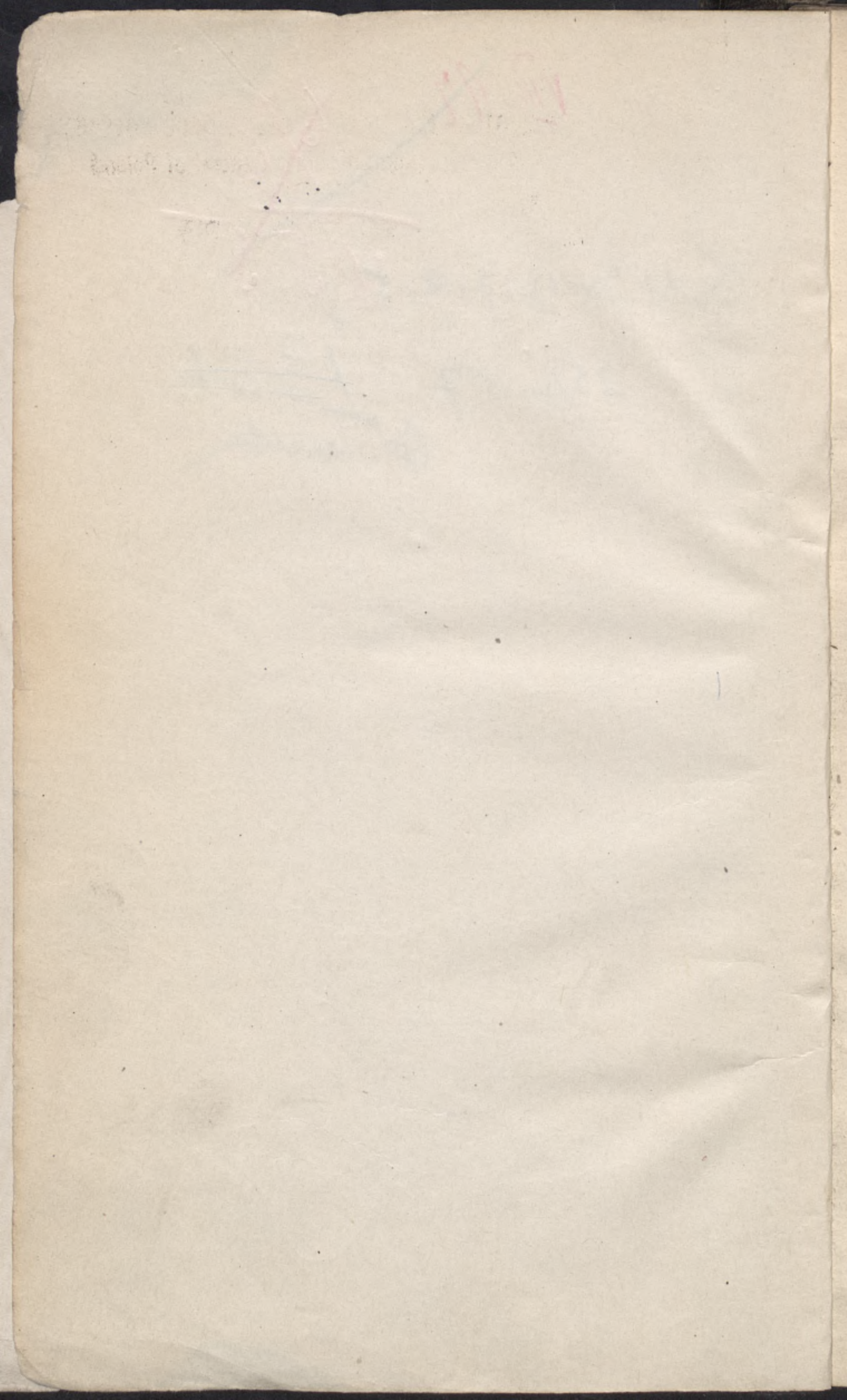
Biblioteka
U. M. K.
Toruń
320370

1326
10.

VIII-97

Dubl. do 17.17.12.5

25/XI 37



BIBLIOTEKA KONSULATU GENERALNEGO POLSKIEGO
Library of the Consulate General of Poland
NO ~~1326~~ 1024
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE NEW POLAND

THE NEW POLAND

BY

CHARLES PHILLIPS, M.A.

LATE MEMBER AMERICAN RED CROSS COMMISSION
TO POLAND

"Life needs not be happy, but heroic"
LEOPOLD STAFF

BIBLIOTEKA KONSULATU GENERALNEGO POLSKIEGO
Library of the Consulate General of Poland
NO 1024
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

Wyłączone ze zbiorów BUW

DUBLET

First published in 1923

BIBLIOTEKA UNIWERSYTECKA w Toruniu

320370

(*All rights reserved*)

W. 1640/60

Printed in Great Britain by
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED, THE GRESHAM PRESS, LONDON AND WOKING

DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY

OF

HELENA MODJESKA

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	SUNRISE	9
II.	THE HEART OF POLAND	20
III.	PADEREWSKI	34
IV.	WORK	68
V.	THE SUPREME TEST	81
VI.	THE CHIEF OF STATE	94
VII.	"PROSHA PANA"	114
VIII.	THE SOUL OF THE EAGLE	126
IX.	HIS BETTER HALF	139
X.	THE FIGHTING WOMAN	148
XI.	THE HOPE OF POLAND	155
XII.	"TAKE A CHILD'S HAND"	165
XIII.	A FIGHTING PACIFIST	176
XIV.	POLAND AT PLAY	191
XV.	ON THE POLISH BOARDS	200
XVI.	THE MIRACLE OF THE VISTULA	213
XVII.	THE LAND AND THE LANDLORD	231
XVIII.	THE LAND AND THE PEASANT	243
XIX.	THE LAND BILL	253
XX.	A PEASANT PRIME MINISTER	263

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXI.	THE JEW AND THE POLE	274
XXII.	THE POLE AND THE JEW	291
XXIII.	THE CRADLE OF THE RACE	309
XXIV.	"THE NEST OF HEROES"	319
XXV.	THE OUTPOST	331
XXVI.	POLAND AND THE SEA	348
XXVII.	KRAKOW	359
XXVIII.	FROM THE HILL OF KINGS	371
XXIX.	HEJNAL	380

THE NEW POLAND

CHAPTER ONE

SUNRISE

I

THE sun came up like a conflagration that October morning as we crossed the Polish frontier. I remember how dark the horizon was all about us, the black belt of the pine forests closing in the level country on every side; how the sun burned through its eastern rim, eating its way up the heavens like a fire; and how a skylark suddenly rose from a meadow beyond the railway yards. We all stood entranced in the doorway of our kitchen car, where breakfast was just preparing, watching the little bird's pulsating rise and listening to its wild, clear, ravishing song. I had never associated larks with what I had fancied were the sombre skies of tragic Poland. Eagles had been fastened in my imagination, and ravens—eagles with strong wings, soaring above the ravens of deserted battlefields. When I told this to our Polish interpreter he smiled. "Yes, there are eagles," he said, "and ravens—plenty of ravens! But there are skylarks too, and nightingales."

The diary I kept on that trip recalls some interesting details of the journey out of Prussia across the Polish border. For me there was a strong personal interest in our coming. The grave of the best friend of my boyhood lay here in Poland, far to the south, in the ancient cemetery at Krakow. Twenty years had passed since the light of Modjeska's eyes had first smiled on me, and the warm notes of her voice had first told me Poland's story. Now I was to actually set foot on the soil she loved.

Two nights before, in my great eagerness, filled with thoughts of her and of a memorable journey into Poland which she describes in her recollections, I had climbed up on the locomotive and had ridden with the engineer and fireman, imagining that we might reach the frontier some time before morning. We would have done so were we riding an express. But this was a heavy Red

Cross convoy of fifty cars, which already had been crawling its slow way across France and Germany for a week and more. We were in Germany then, when I mounted the engine cab. "The dark stretch of level land, cut by the track ahead as if with a knife, seemed to part and open for us as we sped along. . . . We passed through Eisleben, where Luther was born. At midnight we rode into Halle, birthplace of Handel, a scarf of light drawn across the level darkness as we drew up to it, then a deserted station filled with hissing clouds of steam." But Poland was still many miles away. Nevertheless, all the next day, as our heavy train moved slowly along, I felt its nearness.

"There is a big difference between the country we passed through to-day and yesterday's territory," says the diary. "We have left behind us the trim pastoral compactness of endless and numberless gardens and have entered a sort of prairie land—wide levels stretching to wooded horizons; much timber, mostly pine. Then there have been great expanses of sandy soil, one or two bits that looked for all the world like the country one would come across near a sea-coast—sand-dunes and scrubby pines; but mostly the scene has been of ploughed fields rimmed by forests."

But the difference was not in the lands alone. It was in the people. We had come now, in fact, to the scene of a struggle which has lasted for ten centuries and more, the struggle of the Teuton and the Slav. "The people on this side of Germany," my journal reminds me, "are not by any means as friendly as those back towards the Rhinelands. To-day we got none of the greetings or wavings of the hand or hat which marked our passage on the first stages of our journey through Germany. It is as if we were in another country now—a country which somehow revives the disturbing old war-time feelings of a year ago, half forgotten during eight months spent with the Army of Occupation in the beautiful valleys of the Rhine and the Moselle. All along the way, ever since we left Coblenz, if we passed a farmer at a railway crossing, women working in the fields beside the track, or children gathered on the embankment as children will gather the world over to see the train go by, we would be given a smile, a wave, sometimes even a hailing cheer. But to-day it was mostly a dark silence. Even when there was obvious curiosity concerning us, it was quickly coloured with reticence the moment the nature of our mission was known. Why this marked difference from Western Germany?"

II

It was an interesting thing to analyse this attitude toward us of the German of the Eastern provinces, the next door neigh-

bour of the Pole. It was a surprise at first; we did not like to believe in it. Yet there were too many evidences of it to bear denying. Unquestionably they resented us; our American uniforms and the American flag flying from our engine, of course; but most of all, I surmise, it was Poland they resented: the knowledge that we were Poland's friends. It brought home sharply to my mind the age-old antagonism between the Prussians and the Poles.

The man who enters Poland, who would study the Polish people or know the problems with which they are confronted, is obliged to keep in mind this ancient struggle of Teuton and Slav. It is nothing new; it is not a birth of the World War. It dates back to the days of clans and tribes. The fiery sunrise burning through the October woods in the east that Sunday morning seemed to make it all the more clear to me. The east and the symbolic flaming of its heavens represented Russia, where war still went on along frontiers that have neither mountain ranges nor waterways to mark international boundaries; only the human frontier of the worn and bleeding Polish army defending its soil against invasion. But even such wars as Bolshevik Russia then was waging against Poland are ended sooner or later. They are, so to speak, physical wars, and their wounds can be healed. But in this West through which we now were journeying—here the real problem of Poland lies—here the perpetual war continues, the meeting of two peoples who cannot fuse, the domineering Teuton and the dogged, persistent Slav. For ten centuries the German has pressed eastward; for ten centuries the Pole has held his ground. I have not the slightest doubt that he will continue to do so for ever. The sole solution of the problem, the sole hope for peace, is for the German to recognize this fact and leave the Pole alone. Once that degree of understanding is achieved, given the acknowledged tolerance and friendliness of the Slavic nature, the two peoples can live side by side in amicable relationship.

III

Saturday night we had lain for several hours in the railway yards at Lissa, the last German-occupied town before we passed into Poland. And at Lissa, still garrisoned by German troops, still bristling with Prussian officialdom, we had been made to feel more than anywhere else the unfriendly Teuton's frown. At dawn we had been glad to move on. The land that the sunrise revealed to us a little later was not only friendly Poland, but the cradle of the Polish nation. The Poles are "the people of the plains." The word Poland—in Polish *Polska*—means "the country

of the plains." In prehistoric times these level lands that now stretched before us in the growing light of day had all been dark with great forests, in whose scant clearings the Poles had made their first tribal settlements. To the north of us, not very far, was Gniezno, scene of the legendary birth of the White Eagle of Poland, where King Lech, clearing away the trees of the timberland, had found an eagle's nest from which a snow-white eaglet flew on strong young pinions high into the heavens, catching the rosy light of day on his snowy breast.

"This is Sunday," the diary reads, "and there is a Sabbath quiet on the fields. (Sabbath reminds me that yesterday I learned the Polish names for the week-days—with Sabota for Saturday.) I heard a little church bell striking a clear treble note across the meadows, where our train halted at a flagging station. Beautifully tilled, the fields stretch on all sides of us as level as a Wisconsin prairie, and with just the same little roll and lift to them here and there to break the monotony. The roadways are trimmed with neat avenues of trees. Not a sign of a toiler at work. Little groups cross the railroad track and go down a path to Mass. Even the children who are out to drive a cow to pasture are dressed in their Sunday best. The handful of villagers who stood at the railway station we just passed, watching us go by, were likewise togged out in their holiday clothes. I saw a cottager, in shirt-sleeves, bright waistcoat, and black Sunday trousers, standing in the middle of his garden eyeing his potatoes with a speculative gaze. To-morrow, I suppose, he'll go at his digging. His woman was at the doorway in her Sunday apron—for now we are in the Land of Aprons and Shawls. A little flaxen-haired Marylka, not ten years of age I am sure, but wearing her shawl like a grandmother, tended a waddly flock of geese near the track. They stretched their long, squawking necks in a perfect unison of alarm as we passed."

Sunday quiet and peace on the land; peace at least in these Western border lands . . . and yet Poland, hemmed in by enemies, still bleeds under the pressure of war. Back a little the other side of Lissa we saw four stout rows of barbed wire entanglement, the regulation sort such as we saw a year ago for endless dismal miles along the French front. It told its own story, that ugly rusty fencing of 1914, of the Russian and the Prussian advances and of Poland caught between the jaws of the contending powers. Peace and quiet here, with whatever fields that had been devastated then, reploughed and replanted now under the shadow of watchful German hate. But just a little to the south of us, even as we pass, the undefeated German is still prodding Silesia with the same bayonet that stabbed Belgium, while in the East, still clinging to a last hope for his cherished

"Drang nach Osten," he intrigues the Ukranians to quarrel with their Polish neighbours. And all along that far frontier now ablaze with the full daylight the Red hordes of the Bolsheviks, likewise encouraged and abetted by Germany, are pressing westward to override Poland if they can." "Poland," Hindenburg had declared a few months before, "must belong either to Germany or to the Bolsheviks. There could be no graver danger for Germany than the existence of a Polish state, if that state were destined to continued independence." That was immediately after the Armistice, when German troops on the Eastern outposts were still defying the Allies. They hung on in these parts of Poland for months afterward, still hoping for a change in the fortunes of war. As late as mid-March 1919 Germans were attacking Poles in the Dombrowa coal districts, while all through the East they had cleared the way for the Bolsheviks.

IV

. . . Our train dipped a little toward the south, headed for Lodz. At Poniec a strapping young officer, with Baltic blue eyes and a virgin moustache, approaching to speak about the train, first saluted us, with a smile of pleasure lighting up his face, then offered his hand in democratic fashion ;—and I remembered how history tells us that the Poles, even in the days of their kings, had elected their rulers instead of accepting a "divine right" of royalty, cherishing the spirit of democracy through all their generations, "the free with the equal and the equal with the free," as their records worded it from the Jagiellonian days of nearly five hundred years ago. Poniec showed us a little old-fashioned, red-roofed town hidden among the trees, a church spire topping them ;—already the churches, with their elaborate onion-shaped cupolas, began to reveal Eastern characteristics. "The farm-houses along here are built low, with broad sloping roofs. Plenty of snow here in winter-time, I imagine. The roofs tell the story, and there are snow-fences set back from the railway, too, such as we see in our Western states. . . . We are halted at Poniec, and two of our men are out by the track with a ball and mit, playing catch. A young Polish soldier has the ball now. He caught it neatly; he throws it well. They are coming on, these Poles! If they learn to play base-ball as easily as that, we can be pretty sure of them!"

Halted there in the sunshine, with the Sunday quiet all about us, I felt myself as if at some central vantage-point with all of Poland laid out like a map before me. I could picture its wide plains, its broad rivers, its vast expanses of timber set out in relief.

We had left the Oder back of us—" the Polish Shore," as the riverside dwellers call it. The Wartha was north, the Vistula east, all flowing into the Baltic, whose tides, even at that distance, seemed to have left their mark in long stretches of sandy soil. We had, in fact, entered on the great central plateau of Europe, once covered with primæval forests, which lies like a broad, elevated floor between Germany and Russia. This plateau is Poland, in prehistoric times the bed of a vast ocean washing the granite slopes of the Carpathian Mountains—which, if only our eyes could have reached that far, we would have seen standing in snow-capped Alpine grandeur to the south.

We were headed for Warsaw and the Vistula ; but beyond the Vistula, still Polish soil, lay the plains of the Niemen and the Dvina, flowing to the north, and the Dnieper and the Dniester, emptying into the Black Sea. How different it all seemed now from that land which story-books had made familiar to my imagination ! " Little Poland " I had always called it, thinking of it only as a small country of snow-fields and wolves and sleigh-bells. (Perhaps the very word " Pole " had something to do with that ?) But here was a land of vast expanse, embracing many changes of climate in its wide stretch from the black-soil lowlands of the Dniester to the tides of the Baltic, from the Alpine snows and hot summer valleys of the Tatras to the big-tree country of Lithuania. " Little Poland," the third largest country in Europe in point of size, the sixth in population, seemed anything but little to me then.

V

We pulled out of Poniec at noon. " The sun still shines—the first good spell of sunlight we have had since we left France a week ago ; and the world seems good to live in as we cross the prairies with their deep forest horizons and their fields farmed and gardened to the last ditch. We have had some fun throwing 'cookies' to the children who stand along the tracks, in meadows bordering farms or villages, and have laughed heartily at their joyous scrambling for the 'eats.' Back the road half an hour ago, when we gave the kiddies some of our chocolate, it was killing to see the bobs and curtsies the boys and girls would make. They have astonishingly good manners, these youngsters. They never forget their 'Thank you's,' and always say them with such a wide-eyed delight, one gets a thrill in feeling that he is helping make a wonderful moment in the lives of a few, anyway. One little red-aproned lady of six or seven, running to pick up a 'cookie' thrown from the moving train, let the goodie go for the time being to make sure of bobbing her best curtsey to us before we were out of sight.

"At railway stations, where gaunt youngsters in rags have joyously licked the insides of empty tomato cans, it has been the same. The boys' caps have always come off with a polite salute, the little skirts or aprons of the girls have spread out in an old-fashioned curtsey, while they lisped the 'Thank you' of the strange and sibilant Polish tongue." Later I was to learn what a veritable thing of wonder these Red Cross relief trains were to the people, as they saw them pass across the country. Marvellous caravans they were, nothing less!—loaded with treasures; caravans which, in the imagination of the children at least, had come straight across the ocean from far-off America, passing the seas in some mysterious and magic manner (nothing is impossible with the label 'American' on it!), and appearing suddenly over the horizon of Poland in a glory of flags—and soda crackers!

"At Ostrow I climbed up on one of the freight trucks and rode in an auto-seat for a few miles. It was like seeing Poland from a touring-car—without any tyre trouble. We sat high in the sun and breeze, and had a fine view of the country about us. Acres and acres of the dark green of sugar beets, striped here and there with glowing patches of yellow lupin. For miles it seemed so peaceful a scene, out in the sunny, open country, that one wondered if war could ever have touched it. The land was completely cleared of that present-day horror of Europe, the barbed-wire entanglement, and all the scars of trenches and dugouts were covered over. We felt far removed from war then."

Then suddenly we were brought up short. Kalicz came into view.

If one cares to know how old Poland is, he may turn back to the pages of Ptolemy as he enters Kalicz. He will find the town mentioned in the Ptolemaic geography as "Calisia." But it was the Kalicz of the present moment that held our eyes. I had known something by repute of this fine old city of busy industry and ancient art treasures. Before the War, for instance, there had been a magnificent Rubens's "Descent from the Cross" over the high altar of the Church of St. Nicholas; while as a manufacturing town Kalicz had ranked among the first in the great textile territory of Poland, and for generations had been the centre of the Polish lace trade. Now only a ghastly heap of ruins confronted us: acres of broken, staring walls, gaunt, shattered chimneys, vast heaps of brick and stone and mortar, with the raw patching and new scaffolding of reconstruction only making the horror more vivid by contrast. It was like being suddenly switched back into France or Belgium again. Certainly neither France nor Belgium had ever shown us a more ghastly picture of the wreck and ruin left under the smashing fist of the German war lord. Except for the busy crowd of people threading their way

through the streets, half lost in debris, Kalicz might well have been, as we saw it that October evening, the ancient ruins of Ptolemy's "Calisia" reduced to dust by the disintegration of ages.

VI

We struck Lodz that night, the first large Polish city we had come to—a city which, singularly enough, traces its history almost exactly along a parallel line with the history of scores of American towns. In 1793, when the United States was just "beginning," Lodz was also beginning, being then a hamlet with a population of one hundred and ninety. It has now over half a million—500,000 in 1916, with tens of thousands of refugees added since.

We lay in the railway yards all night and long into the afternoon of the next day, in full view of the town and with plenty of time to get about and see it. Lodz is a wilderness of chimneys and smoke-stacks; once the second greatest textile centre in Europe, the Manchester of the continent, with fifteen hundred factories and mills, two hundred thousand workmen, and an annual output valued at seventy-five million dollars. But all this was before the War. One must read Reymont's realistic novel, *The Promised Land*, to know what Lodz was then.

Now, on this bright Monday morning, no streams of workmen poured along the streets of Lodz on their way to the factories; no chorus of whistles blew; no smoke belched from tall hot chimneys like flags of industry. Blighted and cold they stood like a dead forest. War had ruined Lodz. When the Kaiser's forces evacuated the town in 1918 they systematically stripped it of every vestige of machinery it possessed, carting it off to enrich their own German factory centres. I have never seen anywhere in any war-devastated area in Europe a sadder sight than the wreck of the Lodz mills. A German has given a better description of it than I can—Naumann, famous as the author of *Miteleuropa*: "Everyone who has the least feeling for machinery," says Naumann, "looks on these gruesome rows of damaged engines as if he were contemplating animals on whom deadly wounds have been inflicted."

To-day the courageous struggle that is going on to rehabilitate Lodz is one of the heroic chapters of Poland's story. Already nearly fifty thousand textile workers are again employed in that town which, in October 1919, seemed to us like the graveyard of industry. Seven hundred and fifty thousand of its two and a half million spindles are once more at work, five thousand of its thirty thousand looms. But the conditions under which this work is being carried on are still deplorable. Hunger struck Lodz, as it struck all of Poland; but worse here, because it is always worse in populous centres. Not many months after this first visit of ours

we were to find, when making a medical survey of the district, appalling conditions among the workmen's families in this wrecked city—50 per cent. of their children tubercular, either their lungs or their bones affected, thanks to food shortage and under-nourishment.

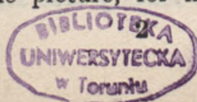
But that the Lodz people were making a brave fight against their heavy odds was plain to us that October morning. The first sight that greeted our eyes as we woke up in the railway yards was one of the town's big municipal potato fields, where all the vacant land in the neighbourhood had been ploughed and planted, and where now throngs of men, women and children were out digging. "There are woods here, too, hedging a low, sandy country in which the townspeople are out at work almost with the sunrise." (I quote from my diary.) . . . "In the woods, a quarter of a mile away, there must be a military camp. Bands of soldiers in the horizon-blue of Haller's Army issue from it. A group of them drills near by. . . ."

"We went out into the potato fields and talked to some of the people. They were cheerful and courteous, making the best of things, and working like slaves, though it was plain that many of them were not accustomed to potato digging." Women and children as well as men bent by the hour that day at the back-breaking toil of digging, digging, digging, and carrying on their backs such staggering loads that one expected to see them fall to the ground under their weight.

Hungry children gathered about our train in the Lodz yards. There was no mistaking that they were hungry. They would devour a dry crust as avidly as an American youngster would put away a piece of pie. Women came, too, worn and pale. But they did not beg. They only waited. When they received food they curtsied and wrapped it carefully in their aprons or tucked it into their blouses, saving it to take home with them. In the fields we saw some of them eating raw potatoes.

VII

In the afternoon we moved on towards Warsaw. It was a bright world we travelled in. The clear air was winey with the pure tang of October. The level fields made a picture of ever-changing colour. Every shade of green was in it, from the dark autumnal-tinted trees to the bright emerald of lush bottom lands. The farm-houses were either white with brown thatched roofs (sometimes a brand-new thatch shone like the trim, bobbed head of a flaxen-haired girl), or they were of red brick with roofs of red tiling. And the people themselves added their own gay contribution of colour to the picture, for here the peasants still dress


BIBLIOTEKA UNIWERSYTECKA w Toruniu

unabashed in the bright garb of their ancestors. One woman, bending at work in a field of clover-brown, was herself an arresting spot of colour, deep brick-red—petticoat, blouse and kerchief all of the same rich hue. "With a sky of flakey amaranth behind them, soft as flamingo feathers, a group of peasants went down a bridle-path across a meadow, the full orange-coloured skirts and flowing capes of the women, the broad, orange-striped trousers of the men, tucked into high black boots, making a splash of colour on the sere field. Reds of every shade, bright orange, pale yellow, ochre, purples and violets and browns—they all seem to be generously daubed over the dull canvas of these Polish fields. And always there is the far blue-black rim of the distant pines framing the picture, under an azure sky, with a soft wafture of smoky October clouds loafing along the horizon."

We drew near Warsaw in the night. While the sun was going down behind us, setting the skies toward Lodz aflame—as if the ghosts of the German torches of 1918 still kept the city ablaze—a newer, calmer glory grew apace in the east. The thin disc of a clear moon wheeled up over the pines, flooding the fields with a rain of light. Perfect stillness came down over the earth—even the air seemed hushed—broken only by the steady rumble of our train, and by our voices as we stood in the doorway of the kitchen car and sang "Old Kentucky Home" and "A Long, Long Trail," "My Little Grey Home in the West," and "Mother Machree," and all the other old favourites of other war-times back in France. Then we lapsed into familiar talk of home and friends and the confidences that such an hour in a far-off country invariably brings. Silences came, too—thoughts of the strange fortune that had brought us here; of the work ahead; of Poland and its people. . . .

Each man to his own thoughts, while the whole world seemed drawn in a spell of light, exhaling a vapour that put unreality on everything. It was as if we had come upon Poland unaware in the night, in her sleep; listened to her breathing, half divined her dreams—dreams of the ending of wars, of peace and fireside content, of sunrises to come, neither blackened by battle smoke nor red like blood.

. . . Something of the mystery of primeval forests seemed to move, too, along the dark edge of the pines. . . . Here was soil that had been fought over for centuries, trampled by Tartar and Teuton and Muscovite, defended and never given up by its own children, who for generations had enriched it and made it sacred with their own blood.

Not a soul stirred abroad, not a sign of human life, not a light in a window anywhere. The moon drenched the roofs of the farm-houses, dampened by dew, with its own radiant downpour till they shone like steel. A solitary tree stood very straight in

an open field, like a sentry alert at his post—and one's thoughts travelled ahead, beyond the pines and the waters of the Vistula, to the Lithuanian forests and the Pinsk marshes, where at that very hour young Poland stood watchful in the night, guarding his Mother. . . .

Very late we came to a railroad crossing, with a lonely little station-house, through the lighted window of which, ruddy against the pale night, we could see a boy at a table bending over a book. His lamp was a railway lantern, with which he came running to us a minute later. We were there for an hour or more, and soon had heard the boy's story. His father and older brothers were in the army. His mother kept the husband's place with the railway, and the boy, Stas, at twelve, was the man of the house—"otherwise he'd be fighting in the army too. There are hundreds of boys in the army!" He said it with a strong note of protest against the fate that kept him at home.

Half an hour later the lights of Warsaw suddenly flared up the horizon at a turn of the track. We were nearly at our journey's end. Our next sunrise in Poland would show us the Vistula. "What do you think that youngster back there was reading by the window?" said one of the men. "He told the interpreter he was reading 'all about America.' His eyes nearly popped out of his head when he learned we were from America. He thought we'd just landed, straight from 'Novy Eeork'!"

CHAPTER TWO

THE HEART OF POLAND

I

For two days our train lay by on the switch tracks north of Warsaw. Our string of fifty cars was so long that one end of it projected on the bridge which here crossed the Vistula to the suburb of Praga——in old days (and soon to be again, let us hope) the railroad junction from Moscow and Petrograd; and in old days, also, the scene of the most terrible of all Russian massacres, when thirteen thousand men, women and children were put to the sword or drowned in the Vistula by Suvorov. On guard there for two days, going up and down the tracks and out on the bridge, the length of the train, one hundred times if once, I had a rare opportunity of taking in a bird's-eye view of the Polish capital—"the heart of Poland," as it has been called for centuries. When I stood at the farther end of the train, the bridge end, the whole city lay before me.

What surprised me at my first sight of Warsaw was its size and its magnificent proportions. I hardly can tell just what I had expected—something dingy and remote and picturesque, I suppose, but nothing more—nothing certainly like this great modern metropolis with that indefinable personality, that air of a "capital" about it, which distinguishes certain cities just as certain people are distinguished above the crowd.

Not that Warsaw is not picturesque. Its skyline is, in fact, one of the most picturesque to be found by the traveller anywhere in Europe, and strikingly individual and characteristic. The city rises on slopes along the west bank of the Vistula, about one hundred and fifty feet above the water level. It is a skyline of solid massiveness, broken by quaint red roofs, spires and domes and oriental-looking cupolas, all climbing the river terraces with an arresting air of bigness and dignity. Nothing more different from the average American city skyline could be imagined. The square tower of the Church of the Virgin Mary at the north extremity, the fine Gothic spirals topping the Cathedral of St. John, the minaret of the Zamek (the old Winter Palace) in the centre; and the five swelling domes of the former Russian Cathedral toward

the south, stand out as the chief points of interest. Everyone of these points, as I was to learn in time, has it own story. St. Mary's great square tower, with its red sloping roof looming up over the city from every angle, has stood thus since the year 1411. The Cathedral of St. John, built in the fourteenth century, in the days of the Masovian Dukes, is one of the architectural treasures of Eastern Europe. Its marble tombs, the richly carved wooden stalls of its choir, above all its exquisitely sculptured pulpit, the winding marble staircase of which is one of the finest pieces of chiselling I have ever seen; all these bathed in dim lights and shadows make up a picture too little known to the American who thinks of Poland (just as I did once) as only a barbarous land of wolves and snowstorms. The first day I stood on that Vistula bridge and looked at Warsaw, I had little idea of the revelations in store for me in that city and in all parts of Poland—of a civilization grown rich in tradition and culture before America was dreamed of!

The Zamek, or Winter Palace, in the foreground of the picture, rising from terraced gardens along the river, was, in 1919, the residence of the Polish Premier, Ignace Paderewski. Before him Russian governors, Russian grand dukes, even a Russian czar—and before them Polish kings—had lived under its historic roofs, which once sheltered likewise many of Poland's richest art treasures, now in Petrograd, whither they were carted off by various Russian rulers. Below the terraces I could see the stables where the Kuban Kossacks once kept their little horses of the Steppes, and whence so often they had gone riding wildly forth to scour the streets of Warsaw with their "nahajkas"—the fierce knotted whip, a sort of cat-o'-nine-tails, used by the Kossacks as a policeman uses his "billy," but with a liberality and a brutality of which no civilized policeman would be capable.

The huge five-domed "Russian" church to the left, with its bell-tower, two hundred and forty feet high, likewise capped by an onion-shaped dome, spoiled the panorama, being top-heavy and "out of the picture." Unlike such domes as those of Paris, London, Rome, or Washington, which crown the scene they dominate, the impression this vast bulk gave me was that it "sat" on the picture, flattened it out, and crushed it down with a sort of bulging enormity. There was an air of physical depression where it rose in triumphant boastfulness, its white polished bricks gleaming with a new sanitary glare that broke all the mellow toning of the scene. This vast church, I learned a few days later, one of the largest in Eastern Europe, was indeed quite new, having been completed only two years before the War, taking eighteen years to construct. It was erected by the Russians as a sort of "official" church which Poles will always regard as an affront and a monument to Muscovite dominion;

all the more so since it stands on a site which was secured from its impoverished Polish owners by a legal trick of the Russians. It certainly is a conspicuous and outstanding monument to the short-sighted methods employed by the Russians, in their attempt to denationalize the Poles by sheer Muscovite weight and ponderosity.

This church was one of the centres of interest during my first days in Warsaw, when there was serious talk of tearing it down, so intense was the feeling of the Poles against it. Some of our Americans liked it, but most of us agreed in the end that it could be called beautiful only at night, when shadows obscured its rawness and made its grey domes, once covered with gold leaf, but stripped now, cluster together in softened outline. We had no difficulty in understanding the feeling of the Poles, for to them that elephantine thing, bristling with czarist arrogance, rising on historic Polish ground in the very centre of "the heart of Poland," was as much an offence as a Moslem mosque would be to Americans if such a thing could be imagined set up on the site of our White House at Washington. The project of razing the church, however, was abandoned for practical reasons, but plans have been drawn for its remodelling on a Romanesque design. Its mosaics, among the richest in the world, will of course be preserved.

II

It was the old red roofs of the city that held my eye. Clustered together toward the north, they gave a quaint touch of warmth to the picture. They were indeed the heart of it, rising in gradual ranks up the city's terrace with an old-fashioned homelike dignity. In days to come I was to spend enchanted hours in the neighbourhood of those historic roofs. They mark the most ancient quarter of Warsaw, the "Staré Miasto," or Old Town, once the centre of the capital and still preserved in its picturesque beauty. The principal houses of the Staré Miasto, centuries ago the residences of rich burghers, merchant princes and the first families of the land, form a quadrangle around an open square. Some of the doors of these houses show the finest kind of antique work in bronze, wrought-iron and wood, and each house has its special insignia or coat of arms. There is "the House of the Ship," "the House of the Two Lions," and so on—even "the House of the Negro," which celebrates the fact that the man who lived there long ago possessed in his entourage that rarest of curiosities, a black boy! Judging by the smiling face of the young African, as it has been immortalized in bas-relief over the door, he was a jolly black boy and his owner a kind master.

Jolly indeed must have been the folk of Staré Miasto in the olden days. There are two or three inscriptions still left to remind

us of their merry life, the most famous of these being a Latin inscription carved in a door stone proclaiming the fact that " wine enlivens the wit and makes the heart grow glad." Then there is Fukier's, one of the most famous vintage cellars in Europe, still in the Fukier family, after centuries of possession. Their insignia, a full rigged ship, hangs suspended from the ceiling of the entrance hall, signifying the far extent of their trade which brought to Poland the vintages of the sunniest and most distant climes. In the crypts at Fukier's, bottles hundreds of years old can still be seen, reposing like hoary ancients with cobweb beards completely covering them. The ceilings of these crypts are encrusted with a peculiar dark formation, a sort of stalactite which glints with a deep garnet colour in the candle-light. " Let's get lost down here and talk about prohibition," Americans say when they go through the Fukier cellars. " If we couldn't get into the bottles, we could eat off the walls and ceilings ! "

But if that is too much for the rigorists, there are the ancient dungeons, right next door to Fukier's ; very properly situated, the Prohibitionists will say. And across the square, on the corner, is the beautiful old Skarga House with its little jutting window—the reputed home of the famous old Jesuit priest, Peter Skarga, who had the courage to tell kings to their face what their sins were, and how they would be punished. Skarga was court chaplain, but no courtier. He was a sort of Polish Savonarola—only they did not burn him at the stake. He was a prophet, too, and foretold to the Diet of his day the partitions which befell the country two hundred years later. Matejko, the greatest of Polish historical painters, has immortalized him in one of his famous canvases. But you need not even go to the gallery to see Skarga. You can see him still (that is his ghost, as the legend goes), standing at the window of his house at sunset, if the rays of light strike just the proper visionary angle (and if, as the irreverent add, you've tarried a sufficient length of time at Fukier's !).

III

In the centre of the square of the Staré Miasto stands a fountain, a bronze mermaid, the symbol of Warsaw as far back as history goes—back to very ancient times when Warsaw was only a fishing village, as the old fisherman's Church of St Mary also commemorates. Even then Warsaw had its connection established with the sea, through the Vistula flowing into the Baltic. If you pause there in the heart of Old Warsaw, studying that bronze siren with her story of ancient river traffic and sea trade, you can review in a glance the interesting history of this great capital, now one of the first cities of Europe, with its million and a half population, its

railway lines reaching out to every part of the Old World, its growing industries and its continuously developing productive life. The Warsaw I have known has been largely a Warsaw of siege and invasion, of commercial ruin and trade paralysis. Yet I have never lived in any city that so pulsates with energy, that seems to have such powers of initiative and resource and rehabilitation.

In the days of our Civil War Warsaw had scarcely one hundred thousand population. In the span of half a century it has grown to a million and a half, while its realty value, so its insurance records tell us, is to-day over two hundred million dollars.

Two things have made Warsaw what it is : its remarkable geographical situation, and the indefatigable energy of its people, who in the face of greater obstacles and more protracted repressions than perhaps have ever been suffered by any other people, have nevertheless kept going ahead, building, constructing, developing. It is too long a story to tell here, the odds against which all this has been accomplished. It is enough to say that the life of the Pole under Muscovite rule was one long daily and hourly harassment of petty interference, no matter what his ambition or his endeavour might be—intellectual, artistic or commercial.

As for the geographical position of Warsaw ; since the Middle Ages it has been the chief entrepôt of all the fertile and prosperous plains and valleys of Eastern Europe. Set in the centre of that vast and rich expanse which in my mind's eye I had seen spread out like a map the first day we had crossed Polish territory, Warsaw stands at a rare vantage-point on one of the great navigable rivers of the Old World. North, south, east and west it opens out to avenues of world trade ; to Berlin and the Baltic—and to America by way of the Baltic ; to Vienna and the Black Sea ; to Paris and London ; to Petrograd, Moscow and the Orient.

The future of such a metropolis, when its past in spite of obstacles is so remarkable, is not difficult to forecast. The famous engineer, De Lesseps, predicted that Warsaw would become "the greatest city on the continent in the twentieth century." The twentieth century is still young !

I felt the beat of the pulse of Warsaw around me with a sense of surprise from the first day I went into the city, and I must say I never quite finished marvelling at it. The more I saw of Poland, its distresses, its losses, after six years of continuous warfare, and the unremitting trials and hardships put on it in its fight for a bare existence ; the more intimate I became with the facts of its past history, when alien bureaucracy and despotism spent all their joint energies in threatening, intimidating and curbing Polish life, all the more I marvelled at this capital city, this heart of the nation, which apparently never has lost its youthful spirit and its zest for doing things.

Sometimes we are warned that capitals are not nations; that "New York is not America," "Paris is not France," "London is not England." But, after all, it is in the capital of any given nation that we must look for the native genius of that nation, focussed and at its best—for the simple reason that it is the nation that makes the capital. In Warsaw one can take a fair gauge of the Poles. No matter if in other centres certain marked characteristics of the country are emphasized—in Krakow a charm and culture that vies with that of an Italian art centre; in Poznan a solid civic orderliness bespeaking pure Western precision of mind; in Lwow the picturesque gaiety of a little Vienna; and so on. But in Warsaw, the Pole reveals himself in all his aspects.

As for the past, and the repressions and curbings this city was forced to undergo for generations, I had only to glance to the extreme right of the panorama as I stood on the railway bridge to read the whole story. There, within a few rods of our train, stood the Citadel.

IV

When one knows the story of the Warsaw Citadel he knows pretty well the whole story of Warsaw and of Poland. This monstrous series of fortifications and dungeons, spreading over acres of land, rising above the steep banks of the Vistula—but mostly hidden under grass-covered ramparts—was built nearly one hundred years ago by the Russian Czar, Alexander I, who erected it at a cost of many millions to punish the Poles for their uprising in 1830. The Poles were taxed for every kopeck spent on this gigantic "slaughterhouse," the guns of which, forever turned on Warsaw, were to be a perpetual intimidation against rebellion, as its walls were to be a house of death for hundreds of patriots. And not only were they taxed, but every stone of the Citadel was hewn, and every brick of it laid, by Polish hands—the hosts of political prisoners taken by Russia in the 1830 insurrection being turned into labour gangs and forced under the Kossack whip and the Muscovite rifle to build their own prison cells or erect their own scaffolds. When the dungeons were completed the leaders of the insurrection were taken out on to the ramparts and shot or hung, while hundreds of their followers spent the rest of their lives in chains behind barred doors, or passed the Citadel's gates only to go to the living death of the Siberian mines. In the years since its erection, sixty thousand Poles have entered the Citadel to be there condemned to death, exile or imprisonment for no crime save that of conspiring or fighting for their country's liberty.

But now the Citadel is no longer a place of terror. The happy Pole, rejoicing in his new-found freedom, has been quick to change

all that. Up to the time of the liberation in 1918, this fortress dungeon was regarded by him at once with horror and as a glorious monument to the deathless soul of his nation. He did not speak of it save in fear or awe. No Pole entered it save to die, or to bid farewell to the living dead. To-day the gates of the Citadel stand wide open. On Sundays its courtyards ring with the music of a Polish band playing Polish airs. Its buildings are now Polish barracks, a Polish military school, a recreation ground for Polish soldiers. The great obelisk which Czar Alexander erected to himself in its central court is gone. A monument to the Polish heroes who suffered and died behind its walls is soon to rise in the obelisk's place. Except for the historic iron-barred cells of Pavilion X, in which the martyrs of 1830 and 1863 were locked and which is now preserved as a national memorial, the whole aspect and character of the place is changed.

V

To turn back to the city itself, leaving our vantage point on the bridge and going into the streets, we strike the same atmosphere of a newly drawn deep free breath which now pervades the once terrible Citadel. The great thoroughfare of the Krakowskie Road, running north and south, wide and spacious and opening here and there into green-parked spaces, literally teems with traffic. In the Palace Square which fronts the Zamek, where the street begins, stands the Column of Sigismond, surmounted by a bronze statue of the King, bearing in one hand a sword, and in the other a cross. This graceful granite column, with its handsome bronze-figured pedestal, was erected three hundred years ago, in the days when Warsaw was a walled city, and the Krakow Gate, giving into the Krakow Road stood just a few rods away. Wall and gate have disappeared in the course of modern expansion, but their record is preserved in the name of the street which is still literally called " the Krakow Suburban Road."

On this busy thoroughfare, as on the Marshalkowska paralleling it, and the broad boulevard Jerozolimska intersecting it, you will see many evidences of misery and want. There are beggars, of course—as there are in all European cities—although within the first year that I spent in Warsaw it was to be plainly noted that the beggars there had disappeared in large numbers, thanks to betterment of conditions and to provisions and regulations made by the new Government. And not only are there beggars, but on every hand you will see signs of the hardship of war—a shabbiness and wornness and "run-downness" which is inevitable.

But this does not diminish, rather it accentuates, the life and movement that flows about you. The trams (a well-managed

system) are packed, every car carrying two or three trailers overflowing with passengers. The "droskies" pour in a constant stream up one side of the street and down the other. The drosky drivers, with their "numbers" quaintly hanging on a metal tag down their back, are a seedy-looking lot; they certainly show the wear and tear of war about as badly as do the buildings in Warsaw, which, although very little damaged by shells, are run down and in ill-repair, robbed as they were, by the double enemy, of every ounce of metal they happened to possess. As for the drosky horses, they are mortally sad—inevitably so in a land that has been almost stripped clean of horseflesh. Yet the observer's eye will not fail to note how washed and scrubbed the cabs themselves are, some of the more prosperous ones even flourishing a new coat of varnish which makes them fairly blaze in the sunlight. (The harnesses, too, of many of them, do not escape notice—beautiful harnesses which are unmistakably the relics of many a reduced family's better days.) But what a comfortable old thing it is, this Polish drosky!—the easiest riding public conveyance I have found in Europe.

When I first landed in Warsaw automobiles were a rarity on the streets, so thoroughly had the war cleaned the country of every vestige of machinery. Army trucks were almost the only vehicles seen. Now new machines have begun to appear, among them taxicabs and motor buses, huge double deckers, such as one sees in London and New York. With the cars of the various foreign military and diplomatic missions, flying the colours of their respective countries, the final touch of life and speed is added to the Warsaw street. But the drosky, with its tall driver's seat (inverted, a watering trough), and the driver forever giving his odd high-pitched cry or his richly rolled "Brrrh!" to stop his horse, still dominates the scene.

Every man, however, who drives a car in Warsaw, or anywhere else in Poland, remarks on the difficulty in "making" the streets, so unaccustomed do the people seem to crowded or hurried traffic. The first impulse is to lose patience and cry "stupidity." But we don't say "stupidity" when we know the Poles. We learn instead that there is a more significant reason than mere lack of usage behind this slowness and apparent inattention of the crowd. The people are devitilized—run down—and this shows more plainly in the mass than in the individual. For the time being their native alertness is dulled. Just one more little glimpse into what war can do to the most virile and alive.

Splendid public buildings; classic porticoes and great flights of steps; magnificent new structures of many storeys and solid dignity (with frequently an interesting hint of native architecture applied to modern business blocks); quaint old one-storied red-

roofed houses left standing here and there, relics of another age, often with niches in their walls containing a statue of their patron saint ; churches so beautiful that you can fancy yourself touring Italy or France (with St Anne's at Wilno Napoleon was so entranced that he regretted he could not transport it to Paris !) ; open spaces with gardens and trees ; shops gay with the latest importations ; book stores everywhwere ; pavement cafés with their little round tables set out under striped awnings behind green arbours of box and palm ; and an ever-moving throng—this is the scene Warsaw presents to you as you pass along the crowded Krakowskie or cut across the Jerozolimska or any other of the busy bisecting streets, to the Marshalkowska, which takes you to the central railway station. It is a scene of fascinating vivacity

At the first green opening of the Krakowskie, near the Miodowa (the street of the Honey Cakes) you come to a quaint little statue of the Blessed Virgin set between a pair of guarding trees, and always, winter or summer, rain or shine, with two dim blue lamps burning before it in the night—lamps which in winter-time, when the surrounding trees and shrubbery and fence are a cloudy dream of filigree frost and snow, give the scene a moonlit air of fairy-like unreality. This statue dates from the days of King John, and is one of Warsaw's landmarks. Further on is the great bronze and granite monument of Mickiewicz—the work of Cyprian Godebski, well known in Paris and a life-long friend of Madame Modjeska—a monument which the Poles were permitted to erect a few years ago, in the days of the Russian dominion, only under the most humiliating regulations, according to which there could be no demonstration, no eulogy, no speaking, no singing. A witness of that ceremony speaks of it as one of the most pathetic moments in the life of his people, when the Poles stood by, surrounded by Russian police and Kossack guards, and in dead silence beheld the figure of their poet and prophet emerge from the sculptor's veil. No one dared speak ; no sound broke the tension until in the end strong men, moved beyond control, broke down and turned away to hide their tears from the alien eyes of their conquerors.

The first day I saw that monument its pedestal was heaped with flowers and laurel wreaths, and often afterward I discovered fresh garlands and the simple bouquets of school-children decking it. There is nothing now to curb the joyous homage of the Polish people for their beloved poet, who endured a life of exile that he might sing out in a free voice the glories and sufferings of his country.

The streets of Warsaw are rich in Polish national memories. A short distance from the Mickiewicz Monument we pass the Cabinet Chamber of the Republic, formerly the palace of the Russian governor, a graceful structure set back from the street in a deep

garden. Near the pavement is a broad pedestal of black granite which, in my first Warsaw days, stood bare of any statue, although now there is a heroic figure of a Polish bugler surmounting it. On that pedestal for fifty years stood one of Russia's perpetual taunts to the Polish people, a figure of Paskiewicz, who broke the patriotic rebellion of 1830 and revenged it brutally by crushing Warsaw more cruelly than it had ever been crushed before under the Czarist yoke. But the Poles, with the removal of the yoke, have put Paskiewicz and his kind out of mind and out of sight. That they are a good-natured even-tempered people, not given to nursing a grudge, is evidenced in the fact that the monument of the Russian tyrant was removed in broad daylight, without any demonstration—merely as a matter of course. Their present treatment of the Russian refugees who crowd Polish cities—there are over one hundred thousand of them—is another noteworthy example of their liberal spirit. Through the Polish Red Cross these refugees are given the same consideration as their own. The Poles simply regard them as fellow victims of the war.

Paskiewicz and his kind are forgotten. There are other things to occupy the Pole. A block or two further up the street he has his Warsaw University, where Kosciuszko went to school as a cadet; whence the tragic poet Krasinski was forced to go into a life-long exile because of the treason of his father; where Sienkiewicz was educated, and many others whose names have gone around the world.

Sienkiewicz a Pole? They used to always call him "the great Russian novelist." And someone mentions Madame Curie. She also? Yes, she also is Polish. And whose monument is this? (In a green triangle just a few rods up the Krakowskie.) "Copernicus." "But Copernicus—wasn't he a great German astronomer?" Polish. Born in Torun, educated in Krakow, a Pole of the Poles. And so it goes. Not only was the name of Poland wiped off the map, but even her native glories were stolen from her by her partitioners.

Here also in the Krakowskie is the Church of the Holy Cross, built by Giovanni Bellotto in 1682, now the shrine of the heart of Chopin, another of Poland's immortal children. A long double flight of steps, parallel with the street, leads to the doors of Holy Cross, and at the top, where the two flights meet, over the crypt where the heart of the musician lies, stands one of the most striking monuments in Europe. It is a life-size bronze figure of Christ, carrying His cross and beckoning to the crowd to follow Him. On Sunday mornings, when the street in front of the church is jammed with people making their way up and down the steps, that figure seems actually alive, as if the stumbling, bleeding

Saviour, mounting Golgotha, moved with the throngs and led them on. And underneath sleeps the flaming heart of Chopin, with the words " Sursum Corda "—" Lift up your hearts"—inscribed on the door of its tomb. In the history of the Warsaw I have known there have been moments when it was not too difficult to believe that that dead heart pulsated and glowed again, beating anew with the ardour and anguish of the heroic people it loved so well; moments when the Poles seemed indeed to mount still another Golgotha, their faces set on the beckoning hand and the compelling face of the Christ in their midst.

That spot is sacred to the Poles. I have seldom seen man, woman or child, from the meanest to the mightiest, pass it without honouring it with a doff of the cap, a sign of the cross, a bow or a military salute.

VI

The gardens of Warsaw are another of the city's charms. Trees line many of the streets—the broad Jerozolimska leading through double rows of limes to the " Avenue Third of May " is like a green alley in a midsummer wood. There are numerous little leafy angles smiling up at crowded corners. The parks are spacious and inviting. In the heart of the city lie the Saxon Gardens, twenty acres of lawn and shade, with wide avenues and secluded walks all converging at the broad basin of a giant fountain. Along the banks of the Vistula, within the radius of dusty pavements and clanging trams, are quiet driveways, green gardens, orchards, and grassy slopes that burst into dandelion bloom in April, and in May are showered with lilac buds and apple-blossoms. Nightingales sing here, in the dark, when even the river seems to pause and listen. . . . The Ujazdowski Gardens, with their chain of ponds, their swans and their miniature bridges, are crowded all day long with children; and just beyond are the Botanical Gardens, where such surprises greet us as rhododendrons and magnolias in full bloom in the open air—magnolias in the Poland we once dreamed of as an arctic region!

But chief and most beautiful of all Warsaw gardens are the Lazienki—so named because here, in the days of the Kings, were the royal baths. Lying in a great forest in the green valley below the Belvedere Palace (the residence of the Chief of State), the Lazienki Gardens are a vast natural park of hundreds of acres, in the heart of which is set a little palace, whose cream-coloured walls and columned portico are mirrored in the clear waters of a chain of lakes, stretching cool blue arms around it. When evening falls in the Lazienki, and the guardsman blows his old fashioned hunter's horn for the closing of the gates, the king swan of the waters patrols

each separate lagoon in solitary grandeur, as if he were supervising the dismissal of human creatures from his domain. . . . We look back and see the moon rising behind the elms. A single furtive note of an early nightingale sounds the opening bar of the night's overture. . . . It is not difficult then to believe the story that is told of Stanislas, the last Polish king, the planner and builder of this beautiful retreat. He was not only the last of the Polish kings, but the last of the old-fashioned kings of Europe, the story-book kind ; a lover and patron of all the gracious arts and exquisite things of life—especially the ladies. He lost his crown and his realm (and the Polish people their inheritance), as the story goes, because he was too much occupied with landscape gardening—and not enough with affairs of State.

But the Lazienki now is a people's playground : the days are gone forever when commoners might only peer through iron fencings at royal gardens. Rowboats ply the lake now, with crowds of merry-makers ; the band plays on occasion ; even at times the beautiful old Royal Theatre has its spectacle—though it needs nothing but its own charming self to make it a sight worth going to see. It is an outdoor amphitheatre, its arena crowned with sculptured figures, its stage, built in the fashion of a ruined temple, set on an island under a tent of trees. One glance at it conjures up visions of gondolas and lanterns swaying in the night ;—the lap of water against marble, heard softly under the laughter of royal players going to the masque ;—visions of dreamy nights under the stars . . . memories of Greece and Italy.

Crossing one of the bridges in the Lazienki, looking off toward the orangery (where the first oranges in Poland were cultivated by that comely lover of forbidden fruits, King Stanislas), we stop suddenly in our tracks, so arresting is the view we get of the Belvedere Palace. At our feet flows the little stream that feeds the lakes. The precipitous banks of this narrow rivulet, densely wooded, make a long deep channel of verdure ; and at the end of this, high on its steep green hill, sharply cut against the blue sky, the palace rises with a fine far-off dignity, white and lofty—one of the best perspectives I have ever seen achieved in landscape gardening. And over the palace, fresh in the wind, flies the flag of Poland.

VII

In the streets of Warsaw you see the Polish flag displayed everywhere. Is it any wonder ? For one hundred and fifty years it dare not be shown. It was proscribed, just as the Polish tongue was proscribed, and Polish patriotic songs, and everything that expressed Polish nationality. Now, in the new day so long looked forward to and prayed for and believed in, the Pole takes joy in

the display of his flag and thrills at the sight of it, so beautiful and fresh and radiant it is to him, flying free in the open air. The colours are amaranth and white—the amaranth a red of luminous hue, a rosy scarlet, very vivid and alive. Matched lengthwise, these colours make a most effective standard, especially when used in long streamers or pennons, or with the White Eagle superimposed.

With the flags flying, the frequent passing of troops—which invariably go singing up the street, fairly shouting the long-forbidden songs of Poland ; with the hum and bustle of moving crowds, a peasant in his local garb adding a bit of colouring here and there, the rattle of the droskies (they do rattle !), the toot of auto-horns, the cries of newsboys—Warsaw's streets present a lively pageant.

The uniforms of the military add to the picture. There are long flashing sabres, dragging on the pavement. Spurred Ulans mingle in the crowd in black red-striped breeches, top boots ablaze with "shine," and short, grey, fur-collared jackets worn like a mantle hanging over one shoulder. The horizon-blue of the Haller men goes by ; then the grey-green of the regulars or the olive-drab which thousands of them wore when I first saw them, looking for all the world like our own sturdy "Yanks" of A.E.F. days. A squad of cavalry passes or a regiment of women soldiers, trim and clean-cut in their buff skirts and regulation blouses, carrying their rifles with the ease of long training, stepping out with the quick precision of veterans.

One evening I saw an amusing happening. An infantry regiment came singing up the street. Then another regiment appeared from the opposite direction, likewise infantry and likewise singing. But the second was of women troops and their song was different. The first regiment was shouting one of the popular rollicking chanties of the front. The women were singing the old song of the Legions, "Poland is not yet Dead." The lusty voices of the long, marching ranks of the men, lifted in one big roaring chorus, nearly drowned the women's treble. But they were not to be beaten by so small a thing as a regiment—and a regiment of males at that ! They too raised their voices, higher, louder. The men answered with a new gusto. The women went them still one better. As they came abreast, stepping briskly along, "eyes front," neither men nor women looking to right or left, but fairly bursting with song—and with suppressed laughter too—they made the street ring with their lifted voices, while the crowds on the sidewalks broke into shouts of merriment and cheers for the competitors.

Then something thrilling happened—something very Polish and gallant. The men suddenly changed their tune, took up the

women's song and joined in their sweet, strong chorus of "Poland is not yet Dead!" The street went wild.

One other street scene stands in my Warsaw memories. It is of a funeral. In the winter of 1919-1920 the billboards and kiosks of Warsaw were literally covered with the black-bordered announcements of death which it is the custom in Poland to put up; and funerals became so common as to scarcely attract attention save for the customary salutation given the dead. I have counted eight funerals in the space of ten minutes; one of our men counted twenty-two in a single day. I have seen funerals in Poland of such poignant sadness that they could never be forgotten—funerals at night, with torches to light the way for the hearse; often a family too poor to hire even the poorest hearse, following on foot after their beloved dead, pushed along on a wheelbarrow or hauled on a simple dray wagon, no doubt loaned by a neighbour for the occasion;—funerals without even barrow or wagon, the rough pine box borne on the shoulders of friends. I have even seen a mother going through the streets with her little flock of children around her, carrying an infant's coffin in her arms.

But this was a soldier's funeral. The plain board coffin lay in the box of an army wagon. The old father and mother of the dead soldier, both feeble and white haired and poorly clad, walked along behind the box. A squad of infantry brought up the solitary little procession. There were no other mourners; the old parents were quite alone. And there were no flowers.

But suddenly out of the passing throngs, baring their heads as the funeral went by, a well dressed man stepped out, hat in hand; turned back, disappeared into a florist's shop, and reappeared in a moment with a handful of flowers. He had only a few paces to run to catch up with the slowly moving funeral. He placed the flowers on the bare coffin, then with a bow to the old father and mother, he fell into line behind them.

Another saw his action; the contagion of it swept along the street. A well-dressed woman driving by stopped her carriage, got out, and joined the cortège, gently taking the arm of the aged mother. More flowers came. Children ran to the coffin with them, more men and women took their places in the procession. . . .

We also followed. And before that soldier's funeral had reached the cemetery out in the western environs of the city, over a hundred people had reverently joined the old white-haired couple—who wept now, though they had shed no tears before; and the rough pine coffin was literally hidden in flowers.

CHAPTER THREE

PADEREWSKI

I

"I DIE too soon," cried Sienkiewicz, the Polish novelist, as he passed away a few hours before the flag of Poland once more rose over the Zamek, the ancient palace of the Polish kings at Warsaw. For more than a century alien rulers had usurped that historic seat, an alien banner had flown from its flag-staff. Now as I looked at it from my vantage-point on the Praga Bridge, its cream-coloured walls tawny yellow in the October sun, under the rippling white and amaranth of the Republic's standard, a Polish ruler once more occupied it. He was not a king, but a civilian ; yet he was a man who already, and for many years of his life, had won more acclaim in more of the capitals of the world than any monarch in history.

It was Sienkiewicz's friend Paderewski, Prime Minister of the Polish Republic, who occupied the Zamek now ; Paderewski the musician, turned statesman and directing the destinies of a nation of thirty millions ; one of the greatest of all the surprises of that astounding post-war period of shocks and readjustments, in which only the extraordinary and the paradoxical could at all stir the jaded world.

II

Poland is a land of surprises and paradoxes, and the greatest of these is the Pole himself. He is a puzzling mixture of human contradictions. As a fighter he is terrible ; yet he can be happy only in friendliness. He is a poor hater ; yet he is a wicked enemy. He is proud ; but there is no false pride in him. Fortune deserts him ; but he goes to work. Want haunts his steps ; but no man on earth can share with you so graciously the hospitality of an empty cupboard . . . and so on. One might continue drawing the portrait of the paradoxial Pole interminably—he is gentle and wild, but neither soft nor fierce. He is square, but circuitous. He is honest, but indirect. He is romantic—and a stark realist ; a poet and a scientist in one. He is an innovator, and a traditionalist. He has the heart of the confirmed optimist and the soul of tragedy.

He has Occidental energy and Oriental patience. He has a zest for life and knows the taste of death; the art of life he understands so perfectly that he has forgotten it is an art. In short—he is a Pole.

"No one can study Eastern Europe," Ralph Butler writes of the Poles in *The New Eastern Europe* (he is a critic not by any means inclined to Polish friendliness), "without feeling that they are infinitely the most attractive of the peoples with which he has to do. They are the only ones in whose composition there is included that subtle *differentia* which marks off the 'big nation' from the 'small.' In all Europe there is no other people, with the possible exception of the French, which is so naturally gifted."

But all these qualities of the Pole, attractive and interesting though they be, when taken together rather bewilder us. He has one attribute, however, over and above all others—or rather hidden under them and too often undiscerned—which commands the undiluted respect of the American. It is his astonishing capacity for getting things done. Underneath the Pole's cleverness, brilliance—what you will—lies the dogged, determined sticktoitiveness of the man who never gives up; who fights on and on, inch by inch, and who, even when winning, is never quite satisfied with himself. He is less inclined than any other man I know to fall back on his oars or rest on his laurels. He has the "divine discontent" on him, the terrible urge of the idealist, with whom imagination and intuition instead of being substitutes for precise knowledge, are simply means of achieving it. "Work will never take the crown from my brow," says the old Polish proverb. "Remember," Kosciuszko wrote to one of his compatriots, "thou hast done nothing so long as there remains anything to do." "Impervious against every temptation of ease" are the words in which the American General Greene described that same Kosciuszko; and in those six words might be written the personal history of whole generations of Polish men and women, unknown to history, who have gone on with their work saying nothing, facing toil, risk, suffering, all as a matter of course; enduring proscription, arrest, imprisonment, exile—and taking up their tasks anew the moment they were liberated: all with a persistence so dogged and unshakable that more than once their dull oppressors have dubbed them "stupid."

And yet—the paradox again—this same dogged, determined, "stupid" Pole has never become a plodder. That is the reason why, in the long run of racial competition, by sheer basic superiority and "survival of the fittest," he has bested his chief antagonist, the Teuton, in so many of the contests in which the two have engaged for a thousand years. Where the Teuton has been

steady, powerful, ponderous, self-righteous, self-satisfied, static, the Pole has been dynamic, flexible, unself-satisfied, self-critical, idealistic and tenacious of his ideal.

Chopin is an example. (It is curious how readily the world has accepted all that this greatest of Polish artists produced as "French" or as "of the German school"—"hitching the star to the wagon," as James Huneker describes that *dictum*—yet whenever the weaknesses or the frailties of his art or his flesh are mentioned, promptly labelling them "Polish.") What is the truth about Chopin? We need only read his biography to discover how truly and typically Polish he is; how, back of all the brilliance, the tragedy, the delicacy, the *tesknota*, the transcendant force of his music, is a power of concentration, a capacity for tireless work, for infinite painstaking, for detail and sustained effort, unsurpassed in the history of any other artist. That is the surprise of the Pole; the surprise of Chopin the musician; of Madame Curie the scientist—(are we to imagine that she discovered radium in five blazing minutes of a genius's leisure hour?); of Copernicus the astronomer; of Sienkiewicz the novelist; of Matejko the painter. . . .

And it is the surprise of Paderewski, musician and statesman.

III

When Ignace Jan Paderewski, music student, aged thirteen, first landed in the city of Warsaw, in the year of Russian Dominion 1874, he heard the story of Sigismund's sword. High on a granite column which has stood for three hundred years in the centre of Palace Square, overlooking the Zamek or Winter Palace, is a bronze figure of King Sigismund, in one hand a cross, in the other an uplifted sword. The legend was that when the sword of Sigismund would be pointed downward Poland's day of freedom would have dawned.

To a Pole such things are possible and credible, because he accepts the fact that life is full of wonders, revealed and unrevealed. Whether young Paderewski, fresh from his Ukrainian home and open-eyed at the sights and marvels of the capital, believed explicitly or not in the legend of the sword is not so much to the point as the fact that he did believe, ardently and wholeheartedly, in the moral of the tale—that Poland would yet be free; and like all true Poles, he swore the oath of his boy heart to consecrate his life to that cause. No doubt his vivid young imagination pictured the return, some not-too-distant day, of a Polish king to that Zamek before which the bronze Sigismund stands guard, and as the picture flowed on, he saw Polish knights and Polish ladies, the Polish flag . . . and he, Ignace Jan Paderewski, home

from the wars, with the fire and glory of victory in his soul, summoned to make music before his country's ruler. To prepare for that hour, how he would study, practice, work, compose!

Little did he dream . . .

Paderewski was born in the village of Kurylowka, in Podolia, on the sixth of November, 1860. His early boyhood was that of the ordinary lad. There was music in the house, but he showed more talent for larks and mischief-making than for the piano. It was not until he was eleven or twelve that his genius really manifested itself; and even then, being a normal healthy boy without any of the earmarks of precocity on him, his father had no positive reason to regard his gift as an extraordinary one. Besides, the family was too poor to indulge in glory; a musical education for the lad was beyond their means. Nevertheless in the end the newly awakened passion of the boy prevailed. After nearly two years of tireless pressure on his father's will, and of equally tireless work to prove the deadly earnestness that was in him, he was sent to Warsaw. The sacrifice this cost the family was no light one. But we shall see how it was repaid.

Paderewski was not quite thirteen when he entered the Warsaw Conservatory. Although the scant funds with which his father could supply him scarcely met his most modest needs, he immediately became popular in the school, his radiant personality and high spirits making him a leader among the students. At his boarding house he found a chum in the violin student Cielewicz (later to win fame in Europe), and these two became inseparable; that is, inseparable as long as there were clothes enough to go around. On occasion, however, the pals were obliged to part. Often hungry together, they could now and then enjoy a square (but separate) meal by taking turns in accepting invitations out, there being a dire shortage of shirts and only one good suit between them. Many comical situations resulted from this arrangement, stories of which Paderewski still recites with a boyish relish to his intimate friends.

Paderewski became notorious in the Conservatory for his mischief, his practical jokes, his engaging personality. Old-timers of that day delight in telling of the escapades of the gay-hearted red-headed youngster who brightened the lives of all around him, in spite of his poverty and want, and who was loved most by those whom he most exasperated with his tricks. One day when he was unusually fractious he was locked in a room by himself for punishment, condemned to solitary confinement and no dinner. He had often gone without dinner before; but it is one thing to have no dinner, and quite another to lose it. The wife of the Conservatory director evidently knew this. She "knew boys," as the saying goes. Ignace Jan enjoyed a secret feast that day,

smuggled in by the kindhearted dame who loved the bad boy as all the world loves a good-natured rascal.

Among the lifelong friends whom young Paderewski bound to him at this time was Kerntopf, famous in Poland as a maker of pianos. The Kerntopf family was among the first to discover the unusual talent of the boy, and took a keen interest in his progress and welfare. In no circle has Paderewski been happier on his many returns to Warsaw than among these modest old-time friends; and no friend has he more deeply mourned than Mr. Kerntopf, who died a few years ago. One story told in the Kerntopf household reveals at once the genius and the personality of the youthful Paderewski.

Mr. Kerntopf had taken the boy to a famous Warsaw music master to get a verdict on his talents. While the two men were conversing the youngster was busy looking over some music sheets on the table. When the professor asked young Paderewski to play, the lad went to the piano and played a brilliant elaborate Polonaise.

"Splendid! This boy has genius!" exclaimed the teacher. "Whose music is it?"

"I think it is an Oginski Polonaise," Paderewski answered. "It is an air well known in our district of Podolia."

When Mr. Kerntopf and the boy left the musician's house, Mr. Kerntopf asked Paderewski how he liked the new teacher. "He doesn't know very much," the youngster giggled.

"What are you laughing about? What can you mean? He praised you so beautifully!"

"Yes, but while you were talking with him, I read over his own Polonaise, and it was that that I played for him—with a few variations!"

Three years and more of hard study, bitter struggle to make ends meet—to make shirts and shoes do double service and sometimes one meal take the place of three; three hard years relieved by the irrepressible spirit of a born play-boy, brought young Paderewski finally to the gawky age. He was a child no more, but a long-legged youth of seventeen, too big for his old clothes, too poor to buy new, and too proud—with the pride of budding manhood on him—to bear the ridicule of rags. His poverty began to grow too conspicuous—to shame him; he could no longer hide behind a prank or a laugh. He and his chum Cielewicz decided to earn some money with their music.

As it was forbidden, however, for pupils of the Conservatory to play in public, the youthful artists had to scheme some way of staging the concerts which they proposed to give without their teachers' knowledge. They decided to run away when the winter holidays arrived, to vanish from the Warsaw scene, and reap

whatever harvest they could in the country districts while the time was theirs. Thus it was that Paderewski, as has so often been told, did actually make his first concert tour while still a schoolboy. And thus it was that he earned his first money in his chosen profession—for the boys' tour was a success, and they both came back to Warsaw with the wherewithal for a complete new outfit of winter clothes.

IV

All this was boyhood, youth, the man in the making. Now, at the early age of nineteen Paderewski struck the first major chord in his life-symphony. He fell in love.

Among the students during his final year at the Conservatory was a charming and talented girl, Panna Korsak, whose gifts of soul and person swept the warm-hearted young Paderewski completely off his feet; and the girl was equally captivated by him, not alone by his gay and endearing nature, his radiant individuality, but by something else that not everyone at the school had been so quick to recognize—his genius. She saw it, awoke it to its true unfolding by the magic touch of love, and became his star. They married, scarcely more than a pair of school-children in years, yet both of them, as events were to prove, already matriculated in the higher school of hardship and suffering.

Paderewski's five years at the Conservatory were now completed and he went immediately to work. Fortunately he was able to secure a position as teacher in the same institution where he had just finished; and this position he held for the two years following, although he was paid hardly a living wage. Had it not been for his love, the complete happiness of his wedded life, these would indeed have been a bitter two years for him. His position in the Conservatory was totally changed. He was no longer one of the pupils, a ringleader among the students. He was a teacher in that most unenviable of all positions—an instructor in his own classroom, a prophet in his own city. Many of the old crowd were gone. His fellow teachers, some of them recent comers, all of them his seniors, either patronized him or were envious of him. He had his friends, of course; most loyal of them all Professor Antoni Rutkowski, pianist and composer, who died in 1896, and whose name is still magic to Paderewski's ears; but there was a "ring" against him—the customary clique of schools of art the world over. The green boy, only a pupil the year before, presuming now to teach among his elders, his "betters," was treated as an upstart.

They snubbed him, persecuted him, poked fun at him; and, irony of ironies, it was his hand—Paderewski's magic hand!—that

they chose as the chief butt of their derision. His radiant mane, destined in future years to become world famous, was nothing to them, because they soon learned that they could not persecute him by casting ridicule at that tawny leonine head, which he would only toss with a laugh in response. But his hand—that was where his power lay. Therefore they chose the hand. "Such a hand! Young man, take my advice, give up music." "With a hand like that you will be a successful butcher, yes!" "Back to the farm, my boy! That fist was never made for the keyboard." . . . How often he was forced to listen to jibes like these, until "failure, failure, failure!" rang in his young ears, and life darkened around him. Lucky for the world that he was in love and had a wife who not only worshipped him, but believed ardently in his genius. For her sake he braved it out, laughed off the petty jealousies of the Conservatory clique, and wore a smile for his adoring partner, whatever the ache or the resentful fury in his heart.

He stuck to his teaching, distasteful as the position was; at night composed, studied, and practised without let-up, always spurred on by his courageous girl-wife; and at the same time he attempted local concert work in the desperate hope of adding to his meagre Conservatory earnings. But here the clique again frustrated him. The prestige which the Conservatory and his fellow teachers should have given him was not forthcoming. An unknown, unheralded boy of nineteen, poor and in rented clothes, aspiring to popular favour without backing or funds—what hope is there ever for such a figure in the field of art—unless, indeed, he possess transcendent genius?

Two years of this struggle went on, this life of bitter and sweet, of the galling taste of slavery and envy and ugliness on the one hand, and the full, pure, ever-refreshing draught of love and beauty on the other; and then came real tragedy, undreamt of catastrophe, gripping the heart of the youthful genius with the hand of death—tragedy beside which the fight to live and achieve was pastime. His wife expired in childbirth, and the boy of twenty faced the world a father and a widower.

Before her death, Paderewski's wife had taken from under her pillow a sum of money. "Here is the baby's dowry," she said, "the money my parents gave me for our child. You are to use it now to finish your musical schooling and to establish yourself, and when you have won your success, you will repay it to our baby multiplied many times over. You have great genius. But you must go abroad. They will appreciate you, away from home. You must have teachers, the best teachers in the world. Before I die you must give me your promise that you will use this money for your music."

If the world had darkened for the boy musician when ridicule rang "failure" in his ears, what words can describe the night that fell about him now? But it had its light; his star still burned, the brighter for the darkness, though far away. More than ever from that moment Paderewski's powers were consecrated to the proving of himself. And he was a father.

He took his baby back to the old family home in Podolia and, encouraged especially by his friend Kerntopf, he set out to make his career. Choosing Berlin first, he soon left the German capital, disappointed in its supposed advantages, and went to Vienna where he presented himself to Leschetitzky, the famous Polish maestro. Madame Modjeska gives us a picture of the Paderewski of that time, when he was visiting at Zakopane, in the Tatra Mountains: "The very next day Dr. Tytus Chalubinski introduced me to a frail-looking young man of twenty-one, saying, 'I want you to know and love Ignace Paderewski, our second Chopin'; and then with the look of a loving father he squeezed the young man's hand. . . . At the piano, Paderewski's head with its aureole of profuse golden hair and delicate, almost feminine features, looked like one of Botticelli's or Fra Angelico's angels, and he seemed so deeply wrapped up in his music that this intensity was almost hypnotic. He also phrased with so much clearness and meaning that his playing made an effect of something new and quite unconventional. . . . In private life he was witty, alert, most kindhearted, always interesting, always having a ready answer. When once a mature beauty chaffed him saying that he was sentimental, he answered: 'Why not, Madame; sentiment does not suit a gendarme; but will you not allow a little of it to an artist?'

"He used to come often to our villa," Madame Modjeska continues, "and it was impossible to keep him away from the piano. Sometimes he played long after midnight, and had to be taken from the instrument by force when refreshments were announced. We had many chats, and I advised him to appear in public. I knew he would make a name and a fortune. His poetic face, combined with his genius, was bound to produce brilliant results. He hesitated, but finally made up his mind to go to Vienna and study under Leschetitzky. That same summer, after leaving Zakopane, he gave a concert in Krakow, at which I had the great pleasure of reciting. Then he departed for Vienna."

V

The great master of Vienna at once recognized the talents of his young compatriot and began to concentrate his attention on his brilliant new pupil, who made a deep impression on him from

the beginning, in spite of the fact that Paderewski, still stunned with his young life's tragedy and heartsore over the failure of Warsaw to recognize his powers, was at this time more in a mood of dogged determination than of brilliant effort. Only the memory of his wife's love and faith, and the encouragement of such friends as Modjeska, Kerntopf and Rutkowski, kept the fire alive in his soul. He felt the responsibility of his dead wife's confidence in him deeply. The achievement of a career had become to him the fulfilling of a sacred trust. He set for himself one single rule and standard of daily life—hard work. " They have denied me my talent. Hard work must take the place of talent."

So he struggled on, the radiant fair-headed youth, not laughing any more for many a day, sobered by the chill shadow of death and loneliness, subdued, quiet, still a slave—but now a slave to his own self-mastery and determination; playing, practising, composing, toiling steadily eight and ten hours a day, week in and week out, without ceasing. If he only knew it, he was working at the foundations of the new Poland!

From Vienna he went to Strasbourg to accept a place as teacher. But he was soon back in the Austrian capital again, studying once more under Leschetitzky. It was a period of prosaic digging and unromantic hard work; a period of readjustment which must be gone through and finished, in which body and soul must suffer the fire of a long and silent test, yet in which the Icarian genius of the Pole was to learn beyond doubting that its wings were not of wax, but of the texture of the sun itself.

Then the door to the concert stage began to open.

Paderewski's first appearances in Vienna, however, while winning respectful favour, did not attract the attention of the general public, nor create the sensation of his later performances. He must travel still further to win the world's recognition of his genius. It was not until he had reached Paris, in 1888, when he was not quite twenty-eight years of age, that his first distinguished success came. Then he suddenly burst on the musical firmament like a new sun—a light so brilliant and sensationally beautiful that the wise ones could predict for it nothing better than the career of a meteor. It was " too wonderful to be true," " too good to last." They did not know the Polish nature, the hard-knit fibre of the stuff which underlay its brilliance and radiance.

The story of the twenty-five years that follow is best written in the annals of art. Paderewski's record for the quarter-century following the launching of his career at Paris is inscribed there, in the same language of immortality which recounts the history of the great masters before him, side by side with the story of Chopin. Inspiration and pleasure of the highest and purest kind he gave to millions of people in almost every civilized country

of the world. But his great professional achievement was the perfecting, as it had never been perfected before, of the art of piano playing. He introduced a new technique and a new style, at once brilliant and persuasive, exquisitely fine and masculinely forceful. He put an end to the old incoherent school of keyboard thunderers, and at the same time revealed to the world the long-forgotten power and vigour of Chopin. He composed voluminously; but he has at all times been so severely self-critical that scarcely more than twenty of his works have been published, and only one opera, "Manru," first produced at Dresden in 1901. For its inspiration, true to his Polish tradition, he drew on his native land, weaving around its tragic story of gypsy love a fabric of purely Polish music, full of the colour and mystery of the Tatras.

But Paderewski's professional record has another and an even higher value than that of the musical and technical; for it reveals to us the character development of a man whose history cannot be ignored in the reckoning of Polish national progress any more than it can be passed over in the record of art. The great artist, as time was to prove, was likewise a great man. As for the sensational features of his career, the playing up of his picturesque personality, his leonine head, his romantic features, they can be best disposed of, perhaps, in the words which Kosciuszko addressed to Jane Porter after reading *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. "I am glad that all your eulogies of me are set down in a romance, because there no one will believe them," the Polish leader wrote to the English authoress. Paderewski had volumes of eulogy and romance published about him. He became a world-vogue. But it was on merit that he won his transcendant position in art; it might indeed be said that he won it in spite of advertising, the effects of which can only be overcome by a true genius. Paderewski never suffered from that fatal weakness of many artists which makes them succumb to the vitiating blandishments of their own press agents. That way artificiality lies, shallowness, eccentricity. His nature was too deep for that, his manhood set too solidly in the bed-rock foundations of hard work.

Kings and queens vied with one another in paying tribute to the Pole, showering him with honours and decorations. But he remained normal—and Pole he never ceased to be—with that glow of inherent power in his soul which made him strong enough on occasion to reject any honour, any fee, no matter how tempting or how fabulous, rather than repudiate his Polish nationality, or submit his talents to the pleasure of Russian Czar or German Kaiser, the traditional oppressors of his country. "His Imperial Majesty"—so ran the "command" from the Court at Petrograd—"is pleased that the world's most eminent musician is a Russian."

"His Imperial Majesty," Paderewski's answer read, "is mistaken; I am a Pole."

France, England, Switzerland, Rumania, Germany, Russia, all the countries of Europe, and finally America, one by one fell to Paderewski's conquest. Millions listened to him, enraptured; mobs followed him, cheered him; the musical and social world went literally mad about him. The greatest artists craved the privilege of painting his portrait, so fascinating a study was his noble head, his strong face luminous with poetic light. In England Alma Tadema and Burne Jones, even Princess Louise, the daughter of Queen Victoria, insisted on immortalizing him on canvas. Famous sculptors in the salons of Rome, Paris, Vienna, Prague, haunted him for sittings. All the multifarious attentions of genuine fame were poured over him like a tidal wave. But he went on working, enjoying it all with a healthy relish, often seeing the glorious humour of it with the eye of a boy. The amount of work he accomplished was prodigious—tour after tour, carrying him back and forth across Europe, across the Atlantic, up and down and across the Americas, finally across the Pacific, with fortune, in the shape of the most fabulous fees ever paid a musician, literally emptying its coffers on him.

Through all this life of applause and success, which might so easily have dizzied him, he kept his head, invested his money, and remained irrevocably three things—a true Pole, a true artist and a true man. "Temptations of ease" were many; but Paderewski had a public mind as well as a public hand; a sort of dual personality, by virtue of which, instead of suffering emotional reactions from his art, he found his relaxation in his head. He was interested in men, in world affairs. In his private life, at the same time, great sorrows and great happinesses still were mingled. His little son, clever and charming, but never recovering from his motherlessness, fell ill and died; but in the love of his good friend Baroness Rosen, who had cared for the child with all the tenderness of a mother, Paderewski found a new wedded happiness, marrying this gifted and distinguished lady in 1899. Family and friends, once in need, shared the bounty of his fortune. His aged father, who had made such sacrifices to give his boy his first musical schooling, never knew want again, but was given an independent income and established in a new house which his famous son built expressly for him. His widowed sister, his half-sisters and half-brothers, all were likewise generously cared for. Public charities and educational institutions flourished under his munificence. Struggling artists were given new life and inspiration through his generosity. Poland itself, in 1910, on the five hundredth anniversary of her historic victory over the Germans at Grünwald, became the recipient of his bounty when he erected

the great Jagiello monument in Krakow. This had long been one of his cherished projects, but the question of a competent sculptor had delayed it. The sculptor, in fact, according to Paderewski's requirements, must be more than competent. " He must have great talent, but he must be young and poor," the commission read. " The money I shall give him for executing the Jagiello monument will help him as the money of my dear wife once helped me."

The fibre of a man is strong that can stand the corrosive pressure of fame, money, laudation, ease and luxury. But fame and laudation to Paderewski were only tributes to art; riches meant the joy of doing and giving; of ease he knew nothing. " Impervious against all temptations of ease." His daily hours of work, study, practice, composition, and again practice, practice, practice, were longer and more arduous than those of the hardest day labourer who sat in the cheapest top gallery to hear him play. " In 1902," writes Madame Modjeska, " we visited Paderewski at his beautiful château in Morges, Switzerland. Those were delightful days spent on the shores of Lake Leman, in view of all the glory of Mont Blanc. There also I could witness what a busy life Paderewski led. He was never seen before luncheon, but we could hear his piano constantly. He was both composing and practising. After lunch he retired for a short rest, and then the piano was again sending up its brilliant notes. He appeared at dinner fresh, jolly, a brilliant man of the world, and stayed with his guests late at night." " On the education of every finger," writes an English critic, E. T. Raymond, " was lavished as much pains as go to the instruction of the children of a good-sized township. The most repellant labour was faced, the most alluring temptations set aside, in order that the very maximum of digital dexterity—the rest was in the man's soul—should be obtained. . . . The skill was largely a matter of sheer hard work, of self-discipline exceeding that of most old saints, of a savage energy which in another orbit might have guided half a dozen trusts."

As things turned out, it was an energy, trained, disciplined and perfected to guide for a time more than a dozen trusts, even more than a great art. It was to help shape, direct, and manage a nation. But Paderewski's heart, nevertheless, remained that of a boy. During all these busy years, filled though they were with dignities and fame, sorrows, joys, responsibilities and ceaseless work, nothing could quite tame the natural gaiety of his spirit, as intimate friends who have enjoyed his hospitality will testify —a hospitality still spiced as it often is with the joyous pranks of a healthy, fun-loving nature. " His house is full of laughter," one friend writes of him. " In his home his delight is to make others happy." " Besides being one of the greatest in art," Madame

Modjeska wrote, he "is also the most delightful of companions. Gifted with a brilliant wit, fascinating in conversation, posted on every subject, he is a perfect entertainer, either as host or guest." At Morges, or in his ranch house in California, his visitor may find a doll or a dummy in his bed concocted of pillows, stockings, etc., in approved Tom Sawyer fashion, with Paderewski, the famous and the distinguished, hiding behind the door to watch the fun, and bursting into laughter at the comic effect of his surprise. Bridge is his favourite game. He used to scold Madame Modjeska unmercifully for her poor bidding. When there are no guests in his own home, he usually impresses Marcel, his butler, into the game. He taught Marcel himself years ago, and now he wonders sometimes if Marcel is not teaching him!

There is no end to the stories told of Paderewski the artist, many of them mere pointless gossip of the sort that is inevitably recounted of public characters. But one little incident, related to me by a passing acquaintance, I would like to set down, because it not only reveals something of the distinctly Polish nature of the man's own character, but also shows how a man, even in an incident perhaps altogether forgotten by himself, can influence the character of others. The story was told me in a dozen words by one who declared that his whole life had been coloured by it: Paderewski had injured one of his fingers. But he insisted on filling a concert engagement before the hurt was entirely healed. "But how could you play?" his friends cried, afterward, marvelling at the unusual brilliance of the performance.

"I may never come this way again—I could not disappoint them," Paderewski answered. "And perhaps a little pain, after all, makes one do a little better."

VI

Paderewski made his first visit to the United States in 1891. From that year onward his western tours became more and more frequent and extended, until finally, establishing a home in California, he spent the greater part of his time in America. He had already purchased an estate in Poland, and had likewise made a home for himself in Switzerland, where, at Morges, he had built up a model farm; for, like most Poles, he is a farmer born; agriculture is his hobby. But the mountains of Switzerland did not always please him. "They are like walls shutting me in," he would tell his friends. He is prairie-bred, and, outside of the Polish plain, is more at home in the broad expanses of America than anywhere else in the world.

It is interesting to study the reactions of America on this man, who in time was to stand before the American people as the

representative Pole of his day; whose name above all others has become synonymous with that of Poland in the United States.

Hundreds of great and famous artists from foreign countries come and go in America; but most of them, after all, are never more than distinguished passers-by about whom we can be merely curious and to whom we can only be grateful for whatever of new life they bring us. Paderewski's case is different. The sentiment of the masses which greeted that striking figure as it appeared on a thousand American platforms changed in a remarkably short time from curiosity to something very much resembling pride and affection, with a strong tincture of possession in it. Something in the man, something more than his music, and infinitely more than his fame, reached out to grip and hold the American people. He became one of us; to such an extent, in fact, that when the great crisis in Poland arrived, the majority of Americans found themselves looking to him more as to an American speaking for Poland than a Pole speaking to America.

The source of this, I believe, was deeper than the man's art or his long familiarity with American audiences. In Paderewski, to be precise, that quality, common to Poles generally, is very strong, of actual resemblance to the American nature, of the paralleling of American ideals. Kosciuszko had this quality, as Washington himself discerned. When choosing between the Pole and the French military engineer Radiere, in deciding on the defence of West Point and the Hudson, the Pole was selected because he more nearly approached the American ideal of democracy—because, to quote Washington's words, he was "better adapted to the genius and temper of the [American] people."

This subtle relationship, so difficult to define, but which does unmistakably exist (as Americans in Poland discover as well as Poles in America), is after all a simple matter of tradition. It explains much of the story of the Poles in America: their own Polish tradition is too much like ours not to have produced a strong parallel reaction. From earliest times, as Professor Robert Howard Lord of Harvard (in *Some Problems of the Peace Conference*) shows, when describing the Poland of the Middle Ages, the Poles possessed "a great enthusiasm for freedom in almost every branch of life; the principle of the sovereignty of the nation, calling the citizens to participate in the responsibilities of government; the conception of the State as not a thing existing for itself, but as an instrument serving the well-being of society; aversion to absolute monarchy, standing armies and militarism; disinclination to make aggressive wars, but a remarkable tendency to make voluntary unions with neighbouring peoples." Such ideals, old for centuries in the Polish soul, could not fail to incline it readily to the general scheme of life and thought in America.

This description of the Polish state of the sixteenth century might almost be a word-for-word picture of our own present-day democracy. Indeed, as Professor Lord shows, the likeness was even more defined and perceivable. "The old Polish State," he writes, "was an experiment of a highly original and interesting character. It was a republic both in name and in fact, although nominally it had a king as its first magistrate. It was the largest and most ambitious experiment with a republican form of government that the world had seen since the days of the Romans. Moreover, it was the first experiment on a large scale with a federal republic, down to the time of the United States. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this republic was the freest state in Europe, the state in which the greatest degree of constitutional, civic, and intellectual liberty prevailed. In an age of religious persecution and chronic religious wars, Poland knew no such troubles; it offered almost complete toleration and an asylum to those fleeing from persecution in all western lands. Like the United States to-day, Poland was at that time the melting-pot of Europe, the haven for the poor and oppressed of all the neighbouring countries."

For several generations before Paderewski appeared in America the knitting together of the Polish and the American ideal had gone on among scattered but ever-growing colonies of Poles in the New World, building up among them a Polish-American tradition with which Paderewski quickly came into contact. The Pole in America, he found, more than the Pole in any other country to which he had emigrated, had assimilated himself into the very nature and being of the land. In the intimate circle of his compatriots which first welcomed Paderewski to America were men and women, many of them the descendants of long lines of Polish leaders and patriots who had made the name of Poland shine in the history of the new Republic as their forbears had made it shine in Europe. First, to represent the world of art, there were Modjeska, Sembrich, Hoffman, the de Rezkes and a dozen others; there were famous physicians, educators, engineers, scientists; there was such a Civil War veteran as General Kryzanowski, who had won his spurs fighting beside Carl Schurz—Pole and German, traditional enemies in the Old World, united in the New in a common cause; and the name of Kryzanowski recalled other Polish heroes of the Rebellion: Josef Smolenski, the youngest cavalry officer in the Union Army; Henry Kalusowski, organizer of New York's famous Thirty-First Regiment. Turn where he would, in fact, Paderewski on every hand was confronted not only by Poles who welcomed him to America as to the land where Polish dreams of liberty come true, but by Poles whose individual histories initiated him at once into the life of the American citizen.

Thus, to the enormous pull which America, as the rainbow's

end, exerts on all wideawake foreigners, was added in Paderewski's case a very special appeal of American idealism, as he sensed it instantly in his Polish compatriots, and as he was later to feel it in the American people themselves. To him America was revealed at once as far more than a mere land of dollars. His Polish clairvoyance was quick to feel that impulse, that undercurrent of warmth and aspiration in American life which most Europeans (and not a few Americans) do not believe exists. He felt it first, as I have said, in his fellow Poles, who acted as a sensitive medium between him and his new public; and he felt it in his audiences, with that unerring instinct which is the gift of artists, and which is itself continuously quickened and sharpened by sympathetic response. If the greatest triumphs of Paderewski's musical career came to him in America it is, as he himself will say, because the American soul has listened to him, answered him, given itself to him with the most inspiring freshness and confidence, to be borne away on the strong wings of his art. "Some people think, and perhaps make you believe," said Paderewski once, to a New York audience, "that this huge country of yours, a country of enormous possibilities, of colossal enterprises, of titanic financial conceptions—that this is the country of the largest factories, of the longest railways, of the tallest buildings in the world, and of nothing else. They think that you are a great commercial and industrial people, of great engineers, of peerless inventors, fearless speculators—in business and banking superior to everyone. It may be true—it is true; but the truest of all is the fact that you are idealists to the core and that for ages you will remain idealists."

How much of our American idealism do we actually owe to the inspiration and the self-revelation which such men as Paderewski give us? In reacting to us, they also show us our best selves. The whole story of America, after all, is of the resolving of multifarious elements and qualities drawn from the Old World to be crystallized into the ideal of the New. But it is not all vague theorizing, based on generalities. In Paderewski's case we have a great man from abroad not only bringing us the best of his own land and of his own character, like a mirror to show us the same in ourselves, but definitely and deliberately fostering our ideal in a practical and a material way. Paderewski has done more, in a professional way, than thrill audiences and inspire musicians. A few years after his first coming to the United States he established a trust fund for the encouragement of American music, the awards from which, made every three years, go exclusively to American-born composers. No warmer tribute of confidence could be paid to young America's higher potential powers than this endowing by a foreigner of a fund for purely American art.

VII

While this process of give and take went on between artist and public, between the Polish musician and the American people, to whom he gave his soul in music and from whom he drew renewed inspiration and strength of purpose, two specific things were happening to Paderewski to prepare him for his later rôle of Polish national leader: he was learning our language and he was making intimate acquaintanceship with many of our foremost public men.

Paderewski's learning of English has been a genuine feat, for he has so completely mastered it that it is no longer his secondary tongue, but as natural to him as Polish. He not only speaks good English, but eloquent English, with the fluency and force of one born to think in it. For Poles, it is true, this is not a novelty. Joseph Conrad is one outstanding example of the linguistic gifts of this people—a man who, not learning English until of mature years, has nevertheless actually set the pace for Englishmen in the use of their own tongue as a literary medium. Modjeska, when thirty-six years of age, learned English so well in less than six months' time that she could play "Juliet" to the "Romeo" of John McCullough. (How thoroughly Polish is the "energy verging on frenzy," as she described it, with which she pursued her studies!) However, Modjeska never lost her accent. Paderewski, it may be said, has achieved the most unique of all these linguistic feats; he has become a great orator in a foreign tongue. He is one of the most forceful and eloquent public speakers we have to-day in America.

I shall never forget the first time I heard him give a public address. It was in 1915, at the World's Fair in San Francisco, when he was touring the country on behalf of the Polish cause. His appearance on the platform of the great Festival Hall, packed with an audience of thousands, was greeted with the same thunderous applause which Paderewski the musician has always won from audiences wherever he has gone. Then there was an expectant pause, in which one could sense the attitude of the crowd—warmly sympathetic, even indulgent, ready to listen to the great artist's words, but with a vague hope back of it all that the speaking would soon be done with, and the music begin. . . .

What a surprise! The first sound of that quiet, rich voice caught the hearts of the people as quickly and as grippingly as ever his music had, and his first words, not in halting accents or broken English, but clear, flawless and easy, were in themselves a stroke of genius. "I come to speak to you of a nation which is not yours in a language which is not mine." . . . Criticism was disarmed, impatience for the piano forgotten, the most intense

and sympathetic attention compelled by that one simple utterance, phrased with all the directness and sincerity of an opening bar to a symphony.

During the first years of the War, until his duties recalled him to Europe, Paderewski was tireless in this work of public appeal, touring America up and down and across, expounding the Polish cause, speaking to thousands of audiences in the United States and Canada. A born orator, endowed through his musical genius with an infinitely fine sense of expression, and possessing the mind of a statesman, he was able with these combined powers to literally move millions, to open the heart of all America to the cry of the Polish nation for freedom. Whatever the heights to which Paderewski had risen through his art, now more than ever he stood before the American people a unique and commanding figure.

Among his four million compatriots in the United States and Canada he stood quite alone. To them, thanks to his authentic knowledge of Polish affairs in Europe, he was the acknowledged spokesman of their mother country; and for them he was their spokesman to America. Among the public men of America, at the same time, his power and authority were widely recognized, just as they had been long recognized in Europe, where sovereigns and statesmen and politicians had come to know him not only as an artist, but as a student of affairs. Association in the inner circles of world power, the society of many of the foremost men of the time in practically every country in Europe, had developed Paderewski's native political capacities until he had become one of the best informed men of the period. Some people who met him and who insisted on "talking shop" to him—that is, piano—were much disappointed because he would mildly protest that there were "so many other interesting things in the world." They put this down as merely an artist's affectation. How little they understood the reach of the man's mind!

The French statesman Clemenceau, as the story goes, on hearing that Paderewski had "given up music for politics," exclaimed "What a come-down!" When I heard that story I was reminded of a letter I once received from Madame Modjeska in which, telling of a visit Paderewski was paying to her home in California, she spoke of the lively times their distinguished guest was having "sometimes playing bridge, sometimes reading and discussing Canon Sheehan's Irish novels, and all the time talking politics." I was like the shop-talking folk then, and the French Premier: I was disappointed. It was a "come down" to imagine Paderewski talking politics. Sheehan's novels, yes; that was art. But not politics. I had not known that the gods ever came to earth like that. . . . Now I realize what it meant, how great the

artist was in his realization that the truest art is the study of human affairs, and how powerfully his feeling of responsibility as a Pole dominated everything else in him, even the artistic.

I had no idea then what sort of politics Paderewski and his friends were discussing. But I know now that at about the same time Madame Modjeska wrote me that letter, momentous things were happening in Poland. Still under the Partitions, the nation was nevertheless stirring more and more to a new political consciousness. It was this movement that Paderewski was then watching, especially as it developed in the Russian dominions, where steam-roller oppression had almost destroyed initiative. In the Austrian and German Partitions there was a different situation; in Austrian Poland concessions had been granted and a degree of local autonomy had been secured; in German Poland the efforts of the Berlin junkers to Prussianize the country by colonizing it with German settlers and rooting the Poles bodily from the soil, landowners and peasants both, had drawn gentry and peasantry together, creating between them a genuine political union. But in Russia the physical exhaustion which followed the crushing of the revolutions of 1830 and 1863, added to the absence of parliamentary government, had almost entirely discouraged Polish political activity. In fact, these conditions had produced a distinct school of political "realists" whose negative ideal of "making the best of things" had resulted in something very near national paralysis.

But then had come the Russo-Japanese war and the establishment of the Duma, with Poles sharing in the newly-won constitutional privileges of the Empire. These privileges, extremely limited though they were, had revived the political impulse of the Pole. The old Pan-Polish movement resurrected itself, took on new life, began to spread through the country, even into the other partitions. This was no smooth or easy process, however, because in both the German and Austrian as well as in the Russian partitions the "realistic" idea, coupled with parliamentary rights, had gained much ground, fostering more and more the policy of a triple Polish allegiance—that is, of each of the three sections of divided Poland remaining satisfied to "make the best of it" under its separate alien rule.

