peasants filled the body of the church.

It was a strange sight to me, one Sunday when I sat there with them, to see all the peasants after the sermon come pressing up the chancel and, once inside the altar-rails, fall on their knees, and so pass, creeping, behind the altar and, still on their knees, emerge on the other side and stoop to kiss a small archaic crucifix that hung there, close to the ground. The church was a tall plain building, plastered white inside and out, enclosed by a low wall. Outside, against the sunny south wall, a confession-box had been placed for the summer months. The priest's neat white-washed house stood close by, with its little garden and its orchard. In the orchard was a small hut, newly constructed of clean straw, in which lived a Jew who had bought the crop about the time that the blossom sets, and so he stayed there night and day to watch the fruit, and guard it against thieves.

In the Polish Cornfields

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But my pen has strayed away from the breakfast table in the same aimless, sauntering way in which the dwellers in country houses—Wanda and her brother and I, for example—strolled out into the garden, then into the rick-yard and through the long cow-byre from which the milk went every morning early into Cracow in a wagon with four horses—or six when the roads were heavy. The cows were bigger, and longer in the leg than ours, but they take less walking exercise, and spend most of their time—not in dark sheds like the Swiss—but chained in open stalls where they lie and chew the sweet beetroot. As for the horses, of which there were so many on the farm that no one could tell me the number, they had not the massive build of the English cart horse, but they were fine, well-bred creatures, and seemed on good terms with their carters. I sometimes watched the long wagons being turned, in a difficult corner, and thought that the horses understood and assisted the manoeuvre with the goodwill and the intelligence of sheep-dogs. A four-months foal, half frightened, half inquisitive, was straying round the yard until its mother whinnied to it from the barn, to tell it that the wagon she was harnessed to was now unloaded of all its sheaves, and was starting on another journey to the wheat-field. Wanda called to the driver, and we ran and jumped into the empty wagon, and drove out of the yard and

down the muddy road through the vast hedgeless stubble fields, the little foal trotting beside us.

We were in a country of wide valleys, covered as far as the eye could reach with unbroken slopes of cornfields, wheat and rye and barley; here and there a great field of beetroot, green amongst the yellow, and on the ridges of the hills dark forests. Strong-limbed, scarlet-skirted women tossed up the sheaves to be caught on the pitchforks of the carters, and laid in the wagons; and the work went on in haste. For, though the corn was very good that year, the incessant rain had wellnigh ruined the harvest, and already these sheaves had been drenched four times, and turned and dried again before they could be gathered. And it was not easy, Wanda told me, to get enough hands, for most of the peasants had little fields of their own, and naturally hastened on this fine day to carry their own corn before they would work for hire. "Besides," she said, "a great many from this neighbourhood have emigrated to Europe.¹ They get better wages there, and do very well; they don't want a lot of beer as the Germans do, and they mostly live on potatoes and porridge; so they are able to save money, and they're very good in sending money home to their old parents."

¹ My typist shied at this word and suggested it was a slip of the pen for "America." But no; it was a phrase I often heard.

We left the harvesters, and walked down to a little stream at the bottom of the valley, and so home through the village, walking where we could along a railing, as children do, to avoid the deep mud of the road. Most of the blue-walled cottages had a strip of land beside them where the villagers grew beetroot, or the tall mauve poppy for its seed.

“Is there a post-office here?” I asked. “I must buy some Russian stamps.”

“You needn’t do that,” said Wanda. “We send our letters to Cracow with the milk early in the morning, so they are posted with Austrian stamps. The nearest Russian post-office is fifteen miles off in the other direction.”

“But wouldn’t the postman take letters for you now and then?”

Wanda looked puzzled for a moment. “What postman?” she said. Then—“Do you mean to say that in English villages the postman *brings* the letters to the people? Here, if you want a letter, you must harness your horses and drive to the town and fetch it. There is no village post-office in this country.”

We reached the house in time for the middle-day dinner, and already the bright beauty of the day was gone. Dark clouds covered the whole sky, the rain poured, and every one was sad to think of the good sheaves that were beginning to dry, now

lying sodden on the wet earth. But soon after dinner, as we sat in the garden porch, the sound of wheels and horses splashing and squelching in the mud announced visitors—a pretty fair-haired aunt of Wanda's, a boy and a girl cousin, and the girl's French governess. They had brought presents for the little Angela, and stayed until the evening, playing games and singing. One of the ladies played, and the children in their white and scarlet dresses danced wild Polish dances with a grace and vivacity and fire that changed the gloomy day to gaiety.

The next day, which was Sunday, we all drove over early in the afternoon to the cousins' house; this drive only lasted an hour, as the distance was not more than three miles. Wanda, her mother and I were in a low two-horsed pony-carriage—much less terrifying than the high one in which we came from the station and in which the girls were now sitting while their brother drove it. No one was pitched out, and we all arrived safely at a house which again was strangely like and unlike an English squire's.

The host and hostess and all the household received us on the steps of the verandah, and led us indoors—Mme. *—begging us to take off our hats, in token of her hospitable wish that we should seem as if we never meant to go. Tea, with fruit and ham and many other dainties, was

laid on a large table at which I, as an honoured stranger, sat between the host and hostess, to one of whom I talked German and to the other French. Every one else was seated in order of precedence, down to the youngest children and two or three governesses at the far end of the table. After tea, we sat and talked in the garden, while the children played a game with sticks and little hoops that is called, I think, "La Grace." When it was too cold to stay in the garden, we went and sat and talked again in a large drawing-room with shining polished floors, and of course we stayed until the long, light summer day was ended, and even then we were pressed to stay to supper.

I lamented my English lack of training in ceremonial manners, which probably caused me to commit several breaches of etiquette in the course of the visit; but, if the Poles are more ceremonious than we are, they have at the same time much more simplicity. Every one was so kind, so simply and sincerely friendly, and so accomplished in the art of conversation that the long afternoon was less fatiguing than it would have been at home. Still, the strain of talking French one moment and German the next, while I was *hearing* Polish and *thinking* in English, made me glad to relapse into stupidity and silence as we drove home through the dusk and the rain and the soft depths of mud.

It seemed strange to reflect that here we were

under the dominion of the Czar, so far away at Moscow, that mighty autocrat, about whom I had been told that afternoon this oddly uncomfortable anecdote. It was about a Polish doctor, a specialist, who had been summoned to attend the Empress when she was suffering from earache. All night he sat by her bedside, no third person in the room except the Emperor, who also sat there, watching. Towards morning the Emperor talked with him a little, and presently said: "You are Polish, but you talk Russian very well." "That is not surprising, Majesty," said the doctor, "since only Russian is taught in the schools." "Really. I did not know that," the Czar answered. As soon as he left the Empress' apartments, he was taken to an official of the palace, who warned him, "Questions addressed to one by the Czar may be answered. No unasked-for information may be volunteered." If anything like the remark of last night was repeated, he would not attend his illustrious patient again. So the doctor understood.

That evening I tried to ascertain how long I was expected to stay, for my invitation had been very vaguely worded, the modern fashion of naming, at the same time that she asks you, the date on which your hostess hopes you will take your departure, not being in vogue in Poland. It appeared my hosts would be shocked, nay, grievously

hurt if I dreamed of staying less than a month—and besides, I *couldn't* leave until the police permitted it, even though the most sudden and urgent affairs should call me. Not content with examining my passport at the frontier, the authorities required it to be sent to them in the town of X—, in order that I might be licensed to stay here and depart again. And Heaven alone knew how many weeks they would keep it. Luckily for me, I was one of those people who have no urgent affairs, and very gladly I stayed on day after day, sketching in the fields, walking in the birch-woods, hoping and fearing for the harvest with the changing skies, and not regarding the greatness of my folly in travelling among alien lands and people, there to knit up bonds of sympathy—to bury a living strip of my heart in a cornfield of Eastern Europe! Yet I knew that it would take root and grow there, and when I had left this country, never to return, would draw me, thrill me with pangs of separation.

Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

But I, like those old peoples who made the English race, was driven by the lust of distant voyages, discoveries, ventures, conquests, to leave some dint of footsteps in far-off lands. Only, unlike them, I must carry away vain booty of

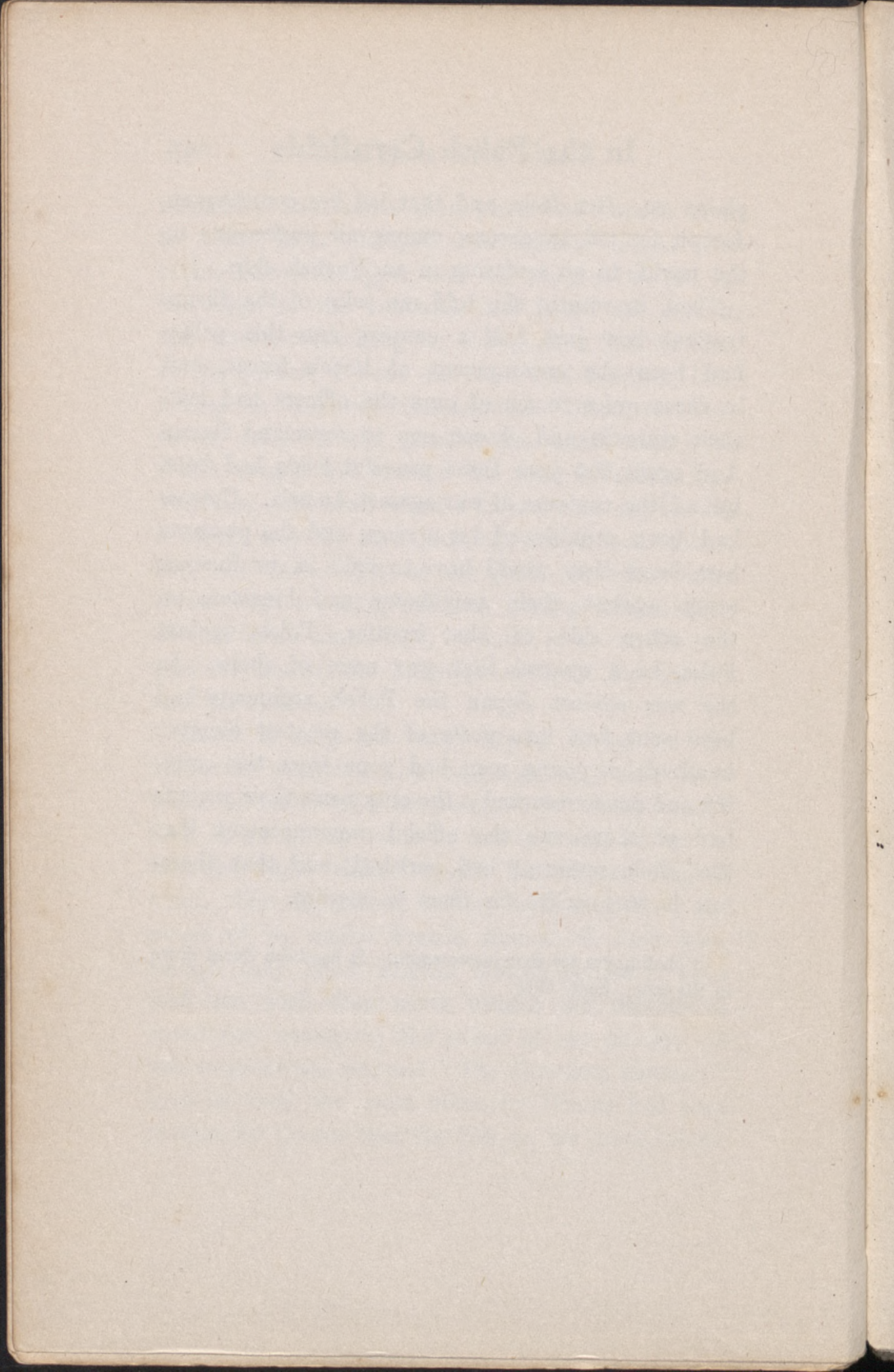
memories, and smiles that, when you unpack them at home, have changed into sighing. Night after night, between supper and bedtime, as we sat on the steps of the verandah and heard the rain in the darkness pouring on the poplars and fir-trees of the garden, I went on, blind and heedless, trafficking in shadowy merchandise. Often we were silent, sunk in the pensive moodiness that with Polish people will succeed the most vivacious conversation, and even when I talked with my hostess it could only be in a language which was neither hers nor mine. Yet, in the dusk, our silent inner selves were reaching out and finding one another. So it is in all friendships, for none of us can be sure that he knows the language even of his brother and his children.

There is only one really urgent reason for the labour of studying any language, and that is in order to understand its poetry. So Wanda and I used to go to my room at bedtime and sit up far into the night while I taught her to read English verse. She understood it very well, and *heard* the music of it, unlike French friends of mine who, though they know English almost perfectly, have told me that they never caught the rhythm or heard any beauty in the *sound* of our poetry. It was songs of the sea, and "The Forsaken Merman" that we read the most often, for Wanda had that passion for the sea that the Pole on his great inland

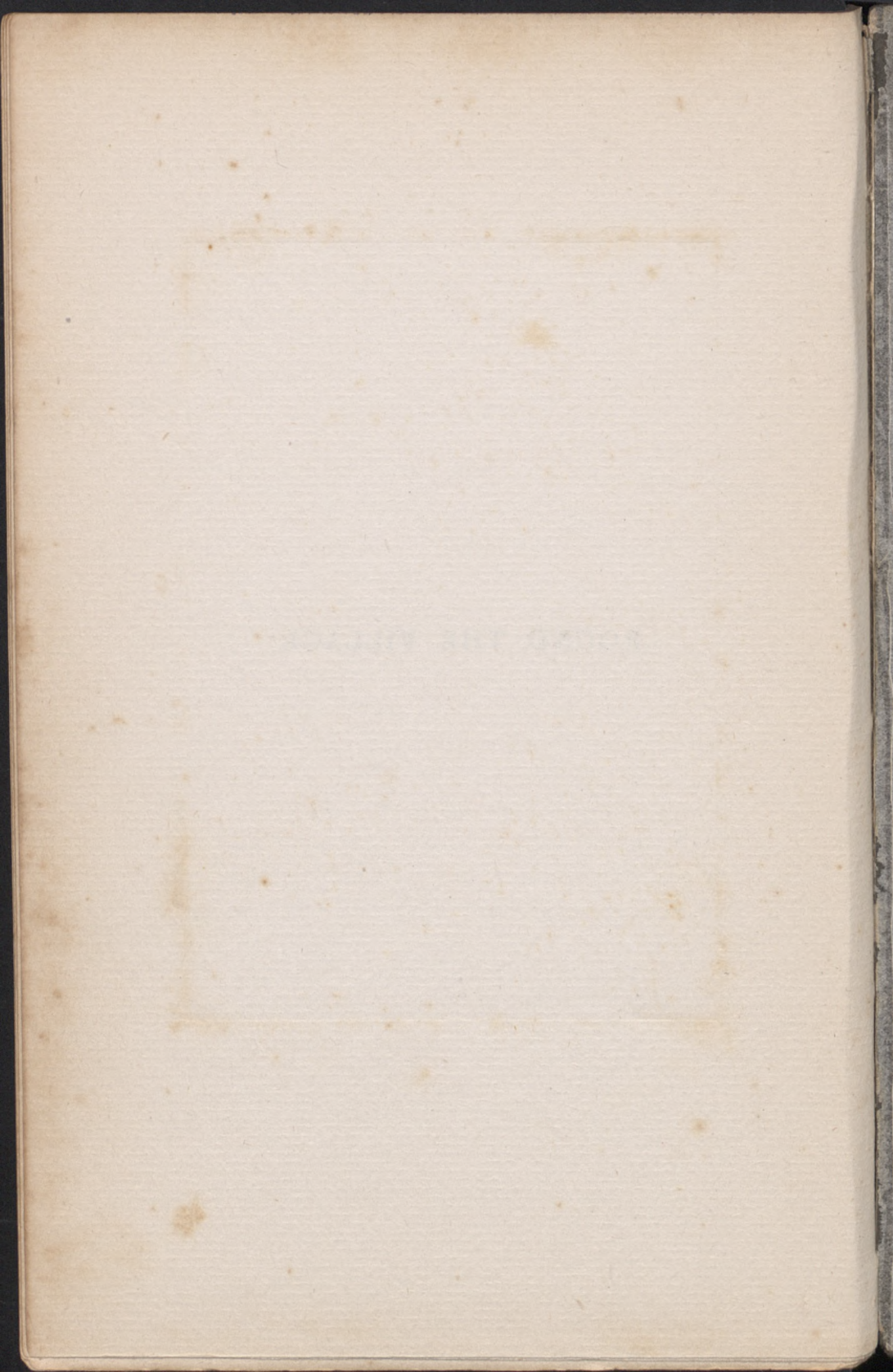
plains so often feels, and that led her countryman Joseph Conrad to choose, among all professions in the world, to go seafaring in an English ship.

Then, in return, she told me tales of the Insurrection—how just half a century ago this valley had been the encampment of Polish forces, and in these quiet rooms of ours the officers had held their councils and chosen one to command them.¹ And again last year these peaceful fields had been full of the rumours of war against Austria. Cracow had been provisioned for a siege, and the peasants here knew they would have to fight in the Russian army against their neighbours and kinsmen on the other side of the frontier, Poles against Poles, in a quarrel that was none of theirs. In the war against Japan the Polish regiments had been sent first into posts of the greatest danger: hundreds of young men had gone from this country and never returned; the only news their parents had of them was the official announcement that the whole regiment had perished, and that therefore it was useless for them to inquire.

¹ I shall never see that house again. It has been burnt down in the war. Sept. 1914.



ROUND THE VILLAGE

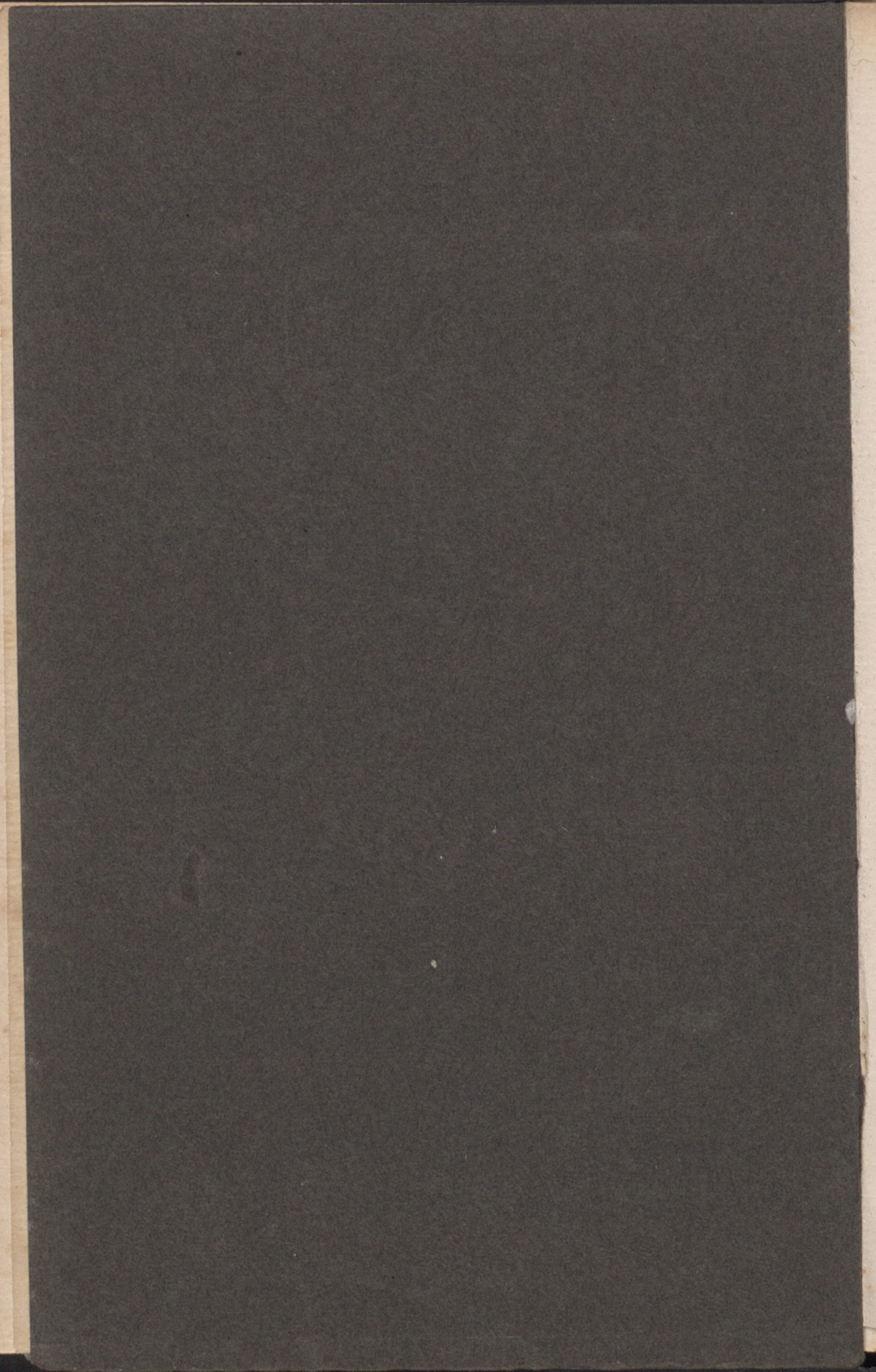




No. 9.—A Bride's Head-dress, *after* M. Uziemblo.

Jesuyllarente
mar 1909.





Round the Village

ONE Sunday, early in August, was the festival of St. Lawrence, the patron of the village church. There was a great *pardon*; masses were said all the morning, crowds of village people came in their finest clothes, and little booths were set up near the church where necklaces, ribbons, cakes, tin trumpets and rosaries were sold. The thin, pale old priest, gorgeous in scarlet, had been in the church from early morning until the afternoon, when he gave a dinner at his own house to the neighbouring clergy. Wanda's brother, a boy of eighteen, and his cousin were also invited. I saw them go, at two o'clock, in their dress-clothes—an odd contrast to their sisters in their gay fête-dresses. The aunt, the cousins and the governesses of course had to come over to G—for the festival, and we, of the sex not invited to ecclesiastical banquets, had also a very good dinner, and certainly one brilliant in colour, at three that afternoon.

Then Wanda and I went out for a walk, passing through the valley where we mourned for the good barley lying like a slain thing rotting on the ground,

then climbing the hillside, our progress barred by nothing save now and then a road which had to be avoided, or "forded" in a shallow place, like a river. On the hillside among the cornfields we came upon a small wood, unenclosed by any hedge or wall, but having an entrance through tall iron gates. This was the cemetery where her father was buried, surrounded by the fields he had lived on and cultivated all his life. There were no gravel paths in the graveyard; all was green and wild. A few tall slender iron crosses stood amongst the trees—pines, silver-birches, lime-trees and wild cherry.

We climbed still further to the top of the hill, which was covered with a forest of such great and shining birches as I had never seen, and then into a wood of young oaks. "Now we have left my mother's ground," said Wanda; "this estate belongs to the Government. They confiscated it in '63, when the owner took part in the Insurrection."

"What became of the owner?"

"He fled away, probably to France, and died there. No one heard anything more about him. He was quite penniless, you see: he had given all his money to the cause, and everything else that he possessed was taken."

That night, when we were all asleep in bed, there was a fierce and frantic barking of dogs that woke up all but the children. A carriage had arrived from the home of the schoolgirl visitor Mina. It

had taken all day to come twenty miles, and the coachman and the four stout horses were so weary that they stayed another day and night to rest, and then, one morning early, Mina, and Wanda's young sister Marie, started off, well supplied with provisions that they might picnic on the way to Mina's home.

After some weeks my passport was returned to me, with the addition of many official stamps and inscriptions on the back of it which somehow made me feel rather less secure than I had done. But whether the Austrian police had informed their neighbours of my wicked fondness for drawing government buildings I never learned.

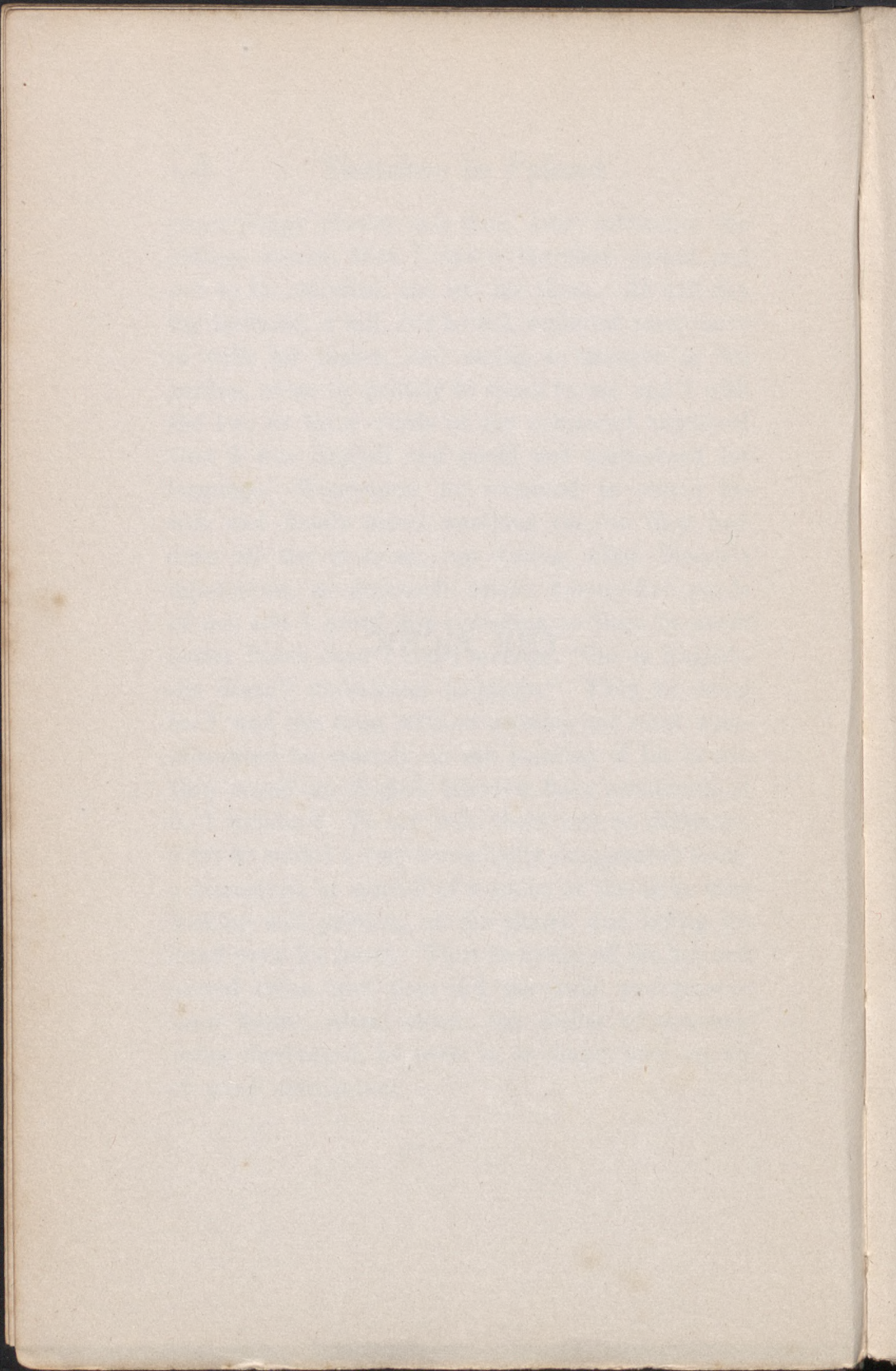
Be that as it may, I was now at liberty to cross the border when I would, and about this time I had an invitation to stay at Lwów (in French "Leopol," in German "Lemberg") with a Countess — I had never seen, but who was a cousin of the —.

"Here you have seen a very modest Polish house," said Wanda, "there you will see a very grand one." It was true, but in both were the same simple kindness and charm of good-breeding.

In the meantime there came one or two fine days at G—; the sheaves were turned and dried once more, and in the end, though late in August, I heard that most of the barley had been saved. I spent these days in sketching some of the cottages. Wanda saw me comfortably seated among the dim

green poppy plants, and then, after informing the cottage women that I was a harmless person and not to be molested, she left me there. At mid-day the husband, a tall, fair-haired, sunburnt man, came in with his horses, and seeing a stranger in his garden, came up politely to speak to me, and I with the two or three words at my command explained that I was English and could not understand his language. Whereupon he retreated to where his wife and family stood watching me, as they had done all the morning, not daring, after Wanda's injunctions, to approach within twenty-five yards of me, and I heard him repeating to them in much better Polish than I could manage, "She is English, she doesn't understand language." Then he came back, and this time, without uttering one word, complimented me warmly on my painting of his house. How would an English labourer have accomplished it, I wonder? To the Pole there was no difficulty. First he smiled a very exceedingly exaggerated smile, a hieroglyph or symbol of a smile, at the same time looking and pointing at the sketch and laying his hand upon his heart. Then he swept off his hat and bowed twice, and then did the smile performance once more. After which, the duties of courtesy being discharged, he went in to dinner with an air of great satisfaction.

THE PICNIC



The Picnic

MY last day at — was blue and sunny and warm; we went to picnic in the woods. I had a little tea-basket with me—a tea-basket for two—and as the household possessed no spirit-lamp that burned out of doors I proposed we should take it. As a matter of fact, that little kettle made tea that day for twelve persons!

We started, Wanda, her brother and I, her two little sisters and their Lithuanian governess; carrying the basket and various cakes and bottles of milk and water; walking through the yellow wheat and barley and rye, and the fields of poppy and clover, and beetroot smelling like honey; and everywhere, when we passed a group of peasants, men and women, old and young, hastened to salute us. It was strange to me to see the shy boy of eighteen gravely giving his hand to be kissed. We walked along the ridge of a gently rolling golden hill, then down a broad valley of yet more corn, where the wagons were being loaded, man and beast working together in good hope, the horses taking snatches

of a mouthful where they could, with only a roguish half-pretence that they did it on the sly. On the near hill above us, high against the sky-line, three or four cows were grazing, and the two small boys who guard them sit there singing all day long—singing loudly so that all the reapers hear them, and so they feel themselves no more lonely, but their singing is a link between them and the toiling world.

We climbed another slope, and on the top of it an artificial knoll of birches and long grass and flowers, which was an ancient cemetery of heretic Arians—mysterious, wizard-like people it seemed. Men say a subterranean passage runs from there to the house we were living in, and another to Cracow. Considering the nature of the soil in that country, I simply can't believe it; yet things "incredible on the face of it" have an odd trick of being true.

From the top of the knoll we saw the same undulating country on every side. Far away in the distance, where Cracow was and the hidden Vistula, the hill of Kosciuszko was discernible, and the line of Carpathian mountains.

Then we left the cornfields, and walked through broken and wooded ground until at last, on a hillside sloping steeply towards the west, we encamped in long rank grass beneath a grove of fir-trees. It was only half a mile from the cousins' house, so two of our party went on to bid that household to join

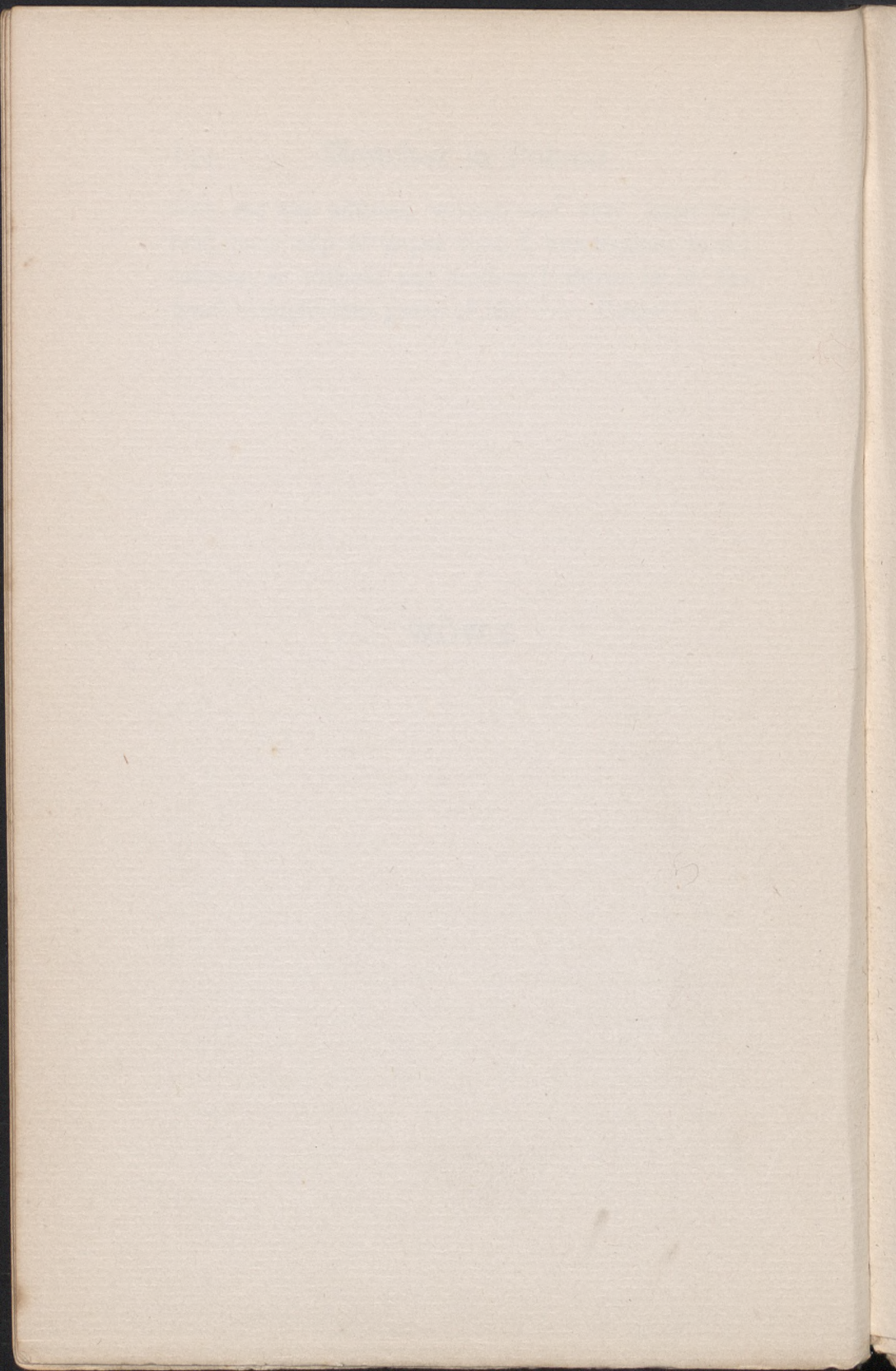
us, and I, somewhat anxious lest my kettle should prove unworthy of this faith in its great resources, set it to boil at once and make tea for the present company. By and by came a sound of singing and the whoops of boyish voices, and looking through the stems of dark fir-trees to the shining golden stubble-field far below us, we saw the others arriving in a two-horsed carriage labouring perilously through the soft ground. Happily the second brew of tea and supply of hot water was ready. Every one made me compliments on the "delicious English tea," pretending (which was quite untrue) that it was a great deal nicer than theirs. Then, basking in the sun, with cakes and cigarettes and songs and a *mêlée* of various languages and then again a spell of musing silence, we brought our picnic to a triumphant end.

Next day there were rain and grey cloud once more—a melancholy morning of last farewells to people who had been good to me. Another horrible two-hours' drive, another showing of my passport at the Russian frontier, and then I passed the Austrian custom-house; this time, however, my boxes were passed without being taken out of the carriage, and so I just caught the little train into Cracow.

Then, further eastwards still than I had ever been, I travelled on through Galicia under rainy skies, seeing only sodden and flooded harvest-fields, and arrived at Lwów that evening. Count Z—— had

sent me the address, written out very large and bold on a slip of paper, that I was to show to my cabman, so without any mishap I drove in at the great wrought-iron gates of the — Palace.

LWÓW



Lwów

Lwów¹ is a town which has every right to look more interesting than it does. But cities are unlike men in this respect, that, for some of them, the strenuous events of their past history, far from leaving deep-cut scars, may chance to obliterate their features; while others—sheltered, maybe, in an island-valley, unassailed, not wrecked by warring dynasties—because they have not suffered, have an air of romance and individuality—an air, and nothing more.

Built by the Ruthenian as a fortress against the Tartar; burnt, besieged and ravaged by Tartars and Lithuanians; fortified, rebuilt by Casimir the Great, Lwów with her strangely mingled population became flourishing under Polish rule. She was a merchant city, trading between East and West, the Levant and the Low Countries, Danzig in the north and Venice in the south. Germans, Armenians, Swedes, Jews, Greeks and Italians were among her townfolk. Charles XII captured her, the Hungarians captured her. Turks and Tartars and Wallachians constantly plundered her territories.

¹ Pronounced Lwoof.

In the seventeenth century she sustained three terrific sieges, first by the Tartars and Cossacks under Baghdan Chmielnicki, then by Chmielnicki and the Russians, thirdly by the Turks. All these attacks the good townsmen repulsed with fury and determination, refusing obstinately to open their gates, or renounce their allegiance to the exiled King, John Casimir. Each time, however, the enemy retired with spoils and tribute from the wealthy city. But in recognition of their conduct all the citizens were raised to the rank of nobles. Once more in 1695 the Tartars were beaten off, but finally under Charles XII the town was devastated and completely ruined. Whole streets were uninhabited; men who had been rich burghers sank into direst poverty.

