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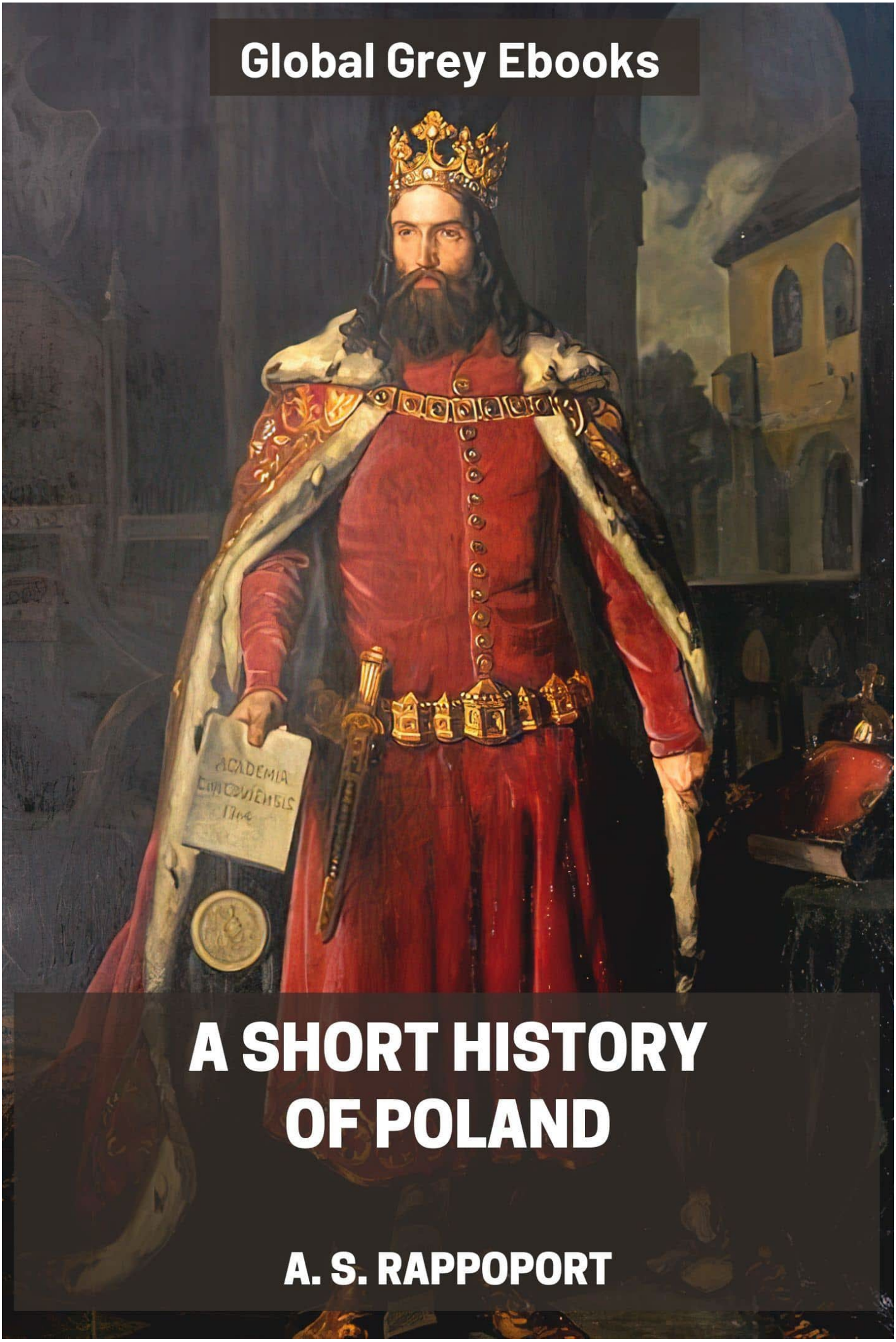

A SHORT HISTORY OF POLAND

A. S. RAPPOPORT

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Introduction

The Country and Its People

The Poles are a Slavonic race; a branch of the great Slavonic family whose possessions once stretched from the Baltic to the Adriatic and from the Elbe to the Borysthene, or Dnieper. The Slavs are an Indo-Germanic family and their cradle stood in Asia. For 2000 years they inhabited the countries bounded by the Carpathians, the Baltic, and the Black Sea, and washed by the Oder, the Vistula, the Niemen, the Dvina, the Bug, the Dnieper, the Dniester, and the Danube.

The Slavs began to make history somewhere between the second and fifth centuries, for the first mention of their existence in Europe is made by an historian about the year 376.

Those Slavonic tribes which occupied the country bounded by the Carpathians, the Bug, and the Oder, and including both banks of the Vistula, were the early ancestors of the Poles. The origin of the word Pole can be traced back to the tenth century: it was first applied to the country they inhabited: *polska* meaning a plain. The Poles were therefore "the dwellers of the plains." The country was indeed one vast plain and could scarcely boast of any natural boundaries - with the exception of the Baltic in the North and the Carpathians in the South. The great river of Poland is the Vistula, whose basin formed the centre of their country and covered an area of 282,000 square miles. Apart from the Poles, who, as has been pointed out above, are of Aryan descent, the country is inhabited by: Red Russians (or Tittle Russians) - who belong to the Eastern Slavs whilst the Poles are of the Western branch - White Russians, Lithuanians, Letts, Jews, Germans, Armenians, and Esthonians.

Ancient Poland was divided into four great districts or regions: Teutonic Poland, which was comprised of Bohemia, Mecklenburg, Holstein, the Marshes of Brandenburg, and Silesia; it stretched from the Elbe to the Oder and from the Danube to the Baltic. These districts, in the course of time, passed under other laws and dominations until now they help to form the German Empire. In the basin of the Oder was Great Poland: it comprised Pomerania, the countries afterwards invaded by the Prussians, the Duchy of Masouria where Warsaw was founded, Cujavia with Posen and Gnesen. Then there was Little Poland with Cracow, the kingdom of Galicia and Red Russia. Lithuanian Poland, which was added later, comprised Lithuania, Courland, Samogitia, White Russia, and Black Russia. All these regions and countries constituted Poland in the days when she was a mighty realm. Gradually her frontiers were tightened until she was divided and swallowed up by her ambitious - and shall we say unscrupulous? - neighbours, but the national spirit which had animated the country has never been crushed. A political commonwealth may be destroyed, a country conquered, a nation exiled, but a race and the racial spirit can never die.

The importance of Poland in European history is due not only to the vastness of her territories but also to her antiquity. For a long time Poland represented the spirit of independence and love of liberty which characterised the ancient Slavs. Rightly, therefore, says M. Salvandy, the historian of John Sobieski: " The Polish nation is one of the most ancient in Europe if we trace back her history to her remote origin and beginning." The invasions of barbarians, of Scandinavians, of Normen, Danes, and Varangians did not affect her. It was Poland too who, together with Hungary and Venice, saved the other nations from the invasion of Tshengis-Khan and his hordes. Out of gratitude for their services, the other nations have since swallowed up Poland, Hungary, and Venice.

In the history of nations, Poland represented the element and love of liberty: a Slavonic race, generous and chivalrous, the Poles were very jealous of their independence and constantly on their guard to defend this independence against the servitude of many laws, governments, or even civilisation. The primitive democratic groups were united and fused into one, but the people, the nation, still remained the supreme ruler. Poland has never been anything but a republic, presided over by an elective chief. The nation elected the chiefs, who enjoyed the title of king. It was always the nation as a whole who, whilst electing or deposing their figurehead kings, actually ruled, reigned, governed, and administered, decreed and decided on war or peace. The first chief whom the nation placed upon the throne was a peasant of the house of Piast. Poland originally had all the elements required to constitute order, force, and progress. In ancient times the ruling, principal idea of Poland's existence was the aim of unity on the one hand, and faith in the common goal on the other. On the one side there was the King, anointed by the Church, head of the voluntary army and representing the principle of unity, whilst on the other there was the nation, consisting of an association of men called upon in turn to fulfil their duty.

One could scarcely find another nation which started her national and political life under such favourable auspices. While the rest of Europe was producing feudalism - the negation of unity and equality in the political, and the negation of the social ego in the intellectual, world - Poland, from the earliest times, stood for independence and liberty. Such were the beginnings of Poland when she knew only *one* nation and one people, neither masters nor slaves but equal members of the free and indivisible Republic. Unfortunately, however, in the thirteenth century, Poland was divided among the sons of Boleslaw, and in the midst of internal wars forgot her destiny and her national aims. In the storm and stress of the wars waged between the four chiefs, the military acquired power and privileges and constituted itself a nobility, thus depriving the people, who had reigned hitherto, of their ancient prerogatives. Henceforth the nobles ruled, elected the kings, declared war and concluded peace, administered the country and enjoyed all the liberties and power.

I. From Ancient Times To The Reign Of Casimir II (1178)

The origin of the Polish nation has been traced back by the sagas and legends to the year 496, the date of the victory of King Clovis at Tolbiac and the foundation of the French as a people. These two nations, the French and the Polish, who have a great deal in common, are thus supposed to have been born on the same day. All these old annals, however, give but vague and somewhat confused information; they have come down to us through the mist of centuries, and no serious historian has accepted them as solid fact. The sagas and legends of early Poland, however, are too romantic and interesting in themselves to be omitted in a popular treatise, therefore we shall deal with them here, at least briefly.

Lech

It is said in one of the early sagas that a certain Lech, accompanied by his brothers Czech and Rus, arrived in the country one day, many centuries ago, and founded the town of Gnesen or Gniezno. In passing through the depths of a forest, Lech is supposed to have found an eagle's eyrie (Gniazdo), so he adopted the eagle as a symbol of his power and as his coat of arms, and founded a town on the spot. He is then supposed to have sent his brothers Czech and Rus to the East and to the West, and they, in their turn, founded the nations of Bohemia (Czechs) and Russia. Lech's own people were called after their first ruler the Lechites. Thus Lech is supposed to have been the first chief of the Poles - about the year 550 - and to have roamed with his legions to the West and to the North of the Vistula; to have conquered Brandenburg, Silesia, Prussia, Pomerania, Holstein, and Saxony, and to have founded the first capital of the Polish kingdom: Gnesen, the cradle of Polish greatness.

After Lech, Ismar is said to have fought against the Danes at the head of a big and numerous fleet, to have seized all the Danish isles in the Baltic Sea, to have compelled the Danish King Sivard to pay him tribute, and to have conquered the greater part of Denmark. Towards the end of the seventh century, we again see Poland divided and ruled over by twelve governors: voievodas or military chiefs. One of these voievodas, however, a certain Crak or Cracus, gathered all the power into his own hands and is said to have founded the city of Krakovie (or Cracovie, or Cracow), where he established his residence. He called his city Cracow in imitation of the croaking of the ravens. After Cech II, the son of Cracus, the latter's beautiful sister, Wanda, took the reins of government into her hands. She had a number of suitors, one of them being a German prince named Ritagor or Rytiger, who had sworn to secure the beautiful Wanda by fair or foul means. " Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch ich Gewalt." Wanda, in reply, placed herself at the head of her army and defeated her too impetuous suitor in a bloody encounter. Rytiger perished on the battle-field, while Wanda is supposed to have thrown herself into the Vistula. Once more Poland was divided and ruled over by twelve governors or military chiefs, and it was during their reign that the Hungarians and Moravians ravaged the country. Then the Poles again chose one single leader, a certain Lescus or Leszek. He was a brave and clever artisan whose real name was Przemislav; he is said to have defeated the Hungarians (some legends say Alexander the Great) in an ingenious manner. He formed figures of men with lances, swords, and shields, and then exposed them in the sun in such a way that the rays were reflected upon them. The enemy, frightened at the sight of these numerous imaginary soldiers, hastily retreated. After Leszek I, the Poles elected a young man of obscure origin as their ruler under the name of Leszek II. He triumphed over his rival in a horse-race, which reminds us of the story of the election of Darius. Leszek II

was of humble birth, yet power neither turned his head nor made him proud; he always kept the ragged garments which he had worn before his rise to power and would often gaze at them, the reminders of his humble and obscure origin. He is said to have perished in a battle which, together with the Bohemians, he fought against Charlemagne. His successor, Leszek III, sought the friendship of Charlemagne and greatly distinguished himself by conquests. He left the throne to his two sons, one of whom, Popiel I, was a weak, cowardly, and effeminate prince, who allowed his favourites to rule in his place. His brother, Popiel II, poisoned his two uncles, but then, in expiation and as a punishment, perished himself in his palace built in the lake Goplo, where he was devoured by rats. This legend reminds us of that of Bishop Hatto.

The Piasts

After an internal struggle, the Poles elected as their chief Piast, a simple peasant of Kruszwica, who possessed a small piece of land, which he himself cultivated, and a few bee-hives. The name of this peasant soon became the highest title of nobility in Poland, and he was the progenitor of a dynasty which reigned in Poland until the year 1370, in the Duchy of Moravia until 1526, and in Silesia until 1575 - that is to say, it existed for about seven centuries. For twenty years Piast is supposed to have ruled over Poland, to have established internal peace on a firm footing, and to have greatly contributed to the general amelioration of manners and customs.

Piast was succeeded by his son Ziemovit in 860. This prince subdued the neighbouring tribes, aggrandised his lands situated in the districts of Gnesen and Kruszwica, and fought against the Moravians, the Hungarians, Prussians, and Pomeranians. The successors of Ziemovit were Leszek IV and Ziemomisl. The latter is said to have had a son who was born blind, but who miraculously recovered his eyesight in his seventh year; “he was the symbol,’’ say the ancient chronicles, “ of Poland opening her eyes to the light of the Gospel.” For this son of Ziemomisl was Mieczyslaw I (Mieszko). Poland was at that time pagan, and the Germans were doing their utmost to spread Christianity among the Poles, hoping thus to establish their influence in the land. The German princes established military posts among the conquered neighbouring tribes; posts commanded by the guardians of the frontiers and who were called Markgrafs. Unable to resist the foreign influence, seeing so many changes among his neighbours, and above all afraid of the superior power of the Germans, Mieczyslaw decided to make an alteration in the customs of his country. He then became the Clovis of Poland. He repudiated his pagan wives and married a Christian princess, Dombrovka, the daughter of the Duke of Bohemia, who arrived accompanied by several ecclesiastics. Mieczyslaw himself then adopted Christianity and was baptized by Bohowid. He placed the holy sign of Redemption on the mountain Dysa-Gora, built nine churches and endowed them with considerable domains. Theologians were invited from France and Italy to instruct the people in the new religion. The people were converted to the new faith - Datin Christianity - thanks, chiefly, to the indefatigable efforts of Jordan, Bishop of Poland, assisted by Mieczyslaw himself and his wife Dombrovka, and especially by St. Adalbert, Bishop of Prague, who traversed Cracow and Poland on his way to Prussia, whither he went to preach the Gospel. The total conversion of - the Poles, however, only took place in the tenth century under Boleslaw the Great or the Brave. Under Mieczyslaw, Poland comprised Silesia and Moravia, and her frontiers extended, on the one side as far as the lands of the Prussians, and on the other to the frontiers of Bohemia. After the death of Dombrovka (977), Mieczyslaw married Oda, the daughter of a German Markgraf, and was soon compelled to acknowledge himself feudatory to the Emperor Otho I. However, he felt this humiliation very keenly and it was his son, Boleslaw, who again freed Poland from the German yoke.

Boleslaw (Boleslas) the Brave or the Great (999-1026)

Mieczyslaw died at the age of sixty-one and was succeeded by his son Boleslaw Chobry or the Brave, who may be considered as the real founder of the kingdom of Poland. Boleslaw may with justice be looked upon as the Napoleon of Poland, for he was at once a great warrior and a fine administrator and legislator. He covered Poland's arms with glory, organised the country judicially and politically, and developed the nation's wealth and prosperity. He was great not only in victory but also in defeat; he was always powerful and ingenious. During the first year of his reign, Boleslaw had to fight against Vladimir, Duke (or Prince) of Kiev, a descendant of Rurik - but he soon arranged a truce with the Russian Prince, as he was compelled to use his armies against other enemies; the Bohemians had invaded Silesia and seized Cracow, but he drove them back and extended his frontiers beyond the Carpathians. Pomerania then acknowledged him as master, and the fame of his courage and daring exploits spread far and wide until at last it reached the ears of the German Emperor, Otho III. This monarch had a great admiration for the Polish hero and decided to see with his own eyes the brave Duke and contemplate his almost fabulous greatness. Fortunately the Emperor had once made a vow that he would go on a pilgrimage to the shrine where the holy remains of St. Adalbert reposed. St. Adalbert, Bishop of Prague, had left his bishopric and gone out to preach the Gospel to the heathen Prussians and had suffered martyrdom, for he was killed by a pagan Prussian. Boleslaw had purchased the Bishop's remains and had had them transported to Gnesen, where even now they are looked upon as a sacred relic. The events of the martyr's life are described on the gates of the cathedral there. Boleslaw went out to meet the Emperor, and together they entered Gnesen, where they were received by the clergy, the nobility in rich and splendid array, and by a brilliant army; fair ladies resplendent in gold and precious stones completed the imposing cortege. At the banquets which Boleslaw held in honour of the Emperor, a new service of gold and silver plate was used each day and was then sent to the Emperor's house as a gift. The Emperor was so impressed by the power, magnificence, and generosity of Boleslaw that he testified his gratitude by elevating the Duchy of Poland into a Kingdom. Boleslaw was solemnly anointed king by the Bishop of Gnesen, whilst the Emperor himself placed the crown upon the head of his friend and ally. Thus Boleslaw became the first King of Poland, ally of the Emperor, free of all tribute. The Emperor also gave him the lance of St. Maurice, in exchange for which he received an arm of St. Adalbert.

The new King soon had an opportunity to show that he well deserved the title newly conferred upon him. He successfully fought and conquered Bohemia, Moravia, and Misnia (or Servia), and added them to his kingdom. Eater on Germany became alarmed at the success of the Polish King and the triumph of Polish arms, and the then Emperor, Henry of Bavaria, " who did not know the Joseph of Poland" and was jealous of his greatness, joined a confederacy formed to humble the pride of brave Boleslaw. The latter, however, won a victory over the Germans and defeated them several times in a war which lasted about fifteen years. At last he concluded a peace with them at Merseburg (1013), by which it was agreed that the lands beyond the Oder were free of German control. This left Boleslaw free to turn his army against the Pomeranians and Prussians, whom he subdued, compelling the latter to embrace Catholic Christianity. As a sign of his domination in Prussia and Germany, he erected in the river Ossa, in the neighbourhood of Rogozno and Laszczyn, and also in the Elbe and the Sala, iron pillars with the inscription: *Hie est Polonia.*

Yet even then Boleslaw was not allowed to lay down his arms. Sviatopolk, Prince of Tver, who had been expelled from Russia by his brother Yaroslaw, son of Prince Vladimir the Great, sought refuge at the Court of Poland - and Poland's brave King decided to help the exiled Prince. Boleslaw defeated Yaroslaw on the banks of the Bug and reinstated Sviatopolk

- but when the latter failed to show his gratitude, he took Kiev, which, at the time, rivalled Constantinople in magnificence and splendour. He made his triumphal entry into Kiev in 1018 and is said to have struck the golden gates of the city with his sword; it was the sword that the Emperor Otho had given him, and because of the shock the sword received it was henceforward called the " broken sword " and religiously preserved among the royal treasures at Cracow until 1795. For eight centuries the Kings of Poland girded on this sword for the ceremony of coronation. The crown and sword of Boleslaw have escaped the covetousness of the rulers of Petrograd, Vienna, and Berlin; these glorious antiquities are still awaiting the renascence of Poland - which, perhaps, may not be far off.

Among the treasures which Boleslaw carried away from Kiev were the bronze gates - originally brought from Constantinople. They were placed in the cathedral of Gnesen and it is upon these gates that the history of the martyrdom of St. Adalbert is written. The last six years of his reign Boleslaw spent in strenuous efforts to repair some of the evils he had been compelled to cause by his constant wars. He did his best to improve the moral and temporal state of his nation; to raise and develop the prosperity of Poland. He built new cities and invited merchants from Greece to visit the country so as to further commerce. He devoted much of his attention to administration and the course of justice, and called upon twelve of his wisest nobles to assist him. He personally travelled through his kingdom and inquired into the manner and method with which the local magistrates administered justice. And yet the power of the King and of his Council in no way interfered with the individual liberty of his subjects, or with the communal freedom: the inhabitants of the various communities, in accordance with the immemorial custom, still assembled to deliberate upon public affairs. Boleslaw made roads throughout Poland to facilitate the visits of mercantile caravans, and Normen, Danes, Englishmen, Germans, and Russians came to Poland. The country was prosperous - but the habits and customs of the inhabitants were simple; the churches and private dwellings were built of wood. Land was given to the prisoners of war, who were thus turned into agriculturists; they then received their liberty, for according to the custom of the people the land could only be cultivated by free men. Boleslaw also invited Benedictine monks from France and founded monasteries on Lysa-Gora, at Sieciechowa, and Tynec.

He was a true father of his people and he not only conquered but organised and conserved his conquests. The ideal which upheld him in his wars against the Russians and the Germans was to make Poland the centre of the Slav nationality. Boleslaw died in 1025. He was accepted as the greatest sovereign of his age, and his people deeply mourned him. He died and was buried at Posen.

Mieczyslaw II (1025-1034)

Mieczyslaw II, who ascended the throne vacated by his great father, was a weak, pleasure-loving prince, incapable of governing a turbulent nation or of waging war against ambitious and rapacious neighbours. He had married Rixa, the daughter of the Count Palatine of the Rhine and niece of Emperor Otho III, and was absolutely under her sway. Poland, under his rule, suffered all the horrors of war and lost a great portion of the conquests of his brave father, especially Moravia. The Russians and Pomeranians then decided to have their revenge, and Mieczyslaw was rudely awakened from his *dolce far niente* and dreams of sensuality and voluptuousness by these several defeats and losses. The life he led hastened his end and he died of insanity. Then his wife Rixa or Ryxa (Recheza) took the reins of government into her own hands and ruled as regent for her young son. She was a German, hated and despised the Poles, and was therefore very unpopular. During the weak reign of Mieczyslaw II, the Polish nobility or the Szlachta, which afterwards played such an important role in Polish history, had become very powerful, and under Rixa this power greatly

increased. The Poles finally revolted against the foreign Princess and she was compelled to flee the country together with her son. A period of anarchy followed: the peasants rebelled against the nobles and seigneurs and the pagans vented their wrath upon the Christians; churches were sacked and ecclesiastics massacred. The Russians on the one side, and the Bohemians on the other, availed themselves of this state of confusion in Poland and invaded the country, burned, pillaged, and ravaged it.

Some years passed, during which the country, torn by factions and parties, each striving for the supreme power by the force of arms, suffered much. Paganism had its stronghold in the province of Masovia, which was governed by one Moislav, a former cupbearer of the late King of Poland, who, although he governed despotically, yet defended it against invasion. At last, tired of the state of anarchy prevailing in the country, the bishops and nobles gathered together and decided to recall Casimir (or Kasimierz), the son of Mieczyslaw II. A deputation was consequently sent to Rixa, who informed them that her son was studying at Liege. Casimir returned to his native land and was crowned at Gnesen in 1041. This Prince restored peace to the . country, reconciled the various factions and enhanced his own prestige by an alliance with Yaroslaw, Prince of Kiev, whose sister Maria (or Dobronega) he married.

Henri I of France having married another sister, Casimir thus became brother-in-law of the King of France. That Casimir had, before his accession to the throne, taken the cowl at Cluny is probably only a legend, but be that as it may, he invited the monks of Cluny to come to Poland and founded two monasteries for them, one on the Oder in Silesia, and the other near Cracow. Moislav or Maslav (or Masos) for a time refused to recognise the authority of Casimir until the latter defeated him at Plock in 1047. Casimir was surnamed the " Restorer," for he restored peace and calm to the country and ruled with wisdom and sagacity; he re-established the bishoprics, abbacies, and convents and contributed to the prosperity of the land. He died, after a reign of sixteen years, in 1058 and was buried at Posen.