It is not difficult to picture Paderewski at this period, watching every movement in the arena of Polish thought, eagerly and anxiously following each step in the development of Poland's home politics, and no doubt often, with real American impatience, wishing he could apply American theories to the far-off Polish situation. By this time the National Democrat Party of Poland had become the chief force, the one great unifying instrument, in Polish politics. It had won every seat in the Polish Duma. (Indeed

so successful had it been there, that in short order the Czarist reactionaries, alarmed at the Polish awakening, had cut down its representation from 34 votes to 12.) It had invaded Austrian Poland and had built itself in deep and strong among the people, especially the peasants, of that partition, in spite of pro-Austrian conservatism and compromise among the gentry. In German Poland it had gained new strength, backing the proprietors and peasants in their land fight. It had accomplished an actual *rapport* between Poles and Russian constitutionalists. In short, it had organized such a strong sentiment of Pan-Polish, that is of national unity, that no matter in which of the three alien capitals Polish delegates now met—Vienna, Petrograd or Berlin—when it came to any crisis affecting the home land, they were indivisible. Of Roman Dmowski, the founder and leader of this party, who has for many years been one of Paderewski's closest friends, and who later was to be his colleague at the Paris Peace Conference, Boswell, the English historian, in his *Poland and the Poles*, writes as follows : " It was due to his efforts that the War found Poland with all the elements of a future political system, which enabled her, on the fall of Germany, to take her place at once as an independent nation."

To know Paderewski, and to appreciate the elements with which he was to contend later, it is necessary for us to realize the situation he contemplated and studied at this pre-war stage of his political development. That little passage from Madame Modjeska's letter reveals him to us, even during his hard-earned holiday, absorbed in public affairs, " talking politics all the time." All Paderewski's knowledge of European affairs would come into play in such discussions ; knowledge which gave him what Americans, less familiar with the Old-World checkerboard, might have called a prophetic sight. He saw the great war coming. (" It seemed to us that both on the European and the American horizon there were many dark clouds," Modjeska wrote in 1909. Poles in Paris talked convincingly to me of the coming war in 1912.) And in that vision he beheld unmistakably the rôle Poland must play in the conflict. From the beginning, long before the world tragedy began, Paderewski's mind was made up to one inevitable conclusion : that whatever happened, Poland must stand against Germany.

The importance of this decision to the Allied cause could not be overestimated. It was largely Paderewski's influence that made it possible.

VIII

Among his many friends in America, Paderewski numbered Colonel House, the personal adviser of President Wilson ; and through Colonel House he became acquainted with the President

himself. This is a significant fact; for to it is due the intimate first-hand knowledge which these two men possessed concerning Poland—knowledge which weighed heavily in the balance of Poland's future when the crisis came, and which bore tangible fruit in that declaration of Woodrow Wilson, enumerated in his Fourteen Points, which proclaimed "an independent Polish State" as a *sine qua non* of world peace.

But long before President Wilson's proclamation was made—in the spring of 1915, in fact—Paderewski had launched his campaign for Poland in America, a campaign which was prodigious both in its scope and its results. As the work of one man, a private and unofficial civilian acting in a world crisis, it is unprecedented. The Polish element in America, representing huge sums of money and enormous man-power, was at once solidified. In Canada the Poles, not alone those resident in the Dominion but thousands of their compatriots from the United States, moved by Paderewski's eloquence, swarmed into the recruiting offices at the stroke of the first bell; and long afterwards, too, this movement continued, when other thousands of Poles, too old or otherwise disqualified for the American service, found a way to the front through the Canadian forces. Then, with America definitely into the fight, a record began of volunteer Polish enlistments—and later of Polish casualties—which put the Poles ahead of every other nationality represented in the A.E.F. The raising of a separate volunteer Polish force or "legion" was Paderewski's next achievement, for it was through him that this concession was granted by the War Department at Washington. From this source eventually rose the famous Haller Army, in which some 25,000 Polish-Americans played a glorious part, not only on the Western Front, but in the East against the Bolsheviks.

In the Haller Army a singular tribute was paid to Paderewski—an honour never before given to a civilian in the history of the world, and to only one soldier, Napoleon—his name was inscribed on the lists of volunteers, and every day at every roll-call, "Ignace Jan Paderewski" was responded to by the thunderous chorus of every regiment of the entire force of 100,000 men.

So much for Paderewski's war record in America, first among the Poles, whom he rallied by the tens of thousands to actual service; and next among the masses of Americans whom he inspired literally by the millions to champion the cause of right against that of brute strength. At the same time, with the inspiration and help of Madame Paderewska, and encouraged by such influential American friends as Herbert Hoover, he organized a vast philanthropic work for the aid of Poland's stricken population, raising a fund of millions to help in the feeding of the starving and the healing of the sick and wounded of his wrecked

mother-country; a fund to which he himself contributed the bulk of his own fortune; for Paderewski, like many another Polish patriot, has given his all to the national cause, even converting his estate in Switzerland into a refugee camp, where numbers of homeless war victims still live on his bounty.

Of the help given him in this work by America, Paderewski never tires of speaking. "Long before this mighty Republic of America decided to join the Allied forces for light and right," he declared, in his Civic Forum speech in New York, in March 1921 (on his return from Europe), "long before that, I found here friends, many good friends, who most generously enabled me to collect funds for the relief of our war victims. Long before that great event, while still on his mission in Belgium—Belgium without bread because without fear!—your Herbert Hoover, our Herbert Hoover, endeavoured to bring into Poland the aid needed by our hunger-stricken people. Unfortunately Poland was inaccessible at that time, inaccessible even to American hearts. As soon, however, as the situation had changed and the way to Poland had become a little easier, your unbounded charity began to flow in streams."

A further passage from this speech gives us not only an echo of Paderewski's simple eloquence, but a picture by inference of some of the difficulties he faced in those trying days when, with his whole soul thrown into the fight, he worked night and day to save Poland from complete destruction. "We had had some promises," he said, "some encouraging words had been spoken to us by other countries. Our best friend, that chivalrous, heroic, glorious France—France whom we have loved for a thousand years—France was desperately struggling for her very existence, and so also were her great and noble allies.

"What could we expect? The outcome of the gigantic struggle was uncertain. The promises given us were vague. Our prospects were gloomy indeed—until the tremendous weight of your influence was thrown on the balance and decided it at once in our favour. That tremendous weight was something already well known to me. It was your American idealism."

IX

From the spring of 1915 to November 1918, Paderewski's American campaign went on. In Poland itself, in the meantime, affairs had developed rapidly. Russia, promising the Poles freedom, had been driven back beyond the Vistula by the Teutons. The Teutons, likewise pledged to Polish freedom, had taken Warsaw and had set up a dummy Polish government, the purpose of which was to blindfold the Poles until a new German subjugation

of them could be accomplished. But the Poles, refusing to be blindfolded, still fought stubbornly for their rights. There had been the dramas of the Regency's rise and fall, of Pilsudski's arrest and imprisonment, of Haller's flight to France, via Russia, to organize a Polish attack in the West; and finally, there had been the escape of some of the chief Polish leaders to Paris, where the national committee was organized.

This Polish National Committee, recognized by the Allies, began the preliminary work of establishing a government for the resurrected Poland; but cut off as it was from all intercourse with the home country, insuperable difficulties arose. In 1918, Polish internal affairs, thrown into complete confusion by the breakup of the Central Powers on the one hand and Russia on the other, grew more and more complicated by the setting up of an emergency government at Warsaw which the Allies refused to recognize. All the divisions and dissensions inevitable in such a situation then rapidly developed, intensified by the more or less triple nature which Poland had taken on during the hundred and thirty years of its tripartition. It was at this crisis that Paderewski rose to his full height as a Polish leader.

Many wise men of that time, even those whose sympathies were wholly Polish, predicted that Poland could never really come together, never really reunite and be one again, after its long break-up. It took a thorough knowledge of the Pole himself, of Polish history and the Polish nature, to inspire any confidence in his future in that dark and chaotic hour immediately following the Armistice, when the whole world, while it shouted and wept to acclaim the laying down of arms, still looked distrustfully over its shoulder and wondered " What next? " But the Pole possessed a psychology of his own: inherent powers of orderliness, organization, foresight, above all, of self-knowledge, were his which the world did not suspect; powers, nevertheless, which his leaders quickly began to demonstrate. None among them at that moment more conspicuously or more constructively exemplified this hidden strength than Paderewski.

In December 1918, a few weeks after the Armistice, Paderewski, journeying by sea from England on the British cruiser *Concord*, landed at Danzig. His mission was the reorganization of Poland and the situation he faced was a serious one. A country wrecked, a people rocking with the shock of four terrible years of ceaseless fighting, destruction, devastation; four years in which, with their countryside open to every invader and their civilian population forced by a deliberate starvation process either to take up arms or go hungry, Poles had been obliged to fight Poles—1,000,000 of them in the Russian army against 500,000 in the Austrian and 400,000 in the German—until it seemed that the very memory

of cohesion must be blotted out. Wave after wave of battling forces had swept back and forth over the length and breadth of Poland until the country was literally stripped, pulverized. Physically and mentally, Poland at that moment was like chaos before creation. The Germans, in spite of the obligations of the Armistice, had not yet pulled out. They had left Warsaw, it is true ; but they were still hanging on on the outskirts. In Poznan they were fighting bitterly to prevent the Poles taking possession, and the Poles at the same time, though they had succeeded in organizing a local government, had been unable so far to coalesce with the former Russian Poland. (In Galicia still another provincial government had been set up, and this was being furiously attacked by the German-armed and German-paid Ukrainians.) Confusion had wrought his masterpiece.

The Regency had resigned, and Pilsudski, on his return from his German prison, had found himself forced to fill the rôle of politician as well as that of soldier. He had organized a socialistic government at Warsaw, but the national bloc and the peasants' parties had refused it their support. A second government under Dasczynski, more strongly socialistic still, had appeared at Lublin. The land was without boundaries, yet attacked on every frontier; for besides the Germans in the west and the Ukrainians in the south-east, the Czechs were advancing in the south-west, the Bolsheviks in the east, the Lithuanians on the north. The country was practically without a government, yet the world of the Allies was already demanding of it the full functions of a Power, with the Press of the world setting up a German-inspired cry of "Polish imperialism," "Polish belligerency," "Polish pogroms," and so on. Paderewski's task was to harmonize all the discordant notes of this furious fortissimo and transpose them into an International Anthem!

Travelling first to Poznan, Paderewski was swept at once into a maelstrom of popular excitement. School children gathered in front of his hotel to welcome him. A German troop, composed almost entirely of officers, fired on them. Several were killed, many wounded; and for three days following, Paderewski and his party lived literally in siege, to the continuous rattle of machine guns and only with what food could be smuggled into them. At the end of three days, however, Poznan was again quiet ; Gniezno and other towns had fallen to Polish hands, the Germans were gone, and nothing was left of them but an odious memory and a threat to bomb Poznan from the air. At midnight on New Year's eve Paderewski left for Warsaw, peasantry and townsfolk acclaiming him in crowds along the road all through the night. It was a triumphal progress from beginning to end. By the time he reached Warsaw he had been compelled, in the space

of one day, to deliver seventeen speeches to the throngs that greeted him.

Within a few hours of his arrival in the capital, Paderewski's harmonizing power began to be felt. For a quarter of a century the idol and pride of the Polish public, with whom he had an unsurpassed record of integrity and patriotism, he came home now to his people clothed not only with the authority of a long-established popularity, but with the new record of his American war leadership and the power of the Allies back of him. And to his achievements for the Polish cause in America, was added his own munificence, the final touch to prove the entire unselfishness and complete non-partisanship of the man. He stood to Poland that moment as a living symbol of peace and conciliation.

He was a born harmonizer. "This eminent artist's energies were all blended into one harmonious whole," writes E. J. Dillon in a description of Paderewski at the Peace Conference (in *The Inside Story of the Peace Conference*); "his meetings with the great plenipotentiaries were never disturbed by a jarring note"; he "sank political passion in reason and attuned himself to the rôle of harmonizer. He held that it would have been worse than useless to have done otherwise." He was the one thing Poland needed at this moment. The people's nerves were shattered, taut, at the snapping point. His very arrival relaxed them.

X

It was the first of January, 1919, when he reached Warsaw. By January 15th the dissolution of the socialistic Moraczewski government took place. On January 29th a general election was held for the establishment of a new government. This in itself is a noteworthy record, revealing as it does that underlying all the Polish welter of post-war confusion and dissension was a solid bed-rock of unity and solidarity. Paderewski knew it was there, and in that knowledge lay the real secret of his power. He was a Pole of the Poles; but he had the perspective of an outsider, and he understood better than the Polish masses could in that turbulent moment how true were the words of his friend Sienkiewicz: "The contradictions which appear prove our vitality. They are a sign that we live, feel, think. In that is our unity. That which separates us unites us."

The holding of that first election in January 1919 acted on Poland like a chemical process; it reduced matters to their elements. Paderewski's trained mind was the precipitate. He had the power of resolving the complex to the simple, of seeing clear through and all around a situation and of measuring it "by and large." The election accomplished, Poland found herself

with a full-fledged constituent assembly in operation. The next step was the forming of a coalition cabinet in which all the varying popular forces should not only be joined and reconciled, but by which they should be more clearly defined to themselves with standardized aims and objectives. In this once more Paderewski showed extraordinary powers of leadership and organization. A ministry was formed with representatives from all the three former partitions, and likewise from all the political groups of the country. It was in this initial election and coalition cabinet that the unified national ideal, sown and propagated for so many years through all of the three parts of divided Poland by Dmowski and the Pan-Poles, bore its first fruit. It needed only the presence of such a man as Paderewski at the critical moment to save the harvest.

Paderewski, however, was the man of no party or group, but of all ; and it was for this reason that Poland rallied around him as it did and set to work under his direction to establish the nation in its newly won independence. Stirring days of strain and conflict followed ; strain within of the heaviest and most exacting nature, but inevitable in such a period of readjustment ; conflict without, on every side, but with Pilsudski and the heroic Polish army daily working new miracles of military organization and victorious self-defence. Nevertheless, in spite of this terrific strain, internal and external, the thought and impulse of the nation was kept at a healthy level ; there was none of the whining over ancient and unredressed wrongs which might easily have been expected, but rather a robust hustling spirit of attending to present needs, political and material. How pressing were the material needs of the hour can be gathered from one statement alone made by Paderewski to the American Red Cross in the spring of 1919—that four million Polish refugees had been scattered by the War, were returning, and must be cared for. How those needs were met is shown in the figures of war-relief work carried on by the Poles themselves, through their government (which had established a repatriation office), and through organized philanthropy, led by Madame Paderewska and her "White Cross," the Polish Red Cross, and other local organizations. Within one year after Paderewski's homecoming, 1,070 of these organizations had been consolidated under a general welfare council directing 3,814 public institutions (hospitals, refuges, asylums, schools, etc.) in which 715,111 inmates were cared for, including 307,642 children ; (641 of these institutions were exclusively for children). In this same period of time, up to March 31, 1920, ten million meals had been distributed by these consolidated organizations, along with thousands of tons of clothing, shoes, medicines and hospital supplies ; practically all the food and other supplies coming from

America through Hoover's American Relief Administration and the American Red Cross.

For the sound, healthy state of mind preserved in Poland during this time Paderewski's credit can hardly be overmeasured. All differences considered—we shall come to these later—he not only stood before the world at that moment as the personification of Polish aspirations and ideals, but he stood before his own people as the personification of themselves. In him, for one thing, they saw symbolized that historic Poland which, despite the divisions, partitions, exiles and tyrannies of generations of alien rule, still remained uncompromisingly, unequivocally Polish, never having permitted itself to become either Prussianized or Russianized or denationalized in any other way. In his ardent championship of the Polish soldier, whose bleeding breast was then Poland's only rampart, he spoke for that traditional Poland which from time immemorial has been consecrated to home defence. He was a pacifier; he was a man known to be devoutly religious; but he never was a pacifist in the weak meaning of the term, as the whole world learned when he uttered those ringing words to the Allies, "You cannot fight Bolshevism with the Bible." The Poland of Paderewski, in short, was the virile Poland of history, which on three memorable occasions had stood as a bulwark between civilization and barbarism and which was ready to so stand again: the Poland of 1444, of Wladislaw, checking the Ottoman hosts; the Poland of 1621, holding back the Tartar invasions; the Poland of Sobieski, of 1683, stopping the Eastern hordes at the gates of Vienna.

At the same time, Paderewski's temperate vision, the integrity and liberality of his thought, revealed the Poles to themselves, though free agents once more, still frank and open-minded enough to acknowledge their past errors, to retrieve them, and to realize that they still had their spurs to win, victories to register over themselves as well as over their adversaries. "All this is terrible," was the sentiment often expressed to me during the two hard years that followed independence; "it would have been so wonderful if we could have just walked into the green pastures of peace and freedom and settled down to browse. But that would have been too easy! We must seal our new freedom, it seems, with fresh Polish blood to make it our very own."

Paderewski stood for what was best in the Polish nature. He was tolerant, reminding his compatriots of Kosciuszko's words, "There is no faith that would forbid a man to be free"; remembering that in all the thousand years of Polish history tolerance had been the nation's shining star, with never a religious war, never a war of conquest, save those waged by imported kings, to dim its lustre. With this Polish tradition part of him to the

marrow of his bones, Paderewski raised voice and hand to protect the minority races in Poland—the Lithuanians, the Ruthenians, the Russians and Germans, and expressly the Jews. " Lovers of peace and justice," he declared, " know that only care and gentle handling will cure certain wounds." But at the same time he minced no words when he stood up to deny the calumnies spread abroad that Poland was aggressive, tyrannous and power-greedy. " Although it is easier to storm a hundred fortresses and to burn a thousand towns to cinders than to overthrow one prejudice," he declared in the Sejm at Warsaw, " the time has come, nevertheless, for the voice of the Polish nation to give the lie to these unfounded foreign accusations." He threw open the doors of Poland and invited the world to look in.

Every official word and act of Paderewski's government disputed the favourite time-worn charge of Poland's enemies that the nation was imperialistic and military-ridden. He knew that Poland from its genesis has been a purely self-defensive state, that the Polish army, in the words of the sixteenth century Jan Zamoyski, was " for the security of the frontiers only, never for making conquests," and he determined by his foreign policy to keep to that ideal and make the world understand it. " In defence of the lives and property of our countrymen," he declared, " in the name of justice and right, in the name of freedom for all, we are ready to sacrifice our own lives and property; but we are not seeking new fame for the Polish standard, we are not boasting of our victories."

Friendship with all of Poland's neighbours was his objective, ancient enemies as well as ancient allies: " a perfect and durable peace," to quote his own words; " peace outside and in "; the solution of all Poland's problems " in the spirit of intimate and harmonious relationship, the spirit of toleration and love, which will give Poles the power to look into the eyes of anybody in the world without having to flush." With that objective he laid the first foundations of international confidence on which Poland's present-day treaties with her neighbours are based. " Poland is not imperialistic," he declared in one of his speeches in the Sejm (May 21 1919). " We do not desire annexations; we are not making an imperialistic war. If we are making war, it is to defend Western European civilization against Bolshevism. Our mission to-day is no different from what it has been for seven hundred years past. We do not desire to force other populations to speak our language or adopt our customs. We wish all our neighbours to develop their own nationalities as they choose. Faithful to the spirit of our nation, faithful to the eternal traditions of our forefathers, we shall never make a war of annexation, of aggression, anywhere." And again: " The White Eagle of Poland is no

bird of prey. From every side, from every corner of our former commonwealth, now once more welding itself into one, people are hastening here to Warsaw, and from Warsaw to Paris; they come in coats, in smocks, in old-fashioned doublets, in the dress of the mountaineer; and one and all they cry and implore that their far lands and homes be joined to the Polish state. No bird of prey, assuredly, this White Eagle of ours, when people on every side are so eager to seek shelter under its wings."

Last, but by no means least, Paderewski, represented America to Poland. Back of him, the Poles felt, stood the great Republic of the New World, their own ideal and model for generations, and his "second country." His prestige was higher for that reason, and the sense of responsibility toward him deeper. It was as if, in a paraphrase of Nelson's words, Paderewski had told his compatriots, "America expects every Pole to do his duty." Besides, in an immediately practical way, he not only brought American money and technical experts into Poland to help in the reorganization of affairs, but by his own example he showed his co-workers how to be "impervious against all temptations of ease." He himself knew no rest. The night-light burned long and late over his labours in the spacious chambers of the Zamek which was now his home, but which, stripped by the enemy of its glories, was by its very size more bare and simple than the house of many a war-impoverished Polish family. Problems and difficulties stalked the halls of that empty palace, massing themselves against him like the shadows of attacking armies. Only a disciplined orderly mind could have stood the strain; only the infinite patience of the true idealist could have kept him sticking to the job, the same patience that had made his self-mastery in music a triumph. As if on his desk before him, at his right hand lay Poland; at his left, Paris and the Peace Conference; and between them the bewildering puzzle of the smoking world into which the bulk of the new incoherent Poland must be fitted, cut and measured by the exacting and at times altogether disproportionate gauge of the Supreme Council. He was more, then, than Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Poland: he was the moulder and arbiter of his nation.

Far be it from the historian, however, to sing the song of those days of Paderewski's public service as a canticle of perfected harmony and conciliation. On the contrary, the whole story is one of struggle and conflict. While Poland's outside enemies sneered at "the piano-playing premier"—the German Press could not tire of ringing the changes on that—at the same time opponents and enemies within faced him on every side. A thousand and one ardent little new-fledged Polands; ten thousand

and one conflicting ideals and interests, grappled at him with claims, demands, exactions Ugly-minded cartoonists were found to jeer at him on cheap postal cards. Advocates of this and that cried him down as "too easy," "too stubborn," "too conservative," "too liberal," too everything. A would-be assassin, some mad radical whose head had "gone fluey" in the tension, attempted to shoot him. . . .

At moments it was like the old scene of the Warsaw Conservatory acted over again, only now, instead of jibing at his piano hand, they cried it down as fit for nothing else—no longer too big, but not big enough to manage the helm of a ship of state. But Paderewski knew his hand.

Besides, he knew his people better than they knew themselves. He knew the tragedy of generations which had produced this feverish public temperature. He could see in their ingrained opposition to "government," even their suspicion of it, bred of a century of misrule, a quality of potential initiative far more promising than mere acquiescence and indifference. He was the doctor, called in to pull the patient through the crisis. He stuck, and pulled him through. Time and again, on the verge of catastrophe, he re-rallied the nation around him, stirring it to renewed union and energy, the power of his straightforward open politics, his crystal-pure patriotism, and his persuasive eloquence winning the day over and over, when smash-up seemed inevitable. As for his eloquence, Warsaw in October 1919 (when I first arrived there) was still talking about the sheer triumph of his wits and his tongue when he put the Treaty through the Sejm early in August. One needed to be actually present, to see him and hear him, we were told, to appreciate the electrification of his simple eloquence when he rose and opened his discourse with the brief words, "Our country is free at last." His courage on the platform was unfaltering. A born diplomat, he knew how to disarm opposition gracefully; but, when occasion needed, he would throw down the gauntlet and challenge his opponents to the face. "I am very well aware that against the government and against me personally there exists a certain feeling in this country," he declared in the Sejm in November, 1919. "We are reproached with having had no policy; but we have had a clearly defined policy. . . . When it was possible to confer, we conferred; when it was necessary to fight, we fought. Our whole policy may be expressed in the words, 'to gain peace and to win the war.' For more than four years this was the policy of France, England, Italy, of all the Allied powers; but of us even more has been demanded; it has been required of us that we reconstruct our country without delay; that we immediately reorganize our economic affairs, restart our commerce, settle our currency, solve

all our problems and satisfy everybody in a day. It was forgotten that corn cannot be thrashed in a burning barn, that hay cannot be made in a thunderstorm ! "

XI

So much for internal problems. Called and recalled to the Supreme Council at Paris, Paderewski wielded there the same weapons that in Poland won him point after point. To read the minutes of his debates and conferences at the Quai D'Orsay is to read an illuminating record of commonsense, foresight and balanced judgment difficult to improve upon. His quick, precise thinking, his graciousness and ready wit, made him stand out, as those attest who heard him (even his keenest opponents), a unique figure among the delegates. He had the gift of seeing around a question in a flash ; he was never caught napping ; and when he was forced to bow to the Olympians, he did it with a gesture that set Poland one notch higher every time. He strove always for the larger aim, to gain the essential thing, yet at the cost of as few of the unessentials as possible.

Opponents of Paderewski, criticising his Peace Conference activities, were wont to enumerate what they called the things he didn't do. But that was in the heated days of the post-war fever, while battle still flamed along the Polish frontiers. To-day, with the air clearer, we find even some of the harshest of Paderewski's critics not only acknowledging the big things he did achieve, but wondering how he managed it ; because now it is possible to see in sharp relief the vast bulk of those dictatorial powers against which he was forced to contend, inch by inch, for every foot of Polish soil won in the great gamble ; the disunion, indecision and internal weakness of the Allies ; the ponderous and pervasive force of international finance ; above all the vacillating policy of Lloyd-George, whose political trickery time and again forced the gallant Pole to choose between a foot's retreat or a mile's surrender. All this is clear enough to-day as time more and more exposes the secrets of the scenes enacted in Paris in 1919. Paderewski suffers nothing from the revealing light : more and more as each detail is brought out his record of patriotic statesmanship is enchanced. To-day, for example his critics are aware that when he made such concessions as the Minority Treaty and the Ukrainian Armistice, he did so under penalty of force, literally at the point of the sword, with the Allies threatening not only the stoppage of transportation for troops and munition for Poland's self-defence, but the actual cutting off of food supplies to the starving Poles, if he refused to sign.

But in the end he proved to be a good bargainer. Every con-

cession written down in Paderewski's name at the Paris Conference went into the international ledger a Polish credit; under every unsettled question he left a clean page for a practically inevitable Polish verdict in the future. What he did secure he "got for keeps"; those things apparently only half won he really grappled with hooks of steel. When compromise meant ultimate Polish gain he compromised; but when Poland stood to lose outright, he fought, as in the case of Eastern Galicia. "There cannot be a Polish state without Eastern Galicia," Paderewski declared. "Untiringly, bravely, patiently and assiduously we built up that section of our country after innumerable wars, defeats and destruction, and to-day we are still building it up. We put it on its present level of civilization. Cultivated by us, this land has produced men famous in Polish literature, learning, and art, as well as famous statesmen and leaders. The most decisive battles in the defence of Western civilization have been fought there, and fought by Poland and the Poles; and there many of the most glorious scenes in our national life have been enacted. Are we to resign our right to this land? Are we to leave it to the mercy of foreign intrigues? A large autonomy has been agreed on, and we shall honourably keep our word. We shall rule honestly and justly. But a temporary settlement of the question would be fatal"—(the Allies had proposed a Galician plebiscite in twenty-five years)—"fatal politically and morally, because it would make impossible even the commencement of a reconstruction of that devastated country. I therefore declare that neither I nor Mr. Dmowski will ever sign any treaty for such a settlement." And they did not.

The case of Danzig furnishes a typical example of the difficulties Paderewski faced at the Conference and the philosophical manner in which he handled them. Polish up to 1793, when it was wrested from its old sovereignty by Prussian violence, the return of Danzig was promised outright by the Allies, and the promise was put in writing. But when the question came to an issue, Lloyd-George, consistent to his policy of clipping Poland's wings, renegged; won President Wilson to his side (despite Wilson's Polish friendship) by bargaining pledges for the President's pet project, the League of Nations; and finally succeeded in beating Poland out of her just claim. Danzig was made a "free city," and the Poles were bitterly disappointed. Nevertheless, Poland is to-day drawing what profit she can from this arrangement, thanks largely to the impulse given Polish thought by Paderewski, who accomplished much in showing his people a way to an ultimate solution of the problem. Danzig as a free town, open to Polish influence and penetration, will more readily loosen herself entirely from German dominance and bind herself to Poland by ties of

assimilation than if a forced union had been created. " In any case," Paderewski wisely told the Polish people, with his characteristically frank eloquence which never was used to deafen the crowd to the voice of hard facts, no matter how much easier it would have been to cheat the day with flowery language—" in any case, Danzig's fate will depend on us. Our enterprise, our perseverance, our political understanding will decide whether or not our relation to Danzig and the people of Danzig shall steadily improve and shall finally become such as in the depth of our hearts we wish to see it.'

XII

" I die too soon," had been Sienkiewicz's last words ; " I shall not live to see Poland resurrected." But before he had passed away the signal had been given. The sword of Sigismund had fallen.

When the Russians retreated before the Germans in 1915 they dynamited the bridges over the Vistula at Warsaw. The shock of the explosions was terrific. It shook the city like subterranean artillery ; it made the old bronze king, high on his granite column fronting the Zamek, tremble till his sword fell out of place and pointed downward. . . . In January 1919 when Paderewski entered the palace, which as a boy he had contemplated as once more the seat of Polish rulers, Sigismund's blade had fulfilled its legend. Poland was free !

One day I rode under the Zamek gate, to the salute of the Castle Guards, to see Paderewski. I thought him greatly changed in appearance since that day in 1915 when he had stood on the platform of Festival Hall at San Francisco, and with ten words had caught up an audience of ten thousand as quick as ever he had captured them with a bar of music. The tall figure, emerging from his private council room, was straight as ever, and more powerful than ever, it seemed, at such close range ; he still wore the flowing white cravat of the artist. But the tawny mane and the blond chinbeard and moustache were grey, the face, more lion-like than ever, stamped with deep furrows of care and strain.

Yes ; Paderewski's famous hair is grey. But it is there, despite the alarm of one excited American journalist in Warsaw who wired his editor that Paderewski had not vetoed the government's anti-typhus ordinance ordering all the men of Poland to be clipped to the scalp. The thick virile bushy mane is still there ; and though the face bears the marks of battle, it bears also the stamp of supreme inner victory. It is the face of a great man : the brow of a thinker and doer, the eye of one who sees. And the voice, rich, low-pitched, is the voice of conscious and disciplined

power, self-mastery and self-possession. Even in a brief private conversation Paderewski's voice has a unique compelling quality, the concentrative force of the man's personality seeming to take one immediately into his confidence. He has that rare gift, which was so marked in Roosevelt, of holding you while he speaks, yet giving you the feeling that you hold him.

Curiously enough, however, it is not Paderewski's face or voice, but his hand, that is first remarked by people who meet him and who receive its warm, firm grasp in greeting. It is a hand that has become almost a legend, such a soul-stirring power has it wielded for so many years; a hand so precious to the public that, when the Treaty of Versailles was signed, the word went around the world that Paderewski had not only written the name of Poland on that portentous document, but that he had given not one hand but both to the friends who gathered about to congratulate him. "Time was," the scribes exclaimed, "when he wasn't quite so free!" "He has given up his music forever!" one Versailles delegate whispered to another when he beheld that handshaking, "he will never play again."

Will Paderewski never play again? Has the inevitable come so soon? Are the tens of thousands to sit no longer under the spell of that Polish soul, the potency of that magic hand, weaving heaven and earth into audible glory? Are all the mingled thunders and cadences of Paderewski's music already to become only a memory? Must the world really give him up to Poland?

Paderewski is Poland's, yes. But he belongs to the whole world, too. That face, that hand, that stalwart figure, that eloquent voice, that soul of greatness—they are the world's, the property of civilization. His record is for all men, his story of self-conquest, self-discipline; of character-building and singleness of purpose; of faith in God and every-day people; it is written in universal tongues. Yet he belongs to Poland first, not only by blood and birth, but above all by reason of the great service he rendered her in her hour of need, the winning of recognition for her abroad, the consolidation of her home forces. And to-day, holding the most unique situation of any public man of the time, even though he occupies no official position, he still stands as the spokesman of his country to the outside world. He is a sort of Polish Ambassador to the Universe. It is a position he could not delegate or avoid, even if he wished.

CHAPTER FOUR

WORK

I

FROM the beginning I liked the Poles. There was something home-like and American about their ways, their looks, their personality that was refreshing in *blasé* Europe; something that made me feel nearer to my own country than I had ever felt since I had left it.

But I was not satisfied with merely liking them superficially. I wanted to know them. I had an immense curiosity to learn what these people were really doing, what they were thinking about; what was actually going on to keep up this teeming current of life which I felt and saw on every side of me. Was it, after all, only the reaction following a century and more of oppression—a flood-burst after one hundred and fifty years of damming up? Or did the stream of Polish life really flow out of permanent and natural springs and into considered courses?

Three years' study of the country and the people gave me enough insight into Polish character and problems to convince me that behind all these external manifestations of energy moves a single determined purpose. To a man, the people of Poland to-day are bent on the welding of their nation into a concrete, unified, independent and self-supporting whole. To accomplish this, Poles are making every imaginable sacrifice; of personal ambitions, personal advantages, even the sacrifice of natural impatience and patriotic zeal, offered up on the altar of the common cause. And they "keep smiling" while they do it.

I was not long in Poland before I began to find out many things. One of them was that despite appalling misery wherever one turned, life was not all a perpetual funeral. On the contrary, the Poles, though they have wept tears of blood, have neither forgotten how to work nor how to play. Their power of "come back" is one of their most astonishing attributes.

Poland—her living body torn asunder for generations and finally crushed under the pressure of six years' steady warfare, caught first between the grinding jaws of contending Powers, then attacked by enemies on every frontier, until she was all but pulverized—has long presented the world's outstanding spectacle of national

tragedy, a figure all the more poignant and appealing because she has been so often made the victim of the sins of others. Nevertheless, she is neither a Niobe melted in tears nor a Rachel who will not be comforted. She is not sitting among her ruins reciting her injuries or bemoaning her distress. Young David is a better simile—I borrow it from the Chief of State, Marshal Pilsudski—a David busy with more than one Goliath, harassed by more than one band of rapacious Philistines.

Why is it that Poland has not gone under like Russia ? Was ever any country riper for " red " revolt and total collapse than Poland in 1918—the triply partitioned, already physically disintegrated Poland, starved and outraged to the point of madness ? Yet Poland neither collapsed nor went mad. What was it that kept her sane and held her together in a sort of miraculous integrity while her Big Sister went to smash ?

In a study of Poland comparison with Russia is inevitable. Both are Slavs, and side by side both have passed through many of the same destructive and terrifying experiences. But there is one all-important difference between them : the Russian is Eastern ; the Pole is Western. One is old and Oriental, the other young with the youth of the New World. Russia endures and endures and endures, oxen fashion ; rises at last in wild blind revolt ; but sinks again under the yoke (this time the red yoke of Bolshevism in place of the grinding collar of Czardom), and once more endures, endures, endures, falling lower and lower in exhaustion and despair. But Poland has never endured, in the sense of submitting. She has never given up. She has continually risen, staggered to her feet, and kept going on. She has the spirit of " come back " in her, strong.

Now, to lapse for a further moment into American slang, one of the tricks of " come back " is to know how to " forget it." The Poles seem to have this trick. I am acquainted with scores of concrete examples of this fact—of Poles, women as well as men, who, after losing everything that has gone into the making of a life of leisure for generations (some of them heirs or owners of large estates and palatial homes), have simply " forgotten it " and knuckled down to work. I know girls with the training and accomplishments of young princesses, to whom Warsaw, Poznan, Krakow or Lwow formerly meant nothing but " the season," a round of balls, operas and beaux, who are to-day out earning their living in these same cities, riding on tramcars instead of in carriages or automobiles, even " turning their own hats " as the women put it. And they are doing all this in the most matter-of-course manner, and enjoying life while they do it.

Polish girls of this type make A-number-one office secretaries, and often demonstrate a real bent for executive work. Among

men, business careers seem to grow more and more attractive ; and business, it must be remembered, was taboo for generations among the Polish gentry. I am acquainted, for instance, with three boys of one family—their grandfathers, no doubt, would have disinherited them for even mentioning business—who to-day own and operate a chain of shops in every one of the large cities of Poland.

To the average man the appeal of able-bodied suffering ends often in mere sympathy, if the sufferer be only helplessly pathetic. But if he be self-helpful and show any sign of fortitude and "come back," he immediately excites a new and livelier and more abiding feeling. The sufferings of the Poles at times simply appal one. But even at their worst, you are forced to forget them in the face of the energy and buoyancy of these people. You count eight funerals in ten minutes. You help pick up old men and sobbing children who have lain down in the gutter from hunger-weakness. You go through all the shocking embarrassments of wretched people covering your hands with kisses in gratitude for a bite to eat, even throwing their arms about your feet and kissing your shoes. You visit orphanages and hospitals and refugee camps and read their records, and know that in Poland a baby dies every twelve minutes of the day ; that the breath of the white plague of tuberculosis is breathing over the land like a vapour of death ; that 20 per cent. of the children of the country are rickety or consumptive or crippled for lack of nourishment. You find that there are (such was the case when I arrived there) two million unemployed labourers without any means of living, and 250,000 destitute families (representing 626,000 people) living on State support. You see and know all this and a thousand and one other appalling facts.

And yet you inhale all about you the bracing air of "things doing," of people busied with every imaginable activity that goes to the making of a nation. The crowded hospitals you visit may be almost stripped bare of equipment, but they are scoured and polished and clean. In the orphanages you find boys learning useful trades—mending their own shoes, manufacturing their own beds and tables and benches, making pottery and toys for the market, even turning out drinking cups from Red-Cross milk tins. You find girls quick as housewives with sewing or knitting needle. You see débris being cleaned up, roads repaired, new buildings being erected, factories reopening. . . . You forget the dead past, though it still quivers with horrible life, in the new vigorous pulsation of the present.

II

The Pole, too, is quite ready to forget. He is so taken up with the things he has to do himself that he has little time to dwell

on the things that have been done to him by others. Even in the dark days gone by, when he seemingly had nothing but memories to live on, it was the deathless glories and fortitudes of his forefathers that most engaged him, that he talked about and sang of and kept alive—always with an eye on the horizon where he looked to see other and newer glories rise.

Once, it is true, in the long history of his suffering, he almost went down under the weight of despair that followed the failure of his struggles for liberty. That was in the long period of outrage, uprising and crushing defeat which stretched from the breaking of Kosciuszko in 1794, through the rebellions of 1830, 1846, 1848, to the last insurrection in 1863. This period developed the Polish idea of Messianism—the theory that Poland was the Messiah of nations, destined to suffer and die for the ideal of human liberty in order that other nations might learn how to live by that ideal. But the Pole's natural virility saved him from altogether succumbing to that enervating philosophy, engendered of Slavic passivity. If he believed in his nation as the crucified one, he also believed in her resurrection.

Any review of the history of the Polish people reveals this outstanding fact—that they have been forward-lookers always. "Mere dreamers and idealists" they have often been called in derision by their enemies. But that was because Poland's dreams and ideals of democracy, of human liberty and equal rights, developed and clung to and fought for with a terrible tenacity, have been always a reproach to her enemies.

Poland among the nations has been like one born before her time. Such people suffer, as Poland suffered when she dared lift up her voice a century ago to promulgate the first written constitution in Europe based on the right of the people to govern. True, that constitution, viewed in the light of present-day ideas, falls far short of what men now demand. Compared with the new Constitution of the New Republic of Poland, the constitution of 1791 is a mere clearing of the ground. But in its time, with its opening words "All power in a State emanates from the people's will," it was a voice in the wilderness, a voice that struck such fear into the hearts of the imperial Powers which ringed Poland around, that with one blow of the mailed fist they shut the mouth of the precursor—or thought they did. To make sure of it, however, they carved Poland up and fed her like meat to their respective Russian, Prussian and Austrian eagles. The spectacle of the Polish nobles voluntarily relinquishing their age-old privileges in favour of equality before the law was too much for czars and emperors.

But if the body of Poland was destroyed by them, her ghost would not down. Her spirit remained, haunting the world,

crying out for its corporeal self, and proclaiming more loudly than ever (because no voice speaks more fearfully than that from the tomb) the things for which she had suffered and been destroyed. Now Poland's day has come, the resurrection of her body reunited to her soul. But " Poland is not living in the past " Paderewski declared in 1919, when discussing the country's problems. " The real interest of the Pole to-day is in the future." I found this to be quite true. Moreover, the Pole of to-day is not just dreaming of the future and nothing else. He is building it, from the foundations up.

He has discovered the old foundations, however, to be pretty shaky in some spots ; in others, quite useless. In that case he is simply throwing them out, digging down to bed-rock, clearing the ground and starting over again. This is what he has done in regard to his political structure. For instance, he has discarded altogether his old-time notion of individual liberty in the absolute, which he once expressed in the Liberum Veto (the *reductio ad absurdum* of democracy, according to which no law was operative unless unanimously ratified) ; he resorts now to the rule of the majority. That is, he learns by experience; he is susceptible to the teachings of his own history. He is literally doing the same in material reconstruction, in restoring and rebuilding the productive resources and facilities of his country.

III

All over Poland, even as early as the autumn of 1919, less than a year after the country was set free, wherever we went into the country we saw pyramidal heaps of broken brick, stone, and cement piled alongside the roads. These collections of débris from the wrecked houses and factories of shattered towns told a double story of ruin and reconstruction. They were useless for rebuilding houses, but they were being put to excellent use in rebuilding roads.

Poland, especially that part of it formerly under Russian rule, has never had good roads, and since 1914 even what she had has steadily deteriorated through misuse and neglect. The heavy traffic of war has literally cut the roads of Poland to pieces, and war at the same time has prevented any but the most temporary repairing. However, the Poles are determined to have good roads. Poland is pre-eminently an agricultural country, and the Poles realize that ready traffic is not only indispensable to a development of agriculture, but that one of the material reasons of the country's former backwardness was the neglect of public highways.

The road programme of the Polish Government is an ambitious one, but there is no blinking the problem in a country of nearly

thirty million population, 60 per cent. of which is engaged in farming tillable soil running to a total of about fifty-five million acres. Before the war, Polish highways figured only about 12 miles roadage to every 60 square miles territory—a totally inadequate amount for a country of such extent and resources. One of the first acts of the government of the new Republic was to investigate the roads and plan their restoration and increase. The use of débris from ruined houses was an initial step in this work. The demobilization of the army and the general expansion of public works, with thousands of former soldiers employed on reconstruction, are further advances toward a new road era in Poland.

But the country highway is only one detail of Poland's traffic problem. Most important is that of the railways. The war destroyed more than half the Polish railway property and so badly damaged the remaining half that less than 50 per cent. of the amount actually necessary for the most urgent traffic is now available. Figuring roughly, with a total trackage of about 11,000 miles, Poland should have at least 7,000 locomotives, 12,000 passenger cars, mail cars and trucks, and 150,000 freight cars, to take care of traffic proportionate to her population and industries.

But she actually has only 3,700 (instead of 7,000) locomotives; 8,000 (instead of 12,000) passenger cars; and 75,000 (instead of 150,000) freight cars. This shortage is aggravated by the condition of the railway stock on hand, about one-half of which is continually undergoing repair, so that the amount of railroad equipment actually in use is only a quarter of what is needed.

From the beginning the Poles have met this problem with real initiative. The first step they took was worthy of note—the appointment of a practical railwayman as national Minister of Transportation, a man who had worked his way up from a place as machinist in the shops at Lwow, through all the grades of railroad administration. His task was enormous, involving the consolidation of three separate systems, legacies of three former powers. Yet order and progress were so quickly achieved out of this complicated situation that even expert critics were surprised. "An instance of the Poles' engineering ability under difficult circumstances," wrote Colonel A. H. Barber, United States Technical Adviser to the Polish Government, "was seen in the way they handled the situation in Poznania and former West Prussia in April 1920, when the German railway employees, 6,000 in number and constituting two-thirds of the staff, abruptly withdrew. It had been freely predicted by foreigners in Poland that this withdrawal would cause the whole system to collapse. The Poles, however, though they did everything possible to induce the Germans to keep on the job, took over the great task, and not only maintained the regular schedules but improved the service." "Poland's

neighbours, who participated in the partition of Poland," wrote Colonel Barber further, "have made strenuous efforts to picture the Poles as an inefficient people lacking entirely in industrial ability. My own observations have convinced me of the fallacy of this anti-Polish propaganda." This accusation of the lack of practical constructive ability is perhaps the most common of all the charges made against the Pole. Yet at every turn the story is refuted by evidence of the things he has accomplished, not alone in his own country, but in others. Most of the great engineering works of modern Russia are his. In America it is enough to merely mention the name of Ralph Modjeski, famous for such exploits as the building of the great suspension bridge at Quebec, a feat achieved after two other of America's most eminent engineers had failed at it.

Travelling in Poland during the reconstruction days of 1919 and 1920 was primitive in the extreme. On a trip, for instance, from Warsaw to Minsk, which normally should not have taken ten hours at the most, forty hours were consumed on the road. Another journey, scheduled on a pre-war time-table at three and a half hours, required nineteen and a half hours in 1920; and going once from Warsaw to Rovno with hospital supplies, an average twelve-hour journey, I was exactly one week on the road! But there was fun when the brave little wood-burner engine, with a top-heavy smoke stack such as our grandfathers rode behind in Civil-War days, halted at a station in the clearing, and everyone got out to help chop, haul or load fuel from the forest. This was a common occurrence.

These were very different trips from the journey we made out of Poland into Russia during the relief of Kiev. Our long supply train on that expedition was drawn by a magnificent 650 h.p. American engine (appropriately decked with the Stars and Stripes and the Red-Cross flag). It was one of the new 250 Baldwin machines purchased by the Polish Government in 1920. We went out at every halt, even late in the night, to look that old iron horse over, pat him and enjoy feeling that somehow or other his big breathing body had something of the strength of our virile homeland in it. The Polish engineer whom we talked to on that machine was as proud of it as a boy, but the firemen were dismayed by its size and power. "The men are too run down. They haven't the strength to work such an engine on the war rations they get—black bread and tea."

IV

Given capital and credit, and with her road, rail and water traffic put on a working basis, there should be no limit to the development of Poland. The resources are there in man-power and in

natural deposits. Her coal alone, once she is able to properly mine and transport it, means complete and speedy industrial reconstruction, the reopening of mills and factories, the re-employment of idle workmen, and the end of the fearful conditions of hunger and devitalization which have been sapping the strength of the nation for six years. Before the War one million Poles earned their living in 80,000 mines, factories and mills. After 1914 this was rapidly reduced to nil. During the German occupation, from 1915 to 1918, Polish industrial production fell off 95 per cent. Five per cent. of normal is the best figure that period can show. In the general clamour of those times and the isolation which Germany carefully put on the country, America did not learn that in Poland the Germans had long been practising the same heartless scheme of forced labour exportation which in Belgium, later on (after Poland was completely wrecked) roused the indignation of the world. The German labour exportations in Belgium were, in fact, merely a further application of the brutal programme which the Kaiser's officials had successfully tried out in Poland and had long been able to carry on there without being caught.

Seven hundred and fifty thousand Polish workmen were thus conscripted into the German labour army; 500,000 of them were just making their way back to Poland when I went there in the autumn of 1919. In their absence Polish industry had simply gone to smash—or rather had been smashed. In the textile industry, for instance, in which 200,000 had been employed before the War, the figures had been cut by 1918 to the absurd number of 2,000! Yet, by the winter of 1919, less than a year after the German expulsion, 34,000 were back at work in the half-wrecked, half-repaired cotton and woollen mills. By February 1922 the cotton output had equalled the pre-war figure of the same month the year before the War. And this in spite of the fact that the Germans carted off, according to their own ciphering, not only the Polish man-power, but various other "items," including 100,000 tons of metals, machinery, cables, fittings, parts, and so on, and 4,000 motors; not to speak of 350,000 tons of raw material and half-finished products which became booty for the invader. As for metals: it is true that the Germans took only 1,558 church bells out of Poland. But that was all there were left. The Russians before them had made away with 10,000.

The proof of the internal solvency of Poland lies in full view in the actual conditions seen to-day. These busy throngs of happy preoccupied people really mean something. The number of unemployed was reduced from two million in 1919 to two hundred thousand a year later; and in 1922 to seventy thousand. (It is true that a veritable army of Polish labourers, women as well as men, have had to seek work in France, where they

have contracted to help clean up the mess Germany made there. But payment for this labour is so arranged that a due percentage of it goes regularly to the support of the workers' families at home.) . . . Fifty-seven per cent. of Poland's pre-war industry is again operating. Railway shops and locomotive works are reopened. Iron and zinc mines are once more producing, with twenty-eight new iron mines projected and reserve sources of ore figured at three hundred billion tons, according to the International Congress of Geologists (Stockholm 1910). Work in the salt mines (with a normal yield of one hundred and forty million tons per year) is resumed. The Polish coalfields are still only scratched, with an estimated reserve of one hundred and ten billion tons and prospective employment for over two hundred thousand men. In the former Russian part alone the net annual coal profits before the War ran steadily over twenty-five million dollars.

Poland is one of the richest oil lands in the world, although she suffered terribly in this field during the War, three hundred of the greatest wells having been set afire by the Russians before they left the country. The normal oil capacity of Poland will supply a population of one hundred millions, which leaves over 70 per cent. free for export trade. Polish oil wells are once more operating on so healthy a scale that the output for 1920 reached two hundred and twenty-eight million kilograms. Shortage of refineries is the greatest drawback to the Polish oil industry.

One of the chief Polish industries is the growing of beetroot and the manufacture of sugar. Ruined beetfields and wrecked sugar factories were one of Poland's war legacies when she came into her freedom in 1918. To-day sixteen of the largest factories in Poznania and thirty-five in the Warsaw district are once more producing, despite the great lack of machinery and fertilizers. The latter shortage, however, is rapidly being remedied by domestic production of chemicals from the rich and as yet almost unexploited potash fields of Malopolska, fields which under Austrian dominion were so neglected that, instead of supplying home consumption and exporting as well (as would easily have been possible), five thousand carloads per year were imported! The 1920 beetroot crop in Poznania ran over nine hundred thousand tons, producing some eight hundred tons of sugar, molasses and by-products.

There is the timber also. Poland is the third forest country in Europe—you do not need the statistical year-books to tell you that, for wherever you go, especially in the east and north, you seem to be surrounded by forests; they shut in every horizon. Imagine a country with over sixteen million acres of timber land! We have been accustomed to think of America as the only place left on earth with virgin forests. But here in the Old World is a country where great untouched wooded tracts fairly shout their

riches to the heavens. True, the Germans got away with no less than sixty-five million cubic yards of logs during their little three years' army picnic in Poland. But the reserves still left are almost beyond computation, at least in money value. Some day Poland will ring with the hum of many sawmills, and then, for one thing, the world's wood-pulp shortage will be relieved and it will not be so difficult to publish books and newspapers. Reforestation is already provided for, while statutes have also been framed for the conservation of the country's standing timber and the preservation of historic forests. It would be a pity indeed to see some of the famous tree lands of Lithuania put to the axe. They are full of better things than even riches—fairies and gods and poetry! And they are of such age and size and height that they easily challenge comparison with the giant redwoods of California. In the trunk of one of these, cut down in 1845, there were counted 1,417 rings. What a story that veteran could tell!

I would be sorry if this record of Polish resources and the revival of Polish industry should sound like a catalogue or a consular report. I wish I were able to convey to the reader something of the sense of impact which these facts and figures have given me as I have come upon them. Over and over again, conning the records which confirmed my observations of these vivid people, so much alive and apparently so happy in being alive, I enjoyed a feeling of actually participating in the tremendous drama of a nation finding itself. I must, however, mention one or two further items to finish off my picture of the Pole at work in his newly regained land.

The fur trade, for instance: after six years of breeding, with practically no harvest of pelts in the countries of the north, this rich industry is already beginning to "come back." Leather manufactories and tanneries also are already up to 25 per cent. of normal capacity. Railway shops are reopened at Lwow, Tarnow, Radom and Ostrow, the latter employing 8,000 men and with contracts already on hand for car building covering the next eleven years. New furniture factories, tobacco factories, even two new toy factories, to foster the native trade which produces unique and beautiful toys, especially in wood; new paper-mills and scores of smaller plants of various kinds, all tell their story of healthy wideawake activity.

A key to the reconstruction situation in Poland is given in the figures of the brick and cement industries. Brick factories have already reached 25 per cent. of their normal output; while cement leads all others. This simply means that Poland is rebuilding In Warsaw, Poznan, Krakow, Lwow, as well as in practically every other town we went into we found the people busy clearing up the "war mess" left them as a legacy by the Triple Powers.

Gangs were everywhere repairing the streets, which in most cases were a mad wreck of chuck holes. Houses were being washed, scraped, repainted. In the spring and summer of 1920 there seemed to be a general refurbishing and house-cleaning campaign going on all over Poland. I remember how heads used to be shaken during the dark days of July and August of that year when the Bolos were coming, thinking what a pity it would be to give over this clean new shining Poland into the soiled hands of Trotsky's hordes.

Actual rebuilding has, of course, been difficult, but it is steadily going on. Polish building losses during the German and Austrian occupations, not counting the Russians, amounted to $331,000,000 (three hundred and thirty-one million dollars) gold. Over a million and a half buildings, 60 per cent. of them homes, were destroyed in Poland after 1914 ; some 2,500 of these were churches of various denominations. Nevertheless, to-day 50 per cent. of the country's destroyed buildings are replaced.

In this connection I came across an interesting little commentary on the manner in which Polish reconstruction is being carried on. The Government has taken up the question of safety-building and fire-prevention, determined to do everything possible to make the new material Poland a permanent thing and not the flimsy overnight structure which too often follows disaster and hasty restoration. To excite public interest in this question, plans were made for a large technical exhibition of fireproof building material, fire-fighting devices, chemicals, water-supply, machinery, etc., to be held in Warsaw. Poland is a great country for apartment houses, the cities being brick and stone. But the country towns and villages are almost wholly of wood, where damage by fire in times past has been frequent and disastrous. To still further perfect the rebuilding of the devastated areas, the Polish Government has made careful researches into the methods employed in France.

I avoid statistics as much as possible in this review of Polish reconstruction, my aim being to give the reader only a general running survey of the country in its " come back " process. The figures I have used, however, are official, compiled from Government records. To revert to these just once more, I will note that Polish exports, since the liberation of the country, have increased at such a rate that as early as January 1919, three months after the German expulsion, the total had mounted from half a million to five and a half million kilos.

V

The facts of Poland's case seem to bear out the words of the German economic expert, Naumann, who, even during the days

of the Boche occupation in 1917, agreed that Poland "possessed sufficient native enterprise to look after her own development." Given time and capital, she will take her place among the first countries of Europe's "New World." Her natural resources and the character of her people guarantee it. The resources are almost immeasurably rich, while the talent of her men is demonstrated on every hand. In "German Poland" before the war they beat the steady thorough-going Teuton at more than one turn of the commercial game. In "Russian Poland" they proved to be such competitors that Moscow and Petrograd business interests continually protested against them. In "Austrian Poland" they proved to be the great financiers of the Hapsburg Dynasty, while we must not forget the business genius they have shown abroad—among the French, for example, where the great Land Bank of France was founded by a Pole. They have been modern, up-to-date, the progressives of Eastern Europe, the first to install the latest American, French or British mechanical inventions in their factories, the first to improve not only their products but the living conditions of their producers. As for the latter, again it is a German (Professor G. Von Schultze Gavernitz, of Freiburg) who testifies. Comparing the Russian and the Polish labourer, he describes the Pole thus: "Nearer than his Russian comrade to the type created by the great industries of the West, he is altogether more European. He eats better and works better; he is more prudent, better instructed in his trade. He is more highly specialized."

It is a fact that in spite of the introduction of the eight-hour law under the new Republic, the present output of the Polish workman surpasses the pre-war rate. In Lodz, for example, one operative to-day handles twenty-eight spindles. Before the War the schedule was twenty spindles to a worker.

And yet how impatient we get with this Pole! I often have heard Americans in Poland "kicking" about the way he does things, forgetting that the Old World pace, not alone in Poland but all over Europe, is not our pace, and forgetting also the heavy handicap under which the Pole works—lack of experience, physical suffering, long protracted mental strain and unrelieved anxiety: in short, general devitalization after a century and more of oppression in which initiative was scientifically destroyed and enterprise paralysed; then six solid years of war. To the thinking man it can be nothing short of a miracle that there is a Poland at all—that the whole business has not blown up and collapsed long ago. Instead, there is a young, ardent, ambitious democracy, which has defended itself against all invaders, preserved internal order, organized and operated a representative government, and established a Constitution which is recognized as one of the world's great liberal human documents.

To the American the thrilling thing about Poland's " come back " is the admiration and affection her people have for us. They have their eyes set on us ; they have looked to us and watched us since the days of Kosciuszko and Washington. They look to us now. They desire our help, our counsel, our advice—and our example ! —so much that a conscientious American feels ashamed sometimes in their midst. A sense of his own personal responsibility and shortcomings as a representative of the American democracy comes over him. He feels that the thing for him to do is, not to talk but to act.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SUPREME TEST

I

" A FAIR field is presented to our view ; but I confess freely that I do not think we possess wisdom or justice enough to cultivate it properly. Illiberality, jealousy, and local policy mix too much in our public councils."

I heard scores of Poles talk in just this discouraging way about their country and its prospects during the first two years of the new Republic. Even the best type of patriotic thinking men, men who do not speak idly of affairs, were at times given to such expressions. No Pole, it is true, used these exact words, because strangely enough they do not refer to Poland at all—but to America, the America of one hundred years ago. They were written by George Washington in a letter to Lafayette during those trying days which followed the success of our arms against King George, when our young Republic was getting on its feet, pulling itself together amid a din of wrangling partisanship and shortsighted theorizing which to-day, as we read of it, makes us marvel that anything resembling union ever came of it.

For days, for weeks, and for month on month our Constitutional Convention met and squabbled—the word is not mine, but contemporaneous. We got nowhere, or at least so it often seemed to the observant men of the time, Washington among them, who had not the advantage we have now of looking through a long perspective of American history in order to judge our nation. And all the while strong old reactionary Europe was laughing at our blunders, ridiculing our weakness, and prophesying a dire future for us—anarchy, a speedy smash-up, and a penitent return to the shelter of the British Crown.

The Poles are their own harshest critics. They have an old saying which reveals this characteristic of self-knowledge and self-analysis :

> Cudze wady widzimy,
> Swoje na plecach nosimy—
>
> The faults of others we see, and their lacks ;
> Our own faults we carry on our own backs.

In the Pole there is just enough of the tincture of Slav introspectiveness to make him delight in analysing himself, berating his own faults and " feeling them on the back " to such a degree as to regard himself periodically as a hopeless case.

But no, not hopeless. The healthy normal Western soul of the Pole invariably asserts itself and literally gets the best of him. He may have his spells of dismay and discouragement and self-disgust, all intensified by an artistic temperament, a refined, sensitive nature which insists on seeing things now and then in sheer black and white, mostly black. But he never really despairs. I became convinced of this once and for all on a certain memorable day in 1921, which I shall try to describe.

On March 17th—it was, as you see, St. Patrick's Day, and for a moment some of us thought our Irish relations had got into Poland (there are Irish Poles : I know one family, Polish for three hundred years, by the name of Mix ; and there are O'Rourkes and O'Briens, and many others, equally old and equally Polish)—on March 17, 1921, Warsaw went wild. The teeming life of the city which I had been analysing for nearly two years as a solid constructive working force, engrossed in the rebuilding of homes, the reopening of factories, the restoration of mines, railways, and so on : the busy preoccupied Poland which I knew, suddenly threw its cap into the air, broke from its ordered course, and flashed, as it were, into an iridescent sea of gaiety. Colour burst out on every side, with flags and pennons flying from a thousand roofs and windows and balconies. Warsaw buildings are square, and tall as European structures go—mostly long blocks of stone apartments and office buildings running as high as eight or ten stories ; and at every door and window there is usually a flagstaff. The effect, when the colours are out, as one looks up or down a long avenue, is splendid—full at once of gaiety and dignity.

Now the flag-decked streets were literally jammed with people. Contingents of civilian marchers appeared here and there, coming in from cross streets, carrying banners, wearing fluttering ribbons on their arms, sometimes singing, always welcomed with a burst of cheers. Aeroplanes buzzed overhead, dipping and circling to the shouts of the crowds. Bands of school children passed, wearing their little characteristic caps, and stepping out with a certain disciplined precision which I have always noted in them whenever they have appeared in ordered groups. Long lines of students—then a tattoo of drums, a blare of music, cheers, and a company of infantry swung into view. A woman near me held her baby high up to see the soldiers go by—a tear trickled down her cheek. She dashed it away with a little treble cheer, joining the chorus that echoed down the street. More school children coming in from the Jerozolimska. More troops. . . .

All of a sudden I felt a choking lump in my throat, a pull at my heart. The Veterans of '63, Poland's G.A.R., came down the Krakowskie—white-haired, feeble, limping old fighters, wearing the uniforms that they had not dared to put on in public for fifty years, and their new insignia of the rank of officer, which has been conferred on every living veteran in Poland by the Government of the new Republic (which likewise has pensioned all of them)—the Republic they had heralded and fought for back in the days when our own fathers and grandfathers were marching to the summons of Lincoln and the Union. Union and the emancipation of the slaves had been our cry then. Reunion and the liberation of the serfs had been theirs. " Our liberty and yours "—the same slogan that emblazoned their banners now as they appeared in the street, the sturdiest of them still carrying their colours without help. A new cheer went up, the sort of a cheer that stops your pulse; not of exultation, something finer in it than that—love and reverence and a hint of tears. Just then the Stars and Stripes fluttered out from an upper window of the American Red Cross house on Ordynacka.

It was like being back home again.

All Warsaw was out that day, a joyous moving mass of humanity. (It was the same, we learned, in Poznan, Krakow, Lwow, Lodz, in every city and town of Poland.) But with all their thronging and crowding and debouching, their passing and repassing, it was plain that these many converging streams of excited people were bent in one direction. They were bound for St. John's Cathedral to attend a great public Mass of thanksgiving in honour of the ratification and proclamation of the long-awaited Constitution of the New Poland.

II

That happy day represented the culmination of the hopes of generations of Poles. Particularly it represented the end of two years of ardent self-sacrificing toil on the part of the people's representatives in the Constitutional Assembly—the Diet or Sejm—which they had elected early in 1919, immediately following their liberation from the Triple Powers. During the months which had passed since then that Sejm had been just as mercilessly criticised, challenged, scored, scolded, and laughed at as our own Constitutional Assembly in Philadelphia one hundred and fifty years ago. But though Poles themselves, all over Poland, had argued and quarrelled and debated about their constitution from the eleventh of November 1918 right up to breakfast-time on the morning of March 17, 1921, when news of its final passing had come to them, they had never really despaired, as their fathers

and grandfathers and great-grandfathers before them never had despaired. They had dreamed and hoped between arguments. And they had worked.

I had seen them at work in their Sejm on a number of occasions, and had been impressed by the atmosphere they created of earnestness and determination. At our own Congress, in Washington, I had been disappointed more than once by finding there a mixture of vehemence, noise, and indifference, where I had foolishly looked for Old Roman dignity and austerity. At Warsaw there was often vehemence, and there certainly was noise ; but never indifference. The scenes which I saw enacted more than once in the Polish Sejm were just such scenes, in fact, as one could imagine in the setting of our own Continental Congress at Philadelphia a century and more ago.

The Polish capitol is a former Russian school building,—once one of the most intensive of the many forcing-grounds of denationalization and Russification erected by the Czarists under the ægis of education in Poland; its legislative chamber being the room once used as the chapel of the school, a long, square, high-ceilinged hall, with galleries on both sides and at the end, and a rostrum for the presiding officer and the clerks placed in what was formerly the sanctuary, above which is now emblazoned the legend—"*Salus Republicæ Suprema Lex.*"

The deputies' desks and chairs are of the plainest, the whole furnishing of the place on the most modest scale imaginable. At the back of the rostrum, in the tribune behind a long high desk, sits the Marshal of the Diet, looking very much like a judge in court. In front of and below his chair is the speaker's box, a sort of pulpit, which deputies must enter when they take the floor —an arrangement much more conducive to serious and considered debate than our informal style of merely bobbing up at one's desk.

The women deputies always attract the eyes of visitors. There are seven of them : one of the ladies, I noticed, was almost blind. On no occasion did I hear any of them speak ; but that they were not mere figures, but active members of the Sejm, was plainly to be seen in the busy coming and going of committee members who frequently conferred with them. Of the work of the women in the Polish legislature I shall write in a later chapter.

Other picturesque figures were the peasant deputies, who wore the bright garb of the rural districts ; a long-bearded venerable Jewish Rabbi (there are a dozen or more Jews in the Sejm) ; Catholic priests in their black soutanes, which in Poland, as in all European countries, are worn in the streets and everywhere in public as well as in church ; and finally the handsome dark-

eyed, grey-haired Armenian Archbishop Teodorowicz, who is one of the leading deputies from Lwow.

It was in this setting that there took place one day a scene which would have thrilled the hearts of all Americans could they have witnessed it. Every seat in the chamber was filled, and the galleries were packed, for it was the opening session of the new year 1920. When the Marshal, rising in the tribune and calling the house to order, had begun to speak, an unexpected thrill swept over the assemblage as they heard his first words. "I have in hand," said Marshal Trampczynski, "certain official documents which report the activities of American relief organizations in Poland to have reached such unusual dimensions that I feel constrained to speak of them before this body."

At the very word "American," even before the Marshal could finish his sentence, the place burst into applause. Then the speech continued, a running review of the work done in Poland by the Hoover Mission, the American Red Cross, and other agencies, giving facts and figures, which were again and again punctuated with applause; and finally a ringing tribute to America and the American spirit, "the characteristic energy of the American nation, which arouses the admiration of the Polish people and serves as an example to all of us."

"During the progress of the War in France and Belgium," the Marshal concluded, "the same story of generous American help was told. But America, far from exhausting herself in the West, has come to us filled with fresh energy, as if she were only now beginning her great work of compassion. The Polish nation, robbed of all it possessed, accepts with deep and sincere gratitude the help given by its friends from across the sea. The Polish Sejm permits me the honour of acclaiming to-day those thousands of unnamed heroes and heroines of America who in the name of mercy have given help, and still give help, to the unfortunate people, especially the little children, of war-ridden Europe. They have not counted any difficulty nor feared any danger, not even death by infection, going into the houses of disease to aid the suffering. I propose the following resolution:

"The Polish National Diet herewith expresses to Poland's American friends its deep admiration and sincerest thanks for the philanthropic, self-sacrificing Good Samaritan work they are doing in our stricken country."

Was the vote carried? The house rose to its feet, galleries and all, and a shout went up that made the walls echo: "Long live the United States! Vivat America! Long live the United States!" And big strapping Poles wiped tears from their eyes as they shouted.

III

To go back to the scene of March 1921, when the Constitution was proclaimed, it was simply the duplication of a scene enacted 130 years before, in the same city, in the same streets. Yet what had come of it? Nothing but disaster. Inspired at that time by the American struggle for democratic government, and not forgetting that their own Kosciuszko and Pulaski had fought with Washington to make that struggle successful, Poland had proclaimed a Constitution on the third of May 1791, which she had believed would mark the beginning of a new era in European history. Instead, it had proved to be her downfall, thanks to the greed of reactionary Prussia and her allies, who were determined that nothing resembling the new American republic should rise up in the heart of the Old World. For that, Poland was crucified. But she did not die—nor give up—nor despair. She began again, planning, hoping, working: and always debating and arguing in the liveliest fashion. March 17 1921 marked the outcome of her debating and a new realization of her dreams.

The standing reproach of Poland's enemies during the two years following the emancipation of 1918 had been that she had had no Government. A Sejm, a deliberative assembly, yes; but no actual Government. Everywhere in Europe I had heard that criticism. "Those Poles! They can never manage a country. They'll never hang together long enough to frame a constitution"; and so on. In Poland, at the same time, the favourite criticism against the Sejm had been, "They get nowhere, they only talk."

As for the enemies of the new Republic, the wish was plainly father to the word. (The laudatory admiration of the Prussian Press for the "wonderful Bolshevik Army" during the invasion of Poland in 1920 demonstrated that.) As for the Poles themselves, to the American observer one of their most reassuring attributes is their healthy inclination to vigorous discussion of public questions, and still more vigorous criticism of public officials. All Poland talks vivaciously, with the most picturesque gesturing, on the least provocation. It is simply a case of superabundant energy, lively imagination, and a democratic spirit of equality which absolutely precludes the thought of their ever submitting to despotism or dictatorship. Every Pole is a politician. Every Pole feels himself a nation builder.

That this spirit exists seems like a miracle when one considers the century and more of political emasculation, paralysis, and death to which the nation has been put by conquering governments—from the time that she set up the Constitution of 1791. It is even more of a miracle that any political sense not only still persists in Poland, but remains intact, unified, and homogeneous,

instead of being disintegrated and split beyond mending. Certainly the partitioners of Poland did their best to break up the Polish entity, to denature it, and stamp on each of the three separate parts into which they divided the country the special (and artificial) mark of their own particular Prussian, Russian, and Austrian characteristics and dissensions.

But they failed. Despite physical dismemberment, the soul of Poland remained indefectible. To understand why this happened, why there is a Poland to-day at all—a stabilized nation with a Constitutional Government, and not only the cornerstone, but the foundations of its future already well laid—in short, to catch the full meaning of this joyous spectacle of March 17 1921 we must know something of what materials, what brick and mortar, and what thought have gone into the making of the present Polish State.

IV

The Poles, on the day when their freedom dawned at last, in 1918, were apparently a hopelessly divided people. For over one hundred years they had suffered political division ; for many more years before that, class division—the class division common to the whole of Europe of that age. True, the two classes, landed proprietors and landless peasants, had more and more grown together. Even as far back as the sixteenth century Poland had known voluntary movements favourable to the toiler, at a time when the life of the villager in Germany (and even in France before the French Revolution) was intolerable. Then the Constitution of 1791, in which the Polish nobles relinquished their privileges, and later Kosciuszko's declaration of freedom in 1794, had set Poland far in advance of the Powers which eventually crushed her ; and had likewise drawn Eastern Europe one more step towards the equalizing of class and class. In the years which followed the partitions, in all three sections of the country, equal disabilities, equal prohibitions and persecutions, suffered at the hands of the same tyrannical oppressors, had more and more made common cause between proprietors and peasants. Each discovered that the other was still a Pole.

The political division was even more marked than the class division, and more fraught with danger to the new State. When the first Sejm was elected in 1919, Poland found herself with more than twenty distinct parties eager to engage in the country's government. This was the inevitable result of what had gone before. For ten generations the millions of Poland's population had been learning many new and different things, many divergent ideas, under foreign rule. Sharply differentiated theories had

developed as to how the national spirit should be conserved, how liberty and independence should be restored. Three distinct schools had arisen in turn in the political life of the nation (which was, of course, more or less an " underground " life). There had first been the Romantic school, ardent, idealistic, hopeful of great things soon to come, of liberty soon to be regained, a school of more or less unorganized physical force which beheld only the motherland's freshly bleeding wounds, and cried out for their avenging. This was the logical result of the first overwhelming shock caused by the triple murdering of the Polish nation—a period of vivid poetry, of fiery eloquence, high-spirited adventure and picturesque patriotism.

The successor of the Romantic was the Realistic school, growing out of the failures of armed insurrection. This at first enunciated the Messianic theory of " providential suffering," a sort of Biblical passivism which beheld in the person of Poland a vicarious sacrifice offered up for the redemption of all other nations. But later the Realistic school evolved into one of more practical consideration of national problems, although its nationalistic spirit was weakened somewhat by a tendency toward compromise.

Finally had come the Constructive school, in the generations just preceding the world war; energetic, more sanguine of the future than ever, asserting itself more and more in local problems of politics and social welfare, education and philanthropy, and gradually developing a new group of statesmen who needed only the most meagre opportunity to demonstrate their ability for handling bigger problems than merely local—to prove to the world that the Pole by his intrinsic gifts has a right to a place in world affairs.

He had indeed demonstrated this already and repeatedly, even in the German Reichstag, where he had sat in respectable numbers under such leaders as Trampczynski, Prince Ferdinand Radziwill, Adelbert Korfanty, Dr. Seyda, Dr. Francis Chlapowski, and others. The first of these, Trampczynski, the Speaker of the Sejm which ratified the new Constitution, is one of the most able and trusted men of the nation, whose courageous action electrified Berlin in 1916, when he responded with a bold defiance to the Prussian's glib talk of Poland's debt of gratitude to Germany. The same courage and power served him in good stead during the final struggle for the Constitution of 1921, when the radical elements intrigued by Moscow sought to inject Bolshevik ideas into the document.

But it was not alone in the Reichstag that the constructive Pole had proved himself. In the Russian Duma he had stood head and shoulders over the Muscovite in the person of Roman Dmowski, whom the English writer Boswell, in his *Poland and*

the Poles, calls "the greatest living statesman Poland has produced." In Austria, likewise, where, during the later years of subjugation, autonomy had given the Pole numerous opportunities for initiative, he had made an especial name for himself in finance, furnishing the Hapsburg monarchy the greatest finance ministers of its history, as well as several premiers and ministers of foreign affairs.

These, then, were the qualifications and disqualifications of the Pole in meeting his great test after November 1918: class division of centuries; political division of many generations; but an indissoluble unit, nevertheless, based on an indestructible ideal of human liberty. The Poles of to-day are the children and descendants of the classes and divisions of yesterday—of proprietors and peasants, of political Romanticists, Realists, and Constructionists. But as quickly as they were free they proved that they were also the joint heirs of a national soul which nothing—neither persecution nor bribery, neither terrorizing nor political paralysis—had been able to destroy. The problem of their fathers had been, how to gain their freedom. That problem had kept them united. The problem of the Pole to-day is how to keep and enjoy his freedom to the best advantage of himself and his neighbours, a problem which likewise unites him and will keep him united as long as democracy exists.

How he has faced these problems from the day of his liberation up to the hour when he ratified and proclaimed at last his long desired constitution is not only the Pole's best answer to those who accuse him of inability to govern, but also the best guarantee of his future.

V

The liberation came in November 1918. It did not by any means clear Polish soil immediately of enemy forces. But it cleared the atmosphere and gave the Pole a distinct perspective cutting through the smokes of war. He at once organized a provisional Government, and within six weeks he had the machinery of a general election in motion. The inherent democracy of the nation came quickly into play. The election, held in January 1919 worked in perfect orderliness without disturbance of any kind, polling an astonishingly large number of votes, and returning to the newly established Republic, as if with a dignified, decisive gesture, its first representative body of legislators.

To the American observer the distinctive points which stand out in the history of this purely formative period of Poland's new political life are these: the remarkable organizing powers of the nation, and the strikingly unselfish character of the patriotism of its leading men. Time and again these men have shown themselves

capable of making almost unbelievable sacrifices for the common cause. Partisanship in any healthy people, above all in a people of such ardent nature as the Poles, is inevitable. But invariably, when things have come to a "show down," the Pole has risen above partisanship, and has renounced pet theory and all thought of preference or personal ambition in such an inspiring manner as to compel admiration. More than once in the past three years strong men and big men of Poland, revealing a strength and a bigness too often calculated on but too seldom found in democracies, have stepped down to make way for the next considered move, falling into line and putting their shoulders to the wheel. The ideal of the whole nation was well expressed by the peasant premier, Witos, in one moment of crisis, when he reminded the Sejm that "Poland is neither the property of the legislature nor of the cabinet, but of the people." Such high character as the leaders of Poland have thus exhibited is bound to bear fruit in the mass.

The things already accomplished by Poland in the way of government are worthy of the record of decades instead of a brief three years. True, the Pole often deprecates praise for what he has done in so short a time, usually saying: "But we have had the advantage of all that has been done before us. We are the fortunate heirs to the legislative experience of the ages." Yet it cannot be disputed, even by himself if he wishes to be modest about it, that the Pole has been a pioneer of human rights and international amity; witness his Constitution of 1791, the first in Europe to proclaim the right of the people to rule; and witness, too, the words of his national poet, Mickiewicz, uttered over a century ago, "The times have passed when nations proclaimed: 'Within ourselves and for ourselves.'" That surely was an early cry for the Leaguing of the Nations which we so much desire to-day. But if the Pole is to be taken merely as the latest and most fortunate of the heirs of ages, then in his powers of selection and adaptation he has shown real wisdom in the organizing of his new Government. He has trained and put into operation laws governing social life which have not only preserved continuous internal order throughout a period loud with clamour of revolution on every side, but which have laid solid foundations for future economic peace and progress. An eight-hour day; prohibition of child labour and restriction of female employment; regulation of living and housing conditions; provision for arbitration of strikes; conservation and encouragement of domestic capital, resources, and industries; the development of education (a compulsory literacy and education law for adults as well as for children); fostering of art and cultural sciences; freedom of conscience; liberty of speech and of the Press; protection of racial, lingual, and religious minorities—these are some of the things actually accomplished and actually

operative to-day in Poland. Only a strong people, with wisdom and judgment, as well as ardour and ideals, could make such a record.

This does not mean that there have not been ruptures, dissensions, blunders, mistakes, and all the other setbacks and handicaps common to the work and deliberations of human beings. But in spite of all, and surmounting every obstacle, the Poles have persisted. In the ratification of their Constitution they have closed the first period of their constructive task and have set forth for the world to see what their ideas of representative government are. Just as an American citizen, questioned regarding his national ideals, turns first of all to his Constitution to make answer, so now the Pole points to this document of his to tell the world what his ideals are of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." He may well take pride in it, too, for it represents a sum total of patience, perseverance, self-sacrifice, and political sagacity, cool judgment, and determined co-operation that few bodies of men in any country could surpass. One hundred and thirty years ago the Polish Constitution of 1791 evoked the praise of Burke, Walpole, and other great European thinkers. The Polish Constitution of 1921 will likewise compel the admiration of the world.

VI

Characteristically, the Pole, who is traditionally of a religious nature—marching himself off to church the moment his new Magna Charta is ratified to publicly thank God and ask His blessing—opens the preamble of his Constitution with a prayer of gratitude for the nation's liberation from bondage. It is all simply and clearly worded, without any attempts at high-flown eloquence or any juggling with fine phrases. The first clause of the Bill comes to grips at once with the social problem of the time —"determined to fix the social order of the nation on the basis of the eternal principles of law and freedom"—and pledges the nation outright to "equality to all and special protection to labour" —"labour," as a further clause designates it (103), "the chief basis of the Republic's riches." The clauses which follow, briefly summed up, outline a scheme of government which has an especial appeal to Americans.

Three powers, legislative, executive, and judicial, comprise the body of the Polish Government; a National Assembly of two houses (the Sejm, or Diet—that is, the House of Representatives, and the Senate); a President and Cabinet of Ministers; and a Supreme Court, with a system of administrative courts. Sejm and Senate are elected for five years, and together they elect the President, who in turn appoints the judiciary, subject to the

confirmation of the Sejm and the Senate. The Sejm is modelled somewhat on the plan of the French Chamber of Deputies, which is said to mirror public opinion more swiftly than any other legislative body in Europe. The presidential term is for seven years. The President is commander-in-chief of the national forces ; but in time of war cannot take active command, appointing one in his stead on the motion of the Minister of War, and with the approval of the Cabinet.

Certain points in the Polish Constitution stand out in contrast to ours. Despite its progressive tenour, it is in some respects more conservative than that of America. More restrictions are set on the presidential office, while the much-talked of danger of Polish militarism (a favourite topic of the critics of Poland, especially her German critics) is distinctly obviated by the prohibition placed on soldiers voting, as well as by the above-noted clause regarding the President's powers in time of war. Nor can war be declared, nor peace made, by the President without the consent of the Diet.

There is absolute equal suffrage. A woman may be elected to the presidency. There is no Vice-President ; a Speaker, or " Marshal of the Diet," chosen by the Diet, presides during a vacancy of the presidential office, while the National Assembly (Diet and Senate joined together for the purpose) elects a new chief executive. The Senate equals in numbers one-fourth the legal number of deputies in the Diet, one senator being elected to every four deputies, all chosen by popular vote at the same election. No senator may be under forty years of age. (The President of the Republic must also be over forty.)

The age limit for deputies is twenty-five. One deputy is elected for every fifty thousand population ; thus the Sejm has some five hundred members, and the Senate one hundred and twenty-five. The Sejm alone has the power of initiating bills ; the Senate passes on and amends them. There was lively agitation on this clause, the radical elements fighting against it vigorously and against the whole movement for a second chamber or revisory body, demanding a one-house congress without any check put on it. The name and example of America was much invoked by the two-house protagonists during this discussion. Even the old soldiers, " the Polish G.A.R.," marched the streets carrying banners proclaiming " We want a two-house congress like America ! "

The new Constitution of Poland, on close analysis, reads like a really epochal document in history. It is at once progressive and conservative, advanced and well weighed. Given the known temper of the Polish people, it reads like a durable and standing instrument. Time alone, of course, can prove its strength. But that the Poles themselves, despite their joy over it, have no

chauvinistic delusions as to its perfection or infallibility is attested in that clause which provides for its amendment. Ten years hence, in 1931, the National Assembly may vote on its revision. After that, every quarter century, it may be amended.

Between the lines of the Constitution of the new Polish Republic we can read the whole social history of our age, the story of the progress of democracy in the Old World, and of the tenacity of the Polish people in clinging to their inborn ideals of human liberty. It sums up Poland. It demonstrates the capacity of the Polish people for regeneration, for profiting by experience, for co-operation and organization. And it testifies in clear crisp wording that it was not so much, after all, during their long years of oppression that the Poles were able to stand their supreme test, as in the actual hour of their freshly gained liberty and independence.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CHIEF OF STATE

I

FRAMED in a verdant setting and fronting its gravelled walk with a columned portico, the Belvedere Palace at Warsaw bears a striking resemblance to the White House at Washington, especially when viewed from the wide Alleja Ujazdowska which, with its double row of graceful limes, is one of the stateliest avenues in Europe.

The Belvedere is the residence of the Polish Chief of State, and the Poles like to call it their " White House "—their " Bialy Dom." It is not really white at all, however, as we see when we come up to it, but a light yellow ; and it still wears the old-fashioned green shutters of a bygone day which went out of style in Washington long ago.

With its resemblance and its present usage, however, the parallel between the State residences of the Polish and the American republics ceases. The foundations of the Polish White House were not laid, like ours, with the square trowel of democracy ; rather, it might be said they were laid with a knife. For generations that great house in the Belvedere gardens was a symbol to the Polish people not of freedom and self-government, but of hated foreign dominion. Its name meant nothing to the patriotic Pole but tyranny and chains, and so did his poets celebrate its infamy.

Fifty-four years ago one of these ardent Poles was born in the deep forest country of Lithuania, to feed his hot young heart from earliest boyhood on the poetry of his countryman Mickiewicz, and to feel his blood flame as he read in the *Ancestors* of that epic-singer the story of the patriotic Cichowski and other national heroes who had been condemned to rot in the dungeons of Belvedere. To be caught reading Polish poetry was a crime for which many a youth like himself had paid the heaviest of penalties. There was the story of one in particular to warn him—a lad of seventeen who, sentenced to imprisonment because *Ancestors* had been found on his person, had burned himself to death for fear that he would betray his companions under the maddening

pain of the Russian knout. Nevertheless this young Lithuanian read his Mickiewicz, nurturing his soul on protestations and prophecies ; and great dreams and terrible resolutions possessed him. In his mind's eye he saw Belvedere then as the unspeakable place, the Hill of Skulls, the Golgotha of his country's crucifixion. His fist was raised against it and all that it represented.

To-day the official resident of that same Belvedere, now the White House of the free Polish Republic, is the boy of half a century ago—Josef Pilsudski, the Chief of State.

II

It was late afternoon when I went up the steps of Belvedere to be presented to Marshal Pilsudski. I had seen him several times before at public functions, dressed in his severely simple uniform which bore neither decoration nor insignia of rank. I already knew the rather dark austerity of his face, the concentrated glance of his deep sunken eyes. And I had heard, as everyone else had, more than one story of his inaccessibility, his taciturnity, of what a " difficult " personage he was.

At the foot of the broad red-carpeted stairway leading from the Belvedere reception hall to the private chambers above stood two guards rigid at attention, their swords lifted in salute. We passed up the stairway and through one room after another, all simply furnished, hushed and stately with an old-fashioned dignity, until we began to wonder which one of the many doors opening before us would at last disclose the Chief of State. Then the aide left us ; we waited ; in a moment another door opened and Pilsudski entered from his bedroom. I could see the plain little bed, with its picture of the Madonna of Chenstohova, historic patroness of Poland, on the wall beside it.

The first time I had been close enough to Pilsudski to study his expression had been some months before, on a memorable occasion in Warsaw—the day of the restitution of Poland's long-lost military decoration *Virtuti Militari*—an imposing ceremony in the great Byzantine " Russian " church—when the medals, borne on a shield through a stately line of national standards, were brought into the sanctuary to be blessed by the Cardinal before they were pinned on the breasts of the day's heroes by the Commander. I had thought him a worried-looking man that day, prepossessed, a little pale ; easy and graceful in his movements, but quick, with the dispatch which characterizes men of purpose. Without the appearance of haste, there was about him, nevertheless, a sense of finishing a thing, being done with it and ready for the next.

But this was quite a different man who now entered the room and greeted us. He was not so rigidly erect as in public. His slim figure with its elastic step no longer appeared tall, but only of medium height. The stern, austere, impenetrable Pilsudski of fame was not here at all. This was rather the democratic soldierly commander whose men to this day, in spite of all new rank and dignities, still call him nothing but " the major," a title of affection that he loves. Before we realized it we were seated about him engaged in informal converse. Since then the great Russian novelist Merezkowski has told me how, when he had his first interview with Pilsudski, not venturing to use his own language, the tongue of Poland's enemy, he began to speak in French. But Pilsudski immediately answered him in Russian, saying with a charming smile, " Perhaps it is easier for you." It is not difficult to understand the power of such a man, who captivates all who come to know him, who is worshipped by his officers and soldiers, and who has won to his side among his most ardent supporters many who began by furiously attacking and opposing him.

One of the paintings by that most tragic of young Polish artists, Arthur Grottger, represents the grey shadow of death passing like a gust of chill air across the deep-forested aisles of the Lithuanian country that gave Pilsudski birth. One wonders at what early day of his youth Josef Pilsudski first looked on that terrible apparition. His face, stern through diffidence before the public eye, in privacy and repose has an arresting sadness and pallor stamped upon it, tempering its strength—not a present sadness but something remote, the shadow of that Shadow which must have long ago surprised his young soul with its sudden terror and in time become his familiar. But soon, as we talked on, a new warmth came into his countenance, his sharp eyes with their kindling wrinkles flashing instant response, understanding, enthusiasm, from under their bushy reddish brows. I studied him as we talked (speaking through an interpreter gives one that clear advantage) : deep lines are sculptured in his high forehead, topped with its stiff brush of black hair. The drooping moustache does not conceal the strength of the mouth. The dark oval face is olive-skinned and pale. The straight clean-cut nose and the keen powerful jaw spell race and force.

We talked on. The interview which was to have lasted an hour extended to two. He sat back in comfort in his chair, leaning forward when emphasis brought gesture into play ; he relaxed, smoked with the easy relish of a real lover of the weed—experimenting with delight on the American cigarette I offered him, which he accepted with boyish " Papierosy Amerykanski ! " We talked on—and all the time one reminding thought shot back and forth in my head like a shuttle weaving an odd thread through

the fabric of our conversation: "In Belvedere now! Belvedere, no longer a dungeon and a torture-house, no longer Poland's Golgotha, but the White House of the free Polish Republic!"

III

The story of Pilsudski is the story of two Polands, the Poland of yesterday and the Poland of to-day.

Pilsudski's ties with the Poland of the past go back beyond history into the dim ages of pagan Lithuania, so ancient is the family from which he springs. (It was his mother's name that Sienkiewicz immortalized in his historical novel *The Deluge*, the heroine of which was one of Pilsudski's maternal ancestors.) Born of such a lineage, of a race of rulers, and brought up in an environment of traditional dignity, he was easily fitted by birth for leadership and high place. But even the wealth and position of the son of a man whose ancestral estates once covered thirty thousand acres could not soften the fibre nor dull the keen spirit of this boy, any more than it had that of his father before him, or of his mother from whose very breasts he drew the invigorating milk of patriotism. As for the influence of that mother, though she died at the early age of forty, she has never taken her hand from the shoulder of her son. "Whenever I am at variance with myself," Pilsudski once declared at a crisis in his life, "when everyone is against me, when storms of censure or reproach gather around me, then I put one question to myself—how would my mother have bidden me behave in such circumstances? And the moment I have realized what would have been her opinion and her wish, I proceed with my task, unconcerned with what others may think."

The rope-and-rack of Russian reprisal, following the Polish Rebellion of 1863, was at its bloodiest tension when Josef Pilsudski first saw the light. His uncle had been killed; his aged grandmother and two aunts thrown into prison, where the grandmother went blind. The whole country was crushed under an iron terror. Twenty thousand Poles, the flower of the nation's youth, were transported in chains to Siberia. Pilsudski's father escaped that fate, though he had been obliged to flee and hide for years; and now his estates were swept away in the pitiless tide of revenge which stripped two hundred and fifty thousand Polish families of their possessions. But even with that the Czarist disciplining of the bold house of Pilsudski was not at an end. Nearly twenty years after the uprising young Josef, a youth in his teens, saw the tears of his father flow afresh when Bronislas, the eldest son of the family, was condemned to hard labour in the Siberian mines because, during a holiday visit to his home, he had loaned his

student room at Karkov University to a poor classmate who became implicated in a revolutionary plot.

Josef's schooling, carefully begun at home, now forced him to be sent abroad; first to Vilna, where an intensive process of Russification was going on, and where the boy suffered "immeasurably," as he declares himself, "under a regime the chief trait of which was everlasting fear and continual lying"; and later to the same Russian university at Karkov where his brother's life-tragedy had been sealed. His native Vilna, for three hundred years a centre of Polish culture and one of Europe's great seats of learning, no longer possessed its university. The Czar had suppressed that half a century before, in his fanatic endeavour to stamp out the national Polish spirit which had stirred to new life there under the leadership of Pilsudski's beloved poet Mickiewicz. Thus the youth must follow in his brother's footsteps.

Follow he did in dead earnest. A turbulent life, full of balked purpose and dogged persistence, now began for him. At twenty he commenced the study of medicine at Karkov, but before he was twenty-one he was expelled for organizing a patriotic Polish society. He returned to Vilna, continued his work of secret agitation, and crystallized more and more his belief that only by force—not by terrorism but by a complete military organization—could Poland ever be freed. He was tireless in this; and then the end—Siberia—came with lightning suddenness. There was police suspicion—a raid—arrests; and among Pilsudski's papers was found the name and address of another suspect who was involved in a plot to assassinate the Czar. Josef, like his brother, was condemned, without trial In a few days the chapter of his youth was closed. In chains, at the bayonet's point, he was marched away and transported to the mines.

IV

Five years later, in 1892, Pilsudski, having served out his term in Siberia, returned to Poland. But he remained little more than a prisoner at large. Banished from his native province he was yet unable to pass beyond the heavily policed Russian borders. He settled in Lodz, the centre of Polish industrial life.

He chose Lodz with deliberate intent. With its vast population of half a million factory workers, ground under the double heel of political tyranny and industrial oppression, this Polish city offered Pilsudski the field he sought for the work he planned. That work was his old task renewed, of building up an underground living Poland, armed and drilled, which some day was to heave its superstructure of alien despotism into oblivion.

The enormous vitality of the Polish race has never found more

vigorous expression than in the crowded days of Pilsudski's activities at Lodz. From 1892 to 1900 he made that city the heart of Poland, vitalizing and feeding all the other members of her secretly nourished body with a constant stream of rebellious reinvigoration. It was, by his own acknowledgment—his quick eye tells more of the tale than his few words—an exciting life; plots and intrigues without number; secret meetings, evasions, disguises; high hopes, wild despairs; unexpected summonses, arrests, imprisonments, executions; a time "when every knock at the door meant possible detection and death"; when, at every clandestine gathering "among ten devotees, ten patriots, ten apostles, sat one possible spy—and none knew which one that spy might be!"

Lodz was now the centre of Polish national propaganda. It was there that *Robotnik* (*The Workman*), organ of his party, was secretly printed by him and from there circulated throughout the country. Like the famous Belgian army paper published during the War to the confusion of the German authorities, so *Robotnik* became the *bête noir* of the Russian police in Poland. It was published under their very noses, but they could not find it. For eight years they spied and hunted, searched and raided for it, and failed. Then one day they unearthed a clue, tracked *Robotnik* to its nest—and caught Pilsudski.

V

Thirty years before Pilsudski's father had joined the rebels of '63, the Poles had risen against their oppressors, only to be crushed after a year's hopeless struggle. One of the punishments inflicted on them for the uprising of 1830 had been the building of the Warsaw Citadel, every stone of which, as has been already noted, the political prisoners taken in the rebellion were forced to set in place under the whips and guns of Russian guards. Then, when they had finished the building of this charnel house, to be the living tomb of patriots for years to come, they were taken out on its ramparts and shot.

It was into this black hole of death that Pilsudski now was thrust. He knew that his would be short shrift before he went to the scaffold. But once more mind won over might.

He feigned madness. And so well did he play the part of the insane Pole, crazed by his five years in Siberia, that instead of the scaffold they sent him off to Petrograd, where they locked him up in a military insane asylum.

The "underground" which Pilsudski had built up from the Polish revolutionary centre at Lodz now served its leader well. Not a move that was made in his trial, in spite of the high walls

of the citadel, but was known to his colleagues. They knew of his "insanity"; they rejoiced over his escape from execution Their hearts and their prayers accompanied him on the long journey into Russia when he was finally transported to the asylum. But more than prayers and good wishes went with him. A plot was already afoot to rescue him.

One of his Lodz companions, Mazurkiewicz, a young Polish doctor—whose first name, Bronislas, seemed perhaps to bind him still closer to him, in memory of his unhappy brother—contrived in time to secure an appointment to the staff of the Petrograd asylum. He proved himself a brother indeed; for it was due to him that Pilsudski, before a year was past, had made good his escape from the madhouse and was back once more in Poland.

VI

Marshal Pilsudski settled back in his chair when I asked him, that evening at Belvedere, if we might not expect a visit from him to America. A quizzical little twinkle teased humorous creases around his eyes. "I have been in America already," he said. "It's a secret! Yes, New York. I have seen your sky-scrapers. But," he ended with a laugh, "for only two days!"

"But now—I could not go to America. Not until the time comes when I may put off my uniform, dress in civilian clothes, be only an observer. Then I hope to see America."

The "secret" of Pilsudski's two-day visit to America was buried deep in the record of his experiences following his flight from the Russian insane asylum. It was during a memorable trip to Japan in 1904 that he made that brief sojourn in New York harbour. Mention of it recalls the details of his story after his escape from Petrograd. He was again free, but now he dare not show his face in his old camp at Lodz. After two years on the continent and in England he settled in the Austrian dominions, in Krakow, in 1902, and in Krakow his underground work was once more resumed.

Events were pushing towards a climax in Russia. The Japanese War with its resulting internal disturbance was already brewing. When at last it broke, Pilsudski, still cherishing his dream of a Polish army, still convinced that by force of arms alone could Poland shake herself free, conceived the daring scheme of raising a Polish Legion to join the Japanese against the common enemy. He faced crushing opposition to this idea among fellow Poles, who saw only disaster in such an uprising, but he nevertheless undertook the venture, setting out alone on the long journey across Atlantic and Pacific At Tokio, however, his project,

checked by the opposition of his own national opponents, was rejected and he was forced to return home empty handed.

In the years that had followed Pilsudski's return from exile in Siberia, Poland had taken heart of hope in the accession of Nicholas II. But Pilsudski had no delusions as to Russian reform. Bitter experience had not only taught him the vanity of such hopes, but had developed and intensified the almost clairvoyant gift he possesses of " feeling " beforehand the course of events—a gift which Mickiewicz denotes as one of the most characteristic attributes of the Slavic race. It was this sixth sense of Pilsudski's nature—one of the striking qualities of his military genius—which now warned him against slackening in the least degree his efforts toward armed organization.

Riots in Warsaw; another abortive uprising; the brutal tragedy of Platz Teatralny, in 1905, when the Russian military charged the crowd with fire and sword and made the streets of the Polish capital run with blood; a students' boycott, demanding Polish education; and a fierce renewal of the Siberian terrors of other years—these were the outstanding events of this turbulent period. Then came a calm, and the establishment of the Duma, Russia's first advance towards constitutional government. Poland, alive with latent political power, leaped to this chance with eagerness. But Russia still feared the subject State. Within two years practically all the blood-bought concessions of 1905 had been repudiated. Poland's Duma delegation of thirty-four was reduced to twelve; the Duma itself, indifferent when not opposed to Polish claims, ignored, at times derided, the activities and protestations of the Poles.

In the face of these fresh tragedies Pilsudski's idea began to prevail more and more on his colleagues. He pointed to these new Polish failures as clear demonstrations of his theory that Poland could never wrench herself free until she could back her protest with armed power. He had never given up that idea. So tenaciously did he hold to it that, as the story goes, on his continental trip he spent all his days in Paris drilling the Polish students of the Gobelins quarter in the manual of arms. Then, back again in Poland, he had still stuck to his belief despite his Japanese failure. When he was laughed at as a " visionary," a " dreamer," a " fanatic," he repeated in his heart the song of his poet Mickiewicz " To Youth ":

> Let violence hurl violence back,
> Break what the reason does not break,
> Reach where the eye does not!

By 1908 Pilsudski had so far succeeded in carrying his point that he had begun under the auspices of his party the formation

of a Polish legion; and this he was now able to do not furtively but openly, thanks to the then existing situation in Austria, where feeling against Russia was developing into open hostility, with Vienna eager to utilize the Pole as a weapon for her own ends.