This state of misery lasted through the eighteenth century and through the first half of the nineteenth—the harsh rule of the Austrians, hopeless revolts, hard punishments. Only in the last forty-five years Lwów has been granted a kind of self-government, and puts on the aspect of a prosperous modern town.

Few commercial towns, however, possess three cathedrals, and three archbishops living within their walls: but here are the Roman Catholic, the Armenian Catholic, and the Greek Catholic or Ruthenian cathedrals, to say nothing of important Jewish synagogues. Here and there the Byzantine form of

domes or towers made me aware that I was further East than I had ever been before. As for language, besides the official German, the advertisements and the names and inscriptions over shops and warehouses in one street would be Polish, in another Hebrew, in the next Ruthenian.

Most of the churches, originally Gothic, are restored or completed as Baroque—a style which perhaps, after all, is most in harmony with the character of this curious town. Whether on account of this heterogeneous architecture or for some other cause, Lwów never gave me the sense of its personality that Cracow did—“crossing obliterates character,” a wise man tells me—and one feels, though interested, fatigued and ill at ease there.

In the principal square, or Rynek, there are fine sixteenth and seventeenth century houses built by the rich burghers for themselves. Mostly very tall and narrow—for no one without special privilege was permitted to have a house of more than a certain width on the street—they bore witness to their owners' wealth and taste in the lavish decorations of their façades and doorways. The house of John Sobieski, who spent much time here, living on the friendliest terms with his merchant-neighbours, was built by an Italian architect for a Greek patrician-merchant: the gable is covered with statues; it has a Corinthian entrance, a Gothic hall and French Renaissance chambers. In the general effect of

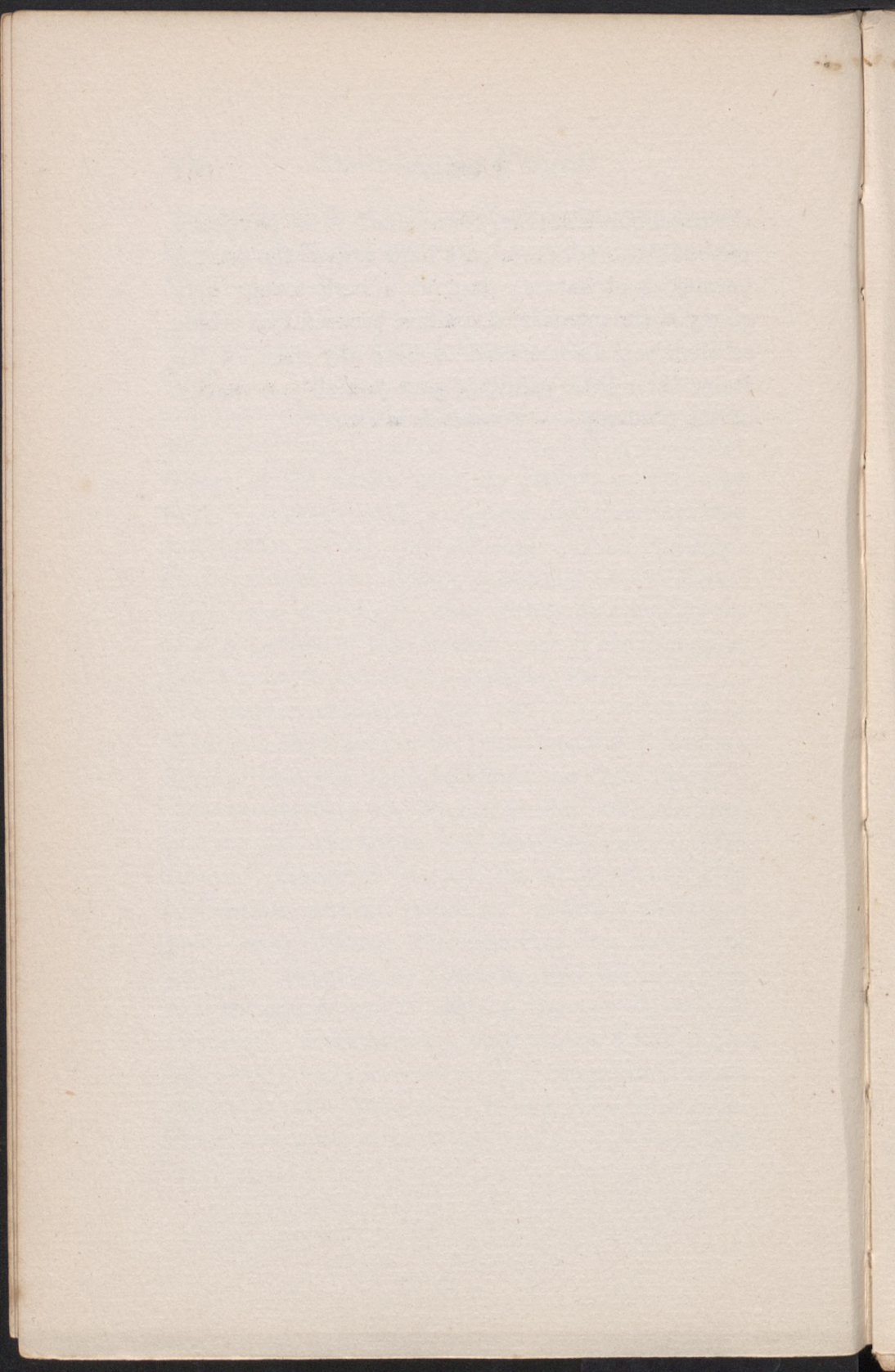
the façade there is very much elegance and grace— but of course one must be extremely ignorant in order to like it.

Near by is the house of the Massari, Venetians, bearing over its carved doorway the Lion of St. Mark.

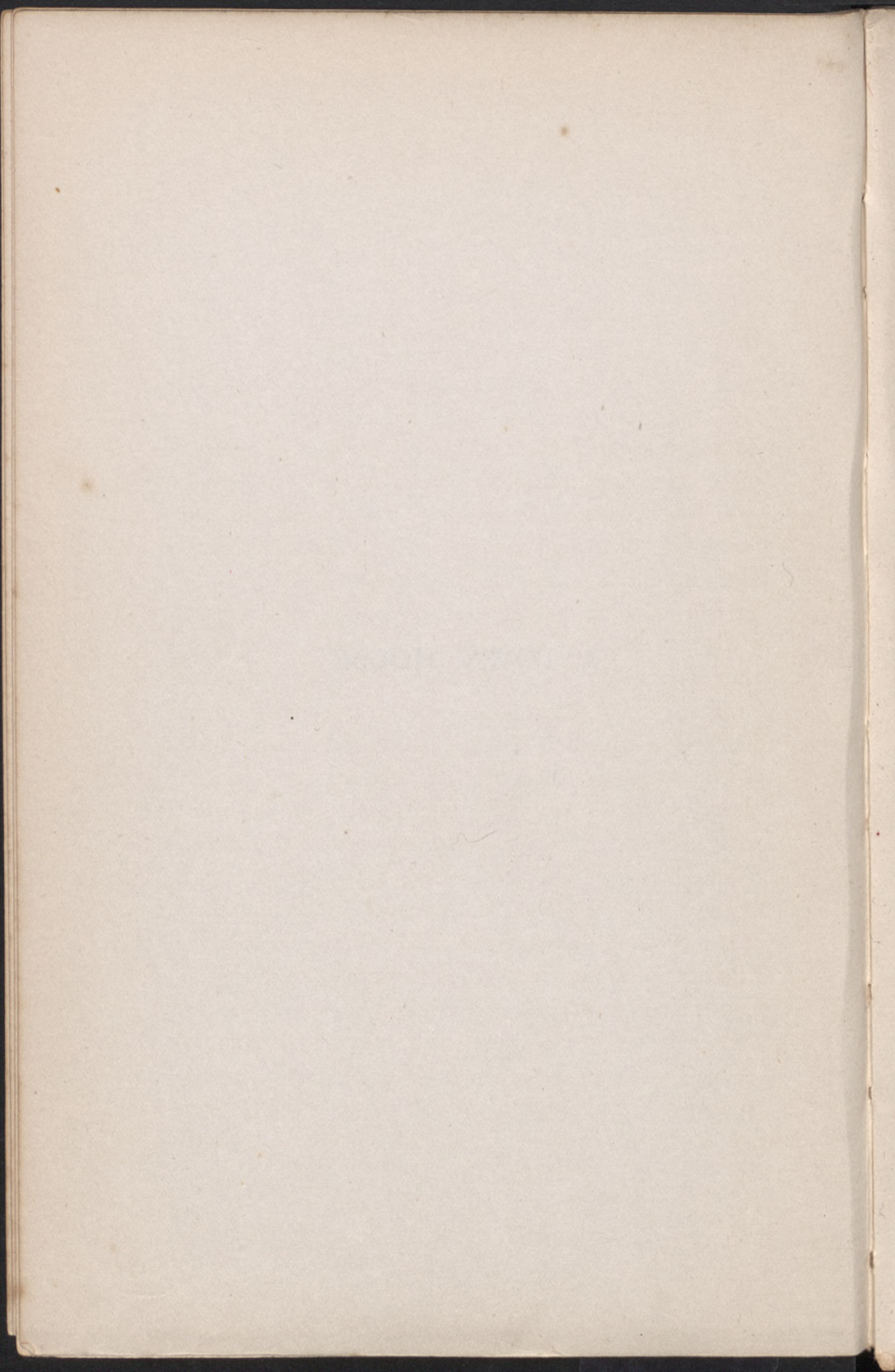
I saw these houses while walking one afternoon with the young Countess —, and then the little chapel of the Boem, near the Cathedral, perfectly square, covered with a dome, and lavishly but beautifully carved and adorned. Then, noticing, as we passed, the Italian campanile of the Greek Wallachian church, we went into a charming park, once a garden of the Jesuits, close to the grandiose Parliament House of the Galician Diet.

A painter, concerned less with what the thing *is* than with the aspect of the thing, would find motives among these tall white buildings and their verdigris domes, seen from the sloping garden with its huge poplars and pine-trees; and altogether Lwów, “incorrect” though it be—and do we not know that Shakespeare was an “incorrect” author?—affords a great many chances and suggestions for making of pictures. Because, as a painter told me once, “*il ne suffit pas de voir la chose, il faut voir l'exquis de la chose.*” I remembered that profound and faithful saying when I saw the work of the painter Stanislawski in the Municipal Gallery that afternoon. They were quite small things and hardly more than

sketches, for his theory was that it is physically impossible to set down on a large canvas the fleeting harmonies of nature; but, as a perfect song may give you the moment of emotion between two people so that you do not need to hear any more of the story, these little paintings gave you all you wanted of the landscape—" *l'exquis de la chose.*"



A TOWN HOUSE



A Town House

THE house I was staying in is built in the style of a French eighteenth-century *hôtel*. The great panelled staircase and a gallery at the top of the house are filled with pictures, mostly of the French and Italian schools: in the salons are exquisite French bureaux, cabinets, tables and mirrors and precious china: one could see quite well that they had never been "discovered in a garret" or "picked up," but had been received here with honour in their youth, each like a princess of some friendly nation arriving to contract an alliance of marriage. Many of these beautiful things had been the property of Louis XV or Napoleon or Marie Antoinette.

The Count D——, now dead, had been Marshal of the Province. I saw his portrait in the Chamber of the Diet and in other public buildings, and though I do not quite know what the functions of a Marshal may be, I could see that a man of that type in whatever society he found himself would become eminent and a ruler for good. Now the old Countess, handsome, benevolent and stately, lives in the palace, not alone, for her children and numerous grand-

Sketches in Poland

children, surrounding her with affection, are her continual visitors. Laughingly I was told that the house was the family hotel, and that on the first day after my arrival no less than nine other people had come, some of them unexpectedly, but all of them welcome. We all met at the two o'clock dinner, where I was placed between the eldest grandson and his sister, who spoke English so beautifully that I knew it must be a pleasure to them to do it. And, for my part, it was so long since I had talked with the absolute assurance of being understood, even to the extent of a quotation or the fine perversion of a common phrase, that while I described to them my adventures and impressions in Poland, I felt as if these now for the first time became actual and vivid to myself. (Poor Robinson Crusoe, I must therefore conclude, had not even the intellectual satisfaction of laying a finger on the sharp edge of his own despair!)

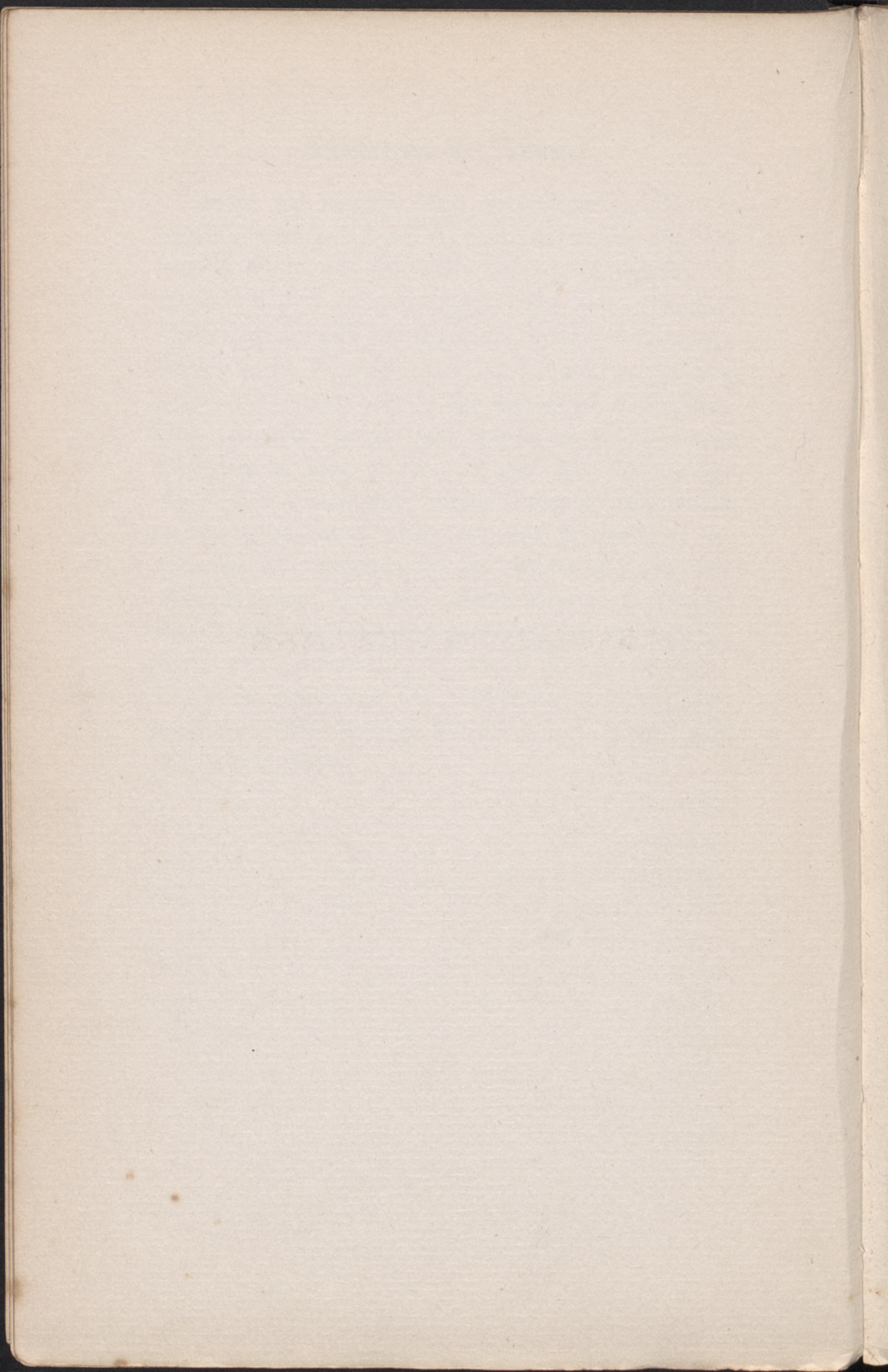
On rising from the table, the guests, as in all Polish houses, surrounded their hostess to kiss her hand. Then, leaning on the arm of her daughter and smilingly commanding the young and the active to precede her, she proceeded with slow steps into the big salon. Here were comfortable sofas and big low English chairs. One wall was hung with Gobelins, in the opposite wall were great windows looking down on the gardens and the tops of poplar trees which, troubled by the wind, were bending

and turning the whity-green under-side of their leaves—strangely resembling in colour and drawing the trees in the tapestry.

Life seemed here a noble and pleasant thing. Is it not a joy to be amongst people of three—nay, of four generations, all in their various stages, graceful, good-looking, and of beautiful manners? It was this family whose gorgeous wedding costumes I described in a previous chapter; yet in their ordinary life there was no ostentation of riches. The ladies in their dress eschewed all extravagances of fashion, and I found that they, each and all, without pedantry or fashionable enthusiasm, interested themselves in some public work. One had built a hospital, one a school, one an institution for the blind, another a school of peasant embroidery. To spend more money than was needful on dress and entertainments I heard was very *mal vu*. In talking that evening with one of the Countess' daughters—a Princess, who lived in Russia—I could not help saying that I was ashamed to think that English society on the whole was more frivolous and more selfish. “You must not blame your countrymen,” she said. “I am sure that, if there was the need in England that there is here, the English would devote their money to *la patrie* as we do. But you have a wise and benevolent government. Ours does nothing to help our poor, so of course it is our plain duty to work for the public good.”

Except for another visit to Cracow in October which I need not describe, these days were the last that I spent in Austrian Poland: altogether I stayed in the country more than three months, always with Polish people, and I never heard anyone complain of injustice from the Austrians at the present day, save only in the matter of the Ruthenians. Austria favours and conciliates them, I was told, hoping that in case of war with Russia the other Ruthenians now under Russian rule would embrace her cause. For her seat is insecure, the reins of her government are entangled, and her administration is feeble. Now, between Poles and Ruthenians, jealousy and hatred break out continually: and at the time of which I am writing a Ruthenian student in the University had shot dead his Polish tutor because he had not "passed" him in his examination.

TREASURES IN THE SAND



Treasures in the Sand

THE young Count I had talked to at dinner was pleased to hear I had seen the Dzieduszycki Museum that morning. It is now *his* museum, but was collected and endowed and presented to the town by his grandfather. He must have employed a whole regiment of collectors and naturalists and savants, for there are birds, beasts and fishes, all beautifully stuffed and mounted, of all the species indigenous to Poland, plants and geological specimens, a great collection of pottery and ancient ornaments, peasant-work in metals, embroideries and costumes of all periods, from all the wide regions of the country. One of the most valuable treasures is a great antediluvian beast—alas! I forget of what kind—that was found in the mud of some river by peasants, who were making shoes of its hide until the learned men got wind of it. I believe the British Museum accepted with rapture a scrap of the beast!

But revered among all the archæologists of Europe is a collection of ancient Scythian ornaments in pure gold.

The Count presented me with a learned *brochure* written about this treasure, and illustrated by photographs of each piece, and he told me the story of its discovery. There was an old poor woman living in the village of Michalkow in the district of Borszczow who used to go every week down to a little stream that runs into the Dniester, to wash linen. One day, after a spell of rainy weather, she noticed that a bit of sandy bank had been washed away, and there in a hole she saw strange golden objects lying in the sand; so she gathered them up in her apron and carried them to her cottage, rejoicing to think that she had perhaps found means at last to pay off her heavy burden of debt. For she owed seven marks to a Jew. She showed him what she had found, and begged him to take it in quittance of her debt. The Jew perceived that the things were of gold, but he was of course reluctant to allow a debtor to escape clean out of his grasp, so he said he could only remit her five marks for the treasure, and she must still owe him two. But the old woman did not agree to the bargain, and next day she took the things in her apron to the mayor of the village, and he, astonished and excited, persuaded her to let him take charge of them while he wrote to the prefect of the province and described them. The governor wrote to the Count D——, who sent down archæologists to examine the treasure. They found that it consisted of a bowl

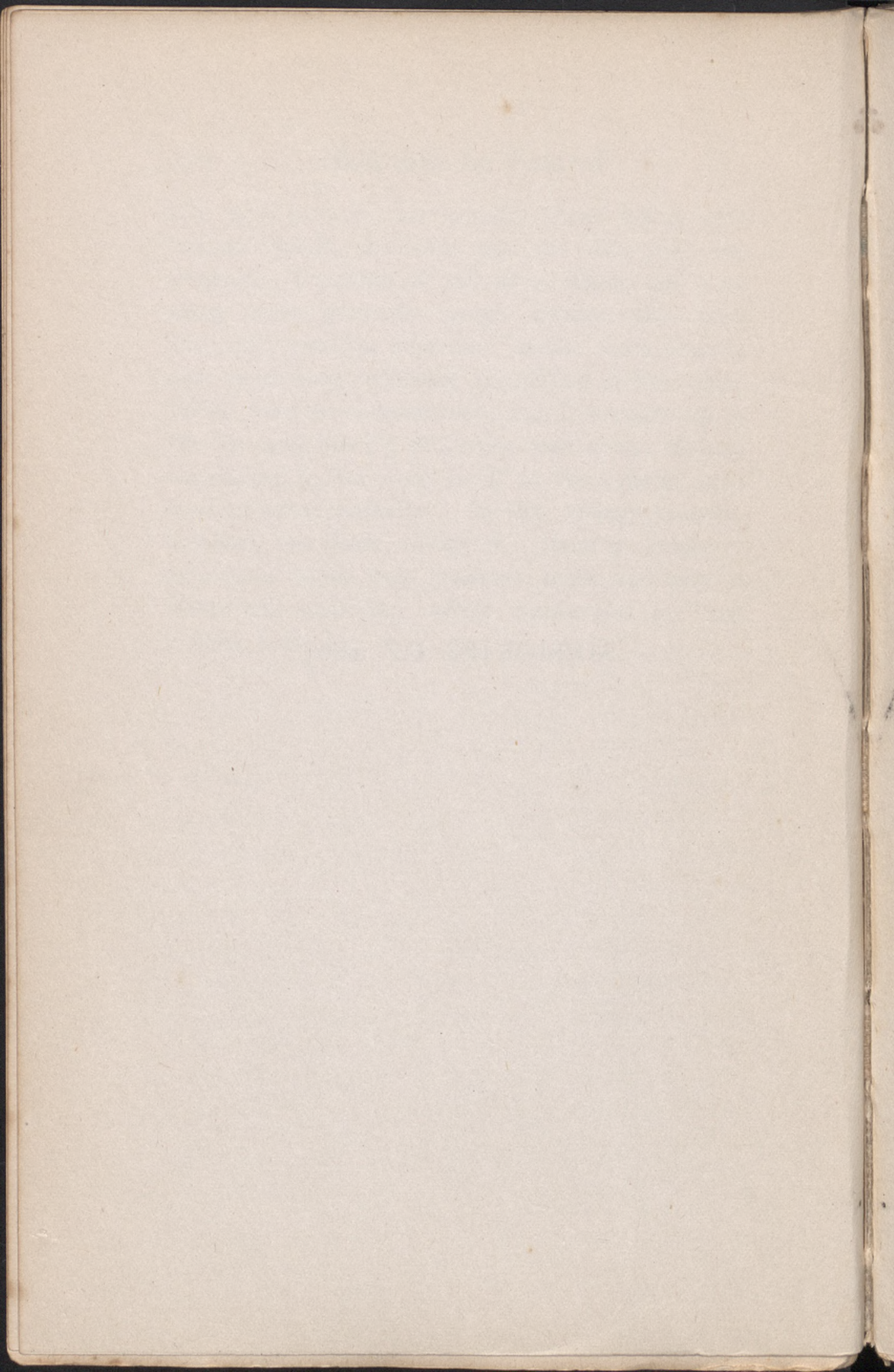
of extremely artistic workmanship and design, and a crown, bracelets and many choice ornaments, which, too small to be worn by a man, had probably adorned the image of a god. Their period is about the fourth century B.C., and the beauty of their shapes and the art, of which the secret is now lost, of working such things in unalloyed gold, were evidence of refined and accomplished civilization.

So the Marshal of the Province bought them from the old poor woman. The historical value of the treasure being beyond calculation, he gave her simply the value of the gold, six thousand florins. And then the Jew had apoplexy and died.

There were two charming small boys staying in the house, descendants of that Adam Czartoryski who was given to the Russians as a hostage, and brought up at the Court as companion to Alexander I, whose intimate friend he became. The Czar Alexander used to say that he asked the opinion of Prince Adam always before making a decision, because he knew that from him he should hear the most noble and honourable point of view. The little boys took me into the yard to see the beloved donkey their grandmother had given them, and then we walked in the garden, and they immediately began—as if these were the thoughts most current in their young minds—to tell me the story of Queen Wanda, whom a German prince pursued that he might marry her by force, until, finding no other means to fly from

him and preserve her country from falling into German hands, she leapt into the river and was drowned. I noticed in talking to them, and with many more grown-up people besides, that they frequently used the adjective "noble," quite frankly and unashamed, evidently translating it from some Polish word in common use; but I, brought up in the fear and worship of Demos, was always slightly scandalized by the word, as if at the sight of some deed of great audacity. In this strange country, however, one dares to say it. Even a couple of rare vases which were, however, crude and ugly in colour the small boy calmly condemned as "not looking noble."

MEMORIES OF 1863



Memories of 1863

I WENT with the boys and their mother to two or three museums, and saw collections of manuscripts, medals and portraits, armour and weapons and banners and many other things, among which I remember an iron bracelet with spikes inside, and some long tangled bunches of small iron hooks whose purpose I did not understand until I was told that these things were used for political prisoners in 1863.

Then I was taken to an exhibition in commemoration of the Insurrection just fifty years ago.

I feel that I would rather forget what I saw, and not tell it. Even now there comes over me the sickness and anguish of spirit that filled me during that long afternoon. I see again the handsome spacious building designed for entertainments and shows, in the middle of a beautiful public park; and I see the other visitors walking down the hall, very silent, their faces perfectly white and hard. Not that it was a display of sensational horrors: it was rather the bald simplicity with which the tale was told that was so moving. Poor photographs, faded daguerreotypes

of clerks and farmers in their Sunday clothes ; proclamations that had been posted on the doors of village barns, boys' scrawled ardent letters stained with parents' tears, the convict-dress of a little girl condemned to Siberia with her parents, small patient relics of men imprisoned for life : one was a little cross of beautiful proportions that seemed to be fashioned of ivory inlaid with some shining metal ; it was no coarse-fingered ruffian who made it, out of bread kneaded with blood and inlaid with tiny pieces of bright straw.

Then there were oil-paintings by an artist who was himself one of the Siberian exiles. As pictures these were neither very good nor very bad—as history they were important. One showed a gang of prisoners halting on the frontier between Russia and Siberia, sitting in the snow, looking vainly backwards in an eternal farewell to Europe ; their heads were shaved on one side and their faces branded with a number, that escape might be difficult for them. Again he has painted prisoners working in the snow, fastened by chains on their naked ankles to their barrows, and rows of prisoners asleep at night, each covered with a wretched blanket, while the overseer came round with a lantern and each man in turn had to uncover his feet to show that his chains were still fast fixed upon them ; or when working in the day they eased a little the heavy weight on their ankles by tying up the dragging end of the chain to their

waists: and there was a woman—a lady—kneeling by a hole in the ice, condemned all day to wash clothes in the water kept from freezing by salt, until she wept aloud for the pain of her cold hands. After a time she died there, of consumption.

The Princess, grave and dignified and pale in her black gown, explained and showed things to me. Then she told me a story of a man who, some time after the Insurrection, came to a convent near her home, and asked to do the work of the monks' garden, unpaid. He lived there in a small hut, wearing the poorest clothes and eating the simplest fare, until he died. "He was very silent and made no friends," she said, "only he liked to talk with me sometimes. No one knew his name, but it was plain to see that he was noble and had been in the great world. He left papers with his confessor, to be shown after his death. These proved he was a prince of Lithuania who had fought in the revolt, and had been reported killed. When, after great sufferings, he had returned at last to his home, he had found that his *fiancée*, whom he loved passionately, had drowned herself on hearing of his death."

I came away feeling broken and shattered—not so much at the thought of suffering, as at the uselessness of it, the triumph of brute Cruelty and Power, the disaster of fine Spirit that fought in vain, defeated, exiled, trampled down into silence.

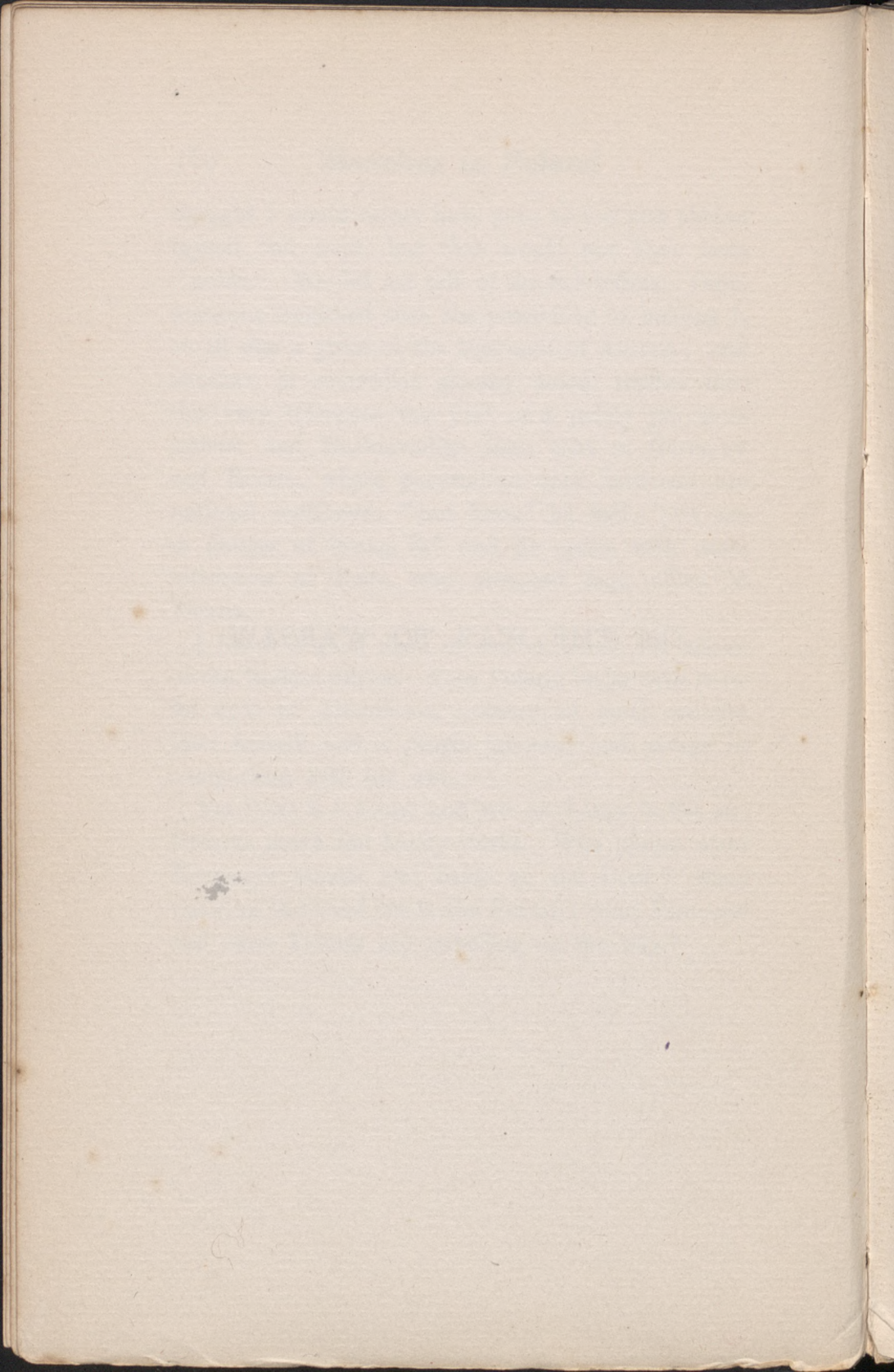
It was time for supper when we came in. I

thought I would rather have gone to bed and hidden myself and wept, but that would not have been "noble." We did not talk of the exhibition. Only, some one remarked that the possibility of holding it at all was a proof of the tolerance of Austria; and another, in somewhat gloomy mood, replied that this very tolerance was part of a policy yet more sinister and Machiavellian than that of Germany and Russia, where persecution only hardened the national sentiment, "but here," he said, "we are in danger of losing it," and he spoke with some bitterness of Poles who accepted high office in Vienna.

I heard a good deal, of course, about the affairs of the Balkan States. Poor Poland looks with wistful eyes at Albania—a country so much smaller than herself, and a people ignorant and savage in comparison with her own.

Yet there is a sound and stir of change in the air. Dreams move the heavy world. Who knows what Messenger stands and beats on the Door? what voices of the Dead cry to the Future? what Rumours and what Tidings are travelling on the way?

ON THE WAY TO WARSAW



On the Way to Warsaw

As I looked at the two cities on the map, it appeared a simple thing to go from Lwów to Warsaw, but there I reckoned without my future host, the Russian Bear.

“Don’t try to go across country like that,” said M. ——. “Heaven only knows when you would arrive. The easier plan by far is to go back to Cracow and take the express from there. How long shall you be in Warsaw? and shall you go on into Russia afterwards?”

It was on the tip of my tongue to say, “But Warsaw *is* Russia,” when I saved myself from that clumsy *faux pas*, and said, “No, I was travelling only in Poland.”

So, yet once more, I visited the gentle and perilous city, and stayed a night there where the hotel servants welcomed with many smiles “Angielka.” I did not leave by express train after all, as it ran by night, and I like to look out of the window when I travel. The *Personenzug* started about nine. A second-class ticket only cost seventeen Kronen, but the journey lasted ten or eleven hours.

The morning was misty and obscure, as though it were only dawn. Cracow, low-lying in the plain, was quickly hidden by a few small woods; only the towers of its many churches and the tall Wawel rose up grey in the grey sky, and for many miles I could see them still across the flat meadows. After that the country was monotonous, or else I was sleepy, until about midday I suddenly observed that the wet, dark fields had given place to stretches of wind-blown sand, along whose ridges here and there grew meagre and weather-beaten green-black firs. Here was the frontier that the two despoilers had agreed upon between them. Russian porters invaded the train, and out we all came with our baggage. Here neither English, French nor German availed me anything at all, and I felt that, unless I could keep my porter in sight, I was lost. I was tearing after him at break-neck speed down the platform, when two officials suddenly shot out their arms and joined hands to make a barrier before me. For a moment I thought I was arrested again, but it was only a primitive way of instructing me to make for the other door; I obeyed their gestures, and passed through with a crowd of others.

Of course I had my passport ready to show, but I was not prepared to see it taken away from me, and I wondered how I should get it back, but submitted, having no tongue in my head with which

to ask questions or remonstrate. We waited in the Customs nearly two hours while all the luggage was searched, some people's trunks being unpacked to the very bottom; the passports I suppose were examined in another office. At last, when I had settled my poor frocks comfortably again in their beds, locked my boxes and got my luggage ticket, I saw a big, long-coated man, whose face was masked in his beard, coming round distributing the passports.

Mine, very wisely, he left to the last, and as it was the only one that bore the Lion and the Unicorn, and I was the only English-looking passenger, there was, to quote the Sentimental Novel, "no need of words between us twain."

Established now in the Russian train, pride, vain-glory and joy possessed me, to think that I had passed the frontier unaided; nothing was lost, nothing had been seized! and I was pursuing my journey alone, armed only with Russian tickets and Russian coins, and the written address of the house I was to go to.

The other passengers were all Russians or Poles: amongst them I found myself watching a lady who stood in the corridor, as I did, looking out eastwards over the melancholy landscape, the unmade roads and the undrained fields where a few peasants were hopelessly turning over their crops of ruined hay or miserable oats. She looked as though she

saw far beyond these to the furthest bounds of the country, and through this present moment into the disastrous past and the hidden future. It was that same unearthly, steadfast look I had seen on the faces of the ladies at K——, on that of Wanda's mother, of the pretty Mme. M—— at Zakopane, of women in the churches in Cracow and others in the exhibition at Lwów, and so I knew quite well what she was thinking of, and saw that her heart was broken by the sorrows of her country, and yet that she prayed still and trusted in God.

We exchanged some commonplace remarks, and then she began, as I felt certain she would, to talk to me about Poland, jealous lest I, as a foreigner, should pass through the country *unknowing*, imagining this was Russia. I longed to hear her history, but it was plain she could not talk much to me there; always when Russian people stood near us she became silent or changed the subject. Yet she impressed me, as many others did, as being, though sad, not bitter. Again and again while talking with Poles, I felt an inward conviction that if once they were freed from their oppressors, they would not be slow to forgive them. It is part of the strange spirituality and sweetness of their nature.