Boleslaw II (1058-1080), Surnamed The Bold

Casimir the Restorer was succeeded by his eldest son, Boleslaw, who evidently inherited the fighting qualities of the first Boleslaw. He took up the cause of many of the weak princes and offered them his protection. Such were Bela, Prince of Hungary, Yaromir, Duke of Bohemia, and Tsyaslaw, Prince of Kiev. Boleslaw was successful in his campaigns in Bohemia, Hungary, and Russia, but on his return to Poland he so cruelly punished the originators of certain disorders which had arisen during his absence that Stanislaus, Bishop of Cracow, considered it his duty to rebuke him. The King was so infuriated at this that he murdered the Bishop with his own hands. Gregory VII, then Pope, was not the man to let such a crime pass unpunished, and Boleslaw was excommunicated, accursed, and dethroned. Abandoned by all, the King fled to Hungary, where he died in misery. Some say that this once powerful King, who had led a life of luxury, found an asylum in the monastery of Willach, where, under an assumed name, he performed menial tasks for the monks, who only after his death discovered his identity. The Pope not only dethroned Boleslaw but he refused to permit the successors of the murderer-King to assume the regal title. Therefore for two centuries Poland was again a Duchy.

Upon the expulsion of Boleslaw, the Poles raised his brother Vladyslaw I to the throne. He repulsed successfully various foreign invasions at different points of his frontiers. Vladyslaw had a son named Boleslaw, by his wife Judith, who was the daughter of the Duke Vratyslaw of Bohemia; this young Prince was but nine years old when he first accompanied his father on his campaigns, and he showed thus early great bravery and courage. In 1102 he succeeded his father as Boleslaw the Wry-mouthed, because of a peculiarity of his mouth caused by an illness.

Boleslaw III (1102-1139)

Boleslaw III was one of Poland's greatest kings and a worthy successor to the first and second Boleslaw. He reigned for thirty-seven years and for practically all that time waged war against his neighbours, the Germans, Pomeranians, Bohemians, and Russians, and was victorious in thirty-seven battles. In 1112 and 1113 he accompanied the Crusaders to Palestine and also undertook a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Gilles in France. Before his death, he divided his patrimony among his four sons; a proceeding which led to many feuds and conflicts, to the great detriment of the nation. He died in 1139.

The period which we have briefly sketched in the preceding pages extends over three centuries and is known as that of Conquering Poland. Under the first rulers of the house of Piast, Poland was bounded by the Carpathians and the Baltic, and comprised the lands situated between the Oder, the Bug, and the Niemen. Gradually, however, under the first Christian kings, her frontiers were extended as far as the banks of the Dnieper and the Elbe: she ruled, too, over the pagan inhabitants on the shores of the Baltic, such as the Pomeranians and the Prussians. Quite frequently also she included under her sway the neighbouring countries of Bohemia and Hungary and often acted as the protector of the feeble and the oppressed: she assisted the Russians in their struggle against their tyrants and the Germans in throwing off the yoke of their Emperors.

For three centuries the chief of the state on the one hand and the nobles on the other endeavoured to accumulate property and power, forces which were originally, as was the custom in all Slavonic countries, the possession of the community. Gradually the system of private possessions was established and the foundations of class distinctions and of a powerful nobility - rivals of the King - were laid. The Kings too endeavoured to concentrate all the power in their own hands and to exercise . all the prerogatives which before had belonged to the community at large. The King began to consider himself the hereditary possessor of the land, which he divided among his children. The royal power reached its summit in 1025, after which it slowly waned. The bishops, palatines, governors of provinces, high dignitaries, and nobles each tried to accumulate as much power as possible and to restrict that of the King, until finally the nobility won the day. This nobility was only a race tradition: it was a class of Lechites who took the name of Slechites, hence Szlachta,[1] and formed the elite of the army; they were called nobles in Katin and were distinguished by a golden chain which they wore around the neck. The lowest peasant could acquire this distinction: all that was required of him was the possession of a horse, a shield, a cuirass, and a complete equipment: thus power ennobled men of lower station.

The lower classes of society in Poland were of many gradations. In military service they were the equals of the nobles and enjoyed similar rights: their disputes were settled by the same jurisdiction and courts: they could possess private property, and their hereditary rights were respected; they could move about freely from village to village and settle wherever they pleased. There were also serfs, prisoners of war, or men condemned for debts and other transgressions. This condition was, however, only a temporary one, for by cultivating the land the serf acquired his liberty, and his descendants formed part of the nation. The serf, thus liberated, performed military service and was entitled to aspire to the dignity of noble. The population of Poland was a movable one, roaming about from one district to another. Although a fairly large kingdom, Poland had no fixed capital; it was only in 1080 that Cracow became a kind of centre; it was also in accordance with the last instructions of Boleslaw III that in future the head of the State had to reside in that city.

[1] Some explain " Szlachta " as being derived from the German word *Geschlecht.*

II. Poland Divided: From Casimir II (1178-1194) to Yagello

After many struggles and vicissitudes and the brief reigns of Vladyslaw II, Boleslaw IV, and Mieczyslaw III, all the dominions of Boleslaw Wrymouth, with the exception of Silesia, which had become Germanised under the elder Piasts, were once more concentrated in the hands of Casimir II, the youngest son of Boleslaw III. This Prince twice refused the ducal throne. At last, however, he was prevailed upon to lay aside his modesty and delicacy of feeling and to consider the welfare of his country and his nation. He was surnamed the Just and was noted for the mildness of his rule. He convened an assembly of nobles and bishops at Eeczyca, which meeting is now looked upon as the first attempt at Polish legislation and the foundation of the Polish Senate. He was perhaps the most affable monarch who sat on the Polish throne. The years which elapsed after his death in 1194 until the accession to the throne of Przemyslaw in 1295 are of little interest in the history of Poland. We shall but briefly summarise the principal events. The throne was successively occupied by Leszek (or Leskus) the White, Vladyslaw IV, Boleslaw V, and Leszek the Black. During the reign of Leszek the White the Teutonic Order of Knights settled in the territories of the Baltic and laid the foundations of the Prussian monarchy. This order was originally founded during the siege of Acre by German knights for the purpose of assisting the Christian pilgrims in Jerusalem and to wash the wounds of the wounded and alleviate their sufferings. The order was approved of by the Emperor in 1191 and also by the Pope. The knights had to be of noble descent, to vow themselves to celibacy and to defend the pilgrims in the Holy Land. Their habit was a black coat with a white mantle and a black cross. At first but a few, their numbers soon increased to forty. Conrad, Duke of Moravia, brother of Leszek the White, invited them to Poland and offered them the territory of Kholm or Chelm, that they might convert the heathen Prussians to Christianity.

Boleslaw V was very young when he ascended the throne of Poland: he reigned from 1227 to 1279, and it was during his reign that the great Mongolian invasion took place. Emerging from the depths of Asia, the vast hordes of the Tartars invaded Poland about the year 1240. The country, weakened by internal strife, was not really able to resist the invasion, and many towns were devastated and much land laid waste. However, after the gallantly fought battle of Liegnitz, in Silesia, the tide turned and the Tartars went on into Hungary, where they finally subsided. During this reign many colonies of Germans and Armenians came to settle in Poland, whose trade and commerce they greatly increased. Although the industry and labour of the German colonists were very useful to the country and greatly furthered its prosperity, yet Poland, in allowing them within her borders, took the great risk of losing her distinctive nationality; of having it submerged in that of the foreigners; of being Germanised. The Dukes, in order to attract the German traders and artisans, offered them many privileges: entire cities and burghs even were governed by the Teutonic law: the *Jus Magdeburgicum.* Many Polish princes showed their liking for Germanism by adopting the German language as the official tongue, in place of the Latin which had hitherto been used. Indeed, it may be said that Polish nationality was only saved by the priests and bishops, who jealously guarded and defended it through these troublous times. It was also about this epoch that Lithuania began to exercise her strength against Moscow and the Tartars. Boleslaw, surnamed the Chaste, was succeeded by his nephew, Deszek the Black, 1279-1289.

In the course of the seventeen years which followed the death of Deszek the Black, Poland had many wars and was governed by many Dukes, who disputed the power. These were Boleslaw VI, Henry IV, Przemys-law, Wenceslaw of Bohemia, and Vladyslaw IV, the Short or Dokietek.

Przemyslaw restored the regal title, but instead of humiliating himself before the Pope to solicit the crown, he simply paid no attention to the Holy Father but received the royal crown from his own nobles and clergy amid the acclamations of his people. He restored peace to the country and established his authority in Pomerania. Unfortunately, however, he was murdered at Ragozno, whither he had retired to celebrate one of the high festivals of the Church.

The long reign of Vladyslaw (Dokietek) was one great struggle against the Teutonic Knights. These, although they owed everything to one of Vladyslaw's ancestors, became very arrogant and attempted to exercise supreme authority over certain Polish territories. In spite of many successes, Vladyslaw could not wholly resist the invading storm of the Knights, and therefore many Polish possessions remained in their hands. With his last words, Vladyslaw urged his son Casimir to wage an extermination war against the perfidious Knights. " Rather bury yourself under the ruins of your throne than suffer them to hold the territories they have invaded. Punish the Knights of the Teutonic Order and the Marquis of Brandenburg." These were the last words of the dying King. Vladyslaw had been the first Polish monarch to be crowned at Cracow, which from that time became the centre and foyer of Polish life and history. He was buried in the Wawel, a faubourg of Cracow, and his son Casimir III succeeded him upon the throne of Poland, reigning from 1333-1370.[2]

The internal state of Poland divided was a deplorable one. Devastated by the invasions of the Tartars, Prussians, Russians, Lithuanians, and the Teutonic Knights, the country was a prey to all the horrors of long-drawn-out war. Discord, too, reigned between the princes: the crown and the succession became the object of constant friction, which could not but cause the country to suffer greatly. The internal disorder was increased by the numerous privileges exercised by the bishops and of which the nobles were jealous. The German influence also, as has already been pointed out, greatly undermined the stability of the nation. We have previously referred to the *Jus Magdeburgicum,* which was in existence in Poland. These privileges, *Jure Teutonico,* were profusely multiplied during the century 1280 to 1380 and spread all over Poland: a considerable part of the country, entire towns, burghs, communes, villages, and hamlets were governed by this law, the law of the foreigner, in contradistinction to the law of the country, the *Jure Polonicale.* German nationality, legislation, jurisdiction, influence, tradition, and customs were thus paramount in the country and completely undermined the autonomy of Poland. It was the foreign fatherland in the native land: Germany in Poland. Whilst the nobles and serfs were governed by the rules and institutions of the Slavs, the burghers in the towns only recognised German law and Germanic institutions. The Poles, therefore, only consisted of two classes: the nobility or Szlachta, and the people or Narod. The people or lower class consisted of free peasants and those attached to the land or the glebe, who were the *servi glebes* or *adscripti.* The free peasants, who could leave their master at will, paid him a rent for the land they cultivated. Both free and bond peasants were also called Cmetho or Kmetho (from the Latin *comes).* To these two classes of Poles we must also add that of the ecclesiastics. Each town (called Miasto) was a somewhat independent republic with its own separate existence, its own government, local legislation, administration, jurisdiction, and even armed force. Gradually all the capitals, cities, and more

[2] The line of the reigning Dukes of Galicia having become extinct, the entire province was now united to the kingdom of Poland.

important burghs became so many republics, whose foreign character naturally deeply affected the national existence of Poland. Germans dominated everywhere and even exercised a great influence at the courts of the Dukes and the grand seigneurs: the German language was spoken by the nobles, who thus distinguished themselves from the common people, who remained faithful to their national language. Throughout Silesia, the German language was generally adopted; it was spoken in all the big cities as far as Posen and Cracow. The priests and the ecclesiastics were able to save the Polish nationality, thanks to their influence over the schools, which were wholly under their control. The histories were written in Latin, but the bishops instructed the masters and teachers to translate them into the vernacular, that is, the Polish language, and to explain them to their pupils, at the same time forbidding the masters to avail themselves of the German tongue. Therefore it was solely due to the episcopal and ecclesiastical hierarchy that the nationality of Poland was saved. The bishops assembled in synods in the presence of the barons and the other high dignitaries and framed and issued regulations which dealt with all the inhabitants. Indeed, it cannot be too often said that it was the Polish clergy which saved Polish nationality, history, language, and customs, and in the midst of the general chaos and anarchy maintained order, morality, and unity among the people. In their councils, the bishops settled all the affairs of the State with the assistance and consent of the barons, whilst the King never decided on anything, nor issued any decree, without first consulting the high dignitaries of his realm, among whom the bishops played an important role. This Council was changed into a Senate in 1180 and the archbishops of Gnesen and Cracow held the first and second positions in it. The Senate was the outcome of the united endeavours of the nobility and clergy to combat the absolutistic tendencies of the sovereigns and to compel them to submit their decisions and decrees to a legislative assembly. They had fought for the principle of a free state with national representation, and at last they realised it in the form of the Senate. Although it was undoubtedly the clergy who had saved the national independence and the national life, yet the nobility soon showed the signs of jealousy, turbulence, and egotism which later were to prove fatal to Poland and to lead to her decline and eventual dissolution. For 140 years, from 1180 to 1320, when Vladyslaw Lokietek was crowned king, the aristocratic anarchy reigned supreme and manifested itself in crimes, treacheries, conspiracies, and assassinations. However, Vladyslaw Pokietek soon re-established the national unity and made wise and beneficial laws. He resuscitated the Polish common law, although for a portion of the population he also sanctioned the existing Teutonic or municipal law, which prevailed in the cities. Though the nobles had usurped all the privileges and concentrated all the political power in their own hands, yet special laws protected the peasants, and indeed favoured the urban inhabitants. The cities, busy centres of industry, were peopled chiefly by the numerous aliens. In order to gain some idea of the great difference and distinctions which existed between these two classes, it is sufficient to consider the amount of the fine imposed for the murder of an individual belonging to either of them. The sum fixed for the fife of a noble was 12 marks, whilst that of a Kmetho was only valued at 3 marks. Later, these sums were increased, and the fife of a noble or an ecclesiastic was worth varying sums from 30 to 60 marks (£44 to £88), whilst that of a Kmetho rose from 6 to 15 marks.

Although the Kmethos were really free men and only obliged to pay rent to the seigneurs, either in the form of money, produce, or labour, yet the barons considered them as their subjects and found a thousand and one means of depriving them of their little possessions and then expelling them from their land, regardless of the fact that the law recognised the liberty of the Kmetho and his hereditary rights. But the feudalism and serfdom which at that time were prevalent almost everywhere in Europe were practically unknown in Poland. For a short time feudalism thrived in Lithuania, but it soon died out again when this country became closely connected with Poland.

Flourishing Poland

Casimir, surnamed the Great, and who well deserved the title in many ways, was elected in succession to King Vladyslaw IV. His reign was a long and prosperous one for Poland (1333-1370). Though his father, with his dying breath, had entreated him to expel the Teutonic Knights from his dominions, Casimir did not feel himself strong enough to carry on such a war with any certainty of success. Besides, Casimir saw clearly that the internal state of the kingdom was such that immediate reforms were absolutely necessary, and in order to carry out his legislative and administrative measures, peace was imperative. He therefore concluded a treaty with the Knights, according to which Cujavia and Dobrzyn were restored to Poland, while Casimir renounced all claims on Pomerania; he also ceded Silesia in exchange for the King of Bohemia's renunciation of all claims to the Crown of Poland. Casimir does not appear to have had much ability in managing foreign political affairs; his chief aim was to reform the country internally and to put it in a position to defend itself; and lie completely succeeded. He gave his whole attention to rearranging the laws of his country: both the judges and the laws themselves required reforming and change. In order to frame a new code of laws which should be uniform in character and universal in application, the King convened the famous Diet of Wislica. This consisted of prelates, nobles, castellans, and other magistrates. They elaborated a code of laws which it was decided should be perpetual and obligatory. The Code consisted of two books: one for Little and the other for Great Poland. In an age of feudalism, when civil rights were being trampled under foot and the right of private property barely respected, this Code of Laws proved of great value. The national Diet then became a regular feature in the country. The first known Diet or Seym was assembled in 1331 at Checiny by the aged father of Casimir, Vladyslaw. The Diet was then composed of prelates, members of the nobility, barons, and knights. The burghers, who were mostly Germans, and the Jews were not admitted to it, while the peasants, who were gradually being reduced to the state of bondmen by the ambitious and rapacious nobility, were of course not represented in it. As regards the foreign law, which was prevalent in the towns whose inhabitants were mostly German, Casimir did not wholly abolish it, but retained as much as he thought to be necessary for the encouragement of art and industry. The tribunals in the towns and cities were still subject to Teutonic law, but the appeal to Magdeburg was prohibited. Instead a Teutonic tribunal was established at Cracow: this consisted of a judge and seven respectable householders, who were nominated by the Starosta or elder.

Casimir submitted to the Diet not only questions of internal policy and the ceding of provinces, but in 1339, on May 8, at Cracow, he practically granted the nobles the power of electing their kings when he proposed to them his nephew, Louis of Hungary, as his successor. He impressed the members of the Diet with a sense of their power, and thus may be said to have laid the foundation of the extensive sway which the aristocracy henceforth exercised over the destinies of Poland, a sway which undermined the prestige of the monarchy, and so, instead of strengthening the Republic, led to its decay and downfall. Casimir endeavoured to encourage commerce, industry, and learning: he built colleges, hospitals, and churches: he built fortresses too, and laid the foundation of the University of Cracow in 1364. Danzig and Cracow joined the Hanseatic League, and from various parts of Germany new colonists came to Poland and its commerce flourished and was prosperous. Casimir was, in many respects, a great King, and really deserved the title his people bestowed on him. Great as he was, however, Casimir, not unlike many other kings both before and since, was not without many faults, especially as far as his private life was concerned. He was addicted to drink, and his love affairs are supposed to have been very numerous. He was married four times, but to neither of his wives did he remain faithful. During the lifetime of his father he married Anna Aldona, the daughter of Gedymin, Prince of Lithuania. After her

death he married Margaret, the daughter of John of Bohemia, who was killed at the battle of Crecy. She is said to have died of a broken heart. In 1341 Casimir married Princess Adelaide, but she quarrelled with him and was shortly relegated to a fortress. Among the numerous favourites who constituted Casimir's seraglio, which was a kind *otparc aux cerfs* filled with fair and frail ladies, there is supposed to have been a beautiful Jewess of the name of Esther, who, like her prototype in the Book of Esther, is said to have obtained many favours from her royal lover. Indeed in 1334 Casimir promulgated the statute concerning the Jews, and in 1337 another entitled *Privilegia Judceorum.* The privileges which Casimir thus granted to the Jews remained in force for many years. Some Polish historians, however, reject the story of Esther and attribute Casimir's kind treatment of the Jews simply to his sense of justice.

Casimir's last wife was Yadwiga of Glogau, whom he married in 1365. On the occasion of the marriage of the King's granddaughter to the Emperor Charles, brilliant scenes were witnessed at Cracow. The Kings of Hungary, Cyprus, and Denmark, the Dukes of Bavaria, Schveidnitz, Opeln, and Moravia, and many other princes were present.

During Casimir's reign many adherents of the sect of the Flagellants - so called from their self-inflictions - entered Poland from Hungary. It is also during the reign of Casimir that we first hear of Warsaw. Casimir died in 1370 in consequence of a fall from his horse and was buried in the cathedral of Cracow under a monument of reddish brown marble. He was succeeded by his nephew, Louis of Hungary (13701382), who was a Capet, and therefore a descendant of Charles of Anjou, the brother of St. Louis. Busy with his own kingdom of Hungary and adored by the Hungarians, Louis left the regency of the country in the hands of his mother Elizabeth, and only appeared twice in Cracow. The Hungarian rule was very unpopular, and the Poles greatly resented the King's ignorance of their language. Louis' mother, an arrogant and avaricious princess, did nothing to contribute to a reconciliation between her son and his new subjects. Louis died in 1382 and with him the line of the Piasts came to an end.

III. The Dynasty of Yagello: Yadwiga or Hedwig (1382-1386)

The death of Louis of Hungary closes the period of Polish history which has been termed "Divided Poland," and which covers 244 years and is full of important events. In consequence of the internal strifes and conflicts occasioned by the distribution of provinces among the princes of the reigning house, and also of the invasions of the Tartars, Mongols, Lithuanians, and the rebellion of the Teutonic Knights, Poland's strength was continually being weakened. Yet in spite of many calamities and the momentary loss of several provinces, the Republic - for so Poland was styled - still preserved her first rank among the nations and her political and religious unity. Nay, she even extended her frontiers towards the East and acquired a few Slavonic countries or districts, such as Red Russia, Vollhynia, and Podolia. Special laws protected the peasants, but nevertheless the nobles held all the political power in their hands.

The fact of there being two pretendants to the throne of Louis I of Poland, namely, his two daughters, Mary, who was married to Sigismund, and Hedwig, who was only fourteen, caused a short interregnum, of which the turbulent nobles fully availed themselves: they heartily embraced the opportunity of increasing their privileges and exacting new concessions. Hedwig was at last elected Queen and entered Cracow as such on October 15, 1384. The people received her with long shouts of "Long live Queen Yadwiga!" Polish historians all describe the deep impression which the young and beautiful princess produced upon such an enthusiastic and easily impressed people as the Poles. She was a granddaughter, too, of the great Casimir, the peasants' King (Krol Khlopov). But if the people rejoiced the young Queen was sad at heart, for the Diet had decided that she should marry Yagello, Prince of Lithuania; they cared but little for the personal inclination of the Queen, who had given her young affections to William, Duke of Ragusa. She was not the first princess compelled by reasons of State to sacrifice love upon the altar of policy. She yielded, but, at first, wanted to say a last good-bye to her lover, who had appeared at Cracow with a large retinue. The Queen was not allowed to see him, but was kept a prisoner in her own palace. In her despair she is said to have seized a hatchet and to have threatened to break open her gates: her paroxysm of passion, however, soon subsided. The Prince of Lithuania came, and although this barbarian, clad in skins, frightened the tender Yadwiga, he did not quite displease her.

Yagello was the sovereign of Lithuania or Litva, the close neighbour of Poland: it was inhabited by barbarian tribes known as the Lithuanians, Samogittians, Letts, and White Russians. The boundaries of the country during its greatest expansion extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The capital of Lithuania was Wilno and the official language White Russian. The Lithuanians were pagans and the priestly caste had great influence among them. The most powerful sovereigns of Lithuania were Mindovg and his son Gedymin (1315-1340). The latter's son Olgerd (1345-1377) increased the power of his principality by adding to it Podolia, Mohilev, and Vitebsk. He even extended his sway over the Republics of Pskov and Novgorod the Great: he also laid siege to Moscow three times. Yagello was the son of this Olgerd. He offered not only to abjure paganism and to compel his subjects to embrace Christianity, but also to unite his own dominions with Poland and to conquer Pomerania, Silesia, and the other provinces which had been lost to the Polish crown. Yadwiga or Hedwig was duly married to Yagello, who, on his baptism into the Christian faith, was given the name of Vladyslaw. Faithful to his promises he at once effected the conversion of his subjects

to Christianity: at the Diet convened at Wilno (Vilna) he decided to abolish idolatry in the Duchy of Lithuania; the savage customs of the rude barbarians were done away with and the altars of the principal pagan god, Perkun, destroyed. In order to convince his subjects completely of the impotence of their heathen gods, Yagello commanded the sacred fires to be extinguished, the holy serpents to be slain, and the altars upon which the human sacrifices had been offered up to be totally destroyed. Surprised to see such terrible sacrilege go unpunished, the barbarians began to doubt the power of their gods and were, therefore, soon prevailed upon to accept baptism.

