OUTLINES OF POLISH HISTORY



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by

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE present lectures, like those on Polish Literature, published in two volumes by the Oxford University Press (1923–1924), were originally delivered at King's College, in the University of London, under the auspices of the School of Slavonic Studies. They were put into book form with a view to supplying to the reading public of the English-speaking countries such information as might be called for concerning the historical antecedents of one of the "new States" of post-war Europe.

Poland differs from some of them by being not a new but indeed a very old State, which suffered the unique fate of disappearing from the map for over a hundred years, to reappear on it again in our own days. In writing the history of the old Poland and its fall, as well as that of modern Poland's captivity and political resurrection, the author has made efforts to keep clear of the two opposite extremes of apologetic optimism on the one hand and critical pessimism on the other. While at one time the partitions of Poland were ascribed by historians entirely to the inward faults of her political and social system, nowadays the greatness of some of the old Poland's achievements, both in foreign policy and constitutional organisation, is more fully realised; the reforming zeal of the nation during the last decades before the final partitions is duly honoured; and the blame for Poland's fall is more evenly distributed between the rapacity of her powerful neighbours and her own errors. As regards captive Poland's repeated struggles for independence in the nineteenth century, it is admitted to-day that, while sometimes wanting in that sense of reality which constitutes political wisdom, they certainly include much valuable constructive effort as well as an abundance of

self-sacrificing heroism; and throughout the record, the unconquerable national vitality of the Polish race is apparent as a fundamental fact which has successfully stood the test of all the fires of history.

The history of Poland has been told in a number of monumental works in Polish, such as the recent co-operative *History of Poland*, now being published in a series of volumes by the Polish Academy at Cracow as part of its large *Polish Encyclopaedia*. The bibliography of Polish history itself fills a huge work by the late Professor L. Finkel, of Lwów, now published in a second edition. The present writer, in his labours of selection, omission and compression, has been guided and assisted by several existing brief manuals of the subject in Polish, including two most brilliant ones, each in three slender volumes, by his Cracow colleagues W. Sobieski and J. Dąbrowski. Nor must it pass unmentioned that in the course of the preparation of the second edition of these lectures, a standard work on Polish history, the *Dzieje Polski* of Professor M. Bobrzyński (2 vols., 1877; 4th ed., 1927), was completed, in its honoured author's extreme but still vigorous old age, by a third volume (1931), covering the period between 1795 and 1923. Embodying the rich and long experience of one who has been both a scholar and a statesman in his time, this great work, with its grave warning lessons from the past, will no doubt fulfil in the life of resurrected Poland, for more than one generation, the useful function defined by the ancient adage *Historia magistra vitae*.

In the present book, which is to serve English-speaking readers as a first introduction to the subject, bibliographical references have only been made to studies in Polish history written in English. The number of such publications having increased of late years, the bibliography appears in considerably enlarged form in this second

edition of the book. Otherwise, the second edition differs from the first mainly by certain additions to the last chapter, which now carries the record of events in Poland down to the beginning of 1931.

R. D.

The University of Cracow, Poland
Easter 1931

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PART I

THE POLISH STATE FROM ITS RISE TO THE PARTITIONS

(962–1795)

LECTURE I

EARLY EXPANSION AND TERRITORIAL DIVISION

I

SLAVONIC nations play a distinct part in Europe as early as the seventh century of our era, but it is not till the tenth that a Polish State emerges into the light of history. It appears at a time when two neighbouring Slavonic States are also consolidating for good: a Russian one, which in that period centres in the South, round the town of Kiev; and a Czech one, which inherits part of a large and short-lived Moravian Empire of the ninth century. The fourth Slavonic State, Serbia, in the South, only became emancipated from foreign control somewhat later, in the eleventh century; the fifth, Bulgaria, had arisen earlier, in the ninth, out of a nation of Asiatic invaders who adopted Slavonic speech and custom, after waging ruinous war on the Slavs for two centuries.

It was such invasions by Eastern nations from Asia which were the decisive factor that prompted Slavonic tribes to organise into larger political communities. The recurrent tide of Asiatic invasions began with the Huns in the fourth century, and ended in the tenth with the Magyars, who ultimately drove in a wedge between the Northern and Southern Slavs, to remain as the Hungary of to-day. Another invading tribe, the Avars, who had come earlier, were only checked on the threshold of Western Europe by Charlemagne, the founder of a mighty Franconian monarchy out of Teutonic peoples. That empire, after its break-up, was replaced on the

Slavonic border by a united Germany, henceforward the common foe of Slavdom. To the pressure of invasions from the East there was now added that of invasion from the West, because the Carolingian monarchy and the later Germany inherited from the old Roman Empire the policy of military colonisation, and erected bulwarks for itself against the East in the Slavonic borderlands, whose inhabitants were subjected or exterminated with ruthless resolution.

Under such double stress, both from East and West, sometimes whole Slavonic nations perished, even after they had formed States. Such was the fate of the Wendish Kingdom in the eleventh century, on the ruins of which the German principality of Brandenburg was built up. Sometimes it was Teutonic invaders themselves who became the political organisers of Slavonic States, as in the case of the early Russian Empire, with its Norman dynasty of Scandinavian origin.