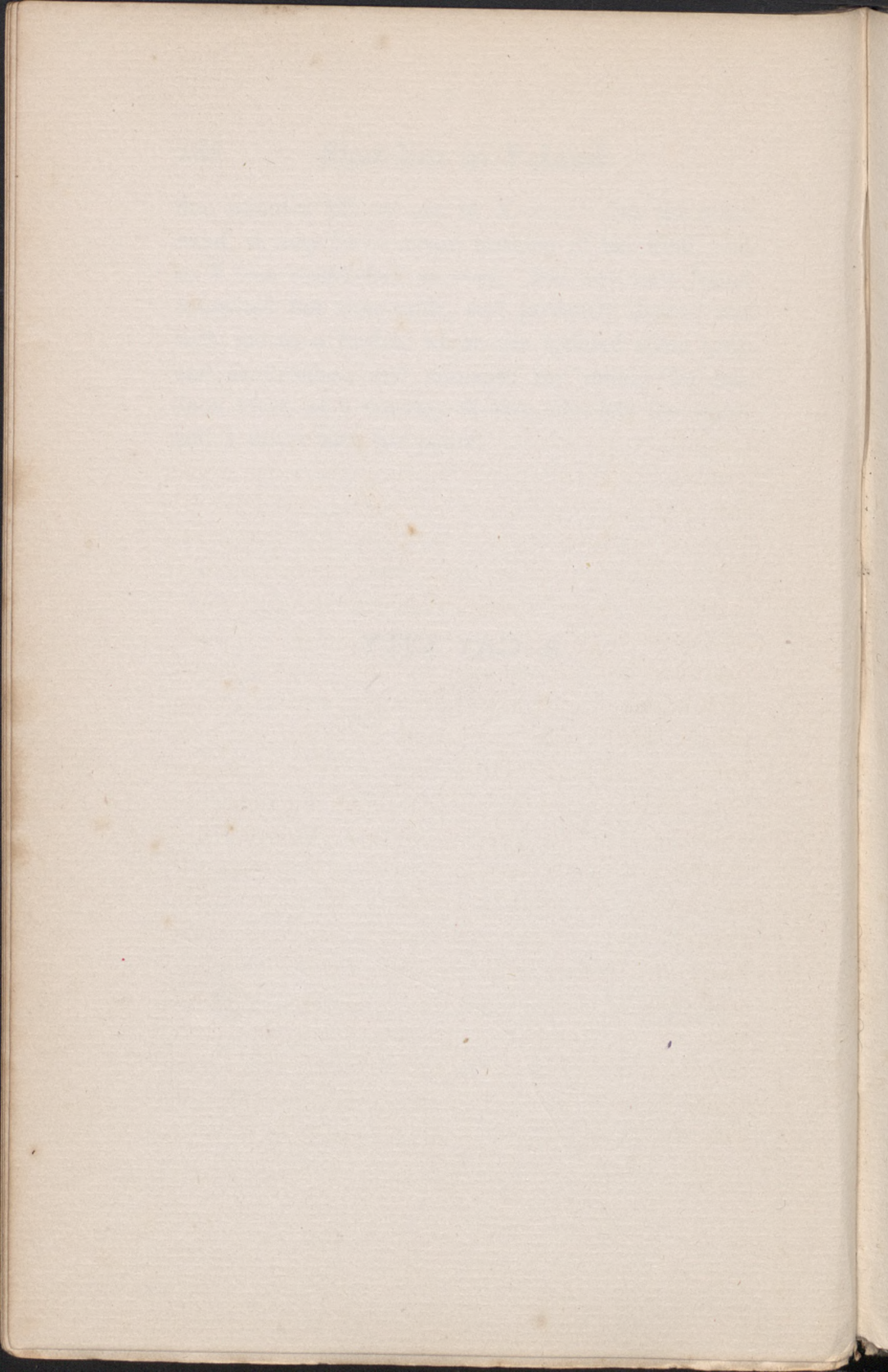
The Russian, I have heard, is a pessimist, but the Pole, as I found him, is not. Whether it be

race or religion or circumstance that makes them unlike I cannot tell, but perhaps the last. For it seems to me that the victor is often more sad than the vanquished. One says: "I suffer in a just cause; my enemy is wicked. Divine Justice will avenge." The other: "My victim suffers. I am not wicked. Divine Justice there is none."

I went back to my carriage and studied the other passengers—fashionable ladies, who hastened to get what information they could from me about English nurses; whether it would be possible to induce them to come to St. Petersburg; what agency should be communicated with; what wages would be asked. I was not greatly attracted to them, and by and by I returned to the Polish lady, and confided to her that I was very hungry. In my simplicity I had imagined there would be a restaurant car on the train, so I had brought no provisions. It was now four o'clock, and I had eaten nothing since the early morning. Two or three officials I had addressed in every language at my command, trying to find out if we stopped at any station long enough for me to get lunch, but even the word "*Essen*" was unintelligible to them. One of them, indeed, seemed to guess what I wanted, and he made a reply which *may* have meant: "At the next station but one some boys will come on to the train with glasses of tea, and caviare, on trays, but if you want anything more you must wait forty-

five minutes till we get to X——.” On the other hand, it may have meant nothing of the kind, and so I was unsatisfied as ever. But my new friend consulted her time-table, and presently dashed out with me to a buffet, where she ordered some soup and sandwiches, and managed my money for me. Soon after, at a country station, she left the train, and I never met her again.

A GAY CITY



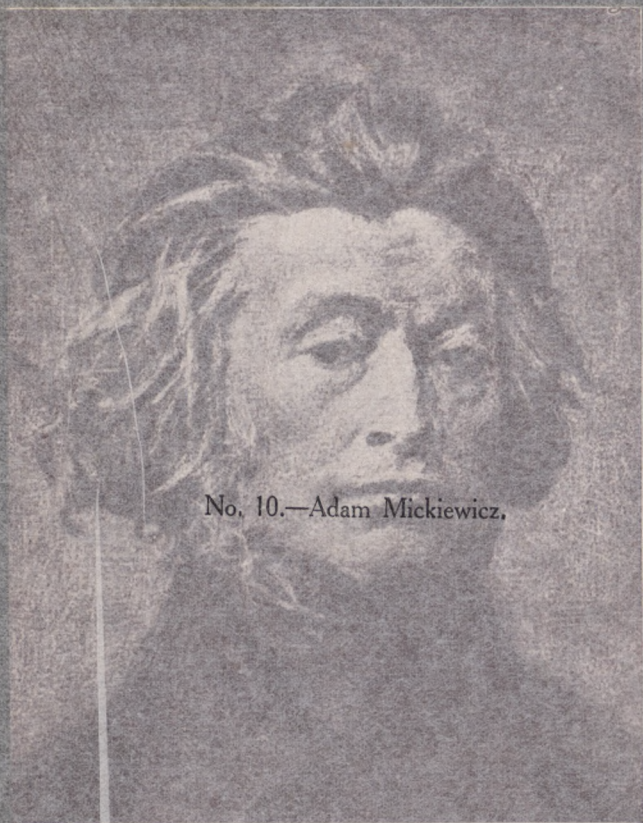
A Gay City

THERE is a story of a Saracen girl who loved an English Crusader, and found her way alone from Jaffa to the doorway of his house beside the Thames, knowing only the two words "London" and "Gilbert." With almost as great economy of speech I entered the second Capital of Poland. I was going as a boarder to a little training-school for servants instituted by some charitable ladies on the model of Mme. Z——'s at K——, and I had the address written down; the number of the house was 19, but as we approached the city it occurred to me that I had neglected to learn how to say "ninteen" in Polish, so I asked a fellow-passenger to coach me, and learned that it was, as nearly as I can write it in English, *Dzeyvantsh nashchty*. Then the train stopped and I caught a porter, and finding it more effectual to talk English than be dumb. said calmly, pointing to my hand-bags: "Please take these things." He obeyed. He said: "*Droshky?*" I said: "*Tag.*" He hailed a carriage, I got in and gave him my luggage ticket in silence. There in the darkness, amongst a noisy

crowd of cabmen and carriages, I waited a very, very long time, and wondered what in the world I should do if the porter never came back at all. But he came, and my two trunks with him. Then in a loud and confident tone I recited the address to the coachman and drove off.

At last we stopped in a street of tall houses, on one of which I saw with satisfaction the name of the school I was to go to. The driver led me into a great courtyard, and up a cold and dismal stone staircase to a door where again was a plate with the same name. But it was not that door which opened. Instead, after ringing and waiting some time, I saw a young woman descending from the floor above. She was dressed in a crimson dressing-gown, and over her shoulders her fair hair fell in two plaits, very long and very thick; and smiling and bowing, with many gestures of welcome, she invited me to follow her upstairs. I looked at her with earnest scrutiny, trying to read her countenance through the absence of conventional guise that disguised her: then once more I trusted Destiny, and followed.

On the upper floor I found myself in a small and spotless chamber, papered blue and painted with white enamel, and after giving a handful of money to the lady of the crimson gown to pay my coachman as she thought fit, I made some tea and went to bed, to dream of Richard Cœur de Lion; and

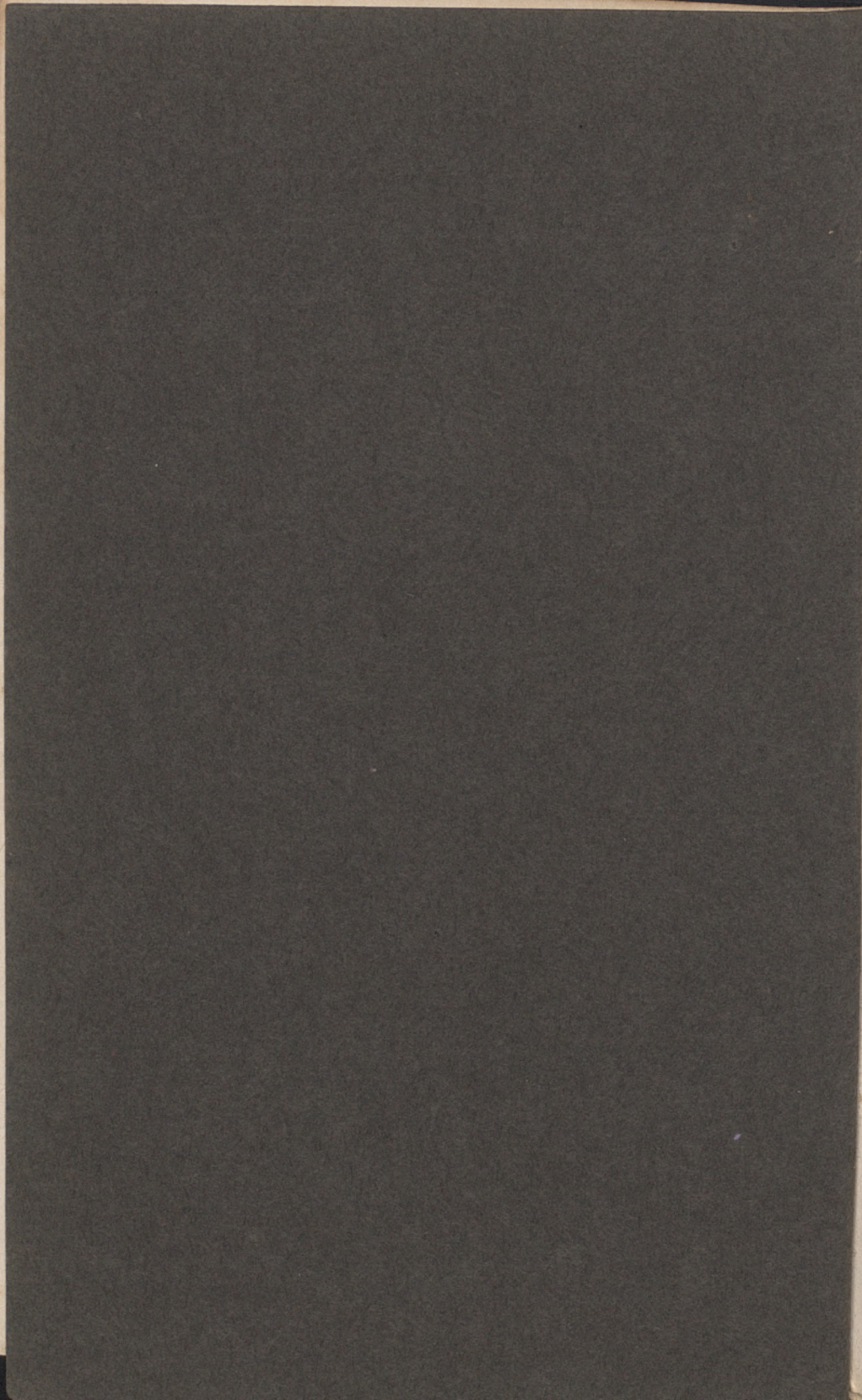


No. 10.—Adam Mickiewicz.

Adam Mickiewicz



Adam Mickiewicz



then of a pale and passionate face that gazed out eastwards over the flooded cornfields.

Next morning, out of a blue sky the sunlight beamed into the small white room. I was called to breakfast in the dining-room on the floor below—a cold, sweet, empty room, painted the colours of the Virgin, white and blue, and decorated only with a portrait of Mickiewicz, the greatest poet of Poland.

There is a statue of him in the chief square at Cracow, another at Lwów: even here the Poles attained with infinite trouble the hardly-granted permission to erect a monument to him on Russian soil, but only on condition that it was done without any “demonstration” or any eulogy of the poet. I remember reading a Frenchman’s description of the intense, the unbearable emotion of the scene when the crowd assembled watched the statue unveiled without one cheer, or any word or sound at all but the sobbing of some who were too deeply moved to keep silence.

A placid, faded-looking lady staying in the house had breakfast at the same time as I did, and talked to me in French. Seven years ago, she had obtained permission from the authorities to set up a small *école de ménage* for young girls in her own house somewhere in Lithuania, but she must teach them absolutely nothing else but house work; tuition in reading or writing or simple arithmetic, unless she should teach

them in Russian (which they do not understand), would be visited by the severest penalties. Since she started her little enterprise, she told me, other ladies in different parts of the country had wished to carry on in their own villages the same useful and charitable work, but they had always been refused the permission to begin it. No reason is given; no pretext. They are simply forbidden.

Then, seeing I was both ignorant of the things she related, and interested in them, she continued talking, with that acquiescent air that often set me questioning in my poor simple English brain, while I listened to her compatriots, whether they appreciated any longer the force of their own words, telling me how education has died out among the peasants since Russia became their master.

“It is not our fault,” she said, “that the lower classes in Russian Poland are now the least educated people in Europe. We have now one primary school for about two thousand six hundred people, but a hundred years ago there were more, and in the sixteenth century more still. In fact, Poland was the first country that established, or tried to establish, compulsory education. That was in 1772, when we were making such great efforts for progress. And after the Japanese War, when the Russian Government pretended to make various concessions towards liberty, and granted us permission to build schools, did we neglect it? No

less than nine hundred schools were opened in one year, and they were well attended. Pupils and teachers alike were enthusiastic. But then in a year's time the Government closed them all, for no other reason but that they thought it safer! The school buildings were closed, the money was wasted, the teachers were dismissed. That is the way things are done in Russia. She gives with one hand and takes away with the other. For instance, a bill is passed in the Duma granting a kind of local self-government by municipal councils in the nine Polish provinces, but at the same time forbidding the Polish language to be spoken at these councils. The Polish members of the Duma protested that the townsmen couldn't speak Russian. 'No matter,' was the answer; 'they may learn.'"

In the same way, she told me, four or five philanthropic societies which were formed after 1905, with no political object, but to educate the illiterate poor (men and women as well as children), have lately been abolished. One of them was the "Society of Polish Culture," and had many thousand members.

The pathetic part of it is that the people are not only willing but eager to be taught. But again I was assured by this Lithuanian woman, as by many other people afterwards, that the Russian laws passed in the last few years to give a show of liberty and progress in the eyes of the world are

merely pretence. What could be more liberal, more enlightened than a decree that people may now spend their money in building schools? Europe is impressed, and reading of the new law does not observe the neat phrase—"subject to the approval of the Governor of the Province."

As a matter of fact, the citizens gain nothing at all by this law. No schools are built, no progress is made, for the governor's consent is invariably withheld.

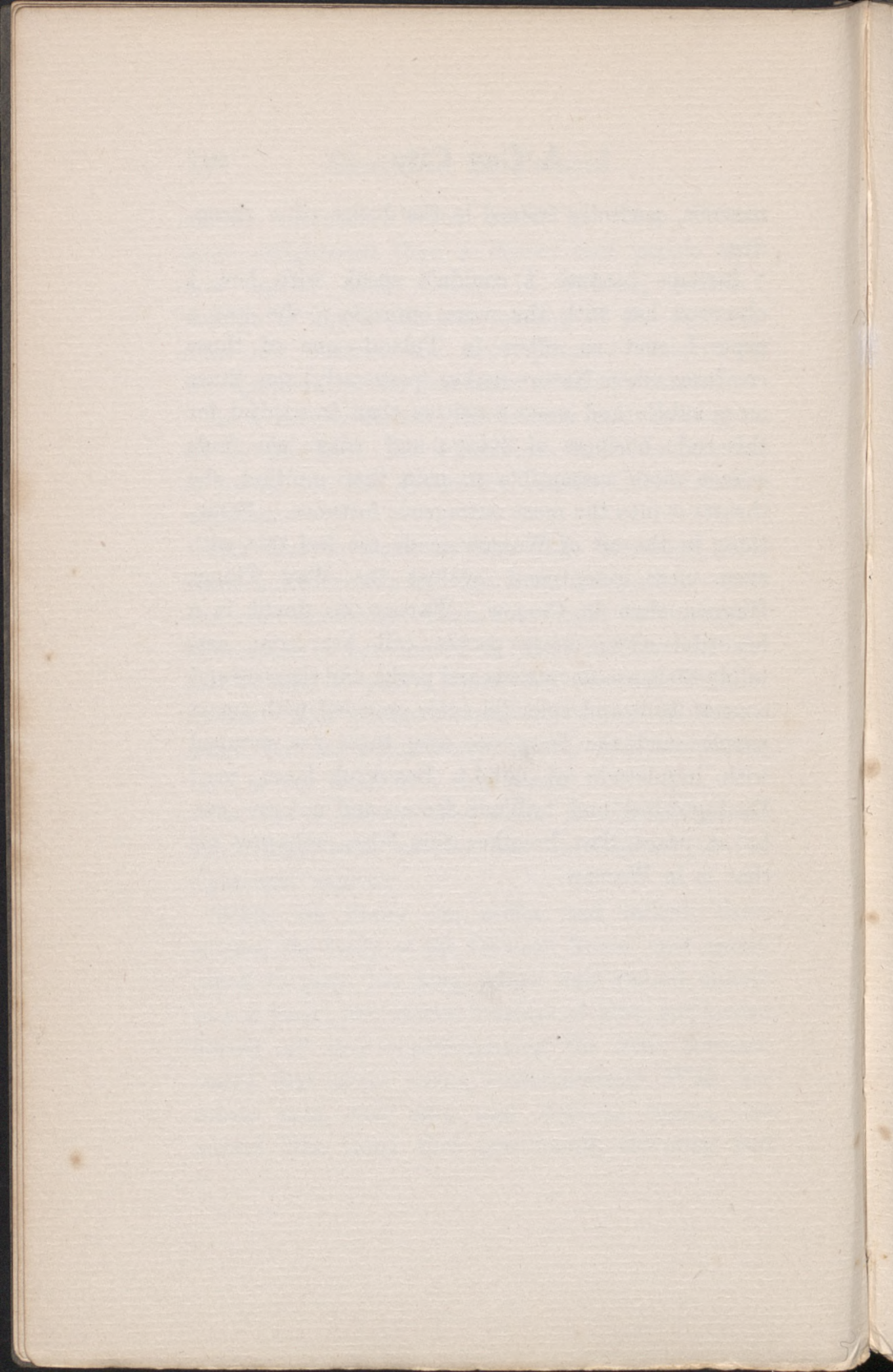
She was to leave at four that afternoon, and reach her journey's end—at least, her station—early the next morning. Then she would drive twenty kilometres to her house. I asked her how far she had to send to post a letter, and she said five kilometres. The parish church is twenty kilometres away, but she sends every Sunday and fetches the *curé* to say Mass in a tiny chapel.

As for a doctor, they have in the village an apothecary such as we had in England in the eighteenth century.

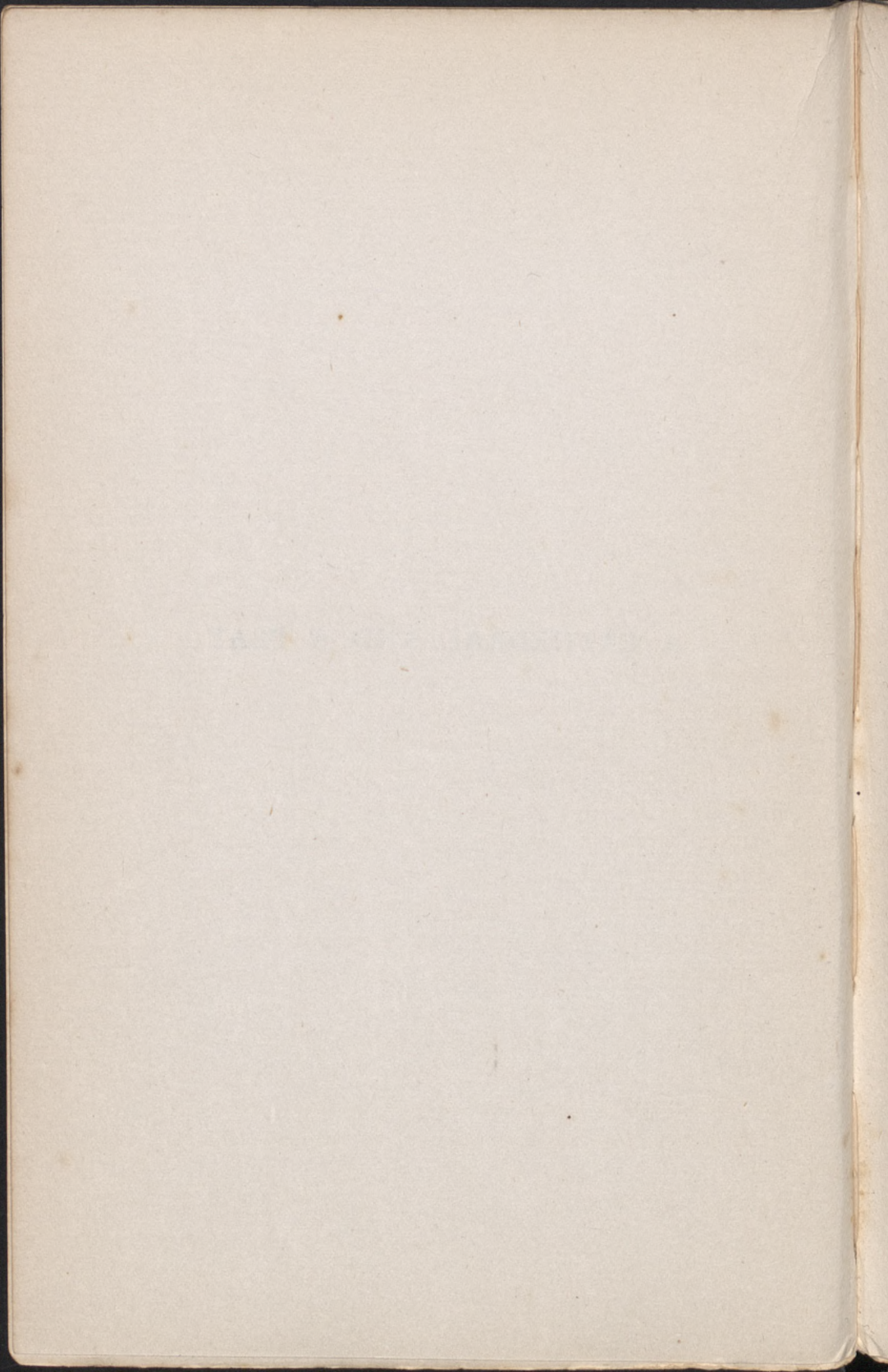
While we drank our coffee and talked, there entered the Lady of the Crimson Gown, now neatly robed in grey, her long yellow hair wound closely to her head; she carried bunches of keys, and busied herself all day superintending the little servant-maids and their young instructresses. With her subtle face, fair skin and delicate hands, she moved like some fine greyhound, shivering and

nervous, perfectly trained in the duties of a sheep-dog.

Perhaps because I couldn't speak with her, I observed her with the more curiosity: she was a type I met so often in Poland—one of those creatures whom Nature makes (perversely) ten times more subtle and more sensitive than is needful for this rude business of living; and where she finds a race more susceptible to pain than another, she thrusts it into the most outrageous fortunes. Something in the air of Warsaw made me feel this with even more resentment against the Way Things Happen than in Cracow. Warsaw no doubt is a beautiful city; many people call her gay: certainly there are fine streets and parks, and theatres and concert halls and splendid cafés crowded with smart people—and the faces one sees there are ravaged with inquietude of mind! Beautiful faces, yes! Distinguished and brilliant faces—and not one can be at peace that breathes this false, unhappy air that is in Warsaw.



A CATHEDRAL AND A PLAY



A Cathedral and a Play

IN this city there are two societies: you are acquainted either with Russians or with Poles, so the little dark-eyed impulsive lady told me, who came soon after breakfast and took me out to see the Governor's Palace, once Polish, now the residence of a foreign official, and all its art treasures carried away to St. Petersburg. "The Russians did that everywhere in Warsaw," she said; "they plundered all they found here, to adorn themselves."

We entered a park, the "Saxon Garden," and there at the end of a wide avenue I saw an enormous stone fountain in the form of a vase, and beyond it—splendid behind dark branches against blue sky—fantastic gilded and Arabian domes, white towers, the massive and gorgeous form of the new Russian Cathedral. Heathen and triumphant and intensely proud—so that marvellous building appeared to me. It drew my fascinated eyes whenever we came within sight of it, but the unconquered little Polish lady turned away hers, refusing to see it, refusing to confess that it was there. Though

Sketches in Poland

all the world bowed down to worship that stupendous image, her heart would be constant to despise it. "*Ce sont les Russes,*" she said, as they had said it in G—. "They want to change the character of the city. They pull down our Gothic churches and build the Byzantine, so that a stranger coming here should believe himself in Russia!"

Naturally I did not propose to Mme. J— that we should enter this cathedral, but I went there two or three times alone, when the bells were ringing—but, no, they did not ring with any distinguishable chime or phrase persuasive to a Western ear; they filled the air with a great booming sound, now shrinking a little, now swelling out over the whole city until they seemed to drown and stupefy one's brain. Perhaps they are not bells at all, but a kind of gong? But I refrained from questions. The interior is square, supported by four colossal square pillars, and everywhere the walls to a great height are painted with scenes from Sacred History, the treatment of them amazingly impressive as the work of gifted, ultra-modern, almost cosmopolitan painters following the Byzantine tradition, and thus attaining an effect, not of stiffness precisely, but of immobility, symbolism, stillness as of eternity. The Italian painters lovingly depicted the incidents in a Blessed Life, but to these, Christ by the roadside fountain searching the heart of sinners, Christ walking on the sea, Christ before

A Cathedral and a Play 203

the Judgment-seat of the World, the death of Judas, the Angel of Resurrection in the Garden—these having been once, now *are*, and remain in unchanging existence. I had heard and read these ideas, of course, but where had I seen them painted? Nowhere had I seen this stillness but in the art of the Far East, the sculptured faces of Buddha.

A sound of strange and beautiful singing made me turn from the pictures, but there were no singers to be seen. An organ boomed, and then men's voices sang, unaccompanied, and the great golden screen afforded no glimpse of the inner sanctuary behind it. Only now and then a small door opened and closed again: a mysterious, gorgeous, long-haired priest came forth, attended by others, performed some brief ceremony, and vanished again. All the time the congregation stood, lost in the vast space and height of the building—a squad of soldiers standing at "attention" with their sergeant, some tall officers with ladies beside them, university students, men who looked like clerks or small officials. Of peasants or of women of the poorer class there were almost none. It seemed that this was a garrison town, as Gibraltar is—one held by force of arms. Here was no place for the humble and the vanquished, as in the long, dim aisles of the church in Cracow where they knelt, covered and hidden in shadow. Could one pray here, confess one's grief, and feel comforted? No;

one might praise and worship, perhaps, conscious that one's worship was nothing.

Fatalism! Ah, there at last the meaning of it all had reached me. This was the temple of eternal and changeless and inexorable Fate!

I asked Mme. J—— whether the Czar ever paid a visit to Warsaw. She shuddered and said: "Thank Heaven, no!"

"Why 'thank Heaven'?"

"Just think," she answered, "supposing some hot-brained boy were to make an attempt against him, what terrible punishment it would bring upon the city."

We were driving to the theatre in one of the innumerable small open cabs, which are so cheap and so very far from smart, and though she spoke in French, she whispered and glanced at the cabman.

It was pleasant to forget the present moment for a time and pass into the eighteenth-century atmosphere of a comedy by the Polish author Count Fredro, who learned his art from Molière. It was a brilliant and genial satire on the manners of the Polish nobles in the reign of King Stanislaus Augustus, when they abandoned their national dress and imported their milliners, their barbers, their poetry, their language, and their manners and their furniture from France. The second act showed the hero in his dressing-room, assailed by the Tempter

A Cathedral and a Play 205

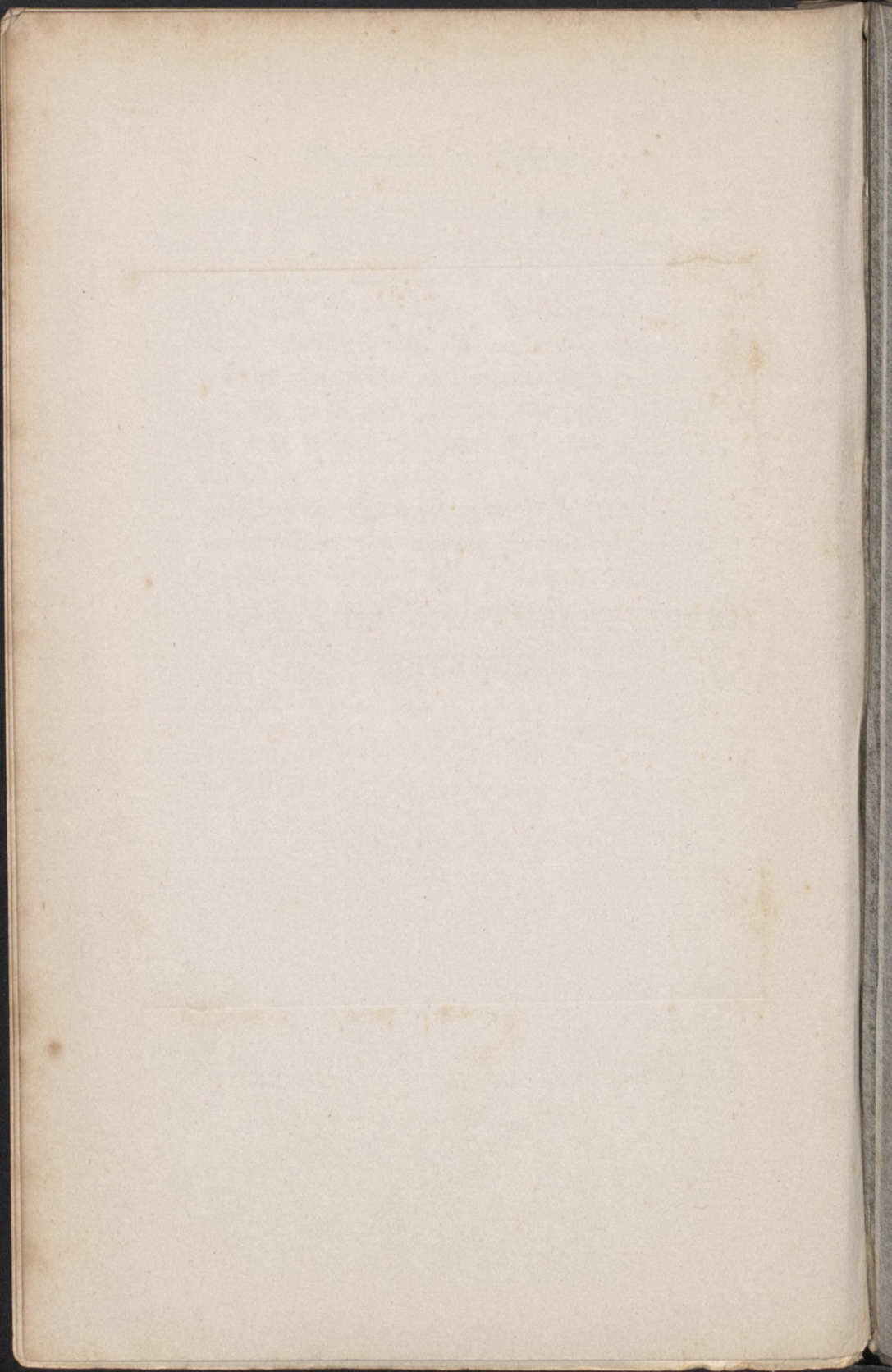
in the form of a smirking man-milliner, attended by three smirking little boys, who were rouged and powdered and dressed like Dresden-china shepherds, and filled the room with handboxes from Paris. Regardless of the horror and even the tears of his good old steward and his major-domo, the hero had discarded his high boots, his long furred coat and magnificent sash, thrown away his scarlet cap and its tall plume clasped with jewels, and had put on white satin breeches and coat, silk stockings and flowered waistcoat. A very fine fellow he looked in them too, but he could not walk in the unaccustomed high-heeled shoes. The drama became intense at the point when he almost submitted to shaving his long moustaches, and allowing his hair to be powdered and tied with a bow of black ribbon behind. The mincing French boys advanced with the barber's bowl, the two old men-servants hid their eyes, when suddenly his better angel prevailed, he jumped up, flung off his white satin coat, kicked out the man-milliner, sent the little pink-cheeked myrmidons flying for their lives, tossed all the handboxes after them, and the two old servitors wept upon his shoulder for joy. In the last scene he entered in his own stately and splendid costume a salon furnished in the fashion of Versailles, where the guests in the latest Parisian modes received him with scorn, but at the same moment from the opposite door there entered the girl of his heart, who

had passed through a struggle like his own and had won it. She was dressed in fine embroidered linen and short scarlet skirt, and her blonde hair fell in plaits to her knee. The curtain fell, the applause was immense. Mme. J—— nudged me to look at the white and scarlet bouquets which were being presented to the heroine, and whispered: "It is not the *actors* they are applauding so much."

As we left the theatre I spoke to a young man of our party about the Russian dramatists. He had never seen any of their plays. "Aren't they acted here, then?" I asked in surprise.

"A company comes from Petersburg sometimes," he said, adding coldly: "Russian people go to see them."

STARE MIASTO AND THE JEWISH
QUARTER

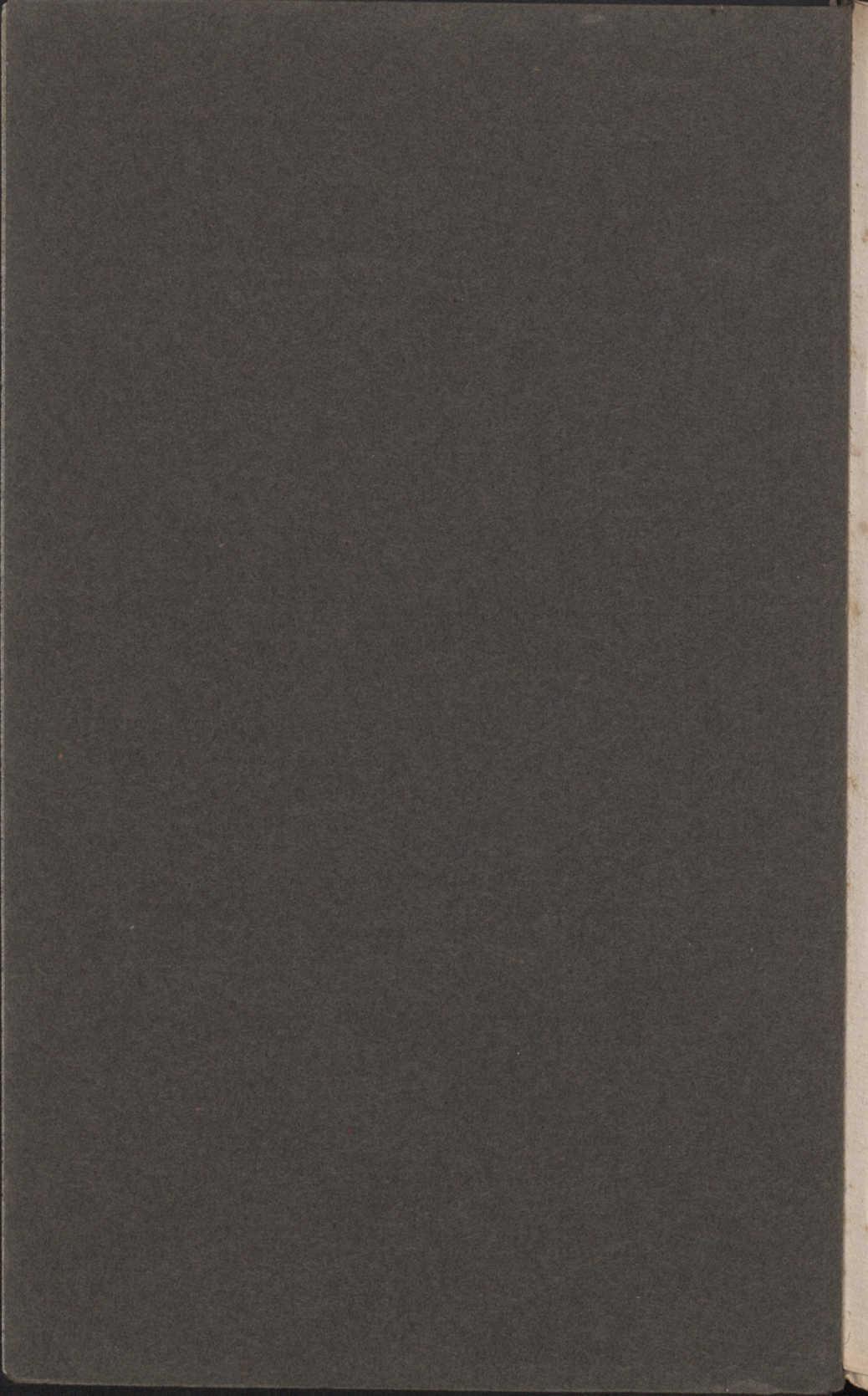




No. 11.—Stare Miasto, Warsaw.