Those were happy days for Pilsudski, with his dream of an actual Polish army at last moving towards realization. He worked feverishly. There was an urgency on him that made every minute priceless. He studied, drilled, planned; raised funds from men who could not give service, but whose hearts were with the cause; made frequent and perilous trips across the Russian and German borders to keep up the courage of his compatriots there; and finally, to consolidate his forces, organized a secret union of all the scattered units now in training.

That keen, determined jaw of his, and those deep sharp eyes, tell the story:

"And did you never give up?"

"A Pole can never give up."

With the fatal 1914 drawing near, Pilsudski began to sense the impending conflict. In January he made his second visit to Paris, this time in the hope of interesting France in the Polish situation. "The development of military preparation throughout Europe at that moment," he explains, "gave Poland a certain value on the European political market from which the Polish question had been mercilessly excluded since the failure of our insurrection of 1863. The habit had been lost of taking us into account. But the military movements of 1914 brought the Polish problem back on the chessboard. The importance of these movements appeared to us all the greater inasmuch as, since 1904, we had been witnessing a whole series of upheavals and conflicts wherein the decisive rôle was laid upon armed force. The sword alone at that moment weighed in the scale of the destiny of nations. That may have been a regrettable fact, but it was a fact; and the people who would close their eyes to it would irremediably compromise their future. We were determined not to be that people."

But at Paris Pilsudski again met disappointment. He was blocked by the newly concluded and secret Franco-Russian alliance, which, despite France's historic sympathy with Polish aspirations, tied French hands. He returned to Krakow, as he had returned from Tokio ten years before, empty handed.

Then the sudden outbreak of the War presented an hour for action; and Pilsudski acted. Within twenty-four hours he had his Legion on the march; had crossed the Russian frontier; and by the third of August, having penetrated 760 miles into Russian

Poland, had routed the Russian infantry and taken the city of Kielce. He had stepped boldly out of his "underground," and had emerged on to the lighted page of history.

VII

Pilsudski's day had come at last to demonstrate the practical working of his theory of Polish force—of pitting one conqueror against another, with the freedom of the conquered as the stake. The daring and swiftness of his dash into Russian Poland struck into the Czar's heart such fear of a new Polish uprising that, within two weeks of the taking of Kielce, Grand Duke Nicholas had issued a proclamation of Polish autonomy.

But that was only one card of Pilsudski's game. Austria, it will be remembered, had already made certain concessions to the Poles, local autonomy among them. Now she must go Russia's autonomy one better. She did. Complete Polish independence in the event of victory over Russia was the new pledge Pilsudski won from Austria.

By the summer of 1915 the Polish Legion had so covered itself with glory that Pilsudski had been given the rank of Brigadier-General. By August 1915 Russia had definitely lost Poland ; the Germans occupied Warsaw ; and the Poles began to count the days toward their promised emancipation. But Germany had no intention of there being an emancipated Poland. She looked with ill-favour on the growing strength of the Poles. She was determined to check it. She set about by planning first to get rid of Pilsudski, whom the German military governor, Von Besseler, named as "the soul of Polish opposition."

But how get rid of Pilsudski, who was really not one man at all, but a whole army ? When the Russians under Brusiloff began their 1916 offensive, Bernhardi, the famous German commander and military critic, found, as he thought, a simple way of dispatching the question. He ordered Pilsudski and his brigade to the most murderous sector of the front, with the deliberate intent, as every Pole believes, of having the bothersome leader of the Legion killed off ; certainly of using him and his men prodigally to conserve the German man-power.

There was nothing for Brigadier-General Pilsudski to do but obey, though he was convinced beforehand of Bernhardi's purpose. He moved his troops as commanded, and his worst fears were quickly realized. Decimating losses began to so reduce the Polish ranks, who were mowed down like wheat, that at last he rebelled. To have guessed the deadly intent was one thing, to see the deadly result was another. It was unbearable. He mutinied—disobeyed orders—withdrew his forces. He could die

himself, before a German firing squad. But he could no longer pour this precious stream of Polish manhood into the Russian slaughter.

Of course this was exactly what the Germans wanted. They courtmartialled and sentenced Pilsudski to be shot. But at the last moment the Austrian High Command intervened and saved his life.

The Polish brigade was sent to the rear under a new commander.

Long before this Pilsudski had become a marked man to the Germans But he was officially an Austrian, a ranking officer of an ally. The fight against him could not profitably be an open one. For a long time the struggle went on, subtle and politic, between the man who stood for Polish power and the men who wished to destroy that power, the Germans even resorting to the most extravagant bribery in the hope of buying up the stubborn Pole. When, following the Bernhardi affair, the German High Command appointed Pilsudski a member of the "Regency," which they had organized to carry out their scheme of denatured Polish government, there is no doubt that they still cherished the hope of forcing him into a position that must result either in his falling into line—or open conflict. The joint declaration they now issued with Austria, proclaiming Polish "independence," was well calculated to accomplish their end. This proclamation was an outright repudiation of every pledge that had been given. There was to be no free reunited Poland after all; only a Russian Poland "freed"—and set under the Teuton thumb All of Poland's reborn hopes of resurrected nationhood, now freshly strengthened by the Romanoff fall in Russia, were once more shaken.

Pilsudski accepted his post in the "Council of State." He realized the challenge of it, but he was determined, in carrying on the fight for Poland, to leave no possible means untried. When Germany's next move, however, proved to be an attempt to press the Polish legionaries wholesale into the Kaiser's service, to be used on the Western Front, the fight became an open one. Establish and develop a Polish army for Poland—yes; but a Polish army for a German stop-gap—no. He protested, not alone in the council, but publicly; delivered a daring "speech of distrust" in Warsaw against the proposed German military oath; forbade the legionaries to take the oath. The end of it was the arrest of Pilsudski and the internment of the recalcitrant troops.

"Our people are slow to rouse," Pilsudski says, describing the Poles. They have learned much of patience and endurance in the long-suffering years of their partitions; but abject submission, never. This period of promised reconstruction had been not unlike others of the past. They believed and hoped much. But when Germany's latest infamy, hitherto more or less diplomatically

concealed, became known, Warsaw went black with anger. The municipality called a public mass meeting to register its protest. A pretty little drama resulted, in which the mighty Teuton was neatly outwitted by the subtle Pole. Von Besseler sent a command to the city authorities forbidding all public discussion of the Pilsudski affair. The mass meeting was held, nevertheless; the German command obeyed; and yet the Pilsudski demonstration was made. The vast audience sat in silence while the chairman read the German letter forbidding the demonstration. Then rising en masse it gave one long reverberating shout, "*Pilsudski!*" And the meeting was adjourned. The German police were furious.

Pilsudski was now deported to the German military prison at Magdeburg. This was in the fall of 1917—September. He remained behind the bars all through the ensuing months of vast world change, which brought to him only by vague hearsay the news of the Bolshevik revolution in November, of the collapse of Russia, finally of the treason of Brest-Litovski when Poland was once more sliced and sold. Those were black days for the strong man of action, locked in a cell beyond all human succour. Even the brightening rumours of the exploits of his colleague Haller, and of new Allied victories in the West, came to him in such broken rays as to only intensify his darkness.

Then there was a new thunderclap—rather, a new sunburst—the staggering tidings of the Kaiser's fall. In that crash Pilsudski's prison walls tumbled, and the White Eagle of Poland winged its flight into the skies of hope once more. Pilsudski walked out a free man, summoned home by the leaders of the now defunct "Regency." On November 10, 1918, amid a demonstration of acclaim such as no other Polish hero had ever received, he returned to Warsaw just one day before the Armistice was signed in the West. Men who looked on his face that day declare it unforgettable, so transfixed with purpose were those sharp sunken eyes, so drawn with emotion those deeply sculptured features. "It shook a man to look upon it." It shook Pilsudski to the foundations of his soul to realize that thirty million Poles now turned to him as their leader.

VIII

A month before Pilsudski was released from prison, following the Kaiser's fall, the German disintegration in Poland had begun —reflection of the rapidly advancing collapse on the Western front and in the German interior. Even as early as October 1918 German officers were making their getaway from Warsaw. When I first reached Poland in 1919 the Varsovians were still recounting the happenings of those days—days which might have been

bloody and terrible, had the Poles yielded to the natural temptation of wreaking vengeance on their erstwhile conquerors; but which instead, thanks to Polish orderliness and good temper, were bloodless—and even comic at times rather than tragic. Comedy it certainly was, put on with a broad brush, when bemedalled and beswordеd German officers—the strutting heroes of yesterday—surrendered sheepishly even to Polish newsboys, who suddenly confronted them and disarmed them on the streets. Those Warsaw "newsies" were having a little revenge of their own just then. Among the multifarious "verbotens" of the German occupation, a recent order had forbidden newsvendors crying their wares, because they had lately been teasing their conquerors with shouts of every sort of imaginable alarm concerning German defeats and Allied victories. "Forty thousand Germans taken!" "On the run to the Rhine!" "Revolution in Berlin!" and so on. All that fun had been put a stop to. Now, at a password that flashed like powder from the Polish "underground," even the newsboys rose up, stepped out, and challenged the brave Teutons. When Pilsudski arrived the first week in November, 27,000 Germans surrendered to the new military authority.

The Chief of State, leaning forward in his chair at Belvedere, his chin in his hand, flashed me an unconscious picture of the man of 1918 pondering the task that lay before him in those trying days. This was a new test put upon his powers. He was a soldier, thanks to his dogged sticking for thirty years to his one dominant idea of military preparedness. But now he must prove himself not only a soldier but a statesman. He must not only reorganize the disbanded and scattered Polish army, but he must organize a Polish government.

The iron of revolt that had gone into his soul deeper and deeper from the days of his father's ruin and his brother's exile, and through all his own succeeding hardships, had made a pure radical of Pilsudski the aristocrat. "But," he says, "though the whole past drives me toward government with the 'left,' there is something above 'left'—and that is Poland." This was the keynote of his thought and action as he took up his new task, as it has been ever since. He has proved himself from the beginning bigger than partisan bias. "If I don't find on the 'left' the necessary competent help, then I look elsewhere."

It was a time of test by fire for every man in Poland. Irremediable chaos and perhaps total self-destruction of the newly restored nation might easily have resulted in that long deferred liberation coming as it did after 150 years of partition and political paralysis. How to draw together the three separated Polands of past generations, which had been systematically emasculated of initiative by their conquerors; how to clear a common ground

of concerted action—this was the terrible task of that hour. There were the inevitable divisions, disturbances, splits and threats of a formative period; moments when all seemed in vain and Poland in danger of falling to pieces; moments when Pilsudski and his colleagues must have very nearly reached despair. But the indestructible vitality of the Polish national idea weathered the storm. Order prevailed. It is a noteworthy fact that throughout the world crisis that has followed the Armistice of 1918 Poland has preserved internal order. This is due to the fact that time and time again the men of Poland, the political leaders, have arisen above all levels of partisanship or pet theorizing. Lubomirski did it when, summoning Pilsudski to Warsaw, he withdrew from the regency and retired from the scene. Moraczewski did it when he stepped down to make way for Paderewski. When Pilsudski and Paderewski joined hands, the same noble gesture was once more achieved. The story of Polish political co-operation, in fact, dating from the first days of the country's independence, is one that would have made George Washington envious.

"But there is a great difference between Poland and America in their beginnings," the Marshal commented when I spoke of Washington. "America had a clear field. Whatever her troubles, they were internal only and could be remedied in due time. She stood by herself and could go on. Poland has had to cope not only with problems of domestic reconstruction, but from the hour of her liberation has been surrounded by enemies. It is as if young David, having slain not one but three Goliaths, must still fight on against a ring of Philistines."

On five fronts the circle of Poland's enemies closed in, barking and snapping as the young Republic struggled to its feet. Germans, Czechs, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Bolsheviks—all of them bit and fought, while Pilsudski toiled night and day consolidating and reforming his army. The superhuman physical endurance and mental powers of the man who could carry through this stupendous undertaking are beyond words. When he had come back to Warsaw in November 1918 there was no Polish army. Some ten thousand legionaries were scattered over the country; a single group of 2,000 men was the sole unit he had to work with. Within six months he had half a million in the field, defending the Polish borders on a front the total length of which was greater than that defended by the Allies in the West.

Early in 1919, following Paderewski's return and the organizing of the coalition formed by him and Pilsudski, things were in such working order that Poland was able to hold her first general election, and this was carried out at once with such loyalty and orderliness that the new Republic found itself possessed overnight, as it were, of all the

organs of government, needing only experience to insure their effective functioning. In the field at the same time her armies were covering themselves with glory. By Easter they had recaptured Vilna—where Pilsudski's first public act was to reopen the university, the Alma Mater of Mickiewicz, closed by Russia for nearly a century. The Bolsheviks were being rapidly driven back. The summer of 1919 saw Poland fairly cleared of enemy troops, Haller and his 25,000 "Yank" Poles having played their part in the Galician field. But Poland's fight for existence was far from being finished. In September of that year Trotsky issued his famous "proletariat ukase" announcing that "Poland's turn comes next."

Poland's turn did come next.

IX

Pilsudski's military campaigns during 1920, with their climax at Kiev, made him unmistakably a world figure. Perhaps because he fought over the same ground that had witnessed the breaking of Napoleon, his enemies accused him of having Napoleonic ambitions. Like Washington, at the same time, he had to suffer the absurd accusation of coveting a crown and dreaming of a dynasty. Outside of Poland, thanks to tireless German and Bolshevik propaganda, the good name of Poland was blackened with charges of imperialism, militarism, territorial greed, and so on. To understand Pilsudski's, the Polish, view-point, to "get behind" the man and know what he was thinking of at this time, one must look closely into the military situation of the moment.

It was simple enough. Either Poland must fight, or she must go down. Fighting, she must go ahead; there is no standing still in war. And going ahead, she must invade the enemy's territory to bring him to terms. As Pilsudski himself expressed it: "There were only two solutions: either to advance, or to stop and draw a defensive line. But such a line was not possible. How could a numerically feeble army like ours, ill furnished with technical appliances, establish a defensive line over hundreds of miles? Such a line must be trenched and fortified with concrete and barb wire. To transport the necessary barb wire alone would have utilized our entire railway service. It was impossible. We were obliged to go ahead."

This is ordinary commonsense. But as it happened, Poland's position was based on an even higher plane than that of the common sense of self-defensive war. She was pledged to fight for others.

In the first place, when Poland was restored by the Allies as an independent nation in 1918, she was appointed the task and put under the obligation of fighting the Bolsheviks. The Allies,

no matter what their sympathies with Polish aspirations, did not set Poland up for sentimental reasons. They set her up to be the eastern barrier of Europe, because they realized, as Napoleon had, that she was the cornerstone of the whole structure of European peace.

In the second place, Poland was bound to the young new nations as well as to the still unemancipated peoples neighbouring her. Already, in January 1920, she had fulfilled her obligation to Latvia, joining arms with the Letts, helping them clear their territory of the Reds, and then withdrawing to leave the country in the hands of its own people. Now the Ukrainian Republic, to which she had allied herself by treaty, called to Poland to liberate her from the Bolshevik yoke.

That is the hub of the whole matter, the truth of Pilsudski's situation in 1920 and the reason he went to Kiev. Simple military necessity would have demanded the invasion of Russia. Poland's treaty-bound obligation to her ally, Ukrainia, clinched the necessity.

So Pilsudski went to Kiev. Had he been successful he would have been acclaimed the world over as a champion of freedom and the "self determination" of small nations. To draw a parallel: suppose that in the time of Washington there had been a majority of Canadians desirous like us to be free of the British yoke. Suppose they had called on the young American colonies to come to their aid. Suppose we had gone. No matter how ingloriously we might have met defeat at the hands of England's superior numbers, to this day we would write that expedition into Canada as one of the golden pages of American history. So, in Pilsudski's thought, may Poland write the story of her expedition to Kiev.

Marshal Pilsudski has not often replied in words to accusations of "Polish imperialism," preferring rather such deeds as his liberation of Latvia for answer. But when he speaks of the matter there is no hedging. "Poland has but one policy, honesty," he declares, discussing the borderlands question. "Nothing is farther from Poland's wish," he told me that evening at Belvedere, "than to possess vast territories inhabited by unfriendly or discontented peoples. A glance at history proves that such experiments have never been successful. Russia and Austria are examples. Poland cannot possibly take such burdens on her shoulders."

The battle-cry of the Polish rebels of 1863, when Pilsudski's father fought Russia, was "Our freedom and yours!" "Our bayonets," declared Pilsudski in 1919, "bring freedom without reservations to all the unhappy peoples of the subjugated territories adjoining us Our honour is staked on giving freedom to

all the populations surrounding Poland. Thus only can Poland herself be free. But," he adds now, "to say that we have dreamed of binding any people to us by force is absurd. That would be only a foolish repetition of the very crime once perpetrated against ourselves."

This brings us to the still unsettled Lithuanian question. I asked for Marshal Pilsudski's views on that, bearing in mind as I spoke his proclamation of freedom and self determination to the people of Vilna when he liberated them in 1919. He answered with precision: "There is no Pole who does not wish to live on friendly terms with Lithuania. We have always been in friendship; it is in our blood. The union of Poland and Lithuania, unique in history, was consummated with the memorable words of the Treaty of Horodlo, 'Nor can that endure which is not based on love.' It did endure, for five hundred years, and that treaty is still in existence. It has never been cancelled. There would be no Lithuanian question to-day were it not for German hate and intrigue."

So Poland went to Kiev, and the sequel proved two points: that the Bolshevik peace proposals of February 1920 were "fake," and that Pilsudski himself could breast one of the blackest tides that has ever overwhelmed any figure in modern history, and come out on top. As for the Bolshevik overtures, Pilsudski knew from the beginning that they were a mere play for time to mass new forces for the Red drive into Poland. He is a strategist. He simply anticipated the move by himself advancing on the enemy, surprising him, driving him back. What followed demonstrated the wisdom of his action. Had he not so acted, the same Red armies which, in August, swept on to the very gates of Warsaw, clear from the Dneiper, whence he had backed them up, would easily have passed the Vistula, crossed Poland, set Germany, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia afire with revolution, and Trotsky would have carried out his boasted threat of watering his Cossack horses in the Rhine. There was nothing to prevent them but Poland and Pilsudski. By going to Kiev the Polish Commander put such a distance between the Red hordes and their goal that in the end they wore out and lost.

It was in those dark days of July and August 1920 that Pilsudski showed his real greatness. A man of less calibre would have become desperate, would have imagined his own fame at stake, and, so imagining, would have grown rash—rejected friendly council—and fallen. But with Pilsudski, from his earliest days back in Lithuania when he was reading his poets and prophets, whose noble verses he still quotes by the page, the stake has ever been, not himself but his country. In those dark days of 1920, while his opponents saw in him their worst fears realized, and

even his friends trembled, he went on steadily in his set course, knowing that even ultimate failure could not prove his principle wrong. A story is told of some officer crying out in his presence, during the great retreat of the Polish armies in August, " All is lost ! "

" All is lost—except Poland," Pilsudski answered.

X

The hard training of this man has formed his mind to habits of silence and anticipation. I have spoken of his strange clairvoyant sense which so quickens his wit to things ahead that it would almost seem at times that he had a prophetic gift. In the days when the whole world was shouting that Yudenitch had taken Petrograd, Pilsudski's only remark, when the news was brought him, was, " Fools or jokers may say so, but it is not true." A day or so later the world learned to be a fact what he had defined beforehand.

Silence and anticipation ; he is a man of few words. Yet when he speaks you feel that he has explored your thought. He understands the thing unsaid as well as the thing unseen. But taciturnity and quick insight, after all, are not strange in a man whose entire life has been a struggle against oppression. Besides, his poets may have had something to do with it. Mickiewicz, in one of his great patriotic songs " To the Polish Mother," bids her teach her son

> Slowly to poison speech ;
> To hide with anger underground ;
> To make his mind deep as an impenetrable abyss.

When I asked Pilsudski regarding the Polish-Russian situation he was slow to answer. " I am not over optimistic," he said. " We shall long be the target of Russian aggression. But one thing is certain," he declared, " Poland will never be the aggressor. Poland will never begin a war. Her watchword is Freedom. She is against brutal militarism and she is opposed to forcing anyone against his own will to be under the dominion of her laws."

" Do you think there is any possibility of the Russian revolution resulting in a new imperialism ? Will the revolution produce a Napoleon ? "

" Never. The conditions which produced Napoleon a century ago do not exist to-day. France, having just then defeated her enemies, was full of martial enthusiasm. Napoleon rose at the psychological moment, seized upon that enthusiasm and used it to his own purpose. No such situation exists in Soviet Russia. The Red armies have been victorious only in civil war. Such

triumphs neither give the victors the needed incentive nor stir in the masses the needed enthusiasm to raise up a great leader such as Napoleon. Besides, the Red armies possess no such material."

As to the possibility of the restoration of a Czarist régime in Russia, Pilsudski expressed himself with vigour. "Poland could have no union with a restored imperial Russia." "Anything but that!" he exclaimed to Merezkowsky when the Russian author asked him the same question. "Bolshevism would be better than that!" (" He spoke with a dreadful strength," Merezkowsky writes: "I felt the power in him." Yet this Russian thinker takes care to add: "Pilsudski is not the enemy of Russia. He has no stone to throw at her. He understands that behind the broken Russia of to-day is something else, something great.")

Then, of the future of Poland? "Ah!" he exclaimed, "the question is more easily asked than answered. A soldier cannot be a prophet! Poland is a new-born baby among the nations. All the world is gazing at this marvellous child. They expect everything from it. But a mere child cannot be like that! A child must make mistakes—especially when the sponsors and masters of the child do not even themselves know what they want it to do."

Again he expressed it this way: "Poland is a structure rushed into existence. A scaffolding of independence was first hastily set up: It is the solid dwelling we are now erecting. There are plenty of bricks and mortar and tools, but naturally they have been ill sorted and they lie about us in confusion. And during all the time this permanent edifice has been going up, requiring the utmost wits and energies of our people for the gigantic task of construction, Poland has been obliged to develop and maintain a vast army of self-defence, to keep what she has won.

"The task is terrific," he goes on; "but it will be carried out steadily, and without any of the hysterical makeshift policy which might easily become the statesmanship of a new and inexperienced country. In her short two years of independence Poland has already proved her capacity for affairs. Any country that could do what she has done in self-defence alone can also organize her political life." And here, with a little "Ah!" of admiration, he exclaimed, "How you Americans organize! I have seen it here in your relief organizations. The best relief work done in Poland has been done by you—I have observed it closely. You know how to organize. You have the individual capacity. It is very rare; in Continental Europe it is very rare."

"Will Poland ever go Bolshevik?" I asked.

"No." The answer came dispassionately but with absolute conviction. "Bolshevism," he went on, "is a purely Russian disease. You will notice that it does not take deep root in

countries which are not purely Russian. In those parts of the former Russian empire in which the social system is not characteristically Russian—in Poland for instance, in Esthonia, the Ukraine, the Cossack region and in Siberia—Bolshevism has never obtained any real hold. The root idea of Bolshevism is class vengeance. The usual idea of the socialist is equality of rights; but that is not what Bolshevism aims at. The Bolshevik desires the complete reversal of the order of things, so that the proletariat shall not only rule but shall oppress those whose place it would take. This is the heritage of the old Russian social system under which the serf was treated like dirt under his master's feet. In central Russia, where this system once held sway, Bolshevism may have a certain future. But not in Poland. Poland will never go Bolshevik."

"The problem of most countries under the new régimes which the peace has created throughout Central Europe," Pilsudski continued, "are manifold and difficult beyond words. None have been more complicated than those of Poland, with an inner civilization to build up; a foreign policy of the most consummate difficulty to work out, blocked in as we are between the jaws of two colossal Powers, who by closing them could once more destroy us; and long without frontiers definitely settled within which we could begin to set our house in order."

He recalled the old Polish ideal of Jagiellonian times, "the free with the equal and the equal with the free," when he reverted to the question of the borderlands. "Yes, Poland dreams of a great confederation, a new America in the Old World," he said. "Perhaps our historic union with Lithuania was the precursor of such a federation. Of one thing Poland is never forgetful—her mission of peace in Eastern Europe. Poland is fully conscious of that mission," he declared, "and she will pursue it with the utmost vigour, knowing that in this way she will be ever faithful to the great principles which guided the Allies to victory."

"Poland is fully conscious of her mission of peace." Pilsudski's words recalled a couplet from one of his boyhood favourites, Krasynski, who, in his poem *Resurrecturis*, prophetically addressed "to those who are to rise again," admonished Polish youth to be what Pilsudski believes is the destiny of all Poland in the world-scheme of the future—

> Peace amid the raving of the storm,
> In discord, harmony; in chaos, order.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"PROSHA PANA"

I

IF some Polish friend whom you meet in the busy workaday crowds or holiday throngs of Warsaw—or Poznan, or Krakow, or any other of the Polish cities—invites you to his home, in nine cases out of ten he will take you to an apartment and not to a house, as we understand the term, no matter what his means or station may be. Of course it may be a "palace," as the larger private residences of wealthy people are called—though in the Poland I have known rich men were "as rare as the devil in Chenstohova"; or, in the country, a cottage or a big comfortable rambling home such as is to be found wherever generation after generation has lived under the same old roof. But on the whole Poland is a land of apartments. In the cities practically everyone lives in an apartment, not only families, but the bachelor sons of families, many of whom, according to European custom, set up their own separate establishments long before they marry.

With us in America the apartment is a comparatively new development. In Warsaw the large and handsome apartment house a few doors from where I lived bore the date 1864—erected in the days of our Civil War. But it was commodious, well lighted, and would easily bear comparison with buildings of the present time.

Built in great blocks, flush with the sidewalk, but invariably around large inner courts—so that every family has outdoor light—the Polish apartment is really a house of surprises. Many times it is found in the heart of the down-town section, fronting a busy street which one could not imagine would be residential. Yet, if you pass from the noise of the thoroughfare through the wide entry, you will come upon a paved court and very often trees and flower-beds, and a shady quiet that completely shuts the city away. Mount the stairs and you may enter beautifully arranged homes of many rooms, high ceilinged and spacious, with a hushed air of solid comfort far removed from the atmosphere of shops and business.

Over the lintel of every Polish doorway, every year on the sixth of January, three mystic letters are chalked, "K.M.B."—

the Polish sign-patent of hospitality, commemorating the three kings who travelled across half the world to visit the King of Kings in in His Stable at Bethlehem. Yet in spite of this traditional symbol of welcome and the free latch-string, you may not always find it an easy matter to pass the sentry at the front entrance; for there is a sentry. Every apartment has its watchful concierge, a formidable personage apparently—especially on winter nights when he sits at his post wrapped from head to foot in a great shaggy fur-lined coat of such voluminous proportions that he himself, or she (for his wife takes her turn at the night vigil) has all but disappeared. Only a monstrous moving thing of dog-skin or cow-hide confronts you, tied in at the waist with a strap. But as it often happens, such a round smiling face, usually of the peasant type, emerges from that huge bearded bulk of buttons and fur that you feel quickly at home. Polish hospitality does not begin merely in the parlour.

I remember one night in Warsaw, going with a friend to pay a call and being told that the house we were visiting was once the home of Josef Hoffman, the famous pianist. The name of Hoffman, of course, suggested the name of Madame Modjeska, and I recalled how she used to speak of the musician's youth, and how in her *Memoirs* she tells of his first steps in art. When my friend told the shaggy doorkeeper that I was an American, and that Modjeska had been my friend, the grizzled old fellow fairly tumbled over his Arctic wrappings to make his bows to me, exclaiming how he remembered the great Pani Helena, because she had often come to this house long ago, in the days when she reigned a queen in Warsaw.

The Poles whom I knew during the days following the independence of 1918 had lost nearly everything in the War. Yet I found them still living in these surroundings of apparent comfort, thanks to legislation of their new Government which forbade rent-raising and housing speculation. True, these people half froze in their big apartments; lived often in one or two rooms for comfort's sake; had an almost empty larder; scarcely knew what heat or light was any more. Some of them had even been obliged to sell certain belongings, one by one—furniture, plate, and books—literally to keep the home fires burning. But they still lived, and had not forgotten the gracious hospitality which is one of Poland's great traditions.

"Gość w domu—Bóg w domu,"

is the old Polish saying: "A guest in the house is God in the home." It is just as difficult to describe the charm of Polish hospitality as it is to describe charm in the abstract. The Pole is at once ceremonious and simple. Fine manners are his oldest heritage;

but hospitality is almost his religion. On occasion he can click his heels, bow from the waist, and kiss a lady's hand in a way—well, in a way that only a Pole can, just because he is still simple as well as courtly. Ceremony is as natural to him as brusqueness is to some others. The poorest Polish beggar seems to the manner born. Boys of the tenements or peasant girls in the fields will doff their caps or make curtsies and say "Prosha Pana" with a grace that any finishing school might envy.

As for "prosha pana" (in Polish spelled *prosze pana*)—we used to declare that it was the national slogan of Poland. It means "if you please," or, more literally, "please, sir" or "please, madame," as the case may be; but it is more than a mere perfunctory phrase, for it sums up the whole matter of Polish ceremony. It is on the tongue of the Pole, master and servant, morning, noon, and night. No man asks you in Poland to come or to go, to sit or to stand, eat or drink, without saying "prosha pana." If you thank your friend for this or that he answers "prosha." If you get bumped in the street car—or if you bump—bumper and bumped exclaim together "prosha." Poles have laughingly told me that the first word a Polish infant learns is, not "mamma" or "papa" but "prosha pana." Also that it is the last word the Pole breathes as he takes his farewell of this mortal earth and is ushered (ceremoniously) into eternity. It has even been remarked that if a Polish landlord should by unhappy chance be put to the embarrassment of kicking a bad debtor down his doorstep, his parting salutation would be "prosha pana!"—to which the bad debtor would of course respond with a "prosha" or two, out of sheer habit.

Now, I am sorry to say, some of Poland's traditional "prosha" is disappearing. But the stranger, new come into the country, hardly knows what to make of even what is still left of it. If it puzzles him, however, it also charms him, and he thinks with regret of it vanishing. Nevertheless it will disappear, inevitably, to a certain extent. The Poles themselves have decreed it, and the times have decreed it. It interferes with business, they tell you. "New times, new manners" Life is no longer to be a stately minuet in Poland. The new Poland is to be new in every sense of the word, even at the expense of some of the courtly customs of other days. "Down town," at any rate, this is to be true—for "prosha pana" has heretofore been just as common in the most ordinary business intercourse as in the drawing-room.

To-day this is perceptibly changing. Over the desk of a railroad official on the Volhynian front in 1920 I saw a sign which read:

Skóncz Swoj interes i idź sobie
Czas to pieniądz.

To the American that says nothing. It might even be a new elaboration of pre-war formality. But to the Pole it said brutally and frankly—

> Transact your business and go—
> Time is money.

In other words, " cut out " the " prosha pana."

Can you imagine the shock such a baldly practical placard as that must have given to the first Poles who confronted it ? But they " stood the gaff." In fact the railway commandant over whose desk it was so conspicuously displayed smiled and told us in his best American, " Oh, everybody's doing it now ! " And this, we found, was literally true. All the desks in that office had this sign. (Nevertheless, none of the officials, I remarked, forgot their best " proshas " when they greeted us or waited on us.)

In a Warsaw bank I saw another " American " sign :

> Nie trudź sie podawaniem ręki.
> Zabiera to za dużo Czasu.

" Cut out the handshaking," this admonished ; " it takes too much time."

The Poles joke about these things and laugh at their new Americanisms, but they mean them just the same. They are a very critical people, and although not given to " taking their souls out and looking at them " as much as their Russian brothers are, they do nevertheless analyse themselves and size themselves up pretty carefully. They realize that they have a new task on their hands now, and they are determined to get it done in the new way. I wonder sometimes if this new way will invade even their homes ? Will a Polish housewife continue to say :

> Proszę, Pani,
> Moja Pani prosi pani,
> Żeby Pani,
> Prosze Pani pożyczyla
> Pani rondla.

when she addresses to her neighbour the simple request " Please lend me your frying-pan " ?

The " Polish kiss " and the kissing of the hand are other formalities as strange at first to the foreigner as " prosha pana." The " Polish kiss," with which friends are greeted as they enter or leave the home, or even on the street—men by men as well as women by women—is often not a kiss at all, but a sort of double embrace, exactly like that seen in the Catholic ritual when priest and deacon salute each other during High Mass. It is reserved more or less for those in the family circle or for the

most intimate friends. The hand-kiss likewise has its reservations. A gentleman usually salutes only the hand of a matron or of the lady to whom he is engaged to be married, except in the case of intimate friendships or family relationships. Children kiss the hands of their elders—and this they do with the quaintest and most charming gracefulness.

Once you know the Poles it is impossible to think of their ceremonial manners as perfunctory or a thing apart. To look at it so, to look at it as mere punctiliousness, is a mistake, as the foreigner quickly learns when he grows acquainted with the people. The first thing that he does learn is that these courtly old-time ways of theirs, which at first glance, seen in the offing, may have appeared stiff, never for a moment put him ill at ease.

II

You are soon at ease in the Polish home, because the "homey" spirit so unmistakably pervades it, underneath all its ceremony, especially if there are old people in the house. At no point does Polish formality give greater charm than in the presence of the old. Grown sons and daughters greet their elders with a deference that never changes from the years of childhood, and still has all the love of their hearts in it. The elder lady of the house is always escorted to the table with a little touch of stateliness, reminiscent of the courtly "Polonnaise." It is something difficult to describe. It escapes words. One feels that it is almost discourteous to comment on it or point it out, so lovely and intimate a thing it is—something to be simply enjoyed in the observing as in the doing.

I know one family of five sons (and many grandsons) which meets unfailingly every Sunday in the old home of the white-haired, soft-voiced granny; these grey-headed men, themselves of lengthening years, entering the chamber of their mother, gathering around her chair, accepting her "wee glass" of hospitality like the sons of a queen received at court; and yet with a dear familiar fondness in their deference that made a soft pull at my heart every time I saw it. The same family, through the hard winters of 1919–1920, had no coal, though they were rich (or had been). I sat at table in the fine houses of the sons when we all had to wear overcoats and even mufflers at the table while we ate—and shivered. But the mother's house was heated. All the five sons had pooled their little ration of coal to make her comfortable.

Most Polish houses are heated by stoves, although the open grate is also common; and nowadays furnaces and steam. The Polish stove is something to remember, We have nothing resembling it in America. Unlike our coal-stoves and wood-heaters,

it is a stationary affair, a part of the house built into the wall—very often across the corner of a room—and invariably decorated with majolica tiling. Sometimes this tiling is quite plain, pure white or blue or olive green, with a cornice of simple classical lines topping it. But often the tiling is figured and elaborate. I have seen these Polish stoves so artistically designed, so made to be a part of the structure of the house, especially where the rooms were large, that they appeared to be not stoves at all, but columns or pilasters. A tapestry at times conceals them. The fire door is very small. Wood or coal is burned (if wood or coal is to be found !), and they heat excellently, the tiling holding the warmth well, and radiating it long after the fire has gone out.

In the Polish kitchen the stove is often a great built-in affair, also tiled and made a part of the house itself, although gas and electric ranges have now been pretty generally introduced. But these up-to-date innovations have not done away with one old-fashioned and attractive feature of the Polish kitchen—the gorgeous display of copper that gleams on the wall. Not so gorgeous now, it is true ; but the pots and pans and kettles of grandmothers and great grandmothers still hold their place of honour and usefulness, although one half of them perhaps are gone beyond recall, confiscated by the invading armies (who were invaders with a vengeance " right up to the handle," as one Pole expressed it, " and handle and all, if it happened to be metal ! ") The half you now see, shining and beautiful once more, was very likely buried in the garden or hidden in some unsearchable place all through the years of the German occupation.

III

If you happen by good fortune to be a house guest in a Polish home, you will see many more things besides kitchen copper handed down from great grandmother days. Great grandfather, too, will be represented, not only by his portrait on the wall, but very often by his old sword hanging in its place of honour—for never can you forget, in the quietest corner of the Polish home, that this is a fighting race in whose blood the old courage as well as the old chivalry and courtesy still beats warm and strong.

As for the family portraits, they show us a stately array of bewigged and crinolined dames and high-chokered gallants with Poniatowski side-whiskers (a fashion which the youths and students of to-day are trying to revive) ; and often there are brave-eyed lads facing the world in the alien uniforms of Austrian or German or Russian commands. There is a separate story in every such portrait, but I always think when I look at them, of the answer a Pole gave an English writer in the days of the partitions, when

asked if it was not a painful thing to have to fight in the army of his oppressors? "Yes; but they teach us the art of war."

Family portraits, however, are a small portion of the pictures which adorn the walls of Polish homes. The Poles are real picture lovers—as their galleries attest—and in their houses you will find many a priceless old original alongside some new work of a living painter. Almost invariably there will be a copy of the famous portrait of the lovely Potocka, known the world over; and the Polish home without some reproduction or engraving of Matejko's vivid historical scenes would be bare indeed—Matejko, the Titan of Polish artists, their Shakespeare of the brush, who revolutionized historical painting in Europe and whose epic canvases, sumptuous in gorgeous coloring and dramatic pageantry, have actually no rival in any country. His "Joan of Arc" and his "Sobieski" (at the Vatican gallery) are among his best-known pieces. Metajko's detail, the authentic portraiture in his historical grouping, and his genius for picturing the rich furs and fabrics, velvets and brocades, of regal times, give all his works a very striking value and beauty. The nearest Western art that come to Matejko's is that of Abbey.

The Alpine glories of the Tatras, caught and held by the pigments of Falat or Tetmejer; the warm light of Mme. Rychter Janowska's dappled lawns and old gardens and manor houses; moonlit snow, sunlight on a flowery field or partridges lost in a storm, by Chelmonski; a richly glowing design from one of Wyspianski's justly admired stained glass windows; Arthur Grottger's tragic drawings from the Cycles of "Polonia," "Lithuania" and "War"; a glimpse of the red roofs and yellow walls of Warsaw's quaint old "Staré Miasto," seen through the accurate and softening eye of Cieslewski, or the exquisite engravings of Tondos or Jasinski—whom Burne-Jones expressly chose to reproduce his work; the wild riding of Ulans, a breathless ambush, a cavalry charge by Kossak; all the gaiety and brightness of peasant girls and their swains in multicoloured garb, brought dancing in from the open field by the magic touch of Piekarski,—these are some of the delights in figure and tone and colour that Polish pictures give you. In oil and pastel and water-colour, etching or engraving, the artists of Poland rank easily among the first in Europe, possessing at the same time their own distinctive characteristics of rich imagination, profound feeling and a unique exuberance of colour.

In many Polish homes rare works in marble and bronze will be found as well as pictures—if they have not gone already to buy bread or coal. The art of sculpture in Poland is hundreds of years old, dating from the days of Wit Stwosz, the greatest master of "Northern art" in the Middle Ages, and many fine traditions of plastic grace, coupled with genre strength, are preserved to

this day among Polish modellers who have won distinction in the salons of Paris, Vienna, Munich and Rome. Copies of Welonski's famous "Gladiator" are familiar, a statue which a few years before the War was carried on a triumphal tour through all the great galleries of Europe before taking up its place in the Krakow Museum. The magnificent heroic bronzes of the Via Dolorosa at Chenstohova are from the same masterful hand—figures which hold the observer spellbound along the ramparts of Jasna Gora, telling the story of Christ's passion with a wonderful mingling of majesty and dramatic force. Another of Poland's greatest modern works, often reproduced in picture and plaster miniature, is Szymanowski's imposing "Procession of the Kings," which has a living sweep to it that gives it an air of majestic reality. This sculptor has also done an "intimate" piece, a "Maternity," which possesses the same flowing lines, with an added warmth of ravishing loveliness that tells the whole story of mother love and baby playfulness. In the Polish sculptor, Wittig (one of Rodin's most celebrated pupils), is another brilliant artist whose originality and delicacy, especially in the treatment of child studies, has made his name a household word in Poland. His boy figure "Adolescence" (*Mlodosc*) is very beautiful, as is also his "Dzieci," a group of three children at play. Wiwulski, whose "Victory at Tannenberg" was erected at Krakow through the munificence of Paderewski, is still another Polish sculptor of the highest gift. Then there is Cyprian Godebski, creator of the heroic Mickiewicz monument at Warsaw, an artist whose name in Paris, since he produced his "Theophile Gautier," is ranked among the first sculptors in the world; Puszet-Puget, famous for animal figures; Pelczarski for studies of women and children; and many others.

In your bedroom, whither your host ushers you with the gentle *dobranoc*, of the Polish "good-night," there is sure to be a crucifix, perhaps some rare old piece of woodcarving or ivory; and there will most certainly be a Madonna—maybe the lovely "Madonna of the Lark," by Peter Stachiewicz, with the wee bird whose nestlings the Blessed Virgin saved from the hawk, singing his little heart out to comfort the Mother of Sorrows; or, again, the same artist's "Madonna of the Saturday Sun" (sometimes called "The Madonna of the Shirt")—Mary at Nazareth, busy hanging the washday clothes out on the line, while the little naked Jesus sits playing in the grass; or perhaps a Hoffman Madonna, with the dreamy face of a young Polish peasant mother gazing at you with the pure mystery of Mary. Of the making of Madonnas there is no end in Poland, so warm and deep an attraction has the Virgin Mother for Polish artists, who run the whole gamut of the Litany in their representations of her.

IV

In the morning you will be awakened by a soft treading servant, most likely a peasant girl who, at least in the earliest hours of the day, slips about her work barefooted, scorning the hard shoes of sophistication—even though she may spoil it all later in the day by wearing high French heels, which never are uglier than when seen stumbling under the gorgeous full skirt of rainbow wool that she has brought from the countryside. She brings you your breakfast with an air of solicitude, making bold, perhaps, to call your august attention to "the beautiful egg of the day," which is exactly what I once heard a fresh egg called by a Pole. It deserved the high-sounding title, because eggs at that time were as rare as coal or flour in Poland. Ordinarily breakfast is only a cup of "herbata" (which is Polish for tea), or coffee, and some fresh black bread. If extra fortune smiles on you there may be rolls, butter, even "babka," a delicious slightly sweetened cake, should white flour and eggs be procurable at all.

At noon there is a luncheon; but it is not until evening comes and dinner, that you really sit down to your first Polish meal.

Dinner has its ceremonial, too. Always the guest is escorted to the dining-room by the head of the house, no matter how frequent his visits; even though he be a house-guest this little mark of distinction is still paid him. Grace is always said. The guest is invariably served first. But there is no stiffness. Gaiety and ease quickly take the table. The simple fare, often in war times pathetic in its efforts toward abundance and variety, is served to the tune of vivacious talk, made all the livelier by the quick-fire quality of the Polish tongue, or the indescribably quaint accent of English as Poles speak it. It is not all mere "table talk" either. A sprightly political discussion is pretty sure to develop, the pros and cons of Polish affairs or of world affairs, with the ladies *au courant* on everything. In no country in Europe have I found the women so "up" on things as in Poland.

It would hardly be just to your Polish hostess to judge the table by the war-time fare we knew. But in spite of shortage, one could see that eating a meal has never deteriorated to the "quick lunch" level among Poles. On the contrary, I imagine it has always been one of their high pleasures if not one of their arts—as it ought to be; a pleasure to be relished in healthy fashion Of course, if there is next to nothing to relish, it is a different matter. But even at that, it was noticeable how gracefully the Poles avoided those constant apologies and explanations for food shortage which, in the Germany I had known in 1918–1919, had frequently degenerated into mere complaining—Germany, a full granary compared to the Poland she had stripped!

According to custom, "przekenski," that is, hors d'œuvres (of an endless variety once, I am told, but not very endless now), are first served at a Polish dinner; little round sandwiches of very salty sardines, cheese, cold tongue; tiny breads with poppy seeds sown generously through them; pickles; olives. The sideboard has its array of these, and there is a supply at your plate. (Under war restrictions this whole feature of the Polish meal disappeared from all hotel and restaurant tables.) Soups are usually thick, with cabbage or potatoes in them, served with small croquettes; or else there is "barscz," the most popular of all, a clear wine-red soup made from beets. (In the summer this is sometimes served cold, with little squares of cut ice floating deliciously in it.) Meat was a rarity; five ounces per week was the ration. Rabbit was the most common meat I noted—and I must confess I never ate it without remembering Joseph Conrad and his historic grand-uncle Nicholas B. If you know Conrad's *Personal Record* you will appreciate my feelings, which were not lessened by the fact, officially stated at the Pasteur Institute of Warsaw, that practically all the cats and dogs in Poland had disappeared! There was neither ham nor bacon in my first days in Poland, and the people were starved for a taste of them. The black bread we ate (blacker than any war bread we had ever known in America) always reminded me of the endless bread lines we passed, day and night, wherever we went—breadlines in which people stood eight and ten hours, through rain and sleet and snow, whole nights at a time, waiting for their meagre family ration. There was neither butter, sugar nor milk, except in the most beggarly quantities and on very special occasions. Dessert was usually of fruits—the cherries of Poland are the fattest and sweetest I have ever eaten; and there is an abundance of apples and pears. I have seen even frozen and rotten apples sold in the markets, and gladly taken. A little pancake, served with preserves, was another favourite dessert. But sweets, I observed, were not used at all in the degree in which we use them; a fact confirmed by the statisticians, who tell us that sugar consumption, even before the war, was less in Poland than in any country in Europe—10.6 kilograms per capita population to Denmark's 36 and England's 40.

These are the characteristics of the Polish meal. Much coffee ("kawa") is drunk (not always real coffee, in war days); and much "herbata"—which is tea. In all Polish cities you will find dozens of "kawiarnias" where people "drop in" for a friendly cup. This is an old-time Polish institution, but general food shortage, the lack of fats and ordinary nourishment, has made the "kawiarnia" more popular than ever. The people are always hungry, because even what food they do get does not supply their bodies properly.

Consequently they continually refresh themselves with stimulants and crowd the "kawiarnias" day and night.

V

I was much surprised at the temperance of the Pole. Given the extremes of the climate, along with the reputation that has been tacked on to him through association in the popular mind with Russian vodka, I had formed a different idea of him. At his table wines are served, usually Hungarian, and vodka (distilled from potatoes) is a popular "appetizer" in the dining-room, while the great national liqueur is "miod," a remarkably rich and heavy dark-coloured distillation of honey and herbs—not unlike the mead of old England, either in name or quality, according to the description Thomas Hardy gives in one of his Wessex tales. But public drinking, such as America knows (or knew!) I have never seen in Poland. Polish bars are wide open—in the literal sense. That is, there are no semi-curtained saloons with half-screened doors and cautious windows and the general air of illegitimate traffic that were a familiar sight a little while ago in the United States. A saloon in Poland is really a sort of café, where almost everything in the line of beverages can be purchased, from a hot cup of "kawa"—pronounced *kava*—or "herbata" to a bottle of Jamaica rum. And these "saloons" as we might call them, are very popular among business men and clerks, who very often satisfy themselves with a bite and a nip at the bar at midday or in the afternoon, really eating only one solid meal in the day, the evening dinner. Women and children likewise stop there for refreshment. There is nothing of the "saloon" really about the place. It may sound shocking to the American, trained in Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy, to hear that over the door or above the bottle-shelves of these places there is often to be seen a little picture of Christ or the Blessed Virgin. That, perhaps, is commentary enough on the honest and straightforward manner of the Polish drinking place.

Beer is enjoyed in Poland in an old-fashioned leisurely way. (The very word "beer" is of Polish origin, according to the testimony of Professor Bruckner of Berlin University.) In summer open-air cafés flourish, where whole families gather for an evening's pleasure. But the absence of intemperate drinking and of public drunkenness is very noticeable, especially in view of the general run-down condition of the people and the natural desire for stimulants which must result. Harley, in fact, in his *Poland Past and Present*, states that the Pole "imbibes far less alcohol—yes, 90 per cent. less—than the Russian or the Prussian." The ease with which "prohibition" was established during mobilization times

and the days of the Bolshevik invasion in 1920 was also noteworthy. Absolute prohibition went into effect, and stayed in effect for weeks at a time, without apparently occasioning any comment. It was taken quietly along with all the other disciplines of the hour.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SOUL OF THE EAGLE

I

WHEN you leave the dinner-table in the Polish home, it will almost invariably be to hear music. It would be practically impossible to find a Polish home without music. It is the Pole's most characteristic pastime, and I have no doubt it has been one of the great solaces of this much-harassed people throughout the history of their partitions and sufferings.

They are a singing people. All over Poland their "lutnias" or popular singing societies have kept this tradition alive. And in the home, even if it be too modest to have piano or violin, or any other instrument save perhaps the "fujarka," the primitive flute of the shepherds, there will still be singing. And such singing! In the simplest houses in remote villages, as well as in city drawing-rooms, I have heard voices of the most unexpected quality and music that seemed inspired—inspired, to be sure, when the chords of Chopin sounded and the Polish soul, smitten by the deathless hand of its greatest master, responded with all its primitve and imperishable power. More than once, listening to Polish music in a Polish home, I recalled that first early morning we had stood on Polish soil, watching the October sun flame through the black rim of the forests in Poznania, when the interpreter had said: "There are two kinds of singing in Poland—the lark's and the nightingale's." The high-beating gaiety of the lark and the heart-breaking sadness of the nightingale are both to be heard unmistakably in Polish music and Polish voices.

But the simile is not good. There is, of course, something infinitely bigger than birdsong—lark's or nightingale's—in Polish music. The cry of the eagle is in it, the wounded eagle, and the rythmic beat of pinions aspiring to the sun. To speak the name of Chopin is enough.

Chopin is the heart and soul of Polish music, as he was the first to translate that soul into the language of harmony. Even a German, Liszt, recognized and testified to this. "How can we understand," he asks, "why Chopin interests us so greatly, attracts us more than other composers? It is because of the strong

and distinctive nationality that animates him—the nationality of Poland." Of Chopin's famous "Marche Funebre," the same German master said: "Only a Pole could have written that funeral march, because all the inborn sublimity and introspect of a people cries out through Chopin in that marvellous inspiration, which seems the mourning cry of a whole nation following the bier of their dearest hopes."

In these days when national music has been so popularly developed, the Pole is proud of the fact that it was his own brother, this same inimitable Chopin, who showed the way for that whole movement which has eventually given us the much-admired Russian, Hungarian, Scandinavian and other native schools. Of all of these the Pole was the precursor. Yet it is not for this that Poles love their Chopin. They love him and play his music and dance to it, because he does indeed strike their inmost souls and wake their whole beings to response. As Count Tarnowski, one of Chopin's biographers, remarks: "Whether it be the inexpressible melancholy and forlorn wailings of a funeral march, or the reckless abandon of a tarantella, it is only Chopin who can express that inspiration—original, melancholy, homely and patriotic—which is the feature of Polish poetry."

Watch a Pole's face as the "Royal Polonnaise" is being played; one of the scherzos; the Seventh Prelude; or best of all the "Etude Revolutionnaire," with its tremendous sudden ending, the struggle of a people checked, but never frustrated—suspensive—ready to burst out again; then you will see what Chopin means to a Pole! One of our American poets once caught something of the "incommunicable light" in the face of a Pole while listening to Chopin. Madame Modjeska was the Pole, Celia Thaxter the poet, and the scene was in Boston in the home of James T. Fields, where Longfellow, Edwin Booth, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and other "sons of the gods" gathered around the beautiful Krakovian. "Deft hands called Chopin's music from the keys," the poet sings:

> Silent she sat, her slender figure's poise
> Flowerlike and fine and full of lofty ease;
> She heard her Poland's most consummate voice
> From power to pathos falter, sink and change;
> The music of her land, the wondrous high
> Utmost expression of its genius strange,—
> Incarnate sadness breathed in melody.
>
> Silent and thrilled she sat, her lovely face
> Flushing and paling like a delicate rose
> Shaken by summer winds from its repose
> Softly this way and that with tender grace,
> Now touched by sun, now into shadow turned,—
> While bright with kindled fire her deep eyes burned

So also, if some gay " Krakoviak " is struck, or some simple tender strain from Moniuszko's " Halka," the most typical of all Polish operas; or a concerto of Wieniawski's, known wherever the violin is known (but also too often known as a Russian and not a Pole); a folk song of Karlowicz's, or his lovely " Griever," or Paderewski's exquisite and haunting " Minuet." Beyond doubt it is in Polish music that we most accurately hear the voice of the nation's soul uttering itself.

II

There is something fascinating about the way in which the minor chord persists through all Polish life. You mark it in their music, their dancing, their poetry, their fairy tales. It was in their soldier songs too, so much sung during the war, and just as popular among all classes of Poles as our own were among Americans after 1917. Almost invariably these songs, even the latest of them, struck a note of fatalism, no matter how rollicking might be their tunes. " We must die for Poland," seemed to be the thought back of them all. They might be marching songs, love songs, or jolly " rounds " boisterously defying the enemies of the motherland, like the inspiriting " Letter to Trotsky "; but always " We must die! "—or better perhaps, " We are ready to die "; for there was no bemoaning the fact.

In no nation in the world have patriotic songs played such a part in the history of a people and in the making of their music as in Poland. The Poles have had many famous patriotic songs since the times of St. Adalbert, who, according to tradition, composed the " Boga Rodzica " in A.D. 995—a hymn which still stands for the voice of Christianity lifted up among " the people of the plains." For centuries this was the national song of Poland. Each new Polish struggle for liberty has inspired new songs, and many of these, dating from Koscuiszko's day or the insurrections of 1830, 1846, 1848 and 1863, were sung in 1920, along with the new songs of the present.

On the Polish front I listened attentively to these soldier songs, feeling that in them I could hear the Poland of to-day speaking for itself. In the snows of Dvinsk or along the dusty roads of the Kiev bridgehead they seemed jollier and lustier than elsewhere. There, in spite of poets' protests and army regulations, " the boys " would insist on injecting a little extra " pep " into their chanties. They liked a wee bit of harmless fun in them, as they swung along. Youth will not be denied. But in the home circle, around the piano after dinner, these songs seemed to me to take on a new sort of grim purposeful air—unless some lads in on a furlough would toss their heads with a wink or a laugh, and put a little of the daring of the

camp and the open road into them. It was all a matter of environment. People at home, singing war songs, have time to think. Soldiers at the front singing war songs, just sing!

The big difference between the Polish and the American war song was this; the Poles seemed to have no "soft" sentimental pieces at all, such as our boys had in "A Long, Long Trail," "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry," and so on. They had love songs, no end of them. They are the greatest lovers as well as the greatest fighters in Europe. But to us their love songs had a tragic air. In "The White Rose," one of the most popular of all, the sweetheart calls to the soldier to come back and kiss her once again as he used to, and she will give him a white rose. But the soldier, marching away, sings back, "I have no need of white roses where I am going." In the end the returning troops call out to the watching girl:

> We have no lover for you now!
> Your lover needs no white roses now—
> He is dead for Poland.

It is impossible to put into words the effect of these songs on the stranger who hears them for the first time, either at the front, or in a Polish home, standing with the family about the piano, sometimes with grandmother instead of grand-daughter playing the accompaniment. There is neither repining nor sentimentalizing, but a lusty Polish spirit as the words ring out:

> March! March!
> Go ahead!
> Over the dead body! Go on! Go on!
> Sleep in your grave, O fallen comrade,
> Dream of home, dream of Poland.
> But we will go on—we will go ahead.
> Maybe we'll be with you to-morrow!
> March! March!
> Go on! Go on!

Or again this song of the First Division of the First Brigade:

> We are the fighting men,
> We are the rifle men,
> We give our lives in the sacrifice!
> We give—we give—we give—
> For Poland's sake we give!

"What do we care for fame or glory?" the soldier shouts in another of his songs. "The time is passed when we think of such things. We die for Poland. Poland will repay!"

The majority of these songs are of the soldiers' own composition, and many of them have never been written down or published. But every Pole seems to know them.

I have seen a little birdlike granny, eighty years of age, her hair still black and glossy, her fingers still nimble, playing the accompaniment to these war-songs, while all the generations of the house gathered around her in the evening after dinner, and sang. Not a house that I went into, but had its dear ones fighting at the front or buried in the snows. But if tears came they were dashed away with a brave high note, and the song went on. And in that hour of song, granny, her quick little old hands flying over the ivory keys with God only knows what burnings in her heart—granny too was fighting her fight for Poland just as surely as were the soldiers at the front ; and so were all around her. In the end the final chorus was always sure to be the ringing song of the Legionaires :

> Poland is not yet dead—
> Not while we are alive !

Then with a vigorous shout, some boy or girl of the house would take granny's place and strike up a dizzy " jazz " in honour of the American guest.

III

When your Polish hostess shows you the nursery, you are no longer a stranger, but an accepted member of the inner circle. When your host takes you into his library he admits you to his sanctum sanctorum.

The Poles are omniverous readers. I have never seen so many bookshops in my life as in their cities and towns ; so many books of every sort in the home ; nor so many high-class journals devoted to literature science, art and religion. Besides their one hundred and fifty daily newspapers, the Poles have over six hundred weekly and fortnightly reviews, three hundred monthly magazines and some seventy-five quarterlies.

If the Poles sing their native songs to-day with a new gusto, because for generations they were forbidden, so now, with the full freedom of their native language restored, they have burst into a chorus of pent-up poetry and literary expression of every kind, which defies even the most prohibitive paper shortage in the world. For one hundred and fifty years Polish literature was proscribed. Books and papers in the native tongue, if tolerated at all, were so censored and hedged about as to almost lose their inherent nature. They would have lost it if Polish ingenuity had not invented means of writing between the lines so that Poles could read what censors could not even see.

A Pole to-day will point out to you dozens of instances where the Polish soul still spoke to the nation in spite of the hawk-eye of Russian, Prussian or Austrian officialdom. In Krasynski's tragic

drama *Irydion* the tyrant Rome is really the tyrant Russia. Slowacki, beholding the ruins of Greece, really sings of his mother country. Mickiewicz in *Konrad Wallenrod* told a story in disguise that every Pole perfectly understood ; it was published in Moscow under the very nose of the Muscovite, all its burning Polish sentiments unwittingly approved, and even applauded by him. Even in the modern *Quo Vadis*, so familiar to us in America, known the world over and translated into more foreign tongues than any other book except the Bible, what is it that Sienkiewicz really pictures in the underground persecuted life of the Christians, and the heroic struggles of Ursus the Sarmatian who conquers the bull in the arena ? It is the story of Poland and Polish readers knew the key to it when we did not—that Sarmatian is only another name for Pole ; that Cæsar and the bull were obvious figures of Poland's oppressors. As for Petronius—he might indeed be taken for Sienkiewicz himself, or at least for a symbol of the patriotic Polish writer, who tells the tyrant to his face what all his uglinesses are—and is praised for the telling. Nero, gloating over the horrors of the arena, questions Petronius because he has not praised him. And Petronius answers ; " 'Tis a spectacle worthy of thee alone, O Cæsar ! " Whereat the fatuous despot cries to his courtiers, " Behold, of all of you, only Petronius knows how to praise his master ! "

Imagine the relish with which Poles must have read such passages as that !

It was this infinite ingenuity of the Polish poets and novelists, finding a thousand expressions in allegory, guarded word and hidden meaning, that gave rise to the classic Russian warning, " Never trust a Pole ! " and to the German calumny, " All Poles are liars " —calumnies and warnings that are still propagated to-day by Poland's dispossessed enemies. With a strange insensibility the partitioning powers never seemed to be able to comprehend why Poles should not be " true " to them instead of to themselves. Polish fidelity to home, faith and ideals was invariably labelled treason.

IV

The first time I went into a Polish library I heard the story of the Polish conscript who was with the Germans when they entered Louvain in 1914. He and all his Polish comrades, given the command to fire on their Belgian brothers, had deliberately shot wide ; but he, an old time Louvainer, when the priceless library was put to the torch by the Prussian vandals, ran into the hall that he had known in college days, tore down the Polish flag that had hung there for years in honour of Louvain's Polish students,

hid it under his shirt and so carried it until he let himself be taken prisoner by the French. Like Louvain, Poland has lost some of her greatest library treasures in the War; if not in the flames, then by confiscation, for thousands of her literary, as well as her art treasures, have been carried off by the invaders, not only during the present war, but for a century previous. In 1795 the Zaluski library of 400,000 volumes was transported to Russia, in 1831 the Warsaw Public Library of 100,000 volumes. The Imperial Library at Petrograd is composed almost wholly of books stolen from Poland. Then, in 1920, came the Bolsheviks. I know one family, once the possessor of one of the most valuable private libraries in Europe, who lost all that rich inheritance of generations to the red torch of Trotsky's hordes.

If we hear the soul of Poland uttering itself in Polish music, when we enter a Polish library we can actually touch that soul, tangible and real, in its tremendous eloquence of silence. Books and literature, the poets and writers of Poland, have played a greater part in keeping the national soul alive than any other human agency. According to Georg Brandes, the Danish critic, the literature of Poland during the period of partitions supplied, so to speak, the place of a national life, gaining immensely thereby in spiritual exaltation. The distinct peculiarity of that literature, as he points out, was that hand in hand with a vigorous inclination toward reality and futurity it reveals an unconquerable tendency toward abstraction and allegory. The Poles, he says, "are at once realists and spiritualists." Their strong propensity to mysticism "which lay in the innermost recesses of their souls," the political oppression of the time "which compelled them to describe their thoughts by circumlocution and to etherealize the outlines of the beings they painted"—these two circumstances united to produce this characteristic effect. The consequence is, Brandes concludes, that "Polish poetry, by its very obscurity and prophetic character, has had a greater bearing on the future of the nation than a logical and convincing poetry could have had. It inspired perseverance, self-reliance, firm faith in the future, and obstinate optimism, which were so much more remarkable, as no country seemed to offer a more fruitful soil for pessimism."

No wonder then that the Pole cherishes his library and his literary masters with a special love, and cannot show his books to a guest without a glow of enthusiasm.

On his shelves you will find not only a rich treasury of native works—poetry, history, science, fiction, drama—but the world classics as well, in the original often as well as in translation; for the Pole is the greatest linguist in Europe. His cosmopolitan taste is a source of marvel. Alongside Shakespeare you behold Mark Twain (a very great favourite in Poland); Dante and Bernard

Shaw consort together; Shelley and Jack London; Barrie and Hawthorne; Keats, and Walt Whitman (very extensively translated and commented on); and so on. . . . The scope of the Pole's reading is enormous. Edgar Allen Poe's weirdness and ingenuity have a great attraction for him; so also have the spirituality and mysticism of Robert Hugh Benson, whose *Lord of the World* and *The Dawn of All* I saw on every news-stand; Emerson and Longfellow, Dickens and Thackeray and Galsworthy—these all appear to be favourites. Maeterlinck keeps company with Theodore Roosevelt; Rostand with Schiller. Indian, Persian, Chinese and Japanese literature likewise are much more generally known than with us, as well as the best of the continental masters.

All this was a surprise to me. Not that I had questioned Polish literary culture or its long standing achievements. I had known for instance, that there had been a Polish *Beatrice Cenci* before Shelley's, and a Polish *Maria Stuart* before Schiller's. In Joseph Conrad's "Personal" pages I had learned something of the coming of Shakespeare into Poland. And I had been acquainted with the pregnant message of the Poles' chief poet, Mickiewicz, to his countrymen: "Inasmuch as you broaden and improve your souls, so much do you improve your rights and widen your frontiers." But I had only half guessed at the universality of Polish literary taste and knowledge.

In Reymont's novel *The Comedienne*, published in America in 1920, there occurs a little *tour de force* of one of the characters in which we get a flash of Polish literary catholicity. Glogonski the dramatist is speaking:

"But Shakespeare is the whole universe. We can merely contemplate him, never understand him."

"And Schiller?"

"A Utopian; an echo of the encyclopedists and the French Revolution. He represents aristocracy, order, German doctrinarianism and pathetic wearisome declamation."

"And Goethe?"

"That means only *Faust*. But *Faust* is so complicated a machine that since the death of the inventor no one knows how to wind it or start it going. The commentators push the wheels, take it apart, clean it and dust it, but the machine will not go, and already it is rusting a little."

"And Shelley and Byron?"

"Aha, Byron! Byron slapped England's face with masterpieces And Shelley? The poet of the elements, not for us mortals. . . . Ibsen makes a queer impression on me. He foreshadows something mightier than himself. As regards the newest overpraised and over-advertised Germans, Sudermann & Co., they are merely a loud prating about small things. They want to

convince the world, for instance, that it is unnecessary to wear suspenders with your trousers because you can sometimes wear trousers without suspenders."

V

But if a people are to be put to a literary test, we must know not only what they read, but what reading they produce. Among his own, the Pole has first of all a trio of national poets who, as one critic has described them, " stand like giant oaks amid saplings "—Mickiewicz, Slowacki and Krasynski, the last named one of the most unique figures in the literary history of the world, since, for thirty years, he refused to sign his name to any of his writings, despite the fame they won, so ashamed was he of that name on account of his father's apostacy.

Mickiewicz, Poland's Goethe—George Sand ranked him with both Goethe and Byron, and Mazzini called him " the greatest literary power of his time "—was not only a great poet, but a great teacher, among whose pupils were such celebrities as Turgeniev, Sainte Beuve, the elder Rosetti, Quinet, Michelet, and a score of others. Krasynski was above all a patriot, sprung from a race of patriots who served the cause of human liberty in more lands than their own—his grandfather fought for our American independence, with Lafayette, and fell on the field of honour at the Battle of Savannah. And this most mystic of all Poland's poets was a seer as well as a singer, the prophet of present day Bolshevism, who in his *Undivine Comedy*, written a century ago, when he was only twenty-one, foretold with terrific power and uncanny foresight the social cataclysms of to-day. Slowacki is Poland's Shelley, surpassing all other sons of the White Eagle in beauty and fire of genius. (" There is no other poetic genius of such luxuriant, luminous, ethereally light fantasy," declares Jan de Holewinski.)

But Polish poetry does not end with this trio, even when the name of a fourth great romantic is added—Malczewski, who was Byron's friend and who gave the English poet the inspiration for his *Mazeppa*. There is a long list of others.

It is my belief that the Pole of to-day reads more modern poetry than any other citizen of any other land. The new day in Poland is distinctly a poets' day. A veritable chorus of voices is heard, and it is singing the Song of the Future. One of the foremost is Leopald Staff, whose classic line, " Life needs not be happy, but heroic," I have taken as a text for this book. Jan Kasprowicz, another leader of this chorus, of peasant stock, born in the Poznan district, not only gives his own soul to his country, but has greatly enriched Polish literature by translations of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats. In Lwow, where he teaches on the staff of the University, I had an interesting meeting with this justly famous

and popular poet, at which I made the interesting discovery that, master of English though he is, he much prefers to speak it on paper than by tongue! Our entire conversation, at any rate, was carried on with pencils—but he wrote so fluent and rapid an English that I could hardly keep up with him.

Kasimir Tetmajer, poet of the Tatras, is not only a lyric singer of sweetness and delicacy, with much of the snow-fed purity of the mountains in his songs, but is also a writer of novels and short stories of great beauty—his *Father Peter* deserves a place with the little masterpieces. He is likewise a dramatist of tragic powers, as his terribly realistic *Judas* (now translated into English, but not yet published) attests. This is a piece which I think no American would dare to write—perhaps could not, it is such an apotheosis of spiritual despair. It was produced in Poland for the first time in May 1922, at the Reduta Theatre in Warsaw.

There is Asnyk, the Polish Tennyson, who kept beauty alive in Poland in the same day of hard positivism which Tennyson himself challenged. There is Wyspianski (whom I have already mentioned as a painter and designer of stained glass), who gave the European stage the magnificent Greek tragedies *Meleager* and *Laodamia*, a whole sheaf of Polish dramas, and *The Wedding*, a masterpiece of fantasy and satire.

Poland was one of the first countries in Europe in which the novel advanced to its present plane of social significance. There are at least a dozen names in the lists of Polish novelists which mean the same to the Pole as our masters of English mean to us in reporting the actual life of man. In Alexander Glowacki ("Prus"), for instance, the Poles have their own Dickens, whose works range from *The Outpost*, a masterly depiction of the peasant, through *The Returning Wave*, a truly Dickensian portrayal of factory life, and *The Doll*, a searching exploration of the labyrinths of the city and a woman's mind, to *Pharaoh*, an absorbing tale of ancient Egypt, in which all of man's long struggle toward social and political cohesion is epitomized. (Under the title *The Pharaoh and the Priest*, this powerful novel has already been published in America, translated by Jeremiah Curtin.) Serenity, geniality and healthy humour, coupled with an ardent and robust humanity, very like the qualities of Dickens, are this novelist's characteristics.

The Pole has his own Kipling in Dygasinski, whose tales of animal life are classics. And above all, known the world over, is Sienkiewicz, the Polish Walter Scott, who has revealed more of Poland to herself than any other writer she has produced. *Quo Vadis* needs only to be mentioned. The historical trilogy *With Fire and Sword*, *Pan Michael* and *The Deluge*, revolutionized Polish ideas of the past and gave the whole national life a new grip on the future.

But Sienkiewicz has been more than merely the Walter Scott

of Poland. He was a master of the short story and set a pace in this form of fiction which has been an inspiration to Polish writers. Besides, he must be taken as a world figure, whose influence goes far beyond the boundaries of his own country. He knew how to handle modern problems as well as historical studies, and he did it with a gesture of universal significance. None of the contemporary masters of any tongue has produced a more searching or powerful work than his novel on Socialism *Whirlpools*, in which he raises a warning voice against internal corruption.

Sienkiewicz has a message for the world, and he stands before the world as the great representative Polish writer. His ideals are high and pure, but he is always virile and honest. There is no weakness in him nor blinking of facts. He is an ideal realist. His gift lies in the creation of robust characters, tireless invention of action and his peculiar power of running the whole gamut of emotion without ever falling into morbidity or exciting illicit passion. The gospel of Sienkiewicz, avowed in his critical study of Zola, is worth recording : " The novel must strengthen life, not enfeeble it ; must ennoble, not defile it. The suffocating need pure air. . . . It is only in an exhausted field that weeds grow." " To know Poland," a Poznan friend once remarked to me, as he showed me his books " you must know Sienkiewicz, not *Quo Vadis* alone, nor just the Trilogy, but all of him." He was delighted when I told him that in America we have read nearly all of Sienkiewicz's works, translated by Jeremiah Curtin. It is a pity, however, that the difficulty of pronouncing Polish names is still a bar which keeps many American readers from knowing the heroic, humorous and charming characters Sienkiewicz has created. In the case of such literature as this, I think it should be permissible to respell the names of places and persons according to our own phonetics.

VI

The astonishing fecundity of Polish intellectual life is at present giving the country an endless stream of new works. But this is, after all, not altogether a new development, since records show that three times as many works have been published in Poland as in all other Slav countries combined. There are scores of volumes on Polish bookshelves to-day ready to compete with the best in any country of the world, once the barrier of the language is removed by translation—in spite of a certain vivid and undisciplined style which many of them possess, strange to us ; a sort of bewildering impressionism which at first dismays, but in the long run fascinates the Western reader.

In the original, the flexibility and variety of the native speech, the richest of all Slavonic tongues, gives these works a beauty and

force to which no translation can do full justice. " A translation, after all," as a Pole once remarked to me, " is like a woman : if true, not always beautiful, and if beautiful, not always true." As for beauty no better tale could be imagined than *The Wild Forest* by Weysenhoff, a writer who combines delicacy of form with a tone often approaching epic grandeur. In Orkan's *The Famine* one strikes the bed-rock of man's struggle with nature's elementary forces. Madame Zopolska is a phenomenon, wielding so powerfully the pen of a man that she easily hid her identity in the days when her writings were proscribed, while to another woman, Marja Konopnicka, Polish literature owes not only the first interpretation of " the people," that is, the masses, in the modern acceptance of the word, but also a veritable library of classic folklore and fairy tales. Still another woman's pen, that of Eliza Oreszko, in *Meir Ezofowicz*, has revealed the soul of the Jew of Poland ; while in her *Argonauts*, translated into English and published a few years ago by Scribner, we have a striking depiction of the corroding effect of riches on the soul of man. Dombrowski in *Death* is clear and subtle ; Berent in *The Dead Wood* is a master of social analysis ; Zulswaki in *The Silver Globe* reaches the height of fantasy.

Of the writers of to-day I found everyone reading Zeromski and Reymont, the two giant living masters of Polish literature. In continental Europe they are accepted as masters, but their works are only beginning to be read in English. Their many volumes are found everywhere in Poland, in shops and newstands, cheap in price, neatly bound in paper covers—as practically all the current literature of Europe is. Nothing of Zeromski's has yet been introduced to America. But it is not difficult to predict a veritable ' Polish season," when once he and Reymont become known to our people. They are both realists of the higher type. They write forcefully, but with blades, not bludgeons.

Zeromski's powers are those of an analytical giant. He speaks grimly and terribly, and in such works as *Ashes*, *The Homeless Ones*, *Ahriman Revenges Himself* and *Evil Acts*, he is gripping and convincing, if not always pleasant. In the last named of these novels he strikes the note of eroticism, not often sounded in Polish literature—the note which Sienkiewicz could always avoid without ever sacrificing strength. " Our literature on the whole," Cardinal Kakowski of Warsaw once remarked to me, " is moral because we have suffered."

Only one of Reymont's works is known in English, *The Comedienne*. Of rural origin, Reymont writes at his best of the peasant, with a first-hand knowledge of the tiller of the soil which ranks his novels of this genre among the foremost in Europe, according to the verdict of French and German critics, by whom such writings are justly considered of vital significance to all who are interested

in the study of social progress. But he does not limit his scope to the cottage or the field. As in *The Comedienne*, he depicts the lure and tragedy of the theatre, so in *The Promised Land* (recently translated by Mme Krumpel-O'Connor, but not yet published), he has given an unequalled study of the whirlpool of the city and its industrial life.

So searching is Reymont's analysis of Polish character that during the Prussian occupation German officials were obliged under order to read certain of his works to acquaint themselves with the psychology of the people they were governing. It can be imagined with what sort of relish they must have read such passages as the following from *The Promised Land*, in which Kessler, a rich Lodz manufacturer, speaks to a group of Polish competitors :

" Not one, not ten of your factories will be the foundation of your industry. You must first become civilized and create a certain industrial culture before your efforts cease to be ridiculous. I know you Poles only too well ! You are gifted, charming, *grands seigneurs*. Why don't you go to Monaco ? Why don't you attend the season at Nice, in Paris, in Italy ? There you would arouse admiration, and that is all you thirst for—to be admired ! You do everything to be admired, to show off before the world, for the sake of fine words, your work, your noble sentiments, your art, your literature, life—they are all nothing more than so many phrases, more or less well declaimed before the gallery ; or if there be no gallery, then for your own delight. Above all things you are Kings of the Flirts. You are children making believe you are grown up."

In these words Reymont gives the quintessence of the German view of the Pole. But the Pole has his clear cut significant answer :

" You are right. And again you are wrong. For instance, take a pig. If a pig could reason about an eagle it would reason in just that way. If it could compare its sty, its vulgarity, its stupid brutal strength, its hideous grunting voice, its intelligence, limited to the capacity of stuffing itself ; if a pig could compare all that it is, and all that it knows, to the beauty of an eagle, its passion for liberty, its desire of soaring up to the very sun, its pride, its love of space, then the pig would hate the eagle and nourish only profound contempt for it. What you say is not a synthesis, but only the snarl of an animal of the lower species."

In another passage of the same novel, Reymont reveals to us in a flash the Polish soul, the soul of the eagle :

" How terrible life is," sighed Anka.

" No. It is only our exactions of life that are terrible. It is only our impossible conceptions of beauty and good and justice that are terrible—because they are never realized, and at the same time they prevent us taking life as it is. That is the real source of all our sorrow and suffering."

" And of all our hope," Nina added.

CHAPTER NINE

HIS BETTER HALF

I

"DOBRA gospodyni kiedy pełno w skrzyni," says the old Polish proverb—"A good housewife is a full cupboard." In war-times, no blame to the housewife, the adage did not hold. But we quickly learned that a good housewife in Poland means far more than a generous larder, quite apart from the fact that the spirit of Polish hospitality always more than made up for a shortage of even the common necessities of life.

It is interesting to make composite pictures in one's travels, to arrive, if possible, at a definite type. This is no more easily to be done in Poland, however, than in any other land, so many and varied are the native characteristics. Still, there may be said to be two distinct types of Polish women—the Slavic blonde, whose faintly flushed fairness often has a touch of the wistful about it that is lovely beyond words—the stamp, perhaps, of generations of sacrifice and endurance; and the brunette, so richly coloured, and with such warm Creole-like eyes, that one wonders how much southern blood is in this northern country. The broad, high-cheek-boned, square-visaged Slav of our popular notion, is not so commonly seen as might be imagined. But the small Greek head is common, and also the straight nose and clear cut features seen so frequently in Ireland. With these special marks noted, the humble male observer must confess that for the rest he finds Polish women simply charming—beautiful—graceful (how they can dance !). Despite their traditional training in old-fashioned manners and reserve, they are still very much the same "good fellows" that their American sisters are, fond of outdoor sports, great walkers and daring riders, inimitable in the saddle. Tradition sticks, however—even the revolutionary changes of these ultra-new post-war days have not quite taken that bloom from their cheek, as witness the fact that among Polish ladies the use of cosmetics, even of face powder, is not yet by any means "the thing" that it is in France and Italy—and America. To continue comparisons, though on the average the Polish girl may possess a few more of the "accomplishments"—music,

languages, and so on—than the American girl, she is none the less practical and not at all slow in adapting herself to the work and ways of her sister from overseas, whom in fact she resembles even in certain physical details, according to report. I have it, for instance, on the best feminine authority, that in no country in Europe can an American girl be better fitted with gloves than in a Polish shop, the native models much more readily suiting the American hand than those imported from France. Is there anything in this ? Far be it from the mere male historian to say. He must limit himself to such obvious characteristics as the aforementioned grace and charm, or to such local peculiarities as the wearing of the wedding ring on the right hand. I can testify, however, to the fact that Polish girls not only learn social relief work readily, and are enthusiastic and unselfish in it, but that also they make excellent office-help.

But to return to our composite portrait. A certain two guests whom I met in the house of a Warsaw friend, combined with the memory of the hostess herself, all taken together depict for me a sort of symbolic figure of the Polish woman—the woman legislator, the woman soldier, and the woman in the home. The lines and features of each, superimposed as it were one on the other, fall readily into a composite whole. Together these three stand for " the better half " of Poland. Around the strong, steady, glowing lamp of their fused light, the little flashes-in-the-pan of erratic (and erotic) femininity, occasionally thrusting themselves up for notice, simply fade away or blow out, mere candles in the wind. Poland, like any other country with its conglomerate millions, has its quota of " new " women, " futuristic " women, " liberated " women, and so on. But they are the smallest of minorities, and they no more represent the womanhood of their nation than a Carrie Nation did that of America, or a Mrs. Pankhurst that of England.

One evening my host and I were tardy for dinner, having gone late in the afternoon to visit the Diet. There he had pointed out to me, from our seat in the guests' gallery, one of the women legislators at her desk just below us, mentioning her name and remarking that I would meet her later. I did, that evening. She was at the house when we arrived. From her and from others, then as well as in interviews afterward, I drew much information regarding the work of the women of Poland.

It was a simple matter to talk with this modest little lady, who bore not a single ear-mark of the ordinary " public personage." She was plainly dressed ; but then, for years the women of Poland have eschewed elaborate gowning and have put costly fashions, even among those who might afford them, out of the pale of good taste.

Like everyone else who observes or inquires into the matter, I was surprised when I found what the women of Poland are doing. Up-to-date is a mild term. Here is a country where women have achieved a higher position and have held an ampler field for a longer time than any other I have heard of, not even excepting our own America. Complete equal suffrage is only one item. Eligibility to the highest office in the land is another —for a Polish woman could be elected to the Presidency of the Republic. " But then," I argued, " this must be one of the few (the very few !) ' good fortunes ' of war that have come to you—something that has happened overnight, this sudden elevation of woman."

On the contrary, woman's " emancipation " in Poland has had nothing sudden about it, nor did it happen overnight. The women of Poland have been public leaders for centuries ; leaders, workers, builders, only they have not been heard of in the outside world ; or, if heard of, it has been usually under a mistaken identity, labelled with the name of other nations—either of those governments which partitioned Poland and blotted her name from the map ; or else of those countries where Poles for the past century and more have sought refuge in exile. As far back, for instance, as 1853 a Polish woman, Dr. Mary Zakrzewska, came to America and founded the New York Infirmary, and later the New England Hospital.

One knows well enough that no nation could persist in its nationhood were it not for its women. Whatever its men might do, fighting and constructing, the woman after all is the repository of the nation's soul. A nation's womanhood is its holy of holies. As she is, so her sons are ; and their sons—and their son's sons. We know all this in a general way. But it is interesting to have precise examples.

In the case of Poland we may go back to the fourteenth century for an example—to Jadwiga, the young Polish queen who, when she succeeded to the throne in 1382, was betrothed to a man she loved, William of Austria. It was a true lover's match. But Jadwiga gave up her lover and sacrificed all that that sort of an ideal marriage meant to her, and wedded the pagan Jagiello, Prince of Lithuania, because the politics of her country demanded such a union. With her aura of romance and self-sacrifice, and a record as well of a full life of great deeds, not the least of which was the Christianization of Lithuania, Jadwiga stands as one of the traditional heroines of Poland, next to the Madonna of Chenstohova, as an exemplar of Polish womanhood.

Jadwiga began a long tradition of nobility of deed and sacrifice on the part of woman which has been kept alive through the centuries by a host of the daughters of Poland who have worked and

suffered and fought for their country. Suffered? One needs but to recall the tragedy of the lovely Walewska and Emperor Napoleon. Fought? They certainly have fought. The great-great . . . many-times-removed-great-grandmother of my hostess, whose portrait hangs on the wall of her home, took sword in hand—took the sword away from her husband, as the case actually was, because he was afraid!—and defended and saved her city from the Tartars. The heroine of Mickiewicz's *Grazynia* was another, donning her husband's armour and leading her troops to battle. In Kosciuzko's time, when the story of our own Moll Pitcher manning the cannon was still new and wonderful, women by the hundreds fought with scythes and forks and with their bare fists in Poland's desperate struggle for freedom. In the Polish rebellion of 1830 Emilia Plater bled and died in uniform. Again, visiting one day the Warsaw citadel with a Red-Cross girl from Gary, Indiana, I was shown cell fifty, where her great-aunt had been imprisoned for over a year because she was caught carrying dispatches for the Polish forces in the uprising of 1863. I could go on recounting dozens of such cases. There is no end to Poland's list of heroic Jeannes.

It was all one long fight. Especially through the dark hundred years of the partitions the women of Poland never ceased to fight, though not always with gun or sword. Then it was in the home that they had to put up their greatest struggle; for all about them, pressing ever closer and heavier and more insidiously into the very precincts of the fireside, the strength and power of Poland's oppressors worked and moved to destroy the soul of the nation. If the language of the Pole remains to-day a living force, the richest of all the Slavic tongues, it is because the women of Poland never would give it up, and talked it and taught it, in secret and at the risk of their lives, rather than see their children lose its heritage. If the songs and music and art and all the traditions of the land have never died out, but have been kept, remembered and alive, ready now for their reblooming and strong enough, too, to stand and grow in the sudden gust of new free air, and the sudden heat of regained liberty: if all this has happened, it is because the women of Poland have been both true and strong. Like a great mother, Poland, through her women, has kept her children warm against her breast and gathered close about her knee.

II

For my own part, I did know something of Polish womanhood even before I came into Poland. There had been Modjeska, artist and patriot, devoting her years, even long after she had rightly earned a rest, to the sole purpose of keeping the good name of

her native land before the public eye in America. That was her working ideal; and she told me more than once that it was likewise the ideal of Paderewski, of Sembrich, of the de Rezkes, of Hoffman, of Benda; of all the famous Polish artists whom America has known for the past generation. Modjeska, it might be said, was their leader, and around her they gathered, forming a sort of school of Polish propaganda—the only right sort of propaganda, which indoctrinates by noble deeds and entrenches itself in high repute.

It was Modjeska who first told me that Madame Curie (born Sklodowska) was a Pole—that illustrious and modest woman, whose discovery of radium is acknowledged to be the greatest scientific achievement of our time. The world thinks of her as French. From Modjeska also I knew that the first director of the first pedagogic institute in Europe, Josefa Ioteyko of Brussels, author of *The Science of Labour* (recently translated into English), was a Pole. Known to the world in general as "a famous Belgian socialogist," this gifted Polish woman later became professor of psychology at the College de France. Modjeska likewise had made me acquainted with the name of Zamoyska, a name which in time came to symbolize for me the whole vast social work accomplished by Polish women in their own country during the past quarter century.

Zamoyska is but one of many—among them the celebrated Mère Ledochowska of Poznania and Dr. Dluska, Madame Curie's sister—but we will let Zamoyska's work speak for many. Exiled from Prussian Poland some thirty years ago, she sought refuge in the southern part of the country, at that time under Austrian rule. There at Zakopané she founded Poland's first school of what, for want of a better term, we must call "domestic science," the aim of which is to teach Polish girls the dignity of household labour, the joy of knowing how to do everyday things right. Peasant girls and daughters of aristocrats meet in this school on a common footing, learning by actual work everything a housewife needs to know, from sewing and mending to buttermaking and the care of cows and poultry. Since the American Red Cross has gone into Poland a course in nursing and "bedside hygiene" has been added by it to the curriculum of the Madame Zamoyska's school.

In continental Europe the trained nurse as we know her was unknown before the war, except among the nuns of various religious sisterhoods. In Poland the story of these Catholic sisterhoods is an epic in itself. They have been the country's pioneers of new womanhood, as the term is taken in its highest sense. Polish nuns, away back in one of the earlier wars, long before Florence Nightingale and the Crimea, were the first nurses ever known to

go out on the battlefields to care for the wounded and dying. They have kept up their great tradition, as we discovered in innumerable instances in the Poland of 1919 and 1920. In one remote spot, far off in the devastated areas of the East—the town was Slonim—we found a nun who was a graduate dentist, and who required only the simplest instruments to go on with her work among the poor. What volumes that one little shy woman, hidden behind her worn veil and patched habit, spoke of the brains and pluck of Polish womanhood! Yet she was only one of many. We came across her kind everywhere—these unknown, forgotten, one might say nameless, Polish nuns, cultured, gentle and brave; the mothers of thousands of the motherless. Their cupboards were usually bare as a bone; but their floors were invariably swept and scoured—as clean as their white wimples and their whiter souls. I never saw one but my thoughts flashed back to the home she must have come from, and the mother who had reared her, fine and gentle, to give her to the cause of humanity.

III

The fireside war of the Polish woman, fought for generations to keep alive the Polish souls of her sons and daughters, was not confined to the hearthstone. She did more than merely conserve in the hearts of her own children the faith and traditions of the nation. She made her own home, it is true, a centre for the culture of the community—as in the case of Madame Morawska, one of Madame Modjeska's relatives, who taught the whole countryside of Poznania Polish history by means of her rhymed verses, which took the place of forbidden Polish books, and which are as familiar to-day in Poland as *Mother Goose* is with us. But the Polish woman did more than make her own home a social centre; she went out into town and village, and into the cottage of the peasant, organizing clubs, circles, associations of every conceivable kind, to promote the welfare of her sisters and their children. Her daughters grew up in an atmosphere of helpfulness. They learned to sew, to teach, to sanitate, to plan homes for peasants and workingmen. They studied medicine, accounting, law, agriculture, handicraft. At every turn they found old ways or made new ways for woman's endeavour, though more often than otherwise they were forced to go to other lands to perfect themselves in their studies. When the partitions of Poland paralyzed the political life of the nation, all its energies turned to cultural and philanthropic activities—to education, hygiene, conservation of health, agricultural reform; to the development of industry and home-crafts; to every imaginable form of social welfare. And in all of these activities women played their part and often took the lead.

The result was inevitable: when freedom of political action was regained, the women of Poland were ready for leadership in it. A glance at the women who sit to-day in the national legislature at Warsaw—there are seven of them, as well as five in the Warsaw municipal council—tells the story of the Polish woman in politics.

To begin with, the first government of the Republic of Poland, the provisional government which stabilized the newly emancipated State after the armistice in 1918, owed its orderly foundation in good part to the women of the country. They had already organized themselves into a national woman's league, with some fifteen thousand active members; a league which to-day, under the leadership of Countess Sobanska, correlates all the work of all the women's associations in the entire Republic, and is in consequence a very powerful organization. This league in the beginning educated and made possible the enormous women's vote which, early in 1919, did much to establish the first elected government of the Republic. But out of the first election there arose more than an emergency government. Women legislators as well as men also appeared, rising to their place not alone through the necessity of the moment, but by the merit of exceptional ability proven through long experience in social activity. These were the women I had seen that day, sitting at their desks in the Diet.

Every one of these women has spent a lifetime in hard work, helping to prepare the Polish masses for the liberty they have now secured. Education has been one of their best achievements. Madame Moczydlowska's name is synonymous with that of the famous model town of Liskow, founded by Padre Blizinski—a village of western Poland, known to sociological students in Europe as one of the best examples on the continent of community development. (Since it was founded in 1900, illiteracy in the district has been reduced from 80 per cent. to 10 per cent.) In temperance work, Madame Moczydlowska has been equally distinguished, and it is through her influence that important laws governing alcoholic beverages have been put into operation by the new government.

Another educational leader is Madame Dziubinska, who spent many years before the war founding and directing agricultural schools throughout Russian Poland, schools which played a doubly important part in the pre-war life of the rural districts, since they not only taught improved methods of agriculture, but effectively combated the denationalizing and stupefying influence of Russian schools. This gifted woman is now a member of the education commission of Poland which, in the schools already founded by her, has already at hand the foundation of a national system of agricultural training Still other educators among the

women legislators of Poland are Madame Balicka, for years the head of a teachers' training school, and Madame Sokolnicka, well known in the schools of Poznania. From Pomerania, on the Baltic, comes Madame Wilczaktiewicz, a picturesque peasant figure and an eloquent speaker.

In Madame Moraczewska, founder of the Polish Women's League, and one of the first promoters of the Women's Legion, the country has one of the most experienced social workers in Europe. Education among the working classes has been her special care for years. Her name is a household word in industrial centres. Equally absorbed in the lot of the workers is Madame Kosmowska, whose all-round gifts of temperament and education make her an unusually interesting figure. She was one of the founders of the Peasant Union in former Russian Poland, and one of the editors of *Zaranie* (*The Dawn*), an organ of the social movement through the medium of which she established a unique social agency for peasants and workers. Through this agency Madame Kosmowska carried on a personal work of almost unbelievable dimensions, so far-reaching did it eventually become, distributing libraries, sending out nurses and teachers, furnishing farm machinery, agricultural instructors, and herself answering a weekly average of over three hundred letters from peasants touching on economic and social questions.

Madame Kosmowska's adventures during the war would make a thrilling volume. She was a bold organizer of resistance to the Russian power in rural districts, agitating against the mobilization of Poles in the Muscovite armies, publishing and circulating secret patriotic journals, and taking an active part in smuggling Poles across the Russian boundaries to enlist them in the Polish legions. So bold did she become, in fact, that finally in April 1915 she was caught, jailed, and after having been imprisoned for many weeks in August, was carried off to Moscow. At that time she was sick almost to death. The first Russian revolution liberated her, but she remained in Russia and at once recommenced her social work by organizing an educational association among Polish refugees. This association grew in time to direct some five thousand units scattered all over the old empire, wherever Polish refugees were to be found. Madame Kosmowska is Secretary of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Diet, a member of the Constitutional Commission, and an active promoter of agricultural reforms.

These are the women chosen to sit among the national legislators of the Polish Republic. They are women of whom any country might be proud, a band of earnest, ardent workers and thinkers, whose little group stands out all the more vividly and sharply defined because of the glowing background behind them—the vast background made by Poland's army of silent home-keeping

wives and mothers and workers. In review, one's recollection of these other women of Poland—the uncounted ones—presents a luminous blur of faces and names; of women, young and old, working, organizing, studying, striving, giving time and strength and such an inexhaustible fund of zeal and enthusiasm to the preserving of their country's soul and the grappling of their country's problems, that Poland fairly glows with them, as if a pillar of white fire had been raised up to lead the nation on—a pillar of fire lit at the hearthstone by a woman's hand.

CHAPTER TEN

THE FIGHTING WOMAN

I

PILSUDSKI, according to a legend of the Bolshevik invasion of 1920, answered a despondent officer who had exclaimed " All is lost ! " with the ringing words, " All is lost—except Poland ! " The answer of one of the women workers of Poland during the same dark days was better still: " Nothing is lost."

" The future is work," the same woman responded quietly, when an American questioned her about the days to come. The more I observed the women of Poland the more I saw that this is indeed their chosen motto—Work. But they have not forgotten how to fight. They have not forgotten the tradition of their great - great - many - times - removed - great - grandmothers. I was brought up sharp with this fact one day early in October, 1920, when I entered the house of my host for luncheon.

There was a guest at the table such as could not, perhaps, have been seen at that time in any other land on earth except Poland. It was a woman soldier, a fighter of the ranks, dressed in her simple uniform of olive-drab blouse and skirt, but looking very much like a frail boy—for she was just home on sick leave, and was pale from a long siege in the hospital. She was a corporal of the Woman's Legion.

I had seen women soldiers in Poland so often, and in such numbers, that they had grown to be a matter of course. I had seen them in all the various stages of their military development, from the time they marched the streets as raw recruits, in ordinary feminine attire and still carrying their purses and their parasols (and often with aged mothers hurrying anxiously yet proudly beside them as they marched), on to the massing of their smartly uniformed quick-stepping ranks at the front. I knew them well as guards and patrols, because at several of our American Red-Cross warehouses they were on duty. I knew something too about their record, what they had done in the army: how they had fought as bravely as any men ; how they had stuck to their posts when men deserted ; how they had introduced a new element into army life, a high idealistic element which for one thing had

put an end to petty thieving; and how, at the same time, by the very act of donning the uniform and taking up arms, they had shamed slackers into enlisting. I knew what the men thought of them, too, reluctant as they had been at first to accept them in the ranks—a reluctance which soon changed to such pride in their prowess that men were glad to serve not only with them, but even under them. Then I had learned of the remarkable development of the women's forces, which now are completely organized into a regular department of the Polish national defence, with a school established where women volunteers may prepare themselves for expert government service by studying economics, military clerical work, sanitary duties, liaison service, telephoning, telegraphing, code signalling. I knew all this; it was all "writ proper" in my notebook. But never before had I met a girl soldier and talked with her.

This fair young corporal spoke good English, so that there was no difficulty in getting her story. She was a university student, a girl of Lwow, or Leopol as the French call it—that heroic town, the very name of which gives one the strongest impulse to stand and salute, once he has learned its story of courage, patriotism, heroism—woman's courage and woman's patriotism and heroism.

The girl legionary told me the story of Lwow. I had seen the town already—"the City of Lions," "the nest of heroes"—a handsome city of wide streets and graceful buildings, the beauty of which could not be altogether marred even by ruins and shattered glass and bullet-riddled walls; a sort of little Vienna, with its splendid old University and its fine Opera fronting the broad tree-lined boulevard leading to it from the central plaza; a city of imposing monuments, gay shops and cosmopolitan crowds. But always now, after hearing the story of the women soldiers from that girl legionary, the domed and spired silhouette of Lwow stands out in my mind's eye with a new significance, cut sharp against a background of white cannon smoke and red flame, with the bright slender figure of a young girl rising in the centre of the picture, a girl soldier wearing the square Polish "czapka" or cap, rifle at shoulder, standing on guard.

II

Immediately after Poland's independence was secured in 1918, one of the first plots of frustrated Germany against the new Republic was the launching of an attack from the south, where German and Austrian forces still remained in large numbers, and where intrigue among the local Ukrainians was a simple matter. The intrigue succeeded and the Ukrainians turned against their Polish neighbours, with Lwow as their objective

Lwow by this time was almost unmanned, so terribly had the war depleted her strength. There was scarcely a handful of Polish troops in the city. Women and children must defend it. How they did defend it, how they went out and fought and died rather than surrender—that is the story Corporal Marylka told me. It is one of the brightest pages in Poland's long history of chivalry.

It all began with the sudden alarm of the treachery of the Ukrainians, the dupes of the German power, who sought to betray the city. In that alarm the zeal and coolheadedness of the women of Lwow rose like a lifted standard around which the whole community rallied. First it was sheer mob force risen in self-defence. But this mob shuffled itself so quickly into order and organization, that in a matter of mere hours six thousand volunteers had been recruited. In the beginning a great many girls and women enlisted in men's disguise in order to fight alongside the men. But soon the number of women volunteers had grown so great that their separate organization was possible.

The defence of the Lwow citadel began ; then came hot fighting at the railway station, around the post office, and at the Ferdinand Barracks, where boys and women, under the murderous fire of the Ukrainians, stood their ground, advanced, captured machine guns, ammunition, finally an armoured motor-car, and still fought on while the enemy's hail of lead and flame showered down on them from every roof and window.

"Folly seemed to lead them ! " our little corporal exclaimed, living the fearful scene and all its desperation over again as she recounted it. ("Glorious folly ! " our hearts echoed.) . . ." Many fell. Josephine Balcer was killed instantly by a bullet in the head. Then there was Jesuit Park, where the collegians used to have their games. There was a bloody battle there, and boys and women died with a smile on their lips, falling under the blood bespattered trees where the wintry branches crackled and fell over them in the rain of bullets. They smiled because the last thing their ears heard was the command 'Forward.' At the citadel Pannie Sophie was wounded."

The girl's voice broke a little at that name, Sophie Prokopowicz. We were to hear more of her.

