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POLAND

A STUDY OF THE LAND
PEOPLE AND LITERATURE

BY

GEORGE BRANDES



LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1903

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PART I

82+ OBSERVATIONS & APPRECIATIONS

FIRST IMPRESSION

1885

I

JOURNEY FROM VIENNA TO WARSAW—THE FRONTIER—CUSTOM-HOUSE INSPECTION

AT 11 o'clock in the forenoon on the 3rd of February the train left the city of Hans Makart and Johann Strauss, and thoughts and memories of Vienna long continued to revolve in my brain; cheerful thoughts and bright memories of captivating friendliness, of cordiality, of warmth of feeling, of the ardour of the moment; of the well-turned speeches of journalists and ex-ministers, the improvisations of young poets, the smiles of elegant women, the jokes and laughter of beautiful soubrettes, the importunities of ladies athirst for literature and autographs; of the pompous marble halls of Theophilus Hansen, the slovenly splendour of the Makart Exhibition, and the cosy room where the King of the Waltz gives his recitals of works, which it is true are only very small works of art, but still genuine art; and for a time I still inhaled the atmosphere of peaceful extravagance, of reckless but kindly joy of life, of amiable second-rate happiness, which fills one's lungs in the great witches' cauldron called Vienna.

Vienna is a city of *freedom from restraint*. How bright are words, hues, and music there!

If the inhabitants of Berlin have appropriated to themselves the dignity of Schiller's *Anmuth und Würde*,¹ grace has become the inheritance of the Viennese. For this is a city by itself, which everything becomes, for it has sound sense enough not to do anything but what is becoming. How rich in recollections and picturesque is it, how rich in strong traditions in comparison with modern regular Berlin! And

¹ Grace and Dignity.

how beautiful is the vicinity, how full of character is the peasants' costume here in the region which we are going through, the long white cloaks with red borders, and how well they know how to wear their clothes in comparison with the North German peasants in their stiff, ugly costume!

Austria is a rich land in a comparatively peaceful state of dissolution, where there are many kinds of men, but no Austrians. It is true we must except the imperial family and one or two antiquities of the old Constitutionalists. Besides these there are only Germans in Vienna, as outside Vienna there are only Hungarians, Czechs, &c.

The train rushes on. A little Polish servant, accompanying a traveller, calls my attention to a young Russian, who now and then spoke French to him. "He knows very well that I understand Russian, but still he speaks French to me; that is the way with them all; they are at heart ashamed of being Russians,"—an extremely naïve but very significant expression of Polish national hatred.

To profit by the daylight while it lasts, I read Sienkiewicz's "Bartek Vainqueur" in the *Nouvelle Revue*. . . .

The train stopped at Granica, the frontier station. Passports have to be inspected and baggage examined. A blond Russian police soldier, in his becoming uniform, a long grey coat, a cap without a vizor, a sabre at his side, entered, demanded the passports and carried them away.

Then we received permission and orders to alight. When a traveller suggested that we could leave our rugs, overcoats, and articles of that kind in the carriage, since we were to return to the same train in an hour, the little Pole informed him of his mistake: "Everything must be taken out; even an umbrella left behind excites suspicion, and if a coat is left, the lining is examined."

The first things found in my travelling-bag were the two numbers of the *Nouvelle Revue*, which I had been reading in the carriage.

"What is this?" asked the chief of the uniformed custom-house officers in German.

"What is it?" I answered. "It is the *Nouvelle Revue*."

“Yes, but what is that?”—“A French periodical.”—“What does it contain?”—“Do you understand French?” I asked.—“No.”—“Is there any one here who understands French?”—“No.”—“There are all sorts of things in it; there are two numbers and there are ten articles in each number. It is impossible to tell in a word what they contain.”—“Then we shall take it and send it to the censor in Warsaw.”—“Is this periodical forbidden?”—“Everything is forbidden that I do not know, and I do not know this book.” He then began to flutter among the leaves, forwards and backwards, and seemed to look for papers concealed in the sheets that had not been cut. I was reminded of the old lithograph which represents a monkey rifling the hand-bag of a traveller and fumbling in his books.

“Have you any more of this sort?”—“Yes, my trunk is half-full of books.” They were going to open it, when I heard from another officer the expression, *revolver*, which I understood, as the word is cosmopolitan. They had found a pistol in my hand-bag. It circulated among them and was examined. “Was it loaded?”—“Yes, with six balls.”—“Would I be kind enough to take them out?” I declined decidedly to be kind enough. “Then we must.” They extracted the balls and afterwards found in the bottom of my trunk a little box of balls, which was put with the pistol.

Then began the examination proper. Every book, every pamphlet was dug out and laid aside; every newspaper, even the newspapers in which my shoes were wrapped, were taken out, smoothed, and laid in a pile. They asked in what language the books were and what was in them. As my explanation was not found fully satisfactory, they took the whole from me, giving me a receipt for 15 pounds of literature. At the same time they demanded three rubles for the transportation of this same literature to Warsaw. I should have attempted bribery, if Poles had not previously told me that above all things, bribery must not be tried in the wrong place. I should run the risk of their taking the attempt as a proof of evil intentions. It was in vain that I urged that I needed the books which they took from me for my work in Warsaw. It was in vain that I called their

attention to the fact that they might safely leave me the *Danish* books and newspapers, since no harm could be done with them in Poland, where no one understands Danish. "In the censor's office they understand all languages," was the answer.—"Grant that that is true, although I have my doubts; but the government censor, who is Russian, I cannot corrupt, and the other people do not understand Danish, do they?"—"That is true from your point of view," was the answer, and, acting from their point of view, they kept the books. There was a Danish-French dictionary in the heap; I showed them that it was a dictionary, that the words were arranged in columns. They racked their brains over it. At last, after mature reflection they gave me the first part, A—L, but with very serious looks replaced part M—Z among the literature which the censor was to examine.

"When and how can I get all this again?"—"So far as the books are concerned you can ask for them at the censor's office; you have a receipt for them. You will get no receipt for the pistol. But you may address a petition—on a whole sheet of paper—to the Governor-General for permission to carry it, then, if he thinks fit, he can give an order to the custom-house officer in Warsaw to deliver it to you on your application there."¹

Thus on the very frontier itself we got the feeling that from this point we were outside the precincts of real European civilisation.

In such a trifling matter as the custom-house examination the two distinguishing marks of the bulk of Russian prudential regulations can be traced: the oppressive and

¹ During my stay in Warsaw, in spite of my request, he did not give the order. When one of my friends, after my return to Copenhagen, applied on my behalf to the Governor-General for the delivery or return of this weapon which was guiltless of shedding human blood, he received the following answer: He must (1) obtain from me a power of attorney certified by the Russian Consul in Copenhagen; (2) make application to the Governor-General for permission to take the said revolver over the frontier; (3) after having received permission, apply to the custom-house at Granica to send the pistol to the headquarters of the custom-house in Warsaw; (4) send the same by mail to Copenhagen and give proof to the office of the Governor-General that the revolver had actually been sent.

the inconsequent. If I had known of the prohibition against having a pistol in my travelling bag, all I needed to do was to put it into my pocket; for the pockets are not searched. If I had known that it was forbidden to carry foreign books, I might have sent them from Vienna to a bookseller in Warsaw, and I should have received them without any delay.

The government regulations are not strict enough, and yet so strict that, for fear of dismissal, the subordinate officials are compelled to carry out their duty brutally as well as injudiciously. The absurdities which met me on the frontier, continually meet the foreigner and sometimes the native born. A few years ago, on the Prusso-Russian frontier, one of my friends, who had prepared himself for the medical examination in Warsaw at the time when the University was still Polish, but who was compelled to submit to the examination after it had become Russian, had a Russian grammar, written in Russian, taken from him because the custom-house official did not know the book.

The Russian rule is not like the Prussian, prudent and uniform; it is incoherent, absurd, and often entrusted to clumsy hands. The pressure upon Russian Poland is so great that it could not be borne for a month if many of the regulations were not chaotic and meaningless, others too trivial to be executed, others easily avoided by bribery, others entrusted to instruments of so little keenness that their effect is destroyed, and others again to such intelligent and cultivated men that they are not put into practice.

I had accepted an invitation to deliver three lectures in French in the town-hall of Warsaw. In regard to these lectures I had many difficulties beforehand. I was compelled to prepare them in time to send the manuscript to Warsaw a month before my arrival, as they were to be submitted to a double censorship, the usual one, and a special one for public lectures. Since it was certain that if they were sent by the ordinary post they would be detained for an indefinite period at the frontier, it was necessary to find a more convenient means of transit. Ambassadorial courtesy enabled me to send them by a

special hand to St. Petersburg. Thus they reached their destination without any other delay than that caused by the round-about journey. Two copies were prepared and sent to the different censors, but after they had twice been read through in French, a day or two before my arrival in Warsaw a new difficulty arose. The well-known curator of the education department, Apuchtin—the same person who had his ears boxed by a student a year ago, which created a commotion and tumult in the whole city—at the last moment required that all three lectures should be sent in again in a Russian translation. This and the further examination naturally took time. Nevertheless, to the astonishment of many, not a line was struck out, although the lectures contained not a little which, as it appeared, excited emotion in the listeners. I was told also that the strictness of the censorship was sometimes neutralised by the carelessness or chivalrousness of the examiner; it seems as if the censor stationed in the hall did not always note very exactly if what is said is really identical with what the lecturer has handed in in his manuscript.

It appears here, as in innumerable other cases in Russia, that an order or prohibition in order to be absolutely effective requires a whole system of additional regulations. This is especially so when the prohibition against printing anything has a practical object. In January the celebrated old poet Odyniec died in Warsaw. He was the faithful friend and youthful travelling companion of Mickiewicz, politically a neutral, almost a conservative; but as his name was so intimately associated with memories of the revolt of 1830 and of the period of literary splendour, as, moreover, he had been so close a friend of Mickiewicz, the most celebrated enemy of the Russian authority, they endeavoured by means of the censor to prevent demonstrations at his funeral. Consequently it was forbidden to give any public notice of the time of his interment, not only in the newspapers, but by the placards which are commonly posted in the streets and before the churches. The prohibition was enforced, but in spite of it a procession of 50,000 persons followed Odyniec to his grave.

It is thus that prohibition and censorship only succeed in acquiring a character for ineffectual spite. This is notably the case with the Polish press. It continually happens that an article is forbidden by the censor on a particular day, but a day or two later the author is allowed to make free use of it. The result of this is only that the suspected newspapers are behind their rivals in the discussion of the subjects of the day. It continually happens also that an article is forbidden by the censor in one newspaper and allowed in another.

The passport system has the same character of annoyance without profit as this form of censorship. Without a passport, viséd by the Russian consul in your place of residence, generally speaking, you cannot cross the frontier into Russia. It is called for, as already stated, in the railway carriage, it is examined in a separate room during the time while the baggage is being searched, and they are so concerned to prevent the traveller from handing it over to some offender or the other, that he does not get his passport back till after he has taken his seat in the train, immediately before the last ringing of the bell; a police soldier brings the passports in a case prepared for the purpose with alphabetical letterings. You hardly reach your place of destination before the passport is again called for; it is taken to the police office and kept there during the whole stay of the traveller in the city, and the information there given is supplemented by inquiries of the servants in the house where you reside as to the full names of your parents, whether you are married or unmarried—the unmarried are regarded as the more dangerous—as to several matters. And this passport, which is only given back on the day of departure, is examined again for an hour at the station on the frontier through which you pass on your return journey.

Nevertheless this vigilance also has a gap by which its results are almost wholly destroyed. There is hardly any attempt to ascertain whether the person named in the passport is the same who has presented it. They evidently have no means of knowing whether the name is

right, but as the passports are examined *en bloc* in a separate room from that in which the travellers are collected, they do not attempt to find out if the description corresponds with the person. As nothing is easier than to procure a passport in Germany, Austria, England or France, and then remain at home and let a friend travel with it, the result is wholly out of proportion to the trouble and annoyance—to say nothing of the fact that hundreds who have no passports are daily guided over the frontier on foot by men who are pointed out to every one who needs them.

I had abundant opportunity of thinking over this subject, as during the tiresome delay I walked up and down among the tea- and grog-drinking idlers in the dirty waiting-room at Granica, annoyed by intruders anxious to change my Austrian money into rubles, consoled by others who explained to me that the officials were quite within their rights in their treatment of me; that the fact of my books being in Danish was no security; who could vouch for it, that they did not contain accounts of the socialist congress in Copenhagen!

At last I got back what was left in my trunk for my own disposal, and without anything contraband except what I had in my head, I arrived the next morning in Warsaw.

II

WARSAW—PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE CITY—CONDITION OF THE LANGUAGE AND OF THE THEATRE— RUSSIANISATION—BANISHMENTS

WARSAW (Warszawa) is a city of more than 400,000 inhabitants. As is well known, it is situated on the river Vistula (Wisla), a broad river, over which of late years a great iron bridge has been built from the square where the castle is situated to the suburb Praga, so tragically celebrated in the history of Poland. I don't know if it was in consequence of Hauch's beautiful song that the stream in its winter dress, full of grey floating ice, appeared so melancholy.

The city is of great extent, but with its decayed grandeur and the horrible memories it calls up at every turn, it makes a mournful impression. In the last century, next to Paris, it was the most brilliant city in Europe; now it is a Russian provincial town. It then had the character of prodigal splendour; now it is a forlorn, neglected place, which declines more and more every day, not the least thing being done by the authorities for its appearance and improvement. It cuts one to the heart to see the wretchedly paved streets, or the terrible old sandstone figures in the Saxon garden, on coming from a luxurious city like Vienna, or one which has blossomed out with such rapidity as Berlin.

For whereas the capitals of countries elsewhere are generally the object of the rulers' care, almost of their tenderness, and cities elsewhere from mere self-love take heed of beauty and convenience, and strive to provide as great attractions for country folks and for foreigners as possible, Warsaw is the capital of a country whose existence the government does not recognise, and is a city whose pride

the government wishes to humble in every way. We must remember that Warsaw has no "home rule," no civic council, and nothing at all like it. Russian Poland is altogether a country where nothing is elected. As there is no parliament, so also there is no municipal government. Only a part of the taxes collected in the city is used for the city itself, the remainder goes to St. Petersburg. Russian self-esteem makes all the arrangements, and Russian covetousness carries them out. The condition of the roads in the vicinity of the city is only to be understood by one who knows the Russian idea in Poland, the rule that when 80,000 rubles are appropriated to a highway, 40,000 must go into the pockets of the officials. No illusion has been left to the inhabitants of the city. As long ago as the 16th of October, 1835, when the Tzar Nicholas visited Warsaw for the first time after the great rising of the people in 1830-31, he said plainly to the deputation which came to greet him, that the castle, which he had caused to be constructed, was built not for the protection of the city, but against it; he threatened the Poles with the misfortunes which awaited them if they did not give up their "dream of a separate nationality, an independent Poland, and all such chimeras," and he concluded with the words: "I have caused this castle to be built, and I declare to you that at the least attempt at insurrection I will have the city blown to pieces, and I will then have it razed to the ground, and depend upon it, it shall not be rebuilt during my reign."

Since the unfortunate revolution of 1863, nothing at all has been undertaken for the cleanliness or well-being of the place, though by reason of a lack of waterworks and sewerage the beautiful city is one of the least healthy in Europe. The bed of the streets is so soft that the paving stones fall away from each other in ridges and holes, but nothing has been done since 1863 to repair them; nay, in all these years, with the exception of the town-hall, which was burned at that date, not a public building has been erected. The whole of the civil and military administration is carried on in confiscated private and public buildings. Time destroys whatever it will without any one seeking to repair

the damage. Thorwaldsen's *Copernicus*, which is so popular in Warsaw that the common people call a statue a Copernicus, is covered with dirt, but is never cleaned. The pedestal is crumbling away under it, but no one restores it. The *Copernicus* is one of the oldest statues of the city. It was completed and unveiled May 11, 1830, after the distinguished author Stanislaw Staszic (1755-1826), the first great orator of the Polish democracy, who gave all that he possessed to objects for the public good, had made a contribution of 70,000 Polish florins to the national subscription for the erection of the memorial. On the other hand, the monument to Prince Joseph Poniatowski which Thorwaldsen had undertaken during his stay in Warsaw, September-October, 1820, and which in 1829 arrived in the city to be cast in bronze, was indeed unveiled the same day as the Copernicus, but was removed, as soon as the revolt of 1831 was quenched in blood. It is now to be found rebaptized as a *St. George*, and inaccessible, in the grounds of a Russian private citizen, the Prince of Warsaw, not far from the city.

The only public memorials in good condition are: the colossal monument to Paskiewicz in the middle of the main street of the Cracow Suburb (*Krakowskie Przedmiescie*), erected in gratitude because he, "trusty and active as the knout in the hands of the executioner" (Mickiewicz) in September, 1831, when the last heroic defenders had blown themselves up into the air, conquered the redoubts before Warsaw and entered the city—and the great iron obelisk, commemorating the names of the Poles, who, in 1831, informed against their countrymen, and were hanged or shot on that account as traitors or spies. On the sumptuous granite pedestal rest four metal lions. About the base of the obelisk are horrible-looking heraldic eagles with two heads of supernatural size. The inscription in Russian and Polish over the names reads thus: "The Poles who fell for fidelity to their Sovereign." This obelisk very possibly misses its mark in Warsaw!

The street traffic is by no means inconsiderable; in the markets there is the same life as everywhere else where

buying and selling take place in the open air. But it strikes the stranger that in those places where the people are to be seen in large numbers, as on their Sunday promenades in the principal streets, they never have the contented and well-to-do Sunday look common in other large cities, but a melancholy or brooding expression. A merry scene is never witnessed in the street, and a joke is never overheard.

The physiognomy of the city does not, however, lack character. The Circassian regiments (that is to say, in reality Cossacks and Armenians in Circassian costume) with their fur caps, their sabres at their sides, their yataghans in their belts, have a picturesque oriental appearance. Every moment also you meet among the less characteristic Polish carriages a Russian equipage, in which a Russian officer is driven by a coachman in the long black national costume with the blue scarf round the waist.

One of the most noticeable things, so far as externals are concerned, in the streets of Warsaw is, that without exception all the names (even of the streets), all the signs, all the notices are in two languages or two kinds of characters; on the left side the inscriptions are in Polish, on the right in Russian, or above in Russian and below in Polish. It is a little element in the contest which the government keeps up to force the foreign language on the Polish nationality.

Recently the government has even begun to try to introduce the Russian language into the Roman Catholic Church. On account of a refusal to carry out an order of this kind, the Bishop of Wilna, Hryniewiecki, was exiled to Yaraslav, and some weeks later his substitute, Harasimowicz, to Wologda.

The only place where it is allowed to speak the Polish language publicly is on the stage. As yet it is not forbidden to give Polish theatrical representations, and this circumstance has given to the theatre a preponderance in Polish intellectual life, which is intelligible, but unfortunate, and so much the more harmful and unnatural as the dramatic literature of the country is rather poor. There is something depressing in seeing this seriously constituted and highly endowed people attributing an importance to the theatre

which it by no means deserves in a nation without pronounced dramatic qualities. If many of the best literary men have devoted themselves to theatrical criticism, it is because in the guise of examination and analysis of the ideas put forward in the plays, they can say and suggest much which it would be impossible to advance without this opportunity or veil.

The theatre in Warsaw is on the decline at the present moment. It is directed by a courtier who is bitterly hated, and who rules it in a military fashion, without the least artistic insight. It has indeed one important comic actor, but otherwise no men of talent of the very first rank, and no contemporary school of dramatic authors who could place peculiarly national aims before the younger men who frequent it. The greater part of the *répertoire* consists of French plays, and the style of acting is essentially French. However, in Helen Marcello, the theatre in Warsaw has an actress who fascinates by her beauty and her glow of passion, and only a few years since it had two admirable actresses who would shine on any stage.

One, Madam Popiel-Svienska, whom I saw play at a performance for a charity in Pailleron's "L'Étincelle," was a roguish and delicately emotional *ingenue*; a chubby little figure, youthful in her movements, with a delicate face, which shone with goodness of heart, its shadows dimples and its sunbeams smiles. When this lady married an elderly man of high rank, he demanded (like the egoist in Musset's *Bettine*) that she should retire from the stage, and she complied with his humour, although the public in Warsaw even now constantly embraces every opportunity to protest against this determination. At the passage in "L'Étincelle" where she says something to this effect: "I must play comedy again," by a previous agreement among the spectators hundreds upon hundreds of bouquets were thrown upon the stage, so that the play was interrupted for several minutes.

The second and far greater actress Poland has produced, who now enjoys a world-wide reputation, since of late years she has played chiefly in English, in London

and North America, and only for six weeks in each year appears at the theatre in Warsaw, is generally known by her first husband's name, as Mme. Modrzejewska. The Poles are justly proud of her ; she is one of the wonders of the nation. When in 1879 a national greeting was to be given to Kraszewski on his fiftieth anniversary as an author, Helena Modrzejewska was asked to come to Cracow and take part in the play at the festival in honour of the prolific author. Her appearance, like her art, is of the grand style. She has a brilliant beauty, is now (1888) over forty years old, but her figure is still slender and elegant without meagreness, and her face, with its regular features, large dark eyes, pure strong lines of the mouth, and the Asiatic grace of her smile can never lose its beauty. I have seen her in "Dalila," by Feuillet, in Sardou's "Odette," and in "L'Étincelle," and I have never in my life seen better art than hers, when as Odette during a visit to her daughter she has to suppress the maternal feelings which overpower her. One of Mme. Modrzejewska's best rôles is Nora in Ibsen's "Doll's House" ; I had a great wish to see her in it, and she was almost equally eager to play it for a countryman of the author ; but we did not count on the despotism of the director of the theatre, who withdrew his consent at the last moment, from pure spite.

Mme. Modrzejewska prefers to play Shakespere, and her English *répertoire* consists almost wholly of Shakesperian rôles. She is indebted to her present husband, an extremely artistic man of the world, Karol Chlapowski, for her taste for English poetry, as well as for her higher development as an artist generally. Naturally enough, she felt the need of a broader sphere for her talents than that offered by the Polish language. But there is great danger that the life of travel as a star, which she has led of late years, will compel her to restrict her art to its coarser effects.

While the stage, as I have just said, is still Polish, the Polish language is absolutely forbidden in the University. All lectures, no matter whether they are delivered by men of Russian or Polish birth, must be in Russian. Not even the history of Polish literature may be taught in the language

of the country. Nay, even in the corridors of the University the students are forbidden to speak Polish with each other.

Even more dangerous to Polish nationality is that provision of the law which requires that all instruction in the schools shall be in Russian. Even the scanty instruction in the Polish language is given in Russian. And so strict is the prohibition against speaking Polish in playtime, or generally in the school-grounds, that a boy of twelve years old was recently shut up for twenty-four hours in the dark because coming out of school, he said to a comrade in Polish: "Let us go home together." But the *régime* to which the schools are subjected with regard to the suppression of the national peculiarities is not confined to the domain of language. In a family which I was invited to visit the following incident happened. The son of the family, a boy of sixteen, the only son of a widow, one evening in the theatre had thrown a wreath to Helena Modrzejewska on behalf of his comrades. A few days after, in obedience to an order from the Minister of Education, the principal of the school called him up, and told him that he must not only leave the school, but that all future admission to any other school whatever was forbidden him; it was the punishment for having been guilty of a *Polish demonstration*. The boy went home and put a bullet through his head.

We may perhaps wonder that provisions which in certain circumstances drive a half-grown lad to suicide are maintained, or that so innocent a thing as the throwing of a wreath is forbidden. But the answer is, that as a rule everything which betrays a love for the language is forbidden in Warsaw.

For instance, strange as it may appear, it is forbidden to give instruction to the common people, because instruction can only be given in Russian, which the common people do not understand. Their ignorance is very great; only one-fifth of the population can read and write. This strikes even the stranger who only remains for a few weeks in Warsaw; a coachman there is never seen reading his newspaper as in other cities; nay, the coachmen, as

a rule, do not even know the numbers. You tell them the name of the street, say, as soon as you come into it, "to the left" or "to the right," and signal them when to stop. In the country the ignorance of everything to be learned from books must be extraordinary. Nevertheless, it recently happened that a young lady, who on her own estate was privately teaching four or five peasant children, received an injunction from the highest judicial officer of the district to desist immediately, since he, who had known her parents, was very unwilling to be the cause of her being sent far away, which would inevitably be the result if she, by continuing her efforts, compelled him to make a report thereon.

Whenever prosperous and patriotic people have asked permission to establish Polish country schools they have been refused. When at last several rich Poles, in their despair at the low level of civilisation of their people, gave way, and with the idea that Russian teaching was better than none at all, began to open Russian schools, no one attended; the peasants preferred ignorance to instruction in a foreign tongue.

Now and again the government stretches the bow so tightly that it breaks. For instance, about ten years ago an ukase provided that all domestic letters should be directed in Russian characters. When as a result of this, the number of letters was so greatly reduced that a considerable falling off in the postal receipts was perceptible, they were compelled to allow the decree to lapse.

The arrangements which tend to bring the ownership of the soil into Russian hands correspond to the endeavours of the government to Russianise the language. When the last great revolt was suppressed, an ukase was issued (Dec. 10, 1865) which prohibited the Poles from acquiring any land in the old Polish provinces of Lithuania, Podolia, Wolhynia, and Ukraina, nay, which prohibited their bequeathing their real estate in these provinces to any other persons than their lineal descendants. Yet according to law, since the revolt there have been no Poles; they are all Russians. Even the Kingdom of Poland is called officially Vistulaland. It was thought, therefore, that by Poles the government

meant the adherents of the Roman Catholic creed in old Poland, and that the prohibition would not be extended to others. But on inquiry as to who the Poles were, the answer was: "The Governor-General decides the nationality," an answer which left no hope.

No blow could have struck the Polish national cause more severely than this ukase; for no country lies nearer to the hearts of the Poles than Lithuania, which since the days of Jagiello and Jadwiga (since 1386) has been united with Poland, and in spite of the difference of language, has felt itself to be a Polish land. Many of the leading men of Poland—natives of the region—have echoed the celebrated words of Mickiewicz:—

Lithuania, like health art thou my fatherland!
He who has never felt the want of thee has never known thy worth.

It was natural that when possible they evaded the law by occupying and cultivating as tenants the land they did not dare to possess as owners, a course which was facilitated by the fact that the principal Russians, who had government donations of Lithuanian estates, soon felt themselves so isolated and so much out of place in the country, that they were content to abandon their new possessions, or at least to leave the care and cultivation of them to others. The danger that after a while the Russians would buy up all the land and soil of Lithuania thus seemed to be warded off. But a short time ago a new ukase of December 27, 1884, which set Warsaw in a blaze, ordered that no Pole—and the Governor-General determines the nationality—should be allowed to lease, act as steward for, or manage the estates in any of the parts of the country specified in the previous order, and—which seems still more rigorous to Western Europeans—this ukase has a retrospective force, so that all the earlier contracts of lease or stewardship were declared by it to be null. Effective power cannot be denied to a decree of this kind.

And of similar import are several of the regulations which have been made of late to strike at those who have some intellectual object in view.

Besides the ineffective censorship already spoken of there is one which is effective. The weekly newspaper, *Prawda* (*Truth*), the most progressive newspaper in Poland, the organ of the Positivists, has 3400 lines. It has happened that for a single number 7000 lines have been erased before the paper was published. The censor seems to be so capricious that it is impossible to foresee what will be allowed. The editor, the celebrated author, Alexander Svientochowski, writes as if there were no censor, and as an editor he cannot send his articles to any other paper.

The supervision of everything written would seem at least to ensure that the writers would escape punishment; for since nothing can be printed unless it has been read and approved, it would seem impossible to do wrong as an author. Nevertheless, young authors are to be met with who have repeatedly suffered a punishment of from three to five months' imprisonment in the interior of Russia; they were punished for their intentions, for what was struck out, or rather, they do not certainly know what they were punished for, since they are struck at not by a law, but by a police regulation.

The fact is the government does not need a law to attain its end; it has at its command what is better, the administrative way, and this administrative way means, as a rule, *Siberia*.

I have named the word which is in the air in Warsaw, the spectre which broods over the city like a nightmare, the threat which lurks about every man's door, the memory of which is to be read in the faces of so many men and women.

The first lady I took in to dinner on the first day of my stay in Warsaw—a beautiful, elegant woman with a Mona-Lisa smile, and something proud in her bearing—spent three years in the mines of Siberia. She had carried a letter during the revolt.

The next evening in a not very large room, more than two hundred years of Siberia were collected. There were not a few men who had spent from 1863-83 there, if we reckon the time it took for them to go on foot; this takes more or less time according to the situation of the place

of exile in Siberia, but always a very long time, and the journey on foot is one of the most painful portions of the period of punishment. From Kief to Tobolsk it takes a year; to the Nertschink mines in the department of Irkutsk more than two years. One evening at a party a young man asked me to talk a little with his father who was sitting in a corner. "He is," he said, "the old man with one leg you see there." He had lost a foot in the revolt, was exiled, and had been obliged to walk the whole distance on his wooden leg; it took him two winters and one summer.

Of course those who return from exile are taken care of in Warsaw as they are always penniless, since confiscation of real and personal property is part of the punishment. Of the several surviving members of the national government of 1863, one keeps a book-shop, another has a private situation, and so on.

After the revolt about fifty thousand Poles in all were carried out of the country. They were either sentenced to hard labour in the salt works and mines or in the forts, or (for the most part) to domicile in some country village from which it would be impossible for them to escape, yet with narrowly restricted choice of occupations. Others again would be allowed to move freely within certain limits; yet even they were strictly forbidden certain occupations, as, for instance, all kinds of teaching. They were taken to their places of destination in bands of about three hundred persons, guarded by Cossacks and watch-dogs, passing the nights in large sheds, where there were pallets for the women and children, while the others slept as they could. It is estimated that there are about one thousand Poles in Siberia, but of the so-called *Wodworency*—that is, wandering peasants or petty nobles of Lithuania—several thousand.

Intellectually few countries would have been able to survive such a depletion as Poland has endured for the last twenty years. Only think what one-tenth of the loss of five thousand or one-hundredth of the loss of five hundred of its most advanced sons and daughters by an exile of many years would mean for Denmark!

III

THE ANTECEDENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POLES

At the commencement of the century what was the condition of this people on which this pressure of foreign rule rests, which, sundered into three parts, with an imperial eagle over each part of its divided body, still lives and seeks to convince indifferent Europe of its power and vitality ?

It was a people which at the brightest time of its regeneration fell a victim to the breach of faith and covetousness of a foreign power.

From the close of the fourteenth to the close of the sixteenth century Poland had been the important power of Eastern Europe, and had extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from the Elbe and the Oder to the Dnieper, over a territory of more than 20,000 square miles. Poland was a great republic, with an elective king, or more exactly, a great democracy of nobles ; for the nobility was so numerous, so accessible, so zealous to maintain the political equality of every single noble with greater peers, that the constitution, though it conferred rights only on the nobility, had a democratic stamp. The organisation of the diet carried out the idea of almost unlimited freedom for the individual.

The weak point in the state organisation was that the nobility (*Szlachta*) was only a class of from 800,000 to 1,000,000 men in a population of from 8,000,000 to 13,000,000, and that the ruling class, after having realised its ideal of freedom and vitality, stood still in a dead conservatism. Until the middle of the eighteenth century society was immovable, because the nobility regarded every reform as an attack upon their freedom, and enthusiastically upheld not only the free choice of a king, which had

degenerated into an actual auction of the crown to the highest bidder, but also the *liberum veto*—that is, the right of every single member of the diet to prevent any enactment by his protest.

Ideas of reform—mostly from France—made way slowly in the last half of the eighteenth century, when it was too late. They did not become predominant till after the first partition of Poland in 1772. From that time forth Polish politicians subjected the existing arrangements to a persistent criticism, the political results of which were shown in the celebrated four years' diet, which met a year before the breaking out of the French Revolution. In this diet the strong national party, in constant conflict with the obdurate aristocrats, who were not very numerous, and the venal traitors who were partisans of the Tzarina Catherine, worked incessantly, secretly, and harmoniously at the reform of the constitution. Finally, May 3, 1791, an epoch-making date in Polish intellectual life, the constitution which had been prepared (an excellent work for those days, which, among other things, made the royal power hereditary, established a responsible ministry and abolished the *liberum veto*) was discussed, adopted, and sworn to by the king and the members of the diet in common in a nine hours' session. A fact like the adoption of this constitution is strong evidence against the alleged unfitness of Poland for self-government.

If the people themselves had dared to decide their fate, they would easily have got the better of that little group of reactionary nobles who, as early as 1792, met in Targowice, at the instance of Russia, to invoke Russia for the protection of their old liberties; but the weak Stanislaus Augustus, as is well known, submitted to the pressure from St. Petersburg, broke his oath, and joined the confederation at Targowice. Thus when the Prussian army, under the pretence of fighting against Jacobinism, but in reality to divide the booty with the Tzarina, invaded the land in 1793, the second partition of Poland was carried out.

Then followed the first great Polish rebellion, under Kosciusko as Dictator. After a three days' fight the Russians

were driven out of Warsaw and in a short time Wilna, the capital of Lithuania, was also liberated. With varying success the contest was continued amidst victory, defeat, and treachery, until Kosciusko—on the sudden arrival of Suvorow on the battlefield—lost the battle almost won at Maciejowice, and, severely wounded, fell into the hands of the Russians.¹ Suvorow carried Praga by assault, and after causing 20,000 men to be cut down on the 8th of November, entered Warsaw. In 1795 came the third and last partition. There was no longer any kingdom of Poland. But there was still a Polish people—a people who had heroic, chivalrous, brilliant, useless qualities enough, but very few of the useful, civic virtues. It was an enthusiastic and unpractical people, noble-minded and untrustworthy, pomp-loving and volatile, vivacious and thoughtless, a people who despised severe and fatiguing labour, and loved all intense and delicate, sensuous and intellectual enjoyments, but, above all, who worshipped independence to the point of insanity, freedom to the extent of the *liberum veto*, and who even now, when they had lost independence and freedom, had remained faithful to their old love.

It was a credulous and confiding martial people, always ready to risk their lives upon a promise, which no one thought of keeping.

Consider the relation of this people to Napoleon, on whom, after the last partition of the country, they naturally fixed their hopes. Only two years after the partition, General Dombrowski agreed with Bonaparte that the Polish legions (in national uniform, but under French leaders) should fight in Italy with the soldiers of the republic. The Poles received many a blow for the French in Lombardy in 1797 and in the Italian campaign of 1798–99. The first legion was almost annihilated under Dombrowski in the battles of Trebbia and Novi; the second under Wielhorski entered Mantua, which the Austrians were besieging; when the French were compelled to capitulate they bound themselves to surrender these deserters—that is, the Poles—to their masters. Nevertheless the Poles raised new legions,

¹ His famous exclamation, "*Fini Polonia!*" is a legend of later invention.

and took part during the Consulate in the battles on the Danube and in Italy. But neither the treaty of peace at Luneville in 1801 nor that of Campo Formio in 1797, contained any article in which the name of Poland was mentioned.

Nevertheless the Poles, deceived by lying promises, hoped at every new campaign that by alliance with the French troops they should succeed in restoring Poland. The celebrated song which the soldiers of the legion had composed far from their native land, "The Dombrowski March"—"It is not yet all over with Poland, not so long as we live"—contains this thought.

But after the peace of Luneville, Bonaparte, who aspired to imperial dignity, merely wished to keep the Poles as a bodyguard for himself, and when General Kniaziewicz answered him by demanding his dismissal, he determined to get rid of them. They were first sent to Italy, and there it was announced to them that they were to go to St. Domingo to put down an insurrection of negroes who were fighting for freedom. Their protests availed nothing. Threatened on all sides with artillery, they were embarked at Genoa and Leghorn, and in the unhealthy climate and in the terrible war nearly all perished.

And yet the Polish legions again fought by the side of the French at Jena. At the peace of Tilsit Russia was treated leniently, while out of what was then Prussian Poland the little Grand-Duchy of Warsaw was created. But this was enough to arouse anew the confidence of the Poles and win their whole trust. When preparations were made for the campaign against Russia, it was in vain that Kosciusko resisted Napoleon's hypocritical advances and flatteries, and demanded positive and publicly given promises. When Fouché was unable to induce Poland's dictator to give his name by threats, they imitated his signature, and by a shameless forgery issued a proclamation signed by Kosciusko to the Polish people, which earnestly entreated the Poles to unite their forces with those of the French. It might have been supposed that they were cured of the worship of Napoleon. But in spite of everything which had

happened, when, in 1812, Napoleon crossed the Niemen, by simply calling his Russian campaign the second Polish war, he induced 80,000 Poles under Josef Poniatowski to accompany him. The following year only 8000 of them came back.

The Poles are as vivacious as Southerners, but they are not a politically prudent people, educated in the school of Machiavelli, like the Italians, who understood how to make the French pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. They are a people whose legions Napoleon induced to shed their blood on a hundred battlefields merely by holding the white eagle before them, and a people whose battalions Steinmetz, in 1870, induced to storm the terrible heights at Spicheren, by allowing the Prussian bands to play the melody of the national song, *Jeszcze Polska nie zginela*, which is prohibited in Posen in time of peace.

Such a youthful or childish enthusiasm is certainly not a sustaining element in the great struggle for life of the nations in industrial and militarian ages. It does not flourish in conjunction with thrift, industry, discipline, moderation, and civil prudence, qualities which ensure the continuance of the individual and of the state.

In old descriptions of the Poles it is commonly said that their chivalry and personal bravery can be counted on under all circumstances, but that there is something of vanity in their magnanimity, something volatile in their generosity, that they are obstinate, combative and quarrelsome, recognising no higher law than their own will, and incapable of keeping this will long on the same point. They are commonly represented as poor economists, very easily involved in pecuniary embarrassments, however large their incomes, as turning over thousands of books, but not studying any, as being exceedingly erratic, and wasting their time and talents. It has been charged against them that at the very time they were raving over ideas of freedom, they were playing the autocrat towards their peasants, and that though they are the most tender husbands, they have two or three mistresses as well as the adored wife. In brief, a combination of eastern and western peculiarities is ascribed to them.

Probably there was a great deal of justice and truth in this older view. It is therefore interesting to inquire which of these characteristics the foreign rule has developed and which it has obliterated.

Love of external splendour is necessarily repressed. It is evidently not killed. Love for all that is symbolised so profoundly by the father's plume in Cherbuliez's *Ladislaus Bolski*, lies deep in the Polish nature. The father's red and white plume, which Ladislaus always carries with him in a case, is the glittering principle of grandeur. And it is extremely significant that in one of the leading poets of Poland this definition of God is found:—

“I see that he is not the God of the worms or of creeping things. He loves the flight of gigantic birds and gives the rein to the rushing horse. He is the *fiery plume on the proud helmet*.”—(Beniowski, 5th Canto.)

Compare the prophet Habakkuk's grand description of God. But the whole spirit of Poland is in these lines. No other race could see divinity in the waving plume.

Nevertheless the love of the tinsel and spangles of glory is necessarily repressed now by a deeper feeling of honour.

When I went to a ball in the town hall on my first evening in Warsaw, where a thousand people, the flower of good society in Warsaw, were assembled in the large saloon, the fact struck me that, with the exception of three Russian officers, there was not a man in the hall who wore a decoration. From his birth almost every Pole renounces decorations as well as uniforms. There is a tale told in Warsaw of a poor school-teacher who had distinguished himself, and received the order of Stanislaus. He kept it hidden in a case, and only used it to punish his children with. When the youngest was naughty, he said, “If you cry again, you shall wear the order of Stanislaus about your neck at dinner.” That was enough.

The essentially aristocratic character of the nation still exists, though greatly modified. The Pole has no inborn inclination to the civic virtues; his ideal is, and

continues to be, that of a *grand seigneur*. The aversion to counting and saving, to reckoning and computing and keeping accounts, is universal. In all places where Germans and Poles compete in the domain of trade and industry, the Poles get the worst of it. The great manufacturers in Russian Poland, who, thanks to the enormous protective duty, enrich themselves at the expense of the purchasers, are almost without exception immigrant Austrians or Prussians. Nay, in this century, a whole manufacturing town (Lodz) has sprung up and grown with American speed; a town, which, lying in the middle of Poland, was founded and is inhabited by Germans only. The Poles are, and continue to be, an aristocratic race; the middle class, which has been gradually wedged in between the nobles and the peasants, is yet comparatively small, and, for a long time to come, for the educated Pole of distinction, the life of the burgess will mean a life passed in eating and drinking, or, as the Count says in Krasinsky's *Godless Comedy*, in "sleeping the sleep of the German Philistine with his German wife."

But we must not forget that the *Szlachta* in its constitution was something very different from the nobility in most of the countries of Europe. It was never a separate caste. After the victorious defence of Vienna John Sobieski ennobled all his cavalry. Even in our century whole regiments of infantry have been ennobled. There are thus at this moment in the different parts of Poland not less than 120,000 noble families. The nobility thus corresponds here most nearly to what elsewhere in Europe is the upper middle class. It must also be noted that the titles, prince, marquis, &c., are not originally Polish, but were first conferred upon the most important families by the foreign conquerors, for which reason they are not much used in the country. In Warsaw in speaking French they address a countess as *madame* and not as *comtesse*. Even on making introductions I never heard any titles given among the aristocracy—an agreeable thing when one comes from Germany.

At the same time the relations between people of rank

and their inferiors have certainly something Asiatic. No small degree of extravagance is usual in the employment of servants. In every house owned by a person of ample means, for instance, there is a doorkeeper who sits the whole day on a chair at the entrance to open the open hall door. A Dane could never be induced to sit so long on a chair. I was also much struck by the inclination or custom of the servants to wait up for the master at night, even when they were allowed to go to bed. Finally, according to northern ideas, their humility was amazing. A Polish servant does not kiss his master's hand but his sleeve, and so deeply rooted is this custom of expressing gratitude or affection that I have repeatedly seen young Polish students carry to their lips the arm of a man to whom they wished to show respect.

The Poles have not become much more economical under foreign rule than before. If any change had taken place in this respect it would have been in Posen, where the German example has made itself felt. They are prodigal of their time.

As there is no freedom of meeting, as no kind of association is allowed — the only club in Warsaw was closed, when a few years since it tried to prevent riots against the Jews in a suburb in which the police did not interfere — as, generally speaking, all public life is forbidden, so that fifty men cannot assemble in a hall without the permission and surveillance of the police, private society, which has to supply everything that is lacking in this direction, consumes an enormous amount of time.

The hospitality is very great and very tasteful. An exceptional quality which is inborn in the race, is tact. In this connection I must be allowed to note with gratitude the delicacy with which hospitality was shown to me on my arrival at Warsaw. I was taken to large, luxuriously furnished apartments, adorned with fine pictures, and supplied with books ; my name was on the door ; on the writing-table were visiting cards with my Warsaw address ; and two servants who could speak foreign languages were told off to wait upon me.

Hospitality is a deep-seated instinct among the Poles. It is certainly exercised towards foreigners more lavishly now that foreigners seldom visit Poland, but the chief reason of its culmination among the native born of to-day is evidently that social intercourse has so completely to supply the place of public life.

IV

THE POLES AND THE FRENCH — INSTABILITY, DILETTANTISM—FEVERISH CHARACTER OF THE PLEASURES OF LIFE—STRENGTH AND SUSCEPTI- BILITY OF THE NATIONAL FEELING

IN many ways Warsaw affects the foreigner almost as if it were a French city. French is the auxiliary language of the Poles, the language which among the higher classes all know perfectly—although I met several who had half forgotten it during a twenty years' exile in Siberia—the language which is spoken as fluently as the mother-tongue and even better than the Russians speak it. In aristocratic circles Poles frequently converse with one another in French, a state of things which from the beginning of the century was promoted not only by the continual intellectual intercourse with France, and the emigration thereto, but by the need of being able to meet the Russians on neutral territory so far as language is concerned. As the Poles in addition are now frequently called the Frenchmen of the North or East, and as they themselves believe that they are closely related to the French through their defects, which they themselves characterise as inconstancy and instability, the foreigner is constantly asked if he does not see a *great and lamentable similarity* between the Poles and the French.

This great similarity is purely imaginary.

The trifling similarity which does exist consists in a cognate capacity for swift enthusiasms and violent revulsions of feeling, a craving for adventures and emotions, and a love of fame and show.

But these points of similarity do not exclude a fundamental difference. The rationalistic, argumentative basis of

the French character is entirely absent in the Pole. The algebraic, arithmetical basis of the French manner of thought is wholly wanting in the Pole. The Frenchman is a great writer of prose, the Pole is a poet. On this account the stronghold of the French world of letters is prose, that of the Polish, poetry—verse. In addition nothing can well be less French than the continual and perfect use of a foreign language, the remarkable knowledge of foreign authors, which meet one everywhere in Poland. Young girls of twenty who speak six languages perfectly and without accent are met in Poland, certainly not in France. Almost every young man or woman of the higher classes knows the most important capitals of Europe, and knows the most important literatures to a great extent. The passionate fondness for travel and the versatility of culture resulting therefrom are in the highest degree un-French. The Pole widens his purview and diminishes his brain power by learning four or five foreign languages; the Frenchman as a rule is either ignorant or a specialist.

But the most striking difference assuredly lies in the relations between the sexes. The fundamental trait of the Polish national character is a certain combination of mildness and energy. But what gives Polish character, and especially Polish patriotism in this century, its special stamp, is the preponderance of the feminine elements over the masculine.

That the relations between man and woman are very different in Poland and in France is quickly perceived in daily conversation. While the tone among Frenchmen, whenever conversation turns on women, is always extremely free, sometimes to a foreigner repulsive, and generally lascivious, the Poles as a rule in discussing women manifest warmth, often tenderness or indulgence, but, so far as I could judge, seldom frivolity.

I have found a remark in an Italian author which possibly goes to the root of this. He thinks that while as a rule among the Germanic races the man is more gifted than the woman, and while among the Latin races man and woman on an average stand on the same level as to

intellectual qualities, among the Poles, the most characteristic Slav race, woman is decidedly superior to man. If we set aside the power of invention or production, we must be struck with the truth of these words. The men in Poland are certainly not wanting in passion, in courage and in energy, in wit, in love of freedom, but it seems as if the women have more of these qualities. In Poland's great uprisings they have been known to enter into conspiracies, to do military duty, and frequently enough of their own free will to accompany their loved ones to Siberia. Mickiewicz's *Gracyna*, who led an army on horseback, has had successors in this century. Celebrated above all others is Emilia Plater, a young lady of one of the first families of Poland, who in 1830 induced a whole district to rise in rebellion, took part in several battles, and at last, having joined the detachments under Dembinski which refused to take refuge on Prussian soil, attempted to cut her way with her corps through the hostile army, but in December, 1831, died of want and overexertion at the age of 26, in the hut of a forester. Mickiewicz's, beautiful poem, *The Colonel's Death*, celebrated her memory. During the rebellion of 1830-31 there was not a battalion nor a squadron of the Polish army in which there were not female combatants; after a battle or a march the soldiers always arranged a bivouac for the women, just as they took care that no word was spoken which could offend their ears.¹

The time for such achievements is now past, but still the women are ever the most earnest patriots, because they feel the most warmly and criticise the least keenly. Nevertheless, the influence of woman has somewhat fallen off in the last twenty years. Once the women laboured as the chief supporters of the Catholic faith; but faith is vanishing where it has not vanished. Once the woman laboured in the same way as the priest, but the union between the women and

¹ In his book on Poland General Roman Solyk says: "When Warsaw was attacked, I noticed in the midst of the fire a soldier of the fifth light regiment who continually leaned against the breastworks, did not trouble himself in the least about the bombs and cannon-balls, but cheered his comrades on with vigorous gestures and cries. Though he stood in the front rank I could not at first see his face; but when he turned I discovered him to be a beautiful girl of 18."

the clergy is dissolving, just as culture and the Church are drifting apart. And in addition to this, as all public life is forbidden, and there are neither assemblies nor unions of any kind, the men seek each other almost exclusively in social life. Since the reception-room does duty as a place of political and literary assemblies, the men think less of winning women to their interests there. The latter feel themselves set aside, overlooked and abandoned, as in South Germany, where the man passes all his evenings in the ale-house, only the desertion has other causes. The pressure from above has evidently greatly aided in separating the sexes and diminishing the social influence of woman. It may at the present time be weaker in Poland than in France. The education of the young girls, moreover, is conducted in much the same way as there—they are never left a moment unprotected—and marriages are made in the same manner as in France; the contracting parties seldom know much of each other before the wedding, and generally see each other for the first time a few weeks before.

So far as the Polish instability is concerned, it also has no similarity to the French. The instability of the French shows itself more particularly in public life, especially where they are collected in masses, as in public meetings or mobs. It depends on the sudden change of mood, for which no single person feels himself responsible. The instability of the Poles is personal, depends partly on the propensity to change, and partly on an instinctive inclination to universality.

In France the ruling principle is a prudent and sometimes subtle egoism which runs in the family and is inherited by the children, which is impressed upon them from the beginning, and which as a rule directs their lives. Parents do not, as in England and America, first strive to develop the youth into a capable man, able to help himself, but they try to smoothe his path in life, procure for him favours, connections, patronage, assure his future or his advancement. And if the path is smoothed, the young man will not willingly abandon his career before the highest rung of the ladder of honour is reached.

The situation is entirely different in Poland, where the young man in private life far oftener allows himself to be led by fleeting instinct than by prudent egoism, and where a single public interest (the lost fatherland, the lost independence, the mother-tongue, the national literature and art), stands immutable and imperishable.

Undoubtedly the foreign rule has tended to obliterate Polish inconstancy in this highest domain; on the other hand, it has necessarily increased the national instability within the circle of private life.

For what can an educated young man do in Russian Poland? For instance, he studies law; he can never become a judge, generally not even an official, without separating himself from all intercourse with his countrymen. He studies medicine; he can never obtain a post at a university, never be at the head of a hospital, never conduct a public clinic, therefore can never attain the first rank in his science. The result is that if he has means—and there is still great wealth in Poland, since to be rich is almost the only thing which is permitted to every one—he goes from one study to another, obtains a smattering of different branches of science, surprises the foreigner by the versatility of his knowledge and information, but has no real mastery of anything.

The following instances were given me in my own circle: A very able young man began as a jurist, passed on to medicine and became a physician, then gave that up and bought an estate, studied agriculture, mechanics, &c., for four years, introduced many improvements on his estate, shortly after sold it, and at the present time is the best theatrical critic in Warsaw. Another young man began life as a farmer, had given up agriculture for music, qualified as a virtuoso, abandoned the career, established a manufactory of instruments, made violoncellos for several years, lost interest in that, and is now working at the Academy of Art in Munich as a genre-painter.

They have too many talents and too little inducement to persevere.

The women complain bitterly of this. Like good wives they endeavour to share their husbands' interests, to identify

themselves with their occupations, and are in despair that every second or third year they have to interest themselves in something quite different. They meditate with anxiety on what the next year may bring.

One evening, when Feuillet's *Dalila* was acted at the theatre, and when the actor who took the part of Carnioli was not especially happy, I could not suppress an outburst of wonder that the actor could be in want of a type of the genial *dilettante* who educates the young composer, in a city like Warsaw, where there are so many men of Carnioli's stamp. The most admirable type stood by my side behind the scenes. And the same evening, when in a large circle I was asked how as a critic I would characterise Polish society, I answered: "You are a society of *dilettanti*."

I believe that the definition is correct, taking the word in its broad sense, and bearing in mind how the Poles have come to be what they are.

We must picture to ourselves a naturally very energetic people, against whose energy a barrier not to be broken down has been erected, a warlike people, who only reluctantly enter the army, in which practically no young man voluntarily chooses the post of officer; an extremely ambitious people, to whom all high positions and offices are closed, and to whom all distinctions and demonstrations of honour are forbidden, in so far as they are not bought with sacrifice of conviction or denial of solidarity with their countrymen; a people naturally hostile to Philistine ideals, but who needed to acquire the civic virtues, and whose circumstances now give them constant encouragement to unsteadiness; a pleasure-loving people, in whose capital not a single public place of entertainment is found; a people with a lively irresistible inclination to politics, for whom all political education has been made impossible, because they are allowed neither to elect representatives nor to discuss affairs of state, and whose political press is silenced in all political matters; to speak of political newspapers in Poland is like speaking of nautical journals in Switzerland. Let us imagine to ourselves this people, constituted for a large free life in the broad daylight of publicity, imprisoned in the

chiaroscuro of private life ; let us conceive a people who, from the time of Arild, had the most extravagant conceptions of the rights of the individual in regard to the power of the state, living their life without any sort of public security against encroachments on the part of an accidental superior official, thinking of Siberia, as we think of a disease, which may come when least expected.

Conceiving all this, we shall understand that under the pressure, which has been exerted simultaneously from so many sides, there necessarily sprang up an extraordinary concentrated activity, a boiling intensity of life, in the narrow circle which remained to them.

As the actual people were shut out, as all education of them, all approach to knowledge was made impossible, the higher classes, which could not adequately recruit themselves, came to lead a kind of island life of the highest and most refined culture, a life, which is indeed national in every heart-beat, but cosmopolitan in every form of expression, a hot-house life, where flowers of all the civilisations of Europe have come to *développement* and exhale fragrance, an eddying, seething *maëlstrom* life of ideas, endeavours, amusements and fêtes. The best society scarcely ever goes to bed before four o'clock in the morning in the month of February. In carnival time the day in Warsaw has twenty hours, and so long as the season lasts they are prodigal of time and strength.

"Life in Warsaw is a *neurosis*," said one of the most intelligent men of the city to me ; "no one can keep it up long."

This people, who discovered the dance of the planets around the sun, also, as is well known, invented the *polonaise* with its proud solemnity, and the *mazurka*, with its contrast of masculine force and feminine gentleness, and the people are perhaps almost as proud of the *mazurka* as of Copernicus. In Poland the *mazurka* is not the dance we call by that name, but a long, difficult, and impassioned national dance, in which the gentlemen and ladies, though they dance hand in hand, constantly make different steps in the same time. It is a genuine sorrow to the Poles that the

consistent Russian government has forbidden the dancing of this dance in the national costume ; and the fourth or fifth question the foreigner is asked in Warsaw is this : " Have you seen our national dance ? " In every other country it would at least be the thirtieth or fortieth.

They dance all through the carnival time as people dance in no other place. Probably nowhere else are so many charity balls given. They dance for everything—for " the poor sewing girls," for " the poor students," &c. I do not deny that many times, when I stood watching the dances—sometimes I was invited to two balls on the same night—I could not help remembering the old hard adage : *slavus saltans !* But as a young girl said in allusion to a moralising article in *Prawda* : " What would be the advantage if we left off dancing in Warsaw ? "

Yet the gaiety with which they whirl is not the common joy of life ; it reminds us rather of that which the prisoners of the Revolution displayed in their ignorance as to what the next day would bring forth. This levity is not common levity, but a lightness often found in those who daily defy suffering and death.

For like reasons at times they are more serious than people on similar occasions in other countries. At a very sedate entertainment which the representatives of literature and art gave me, when there were a series of speeches in French and Latin, the ancient festival tongue of the Poles, it happened, when one of the speakers said some words which especially excited those assembled, that tears at once stood in their eyes, and that old men, who had passed a whole period of their lives in Siberia, and hundreds of times had seen death staring them in the face, sprang up, and while the tears rolled down their cheeks, embraced the speaker. It seems, then, as if the foreign rule had equally increased the susceptibility to social enjoyment and the susceptibility to serious emotion. The power of feeling pleasure and pain, the disposition to tears and laughter, seem to be as strong as in the sick.

Besides, passionately as the Poles are a people of the moment, just as thoroughly are they a people of memories.

Nowhere else can be found such a religion of remembrance, such a clinging to national recollections. They cling to everything that can recall the Poland of the past. It is true that all the works of art of the city and all the treasures of the nation have been carried away to St. Petersburg; the city has even been robbed of the great Zaluski library of 300,000 volumes, but the more stubbornly do the people hold on to national recollections. They have been assisted in this endeavour in the most forcible manner by the fact that all the Polish poetry and historical writings of this century, as well as Polish painting, have been pressed into the service of the national idea. Artists like Mateiko and Brandt—both admirable colourists who fall short in simplicity and perspicuity of composition—almost constantly treat national historical subjects; their poets have treated Poland and Poland's fate, even when, like Krasinski in *Irydion*, they place the action in old Rome, or like Slowacki in *Anheli*, transfer the scene to a fantastic Siberia. Poetry in the Polish home has the same importance as religion. The best works are, or have been, strictly forbidden reading. Their acquisition as well as their possession was perilous. Generally the books, when they had been carefully read till the thoughts were remembered, even if the words were forgotten, were burned—with the same pain with which a woman who is not free burns a letter from the man she loves. But they have not forgotten in Poland, how, when the young Lévitoux was put into the citadel in Warsaw because a copy of Mickiewicz's *Dziady* had been found in his house, in his despair after the torture he had suffered, and in his anxiety lest in his ravings he should name his comrades, he with his manacled hands pulled his night-lamp under his bed of rushes, and burned himself to death; nor have they forgotten that several hundred Lithuanian students were sent to Siberia for having published the *Temptation* of Krasinski in book form after the poem, which the censor had not understood, had seen the light in the feuilleton of a little paper.

The national authors are found to-day in every house, and even if the Poles have been obliged to establish their

national museum at Rapperswyl, Switzerland, for safety, still there is to be found in almost every home in Warsaw an album with reproductions of Arthur Grottger's remarkable paintings at Cracow, representing the history of the sufferings of Poland, a (prohibited) lithograph of the same artist's *March of the Exiles to Siberia*, and some pictures of the defence of Warsaw in 1831, representing the last Polish regiment, which blew itself up with Ordon's redoubt. The Poles regard with tenderness and emotion not only the faces, but the antique, semi-comical chasseur uniform of the soldiers, with the swallow-tail coats. This was, it is true, the last Polish military uniform.