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Stare Miasto and the Jewish Quarter

I OFTEN went exploring by myself in Warsaw, never meeting with any mishap, but never feeling at ease as I did in Cracow—the city where I had suffered arrest. When I lost my way, I turned to some well-dressed woman and spoke to her in French, and was always very courteously directed. Failing this, I jumped into one of the open cabs. They are very cheap (but the horses are wretched), and one often sees very poor—and dirty—people driving in them.

I visited the Catholic Cathedral, Gothic, with a façade of black and white marble, hidden away in a street so narrow that it is scarcely possible to see it. Inside it seemed to me dreary and cold.

At the end of the street, to my joy, I came into a magnificent ancient square—"Stare Miasto," "the Old Town." There were tall fourteenth and fifteenth century houses, the homes of merchants and princes and burghers, each, as in Lwów, having its own personal character in the decoration of its front and roof and doorway. Some have for centuries been in the possession of one family—as that

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of the Fukiers, traders in Hungarian wines—but most of them now are divided into tenements and swarming with Jews, whose enormous and tasteless notice-boards, everywhere advertising their presence, cover the walls and the carving around the doorways and the windows. A patriotic Polish society has been formed in order to buy back these fine houses and preserve them. If this were done, Stare Miasto would rank among the characteristic and delightful squares of old Europe, but at present I think there is only one (called Baranchaw) in which it is possible to enter and to read there the history of its brave old Polish life. It contains a museum, where what pleased me most was a collection of glass—huge drinking-vessels and goblets that flowed so freely once with Hungarian wines. The house being lawfully and honourably narrow, the staircase is extremely steep and high, but built of dark oak as solidly as though it should last a thousand years. The whole house enchanted me by its noble bourgeois character of simplicity and dignity and strength.

This ancient quarter of the town is on a steep height beside the Vistula, the river which shares its country's fate under a threefold yoke. I was to meet it again as one of the rivers of Prussia at Thorn and at Danzig, where at last it attains freedom in the sea. Here it is already very broad and strong, and runs northwards, guarding the

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city on its eastern side from the invasions that always threatened it. The suburb on the other side is called Praga, the story being that Warsaw was founded by Bohemians, who named Praga after their own city.

I asked Mme. J—— whether any terrible consequences would follow if I tried to sketch in the “Old Town.” (A few months before, I might have inquired laughingly if it was likely they would send me to Siberia, but after certain things I had heard and seen, I felt that I should never speak laughingly of Siberia again.)

She at once exerted herself to obtain a permission for me—or rather many permissions, for I must be licensed in different offices to draw in the Baranchaw Museum, in the park of Łazienki, and then in the Square. This last favour, indeed, I never gained at all; the Russian policy of delay defeated me. After many hours spent in dreary ante-rooms, after showing my passport and *carte de domicile*, and my already-gained permission to sketch in the park; after buying a large and expensive stamp to affix to my petition, after being told to wait and come again, only to find it was a saint's day and the doors were closed, I was forced to leave Warsaw with a very scanty “bag,” but feeling that I had received an unforgettable lesson in the virtues of humility, patience and obedience.

In the meantime, as a docile tourist, I visited

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the beautiful country palace of King John Sobieski, a low, long house, full of "works of art," and standing in an exquisite melancholy garden—a Watteau garden, where are tall trees that the King planted with his own hand. And the next day, being told it was the right thing to do, I went to see the great cemetery of Warsaw. That day I happened to be alone, but I had been well instructed as to the tram I was to take, and knew that the cemetery lay at the end of its "run." It is rather a charming place of grass and trees and flowers, and contains some very graceful tombs. And I was glad indeed to arrive there, for on the way the tram passed through what seemed to me many miles of streets in the Jewish quarter.

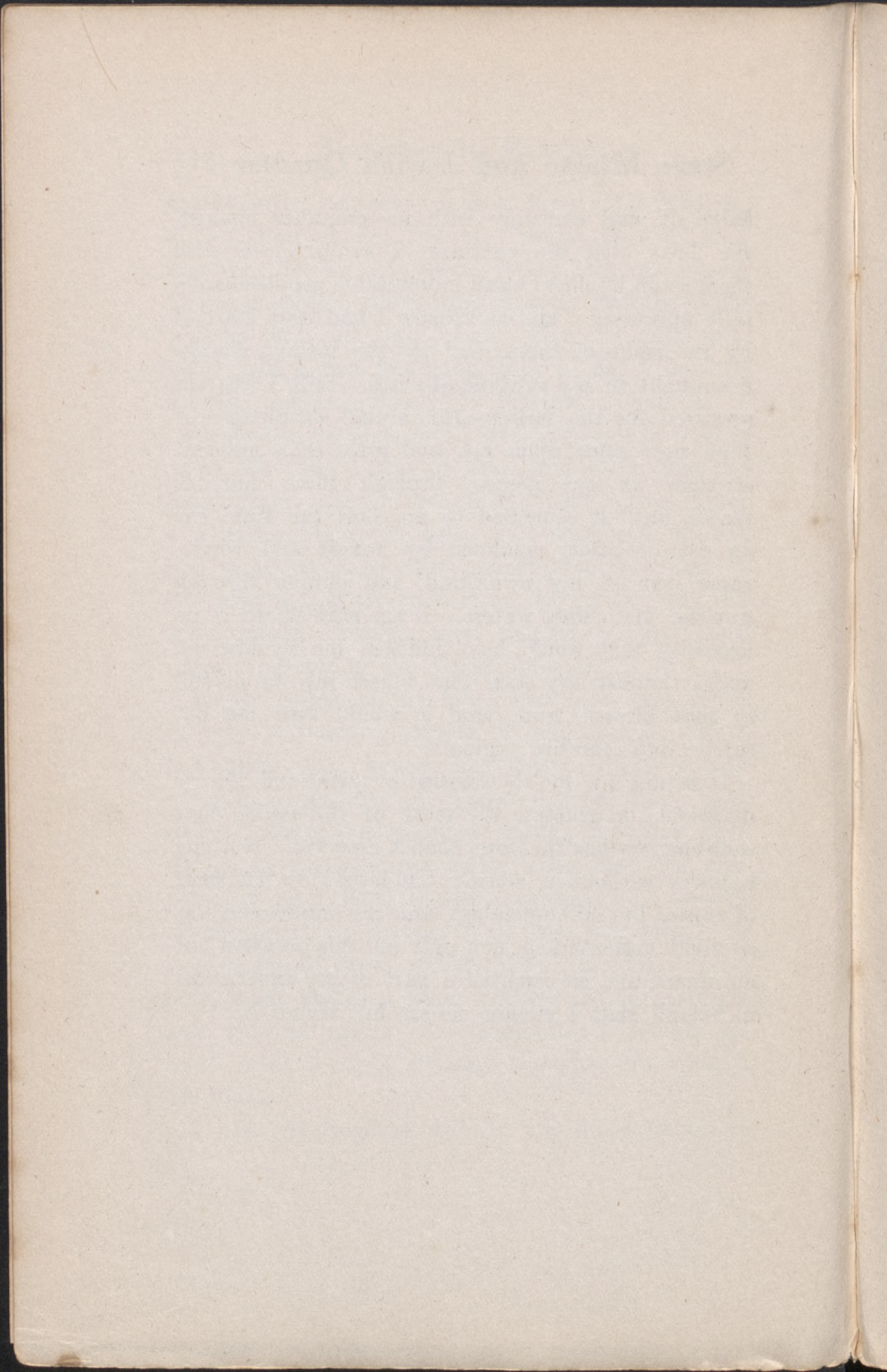
In the course of my life I had been very often in ugly and dreary streets of great towns, but I had never seen houses like these, which in any other quarter—even of Warsaw—would have been decent, though commonplace enough, for they were not small nor poor nor badly built, but sour, discoloured and squalid with neglect: and everywhere there was no one to be seen but Jews! It was wrong of me, no doubt, to feel as I did. However, these sketches being nothing if not a simple and truthful record of impressions, I cannot set down what I ought to have thought, but what I did think.

I had left England without any intimate know-

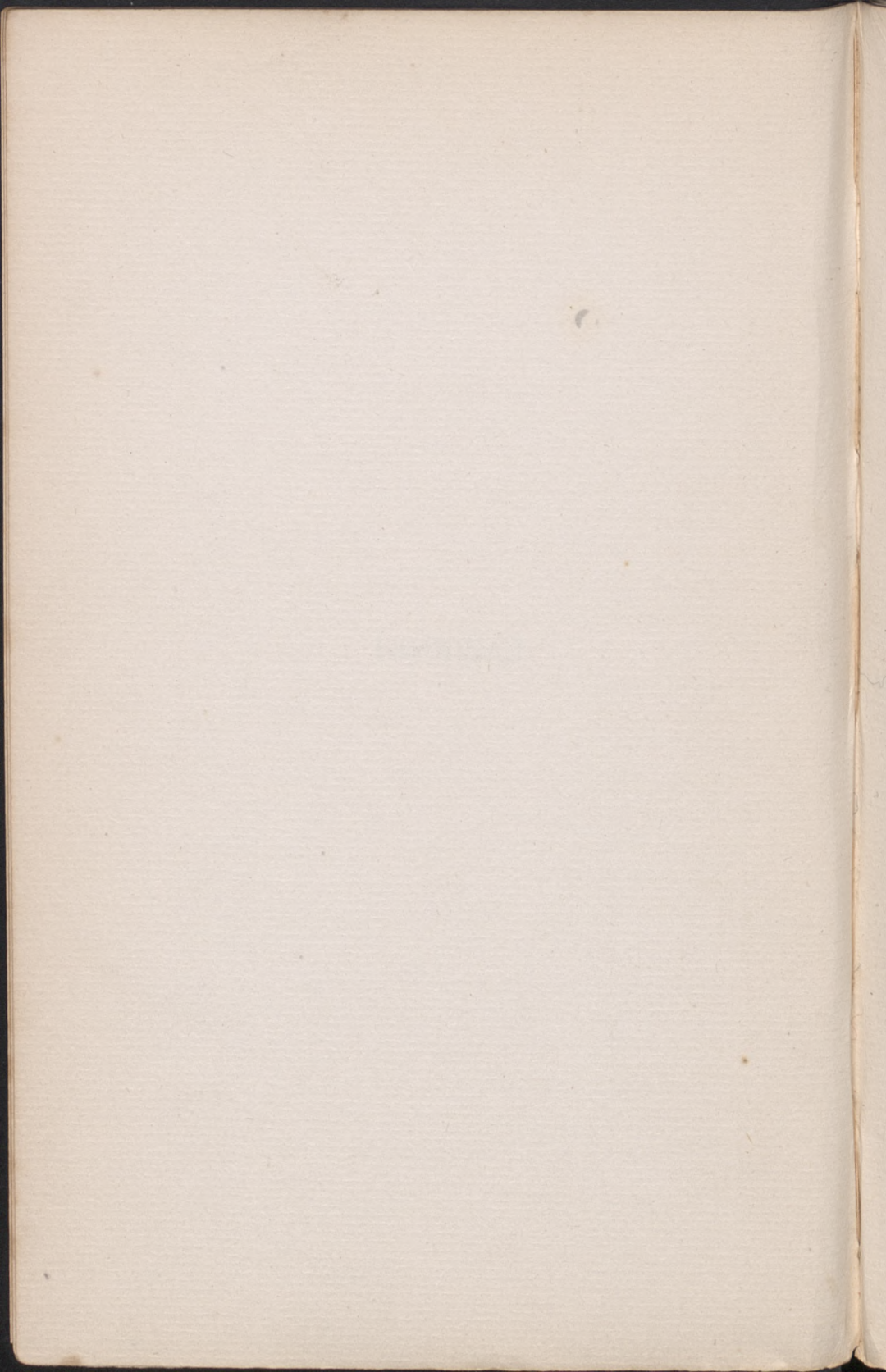
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ledge of, and certainly with no prejudice against, the Jews. On the contrary, I sympathized with them as an intelligent and indomitable people shamefully oppressed; and at Cracow I had been startled by the sight of them, and by the instant change it wrought in my attitude of mind. Still, I was not prepared for the feeling—this actual shrinking fear that now came upon me, and grew each moment stronger as we passed through these horrible places, until it appeared to me that the tram was an ark of safety, manned by honest and wholesome men of my own kind, and gliding through unclean and slimy waters. I am sure there is no necessity that would have induced me to descend, and I thanked my stars that I had only to sit still in that blessed tram, and it would bear me out safely into another region.

It is not for me to theorize on great and thorny questions, or examine the truth of the saying that each country has the Jews that it deserves. Nothing happens without a cause; but here I do not treat of causes but of happenings, and the impression was so vivid and abiding, not only on this occasion but on others, and so essential a part of my experiences in Poland, that I cannot choose but record it.



ŁAZIENKI



Łazienki

THIS was in August, but I was again in Warsaw during October, when people were back in town. The season was, as usual, "gay," and I studied in shop windows with feminine interest the fashions prepared for a Russian winter. Had I been a man, however, I might have been more interested still, for while the women's clothes were much like those in Paris, I might have enjoyed the new sensation of buying myself a long full-skirted coat, belted at the waist and trimmed with fur, boots of soft leather reaching to my knee, and a high brimless hat of astrachan.

Theatres were full. I listened to Tannhäuser in Polish, and heard my companions maintaining that among all the languages of Europe that was the one most fitted to the spirit of the drama. For my part—if I may venture yet once more to give my own untutored impression—Polish always sounded at its best in fierce and warlike speeches, or ballads about terrific slaughter in battle, charges of horsemen, the confusion of armies fleeing in impenetrable forests, and floundering and choking

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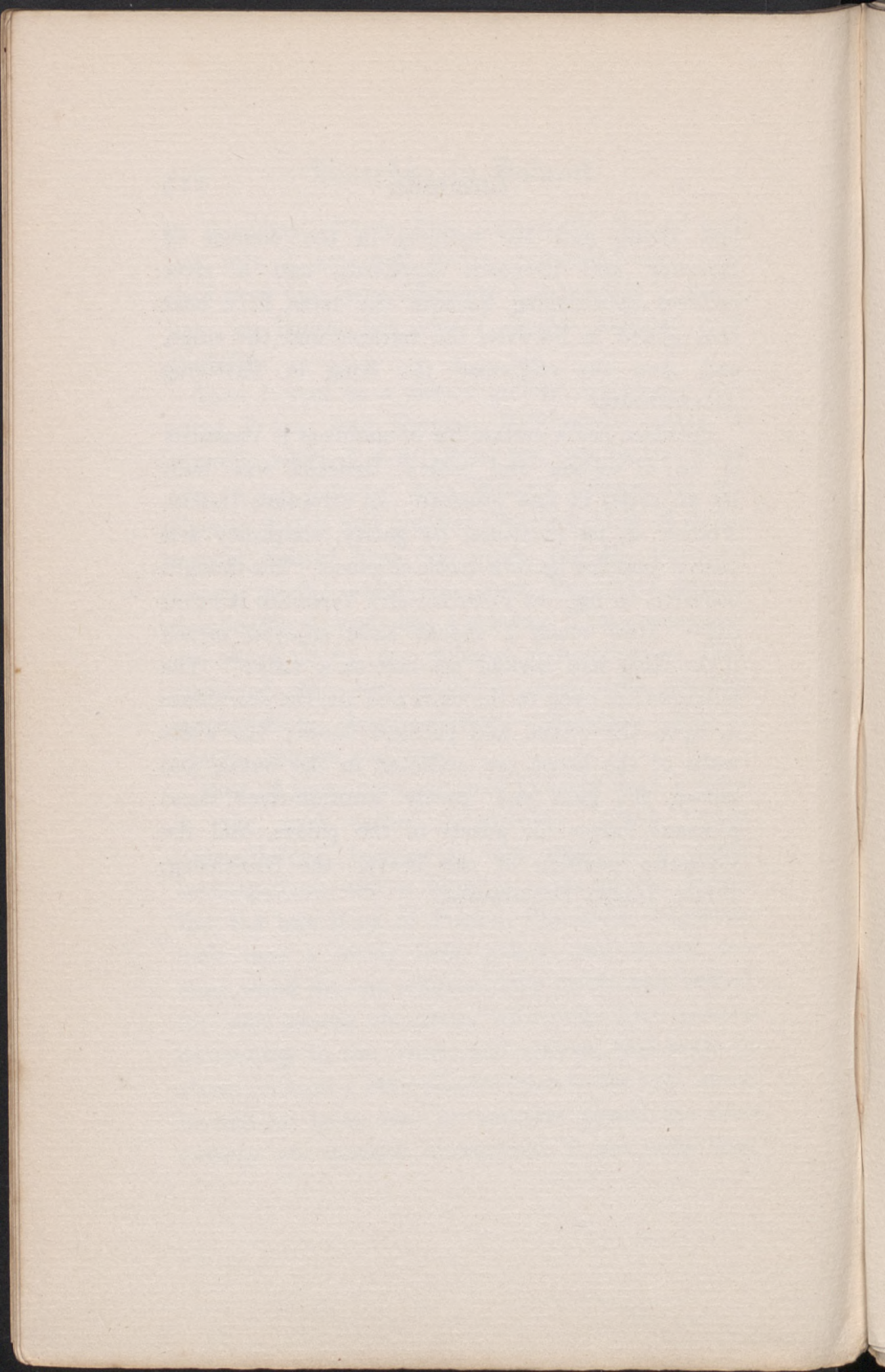
in morasses. Every Pole who reads this (if any do) will, I am well aware, contradict me: you shall even find them affirming it is possible to make love in Polish, but this I should consider very doubtful.

Then I went to a picture gallery, where the first thing I saw was Norman Wilkinson's poster of Malvolio which had delighted my eyes in the Tube the winter before; with Bakst's designs for the Russian Ballet and Gordon Craig's models of stage-scenery lighted from the wings, but the principal things in the exhibition were Mehoffer's superb designs for stained-glass windows. These enchanted me above all by the richness of imagination they displayed—the true painter's imagination creating inexhaustibly from abstract thoughts, shapes, images, colours and lines.

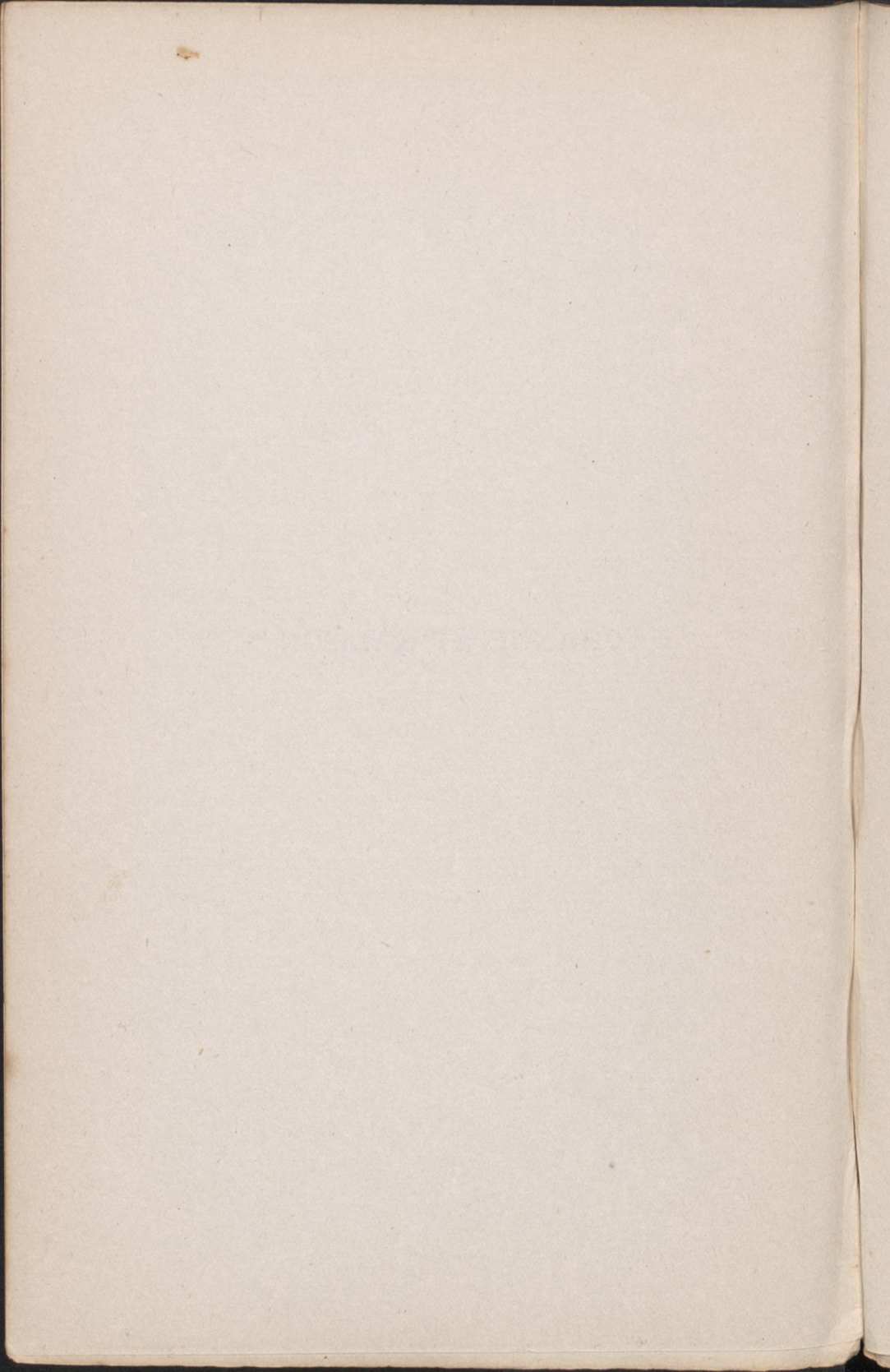
Most of these blue and gold October days I spent in the park called "Łazienki," which means "the Baths," because it was originally a king's bathing-place and a hunting lodge in the forest. But the last King of Poland, Stanislaus Augustus, built here a lovely little palace, and turned the clear water into an artificial lake before and behind it; and among the trees, with wide low terraces descending to the water, and statues, and seats of stone, he built a little theatre open to the sky, where he and his ladies and his courtiers passed the time sweetly on summer afternoons. I am sure they

had Diana and her nymphs in the manner of Boucher, and love-lorn shepherds, and a river goddess approaching beneath the trees, in a boat that glided in between the terraces and the stage, and then she addressed the King in flattering Alexandrines.

Potsdam has a certain air of snobbery; Versailles is all of dignity and pride; Łazienki was built by an artist in fine pleasure. In structure Italian, French in its furniture, by gaiety, simplicity and ease it justifies its own exotic elegance. The thought occurred to me—at Potsdam and Versailles it never did—“How much I should have enjoyed myself if the King had invited me here on a visit!” The windows are open to the light and air, the sun shines in upon the waxed and polished floors; the white walls of the house are reflected in the water, and among the gold and tawny autumn-trees stand pleasant lodges for guests of the palace, and the favourite pavilion of the brave, the fascinating, Prince Joseph Poniatowski.



“CHANGE AT KALISCH”



“Change at Kalisch”

It was the 28th of August. My first visit to “The Kingdom” had come to an end, and I was joyfully preparing to go into the Grand Duchy of Posen and stay with the Princess —, whom I had met in K—. Life had been a little difficult here in Warsaw, where no one in the house understood me. It was as though, in walking, one had to push one’s way through the blades of grass, and every little pebble were a hill to be climbed. Even to ask for a clean towel was a matter that involved an hour or so of hard thinking. I looked up *propre* in my little French dictionary, and when I found twenty-eight Polish words that translated it, my eyes filled with tears of discouragement. Sometimes at meal-times I found an interpreter in a young girl who was staying in the house with her sister, and had learned in a few months at a Berlitz school to talk the most extraordinary French I ever heard. I found she was planning to visit London, though she had no friends there, and was under the impression, poor child, that if she learned German (also at the Berlitz

school), she would be understood anywhere in England.

I had bade good-bye to her and her sister and the Lady of the Crimson Gown (Panna Henrietta), had lunched, and sent for a porter to carry down my trunks, when the two young women came rushing up to my room, wringing their hands, stammering and breathless, to explain that I hadn't got my permission to leave Russia!

"But yes! this card," I said wrathfully to the poor girl who murdered the French language. "I asked you the other day, as I couldn't read it, whether it was the official permission, and all that was necessary before I left, and you told me 'yes.'"

"To leave Warsaw, yes, and go to another city in Russia, but not into a foreign country," she stammered.

"Anyhow, I shall go," I said. "I'm English; here's my passport all right; they would never stop me for a trifle like that!"

"Yes, yes, they will; they will send you back again to Warsaw, or else detain you two or three days at the frontier."

Hearing this, I wavered. The vision of the dismal little frontier station in a bleak, mud-coloured plain was sufficiently distinct in my memory, and the glamour of a possible adventure faded into the prospect of a tedious and expensive waste of time.

Perhaps it was cowardly of me, perhaps in a few weeks of Warsaw I had become infected with a novel fear and respect for authority, but at the psychological moment Panna Henrietta suggested, “Perhaps you might go to-night”—and I yielded.

A young governess of the school, who spoke a little German, went with me to a grand and gloomy police-office, where in a long room, divided down the middle by a substantial wooden railing, about fifty officials sat at large tables, writing. Panna Alexandra found her way to one, and began speaking to him over the wooden barrier. He shook his head, shook his shoulders, shook his hands. Nothing could be done that day, nothing whatever.

Then I pleaded in German, as I had been instructed, that pressing business, urgent necessity—

“*Je ne comprends pas,*” he broke in roughly.

“*Ah, mais vous parlez français ?*”

“*Non.*”

His voice was curt and sullen, and he said no more. Then the girl laid on his table my passport and *carte de domicile*, and somehow or other, as she did so, two roubles remained among the papers. He took up my passport and read it through. Really, his face was quite pleasant when he smiled, and he was smiling now, perhaps, at the Lion and the Unicorn, for he hadn't noticed any roubles. Then, after we had waited an hour or so, he gave us back the papers.

Sketches in Poland

“It is done?” I asked eagerly of Panna Alexandra. She nodded. “It will be all right,” she said. “We must go now to the ‘magistrate.’”

We took another cab, and drove to a still larger and grander building, distributed another rouble or two, and then were told that some one was sleeping who would wake at 9.30 and sign the passport. So back we went to our supper (of cheese and milk, I remember), then at 9.30 returned, and the passport and permission were handed to us with a sweet smile.

An express train left the Vienna station at 11.15 for the Prussian frontier at Kalisch.

Passengers of all ranks waited in crowds surrounded by piles of luggage in a vast hall, where was a table covered with vodka, caviare, kanapkas, and all kinds of strange viands and spirits. Then there was a whistle, a rush to the train, I found myself in a comfortable compartment with a seat I could lie down on, and a polite fat man who snored on the seat opposite. As I fell into uneasy sleep, I remembered half-remorsefully how obedient I had been, and again and again I wondered—“Should I have enjoyed myself? Would it have been fun?”

About six in the morning we reached Kalisch, where was a long delay while passports were examined yet once more, before we were permitted to leave Russia. Then I was put into another little train, and after a journey of five or ten minutes,

descended and found myself in Prussia. Here, not at Kalisch, as I had imagined, was my starting-place for the village in the Duchy of Posen I was going to, but through this mistake my luggage had been registered only to Kalisch, and, it appeared, remained still on Russian soil. The only thing to do was to go back and fetch it. A kind and fatherly old German official, a sort of sub-station-master, put me once more into the little train which runs backwards and forwards every half-hour or so between the two frontier stations, and sent me back into Russia. Here my passport was at once taken from me again. I found no one to whom I could explain what I wanted, and was lost among the crowd of people travelling from Germany into Warsaw, and the porter, I suppose, was vainly searching for my luggage amongst theirs. An hour passed. I found a woman-clerk of the Customs who spoke French, but only used it to scold me soundly for having given up my passport: until she heard it was an English one, when she suddenly became civil.

But at this moment I found myself pounced upon, seized, and, as it were, instantly appropriated by a tall young man, a traveller, with black and glittering eyes, who spoke all languages at once, understood the situation at a word, quashed the woman, caused the porter to find my luggage the next moment, had it registered and weighed in the

Sketches in Poland

twinkling of an eye, got back my passport and rushed me off to the little train just starting again for Prussia. He seemed surprised to find that I could speak German, and said that English people travelled in the Ukraine, Bessarabia, Podolia, and all strange parts of Europe without knowing a word of any language but their own. "And you, I suppose," I said, "go about saving them from the consequences."

He told me his mother was a Pole, but I heard another man call him by a name that was German-Jewish, and I am sure he was more Jew than anything. The way in which he watched with his glittering eyes, even while he was paying for the ticket, the porter who weighed my luggage, lest he should juggle with the weights—not with the lordly aloofness of an Englishman, but eagerly, sympathetically, I might say, as one who understood that it was pleasant to cheat and would do it himself in the other man's place—the way in which, hastily alighting at the station, he gave the ticket-collector twopence instead of threepence, saying that I had come third-class, and thus, out of pure delight in it, cheated for *me*, afforded a curious glimpse down crooked ways of thinking. I did not like him, though he had done me a good turn disinterestedly, and I was glad to find that in another five minutes we should travel in different directions.

His behaviour was correct, and yet there was

something in it, all the while, that displeased me. Perhaps it was the delicate and chivalrous Polish manner to which I had so quickly grown accustomed that had spoilt me ; but, whatever the cause, while he sat beside me in the train and talked, I was conscious of an indefinable resentment—the faint surprise that the Goose-girl in the fairy-tale must have felt when people took her for a goose-girl !

Is it possible the atmosphere can change from poetry to prose the instant one crosses a frontier ? or that there I just happened to strike into a current of vulgarity that immediately set me gasping for an air of finer elements ? Certainly there are some people and some houses that have an air about them in which one’s whole nature expands and is glad, floating out lightly in all directions like sea-weed when the wave uplifts it ; and there are some in which it sinks like the weed when the tide has left it, and lies flat and dry and shapeless.

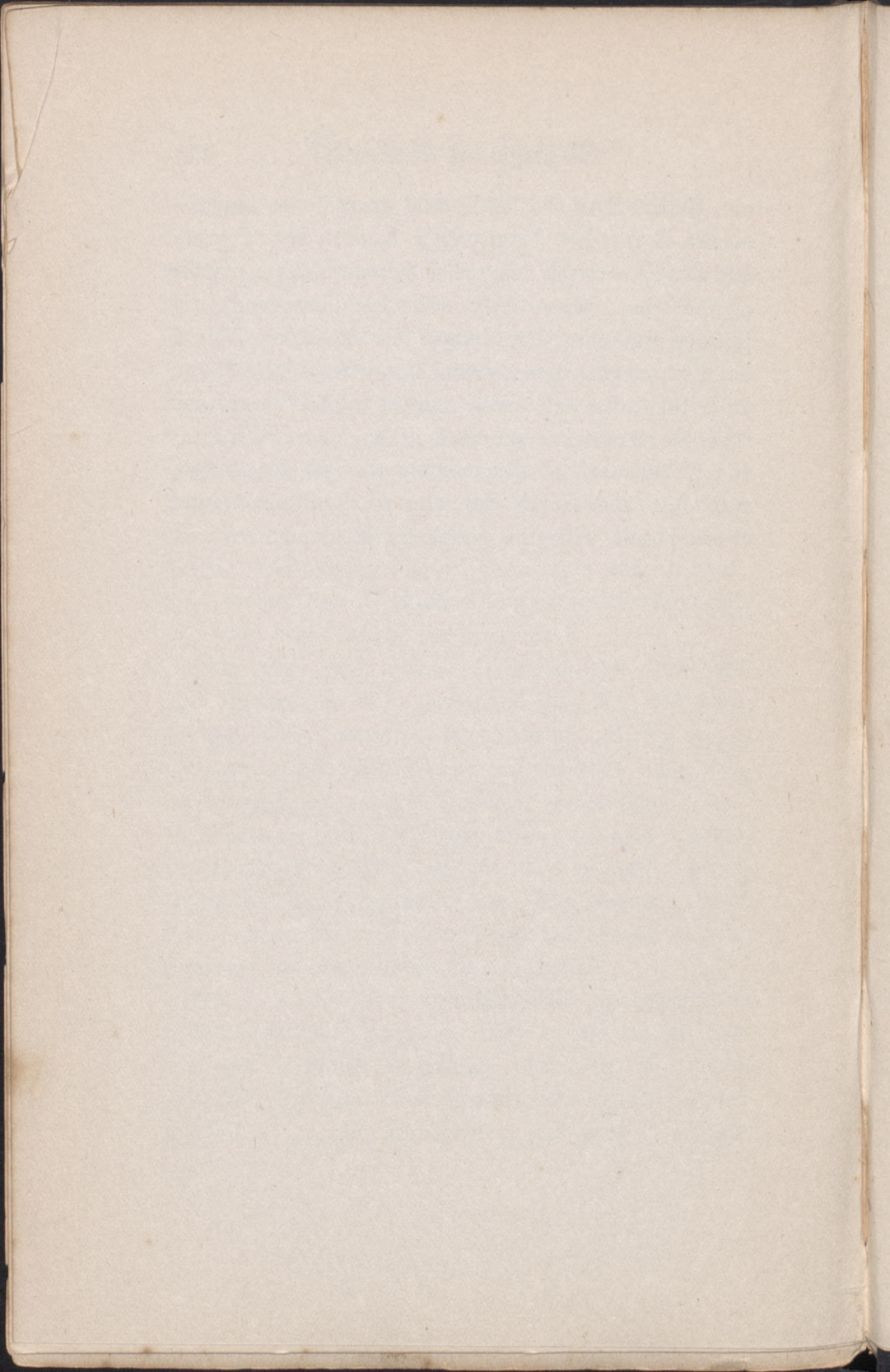
However, if I had dropped into prose that summer morning it was a cheerful and lucid prose. By eight o’clock I had already started in a train that moved leisurely southwards over the golden stubble-fields, stopping at every neat little village among orchards and kitchen-gardens. The air was warm and still, and the sun shone gaily. Peasants with large baskets got in, farmers, and young men in corduroys of a pleasantly exaggerated “sporting” cut, accompanied by dogs in a leash. Really, I

thought, as I sat looking out of the window, a stranger looking at these well-cultivated fields would think it a happy country. Nature, usually so responsive an interpreter of the moods and history of man, seemed here untouched by the bitter struggle that Prussian and Pole were engaged in. What did it matter to her that a farm had been cruelly wrested from one and given to the other, or that the children who trotted over the fields in the morning to school, crawled back bruised and beaten in the evening because they had prayed in their native tongue, and having learned nothing at all, all day, but two or three German words of which they had not even been taught the meaning?