Yagello to Vladyslaw VI, Warnenczyk (1386-1434)

Lithuania was now united to Poland, and the new king transferred his residence from Vilna to Cracow. The Lithuanians did not accept the fusion without a murmur, and Vitovt, one of Yagello's brothers, compelled the latter to recognise Lithuania as a sort of appanage of the crown. The Lithuanian nobles were permitted the same privileges as those enjoyed by the Polish aristocracy. During the reign of Yagello, the Teutonic Knights, who were attacked by the combined forces of Poland and Lithuania, were defeated in the famous battle of Gruenwald, in the vicinity of Tannenberg in Prussia, in 1410, and 50,000 of the Knights, including their Grand Master, are supposed to have been killed. Queen Hedwig died in 1389, but Yagello, who had no claim to the Polish crown, except as her husband, still continued to rule as King for over forty years. He is said to have been an amiable and considerate man and to have been greatly attached to his wife, although some historians accuse him of jealousy and inconsiderate treatment of her.

At the Diet of Yedlin in 1430 Yagello's son, Vladyslaw, was declared his successor:. the nobles, however, made him grant them new concessions in return for their consenting to accept his son as King. No sooner, however, did the old King die - in 1434 - than trouble arose. Vladyslaw, being very young, was under the tutelage of the great ecclesiastic Zbigniew Olesnicki (1454) and of his mother. He had scarcely reached his majority when he was offered the crown of Hungary and Bohemia. It was at the suggestion of John Corvinus, who afterwards became the famous Huniades, that the crown was offered to Vladyslaw VI, who, it was hoped, would defend the Hungarians against the Turks. Their great heroic struggle against the Turks, which lasted over two and a half centuries, had but just begun.

Vladyslaw entered upon a campaign against the Turks, but was defeated and killed at the battle of Varna in 1444. After a short interregnum, Casimir, brother of the late King, was elected to the throne (1447-1492). During his reign, Poland > became a true Republic, with her Kings little more than mere Presidents or the lieutenants of the Diet. The constitution of the Republic was firmly established; the nobles acquired the right to send deputies to the Diet and the Statute of Nieszawa (near Thorn) consecrated the rights and privileges of the Polish nobility. This was the Polish Magna Charta. It was also during the reign of Casimir IV that the Prussians, tired of the tyranny of the Teutonic Knights, cast off their rule and acknowledged themselves vassals of Poland. The Poles warred against the Knights until at last a treaty was signed at Thorn in according to which Western Prussia, Danzig - one of the chief towns of the Hanseatic League - and Thorn were ceded to Casimir, whilst Eastern Prussia was left in the hands of the Knights, whose Grand Master had to acknowledge himself a vassal of Poland. The country also lost Novgorod the Great, which had been joined to Lithuania. It was taken by Ivan III of Moscow, which principality soon became a dangerous neighbour and rival of Poland.

Casimir was succeeded by his son John Albert, in spite of the opposition of the Lithuanian nobility, who wanted to place Alexander, another son of Casimir's, upon the throne, and when John Albert died in 1501, this Alexander was finally elected King. His wife was Helen,

a daughter of Ivan the Great of Russia and of Sophia Paleologue, who was heiress to the throne of Byzantium. Russia, or rather Moscow, was rapidly becoming a strong and formidable rival of Poland, which led to continual struggles between them, and in spite of the close alliance by marriage of the two countries, war was actively waged between Russia and Poland. The war was caused chiefly by religious differences. Alexander was a Roman Catholic, Helen belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church, and Ivan demanded for his daughter the full and free exercise of her religion,, and that a Russian church should be erected at Vilna. This was granted. Subsequently, however, Ivan quarrelled with his son-in-law and so war was declared. During the reign of Alexander the Polish nobility obtained further concessions from the King. They practically demanded that he should become merely the President of the Senate. In a Diet held at Radom in 1508 the *Liberum Veto* made its appearance. It was decreed that nothing important should be undertaken without the united consent of the deputies *(communi consensu):* that is, that in future the final decision should not rest with the majority but that unanimity was necessary. This afterwards gave rise to the famous Liberum Veto which led to the ruin of the nation. Alexander died in 1506 and was succeeded by his brother Sigismund I (1507-1548).

Sigismund, Duke of Lithuania, whose qualities had already rendered him famous, was acclaimed by the nation. He proved his military ability in his wars against the Tartars, the Russians, and the Teutonic Knights, who were once more compelled to acknowledge Polish suzerainty, and their Grand Master, Albert, created Prince of Prussia, took the oath of allegiance to Poland. It is during the reign of Sigismund that we hear of the Cossacks for the first time. The crown of Hungary was offered to Sigismund, but he refused it as he had already refused that of Sweden. He was greatly feared in Europe: the Popes always showed him distinct marks of their favour and consideration; Sultan Selim respected him, Solyman feared him, and Emperor Charles Quint and King Francis I of France were anxious to have his vote as candidates for the Imperial throne. Sigismund did his best to maintain unity within his dominions; he was always a friend of peace and unity. Under his reign the cities flourished and prospered, public monuments were erected, learning and education increased, and great captains, scholars, and legislators of the world came to Poland. Copernicus (1473-1543), a native of Thorn, was a contemporary of Sigismund.

In order to make justice uniform, the King made one code of laws obligatory for both Poland and Lithuania. Sigismund had first married Barbara Zapolya, who died in 1515. His second wife was Bona Sforza, a daughter of the Duke of Milan. She exercised an enormous influence over the King, who became utterly powerless in her hands. Because of her avarice and intrigues, she was hated by the Poles, and yet the country owed to her a somewhat refining influence, for she introduced artists and painters from her native land to the Court of Poland. It was under Sigismund that the first rebellion against the King occurred. He lived until the age of eighty-two, his life having been very temperate and his strength extraordinary. He was a modest and humble man and a true father of his people. They loved him in life and revered his memory after his death, for Poland, under his rule, had become very prosperous and wealthy. He was succeeded by his son Sigismund II, Augustus (1548-1572).

Sigismund Augustus was crowned on the 26th of July, but he had to fight energetically against the Diet of Warsaw, that wanted him to repudiate his second wife, Barbara Radziwill, whom he had married secretly. His first wife was Elizabeth, the daughter of the German Emperor. Such, however, was the King’s love for his wife Barbara that he preferred to resign the crown rather than give her up, and so the Diet gave in and Barbara was crowned. Her happiness, however, was of short duration, for she died six months later. Her Italian mother-in-law was suspected of having poisoned her. Sigismund Augustus afterwards married a sister of his first wife; she was the widow of Francis Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua.

Protestantism had now found many adherents in Poland, where they were called Dissidents. The policy of the King was a somewhat inconsistent one, and the new faith spread widely and took firm root in the country. One of the greatest partisans and enthusiastic followers of the Reformation was Barbara's brother, Nicholas Radziwill, Palatine of Vilna. During the reign of Sigismund Augustus, Lithuania became more closely united to Poland and their union more strongly cemented. They formed one indivisible Republic, under a chief elected by both in the general Diet of Warsaw.

Sigismund conquered a portion of Livonia from the Sword-bearing Knights, and their Grand Master acknowledged himself as a vassal of Poland. This conquest made the Tsar of Moscow, Ivan the Terrible, jealous, and he invaded Esthonia and Livonia. The Poles relieved the Livonians; Livonia was declared a portion of the Republic, and the Grand Master Kettler, who had renounced his rights as Grand Master, was declared hereditary Duke of Courland and Samogittia. Like Albert of the Teutonic Order, Kettler and most of his Knights embraced the doctrines of Luther. Tsar Ivan, however, was finally victorious, and the Poles lost Plotsk, whilst Esthonia fell to Sweden.

Sigismund Augustus died without leaving a direct male heir, and with him the line of the Yagellos came to an end. The crown of Poland again became elective and the Diet disposed of it as it pleased. The flourishing period of Poland was over, for henceforth anarchy, the usual result of elective monarchy and the ambitions of the neighbouring states, reigned supreme and initiated the decline of the country.

In consequence of the union of Poland and Lithuania, the Republic, whose boundaries reached the banks of the Dnieper and the Dvina, rose to the rank of a first Power in Europe. The Princes of the House of Yagello knew how to make themselves respected by their hostile neighbours, the Moscovites and the Tartars, and extended their protection to Hungary, Bohemia, Moldavia, and Wallachia. They subdued the Teutonic Knights and added to the crown of Poland the provinces of Prussia and Livonia, including Courland. The policy of the government was mostly a conciliatory one, and to a certain extent saved the country from those misfortunes which the wars of religion brought upon Germany in those days.

The principal facts of the Yagellonian period were: the conversion of the Lithuanians to Christianity, the fusion of the two peoples, and the disappearance of the preponderating German influence in North-eastern Europe.

IV. Poland an Elective Monarchy: From Henry of Valois to John Sobieski (1572-1674)

The nobles of the Polish Republic were united in their efforts to nominate a successor to Sigismund II, and on April 5, *1573,* [a]t the General Diet, elected Henry of Valois, the brother of Charles IX, King of France. His ambassadors having taken the solemn oaths which guaranteed the rights of the Republic, Henry went to Poland, where he was crowned, February 25, 1574- As soon, however, as he heard of the death of Charles IX, which took place on May 30 of the same year, he fled from Cracow, on June 15, without having informed any one of his plans, and ascended the throne left vacant by his brother, as Henry III. The Poles were stupefied at the news of their King's flight. Savoyszovski, a Cossack in the service of the Palatine Sandomir, was despatched at once to beg Henry to return. He overtook the King at Vienna, having ridden no leagues in twenty-four hours on the same horse, but was not successful in his mission.

After many Diets, the throne of Poland was again declared vacant on July 15, 1575. The Poles were absolved from keeping their oath of allegiance to Henry, and it was arranged to call a Diet to elect a new King in the following November. The Archduke of Austria intrigued his best to be nominated, but the Polish States declared that the "House of Austria was Poland's worst enemy; that they would never allow a prince of that house to be their King; that the Kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia should be warnings to Poland, for these nations, after having lost their liberty, were groaning under the Austrian yoke." At the meeting of December 14, Anna Yagelonka, sister of Sigismund Augustus, was declared head of the Republic, and Stephen Batory, Prince of Transylvania (chosen for her husband), declared King. The primate Uchanski, one of the Emperor's partisans, and the town of Danzig were forced to recognise his election. At the Diet of February 1578, Ducal Prussia did homage in the person of George Frederic, guardian of Albert Frederic, who had become childish. In the meantime, the Tsar Ivan IV had broken his treaty with Poland and taken possession of the whole of Livonia. Stephen Batory marched against him, and after three glorious campaigns retook Livonia and signed a peace at Khiverova-Gorka on January 15, 1582. He then divided Livonia into three palatinates: Wenden, Dorpat, and Parnau. Stephen Batory organised the Cossacks, founded the Academy of Vilna, and devoted himself to the settling of the affairs of the country. He died suddenly on December 12, 1586. The period of Poland Flourishing which some historians bring to an end with Batory's death, may, however, more aptly be said to extend to the death of Sobieski.

The intrigues of Austria and of the Tsar of Moscow were again of no avail, for Sigismund Vasa was elected on August 19, 1587; he swore an eternal alliance between Sweden and Poland, as well as to all the obligations of the *Pacta conventa.* The Austrians then endeavoured to seize the crown by force, but they were defeated by the Poles at Byczyna, and the Archduke Maximilian was taken prisoner. He was only restored to liberty a year later, when he renounced all claims to the throne of Poland. The Diets which then met, both to consider the subject of the King's marriage with one of the Austrian Archduchesses as well as that of his political conduct, showed how free the states were, and, although but weak, what courage they had' in defying Austria. The Diet of Bezierno, on June 24, 1607, pronounced the fate of the King, but the affair passed unnoticed in the tumult of the incessant wars of this reign against the Cossacks, Hungary, Sweden, Transylvania, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Turkey. On these countless expeditions, which impoverished the country by

the heavy taxes of which they were the cause, the Polish armies, commanded by illustrious generals like Zamojski and Stanislaus Zolkiewski, gained many glorious victories. Eight thousand Poles under Zolkiewski gained a celebrated victory against 140,000 Moscovites on July 4, 1610. The Tsar was taken prisoner; there never was a more favourable opportunity for the union of the two nations. The King of Poland held the fate of the whole of Slavonia in his hands, and if he had only used the occasion to spread civilisation and liberty, Poland could have changed the whole political aspect of the North of Europe. The King, however, did not support his troops already tired of waiting for reinforcements which never came, and they retreated. Vladyslaw, Sigismund's son, had been made Tsar of Moscow, but later, when he wished to be crowned, Michael Romanov ascended the throne of Russia. This was also the period of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) between the Emperor of Germany and the Catholics on the one side, against the Protestants of Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary on the other. Sigismund Vasa intervened and Polish troops, performing prodigies of valour, were largely responsible for the victories gained by the Emperor of Germany, the mortal enemy of Poland.

During the reign of Sigismund III Poland was in a troubled state because of religious dissensions. In 1859, a Synod held at Gniezno decided that none but a Roman Catholic could be elected to the throne of Poland. The King himself followed the advice of Andre Bobola, of his confessor Golynski, and of the famous preacher Skarga, and greatly favoured the Jesuits. Sigismund was as great a fanatic as Philip II of Spain, and he heartily supported the efforts of Peter Skarga to convert the Orthodox Christians living on Polish territory to Roman Catholicism. In 1595, several prelates met at Brzese in Lithuania and sent a delegation to the King, who gave them letters to Pope Clement VIII. They were accepted as adherents of the Church of Rome, but were allowed the use of the old Slavonic language in the ritual. Such was the origin of the *Uniates,* who still exist in great numbers in Galicia. It was also during the reign of Sigismund III that the false Demetrius, pretending to be a son of Ivan the Terrible, claimed the Russian crown, and with the help of the King of Poland was actually successful in ascending the throne of Moscow: he reigned for eleven months. The Pretender married the celebrated and ambitious Marina Mniszek, a daughter of the Palatine of Sandomir.

Sigismund III died on April 30, 1632, after a reign of forty-two years. The Diet elected his son Vladyslaw IV, who was crowned on February 6 of the following year. The Russians having broken their treaties, the Polish troops again took the field against them under the command of Stanislaus Koniecpolski and Christopher Radziwill, two great generals, distinguished alike for their courage and military talents. In spite of the intense cold and the superior numbers of the enemy, the Poles, victorious everywhere, had already made themselves masters of the whole of Moscovy, when the Tsar obtained peace on May 27, 1634. The King of Poland renounced the right to the title of Tsar, which the Moscovites themselves had given him on October 27, 1610; the Tsar in his turn renounced all his claims to Livonia, Esthonia, Courland, Smolensk, and Czerniechov. Thus the Tsars, far from being able to call themselves "Lords of all the Russias," really had no right over Russian land which remained the property of the Polish Republic. However, this victory over the Moscovites frightened the Turks, who prepared to invade Poland with a view to converting it to Mohammedanism, as their Sultan proclaimed. They soon begged for peace, which was signed in 1634, the conditions being advantageous to the Poles. Vladyslaw, having received the oath of fidelity from all the Russian nobles, also concluded a treaty with Sweden, the principal stipulations of which were as follows: Sweden restored to the King of the Republic that part of Prussia which had been conquered, except Pilau, which was handed over to the Elector of Brandenburg, Duke of Prussia; Sweden also restored all the objects of art and

scientific treasures carried away to Upsala, and Vladyslaw IV, King of Poland, took the title of King of Sweden.

France, anxious to render closer her union with Poland, offered Vladyslaw, who was now a widower, the hand of Marie Louise, the daughter of Charles Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. The marriage took place at Fontainebleau on September 26, 1645, and the new Queen was crowned at Cracow on the 15th of the following July. Vladyslaw IV died about two years afterwards, having had the grief of seeing the Cossacks of the Ukraine, driven to revolt by the exactions and depredations of the nobles, defeat the Poles at Korsun and take 70,000 captives. Yet in spite of this, he left Poland great and powerful and extending from Sievierz to the Oder and from Riga to Otshakov.

John Casimir (1648-1668) The Cossacks

After the death of Vladyslaw IV, there were three competitors for the throne: Ragoczy, Duke of Transylvania, and the two brothers of the preceding King: Charles Ferdinand and Jolm Casimir. John Casimir was elected on November 22, 1648, after a very stormy interregnum. He had been an intrepid warrior in his youth, and had been arrested on one of his voyages " by order of Richelieu " in the Bay of Marseilles, on suspicion of being an accomplice of Spain, then at war with France. After being detained for two years, a prisoner in Sisteron, near Vincennes, he was liberated and retired to Rome, where he joined the Jesuit Order and was made a cardinal. He returned to Poland but a short time before his election, and was crowned King in 1649. The early part of John Casimir's reign was troubled by formidable invasions of the Cossacks, which were really risings of the peasants against the nobles. It was a terrible civil war, causing Poland to suffer more than she had ever before. The Cossacks represented the living protestation of the people against their oppressors: they were their strength and they were indeed strong. But gradually they deserted the cause of the peasants and came to personify nothing but Russian schism and Moscovite influence in Poland. Therein lay the weakness of the Cossacks, a weakness greater even than their strength had been. Carrying the schismatic and moscovitic banner, blessed by Mohila, metropolitan of Kiev, they destroyed churches, ravaged and set fire to the possessions of Catholics, for the Catholic people of Poland generally refused to join them. However, numerous serfs in revolt and people of all classes, even the lesser nobility, hastened to join their ranks. Bogdan Khmielnitski, then leader of the Cossacks, took away with him after his first expedition four times as many people as he had brought with him, and the number went on increasing. Bogdan Khmielnitski was a Polish noble, honoured by Vladyslaw IV; he had seen his village ruined and his wife seduced by Czaplinski, Starosta of Szechin, and not being able to obtain redress from the tribunal, he called the Tartars and peasants together and took possession of Kudak. Beaten by Jeremiah Wisniowiecki, he took his revenge on the nobles near Pilavce and won three victories. The valiant Stephen Polocki and two Polish Hetmans were taken prisoners. At the head of nearly 200,000 men, Bogdan Khmielnitski then advanced to Leopol and Zamosc, where he concluded an armistice, while waiting for the result of the elections which proclaimed John Casimir King. The new King gave the Cossack leader the Hetman's baton, and commissioners were sent to him at Pereiaslavl on February 19, 1649. The Cossacks demanded the abrogation of the Union of Brzesc, the expulsion from the Ukraine of the Jesuits and the maintenance of their prerogatives, but never even thought of the cause of the peasants, who then understood that they had nothing to expect. Yet peace was not signed and hostilities recommenced. John Casimir, besieged at Zborov by the army of Khmielnitski, made a treaty with the Tartars on August 17, and on the 19th another with the Cossacks. In neither of these treaties is there any mention of the people being in revolt. It was agreed that the Greek Russian Church should be the state religion in the Ukraine as far as the Horin; that the Jesuits should be expelled from the district and not allowed to establish any schools; that

all public positions should be reserved exclusively for schismatics, whose bishops should sit in the Senate, and finally, that the registered number of Cossacks under arms should be 40,000. It was evident that henceforth it would be a question of religion for the Cossacks and not a question of the people, and that the peasants had been used merely as an instrument. Although Khmielnitski had made himself master of the Russian provinces of the South and of a third of Lithuania, had made treaties with the Tartars, the Turks, the Moscovites, and Swedes, the Cossacks soon began to give way and war was begun afresh. On June 28, 1651, a battle was begun near Beresteczko, which lasted ten days and left John Casimir victorious. Thirty thousand Tartars and Cossacks were slain: thirteen guns and the rebel camp fell into the conqueror's hands, who did not follow up his victory but concluded peace on September 28.

About the same time Kostka Nepierski settled on the western slopes of the Carpathians near Cracow, in the fortress of Czarstin, and called together the people, proclaiming that he had come to revenge and deliver them from the tyranny of the nobles, but the people were deaf to this appeal. Khmielnitski again soon revolted, and near Batov in 1652 surprised a camp of 9000 men, who were all put to the sword. It was the flower and youth of the army that perished here. Rejoining the Tartars, he again besieged John Casimir and forced him to renew the treaty of Zborov, in which it was only a question of schism and schismatics. Khmielnitski, after having tried in vain to settle his family in Moldavia, went abroad. This was the end of the schism and schismatics in Poland. Sweden refused to let him enter that kingdom. In January 1654 he signed a treaty at Pereiaslavl, by which the Cossacks in Tittle Russia passed over to Moscow under the domination of the Tsar; the latter promised to guard the frontiers and keep 60,000 men in arms at Khmielnitski's disposal. Not content with delivering his country over to the foreigner, Khmielnitski again devastated it in 1655 up to the walls of Leopol. These were some of the terrible results produced by schism, favoured by the servitude of the people. This catastrophe, which alone is almost enough to account for the fall of Poland, was accompanied by horrible slaughters. In this internal struggle, in which devastation and fire destroyed towns and villages, generally built of wood, the massacre of the adherents of both sides was terrible. In some places the whole population was exterminated; men, women, and children were tortured, hanged, impaled, roasted over slow fires or buried up to the neck and their heads reaped off with scythes. Such and many other horrors took place, the mere recitation of which makes one shudder. Yet these were but incidents beside the great disaster of the country being given over to foreigners.

The Polish constitution had one principle, viz., "that the right of majorities did not exclude the right of minorities, not even the right of one single person, and that henceforward the decisions of the Diet, in state matters, must be accepted unanimously with contradiction *nomine opponente, nulla obstante contradictione,"* as the law said. The opposition of any member put an end to the resolution and dissolved the Diet; that is what was called "Liberum Veto." This principle, so admirable in theory and which marks the highest ideal in assemblies, had never been put into rigorous practice, perhaps because of a confused feeling for another principle no less true: *summum res summa injuria.* Until then, one had only seen the noisy tumultuous breaking up of the Diet brought about by a general disagreement. But in 1652 John Casimir, having convened a Diet to decide on some means of arresting Khmielnitski, Sicinski, the nuntius of Upita exclaimed: "Veto," and thus put an end to the Diet, and annulled all the work it had previously done. All his colleagues were angry, but recognised the legality of his veto; these ruptures became more frequent as time went on.