It is in accordance with this national feeling, made vigilant by oppression, that they cherish a hatred for all foreign authors who occasionally or systematically depreciate the Poles. Not that they took Heine's celebrated lampoon (*Zwei Ritter*) about the two valiant noblemen, Krapülinski and Waschlapski much to heart. They have laughed at its wit and know it by heart, and they know very well how warmly he expressed himself in many places about Poland. But they are familiar with Freytag's *Soll und Haben*; they attach great importance to a casual remark of the younger Dumas about the Poles from *everywhere*, who took part in the insurrection of the Commune, and in February they were in an uproar over the word *ausrotten* (exterminate), in reference to the Poles in Prussia, used by Eduard von Hartmann in an article in a review, an expression which they took too much *au sérieux*. The Poles pay altogether too much attention to what is written about them in Europe. Anxiety as to what is said about one is a general accompaniment of weakness.

V

CONSOLIDATION OF EVERYTHING POLISH — RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PARTIES — POLAND A SYMBOL

A WEIGHTY, and for Poland a decidedly happy, result of the foreign rule has been the welding and uniting of everything Polish. All provincial differences have vanished in this unity ; the different parts of Poland, Austrian, Russian, and Prussian Poles feel that they are without exception one people. In these later days, Austrian Poland has become the centre about which the others cluster, since the Poles in Galicia have a parliament, where their language may be spoken, besides two national universities, and whole towns where many things may be printed, which the Russian censor would forbid.

And like the provinces, so all the religious sects are merged in the national unity.

Poland was once an exclusively Roman Catholic land. Now mixed marriages are of frequent occurrence in Warsaw. In the two homes with which I was most familiar, in one the husband was a Protestant and the wife a Catholic ; in the other the husband was a Catholic and the wife a Protestant. It must be added that in neither of these homes did the religious faith play an important part.

As to the Jews, who are so numerous in Poland, because the kingdom of Poland offered them an asylum during their long persecution, that form of hatred of the Jews, which has been decorated with the affected name of *Antisemitism*, and which certain sections of Danish society with their inclinations to cultivate German reaction and German rudeness have imported, has not struck root at all in Russian Poland. Of course the far-reaching mutual aversion of Jews and

Russians, dating from a thousand years back, persists even here. The peasants have no dealings with the Jews, and it is only recently that the Jews have been placed on the same footing as the other citizens. Nevertheless, even in 1794, when despair armed Warsaw against Russia, they took part in the national defence; a regiment of Jewish volunteers fought under Kosciusko's banners, led by the Jewish Colonel Berko, who in 1809 fell fighting against the Austrians. In 1830 the same prejudiced and irresolute national government, which rejected the aid of the peasants, and would have nothing to do with the revolt in the old Polish provinces, rejected the applications of the Jews to be allowed to enter the army instead of paying for exemption as formerly. When the rebellion was suppressed, Nicholas punished them for this application by incorporating them with his own army, and that was not enough. Since the Jews had also asked the national government for permission to share in the higher and lower general instruction of the people, the Tzar declared that for the future he would take care of their education. He caused 36,000 Jewish families to be taken across the frontier, "in order to remove the temptation to smuggle," as it was said, and ordered them to settle on the steppes of Southern Russia and cultivate the soil there. The Cossacks came with the order of expulsion. All furniture was thrown out into the street, old men, women, small children, exhausted and famished, were obliged to drag themselves away to the place of destination. If a woman sank down fainting by the way, the husband had to go on notwithstanding. And at the new place of abode the exiles were crushed by the most severe of punishments: child-conscription. In the great raids of 1842 all the small boys of six years and upwards were seized and sent under Cossack guards to Archangel to be brought up as sailors. Of course they died like flies on the way.

Common misfortune has united the Polish Jews to their Christian fellow-countrymen. For the other Poles have also been compelled to endure the loss of their children. An order from Prince Paskiewicz of March 24, 1832, which was executed, began thus: "It has pleased his Majesty the

Tzar to command, that all strolling, orphan, or *poor boys* in Poland shall be admitted into the militia battalions, and subsequently be sent away in a body to Minsk, when decision will be made about them according to the regulations of his Majesty's general staff." And the execution of this order is not any exceptional incident. Six years later—April 13, 1838—the following communication from the council of the government appeared in the Warsaw newspapers: "On the 8th of this month, in the Town Hall, there will be a public offer of contracts for the transport to St. Petersburg and Ural of some thousands of the sons of Polish noblemen." From this time forth Jewish and Christian Poles have felt, not indeed as a community, but as a nation. The fraternising of the people with the Jews in Warsaw in 1860 solved the question as the equality of the latter, and when in February 1861, in the square before the castle, and in another larger square, shots were fired upon the kneeling crowd, who with the mouths of the Russian cannon before their eyes, gave utterance to a national hymn, and besought God to send to the Poles freedom and a fatherland, the Jews felt impelled to manifest their national disposition by an unmistakable demonstration. In great numbers they accompanied their Rabbis into the Catholic churches, just as the Christians in great numbers went into the synagogues to sing the same hymn.

But the feeling of unity was already strong in Poland's greatest poet, Mickiewicz; his work, *Pan Tadeusz* (of 1834), which has become the Polish national epic, ends with the playing of Poland's celebrated national song for Dombrowski and his soldiers by a Jew. "The great Master," as the poem calls him, by his cymbal music alone, in great enthusiasm, evokes the whole history of Poland from 1791 for his audience. The impetuous polonaise of May 3rd is the starting point, then follows the false chord, the sound of the traitor-note, which calls to mind Targovice, then march, attack, battle, storming and shot, groans of the children, wailings of the mothers; the blood-bath of Praga rises before the eyes dim with tears. Then the key changes to the wailing melody of the old popular

ballads, to the story of the exiled warrior, who wanders through woods and many a time is ready to perish in agony and starvation, until at last he sinks down at the feet of his faithful little horse, which digs his grave with its hoof. Closely gathered about the master, the soldiers listen to the well-known melody and recall the better days when they sang this ballad at the grave of their fatherland.

"They raised their heads, for how entirely different, how much lighter it sounded now—louder, in another time, carrying another message. And again the master let his glance glide over the strings, folding his hands together, and struck a blow with both staves, so fully, so powerfully, that the strings resounded like a brazen trumpet, and this renowned melody born of the holiest hope, this triumphal march flew towards heaven: 'It is not yet all over with Poland! not so long as we live! Up, Dombrowski! To Poland!' and all clapped their hands, and 'Up, Dombrowski!' pealed through the hall. And as if he himself were startled at the effect, the master trembled. . . ."

And covering his face, while a torrent of tears burst out through his fingers, he says to Dombrowski: "Yes, General, thou art he, whom the singer's mouth has heralded," and the poet adds: "Thus he spoke, the brave Jew, he loved his native country as a Pole."

Yet though there is now no religious division in Russian Poland, of late years a party division of another kind has arisen—namely, that between the youth with positive tendencies, who are disposed to make the liberation of the intellect the highest aim, and the Catholic patriots, or those working with them.

The Catholic religion has long seemed to be indissolubly bound up in the national cause. Without the influence of the Catholic clergy it would have been impossible to keep the larger part of the population, which is excluded from the higher culture, firmly united as a nationality. Now this difficulty has arisen, that those possessing the highest culture no longer believe in the Catholic faith, and that the leaders of youth believe the only possibility for intellectual advance to lie in opposing modern views of life to the tradition of

the past. They have asked themselves with anxiety if Polish culture, by maintaining its relations with Catholicism, as, for instance, do the great poets of the romantic school, Mickiewicz and Krasinski, will not come to be antiquated and outstripped in the general work of Europe, and some eminent men, among them first and foremost Svientochovski, have felt obliged to express themselves on the religious question in a manner which has wounded some, and caused anxiety to more. Recently so distinguished an author as Sienkiewicz, who commenced his career as a radical, and whose opinions were long radical, has been seen from prudential reasons to ally himself with the conservative party. It is much to be regretted, however, that by receiving a considerable annual sum for holding a sinecure as nominal editor of a clerical newspaper, he has complicated his situation and lost a great part of his prestige.

There is a dilemma here, which troubles the Polish intelligence more than anything else. Many of the best people dare not say what they think, lest they should injure the cause, which is to them the holiest, or rather the only holy cause: the cause of Poland. Other eminent men are led to the reflection, which under common conditions would be unquestionable, but which in this case does not suffice, that there are ideas which have greater weight and importance than the idea of nationality. The question becomes practically a question of expedience, toleration, and tact.

My purely personal relation to the question was this: those on the progressive side in Warsaw were inclined to appropriate me, while isolated men, who although entirely liberal, desired for political reasons to avoid a breach between the patriots and the "Young Poland" party, earnestly desired my presence in Warsaw, because they thought it possible that a foreigner, who had friends in both camps, might effect a reconciliation. They sought, therefore, to make use of my stay in Warsaw to bring this about, and it was said to me on a certain occasion that, that evening for the first time in fifteen years, representatives of the different parties were assembled in the same room. What I personally saw in Warsaw could but give me a lofty idea of the harmony of the Poles as a people;

the attitude of the conservative party especially surprised me. More than one Catholic priest received me heartily, and the greatest festivity to which I was invited during my visit in Warsaw was given by the leader of the conservative party, the owner of the newspaper *Slovo* (*The Word*), Count Przewdziecki. (He is the son of the man who published the complete works of the Polish historian, Johannes Dlugosz, in fourteen large quarto volumes, at great personal expense, and a near relative of the Countess Przewdziecka, who is Merimee's "Second Unknown" (*Autre Inconnue*.)

Although, according to my idea, Polish culture at present must thus be limited to an extremely prudent and wary evolution, it is evident that the year 1863 marks an epoch in the intellectual life of Poland. The follies and horrors of this year, the frantic chaotic rebellion, with its tragic result, has made the nation sober. Too sober, it may seem to some, for while before 1863 it was the wont of the Poles to see all merits united in their own people, since that time it has become the fashion to speak sorrowfully and depreciatingly of Poland. But it is a great gain in any event to have cast off the sickly self-worship which prevailed in the thirties, at the time when the two great opponents, Mickiewicz and Slowacki, simultaneously adopted the visionary dreams of the mystic Towianski, who regarded the Poles as the Messianic race, suffering for the sins of mankind, and by suffering, working out the salvation of humanity. They have learned to look the stern reality in the face, and the hopes they cherish—and though certainly not sanguine, they are by no means without hope for the future—are not founded on dreams and fantasies.

Finally, the drastic foreign rule since 1863 has produced an intellectual condition which, however unhappy it may be, may in certain ways be called the finest and best possible to a nation, a condition which calls to mind that of primitive Christendom under the oppression of Rome, a conception of the world, pessimistic in many points, but not on that account less true.

Perhaps after all there is no condition more elevating for a race than one in which no distinguished man ever has any

external distinction, title, or decoration, and where the official tinsel of honour is regarded as a disgrace, while on the other hand the official garb of disgrace, the political prison blouse, is regarded as honourable.

Every child who daily goes past Paskiewicz's monument, who sees the names of traitors encircled by garlands on the obelisk, is from a tender age familiar with the thought that those whom the authorities honour are not as a rule the best men, and that those whom they persecute are not as a rule the worst.

That which is the pith, the true pith of Christian teaching, a right estimate of the honours of this world, the ignominy of this world, and the justice of this world, of real greatness and real baseness—this estimate, every one here, even the least gifted, has accepted. What a school for life! Poland is the only country, I believe, where primitive Christianity still exists as a power in society, and that equally for those who are Christians and for those who are not.

The name of Poland is not found on the map of Europe. The people of Poland are not reckoned among the peoples of Europe. The freedom and welfare of its sons and daughters are in the power of foreign rulers. Its language is persecuted and suppressed.

This people has not a single friend among the mighty of the earth; on the other hand it has active, extremely active and effectual enemies, and its misfortune is that its enemies are the most absolutely powerful men in the world.

On the other hand Poland has, I believe, among all the nations of the world the best and the most humane of their sons for her friends.

Poland presents the spectacle of a nation which is not only condemned to death, but which, as Cherbuliez has said, has been buried alive, and yet which continually raises the lid of its coffin, and shows that its vital power is still far from exhausted.

We meet here a people in whom every nerve is strained, because day in and day out they fight for their existence, instead of enjoying it like other races. We see here a people who are entirely absorbed in their national cause, and yet

this national cause is nothing but the universal cause, the cause of humanity.

We love Poland, therefore, not as we love Germany or France or England, but as we love freedom. For what is it to love Poland but to love freedom, to have a deep sympathy with misfortune, and to admire courage and enthusiasm?

Poland is a symbol—a symbol of all which the best of the human race have loved, and for which they have fought. In Poland everything is concentrated, all that is most hateful and despicable, all that is most lovable and most brilliant; here the contrasts of human life are found in bold relief; here the cosmos is concentrated as in an essence.

Everywhere in Europe where there has been any fighting for freedom in this century, the Poles have taken part in it, on all battlefields, on all the barricades. They have sometimes been mistaken in their views of the enterprises to which they lent their arms; but they believed that they were fighting for the good of humanity; they regarded themselves as the bodyguard of freedom, and still look on every one who fights for freedom as a brother.

But conversely, it may also be said that everywhere in Europe where there is any fighting for freedom, there is fighting for Poland. The future fate of Poland is wholly dependent on that of Europe; for if the idea of the right of the people to independence, and the right of every nation to full political freedom continually gains ground in the world, then the hour is drawing near when the resurrection of Poland shall be something more than a hope.

SECOND IMPRESSION

1886

THE EXPULSION OF THE POLES BY PRUSSIA

THE two greatest military powers of the world, Germany and Russia, which are on bad terms with each other, but neither of which represents political freedom, the right of the nation and of the individual to self-government, have at present one task and object in common ; with all the means at their command they wage a war of extermination against a nationality of from 14,000,000 to 16,000,000 people, which is tied and bound, oppressed and gagged as no other nationality in Europe is, but which nevertheless is treated by its rulers as if it overflowed or crushed out the elements which govern it, and we see it incessantly described as a danger or a threat.

The partition of the Polish kingdom is nearly a hundred years old. But it will not allow the three powers that accomplished it to be at peace. Even now it demands great efforts to establish it as just and right. It is not enough that they have caused the history of the world to be written as if all the blame were on the side of this old Poland. It is not enough that what among other people is counted as virtue or duty—love of one's country, its memories and language, hatred for its enemies and detractors—is branded and punished when professed by a Pole. It is not enough that no Polish deputy in the German or Galician parliament can escape swearing and protesting his faithful allegiance to the foreign power that shared in the partition, or that the youth of Poland are registered as soldiers in the German, Austrian, and Russian armies, are put into regiments where only a foreign language is spoken, and have to fight for foreign interests ; more recently Russia and Germany

have simultaneously initiated a persecution of the Polish nationality, which comes very near to abuse.

At the beginning of this year, after a few days' warning, Prince Bismarck drove out of Prussia fifty thousand Poles, men, women, and children, helpless creatures who had to seek a shelter or perish. His political motive seems to be twofold. He is afraid of the Polonicising of the German-speaking parts of the country; for it appears that the Polish language, in spite of everything that is done to root it out, continually gains ground. And he would like to secure the best possible conditions in a forthcoming war, and have as few hostile elements in the country as he can. He is not only driving out of Prussia all foreign Poles, even if they have long been settled there—and this so rigorously, that on the 1st of February a woman ninety-one years old arrived in Warsaw, who was exiled from Posen as dangerous to the State—but he is also proposing measures that will make the ownership of the soil as burdensome as possible to the Prussian Poles who reside in Posen and possess land there. He wishes to buy out the Poles from their old land, and has asked for 300,000,000 marks towards colonisation, just as if some region either uninhabited or inhabited by savages were in question. And it is not even to be permitted to every German to buy Polish land unconditionally; no one who has married a Polish woman can get permission; for experience teaches, says Bismarck, that such a wife makes her husband a Polish patriot in the twinkling of an eye. In future no Prussian Pole is to be allowed to settle in Posen, unless he has married a German wife; for only in this event can there be any hope of Germanising him and his children.

I

THE POLISH WOMEN

IT thus appears that Bismarck regards the Polish women as even more dangerous to the unity and safety of the German empire than the men. He has unintentionally borne testimony to their pride and worth. And they deserve it, for in all that relates to the contest for the preservation of the national spirit, they are the marrow of the land.

The women here referred to belong to the aristocracy. Among the common people there is only a religious national consciousness, and there is no middle class as in the Germanic and Latin countries.

Broadly speaking, we may say of these women of the higher and lower aristocracy that their qualities, virtues, and vices have nothing *bourgeois* about them. They are not domesticated, they are not small-minded. The best of them have a pride, which exalted and exceptional as it is, springs from their feeling of the strength and purity of the spiritual life. They are women who are born to rule, and who even in narrow and straitened circumstances preserve the grand self-esteem which runs in their blood. In women of this type the emotional life is wholly absorbed in the national cause. Several among them, indeed, are zealous children of the Catholic Church, but for the larger number and the more intelligent, Catholicism is precious only as the palladium of the nationality. Cherbuliez's characterisation of the Polish women as "Punch mixed with holy water" is now a trifle antiquated.

The Polish women are renowned for beauty, and deserve their reputation. It is a kind of dogma in Poland that the real Polish woman is blonde; it is considered most elegant to be so; still, although some women are to be found

who not only approach the Swedes and Norwegians in the golden yellow of their hair, but who surpass any Northerner in the glistening whiteness of their skins, the dogma does not hold true. Brunettes are everywhere more numerous, and the colour of the hair of the larger number is a dark brown.

The perfect form of the hands and the smallness of the feet are remarkable in the Polish women. They even place the beauty of the hands above all other perfections. "I regard my hands, but not my face," said one, and one of them who otherwise thinks little about her appearance and is too cultivated to be vain, when her hands were frost-bitten in Paris, caused the most celebrated physician in the city to be sent for. Polish ladies maintain that when they visit the shoemakers' shops in Vienna and show their small feet with high insteps, the shoemakers exclaim: "Das kennen wir, das sind polnische Füße!" (We know that those are Polish feet.) It is also said in Warsaw that in the Vienna shoe-shops they have a separate case of boots and shoes for these feet, and that its contents are widely different from that of the case designed for English ladies.

The prevailing view here, as in all other nationalities known to me, is, that the typical national woman lives for her home and children—perhaps more for the children than the husband, and that she rarely leads a life of love. Matrimony is not so paraded as in Germany, and is not so often the occasion of catastrophes as in France. The Polish women have hot heads, but their senses are under control.

Now and then a great irregularity happens: a lady leaves her husband and lives with her lover; a young girl marries her father's valet, and the like. They are the rare exceptions. When you meet an accomplished coquette in society, she is almost always of foreign descent. On the other hand, great examples of maternal sacrifice are by no means rare. Countess Rosa K., called *the first lady in Poland* on account of her family connections and fortune, has for years lived entirely alone in an unimportant mountain town in the Carpathian mountains, for the health of her feeble little son.

There are still found in Poland remnants of that abstract worship of women, which, as long as the kingdom of Poland endured, found expression in the following description of the Madonna: *Virgo Maria Regina Poloniæ*. Although or perhaps because the economic emancipation of women has not been even mooted so far, gallantry towards the female sex is *de rigueur*. Men always rise in a tramway to give a lady a seat. And in any public place whatever, even at the most elegant receptions or balls, a chair is taken away from under one with the words, "For a lady."

In the upper ranks of society the life of the women at first sight seems to be purely idle. But in summer in the country, where patriarchal relations to a great extent still prevail, the mistress of the estate has much to do, and in Warsaw it is only apparently that she lives a life of mere amusement.

The lady of position rises between eleven and twelve o'clock in the forenoon, and goes to bed at four o'clock in the morning; she drives from one visit to another and from one party to another. But in reality she labours every day for public and national interests. Everything, the most innocent enterprises, the founding of a library, a hospital, a sewing school, no matter what it is, is made to strengthen the Polish cause. Four ladies do not meet on a charity committee without promoting the national cause under its cover.

It is forbidden to teach girls Polish in a school, but it is allowed to teach them to sew. They draw corsets on the slate in case the gendarmes should come; they have sewing materials on the table, and books under it.

Several ladies, eminent for their talents, have attempted to do more; thus the renowned authoress, Elise Orzeszkowa, even established a printing press to be carried on with a view to the education of the people. This enterprise came to an end when the government prohibited it, closed the printing office, and confined Madam Orzeszkowa for several years at Grodno. Her romances, which have attracted much attention—*Meir Ezofowicz* is especially worth reading—disclose a talent which is akin to that of George Sand; they are written with a melancholy patriotism inspired by an en-

thusiastic faith in freedom ; her minor novels have a keener stamp of realism, and more decided artistic form, but the same patriotic, didactic tendency. A younger poetess, who has attained a very high rank in lyric poetry—Marja Konopnicka—while contending with the most difficult and oppressive conditions of life, has developed into the poetic representative of a life of freedom of thought and emotion which is still exceptional in Poland. The chord of the love of country also vibrates strongly in her poetry, as, for instance, in her ode to Matejko on the painting, *The Battle at Grünwald*.

The opposition between Poland and Russia is never out of the mind of the women. This is constantly noticeable in daily life. A young girl was deserted by her lover. It was always cited as a detail which made the perfidy and cruelty more bitter, that it was for the sake of a *Russian* dancer he left her. A young girl, not twenty years old, rebuked a group of half-grown Polish schoolboys in the Saxon Park because they were speaking Russian to each other. Such little traits teach every one who resides for any time in Russian Poland that it is the women who keep the national passion at white heat.

In other respects, like the women of other countries, of course they are of all sorts ; gentle and quiet, or suspiciously sharp-sighted, virginal and combative, or with erotic tendencies, or vain, theatrical dispositions. There are some who, genuine Slavs, are wholly absorbed in intellectual enthusiasms, and there are individual commanding natures, typically Polish, with the determination and firmness of an exceptional man. There was one, whom her father, a general of artillery, who wished to cure his child of fear, had compelled from the time she was ten years old to stand at the side of the cannon when they were fired, and who now, at the age of twenty, was characterised as a woman who could stand fire.

Often common patriotic interests unite them to the men ; sometimes they choose a man instinctively for the reason that he falls less short than others of their patriotic ideal. On the whole it may be said that they think rather lightly

of men, and know their faults thoroughly. Courage in a man is not enough for them. "If they could not even fight, they ought to be buried," was the retort made—in answer to a speech which exalted this virtue in men—by a young girl of much character. As a rule it may be said of these women, that they demand much and give much in return.

II

THE MEN—POLISH IDEALS, VIRTUES AND VICES

THE men are well-grown, often thin ; most frequently with clear-cut faces and long, thick, pendant moustaches. This type may be traced from peasant to aristocrat. A frequent variation is the heavy, childishly frank country noble, who greets his friends at meeting and parting with a kiss, and has his heart on his lips, but who, nevertheless, has a manly bearing and much natural dignity ; this is the type which Mickiewicz has immortalised in several instances in *Pan Tadeusz*.

Political qualities are universally wanting. While the German generally feels as if he had found his destiny when he is harnessed to the chariot of state, even if he thereby loses some of the best of his nature, the Pole is without any talent as a politician. The economic as well as the political sense is but slightly developed in Russian Poland.

Therefore there was in the old kingdom of Poland (just as in Greece) a high civilisation without the material foundation which could secure its continuance, and on that account a development of personal freedom took place here (as in Judæa) at the expense of the power of the kingdom in its relation to foreign countries.

There are two Polish national songs, which together give a complete picture of the national character of the Poles : one is Wibicki's *Jeszcze Polska* of 1797, a poem famous throughout the world as "Poland is not yet lost ;" the other is Ujejski's *Zdymen Pozarow* of 1846, written after the Galician massacres. The Metternich Government, which got the idea of using the peasants against their masters from Archduke Ferdinand, persuaded the peasantry in Galicia that the em-

peror had granted them freedom from military service and had given them the soil for partition, but that the nobility prevented the carrying out of this imperial regulation. When the young nobles then sought to win over the peasants to a national revolt, the fury of the latter turned against the Polish nobility; in three days two thousand men, women, and children of noble rank were exterminated, some being burned alive, others flogged to death, and others cut to pieces.

Ujejski's song is the expression of the despair of the younger race at seeing the hopes of Poland thus brought to naught by the Poles themselves, as Wibicki's song is the expression of the bright hopes of the old race, even after the blow of the third partition had fallen. The first is a hymn which resembles a psalm, the second a march which approaches a mazurka.

The two sides of the character of the people, the whole Polish spirit, are reflected herein. In Ujejski's hymn there is the lofty, burning earnestness, the love of country as a religion: "Our lamentation mounts up to Thee, O Lord, with the smoke of fire and the steam of our brother's blood!" *Jeszcze Polska*, which is generally believed to be pathetic, because it has played the same part in the national life of Poland as the *Marseillaise* in that of France, is an extremely careless, merry song, the ballad of heroic thoughtlessness. Its argument is: No fear. Poland endures still. March, march, Dombrowski! It is joy to live, to sing, to fight.

The virtue which has gradually made its way in Europe in modern times as the chief civic virtue is that of working, and loving work for its own sake. The conception on which it is based is very rare in Poland. Its children have cultivated the earth and cultivated their minds for centuries, but they have at the same time obstinately regarded work merely for money as a low, degrading thing. They have nourished the inherited aristocratic contempt for the merchant and the manufacturer, to say nothing of the shopkeeper and the mechanic. They have collected great fortunes, but they have spent them. Money was a means; very seldom an end: work a semi-disgraceful resource; never its own reward.

They wished to enjoy life, not earn bread, and above all, to live lavishly and carelessly.

In this country the useful has always been given the second place, often the third.

Not that their highest interest lay in an ideal *reproduction* of life, as did that of Italy during the Renaissance, when it was absorbed by its eternal art. No ; the end here was to make life itself a festival which a great lord, a really *grand seigneur*, gave to other gentlemen, great and small, and their ladies.

Hospitality is a more essential feature in Polish life than in that of any other country. Elsewhere people are hospitable only when they are bored : here they are hospitable without being bored ; to shrink from showing hospitality here is accounted snobbery ; to shrink from accepting hospitality, even on a grand scale, is also snobbery, for it shows that you value it in money.

In ancient Poland even war was festive. In war the Polish knights wore large wings on their cuirasses, real ostrich wings on their saddles, and, as a matter of course, plumes in rich variety.

And how beautiful and rich was the Polish costume in peace ! It can scarcely be maintained that their mode of dress was ever practical, but what glittering luxury it displayed ! What wonderful splendour in sashes, with their gold and silver embroidery, which were wound many times about the waist ! What a delicate and superior sense of beauty in their silk embroideries ! The man who wore such a sash about his waist had a constant impression of happiness, fulness of life, prosperity. This was not tinsel, like so much of the French finery of those days, but solid and enduring splendour.

The individual mighty man of this people did not live for himself alone, was not reserved, and the whole race was like him. We have only to consider two such incidents as these : that Poland opened its doors to the Jews in the Middle Ages, and that John Sobieski liberated Vienna from the Turks ; two rare incidents in the history of Europe of religious liberality and political chivalry.

But ideals, disinterested ideals, are a luxury, which bring their own punishment on a people almost as national vices do. The nations which attain to new religious ideals in the emotional life, or in their contemplative life raise themselves to new heights, or which follow aristocratic ideals in their conduct, are always weak as makers of states ; frequently they have been compelled to pay for more exalted qualities by the loss of their political existence, but a race like the Poles is placed in a more difficult position than ever in a period so uniformly civic and martial as our own.

Especially does the old-time aristocratic contempt for work prove fatal. No one works who does not need to, and many who should, do not. Society in Warsaw is perhaps more exclusive than anywhere else. The prejudice against work is impressed upon the young by the old. A distinguished old lady made this significant remark : "What company they invited me to meet ! It was made up of *workmen*, advocates whom we pay, manufacturers who sell goods, doctors, into whose hands three rubles are slipped for a visit !" The wife of Don Ranudo would not speak otherwise.

But how does a whole class get money in our time without work ? some one will ask. That is exactly the crux ; the money of the Polish aristocracy is coming to an end ; those who still have land are frequently obliged to live wholly on their estates.

But we must not believe that any one troubles himself much about this. A Polish proverb runs : "I suppose it will settle itself," a saying characteristic of the land of disorder. A poor paymaster, or one who lives on credit, is judged less severely here than anywhere. About families who are in debt to everybody it is said indulgently : "They were forced to run into debt." They are not despised on that account, hardly even when extravagance has amounted to folly, as when the head of a family gambles and loses a fortune in play. But just in such cases the bright and the shady sides of the Polish character are seen in close proximity.

Of two brothers, one lost 200,000 rubles in play and fled from the country. The other brother assumed the debt,

betook himself into the country, lived on his estate like the humblest workman, toiled like the poorest peasant, and during his whole life was paying off his brother's debt. Exaggerated, heroic self-sacrifice flourishes alongside of crazy, criminal recklessness.

The propensity to vain love of display, to extravagance, generates in low and bad natures that disorder in all money affairs and that lust for wealth which determine the peculiar Polish form of rascality, that which makes swindlers in private life and traitors in political life. Probably in every well-marked nationality rascality in money matters has its peculiar, favourite form. The two following incidents show it in its Polish extravagance.

A young man of good family ran in debt to the amount of 80,000 rubles, borrowed of all his relatives, impoverished them at last, and carried it so far that he borrowed of every one he met, of strange ladies, of ladies of his own country whom he met abroad in a hotel; he did not despise even a loan of five or ten rubles. Finally, when he had not a copeck left, he entered a monastery in Paris as a novice. There was general edification in his family. A short time after, he writes home to a pious old aunt, explains to her that each of the other brothers has given the monastery a sum of money, and begs her urgently to advance him a small sum, only 6000 rubles, so that the other monks should not despise him. As soon as he receives the money, he leaves the monastery, travels at full speed to America, spends the sum to the last penny, returns to France, becomes a monk again, and is to-day one of the most popular father-confessors in Paris.

The following incident from real life shows a variation on the same type, and illustrates at the same time peculiarities of Polish character of an entirely different kind.

A rich lady of the Polish aristocracy, very austere and demure in her whole conduct, peacefully and, as it is called, happily, married, who had a worthy husband, a beautiful home, and who had never been in love before, seemed to fall under a spell when she became acquainted with a certain elegant young nobleman. She abandoned husband and

children, house and home, and allowed herself to be carried off to Paris under a forged passport. The young man was kind to her for about a week, then gradually sold all her articles of value and ornaments, locked her up when he went out to amuse himself with the money, and soon left her so completely in the lurch that, stripped of everything, she was compelled to write to her mother for aid. Her mother brought her home, and her husband declared that he was willing to take her back again on the condition that she first kneeled down at the threshold of the house and asked pardon of all, even of the servants, for the bad example she had given. She submitted, and he has never since said a reproachful word to her, or recalled the past by any allusion.

Just as the rascality in money matters which here manifests itself among the depraved Poles is extreme, so is the horror there is of any intermingling of monetary value in an expression of gratitude to superiors or equals among the better class.

An exiled Pole, who took part in the rebellion of 1863, and who has since earned his bread as a photographer in Christiania, sent back to Charles XV. an expensive pin which the latter had sent him in remembrance of an interview, and of a service he had rendered. Another little incident that occurred in Warsaw last year is even more significant and instructive. A young landed proprietor, Mankowski, won the prize offered for a comedy by a Polish private citizen. He sent a diamond ring as a thank-offering to a popular actor, who had given him great assistance with the stage effects, and had spent a good deal of time upon this. The actor refused to accept the ring. When this was told me, and I suggested: "Can he give his time without compensation?" I received the answer: "He does not need much, you see: he does not take that kind of pay; but also he himself does not pay. People know that he has not much, and therefore regard it as mean to dun him. For instance, he has now occupied a fine apartment for ten years. During this time he has never paid his rent; but when rent day comes, he pays a visit to the landlord in the morning; the

latter offers him a cup of chocolate, the young actor makes an excuse for his negligence with regard to the rent, laments his want of money, and there is no more said about the matter."—"And his tailor, his shoemaker, does he not pay them either?"—"No ; they hope that he will some day make a rich match. On the other hand, he does not receive an invitation to dinner without reciprocating, and when he gives a dinner at the Hôtel d'Europe to Kronenberg (the richest banker in Poland), it is not less magnificent than Kronenberg's own dinners—and then he pays."

According to this way of looking at it, it is only necessary to pay for the unnecessary, the superfluous. Nowhere else indeed does the superfluous stand in so great honour. The young men of the highest class in Poland are products of luxury, extremely engaging, gently affectionate like women, delicate as late off-shoots of old noble stocks. As a rule they do not work ; and when by exception they do, without necessity, devote themselves to a study, prepare themselves for a professorship, or something of that sort, they awake general amazement and wonder. They applaud a young man not for working, but because he does the superfluous.

Thus to do the superfluous has always been the characteristic of Polish heroism. The men of the great days of Poland have taken part in the most varied European wars whenever the contest was about an object which had their sympathy. They fought in 1848, and later in the Crimea, in Italy, in Turkey. Thus it was with the old Ordon, sung by Mickiewicz, the hero of 1831, who blew up his redoubt before Warsaw when the Russians entered it, and who was himself saved by a miracle. He had been everywhere where a blow was struck for freedom or against Russia. Until last year this true hero, in whom all that is lofty and rare in the Polish character was combined, lived a quiet life in Florence. Proud and poor as he was and advanced in age, unable to work, in his fear of becoming a burden to others, he put an end to his life by a pistol shot. His courage was that of a knight-errant. And this kind of martial courage is found in spirits of the second rank, as, for instance, the lately deceased Tripplin, who in his accounts

of his travels has given a sympathetic, idealised description of Denmark. He also took part in the most varied wars for freedom, and was everywhere where there was any fighting against Russia.

The following incident of the last rebellion well illustrates the Polish disposition to show a courage which has no regard to the useful. When in 1863 all hope for the cause of Poland was lost, at the last meeting of the national Government its chief announced that he should remain in Warsaw ; that he would not run away ; the other members of the Government could still save themselves, and he handed them the passports which had been prepared. Then they also determined to remain, and to expose themselves to all the dangers of being taken as leaders of the rebellion, rather than fly before the enemy against whom they had risen.

With such virtues and the vices which have been touched upon, people do not get on in the world in the nineteenth century. They are not even honoured and respected, much less strong and great. The grace of magnanimity and recklessness is badly placed in our time between German prudence and Russian might.

III

EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION—DEMOCRATS, SOCIALISTS, FREE-THINKERS—COMPULSORY CHOICE OF THE CULTURED

OPPRESSION has now reached its greatest height in Russian Poland since the partition of the kingdom. So complete is the gagging of the press that the refutation of the arguments in Bismarck's speeches, or any attack upon them, was strictly forbidden. No one even dared to show that the *Polish agitation* with which, according to the prince, it was necessary to contend, for very good reasons only consisted in an unbroken determination to maintain the nationality and language against the foreign conqueror, who, on his side, sets the whole machinery of state in operation, and uses all its powers.

The aim of the government in Russian Poland, as already mentioned, is especially directed to two objects: the Russianising of the ownership of the soil, and the eradication of the Polish language.

The ukase of 1865, which has been spoken of, forbade the Poles in the old Polish provinces to devise their land to any others than their children. In March 1886, however, the Russian Courts hit upon a decision of even broader import, since a will in which a Lithuanian proprietor had left his estate to his son was declared invalid, and the land was sold by auction.

In the Kingdom of Poland it is still permitted to speak Polish in the open street, and to write a notice in Polish, provided that above it the same is written in Russian; but anywhere outside of the so-called kingdom—in the whole of Lithuania towards the north, and in the south as far as Odessa—everywhere, where culture and language in the

cultivated classes are still Polish, in and on all public buildings a notice is posted with the words: "*The speaking of Polish is forbidden.*" The violation of the prohibition is punished severely, and every functionary, even to the lowliest, who is reported to have said a few words in Polish, even as an answer to a question in Polish, even to persons who do not understand any other language, is punished with heavy fines or dismissal. A tramcar conductor was recently fined twenty-five rubles—more than his month's pay—for having answered a Polish question in the same language.

Just imagine a trial in Russian Poland. The magistrate, who is generally a Pole by birth, and speaks Russian with difficulty and with a bad accent, questions in his Russian the accused, a Polish peasant, who does not understand a word of the judge's speech. The questions are therefore translated by an interpreter. He answers in Polish. New translation by the interpreter, unnecessary as it is, and thus questions and answers continue, because neither magistrate nor accused is permitted to speak his native language. And at the public trial the prosecuting counsel speaks against the accused in a language which the latter understands no more than what his counsel says in his behalf.

The Kingdom of Poland, where the language is still allowed, and where the *Code Napoléon* is still in force, seems to the inhabitants of the other provinces comparatively a paradise of freedom. They go from Wilna to Warsaw for a few weeks every year to breathe freely.

He who has experienced the state of things in this paradise of freedom can draw his own conclusions as to what it is in the provinces.

So far as education is concerned, the parents keep their little boy or girl at home and out of school as long as possible, teach them themselves, or have them taught, in order to give the first elements of knowledge in Polish and in the Polish spirit. The child sucks in with his mother's milk contempt for the Russians, and passionate hatred for them. Everything which the child hears in the first years of his life strengthens this hatred and contempt. He learns so much that is great and good about the superior culture

and exalted courage of his countrymen that he attributes everything great to Poland and the Poles. "Is it possible that Columbus was not a Pole?" asked a little boy of his mother in my presence. On the other hand, as a rule everything which the child learns or experiences with regard to the Russians is unfavourable, or it receives an unfavourable interpretation. The Russian officers are unobtrusive in their bearing in public places; they are generally seen alone, seldom two and two. It is not the custom as it is in other armies for them to greet each other when they meet. Their behaviour is not in the least arrogant; they rather seem oppressed by their situation as the detested representatives of the ruling race. But the uniform is unpopular; the Poles do not give the officers credit for their modesty, they take it rather as proof of consciousness of intellectual inferiority. And a single little incident like this, that the carriage of the Russian general, on leaving a public ball, breaks the established row of carriages and goes ahead, arouses the bitter feeling of living in a land conquered by an enemy.

There is, of course, a Russian colony in Warsaw, but there is no real Russian society on account of the great disparities in rank among the Russians who live there. They cannot accept each other as equals. And here, as elsewhere, the Russian officials do not bear the highest characters. In addition to which, the better-class Russians think themselves too good to accept posts in Poland. They shrink from the odium attached to the calling.

A few years ago a Russian was appointed Professor of Zoology at the Warsaw University. He arrived, and was shown over the museum of stuffed animals. He noticed that the names on the labels were in Latin and Russian only. "Why not in Polish?" he asked. The Rector of the University explained to him that he had been sent to Warsaw not primarily to give instruction in zoology—it was comparatively unimportant whether the students learned much or little of the subject—but to carry on the Russian propaganda. The new Professor then inquired when the next train left for St. Petersburg, and departed incontinently.

In the same way the leading Russian actress declined to go to Warsaw with the imperial troupe, and declared she would not act there until she might do so in Polish. But such cases are exceptional.

On the other hand, there are incidents of the very opposite description, which a Polish child daily witnesses and hears discussed in his home. Hatred of the Muscovite (*Moskal*) becomes a part of his nature.

He is finally sent to school, that is, he has to be given up to the Russian state, to Russian teachers. In his own home his mother has always dressed him in the Polish national costume, which is not allowed in the street. He has lived with picture-books and paintings which have shown him scenes of the past history of Poland, of the revolutions of this century, of the march of the exiles to Siberia; he knows the career of Poland minutely. In school the boy is dressed in Russian uniform, is addressed only in Russian, is never allowed to speak a single word that is not Russian, never hears anything about Poland or Polish literature, or if it is mentioned at all, it is spoken of as something prohibited, evil. He learns here that he is Russian, and nothing else than Russian. What confusion in the child's soul! The boy is compelled to be a hypocrite, to tell lies. The seeds of defiance and self-restraint, or of falsehood and flattery, are planted in his soul. Desperate questions as to whether resistance is of any use, whether justice exists, necessarily arise.

The schools are bad. The circumstance that the whole instruction is given in a foreign language, and that an inordinate stress is laid upon the acquirement of it; the dislike and constraint, which are the result thereof; lastly, the habit of looking on the teacher as a foreigner and an enemy have a great effect in diminishing the result. There is a minority of the students who understand French, and speak it well; a certain number understand and speak the language of the frontier—German; but the majority are barely able to read foreign books, and many do not understand a simple question in French or German. Those who are well-to-do go to foreign lands to study; if they cannot

obtain permission for this they prefer to go to St. Petersburg, where they find less restraint and better professors, rather than remain in Warsaw, where the university instruction as a rule is bad.

When the University was suddenly transformed from Polish to Russian, those professors who did not know Russian asked leave to retire. Several of them remained, however, chiefly from patriotic reasons. But by degrees the University was purged, and the Polish professors were replaced by Russians, or by those who were favourable to Russia. The regulation has been made that after twenty-five years' service a professor can be dismissed, unless the faculty specially desire to retain him. They never desire to retain an eminent Polish professor. Thus, last year, Baranowski, the first medical professor of the University, received his dismissal as coming within the limit, although, since he was very young when he was appointed, he was just fifty years old and in full possession of his powers. As Professor of Æsthetics and the History of Literature, passing by the deserving and sound historian of literature, Piotr Chmielowski, they have appointed a certain Struwe, the only man who could be found who would speak Russian. Sometimes he succeeds in obtaining three auditors.

The halls are so small that none of them hold over a hundred, and not one of them is ever full.

The students have to wear a uniform like the pupils of schools, and they are under strict supervision. It is naturally forbidden to them to form any union whatsoever. They are not allowed to stand in a knot on the street, and if they even assemble at all in private to the number of six or seven, they are sure to be reported and punished; for everything is known. No one goes in or out of a house unseen. Latch-keys are unknown—and there is no northern institution one can speak of which astonishes an inhabitant of Russian Poland more than the latch-key. "Does the government allow such things?" they ask, with amazement. Every one, even the master of the house, must ring at his door, and the porter (*Stroz*), who corresponds to the Russian *Dvornick*, and whose duty it is to be responsible for

the safety of the inmates, invariably serves also as an instrument of the police.

Thus the students are driven to study alone, but this is also made difficult. A great many of the most celebrated foreign works, as well as the most important of the literature of their own land, are forbidden, and must be got over the frontier as smuggled goods, which on the one hand increases the cost and on the other is dangerous. Therefore it cannot be wondered at that among the more intelligent of these young men there are found many with far-reaching anti-governmental views.

There are no Nihilists among them: neither the name nor the thing is known in Poland. The most advanced among them fall into two groups. Some call themselves democrats and some socialists. The democrats hold the views which are supported in *Prawda*. Still, their chief interest is not social or political, but purely intellectual. They constitute the first free-thinking group of this century in Poland. But as Catholicism and the power of the clergy from remote times have had their support in the Polish aristocracy, which represents the national tradition, and as the press of the aristocracy, especially the newspaper *Slowo*, is the organ of Catholicism, free-thinking allies itself with democratic inclinations and aims.

The young men who hold democratic views would like to introduce into Poland modern thoughts, views, theories and books. They would like to translate even the trivial protests of Max Nordau, if they were not afraid of the censor. Their strongest speaker, Swientochowski, is about forty years old, handsome, clear-eyed, stubborn, with a head like that of a provincial Christ, a poet and a fine writer, and, above all, a character. He has great qualities as a controversialist and as a didactic author, but his dogmatism causes him to be easily involved in squabbles, and he lacks grace and tact. His chief task is a war against the Catholic clergy. But an attack upon the clergy in Poland, even more than elsewhere, is an unpopular thing, because the nationality of the country has been for so long a time bound up with the Romish religion, and because the religious difference even now—

since the educational standard of the people is so low—makes the strongest bulwark of the nation.

Then it also appears—albeit it is denied and the adherents of *Prawda* do not like to hear it—that the censor is more indulgent to this paper than to any other. It has permission to say things which would be forbidden to any other journal. For everything which tends towards cosmopolitanism and which undermines the Catholic church is far less dangerous to Russia than the nationalistic religious tendency. The influence of the Roman Church still appears to Russia its chief enemy and chief danger.

There is only one power in Poland which Russia persecutes and fears to the same degree, perhaps even more, and that is—singularly enough—Socialism.

I have said that there is a group among the studious youth who call themselves Socialists; a large number of the working people are of the same mind through the influence of the socialistic thought of Germany. I believe that these so-called Socialists among the students are of the highest class, the best informed, the most enthusiastic and devoted; they are mostly young doctors who have acquired modern science, and who by reading at first or at second hand have become disciples of Karl Marx. They feel keenly the existing injustice of the conditions of society. They realise that, even if Poland *per impossibile* should become free, little or nothing would be gained if the aristocracy or the clergy should continue to exercise the ruling influence, and capital should continue to exploit those who own no property. They have nothing against the Russians as Russians, and dream vaguely of allying themselves with the revolutionary elements in Russia, of which indeed they know nothing. They pay dearly for the perilous and wholly Platonic sympathy for Socialism which they cherish. For every student who is accused or suspected of socialist propagandism is sent relentlessly to the castle, even if he has not been guilty of the smallest illegality.

It is the danger threatening from Russian socialism which makes the government so anxious about that of Poland. The five political criminals who were hanged in the prison of Warsaw at the end of January were Russians. The case,

which came to an end here, turned upon a conspiracy organised by an inferior magistrate by the name of Bardowski, a political plot wholly without a prospect of success. The conspirators had drawn up socialist proclamations, which were to be given to the working people of Warsaw; they had stabbed a cigar dealer, in whose shop one of them, an engineer by the name of Kunicki, had been stupid enough to forget the protocol with the names of all the conspirators, and who in his anxiety had taken the book to a police station.

Very little appeared against the accused, so little that the Governor-General of Poland—the celebrated General Gurko, who is of Polish descent, and whose name properly pronounced is the Polish *Hurko*—after the sentence of death was pronounced, twice sent the papers to St. Petersburg with the declaration that he could not see how they could condemn these men to death. Since the death sentence was nevertheless confirmed, the governor, who is humane without on that account being known as soft-hearted, acted as follows. He caused the condemned persons to be awakened early one morning, and they were then told that they were sentenced to banishment, and must therefore take leave of their relatives, and if they desired it, see a priest to prepare them for their long journey. They all declared that they did not desire to communicate with any minister of religion. One of them wished to say good-bye to his father, who was sent for. They were then taken to a closed room, where the execution was to take place. The sentence was pronounced there, and at the same moment the executioners seized them and hanged them in the room.

It is most significant that two Russian officers who were condemned to death, but who at the last moment had their sentence commuted to hard labour in the mines for life—which is virtually the death punishment, since no one can endure it for more than four or five years—were not guilty of anything whatever except that they had received some pamphlets and proclamations from Bardowski, which they had not shown to any one, so far as could be proved, much less sought to distribute, but which were found in their houses.

So dangerous is it to have socialistic writings in one's custody.

However, no Pole ought to hazard freedom and life for the sake of socialistic ideas. For in general it may be said, though young men with socialist sympathies in Warsaw are, strangely enough, surprised to hear one maintain it, that there is no sense in a Pole being a Socialist. For what does Socialism mean, shortly expressed? What else than directly or indirectly, the expropriation of private rich men, capitalists and landed proprietors, for the advantage of the State? But translate this into Polish, and it becomes under the conditions that prevail now, and have long prevailed, absolutely nothing else than the expropriation of Polish rich men for the advantage of the Russian State. But whatever the Russian State has once annexed may be called a thing of the past. It would require a strong faith to think that it would ultimately profit the Polish common people, when one lives in a city like Warsaw, where there is no municipal government, and where the revenues of the municipality go straight to St. Petersburg and only an extremely small portion thereof is used for the city's own advantage.

The only thing the Polish Socialist actually can do is therefore to excite the workmen against their employers, arouse their discontent, and lead them on to strikes which almost always end in defeat. Since election does not exist, so to speak, and a real party can never be formed, all socialist action on a larger scale is impossible, wholly apart from its ruinous effect upon the individuality of the Polish people.

A similar consideration to that which ought to prevent a thoughtful and prudent Pole from placing himself on the side of the Polish Socialists, even if he is otherwise inclined to socialistic theories, should prevent him from giving his full support to the free-thinking group in Poland.

One can be as good an European as any one, one may despise all the chauvinism, which as national conceit merely stupefies a people, and still regard the forcible annihilation of a rich and valuable national individuality as a misfortune for the whole of Europe.

It seems to me as if all other questions in Poland must

be subordinate to this first and most important: the preservation of the nationality. But at a time like this, when it is absolutely forbidden to establish Polish schools, or to give peasants or the lower classes national instruction of any kind, a comprehensive free-thinking agitation, which would paralyse the Catholic faith, would also paralyse Polish national feeling. Unquestionably there are Protestant Poles in Posen and scattered in Russian Poland numerous *united* churches, which (in spite of the fact that their priests are married and their relations with Rome looser than those of the Roman Catholics) feel themselves to be very good Poles; but this is the consequence of the power of a tradition.

A rupture with the religious tradition at this period, if it could be brought about among the masses, would always be a victory for the Russian principle.

To be called a democrat has no sound meaning either, unless the word expresses the opinion that the masses of the people ought to rule. It is rather fruitless to cherish this opinion so long as nobility and peasantry are in an equal degree under the whip of the foreigner. All that the democrats are able to accomplish is to oppose the influence of the large landed proprietors, by election of the parish council in the country, and of the managers in private undertakings, a good and useful thing, in so far as it arouses a feeling of independence among the people, a cause of less undoubted profit, in so far as it lightens for the Russians the labour of breaking the power of resistance of the higher classes.

A dreadful dilemma presents itself to the Polish intelligence: it seems condemned either to choose progress, with the danger of playing into the hands of its own worst enemy, and the worst enemy of all progress, or to choose stagnation, with the danger that the nationality which is thereby preserved, and of which its sons were and are so proud, should drop behind in the culture of Europe, becoming antiquated and outstripped.

There is something really tragic in this situation. More than one man, who represents the Polish intelligence in its highest development, sees himself—like the proud Count Henrik in Krasinski's tragedy—condemned to defend the

citadel of the Holy Trinity. These men are modern men, and they are silent on the subject. They are free-thinkers, and if as landed proprietors in Posen they have seats in the German Parliament and the Prussian *Herrenhaus*, they vote invariably with the centre. There are those among them who would very gladly dine with a socialist leader like Viereck, and yet officially follow Windhorst's flag. They know Heinrich Heine by heart and belong to the Catholic party. They are free-thinkers, and as Poles feel themselves compelled to support Rome—an intellectual torment which is not known anywhere else.

And in all domains it is manifest how patriotic or supposed patriotic struggles repress modern intellectual life: in the plastic arts, where patriotic allegories and symbols have too long usurped the place of pictures of real life, and in literature, where the historical romance still blossoms, a late aftermath of Walter Scott. The writer of greatest narrative talent among the living authors of Poland, Henryk Sienkiewickz, made his *début* with excellent modern novels; gradually associating himself with the Catholic party, he has taken up the line of great patriotic historical romances in the style of *The Three Musketeers*, with endless sequels. He regards it as his task in view of the depressing present to show the people the image of a past, when it still existed as a nation, and he prefers to describe the most unhappy period of the old history of Poland, in order to strengthen the people's faith in the surmountableness of the existing wretched condition by pictures of the terrible crises of bygone days. Nevertheless, in spite of all his talent, the result is that when from times which he knows he goes back to times which he does not know, and works with an aim entirely different from that of art before his eyes, he generally falls so far short as an author that he loses his best readers, and his novels are only successful as a means of amusement, or as stimulants to patriotic feeling.

Just as socialist and democratic or free-thinking tendencies do not mean the same in Poland as elsewhere, so also Catholic and conservative leanings have a special character here.

In German literature, for instance, the Catholic tendency of Romanticism in this century is sharply opposed to the Protestant form of the earlier literature and the purely pagan bias of contemporary literature ; but in Poland, Catholicism in this century has always been in opposition, in constant, restless conflict with the power of the State, frequently blended with that love for the truth which emancipates, and with that enthusiasm which exposes to martyrdom. In Protestant countries the clergy are as a rule servile ; in Poland they never are and never can be degraded into tools of temporal power.

There are Catholic priests whom their superiors permit to write in newspapers, to visit the theatres and participate in social life, because it is known that they are wholly absorbed in the double object of exercising charity and of keeping the language of Poland alive in the most remote provinces. People close their eyes to infringements of the Catholic ritual among them, nay, even at a probable disbelief in certain dogmas, because they know them to be zealous supporters of Catholicism as the intellectual Polish national power. The stamp of comparatively innocent hypocrisy, which unquestionably adheres to them, injures them only among the few. General opinion regards them favourably.

As may be seen, according to my opinion, the point of view for the appraisal of the different parties and intellectual powers, which the foreigner feels himself compelled to adopt, is this : how far do they offer a greater or lesser power of resistance to the principle which aims by all means at breaking down the individuality of the people, the new and fearful principle of Asiatic absolute monarchy ? It will be only when the danger which is threatened herefrom is removed that Poland can afford the luxury of measuring the different aims of the times by a new and sounder standard. But so long as this principle triumphs, so long will this dismembered and tortured Poland be the unquestioned representative of humanity as opposed to it, the advance post of civilisation, even in domains where its form is not modern, and so long will the tattered flag with the white eagle of ancient Poland remain the old unique, adorable banner of freedom.

IV

POLISH LIFE AND THE RUSSIAN SYSTEM—PUBLIC FESTIVITIES AND MASQUERADES, SOCIAL LIFE IN DIFFERENT CIRCLES—THE SAME OPPRESSIVE ATMOSPHERE EVERYWHERE

OPPOSED to the Polish life, impulsive, pulsating, now weaker, now stronger, stands the Russian system, the heavy Russian force system, working like a machine, the mechanism of eradication and extermination.

It strives not only to cut down all free shoots of nationality and of the culture of the language, but to strike at its growth in its roots, to sap its germs, to blast its seed.

And even this is not enough. The system fears all the germs which are floating in the air, which drift with the wind, swim in the streams. It is afraid of everything which fills the air in the guise of song or laughter or tears, of everything which rises to the lips in words, of everything which captivates the eye as a beloved colour.

Against everything, even things the most airy and spiritual, the system has a prohibition. For the national dress it has given a uniform; for song, silence; for laughter, silence; for wailing, silence; for speech, silence; and for everything which is published at home or abroad, the censor. It has built a wall about this land, and striven to make it so high that no bird can fly over it, and so dense that no breeze can pass through it.

The national dress is forbidden even as a carnival costume, even in historical dramas in the theatre. Poland's colours, Poland's arms are strictly prohibited, must not even remain on the front of an old house, or on the frame of an old painting. The national songs are so strictly forbidden that people are shy of playing them even in a private house, if there is a large company.

Laughter indeed is not forbidden, but it forbids itself. It is so rare that a foreigner who late at night in the society of his acquaintances laughs aloud at some conceit, sees the police and gendarmes assemble with signs of astonishment. I never heard any laughter in the streets of Warsaw but my own.

Silence and seriousness are the two traits which above all are characteristic of Poland. It is a land where no one publicly expresses mirth.

Go into the great student café which is situated opposite the University. No one says a word aloud. Go out in the street. There is never a shout. No one likes to attract attention to himself. Or take as example a large public ball, under the patronage of the best society. The orchestra thunders, the mazurka is danced through all its figures for three-quarters of an hour at the stretch. But in a corner of the hall stands in a circle of young officers the strict old General Krüdener, who was defeated at Plevna after having been compelled to make a hopeless attack, much against his will. In another corner stands Colonel Brock, only some thirty years old, who has risen to be chief of the gendarmerie, the political police, who are rather disliked by the other corps of the army, and with whose officers the officers of the army do not like to have anything to do, but whose commander nevertheless is the most important man in the city, more important even than the Governor-General; for a command of his is final; there is no appeal from his orders. The thought of the qualities which he must have displayed in order to have attained such a post at his age, presents itself involuntarily to the mind. His glance flies uninterruptedly about the hall and puts a certain damper on the gaiety. Where it falls, falls silence.

Or take a great rout in a public hall. It is a beautiful sight, but a quiet festival. It is allowed because the object is charitable; an asylum or a foundling hospital receives the profits.

Against the pillars of the hall sit the distinguished ladies who preside over the festival and distribute the prizes of the lotteries. The hall is full of young ladies in the

most beautiful toilettes, present to see and be seen. They can talk freely there with the men they care to meet, while the mothers and aunts keep their seats. But all conversations are subdued. It was necessary to invite the Governor-General of Poland, the strict and very much dreaded General Gurko and his wife, a lady whose exterior and bearing are less distinguished than her position. It is the popular impression that Madam Gurko, plainly enough the least popular person in Poland, who with womanly fanaticism has appropriated to herself the task of serving the Russian cause by all means, is the prime mover of all the measures which have struck a blow at Polish hopes and interests of late years.

The old aristocrat, Louis Górski, called Poland's pope, the most strong-willed representative of the Catholic party, is the giver of the festival, and as such has to offer his arm to Madam Gurko to take her round the room. No one greets her ; all speak in an undertone or turn their backs. Behind them come the Governor-General and Madam Gorska. Both couples exchange ceremonious phrases only in French. Gurko, who carries himself very gallantly, is a man of medium height, of strong frame, with thin hair, a large fan-shaped beard sprinkled with grey, a slightly reddish nose ; the expression of his countenance does not evince the boldness and celerity which have been his characteristics as a general. He looks more fitted to command officers than to rule a people.