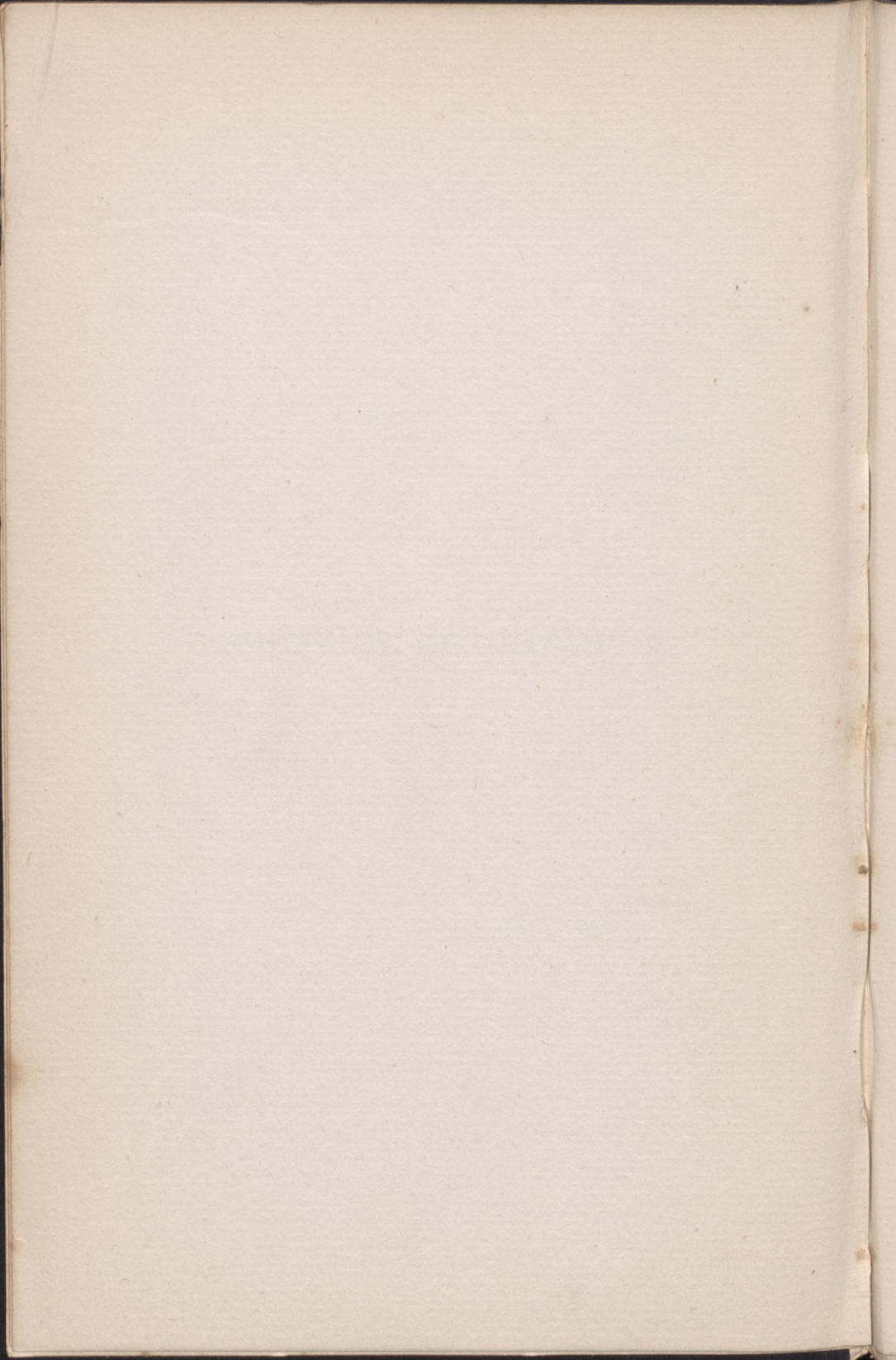
Soon after one o'clock I arrived at —, the only passenger who descended at the hot and smiling little station; it consisted merely of a platform and a signal-box among the wide fields, and a long road ran at right angles to the railway. But there was no yellow carriage drawn by white horses which the little princesses at K—— had vowed would be there to meet me. The station-master and I were the only people on the platform: no carriage, no other house was in sight.

But I should have profited little by experience if I had not had boundless faith in the fidelity and kindness of Polish hospitality, and I sat on one of my boxes, my head in the shade of the signal box and my feet in the sun, contented to breathe the sweet air

and the smell of the fields, and drowsily review the events of the last twenty-four hours. My telegram had somehow been delayed, I felt sure (as a matter of fact that was exactly what had happened), my journey was over, I no longer felt like a bewildered child wandering in wonderful Countries of the Moon, as I did during all those months while the strange Slavonic languages sounded in my ear. Why, at the further end of this country was the North Sea, and over the North Sea one reached across and shook hands with the people in England!



A CHÂTEAU IN POSNANIA



A Château in Posnania

AT last a carriage—not the yellow one!—arrived to take me to —. The driver conversed politely, and presently inquired if I were a governess. I told him, no, but, being in a self-confident mood that day, added that I was quite ready to become one, if necessary: he, fearing to have been indiscreet, remarked that there were many governesses at the house, and it was “difficult to tell with foreigners.” Then he called my attention to the excellent road we had just entered on, and said it was “ours,” meaning that the Prince had made it. And it was certainly greatly superior to the public one. We passed through a wood of birches and then of firs, and pleasant open pastures, then, passing a few cottages, came to the big garden-gate, where the Princess and some of the children met me.

It was an enormous garden—looking to English eyes wild, but none the less beautiful for that—of many lawns and groves, and shady walks, and water with swans upon it: and there was a dry moat running round the house, which was high, square and massive, with two towers. A broad flight of steps led up to a terrace, and then into a great hall sup-

ported by pillars. It was used as a dining-room, doors on each side of it opened into other rooms, and on the left was the chapel where we went every evening for prayers, and in the gathering summer darkness the Princess recited a litany in Polish, the two youngest children kneeling beside her on the altar-steps.

My bedroom was a large and stately chamber on the ground floor—to judge it by its principal furniture, a drawing-room—but I slept in a beautiful French bed and bathed in a no less beautiful English bath.

The Polish beds, as I had known them hitherto, were always very clean and firm and flat, but there is one very odd thing about them, and that is that the quilt or blanket is exactly the same breadth as the mattress, and about a foot shorter, and the sheet is turned up round the edges and neatly buttoned on to it.

One draws up the quilt to one's chin, and instantly one's feet are exposed to the cold air, or one turns over in sleep, and the whole thing slides to the floor. In fact, no one who cannot lie as still all night as a wax doll with its eyes shut could possibly keep covered up in such beds, and many and many a night I lay trying in vain to find the centre of balance, and pondering in vain the insoluble problem—how the Pole, with his high-strung and feverish temperament, the last person on earth, one would say, to

sleep as a wax doll sleeps—how he manages to be snug in bed? There must be some secret way that their mothers teach them, or an incantation or charm they repeat each night that holds the coverlet still, but no one ever told me what it was. And so I can only advise the uninitiated traveller, that when he arrives, weary, at his journey's end and is shown to his room, he unbutton sixty-eight buttons on the left side, sixty-eight buttons on the right side, twenty-five buttons at the bottom, and twenty-five buttons at the top. Whereupon he will become possessed of about three inches of sheet to tuck in each way. Then, being an exceedingly wise traveller, and having brought with him a large pure woollen rug, he throws away the heavy quilt, tucks the rug in, and will probably sleep very well. (However, next evening he is certain to find that the chambermaid has buttoned the whole thing up again as he found it.)

No such performance was required that night. I slept like a log, if not like a Pole, and next morning found my way into the hall and had breakfast, looking through the dark marble pillars to the shining trees and lawns of the garden beyond.

The sweet-faced old Galician nurse—the question of whose last refuge still remains uncertain month by month at the will of the police¹—was giving the youngest child its breakfast there, and presently I

¹ Page 63.

followed her into the garden to talk to the young English governess. She was only there for the summer holiday, but it was her first engagement abroad and she was glad to meet a compatriot. She even hinted rather plaintively that life here was unlike what it had been in Brighton. The Parade—and a Polish country house! One could but smilingly assent.

I had written to a Mme. — whom I had met in Cracow. She had invited me to stay with her near Posen, and, though I knew that if I addressed the letter in German, French, or even English or Italian, it would reach her, I asked the little Irena to show me the proper manner of addressing it in Polish.

“But you mustn't address it in Polish,” she said. “It's forbidden.”

“Why?—couldn't the post-office people read it?”

“Of course they could read it! It's only one of the new laws made to exterminate our language. If you address it in Polish, it will be sent to a ‘translation bureau’ and stay there two or three days, perhaps, and then your friend will have to pay a fee for the translation of the address into German.”

Then, being, like all Polish children, well instructed in history, she quoted the declaration of the Treaty of Vienna specially referring to the inhabitants of Posnania. “Their nationality must be respected, and their mother tongue shall rank equally with the German,” and the words of the Royal Manifesto

of the same year—"You too have a country, and through this very possession have gained my esteem by reason of the love and devotion you show to it."

Then she ran off to get ready to ride with her father, and her eldest brother and sister. It was a pretty sight to see them start on beautiful long-tailed Arab horses.

"Don't hold your reins so tight, Irena," her mother called to her. "You are making your horse fidget."

"I like a fidgety horse," she answered with a grave smile, her eyes gleaming in her white little face.

The Princess took me with her in a pony-carriage to see some cottages on the estate that were being arranged as lodgings for harvesters or other temporary labourers, then, on our return, to a little infant school she had built near the big house. The pupils were mere babies, of course, too young as yet—happily for them—to attend the government school, and of course it was "forbidden"—familiar word!—to teach them to read or write, but they were learning under their comely young mistress to talk and to play, and to count (I think) and to blow their little noses and say their little prayers, and to sing, and to understand pictures, and give names to familiar animals and flowers, and generally to behave themselves like intelligent and well-conducted babies. Poor little things! In a few years they would go to the government schools, in which the teachers

Sketches in Poland

are forbidden to speak one word to them except in German—a language neither they nor their parents understand.

“Imagine,” said the Princess, “a crowd of fifty or sixty children, and the schoolmaster points to the window and calls out ‘Fenster! Fenster! Fenster!’ and they all call out ‘Fenster!’ and those behind don’t even see what he’s pointing at. And when they go home and their mothers ask, ‘What have you learned to-day?’ ‘Oh, we learned “Fenster.”’ ‘And what does “Fenster” mean?’ ‘Oh, we don’t know.’

“There are more than a hundred thousand Polish children, living in purely Polish districts and going to school like this,” she said. “Can you wonder that they learn nothing? But the Government does not care. It is even glad that they should be stupefied and brutalized, so that they may pretend that the Poles are an inferior race.

“But worse than this. To a kind-hearted and conscientious man, to be teacher in a Polish school must be a miserable task, so the consequence is that we have only the worst kind of government teachers—stupid and inferior and cruel, who in a passion beat the children unmercifully, drag them about and lift them by their ears—yes, it happens sometimes that a child’s ear is torn off!—but it is useless for the parents to complain. There is no justice for them and no redress. The schoolmasters

know that whatever they do they will be justified by the Prussian authorities."

"I have heard," I said, "that the children rebelled at last when the last of their old privileges was taken away—that of saying their morning prayers at school and their catechism in Polish."

"Yes, in 1908. That was Bismarck's doing! He had made that cruel law in 1886."

"And I heard that for this cause two or three children were even beaten to death. I spoke of it some months ago to some English journalist friends of mine, but they said it had never been recorded in an English newspaper, and so they seemed to think it couldn't have happened."

"Well," said the Princess, "let them record it now, for it *did* happen. One case I know was at a village called Pudliszki. It was a boy who insisted on saying his prayer in Polish. He was quite well that morning, and healthy. His master laid him down on a bench and beat him, and when he had done the boy was unable to stand. His schoolfellows carried him home, and next day he died of—how do you say it in English?—'*une lésion intérieure.*'"

"I suppose the master was very severely punished?"

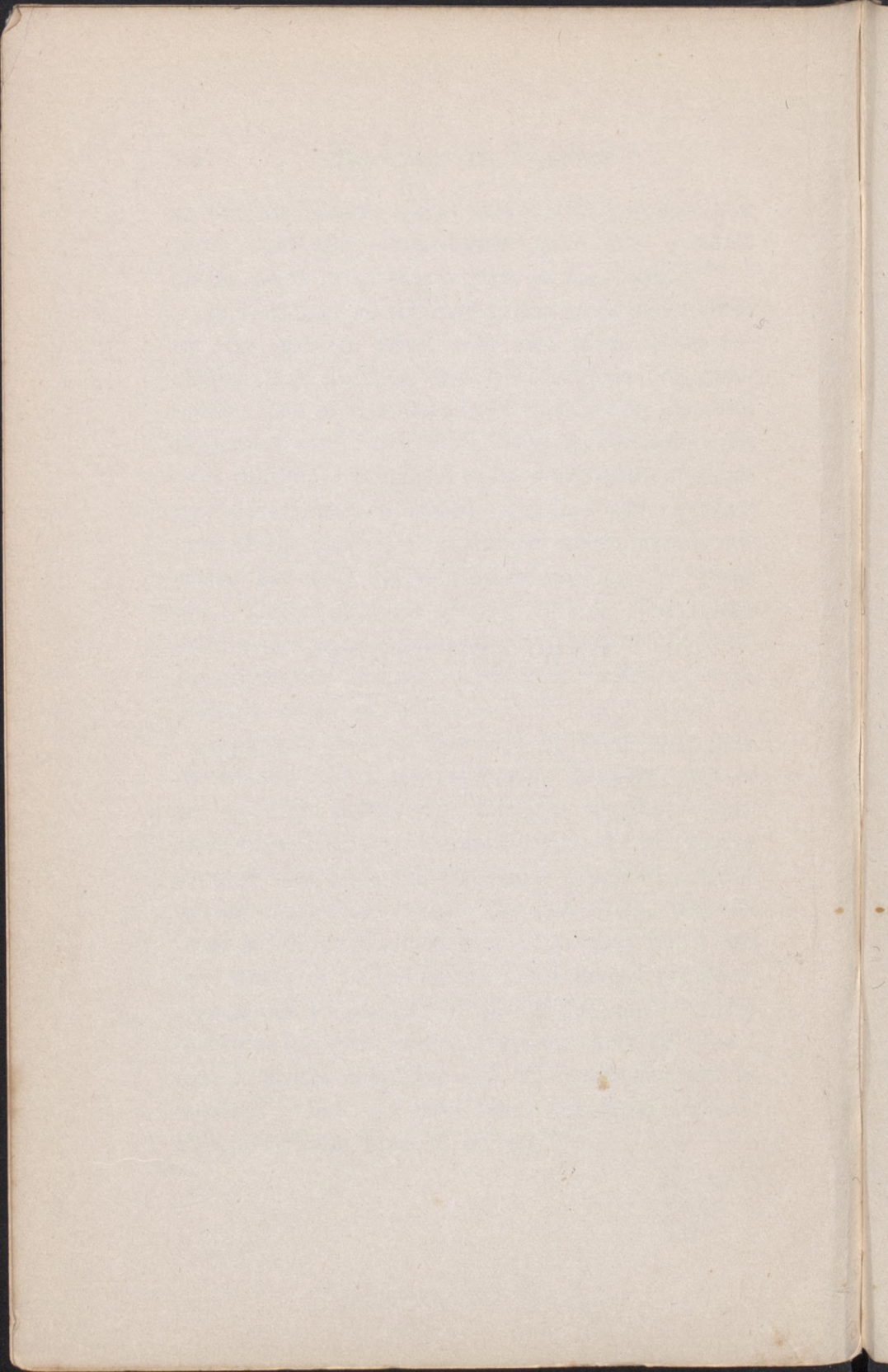
"No, nothing at all was done to him. There was an inquest, and the coroner said the child had died a natural death. But the boy's father was not satisfied, and he used to hang about the school-house in the dusk and threaten to kill the master,

so that he became quite nervous, and resigned his post. And they immediately gave him a much better place in a distant part of the country."

As we talked we returned to the house and walked up the garden drive. On one lawn, where the children had a swing and parallel bars for gymnastics, one of the little boys was having his daily German lesson from the village schoolmaster, for even the Prince is obliged to have his children taught by government-appointed teachers. In another part of the garden, in a summer-house, Irena was giving her daily Polish reading lesson to a village girl. This of course is against the law. The village child comes up to the house, sometimes at one hour, sometimes at another, carrying a basket of eggs, perhaps, or some flowers.

Apparently this is the kind of thing that goes on all over the Duchy of Posen. I visited five or six country houses in different neighbourhoods, everywhere hearing the same story: and I can hardly suppose that my small experience happened entirely among exceptional cases. The fact is, the Government is not looked upon as a good thing, but a bad one which it is the duty of all honest people to circumvent to the best of their ability, and often, for instance, in casual conversation one may hear, as I did, a gentle charming girl of twenty-five or so saying: "But I, I have been very lucky indeed! I've never been fined at all yet."

LAW AND EQUITY



Law and Equity

IF such cruelties as I have been describing were things of a past *régime*, or if they were even in process of amendment, I would not speak of them. There is no more evil occupation, I think, than digging up buried hatchets. But, far from improving, the condition of things grows worse from year to year. It was only in May, 1908, that the Polish language was forbidden at public meetings even of purely literary or scientific societies. The Law of Expropriation, which renders the condition of a Polish landowner one of daily instability and fear, was passed in 1908; and in June, 1907, the "police law," which forbids a Pole to build a house even on land which has been his for generations. This is an example of the way in which Prussian Tyranny advances, and escapes notice by the rest of the world behind a mask of justice. For the saving phrase "without permission" causes the law to appear a quite reasonable and ordinary one. Only by actual knowledge of its working one comes to know it for the weapon of a savage racial hate and

of a cruel and calculated system of oppression. For the permission—so the Prince assured me—is always refused, sometimes on the most trivial of pretexts, sometimes without any pretext at all.

The Polish peasant evades the law sometimes by living on his farm in a caravan, but even then if he puts in a stove with a chimney to it he is prosecuted! The only houses which are ever built—at least in the neighbourhood of —, are those put up by the Government for German settlers, and the only way in which a Pole can obtain a new house is by waiting until the German fails (which is not seldom) and gladly sells it to him.

There were several neat little farm-houses in the village of —, which people pointed out to me as we passed them and told me had lately changed hands in this way. For the Government has already spent fifty million pounds (and in this year, 1913, it voted eleven million more) for the “colonization” of its Polish territories—that is, for the purchase—on its own terms—of Polish land, and the planting in of Germans, to whom it offers extraordinary facilities. But Fate, by an ironic yet perfectly logical device, has frustrated all their endeavours.

For these “colonists,” being for the most part men who for one reason or another have failed in their own neighbourhoods, succeed no better in conditions which are new to them. Then, again, this move on the part of the Prussian Government has

been countered by several Polish societies which founded country Savings Banks and "Country Banks" for the purpose of aiding the peasants and farmers to keep their land; and succeeded beyond their best expectations. One bank, for instance, founded within the last twenty-five years, which began with a small capital of £2,000, has increased it to £300,000, and many others prosper at the same rate.

And the result actually is that more land has been bought in the last twenty years by Poles than by Germans.

During this month of August the German newspapers were much occupied with the Kaiser's official visit to the city of Posen. Several people I happened to meet about this time had been invited to meet him at dinner, and their wives to the reception of the Empress, so I naturally heard some discussion of that question which was a delicate and by no means a pleasant one for the Polish nobles. Some of them held that, since the policy of William II from his accession to the present day had been one of unmitigated hostility to their nation, to accept the invitation would be a base hypocrisy. Others allowed themselves to be persuaded by the governor (acknowledged to wish the Poles well) that by offering a discourtesy to the Kaiser they would only afford their enemies a pretext for still greater oppression in the future. Feeling was strong on both sides. Those who stayed away recalled the deep

resentment caused by the Kaiser's speech on a similar occasion some years ago, when, it appears, he delivered a lecture on the defects of the Polish character.

This year, to read his speech one might fancy that Posen was the most blissful of provinces, and the German newspapers reported an "enthusiastic reception." Word passed from mouth to mouth, it is true, that certain people driving to the palace had had their fine clothes spoiled by ink thrown over them.

I stayed a week at —, sometimes driving out to other country houses, sometimes into the fields to see the great herd of foals with their mothers (beautiful creatures!), sometimes walking round the farm-buildings close to the house, all very well-ordered and up-to-date: there was a small factory there, I remember, for making methylated spirits from potatoes. Once I went into the carpenters' workshop in the yard, and the Princess told me the man who was working there was a peasant land-owner, by no means poor, "but he comes to work here whenever he has leisure," she said, "in order to earn some extra money so that he may buy a little land for his younger children. The Polish peasant cares little for trade—he leaves that to the Jew—but his great desire, as you know, is always to have land and be a farmer. And indeed the Government makes it difficult for him to do anything else.

If he opens a little shop, it is boycotted as far as authority can manage it. For instance, soldiers are strictly forbidden to buy anything in a Polish shop, or to enter one, even if it belong to their parents. And all the government situations—such as those on the railway or the post-office—except the very lowest and most poorly paid, are given to Germans.

I asked her whether there was much ill-feeling between the Polish peasants and the Germans who settled amongst them. She told me it was not so. The Germans were often good honest folk, who got on well enough with their neighbours, and were glad to have Polish farm-servants, who frequently knew better than they how to manage and cultivate the land. Now and then, of course, there were quarrels amongst the young men, but nothing like bitter enmity.

She went on to speak of the great misfortune it was for the people—especially for the children—of countries like Russia and Prussia, to grow up in the belief that Right and Authority were necessarily opposed to one another, and that all one's best ideals must be cherished in secrecy and subterfuge.

“How happy you are in England!” she sighed, and smiled at me kindly. “I shall send all my boys to school there as soon as they have passed the compulsory German examination. All the same,” she added, “I am glad that my children should be brought up here, rather than in Russia. The Prus-

sian is detestable, but he is generally in a way honest. But in Russia corruption is so universal that one is driven—absolutely driven—to meet lies with lies, and to have belief in no one.”¹

I thought, while I took farewell of her and travelled on to Posen, that my brief experience of these countries had not led *me* to lose faith in human nature—at least in one species of it.

More and more, as I made acquaintance and friendship with Poles, I had learned to reckon as a certainty on their courage—the first of virtues!—and on their quick responsiveness to the call of whatsoever things are just and whatsoever things are lovely and of good report. Courage and faith, and idealism, and personal charm and brilliant cleverness!—Heavens, what a people! What traveller led by incredible dreams had found them faithful as I had?

Sitting alone in the railway carriage, I opened my many-coloured bundle of impressions and considered them; for at Posen I should meet Judith, and now for the first time show them to English eyes and pass the Customs House of the English mind.

Would she smile a superior smile, as people do

¹ The reader should bear in mind that this passage relates to Polish feeling before the war, since the outbreak of which, as I have pointed out in the introduction, events have shown that Polish sympathies are overwhelmingly on the side of Russia, while a new spirit of confidence in the future is beginning to make itself felt.

when one tells them one's adventures in the Islands of the Moon? Would she crush me with the word "enthusiastic"? Oh, but I would be wary! I would give her nouns, yes, nouns and verbs, and not a single adjective! I would give her no hint that magic was at work in this country until she had drunk the wine-red beet-soup or some other bewitching potion that they give you, and began to speak with adjectives herself.

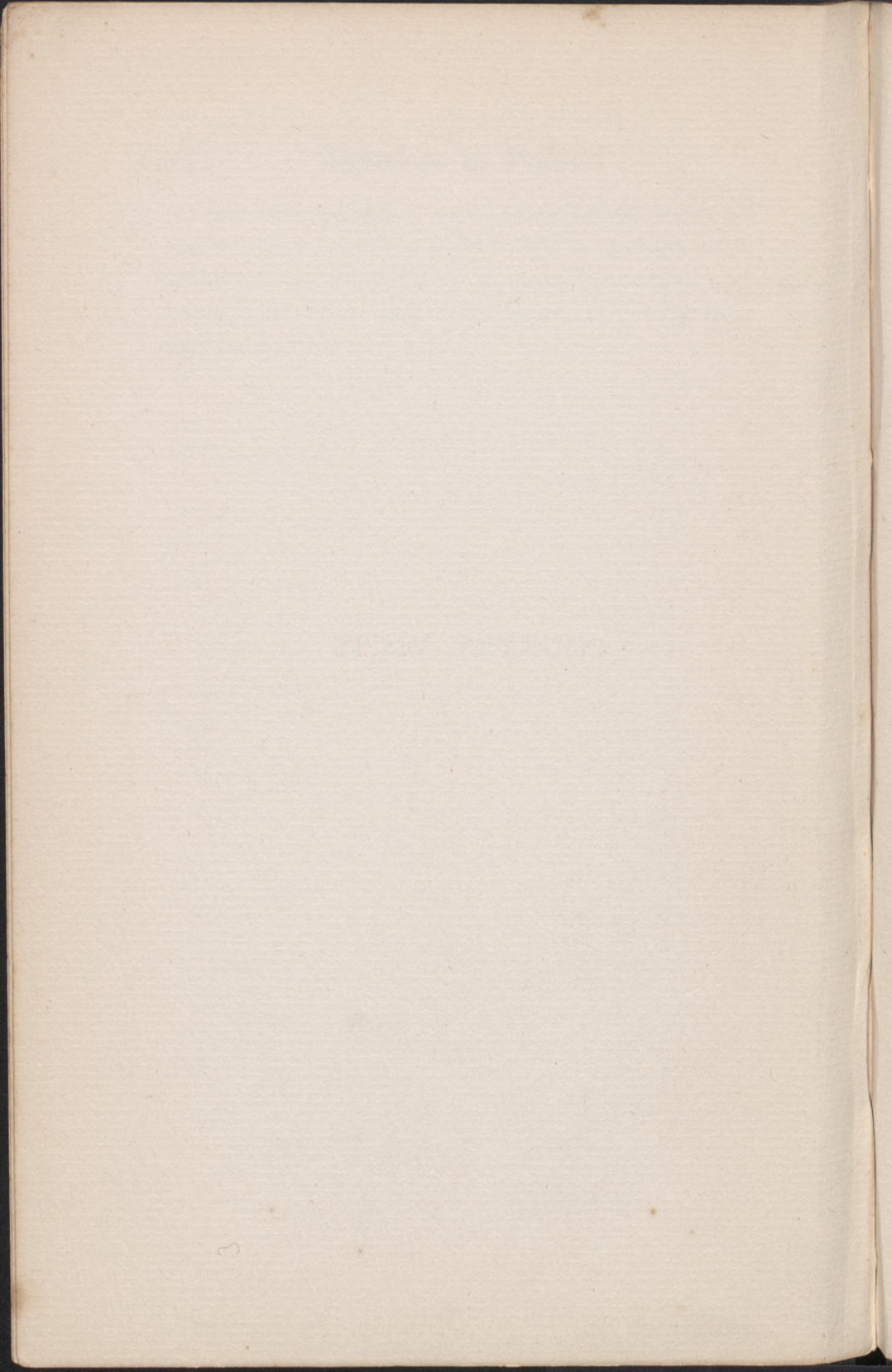
Then I searched for the verbs and nouns with which I would describe to her the hall where we sat at supper last night until the grey dusk and silence flowed in and seemed to over-brim one's heart, while the master of the house, sitting very still, his blue eyes gazing straight before him, related tales of the Insurrection, and defeat and imprisonment and exile.

"That was Prince Romain Languszki, a good man and a great gentleman," he was saying; "there had never been any other charge against him, and he was sentenced only to be 'deported to Siberia.' And the Czar, in signing the warrant, added—*with his own hand*—the words 'On foot. And in chains.'"

"On foot. And in chains." I knew the daily and nightly physical wretchedness such a sentence signified—the physical degradation so great that it is almost degradation of the spirit. What burning flame of patriotism is this that gave men the courage

to face such penalties, and having beheld them, to endure them and not yield! For a moment one's mind, at the thought of it, soared upwards and triumphed then sank down again, sick with hate and indignation and pity.

COUNTRY VISITS



Country Visits

“THE best thing that can be said for Persecution is, that if it is only remorseless enough, it is pretty often successful!” was Judith’s comment when I had finished speaking. “And as soon as it succeeds it is forgotten, because there is no one left alive who willingly recalls it. I wonder how many ‘movements’ and how many heresies we have never heard of because the Strong Hand was strong enough to suppress them? And here in Posen it seems to be fairly successful. Really, one would say it was a German town—statues of Bismarck and the Emperor William, the names of museums and palaces and streets! German newspapers at the railway book-stalls——”

(“The Polish ones are not allowed to be sold there!”)

“—All the porters speaking German——”

(“They are dismissed if they don’t, you know.”)

“—The German decorations of the Town Hall——”

(“The old front with portraits of the Polish Kings was destroyed.”)

“Well,” she said, “Baedeker doesn’t mention

that, and as we can't see the old city as the people in 'An Adventure' saw le Petit Trianon, and the present one isn't very paintable, what do you say to moving on?"

We agreed to move on. But that evening she came up laughing to my room, from the hall (we were in a German hotel), exclaiming—

"What do you think? We have had an invitation—by telephone—at least *you* have—do you think they *can* want two of us?—from a Count V———do you know him?—about twenty miles, he says, from here—who are they?—and they have written a letter, and expect us on Monday—have you heard anything of this before?"

"The Countess is a sister of the Princess A——," I said. "I had no idea they were going to invite us; I have never seen either of them. I am convinced they are perfectly charming. I am quite sure they're inviting both of us, and we will go there on Monday. The letter will arrive to-morrow, no doubt, and tell us about the station and the train; and they will meet us with their beautiful long-tailed horses, and we shall enjoy ourselves enormously."

As in a fairy-tale, "everything happened exactly as the old woman had foretold."

The château is, like most large country houses in this neighbourhood, built in the French eighteenth century style, and (after the old Polish fashion) enclosing three sides of a great square. On the

fourth side, opposite the main building, are imposing wrought-iron gates. On the other side of the house, the drawing-room opens upon a terrace that leads down into a garden with avenues of tall clipped limes, fountains, and labyrinths and lawns.

Inside, the château was more modern, more elegant and gay than any Polish house I had yet seen, and the way of living was more luxurious, yet none the less of a graceful and charming simplicity.

We arrived in time for dinner—precisely at noon—in a great panelled room, where, besides our hosts and ourselves, there sat the five beautiful fair-haired children, and their French, English and Polish governesses, and the tutor, who, as a Pole is “forbidden,” is one of the almost equally fortunate natives of Alsace-Lorraine. Besides these, there were several other guests, some of whom I had met already in Galicia, and who informed us that we were expected during the next few days to dinner or to supper at the neighbouring châteaux where they themselves were staying.

In spite of this large company at the table there were two or three places left vacant, as the Countess explained to me, in accordance with the old Polish custom, so that a guest or stranger, arriving unexpectedly, might find himself immediately welcomed. In the ancient Polish phrase, these are the places laid for “the men from the mountain.”

After dinner, and coffee and conversation in the

drawing-room, we went out driving in a country—not mountainous, of course—a country of wide, rolling plains that the shadows of the clouds sweep over, changing their aspect each moment from dark to light, of cultivated fields, pastures, and small lakes hidden in pine-forests.

The quarters assigned to Judith and myself were on the ground-floor in one of the side-wings of the house, and we slept in two beds side by side.

On that first evening, as I was luxuriously drifting into sleep, I heard my neighbour drowsily murmuring: “But how amazingly kind they all are!”

“Hmmm!”

“So charming in manner, so unaffected, so courteous!”

“Yes.”

“And artistic. One sees it in the perfect taste of the garden and the house and everything about them.”

“Quite so.”

There was a short pause. Then—“Are Polish people *always* as good-looking as that?”

“*Always.*”

Another pause. Then—“Did you know the Count V—— is a sculptor? Awfully good one too. They showed me a lovely big studio at the top of the house—(you were looking at the stables, you know) full of portrait busts of his and things that have been in the Salon. Splendid, they were!”

“ Oh ? ”

“ Well, good-night, dear : you're sleepy, I think.”

“ Good-night.”

I turned in my Elysian bed, and smiled and smiled in the darkness.

Judith was using adjectives !

Next morning breakfast was brought to us by a maid who looked a little shy of us at first, but broke into delighted smiles when I said “ *Dzien Dobre,* ” and instantly paid me compliments on my proficiency in the Polish tongue ; and then we were free to wander in the garden with our sketch-books until the Countess came and took us over the farm buildings, and then we went driving again to see the herds of young horses in a distant paddock.

We returned to find the children careering round the garden in their carriage drawn by four coquetish little donkeys. They have a tiny live-stock farm managed by themselves on scientific principles. We assisted at the midday meal of all the beasts—a ceremony concluded by one of the small boys riding a clean but indignant pig bare-back round the yard.

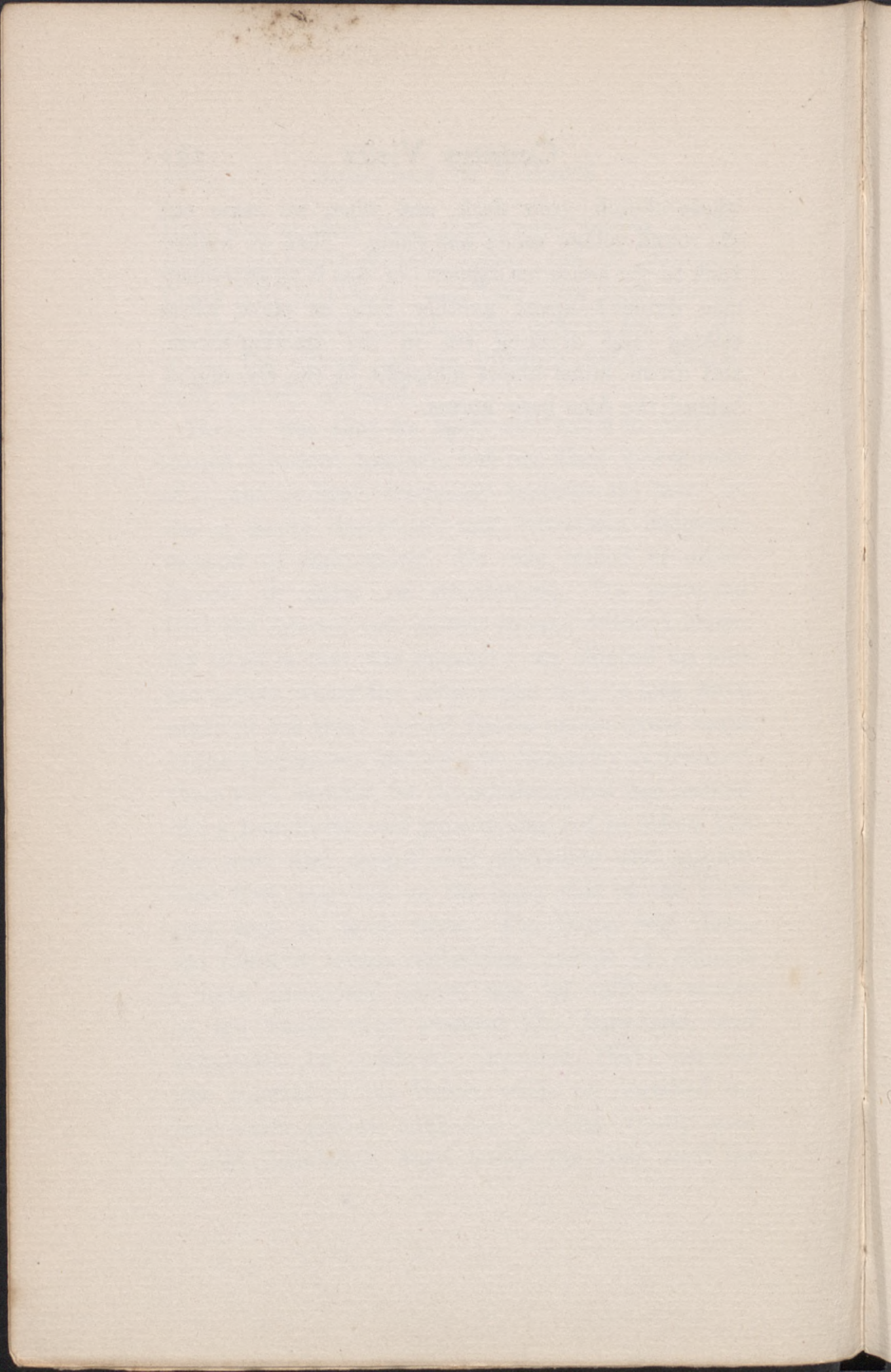
That evening we drove in a big carriage drawn by four splendid grey horses to a country house at some distance : when we were still several miles away, the sons and daughters of the host met us on horseback, and turned and rode with us to the house.

Sketches in Poland

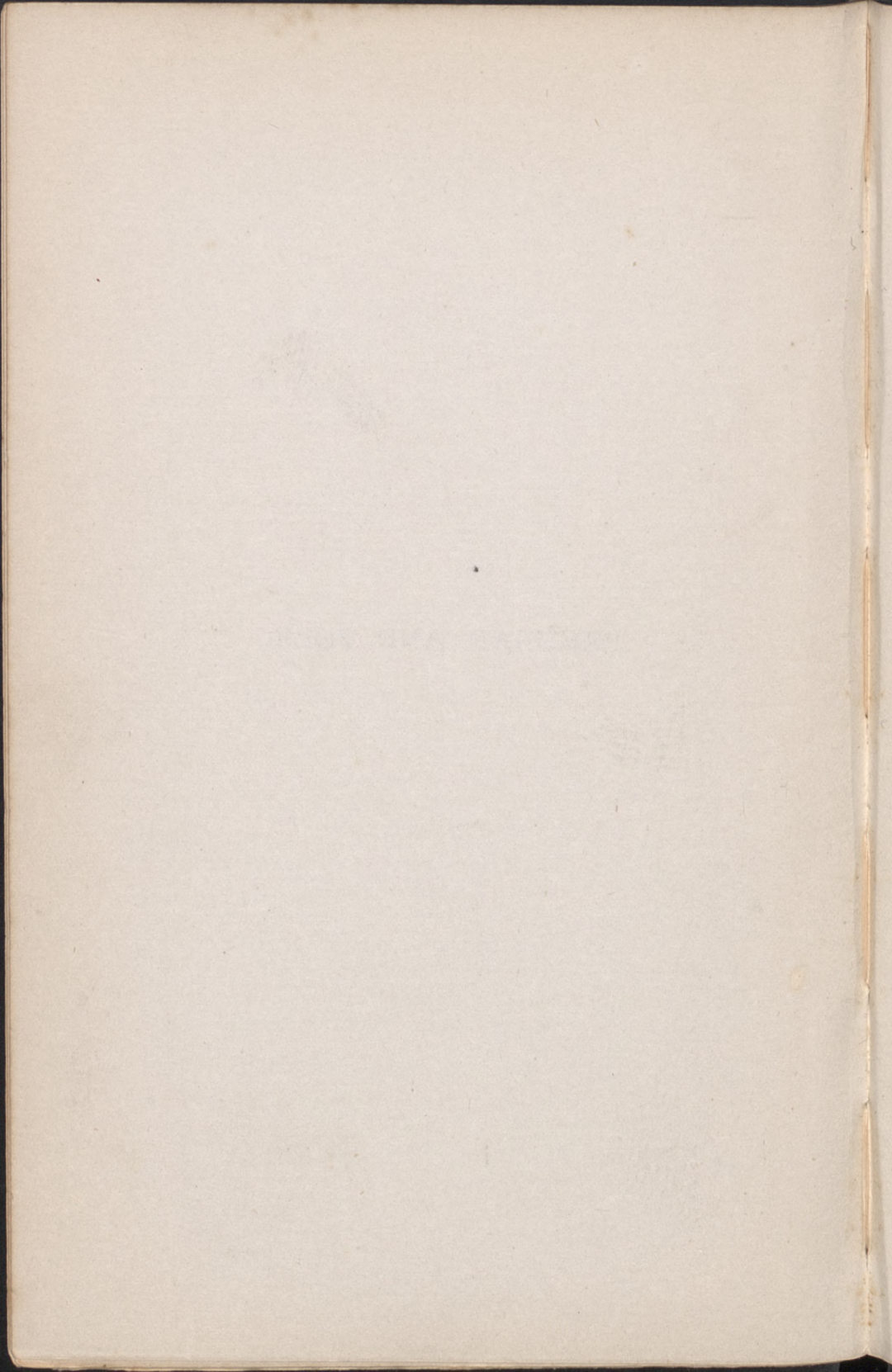
Here was another large picturesque garden, a long white eighteenth-century house full of exquisite Louis XVI furniture; and here were more charming and hospitable people, who took us for a walk to see the village and its fifteenth-century church built entirely of wood.