"One group of seventy women, under women's command, held a position for four weeks without rest and not much food, repulsed three violent attacks of the enemy, and never lost a foot of ground. Many of them were killed. Josefa Bardowska and Sophie Wronska died of their wounds a few days later. At the central railway station the fighting to save our food and ammunition-transports was terrible. The Ukrainians had German aeroplanes and drenched us with shrapnel. But no one left her post. One

girl only fifteen years of age was killed there by shrapnel, because she refused to leave her post without orders. . . ."

After the first alarm and the first daring outburst of self-defence, the women's forces developed more and more into an organized body, drilling, living in barracks, taking the soldiers' oath. Not only were fighting detachments formed, but also civilian patrols and a liaison service. The work of the women guards grew steadily, until they became one of the most important factors in the Polish national forces throughout the two years of war which followed independence, not only maintaining order and saving property, but at the same time releasing hundreds of men for service at the front. By the last week of December 1918 the women's fighting detachments had become so well organized and drilled, that they were ordered to the trenches. Where did you spend Christmas, 1918? Four hundred girls and women of Lwow, wives, mothers and daughters of soldiers, spent their Christmas that year knee deep in snow and mud, rifle in hand, on guard at the furthest outposts.

The women's liaison service covered itself with glory. Madam Gagorska's messenger corps, composed of both girls and boys, secretlyoccupied a vantage point in the heart of the Ukrainian section of the city, and kept the Polish forces in constant touch with the movements of the enemy. Day and night, under incessant fire, these scouts slipped back and forth through the lines (sometimes via the sewers), risking their lives hourly. "Wanda Leshwin was captured New Year's, 1919, while scouting and carrying dispatches. After eight weeks of unutterable torture she escaped. And there was Wanda Gertz—she had fought in the Polish Legion, the men's legion, under Pilsudski, for eight months in 1914 and 1915, disguised as a boy. She was one of the best, she had had such experience. And Sophie Kremer, and Louisa Rudowska, and Stanislawa Paleolog. They are all officers now."

More than a thousand girls, women and boys fought in the defence of Lwow, and hundreds of them died in battle. But "the blood of martyrs is the seed of faith." Death and suffering and hardship instead of daunting the women of Poland only made them more determined. The work begun in Lwow spread all over the country. In 1919 Vilna organized its woman's legion, under the command of that same Wanda Gertz who had won her spurs under Pilsudski. By the time of the Bolshevik invasion of 1920 Warsaw, Krakow, Poznan and Grudziadz all had their own separate women's legions, in which recruits were enrolled from scores of tributary towns. Four thousand women joined the colours at this time.

III

"And there was Sophie Propokowicz. . . ."

"To-day," said our hostess, "is the funeral of Captain Sophie. This," she explained to me aside, "is why we have Marylka here . . . so that she may see the funeral. They were friends."

"Sophie was a Lwow girl, too," the girl legionary went on "She was wounded first at the citadel. But she could not rest idle, and so as soon as she could stand she took off her uniform, put on an apron and went into sanitary work. Then, when she was strong enough, she was back into uniform again and joined the Vilna legion. She would do anything and everything that needed to be done—fight, if need be—nurse, work in the relief ranks. For a long time she disappeared. Where? Behind a great heap of ragged and bullet-riddled uniforms which had to be cleaned and mended. She had stood under a hail of lead without a quiver. Already she had been decorated three times for bravery in action. But she was not ashamed to turn again to a woman's task of sewing and patching whenever there was need of it."

When the new Bolshevik invasion came in 1920, young Sophie—she was only nineteen—had grown to be so proficient a soldier that she was promoted to a regular captainship and put in command of a company of men. Her fighting in the defence of Vilna and Grodno had won for her, as it had for all her sister soldiers, the complete confidence of the war department. At Vilna eight miles of trenches had been entrusted to the women, and sixty of them were lost in those trenches. Now, before the gates of Warsaw, an entire battalion of women—infantry and machine-gun companies—were fighting under Haller, directly commanded by their own veteran women leaders of Lwow; while back in Lwow itself, at the same time, new troops of women, re-enacting the heroic story of 1918, were digging trenches and drilling for the second defence of the town.

Captain Sophie fought before Warsaw. Then, when the Red armies, swinging around to the north in their attempt to encircle the capital, were threatening the Vistula, she was ordered to Plock. The last chapter of the story of this gallant girl was written at Plock, in blood

The Vistula cuts the town of Plock in two, near the old Gothic cathedral. The Bolsheviks got into the town without encountering any resistance at first, making their advance full of confidence that they could sweep over the bridge and plant their forces solidly on the west bank of the river before the approaching relief of the Poles could come up. "Suddenly a volley of shots met them from a barricade just a few rods in front of the river. It was our Lwow girls, well versed in street fighting from the old days! But

they were a mere handful, ranged behind their improvised defence. The Reds laughed. They did not believe such resistance could hold out for ten minutes.

" But ten minutes, an hour—one—two—three hours pass, and the defenders are still there. They are advancing too, in spite of the murderous rifle fire and machine-gun hail of the Bolsheviks; advancing—making sorties—throwing up new barricades—capturing piece after piece, until ten machine guns and one convoy after another of ammunition has fallen into our hands. The Reds fall back. You may believe me, yes, they are astonished, those Bolsheviks! They fall back. We advance. They stand. Then we fall back—a little, only a little. And then, at last!—the first roar and blaze of Polish artillery breaks from the rear. Oh, red fire was never so beautiful—the relief has come! Sophie and her troopers leap forward with a wild cheer of joy, driving now faster and further up against the enemy.

" It is dusk now—and remember, this battle began in the morning. Yet the girls still fight on, tireless, dauntless, with renewed strength. But the Reds are determined at any cost to cut off the advance of the Polish relief from the rear; so they suddenly open on to the bridge such a sheet of iron and flame that the position of the Lwow defenders grows desperate. Sophie's troopers stand. They still hold their last barricade, while she, with a handful of volunteers, turns to reconnoitre the rear, to hasten the relief. . . .

" She makes for the bridge. Bullets pour like rain on her and her squad. The air, it is shattered. A ghost could not pass through that fire.

" On they ride, Sophie crying out to her companions. Now they have the bridges in sight. Another moment and they are safe . . .

" And then . . .

" Suddenly a squad of Red Cossacks sweeps up from the flank, riding down the reconnoiterers. 'Go on! Go on! Don't mind me!' the girl leader shouts as the enemy horsemen plunge upon them. Her horse stumbles. . . . Oh! . . . A Bolshevik sabre with one cruel leap of its blade, comes down on her head—literally cuts away a part of her skull. She has fallen. She is covered with blood. But no matter—'Don't mind me!' she still cries, smothered in her own blood, while the infuriated Cossacks, even as they pick up the now half-insensible body, hack at it with their swords and rain on it a shower of blows from their brutal nahajkas They ride away with her. . . ."

" But at that very moment the long-expected help has really come. A whole battalion of Polish cavalry rides thundering over the bridge. They fall upon the fleeing Cossacks. They strike them down like sticks, they scatter them like grass! They bring the broken and bleeding Sophie back into the town.

"She is still alive, and now all Plock is up in arms, children and women with sticks, brooms, spades, joining the soldiers to help man the barricades; how like her own dear Lwow! But there is one defender who will never stand in the breach again, nor ever again expose her proud young head to the fire of the enemy."

IV

Little Corporal Marylka stood at the window with us and watched the funeral pass down the Alleja Ujazdowska. This then was the end of Captain Sophie's story, after weeks of maddening suffering in the Red-Cross hospital at Warsaw, whither she had been brought from Plock. The autumn air was solemn with the strains of Chopin's "Marche Funèbre." For a while Marylka wept quietly. Then as the white wooden coffin, covered with ivy came into view, borne on the shoulders of girl legionaries like herself, she broke down.

None of us could see the funeral very well. The throngs stood mute with a figure passing to or fro here and there, while the stately music died sadly in the distance . . . it all seemed very far away, as if viewed through an inverted lens; all confused somehow with the bridge at Plock . . . cries, blood, flame.

"The children are begging for you." It was the voice of our hostess, summoning us back to reality. The street was quite empty now, strewn with trampled leaves, but we still stood at the window, seeing nothing, yet seeing many things. "The children are calling you." (She had slipped away for a moment and now had come back with the baby in her arms.) We all went to the nursery together.

"Here is that book about the women," said our lady, handing me *Kobiety*. "I know you want to read it. Marylka has read it."

"And what do you think of it, Corporal Marylka?"

"No," she answered smiling and flushing a little, though her eyes were still wet with tears, "I didn't finish it." She hugged the two tots crowding around her knees. "It was too dull and a little mad. That woman felt too sorry for herself."

"In Poland," added our hostess, holding the baby out to the girl-soldier, because he was clamouring for the brass buttons of her uniform, "in Poland we think that the unpardonable sin, to be sorry for yourself."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE HOPE OF POLAND

I

It was good to see that girl-soldier drying her tear-wet eyes with a laugh as she sat down on the nursery floor to play with the children. Then we all laughed when little Karolek toddled off, found Marylka's czapka, plumped it over his ears and gave her a staggering salute.

Whenever I recall that scene my thoughts go back to our American Red Cross Orphanage at Bialystok. There had been a wobbly little tot there among the refugees, tinier even than Karolek, not two years old, not two feet high, who had learned to make such a perfect salute, with such a precise click of his wee baby heels, that one of our nurses had cut him out a uniform, decorated with sergeant's stripes and no end of insignia, and in this he would parade the aisles between the double-decked beds, delighting himself and the other youngsters by the hour—though for himself he would never crack a smile during these performances, stepping off his paces as solemn as an old general.

Through the many long months I spent in Poland my work took me over so much of the country, in so many directions, I would not venture to compute the miles I covered, and certainly I would not attempt to say how many needy children I saw on those travels, which brought me everywhere where the tide of Poland's four million refugees was sweeping back and forth over the land. There were literally thousands upon thousands of them. But wherever I went, I would remember the orphanage at Bialystok, because it stood out as a sort of common denominator for the whole vast total, embracing in its eight hundred boys and girls all types, sizes and ages, all shades and degrees of the seven hundred and fifty thousand orphans of the new Poland.

It is not easy to imagine one single country, a new country just beginning its career among the world's modern democracies, burdened with such a handicap as this—three quarters of a million orphans! Yet the orphans were not all. There were other tens and hundreds of thousands of children not orphaned, but almost as badly off; hungry and half-clothed, and suffering from diseases and devitalization to such a degree that there were moments

when an observer simply despaired of the future. At one time it was figured that fully half of the adolescents of Poland were tubercular or rickety; every fourth baby was dying before it was one year old—in the congested industrial centres every second baby; while in some of the eastern districts there were practically no children left at all, and 25 per cent. of them had died of hunger.

But the Poles did not despair. They went to work to care for these hosts of their little ones as best they could, and in this, perhaps more than in any other single endeavour, they showed their true nature and capabilities. It was not alone that everyone helped; it was their spirit of co-operation, their gift for organization, for getting together and working together, that made them shine in the eyes of outside workers. It was this, too, that kept outsiders, working for them and with them, from literally throwing up their hands in despair.

The big idea back of all the American relief work in Poland, back of all the spending of America's generous millions, has been to develop Polish self-help. The success which the two great American relief organizations, the Red Cross and the Hoover Administration, have had in this regard is commentary enough on the ability and self-reliance of the Poles. As early as the autumn of 1919 the work of Mr. Hoover's Mission was being carried on by a Polish control committee and sub-committees scattered throughout the country, a complete Polish administrative structure having built itself up with only just enough Americans on hand to interpret the needs of Poland to America. As for the American Red Cross, to point alone to the Polish American Committee for children, which is now carrying on the former's work in more than two hundred child-health stations, is sufficient; while the Polish Red Cross Society of to-day, fostered and encouraged by the American Society, is the second largest in the world, next only to that of the United States, and has a membership of over a million.

Of course there have been mistakes, incompetency, bungling and many other things of the like in the relief work in Poland, all growing out of inexperience and lack of mutual acquaintance with Polish and American character and methods To tell the story otherwise would be as unfair as it would be to say that all the mistakes were made by the Poles. In the long run, the story is one of real achievement, of wonders worked by both sides, with generous Americans testifying that half their credit is due to the self-reliant and co-operative spirit of the Poles, especially when it came to doing for the children.

II

One branch of American relief work which has made a very special hit with the Polish people is the Junior Red Cross. They

have taken this up with eagerness and foresight, looking to it to lay the foundations of a complete native welfare organization for the future, an organization growing out of actual Polish soil. It was at the Bialystok Orphanage that this work began. And it did literally begin in the Polish soil of the gardens surrounding the institution.

The orphanage was formerly a military barracks on the outskirts of that town which lies in sight of the great forest of Bialowicz, once the hunting ground of the Russian czars. How our Red-Cross men, under the inspiring leadership of Dr. Chesley, Major Mohler and Dr. Diehl, transformed that huge windowless red brick shell, at various times the camp of Russian, German and Bolshevik fighters, into a veritable beehive of industrious contentment, ringing with the voices of children and the tramp of little feet; at night hushed and sweet with the grace of children's prayers, children's dreams and children's soft breathing—with all that makes life pure and worth while; that story is one to be especially remembered in America's relief record abroad.

I shall never forget the first time I visited the Bialystok Orphanage. I had been seeing sights among the freshly gathered-up orphans and refugee children in other towns further east, that had literally turned me sick: little bodies bloated with starvation, distended to horrible drum-like rotundity; little legs so scrawny and enfeebled that they could no longer bear the weight of those swollen bodies, under which they seemed to actually bend and crack as they leaned against the walls; little hands turned blue with emaciation—the thin watery blue that one sees in a pan of stale skimmed milk; little fingers so ghastly shiny, that when they were thrust out to you with a wan joyousness of greeting you were afraid to touch them for fear they would fall horribly apart. I had seen sights too sad and too fearsome to recount: baby graves along the roadside; refugee mothers resting by the railway tracks, nursing half-dead infants at their sterile breasts, themselves feeding on grass and weeds, on soup made from potato peelings, or black bread that was uneatable. From outlying districts beyond Kobryn and Baranowicze our workers had even reported cases of incipient cannibalism among abandoned children —small creatures that should have been sweet and fair and at play, turned into ravening young wild beasts trying to devour each other. . . .

But here, in this Bialystok Orphanage, what a different story! Here only the traces of these horrors were to be seen. The livid pencilling of starvation and disease was already dim and fading away under the eyes of these flourishing youngsters. True, there were some sorry-looking newcomers, among them two or three tiny infants only a few days old, with wizened ancient faces and

fleshless bones. They hardly made a handful if you picked them up, and they were so horribly light in weight that you felt you held only the wee ghostie of a baby in your arms. But the others around them, the eight hundred, busy, happy others—they told the story.

So many beautiful children among these crippled and deformed! Their soft natural beauty just beginning to rebloom in firm flesh and clearing skin and bright laughing eyes. Types of every kind; the gentle Slavic blonde, with its touch of the ethereal; the dark-eyed, dark-skinned "Italian type"; and so very often what we called the "Irish type"—blue eyes, black hair, oval face and a wistful shadow hovering somewhere around mouth or chin, playing hide and seek with the real Irish come-hither of the eyes.

There were classrooms for them where they studied and recited their lessons to Polish teachers; drilled, marched, did kindergarten work and sang. How they did sing! What a contrast to the singing I once heard at the Povonski refugee camp near Warsaw, where a group of boys and girls, just brought in from the devastated areas, had "performed" for us. They had not yet had time to respond to the touch of food, warmth and clothing. Their young voices had died away in whispers. Not all the encouraging smiles and gestures and admonitions of their matron had been able to keep them livened up. When they had sung a "motion song," their half-hearted movements had been like the faint memory of an action. As they moved their lips, their little pasty-coloured faces had just stared at us with a tired look that scarcely had even curiosity in it—a sort of resigned cunning, as if they wondered vaguely what we might do to them, yet as if nothing we could do would ever be too wonderful to them (or too terrible) any more.

Those children at the Povonski camp had made me think sharply of what a Polish educator had told me: "There are no children left in Poland—they are all little old men and women." But the Bialystok youngsters vociferously disputed that dictum. They crowded and stared with the liveliness of healthy young animals; and when they sang, they made the rafters ring. With them, if it was a "motion song," the boys would shoot their arms out like catapults, punch their partners if they got a chance, and exaggerate the whole action of the piece with that lusty exuberance which means honest mischief, red blood and the joy of being alive. If I had not seen other sights and had not known other things about the children of Poland, I could never have guessed the truth about them from seeing them at Bialystok. What I did see was the simple miracle that could be wrought with just a little care and nursing and a little wholesome food.

"How can we build a nation out of material like that!" Colonel Kasimir Habicht, our liaison officer, had cried in despair

one day as he showed me the records of the refugee camp at Chocyn. Sickness and infectious disease had been so rampant there, and the deaths so many, that the place had been given the name of "the children's graveyard." "But these—you see what can be done with just a little help," the same officer had exclaimed at Bialystok—"these are the hope of Poland."

III

There were types among the Bialystok children which certainly gave one a deep breath of hope for the new republic; character types whose individual stories spelled qualities of sturdiness and determination that ought to play a big part in the making of their country. Two brothers I remember, aged eleven and thirteen. They had walked all the way from Vilna to Bialystok to find shelter in the Red Cross Orphanage, leaving their mother and the smaller children of the family (the father had been lost in the war), simply because there was not enough food at home to go around, and they could not bear any longer to eat the scanty rations needed for the littlest ones. They were manly little fellows, rather quiet and reserved, and much occupied with their new work in the orphanage carpenter shop. For they had not come to beg. They had heard that the Americans would give them work; it was this that had sent them on their venture abroad, tramping 200 miles to earn their living. This was the first question they had asked the day they landed at the orphanage—could they find work?

The carpenter shop was only one of several branches of activity established by the American Red Cross to teach the Polish refugee children self-help and useful trades. Every piece of furniture in the Bialystok Orphanage, every piece of wood I might say, from the flooring to the rafters (and actually including the flooring)—cupboards, tables, benches, beds, all were turned out by the boys themselves. The beds were their special pride. They were made of pine two-by-fours, and were double decked. The top decks were so popular (especially on account of the climbing up at night and the climbing down in the morning) that "turns" had to be arranged, to keep every youngster satisfied. Every child made his or her own bed; they were as trim and orderly as beds at West Point on "inspection."

Then there were the food trays on wheels (also made by the young carpenters); but these served a double purpose, first, to bring in food for the sick; and then for recreation—as many of the very smallest and weakest of the convalescent kiddies as could be piled on them, being wheeled up and down the aisles by their older companions. "What larks!" as Joe Gargery would say.

It was an invention of their own, and they took endless delight in it.

I saw more "little mothers" among the ten and twelve year old girls of that orphanage than ever I laid eyes on before. The life these children had led, scattered over the country, seeking shelter and food and looking out for themselves, seemed to have developed in them a strong spirit of helpfulness. The smaller and weaker ones at the orphanage were cared for and "shown off" with tenderness and pride by the elder ones. Very often little brothers and sisters would cling together inseparably, no matter how happy their new surroundings or how numerous their new playmates, so stamped were they with the impulse of mutual protection and preservation, developed in their wanderings.

Wherever one went in Poland his heart was wrung by the tragedy of the children. But what hurt the most at times was not the sorrow but the joy of these youngsters if they were given the smallest chance to smile and play and forget hunger and suffering. We found ourselves caught between laughter and tears half the time among them, seeing their tragedies turned into comedies, their sobs into misty smiles. There was Ignazy, for instance, the boy who lost his playmate and came to one of the Red Cross shelters hunting for him. Ignazy was not an orphan, but one of the children of a labourer in the railway yards. Janek was his refugee chum whose abode was a box-car. When Janek was finally picked up by the Red Cross and taken away, Ignazy was desolate. So he followed Janek a few days later to the big A.R.C. House, walked in, was mistaken for just another stray, and was put through the whole terrifying process of head-shaving and steam bathing, and then tucked into bed. This all befell him with the swiftness of a tornado, and despite his wildest protestations, before the error was discovered. But he found his Janek, and in the end his little chum went home with him, adopted as his brother by the railway worker and his wife, in spite of the struggle the couple had to keep their own little family fed and clothed.

If we ever doubted that all children are alike the world over, we changed our minds at the time of the "terrible gambling scandal" in the Bilaystok Orphanage. The "scandal" was discovered by one of the nurses when she found that all the buttons in the institution were disappearing. Children must play games. These ingenious little Poles had invented a game something on the plan of marbles and "jacks"; but having neither marbles nor jackstones, buttons, the only available booty, were "shot" for, with the result that all the buttons in the orphanage were rapidly vanishing, at least from their proper sphere. Even the girls' stock was giving out, one or two of the more enterprising boys having cornered the market and sent their less lucky playmates to bribe

the girls to "lend" theirs. It was Adam tempting Eve, and Eve had fallen to such a degree that dressing in the morning was becoming a serious problem, and the keeping up of little pants and petticoats all but an impossibility. Then the nurse discovered why, and "buttons" as the game had been called, was taboo.

The next day safety-pins began to disappear from all the little aprons and blouses and breeches in the house. If "buttons" was forbidden, "pins" was not. A consignment of good old-fashioned American marbles finally solved the problem.

IV

I had heard some of the wonder tales that were told before bed-time in that nursery in Warsaw where we left Corporal Marylka sitting on the floor. I knew all about Morskie Oko, "Eye of the Sea," the fairy lake in the Tatra mountains, where the disobedient princess and her children had been turned into rocks and tears. Then there was the story of the Enchanted Water Lilies which no one may pluck because they are not really water lilies at all, but the souls of Polish maidens, saved by magic from Tartar invaders many centuries ago. Also, there was the Princess changed into a Frog; the Dwarf with the forty-foot beard; the Good Ferryman; the Magic Whip; the wonderful Tailor Thread and his companion, Count Scarecrow, who mended the sky and saved a kingdom; and dozens of such stories delighting the hearts of Polish youngsters. But you never really hear a fairy story until you hear a child tell it. It was not until I became acquainted with the refugee children and learned something of tales they bring with them from all parts of the country, from peasant cottages and small villages huddled within sight and silence of great forests, that I really appreciated what Polish folk-lore is and what a part it plays in the making of the national character from the cradle up.

I had wished to know something about this. I had been asking, "What traditions have these children back of them? What sort of beliefs and wonderments occupy their little minds? What ideals have they and what is the source of those ideals?"

Polish folk-lore is a queer and at the same time a fascinating mixture of fancy, poetry, pagan mythology and Christianity, with such a confusion of Biblical and fairy themes in it that it is quite impossible to separate them. God and Heaven and Christ and the Blessed Virgin, are as familiar figures in the stories Polish children listen to and tell each other as Cinderellas and Sleeping Beauties are to us; and they are as inextricably mixed up with Giant Killers and enchanted princesses. The good peasant, for instance, who shares his loaf with the hungry passer-by is rewarded by a Grand Tour through the Next World in which he beholds all

the marvels of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise—a sort of Divina Commedia—winding up with a really magnificent presentation at the Court of God the Father, where he is introduced to Christ and the Twelve Apostles and the Queen, who of course is the Madonna of Chenstohova.

We may leave it to the theologians to discuss the merits of proper reverence, and so on, or to the rigorist to protest that this is no way to bring up children in the teachings of Christianity; that it is only laying the ground for scepticism to tell children such yarns. There is no answer except the fact that to the youngsters who hear this sort of story, religion is not a far-off, but a very real and intimate thing in which love and kindness and right behaviour are made ideal and familiar, and in which fear and aloofness have no part. As for scepticism, the whole Polish nation disputes that argument. It is certainly not a nation of sceptics. Facts are still miraculous to the Pole and miracles still are facts; the Miracle of the Vistula, for example, which is no child's fairy tale.

The fairy queen and the magic godmother of the Polish child is usually the Blessed Virgin. But she doesn't just sit on a Throne in High Heaven and listen to Angels. (The song she enjoys most, according to Polish lore, is that of the meadow lark, who warbles sweetly at her feet to repay her for having once saved his nestlings from the hawk.) On the contrary, she is kept very busy on earth, playing godmother to the baby girl of the peasant, who paused in the midst of his harvest work to have his little one christened; spinning those fine silver cobwebby threads which so often brush your cheek in the early morning, and which are let down from Heaven for the express purpose of reminding you to do a kind deed sometime before the day is passed; and so on. It is she who makes the sun shine on wet days, by hanging out the little shirt of Infant Jesus to dry, for then of course the sun cannot possibly refuse. It is she who slips a cat out of her big sleeve to save the poor widow from a pest of mice. (The peasant's word for full sleeve literally means "cat.") In short, she occupies herself in a thousand and one ways, this Heavenly Queen of Polish folk-lore, with the affairs of poor, pestered, earthly humanity.

Angels likewise are familiar figures in the life of the Polish child. At Bethlehem—and the stable at Bethlehem, we must not forget, was really the cattle shed of a poor Polish peasant—at Bethlehem "there were over thirty thousand angels showing their best tricks to make the Madonna's Baby laugh." (Could anything be more naïve? Can't you just *see* those joyous angels flying upside down, doing dips and darts, "showing their best tricks to make the Baby laugh"?) These angels were very human in their feelings, too, it appears. Everyone of them wanted to "fuss" with that Baby, dress him and undress him, hold him

and play with him; and they all felt a little slighted when the Queen told them—"No, not even an angel can take a mother's place." (The unconscious pathos of that, among these motherless tens of thousands!)

To the Polish child everything in the world about him is linked some way or other with the supernatural, with holy things. I saw refugee children feeding on roots and on grass. The Polish forests were filled with lost and wandering people who had no subsistence except what the ready earth could give them. But why is the root of the fern so sweet and palatable? Because when the Holy Family was fleeing into Egypt, and the Divine Infant cried with hunger, the fern offered its roots to Him to eat, "even though it knew it must die if its roots were taken." And why is the thistle leaf spotted? Because the Mother of Jesus spilled some of her sweet mother milk over it one day when she was nursing her baby.

Why does the lightning never strike the hazel? Because when Mary—"like a frightened quail," as the legend quaintly puts it—was fleeing with her child from Herod, the hazel offered her its shelter, "though it knew the sword of the wicked king would cut away its branches to hunt for the fugitives." So likewise the aspen always trembles, because it was cowardly when Mary sought its shelter. And the cuckoo must ever be a bird without a nest because it wished to win the favour of King Herod by calling out to him to betray the hiding-place of the little Christ.

If you are a Polish peasant lad, and you look sharp enough when you are alone in the field, ploughing and sweating under the hot sun and tempted, perhaps, to be a bit rebellious, you will see the Little Jesus riding your horse, and with a golden bridle too; because one of the first things St. Joseph did was to teach the boy Jesus how to work. And if you are quite too lonely out there, with only the champ of the harness and the soft turning of the sod to break the stillness, a lark will sing to you; for larks have always sung in ploughed fields ever since the day God the Father took a walk over the Farm of Paradise and heard Adam complaining about things being so awfully dull and quiet. "God the Father just took up a handful of earth from the furrow, tossed it into the air"—and the first lark sang to man.

Orphans figure with striking prominence and frequency in Polish folk-lore. "There are no eyes in all the world so sad as an orphan's eyes," one of the legends begins. This may be one of the heritages of the country's long history of invasion and affliction, with the men of the country for ever off on the frontiers fighting to keep out Tartar and Muscovite (and German and Bolshevik). Whatever the source of the tradition, there is no denying that thousands of little Polish hearts have been comforted

in the night hours, under the stars, in wrecked homes and abandoned trenches and dugouts, in refugee camps and orphanages, by the old old stories handed down for generations, which tell of the love that fairies and angels, and especially the Queen Mother, have for fatherless children. Perhaps this tradition also explains the heartbreaking fervour with which I have seen Polish waifs cover the hands of their American benefactors with kisses, and even fall at their feet to kiss their shoes. " God sent the Americans," was the burden of 90 per cent. of the written thanksgivings received at our Red Cross headquarters in Warsaw.

Two other distinctive features of Polish child-lore impressed me. One was that so many of the tales are tragic; the story of Kasienka and the Prince, for example, in which the little heroine, a slavey in the royal court, dies with her heart pierced by the hunting arrow of the king's son whom she loved. About these tales there is an air of fateful inevitability which unquestionably is a reflection of the nation's history of suffering and endurance. Then, there is the absence of revenge. Is this a stamp put on Polish child-lore by the gentle Slavic nature? Or is it one of the sources of that gentleness? Whichever way it works, the fact is that when you scan Polish folk-lore you find a surprising lot of forgiveness of enemies and inability to cherish a wrong or harbour vengeance, much pleading for the guilty and letting them off with only a salutary modicum of punishment. Perhaps it is just plain applied Christianity? Whatever it be called, it is a racial and a national quality to be considered when we are figuring on world peace and leagues of nations.

CHAPTER TWELVE

"TAKE A CHILD'S HAND"

I

ALL this about Slavic nature is not to say anything so absurd, of course, as that Polish children do not quarrel and fight and do all the other things which youngsters the world over have always done—even well-fed, healthy youngsters! I do believe, however, that the little Janeks and Marylkas of Poland have a mystic touch in them. It pervades the whole country, even the landscape, breathing along the shadowy edge of forests and over the level plains as sure as the wind blows the grass.

But however vivid to their young eyes the hidden wonders of their world may be, Polish children have the same strong instincts as other children; and among these is an undeniably American love of sports, as we found in the readiness with which they take to baseball. We got our first insight into the Polish boys' aptitude for ball, bat, and mit the first day we travelled across Polish territory, when young soldiers played catch with us along the railway tracks when our train was halted. Afterwards I saw children on a Red Cross playground get into the game in fifteen minutes well enough to go to the bat. In the Polish army the boys go in strongly for football. Soccer is the favourite game. I have known one regiment to have as many as four separate teams challenging each other, as well as playing other regiments

Field and track sports are very popular among Polish boys, while athletics for girls are extensively developed, especially by the girl scouts. In normal times there is a good deal of outdoor life for the Polish youngster. From the time that he rolls hoops and spins tops, as hundreds of little ones may be seen doing all summer long in the beautiful Lazienki Gardens at Warsaw, or in the Krakow Planty; from the time he rows a scull on the Vistula; rides his father's plough-horse, or first mounts the saddle of a thoroughbred; hunts rabbits in the field, or skates on the pond—be he city or country bred, the Pole knows sports and games and contests, and has learned how to lose as well as win. After all, the one thing to ask of athletics is, What sort of men, what sort of *morale*, do they produce? Do they make real sportsmen, in

the right sense of the word ? The Pole is a good sportsman. His history demonstrates that.

The boy scout movement flourishes in Poland. It has already played a striking rôle in the history of the new Republic, and its story reveals a side of Polish boy and girl character that is significant when one is studying the nation and its making. Except in that part of the country formerly occupied by Austria, scouting was always prohibited and proscribed, children being expelled from school and their parents persecuted when their connection with the organization was discovered by the German or Russian police. Nevertheless the movement spread and progressed, surreptitiously of course, fostering and keeping alive not only Polish games and sports, but the forbidden Polish language, literature and geography.

When freedom came in 1918 there were over ten thousand boy and girl scouts in Poland. They played a thrilling part in the fighting in those first days, when a ring of enemies pounced on the new-born Republic from every side. They were the first to volunteer for the freshly organized Polish army, which sprang into existence in twenty-four hours. At present there are about twenty-five thousand boys and some ten thousand girls enrolled in the scouts, with three thousand of them still in the army. Their scout training and camp life has served them in good stead, and has made them quick and ready for practical and active service. With the highly popular General Haller at their head, the boys and girls of the Polish scouts are to-day a real element in the life of their country. In no land in the world have the scouts such a tradition as in Poland, despite the still short life of the organization. On their honour rolls are the names of some of their country's most illustrious heroes, among them the young priest Skorupka, "the saver of Warsaw," and that bravest of all the girl martyrs of the Great War, Captain Sophie of Plock, whose story we have already heard.

But the glory of the youth of Poland in the World War does not belong exclusively to the scouts. When the Bolshevik invasion of 1920 began, and Haller organized his "Miracle Army," all the children of the land rushed to the colours, volunteering in numbers and in a spirit that was staggering. There was no stopping them. Their fathers and their brothers were at the front. Even their mothers and sisters were digging trenches, or serving as guards, or in the ranks. So it was that the very children rose up—the hope of the land—and the soil of Poland was wet with the young blood of boys in their teens, who were mowed down by the hundreds under the fire of the Red machine-guns. Unspeakable sacrifice !—yet it was these boys, Skorupka and his own students from his own classroom, and thousands of others like them, who stopped the gap and saved the country.

We used to see them marching in Warsaw, rank after rank of little fellows, trim and tidy and serious faced, stepping out with a grimness of purpose that struck a man's heart cold. I have watched them drilling under the Poniatowski Bridge, when the red light of sundown, flaming like a blaze of glory behind them, cast grotesque shadows across the parade ground, as if their figures were those of old and bent and crippled men. I knew that in other towns, in Poznan, Lwow, and Krakow, the same scene was being enacted. And I would wonder what sort of a shadow this holocaust of boy blood would cast over the manhood of the future Poland. War had already cut the birth-rate in half. The normal 10 per cent. increase of population had been changed to a 30 per cent. decrease. . . . But now one felt that the very vitals of the nation were being drawn. If there had been too much of this—there would not be much Poland to talk about to-day. But the miracle happened. The faith of Poland was the faith of a child, but her strength was the strength of a man.

II

Wherever we went in the field we came across these boy soldiers. Their pluck and endurance in the hospitals, where we so often discovered them sick or wounded, was astonishing, their manliness beyond words. I myself have had them refuse the money I offered them, though they would look me in the eye and say "chleba"—bread—with a brave wistfulness that was almost terrible. There were many of them in the service, even before the 1920 invasion, mostly orphans and homeless waifs whom the Government was doing its best to gather up and place in institutions and schools. But that was easier said than done in the Poland of those days, when institutions and schools had vanished and the whole country lay in ruins. At Christmas 1919 there were by actual count over fifty-five thousand orphans in the city of Warsaw alone. How to care for them ? How to feed them ? There was neither housing nor bedding nor food for them. In one orphanage we found fifty-three children—with three single beds for them to sleep on. The hard floor was the portion of forty-seven. Six lay ill in the beds, two apiece, feet to head. The Polish refugee bureau was then spending fifteen million marks per month caring for children, at an overhead expense of only $3\frac{1}{5}$ per cent. ; but that was only a drop in the bucket. One million children per day were receiving a free hot meal of American food from the Hoover Mission alone, not to mention the thousands cared for by the Red Cross ; but other millions still went hungry. At least the boy soldiers could share the poor rations of the men in the ranks.

To look at the children of any country is to look its future in the face. Is it hopeful? There were moments when one felt in Poland that the country would deteriorate into a nation of consumptives, were it not for the astounding vitality of the stock —and the help given by America. Two million children were suffering for want of medical attention in October 1920, with 20 per cent. of the total child population gone tubercular. In the industrial districts 50 per cent. of the working-men's children were tubercular. Nearly ten thousand children (to be exact, 9,696) died in Warsaw in one year, $37\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of them succumbing to tuberculosis. In Lodz five hundred children were dying every month, 43 per cent. of them tubercular.

And to combat this?

A famine of food and medicine, and a famine of doctors; in all of Poland less than four thousand doctors, a ratio of about eight thousand patients per man; in some districts 15,000. In one year four hundred Polish physicians died of typhus and other diseases contracted while on duty. Free dispensaries, with a thorough home-visiting system, were established all over Poland by 1920 (where 75 per cent. of the children examined were found to be tubercular); but there was no cod liver oil, no milk; neither food nor medicine to give them, and not even the necessary microscopical instruments to make proper examinations. We were obliged to fall back on the use of cottonseed oil to meet this emergency.

When one knows these things (and a few others) about the child problem in Poland, and considers at the same time the pluck and endurance and persistence of the Polish people in handling that problem, along with the inherent clean-bodied vigour of the race, he can only salute. He can never despair. And when he sees the miracle of child resuscitation wrought before his eyes—the blue-skinned, wizened infant grow plump and rosy, the rickety built up and steadied, and hundreds of that vast army of motherless and fatherless and homeless made happy, busy at play and at work, as they were in the American Red Cross orphanage at Bialystok, and in scores of other such institutions; then he knows that Poland's "come back" is an assured thing.

III

A glance at the educational problem of Poland and the manner in which it is being tackled confirms this assurance.

Among my keepsakes is a little scrap of paper which tells the dramatic story of my first acquaintance with Poland's efforts to educate her masses. We were in the Dvinsk region, where American supplies were saving thousands of children from actual starvation. A Polish officer with us stopped our sleigh to explain the details

of a battle which had taken place just a few days before along the road we were travelling. "Here," he said, "our men took their last stand before they entered the town. Some of them fell on the spot where we are standing." He knew his men by name. "Piotr Chania was killed here.'

As he spoke my partner, Jerry, spied a little paper fluttering in the sharp wind, frozen into the crusted snow. It bore the name of Piotr Chania, under which were a few lines of laboriously written A's, B's, and C's. It was a page torn from the boy's copybook, lost somehow when he fell, and left on the spot where he had died. He was sixteen, but had only begun to learn his letters. "Children got very little education under the old régime," the Captain explained. "In the rural districts practically none. We had 60 per cent. illiterates in the army when we began. We have reduced it to 25 per cent."

That army school system which in twelve months could raise the literacy of the Polish soldier 35 per cent. is characteristic of the entire educational scheme of the New Poland. The Pole is instinctively a lover of schooling. He has a traditional reverence for learning, and is justly proud of the fact that the first national ministry of education which Europe ever possessed was founded in Poland in 1773. Perhaps no better testimony to the Pole's regard for education could be found than in the fact that throughout the history of the partitions one of the most favoured methods of persecution indulged in by the Powers was the suppression of native schools and the closing of universities. The alien rulers of the Pole knew how to touch their victim to the quick. As a reaction to this, one of the first steps taken by the new Government, as soon as independence was regained, was the passage of laws assuring the livelihood of the elementary teacher.

A story told me by a member of the Ministry of Education illustrates the response made by the people to Government action in this regard. A party of school officials, on an inspection tour of the war-devastated regions of the East, stopped at a small town which was in a particularly bad way—practically wiped out—but the population of which had already returned, living in impoverished homes made in trenches and dugouts. When the officials noted the unusually discouraging conditions in that town, they were inclined to apologize for coming. "We realize," they told the local delegation which was showing them about, "that our visit here is premature. You have lost too heavily to be able to think of anything yet but the re-establishment of your homes——"

"On the contrary," was the response, "we want a school, and we want it first of all. We can manage as we are, in the dugouts, for a year or so, if we have to. But we can't get along

without a school for our children. That's one of the things we fought for in this district."

They got their school—first of all. As it developed, in fact, they had one, or the beginnings of one, already, located in the "best" dugout in the place, where Mass was celebrated by the parish priest on Sundays, and where on week-days a teacher, chosen from the local population and voluntarily supported by it, taught the youngsters in relays of a hundred each.

I found the Polish school system, although still in its formative period, practical and far-sighted; and the problem itself, which is mostly one of co-ordination and reorganization, became so interesting to me that I made it a point to visit schools whenever I could. As a large part of our child relief work was done through the schools, I had many opportunities of seeing the children actually at work—not on parade, but at their everyday tasks.

The inborn idealism of the Pole finds no readier expression than through the medium of the school. In the school the Poles rightly feel they have their hands on the tangible future, on the hope of the nation, and they seem fired with a determination to mould it not only into something beautiful, but into something lasting and substantial. For instance, in the schools I visited I found a strong tendency to emphasize manual labour, "to glorify work," as one teacher expressed it. If boys, for example, learned dimensions in their arithmetic class they forthwith applied those dimensions in practical work in the school's carpenter shop. School gardens were made an integral part of the curriculum. I saw little housewives of the future working out their study of weights and measures in their own little plots of potatoes and carrots. One Warsaw school has a botanical garden with five hundred growing specimens, among them many valuable medicinal plants, as well as an outdoor lecture room, where the lessons are taught.

Two striking features of Polish child nature, as revealed to us in our contact with the schools, stand out pre-eminently—the strange quietness of the children in large groups; and the originality and frankness of their thought, as expressed in their written exercises. As for the first, their quietness (which I should say simply spells "discipline"): we had almost continuous demonstrations of this during six months' work giving cinema lectures on hygiene to schools. In that time we handled over 250,000 boys and girls, ranging in age from seven years to fourteen and fifteen. To those among us who had done similar work in other European countries the quiet orderliness of the Polish youngsters was hardly short of startling; it was almost uncanny the way these little Slavs, in groups of from four to five hundred, would come and go, taking their places with a docility that would almost make

one wonder just how healthy and vigorous and " common ordinary " they might really be.

But if they were almost too docile and too disciplined in mass formation, an originality and initiative just as striking showed in their individual selves as expressed in their school exercises. Hundreds of essays written by children in various parts of the country passed through our hands during our hygienic lecture work, and the unique literary freshness of these was a constant source of delight. The things these children would say were eye-opening ; there could be no doubt about it, they knew how to think, and they were not afraid to speak their thoughts. One boy of thirteen, for instance, describing a lecture given in a hired cinema hall, set down his views as follows :

> It is true that we suffer from bad sanitation and neglect of personal hygiene—and the hall in which the lecture was given was evidently chosen to demonstrate the fact. The floor and walls were literally thick with dirt.

Here is another example of the Polish child mind expressing itself—not critically this time, but with an originality and a self-revealing simplicity that is very touching. A girl of twelve, in Kielce, describes the Vistula :

> I saw the river for the first time from a hill. Like a great ribbon through the green meadow she goes. She has a queenly dignity in all her movements, irresistible charms in her waves. I ran to see her. Now she goes quietly and again she plays and makes a noise with the waves. With her chatter she breaks the monotonous quiet and then flows peacefully on.
>
> In this swishing noise one can hear the whole past of Poland ; one can hear the complaint against the oppressors of the soil ; and a prayer to the Father of nations, and sorrow, and crying and groans of those who are oppressed. Timidly I took a little water in my hand and made a sign of the cross on my breast. Suffering was tearing my breast.
>
> Vistula ! . . . Vistula ! . . .

The study of languages, which Poland's geographical situation makes imperative, is judiciously carried out. Not only French and English, but German also is taught, the Pole wisely realizing that however he may fear the Teuton, he still must live next door to him and trade with him. In one of the English primary classes I had an interesting hour one day writing names and dates on the blackboard to draw the Polish-American parallel for the children. " 1776 and 1791," I wrote, " Washington and Kosciuszko ; American Independence, the Polish Constitution." Then " 1863 " (the year of the last Polish rising) ; " Lincoln : serfs and slaves." I found the pupils familiar with nearly every American historical name I wrote.

The care given the children's health was a striking feature of the Polish schools ; in this regard I found them abreast with

the latest and best of other countries. Many of the schools which I visited had dental offices, in which was kept a complete record of the teeth of each individual child. Regular visits of dentist and oculist were part of the weekly programme. Athletics were systematically encouraged. In several schools I found not only well-appointed gyms, but also large indoor playgrounds for winter use, glass enclosed, sunny and full of light, but most rigorously ventilated.

The movie machine is another modern feature of the Polish school. It is not only used, on occasion, for community entertainment, but regularly for illustrated lessons in geography, history, and physiology. In short, the up-to-dateness of the Polish schools was a constant revelation to me, among other innovations which I encountered being an experimentation with our much-talked-of Gary system. A compulsory education law is being put into operation, which is meeting with enormous popular success. One outgrowth of this law is the establishment of a system of evening classes for adults, hundreds of whom are eagerly " taking pen in hand " to learn the transcendant art of writing their own names.

The difficulties which Poland has encountered in working out her educational scheme have at times been almost insurmountable. Shortage of teachers, lack of school buildings (4,000 destroyed in the war), shortage of food and clothing for children —these have been some of the chief obstacles to be coped with. Yet, to cite one province alone (the most backward) : in former Russian Poland, where before the war there were only 5,600 primary schools, 7,600 teachers, and 370,000 children, for a school-population of 2,000,000, there were in 1919, after only one year of Polish administration—and that during wartime—10,800 primary schools, 15,600 teachers, and 850,000 children ; and to-day these figures are greatly increased.

In five years, before the end of 1928, the Polish Government, working out its present school plan, foresees the introduction of general compulsory education throughout the country, each child attaining seven years of age to be obliged to enter school and to remain at school for seven years. At the same time the co-ordination of the new high-school system, patterned largely on the American plan, will have been accomplished. According to Polish educators with whom I have talked, the old preparatory-school system in Poland does not specialize enough to fit the youth of the country for particular lines of study in the higher institutions. At present a boy or girl must carry too heavy a burden of general studies while advancing to the university or polytechnic, where specialization begins. The new plan will begin the student's specialization earlier, in the preparatory classes.

IV

If it was in a dramatic manner that Poland's struggle for the education of her youth was first revealed to me, on that snow-covered Dvinsk battlefield, what shall I say of the drama of the Fourth of July celebration in 1920, when the school-children of Warsaw gathered to pay tribute to America ?

That was an event almost too poignantly dramatic for words. Marshalled in perfect orderliness by their scout leaders, regiment after regiment of Polish youngsters, from toddling babes to strapping boys and pinafored girls, marched into Platz Teatralny, where a gigantic replica of the Statue of Liberty had been erected. Twenty-five thousand of them were massed before us in solid phalanxes of cheering, singing ardent young humanity. From the balcony where we stood it seemed as if we were lifted above a sea of upturned faces and fluttering flags.

Those flags ! Those brave attempts of little childish hands to fashion our Stars and Stripes ! Never were the home colours so beautiful as we saw them then, though often the stripes were awry, too few or too many, set perpendicularly instead of parallel ; or the stars, numbering perhaps only half a dozen instead of the proper forty-eight, clustered on a field of apple green instead of azure ! But oh, the rippling and fluttering and the thrill of them in the sunlight !—the loud, happy hum of voices ; the treble cheers of little isolated groups, the pathos of the tiny girls, whose flowery patterned tams were really Red-Cross comfort bags (though we alone of all the thousands of onlookers knew that strictly family secret) ; and then at last the clarion blare of the bands playing the "Star Spangled Banner" ; and the rising voices, swelling at last into the brave lusty chorus of the Polish national anthem ! Was that not something worth living to see and be a part of ?

V

In the thrill and glory of that scene one was apt to lose sight of the actual heroism of the Poles in making such a holiday for us on our national birthday ; yet it was heroic, and we knew it ; for at that very moment while Polish bands played American music and Polish children waved American flags, a new tragedy was impending, in which the children more than any others were doomed to suffer. On that same July 4 of 1920 the Red armies of the Bolsheviks were already thundering up from the east and south, threatening the very existence of the Republic. In two weeks' time the Bolos had chased out that Bialystok Orphanage of ours, and we were obliged to transport it clear across the width of Poland for safety.

With all their hardships those moving days were merry days for the youngsters. In the whole process of transferring the eight hundred children and the entire equipment and personnel of the institution, first to Warsaw, and then further west almost to the German frontier, there was not a single accident, so orderly and well behaved was that large-sized army of boys, girls, and babies. The excited youngsters, in fact, enjoyed their escape with all its hairbreadth adventures like a circus; and, indeed, the long train of fifty-one cattle cars, loaded with children, nurses, beds, and trailing a complete kitchen outfit, with stoves, boilers, canteen, and all accessories, was not unlike a circus, especially when old Nanny was in the picture. Nanny was the orphanage goat, whose special function was to furnish fresh milk for the smallest infants. She made the trip without a mishap, even riding occasionally on top of a box-car to survey the scene and sample the sheet roofing.

The orphanage landed at Liskow in the middle of the night, making the last twelve miles of the journey by wagon and motor. There was consternation in the village at first. Someone, giving the alarm that the Red Cross had arrived, left off the "Cross." "The Reds have arrived!" Certainly, this force of nearly one thousand in wagons and autotrucks appearing in the dead of night, looked very much like an invading army.

There were various complications. The "army" slept in the open the first night. The next day tents were put up—but the only available space for them was in a field of grain still uncut, for lack of help. (Most of the men and boys of the community were at the Front.) So the Red Cross men and all the larger orphanage boys went at it, harvested the crop for the Liskow peasants, and pitched their tents in the cleared space.

But by this time the nurses had made a discovery even more horrible than the famous pin-and-button scandal of Bialystok. There was an orchard nearby, and there were green apples. With boys thrown in, you can guess the rest.

Happily there was also castor oil!

One of the little fellows had a bad fit of lonesomeness (following the green apples), during which he wrote the most pathetic of letters to his mother, regarding whose whereabouts neither he nor anyone had the least idea; she was very likely dead by the roadside back in the Russian plains, whence the boy had come with a trainload of refugees. This letter he confidently entrusted to one of the nurses, with injunctions to "send it off," an unshakable belief existing that Americans can do anything. When that letter was translated there were tears wetting the smiles of those who read it.

"O my mametczka, dearest of little fat mothers," the letter

said, " do not scold your growing son Wiktor because he is very lonely. I will be good. The Americans are so good there is no telling, only it isn't the same though I have much to eat and beautiful pants. There are meats to eat, and even breads, and also medicine when you are sick." (Memories of castor oil !) " But I am not sick any more. And many good things, but littlest of dear fat mothers, there are no herrings. I will give my heart for a herring. Please to send your growing son Wiktor a herring, or he must die, or run away where herrings are once more."

Perhaps *you* do not realize how toothsome a good brown herring is to chew on ? Perhaps you cannot feel the depth of the tragedy of Wiktor's letter. Wait till I tell you its sequel.

Wiktor did run away. The pressure was too great on his lonely little heart—or stomach—or whatever part of his young anatomy it was that longed most for the salty relish. But his nurse knew nothing of his disappearance, because she had driven into the nearest town for fresh supplies early that morning, and did not discover Wiktor's truancy until evening, when she was coming home in the dusk.

A little huddled figure showed down the road, trudging along with a stick, like a grandfather. The nurse stopped the camionette and waited. That solitary figure had a familiar look. It was Wiktor.

" Where are you going, Wiktor ? "

The truant was struck dumb. He could make no answer. A pucker came into his little pale face, his stick dropped, one fist began to falter up towards his eyes. Then something like " herring " sounded from his trembling lips.

" But Wiktor ! " The nurse jumped down beside him and put her comforting arms around him. " We've got herrings, Wiktor, a whole bushel of them. Herrings for everybody. Pile in."

Wiktor went to sleep on the nurse's lap long before the camionette reached the orphanage. In one hand he clutched a shiny toothsome herring, already well sampled by sharp young teeth. The Polish driver smiled and said something to himself. " What is it you are saying, Stas ? " the nurse asked.

" I can't very well say it in American. In Polish it's ' Dziecko za rękę—matkę za serce.' It means—well, something like this : ' Take a child's hand, you take a mother's heart.' "

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A FIGHTING PACIFIST

I

It was in the office of the Polish Red Cross at Warsaw that I first heard the story of the death and burial of General Joseph Haller. And I heard it from the lips of the General himself!

The Haller funeral was held in the dusk of a May evening in 1918, at the end of the second day's battle of Kaniow, in the Ukraine, following the victory of the Germans under Marshal Eichorn's overwhelming numbers. The grave was dug in the black loam that borders the banks of the Dneiper, and into it the body was pitched with short shrift and scant trumpeting of the honours due to military rank and valour. Around the grave stood a group of captured Poles, who trembled while the first nightingales of spring sang over the dull swish of spades and sod.

"No quarter," had been the Teuton cry against this "rebel," as the Germans called him, who already had nearly wrung from their grasp the freshly plucked fruits of their Brest-Litovski triumph. To make doubly sure of him they had put a price on his head. "Haller, dead or alive! One hundred thousand marks to the man who brings him in."

Was it guilt that made those captive Poles blanch and shake around the new-made grave? Was there terror in their souls for having branded themselves with the mark of traitor to win the award set for the capture of their leader? It was they, true enough, who had brought the body in, a poor, battered, unrecognizable thing, its Polish uniform bloody and torn to shreds. The award was theirs, and the favour of their captors. Yet they stood pale with fright; they scarcely breathed with suspense.

No leader of soldiers in all the histories of war ever has been more loved or more ardently followed by his men than Joseph Haller. Yet if the Germans could have read the hearts of those Legionaries who now beheld the body they had delivered to their captors cast ignominiously into a ditch, they would not have found grief there, nor rage, but rather a wild joy, an exultation that took all the will power of their beings to conceal.

It was this terrible joy of theirs that made their knees shake

under them as the Haller grave was filled—joy, and the fear that their joy would be discovered. For they were not traitors at all, but heroes. "Yes, heroes indeed," exclaimed General Haller, as he recounted the story to me in Warsaw two years later. Heroes indeed! for at that moment as they stood trembling about the grave dug for their commander, while the Germans examined the broken body and noted whatever marks of identification they could find—while all that ghastly work went on, these soldiers knew a secret that even the furtive glance of an eye might betray. They knew that Haller, the real Haller, alive and fighting, the leader whom they would indeed follow to the grave, was actually riding as that grave was dug, on to Kiev—on to Moscow—sweeping with a chosen band of his legionaries out of the German reach, in to the Russian lines—safe and sound, with the cause of Poland still on the cry.

The escape of Haller from the Germans at Kaniow and the substitution of another body for his by a handful of his loyal legionaries, makes one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of the War. The whole story of Haller, in fact, runs on just such heroic and daring lines, and is filled with the dash, and peril, and escape, the fight, defeat, and victory, that give lustre and glory to war. Yet the hero of it all, who sits to-day in his office at the headquarters of the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw directing one of the giant tasks of his country's reconstruction, far from being a lover of camp, or march, or battle, is by his own avowal a hater of war and a pacifist. "A pacifist, absolutely," he declared. "I hate war. All Poles hate war. All of Poland hates war. Can you find a true soldier anywhere in the world who does not hate war? War to the soldier is sacrifice. Times come when that sacrifice must be made, when there is no choice. But I have never known a fighting man yet in all of Poland who was not at heart a man of peace—a pacifist."

But it was not in an office chair that this Polish reconstructionist learned to love peace, and to know the value of it to a nation. He learned the lesson in the saddle, in the field, in the trench, in danger and hardship. That wild ride out of the clutch of Eichorn's claws at Kaniow, the escape to Kiev, and to Moscow—this was by no means the first perilous adventure in which Haller had figured at the risk of his life. Nor was it the last. But one must know his story from the beginning to measure the man, either as a fighter or a pacifist.

II

Such figures as Josef Haller do not occur in history daily. He is a man surcharged with that indefinable quality which we call

"personality." Every glance of his eye, every move of his sturdy square-shouldered frame, has personality in it. True enough, people who have seen him only in passing have called him "ugly," his dark face can look so stern, his bearded jaw so set. But those who know him, who know the flash of his smile, lighting up his countenance with the warmth of sun on a rugged country; who know the blithe "come hither" in his black eyes, crinkly with *bonhomie* and good fellowship—to these, Haller is far removed from ugliness. And though he is lame, with a crippled leg, limping and carrying a heavy rough stick, he has an electric stride. The ruggedness of the Tatras is in him—the hill country that gave him birth. But in Poland the hill country is likewise the south. And happily he was fostered far enough down the Carpathian slopes to be spared any glacial aloofness in his make-up. Only the fervid sun and the strong winds of the foothills could breed this sort of man.

He is stamped with the dusky colouring of out-of-doors. He spent his youth in the free range of his father's estate in the Podgorze district, south of Krakow, learning to ride bareback like a cowboy when he was a mere tot. Patriotism, public duty, and hard work were traditions in the house where, on August 13 1873, he was born. His mother, of French descent, daughter of one of the Polish heroes of 1831, was of the old genteel school of woman and lady who leads the life of housewife, yet reigns in her home like a queen, worshipped by peasants and tenants the length and breadth of her estate. His father, Director of the Polish Landowners' Credit Society, was the constructionist type of proprietor, a keen man of business, leading in the activities of his district. His father's father, likewise a landed farmer, had been President of the Republic of Krakow, the "Free State" erected in 1815 by the Treaty of Vienna (when Poland was divided for the last time among the Powers), but which in 1846 was annexed to Austria. His uncle, Cæsar Haller, had been a leader in the rebellions of 1848 and 1863.

It was in such an atmosphere that the young Josef grew up, learning among his first lessons in life the responsibility of the landed proprietor, upon whom souls and acres depend. And it was not theory alone that he learned, but the practical work of the farmer and stockbreeder.

Nevertheless he was destined for a military career, and he passed quickly from his first schooling in Lwow to the Military Academies at Koszyce and Hronice, and thence soon afterwards to the College of Arms at Vienna. In 1895, when only twenty-two, he graduated with the rank of first lieutenant of artillery. Next he was assigned as an instructor in Imperial technical schools; then he became commandant of one of these schools, with the

rank of captain. But a short time later he retired to private life, in which, as he says, the richest and happiest of his years were spent.

All this time, it must be remembered, Haller, Pole of the Poles, with a dream never dying in his heart of some day seeing his country freed and reunited, remained still an Austrian subject. Perhaps he was able to half forget the fact at times, for Austria at that passage in her history was handling her share of proud Poland with a certain commendable decency. But in 1912—who knows what smokes of war Vienna already sniffed on the wind! —Haller, like many of his compatriots, was reminded of his alien allegiance. He was recalled to the army.

The grit, initiative, and unfailing good humour which had made him an athletic leader and an idol among both his schoolfellows and his students, were rare qualities for the profit of Austria in the task now assigned him Knowing well the game she played, Austria encouraged at this time the organization of native Polish military units. She knew she would need them. She permitted them to have officers of their own nationality, allowed them to be garrisoned in their own districts (unlike Russia and Germany, who invariably shipped their Polish conscripts far from home), and generally played up the Polish fighter within his native boundaries. To Haller was now entrusted the establishment of schools for commissioned and non-commissioned Polish officers, and for these he personally drew up plans for a course of training which is still regarded among military experts as a model of its kind. He was an "old hand" at this. From babyhood he had watched the manœuvres of the Austrian forces which were carried on in the fields within stone's throw of the Haller home, and not without profit, as an anecdote of his childhood relates. One day, when he was four years old, the Prince of Wurtemburg, commanding the manœuvres, accosted the child, a wooden sword at his side. "Perhaps you'd like to fight me?" said the Austrian prince; whereat the little fellow whipped out his toy blade and parried every thrust of his Imperial challenger. "What are you going to be when you grow up?" asked the Prince. "A Polish soldier!" was little Haller's prompt answer. "A Polish soldier"—not merely a soldier, but a Polish soldier.

III

The second year of military activity, of planning, organizing and instructing Polish troops had just touched its meridian when suddenly in August 1914 the War broke out. Now still another life opened up to Haller, the real life of the soldier, saddle and manœuvre, battery and battle; a chance for him to make practical

application of those military theories of his which by this time had won him recognition in the first ranks of Austrian authorities.

The next four years were crammed with action. First the Polish Legion of the East was organized, which he led to Lwow within a few weeks of the declaration of war—Pilsudski in the meantime having advanced into Russia with his regiments of Polish Fusiliers. Then he organized the Third Legion and went with it to the Carpathian front. Later he became commander of what was called the "Haller Group," and in the action which filled these quick-fire days was twice seriously wounded, the last time badly disabled. But by June 1916 he was on his feet again —"on one foot anyway," he laughed, describing himself at that time—and in command of the famous "Iron Brigade," with which from then on he fought through all the campaigns against the Russians until the treason of Lenin and Trotsky was achieved at Brest-Litovski in February 1918.

No more tragic position could be imagined than that of the Poles following the outbreak of the World War. Split up under three sovereignties, they were now forced, by the fate of their ancient partition among the Powers, to a fratricidal division among themselves—brother against brother; the Polish conscripts of the German and Austrian armies fighting the Polish conscripts of Russia. But in reality there was a secret balm to heal the wound. Though the body of Poland was sundered and bleeding, the Polish soul remained indefectible. A tremendous elemental unity of interest bound together these outwardly opposing forces. In the back of every one of these hosts of Polish heads was a common dream and a common purpose—a liberated Poland, to be realized sooner or later, by the patient biding of time, at the cost of any sacrifice, and regardless of the alien flags of the moment under which every Pole must fight.

But there must first be a Polish army "That, under our present dispensation," General Haller explains, "had to be inevitably the cornerstone of our national structure." So it was that, while in Austria, Pilsudski and Haller, taking every advantage of the chance their enemy at home gave them, mustered up their fusiliers and legionaries, in Russia at the same time another Polish patriot, General Dowbor Musnicki, had gathered the Poles of Muscovy into an army of their own. The aim of each of these separated Polish forces was one and the same—the breaking down of their common enemies, one at a time. Thus, in fact though in secret, it was not Pole against Pole, but "Austrian" Pole against Russian, "Russian" Pole against the Teuton, and all Poles for Poland—looking to the day when they could strike hands together on their own free soil over their frustrated conquerors.

By this time, however, the Teuton was winning heavily, and

the more victory was his, the bolder he became in repudiating the promises he had made to Poland early in the War. That, of course, could not greatly surprise the Poles, long inured to the treachery of their chief enemy. Few, if any, Poles had entertained illusions as to the policy behind the recent military encouragement of their several conquerors. But now it enraged them to see how quickly, with Russia's defeat, Poland was ground deeper and deeper under the heel of the German victor, who had entered shouting " Liberty," but who stayed only as a new conqueror.

When Lenin and Trotsky sold Russia to the Kaiser at Brest-Litovski in 1918, they delivered Poland into the hands of a worse tyrant than any Czar had ever been. By one clause of the Brest-Litovski treaty a large slice of Poland was handed over to the Ukraine; and by another, a secret clause, later brought to light, the remainder of Poland was abandoned to Germany. No Pole could behold this spectacle, nor endure this new shame that was put on his native land, without protesting. The protest of Haller and his legionaries was such a flaming up of the soul that it swept them in one stride over the crest of an adventure unique in the pages of military history. They threw Austria and her forced allegiance behind them, and went smashing through her lines into the Ukraine, to join Dowbor Musnicki and his " Russian " Poles.

Hot battles at Rarancza and Rotkitna saw Haller's legions pounding down the ranks of the very army they had been forced to follow a few days before. Then on to Soroki, on the Dneister, thence cross country to the Dnieper, to Kaniow, where his drama was to reach a sudden climax.

Here at Kaniow, however, it was no longer the pursuing Austrians that Haller must fight, but the Germans, under Marshal Eichorn, reinforced by the Bolsheviks, both drawn up in overwhelming numbers, blocking the advance of the Poles definitely. It was a hopeless situation, with Haller and his legionaries caught squarely between two fires. After two days of terrific fighting the Polish leader decided that only strategy could win his game. His eyes were set on a greater objective, of course, than the Germans could guess. Faced east, he was really fighting West; and he saw the day when Poland would need in the West every mother's son among these legionaries now fighting beside him. He gave the order for dispersal; fooled the Germans with his own supposed capture and burial; cut through the lines with as many as could make the dash, and went ahead into Russia on his long way around to France—with a German prize of one hundred thousand marks offered for his capture.

General Haller laughed as he told the story. " But my head isn't worth nearly as much as that to-day—and it isn't on account

of the rate of exchange, either. One hundred thousand marks, the Germans offered—why, that would be a million in Polish money! Yet the other day the ladies sold my head at a Warsaw charity bazaar for three thousand—and it was autographed, too, to absolutely identify it."

IV

Following the escape at Kaniow, Haller and his band reached Kiev in safety; later Moscow. The work of raising more Polish troops was resumed Two divisions—the Odessa and the Siberian Chausseurs—were recruited in short order. A forced advance was then made northward, Murman, with its railway and outlet to the west being the objective. At Murman he raised the Murman detachment, and thence, with these forces, ventured on the long journey to France, where Poland was to join hands with the Allies. The famous Haller Army, linked for ever with the story of America in the Great War, thus had its birth.

The tireless work of Paderewski in the United States had by this time borne rich fruit. In the first place, before America entered the War, thousands of Polish Americans, hearing the summons of their great compatriot, had rallied to the cause of democracy, going into Canada to enlist there with their Polish-Canadian colleagues in the Dominion Army. Then came our own declaration of war, with veritable hosts of Poles rushing to the colours. Then came also America's first recognition of the Polish Republic, when, at Paderewski's request, the Poles of America were allowed to form a separate army of their own, the ranks of which were swelled by thousands of other Polish volunteers whose age had excluded them from American service. When Haller began the organization in France of his great army of legionaries, Poles from every land under the sun came streaming to his call; from France, from England, from Italy, from all the Americas. Over 25,000 of this force, one-fourth of the entire Haller Army, were from the United States.

The Armistice of November 11 1918 was the Gabriel cry for a resurrected Poland. But it signalled only the beginning of Poland's real fight for liberty and independence. Decrees of the Allies might set up a reunited State; but by the decree of Providence, Poland must seal her newly-gained freedom with travail and blood. Germany and Austria had fallen, and Pilsudski's young armies, springing up in the night out of the very soil of Poland, had cleared the land of the invaders, who had fled in cowardly ignominy before the risen hosts of Polish idealists. But the Teuton power was far from being laid. German intrigue quickly raised a new enemy for Poland in the Ukraine; and

there was now, thanks equally to German hate, a new and more terrible Russia than that of the Czars for Poland to fend from her borders—the Red Russia of the Bolsheviks.

So the time had come at last for Haller and his hundred thousand to stand on Polish soil, under the Polish flag, fighting freely and openly for their native land. Thus, early in the spring of 1919 Haller brought his army, with its twenty-five thousand "Yank" Poles, out of France, through Germany, into Poland.

The heart of Poland fairly broke with joy at this homecoming of her own. Of old, in other days, she had rejoiced at the entry of friendly allies marching to her aid. But the day that Haller and his legionaries came she welcomed not an ally, but the sons of her blood and bone. The whole nation rose to acclaim them, strewing the railway tracks with flowers, singing old songs of the motherland, shouting, weeping for joy. From the moment Haller and his army struck the Polish border the journey was a triumphal progress. The triumph began, indeed, long before that, and many touching scenes were enacted as that joyous processional of singing and shouting men, of flag-decked engines and box cars gay with green branches, festooned with the Stars and Stripes of America, the white and amaranth of Poland, and the silvery Polish eagle, made its way eastward. In the zone of the Prussian frontier, still undefined and still on the beat of the German police, Poles came out, at the risk of hustling and arrest, to shout their *vivats*. Into the heart of a solitary wood, where the railway cut a long curving avenue of seclusion, one old man, a veteran of Poland's Rebellion of '63, wearing his treasured veteran's cap, made his way beyond the range of the German guards to cry out his "Polska! Polska!" At another village a young woman with a band of children came running across the fields with armfuls of wild flowers to shower at the troops. The young woman was of the old Polish house of Chlapowski, a niece of Haller's life-long friend, Helena Modjeska.

Across the width of Poland, which shouted and wept its joyous acclaim of him, Haller hurried on with his men to the Ukrainian front and there plunged into the thick of the fight. One victory after another crowned the days that followed. He smashed the German conspiracy in the Ukraine, retook Lwow, retook Boryslaw with its rich oil wells, and cleaned all Malopolska of the enemy, both Ukrainian and Bolshevik.

His tasks in the south-east finished, commands followed on the western and north-western fronts, where, during the winter and spring of 1919–1920, both Czechs and Germans were harassing the new republic. This chapter of Haller's military activities meant one lesson clearly read to Poland's enemies—that, though young, weak, and impoverished, she was still ready and able to

defend her rights. She was almost completely surrounded by hostile forces at that time, but she demonstrated her power to hold and handle them all. The culmination of these campaigns was signalized at Putsk, on the Baltic, by Poland's formal reclamation of the sea, from which she had been cut off for over a century by her German conquerors.

V

No review of the career of Haller would be complete without some picture being given of that memorable March day in 1920, when, in the name of the Republic, he reclaimed those Baltic waters which for centuries had been counted among Poland's most cherished possessions. The German conquerors had gone, the last German troops had evacuated their last point of vantage on the peninsula; the little fishing town of Putsk, like all the rest of Pomerania, was once more free and Polish; and though their historic port of Danzig was still in alien hands, so great was the joy of the Poles at touching once more, independent and unprohibited, the open Baltic wave, which meant for them access to the outer world, that they gave vent to their feelings in a ceremony such as only a poetic and imaginative people could conceive.

On his "wedding" finger General Haller wears a rare, curious ring, which commemorates that ceremony It is a mate to the ring with which Poland was wedded to the sea at Putsk. All the solemn ritual of the Church was invoked to beautify that marriage. On the beach an open-air altar was erected, and there, with thousands of citizens marching out from the town singing anthems and national songs, with bands playing and flags flying, the historic nuptials were celebrated.

When all the altar candles were lit and flickering in the wind, and all the singing populace had gathered around the officiating priests, the blare of bugles announced the approach of the Polish troops. In stately procession they came marching down the sands, Haller, mounted on a white charger, leading them. At the altar he dismounted and knelt, receiving the two blest rings. Then, while the bells of the town began to ring, while the priests' voices rose in the final chant of the Mass, while the bands played the stirring hymn-like notes of "Poland is Not Yet Dead," and the people sang in a chorus that swelled to the sky, the General, remounted on his charger, rode into the tide. He drew his sword, saluted with it, and dipping its shining blade into the water, cast the second wedding ring into the sea. The streaming amaranth and white of the Polish standard fluttered at that moment to the wind, hoisted on a staff set far out in the water. And the shouts of the people and the legionaries drowned the voice of their leader as

he declared Poland and the Baltic once more united "in the name of God and the free Republic!"

VI

Days of quiet seemed ahead for Poland in the spring of 1920. In the east the Bolshevik invaders had been driven beyond the Dvina and the Dnieper. The western territories were cleared and busy with their rehabilitation. Haller, his martial tasks completed, resigned his command. His "Yanks" were chafing to get home to America. He himself was eager for the work of reconstruction which he kept steadily in view. He launched the demobilization of his army, shipping transport after transport of his men from Danzig to New York. But the dispersal of his forces was hardly completed before the cry of alarm rang in Poland's ears once more. The great counter-drive of Trotsky's Reds had begun, sweeping up from Kiev and down from Dvinsk, till the Republic shook with the thunder of their approach. Haller was immediately recalled, and the task of raising an emergency army to back the retreating regulars was placed in his hands by the Council of National Defence.

No democracy in peril can ever read that page of Polish history written by Haller and his "Miracle Army" in the summer of 1920 without taking heart of courage. All doubts of the basic unity of the Polish people, who, forcibly partitioned for over a century, had only begun to learn the first lessons of national co-operation when this terrible crisis came upon them, vanished in the light of that mighty act of union. Within the space of six weeks Haller rallied around him a force of 75,000 volunteers, drilled them, armed them, and led them victoriously through the long defence of their capital. No army since the days of Lexington and Concord has gone to battle aroused to such a pitch as this. Disaster was trampling the inner thresholds of the country. Hope seemed lost before the overpowering numbers of the enemy whose Red hosts were rolling up the weary and disease-stricken Polish regulars at twenty miles a day. The dynamic personality of Haller electrified the Polish masses at that moment. He drew volunteers like a magnet, held them, moulded them into an ordered, moving force, and swept them to an unbelievable, an impossible victory. In that blackest of all Poland's black hours, Joseph Haller, afire with purpose, sure and foreseeing in decision, strong in his faith in God, whom he invoked daily in public as he knelt at his morning Mass, personified the deathless Poland of the ages, brave, patriotic and religious. It was these qualities in him that gave him such power over his people. He was like a light to them. They followed him and obeyed him because in him they beheld themselves at their highest and best.

Those were wonderful and terrible days! The streets of Warsaw, Lwow, Poznan, Krakow streamed with volunteers—men and boys, women and girls, old grey veterans and lads not out of school. How they marched and sang, how they drilled and sweated, heartening the homekeepers, shaming into action whatever slackers might be standing by! Every open space, every vacant lot was a training-ground. And the name of Haller was on every lip; at every turn his face and his figure beckoned from the recruiting posters, calling the nations to arms.

Then the "miracle" happened. At the stroke of the hour set for the fall of Warsaw—for the long prophesied spanning of Trotsky's "Red Bridge" that was to open the western world to anarchy—the Miracle of the Vistula happened, that turning of the tide of war which baffles reason and is beyond human explanation. The Reds were within twelve miles of Warsaw (nearer than the Germans got to Paris in 1914); the capital was surrounded. In the north the last hope was gone—the Danzig railway line was cut; the Bolsheviks had penetrated clear to the Prussian frontier. They were coming in from the south; their guns were within sight and hearing. They were closing around the city in a vast circling "nutcracker" movement, which had gained such momentum that disaster seemed inevitable. The Polish regular forces, ill fed and worn out by months of campaigning on that vast front that had broken Napoleon, had now almost gone to pieces, with a decimating wave of dysentery sweeping through their ranks to finish the job. They were dying by the thousands; pouring into Warsaw in long streams of box cars, where the living, the expiring, and the dead were packed in fearful masses of broken and agonizing humanity. I stood in such cars as these, where the very silence of the corpses, covered and uncovered, seemed to be pierced by the delirious cries of the dying. It was a moment in the life of Poland that froze the heart of the nation to its core, and shook the world with threat. Yet the miracle happened—thanks, as the Poles say, to God and His Mother, who gave them Weygand and his Fochian tactics; Pilsudski and his unconquerable will; last, but not least, Haller and his volunteers. The tide *was* turned! It was red with the boy-blood of young Poland, following Haller to the Boug; retreating with him back to the Gates of the Citadel; advancing again to the fiery field of Radzymin. It was all one tremendous chaos of flame and blood, of thunder and terror and smoke. But Poland and the world was saved!

VII

Such is the story of Haller, the fighter. But to have told it so is to have revealed only one side of the man. The other side

shows us the Pacifist, the Constructionist, who sees, beyond the travail of her fighting days, a Poland settled in quiet and contentment, her farms restored, her factories producing, her mission realized—the cementing of East and West in peace and amity.

When Haller had won his captainship under the Austrian régime, it will be remembered that he retired to private life. But not to ease or idleness. Retirement for him meant harder work and a bigger task than even his military career offered him. He took charge of the family estate, began a thorough study of economics and agriculture, and thus commenced what he hoped was to be a lifetime career as a developer of Polish soil and resources. He went deeply into the questions of rural housing and sanitation, experimented with crops, stocks, fertilizers, and machinery—working in the fields himself to learn, first hand, what the tiller of the soil must know. He was idolized by the "Gorali," or mountaineers, many of whom fought under him as legionaries. "That was one thing my military training taught me," he explains. "The man who would command men and lead them must first be one of them." Haller had dreams and ideals for his farms and his tenants, but he knew well that to realize these dreams, or to ever accomplish anything in the way of leading his people ahead, he must begin by knowing all that they knew where they stood.

Before the War, the co-operatives of Southern Poland were among the foremost organizations of their kind in Europe. This was due in a very large measure to the activity and leadership of Haller, who, far from confining his energies within the boundaries of his own estate, was out for a general development of the country, through the improvement of its agricultural industries. He became a moving spirit in the establishment and expansion of farmers' co-operatives throughout Malopolska, specializing particularly in dairying. Dairies and cheese factories, besides various other associations for the pooling and marketing of produce, crops, hides, the purchase of machinery, and so on, sprang up under his initiative. The dairy question finally interested him to such an extent that he made an extensive trip through Switzerland and Denmark to study the methods of those countries in the cultivation of soils, the breeding and care of cattle, and the production of milk, butter, and cheese.

It was from this absorbing work among his compatriot farmers and landsmen that the Austrian Army had taken him in 1912. But through all the years that followed the farmers and the farmers' co-operatives, the crops and the dairies, were always on the horizon of his mind; "for Poland," he tells us, "is first of all an agricultural country, and her soundest foundation lies in the welfare of her agriculturists, the ones who produce her food

supply and make possible her industrial development." He knew, too, by first-hand experience what disasters war brought to the farming people, for all of his own properties were lost. Financially the War has ruined him. He has nothing left but a little cottage in the mountains.

When General Haller had completed his martial tasks in the Ukraine; when he had accomplished the reclamation of the western provinces, and had penetrated to the sea; when he resigned his command in the spring of 1920 and demobilized his army; each of these times he had thought his soldiering done with and his "real" work to begin again. But each time new emergencies recalled him to the line. Then came Warsaw, the crowning climax of his military career, when, from early June, through all the strenuous midsummer days of recruiting, organizing, inspecting, and fighting, he never rested. In the great seven-day strategic retreat from the River Boug, August 3rd to 10th, and in the final engagements which began August 12th, he scarcely slept. Yet with the danger past and the country once more secure, instead of turning at last to the respite he had so richly earned, we find him instead, within two weeks—on August 25th—plunged into a new and vaster work than any he had yet undertaken—the direction and reorganization of the Polish Red Cross, which ranks to-day the second in the world, with over a million members.

"This is the biggest army I've been given yet!" the General exclaimed, as he spread a mass of documents on the table before him to explain his work. "And the happiest army!—a million fighting pacifists. Yes, we're all pacifists. But we have an awful fight on our hands—a fight against disease, starvation, despair. The army? Yes, I remain on the active list, ready for any call. But we have disbanded our volunteers. We have sent our men and women back to work, our boys and girls back to school. They have fulfilled their duty. We have peace at last!"

"Russia," General Haller continued, "will not always be our enemy—only as long as she is leagued with Germany, who for a long time yet, I am afraid, will threaten and make trouble, not only for Poland, but for the whole world. From the day she sent Lenin to Brest-Litovski, Germany has been responsible not only for Poland's suffering, but for the world's danger."

Haller goes at his "pacifist job" with the same clean-cut precision and robust vigour that have won him fame as a soldier. He has the wide vision of the constructionist. He did not study soil, crops, housing, sanitation, stockbreeding, nor organize dairy co-operatives and farmers' associations without learning vital things concerning the foundations of national life. Trained soldier though he is, he thinks nevertheless in terms of people and nation, not alone of army and fighting man. It could have

been supposed that one of his experience, taking up Red Cross work, might be inclined to over-militarize it. One glance at Haller's programme proves quite the contrary. This programme, as he himself outlined it to me, includes systematic plans for the sanitation of towns and villages, the founding of hospitals for epidemic diseases and sanitoriums for tuberculosis; the feeding, housing and clothing of war victims and refugees; the establishment of milk stations, kindergartens and schools for children; the care of orphans; and the rehabilitation and employment of discharged and disabled soldiers. Does this sound an ambitious programme for an organization scarcely a year old? But it is a young giant, this Polish Red Cross, already next in size to that of the United States, and greater than those of England, France, or Italy.

"During the critical months of 1920," General Haller explains, "the Polish Red Cross spent twenty million marks in its work. Its entire administration costs ran less than 5 per cent. That means that for every mark spent 95 per cent went into actual relief." Assuredly a record to be proud of!

"We employ 4,000 nurses, and are operating 20 hospitals, 7 sanatoriums, 4 sanitary trains, 52 dressing and first-aid stations, 29 disinfecting columns, and various other health activities. Over six hundred of our nurses have already taken the short course of training established for us by your American Red Cross in 1920—and that beginning, let me say, gives promise of being one of the most far-reaching works of philanthropy done in stricken Poland by generous America." (Out of that initial course there have developed since two full-fledged training schools for nurses, one at Warsaw and one at Poznan, both still under American administration.)

Fifty-five libraries for sick soldiers, besides an ever-increasing number of elementary and trade schools for disabled men, are further items in the list of accomplished things. And this whole record, it should be remembered, is to be read in the light of such disaster and loss as no other country in the world has suffered since the War began.

When he spoke of the nurses' training courses, General Haller dilated on the work of the American Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies, and the American Relief Administration in Poland. He summed it up this way: "Without losing sight for a moment of all that has been done by America in the way of immediate relief—especially among the children; nevertheless I would say that the big lasting thing accomplished has been the aiding, fostering, encouragement, and guidance of our own native welfare organizations. We owe more to the American people than could ever be repaid, not alone for supplies and material help of

every conceivable kind, but, above all, for the moral backing, the example and definite guidance given us. Americans in Poland have never been guilty of pauperizing. They have recognized the fact that Poland is not a pauper nation. I think nothing finer could be conceived in the way of philanthropy than this American ideal of helping others to help themselves."

Besides being president of the Polish Red Cross, General Haller is also at the head of the scout movement in Poland, of which his own fourteen-year-old son Eric was one of the most active workers at the Front during the invasion of 1920. Boy scouts and girl scouts, as I have already noted, in a previous chapter, have played a vital part in Polish history since 1914. The first Polish volunteers in the present war were, in fact, recruited from the ranks of the scouts; there are 3,000 of them still in the army. Altogether, there are about 25,000 scouts and nearly 10,000 "girl guides" in Poland to-day—an army of Polish youth to which Haller is a veritable idol.

And now, with his eye always on the future, his mind always constructive, he has rallied another young host about him in the Polish Junior Red Cross, which, just organized, has already been established in some 40 cities with a membership reaching the hundred thousand mark. He is as proud of his Juniors as a dad of his kiddies. "In 1920, in Warsaw alone," he told me, "these youngsters of ours raised 150 tons of foodstuffs in the civic gardens, which they themselves planted, cultivated, and harvested in the vacant lots around the city. This included 40 tons of potatoes, besides beets, cabbage, carrots, and so on—a supply sufficient to feed a large number of families that would have gone hungry if it had not been for our Junior farmers."

The glow of the countryman's pride kindled Haller's eyes as he talked of his youthful farmers. "Of course," he said, "it is a mere platitude to say they are the hope of our country, our children. But when a man looks over the records of Poland's losses in child life—10,000 dead here in Warsaw, last year alone; a million of them tubercular throughout the country; over 15 per cent. of all our children rickety, deformed, defective—then you understand what we mean when we talk about our children. We must save them. We cannot build a future on a foundation of broken humanity, nor offer a race of devitalized men for world citizenship. We must save the children."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

POLAND AT PLAY

I

ONE of the first sights I saw that first sunny day in October 1919, when I stood on the Praga Bridge at Warsaw on guard at our Red Cross supply train, was a sculling team rowing up the Vistula. It made a fascinating picture—the long harmonious stroke of the oarsmen gliding back in their seats with each strong pull; the glitter of the blades dipping and rising in and out of the sparkling water, very blue under the October sky; the swift knife-like advance of the scull as it cut a shining scar up the centre of the river. Some youngsters in a scow along the Praga bank cheered the rowers as they passed, and as I watched them the thought come to me that there would be another Poland for me to see besides the Poland of hospitals and battlefields, refugee camps, and orphanages—a Poland at play. I had not thought of that.

People must play, or die. They cannot live on and on in unbroken tragedy. That way lies madness. In a measure, the inherent powers of a people may be gauged by their power to play, their ability to relax, to rise above heartbreak and disaster, and renew their strength in healthy pastime and recreation.

I was but a few days in Poland when I had an opportunity of seeing the people at play in earnest and on a large scale. A fete was given in the Agricola, a suburban park of Warsaw, in honour of the army. Thousands that day made their way out to this big playground, where the afternoon was spent in sports and games, and in the making of a general holiday very much like what we indulge in on occasion at home. Refreshment booths were scattered over the grounds. In the shade of the trees gay pavilions dispensed tea and lemonade and "pontchki"—the Polish doughnut, minus the hole, but with a delicious heart of jelly. Bands played. Pretty girls pinned "tags" on passers by, and gathered basketsful of "marks" to swell the relief fund for the soldiers. In the grandstands—with the crowd thickest around the box where sat the Premier and Madame Paderewska, the prime movers of the fete—thousands cheered the track teams, the "footballowy" match and the horseraces.

One of the games at the Agricola that day was a curiosity to us. It was a sort of tourney, arranged on the old-fashioned story-book plan of riding knights and clashing spears played with such skill and speed, that it made us realize how the old gallant Poland of bygone days still survives in the modern Republic of the twentieth century. Two teams, each of eight mounted horsemen, fought a duel with lances, the players wearing great masks to protect their faces, and bright plumes to distinguish them in the combat. The plumes of one team were red, of the other white; the game was to cut the opponents' plumes. When a rider's feather went down he retired from the field.

The reds won; but not until we had experienced a dozen genuine thrills; the horsemen lined up in opposing ranks: the signal: the first plunge ahead . . . the first plume down, the first rider off the field. Then at it again! Now a red rider is bested, now a white. Now the teams are again even. And so on, in breathless excitement, until the opponents were four to three, two to two—finally a "finish fight" between white and red. The riding was superb, and the old love of the Pole for horseflesh, a tradition from the earliest times, showed in the spirit of the riders and the tumultuous cheering of the crowd.

Horsebreeding before the war had no better field in Europe than Poland. At present the stock of the country is wrecked, but a racing season of a sort still remains at Warsaw. We spent some lively Sunday afternoons at the course, enjoying the horses, the betting, the crowds, the whole jolly spirit of sportsmanship which characterizes a racetrack, where, even in a city of a million or more, everybody seems to know everybody else, and horses, jockeys, and spectators are all one gay democracy of suspense and excitement. This was Poland at play, full fling—with a vengeance, we used to say sometimes, speculating on how many in those thousands of war-driven and war-ruined people might really be seeking distraction from too-terrible burdens, or perhaps even desperately hoping that this winner or that might mean a little more extra comfort for them in the winter ahead.

Then winter came.

II

Winter in Poland! Winter in Warsaw, with the red roofs of Staré Miasto gleaming through the snow. Of course we had looked forward to it, for in all the stories and impressions we had had of the country of Kosciuszko and Pulaski, Poland was synonymous with winter—with snowdrifts and sleighbells—not to forget wolves.

There had been moments when we had forgotten the wolves.

And we were duly ashamed of that. For when the north wind came at last—very early in 1920—scouring the Vistula Corridor with its Baltic blasts to meet the icy breath blowing up from the Dnieper and the Black Sea, we remembered the wolves. We saw them then, the ravening wolves of starvation and exposure, let loose over shivering Poland. Half the potato crop was lost that year. Bread lines were blocks long, and bread had almost disappeared, with the country facing a grain shortage of nearly a million tons.

An old proverb had foretold that the year in which Poland would be freed would see two winters, and the proverb came true. The leaves were still green on the trees when the first blizzard struck us on October 27th—and what a sorry sight they were, those long avenues of limes and maples suddenly smitten black with death! They seemed to symbolize the people, pinched and bloodless and hungry, without even fuel to heat their homes. I saw dealers selling firewood by the pound, weighing out stick by stick on a little scale such as we would weigh sugar on. Perhaps they were sugar-scales. But there had been no sugar left in Poland for years, though normally it is one of the greatest sugar-producing countries in Europe.

This was also the signal for sleighs and sleighbells, for snow-shovelling—and snowballing! And once more I saw how the invincible Pole can play, even in his misery. Even the poor women who earned their bite by cleaning the pavements and car tracks would laugh over their shovels, or chase the snowballing youngsters with mock fury. On the Nowy Swiat the snowbanks were heaped so high you could just see the tops of people's caps across the street.

The snow brought our old friend the drosky man out in a new guise. Enveloped in a huge coat, which did not seem so much to have been put on and buttoned around him as to have just lapped him up in its enormous folds, with a belt (or string) to tie him in at the waist, and a tall astrakhan cap, he looked literally immense. His old horse, too, suddenly took on new and vast proportions, being apparently several hands higher than the day before. This was not, however, by virtue of any such wrappings as had all but extinguished his owner, but because of the size of the sleigh to which he was hitched. It was the tiniest thing in grown-up sleighs that one could imagine. With barely room for two passengers (who must cuddle up close to stay in at all), and no seat for the driver, unless he sat on the upright board which separated him from his " fare "—ordinarily he stood as he drove —it looked like a toy as it went jingling and gliding along the street.

There was a small skating rink (or " ring " as the Poles call

it) directly across the street from our Red Cross house in Warsaw —a tennis court in summer, flooded when winter came; and it was filled afternoon and evening with skaters. Another and larger rink was in an amusement park next door to our headquarters. So we had ample opportunity to see our Polish friends enjoying themselves at one of their most characteristic sports. It goes without saying, of course, that they skate well, with a real touch of the picturesque added by their furs, the girls' "kolpacheks" (a fur toque tipped off with an aigrette), the men's tall astrakhan caps, their short frogged jackets, and always their gay colours. One Polish style fascinated our American girls—the overboot, a high felt overshoe, topping the ankle, slit at the sides, and trimmed with fur. Made in all shades of grey or tan, or brown, as well as black—and even in bright red—and put on over the street shoes, this "obuwia" gives a clumsy effect to women's feet, but Polish girls wear it with something almost approaching grace.

Winter brought us music also, concerts, dances, the opera, and the theatre—even the circus. In Poland the circus, with all the familiar accessories of clowns and acrobats and performing animals, is a distinctly wintertime institution, and instead of playing in a tent is set up in a permanent building designed for the purpose. The Warsaw circus, to which we often took parties of our Red Cross orphans, is a large circular structure, with tiers of seats rising from the sawdust ring in the centre. Here the trapeze performer flies through the air, the tightrope walker dizzies along, the juggler juggles, the horses "waltz," the trained dogs bark, and the clown stumbles around in grotesque Charlie Chaplins, exactly as in our tent-circus at home. There is even pink lemonade. And between acts every one promenades to the stables and feeds carrots to the ponies.

Dances, singing, and a general run of what we call "vaudeville acts" are part of the programme of the Polish circus, which, in fact, largely takes the place of our variety show; but this form of amusement has not by any means reached the stage of development in Poland that it has in America. Outside of the circus, vaudeville (as we know it), and the cabaret are still in a crude state, as compared with the extravagance (and at times the artistic elegance) of our similar entertainment. Poles marvel, indeed, when they hear that in America millions are spent on the housing of this sort of thing, in the most elaborate theatres we build.

But the Poles make up for this in their dramatic productions, their opera, and their ballet. Outside of the *Théâtre Français* I have seen no acting and no stage-producing anywhere finer than that at Warsaw. In many points the Warsaw opera will even stand comparison with that of Paris. The Polish ballet is

without an equal, unless we count the Russian ballet which periodically visits America and the European capitals, and which frequently has included Polish artists in its personnel.

III

The dramatic instinct is so strong in the Poles that they even elaborate on their Church ritual, in itself a richly dramatic pageant: as on Good Friday, when the "groby" are set up commemorating Christ's burial, the tragedy of the Passion being realistically represented, thousands crowding to the "grave" to mourn the dead Saviour, all culminating in the grand climax of Easter morning —music, singing, and the empty tomb! Thus dramatic art is one of Poland's honoured traditions. There has been a native theatre in Poland since the eleventh century, when the foundations of the art were laid in the mystery plays given at Krakow cathedral. These mystery plays are still performed during the winter holidays, when people lay straw on the tables (no matter how elaborate their feasts) to commemorate the straw of the Stable of Bethlehem; when the "Wilja" is celebrated—the time-honoured fish supper of Christmas-eve; when the Christmas bread is broken between friends and neighbours with the greeting "Wesolych Swiąt!" and the "szopka" or pantomimes are staged to the accompaniment of "kolendy," or carols. At that season, too, mummers travel from house to house, dressed in Biblical costumes, carrying their miniature shows on their backs, and enacting the story of the Nativity with marionettes—with a generous dash of local comedy thrown in—just as their ancestors did from the beginning of Polish drama. The history of the drama in Poland is, in fact, the same as the history of the drama in all the older countries, having its origin in the Moralities which were first staged in the sanctuary, then transferred to the church steps, thence to the public square, and finally to the theatre.

The modern theatre of Poland owes its existence to the squires, who introduced theatrical performances into their houses as early as the sixteenth century. Italian opera was imported into the country towards the middle of the seventeenth century, and early in the eighteenth century classical tragedies and comedies were being performed. Beaumarchais' "Marriage of Figaro" was done in a Polish translation even before it had been performed in the original at Paris. In 1765 Shakespeare was introduced by King Stanislas Augustus at his court theatre, and from about that time the public theatre as a popular institution became an established thing.

The best souvenir remaining to-day of the old-time court theatre in Poland is in the Lazienki Gardens at Warsaw, where

the same Stanislas Augustus, the country's first patron of Shakespeare, erected a beautiful open-air auditorium. The stage of this theatre, built of marble in the form of a ruined temple, stands apart from the auditors' benches on a little island. The audience in the amphitheatre is thus separated from the stage by water, the players in full costume being brought to the performance in gondolas in open view of the spectators. This theatre is still used on gala occasions.

After the partitions, the history of the Polish theatre is as chequered as that of Polish politics or literature. Subjected to every imaginable restriction of alien censorship, it was forced to struggle for its very existence. But the dramatic instinct was strong, and the art persisted and survived, enriching the intellectual life and quickening the national impulse by producing native, as well as reproducing the best foreign, literature of the stage. Thus Shakespeare has become a living tradition in Poland; the Greek classics, given to America by Margaret Anglin, have had generous Polish production; and practically all that Europe knows of English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish drama is familiar to the Polish boards.

IV

"I find Shakespeare," Madame Modjeska once told me, "an inexhaustible source of inspiration." All Poland seems to have long ago agreed with her, for the Bard of Avon has been a cult among the Poles for two centuries. Many of the earlier translations, however, were extremely heavy, "Hamlet" being given, in the first versions, in pompous Alexandrine verses. It was not until about fifty years ago that good translations were available, and then they were subjected to such cutting by the Russian censor that they suffered actual mutilation.

In her memoirs Madame Modjeska tells some of her own amusing experiences with the censor, though they were not always exactly amusing. She was flatly refused permission to produce "Hamlet," for instance, because of the scene representing the murder of the king! "Such things," the censor declared, "must not be put before an audience. They might suggest disloyal ideas." Only when an influential Russian friend intervened and convinced the authorities that the murder of Hamlet's father was "a purely family affair" was the play allowed to go on.

"Every noble sentiment was forbidden," Madame Modjeska writes. "Even certain words were found disloyal, among them the word 'slave.' In one of the melodramas it was cut out and replaced by the word 'negro,' and the sentence, which ran as follows: 'He was a slave to his passions,' was changed to, 'He

was a negro to his passions.' On another occasion a Catholic priest had to say 'I love my country and my people and I shall never leave them!' The words 'country' and 'children' were replaced by 'wife' and 'children.' In another play the words 'He walked arm-in-arm with the emperor and whispered in his ear,' were changed to 'He walked three steps behind the emperor and whispered in his ear!'"

It can be imagined what that censor did to Shakespeare!

What impresses the American observer in Polish productions of Shakespeare is the fervid and exalted atmosphere of poetry which pervades them. No poet appears so well suited to the Polish dramatic artist, whose clairvoyance and unusual imaginative gift and natural grace seem to fuse him completely into the Shakespearian characters. There is a good deal of Hamlet in the Pole anyway, the Slavic *tesknota*, that untranslatable sense of melancholy which rises out of the deep wells of human sympathy, and which is not ashamed to express itself in poetic words; and there is likewise a lot of Falstaff in him, as Sienkiewicz demonstrated in his "Zagloba." Viola and Rosalind, too, find a quick and rich response in Polish femininity.

In the tragedies the mystic in Shakespeare rouses the mystic in the Pole. Macbeth with the Weird Sisters and Banquo's empty chair; Hamlet and his father's apparition; Brutus in the tent at Philippi; these all breathe a familiar air to the Pole. So do the sprites and fays of "The Tempest" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream." A memorable performance of the latter, given just before the War, was still being talked about when I was in Warsaw. The robustious Elizabethan humour of the comedies has an equal response. The comedies, I found, are not expurgated as rigidly as with us. "A Comedy of Errors" was played while I was there, and the audience rocked with laughter. But some objected to the unseasoned flavouring.

V

There are half a dozen high-class theatres in Warsaw, Krakow, Poznan, Lwow, Lodz and Vilna. Each of these cities has at least one national theatre, where opera, the classics, and the best modern pieces are given. Since the liberation of 1918 the national theatre movement has enjoyed a great revival and expansion.

The Teatr Wielki (Grand Theatre) in Warsaw is the centre of the Polish national theatre system. It is to Poland what the *Comédie Française* at Paris is to France. This State theatre, formerly the Imperial Theatre under the Russian régime, subsidized by the Government, really comprises six theatres: the Opera, the Drama, and the Reduta in the main building; the Operetta,

the Garden Theatre (in the Saxon Gardens), and the Little Theatre, in separate buildings. A dramatic school, a school of the ballet, two orchestras, and two choruses are maintained by the institution. Thus, it can be seen that the Pole takes his play seriously, at least to the degree of seeing to the provision of it in a thoroughgoing businesslike manner.

The first free hour I had in Warsaw saw me making my way to the Teatr Wielki, to look on a scene already familiar to me through pictures which Madame Modjeska had often shown me. To get to it, I passed the big five-domed "Russian" church and through the beautiful Saxon Gardens, a magnificent park of about twenty acres set in the very heart of the city. In this park is the Garden Theatre, the scene of many of Modjeska's triumphs, and especially of her farewell to Poland, when thousands of people lined the entire way from the stage door to the door of her home to acclaim her as she passed—to exile, as events were to prove. Varsovian "old timers" still talk of that event.

The Teatr Wielki is an imposing architectural pile, a structure of magnificent proportions with a wide lower colonnade which stretches a block, surmounted by tiers of columns which give the whole edifice an aspect of grandeur and dignity. This huge building, the centre of the musical and dramatical art of the country, not only houses three of the State theatres already mentioned, but also the offices of the Government directorship which manages them The Opera is in the centre, the Drama and the Reduta at the right, the administration offices, workshops, scenic studios, storerooms and wardrobes at the left. The whole comprises a vast plant, a sort of dynamic centre from which the artistic life of the nation radiates.

That it does radiate was demonstrated by the work done by Polish artists during the War. They were all mobilized, and if they were not all permitted to actually serve in the ranks at the Front, they produced work of direct service to the defence forces.