Or take a *soirée* at the house of one of the leaders of the aristocratic party. The names of the most renowned families of Poland are represented. Here sits a Countess Plater, niece of the celebrated Emilia ; here a Countess Krasinska, married to a relative of the poet, both liberal and patriotic to excess ; here a Countess Ostrowska who is considered the most beautiful woman in Poland. We might believe that the Poles would feel themselves here within closed doors as free as possible ; but if a foreigner says too bold a word, one of the young men of the family touches him on the shoulder and whispers, "Not so loud ! On the chair which is back to back with yours sits Count

Tolstoi, the minister of police, whom my uncle has been obliged to invite."

Or take a public masquerade. The largest, which is given in carnival time, has the whole of the theatre at its disposal. It is combined with a lottery, the profits of which go to the theatre for a pension fund, and its name, "Tombola," is derived therefrom. It opens at midnight; all the ladies are wrapped up tightly in dominoes and impenetrably masked, and the masks are not taken off, while the gentlemen are not allowed to wear either masks or costumes, but come in evening dress.

This form of masquerade is very old here. E. A. T. Hoffmann, more than eighty years ago, described it as a jubilant and brilliant festival in the pleasure-loving Warsaw of his time.

The piquancy of the arrangement is that the ladies can say what they will to the gentlemen; can attack them, show themselves conversant with their secrets, without letting themselves be known. The chief pleasure it affords is the facility it offers to lovers of meeting one another and disappearing together. If a man is very well known, he is accosted and taken to task by scores of ladies in the hall without being able to retort. A lady comes, takes his arm, and walks off with him till another comes and takes him from her.

There are two or three thousand people present and the crowd is great; but there is not the least trace of joviality. There is neither music nor song nor laughter nor loud conversation. If this is a love-masque, it bears a striking likeness to a funeral, or, more exactly, several funerals, different funeral processions which move silently past each other in the spacious rooms.

Wherever you are the oppression is felt.

I recall a grand breakfast at the house of one of the recognised leaders of democratic youth. There were democrats and free-thinkers present, men who had the traditions of 1863 far behind them. The most characteristic thing about them is, that they are men who hardly have an ideal which they expect to be realised before many

hundred years. Otherwise they are heterogeneous enough, controversialists, dissatisfied, independent thinkers, or mere admirers and echoes, yet almost all of good courage in so far as they are persuaded that the world can be reformed, that it is only necessary to set about it the right way. Among them we may note some aristocrat, erstwhile in debt, then richly married, who in his quiet way is as radical as any of them, some gaunt figure with disorderly beard and hair hanging down over the eyes, just returned for the fifth time from a Russian fortress in the Urál mountains, where he usually does penance for his socialist sympathies for several months at a time. Here, as everywhere in this quiet land, a general conversation is an unknown thing; conversation is carried on with subdued voices in small groups. And in whatever direction the conversation drifts, you always stumble as if against a wall upon innumerable obstacles and hindrances, which every kind of attempt to achieve some human object invariably encounters in this land. "Naturally you are right," says the host to the foreigner. "We really have neither democratic nor any other politics whatsoever in this country, but we have *reflections* of what are so called in Europe"—a remark as exact as it was hopeless.

The same thing strikes one under a slightly different aspect in the peculiarly intelligent Bohemia, which does not trouble itself about politics, but lives wholly in studies and art. Here we are (intellectually speaking) in the land of the extreme left. I hardly met a more interesting circle in Poland than that which I found collected in the house of the art critic, Antoni Sygietinski, who, with the highly gifted artist Witkiewicz, unfortunately a great invalid, represents artistic socialism in Poland.

Sygietinski is a slender, handsome young man, with a long red beard and bright, enthusiastic eyes. Common art sympathies have brought him and his Polish and foreign colleagues together. In Swientochowski's circle one day a foreigner stood alone in his unfavourable judgment on the Polish art of painting of the present day. The conversation was somewhat as follows: "Your art is wholly on the wrong

road. It loses sight of life. You paint allegories or knightly spectacles. Every other picture at your exhibitions is the closing tableau of a five-act play just before the curtain falls. Your great deceased idealist, Grottger, was a poet, not a painter. Your great living master, Matejko, is a near-sighted psychologist, not a painter. The picture which took the prize at the exhibition this year, a Catholic allegory with angels at the bedside of a sick person, is a horror." Some one asked, "Is there then in your opinion absolutely nothing which is good for anything?" The foreigner answered, "Horowitz's portraits and Witkiewicz's paintings; but the best thing I have seen is certainly an album with drawings by the brothers Gierymski. The best of these well over with talent; one sees a study of Nature in them and the perception of an artist. They have been seen and felt, a praise one can rarely give to modern Polish art." A tall man behind him clapped his hands; it was the man who had published the album and written the text for it, Sygietinski.

So little has the art of the brothers Gierymski been understood in their native land that the publisher, an enthusiast in modern art, lost 8000 rubles on this album. At last he publicly offered to give it for nothing to the subscribers to the weekly paper *Wedrowiec*, but the majority of them did not even care to fetch it.

The circle which has formed about the journal just named, unfortunately a publication hardly destined to long life, has, as its leading power, the energetic artist Witkiewicz, who comprehends characterisation as few do. It consists further of young doctors, engineers, literary historians, novelists like Prus, gifted mechanics (a smith, perhaps the most subtle student of literature in Poland), a number of painters, musicians, amateurs—representatives of refined radicalism.

Swientochowski's group is antiquated in its views of art, in spite of its lofty culture. The men who belong to it have admirable collections of books, but pictures on their walls which a Parisian *concierge* would despise. Swientochowski even writes old-fashioned didactic dramas like *Elvia* or *Antea*. The younger men who write for *Wedrowiec* or design for it, live in rooms without furniture, but with magnificent

drawings and paintings on the wall. They are modern not only in their mode of thought, but in sight and sense. They are wild birds, and since birds of a feather flock together, significantly enough, the one among them who wields the most spirited pen is married to a remarkably beautiful wild Indian girl from South America. She is adapted to Poland in so far as it has been found impossible to teach her any idea of money or its value.

In this circle Bohemian freedom rules, a puff of real intellectual freedom which fills the lungs; but it fills them in complete silence, making as little noise as possible. Here also an invisible pressure descends from above. Here also an everlasting damper is laid upon the spirit—a damper of seriousness, of melancholy, a quiet despair of ever being able to accomplish any good in life. Art and ideas are used as a means of forgetfulness. And all these young men, whatever they are—writers, journalists, draughtsmen, physicians, engineers, &c.—must, wholly apart from the contest for bread, daily fight a double battle, receiving ideas from the surrounding world of Europe and imparting those ideas to their own world.

V

THE CENSORSHIP—DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING PERMISSION TO DELIVER LECTURES

GOING from the Theatre Square in Warsaw along the Miodowa Street, at No. 7 on the left there is a house, over the door of which in Russian letters appear the words, "Censorship Committee." Across the yard to the right you enter through a narrow street door, and as in a post-office you see immense piles of newspapers and books in wrappers lying in heaps. It is the day's mail.

Every single newspaper which comes is taken out of its wrapper and examined; everything displeasing to the authorities is blackened over. Every book is opened and the leaves examined. Consequently there is no regular time for the arrival of this kind of mail. Sometimes three or four newspapers are received at once, and then for four or five days not one.

In another room the native newspapers are examined. On account of the conditions of censorship they are almost all evening papers. None the less are they unable to make use of the foreign mail of the day, which arrives from Berlin in the afternoon. They are generally poor. With one exception they are all assisted by private contributions. Their subscription list seldom rises to more than fifteen hundred. The professional journalists are compelled to write for four or five different papers on the same subject in order to live by their pens.

At eleven o'clock all the proof sheets go to the censor. The censors correct them according to their pleasure and caprice, their severity or indulgence depending very much on whether they have personal animosity towards the writer or not, whether they hope to obtain concessions from him, and whether they have been bribed or not.

Almost all articles in which anything is really said are therefore not intended to be understood at the first reading. The language is abstract, vague, of doubtful meaning. The whole public is taught to read between the lines. Almost all the feuilletons are allegories ; they say one thing and express another. Since words such as "freedom" or "fatherland" are always prohibited, it is natural that circumlocutions should be used.

At four o'clock the proofs are returned to the offices of the newspapers. The matter erased has to be replaced by articles in reserve, which have been through the censorship in season and are lying ready for use to fill the gaps.

In another place again all foreign books are examined to see whether they ought to be offered for sale in the book-shops or not. They allow a variety of natural science—Darwin, Haeckel—even in translations ; on the other hand, little history. The extremely conservative Polish historian, Szujski, is wholly forbidden, even in German, because he writes on Polish topics.

Of course all books published in the country itself are scrutinised with the greatest strictness. Even the classics of antiquity are examined. It has happened that the Roman verse *nec timeo censores futuros* has been struck out because it was translated: I do not fear the *censors* of the future (the meaning is, the judgment of the future). In a play dealing with the past of Poland they struck out before *Jagiello* the word *King* of Poland, and substituted *Duke*, although there never have been dukes of Poland. Nay, even the cookery books are subjected to the censorship, and are corrected with such puerility that lately the words "to be boiled over a *free* fire" were erased because the word *free* was used.

Manuscripts for public lectures, the texts for recitations, the songs for concerts, are examined in another place. Even if a song belongs to a collection of poems, which has passed the censor ten times in different editions, it cannot be sung at an evening entertainment without having been examined anew.

It happened this winter that an actress, who, recalled

on such an occasion, recited a little harmless poem about a mother and her child, which was not on the programme, was fined no less than a hundred rubles.

This winter I had occasion to study the censor very closely. In return for the kindness which had been shown to me the year before in Warsaw, I had promised to return, and to speak on the Polish literature of this century, which is treated almost exclusively as philology by the critics of the country.

The task was extremely difficult for many reasons. There was in the first place the intrinsic difficulty of telling the Polish people something new about a literature which they knew better than I. Then there were the external difficulties. At the University of Warsaw it is absolutely forbidden to speak of the history or literature of Poland after the year 1500. Not even in Russian, not even in the Russian spirit must the subject be dealt with. And in addition to this, the good literature of the whole of this century is patriotic in the extreme, thoroughly hostile to the Russian rule, and forbidden on that account. How should I manage to discuss Mickiewicz's *Dziady*, in which political prison life in Wilna is described, or Slowacki's *Kordjan*, which treats of an attempt to assassinate the Tzar Nicholas, or Krasinski's whole works, not to speak of the lyrics of war and rebellion; how, on the other hand, could I omit to speak of all these?

First and foremost it was necessary to get permission to speak at all on this subject. There was only one thing to depend on—the dislike of the persons in authority to be regarded as barbarians by Europe.

In the middle of January I sought permission from Count Tolstoi, the head of the police, to deliver lectures for a charitable object. The answer came in the middle of February. I was permitted to lecture three times in Russian February (the 1st of which answers to our 13th). I then drove immediately to the President of the Censors and presented my request, basing it on the invitation which had been given me the year before in Warsaw: "Come again and speak about our own literature."—The President:

"Ah! you wish to treat of Russian literature."—"Not this time, your Excellency; you know that the people here generally speak Polish, and are most interested in what is written in that language."—"In what language will you speak?"—"In French."—"That is well; you can say a great deal thus. You address yourself to good society. It would be another affair if you wished to speak in German; there are so many uncultured, hot-headed persons who understand German." His Excellency promised me speedy permission, and kept his word.

It was only then that I could begin my composition, and it progressed extremely slowly.

There were days when in spite of all my diligence I wrote almost nothing, days, when I strove in vain to find expressions with double meaning, images, in themselves indistinct, which could be understood by the audience, circumlocutions, which could be seen through and yet would be unassailable. Fortunately this Polish people, half oriental, prefer the picturesque to the purely rational style, being in this point as in many others, the opposite of the French.

Gradually I acquired practice in the rebus style, and wrote so that by an accent or a pause I could give a sentence a new and more living character; I became expert in hints and implications.

At last I had two copies of my first lecture ready in French and one in Russian for the curator of the University. I furnished them with the necessary stamps, drove with the first lecture to the President of the Censorship, and asked that the censor might begin. I had taken a priest with me—it is always good to have a priest with you, he has friends everywhere, in Poland especially, among the Polish subordinates of the offices. There was nothing in the way. But as bad luck would have it, Apuchtin refused to begin on the Russian text till he had all the lectures.

This was bad; for I wished to see by what was erased in my first lecture what I might venture upon in the next.

Since it was now plain that the Russian February would be at an end before I could get the lectures back from the

ensor, and since I also saw that three lectures would not be enough for the subject, even if I spoke for two hours each time, I sought to obtain from the chief of the police permission to deliver four lectures instead of three, and asked to have my time extended beyond February.

The number *four* did not meet with approval.—“Why not?” was then asked.—The answer was: “Because three lectures are an *entertainment*; four are a course of *instruction*.” They were afraid, it seemed, that under the form of lectures for charity, a sort of Polish university should be established in the town hall, in which one cycle of lectures should in some way or other be continued in the next.

The matter of the prolongation of the time was then debated. Why do you not lecture in February? It is your fault if you do not do it.—I complained of the difficulties with the censor.—Well, well, then there was this to be done; give a written petition to the chief of police; he would send it to Apuchtin, he would forward it to General Gurko; the latter would possibly inquire at St. Petersburg if the request could be granted, and the reply would come back through the same channels in reversed order.—When could the answer be expected?—Oh, in five weeks.—But then March will be over, and by the 1st of April (Russian style) I must be in Copenhagen.—Well, that was my affair, and did not concern the authorities.

Plainly enough they were not very anxious to have lectures on Polish national literature delivered in Warsaw.

At this time I received my first lecture back from the censor. They had been very thorough. The conclusion, several pages, was struck out, and in various places the erasures were numerous. Even a well-known quotation from Schiller, “the living is right,” was struck out. Words like *résignation* or *tristesse*, used as characteristic of Polish literature, were blotted out. In one place where I had spoken of the *Catholic piety* of the poets these words were erased. In another place where I had spoken of the life which is described in the most celebrated work of Mickiewicz, the red pencil had gone over these words: “The Lithuanian forest, the natural setting of this life;” and in, “For the

first time, since the partition of the kingdom," the last phrase was obliterated.

This was discouraging in so far as I saw that there would not be anything left of the second lecture, which was the boldest. I then made the third almost colourless in political, religious and social respects, intending, to the best of my ability, to atone for the weakness by a stronger colouring in delivery and style.

Then it happened that my censor—the only one who was hated among the censors of Warsaw—suddenly died. They found my last two lectures, uncorrected, under his pillow. They were as grateful to me in Warsaw as if a causal connection had been found between this last-named fact and his disappearance from his earthly vocations as judge.

Now everything looked brighter. There was hope of a milder treatment. In order to shorten the process I determined to make a direct appeal to the Governor-General. The hero of Tirnowa and the Pass of Shipka could not be so narrow-minded as subordinate police officers and subordinate censors. I drove to the castle on Gurko's audience day. It is the old royal palace on the Vistula, unchanged externally, but plundered of all its objects of art.

In the ante-room, an oblong hall, several hundred petitioners sat in a row with petitions. In an inner hall, spacious and empty, with large mirrors and red furniture, the notabilities of the city, old senators, old generals, the President of the Censors, the President of the theatre, waiting their turn, walked up and down in their uniforms. In the middle of the hall stood a young Russian cavalry officer, Gurko's adjutant, tall and good-looking, who spoke French fluently with the other Russians, but with a strong Russian accent. He struck his heels together so that the spurs jingled, practised a dancing step, and seemed to be dreaming of court balls at St. Petersburg. I made my request for an audience to him. I met with an unqualified refusal. The audience time was from one o'clock and it was now five minutes past one. On my suggestion that I did not at all expect to be the first to be admitted, the answer was that the list of those seeking an audience was closed when the

clock struck one, and sent in to the Governor-General. Nevertheless, as I declared I would not go, but was fully determined, as I was, to find my way to General Gurko, I quietly took a seat on a sofa and waited. A Pole with a great star on came to me and asked if I was possibly on the list of petitioners, meaning on the list of the poor petitioners in the ante-room. When I replied no, he promised to put me on the top of this list. Then the General, as soon as he had got through the private audiences, and came out of his apartment, would turn first to me.

I was obliged to wait more than three hours. Then the General came with his staff. "You wish to speak with me? Your business?"—I presented my request for liberty to speak in March, since February was almost over.—"*Mais c'est tout simple.*"—I declared that I had met with obstacles which were insurmountable for me.—"Who forbids you then?"—"Your Excellency, there is no need of any prohibition. But I need a permission, and they do not give it to me."—"Very well, I allow it."—"But they will not believe me unless I bring a written word from your Excellency. I have a written petition here addressed to you." He took the letter and my pencil and wrote across the paper, "Ordered. Gurko."

The principal difficulty was thus happily removed. But still it was impossible to advertise the lectures, as the Russian text had not yet been returned from Apuchtin.

Twice I personally sought to obtain an interview with him. Each time I received the answer from his subordinate, that M. Apuchtin could not receive me, but that he himself was reading my lectures with the greatest interest—an interest I would very gladly have dispensed with, and which seemed to augur ill.

At last I got them back. Nothing was erased. Only by a few pencil marks on the margin my attention was called to certain phrases where the manner of expression was offensive to a delicate Russian national feeling, as, for instance, where I had said that Mickiewicz had had an influence on Lamennais and Pushkin among *foreign* authors. These marks indicated a keen and cultured reader, and I had to admit

that he had been content to point at what he might have struck out and forbidden.

Now only the permission of the chief of police, Count Tolstoi, was wanting to the posting of the notices. They advertise lectures as they do the theatrical performances by posters, not by notices in the papers.

But it proved unnecessary to put up the posters. For with so much excitement and interest had the city followed my exertions to get permission to deliver lectures on Polish literature, that as soon as the report of Apuchtin's permission got abroad, all the tickets, 3600 in number (for the three lectures), were sold in a few hours, so that the permission to post notices, which came in the forenoon, was superfluous.

VI

HOW ONE WRITES AND SPEAKS UNDER A CENSORSHIP

To give an idea of how writing and speaking are done under a censorship, here are some examples taken from my lectures.

I had to make it plain to my hearers that I well understood the contents of certain books, even if I might not allude to them directly. For instance, it was impossible to quote the scene in *Dziady* where the martyrdom of Poland is compared to that of the Crucifixion, but I could refer to it. I therefore spoke as follows in my introduction:—

“You may learn from me how your literature of the first half of this century is reflected in the mind of a European reader; you may learn what impression of your intellectual life a favourably disposed foreigner receives.

“For a favourably disposed foreigner I am. No merely artistic or intellectual interest, but a broader human sympathy has drawn me to this subject. There is in it something which not only occupies but lays hold of the mind; the modern literature of Poland excites the emotions in a higher degree than that of most other nations. There is something reserved, not easily penetrable in it. Or rather, it is at once closed and open, according to the point of view at which one places oneself. It reminds us in this respect of the celebrated painting by Gabriel Max, *The Handkerchief of Veronica*, a painting I do not value highly artistically, for it is a piece of artifice, not a work of art, but which well illustrates what I mean. At the first glance the countenance seems to be that of a corpse; the eyes are tightly shut, the expression lifeless. But when you reach the right point of view the face suddenly assumes life, the eyes open and turn a sorrowful and solemn gaze on the spectator.”

Direct mention of the various Polish attempts at insur-

rection was impossible. I could only express my meaning by characterising in expressions as general as possible mental conditions after great public misfortunes "such as famine, floods, or *unsuccessful revolution*." It was equally impossible in commenting on Slowacki's famous poem, *Król Duch*, to say directly: "The cruelty which is here described was actually perpetrated by Ivan the Terrible." I chose this circumlocution: "When in *Król Duch* the principal character narrates how with his sword he nailed the foot of the old minstrel to the earth, and how the latter continued to deliver his message unperturbed, it recalls an anecdote of the court of Ivan the Terrible." In this form the sentence passed the censor for the lecture, and the censor for its publication as a feuilleton in the *Gazeta Polska*, but it was, however, struck out later by another censor from the printed book.

In Mickiewicz's *Dziady*, in Conrad's improvisation, there is a passage where the hero in despair complains to God of the indifference with which He lets him suffer; the most effective line in it is this: *Thou art not the father of the world, but its—Tzar!* I required this line in my lecture, and wanted to suggest it. To analyse the work was impossible, even to name it difficult. On the other hand, it seemed feasible to mention Conrad's name without saying in which play he appeared, and to quote the passage with a slight change. I could certainly depend on an exceedingly slight knowledge of Polish literature in the censor.

I chose, therefore, to speak of the different attitudes of Polish authors as to the *problem of cognition*, and insinuated this in connection therewith. "And as the savages of antiquity, when they were angry with their gods, discharged an arrow into the vault of the heavens, so Conrad flings this taunt out into the universe, which he says shall resound from generation to generation: *Thou God! Thou art not the Father of the world, but its . . .*"

Here I made a pause of some seconds, during which a shudder literally ran through the closely packed hall. Then came the word *tyrant*, and they drew breath and looked at one another. No one moved a hand. After such passages a deathly silence prevails in order not to

compromise the speaker. They vigorously applaud some innocent comparison or other a few minutes later, or they reserve the most hearty applause to the close, when no one can determine what it is which has specially called forth the storm of approval. The passage belongs to those which were struck out in the censorship subsequent to the lectures and the first printing in the feuilleton. This examination lasted *seven months*, and left the little work extremely mutilated.

Here is a last example of what the censor, who probably was not very familiar with Shakespeare, or who had no sense for the symbolic, allowed to be said. The passage was about the poets among Polish emigrants. I compared them to Hamlet, and said among other things :—

“We find traits of Hamlet’s character in all these spirits ; they are in his position from their youth. The world is out of joint, and it must be set right by their weak arms. They feel, like Hamlet, all the inner fire and outward weakness of their youth ; high-born as they are, and noble-minded as they are, regarding the conditions which surround them as a single great horror, they incline at once to day-dreams and to action, to musing and to recklessness.

“Hamlet saw his mother, his dear mother, whom he loved more than other sons love theirs, degraded under the hand of the crowned robber and murderer. The court, which is open to him, frightens him, just as the court in Krasinski’s *Temptation* (a symbolical representation of the St. Petersburg court) frightens the young man. These descendants of Hamlet, like him, allow themselves to be sent away to a foreign land. When they speak, they dissemble as he does, clothe their meaning in comparisons and allegories, and it is true of them, as Hamlet says of himself to Laertes :—

“Yet have I something in me dangerous
Which let thy wisdom fear ; hold off thy hand.”

Strangely enough, not one of the many censorships to which these lectures were submitted, not one of the many which preceded their delivery, and neither of the two new ones which examined the edition in newspaper and book form, found anything to object to in this passage.

VII

MENTAL EFFECTS OF THE SITUATION ON THE YOUNG

AN important result of the censorship in Poland is the constant disquiet of the press and thereby of the people. As it is impossible to obtain any certainty of what is going on in the country, and impracticable to impart what one knows or thinks one knows, eternal rumours float through town and country, in which the political hopes and anxieties of the people are reflected. At one time it is reported that this or that high official has been recalled, because the government itself finds the pressure too severe; men believe that they are going to breathe a more liberal air; they find in the most accidental negligences, from one or another of the authorities, symptoms that for the future they will wink at much that has been forbidden. Again, it is reported that the severest measures are in preparation, that hitherto unknown dangers are threatened. Thus the people are constantly kept in a state of feverish agitation.

It will easily be seen how greatly such perpetual disquiet hampers the growth and development of the intellectual life. Only the exact sciences flourish. Medicine especially stands high. Dr. Tytus Chalubinski, an old man, upon whose face genius has stamped itself, has long been regarded as the leading physician of Poland. Next to him Baranowski is the most esteemed. Historical and political literature necessarily stand somewhat in the background. At present Russian Poland does not possess any historian of the first rank. Szujski, who died recently, is the most important writer of later historical literature, and as an essayist Julian Klaczko, who has a European reputation, holds a like position. Both of them lived and worked in Austria. In literary history a

sober spirit of investigation predominates. Polish writers on such subjects approach the German method and German style. Poland's leading and distinguished literary historian, Spasowicz, who is also the most renowned advocate of the Russian empire, living and writing in Russia, has been obliged to exercise a prudence in everything touching upon politics, which has made his chief work, *The History of Polish Literature*, less interesting than it otherwise would have been. The most esteemed critic, Professor Tarnowski of Cracow, is an academician of the old school, of a romantic turn of mind, whose tendency becomes more and more ultra-Catholic with advancing age. Ultramontanism in Cracow has almost as depressing an influence as the government tyranny in Warsaw. And when Tarnowski appears as a lecturer in Warsaw he can only secure his effects by a purely external and formal eloquence.

It is a general superstition, which must be given up, that raw external means of power are powerless to crush and break down national spirit.

The censorship is indeed the most intellectual of the brutal means the authorities use for that purpose.

A less intellectual and even more effective means is confiscation. After the rebellion of 1863 all the real estate of the landed proprietors who participated in it, or who were suspected of having given it sympathy or support, was confiscated. I know a man of a princely old Lithuanian family, who possessed a princely fortune, and who now, after twenty years in Siberia, is reduced to a little situation in a bank. I know a lady who was the heiress to a property of a million rubles, but who had been robbed of her inheritance because the peasants on her uncle's estate had given provisions to bands of rebels.

Even the confiscation of the soil is naturally not of final importance, so long as the peasant remains on it and continues Polish in his ideas. But Russia seeks to win the peasant in every way. She abolished serfdom, the abolition of which, proclaimed by the Poles themselves (in the constitution of May 3, 1791), she had set aside, and the old hatred of the peasants towards their masters has been richly

exploited. And when the floods of the Vistula desolate the land, Madam Gurko travels about the country distributing rubles from the imperial treasury by hundreds of thousands, to the peasants, who with the benefaction receive a recommendation to be grateful to the Tzar, their father—a recommendation which often bears fruit.

Exile to Siberia is another powerful weapon. There is no doubt that the flower of a whole generation, the preceding Polish generation, almost all of those most distinguished for courage, intellect, and enthusiasm, died there. Those who did return, have often lost something of their clearness of vision. They have not infrequently remained at the point where they stood when they left Poland. I may mention two writers as examples, both on the editorial staff of the *Gazeta Polska*, Haenckle, who, chained with four others to an iron bar, was compelled to travel on foot to Irkutsk during two winters and one summer, and was there for ten years, and Boguslawski, who was there for the same length of time. They are clever writers, but confirmed romanticists; modern men they will never be.

And the terrible uncertainty of the law is in itself destructive. A few weeks since a young man returned from a two years' banishment. His offence was that the day after Apuchtin received the box on the ear from the angry student already spoken of, he had sent twenty-five rubles to a newspaper for a charitable object with the words, "To commemorate a happy event." It did him no good that it could be proved that his brother had had a son born to him the day before—they would not believe that this was the event to which he had referred—he was sent away. Physically he had suffered nothing. He returned as so many Siberian exiles do, fresh and rosy; but he had become prudent, very conservative in all his utterances, and would not allow himself to criticise his sentence.

When the well-known Szymanowski, poet and publisher of the *Courier Warszawsky*, lay on his death-bed recently, I visited him. He told me of the fright he had received when a short time before some one had rung his door-bell in the night. He was reminded of the night ten years before,

when the gendarmes came, forced him to get up, and carried him away in a sleigh. He did not know of what he was accused. His family was a long time learning his place of detention. When he was set free after the lapse of some months, he did not learn what was his offence, and has continued ignorant of it ever since. And Szymanowski has represented the most peaceful conservatism throughout his whole life.

Let us now consider the psychical influences of this general condition on the younger generation. It has now gone so far in Russian Poland that many a young jurist or doctor of an old Polish family speaks Russian better than Polish, nay, speaks his mother-tongue with a foreign accent. I may instance this case: The young man has studied in St. Petersburg. He has by no means given up his nationality, but he has associated and been compelled to associate with Russians as comrades. He comes back to Warsaw, where no Pole ever associates with a Russian, the nationalities being as oil and water. It seems unnatural to him that his mother and sisters oppose his visiting at the house of the Governor-General. They live another emotional life, speak another language. The nerve of national indignation is blunted in him. Besides, there are practical considerations. He is sure that if he makes no concessions he will never get even a subordinate office in Poland, never be able to live in the same city as his mother. He may become *procureur* in Riga, or subordinate magistrate in Kasan, but he will never get a position in Warsaw, if he is irreconcilable.

The suppression of the language is also effective. Recently at a competition for the prize offered by a private person for the best drama, the winner, Koslowski, attracted attention by the purity and strength of his diction. General pride and joy were expressed that a young man of twenty-five years, educated under the latest school regulations, should write such beautiful Polish, *Slowacki-Polish*. There is a pervading fear that the growing generation will be unable to write the mother-tongue in its purity.

The temptation to make some concessions to the Russians is, as has already been suggested, very great. It is, moreover,

often difficult to draw a strict line between Russians and Poles. Even if the Russians are not received into society, it is almost impossible to exclude individual Poles who are either really subservient, or are suspected to be so. The Poles who have taken office sometimes become mere officials, loyal officials. Of many an one who would like to pass for a Polish patriot, it is said that he has been unsuccessful in his attempts to obtain the title of imperial flunkey. Sometimes in one family the father has Polish tendencies, the son is politically indifferent, even has almost Russian tendencies. Now and then one whose son fell as a hero of the rebellion, is, like the President of the theatre, Gudowski, one of the supporters of the throne.

There are also boundaries which passive resistance cannot pass. As the theatre is the last place in which Polish is still spoken, the dread of Russian plays on the national stage is very great. It seems then simple enough, when a Russian company comes, not only for all the Poles to remain at home, but for the Polish press not to notice the performances. Yet it is not so simple. Free tickets are given to all the Polish students and officials, and they are compelled to go. Notices of these performances are demanded by the censorship, and if they are not given—on the plea, for instance, that no one on the editorial staff understands Russian—then great obstacles are put in the way of the newspaper by the censors; the erasures become so relentless that they must give way. The opposition the press might offer is immediately broken down.

A dread continually broods over Russian Poland, that the government will some fine day close the theatre in Warsaw, and that the government will order the newspapers to appear with double text, Russian and Polish. Then they must soon surrender, and the language will die out.

So weak has unhappy Poland become that it accounts itself happy when it finds itself not wholly forgotten. Poles are delighted when a Polish tenor like Mierczewinski attracts attention—then, at least, the name of Poland is mentioned. They are happy when a man with the Polish name Rogoszynski (comically enough his real name is Schulze)

undertakes a voyage of discovery in Africa, although he was not in a position to take possession of the smallest strip of land for Poland—since there is no Poland—and was even arrested and taken away on a German man-of-war by order of Bismarck.

So depressing is a foreign rule.

And nevertheless this persistent suppression is to the advantage of the nationality it would grind to powder.

The peasants are waking up. They teach themselves to read in their Polish prayer-books. They club together and hire a teacher to give them privately all the necessary instruction in the correct writing of their forbidden tongue. Religious persecution especially rouses them and makes them conscious Poles. Before the Prussian *Kulturkampf* they did not feel themselves to be Poles in Posen; before the persecution of the "United" they did not feel themselves Poles in Russian Poland. When the police interferes against the United priests, as in Lublin, the national consciousness increases and rises in a whole province.

In the next place it is not wholly unfortunate that hardly any Pole can become an officer in the army. It has had the good effect of driving the Poles into paths so foreign to them as those of trade and industry, has contributed greatly to create the beginnings of a productive, working class of citizens. It has finally aided not a little in the advancement of agriculture.

And yet these good influences are manifestly of slight account in comparison with the depressing ones. It seems impossible that Poland should endure under such oppression for more than a hundred years longer. But when we see a people live materially and intellectually in the face of tremendous hindrances, when we follow with interest a course of life and intellectual development which takes place under such conditions—then we may well ask ourselves whether the nation to which we belong, and whose lot in life seems to the Poles to be so enviable, has used the comparatively heavenly conditions, in which it has lived, as it could and ought. And when we see how far the Poles succeed, we are amazed for a moment at a nation like the Danish, which has

everything which the Poles lack and want ; national independence, a constitution, freedom of the press, liberty of speech, liberty of assembly, right to use our money as we like, the power of the state in our own hands, the army in our service, free access to the sea, as well as to all the benefits of freedom—we wonder that such a nation has led a life comparatively so meagre, and so formless, and has suffered so many of its greatest advantages to be torn from it without any foreign intervention.

Although there is so much that is sanguine in the temperament of the Poles, nevertheless the lack of any future prospect in their situation, humanly speaking, broods over their minds like a nightmare. There is no visible prospect of their emerging from their present state save the extremely vague one which appears in the possibilities of a great war with Russia on the one side, and Germany and Austria on the other. Not that they cherish any wish to exchange the Russian rule for the German, although the latter is more humane—it seems on the other hand more dangerous, less likely to be shaken off. If their hopes assume a more definite direction, they rather tend to the establishment of a great Slav power, under the leadership of Austria, in which a leading part would fall to the Poles in that part of Poland belonging to Austria. These dreams of the future assume no more definite form in the minds of the most cultured and experienced.

But we shall hardly be wrong in the opinion that with the majority of those of average culture, faith in the re-establishment of the ancient kingdom of Poland in a not very distant future is still a religion.

VIII

IS POLAND AS AN OBJECT WORTH THE SACRIFICES MADE FOR IT?

KRASZEWSKI during his exile once exclaimed : " Oh, thou land, which, when we die, preserves so many reminiscences of us ! Oh, thou beautiful land, our mother ! When we say farewell to our friends, we have the hope of meeting them again in the next world, in heaven. But never, never again shall we see thy loved landscapes, thy linden avenues, thy villas, thy brooks and rivers, thy spring which was always young, none of all these memories. Can heaven really be so beautiful that it makes us forget all this, or does a river of Lethe flow before the gate of Paradise ? "

In these words of a childlike believer, who hopes for a future meeting with his friends, but yet cannot expect a future sight of his fatherland there is a feeling, which, if we give it a little greater scope, embraces far more than these words. In fact how wonderful is this obstinate national contest of the Poles ! They fight desperately for the preservation and development of their language and popular peculiarities, and suffer a thousand pangs for their sake. Every one of them knows that he must die, but he would have the consciousness that the language and the people will survive when he shall know no more of them. Even those among them who believe in another life do not imagine that in that other life they will speak Polish. And those who do not believe in a future life, who do not fear annihilation for themselves, fear it for the whole nation, every individual of which must die.

It is a similar feeling to that feeling of horror, which seizes most men when they hear for the first time that this earth is slowly cooling off, and that sometime in the far

distant future it will be an ice-cold sphere, on which no life can flourish. They have always known that every individual of the human race must die, but they would prefer that the race itself should not. This conception of the frozen globe destroys all their cherished illusions about the constant advance of culture, the religion which most of those who have given up revealed religions live upon; for there are even now only a few who have grasped the ideal that the goal of humanity cannot be at its end or death, if death be in store for it, but must lie in its highest individualities. Even if the human race is to die out, true culture is not on this account less valuable, not less worth striving for. Its worth does not depend on its continuance through all eternity. We do not ask whether a symphony is long or short, but whether it is beautiful. Its value is independent of the time it occupies.

The Poles know historically, as we do, that many kingdoms and nations have blossomed and disappeared, but they will not believe that this lot is now that of their nation and language, however sorely they are pressed from all sides. They will fight for their life, and this is to their honour, whatever the result may be.

Many of them must necessarily doubt whether they will ever succeed in tearing themselves free from a supremacy which is supported by an enormous army, in establishing a Polish political hierarchy, and in founding a kingdom out of a nation unaccustomed to all self-government as the Poles have now been for almost a century. Inevitably the question presents itself which I once formulated thus (in the preface to Cherbuliez's *Ladislaus Bolski*): "Is Poland an ideal or a reality? It could not continue when it existed, can it be re-established, now it has fallen? Is this Poland for which the Poles live and go to death more than an abstraction and a chimera? Is the object worth the sacrifices? Or is it the sacrifices which give the object its worth?"

The object, like all earthly objects, only more plainly, more palpably, is an ideal, that is, an unreality, the conception of something good. It shows its power over the mind by the strength with which it compels generation after gen-

eration to place spiritual advantages above material. The sacrifices which are made to this ideal do not prove its value. But it is in and of itself valuable, in so far as it creates character, and develops talents, and it is incontrovertible that it has called forth elevated thoughts, heroic actions, and a literature both rich and important. As a motive power it is a civilising power; for it produces proud, liberal-minded men.

We are unaccustomed to see a whole people absorbed in an endeavour, which is resisted and fought against on all sides, and which seems to be at variance even with the historic law of decadence, an endeavour, which exists not only by force of the instinct of self-preservation, but more or less consciously by force of the fundamental idea that the life of the world becomes poorer and more uniform for each national individuality which disappears—an endeavour which might nevertheless be futile. Yet Poland's disappearance would not be like that of Assyria or Egypt in remote antiquity; for Poland in the presence of Russia and Prussia, politically speaking, signifies independence, freedom, justice, reason—that is to say, the question whether these forces shall conquer or succumb. Poland is the question whether it is military force or the will of the people that is to have the last word in the history of the world of the present day. Should Poland be definitely lost, it would indicate nothing less in principle than that the culture of liberty and liberality in Europe were lost. One independent country after another would fall after Poland.

On the other hand, if the culture of freedom gains ground, the oppression, which rests so heavily on Poland, will be lightened, and Polish nationality will find a form, under which it can live its own life. For a hundred years it has now been under the yoke of three great powers, it has served as their anvil, and has borne the blows of the enormous hammers without being crushed. Either before very long the hammers will be stopped, or this culture, which was once the pride of western Europe, will be annihilated.

We cannot see thoroughly into anything. Our life is a

phenomenon ; we are surrounded by phenomena and by phenomena only. We are nothing but images for each other. When we die the image remains in the consciousness of others, because it was the only thing of us which was ever there.

We know also that the ideals which in olden times were localised and converted into the qualities of a supernatural person, the greatest liberty, the highest justice, &c., are mere images, never realised anywhere or at any time, and that they will never be fully realised anywhere ; we know that they have no other existence than that which our manner of thought and action give them. They exist only in so far as we love them. But we love them only so far as we labour for them.

The highest love is a pain, which we soothe by living and working for the object of our love.

That Poland's whole intellectual life is absorbed in the question of the existence of the Polish nationality is therefore not so poor a cause as it seems ; for Poland, in the historical development of relations, has become synonymous with the right of mankind to civil and intellectual freedom and with the right of nations to independence. Poland is synonymous with our hope or our illusion as to the advance of our age in culture. Its future coincides with the future of civilisation. Its final destruction would be synonymous with the victory of modern, military barbarism in Europe.

THIRD IMPRESSION

1894

A POLISH MANOR-HOUSE

I

NEIGHBOURHOOD—LANDSCAPE—INCREASED SEVERITY OF RUSSIAN RULE

WE left Warsaw in the afternoon. The town lay simmering in the glowing sun ; people went slowly along in the shadow of the houses ; all the military—infantry, Cossacks, gendarmes—were dressed in white linen.

In the train we met acquaintances—Poles who were returning from the Carpathian mountains (Tatra) or from Bohemian watering-places, others who were travellers or residents in the environs. Groups were formed in the corridors ; we jested and laughed ; thus time passed.

At K. a couple of carriages awaited us—one for ourselves, another for the luggage—and off we went at full speed in the summer evening, along excellent old military highways of the Napoleonic era, along sandy, heavy roads, at last through an endless avenue of tall poplars.

Franciszek told us of his conversations with the Governor-General of Poland, whom I had once met.

After an attack of apoplexy he sent for Franciszek and asked him to accompany him on a journey. Evidently Gurko is more remarkable as a general than as a person of ordinary intelligence. On leaving a place he always left a pair of boots behind, convinced that this would be his only chance of returning alive to the same place. Franciszek pointed out to him that even if the fact of forgetting a pair of boots were a main condition for returning, it would be doubtful that this same result would be obtained if the boots had been left on purpose. Gurko answered, that according to his experience it was undoubtedly so. Whenever he had

been on his way to danger he had left a pair of boots behind, and had thus scattered no less than 112 pairs of boots in Russia, Turkey, and Asia.

Perhaps much apparent heroism may be explained by such a firm faith in boots.

We drove on ; it grew dark and the stars appeared. We drove through miserable towns and still more miserable villages, whitewashed frame houses, common wooden houses with thatched roofs, and outside swarms of bare-legged children.

The horses did not get tired, and the avenue seemed to be endless. As far as we could see, no manor-house was visible for miles round. I began to insist that Krolewice did not exist at all, that probably we were travelling in a circle and most likely towards dawn we should drive through B. at a gentle trot and return to the station at K. Mme. Jozefa's grey eyes gleamed laughingly in the darkness ; the two young girls, guests, agreed that I was right, and began to tell stories, that moved them to incessant peals of laughter. One funny story called forth another, and while the fields sent forth their aromatic perfume, and the air grew cooler and fresher, the merry carriage rushed on in the transparent darkness of the mid-summer night. One might have supposed that it contained only happy people.

At length we caught sight of something white behind large groups of trees. Soon we faintly saw the outlines of a spacious courtyard and the contour of a mighty garden.

The carriage makes a turn, drives through the open gateway and stops. In the luminous hall were assembled the staff of the manor and all the servants in gala dress to receive their master and mistress. After a hasty toilet, we all assembled late in the evening for the dinner so long postponed. It looked so pretty ; the table was decked with masses of flowers, and all was festively arranged for the occasion, with excellent food and Polish champagne—that is, French, imported half finished, and given the last admixture here, as otherwise the duty would amount to two rubles and fifty copecks for each bottle.

Since this I have become familiar with the country. I know it pretty well, so much the better as no breath from the surrounding world has disturbed my peace. Not a book, not a newspaper have I been able to get during the time I have been here. All my newspapers are sent to the censorship, and my letters are detained in Warsaw. I don't know anything about the world—that is, Denmark—save what is to be found in the telegrams of the *Gazeta Polska*, and that is not much. I have telegraphed and written to the post office in Warsaw ; everything rebounds from Russian bureaucracy. I wonder if at any place, even in Turkey, there is such a wonderful want of law as in Russia.

Outside the garden the landscape extends in all its flatness. Rich it is, cornfield beyond cornfield, and pleasant, for poplars and birches, willows and lindens shade the roads. But the finest ornaments of the landscape at present are the enormous stacks of rye, put up in a way unknown among us, like ancient round towers with low, pointed roofs. The roof is golden, the towers are brown, because here the ear is not visible in all its length, and in the sun these stacks look most cheerful. Save for these, the flatness is only broken by windmills, trees, and now and then far away by a church or a wood. All around, girls with white kerchiefs on their heads are raking hay.

The arrangement of the house is above all praise. It is an oasis of civilisation in a land of rustics. Everything proclaims the most exquisite refinement of taste ; and especially pleasing is a library, so enormous, so entertaining, so beautifully bound, that its equal will not easily be found in the private houses of any capital. Each room has its peculiar stamp, and the ground floor opens into a vast palm-house.

The manor forms no slight contrast to the surrounding habitations. When the peasants want help or advice, they do not apply to the priest, who for the rest is a very honest young man (he has been to Rome and speaks a little Italian), but to our lady of the manor ; and it must be confessed that human nature is so strong in them that they steal anything they want which they do not obtain as a gift. They

steal everything that can be stolen, from poultry to garden tools ; they fell the trees in the wood, and steal so much the more passionately that Mrs. Jozefa brings no charge against them. "What of that?" she says ; "they are so poor, they must be excused."

The weather is warm, but not too hot, and the bathing arrangements are excellent ; only the flies and mosquitoes are rather disagreeable. However, we are well protected by an ingenious contrivance ; the inner windows consist of fine wire netting, so that no insect can make its way into the room, and we can sit with open windows and enjoy the fresh air.

Never even in Holland have I seen such cleanliness as reigns here. This, indeed, marks one of the sharpest contrasts between the higher classes and the common people in Poland. The whole house is cleaned every day, nay, even a couple of times a day ; three or four servants at a time are sent to clean a room, so that everything is in order in fifteen minutes.

Very often we have guests : yesterday came a couple of Polish painters who are living in Munich ; they brought a breath of ale and of art with them from the big art village. To-day came the editor of one of the great papers of Warsaw.

Russian power has developed in an astounding manner since last I was here. Then it was possible to have papers by book post without their passing the censorship, if they were written in a language not known by the officials. Now all is sent to St. Petersburg to be examined if it is not understood here. We get the *Figaro* a week late, and, in every number, large pieces are blackened over. Even a clerical and conservative paper like the *Figaro* is often confiscated. In *La Vie Parisienne* the improper parts are blackened over, and much is considered improper.

At present there is an exhibition of Polish industry and art at Lemberg. The government has ordered that no one in Russian Poland shall exhibit. (In several cases it has been done, nevertheless.) But then the question arose whether the papers might write about the exhibition. The first month it was absolutely forbidden even to mention it.

Later each paper got permission to insert four articles from Lemberg, none to exceed a hundred lines, and all to be on the products of industry, not a word about art; between each article an interval of a fortnight was to elapse. This winter an editor was sent for by the director of police, who, in a voice trembling with anger, asked him what he meant by writing in a manuscript the Polish letters which answer to "H.I.M." "What does 'H.I.M.' mean?"—"Of course, His Imperial Majesty; it is a generally used abbreviation."—"Aha! you have the audacity to *abbreviate* the title of His Majesty the Emperor? You have not *room* enough in your paper for his whole title? In that case you may be sure that he will find *room* for you, where you do not want to go. Now you may pay 600 rubles provisionally for your evil intention."

In Warsaw I saw odious examples of the brutality of the police. On every possible occasion they strike and push the poor cabmen with their sheathed swords. These drivers, with their numbers hanging on their backs, resemble real slaves.

Here in the country the common people are quite broken by oppression. In the village school only Russian is taught, which language the peasants do not understand. But as instruction is not obligatory, very few of the children go to school. In law-suits the language is likewise Russian, and all must pass through an interpreter, so that the accused is unable to control his own statement. The official policy is to irritate the peasants against the higher classes, and in all civil cases the former always gain their point. A landed proprietor here with his huntsman surprised four poachers who had committed a literal carnage among his game, and who were about to load their booty on a cart when he appeared. They escaped, but he got hold of a coat, which he retained to produce as evidence. The thieves were acquitted, as it was impossible, against their denial, to prove that the game they had on their cart belonged to the proprietor. The latter, on the other hand, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for the theft of a coat.

Thus is justice meted out, and the only consolation is, that however bad things may be, they might be worse. And men rejoice that the worse has not yet come to pass. In Poland, as everywhere, there is always cause for gratitude. A man looked upwards, when a swallow, which was flying above his head, dropped something on his nose. "How lucky," he said, "that the cow has no wings."

People are unconcerned here in Poland in spite of their torments. They live like a mutilated man, who proves that it is possible to have but one leg, one arm, one eye, and still be a man. They are like Josias Rantzau, who had only some few pieces of himself left and yet kept up his courage and good temper. They live, deprived of all political life, all social endeavour, all direct pursuit of national aims, and they live the more intensely the life left to them. They live and feel as elsewhere, and they rest satisfied with speaking that which must not be written or printed.

At this moment the sky is as clear as on a sunshiny day in the south, and the sight I have before me beyond the wire is full of peaceful beauty. In the foreground, a large lawn studded with beds of tall rose-trees and flame-coloured pelargoniums. A beautiful effect is made by a shrub with white leaves among them. All around are grouped the mighty old trees of the park. Outside the gateway a carriage with four horses waits us to take us to the neighbouring manor.

In short, life is charming for the moment.

Merimée used to summarise his views of life as follows: Harlequin fell out of the window from the fifth storey. When he passed the third, somebody asked him how he felt. "Pretty well," he answered, "provided that this continues."

We all know how the fall will end, but as long as one is in the air, it is not so bad.

II

CHOLERA—CENSORSHIP—ARRESTS

TOWARDS seven o'clock when the burning heat of day is over the different inmates of the house appear from their rooms. Some take a ride on horseback, others walk in the fields. A few of the elders are content with a walk in the garden. Last night, when our host had dismounted from his horse by the lawn before the veranda, and Miss Helen had come in after a long conversation in the garden about the future of mankind, religion, morals, love, and other subjects, I laid before our hostess the number of the *Revue de Paris*, containing part of the Hymn to Apollo (music and words), found in Delphi, and asked her to sing and play it. She did so, and exclaimed with surprise: "*Wagner!* It is pure Wagner!" I told her that it was just the impression this music had made on the French scientific man who published it, and we lost ourselves in reflections on the honour it was for Wagner, that those melodies so long hidden beneath the earth of that ancient, wonderful land of beauty, should present an analogy with his art. If Nietzsche had lived to see this it would have made a deep impression on him, and his criticism of Wagner would have been deprived of a point of support. For it would be startling, indeed, to insist on the decadence of art in Greece in the fifth century before Christ.

From old Greek music the conversation glided to old Greek vase-paintings. I showed a reproduction of the remarkable painting of Eos carrying the corpse of her son, which so absolutely anticipates the Christian *Mater dolorosa*. We spoke of the satyr with the wooden leg painted on an old vase showing, that the ancients practised amputation, and replaced the lost limb by an artificial one. Then we left Greece for Poland, Greek paintings for Wiworski's ceiling

and wall-paintings ; Greek misfortunes and sorrows for more proximate modern miseries, Polish and universal.

The cholera has appeared in the villages around here : at B., at K.—everywhere. Out of ten attacked by the sickness, five at least generally die immediately. Unfortunately in this month many church festivals are held. Thus next week a local festival is impending ; *the Pardon*. The peasants gather in crowds on this occasion to make merry and enjoy life for a few days. In the Middle Ages there was some sense in this kind of festival. At that time the church imposed upon sinners of both sexes severe punishments, all sorts of penances (such as not being allowed to eat meat for five years ; the wearing of a hair shirt for years, &c.). Now and then a general pardon was given, and of course this was celebrated with extravagant joy. In our days the punishments and penances have ceased, and only the fairs remain. But under present circumstances they are rather perilous. The peasants revel in fruit, much of which is unripe, and drink a quantity of beer. We have applied to the priest and asked him to write to the archbishop to get the festival definitely postponed, but as the latter has refused a similar request from a neighbouring community, there is little or no hope.

Last week I went to Warsaw and had an audience of his Excellency the President of the Censorship, M. Jankulio, a handsome man of mixed race, who has, they say Greek, Jewish, and Russian blood in his veins. He is allied to the Gurko family ; was for a time secretary to the Governor-General, and has made a speedy career. He received me with courtesy, assured me that printed matter sent to me was not retained, for one reason, because nobody in the censorship understood Danish ; I should get everything sent to me without delay, &c. Nevertheless, a week later, I received a Danish newspaper of July 31, sent to me on the 12th of August with the stamp of the censorship in St. Petersburg. His Excellency, who called in several subordinates to report, has, as may be seen, been greatly misinformed as to what is taking place in his own office ; the functionaries, who do not understand Danish, have simply sent everything to St.

Petersburg, where there are Finns enough in the censorship who understand our language. No great regard is paid to the convenience of the reader if it is a question of watching the foreign press. Whole articles are cut out ; thus one in a French review on the history of anarchism. All that is disapproved on political, moral, or religious grounds, is blackened over in such a way that not a letter is legible.

It is not to be denied that the Russians know how to govern. The machine works to perfection—soundless, silent as death, but effectual. For instance, the time is long gone by when political trials had a certain publicity ; now things are done in quite a different and undeniably a far more intelligent way. Early some morning the person concerned is fetched by a carriage and a couple of very polite gendarmes. And from that moment *ni vu ni su*—impossible to learn anything at all of him until he comes back, *if* he comes back.

In one of the neighbouring manors a young girl of twenty was arrested one morning. The parents' desperate demand to know the reason why received no answer ; the gendarmes had their orders and knew nothing. The parents followed in their carriage and reached Warsaw almost as soon as their daughter. They rushed to the authorities ; they knew nothing, only that the young girl was no longer in Warsaw. Six months later she came back from the Petropavlovsk fortress in St. Petersburg. A cousin of hers had been arrested on the charge of possessing a number of forbidden books. Questioned as to whence he had got each of them he had not answered, until the constant awakening during the night-time, and other methods loosened his tongue. He confessed that his cousin had procured him one of these books. As nothing else could be stated against her she was released that time ; but this year, when the insane mourning procession of young men and young girls took place through the streets of Warsaw on the day on which the revolt in 1794 broke out, she was arrested anew as a participator. It was of no avail to the promoters of the demonstration that they had called together the young people by means of a handbill in these words : " A lady (here a fictitious name) of great

virtues and abilities is dead. She was infinitely beloved by her children, who cherish her memory and hope for her resurrection. Those who knew her may assemble this day in honour of her." It was intended to put garlands before the house of the shoemaker where the revolt was proclaimed, but the police surrounded and arrested all the members of the procession—about three hundred; they are all transported, and the young girl among them. It is said that they are isolated, each in a different place.

A student who, a couple of years ago, was arrested as leader of a socialistic group, has disappeared so completely that his brother, in spite of repeated supplications, has not been able to learn even this—if he has been hanged or is still alive.

The time has long gone by when executions were public. They take place silently in the jails, and it is said that no account is even kept of them in Petropavlovsk: they are so easy there—plenty of water around the island.

It is fair to say of the Russians that as a reigning caste they are not to be trifled with. Four officers of the Guards, who had abused their position by propagating Nihilism among their subordinates, were arrested. One of the rebellious books found at their house was a treatise printed abroad, and a note was also found stating that it had been lent the officer by a relation, a justice of the peace. The latter was arrested, and cross-questioned as to why he had procured the book. He answered, and with apparent truth, that he had wished to read the book out of curiosity without concurring in the ideas expressed in it. The four officers of course were shot; but it is more surprising to learn that the justice was hanged. There is something excellent in the system; it renders vanity as a motive of political crimes impossible. No paper dares to mention the name of the criminal, far less speak of his arrest, or anything he might say in his defence. He disappears in silence and his name is never mentioned in any paper. If this system were adopted in Italy and France the number of political murderers would probably be considerably diminished. However, it is not to be denied that it has certain drawbacks.

Of late years the severity concerning prohibited books has been considerably augmented. It has become impossible to procure any of these; no bookseller dares now to order one of them. For instance, none of the books I have published in foreign languages since I was last here have crossed the frontier.

The amiability and good breeding of the Russian officers are in curious contrast to this severity. It must be admitted that in the Russian officer of the Guards (and only the Guards are stationed in Warsaw) we never notice the conceit and arrogance which characterise the Prussian officer. Courtesy, almost modesty, the bearing of the polished man of the world, are the peculiar stamp of the Russian officer. And this humanity is not merely superficial. The two Russian officers, whose position would enable them to do more evil than any one, the commander of the gendarmerie, General Brock, and the chief of the police, General Kreigels, are actually beloved by the Polish population. They always deliver the mildest possible reports. Every harshness displayed is against their wishes. But they are obliged to obey the orders they get.

In the officers' staff itself there is no inclination to treat the Poles as a vanquished people. They rather insist upon a gentlemanly behaviour towards them. Recently we had a striking instance of this. A son of the Governor-General saw at the house of a comrade here a forbidden book and asked him how he had got it; the officer told him the name of the bookseller. The young Lieutenant Gurko went to the latter and asked for the book.—No, it was not to be had, it was forbidden.—If he could procure it for him?—Under common circumstances it would be impossible, but as to the son of the Governor-General, he supposed that the prohibition might be waived.—Some weeks later the lieutenant got his book, and denounced the bookseller, who was arrested. Immediately thereafter the officers of the regiment, each and all of them, sent in a petition that Lieutenant Gurko might be struck off the list of officers; failing this, they all requested their own dismissal. They got no answer, but they insisted. The consequence was, in fact, that Lieutenant Gurko was dis-

missed ; to be sure he was at the same time placed upon the general staff.

The overwhelming heat is now over ; the time in which the shower-bath house in the park was our main consolation. I never entered it without being reminded of the first act of *The Valkyries*, for it is built up round four gigantic stems of trees which rise through the house like the large tree in the dwelling of Siegfried's mother.

Now the temperature is such that we should like to make use of the invitations received from the neighbouring manors. The sad state of the roads obliges us to pay our visits in a carriage and four, otherwise we should never get along. At the neighbouring manors there are several original men and women.

III

MONOTONY AND STILLNESS—SUMMER-NIGHT SENTI- MENTS—POLITICAL DIVERGENCE OF THE OLDER AND YOUNGER GENERATIONS

THE peaceful quiet that reigns here is of the kind possible only to those who live miles from railway stations and towns. Never a sound breaks the silence of the night, with the exception of the watchman's horn, which every quarter of an hour announces that he is awake. But as for me, I never hear it after having gone to bed. We sleep calmly in this stillness, and therefore I am always awake when in the morning Wladislaw brings my clothes and opens the shutters and windows. Wladislaw is from Lithuania, thirty years old, and he it is who, among the servants of the house, has been placed at my disposal. He is a jewel of a man—small, slender, and strong, full of the Polish flexibility in every limb, and particularly intelligent. He speaks French and Italian very well, having passed five years in Florence with Count Guybowsky, and two years with Franciszek in Paris. He does not always express himself correctly in French, but his locutions are always extremely picturesque. For instance, he says: "*Il mouche fort aujourd'hui*;" this is to be interpreted: "There are a great many flies to-day." He speaks Polish as his native tongue; understands Lithuanian and Russian. I am an ignorant fellow in comparison with him. To be sure, I know German; but he knows how to shave. I know a little English; but he can carry my tub with a straight arm. In Paris he might become an interpreter, a hairdresser, or a waiter as it might happen; were he a little less good-natured, he would be the typical *Figaro*.