How it was that we spent two hours in the little church I cannot imagine, but my diary makes note of it, and Judith's testimony confirms the fact. It was a newly discovered and extremely delightful method of sight-seeing. No one talked of architecture or dates or restorations. We perceived that the interior was almost square, without knowing whether that was unusual; we climbed up into the gallery where the little organ was, to look more easily at the three carved figures on the great beam of the rood-screen, and then we lingered and dreamed there very happily, for the whole church was scented like a pine-forest, and glowed dim red in colour like the rose, and copper and cinnamon and auburn tints that you find on the inner side of the thick grey bark of larch trees. The Baron was there, the sculptor whose enchanting groups of animals I have mentioned before, and he told us stories of the Saints that sounded like fairy-tales, and fairy-tales he probably invented that sounded like legends of the Saints, while we watched the last warm golden sunbeams passing slowly over a cold Renaissance angel beside the altar until the

whole church grew dusk, and when we came out the round yellow moon was rising. Then we walked back to the house for supper—or was it an extremely nice dinner?—spent another two or three hours talking and drinking tea in the drawing-rooms, and drove home about midnight in the moonlight, behind the four grey horses.



PRUSSIAN AND POLE



Prussian and Pole

THEY were not all fairy-tales we were told that day. People were talking here, as elsewhere, of the Law of Expropriation—the last move in the Prussian war of aggression—which enables the Government to buy out a landowner against his will at its own price and expel him. The last case was that of a widow with young children.

“She declares she will not move,” they said, “unless she is carried by force.”

“And what will happen?”

“Oh, they are making her pay a high rent for the house, and if she refuses to pay it, then they can put her in prison. A priest was imprisoned not long ago—a priest!”

“What for?”

“He was urgently summoned to take the Last Sacrament to a dying man. It was impossible for him to refuse, although of course in that case it was against the law.”

“But why?”

“Because the house where the man lay was outside the bounds of his parish. And a Polish priest

is forbidden to celebrate any office except in his parish.”

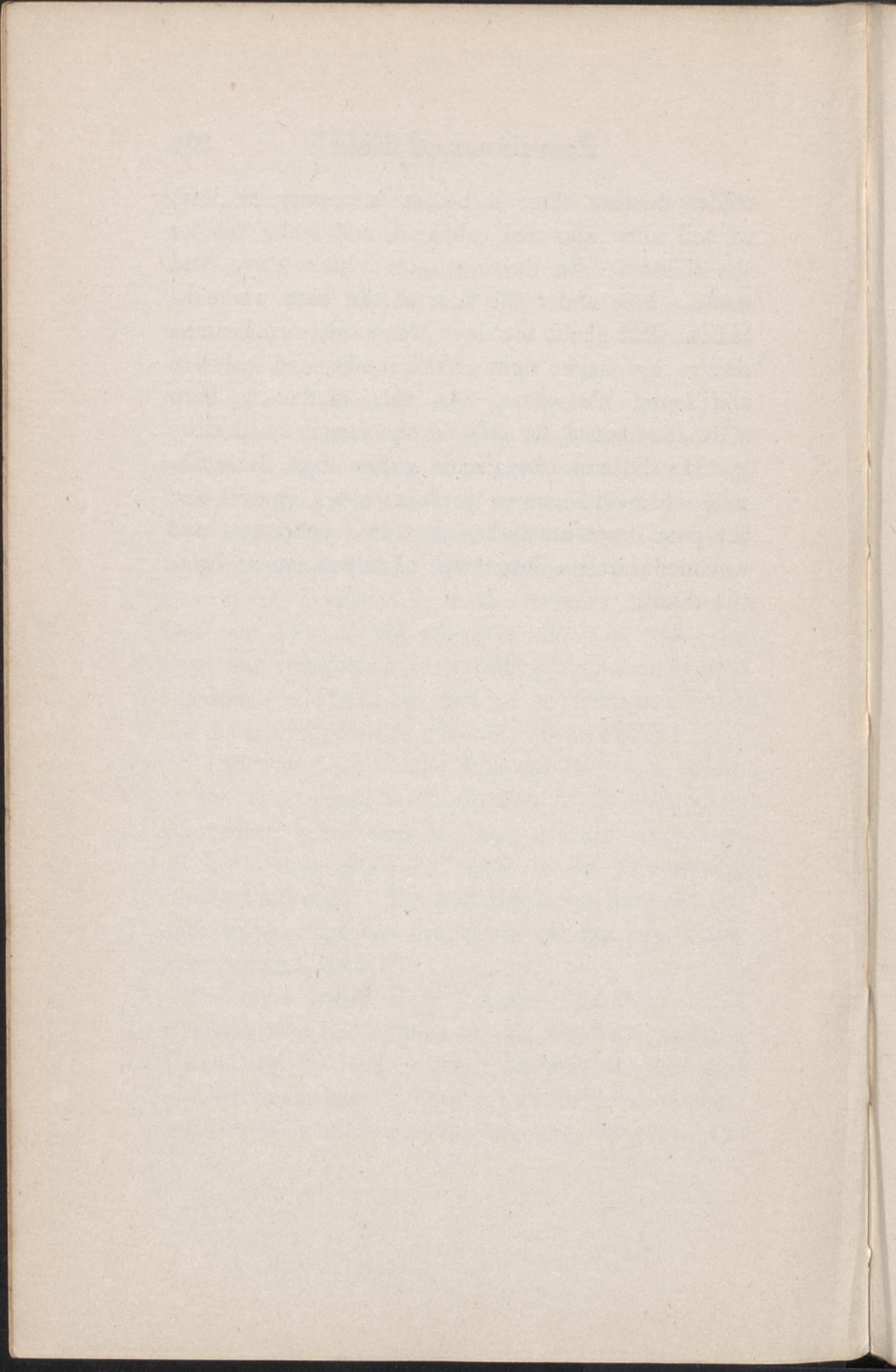
Then they told us how there is no Polish archbishop now, “because the Pope has promised us to appoint none but a Pole, and the Emperor is determined to accept none but a German. And so there is a deadlock, and has been for years.”

“It is not enough for us to be law-abiding and honest, asking nothing more than equal citizenship with the Germans, as was promised to us—*sworn*—in the Treaty of Vienna, keeping only our own language and customs. We must be flattened down, exterminated, effaced from the memory of nations. Did you hear of the chemist who was not only fined but imprisoned for labelling his poison bottles ‘Poison’ in Polish *as well as* in German? And this to sell to peasants who only spoke Polish!

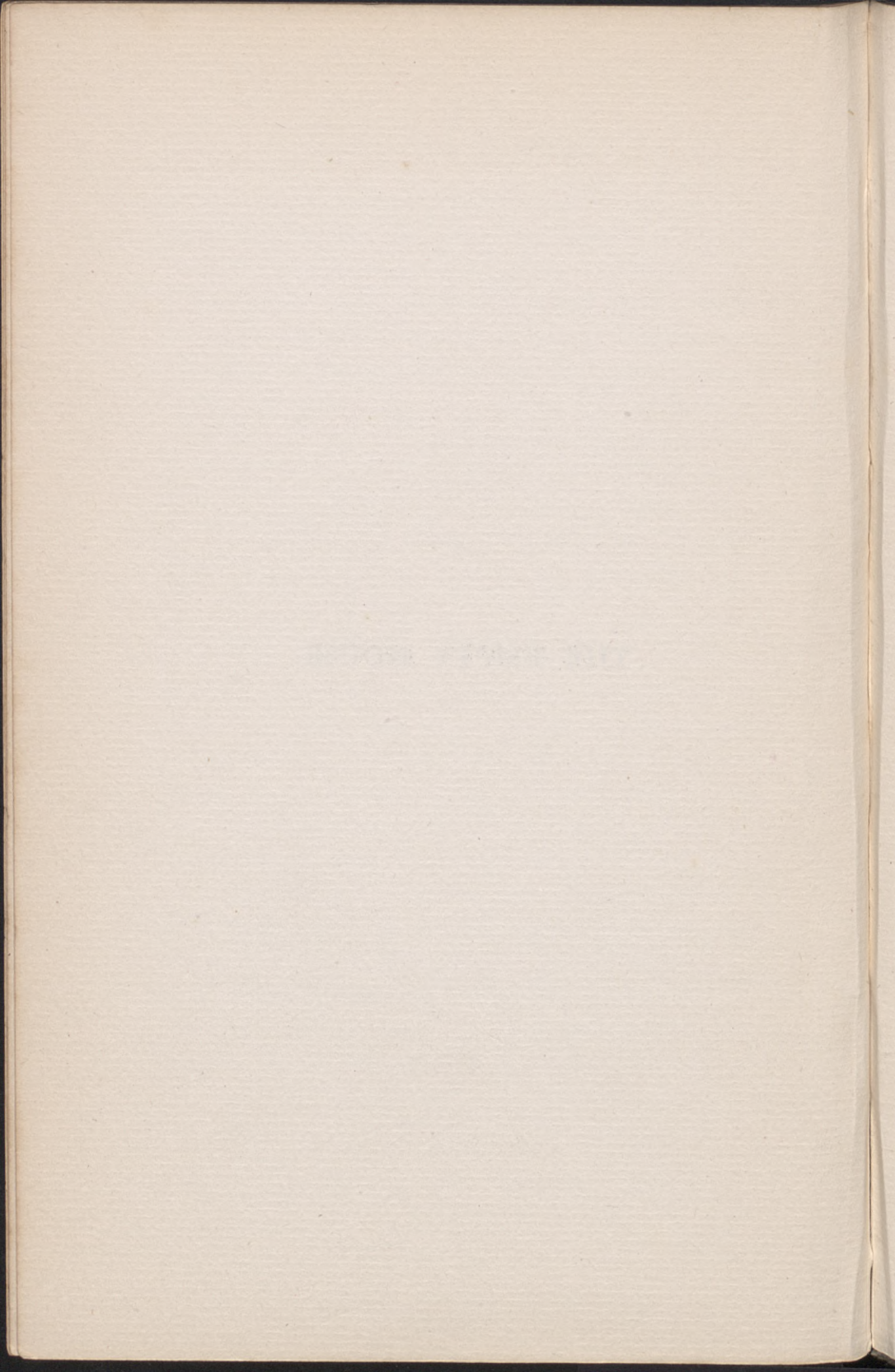
“Did you hear of the Princess R——, a cousin of the C—— and a cousin also of the Emperor, who asked permission to have a little settlement on her Polish estates of nuns to do sick-nursing among the poor? The permission was granted, but only on the condition that there was not one Polish nun amongst them!”

The most horrid story I heard that day was of a farmer who had applied in vain for leave to build a house on his land, so he lived with his wife and children in the barn. They got on fairly well through the summer without cooking anything, but when the

colder weather came it became necessary at least to boil some eggs and cabbages, and make tea for the children. So the man got a little stove, and made a hole under the floor of the barn where he hid it. But about ten days afterwards a policeman passing by caught sight of the smoke, and came in and found the stove. As this made the barn a dwelling-house, he ordered the farmer to destroy it. He did not obey, and a few days later the police came to remove it: there was a quarrel, and the poor desperate father shot at a policeman and wounded him—a long term of imprisonment being the result.



THE EMPTY HOUSE



The Empty House

WE spent a week of days like these at — and left it overwhelmed with gratitude and admiration, and even satisfaction with ourselves, for, as Judith very truly remarked, the art of hospitality in Poland has reached to such delicacy and perfection that one's hosts actually succeed in persuading one that it is *they* who were fortunate during one's visit.

Afterwards we saw other country houses and other friends of mine whom I refrain from describing, because as I continue writing I find it increasingly difficult to hide with a proper English reserve my personal affections.

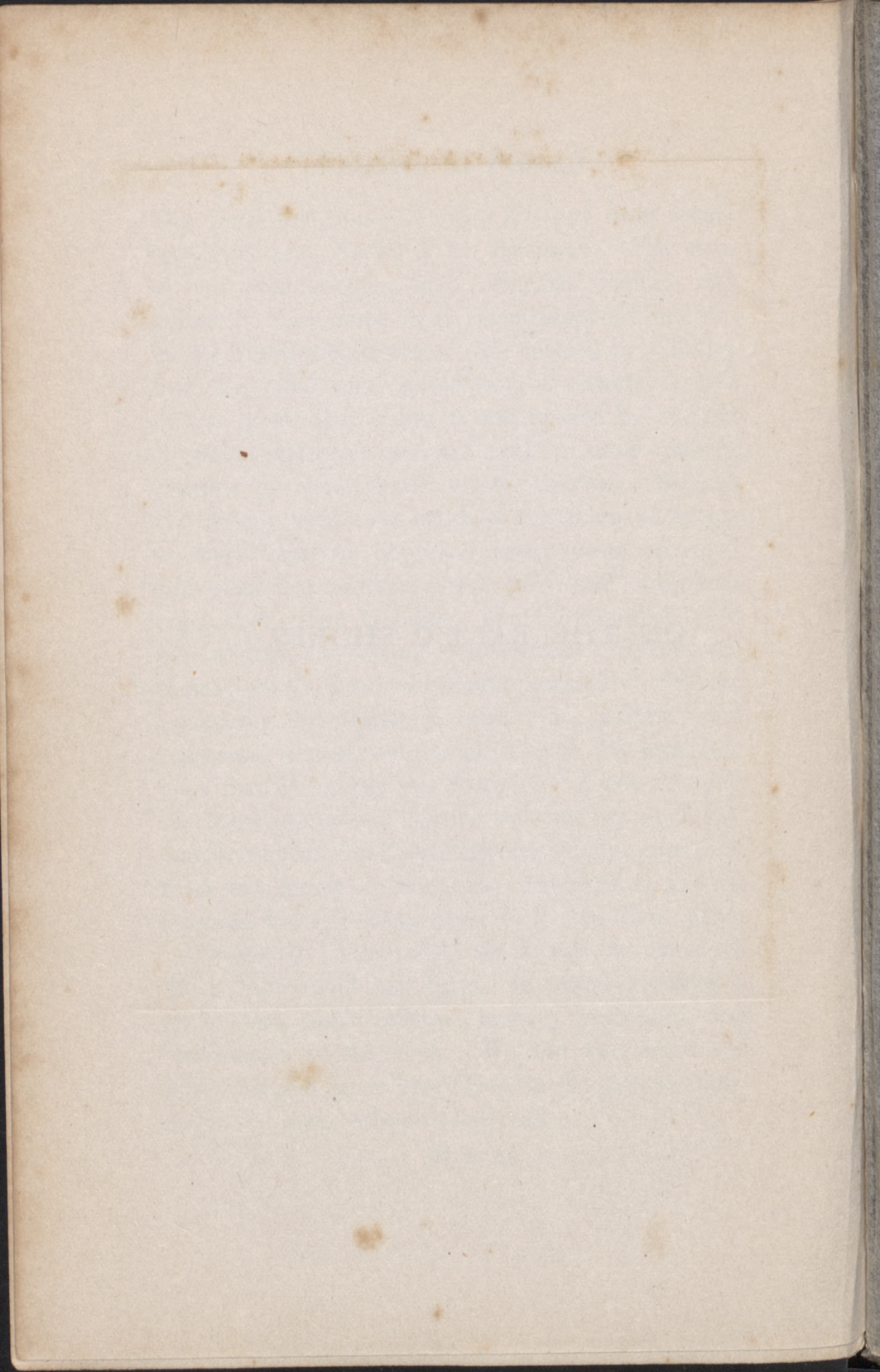
At one château alone which Judith and I visited together there was no one to welcome us. We went there from Posen, taking the train to —, and then a country omnibus for many miles along the straight road between pine forests and over the gently-rolling plain, then passing down a long wide village street, rather picturesque, with acacia trees growing before the low houses. There was no other house of any pretensions but the castle standing in its garden at the end of the village.

This was the home of the Z——s,¹ from which they had been banished by Bismarck. The style of it is what is called here "English Gothic," and indeed it bears some faint resemblance to our domestic Tudor architecture. We entered by a bridge over the moat, and waited only a minute or two at the great door before it was opened by the old steward, evidently prepared with a usual patient courtesy to show the house to tourists. He had the dreamy, gentle face of those for whom all events of much emotion happened many years ago, and who now live solitary, speak little and remember much, but when I showed him the Count Z——'s handwriting, he became transformed. "From the Count ——? From the Count himself?" he kept exclaiming (in German), with joy, surprise and eagerness, almost as though I had brought him news that his master was returning. I was wrong to say there was no one there to welcome us, for *he* did, and he took us over the stately melancholy rooms, and those not shown to strangers, furnished as the old Countess had left them, never to live in them again.

I think, if houses could speak, this one could tell much but would say little. It would preserve a grave and noble silence, leaving complaint and lamentation to the weak. We too were silent and heavy-hearted as we drove back in the grey evening, down the long, unfrequented road.

¹ Ref. p. 33.

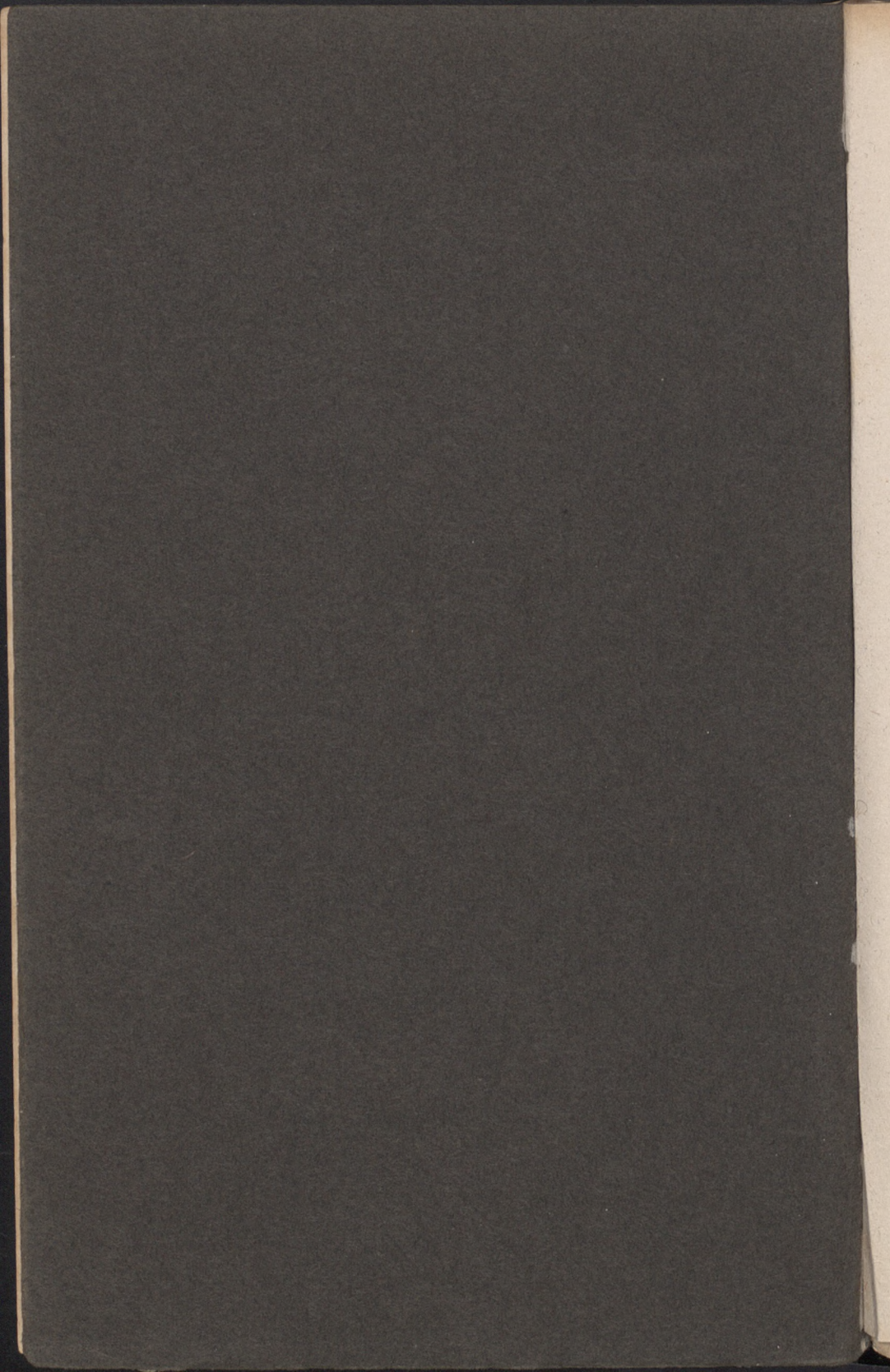
ON THE BALTIC SHORES





No. 12.—Putzk : "A Busy Day."





On the Baltic Shores

It was a busy day in Putsk—a market day. No fewer than three carts stood unharnessed in the square, and nearly a score of people had gathered there, gravely inspecting the live-stock, which consisted of a few fowls, and two pink pigs, each with a fat woman in attendance who held him by a string that was fastened to his leg.

On the steps of the *Polizei-Direktion* a policeman stood, and preserved order. The postman, his day's work long ago ended, gossiped in turn with the baker, the ironmonger, and the seller of postcards and tobacco, who stood in the doorways of their neat houses, which were painted white or green or yellow, and shaded by elaborately clipped trees.

The square was a large one, and paved, like the few surrounding streets, with cobbles. Behind it the old red-brick Northern Gothic church stood high, and looked over the roofs on one side into the market, and on the other to the road which ran down steeply to the shore of the shallow, brackish, tideless Baltic Sea. There was a small pier there,

and a row of pollard willows grew close by it. Cocks and hens paraded with white ducks by the water's edge.

Silver birches, tall black poplars and enormous willows fringed the high banks on the south-east side, their great roots almost in the sea: along the shore north-westwards flat green meadows extended into the distance. Before us we could see faintly the grey headland of Hela, stretching long and narrow far into the sea.

The sun shone with the warm mellow golden beam of early autumn, the water was as smooth as silk, and reflected the clouds as though it had been a lake.

We were in West Prussia. Between us and the Duchy of Posnania lay the country we had passed through the week before—an endless rolling plain, not monotonous, for sun and wind and cloud swept over it, the lie of the land revealed itself, and the forests as the gliding shadows touched them turned from silver-grey to darkest velvet-green. Sometimes we had passed small lakes, sometimes wide and shallow valleys, hardly to be called valleys, where flowed the tributaries of that great river the Vistula, and at Thorn we had reached the Vistula itself. To travel in these plains is to understand how fortunate in barbarous ages was such a country as England, guarded on all sides. What wonder that in Poland there was little cohesion, little sense

of unity, that the supreme power was weak, that boundaries were perpetually changing? What wonder, above all, that the unhappy country was continually ravaged by invasions?

From Danzig we had come eastwards along the coast to Zoppot—a town whose name is the German version of the Polish Soboty (meaning “Saturdays”). It is now a paradise of summer visitors—a pleasant place enough, but Judith and I, who craved for a neighbourhood less populous, less rich in cinemas and theatres and tennis-courts and baths, had left it for Oliva, where we spent a day in the delightful garden of the palace of the old Cistercian abbots; but when we discovered Putsk almost at the extreme end of the Putziger Gulf, and found we could have rooms in the convent, we decided to stay there. It was a convent of German nuns, the Grey Sisters of St. Elizabeth, who nurse the poor. On the ground-floor they had sick folk and old people, who stayed there until they died, but above were many rooms for visitors, mostly school-teachers on a holiday, young men as well as women. The house was a large airy building of red brick, quite new, in fact builders were still pottering about in the yard which the sisters told us they intended soon to turn into a garden. The rooms were lofty and exquisitely clean, and there was even a bathroom in our corridor.

On the first evening we spent some consideration on the matter of our frocks, that they should be neither so worldly as to shock the inmates, nor so simple as to make them think that we held a supper with them in slight esteem, and ready at last, we waited to be summoned to the dining-room, half amused already and half bored at the prospect of introductions and the endeavour to make ourselves agreeable. But at seven o'clock our supper was served in my room, which was the larger of the two, and all our meals afterwards were brought there, so that we were free to spend ourselves all day in painting and in the evening to be as insular and frivolous in dress as we pleased.

In truth it was a happy time, and we stayed there till the first days of October. The inhabitants of Putsk are a humane and merciful people, so uncorrupted by the world that it does not even occur to them that those who go out sketching are the lawful prey of all the loafers in the place. There seemed to be very few dangerous characters in the shape of policemen about, and Judith sketched in peace the long avenues of willows in eternal procession over the undulating plain, while I went down to the sea, fascinated by the tawny and black and ivory birch-trees as I saw them against the intense blue.

Every now and then we vowed to one another—and yet we still stayed on—that next Monday we

would tear ourselves away and paint the Cathedral of Danzig. And worldly Conscience upbraided us a little with "Here you are! You have come hundreds of miles to a country seldom visited, a country rich in monuments of historic and antiquarian interest; and it seems that what you really want to paint is a row of posts in the water!"

"Quite right if we do," said Judith, who cared even less for Conscience than I did. "I remember once I was unlucky enough to be showing my sketches to a company of very dull people whose only remark as I brought out one thing after another was—'Oh! Where is that?' until presently I saw that what they really wanted was not pictures at all: so I tried a new method to please them, and very soon found myself successful. One said to another: 'Oh, Edith, you *must* look at this. This is a *very* interesting picture. It is a village in Fifeshire, and Miss Phillimore says that the doorstep of that fifth cottage—no, you can't *see* the doorstep, but it's *there*—that doorstep was a stone that was brought up from the beach, and was the first stone that Bonny Prince Charlie set foot on when he landed in Scotland.' And then the whole company greatly admired the picture."

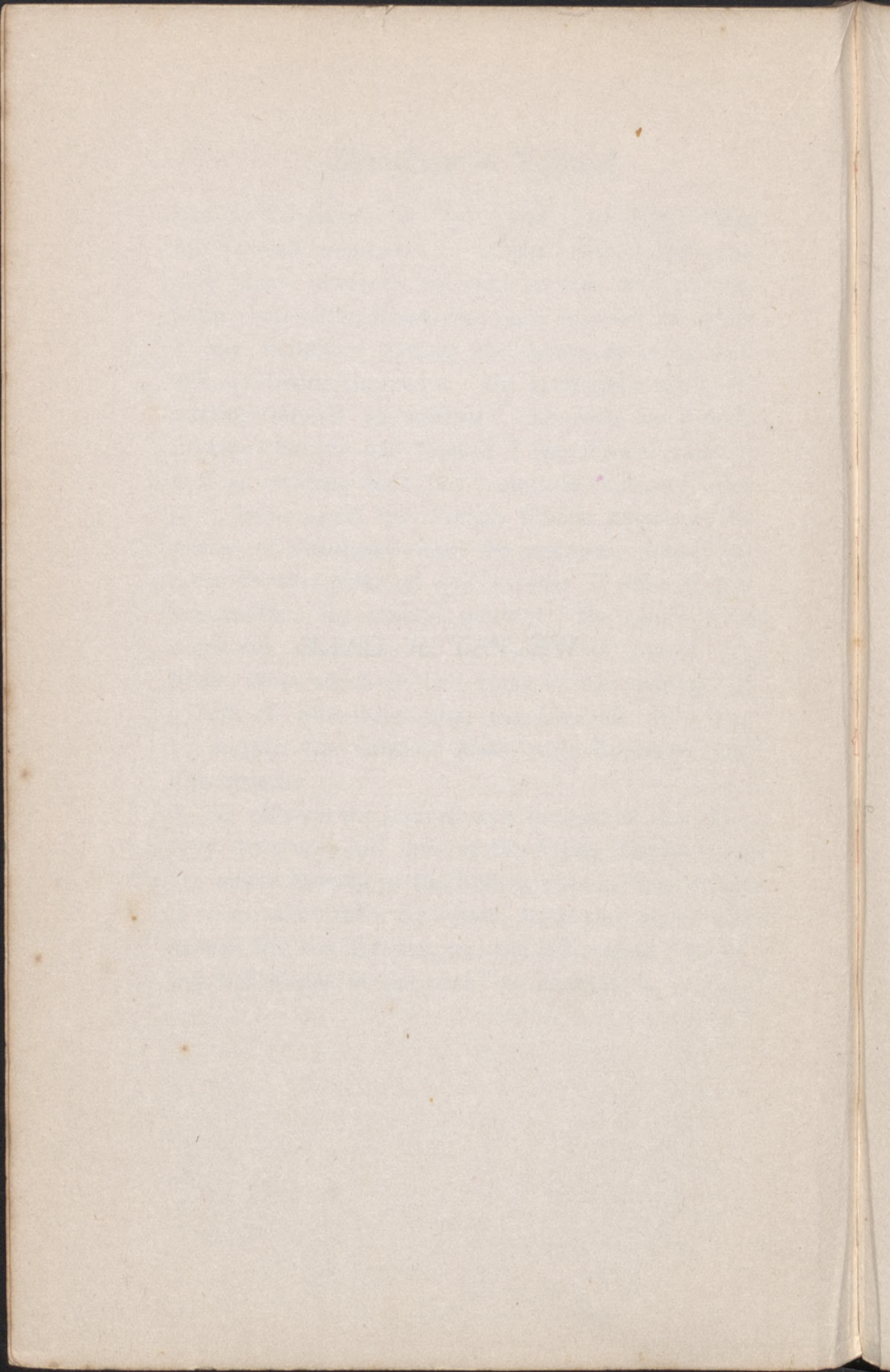
Thus we strengthened ourselves in scorn of the World and painted the things that pleased us.

We found a tradition in the place that an Englishman had once stayed in Putsk before us. He

was a *Tier-Arzt*—a Vet—and had lived here for several months. I wonder why. But the only stray foreigner we came across was an unhappy little Frenchman who once accosted me while I was sketching among the horse-chestnuts and willows beside the shore. He apologized for “permitting himself to address” me with the adroit flattery that he had fancied I was French, and it was so evident that he “annoyed himself”—for so I have heard my French friends translate the phrase *il s’ennuyait*—that he annoyed himself almost to the point of suicide that I suffered his interruption for several minutes. He spoke with home-sick eloquence of the south of France, his home, from which he had come as the employé of a firm of wine-merchants, and here his duty was to supply the Officers’ Mess with Bordeaux and Champagne.

The officers we seldom saw except in the sky: they were occupied here at the Flying Station, and the angry purring of the hydroplanes as they swept past us, shot into the water, then rose again and soared into the distance, was the only sound “breaking the silence of the seas” to distract us.

WE PAY A CALL



We Pay a Call

WHEN we had been about a fortnight at the convent, the Sister Superior told us that the parish priest—the Herr Pfarrer, as she called him—was very anxious to make our acquaintance. We understood, of course, that etiquette forbade him, as a resident, to call on newcomers until they visited him, but in spite of two or three gentle reminders we excused ourselves. Then one day she informed us that we were invited, with her, to tea at the Parsonage, at what hour we ourselves were to choose: so seeing that there was no escape, we declared ourselves delighted, and went about six o'clock to the dark, serious little house in the shadow of the church. The Herr Pfarrer was a Pole, an old man with a shrewd and kindly face; an elderly widowed cousin kept house for him.

We all sat round a small table in the parlour, and we talked—in German—as politely as we knew how, and he went and fetched a bottle of sweet white wine, which he opened, and we drank each other's health, and ate funny little hard cakes, and the Sister described to our hosts our curious Eng-

lish habits—how great and meritorious was our diligence in painting, how we smoked cigarettes (at least, one of us did), how our appetites were small, how we slept all night with the windows open, how we had refused feather beds on the top of us, and preferred blankets. All these details were listened to with the profoundest interest, and after a call of an hour or more, we took leave.

A day or two later the Herr Pfarrer sent his carriage—and two fine horses—to drive us to what they called “the open sea,” at the point where the long headland of Hela joins the mainland. It was a wind-swept, sad, yet expressive landscape of sandy hills scooped and carved into significance of shape by storms, of bare fields and sparse villages, with fine churches and wayside shrines.

Passing a salt meadow, we ascended a low sandy ridge, held together, as it were, by the roots of struggling fir-trees, and there was the lifeboat house, and the wide, desolate Baltic shore. No more of the world was to be seen there but the low bank on one hand and on the other the empty, it seemed the untraversed, sea.

We had left the carriage in the salt meadow, and now we walked far along the beach. I longed to find and carry away some amber, because I knew it was *verboten* to do so, but it is found most commonly further eastwards near Danzig. Only licensed searchers are permitted to find it. And

so great, apparently, is the force of Imperial law, that I, being unlicensed, found none. It was also *verboten* to tear up any of the rank grass that grew along the ridges—a law with sense in it, but Judith was provoked into inquiring whether it was also forbidden to sit down on the bank?

Two girls were with us, the Pfarrer's niece and a friend of hers staying at the convent, a German girl, placid, anæmic, with undistinguished features that looked as though they had been taken away from the fire just in time to prevent them from melting away; but on the face of the little Pole a cunning workman had wrought with a light and exquisite chisel, and she carried her small head with a sweetly imperious air. Now she made us all sit down beside her, and produced four dainty little flagons of green glass—scent-bottles perhaps—one of which she presented to each of us, inviting us to drink their contents of sweet Hungarian wine.

After receiving so many tokens of goodwill—for I have not told half of the kindnesses that the Grey Sisters showed us—how one of them massaged my foot three times a day when I hurt it, and how, when they knew it was my birthday, although it was a Friday, they made me a special feast of apple-pastries, and one brought a pot of fuchsias, another a handful of gladioli and a bowl of sweet white stocks—after all these we felt impelled to hold a “reception” on our last Sunday afternoon,

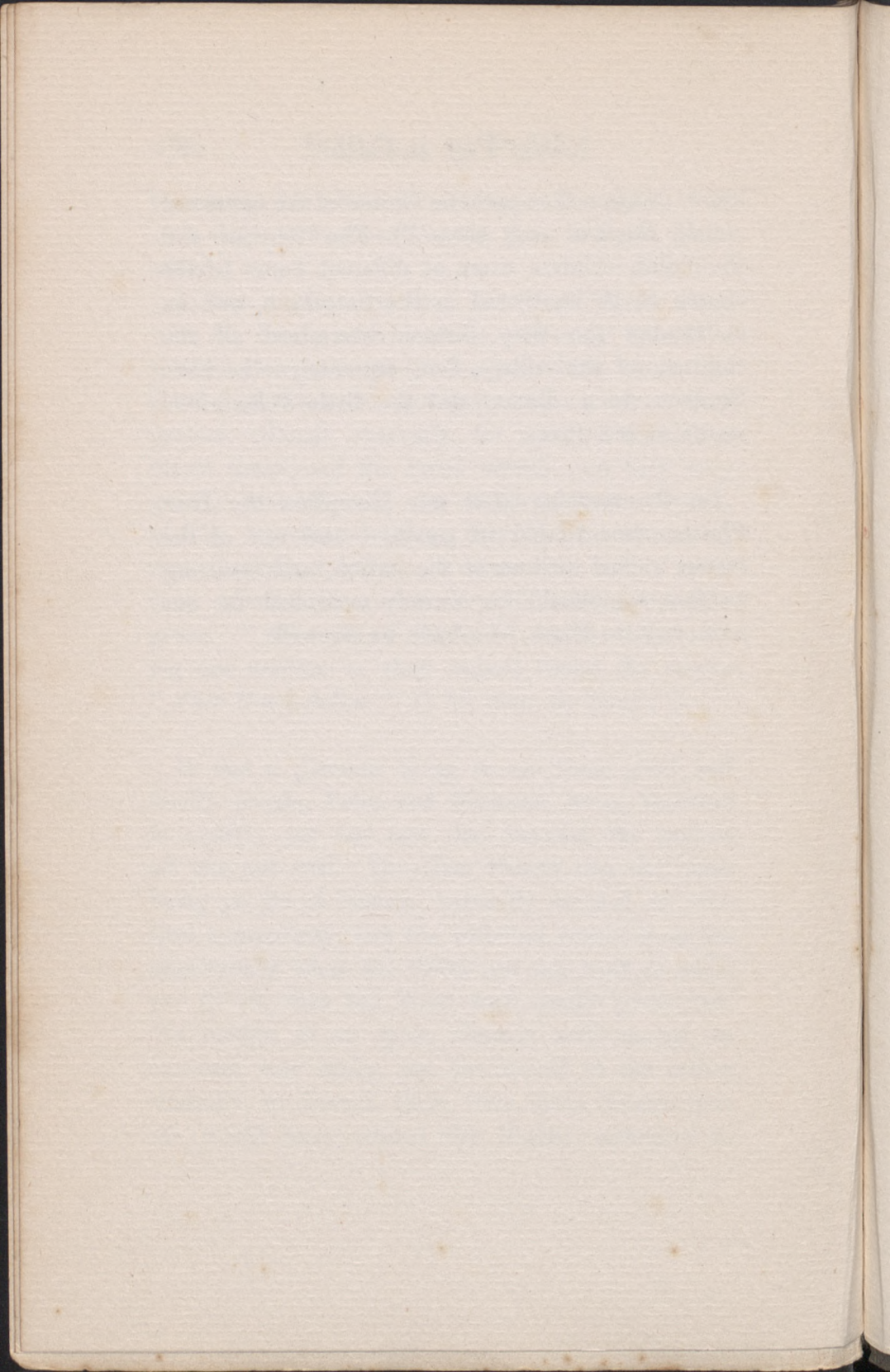
to exhibit our sketches and regale our guests with such elegant sweetmeats as the town of Putsk would afford.