John Casimir

It is not possible to draw a picture of the misfortunes and losses which Poland suffered at this time. In 1652 the plague slew over 400,000 men; in Cracow alone 173,000 Christians and 20,000 Jews succumbed to the disease. Many millions of people perished in different ways in an incredibly short space of time. One million followed the Cossacks; a multitude left the country; towns and cities were depopulated visibly; villages and hamlets entirely disappeared, and fields, formerly under rich cultivation, became overgrown with bushes. In 1655 the Russians destroyed Troki, Grodno, Merecz, and Kovno: all the roads between these cities were piled high with corpses; a large number of the inhabitants of both sexes were carried away to the depths of Russia. At Vilna, fire destroyed several parts of the city and 15,000 people were killed. In 1655 and 1656 the Swedes burned and destroyed Lublin, Konin, Varka, Fordon, Lenczica, and their inhabitants were all put to the sword. Lesno, Vielun, Kleparz, Stradum, Kasimirz, and the suburbs of Warsaw and Cracow and other cities also suffered greatly. The Transylvanian Cossacks, Tartars, and Swedes pillaged Red Russia, carried off the inhabitants and set the towns of Loiov, Chvastov, Pinsk, and Bobruisk on fire. One can judge from these examples what was done to the other towns: Poland was, indeed, nothing but a cemetery, a ruin! Yet in spite of all these disasters, in spite of the disgraceful treaties of Oliva and Andruszovo, the country would have risen triumphant if internal troubles and calamities of all descriptions had not fallen upon her just when she finally succeeded in getting rid of her external enemies. The army returning from the Dnieper in 1662, having received no pay, stopped in different parts of Lithuania and Poland and demanded the payment of that which was due to them; pillage and murder prevailed. Then Florian Czartoryski, the Bishop of Vilna, and George Biallozor managed with the church treasures to partly satisfy the demands of the troops and the Diet levied taxes to raise the remainder. John Casimir, having been released from his vows and obtained the necessary Papal dispensation, had married his brother's widow, Marie Louise Gonzagua. She contrived to persuade her husband to induce the Diet in 1661 to nominate as his successor the Duke of Enghien, son of the great Conde. This proposal was received with the silence of surprised indignation, then the Diet was broken up by the veto of Maximilian Pedro, custodian of Leopol, and the Chamber of Deputies by that of Povalski. Every one rose against this open violation of the fundamental law of the Republic. George Dubomirski, a Marshal and Hetman who had rendered great services to his country and was greatly renowned, said to the King: "You would not be allowed to do for your own son what you are now attempting to do for the son of a foreigner." This conduct drew upon him the anger of the Queen, who, with Nicholas Prazmovski, the Chancellor, intrigued to bring about the demand that Eubomirski should be brought before the Diet of 1664 on a charge of attempting to overthrow the Royal House in order to make himself Protector of the kingdom, as Oliver Cromwell had just done in England. He was condemned to death and his goods were confiscated, but he saved his fife by fleeing to Silesia. His place as Marshal was offered, first to John Clement Branicki, who refused it, and then to John Sobieski, who accepted it, and who also took the title of Hetman: this title had been given first to Stephen Czarniecki on his deathbed. Then the different districts of Great Poland formed a league in favour of Lubomirski, who defeated the royal troops at their first encounter; he was at the head of but 12,000 men, while there were 26,000 under the royal banner. In vain did the bishops of Cracow and Chelm endeavour to make peace between the combatants. John Casimir was defeated in 1666 and more than 10,000 Poles perished in this bitter civil war. Peace was signed at Lengonice and the King restored to Lubomirski his lands and titles, whilst the latter took the oath of submission, and then retired to Silesia, where he shortly afterwards died. This peace was ratified by the Diet, which then confirmed its right to elect the sovereign. Queen Marie Louise died shortly afterwards. In the midst of so much internal discord, John Casimir foresaw the future fate of Poland and, as early as 1661, he pronounced these prophetic words in the Diet - words too well justified by

succeeding events - "God grant that I am a false prophet, but if you do not hasten to remedy the evils in which your make-believe free elections plunge the country; if you do not renounce your personal privileges, this noble kingdom will become a prey to the other nations. The Moscovite will tear Russia and Lithuania from us; Brandenburg will take Prussia and Posen; and Austria, more loyal than the former Powers, will be obliged to follow suit and will take Cracow and little Poland."

These words were uttered a century and a half before the dismemberment of Poland, when the country was divided in the manner Casimir had described. At that time the condition of Poland was sad, but not hopeless. The Catholic religion was spreading more and more among the people, aided by the zeal of the King and the nobles, and by countless conversions, such as that of the Radziwills, who from being good Protestants became fervent Catholics. The country of Copernicus and Cromer had fallen from the high place it had acquired in literature and science, but the Catholic schools, especially those directed by the Jesuits, were very numerous and had considerable fame. Industry and commerce had suffered greatly in spite of the local increase in certain cities, such as Warsaw, and the multiplication of the shops kept by Jews or Germans. Poland exported only about half the quantity of rye and wheat which she had been accustomed to send abroad, yet trade was still large, the various industries developed, and agriculture flourished. The markets were flooded with goods from Holland, Belgium, France, Hungary, Turkey, and Asia. Danzig was still a rich commercial depot. Old customs had undergone many changes by the seventeenth century, principally among the nobles who had adopted light French manners together with the French fashions. The national costume had been neglected by the women, who now dressed like Frenchwomen. Manners were now very stiff and formal and great respect was shown by the young to their parents and other elderly folk. The people, oppressed and taxed ever more and more, fell into complete misery. The peasants were frequently without bread, and their children could not be sent to school, while the lower nobles were reduced to the condition of peasants. Neither was the political situation very brilliant. The Republic had lost Livonia, the Duchy of Prussia, and the lands across the Dnieper. The Tartars now recommenced their invasions and even the victories of Sobieski could not wholly put a stop to them. John Casimir was not afraid to face all these difficulties, but having only recently become a widower and moved by pious feelings and a strong desire to re-enter the purely religious life, he resolved to lay aside his crown after a reign of twenty years, and nothing could change his determination. On September 6, 1668, he consequently declared the Diet of Warsaw open and bade farewell to Poland in a very touching speech, in which he reminded his hearers that he had always been first in attack and last in retreat - which was true. The nation's grief at the abdication of the King was deep and sincere. In him the people saw the last of the Vasas, the last drop of the blood of the Yagellos; they remembered that he had taken part in all their misfortunes and in all the glory of their country. These memories awoke a painful tenderness in all hearts, and when the members of the Chambers were admitted, for the last time, to kiss the King's hand, loud sobs were heard in all directions. John Casimir retired to France, became again the monk he had been before his election, and died as Abbot of St. Martin de Nevers on December 16, 1672. His heart was deposited in the church of St. Germain-des-Pres in Paris.

The Diet met again on May 6, 1669, and elected Michael Korybut Wisniowiecki, Palatine of Red Russia, to be their new King; he fled, but was caught and forced to accept the government of the Republic. Descended from the Yagellos, he reminded the people of their splendid period. His father had gained great renown and sacrificed his fortune in the wars against the Cossacks and Tartars. Heir to an illustrious name, his only fortune was an income of 3600 francs left him by the Queen Marie Louise. The anarchy caused by the incessant disputes of the nobles greatly increased, and the Tartars, Cossacks, and Turks profited by

them again to invade Russian territory in June 1672. The King did not know how to meet the inevitable, and John Sobieski, who had rallied his partisans and armed the peasants, could only oppose 6000 to the formidable hordes who made both Europe and Asia tremble. The enemy was already victorious when, on October 15, John Sobieski took the field near Kaluza and pursued and killed 15,000 men. He met a crowd of fellow-citizens being taken away as slaves by the Mohammedans: there were some 20,000 of them who blessed their liberator, but Sobieski was ready to do still more than that. He fell upon the enemy and was gradually defeating them when Michael signed an ignominious peace. Sobieski, angry at this sign of weakness, returned to his home, and Louis XIV offered him the baton of the Marshal of France. He then turned to repel the Turks, who were again invading the country, and defeated them at Chocim. The snow was falling when Sobieski, on foot and covered with snow, with sword in hand, led on his few but brave followers to the attack of the Mohammedan camp; in but a short time the Standard of the Cross, the White Bagle of Poland, and the Armed Knight of Lithuania floated over the enemy's camp, and over 20,000 Moslems were no more. Sobieski captured the Sultan's banner and sent it to the head of the Church; to-day it still hangs in St. Peter's Church in Rome.

V. John Sobieski

After a short interregnum, the Diet offered the crown to John Sobieski, who was crowned as John III. He had married Marie Casimire de la Grange d'Arquien a few years before. Salvandy, the historian of John Sobieski, gives an interesting description of the marriage, which we shall briefly summarise in the following pages. The brilliant Polish embassy which in 1645 entered Paris to ask the hand of Louise Marie de Gonzagua de Nevers for Vladyslaw Wasa, King of Poland, was destined through the success of the mission to exercise a most important influence upon the future of John Sobieski, for the Princess Louise was accompanied to Poland by Marie Casimire de la Grange d'Arquien, then a little maiden of but eleven years of age, but already one of the Queen's maids of honour and distinguished by her precocious beauty and intellect. All yielded to the graceful attractions of the charming child, to whose empire John Sobieski was one day to submit.

Time wore on; Poland encountered enemies upon all sides, and foremost in 72 every battle was John Sobieski, whose name became a very tower of strength to his country and a terror to its enemies. He was successively given the posts of Grand Ensign and Grand Marshal. His sixteen years of active service and constant self sacrifice well deserved this reward. On his journey to Warsaw - in order to receive the investiture of his new dignity, the highest civil office in the gift of the Republic - he again met Marie Casimire, then Madame Zamoyski and a widow. Her husband, John Zamoyski, had died but a few weeks before and she was clad in the deepest mourning, but her fascination was only rendered the more touching by the veil of sorrow thrown around her, and Sobieski stood defenceless before the magic of her beauty and talents. Nor was he alone in his admiration, for the whole of Warsaw bowed at the feet of the brilliant Frenchwoman. The first bond of sympathy between them was their mutual love for France, its art and its literature. John could offer to the lady of his choice, honour, wealth, and glory. The Queen, whom he succeeded in enlisting on his side, took an active part in promoting the marriage. Time pressed, war as usual threatened the frontiers, and Sobieski had not the courage to leave the side of Marie until her fate had been irrevocably united with his own. Alas for Sobieski! The sorrows of his after life expiated a great mistake, if not a positive wrong. The ashes of Zamoyski were scarcely cold when he led to the altar the woman who had owed everything to the affection of her late husband. John surely should have judged that a woman who could so quickly forget and so outrage the memory of the man who had devoted his life to her, was unworthy of his love; that she would blast his existence instead of honouring and elevating it. But he was blinded by his infatuation and her dazzling qualities; he loved her then, and whatever her faults and caprices, he loved her to the very end. The wedding festivities were brilliant, as the rank of the parties demanded. In Poland the Kings and grandees disposed of the hands of their wards and dependents. Sobieski selected a young officer, one of his more intimate friends, as his ambassador, who, bearing a wreath of rosemary and a casket of precious jewels, went in great state to ask the Queen for the hand of her maid-of-honour. The messenger, as was the custom, expatiated largely upon the celebrated exploits and incomparable virtues of the hero who had sent him. The Queen, through her Chancellor, replied by praising to the skies the attractions, the goodness, and the brilliant gifts of Madame Zamoyski. She ended by acceding to the wishes of the Palatine, and placed upon Marie's brow the rosemary crown laid at her feet by the faithful envoy. Three days were usually devoted to the ceremonies pertaining to marriage. Before sunrise on July 5, the Grand Marshal repaired in person to the palace, preceded by his guard bearing torches, and followed by several thousand gentlemen, his attendants and his clients, all wearing rich robes or glittering armour. He himself blazed with diamonds and gold: his very steed bent

under the weight of the costly arms, and trod daintily upon the silver shoes which bound the hoofs, while pearls, emeralds, and sapphires shone upon the gleaming harness. The Queen led the bride and groom into the chapel, where they were united by the Papal nuntio, Odescalchi. At the door of the church the happy couple were met by the crowd of orators and poets, who in lengthy harangues entertained the Grand Marshal and his companions with their mutual excellences and virtues. These addresses consumed the day until four in the afternoon, when the royal banquet was served, which at one in the morning following was not yet concluded. The King, the Queen, and the newly married couple, in their magnificent attire, sat round a table upon the platform of the throne itself. Two other immense tables were occupied, one by the ladies of illustrious rank and the other by the Senators and grandees. The relations of the bride and groom, under the name of Gospodarz and Gospodini, or masters and mistresses of the house, were active in filling the cups of the assemblage. Four bins of Hungarian wine were consumed, to say nothing of the innumerable casks of beer, which flowed without ceasing in the adjoining rooms for the use of the attendants. Finally, the tables disappeared and a crimson carpet stretched upon the floor of the hall announced the commencement of the ball, which was to terminate the first day. The succeeding morning was devoted to the reception of the bridal gifts. Madame Sobieski, who had not yet quitted the palace, appeared in all the radiance of her beauty and her splendid costume, seated upon the Queen's throne, thus making her first essay of the royal position. The Queen's Chancellor stood by the side of Marie. The above-mentioned envoy of Sobieski read aloud the names of the seigneurs who had been presented at the festival of the preceding day, and as each noble's name was called, a deputy presented himself and laid at the bride's feet a wedding present. Vanity, rather than affection, regulated the splendour of the gifts. The Queen's Chancellor, who replied in Madame Sobieski's name to the compliments of the envoys, won for himself universal admiration by his skill in inventing, from morning until night, new formulae of praise and thanks. A second banquet and another ball closed the festivities of the second day.

On the morning of the third day, the bride was conducted by the King and Queen, accompanied by a numerous cavalcade, to the palace of her husband. Sobieski entertained the court with the utmost magnificence. The tables groaned beneath the weight of the plate and the multitude of rare and costly dishes, such as quarters of delicate roes, elks roasted whole, bears' feet, and beavers' tails. The wines of France were not wanting; the Polish pipe filled the air with clouds of smoke, and the joyous music peeled merrily from the orchestra. Finally all was over and the guests departed. The three days were ended and peace and quiet succeeded to the noisy revelry.

When he became King, John Sobieski, after a few years of peace, set out against the Turks, who had invaded Hungary and were threatening Vienna. The capital would have fallen into the hands of the infidels had it not been for the brilliant victories of the King of Poland. He was greeted as the rescuer and the liberator of Vienna. A letter written at this time by John Sobieski to his wife details vividly all the events of these important days and is a relic worthy of preservation. I extract a few paragraphs.

"In the tent of the Virgin, Monday night, September 13.

"Sole Joy of my life, charming and well-beloved Mariette, -

"God be for ever blessed. He has given the victory to our nation; a victory without equal in past ages. The Turkish camp and artillery, with infinite riches, have fallen into our hands. The approach to the city and the surrounding fields are covered with the slain of the infidel army, and the rest are flying in consternation. The Vizier, in his flight, has abandoned all, taking with him only his horse and the garments upon him. I am his heir, for the greatest part of his riches has fallen into my hands. Advancing with the front rank, and driving the Vizier before

me, I met one of his servants, who led me into the tents of his private court; these tents alone cover a space as large as the city of Warsaw or Peopol. I seized upon all the standards and ensigns which are usually borne before the Vizier. As for the great Standard of Mohammed, which he himself entrusted to Mustapha's care, I have sent it to the Holy Father (Pope Innocent XI) by Talenti. We have, besides, many rich tents, superb equipages, and a thousand other beautiful toys. I have not yet seen all but they far surpass in magnificence those we found at Chocim. Four or five quivers alone, set with rubies and sapphires, are valued at several thousand ducats. You cannot say to me, my heart, as these Tartar women do to their husbands when they return empty-handed: ' You were no warrior, for you have brought me nothing; only he who fights in the front rank returns with booty.' The Emperor is at the distance of a mile and a half from the city; he is descending the Danube in a boat; but I perceive he has no great desire to see me, perhaps through some measure of etiquette. He is anxious to reach Vienna to chant the *Te Deum,* and I will willingly yield place to him, for I am very happy to avoid all these wearisome ceremonials."

Whatever may have been the cause, it was indeed true that Emperor Leopold showed no alacrity to meet the deliverer of his capital, and Sobieski soon after made, in many ways, experiments in the gratitude of men.

Vienna passed at once from famine to abundance, for the Turkish camp was well supplied with provisions. The Turks had left behind them many of their children, who were found beside the corpses of their slaughtered mothers. They could not make the little creatures the companions of their flight and had not had the heart to murder them. The prelate immediately took these forsaken infidel orphans under his own care. More than six hundred were found upon the bloody field, and this new Vincent de Paul was a father to them all. He fed and clothed them and sent them to school, feeling himself amply repaid for his sacrifices by their conversion to Christianity. The whole Christian community united in the rejoicings over this victory. All creeds, all nations, Kings, Queens, and Princes, vied with each other in celebrating the success and glory of John Sobieski. Felicitations and tributes of praise and thanks poured in upon him from all quarters, and by common consent he was named throughout the civilised world: "The liberator of Christendom." The liberator of Vienna followed the Turks into Hungary, was defeated near Parkany, but retaliated at Grav, where he gained a wonderful victory. He returned to Cracow in December 1683. Pope Innocent XI, in memory of the deliverance of Christendom, sent Sobieski a helmet, a sword, and a golden rose. In July 1684 Sobieski arrived at Warsaw, accompanied by his wife and son, and found the Papal nuntio and the ambassador of Venice already there. The procession set out for the church; the Papal nuntio was accompanied by knights on horseback, and the presents from the Pope were carried before him. After Mass had been said, the nuntio, assisted by four bishops, delivered a discourse in honour of Sobieski, which was followed by the Benediction. Then the King of Poland approached the altar, and placing the golden helmet, encrusted with precious stones, upon his head, buckled on the sword with its diamond-studded hilt and golden scabbard, and handed the golden rose to the Queen. Then the King, sitting on his throne, touched the ambassador of Venice on the shoulder with his sword and dubbed him a knight: they then visited the tents taken from the Grand Vizier before Vienna, and the day came to an end with a splendid banquet. It was a custom for the Pope to send presents, which had been blessed at Christmas or Easter, to the Kings who had distinguished themselves by piety or by victories against infidels or heretics. The first instance of this took place in 1385.

Casimir IV in 1448, Henry of Valois, Sigismund Augustus in 1550, and Stephen Batory each had received a cap and a sword.

Meanwhile, in the midst of all his triumphs, Sobieski suffered much from the intrigues of his wife and the discord among his nobles, which left him but little peace. The Lithuanian nobles also opposed him. One of them, of the family of the Pacs, a Grand Chancellor, had spent 2,000,000 florins to build a monastery of Camaldyke monks near Vilna, under the patronage of St. Mary Magdalen of Piazzi, a relation of his. The Sapiehas were in opposition to the Pacs, and the King granted them many signs of favour. This family became in time his enemies, even aspiring to his crown. The King's kindness to the Oginskis and others answered no better. An Austrian cabal had been formed, at the head of which were the most powerful Senators and noble houses, who did their very best to deprive Sobieski of his throne. In the midst of all these difficulties the King of Poland signed, against his will, the treaty drawn up at Moscow on May 6, 1686, by which the truce of Andruszovo was turned into a definite treaty and he handed over to Russia Smolensk, Czerniechov, and Sievierz, thus letting the Cossacks of the left bank of the Dnieper pass under the domination of the Tsars and getting nothing in exchange. As to the 200,000 roubles supposed to be paid, he never received them. The States refused to sanction this treaty and Crzimultovski, who was sent to Poland to negotiate the treaty, narrowly escaped assassination. John Sobieski then turned his attention again to the Turks, hoping to gain some principality, perhaps Moldavia, for his son. But at Bukovina he found himself watched on every side by countless enemies so made a marvellous retreat, which has been likened to the Retreat of the Ten Thousand, and is celebrated in the national songs. Still more unfortunate in his next campaign, he returned to Poland with an army much discouraged, weakened, and diminished. He was always the dupe of Austria, who incited him against the Turks, promising him reinforcements and subsidies which were never sent, and his son James failed in both his attempts at a good marriage: one with an Archduchess, and the other with the widowed Margravine of Brandenburg, Louise Charlotte Radziwill, who, besides possessing fortified places and castles and cities, had an income of £800,000. Sobieski's wife made him drink the dregs of bitterness. She was an unnatural mother, hating her son profoundly.

Even those who lived on the King's kindness were outrageous in their conduct towards him. For example, the Count Palatine of Sieradz called him to his face tyrant, oppressor of the people, and violator of laws and the constitution; enemy of the country and destroyer of liberty. Insulted by miserable satire, Sobieski was accused of wishing to assure the succession of the throne to his son, and of betraying the state, in blind compliance to the wish of his wife, of whom, they said, he was the slave. Salvandy writes:

"John had reached the summit of human grandeur, but sought in vain the peace to which his great deeds had entitled him. In tracing his declining days, one is saddened by the spectacle presented by a great man, respected by the whole world, yet betrayed by his own family; revered by all Christianity yet continually exposed to the ingratitude of fractious subjects, who broke his heart by destroying, through their dissensions, the unity and prosperity of their country."

After reaping so brilliant a harvest of glory, he returned to his native land only to find discord in its councils and annoyances of all kinds in his domestic circle. She who should have been the comfort of his later years was the scourge of the hero who had crowned her. She filled the palace as well as the Republic with her plots and intrigues, interfering in all affairs whether public or private, sowing disunion and corruption everywhere and deriving her power to injure from the enduring affection and consideration of her husband. Her own children did not escape this pernicious influence and their quarrels embittered the last hours of their noble father.

In 1689, we find Sobieski dismissing an unusually stormy Diet with the following expressions and prophetic words, which we quote as a specimen of eloquence rarely equalled, even though proceeding from a great and expanded intellect and speaking through a lofty but deeply wounded soul and a tender and devoted heart. The Diet had, in every way, opposed his views and desires, and not satisfied with this had even dared, through one of its members, to brand him as a tyrant, a despot, and the destroyer of the liberties of his country. The aged monarch, with an effort, rose, and gave vent to the feelings which oppressed him:

"He knew well the torments of the soul who said that petty griefs are prompt to speak while great sorrows find no voice. The very universe would be mute while contemplating us and our counsels. Nature herself would be seized with astonishment. That beneficent mother has endowed all that live with the instinct of self-preservation and has furnished the meanest of her creatures with an arm of defence; we alone in the world turn our arms against ourselves. That instinct has been torn from us; and not by a superior power, or an inevitable destiny, but by a voluntary delirium, by our own passions, and by the strange desire we seem to feel of injuring ourselves. Oh, what will be the mournful surprise of posterity to see that, at the very time when the name of Poland was venerated throughout the universe, we have permitted our country to fall from the height of glory into the depth of ruin, to fall, alas, for ever. As for myself, I have been enabled to win for you a few battles, but I now acknowledge that I am powerless to save you. For the future of my beloved country, I can only trust, not in destiny for I am a Christian, but in the mercy of an Almighty God. I have heard it said within these walls that a remedy exists for the wars of this Republic and that remedy is, that the King should not trample upon the liberties of the nation but should restore them. Have I, then, destroyed those liberties? Senators, that holy liberty in which I was born and have grown old in rests upon the faith of my oaths, and you know well that I am no perjurer. To it has my life been devoted, and from my earliest youth the blood of all my race has taught me to found my glory upon this devotion, Let him who doubts me visit the tombs of my ancestors, let him follow the path to immortality that they have trodden before me. He can trace by the crimson drops of their blood the highways to the lands of the Tartars and the deserts of Wallachia. He will hear voices issuing from the bosom of the earth, and from beneath the frozen marble, crying: ' Learn from me how sweet it is to die for our country.' I might also invoke the memory of my father, the glory which he enjoyed in having been four times called upon to preside over the Comitia in this sanctuary of our laws, and the name of Buckler of Liberty which he merited. Believe me, the disorganising eloquence to which I have listened would be much better employed if directed towards those who, by their disorders, are calling upon us the denunciation of the prophet, which I hear, alas, thundering above our heads: 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.' Your illustrious lordships know well that I do not believe in auguries. I question no oracles and give no heed to dreams. It is no oracle, but faith which has taught me 87 that the decrees of Providence cannot fail to be accomplished. The power and justice of Him who rules the universe governs also the destinies of empires; and where all is dared in the very lifetime of the Prince, altar raised against altar and strange gods worshipped in the presence of the true, there already threaten the chastisements of the Most High.

"Senators, in the presence of God, of the world, and of the whole Republic, I protest my respect for liberty and promise to preserve it such as we have received it. Nothing can alienate from me this holy deposit, not even that monster in nature - ingratitude. I will continue so to devote my life to the interests of religion and of the Republic, hoping that God will not refuse His mercies to one who never hesitated to give his heart's blood for his people."