It does one good to open one's eyes on beautiful lawns and trees. The more one has been condemned to live in a town the more one is sensible of living with nature. When

I am driving about here and I perceive by the strong sweet perfume that we are approaching a clover field in blossom, I make the horse walk, that I may not be deprived of any of this perfume. When one is unaccustomed to ramble about on field-paths, every feather becomes interesting, and one looks at the plants like a botanising schoolboy. In the forenoon I rove about alone, the heat being too intense for my friends. But towards evening we all walk out together, and every day a different way. The constant spectacle—the sunset, the twilight, the rising of the red moon on the horizon, and its change into sparkling yellow—is every day the same and every day new. One's mood and the conversation vary, according to one's companion. Yesterday the air was calm ; dusk came on speedily ; the mown fields breathed fragrance after the rain, and the full moon was shining with an almost hypnotising effect. The young girl beside me quoted in a low voice a poem by Kistemaekers, of which these are the first strophes :—

“ J'aime la nuit,
 La nuit des rêves
 Aux heures brèves
 Quand l'astre luit
 Sur champs et grèves,
 J'aime la nuit.

Quand la nuit dort
 Dans le silence,
 La lune lance
 Sa clarté d'or,
 Qui se balance
 Quand la nuit dort.”

It was surprising how these verses mingled with the harmony of the summer night.

Thus the days pass ; monotonous days which are but a succession of spectacles of nature and of conversations ; days of which we do not know if they are Tuesday or Friday ; weeks, of which only Sunday is recognisable, because then at twelve o'clock the church bells call the faithful together for mass. These church bells ! Every evening at nine o'clock they strike a few times, and then cease as if in alarm. An official explanation as to the signification of these strokes has been given to the authorities. In reality they toll in memory

of the Poles who fell for freedom during the revolution. Few strokes only and muffled, a secret appeal to memory. But no alarm-bell could conjure, as they are conjuring, all over the land, in the capital as well as in the smallest village.

We are lulled by this monotony and stillness, this good, pure air. The cholera is raging near us in Sochazew, but it does not reach us. And we do not at all regret Warsaw, where the epidemic has spread enormously. The only temptation there is the theatre. Marcello is acting, and I have not yet seen her this time.

When Poland's greatest actress, Modrzejewska, had emigrated to America to act only in English, Wisnoska and Marcello remained, only a few years ago, the two queens of the theatre of Warsaw. Now Marcello, the dark beauty, reigns alone. Her fair rival is no more. Many people still remember how poor Wisnoska came to her death. A Russian officer of the Guards, who for a long time had been persecuting her, and tormenting her with his jealousy, one evening entered her house and demanded of her that she should give up all and everybody for his sake; if not, she would not escape him alive. When she told him that he was quite indifferent to her, and that she would preserve her freedom, he pulled out his revolver, and was cruel enough to keep the unhappy woman before the pistol-muzzle all through the night; all the while he was talking and drinking. At length she understood that she could not escape, and every quarter of an hour she put down on leaves, which she tore out of her note-book, her desperate lamentations, rolled up the leaves and threw them all around the room on the floor, that they might be found after her death. Towards morning he shot her, returned to the barracks, cried out to his comrades: "I have shot Wisnoska!" and was arrested as soon as his brother officers, who thought he was raving, had inquired into the matter and had found the corpse. In the lower as well as in the two superior courts he was sentenced to twenty years' hard labour. However, the emperor thought that here was an occasion to exercise his prerogative. He commuted the sentence and condemned the culprit to degradation. He was reduced to the ranks; a week later

he was promoted sub-lieutenant, another week later lieutenant, and in this way justice as well as mercy were satisfied. Poor Wisnoska! Her hair was so rich and fair; her eyes so blue, and her smile so bright. I saw her before me, beside Marcello, in the first row in the great council hall one day when my lecture on Polish literature was given there. Most earnestly she clapped her hands, which were small and covered with delicate grey gloves. She might be less beautiful than Marcello, but as an artist she was certainly more gifted. She has left a void—is not forgotten.

We need not go to Warsaw for society; we have plenty of neighbours within a drive of a couple of hours, neighbours with long, curious names terminating in *wicz* and *ski*. Nearly all the landed proprietors about here are enormously rich. They not only possess extensive properties, which they manage together with their sons, with great skill, but generally a manufactory of beet-root sugar and sometimes of alcohol is connected with the estate. Beside the cornfields there are boundless fields of beet-root and potatoes.

The culture of the elder generation clings to democratic and anticlerical ideals. A particular trait in the old gentlemen is their hatred of priests, particularly their abhorrence and dread of Jesuits. It always excited amazement when, as I usually do, I mentioned the Jesuits with a certain warmth and admiration. Most of the squires are cast in one mould, and do not understand these fine shades. They read much, but are most attracted by rather coarse, popular books, directed against religious and political prejudices. They are ardent patriots, anxiously watching the political horizon, hoping to discern some sign of better times for Poland.

The younger generation is practically active and does not care much for politics; they have made their choice in life. In the elder generation the men are more interesting than the women; in the younger the reverse is the case. Though what is known elsewhere in Europe as the emancipation of women is prohibited here, their independence of thought is great, certainly not inferior to what it is in the North, and the level of culture is higher, because the store of

general knowledge is greater, not to mention knowledge of the world. The young women speak French and English besides Polish, not like languages they have been taught, but as they speak their native tongue, and they are familiar with foreign literature because all their leisure time is spent in reading, and they know the different countries well, having passed at least one-third of their life in travelling.

Of course all species are to be found among them; not excepting that of the goose, and even the pretentious goose conscious of beauty and of descent from a most noble gander; but I only met one specimen of the kind. On the other hand I saw a couple of noble falcons, a swan, a sphinx. . . .

Not far from here lives a young girl who is not exactly beautiful, but so graceful that every moment she becomes so. She never laughs, and her face is without a smile, even the smile of courtesy; she never speaks except when alone with one person; she is mute as a fish when we assemble in the saloon or at table; but she knows to a turn the value of every person and every circle in Warsaw, and though she is but twenty-four years old, she is as independent and as unprejudiced in her ideas as a clever man of forty. She has read all the most daring books written in the last twenty years.

And some few miles distant, in an old manor house with antique furniture, and seven straight avenues which radiate from the lawn before the house, you may meet a young woman of thirty years of age who lives with her parents, separated from her husband, who took to drinking and squandered her fortune; and this young woman is so remarkable that she would make a sensation in any capital. She is dark like an Italian, with a figure like a Roman, but her whole personality is instinct with the Slavonic grace and charm. She captivates because such a face as hers has never been seen before. Her mouth especially is wonderfully expressive, like that of a great actress. She reminds one of bright purple, a purple poppy with an intoxicating perfume, and she has a most melodious voice. Her manner is aristocratic, quiet and self-contained. Other women look meaningless beside her. But she does not appear to be

conscious of herself as an exceptional being. In my eyes she is the embodiment of the spirit of Russian Poland. From her radiates all its southern ardour, its Slavonic grace, its mysteriously attractive inner life.

For this is certain: although Russian Poland is oppressed and tortured as is neither Prussian Poland nor Austrian Galicia, still it is only here that the heart of Poland is throbbing, and only here that the Polish race may be studied in its best and rarest originality.

In Posen and East Prussia the Polish landed proprietor is impoverished; generally he has been obliged to sell his property; the Germans, supported by the means of the state and by all sorts of cunning prohibitions, with the hundred million marks of the state in reserve, backed by the passion of the German propaganda, have bought up the country inch by inch. The Polish peasant in Prussia is trained by compulsory instruction, and is on that account more cleanly and prosperous than elsewhere, but the Polish population is mixed there. The nobles are brought up in German schools and at German universities. Galicia, a poor mountainous district, is, as an Austrian province, negative. The population enjoys full national and civil freedom. Polish songs are sung and Polish speeches are delivered freely in Austrian Poland. But parties fight against each other with an unquenchable hatred. Cracow is the stronghold of the clerical majority, Lemberg that of the free-thinking minority. Though the Galician press is free, it is nevertheless worse than the Russo-Polish, because its contents consist almost entirely of personal insults occasioned by the party strife. In Russian Poland the press is fettered to such a degree that it has been, for instance, impossible to warn the young people against the senseless political demonstrations, so tragical in their consequences, to which they constantly resort, urged on by the women. The press has not dared to mention these demonstrations with a single word, and still it is better than the Polish press in Austria.

The Polish vivacity and intellectual charm has its real home in the kingdom of Poland—perhaps because only here are the material conditions of the upper classes such as

to enable them to lead a modern life, continuing their life during the Renaissance. Russian Poland is the richest corn-growing country in Europe. Every patch of ground is fertile. The nobles here are often very rich, and people enjoy their money. A host of servants, as is well known, are kept in a well-conducted house in Poland, the houses being almost always spacious, with many spare rooms. The ladies revel in beautiful dresses. They dress two or three times in the day, and if any come to stay for some time in the house, they have as much luggage as Sarah Bernhardt. The ladies of this house, who have no occasion to make themselves smart, have appeared in fifty different dresses at least. On my putting the question one day none of them knew how many dresses they possessed. It is still more singular to see that the gentlemen change their dresses as frequently. None of them own less than two dozen complete costumes, and in addition wraps, overcoats, hunting and riding costumes. In this particular they live as in the time of Pan Sopiça.

None of them would be impressed by the cupboard full of boots, with which Bourget's Casal is supposed to overawe the snobs.

Between the three parts, into which the ancient Poland is divided and which are so closely bound together by language and memories, there is politically not the slightest co-operation; they can never act in concert; they have not even common measures and coins or legal regulations or stamps—nothing at all in common; not even a man who is popular in all three countries as a politician. In literature there is after all but one name which unites them; Sienkiewicz has by degrees become the jewel in the crown of Poland. And he is far from being a genius of the first rank.

Nothing material is done to unite the parts of the country; only ideal means are possible. There is, especially in the elder generation, a group of patriotic idealists, valiant dreamers, simple and hopeful souls, who are constantly travelling about between the severed parts of the land, and who, by conversations, bargains, and agreements of an innocent nature, keep up the holy fire. The great exhibi-

tion in Lemberg is an outcome of their exertions. But it cannot be denied that only too many of the best of the younger generation, both young women and young men, have given up all national hope; have ceased to watch for gleams of light, looking upon all such gleams as *ignes fatui*. Openly sceptical, nay, even contemptuous, they are melancholy spectators of the agitations of their elders.

IV

POLAND AND FRANCE—POLAND AND GERMANY

"CONFESS that our Polish cooking is excellent," said Madame Halina.

"I do indeed, I think it the best in the world."

"That all our dishes are original!"

"I admit that they taste very good, and that as a rule one doesn't know what they are made of."

"Confess that our soil is more fruitful than any other, that our scenery has a style and an attraction of its own, and that it is more spacious than any other."

"I agree with all you say. Even flatness is imposing here."

"Admit that our language is flexible and beautiful, soft and malleable, melodious and luxuriant, even if it has not the varied rhythms of Russian."

"I admit that your speech is fascinating."

"Admit that no other people dance as we do. Is there any dance like our mazurka?"

"I am hardly a judge, but I am inclined to think most highly of Polish dancing. The ballets at Warsaw would be hard to beat."

"Admit that our women are beautiful!"

"Beautiful and beautifully dressed. Who could question this?"

"Admit that our men are intelligent and hospitable."

"They are indeed. But what do you want with all these confessions?"

"Admit that Nature has lavished upon us all the gifts that should make a nation happy. We are cheerful, easily pleased, and have withal the imaginative spark. Why then have we become the most unhappy race on earth?"

For has there ever been a more hapless nation than ours in all the history of the world?"

"I doubt it, unless perhaps we except the Jews, who are no longer a nation."

"Then is it not incredible, inhuman, that all Europe has lost interest in us, that no one will lift a finger in our behalf? I am not thinking of the Powers responsible for the partition. But is it not shameful to see France crawling on her belly before our tyrant, that France we revered, fought and bled for?"

Every Polish man and every Polish woman is cut to the heart by the enthusiastic servility of France to Russia. Nowhere do people know France more thoroughly than here. Educated Poles are brought up in French fashion, they speak French as fluently as their own tongue, they read and appreciate French books more than any other people. It is for these very reasons that the self-abasement of France before Russia has wounded them so deeply.

No people in the world ever believed so firmly in France, or sacrificed themselves so cheerfully for France as the Poles. Read what Henri Houssaye says in his "1814." Whenever things were most desperate, whenever some forlorn hope or the personal safety of the Emperor was in question, the Polish Lancers were always to the fore. They and the *Vieille Garde* were always the last resource. And neither ever failed.

A Polish woman, a woman Napoleon never won, though he possessed her, and whose admiration for him never became love, was the only woman who visited him at Elba, after his downfall.

Poland is now so utterly forgotten by the French that one never hears her mentioned by them. They know nothing of the Poles, and it is impossible to get an article dealing with their sufferings inserted in any French review. *Saoul comme un Polonais* (as drunk as a Pole) is the only memento of them that lingers in the national speech.

It has actually come to this, that French newspapers,

commenting on the incessant changes of ministry in their own country, remark as follows :—

“What must our allies, the Russians, think of us, and of these ministries that change every year, nay, several times in one year! With them, ministers remain in office for twenty and thirty years.” If the French were governed for six months on the same lines as the Russian Poles, their enthusiasm for Russian methods would, no doubt, be considerably modified!

What would the French say, if it were absolutely forbidden to teach the French language in any French school? Or if school-children were strictly forbidden to talk together in their native tongue in the playground or the street? But this is what is done to Polish children.

Or if, in the teaching of history, the name of their fatherland were never mentioned, if its history were treated as non-existent, and all the energies and efforts of teachers were directed to the instilling into their children of an idealised history of a foreign race? If the fate of Alsace and Lorraine, aggravated a thousandfold, were the fate of all France!

This summer all young boys were refused passports to cross the frontier. What would a French lady say if she were forbidden to cross the frontier with her little son? If she were a Pole, she would, like a young mother of my acquaintance, simply have to stay at home. The authorities were afraid that the boys of the country would be taken to the exhibition at Lemberg, that they would witness political demonstrations, hear Polish songs and speeches—and this was prevented by the simple device of refusing passports. What would a Frenchman say, if all official posts of distinction and lucrative situations, the army and the navy, and the higher administrative functions were all alike closed to him? if the State forbade him to fill any post, the emoluments of which exceed 1000 rubles? Yet this is the case here. No Pole receives higher payment.

When the State recently acquired all the private railways in Poland, the whole of the Polish staff without exception was

dismissed ; hundreds of families were made destitute. In the Postal Service, as elsewhere, the promotion of Polish *employés* ceases when they have reached a salary of 1000 rubles.

What would the French say if every line written by them for a newspaper had to be submitted to a Government censor before publication, and if their authors were punished for things they had intended to print, but which had never appeared ? Such things are the rule here.

What would they say if the winter and summer *revues*, so popular in their theatres, had to be absolutely renounced ? Here no such things as *revues* are possible, or even imaginable. A review of the events of the year ? What would these be ? There are no public men in Poland save the Government officials, and their names may not even be mentioned, nor their actions alluded to, in a newspaper article, much less on the stage. Parliament, public meetings, associations, and such like, which furnish material for quips elsewhere, do not exist. The only possible topics would be purely private scandals, but the Poles are not ignoble, and there is no newspaper among them answering to such a sheet as the Danish *Witzblittern*, not even in Galicia, where personal polemics are nevertheless in the blood.

What would French workmen say if they were absolutely forbidden to found any union, or enter into any association ? If a strike were not only an unimaginable proceeding, but even any combined discussion of their interests were impossible ? But these things would be impossible to them if they were governed by Russia. And it would avail them little to protest in the name of the right of public meeting. For the right of public meeting is unknown here.

Finally, what would devout French Catholics say, if they found themselves handed over to the supremacy of the Czar-Pope ? When from time to time (as happened this spring in the village of Kroze) a church the authorities have determined to Russianise is surrounded, and the peasants who refuse to leave it and give it up are shot

down by Cossacks and soldiers, the survivors being knouted, the incident goes the round of the European papers for a day or two, and readers comfort themselves with the reflection that such occurrences are exceptional.

But the daily, cold-blooded annoyances are never mentioned. In his day, Krasinski called Poland the land of graves and crosses. One of the most striking characteristics of Polish landscapes are the lofty wooden crosses. They are not crucifixes, as in Italy and Tyrol, but plain crosses. If such a cross falls down or decays, it might be supposed that it would be permissible to replace it. Not without a Government permit, and this is not easily obtained. Two years ago a cross of this kind in a field was struck by lightning. It has been lying broken ever since; the owners dare not repair it, because the necessary permission has not yet been forwarded from the Government offices in St. Petersburg. If it had been a St. Andrew's cross now! But the actual one is looked upon as a Romish symbol! Under this *régime* even the cross is feared as a sign of insurrection.

The land of graves and crosses! If they try to restrict the number of crosses, the graves at least are allowed to multiply freely. In 1831 the Russian official bulletin ran as follows:—*L'ordre règne à Varsovie*. Now order reigns no longer, but cholera, though this does not appear in the Russian bulletins. A pedagogic government gives the number of cases and of deaths as it pleases, in such a manner as to pacify inquirers in Europe and abroad.

Round two of the little towns in this district a military cordon has been drawn. No one is permitted to leave or to enter them, and the inhabitants are dying like flies. The spread of the scourge is due not only to the poverty of the people, but in a still greater degree to their ignorance. When once the disease has appeared, it is impossible to reason with them, or even to give them any remedies. Neither peasants nor servants can be induced to give up eating fruit. Cholera is fate, they say; the person who is to get it will have it. And no sick person, whatever is the matter with him, will swallow a drop of medicine.

They imagine that there is a sort of conspiracy to get rid of those afflicted with the disease as quickly as possible, and are persuaded that anything offered them by a stranger is poison. No arguments can overcome this idea.

But who is to blame for all this blind ignorance?

A generation back all the hopes of the Poles centred in France. This time has completely gone by. The then policy of the Poles in Austria and Prussia consisted of a mere barren opposition. Whatever the respective Governments proposed, the Polish deputies refused. It was in Austria that this policy was first modified. The Poles were granted liberty of speech and action, they encountered sympathy, they gradually received power, and became contented. As under William I. the Poles could always reckon upon ill-will and oppression from the Government, their activity in the German parliament gradually restricted itself to the voting of perpetual nays. They rarely spoke, knowing the futility of such demonstrations, and being moreover poor orators. It was not until Josef Koscielski became a member of the Reichstag and of the Upper House that these tactics were changed. He became intimate with the Bismarck family in Berlin, and made up his mind to bear the displeasure with which this intimacy was regarded by his compatriots. He made his *début* in the Reichstag as an orator, and gained the ear of the house by his eloquence. After the fall of Bismarck he became even a greater favourite with the young Emperor than he had been in the Bismarckian circle. He and his young wife were often invited to dine alone with the Emperor and Empress, and even now that he has retired from political life he and his are frequently the guests of the Imperial family.

Koscielski met the wishes of the Emperor as far as it was possible to him, and influenced the Polish party to vote in the same sense. Thus he voted for the naval grant, a service the Emperor rewarded by conferring an order of great distinction upon him. In return, as is well known, concessions were made to the Poles as regards their language and their Church. For the first time after a very long interval, an Archbishop after their own hearts was nominated. And

for this they had to thank Koscielski. There is no doubt that his winning personality and his political tact had gained more ground for them than they had conquered since the time of Frederick William IV., whereas the voting of an extra ship or two to the fleet did them not the slightest harm. But the Poles have never been tacticians, and Koscielski's diplomacy brought him contumely rather than popularity. He went by the name of Admiralski ever afterwards. It was a nickname that every one could understand, and that the meanest wit could grasp. Whenever he voted in favour of a Government measure, he was looked upon with suspicion. Like all Poles, he had a certain love of splendour, and he was perhaps not altogether unaffected by the civilities shown him at Court. The Poles never ceased to impress upon him that his personal vanity was at the bottom of his activity in Berlin, and that he sacrificed national interests to his own. He accordingly resigned in the spring.

He justly estimated that the Poles, having nothing to hope for from France, should now do their best to obtain concessions from Germany.

V

A CHURCH FESTIVAL—POPULAR BELIEFS

It is the festival of forgiveness in the church to-day. From early in the morning there has been ringing of bells and concourse of peasants from miles round. Outside the church of Petrovice sellers have run up small booths and huts for the occasion, where all sorts of things are offered for sale—holy images, rosaries, cruciform ornaments, and some toys for the children the mothers have brought with them, but all so infinitely poor that there was scarcely anything to be had above a penny in price. It was most disheartening to look at the pictures suspended beneath the eaves of an old hovel—lithographs of the worst and most tasteless paintings, and of daubs almost blasphemous in their embodiment of bland Virgins and insipid Saviours. On closer inspection we discovered with surprise that this factory work was marked not only Paris, but most of it even New York. It is the indefatigable Yankees, brave Protestants, who are sitting on the other side of the ocean, gaining money by making hundreds of thousands of holy pictures for the Catholics in old Europe. No wonder that they are hideous. Even a lithograph of the most nauseous Carlo Dolci would be a relief among them.

The church is overcrowded ; the doors are wide open, and a large column of men and women crowd before them to catch as much of the sermon as possible. But besides, all over the square in front of the church a whole little population is standing, sitting, and kneeling, uncovered, in deep devotion. All round lie beggars ; about eighteen have arrived in a covered cart ; disgusting cripples with naked arms or bandaged legs ; the whole crowd of palsied beings on whom the Son of Man worked His miracles in days of yore. Near the church a chapel has been run up by its

master-mason, who is making repairs in it, and who desires to display his pious disposition ; on the chapel is a wooden crucifix, a monster of tastelessness !

All sense of art and beauty seems quenched in the common people. How lively was formerly their sense of beauty ; how handsome and becoming the national dress which the Russians have now strictly forbidden ! What a picturesque figure the peasant of Galicia still is in his white coat ornamented with red, and with his large felt hat ! Here the peasant now wears the most horrible cap and a dress without cut or character ; while the women and the girls, who have been deprived of their national costume, have a predilection for loud yellow and crude green.

They all walked about, looking at the stalls and bargaining, now and then buying some pastry, and some of the fruit offered in spite of the prohibition. But the forbidden fruit has here, as elsewhere, its particular charm. The people of the manor erected a booth at which bottles of boiled water, with peppermint and brandy to flavour them, were offered gratis ; the object was to prevent the dangerous drinking of water. The peasants drank eagerly, contrary to our expectations.

For several hours our ladies had sat in their church, in spite of the heat and bad air. We men did not go in, until the great mass at the very last. The sight from the altar of the church was picturesque. Just behind the priest sat the ladies, some from the neighbouring estates with their husbands ; they were festively dressed, but their devotion did not appear to be intense. Then the peasants, men, women, and children, head beside head, as many as the church could contain, the white, yellow, and pink headgear of the women gleaming, among brown men's faces with thick long moustaches, all kneeling down, then rising, then bending their heads to fall again on their knees, swaying like corn in the wind. Above them sounded the hymn, one of the most ancient of Polish linguistic monuments, music and simple words dating from the tenth century : " Holy God, mighty God ! Deliver us from plague, from famine and from war. God, the Almighty ! "

It goes back to the time when Poland was first afflicted with the plague, and has a new actuality in these days.

The sermon was not bad, impressing upon the hearers that religious exercises and church-attendance count for little in comparison to one's life and acts. On the other hand, the priest, who celebrated the mass, with his stupid expression, his thick cheeks and his fat figure was grotesque, and his way of pronouncing Latin utterly rustic. All that stood for art in the church was glaring and in bad taste ; —the wall-paintings, the pictures on the banners waving above the congregation ; but beautiful were the living decorations of flowers and green round the pillars, and the blooming oleanders in flower-pots before the altar.

Our own little priest was not officiating that day. He was the host, and chiefly taken up with the great dinner of forty persons, which he was to give after the service. He knelt down with the others, but I read his thoughts. He never speaks of his faith, but from what he says, we feel that he thinks like the rest of us. It is always thus with the priests who have studied for several years in Rome. A stay there is more beneficial to intellect than to faith. This is strongest in the poor creatures who ascend the pulpit directly from the Polish seminaries. For the rest, the poor priests had a hard day. Not less than four hundred peasants came to confession, and there were but thirteen priests to confess them. They were ready to drop with fatigue. Fortunately they consoled themselves afterwards.

No greater contrast can be imagined than that between the Polish and the Russian peasant in relation to religion and its expounders. However orthodox the Russian peasant may be, to him, as to the Russians in general, the priest is a most inferior creature, half comical, half despicable. It is a bad omen to meet him. The Russian priest does not differ much from the peasant as to culture ; but having more money, it is easier for him to get drunk, and in reality his life consists in the main of carouses and sleeping off their effects ; but the Polish peasant venerates his priest. Nay, the authority of the Catholic priest is the only one that has remained absolutely undisputed in Poland at all times. It is within his

power to put the peasant into the mood he desires. This always becomes apparent after confession. When a theft has been committed, it constantly happens that the priest brings back the stolen object. The peasant does not bring it himself, but in his anguish he gives it to the priest that the latter may forward it to its owner.

The piety of the Russian peasant does not exclude certain tricks and a good deal of sharp practice in his dealings with the saints.

A Russian peasant with horse and cart had got upon the ice, which was about to break up, and in his distress he promised St. Nicholas the value of the horse, if he reached the shore alive with his vehicle. This he did, and now his main thought was how to get out of this scrape without breaking his word to the saint. The horse was worth more than a hundred rubles, and this was a loss he did not like to suffer. At last he hit on a way of escape. He went to the fair with his horse and soon found a purchaser. "How much do you want for your horse?" asked the latter.—"Five rubles," was the answer.—"Five rubles? You are not in earnest; but of course I will pay that."—"Very well," said the peasant; "but I have decided not to sell it without this hen, which I have on my back."—"And what is the price of the hen?"—"Ninety-five rubles." The bargain was made and the saint got his five rubles.

The Polish peasant is more artless with his saints. He has not the fire and fervour of invocation of the Italian peasant, but he kneels lost in supplication before their images. This was evident yesterday.

After the service the great dinner for all the clergy took place at the young priest's house. The chief landed proprietors of the neighbourhood were also present, forty persons in all, as mentioned. As our young priest has only an annual salary of 150 rubles, and with all his perquisites does not get more than six or seven hundred rubles, it is impossible for him to give such dinners. But the custom is to send him all the meat and drink he wants from the manor, also table linen, dishes, plates, and glasses. The thing was particularly difficult yesterday, because the festival

fell on a Friday, so that there could be no meat. Our lady had sent for four or five different sorts of fish, and from the day before all was activity in the house. Our cook, who has studied his art in Paris, and who moreover is both baker and confectioner, excelled himself. The salmon and the pike were lying, mighty in circumference, on heavy dishes; the wine was rolled in barrels from the cellar; and from early morning all the servants were hurrying to and fro in an endless procession, carrying dishes and baskets filled with all sorts of good things, between the manor and the parsonage.

The thirteen priests and the other great folks were soon seated in two spacious rooms to celebrate the fast-day. In the sermon it had been said that the truly religious man is not gloomy and choleric, but always cheerful, and about this many a merry speech was made during the meal. But it is fair to say, they ate more than they spoke, and they drank more than they ate. Burgundy and Bordeaux and Hungarian hock disappeared so hastily behind the clerical waistcoats that every now and then an express was despatched to the manor with a slip of paper requiring this and that from the cellar. They drank hard like good Poles, and nevertheless nobody spoke a word too loudly, because the young priests were shy of exposing themselves before their superiors, and these did not forget to keep up the respect due to themselves. But to see my friend Franciszek at the top of the table, presiding at this clerical dinner, having his health proposed as the giver of the festival, as the patron of the Church, as the great religious benefactor of the country! What may a worldling not become, if he is rich, clever, and lavish!

Certainly several of the priests were no more believing than he. The more gifted of them had all gone through the Roman school. But no experience shakes the faith of the common people. Things the most contrary to reason and the most cruel are to him but further evidences of the care of Providence. Listen to this Polish legend, which Sienkiewicz has introduced in his tales:—

A peasant boy discovered one day, when passing a hollow

tree, that somebody was within the trunk. He approached and found that it was Death, who had fallen asleep there. He quickly put a plug into the hole, and when Death awoke, he was a captive. From that moment there was exultation in the village. No more death ; no funerals ; no mourners. But the joy only lasted for a time. As nobody died, everything was overcrowded and the soil could not supply food enough for so many. It then became necessary to draw out the plug. Death got his liberty ; he hurried to Christ and requested orders as to whom he was first to mow down. Christ pronounced a name. It was that of a mother of five children, and when Death came to her, she was terrified, not so much for her own sake, as for her little children's. She fell on her knees, and implored Death, saying : "You see, yourself, that it would be a cruelty to take me. What will become of my five babes when I am gone ; who is to provide for them ? They will perish miserably. I entreat you, go away !" Then Death hastened anew to Christ, in spite of the command he had received, explained the case, and asked for orders. Christ first gave Death two strong boxes on his ears for his disobedience [the rustic experience lies behind this trait] and then said : "Fly over the ocean ; go diving where it is deepest, and bring me the little white stone you will find there." Death did as he was bidden ; found the stone, and brought it. Christ said : "Crack it with your teeth." It was hard for the fleshless lips of Death, but it was cracked, and within was a little white living worm (!). Then Christ said, "There, you see. I knew that in this little stone was a worm, and think you that I, who know this, should not have thought of the fate of the five little children, who will become motherless at my command. Get on ! and kill the mother immediately !"

Such faith in the common people is very necessary that they may not lose confidence in the decrees of Providence in a land and under a rule where it cannot be said that the finger of Providence is particularly perceptible.

VI

THE MEMORIAL PROCESSION OF 1894— PAINTERS AND WRITERS

THE middle of summer is over, and authors, poets, journalists begin to return to Warsaw. It is impossible to show oneself in a restaurant without being overwhelmed with embraces and men's kisses on both cheeks, always to the same tune: "What treason to come to Warsaw when everybody is absent!" And then all sluices of conversation are opened, and the stranger, so long solitary, is at once initiated into all sorts of literary affairs, hundreds of family stories, scores of political misfortunes and intrigues, and international farrago concerning remuneration, publishers, rivalries, and what not. Many half-forgotten and half-effaced figures, fates and names, rise anew in one's memory, and at last it appears as if one's absence had been but of a few weeks, though it covers a space of seven years.

The latest event is the arrest of a young medical man. At four o'clock in the morning two police officials arrived with their subordinates and set on foot an investigation in his home, rummaged everything, seized all his papers, even tore off the green cloth on his writing-table in order to look for papers beneath it, and then carried him off to the citadel. The two officials have since remained in the dwelling, of which they have made a kind of a trap; the first few days they arrested every one who entered the house—patients, friends, and acquaintances, to examine them.

Nobody knows why; but they fear that he has collected money for the young men and young girls who were banished on account of the procession in memory of the revolt in 1794. These raids are always made during the night. Sometimes the matter takes on a certain humour,

namely, when the police are on the wrong tack and nothing is to be found. Such was the case with one of my friends, the author Gavalewicz, whose house they searched for some leaves of manuscript to compare with the manuscript of an anti-Russian article printed in a paper at Cracow, which the police had got hold of, nobody knew how. Gavalewicz remained in bed during the search, while his little servant in the kitchen was cross-examined about every one who came to the house ; now and then the commissaire came into his bedroom and asked for a cigarette ; or one of the subordinates came to tell him he might be easy, the search had not revealed anything bad. At last this man accepted three rubles, and the company trudged off, the commissaire having asked for a leaf of G.'s manuscript "as a keepsake." As if anybody here were stupid enough to send articles to Cracow in his own handwriting !

But this time the search was not of so mild a nature ; it extended to the rooms of a student named Stefan Bein, who was living opposite, on the same floor. After having searched here until eight o'clock in the morning without having found anything, the policeman approached him and said : "What is your name again ?" He told his name.— "Stefan, you say? No, Stanislaw?"—"My name is Stefan."—"Then I beg you to excuse us. The search-warrant is made out in the name of Stanislaw." Of course it was a lie, but in this way they covered their vexation at having searched in vain.

If we consider the real cause of all this to-do, the most piteous image of the misery of Poland takes on a tragicomic aspect. Everything that day was set in motion by a lady, who, being old and ugly, wanted at any price, even the highest, to be talked of, and who, accordingly went in for patriotism. She got the idea of arranging a mourning mass with a procession. Her son is a student, and many of his friends came to the house. One of them went to a priest to buy a mass without the latter suspecting anything. He and his fellow-priests, who now all are deported, were as innocent as children. It was not until

he turned round during the mass and saw the church full of people, among them two or three hundred students in uniforms, that he guessed he had fallen into a trap. She had done her best to collect people, and was utterly disgusted at the cowardice of those who declared that they preferred to stay at home.

In the papers it had been announced among the advertisements, and not in the text, that the mass was to be celebrated in thankful memory of the escape from death of a little girl, whose name was added; but this name did not strike the advertisement censor, though it at once caught the attention of those familiar with the history of Poland, because in 1794, when the revolt broke out, this child was by a mere chance ridden down by a whole squadron of Cossacks, and drawn forth unhurt from beneath the horses. Consequently the readers understood that the mass was a commemorative festival, and on that account the church was crowded.

From the church the procession went to the historical house of the shoemaker Kilinski, in the old market-place. Before it all took off their hats respectfully. But as if no sordid element should be wanting in this miserable parody of a political action, the house where the shoemaker lived a hundred years ago has now become a house of ill-fame. The inmates, who saw the procession approaching and noticed the salutations, believing that this was some youthful frolic or other, kissed their hands to the young people from the windows, and laughed. Then the police made its raid and arrested all of them.

So insecure do the Russians still feel that this foolish and pathetically ridiculous demonstration alarmed them. When Gurko who was abroad heard of it he was beside himself with despair. "This proves," he cried, "that my labour of ten years has been in vain." And he continued, "We are now forced to use measures of the utmost severity."—"The more so," added one of his sons, "because Poland is our bulwark against Europe."—"You ought to move your bulwark a good way back," observed a stranger. He received no answer.

And all this on account of a mere trifle! Here in Poland the sublime is often closely akin to the ridiculous. I could not refrain from thinking of the finding of the corpse of Joseph Poniatowski in the Elster. Very possibly the general looked something like the equestrian statue by Thorwaldsen in real life, though this made him considerably younger than he was. But the corpse was not to be recognised. Everything about him was a sham. He wore a wig; his moustaches and eyebrows were false, and being bent and feeble, he was tightly laced in a corset. It was owing to a valuable watch that he was recognised. Some days ago I visited the little country house where he lived. Its exterior consists wholly of secret exits and entrances. He was a pasha of many tails, but a good soldier, at once ridiculous and heroic.

When authors from Warsaw come to see us here in the country, we have much difficulty with them. They cannot bear to be away from the capital more than one day; they miss their friends and their amusements. But if one of them stays from Saturday evening until Monday morning, it is sufficient generally; in that time he tells us all that he knows.

The painters enjoy a stay in the country more; we have quite a little colony of them here at a time—three young men and a lady.

At meals we do not talk much, as the servants understand French; but later, when we are taking coffee in the library, or on the veranda, or when on rainy days we gather in the winter-garden, where there is a fragrance as in Zola's hothouse, and where not even a polar-bear's skin is wanting, these visitors relate the adventures of the summer.

The painter Witold says: "You have heard of my gaining much money of late years by official orders. This is true. I have had a large income, but it was dearly purchased. I was staying in Paris, and for the first time in my life I had exhibited a military picture in St. Petersburg (you know I never paint anything else) when I received a telegram summoning me, as the great personage you know of wished to see me. I arrived. My picture was bought for 12,000 rubles, and I got an order for a battle-piece from the Russo-

Turkish war ; the field of battle was in Roumania. I went down there, I am sorry to say, to no purpose, the battle-field being but a common meadow with some rising ground far in the background. I took great pains with the picture and delivered it. New telegram. The great personage wished to have more soldiers in the picture. You who know how great he is, understand that any objection was impossible. I had to repaint the whole picture, to put more soldiers into it, and it is now without any artistic value. Then came a new order : Suworow crossing the Alps. That is a period which I have at the ends of my fingers and which I adore. I know every incident, every button on each uniform. I studied the landscape, finished the picture and delivered it. True to fact I put Suworow on a simple Cossack horse ; he never rode any other, and changed every day. The horse was brown, because this colour looked best against the light background. New telegram ; they wanted to see me ; demanded alterations. First a general came ; asked why Suworow was on a brown horse and not, according to tradition, on a white one ? I answered, ' Because tradition is false ; he always rode Cossack horses. The horse is brown because it agrees with the colour-harmony of the picture.' Audience ; new questions ; the same answer. Order to put Suworow on a white horse. I obeyed, though it looks damnable. New order : Storming of a Turkish redoubt, 1878. I executed it ; put the redoubt in the foreground, to the right ; very picturesque ; turbans, caps, cannons, silk banners, confusion. Russian columns advancing at the double from the background. I deliver the picture. Telegram : my presence demanded. I arrive ; they are much pleased, but request, nevertheless, an alteration. The Russians in the foreground, the miserable Turks in the background ; quite another picture, you see. This, too, I finished and got 15,000 rubles for it ; but it is a poor affair, I am sorry to say."

The author Olgerd : " Do not believe that he troubles himself on that account. He is like our painters in Munich ; they do not care a fig for art if they only make money. They paint a Lithuanian hunting-party in a snow scene. A

dealer who sees that the picture takes greatly, immediately orders fourteen copies for America. They get 5000 marks for each, and they paint the same Lithuanian hunting-party in a snow scene all the year round."

"Alas, such is the case! It is certainly not to be denied," says Madame Jozefa, "that I remember distinctly from my long stay in Munich, and that is what I despise in our painters, those in Munich as well as elsewhere."

"Don't you talk, Madame Jozefa. While we paint, you do nothing but order new dresses from your dressmakers."

"Exactly, and it does me credit. It is never the same dress, mind. You compose a picture, a book. This is impossible to us. But we, too, are artists in our little way. We compose dresses for ourselves. This is not only an occupation, but free poetical composition. We use all our talent in composing, in the blending of colours, in the harmony of the whole, and we never repeat ourselves, not even after the lapse of weeks."

Olgerd turned to me. "You saw me the other day at Warsaw in the Café Europeiski lunching with my editor and a gentleman with a beard. Do you know who he was? The Russian censor, who has the superintendence of our journal. I had invited him to lunch; was obliged to do so. So far we have got. So low we have fallen. The Polish lion, once so feared, has become a poodle that can fetch and carry."

"When you were last here," continues the young poet Mikola, "we were allowed to take in the papers we chose in the editorial office. Now there is a list of those allowed, and they are not numerous. It is absolutely forbidden to take in any Galician paper, as well as to reprint any article from these. If some cutting of such a paper is found in a registered letter addressed to us, which is opened at the post-office, we have to pay a fine, even if we never asked to have it sent. The person addressed, not the sender, is punished. If it happens—and this may be the case—that one of our correspondents in Galicia, out of laziness, instead of communicating some piece of news in his own words, uses expressions he has just read in a Galician paper,

then we are severely punished for his neglect and indifference. His text is compared with the Austro-Polish paper, similarities are found, and the storm breaks over our heads. The fine for this mistake is from a thousand to fifteen hundred rubles. And it may become worse ; we may live to see the Polish tongue absolutely prohibited, as is now the case with Little Russian ; it is forbidden now to speak Polish in the street in Lithuania, Podolia, and Wolhynia. Even now instruction is given in the Russian language in the deaf and dumb institution here. And see how insipid our authors become. You know as well as I our great friend Alexander S., with his lyrical eyes and his radical mouth. Compare his style of to-day with that of seven or eight years ago, and you will perceive the decline. We have fixed all our hopes on the great war, so long expected."

"We will say nothing of the war," says Olgerd ; "we believe that it will come, but talking will not hasten it. We have become a country which does not exist in the present, but partly in olden times, partly, and ever, in the future. In a novel I have described a family which lives thus, never in the moment, always in future expectations. This family is the Polish people. We have not grown insipid, as Mikolaj urges, but we are obliged, more than ever, to take refuge in paraphrases and allegories. You have seen my last book, which has made a sensation, and which is so beautifully illustrated : *Polish Legends of the Holy Virgin*. It has had a great success. Certainly not because it is in the least clerical. But you know our old designation of the Holy Virgin : *Virgo Mater, Regina Poloniae*. The Holy Virgin in my book is Poland itself ; and this has been understood by every one except the censors. It is more necessary than ever to be cautious. Last year an opera by Moszniuszko was performed here ; these were the words of one of the arias : "I loved my mother more than any other woman, since her death everything has ceased to be attractive to me." The censors maintained that the word "mother" would suggest the word "fatherland" to the audience, and demanded that it should be changed into : "I loved my aunt," &c. This winter Sudermann's *Heimath*

(*Home*) was acted here, but the censorship changed the title. As the word "home" (*Oiczyzna*) may signify fatherland, it was changed into *Family Nest*.

"It is this pettiness that is torturing us to death little by little." These words we hear from the corner under the palm trees, where Helena is lying on a couch, and pointing to the firmament studded with stars, she recites in a low voice this little French verse—

"L'immensité
Vierge de flamme
Berce mon âme—
Félicité !
Mon âme clame
L'immensité."

VII

A COMMON DOMESTIC OCCURRENCE, SIGNIFICANT OF THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY

AN occurrence, in itself insignificant, that took place yesterday evening, gave me a sudden insight into the position of that part of the population which the Russians wish to humiliate, and at the same time into the relations of the different classes in various districts.

We went over to Piasecznica, where we had been invited to supper. We were fourteen at table—members of the family and a few friends. When one of the servants was changing the plates he did it in so noisy a way that the conversation was interrupted. Some of us thought that he was drunk, others that he had been clumsily anxious to turn the plates in such a manner that the gilt monogram might come straight before each person, which he succeeded in doing. However, we soon forgot this little incident and continued our conversation; but no sooner had we risen from the table and entered the saloon than we heard loud cries. The servant had evidently been seized with a fit of alcoholic mania, and in the kitchen he had seized a long knife with which he had attacked the doorkeeper. They took the knife from him, but he continued to rave, cry, and scream, rushing up and down the great entrance hall. Now and then he stopped to light a cigarette, screamed and menaced anew, and began to abuse the company in Russian. (He had formerly been a servant in a Russian house.) His demeanour was so alarming that it appeared unreasonable to allow him to pass the night in the manor, and we all agreed it would be well to send for the police. Of course the nearest police station in the country is often far away, and even at full trot it is impossible to reach this one in less

than half-an-hour ; in fact, it was two clear hours before the policeman arrived.

It was necessary to walk up and down the entrance hall to watch the madman, who was very restless : now he would rush into one chamber, then into another. I called one of the young men's attention to the fact that the crazy fellow had approached a cupboard ; he answered that this belonged to the servant himself, and, accordingly, he did not look after him, as he ought to have done.

"Oh dear !" he cried suddenly, "he has taken a revolver out of the wardrobe ; it belongs to my brother, and he is certain to have taken it from the pocket of his overcoat, but don't mention it to the ladies."

They, however, soon observed that he was rushing to and fro with the loaded revolver in his hand, and some of them were very much frightened. Suddenly a report was heard, and two maids, pale as death, darted into the room, crying, "He has fired !" We all left the room, some to stop him, others to seek refuge.

At the moment when the room was thus deserted, I saw the most beautiful of the daughters of the house crossing it, and, as if quite justified in doing so, she kissed the lips of a young man who stood leaning against the mantelpiece, an incident which I note, partly because it is the only immoral action I witnessed during my stay here, partly because it proves that Polish women do not lose their presence of mind in alarming circumstances, but even understand how to turn a general confusion to account.

It was now made clear that the servant in question, who had been in the manor but one month and six days, was not only intractable, but altogether a dangerous person. The maids related that on the foregoing Sunday, when all the family were absent, he had explained to the other servants that they ought to set the house on fire, and if possible let every one perish in the flames. And again and again he had reiterated such remarks.

The master of the house had sent for no less than five of his peasants, that they might get hold of him ; but they would not touch him. They looked unpleasantly sullen

and hostile. Of late they have been so seriously worked upon by agitators who set them up against their lords and their families that they look on with a sort of satisfaction whenever anything goes wrong. The Russians take advantage of this mood and add fuel to the fire. We only need to take a walk in the country to note the disposition of the peasants. All the elder rustics greet us politely, muttering the formal: "*Niech bendzie pochevalowy*," that is, "He (Christ) be praised!" to which the answer is, "*Na wieky*" (ever and ever). None of the young men ever salute us. Even many years ago, when we were talking over the possibility of a revolution in Russia, I said: "A fine revolution, that will consist in the peasants burning down the manors of the liberal proprietors." My opinion was once more confirmed.

My proposal that we ourselves should lay hold of the madman roused a surprise and displeasure very instructive to me. "In that case the police will side against us, and we shall be arrested—not he." However, as he was going to fire again, the coachman, more energetic than the masters, got the better of him, and though six persons had great difficulty in holding him, they succeeded in tying his arms behind his back. Then—for fear of the police—a good soft feather-bed was brought for him to rest on, while he continued to rage and curse.

A pause—and we heard the sounds of carriage-wheels: it was the Russian police officer. He is an unmilitary figure, in uniform, with spectacles, long, black, straight hair, a look of stupidity, reserve, narrow-mindedness, pedantry. He asks to hear the witnesses. But for fear of the vengeance of the servant after his release, nobody will submit to be examined. The doorkeeper was not aware of having been attacked with a knife; the maids had never heard any threats. The revolver had been flung into the garden beneath some bushes, and was not to be found in the darkness. It began to look as if the proprietor, who had caused him to be bound, was the only one guilty.

Money was offered to the police officer, but in a way so imprudent and public that he most virtuously refused the

bribe. Then he begins to examine the things found in the pockets of the servant. A pocket-book, with cards bearing the name of a Russian baroness—servants commonly steal cards of their master's in order to be able to procure goods from the shops—then apparatus for making bullets. The policeman orders the captive to be set at liberty. The latter rises and demonstrates. He won't leave the house without three months' wages—though he has not served more than one month and six days—and even though the moment is not very well chosen to speak of wages, when he has just been accused of a serious crime. The policeman supports his request, and offers to drive him away with him.

“He has his own reasons for wishing him to be well furnished with money,” my host says to me. “As soon as they have got into the carriage, they will begin to bargain as to how many rubles the policeman is to have to let the other jump down and disappear in the darkness. In half-an-hour he may come back and set the outhouses on fire if, indeed, he does not venture to come into the house.”

To prevent this immediate escape, we feigned great anxiety for the precious life of the policeman, alone in the carriage with the unbound malefactor, and my host ordered one of the most trustworthy of his people to accompany him—for protection.

Of course the escape may nevertheless have taken place to-day.

At length the carriage drove away, and I thought that this episode which had disturbed us was ended and would be soon forgotten. But when I returned to the saloon I remarked to my great surprise that the ladies were quite in despair: “But why are you in low spirits now, when all is happily over?”

“Nothing is over,” said young Mme. Wielogłowska. “It is easy for you to keep up your courage, you who are going back to Denmark in a few days. In a month my parents are going to Warsaw; one of my sisters is going to Paris, the other to Germany. Then my husband and I will be

alone here. It is certain that this rogue will avenge himself, because we tied his arms. He will kill us, or set fire to the house. These people always avenge themselves. Last year my brother-in-law, who lived in the neighbouring manor, found two horses in his field. He brought them to his stables, and when the peasant came to fetch them the next day he demanded fifty copecks as a penalty. The peasant began to lament; he was a poor man, he could not afford to pay. 'You must pay this fine,' my brother-in-law said to him; 'you are no poor man; you have eight horses, and last month you sent four of them into my fields to graze.' The peasant paid the fine; but that very evening he stole upon my brother-in-law with a pitchfork and killed him from behind at one blow. He escaped with a trifling punishment."

"Yes, they are dangerous, the surroundings in which we live," said the owner of Skotniki. "Last autumn I was obliged to send away a servant who had been stealing. After that my house was twice set on fire. Every one knows who did it, but I am unable to prove anything."

We stayed until two o'clock, but the whole company was depressed, with the exception of the young lady of the kiss, who appeared to retain a certain cheerfulness. But people in love live in their own sphere.

When, on the way home, I thought over the incidents of the evening, I could not help feeling how seriously the political and social disproportion, caused by the universal oppression had manifested itself in this miserable occurrence. It recalled to my mind the state of Galicia in 1846, when the peasants, to whom the proprietors addressed themselves, to induce them to participate in the national revolt, seduced by the falsehoods of the Austrian emissaries, rose, and vented their rage upon the Polish nobility, who, as they imagined, prevented the carrying out of the imperial regulations for their benefit. Certainly the nobility must bear the blame of much ancient injustice towards the rustics, or such things could not be possible, and the old hatred would not persist. Yet nowadays the proprietors are so nationalist and so humane that it is the ignorance of the common people,

the bestial condition maintained by the Russians, which is to blame for all the misery and the hatred.

Under the pressure here, everything, even class differences, becomes a caricature of conditions elsewhere in Europe.

However strange it sounds, in spite of the dissatisfaction with the higher classes here in Poland, the social problem does not affect the common people as profoundly as the national question.

It is inconceivable that the class-struggle of this age should leave Poland unaffected. But the ill-will against the Russian is nevertheless a hundred-fold stronger than the distrust of the master. The Russian is despised for not being a Catholic ; the most abusive term a peasant can use is *Moskal* (Muscovite).

Among the people of rank and the common people there is only the economic distance ; but between the Pole and the Russian rises the barrier of religion, the most powerful factor in the life of this country.

VIII

NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND PATRIOTISM— CONCLUSION

OUR young priest came yesterday to pay a visit to me, and was kind enough to bring the lithographed exegesis of the Old Testament, used in the lessons at the seminary in Rome. It is in Latin, composed by a Jesuit, rather intelligent, not without acuteness, but of course quite unscientific, as its demonstration always tends to justify orthodoxy. It is not in the market, and it was interesting to me to ascertain on what principles instruction is carried on. However young Father Usmanowicz may be, he has suffered several disappointments. He considers it an injustice and an insult that he has been appointed parish priest here. His ambition was a professorship at the priestly school in Warsaw, and most likely he will manage to get it. He is refined and intelligent enough, if not *too* intelligent.

We had a good talk on many topics. Firstly, on the papers. Yesterday we had read aloud the last literary articles by Casimir Zalewski and Boguslawski, the first suggested by the panegyric upon Sardou, in the *Figaro*, by Henry Becques, the second by a feuilleton on the utility of criticism by Sarcey. The quantity of abstract out of date æsthetics in the papers is certainly caused by the oppression of the censorship. We spoke about the insane administration in this part of the country: to think that we are daily obliged to send for our letters to B——, and that the messenger may never bring a registered letter, only a notice that one is lying at the post-office for me. I am obliged to fetch it myself, and I mentioned the postmaster's answer to my complaint: "*But no one from Krolewice has ever been here to make my acquaintance.*" Then we spoke of the price we pay for the delivery of telegrams; two rubles and twenty

copecks for each (more than the telegram itself), and they are brought day and night. On Mme. Jozefa's birthday the bell rang all night, and Franciszek had to pay seventy rubles for telegrams, the interesting contents of which were: "Cordial felicitations"!

We went out into the fields, sat down under a high poplar, listened to the whistling of the wind in the leaves, and our conversation took a more serious turn. From petty troubles it turned on the great national martyrdom, from the daily denial of liberty and justice, to the great historical injustice, which every day brings forth its venomous fruit anew.

Old Field-Marshal Moltke one day said to Koscielski, that, in a book he had read about Poland, he had been most pleased by this sentence: "We do not love Poland as we love Germany or France or England, but as we love freedom;" a very curious remark from the lips of one whom one would not suspect of loving freedom overmuch. I feel myself that the essential view, pronounced in those words, has determined my view of Poland from the beginning. Every one who loves freedom must love the most oppressed population in Europe from the bottom of his heart; he overlooks its faults, and its perfections captivate him.

But what is the use of seeking the *pluperfect*? No one with a properly developed psychological sense can overlook the qualities which form the weakness of the Poles, and which have been exaggerated by their exclusion from public life. What their enemies call falseness is rather the result of a life of unreality. They have a propensity to put forward pretensions which are only half real. This propensity is in no way akin to the coarse extravagance of the Southern French, but is the outcome of a life that has to be satisfied with words instead of deeds. An editor of a newspaper here, who never writes an article, scarcely reads his papers, and who can still less be looked upon as its leader, takes a naïve and sincere pleasure in hearing himself mentioned as the editor, and he talks gravely, without any deliberate intention of lying, of his great work with the paper, his struggles

with the censorship, &c. A little party of patriots has assembled every fortnight for twelve years ; every Thursday they rescue their fatherland by ingenious plans and combinations, and hardly perceive themselves that all remains as it was.

I said to the priest : "The Poles are perhaps the only people on earth who do not claim common sense as a national quality. Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans, Italians, Danes are convinced that common sense reigns among them. The Poles do not believe this. They know too well that they never have been able to take practical advantage of any historical situation. They are not wanting in knowledge of themselves."

He answered, "In our country, strangely enough, the women seem essentially different from the men."

"As far as I can judge," I said, "the women of the higher classes have a great deal of self-control and but little temperament. The character of coldness, which Edmond About assigned them in verse once, when he sighed in vain for a Polish lady, is still very appropriate. Strange as it may sound, I think that the Englishwoman Maud in Paul Bourget's *Cosmopolis*, the placid, warm-hearted woman whom no agitation is able to throw off her balance, is a type often to be met with in Poland."

We had continued our talk about half-an-hour, sitting under the tree, when we saw Franciszek, Madame Jozefa, and Madame Halina approach ; they sat down beside us on the grass and joined in our conversation. It turned on the following topic.

As there are in Poland no Polish officers, politicians, or high functionaries, woman's favour, which in other countries falls to the lot of men who are prominent in some way or other, here nearly always becomes the share of authors and artists. Almost in every town in the world there are some few men in whom all the women who have no other object for their feelings delight. Such a man is a kind of a pawnbroker's shop for women's hearts. In Poland Henryk Sienkiewicz is such a pawnbroker's shop. Though about fifty years of age and by no means elegant, his reputation has made

him the man about whom the women rave. It is so much the more curious, as he has never written a line of verse. But when he arrives at one of the Polish watering-places in the Tatra mountains, or when he enters a drawing-room in Warsaw, all the women are electrified, from grandmothers to schoolgirls. For the rest, he does not give them any encouragement.

Even his tragi-comic matrimonial fiasco which took place this year has not diminished his prestige. He married a second time, a young girl of eighteen of the highest aristocracy. No pains were spared to make this marriage an event. The couple were married in the cathedral of Warsaw by a cardinal; the pope sent a letter of congratulation. All the aristocracy of Poland met in the church. But only two weeks after the marriage the young bride took refuge with her mother and would not return to her husband. All the women in Poland condemn her behaviour.

But still more characteristic than their hero-worship is their enthusiastic and passionate patriotism. No feeling in them is more serious than this. They are capable of any sacrifice for patriotic aims, and prove their sincerity by their actions.

The other day it happened in this house that a Polish proprietor who had been brought up in England hazarded the remark that patriotism was nowadays greatly lacking in Poland. The gentlemen contradicted him, but the ladies—it was quite a spectacle to see them. With flaming eyes and blazing cheeks they stood round him, and their voices trembled in refuting him. In a perfect fury one of the youngest ladies exclaimed: "I promised you to take you home in my carriage, but now you may go on foot."

We soon agreed that if this flame were not burning in the hearts of the women the enemies of Poland would long ago have got the upper hand. For no people in the world has such oppression to endure, such manifold persecution to suffer. They are living under conditions which allow every measure taken against them to be easily carried out, and every evil person who concocts hostile or mean plans against them has a wide field for his energy. It very seldom happens,

as it did a year ago, that such plots are revealed, so that a peep is opened into things which would otherwise remain unpunished.

A student called Hendigery, who was studying at the University six months ago, and who had made up his mind to make a career for himself, began to write now and then in the papers, and then went to Cracow with good introductions. He was very handsome, very active ; one of those scoundrels who always have the game in their own hands because simpletons believe that they are only to be met with in bad novels. He posed in Cracow as a political victim of the state in Russian Poland, met with sympathy everywhere; after a month's acquaintance, he married the beautiful daughter of a professor in easy circumstances. But immediately after his arrival he had commenced a correspondence with the police authorities in St. Petersburg ; had declared himself able to produce proofs against all the remarkable and leading men in Warsaw, implying that these proofs were more due to his own sagacity than to any imprudence or to plots of the persons in question. His advances were gladly received. With a false passport he made a wedding trip to St. Petersburg—going ostensibly to the south ; had an audience with the chiefs of the secret police, and made all necessary preparations with them.

As soon as he had returned he began to frequent the society of the miners in Galicia, apparently out of interest in the labour question, but in reality to procure dynamite. He got a quantity sufficient for his purpose. He made 150 small parcels of dynamite, which he addressed to 150 men in Warsaw, pointed out to him by the Russian authorities. These small parcels he sewed up in the overcoat of a man whom he had engaged to carry them across the frontier.

In the meantime the Austrian police had noticed the strange conduct of the man. They knew that he had gone southwards and immediately after to St. Petersburg. They knew of and watched his visits to the mines, and they determined to interfere. His messenger was arrested before he reached the Russian frontier. A domiciliary visit brought to light a number of letters and telegrams from St. Petersburg

which, although cautiously composed, betrayed the intimate relations of the political victim and his persecutors. A trial was set on foot. Only five weeks after the wedding his wife learned whom she had married. Of course the Russians repudiated Hendigery, denying all knowledge of him. He was sentenced to three years' hard labour, which he has not yet expiated. It was a master-stroke that ended in disaster.