It was a great success. The Herr Pfarrer came with his cousin and his niece, and every inmate of the convent—save only the bedridden—from the Sister Superior to the youngest maid-servant. They partook—though sparingly, for which I could not blame them!—of the Putsk sweets, and they very greatly marvelled at our Putsk sketches, which, plainly, represented things they had never seen or never looked at before. I cannot say that I think they admired them, but they did admire our diligence. “*Alles Hand-Arbeit*,” I heard them telling one another as they walked round the room; “*Alles Hand-Arbeit!*” (“All done by hand!”)

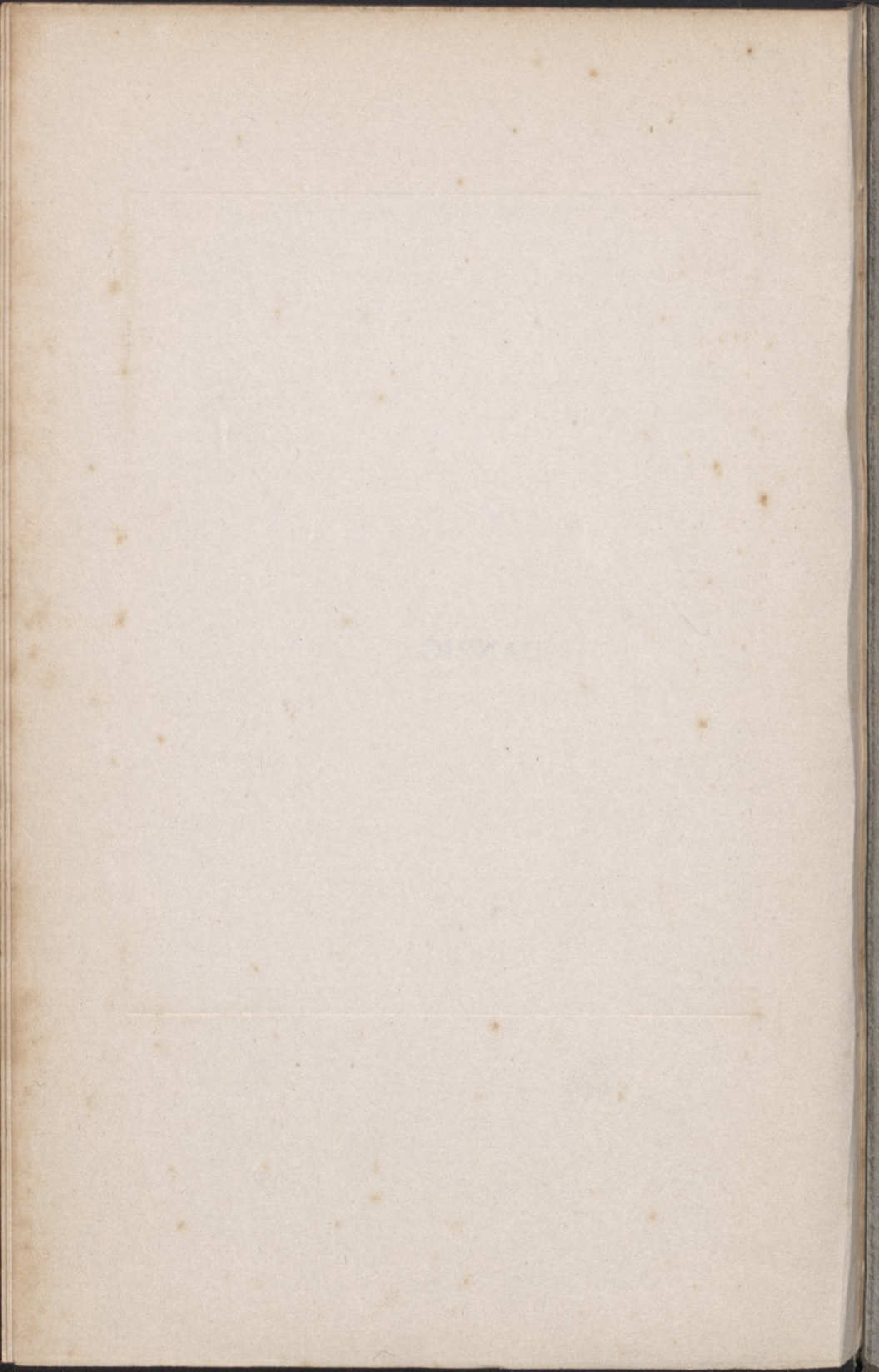
It was a pleasant thing to see these good and kindly people, Poles and Germans, living together in amity; yet one saw that beneath the surface all was not well. The Herr Pfarrer and the nuns, being people of religion, naturally avoided all political controversy, but the widowed cousin took the opportunity when the Sister was not near to whisper to me that the Poles were sorely persecuted. We neither of us spoke German well enough to converse very easily, but she looked at me rather wistfully, as though there were many things that she would have wished the English strangers to

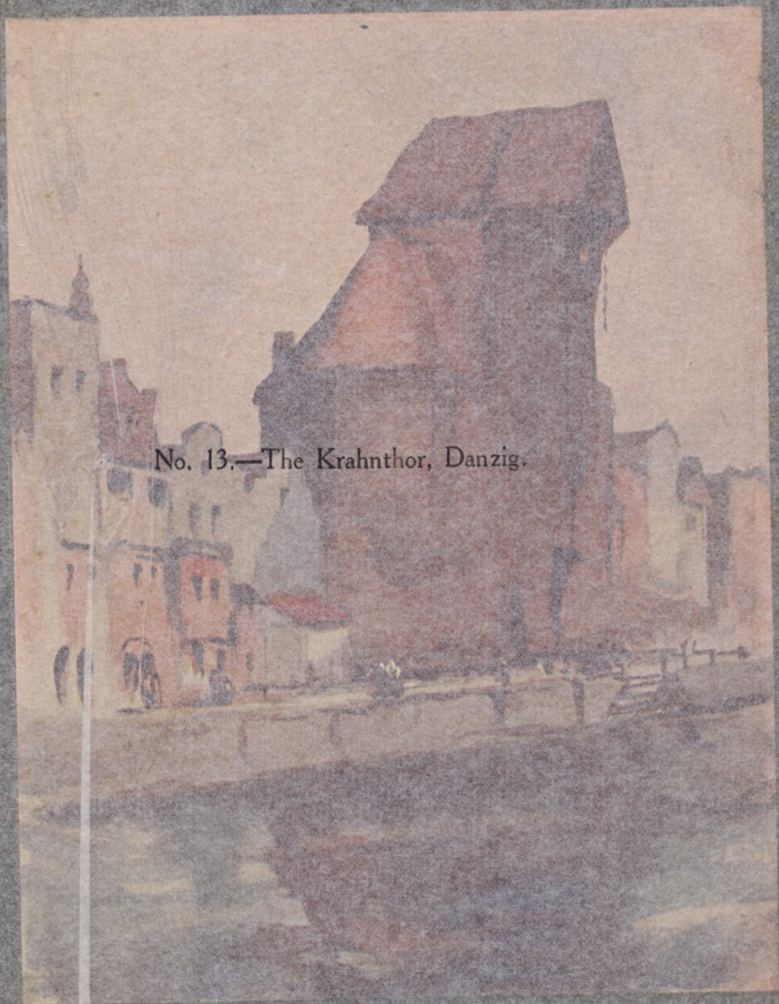
know. (Again that pathetic illusion of the oppressed —“*If England only knew!*”) The German and the Polish children came at different hours to the church to be instructed in the Catechism, and on a fête-day the Grey Sisters entertained all the children of the village, but separately—the little Germans to a dinner, and the little Poles afterwards at tea-time.

On the morning after our Reception the Herr Pfarrer came to bid us goodbye, and one of the Sisters walked with us to the station, and, assuring us that we should be warmly welcomed on our next visit to Putsk, she bade us farewell.



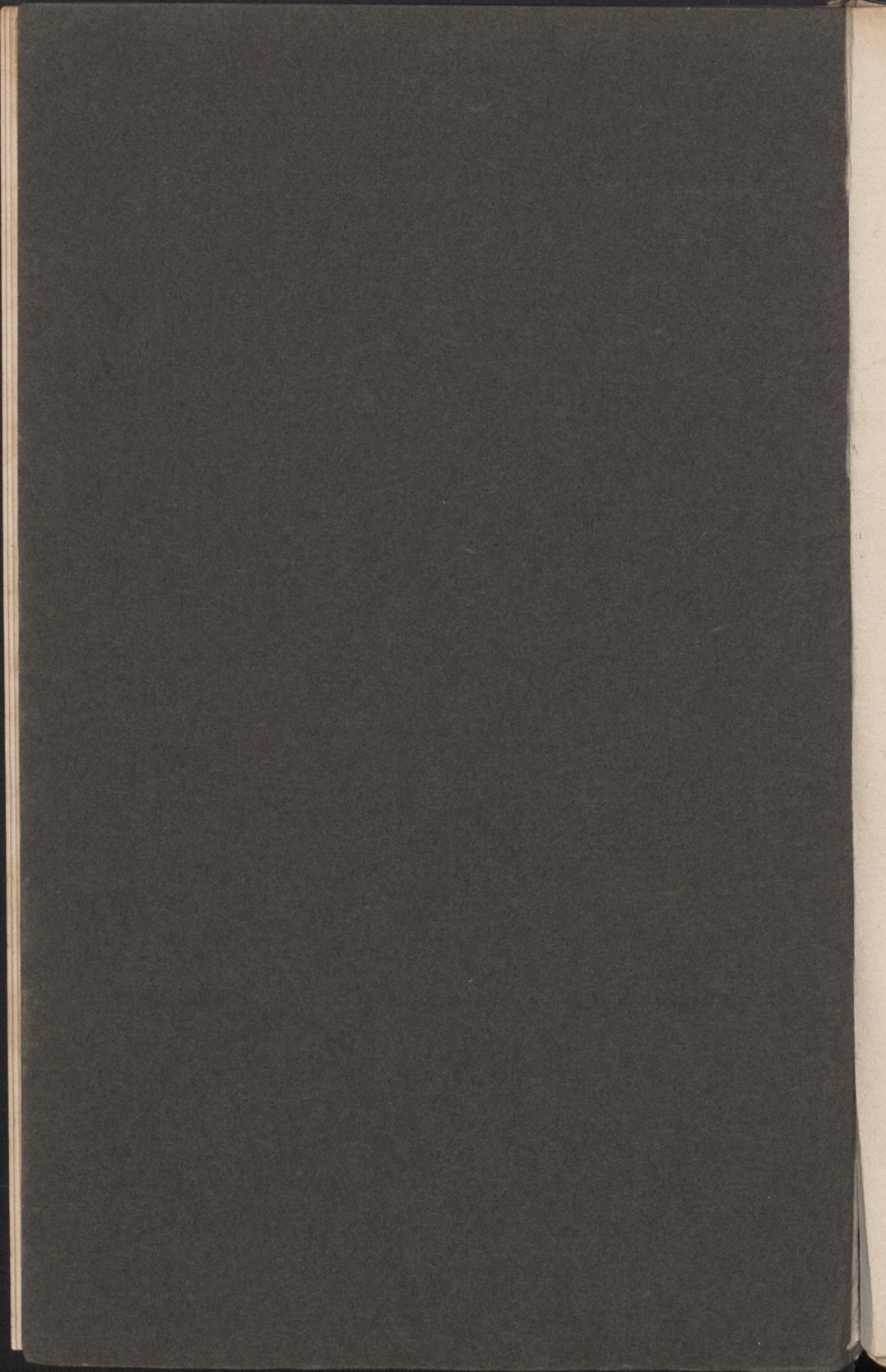
DANZIG





No. 13.—The Krahnthor, Danzig.





Danzig

THE town of Danzig is a brave town, beautiful with a masculine and unselfconscious beauty, pursuing with a single mind two objects, of which the first is chiefly a means to the second, its strength and its commerce. Baedeker says that one may trace there the architectural styles of six centuries, but to me the most striking impression that it gave was of the delightful harmony that makes its churches and its warehouses and granaries appear like brothers of one family who follow divers careers in life and bear the stamp of their experiences, and yet are plainly of one bone and of one flesh. This is owing principally to the material of which they are built, for they are all of brick : the churches, on account of the absence of stone, display no carving and no exterior ornament ; their beauty is the beauty of straight and soaring line, and the tall stately warehouses resemble them, as I have said, as merchants might resemble cardinals.

They stand along the banks of the River Mottlau, which divides into two branches as it runs through the town, and forms an island in the middle of it,

and here are busy quays crowded with shipping, and great trade is carried on, as it has been for hundreds of years, in grain and timber and beet-root sugar.

If Danzig were more on the beaten track, it would be no doubt well known and loved by sightseers and artists: its harmony of style, its steadfastness of purpose, its large and lordly character render it an exceedingly attractive city, but the hotel keeper told us that the only English who came there were merchants and men of business. Yet there is a fourteenth-century Merchants Hall, now a Corn Exchange, called after King Arthur—the “Artus-hof,” and among the bastions which fortify the town to the south-east, and which are named each one “Bear” or “Wolf” or some other beast name, there is an “Eichhorn” and a “Löwe,” and between these last leads a street called the Englischer Damm. Also one of the most magnificent seventeenth-century houses in the old streets leading from the cathedral to the river is called, I know not why, the “Englisches Haus.”

These houses are more or less Renaissance in style, yet sober and very dignified. Though the streets are wide, there is but narrow space for wheel-traffic, because each house has a terrace, or raised stone landing before it, decorated with noble balustrades of wrought iron or carved stone, and with stone stairs leading down into the street. These

were, of course, and no doubt still are, the houses of the rich burghers. Many of them display over their carved doorways mottoes of a candid and a healthy worldliness. "*Besser beneidet als beleidet*" is the only one I remember at this moment.

We spent many afternoons sketching on the island, looking across the water to the picturesque "Frauenthor" and the strange gigantic grain elevators. People were much too busy or too good-natured to annoy us, and we had a happy time. Then in the evening we wandered back by the Green Gate, and looked at the many shop-windows in which amber was displayed. At first we asked ourselves whether we really liked it or not. On the second day we each bought one little bit. On the fifth day we were buying chunks of amber, clouded amber, clear, pale, golden amber, amber the colour of treacle that the lamplight shines through, unshapen lumps that we hardly held in our clenched hands, one smooth piece the size and shape of a thrush's egg that I slid into my wine-glass at dinner and gloated over as it lay, a clear bubble in the depths of the clear amber-coloured wine.

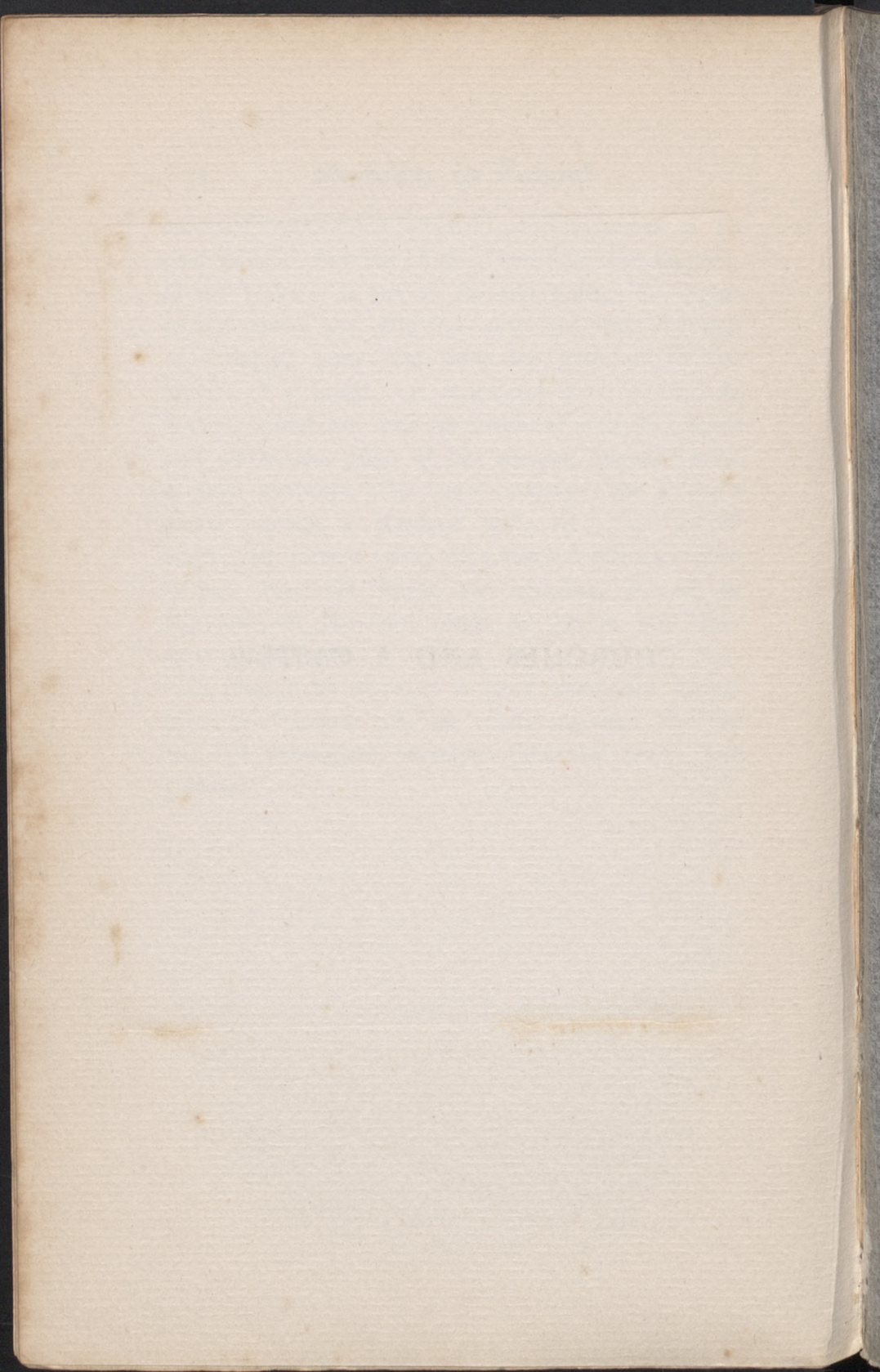
These were more to be desired by far than the necklaces and ear-rings and brooches that the shop-people had made, for often they had cut the gentle stone into sharp facets that it might appear a topaz. And should not do so, for amber—how perfect the

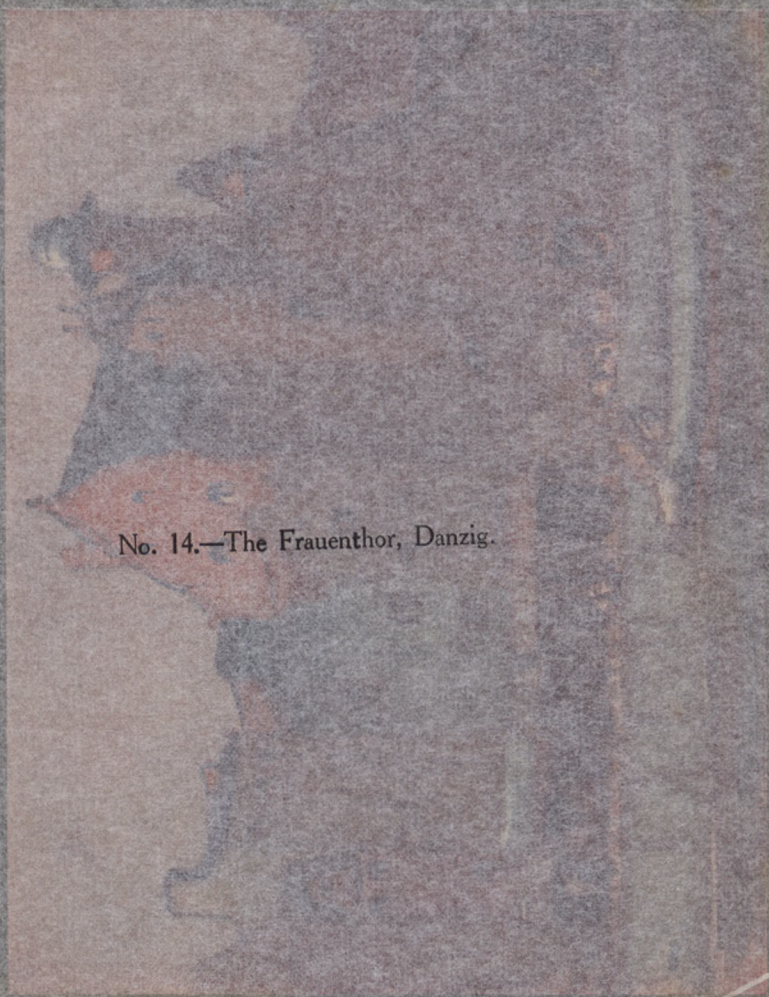
Sketches in Poland

caressing, mumbling English word!—amber is no cold mineral, but the child of trees and the nursling of the water; it has no star-like points, no angles as the crystal has, only the suave and blunted forms of dropping gum. Its sides are flattened in the crevice of a bough, or sometimes it is rounded as though it had run into the mould of a dryad's hand and shows the print of her smooth fingers. It is a fossil sunbeam of a huge antiquity, the Dryad's Jewel (though a Mermaid stole it); still almost warm, still almost sweet with the hot resinous scent it had when the forest was breathing incense to the sun and the trees oozed out before him their slow golden tears.

It pleased us to carry it away, carelessly stuffed into the pockets of our sketching-bags, for so we half persuaded ourselves that the booty was *verboten*.

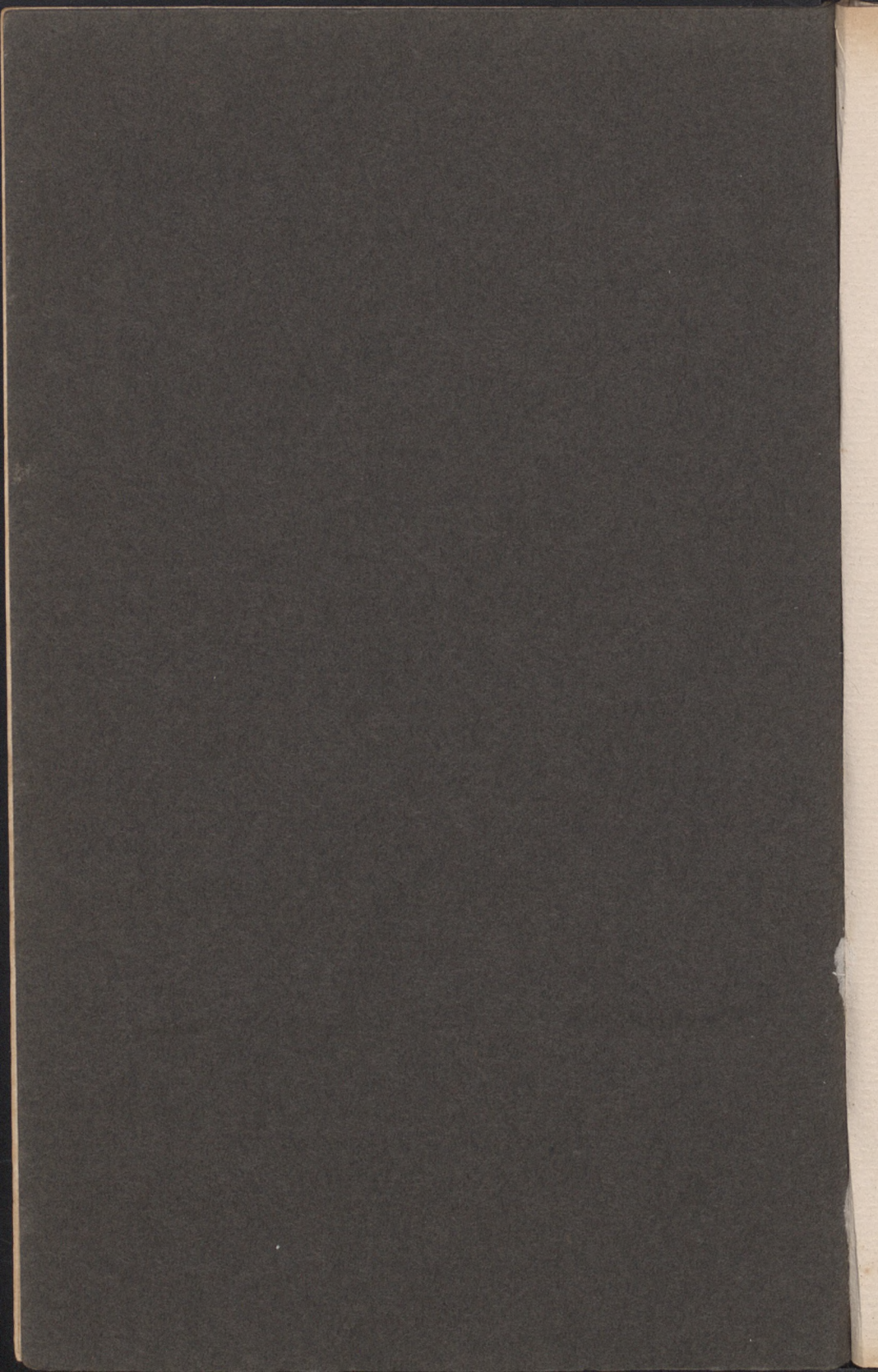
CHURCHES AND A CASTLE





No. 14.—The Frauenthor, Danzig.





Churches and a Castle

TOWERING in the midst of this town of many noble buildings, and dwarfing the tallest houses, the three great churches of St. John and St. Mary and St. James are the crown and glory of Danzig. I will not attempt to describe to those more learned than myself their distinguishing characteristics. The first time I saw this "Baltic style"—I mean with the eye that *sees*—was at Thorn when on the evening of our arrival there we saw the Johannis Kirche.

As we approached it in the failing light, it towered up before us, stern and very simple, the dark red mass of it imposing by its very sobriety. Inside, we found ourselves apparently in three aisles of immensely tall white pillars. The whole interior of the church was grey-white, ivory-white, or tinted with clear green or rose where the light touched it through the coloured windows. In the beginning of dusk it seemed a building hewn out of a grey-white cloud, fading and unsubstantial. Only the western windows, blazing like rubies and emeralds and topaz, appeared more solid than the walls them-

selves. There are two aisles, in height equal with the nave; no transepts. The pillars, flat-sided, without a curve, spring upwards to a height that is nine times greater than their diameter, and spread themselves in exquisite fan-shapes, forming the roof.

There are three great churches of this pattern in Thorn, and we tried in vain to buy any photographs which showed the design of the interior at all, and the beauty of those white columns soaring and singing. No photographer in Thorn seemed to know how beautiful they were; all we could find was postcards of every flamboyant and trivial carved wooden shrine and altar at the foot of the pillars.

In Thorn is a statue of Copernicus, the Polish astronomer, who was born there, and a fine old Rathaus of the same character as the churches, and above the river are old ramparts with red-brick towers over the gates like those at Cracow.

At Marienwerder (Kwidzyn), a small town not far from Thorn, there are a Bishop's Palace and a Cathedral of the same type, but the interior, being restored, is of new red brick, distracting and unpleasant to the eye.

To Marienberg, another small town, we made an excursion in order to see "the grandest mediæval secular edifice in Germany," the fortress of the Teutonic Knights and the residence of the Grand Master. Half palace and half fortress, and covering

a low hill beside the river Nogat, it is indeed a grandiose and colossal pile, and if this were in any sense a guide-book, it would be my duty to describe it in detail; but as I am merely an irresponsible, indolent reviewer of things as I pass by them, I will only mention that there is a very fine council-hall of the Knights to be seen there, and upon the outside wall of the chapel a gigantic figure of the Virgin in mosaic, probably Venetian work of the fourteenth century. Our enjoyment of the place was spoiled by the bad taste (obtruding itself everywhere) of the nineteenth-century restorers: the most distressingly ugly thing of all was a stained-glass window, to which the guide proudly called our attention as being the gift of Wilhelm II.

Yet of this ugly window I have a not unfriendly recollection, for it was there that we began to make acquaintance with two people among the little herd of visitors that the custodian was leading. These were a mother and a boy of about seventeen, and we had noticed them already as looking somehow "different" from the rest. They were neither among the learned and pedantic, nor the dull unappreciative sheep of the flock, and while these mechanically ejaculated "*Schön*" beneath the window, an involuntary glance of sympathy passed between us and them. Then I asked a question of the guide and failed to make him understand it, and the Polish lady (for of course she was a Pole) volunteered an

explanation. And before we had exchanged a dozen sentences it appeared (equally, of course) she was a cousin of acquaintances of ours and lived in Posen close to a house we had visited. I remembered to have seen her sister at D——, and to have heard that she was the daughter of a Russian Pole who had died an exile in Siberia after the Insurrection. We left the castle together, and walked down the market street of the little town, the houses of which have deep arcades before them, and then on the sunny side we found a little coffee-house and ordered a second edition of breakfast.

The boy was charming, not shy, in spite of his studious air; and though he looked as though he had been working too hard at exams., full of vivacity and laughter. They returned to Danzig as we did, and told us they were staying there two or three days on their way homewards from Zoppot.

In the train, the boy told us how Thorn and Danzig and all this country were part of the possessions which the Polish kings—rashly hospitable—bestowed in the thirteenth century upon the Teutonic Knights, that they might convert—or conquer—the heathen Borussians and Lithuanians while they themselves were fighting in the east and south of their wide kingdom. “So they were what you call vassals,” he said. “They were called Knights of the Cross, and were under vows not to trade or marry. But they changed all that, and became the greatest

enemies of the Polish kings ; and then there were bloody and fierce battles, till at Grünwald the Poles gained a great victory. That battle was in 1410. You must have seen the great monument of it at Cracow that Paderewski gave. After that the whole of West Prussia was Polish, and remained so until the Partition in 1772."

"But Danzig was one of the Hanseatic Towns?"

"Yes, and the inhabitants hated the rule of the Knights, and after the battle of Grünwald, they rose up and destroyed the Knights' castle beside their town, and drove them all out, and placed themselves as a 'free city' under Polish protection. Then in 1795 it became German."

"And then the French took it?"

"In 1807, under Marshal Le Fabre. He was made Duke of Danzig. Then, after the Retreat from Moscow, Danzig became German once more."

"Just a hundred years ago."

"They are celebrating the centenary of the Battle of Leipzig now, as you know," said Mme. ——. "For all the other nations it meant victory, but for us defeat, because the Poles hoped such great things from Napoleon and fought for him up to the last. And *we* are commemorating in that battle our Prince Joseph Poniatowski—you have heard of him?—how brave and handsome and charming he was, and how all the ladies were in love with him? and——"

“ But how splendidly he died ! ” the boy broke in impetuously. “ Fighting all day, wounded but still fighting, when he saw that all was lost, he spurred his horse and plunged into the river, and was drowned rather than live defeated ! ”

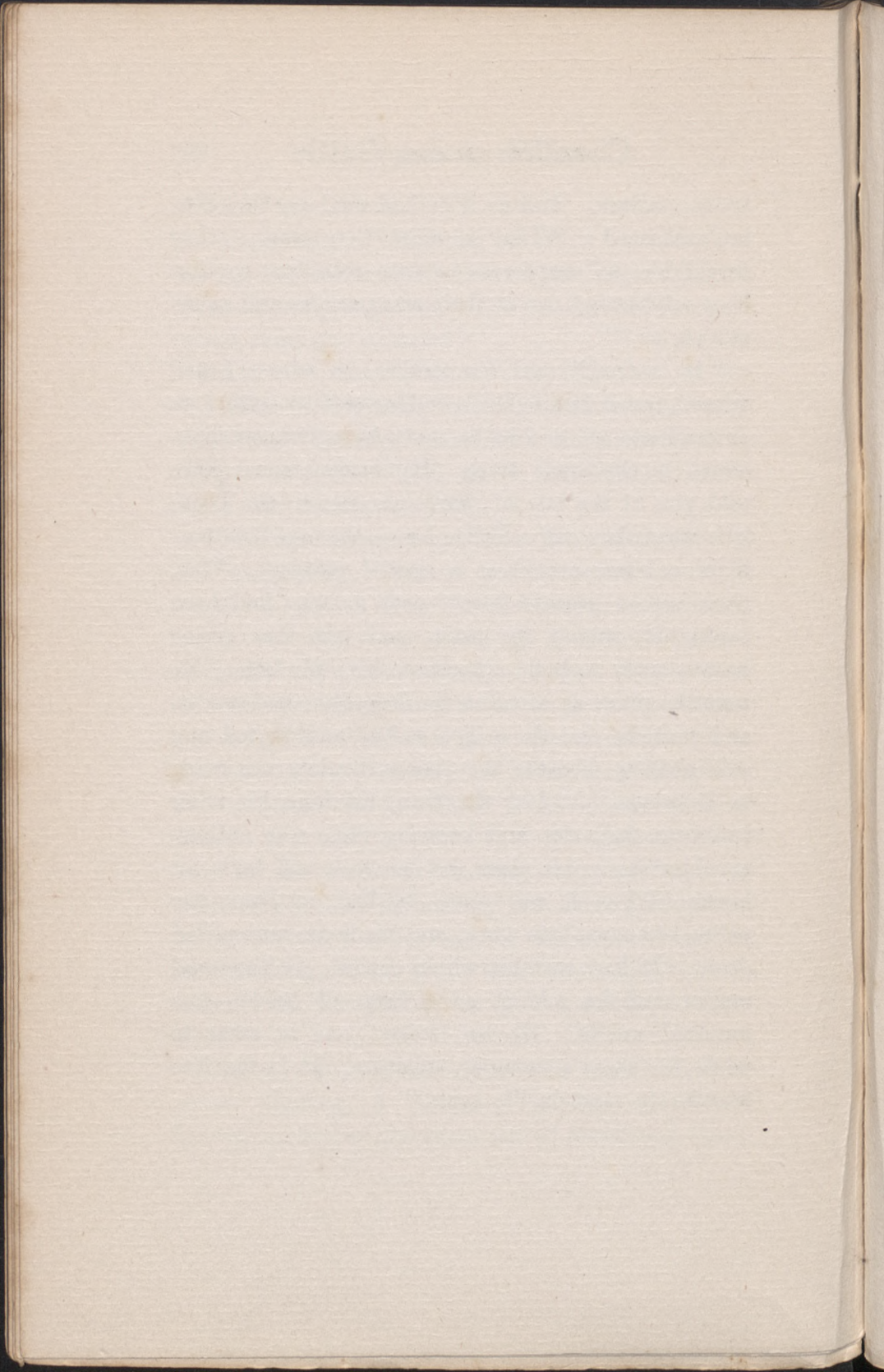
Mme. — asked us to stay with her on our way back to England ; indeed I believed she really wished it. The boy wrote down the name of their village, first the Polish, then the German name, which was entirely different.

“ It is just a new name they have invented, ” he said disgustedly, “ but we are compelled to use it, because they want all the Polish names to be abolished. No, it was only a few years ago that they changed them all, and quite suddenly. A poor woman near us went and asked for a ticket to the village where her daughter lived, and gave the name by which she had always known it. The booking-clerk—the *Prussian*—said, ‘ There is no village of that name. ’ She didn’t know what the German name was, so she wandered up and down not knowing what to do, until by and by the clerk pointed out to her a train just leaving the station, and said to her, laughing, ‘ That is the train you ought to have taken. ’ He thought it was quite a good joke, you know.”

The boy had turned white with anger while he spoke. Sighing, I wondered whether his future life was to be yet one more tale of revolt and heart-

broken failure. And as if he had read my thoughts, he exclaimed: "That is what they want: they would like to exasperate us into rebellion, so that they might send one of their great armies and exterminate us!"