The noble old man would have added more but he could not; his voice had been tremulous with tears but now he broke down and sobbed aloud. The whole assembly was moved. The Primate of the kingdom fell at the foot of the throne and protested the love and the gratitude of Poland. John only replied by begging the senators to think first of the interests of their country. Cries of respect and affection arose on all sides, the King's emotion pervaded the hearts of all, and the important measure whose passage he had desired was voted by acclamation. Sobieski had well judged of the future. He felt too truly that, after his death, the last hour of Nineveh would indeed sound, and his discourse only revealed the sorrow and sad forebodings which filled his soul. The impression he had succeeded in producing was transitory, and soon discord again reigned throughout all classes. Sobieski wished to abdicate but the senators persuaded him to remain on the throne. In 1691 he began the third expedition to Moldavia, in which Austria, as was the Austrian custom, did not send the help which had been promised, and his army perished without having been in action. The Tartars profited by this to advance three separate times, once to the centre of the country devoid of defenders, and devastated it by fire and sword. Poland did not get her deliverance until 1695. In the meantime fresh quarrels had caused another war in Lithuania, when the Bishop of Vilna, Constantine Brzostovski, supported by the King and nobles, solemnly excommunicated General Casimir Sapieha. The disputes went on and Diets were broken up and speeches were loud and barren. Sobieski again wished to lay down his crown, but Zaluski, the Bishop of Plotsk, succeeded in persuading him against this second attempt at abdication. During his late years, when external peace and national affairs permitted it, John Sobieksi lived at Zolkiew, the home of his childhood, where he called around him the great men of the time and endeavoured to make them forget their rivalries and to devote all their talents and energies to the service of their country. He encouraged a taste for letters and promoted the study of art and science. Astronomy, medicine, history, and poetry flourished under his fostering care and in his latest days his own failing hand traced verses in his native tongue, which were equal to the productions of the best Polish poets of his time. His health was rapidly breaking, and books, with long and learned conversations upon the nature of the soul, the hidden ways of Providence, the marvels of creation, the future life, employed the leisure hours of the hero laden with so many warlike trophies. But even in this retreat calumny pursued him, and his age and services were no protection against the accusation of his enemies. Neither public nor domestic difficulties nor trials, however, could break the noble spirit or damp the martial ardour of Sobieski. As late as February 1695, when the Turks and Tartars, having heard a false report of the King's death, invaded Poland and penetrated as far as Leopol, John assembled his troops, and accompanied by the Queen embarked upon the Vistula. The same Marie Casimire and the same John Sobieski had embarked forty years before at the same place with Louise of Nevers and her husband to meet the same enemy whom John had, since then, so often vanquished. But this time, the Turks did not await his arrival. As soon as they knew him to be alive and marching towards them, they fled, satisfied with having braved the cities they could not hold and with having carried fire and sword into three provinces.

Burdened with care, undermined by a disease which, by the mistake of his doctor Jonas, hastened his end, the Conqueror of Vienna died at Willanov, near Warsaw, on the feast of Corpus Christi, on June 17, 1696. It was the anniversary of his birth and election. He was seventy-two years of age and had reigned twenty-two years. Very majestic of face and figure, simple in his life, brave in battle, skilled in council, and capable of undertaking great things, he cultivated a taste for letters, science, and arts, and showed many signs of genius. He left behind him one of the most brilliant names in history, one recording the heroism of Poland and the ingratitude of Austria. Charles XII exclaimed on hearing of his death: "Such a great King should never die."

VI. The Saxon Kings: The First Partition

Augustus II, Elector of Saxony There was much internal disunion in the elections of 1696. Votes were divided between the French Prince, the Duke de Conti, and Augustus the Elector of Saxony. The Elector was the nearer to Poland and therefore was the first on the scene. Conti came by sea and arrived at Danzig much later; he was but feebly supported by France, and had to give way to the Saxons. Augustus was much discontented with the situation in Lithuania, which seemed to presage civil war. The nobles had conceived such a hatred against the Sapiehas that they massacred and cut them to pieces at Reipuny, and then formed the confederation of the Olkienski. The Sapiehas, obtaining no assistance from Augustus II, joined Charles XII, King of Sweden, at the moment when he was invading Poland. Augustus II, having relations with Austria, succeeded in recovering the salt-mines of Wieliczka, and Kamieniec and Podolia were restored when the Turks signed the peace of Carlowitz in 1669. He thought that it would be an easy matter to get possession of Livonia, as Charles XII, King of Sweden, was very young and quite without experience. With this intent he made an alliance with Russia and Denmark, and declared war on Sweden. Charles XII, acting with extraordinary swiftness, beat the Danes, overcame the Russians, and after having driven the Saxon from the neighbourhood of the Dvina in 1701, threw himself against Lithuania and Poland.

War with Charles XII

No one in Poland had dreamed of making war against Charles XII. Augustus II, with his Saxons alone, had undertaken the war without the consent of the nobles, and Charles XII found no great resistance. He seized Warsaw, and after having beaten Augustus II near Kliszow entered Cracow. Confederations were formed in Poland and Sandomir in favour of Augustus II, and another in Poland, also in 1704, under the Primate Radzieiovski in favour of Charles XII, who commanded the election of Stanislaus Leszczinski as King. The election took place. After having repulsed Augustus II in Saxony, Charles XII continued to pursue him until he was forced, by the Peace of Altranstadt, to abdicate in favour of Stanislaus I. The Saxon war came to an end and Charles XII marched through Poland against the Russians, who, having advanced to Grodno, retired at his approach. The King of Sweden’s defeat, however, at Poltava in 1709, when the Russians put his troops to flight, emboldened Augustus II to return to Poland, where, supported by the Russians, he drove back the Swedes and their allies. Meanwhile difficulties were accumulating. The Saxon army was ordered to evacuate Poland. A meeting was held at Tarnogrod to this effect. Russia wished to mediate. Finally peace was concluded in 1717 by the Diet, nicknamed the “Dumb” because it lasted only seven hours and the silence was only interrupted by the reading of the articles of the peace. The Saxons evacuated Poland at once, and the Russian army of Peter the Great and Augustus II made treaties of peace with Sweden, 1720 and 1723.

Poland overtaken by Disaster

During the reign of Augustus II, the vices of the nobility were the cause of terrible anguish in Poland, and the consequences of this sad state of affairs were most deplorable. The invasions of the Cossacks and Swedes and other aggressors, who spread through the whole of Poland, were accompanied by pillage and devastation. They left many signs of their excesses along the roads by which they travelled and covered them indeed with desolation. The civil wars of Poland and Lithuania also left their traces on the already ruined country. Such was the condition of affairs for a very long period, namely, from 1648 to 1717 - from the beginning

of the reign of John Casimir to the "Dumb Diet." This short resume will, at least, explain how the State had been weakened, depopulated and devastated by its heavy losses, and how the nation, as a whole, had been demoralised by the faults of the ruling classes, especially the aristocracy. All during the Saxon rule, Poland, almost forgotten by Europe, remained steeped in a dead lethargy. Not one notable event occurred to show that the nation was still alive, yet it is not to be wondered at. Under John Casimir, the nation had, by extraordinary efforts and sacrifices, pulled itself together, but later its many losses, reverses, and sufferings weakened it into helpless impotence. Just as an invalid remains inert and worn out by pain after a gangrened wound has been cut away, or he has lost a limb, or some violent fever has reduced his strength, so Poland, having suffered so many misfortunes, was languid and indolent, and the events of this period of her lethargy are mostly to be deplored. In 1721, in the reign of Augustus II, the inhabitants of Thorn, revolting against corruption, were tried at the High Court and severely punished; their burgomaster, in spite of his innocence, was executed. This trial drew the attention of Europe to the unhappy condition of Poland. During the interregnum following the death of Augustus II, the Diet decreed that dissenters could not possess any post or dignity whatsoever. And in fact they had enjoyed none of the privileges and rights of citizenship for some considerable time. By this new decree the law itself deprived them of the hope of ever securing justice from their compatriots.

Stanislaus Leszczinski

During the interregnum it was decided to elect a Pole as king, and that no foreigner could be admitted as a candidate for the throne. The virtues of Stanislaus Deszczinski, which had been tried by great adversity, now attracted the attention of the Diet, especially as his daughter had become the consort of Louis XV. His election was unanimous. But the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg saw with dissatisfaction the father-in-law, and consequently the ally, of Louis XV on the throne of Poland, and resolved, therefore, to oppose his election. As soon as the news arrived at Warsaw, Russian troops overran Poland. The Chancellor Michael Visnioviecki, with the nobility of the two palatinates, and Hosius, the Bishop of Posen, went to Prague where, strongly aided by Russian soldiers, they proclaimed the Elector of Saxony, Augustus III; King of Poland.

Although Stanislaus Leszczinski went at once to Warsaw, he could not maintain his rights. At the approach of the Russians he retired to Danzig, where he was besieged. His weakened nation could not assist him, the help from France was insufficient, so Leszczinski, wishing to avoid the horrors of a siege, disguised himself and managed to escape from Danzig, where he ran daily risk. His followers were overcome and many families were ruined. Then France, supporting Leszczinski, declared war on Austria. The war was fought on the banks of the Rhine far from Poland, and lasted but a short time; the results were not favourable to Poland. Augustus III remained in possession of the throne and Leszczinski received slight compensation in the possession of Lorraine, keeping for life his title of King of Poland. He governed Lorraine as a father, and his memory, when he died, was much loved on account of his many virtues.

Augustus III (1734-1763)

During the reign of Augustus III, the house of Ketler in Courland came to an end. The princes who succeeded were either raised to the position or forced upon the people by Russia. The remainder of Poland, however, enjoyed profound peace. As Elector of Saxony Augustus III was mixed up in the Seven Years' War, into which, however, he did not drag his Polish subjects. It was only by seeing the troops pass through Polish territory on their way to the wars, or on their return, or by the recruiting which sometimes went on among the Poles, or by the levying of foodstuffs, or by the bad coinage which was spread through Poland by

Frederick II, called the Great, that the nation knew that war was going on. Poland looked upon herself as happy under the Saxon rule, and "Ret out your belts" passed into a proverb. Poland, people said, was like an inn: any one could go in, make a noise, and leave when he pleased. It was also said that disorder was the life, happiness, and salvation of Poland. The Diets at that time could be broken up by a single *veto.* At banquets, drunkenness and coarseness went to prove that plenty reigned in the households of the nobles, and that people were courageous. Glass in hand, losses, taxes, and extortions were forgotten. Some of the inhabitants lived a retired life, deprived of the rights of citizenship, yet enjoying modest fortunes. Poland was like a sick man with perpetual pains whom long sufferings have rendered motionless and whose sensibility has been destroyed. The peasants, townspeople, and the nobles were quite indifferent to the insults heaped upon them, and to the ills which they endured. This fearful insensibility was on the decrease, however, and a change in the nation could be seen.

The Propagation of Monarchical Ideas

Many Poles had gone to live in France with Leszczinski; others went to visit him in Lorraine at his home; some studied there at his expense. And these Poles, on returning, took back new opinions and ideas quite different from those which ruled the political and social state in their own country.

In France and in Poland they saw kings, but in Poland the King was elected, and presided over the Republic, Senate, Diet, etc., his executive power being very limited. In France, on the other hand, there were no Diets, the monarchy was hereditary and absolute, the royal power concentrated in itself all other powers and dignities. The King was surrounded by ministers, princes, dukes, counts, peers, marshals, generals, chamberlains, all ready to serve him and be rewarded by him with riches, honours, distinctions, and orders. There was nothing like that in Poland. Augustus II, followed by Charles XII, instituted the Order of the White Eagle; but this Order was contrary to the institutions of the Republic, for the simple reason that the republican spirit was impotent and dull. French monarchical ideas were propagated without hindrance and gained credit daily, because the noble people, without learning or foresight and indolent, no longer opposed them, and could not understand what was useful and necessary to the Republic.

Zaluski: Konarski

Several Poles felt the necessity of reviving learning in the country, and they used all the means in their power to this laudable end. Joseph Andre Zaluski took infinite pains to found a library on which he spent enormous sums. He was rigidly thrifty, and fed on cheese so as to be able to consecrate all his means to increase it. He gathered together such a large number of volumes that his library surpassed all other private libraries and was at the head of all those of the time in Europe. Then he made it public, finally offering it to the nation.

Stanislaus Konarski, too, did all in his power to bring education to a high standard. At his own expense he founded a college for young nobles at Warsaw. He fought against prejudice and all the terrible obstacles in his way with unswerving boldness; he fought against the depraved taste of the time in literature, against bad methods of teaching, the disorders in the Republic, the *veto,* and the scandalous breaking up of Diets. The scientific emulation which then existed between the Jesuits and the Piarists[3] was the cause of warm zeal; attacks against abuses in the Republic wounded the *amour propre* of the nobles. But by their efforts education took a more animated and regular step forward, not only in Piarist schools but also in the Jesuit, and in all the other institutions where citizens were being formed. Education,

[3] A Catholic educational order founded in the beginning of the seventeenth century.

placed on the road of progress, was also to play its part in the propagation of the French monarchical ideals.

The Czartoryski Princes

Many powerful families, recognising how disorganised the Republic was, were endeavouring to introduce some salutary reforms for the re-establishment of order. But their ideas on the subject did not agree. Some wanted quick measures and others but moderate ones; one wished to introduce important changes all at once; another desired slow, sure, and progressive movement. There was also a certain amount of ambition in this generous idea of offering one's service to the country.

Czartoryski, Chancellor of Lithuania, and Augustus, his brother, took upon themselves to change the Republic into a well-organised monarchy, and to hasten the advance of reform. With this intention they made great preparations, expecting opposition from the Radziwills, the Polockis and the greater part of the nobility. Not to be discouraged, and in order to be more sure of success, they entered into relations with Russia, which conduct made many of their opponents more hostile. Then Augustus III died, on October 3, 1763, and the throne was vacant. Russian soldiers entered Poland, occupied Warsaw, and advanced to the left bank of the Vistula.

Convocation

The two opposing parties went to the Diet. The hall was full of armed men. According to ancient custom, the Marshal of the last Diet opened the new Diet. The old Marshal was Adam Malachovski, and he was to fulfil this function. A small number of nobles was awaiting his arrival. Mokranovski of Bielsk in the meantime drew up in the name of the absent a protest, and advised the closing of the Diet. Then the long-expected Malachovski entered, and advancing to the middle of the hall, held his baton of office lowered - no threat frightened him, nothing could shake his firmness - without raising it, he declared he would oppose any measures which had been prepared in such a manner. He further announced his intention of carrying away the presidential staff, since law was without and liberty was insulted by the violence of foreign troops. Then he left the hall, preceded by Mokranovski, and making his way through the crowd he left the castle. And in this manner the Diet was broken up, and all the forms observed. But the stronger party still remained in the hall and they proclaimed Adam Czartoryski, son of Augustus, Marshal, and brought forward a motion to carry on the Diet, to elect a King, and to bring in measures for reform.

John Clement Branicki, Hetman, Charles Radziwill, and the other members of the beaten opposition, seeing that it would be impossible to carry on their struggle against superior strength, retired from the country, leaving their adversaries to continue the prosecution of their plans.

Election

The states then met for the election of a King, as usual, on the field appointed for that purpose near Warsaw.

In the middle of the field a shed was erected in which the Senate took their places according to prescribed order. On one side, a more spacious place was reserved for the deputies, and this was called the circle or *kolo.* The place occupied by the members of the two Chambers was surrounded by a ditch and a rampart with three gates, one towards the West, the other towards the South, and the third towards the East. Round the rampart tents were erected for the nobility and the deputies of the seven principal cities, who placed themselves in the order of the palatinates, near the three gates. After Mass, which was celebrated in the parish church

of St. John at Warsaw, the primate, as chief of the State, the inter-King, replacing temporarily the highest royal authority, went to the field in a carriage drawn by six horses, preceded by his court and crucifix, by a bishop on horseback carrying his cross, and by his Marshal, whose functions were always carried out by a senator. The senators, deputies, and the knights followed him, using all the pomp customary on such occasions. When the procession had arrived on the ground, each person took up his position, either in the tent or round the rampart. Every one knew that the courts of St. Petersburg and Berlin proposed Stanislaus Augustus Poniatovski, *Stolnik* of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The friendship of his father with Eeszczinski, the ties which bound his family with that of the Czartoryski - Stanislaus Augustus being the son of the sister of Michael and Augustus Czartoryski - the favour of Catherine II, and the recommendations of foreign courts were sufficiently powerful motives to obtain the votes of the electors. After the chant of the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and at a given signal, the senators and the deputies rejoined the citizens of their palatinates, who came out of their tents and took up their places under their respective banners. The primate then mounted his horse, and rode round the palatinates, asking each in turn which King he desired. And they voted unanimously for Stanislaus Augustus, and gave their consent to his election. Then the primate proclaimed the name of the King Stanislaus Augustus, and the Grand Marshal announced his election at the three gates of the camp. Then the *Te Deum* was sung, which brought the ceremony to an end. Some days afterwards Stanislaus Augustus took the oath *pacta conventa,* and prepared for his coronation.

New Reforms

The laws which were to reform the Republic having been drawn up by the States at the Diet of Convocation without the participation of the King, were presented with other laws to the Diet of Coronation, where they were ratified or new rules decreed. The Republic recognised the titles of King and Emperor as borne by the sovereigns of Prussia and Russia, and limited the power of the Hetmans and Marshals; it limited also the effect of the *veto,* and granted the King more executive power. The title of Prince was given to the royal family at the coronation, and shortly afterwards the King instituted the Order of St. Stanislaus, and organised a very brilliant court; he established a military school for cadets, and a foundry for cannon, and he also opened a mint. His reign began under splendid auspices. John Clement Branicki having returned, he took up his residence at Bialystok, where he led a retired life. Other persons who had been against the King’s election returned and recognised his authority. But this calm did not last long, and as on a fine day signs of storm may not be absent, the discord which was to shake the throne of Stanislaus Augustus was already apparent.

The Confederation of Radom

The courts of St. Petersburg and Berlin, who availed themselves of every opportunity to interfere in Poland’s internal affairs, presented Notes, in which they demanded that dissenters should enjoy the rights of citizenship which they had formerly enjoyed. Repnin, the Russian ambassador, demanded the re-establishment of the *veto* and the dissolution of the Czartoryski league, which were granted. As to the dissenters, many of them, impatient to push forward their business, yielded to suggestions of foreigners and formed confederations under the protection of neighbouring states. Stanislaus Brzostovski, and other adversaries of the King and the Czartoryskis, formed leagues to which the court of St. Petersburg offered its protection. Charles Radziwill allowed himself to be led away by Brzostovski, returned to Poland and joined the confederates. The crafty Prince Repnin tried to bring together the more turbulent and discontented spirits, and actually succeeded in uniting all the leagues, despite their varied opinions, into one Teague of Radom, under Brzostovski and Radziwill. Then he

was able to secure the compliance of the King and the protection of the Empress Catherine II, so he thus forced all the discontents into a reconciliation with himself. By these means he was able to make both the King and the league subservient to his will. The confederates called a Diet at Warsaw, in which Repnin, meeting with strong opposition to this question of the dissenters, was extremely violent. He arrested four of the most prominent among those who raised obstacles: Soltik, Bishop of Cracow; Joseph Andrew Zaluski; Venceslav Rzevuski, Palatine of Cracow; and his son Severin, and transported them from Warsaw to the depths of Russia under a very strong escort.

The Confederacy of Bar

In the meantime the discontent in the court and country was increasing rapidly, 109 and the result of the League of Radom exasperated the more ardent spirits. Some complained that Russia had deceived them, others were full of anger against the King, whom they accused of giving way to the Russians, and all revolted against the violence and outrage levelled against the law and liberty. Leagues were formed to deliver the country from the yoke of the foreigner and to establish the independence and freedom of religion. The confederacy of Bar was the most celebrated of them all, and was joined by all the others in an obstinate war against Russia. Several noble Poles, including Casimir, Bishop of Kamieniec, and Adam Krasinski, were the chief leaders. The bishop implored foreign Powers for assistance, but those who were willing to co-operate were too weak to be of any use. He found most of the states worn out by war and following a selfish policy. The late treaties had brought about such a change in political relations that France found herself in the position of an ally of Austria. Austria offered refuge to the leaguers, who, having had reverses, retired to Hungary and Silesia. France sent them insufficient help, secretly. Turkey alone declared war on Russia, a war which soon came to an end without any advantage from it accruing to the leaguers. The military operations of the league of Bar extended throughout Poland and Lithuania. Russian troops, stationed round the capital, prevented the leaguers from joining the national army, which was thus kept in inaction.

The war dragged on slowly. The leaguers, who numbered perhaps 8000, were badly organised, while the Russian army was under good discipline. Yet the issue of the war was for some time very undecided. Casimir Pulawski was the most active leader; in spite of all the adversities he had gone through he was able to prolong the struggle with more success than the others. He had lost his father and his brothers. His father, whose idea the league had been, had been slandered and suspected of treason; he died in prison. Casimir, overwhelmed by this event, redoubled his activity, wishing to prove by his devotion and his sincerity his attachment to his country, besides rehabilitating the memory of his father, so unjustly condemned. By his admirable conduct he carried out his father's wishes. He fought to the end, and even when the cause of the leaguers was weak and hopeless, he defended Czestochova to the very last. The carrying off of the King contributed a good deal to the misfortunes of the leaguers.

The carrying off of the King

The league, through its secretary Bohusz, declared the throne vacant, and a certain Stravinski handed to the King in his castle at Warsaw a paper ordering him to appear before the tribunal of the league. It was Stravinski who conceived the bold project of carrying off the King. He obtained Pulawski's permission, on condition that no attempt should be made on the King's life, and Stravinski assured him on his oath that the King's person should be safe, he would not give an example of a crime which up to that time had not occurred in the history of Poland. With certain accomplices, capable of anything, he placed an ambuscade in Warsaw near the Miodova, and when the King returned in the evening from his uncle, Prince Michael

Czartoryski, to his castle, attended by his suite and servants bearing torches, Stravinski, coming from the Elektoralma, attacked the royal carriage opposite the Capuchin Church. The King escaped from his carriage as shots were fired and tried to enter his uncle's palace, but the gates were closed and he knocked in vain. The leaguers, warned by the noise, seized and carried him, slightly wounded, to their horses, and then over the ramparts and through the mounted Russian sentries. The night was very dark, and the leaguers lost their way, so that but one, Kuzma-Kosinski, remained with the King, who persuaded him that he was his King and as such was entitled to respect. Kuzma changed his mind, led the King to a mill, where he could rest awhile in security and return to the royal castle the same night. This incident caused great dissatisfaction among those leaguers whose sympathy with the league had grown cold.

This happened just when the foreign Powers decided to cease assisting the Republic, and when the neighbouring states had conceived the project of putting an end to the war, which had already lasted several years, and to settle the boundaries of Poland. Austria and Prussia advanced their sanitary boundaries very far into Poland under the pretext of guarding themselves against the plague, at the same time issuing long manifestoes proving their right to several of the Polish provinces. The members of the league, still under arms, dispersed in foreign countries. Casimir Pulawski disappeared from Czestochova and retired to America, where he was killed in battle. Of all the leaguers, Zaremba was the only one who repented and expressed his regret to the Russian authorities. The Diet of 1773 was then convoked to make terms with the neighbouring states, and to settle what was to be done in the future. But the number of the members was small; and at the opening of the Diet, when a Marshal was about to be chosen, according to the usual custom, Adam Poninski came forward and declared that he himself would hold the Marshal's baton and declare the Diet open. Many of the deputies from Lithuania, among them Reiten, Korsak, and others, opposed him, and made a very strong resistance. But they were not able to prevent their colleagues, meeting at Poninski's house, from forming a confederation, who judged them as rebels, and excluded them from the meeting. They chose delegates to carry on the functions of the Diet.

The First Dismemberment: Constitution

The first dismemberment of Poland took place in. 1772. The idea first originated with Frederick II of Prussia, and the treatment of the Dissidents by the Poles gave the neighbouring states an opportunity for interference. Prussia seized Royal Prussia, with Danzig and Thorn and several other districts, whilst Austria took possession of Red Russia from Podolia in Little Poland to the Vistula. Russia took Polock, Vitepsk, and Mscislav to the Dnieper and the Dvina. The Diet of 1773 drew up a new constitution. The *liberum veto* was to be in force, the power of the King curtailed and a permanent council was to assist him.