It is evident that the emperor is not always aware of the way in which the system of government in Poland works ; this was proved when the massacre and the knouting took place on the occasion of the seizure of the church at Kroze by the Russians. A Russian princess who was abroad read about this in foreign newspapers, and sent a cutting to the Czar. The latter, not believing in the exactitude of the account, despatched his then favourite, the Prince Kantakuzen, to examine into the matter. But it happened that Orezewski, the governor-general of the district of Kroze, proved to be an old friend of Kantakuzen. These two spent a couple of pleasant days together, whereupon the prince returned to St. Petersburg with the information that the whole affair had been ridiculously exaggerated. All that had happened was that a few peasants, who would not yield to the police, had got broken noses. And thus the matter was hushed up. But the same princess, who was irritated at the contradiction, procured proofs of the truth of the account, which she had sent to the Czar. Orezewski received his dismissal and Kantakuzen was exiled. He went to Paris, where he died.

It was a splendid evening ; the sun was setting behind dark clouds in the horizon, leaving a luminous golden border round the cloud. No sound from the fields except that of the partridges flushed by Madame Jozefa's two blundering poodles, Caro and Finka. It was my last evening, and I was glancing round the country, which I should not see again for a long time.

Franciszek said : " Do come again ! You can't be bored with a library of 8000 volumes, and you may tell me what books you want for next year and I will procure them."

Madame Jozefa said : " Do not forget us, but come back !

Now we have known each other for ten years and our friendship has grown steadily. Do not return for the sake of books, but for our sakes. Nowhere have you better friends."

The young priest said, smiling: "Come back, and we will again defend the Jesuits when old M. Rostropowicz attacks them, and again discuss the book of Ecclesiastes and agree that all is not vanity."

Mme. Halina said: "Come again; give us lectures in the town hall, and we will attend in crowds and applaud with all our hearts. Do not forget us."

And the wind whistling in the high poplars said: "Do not forget us! All Europe has forgotten us. Do not forget this people, so winning and so richly endowed, which feels so deeply, and dreams so vividly, and loves so profoundly. Do not forget this earth which has absorbed so much noble blood, this country, forsaken by Gods and scorned by men. Do not forget us!"

FOURTH IMPRESSION

1899

LEMBERG

I

IN a speech made by the master of the University in the capital of Galicia to me, he said: "You are our guest, but we have not invited you in order to influence your opinions. We certainly hope that you will write about us; but we do not ask for praise. We only desire the truth. Tell the truth about us, however the words may sound, and we shall be thankful to you."

To be able to speak the truth one must know it. But I do not suppose that I myself know the truth about Austrian Poland. If one is at a disadvantage in learning the real state of a country when one arrives as an unnoticed stranger, and has little opportunity of talking to any one but waiters, curators, and a few fellow-travellers, the conditions are hardly more favourable when one visits a country as an invited guest, received at all stations, having one's day mapped out beforehand from morning till well after midnight, scarcely alone for one hour, presented to 400 persons in one day, and handed about like a parcel sent by post. In a few weeks one sees more than in a whole year under ordinary conditions, but it is impossible to check one's impressions.

Every one knows how strong is the feeling of being a stranger in a country, where one passes through the towns without knowing any one, and sees all doors closed to one; but it is almost worse to find all doors open, and to be known before having made the acquaintance of any one. One needs the rest necessary to make observations, and it takes time to really know people.

If the first condition of speaking the truth is to know it, the next certainly is that one should be able to speak without fear or favour. This is impossible to any one who has been

brought into close contact with all the leading personages in a country, and who has met with the most perfect hospitality from them. But this was my case here. My stay in Galicia in the autumn of 1898 was one uninterrupted succession of public and private festivities. Nay, even friends of mine who had come to Lemberg to visit me were invited everywhere, even in private circles.

My stay in Galicia had this great interest to me, that here for the first time I saw the Poles as a free people. I know a part of Prussian Poland, and I know some of the leading men in Posen rather intimately. With Russian Poland, I may say, I am fairly familiar, after four different visits. But never before had I had an opportunity of observing Polish life developing under self-government without any foreign pressure, with the rights of public meeting and of freedom of speech. At least I have here seen enough to prove that the Poles do not lack the ability to shape their life as an independent people. It is not the fault of the population that Galicia is a poor country. The faults of the Poles, among others, for instance, a certain irresponsibility, are not characteristic here; these are more pronounced in old free states, where the capacity for patriotic sacrifice which distinguishes the Poles is much more scarce, and, even if strong prejudices still obtain among them, these in themselves do not paralyse the intelligence or the honesty of the people. These prejudices have gathered strength from historical conditions less favourable here than elsewhere.

The Poles, as I have said elsewhere, have shown me more kindness and affection than any other people in the world. As a critic, therefore, I am bound to be on my guard against the pleasant promptings of gratitude.

It is the more difficult for me to be impartial that I avowedly come to my task with friendly prepossessions. I love the Poles, not only because their fate has been so sad, and the historical injustice they suffer is so great, but because something in their entity strongly attracts me. Now and then I have been praised in Poland, because, while others do homage to the great people of the earth, I have preferred

to court misfortune. But it is not only the calamity of Poland which has won me to the land and people. Among the developments of the human plant, manifold as they are, the perfect blossom of the Slavonic race is the flower that most enchants me.

II

At Cracow, Wavel fell short of my expectations. Certainly I visited the cathedral under most unfavourable conditions, after its complete restoration ; but this was not so much the cause of my disappointment as the fact that I had hoped for and expected much more original architecture. The architect, who had carried out the restorations and very amiably showed me all over the building, immediately pointed out to me the most beautiful chapel, built by Florentine artists, and said—and certainly he is right—that it was not much inferior to similar chapels in Italy. But I, who a few months before had travelled through Italy from Syracuse to Verona, had expected something very different in Poland. On the other hand, I was glad to see that the two monuments by Thorwaldsen at Wavel looked extremely well.

The most original work of art in Cracow is certainly Matijko's rich and glowing decoration in the chancel of the Church of St. Mary.

I paid a visit to the very original old invalid, Julian Klaczko. Stretched on his bed, he looked, with his thick, fair moustache, like a Pole of the seventeenth century, though he has Jewish blood in his veins, a proof among many others of how strongly surroundings modify and transform. He, who in 1848 was an ardent revolutionist, has, affected perhaps by the air of Cracow, become more and more conservative. He praised me, because in one of my books I had evinced so much sense of the national importance of the Catholic Church. I endeavoured to cheer the sick man a little by telling him about a certain diplomatic dinner in Rome six months before, at which, when his name was mentioned, all the men present, from

the Swedish Ambassador to the Turkish *chargé-d'affaires*, had proved to be as familiar with his works as myself, though I know almost everything he has ever written. Of course his position in Austria in 1867 as Secretary to Beust, his part in the settlement between Austria and Hungary, as well as his book, *The Two Chancellors* (Bismarck and Gortschakoff), have contributed to keep him before the eyes of the diplomatist.

Melancholy reigned in the sick room. He did not appear to have much hope of recovery. I owed him gratitude for the benefit I had derived from his studies on Krasinski. However, it appeared as if national feeling had repressed and limited his liberalism. At last all other thoughts were merged in the sad reflection that I was not likely to see him again.

In the evening the Arts Club arranged a festival for me. The old Kossak, the patriarch of the painters, took me to dinner, and in a French, unearthed from his youthful recollections of student life in Paris, he made a very cordial speech to me. He said among other things: "Here you see of what use the repression of language is! From our childhood we have been forced to learn German, to speak German, and what is the consequence? that we all speak French to any stranger." I was elected honorary member of the Letters and Arts Club, and Kossak promised to decorate the certificate of membership for me. This was not to be—a month later he was dead. He was an excellent animal painter; he had studied the character and movements of the horse as no other artist has done; his more famous son, with his richer dramatic talent, is sure to preserve the name from oblivion in Poland.

Among those present at the festival, the young Professor of Literary History at the University, Ziedochowski, was prominent. He is a refined and conscientious scholar of the highest intelligence; for the rest, a devout Catholic. The young Polonised Frenchman, Paul Rongier, French Lecturer at the University, was the only one in the circle who spoke perfect French. He combined French charm with Polish cordiality. Then the musician, Bielicki, played; a

handsome and lively man, who had been in Copenhagen as the guest of Gade, and had studied Scandinavian popular melodies. He played alternately charming compositions by Chopin, and Swedish popular dances, until a fugitive refined spirit of music and enthusiasm, mutual affection and fraternity was diffused in the hall. The air was fragrant with happiness while we were together.

When I got out of the carriage, which had brought me from the hotel at Cracow to the railway station, I was received by a little party of men, the chief participants in the festival of the evening before, who, with the old painter Kossak at their head, had appeared to take leave of me. But after the exchange of a few words, I saw with astonishment some familiar figures from Warsaw, whom I had certainly not expected to meet with, hurrying down the high broad staircase from the station.

They were Falad, the renowned painter, the poet Maryan Gawalewicz, and my intimate friends and entertainers during my different sojourns in Russian Poland—Jan and Madame Jozefa. "You here?" I exclaimed, surprised. "We are going with you," replied Jan. Falad had only come down to make arrangements about a portrait, which could not be painted on account of my hurried departure. Gawalewicz embraced me, Madame Jozefa shook hands with me.

In the train our intimate conversation soon became difficult. People walked along the corridor to see the man expected at Lemberg. While we were at table in the dining-car at one of the stations an old gentleman came in, and, with touching courtesy, handed me a volume of poetry. At Przemysl a reporter entered, a little, good-natured, but necessarily intrusive fellow, who was commissioned to interview me for a Lemberg paper. One of my friends was kind enough to answer on my behalf.

There was a swarm of people at the station when we arrived in the evening. How strange is it to arrive thus, and to be greeted by perfect strangers! One is surrounded, saluted, shaken hands with, and is scarcely able to discern the faces or catch the names hastily mentioned. In the waiting-room I was welcomed by the chairman of the Literary

and Artistic Union ; then the brilliant vice-president of the Journalists' Union addressed me ; and then Professor August Balasits and M. Antony Wereszczynski drove me to the hotel, where I found a grand apartment on the first floor at my disposal. On the tables were lying invitations for several days, visiting-cards with my address in Lemberg, and many letters.

At a long supper-table in the restaurant, Madame Jozefa, handsome, large-eyed, and bashful as a young girl, presided as the only lady. Members of the Sobieski Festival Committee dropped in, and the little reporter from the train also sat down to take notes.

III

The next day I made the acquaintance of most of the persons whom I was to meet so often later—the Mayor of Lemberg, Dr. Godzimir Malachowski, who had invited me, an amiable, cultured lawyer, elected to his position by the suffrages of his fellow-townsmen, and well worthy of re-election ; the Governor of Galicia, Count Leon Peninsky, formerly Professor of History at the University, a man of science, who some years ago was requested to assume the duties of governor, none being better fitted for them by social position, fortune, and commanding qualities ; and the great Marshal, Count Stanislaw Badeni, a quiet, satirical man of the world. He is the brother of the former Austrian Prime Minister, who excited so much discontent among the German population of Austria by his regulations decreeing equal rights to all languages spoken in the Emperor's dominions. Like his brother, he is pronouncedly Polish in type.

Among many others whom I visited the first day, I must mention one of the best men of Poland, whose name is everywhere pronounced with veneration, Prince Adam Tapiecha ; in his mingled simplicity, refinement, and geniality he is the typical *grand seigneur*. During the course of my conversation with him, I first learned on what bad terms the Poles and Ruthenians of Galicia live together. The great

people of Poland often complain of the fact that young Ruthenians, whom they support and place, as soon as they achieve independence, become hostile to the Poles and ally themselves with the Russians. This is very astonishing, because in Russia itself the Little Russian language is so utterly repressed that nowhere within the frontiers of the country are books allowed to be published in it. I was soon to learn, however, on the other hand, what depths of bitterness the Ruthenians nourish against the Poles.

Another aristocrat I became acquainted with, who has devoted his whole life to patriotic objects, was the old Count Dziejuszycki, now an invalid, almost completely paralysed, and a prisoner to his couch. He has, at his own expense, erected a national museum of another kind, but of equal importance with the Czartoryski Museum at Cracow. It contains specimens of the whole flora and fauna of Poland, and is, besides, ethnographic, illustrating the customs, industries, and costumes of Poland, in every province and at all periods.

I also paid a visit to another gentleman, less wealthy, but no less refined and cultured. M. Wladislaw Lozinski has made a very valuable collection of weapons; he possessed many mementoes of the great period of Poland; they may not all be quite genuine, perhaps, but at any rate many of them are relics. He and his wife—who, though no longer young, has preserved that charm which is the secret of the Polish women—have one of the most handsomely furnished homes in Lemberg, half dwelling and half museum.

IV

During my stay several commemorative festivals were held in honour of Sobieski (King Jan III. as he is called in Polish), whose equestrian statue was to be unveiled. At the function held the evening before this event my hosts sang, as an attention to their guest, the Danish song: *Why is the Vistula swelling?* Music and words are by Danes. The

words had been translated, and the song was now given for the first time. It was most beautifully sung by a male choir. Immediately after the choir struck up the national anthem by Ujejski: *Z dymen pozasow*, which was undeniably better understood and better known; every one listened standing. I am bound to say that the Danish song by Gade, though much better executed, did not please the Polish public very much. Their taste is rather for the slow and monotonous.

It was a beautiful sunshiny day when the Sobieski festival was inaugurated by Divine service in the cathedral. The church was crowded, and the whole "Szlachta" had made their appearance in their national costume, which outside Russian Poland is worn on all solemn occasions.

The Governor, as representative of the Government, was the only person in the costume of our own days. This masquerade is in harmony with the love of ancient times and things proper to the Poles; and it was surprising to see how becoming the magnificent old costumes were to the handsome, vigorous, manly figures, whose regular features preserve the hereditary stamp of the race.

A Jesuit priest delivered the historico-national speech in memory of Sobieski. Then we walked in procession from the church to the square, where the statue was waiting in its coverings. The sun was shining, the enormous square was crowded with people; all balconies and windows were also occupied. With lofty and masterly eloquence he emphasised the importance of the fact that the capital of Galicia had erected a monument of the most beloved King of Poland on Polish ground.

V

At the morning festival in the town hall a *déjeûner* was given; only a dozen people, specially invited, were seated. I had the curious honour of finding myself at the same table with three archbishops, a complement not to be met with anywhere out of Rome, save in Lemberg. Un-

doubtedly they were most holy men, but if so, their exterior was deceptive—and they ate! One might have supposed they had fasted for a week before.

The other members of the clergy I met were much more refined. The Jesuit who had spoken in the church sought me out in the evening at the Mayor's reception, and thanked me for refuting the vulgar prejudices that exist against the Jesuits, for whom I have always had a weakness.

I was specially touched when Father Gnatowski, one of the most influential of the Galician clergy, spoke to me with warmth and kindness. In one of the best houses of the town he made me a speech, concluding with this expression thrice repeated: "*I bless you.*" As a proof of how perfectly the Catholic clergy is informed of all that even remotely concerns the Church, I must mention that Father Gnatowski was thoroughly acquainted with some remarks I had several years ago addressed to Père Lange, after having corrected some particulars in a lecture delivered by him at the Danish Students' Club. Father Gnatowski was further familiar with an article published by me in a Danish paper, in connection with the conversion of a Danish lady.

VI

Here, as in Russian Poland, I made friends with some of the best specimens of the scientific Poles, well-informed, sensible men, refined, discreet, and brimming over with cordiality. The amiable and intelligent Bálásitz, who during my stay here devoted as much of his time to me as I wished; the fine animated old Dr. Antoni Malecki, famous for his labours as the historian of Polish literature; and the cultivated professor of medicine, Dr. Ziembiecki, who has studied in France, and who wears the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour as a token of his sojourn there. I also met with much learning and intelligence in Galicia among unknown people. A young man, who had never been in Denmark, had taught himself Danish, and possessed a copy of *Danish Popular Songs*, by Svend Gruntvig, with

which he was thoroughly conversant, and which he greatly admired.

Among the artists I was most attracted by Jan Styka, who has decorated the great reception-room of the town hall with an enormous painting, the subject a kind of vast synthesis of Polish history. He had just exhibited in Lemberg his excellent panorama of the battle of Raclavice, painted in conjunction with the younger Kossak. It represents the action in which Tadeusz Kosciuszko, on the 4th of April 1794, beat the Russian troops with his little army; the militia of Cracow, peasants, only armed with scythes, decided the day by an assault upon the Russian artillery and the capture of their guns. I share Styka's enthusiasm for this dictator of Poland, who was certainly one of the greatest and most simple-minded men in whom a people has seen itself personified at its best. What a part he has played even in the imagination of foreign nations we may learn from such a book as that of Robert Arnold on Kosciuszko in German literature, which contains an overwhelming bibliography of German works alone dealing with Kosciuszko. It makes a strange impression to see youthful drawings by him in the Czartoryski Museum in Cracow, executed in the most careful and elegant eighteenth-century style, among them a symbolical drawing of the dominions of his protector, the then Prince Czartoryski, entitled *Le Fleuve du Tendre*, and one of the Temple of Honour. For the rest, he certainly had in him the sacred fire which of all his other countrymen perhaps Mickiewicz alone possessed.

Styka's studio was very interesting, and his artistic talent manifests itself best in his surroundings, which reflect his own generous, ardent, and enthusiastic nature.

Among journalists, I met of course with all types, from the highest to the lowest. The cool, patronising, intrusive, calmly insolent, eternally inquisitive journalist is always an odious personage, and perhaps especially so in Poland, where he becomes the more intolerable, that he bears an ancient name, is admitted into aristocratic circles, and knows how to make himself dreaded by the men, and indispensable to the women, whom he supplies with news and scandal.

But others I met were cultivated, conscientious men of the highest breeding, as, for instance, the excellent staff of collaborators of *Slowo Polsie*. A few have a surprising gift for the instantaneous rendering of a personality or a situation, an accomplishment which no Danish journalist possesses to the same degree. The accuracy of Galician journalism is also extraordinary. The press as a whole does its very utmost to obtain genuine and original information. Thus one day I was much surprised to see in one of the papers here a perfectly accurate account of a speech which I had made at a torchlight procession in the year 1891.

Only a single section of the press became unfavourably disposed towards me, the Ruthenian. It happened thus: A long time before my arrival I had received an invitation from the Ruthenians in Lemberg to an entertainment they proposed to give. One day a deputation of three Ruthenians appeared, of whom Professor Michael Hrukhovski was the spokesman, while another, who now and then put in a word, was the well-known agitator and journalist, Jan Franco. These gentlemen asked me to attend a lecture on Little Russian Literature at their club, and be present at the ensuing festivity. I thanked them and accepted. But when in the course of the day I mentioned this invitation to my Polish friends, I discovered that I had made a mistake. They exclaimed that it was impossible I could so far disregard their feelings as to associate with these men, who were their worst enemies, and the sworn foes of the Polish nationality. Though Hrukhovski had been placed by the Poles at their University, he had turned against them immediately after his appointment. The next day an article in a Ruthenian paper was read to me, in which Jan Franco eagerly made use of me against the Poles, making the statement that *I* had been the first person to describe Mickiewicz as the poet of treason (a description *he* had merely repeated), and hinting that the Poles as a nation approved of treachery. He gave a garbled version of my words, lending them a meaning exactly the reverse of what I had intended, in order to carry his point. I at once sent a letter to the Ruthenians, couched in the

most polite and cautious terms, in which I explained that, knowing nothing of the merits of the case, I sided with neither party in the controversies between Poles and Ruthenians. I did not allow myself to judge in the matter, but as I had been invited to Galicia by the Poles and received by them, and as they had given me to understand that they would consider it a kind of treachery if I attended the Ruthenian meeting, I was obliged to beg to be excused. I would not, I hinted in conclusion, risk the appearance of sympathising with treason. Henceforward Franco attacked me every day, and he is not yet weary of this work, for a long time after he reprinted his Ruthenian articles against me in German in Austrian periodicals, and quoted with exultation some disconnected observations of an unfavourable kind, made by certain Galician landowners on one of the types in a book of mine.

It remains to say a few words of the ladies in Lemberg, to whom I owe such a debt of gratitude. Even before my arrival they had prepared the splendid framed address, which was handed me at the Sobieski Festival, with 2000 signatures. It seemed to me that they appeared less in society than was the case in Warsaw. Most of the entertainments to which I had been invited were men's parties. The town being smaller than Warsaw, a more rigorous conventionality reigns there. The social differences are more marked. The ladies of rank are addressed with their titles, which, in my opinion, is opposed to good taste, and always sounds rather provincial. Perhaps some of these *grandes dames* showed a certain lack of consideration for others in their speech. Not that I personally had the least reason to complain; all showed me the most exquisite courtesy. But sometimes I heard sharp remarks flung in the faces of men, who were obliged to listen smiling, because everything is allowed to the great lady.

For the young unmarried women the rules of society are as severe as in France. The young girl is never allowed to go out alone by day or by night, and I heard more than one passionately envy the girls of the North, of whose independence they had heard.

The feminine type in Galicia is very attractive, if not so beautiful as in Russian Poland; the race is decidedly less pure. But here as everywhere on Polish ground now and then one meets a young woman so charming, that one feels a kind of sadness at the thought of never seeing her again.

Among the ladies I met, several showed a surprising knowledge of art; a few even knew all the less famous painters and paintings of value in the Italian towns that are rarely visited by the ordinary traveller. Others, less travelled, were nevertheless keenly interested in all manifestations of art. I should like to mention Madame Mlodnicka, once the betrothed of the famous dead painter, Grottger, and her daughter, Madame Maryla Wolska, one of the most accomplished women I ever met, with a surprising talent for sculpture as well as for music and poetry. In a Polish family, that after 1863 lived long in Syria and Mesopotamia, because the father, a highly accomplished man, had been obliged to emigrate after the revolt, I noted in the beautiful daughters a most attractive mingling of Polish and exotic characteristics. The young girls spoke Arabic together as fluently as they spoke Polish and French.

VII

An invitation, which I had great pleasure in accepting, was to attend an ordinary lesson in the afternoon in the Lemberg section of the gymnastic society, *Sokol*. This society is one of the most original of Polish institutions. *Sokol* includes all Polish towns outside Russian Poland, and all towns in the new as well as in the old world (Chicago as well as Berlin), where a large number of Poles are living. In Galicia alone the union has 18,000 members, who are considered by all Poles the flower of the national army of the future. With so much enthusiasm are gymnastics practised here, that youths and men of sixty perform their exercises side by side from the most elementary to the most difficult, such as with us are only attempted by professionals. For instance, they were able to

remain suspended by their heels on a trapeze and swing round in the air. In the large hall all sorts of exercises, hygienic and athletic, were performed at the same time by different groups.

An elderly gentleman came to greet me ; he had been twenty years in Siberia after 1863. "It is a calumniated land," he said, smiling.

The speech addressed to me when I entered the hall, by the President of the *Sokol* of Lemberg, Dr. Dzizelzielewicz, I am able to quote ; it is the only one of which a copy was handed to me. It is interesting, I think, on account of the manly spirit by which it is inspired :—

"Friendship in prosperity is an easy thing, in adversity a most rare one. Only men with their hearts in the right place have a sincere sympathy with the feeble, and boldly side with them.

"I pronounced a word which ought not to be heard within these walls. We are weak this day, it is true, but if we only deserved compassion, a man so clear-sighted, truthful, and far-seeing as our guest, familiar as he is with our aims, would not have shown the deep interest in us that he has manifested. He looked for and probably found in us something more than an unhappy people worthy of his pity. He sought and found those, who, in their misfortune and in spite of their misfortune, bear in mind their national dignity, and whose aim it is to throw off their weakness as soon as possible.

"His visit to us to-day proves this. He comes to us not in order to listen to words of gratitude, not to attend a festivity, but to see our daily work, to know and to judge of this work.

"Your purpose in coming here makes our welcome doubly warm and affectionate. I greet you in the name of the oldest Gymnastic Union. Among our people, once so rich in health and energy, bodily vigour has of late been a plant slow to take root and to develop. All the more is it essential to cherish this health and energy of the people, to cultivate and develop the body as carefully as we tend, cultivate, and develop the mind.

“After long and toilsome work of almost thirty years, the history of which is outside the scope of my present remarks, we have advanced so far that our unions number about one hundred; seventeen of them have their own gymnasia, and—we consider this the most important point of all—all these unions are branches of one parent guild, which forms an independent superior union having its seat in Lemberg, and its rules sanctioned by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior. Such a society also exists in the German Empire and in the United States. The aim of this fellowship is the homogeneity and firmness of our organisation, and we look to it to ensure the exact fulfilment of our aims.

“I may be allowed perhaps to say a few words about these aims. Every nation, and more especially a nation such as ours, needs for its development health, ability, perseverance, unity, and discipline. Our efforts must rest on a national basis, though they have nothing to do with politics, and do not involve enmity towards other nations. We want to be a sound and able people, that we may be able to hold fast our privileges, and fulfil our social duties. Natural as this is, there are many who do not choose to understand it, and many who deliberately misrepresent it in order to injure our cause.

“You, most honoured master, who have come with a sincere wish to learn the truth, will be able to form a just and impartial notion of our efforts. We hope that you will make the truth known wherever it may be necessary.”

Listening to this speech, I was deeply impressed by the eagerness the enemies of the Poles have shown to see in this extensive organisation of men of a strong and capable race from early youth to old age, a preparation for rebellion.

VIII

Most fatiguing was life in Lemberg! The day before I had given a lecture in the town hall in aid of a proposed statue of Mickiewicz, and it had given me great pleasure, partly because on this occasion I met Prince Czartoryski

—and I had never before spoken with a Czartoryski—partly because I was able to present the town with a handsome sum of money, as all the tickets were sold at high prices.

Early in the morning I was obliged to submit to be interviewed for the Petersburg journal, *Kraj*, and to do my best to give evasive answers to adroit questions. During the interview the young author arrived who was to introduce me to no less than three clubs of young people, two of men and one of women. I had unfortunately promised to meet them on another occasion, and had forgotten the invitation.

Even now, I was rather late, but they had been patiently waiting. All the ladies were seated, and the young men were standing in groups around. There was hardly room to pass, and here as elsewhere in Lemberg, even in the town hall, the ventilation was very bad.

It was one of the most remarkable meetings I have attended in Poland. Only on a few memorable occasions in Warsaw have I ever seen so many young people assembled. It was a representative audience of the intellectual and advanced youth of the nation; the men almost all socialists, revolutionists, or anarchists—not a few had suffered political imprisonment in Russian Poland. The young women were all intellectual workers and thinkers of the emancipated type.

They had invited me partly to show their good-will, and partly to have the opportunity of explaining that I had wronged the advanced youth of Poland by some conservative notions in a book of mine.

There were certainly not less than eight speakers, representatives of the different groups, and all spoke well, clearly, and instructively, with ideal youthful fervour and conviction. Most impressive and attractive to me among the speakers was a young lady, a beautiful Jewess, Madame Emma Lilienowa, whose simple and logical speech I followed with interest and admiration, though it told against me; but inwardly I was delighted at being rebuked as too conservative, not so much because the situation was new to me, but because if these good people could have known me thoroughly, they would have been perfectly content with

me. If there be a point on which I have a clear conscience, it is this: that no one can reproach me with having too much respect for the existing state of things.

Of course I meant, and mean none the less to maintain, what I asserted in my book as to its being unpractical to be a socialist in Russian Poland. I certainly did not urge that it would be meaningless to be a socialist in Austrian Poland. When in 1885 I stated that the Jews were not ill-used in Poland, I did not deny the possibility that an intense hatred of the Jews might arise in Galicia ten years later. If I had pleaded the cause of the Catholic Church in Poland, in so far as I asserted it to be the chief factor of resistance to the Russianising of the country, I did not claim for it any exclusive privileges either here or elsewhere. Very reasonably they pointed out the injustice meted out to the Ruthenians and Jews, and the unfair treatment of the free-thinking students at the University of Cracow, urging that the Poles in positions of authority seem hardly to realise the nature of that liberty for which they themselves are struggling. I heard a great many things that saddened and shocked me, things I could hardly have thought possible. I will give an instance:—According to law the Jew is allowed, like any other citizen, to possess land, but last year, when a rich Jewish family bought a Polish property, all the people of the district were greatly agitated, and not only the inhabitants of the district, but the well-known conservative and clerical professor, Tarnowski, summed up the general exasperation elegantly in these words: "The Poles are not anti-Semites, they do not at all hate the Jews, but they object to seeing sacred Polish land in the hands of Jews." The owners of the estate were threatened with death, and were obliged to cancel the bargain. That this harmonises ill with the ideal of freedom is but too true. It is not surprising, therefore, that Zionism has many adherents among the Jewish inhabitants of Galicia. The persecution to which a student known to be a free-thinker is often subjected is hardly less deplorable than the want of toleration shown to the Jews. But no one with the slightest knowledge of human nature could be supposed to

have asserted that the Poles were exceptional. The national cause is no less holy because of this. The main point of the ensuing debate, however, as far as I was concerned, was my attempt to show my audience that I advocated a conservative policy in Russian Poland purely on strategic grounds. It took time to make myself understood. Unfortunately for Poland, Macchiavelli was no Pole, and has had no disciples among the leading men of Poland.

I had scarcely returned to the hotel when I had to step into the carriage waiting to take me to the Union of Veterans, the survivors of those who had taken part in the insurrection of 1863. M. Tadeuz Czapelski, the intimate friend of my Warsaw friends, came to fetch me. He was a member of the Union, though he had taken no part in the actual rising, being at the time a boy of fourteen, who had been kept busily at work casting bullets. When we approached the house we caught sight of the old men standing on the balconies waiting for us. Kagetan Ivanowski, the President of the Society of 1863, formerly Secretary of State under the national government, and renowned for his bravery, received me at the entrance, introduced me, and made a speech, which was followed by numerous others. All these men had served as soldiers or officers during the heroic struggle against the Russian power. One among them, still vigorous though past eighty, had been an officer in the revolt of 1830. Every Sunday forenoon these men assemble at their club to partake of a Spartan meal, consisting of national dishes, a meal such as soldiers share in camp. I cannot describe the feeling which came over me when all these old men formed a circle around me and, with great enthusiasm, sang *Jeszcze Polska*. I had to answer all the speeches, but at last tears came into my eyes and I could not speak for emotion—I, who never weep. Czapelski and I took leave amidst songs and acclamations. From the carriage we saw the veterans waving farewell to us till we turned the corner of the street. At the hotel we joined our friends for lunch. It was computed that I had made eleven French and three German speeches that morning. Jan and Madame Jozefa were to return to Warsaw immediately after lunch. A crowd of

friends accompanied them in carriages to the station, where they, moreover, had the opportunity of taking leave of the governor of Galicia, who had to go to Cracow in his official capacity, and who left his carriage to greet them.

After having returned to the hotel I had to write some friendly parting words on more than fifty visiting-cards to send off in the town.

Then I was expected by a man, who had been repeatedly mentioned to me even in Copenhagen as the discoverer of a new and unknown force, the engineer Rychnowski. But, ignorant as I am of chemistry and electro-biology, I was incapable of forming any opinion as to the real worth of his presumed discovery.

I was conducted across a court to the little entrance of a side building where the laboratory was. It was dark, and we had a difficulty in finding our way. A door was opened, and we stood face to face with the strange magus, a stout man of fifty with a greyish beard. His face was that of a thinker, but also bore the stamp of mystery often seen in the countenances of the half educated or the half crazy. He received us most politely, and introduced us into his apartment. It might have been Faust's studio, and suggested the alchemists of the Middle Ages to me. The force he had discovered was a motor power, stronger than any other hitherto known; besides, it was the vital power! If he brought it to bear upon himself, he would renew his youth, his strength would increase, and he would be able to endure bodily and mental fatigues to an unheard-of extent. On the day of my arrival I had promised the old poet Bezazowski, whom I had met at a public entertainment, that I would pay him a visit. But my time had been so much taken up that I had literally not had a single minute to fulfil my promise. Now I drove in a hurry from Rychnowski to his house.

He was certainly worth meeting, this venerable old man. He had passed the last half of his life as a consul in the East, and had familiarised himself with Oriental manners and customs as few Europeans are able to do. Nevertheless, he had remained an enthusiastic Polish patriot. As a poet he enjoys great favour among his countrymen.

Unfortunately, I could not stay more than half-an-hour with him, it being already late. I had not done my packing, and the train was to start at eleven o'clock. We returned at full speed to the hotel, where the mayor presently came to fetch me, and for the second time this day off we went to the station, where, in spite of the late hour, a group of friends had assembled. With my foot on the carriage-step I pressed the hand of old Siberiak, who had greeted me in the *Sokol* gymnasium.

And the evening came on, and night fell on the last day of my stay in Lemberg.

THE ROMANTIC LITERATURE OF
POLAND IN THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY \

1886

POINTS OF CONTACT IN POLISH AND DANISH LITERATURE

THERE are few points of contact in the literatures of Poland and Denmark.

In the Polish world of books we find a small but very instructive contribution to the history of warfare and culture in Denmark in the seventeenth century, namely, Jan Chrysostom Pasek's *Recollections*. As leader of a division of the Polish army, which came to the help of the Danes against Charles Gustavus of Sweden, this nobleman was in Denmark in 1658 and 1659; took part in the memorable conquest of the island of Als by cavalymen, who swam across the Alssund with their pistols behind their collars and their powder-horns on their necks, and was present at the storming of Koldinghus and the capture of Fridericia. He observes and describes the manners and customs of the peasants; falls in love with the daughter of a Danish landed proprietor, who cherishes a burning love for him, but he tears himself away from his sweetheart, returns to his fatherland and introduces two things, hitherto unknown in Poland: Danish wooden shoes and long Danish cavalry boots.

He describes the Danes as well formed; the women as beautiful, but too blonde. As regards the arrangements of the houses, it strikes him as strange that the places for sleeping are often mere cupboards in the walls. As to manners and customs, he is astonished that every one, including the women, sleep stark naked, and that no one regards it as indelicate to dress and undress in the presence of others. When the Poles criticised this as indecorous the women replied that they had no reason to be ashamed of their limbs, which were created by God. As regards living, he is disgusted at all the sausage meat, which is eaten as a

delicacy, and as regards dress this peculiarity has become fixed in his memory, that the women, who in other respects dress with taste, wear wooden shoes, not only in the country, but in the cities, "with which they make such a noise on the stone pavements that one can hardly hear his neighbour speak."

Of the Danish women in general he remarks that they are not so reserved in their affections as the Polish. "For although in the beginning they are extremely shy, they fall in love in a single meeting so extremely and passionately that they cannot conceal their feelings, but are ready to leave their parents and rich surroundings and go out into the wide world with their lovers." He quotes from a letter from his sweetheart, which as a specimen of composition is not uninteresting. It runs as follows:—

"High, well-born, gracious Sir ; Persons, who are dear to our hearts, we wish to honour with words and see with our eyes. In how high a degree my father has conceived love for thy renowned people and thy knightly brothers-in-arms, he shows by often speaking thy name. It is his earnest wish to look upon thee not only as an adopted but an actual son. But if my father loves thee, then his daughter, in whose heart an unchanging love for thee will continually blossom, loves thee not less. Oh, couldst thou read in my heart the force of my emotions ! I confess now openly what I have so long kept secret, that my heart will never beat for any other man but thee. . . . I am going where fate and my heart lead me. My family may claim equality with the oldest in Poland. If my character is not free from fault, thou hast praised it. My religion does me no dishonour ; I believe in the holy Trinity. My father's declaration that he will not let his fortune go to a foreign land, is no impediment. My father lays down the law, but thou wilt be able to interpret it freely, thou wilt be able to assume control over his fortune. It is thy duty to command and mine to obey," &c.

For a time Pasek, kindled by the young lady's passion, was tempted to stay with her in Denmark, but a double fear of becoming as one dead to his relatives in Poland and

of losing his eternal salvation, in case he allowed himself to be made a Lutheran, moved him to march home with the rest of the Polish troops. He became the favourite of two kings in his native land and at last died in old age in 1700. It was not till 1836 that his admirable memoirs were found and published.

When to this description of the Denmark of that period we add that Lelewel wrote a book on *Edda Skandinawska*, and that in several of the romantic poems of Poland, as for instance in Krasinski's *Irydion*, there are here and there fantastic descriptions of Denmark in heathen days, in "King" Odin's time, we shall have summed up the impressions of Denmark to be found in the culture and intellectual life of Poland.

But the existence of Poland has made a deeper impression upon Danish literature. This is more especially true of the critical periods in the history of Poland in this century, the revolutions of 1830 and 1831 and of 1863, which attracted attention to the country and aroused sympathy, a fleeting sympathy certainly, but genuine.

Between the years 1830 and 1840 there appeared in Denmark, as elsewhere, beautiful and emotional lyric poems on Polish subjects (such as Paludan-Müller's *Call to Poland*, Aarestrup's *A Polish Mother*), and in the fifties appeared Hauch's great and famous novel, *A Polish Family*, with its beautiful songs, one of which, *Hvorfor svulmer Weichselfloden*, is one of the best lyrics of our literature.

This novel is interesting as the one great attempt of a Dane to identify himself with the spiritual and social life of the Poles. Nevertheless, as a novel it is a work of the second rank, the description of character being weak and abstract. It was quite in accordance with the spirit of his time, that Hauch made no attempt to write from his own knowledge. He never travelled in Poland, never even made any efforts to study one or two Polish families before he so elaborately presented one; but he had studied the Polish ballads, which had been translated with great diligence, reproducing or paraphrasing many of them in Danish, and thus in the tones of sadness, despair, love of country and Catholic piety,

which ring through the romance, an occasional chord is struck which sounds like a Polish chord.

Even the renowned song, which in a certain sense is the spirit of the whole book, condensed into the smallest possible space (it is sung at a dance in one of the principal scenes in the book), is built upon motives from Polish ballads, still sung during the Cracovian dance.

The ballads always consist of two-line verses, the first of which gives an image and the second a parallel or an explanation of it.

For instance :—

“Yonder by the high walls of Cracow the Vistula flows,
All the sons of Poland pass away in long lines.”

Hauch expresses it thus :—

“The floods of the Vistula wind slowly under the walls of
Cracow, Strong hosts march to break the eagle’s dungeons.”

Or again :—

“They all march out with smiles and do not return, There-
fore woods, meadows, and women all mourn deeply.”

Hauch :—

“Sword and scythe flashed in smoke and fog on the plain,
Not a warrior comes back from the wild fight, Therefore
field and meadow mourn, And Poland’s daughters have lost
their merry smile.”

The composition of Hauch’s poem as a whole is far above the scattered lines of the ballads in effect, but the Polish diction is shorter, it has more emphasis and force.

Although the events of 1863 gave rise to several more or less eloquent and well-considered articles in the Danish press, they called forth nothing else of literary value save four or five fine poems by Snoilsky, which first appeared in a Danish newspaper. Since then the people of Denmark have not given much thought to Poland ; the last uprising has been called the death battle of the Poles, and the Polish nation is regarded as dead.

But “it is not yet all over with Poland,” although this poor Poland resembles an elegant and defenceless woman upon whom all have fallen and trampled. Even in the thirties the friends of Poland regarded its history as closed.

In 1831 the Hungarians in an address to the Emperor of Austria offered to fit out at their own cost an army of a hundred thousand men to aid the fighting Poles. The offer was naturally declined ; but in 1832, when all was over, a member of the Hungarian Parliament, Polocsy, uttered these words : " If kings and emperors regard themselves as members of one great family, and wear mourning when one among them dies, then with far greater reason ought the destruction of a nation to cause all the other nations to mourn ; but the mourning which kings wear on their hats or arms, these nations wear in their hearts." These are fine words, but Poland was no more a corpse in the thirties, than she is now to be regarded as blotted out of the number of nations.

I

TENDENCIES COMMON TO ALL EUROPEAN LITERATURES — PECULIAR FEATURES — RETROSPECT — KOCHANOWSKI — SKARGA — JESUITISM — FRENCH PHILOSOPHY—RATIONALISM

THE Polish literature of this century presents the same picture of changing elemental tendencies as the other European literatures with which I am familiar. The setting is everywhere the same. At the beginning of the century an antiquated classicism and soon cast aside, a romanticism absorbing the largest part of the century, and in the seventies and eighties a dawning realism.

This is common to Europe. But in every nation these tendencies assume a different character, according to its historic theories and historic relations. The Polish literature of this century bears a peculiar stamp, apart from the peculiarities issuing from the national character, in this respect, that it developed in a country which had recently ceased to exist as an independent state. The literature, and especially the poetry, came on this account to supply, as it were, the place of all the organs of a national life which were lost at the partition of the State. It gains thereby in spiritual exaltation, but necessarily loses in variety.

A brief retrospect of the history of development in the last few centuries is necessary to the understanding of the poetry of the present century.

The upheavals which the Reformation caused in the principal countries of Europe left Poland comparatively undisturbed. While kindred Bohemia, under the desire for a great social and ecclesiastical reform, wore itself out in the Hussite War through the whole of two centuries, from the death of Huss to the battle at the White

Mountain (1620), and for two hundred years more seemed as if it had actually slipped out of history, under the stress of its superhuman exertions, the Roman Catholic Church stood comparatively unassailed in Poland, and the country was spared any very radical religious discord.

The period which is generally described as the Renaissance was for Poland her time of greatness, and introduced her first golden age of poetic literature. Its greatest figure was Jan Kochanowski (1530-84), a worshipper of Horace and Virgil, a contemporary and acquaintance of Ronsard, who made his *début* as a poet in the Latin language, but soon adopted the Polish, becoming its greatest master of those days. Imbued with the spirit of antiquity and of the Renaissance, cool towards Christianity, warm towards the republic, a pagan theist, he tried his hand at all sorts of poetry, and in all gave evidence of manliness, liberality, and humanity. His *Treny*, a series of delightfully simple and touching elegies on the death of a beloved daughter, are of such excellence that they are not even surpassed by the admirable poems on the same subject, written by Victor Hugo so many years after.

The two principal poetic forms which flourished in this period are the idyll and the satire—the *idyll* because the sympathies of certain poets break through that ring which the “Szlachta,” the Polish nobility which is everything in the republic, has drawn about itself, and approach the common, suppressed people, who are glorified in bucolics; the *satire*, because the sharp critical sense of other poets turns against the ruling caste of nobility, and attacks the idea that nobility is an accidental privilege of birth. Just then, about the year 1600, the “Szlachta” became decidedly hostile to progress, clinging desperately to the privileges of its powerful position.

The social movement in those times, which in Germany was broken by the suppression of the rebellion of the peasants, and the extermination of the Anabaptists, was overcome by the Polish nobility during the war with the Cossacks, by the most tremendous efforts. The intellectual regeneration which, in Germany, when humanism was

absorbed by Lutheranism, halted at the mediocrity of a civic and ecclesiastic intermediate form, broad and strong enough to resist for long the pressure of the times, became stunted at once in its growth in Poland, because in contrast to the movement of the Reformation, it was absorbed by a humanism to which only the most cultured of the highest classes were susceptible, and which was therefore overcome with ease, as soon as the religious counter-revolution, with Jesuitism at its head, attacked it.

Polish Protestantism assumed the form of a heretical philosophy, which rejected the teaching of the Church, and at the same time its morality, without being able to formulate any independent positive morality. It seemed mainly inspired by a polemical tendency to approve all that had been the subject of earlier prohibitions (marriage between blood relations, as well as free relations between the sexes), and by the dogma that the confiscation of the property of the Church was essential. In the meantime, since the Protestant nobility needed religion to keep the common people in check, its own humanism being incomprehensible to the masses, and since, trembling for its privileges, it was necessarily apprehensive of the principle of free investigation, which lies at the bottom of all Protestantism, the appearance and agitation of individuals of talent in the aristocratic and clerical party was alone required to make this Protestant nobility fall off, and one by one return to the motherly bosom of the Catholic Church. Such an oratorical genius was Orzechowski (1515-66), who showed the nobility that the clergy alone were able to strike the king with terror of breaking the oath, which he was always obliged to swear to the "Szlachta" promising to preserve its privileges.

He was succeeded by a man of even greater and more celebrated oratorical talent, the priest Skarga (1536-1612), a Jesuit, who was an ardent Polish patriot, a regenerator of fallen Catholicism, who foresaw all the dangers of the anarchy of the nobility, and in one of his sermons to the diet, even foretold the partition of Poland. Let us quote his words:—

“A foreign enemy will come upon you, will take advantage of your internal discord, and say: ‘Your hearts have become divided, now you will be ruined.’ These internal strifes will bring you into a captivity, in which all your freedom will be lost, and abased. Great countries and principalities, which had become united with the crown, will fall off and be torn away, and you, who once ruled other races, will, like an abandoned widow, become a mockery and sport for your enemies. You lay waste your people and your language, the only free people among all the Slav races, you destroy what there is left of this ancient and far-reaching people, and will be swallowed up by other races who hate you.” (Third sermon.)

It is in the act of delivering this sermon to the diet that Skarga is represented in the well-known painting by Matejko.

From his time until the middle of the eighteenth century Jesuitism was predominant in Poland and determined its intellectual life. It was for ecclesiastical even more than for political reasons that Sobieski undertook his campaign to Vienna against the Turks in 1683; it was zeal for the preservation of the Catholic faith that led the Polish clergy to summon the order of the Jesuits, and by degrees place the whole province of instruction in their hands. The only intellectual product which flourished under this rule was eloquence, which attained an extraordinary height in Latin as well as in Polish. It even became the custom of the times to mix the two languages into a macaronic medley which only false taste could approve.

This Jesuitical movement was finally dissolved by the current which emanated from the philosophical ideas of the eighteenth century in France. In so far as these ideas were reformatory in political matters, they first began to influence minds only when an incurable breach had already been made in the Polish State. The conservative caste of nobility had long succeeded in branding every attempt at reform as reactionary—that is to say, as an injury to their precious personal freedom, that freedom which through the *liberum veto* had led to anarchy, and the sale of the crown to the highest bidder. Now the young Poles travelled to

France to get advice from its most celebrated thinkers as to a new constitution for their fatherland threatened with dissolution. Wielhorski addressed himself to Rousseau as author of the *Contrat Social*, and received from him *Considerations sur le Gouvernement de la Pologne*, to the Abbé Mably, and procured from him *De la situation politique de la Pologne*. So in our own days have Japanese envoys applied to Professor Gneist in Berlin, requesting him to draw up a constitution for their country.

Rousseau considered the question in a purely *a priori* manner. His dislike of absolute power led him to recommend the division of the powers of the State, to advise a confederate government, to adhere to the elective king, and even to retain the *liberum veto*, only limiting its use. He advocated democracy in forms quite unsuitable to Poland; his ideas served as a pretext to the later anarchists, the traitors of the confederation of Targowice, who were protected by Russia. Mably, who showed more political sense, advised the introduction of a hereditary constitutional monarchy.

The first partition of Poland in 1772 put an end to these consultations with foreigners, but after 1778 the Poles of the national party took the most energetic counsel with each other as to the foundation of a new form of government, finally agreeing upon the excellent constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791, which has been called Poland's patent of nobility among the nations of Europe. It was followed by the second partition, and after the insurrection of Kosciuszko by the third.

One of the most eminent men of these times, the leader of the rationalistic classicists, Jan Sniadecki, whose narrowness in relation to the budding romanticism did not exclude broad and clear views in other domains, gave pertinent expression to the spirit of these times, when he said that after the disappearance of their fatherland as a State the Poles felt themselves as it were condemned to suppress and exterminate all the mental emotions in themselves which were engendered by education, habit, and the desire of seeing the public weal advanced, emotions which had been the soul of

all their intellectual powers and qualities. "Now," he says, "the Poles must outlive themselves, must create for themselves a new soul, and enclose their emotions within the narrower boundaries of private life." It is therefore no wonder that a pause of several years in the manifestation of general intellectual development appears between the end of the kingdom and the dawn of the new romantic literary movements.

During this pause the revolutionary period and Napoleon's metamorphosis of European conditions took place.

Immediately after the massacre at Praga, the conquerors imprisoned a number of the leading men of Poland; many of them disappeared in the fortresses of Prussia and Austria; others were sent to Siberia; nay, certain Polish generals were carried as far as Kamschatka. Those who escaped emigrated to France, Italy, or Turkey.

It was natural that the Poles, whose republic had just succumbed in a contest with three hereditary monarchies, should sympathise with the French Republic during its wars, and in the hope that it would take up their cause, their legions fought by the side of the French troops. Again and again the Republic and Bonaparte deceived them in their hopes; again and again Napoleon gave them promises he never thought of keeping; again and again the Poles shed their blood for him in crowds, nay, in hosts. In his solitary sledge journey on the retreat from Russia, he was accompanied from Smorgoni, the temperature being thirty degrees below zero centigrade, by a hundred Polish lancers, who voluntarily offered their escort in the evening, and of whom only thirty-six survived the next morning.

Kosciusko did not believe in Napoleon; he refused in the most determined manner to induce his countrymen to fight under him. "And if you were made to do so by force?" asked the Duke of Otranto in the capacity of negotiator. "Then I should declare plainly and loudly that I was not free and that my sympathies were not with you."—"Very well, we can do without you," answered Fouché. They could to a certain point, because the Poles were carried away by the idea that Napoleon, as the founder of a new

dynasty, would be compelled to wage war against the old royal families that had partitioned Poland. And yet, as already stated, before his Russian campaign Napoleon did not disdain to issue a proclamation to the Poles in Kosciusko's name, in which he speaks of himself with the most profound admiration. It begins thus: "Amid the din of arms with which Poland resounds, Kosciusko addresses himself to you. Thus has Napoleon's high destiny willed, he who destroys and creates kings, who strikes down hostile nations with his lightning, . . . the man of fate turns his eyes and thoughts on you."

Upon all occasions Napoleon abused, sacrificed, and deceived Poland. But this people, who since the dissolution of the State seemed doomed to hope against hope, did not abandon him on that account. On the contrary. Immediately after the Emperor's fall, as we shall see, a Napoleon-cult sprang up in Poland, in comparison with which that in other countries and other literatures is inconsiderable.

Alexander I. in his first period was mildly disposed towards Poland. In the short interval between the year 1815, with the good constitution it brought, and the time when Alexander's reactionary efforts began, the intellectual development proceeded smoothly and freely, undisturbed by political contests. At this period the Franco-classical production of the time of Stanislaus Augustus was rejected as mere drawing-room literature. There was a struggle here as elsewhere, but of short duration, between the classicists and the romanticists; then the different provinces enter in turn upon the scene, with their new brood of poets; first Ukraina, then Lithuania, then the others, were all permeated by the feeling that it was time to leave the hot air of luxurious rooms for contact with the people at large under the open heavens.

II

POLISH ROMANTICISM DETERMINED BY THE CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE, BY EUROPEAN ROMANTICISM AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION—SPECIAL POINTS OF VIEW FOR THE ANTI-THESIS OF CLASSIC AND ROMANTIC—WORSHIP OF NAPOLEON AND BYRON — RELATION TO SHAKESPEARE AND DANTE — INFLUENCE OF EMIGRANT LIFE ON THE SENTIMENT OF WRITERS

THE period 1820–1850 was the richest and most important as regards poetry. And in this period the three fundamental factors which determined the literature were evidently these: the national character, European romanticism, and the exceptional political situation.

The national character, as it had been developed down to this period, was specially adapted for the influences of romanticism. It was intelligent and magnanimous, splendour-loving and visionary, with a propensity to chivalrous virtues and religious aspirations. Then as now it lacked the ballast which the Germanic nations have in their native phlegm, and the Latin races in their native logic. It was akin to the French in its fickleness, different from it in the nature of its capriciousness; for the Frenchman is capricious when his native rationalism leads him to shatter his historic heritage, the Pole when temperament or enthusiasm carries him away. It was akin to the Italian in its idolatry and its vivacity, but differed from it in its want of shrewd political sense, and of that plastic tendency which has made the inhabitants of Italy pagans under all forms of religion.

When European Romanticism reached this nation, it did not fare as in Germany, where it was engendered in the non-political societies of provincial towns, and allied itself to the indefinite idealism, the want of social feeling, and the aversion to reality, which had laid hold of the minds of thinking men—nor as in England, where Romanticism found

itself in direct antagonism with the ingrained bias of the people for the useful and the practical, and where it allied itself with the old Norse tendency to an indomitable independence and defiance in the free individual, even towards his fatherland—nor as in France or Italy, where a Latin and classical element, essentially foreign to Romanticism, prevented its conquest of the intellectual heart of the people, and limited it to a purely artistic intoxication of short duration.

In Poland, where the national character was peculiarly adapted to assimilate Romanticism, the common national misfortune had moreover given a romantic bias to minds. Romanticism, therefore, did not isolate souls either in egotism, as in Germany, or in wild independence, as in England, but bound them together in a visionary feeling of compatriotism. Neither was it contingent upon a dislike to reality, but upon the sense that the fatherland was already an unreality, something which must be believed in, and could not be seen with the bodily eye. Finally, the Latin element, even if stronger than in any other non-Latin country, was but an importation, and made no serious resistance.

Here, with far greater force than elsewhere, romantic enthusiasm swept away all barriers, spread out in far wider circles—because of the national character, which is not rational, but fantastically heroic—and harmonised far more thoroughly than elsewhere with existing times and conditions—because of the national fate, which occupies all thoughts, and round which all day-dreams revolve.

We shall recognise this peculiarity most plainly if we turn our attention to countries and literatures where the political situation was akin to that of Poland. It is true that a counterpart is nowhere to be found, but there are analogies more or less strong.

Let us consider, for instance, the Flemish literature, which arose in Belgium about 1830. It resorts to great historical romance in the style of Walter Scott, in order to excite Flemish national feeling. Henry Conscience's romance, *The Lion of Flanders*, is the leading work, a book of the same kind as Rzewuski's *Memoirs of Soplica*. This

literature is strongest in the pure lyric. But it is the product of a peaceful nation, a nation not prone to exaltation. It is a literature of the common people, which clings to the earth, not like the Polish, a soaring and flaming poetry, which throws its light over the whole horizon, and loses itself in the clouds.

Or let us consider Finland, with her Runeberg, who has analogies with Mickiewicz. *Fanrick Stals Sägner*, which treats of the contest for Finland in the year 1810, is certainly the nearest European counterpart to *Pan Tadeusz*. The author describes the Finnish national character, as it appeared during the war, just as *Pan Tadeusz* presents the Polish national character of the same time. There is no national hatred in any of these poems. The only Russian officer who figures in the Finnish poetic cycle, Kulneff, is the type of a noble enemy, high-minded and gentle; the only Russian officer who figures in the Polish epic, Rykow, is an honourable man, incorruptible, faithful, and brave.

What is lacking in Runeberg is the lofty national self-criticism, which distinguishes Mickiewicz, and the poets of Poland as a whole. His Finns are heroes, heroes "in winter dress," heroes in tatters sometimes, but always heroes. They have almost no faults. In spite of all their glowing love for their countrymen, the poets of Poland are far more synthetic, painting the frail as well as the strong side of the inherited character of their nation. To be sure they have had a far richer material at their command; they were not an undeveloped people like the Finns, whose language even lacked all literary form and polish, but a people with the lights and shadows of a thousand years of civilisation.

The peculiar situation of Poland necessarily modifies the points of view from which we contrast Classicism and Romanticism elsewhere.

When we read Mickiewicz's poem, *Romanticism*, with its dogma that the superstitions of the people are worth more than classical rationalism, we note in this enthusiasm for a belief in ghosts, and this hatred for cold acumen, which observes through the microscope, something which is

common to Romanticism in all countries, nay, something wearisomely romantic. The romanticists everywhere feel a satisfaction in leading the swelling currents of new emotion into spiritual beliefs and popular superstition. Everywhere also there is a connection between the advent of Romanticism in literature, and the great religious reaction of the nineteenth century against the indifference to all dogma of the eighteenth.

But there are two circumstances which nevertheless give Polish Romanticism a peculiar character. Firstly, the opposing catholic tendency had not the mediæval feudal stamp as elsewhere. Secondly, the double contrast of Classicism and Romanticism, Liberalism and Conservatism, did not obtain here as in so many other countries. In France, for instance, Romanticism from the beginning was suspected not only as hostile to enlightenment but as legitimist. Victor Hugo's first odes and ballads were both anti-Voltairean and loyal. The most distinguished opponent of the Romanticists was the celebrated liberal, Armand Carrel, the recognised leader of the French republicans. In Poland, on the contrary, the opponents of Romanticism (men like Sniadecki, Beku, Osinski) were usually officials, and conservative in their political convictions, while from the very first Romanticism was rightly regarded as oppositional.

As the recognised laureate of a whole nation in the first half of the nineteenth century Mickiewicz occupies a position, which finds a parallel in that of Oehlenschläger and Tegnér. But apart from all other dissimilarities, there is this difference between Mickiewicz and the two Norse poets, that when the latter employed their talents to glorify their nation, they chose the material of its legendary world or worked out themes from its antiquity, its middle ages, or even a more distant past, substantially without ever describing the life they themselves had had the opportunity of observing, while Mickiewicz, especially where he is at his best (as in *Pan Tadeusz* and certain parts of *Dziady*) reproduces a life he has seen with his own eyes, or a life the memory of which still hovers in the air about him.