"It is true," said his mother, to whom I had turned, as if hoping for a milder view, "—either to exterminate us, or else to make living impossible—which is the same thing. My cousins must have told you of the law of 1907—no, not in the Diet; it is what they call a Police Law—that no Pole may build a house except as a special privilege. Well, there was a peasant-farmer near us who had been saving his money for years, and just that spring he was ready to build a house on his little farm. He sent the plans as usual to the inspector, and waited and waited; and the police waited and waited and said nothing, because they knew this law was going to be made. At last the man, thinking his affair had been forgotten and knowing there was nothing to object to in his plans, set to work and built his house. When it was quite finished, in June, the police law came into force, and his house was pulled down. It had cost his whole capital, six thousand marks, and he sold it as a heap of bricks—two hundred marks. He was ruined, and he came to work for us as a common labourer. It is too late for him to start in life again."



CONVERSATIONS SENTIMENTALES

Conversations Sentimentales

THAT evening Judith read to me from her little collection of aphorisms this of Leopardi—"The heaviest burden men can lay upon us is—not that they persecute us with hatred and scorn, but that they thus plant hatred and scorn in our souls."

"Then we are really injured," she went on, shutting the book. "They've put upon us a sort of black corroding stain, that, if it can't be washed clean, will eat up the very fabric of our souls."

"But oh, the pity of it!" I said. "That the good can be injured by the bad in that way through no fault of their own! But the Poles—that's the most astonishing of all—they are *not* stained and corroded. If England had suffered the wrongs that Poland has—my goodness! what a black and bitter heart I would have! But I don't believe that they have."

"No," she answered thoughtfully, "it does seem to be true what you said once, that they have a kind of sweetness, a kind of unearthliness—I wonder——"

She gave a little puzzled sigh, smiled, and bade me good-night.

The next evening we went to Mme. K——'s salon to bid her good-bye, and while she and Judith were discussing and comparing specimens of lace, the boy, sitting at the piano and playing softly and dreamily, told me stories of Russian Poland, "the Kingdom," from which his family was banished,—a story of the punishment of a soldier who had spat at an officer who spoke insulting words about Poland—too horrible to remember. The story of his great-uncle who had been exiled for life to Siberia because it was said that fugitives after the Insurrection had taken refuge in his woods and he had not denounced them. A story of Polish rebels who discovered amongst them a spy in the pay of the Russian police, and hanged him in a wood. After a time the land-owner of the estate ordered the body to be taken down and buried, and this order, in spite of clear proofs of his innocence, caused him to be accused of complicity in the "execution." "They would use any pretext," he said, "to get rid of one of us, and so he was found guilty, and exiled."

Suddenly turning towards me, in a low passionate voice he said: "Do you wonder that we *hate* our rulers?"—and before I knew it I had answered: "No, I don't wonder; I hate them too!"

He ceased speaking, and played for several minutes mournful, dreamy melodies, as though he would soften the fury of his own thoughts. Then, breaking into a wild and rapid air, he sang—

“Comrade, when my heart breaks,
When mine indignation upholds me no more,
Darken my window, I charge you, and bar my door:
Let me die as the wounded wolf or the bear,
Snarling, dies in his lair!

“Then, then, if my tears flow,
Weep not with me, nor clasp in pity my hand.
Nay, as a solemn priest by my pallet stand,
Calling from hell beneath and from heaven above
Curses on her that I love.”

He rose, a little pale, but smiling. “One of our peasant songs,” he said. “Forgive me for putting it so badly into English!”

CONCLUSIONS

CONFIDENTIAL

Conclusions

I HAD had other invitations to Cracow, but the summer—such as it was—was over; Judith was obliged to return to England, and it would be obviously pleasant and convenient to travel with her. I had received a letter and an invitation from my Aunt Patricia, “although,” she wrote, “you are evidently so deeply captivated by the *charm of manner* of your new friends that you may be hardly willing to return as yet to those who have less of fascination, but more—possibly—of solid worth.”

“Curious,” said Judith, to whom I was reading the letter, “that thoroughly English, that thoroughly Puritan idea of the essential incompatibility of ‘solid worth’ with charm. We all have it—you have it, and I have it—in the far depths of our minds—Distrust of the Beautiful—a secret conviction that pleasantness *must* be allied with insincerity.”

“And yet,” I said, “is there really any truth in it at all? I am sure a hard and unsympathetic manner is often merely a mask that conceals a cold and unfeeling heart. If we are deceived by appearances, it is only because we haven’t the *eyes* to see

those appearances truly. 'We all look what we are, my dear,' an old parson-friend of mine said to me when I had confessed that I 'didn't like so-and-so, he looked such a brute.' " And as far as my experience goes—my deep and vast experience!—I would say that the Poles are just as unworldly, just as kind-hearted, as sympathetic, and heroic, and—and—as *beautiful*, in fact, as they look."

Judith laughed, and went to pack her boxes, and I sat down to consider, and make my decision.

I was just a little home-sick, yes! And I was tired, not by travelling, but by the traveller's constant need of circumspection—the necessity of using my wits in order to conduct myself not foolishly, to adjust myself harmoniously in the business of every day.

I thought of home in an English village, how easy life was there, how honest, how comely! I thought of those white cliffs we do not look upon without a ridiculous thrill of love and pride, and an inward "act of devotion."

Besides, my summer clothes were all worn out, my shoes, like those of the Gibeonites, "old and clouted by reason of the very long journey." It was time I went home, embraced my kinsfolk, bought some new frocks, heard the new plays, studied the publishers' autumn announcements.

Having come to this conclusion, I let Judith start off alone for Berlin, while I, against all sense and

Conclusions

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reason, still bewitched, still charmed by a people I could never really know, whose language I should never speak, whose sorrows I could never hope to lighten, turned again eastwards and wandered once more into the Kingdom of Poland.

HISTORICAL POSTSCRIPT

Historical Postscript

THE outbreak of the present war has at last lifted that heavy veil of silence with which the Powers of Europe have surrounded and obscured the Polish question during the past fifty years. Since three of the present protagonists held each a part of what the Russian Commander-in-Chief has vividly described as the "living flesh of Poland," it was natural, though not excusable, that they refrained, before the menace of a common catastrophe unlocked their lips, from recalling that "greatest crime in history," that brutal and bloody negation of the *droit de vivre*—the literal rending of Poland limb from limb. Now that Poland is again an enormous battlefield, with three nations fighting on its soil, the sight of 600,000 Polish soldiers in arms, not against their common enemy but against each other, brother against brother, helps one to realise to the full the crime against humanity perpetrated by the great Powers in the past.

Time has done its work. Fifty years of silence have obliterated even the name of Poland from the minds of many people in Western Europe. The

majority of the English nation is ignorant of the past glory of Poland, equally as of the sorrow and suffering that have been its lot during the last 150 years. For forty years scarcely a dozen books on the Polish question have been published in England ; scarcely an English writer, with the exception of those few who have travelled in Poland, have troubled to mention that unhappy country.

To know a people one must not only have learned its history but have lived in its midst, on the soil and among the surroundings of its forefathers. To understand it one must either be its honest hater, or its fervent friend. The Author of this book, to the gratification of her Polish friends, has adopted the second attitude in respect to Poland, and in the work to which I have the honour to add this historical postscript, she has dealt faithfully and sympathetically with the buffeted and betrayed, but still unbroken, soul of the Polish nation, a people which, in good report or ill, in its highest or its lowest periods of prosperity, has always kept untarnished its noblest national traditions, and but once, in one brief and bitter moment, has proved unfaithful to itself.

THE KINGDOM OF POLAND

During almost all her existence as a nation, Poland remained utterly and scrupulously honest to herself and to her neighbours. Since her final struggle, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, to emerge

into history at last an united nation, she never made war that she might acquire a neighbour's territory, or crush its national spirit. Her only desire was to live and to let live, to preserve her unity, and to fulfil such duty as she had, by accident of birth and position, towards her faith, her traditions, and her share of Western culture. And this duty was difficult of fulfilment. On the one hand, she constituted the rearguard of Occidental culture and civilisation; and on the other hand she was the ever-watchful outpost of the Slav and Latin worlds—united and crystallised in herself—against the brutal and barbarous military despotism then, as now, existing in and represented by the kingdom of Prussia. Her resistance to this menace constitutes the whole of Poland's history since the first battle waged in 963 by the first Polish ruler, Mieszko, until the present day.

From the sixth century, the German advance in Slav countries became every year more far-reaching and irresistible. The Germans had already conquered Mecklenburg and Brandenburg, exterminated the northern Serbs and the Polabians, killing men, women and children, when at last they found a barrier in the Polish state. Under the rule of the first two Polish kings, Mieszko and Boleslaw the Brave, Poland resisted their attacks, and after many battles emerged victorious.

A Christian country, owing allegiance directly to

Rome, Poland was the extreme outpost of Roman Christianity: even in religious matters she repelled the influences of Germany, and as early as 1125 established an independent Church under the Archbishop of Poznan (Posen) subject only to the Pope. It is worth noting in this connection that her conversion to Christianity was mainly the work of French (Provençal) and Italian monks and missionaries. Of these early pioneers of religion and civilisation, hardly twenty per cent. were German.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were the most difficult times in Poland. She had then first to establish her internal unity in the face of the ever-growing power of the Germans and (from the beginning of the thirteenth century) the periodical Tartar invasions.

In accordance with Slav custom, which divided a dead ruler's estate equally among his sons, Poland was soon split up into principalities, small in size but large in number. This division, however, had the double advantage of preventing the growth (as in other countries) of a feudal system, and of helping thus early to realise the democratic ideal.

THE TEUTONIC KNIGHTS

The ruler who finally re-united most of the Polish territory (with the exception of Silesia, which has remained in the hands of germanized Polish princes until the present day; though even now, the Polish population there amounts almost to one and a half

million) was Wladislaw the Short (Lokietek). During his reign the first war between Poland and the Teutonic Knights began (1326-1333).

The career of this Order is interesting. In 1226, Conrad, a Polish prince, too weak to repel the repeated attacks of the pagan Prussians, whom two crusades called by Pope Honorius III (1219-1222) had been unable to crush, invoked the assistance of the Order of Teutonic Knights, presenting them with a castle and extensive lands. In the course of the following fifty years the Knights succeeded in conquering the Prussians; but, instead of converting them to Christianity, they proceeded to oppress them and germanize their country. Not content with this, the Knights soon began to make periodical raids in Poland—a habit that directly provoked war between themselves and the Poles, who finally defeated them at Plowce.

Kasimir the Great followed his father Wladislaw on the Polish throne. From his reign dates the real intellectual life of Poland. Kasimir caused the Polish constitution to be laid down in the Statute-Book of Wislica (1347); and in 1364 the University of Cracow was founded. By inheritance, he acquired the province of Red Russia (the western part of modern Galicia) which thenceforward, until the end, remained a part of the Polish kingdom. The twenty years following the death of Kasimir mark a lull in Polish political life, although the first attempt was already being made (1374) to transform the old

despotism into some more democratic form of Government, by extending and increasing the numbers of the nobility.

UNION WITH LITHUANIA

With the accession of Jadwiga, and her marriage with the Lithuanian prince, Wladislaw Jagello, the history of Poland arrives at its turning point. The Lithuanians, who had frequently rejected the Christian religion, when offered them at the point of the sword by the Teutonic Knights, at once peacefully accepted it from Polish hands, and shortly afterwards concluded a lasting Union with Poland.

This Union, sealed at Horodlo, was quite unique in its way. Here were two free and (at that time) powerful nations, possessing territory greater in extent than that of Germany to-day, deciding for good or ill to join their forces and their lands, forget their ancient feuds and work in peace for the progress of their civilisation. That the leading motive for this step was the mutual *entente* and affection of the two nations is manifest from the terms of the Act of Horodlo itself, which begins with the following high invocation:—

“Nor can that endure which has not its foundation upon love. For love alone diminishes not, but shines with its own light, makes an end of discord, softens the fires of hate, restores peace in the world, brings together the sundered, redresses wrongs, aids all and injures none. And whoso invokes its aid

will find peace and safety and have no fear of future ill."

The Union successfully passed the test of time, and until the fall of Poland, the Poles and Lithuanians lived in complete unity, so much so that the joint kingdom was considered as one and indivisible.

The rule of the House of Jagellon marked the climax of Poland's greatness. The military importance of the Teutonic Knights had been crushed at the victory of Grünwald (1410), and in the peace treaty concluded at Torun (Thorn) in 1466 the Grand Master of the Order surrendered utterly to the King of Poland, acknowledging him as suzerain and ceding the provinces of Pomerania, West Prussia and Chelmno (Kulm); while, fifty years later, in the Treaty of Cracow, the last Grand Master of the Order, Albrecht, accepted Prussia at the hands of the King of Poland as a feudal tributary state, and homage was done to the kings of Poland by every Prussian prince until the end of the seventeenth century. During the reign of the Jagellon dynasty, the principality of Inflant became tributary to Poland, as well as Moldavia and Valachia. Sons of Polish kings ruled over Hungary and Bohemia, and Polish influence extended far beyond her own territories, which never before or since this period were greater in size. From Danzig to the Carpathians, from Brandenburg to Czernihow, from Plock to the Black Sea, the Polish kingdom extended. The Tartars were

repulsed, the Germans crushed; and the whole country was consolidated by the Treaty of Lublin (1569), which established for ever the Union of Poland and Lithuania under one king, one treasury and one Parliament, though with separate administrations.

A REPUBLIC OF NOBLES

The transformation of Poland from an autocratic monarchy to a constitutional state was really very rapid. As early as 1454 many privileges had been conferred upon the middle classes and provincial Diets had been instituted; while in 1505 the Charter "Nihil Novi" provided that no new laws should be issued without the assent of the Senate and the deputies of the nobility. It must here be explained that the Polish word "nobility"—Szlachta—has a much wider significance than the similar expressions in English or French; and that the size of the Polish nobility was a question of the utmost importance in Poland.

In 1537, for instance, more than 150,000 nobles were assembled at Lwów (Lemberg) under arms, each of them having the right to vote. Estimating that each of these deputies represented a family of six persons (a number not exaggerated at this period) it may be reckoned that the Szlachta included over 1,200,000 persons or one-eighth of the total population of Poland, which then did not exceed ten millions. In a country where one man in eight was a noble,

the nobility naturally became the leading factor in its political life ; and Poland, on the death of Sigismund August, the last of the Jagellon dynasty, became a republic of nobles, with an elected king as its head. These kings, from the time of Henri de Valois, swore to observe certain conditions laid down on their election, which conditions were that the Crown might not become hereditary, that the sovereign must in all legislative matters consult the Senate, that the "Sejm," or parliament, must be convoked at least every two years, and that the nation reserved the right to withdraw their allegiance if this trust were betrayed.

Parliament became now the most important political institution in Poland ; its importance being shared by its members. Not unnaturally, the Polish constitution, springing originally from the commendable desire to be just to all, and still more to do harm to none, fell into the habit of being just and unoffending to all but itself. From this kind of unpractical altruism, and from the inception of the notorious *liberum veto*, which empowered a single deputy to defeat the resolution of a majority in Parliament, grew the confusion and chaos which partially obscured Poland at a later period.

POLE AND MUSCOVITE

Meanwhile the country flourished under the reign of Stephan Batory, and under the kings of the Waza

dynasty, growing finally to her greatest glory under King John Sobieski, who delivered Vienna from the Turks in 1683. At the same time, however, Poland suffered much in the wars with Sweden, and more particularly with the Muscovites.

From the long struggle with the Tartars, the great dukes of Moscow had emerged as the most powerful Russian princes, and their final success helped to transfer the centre of Russian political and commercial activity from south to north, from Kieff to Moscow, from the Little Russians to the Great Russians. The grand-dukes proclaimed themselves Emperor of Russia, and later asserted their sovereignty over such Russian provinces as were governed by Poland. In this fact may be traced the political origin of the never-ending wars which began at this time between the Poles and the Great Russians, though one must seek deeper for the real and racial reason.

At this period, as later, Russia was the most autocratic and Poland the most democratic state in Europe. Moreover, the clarions were sounding each day more shrilly the call to arms for the great impending battle between East and West. Polish culture was Latin and its faith seated at Rome; Russian culture was Greek and the source of its religion Byzantium. Poland had developed in itself to the utmost the elements of the civilisation of Rome, Italy and France, with their intrinsic tolerance and

democratic concepts, while Russia, under the double influence of Asia and the Greek church at Constantinople, represented the most rigid autocracy in religion and state.

If the political constitution of Poland at this period may be roughly but not inaccurately defined as anarchical, the Russian state must be described as a bureaucracy. While Poland was rapidly developing along the lines of individual liberty and communal culture, Russia held fast to its Oriental despotism and its dreams of territorial expansion.

The internal history of Poland progressed on the same lines as that of England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and her citizens enjoyed extensive civil and political liberties. The kingdom, however, had the supreme and almost insurmountable disadvantage of having no natural boundaries or defences, and being surrounded by three despotic Powers, capable of expanding only across the Polish frontiers.

The growing internal disorder in Poland was not greater than that in France under the Regent or under Choiseul, nor greater than that in South Germany during the same period, but it developed in a direction opposite and hostile to that taken in neighbouring countries. The fall of Poland was inevitable. Three times—in 1772, in 1793, and in 1795—was the kingdom partitioned, falling victim to Prussia (once tributary to Poland herself), to

Russia, which had emerged only three centuries before from barbarism, and to Austria.

THE FALL OF POLAND

Whatever may have been the cause of the fall of Poland, it was not lack of courage. The first attempt at regeneration was made by the so-called Confederation of Bar, which engaged in a guerilla warfare lasting from 1768 to 1772. When this failed, the Poles turned their attention to the pursuit of education, instituting a splendid system of primary education, the first of its kind in the world. Then followed the famous Constitution of May 3, 1791, a most comprehensive charter of popular rights and liberties. Three years later, the immortal Kosciuszko led an insurrection which at first achieved considerable success, but finally this, too, failed.

In the hope that the Napoleonic *régime* would restore independence to their oppressed fellow-countrymen, a Polish legion was formed in Italy to fight with the French. As many as 20,000 Poles joined the ranks, and took part in the battles at Civita, Castellane, Novi, Marengo and Hohenlinden. In 1803, however, they were shipped to San Domingo, where most of them died, more from disease than from wounds. In 1807, Napoleon again appealed, through General Dombrowski, for a new Polish Army. In a few months, no less than 26,000 Poles answered the call, and in the same year the Duchy

of Warsaw was formed. All over Europe, from Saragossa to Raszyn, where Colonel Godebski, the "last Polish Knight," was killed, Polish regiments fought side by side with French. In that final disastrous march on Moscow, over 80,000 Poles took part, and Prince Joseph Poniatowski, Maréchal de France, dying on the battlefield, gave utterance to the following famous words: "God gave me the honour of Poland to guard; only to Him I give it back." All the world knows the terrible march of that broken army back to France.

The fall of Napoleon tolled the knell for the awakened hopes of Poland. Later, Czar Alexander wrote that good fortune would not change his goodwill for the Poles, and that they might expect everything from his magnanimity. There is no need to describe the form that his magnanimity took.

The Treaty of Vienna gave one limb of the body of Poland to Austria, another to Prussia, and another, under the title of the Kingdom of Poland, to Russia; while Cracow became a republic. This treaty, guaranteeing the constitution of the kingdom of Poland and of the republic of Cracow, and further guaranteeing that the Polish national institutions, language and religion should be preserved inviolate, was signed by all the great Powers of Europe—Great Britain, France and the three nations who divided the spoil. Thus a legal treaty sanctioned a political crime—and even this was not kept!

POLAND AND RUSSIA

Meanwhile the kingdom of Poland, as newly formed under Russian rule, was granted a constitution (drafted by Prince Adam Czartoryski, a great Polish statesman) comparatively liberal in its terms; and was allowed to retain her national army. The Czar was crowned King of Poland, and it was promised that the nine governments of Lithuania and Ukraina would be incorporated in the kingdom.

This promise was never fulfilled, and soon all these rights and privileges were withdrawn. Regardless of the constitution, the government of the country was soon almost entirely in the hands of the Grand Duke Constantine, Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army, and the notorious Nowosilcow, the commissioner appointed by the Czar. The privileges of the Press were withdrawn, and a rigid censorship was established; the country was over-run by secret police; many schools were closed and others harshly conducted; the patriotic section of the army was so cruelly treated that many officers retired or committed suicide; and the right of free speech was rigidly suppressed, in Parliament as well as outside.

The year 1830, that year of revolutions, witnessed in Poland an insurrection which dragged on for many months, and was only finally quelled by the harshest measures. Those of the rebels who were unable or unwilling to flee the country were executed or exiled to

Siberia. No less than 45,000 Poles in Lithuania and Ukraina were banished to the remotest parts of Russia; the children of Polish soldiers were transferred to Russian military colonies; members of the Uniate sect were bloodily persecuted; the property of the rebels was confiscated; and Poland was declared in a state of martial law which lasted until 1856. Many Polish intellectuals forced to flee the country were cordially received in England and France. In this country, Lord Dudley Coutts-Stuart, David Urquhart, Thomas Campbell and others were prominent in this work of hospitality. The Association of the Friends of Poland was founded and obtained a Government grant of over £10,000 annually for the aid of the ruined exiles. Equally hospitable were the French Government and nation to the Poles.

From 1830 to 1863, hardly a year passed that did not witness a Polish rising, each provoking Russia to more terrible retribution than the last. On the slightest pretext or on none, Poles were hanged or shot after drum-head court-martial. The less fortunate were sent to the salt mines of Siberia. The least of the liberties granted as "privileges" to the Poles was withdrawn, and a veritable Reign of Terror began.

Thus the Russian Government provoked the second great rising in Poland, the Revolution of 1863. Without arms or money or efficient organisation, the youth of Poland fought for almost two years against

the most powerful army in the world. During that tremendous time of heroic but hopeless rebellion, many names—Langiewicz, Traugutt and Hauke (from whom the Princes of Battenberg descend)—became enshrined in the popular traditions of the people.

The years following 1863 were the bitterest in Polish history. As a result of the revolution, about 30,000 Poles were killed, and over 150,000 sent to Siberia. The loss of many fortunes was the least of the heavy toll of retribution (or rather revenge) exacted by Russia. Particularly heavy taxes were imposed on the Poles; they were prohibited to purchase land in Lithuania or Ukraina; their faith was persecuted; their bishops were exiled; their schools were Russianised; the use of their language in public was forbidden; and even the name of their country was changed to "the Vistula Provinces." At the beginning of the present century there were actually fewer schools in Russian Poland than at the end of the sixteenth century; while the proportion of railways is to-day the lowest in Europe, there being relatively less mileage in Russian Poland at the present time than there was in Roumania in 1875.

But these commercial restrictions, like the most rigorous acts of revenge that followed each popular stand for liberty, were all in vain. Polish nationality resolutely refused to be exterminated, and nearly two centuries of oppression have left Poland still a potent name and nation in the politics of Europe.

POLAND AND PRUSSIA

The Prussian policy towards the Poles, no less harsh but pursued with greater cunning, was equally ineffectual. The Prussian *régime* in Posen began with assurances of goodwill and clemency; but already in those early days of the German Empire war had been declared against the Poles—a war of extermination.

The Poles were by degrees ousted from the Government offices; the Polish language was further and further banned in the schools; public administration indulged in a grievous policy of provocation, inflicting upon Poles every hardship and annoyance with which it was possible to harass them without openly stepping out beyond the pale of apparent legality.

Presently a number of learned men, with the historians Mommsen and von Treitschke at their head, set about elaborating a theory concerning nations of inferior quality—“*der minderwertigen Nation*”—which, calculated to justify the Government, urged it further still in its anti-Polish policy.

Action inevitably provokes re-action. Prussian aggression did not fail to call forth Polish resistance, and it ensued that, in spite of growing oppression, the Polish element did not diminish in Posnania. On the contrary it literally gained ground. And there was a slight increase of territory in Polish hands.

Realising that repression within the bounds of the law was of little avail, the Prussian Government then bethought itself of methods unheard of in

history. It set about preparing Laws of Exception, and this in time of peace, against subjects guiltless of insurrection, who had never raised their arms in self-defence!

The first act of this monstrous policy was the expulsion from Posnania of all Poles not actually Prussian subjects. Following upon a ministerial decree dated March 25, 1885, over 30,000 men, women and children were put across the frontier before the year's close, with orders never to return. Some 10,000 more followed later. Most of these exiles had been in the country since childhood, and there possessed what made life worth living—family, friends, flourishing industries, even property.

Strong feelings of indignation were aroused in the Reichstag, and, in spite of a violent speech from Bismarck, a motion by Dr. Windhorst was carried (January 26, 1886) condemning the expulsion of the Poles as “unjust and detrimental to the interests of the Empire.” On April 26, 1886, the Prussian Diet—which, elected on a very narrow franchise, does not actually represent the country—passed the Colonisation Bill. A Royal Commission for the Colonisation of the Eastern Marches was empowered to purchase Polish lands and convert them into German settlements. For this purpose, credit of 100 million marks was voted, and this, by successive instalments, reached a total of 1,000 million. Here was war undisguised.

Let it be understood that commerce and industry were at that time but feebly developed in Posnania. It was the earth that fed the Pole ; nurse as well as mother, the earth represented his whole existence. Wrench a Pole from his soil and you send him adrift, like a leaf torn from its tree, to do battle with unknown winds. This new law was not aimed primarily at the rich landowner, but at the son of the soil. It was intended to dismay the peasant-owner of humble acres, to drive the poor hired-labourer afield.

The Pole was struck, therefore, at his most vulnerable point. He had already been forced by poverty to sell land : between the years 1861 and 1886, Polish property in Posnania had diminished by some 730,000 acres (293,378 hectares). The Commission, between 1886 and 1897, bought 335,383 hectares.

And yet the total acreage of property in Polish hands was not seen to diminish. Once more repression had been met by self-defence. Private enterprise, admirably organised, had met the Royal Commission on its own ground ; the Pole had begun to buy out the German proprietor settled in Posnania ; and presently the Pole bought out the German a little faster than the German bought out the Pole. Between 1897 and 1900 the Germans bought 32,697 hectares, and the Poles 63,314—a net gain of 30,617.

The Prussian Government was forced to recognise that its policy was not quite a success. Therefore it set about improving matters. The Royal Com-

mission was henceforth to concentrate its efforts in those districts where the Polish element was weakest. Later, in order to strengthen the position of the German settler, a system of entail was introduced into the small German colonies (June 8, 1896) by which the Government reserved to itself an *Anerbenrecht*, a right of pre-emption over these properties at every change of hands. Since that date, land once acquired by the Commission is lost to the Pole for good and all.

Still the German colonist came forward in disappointingly small numbers, whereas the Polish peasant, enriched by labour abroad, bought up more and more of his native soil. So a new Law of Exception was voted (June 30, 1907). In long-winded and deliberately involved phraseology, it forbade a Polish peasant to build on his own land without first obtaining official authorisation. This meant that, after toiling all his life to amass a humble fortune, no working man might dream of ending his days beneath a roof of his own, on that modest strip of the land of his fathers which he had bought with his own sweat. Once more the Polish peasant was unconquerable: he fashioned, gipsy-like, a home on wheels, and continued to live on the earth he loved.

The Government, apparently at the end of its resources, now consulted the political economists.

Herr Bernhard (who afterwards received a chair at the Berlin University, in spite of formal opposition

on the part of his future colleagues) was entrusted with the task of studying the situation. The result of his labours, to which were added those of Prof. Ernest Hasse, of Munich, and of Herr Cleinow, served to convince the Prussian Government that the only means of victoriously combating the Polish element was to uproot it from the soil, by brute force if need be.

Then did Prince Bülow introduce a bill, known as the Expropriation Bill. The Government was thereby empowered to take possession of the ancient Polish hereditaments, even if these were not for sale, by the forcible expropriation of the owner. After lengthy discussion, this notorious bill was passed by the Prussian Upper House. It is, perhaps, worth recording that, on this occasion, eighteen Prussian doctors and professors, men of standing in the world of science and of letters, voted for the Government, turning the scale towards injustice. (The bill was passed by a majority of 28.)

The Expropriation Bill was passed (March, 1908) in time of peace, a thing hitherto unheard of in history. It was dictated by sentiments of hatred, not of public utility, and was in fact the culmination of a policy of hatred, striking rich and poor alike, following no logic, either social or socialistic, directed in defiance of the laws of nations against a people who did not even ask for "a place in the sun" but passionately desired to remain, even under the shadow of afflictions, on the soil of its fathers.

Sketches in Poland

The repression of all legitimate manifestations of national life had meanwhile been keeping pace with economic oppression.

There is no need perhaps to refer to the dark period of the "Kultur-kampf," with its imprisonments, its persecution of the clergy, its expulsion of Bishops. This movement, although it struck Poland at the heart, cannot be classed as purely anti-Polish; it was a part of Bismarck's general policy, and was aimed against German Catholicism in general, not against Polish Catholicism in particular. The "Kultur-kampf" served to strengthen among the Poles not only their faith but their national consciousness. It widened the breach between Pole and German. We find, for instance, that it directly affected inter-marriage, marriages between Pole and German having indeed never ceased since then to diminish in numbers.

The struggle between Polish national sentiment and the Prussian Government may be said to have begun in earnest after the "Kultur-kampf" had practically suspended its activities. It was then that the Germanisation of the schools was taken seriously in hand. The Polish language, after having been entirely banished from the secondary schools, was excluded from the elementary schools by a ministerial decree, September 7, 1887. After that date, it could only be used outside the school curriculum, or for the imparting of religious instruction.

In 1905 even this poor privilege disappeared ; and now the sound of the Polish language is no longer heard in Polish village schools, where Polish rate-payers must pay perforce to have their children taught the catechism in a strange, to them almost unintelligible, tongue.

A children's strike ensued. In the course of a year, some 100,000 children refused to be taught religion in a foreign language ; whereupon the Government issued a circular commanding the punishment of these young offenders. First, the parents were taken in hand and heavily fined ; next, the children were dealt with by the teachers and flogged without mercy. The brutality shown at Wreschen, in particular, aroused for a brief instant the indignation of the European Press, which, thrilled with horror at the thought that little children could, in our enlightened days, be crippled for life or even killed outright for patriotic faith, raised a passing outcry and then—forgot !

In order to encourage the Prussian functionary in his unpleasant task of Pole-worrying, every German accepting office in the Polish Provinces receives extra pay (*Ostmarkenzulage*), and German settlers in general are offered substantial advantages.

It is difficult to enumerate the many forms of petty tyranny exercised in Posnania to-day. Letters may not be addressed in Polish ; a Pole wearing Prussian uniform is forbidden the use of his own

tongue with a comrade in barracks ; the language is taboo in public offices ; indeed all officials, down to the humblest, are Germans. Since May 15, 1908, the use of Polish has been strictly forbidden at meetings in all districts where the Poles do not exceed 60 per cent. of the population. Polish towns are disguised by a Prussian veneer ; Polish shop-keepers in Polish streets (bearing German names) display their wares behind German inscriptions. The time-honoured names of Polish towns and hamlets are Germanised beyond recognition ; Innowroclaw, for instance, the seat of an historic Palatinate, has become —Hohensalza.

POLAND AND AUSTRIA

Austria's attitude towards the Poles was just the reverse. She began by treating them harshly, denying them the few liberties preserved by the Treaty of Vienna, and creating discord between the various classes of the population of Galicia. In religious matters alone, sharing with Poland the Roman Catholic faith, she forbore to interfere. Fearing a rising, however, and following her motto "*Divide et impera*," Austria conceived the Macchiavellian idea of setting Pole against Pole, peasant against landlord. The Polish peasants, most of them illiterate, were provided by the authorities with arms and incited to rise against the Polish nobility. At the instigation of a notorious brigand named Szela, over

2,000 men, women and children of the Polish upper classes were killed. At the same time Polish patriots were imprisoned or executed.

Since 1860, however, and more especially since the Charter of 1867, Austria has altered her attitude towards the Poles. From that time, Galicia has enjoyed a fairly liberal measure of autonomy, possessing her own provincial Diet, a Minister for Galicia in Vienna, and the right to administrate internal affairs. The use of the Polish language, as well as of the Ruthenian, is nowhere restricted, and education, science and industry are permitted to progress unhindered.

The success of the measure of self-government enjoyed in Galicia has proved that the Poles are capable of governing themselves under modern conditions. Emerging triumphant from the persecution to which they had been subjected, they compose to-day one of the most rapidly increasing nations in the world, and their population (over twenty-five and a half millions) is the sixth in Europe in size, being over three times greater than that of Belgium, and greater than that of all the Balkan States; while Polish territory is larger than that of the United Kingdom.

POLAND AND THE GREAT WAR

In conclusion, I cannot refrain from quoting the following admirable passage by Mr. Arthur Symons, written in 1908 on the occasion of the latest triumph

Sketches in Poland

of that reign of Prussian tyranny which has culminated in the present war: "The Polish race, to those who are acquainted with it, is the most subtle and most delicate, and one of the noblest and the most heroic races of Europe. Its existence should be as precious to Europe as that of a priceless jewel. The hand of Prussia is stretched out to steal it: the hand of a thief snatching at a jewel. If it is stolen there will be an end to its vivid, exquisite life; its light will be put out, under bolts and bars, in darkness. What has Prussia to do with a race which it cannot understand, a race which desires only peace with freedom?"

Peace with Freedom! As I write, three nations are at war on Polish soil; three millions of men—some of them, by a final bitter blow of fate, Poles—are hurled like wild beasts at each other's throats. Even greater than the terrible suffering of the combatants is the tragedy of Poland, whose most cherished haunts and homes are being violated and destroyed by this red storm of war. Peace with Freedom she passionately prays for—peace for the fulfilment of her fairest traditions, the achievement of her dearest desires; freedom to take again her place, proud and unashamed, as the outpost of that Western culture and Liberty in whose cause she has waged such glorious warfare in the past.

G. E. S.

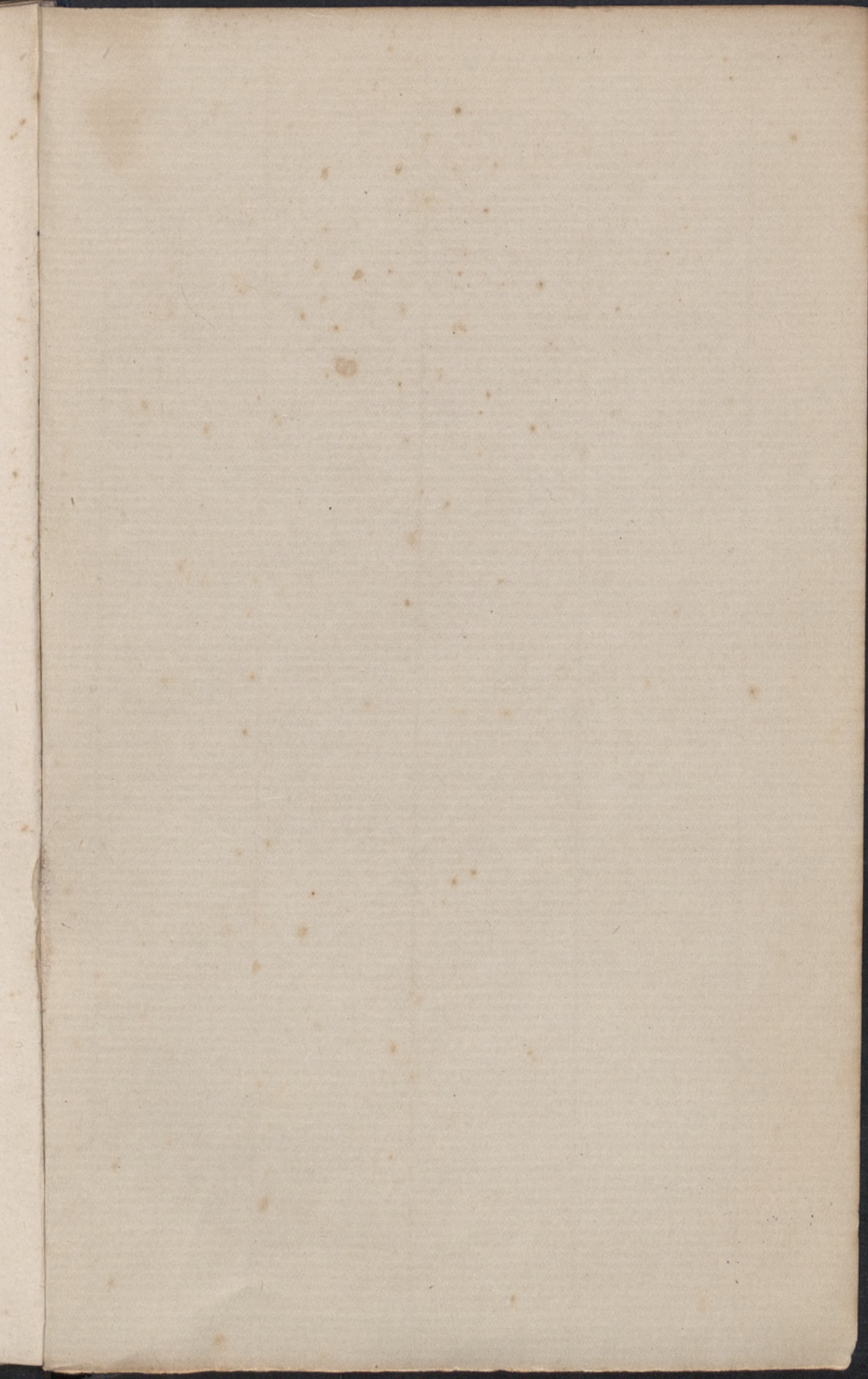
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