This constitution was guaranteed by Russia and the integrity of Poland assured by the three neighbouring states. The same Diet also ordered a commission on educational questions, which rendered much service to the nation. The Jesuits were suppressed at this time, many of their schools disappeared with them, and their immense wealth was confiscated by the nation. The Diet ordered it to be used for educational purposes, and the direction of education was entrusted to certain officials, who formed the Commission for Education. Since the fall of the league of Bar and the termination of the Diet there had been perfect peace in the Republic. But although the Russians had evacuated Poland, Russia still had great influence in the country, and nothing could be done without the consent of the Empress. The constitution was the object of special attention on her part, and anything political, even the personal interests of those whose lives were given up to politics, was carefully watched. Apart from this, Poland had liberty to do what seemed best for the betterment of the country in general. Many

plans were made to improve agriculture and commerce, banks were started, and speculation begun. The canals of Oginski and Muchaviec were dug; factories arose and factory hands increased in numbers. Tyrenhaus, the treasurer, established important industries in Lithuania. Many of the higher nobles gave land to the peasants, and emancipating them guaranteed their liberty, thus bettering their condition. This, in itself, contributed much to the prosperity of the country; but prejudices cannot be got over in a moment. The want of legislation was felt; Andrew Zamoiski, a virtuous citizen of great worth and irreproachable honour, formed a plan for this, but he was surrounded by jealous men in the Diet when he spoke of his project, so that the bill was thrown out without discussion. The opposition against him was caused by his request that the same laws should govern both the peasant and his master.

Polish Manners before the Fall of the Republic

Prejudice was conquered little by little; superstitions became ridiculous in time, as the nation became enlightened, and the improvement in manners was easy to see. Excessive drinking was more rare and brawls were scarce; manners became more easy and less severe - old men no longer demanded that extravagant submission which had been so extremely irksome, and were content with the respect which every man of a certain age has the right to expect from youth. In the clubs, elegance was mixed with gravity and national urbanity. And it was noticed that French manners no longer had much influence in the country. The old Polish costume was no longer fashionable; a great number of frock-coats and overcoats of French cut were seen, yet these were not so heavy as those formerly worn. Women gave up the enormous dresses with hooped petticoats; the fashions were simpler and more convenient and agreeable. Every one longed for the natural and simple. More importance was attached to the household furniture, and a greater degree of simplicity was observed in this as well. There was less decoration of all sorts. Carriages also changed; their coverings as well as the shape and springs had been improved and they were much more comfortable than before. Also it was much easier to procure a carriage than it had been, and they were in consequence used more frequently. Stanislaus Augustus himself, as well as the men who flocked to his court, contributed largely to the general improvement in these matters, particularly in good taste.

National History: The Polish Language

The King being fond of study, and understanding the importance of it, his court became the centre to which men cultivating literature and science and all that contributed to propagate learning turned. And although French customs were mixed with national habits, and a very great number of French works were read, yet the national tongue was studied with care and was indeed preferred by the citizens. National deeds were looked up, and the King himself, desiring to see the history of his country properly written and explained, charged Naruszevicz and many others to give their attention to that branch of literature. The Polish language, pure and correct, became the medium for conversation, the mixture of French with Polish was no longer the fashion. The language itself, spoken at court and in polite society and used by writers of the first class, became polished and graceful. There were celebrated poets, too, like Krasicki and Trembecki. In the two Chambers the language used was full of strength and dignity, for the speakers were talented. The same great care was taken to write the language in the drawing up of public deeds. Science was taught at the schools in the national tongue - Latin was also taught, and the method was more easy and useful and was used for a number of subjects. The educational commission which had organised secular schools on a given plan of education found great assistance in the Piarists. The first object of education was to make good citizens useful to their country. These schools produced men capable of serving the Republic, and their number increased daily. Poland, animated by new sentiments, had increased her strength and prepared herself for fresh events, which were soon to follow.

VII. The Second and Third Partitions: Kosciuszko

The secret designs of the Empress Catherine II on Turkey were generally understood. Stanislaus Augustus travelled to Kaniov to see the Empress, during her journey to the Crimea, and on his return raised an equestrian statue of John Sobieski crushing the Turks. It was thought that he would take part in a war against them. But the Poles had no motive for war against the Turks, who, remaining faithful to their treaties, had given no cause for breaking them. Russia was at war with Sweden and Turkey, and the attention of certain foreign countries was attracted by her increase of power: Prussia and England, wishing to stop this, tried to get Poland to agree to their plan; to break her treaties with Russia, and thus get rid of the Russian guarantee, which had been imposed upon her by force, and recover her independence.

The Diet of Four Years

The Diet which now opened was begun under most favourable auspices. The Marshals were Stanislaus Malachovski and Casimir Sapieha. To prevent the deliberations from being disturbed by the breaking up of the Diet by use of the *veto,* a league was formed.

The King and many of the nobles were against any open rupture with Russia. But the King changed his mind and joined the party of patriots, who being numerous commanded the majority in the Diet. The confidence which had wavered for some time between the King and the national mind was established more firmly, and it was said that the King was with the nation and the nation was with the King. A treaty was concluded with Prussia, who promised sufficient help in case of necessity. The Branicki party, however, showed a violent opposition to this and insisted on keeping in with Russia. This party, which was able to prolong the work of the Diet by argumentations, took up precious time in useless discussion, inventing petty questions of no importance, and causing much embarrassment. And this is why the Diet dragged on for several years, for the execution of the law was made difficult by such shameful machinations; this particularly refers to the army organisation scheme. A levy of 100,000 men had been ordered and it had been difficult to get 60,000, to say nothing of their equipment.

This Diet, which lasted for four years without any interruption, was the longest; the others had lasted only a few days or weeks. No other Diet had made so many laws as this: that is why it is called the Great Diet. A tax called the *dime* was put upon the fortunes of the nobles; the *veto* was suppressed, and thus leagues became of no use and were abolished. They discussed the heredity of the throne and talked about a successor for Stanislaus Augustus. The solution of this question of a prerogative, defended so obstinately by the nobility, was sent to be considered by the districts. Two years had passed by since the Diet began. According to regulations another Diet ought to begin. The deputies were thinking about meeting to choose the new members for the ordinary Diet. In 1790 the question of the heredity of the throne was settled. This question had never been discussed, because the nobles looked upon it as their especial privilege: but at this time opinion had changed and the acceptance of the monarchy was general. With unanimous consent the heredity of the throne was sanctioned, and the Elector of Saxony, grandson of Augustus III, was nominated successor to Stanislaus Augustus. The deputies recently elected then went to Warsaw and

joined those already there. That is how the number of deputies was doubled for the remainder of the session.

It was at this Diet that a letter from Frederick William of Prussia was read. He desired, he said, as also did England and Holland, to form such a friendship with Poland that no intrigue would be able to disturb it. There had been a conference with the ministers of Prussia and England. Lucchesini, who had replaced Buchholz early in 1789, said that the King of Prussia thought it would be more advantageous for Poland to establish a good government than to maintain a large army, which would expose the Republic to the danger of revolutions. And after discussion it was decided to reform the constitution, and eight articles were drawn up which were called *Principles for the Improvement of the Constitution.*

Art. 1. That it is the right of citizens: (1) to make laws, and only to submit to those laws which the people have placed upon the statute; (2) to regulate the coinage and to levy taxes; (3) to draw up treaties and to declare war; (4) to supervise the Grand Council (Straz) and all executive powers, who must be responsible to the people for the exercise of power; (5) to elect the King and the Grand Council and the Judges, and any other public body.

Art. 2. The rights and duties of the nation are confined to the nation, nuntios, and deputies.

Art. 3. That the nation had the power to remove or confirm any nuntio in his office according to his conduct. And that the Diet should be convoked: (1) in any urgent case concerning the rights of the people; (2) in any case concerning any collision with public bodies or a revolution; (3) at times of danger of famine; (4) at the death or grave illness of the King.

Art. 4. The will of the nation must be evident in the exercise of any legislative power. There must be unanimity in voting for the cardinal laws, and three-quarters of the votes for political laws, and two-thirds for taxes.

Art 5. The members of the Diet must follow the rules prescribed by the future constitution; but for the conclusion of treaties and alliances, and for the declaration of war, three-quarters of the votes of the members of the Diet should be decisive.

Art. 6. The nation should recognise the need of inspection for internal affairs, as well as for foreign, and this power must be centred in the King and his Council (Straz); the persons forming the Council should be responsible to the Diet, but have no vote in the Diet.

Art. 7. Magistrates and all those using executive powers should be supervised in case of prevarication.

Art. 8. Once the constitution is fixed and settled, the Diets would be no longer legal.

These articles were accepted unanimously. But no arrangements had been made about the heredity of the throne. It was a difficult subject to touch and caused much argument; the uncertainty of elections, and the difficulty of deciding on a family, when every noble thought he had the right to put up for election, made it impossible to settle the matter definitely, and the question was left to settle itself as it were. The King, who had taken the oath of *pacta conventa* not to take any steps to make the throne hereditary, played a passive part, while the question was under discussion, knowing full well that no member of his family would ever succeed him. When his opinion was asked, he said: “I know that I shall be eclipsed by the rising sun; but I am convinced that the intervals before the election of a King takes place are a cause of the decadence of Poland.”

The most important business of the Diet was to promulgate and sanction the constitution, which was called the governmental statute. The throne was declared hereditary; the Catholic religion, the State religion, and religious liberty was assured to dissenters; the rights of the

nobles were guaranteed; and the citizen, as well as the noble, was to send deputies to the Diet. The peasants were to be safeguarded by the law and their individual liberty was to be assured. The sovereignty of the people was made manifest by the Diet, and all legislation was preserved by the Diet; judiciary power to be independent; the executive power was to be entrusted to the King, who should have a Council composed of ministers and the primate. This constitution, which was to be modified and altered if necessary every twenty-five years, was promulgated on May 3, 1791. The King took the oath to observe the constitution, and went to the Church of St. John, where both the Chambers took the oath. Two days after, on May 5, it was accepted by those who had been opposed to it.

After having been accepted with unanimity, it was handed over to the judgment of the nation, who were to be allowed to air any grievance they might have against it during the space of nine months. Every one was free to make remarks or ask for explanations. Nine months after its promulgation the deputies were called together in the same fashion as the nuntios, to give account of their work in their different districts. Everywhere the constitution was accepted and the oath administered. The King of Prussia recognised it, and the praise which he bestowed upon it shows his entire approbation. Various courts also recognised the new Polish constitution. However it was not destined to last long. The opposition endeavoured to overthrow the government. Felix Potocki sought some means to protect the liberty of the nobles, which the new constitution had done away with. Many of the nobles, particularly Francis Xavier Branicki and Severin Rzevuski, with Felix Potocki, sought support from foreign courts. They implored Catherine II to give them her protection - Poland having previously broken all the humiliating treaties made with Catherine II - and they formed in 1792 the league of Targowica in the palatinate of Braclav.

Russian troops led the leaguers and invaded Poland and Lithuania. The command of the army was given to Stanislaus Augustus, who gave orders to retreat. They retired to the Bug. In the meantime the political relations with the powers had lately altered, and the King of Prussia, retracting his promises, did not hesitate to give his words the lie, in refusing the help he had guaranteed. The Polish army, left to itself, waited for Stanislaus Augustus, who did not come. It could not stop near the Bug without feeling nervous. The Russians thought to cross the river. The battle of Dubienka shed well-earned glory over General Kosciuszko; but the Russians crossed the Bug. The King ought to have joined the army, but he retired to his capital. He called his people to arms, and twenty days later, responding to Catherine’s orders, he signed his submission to the league of Targowica, and he did this cowardly act in the name of the army. The Russians occupied Warsaw. The league of Targowica took up the reins of government and governed by orders and decrees.

Second Dismemberment

Two neighbouring Powers, however, announced by manifesto the new dismemberment they ordered, accusing the Poles of extravagant, subversive, and anti-social ideas. Prussia seized Great Poland and the districts near the capital. Russia threw her frontiers through Middle Lithuania and Volhynia. What was left of the country was to compose Poland, in which a Diet was called at Grodno. A new league was formed, which decided that the league of Targowica was dissolved, and ordered a new constitution and different regulations to sanction the dismemberment and abolish all the decisions of the Great Diet. The deliberations of the Diet of Grodno were held in a hall, against the walls of which the Russians pointed their cannons, ready to fire.

Kosciuszko

The second dismemberment of Poland roused general indignation. Some courageous citizens of Warsaw took the initiative and formed a patriotic league, which was joined by the entire army, who chose as their chief Thaddseus Kosciuszko, then an exile in Saxony. There was no other feeling but the most devoted patriotism. John Kelinski, a shoemaker, Joseph Sierakouski, a butcher, and Andrew Kapostas, a banker, distinguished themselves preeminently.

Kosciuszko, born on February 16, 1746, in the palatinate of Novogrodek, had studied at Warsaw and Paris. He was in France when the American War of Independence broke out; he sailed for Philadelphia, and was brought to the notice of Washington, who, after the battles of Saratoga and Yellowspring, promoted him , to be brigadier, and later, to be governor of the fortress at West Point. He returned to Poland after the Peace, and as brigadiers' general distinguished himself in the campaign of 1792 against the Russians, then to escape their revenge he left his country with 500 officers, the flower of the army, and went to France, where in the session of August 26, 1792, the National Assembly gave him the title of "French citizen."

He then travelled through Germany and Italy and stayed for some time in Leipzig r and Dresden. Replying to the call of his fellow-citizens, he returned to Cracow, and the inhabitants met together to draw up the Insurrection Act, from which the Acts of the other districts were copied. This Act was published on March 24, 1794, and contains a list of all the ills which Russian tyranny had heaped upon Poland, stating the different means employed to subjugate the country. It ran thus:

"Crushed by these immense misfortunes, conquered by treachery rather than by the strength of the enemy; deprived of the protection of the national government after having lost our native land, and with it the enjoyment of the most sacred rights of liberty, safety, and property, individual as well as material; deceived by some and abandoned by others, we, Poles, inhabitants of the Palatinate of Cracow, in offering up our lives as the only thing which the tyrants have not taken from us, seize upon any extreme and violent measures which despair suggests. Having then the firm resolution to perish and be buried in the ruins of our country or to deliver our native land from ferocious oppression and a yoke full of insult, we declare in the face of heaven and to the whole human race and especially to those nations who know what liberty is, placing it above wealth of any sort, that in making use of the incontestable right to defend ourselves against tyranny and armed oppression, we unite all our strength in a spirit of patriotism and fraternity; and persuaded that the success of our great undertaking depends above everything on our unity, *we renounce all those prejudices of opinion and distinction* which until now have separated or could separate the citizens and inhabitants of the same land and children of the same country; and we promise each other to spare no sacrifices whatever, but on the contrary to use all the means which the sacred love of liberty inspires in the heart of man, or which despair has discovered, for its defence.

To free Poland from foreign troops; to recover and ensure the integrity of our frontiers; to destroy all kinds of usurpation, internal as well as external, to consolidate the general liberty and independence of the Republic - this is the sacred aim of our insurrection."

The organisation of the revolution then followed, and Kosciuszko was entrusted with unlimited powers. The manifesto ended as follows:

"The most cruel misfortune and insurmountable difficulties cannot weaken nor discourage virtue and civic courage. Placing the power of using ourselves and our property in the hands of the head of the supreme National Council for as long as the struggle with despotism for

our liberty and justice against oppression shall last, we desire to have the great truth that the safety of our country is the first law always before us."

The first signal of the insurrection was given on March 12 by Madalinski, who, refusing to disband his brigade, executed a wonderful march through the Prussian armies, from the neighbourhood of Ostrolinka to Cracow. The military oath to Kosciuszko was taken, and. in two days Cracow, so long oppressed by the Russians, regained its liberty, which was not abused.

Religion consecrated the efforts of the insurgents. Without any disorder they flocked, to the cathedral, and taking the altars to witness the justice of their cause, they bound themselves to commit no act of violence to stain it. The constitution of May 3 was then read, and the oath was taken to maintain that constitution with their fortunes and their lives. The same oath was taken in the provinces and voluntary contributions were offered everywhere.

Kosciuszko having been invested with full powers, addressed the army and the nation, and made a special proclamation to the women of Poland, always so celebrated for their patriotism. He sent these deeds to the courts of Denmark, Sweden, England, and to the revolutionary government of France, to the United States, and even to Vienna. Trusting to the exaltation of patriotism, he marched to Warsaw at the head of 4000 men, badly armed - and met 12,000 Russians near the village of Raclavicee; the Russians thought to crush him by superior strength. That day was indeed a memorable one for the Polish peasants, who, with no weapons but their scythes and sickles, flung themselves upon the Russian, batteries and took the guns. The defeat was complete; the Russians lost 3000 men and twelve cannon and this feat of arms encouraged patriotic energy to the highest degree. On the 12th of April the inhabitants of Warsaw received the news, and the 17th, 18th, and 19th witnessed the insurrection of the capital, which was to play such an important part in this revolution of a people. It was Holy Week. Igelstrom, the Russian general, had proposed to massacre the inhabitants when they were in the churches. This atrocious plot was discovered by Kilinski, and the people of Warsaw became aware of it just twenty-four hours too soon. Women and children and old men seized what weapons they could find; the Russians were driven from their positions and abandoned the city after losing 4000 dead and 2000 prisoners and twelve cannon.

Then Kosciuszko went to meet Souvarov and Fersen with 7000 Poles and twenty-two cannon, leaving 3000 soldiers and ten cannon with Poninski to prevent the two Russian generals from joining up a position at Macieiovice. But Poninski, whom he had told to rejoin him, did not do it, so on October 10, 1794, he found himself and his brave little army opposed by 17,000 Russians and ninety guns. He drove them back twice, leaving mounds of slain. Fersen then formed the Russians in columns for the attack, and the battle was renewed with fury and a bayonet charge was made; they fought man to man, each inch of ground was taken and retaken, and in spite of the numbers against them the Poles were invincible so long as Kosciuszko was afoot. Suddenly, however, a lance struck him and his blood gushed forth, yet none the less he led his squadrons until his horse, being wounded, flung him into a ditch: a sword-thrust cut his brow, and feeling himself lost he cried: "Brothers, give me the death-stroke." A Cossack turned to give him his wish but another stopped him, saying: "It is Kosciuszko, do not kill him." All the Poles died heroically.

"Kosciuszko, taken by the Russians, languished for two years in a dungeon in St. Petersburg. Paul I set him at liberty and he travelled to America, staying there eighteen months. He then went to France, where he did all he could to gain the favour of the French for Poland. The Polish hero then retired to Soleure in Switzerland, where he died on October 15, 1817. His body, taken to Warsaw, reposes among Poland's kings.

“Kosciuszko,” says one of his biographers, “is the last of the knights and the first of the citizens, he who carried the banner of the old Polish cause farther than any one else; his generosity had no limits; his heart was true as steel, and his soul tender, confiding, and credulous; sweet and easy as a child; a hero, a saint, and so simple! He was called to assist a hopeless cause, to fight an unequal fight, and he accepted his mission, believing in miracles, and magnanimously went out to Victory or Death.”

The great deed of spoliation, which was the crushing of Poland, is not less atrocious than the act itself. All the treasures of Warsaw, archives, public deeds, libraries, museums, were carried off and taken to St. Petersburg, and dispersed or burnt. The same thing happened to the royal archives and treasures and other objects taken from Cracow by the Prussians. All Polish towns were despoiled in this manner. As for the King, Stanislaus Augustus, he was ordered to proceed to Grodno in 1795, where by a refinement of irony he was made to sign an act of abdication on November 25, the anniversary of his coronation. Then he was sent to St. Petersburg in 1797, where he lived on a pension of 200,000 ducats, paid by Russia, and died 136 on February 12, 1798, sixty-six years old. The Tsar, Paul I, ordered his funeral to be held with all kingly pomp.

Poland, however, had the glory, before her fall, of having completely reformed her laws, institutions, and manners, extinguished all the germs of internal discontent, of rallying round her all her children, and of showing to the world at large that the country, even when falling before the united efforts of three devastating Powers, was regenerate. The nobility called all the other classes of society to enjoy civil rights and political and social liberty. The citizens, inspired by national feeling, were devoted to the Republic. The dissenters, recovering their liberty and their rights as citizens, no longer looked abroad for assistance. The peasants were emancipated and had become Kosciuszko’s bravest soldiers.

The constitution of May 3, 1791, had united all hearts and minds. Poland was united and the mind of her people was one. That is why her glory is now as unfading and immortal as it was when her enemies tried in vain to make her disappear from I among the nations.

VIII. Poland after the Partitions

“A nation lives, moves, and has its being thanks solely to the national spirit animating it, therefore it can continue its existence even when it has been deprived of its territory. Nations and races, like those of the Slavs or the Jews, do not die; they only retire for a time to the background while awaiting their opportunity to again “take their place in the forefront of the world’s arena. In their prison cells and on the snowfields of Siberia the children of Poland continued to dream of their country’s independence. Western Europe, especially France and England, were loud in their indignation against the partition of Poland and the crushing of the independence of a nation and a Republic. All through Europe sympathy was expressed for the unhappy Poles. Had Europe not been so busy herself in consequence of the great social upheaval which had occurred in France, she might very possibly have broken a lance for Poland, but as matters were the French Revolution made the princes of Europe hesitate, and so their indignation and sympathy for Poland remained passive. Refugees from Poland fled to France and Italy, where they hoped to stir the embers of indignation into raging flames. Polish patriots formed a secret confederation at Cracow and offered to serve in the French army: the Polish leader was received with open arms by the French Directoire, and the Polish legions were subsequently used in aid of the Italian Republics and held ready to go wherever the government found it necessary to send them. These legions wore their native Polish uniform and the revolutionary cockade. Dombrovski was sent to Milan to help Bonaparte in his operations down there; these Polish legions rendered great service to the French cause and the hopes of the Poles rose high that they might, with the help of Napoleon, see the restoration of their country’s independence. Then Napoleon signed the Treaty of Campo Formio and their dream of Free Poland was shattered. The great Corsican told Dombrovski that “the moment had not yet arrived; wait and be patient.” The Poles were patient. In the meantime, the three Powers which had divided Poland among themselves did their best, or their worst, to destroy everything that could resuscitate the national spirit in the country: to obliterate every vestige of national life, religion, law, institutions, customs, habits, and even historical monuments; such was the common aim of the three countries, Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Both Austria and Prussia endeavoured to Germanise their portions of Poland; they introduced German laws, customs, and even , the German language into ordinary use. Russia, perhaps, was more generous or politic at that time, for she strove to reconcile the Poles to her government by a more liberal policy. Paul I, who took a delight in upsetting all that his mother had done, was comparatively liberal as far as Poland was concerned, and Alexander I, the dreamer of republics, could not, of course, inaugurate a policy of repression, in any case not at first. Therefore, while at Cracow Austria closed the University and founded another seat of learning at Leopol, or Lemberg, Alexander I gave special privileges to the University of Vilna. Then Napoleon decided to restore the independence of Poland. Electrified by the promise of liberty, the Poles once more took up their arms and flew to the Emperor’s call. The Emperor entered Posen and Warsaw, where he was received with open arms and unbounded enthusiasm. By the Treaty of Tilsit, on July 7, 1807, Napoleon created the Duchy of Warsaw; it consisted of six Departments, with a population of about two millions. Frederic Augustus, King of Saxony, was placed upon the Polish throne. It would be folly to imagine that the Poles were satisfied with this establishment of a mockery of a State, but, nevertheless, when shortly afterwards Napoleon declared war on Spain, the Polish legions were again ready to support him. “As soon as the news of the war spread in the country,” writes the Countess Potocka in her *Memoirs* (p. 303), “our young men ran to arms from all sides, not even waiting until they were called. Neither the threats of Russia nor the fears and

arguments of parents had any weight, and failed to cool the patriotic ardour. It was an enthusiasm equal to that of 1806, but with one degree more of confidence. A new generation had taken the place of that which had partly disappeared from the French army. With a feverish curiosity the children listened to the tales of their elders, burning all the while with martial ardour. The hope of returning as heroes spurred them on to great deeds. Soldiers scarcely adult gained the admiration of old grenadiers. Those who had not enlisted and wore no uniform dared not appear in the streets for fear of being insulted by the street urchins."