This is the secret of his superiority over a whole army of contemporary national poets ; it is this which gives his Romanticism and that of several of his contemporaries in Poland a comparatively modern stamp. At that time they did not yet feel in Europe that the poet must be the offspring of his age as a rule ; they were too strongly attracted by distant times or foreign countries. The results in their descriptions of mankind, oftener than not, were beings who never existed and never could exist, beings whose spiritual life was created by the subtraction of a great many qualities which only modern men can have, and by the mechanical addition of qualities which the poet's reading had taught him were found in the past. Not in consequence of a correct theory, but by virtue of a sound instinct, Mickiewicz resorted to an old subject or a distant period only when political considerations made it easier for him to express what he had at heart, when the fundamental thought concealed itself behind an allegory, as is the case in *Grazyna* and *Wallenrod*.

Throughout the romantic literature of Poland, we find here and there traits so realistic that they do not seem to belong to the period. In some of the poets the observance of reality is carried so far, that they even introduce living or recently deceased persons into their poems. But that which is peculiarly Polish, is that hand in hand with the hankering after reality and futurity there is an unconquerable tendency to abstraction, allegory, and superstition. They are at once realists and spiritualists.

Two circumstances united to make their poems abstract and allegorical : first, the propensity to mysticism which lay in the inmost recesses of their souls and which, after having slumbered for a while, was easily awakened in them all, since they had been educated as Catholics from the first ; in the next place, the political oppression, the consideration of the censorship which compelled them to describe their thoughts by circumlocution, and etherealise the outlines of the beings whom they painted.

There were, in particular, two great persons, at that time recently deceased, who had set the forces of imagination

in motion all over Europe, but who aroused greater enthusiasm here than in any other country outside of their native lands: Napoleon and Byron.

It was the period when the cult of Napoleon was spreading over Europe. The real being was forgotten; genuine historical research had not yet begun. Napoleon had become a legend, which had deeply affected Henry Beyle, of which Victor Hugo, Béranger, and Heinrich Heine, each in his own way, made themselves priests, and which Thiers unfolded as a great epos, accessible to the crowd. However little cause the Poles had to thank Napoleon, they had attached such great hopes to him, that after the desolation of the last years of his life and his impressive death had cast a transfiguring light over his life, they continued to pay honour to his shade as their liberator and saviour.

As the years passed by after his fall, he became the superhuman, supernatural man to the popular fancy. To the Romanticists he became an enigma. In those days the eighteenth century was regarded as the time of frivolous exposition. Here was a phenomenon which could not be judged by ordinary standards of intellectual observation. This awakened anew the quality of admiration, which had been lost in the preceding century. They thought that the prosaic English hated him because he was incomprehensible to them. No human being had been able to strike him down, nor any general but General *Frost* and General *Hunger*. In the preface to *Dawn* (*Przedswit*) Krasinski dates a new epoch from Napoleon. He says:—

“The age of Cæsar has returned in that of Napoleon. And the Christian Cæsar, who is superior to his predecessor by the achievement of nineteen centuries, and who was perfectly clear as to himself and the object for which the divine spirit, which leads the course of history, had sent him—dying, said on his rock of exile: ‘The beginning of a new period will be reckoned from me.’ These words contain a complete revelation concerning him and the future.” Mickiewicz in his mystic period reveres Napoleon as a demi-god. He was no Gaul, he had no *esprit*, no wit,

he felt himself drawn to the East. "Like all the greatest men," says Mickiewicz with a turn which foreshadows Disraeli, "Napoleon felt himself mysteriously at home in the East." His life demonstrated to Mickiewicz the existence of the invisible and mystic world. He believed in omens, and acted on them; he had direct intuition. Therefore he is the man of the Slav race; for the Slavs are a people of intuition. And thus for Mickiewicz he becomes the source of everything which the Polish people of that time admire.

Again and again Mickiewicz contends that Napoleon created Byron, and that Byron's life and glory had awakened Pushkin, so that Napoleon had also indirectly engendered the latter.

Since poetry, according to Mickiewicz's definition, is action, Napoleon's life becomes the loftiest poetry. Nay, even more; his mission was to liberate nations and thereby the whole world. (Preface to *L'Église et le Messianisme*.) And while St. Helena comes near to being a place of suffering like Golgotha, a glimmer of the Passion of Christ falls over the life and death of Napoleon.

The same propensity to uncritical transports, the same enthusiasm for the dazzling, is brought to light in the relations of these Slav poets to Byron. Thus poets so diverse as Mickiewicz and Slowacki meet on common ground for years in their Byronism. As Washington had made no impression on them while Napoleon fascinated them, so not one of them cared for Shelley, while Byron was on everybody's lips. They believed in all seriousness that Byron was the greatest lyric poet of England.

To make Byron's intellectual descent from Napoleon more obvious, Mickiewicz, who had evidently no knowledge of Wordsworth, or Coleridge, or Keats, or Shelley, wrote: "I regard it as certain that the flash which kindled the fire of the English poet came from the soul of Napoleon. How could we otherwise explain this man's existence in the midst of the jejune English literature of his day, a survival of the former century? . . . Byron's English contemporaries, in spite of the example of his genius and the influence eman-

ating therefrom, produced nothing which can be compared therewith ; and after the death of the poet, English literature sank back to the level of that of the past century."

Every sentence here is a blunder. Every one of the contemporaries of Byron named above, so far as poetry is concerned, several times reached his level, and in some respects even excelled him. But undeniably no one of them was so dazzling as he ; they were neither dandies and *poseurs* in youth, nor theatrically heroic as men. Even he who would by no means rob Byron of his undying honour as a poet, and of his never-to-be-forgotten services as a friend of freedom, must feel that in Poland he is estimated as much by his false prestige as by his real greatness.

Nevertheless Napoleon and Byron have this merit in common, that they drew the Poles out of their purely national absorption. Polish literature had been national in the sixteenth century, but it had lacked the stamp of common humanity which makes a literature accessible to Europe at large ; in the eighteenth century it had been cosmopolitan, but in such a fashion that it ended in the French imitation of classical culture without the deeper national stamp, which makes a literature interesting to Europe. Sniadecki was a friend and admirer of Delille, Bogomolec imitated the plays of Molière in a conventional and foreign style. This literature had become petrified in its slavish reverence for rules. Now all barriers were broken down. A time of national wandering had returned. The material boundaries were no longer fixed, and the intellectual boundaries widened at the same time. The Poles fought under Napoleon in the most diverse countries, and Napoleon's hosts brought troops of the most diverse races through Poland. So, too, in the intellectual world, when the nations mingled intellectually, the Poles found in the poetry of Byron the common European despair and thirst for liberty, supplemented them with their national peculiarities, and introduced them after the manner of Byron to their countrymen.

Of the great poets whom the romantic school in Germany had first revealed to the romanticists in all countries, Shakespeare and Dante made the greatest impression in Poland.

Slowacki especially appropriates Shakespeare's style and manner of treatment. Nevertheless what made the most impression in Shakespeare were the horrible events, the murders and mutilations, which appear in some of the historical plays and legendary tragedies. The Polish fancy was attracted by that side of Shakespeare which is most strikingly represented in his earlier drama, *Titus Andronicus*, with its accumulated horrors. Only rarely is this tempered by the influence of the Shakespearean comedies, as in *Ballandyna*.

But perhaps the kinship which the Polish authors of this time felt for the great exiled Italian, whose poem was separated from them by so many centuries, is most significant. They were unhappy and exiled as he was; like him, they looked on at the political destruction of a state by acts of violence, and sought, as he did, consolation in penal sentences and prophecies. Krasinski especially is under his influence, and through Krasinski, Slowacki. It is the influence of the *Inferno* which can be most plainly traced. Only rarely, as in some of Krasinski's poems, does a form like that of Beatrice point towards a regenerate world and a happy life.

Now just as the special fate of the nation determines its receptiveness of foreign influence, it modifies, as we have seen, the point of view in judging of opposing forces like classicalism and romanticism, reaction and progress. It acts on the character of the literature so strongly, because it first acts on that of the writers.

They have much in common. They are all of aristocratic birth, all educated in the Roman Catholic Church, all passionate patriots. But they have this in common especially, that they all left their country between twenty and thirty years of age, and never returned. Even those authors among them who had not taken part in the rebellion of 1830, went away to a foreign land in order to write freely. Therefore they all become emigrants and pilgrims, work as leaders who have no firm connection with their people, and are never sure of a following, and live in a state of hope constantly deferred as to a general revolution in European politics.

All this together evoked a political Romanticism of a special kind, very different from the reactionary German and the humanitarian French varieties.

But what especially interests us in these men is to note the influence of the emigrant's life on the emotional life of the author.

They are enthusiasts by nature, and as romanticists, enthusiasts by theory. The emigration gives their emotional life something morbid, impatient, meaninglessly restless, because it doubles its exaltation.

Let us see what forms an elemental emotion like love takes on with them.

Mickiewicz, who had long been in love with Eva Ankwiczova, had even been religiously affected by her childlike faith, nay, by her visions—she had seen him in white robes with a lamb in his arms—suddenly leaves Rome just as Eva's father is on the point of giving his consent to their union, which he had for some time forbidden, and never again seeks to see his loved one, the memory of whom nevertheless fills his chief work, *Pan Tadeusz*.

Krasinski, who had paid homage to his friend, Madam Delphine Potocka, in the most extravagant language as his soul's sister, his muse, &c., as a minor, abandons his loved one in obedience to his father, and marries another lady in accordance with his father's wish. But at the same time he writes to the deserted lady, whom he sings in his poem, *The Dawn*: "Pray for me, that my eternal love for thee may not drag me down to hell. Pray that I may sometime fight my way to God in heaven to meet thee again!"

Slowacki becomes acquainted with Maria Wodzinska, while in Madam Patteg's *pension* on the lake of Geneva. Both the two young people cherish a strong passion for each other, and Slowacki's delicate and intellectual poem, *In Switzerland*, survives as a memorial of the happy hours of this love in beautiful surroundings. But the middle-aged daughter of Madam Patteg, Eglantine, who is enamoured of Slowacki, languishes and raves in her jealousy, and makes scenes. This is enough to make the poet draw back from his beloved, and the Wodzinski family depart. Slowacki

moves over to the other side of the lake of Geneva, writes a poem to Eglantine, *The Accursed*, and then returns to her again.

The passions, indeed, seem strong, but the characters are weak. These poets leave their loved ones, not to save themselves from the consequences of passion, nor from fear of ties (like Goethe), nor because they have ceased to love, or feel themselves drawn in another direction; they behave as if they had become a little unhinged.

As nomads or emigrants they are dependent, not lords of their fate, and far too fantastical to lay out a practical plan of life. They have no abiding place, no home. Their upheaval from their paternal soil affects their characters, makes them unstable, and increases their propensity to a mystic intellectual life.

When in the beginning of the forties, Towianski, a Polish nationalist visionary, a cross between Père Enfantin and Cagliostro, suddenly appears among them, most of them fall under his power. And even those who do not follow him, become none the less mystics, at least at some period in their life. They die young, worn out long before old age, either in monastic subjection, like the once indomitably defiant Slowacki, or, like Krasinski, in a mental condition of uninterrupted melancholy, to which he gave expression in the words: "Thy people has been given to other races to eat, for the renewal of their blood."

They were all religiously inclined or religiously educated. They expected that an object was to be accomplished directly or indirectly in every great event, consequently also in all that most nearly concerned them; they traced a divine plan in what they experienced in life. They did not understand that a nation could be annihilated, blotted out from the number of the living. When these Roman Catholics looked out over human life and history, they could not conceive that the bad and the hard-hearted, the cruel and the ruthless, should prosper so greatly, and that God should make no sign. They thought that the Almighty must have concealed a mysterious meaning in all things, so that at last everything must turn to good.

If they believed it possible to decipher this meaning they became preachers, seers, and prophets; when they despaired of finding this, they held their peace in disconsolate grief. But all their thoughts and dreams revolved about the mysterious significance of the great shipwreck their State had suffered.

There is something deeply romantic in this. The romantic intellect is (as I have elsewhere said) a kind of atavism. It questions, as men in remote superstitious times did. It asks for the significance of what happens, while the modern intellect asks for its cause. Thus these minds hardly ever seek the causes of Poland's fate, but they seek with anguish, with poetic frenzy, and the added passion of the religious visionary, to penetrate the darkness, to learn the significance of that fate, and phantasy, enthusiasm, and passion give the answer.

Generally they start from certain historical assertions as dogmas. In the past of their nation we note traits of character, peculiar and important, to be found in no other nation. These traits emanated from pre-historic Slav antiquity, and the future of the nation depended on loyalty to these primitive national institutions (the assemblies of the people, and the Slav communism in property, although the latter is more Russian than Polish). The misfortune of the nation was due to its defection from these. In other words, they fastened on a little group of cognate ideas and principles, which, as Spasovicz has expressed it, being inherent in the nation from its origin should indicate its *vocation*. The great and learned historian of that time, *Lelewel*, a writer somewhat earlier than the Romantic school, and one who in many respects had a very strong influence on their fundamental theories, formulated this theory, which for one or two generations was undisputed in Poland.

It might seem that the poets would have served their people better if they, with their greater insight into the powers which are effective in history, had presented the causes of the disappearance of the nation as a State; their readers would then have gained some insight into the means of withstanding the national decay, and of aiding in

a resurrection. But, in reality, their poetry, by its very obscure and prophetic character, has had a greater bearing on the future of the nation than a lucid or even a logical and convincing poetry could have had. Their over-exaltation which explained nothing, but which was in itself so explicable, inspired readers with an enthusiasm which, in the political conditions they were in, was very useful, nay, necessary. It inspired perseverance, self-reliance, firm faith in the future, and obstinate optimism, which were so much the more remarkable, as no country seemed likely to offer a more fruitful soil for pessimism.

It is as if the poets had felt that their mission was to give the people spiritual nourishment and a spiritual tonic to support them on their way, even if this should lead them on for some hundreds of years. Therefore in their works they concentrated all their thoughts upon their own nation, condensed and compressed patriotism, hope, hatred of treason and wrong, confidence in the final victory of the right, focussing these emotions round a common centre in a perfectly unique fashion. Hence they are not seekers of truth but soothsayers.

In this way their poetry acquired a peculiar stamp both religious and artistic. The idea of nationality which permeates everything with them, was embraced with a religious heartiness in its essence, and the contest for it was accepted as a duty of a religious nature.

Thus it came to pass that the Polish poetry of the Romantic period, which superficially gives such a defective picture of the condition of the country and of the people, taken as a whole constitutes a sort of modern Bible, an Old Testament with its books of the Judges and the Prophets, with patriarchal descriptions (as we find in Rzewuski or in *Pan Tadeusz*), with psalms (like Krasinski's), here and there with representations of a Judith, of a struggle of the Maccabees, or of a persecuted Job, and now and then with a hymn of love, more ethereal, but far weaker than that of old Palestine.

The whole may be regarded as a collection of national books of devotion.

The literature most distinctly assumes this character from the time (1830) when the Polish nation next conceives hopes, rises, and is crushed, and when its young generation is sent to Siberia, and its poets emigrate, so that we get three kinds of Polish literature—that of those who were transported, of those who emigrated, and of those who remained at home.

In the eyes of the Poles the cause of Poland, far from sinking from this moment, becomes for them the holy cause, the country the holy country, the people the martyr people, the people of freedom who suffer for the whole of humanity. The symbolic importance they had once given to Napoleon as the saviour of the nations, Poland itself now assumes, only the picture shines with still more glowing colours.

Stephen Garczynski writes thus during the cannonade of the redoubts of Warsaw:—

“O my nation! As the Saviour’s wounded head for ever impressed its bloody image upon a veil, so wilt thou, my nation, stamp the bloody image of thy fate upon the whole of this generation. Thou wilt throw this generation into the face of Europe as were it Veronica’s veil, and the history of thy suffering will be read thereupon. And the time will come, ye nations of Europe! when your eyes and thoughts will be fixed as if by enchantment on the bloody image of the crucified nation.”

Thus also cries the Abbot in the second part of Mickiewicz’s *Dziady* in the great vision scene, which symbolises the attitude of Russia, France, Prussia, and Austria towards Poland.

“He has risen, the tyrant—Herod! O Lord! see the whole of young Poland given over into the hands of Herod! what do I see? These white streaks are roads which cross one another, roads which are so long that they seem without end! Through deserts, through drifts of snow they all lead to the North. . . . See this multitude of sleighs, which drive away like clouds, which are driven by the wind, all in the same direction! O heavens, they are our children. . . .

“I see the whole of this troop of tyrants and execu-

tioners hastening to seize my fettered nation. The whole of Europe mocks at it: To judgment! The mob drags the innocent to judgment. Beings who are nothing but tongues, without hearts or arms, are their judges. And cries rise from all sides: 'Gallus, it is Gallus who shall judge this nation!—Gallus has not found it guilty, he washes his hands. But the kings shout: Sentence it, give it to its executioners, the blood be upon us and our children. Release Barabbas. Crucify the Son of Mary, crucify him! He has scoffed at Cæsar!'

"Gallus has delivered up my nation; it is already bound; see, they exhibit its innocent face, soiled with blood as it is, with a crown of thorns in derision about the forehead. And the people hurry and Gallus shrieks: 'See, this is the free, independent nation.'

"O Lord, already I see the cross. How long, how long time yet shall my nation endure it? Lord, have pity on thy servant, give him strength that he may not fall down and expire on the way. His cross has arms so long that they stretch out over the whole of Europe; it is made of three nations which are as dried up as three withered trees.

"They drag my nation away, there it is, there on the throne of sacrifice. The crucified one says: 'I thirst,' and *Ragusa* offers him vinegar, and *Borus* refreshes him with gall, and his mother, Freedom, who stands at the foot of the cross, lifts her head and weeps. . . . And see, the Muscovite soldier runs up and thrusts his spear into his side."

This is the picture which impresses itself most deeply on the memory, when one has studied the Polish poetry of the first half of the century; the pale profile of a martyred nation which consoles itself that its suffering is its honour, and that it suffers for the common cause of nations.

But the value of this romantic literature is not limited to its significance for the people of Poland. Even if European ignorance of the language in which it is written has made it impossible for it to have a wide influence, it yet has influenced the minds of other literatures (as Mickiewicz influenced Pushkin, and as his *Book of the Polish Pilgrims* was copied by Lamennais in *The Word*

of a Believer); even now surprises and charms the foreigner by the intensity of its emotional life, by its love for the ideal, and, when it attains its highest level, by its vigorous pictures of nature in Poland, of the steppes of the Ukraine, of the forests of Lithuania, and of the human life in recent and distant times, for which these surroundings form the natural and indispensable background.

This group of poems showed to foreign countries the presence of a sum of life, whose strength people had begun to doubt, and which they did not know how to value. We must always, in the first instance, demonstrate that we are alive; for, as Schiller says, the living are right. In the next place, we must know how to show to friends and enemies that we are in no respect behind them, that we dare to measure ourselves against them, and that we have other rights besides the mere right to live, namely, the rights that pertain to culture and to intellectual superiority.

In both these respects the romantic poets of Poland have demonstrated what it was necessary for them to show to Europe.

III

BRODZINSKI, THE PIONEER OF ROMANTICISM— POPULAR BALLADS—THE UKRAINIAN POETS: MALCZEWSKI, ZALESKI, GOSZCYNski

THE new literature had a forerunner, who bore the same relation to it as did Herder to the German intellectual revolution, and Steffens to the Danish; *Kasimir Brodzinski*, a man of a gentle, genial nature (born in 1791 in a country town in Galicia), who lost his mother early, and who, badly treated by his step-mother, took refuge in the servants' hall and in the cottages of the peasants. He thus became early familiar with the way of living and manner of thought of the common people, and also with the national fairy tales, traditions, and ballads. In other respects his education was German. As in 1809, a part of Galicia had been united to the grand-duchy of Warsaw, Brodzinski entered the Polish army and took part in Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812. In 1813 he was taken prisoner at the battle of Leipsic; some years later he settled in Warsaw, where in and after 1822 he delivered admirable lectures at the University on Polish literature, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Schiller, &c., and directed the attention of his hearers to the value and quickening influence of popular national poetry. Most of the members of the Ukrainian school of poets, as well as Mickiewicz, received an impulse from him.

He had a rival, who, in the eyes of his contemporaries, far eclipsed him, *Osinski*, also professor of the history of literature in the University, the favourite of society, a fanatical champion of the classical taste, a blind contemner of the rising romantic poetry, and a brilliant speaker. Brodzinski's voice was not strong, and his appearance was simple, but his eloquence was genuine, and his influence on young men very great.

Slightly under the influence of Goethe's *Hermann and Dorothea*, he wrote the idyll, *Wieslaw*, a quiet love story, enacted among the peasants of Cracow, which is read to this day. With proud humility he called himself "the modest village sexton, whose only service has been that he awakened literature to its morning devotions before day-break."

As a teacher he prized naturalness above everything, naturalness in manners, in style, in poetry; he turned the minds of the young generation from classical localities, "the regions of Arcadia," and exhorted its poets to sing of their own beautiful land, "the soil on which thy youth was passed, for which the sons of Sarmatia have poured out their blood, and where thou shalt sometime lay down thy white head, while the firs grow green over thy grave."

As an æsthete Brodzinski cannot be called a scientific man; he was less and more; less, in so far as he lacked methodical skill; more, because what is called science in this domain, may exist without originality, without judgment, without the least perception of individuality, while genuine literary production in its billowy life, in the lot and part, which the personality, its mood and its art have in it, excludes direct scientific treatment. In him arose an author who belonged at once to life and to the world of books. He stood half-way between science and art, and above science in the fields where mere science is no art.

The revolution of 1831 tore him away from his peaceful labours, and threw him into a vortex of national fanaticism which had hitherto been foreign to his being. Like so many others, even of the greatest, he became convinced of the Messianic mission of his fatherland and lost himself in prophecies. In an essay on the nationality of the Poles he wrote this sentence: "The Polish nation is the Copernicus of the moral world; it has discovered the law of the attraction of all races to the central moral point—the idea of humanity; it was granted to this nation to bring the rights of the throne and of the people into equilibrium on scales the beam of which stood fast in Heaven itself."

So strongly did the recent and apparently final defeat of Poland affect the clearest and purest intelligences.

Popular ballads gave the first inspiration to this brood of poets; for this was the form most remote from the classical. All the Slav nations and the Lithuanians, a race allied to the Poles, possessed national ballads in great abundance but of very unequal merit. The best is certainly the Lithuanian ballad (*Daino*), in which a race far different from the Slavs has incorporated everything poetical which it had at heart. Servia's rich, popular poetry, now known over the whole of Europe by translations and adaptations, had an influence on Runeberg in the North. That of Poland is less plastic, softer and milder, sometimes also lighter and gayer. Finally, the poetry of the steppes and the boldness and melancholy of its inhabitants live in the South Russian ballad, the *Duma* of the Cossacks.

While yet a child, Mickiewicz learnt the Polish popular ballads from an old servant. They are known in Denmark only by two or three paraphrases in Hauch's *Polish Family*. Among these is a long one which begins:—

“Why, O birch tree, dost thou stand so solitary?
On the heath in the winter and wind?”

This little song is a paraphrase, in Shakespearean style, of an ancient unrhymed popular ballad of the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

“Birch tree, birch tree! Beautiful birch tree! why art thou so sad? Does the old white frost make thy sap stiffen, or is it the wicked wind which blows upon thee? Or is it the brook which washes the earth from thy tender roots?”

“‘Sister Olga,’ says the birch, ‘the old white frost, and the wind do not hurt me, neither does the brook.’

“‘But from far, far distant lands came the Tartars, and they broke my boughs and they kindled great fires and trod down the grass, the beautiful green grass, round about me. And where they built the fire, there the grass will never grow any more. And where they rode through the crops they look like the autumn stubble.’

“‘And where their horses waded through the brooks, no

beast will drink, and where their arrows strike, the wound heals only in the grave.'"

Even before the greatest poet of Poland was inspired by the Polish national ballads, the group of poets, which was directly influenced by Brodzinski, pointed out the way to Mickiewicz, studied the Cossack *Duma*, and lost themselves in the broad horizons of the steppes. This group formed the so-called Polish Ukrainian school of poetry, whose three greatest names are Malczewski, Zaleski, and Goszczynski.

Anton Malczewski, born in 1793 in Wolhynia, died when only thirty-three years old, unappreciated, nay, unknown. He is the author of the most popular poem in Polish literature, and perhaps the one most frequently republished and illustrated, *Marja, an Ukrainian Tale*, in style recalling Byron's early shorter epics. Malczewski was the son of a Polish general, received the French culture of the fashionable world, entered the army under Napoleon, was severely wounded, resigned his position as an officer, travelled in foreign countries from 1816 to 1821, took part in the amusements and pleasures of the society of the upper classes till he lost his fortune and health, when he returned to Wolhynia, settled in the country, and was drawn into an intrigue with his cousin, the invalid wife of a neighbouring landed proprietor, whom he restored to health by a magnetic cure. She left her husband, and the two lived together for some years in Warsaw, where Malczewski, who was now very poor, supported himself by a private appointment, until the uneasiness and importunity of his companion—she could not endure him to be away from home—compelled him to resign his position. Although very neurotic himself and harassed by the exactions of an excessively neurotic woman, he forced himself to the culminating work of his life. *Marja* appeared in 1825, was unfavourably judged by stupid critics, attracted no attention, and did not sell. Malczewski died under the impression of this failure, and when his death was announced in the newspapers of the classicists, Osinski gave him these parting words: "He is said to have tried his hand at Polish poetry."

The important event in Malczewski's literary life was that he became personally acquainted with Byron in Venice. Byron was then thirty years old, Malczewski twenty-four, both very fine-looking men. They belonged to the same rank in society, were both melancholy and sensual, but the former had a martial, the latter a sensitive and delicate nature. It was natural that Malczewski should fall under the influence of the great Englishman; in return he (it is said) gave Byron the idea of his poem *Mazeppa*.

The model of the hero of *Marja* was Felix Potocki, who appears frequently in Polish literature, one of the "fated chieftains" of the confederation of Targowice; he is here idealised into a handsome and blameless knight under the name of Waclaw. As he had married a young lady of the petty nobility against his father's will, the cruel and artful father, after a pretended reconciliation, sent him and his father-in-law away on an expedition against Crimean brigands, and then caused his bride to be drowned by masked men in the moat of the castle.

By placing this event in the times of the Tartar contests, the poet has enabled himself to treat it in such a way as to give himself the opportunity of playing on all the strings, and using all the powers of which he was master. He described the freedom, wildness, and silence of the steppes of Ukraine, when he sang of the solitary Cossack who rode over the steppes to carry the Wojewode's false message of reconciliation; dwelt lyrically on the character of the Cossack, freeborn, yet so faithful to his lord; gave with force and precision the picture of the sortie of the Polish knightly band, with the ring of the trumpets and the clatter of the horses' hoofs under the Gothic portals; and painted in contrast the portrait of the solitary Marja, the ideal of the gentle devoted Polish woman, the consolation and pride of her father, who, when near him, lives for him, but who ever and always is thinking of her beloved, her husband, consumed by a longing for him, "the world of her soul," whom, in the poem, she only sees for a few hours again before she bids him an eternal farewell.

The conversations between the lovers are reproduced

with sentimental enthusiasm, the battle between the Poles and the Tartars is depicted with great impetuosity; the fundamental traits of the two different races of men stand out sharply, and we are sensible of the significance of the conflict between civilisation and barbarism in those times, when the campaigns of the Poles were directed against perpetrators of violence of the most cruel kind, and their self-defence became the bulwark of Europe. And in the next place the poet has drawn a skilful contrast between the uproar of the masked men at home, and the fury of the battle-field; the former concerned with the murder of a defenceless woman, and the latter taking place to protect that home which was being destroyed at the same moment.

The murder of the young woman is not described at all; we see that the author shrank from it. Hardly anything is made of Waclaw's meeting with the corpse, although his longing for the living woman on the ride home is very strongly emphasised. Where his imaginative power failed him, the poet understood how to conceal the want by setting the reader's fancy in action, while he opens up possibilities, suggests a great deal, leaves a great deal undetermined.

Malczewski, in his treatment of this theme of his native country, was influenced, as we cannot fail to note, by reminiscences of his travels. When he opens the second canto (like the first) with a description of the steppes, he draws a parallel between their natural characteristics and those of the beauties of nature in Italy, and declares that the depressed man who would be cured of his melancholy, must hie to the south, since the melancholy uniformity of the steppes only lays bare the wounds of the heart. When the masked men are about to enter into the castle with a song, the author is also full of Italian reminiscences. The carnival at Venice was before his eyes with its gaiety, as a contrast to this horrible mummery, and he has mingled the tones of a dirge with the gay song of the masqueraders, much as Victor Hugo would have done.

Partly in memory of his association with Byron and his

influence, partly as an expression of something Polish and personal, Malczewski introduces a mysterious page, who is present when the preparations are made for the murder, and who later meets Waclaw, and jumps upon his horse behind him, when he rides away for revenge. Of him the poet sings: "Who was he, the young man with the tearful look? Angel or devil? Was it the spirit of his misfortune? Will he add to the pangs of Waclaw? Share his sorrow? I know not! He embraces him and they disappear at a gallop." Elsewhere this young page says of himself: "I am a foreigner in my native land, my fate has left black scars on my breast. That I, so young, was compelled to eat the poisoned bread of the world, it is that which has burdened my heart and set my tears flowing. . . . When I sing a song, the melody is sad." It is plain that in a naïve and awkward manner the author here introduced his own personality into the poem, which was to survive him, and make him famous after his death.

To the Ukrainian group of poets in addition to a series of minor intellects (Padura, who became a wandering ballad singer, and Grabowski, who wrote Ukrainian melodies), belong the two Zaleski and Goszczynski, both greatly influenced by Brodzinski's lectures, with their references to the nature of their own country.

Bohdan Zaleski (born in 1802), who, after a silence of more than a generation, died two or three years ago in Paris, is not, like Malczewski, the poet of the Polish nobility, but of the Cossacks. Again and again he has praised, in verse, his beloved steppes, his Dnieperland, and in fact he has sung of nothing else. He himself says that for him the carol of the birds, the ditties of the young girls, and the songs of the men in praise of the Attaman, flowed together into a single living song, which he drank in a full draught. Mildly and elegiacally he sings the longing for the steppes, the yearning for the scenery of the Ukraine, the dangerous life and the solitary death that are the lot of the Cossack. Placable and gentle, he passes over the time when Poland harassed and oppressed the Cossacks, who rose in continual conflicts against his native land, and goes back to the peace-

ful times of the sixteenth century, which again he purges of everything grotesque and brutal. His best known poem, *The Holy Family*, a somewhat bloodless Christian idyll (which treats of the time after the Passover in Jerusalem, when Christ was a child, describes the uneasiness of the parents until He was found teaching in the temple, and paints with delicate colours the tone within and without this temple), is mainly valuable for the picture of the pilgrims' journey to and from Jerusalem in the fragrant spring, the bivouacs under the open heavens, with the frugal supper obtained from the country village, and the shouts of the children around the camp-fire—a picture which is an exact reproduction of what he had seen on the steppes of his native land, when the South Russian pilgrims went on pilgrimages to their holy places at Easter—only that there is not the boldness in the description which the subject demands, but the bland mildness of miniature-painting.

After the revolt of 1831 was ended, Zaleski emigrated, and soon after, like other greater poets, became in Paris a votary of Towianski's fanaticism. Later, he turned back from mysticism to orthodox Roman Catholicism, and wrote a long, shallow poem, in the ascetic spirit.

Severin Goszczynski (born in 1803, died in 1876) came from a village in the department of Kief, was educated as a comrade of Padura, Crabowski, and Zaleski, as a young man was mixed up in a conspiracy, took part in the revolt in 1830, and afterwards emigrated to Paris, but later came back to Austrian Poland.

His chief work, *The Castle in Kamów* (1828), which treats of a sanguinary revolt of the peasants of the last half of the eighteenth century, is a poem rich in romantic horrors, represented with an undaunted eye and a firm hand. Goszczynski was a gloomy, superstitious, martial being, with great dramatic gifts, who dwells by preference on outbursts of violent passion, scenes of murder, madness, and fire. While Byron's spleen and melancholy gave Malczewski courage to give expression to cognate traits, it was Byron's taste for wildness and violence which appealed to Goszczynski. His soul vibrated at the recollection of the war of exter-

mination waged against each other by the Polish nobility and the Cossacks ; he dwells on the hot desire and cold cruelty of the men, and the ungovernable love of the women, leading them to madness or murder in order to free themselves, and he loses himself, without trembling, in visions of the massacres of that time, of punishments such as impalement, and the red glare of burning castles.

IV

MICKIEWICZ AND GOETHE—FARIS AND THE ODE TO YOUTH—YOUTH OF MICKIEWICZ—MICKIE- WICZ AND PUSHKIN

ONE day in August 1829, two young Poles arrived at Weimar, in order, if possible, to make the acquaintance of the great Goethe. They had letters of introduction to his daughter-in-law, Madam Ottilie, whose maiden name was Pogwisch, and to him, also, from a Polish artist of high standing, the court pianist, Madam Szymanowska, of St. Petersburg.

They were well received, and were remarkably popular, not only in Goethe's house, but also in all the best society of Weimar, and they well deserved it, for they belonged to those persons who amply repay the hospitality shown to them. They were Adam Mickiewicz, at that time thirty years of age, and his twenty-six-year-old friend, Odyniec, the most enthusiastic and amiable Patroclus any Achilles could desire.

Odyniec's natural and graceful letters from Weimar show us, as in a mirror, what the widely celebrated little city was in the days when Goethe had reached his eightieth year, and, in addition, describe with a delicate gift of observation, even if not without partiality, the contrast between the two greatest poets of Germany and Poland, when one was an old man, and the other in all the vigour of his youth.

We hear the old and the young master talk, and their utterances deal with the life of the moment. The description of the first visit to Goethe is delightful, when they were admitted, after having waited for a while, with frightful beatings of the heart. We actually hear the accents of Goethe's enthusiastic exclamation concerning Madam Szymanowska: "*Elle est charmante; comme elle est belle et*

gracieuse ; comme elle est charmante !” And later, the little party at the house of Madam Ottilie, when young Odyniec was so fascinated by the charming Madam Vogel. Goethe asks him the good-natured question : “ Nun, wie gefallen denn Ihnen unsere Damen ?” and the young Pole, not yet entirely perfect in the German language, answers, smiling : “ Paradiesischen Vogel, Excellenz,” meaning to say, “ Paradiesvogel.”¹

One day when Odyniec had taken breakfast with the Vogels, and remained so long that he missed the dinner-hour in the hotel, on his return he found Adam at the table from which the cloth had been removed, with two French gentlemen. They wanted him to help them to the name of Poland’s greatest poet. But he constantly mentioned names which they rejected as wrong. One of them said : “ Non, Non ! ce n’est pas le nom ! Mik . . . Mis . . . Mik . . . Eh ! qui est donc votre grand poète ?” Mickiewicz looked significantly at Odyniec and nodded his head gently, then proposed the name of Krasinski, and, during the indignation of the Frenchmen at the ignorance of the Poles of their own literature, Adam rose and went to his room. The gentlemen, the elder of whom was the celebrated sculptor, David d’Angers, who had come to Weimar to make a bust of Goethe, now turned to Odyniec, asking if he did not know the name of Poland’s greatest poet. “ Probably you mean Adam Mickiewicz,” he replied. When David broke out : “ Exactly, exactly, it is of him that I wished to speak ;” he received the answer : “ It is he who just went out of the door.”—“ Oh, how droll, but it is so. I have his picture in a Spanish cloak.”

It was the well-known portrait of Mickiewicz, leaning against the rock Ajudagh.

David immediately seeks Mickiewicz in his room, and finds this changeable being, who was just now gloomy and indifferent, genial and gay. During the lively conversation—according to the enthusiastic description of Odyniec—Adam suddenly grows to a giant and shoots forth sparks like a Vulcan, so that David, wholly carried away, begs

¹ “ Well, what do you think of our ladies ?” “ Paraisaical birds, your Excellence ” (for Birds of Paradise). The play on the name Vogel (bird) is lost in translation.—TR.

permission to execute his portrait as a medallion. On a succeeding day he persuades the poet to read aloud to him something of his own in a French prose translation. Mickiewicz reads the poem, which is certainly the best of his short poems, *Faris*. The strongest part of it is as follows:—

“How happy is the Arab when he lets his horse leap out into the desert from a block of stone! The horse’s feet sink into the sand with a dull sound as when the glowing, red-hot steel is plunged into the water. So he swims away in the golden sea of sand, and parts the dry waves with his breast.

“Faster, even faster! Already his hoofs hardly touch the plain of sand. Farther, farther! He has already vanished in a cloud of dust.

“He is black, my steed, like a thunder-cloud. A star shines on his forehead. He spreads his withers like an ostrich wing before the wind, and his white hoofs flash lightning.

“Fly, fly, my brave horse with the white hoofs! You forests, you mountains, place, place!

“The cliffs, the watchmen of the boundaries of the desert, turn their dark faces toward me, repeat the echo of my gallop, and seem to threaten me. It is as if they shouted, Whither does this madman go? There where he is hastening there are neither any palms with their green crowns, nor any tent with its white breast for shelter against the arrows of the sun. There sleep only the mountains, there only the stars pursue their course.

“I hasten, hasten. When I turn my head, I see the shamefaced cliffs flying and hiding one behind the other.

“But a vulture has heard their threats. It is stupid enough to believe that it can make me its prey here in the desert, and it swings down through the air towards me. Three times it sighs around my head and encompasses me as with a black crown.

“‘I scent,’ it croaks, ‘the smell of death. O mad knight! O mad horse! Does the knight seek a path here? Here lies only death, here only vultures fly.’

"He shrieked and threatened me with his shining claws. Three times we measured each other with our eyes. Which of us quailed first? The vulture. I hasten, I hasten, and when I turn my head, I see the vulture far, far away like a black spot on the heavens, at first as large as a sparrow, then as a butterfly, then as a gnat, and then it vanishes in the blue of the heavens.

"Fly, fly, my brave horse with the white hoofs! Ye cliffs, ye vultures, place, place.

"Then I let my eyes run round the circle of sight as if I were the sun himself and I saw no one all around me. Here sleeping nature has never been wakened by man. Here the elements rest peacefully, just as beasts on a newly discovered island do not fear the sight of man.

"But Allah! I am not the first, not the only one here. Are they travellers or robbers, who are lying in wait? How white they are, the horsemen! And their horses are also hideously white. I fly towards them; they do not move. I shout, they answer not. Allah! It is death. A caravan long since buried in the sand, from which the storm has now blown the sand away! On the bony sides of the camels sit skeletons of Arabian men! Through the holes where eyes once sat, the sand flows out and seems to mumble a threat: The madman! why does he ride hither? He will soon meet the hurricane.

"I hasten, I fly— O death, hurricanes! place, place.

"But the hurricane comes, the most fearful of Africa's disturbers of peace, which move solitary over the sea of sand; it seems to me to be far away; it is surprised, it stops; it whirls around me as if saying to itself: What younger brother of mine among the winds is this, which, so feeble in growth and so slow in flight, ventures into my old kingdom of the deserts? It roars and comes towards me like a pyramid in motion. But when it sees that I am only a man and do not step aside, it stamps, raging, on the ground and leaps over half of Arabia. It seizes me as a kite does a sparrow; it strikes me with its whirling wings, burns me with its flaming breath, hurls me up into the air and throws me down on the earth. I jump up and fight against it,

tear apart the gigantic knots of its whirls. I bite it; crush with my teeth whatever I can get hold of in its body of sand. It would like to slip out of my arms, but it cannot tear itself loose and it grows weak. Its head falls back, dissolved in a shower of dust, and its immense corpse stretches itself out at my feet like the rampart before a city.

“Then I took breath, lifted up my eyes and looked proudly on the stars, and all the stars looked steadily down on me with their eyes of gold; for they did not see anything but me in the desert. Oh how sweet it is to breathe here, to breathe in and out, in full draught of a full heart! I breathe freely, fully, deeply. All the air of Arabia is hardly enough air for my lungs. Oh how sweet it is to look around as far as the eye can reach; my eyes are enlarged, strengthened; their gaze already pierces through the circle of vision. Oh how sweet it is to stretch one’s arms out freely, peacefully, to their full length! I feel as if I could embrace the whole world from East to West. My thoughts fly like an arrow, higher, higher, higher up yet into the abyss of the heavens. And as the bee entombs his life with the sting with which it pierces, so I hurl and pierce with my thought my whole soul into the vault of heaven.”

David gave a bound in the chair on which he was sitting modelling his medallion with a bit of wood which he had splintered from a stick which lay behind the stove. “How did you hit on that?” he asked.

“I like that,” answered Mickiewicz; “there you see the artist who wants to know the conditions under which the work came into existence, and had to come.” And he related that while still very young he had read some Oriental poems in a French translation—and how one day in St. Petersburg, as he was leaving a gay dinner party and saw that a storm was coming up, he had taken a droshky and said to the driver that he must hurry. And the driver let the horse go as fast as the reins and harness would allow, and this chasing and rattling, the sougling of the blast, the rolling of the thunder, and

more than all this, his delight in the rapid movement, awakened the melody of *Fari's* in his mind, and the poem was completed the same night.

This poem is admirable not only for its grand fantasy but for its vigorous youthful force. There is in it a pride, a self-assurance, which the poet's first readers needed; it encouraged them not to succumb. There is no Goethe-like self-limitation here, none of Schiller's sense of the distance between the ideal and the reality. It is the apotheosis of endless temerity.

And it is indeed quite in the same spirit as the celebrated *Ode to Youth*, which Mickiewicz completed soon after. This ode has been called his first political poem, although in itself it is entirely unpolitical, but, without any intention on the part of the author, it became the *Marseillaise* of the Polish youth:—

"He who as a boy has already killed serpents will as a youth be able to strangle centaurs, wrest from hell its spoil, and win laurels in heaven. Mount so high that no eye can follow. Break and demolish what intellect alone does not break. Youth! thy flight is the flight of the eagle—and thy arm leads the lightning. Let us place ourselves arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder, and surround the world with a chain, collect our thoughts to a single flame and all our souls to a single hearthstone! And thus, old world! out of thy tracks! we will thrust thee, old earth, out into new paths and peel off thy decayed shell, that the spring of thy youth may blossom on thee!"

Reading this lyric, we understand Odyniec's joyful outburst about his friend, when he says that in the conversations with Goethe, Adam's words were glowing metal, Goethe's bright, cold coins. But we also understand the amazement of the conventionally educated young Pole at Goethe's whole manner of thinking and feeling. It is specially when the conversation in Goethe's house turns on the natural sciences that both the Poles have occasion to wonder at Goethe's purely pagan contemplation, while they themselves are all fire and flame, devotion and faith. Goethe at times expresses one simple and weighty thought

after the other. Odyniec quotes some expressions, taken directly from the lips of the old man: "*La nature a l'attrait et la charme de l'infini.*—We must be consistent in our investigation, and Nature deceives no one.—Nature's treasures are enchanted; no spade, but a word discloses them to the eye.—I have often been at war with Nature, but I have always ended by asking her to forgive me." And many other similar sentences. He writes home to a friend in Poland thus: "If you are already astonished that here the talk is only of *Nature*, what will you say if I tell you that this term recurred at least two hundred times and that the word 'God' was not mentioned once? As if Nature were one and all, Alpha and Omega, its own creator and deity! This is, then, the Pantheism, which I have hitherto, God be praised! only known by report, and which I believed was only proclaimed by people who spoke against their own better convictions, and did not understand what they themselves said. But to-day it was otherwise. Everything that Goethe said, and even everything which he did not say plainly, was clear. And this clearness, this winter-light chilled me with such coldness, that even the radiant glances of my beautiful companion at the table (Madam Vogel) only struck on my heart like the rays of the sun on snow which it cannot melt. I looked inquiringly over to Adam, in order to guess his thoughts; but he sat gloomy and silent." And Odyniec rejoices that his great friend still believes, as he says in *Dziady*, that there was some one who hung the weights in the clock of the world, and that the Polish prophet thus distinguishes himself from the German Titans. For him Goethe is the wise man: "who does not know the living truth, sees no miracle," and he applies to himself with reference to Goethe the words of Mickiewicz's poem, *Romanticism*: "Emotion and faith speak more strongly to me than the eye and the telescope of a sage." And then follows a criticism of *Faust*, dismay at the creed, that God is only an emotion, which man draws from nature, and every name a mere sound. What is this Faust? Satire? Irony? Insult? and against what is it directed? he asks. Against German scholasticism, or the everlasting moral laws

and truths, emotions and ideas, traditions and aims of all humanity. He asks Mickiewicz for counsel, and we see that the latter is content with *excusing* Goethe: "We must always recognise that he never takes the offensive against religion as the authors of the last century did, but is only indifferent to the fundamental religious truths." "Consequently not eighteen, but twenty less two!" bursts out Odyniec.

So foreign was Goethe's view of life to Mickiewicz. The nature of the latter shines out in its Polish individuality when we place him by the side of the greatest poetical genius of Germany.

He was born in 1798 in the little village of Zaosie near Nowogródek in Lithuania, a descendant of an old noble family. In the spring of 1812, when he was thirteen years old, he saw the armies of Napoleon march through Poland on the campaign against Russia, Poland's white eagle united with the golden eagle of the empire. The King of Westphalia had his headquarters in Mickiewicz's ancestral home at Nowogródek. The hopeful and martial spirit of the times filled the child's soul and fertilised that of the man. He says in *Pan Tadeusz*:—

"O Spring! to have seen thee in our home that great year, thou memorable Spring of War, thou Spring of fertility! O Spring! to have seen thee with flowers in masses, with the green of the fields and woods, and the pomp of warriors in battle array, rich in miracles and achievements, and with a thousand hopes in thy lap, memory great and fair, thou fillest me even to-day. Born and bred in thralldom, as a child an exile in chains, I have never in my life known but one such Spring."

In 1815 Mickiewicz came to the University of Wilna, began to study philology, and formed an intimate friendship with the afterwards well-known Thomas Zan, the soul of the private society of the *Philomathians* and of the public society of the *Philaretans*, both of which recall the German *Tugendbund*, non-political associations having the intellectual and moral development of the students as their aim, which were, however, soon to be overtaken by the suspicion and persecuting fury of the Russian authorities.

After having made his first essays in composition in a purely classical style—like Oehlenschlaeger and Victor Hugo—Mickiewicz turned to the new European romanticism. Here, as in England, it was Bürger's *Lenore* which called forth a new ballad poetry. Itself evoked by old English ballads, the poem had so strong an influence on Walter Scott that he made his *début* with a translation of it. A version by the Russian poet Zukowski made so deep an impression on Mickiewicz that he adopted an entirely new style and composed a whole series of ballads, one of which, called *The Flight*, even treats of the same theme as *Lenore*. These poems, which are founded upon local popular traditions or Slav superstitions, are now romantic in the tone of popular ballads, now vigorously dramatic like the admirable song of the *Wojewode*—immoral as a poem in prose by Merimée—or again humorous, like the description of the terror of the devil at a termagant in *Madam Twardowska*.

Mickiewicz had had a first "unhappy love," as it was called, a passion on which the poets of that time (Byron, Heine, and many others) lived poetically for a long time. He had already fallen in love in Nowogródek with a young girl of good family, *Maria Wereszczaka* (celebrated in his verse by the name of *Marylka*), who preferred another to him. In the condition of erotic desperation, which he was now experiencing, Byron became his only reading, and he wrote the oldest parts of *Dziady* (the Festival of the Dead), which, in connection with an old Lithuanian custom of placing food and drink in the churchyards for the dead on All Souls' Day (the 2nd of November), introduces peasants, shepherds, an exorcist, and a great number of spirits on an imaginary stage. Among these spirits is a suicide, the victim of unhappy love. In other fragments this suicide—called Gustavus, after the hero in Madam de Krüdener's sentimental romance *Valérie*—appears as a ghost, who is condemned every year, on the 2nd of November, to suffer his agony of mind again. All these fragments, full of romantic ghosts and overstrained emotion, are without interest to the foreign reader. Werther and Werther's offspring appear on the scene again. Immediately after, however, came the little heroic

poem, *Gracyna*, which treats in fresh verse an old Lithuanian motive of patriotism and female bravery, and in this there was nothing obscure or mawkish ; the form is clear, and the intellectual impulse vigorous.

After two or three years' residence in Kowno as a teacher, Mickiewicz returned to Wilna, where events soon revolutionised the calm life he had hitherto led. The murder of Kotzebue by Sand had helped on the reaction in Germany. It was awakened at the same time in the great neighbouring land.

Alexander's liberal tendencies came to an end with the year 1823. The authorities began to hunt out attempts at rebellion on the part of the students. Nowosilcow, who had fallen into disgrace, after having squandered in excesses what he had scraped together in all sorts of ways, set himself to discover a conspiracy in Poland, and went with his whole staff of spies to Lithuania. All the monasteries in Wilna, eight in number, besides several other public buildings, were made into prisons. At the end of October, 1823, Mickiewicz, Zan, and all their friends were arrested. The young men were confined in cells, but could see each other in the evening in the cloisters. How long they were there they did not rightly know ; they had no almanac and received no letters ; there were wooden shutters on the windows, so that it was difficult to distinguish the morning from the evening. Thomas Zan, who took upon himself all the blame of the innocent meetings of the *Philomathians* and *Philaretans*, was treated the most severely, and suffered especially from hunger. He was sent to Orenburg, and was not pardoned until 1837. The long exile changed his views of life ; he, who had been a freethinker and an oppositionist, entered the service of the Russian state as a mystic and ascetic. After ten months of detention, Mickiewicz was sent to St. Petersburg, and, when he was assigned to service in one of the governments of the interior, he chose Odessa. When he came thither there was no vacancy for a teacher. Then (in company with the subsequently celebrated Rzewuski, who tried his hand at authorship at the request of Mickiewicz) he made a journey to the Crimea, and in his case, as with

many others of the best Slav poets, the first view of the mountain landscape and the southern scenery sharpened his appreciation of nature. What the Caucasus was to be for Pushkin, Lermontow, and Tolstoi, that the grand panorama of the Crimea was for Mickiewicz. His *Crimean Sonnets* have justly been given a chief place among his poems.

In Moscow, where he obtained a post in the office of the governor-general, he wrote *Wallenrod*, as well as *Gracyna*, taking his subjects from the pagan days of Lithuania, and the contest of its princes with the Teutonic Knights. The hero, historically a grand master of the order, who, himself ruined, brought the whole order to ruin, was made a Lithuanian by Mickiewicz; in order to withstand the national enemy more effectually he insinuates himself into the enemy's camp, pretends to be of his party, becomes a leader of his army, and thus with one blow avenges his countrymen. It is a glorification of dissimulation and treachery in the service of the fatherland—a Macchiavellian idea incarnated in a Byronic hero. Interwoven with this fundamental theme there is a sentimental love story in the romantic style.

The censor, who read the poem without understanding it, allowed it to be printed, and this, in conjunction with the *Crimean Sonnets*, soon caused the name of Mickiewicz to be in everybody's mouth. The best Russian society was opened to him, not only in Moscow but in St. Petersburg, whither he speedily received permission to travel. It was the Princess Zeneide Wolkonskaya who introduced the poet to the Russian aristocracy, where he became a favourite and was greatly loved and admired. Many ladies took lessons of him in Polish, and the Princess Wolkonskaya became his translator. The *Sonnets* and *Wallenrod* were now read as zealously in Russia as in Poland, and the author, somewhat enervated by the amusements of society life and the favour of the ladies, for a long time only wrote trifles. He had a great desire to see foreign countries, and it was the influence of the Princess Wolkonskaya which obtained him a passport for an indefinite time; with this he left St. Petersburg in May, to see the wide world, by way of Weimar.

We have seen him in personal contact with the greatest poetical mind of Germany. A year before he sought out Goethe he had entered into personal relations of friendship with the most eminent Russian authors of that period. Mickiewicz and Pushkin were of the same age. They came to occupy parallel positions, each at the head of one of the two great Slav literatures. Both commenced as disciples of Byron, both with advancing years became more and more national. A fundamental difference between them lies in the fact that Pushkin, after the controversial and rebellious attitude of his early youth towards absolute power, allowed himself to be won over by the personal good-will of the Tzar Nicholas, and lost all faith in the ideals of his youth; while Mickiewicz, to his death, continued faithful to his first political enthusiasms and hopes.

The memory of their intercourse is preserved in Pushkin's poem, *The Bronze Horseman*, and in the fourth part of Mickiewicz's poem, *St. Petersburg*, which bears the sub-title *The Monument of Peter the Great*.

Mickiewicz has here preserved the impression of a conversation which the poets, one day in 1829, the very year before the fates of Russia and Poland were divided, had in St. Petersburg, during a shower, both covered by Mickiewicz's cloak, at the foot of Falconnet's celebrated monument to the Tzar. The verses are as follows:—

“One afternoon two young men stood hand in hand, seeking shelter from the rain under the same cloak. One of them was a pilgrim who had come from the West, an unknown victim to the power of the Tzar; the other was the poet of the Russian people, celebrated through the whole North for his songs. They were not old acquaintances, though they knew each other well, and a few days before had become friends. Their souls, which had raised themselves high above the barriers of the earthly life, resembled two twin mountain peaks in the Alps, which, separated by a furious mountain torrent, are hardly sensible of the roar of the force which separates them, and bend their lofty peaks toward each other. The pilgrim stood lost in deep thought, when the Russian poet, in a low voice, said to him:—

“To the first Tzar, who created this magnificent city, the second Tzarina raised this memorial.¹ The Tzar, already cast in bronze of heroic size, sat on the back of his Bucephalus, and waited till a place should be prepared for him and his horse. But there was not ground enough for him to stand on in the land of his birth. So they sent a messenger over the sea for a pedestal for him. And from Finland's rocky shore a huge granite block was torn away, and, at the bidding of the Tzarina, swam over the waves, sprang on shore, rolled on, until, in the great city, it cast itself down at its ruler's feet. There it lay firmly, and then the bronze Tzar dashed forward, the knoutocratic Tzar in his Roman toga; he spurred his horse so that with a leap he mounted on the granite block, steadied himself on the edge, and reared up in the air.

“Not thus in old Rome does Marcus Aurelius, that favourite of the people, sit on his horse, he who first made his name famous by driving out spies and accusers, then, after having punished the tormentors at home, chastised the highwaymen on the Rhine, and the barbarians on the Pactolus, and peacefully returned to the Capitoline. Beautiful, noble, and gentle is his brow, from which one idea shines, that of the welfare of the kingdom. He raises his right hand majestically, as if to give his blessing to the whole host of his subjects; the other hand rests on the reins and restrains the ardour of his steed.

“But the Tzar Peter gives his horse the reins; we see that he has ridden everything down in his way. Now he has sprung up on the upper side of the rock. The foreleg of the horse already plays in the air; the Tzar does not hold him back; he pulls at the bit; he must fall and be crushed. It has already stood thus for a century without falling. Thus a waterfall issues from a mountain, is caught by the frost and stiffens into ice, hanging over an abyss.

“Yet when the sun of freedom rises and a breath from the West warms these frost-bound regions, what will then become of the waterfall—and of tyranny?”

As various internal signs show, the words are really the

¹ The inscription is: “Pietro primo Catharina secunda.”

words of Mickiewicz, not of the Russian poet into whose mouth he has put them. Pushkin for his part afterwards wrote a poem about this meeting in St. Petersburg, which was not printed till four years after his death in 1841, and which, since at that time it was impossible to mention Mickiewicz's name in Russia, merely bears the superscription "To M." In it is the following passage :—

"He was our guest. Among a race which was foreign to him, he cherished no hatred to us and on our side we loved him. Gentle and as a friend he sat at our table. We exchanged with him pure dreams and poems. He was inspired by heaven and looked down upon life as if from above. He often spoke about the days of a great future, when the nations should forget their dissensions and be united in a single great family. We listened eagerly to his prophecies. Then he passed on to the West and our blessings followed him on the way. But now our peaceful guest has become our enemy; to flatter the fierce multitude who listen to him, he sings the praise of hatred in his verses. His voice comes to us from afar. O God! give peace to his embittered heart."

There is no shadow of any personal ill-humour in this utterance, in which Mickiewicz's later position is judged from a Russian point of view. A still warmer sympathy inspired the article which Mickiewicz published in the French newspaper, *Le Globe*, on receipt of the news of Pushkin's death. In spite of all the attraction towards each other which they experienced at a certain period of their lives, and in spite of their common descent from Byron, they were and continued to be contrasts in so far as Pushkin in his whole being was an aristocrat, a poet for the few, a scorner of the many, while Mickiewicz, on the other hand, was a spirit wholly given up to his nation. For Pushkin, to be national meant reconciliation with the authorities, a rupture with trust in freedom and in the future of Europe. On the other hand, Mickiewicz became national only by emancipation from all connection with official Russia and by an optimistic enthusiasm, which stands in the sharpest contrast to Pushkin's constantly increasing satiety. In his later productions Pushkin con-

stantly complains that the dreams of his youth have left him, dreams of love, of freedom, of honour. And he exclaims, "I see no goal before me."

The strength of Mickiewicz as a productive genius was that he was not for a moment in doubt as to his aim.

Pushkin was Russian as Mickiewicz was Polish. But as Michelet has somewhere expressed it, if I am not mistaken, at that time Russia was not as yet a nation, only an administration and a whip. The administration was the German and the whip the Cossack. But while Russia was a government without a nation, Poland had the comparatively better lot of being a nation without a government.

V

THE POLITICAL SITUATION DETERMINES THE MANNER OF TREATING ALL SUBJECTS, THE POINT OF VIEW FOR LOVE AND HATE, MATERNAL AND FILIAL EMOTIONS, THE RELATION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE PEOPLE, BETWEEN GENIUS AND THE SURROUNDING WORLD, BETWEEN EMOTION AND REASON, RELATION TO RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

AS soon as we have observed how the three factors, national character, Romanticism, and the political situation, determine, develop, exalt, humble or stamp the nature of these poets as men, we easily discover how these same motive powers invariably determine their productions. But since Romanticism is the same in all countries, and the national character manifests itself quite differently in different times (for instance quite otherwise now than at that time) it appears that the political situation is the important factor.