They began, men and women together, voluntarily selling their jewelry and personal treasures to raise funds. Then they divided themselves into corps, the painters making posters (an art highly developed in Poland), the dramatists writing plays for the "theatres on wheels" which were sent to the field, travelling up and down the front to entertain the soldiers; actors, actresses, singers and ballet dancers going everywhere to perform for the men, keeping the hard life at the Front seasoned with the saving salt of humour and play. There was a complete organization, working day and night for the fighting forces, many artists doing their "bit" in their spare hours, in addition to continuing their arduous work of study, rehearsal, and performance. I visited the various workshops of these mobilized artists and saw among

other things hundreds of wonderful marionettes made for the camp shows by some of the country's foremost modellers and painters, and dressed by some of the theatre's most celebrated women players.

In time all this war activity, voluntarily organized by the artists, was placed at their own request under Government supervision, and eventually became one of the chief propaganda works in the Republic. When the Bolshevik invasion reached a crisis, with large numbers of troops in and around Warsaw, stringent regulations went into effect governing cafés and theatres, the principal places of amusement being given over almost entirely to the entertainment of soldiers. The Opera was theirs exclusively, regular performances being given but no tickets sold, the house being reserved night after night for the fighting men. It was not alone the perfect order in which this plan was carried out that impressed the outside observer, but the significant fact that it was the highest form of musical and dramatic art that was found the most popular for the great body of Poland's fighting men.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ON THE POLISH BOARDS

I

MY first view of the Teatr Wielki was impressive. As I left the Saxon Gardens and crossed the Platz Teatralny, I came on to a patriotic demonstration, with bands playing and flags flying. This same ground, I remembered, had been reddened only a few years ago, in 1905, with the blood of Polish insurrectionists, rising against the Russian yoke, and pitilessly mowed down with gunfire and sabre. Now they were free to rise in quite a different mood and manner, free to speak under the protection of their own flag, without a Kossack whip in sight, or the sign of a Muscovite bayonet. Here also one of the darkest tragedies of the Rebellion of 1863 had been enacted, when a boy of eighteen, set up on a Russian scaffold and at the last moment given the promise of life if he would turn State's evidence, was shot because he refused to betray his fellow patriots. Doubtless some of those compatriots of his, now the veterans of '63, were in the crowd which I saw gathered in front of the theatre.

How different this scene that I now beheld from those of the days of Modjeska, when her appearance on the stage more than once resulted in the calling out of the military forces as a precaution against patriotic demonstrations. Once a group of students had dared to send her a wreath over the footlights. The wreath was tied with pink and white ribbons. The Polish national colours are white and amaranth. The next day all of those boys were expelled from the university. The tragedy which ensued made a mark on Modjeska's heart which a long lifetime's memories could never efface. The leader of the boys, in order to insure the reinstatement of his schoolfellows, killed himself.

My first taste of Polish opera at the Wielki was a surprise. I had seen opera in other "secondary" capitals of Europe; but here was something quite different, and so excellent as to challenge even the best. The deepest theatre stage I have seen in Europe, an unusually large chorus of good-looking and well-trained singers, leaders of distinction and at times of brilliance, and an excellent orchestra: all these combined to make a striking impression on

the American visitor. Among Warsaw singers the tenor Dygas stands pre-eminent, with Paris and Berlin triumphs to his credit; and there is also Dobosz, tenor, Gruszczynski, a magnificent baritone, and the soprano Mokrzyska, whose voice has a beautiful mezzo texture.

The stage management was especially good, due, no doubt, to the fact that in Europe the position of stage-manager is regarded as the most important in the theatre, requiring high artistic qualifications, education and a wide knowledge of literature. In no production at the Warsaw Opera during the best part of three seasons did we see a single tawdry costume, indifferent piece of scenery, or careless make-up. One felt that there was a strong and deft hand directing it all. The efforts to keep up the costuming, I was told, were strenuous; there was much turning and refurbishing. But there was a rich wardrobe to draw from, the accumulation of many years, and there was patently an inexhaustible fund of good taste.

As for the scenery and lighting, they were of the latest and best. Upright cut-out scenes were much used, against a panorama of solid blue, with lighting so arranged as to do away with stage shadows. Some memorable settings recall themselves—the Nile in "Aida," for instance, with a far glint of moonlight on the Pyramids, the horizon just touched with radiance, a marble temple, clear and chaste in outline, reflected in the water, all drenched in a blue misty light, the very air and atmosphere of Egypt in it. Again, there was a forest vista in "Dola" (a new opera, telling the story of the World War) which took us into illimitable depths of leafy shadow, down a path so long and far away it was hard to believe it was not real—a remarkable piece of stage perspective. One of the settings of "Othello" also was striking, a masterpiece of simplicity and dignity. Four columns and three arches framed a blue Italian sky; in the right foreground a brocaded drapery, falling from the ceiling in heavy folds, was caught up with a bronzed rope; a single chair; in the background a cluster of dark cypress trees; at their feet a patch of garden with tufts of gladioli drowned in yellow light. The effect was that of a painting by a master. Against such a background the Venetian tragedy moved as if story and scene were one.

Though the standard repertoire of opera is given, the Pole, with his inherent love of original ventures, does not stop at that; he creates as well as recreates. There were several novelties introduced from 1919 to 1922, among them "Hagith" by Szymanowski, a triumph of new-school realistic music; and also the same composer's brilliant Oriental ballet, "The Song of Hafiz." Another was the "Dola," already mentioned. D'Albert's "Dead Eyes" was another, a beautiful production, reciting in a highly sympathetic manner the story of the blind woman healed by Christ.

The production of "Aida" was the best all-round performance I have seen anywhere; and it, too, had its novel note. Aida's dark loveliness was not left altogether to the auditor's imagination. She was made up in realistic Ethiopian style, a dusky brown. As she was neither ugly nor stout, but graceful and pretty, with a beautiful voice, the result certainly justified the innovation.

II

In "Aida," as in all the operas where a divertissement was introduced, the ballet was worked in as part of the legend, instead of having the story halted and the stage cleared for a separate entertainment. Thus the dancers in "Aida" performed before the assembled court for the delectation of the victorious Rhadames. In "Rigoletto" they danced before the King. In "Trovatore" the ballet was a band of gypsies and mountaineers. On nights when "Dead Eyes," "Pagliacci," "Cavalleria," or other short operas were given, the second part of the bill was usually a ballet.

Warsaw is the home of the ballet. I had heard that before I went to Poland, but I did not realize what it meant until I saw what a vital part dancing plays in Polish life. The ballet is to the Pole what the opera is to the Italian. Even the tiniest youngsters are artists at dancing, as we had seen on more than one occasion when children had come to the Red Cross House to perform for us, as a token of thanks for food and clothing. It was their natural expression, their first impulse, to dance for the Americans, when they wished to show us their regard. In one of the favourite Warsaw ballets, Grieg's "Dance of the Trolls" from *Peer Gynt*, I have seen wee midgets not three feet high performing with a finish and abandon that set audiences wild with delight.

The Pole, in fact, dances from babyhood. He is born with a tune in his toes. He dances all his days—and a good many of his nights; or if he is not dancing himself, he is watching others at it. In short, if one wishes to see Poland at play at its best, he must see the Pole dance; first in the drawing-room, whirling through dreamy Chopin waltzes, round after round, hour after hour, up to the finale of the "White Mazur," which is reserved for the grey light of dawn; and keeping it up with a vim and joyousness that sends even the hardiest Yank to the wall; or else stepping off the mad turnings and circlings of the "Oberek," the "Kujawiak," or the "Krakoviak." After that you must see the ballet.

At the Warsaw Opera, one night at least every week is given over exclusively to the ballet, in addition to the many performances interpolated during the operas. To secure a seat for one of these ballets is no easy task, especially since advance sales are not indulged in on the American scale, everyone being

obliged to take his chance in the ticket line-up. The programme usually consists of one or two long pieces, with a variety of single numbers added. Among the notable selections which we saw were Leon Bakst's "Kleopatra," Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scherezade," D'Auberval's "Lizetta," the old favourite "Gisella," and "Pan Twardowski," by Rozycki, a new native ballet based on a Krakovian legend somewhat resembling the "Faust" story—the tragedy of the man who sells himself to the Devil. "Kleopatra" and "Scherezade" were done on a magnificent scale, with a wealth of Oriental gorgeousness. "Lizetta" was like a Watteau fan. "Gizella," with its strange air of the supernatural, was full of dim elusive beauty, a sort of gentle unreality being achieved both in the setting and the dancing. In every one of these performances the genius of Warsaw's ballet-master, Piotr Zajlich, was revealed as of the highest order, and it was no surprise, after seeing some of his performances, to learn that as a co-worker of Leon Bakst and as a former director with Pavlowa, he had already made fame for himself in London, Paris, Rome, and even far-away New York.

Poland's favourite ballet dancer is Smolczowna, a beautiful and talented young woman who has already visited America twice in company with Pavlowa and Adeline Genee, under both of whom she studied. She has also made a name for herself in London, under Dhiagilev, and has toured as far as Australia and New Zealand. Like many other Polish artists, however, she was known before the War not as a Pole but as a Russian, being then a Russian subject. But she is in reality a Polish patriot as well as a Polish artist, and, despite her youth, has already suffered for her country. Shortly before the War she was exiled to Moscow for her Nationalist activities, and was kept there under Russian surveillance until Poland was freed. One of her aunts was among the first women lawyers of Poland. To see Smolczowna in "Lizetta" is to see high comedy in dancing and pantomime done as exquisitely as a piece of Sèvres. Before I saw her in "Gizella" this old ballet was new to me, and I wagered that it could not be done. To me the story of the spirit of the dead girl rising from her grave to comfort her lover seemed too fine and ethereal for theatrical presentation. But Smolczowna did it with a delicacy and spirituality that were indescribable. Again, her interpretation of Saint-Saëns' "Death of the Swan" had the same pathetic and elusive beauty. In such erotic pieces as "Kleopatra" and "Scherezade" requiring voluptuous grace, she was not as successful as in the pure and exquisite and ingenuous.

Crowds go to see Smolczowna, while another artist of blonde girlish beauty, a perfect Rosalind type, is Szymonska, who makes the most adorable "boy" I have ever seen on the boards. A third is Rossignol, who shines especially in the native

dances, when, booted and aproned and ribboned and cloaked, she tosses and stamps through the wild gaiety of the Oberek or the Krakoviak. It is these dances, quite as much as the story and the music, that draw people to Moniuszko's opera "Halka," in the ballet of which Rossignol usually leads.

The story of "Halka" is an old, old story—the girl who loves "not wisely but too well," and breaks her heart against the adamant wall of fate. Musical critics in Warsaw have told me what the faults are of this opera; but as a mere lay observer I plead guilty to enjoying it whole-heartedly from beginning to end. Perhaps it is too "obvious," as some remark. Music, I realize, can be at times more distressingly obvious and commonplace than flat words. But "Halka" is above all simple and clear and moving. I needed no interpreter to make me understand its story, and to me that story was told in the score as much as in the libretto. Its hauntingly sweet *motif*, sounded first as Halka comes singing to the window to look in on her lover's betrothal feast, has stayed with me from the first moment I heard it.

That betrothal feast is a bright page out of the Polish story book, and it gives the stranger a complete picture of the Polish national dances. The stage is crowded with guests, gay as a rainbow in the multicoloured costumes of old-time Poland. The music carries one away as it strikes off, one after the other, the stately strains of the Polonaise, the whirling Oberek, the impassioned Mazur, the lively double-time of the Krakoviak. It is a picture of life, motion and colour, gaiety and tragedy, impossible to put into words—it must be danced and sung and seen to be realized. The Polonaise, reminding one of the minuet, is full of slow grace, the couples curtseying and passing with a flowing cadence, winding and unwinding in a maze of moving colour. The Oberek is "like a runaway steed," as Madame Nalkowska describes it in *Kobiety*; it hypnotizes beholder as well as dancer:

"Careering in a tiny orbit, toward the centre of which we lean all the time, we turn round and round with vertiginous speed, like two planets run mad. Locked in each other's arms, carried on by our own impetus, we glide along with half-closed eyes, involuntarily, all but unconsciously, with a passive motion, as if by ourselves unable to keep so tremendous a pace. Around us we perceive only a confused mass of thick, clotted brightness. The lights, the mirrors, the brilliant circle of lookers-on, are no longer distinguished as they fly around us. All is merged in one maze of colour."

It is in the dance that the Pole finds his truest expression—the joy of living, the wild abandon that tosses sorrow away. Whether it be on the village green among the peasants, in the fashionable drawing-room, or on the boards of the theatre, while he dances

or watches others dance, the Pole is most himself. He relaxes then, and is happy.

III

Knowing something beforehand through Madame Modjeska of the enterprise of the Polish dramatic theatre, I should not have been surprised at finding it up-to-date. But it surpassed my expectation when I discovered among the current productions for the 1919–1920 season plays so recent as Booth Tarkington's "Clarence," Tagore's "Post Office," Oscar Wilde's seldom acted "Florentine Tragedy," and even "Mr. Wu." Besides these, there were on the bills Bernard Shaw, Ibsen, Strindberg, Rostand, Galsworthy, Pinero, Arnold Bennet, and others of the best contemporary writers—not to forget the redoubtable Avery Hopwood, whose "Fair and Warmer" kept Warsaw laughing for weeks.

We would not have recognized Booth Tarkington's "Clarence" when it was announced were it not for the name of the author. The name of the play was changed. It was billed at the Little Theatre (Teatr Maly) as "Claudius," because "Clarence" would mean nothing to the Pole, whereas "Claudius" means to him just about what "Clarence" means to us in the circumstances. This performance, which I attended twice, was a real surprise. I went expecting to see very little of "the old U.S.A." in it, imagining that the Polish players could not come within miles of approximating the American atmosphere, which in this case is ninety per cent. of the play. I watched especially for the customary Polish bowing and hand-kissing—which of course would have been the funniest thing of all in a transplanted American comedy. But there was not a trace of it. Instead, they gave the piece in the breeziest American fashion, true to life in the most minute detail, including the boisterous roughhousing of "Bobby" and "Cora." Nothing more American could be imagined than the boyish conceits of Bobby, the tantrums of Cora, and the delicious squabbling of the two. The despairs of the harassed father of the house, even to his inability to finish the story he was reading in the *Saturday Evening Post*, were portrayed to the dot. And the Polish Clarence was very near the perfection of Alfred Lunt. The only false note was the grass-widower. He had not a mark of the U.S.A. on him.

We came out of the theatre congratulating the Poles and wondering what quality it is in these people that makes them so astonishingly American, when a still funnier thing than the comedy happened. Some of our Polish friends began to apologize to us! They were alarmed lest we be offended with the play; they were sure the actors had burlesqued us badly. "Americans never

behaved like that," they assured us. We had our best laugh then trying to convince our apologetic friends that this was mild compared to the "real thing" back home.

The Polish papers liked the Tarkington piece, though they confessed they didn't quite understand "all its naïveté." "Whisky and soda with ice on a very hot day!" one of the critics exclaimed.

Plays from America or concerning America are very popular in Poland, especially such historical dramas as "Kosciuszko," a perennial favourite, with the name of America and Washington inevitable; and there was a new drama at the Polski Theatre, "Pulaski in America," in which Washington was actually represented. The scenes of this little piece, transporting us from Warsaw to Independence Hall in old-time Philadelphia, to Chester and Bethlehem, Savannah and Charleston, were all well done. We heard the Moravian nuns singing Longfellow's beautiful hymn of Pulaski's banner, familiar to all our school-children; and that reminded me that when Americans used to see Modjeska playing in "Hamlet" with Edwin Booth, it was to Polish music that they heard the songs of Ophelia sung, written by Moniuszko, who was Modjeska's friend, and whose "Halka" I have just described.

Two of Rostand's pieces were done, "Romanesques" and "L'Aiglon." "L'Aiglon" was a smooth, well-rounded performance, enjoyed without any reservations after having seen Bernhardt do it in French and Maude Adams in English. The "Romanesques" stands out as one of my most enjoyable Polish memories. It was mounted in the "new" style, just fantastically enough to frame the whole performance in an atmosphere of unreality. The moment the curtain rose the very scenery seemed to make a gesture as if to say, "Here you shall behold a comedy." And the piece itself was played in that manner of which theatre-goers sometimes dream—played delicately, lightly, for the fun of it and the love of it. One could never forget the quarrelling of the two old men, nor the exquisite comedy of that tragic moment when the frightened maiden, confronted by the fiercely-moustachioed highwayman, backs up into a corner and tries to "shoo" the terrible creature away by waving a bit of pink gauze in his fearsome visage.

Of the imported dramas, two others stand out in memory—Tagore's "Post Office" and Oscar Wilde's "Florentine Tragedy." Until I saw "The Post Office" in Warsaw I had never heard of this piece being staged. It was done unmistakably "with a gesture"—a rich, eloquent gesture, static enough to be Oriental, yet dramatic and full of the pathos and mystery of life as it passes by. The dreaming child at the window in the half-darkened room, the blaze of full daylight beyond, just within his reach

and yet out of it, the tragedy of the passing of everything, and the final coming of the princely visitor: all these details were worked into a stage picture of real beauty.

Wilde's "Florentine Tragedy," played the same night as "The Post Office," opened a vista to a far different world. From the first moment that you caught sight of the stars through the high Renaissance window, clear and serene above the fateful Arno, foreboding gripped you. The story of the beautiful woman, the young lover and the sordid husband, was told with the slow, inevitable beat of actual tragedy, quickening and accelerating and finally sweeping everything before it. The acting of the merchant, with his sinister unfolding, before the trapped lover, of rich bales of silk and furs and cloth-of-gold, while all the time he plotted his destruction, reached the height of concentrated passion. Only the perverse Wildian ending jarred. Even these Warsaw artists could not make that convincing.

IV

Since the independence of 1918, play-writing has flourished in Poland, and native authors, free of alien censorship, have been blossoming forth in a rich output of drama. War dramas have had a certain vogue, though not as much, perhaps, as in America. (Maybe the thing itself has been too near and too real?) One of these, "Charitas," a modern mystery play, was a terrifying portrayal of world upheaval, in which Christ is crucified again, and the human mob, forgetting all things spiritual, surges over the earth bent on material conquest. Another, "The War Kiss," was much on the order of the average American current drama, rather obvious and theatrical, but with some powerful scenes contrived in the course of its more or less ordinary story. The one great drama among the new Polish plays of 1919–1920 was "Ponad Snieg" ("Over the Snow"). This tragedy of present-day Poland will no doubt live; it seems to have already taken its place in the national repertoire throughout the country. It is from the pen of Zeromski, one of the living giants of Polish literature, and has recently been translated and published (but I think not performed) in America.

One other great war play (not new) was given, Krasynski's prophetic tragedy, "The Undivine Comedy." This strange and rather chaotic drama, written one hundred years ago by one of the exiled poets of Poland when he was only twenty-one, is powerful and convincing when seen in its native setting. In Warsaw it drew crowded houses. But it would seem almost impossible to transfer it to the foreign stage. Lord Lytton in his "Orval" attempted

this, but failed. A comprehensive outline of the play, with excellent translation, may be found in Gardner's "Anonymous Poet."

"The Undivine Comedy" is one of the great social dramas of modern Europe. A century ago it foretold, in the most striking manner, the upheavals which we are actually witnessing to-day; its chief protagonist, Pancracy, personifying the tyranny of the proletariat, denouncing "Knightly honour—a faded rag in the banner of humanity! . . . Oh, I know you, believing still in the bones of your great-grandmothers, in the words My Country . . . believing, or pretending to believe in God, for it would be difficult for you to believe in yourselves!"

(It would not be too difficult to believe that it was the Lenin of to-day who uttered these very words.)

"Atheism is an old formula," answers Henryk, who represents the passing order. "I expected something new from you." To which Pancracy responds in the veritable voice of twentieth-century Bolshevism, as if Moscow and Petrograd spoke in chorus:

"I have a stronger, a mightier faith than yours. The groans won by despair and pain from thousands of thousands, the hunger of workmen, the misery of peasants, the shame of their wives and daughters—that is my faith and my God for to-day. . . . I only recognize one law. That law is your destruction."

If the body of this startling drama, written a century ago, has so clearly foretold events, how prophetic, then, one asks, is its ending? Is this also to be proven true? Pancracy, the genius of disaster, triumphs. He mounts the ramparts of the world, and contemplates the new universe he has created through destruction. But he has forgotten one thing. Suddenly, in the sunset, a cloud of fire confronts him and a Figure rises to terrify him, "as a pillar of snow-white brilliance above the precipice." He cries:

> "Both hands lean on the Cross, as the avenger's on his sword,
> Of wreathed thunderbolts His crown of thorns.
> From the lightning of that glance he must die who lives.
> Put your hands upon my eyes!
> Smother my eyeballs with your fists!
> Part me from that look that shatters me to dust! . . .
> Your hands are transparent, as water, as glass, transparent as air!
> I see still! Give me only one crumb of darkness!
> Darkness! Darkness!
> Galilaee vicisti!"

Robert Hugh Benson's novel, *Lord of the World*, is the only thing we have in our language resembling this strange Polish drama; and it is significant that this novel is one of the most popular of all recent translations in Poland. I saw *Lord of the World* on the news-stands wherever I went.

V

The typical native dramas I found highly interesting, and of these I choose three as representative—Slowacki's tragedy "Lilla Veneda," Stefani's rustic comedy "Krakovians and Mountaineers," and Szaniawski's satire "The Paper Lover."

"Lilla Veneda," which the German critic Kleiner calls "the greatest tragic creation of European romanticism," was heavy and dark to us, but unmistakably great, with a dim atmosphere of prehistoric legend and the inevitability which characterizes all great tragedy. Its story of the imprisoned brothers Lelum and Polelum and the aged King Dervid, and of Veneda's struggle to free them from the evil power of the baleful Gwinona, is told in noble verse, the rhythmic beat of which, after a time, plays on one's ear like the pure Greek of Sophocles; and it was acted with dignity and fervour. One of its most dramatic scenes recalled both the terror and the tenderness of a scene in William Tell: the old King, suspended by the hair, and being stoned to death, can be freed only if his sons cut his cords by hurling their battle-axes at him—a Polish legend older than any written story. Despite the patriotic associations of this play, however, it was not welcomed by the critics in the days of the Bolshevik advance in 1920. "Why revive this tragedy now?" they asked. "The Polish nation does not wish to listen to-day to the heathen harp of the Venedas. It is our old Christian battle hymn of faith and hope, Boga Rodzica, that we want!"

Stefani's comedy, "Krakovians and Mountaineers," received a different greeting. This also was produced at the time of the Bolshevik invasion, when the Government was carefully fostering public entertainment to keep up the morale of the masses, and was especially providing soldiers on leave with amusement. The night I saw the "Krakovians" half the house was reserved for Polish "dough boys." And how they did shout and stamp and applaud the jolly songs and dances of this melodious old comedy, which had delighted many generations since it was written in 1809. The stage was a blaze of colour, and there was enough music to make the piece practically an operetta. One of the Press comments on this play of peasant life is significant.

"Times are changed," this criticism said. "Now we are free from Russian and German dominion, and our peasant has the right to sit in the legislature, to defend his own country, and to learn how to become a true national. Perhaps this peasant is not yet all that we have expected, but time will prove him to be the best foundation of our mother country. . . . The soldiers enjoyed the play, and it may be that it awoke in their hearts a longing for the good old times, a stronger feeling of patriotism and love

of their native land. Perhaps more than one of these soldiers understood for the first time what all this really means to them —the straw-thatched cottage, the field cultivated in the sweat of their brows, the green meadows along the Narew, the Boug, the Vistula; the wind in the forest, the familiar call of the stork on the chimney, the sound of the flute, the noise of cows and horses —all that goes to make up their mother country, which now they must defend with their own breasts."

Keen wit and a good deal of incisive funmaking characterized "The Paper Lover," as they do most of the Polish comedies. Its author copied Fredro, the Polish Molière, in saying daring things. In one of Fredro's comedies, for instance, the Pole is mercilessly ridiculed for the aping of French manners in which it appears he once indulged. In "The Fairy," another satire, fortune-seekers and upstarts are made precious fools of. "The Bachelors' Club," played by the same Warsaw company that did Rostand's "Romanesques" so well, pokes joyous fun at matchmaking and matchmakers. "Fonsia's Wedding" is another comedy full of nimble shafts aimed at human foibles.

But perhaps the most cutting of all the recent "comedies of criticism" produced in Poland has been Markiewicz's "Thieves' Conversion," a piece which, with Shavian epigram, made such havoc of war profiteers, nouveau riche, society "chasers," and all such ilk, that it put both public and press on edge—especially the press, which the author scored with a scalpel. Markiewicz (whose name is famous abroad by reason of his celebrated Irish wife) has produced several other successes, among them a gripping modern tragedy, "The Marriage of Martha." His plays are well known in Dublin and London and are invariably characterized by their merciless showing up of modern life.

Thus, even when he plays, the Pole remains his own sharpest critic. Ill-humour or the unkind cut, however, I have never seen in his comedy; certainly nothing of the kind directed at his enemies, the former oppressors of his country. German and Russian operas were done throughout the war days of 1919 and 1920. The outstanding dramatic production of 1922 was a revival of Schiller's "Maria Stuart," since the days of Modjeska a Polish favourite. But it was in particular the Pole's attitude toward the Jew that impressed me. Never have I seen the Jew ridiculed or offended on the Polish stage. One of the favourite ballets at Warsaw, "The Tavern," was a good example of how the "stage Jew" is handled in Poland. Here the bearded Israelite, with buxom spouse and innumerable progeny, was introduced into the dance in a good-humoured way that delighted everyone.

No record of Polish native drama would be complete without

mention of Wyspianski's "The Wedding," or Mickiewicz's "The Ghosts." The latter, an annual event, performed in theatres all over the country every November (just as the "szopkas" are at Christmastide), tells a fascinating story of the Vigil of the Dead, the revisiting of ancient haunts by the spirits of the disenthralled, who come to an old chapel at Vilna at midnight on the eve of All Souls, seeking release from their purgatorial bonds. A tragic narrative of patriotic sacrifice and unrequited love is woven into this strange play. And a curious thing about it is that the story is true. "That man was my great-grandfather," remarked one young Pole in our party at the Mickiewicz play, indicating the ghostly figure of a wretched soul hovering in the moonlight at the chapel window, with a flock of ravens beating their wings about him as they plucked at his heart in punishment for the heartlessness with which in life he had treated the peasants of his estate. "He was a very wicked man!" his lineal descendant naïvely explained. Another scene of great beauty in "The Ghosts" is that in which the maddened lover caresses the broken branch of the old pine-tree under which he had kept the last tryst with his beloved.

Wyspianski's "The Wedding" is a drama of contemporary life, with a thread of fantasy running through it, on which is strung the introduction of various phantom figures, among them the prophet Wernyhora, who foretells the Polish future. There is an indictment of the peasant in this drama which gives the piece a national significance. The prophet entrusts his golden horn, symbol of the national tradition, to the peasant Jasiek, who represents the new Poland. But Jasiek, not realizing the value of the gift, loses it. When Poles witness Wyspianski's drama nowadays they ask themselves pointed questions. It puts the peasant on his mettle.

VI

Besides the Opera and the dramatic theatres (notably the Boguslawski, the Polski, the Komedia and the Maska), there is the Operetta, a part of the State Theatre, though in a separate building; and the Philharmonia, the home of the Warsaw Symphony, under the direction of Mlynarski, formerly director of the Glasgow Symphony. Here concerts and recitals are given by the best native and foreign artists, political differences meaning nothing to the Pole when it comes to the question of art. He possesses a true catholic spirit in his love of artistic things, inviting German, Russian and Austrian artists to his capital with the same enthusiasm as others

At the Operetta musical comedies and light operas are given,

but the production of this sort of entertainment in Poland falls considerably below the standard of the opera and the drama, despite the talents of Messalowna, the Operetta's favourite, who is a woman of striking beauty, with a fine soprano voice and a wild grace in dancing that always suggested to me a flower suddenly caught up in a whirlwind. She has an enormous following, but to me seemed very much superior to her surroundings.

The failure of the Pole in the secondary things of the theatre is difficult to understand. He is not by any means a "highbrow." The progress of the "movie" show in Poland demonstrates this.

The "movie" has a distinct future in Poland. There is a fund of native material to draw from, both story and setting; plenty of dramatic talent and an unequalled market. The smallest villages of the new Poland now have their "movie" theatres. Enterprising circuits are bringing in the best European and American films, and native producing companies are already organized, not only for the building of new theatres and the making of films, but also for the manufacture of apparatus. Some of the local Polish films which I have seen are of a higher order than many imported from Italy and Germany, while as for American films—so far only the tawdriest and cheapest seem to have been sent over, much to the popular discredit, I should think, of our country abroad.

That the spirit of the new Poland will soon put its stamp on the film, as well as on all other expressions of Polish popular life, was demonstrated to me one night at a "movie" in Warsaw, when I was with a young Polish officer. The story was an imported one, the happy ending of which was made to depend on the hero's discovering that his sweetheart was not, after all, a mere governess, but a lady of high rank. My young Polish democrat didn't like it. "That shouldn't have counted, her having a title," he commented.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE MIRACLE OF THE VISTULA

I

MR. TROTSKY would have laughed if he had seen what I saw in the streets of Warsaw on Sunday, August 8 1920.

It was a religious procession—the kind of religious procession often witnessed, I imagine, in the Middle Ages, simple and unabashed and matter-of-course in its belief in God and the supernatural. There were one hundred thousand people in it; yet it was not a programmed affair, but a spontaneous, informal outburst of faith and feeling. It was the people of Warsaw calling upon God to save their city.

Men, women and children marched in this huge procession, which lasted from noon until evening. The men were mostly the aged and the crippled, numbers of the latter being wounded soldiers convalescing and just able to hobble out. For over seven hours this vast marching throng, carrying banners, flags and sacred images, moved through the city from one church to another until every house of worship in the capital had been visited, each visit augmenting the forces by hundreds and thousands. And as they marched they sang.

One must hear the Poles sing to know what that means. They are one of the greatest singing people in the world; greater even than the Germans, I found, at expressing themselves through massed song. And they go at it with a robust abandon and a free-heartedness that is childlike. In Poland one hears singing on all sides of him. Especially was this true in war days when troops were for ever coming and going. The Polish soldiers sang continuously, apparently never tiring, and seeming to knock all sorts of shines out of life as they swung along to the rhythm of their vigorous war tunes.

The song that was being sung most frequently by the hundred thousand of that procession of August 8th was one which in many ways resembles our "Holy God," except that it was more of a hymn of supplication than of praise—

Holy God !
Almighty God !
Holy and Immortal God !
Have pity on us !

Jesus pardon,
Jesus hear us,
Loving Christ have pity on us !

—ending always with a plea to the Madonna for intercession. I was in my room writing when the first wave of that vocal storm struck my ears. The procession was a block away then, passing down the Marszalkowska. Never have I heard such a swelling volume of harmonious sound as swept up from that marching host. It seemed to come in billows—men's voices and women's voices and children's voices—all blended into one vast rising sea of song. It had a pathetic sweetness that gripped one's heart and at the same time a strength that made the tumbling walls of Jericho an easy thing to imagine.

"Wouldn't Trotsky laugh to see such a spectacle!" For Trotsky's Reds were at that moment only a few miles outside of Warsaw, rolling their victorious tide of guns and cavalry up from the south, in from the east, and further and further along the north, filling the Vistula Corridor with a huge army to cut us off from the sea, encircling the city in a ring of disaster. For days we had heard in imagination (and very nearly in reality) the thunder of the Bolshevik hoofs beating up nearer and nearer around the Polish capital. Unless something happened—another miracle of the Marne—the Red tide would sweep through us and over us on its rush for the Western world. But with that procession of one hundred thousand praying and singing people something had come to drown the Soviet thunder, a sound so vigorous and full-voiced that it seemed more than a supplication. It was a cry of defiance to the approaching enemy.

That is just the point—it was a cry of defiance to the enemy; a challenge to the Red powers to do their worst. There is no denying, of course, that Trotsky would have laughed at the spectacle of women and children—and men!—marching through the streets praying and singing. The silliness and the futility of it all, with the day already set and proclaimed by him just one week hence, August 15th, for the fall of Warsaw and the final crushing of Poland! Could Trotsky, in fact, ask for a more concrete example than this of the mediæval feeble-mindedness of a people who would stop to pray to God for help, with the invincible hand of the Reds at their very throats?

But if Trotsky, the irreconcilable terrorist, would have smiled, I think that his keener-witted partner, Lenin, would not; for his sharper ear would have caught that note of challenge in the voice

of the hundred thousand, and he would have known that it was a note that neither guns nor cavalry nor even butchery and terrorism could silence. Lenin would have seen in this vast throng of singing homebodies, though easily to be scattered with carbines and horses' hoofs, a far more formidable obstacle to the Red advance than a mere mob of praying women and crippled men. It was the ancient Christian faith of Poland that raised its voice in that tremendous demonstration, and the Faith of Poland is more invincible than the might of Red Russia. Lenin, looking on this procession, would have known this. He would not have laughed nor even smiled, because he would have realized that, however his partner's armies might crush and terrorize, neither he alone nor the two of them together could ever make Poland " red " except with martyr blood.

II

The religious faith of the Poles is one of their most pronounced characteristics. The way in which the people, in town and country, attend their church services is something astonishing. They go literally in throngs, the men as well as the women. The church seems, in fact, to be considerably a man's church in Poland. Any congregation in any church at any hour will show a surprising percentage of men. Before the Red invasion of 1920, and before the new volunteer army drained the country, half the congregations assisting at Sunday Mass were men. In winter I have seen Holy Cross Church in Warsaw, one of the largest in the city, packed to the doors for one service after another up to noon. During one of the worst blizzards I ever was in (not even excepting Northern Wisconsin) I saw that church overflowing at its doors, the people who could not get in standing outside bareheaded in the storm. There were a dozen or more soldiers in the crowd at the doors, a high-ranking officer among them. He, too, was bareheaded, reading his book under the shelter of his cap.

An American is a little shocked at first by the behaviour of the Poles at church. Religion has not pulled their chins in the least; in fact, at first glance we might think them lacking in reverence. But on acquaintance we learn our mistake. The truth is, the Poles simply make themselves at home in their churches and are entirely unconscious of any strangeness in that environment. Crowds of them throng up into the sanctuary and around the altar, kneeling and sitting on the altar steps, quite as much at ease as if they were on their own doorsteps. Any one of them—a simple soldier or a gold-braided officer, a beggar or a prosperous civilian—may step up out of that crowd to wait on the priest at the altar. I have seen this happen more than once, and

it was always done simply and quietly and as a matter of course.

In Poland everyone goes to church, the whole family, all the generations (of which there are always many in evidence—no race suicide here !). No one stays home, not even to mind the baby. The baby comes too, being usually a regular attendant from the Sunday that he is christened. And while it may sound a bit like stretching it, on looking back over my Polish experiences, I must say that the Polish babies are the best-behaved lot of youngsters I ever saw in a church. But the credit, after all, shouldn't go to the babies. It's the treatment they get. They are made quite at home. I have seen a young mother at Mass comfortably sitting on the church floor nursing her infant while the service went on ; and white-haired grandmothers, too, also squatted on the floor, saying their rosaries, with sometimes one and sometimes two babies on their laps. Pews, it should be noted, are not common in Polish churches.

There is something Biblical, or at least very Early Christian, about the rapt devotion of these people at their public prayers—packed in crowds into their churches ; hands uplifted and folded in childlike fashion ; eyes intent on altar or crucifix or Way of the Cross. And then again there is the singing. It swells and sweeps through the building until one says, as we said that August Sunday while we watched the Warsaw procession, " God can't help but hear ! "

All during the first week of August 1920 there were special daily devotions in all the churches throughout the country, petitioning Heaven to save Poland from the Reds. The churches in Warsaw were packed from morning to night. Then came the procession of August 8th, the culmination of these devotions ; while, at the same time, according to that same day's official communique the Bolos were less than forty kilometres (twenty-five miles) away. Would the city fall ? Would these streets be thronged in a few days with the looting hordes of the Red army ? Would the sheer human weight of the Bolsheviks' preponderating forces break through and scatter these hundred thousand praying Poles—and make Trotsky laugh ?

III

According to the official communique one week later the Bolsheviks were only twelve miles outside Warsaw. They were in Okuniew, while at Radzymin they were in and out, that town having changed hands four times in twenty-four hours in the bloody struggle. The whole *morale* of the Polish forces was now being put to the final test, and there were many who, in view of

the reverses of the last six weeks, had become quite hopeless of any eleventh-hour success or any " Marne Miracle " to save them. The fatigue alone of the men, after their long retreat from Kiev to Warsaw, seemed to make a final stand impossible. And in the meantime, to again quote the communique, " the third and sixteenth Red armies have received their formal orders to take the city."

This was the Feast of the Assumption—always a great religious holiday in Europe. In spite of its being such a traditional festival, however, I expected to find the popular fervour and devotion a good deal slackened after that heart-pulling demonstration of the week before, when one hundred thousand Varsovians had marched through the streets from noon till evening singing and praying to God for deliverance. But there was no slackening. The churches on the morning of the fifteenth were more crowded than ever, with throngs still going in and out up to three o'clock, and the tension, one felt, steadily reaching the breaking point. The hopes of the people rested now, in a sort of final desperation, on the forces drawn up around the city. People would tell you quite frankly : " Only a miracle can save Warsaw now." But it is not easy to believe in miracles—beforehand.

In Poland the fifteenth of August is not only Lady Day, but also the Polish " Harvest Home." Everyone at church that morning carried a cluster of flowers and grain and fruit. Men, women and children, all had their little harvest-sheaf in their hands, brought to the church to be blessed. The custom is so old that there is no tracing it. No doubt it dates from the pagan era, and is one of the many ancient ceremonies which the Church in earliest times made over into Christian significance. The blessed harvest-sheaf is taken home and set up in the house, very often over the doorway where we would hang our " lucky horseshoe," and is preserved there through the year. In the rural districts there is great faith in its curative and healing powers. If cattle are sick or injured, they are fed a wisp of the hay or grass or a few kernels of the grain from the blessed sheaf.

This harvest sheaf is only one of many examples of the manner in which religion among the Poles is made intimately a part of the people's daily lives. Everywhere the people surround themselves with emblems and evidences of their faith. When the Pole builds him his cottage, he sets a cross somewhere on its outer walls, either painting it there, making it of wood, or, if he builds of brick, raising the bricks in cruciform design over the doorway or under the gable. (In the cities, too, there are hundreds of large buildings to be seen with the same mark of the cross conspicuously displayed.) Up and down the country roads of Poland you will find this sign of the Christian's home everywhere, and not

alone on the houses, but on barns and stables as well, as if to invoke a blessing on all the farmer's possessions.

The wayside shrine is even more common in Poland than in France. Every cross-roads has its tall crucifix, sometimes fifteen or twenty feet high, but often with the Figure very small and pathetically out of proportion to the stature of the cross itself. A little gabled roof usually protects the Figure, and there are always wreaths and clusters of flowers hung on the cross as high as hands can reach. Many of these Polish wayside crosses, when I first saw them, were half in ruin, rain-washed and rotting away; because, among the countless restrictions put on Polish life under the Russian régime along the eastern borderlands, was one forbidding the repair of such Catholic emblems, or the erection of new ones: in consequence of which the "lonely little Jesus" of the cross-roads was loved all the more by the people, His solitary and neglected state winning not only the tribute of their prayers and flowers, but often taking a prime place in their poetry and song. Often, in the dead of night, too, His shrine was repaired in secret, little by little, with the utmost stealth but the quintessence of devotion.

Next to the wayside crosses, shrines of the Blessed Virgin are in greatest evidence. One finds them everywhere, of every imaginable size and fashion, from elaborate affairs of wood or brick with pillars and pinnacles and cupolas, to simple little tabernacle-like boxes, glass-covered, nailed up under the protecting branches of a tree, the box sometimes containing so very small an image that one can barely see it. Always these little shrines are heaped with offerings of the field—in spring with apple-blossoms; in summer with daisies or tiger-lilies; in autumn with asters and golden rod, and sometimes an apple or a pear set on the shelf before the statue. Even in the snows of winter offerings are frequently made—a handful of grain for the birds whose song in the summertime makes the leafy shrine ring with praise of the Creator.

It is a poor farmer in Poland who has no cross or crucifix somewhere in his fields. The large estates, of course, have their chapels and their shrines; but the smallest landholder also must set up his little "holy place" to put a blessing on his planting and his harvesting. One often sees a peasant pausing on his way to or from his work to stand bareheaded or kneel before his cross or shrine. All work is begun and ended with a prayer. The rosary is the hourly companion of the shepherd and the goose-girl, as well as of the ancient granny who tends the cows or the goats by the roadside.

Sunday on the Polish countryside is a gala day, made bright beyond description by the costumes of the peasants. The gaiety and colouring of these native costumes is bewildering to the

Western eye. One has seen such things in pictures or in the chorus at the opera, but it is hard to believe even when one sees them that they are actually things of everyday life. Paintings and opera choruses are tame beside the real thing. Yet they are neither gaudy nor glaring, but as harmonious and beautiful as the plumage of birds. They fit in perfectly with the picture—and never have I seen a prettier or more arresting picture than that made by a group of Polish peasants crossing the wide prairie-like fields to church on Sunday morning, dressed in their holiday best. Against the background of green meadows, and always with an horizon of blue-black pines framing the scene, the orange and amaranth and violet of their wide-striped skirts and trousers, aprons and flowing capes, moves like a pageant. In the Lowich district, home of the famous "rainbow woollens" of Poland, orange seems to be the prevailing colour. The woollens are invariably woven in broad stripes, and next to orange, violet and amaranth (the Polish national colour) are the favourite shades. Further south, in the mountain country of Krakow and Zakopane, white wool trimmed with red and brown predominates among the men, who also are much given to narrow-striped trousers of red and white.

The men go in for colour on a scale difficult for the Western male to realize—linen shirts (homespun and very fine) with flowing sleeves embroidered beyond description ; dazzling waistcoats with huge buttons of silver or gilt or bone ; rakish hats ; and always top-boots. Among the women it is a draw between high boots laced with bright-red laces, and top-boots that are in themselves an absolute distraction—neat dainty affairs of the sort that makes dancing seem second nature. No feet could be still or graceless in such boots as some of the Polish girls put on on Sunday.

But they don't keep them on. That is the curious fact you will notice if you watch a crowd of Polish peasants on their way to church. They carry their boots in their hands as they stream single file along a meadow path or join in a group on the highroad. That is their native sense of economy asserting itself. Boots are made to save as well as to wear. Before the service begins they will all sit about on the grass in laughing circles pulling on their footwear again to make ready for the march into church.

IV

The summer months of 1920, however, took a lot of this gaiety and colour out of Polish life. By August, tens of thousands of the peasants of Poland were homeless and landless, thousands of them jammed into strange cities far from their old-time haunts, knowing no one, afraid of everyone, and half-starved. The churches in

Warsaw were filled with them at all hours of the day. The church was the only familiar, homelike spot many of the frightened creatures could find.

According to conservative estimates over one million people were made homeless by the Red invasion of Poland that summer. The great percentage of them were peasants and farmers. For weeks I saw such an endless stream of peasant-carts—narrow, springless, high-boxed wagons, built for one-man roads and forest trails—pouring into Warsaw from the east that they became a commonplace of our daily life. All day long, and far into the small hours of the night, the procession went on : tired horses, straggling cattle, weary, worried, dust-covered people, what earthy belongings they had been able to save in the scramble for life piled into the wagons ; the aged or the very young riding ; the others walking. And these were the fortunate ones, who had horses and cattle and carts left. There were other tens of thousands who had no alternative but to go on foot bent under heavy loads, driving their treasured pig or goat ahead of them.

Hundreds of these refugees dropped by the roadside in their flight. Their path was marked by graves, the hastily-dug resting-places of the aged and the infants. Wayside deaths and terrorization—that was the story in brief of thousands of Polish families in 1920.

And still they came—during those August days literally in hordes, as the Reds drew nearer. In the jamming of the Warsaw streets one could see the whole tragedy of the clearing of Eastern Poland of its population. The Government did its best to deflect the main refugee streams from the larger centres, and yet three hundred thousand, it is estimated, passed through the capital alone. " Where are they going ? " one asked. Most of them had no destination. They were just drifting, on and on. When they fled from their homes, seeing the conflagrations of the pillaging Reds on the horizon, in many cases with their own hands they set fire to their houses and haystacks rather than let them fall into the possession of the enemy. Literally they burned their bridges behind them. They thought Warsaw a safe refuge then ; and on August 15th the Bolsheviks were only twelve miles away.

The invasion of the city by these hosts of homeless refugees presented many strange scenes. After a while they began to penetrate into the residential sections, until little by little the whole capital became a sort of gypsy camp. We woke up on the morning of August 15th to find our Ulica Szopena (Chopin Street), which is far removed from the general stream of traffic, transformed into a sort of improvised farm. Horses and cows were everywhere ; wagons and carts, and no end of hay and straw. Goats were tethered to the trees, and there were pigs and a big

gander to complete the picture. A rooster, tied to a door-post in the courtyard of the house, had called me at sunrise to remind me of old days on a far-away farm. The curbs were lined with refugees—mothers nursing their infants, grannies cooking breakfast over a fire of sticks and twigs. But by evening of the same day the whole cavalcade had vanished, gone on its frightened way, still seeking safety from the approaching Reds.

One of the most pathetic sights I saw among these war-driven refugees was a child, sitting in the straw of her daddy's cart, holding in her arms very carefully and reverently a brightly-painted statue of the Blessed Virgin. That was this same morning, " Lady Day "—the day proclaimed by the Bolsheviks for the fall of Warsaw.

V

No country could undergo such an upheaval as this without being morally as well as emotionally affected. The influence of religion in the life of the Polish people is unmistakable ; but I was curious to learn whether that influence had not been considerably countered and lessened by the demoralizing conditions produced by the War. Perhaps there was something left, after all, for Trotsky to laugh at ?

I went to Cardinal Kakowski, the chief churchman of Warsaw, to ascertain what views I could on this matter. The residence of the Cardinal is an interesting place—a big, barrack-like building, set back in a wide, open court in the very heart of the down-town district. Huge gates on the rather narrow Miodowa (the " Street of Honey "—once a honey-cake market) open on to this court, with a cobble-stone driveway leading up to the doors. The house itself has the external appearance of a seminary or college, while the interior, with its entrance hall and bare-floored, high-ceilinged reception rooms, chairs set precisely along the wainscoting and portraits of Church dignitaries on the plain grey walls, is the typical priest's house seen around the world.

But the really interesting feature of the Cardinal's " Palace " is not its location, or its appearance, but the fact that for many years it was the home of the Calvinist and Lutheran Consistories and the Russian Archievey, as well as of the Catholic Archbishop, all of whom, under the Russian régime, were obliged to live practically under the same roof—a very simple arrangement to keep Church and churchmen constantly in the focus of the sharp eye of the Czarist Government, which, in religious matters above all others, supervised the lives of its subjects to the most intimate detail. True, the Catholic Archbishop and the Protestant Super-

intendents under Russian rule were given apartments separate from those of the Russian prelate; but that the object of surveillance was achieved goes without saying, especially as regards the Catholic Ordinary, who represented the vast majority of Poles. Petrograd always kept a strong hand on Warsaw. No Catholic Bishop could be appointed to this See unless he had been educated in the Petrograd Academy, of which Cardinal Kakowski is a graduate.

I had seen Archbishop Kakowski at public ceremonies several times before I met him personally, and had been struck by his commanding figure and kind, strong face. He is hardly more than fifty, over six feet tall, and fair, and in his pontifical robes he makes a striking picture. When he entered the room to greet me, the morning of the interview, dressed simply in a black cassock with scarcely a touch of cardinal on it, he seemed taller than ever; power and force were in his stride and hand-clasp, cutting the customary salutation short with a democratic gesture that reminded me poignantly of a memorable day before the War when Pope Pius X had given me just such a friendly and informal greeting at an audience in the Vatican.

The Cardinal answered my queries frankly and promptly concerning the effects of the War as noted in the churches. "Church attendance is about the same," he said. "There is no discernible falling off, and communions have increased. But there can be no denying the evil influence of war, its disruptive and demoralizing effects, especially in the cities. The stronghold of religious faith is in the country districts, where life is less complex and temptations fewer. But throughout Poland the inevitable laxity has resulted which is always the fruit of war, especially in regard to sex. We have no divorce in Poland. But the long six years of fighting, first under German, Austrian and Russian army conscriptions, then in our own self-defensive struggle, taking thousands of our men far from their homes, has had a marked effect, and has greatly increased sexual immorality. Conditions during the German occupation in this regard were very bad."

The Cardinal spoke in the friendliest way of the Protestants of Warsaw. "Protestants are scarcely 5 per cent. of our total population," he said, "but they are a sound element in our community. They co-operate with us in every way in promoting the moral welfare of our city. They are mostly Lutherans."

"Poland is a Christian country," Cardinal Kakowski declared, "but elements have inevitably crept into its government, during the present period of reconstruction, that are anti-Christian. These elements have grown especially influential in the army—no doubt because an army, being a concrete mass, presents a vulnerable point of attack. The demoralization which the Polish army suffered recently" (in 1920) "was due to the influence of these

elements, which are essentially disintegrating and subversive to order and *esprit de corps*. The *morale* of the men was weakened.

" There was, for example, the matter of chaplains," the Cardinal explained. " The army was poorly supplied with chaplains, and nothing could be done for a long time to change the situation. There was a crying need for a moral regeneration in the army, but those in authority were for a while slow in understanding that need. Moreover, the influence of the chaplain on the boys was nullified by some of the officers.

" We knew all this, but there was little we could do ; and as disaster upon disaster rolled our army back nearer and nearer Warsaw, with the souls as well as the bodies of our boys in jeopardy, it was no easy spectacle for us to contemplate.

" But then, happily, a change came. It was the old story of good coming out of evil. The military authorities, appalled by the almost complete breakdown of the morale of the army, began to put a stop to anti-religious propaganda. The new volunteer army, organized by General Haller, set the pace. More and more chaplains were called for. With the shortage of priests in the Church we could not give the army enough. But the light had broken. Our soldiers had their chaplains again, bringing them the strengthening consolation of the Sacraments, and encouraging and inspiriting them by word and example."

The part played by one of these army chaplains in the saving of Poland makes one of the most thrilling and heroic stories of the World War. It is, in fact, the story of the Miracle of the Vistula, which I will endeavour to recount.

VI

The miracle, so hard to believe in, so humanly impossible, happened on that same 15th of August which I have already described. I will let my journal tell the details :

" The Bolsheviks are on the run. Tens of thousands of prisoners and innumerable cannon and other spoils are already captured by the Poles. The Soviet armies are cut up and surrounded. From every point along the entire front, which extends hundreds of miles from the German boundary (far to the northwest of Warsaw) to the Dniester River in the south, news comes of continuous Polish successes and the complete routing of the enemy.

" What happened ? And how did it happen ? It was the heroic action of a young chaplain in the army that turned the tide at the last minute and wrought the miracle. Leading his regiment into the thick of the fight when absolute disaster threatened, this priest fell, riddled with Red bullets and pierced with Red bayonets.

But his men were victorious, and from that crucial moment of the sacrifice of his life the die was cast for the Red defeat. It was one of those fateful, history-making acts which just tip the balance and send events all sliding the right direction at a moment when only a miracle will save.

"Last Sunday, the 15th of August, the Red armies had penetrated as far as Radzymin, their nearest point of approach to the capital. Radzymin within twenty-four hours had changed hands four or five times. One Polish regiment, giving up without sufficient struggle, was disciplined, dispersed in disgrace, and its officers executed; while a second, the 236th Warsaw Volunteers, was sent to replace it and take back the town.

"Father Ignatius Skorupka, a volunteer chaplain with that volunteer regiment, went into the fight with his men. They were decidedly 'his' men, for scores of the young fellows in the 236th were his pupils in school. He was a teacher of Christian doctrine in one of the largest academies in Warsaw, and when the volunteer army was organized he insisted on going with 'his boys,' with whom he was enormously popular, being their scoutmaster and their leader in sports and athletics as well as their spiritual mentor. He went into the fight with them, as a matter of course. But the ordeal they faced was so terrible, the fire from the Red guns so withering, they began to waver, even in spite of the awful fate of disgrace and death just meted out to their defeated predecessors in the attack. Human flesh and human spirit, even so ardent as that of these untried but daring young volunteers, could not endure the blaze of flame and steel that confronted them. An American officer here who witnessed the attack, which began about one o'clock Sunday morning, told me that never on the Western Front, when the Germans were relying almost wholly on machine-gun warfare, had he seen so formidable and bitter a fire as the Bolsheviks put up at Radzymin.

"The Poles wavered. Father Skorupka saw the wavering. Not alone Poland and Warsaw, but the honour of his regiment, of 'his boys,' was at stake. With his surplice and stole over his uniform, and suddenly lifting his crucifix high in the air, he leaped ahead of the front line, shouting to them to come on.

"One of the officers of the regiment, a seasoned veteran of the last six years, says that 'I have seen many courageous officers in battle, but never have I seen a man lead troops on as Father Skorupka led them.' Under the shock of his magnetic voice and action, the Poles advanced. But the Bolshevik fire again drove them back. Again the chaplain led. Again they advanced—and again fell back. Still again. And yet once more. Four times, with his crucifix high above his head, where all might see it, and his voice shouting in the names of Jesus and Mary to come on

and save their homes and their people, the young priest led his regiment. Four times! The fourth time there was no wavering. On they went. There was no more falling back. Radzymin was retaken. But it was taken over the bullet-pierced and bayoneted body of Ignatius Skorupka.

"The story of Father Skorupka has spread quickly to Warsaw, being mentioned in the official communique of the day following. To-day his picture is exhibited everywhere, while plans are already proposed for the erection of a monument to him in Palace Square, the centre of the city. This monument is to be cast from metal captured from the Bolsheviks on the field of Radzymin. All the pictures of the young priest—he was only twenty-seven—reveal a comely, boyish face, with an expansive brow and a mouth that has much sweetness and gentleness in its lines. The brow tells the story of a mind that was far from the ordinary, the mouth bespeaks the kindly traits of human fellowship and love which made him worshipped by his pupils and fellow-soldiers."

Warsaw's bewilderment at the stupendous and unbelievable change in her fortunes within the course of a few hours steadied a little as the story of Skorupka became known. "What has happened?"—with a blank for answer, best describes the Polish state of mind during the first two or three days following the sudden turn of the tide. No one knew just what had happened. The Bolsheviks, whose guns had been in hearing for days, had not come in—were not coming in—couldn't get in. That was all anyone knew. The enemy was faced about and on the run. "A miracle!" was invariably the concluding remark of the Poles, when they discussed the question—and no one else did anything else for days. That hundred thousand, marching, singing and praying through the streets of Warsaw three weeks before—that crowd had meant business, business with Almighty God. "Those people simply put the deal up to Him, and He came across." On that day there doubtless were many offerings made to Heaven which Heaven alone will ever know about. But it is not difficult to imagine the offer Father Skorupka made. It is not difficult to see him, swept with the twin fires of religion and patriotism, leaving his studies, dropping his books and his plans for the next term's school work, going out to join "his boys," and saying to God in the secret of his heart: "Take me, but save my country!"

VII

The answer to Skorupka's prayer was the Miracle of the Vistula. The country was saved. But what a wreck it was!

We were scarcely out of Warsaw, on our first visit to the devastated areas east and north, following the victory of

August 15th, when we came to the battlefield of Radzymin. There was a pine wood, where the Polish batteries had been placed; an open plain cut like a grill with trenches; barbed wire; the distant town; and some scattered graves: all lying hushed and quiet under heavy clouds. This was the scene of the Miracle of the Vistula.

The town of Radzymin itself showed many marks of the battle: buildings wrecked by artillery, whole blocks lying in ashes. At Wyskov we struck another field of decisive fighting, and another wrecked bridge, being held up here several hours waiting to get across the pontoon over which troops were then moving. The commanding officer of Father Skorupka's regiment passed us at this point.

The tour we made took us as far north as Ciechanow (on the map almost directly north of Warsaw) and as far east as Bialystok, covering a large part of the ground that had been swept by the Red invasion and the Red retreat. The section traversed by us in this trip may be taken as fairly representative of the whole of Poland east of the Vistula. What we saw there may be regarded as characteristic of what might be seen anywhere in the war-ridden areas of Poland at that time.

It was raining heavily when we started out; rain and dismal skies were continuous throughout the journey. There was nothing to brighten the picture; all was depressing—all except the spirit of the people with whom we met and talked. That spirit shone like a star.

Just after we had left the drab, shell-shattered ruins of Pultusk and had struck the country road again, we met a young Polish sergeant who asked for a ride to the next village. He was a clear-eyed, clean-cut chap, whose manly way of speaking up to the Polish colonel in our machine was characteristic of the natural democratic manners which I have so often observed in these people. His salute was perfect; but that ritual performed, his advance and request was frankly that of man to man. He had been wounded; the healed scars of two bullet holes in his left cheek told the story of how the deadly lead had gone in and out, narrowly missing his left eye. But the wound still ached, and he was on his way to the doctor for medicine.

Invalided home, this young man had been caught on his father's farm when the Reds came in. "They brought threshing-machines with them," he told us, "and they threshed all our grain, all the grain in the neighbourhood, and took it off with them. Most of the cows and horses, too. But we will put in winter wheat. My father and others here are combining to get some planting done by pooling the seed and the few horses that are left. Fortunately I will be home for a while longer to help."

The same note of matter-of-course optimism was in his voice and words that I have heard wherever I have met Polish war victims.

Bridges were down everywhere, but they were going up again as fast as hands and hammers could repair them. At one place, where we forded the Narew River, the men working on the bridge shouted at us that when we returned that way in the evening the job would be finished. And it was. Evidently they hustled the work for us, for they took great pride in the fact that we were the first across and sent us over the new planks with a lusty cheer and a waving of hats.

The broad stretch of country out by the Narew from Serock to Ciechanow gave us a panoramic view of war-invaded Poland. On all sides the horizon was bound by the dark walls of pine forests. Heavy clouds swept them with a sort of thick violet light. Patches of yellow lupin in bloom splotched the drab canvas with ruddy colour. The wrecks of bridges, still smoking, dragged their trailing ruins in the water—always a sorry sight, a broken bridge, there is so much of utter despair and finality in it. Rows of gaunt chimneys, like the disembodied souls of homes left stripped and exposed, stood cold and high in scorched nakedness, marking the scenes of recent terror and flames and tears. Alongside the road we passed the charred wreck of an auto-truck; further on, a broken Russian camion ditched by the highway. But the one sight above all others that struck us on every hand was the abandonment of the fields. No farmers were abroad; no furrows were being turned. Ploughs and horses were gone. No cattle were in the pastures. They had all been carried off. Black spots in many fields showed where grain or haystacks had been burned. There was an indescribable stillness and blight over the whole scene.

Near Ostrow we arrived at a military headquarters one day just at noon. The sun was out, and the officers were having their mess in the garden of the country house where they were billeted. They made us join them, and we had a taste of the meagre fare of the Polish army. One wondered how they could fight as they did on these rations of thin soup, black bread, wretched beef (or horse-meat) and tea. But they seemed to enjoy it, and were like a crowd of schoolboys, with just a touch of reserve on account of their unexpected American guests. It was pathetic to see their attempts at making an extra show of their poor table "for company's sake." Their tablecloths were bed-blankets, but there were bouquets plucked in the garden to enliven the scene. There was the same democratic spirit among them, too, that I had noted before. The ragged mess-boys who waited on table were not ruled out. They also had their share in the courtesies and responsibility of the occasion.

The house was a big, three-storied, square, white-washed building of brick, surrounded by gardens and orchards—all neglected and weed-grown now. There was no family left in the place. It had been the home of two brothers who lived together. When the Reds came, they seized the place, arrested the younger brother (the older was absent at the time) and took him to Bialystok. When the older man returned and found what had happened, he hurried to Bialystok to intercede for his brother and to try to free him. The only answer the Bolsheviks gave him was to arrest him also. Then they shot them both. Along the fences around Ostrow I saw placards, put up since the Red retreat, asking for "prayers for the repose of the souls of Kasimir and Ignatius Iwanowski."

Lomza was the first town of any size we entered, a well-built, prosperous-looking place beautifully situated on a hill. It had a look of a North Italian town, set on its eminence, with its old Gothic cathedral looking out over a farming country of teeming riches. There were few marks of war wreckage in Lomza. The Reds had captured it with ease during the strategic retreat of the Poles, early in July; and as they fully expected to stay there indefinitely they had been a bit careful. That is, careful of the buildings. But of the bodies and souls and personal property of their victims—that is another story.

VIII

At Lomza we found lodging in the home of a Pole who had acted as local agent for the American Relief Administration, and who gave us a welcome that had no limit to its hospitality. (Even the small inhabitants of the bed-tick on which I slept on the floor insisted on keeping me awake all night, explaining how glad they were to have me there. No denying, like all others in these war-starved countries, they were very hungry.)

This Pole talked freely, and gave us some highly interesting details of the Bolshevik occupation of the town. "They began looting as soon as they arrived," he said. "They managed it this way: any individual soldier of the Red Army is free to loot all he likes unless a Commissar forbids it. The soldier's officers have no authority to stop him; only the Commissar can do that —and where can you find a Commissar when you want him? Thus the Bolsheviks robbed the American Relief Association's warehouse in Lomza wholesale—one item alone was five hundred cases of condensed milk—in spite of all the official prohibitions, official seals and official guards that I might secure. In fact, they threatened to shoot me for daring to say that the warehouse had been robbed.

"In two or three days they had pretty fairly stripped the shops and stores of the town. Then they began on the private houses, and on the people themselves. One could not go on the street wearing rings or jewelry. They simply stopped you and took them away from you. Even the clothes on your back were not safe. As we all had been heavily requisitioned already for supplies for the army, especially for underwear, some of us had not much left. If the Reds had remained any longer we certainly would have had nothing."

A daring and dramatic thing occurred in Lomza on the second day of the Bolshevik occupation, an event which proves that even the Red Terror cannot always strike fear into the hearts of people—especially women—who have the courage of their convictions.

One of the first acts of the "Bolos" on their arrival in Lomza was the arrest of the Bishop and two pastors of the town. As is usually the case under the Bolshevik régime, these men were hustled off to jail without charges or warning—merely on suspicion of being "counter-revolutionary type." The Reds frequently execute people simply because they are "counter-revolutionary type," freely acknowledging that they have no specific charges to make against them.

The day after the Bishop and priests were taken away, the Propaganda Commissar of the Reds called a public meeting, which all citizens were compelled to attend. He began the usual harangue about the beauties of Soviet Government, etc., primed for a long tirade against the "follies of democracy," the "slavery of religion," etc. But he was suddenly interrupted by a loud chorus of women's voices shouting, "Send us back our Bishop and we'll listen to you." The man who gave us the narrative told with gusto of the blank look of astonishment and finally of infuriation that came into the Bolshevik orator's face at this point of his discourse. He tried to go on, but every attempt was interrupted by the same chorus, all the women in the hall shouting in unison, "Give us back our Bishop!"

The women of Lomza succeeded in breaking up that Bolshevik meeting. Yet no single one of them could be accused. All were guilty. They had planned their demonstration so well that no individual woman could be picked out for punishment.

The Red leader's next move was to go after the men. But the men simply responded: "We have nothing to say. Don't you tell the women they have equal rights now? There you are!"

The Bishop and the priests were released from jail and permitted to return.

But in the end the Bolsheviks took a horrible revenge on the women of Lomza. There are at least six mothers in that city

(" God only knows how many more! " our Polish informant exclaimed) who are wondering in tearless silence to-day where their young daughters are. " The day the Bolsheviks left, they carried many girls away with them by force. I for my part saw six of them huddled into a truck, crying and weeping, as the machine tore down the street in the auto column of the retreating Red army."

IX

The route from Lomza to Osowiec, thence to Bialystok, and finally back to Warsaw was more or less a repetition of what we had seen since we began our tour: wrecked bridges, abandoned farms, here and there the ashes of a house, and always the roadside grave. At Osowiec, once a strong Russian fortress facing the German border, no human being was in sight; nothing but acres of ground strewn with the gigantic ruins of the blown-up fortifications.

A Polish guard came out to challenge us—a solitary figure emerging from the shelter of a huge sheet of corrugated iron set on a hillside. His uniform, dripping in the cold rain, was little better than rags. But he had a smile in his blue eye as he exclaimed " Amerykanski! " and let us pass on. On this trip we met or overtook literally thousands of soldiers, regiment after regiment, most of them moving south to chase Budienny out of Galicia. They were fatigued and hungry, no doubt, but they usually came singing down the road, making the land ring with their lusty voices. In their " dough-boy " uniforms they looked so much like our own boys of the A.E.F. that they fairly took the heart out of us as they swung by. " What can't they do," we said, " once they get back to peace and the soil and productive labour again! "

" After all," remarked our colonel, " this is the real Miracle of the Vistula—the indomitable, irrepressible, God-believing spirit of the youth of Poland."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE LAND AND THE LANDLORD

I

WINDMILLS! The windmills of Poland were a joyous surprise for us. Windmills to right of us, windmills to left of us, windmills wherever there was wind; great giant windmills, with wings like birds in a fable, and an air about them that was nothing short of thrilling, so lusty and exuberant they were as they swung their enormous arms about in the breezy sunlight, with a big, healthy, vigorous sweep that seemed to hail a man for miles. I even cocked my ear at sight of them to catch the sound of a cheer as we came over the green slope. "There you are!" they seemed to be shouting. "Just watch us! We're on the job. Come along! Pile in your rye! Pile in your wheat—and your oats—and your barley! That's all we ask. Pile 'em all in! We'll do the rest. That's what we're here for. Oh yes, the Germans! They burned down eleven hundred and ninety-two of us, along in 1915. Not to mention what the Russians and the Austrians did before that. But never mind. We're here. And the land is here. And *you're* here. So wave your arms, old fellow, and get in the game! Round and round in the merry wind! Round and round, and grind and grind!"

Is this too fanciful? The actual fact is we laughed outright, we couldn't tell why, the first time we came on to those windmills in Poland. Even when one of them stopped, all out of breath, it still looked quite cheerful; not at all sad, as windmills on horizons in oil paintings and in sentimental poetry so often do. You could actually hear that old mill whistling "Whew!" as it wound up its performance, and it wasn't too difficult to fancy one of its big arms bending up (when no one was looking) to wipe the honest sweat off it grey, shingled brow.

We were on our way west-bound for Lowich, Lodz, and finally Liskow, where the American Red Cross Orphanage had been transferred during the Bolshevik invasion of 1920. Coming out of Warsaw we had passed the Field of Wola, "Bloody Wola," a battle-ground that had run red with the life-stream of Poland in the Rebellion of '63. The walls of its little old white church

among the trees, at the altar of which one of the leaders of the rebellion had been trapped and murdered, were still peppered with the bullets of sixty years ago. Here too, in ancient times, the Sejm or Parliament held its outdoor sittings, choosing its kings and crowning them in the leafy open.

After Wola we were soon into the country in earnest, and it wasn't long before a windmill, as usual, was hailing us across the level fields. I recalled scenes in the south and east, along the Boug and down toward the Dnieper, where, instead of these sweeping, prairie-like stretches of grain, the country rolls in rich folds, breaking into hills and bluffs. But the windmills had been there too. The first sight to greet our eyes one early dawn along the Dnieper, after we had pulled wearily and wakeful through a long night of forests, sand and misadventure, was windmills—a whole family of windmills; seven by actual count, of various sizes and ages, and all poised along the brow of the steep hill, their twenty-eight arms going full blast, as if we had just caught them in the act of leaping across the green gully in front of them. Maybe that's what Polish windmills do for morning exercise.

II

It would be impossible to see Poland or to really know the Pole without going into the countryside, without getting acquainted with his windmills. Perhaps those reference books which had told us that "Poland is a rich agricultural country," really meant to say all the things we found out afterwards; that Poland has the highest percentage of rural population of all the countries of Europe; that 94 per cent. of its vast area of some two hundred and fifty thousand square miles is productive; that it is the third forest country in Europe; that twenty millions of its people live on the land. Perhaps; but they hadn't. And of windmills, not a word.

We learned these facts "on the side" as we worked in various parts of Poland, and I set them all down carefully in my notebook. But whenever I went the least distance into the actual Polish countryside I was prone to forgot about notebooks. There were much more interesting things there than statistics. Windmills, for instance. And people—the most interesting people I have met anywhere; and a life of such vitality and charm and grace that I always came away from it with the greatest reluctance. This is the real Poland, the countryside.

The scene, viewed from the roadway where you ride in your "bryczka" or basket trap, is the same always: wild flowers everywhere, gorgeous fat buttercups and whole blue skies of forget-me-nots; level or rolling fields of green; haystacks and

grain shocks; clover meadows or waving seas of rye, wheat, barley, oats, flax, buckwheat; flocks of cattle and sheep dotting the picture, and white "flotillas" of geese rocking across the green expanse; vast stretches of potatoes or sugar-beets; all laid out like a variegated carpet as far as the eye can see, and always hedged in by the woods, where the "polanka" or clearing here and there tells of the further invasion of man into the primeval. Fields and forests—fifty-five million acres of farm land, thirty-one thousand two hundred square miles of forests—that's what Poland is. Then the villages of the peasants; for the majority of the Polish peasants, instead of scattering out over the fields in isolated farm-houses, cluster their homes together in villages, which are usually strung along the road for half a mile. And in the centre of the picture is the house, the home of the estate-owner of the neighbourhood.

The house is invariably set among trees—limes or beeches or oaks, sweet-smelling linden, white birches showing their silver leaves, and plumy old elms reaching their shadow-weaving fans over the roofs. There is invariably a long, tree-bordered avenue leading up to the house, and there are sure to be full-throated orioles—the golden or Baltimore oriole, the same as we have in America—flashing through the green in the morning; and at night always the nightingales. The trees about a country house in Poland are among its dearest possessions, and so all the more heartbreaking has been the destruction of invading armies, when these old sentinels, planted by the hands of many forefathers, have been despoiled. Where artillery action had been hottest one often sees whole rows of fine old trees cut short, as if a giant scythe had swept through them. Now the storks make their nests in the stumps.

That was another surprise, next to the windmills—the storks. I had thought Holland had a monopoly of both, but I found one as common as the other in Poland. We saw storks in all parts of the country. We counted fourteen of these old-fashioned, wise-looking birds one day, feeding in the lush grass in the shade of a bridge we were crossing. They were as tame as if they were household pets, and walked the Polish world with a stately, confident step, sure that no man would ever harm them. They are as sacred in Poland as elsewhere—and kept just as busy bringing babies!

As for the trees, at one house in Poznania (a residence of the Chlapowski's, the family of Madame Modjeska) stands a tree, happily untouched, which holds a place in the hearts of all Poles as well as of that particular family. It is the tree under which Mickiewicz wrote his great national pastoral *Pan Tadeusz*, a poem which all should read who would know the old patriarchal

life of the Polish countryside. This Chlapowski house at Kopaszewo is an imposing, steep-roofed, high-porticoed mansion, green with climbers, approached by a handsome driveway and a stately flight of steps. It may be taken as a good example of the larger and more elaborate type of Polish country house, bearing a strong resemblance to our typical Southern plantation home. At very first sight it seems to combine all the ceremonial courtliness and all the homely hospitality of Polish manners—as if it said, "Come in! This is what our windmills have been waving to you about."

The average Polish country home is not always quite so pretentious as the three-storied mansion at Kopaszewo. It is very often only one storey high, a rambling, many-roomed, comfortable place, built generation after generation as the generations grew, with a free-and-easy air about it, as if it would be perfectly willing to add another wing to itself for you, the new guest, if you would only stay long enough. For Polish country houses are famous for their spacious hospitality and for the number of guests they can accommodate, especially at holiday time or in the hunting season. The sport of princes is second nature to the Pole, whether it be ducks or deer, foxes or wild boar, or even the big-horned elk, which still may be stalked in the Polesian forest districts.

In the old days (that is, before the War; and even yet on occasion) the guests at a Polish house have been at times so many that some of them have made their beds in the hay in the barn. That lot would fall of course to the young men or the youngsters of the house, with their city cousins, perhaps, to share the fun. And then, as poor old Joe Gargery used to exclaim, "What larks!"

There is nothing sumptuous about these Polish country homes. They have, instead, a clean, airy, open-window way about them, with their always highly-polished floors, which the servants go over every morning in the cool early hours, shining them up with pads which they manipulate by their feet or on their knees. There seldom are carpets, but many rugs—old rugs of the East—in the house for generations, rugs that connoisseurs would give their eyes to possess; and rugs also of peasant weave, the famous "Kilims," rich in pattern and colouring. When these come up in the evening, as they often do, at the magic word "dance," what a floor is there for the whirling waltz! I never understood why the Polish waltz is the furiously gay affair it is until I saw a real Polish floor. Then I knew that Poles waltz as they do because they must—or else go down! I have seen even the most expert go down sometimes. But they were up again and vanishing down the mirrorlike length of the floor before you could count the step.

In the country house of Poland you see the Polish housewife

and her table at their best. Every woman is a housewife in Poland, no matter how numerous may be her servants. She is the teacher of the servants, her home more or less a school of domestic science for the neighbourhood. Here you taste cheeses and butter and cream that are beyond belief—not common in post-war days, it is true, but still sufficient when guests arrive to make the old, undevastated Poland seem almost real again. Wild strawberries in the morning; at luncheon, a dish of curds or chilled "chlodnik," which is made of beetroot juice, cream and fruit, and is served with ice; mushrooms—what a land it is for mushrooms! there are a dozen edible varieties to choose from and twice as many ways of preparing them. Fish—pike or brook-trout, fresh from the stream, melting in one's mouth; wild-fowl, usually partridge; and smoked meats, "jerked" at old home chimneys over the aromatic fumes of juniper wood. Or there may be "zrazy," a sort of mincemeat patty made of beef, with butter, eggs, spices, onions and bread-crumbs, salted and peppered to a king's taste. If you are in the Lithuanian country you may find "kisiel" in the cupboard—a jellied oaten water; or you may sip "rosol" (*consommé*) at your dinner, or black broth, made of the blood of goose or duck, seasoned with vinegar and spices. But according to the old custom, this is not a dish you would wish to be served if you happened to be suitor for a daughter of the house. A suitor to be given black broth meant "*finis*." But suppose you are a suitor, and you win. Then there will be toasts galore, the last of which will invariably be that immemorial pledge for the whole gathering which has been drunk at Polish tables for ages, "Love we one another!"

Easter in the Polish countryside is a great season for setting the festive table, with the sideboard laden with good things—though the makeshifts of war days were sometimes a bit pathetic. It would be a poor country house, however, which could not afford the traditional roasted porker for Easter. He takes his place as king of the feast, set in the midst of the other delicacies in fat and gleaming nakedness, his shining snout wreathed with buds and greens. But no, he is not king. The presiding genius of the Polish Easter board is always the symbolical Holy Lamb. And this toy figure, with its *Agnus Dei* bannerette, rules not alone at the Paschal time, but lingers on the table for weeks after the festival has passed.

The laden sideboard is called "swiecony," and if it is not always as laden now as in other days, it makes up for lack of edibles in its decorations of garlanded flowers and new spring leaves. And there are Easter eggs, of course, and one inevitable dainty, the "baba," which dates from pagan times, when the spring festival was celebrated with fun and feasting.

There is a special cake, called " strucla," for Christmas too—that gay season when the carollers go about through the snowy countryside singing " kolendy," dressed in fantastic dress, and carrying on their backs their miniature Nativity plays. Everyone repairs to the forest then, to help bring home the " holy trees " ; the ladies all wear " kolpacheks," sticking a spray of holly into that *chic* headgear, under which the plainest face is pretty, framed in furs and laughing over the jingle of sleigh-bells. And besides " strucla " and figs and dates and nuts, there is " miod " to sip when you come in out of the cold—" miod " distilled from honey, with all the wild, intoxicating essences in it, of clover fields saturated in summer sunlight. And always there is the " samovar," with its steaming " herbata," and cakes flavoured with saffron or poppy-seed.

III

This is the Polish country house at holiday time. But it is not always holiday time on the Polish countryside any more than anywhere else in the world ; least of all in these days when loss and death have subdued the spirit and very much tamed the flesh. The tradition of the Polish country home (or " dwor " as it is properly called) is, however, one of good cheer ; a tradition which has its real source in work. These centres of estates are busy places, and there is a reason for it.

When ill-fortune took independence from the Pole, the effects of it were far-reaching. But thanks to the Pole's sound sense these effects were turned to good account in a thousand and one diverse and unexpected ways. The Pole, it seems, will not down. His whole history testifies to that, and there is no end to the individual cases demonstrating it. The story of Kowalewski, the Vilna student who was exiled for nationalistic agitating, but who, in the years of his banishment, made of himself an Orientalist and authority on Far-Eastern languages, is one example of the rich advantages to which a Pole can put the uses of adversity.

Poland did this on a large scale following the partitions. For one thing, the loss of political functions and the tyrannical restrictions of life in close contact with alien officialdom banished the landowning, educated Pole from the cities back to the land. All the internal evidence points to the conclusion that if Poland had remained free, her industrial development would have been much more rapid than it was. But what industry lost agriculture gained, so that Poland remains to-day what she has been from time immemorial, an agricultural country. Some of the largest industries which she has developed rely in great part on agriculture and are a direct outgrowth of it—sugar refineries, for instance, starch factories, distilleries, breweries, etc.

The wholesale withdrawal of the Pole to the country may have had some bad effects. It might be argued that it narrowed his orbit, in the sense of world interest, taking him out of daily contact with universal progress. But the facts, strangely enough, dispute this simple deduction. His literature, his art, his science, all the products of his mind tell a contradictory story on this point. The truth is, the Pole never actually lost his contact with the world. The very restrictions which drove him to the land to seek some freer field of life, some more open channel for his energies than that of the city, where he was hedged in by all the daily annoyances and petty persecutions of alien government, also shut him to a great extent out of his own schools. (His own schools, in fact, were gradually shut altogether.) This sent him abroad. By natural inclination a student, avid for the things of the mind, he brought home from travel and the universities of Europe the best and the most liberal thought the outside world had to offer. And the progress thus made, the advantages thus gained, were applied in greatest degree to his country life, above all to his agriculture. He became a scientific agriculturist.

Thus it transpires that the curse of absentee landlordism never put its blight on Poland, where country homes have been for generations among the real fountainheads of Polish life, radiating through the whole nation a spirit of energy, enlightenment and advancement and of tenacious patriotism. They have been the true social centres of the country, in the broad sense of social enterprise and welfare.

As far as the women of the house are concerned, they have, as already stated, made the "dwor" a veritable school. Besides the fine arts of housewifery taught to generations of peasant girls, the language and history and religious faith of Poland have been preserved largely through the medium of the country house. In the days when the Polish tongue was proscribed, the private boudoir of the mistress of the "dwor" has in innumerable instances been the secret classroom and Sunday school of the peasant children of the district. There they have been taught their prayers, their letters, their catechism; and have learned, perhaps in rhymes, such as those made by Madame Morawska, Mr. Chlapowski's grandmother, the history of their country, These history rhymes of Madame Morawska are known by heart through the whole countryside of Poznania.

If the lady of the house has made her home a school, the man of the family has made the "dwor" a practical college of agriculture, through which the standard of farming for all the country around him has been constantly kept up and improved. This has been accomplished only by the hardest and most tireless work, by the study and application of new methods, the introduction

of new breeding stock and new machinery, by seed testing, soil fertilizing, and so on. Such a tradition is the personal supervision of the Polish landlord over his farm and stock that it gave rise generations ago to one of the national proverbs, " A master's eye makes a fat horse." Even as far back as the fifteenth century we find the Polish historian Dlugosz describing the landlord of the days of King Boleslas the Brave (A.D. 1025) as " taking pleasure in agricultural pursuits and the breeding of cattle." As an actual fact the results of scientific Polish farming are shown in such figures as those for 1914, which revealed the wheat and rye crop increased 250 per cent. in ten years. The pre-war average run for wheat was 40 bushels per acre; rye, 28 bushels. The total output of Polish farms in 1912 was as follows: grain, 21,392,000 tons; potatoes, 34,469,000 tons; beets, 12,900,000 tons. The beets went 21½ tons per acre, giving Poland at that date third place in the world's output of sugar beets.

It was in just such houses as these which we are now considering that some of the great agricultural associations of Poland had their birth—associations which are to-day so important and so influential a factor in the economic life of the country that it might almost be said that the nation's future depends on them. Count Desire Chlapowski—famous as a fighter in Napoleon's army—following the Napoleonic wars, laid out the first plans for the emancipation of the peasants of the western districts, after having already travelled to England to study farming and land-tenure systems there, systems which he proceeded to introduce into Poland. His sons and the sons of his sons continued his work, and were leaders in the great land struggle in Poznania before the war, in which Polish peasants were enabled to acquire two hundred and fifty thousand acres of small farm lands in twenty-five years, in spite of the methodical pressure of the German Government to dispossess and uproot the Pole from his own soil.

In Poland at present there are more than twenty-five hundred agricultural societies, " circles," etc., with an actual membership of 370,000 and a clientele of nearly 5,000,000 consumers. There is likewise a strong agricultural Press devoted to the interests of the farmer and the modernization of agriculture. It is to the Polish country house, the seat of the estate owner, that the beginnings of this vast movement for the improvement of farming and the betterment of farm life is to be traced; to the landed proprietor and his wife—and to the parish priest. No record of Polish country life would be complete or fair without a tribute being paid to the priest, who has been not only the pastor and defender of his people, but the real link between the two classes of gentry and peasantry.

From the days of Peter Skarga, the great Polish Jesuit preacher,

the priest in Poland has been famed as a champion of the people, of the peasant against the exploitation of unscrupulous landlords, and of all classes against their common oppressors, the alien Powers, whom time and again they have defied and challenged. Skarga has had many illustrious followers of the cloth, especially among the educators of the country, who have sought in the enlightenment of the people for the true source of liberty. There was Father Konarski, who began the reform of public education in 1740, and first introduced the exact sciences into the schools; Father Hugo Kollontay, who with Father Gregory Piramowicz drew up the statutes for the first national board of education to be created in Europe—Kollontay being later intimately associated with Kosciuszko in his struggle for independence and the enfranchisement of the peasantry. There was Father Stojalowski, a pioneer of peasant emancipation; Father Szamarzewski, one of the founders of the Poznanian co-operatives; and in our own time Father Peter Wawrzyniak, one of the strongest and most successful leaders in the land-struggle against Germany; and Father Blizinski of Liskow, who, against the opposition and under the suspicion of both Russian and German Governments, has made a model settlement out of one of the once poorest districts in the country, reducing the illiteracy of the population from 80 per cent. to 10 per cent. in twenty years, and establishing a complete self-dependent co-operative life among the people.

Skarga—the forerunner of these, and one of Poland's national heroes, whose picture is seen in every house and cottage and schoolroom of the land—was a prophet who foretold many of the disasters which in time befell the Polish nation. But when he spoke on behalf of the serfs, just and true as his words were in the light of his own times three hundred years ago, he miscalculated when he declared that the peasants were "storing up a terrible future" for the nobility—unless his words meant that it was the nobles who were storing up that future for themselves. In that case, the nobility must be credited with heeding his warning well; for the records show that, whatever their faults three centuries and more ago, that future of the Polish peasant, which to-day has become a reality, is not terrible. It is wonderful, and it has been largely made so by the gentry.

IV

The history of the relations between the proprietors and peasants of Poland in modern times, especially during the past fifty years, might be called one of benevolent assimilation, in that the landowner, through the gradual drawing together of the two classes, has more and more shared with the peasant the culture

and tradition which the gentry had created. The peasant has risen. But it is taking no whit of credit from him to say that, if he has risen, it has not been entirely by his own unaided efforts. No honest Polish peasant disputes that. It has been a mutual process between master and man, as the old terms went; actually mutual, as is proven by the striking fact that as the peasant has advanced so has the proprietor also, in increasing liberality of spirit and strength of character.

Every historian who treats of this question, no matter what his prejudices, acknowledges in the long run that the lot of the Polish peasant, even in the days when all Europe rode the neck of the toiler, was never as bad as that of his brother in other lands. Before serfdom was abolished in any European country, as historical records show, it was a common happening for the serfs of German landlords to run away and seek their livelihood with the more lenient Polish Pans. In Poland the lot of the serf was always mitigated by the nature of Polish character, which instinctively leans towards liberality and is inherently democratical. That there was class division in Poland, as in all the countries of the world since history began, needs no explanation beyond the universal bent of human society. But that class division in Poland never developed to the acuteness known in other lands is all the more to be wondered at, when the fact is considered that the original class of servitude in Poland was greatly augmented as time went on by prisoners of war, who in themselves, being aliens and enemies, created an inevitable distinction. Only the inherent Polish spirit of tolerance and liberality can explain the eventual absorption of these into the national body, and the development of mutual relationship between gentry and peasant.

The partitioners of Poland knew this spirit and what it meant, and they did their best to widen the breach between the two classes, in the hope of weakening and destroying all impulse toward national unity. "*Divide et impera*"—"divide and conquer." They even tried to legislate that breach into an impassable gulf, playing class against class and man against man, floating half-baked laws designed to satisfy neither side but sure to make friction between them—as when Russia freed the serfs but dispossessed them of the soil they lived on, thus leaving them a landless mass on the hands of the proprietors; free, but dependent on the landlord, with just a half-taste of liberty on their lips, but in their fists at the same time "forest rights," "pasturage rights," and other paper concessions destined inevitably to provoke and harass the landowner and impede the progress of agriculture. Or, worst of all, as when Austria in cold blood roused the peasants against the proprietors, plying them with free drink to precipitate a massacre in which two thousand were killed, for every head of

which the Hapsburg Government paid a public bounty. That fearful crime was committed to stave off the land reforms of 1846, according to which the Polish " Pans," or landlords, had planned the emancipation of the serfs.

Every step taken in the history of Poland toward the enfranchisement of the peasant originated with these same Polish Pans, and was eventually forced by them on the usurping governments. As early as the sixteenth century Polish philanthropists were championing the peasant's cause. The Constitution of 1791, while it did not wholly enfranchise them, prepared the way for Koscuiszko, himself a proprietor, who, three years later, roused the nation against the partitioners and set the peasants actually free. Prussia's hand was forced in 1823; Austria's in 1848—for, two years after the massacre of 1846, Austria was obliged to do what the Poles had tried to do. In 1863 " Your freedom and ours " was the slogan of the rebelling Pans—the freeing of the serfs and the reunion of the divided nation—the Russian Czar following a year later with his belated decree of 1864. Every record shows the Pole continually developing and advancing his ideas of human liberty, always a pioneer of social progress in Eastern Europe.

In the long struggle between Poland and her partitioners the peasant became a pawn between his own nation on the one hand and the Powers on the other. Each of these three Powers knew that if he could subjugate the Polish peasant, Poland was his, Poland would disappear. If Russia could make a " moujik " out of the Polish serf, if the Teuton could make an obedient atom out of him, the game was won through sheer force of numbers. Poland, on the other hand, the old intellectual Poland of leaders and thinkers, the men who traditionally owned the land and had given the country its native culture—the Poland, in short, of which it was the inborn ambition and aspiration of the peasant to be a part—Poland knew that the strength and resources of the nation lay in the tiller of the soil. These thinking men of Poland knew how the peasant loved that soil; they knew his industry, his honesty, his fidelity, his sturdy virtues of simple faith and clean blood. They would not suffer this stock of the nation to be lost, and they fought to retain it, body and soul, to keep it Polish, to advance it in national consciousness, and to build it up more and more into a citizenship worthy of possessing the national tradition. The challenge of the prophet Wernyhora to Jasiek the serf was a challenge to the gentry of the land as well as to the peasantry.

The manner in which the peasant responded and in which he resisted all the blandishments and all the brutalities of Russification and outwitted all the legalized scheming of the Prussian

overlord simply proved one thing, that the peasant was a real Pole; that he would be nothing else and could be nothing else. It was his great test, and by his unscathed passing through it he won his charter to nationhood.

The Poland of the present day, with one peasant already risen to the rank of Prime Minister, and peasants sharing in the fullest degree in the legislative activities of the nation, has demonstrated the wisdom of the Poland of yesterday, which had the humanity to appreciate and the foresight to evaluate the true worth of the tiller of the soil. To me the wonderful thing about the Government of the New Poland is not so much that it can have a peasant Premier and peasant men and women in its Sejm, but that peasant and aristocrat are there together, working side by side for the common good. Yet, after all, this is really nothing new; it is what they have been doing for generations. It is evolution instead of revolution. If the Polish gentry in times past had not begun to know and understand the Polish peasantry, the Poland of to-day, instead of being a land of peace and promise, would be only another Soviet Russia, dark with confusion and red with fratricidal blood.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE LAND AND THE PEASANT

I

It does not take a long acquaintance with a Polish peasant to understand why he is what he is in the present crisis of world democracy. He is " good stock," the salt of the earth, with qualities like iron. In his little " wioska " or village he lives a rugged and wholesome life which, despite the changes of time, still bears many marks of an ancient communal system, holding his councils, electing his " soltys," and " starostas," and realizing in his own small circle a rudimentary democracy such as his ancestors knew further back than history goes. He is a traditionalist to the marrow, the most conservative creature on earth, clinging to age-old customs and habits with the greatest tenacity; not very progressive, it is true; hard and rather inflexible, if not intractable, in the modern movement of affairs; but sure, solid and dependable. As for his conservatism, it shows at every angle of his daily life. In no corner of the world, for example, have the inroads of fashion in dress made less headway than on the Polish countryside among the Polish peasants. The spinning-wheel and the loom still hold their place of honour in the cottage. Homespun is still the garb of solid respectability. Men's coats and women's skirts are cut as were those of their great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers for generations back. When they come into the cities they still wear unabashed the brightest and best of this picturesque garb, though, alas, I must confess I have seen its fine primitive beauty spoiled more than once by staggering experiments with French high heels!

The peasant's cottage is small, either of frame, logs or brick, white-washed often, and usually with a thatched roof which is the owner's special pride. He may have a telephone or an electric light wire strung to his gable, but the thatch seems to stay. If, however, the roof be shingled, its long sloping surfaces are not left to fate unadorned, but are often painted with a design of conventional squares and angles, red or blue, which give an effect of neat gaiety to what might otherwise be a drab spot on the landscape. High up alongside the door, or on the roof, or at the end of

the cottage, under the gable, one will almost invariably see a cross either painted or made with the bricks set out in the desired cruciform lines. Thus the Polish peasant puts a blessing on his little home, even while he is building it, embedding that blessing into the actual structure, as it were ; and at the same time he proclaims to all who pass that his is the house of a Christian. These are the definite intents of this typical Polish decoration.

Such is the cottage of the plains, in the dooryard of which will be often seen in the early autumn months neat piles of peat fresh cut from the neighbouring marshes and seasoning for winter use. In the mountain districts of the Tatry quite a distinct building pattern, entirely of wood, is found—now known among architects as the Zakopané style. The steep roofs of the Tatry cottage tell the story of heavy snows, while its wide eaves and galleries and colonnades are made for the torrential rains and the blazing sunlight of mountain regions. Whole villages are found in the Tatry hills built in this picturesque and airy fashion.

The whole subject of Polish art and architecture might be touched upon here, in relation to the peasant, for it is an interesting fact that through all the centuries during which Polish culture developed, inevitably shaped and moulded by France and Italy, the arts and crafts of the Polish peasant remained untouched by outside influence. While the formal architecture of Poland, for example, passed through the varying stages of Roman and Renaissance and Baroque, common to all European countries, the Polish peasant learned to build his house and his church in a style uniquely his own, designing its steep roofs with their sloping curves and wide eaves—like the careful topping-off of a grain stack—to shed the heavy snows and rains of his northern climate. In woodcraft and weaving, pottery and basket-work too, he and his women-folk made their own expressive way from aboriginal crudity to finished art, developing a mode of line and symbol unlike any other in the world, except it be, curiously enough, that of our south-western Indians, whose bright colours and stripes, at their best, often resemble the more primitive Polish peasant handcraft. In this regard, it is interesting to note the strange fact that, in far-off Europe, the peasant of the Polish plain, without any possible foreign inspiration, invented the art of Batik supposed to have originated solely in Batavia : exactly the same process of designing and colouring with wax springing up ages ago in these two immensely different lands. In Poland it began with the colouring and picturing of eggs, at a time when Christianity, just introduced, appropriated the old festival of spring to the celebration of Easter ; and this fact brings up another interesting detail of the history of the peasant and his art. It was due to the foresight of Italian and French missionaries that the faith finally took root

in the Polish soil, at a time when its introduction was being fiercely resented because the earlier German missionaries had ruthlessly stripped the land of every sign and symbol of its heathen age, stamping the iron " verboten " of the Teuton on all the old customs and usages grown dear to the people from immemorial ages. The Italians, knowing better than that, followed the wise policy of the early Church in Rome. Instead of tearing down the old pagan structure of festival and folk-lore, they put a Christian blessing on it and preserved it with a new significance.

To-day it is from the peasant art of Poland, thus originating in the very soil and thus preserved, that the modern art of the country is drawing its strongest inspiration. One needs to see with his own eyes the rich and curious designing of Polish peasant furniture, wood-carving, leather-embossing, pottery, rug-weaving or embroidery, to realize what a fund of originality it furnishes to the artist of the new Poland ; a glimpse, for example, at the treasure-chest of a peasant bride—a treasure in itself of delicate carving and chasing and colouring, almost Oriental in the sumptuous intricacies of its deep-cut lines and figures. So also in the case of architecture : the whole story of modern building design in Poland to-day draws its inspiration from peasant origin.

The garden around the Polish peasant's cottage, plainsman or mountaineer, is bright with flowers. Flower-boxes often fill the windows. All the old friends we know at home bloom there in profusion—lilacs, the sweet-smelling pink, the tall, lusty hollyhock, pansies, asters, roses galore, and invariably the sunflower, the seeds of which are in some districts a staple delicacy.

When you enter the cottage of a Polish peasant you will encounter good manners that may astonish you. Your host, in the first place, will be sure to greet you with a hearty " May Jesus Christ be praised ! "—the greeting of the Polish countryman for a thousand years ; to which you must answer, " For ever and for ever." This custom may surprise you at first ; but if by chance you should surprise him—if you are an old acquaintance, let us say, arriving unexpectedly—you will hear another exclamation, this time straight out of the Book : " And the Word became ! " It is not irreverence but sincerity and honest piety that speaks thus. As for manners, everyone I know who has come in contact with the Polish peasant in his home has been impressed by the unconscious grace of his modest etiquette. Myself, I was continually opening my eyes at revelations of gentle breeding in the most unexpected places. The manners of the children, neither bashful nor forward, were a constant source of delight to us.

The interior of the cottage, not well lighted, would be dark were it not for the white-washed walls. There is always one great central feature—the oven. This is built into the house, or rather

the house is built around it; a huge permanent affair, which not only bakes the family bread and cooks the family meals, but serves also as the single heating apparatus of the home, beds even being made, in the coldest season, on its broad stone flanks. After the oven, the next thing that catches the visitor's eye is the "Holy Corner"—I know no other term to use—in which hangs a crucifix or a picture of the Madonna. This is the family shrine, before which the Rosary or other family prayers are recited. Often a miniature sanctuary lamp burns on the shelf under the crucifix or image; there are blessed wax candles on either side; many festoons of coloured tissue paper cut into the most delicate lace-like patterns; and fresh flowers, if it be the season, breathing the tribute of the fields to the peasant's holy of holies. Here also, or perhaps upon one of the rafters, if not over the door where you have entered, you will see the little cluster of grain and flowers which has been blessed in the village church on Lady Day, and which is treasured the year around along with a spray of evergreen or palm given out at Mass on Palm Sunday.

If there is a baby in the house—and there always is a baby in the peasant's house—you may see a cradle that you won't forget. A supple elm pole bends down from the rafters, with a strap or a heavy cord on the end of it. The cradle is a basket tied to the cord. With what a gentle motion, rise and fall, it hushes the little one! It is as if a soft wind in the trees were rocking him.

II

The hand of Nature weaves a bright thread through the whole fabric of the peasant's life, from those first moments in his elm-branch cradle. Flowers especially play an intimate part in his history—at his christening, at his betrothal, at his wedding. A christening in Poland is a joyous affair, while to witness a Polish wedding is a privilege not to be forgotten. If it be summer, bride and groom are wreathed with flowers. On the eve of betrothal her bridesmaids have crowned the bride-to-be with rosemary, barberry blossoms, rue and the green leaves of the periwinkle; but on the wedding day her crown is a much gayer one, of daisies, rosebuds, whatever flowers the season affords, built high like a coronet and tied with streamers of multi-coloured ribbon worked in rich patterns of flowers and leaves, these ribbons themselves telling a gay story, since they are the traditional gift of Polish peasant beaux to their ladies; a girl's collection of streamers on her wedding day representing the extent of her popularity in maidenhood. There is dancing on the lawn, a feast spread out-of-doors; or else, if it be fall or winter, in the house, where the tables creak under their festive load. The cup of cheer brims

for days before and after, to welcome any and every guest, friend or stranger, who happens along. The bridesmaids sing; the older folks chat in the corners; the dancing keeps up for hours, till the sod thunders or the floor of the cottage trembles under the gay stamp of boots. The wedding cake, which in the eastern border regions is called "Korowaju," has a very special significance, and must be first cut by the "matchmakers," usually the godparents of the bridal couple. After the wedding, when the bride first enters her new home, she is welcomed with the traditional bread and salt, symbol of homely plenty; and this is a custom equally honoured among the gentry.