The Poles were on the Emperor's side when he began his Russian campaign, and greeted him as their Redeemer, but their enthusiasm somewhat cooled when he informed the Polish deputations who had followed him to Vilna "that he had guaranteed the integrity of his estates to the Austrian Emperor." That was as far as Galicia was concerned; Lithuania he invaded as a Russian province. The Russian campaign ended in disaster and the Duchy of Warsaw was dissolved. The King of Saxony was deprived of both the Grand Duchy and a portion of his dominions, whilst the three Powers once more took possession of the provinces and towns which had belonged to them before the Napoleonic invasion. After the fall of Napoleon, the Vienna Congress turned its attention to the fate of Poland. Public opinion and sympathy were in favour of restoring the Republic in its integrity, and Castlereagh and Talleyrand laboured hard to attain this object. The three Powers interested, however, declined to give up that which they looked upon as their own property. Yet by the Treaty of Vienna a resettlement was decided on. Galicia and the salt-mines of Wieliczka were returned to Austria; Posen was given to Prussia in addition to all that she had received during the first partition; the town and district of Cracow formed an independent Republic under the guarantee of the three Powers, whilst the remainder of ancient Poland, comprising the new Duchy, went to Russia and was formed into a constitutional kingdom under the sovereignty of the Tsar. The new kingdom was proclaimed on June 20, 1815, and on December 24 the constitutional charter was granted to Poland. The charter was a very liberal one, for at that time Alexander was the friend and partisan of all liberal institutions. An amnesty was granted to all the Poles who had fought with Napoleon against Russia in 1812. A provisional government was formed at Warsaw with Prince Adam Czartoryski, the friend of Alexander, at its head. Poland, however, did not enjoy her state of peace and liberty for very long; a feud soon broke out between the Tsar and the constitutional kingdom. A great reactionary change had come over Alexander I. He was influenced not only by his own reactionary advisers, such as Araktsheev, by Austria, and Metternich, but also by the general spirit of reaction which, at that time, was animating the governments of Europe. In Europe, especially in Germany, an agitation was observable which raised the alarm of every sovereign anxious to preserve his power.

This uneasiness was communicated to the Tsar. It was Austria, especially, who initiated the re-establishment of the ancient *regime* of absolute monarchy. The aristocratic reactionaries, planning, scheming, and plotting how to crush the hydro-head of democracy, had established their headquarters in Vienna. Metternich and Gentz, his right hand, were busy elaborating a theory of reaction. Alexander, under this influence, opposed every effort made towards the propagation of liberalism; he abandoned his former policy and principles and appeared as the champion of absolute monarchy and autocracy. Forgotten were all his promises, forgotten all the dreams of his youth. His change of attitude made -itself strongly felt in Poland. He had granted a constitution to the country, but the Poles soon saw that they could not rely on the promises of Alexander, who readily assented to the oppressive mode of government established by his brother Constantine as Viceroy of Poland. Gradually, Alexander showed his utter contempt for the promises he had made, and although the material condition of the country improved and the prosperity of the nation increased, "the Poles were, naturally, very

dissatisfied with the state of affairs. Discontent and hatred spread in the country and the gulf between the government and the liberty loving Poles grew steadily wider and wider.

The Revolution of 1830

The French Revolution of 1830 gave a stimulus to the hatred of the Poles for their Russian masters, and fanned into flames the embers of their discontent. Proud Tsar Nicholas, the Don Quixote of autocracy, was not the man patiently to soothe discontent. On the contrary, at the Diet of 1830, he refused to grant the concessions which the Poles demanded. An insurrection broke out on November 29.

Students paraded the streets, calling on the inhabitants to take up arms for their country's freedom. Some of the students marched upon the Belvedere Palace with the intention of seizing the Grand Duke Constantine, but the latter had already escaped. Thousands of Polish troops joined the insurgents and killed some of their Russian officers. The prison doors were opened and the criminals and debtors invited to swell the ranks of the insurgents.

The patriot Chlopicki was nominated generalissimo of the Polish troops and he at once despatched special envoys to St. Petersburg (Petrograd) and to the Courts of Western Europe. They declared that they considered the House of Romanov had forfeited the crown and throne of the country. Then Chlopicki displeased the party in power and resigned his command of the army: Radziwill succeeded him. Adam Czartoryski had been placed at the head of government of the Republic. Unfortunately the Poles counted upon the help of Western Europe and upon the noble and unselfish resolutions of politicians and diplomatists, and were once more deceived. No help came forward: Europe let Poland fight her battle alone and unaided, and the results were disastrous to the country. An army of 120,000 Russians was sent against them under the command of General Diebitch, and although the Poles won a victory at Grochov they were soon defeated and their armed forces dispersed.

Then riots broke out in Warsaw; Czartoryski fled and was replaced by Krikiviecki and afterwards by Niemoievski. The Russian army crossed the Vistula, compelled Warsaw to surrender and quelled the rebellion. Poland's dream was shattered. She lay prostrate at the feet of the conquering Russian army, and the autocratic Tsar Nicholas I was not inclined to show any generosity to the Poles. The constitution granted by Alexander I was annulled and severe measures were taken with a view to eradicating every vestige that could remind the Poles of a national existence. The University of Vilna was suppressed and the seat of learning removed to Charkov; the Polish language was forbidden and the palatinates became mere Russian provinces. The punishment of the partisans of the insurrection was not less drastic.

A small Polish Republic was still in existence on Austrian territory. It was the Republic of Cracow, whose freedom had been granted by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Austria, however, had not strictly adhered to the regulations laid down by the Treaty, and Metternich devised a plan by which he hoped to exterminate the nobles and landed proprietors of Galicia. Rumours were constantly spread among the peasants that the Emperor had granted the land for partition among the peasants, but that the nobles opposed the measure and were suppressing the gift. The peasants, at last, rebelled against the nobles, and thousands, women and children included, were killed. The three Powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, then availed themselves of the opportunity to crush the Republic of Cracow and to annex it to Austria.

Once more Polish hopes were raised, and the vision of the dream that might be realised filled the hearts of Polish patriots with joy: this was during the Crimean War.

The Crimean War roused the hopes of the Poles, who were constantly dreaming of national independence and liberty. Prince Adam Czartoryski was again busy, although he was then

eighty-three years of age; he was an enthusiastic advocate of an Anglo-French alliance, and sent several memoranda to the English Government, as well as to Napoleon III, with whom he had several interviews. The Prince's plan was to attack Russia in Poland, where her position would have been mostly endangered, as the Poles would gladly avail themselves of the opportunity to strike her. The Allies, however, did not adopt the plan, and, moreover, when the war was finished they did not consider Poland at all. The hopes of the Polish patriots were all frustrated and their confidence in European justice lost. Russian Poland remained quiet for a time, but the turbulent spirit of the oppressed Republic broke out once more in 1860 in a last spasmodic endeavour to shake off the Russian yoke. On the thirtieth anniversary of the Revolution of 1830 demonstrations took place in the streets of Warsaw.

"The first symptoms of a Polish movement," writes Prince Adam Czartoryski, "dated, from the celebrated meeting of the three sovereigns of the North, which took place in Warsaw, October i860, following the formation of a united Italy." For thirty years, since the last War of Independence, Russian Poland had remained quiet, although always shuddering under the rule which Nicholas I had imposed on her, and which even liberal Alexander II continued to carry out. The new Emperor was capable of thanking the landowners of Lithuania for their initiative in liberating the serfs, and to mention them as an example to his Russian nobility, who were not so well disposed to make such a sacrifice, yet, at the same time, he could make a declaration to the inhabitants of Lithuania and Ruthenia that they were Russians and that he would never recognise any Poles in the people of these provinces, in favour of whom even the Treaty of Vienna had stipulated that there should be "a representative of national institutions." Alexander II had also proclaimed an amnesty for the exiles in Siberia and the refugees abroad; but it was a tardy measure of justice which spoke of "culpable error," which kept the spoils of thirty years, and deigned to permit the return of exiles to the homes which were *not* restored to them. It was a measure which imposed a humiliating acknowledgment of repentance as a condition of the pardon, and was, therefore, more likely to irritate than to heal. Lastly, two speeches made at Warsaw before the Marshals, senators, and Polish clergy had, from the beginning, clearly defined the character of Alexander's reign: "I intend," said the Emperor Alexander on this occasion, "that the rule established by my father shall be kept; so, gentlemen, above all, no dreams, no dreams. The happiness of Poland depends entirely on its fusion with Russia; what my father did was well done. I shall keep to that. My reign shall be a continuation of his."

And Poland went on, without any illusion or fuss, in the quiet obscure work of bettering her internal affairs, which amelioration she carried on without interruption and in spite of obstacles. But the meeting of the sovereigns at Warsaw was a surprise. The general opinion in Europe was that the meeting was a point of departure for a new Holy Alliance, of a concert of the Northern Powers against Italy, and the liberal spirit of the West. That the three monarchs who had dismembered Poland should have chosen the Polish capital for the place of their deliberations seemed an outrage, and the people were immensely impressed.

They showed unmistakable signs of irritation. All the resentment felt, all the memory of suffering endured seemed to wake up, to come to life again. The increasing agitation of the next few months came to a climax on February 25 and 27, when the people of Warsaw flocked into the streets, bearing unarmed the flag and the cross before them, exposing themselves to Russian bullets and chanting the hymn of Saint Adalbert, their first apostle, "Holy God, Mighty God, Immortal God, have mercy on us. Holy Virgin, Queen of Poland, pray for us." It seemed as if the whole nation, ripened by long and incredible suffering, full of the most generous and liberal ideas of the century, had been born again, in spite of prolonged slavery. All classes in the nation were united in the love of their country; Catholic priests, Jewish rabbis, and Protestant pastors marched at the head of processions, just as they were

later on to lead them to the snowfields of Siberia. The admission of the Jews to full civil rights was proclaimed at once. Keeping her own profoundly religious character, bordering on poetic mysticism, Poland showed a liberal and broad-minded modern spirit. The Emperor Alexander himself had recognised the goodwill of the Lithuanian nobles on the peasant question. The Agricultural Society, which represented nearly all the moneyed landowners in the kingdom, had worked with great perseverance for many years for the welfare of the people. It is true that the efforts of the Society were often contrary to what the Russian Government desired, and this proved to be one of the principal causes of the popular feeling after the meeting at Warsaw, for the Russian government, just as the Austrians had done in 1846, did not hesitate to stir up class hatred and sow seeds of dissension. The agricultural Society, understanding the gravity of the moment and fully impressed with a sense of its duty and without regard for the government prohibition, invited the citizens to make great self-sacrifice and declare the peasants landowners. This happened on February 20, 1861. And after the bloody days of February 25 and 27, it was to this society - the only national institution which Poland now possessed - that the people instinctively clung; and it was from this combination of popular exaltation, moderated and regulated by the wisdom and liberality of the Agricultural Society, that the first action of the National Movement proceeded, namely, an address to the Emperor Alexander II. This address was headed by the names of the Archbishop, the Chief Rabbi, the head of the Evangelical party, and the nobles of the country. It was soon covered with the names of people of all classes and creeds.

The suppression of the Agricultural Society naturally produced new troubles. On April 7 and 8, crowds again gathered in the streets and manifestations took place. The crowds were dispersed by cavalry, who mercilessly shot down the unarmed and defenceless citizens; the open space in front of the Zamek, or the Castle of the Viceroy, was strewn with dead and wounded. These cavalry charges, however seemed to produce no effect, for still the manifestations continued, and on October 10, at Horodlo, on the frontier between Poland and Lithuania, a vast crowd gathered to celebrate the anniversary of the union of the two countries. In the meantime the government, afraid of openly oppressive measures, endeavoured to employ a policy of diplomatic conciliation, and Count Lambert, a Catholic and a descendant of a French family, was appointed Viceroy, but he completely failed in his efforts. He was surrounded by partisans of extreme measures of oppression: General Gerstenzweig - evidently a German, which in this as in many other instances of Russian oppression is significant, had a scene with Count Lambert and committed suicide. Lambert was recalled and the Grand Duke Constantine was appointed Viceroy. It was too late for a policy of reconciliation, so repressive measures were employed; one of these was the forcible enlistment of a number of young men, who were seized and enrolled in the army. It was simply the arrest of at least 2000 agitators under the pretext of conscription. Reconciliation was now out of the question, and the insurrection broke out soon after this, in January 1863.

The insurgents numbered not more than 6000 or 8000 and were badly armed. They could not compare with the Poles, who rebelled in 1830, when Poland disposed of a regular army. For a few months the insurgents resisted the official government, until Constantine was recalled and General Berg succeeded him at Warsaw, whilst General Mouraviev was appointed Governor of the Western Provinces and had his headquarters at Vilna. Drastic measures were now employed against the insurgents, who when caught were at once hanged or shot without any fuss. The last fight between the insurgents and the Russian army took place in February 1864, near Vengrov, and in May the insurrection was ended.

In August the execution of the leaders of the revolutionary committee marked the last act in the great drama. The peasants had taken only a lukewarm interest in the insurrection, which had been supported chiefly by the nobility, the clergy, and certain sympathisers among

the *bourgeoisie.* The classes, therefore, suffered mostly from the rigorous and oppressive measures which the government now adopted. The last traces of even a pretence of Polish independence now disappeared and anything that could foster national sentiment was suppressed. Russian became the official language in the courts, schools, and even in the Catholic churches. Polish libraries and printing presses were suppressed; the University of Warsaw was Russianised. Henceforth Poland's history is only a portion of the internal administration of the Russian Umpire. The Kingdom of Poland is but a name. Poland was thus severely punished for her insurrections. The relations between the Russian government and the Poles have, however, improved greatly since the accession of the present Tsar, who has now promised an autonomy to the country. Austrian Poland has been luckier than Russian Poland, for Galicia enjoys perfect freedom. As for the Poles in Prussia, they have been subject to a rigorous system of Germanisation, whilst the Church has had to endure a great deal from the Kulturkampf. The land owned by the Poles has been gradually bought by the government for the establishment of German colonies.

Conclusion

We have thus seen what an important part Poland has played in the history of Europe. Prussia, whose territory is only a portion of ancient Poland, was her vassal until 1660, whilst the Russian Tsars, who became Emperors with Peter the Great, were only recognised as such by Poland in 1764. As late as the eighteenth century Poland was one of the greatest realms in Europe. Without any exaggeration one may even say that Poland has many a time saved Europe and all Christendom from the invasions of the barbarians. She served as a bulwark against ninety-one invasions of Tartars and Mongols, and for two hundred and sixty years, from the days of King Vladyslaw to the reign of Augustus II, in 1699, she waged an heroic war against the conquering Turks and saved Vienna and Europe from the Moslem barbarism. She has rendered Europe and our civilisation immense services.

IX. The Political Life of Poland and her Social Constitution

WE have mentioned in the preceding pages that Poland was practically a Republic and her Kings the chief magistrates. The crown had been hereditary during the reign of the Houses of Piast and of Yagello, but then became elective and the Diets could offer it to any one they chose. The political power was then all centred in the Diet, therefore a brief description of this assembly should prove of interest to the reader.

The Dietines preceded the Diets proper: these were the district or provincial assemblies; they were composed of nobles, bishops, castellans, and magistrates, whose business it was to elect the deputies of the Diet and to regulate all local affairs. The number of deputies to the Diet varied according to the province and other circumstances.

The Diet was composed of the senators, the deputies from the various provinces, and the Palatines of the Republic. The expenses of the deputies were paid by the government and their persons were inviolable. The deputies assembled in a room called the *officina legum,* the laboratory of laws; the King and the senators participated only to a limited extent in the actual framing of the laws. The whole assembly then met to discuss and settle all public and political affairs. The Referendary of the Republic first read aloud the *pacta conventa,* the oath of the King, the decrees of the Senate, and a *resume* of the instructions given to the ambassadors. Then the Chancellor of the Republic explained the question upon which the assembly was called together to deliberate. Nominations for various posts followed. The articles voted by acclamation or unanimity became law, whilst those which did not receive the unanimous vote were held over until the next Diet. An ordinary Diet lasted for six weeks, and was convened every two years. At any moment, however, an extraordinary Diet could be convened. The most important Diet held was that of Election, when a new King was elected and placed upon the throne of the country.

Hauteville, in his account of Poland, gives a detailed and minute description of the *pacta conventa,* which we venture to think will interest the student:

“Of the *pacta conventa,* or the contract between the King and the people.

“The Poles are so fond of their liberty and so afraid of losing it that as soon as the King is elected they make him swear upon the altars to maintain all their privileges during his reign. This is usually called the *pacta conventa,* which is properly a contract between the King and the people, by which the former is obliged to preserve all the rights and immunities of the latter.

“According to the laws of Poland, this important ceremony ought to be performed before the King is proclaimed. Thus at the election of Henry of Valois, after they had rejected Ernest of Austria, the Emperor’s son, and confirmed the election of unanimity was required, and as distinguished from a Diet of confederacy, in which all business was carried on by the majority: the *liberum veto* was not only a negative upon any law but it had the power to dissolve the assembly. The privilege in question is not to be found in Polish history antecedent to the reign of John Casimir. It was under his administration in the year 1652 that Deputy Sicinski cried out: “I stop the proceedings,” and then quitted the assembly.

King Henry, John de Monluc, Bishop of Valence, that Prince’s ambassador, was obliged by the Senate to come to the Diet, where the conditions that were to be observed by his master,

the new King, were read in his presence. After which he took an oath in the name of Henry of Valois and his brother Charles IX duly to observe them. Then he was conducted to St. John's Church, where, after the celebration of the Mass, Henry was proclaimed King of Poland on May 18, 1573. And then the ambassadors who were sent by the Republic to offer the crown to King Henry obliged both him and his brother Charles to take the same oath at Paris, in the great hall of the palace, on September 10. This is the method prescribed by the law for swearing to keep the *pacta conventa,* yet this method is not always punctually observed, for both King Michael Wisnowiecki and King John Sobieski took the oath several days after their election at Warsaw upon the great altar of St. John's Church. The *pacta conventa,* or contract, is drawn up and methodised by the order of the Senate and nobility, after which the three orders go to church, where the Great Marshal reads the whole contract aloud; these are the principal articles:

"That the King shall not assume the quality or title of heir of Poland nor appoint any person to succeed him; but that, on the contrary, he shall inviolably preserve and maintain the laws and constitutions relating to the free election of a King,

"That he shall ratify all the treaties of peace made with foreign princes.

"That he shall make it his principal care to preserve the public quiet and tranquillity.

"That he shall not pretend to the rights of coining money, or deprive the Republic of the profits of the coinage.

"That without the consent of the Republic he shall neither declare war against any prince nor give orders for the levying of forces; and that without the same consent he shall neither bring any soldiers into the kingdom nor suffer any to go out of it.

"That he shall not introduce any strangers of what rank or quality soever into his Council; and that he shall not bestow any offices, dignities, or government upon them.

"That all the officers shall be Poles or Lithuanians, or at least natives of such provinces as depend upon the crown of Poland.

"That the officers of the Regiment of Guards shall be natives of Poland or Lithuania; that the colonel shall be a Polish gentleman, that he shall take an oath of fidelity to the Republic, and that all the officers shall be under the jurisdiction of the Marshals.

"That the King shall not marry without the consent of the Senate, according to the ancient laws of the kingdom, and that the train of attendants of the Princess whom he shall marry shall be regulated by the Senate.

"That he shall never make use of his private signet in affairs that concern the Republic.

"That for the preservation of his power and dignity he shall dispose of the offices both of the Republic and court (lest they should be either usurped or remain vacant), and that the number of them shall not be diminished.

"That he shall administer justice, according to the advice of the senators and councillors who attend upon him.

"That for the expenses of his table he shall only possess those revenues that were granted by the Republic to the Kings his predecessors, and that he shall only enjoy them for his life.

"That he shall not confer upon one person the offices or dignities which according to ancient laws ought not to be possessed by one man.

"That he shall take care, in the space of six weeks, to fill up all the vacant offices.

“That the first thing he shall do in the Diet shall be to dispose of the vacancies and to cause the Chancellor to publish them; and that in pursuance of the laws he shall only bestow them on Polish gentlemen who are persons of merit, of the age required by law, and of a staid and solid judgment.

“That he and his Council shall so regulate the troops, horse as well as foot, that the Republic may not stand in need of any foreign troops, nor be put to an unusual expense, and that the soldiers shall be satisfied with their pay and do no injury to the peasants.

“That he shall in no wise diminish the treasure at Cracow, but on the contrary shall endeavour to augment it.

“That he shall not borrow any money without the consent of the Republic.

“That if the exigencies of the State require naval forces, he shall not pretend to levy them without the approbation of the nobility and the advice of the Senate.

“And, finally, that all the rights, liberties, and privileges that have been justly and lawfully granted to the Poles and the Lithuanians, and to all the inhabitants of the provinces depending on them, and to all the cities, according to what has been ordained in the previous Diets, shall be inviolably kept and preserved, and that he shall issue his letters patent to confirm them in their clauses and conditions.

“They also frequently add other articles, according to the exigencies of the moment and the quality of circumstances of the elected Prince. As regards the ceremonies that are used when they make the King swear the capitulation: the Archbishop and the Marshal of the deputies carry it before him, and after Mass has been said, require him to take an oath to observe it according to his promise. Then the King, being on his knees before the Great Altar, says after the Chancellor:

“‘We, . . . chosen King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, Russia, Prussia, Moravia, Samogitia, Volhynia, Podolia, Livonia, Smolensk, Siberia, promise to Almighty God and swear upon the Holy Evangelists of Jesus Christ to observe, maintain, and accomplish all the conditions agreed upon at our election, by our ambassadors, with the senators and deputies of Poland, and of the Great Duchy of Lithuania, and confirmed by the oath of our ambassadors; and to perform the same according to the clauses, points, articles, and conditions mentioned therein, and in such sort that the speciality cannot derogate from the generality, nor the generality from the speciality. All which we promised to ratify by our oath on the day of our coronation.’

“After the King has sworn to keep the *pacta conventa,* the Chancellor gives him the decree of his election, written on parchment, and signed by the senators and deputies. The Republic of Poland uses these precautions at the elections of their King, so that if afterwards he should act contrary to what he promised to observe, the senators may have a right to remind him of his duty. It was the breach of one of these articles which gave the Poles cause to complain of their King Michael. For in the *pacta conventa,* which he swore to observe, had been inserted this article: ‘That he should not marry any Princess without the consent of the Republic.’ Nevertheless, without even asking their consent he married the Emperor’s sister, and the party formed against him found in this act sufficient ground upon which to compel him to abdicate.

“If the Prince who is elected be not present at Warsaw, he takes the oath in the presence of the deputies whom the Republic sends to him for that purpose; before them he obliges himself to observe all the articles of the capitulation. Thus it was that Sigismund III swore to

keep the *pacta conventa* as it was drawn up by the Senate and the nobility in the Abbey of Oliva near Danzig, anno 1587.

"It is the custom in Poland for the Great Marshal to carry the staff erect before the King when he goes to any ceremony: but it must be observed that during the time between his election and his coronation they carry the staff bowed down. When the King issues any letters, orders, or constitutions, he only assumes the title of King Elect, and no despatches can be sealed with any but the Little Seal of the Cabinet; this being a sign that the election is perfected by the coronation which is, as it were, the seal of it."