It determines the point of view from which the life of man is beheld, the point of view for all the spiritual problems, which are treated, the character of the masculine and feminine leading persons, and the entire symbolic and allegorical form of the poems.

The study of Polish literature leaves no doubt that it is the poetico-political dream life, which modifies the spiritual condition and the spiritual questions that are contemporaneously treated in European poetry, because it brings them within the national angle of vision, wholly excludes some questions and brings forward certain new ones, which are not treated in any other place.

For instance, let us consider the subjects on which the poetry of Goethe and Heine, Byron and Shelley, Hugo and Musset turns, and see what form and shape they assume here.

Such subjects are the whole domain of love and hate,

the description of all the passions in their conflict and battle with duties, the question of the power of the human spirit to penetrate and understand the universe, of the justification and future of religious faith, of the relative right of the different ranks in the war of classes, of the right of genius and its meaning for its nation and for humanity, the different views of life of two generations succeeding each other, &c.

Take an emotion like love between a man and woman, and see how it is treated by a Polish poet of that period.

In the narrative and dramatic works it often has a wild and criminal, but never a sensual character. But when the poets either express themselves in their own name or through heroes, behind whose masks we catch a glimpse of their traits, it is amazing how abstract and incorporeal love becomes in their hands. It is always emotion, never desire. It is in unison with this that the sorrow of love—and there is more of the sorrow of love than of its joy in their poetry—is forced into the background and overcome by other less personal emotions, like political enthusiasm or patriotism. In Mickiewicz's *Dziady*, the hero, under the impression of such a revulsion of feeling, even gives himself a new name. He designates the day on which he was imprisoned (which corresponds with the day on which the author was imprisoned) as the day of the death of his old *ego*, as his new birthday, drops his peaceful name, Gustavus, and assumes the new martial one, Conrad. *Gustavus obiit MDCCCXXIII Calendis Novembris. Hic natus est Conradus, &c.* That is, the name of the hero of Byron's *Corsair* replaces that of Madame de Krüdener's emotional romance. The incident is typical. There is generally a Gustavus who dies in order that a Conrad may arise. And it is also in harmony with this that the Polish women in poetry are so unearthly. We can never imagine them engaged in the daily work of life. They are either heroines, who, high on horseback, rush into the tumult of the battle, or they are ethereal phantoms, visions from a better world, angelic manifestations, whose being is pure soul.

There are in one of Wordsworth's poems these well-known lines about a young woman whom he admires:—

“ A creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food ;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

A being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A traveller betwixt life and death ;
 The reason firm, the temperate will,
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill.”

Such an earthly and simple ideal of woman, as it may be called, is never found here, because the national keynote and the secret political thought of the poets demand to see her either in the guise of a patriotic Amazon, or as the personification of the national genius.

Thus woman is greatly admired, much glorified, but little observed or studied here. Neither as a sweetheart, nor as a daughter, nor as a sister, nor as a mother does she stand out purely as a human being, with strongly individualised qualities. The picture immediately becomes ideal, and is always kept within the definitions of a species. Love is generally described without any shadows, filial affection is often exalted, as in Slowacki's *Lilla Weneda*, by all the cruel sufferings which a hostile prince makes the father endure ; and the mother appears as one whose emotions are hardened early, and whose vocation consists in accustoming the son to bear with firmness whatever hard fate life may have in store for him. This is the “ note ” of Mickiewicz's celebrated poem, *To the Polish Mother* : “ Take thy son in time into a solitary cave, teach him to sleep on rushes, to breathe the damp and vitiated air, and to share his couch with poisonous vermin. There he will learn to make his wrath subterranean, his thought unfathomable, and quietly to poison his words, and give his being the humble aspect of the serpent. Our Redeemer, as a child, played in Nazareth with the cross on which He saved the world. O Polish mother ! In thy place I would give to thy son the toys of his future to play with. Give him early chains on his hands, accustom

him to push the convict's dirty wheelbarrow, so that he shall not grow pale before the executioner's axe, nor blush at the sight of the halter. For he will not go on a crusade to Jerusalem, like the olden knights, and plant his banner in the conquered city, nor will he, like the soldier of the tri-colour, be able to plough the field of freedom and water it with his blood. No! an unknown spy will accuse him; he must defend himself before a perjured court; his battlefield will be a dungeon underground, and an all-powerful enemy his judge. The blasted wood of the gallows will be the monument on his grave; a few woman's tears, soon dried, and the long talks of his countrymen in the night-time, will be his sole honour and memorial after death."

The masculine leading characters in these poems, like romantic heroes in general, are nationalists, and moreover passionate and martial natures. But there are traits which distinguish them among all others.

In the North in those days our poets went to antiquity to find heroes. The most celebrated of them, the heroes of Oehlenschlaeger, are types of the most vigorous youth of those times, light-hearted, eager for battle, fond of travelling, in the main good-natured, not without transitory relations with mermaids and terrestrial women. Tegner's Frithiof is something of the same kind in Swedish, a knight whose relation to the political events of his time is extremely weak, almost nil.

They do not in any respect resemble the heroes of the contemporary Polish literature. These are all much more weird and all pursue politics. If, for instance, we compare Tegner's *Axel* with Mickiewicz's *Gracyna*, two poems whose whole form is borrowed from the poetic narratives of Byron, and which further have this in common, that in both a woman fights in the dress of a man, then the difference is especially this, that in Tegner's poem everything is wanting which, even if ever so feebly, could sound like an exhortation or warning to the poet's contemporaries. On the other hand, in Mickiewicz, whose scene is laid in pagan Lithuania, the action is as follows: Prince Litawor, dissatisfied with his father-in-law Witold, called on the Teutonic Knights for help.

His wife Gracyna, who has not been able to keep him from this defection, arbitrarily commands that the German messenger shall be denied access to Nowogródek. And when the wrathful allies direct their campaign against Litawor instead of against Witold, Gracyna puts on her husband's armour, passes herself off for him, and goes to battle against the Germans. Although the victory falls to the Lithuanians—thanks to Litawor who hastens to the spot at the right time—the princess herself is mortally wounded by a shot from a German gun. Her slayer is thrown upon the funeral pyre with her body, and Litawor casts himself into the flames. The lesson which the author seems to wish to teach to his countrymen is therefore this: A wife, in spite of her husband and prince's command, may dare to send away allies, deceive the army, expose the country to danger, carry on war, lose the battle, provided only that she has the national honour in view; everything is allowed, when the highest object is at stake.

Or let us take another group of leading masculine characters which have their origin in Byron's heroes, the young men of Alfred de Musset. One and all they are placed in this dilemma: the possibility of distinguishing themselves by achievements, now that the Napoleonic era is over, seems to be closed to them. They accordingly throw themselves into debaucheries, and in a life which excites and stupefies the senses, but weakens the energy, they become more or less unfit for political, artistic, or martial action.

This internal contest between the inclination to amusements and the impulse to action never appears in the Polish poets. Here the conflict is always between the inclination to action on a large scale and some kind of obstacle which lies before the individual, and which he is not in a position to get out of the way.

Just as little as in Victor Hugo, are the heroes here young representatives of the new stratum of society which, as if inspired by the recollection of the French revolution, rises in bitter contest against the higher classes. The hero here is never a democrat from principle, to say nothing of a republican. In social aspects the whole of this poetry has a

conservative stamp. Even Slowacki, who passes for the poet of the future, is no serious exception. The only work in which class contests play an important part, Krasinski's *Godless Comedy*, is so far from showing the advocate of democracy in a heroic light, that he even appears as a figure of a Caliban-like roughness, who is not even fully certain of his rights and convictions.

And finally if we compare the leading characters in the Polish poets with those of Byron's own poetic youthful narratives, which had such an extraordinary influence upon the Polish poets, we find that there is indeed a certain resemblance in the violence of mind, and the wild and melancholy despair; their life is a chain of sufferings, disappointments, passions, crimes, and imprecations, but they never have the trait, which passed from Byron's own nature into that of *Childe Harold* and *Lara*, of despising their own countrymen, their own country. When they become traitors to it or fight against it—like Litawor, like Wallenrod—it is in a transitory fit of passion, which is immediately repented of, or the treachery is feigned for a short time only with the intention when it comes to the point, of serving it the more energetically. Nay, even when, like Slowacki's fantastic king, they subject the nation to sufferings and torments without number, it is only from a kind of higher love, which under the mask of cruelty is the motive power of their method of treatment. They would harden the nation as the smith hardens the metal on his anvil, they would by harshness force the nation up to a continually higher plane of development. And the poet's intention is never, like Byron's, to nettle or rebuke a circle of readers, but to arouse a nation, to teach it that a national existence is not too dearly bought by the torture of a whole generation. In order to arouse his nation he would "beat on the heavens as on a brazen shield."

The schism between the great individual and the nation, which is so characteristic of the life and poetry of Shelley and Byron, never manifests itself here; this is, indeed, partly because the poets never exalted themselves so high above the average intellectual condition of their people, its

religious and political daily life, as Shelley, for instance, but also quite as much because of their feeling of homogeneity with the people whose only organs they were.

And as they felt themselves one with the people, so also they saw the people collectively. This is the reason why they never tried to describe the opposition between two successive generations, a theme which generally supplies such a fruitful material for poetry, and which Kraszewki afterwards made his own. Mickiewicz, indeed, glanced at the subject as a theme of the past in his dramatic fragment written only in French, *Jacques Jasinski ou Les deux Polognes.*" In *Pan Tadeusz* he makes the imitation of foreign customs and the praising of foreign countries the subject of mild derision; he contrasts therewith the love of the beautiful natural scenery and old usages of his native country, but he never desired to use as a subject any contrast between the methods of thought of two generations.

And on the feeling of the indissoluble connection of these poets with their people depends also the existing conception of poetic genius. In those times they never conceived of the poet in Poland as an artist, but as a seer. That poetry is above all an art, according to some the first of all arts, that its function is the representation of the life of nature and of man in a perfect and irreproachable and therefore imperishable form, was seldom suggested. If by exception one of these poets undertook such a peaceful and comprehensive reproduction, as did Mickiewicz in *Pan Tadeusz*, he personally valued this work of his very little, and did not even understand its exceptional worth. They conceived of poetry above all as inspiration, as a divine frenzy, which discloses itself in hallucination and improvisation, and as a fact these poets were almost all eminent improvisadores and subject to illusions. In a certain sense it can therefore be said that Conrad's improvisation in *Dziady*, which gives an intensified conception of Mickiewicz's own improvisation, marks the apogee of the romantic poetry of Poland.

There is only one among their poets, Krasinski, who is alive to the dangers of the nervous exaltation, which resulted

from this ideal. In his melodrama, *The Godless Comedy*, he pointed out vigorously the weakness of character which was its bane. The poet is regarded by the others as the chosen leader of the people, not "myriad-minded" in a general sense as Shakespeare calls the poet, but exclusively representing the millions of men who make up his people. In this sense we must take what Conrad says of himself: "I am called Million, for I love and suffer for millions of men."

The greatness and beauty of this interpretation of genius depend on its narrowness. Genius here is intensified patriotism, which is thought to make a man inspired and far-seeing, and which by putting in his mouth the words which charm, secures his ascendancy over other minds. In the improvisation, Conrad says:—

"My love does not rest on a single being like the insect on a rose; nor on a family nor on a century. I love the whole nation. I have embraced all its past and coming generations, pressed them to my heart as a friend, a lover, a bridegroom, a father. I would give my fatherland life and happiness, make it admired by all the nations of the earth if I could. But the power for that is wanting to me, and I stand here armed with all the might of my thought—and also with that power which men do not give, the feeling which burns within me as in a crater and sometimes breaks out in words. . . . I was born a creator. I have my powers from the same source as Thou, God, hast thine. . . . Is it Thou who hast given me my mighty penetrating gaze, or did I myself take it there where Thou didst take Thine? In the moments of my full strength, when I lift my eyes towards the driving clouds or the sailing bird of passage, then I only need to will, and with a glance I bring them to a standstill, catch them as in a net . . . only men, corrupt, frail, even if immortal, serve and know me not. . . . But I will lead them, not with weapons, for one weapon protects from another—by the feeling which is in me. Let men be for me as the thoughts and words with which, when I will, I construct poems. It is said that it is thus that Thou rulest. . . . I would have power. Give it to me or show me the way to it. My soul

is incarnated in my native land, and in my body I have all the soul of my native land. My country and I are one only. I look on my unhappy country with the same eyes with which a son sees his father broken on a wheel; I feel the pangs of a whole nation, as a mother feels in herself those of her child."

This is not the careless northern conception of men of genius as the elect of fortune, who, by a miracle, easily find what inquirers seek for in vain. But Conrad is just as far removed from the brooding heroes, the Manfreds or Fausts, with whom George Sand in her time compared him. For the joys and sorrows of a life of thought are far from occupying the prominent place in the poetry of Poland which they hold in that of Germany or England. The slow and toilsome struggle of human thought for freedom, for strength to cast aside the cerements of prejudice, its attempt to penetrate the secrets of the universe, which is elsewhere described with confidence in thought as the guiding power, and with faith in its final victory—all this appears here only as foolhardy exertion, or an outburst of tragic despair.

For to all these poets the answer which religion gives is the final answer. They sometimes doubt, they never reject. Even when they lose faith in some dogma of Catholicism, even when they make attacks upon the Church and its priests, or show sacred things in a comic light, they do not dissociate themselves from the Christian conception of the world.

Thus we saw from Odyniec's letters during his residence in Weimar, those admirable descriptions of the intercourse between men of genius and talent, and beautiful women, that, however great an admiration the author cherished for Goethe as artist and scientist, he understood nothing whatever of his philosophy of life, and even if Mickiewicz understood this better, it is clear that he did not feel a greater attraction to it. Odyniec's reflections on *Faust* are as feminine as those of Mme. de Staël in her *Germany*, and Mickiewicz was not able to see anything in Goethe's nature-worship and natural piety but avowed indifference

to revealed religion. Krasinski also expresses himself wholly in the same spirit when, in the preface to *Dawn*, he says that "the phlegmatico-delirious atheism of German philosophy has resulted in chaos," and when in the bold anticipatory attempt to give a positive system of fundamental definitions and laws of the universe, he only sees the negation of a revelation.

The Polish poets did not share the rationalistic belief of the greatest of Germans, because they vaguely felt that with this belief no firm immovable bounds were prescribed to the human understanding, and that, as a necessary complement, it circumscribed the possibilities of and the capacity for action. They wanted a belief in the energy of youthful enthusiasm as it appears in the *Ode to Youth*, a belief in miracles of courage and achievement which presupposed belief in miracles as a link in the government of the world, and therefore necessarily regarded reason as a quality of very great limitations. Since they wished to have a right to demand the improbable, the impossible of youth, they had necessarily to secure for themselves an enclosure for the supernatural in space as well as in time.

Finally, they felt strongly, with regard to Goethe, that the religion they needed was not a religion of contemplation like his, but a religion of action and suffering. Goethe's pantheism therefore could not compensate for their inherited circle of ideas, which incited to deeds, and surrounded torments with glory.

Nor could the otherwise predominant influence of Byron's poetry disintegrate this circle of ideas. They encountered in him no opposite convictions, only doubts and questions. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that Shelley in his lifetime had received the recognition he only obtained half a century after his death; then the Polish poets would have found in him the combination which nowhere met them — Goethe's lofty and sure conception of nature in combination with the practical enthusiasm, the strong hope, and the belief in the miracles of activity, which they themselves required, and which to their sorrow they missed in the old man at Weimar; for

Shelley was eternally young, and, like them, appealed to the youth of the mind. If they had come under his influence instead of Byron's, the cause of intellectual freedom in Poland would have a less difficult battle to fight now. Without wounding the religious feelings of their readers, they would have been able to transform them so far, that the inevitable schism in the future between the ideas of this century and the emotional life of the nation, would have been less deep.

It is especially in Conrad's great monologue in *Dziady*, that Mickiewicz has tried his powers of formulating a theory of the universe. The enormous extent of human suffering has brought Conrad to doubt the existence of God. From the first he feels himself as strong as a god. The poets in those times liked to regard themselves as gods. This is the confusion of ideas which appears in all countries when Romanticism culminates. The poet who, in imagination, can stop the flight of the birds and the course of the stars, can it is argued, really do so, since in this fantasy of his he has a divine power; for, according to the romantic teaching, imagination is the decisive quality, that which God and man have in common; the creative power of the divinity is imagination.

And it is in this feeling of his supposed power over nature that Conrad asks of space if there is a higher power than his own: "Show thyself, and let me be sensible of thy superiority!" He cannot solve the contradiction that divinity is a quiet spectator of the sufferings of life on earth. "I suffer, I rage!—and contented and secure Thou rulest continually, judgest continually, and it is said that Thou art never wrong. Listen to me, if it be true, that which I learned even in my cradle, and have believed in with childish faith, if it be true that Thou lovest, that Thou lovedst the world, because Thou didst create it, . . . if a heart, which feels, is not a freak of nature, which is produced by accident and dies before it comes to maturity; if in Thy kingdom emotion is not an illegal thing; if millions of unhappy beings, who call for help, are anything else in Thine eyes than an equation, which it

is difficult to solve, then . . . Thou art silent! I have unveiled Thy inmost being—with a voice which will resound from generation to generation I cry out into the universe, to the utmost borders of creation, that Thou art not the world's father, . . . but (the voice of the devil) its Tzar." We see that the poet has taken care that the reader should not confound his own way of thinking with that of the hero, for it is the devil who here prompts Conrad, and the irritation under which he speaks is imparted to him by invisible demons, who fill the air about him.

Thus, but even more distinctly, Krasinski, when in *The Godless Comedy* he gives expression to doubts, which he himself had perhaps felt at times, puts them on the lips of distracted men and women. The strongest outburst of doubt which appears in Krasinski's works is uttered in a madhouse. The sick Countess says: "Christ can no longer save us. He has seized His cross with both hands and thrown it down into the abyss. Do you hear this cross, which has been the hope of millions, rebounding in its fall from star to star? It breaks, it is splintered, and with its dust it obscures the universe."

So we also see that the only one of the poets who really believed in philosophy, the brave lyricist *Stephan Garczynski*, the war-poet of the revolution of 1831, the favourite and imitator of Mickiewicz, the writer who, as the disciple of Hegel, seems personally to have separated himself most widely from the church creed, in his principal work *Waclaw*, makes his hero, it is true, attack monks and priests with harsh and angry words, but still in such a way as to leave religion undisturbed by the assault. He blames the monks because they destroy the capacity for thought and action by their teaching, but he himself believes and prays; it is in the name, not of reason but of emotion, that he declares himself to have outgrown ecclesiastical forms.

Garczynski's hope or wish as man and poet was to bring his world of emotion into harmony with his reason, to reconcile the kingdom of the heart with that of the mind. The fourth canto of his *Waclaw*, entitled *Science*, shows that,

unlike the German teacher, whose disciple he was, he did not see salvation and the highest life in thought and its development in science. The reaction from theory to practice, the enthusiasm which leads from contemplation to action, seem to him to comprise the complete truth of human life. According to his conception, only in the contest for practical ideals does the opposition between emotion and reason cease to be a strife. And the personal preference of the poet, as it appears from the poem and as was to be expected, lay not on the side of rational understanding but on that of enthusiasm.

Finally, we note the same trait in Slowacki, even when in *Beniowski* he makes his great and passionate onslaught upon the Jesuits. Here he goes so far as to prefer a fatherland without a future to a fatherland under the guardianship of the Jesuits. He overwhelms Rome, nay, even the Pope with taunts, but he is so far from calling Christianity itself in question that he cries to Poland, *The Cross, that is thy Pope.*

No outburst could be more significant of the emotional life of those days. In the revolt of 1831, the Polish priest, crucifix in hand, marched at the head of the troops, and was in reality the power which attached the common people to the cause of independence. But this Catholicism was not that of Rome. For when in the same year languishing Poland, praying for help, stretched out her hands to the Pope, he referred the Poles to the Tzar, demanded obedience and submission, and stamped the rising as rebellion. Again there was no opposition from the Pope, when in 1833 the forced conversion of the "United" communities who had joined the Catholic Church took place. Dragoonades of Cossacks were employed on the Russian side; they surrounded the villages and knouted the priests. Then the Russian pope, with his whip in his hand, held a review of his new parishioners, and in military colonies the stubborn were put to death as rebellious soldiers. It was officially stated on the Russian side, as regards this amalgamation of the united congregations with the Greek Church, that it was to be looked upon as a "happy union, which had cost no

tears! Only gentleness and persuasion have been used." And the Pope, the one sovereign whose duty it was to do his utmost for Poland, looked on without protest. We can understand how Slowacki, in 1841, could at once express his aversion for the Pope and his confidence in Church and Cross.

Nevertheless it is very suggestive that, at least until the last, when he was enthralled by Towianski, he was sceptical and wavering in his faith. The preface to *Lambro*, with its attack upon the poets of the religious school and its keen sense of the false and artificial in the theories of Friedrich Schlegel, is a proof of this. Neither is it without significance, that in the tragedy of his youth, *Mendog*, as well as in his poem *The Monk*, the conversion from paganism or Mohammedanism to Christianity, whether from calculation or belief, is represented as bringing misfortune, calling forth the execration and hatred of the nearest relatives. In any case, this is especially peculiar to Polish Romanticism, that the political defection resulting from the abandonment of the old customs of the nation or the community, is described as so unpardonable that no rising to a more lofty religious conception of life can atone therefor.

VI

THE TWO PRINCIPAL THEMES OF THE LEADING POETS MICKIEWICZ, SLOWACKI AND KRASINSKI; THE FIRST TWO, THE POETS OF VENGEANCE, KRASINSKI, THE POET OF LOVE

AMONG the romantic poets of Poland there are three whose names are written in letters of fire: Adam Mickiewicz, Julius Slowacki, Zygmunt Krasinski.

If we glance over the collected works of these three great romanticists, we shall find them dwelling especially on two themes: they depict horrors and they sing of hope.

In other words, a double current flows through the Polish poetry of the years 1820–1850; it describes sufferings which lead to thoughts of revenge, and sufferings which tend to produce spiritual development and purification. And, whereas in other respects we must generally put Mickiewicz by himself on one side, Slowacki and Krasinski as two united friends on the other, here it is Mickiewicz and Slowacki who come nearest each other in spirit, who willingly and frequently occupy themselves with thoughts of vengeance, while Krasinski stands opposed to them as the advocate of universal brotherhood.

The inclination to that which is tragical and heart-rending is common to all the poets; they either hasten towards a bloody catastrophe like Mickiewicz in *Gracyna*, Slowacki in *Hugo*, or the whole poem is taken up with scenes of destruction.

Julius Slowacki, born in 1809 at Krzemieniec, the son of a professor of the history of literature, lost his father while he was a little child, but through his whole life maintained the tenderest and most confidential relations with his mother, who was soon married a second time to the Professor Beku of Wilna, who was assailed in Mickiewicz's *Dziady*. Spoiled by the daughters of his stepfather, loved by his mother,

the boy grew up in a life of fancy, which resulted in an exclusively poetic bias and an all-absorbing artistic ambition which became the stimulus and spur of his life. He became the typical romanticist, who took it for granted that a romantic life was the true condition for the production of genuine poetry, and who never wasted time or thoughts on giving his planless career a material foundation of work or effort. All deference to the useful was hateful to him.

His strong imagination was, in its essence, not so much creative as musical, picturesque, and decorative. In fact, his talent was a great gift of language. He impresses by the melody of his verse and his wealth of imagery.

He was educated at the University of Wilna, which at that time could offer no further nourishment to his mind ; it was already laid waste by reaction. As compensation he imbibed the exalted patriotism of the period, and all the ecstatic sentiments of the romantic frame of mind. Byron laid hold upon him as upon so many other poets, and nowhere did the English poet come upon a better prepared or more congenial spirit. Byron's way of thought and Byron's desperate characters became almost immediately his own. He too, as a youth, experienced an unhappy love for a young girl (a daughter of Andreas Sniadecki), a cultured maiden a good deal older than himself, who would not listen to the story of his flame, and on this account he suffered his first infernal pangs of wounded pride. His stepfather died. Slowacki in 1829 entered the office of the Polish Ministry of Finance in Warsaw as clerk, when the revolt broke out and so took possession of him that he wrote several lyrical poems in the revolutionary spirit. It seems that his enthusiasm was speedily cooled, and in the year 1831 we find him suddenly leaving Poland under circumstances which made it impossible that he should ever return. He travelled to foreign countries with a passport from the revolutionary government ; at Dresden he was commissioned to carry despatches to London, and journeyed from London to Paris, where in the following year he printed his first volume of poems, containing dramas and narratives in the Byronic style.

Mickiewicz also soon came to Paris. He was already widely celebrated, and Slowacki, a beginner, consumed with an unsatisfied ambition, full of self-esteem and thirst for recognition, regarded his great rival with mingled feelings. His first poems did not cause any great sensation, yet some lovers of Polish literature after reading his drama, *Mary Stuart*, recognised in him certain qualities lacking in Mickiewicz. Half in doubt and half inclined to overestimate himself, he burned to hear the opinion of Mickiewicz. In the preface to the third volume of his poems he wrote: "Neither encouraged by praise, nor disheartened by criticism, I throw this third volume down into the silent abyss which has swallowed the first two." His pride prevented him from seeking Mickiewicz. But common friends brought them together, and then followed a reciprocal exchange of civilities and compliments. Soon after Slowacki became a member of the Polish literary society of which Mickiewicz was president. Their pleasant relations were nevertheless soon disturbed. Acquaintances carried to Slowacki Mickiewicz's dictum that his poetry resembled a wonderful temple, but that there was no God in it. And to Slowacki everything about Mickiewicz soon became disgusting, "from his crumpled shirt to his papistry." He even denied that Mickiewicz had any poetic ability. Then the third part of *Dziady* appeared, in which the author rises higher than ever before, but in which, unfortunately, Slowacki's stepfather Beku, whose memory was dear to him and precious to his mother, was represented as Nowosilcow's lickspittle, struck by lightning as a punishment for his baseness. From this time forth Slowacki hated Mickiewicz. He even thought of challenging him. "O mother!" he writes, "there is nothing left for me but to encompass thee with such an effulgence of honours that the arrows of others cannot strike thee. God has inspired me. It will be an equal fight with Adam."

In the first as in the later poems which he publishes, his poetry shows a basis of agony, a frame of mind apparently induced by a vision of annihilation.

Naturally, with him as with other poets his mood depends

mainly upon the harmony which exists between an artist and his public. Wherever such a sombre seriousness has mastered all minds as that which fell upon the Poles after the unsuccessful revolution, a poet simply to be heard, in order not to be pushed aside as a buffoon who misunderstands the common temper, must necessarily in his art reflect suffering, discontent, wrath at terrestrial or celestial injustice, and depict numberless unsuccessful attempts to prevent wrong, or at least to avenge outraged right. He does it because generally he is subject to the same influences as his people, receiving all impressions far more keenly and sympathetically.

This disposition appears in its most abstract form in such works as Slowacki's *The Plague in the Desert*, which is justly celebrated as a tragic description of a calamity recalling that of Niobe. In 1835 Slowacki made a journey from Paris to Italy by way of Marseilles, later a journey from Naples to the East, which took him to Greece, Egypt, Nubia, Syria, and from which, in 1837, he returned to Italy by way of Cyprus. On the way to Syria, at El Arish, he was compelled to lie in quarantine in the middle of the desert. To this sojourn was due the poem of the plague-stricken family of El Arish, in which an Arab tells in simple, eloquent words how he has seen his four sons, three daughters, and his wife torn away from him by the plague one after the other. This narrative, which, in contrast to several others by the author, has not a line too many, but is characterised by an antique severity and Biblical grandeur, has obtained such high recognition, not only because of its artistic excellence, but because of its harmony with the melancholy of its readers. More than one found the picture of his own trials and losses in the poem. With a vague feeling that there was a certain bond, a certain point of union between the subject and the reader, commentators have endeavoured to give a symbolical explanation of the episode, seeing allusions to the loss of their fatherland, and their grief thereat, only to be arrived at by the most far-fetched interpretations. The truth is that without any symbolism whatever, the reader might well see, in the family visited

by the plague, a group of beings whose fate was akin to his own.

Slowacki's *Arab* is a poem of the same character. It depicts the abstract mania for annihilation, the Satanic desire to spread death and destruction, and destroy the joy of life, wherever it is found. The being, who from an ambush shot the arrows of the plague against the unfortunate Arab father and his children, might be supposed to have such thoughts.

Nevertheless there is more here than the mere poetry of suffering. The poetry of cruelty is combined with it, a theme which recurs again and again. Slowacki especially revels in the description of horrible cruelty. It came near home. For these poets had experienced great cruelty in their lives, and fancy is receptive above all things; it gives out the pictures with which it has been filled. The cruelties with which all Slowacki's dramas and most of his narratives swarm, betray how deep an impression the tortures he experienced in his life, or had heard or read about, made upon his mind. Several of the fiercest traits of cruelty in his poems are founded on actual historical incidents. Ivan the Terrible, like the leading character in *Król Duch*, on one occasion nailed the foot of a messenger to the ground with his sword, without diverting him from the delivery of his message, just as happened with the old bard in the poem. And the prototype of many such traits in Slowacki must be sought for in contemporary events, which made his blood boil and inflamed his fancy.

All the poets dwell insistently on prison scenes, scenes of banishment, and harsh punishments. Descriptions of sufferings, long speeches that narrate and describe cruelties, take up nearly the whole of the third part of Mickiewicz's *Dziady*, in which the author has delved so deeply into his own personal experiences and fearlessly brought upon the stage contemporaries under their real names. He has never elsewhere achieved such scorching realism of effect. And strangely enough he thought that this was genuine Romanticism. In his poem, *Romanticism*, he began by rejecting dead truths: "If you would see wonders full of the truth of life," he says, "have a heart and look into hearts." Shortly

after he defined the essence of Romanticism thus : "When the romanticists write they have the naked truth before them, while the classicists are content with marionettes ;" here he proclaims distinctly the right of the poet to seek the naked truth in his nearest environment, however lowly and simple it may seem to be. Finally, he upholds the same doctrine distinctly in this poem, in which after the manner of Dante, he praises and condemns his contemporaries without respect of persons.

The poet describes how a young gentleman relates the story of Chikowski in a drawing-room in Warsaw. He, one of the handsomest, gayest and most spirited young men of Poland, recently married and happy, disappeared one day from his home. It was said that he had committed suicide, no one understood why. The police caused it to be rumoured that his cloak had been found by the Vistula. Years passed by ; one gloomy and rainy evening some prisoners were brought from the Carmelite monastery to the Belvedere. An intrepid young man in the crowd of spectators shouted out : "Prisoners, who are you ?" and among a hundred names the name of Chikowski was shouted back in answer. His wife was informed, and she sent petition after petition to the government, but could learn nothing. Reports floated about Warsaw during the three following years, during which no news of him was received, that he was being tortured, but that he would confess nothing, that he was kept awake at nights, that for whole months he had salt herring to eat without any water to drink, that he was given opium to frighten him with visions and spectres, that he was tickled under his arms and on the soles of his feet, and more—until his name was forgotten among the names of the other persons who had disappeared. Then one night there was a ringing at the door of his wife's house ; outside stood an officer, a gendarme, and a prisoner whom they delivered, demanding a receipt. They threatened him with uplifted finger : "If you dare to talk !" and went away. He was changed, had become stout, but with the unhealthy fat of the prisoner. The wrinkles of half a century were on his forehead. He did not seem to recognise his old friends who

came to greet him, but looked at them with an absent gaze. "All that he had suffered in the days when he was tortured, and all that he had thought in the nights when he lay awake, was revealed by his eye in a second. This eye was frightful to look at, it was like the panes of the grated windows of a prison, the colour of which is greyish like a spider's web, but which, seen from the side, has rainbow reflections and in which we discern a bloody rust, mirrored lights and dark spots. They have lost their transparency, but their surface betrays that they have long been exposed to dampness, neglect, dust and darkness." When he was asked a question, imagining himself still in prison, he replied, "I know nothing, I know nothing."

A young lady (the feminine Providence of the emigrants, Claudia Potocka) asks: "Why do you not treat such subjects in your poems?" A count answers: "Old Niemcewicz may use them in his memoirs." A man of letters exclaims: "That is a frightful story." Another, "Tragic, on my word." A third finally says: "We listen to such things, but who would read them? It is outrageous to bring eye-witnesses upon the stage instead of mythical persons. And then besides there is an inviolable and holy rule of art. It is that poets must not treat of an incident till . . . till . . ." A young man: "How many years are we to wait till a fresh fact has become as dry as tobacco and as honey—sweet as a fig?" The first: "There are no fixed rules." The second: "A thousand or two thousand years. *Besides, you could not say in a poem that he was fed on salt herring.*" An impression may be obtained from this quotation of the force and clearness with which sufferings are depicted here.

Or read Sobolewski's comment on the twenty kibitkas (sleighs) full of young students and schoolboys of Samogitien, which he saw drive away to Siberia to the beating of drums, while the crowd stood like a wall before the prison behind guards with fixed bayonets. Every feature here is full of life. Take for example these lines: "Poor children, you all have shaved heads like recruits, and fetters on your feet. The youngest, who was only ten years old,

complained he could not lift his chains, and showed his bare and bleeding feet. The police officer asked what he complained of, and being a humane person, himself examined his chains. 'Ten pounds! that is according to the regulation,' he said. Then Janczewski was brought out . . . torture had made ugly, thin, and dark, him who a year ago had been the gayest and handsomest of them all. He looked down from his kibitka like the Tzar from his pedestal of rock. His glance was proud, dry, clear; he seemed to wish to console his comrades, and his smile seemed to say to the assembled multitude: 'See how little misfortune touches me!' . . . He noticed that people wept when they beheld his chains, so he lifted them up in the air and shook them to show that they were not too heavy for him. The kibitka set off at a gallop, he waved his hat, crying: 'No! it is not all over with Poland yet!' and the crowd hid him from my sight; but for a long time his arm could still be seen, raised up against the heavens as a background, and the tattered black felt hat waving like a banner of woe above the smoothly-shaven young head, the proud and spotless head which from afar bore witness to the innocence of the victim and the shame of the executioners."

Just as colour has its complement, and the chord of the seventh its resolution, so this theme always arouses in Mickiewicz and Slowacki the motive of vengeance.

We can follow this most clearly in the third part of *Dziady* throughout the different songs which the prisoners sing.

First comes Jankowski's song: "In order that I may become a believer, I must first see Jesus and Mary chastise the Tzar who defiles my country. So long as the Tzar lives, and Nowosilcow drinks, and I myself go in fear of Siberia, so long must not any one expect me to say: Jesus! Mary!"

Then follow Kalakowski's ironical verses: "What does it matter if I must suffer banishment, hard labour, chains, if only as a faithful subject I am allowed to labour for my Tzar!—when in the mines I have to hammer diligently and skilfully, I say to myself: This grey iron will some day become an axe for the Tzar.—If I get out of the

house of correction, and take a young Tartar woman to wife, I say to her: 'Bear us a Pahlen for the Tzar! [Pahlen, Paul I.'s murderer.]—If they send me out as a colonist, and I become hetman or boyar, then I will sow my field with hemp, only hemp, for the Tzar.—Of hemp a halter is made, a grey halter, which can be interwoven with silver; perhaps an Orloff may throw such a scarf around the neck of the Tzar.' [Orloff, murderer of Peter III.]

Finally Conrad sings: "My spirit was silenced, my song lay in the grave, but my genius smelled blood, and with a shriek it rises like a vampire, eager for blood. It thirsts for blood, for blood. Yea, vengeance, vengeance! Vengeance on our executioners! Vengeance, if God will, and whether God wills or not!"

We see that the poetry of vengeance has its germ here. If God will not avenge them, then the Poles must avenge themselves.

Vengeance as here pictured almost always wears a mask, lurks behind dissimulation, strikes unexpectedly, dealing a blow long prepared. The fundamental thought is always that he who is persecuted by God and men is entitled to use all means, and that the salvation of the fatherland is the supreme law. Thus Gracyna is wholly right when in disobedience to her husband and lord she follows the higher call to prevent any false alliance with the hereditary enemy. And *Wallenrod* contains the same idea in another form: here it is not a false alliance but a feigned one! Against the foreign enemy hypocrisy and treachery are legitimate weapons. Thus Wallenrod as the Master of the Order prolongs the campaign against the Lithuanians until thousands of Germans perish. When Lithuania is freed, all lost for the Order, and he himself condemned to death by the secret council of the Knights, with proud contempt he throws aside the mask of hypocrisy, tramples the cross of the Grand Master under foot, and jubilantly confesses the sins of his life.

It was overlooked by Mickiewicz himself, though not by his critical rival Slowacki, that in the doctrine which *Wallenrod*

proclaims, a justification might be found for every apostasy. At any rate, misunderstanding and abuse did not frighten him. The ballad *Alpujarras*, which is sung at the great banquet, certainly gives the clearest expression to his train of thought. Almansor, Prince of the Moors, is forced to surrender Granada, because the plague is raging in the city; he makes his way through and flies. The Spaniards are sitting at a drinking bout, when the guard announces that a stranger begs admission for an important message which he brings. He is an Arab. "Spaniards," he cries with humble mien; "your God will I serve, your prophet will I believe in, your vassal will I be." They recognise Almansor. The chief presses him to his heart and gives him the brotherly kiss; all the leaders embrace him, one after the other. Then he suddenly becomes faint, falls to the ground, twists his turban, and exclaims triumphantly, "I am sick of the plague!" With his pretended submission he has brought the plague to the Spaniards in his brotherly kiss.

So we also find Slowacki again and again singing of the curse, which overtakes treachery practised towards fellow-countrymen—Jan Bielecki, Waclaw (the same Felix Potocki who appears in Malczewski's *Marya* and afterwards in Slowacki's *Horsztynski*)—and, varied again and again, a glorification of deceit or surprises practised against the enemy (*Lambro*, *Kordjan*). *Lambro* is the story of a Greek, who becomes a brigand and renegade in order the more safely to strike at the Turkish perpetrators of violence—an inhuman figure, the model for which is hardly to be found in life, but in the Oriental poems of Byron. *Kordjan* is a Pole, fantastical and nervous, far too refined and delicate for the bloody task he assumes, an attempt to kill the Tzar Nicholas—a character who, although inspired by Mickiewicz, is built up on a basis of personal observation. The drama as well as the poem both deal solely with the thought of vengeance.

It is against this fundamental idea that Zygmunt Krasinski directed his most important works. His birth and his family relations brought him to evolve a less simple doctrine from the spectacle of human suffering.

Zygmunt Krasinski was born in Paris in 1812 of Polish parents, who belonged to the highest aristocracy. His father entered Napoleon's army as a young man, served till he became imperial adjutant, and after Napoleon's abdication brought back the Polish regiments as a general. He became a senator and Woyewode, opened a grand *salon* for scientists and artists in Warsaw, in which classical thought had one of its strongholds, and soon appeared as one of the most faithful servants of Alexander and Nicholas. He made himself conspicuous in a most sinister manner in 1828 as a member of the court of the Diet established to try political offenders in Poland, he alone voting for severe sentences on the conspirators. Just as he was brave in battle, so he showed himself timid, easily flattered and tempted by the Russian Government in time of peace.

This high public position of the father—he succeeded Paskiewicz as Governor in 1856—was a potent factor in the son's life. In spite of his absolute disagreement with his father he felt himself bound to him by inviolable piety, and thus deprived of all freedom, not only in his personal relations but in his literary career.

When only sixteen years old, he endured an insult for his father's sake which he could never forget. When in 1829 one of the popular men of Poland, Bielinski, the President of the Court, was buried, all the students of the University of Warsaw attended the ceremonies in a body, and left the lecture rooms empty. By his father's command, nevertheless, Zygmunt Krasinski was obliged to go to the University as usual, on which account his comrades, on the next day, fell upon him and turned him out. The scene is described in Krasinski's *Unfinished Poem*: "I see the old building, in whose halls a thousand of the same age sit, and the teachers speak from their chairs. I see the stairs which wind about like a serpent. Is it not so? I was a brave little fellow, although as yet not full grown and not strong. I came from home, went proudly past them all, knowing indeed that they hated me, but not why. They surrounded me and pressed upon me from all sides, and shouted: 'Young noble! young noble!' as if it were a

disgrace to know where my ancestors are buried. I seized hold of the iron railing, but they pulled me by my hands, my feet, my cloak. . . . Then thou didst manifest thyself to me, my good genius, saying: 'They are unjust. Be thou more than just, forgive them and love them.'"

Fate had dedicated him to suffering, and he did not see in the injury he had suffered, an invitation to play the part which the injustice of his countrymen and the temptations of the rulers laid in his way. Just as little did it commend itself to his refined and temperate nature to make himself the favourite of the mob by a breach with his father. Both as a youth and as a man he paid an exaggerated filial respect to this father, who, as a deserter, was covered with Russian honours and Polish curses. For his sake, during his whole life, he continued to be an anonymous poet, and the consciousness of having a father in the opposite camp made it impossible for him to proclaim the gospel of vengeance in his poems. He thus dared to defy one of the dogmas of his nation, and a fundamental doctrine in the literature of the time, since he proclaimed the impotence of hatred in a nation passionate by temperament, martial by instinct, and besides, so tortured and desperate, that all the products of its imaginative power hitherto had been not only sombre as a clouded heaven, but traversed by the lightning of vindictiveness. Touching the productions of the other poets, he says in *Wallenrod*: "Murder and fire, that is what you Waidelots [Lithuanian bards] love to sing about, you leave honour and the pangs of death to us. From the cradle your song winds itself like a serpent around the breast of the child, and pours its poison into his soul; the insane yearning for glory and the insane love of country." But none of them had such a feeling of responsibility as Krasinski. He suffered terribly when he heard of the cruel punishments inflicted on young students for having circulated his forbidden poems.

Krasinski again describes only sufferings. In *Irydion* he represents the suffering which a foreign rule actually caused, and gives a picture of ancient Greece some hundreds of years after it was conquered by Rome. He depicts

the love of the most eminent Greeks for Hellas, as the land to which Europe owes all noble culture, the land which first taught her the significance of political freedom, and portrays the hatred of Rome, the cruel and haughty master of Greece, from whom her half barbaric culture was borrowed. The drama shows us the national spirit of Greece, pondering on a great work of revenge, after centuries of oppression and dishonour, at a time when the terrible abuse of power of Caracalla and Heliogabalus had excited the minds of all the better sort of people.

Irydion is the "Son of Revenge" child of the avenger; he is the son of the great Greek Amphilochos, who himself belonged to a generation for which revenge did not seem ripe, but who had impressed upon Irydion and his sister, Elsinoe, his two children by a northern woman, hatred of Rome. When he blessed them while they were sleeping as little children, he said to them: "Remember to hate Rome and avenge yourselves; thou, Irydion, with fire and sword; thou, Elsinoe, with all a woman's shrewdness and perfidious art."

And in his palace in Rome Irydion lives solely for the idea of revenge, and in its service unites his charming sister to the weak and miserable boy who is the head of the State. Elsinoe bends Heliogabalus like a reed, and Irydion explains to the emperor that it is not his rival, Alexander Severus, but the city of Rome itself that is his enemy. He should wage that war against the city which Nero began with the conflagration, and then transfer the imperial throne to Byzantium. And Heliogabalus is fascinated by this poetry of annihilation on a vast scale, which captivates him as it has captivated better men than he—Polish poets, for example.

Krasinski justly felt that for most of his countrymen of that time Poland had gradually become only a name, which called for vengeance. He saw the danger to the nation's sense of right, which lay in its having come to believe that everything was allowable as against the oppressor. Even in the poem to the Polish mother, falsehood, hypocrisy, and fraud were painted as virtues. Thus no

one had regarded it as wrong that the hero of Ostrolenka, General Bem, had professed Mohammedanism simply in order the better to strike at Russia in the Turkish service. So no one at a later period regarded it as wrong in Wielopolski that, in an open letter to Metternich after the massacres in Galicia, he preached the merging of the people in Russia, in the hope that union with the most powerful enemy would procure vengeance on the two other enemies, Austria and Prussia, which a new Attila might then crush.

Krasinski was alarmed at this national feeling, which lived only in hate, at this patriotism, which was even stronger than death, but always carried death in its mouth. He wrote *Irydion* to warn his people.

At the last moment all Irydion's schemes miscarry, because of the distrust he arouses in the Christian bishops. Elsinoe demands the death of Heliogabalus, to avenge herself for what she has suffered by being his mistress ; then she kills herself. Alexander Severus conquers, and becomes emperor. And Irydion would fain die, when Massinissa—his bad tutelary genius, the Waidelot of *Wallenrod* on a grander scale, and moreover, a kind of incarnation of the horror of antiquity for the institution of Christianity—carries him away in space. In the distance he sees from a height on the coast, Rome, "showing its marble in the sun as the tiger shows its white teeth." And a fear comes upon him that Rome will not be destroyed as his mother had foretold. Massinissa then informs him that the Goths, it is true, will trample Rome into ruins, but that the Christians will then create a new Rome, which will take the warriors of the north in leading strings, and once more rule all the nations of the world.

Krasinski wished to show his people, in one grand example, that the mere thirst for vengeance produces nothing durable, and that hatred is unfruitful. In addition, perhaps, as Klaczko has keenly observed, he wished to hint that the enemy may find a new lease of life, where it is least to be expected, as Rome found the basis of its second period of greatness in Christianity, the successors of the Teutonic Order a like fundamental force in the Reformation ; it may

be Russia will find it in the civilisation of our century, the very force which would seem to be a threat against Russia.

The epilogue transports us to the papal Rome of 1830. Irydion wanders with Massinissa over the ruins of old Rome, and among those of its later splendour. The ruling power is represented by two old men in purple mantles, whom some monks salute, and call princes of the Church. They are seated in a carriage with a pair of old black horses, and a servant stands behind with a lantern. These are the successors of the Cæsars! says Massinissa. Irydion no longer hates Christianity, whose fate now seems to him as sorrowful as formerly did that of Greece.

At last Irydion hears a voice, which calls to him: "Go north, in the name of Christ, and stop first in the *land of graves and crosses*. Thou mayst know it by the silence of its warriors, and the melancholy of its little children. Thou mayst know it by the huts of its poor, destroyed by fire, and the palaces of its exiles, which have been laid waste. Go there and dwell among the new brethren whom I give to thee. This shall be thy second trial. For the second time thou shalt see the object of thy love pierced through, and in the death struggle, and the sufferings of thousands of souls shall be contained in thy heart."

The moral, then, is this: Your task in the land of graves and crosses, as in the land of temples and cypresses, is not the making war upon your enemy by all means, but the conquering him by intellectual and moral superiority. Krasinski's doctrine, proclaimed again and again, is this: Not to expect better times from the evil we may wish to inflict upon our enemies, but from the good we develop in our own minds. What he fears is the poison which thralldom engenders and secretes in the soul. To him, Siberia, the knout, and tortures, are less terrible than to see the national spirit poisoned in the thirst for vengeance.

Consequently we have this radical contrast:—

On the one hand, the recklessness of despair, which sanctions everything, if it only strikes the tyrant: the act of Gracyna, the fraud and treachery of Wallenrod, the plague-kiss of Almansor, Kordjan's attempt at murder.

On the other, when Paskiewicz is ruler in Warsaw, a voice which warns against unproductive hatred, and which, when it is answered with derision on account of its supposed cowardice, is content again and again to point at efforts towards a higher culture, by which to eclipse, and thus to conquer the enemy through intellectual development and purification.

There are two great leading principles in the battle of life. The one is earthly, and the other spiritual. The former has the more immediate results of an act in view, the latter the more remote. The former is to this effect: Since life is full of horrors, then make thine enemy harmless by annihilating him. For this, all means are lawful. The other is to this effect: Since life is full of horrors, diminish their number by returning hate with love! Love thine enemy, disarm him by a self-esteem, which only unfolds itself in love, and which, stronger than death, everywhere awakens life! The former is Conrad's and Kordjan's, the latter is the principle of the great Anonymus. Perhaps they are both equally unpractical, as between nation and nation. The one, because vengeance continually calls forth vengeance anew, the other because love, as the only principle, is inadequate, in a world where the gentleness of the lamb does not protect it against the teeth of the wolf.

But it is these two principles, both equally romantic, which permeate the romantic literature of Poland.

There is also a third unromantic and unsentimental principle; it teaches neither to exterminate nor to love your enemy, but to work more and better than he. The future belongs neither to the avenger nor to the apostle, but to him who labours with genius.

VII

THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET IN POLAND—THE TYPE OF HAMLET CONCEIVED ON RADICAL LINES BY SLOWACKI, AND ON CONSERVATIVE LINES BY KRASINSKI

THERE is yet another variety of the avenger, with much of the type of the prophet in it, which has not yet been touched upon, and which must be treated apart. It is that group of figures in the romantic literature of Poland which may be called Hamlet characters. In the literature of the Renaissance there is this one great type from which modern poetry may be dated, Shakespeare's Hamlet, springing originally from the English sense of reality and the scepticism of Montaigne. As Hamlet is the first philosophical drama of the more modern times, so also here for the first time the typical modern man appears with his keen sense of the contest between ideals and surroundings, of the disproportion between strength and task, with all his variety of spiritual being, delicate feeling and cruelty, his wit without merriment, his everlasting procrastination and furious impatience.

Much of the most modern of the poetry of the nineteenth century derives from Hamlet. In Germany Goethe interprets him in Wilhelm Meister, and this remodelled Hamlet calls Faust to mind. When Faust was transplanted to English soil, Byron's Manfred springs up, a new, if remoter, heir of Hamlet. But in Germany the Byronic nature even assumes a new and Hamlet-like (Yorick-like) form in Heine's bitter and fantastic wit, in his hatred and caprice and intellectual superciliousness. The generation to which Alfred de Musset belonged in France, and which he described in his *Confessions d'un Enfant du Siècle*, nervous, inflammable as powder, with its wings prematurely clipped, without the field for its thirst

for action, and without energy in its actual field, forcibly reminds us of the type. And perhaps the best of Musset's masculine characters, Lorenzaccio, becomes the French Hamlet, skilled in dissimulation, languid, brilliant, gentle with women, yet wounding them with harsh words, morbidly desirous of remedying the unimportance and foolishness of his life by a deed, and acting desperately, uselessly, and too late.

Hamlet, who centuries ago had been young England, and who to Musset for a long time was young France, afterwards became the name by which the Germany of the fifties christened itself. "Hamlet is Germany," sang Freiligrath.

In the development of Polish Romanticism there comes a time when its poets are inclined to say: Hamlet is Poland.

It was the result of kindred political circumstances that the character of Hamlet even at this same time, but still more twenty years after, came to dominate another Slav literature, the Russian, where we can trace it from the productions of Pushkin and Gogol to those of Gontsharof and Tolstoi, while in Tourgenief's works it really occupies the chief place. But we shall see that the peculiar point in the Hamlet consciousness, the vocation of vengeance, is wanting here, because all the emphasis is laid on the disagreement between reflection and energy in general.

On the other hand, we find marked traits of Hamlet's nature in all the Polish political geniuses. From their youth up, they all stand in his position. The world is out of joint, and it is to be set right by their weak arms. High-born and noble-minded as they are, they all feel like Hamlet the inward fire and outward impotence of their youth; conceiving the conditions which surround them as one supreme horror, they are constituted at once for dreaming and for action, for musing and for recklessness.

Like Hamlet, they have seen their mother, the country to which they owe their lives, dishonoured under the hand of crowned robbers and murderers. The court, access to which is sometimes open to them, frightens them as the court of Claudius frightened the Danish Prince. These

descendants of Hamlet are, like him, cruel to their Ophelia, they abandon her when she loves them best ; like him, they suffer themselves to be sent away to foreign lands, and when they speak they dissemble like him, clothe their meaning in comparisons and allegories. Finally, what Hamlet says of himself holds good of them: "Yet have I in me something dangerous." The peculiarly Polish feature is, that what weakens them and hinders them is not their self-consciousness but their poetry. While the Germans of this type are ruined by self-consciousness, the French by debauchery, the Russians by sloth, self-irony, or self-abandonment, it is imagination which leads the Poles astray, and causes them to live a life at variance with the true life.

It is true that the Hamlet character has many different sides. Hamlet is the doubter, and, committed to inaction by all sorts of scruples and considerations, is a man of brains, who now acts nervously, now unmanned by nervousness does not dare to act ; finally, he is the avenger, the man who dissembles in order to be better able to avenge himself. Every one of these aspects is developed by the Polish poets.

There is little of Hamlet in the personal character of Mickiewicz, if we except the almost insane transport at an idea which appeared in him at the moment when Towianski entered into his existence. From this time forth the liberation of Poland became a religion, a certainty for him. He wanted to write to Nicholas, to convert Rothschild, in order to win them to his cause. The chair of Slav history and literature, which the Monarchy of July had bestowed on him at the College of France, was taken from him, when his lectures came to consist merely of the development of fantastic patriotic theories (1844). But he possessed energy. In 1848 he tried to form a regiment of Poles in Italy. During the reign of Napoleon III., who, according to his belief, was to realise the Messiah-promises of the great Napoleon, he filled for some years the modest position of librarian at the Arsenal, which the Emperor had given him, but during the Crimean war he travelled to Turkey to raise a Polish legion against Russia. He died there, in the midst of these efforts, in November 1855.

Nevertheless there is a glimpse of something like Hamlet in several of the characters he created—Wallenrod, Gustavus, Conrad, Robak. Gustavus speaks the language of significant insanity, Conrad loses himself in philosophical reveries, Wallenrod and Robak dissemble or disguise themselves in the service of vengeance, and the latter, like Hamlet, kills the father of his beloved.

The Hamlet nature plays a far greater rôle in the character of Slowacki. He was wild and gentle, unruly and ivy-like, in life clung to his friends, in art to predecessors, lived not with his whole person, but with his head, in his ideas and his fancy. His imagination is richly coloured and melodious, decorative and sonorous, but he is wholly lacking in the plastic sense. It is on this account that Krasinski's advice to him is so excellent: "Put granite under your rainbows."

Practically, he was greatly influenced by his consciousness of rivalry with Mickiewicz. His poetical writings are mainly governed by this. In the history of the Middle Ages we read of anti-popes. Slowacki belongs to the race of anti-popes. His real originality is that of form. So far as characters and fundamental themes are concerned he is almost wholly limited by the models he imitates, and the rivals he strives to outstrip or contradict. Thus we can trace all the more plainly the general tendencies of Polish literature in his receptive nature.

His drama, *Kordjan*, written in sight of Mont Blanc, which seemed to Slowacki "a carved statue of Siberia," is founded on the coronation conspiracy against the Tzar Nicholas. The conspirators here hold their meetings in a church at night, and the young Polish nobleman, Kordjan (the man of heart), offers to commit the murder of the Tzar. Nothing could be more Hamlet-like than Kordjan's answer to the President's exclamation, "Thou hast a fever, thine eyes are wild!"

"KORDJAN.—It is nothing, old man! It is my hair which has become white and consumes my skull. I feel every one of my hairs suffering the pangs of death; but that amounts

to nothing. . . . Plant two poplars and a rosebush on my grave—streams of tears will water them, and I shall have hair on my head again. . . . Hast thou a pen? I would fain write the names of those who will lament me—my father, dead; my mother, dead; all my relatives dead; she, worse than dead. . . . Therefore I shall leave none behind me. They are all with me! And the gallows will be my monument.

“THE PRESIDENT.—Kordjan! There is the note thou gavest the conspirators; take it, burn it, and be free of thy word!”

“KORDJAN.—One, two, three! Carry arms! Sentinel on the castle! Take care! What foolish words! they are to teach one how to walk. Old man: you irritate me with your peaceful countenance: I cannot forget that I shall never be old. If I ever surround thee with my flock of children, then spit on my white hair, I permit it. (*The clock strikes eleven.*) It is heaven which calls me.” (*Hastens out.*)

Kordjan's entrance into the castle is now described in a great fantastic scene. He keeps the watch for the night, and, with his carbine on his arm, he goes towards the emperor's bedroom, while the voices of imagination and fear speak to him incessantly. Imagination says: Listen to me! I speak to thine eyes! Fear says: Listen to me! I speak in the beating of my heart, until walls and columns become serpents and sphinxes, the floor lives, the plants have ears, the flowers move, and long funeral processions wind from the church into the castle; caskets, sceptres, crowns, corpses, and ever more corpses, while the church bells chime. Kordjan falls down on the floor with his arm around his bayonet. He was not equal to the deed. The Polish tendency to phantasmagoria intervened between him and his action.

Not less Hamlet-like is the earlier, finely worked out scene in Kordjan, in which Kordjan as an emigrant has an audience with the Pope, the same Gregory XVI. who in July, 1832, in a letter to the bishops of Poland, had condemned the Polish revolution as rebellion against the

legitimate ruler, and praised the *high-minded* Tzar who—thank God!—had restored order and peace.

The scene takes place in the Vatican. The Pope is sitting in his chair. On a stool by his side is his tiara. On it a red-breasted parrot. A chamberlain opens the door for Kordjan, and announces in a loud voice: "Count Kordjan, a Polish nobleman."

"THE POPE.—Welcome, descendant of Sobieski." (*He extends his foot. Kordjan kneels and kisses it.*) "Poland is constantly overwhelmed with benefactions from heaven, is she not? Daily I thank God in the name of this happy land. For the emperor, who is really like an angel with an olive leaf, ever has the best disposition towards the Catholic religion. We ought to sing *hosannas*. . . ."