Sometimes a Polish wedding lasts for days. I went to one the evening of that Saturday we started out from Wola. We danced till six o'clock the next morning—there was no breaking away; left for Liskow; returned Monday night—and found the wedding still going on! But, elaborate as the affair was, the *pièce de resistance* of the feast was truly a reminder of wartimes. Plain rabbit. There was fun and hospitality enough, however, to more than make up for all the fatted capons in Europe.

Summer evenings the peasants often set their table out of doors, eating their simple fare in the shade of the family apple tree. Then they have music, of flute or fiddle, and they sing and chat till the frogs begin their nocturnal chant. The stork on the roof has already given the signal. The old Polish legend says that what the frogs sing when bedtime comes and the stork, their daytime enemy, disappears in his nest, is a joyous refrain, "The stork is dead! the stork! the stork!"—first the froggy chorus leader, then a duet; a quartette; finally a vociferous song in unison, "The stork is dead! Kro-ak! kro-ak! Hurrah-h-h!" The peasant who told us this, having talked of the problems of his country and his kind, particularly of Bolsheviks and Germans, smiled dryly at the frogs and said, "But he isn't dead. He'll eat them again to-morrow, if they don't look out." Frogs, as it happens, figure a good deal in Polish folk-lore and fairy tales, and give rise to many proverbs, such as the classic, "Frogs in the pond know nothing of the sea."

The peasant's work is hard and his hours are long. But if he and his kind are a quiet lot, not given to loquacity, they seem to be always ready to sing. In the fields they improvise songs as they go along, with tunes that are always melodious, and words that are either witty or sharp or very tender and sad. They set all their thoughts and feelings to impromptu music. It was from long days listening to peasant melodies that Chopin drew much of the material embodied in his immortal compositions.

The Polish peasants are a long-lived and prolific race, age into the nineties being common, and families always large. They are

vegetarians in spite of their heavy toil; yet what strength, what ruddy skin, what clear good-humoured eyes! The men are big framed fellows, often of almost giant stature, and strong as oxen. When they appear, as I have seen them on occasion, in the uniform of their military service, wearing the enormously tall caps of the Ulans, for instance, they are veritable giants. Powerful, broad-backed, with the stamp of the wind and the sun on them, they are a hardy, sturdy people, women as well as men; the women (as I have frequently seen them in wartime) doing the tasks not only of the men but of the beasts of burden, drawing plough or wagon like horse or oxen. In the mountain districts I have seen men bearing a strange resemblance to our south-west Indians, almost bronze in colouring, high cheekboned and supple. Their costume, brightly trimmed with braid and buttons and beads, and their white wool close-fitting trousers cut to the shape of the leg and slit at the ankle, not unlike the buckskin breeches of the Indian, heightened the effect, which was completely topped off by the "ciupaga" or mountaineer's stick, the handle of which is practically a tomahawk.

The peasant of Poland has a deep-seated respect for books and learning. He takes readily to schooling, and is already making the most of the new educational laws of the country, which are not by any means designed exclusively for the younger generation. Numbers of men and women of middle age may be seen already attending the evening classes opened in towns and villages, figures which would be pathetic were it not for the admirable pluck they show studying their A B C's and trying to learn to spell and write. Pupils of this kind are far from being ignorant, however, for their general knowledge of Polish history and geography is much greater than might be expected, thanks to the traditional teaching of the countryside, which usually has had its centre in the manor house. That the peasant's eagerness for learning is fruitful is evidenced in the fact that he has already shown his capacity in letters and art and affairs by giving some of the best-known men of the nation to public life. For example, the greatest modern lyrical poet in Poland, Jan Kasprowicz, is of peasant stock; and Father Peter Wawrzyniak, whose organizing and administrative genius made the development of the Polish property movement in Poznania an absolute triumph over German officialdom, was the son of a peasant.

Reymont, the most famous of living Polish novelists, whose analysis of Polish character is so keen that the German authorities, during their occupation of the country, ordered his writings read by all the Prussian military officials, writes at his best when he deals with the Polish peasant. There is one page in his novel *The Comédienne*, which sums up in a few sentences the whole life

of the peasant. " Imagine for a moment the fields," he writes, " green in springtime, golden in summer, russet-grey and mournful in winter. Now behold the peasant as he is, from his birth until his death—the average normal peasant." And he goes on :

" The peasant boy is like a wild, unbridled colt, like the irresistible urge of the spring. In the prime of his manhood he is like the summer, a physical potentate, hard as the earth, baked by the July sun, grey as his fallows and pastures, slow as the ripening of the grain. Autumn corresponds entirely to the old age of the peasant—that desperate, ugly old age, with its bleared eyes and earthy complexion, like the ground beneath the plough. It lacks strength, and goes about in tattered garments like the earth that has been reft of the bulk of its fruits, with only a few dried and yellow stalks sticking out here and there in the potato fields ; the peasant is already slowly returning to the earth whence he sprung, the earth which itself becomes dumb and silent after the harvest and lies there in the pale autumn sunlight, quiet, passive and drowsy. . . . Afterward comes winter ; the peasant in his white coffin, in his new boots and clean shirt, lies down to rest in that earth which has, like him, arrayed itself in a white shroud of mist and has fallen to sleep—that earth whose life he was a part of, which he unconsciously loved, and together with which he dies, as cold and hard as those ice-covered furrows that nourished him."

III

The land, the countryside of Poland, is so intimately woven into the life and language of the people that even the names of months of the year are taken directly from the fields. Thus April, ' Kwiecien," is " the flowering time " ; " Lipca," July, is " the month of the blooming linden " ; August, " Sierpien," is " the sickle " ; September, " Wrzesien," " the heather " ; November, " Listopad," " the falling leaves " ; while " Pazdziernik," October, is " the month of the flax," the word signifying the hull or fibre of the flax straw. If you happen into a peasant village at this season you will see a curious and a very ancient process going on, as the flax is threshed and drawn and worked into its eventual linen fabric. " Bees," are held, peasant women going from house to house to help their neighbours, making much merriment and enjoying plenty of gossip and singing and dancing on the way.

The flax is hauled in from the field, either in the low narrow carts which Americans in Poland have christened " puppy baskets," or else by hand, usually by the women, to whom the entire ritual of the flax seems to more or less belong, and who take special pride in the ease and grace with which they can walk up the road with

huge bundles poised on their heads, or with broad wooden yokes across their shoulders, a bundle or pail swinging from each end of the stick. The straw is first soaked, either in the village stream or in a big primitive vat hewn from the trunk of a tree; pounded and worked by a great pestle into the proper degree of softness and pliability; then drawn and redrawn with a large wooden comb until it becomes fibrous and stringy.

One often sees long strands of this fibre draped on the fences, where it is hung out to dry before it goes to the spinning wheel and the loom, to be woven into great bolts, which later must be carefully washed and spread on the grass to bleach.

Flax and the homespun linen of the countryside play an intimate part in the life of the Polish peasant. His days are woven into its fabric, from birth to death, from his swaddling clothes to his funeral sheet; from the time that he runs knee deep through its blue flowery fields till he is wrapped in his shroud, not to speak of the good old-fashioned uses to which his wife puts it, making oil from its seed and poultices for his back. It enters into the Polish folk-lore, too, one of the peasants' favourite legends being the story of the coming of the first flax, the "treasure from Heaven," to Poland. According to this legend, the flax was planted in the beginning by the Madonna of Chenstohova to befriend a motherless peasant girl who was in distress over her parents' illness and the ruin of their crops. "Worry no more, my daughter," said the Queen. "I shall send you a treasure from Heaven. To-morrow, when the sun rises you shall find new flowers in your garden, smiling up at you with eyes blue as the sky. Pluck them and they shall serve you well."

So it befell, as the legend goes; and the bewildered girl obeyed, though she did not know what to do with the flax after it was plucked. But the Madonna came in the night, attended by troops of angels, who set up a workshop in the poor cottage, and taught the child how to work the flax and spin and weave it. "And when morning came Hela held in her hands the first piece of linen in all Poland. And she made a shirt of it for her father, and at once he was cured. And from that day there has been linen in Polska, and that is why the flax is a holy flower. How could it be else? Was not the Lord Christ Himself wrapped in it both at His birth and at His burial?"

Much of the peasants' clothing and household linen is made from home-grown flax; fully 75 per cent. of the fabrics used by them is homespun. The linen is often worked with beautiful embroidery, for which Polish girls are famous. But it is the rainbow wool of Lowich which is best known, and which shows the peasant off to best advantage.

IV

I never shall forget the first time I visited Lowich. It was Sunday, and when we arrived Mass was being celebrated in the old Abbey Church. The place was packed, with the congregation overflowing at all the doors. A young peasant mother, in brown and orange stripes, knelt by the main entrance with her little three-year-old girl, dressed in an exact duplicate of her own gay garb, even to a wee kerchief folded on her baby breast. But oh, how sleepy and noddy she was in her warm Sunday gown! . . . One or two young fellows, in top boots and long, black much-befrogged and braided coats, loitered by the big iron gate. They carried their flat beribboned hats in their hands, and knelt when the Consecration bell rang.

Within, in the dim light of the large church, we could see nothing but a great irregular floor of colour, a mass of kneeling people clad in such rainbow hues, such kerchiefs and cloaks and shawls and skirts as I had never seen before, not even in the Warsaw ballet. And then a hymn began; and it grew and grew till the whole church echoed with it, and the kneeling mother by the door and the loiterers by the gate joined in. The little one, her eyes still dewy with sleep, awoke, but she stayed very still. The hymn went on, sad, minor-chorded and chant-like, and very long. . . .

The scene brought back memories of Chenstohova, that chief of all the shrines of Poland, where as many as eighty thousand pilgrims have gathered at one time to kneel and pray for their country. It is an historic spot, the scene of the famous defence of the monks of Yasna Gora against a Swedish invasion in the seventeenth century, and also the shrine of the celebrated "Black Madonna," an ancient painting on wood, so called because of the discolouration with which age has darkened it. According to tradition, this picture was painted by St. Luke the Apostle. It is deeply venerated by all Poles. I have seen thousands of peasant pilgrims kneeling before it, their packs on their backs, their bright garb dusty with travel over many miles on foot. I have heard thousands singing at the altar of Chenstohova, their faces and their voices lifted in rapture as the curtain was slowly raised from the sacred picture, while the organ pealed, and bugles high in the galleries above the shrine blew a sweet aria of praise.

When the hymn was finished at Lowich that Sunday morning and the congregation began to pour out of the church, the sadness of the peasants' chant was quickly forgotten in the gay picture they made. Such a massing and movement of colour it is impossible to describe. I had seen touches of it before at the Diet in Warsaw, or when an occasional peasant appeared in the city streets, or a little group crossed the open fields near the roads

where we happened to travel. But here there were hundreds of them, crowding through the big churchyard gates, streaming into the wide street and the square beyond, all clad in their famous rainbow wool, a great animated blur of colour, rich and bright and gay, and, for a long time to us, only half real, as if an illuminated page of a story-book had suddenly come to life.

The men's trousers, tucked into high boots, and the women's skirts, all were of the famous Lowich wool, broad striped, dyed much in canary yellow and orange, alternating with blacks and browns, violet and amaranth, rich chocolate hues, deep purples, green and rose and cream colour. But yellow seemed to prevail, a yellow so radiant and luminous that I can liken it to nothing so much as to the hue of the California poppy.

The men's vests were very gay, but their coats were more sober, black, long, and much trimmed with braid. The women's fancy aprons and their cloaks, very full and gathered at the neck, were of a piece with their skirts ; and their skirts were so ample, one might think they were wearing hoops. Most of them wore high-laced boots, the laces of a colour to match the dress ; a few wore tan top boots, cut like a cavalryman's. Many carried their cloaks on their arms, displaying linen bodices literally crusted with rich coloured embroidery. Around their necks endless chains of coral or amber beads ; on their heads kerchiefs, tied close if they were matrons, worn loose if they were unmarried, with long braids often reaching below their waists. When a Polish peasant girl marries, she cuts her hair and binds her brow with a tight kerchief of wifehood. But she dresses none the less prettily whether she show her braids or not. And she clings to this gaiety of raiment even into old age ; she walks all her days in its rainbow hues. We saw scores of tots, some blue eyed and flaxen haired, some dark as gypsies, like dolls out of the Warsaw shops, clinging to their mothers or their grannies' skirts. The grannies, too, though wrinkled and grey, were dressed in the gayest of Sunday " rainbows."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE LAND BILL

I

MEN who live close to the soil are canny. With the odour of the upturned sod and of green and growing things they inhale a sixth sense unknown to the dwellers of pavements. There is a little legend in Polish folk-lore which gives a hint of the traditional canniness of the peasant's wit.

One day, says the story, a poor peasant was sowing his wheat and he didn't have half enough to go around his little patch, and he was praying hard what was he to do when harvest time would be on him ? And just then an old man comes along leading an ass on which sits a beautiful young matron with a babe in her arms. " King Herod is after us," says the man—who of course was St. Joseph. " We're done to death, and my poor beast can go no further unless you give me a bite of grain to feed him." So the peasant begins to feed the weary creature, though he was himself so hard put to it for seed.

" And while you're doing that," says the Madonna—for you may be sure it was none other than the Queen of Heaven and the Queen of Poland was riding that poor tired beast—" give me a handful of grain, will you, and I'll plant your patch for you." So she did. And though she went up and down the whole field, the wheat never gave out, and she sowed every inch of the patch in a few minutes. And then they went their way to Egypt.

But wonder of wonders, the grain instantly began to grow! Taller it was than ever you saw grain before, and in a wink there was a wonderful crop, green and thick before your very eyes. At that, along comes King Herod. " Did you see a man and woman going this way with a youngster between them ? " says the King. " I did," says the peasant, abashed not a whit by the grandness of the wicked man. " And when was it you saw them, then ? " " It was when this crop was planted I saw them."

The peasant is nobody's fool, not even a king's—much less, as we shall see, a wily Herod's like Lenin or Trotsky. He is slow and plodding, this Polish son of the soil, but he has foresight and he is hard and sound. The history of the past three years in Poland,

and particularly the history of the Polish Land Bill, shows what the peasant of that country is made of, what a " long nose " he has, and how firmly and instinctively he is grounded in right and justice.

Perhaps it is not only that he is a child of the furrow, canny from his contact with the breathing earth. It is to be remembered also that, though the Polish peasant lives mostly on the open plain, he has lived also from time immemorial in sight of the forest, his life rimmed in by its horizon. The forest breathes mystery and breeds reserve and distrust. What lies within its depths ? According to the old Polish legend, somewhere in the heart of the ancient wood is the hidden capital of the Kingdom of the Wild, the place whence come all the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air, and whither their spirits return after death—a forbidden place, never to be penetrated by man. All strange things issue from this mysterious abode, so remote, yet so near at hand ; all things that are to be suspected and taken warily.

So the forests and the plains both have played their part in the moulding of the peasant's character and the development of his psychology. If the one has given him strength and self-reliance, the other has made him sharp-eyed and careful. Hence it is that by very nature he moves with caution, thinks twice, looks before he leaps—and then walks around !—and is not easily to be caught by mere words.

One more factor in the make-up of the peasant is to be considered if he is to be rightly estimated in relation to his new duties of self-government. He is religious. This does not mean that he is superstitiously religious, no matter how ready superficial observers may be to stick that label on him. He is religious in the sense that he believes to the extent of making his faith an actual factor in the conduct of his life, living it serenely and fearfully with " the beginning of wisdom " grounded in his bones. The supernatural is the natural to him. If he does move warily along the edge of the dark forest, on the one hand, on the other he skirts the luminous border of the supernatural with simple confidence. His hand, stained of the soil, is placed frankly in the hand of the Eternal. A little scene from the folk-tale of the peasant who journeyed through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise—a sort of rustic Divine Comedy—shows with what faith he accepts God into his daily reckoning.

The peasant of this legend has arrived in Heaven at last, and has just been introduced to Christ and the Apostles, when God the Father walks into the " grand gold room." He has nothing to say at first ; crosses the room in a business-like way, opens a window, looks out for a minute and puts a blessing on the world. " Then God the Father turned around," the legend continues : " ' Well, John,' he says to the peasant, ' and how are the crops ? ' "

II

Though the fantasies of Russian Communism offered small temptation to them, the canny Polish peasants had high need of their supernatural faith to sustain their souls when the war lords of Prussia, Russia and Austria were through with them, especially in the eastern districts. The story of what the War did to the Polish land is a long narrative of brutality and destruction. One million, one hundred and seventy thousand (1,170,000) cottages, farmhouses, mills and farm factories were destroyed up to 1918 (more than twice as many as in France, according to the official French figures given in the British Parliament by Lloyd George in 1921). This represents a money loss in the rural districts of Poland of some nine hundred million gold francs. One million three hundred and eighty thousand (1,380,000) horses, half the total of the country before the War, were driven off or killed ; one million six hundred and fifty thousand (1,650,000) cows, calves and beef stock ; half a million sheep, goats and pigs—again 50 per cent. of the pre-war total. Much of this loss was wholly unnecessary, sheer wanton destruction, the Russians in their retreat herding thousands of horses and cows along with their army without making any provision for water or fodder, and in the end leaving the creatures to die by the road.

The Germans were more careful in their depredations—that is, more careful of themselves. They denuded thirteen and a half million acres of forests—but they shipped the timber to the saw-mills of Germany. As for the stolen livestock, they saw to it that it went straight and in good order to enrich the stock of their own beloved (and untouched) Vaterland. Over seven million acres of grain land were laid waste, the crops planted in 1918 running to an acreage of 7,189,465 less than the year before the War. In the eastern districts, with an estimated rural population of six millions, the requirements for food, seed and livestock in 1920 were figured at one hundred and thirty million pounds of grain. But the highest crop figure that could be prospected in the spring of that year was thirty-four millions—a shortage of nearly one hundred million pounds. And then came the Bolsheviks. They completely devastated 50,000 square miles of territory and carried off 80,000 more horses in the three weeks of their invasion.

I have travelled through the larger part of the devastated areas of Poland, and I can only describe them in the simple statement that there is nothing left. That is, nothing but the land—the bare waste land, much of which has gone wild and will require years to reclaim. I have seen refugee landowners and peasants by the thousands, both when they were fleeing before the fire and

sword of the invader, and when they were returning to their land afterward—actually kneeling sometimes to kiss their beloved soil! It is impossible to describe either their hardships or their pluck. I know tenderly nurtured girls, daughters of families long accustomed to a gentle life, who have herded their cattle, driven their horses and cared for them, without help, journeying for weeks in their escape to safety. And they have come out of it smiling. But not all have come out of it. The roads of eastern Poland are lined with graves—baby graves beyond counting! In all, according to an estimate given by Mr. Paderewski in 1920, the War scattered four million people from the Polish soil, and 60 per cent. of these were peasants. In 1919 alone 2,400,000 refugees returned to Poland—only to be uprooted and driven out again in 1920 by the Bolshevik invasion.

When liberty came at last, and the inevitable reaction after all this suffering and loss, and all the suffering and loss that had gone before for 150 years, when the chance came at last to secure land free and wholesale in the post-war confusion which threw into the hands of the peasants a sudden and unaccustomed power—would it have been strange if Poland had seen a revolution such as that going on next door in Russia?

There was, in fact, more than even the immediate loss and distress resulting from war to urge the Polish peasant on to bloody revolution if he were so minded. There was besides a long standing "land-hunger" to be satisfied—and what better time to satisfy it than at this moment when the whole country, the whole world, was in upheaval, property boundaries vanished, and proprietors gone? The Polish economist, Ladislas Grabski, estimated the number of landless people in Poland in 1920 at two millions. At the same time another million and a half, although possessing land, owned holdings of less than twelve acres each; while the fact is demonstrated that no farm under twenty acres can be profitably tilled to yield even the most modest surplus. Thus we have at least three and a half million people without land, desiring land, attached to the land either as farm labourers or small-holders, and practically unable to earn their living away from the land.

What a ripe field in which to scatter the seeds of anarchy! So thought Lenin and Trotsky as they planned to make Poland "the Red bridge" to the western world. To the peasants of Russia they had proclaimed grandiloquently that "all proprietorship of the surface and contents of the earth—water, wood, and living forces of nature" belonged to the peasant, "to be his for ever and for ever," and so on. They assiduously plied their Polish neighbours with propaganda based on these high sounding phrases. The Polish peasant, being canny, however, answered, "Yes; but how?"

Was it to be by revolution, by wholesale confiscation and thieving, with chaos to follow?

Guided by the thinking minds of Poland, and by his own decent instinct, for justice and fair play and fear of the Lord, the Polish peasant decided on order and against revolution. He had helped write into his country's Constitution the words, "The Polish Republic recognizes property as one of the bases of social order," and he was determined to stand by his word and protect the rights of property, his neighbour's as well as his own.

III

So the Polish peasant, enjoying since the liberty of 1918 full swing at self-government, set about, quietly and determinedly, to do his share in solving Poland's land problem. The surest guarantee of the country's integrity, he argued, was to have the land in Polish possession and safeguarded against foreign exploitation. He wanted the land. But he was for law and order, and he would respect property rights. He would buy the land and pay for it. That was the first decision.

The Land Bill, which has now resulted from this decision, after nearly three years' study and deliberation, is a remarkable document. Unquestionably it has many faults, and as time tests it out, it will very likely be discovered to have still more of them. But it is a boldly conceived experiment planned on a large scale, and it will work vast changes in Eastern Europe. It might well be termed the birth certificate of the new peasant citizen of Poland. The most notable thing about it, apart from its intrinsic merits, is that it represents not merely peasant ambitions and desires, but the joint thought and the joint work of proprietor and peasant applying themselves together to the solving of the land problem. As compared with the land reforms of Czecho-Slovakia, Yugo-Slavia and Bulgaria, of which arbitrary confiscation appears to be the keynote, the Polish Land Bill is a conservative and democratic reform. While in Poland, for example, a maximum of 450 acres in private property is permitted, in Czecho-Slovakia all arable tracts over 375 acres are confiscated for redistribution. In Bulgaria no family is allowed more than it can actually till, not more than fifteen hectares. In Yugo-Slavia more or less forcible dispossession, without any Government authority whatever, has been carried out by the peasants. In all of these countries there is dissatisfaction over the land reform, both among peasants and proprietors.

For us to understand what this Polish Land Bill means, and how it came to be what it is, we must first realize that the parcellation of land in Poland is not a new thing. It has been going on for

generations, the larger estates for more than one hundred years having little by little undergone a process of natural subdivision. The old-time foresight of the Polish Pan, of which I have already spoken, made this possible—that progressive spirit which inclined him toward a liberal relationship with the peasant, teaching him better farming, more and more setting him up, and more and more sharing with him the culture of the manor house. It was the same spirit which time and again forced the hand of the alien governments in Poland to recognize peasant rights. It is this spirit of democracy and tolerance, the outstanding characteristic of the Polish nation, which laid the foundation for the Land Bill of 1920.

In Poznania the peasants, with the aid of the proprietors, and in spite of German attempts to uproot the whole native stock and substitute German farmers, succeeded in the course of twenty-five years (from 1886 to 1911) in taking up 250,000 acres. In former Russian Poland within forty years (1870–1910) the Polish peasants acquired 3⅝ million acres. In Lithuania and Ruthenia, regardless of extremely drastic laws of exception against Catholics (i.e. Poles), the peasant holdings increased 5½ million acres; in Galicia 8¼ million acres. From these figures it can be seen that the taking up of freehold property by the peasants of Poland is not at all a revolutionary but is a purely evolutionary process, begun years ago with the co-operation of the proprietor.

From these facts also it can be seen how landlord and peasant, already long acquainted with each other, were able to get together on a common ground to work out the land problem, the biggest problem their regained liberty presented. Of course it was not all done in a day. " Krakow was not built in a day," says the proverb. Differences, dissensions, divisions, debates and arguments were many and long. Again and again, however, the one predominant fact comes home to any person studying this chapter in the history of the New Poland: proprietor and peasant knew each other. The gradual process of land parcellation which had already gone on for many years had drawn the two classes together, especially when alien persecution gave them common cause. Increasing mutual confidence had grown up between them. The peasant's inborn mistrust of the aristocrat had worn away, and at the same time the aristocrat had come to know more and more the latent talents, the solid honesty, and the indefatigable industry of the peasant.

IV

When the Poles addressed themselves to the working out of the land problem they found two sets of figures to be balanced. On the one hand, 3½ million people either landless or needing

more land; on the other, several millions of acres of land, but land which must first be acquired under law, then parcelled and apportioned with due consideration of many conflicting interests. Only 15 per cent. of Polish land being State property, the burden of the problem must fall on private holdings; that is, on the large estate owners. Moreover, it must be kept in mind that in handling this question, as in all the other internal questions which confront the Poles, three separate systems already eatablished in the three former partitions of the country had to be reconciled and co-ordinated. Again, the whole question had to be faced in the light of agricultural improvement. The standard of Polish farming must not be allowed to lower.

Briefly this is what the Land Bill sets forth: Five hundred thousand acres per year are to be purchased and parcelled out, in farms of about 37½ acres each. State properties are to be divided first (excepting forests, which the State reserves for itself); and when these State properties are exhausted, private properties. The whole statute, however, being based on the theory that land ownership rightly belongs to the actual worker of the soil, proprietors are not to be forced to sell provided they work the land themselves. Hired labour is permitted, and inheritance. But the extent of private estates is regulated by law. Except in the case of certain specified localities where the standardization of agriculture requires more, the limit for private estates is set at four hundred and fifty acres.

It is estimated that it will take ten years to parcellate the State properties now availalbe. Hence, private owners have a decade in which to get ready for the application of the law to them. When their turn does come, the first properties to be expropriated will be those neglected and abandoned lands which in many cases are included in the estates of owners whom the war has ruined, and who are anxious to sell—this land, as it now stands, without capital, help, or machinery to work it, being a dead loss. Lands bought during the war by speculators and profiteers will come next. Then estates in the vicinity of industrial centres, where the housing problem demands expansion. In such localities the maximum holding is set at one hundred and fifty acres.

Prices will be adjudicated by the Land Office, based on the average market price.[1] Live stock, equipment and machinery will not be subject to expropriation, while the price of buildings and other improvements, and of planted and harvested crops, will be computed *ad valorem* and compensated for.

All this was difficult enough to settle. But the real problem came when the question of who was to get the land had to be

[1] A clause in the Land Bill providing for purchase at 50 per cent. of value is now in question as unconstitutional. (C.P., July, 1922.)

tackled. It was a delicate question, but the Poles handled it well by working on the theory that the land, being the best material thing Poland could give her citizens, her best citizens should have first choice. Service to the Republic was made the test of quality.

In their Constitution the Poles had already carefully provided against militarism by ruling the soldier, while on service, out of the voting privilege. But this did not mean that the Pole had no appreciation of what the soldier meant to him. Far from it, as the provisions of the Land Bill regarding the award of land testifies. In this the soldier comes first.

Disabled soldiers first of all, provided they are physically capable of working the field ; then soldiers who volunteered and soldiers who served longest at the front. All of these are to be given the land, free of charge. All other soldiers, holding honourable discharge, will have the privilege of purchasing land, paying for it on long-term credit, in money or crops as they may choose.

The purchase classes which follow the soldiers are : landless agricultural labourers (first of whom come those who have lost their occupation through the cutting up of large estates where they were formerly employed) ; then the owners of dwarf holdings. In order to give the landless men precedence, and to restrict the enlargement of small holdings at the expense of those who have no land at all, purchase by those already owning property is limited.

Among the landless agricultural labourers first chance goes to those who have passed through an agricultural college. The Land Bill establishes a national system of agricultural schools, and has already reserved twenty-four thousand acrés for experimental stations, testing farms, etc.

These are the essential points of the Polish Land Bill. Without going too much into further detail, it should be stated, however, that the operation of the law is insured, first by the establishment of a State Land Bank, which will advance money to the peasants for land purchase on the security of the land itself ; and second, by clauses which give the Government control over all land, and which forbid the re-sale of expropriated lands, once they are awarded, for a period of twenty-five years. Sales of unparcelled farms and estates can be made only with legal sanction. New purchasers must be natives of Poland, and trained or experienced farmers. These clauses were necessary to insure the full functioning of the reform, and to head off speculation by proprietors of large estates who might not wish to submit to the minimum parcellation of their land, and who might sell off in the maximum subdivisions of four hundred and fifty acres at a high profit in order to defeat the object of the Bill. Another provision is interesting, in view of what has happened in Russia. Any person who

has lawlessly taken possession of another man's land is classed with the traitor and the army deserter, and is excluded from the privileges of the Land Bill.

To work out this problem, even on paper, has been a gigantic task. But it has been more than worked out on paper. The Bill is already in operation. In 1919–1920 three hundred and fifty thousand acres of land were parcelled; over fifty thousand horses have been demobilized and returned to the fields; a school of engineering, surveying and appraising has been opened, to train experts for the continuance of the work; and twenty-five hundred farms, totalling sixty thousand acres, have been "reconstructed." This in itself is one of the most difficult details of the whole Polish land reform, but happily it had been begun long ago by the proprietors themselves, and needs only attention and development. "Reconstruction" is the rearranging of small and scattered peasant holdings into single farms. There still remain twenty-five thousand dwarf holdings, so scattered and divided through generations of indiscriminate purchase and parcellation among heirs, that their value is greatly lessened and the crop system of entire districts disorganized. The Government is "reconstructing" these properties by a process of transfer and exchange of deeds which in time will throw each man's holding all together and greatly increase facility of cultivation and productivity of the soil.

V

The riches of Poland are inexhaustible—on the one hand millions of acres of virgin soil, millions of acres of forest, unreckoned wealth of chemical fertilizers; and on the other millions of stout-hearted broad-backed young men waiting to settle down on these lands and develop them instead of emigrating to foreign countries to find a living. All these facts combined make the promise of the New Poland something for the whole world to calculate on.

In the eastern districts, where the Land Law will be first applied, there has already begun a movement which in many respects will parallel the western advance of our American pioneers or the opening up of the colonies of the British Empire. New homes, new schools, new churches—not to forget new windmills!—will dot these Polish prairies, as they dotted the prairies of Wisconsin and Minnesota and Iowa, or the plains of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Villages and towns will spring up, giving increased impetus to the awakening trade instinct of the Pole, who in these restored areas should prove himself equal to all their problems of development, commercial and industrial as well as agricultural. This, I take it, is one of the chief expectations of

the Land Reform—that while it will scatter the peasants more and more over the land, at the same time it will induce the proprietors more and more to invest the capital realized from the sale of their surplus holdings in industrial enterprises.

Thus the new frontiers of Poland will be built up, peopled by a new generation, the sons of those brave defenders of the soil whom we saw fighting through the long campaigns of 1919 and 1920. Children of peasants, they will still remain the heirs of that nobility beside which, in the ranks or under whose leadership, their fathers fought, or from whom their progenitors perhaps learned long ago the first rudiments of farming. On these new frontiers they will come at last into the full heritage of that national culture and tradition which was created, perfected and preserved by the Polish gentry, the first founders of the Polish nation. Jasiek will have taken up the challenge of Wernyhora.

But the task of this future owner of the Polish land will be no easy one, especially in those settlements where he must still be a frontiersman, personifying the Poland of history, the traditional outpost nation, the " Rampart of Christendom " as she has been called for generations, the " Bulwark of the West." Colonizing the borderlands, he must settle down next door to a Russia destined to remain for a long time yet a battleground of ideas, if not of blood. Will his Soviet-ridden neighbour, the Russian moujik, looking across the way at the Polish democracy, learn something new about life, and go and do likewise ? Will he see a signal of liberty and plenty in the lusty swinging of the busy Polish windmill, and something more in the stork on his chimney than a symbol of children born only to waste away ?

When I study the Polish Land Bill I think of the Polish peasant turning the sod of his new farm, no longer digging trenches and dugouts, but furrows and a cellar for his house ; and I recall certain lines from Maud Ashurst Bigg's translation of Mickiewicz's pastoral poem, *Pan Tadeuz*, in which the peasant utters the age-old cry of the Pole for the land, for peace, the joys of the countryside :

" Ah, when will Heaven
Permit us to return from wandering
And dwell once more among our native plains ;
Serve in that cavalry which wars on hares,
Or in that infantry which carries arms
Against the wildfowl only ! Know no weapon
Except the scythe and sickle, nor gazette
Except our simple household reckonings ! "

CHAPTER TWENTY

A PEASANT PRIME MINISTER

I

"DOES His Excellency milk the cows?"

I was not five seconds outside the Cabinet Chamber of the Republic of Poland before I was told by my friends that that was a shocking question to have asked so high a dignitary as a Prime Minister. But the Prime Minister himself had not seemed to think it shocking. He had laughed and confessed frankly that his wife does the milking.

The Premier of Poland at that time was a peasant farmer, the son of a peasant, with a peasant wife and peasant children; a man, in fact, whose story is significant in the history of the New Poland. He is the proud owner of what is considered an extensive farm in the district of Tarnow—in Malopolska (that is, Galicia, east of Krakow)—where he was born, and where he has his home. He owns twenty-eight acres, four cows and two horses. Not much as worldly wealth is reckoned. Yet despite the modesty of his holdings and the meagre simplicity of his life, he has become one of the first men of the largest of the new republics of Europe.

Silk-hatted Europe laughed up its broadcloth sleeve at the idea of a peasant in the chair of a Prime Minister. But to be laughed at for doing original things is no new experience for Poland. She has always had the blood of youth in her, and has long been the *enfant terrible* of the Old-World household—a land of daring experiments and of "dangerous innovations," as the reactionaries term them. Even when she was a kingdom she managed her affairs in a style of her own, insisting on electing her kings, rejecting for many centuries the outworn system of choice by heredity. She was among the first to liberate the serf, and to give freehold rights to the toiler. She was the first nation in Europe to organize education for the masses on a uniform basis. And she was the first of all the Old-World nations to establish a constitutional government founded on the right of the people to rule. It was this constitution, promulgated in 1791, just at the time when we in America were emerging from the crucial test of our own first fire—in which Poland's greatest hero, Kosciuszko, fought for us—which brought

about the ruin of Poland. The Powers surrounding her, alarmed at last beyond all patience for their own imperial safety, crushed her for that, hurling all their concentrated force against her in the attempt to stamp her out of existence.

With her record established for innovations, it has not been surprising to find the resurrected Poland, once more freed from the grip of the reactionary Powers around her, doing startling things. She chose an artist, Paderewski, as her first Premier; but at him her enemies scoffed for only a little while, forced as they were in quick order to accord to the great musician the honours of a real statesman as well. In all her history, however, Poland has perhaps done nothing to set Court Europe more aghast than to pick a peasant for the head of her Government.

The offices of the Polish National Ministry are located in the palace of the former Russian Governor-General of Warsaw. On a large granite pedestal in front of the palace, whereon once stood a bronze monument celebrating the Czarist despotism, there now rises the figure of a Polish soldier, a bugle to his lips, summoning the long partitioned nation to unity. Over the doorway of the Cabinet Chamber, one flight up, I read this inscription in plain Latin lettering cut in a marble slab:

ANNO MCMXVIII
DEI—PROVIDENTIA—POPULI
CONSTANTIA–LEGIONUM
VIRTUTI–POLONIA
RESTITUTA
DOMUS—HÆC—A.D.
MCMXX RENOVATA

And within that room, surrounded by a group of the first minds of Poland, sat the Tarnow peasant, Vincent Witos, Chief Minister of the Polish Government. No doubt it was largely because old-fogey Europe, still thinking in terms of palaces, imagined the Peasant Premier committing all sorts of ungloved gaucheries in a swallowtail in that once imperial edifice, that she scoffed at him. But Witos, the peasant in a palace, was wiser than they reckoned. He eschewed the swallowtail. His opponents, as a consequence, dubbed him "the collarless Premier," but the name was hardly fair. He does wear a collar, and he is not guilty of such an affectation as that of our own superdemocrat, Jefferson, Kosciuszko's greatest friend, who, it will be remembered, insisted on receiving Foreign Ministers in his bath robe and slippers. The day I met Premier Witos he not only wore a collar, but it was as starched and spotless a bit of white linen as a duke might wear. It is quite true, however, that there was no necktie. And the remainder of the Premier's attire was more or less in the same manner of concession between cottage and capitol. He wore the high black

boots of the peasant, with the breeches tucked into them, like the boots of our Forty-niners and western ranchmen of a generation or two ago. But his suit, of grey-green cheviot, was cut on conventional lines, although it could hardly escape the suspicion of being a " ready-made " Sunday best.

For over a year in Poland I had been remarking the striking likeness of things Polish to things American. There is something in the air in Poland that takes the American out of Europe and sets him " back home " among his own people. One feels this wherever he goes in Poland. Many Americans speak of it. I felt it unmistakably while conversing with President Witos. I have met many an American farmer who looked very much like the Polish Premier, and who talked and acted exactly like him—a plain man, of no pretensions and of few words. At the same time one felt that he was " canny," shrewd and sharp—with the shrewdness and sharpness " of the soil " ; nobody's fool, in short, this peasant in high boots, with the affairs of a nation on his mind.

Witos, like many of our own American farmers, is a wide-awake politician. He has been in politics all his life, and always with one ideal—the betterment of the Polish farmer's life. Those who never heard of him, even in his own country, until he appeared with apparent suddenness, coming as if from nowhere to head the Government, wonder by what sort of miracle he was able to carry off so difficult a rôle as that of President of the Cabinet of the Polish Republic. But his walking into that office was only one stride of many taken through a life filled with political activity. To his position as Premier he brought the training of a dozen years gained in the Austrian Parliament at Vienna, and before that in the local Galician Parliament at Lwow (Lemberg).

The Polish Premier did not speak very readily about himself. When it came to discussing questions concerning the nation or the farm he had his facts and figures ready. But, in questioning him about his own career, one felt unmistakably his peasant reticence and awkwardness. Peasants don't know how to graciously talk about themselves. However, Mr. Witos tells enough of his own story to make plain the history of his remarkable progress from peasant boy and day labourer to the Premier's chair. That history in itself, without further words, is the most eloquent of commentaries on the democratic spirit of Poland and the Poles. Only in such democracies may peasants, like rail-splitters, such as our own Lincoln, rise to the highest offices in the land. This, in fact, is the real significance of Witos' figure in the Polish picture of to-day.

" My father and mother could not give me much so far as advantages or property go," Mr. Witos explained. " My father was poor. He owned fifteen acres, but things never went very easy with him. He had ambitions for his children, however, and he

sent me out to learn the carpenter's trade. I got what schooling I could at the same time.

"For a good many years I was employed as a day labourer in the woods on the estate of Prince Sanguzko, and I did very well as things went. I earned from eighty to one hundred halers a day." (In American money that would be something in the neighbourhood of twenty cents.) "These were happy days, too, a few years before the war. But it was not the right kind of happiness, after all. Things couldn't go on that way for any of us, with Poland divided and thousands of Poles landless and dispossessed in their own country, on their own soil. The thing to do, as we saw it then, and as we continue to see it, was to draw the Polish peasants and farm workers closer and closer together in a unity of interest. That was the only way to lay the foundations of the future free Poland, in which we never ceased to believe, so that when freedom did come we would know each other better."

This type of man, determined, steady, and busy with long, long thoughts, pondering in his comings and goings as he earned his daily wage the problems of himself and his fellows and his country, was inevitably destined to become a leader and exert a strong influence within his home circle. His healthy peasant mind, whatever its limitations in training and education, had the gift of clear seeing. His natural bent for organization soon placed him at the head of his local "club." And from this small radius his influence gradually widened, until he became known to all the farmers of Galicia as a leader of the safe, sure and sound type—the kind of a leader who always appeals most strongly to the careful mind of the tiller of the soil. Witos won the reputation among his fellows of getting practically everything he went after in the long run. In the American phrase he was a "go-getter." At the same time he learned the political game thoroughly, developing a capacity not only for leadership among the peasants and farmers, but for cultivating and keeping likewise the good-will of others.

From 1908, when he was elected to the Provincial Parliament at Lwow—we would say to the State Legislature—the political rise of Witos was rapid. Three years later, in 1911, he was sent to Vienna to represent a large and influential constituency in the Austrian Reichsrath, and there he served until the war changed the face of all things Polish. But the climax of the peasant delegate's career at Vienna brought a bit of drama into his life that is worth recounting.

II

Austria, one of the three bloody-handed partitioners of Poland, along with her master and ally, Germany, was at a crisis in 1914.

Poland, the long heeled-over subject State, was now a valuable pawn in the game of the Powers, the joint game of Germany and Austria against Russia. Every possible concession must be made to win Polish goodwill and gain credit in the outside world. For over a century Austria had sought by all sorts of political "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain" to hoodwink her Polish subjects into being Austrians. She had not succeeded. Now she felt she must succeed. And the first card to play was to bind the Polish delegates in the Reichsrath to her side. She tried to tempt the peasant leader Witos, knowing what numbers he swung behind him.

But Austria was destined to disappointment when dealing with the peasant Witos. Taking every advantage afforded him to serve his people in the Parliament of the conqueror, Witos still remained an irreconcilable Pole. For the Austrian blandishments he had no ear. He stood among the first of his compatriots demanding nothing short of absolute independence for Poland. String-tied autonomies and other lavish pledges had no lure for him. He opposed all the "orientations" proposed by the rival Powers for the solution of the Polish problem. He refused a seat in the Lublin Cabinet when that bait was proferred him. He even rejected the leadership of the powerful Polish circle in Vienna, through which his opportunities for personal advancement would have been enormous. He would have none of any of these things.

Instead, as early as 1916, in a public address in Krakow, Witos went openly on record as the irreconcilable Pole that he had consistently been through all his service in Vienna. It took iron will and iron confidence for the peasant legislator to stand by his guns at that stage of the game, when he was still an Austrian subject, when Germany was still winning the war, when the Armistice of the West was still far away and undreamed of, and there was as yet no official Poland in existence.

The natural outcome of all this was membership for Witos in the Polish Parliament when, two years later, following November 1918, Poland actually did rise again, an independent nation. To be elected from his own home district to the national congress of his own free country was more to him then than all the tempting offers of preference and power that Austrian imperialism had been able to make.

III

In these years which saw Witos rising to place as a legislator, the successful politician did not cease to be the practical farmer. The farm and the farmer's welfare was the mainspring of his public activity. It began that way, and it remains to-day the big motive in Witos' life—the betterment of living for the Polish peasant.

It was his speech on the question of agricutural reform, his maiden effort in the new Republic's first Diet, that drew the attention of all of Poland to the man destined not long afterward to actually stand at the head of the Government.

Witos is not an orator. He lacks the "social graces," the resonant rounded voice and the pleasing personality that make political success such easy sledding for many men. On the contrary, there is much that is apparently hard and arid in the make-up of this rather diffident, raw-boned, big-knuckled, wiry-framed carpenter and tiller of the soil. But in his head there is no aridity of commonsense and of facts, and his tongue knows how to drive those facts home as surely as his hammer-hand knows how to put nails in their place.

Despite contrary appearances, much of the dreamer must perforce be in the soul of a man who could hold to his vision as Witos held to his through all the assailing years of his political life under the Austrian partition. But the dream lies embedded too deep in such a character for the world to see, except in the sum total of its life and activities. On the surface Witos is simply sharp, cold, practical—some say crafty. In the broad forehead topped with straight black hair that has not a sign of "give" in its Indian-like texture; in the long nose, the keen small eyes and sharp chin of Witos, one sees both the typical peasant and the astute politician, the man of the soil who has made a place for himself in the world of affairs, the backwoodsman of meagre beginnings and scanty opportunities, who has cut his way through a forest of difficulties and obstacles by sheer force of will and wits and unconquerable belief in the goal ahead. There is invincible determination and not a little stubbornness in the Premier's visage; his slow calculating eye is not fooled by anything it sees. 'Witos always looks twice," remarked one deputy to me at the Diet. "Yes, and speaks once," commented another. There is an old Polish saying of such a man: "He does not sow his words on the wind."

We had grown fairly well acquainted by the time I asked Premier Witos that shocking question about milking the cows. But at first he had been wary of my questioning. That smile, however, revealed something of the inside man. It put light into a face that is not naturally winning, and that now bore the added shadow of many new cares and worries. In the smile of Witos one saw the home man, the everyday peasant farmer whose twenty-eight acres, four cows and two horses are his pride. And there is the wife who milks the cows. "In Poland the women always do that," the Prime Minister explained. "In fact," he added, the glint of humour coming into his eye again, "the men would be ashamed to do it, or at any rate ashamed to say so."

So much for a passing comment on the life of the Polish countrywoman. Farmers' wives in Poland, however, do more than milk cows. One can guess that easily enough, hearing Witos' own story. The truth is, they know very well, these Polish wives, "what every woman knows," as Maggie Wylie puts it—that they are the real making and mainstay of the menfolk of the land. The wife of Premier Witos works on the little farm in Malopolska while her husband discharges his political duties in Warsaw, at the same time managing the family interest in the village mill, which owes its existence to the enterprise of her "man," and in which he has invested the munificent sum of five hundred marks. It is not difficult to imagine the part that this "energetic woman," as she is described, has played in the shaping of her husband's career.

Then there are other spurs at the man's heart. Young as he is—only forty-eight—he is a grandfather. His daughter is married to a peasant farmer of the Tarnow district; and there is a wee peasant baby, brand new, for Mrs. Witos to play granny to and spoil, and for the peasant leader himself to turn his thoughts to when political crises become too burdensome for endurance.

IV

To Witos, whatever the various other problems of his country to be solved, the first thing for Poland to do, so far as her internal affairs are concerned, is to settle her land question. On account of the tenacity with which he clings to this he is accused by his opponents of cherishing inordinate political ambitions. But let him speak for himself. "Everything after all," he told me (this was before the final passage of the Land Bill) "everything, after all, depends directly or indirectly on the land. If there be war, then the feeding of our army, man and horse; in peace or war, the provisionment of the population. Poland is essentially an agricultural country. An agricultural country must at least feed itself, whatever its exportings and importings may be. And Poland, normally, can feed itself. For our industries, yes, we must secure credit. We must develop our factories, our oil wells and mines, the riches of which are inexhaustible. But the industrial worker must be able to live, first of all. And how can he live better than fed by the products of his own country? You need only remember that more than 70 per cent. of the population of Poland is engaged in agriculture to understand what a vital thing the land question, the farm question, is to us. In Congress Poland alone, formerly under Russian rule, there are over six million people living on farms."

"Since the war began," Mr. Witos went on, "the agricultural man-power of our country has been disastrously reduced. The whole man-power of the nation, of course, has been fatally depleted.

But when we look to the farms and find such conditions as exist there, then we learn something first hand about the high cost of living. When the soil of a country is not producing, trouble results.

"We have the soil. The riches that lie fallow under the sod of Poland are beyond measuring. We have the land. Yet at the same moment that three millions of our farming people are landless, there are millions of acres of undeveloped land in Poland waiting to be tilled. Thousands of these acres are abandoned land, wrecked by the war; other thousands are virgin soil, never yet touched by the hand of man. We have vast tracts of State lands to be opened up. Besides, there are extensive holdings, owned by private interests, unworked and neglected since the war, for the sale and distribution of which the proprietors would welcome any reasonable arrangement. The war has ruined these proprietors. They need the capital which their land will produce. And others need the land. All we need is to get together. If the enemies of Poland will leave her alone and let her get down to a settlement of her domestic problems, she will soon be doing her share in solving the world's problem of supply and demand."

"But what of the effect of the war on the future farm life of Poland?" I asked. "Is it true that army life has more or less urbanized the Polish farmer's son? Has a taste of the barracks and the city spoiled him and left him unwilling to go back to the land?"

"No." Premier Witos answered. "On the contrary, our farmer boys are more eager than ever for the life they know best. But this is only natural. Besides the added incentive of much better conditions under our land reform, the hardships of the war have made our young men appreciate as they might not have before the security and comforts and advantages of their country life. I know that it has been predicted that the war would eventually turn loose on Poland a host of unsatisfied, discontented youth, who would refuse to go back to the old life of the plough and the cottage, who would congest the cities and towns and flush the industrial labour market to the point of revolution. There was no truth in that prediction. We have observed instead an actual reaction towards the farm. Thousands of our soldiers on receiving furlough, in place of spending their holiday in pleasure or idleness, have hurried home to put in or harvest the crops, and have worked every hour of their free time—and worked far harder than they would ever have thought of doing before the War. Of course it was plain necessity. But I believe also that they have found a new value in old things.

"Poland's war against the Bolsheviks was a farmers' war," Premier Witos declared. "What did the Red invaders want? Our land. What did Trotsky and Lenin want? The products of our land, to feed their Red armies. In the trail of their forces

in the autumn of 1920 they brought entire colonies of Russian peasants ready and equipped to settle down on our confiscated farms. They had ruined and exhausted Russia; after that they would have liked to make Poland pay to keep their political pot in Moscow boiling. And it would have been the Polish farmer who would have had to do much of the paying. He has already paid, bitterly, in blood and property."

The Premier spoke of a recent visit to the invaded regions of Eastern Galicia. "Practically everything was destroyed in that territory," he said. "No cows, no horses, no wagons, no grain, no fodder, no potatoes were left. The farm machinery was all taken. The Reds robbed our peasants of even their bedding and clothing. For the people of that district, and in fact for all of the territory east and north of the Vistula, this has been a farmers' war indeed!"

The horse situation in Poland is one of grave concern. The loss in draft animals has been enormous, and without horses the land cannot be tilled. "Eighty thousand horses were lost during the last Bolshevik invasion alone," said Premier Witos, "and before that, over one million. The total number of barns, farmhouses, and so forth destroyed during the war is also more than a million. I have the figures here," he continued, taking a document from his desk. "And this," he added, handing me the paper to make note of the figures, "represents losses suffered only up to 1918. After that our people went back pluckily to their land again, and then once more everything that they possessed was levelled to the ground."

One could not listen to such a recital as this, a cold, clear statement of bitter facts spoken in unimpassioned words, without seeing a discouraging vision before the mind's eye of devastated lands, ruins and ashes and desolation. What, then, of the future?

V

"In ten years the farmers of Poland will be on their feet again. In ten years Poland will be restored. It will take all of ten years—but what is that in the life of a nation?"

The peasant Premier of Poland made the statement with absolute assurance. But he went on: "In that ten years we have much to do. Millions of Poles have been scattered by the War. They must be rehoused and re-established. Our repatriation bureau has already accomplished unbelievable things, but its task is only begun. We have our public schools to rebuild. There are no schools left in the invaded districts, and great numbers of our teachers were lost in the War.

"As for our schools, there is also the question of agricultural

education. I understand that you have a very fine system of agricultural education in America, carried on in connection with your State Universities. Poland has pioneered a little in that direction also, but in the next few years we hope to develop a thorough national system of special training, scientific and practical, for farmers. We will be in constant need of the counsel and assistance of your country in developing these plans. But there must necessarily be a great modification of American farming methods as applied to a country so far distant and so different from yours as Poland."

The school question led further into the subject of children. Child welfare is a matter of vital concern to the struggling new Republic, and one in which wide public interest is being taken. In no country in Europe have so many children suffered for so long a time as a result of the war as in Poland. And in perhaps no country of Europe is better provision now made for the rehabilitation and conservation of child life, there being at present over two hundred child health centres and milk stations operating throughout the country, founded by the American Red Cross and the American Relief Administration and carried on by the Polish Government, which has subsidized them with the munificent sum of $275,000, in Polish money a colossal fortune of a billion and a half marks.

" There is a belt of territory along the eastern edge of our invaded districts," said Mr. Witos, " a strip varying from fifty to a hundred miles in width and stretching the length of the land, where to-day you will find no children over three years of age or under twelve." He paused.

" They are all dead . . . ? "

" Yes. And of those who do survive, thousands live only to suffer, bearing the ineradicable marks of malnutrition—deformity, impaired mentality, above all, tuberculosis. There are more than two million children in Poland at the present time in need of medical attention, and one million of them are tuberculous. Many are starving. Nearly ten thousand children under the age of sixteen died in the city of Warsaw alone last year, over one-third of them from tuberculosis. Lack of proper nourishment, especially of milk, is the cause of this slaughter of our innocents.

" That brings us back to the farm question again. This milk shortage which has cost our country so many lives traces itself directly to the farm. And it was not alone the loss of cattle in the invaded districts that caused it. In the autumn of 1920 a new scourge appeared, the Bovine Pest, which killed off immense numbers of milch cows. It looked very bad for a while, but now that danger has passed."

The action of the Polish Government in dealing with this pest

was instant and effective. An appropriation of eighty million marks was voted immediately on the discovery of the disease, experts were dispatched into all infected and threatened areas, rigid quarantines were established, and in less than six weeks the plague was stamped out.

" Thorough co-operation between the farmers and the Government made that quick action possible," was the comment of Premier Witos. " And that is the big thing we are all aiming at—co-operation throughout the country between all men. The farmers of Poland have already learned something about co-operating among themselves. But union among our farmers is only one link in the chain. Unity of all interests, of producer and consumer, of capital and labour, of farmer and merchant, of worker and employer —that is the ultimate aim of the Polish democracy."

Mr. Witos said nothing, of course, as to what it meant to Poland, at a critical pass in the Republic's affairs, to have a farmer, a recognized leader of the nation's vast numerical majority, at the head of the ministry. But it is plain to see what it meant. The stamping-out of the Bovine Pest, grave as was the menace of that scourge to the life and health of the country, is a small item in the account. In the sum total the presence of a peasant farmer at the head of the Polish Government when the Bolsheviks were invading the country was one of the big deciding factors in the War of 1920. The peasant Premier played a vital rôle then. He carried Poland's millions of peasants with him, to a man, summoning them to the standard at a moment when not only disaster and ruin from without hammered at the nation's heart, but intrigue and Red propaganda threatened from within. The peasant farmers of Poland stood by Witos. They not only fought, and gave their sons and their daughters to fight, but they rose up like a host with all their possessions ready for the sacrifice, so that we saw such a spectacle as forty thousand horses and wagons, lined up in an emergency in the space of forty-eight hours, all volunteered for the transport of army supplies.

To Poland's enemies, without and within, that was a deadly blow—the rallying of peasant Poland to the nation's call. The Radicals had not counted on anything like that. They had even dreamed of the contrary ; of Witos giving a hailing cry of fellowship to the Red invaders, the signal for revolution and a Polish Soviet ! But they did not know their man—the typical Polish peasant who, as the saying goes, " loves three things—God, because He gave him the land ; the land, because God gave it to him ; and his home, because it is rooted in the land God gave."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE JEW AND THE POLE

I

WHOEVER comes out of Poland will be asked " How about the Jewish question ? " Trying to answer it brings up the story of the old darkey factotum in a southern village who had won great renown for his ability to solve all the problems of the universe. Not infrequently, however, he was given such posers that he was stuck for an answer. He always sought safety on such occasions in the cryptic response, " Belubbed breddern, dat am a questiong what can *only* be answered in *Latting*. And *you* don't understand *Latting*."

The Jewish question in Poland is a hard one to answer because of the difficulty of getting at the facts, in the first place ; and then of finding terms in which to expound them to the satisfaction of all concerned. But one thing is certain. No one can study Poland or write of Polish problems and side-step the Jewish question. It is the most important internal problem of the new Republic. Moreover, it is a world problem, affecting every country into which the Jew has gone.

It is quite true that at first glance the visitor to Poland may even be half convinced that there is no Jewish question in Poland. When he meets, as he will, Poles of Jewish blood and of Jewish faith among the country's best citizens—writers, teachers, historians, artists, physicians, legislators, all joined with their fellow-citizens of Polish blood and Christian faith in the common Polish cause, he will be inclined to say, " But there is no Jewish question here." Yet, on the other hand, a dozen instances in a day will contradict this impression. In the Sejm he will find Jews antagonizing, by every means known to the politician, the ideals and aspirations which the Pole most cherishes. In the ranks of Communists and Radicals, those partisans who represent everything that the Pole abhors, he will find hardly any but Jews. In the world of commerce he will find the Jew, almost unique among all the people in Poland, crying the country down at every turn, seeing no good in it, hoping nothing for its future. If he explores the ghetto he will find himself stepping with one stride

into an alien world a thousand miles and a thousand years removed from the Polish world about it.

Undeniably, there is a Jewish question in Poland.

But what sort of a question is it? Is it a political question? In a brief canvass of the Jewish communities in Poland we find that they are just as politically divided as Gentile communities; that there are at least five, if not more, major Jewish parties in the arena, not to speak of lesser factions.

Is it a religious question? In the ghetto we will betake ourselves to the synagogue, to see with our own eyes what sort of worship this is which keeps such a grip on its adherents as to mould them into that indissoluble whole with which Israel appears to front the world. And the first thing we discover is that, after all, even in his religion, the Jew is divided. Here, in the midst of the service, we will be curiously impressed by the grandeur of the place with its Altar of the Thoras along the eastern wall, its canopied Bema, its galleries for women, separated from those sacred precincts where only the feet of males may tread. Our eye will be held by the figures of some of the handsome old men worshipping there, patriarchal in their long halats, their snow-white beards and venerable countenances. Yet, here also, at the same moment, in this throng of worshippers, we will behold a degree of inattention, a lack of reverence, that will make us wonder just how strong the hold of this ancient faith is on the sons of Israel—or on his grandsons. Around the corner those sons and grandsons in goodly number are enjoying their own "reformed" worship in another synagogue with a different credo.

What sort of a question is it?

At any rate the question exists, and if we would at all approximate an answer, we must first look into the story of the Jew and the Pole from its beginnings.

II

One of the earliest records dates back to the eleventh century, when Jewish slave merchants traded in Poland: Queen Judith at Gniezno, 1085, expended large sums of money for the freeing of Christian slaves from their Jewish masters.

The eleventh century saw a large influx of Jews from Bohemia, where they were suffering severe persecution. Poland was then the only country in Europe which afforded the Jews sanctuary, and from that time on, during all the anti-Semitic persecutions which ensued in Western Europe, especially in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the unfortunate children of Israel flocked into Poland from England, France, Italy, Spain,

Portugal, Germany, Bohemia, finding in the land of the Pole their only security. In all the history of Poland the Jew has never been persecuted by the Pole for his religious belief. Such a refuge, in fact, did this country become for the harassed Jew that it was known historically as "Paradisus Judæorum"—"the Jews' Paradise."

Beginning with the thirteenth century the already well-established privileges of the Jews in Poland were more and more confirmed by law, the first charter, according them the special protection of the sovereign, and granting them more actual privileges than were given Christians, being issued in 1264 by Prince Boleslas the Worshipper. Kasimir the Great (1333–1370), popularly known as "the King of the serfs and the Jews," conferred on them further indulgences and liberties. Unmolested travel throughout the country; decrees of punishment against all who should hinder or attack or annoy them, especially boys and students; and provisions for a considerable extent of self-government among themselves and separate from Polish jurisdiction, were some of the privileges in which this and later charters vested them. Throughout the Middle Ages and on into the eighteenth century, these royal favours to the Jews in Poland widened and increased, resulting finally in a more or less complete autonomy, giving them their own distinct local governments, courts of justice, schools, police, etc., and eventually their own general legislature or Sejm (called "Waad").

But in time this *imperium in imperio* over-reached itself. The privileged Jew, especially the Jew in office, withholding himself from Polish citizenship (which he could hardly be expected to desire in the circumstances, considering the many special favours accorded him otherwise), began to abuse his power, using it even against his own fellow Jews as well as to the disadvantage of Poles. This brought a reaction, resulting finally in the abrogation, in 1764, of the separate Jewish Sejm, the closing of which was welcomed with rejoicing by the Jewish masses themselves, so heavily had they come to be burdened under it.

At the same time the Poles began to realize that a serious internal problem had grown up in their midst. They sought the solution of this problem by offering the Jew equal rights of citizenship. Thus it was that, beginning with the Constitution of 1791, and later under the régime of Napoleon's Duchy of Warsaw in 1807; in the Poznanian Provincial Parliament in 1847; in the Wielopolski Reforms of 1862; in the Galician Diet in 1868: throughout the history of each and every period in which Poland was able to legislate for herself, the idea of Jewish enfranchisement was in some manner or degree advanced. Of the first efforts in 1791, based on a project framed by the Catholic priest, Hugo

Kollontay, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* says: "This was the only example in modern Europe, before the French Revolution, of tolerance and broad-mindedness in dealing with the Jewish question."

But the Jew, conservative of conservatives, whose soul is knit to tradition as the branch is knit to the tree, did not take kindly to these proposed reforms. They abolished his special privileges, and he imagined that they endangered his ancient faith. "The Jews tried with all their might," writes the Jewish historian, David Kandl, "to frustrate the proposed reforms, which were regarded as a new calamity to the Jewish nation. In many places fasts were imposed to beg God to avert such misfortune."

It is not too difficult to understand the mind of the Jew at this stage of his history in Poland. "Let well enough alone," perhaps expresses it. He was contented as he was, free as he could be in no other land, living his own distinct life entrenched behind the walls of his ghetto, separate and wholly removed from the Christian mass, the "unbelievers," around him, whom he could not understand and from whom he held aloof with all the stubborn exclusiveness born of a culture which had impregnated him to the marrow with the conviction of his own racial and spiritual superiority. What could equality before the Gentile law mean to him? No more than the Gentile law itself, which was nothing. What would Polish citizenship mean? The exchange of special privileges, very old and time-honoured privileges, long engrafted into his life, for strange new burdens of common responsibility. Above all, what good would Polish enfranchisement be, the Jew argued, if it should endanger the faith of his children and lose the coming generations to Israel? "The Jewish leaders," explains Askenazy, the most eminent of living Jewish historians in Poland, "were afraid of any enfranchisement which would tend to the destruction of Talmudic orthodoxy, impair the purity of ancient customs, and eventually burden the Jew with common duties, the most abhorred of which was military service." Against the imposition of military duty in particular they so strongly protested that they were finally permitted the alternative of a money tribute. "Their success," Askenazy records, "transported the Jewish politicians with joy."

To this day the Jew in Poland evades military service. "By bribery, desertion or some other device"—to my personal knowledge in many cases by self-inflicted wounds—"they escape all service at the front," declares the Wright Report to the British Parliament, in explaining anti-Jewish feeling in the Polish army. "The Jews in Poland," this report goes on, "have little but commercial traditions, and are not Poles. The Polish Tommy, however, who has to stick it at the front without food or clothes,

in the torturing cold of the Russian winter, is not likely to enter into these philosophical considerations. All he knows is that the Jew 'gets off.'" "The Polish Government," the same report declares further, "says it will admit Jews as field-officers if they will sign a declaration that they are of Polish nationality. This they refuse to do."

To return to our history: this, then, was the situation which Poland faced from the time of her first attempts at Jewish enfranchisement. By her tolerance in the beginning she had admitted the Jew in vast numbers within her boundaries, but by her leniency she had allowed him to lag so far behind in the procession of civic and national life that the ghettos in Poland were become mere by-stations of mediævalism, little oases of the Promised Land in which the Jewish masses very naturally tarried long and happily, rejoicing in their lack of obligation to any but themselves, and in the lucrative trade which they more and more controlled; their rabbis at the same time engrossed in the delights of their Talmudic lore. Who could blame them?

But suddenly the Pole woke up to the danger of this situation, in which a powerful alien State presented itself full-fledged within the Polish State. "An end to special privileges," he said; and forthwith he summoned the Jew out of his ghetto and bade him take up his proper place alongside his fellow citizens, to share their burdens and become a part of the Polish national organism.

The Jew, frightened for his privileges and his sacred traditions, held back. If the ghetto had been imposed on him in the beginning, he now made it voluntary.

III

It was not alone the Jew, however, clinging to the old and fearing the new, who balked the progress of events. If that had been the only hindrance, time itself would have sensibly lessened it, and in a degree removed it even without the enfranchisement which the Jew did not desire. Assimilation would have inevitably taken place in the natural process of social evolution. More and more of the children of Israel, unable to resist the current of human progress into which enfranchisement and reform would have swept them, would have gone out of the ghetto, leaving its Oriental mediævalism behind, mingling with the western world at their very elbows, and becoming citizens of Poland, just as countless numbers of them, still retaining in large part the faith of their fathers, have done in other countries—not a few of them even in Poland itself, in spite of all Jewish prohibitions and obstacles.

It was not the Jew alone. Only an artificial barrier, added to the barrier of tradition, could have retarded the Jew in Poland as he has been retarded.

The Constitution of 1791, the first formal attempt of Poland to enfranchise the Jew, instead of setting him and the whole country free, brought down the wrath of the Powers to the total extinction of the Polish State. But though it was the end of all those proposed reforms which would have made the Jew a Polish citizen, the effect of those reforms was not altogether nor immediately lost, as the story of Koscuiszko, risen to defend the Constitution three years later, proves. Not only the peasants of Poland, their rights recognized, rallied round Koscuiszko, but a goodly number of Jews likewise responded to his call, a celebrated leader among them, Borek Josielewicz, raising an Israelite regiment which fought beside the liberator on the field of honour. Then came the tragedy of final defeat, and the end of Polish freedom for one hundred and thirty years. Henceforth the destiny of the Jew in Poland was in the hands of the partitioning Powers.

It was the hands of these Powers that erected the new barrier between Jew and Pole, buttressing and heightening the walls of the ghetto—the same crafty and cruel Powers that had persecuted the Jew within their own boundaries, and had driven him by the tens of thousands into Poland for sanctuary. So wise in their generation were these self-same Powers that they knew how to turn even their persecutions to their own account.

Whatever their differences and jealousies, the statesmen of these three Powers were one and united in their joint hatred of Pole and Jew. But they had no intention of permitting anything resembling a common cause, anything like a fellowship in suffering, to grow up between the two. There were to be no more Boreks and no more Jewish regiments rallying to the call of another possible Kosciuszko. The surest way to forestall any such contingency as that was by setting Jew and Pole against each other. The entire history of the Jew in Poland from this time on is a development of this combined anti-Polish and anti-Jewish policy of the Powers, the policy of " divide and rule."

Even so they did not succeed at once. Though one of their first concerted moves was to drive all the poorest and most ignorant Jews out of their own lands, making Poland a dumping-ground for them, or rather that part of Poland which Russia named " the Pale " (for Germany did not even set off a " Pale " for her outcasts, clearing them entirely from her territory), still Poland continued to assimilate the Jews to a certain degree, attracting some of their best minds by her tolerance, minds which did nôt fear but which, on the contrary, appreciated her efforts toward their betterment. A strongly assimilative race, the Poles had already absorbed

Germans, Italians, Hungarians, Scotch, French, Irish and others into their national body, so that these became Polonized as the same races in America have become Americanized. Even the racial cleavage and the rigid separatist nature of the ritual Jew could not wholly combat this Polish absorbent force.

But unhappily it was only the poorest Jews whom the Powers banished from their own territories and drove into Poland. Those possessing a certain sum of money (in the German dominions one thousand thalers) were exempt. Being the poorest, these exiles were also in the greatest misery, as well as in the greatest ignorance. Poverty and ignorance together made them the ready prey of their enemies, who were neither slow in inflaming their unenlightened minds with suspicions and fear of the Poles, nor backward in making anti-Polish sentiment a paying commodity. Thus every Polish attempt at advancing the Jew was nullified or vitiated. The Jews' ignorance of his neighbour, from whom the rigorism and exclusiveness of the Hebraic culture of the ghetto had already set him apart, was now more and more successfully played upon. Assimilation was given the name of apostacy. Cupidity was appealed to. The Jew was set as a spy on the Pole. The whole diabolical machinery of anti-Polish propaganda was oiled and kept in motion.

The Teutonic Powers, had one great advantage in this over their fellow criminal, the Muscovite—the advantage of language. The tongue of the Jew in Poland is German, and has remained so since the earliest times, when he first emigrated into Poland. A mediæval dialect, the so-called Yiddish (which is German for Jewish, i.e. "Judisch"), the Jews' language is 70 per cent. German, the remainder being Hebrew, Polish, and whatever Asiatic or Tartar words the Israelites brought with them from the East. Some writers wonder at the tenacity with which the Jew in Poland has retained the German tongue, seeing in that fact evidence of a mysterious affinity between the Jewish and the Teutonic soul. But the ghetto, it would seem, is explanation enough. In Spain the Jew acquired Spanish and kept it, because it became the language of the Spanish ghetto. In Germany he acquired German (i.e. Yiddish) ; and when he migrated into Poland, or was driven there, he brought his Yiddish-speaking ghetto with him, and shut himself behind its walls. The negligible degree in which Polish became incorporated into the language of the Jew denotes exactly the degree in which the Jew permitted himself contact with the Pole.

IV

This went on for years, the Jews, meanwhile, either being driven or crowding themselves voluntarily into Poland by the thousands,

finding there a profitable field for trade and such a haven of special privilege as no other country in Europe afforded. In the old ghettos of Poland, standing for hundreds of years unchanged and unmolested, the very air of Zion itself was to be breathed. No matter how much a certain small number of the rising generation might be attracted " beyond the iron gate," or how large a number might be tempted across the seas (as we shall presently note), here in Poland was a scene perfectly suited not only to the petty Jew trader, but above all to the rabbinical rigorists, the ritualistic purists, all the leaders of the old school who could see nothing but spiritual contamination in the social equality of the Gentile. And, more than that, whatever the persecutions they or their fathers may have suffered in Germany or Russia, here, strangely enough, banished by those same Russians and Germans, they found not an inconsiderable measure of the favour and patronage of their one-time persecutors, whenever that favour and patronage could be used against the Pole.

Thus the exclusiveness and caste-sense of the Jew in Poland increased with his numbers. As for his numbers, at the time of the first partition in 1772 the Jewish population of Poland was 450,000, but in twenty years it had doubled, so that when the Poles tried to establish their Constitution in 1791, proclaiming among other rights that of equality for the Jews, these numbered 900,000. Some idea of how the partitioners continued their process of " dumping " may be gained by noting the figures of the increase of Jewish population in Poland as time went on. In 1827 they were 9·3 per cent. of the total; in 1834, 10·1 per cent.; 1862, 12·8 per cent.; 1890, 13·9 per cent; 1905, 14·5 per cent. As Poland stands to-day they are roughly 15 per cent.—about half of the total Jewish population of the world.

At the same time, in that part of Poland formerly held by Germany, whence the poorest Jews were expelled, and where the richer gradually fell away before the increasing trade competition of the Pole, we find a rapid decrease: from 6·3 per cent. in 1815 to 4·3 per cent. in 1857, down to 1 per cent. in 1910.

The prolific nature of the Jew must also be taken into account. In 1914 the natural increase among Israelites was 17·6 per cent. against 14·5 per cent. among the Christians.

In spite of these figures, nevertheless, there was a serious counter-element—emigration. The factor of assimilation worked very slowly, although Jews did continue to become Polonized, in spite of the fact that more and more it exacted exceptional moral courage and strength of character for any child of the ghetto to go out and take his place in the citizenship of the country. But if assimilation was minimized, emigration constantly increased, no doubt to the alarm of the Rabbinical Fathers, who would see

in it not only a numerical loss to Israel, but a growing influence of liberalism. No family with sons or daughters or relatives gone abroad, where assimilation was inevitable, could escape the subtle contagion of "letters from America." Whatever their first disappointments and disillusionments in the new land, Jewish emigrants, or at any rate their children, soon learn to say and feel "We are Americans." As a matter of fact, from 1897 to 1911 nearly fifty thousand Jews emigrated every year from Poland to the United States, while the annual emigration to England, Canada, France, Belgium, Africa and Palestine amounted to over ten thousand. Thus for fifteen years continuously sixty thousand Jews were annually lost to Zion in Poland, a grand total of nearly one million.

Almost coincident with this exodus, and no doubt largely the cause of it, both Germany and Russia had "dumped" a new lot of exiled Jews into Poland. In March 1885 the Prussian Government had suddenly banished, on twenty-four hours' notice, all Jews who had not been born in Prussia. This meant that the larger number of Jews in what was then called Prussian Poland must get out. They were forbidden to go back into Germany; they must go forward, eastward, into the Polish "Pale." A few years later Russia had put into operation an even more drastic law of banishment, accompanying it with pogroms and brutalities. In the single month of March 1891, as a result of this, one huge hegira of 20,000 Jews came pouring into Poland; and after the great Russian pogroms of 1905 and 1906 the story was repeated. Thus, from both sides, the Jewish flood swamped the land of the Poles.

This new tide in the affairs of the Jew in Poland almost paralyzed the assimilative movement—a movement which, in spite of every obstacle heretofore, had begun to give promise of really awakening the sensations of Polish national consciousness among the Jews. The newcomers, especially those from Lithuania and Russia, the "Litwaki," brought with them as counteractants against assimilation not only a rigorist Talmudism more irreconcilable than that of the purest of the ghetto Fathers; but they added the embittering factor of political Judaism, which they immediately backed up with the foundation of a Jewish Press. This was the one thing calculated to close the ghetto gates tight, and the one thing which the slow-going movement of assimilation could not combat. It was at this period that the Poles, now literally inundated with a Jewish flood, heard perhaps for the first time the cry of "Polish Judea" raised in their midst. "Judeo-Polonia!"—Poland was henceforth to be Zion.

The Jewish situation in Poland wanted just this last touch to confirm almost irrevocably the separatistic exclusiveness of

the Jew. The Rabbinical extremists welcomed this new political strength which to them was as manna fortifying Israel against the inroads of emigration and assimilation. The Jewish masses, wholly ignorant except for their Talmudic training, fell completely under the spell of the new " Judeo-Polonia " power, which spoke so efficaciously to them in the terms of political ambition that by 1912, in the elections for the Russian Duma, the Jews of Warsaw—40 per cent. of the city's population—were able to secure majority enough to send their own representative to the Assembly at Petrograd as the spokesman for the Polish capital. If he had been simply a Jew—that is, if he had been merely a Polish citizen of the Mosaic religion—it would have been one thing. But he was a radical international socialist, pledged to every policy and ideal abhorrent to Poland and to democracy.

The complete cleavage of Pole and Jew dates from this time. Moreover, from this time the Jewish question in Poland took on the colour of political partisanship, the Jew, that is, the Jewish leader, openly aligning himself against instead of with the Polish citizen. The Jewish masses of course followed their leaders, more and more estranging themselves from their Polish neighbours. Now more than ever the Jew in Poland, when asked if he were a Pole, answered, " No, I am a Jew."

V

What had transpired behind the walls of the ghetto in Poland during all these years ? What is this Hebraic culture which so sets the Jewish people apart from their Polish neighbours, that to-day we find within a nation of some thirty millions an internal alien nation of almost five millions completely separate, distinct and aloof ?

To begin with, it seems to the observer from America that the Jew of Poland, the Eastern Jew (Östjuden) is in himself a very different person from the Jew of the West. The Eastern Jew, as Dr. Wolfgang Heinze, a captain in the German army, has remarked, was only discovered in 1914. He is entirely Oriental, for the reason that he has never been obliged to cast off the Orientalism of his race. He has stopped by the wayside, while the rest of the world has gone ahead, simply because he has found a wayside to stop at and liberty to tarry there. The Pole was too tolerant, too lenient, we say ; he should not have permitted this. It was good neither for the Jew nor for himself. But while I found the Poles ready to admit the charge of shortsightedness in this regard, I found them also a naturally tolerant and lenient people ; they could not have done otherwise. The whole thing, after all, began in an appeal to their tolerance, at a time when

the Jew in every other civilized country in the world was being proscribed and persecuted.

Or the Jew, we say, should have been awake, alive to the progress of the world ; he should not have sat by in his tent, lagging behind in the caravan of life. " But why not ? " he might answer It paid him ; he had privileges, favours, special protections. And he had the full draught, unmolested, of his ancient faith. Anyway, it was not he, the Jew of the masses, who was to blame. It was his leaders. He was the child of Zion's fathers. They held him Under the tutelage of the Rabbis the Jew was bound to become a separatist. His schools taught him no language but the ghetto language. His sacred books grounded him in an ethics inevitably separatist.

Roughly speaking, the Jews have three classes of schools in the ghetto : the Cheder (primary), Jeshibot (secondary) and Talmud Thora, or advanced. In the Cheders, usually conducted by poor Rabbis whose pupils pay the equivalent of a few cents a day, only religion is taught—the children, aged from about five to twelve, learning here their letters and the first reading of scriptural verses These they recite aloud in unison, the resulting din of voices making a strange monotonous hum which lasts for hours at a time, and which it may be imagined half hypnotizes the weary children

In the Jeshibots the classes are about the same as in the Cheders, largely religious, but with the study more advanced. Then comes the Talmud Thora, the ghetto high school. It is free, and is attached to the synagogue. Here there are blackboards on which the Rabbis may expound the lessons. In the senior classes Jewish history is taught, and Jewish geography—that is, the geography of the Old Testament, such as is taught in our Sunday Bible classes and parochial schools, although of course in much more thorough detail.

The study of the Jewish children in the ghetto schools is almost exclusively the Talmud. The Talmud is a vast and complicated work of Biblical commentary, consisting of many volumes, in which the verses, phrases, lines, words, even the very letters of the Old Testament are dissected and explained. Without going into details about Mishnah, Tosefta, the Babylonian and Palestinian commentaries, Gemara, and Shulkhan Arugh, we can sum it all up in the one word Talmud, which may well be called the Jews' *vade mecum*, his guide of life, the source, foundation, and whole substance of his ethics and philosophy ; in short, his sacred law—so sacred to him that he values it above human life, as one American-Jewish writer, reporting excesses during the war, attests. According to this witness, Jews in Poland, before they would speak of their brethren who had been injured or killed, would invariably give evidence first of any defilement of the Holy Scrolls of the

Thora, if there had been such. "The Talmud," the *Jewish Encyclopedia* explains, "served them as an encyclopedia of all knowledge, and for questions of everyday life, including abstract law, legal decisions, both civil and criminal, religious legislation, theology, etc."

The teaching of the Talmud, ground into the very bones of the Jew from babyhood, colours his whole life. Followed in all its literal absolutism, it makes the Jew a man apart in the community, a curiosity to the passer-by. If we consider the one fact alone that, despite the millions of Jews in Poland, Jewish and Polish children seldom, if ever, play together, we can begin to realize how this Talmudic teaching works out, and what the separatism of the Polish Jew means. The Jewish child goes into the Cheder at five or six, and continues at school until perhaps fourteen. He sits the day long at his lessons, and he has practically no holidays during the entire year except the Sabbath. Poring over his books for long hours from week-end to week-end, through the whole twelve months, he knows nothing of athletics or sports or any of the recreations enjoyed by Christian children. On the Sabbath he is free; but this weekly holiday is something beside which our old-time Puritanical Sunday looks like a circus. Even his clothes set him apart, for his parents dress him as his fathers are dressed, in halat and cap, the very feeling of which must be one of rigid solemnity. I have seen little shavers of four and five in the Polish ghetto—sometimes, it is true, venturing beyond their accustomed streets into the main highways—walking so correctly and aloof, their long black coats below their knees, their little round peakless caps pressed tight on their curly heads, that I wondered if they ever ran or jumped or whistled or shouted. "The Cheder," says the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "transforms healthy children into sickly nervous ones, and it has been said with much truth that the physical degeneration of the Jewish masses is due in part to the baneful influence of this class of school."

For many weeks my Red Cross work in Warsaw necessitated my going daily on foot into the ghetto. I grew to know it well. At first I had a frank feeling of pity for these Jewish youngsters, and for their elders as well, so set apart by their exclusive garb. I imagined in a vague way at first that it was, that it must be, somehow or other, an unwelcome mark of distinction put upon them. But I soon learned my mistake. On the contrary, the Jew, could he have read my thoughts, would have felt sorry for me. The whole ethical system of the Talmud, from generations immemorial, has bred in him the conviction of his superiority.

This is the most intractable thing the ghetto training does to the Jew in Poland. Whatever of the old teaching of Hebrew morality clings or does not cling to the Jewish soul—of his alleged

" rights " over the Gentile or " Goy " ; of his moral non-liability to Gentile law ; of mental reservation, and so on—in the sum total this one thing does remain, the caste sense, the separatist instinct, the idea of superiority

VI

How does all this fit the Jew for Polish citizenship ? The Jewish writer referred to above, in regard to the Talmud (Captain A. L. Goodhart, late Counsel of the Morgenthau Mission in Poland), relates in his book, *Poland and the Minority Races,* some of his findings in the ghetto schools in Warsaw. " We then went to the senior class (of a Talmud Thora) where the children were thirteen or fourteen years old. These children had just been studying Jewish history, and one of them enthusiastically repeated to me the names of the different kings of Judah. As this was the oldest class, I thought I would ask them some questions. Of the thirty-five children . . . none of them had ever heard of Washington, either the city or the man. None of them knew who Kosciuszko was, and one particularly bright boy was the only one in the class who had ever heard of Sobieski. He thought Sobieski was a Polish nobleman who had fought against the Russians. . . . Only one boy could talk Polish, although four or five could understand it. . . . All the classes in this school were conducted in Yiddish."

Of another Talmud Thora, or ghetto high school, Captain Goodhart writes : " One of the best had some maps on the wall . . . detailed charts of Palestine. The children in this class were able to draw excellent plans of that country on the blackboard, filling in the names of the cities and most of the villages. I asked one of the boys whether he could draw a similar map of Poland, and he said no. . . . They could not remember that they had ever seen a map of Europe. . . .

" After having visited these schools we had an interview with the head of the Talmud Thoras. He was opposed to the idea that the Polish Government should inspect these schools and force them to teach Polish to the children. . . . The purpose of his schools was to give the children the traditional Jewish education. I suggested to him that this was the same education which the Jewish race here in Poland had been receiving for the last six hundred years, and that a more modern curriculum might be advantageous. He looked at me in astonishment, and his only answer was, ' Under our plan the boys will grow up to be an honour to their race.' "

In one of the Cheder schools, according to Captain Goodhart, the Rabbi " was very much worried about the future of his school now that the Poles were in control. He had heard that they were going to insist that the Jewish children be taught Polish. As

he had only a slight knowledge of that language, it would force him out of business."

It will be noted that all the Jewish schools mentioned here are boys' schools. The Jew does not consider women in his educational scheme. She has only one purpose in life, in his opinion, and that is to be the mother of the sons of Israel. Even the synagogue is shut to her, except the galleries, where she may look on. She may not set her foot within its sacred precincts. A separate stairway, sometimes built outside the synagogue wall, leads her to her place of worship. One result of this exclusion of women from Jewish education is that many Jewish girls go to Polish schools and become more modernized than the boys, bringing touches of western culture into the Oriental atmosphere of the ghetto, and doubtless contributing their bit, perhaps unwittingly, to the cause of assimilation and progress.

Naturally the same law which establishes the separatist school for the Jew forbids his sons entering Polish schools until they are firmly established in the Talmudic faith. In 1917, out of 460,000 children in Polish primary classes, only 9,000 were Jewish.

VII

"The culture of the ghetto," says Bernard Lazare, an eminent Jewish scholar, in discussing the effects of the fourteenth-century rigorism of the Rabbis, "cut off Israel from the community of peoples; made of it a being fierce and solitary, rebellious to all law, hostile to all fraternity, closed to all beautiful, noble or generous ideas; made of it a nation small and miserable, soured by isolation, stupefied by a narrow education, demoralized and corrupted by an unjustifiable pride."

To-day it is still the fourteenth century in the Polish ghettos. This stupefying culture has gone on for tens of generations, with the result that, in the single point of contact possible between Jew and Pole under such circumstances (that is, trade), the Jew has remained a parasitical middleman. He is in the land but not of it. He passes through his hands, but does not produce, the fruits of the soil. Into the soil itself he has never struck root, nor has he ever become an integral part of the industrial labour of the country. Ninety-four per cent. of the grain business of Poland was in the Jew's control before the war, 93 per cent. of the hide and leather trade, 91 per cent. of the hawking traffic. But he neither sowed nor reaped the grain, nor bred the stock which yielded hide and leather profits, nor produced any of the thousand and one commodities which he peddled.

The Jew in Poland never has become a tiller of the soil. Even though the Russian Government had not forced him, as it did at

times, to crowd into the towns, he would still have remained, by choice, a city dweller. His religion alone necessitated this; for to till any other soil but that of Palestine is, to many of the extremists in Jewish orthodoxy, a defilement. Besides, the Jew is by nature an urbanite. He is a "social animal" in the highest degree. He must live in a crowd. He cannot endure the loneliness of the open field or the solitary house. He enjoys crowds, talk and gossip, and he must have company. He is Oriental.

Conditions found in the ghetto, at the present moment, even among the less needy, testify to this. Whatever the cause, which certainly is not always poverty, thousands of Eastern Jews live together in quarters so squalid and unsanitary as to excite the repulsion of Western Jews as well as of Christians. I have heard Jews from America declare, on revisiting their old homes in Poland, homes of the not too poor by any means, in the pretentious Nalewki of the Warsaw ghetto, that never could they live again in such an environment. Again, the persecutions which Jews have suffered in many lands, the persecutions which drove them into Poland for shelter, have no doubt ingrained in them a strong collectivist instinct, making them fear to live alone beyond the numerical protection of their own kind.

The first trade of the Jew in Poland was the slave trade. Money lending and the subleasing of State revenues next developed—the taking over, for example, of the collection of customs duties in return for a bounty paid to the State for the privilege; then tavern-keeping and the liquor traffic, which became in time almost exclusively a Jewish business; finally, a general trading and brokerage in all commodities of barter and exchange, with a widespread development of the smuggling traffic during the partitions. Money-lending, in the days when such business knew no regulations and the profits were unlimited, naturally led to extortion and usury; and out of it all grew inevitably that bitter feeling which such trade always engenders between lender and borrower—in this case, between Jew and Pole All these facts must be considered in weighing and judging the prejudices which grew up against the Jews in Poland. And this brings us to the delicate question of moral law, as it applies to trade and commerce—to the question, rather, of the highly prejudicial ghetto law as it affected the relations between Jew and Pole.

It would be unfair to judge the usurers of another age by the laws and customs of the present. The people of any given period of history are to be measured by the standards of that period. No Poles with whom I have discussed the Jewish question, and no Polish writers whose books I have consulted on the matter, have deviated from this rule. But the problem of Talmudic ethics, and their effect on the relations existing between Jew and

Pole, still confronts us, when we study modern conditions as well as those of mediæval times. This does not mean that we are to check the Jews literally in the twentieth century on every doctrine set forth in the Talmud. Many of the Talmudic beliefs and practices of old are to-day more honoured in the breach than the observance. Among Western Jews, who long have taken their place in the march of progress, this is entirely true. But the Jew in Poland has held back. Here he has made his case a highly exceptional one. No matter what the unquestioned uprightness and honesty of Jewish people whom we may know in America, or of the individual Jew in Poland, it must be acknowledged that the Eastern Jew in the mass does take his stand on a different moral ground than his Christian neighbour, a stand which makes many things, forbidden by the Christian code, morally permissible to the Jew when he deals with non-Jews. There can be no other explanation of such figures as those given, for instance, in Rossow's work, *The Jewish Question*, which, quoting the court records of former Russian Poland for the ten years from 1876 to 1886, gives us among other items the following: convictions for crimes of forgery and fraudulency, 78·9 per cent. Jews; perjury, 86·2 per cent. Jews; falsification of money, 94·6 per cent. Jews; concealment of stolen goods, 79·7 per cent. Jews. In a population numbering at that time not over twelve Jews to the hundred, this percentage of what we might call "commercial crimes" among Jews is abnormal. The only reasonable explanation, to any one familiar with certain teachings of the Talmud, is this: that Jews so convicted in Gentile courts were not guilty, nevertheless, according to their own Talmudic morality, their "Judischer Weise," as they call it, their "Jewish wisdom." It might of course be argued that the explanation lies in the possible prejudice of the courts. But this is disputed by other figures, such as those which show the low percentage of 11·1 per cent. for murder convictions among Jews. Thus, while among ten murderers only one was a Jew, among ten perjurers, eight were Jews.

These figures are not cited as general accusations against Jews, but are given for the purpose of emphasizing two facts, the knowledge of which is essential to an understanding of the whole question: the large extent to which Jews in Poland were engaged in trade; and the moral advantage which their Talmudic teachings gave them in this trade over their Polish competitors who lived under a different code—an advantage which was bound inevitably to create feeling between the two races, not to speak of its general demoralizing effect on the whole community. The question here is not one of comparative moral values, but of the specific difference in moral codes. This difference must be reckoned with if we are to understand the position of the Jew in Poland.

VIII

The Jew in Poland is thus seen to have become almost wholly a tradesman or middleman. Although not rooted in the soil, the various privileges accorded him, the advantages of his own special code, and his natural inclination for trade, all combined to gradually give him the control of the products of the soil, and thus to excite the natural animosity of the Pole. Eighty-three and nine-tenths per cent. of Polish commerce of all branches was in the Jew's hands at the time of the beginning of the World War, and 55 per cent. of Polish industry. The latter he controlled through his capital, and in a lesser degree through his handcraft. The industrial work of the Jew in Poland, however, has been almost altogether "piece work"—tailoring, shoe-making, furrier work, and other jobbing done at home or in ghetto "sweat shops" in which he has not hesitated, any more than his Christian neighbour, to exploit his own less fortunate brothers when capital has given him the power to do so.

The Sabbath Law has kept Jewish workers out of regular employment in Polish factories to a great extent. This one difference alone, between Jew and Pole, precipitated a heated clash in the Polish Sejm in 1920, at the time the bill for a forty-six-hour working week (legalizing Sunday as a day of rest) was voted on. Ghetto leaders in the Sejm made a political issue of it. "Gentlemen," said one of the Jewish Deputies, when this bill was passed, "permit me to inform you that by this act you have forfeited Vilna, Grodno and Minsk." Such a statement, made at the moment of a military crisis, with the Bolsheviks rapidly advancing, was well calculated to rouse bitter feeling against the Jews in Poland. "It was less with complaints about pogroms and excesses that the orthodox leaders came before the Commission," says the Wright Report to the British Parliament, "than with complaints about Sunday closing."

If we picture now this separate caste of millions living aloof and by itself behind the walls of the ghetto, more closely related to the year 500 B.C., to the age of Ezra and Nehemiah, than to the twentieth century, a caste bred in a culture wholly alien to the world surrounding it, cultivated in a sense of privilege, grounded in a deep and abiding conviction of racial and spiritual superiority; in the mass entirely subject to the lawgiving of its ritualistic leaders and speaking a language practically unknown to its Polish neighbours; if we picture this people so situated, we can understand what a fertile field they offered for the intrigues of outside Powers, and why they so readily fell under the spell of the newcoming political spirit of Nationalistic Zionism which was awakened in them during the first years of this century. The situation during the War and at the present time will then be more clear to us.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE POLE AND THE JEW

I

In the War, as before, the Jews in Poland once more went blindly the wrong way They were still the victims of the intriguing Powers, the strong tie of the Germanic-Yiddish tongue playing its greatest rôle at this time. During the Russian Army occupation up to 1915, if the Jews remained negative and passive, so far as Poland was concerned, there were very few signs, nevertheless, of downright anti-Polish feeling among them. Had the political Zionizing of the ghetto not halted the assimilative movement as it had, the Jews in Poland might indeed have come out of this mêlée to an appreciable degree Polonized. This is not impossible to believe when one considers the loyalty of the handful of Jews who did weather the storm and who are now found ready for the liberal promulgations of the new Polish State. But the Jewish masses were in the hands of unscrupulous political leaders who, as events proved, were in the hands of the Germans. The moment the Germans came into Poland these Jewish leaders declared openly for them, and against the Poles.

The Poles could have forgiven the Jews their previous "neutrality," their passivity ; their lack of support, for example, of those Polish legions which all this time had been secretly organizing for the liberation of the country (but which, alas, had produced no Borek Jasielowicz). But the outright championing of the enemy by the Jews in Poland was a bitter blow to the Poles, as well as to those Jews, small in number but staunchly loyal, who had become Polish citizens.

From the day of the Germans' entry the anti-Polish sentiment of the Jews was avowed. Throughout the country Jews became the paid intermediaries of the invader, while in the capita Jewish leaders were found so entirely given over to the enemy as to speak as did Dr. Nathan Birnbaum in his pamphlet *Den Östjuden ihr Recht,* in which he made the declaration that "sooner or later the German and Austrian victors will properly repay some of these nations [including the Poles] for their narrow-minded and adventurous temper in trying to impede the victory." "The sooner

and the more thoroughly these nations are repaid the better," continued Dr. Birnbaum's pamphlet; "the sooner will they smother their childlike nonsense; the sooner will die down their *dernier cri*—their lamenting and national prating, which already begins to grow tedious. But it may be expected," this Jewish leader concluded, "that those who in the days of trial have shown the Germans sympathy will be properly rewarded, and first among them the Jewish people, who, having understood and instinctively felt the importance of the Teutonic nations, faithfully stand by the side of Germany and Austria."

To make doubly sure of the reward for which he was thus setting forth such unequivocal claims, Dr. Birnbaum added in another passage the reminder that Germans and Jews "would both profit if the Germans would begin to properly value and put to practical use the sympathies which are shown to them, not only by German Jews in Germany, but also by Eastern Jews."

Such utterances as this were hardly calculated to help solve the Jewish problem in Poland. Rather, their effect was to shake the last vestige of Polish confidence in their Jewish neighbours, even the loyal ones coming inescapably under suspicion. The same effect was produced and heightened by the words of a prominent member of the Jewish National Committee, Mr. Kaplun-Kogan, who promised in his brochure, *Der Krieg*, that the Jews would give valuable service to the Teutonic power in the countries east of Germany. On every side the Poles heard declarations and promises of this kind, so that it did not surprise them, perhaps, to read later the statement of Sigismund Meyer in *The Jews of Vienna* (1917) that "the independence of Poland is the greatest danger threatening the Israelite community," a statement which simply confirmed the assertion of Dr. Ehrlich, that "the Eastern Jewry should be regarded as an enlargement of the German power within the boundaries of other nations and countries." All Jewry, Eastern and Western, and even worldwide, the Poles began to feel, must be arrayed against them, after they had read the statement of still another Jewish writer, Adolf Friedman, who declared in Munich in February 1916 that "in America live two and one-half million Jews, and of this number seven-eighths are emigrant brothers and sons of Jews from Eastern Europe. Besides the Germans . . . they were the only Americans who defended the cause of the Central Powers . . . especially after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, when the whole Jewish press, to the number of nearly one million copies, took the German side."

Entirely shut away from the outside world by the German censorship—the chief aim of which was to destroy all ties between Poland and the Allies—the Poles had no means of confirming or refuting such statements as this. And even when courageous

Jewish leaders did lift up their voices in defence of Poland, and in condemnation of the treachery of their brethren, it gave small comfort. One Jew, Benjamin Segel (in *Die Polnische Judenfrage,* 1916), cried out, " What nation in the world would tolerate in its midst an element which, as is well known, can always be used against that nation by a foreign power ? " But the harm was done already. The Jew was known to the Pole openly and publicly as the ally of his enemy.

It was the power of the German tongue, speaking through the Yiddish jargon, coupled with the Jews' total inability to believe in the indestructibility of Polish nationality, that created this really terrible situation. Ages of persecution in many lands had made the Jew servile. To him power was power, a bald inescapable fact. And now that power spoke to him in the only language he understood.

II

While the Jewish leaders in Poland were thus espousing and acclaiming by voice and print the cause of the victorious Teutons, and even holding jubilant demonstrations ridiculing " the Polish Goose " as the symbol of Poland, the White Eagle, was called by them, Jewish factors at the same time, to the consternation and outrage of the Poles, were rapidly filling up the intermediary ranks of the occupying army as agents, requisitioners, spies, the strong trade position which they already occupied throughout the country well qualifying them for this work.

That there were Jewish spies employed in Poland was nothing new. Espionage was such an old practice among the Jews that distrust of them had become an every-day tradition ; a distrust so marked that even Mickiewicz, the Polish national poet, a friend of the Jews who never hesitated to celebrate their virtues, writes of it as a matter of course in his poem *Pan Tadeusz,* published nearly a century ago. In that poem we find that no Pole during the Partitions would give news of his country in any gathering without first making sure that there was no " jarmulka," or Jew's cap, in the crowd. With the coming of the Germans in 1915, the old story was repeated. This was fully confirmed later, when, following the Armistice in 1918, and the expulsion of the Germans, the secret documents of their censorship office were discovered, left behind in the haste of the enemy's withdrawal from Warsaw. Number six of these documents, dated June 18 1915 (page 6), states that " the services which Jews render to our army in the occupation areas should not be mentioned in the press, lest Russians by rough handling deter them from being serviceable." At the same time that this Jewish spying system was being organized

by the Germans, most of the requisitioning of Polish foodstuffs, livestock, etc., for the German army was made through Jewish agents. The cup of humiliation of the Polish Jews, those who were true to the Polish cause, was now filled to overflowing when they beheld men of their own blood and faith openly become the paid agents of the oppressor, raiding Polish towns and Polish farms in the name of the military powers, to feed, transport and maintain the enemy forces.

Hoarding and profiteering, inevitable curses of all war-ridden countries, followed, evidence of which continued to show itself long after the German was gone. Useless to argue that Jews, like other men, were simply reverting to primordial laws of self-preservation; that thousands of poor Jews, like their Polish neighbours, suffered hunger and exposure; or that many wealthy Jews gave abundantly out of their riches to succour the needy. Equally useless to argue that hoarding and profiteering was not exclusively a Jewish sin (as it certainly was not, in Poland or any other country). The Polish masses knew only the one enraging fact, that in many of their villages, where want and starvation were to stalk for five years afterward, in Jewish homes there was food to eat. As late as February 1920 and quite unexpectedly, I myself ran into an example of this one day in going to the house of a Jew at Dvinsk, to inquire about an interpreter. In that town, to my personal knowledge, there were people dying of starvation daily. The Bolsheviks had been driven out only a few days before, and the situation was terrible. I had seen children there in the last bloated stages of hunger-exhaustion. But on the table of this Jewish house, where the family sat eating when I entered and while we talked, were meat, sugar, butter, milk and bread. When I asked the interpreter, who had lived many years in America, if she was an American or a Pole, she answered, "No, I am a Jew."