One can form some idea of the manner and method in which the crown of Poland was offered to the candidate chosen by the Diet from the address sent to Augustus II, Elector of Saxony, on his election to the throne of Poland. We quote the address from Hauteville:

"Has Poland not chosen a hero beloved of heaven and earth, a hero who won so many victories from the barbarians and who is laden with so many laurels? Has she not preferred Augustus before all the rest? Who, before he was chosen to occupy the vacant throne, so well deserved by his valour, fame, and eternal honour to fill it? Certainly we could never hope for comfort again, after so many calamities which we are no longer able to bear, if we had not the expectation that your reign will put an end to them. You have triumphed, most serene King, over the Turks, triumph now over the hearts of the Poles. Stretch forth over our crown your arms so well accustomed to vanquish the infidels. The people who give you their suffrages, give them to a Prince whom Rome looks upon as her defender, and Christendom as her bulwark; a Prince whose experience, policy, achievements, and so many victories cannot but gain the esteem of the world. And who can better rule a nation which has subdued so many countries, and is still famous for the preservation of her liberty, than your Majesty, Most Serene King, in whose Countenance and continu'd course of life, we behold that courage, and everything that is capable to draw Veneration to your *Person? Poland,* that has always been so Warlike and Nurs'd up on Armes from her Cradle, shall behold you imitating, if not surpassing the Heroic Actions of your Ancestors, endors'd with a partial Heart breathing only what the sublimest Bravery inspires into your Breast, and full of Majestic Sweetness. She will admire your Generosity and all those sweet Royal Manners, that must needs force the World to confess that 'tis only in your Breast that Majesty Resides.

"Lastly, She will behold and admire You, not only for your Natural Endowments, and those Rare *Perfections* You have Acquired in Your Illustrious family, and in Climates where Your Valour has been signalised, but for Your Embracing our Religion. This is that Light which renders Heaven Serene, and dissipated those Clouds and Tempests which at first obscur'd your Free Election. Most fortunate Prince, You have Rejoyc'd the Holy City; You have paid your Ancient Mother the Honour due to Her and *Saxony* is become by Your Change of Religion a thousand times more Illustrious than by Your perpetual Victories. By abandoning the Errours of your Country, You have found Crowns among Foreigners. There were several Competitors, Excellent Princes, and of great Worth, who aspir'd to the Crown of Poland, but none of 'em who had Heaven a sharer in the Contest. You only were the Person who began with God, and for Your *Premium* carry'd the Prize of that Faith which you had Recover'd. That thing once confirm'd to us, we gave you our Free Suffrages with all our hearts and have Proclaimed You to Reign over us. We are Ignorant whether You will or will not be our King, but are Assur'd that You are Valiant, Warlike, Affable, Pious, Catholic, and give You our Hearts, our Prayers, our Tongues, and all we have in the World. Our Republic, not Your own, whose Fame is so far spread, Venerates, Loves Your Person with an Entire Affection, and desires Your Presence, as one whom She has chosen for her King, or rather as one whom God Himself has Chosen, and whom we as Frankly and Freely Receive. What we have done,

not in the Dark, but in the View of Heaven, this Day we here Confirm by these letters. We invite Your Majesty, after Your having been Proclaimed, not by Tumultuous Factions, nor by the Fury of Inconsiderate Rashness, or that we had put our Crown to Sale, but by the Unbyass'd Wishes and Desires of the People, who invite Your Majesty with a Profound Sincerity of Heart, and an Ardency of Desire not to be expressed. Come then, Blessed Prince, since God has so decreed it, since *Poland* so Earnestly Desires it, since *Rome* Rejoyces at it, since *Germany* approves the Choice, since *Europe* applauds it; since all the World, the Barbarians only excepted, send up their loudest Acclamation to Heaven in testimony of their Content. Christendom is preparing for Your Majesty's immortal Renown, *Asia* her spoils, and *Poland* a crown invironed with Laurels. May all Yom Undertakings prosper: appear in the midst of us and Reign over us. And as for my Self in particular, how happy am I, upon the Frontiers of my country, and at the head of this noble Embassy to give Your Majesty the same suffrages, which I had given you before the Field of *Mars.* How happy am I to have been chosen to bring You the Tydings of Your being Proclaim'd. 'Tis so great an Honour for a noble *Polonian* that he could not wish a greater. Now then, after we have thus congratulated Your Majesty, we will return and spread the report of Your Fame amongst our Brethren. We will bless ourselves for what we have seen, we will Publish what You are and how great our Hopes in so illustrious a Prince. Lastly, we will declare Your Glory among the Nations and all the East shall be told of Your Majesty."

Such was the political life of Poland until the year 1772.

The Inhabitants

The inhabitants of Poland may be divided into four, or rather five, denominations, namely: nobles, clergy, citizens or burghers, peasants, and Jews. The nobles had a share in the legislation of the country, were alone entitled to wear a sword, but were not allowed to engage in commerce or any industry. In the Polish laws, "nobles were all those who possessed a freehold estate, or could prove their descent from ancestors formerly possessing a freehold; who followed no trade or commerce and were free to choose the place of their habitation." All the nobles were equal by birth and each of them could aspire to the throne. An interesting description of the nobles of Poland is given by Bernard Connor, who was physician to King John Sobieski:

"We come now to speak of the nobility of Poland, which comprehends all the gentry in that country and even all those whom in England we style only freeholders. Of these every gentleman or nobleman has his coat of arms granted by the Republic; but then he, or some of his family, must have an estate in land. They are capable of the greatest offices in the kingdom and may buy lands where they please, and have a right to be elected King, if their credit and interest can procure it. Every gentleman is a sovereign Prince on his own lands, and has power of life and death over his tenants, who have no laws or privileges to protect them. They dare not leave his lands to go to others on pain of death, unless he sells them; and if he die, his tenants pass with his lands. But if their lords ravish their wives or daughters the tenants may leave his service. All the gentry of Poland are equal by birth, and therefore they do not value titles of honour, but think that of a noble Pole or gentleman of Poland the greatest they can have. Neither the King nor the Republic bestow the title of Prince, which belongs only to the sons of the royal family; for some are made Princes of the Empire and as such enjoy the title of Prince. They have no precedence upon that account. Nor have they any Dukes, Marquises, Counts, Viscounts, or Barons, but a few have foreign titles which the rest generally despise; for they do not value any borrowed character or external denomination, but say that it is intrinsic worth and service done to their country that deserves preferment. King Sigismund II established an Order of Knighthood of the Immaculate Conception, created

several Knights and allowed them privileges and superiority above others, but they were so much undervalued and despised by the rest of the gentlemen that the Order (in spite of the royal protection) soon came to nothing. Those great privileges made the Polish gentry very powerful."

There is hardly a country in the world where two million nobles enjoyed such liberty in theory as well as in reality. The abuse, however, of the freedom acquired by the nobility - a freedom and a power which, if well balanced and judiciously exercised, could and should have made Poland one of the mightiest Republics in Europe - led to her decay and downfall.

The Clergy

In 966, when Mieczyslaw embraced Christianity, he granted several immunities and estates to the Polish clergy. His example was followed by his successors and the rich nobles, so that the riches of the clergy increased to such a considerable extent that the Diet forbade, by different laws, especially by one passed in 1669, the alienation of lands to the Church. From the time of the first establishment of the Catholic religion by Cardinal Egidus, nuntio of Pope John XII, the bishops had a seat in the Senate. They were appointed by the King and confirmed by the Pope. The ecclesiastics had their own courts of justice, which were: the Consistorial, under the jurisdiction of the bishop of the diocese; the Metropolitan, under the primate, to which one could appeal from the bishop's court; and lastly that of the nuntio, which was the supreme ecclesiastical judicature within the kingdom. In cases of divorce the parties had to apply to the Pope. In most civil affairs the clergy were tried by the ordinary courts of justice, whilst in criminal cases they were at first arrested by the civil authorities, then judged in the consistory and, if convicted, handed over to the civil authorities again to be punished. The clergy were also exempt from paying any taxes, but this exemption was later annulled, so that the ecclesiastics were taxed in the same manner as the laity, with the difference that their contributions were called charitable subsidies instead of taxes.

The Burghers

About the year 1250, during the reign of Boleslaw the Timid (or the Chaste), the privilege of exercising municipal jurisdiction was granted to Cracow, and later on to several towns in Poland: these were the privileges possessed by the German cities. This set of rights was called in the statutes of Poland *JusMagdeburgicum et Teutonicum.* In the thirteenth and the following centuries many cities were built, and to all of them a charter of incorporation was granted. The burghers enjoyed their privileges during the rule of the Yagello family, but when the crown became wholly elective, the nobles endeavoured to encroach on these privileges of the burghers. The burghers possessed the following immunities: they could elect their own burgomaster and council; could regulate their interior police and had their own criminal courts of justice, which decided without appeal. Tradesmen and artisans were included among the burghers, some of whom became very rich and enjoyed considerable influence.

The Peasants

We have already referred above to the classes of peasants: the free and the bondmen. The first were known as Kmethos. The slavery of Polish peasants was always very rigorous. Until the reign of Casimir the Great, the lord could put the peasant to death with impunity, but in 1347 Casimir the Great prescribed a fine for the murder of a peasant. The reforms of Casimir by which he endeavoured to alleviate the miseries and sufferings of the peasants proved, however, ineffectual against the tyranny of the nobles, who constantly strove to enslave the lower classes, especially the peasants. In the statutes of Poland there were over one hundred clauses unfavourable to the latter. They were at the absolute disposal of their masters and had

scarcely any security, either for their properties or their lives. It was only in 1768 that a decree was passed declaring the murder of a peasant a capital crime; but even then the condemnation of the murderer was a rare occurrence. Some of the nobles, however, were generous and enlightened, and gave liberty to their vassals; the first Polish noble who granted liberty to his peasants was Pan Zamoiski, who freed six villages in the Palatinate of Masovia in 1760.

The Jews

The Jews have formed, and still form, a considerable part of the inhabitants of Poland. They came to the country during the tenth century and the first charter was granted to the Jews of Poland by Boleslaw II in 1264. Casimir the Great renewed and amplified their privileges. Some say that the monarch was prompted in his generosity by his Jewish favourite Esther, but there is no doubt that Casimir the Great, besides being a just and generous man, had also the welfare of his country at heart. John Sobieski, the rescuer of Vienna and one of Poland's greatest men, ardently approved of Casimir's policy; he extended his favour to the Jews to such an extent that they called his administration a Jewish Junto. After the death of John Sobieski, an old law of Sigismund I was revived and inserted in the *pacta conventa* of Augustus II that no Jew or person of low birth could farm the royal revenues.

X. A Brief Sketch of Polish Civilisation and the Development of Literature

Civilisation may be said to have begun in Poland with the introduction of Catholicism, which took place in the eighth century. The Slavs, being close neighbours of Italy and the Byzantine Empire, received Christianity together with literature and art from these two sources, especially from the cities of Rome and Constantinople. Free Poland soon became the centre and foyer of science, art, and literature in the North of Europe. “The Polish language,” says M. Chodzko in his monumental work on Poland, “is superior to the other northern idioms, and therefore Poland occupies the first place in the history of civilisation of the Slav peoples.” Poland, it must be admitted by all, has always been in the vanguard of liberalism and progress, and those Poles who now propagate intolerance, selfishness, and persecution against equally oppressed races are unfaithful to the true and traditional spirit of the ancient chivalrous and generous Poland, which was rightly styled the “Knight among the nations.” In the tenth century, when the entire nation, following the example of their King Mieczys-law, embraced Christianity, theologians were invited to Poland from Italy, France, and Germany, who brought with them all the science and knowledge available at that period.

Boleslaw the Great, at the beginning of the eleventh century, encouraged the spread of science and art, and by founding the Benedictine Order at Sieciechova, Tynec, and Lysa Gora, he gave a new stimulus to the propagation of instruction and education. The work of the monks and the constant communication with the Latin races, and an acquaintance with the latter’s social life, enabled the Poles to acquire all that was actually known in those days of the ancient literatures of Hellas and Rome. In the eleventh century books were not rare in Poland and numerous were the MSS. which existed in the country. In the twelfth century there were as many flourishing schools and public libraries in Poland as in Italy, and the Slavonic youth showed its ardour to learn and to study by frequenting, in large numbers, the great seats of learning in France and Italy. The most famous authors of this period were Mathieu Choleva and Martin Gallus, the first historian of Poland, who wrote between 1110 and 1135. During the thirteenth century Poland passed through a great crisis: her very national existence was in danger, and it was only saved by the labours of the clergy, who translated the history of the country into the vernacular and taught it in the schools. Other famous men of this period were: Vitelio, a great mathematician and physicist; Vincent Kadhibek and Martin Strezepski (who is also known as Martinus Polonus), the historians.

Vladyslaw Lokietek inaugurated in the fourteenth century an era of great prosperity in Poland. He was the patron and protector of science. Poles at that time greatly frequented the Universities of Padua, Bologna, and Paris, where many of the professors were their compatriots; such were Jean Grot and Nicholas of Cracovie. In 1347, the year in which Casimir the Great promulgated the famous statutes of Wislica, he also founded the University of Cracow, which is the most ancient seat of learning in Northern Europe, that of Prague having been founded in 1360, that of Vienna in 1365, and that of Leipzig in 1404. The schools and colleges were reorganised and the University of Cracow became the national centre of learning; it was modelled on that of Paris, and just as in the latter city science was taught in Latin. It was also at this time that the great national monument was completed: I refer to the translation of the Bible into Polish - it was done for Queen Hedwig, the niece of Casimir the Great, who was herself distinguished for her love of the arts and of science as well as for her other virtues. A new era of historical study was opened up by the famous

Dlugosz (born in 1405), who was the tutor of the two sons of Casimir IV. Dlugosz, was the author of the famous *Histories Polonicale.* During the reigns of John Albert and Alexander, the zeal and ardour of the nobles for instruction was so great that it was rare to meet one who did not speak three or four languages. Poland was in those days, in very truth, the " cradle of scholars," that Erasmus called her. The sixteenth century was a very brilliant one for Poland; from a literary and scientific point of view, it may be compared to the age of Louis XIV in France. Thanks to the many favourable circumstances and the liberal foundations, the high schools had become the cradle of a race of learned and illustrious men. The University of Cracow could no longer accommodate the numerous flock of students who came from every part of the kingdom, therefore high schools were founded in Posen, Leopol, and other towns.

In these days, the bishops, magistrates, and senators owed their dignities entirely to their talents; the son of a nobleman or the son of a peasant were sure of exactly the same welcome if their ability warranted any attention. The historian Kromer was the son of a peasant; the poet Danticus, whom the Emperor Maximilian so greatly admired that he placed the poetic crown upon his head, was the son of a brewer. Both these scholars were, in succession, bishops with the title of Prince of the Church. The characteristics which distinguish this period of Polish literature are simplicity, lucidity, and earnestness. In 1520, the Polish language had reached a very high point, and indeed in every way Poland had become the forerunner of progress and intellectual development. The country became the recognised refuge and haven of rest for all who were tossed about on the ocean of exile for their political or religious beliefs. On the banks of the Vistula and the Niemen, one could meet refugees from Germany, Spain, Sweden, Italy, and England. The Polish laws guaranteed to every one freedom of rites or religion. At that time religion was accepted as a sacred mission in Poland; even Catholicism found it possible to reconcile its staunch opposition to the Protestant reform with true tolerance. When the envoys of Poland went to Paris to offer the crown to Henry of Valois, the French court was greatly surprised at the elegance with which the envoys expressed themselves in Latin, French, Italian, and German, for there were but two men at the court of the Valois who could reply in the language of Cicero. In the sixteenth century no less than eighty towns in Poland had their own printing presses, and in Cracow alone there were more than sixty. The first printing press in Poland was established in 1474. Among the celebrated scholars of this period we shall quote Nicholas Copernicus, born in Thorn in 1473, and who caused a complete revolution in our knowledge of astronomy (he died in 1543); Stanislaus Hosius, famous for his controversial works, was born at Cracow on April 8, 1504, and was made a cardinal by Pope Pius IV; Martin Kromer, the Titus Livius of Poland, and the son of a peasant, was born in 1512 and died in 1589; Stanislaus Orzechowski, who was born in 1513 and published over fifty works; the poet Clement Janicki, who was born in 1516 and was crowned at the age of twenty by Pope Clement VII - his poetry has been compared to that of Tibullus and Catullus. John Kochanovski (1532-1584) was one of the greatest writers of Poland and greatly developed the richness and elegance of his native tongue, although at first he had written in Latin. The Polish language then became classic and was used on all the occasions of ceremony where formerly only Latin or perhaps Russian had been employed. Another Polish writer who raised the prose style of the language was Peter Skarga, a Jesuit priest who delivered elegantly written sermons before the Diet and "told his people their sins and to the sons of Poland their transgressions." He criticised the vices and faults of his compatriots and conjured them to better their ways, otherwise Poland's downfall would surely and swiftly follow.

During the seventeenth century Poland was engaged in the wars with the Turks, the Russians, and the Swedes; she was a vast battle-field and so counted more valiant soldiers than writers or *litterateurs* among her people. However, the advent of the Jesuits, who so Latinised the

Polish language as to make it almost unrecognisable, may have tended to hamper the development of national prose and poetry. During the eighteenth century everything French was *d la mode,* and Corneille, Racine, Moliere, and Boileau found many imitators in Poland.

After the Partition of Poland all literary as well as political life was at an absolute standstill, for many of her most able sons had either perished or been sent into exile in Siberia. The Renaissance of Poland took place in the eighteenth century. Although the country had lost her independence "she was not dead," as the legions under Dombrovski sang, and the Poles, not unlike the Jews, although deprived of their territory and political existence, then and since, manifested their vitality in the arts, science, and literature. Romanticism flourished in Poland as in Prance. Adam Mickiewitz (1798-1855), the famous author of *Pan Tadeusz,* which is considered his masterpiece, Slowacko, and Krasinski are near intellectual relatives of Byron, of Victor Hugo, of Schiller, and of Goethe. The creator of the modern novel in Poland is Kraszewski.

One should also mention the Ukrainian poet, Bogdan Zaleski, whose verses breathe the very spirit of melancholy and the sadness of the steppes. Comedy was introduced into Poland by Count Alexander Fredro (1793-1876), who was, to a great extent, influenced by Moliere. The greatest Polish historian of the nineteenth century is considered to have been Joachim Relewell (1786-1861). Among the numerous writers of modern Poland we shall only mention, as it hardly enters within the scope of this little book to do more, the names of Rlisa Orszesko, Przybyszewski, and Henry Sienkievicz, the famous author of *Quo Vadis?* Polish literature, as a whole, is rich and varied; during the period from the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth centuries it was wholly under the Latin sway, yet, with Mickiewitz, it became national, original, and flourishing.

A Few Great Events in the History of Poland in Chronological Order

Mieczyslaw I embraces Christianity, 965.

Jordan, the first bishop, 968.

Poland made a kingdom, 1001.

Murder of St. Stanislaus, Bishop of Cracow, by Boleslaw II, 1079.

Poland a Duchy, 1079-1295.

Poland divided into governments, 1139.

Reforms of Casimir the Just, 1180.

The Assembly of Leczyca, 1180.

The invasion of the Tartars, 1241.

Poland again a kingdom, 1295.

Alliance with the Lithuanians, 1325.

Casimir the Great, his reforms, the Code of Wislica, 1347

Court of Appeal at Cracow, 1354.

The Yagellos ascend the throne of Poland, 1386.

Lithuania converted to Christianity, 1387.

Wars with the Teutonic Knights, Battle of Gruenwald, 1410.

Wars with the Turks, the famous Battle of Varna, 1444.

Deputies elected to the Diet, power of the nobility increased, 1468.

Origin of the House of Brandenburg, abolition of the Teutonic Order; Albert of Brandenburg created Prince of Eastern Prussia and made feudatory to Poland, 1525.

Religious dissensions, the Reformation, 1552.

Poland acquires Livonia, 1561.

The Diet of Lublin, 1569.

The Synod of Brzesc, 1595.

Wars with Russia, 1634.

Sicinski exercises the *liberum veto* for the first time, 1651.

The Cossack wars, Bogdan, Khmielnitski, 1654.

Little Russia becomes a Russian possession, 1654.

The peace of Andruszovo, 1667.

John Sobieski rescues Vienna, 1683.

Kamieniec Podolsk (taken by the Turks in 1672) restored to Poland, 1699.

Warsaw and Cracow taken by Charles XII, 1702.

The Diet of Grodno, 1718.

The blood bath of Thorn, 1718.

The Synod of Zamosd; Greek and Latin Churches, united, 1720.

Loss of Courland, 1758.

The Confederacy of Bar, 1768.

First Partition of Poland, 1772.

Second Partition of Poland, 1793.

Kosciuszko; rising of the Poles, 1793.

Warsaw taken by Souvarov, 1794.

Annihilation of the Republic; Third Partition; Abdication of Poniatowski at Grodno, 1795.

The Poles in France, 1797.

Grand Duchy of Warsaw, 1807.

The Congress of Vienna, 1815.

Kingdom of Poland restored, 1815.

Public discontent in Poland, 1819.

The Polish insurrection, 1830.

Rebellion in Galicia, 1846.

The Crimean War, 1856.

The Second Polish insurrection, 1860-1863.

Kings of Poland

Legendary Rulers

Lech I, about the middle of the sixth century.

Lech II, son of the former.

Wanda, about 750.

Lesko I, towards the end of the eighth century.

Lesko II, 804-810.

Lesko III, 810-815.

Popiel I, 815.

Popiel II, 842,

Piast, 861.

Ziemovit I.

Lesko IV, 892-921.

Zemomysl, 921-962.

Polish Kings since 962

Mieczyslaw I (Mesko), 962-992

Boleslaw I, the Brave (Chobry), 992-1025.

Mieczyslaw II, 1025-1034.

Casimir I, the Restorer, 1040-1058.

Bloeslaw II, the Bold (Smaly), 1058-1079.

Vladyslaw I, 1079-1102.

Boleslaw III, the Wrymouthed, 1102-1138.

Vladyslaw II, 1138-1146.

Boleslaw IV, the Curly (Kedzerawy), 1146-1173.

Mieczyslaw III, 1173-1177.

Casimir II, the Just (Sprawedliwy), 1177-1194.

Leszek the White and Mieczyslaw III (alternately), 1194-1202.

Vladyslaw III, Longshanks (Laskonogi), 1202-1206.

Leszek the White restored, 1206-1227.

Boleslaw V, the Modest (Wstydliwy), 1227-1279.

Leszek the Black (Camy), 1279-1288.

Anarchy, 1288-1295.

Boleslaw, Prince of Masuria, Henry IV, Prince of Breslau,Vladyslaw IV, Prince of Sieradz, 1289-1292.

Przemyslaw, Prince of Pomerania, 1295-1296.

Vladyslaw IV, the Short (Lokietek), 1297-1300.

Wenceslaw I, Prince of Bohemia, 1300-1305.

Vladyslaw Lokietek (restored), 1305-1333.

Casimir the Great, 1333-1370.

Louis, King of Hungary, 1370-1382.

Interregnum, 1382-1384.

Hedwig or Yadwiga, 1384-1386.

Vladyslaw II, Yagello (together with Hedwig) 1386-1399

Vladyslaw II, Yagello (alone), 1399-1434.

Vladyslaw III (Warnenczyk), King of Hungary, 1434-1444.

Casimir IV, 1447-1492.

John Albert, 1492-1501.

Alexander, 1501-1506.

Sigismund I, 1506-1548.

Sigismund II, Augustus, 1548-1572.

Interregnum, 1572-1573.

Henry of Valois, 1573-1574.

Interregnum, 1574-1576.

Stephen Batory, 1576-1586.

Interregnum, 1586-1587.

Sigismund III, Vasa, 1587-1632.

Vladyslaw IV, 1632-1648.

John Casimir, 1648-1668.

Interregnum, 1668-1669.

Michael Korybut, 1669-1673.

Interregnum, 1673-1674.

John III, Sobieski, 1674-1696.

Interregnum, 1696-1697.

Augustus II, Elector of Saxony, 1697-1733.

Interregnum, I733~i735-

Stanislaus Eeszczynski ruled from 1706-1709 and from 1733-1734

Augustus III, Elector of Saxony, 1735-1763.

Stanislaus Poniatowski, 1764-1795.

THE END

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