II

But it was another influence, coming from abroad, which definitely brought Slavs into the pale of common medieval civilisation and the European political system. That influence was the Christian religion.

The way in which Christianity came among the pagan Slavs determined the momentous question whether a united Slav world was to appear on the European scene and oppose its solid block to the united German power. The introduction of different forms of Christianity established a division among Slavs, which deepened in the course of ages, and separates them to-day. Following the breaking-up of the later Roman Empire into an Eastern and a Western one, Christianity, by the time it reached the Slavs, was splitting up into two branches.

One of these, the Roman Catholic Church, inherited the imperial genius and intellectual culture of ancient Rome, while the other one became associated in its fortunes and in its structure, in its spirit and in its traditions, with the hardening absolutism of the Greek emperors at Byzantium, or Constantinople. It became even distinguished outwardly from the Roman Church by the use of Slavonic speech in ritual, instead of Latin, and by the introduction of an alphabet, based not on the Western Latin, but on Greek characters.

Byzantine and Roman Christianity henceforward confront each other within the Slavonic group of peoples. The distinction extends far beyond Church organisation or literary culture, into the domains of political development and national character. It lies at the root of the agelong antagonisms and deep temperamental difference between such Slavonic neighbours as the Russians and the Poles, or, in a lesser degree, the Serbs and the Croats.

The Czechs, after an early conversion to Byzantine Christianity, were ultimately drawn into the orbit of Rome, and Poland received the Roman religion from them at the marriage of its first historical ruler to a Czech princess. This was due to the fact that the Western branch of the Slavonic group, composed of Poles and Czechs together, was separated, by the intrusion of the Magyars, from Byzantium, the seat of Eastern Christianity. At first this placed Poles and Czechs at a disadvantage as compared with Serbians, Bulgarians and Russians, who profited by the treasures of Greek culture, inherited by the Byzantine Empire. And connection with Rome also meant a preponderating influence of Roman Catholic Germany. But later on, Byzantium decayed, to be ultimately swallowed by the tide of Islam, and, on the other hand, Rome progressed in intellectual power and

achieved success in political struggles with the German monarchs. In the altered circumstances produced by these later developments the Roman connection of Poland, as well as of the Czech Kingdom, and also of Hungary, told in favour of joint advance in civilisation together with the whole Western world.

III

The earliest history of the Polish State is wrapt, like that of others, in a mist of legends. Some of them are met with in other European countries as well—like the story of Prince Krak, the dragon-killer and founder of the town of Cracow, or Prince Popiel, who was devoured by swarms of mice. Some others are common property of the romantic poetry of Western medieval nations—like the story of the brave Walter and his foreign wife Hildgund. Another one yet, the legend of Princess Wanda, who drowned herself to escape a German marriage, has been frequently treated by modern Polish poets, and has acquired the dignity of a national allegory. There is one, finally, which is evidently allegorical, even in its original form: the story of the peasant prince Piast, a farmer and wheelmaker, who becomes the founder of the first Polish dynasty, and whose figure symbolises the peasant strength of an agricultural nation.

All these legends centre round two rivers: the Vistula, which is the principal artery of central Poland throughout history, and its Western tributary the Warta, which waters the old Western province of Poland, that was to hold its own against Prussian rule so bravely in our own days. It is these regions, then, on the banks of the Vistula and the Warta, which form the nucleus of the oldest historical Poland, and they are the principal

possessions of the earliest authentically recorded ruler, Miesco I (962–992). His empire grew to considerable size, extending as far as the mouth of the River Oder in the North-West; but he had still to do homage to the German Emperor, and was not well able to hold his own against aggressive Slavonic neighbours, either the Czechs on the one hand or the Russians on the other. He sought support in Hungary, which by that time was a Christian State, and he formed alliances with Sweden and Denmark by dynastic marriages. But self-help proved a better source of strength under his great successor, Boleslas the Brave (992–1025), who drove a German stepmother and her sons out of the country, fought Germans, Czechs and Russians victoriously in many long wars, and extended Poland's frontiers over the provinces known in our days as Eastern Galicia in the East and Silesia in the West, while he gained a strong foothold on the Baltic shore in the North, and added the Slovak country, beyond the Carpathian Mountains, to Poland in the South. It was due to the genius of this ruler, then, that about the year 1000 the historical Poland as a large State really arose. His victorious expeditions at different times ranged as far as the town of Kiev in the South-East (then the capital of Russia), and the River Elbe in the West (then still flowing through Slavonic territory); and he not only created a large empire, but also organised its political administration on a basis of absolute monarchy and feudal class division. A standing army of 20,000 knights and an extensive system of taxation gave strength and means to conduct a resolute imperial policy.

IV

The chief power which held the empire of Boleslas the Brave together was, after all, the great king's personality.