So the Jewish-Polish tragedy was acted out through the years of the German occupation, from 1915 to 1918, a tragedy which would never have been if the Jew in Poland had been left alone by Poland's enemies; if the story of Borek Josielewicz and Kosciuszko had become the Jewish ideal and tradition, instead of the intriguing suspicions of German and Russian provocateurs, whispered into the ear of the children of the ghetto, and taken up by unscrupulous Zionist politicians to keep racial animosities alive. The spectacle of Jewish leaders openly declaring for the enemy; of Jewish agents stripping the land with the enemy's authority; of Jewish informers betraying their Polish neighbours; all these only confirmed to the Polish masses the sorry truth of Bismarck's Machiavellian utterance: "Pourquoi Dieu aurait-il créé des Juifs Polonais si ce n'est pour servir d'espions?"

III

Thus matters ran from 1915 on: and then came the thunderclap —the collapse of the Central Powers.

But the enemies of Poland had prepared for even this eventuality. They had not forgotten to frequently pass abroad through the ghetto that potent and odious word "revenge" as a warning. "Look out for Polish revenge if ever you are caught." They knew the psychology of the Jew, and how the idea of revenge, the old Mosaic law of an eye for an eye, would grip his mind and put him on the defensive.

When Germany fell, and Poland found herself free, the Jews of Poland, thoroughly impregnated with this idea of imminent retribution, became convinced of one thing—that the Pole would repay him now for all that had gone before. Had the Jews, even at this late hour, "come in," it is my belief that the Pole still would have forgiven them, so tremendous was the relief and joy of his regained liberty. But the Jew could not see this. He knew nothing whatever of the Pole or his psychology. He had shut himself out of that knowledge—or had been shut out of it by the barrier of language, by his caste, and by the machinations of his Zionistic leaders. Here the trick of the partitioners succeeded completely. There was no common cause between Pole and Jew, no fellowship of suffering, no mutual tie. This is the only possible answer to the question, "Why did not the Jew, a born idealist, catch the fire of Polish idealism?" Because Jews and Poles were strangers to each other. One item from the 1910 census figures of former German Poland will illustrate this fact: out of 26,400 Jews, only twenty-two declared themselves Poles.

But it was impossible for the Jew to remain non-Polish without becoming anti-Polish. He was "anti," and on the defensive instantly, the moment Poland became free, a sort of desperation pitching him to any side, now that his patron Germany was down, rather than to trust himself to this new, strange and totally unknown Polish power, into whose hands he suddenly beheld himself falling. It was a terrifying situation. "Poland is dead," the Jew's German masters had taught him to say and to believe; in the same breath whispering that malignant warning—"Revenge!" And now a resurrected Poland arose before the very eyes of Israel.

The Jew lost his head. In the Ukraine, where German intrigue was still engineering things, he sided with the Ukrainians, openly opposing the bringing in of the Haller army, which contained some 25,000 American volunteers. In Krakow he was with the Austrians, where, in February 1919, plans for a Jewish mobilization were discovered, along with large stores of rifles, hand grenades and ammunition hidden in the synagogue. Finally, when the Bolsheviks came, he was with the Bolsheviks.

IV

" While it does not follow that all Jews are Bolsheviks," says Deputy Armand Libermann, a Jewish member of the Polish Sejm, " the fact remains that a large number of Jews play a dominant rôle in the communist movement." This fact unquestionably influenced the Jewish masses at this critical period of their history in Poland. Despite much suffering at Bolshevik hands, they gave themselves almost as wholly and openly into Trotsky's power in 1919 and 1920 as they had to the German over-lord from 1915 to 1918. It was only one more fatal mistake made by an excitable and desperate people ; and the fact that the Bolshevism which they espoused was itself of Jewish origin, fathered by the doctrines of the Jew, Karl Marx, and propagated by such Jewish leaders as Braunstein (Trotsky), Bela Kuhn (Cohen), Szamuelly, and others, did not tend to mitigate their blame in the eyes of Poles.

In defending the Jews against the charge of Bolshevism, the argument is usually offered that the Jew cannot really be a Bolshevik, being the strongest of individualists, an absolute advocate of private property rights, and temperamentally antipathetic to anything resembling communism. But after taking into consideration the panic of the situation in which the Jew found himself, it must be remembered also that Bolshevism as it worked out in those Polish districts overrun by the Reds was about 10 per cent communism " on paper," and 90 per cent. profitable business " in hand." Whatever its theories, in practice it gave unlimited power to its leaders, power over persons and over property ; and it was this power, apparently, that attracted those hundreds of Jews who became commissars as fast as towns and villages fell into Trotsky's hands. Besides, the Jew, by very reason of his dispersion, is an internationalist instead of a nationalist (Zionism notwithstanding) ; and the internationalist doctrines preached by Bolshevism unquestionably appealed to him.

As to the business phase of it, Captain Wright in his report to the British Government remarks : " The attractions of Bolshevism are little theoretical. Bolshevism spells business for poor Jews ; innumerable posts in a huge administration ; endless regulations, therefore endless jobbery ; big risks . . . but big profits. The rich bourgeois Jew also manages to get on with it in his own way, ' Judischer Weise ' as the Jews call bribery." " In spite of repeated and constant accusations," Captain Wright remarks further, " the Jewish political leaders have never publicly repudiated Bolshevism, from which I conclude they must have many sympathizers with Bolshevism among their followers. . . . While the British Commission was in Warsaw, a ready-made Bolshevik Government, prepared to begin operatons, was arrested there. . . . The Jews

had one-third of this ready-made Government. That was twice their fair share, and I think this is generally their share of Bolshevism."

At any rate what happened was this : the Jews of Poland went over to the Bolsheviks. Whoever " passed the word," or whatever the " word " was, there is no telling. But it is a fact, which I set down not altogether from report, but from personal observation, that when the Bolsheviks came, the Jews, instead of fleeing before the terrorists as did the Polish masses, stayed to greet them, and even went out to meet them. At Kaluszyn they showered the approaching Soviet troops with flowers. At Zitomir, where Polish fugitives were betrayed by Jews and slaughtered (the mutilated bodies of whom I saw, and the story of whom I heard not from Poles, but from Bolshevik sympathizers)—at Zitomir the streets were lined with enthusiastic Jews as we fled from the town, forty-five minutes before Budienny's Red Cavalry entered. Yet ten minutes before the alarm was given, and for days before that, no Jew had appeared in Zitomir. If fear of the Poles be argued as the cause of this, one must ask, " Why the fear ? " Had the Jew in Poland been the Polish citizen he should have been and might have been, there would have been no reason for the Jews of Zitomir to be afraid.

Though Jewish individuals often suffered bitterly for their misplaced confidence in Trotsky's hordes, on the other hand, in innumerable cases—in the generality of cases—Jews were rewarded with power and became active workers of the Red régime. Jewish commissars in the Bolshevik armies were quick to find their own in the invaded towns (especially when their own went out to give them welcome), with the result that the new commissars nominated locally at captured points almost invariably were likewise Jews. The situation of any Poles who might be left in such communities, and their attitude toward the Jew, is not difficult to comprehend. It was the same as their attitude toward the Bolsheviks, and toward the Germans before them.

More even than sympathetic greeting and political co-operation with the Soviet Powers is on the records to explain the Polish attitude toward the Jews at this point. In some cases the Jews even armed themselves—for self-defence, it was afterwards claimed; but it was in the Bolshevik ranks that these armed Jews fought against the Polish troops; and this, considering the known distaste of the Israelite for arms, is a noteworthy fact. In Nasielsk they crowded the Red ranks with ghetto volunteers ; at Hrubieszow they fired on the retreating Poles. At Siedlice an armed detachment of Jews was taken prisoner in action against the Polish army ; and here also the Jewish shopkeepers hastily repainted their signs, changing them from Polish to Russian, to welcome the Bolsheviks. At

Kielce, three hundred Jewish youths marched through the streets shouting "Viva Lenin! Viva Trotsky! Down with Poland!" At Wlodawa a detachment of Jewish Bolsheviks was organized and fought in the Soviet ranks. Bilaystok also sent its troop of armed Jews against the Poles. At Minsk, during a congress of local Soviets, representatives of the Jewish association announced that they had prepared for a mobilization of all their members against the Polish advance. Finally, at Vilna, the Jews fired from their houses on the Polish troops when that city was being liberated from the Bolsheviks. "In view of the special communist zeal displayed by the Jewish element in the areas occupied by the Red armies," says an order issued to the Twelfth Bolshevik Army in June 1920, "every consideration must be shown toward the Jews." The same order commanded that "all persons of Polish nationality are to be arrested on the slightest suspicion and conducted before the Extraordinary Commission. Should distance or any other obstacle render this difficult, Poles are to be shot on the spot."

All this makes unpleasant reading, reading which might at first blush seem more calculated to defeat than to further the amicable purpose of this writing, which is solely that of constructive criticism. None of these facts, however, are to be taken in prejudice against honest Jews in Poland or elsewhere, who are as ready on principle to deplore such happenings as other people are. But it is absolutely necessary to know the situation as it actually was to understand the Polish attitude towards the Jews, and to comprehend what followed.

V

What followed was strange enough, certainly, to be difficult for anyone to understand. A storm of indignation might have been expected, raised around the world, at least in the Jewish world, against the treason of those Jews in Poland who had thus gone Bolshevik, betraying their towns and their Polish neighbours. What came, on the contrary, was a storm of calumny breaking over the head of Poland; wholesale accusations of pogroms (that is, official massacres of Jews), and a cry sent up through all civilization against the alleged brutalities of the Poles. All over America public mass meetings were held in the spring of 1919 protesting against these supposed pogroms, while the sensational press of the United States and England knew no limits in playing up its atrocity stories, the *New York Herald* going so far as to publish in its issue of May 26 1919 a faked picture of "A Polish Pogrom," reproduced from a photograph actually taken at Kishineff, Russia, fifteen years previously. Finally the abuse became so offensive and so unbearable that Prime Minister Paderewski, denying the accusations, asked both President Wilson and King George of England to send com-

missions to Poland to investigate the situation. President Wilson chose Mr. Henry Morganthau, a prominent American Jew, to make the investigation; the British Government sent Sir Stuart Samuel and Captain Peter Wright.

The controversy centred about the happenings at Vilna, Minsk and Lwow. The Lwow stories related the " atrocious massacre " of " hundreds " of innocent Jews; but the Jewish mortuary books revealed that the victims of this alleged pogrom, most of whom fell in street fighting of the opposing forces, numbered thirty-four. At Vilna, thirty-five Poles had been killed by Jewish Bolshevik sympathizers in ambuscade, where also, according to the sworn testimony of three former members of the Danish Legation from Petrograd, who were eye-witnesses of the act, other civilian Jews fired on Polish troops in the railway station. Executions followed these crimes, among the Bolsheviks captured in the town being thirty-eight Jews. These were court-martialled, tried by a commission of five (two of which were Jews), and shot. But there was no pogrom.

At Minsk, trouble was to a great extent forestalled by the wise action of Mr. Morganthau, who issued a proclamation to the Minsk Jews which he sent to them by aeroplane, ahead of the Polish army, warning them against treasonable action or any participation in the Bolsheviks' fight against the Poles.

An unprejudiced reading of all three reports of the American and British Commissioners (Mr. Morganthau, Sir Stuart Samuel and Captain Wright) convinces one that the press stories of Polish pogroms were gross exaggerations, and that, though there were numbers of excesses and even certain cases of atrocities, there were, nevertheless, no pogroms, no wholesale massacres, carried out at official instigation or with official connivance.

At the same time we read in the Wright Report that " at least a hundred times as many Jews as in Poland have been slaughtered during the same period in the Ukraine, and perhaps quite as many in Hungary or Czecho-Slovakia,"—yet little or nothing was published in the press concerning these veritable pogroms. Sir Horace Rumbold, British Minister at Warsaw, in submitting the Samuel and Wright Reports to his Government, concluded with the remark: " It is giving the Jews very little assistance to single out for reprobation and protest the country where they have suffered least."

The significant feature of this entire controversy is that all the accusations of Polish atrocities, pogroms, anti-Semitic massacres, and so on, originated in the German press, mostly at Berlin, or at Kovno (Lithuania). From the day that the German armies were forced to withdraw from Poland, these stories began to appear in German papers and to be cabled around the world.

I was in Warsaw on two occasions when " pogroms," so-called,

took place. In one case I was on the spot. According to the reports which we read afterwards, mobs and riots characterized both these scenes: " Jews fled for their lives,"—" consternation reigned," and so on. What actually happened was this: In the first case, at the Wiedenski railway-station, jammed with travellers and moving troops, a Jew was hustled by roystering soldiers, and forced to shout " Hurrah for Poland." In the second case, at the Brest (Brześć) station, Jews were forced by soldiers to help carry the soldiers' baggage. A fight ensued. In both cases the soldiers were disciplined on the spot by their officers; and in both cases every Pole I knew, and the Polish press the following day, repudiated such happenings as disgraceful and unworthy the name of Polish. Neither of these incidents would have happened had Jew and Pole been properly acquainted with each other, as they should have been after living together for nearly a thousand years, and as they would have been if the walls of the ghetto and the intrigue of their common enemies had not kept them apart.

Seeing such incidents magnified in the foreign press as " pogroms " my faith in such stories was shaken. But still I was not satisfied. I felt that where there was so much screaming there must be some beating, and I determined to find out. My own conclusion, after personal observation, and the reading of much evidence is that, if there were no pogroms in Poland, excesses were unquestionably committed against Jews by Polish soldiers and Polish civilians. But these excesses were not anti-Semitic, *per se*, and cannot be considered so. Any alien or any traitorous national convicted as the Jew was in the Polish popular mind and caught at such an excited moment, would have suffered the same; and this is true not alone of Poland, but of any other country at war, our own United States included. The hostility aroused in England against the Jews of London's East End during the Zeppelin raids gives a mild hint of how things went in Poland. But in Poland the element of fear must also be reckoned with, a popular fear certainly not unfounded when the attitude of the Jews during the entire war, and particularly during the Bolshevik invasion, is considered. It was this fear of the hostile Jew, who numbered millions, not thousands, which precipitated not a few of the excesses in Poland, excesses which, it must be remembered, were not general, but local, and were provoked by local happenings.

VI

But what of the official attitude of Poland during this trying time? What was the attitude of the Pole to the Jew? From the beginning, from the establishment of the first free Polish Government of 1918 under the Socialist Moraczawski, this attitude

was the same as that which would have been taken by our own American or any other fair and just government in the circumstances. "Every inhabitant of free and independent Poland," wrote Mr. Paderewski in his proclamation of March 24 1919, "is alike protected by the law, which applies to all, irrespective of differences of race or religion. All persons found guilty of aggression, violence or depredation, or of any act injuring the personal security of Jew or Christian, will be punished with the utmost severity of the law." The Polish Minister of the Interior, in a previous proclamation dated March 3, 1919, declared that "the Jewish population enjoys the full rights of Polish citizenship in the same degree as the Polish population, and shall not be the object of any violence or exaction whatsoever. Every arbitrary and illegal act committed against the Jewish population, either by officials or private individuals, shall be punished according to the full rigour of the law. Free Poland will not tolerate injustice, violence or wrongs." "Let us severely condemn excesses unworthy of the Polish people, dishonourable to Poland and contrary to the Christian religion," said Deputy Korfanty in a speech in the Sejm, June 26 1919; "let us appeal to the population and to the Polish soldiers, who should behave to the Jews as befits Polish Christians."

The Republic did not stop at proclamations. Determined to protect the Jewish population, the Government set up special courts-martial in more than forty towns, to put on trial within twenty-four hours any person accused of anti-Jewish acts. These courts were given jurisdiction over military as well as civilian persons, and accomplished more than any other single agency in restoring calm and confidence to the Jewish population.

Still another protective step taken by Polish authorities indicates the broad progressive lines on which they laid their scheme of action. Determined to establish a police force second to none on the continent, Warsaw remodelled its system on the plan of the internationally famous London police, going so far as to secure from England a group of crack "Bobbies" and expert organizing officers under Col. Macready in order to put the Polish system on a practical working basis.

With the excitement and bitterness of the war days of 1919 and 1920 a thing of the past, Pole and Jew together now face this question calmly, the best thought of both, I am convinced, determined to solve the problem in amity and justice. According to the words of Sir Stuart Samuel, who headed the investigation commission sent from England to Poland in 1919, "the Jews in Poland now enjoy more rights and privileges than those possessed by the Jews of England." That the Jew in Poland realizes the advantages which Polish citizenship offers him was demonstrated soon after the Riga Peace Treaty was signed between Poland and the Bolsheviks.

According to that treaty large numbers of Jews, for the past three years under Polish Government, were allocated, by the new boundaries drawn, to Russian sovereignty, their emigration at the same time being prohibited. But these Jews of Russia made a vigorous protest, declaring their desire either to remain under Polish protection or to move into Poland to settle. They knew that in the Polish Constitution it is written that "all citizens are equal before the law." This equality, now that the Jew has begun to grow acquainted with the Pole, becomes more and more attractive. "Freedom of conscience and creed is guaranteed to all citizens," he reads further; and again, "The Polish Republic guarantees on its territory protection of life, person and property to all, without distinction of race, nationality, language or religion."

But it is also written in the Polish Constitution that "a Polish citizen cannot be at the same time a citizen of another State," and that, "the first duty of the Polish citizen is loyalty to the Polish State"; that "no religious association may be maintained in opposition to the Statutes," and that "no one can withhold from performing his public duties on account of his religious convictions." There are to be no conscientious objectors in Poland.

In these words the Jew in Poland reads at once the declaration of his complete enfranchisement and the death warrant of special privilege, of sectionalism and separatism, and the end of that political Zionism which has been his evil genius for many generations. This Zionism, which Mr. Morganthau characterizes in its Palestinian aspect as "a cruel playing with the hopes of a people blindly seeking their way out of age-long miseries," has been at the root of the Jewish trouble in Poland from the beginning, because there it has dreamed not alone of the spiritual Zion of the faithful Israelite, or the far-away Zion of a reclaimed Palestine, but an actual and material Zion intruded on Polish soil. To permit it to secure the ascendancy once more over the natural process of assimilation would be, indeed, to again quote Mr. Morganthau, "a surrender, not a solution . . . a retrogression into the blackest error, not progress toward the light." There is no place for such a political scheme in a free State. As Lucien Wolf shows in his book, *The Jewish National Movement*, Zionism was an outgrowth of Czardom. But Czardom is passed for ever, and with it the usefulness of the Ghetto politician.

The Zionistic politician hangs on, nevertheless. But his power wanes. In his stead speaks the constructive Jew who rises to claim his place and prove his worthiness of it in the Polish State. Among such Jews the "autonomy" of the political Zionist is regarded as a mistake and a danger. "Jewish national and cultural autonomy," declares Deputy Perl of the Polish National Sejm, "will give no solution to the Jewish question, but will only add

fuel to the fire, hinder the indispensable and inevitable course of assimilation, and artificially separate the Jews from Polish culture." "I am sure," this prominent Jewish leader in Poland adds, "these autonomist aspirations will become weaker and weaker as the Polish State expands."

The Congress of Polish Jews has taken the same stand. "This Congress," it declared in its manifesto of July 1919, "entirely shares the opinion of Prime Minister Paderewski that there is not the least danger of any ethnical and religious minorities being less protected by the Polish State than by the guarantees of the League of Nations. Autonomy and the cultural segregation of the Jews would in reality constitute an attempt to create artificially a Jewish nation, against all the natural laws of historic evolution. The Congress believes that only the common compulsory education of children without distinction of religion, in the Polish public schools, is capable of establishing healthy relations, knitting the bonds of brotherhood and facilitating the intimate union of the Jewish population with the national Polish life."

In the outlying territories beyond the great cities this same idea has its champions. The Jewish Council of Staré Sambor, for instance, addressed to the Polish Government a memorial declaring that the Jews of its district are pledged "to that party which repels all separatist ideas, knowing that such tendencies are prejudicial to both the Polish State and the Jewish community." "We emphasize," this memorial concludes, "that we consider ourselves Polish citizens and have a strong desire to fulfil our duties to the Fatherland."

VII

In his book on *Poland and the Minority Races*, from which I have already quoted—a valuable little contemporaneous history despite its Jewish bias (natural enough in a Jewish author)—Captain Goodhart tells this story of the Morganthau Mission:

An intelligent looking well-dressed man called and demanded a confidential interview with Mr. Morganthau; only after long persuasion was he induced to speak with anyone else; and then, when he did consent to tell his "secret" to Captain Goodhart, he had to be taken into the garden, beyond all ears. After looking behind the hedges to make sure, he seized the Captain eagerly by the arm, and began in a breathless whisper:

"Have you noticed that there is very hard feeling between the Jews and the Christians?"

The Captain had noticed it.

"Well, there is only one solution, and I'm sure you haven't guessed it."

"No, I haven't guessed it."

"Nor Mr. Morganthau either?"

"I'm sure he hasn't guessed it either."

The man let go the Captain's arm and struck his hands together joyfully. "If there is hard feeling between the Jews and the Christians," he went on, "there is only one thing for Mr. Morganthau to do, and that is to start a new religion to which they both can belong. I have that religion all worked out, and I can easily explain it to you in a few hours."

Captain Goodhart does not tell how he got rid of his caller; but I am sure he came out of that interview more convinced than ever that the solution of the Jewish problem not only does not lie in any "new" religion, but that it is far from being so complicated a matter as to take "easily a few hours," to explain. On the contrary, the solution is as ancient as the problem itself, and can be defined in the one word "assimilation"—the same old assimilation that Poland and some Jews have been trying to realize from the date of the first reforms, over a century ago. For Jew and Pole alike, assimilation is an absolute necessity; and it is likewise absolutely inevitable. It will not be an easy process, it is true, for either Jew or Pole, after centuries of separation and prejudice But there is no escaping it. The Jew can no longer afford to stand in his own light, nor be the passive tool of others; he must realize himself, a full-fledged Polish citizen. He cannot, in fact, afford even to take advantage of the artificial rights and special privileges allowed him in the Minority Treaty if he desires to progress. For Poland, the matter is equally vital. "There is no State," writes the author of *Balkanized Europe*, Paul Scott Mowrer, in a paper on *The Assimilation of Israel*, "there is no people so good-natured and so confident of its own strength, that it will unprotestingly tolerate in its midst a body persistently and wilfully foreign, especially when this body at the same time aspires to take a leading part in the national economic or political life."

But, one might argue, how can the process of assimilation be expected to operate in a country where the alien population is so indigestibly numerous; nearly five million, nearly 15 per cent. of the total?

To begin with, the Jewish population in Poland must be reduced; emigration of course is the only answer. As to this, Mr. F. Rutkowski, whose valuable monograph, *The Jewish Question in Poland*, I have had the privilege of reading in manuscript, argues that the economic development of Poland and the growing capacity of the Pole for trade and commerce, will gradually eliminate a large part of the Jewish surplus in Poland, which will migrate in part to America and other countries, and in part will be absorbed by the New Russia, whence so many thousands of Jews were banished during the past quarter century, but where now they will be free to return. The sphere of the Jews' activity in Poland, this writer

believes, will grow narrower with the development of Poland's normal health, and the settlement of conditions in neighbouring countries. With this view Sir Stuart Samuel seems to agree. "Should a suitable government and peaceful conditions be established in Russia," the latter writes in his report, "there would be a general emigration to that country. . . . The ardent hope was frequently expressed to me that Russia would soon be open for immigration." "Many Jews who are by no means poor try at the present time (1920) to escape into Russia, so fine are the business prospects," Captain Wright remarks in his report. "If Russia is opened to the Jews, the Polish-Jewish question may solve itself."

Education is a corollary of assimilation It will naturally be one of the prime factors of Jewish absorption into the Polish State; not education of the schools alone, but education in trades and industry. "The Jews," says Mr. Korfanty, "must be induced to take up other occupations besides that of middlemen. They must be converted into artisans and workmen." The remarkable expansion of the co-operative movement among Polish agriculturists will play the most important part in this elimination of the superfluous middleman, gradually shuffling the whole economic structure of the country down to a normal basis.

This co-operative movement became an absolute factor in the Jewish-Polish problem at the time the political Zionists of the Warsaw ghetto succeeded in sending an international socialist to the Duma to represent the Polish capital. For this reason the co-operative, in so far as it became a protest of the Poles against political Zionism, has been called a boycott. It was not boycottage, however, as we understand it. A boycott is negative, a deliberate retaliative measure. This, on the contrary, was a constructive movement, a development and an expansion—or better still the crystallization—of a general process begun long before the time of the Duma elections of 1912. Its beginning, in fact (comprising various agricultural and trading associations banded together for the buying and selling of the products of the soil and of manufactured commodities) dates back more than half a century; but at this particular point it focussed itself into a nationally organized determination among Poles to patronize Polish trade only, if that were possible, and to develop Polish trade in order to make it possible. In the latter determination lies its real value.

The co-operative movement in Poland did not owe its origin to anti-Jewish politics, but was a natural outgrowth of the country's agricultural and economic progress. The realization among Poles that Jewish trade was becoming a dangerous monopoly did, however, give enormous impetus to the idea, rousing the latent trade instinct of the Pole to action in a degree never known before. "This economic change," to quote the Wright report, "was fiercely resented by the Jews, and very often by criminal

means such as arson. The co-operative Polish societies in the country which displaced the local Jewish dealers were often attacked; one of the Jewish nationalist leaders bitterly denounced the Poles to the Commission, because, as he said, a generation ago the Poles had none of the business of their own country, but now they had at least 20 per cent."

The Jew has been called by a well-known German economist, Sombart, "the world's leaven of economic progress." In Poland he has grown too ponderous to be merely a leaven—too much yeast will spoil the bread—but he certainly has acted in recent years as a stimulant to the Pole, and in no case more so than in the matter of the co-operatives. These are no longer an experiment in Poland. In Poznania, before the war, they had already practically solved whatever Jewish problem remained after the German expulsions. They had done away with the middleman. In former Russian and Austrian Poland the situation is quite different, however, since it is here, especially in the old "Pale," that the Jews are concentrated. But as there are altogether over 2,500 co-operative societies in Poland to-day, with a clientele of 5,000,000 people, and the numbers are steadily increasing, the Poles seem justified in expecting much from this movement in the future, in solving their economic and incidentally their Jewish problem. The Government gives every encouragement to the movement, regarding it as one of the prime factors in the commercial resurrection of the nation. The co-operatives, however, function on a strictly non-political non-partisan basis, on the model of similar Swiss, French and German associations, with membership open to Jewish producers and consumers in full equality with others. To the charge that this is only nominal, the Pole answers that it will not be nominal when the Jew becomes a producer, instead of a mere speculator.

In the opinion of many foreign as well as Polish economists, the solution of the Jewish problem in Poland lies in the co-operative movement. In so far as it is an economic question, yes, but like education, the trade co-operative is only one of the corollaries of assimilation.

There remains to say only a word as to what assimilation really means. It means that the Jew must come out of his ghetto; that he must close his Yiddish schools and put his boys and girls into Polish schools; that he must educate his children away from (and himself forget) his Talmudic code, rising above his Orientalism and putting aside those exotic peculiarities of custom and dress which mark him off from the mass as "queer," and bring upon him suspicion and ridicule and pain. He must depart, once and for all, from his Zionistic internationalism and become a nationalist. In short, assimilation for the Jew in Poland means that he must become a Pole.

But assimilation puts its obligation on the Pole as well. He, for his part, must live up to his Christian code in all his relations with the Jew, giving him the hand of citizenship freely, leaving no act undone, no word unspoken, which will serve to initiate the son of Israel into the complete fellowship of the Polish nation. He must forget old grudges and past wrongs. In short, he must be a true Pole, chivalrous, generous and kind. I believe the Pole capable of all this. He has already proved himself so.

But the Jew: can he do what we ask him? Can he give up his ritualistic habit, close his Yiddish schools, forget his Talmudic code: do all this and still retain the faith of Israel? Note the difference, and how much easier it is for the Pole than for the Jew: the Pole is constrained only to realize himself at his Christian best; but the Jew is asked to do things which may seem to him at times almost like religious apostacy. Assimilation predicates honesty and sincerity; and we demand this of the Jew: not pretence, not the mere gesture of citizenship, but the actual conversion. And he may answer: "How can I be sincere and yet false to my faith? How can I be honest and yet deny the blood of my fathers that is in me?"

As to whether the Jew can or cannot be assimilated in a Christian civilization and yet retain his faith, the answer lies in the future, in the ages. But perhaps it is not intended that he should. Perhaps the Creator, who made Jew and Gentile, may ordain that in the fullness of time the same Judea which has given us this Christian civilization of ours shall accept that civilization? Perhaps the Biblical prophecy of the conversion of the Jews is a true prophecy and is to be fulfilled, the natural means to the divine end being the process—the very natural process—of assimilation? To all that, of course, the Jew will respond that this prophecy means nothing to him since he does not believe in it; while the Christian may well be sceptical, saying, "Two thousand years of it and the Jew remains unchanged." But many prophecies have been fulfilled in which the Jew did not believe. And what is two thousand years in the Divine evolution?

But this is going far ahead and very far afield—like the old Irish woman who, whenever she was losing out on an argument, would put a clincher on it by saying, "I leave it to God, I leave it to God!" After all, God leaves these things to us, or at any rate most of the details. The fact of the moment confronts us: that wherever he goes the Jew, to save himself, must assimilate. He has done it in other countries outside of Poland, and he must do it in Poland. In America he left his ghetto, put his children into the public schools, dropped his Yiddish tongue and his Talmudic code, set aside the Orientalism of his fathers, and more and more reformed his synagogue.

Whether or not, in just such measure as he has done these things he has likewise advanced toward the fulfilment of prophecy, is one question; but that he has gone far towards solving his age-old problem no one can dispute.

VIII

"American Jews consider themselves American patriots," said Mr. Morganthau in 1919. "If the Polish Jews desire to collaborate with the Polish State, they have only to follow the example of their American brethren."

It will not be enough, however, for the Jews in Poland to look to their brethren in America. The Jews in America and in England—all the "Western" Jews of the world—must for their part look to the Jew in Poland, responding wisely and constructively, helping toward the solution of the problem, not by blind sympathy stirred up by German press agencies, which serve only their own selfish political ends, but by facing the facts of the case, seeing the Eastern Jew as he really is, and lending him a hand to rise to his proper level of Polish citizenship. "Nothing like these East Jews exists among the West Jews (or is even known to most of them)," says Captain Wright in his report. "No West Jew I have ever met is like the orthodox East Jew, or even has any idea that such people exist; otherwise they would be less surprised at the prejudices of the Poles."

"The difference between Chassidim and Christian is not even a difference of religion, or even a difference of nationality, but one of civilization," this report declares, . . . "and it is impossible (i.e. as long as the Jews retain their exclusive civilization) for Poles to amalgamate with them, and difficult to mix with them or even to frame common laws for them. . . . Nothing could be more difficult to associate with than a people who, physically, mentally and morally are, and whose whole conception and way of life is, so very different."

Quoting still further this report, which made one sole recommendation to the British Parliament—that the Jews of England be urged to look into the actual internal conditions among the Jews of Poland—we read: "They are unfit for the modern economic world, not in consequence of any fault of their own, but in consequence of a long historical past." "The enlightened East Jews recognize this, but I doubt whether West Jews do, or could easily be gotten to recognize anything so contrary to their fixed ideas as that any Jews exist who are unfitted for the modern economic world. But no one else can help these poor people, who, engrossed as they are in the practice of their strange and age-old religion, will look with suspicion on anything that does not come to them from their co-religionists and Rabbis."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE CRADLE OF THE RACE

I

BY centripetal force the genius of civilized peoples focuses in their cities. Historians who seek to interpret races and nations must inevitably look into their centres of population. "What sort of cities did these people build?" is as leading a question as "What sort of men did they produce?" The foreigner who comes to study America cannot ignore our rural life, our agricultural districts; but it is to our cities that he must turn to find concrete exponents of our special brand of civilization or culture. And not to one city alone; not only to New York or Boston or Chicago or San Francisco, but to New York *and* Boston and Chicago, and so on. For such a student the Scripture might be paraphrased: "By their cities ye shall know them."

Along with the general notion that Poland is one of the "little" countries (forgetting that it is almost as large as France) goes the idea that there is only one city in Poland—Warsaw. (Even Warsaw is left out of it sometimes, as in the case of the Englishman who, on hearing I had just come from there, asked me genially, "Well, and how do you like Russia?") Besides being the capital of the Polish Republic and "the heart of Poland," as it has been called for centuries, Warsaw is also the geographical centre of the country and the hub of a wheel of large Polish cities which lie at almost equal distances from it, north, south and west; each of which turns, so to speak, on the axis of the metropolis, but each of which at the same time stands as a separate and distinct symbol of Polish national life. These cities are Poznan, Krakow, Lwow, Vilna, Danzig and Lodz.

Of Lodz I have already spoken in describing our first journey across Poland in an American Red Cross relief train. It is to-day a city of more than half a million population, the industrial capital of the Republic, and, before the war, the second largest textile centre in Europe, a position which I have no doubt it will soon regain. In some aspects Lodz is more like an American city than any other in Poland. In its rapid rise and expansion, at any rate, it has been distinctly American. And in the buoyancy of its

present revival, after almost complete ruin, it continues the likeness.

If Warsaw is the heart of Poland, and Lodz its industrial centre, Krakow stands for the nation's culture and for the golden age of its historic glories, the sheen of which is not yet lost from its mantle nor the light from its soul. Krakow is Poland wearing a crown. In the same sense Lwow, "the City of Lions," typifies the knighthood, the dauntless spirit, of the Pole combating the incursions of the Eastern borderlands—Poland bearing the sword of self-defence. Vilna is Poland lifting up the torch of enlightenment, of Latin culture, along the furthest frontiers of Byzantium and the wilderness ; the civilizing powers of the Polish race, the unconquerable ascendancy of its western civilization over Russian orientalism and Lithuanian paganism. Danzig is Poland calling to the outer world, her hand, offered to her sister nations, filled with the riches of her wide and well-watered plains, her foot set on an anchor ; for truly the hope of Poland is Danzig, her one outlet to the sea. Finally, Poznan bespeaks the native genius of the Pole, rising out of "the cradle of the race," struggling with tireless courage, with tenacious vision, and with ever more perfected order and system against the equally tireless but less subtle antagonism of the Teuton.

II

Poznan lies about three hundred miles west of Warsaw, at the confluence of the Warta and the Cybina rivers. It is the metropolis of the province of Poznania, and was once, for a long period in early Polish history, the national capital. No purer Polish blood can be found anywhere in all the land of the Sons of Lech than here. And in the history of no Polish town is a more inspiring record inscribed of the indestructible nationality of these people.

That the soul of Poland survived in spite of partition and persecution seems wonderful wherever one travels in this long dismembered land. But that it survived in Poznan is miraculous. For it is here that the Pole from time immemorial has met and struggled with his strongest and most implacable foe, the cold-blooded, methodical, close-calculating, brute-force Teuton. Long ago, when the Saxon and Swabian tides swept eastward, it was here that they met their first resistance, and were held in check and were thrown back. Then came the Teutonic Knights, Grand Masters of treachery and cruelty ; then the Partitions and the new Prussian tyranny of Bismarck and his Kulturkampf ; finally, the Hohenzollerns, their War Lord and their Junkerism. Through a thousand years the Pole has survived them all.

Towns have personalities like people. The moment you enter

Poznan you feel the personality of the place—not in the " Kolossal " style of its very new pre-war German structures, which are mostly too obvious to be " felt," but in the quaint old Town Hall with its beautiful galleried façade and its slender tower, rising to a height of two hundred feet and dominating the city with a sort of quiet courtliness and grace, very noticeable and very Polish in contrast to the heavy massiveness of later German architecture.

Everywhere one turns, marks of the long German occupation meet the eye. The town is stamped with them, as if with hoofs. They serve admirably to accentuate the native colouring and manner of the place and to once more remind us that in no other art does man reveal himself and betray himself so surely as in architecture.

Poznan has an attractive well-ordered clean-cut atmosphere which appeals to the American visitor. Parked promenades, boulevards, green spaces, many trees, give an inviting look to the town. At the same time, with its population of a quarter million, its excellent shops, its factories (many of which are now reopened), it has a distinct businesslike air. It is an historic trading centre, and enjoys not only the advantage of transcontinental railway service but has also a heavy waterway traffic carried on by means of a canal system, connecting the Warta with the Vistula. The city is the market centre of the richest grain fields in Poland, fields which not only feed the thickly populated industrial regions of Silesia and also export to Germany, but which yield so abundantly that they strike the balance which makes Poland under normal conditions self-supporting. The surplus grain output of Poznania makes up for the cereal shortage of the eastern districts.

Machinery, furniture, and sugar are Poznan's chief manufactured products ; there is a large trade in lumber, grain, potatoes and wool, and a number of distilleries. Those sections of the city inhabited by industrial workmen are noteworthy for their cleanliness and the pleasing manner in which so-called " community " architecture has been handled. The deadly sameness so often found in blocks of labourers' houses in other countries has been avoided here. The streets are well-paved and well-cared for. " Ah, German system ! " I exclaimed on first noting this. But I was wrong. The workmen of the Poznan factories, the people who built these houses and who live in them, are Poles. They are the most skilled and educated industrial class in Eastern Europe.

III

It is the fashion, when comparing the western part of Poland, long occupied by Germany, to the more backward eastern and southern parts, formerly under Russian and Austrian dominion, to point to " German system," " Teutonic thoroughness," and so on,

as the sources of all the prosperity and orderliness of this section. This legend of German "efficiency," of the perfection of all things "made in Germany," is one of the oldest of the many Prussian inventions peddled to the world to prove the advantages of Berlin Government over "secondary" nations. So embedded is this legend in the popular mind, and so assiduously is it still cultivated abroad by German propagandists, that it has become as fixed as a fact, blinding people altogether to the truth. In this particular case the truth is that Western Poland, the cradle of the Polish race, was the richest and most prosperous section of the country long before Germany laid hands on it. If it so continued to be, the credit is certainly as much the Pole's as it is the German's.

Of course, "to give the devil his due," it can be argued—by a sort of back-hand reasoning—that the Polish nation actually owes its existence to Germany: because it was German incursions and depredations, far off in tribal times, that forced the Polish clans to first draw together in self-defence here in this western country. In the same way, in the specific case of Poznan and Poznania, it may also be granted that one good turn was done for the Poles by the German invader, in the challenge that the alien dominion threw down to the native—a challenge which, on the Germans' part, was never calculated to result as it did, or to be taken as a challenge at all. What the Germans expected and aimed at was the complete subjugation and Prussianization of the Pole. Instead, they were so bested at every turn that, toward the end of their dominion in these parts, after trying every other means of scientific coercion and legalized brutality, they found that the only method by which they could meet Polish competition was by outright expropriation, backed by armed force.

The fact seems to be that the Germans, in spite of all their loud talk about "Polnische wirtschaft," Polish "racial femininity," Polish "incapacity for self-government," etc., really feared the Pole for his superiority and strength instead of despising him, as they pretended. The figures in the case prove that such fear was well-grounded. For one thing, Bismarck, the Iron Man, learned that though he might subjugate Austria, crush France, and conquer Denmark, he could do nothing with the Polish peasant except challenge him to ever greater strength. The German emigrant population of Poznania had jumped from 20 per cent. of the total in 1815 to 47 per cent. in 1867. But by the time the Prussians had begun to expropriate in 1908, it had fallen to 37 per cent. What had happened? Where did the Germans go? Did they return to the Vaterland, disgusted with these "butterfly" Poles?

The majority of them remained. But they became Poles.

If anything further were needed to explode the German's

claims to superiority, the happenings which marked his final departure from Poland would suffice. The solid and practical nature which the Pole so often hides behind his brilliance and gaiety were revealed to the fullest at this crisis. With the fall of the Kaiser and the outbreak of Spartakism in Berlin, the Germans of Poznan " went red," forming " Councils of Workmen and Soldiers," in the approved fashion of the Bolsheviks, priming themselves for an orgy of revolution. But the Poles were determined to save their country from any such debacle as had wrecked Russia. They organized a " Popular Council " in opposition to the German radicals, and forthwith began a campaign of " permeation " against the Reds, which they carried out with complete success, not by open combat, but by flooding the Workmen's Councils with their own numbers until they had secured such a majority in them that the radical efforts of the Germans were paralysed. That accomplished, the Poles next held a popular election, elected a Provincial Diet, and by December 3 1918—three weeks after the Kaiser's fall—had an orderly government functioning. Thus, with chaos and revolution on all sides of them, with Germany and Austria gone to pieces, the Poles—the despised, the incapable, the weak, the impractical Poles—stood firm on their legs, their heads clear of the wreck. And they have stood so ever since.

IV

There are some beautiful gardens and vistas to be enjoyed in Poznan, as for instance when the eye first catches sight of the fine temple-like State Theatre with its Ionic portico facing a spacious park. In the Zoological gardens, where people stroll and rest and where whole families enjoy their Sundays and holidays together, there is one corner of special interest to all visitors, native and foreign alike—The Eagles' Eyrie. Here, in an enormous enclosure among towering rocks, a flock of Polish eagles is kept, lacking nothing except the mythical white feathers of the national legend to make one feel that he is really at the cradle of Poland, that he is standing on the bed-rock of Polish soil.

Poznan, which has been a Bishop's town since the tenth century, and is now the residence of the Polish Primate, Cardinal Dalbor, was the royal seat until 1296. In the cathedral—full of art treasures, rich with mosaics and Byzantine decorations—there is a famous " Golden Chapel," where some interesting memorials of olden times, the tombs of kings and princes, are to be seen. These relics of the past remind us that if we travel a few miles to the north-east of the city we shall come to the ancient town of Gniezno (meaning " the nest "), which is the actual " cradle of the race," the Plymouth Rock of Poland. The two towns, Poznan and Gniezno, cannot

be considered separately. To enjoy the one you must see the other.

Despite its modern appearance and prosperous air, Gniezno is the oldest town in Poland, dating back beyond history to legendary times, and becoming the centre of Polish life centuries before Christianity was introduced into Eastern Europe. Here, in the cathedral, one of the largest churches in Poland, with its wonderful bronze doors, eight hundred years old, lies the tomb of the martyred St. Adalbert, whom the Prussians slew when he penetrated their pagan fastnesses to convert them. The silver sarcophagus in which the body of the martyr lies, symbolizes the construction of the ancient Polish State: four figures support the cask—a priest and a peasant, a soldier and a noble. (It is significant that even at so early a date as this the position of the peasant in the Polish entity was established and acknowledged alongside the lords spiritual and temporal of the age.) This shrine has been for centuries a place of pilgrimage. As early as the year 1000 the Emperor Otto journeyed here to pay homage to the Polish martyr, kneeling barefoot before his tomb. When he arose he proclaimed Gniezno the Metropolitan See of Poland, and so it has remained to this day.

Back in Poznan at every turn one meets reminders of Poland's historic glories, linked closely with the story of Gniezno. But what impresses one most at the present moment is the modern story of the nation's persistence and idealism in the face of almost endless proscription and persecution. It is written on every street and every building. The Mickiewicz monument recalls a famous scene when the German authorities arrested and jailed a group of students for laying a wreath on it. The central park of the city, for a few years grandiloquently named after the now fallen Kaiser, likewise has its story—of the uprising of 1846, when an insurrectionist movement spread all over Poland, and in Krakow resulted in the infamous peasant massacres engineered by the Austrians. Here in Poznan the German power, made aware through the channels of its perfect espionage system that the uprising was about to take place, suddenly brought down its mailed fist and at a concerted signal jailed over 1,000 Poles in various parts of the city, centering the Prussian military demonstration of the moment in this little park. To-day it is merry with the voices of children, German and Polish together, enjoying their public playground, which is complete even to the good old sand-pile.

One cannot pass a school building in Poznan without taking thought. In these schools one feels that now the Pole has come at last into his own. For generations he was taxed for the building and support of many schools, only to suffer through them the most humiliating deprivation of his rights, the most galling of all persecutions, the denationalizing of his children.

In those days the native language was forbidden and the Polish children in Polish-built but German-controlled schools were taught in German, made to recite the Lord's Prayer in German, forced to play in German—for the use of the home tongue was strictly proscribed even during recreation hours at school. Finally, the Holy Bible was seized upon as a Prussianizing instrument, little Poles being forced to learn the A B C's of the alien language through the medium of familiar Bible pictures. It was not the Bible they were learning then—they knew that already from their old-fashioned Polish home teaching. It was German. Later they were flogged—in certain memorable cases even to the point of death—for refusing to learn religion in German, and their parents imprisoned and fined on this same account. Finally came the famous school outrages and school-strikes of 1906, which began with the brutal beating of fourteen boys and girls at Wrzesnia and lasted more than a year. Before these strikes were ended, over 10,000 Polish children were involved.

The German reprisals for the Polish school strike were merciless. One hundred and sixty newspaper men and clergymen of Poznan and surrounding points were arrested for championing the children's cause, large numbers of Polish factory employees lost their livelihood, and the elder brothers of all the strikers were debarred from higher educational institutions. A curious relic of those days—such a little while ago and yet now so far away !—is found in the records of Polish secret societies, where the customary oath was taken "with spelling book and catechism in hand."

To-day the schools of Poznania, as of all Poland, are free, and though the native language has rightly taken first place in them, German also is taught, and the beginning of a new era, far different from the old, is opened. There is a great shortage of teachers, owing to the obvious fact that training of Polish teachers has hitherto been impossible ; while even in those schools maintained under the liberal Polish law for the children of German neighbourhoods, German teachers are wanting. Eight hundred of them refused to take the formal pledge of allegiance exacted of all school teachers in Poland, so irreconcilable has been the feeling among the dispossessed Prussians.

In the lives of the public men whom Poznania has produced we read a record of which she is justly proud. Of whatever advantage the German controlled schools might deprive the Pole, they could not destroy his spirit nor his home-bred patriotism, as Germany learned time and again when Polish members of the Reichstag set the Berlin legislature on ear by their courageous championing of the Polish national cause. Such names as Seyda, Chlapowski, Ferdinand Radziwill, Korfanty, Trampczynski, are written for all time in Poznania's records. Korfanty's fame as a

daring popular leader was made long before the Silesian troubles of 1921 spread his name to the outside world. When the Berlin plenipotentiaries at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 cried, "You wish to destroy German industry," because Silesia was being returned to its Polish motherland, it was Korfanty who responded, "In Silesia, German industry means war"—a fact with which the memoirs of the Prussian Marshal Ludendorf have since made the whole world well acquainted. The record of Trampczynski in the Reichstag was equally courageous. He created a sensation at one moment during the war, while Germany still ruled, by challenging the entire Prussian system in Poznania in scathing terms. To-day he is the presiding officer of the Sejm at Warsaw.

V

Two public buildings stand out pre-eminently in Poznan to challenge the visitor's eye. They both have their stories to tell—the former Kaiser's Palace, and the one-time German colonization office.

The Kaiser's Palace at Poznan is one of the most striking monuments in Europe to the imperialistic myopia of Prussian diplomacy. It was erected by Wilhelm II as a mark of favour to the Poles! It is true they were taxed between five and six million marks in order to enjoy this favour; but nevertheless the Kaiser actually hoped to win the smiles of these unwilling subjects of his by putting up this imperial residence in their midst. How rudely shocked—or how red-faced in dark Prussian rage—that extinct majesty must have been when he discovered that self-respecting Poles, however punctiliously they might give to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's (by right of might), did not care to be even seen inside his doors. Once, one weak-kneed Polish aristrocrat did venture to accept the imperial "command" to a levee at the Palace. For his temerity he was hooted on the street and doused with cold water by outraged fellow-citizens. If he had accepted the royal invitation in a heated moment, he had time to cool off and think it over before he sent in his card.

But the Kaiser's Palace recites the German chapter of Poznan's story only in what might be called general terms and by inference. It is the old Colonization Office that gives us the details and particulars. In this huge pile the whole history of Polish national persistence and tenacity is summed up. It was within these stout walls that the German Government focussed its greatest energies in its long struggle to oust the Pole from Poland, uproot him from the very soil, and colonize it with German farmers. In all human history there is no more thrilling story of a race struggle than that between Germans and Poles for the Polish land of Poznania.

Germany, in her determination to conquer Poland and obliterate her from the world map, aimed directly at the soil. The Prussian share of the Polish spoils, after the last partition, was mostly agricultural lands, and the wise German knew that if he could root the Pole, by instinct and tradition a tiller of the soil, out of this land, he would drive him beyond the seas. To accomplish this end, Berlin established its notorious Colonization Commission, the specific task of which was to colonize Poznania with Prussians. The Commission was all-powerful, backed by government authority and by inexhaustible funds. It possessed a capital, to begin with, of 100,000,000 (one hundred million) marks, from which it could freely draw to combat the hard-pressed Polish peasant, and before it had come to an end had spent over 500,000,000 marks to achieve its purpose.

For a time this truly "Kolossal" scheme succeeded. While the records of 1815 show the Poznanian land almost exclusively in Polish hands, by 1886 the Germans had taken up 3½ million acres, by that time owning some 60 per cent of the total agricultural area of the province. Then the Poles woke up in earnest, and the silent and bloodless fight began.

A Polish man of the hour arose to lead his people. He was Peter Wawrzyniak, a plain parish priest of a country district, the son of a peasant. He became the personification of Polish national spirit in waging the war for this land in "the cradle of the race." He was a financial genius who took his gifts in earnest, determined to use them for the good of his country. He made a deep study of finance and banking, even journeying to the United States to investigate American systems of funding and credit.

The battle was one of wits. Always keeping within legal bounds, the Poles, led by Father Wawrzyniak, organized a counteraction against the highly financed German penetration, establishing land societies and loan associations of their own, and a bank to back them. Around him the priest leader rallied the best men of Poznania, possessing, as he showed, such a genius for organization that landlord and peasant alike unhesitatingly joined hands with him. Madame Modjeska's husband, Count Bozenta Chlapowski, well-known in America, and his brother, Dr. Francis Chlapowski, were among the leaders of the gentry in this work. Never has the rôle of the Catholic priest as champion of all his people, rich and poor together, been more nobly filled than in the case of Father Wawrzyniak.

The Polish land movement spread rapidly and took on such a steady momentum that by 1911 Polish farmers had added over one hundred thousand acres to their holdings and had more than tripled the market value of the land.

The Germans, finding themselves thus worsted "within the law," made new laws. In 1904 subdivision of Polish farms was forbidden.

Next, the government preempted an arbitrary and preferential claim to all land which might undergo change of ownership. The erection of dwellings was prohibited without permission; finally Poles could not live even like gipsies, because the lighting of a fire to cook their food or to warm themselves brought them legally under the dwelling-house statute. The story of the origin of that particular statute is interesting. A certain peasant, named Jimala (the name in Polish, "Grzymala," quickly grew famous), was refused permission to build a house. But he did not give up. He did build his house—but he put it on wheels. When the police went after him, he proved that it was not a house at all but a wagon in which he was living. Out of that little struggle with the overlord grew the fire-building proscription; but if Jimala could no longer keep warm or eat cooked food, at least he won renown for his pains, for his car became known from one end of Poland to the other, through story and picture card. When others tried to emulate his example, however, they were promptly "pinched." One peasant, obliged to live like an outcast on his own soil and exasperated beyond self-control, shot at a policeman and went to prison for a long term in consequence, forced to abandon his family to poverty. Another, applying for a permit, was so long put off without a definite answer that at last he went ahead and erected his little brick home. As soon as it was finished—they let him finish it—the police forced him to pull it down, brick by brick. His life-savings were gone. Finally came the ultimate blow of the Prussian fist, the expropriation law, passed in 1908, by which all Poles, landlords and peasants alike, were subjected to wholesale eviction. This was the stage of the game when the war broke in 1914, the expropriation law having actually gone into effect in 1912.

The remarkable point of all this is, that the Poles continued to win. The imported German farmer, very often a poor grade of immigrant who perhaps had already failed in the Fatherland, could not make the venture a go, even when the land was practically given to him; he vanished from the scene. A large percentage of those who did stay became Polonized. The artificial cut-and-dried process of the German machine, which after all had only money to back it, could not compete with the inspirited and natural Polish movement, which was backed by an ideal.

Nothing could be more dead than the Prussian system is to-day in Poznania, and its complete failure and disintegration seems perfectly symbolized in the huge bulk of the Colonization Office in Poznan, whose massive chambers, emptied of their once-powerful army of German factotums and office-holders, are now transformed into the halls of a Polish University. A new genius dwells now behind those walls. It is the genius of Poland, rising strong and renewed out of "the cradle of the race."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

"THE NEST OF HEROES"

I

ONE evening at the Warsaw Opera there was a subdued commotion in the audience a moment before the curtain went up, with much nodding and furtive pointing toward a couple just taking their seats. "Petlura, the Ukrainian chief," my Polish companion whispered to me.

It was Petlura who had headed the Ukrainian military movement which resulted in the useless and disgraceful after-war of 1918–1919 in southern Poland, following the defeat of the Teutons—a movement so mixed up with Pangerman politics and Berlin intrigue that it was discredited from the beginning. This movement, *sans* military, still continues, though it has been long ago shuffled back to its natural habitat toward the east and removed to a considerable extent from the Polish city of Lwow, which in 1918 the Ukrainists endeavoured to make its centre.

At the time that I saw him Petlura had repented his German intrigue and his treachery to his Polish friends, had been forgiven, and was in Warsaw asking Poland for help in his new fight against the Bolsheviks. A swarthy faced undersized man of middle age, he had about him exactly the air one expected in a leader of such adventurous campaigns as had won him his fame. There is nothing very heroic or picturesque about his story; it is rather commonplace; but he proved a potent distraction for me that evening at the Opera, because in his person he brought up one of the vital Polish problems in which I was then interesting myself, the Ukrainian question. On our way home after the performance I discussed him with my Polish friend. He was not very complimentary. "He's a Tartar!" he exclaimed.

"A Tartar? You mean really a Tartar?" (One often meets people of Tartar descent in Poland—with a capital T.)

"No, I don't mean it that way Petlura . . . " and he told me the story of the German outrage of the Ukraine in 1918, in which Petlura figured so prominently.

A few weeks later I found myself in Lwow (and not long after that still further east, crossing the Ukraine to Kiev), where I

was able to get at Petlura's story on the ground. By this time the Ukrainist chief was an ally of Poland, his army joined with the Polish forces against the Bolsheviks, and there was good feeling all around. But among the Polish masses, especially in Lwow, (and even in Kiev, as I found later) there was small confidence in Petlura. After the happenings of 1919, they still thought of him in the way my friend expressed it, as a "Tartar."

II

Lwow lies in the foot hills of the Carpathian range some two hundred miles south of Warsaw. From any eminence in this fine city of a quarter million population one can look out over historic ground that has been trampled by the hoofs of war from the earliest days of history. Over Lwow's green neighbouring plains and slopes Tartar and Turk and Mongol hordes have swept; Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Kossack raiders; Swedish, Hungarian, Austrian, Russian and Prussian armies; and lastly the Red packs of Trotsky. Yet Lwow still holds up her head and flourishes, an outpost of Western civilization, and one of the most interesting and picturesque towns in eastern Europe.

The name, Lwow, is not difficult for the American once he sees it in his own phonetics. "Lvuf" is the pronunciation; "Lemberg," as the Austrians used to say it; while the French still stick to their pleasing "Leopol," which comes nearer explaining the meaning of the name to us than any other version—"the City of Lions."

We know already the story of Lwow and the Woman's Legion. "The Nest of Heroes," the town is sometimes called; but it might well be named "The Valiant Woman," and its symbol a woman armed. Lwow was born armed. She came into existence a fortress; she still is a fortress; and all her life has been made glorious with martial honours won in self-defence, by her daughters as well as by her sons. Of this record there is no brighter page than that which tells the story of her struggle against Petlura and his German-paid mercenaries when they sought to tear her from the Polish motherland.

That was only one of many such tragic episodes. A thousand years of sieges and conflagrations, plunderings and massacres, have forged the steel of this gallant old town, which has been twice completely destroyed and twice rebuilt. One of its rebuilders was Kasimir the Great, that Polish ruler who codified the laws of the nation, reformed the courts of justice, and began so well the movement of emancipating the serfs, that he was henceforth known as "the Peasants' King," just as he was known in the ghetto as "King of the Jews" because of his liberal protection

of the sons of Israel. Another Kasimir, three hundred years later, ennobled the entire citizenship of Lwow for its courageous allegiance during the Lithuanian and Cossack invasions. And King John Sobieski, defender of the Western World against the Turk, so loved " the City of Lions " that he made it one of the first centres of his Court.

Is it any wonder, then, that Lwow stands out among her sister cities with a strong and shining personality, as if she were indeed clothed in armour? Or any wonder that Poland is prouder of her than of any other single possession within her domain? During the Bolshevik invasion of 1920, when Lwow was the key to the door of Poland in the south, and the Reds were advancing twenty miles a day, one word went through the length and breadth of Poland that put heart into the whole nation—" Lwow will never fall." The just boast of the Lwovians to-day is, not alone that they did not fall, but that they never were afraid. Purpose made them calm. Their bravery was bred in the bone. And once again their women led, either in the ranks or digging trenches around the city.

From the first time I saw Lwow I called it " Little Vienna," so gay were its wide streets and attractive shops, so pleasing its monuments and buildings. There were signs of war on every hand: broken glass, wrecked houses, walls tumbled into ruin or peppered like sieves with bullet holes. Its handsome railway station was a sorry sight, for here the enemy's shrapnel had showered like rain. But it still stood, much patched and boosted up with ugly boarding and its coat-of-arms remained unspoiled: " *Leopolis Semper Fidelis.*"

Set on the great crossroads of East and West, Lwow has for centuries been an important trading centre. For ages it has stood with one hand touching the Orient, the other the West. Flanders and the Levant met on its market place. The merchantmen of Venice and of Danzig saluted there. It was one of the world's meeting-points. The Italian strain is distinctly seen in Lwow. The Lion of St. Mark has paced his stately way even to this far corner of the earth. The historic house of John Sobieski is the work of a Venetian architect, while many others of the old sixteenth and seventeenth century buildings, tall and narrow and with richly modelled façades, betray the same origin, especially in their suggestion of Moorish grace, a plain translation from the lagoons of Venice. Then there are the Renaissance arcades of the market place—they might easily have been lifted bodily out of Genoa or Florence. The old abandoned palace in which our American Red Cross headquarters were located was like a picture from Italy, with its Gothic windows, its carved doorway, its wide staircases—even its haunted chapel, possessed of a genuine and fully certified ghost.

Byzantium too has left its mark on Lwow, especially in the architecture of some of its churches, with their copper-covered domes and bulbous cupolas, topped by the odd Ruthenian cross. Above the arms of this cross is a smaller cross-stick representing the inscription of Pilate ; while below, tipped at a slight angle, is still another short cross-arm which represents the footrest of Our Lord when He was crucified. According to the Ruthenian legend, so great did Christ's agony become that at last He wrenched the footrest out of place, pressing it downward in His pain ; and ever since the cross has been so made, to remind Christians of the sufferings of the Redeemer.

It is not many cities that can boast three cathedrals, but this is one of Lwow's distinctions—another mark of the town's unique position at the crossroads of East and West. Besides a Catholic Archbishop there is also a Uniat Metropolitan and an Armenian Bishop. It was the latter, Monsignor Teodorowicz, whose purple cassock I had seen among the delegates at the Diet in Warsaw. He is the leading representative of his people in the national legislature as well as their chief priest.

Nor does the Oriental colouring of Lwow stop with the churches. There is the synagogue also, and the Jew himself, retaining here perhaps more of his Eastern manner and dress than anywhere else in the Western world. Like his brother in Warsaw he wears the " halat," a long black tight-fitting coat, reaching to his shoes. But also he wears the " pejsy " or " Galician curl," a natural adornment which some years ago went out of style (by imperial decree) in the Russian dominions, but which remained permitted under Austria. Over each cheek, in front of each ear, the hair of the Galician Jew falls in a fat ringlet which often is oiled and curled to the utmost perfection. The effect is startling to the American observer, and for some indefinable reason is distasteful.

As in all Polish towns where there are Jews, they are exclusively tradesmen, and the shops of their ghetto present a curious sight to the Western traveller, especially the signs with which they advertise their wares. Usually on long boards, hung like open shutters, these signs are painted in the most arresting combination of colours—reds and yellows and blues that will not be denied !—dizzy with Yiddish hieroglyphics and garnished with the most primitive kind of picturing. The Yiddish lettering seems hardly necessary. There could be no mistaking the language of these signboard pictures

The ghetto tradesman does not rely altogether on his signs, however, for the carrying on of his traffic. He lifts up his voice in the market-place, or as he goes hawking along the pavements, with a din of " handluje " and " kupuje ! " that is deafening—" I sell ! "—" I buy !" Compared to the strange quiet of a Polish

market, where the first thing that impresses one is absence of noise and clatter, the ghetto trading-places are bedlams of the first order. The only disappointing thing about them, to me, was their lack of colour. They were Oriental in every detail but that. The Jews, thronging the Lwow ghetto, were drab in their dress, the women's only striking feature being their ritualistic wigs. "Talith," or prayer-scarf, "halat," "gaberdine," "phylactery"—all these words have a sound of colour and romance in them until one sees the tame original. Then one is disappointed. The brightest thing in the ghetto is the beauty of many of the smaller children. But then, the most beautiful thing in the world anyway is a little child!

III

Cathedrals and curls and cupolas, Moorish façades and ghetto sign-boards, Florentine arcades and Venetian lions, all these and a thousand and one other oddities join together to tell the story of Lwow's strangely mixed history and inhabitants. Yet the city is purely Polish in its culture, and (excepting the Jew) 80 per cent. Polish in population. For fifty years before the outbreak of the World War—ever since 1861, when political exigencies forced Austria to grant autonomy to her Slavic subjects—Lwow was the most active Polish centre in existence, and the seat of a Polish Sejm or parliament, in which some twenty years ago the self-determination movement began to expand and take on such a national scope that in time it played an important part in the political welding of the whole country. This Galician Sejm (the parliament building in which it once met—now a part of the University—being one of the sights of Lwow) has produced some of Poland's most eminent political leaders of the day. Among them Korytowski and Glombinski, both former Ministers of Finance for the Austrian Empire; Stanislas Grabski, Count Tarnowski, Prince Czartoryski; Daszynski (Vice-President of the National Ministry, when I was there), and Witos, the peasant Premier. The political solidarity of this section of Poland was well demonstrated in 1918, when, within a few weeks, it restored order, organized a free government and drove out the invader.

The parks and plazas of Lwow are one of its chief attractions, and often they bespeak the Polish soul of the town in a striking manner. Heroic memories haunt you as you walk through the Jesuit Gardens, whose trees, during the Ukrainian siege of 1918, were clipped and riddled with bullets and whose sod was wet with the blood of boys and women dying in defence of their homes. The nightingales of Lwow are famous; they sing in the wooded

aisles of this pretty old spot, now so sacred to the Pole, with a sweetness passing words; and in the evening a gentle melancholy broods over the place. Even in daylight, when voices and laughter and the noise of children at play resound through its green spaces, a feeling of hushed grandeur hovers about, as if the spirits of those youths who fell bleeding there under the trees were somewhere near, watching the games in which they never will join again.

It is in winter that Lwow is gayest. In her memoirs Madame Modjeska tells of a famous sleighride party which she enjoyed in the old days, twenty jingling sleds filled with merrymakers carrying flaming torches, riding off over the snow to a country house beyond the city, where the happy Poles danced until daylight. The sound of sleighbells in Lwow always conjured up that scene to my mind. Winter brings the theatre and the opera also. Lwow is a real musical centre, where concerts flourish. It is the traditional home of the "dumki" or reverie, a native song of very ancient origin, plaintive and low, composed in double-time, and usually accompanied on the bandura and the teorbe. There is a handsome Opera-house and State Theatre, and always a full season of the best music and drama. Fredro, the Molière of Poland, whose bright comedies are still played all over the country, was a son of Lwow.

Many of Poland's most illustrious names are associated with Lwow or the lands surrounding it, foremost among them the man whom Americans regard as the greatest of Poles, Ignatius Paderewski, who was born in Podolia. Slowacki, "the Polish Shelley," was from the neighbouring plains of Volhynia, while Bohdan Zaleski, called "the Ukrainian Nightingale," was likewise a son of the borderlands The melancholy of these immense plains sighs through Zaleski's lovely poetry. To use his own words, his verses are "nursed with songs' milk, with flowers' marrow." I have gone through this country in Maytime, when it appeared such a limitless wilderness of wild flowers, stirring in the wind under so blue a heaven, we seemed to breathe in our nostrils not only sweet air but the very colours of sky and meadow. It is a land of rich hopfields also—and of wild strawberries. Such wild strawberries! Travelling through the woods, children would accost us selling bowls and pails heaped high with the tiny delicious fruit, red pyramids of wild temptation, the odour of which alone made one's mouth water. In the heat of noon the perfume of the berries freighted the air and came to us on the wind, sweet and heavy.

What a hunting ground for the artist! The scenery of the undulating country surrounding Lwow, breaking in the south to wooded hills, would fairly distract a painter. The Art Gallery in Lwow tells the story. It is a treasure house of native colour

and feeling, a house of a thousand windows giving on to a bright airy landscape of illimitable spaces.

IV

The intellectual life of Lwow has long given the city rank among the centres of learning in Eastern Europe. Its University, founded in 1661, still functions, and is a flourishing institution with a steadily increasing sphere of influence. Among its professors I met one the story of whose long life embodies much of the story of his native land. An exile to foreign countries, he continued to devote himself to his science and made a name for himself abroad. But the moment Poland was free he returned to his beloved Lwow and accepted a chair in his Alma Mater, giving up an honourable and highly profitable situation to work for less than his daily bread—but to work in his native land! The two sons of this same man, though born and educated abroad, are still such loyal Poles that each of them, when their time came to marry, returned to the motherland, one from Germany and one from America, to get him a Polish wife. No wonder " Lwow will not fall," if it breeds in its sons and the sons of its sons such a spirit as that.

This same feeling of attachment to Lwow was characteristic of all Poles, of whatever section, during the Partitions. Lwow then, like Krakow, was a place of national pilgrimage, especially for Poles of the Russian Dominion or of the borderlands, many a father and mother contriving, sooner or later, to take their children, or send them there, to imbibe a little of the real Polish air, more free and undiluted in Galicia than in the other restricted parts. And for this many a Polish parent or child suffered at the hands of the Russian police if they were caught coming back into the Czar's domains carrying such contraband as Polish storybooks or Polish White Eagles (carved from the crystal salt of Rabka or Wieliczka), or picture postcards of Kossak's renowned panoramic painting " Kosciuszko at Raclawice," which is one of the memorable sights of Lwow.

The Lwow University possesses a magnificent library of 240,000 volumes; and affiliated with it are the Society for the Promotion of Learning and two important museums, the Ossolinki and the Jeduzitska (Dzieduszycka), the latter containing a remarkable collection of Polish fauna and flora, geological specimens, ancient pottery, metal-work, embroidery, costumes, etc. Here also is to be seen a notable groups of Scythian relics, revered by all the archæologists of Europe, and drawing students from many corners of the world to study it. This treasure of pure ancient gold, the secret of the alloy of which is lost, was discovered some years ago in the sand along a little tributary stream of the Dniester. The

pieces were found by a poor peasant woman while she was doing her washing in the river. She showed them to a Jewish money-lender to whom she was in debt, but being offered only five marks when she wanted ten, she took them next to the " starosta " or mayor of her village. The starosta put the archæologists on the track of the discovery, and the old woman was paid a thousand florins ; whereas, as the story goes, the Jew dropped dead. The collection, consisting of bracelets and other ornaments, a miniature crown and a bowl, all of wrought gold of the finest workmanship, has been pronounced by savants as dating back to the fourth century B.C.

But if Lwow has three cathedrals, that is not distinction enough : she is also to have two Universities. And thereby hangs a tale— a tale not unconnected with our friend Petlura, who began this story for us.

The second University of Lwow was legislated into existence in 1920 by the Polish Government, and will be solely for the use of Ruthenian students. Its foundation reveals Poland to us in the act of formally fulfilling the pledge she has given to protect her minorities, a pledge given long ago in deeds, and written in the nation's record of tolerance and protection for all within her boundaries.

This record is especially true regarding the relationship between the Poles and the Ruthenians, or the " Ukrainians," as they now are known, although the term properly used should mean only that political minority among the Ruthenians who invented the name as a label for their nationalistic party. The word " Ukraine " means " the borderland " ; a Ukrainian is a dweller of the borderland. This borderland is the great tract of the Dnieper, extending from the lands east of Lwow into what was formerly the Russian Empire. The larger part of this Ukraine is now held by the Bolsheviks, and it was in the hope of liberating it from the Soviet Yoke that Poland joined Petlura's forces in the Kiev expedition in 1920. That portion of the Ukraine which has been restored to Poland contains a Ruthenian population of about 3,000,000 to some 2,000,000 Poles.

The Ruthenians are a Slavic race, neither Polish nor Russian, but speaking a language akin to both. They are not a national entity ; at least they have not yet reached that stage of development. There are many even among themselves who regard their so-called nationalism as artificial, and who believe that even with the impetus given the movement under Polish protection, it will come to nothing. One prominent Ukrainian writer in Kiev said to me, when I questioned him, " There are no Ukrainians." The movement, however, is strongest in the Kiev neighbourhood, where the Orthodox faith is held. Out of this the Ukrainians are now striving

to construct a national Church of their own, which, like the Uniat Church, may be joined to the Catholic body at Rome.

There is an historical record which shows us that nearly a thousand years ago, as far back as 981, and even before that, Ruthenia was Polish. During the Tartar and Muscovite invasions it changed hands repeatedly, but for six unbroken centuries, since 1340 it has been part and parcel of Poland, its people (particularly those toward the west, where the Polish influence was strongest) united to Poland not only politically, but religiously, being mostly Catholic, either of the Latin or Uniat rite.

During the period of the partitions, each of the three powers, Russia, Prussia and Austria played his own separate game with the distinct object in view of keeping Poland weak and internally divided, to forestall any possible national movement. Dissension among the Poles was fostered wherever possible, as when Austria stirred up the Galician peasants with alarm and vodka to massacre the Polish landlords in 1846. Sometimes the three Powers joined together in this sport of " divide et impera " ; sometimes they secretly fought against each other ; sometimes they did both at the same time. The last was the case some seventy years before the war when Germany and Austria, with the triple purpose of weakening both Poland, their subject, and Russia, their partner in crime, and of preparing the way for Teutonic dominance in the East, began exploiting the local Ruthenian dialect to encourage a " Ukrainian " nationalist movement. Russian persecution of the Ruthenians played nicely into the Teutons' hands for this purpose. But Pole and Ruthenian had lived together without trouble or mishap for six hundred years running, and it was not the easiest work in the world to break their ties.

It must be remembered, of course, that when this anti-Polish movement among the Ruthenians was begun by the Teutons, there was really no Poland, politically speaking ; so that at that stage of the game the Ruthenians could hardly be blamed for entertaining hopes of breaking away, regardless of Poland, from the Russian yoke. By the time that Germany fell, in 1918, and Poland was re-established, the Ukrainian movement had received too much impetus to be brought to a sudden halt. And it was quickly given a new push by the Germans, who were now determined to crush all possibility of a Polish-Ruthenian rapport, and to place every imaginable obstacle in the way of Polish unity. With this in view they egged the Ukrainians on to open warfare, turning troops, arms and munitions over to them, along with such rich promises for the future, if only they would succeed in disrupting the new Polish state, that the Ukrainians succumbed to the temptation. It was this military movement which Petlura headed from November 1918 to July 1919.

General Haller's volunteer army, including some 25,000 " Yank " Poles, recruited from almost every state in the Union, finally put an end to this Petlura escapade. Internally, the adventure was doomed to failure from the first. Organized by a Ruthenian minority, financed by German gold and armed with German rifles, it received no genuine support from the bulk of the Ruthenians themselves. They regarded Petlura's forces as brigands, and asked only to be left alone, to live in peace and till their fields as their forefathers had done under Polish rule. Ninety-one per cent of them being peasants, their care was the soil, and they had no more welcome for Petlura's " Ukrainian " troops than for German invaders or Bolshevik hordes, when it came to the trampling of their farms and the destruction of their crops.

So the Petlura campaign failed. Lwow was saved and remained a Polish city, and in time the Ukrainians, crushed under the Bolshevik heel in the furthermost lands of the Dnieper, were forced to cry out for help to their ancient friend, the Pole—the friend they had a few months back betrayed and attacked. To-day, while the far eastern parts of the Ukraine still remain under the Red yoke of Moscow, the western territories are once more united to the Polish state, a part of the free Republic, with every liberty guaranteed them, even to the official recognition of their language in schools and law courts, in state offices and the local Sejm: finally, to the establishment of their own university.

The moment the Petlura fiasco of 1918 was ended, the Poles wiped the affair from their slate, immediately releasing all Ukrainian war prisoners, even taking measures to safeguard them against local reprisals on their return home. This was not, however, the first token of good-will given by the Republic. As early as May 1919, while Petlura was still attacking and plundering, Poland had enacted laws in the National Sejm at Warsaw securing to the Ruthenians " absolute political liberty and the full possibility of economic, industrial and national development." The passage of the Land Bill in 1920, confirming to the peasants of Ruthenia the same rights as those given to peasants in other parts of Poland, is still another pledge of Polish protection, perhaps the one that has appealed most strongly to the Ruthenian tiller of the soil.

If the Ukrainians do not develop a nationality under such conditions their case is indeed hopeless. If they do, they will unquestionably be one of the most valuable units of that great Polish Federation which Polish idealists dream of, and which the progress of events may yet make a reality.

V

In the light of contemporaneous events, it is easy to trace the Ukrainian movement to its actual source. Climb any hill or tower

in Lwow, look out over the surrounding country, and you can see it with the corporeal eye. It is the Polish oil-fields. It was "oil" that the Germans and the Austrians were thinking, not Ukrainian nationality—oil, and "Drang nach Osten—when they began the Ukrainian movement a quarter-century ago.

This part of Poland is largely agricultural—a deep rich soil, yielding abundant crops. But it is in the oil wells that the greatest riches of the district lie, riches which have been so rapidly developed, and which have so affected the industrial awakening of the region, that in the ten years from 1900 to 1910 the number of factories in Lwow and its vicinity doubled in number. When it is known that 40 per cent. of the pre-war capital invested in the Galician oil-wells and their related industries was German and Austrian, the real story of the Ukrainian movement is pretty well told. When the Kaiser's big trick failed, and Berlin's scheme of controlling all the riches of Eastern Europe fell through in the collapse of 1918 (sweeping the loot of the Brest-Litovski Treaty with it), the desperate Junkers concocted the Petlura plan of breaking Poland up and keeping their fists elbow-deep in the Polish pot. As late as the spring of 1919 they were drawing all the oil they wanted from the Galician wells in exchange for the backing they were giving the Ukrainians.

Yet the terrified oil-owners of Berlin and Vienna need not have been so alarmed. While I was in Poland the Polish government, instead of confiscating the stolen goods of these Junkers, as it would have had a perfect right to do, was working out a system of rehabilitation, offering to meet representatives of the former German and Austrian proprietors to arrange a settlement. Naturally, however, the desire was to eliminate German ownership as much as possible, and there was a good deal of regret expressed over a clause in the Treaty of Versailles which favoured Austrian over German capitalists, the popular feeling being that both should be treated alike.

Investors of Allied countries, at the same time, were being offered every inducement to resume proprietorship of their pre-war holdings. There are over ten million pounds sterling British money invested in these oil-fields, divided among some 75,000 shareholders, while French and Belgian interests total about the same amount. Since the War, American capital has been coming in. The Galician oil output before the War was about 20,000,000 quintals annually; but the field is as yet scarcely scratched.

It was a Polish chemist, Ian Lukasiewicz, who first distilled crude oil and who made the first lamp in which this distillation, now called "kerosene," was burned for lighting purposes. This was in 1853, before the birth of the oil industry in America. The Pole, in fact, has been a pioneer in the oil business, and has

brought the technique of the petroleum industry to a high degree of perfection, developing an actual school of specialists in geology and mine operation. A number of the well-driving instruments now used in the oil-fields of other countries originated in the Lwow district. At the same time America has made return ; it was a group of Canadian prospectors who introduced modern boring methods into the Polish oil-fields.

" So that's the story of Lwow and the Ukrainians," said my friend. " And of Petlura. He's a Tartar !" Far be it from me, said I, to label Petlura. I could not help but think, though, of our old Congressional adage, " Scratch "—a Senator it was, I believe, not a Tartar—" and you strike oil ! "

The story of Lwow herself, the City of Lions, the " Nest of Heroes," the Valiant Woman, pleased me better ; Lwow, brave and gay, as quick with a song as with a sword.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE OUTPOST

I

" NOR can that endure which is not based on love."

In their pursuit of the Bolsheviks, after the first Red retreat in the early spring of 1919, the Polish armies were able to go forward at such a pace through the endless miles of marsh and forest which lie to the north and east of Lwow—the districts of Polesia and Lithuania—that even their own leaders marvelled. No foreign army had ever before advanced through this militarily-impossible country without fatal delays. Napoleon's disaster in 1812 had had one of its chief sources in the impenetrability of these woods and swamps. In the World War Russia had failed here, and Germany had halted. But the Pole strode on. Roads and "corduroys" were mended for them, bridges replaced; railways (destroyed by the Bolos to cut off their pursuers) rebuilt in a few days by volunteer bands of peasants. What was the reason?

The reason dated back five hundred years to the Treaty of Horodlo, signed in 1413, when Poland and Lithuania formed their unique union, embracing in its pact all of these widespreading eastern territories, and sealed it with those pregnant words, " Nor can that endure which is not based on love." This union has endured for over five centuries. Nothing except goodwill and popular sympathy could have made possible the penetration of Polesia by the Polish troops, whom the natives hailed as liberators, offering them every assistance in their advance towards Vilna and the countries of the north, to clear the land of the Red Russian hordes. In these districts neither Czarist nor German nor Bolshevik authority could ever take root. They have always remained " Poland " to the natives. Old peasants in times past would dismiss talk of anything otherwise with a laugh; many persisted for years before the war in still paying their taxes, as their forefathers had, " to the Polish King," although the tax-collectors hardly relished that. One ancient huntsman was found who had never heard of the partitions nor of the Napoleonic wars! In their odd dress and shoes of birch-bark these Polesian peasants are like figures out of an old storybook.

This country, lying between Lwow and Vilna, between the rich plains of the Ukraine and the hills and forests of Lithuania, forms one of the great borderlands of Poland and is one of the few virginal countries left in Europe. It is a land of forests—its name Polesia means "along the forests" (po—along; las—forest)—a land of great marshes, of innumerable small lakes and countless little streams. It is a hunter's paradise, where otter and beaver still are trapped, where wild deer surpass the dreams of Nimrod, where the bear and the antlered elk, and even the almost extinct white bison, of which only a few hundred remain and which have otherwise vanished from the earth, still haunt the unexplored fastnesses. The famous forest of Bialowiez, the greatest forest in Europe, stretching from Brest-Litovski to Bialystok and far beyond, was formerly the favourite hunting ground of the Russian Czar.

The journey I made through this region in the summer of 1920, after we had escaped out of Kiev from the clutches of Budienny's cavalry, in pursuit of the retreating Poles, is something I shall never forget. By the time we had gained this point all danger was past; but the story did not reach its full climax until we arrived at Brest. There, in one of the chambers of the fortress where Russians and Germans had met in 1918, to sell and buy Poland once more, we saw the famous cryptic writing of Trotsky on the wall. "No war, no peace." Many have puzzled over that dictum of the Bolshevik autocrat, striving to figure out what he meant by "No war, no peace" The mistake appears to be in imagining that the words were intended as an ultimatum. To us they seemed to be simply a marginal note, scratched on the edge of the impasse which events had reached, when there was neither peace nor war.

With danger left behind, we could enjoy the beauties of these Polesian lands as we travelled through them, though there were memories sad enough, too, conjuring themselves up. For it was through these forests that thousands and tens of thousands of Poland's four million refugees fled when the Russians retreated in 1916. Many of them went no further, but died in the woods, after keeping body and soul together for weeks on the food of grass and roots and bark. The place is full of wayside graves.

Besides its wilderness of woods, swamps and lakes (it seemed that we never quite got out of the woods), Polesia possesses a vast area of drained and arable soil, estimated at some five million acres; and the possibilities of its further reclamation and development, I should judge, are practically unlimited. In the eighteenth century the Polish Government began to organize road and water communication through this part of the country, but the Russian partition put an end to development. Two important waterways, however, were organized, the Royal Canal and the Oginski Canal,

joining the Vistula and the Dnieper—the Baltic and the Black Sea.

We saw a good many cattle grazing here. The stock raiser would find this a paradise, so rich is the natural pasturage. The timber wealth also of these vast resinous forest tracts is almost untouched, save for the depredations of the Germans, who cut down over 3 per cent. of the Bialowiez. Some enterprising Poles developed tar, pitch and charcoal industries here in the past to a certain extent; but under the new Republic the forests are now all conserved to prepare for a modern scheme of reafforestation.

A hunter's, a lumberman's a stock-breeder's, a naturalist's paradise; but oh, what a paradise for the storymaker, the inventor of yarns—what a scene for adventure tales, this ancient wilderness, still unexplored while the rest of the world goes mad with knowledge of itself. One wonders that Sienkiewicz went to far-off Africa to write his last story, *Through the Wilderness*, when he had such a virginal wilderness as this at his own back door. If "R. L. S." had ever laid eyes on it, or Kipling, they would have immortalized it. Mowgli seemed to be everywhere, just out of sight, peering at us from the jungle as we passed. There is a great Polish nature-writer, Sieroszewski, who has written tales of outdoor life, of trees and flowers and animals, not unlike Kipling's, and fully equal to them in their intimate knowledge of the wild. That would not be so difficult, one thinks, as he travels through this romantic country—there is such an air of mystery and adventure breathing over it, especially when the wind rises in the night and the forests are troubled and your Polish driver mutters the old saying, "Somebody's hanged himself, the wind is so high."

II

We journey due north through the Lithuanian country, passing many more scenes which excite romantic fancy; especially the old wayside taverns, where, in the days before railroads, the postillions used to halt to change mounts and take a stirrup-cup. We are now possibly near the great trade route of ancient times where Greek and Roman merchants travelled toward the Baltic in search of amber. Then Vilna at last, set on picturesque hills cut by the Vilja river, surrounded by pine forests, orchards and farms; in the springtime fairly buried under a cloud of leafy verdure.

The quaint old domed and turreted city invites you at the first sight of it. Some of Vilna's historic walls still remain, dating from before the days when Columbus discovered America; but these walls, after all, are comparatively "new," being the last ones built, after no one knows how many previous centuries of fortification. We enter the town by the Ostrobrama, that is,

by the Gate of the Virgin, with its double device of heraldry over it, the White Eagle of Poland and the Horseman of Lithuania. And instantly we note a curious fact: that everyone passing under this high-arched portal bares his head as he goes; even Jews, marked in the throng by their long black halats, remove their little round caps. A crowded street, narrow and crooked, faces us beyond the gate; and in it we see men and women kneeling on the sidewalk in prayer. (I have seen them so, even in the depth of winter, the snow ankle deep, oblivious to all passers-by). Impelled by the force about us, we too find that we have removed our caps, though we may not yet know why. Then turning, as we pass the gate, we see over the arch a chapel, behind the glass doors of which stands an altar with many votive lights and offerings and a great curtained picture at the back.

There are two famous shrines in Poland, Chenstohova (Częstochowa), near Krakow, and the Ostrobrama here in Vilna. If by good chance you happen to pass Ostrobrama at the proper hour, you will find the curtain of the shrine raised, disclosing a very old much-discoloured picture of the Blessed Virgin, done in the Byzantine manner, painted on wood, but entirely covered, excepting the face and hands, with silver and gold. It is in the manner of what the Russians call an ikon, a form of sacred art highly developed and very popular in the Eastern countries.

The Ostrobrama was erected in 1671, but the picture, said to have come originally from Italy, and long held miraculous, is thought to date about a century earlier. Previous to the building of the chapel the picture hung outside the walls, above the gate, where the Eagle and the Horseman now proclaim the union of Poland and Lithuania.

If it be indeed blossom-time when you enter Vilna, with the pear orchards, the cherries and the apples one drift of bloom; if it be Easter, let us say, then you will hear a story told wherever you go in the town that will make you enjoy and understand Vilna and its people. It is the story of the Easter of 1919, of the liberation of the city from the Bolsheviks, and of the remarkable civic struggle the citizens of Vilna made for their freedom during the Soviet occupation. It was a veritable battle of the Idea against brute force and terrorism.

I heard the story from the Princess Anastasia of Georgia. I could have gone to no more interesting or authentic source; for this remarkable lady was one of the leaders in Vilna's anti-Bolshevik fight. Her black eyes, her strong face, flashed with a hundred emotions as she recounted the tale; and when she came to her own dramatic adventures there was a first-hand thrill to it all which could not be communicated in the written word. How she was thrown into prison, lying in a crowded filthy cell among

so many others that there was hardly room to breathe, sleeping on the floor or the table, half-starved, and tortured by vermin; —how on Easter Saturday, after ten weeks of this, they heard shooting in the town and the word began to pass through the prison that the Poles were coming—how at last, on Easter morning, the alarm did break, with the Bolos, seen through the window of the cell, flying in panic: the noise of artillery, the rattle of machine guns all that day, all that night: then, on Easter Monday the sudden ceasing of all sound, all commotion, and at last the cry, "The Poles are here!"—with the prisoners falling on their knees, weeping, praying, raising their voices in a loud joyous Easter hymn half broken with happy sobs; the sudden bursting open of the door; a young Polish officer, blackened beyond recognition with smoke and blood and unshaven beard, crying out in a familiar voice, "Is it yoú?"—and the Princess swooning (the first time in all her life that she fainted) into the arms of her adopted son whom she had not seen for two years, and whom she supposed was dead;—that is a story that never could be told more than once as I heard it.

Yet this is only the ending (or at any rate, the middle) of the real story of Vilna's fight with the Bolsheviks. That actually begins three months earlier, in February 1919.

III

When the Bolsheviks first took Vilna, January 6, 1919, following the withdrawal of the Germans (who did much more in those days of fateful change than merely leave the back door of Poland open when they pulled out), there was in the city an army chaplain, Chaplain Muckerman, who had served with the Polish conscripts in the German forces. This man had been in Vilna ever since the Germans came there three years before; and he had so won the hearts of the Vilna people, and had been so won by them—especially by the members of St. Kasimir's Church, mostly working men—that he had stayed on after the Bolshevik invasion.

Chaplain Muckerman was a Jesuit priest, a learned man, with a special leaning toward social welfare work and the study of economics. In the coming of the Bolos to Vilna Father Muckerman saw a rare chance to put some of his own ideas of social reform into operation to counteract the heathen communism of the Reds. In short, rather than let the people whom he loved be swept away by the Soviet wave of godless socialism, he determined to launch a Christian socialism of his own. He declared a sort of social war on the Bolsheviks.

On the morning of January 11th, the sixth day of the Red occupation, Vilna suddenly appeared literally plastered with flaming

red posters, the reddest of Moscow red, summoning the workmen of the town to a public meeting in St. Kasimir's Church. Even the walls and doors of the church itself were covered with these flaring proclamations, and, as the Princess Anastasia remarked in telling the story, " the people were very displeased with that." " What next !" they began to complain, beholding even their churches disfigured by what they supposed were " Trotsky's banners." Some two thousand of them, however, attended the meeting, curious and not in the best of temper. To their astonishment, they found Father Muckerman in charge.

The result of that meeting—which of course the priest himself had called—was the organization of a popular workingmen's league which grew so rapidly that within one week it had eleven thousand members. Father Muckerman merely launched it ; the leadership he at once placed in the hands of the men themselves. From the first night, when he made all who had anything to say get up into the pulpit and say it, the league developed the workmen's own initiative. " Bolshevism is strong," the chaplain told them. " But it is strong because it is organized. The only way to fight it is by counter-organization. Christian workmen, get together ! Organize !"

They organized. They at once took over the former Jesuits' school-buildings, established a co-operative bank, a bakery, a laundry, a school for little ones, a school for girls, and one for boys of fourteen and fifteen—the latter with a separate junior league of their own, holding their own meetings and carrying on their own autonomous organization. A kitchen was opened, serving some seven hundred meals a day. Bread was furnished at cost. A little farm was purchased outside the city, with horses, pigs, goats, hens, and cows to supply fresh milk for babies. A complete self-supporting organization was established and in full operation within the space of a few weeks.

The Bolshevik authorities were furious at this bold snatching of power and prestige out of their hands. But they could do nothing. Father Muckerman and his Vilna workmen, not knowing fear, faced the Soviet Commissars full front, not with explanations or apologies, but with demands. They were brazen. They forced the Bolsheviks to give them light, heat, and other necessary concessions to carry on their establishment. The league was a workmen's league, an actual soviet, and the Soviet authorities could not consistently refuse. At first they thought to evade by making restrictions ; but the league met them at every turn and disarmed them, not with defiance but with acquiesence. The name " Christian Workingmen " could not be permitted. " Very well." Off came " Christian." " St. Kasimir's—that is not allowed." " All right." St. Kasimir went the way of the

Christian. The wise Vilnovians freely let all nominal and unessential points go by the board. They were out for bigger game than names. The Reds were balked at every step.

But the Reds were determined to put a stop to it. Nothing is more infuriating than passive resistance. So one day they came to Father Muckerman and informed him that he was to be transported; that he was a spy. "But if I'm a spy you must not transport me. You must arrest me, court-martial me and of course shoot me. I demand to be arrested and tried." The Reds went away to talk it over.

That afternoon the chaplain called a mass meeting to explain the situation to the people and to prepare them for the arrest which now seemed to him inevitable. In fact, he had determined to give himself up rather than to expose the lives of his companions. Large crowds attended this meeting; and in the midst of it the Bolsheviks, having come to a decision, suddenly drew up a regiment around the church, encircling it with a cordon of machine guns, and completely surrounding the crowd. And then a curious thing happened. Father Muckerman announced his intention of surrendering; but his own people, refusing to permit him to do so, made him prisoner. They would not give him up nor let him give himself up. They held him there in the church, one man against five thousand of them, packed into the building and gathered in the plaza. They refused repeatedly to let him out, and they refused to disperse. "If they want him, just let them try to take him!"

Parleys began. Conferences were held between league delegates and Red officials, but no agreement could be reached. The Bolshevik Commissars themselves were afraid to appear before the crowd. "Do you want us to be mobbed?" they asked the league representatives when the latter visited the Soviet headquarters. The Princess Anastasia was one of the league negotiators; on the evening of the second day of the "siege" she was arrested and jailed. Then the Reds cut the electric wires lighting the church, leaving the crowd in pitch darkness. But the workmen secured candles and still stood their ground. For three days the people stayed there, eating what food the league's kitchen could supply, praying, singing hymns in great lusty choruses which challenged and enraged the Bolsheviks. Every member of the league received Holy Communion. They would do anything and everything Father Muckerman suggested except let him go. Whenever he began to argue about that, they respectfully shut him up.

At last, however, about five o'clock on the morning of February 12th—Lincoln's Birthday in America!—the Reds began to open fire on the church. At that, the chaplain, putting his people under a spiritual obedience, insisted on being taken. "There shall be

no bloodshed," he declared. And the workmen at last acquiesced. "You may arrest him and try him," they told the Bolsheviks, "but there's to be no packing of him off in the night and all that."

The Bolos agreed. But, Bolshevik-like, within twenty-four hours they had broken their word and had shipped Father Muckerman to Minsk. At Minsk he was promptly sentenced to be shot. But the Vilnovians followed him, and they spread the fame of their "Christian Soviet" so effectively abroad in the Minsk neighbourhood that this town also rose up and championed the priest. From there the Reds hustled him to Smolensk; but they kicked him so badly that he was seriously injured and fell ill. They were still afraid to shoot him, so he was sent to the hospital. Here he was kept for nine months; and here again he very nearly started another "Christian Bolshevik" revolution among the Reds. At last they let him go. He was too troublesome a customer for them, with his popular and practical ideas of workingmen's freedom and human rights.

Vilna's "Christian Soviet" still flourishes. When I was there last, in the spring of 1920, it had twenty thousand members and was carrying on a more extensive work than ever, enlarging its school and its co-operative store and adding a harness shop to its activities. With generous supplies furnished through the American Red Cross, the league was able to feed and clothe thousands of needy instead of mere hundreds. A shoe shop had also been opened, and here I saw huge heaps of discarded old American shoes, of every imaginable size, style and degree of depravity, being remade into good stout footgear for the children and labourers of Vilna.

The Princess who told me this remarkable story was not herself a Pole, but a Georgian, from the ancient kingdom of Georgia in the Caucasus. A refugee since the Bolshevik upheaval in Russia, she had thrown in her lot with the Poles, and, as she spoke a remarkably fluent English and possessed a high literary culture, she had now become a teacher of English in the Vilna University.

IV

The very mention of the Vilna University touches the soul of this old city and links us with the great past of Poland, when the nation first took its stand as a pioneer civilizing force on the Eastern frontiers, destined to breed, as we have seen, a race so valiant and fearless that even the terrorism of the Red Soviets had no fears for them.

To tell the story of Vilna and its University we must go back once more to the Treaty of Horodlo, with its historic clause of union "based on love";—back even to pagan times when

Lithuania was still a land of heathens, adoring strange gods, and, like our South-west Indians, worshipping the snake as a sacred symbol. (One wonders how much Old Nick in the Garden of Eden had to do with all that!) Traces of those unenlightened times are still to be found in remote Lithuanian villages; but the country has been for centuries Christian in faith and Polish in culture, the terms being synonymous in this part of the world.

In the heart of Vilna, topping a steep hill (now the centre of handsome public gardens) stands Gedymin's Tower, the remains of the fortress and castle of Gedymin, the last pagan ruler of Lithuania and the first Lithuanian chieftain to seek a union with Poland, in order to fight off the incursions of the Teutons coming in from the north and west. At the foot of this hill stands the beautiful Cathedral of St. Stanislas, with its stately campanile set apart; the Cathedral itself an imposing edifice, built in the classic style of a Greek temple, with a Doric portico, the colouring of the whole a creamy white, rich against the green background of the hill.

Founded in 1387, this ancient Cathedral occupies the exact site of the pagan sanctuary of Perkunas, the Lithuanian god of light. Thus, if we stand at Gedymin's Tower, looking out over the city, with the Cathedral of St. Stanislas below us, we can review, as it were, by the corporal eye, the history of Vilna from its pagan days to its present state, from the time that it was a little fortified town containing a few hundred people, to its twentieth century population of a hundred thousand and more, its modern traffic and busy railway lines and factories. If by chance, while you stand there, an aeroplane with its flying man whirrs overhead, en route to Moscow, then indeed the span seems long between other days and this.

Invaded from the west by the always depredating Teutons, forebears of the German marauders of our own age, who came carrying the Cross and remained to wield the sword of extermination; harassed on the east by the Muscovites, the moment came when Lithuania's only safety lay in union with Poland. That union was first consummated in 1386, when Jadwiga of Krakow, relinquishing her love romance with an Austrian prince, consented to marry Jagiello, Gedymin's son, and become Queen of Lithuania as well as of her own Polish realm. From that time, with Jagiello's conversion to Christianity, dates the rise of Vilna as a capital and a centre of Western culture. All Lithuania followed its Prince to baptism, and in the year after his marriage he founded this Christian Cathedral which rises below us at the foot of Gedymin's Hill, setting its foundations on the very spot where his ancestors from unremembered time had worshipped their mythological deities. A few years later, in 1413, he signed the Treaty of Horodlo, "based on love," which never has been abrogated and which

remains in effect to this day, despite even the long Russian occupation and the more recent German intriguing to the contrary. As for the manner of the Russian's one hundred and fifty-year occupation of Vilna and Lithuania, it took its gesture from the self-righteous declaration of the first Muscovite seizure, in 1656: "God gave Lithuania into the Czar's hands, and the Czar must not return what God gave him to anyone!"

There is a famous "Silver Chapel" in the Vilna Cathedral, a rich sanctuary of marbles and precious metals where the sarcophagus of St. Kasimir is to be seen and the tombs of eight of the kings and queens of Poland. An interesting old Madonna is here also, the gift of the Greek Emperor Palealogus. Everything in sight speaks not only of Christianity, but of that momentous change five hundred years ago, when Lithuania, the last country in Europe to abandon paganism, accepted the Latin culture which Poland brought her. The sacred fire of Perkunas is long extinguished. The sanctuary lamp of the Eucharist burns in its stead. Even Bolshevism left no trace here of its brief but godless régime, not daring to lay hands on these consecrated precincts—as it did not dare to keep on its cap when it passed the Ostrobrama The Soviet Commissars, Vilnovians say, skirted as clear of St. Stanislas Cathedral as they did of the Virgin's Gate.