"THE PARROT (*shrilly*).—*Miserere*."

"KORDJAN.—I bring you here, holy father, a holy relic: it is a handful of the earth, where ten thousand men, children, old people and women were murdered . . . without even the sacrament of the altar beforehand. Treasure it, where you treasure the presents of the Tzars, and in return give me a tear, only a tear. . . ."

"THE PARROT.—*Lacrymæ Christi*."

"THE POPE.—. . . To-morrow you shall see me in all my majesty distributing blessings to the city and the world. You shall see whole races on their knees before me. Let the Poles pray to God, reverence the Tzar, and hold fast by their religion."

"KORDJAN.—But this handful of bloody earth, does no one bless that? what shall I answer to my friends?"

"THE PARROT.—*De profundis clamavi, clamavi*."

"THE POPE.—. . . My son! may God lead thee, and grant that thy people may tear the germs of Jacobinism out of their bosom and wholly and entirely devote themselves to honouring God and cultivating the earth, henceforth holding nothing in their hands but psalm-book, hoe, and rake."

"KORDJAN (*throwing his handful of earth into the air*).—I throw the ashes of the martyrs to all the winds. With a sorrowful soul I return to my native land."

“THE POPE.—If the Poles be conquered, thou canst be sure that I shall be the first to excommunicate them. May religion increase like an olive tree, and may the people live in peace in its shade.

“THE PARROT.—*Halleluja!*”

And if in Slowacki we find the radically disposed type of Hamlet, the conservative Hamlet meets us in Krasinski, who for so many years was Slowacki's friend and supporter.

The poet was not able to develop his views of life from within with perfect freedom. A certain reserve was imposed upon him by his position as his father's son and by a heritage of aristocratic tendencies. Often and often his personality was plainly in an inward strife, constantly suppressed, with the doctrine he proclaimed and the view of life he advocated—a view of life which has all the advantage of an elevated mode of thought hostile to the mob, but which is never young, not even in the first youth.

The hero of *The Godless Comedy* has more than one trait in common with the most celebrated of all Danes. He has Hamlet's sensitiveness and force of imagination. He strives towards an ideal, but yet stands outside reality, poetising his life. He is punished for the absurd difficulty of his character by the insanity of his wife, just as Hamlet is punished for his pretended madness by the real insanity of Ophelia. But this Hamlet is torn by a more intense inward conflict, and devoured by deeper doubt than the Hamlet of the Renaissance. The latter doubts whether the spirit, whose cause he espouses, is anything more than a phantom. When Count Henry shuts himself up in the *Castle of the Holy Trinity* he is not sure that the Holy Trinity is more than this. He has no faith, only the need of faith. He is conservative and clerical, not from conviction, but from the fear that the forces that are besieging this castle are only destructive forces. For political reasons he supports a religious system as to which he hears from his coarse antagonist, Pancratius, the democratic leader (a character like Renan's Caliban), the harshest truths, without being able to refute them. When Pancratius unfolds his Utopias to him, it is of little use that

he has the answer ready, "You do not yourself believe in them"; when the latter to his remark about the human race, all being saved through Christ, can retort: "Why then has He not helped men in the two thousand years of misery and wretchedness which have elapsed since His death? Are you created in the image of man or in that of the nursery?"

This pang is peculiar to the Polish Hamlet.

Krasinski cherished no illusion as to a speedy resurrection of the kingdom of Poland. He regarded the whole of western European civilisation, including that of Poland, as doomed. Nay, even Christianity seemed to him to be dying, although he himself always wrote in a Christian spirit. When he made his appearance as an aristocratic conservative in his poems, it was with the agonising feeling that he was defending the bad for fear of the worse. The adversities of his private life and national misfortunes combined to crush him early. From his thirty-fourth year he was a broken-down old man, afflicted with nervous debility and a disease of the eyes. The thirteen years he had still to live were an uninterrupted struggle with death.

It has been already stated that Hamlet was, so to speak, introduced at the court of Claudius by him. The episode occurs in his beautiful poem the *Temptation*, a typical example of the symbolical form of representation in which the political conditions of those days compelled the poets of Poland to express themselves. The poem dwells plainly enough on personal recollections of Krasinski's youthful residence in St. Petersburg, and is, moreover, a fantastic representation of what he would have experienced in life if he had followed his father's example.

The poem opens mysteriously with an invocation: "O mother, six times pierced, unhappy mother!" and describes a landscape where on a gentle rising hill a coffin lies under a slender fir tree; in the coffin is a figure with chains on the hands and a crown on the forehead. Six hills are separated by green furrows, where blood runs like babbling brooks, and weeds sprout over broken weapons.

Then the poet describes the arrival of a young noble

at a great city and a great castle, by the stairs of which all ascend as eagerly as if they were going up to heaven. There is the sound of many musical instruments, perfumes surround the new-comer, he sees a throne in the sunlight elevated above the crowd of dancers. On the throne sits the absolute ruler of life and death under a canopy of flags. From one of these flags, which is torn in tatters, drops of blood now and then fall. But no one pays any attention to them except the youth.

The crowd separates, and the lord of the castle steps down from the throne and goes, erect and vigorous, towards the young man. The youth looks him steadfastly in the eyes; the ruler knits his brows and says gently: "Come, let us go together, and I will show you the wonders of my castle." And when the youth stands as if lost in a dream, he gives him a kiss on his forehead and leads him away. With his mother's coffin before his eyes the young man walks by the side of the ruler of life and death, and the blood in his arm beats against the hard arm of the usurper. And the latter speaks of the past, even mentions the name of the murdered mother without shuddering, as if her death did not rest upon his conscience.

They pass through rows of men whose foreheads touch the malachite floor; then at the other end of the castle marble doors are suddenly opened. The youth looks into an enormous treasury, into mines of endless extent. Fountains of flowing gold and silver shine with blended splendour, and amethyst vaults rear themselves in all the colours of the rainbow. But now and then there is also heard as it were a shriek of some one dying, a clanking of chains; now and then human forms pass by like black cloudlets over the moon; they raise their hands with a clank, and pray for a drop of water; then the eyes of the ruler grow blood-red with wrath.

From this time all show honour to the young man. They wish to kiss the hand which has touched that of the ruler. They offer him goblets full of costly wine, and a beautiful young woman speaks to him of love.

In the throne-room the lord of life and death has given

the youth a place at the table by his side under the conquered flags. Ambassadors from the kings of the East and of the West appear before the ruler, and every general puts at the foot of the throne an urn of pure gold, full of the ashes of those who have fallen in battle for the holy cause in the different quarters of the globe. The ruler asks: "Are they really dead, and will they never rise again?" The answer comes, "Certainly never," and the urns are ranged on both sides of the hall on black granite columns. Fire is laid in them, and they burn with a bluish flame; pale clouds of incense convey the odour of the dead to the ruler.

Directly opposite the young man stands the urn which bears his mother's name and contains the ashes of her sons. As often as he looks on it he forgets his beaker, but the beautiful woman by his side continually offers it to him again. A veil spreads itself over his consciousness. Then the ruler smiles and says: "You are my guest; it is time that you take the oath of allegiance to me and renounce your old name," and he throws a handful of diamond crosses to him with the words, "Wear them in remembrance of me." A herald steps forward, and out of a black book he reads aloud the formula of the oath to the young man, who repeats it with sunken head, while it becomes dark before his eyes. He has hardly ended when the lord of life and death rises and calls out: "You slave of my slaves! you shall die by the halter if you break your oath!" Then he smiles with scorn. But when the youth raises his eyes, he reads on the urn, where his mother's name was written, only the one word—*Dishonour*, and thousands shout *dishonour* to him, before him, around him. *Dishonour* resounds in the vaults of the castle from the throne-room to the treasury.

It was all a dream, from which the youth awakes, and the poem ends as it began, with an enthusiastic invocation of the six times pierced mother.

As already indicated, the poem is an expression of the Polish Hamlet's horror of the court of Claudius.

But only a partial representation of the peculiarity and versatility of these Polish writers is given by laying stress upon their analogies with Hamlet. Hamlet's antithesis in

Shakespeare's tragedy is Fortinbras, the rejuvenating principle of fresh reality, who inherits the throne and the kingdom when all else is lost and poisoned. There is also a glimmering of the nature of Fortinbras in several of these poets, but the very essence of that which he symbolically represents lives in Mickiewicz.

In Mickiewicz there was a fountain of bubbling, youthful power. There was something in him which was freshness itself, irresistibility itself, a something which is expressed in words in the *Ode to Youth* and in the immortal poem, *Faris*. It is youth which believes in being able to tear the old world out of its groves, and which makes the attempt. It is youth which, like Faris or the Jehu of Scripture "drives furiously." It is before this that birds of prey take flight and hurricanes must yield. This tumultuous force and self-confidence is not to be found so primitively either in Slowacki or Krasinski. It is from this force in Mickiewicz that springs a passion as exalted as that which stretches the bow in the third part of *Dziady*, and a masculine equilibrium of thought such as that which is disclosed in the masterpiece of Polish literature, *Pan Tadeusz*.

Such robustness of emotion is not found in any other Polish poet. Mickiewicz alone approached those great names in poetry, which stand in history as above all healthy, far healthier than Byron, healthier even than Shakespeare: Homer and Goethe.

It is not by the healthfulness of his soul that Krasinski raises himself above his period and belongs to the future. It is by the loftiness of his soul, the sublimity of his outlook, and his mode of thought. His works have not the blush of health, but the purity of colourlessness. There is a defiant independence in his isolated position, a peculiar foresight in his views as to the danger of inciting the people against the Polish nobility—those views which Slowacki arrogantly and scornfully ridiculed, but which received an apparently incontrovertible justification when the peasants of Galicia, in 1846, were paid by Metternich's agent, Breindl, five gulden for every living and ten for every murdered Polish nobleman. There is finally a depth of understanding in *The Godless*

Comedy, the genius of which surprises us, when we remember that it was composed by a youth of twenty-one.

It is neither their robustness nor their independence that will enable Slowacki's productions to defy time. It is true that, in religious respects, he is more liberal, in political, more audacious, than his great rivals, but he is so as much from a spirit of contradiction as from conviction. No one is more brilliant than he. He has the genuine Polish love for show and colour, he for whom the divine was symbolised by the plume in the helmet. But if he has the Polish love for pomp, he has, above everything else, the common Slavic faculty for imitation. In almost every one of his works we are distracted in our enjoyment by the recollection of a very definite exemplar.

The manner in which he appropriates Shakespeare is slavish; his *Balladyna*, a blending of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, in which beautiful single passages and profound scenes are to be found, but in which the elements are inharmoniously adjusted to each other, leaves a painful impression as a whole, in spite of the boldness of certain conceptions. He has utterly ruined his treatment of the tragedy of *Beatrice Cenci*, supplanting the study of the human soul by a long drawn-out romantic dance of witches, a mere dilution of the witch theme, treated with the judicious reserve of the master in *Macbeth*. His *Cenci* is far behind Shelley's much earlier and more admirable version of the same theme, with which Slowacki was evidently not acquainted, otherwise he would have imitated it. His *Mary Stuart* is more independent and characteristic. It follows, almost act for act, the same portion of the life of the Scottish Queen, afterwards treated by Björnson and Slowacki's *Mary*, as a character, is more interesting and more important than Björnson's, while the treatment as a whole is more lyrical.

Slowacki was perhaps too much taken up by himself to become properly absorbed in humanity before he described men. He studied human life less than the works of Byron, Shakespeare, Mickiewicz, Krasinski, and finally Calderon. So he drew figures half living, half dream-like; characters

of which some fragments are true, others incorrect, and concealed the weakness of the drawing by throwing the rainbow glow of his diction over it. His style is bold and eloquent but seldom closely knit. Its strength and weakness is its overwhelming richness of colour.

There is no bird which in strength of wing and power of flight can rival the eagle. Fitley is it called the king of birds. There is no bird which, in unblemished whiteness and quiet dignity of movement can rival the swan. Fitley is it called the symbol of noble purity. The peacock cannot fly like the eagle, nor sail like the swan, but neither of them can come near it in the incomparable splendour of its plumage.

Mickiewicz is the eagle, Krasinski the swan, Slowacki the peacock among the winged spirits of Poland.

VIII

PAN TADEUSZ, THE ONLY EPOPEE OF THE CENTURY— MICKIEWICZ AND RZEWUSKI—IMPORTANCE OF MICKIEWICZ

AMONG the works which these poets have produced there is a single book which competent judges at an early day pronounced to be the best poetical work in Polish literature. It is the only work in which one of the three great poets has attempted to give a picture of the many-sided national culture during a period of agitation of which he was himself a witness; the only work in which we find a broad and rich representation of the natural scenery of Poland; the only one in which the poet does not think it beneath him to let everyday men appear in large numbers; finally, the only one in which the keynote is no longer that of tragical or lyrical exaltation, but a quiet humour, from which the passage to satire, tenderness, melancholy, or enthusiasm is easy.

As we all know, the number of epic poems of real value is small. But certain of these works remain in the literature of the world as essential books, national books, in which a whole nation or race has found its character described, its life embodied in true and living form; they belong to remote times like the patriarchal books of the Old Testament, like Homer, Ramayana, Firdusi, the Niebelunge-lid. The reason is that the naïve consciousness of a nation generally expresses itself for the first time in a genuine epic. It comes into existence when the nation has such a clear understanding of itself that it can enjoy a glorified reflection of its conditions in art, and yet has not become so civilised that its religion has stiffened into dogmas and its forms of society into a commonwealth of police or of law. For the conditions are epic—that is to say, in the

broadest sense heroic—only when the ruling power does not lie outside of the individual, and has not destroyed independent activity, as it is destroyed when discipline and command rule in war, and royal power, official force, and even more powerful society standards in time of peace.

In Homer every single leader is an independent Greek; even if Agamemnon is the king of kings, the other kings are not under his sceptre. We meet with similar conditions in the epic poems of far later times, as in the *Cid* of the Spaniards and in the Italians, Ariosto and Tasso, even if the *naïveté* is weaker here, and the Virgilian models, notably in Tasso, have a depressing effect. Tasso's *Jerusalem* could be a genuine national book only in so far as the people delighted in the sound of the verses and in the brilliant adventures. It did not find its own life reproduced therein.

The attempt to create a national epic failed most conspicuously when Voltaire wrote the *Henriade* in the eighteenth century. From that time all thinking men began to understand that wholly peculiar conditions are demanded for the production of a national epic poem, and that it could hardly be written in an intellectual age, since it was neither probable that we should be able to find that *naïveté* in a poet, nor that primitive anarchy in a period he knew and could describe, on which the power of the great epics to strike deep into the national consciousness seems hitherto to have depended.

Since *naïveté* has again come to honour and dignity in this century, and since poets have again become child-like to some extent, and to some extent have simulated simplicity, they have tried to avoid the regularity of modern conditions by laying the scene of their epic essays in grey antiquity.

It is in the nature of the epic to give a broad picture of the culture of the people, with a detailed description of their entire manner of living, their eating and drinking, their dress and dwelling, manners and customs. In Homer all this still lives. The Homeric man and woman find themselves again in their surroundings. Odysseus has him-

self fashioned his bed, the women have themselves woven their apparel, the king's daughters themselves attend to the washing, the men themselves pitch their tents, or build their houses. Nothing of their own is strange to them, nothing, like the dwellings or materials of our own days, is the product of a manufactory or of a machine. The heroes themselves gained their rare weapons, each of which has its own peculiarity, by fighting or as booty.

When the Scandinavian authors, shrinking from their own organised and regulated age and the tyranny of factory and machine, turned back to antiquity, they produced narrative poems like *Hrolf Krake*, or *Frithiof*, books of a certain qualified value, but which have no deep intellectual interest, because they have not the slightest resemblance to the period they represent. The only modern poets, who have succeeded in producing anything which has the character of an epic, are Byron, whose *Don Juan* is a picture of the world, although in its nature it is a bitter, glowingly sensual, wrathful satire, and before him Goethe, who in *Hermann and Dorothea* reproduced something of the simplest and best substance of the German people in the old art form of the narrative poem. The types here are plain, of homely grandeur. Hermann and Dorothea stand before the reader's eyes as the German Adam and Eve. But the epic foundation is slender; family life in a little German town; pastor and apothecary; the landlord and landlady of the inn; the relations between parents and a grown-up son; but as background we have: the French Revolution, the fugitive emigrants, who bring from the left bank of the Rhine the orphaned, homeless girl, whom Hermann leads to his home and to his parents. The contrast between vagrancy and the cosiness of a provincial town, between upheaval and *bourgeois* stagnation, is also indicated here. The whole is less an epic than an idyl of family life on an epic background.

In *Pan Tadeusz* Poland possesses the only successful epic our century has produced. The good star of Mickiewicz ordained that this time he should not go back to the remote past in order to produce something epic. Here he succeeded in seeing the heroic in his own age.

Elizabeth Browning in the beautiful and eloquent verse of her *Aurora Leigh* has a memorable passage as to the possibility of seeing this. She says:—

“ . . . every age,
 Through being beheld too close, is ill discerned
 By those who have not lived past it, we'll suppose
 Mount Athos carved, as Alexander schemed,
 To some colossal statue of a man ;
 The peasants, gathering brushwood in his ear,
 Had guessed as little as the browsing goats
 Of form or feature of humanity
 Up there—in fact, had travelled five miles off
 Or ere the giant image broke on them,
 Full human profile, nose and chin distinct,
 Mouth muttering rhythms of silence up the sky.”

Thus the ordinary man and the ordinary poet do not see the contours of the age in which they live.

Mickiewicz was the rare epic poet in this sense, that he succeeded fully in reproducing not only the origin and source of the customs of his native land, but all the greatness and all the poetry which the period about the year 1812 had in its bosom for Poland. He dared to found a whole epic on his own observation.

Its genesis is remarkable. It emanated from Mickiewicz's feeling of despair when the revolution of 1831, in which he had not participated, was crushed. In 1832, after Garczynski's death, he writes: “I am like a Frenchman on the retreat from Russia, demoralised, weak, almost without boots.” He became reserved, gloomy, sullen, misanthropic, and negligent in his dress. To escape this despairing dejection, he turned back to the land of his childhood, Lithuania, in which he had seen the light, which he had not visited since the years of his early youth, and which he, the exile, was never to see again. And he, who as a poet, directly or through disguises, had always spoken only in his own name, he who had defied and incited, protested and agitated, became an epic poet of perfect calm and mighty breadth.

He achieved the epic *naïveté*, which is so rare and so costly, which was denied to all other poets in and out of Poland, for a double reason ; firstly, because of a peculiarity

in his relation to his subject, and, secondly, because of a peculiarity in the subject itself.

The other poets lacked *naïveté*. But he, who had only seen his fatherland with the eyes of a child, and never could see it again with the eyes of a mature man, had never had this picture clouded. He received in compensation for this exclusion from the land of his fathers the long lost gift of the epic poet, the naïve feeling of growing up with the country, its customs and conditions, as they were when he was a child.

And then it happened that the subject which presented itself to him had just the characteristics of the old epic subjects. Lithuanian life about 1812 was an entirely civilised condition in its way, yet one wholly outside of the monotonous cosmopolitan civilisation. Everything in this *Szlachta* epos was, therefore, as untouched by the culture of western Europe as are the enormous primeval forests of Lithuania by forestry. Here everything is original, from the peculiar food of the country, with its wonderful names, to the variegated dress—*zupan*, *kontusz*, *conföderatka*. There is a wealth of characteristic customs; there is even a special costume in which to collect edible sponges. And every weapon, every club, every sabre, every gun, has a history which is told. Originals swarm here; every other person who appears is an original of the primeval forest. Here there is neither supremacy nor discipline. The relation between the upper classes and the servants is still, as in the Middle Ages, a purely personal relation, not infrequently a passionate attachment.

Finally, in this aristocratic epopee there is a relation between the nobles such as we see between the princes in Homer. A wild independence blossoms here, in spite of apparent subordination to a king, a state of things unknown elsewhere in Europe. Men do justice for themselves with weapons in their hands; they acknowledge no superior, carry on war and give battle on a small scale, rend the land with internecine conflicts until the coming of the Russian drives the enemies into each other's arms, and Napoleon's entry into Poland lights the fire of patriotic enthusiasm.

But the anarchy of the nobility, which in the world of reality had shown itself so fatal to the existence of Poland, proved, as if in compensation, so admirable an epic subject, that Poland got its only epos by virtue of that very condition which annihilated the country as a State. And Mickiewicz, describing this host of Don Quixotes with love and humour, opened up vistas in the past and the future which explained the glorious past of his people and its present ruin.

The action lasts from the summer of 1811 to the spring of 1812. By choosing this point of time, his hopeful nature found scope in his poem, this epos of a humiliated people, for he could close with a lyric flight, an inspired burst of consolation. He had experienced this popular feeling, when as a boy he saw the entrance of the French battalions into Nowogródek.

In his travels in the Crimea, Mickiewicz had as fellow-traveller the somewhat older Henryk Rzewuski, the heir of one of the old families of the great nobility of Poland. This intellectual man, an excellent narrator, had been educated in a reactionary, aristocratic circle, which swore by Bonald and De Maistre. In 1812 he had made the personal acquaintance of De Maistre in St. Petersburg, and he appeared first in private life, afterwards in literature, as the uncompromising spokesman of his master, the greatest champion of authority of the age. Rzewuski abounded in recollections of the life of the Polish nobility of the eighteenth century. He was endowed with a literary talent of which he was not conscious. When Mickiewicz was residing in Rome and passed two winters in company with Rzewuski, the poet urged him to write. He inferred the talent of written description from his gift of oral narrative. When, in response to his suggestion, Rzewuski produced some verses which Mickiewicz pronounced bad, the latter did not on that account mistrust his own judgment; for he had perceived from the beginning that the talent of Rzewuski could only manifest itself in a prose form. Therefore he earnestly advised him to write prose. Rzewuski followed this advice and succeeded. Strange to say, this prose afterwards had a reflex influence upon Mickiewicz.

Rzewuski wrote a thick volume of memoirs of the previous century in the style of the period. The fictitious author was Severin Soplica, one of the servants and adherents of Prince Charles Radziwill. In these loosely knit memoirs, which give glowing pictures of the time, rich in strong features and with admirable descriptions of character, the leading personage is that Prince Radziwill, so popular in Lithuania, called *Paniekochanku*, on account of his favourite form of salutation (Dear sir! Dear friend). The time of the action is about 1770. When the book appeared in 1839 it was received with great enthusiasm; it was read as if it were a volume of genuine reminiscences.

It was completed in 1832, and it is probable that Mickiewicz had received from Rzewuski the incentive to deal with the Poland of the end of the eighteenth century. That his hero also bears the family name of Soplica implies this. At the close of 1832 he began the elaboration of *Pan Tadeusz* which, in a letter written in December, he characterises as "a rural poem in the style of *Hermann and Dorothea*," of which he "has altogether scribbled a thousand verses." While he was writing it, he felt as if he were transported to Lithuania. In February 1834 he finished the poem, which for the rest he mentions carelessly, with a certain lack of respect, as "a piece of nonsense," in comparison to *Dziady*, which he means to continue in order to finish "his one work worth reading." Wonderfully enough the public soon judged far more justly than the author himself in this matter. He did not even appreciate his good fortune, in lighting upon such an untouched subject, such primitive nature, whose poetry he could reproduce with lively fancy, and such a characteristic anarchy regulated by customs, and marked by all the unruly freedom of the individual, which was in such contrast to the police-ridden uniformity of other European countries.

And since he was not like Rzewuski merely a gifted narrator, who presented a past in careless fragmentary prose, but a writer who embalmed his recollections, observations, visions, and hopes in a form of entrancing melody, so that no syllable could be taken away from any line without loss,

he endowed his chief work with such a power of resistance to time, that it will come to later generations in Poland as the great diamond in the national patrimony, the cutting of which has made its value incalculable, and whose hard surface resists all attack.

It is very suggestive that the contemporaries of Mickiewicz paid particular attention to the descriptions of the past in *Pan Tadeusz*. They considered the poem in connection with the *Recollections of Soplica*, and thus, in the period which immediately followed, that one of the elements of the Polish romanticists became the predominant one, which in the beginning had not been specially prominent, namely, the element of the ancient nobility. In the track of *Pan Tadeusz* the epopees and romances of the ancient nobility grew so rapidly that even Slowacki — in *Agamemnon's Tomb* — was obliged to utter a warning against this continual poison of the past, this Nessus-shirt which the new Poland wore, the red *kontusz* and golden girdle of the old *Szlachta*.

Now we can hardly comprehend that it was that in *Pan Tadeusz* which suggests Walter Scott, which about 1840 gave this unique poetical work its chief effect. At the present time it is clear that the reason that Mickiewicz, and he alone of the three greater poets, finally succeeded in producing a work at once popular and imperishable, was the circumstance that he, and he alone, gave a description of realities with no fantastic or mystical elements interwoven, and painted a world which did not lie half-hidden behind the mists of the past, but one which he himself had seen with the clear, wise eyes of childhood before it vanished.

The sub-title of the poem is “The Last Raid in Lithuania,” and treats of the old anarchical custom of determining litigation between two noble families thus: one of them with its adherents in a body simply rode out and took possession by force of the object in dispute. Thus it happens here. Between the families Soplica and Horeszko there is an old quarrel about the possession of a ruined castle. The nobility of the district is assembled at Soplicowo to settle the quarrel. There we become acquainted with all the persons who appear; the leading character, Tadeusz, his uncle, the

Judge Soplica ; the opposing party, the foolish Italianate, romantic Count Horeszko, in whom the author seems to have given the portrait of the man who supplanted him in the heart of Marylka ; a handsome and amiable coquette from St. Petersburg, who is no longer young, Telimene ; the young *ingénue* Sophia of the house of Horeszko, who was brought up in the family of the judge (a young girl, who has some of the traits of Marylka); finally, a swarm of excellently drawn guests. They go on a bear-hunt in the primeval forest, which is described with incomparable power. The hunters come into peril of their lives, but the bear is struck down by Robak, a mystic Bernardine monk, who intervenes on all occasions to help and rescue. The dispute about the bear's head excites Count Horeszko, and leads him on to take forcible possession by "raid" of the castle adjudged to Soplica. This triumph is celebrated by a drinking-bout, at which all the participants become so intoxicated that the Russian soldiers passing by are able to overcome them like beasts, and bind them. But against the Russians all the Poles feel as if they were allies. Robak forms a plan to liberate the prisoners and take the Russians by surprise. It comes to a battle, in which indeed he is mortally wounded, but the Poles prevail. Their leaders must now, it is true, escape further pursuit by flight, but they cross the Niemen to the troops of Napoleon, and soon return as officers in the Polish army under Dombrowski, whose banner unites all the former opponents. The marriage of Tadeusz Soplica with Sophia Horeszko is celebrated as a symbol of the reconciliation of the rival houses, and at a great banquet Jankiel plays the history of Poland down to 1812, until all ends as in a golden dawn of bright hopes.

The leading character, Tadeusz, is an amiable and brave young fellow, not more interesting than one of Walter Scott's young heroes, and has no other function than that of holding the story together. His youthful nature is fully described, without hypocrisy or dissimulation ; nevertheless there is nothing in him which fascinates. The real hero is not Tadeusz, but his father Jacek, who conceals his name and his rank under the cowl of the monk Robak.

Jacek has formerly killed Sophia's father, the magnate Horeszko, just as he was defending his castle against the Russians. It is true that the great lord had rejected Jacek as a suitor, much as Count Ankwicz, from whom he is painted, had turned away Mickiewicz. Jacek never sees the daughter Eva again (the very name is preserved), and she is forced into the marriage in which Sophia is born. He himself marries afterwards without love, and becomes the father of Tadeusz, does penance for the murder of Horeszko as a Bernardine monk, has Sophia educated, and watches over her and his son like a Providence. As the murderer of Horeszko he acquired the reputation of having been a tool of the Russians; in reality he is one of the trusted men of the French government, and has been entrusted with the task of arranging a great Polish insurrection. When he dies in the victorious battle with the Russians, the cross of the Legion of Honour is placed on his grave.

In Jacek's personality we see as it were Mickiewicz's new poetry grow out of the older. As a murderer through injured pride, as the patient monk, who pays for the untamed wildness of a moment by the renunciation of a life-time, he reminds us of the old Byronic heroes, in his nature closely related to all the romantic and passionate characters of Mickiewicz. In certain ways he is as true a reflection of the personal life, experiences, and sentiments of the author as Gustav and Conrad. But out of the lyrico-romantic kernel of his spiritual life the whole epic wealth bursts forth as a mighty oak grows from an acorn. The fate of the individual man is entirely absorbed in that of the whole nation, whose vices and virtues are unfolded to the reader, as we become acquainted with its quarrelsomeness, party dissensions and inclinations to civil war, but also the enthusiasm, which makes it ready, as soon as the blast from Europe reaches it, to rise as one man and realise its ideal. The blind hatred of the earlier poetry has vanished here. Plut, the born Pole, is put to shame and removed without mercy as a deserter. On the other hand the Russian Rykow is a brave and honest fellow, a little inclined to

drunkenness—like the Poles themselves—but incorruptible and good-natured.

In the main the description of individuals is not at all the most important thing here. The principal subject is the broad description of natural life and of human life as determined by natural surroundings.

In the description of the bear-hunt there is a passage where the Wojski (a title of honour, tribune) of the district, when the bear is killed, plays a flourish on his horn over the dead bruin. It is as follows :—

“Then our Wojski grasped his horn, which was tied securely to his belt, his buffalo horn, long, with many windings, like a boa—carried it to his mouth with both hands. His cheeks are stretched like a pumpkin, bloodshot his eyes burn.

“Now he drops his eyelids, then draws in his paunch, and draws breath and wind into his chest with all his might and blows—like a stormblast whirls the roar away into the deep thicket, where echo plays with it. Then the huntsmen are dumb with astonishment, fascinated by the melody, purity, force, and fulness of the strong tones. All the art which formerly won him honour, now as an old man he displays once more in the assembly of the huntsmen. He soon wakes the oaks, fills the woods round about, as if he were beginning a hunt, as if the hounds were baying around. For it was the hunt, painted in tones, strong, clear. First it sounds aloud into the world—the fanfare of the morning signal. Then whines and howls, the sounds of a pack of hounds. Then it thunders now and then, it is the booming of the guns when they fire.

“Here he stopped, yet he did not drop the horn. They believed he was still playing, but it was the echo. He blew again, and the horn was as if enchanted, now harsh, now delicate, wholly as the mouth of the Wojski treated it. He imitates the voices of the animals. Just like a wolf’s mouth the horn now howls so hideously that all hearts fail. It opens like the throat of a bear and sends out a loud roar. Suddenly, like the roar of the wild ox, they feel it rend the air.

“Here he stopped, yet the horn did not drop. They believed he was still playing, but it was the echo.

“For the trees repeated the matchless work of art, and it resounded from beech to beech, from oak to oak.

“He blew again, as if there were hundreds of horns in his horn. So the wild chase through the grain of the peasant is heard. Shots, baying of hounds, the death rattle of the deer—now he raises the mouth of the horn. And the triumphal fanfare strikes with power against the vault of heaven.

“Here he stopped, but the horn did not drop. They believed he was still playing, but it was the echo.

“There sounded as many horns as there are trees in the forest, as from choir to choir it sped from tree to tree. And tones rolling wider follow on tones, then they become softer, purer, and more tender till they die away softly somewhere on the threshold of heaven.”

What is said here about the playing of the *Wojski* expresses exactly what *Mickiewicz* had the power to do. Because he, the exile, dreamed himself back to his childish impressions of nature and human life in a land which lay in a naïve and motley civilisation, outside of trade, but with a characteristic stamp of handicraft, outside of a state of police, but with a recognised anarchy of established custom, he succeeded in making the ancient old Lithuanian forest speak, was able to conjure up the wild and merry hunt in the country, the natural sounds of the animals, the twitter of the birds, the growling of the bears, the bellow of the wild ox, the choir of all the human voices. He rises from the quiet whispering between beech and beech, oak and oak, until it is as if he had the melody of hundreds of horns in his horn, as if he had the voices of all the deceased generations of the land therein.

These voices are heard through the poem ever in broader flood, ever in purer tone, giving utterance to the yearnings of the country in love and pain, hope and anger, wildness and folly, mirth and enthusiasm, until it appears as if the whole heaven of Poland were filled by his song. And when

we have seen how deeply this poem of his even to this day affects the minds of the Poles, we are reminded of the words about the listeners to the Wojski, that it seemed to them that he was still playing when he had longed ceased. So completely does Mickiewicz live in the echo he has evoked.

IX

DIVISION AMONG THE POETS—DISORGANISATION OF ROMANTICISM—POLISH LITERATURE OF TO-DAY—CRITICAL SUMMARY

NOT one of the three great romantic poets sang for long. Mickiewicz did not publish any more poems after 1840, though he lived thirteen years longer. And Slowacki, who died in 1849, when only thirty-seven, wrote almost nothing in the last three years of his life.

Rivalry and difference of opinion separated them widely in the forties.

The rupture between Mickiewicz and Slowacki was most complete. Slowacki's ill-fortune and his irritable nature, as well as a somewhat unjustifiable coldness on the part of Mickiewicz, had constantly kept the former at a distance from his more fortunate rival in the admiration of his countrymen. Nevertheless there was a moment when they met in unison; some days after the Slav lectures by Mickiewicz at the College of France had been begun during the Christmas of 1840, the Polish emigrants in Paris arranged a dinner for him. At this festivity Slowacki was also present; *Pan Tadeusz* had made him forget all his earlier injuries and all his old rancour. He even rose and in improvised verse celebrated the guest of honour as the first singer of their common fatherland. The best of his spiritual life broke through here. He sacrificed none of his dignity; there was a touch of bitterness in the way in which he alluded to his own fate, and a melancholy pride in the hope he expressed that he also in his way had rendered services his fatherland would value; but he addressed Mickiewicz with heartiness, and gave him his homage with sincere warmth. He declaimed his improvisation with so much enthusiasm that he won universal applause, except

from some fanatical admirers of Mickiewicz, who were instantly offended at his comparing his talent and fate with that of the great man. Mickiewicz gave a comparatively friendly answer, also in verse, probably the last verses he ever composed. There was some severity in his criticism of Slowacki's works and character—he advised him to control his pride of spirit—but he also said flattering things to him, and mentioned that he himself in his day at Wilna had prophesied to Slowacki's mother the coming honour of her son. The two poets embraced each other, the bystanders embraced them with tears in their eyes, and the old enmity seemed to be a thing of the past.

But soon after, a final breach was brought about by a trifling cause, a silver bowl, which Slowacki was asked to present to Mickiewicz in memory of this festival. Slowacki regarded this request as an insult, an imputation of vassalage, and when he refused, the new Catholic journals of the emigrants fell upon him and attacked his best poems, and those of his friend Krasinski. He responded by attacking the blind admirers of Mickiewicz, and described their conduct towards him and his friend, after which the papers gave erroneous accounts of what had happened at the festival between the two improvisadores. Slowacki expected that Mickiewicz would now give an account of the actual occurrence, but when he wrapt himself up in a dignified silence, exasperation took such hold upon Slowacki that it inspired him. He published *Beniowski*, a poem in the style of Byron's *Don Juan* and Musset's *Namouna*, in which the material was only a pretext for lyrical and emotional or scornful and pugnacious digressions from the main subject; and here he attacked Mickiewicz's adherents, "the Jesuits of the emigrants," as he called them, scourged them with passion and wit, and settled his relation to Mickiewicz, made a brief abstract of his improvisation, and in conclusion, threw at him this challenge: "We are two gods, each of whom rules upon his own sun. . . . I will not go with you on your wild path, but by quite another path, my own, and the people will follow me."

At this point in Slowacki's literary life, Krasinski came

publicly to his aid ; in a somewhat lengthy article—the anonymity of which deceived no one—he sought to adjudicate between Mickiewicz and him, attributing to each his great qualities, and to each his own sphere. He attributes to Mickiewicz centripetal, to Slowacki centrifugal force ; to the former plastic talent, and to the latter musical, laying stress on Slowacki's extraordinary control of language. With some inordinate and diffuse comparisons, he finally characterises Mickiewicz as the Michael Angelo of form, while Slowacki, he says, corresponds to "Correggio and Raphael, or to Beethoven." The intention at least was good enough, and from that time the reputation of Slowacki was on the rise. Thus the faith was justified which led Slowacki in his time to symbolise his relation to Krasinski by that of the twin brothers, Lel and Polel, who, bound together with an iron chain, constitute, as it were, one single person in the contest, the one wielding the sword, the other the shield.

But soon this bond, apparently so strong, was to break. In the first half of the forties, political life among the Polish emigrants had reached its apogee. They had an instinct that a general European outburst of revolutionary passions was imminent, and they gladly anticipated its coming in the belief that an insurrection was the only means of restoring Poland. Towianski's sect had created a mental ferment, but the most effective group among the emigrants was the *Democratic Society* which had its seat first at Poitiers, and afterwards at Versailles. It arranged a general revolt, which was to begin in Austrian and Prussian Poland, and since it justly contended that a revolt could not succeed without the help of the peasants, it addressed itself through secret messengers and pamphlets to the common people. In order to win them, it suggested a new partition of the soil, and thus raised a threat against the landed proprietors. Pamphlets, the most important of which were signed with the pseudonym Prawdowski, carried on the revolutionary propaganda by declamations against the part which the aristocracy and clergy had played in the history of Poland.

His dread of freethinking, and his aversion to demagogues

and socialists led Krasinski, in 1845, under the pseudonym, Spiridion Prawdzicki, to write against Prądowski three psalms (of Faith, Hope, and Charity), fascinating in their verbal diction, but mystical in their preaching of prayer and moral self-purification as the only permissible means of contending with oppression, unjustly aggressive in their conception of the democrats as bloodhounds. Although he was so full of faith personally in the superior virtues, heroism, chivalry, &c., of the nobility, he did not deny their past sins, but appealed to the men, who, with childlike cruelty, shouted for their blood, "to throw away the knife."

These psalms so greatly irritated Slowacki that he allowed himself to be drawn into a poetic answer, "To the Author of the three Psalms." With warmth and force, but also with bitter scorn he refutes the doctrine of the right and use of passive resistance, and scoffs at Krasinski as the distinguished son of the nobility, who, tender of the welfare of the privileged class, sees dangers everywhere for the poor nobleman: "Who has threatened you with the knife? . . . Perhaps the light has penetrated through the red curtains of your windows; it has seemed to you to look like blood, and you shout, Do not murder the Szlachta. I am humble enough not to curse any intellectual movement. Moreover, do not believe that the divine idea only unfolds itself under the direction of angels; God often allows it to be born in blood, and He sometimes sends it with Mongols." Against Slowacki's wish and design this poem was published.

The horrors of Galicia, which broke out immediately after, came as if to give the lie to Slowacki. Under the guidance of Austrian agents and liberated galley slaves (like that Szela who caused the whole family of Bohusz, twenty-two persons, to be put to death), in 1846, 8000 Polish soldiers to whom furlough had been given, persuaded the peasants in Galicia to believe that the Tzar had emancipated them, but that the nobility prevented their exemption from service in the army, and a new partition of the land. They rose up as one man against their lords in the three bloody days which have been already spoken of.

Although it was not the democrats of Poland, but distinguished members of the Austrian Government who were behind these murders, still they showed how easy it was to turn the Polish peasants into madmen. Krasinski's prophetic soul was justified, and in the year 1848 he responded to Slowacki's poem with the *Psalm of Sadness*.

It is true that a superficial reconciliation between the two former friends was brought about, but still their last literary relation to each other was marked by jarring discord. In Slowacki's posthumous play, *The Incurables*, Krasinski is caricatured as Count Phantasius Dafnicki, who sets out to marry a fortune; nay, even his inamorata, Delphine Potocka, is caricatured as the divorced Countess Idalia, who accompanies him everywhere. And in Krasinski's great posthumous work, *The Unfinished Poem*, in the suite of the demagogue Pancratius, Slowacki appears under the name of Julinicz, as the popular prophet, who introduces himself with the outburst: "I am a great man, a prophetic spirit, place, place," proclaiming with unhealthy enthusiasm his contempt for Christianity, and that indifference for human life which was expressed in his *Król Duch*.

In 1848 Slowacki laid before his countrymen in Paris his plan for an insurrectionary league among the Poles. He went to Posen to induce the national committee there to adopt it, and take part in the contest. But the revolt was then near its end. The battles of the 29th of April and the 2nd of May prepared the Poles for final defeat. After having seen his mother once more at Breslau, Slowacki turned back to Paris, and died the year after, of a tedious and painful illness.

In the great revolutionary year, 1848, the Polish emigration had played out its part. Although national movements and efforts in this year had been so vigorous, not a single new State arose on a national foundation, nay, States (like Austria) which the carrying out of the principle of nationality would have shattered, came out of the crisis more powerful than ever. But so far as the Poles are concerned this made little impression. The romantic ideals, whose central point was the speedy regeneration of the kingdom,

still controlled the minds of all; though after the great poets became silent, Romanticism could no longer take so high a flight. The terrible collapse of 1863 was the first decisive thing which awakened the people out of their dream-life, and showed them the reality as it was.

From this point in the literature of Poland, history and historical criticism have driven poetry into the background. In opposition to the old ideals and watchwords, a new ideal has arisen, that of *the historic truth*, and a new watchword, *labour*, and the most eminent writer and poet of the next succeeding age was the man who has most energetically extolled the importance of labour for his nation, and who has himself set an example in taking his task in literature as that of a workman on the grandest scale. Joseph Ignatius Kraszewski (1812-1886) who, in 1879, on his jubilee as an author, was visited by delegates from all quarters of Poland with gifts and letters of honorary citizenship as the greatest living national author of Poland, had at that time published four hundred and forty volumes, without collaborators, and if articles scattered here and there are included, perhaps six hundred volumes in all. As a writer of romances he prevented the higher classes from forgetting their nationality by exclusive reading of foreign books, and taught the nation to know itself, in so much as he assailed the national delusions alternately in journalistic and poetic form, and as an energetic educator of the people showed the Poles what duties their political misfortunes had laid upon them in a higher degree than upon other nations.

Kraszewski wrote historical romances, modern novels, fables, recollections, poems, comedies, books of travel, published popular books, and books for the young of ethnographical, archæological, historical, and philosophical import, was a theatrical director, editor of a daily paper, and a political writer, as well as an illustrator, designer, and etcher; in brief, this one man distributed writings like a Bible Society, and strove in these writings to form a national school for his people. It goes without saying that such fecundity was not combined with that artistic perfection which was the glory of the romantic poems. Nevertheless,

romances like *Morituri* and *Resurrecturi*, novels like *Ulana*, and above all, the extremely interesting *Potter Jermola*, are works of real value.

At the present time Poland has no author of the first rank, although it does not lack eminent talent in different directions. In *Adam Asnyk* Poland has a graceful lyric poet, in *Boleslaw Prus* (Alexander Glowacki), a humorous and sensitive novelist. This last author, a self-taught writer, a bold and truth-loving journalist, is one of the men whose influence is most important, and who will prove most instrumental in forming the new times in Poland.

Asnyk was born at Kalisz in 1836, the son of a father who had been a captain in the disbanded Polish army. From his nineteenth year he studied medicine at the academy at Warsaw, and later at the Universities of Breslau and Heidelberg, and returned in 1860 to the capital in order to lend his aid to the organisation of the secret military force, which the young people in their resentment and heat intended to direct against the Russian power. He then took his share in the arrangements for the Revolution of 1863, a movement which remains a monument alike to the heroism and the lack of political judgment of its promoters. He had already been arrested in 1860 and placed under police surveillance; he then went to Heidelberg and stayed there until the outbreak of the revolt recalled him, and other Poles studying at foreign universities, to Warsaw. He displayed such vigour and determination that although only twenty-five years old he was placed at the head of the movement, and elected a member of the secret national government, which, under that gentle and loyal hero, Micesyslow Siczicki, issued secret orders, which were obeyed by all Poles, while the commands of the imperial authorities became dead letters.

After the definitive triumph of the Russians, Siczicki would not leave Warsaw. He was accordingly sent on foot to Siberia, where he remained twenty years. Asnyk fled to Austrian Poland, where he settled, first at Lemberg for a short time, then at Cracow, where every friend of Poland was sure of a welcome at his house. He travelled

to Switzerland, Holland, England, and Italy, and he has written on subjects suggested by these travels. But his spiritual life has been dominated entirely by the impression left on it by the failure of the revolt of 1863, namely, that all hope of an independent Poland must be abandoned, at least during his lifetime. He lost all faith in historical progress. The anguish he had gone through determined his manner of feeling for the rest of his life, his constant pessimism, his melancholy and doubt. Never again has he seen Russian Poland. But far from charging the calamities upon the comrades of his youth, as many others have done, he continued to communicate with them—with Siczicki, with Karol Benni, with all who still frequent Benni's house in Warsaw. They always hold their patriotic, but politically innocent meetings there. He published his poems (a selection of which appeared in a mediocre German translation) under the pseudonym *El—y*, and took an active part in the public life of Galicia. He became a prominent member of the democratic party, and (from a sense of duty, and without any pleasure in his task) editor of a great political paper, finally founding *The Society of Public Schools*, the efforts of which have been marked by such constant success.

In addition, there are two men of very great ability, both a little over forty years of age, who are the most important representatives of light literature.

Alexander Swientochowski is of noble birth, but without the aristocratic stamp, the man of modern times, the fundamental spokesman of free thought, the representative of the advanced culture of Europe; of strong will and character, possessing a vigorous style and strong in argument, as an author wholly identifying himself with his principles. His dramas are without artistic value, but his novels, *Chawa Rubin*, *Damian Capenko*, *Karl Krug*, apart from their moral endeavour to teach the Poles humanity towards foreigners on the soil of Poland, the Jewess, the Little Russian, the German,—have a compact and concentrated form of high artistic merit. The novel *Clemens Boruta* develops the drama of starvation with poetic force.

Henryk Sienkiewicz, Poland's favourite author, presents a sharp contrast to the untiring agitator Swientochowski. He has a patrician nature, with a rich and versatile talent, at once emotional and bitterly satirical. He has reached his highest point, and shown himself a keen realist in the spiritual domain, in his *Charcoal Drawings* (Szice-weglem), the affecting story of how a poor young peasant wife is driven to sell herself in order to free her husband from military service, a masterpiece. He is excellent in the very short story (*The Lighthouse, The Angel*), picturesque in representation and full of glowing intensity. I am sorry to say that of late years he has been absorbed in the production of endless historical novels, in the style of the elder Dumas, which have made his name widely popular, and produce a large income.

And yet *Pan Tadeusz* had already pointed out to later poetry the way towards real life, the peculiar life of the century, and in fact inaugurated the epoch of Polish realism. It cannot be long before the conviction makes its way, that if the authors of Poland of our time would compete with the best authors of Europe, with those like the great prose writers of France and Russia, it is absolutely necessary that they should turn their backs on the distant past, and limit themselves to the one domain, where it is possible for the author wholly to escape convention, and to be not only inspired but true.

It is only natural that the fancy of Polish writers should have, to an extent unprecedented elsewhere, continued to revolve about the past. Since the Polish people as a people has been condemned to practical inactivity, the past must appear to them as their last most glorious possession, and so, even after the decline of genuine Romanticism, Polish poets long continued to dwell on the memories of the past, which they found in books, instead of reproducing a life fully as interesting which flowed unheeded past them. The strong artistic impulse towards the past, nevertheless, depends in the last instance on the superstition, that the past, or, as it is called, history, alone admits a representation of the ideal. But perhaps we shall see that the historical is as negligible in poetry as the spiritualistic. In the flourishing

age of Polish Romanticism nothing could be told or represented dramatically in which spirits did not play a part, frequently a chief part. They seemed more poetic and more ideal than men of flesh and blood. They took the place of the gods in the ancient poems, even intruded in contemporary subjects as in *Dziady*, and in historic drama, as in Slowacki's *Cenci*. The conjuring up of the figures of the remote past in Polish romantic literature may be a new, and only a slightly less abstract spiritualism. For these also may often be classified as good and evil spirits.

There is only one future for Poland's literature, after its days of Romanticism are over, and that is to become a modern, a living expression of the life of our own time.

The whole intellectual life, the whole literary world of Poland for a long time turned upon the question of its existence. We have seen that this question developed into the question of the reality of the loftiest ideas. But it goes without saying that the literature of a people cannot everlastingly continue to turn upon so abstract a theme. The fundamental emotion, to which the romantic literature of Poland gave expression, is not likely to disappear, but it cannot continue to be predominant without impoverishing her literature.

The too predominant sensations of feelings of cohesion, of common sufferings and common exertions, the continual playing on a single string, must prevent individuals from coming forward in literature in all their originality. Because they are continually regarded as a link in a whole, sharing pleasures and disappointment with others, they do not reach the depth of the agony of existence. They are not represented as solitary enough. If it is an evil not to see the wood for the trees, then it is also an evil not to see the trees for the wood. No doubt we find here in the youthful works of the poets enough of the half-assumed sensation of loneliness of the Byronic heroes. But the loneliness of the uncomplaining man obtains no expression. It is in consonance with this that the characters in this literature, in spite of all the hardships and evils which shower down upon them from without, are not unhappy enough. The misfortunes

whose stage is the outer world, are found here in abundance. But the greatest tragedy, that of which the human soul may be the theatre, even without any special pursuit of a hostile fate, is not presented to the reader's consciousness in the same degree. These poets have so naturally felt impelled to say a consoling, hopeful word to their readers, that they have not sounded misery to the lowest depth with their imaginative power. And on the other side the romantic literary group of Poland, rich as it is, has this defect, that it has allowed very little scope to the comic elements of existence. Thus it lacks a full grasp of human life, its whole intensity. It seems as if the sense of the comic were not very strong or very widespread among the Polish people. The poets, who like Fredro have had a sharp eye for it, have not used their talent for the comic in the service of the more elevated ideas, and the poets, who, like the romanticists, have laboured in the name of ideas, have shown little skill in the use of laughter either as a weapon or as the expression of cheerfulness.

There is a gleam of humour diffused throughout *Pan Tadeusz*, which could not be more delicately beautiful, but it is weak, and the poet has not succeeded in making a really comic impression when he intends to. Thus the Count now and then becomes tedious when he ought to be comic. With a better developed sense of humour Mickiewicz again would not have produced a figure like Gustav in *Dziady*. He is unintentionally comic when he ought to be most impressive. Neither does Slowacki ever achieve a strong comic effect. His comic secondary characters are never observed from real life, but constantly remind us either of a Shakespearian clown or of a Calderonian Gracioso, and at best create a smile, never laughter. He really produces a comic effect only when he does not intend to, as in depicting the achievements of his sottish and desperate hero Lambro. Finally, however alien comic effects are to a talent like Krasinski's, still the drawing of the character of the Italian baron in *The Unfinished Poem* shows that he possessed undeveloped ability in that direction. It is a pity that he did not in the least feel the impulse to use

it. There would have been a fine scope for comic effects in *The Godless Comedy*. Pancratius and his associates would have gained thereby.

Generally speaking, it may be said that a more widely diffused and more delicate sense of the comic among the leading persons of the nation would have prevented several of the excesses of the romantic heroes, driven the romantic ghosts and witches more into the background, and sharpened the delineation of a crowd of secondary characters.

The lack of the comic element in this literature has a triple reason ; first, the serious, nay, melancholy temper of the public for whom the poets wrote, secondly, their strenuous conception of their calling, for they regarded themselves as the teachers and leaders of the people, never as their *maitres de plaisir* ; finally, the exaggerated idealism of the Polish intellectual life of this century.

This idealism, which naturally has engendered no little boldness in expressing an unwelcome conviction or a burning protest, excluded the bold and many-sided conception and description of human nature. Polish Romanticism lacks the strong contrasts which produce the impression of the comic, because it has represented man too exclusively from the intellectual side. That man is first and foremost a being with necessities, not a being with ideas, is here suppressed or glossed over. That strong erotic or political passion is an exception in human life we note as little in this romantic literature as in others. But there is perhaps no literature in which the life of the senses and instincts, which is the foundation of all passions, is so set aside, or—where it could not be wholly passed over—is so foreshortened and placed in the background. Therefore we shall seek in vain for more sexless love-making than that which is described in the romantic literature of Poland, in Slowacki's *In Switzerland*, in Krasiński's *Aurora*, &c. We are actually astonished at the note and the key which Telimene puts into the hand of the hero in *Pan Tadeusz*, and yet this is all that we learn of the relation between the two. But where the whole sensual entity of man, and therewith one of the strongest elements of contrast between spiritual struggles and earthly instincts is omitted

in the picture, there the tragic hemisphere in poetry must necessarily lack the supplement which the comic hemisphere supplies.

Perhaps, nevertheless, what is most wanting in this epoch of Polish literature is, as was to be expected, the expression of the peaceful pleasures of life. It contains much love, but no contentment. It is a great exception when a character appears who now and then breathes fully and freely.

Still, what this epoch possesses is rich and abundant; an earnestness so great, that no other literature in Europe is so intensely earnest, a pathos so deep, that only the greatest tragic authors of Greece and England speak in such a strain, and an enthusiasm so lofty and pure, that it is only occasionally manifested in other countries. Nowhere else do we see a whole generation carried away as here by it.

As a form of art Romanticism is dead, a thing of the past. Its heroes and heroines, its spirits and witches, in part even its language and style are antiquated. Nevertheless, there is a Romanticism which outlives forms of art and schools of art, and which still preserves its vitality and worth. It is the element of healthy enthusiasm, which every strong human emotion can assume when it is refined and intensified beyond the average. Without any background whatsoever of superstition, and without relation to anything supernatural, our feelings for nature, for the woods and fields, the sea and the heavens, may assume this form of romantic ecstasy, and in even higher degree emotions like love, friendship, love between parents and children, love of language and native land, and common memories may take a like form.

In few literatures has this abiding Romanticism attained to an expression of such beauty as in the Polish.

X

CONCLUSION

PASSING through the side wing of the great Kremlin palace at Moscow, which contains the armoury (Orusheinaya Palata), we see, in the lower storey, twenty-two marble busts of Polish kings and distinguished Poles; in the storey above, in the large round hall, the Polish throne, and, near by, the crown worn by the last king of Poland, Stanislaus Augustus; and finally, in the adjoining room (opposite Charles XII.'s sedan chair, taken at the battle at Poltawa), sixty Polish banners, captured from 1831 to 1863, with Polish inscriptions, torn by bullets, and to the right of these, on the floor, a beautifully made closed casket. In this casket is deposited the constitution of the 3rd of May 1791. "Poland's patent of nobility among the people of Europe" has become an object in a museum. A Russian who accompanied me to the Kremlin, in spite of his nationality, made the remark: "It makes a melancholy impression to see the banners and the casket here." How strange it must be for a Pole, with any national feeling, to see the great men of his country, the insignia which were the symbols of the dignity of his fatherland as an independent power, its ensigns with the white eagle, nay, even the *Magna Charta*, which his people, in the most supreme moment of its life, formed for its future, and which was never rightfully displaced, exhibited here in the imperial palace of a foreign capital, as curiosities for the amusement of spectators! It must be like reading one's own name on a tombstone.

To be fought against, to be persecuted, to be treated as a criminal, when you are in the right, may be borne; but to see yourself treated as dead, to see your memories, your pride, your banner, your charter exhibited to the scorn of another as his possessions, as trinkets found in a grave,

that is to see with your own eyes, with your own hands to grasp the complete destruction of that for which you live—and yet to go on living and believing in it.

Again and again we return to the thought: How symbolical this Poland is! For in this period, what other lot than that of the Pole has every one had, who has loved freedom and wished it well? What else has he experienced but defeat? When has he seen a gleam of sunlight? When has he heard a signal of advance? Everywhere, everywhere the fanfare of the violent, or the organ peal of the bold-faced hypocrite! And everywhere stupidity as bodyguard of the lie, and everywhere veneration for that which is paltry, and everywhere the same vulgar disdain for the only thing which is holy.

Yes, Poland, thou art the great symbol. The symbol of pinioned freedom, whose neck is trodden upon, symbol of those who lack any outlook, yet hope against all probability, in spite of all.

When the foreigner sees thee covered with thy mantle of snow in the winter time, then it seems to him as if the cold and the snow, and the eternally gloomy heavens, were so in harmony with thy being that he can hardly imagine these bare trees covered with leaves, these streets and roads free from snow, these heavens pure and warm, this land without winter.

But if he comes to Warsaw on a summer day when the sun glimmers through the thick foliage in the Saxon park, when the *Green Square* (Zielony Plac) deserves its name, and Lazienki lies, smiling and elegant, bordered by its group of trees, reflected in its park, then he feels that sunshine and the warmth of summer are also at home here. Wilanow allures him, Sobieski's beautiful country seat, which he has hitherto seen only in the light of a cold spring day, and he finds the palace surrounded by a luxuriant, fragrant flora, by tall trees, which Sobieski planted himself, or caused to be planted.

Never has he seen such tall, such magnificent poplars, tall as the cypresses in Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, proud like them, melancholy and yet solemn like them.

And when, on a summer afternoon, the breezes sigh gently through the tall poplars at Wilanow, and the foreigner walks slowly through the broad avenue they form, while he hears the Polish language about him, and perhaps sees dear beings beside him who live wholly and entirely in their passion for the cause of Poland, as the cause which gives a meaning and a consecration to their lives, and in faith in the future of Poland, as the faith which alone has made them brave, useful men—then when the sunset is beautiful, and the flowers exhale their fragrance, and the temperature is mild, and the air a caress, the foreign wanderer feels less hopeless, and he says to himself: Who knows! Perhaps—in spite of all.

THE END



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