Jadwiga of Poland brought not only the faith, but the culture of the West, to this corner of the world: schools developed rapidly. Within a little more than a century after Horodlo the Polish educational system had progressed in Lithuania to such an extent that the foundation of a university was demanded. In 1583 King Stefan Bathory opened the University of Vilna, and a new era of cultural development began, to continue uninterruptedly for two hundred and fifty years, until the blind hate of Russian despotism and the fear of the intellectual ascendancy of the Pole put an end to it.

In 1830, following the Polish insurrection of that year, Czar Nicholas I abolished the University. The closing of schools was one of the favourite disciplines of the partitioners of Poland whenever the Polish people dared to assert their national rights. Prussians and Russians alike knew well how to touch the Pole to the quick. His appetite for education is insatiable (as one sees to-day in every university town of Poland, where hundreds of students, departing from all Old World tradition, are working and earning their way through school; in Warsaw going even so far as to become restaurant waiters—a "shocking" and not an easy thing to do in custom-bound Europe). But the first official act of the new Republic, following the liberation of Vilna on Easter, 1919, was the reopening of the old university.

In the meantime, during the long years of its functioning, a record had been made by the Vilna University which, gauged by any high standard, would have been more than honourable, but which was nothing short of remarkable when one considers how this city has stood at all times a frontier town, touching on the hinterland of a culture as different from ours as East can be from West. It became the radiating centre of a great educational system, spreading out such a network of schools that at the present time (and this after more than one hundred years of Russian reactionism) nineteen hundred of the twenty-five hundred schools in the district (73 per cent.) are Polish. In 1773, when a great new educational revival swept over Poland, Vilna took the lead, still retaining its laurels as the Polish pioneer of modern reform and progress. It was here that Father Hugo Kollentay, one of Kosciuszko's chief collaborators in the Revolution of 1794, worked out those schemes which crystallized in the establishment of the first national educational commission founded in Europe. Lelewel, the father of Polish historians, whose ethnographical maps created a new department in learning, studied at Vilna. From Vilna also came the financier Lubecki, who astounded the diplomats at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 with his mastery of economics. He was the founder of the Bank of Poland, the "father of Polish industry."

To review the history of Vilna and of Lithuania is to review five centuries of the progress of Polish culture. It is a curious fact that more of the great and world-known names among Polish leaders came from this district than from any other part of the country. It was Lithuania that produced Poland's greatest patriot, Kosciuszko, whose name at once links this far-off land to America, and seems to open the way for those Americans who came in 1920 to repay in part our debt to Poland—the Directors and Surgeons of the American Red Cross who established at the Vilna University a great hospital and school of modern war-surgery, and the scientists of the Harvard Research Unit, who, under the auspices of the League of Red Cross Societies, made here their epochal researches into the deadly typhus germ. The name of Mickiewicz, Poland's national poet, is inextricably woven into the story of Vilna. It was at Vilna University that he began his long life of patriotic apostleship, and it was from this university that he was exiled by Russia, never to see his native forests again, though he was to immortalize them in literature. Another of Poland's chief poets, Krasynski, the prophetic author of *The Undivine Comedy*, was the son of a Lithuanian mother, a Radziwill. Kowalewski, a famous Orientalist, is still another illustrious son of the Vilna school, a man whose life story in a special manner sums up the Polish characteristics of tenacity of purpose and

common sense. He was an exile for thirty-five years, but instead of repining in his desolation, he set about to make life worth while as best he could in the Far East to which he had been banished, and became in time the first authority of his day on Oriental languages and history. Unfortunately for scholarship, his entire collection of manuscripts and original documents was destroyed by the Russians, when a bonfire was made of the contents of the Zamoyski Palace in Warsaw in reprisal for the Polish uprising of 1863. Other treasured relics, among them Chopin's piano and many of his priceless letters to his mother, were burned in the same fire.

The poet Slowacki, the statesman Czartoryski, the novelist Kraszewski—the "Polish Dumas" he has been called, not alone for the quality of his writings, but because he produced six hundred and thirty volumes during his lifetime, not counting journalistic writings;—these names and many others are on Vilna's honour list, either because of nativity or education; while the city's records in art and music reveal a civic theatre opened as early as 1783, where the first opera of Moniuszko, the composer of "Halka," was produced in 1858. Finally, in our own day, there is Sienkiewicz, whom we know best as the author of *Quo Vadis?* And there is the Chief of State of the Polish Republic at the present moment, the unique soldier and statesman Josef Pilsudski.

V

Vilna has been a storm-centre always. Plundered by Prussians, Swedes, Cossacks, Germans and Bolsheviks, it has had the sort of history that either makes or breaks a city's generations of men: either they go down or they stand. Vilna has stood.

In modern times the storm begins with the coming of Napoleon. The strategic centre of his advance into Russia in 1812 was here; and here too the defeated Marshal of the World returned in midwinter of the same fatal year of 1812, to tarry just long enough to don the disguise under which he fled for his life on the night of December 6th. By this time he was well schooled to declare, as he did later in his days of exile, "My failure to establish a strong Poland, the cornerstone of European stability; my failure to destroy Prussia; and my blunder in regard to Russia, were the three great errors of my life."

It was during this campaign that Napoleon pointed out one of the churches of Vilna—St. Anne's—as being so beautiful a piece of architecture that he regretted he could not carry it off to Paris with him. The immortal freebooter need not have stopped at such a mere trifle as a large stone church. He had already inflicted heavier loss than that on Poland. Of the eighty thousand

Poles who had volunteered to serve under his eagle, only three thousand returned home after the Moscow disaster.

After Napoleon, Vilna became one of the prime centres of the Russification system of the Czars. Memorials of Muriaviev "the hangman," notorious for his repressions, are still to be found in the city. But Vilna remained Polish, regardless, and grew ever more and more Polish at such a steady pace that to-day the Polish proportion of its Slavic population is almost ten to one—71,000 Poles to 7,600 others. (The Jewish population is counted separately. It is 45 per cent. of the total, Vilna being one of the chief Jewish centres of the world, and the seat of the most conservative Rabbinical seminary in Europe.)

The Russian Government took a census of these districts in 1897, which practically eliminated the Polish inhabitants. That is, on paper. When the Germans came in 1916, they had only this Russian census to go by; but they soon hit upon actual figures which surprised them. "Minorities" turned out to be majorities at such a rate that in a short time the invaders were obliged to dismiss their Russian interpreters and employ Polish. The Germans, in fact, were not so foolish as the Russians, who preferred to blind themselves to facts rather than face them and deal with them. An official report to the German High Command, January 3, 1917, making record of conditions in Lithuania as found by the Prussian military, contains this interesting passage:

> Poles alone have the advantage of possessing initiative, both in politics and other affairs. If it is impossible to govern without their co-operation in time of war, it would be even more difficult in time of peace, since no other nationalities in Lithuania offer any prospect of serious stable government.

It was not co-operation, however, that the Germans demanded of the Poles, but submission. And from that fact rises the whole Lithuanian question of the present, a question which makes Vilna a centre of world importance, one of the vital factors in the problem of European peace.

VI

When the Germans lost in 1918, after hanging on as long as they dared in these parts, they treacherously slipped the keys of Vilna into the hand of their friend Lenin. "We sent Lenin into Russia," writes Ludendorf in his memoirs, "to attempt the ruin of the Russian army. It was an extremely risky undertaking, but it succeeded beyond our greatest expectations." (Assuredly it did!) Then, in the spring of 1919, as we have seen, the Poles liberated Vilna from the Bolsheviks. In 1920 the Bolsheviks came again, this time better equipped than ever with German

officers, arms and ammunition. Once more they were defeated by the Poles—but Vilna was not returned to Poland. Instead it was claimed by the Lithuanians, that is, by the "political" Lithuanians of Kovno, a claim which was at once disputed by a small army of Vilna Lithuanians and Poles who seized the city under the command of a Polish general, Zeligowski, and held it until the popular vote of 1922 proclaimed the city once more Polish before all the world.

But who are the Lithuanians?

The Lithuanians are the racial descendants of those people who in Jagiello's day signed the Treaty of Horodlo. That treaty, as I have said, still stands. But when Germany came into this great timber country, the forest wealth of which it would be difficult to compute, she coveted it not only for its untouched riches, but as a key to Baltic supremacy and a corridor to Russia. She set about, therefore, to destroy that union, "based on love," which had existed for more than five centuries, and sought to replace it by disunion, based on hate. In other words, she began to play here in the north the same game of intrigue and quarrel-making that she had played in the Ukraine among the Ruthenians, stirring up a "new national" anti-Polish movement among the Lithuanian minorities.

The Lithuanians are not Slavs, and the mother tongue is as different from Polish as Greek is from Latin. This archaic language, a survival of tribal times, has never risen to the dignity of a literary expression; it is only in recent years that it was even written down. According to their vital statistics, moreover, the Lithuanians might indeed be called a disappearing race, their birth-rate registering only seven per thousand to the twenty per thousand of the Poles. In all there are about 1,800,000 Lithuanians in their native land, with some 800,000 immigrants scattered in different parts of the world; the entire number of Lithuanians in existence being thus hardly 3,000,000 at the very most. In the city of Vilna, the old Lithuanian capital, with a population of about 150,000, there are not four thousand of the aboriginal people; in the entire Vilna district, not seven thousand. Politically these few thousands are, according to the elections held in 1919 and 1922, less than negligible, either voting the Polish ticket as Poles or abstaining altogether, no distinct Lithuanian vote being registered. The only anti-Polish vote in these elections was that of the Jews.

Where then, one asks, are the 1,800,000 Lithuanians noted above as being in their native land? They are in the Kovno district, west and north of Vilna, where Lithuania borders on the East Prussian frontiers. This latter fact is significant.

At Kovno the Lithuanians have set up a government or "Taryba" of their own. But this Kovno Government has

been so markedly Prussian in its attitude and deliberations since the period of German occupation, 1916–1918, that it has never attained the degree of credit among neighbouring peoples which a legitimate and genuinely native Lithuanian Government would. To such a government, that is, to one purely and honestly Lithuanian, or to the existence of a separate Lithuania, the Poles seem to have no objection. On the contrary, they would evidently welcome it as a solution of the Lithuanian problem, realizing that such a government, with the Lithuanian people really behind it, would be Poland's natural ally. It is the palpable German nature of the Kovno Taryba, as it has revealed itself so far, that must be questionable, not alone to the Poles, but to all who are interested in peace. A nation of less than 2,000,000 people, set in such an important keystone situation as Lithuania's, must have a strong ally to help preserve its integrity. Germany could not be that ally: Lithuanian integrity would quickly disappear under German dominance.

But Germany, bent on converting the Baltic Sea into a German Lake, determined on domination in the East and an open passage-way into Russia, has clenched her fist tight on Kovno, and will keep her stranglehold there as long as the Lithuanians or the Allies permit her; and the Lithuanians are not strong enough to resist alone. Unsettlement in the Baltic States is Germany's avowed policy, and her only means of retaining what she calls "spheres of influence." "We need Lithuania and the Ukraine as German outposts," Erzberger wrote in April 1919. "Poland must be weakened," he goes on, "for if we succeed in keeping Poland down, it will mean enormous gains for us. In the first place (i.e. with Poland down), France's position on the Continent in the long run is untenable. Second, the way to Russia is then open. That is, even to a blind man, Germany's future. We will undertake the restoration of Russia, and in the possibility of such support, we will be ready within ten or fifteen years to bring France without any difficulty under our power. The march toward Paris will be easier then than in 1914. Russia is now ripe, if planted with German seed, to come into the great German future. Nothing must disturb us in the great problem before us. Poland is the sole but very powerful obstacle. If we succeed in hindering the building up of a strong Poland, then the future is quite clear to us."

It was before this dictum of Erzberger's, however, that Germany's Lithuanian scheme was disclosed. As early as September 1918 certain letters of Ludendorf, written to the then German Foreign Minister, von Hintze, fell into the hands of M. Korfanty, at that time a Polish delegate in the German Reichstag. These letters, which revealed all and more than Erzberger said later, were

read by Korfanty in the Reichstag in November 1918, but no newspaper publishing a word of them was permitted to pass out of Germany.

So it is that Vilna, outpost of Western civilization in the Baltic hinterland, centre of Latin culture and thriving modern commercial city, stands also as one of the integral factors not alone in the political problems of the new Poland, but in the problems of the whole new world which has been created by the War. In one sense it might be said that Vilna is the keystone to peace in Europe as well as the rock on which Poland's continued existence rests. It is the outstanding point of direct contact between Russia and Poland. That Russia, now in chaos, will rise again all Poles believe. Will the new Russia be Poland's friend? Or will she still be controlled, as she was for so many years in the recent past, by Germany, whose efforts to hold the Baltic continue unabated to this hour and will never cease?

Trade is the touchstone; and trade advantages would point to a Polish-Russian entente. The more or less mutual knowledge of the Polish and Russian tongues among the two peoples, and their immediate contiguity along a frontier of hundreds of miles, should be deciding factors in the problem. Besides, Russia's bitter knowledge of the fruits of German intrigue, the immediate cause of all her present ruin (the military debacle, 1915–1917, engineered from Petrograd by the German Stürmer; the Lenin-Trotsky disaster, 1917 to date, planned and paid for by Germany): all this terrible experience may hold the Russia of to-morrow aloof from the Teuton and incline her toward friendship with Poland. At the same time, the general temper displayed by the people of the two countries lends colour to this possibility; for the Poles do not hate the Russians; and, outside of the old circle of extreme reactionaries, the Russians do not hate the Poles, the Bolshevik politicians never having succeeded in rousing any genuine anti-Polish feeling among the Russian masses. The Polish attitude is well expressed in the words of the Russian publicist Merijkowsky, who, in speaking of the Polish Chief of State, Pilsudski, declared "he has no stones to throw at Russia."

It all depends on who the leaders of the new Russia are to be. There lies the world's mystery to-day. If they are hostile to Poland; if German capital and German trade (already entrenched in Russia through the German-speaking Jew), prove too strong a temptation, too attractive an aid to Russian reconstruction, the Russians will not be slow in striving to regain the Polish dominions lost to them since 1915. They will strike Vilna first. The Polish-Russian boundary treaties made between Warsaw and the Bolsheviks will mean nothing then. There will be another war which will inevitably involve the whole of Europe; for France would be vitally concerned.

Whatever the future, Vilna itself can never be anything but Polish, as she has been for over five hundred years and as she has remained through more than a century of Russian rule. Her sentiments are on record definitely, now, since the election of 1922; but even before that, in April 1919, immediately after the Easter liberation, a great mass meeting of Vilna citizens sent a stirring message to Warsaw proclaiming the town's allegiance to the Polish nation: " Vilna, besprinkled with Polish blood, feels itself once more intimately united to the great heart of Poland. It is because it recognizes this unalterable union that it submits itself to the will of the Polish Government and recognizes no other authority as supreme. The heart of Vilna overflows with love and gratitude, and turns toward Warsaw and the Vistula."

" Nor can that endure which is not based on love."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

POLAND AND THE SEA

I

THE Fires of St. John, a fête celebrated in all the countries of the Old World on the eve of St. John's Day, June 23rd, has taken on a special significance in Poland since the War. In other times the "Wianka" or Festival of the Wreaths, recalling the tragic fate of the legendary Wanda who drowned herself rather than submit to a Prussian suitor, was merely a quaint bit of "midsummer madness"—the lighted garlands of youths and maidens, gay with coloured lamps, set adrift on the river to "touch, kiss, and be captured" and to foretell an imaginary fate; the singing and the inevitable dancing; all combining to make a lovers' holiday. But when I saw the Wianka, it meant much more than this. It meant Poland's love for the sea, her longing for the open tide, access to the outer world.

No prettier pageant could be imagined than that enacted at Warsaw on St. John's Eve, 1920. The river terraces were literally covered with people; there must have been a hundred thousand massed there in the bright dusk along the banks, in the Vistula Gardens, on the bridges, waiting for darkness to come and the beginning of the fête. Then, when night fell at last, and the air was sweet with the music of bands on the shore and the singing of young people on the boats in midstream, the play commenced.

Barges, decked with green branches, flowers and garlands, some of them solid masses of upright trees gay with the tremble of Chinese lanterns and the flutter of pennants and flags and steamers of every colour, made their entrance on the scene one after another, dropping their own wreaths into the water and joining in the stately pursuit to capture the wreaths of others. These barges, looking like little forested islands set adrift, appeared from under the great Poniatowski Bridge; and as each emerged silently from the pitch black darkness beyond, greeted always, after a hushed moment, by shouts and cheers, a huge searchlight struck it with the full shaft of its broad ray, giving it the effect of a majestic entrance, as a player queen might enter the stage under the spotlight. Then there were fireworks, spraying the dark river with showers of

fairy lights, revealing the green slopes and wooded banks of the Praga shore opposite in flitting blazes of illumination ; whereat, one could be very sure, the thoughts of many in that crowd travelled far to the eastward where Véry-lights perhaps at that very moment were picking out the advance of the Russian hordes. That green Praga shore, now with its holiday throngs watching the fête, was reddened once with Polish blood, a hundred years ago, when the massacre of Suvorov the Russian drove 13,000 into the river, or slaughtered them before they could reach the water. Was such a tragedy again in store for Poland ?

In 1920 the Danzig question was greatly occupying the public mind, and it was not difficult to imagine that the thoughts of many that night, passing the memory of the bloody tragedy of Praga, followed the Vistula and the wreaths that drifted on its current, floating " down north " beyond heroic Plock, beyond lovely old square-towered Torun, the birthplace of Copernicus ; on to Danzig and the Baltic. Would even one of those floating garlands ever reach the open sea ? And would that be an augury of Poland's future ? So much of that future lies on the sea and in the one time Polish port of Gdansk, as its name was spelled in olden times, before the Germans made it over.

II

During another memorable pageant a few months before, when the " Marriage of Poland and the Sea " had been solemnized at Putsk after the departure of the Germans, General Haller, riding his white charger into the surf and saluting the tide with drawn sword, had declared that " Poland's desire for the sea, for an open port and access to the world, can be likened in its ardour to the desire of Icarus for the sun." I remembered those words the night of the Wianka, for I had already seen, a few weeks previously, something not only of Poland's desire for, but of her need of a seaport. In April of that year, when the American Red Cross was taking care of the Polish-American soldiers of Haller's Army, then being shipped home viâ the Baltic to New York, I had spent some time in Danzig. That business had been considerably hampered by petty annoyances and obstructions, thanks to the German officials who were still in power there ; for though Danzig had been made a free city by the Allies, and was nominally under the control of their High Commissioner (a British officer), no actual change in the government of the town had ever taken place. This was nothing surprising, it is true, to anyone who had gone beyond the beaten track of the World War ; for at every outpost to which she can cling Germany is even yet to be found hanging on tenaciously with a sort of desperate hold-over authority,

half bluff, half intrigue, and all camouflage. This Prussian officialism I found, in Danzig's case, on interviewing Oberburgemeister Sahm and other functionaries, to be largely made up of contempt for all things Polish, a professed conviction that " Poland won't last," and a warmly avowed admiration for the Bolsheviks and " the wonderful Soviet Army "—that wonderful Red horde which, as we were to see a few months later, Berlin was to encourage and to actually consider joining, in order to crush the Poles. Later in the same year, when the Bolsheviks were at the gates of Warsaw, the world was to see still another example of the hatred of the Prussian, when the German dockmen at Danzig, not discouraged by the Allied High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Tower, refused to unload arms and ammunition shipped in there for the Polish defence forces. And once again, in the summer of 1921, when the Germans were flouting Allied authority in Silesia, we were to witness the strange coincidence of Danzig (still under the nominal control of a British Allied Commissioner) refusing to permit Allied reinforcements to pass, at exactly the same moment that the British Government was disputing with France the necessity for those reinforcements.

At first glance it is difficult to " place " Danzig. One is inclined after a day of it to say: " At last here is one corner of the world where the German won, where the Pole lost out. This isn't Poznan." But a few days more of it, a little intercourse with its people and a little looking behind the scenes, changes one's view. The final conclusion is that Danzig, after all, is Polish. It has really been Polish for a thousand years, despite two intervals of German rule (from 1309 to 1454, and from 1793 to date) ; in both cases the city being wrung by Prussian violence from the sovereignty of Poland. And it is Polish still, regardless of a German veneer and the preponderance of German numbers in its present population.

Go where you will in Danzig, Polish landmarks face you. The White Eagle of Poland surmounts the town's ancient gates and spreads its wings in the city Council Chamber. The figure of King Sigismund rides the weather-vane of the Town Hall. The arms of Poland stand in the Guild House, or Artushof ; there is even preserved there a portrait of Napoleon (one of the favourite heroes of the Poles, but hardly of the Germans !) whose troops, after the Moscow retreat, left Danzig not as defeated, but with the acclaim and regret of the populace. The works of Polish artists hang in the galleries and decorate the public buildings, notably the paintings of Chodowiecki and Stryowski, the latter in the Dealhof, a monument which Danzig owes to the munificence of still another Pole, Gieldzinski. Polish architecture likewise gives grace to the city's outlines as in the semi-Byzantine spire of St. Catherine's, with its melodious

chime of thirty-five bells. The tomb of the great astronomer Hevelius is in this church.

These innumerable Polish landmarks, still carefully preserved, seem an odd contradiction of the official attitude of Danzig toward Poland in recent times. The explanation lies in the continued supremacy in this district of the Prussian Junker, Prussian officialdom and Prussian capital. But in spite of all that, one knows well that these numerous purely Polish treasures and relics could not have remained if Danzig were not at heart a Polish town, cherishing its Polish heritage. It is the foundations of the town that are Polish; and by foundations one does not mean brick and mortar alone, but the tradition of the people. The Danzig dock labourers who proved pure Prussian in 1920, when Poland was at her crisis, were pure Prussian. Thousands of working-men were imported from Germany to Danzig after 1914, when the war industries of the town (submarine building and ammunition factories) were put at full speed by the Berlin Government. From Berlin these workmen brought to Danzig a heavy charge of the Spartakist spirit of "strafe" and Red radicalism. While we were shipping the American-Haller men home in April 1920, these Spartakists were staging a little "revolution" of their own in Danzig, out of sympathy for their Berlin brethren who were just then engaged in a like demonstration, and the person of an American was far from sacred.

As for the real feeling among the Danzig masses, it was not only shown in 1793 when the city stoutly resisted the Prussian usurpation and in 1813 when it besought the powers to reunite it to the Polish State, but in our own day one little incident which happened a few years before the War, in 1905, when the pulse of the town was still normal, serves to illustrate the abiding Polish spirit of the place. Lightning destroyed the spire of St. Catherine's, and the influential Junker ring of the town tried to put a stop to its re-erection after the old Polish design. When this became known to the public such a popular protest was raised that the Prussians were forced to drop the case. The old Polish style tower went up again.

III

Danzig is a dignified town, with a sober air despite its lively traffic and very apparent prosperity. With a population of some 200,000, a steadily growing shipping trade, and shops and factories employing thousands of workers, it makes an interesting combination of the old and the new, of an up-to-date business city set against one of the most picturesque backgrounds in Europe.

It is a delight to wander about the Danzig streets, exploring

the narrow old "langs" or lanes, reading the story of more romantic days than ours written on every gable and façade, every arched gate and thunderous door-knocker. Sometimes the town is called "The Venice of the North," because of its canals, its island at the confluence of the Radunia and the Mottlava, and its stone water-steps against which the green tide laps all day long with true Venetian languor. There is a little mill-stream cutting straight through the town, very dull and lazy above the mill, but making a cool white noisy rush over the dam below. The mill itself is one of the sights of Danzig, a huge barn-like structure of brick, with the steepest red roofs I have ever seen. They almost trail the ground.

The picturesque and the romantic confront one everywhere in Danzig. For one thing, it is an old pirate town, and if you would see some real pirates' loot of the good old freebooting days, all you need do is to step into the Chapel of St. Dorothea, in the Marienkirche or Cathedral, and look at Hans Memling's famous painting "The Last Judgment." This priceless canvas, perhaps the best preserved old master in Europe, was ordered by a Florentine, one Angelo Tani, for a church of his native town, in 1467—before even the caravels of Columbus had ventured on the high seas. But others had ventured, among them the Danziger pirate, Paul Beneke, in his ocean rover *Peter*. One day the *Peter* brought home a rare capture, flying the flag of the Duke of Burgundy and bearing a cargo worth millions of gelder. Hans Memling's wonderful canvas, painted in Bruges and shipped for the Italian coast by way of England, was included in the booty.

Another famous capture of the *Peter* was *The Swan of Caen*, in 1470, with no less a personage aboard than the Lord Mayor of London, taken as a hostage in the wars.

But the Dom, as St. Mary's is called, has other treasures even more interesting than pirate loot. In itself it is one of the most interesting mediæval sanctuaries in Europe. It is enormous, the fifth largest church in the world, with a seating capacity of 25,000, and of such vast dimensions and height and spaciousness, and so dark with its age-discoloured brick, that it fairly swallows us up when we enter it. It has a cold air, too, despite its rare old sculptures and decorations. One feels this especially as he approaches the beautiful wood-cut altar of 1507, telling in marvellous carving and gilding and colouring the story of the life of the Blessed Virgin. It lacks the warm glow of the sanctuary lamp to make it a real and living thing.

The voice of the Dom's great six-ton bell, the "Gratia Dei," still booms out deep and rich, though no longer tolled by blind ringers, whose special and exclusive privilege this once was. The "paternosters," which the donor of "Gratia Dei" begged should

be said for him whenever the bell was rung, are said no more. They vanished from the liturgy of St. Mary's long ago—when the great Church revolution of the fifteenth century drove out priests and bishops, Latin and litanies, and substituted for them prosaic *deutschsprechend* parsons. A grand new statue of Martin Luther, recently erected, commemorates those days of change four hundred years ago. Even the famous old Astronomical Clock of Düringer, the hours of which used to be struck by the Twelve Apostles, is silent. As the Polish critic said of Goethe's *Faust*, the trick of winding it was lost when its maker died.

If St. Mary's lacks the warmth and feeling which old churches in Europe usually give, it is still full of curious interest. An ancient hour-glass on the pulpit reminds us of how the congregations of older days would "time" their long-winded preachers. In the chapel of All Saints is "the bread that was turned to stone" to warn wasteful Christians against a too prodigal use of this world's goods. Also there is "The Withered Hand," which rose out of the grave, as the legend goes, to protest a broken vow. Horrible as well as curious; but not so horrible as a Pietà or Mourning Madonna, done originally in the style of Michael Angelo, but now ruined by garish paint in the most realistic mode of "sacred art."

IV

That "Withered Hand" of Danzig achieved its uncanny purpose with me, "protesting a broken vow." It reminded me sharply of the historic treachery of those German Crusaders whose story is told in Sienkiewicz's novel *Knights of the Cross*. They were the first to tear Danzig from the Polish motherland, accomplishing the deed through cruelty and infidelity. Foolishly the idealistic Poles invited the thoroughly practical Knights, famous for their crusading exploits, to come to the Baltic shores to convert to Christianity the heathens of this district, who had already martyred two missioners of the Gospel, St. Adalbert and St. Bruno. So in 1228 the Teutons came, bound by the strictest vows of religion neither to trade nor marry, but to devote themselves to the single priestly task of spreading the Faith.

In true Teuton style, however, and with that same thoroughgoing "efficiency" which even yet is regarded as an almost godlike attribute in the Germans of to-day, these vows were promptly turned into mere "scraps of paper" as soon as the greed of the Knights was stirred by the untouched riches of Poland. Before very long the Teutonic missionaries had become marauders, overrunning the country, raiding it and crushing it with the mailed fist, under an insignia that was a true prototype of that Iron Cross of the Hohenzollerns who were destined to follow them.

Religion was nothing to the Knights of the Cross except a horse to ride on into new fields of conquest. They laughed at papal interdict and excommunication. In 1308 they pounced on Danzig—it was St. Dominic's Day, a holy fête day among the Danzigers, an excellent day for a massacre!—and forthwith and without mercy they slew ten thousand of the city's inhabitants, pillaging, burning and killing for day upon day of bloody terror, until they had succeeded in practically exterminating the natives and wiping the town out of existence. That is how Danzig became German first, in the approved Teutonic manner, the only way in which German power has ever been able to completely conquer; and that too is how the notorious House of Hohenzollern had its beginning.

Had this German policy of extermination been feasible throughout the Baltic territories, the great Slavic gap which Pomerania makes between East Prussia and Germany proper would not exist to-day. But the murder of all the natives in that stretch of land was too great a task even for the lusty Teutons. They were obliged therefore to resort to the scheme of colonization. The result of this, however, was the same as in Poznania; the Polish native root was too strong and too tenacious for the engrafted German; the Teutonic settlers were absorbed by the Polish speaking natives. Germans became Poles, and Pomerania remained Polish. Thus, as the American expert Dr. Lord, at the Peace Conference, pointed out, while Germany, in spite of every device of anti-Polish proscription, has never been able to bridge this gap which separates East Prussia from the Fatherland, Poland (in face of the same proscription) has maintained unbrokenly a continuous belt of Polish speaking territory clear through to the sea.

It was not until the victory of the Poles at Grünwald (Tannenberg) in 1410, when the Teutonic Knights were crushed in battle by Jagiello, that Danzig recovered from the blow of Dominic's Day, 1308. Then, for three centuries following Grünwald, Danzig enjoyed its Golden Age, under what even the German guide-book calls "the genial and powerful Polish sovereignty." It was an age of great prosperity and achievement, marked by the founding of an Academy, a Library, a Society of Science, and by an expansion of trade beyond all the dreams of the Danzig shippers. This trade reached even to Genoa and to Venice, as one of the historic paintings in the Town Hall tells.

It was during this golden age that the Scotch began to discover Poland and that English trade flourished in Danzig. Permanent reminders of both Scotch and English in Danzig are to be seen in the picturesque old English House; the English Chapel, still in use, the first minister of which was the one time chaplain of Holyrood, and the Douglas Gate, named after William Douglas, who was slain by the English at the Bridge of Danzig in 1390.

There is likewise a Danzig suburb known as Old Scotland, dating from 1433, and a street called "Scottish Lane."

The Scotch did not stop at Danzig, but penetrated into Poland proper, where a strong Scotch tradition grew up, to be encountered to this day in Warsaw, Krakow, Poznan, Lublin, and other cities. In 1640 there were said to be 30,000 Scots in Poland. It was a Scotch poet, Thomas Campbell, who perhaps first put Poland into popular English literature, while the name of Lord Dudley Stuart is written in some of the most heroic pages of Polish history.

V

In 1793, when Germany for the second time seized on Poland, Danzig again suffered. It was then that the elder Schopenhauer, father of the Danzig philosopher, became a voluntary exile from his native town, declaring that the Prussian conquest had put an end to liberty. Bismarck's iron hand afterwards drove Danzig's sea trade to Libau and Windau, and the persistent dog-in-the-manger policy of Berlin, cutting Danzig off from the Polish plain, her natural trade-land, gradually stagnated her to the rank of a third-rate port. Hohenzollern favour gave preference to Wilhelmshaven and Kiel as naval bases, at Danzig's cost, while the ocean traffic which would have been hers under normal conditions went to the booming of Stettin, Bremen and Hamburg.

The figures of Danzig's grain exports during the years when the port had free access to Poland, compared to those of the later period when Berlin controlled the destinies of the town, tell the story. In 1617 (under Polish sovereignty) Danzig's grain exports were 289,000 tons. In 1871 (following seventy years of German rule) they had dropped to 189,000 tons, and by 1900 were reduced to 180,000 tons ; a total falling off of more than 37 per cent.

In spite of all this the town flourished, becoming a great industrial centre, which it remains to the present day. One needs only to walk through Danzig's quaint but very busy streets, with their high-gabled, wide-porched houses, and their constant stream of traffic, or along the bustling water-front, to see how the city thrives. Great granaries and warehouses crowd the harbour ; and these, with the historic Tors, or gates, tall and red roofed, flanking the Motlava, give the skyline an odd blend of old and new world fashion. The shops brim with curious wares, most attractive of them all the amber, for which the Baltic has been famous from time immemorial. For at Danzig we are on the historic Amber Coast, where those wonderful jewels of the sea, "fossil sunbeams," have been mined from the deep for ages, back at least as far as Greek and Roman times. Beads and necklaces, pins and bars and pendants, brooches and pipe-stems, and a thousand and one other

tempting trinkets are shown, cut and carved from this gem-like substance. Best of all are the uncut amber lumps—I have seen them as large as a quart measure—coming to the purchaser just as they are cast up by the sea, rough and clear, pale yellow, topaz, or a deep golden hue, clouded, or with the proverbial fly caught for ever in their translucent depths, as if to remind us of an antediluvian day when flies, the common kitchen variety, were exactly like their bothersome descendants of the twentieth century.

The amber trade yields a neat income to the Danzigers. But it is only a side line. Their wealth lies in their lumber, grain and sugar traffic, and in their flourishing manufactories. Through the harbour of Danzig the riches of the mines, the timber lands, and the wheat fields of the new Poland begin already to pour a stream of gold. The fertile plains which the Vistula waters, before it empties itself into the Baltic, were once called " the granary of Europe." To-day many signs point to an early reclaiming of the dignity of that title—a very important dignity in these days when half Europe still cries for bread. Poland soon can feed herself, and others too, once her devastated fields are refertilized and machinery is put at her disposal.

Though the Treaty of Versailles may have made no more aggravating blunder than its failure to restore Danzig to Poland, this blunder, at any rate, unlike others of its kind, is not wholly irretrievable. At least the Poles seem to so regard it ; for they are going ahead, making the best of what rights they have secured under the Free City plan, with the result that Danzig is already expanding under the impulse of renewed Polish traffic. The disposition of many Danziger business men at the same time seems to be to cultivate the closest possible relations with the new Republic. A number of them, immediately after the re-establishment of Polish independence, organized a league and sent a delegation to Warsaw to open commercial negotiations. These preliminaries of an entente have since developed into a full working agreement which, there is no doubt, will do much toward an early restoration of the historic ties between Poland and its seaport.

Among the interesting men I met at Danzig was Admiral Borowski, a veteran of the sea, who got his training in the Russian Navy, and who was in charge of the Polish revenue interests and coast defence when I was there. He had visited America before the War, when the Russian Navy was having some ship-building contracts filled in the United States, and he knew all the Great Lake cities, from Buffalo to Superior. " What do you think I saw the first day I went down to the Cleveland water-front ? " he asked me. " One of your big lake steamers, with a Polish name ! The name was Modjeska."

VI

Poland, with 2,575 miles of navigable waterways, is a land of great rivers, but the Vistula is queen of them all. It is in many respects a remarkable stream. It is seven hundred miles long; yet the distance by land from its source in the Carpathians to its mouth at the Baltic is only three hundred and thirty miles. It winds and flows in nine different directions as it traverses the Polish plain, thus watering a basin, entirely within Polish boundaries, of 125,000 square miles—greater than the basins of the Rhine, the Elbe, the Oder or the Niemen. With ten large tributaries flowing into it from the west, and exactly the same number from the east (among these the Narew with a basin of some 50,000 square miles), the Vistula makes of Poland one of the greatest naturally irrigated tracts in Europe.

Thus Danzig, the only port of this rich field, and the largest all-the-year ice-free port in the Baltic, is much more than an interesting old treasure-town of historic memories. It is a city of the future, a future which is already assured by the records, which show that whenever Poland has flourished, Danzig also has flourished; and whenever Poland has suffered a set-back, Danzig has retrogressed. The grain export figures have already been given. Under German rule we find further that the average number of ships annually registered in the port for eight years previous to the War was about 2,500; the total imports 1,000,000 tons, exports the same. Since the re-establishment of Polish independence, Danzig's shipping figures have gone ahead of all expectations. The exports in 1919 passed the 2,000,000 mark; in the first six months of 1920 they doubled that, with the imports running over 4,000,000 tons. The Motlava, which is now deepened to take ships of heavy draught into the very heart of the city, is to be still further dredged, and the outer harbour still more enlarged. Direct steamer lines to America, as well as to English, Scandinavian, Belgian, Dutch and French ports, have already established a passenger traffic which is steadily growing.

Since the seventeenth century American ships have been making the Polish port, but it is only within the past year that American travellers have discovered the interesting sea voyage from Philadelphia or New York through northern European waters, to this busy new-old Baltic town. The distance between Poland and America seems cut in two that way. If one thinks of Poland across the Atlantic, beyond France and Switzerland and Austria and Slovakia, it seems a far-away country to be sure. But when one says, "New York to Danzig," the journey is half made already. And the tourist who takes it has unexpected pleasures in store for him, not in Danzig alone, but in the many historic scenes he may

visit in its vicinity. The country about Danzig abounds in mediæval souvenirs, old castles, churches, abbeys, towers, all the scenes that make travel worth while and history real. At Malbor (Marienburg) stands the best preserved relic of Middle Age feudalism in Europe, the stronghold of the Teutonic Knights. A short trip down the Vistula brings us to Torun, a mellow old town of red brick and steep roofs and square towers, to enter which is like turning the pages of a mediæval chronicle. A little further is Plock, with its picturesque river heights; scene of the heroic last defence of the girl soldier, Captain Sophie. The ancient seat of the Dukes of Masovia, Plock is one of the oldest towns in Poland. Its early twelfth-century cathedral is an historic treasure.

Thus it goes: if one traverses the Vistula, from mouth to source, and never leaves its banks, he may review the whole story of Poland. At Sandomierz, half way between Warsaw and Krakow, the American traveller will make a curious discovery. The coat of arms of this thousand-year old town is the same as his own national device—stars and stripes, red, white and blue, set like ours in the design of a shield. With the Eagle of Poland superimposed the likeness to the American insignia is startling. Will some energetic delver demonstrate now that Betsy Ross' name was really Rosskowska or Rossowiecz? Or was she one of the Scotch Rosses who came into Poland in the fifteenth century?

But Sandomierz is a long way from Danzig. We need travel scarcely an hour's journey from the port to see a scene as interesting as any in Poland—the seaside resort of Soboty (Zoppot), so named, one might imagine, because it is the week-end resort par excellence of the Baltic ("Soboty" for "Sobota," which means Saturday). Backed by green hills and cool forests the beaches of Soboty make a gay picture on a summer's day. Half Poland comes here to play—the half that does not go up into the cool piney mountain resorts of the Tatry, at the other end, the southern extreme, of the country. The yellow sands are crowded, the surf splashy with bathers. Gay parasols and gayer frocks set off youth and beauty here just as they do at Ostende or Brighton or Atlantic City. Blonde Polish fairness burns brown here to match the creole loveliness of its sister type. Strapping athletic fellows breasting the waves remind one of other tides which the manhood of Poland has faced through its long history of self defence. . . .

Then all such reflections vanish. A shout comes from a troop of youngsters just let loose to play on the beach. The sand flies! They are not troubling themselves about past history. They are living in the joyous present, and if half of them are German and half Polish, what matters that to them?

If the world could only play together for a while, what a difference it might make!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

KRAKOW

I

THE tourist abroad often finds himself experiencing a vague sort of disappointment in his travels. He has crossed the seas; he has come to foreign lands. But he is still decidedly on earth, the same old ordinary earth that he had thought to leave behind at home for a while; still among everyday human beings who dress in the familiar styles of Broadway and hurry about their business in the customary Main Street fashion. Even the sound of alien tongues, strange to his ear at first, soon grows commonplace.

Once or twice in his life, however, he wakes up in quite another world;—when, for example, with a few leisurely strides he passes from Paris and all that the Boulevards signify, across the Pont Neuf to the Left Bank, and enters the city of St. Genevieve and St. Louis, of Julian and Cluny and François Villon. Or when he turns in from the Florence railway station to the cloisters of Santa Maria Novella, or goes a pace further to the Lungarno, or walks through the cool canyon-like streets of Savonarola's and Dante's time, from Giotto's tower, across the Rubicante, to the cypresses of San Miniato. . . .

Or when he comes to Krakow.

Some liken Krakow to Bruges, some to Winchester, some to Alt Nuremburg; some to Angers. But after all, it is like nothing else but itself alone. It is old—so very old, that there is no reckoning its age. True, there are chronicles going back to A.D. 600; but Krakow's foundations are not laid in "A.D." nor even in "B.C." but in legend and mythology. Deep in the solid rock of the old royal hill of Vavel we find the dark chambers of the "Dragon's Cave," a vast series of subterranean caverns of which history gives no explanation. Again there is the familiar "Devil's Hole" where "Pan Twardowski" met the demon and traded his soul for power— a fable recently put into ballet music by Rozycki, and used long ago by the national poet Mickiewicz. Legend accounts for these caves; the geologists and archæologists rank them among the oldest known repositories of human civilization in existence but they are too old for history. In the bluffs near

Krakow still other caverns are found, the prehistoric dwellings of the Jura hillmen of the Stone Age—literally the cave men of our school geographies. When we read of them in the old days back home they seemed too remote and vague to be visualized. But here they suddenly conjure themselves into gigantic reality as we touch the actual substance of their time. Here indeed one seems to touch the foundations of the world.

Then there are the grave-mounds, or tumuli of "Krakus" and "Vanda," whose stories are closely woven into Polish lore. These are unmistakably the remains of a pagan epoch; perhaps they have some relation to our Indian mounds in America. Who can tell? I have seen peasants in these districts who bore a strong resemblance to our aboriginal red men. Krakus is the mythical founder of Krakow and the slayer of the Vavel Dragon; Vanda, his daughter, is Poland's first legendary queen. Her story is one of tragedy. Pressed by a hated German suitor, who sought to take her by force of arms, but against whom she fought valiantly at the head of her own little band of troops—the first girl legionary—she at length threw herself into the Vistula rather than submit to the victory of the alien prince; or, as another version of the legend puts it, rather than ever to cause bloodshed again, so driven to despair was she by the horrors of war.

There is a significant point to both these stories of prehistoric Krakow. It is for the liberty of his people that Krakus fights, for a Poland long terrorized by the dragon of oppression, who exacts human sacrifice to placate his wrath and satisfy his greed. And Vanda fights and dies rather than be subject to an alien master. Polish history is summed up in these two legends.

II

Krakow is built on hills and circled with a ring of beautiful public gardens, the "Planty," which mark the site of the ancient walls. The moment one sets foot in this charming city, old-time things confront him. One step from the station is the Rondel, a 1498 barbican, a huge red brick bastion, bristling with ancient fierceness, with memories of stone cannon-balls, boiling pitch, and all the now harmless terrors of mediæval war. What a mellow, quaint old thing it has become! Will the instruments of our scientific warfare of to-day ever grow quaint and mellow?

Beyond the Barbican is St. Florian's Gate, through which we must pass to enter the business district. Remains of the ancient walls still stand; old towers, recalling in their names the Middle Age guilds—"the Tower of the Lacemakers," "the Joiners' Tower," "the Carpenters' Tower." We are soon transported to a world that seems far removed from motor cars and aeroplanes.

The clang of a trolley beyond the Florian Gate, the "toot" of an automobile shooting under its turreted arch, seem to break the picture. The gaily dressed peasant, garbed as his ancestors were garbed, time beyond reckoning, driving by with his basket-cart and his tawny little horse—these fit better into the scene.

In the centre of the town we come to the Rynek, or market-place, where in olden times the kings of Poland, upon their election, received the homage of the people; where tournaments were held, and all public concourses. It was here that the historic game of "konik" was played and still is played, though in a much modified fashion in modern times; a game which gives us a curious touch of the ever recurring parallel between the stories of Poland and America. "Konik" celebrates a feat in Polish history much resembling our ride of Paul Revere. The Polish hero, whose name was Micinski, saved the city of Krakow during one of the Tartar invasions by galloping all night through the countryside, rousing the people with a warning of the advancing hordes. To commemorate this deed the pageant of "konik" ("little horse") was instituted, in which a peasant, either riding a hobby-horse or wearing a miniature carved horse slung from his belt, appears in the Rynek, joyously "rousing" the crowd with an imitation mace, stuffed with straw. He is heralded by drums and whistles and by the delighted shouts of children who love to get in his way, and he has the privilege of extracting pennies or other booty from all whom he "rouses," as his ancestors have had ever since the game was invented. For the "konik rider" is always a Micinski.

One of Krakow's most celebrated landmarks, the Sukiennice, or Market Hall, stands in the Rynek, a beautiful Renaissance structure, stamped with old Italian grace—delicately pinnacled roofs, long colonnades, quaint outside stairways. That the age of this building goes far back of the Renaissance, however, one realizes as soon as he descends to its cellars; for these cellars are really the arcades of the original first story, so high has the level of the city risen through the passing centuries. In 1241, during a Mongol invasion, Krakow was left a heap of ruins, then rebuilt; and it has suffered wreck, fire and bombardment many times since, although during the war it escaped injury.

All about us, as we stand in the Rynek, are the façades of old palaces and houses, the homes of the rich burghers of other times, with wide arched entrances and vistas of cool courtyards beyond. If it be market day, we are in the midst of a scene of the liveliest colour and animation. Vendors' stalls fill the colonnades of the Sukiennice; some of them overflow with flowers; and as gay as the flowers are the bright costumes of the peasants, canary and violet, pink and amaranth, crowding around the shops to buy, or

selling their fine woodcarvings, their fresh butter and mountain cheeses, their dried mushrooms and curded milk.

In one corner of the Rynek is the "cabmen's church," the Chapel of St. Adalbert dating from the year 980. It is called the cabmen's church because it is frequented by the drosky drivers, who have their stands here in this square; and it is so little that it seems almost like a toy beside the towering Panna Marya and the spacious Sukiennice which overshadow it. Sometimes people say it is "the smallest church in the world," and sometimes they say it is the smallest church in Krakow—and thereby hangs a favourite bit of Krakovian badinage to which all visitors are sooner or later treated. Not far from St. Adalbert's tiny chapel is the beautiful Church of St. Peter, built by King Sigismund III in 1597, and modelled after St. Peter's at Rome: an imposing nobly-domed edifice, fronted by a scupltured stone fencing which is topped by life-size statues of the Apostles. "But which *is* the smallest church in Krakow?" your questioner persists. "Why, St. Adalbert's, of course." "No; St. Peter's." "But St. Peter's—why St. Peter's?" "Because St. Peter's is so small there isn't room even for the Twelve Apostles."

While you listen to the story of St. Adalbert, stooping your way through the tiny doorway of his little shrine, and then emerge from its ruby-lit shadows into the bright air of the plaza again, a feeling takes hold of you that you are not only on historic but actually on holy ground. And true enough; for Christianity was preached ages ago on this very spot by saints and martyrs. Perhaps Cyril and Methodius, who first brought the Faith to these Eastern countries, once trod these ways. Certain it is that St. Adalbert did, for authentic records tell of his preaching in the Krakow Rynek before he started on his journey north, to meet death at the hands of the heathen Prussians. St. Hyacinth was here in 1223, and St. John Capistrano in 1453. His is a familiar name, from the old Spanish Mission of San Juan Capistrano near Los Angeles. During her long years of residence in California, the Mission of San Juan was a special care of Madame Modjeska. A daughter of Krakow, she did not forget that its patron was once a guest in her native town.

But whatever saints of the olden days spoke in the Krakow Rynek, there is one voice of modern times of which we can be sure, the sound of which echoed to the same walls that stand here to-day—the voice of Kosciuszko. That voice had rung out with command at West Point, and in the Carolina wilderness, along the wilds of the Pedee and the Catawba, when America was fighting for her liberty; and here it spoke the same message a few years later. A brief carving in the pavement of the Rynek marks the stone upon which Kosciuszko stood on the morning of March 24 1794,

rallying around him the forefathers of these peasants we see to-day in the market place. Near by is the Capuchin Church, where, on the same morning, the Polish leader knelt to receive his sword from the hands of the priest who had blessed it at the altar. "God grant me to conquer or die!" was Kosciuszko's prayer at that moment. He died, and yet he conquered, though it took a hundred years and more to prove it.

Nothing remains but the stately tower of the old Town Hall in which Kosciuszko, that same March day in 1794, read the Act of Rising and witnessed the signatures to it of noble and peasant set down side by side—the first time in the history of Europe when serf and master stood on equal ground, their hands joined in a common national cause, their names written together on a State paper.

III

Crowded with such recollections, figures more real than vendors and peasants seem to gather now in the Rynek as we look about us and hear its story. Assuredly this is holy ground, we say. And then, high above us music breaks suddenly on the air as if to answer our thought—the strains of a bugle blowing a brief little bar of melody that seems at once lofty and far away and yet almost at our ear. Is it real? Are these clear treble notes imaginary, rippling and floating out, now swelling, now diminishing, now dying away? Ethereal, unearthly music! It has a sound of remoteness and unreality in it that halts us in our tracks.

"It is the hejnal," our guide explains. "Hejnal in Polish means morning-song. It is the trumpeter of Panna Marya announcing the hour."

I shall never forget the first time I heard that far away after-music of the Krakow belfry. No one had forewarned me of it. The clamour of the chimes had begun to die away and had already passed from my conscious hearing . . . when suddenly that new strain came—sweet, remote, of an infinitely fine and silvery texture. It was as if some aerial spirit had caught and told abroad the secret of what the bells murmur to themselves in the muffled silences between their hours of striking. The echo of their regal voices still filled the arcades of the market hall; but this new voice never quite touched the earth, never quite came down out of the high blue. Its music died away on a suspended note—a note that no ear could forget, once having listened to its elusive sweetness or heard the story of its origin: how the Tartars came riding against Krakow, bent on the destruction of the old royal city of the Poles; how the watchman in the tower of Panna Marya saw them from his lookout and began to give his signal to the people;

and then how one well-aimed arrow of the invader struck him full in the throat and silenced forever the unfinished note of his warning bugle. Never since then, through all the centuries, has the music of the hejnal been played to its final note. Yet all day long, from six o'clock in the morning till midnight, at every hour and every half hour, the Krakow bugler still blows his little aria, facing in turn north, south, east and west, to proclaim the hour to the four winds of heaven. It is a sort of commingled reveillé and taps. At night, in the late hours when the city is asleep and few stir abroad, the effect is arresting, as if indeed a warning were called from the outlook, or an admonition. But in the early morning it has a feeling of the muezzin of the East crying from his minaret, summoning men to arise, to worship, and to take up their work.

This was my introduction to Panna Marya, the Church of the Virgin (" the Church of Miss Mary " I found one English writer literally translating it !). No better vantage point can be found at which to " feel " Krakow than this beautiful old church, huge and plain in its exterior, with just a touch of the East in its cupolas ; but in its interior a treasure house of Gothic splendour. When we enter St. Mary's we have a symbol before us of all that Krakow means—an antique jewel casket of dim rich loveliness, of historic treasure and brooding charm. Krakow is Poland's jewel casket. It is, as a matter of fact, the old coronation town of the Polish kings.

The windows of Panna Marya fill the church with mingled shadows and dull gold and dim garnet lights. They glow with a far away splendour that folds every nook and corner and high vaulted space of the ancient building in a sort of warm serenity. It has art treasures known to all the connoisseurs of Europe, among them the famous altarpiece and crucifix of Vitus Stoss and Matejko's wonderful polychromes " The Symphony of the Angels." But apart from these intrinsic things Panna Marya has a distinct feeling of its own, which repeatedly draws one back to it. " Whatever credo one may say or leave unsaid in one's heart," writes Frances Delanoy Little in her *Sketches*, one of the few sympathetic books to be found in English concerning Poland, " 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 chapels and altars ; but, I think in the ceremonies, in the music, and in the silent prayers of the people who are praying and who 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."

Panna Marya is built of brick, as practically all of Krakow is,

though most of the buildings are covered with stucco. Of King Kasimir the Great it was said that "he found a Poland of wood and left a Poland of brick." But the old red brick of European towns is not to be confused with the glaring colour of our more modern building material. On the contrary it is dark and rich, a dull russet hue, taking on through age a mellow tone very pleasing to the eye. In Torun, in Danzig, in Plock, in all the old Polish towns, much of the architectural beauty lies in the antique brickwork, which often is wrought in the most graceful design and detail.

Panna Marya has two towers, one taller than the other, and a story to go with them. It is a tragic story, as one guesses the moment it is first mentioned, and a queer old knife chained to the east door of the Sukiennice is pointed out to illustrate it. The story is of the two brothers who were employed to build the spires of the church. One worked swiftly and diligently, with a facile hand and a sure knowledge of his art. The other halted and delayed, attending more to his brother's speed than his own task, growing daily more envious and daily falling further and further behind. At last, abandoned wholly to his sin, he slew his brother with a knife, just as the final brick of the finished spire was put in place. The murderer was put to death; his tower was never finished. And his knife still hangs by the door of the market place to warn all men against the sin of envy.

IV

The Sukiennice knife, with its grim story of the conflict of human passion and aspiring art, is the key to a thousand and one other stories and wonders to be found by just stepping into the picturesque old building and climbing the stairs. The national museum is housed here.

This museum is a mine of ancient treasures, an ideal place in which to loaf and wander at will, letting your imagination fall back a few paces (a few hundred years), to idle along through those gallant other days when knights were bold and the world had time to be picturesque. The collection of Polish antiques and art seen here is the richest and largest in the country. Many of Matejko's huge historical canvasses are included in it, gorgeous in their colour and their drama, and to see them alone is as good as a pageant. It is curious, too, to note how appropriately these paintings illustrate, as it were, the stories told by the various antiques. They make a vivid background for what otherwise would be merely archaic. Here also is Siemieradski's stupendous painting of pagan Rome "Nero's Torches," the burning of the Christian martyrs, a picture long familiar in engravings and

lithographs. As for Matejko, his most famous canvas at Krakow is "The Homage of Albert of Brandenburg"—a scene in Polish history the title of which you will find ingeniously altered by the Germans, in Baedeker's guide book, to read "The Homage *to* Albert of Brandenburg"—one whole chapter of European history changed by a single stroke of the Teutonic pen of propaganda!

Arms and armour, huge beheading swords (called "My Lord Penknife" by facetious Poles of the olden days); battle-tents, including a large and elaborately decorated linen one captured from the Turks in the seventeenth century; old sculptures and woodcarvings of Vitus Stoss and others; bronzes (Wielonski's powerful and beautiful "Gladiator" among them); relics of the mediæval guilds and crafts; these are but a few of the art treasures and historic relics to be seen here.

Back a short way, near the Florian Gate, is another museum, the Czartoryski, a picturesque fifteenth-century house, remodelled after the plans of Viollet le Duc, and containing costumes, fabrics, laces, fine saddlery, armour, furniture, and other souvenirs of Poland's past. To the visitor come from afar nothing in this museum is more curious or more interesting than the great cavalry wings worn by Polish warriors in Sobieski's time, in the defence of Vienna. These enormous pinions, made of eagle feathers, fastened to the shoulders, and extending the full length of a man's body gave the mounted riders in battle a wild superhuman look, the appearance of huge unearthly birds flying to attack. A troop of them descending on the enemy came with the headlong rush and tumult of a supernatural host. It was just that effect they were designed to have, and did have—the records tell—on the frightened Turkish forces which fled in a rout before the gates of Austria. The only familiar thing to which I can liken these Polish cavalry wings is the feathered headgear once worn by our Indian chiefs. In some cases this also, it will be remembered, fell the full length of the body.

There is a fascinating collection of men's girdles and sashes in the Czartoryski Museum, of the kind described by Mickiewicz in *Pan Tadeusz:*

> A massy girdle gleaming with thick tassels,
> Like plumy crests; on one side gold brocade,
> With purple flowers, black silk on the reverse,
> With silver lattice work; a belt like this
> May readily be donned on either side—
> The golden on a gala day, the black
> In mourning.

Some of the sashes in the museum do not limit themselves, however, to two designs; they run even to four, on each side two of distinctly different colour and pattern, so that they could be

folded and worn for a wedding or a funeral, a formal visit or a ball—all in the same day if the wearer liked. These gay rich fashions date back four hundred years, but they are still in use on festive occasions, as I learned in Lwow one day when I saw a wedding, all the principals of which were dressed in the bright costumes of tradition—coloured silks and velvets, high boots and bright brocades.

Then there is the " Sukmana," the cloth coat of the peasants, forever honoured in Polish history since the day Kosciuszko donned it on the battlefield ; the " Szuba " or pelisse, a long sleeveless coat of silk or fine cloth or lustrous velvet, dyed violet, plum-coloured, dove grey, deep garnet, and trimmed with rich fur, usually sable ; the " czamara," a tight-sleeved, long-skirted coat elaborately braided at front and back ; the hooded " taratatka," the " kontuz," a heavy outer garment reaching almost to the ankles, loose fitting and worn with a girdle ; the " zupan," a silk shirt, with long sleeves, buttoned to the neck ; the " delja," a magnificent flowing robe, fur-lined, for gala occasions especially ; gay shoes and gayer boots, high, topping the knee, and embossed in intricate fashion. The whole in effect makes a bright pageant of the bravery of other days and an interesting commentary on the splendour and delicacy of old-time taste in dress, male as well as female.

But the real treasures of this little Czartoryski Museum are the paintings—a small collection,but one which contains more priceless canvases than can be found in the same space anywhere outside of Italy : a Leonardo da Vinci, for instance, " The Lady with the Ferret," one of the four authentic daVinci's in existence ; a Raphael, a Titian, a Murillo ; Van Dyck, Holbein, Rembrandt, Teniers . . . a veritable treasure trove of masterpieces.

V

As long as one keeps within the circle of the Planty on his wanderings through Krakow he knows that he is still within the confines of the ancient town. One peculiar characteristic will be remarked of the buildings of this part of the city—the odd way in which many of them are braced from the pavement to the first story with curving buttresses of stone or brick. The effect is strange as one looks down a street, as if the old houses had leaned back a little to make way for the traffic that has passed their doors for so many generations. (Perhaps this happened only recently, since these terrifying twentieth-century things called automobiles came into fashion ?) Niches and statues are in the walls of many of the buildings, while over the doors of others are the crests of the mediæval guilds ; or, as in the case of a very old house I saw near the foot of the Vavel Hill, a cardinal's hat cut in the keystone of

the arch. The guild insignia are quaint. The patrons chosen by the Krakow Potters, for instance, were Adam and Eve—because Adam and Eve were the first work of the potter God!

In these winding narrow streets it is easy to drop back in imagination to the life of other days, in spite of the busy modern traffic which crashes through them; for Krakow, with all its haunting memories, is now an up-to-date business town. In place of twentieth-century trucks, however, one can readily conjure up the caravans which once journeyed this way, laden with wine-casks from the vineyards and metal from the mines of Hungary; bringing in wax and iron and copper ingots, and returning with salt, furs, wool, or rich Krakovian and Silesian cloths.

It takes so little to make a picture! Over a high blank wall an apple bough reaches a blossomy arm—to beckon us to Italy. A nightingale sings—and it is Italy indeed. An upper window opens; a woman hangs a bright rug over the sill—and the Court of Poland, in the mind's eye, moves with stately pace along the street, starting out from Krakow on its journey to France of the Renaissance, to visit Catherine de Medici and to astound that illustrious lady, as the histories tell us, with the splendour, the perfect manners, and the flawless French of its handsome gentlemen. Or still another cavalcade appears, of Polish knights departing for the Crusades, or returning home bearing such trophies as St. Jadwiga's Chalice, a quaint oriental cup now to be seen in the National Museum, and which some legends hint may indeed be the Holy Grail. Or yet another picture: John Sobieski and his winged troopers setting forth from these very streets to meet the Turk and halt him at the gates of Vienna, saving Christendom three centuries ago exactly as the Poland of our own day has saved western Europe from the Red barbarians of the East.

The groups of students who throng the green walks of the Planty remind me of what Madame Modjeska used to tell of her girlhood days in Krakow. She would come to the Planty at five o'clock in the morning to study and rehearse her rôles; but she would vanish before eight, for fear of the ridicule of the students. Youths at school (or on their way to school) were the same in her day as they are now; the same, we may be very sure, as they were a thousand years ago, in the days of King Boleslas the Brave, when the cathedral school of Krakow was founded. It was from this school that the later and justly famous Krakow University sprang. As time went on, the Krakow students played an important part in the making of their city. Five centuries ago they began to go abroad to the Universities of Bologna and Padua, and to this day you may see on every side the stamp of Italian grace which they brought back with them to their native town.

VI

The fine Italian hand is to be noted everywhere in the architecture of Krakow. I had remarked that even before I had learned the detail of the city's story, to discover later how fact after fact confirmed the first impression. If the Sukiennice or Market Hall is beautiful with a true Renaissance beauty, the secret of it is soon revealed in the name of Gian Maria Padovano, the architect who redesigned the building after the great fire in 1555, which destroyed a large portion of the town. The name of Bishop Ivo, who built Panna Marya, brings Italy still closer, for he was an intimate friend of St. Dominic, under whom his two nephews were educated at Rome, returning to Poland to build in due time the beautiful Gothic Dominican Church of Krakow. Another strong Italian influence here was the consort of Sigismund I, Bona Sforza, of the famous Milanese family of that name. And, as already noted, the long exchange, through many generations, of Polish and Italian teachers and students—especially between the Universities of Krakow and Rome, Bologna and Padua—made the Italian influence a positive factor in the cultural development of Poland.

The University of Krakow is one of the most celebrated seats of learning in Europe, and one of the oldest. If its foundation be indeed dated back to the ancient cathedral school, established in the reign of Boleslas the Brave (992–1025), then this University is perhaps the oldest in existence. But taking the date of its first formal opening in 1364, it still stands among the earliest educational institutions in the world. It quickly became a centre of European studies, and in time grew so influential that its representatives were invited to the Great Councils of Constance and Basle. It attracted students from many countries, a veritable procession journeying to the Polish capital to enjoy the advantages of its famous schoolmen. The astronomer Adalbert (Wojciech) was one of these; and after him his immortal pupil Copernicus, who, though born in the Polish city of Torun, of Polish parentage, has long been claimed by the Germans, along with many other illustrious Poles whose achievements they have always been ready to label "Made in Germany."

As in the case of other celebrated Polish names, that of Copernicus likewise links us with Italy. He was not only a teacher of mathematics in Krakow, but also in the Universities of Bologna, Padua and Rome. In the Jagiellonian Library of the Krakow University as it stands to-day, with a statue of Copernicus in the centre of the courtyard, we see again the incomparable beauty of Italian design, here restored and adapted by Polish artists.

This courtyard is one of the architectural gems of Europe.

Passing from the street through an archway—to the left is the room of St. John Kanty, now a shrine, perpetually filled with the flowers and lighted candles of devotion—we come upon a beautiful Gothic arcade which runs the full scope of the four walls of the court, the carved columns and groined roofs of the colonnade, cut in that unique fashion called "crystal," giving the enclosure a cloistral effect of great beauty and dignity. This colonnade is surmounted by a broad balcony, with a richly carved stone balustrade, above which rise the walls, broken irregularly by quaint leaded windows and smaller balconies, from which, in olden times, the teachers used to speak to the students assembled in the court below. The roof projects in the Florentine manner, with wide eaves supported by graceful wooden brackets.

The new modern buildings of the Krakow University have been very happily designed in harmony with the ancient originals. The whole effect is one of dignity, fully in keeping with the traditions of this historic school, which has never closed its doors, never ceased to function, through the six centuries of its existence.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

FROM THE HILL OF KINGS

I

We turn from the University of Krakow to the Hill of Vavel, the Hill of Kings, surmounted by the ancient castle of the Polish rulers. It was the kings of Poland who founded the University, and it was from them, reigning on the royal Vavel, that it drew its earliest patronage.

The Castle of Vavel is not a single building, but a heterogeneous group of structures representing the accumulation of succeeding periods of Polish history; a good reminder of the Polish proverb, "Krakow was not built in a day." It rises on a hill above the Vistula; not a hill of steep crags and impregnable rocks, as I had imagined it, but a green-treed eminence which in summer time is one terrace after another of leafy verdure. Here fortresses, palaces, watch-towers, turrets, and the great cathedral of St. Stanislas, all cluster togther, surmounting bastions and walls and ramparts which ascend almost from the water's edge, the whole effect of the scene being one of massive if not of forbidding dignity.

It is impossible, however, to associate the sternness and fierceness of feudalism with the Vavel, perhaps because Poland itself was never feudal. The wild isolated grandeur of Rhine castle and Moselle stronghold is not to be found in Poland—except at Malbor, built by the Teutonic knights. Does the land produce a people, or does a people stamp the land with its personality? Did the wide open fields and gentle slopes of Poland give the Poles their quiet easy going souls, so that even their fortresses look good-natured and approachable? Yet their history tells us how well these same open unprotected plains have taught them to fight, to defend themselves, to make their very breasts their rampart. "God put the Polish people on horseback and turned their breasts eastward," says the old warrior-chaplain, Father Voynovski, in Sienkiewicz's novel *The Field of Glory*. "By that same act He showed them His will and their calling. If we wish to fulfil His command and our mission with worthiness, we must face that vile sea and break its waves with our bosoms."

Battlemented towers, gabled roofs, spires and copper-covered

cupolas, all grouped together above green trees and russet walls and the tawny waters of the Vistula, make a memorable picture of this Hill of Kings. It reminds Englishmen of Windsor by its situation, and Spaniards of the Alhambra by its colouring. But like Krakow itself, the Vavel has an individuality all its own; and if at first glance it disappoints that visitor who looks for stern loftiness and frowning grandeur in an old royal castle, it is not long before (very Polish!) it takes him captive with its charm.

Despite war and its pressing nearness, the Vavel was a busy place when I visited it, with masons, carpenters, workmen of every description engaged in its restoration. Poles cherish this landmark above all others, and now that it is restored to them, whole and entire for their very own, they will leave nothing undone to preserve it and perpetuate its glories for their children. The Vavel is the Pole's Mount Vernon, his Westminster, the sanctuary of his nation. The bones of his kings and leaders are buried here. It is the tomb of his spiritual patron St. Stanislas; the shrine, in fact, of everything that his motherland means to him.

It was not alone the busy workers in it that made me feel this in 1920, but especially the groups of people who came and went continually, gazing at the historic relics, kneeling before the various altars; parties of tourists, little family gatherings of fathers and mothers and their youngsters (some straight from the country districts, in their bright peasant dress)—the eyes of all of them wide with wonder and reverence. Troops of school-children with their teachers were most frequent, learning their history at its fountain source; and with what open hearts, what earnestness and fervour they learn it! I have one keepsake among my papers which tells this angle of the Polish story better than could any words of mine—a little twelve year old schoolgirl's "composition," describing her visit to the Tombs of the Kings at Vavel. It is translated literally:

> We went down the marble steps. At the entrance we felt the underground coolness. The guide, an old man, was sitting on the stone bench. The expression on his face showed us that he understood and appreciated his duty. He got up, turned on the light, and asked us to follow him. In a short time we heard his serious voice saying, "Kasimir the Great, our beloved king." His voice echoed against the ceiling and penetrated to the farthest tomb and then died away. "Stephen Bathory, our powerful and great monarch." The frost of emotion passed through us. Reflection after reflection passed through our imaginations. Our thoughts ran in the dusk of time and we saw those who lie here, who were great and powerful, with their sabres or cross in hand, receiving tributes, defending the oppressed. Ah, to-day! . . . From our breasts came forth a deep sigh. . . . We were the last who visited the tombs that day. Behind us the old door creaked. The guide when he parted with us had tears in his eyes.

Only a Polish child, I think, could have achieved the authentic simplicity of those words.

One of the bitterest blows the Poles had to endure at the last partition was the total loss of the Vavel. And it was not enough for their conquerors to take it from them: they must desecrate it also, turning it into a common barracks. The slow ruin that followed, the neglectful, roistering life of the thousands of Austrian troopers who were quartered in it, generation after generation, finally reduced the Vavel to such a dilapidated wreck that it is no wonder Modjeska in her memoirs described it as "a very old and lonesome man with weak eyes and open mouth, brooding over his past."

It is not that any longer, however. The disgrace of the Vavel's spoliation at last became too poignant for the Poles to bear. In spite of their subjugation, they determined to save this most sacred of their national monuments, and in this their wits served them well where force could not possibly count. A few years before the War they established a great national purse, subscribed to by everyone, and at the same time they secured from Vienna the imperial permission to purchase the castle from the Austrian military and to present it as a royal residence to the Austrian Emperor. Thus only, by inviting the alien ruler into its sacred precincts, could they be assured of its preservation. But it was better, they argued, to make the humiliating gesture than to lose the treasure altogether. Better the ruler himself than his troopers.

Franz Josef accepted the gift, and the restoration of the Vavel commenced. The movement now continues under the Government of the Republic, with a national course of lectures organized throughout the country, through the medium of which some of the leading Polish scholars, by spoken word and the use of "movies," are educating the entire public in the value of their national shrine. At the same time, through a subscription scheme, by which everyone who gives contributes to the restoration of at least one stone or brick in the rebuilt castle, literally millions are secured for the great task—and the Vavel becomes truly a possession of all the people.

II

The preservation of the Vavel really began, however, the very day the nation fell in the last partition. Immediately that tragedy took place the wardens of the castle, foreseeing its fate, hastily covered up as many of its treasures as time would allow, plastering over some of its finest walls and sculptured doorways and hiding precious carved staircases under wooden frames, thus saving not a few of the art works of the palace from the depredation of the Austrian troops. Some of these long hidden treasures were just being uncovered when I was there, among them a magnificent marble

chimney-piece. On every side, however, one could see the wanton defacements of the enemy, who had torn down and cut through as he willed, leaving many of the finest chambers of the castle mere heaps of rubbish.

There are courts and colonnades, balconies and sculptured stairways, enormous halls and a thousand interesting nooks and corners to see in the Vavel. The Zygmunt Chapel and the royal courtyard, rebuilt after designs by Dellalore and Castiglione (again the Italian influence), are two of the finest specimens of Renaissance architecture in Europe, according to the well-known critic Essenwein. But the heart of it all is the beautiful old Cathedral, noble and impressive in its proportions, filled with the tombs of the kings and queens of Poland, and rich with sculpture and statuary, old tapestries and jewel-like windows.

In the centre of this basilica, under a huge baldacchino, rests the silver sarcophagus of St. Stanislas, the Becket of Poland, who was murdered at the altar by his King, just as St. Thomas of Canterbury was murdered in England. But the Polish Becket, even in death, was forced to suffer an indignity that never befell the English martyr. When the Prussians entered Krakow in 1796, the first booty they laid hands on was the silver coffin of the saint. Only by raising a fund equal in money value to the actual weight of this precious metal casket were the Poles able to save it from further desecration. It is not recorded whether the weight of the martyr's dust was included in this hard driven Prussian bargain.

In the eleventh century Crypt of St. Leonard, under the Cathedral, among vaulted arcades of dim grey stone, lie the bodies of Poland's illustrious dead; not alone her kings and queens, but her great intellectual and patriotic leaders. Mickiewicz, the national poet, is here; Sobieski, the saver of Europe from the Turk; and Kosciuszko, hero of America's as well as Poland's struggle for liberty. A Stars and Stripes is draped over Kosciuszko's casket.

Kosciuszko's body lies here; his heart is in a reliquary at Rapperswill, Switzerland, where many of Poland's national treasures have reposed, safe on neutral ground, out of the reach of the desecrating hands of invaders and alien rulers. But Kosciuszko's figure rises anew before the mind's eye in heroic proportions when we leave his tomb and climb to the topmost rampart of the Vavel to look out over the city and the adjacent country. There, just below us, Kosciuszko rides in bronze, looking out with doffed cap across the Vistula to a green hill which stands clear against the skyline, the real Kosciuszko monument—one of the most unique monuments ever erected to a man in European history. This Mound was built by the people of Poland, who brought earth from the battlefields where the patriot fought, and from their own home tilth, from every corner of the land, in sacks, in boxes, in barrows,

in their bare hands—and heaped it up, year after year, to make a memorial for him which should bespeak their veneration in a far more tender and more lasting eloquence than that of bronze or marble. It is impossible to look at that green mound towering above Krakow without seeing Kosciuszko, as if he still kept watch over the land he loved.

To the shame of the Poles and their deep humiliation the Austrians in due time chose this sacred mound as the site of a fortress, from which they could train the guns of intimidation on the old Polish capital. Benda, the Polish-American artist, has drawn a memorable little picture of Modjeska as a child, carrying in her apron the shells she picked up during the Austrian bombardment of 1848, when these same guns, mounted on Kosciuszko's hill, sent a hail of fire and death into the city.

III

The view from Vavel ramparts is one of the great panoramas of Europe. To the south rise the slopes of the Carpathian foothills, beyond and above which stand the snowcapped Tatras, silver against the blue of the sky. Nearer are the oil fields and the famous salt mines of Bochnia, Rabka, and Wieliczka. I remember a picture of these mines and their curious underground chambers in our old geography back home; but in our geography days Poland and Krakow and the salt mines had the remoteness of a fairy tale. I had no thought then of ever seeing them. Yet how near they are—a few hours from Vienna, a few hours from Paris, as modern travel goes; and Paris nowadays is next door to New York.

No one visits Krakow without going to the salt mines. If you are inclined to the unique and picturesque in your travels, and desire to feel that you have really been transported to another world, you will be satisfied here, as you pass through these vast subterranean galleries of illuminated crystal, with their strange underground lakes, their stairways, their halls, their chapels and grottoes, even their huge chandeliers, cut from the solid rock salt. In the chapels are sacred statues, likewise carved from the salt. "Is that really Lot's wife?" one of the youngsters in a group of tourists asked, the day we were there.

At times there is an orchestra to make these strange crystal chambers of the underground echo with music. And very often groups of peasants, garbed like the rainbow in their countryside dress, sing and dance, moving under the torches of the guides, making fantastic shadows on wall and floor, until the whole scene is like a living page from the *Thousand and One Nights*.

All this to satisfy the fanciful. You who are more practical,

you also shall be satisfied. Indeed you will gasp to behold the riches that surround you here, underfoot, overhead, on every side. These are among the greatest salt mines in the world, and their wealth is still unexplored, though they have been known and used for seven hundred years. During the long Austrian occupation, thanks to Hapsburg reactionism, when a despotic state monopoly debarred all initiative, the salt mines of Poland were not permitted to develop. The Wieliczka mine alone, covering about three square miles, is estimated to now contain some 21,000,000 tons of salt. At Inowroclaw are other mines with an annual capacity of 50,000 tons; in former Russian Poland still others yielding 220,000 tons per year. In the recent Austrian dominions there are 500 known salt sources still undeveloped. Before the War the annual output was only a little over 50,000 tons; but with the resumption of Polish trade and industry the prospects for these mines are almost fabulous. Their "occupation" for a period of five years was one of the Armistice terms proposed by the Bolsheviks when the Bolshevik armies were winning in 1920. Lenin, Trotsky and Co., wanted very much indeed to lay their hands on these riches then, to keep their Red Terror going a little longer!

IV

From our lookout on the Vavel our eye travels beyond the salt mines, up into the mountains toward snowy Zakopané. This is the most famous health resort in Poland, and it is here, high in the pure healing air of the pines, that the Polish Red Cross, in its organized fight against disease, has established its central sanatorium for tubercular children. Here also is a sanatorium founded by Dr. Dluska, sister of the world-famous scientist, Mme Curie; and here, through the medium of the Zamoyska domestic school, the American Red Cross has done pioneer work in training Polish women for the nursing profession. A school of lacemaking for peasant girls was likewise established here years ago by Madame Modjeska, to complement the schools of wood-carving already founded for boys by Dr. Chalubinski, one of the many efforts which Poles of private means have long been making to develop the cottage crafts of the country and improve the peasant's life. The peasants of these mountain districts are of a high type, sturdy and keen. Their woodcarving and needlework has long been famous; among the souvenirs which the traveller brings away with him from this region there is sure to be a bit of native embroidery or lace, or a Zakopané "ciupaga," or cane, carved usually with an eagle for the handle, after the fashion of the sticks carried from time immemorial by the Polish mountaineers.

One trip into the Tatras makes it easy to predict that in years to come, as the world settles back to normal again, and travelling conditions improve, Zakopané and all the mountain district within reach of Krakow will be opened up and become a haunt of tourists and health seekers. Going up into these cool shelters one can cheat the year when it is at its solstice by enjoying a second spring in mid-July. And here, all through these spurs and ranges, at varying altitudes, one finds thermal springs as well as iron and sulphur, alkaline and saline waters.

The scenery baffles description. It is a paradise for the mountain climber. While some of the ascents can be tackled only by experienced climbers, such as those in the wild Gorganes, on the other hand the Pienines and the Western Beskids are neither too difficult nor too dangerous for ordinary climbing. Wilder than many of the more trodden ways of the Alps, the Tatras offer a refreshing variant from the beaten track. It is a wilderness of timbered slopes, deep valleys, tumultuous streams and foaming cascades, all capped by illimitable ranges whose peaks break like a sea of snow and rock to the horizon. High among these mountains one often comes upon clear snow-fed lakes. The best known of these, the Morskie Oko, famed in Polish legend as the Eye of the Sea, lies five thousand feet above sea level, like a lost blue jewel set in a green wilderness of furs.

All these scenes are to the south, Hungary and Slovakia beyond. To the west and the north-west lie other lands which, if not always so picturesque, have played a more vital part in the drama of the new Poland than any others. They are the Silesian, that is, the Cieczyn and Upper Silesian coalfields, in which is involved one of the most serious problems of Poland's future, the question of her western boundaries, of her relations with Germany and the Germans.

V

The Silesian coalfields are the economic backbone of Poland, the prime factor in the Republic's physical make up, without which, the Poles feel, the political independence of their country would be a nut without a kernel. The future prosperity of Poland lies in these coalfields, because the industry of the country is dependent on them.

Lost centuries ago to Polish sovereignty, originally through royal marriages and then through conquest, the Silesian territories still remained in spirit and sympathy so strongly Polish that, the moment the national independence was re-established, they joined themselves of their own free will to the mother country. But this simple act of "self determination," as President Wilson termed it, was not destined to settle their problem. On the one hand the

Czechs, that is, the newly organized republic of Czecho-Slovakia, and on the other hand the Germans (the same old Germans), put in counter claims. The Cieczyn boundary question was ultimately settled "out of court" by joint agreement between the Poles and the Czechs; but the Upper Silesian territories, although ceded back to Poland outright at first, became, through the temporizing attitude of Lloyd George at the Peace Conference, a bone of contention which, in spite of nominal settlement, will still remain in dispute, it is to be feared, for a long time—as long as Germany continues to regard treaties as mere "scraps of paper." The truth is, while the claims made by Germany before the Supreme Council concerning Silesia were ostensibly based on economic necessity, their arguments were belied by the revealed facts of the case, their chief militarists giving the game away in their writings, disclosing, as Ludendorf did in his memoirs, that Germany's real interest in Silesia is military. From this region, it must be remembered, came practically all the high explosives and poison gases used on the Western front by the Germans from 1914 to 1918. The Silesian mining districts, according to Ludendorf's *Memoirs*, are an indispensable condition to the success of Prussian arms. But Poland to-day neither owns, purchases nor manufactures any gas bombs or poison gases: Silesia to her means simply a livelihood.

The same applies to the iron beds and the zinc and silver mines of Silesia, which extend into the picturesque Jura Hills and the Holy Cross Mountains. This region is rich in Polish lore, but richer still in Polish ore, with reserves estimated at 300,000,000 (three hundred million) tons. So rich, in fact, are these Polish mines that during the War the covetous fist of the German war-lords lit on them with an official declaration that they "must be detached from Poland and incorporated into Germany for strategic reasons, being indispensable to the German policy of expansion." To Poland they are indispensable for the simple purpose of employing and feeding her tens of thousands of workmen. And they are already being developed by the Poles, in spite of handicaps caused by the Germans' invasions and depredations, and the later political uncertainties of their situation.

The centre of this iron district, which, from our vantage-point on the Vavel, fills the whole north sector of our panorama, is Krakow's historic sister city Chenstohova. This is the "Mecca" of the Pole, his place of pilgrimage, his religious Holy of Holies, as Krakow is his patriotic sanctuary. At Chenstohova is the shrine of Yasna Gora, celebrated in Polish history as the scene of the miraculous defeat of the Swedes in 1655 under Prior Kordecki, and beloved of all Poles as the repository of the famous "Black Madonna." The sacred tradition that this picture was painted by

St. Luke the Evangelist did not hold back the desecrating hand of the Prussian when he entered the town in 1915. His first act here was to tear down the "Black Madonna" from its place and set up a picture of the Hohenzollern Kaiser over the dismantled altar, forcing the people in droves to enter and kneel before it.

VI

The recital of these few lights on recent Silesian history, coupled with what we have observed at other points of the Polish compass, brings home to us as we stand here on the Hill of Kings one striking fact in the political history of Poland—the fact that the problem of Poland's future depends primarily on her relations with Germany. Wherever the Pole turns, it is Germany that he really faces. In the oil country of the south the agitation of the Ukrainist minority among the Ruthenians still breathes the spirit of the Teutonic backing which was so openly given it in 1918, and which, as late as 1922, showed its head again wearing an undisguisable Hapsburg face. On the north the entire seaport traffic of the Polish plain is tenaciously clung to by the Berlin Junkers, whose agents (not discouraged by British interests) still control the Free City of Danzig to a large extent. On the north again, linked with Danzig, German intrigue manipulates the politicians of western Lithuania, whose interests lie exposed to the east Prussian pressure, and with whom rests much of Germany's hope of Baltic supremacy and an open corridor to Russia. On the east, as we have seen at Vilna, the destiny of the Polish-Russian future rests also on German relations, with the whole east frontier of the Republic involved in the question whether the Russia which to-morrow shall rise from to-day's wreckage is to be friendly or hostile to Poland—a question which Germany will exert every effort to decide against Poland, in her own imperial interest. Finally, here in the west, where Poland and Germany touch outright along the Silesian border the struggle will go on indefinitely, unless Germany learns the lesson of her age-old failure wherever she has tried to subjugate or destroy the Pole.

The Poles do not deceive themselves as to this situation. They know that Germany will crush them if she can. They know that if Germany lost in 1918 because of the exhaustion of her resources, in Russia she can find all things needful for her future welfare and her future warfare. "Even to a blind man," as Erzberger wrote in 1919, "Germany's future lies in Russia."

But Poland stands in the way.

"Crush Poland," says Germany.

It cannot be done. They have tried it for a thousand years, and have failed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

HEJNAL

I

THUS from the ramparts of the Vavel, looking out from the Hill of Kings, we see Poland laid like a map before us, set within that cycle of cities which rings the country like a wheel, with Warsaw as its centre: eastward from where we stand, to Lwow and the oil wells; northward through the timber lands to Vilna; thence west to Danzig and the sea; southward to Poznan and the Poznanian grain fields; south and west again, through the coal and iron regions to Krakow, the salt mines and the Tatras. The Vistula, which flows at our feet, traverses this whole vast plain, from the Carpathians to the Baltic; and across it, in my mind's eye, I can trace the route of the transcontinental railway which we took those first October days in 1919, when we travelled from the German frontier almost straight east to Warsaw; and the later journeys out of Warsaw, beyond the confines of the old kingdom into the eastern borderlands.

Poland has changed much since October 1919. War is done with, and peace is come. The hard nervous strain of six years of conflict, anxiety and privation is slackened The military uniform is disappearing from the streets, and the picturesque sabre no longer trails the pavement. Swords have become ploughshares, and the Polish soil, every span of which has been a battlefield, breathes normally again. In short, the Pole is happy and at work. In one year he has reclaimed 500,000 acres of farmland laid waste by war; in fact, to-day the seven million and more acres of ruined land of 1919 is reduced to 925,000 acres—figures eloquent, beyond words, of courageous toil—toil which has meant at times, in the absence of machinery, the actual tilling of the soil with his bare hands. His grain fields are fairly shouting with the bounty of their first peace-year harvests—the best crops in memory, old timers say; 40 per cent. more winter rye, 25 per cent. more winter wheat than 1920, with the spring planting still to be added. The oil wells are working, the mines, the factories; the railways are getting back to normal, with 1,775 miles of new trackage already laid and operating. Let us look over a few of the figures.

On April 1, 1920 the Polish cotton industry was restored to 40 per cent. of pre-war production. On October 1, 1920 it had climbed to 51 per cent. By April 1, 1921 to 60 per cent. By February 1922 it had touched the pre-war figure! Wool—an increase of 110 per cent. in less than a year; 10 per cent. over normal. The June 1, 1920 figure was only 19 per cent. of the pre-war output; the October figure 26 per cent.; the April 1921 figure 40 per cent.

The oil wells are already producing the full pre-war quota, with an over-and-above export of 25,000 carloads for 1921. The coal mines are up to 83 per cent of normal, an increase of 17 per cent in the past year (1920–1921). In the ten months from June 1, 1920 to April 1, 1921 the salt industry went ahead 40 per cent., with an export surplus of 15 per cent. beyond internal requirements; iron foundries 75 per cent.; metal works 80 per cent.; cotton 50 per cent.; sugar 34 per cent.

All this means many things, but above all it means that the Pole has really found himself, economically as well as politically; that he is coming into his own with the sure stride of a man; that he is at work; that he has remembered the words of Kosciuszko: "Thou hast done nothing so long as there is anything left to be done"; that he has heard the challenge of Haller spoken at the burial of Father Skorupka, the hero of Radzymin: "Poles, look about you! Work! Toil for your country! Give her the offering of your unstinted labour, so that the immortal ones whom we honour may be witnesses to the fact that Poland is not yet dead, nor can ever perish!" The employment figures bear out the story. In 1920, 260,000 men were engaged in the various industries (half of the pre-war number). But on April 1, 1921, 340,000 labourers, over 30 per cent. more than the previous year, were back at work. In the metal industries, where only 8,000 men were employed in 1919, in 1921 there were 46,000. Seventy-nine per cent. of the Polish labour employed in 1913 is again at full-time work.

There is one more item of such significance that we cannot pass it over. Of the more than a million and a half homes destroyed in Poland from 1914 to 1921, already nearly half a million (464,192) are rebuilt. The Pole is not only back at work, but he is getting back into his own home.

When we add to this little table of statistics the important fact that only 24 per cent. of the 1922 Budget of Poland is appropriated to the Ministry of War, and that 20 per cent. of this amount is consecrated to relief work among the disabled, the blind, and other war victims, we begin to realize that Poland to-day means not only business, but peace; that she is proving herself true to her historic mission in the East.

Finally, we must speak of the most significant fact of all—that

Poland to-day, through her Sejm, her national governing body, in spite of Cabinet crises innumerable and ceaseless political disturbances, after having started out in 1919 almost hopelessly divided into twenty partisan factions, has nevertheless reached at last that point in her political evolution where she articulates a clear and definite policy through the medium of an actual majority.

II

But someone tells me to put by my notebook and my statistics and to look at Krakow in the sunset. . . .

Bathed in a golden haze that fills the valley of the Vistula, the city begins to darken already as we pick out and name familiar landmarks, one by one, before all are merged in shadow. There is the great bronze and granite Jagiello Monument, erected by Paderewski to commemorate that earlier rebirth of Poland five hundred years ago, when the invading Teutons went down before the Poles on the field of Grünwald. There is the beautiful New Theatre, one of the handsomest structures of its kind in Europe, the building fund for which was begun by Madame Modjeska; a theatre which is in itself a gallery of fine arts as well as a playhouse, containing sculpture by the best modern artists of Poland and a curtain by that same Siemieradski whose "Torches of Nero" we saw in the National Museum. The spires and domes and cupolas of Krakow's "forty churches," dusky bronze and green copper; the quaint red gabled roofs and clustered chimneys of the old houses, their brick walls mellowed to a warm russet hue; the circling green of the Planty; all these, washed with the glowing pastel of sundown, make a mellow picture of old-time loveliness, an etching in sepia.

But my thoughts are still in my notebook, still of the new Poland of the present hour; of the Pole at work again, his mines and his factories humming, his school bells ringing. . . I can hear the tap of his hammer as he rebuilds his cottage, even the soft fall of the sod as his plough turns its new field. An early star comes out, like a little lamp in a window. . . . My eyes travel to a green spot, not far away, among the cypress trees just beyond the town, where the dead of Krakow sleep. There, before a temple-like tomb of bronze and marble, the sculptured door of which bears the likeness of a dear and familiar face—there lies the end of my Polish pilgrimage. It is there I wish to go, not for tears, but to bring this good news of Poland—of Poland free—to tell it over and over again, in the name of Modjeska, who never doubted it would come true.

From that sacred spot I could travel on, past the barn where Kosciuszko slept the night before the Rising, on to the wheat fields and the oaks where he planned this new Poland which has come true; on even to Raclawice, where he won his first victory in 1794.

The graves of peasant soldiers who fell in that struggle still rest under the gnarled old trees. In the bark of one of them are still to be seen traces of a cross cut by some loving hand. Now there is peace on these fields, and the song of Modjeska's poet friend Kornel Ujejski comes to mind "The Song of the Wheat"—"in death I live"—in the seed of grain the symbol of resurrection.

The great bell "Zygmunt" in the tower of the Vavel booms out the hour, folding us in a soft rush of sound. His strong voice echoes over the city; mingles with the violet shadows that rise from the river; is lost in the dusk. The chimes of Krakow answer. Then, from the spire of Panna Marya floats the pure clarion of the belfryman's horn, playing the hejnal, blowing his brief sweet aria to the four points of heaven, as if he would put a blessing, as if he would make the sign of the cross in music, over Poland.

. . . . Watch through the night as Vanamee watched in Frank Norris's romance of the Californian wheat fields, and your heart will sing as he sang, and as the "Ukrainian Nightingale" sang to Modjeska, of hope, growth, life, resurrection. "Sons will reap where fathers sowed."

Watch and wait, still a little longer, and you will hear the bugler of the hejnal once more waking the world, chanting the words of Karpinski's morning hymn:

Scarce sleep unseals my eye,
To Thee, O Lord, I cry:
My Lord in Heaven I call,
And seek Thee round in all.

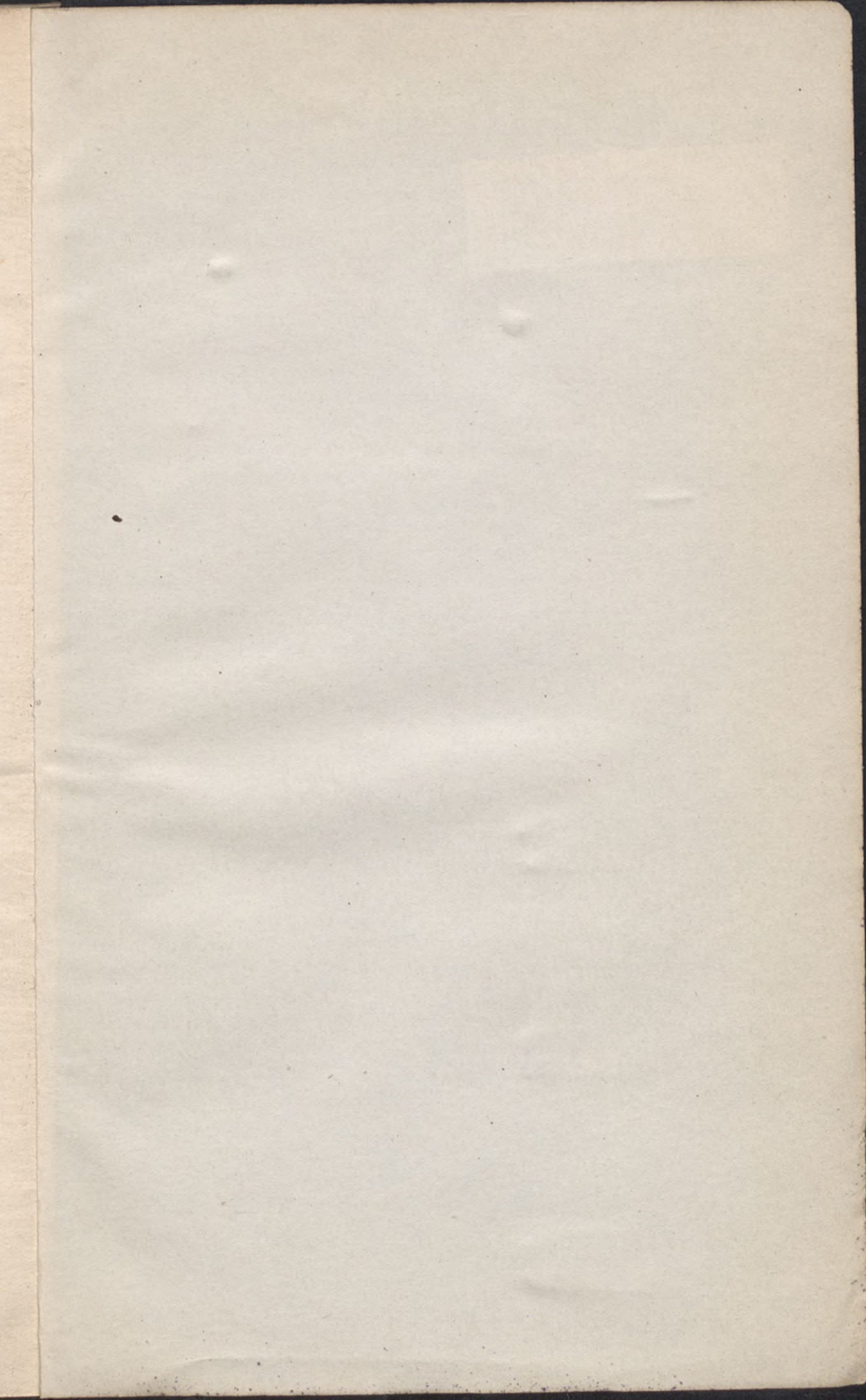
Many are dead who lay
To sleep but yesterday;
We have awaked once more
To serve Thee and adore.

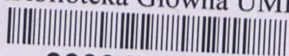
BIBLIOTEKA UNIWERSYTECKA w Toruniu

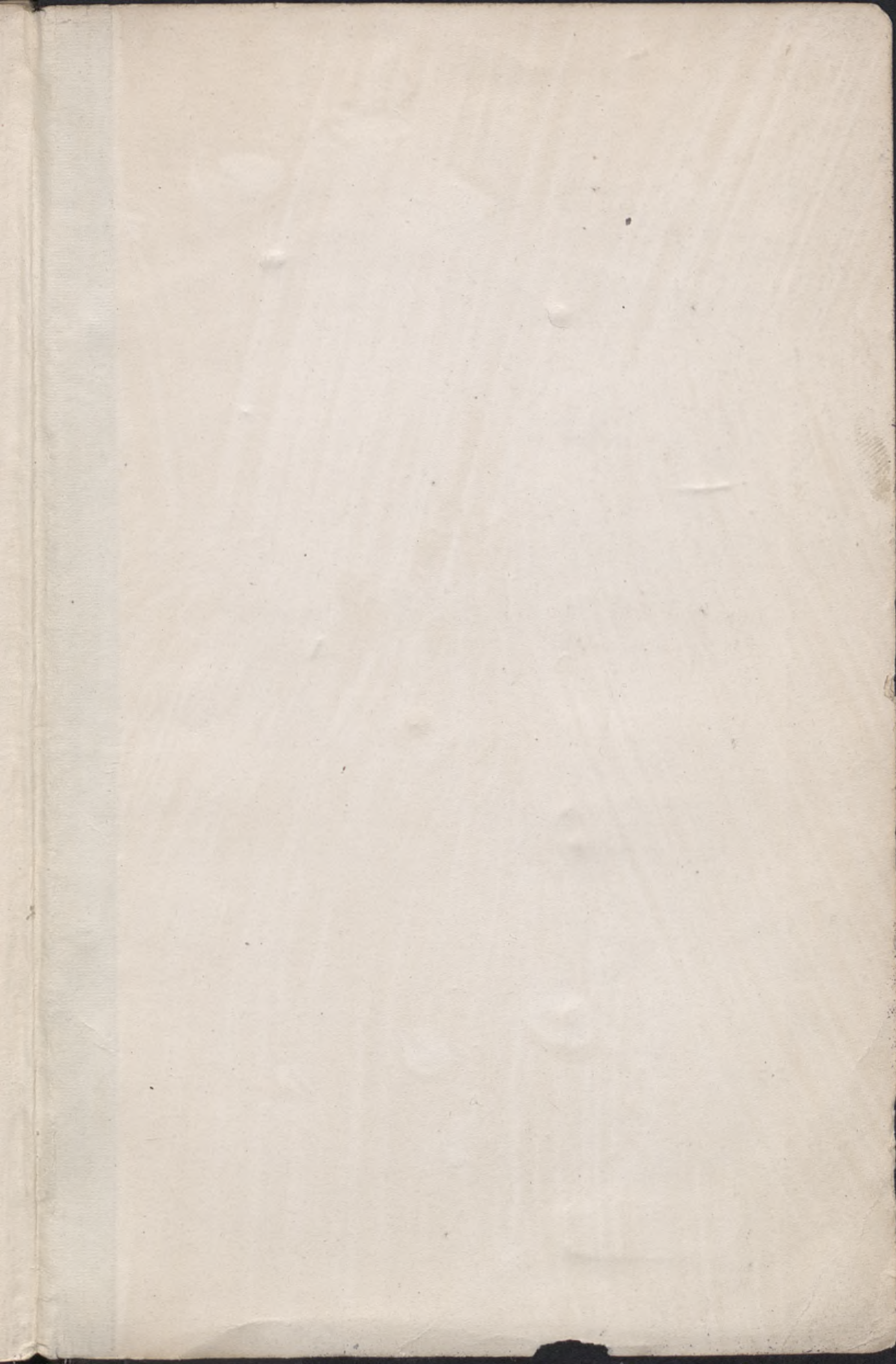
Printed in Great Britain by

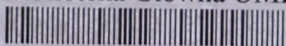
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED

LONDON AND WOKING




Biblioteka Główna UMK
300047604754



Biblioteka Główna UMK

300047604754