When that was gone, a period of rapid decay inevitably set in: Poland was not only deprived of all her border provinces, but threatened by utter extinction. A peasant revolt, coupled with a reaction of the remnants of paganism against Christianity, plunged the country into anarchy. Jealousy between the Germans and the Czechs saved Poland from perishing at the hands of either the one or the other of these neighbours, and the foundations laid by the great Boleslas finally reappeared from under a passing wave of invasions and insurrections.[1] Administrative order was re-established, and civilised institutions were patiently rebuilt by the peaceful king, Casimir I (1034–1058), justly called "the Restorer," and the wide frontiers Poland had acquired under the first heroic Boleslas were won back by his equally heroic great-grandson, Boleslas II, called the Bold (1058–1079), the first Polish king permanently residing in Poland's medieval capital, Cracow. By interference in the dynastic quarrels of the Hungarian, Czech and South Russian kingdoms, he asserted Polish influence in these neighbouring countries, and by giving aid to the German Emperor's adversaries he successfully defied his power; in this he was morally supported by the Pope, Gregory VII, then at strife with the Emperor, Henry IV. But once more was the rising authority of Poland in the international affairs of Eastern Europe to suffer a check. A bishop, intriguing with revolted nobles against the king—St. Stanislas of Cracow—was murdered by him at the altar, like Thomas à Becket by Henry II in England, and the greatest power in the medieval world—the Church—triumphed over the State, as it did so often in other countries at that time. The royal murderer ended his days in exile, and under a weaker brother, who followed him, the reconquered might of the Polish State decayed for a second time; the ambition of a powerful

favourite almost led to the overthrow of the dynasty, and division and civil war ensued. It seems as if Poland's good fortune in that early period was bound up with the name of Boleslas, for a third valiant king of that name, surnamed the Wry-Mouthed (1102–1138), once more restored unity and power against foreign intervention and attempts at dismemberment. The memory of a crushing defeat he inflicted on the Germans near Breslau, in Silesia, is supposed to live in the name of a small town in that neighbourhood called "Dogsfield" (Hundsfeld). The authority of Poland was asserted against Czech interference by repeated expeditions into the very heart of the Czech Kingdom. But the king's principal endeavours were directed, with a right sense for the vital necessities of the Polish State, at the aim of securing for Poland a broad stretch of Baltic shore about the mouths of the Vistula and the Oder. This end was attained by prolonged struggles, with the help of the Danish ally, and places so entirely beyond Slavonic boundaries now as the town of Stettin at the mouth of the Oder and the island of Rügen opposite to it, then both inhabited by Slavonic tribes, became subject to Polish overlordship. This, however, was far from being the end of Poland's agelong struggles for her indispensable outlet on the Baltic Sea. The mouth of the Oder was to be soon lost once more, and for good; it became thoroughly Germanised; for the mouth of the Vistula there were to be more long wars, and East of it the German element was to obtain a permanent foothold, which it possesses to-day in East Prussia.

V

Not only with regard to that vital problem of an outlet on the sea, but also in other directions, the renewed conquests of the third Boleslas were not lasting. In fact,

this third attempt at Polish empire-building on a large scale was once more to be followed by a period of eclipse, when the man who was the soul of it vanished from the scene; and the eclipse was more durable and more dark this time. More impulsive by temperament even than any of his predecessors, Boleslas III marred his achievements, in dying, by a division of his empire between four sons, with provisions for the feudal sovereignty of the oldest one over the rest. This was then the dynastic practice in both neighbouring States, Russia and the Czech Kingdom. But in both of them it had led to endless domestic broils, and in Poland the result could not but be the same. For two centuries and more—best part of the twelfth, the whole thirteenth, and one-third of the fourteenth—Poland exists only as a group of warring principalities: the Grand Ducal Seat of Cracow is always contested, and the authority of the Grand Duke over the other regional princes never recognised. Nor is this the only source of calamities: another permanent scourge of Poland makes its terrible appearance, in the shape of Tartar invasions, which henceforward will periodically sweep the country, and especially its South-Eastern border provinces, for half a thousand years nearly. The first Tartar inroad, in 1241, actually devastated the whole of Poland, and its tide broke only on the confines of Germany, turning aside into Hungary and finally back into the East on the news of the death of the great Khan. From that terrible year onward ever-renewed defensive fights against the Tartars, and in course of time also against the Turks, become a constant feature of Polish history; the battleground of the steppes on the Ukrainian border is the school of Polish chivalry; the "Tartar dance," as it was called, is the training of the nation's youth, and the dignity of a bulwark of Christian civilisation the chief object of national honour and ambition.

VI

But yet another, and even more dangerous, enemy to Poland arises in definite shape and grows in power during this stormy and calamitous period. The agelong and instinctive "pressure Eastward" of the German element—the "Drang nach Osten," as German historians have described it—led to the absorption, in the eleventh century, of the Slavonic territories now forming the Eastern half of Germany. The German danger, having reached the doors of Poland proper, became embodied, with regard to Poland herself and her smaller neighbours in that period, in the menacing form of a German military organisation of religious origin. The Teutonic Knights of the Cross, originally formed in connection with the movement of the Crusades, gain a foothold on the North-Western outskirts of Poland, near the Baltic shore, under pretext of converting to Christianity the still heathen tribes of North-Eastern Europe. They spread Christianity among them with fire and sword, and from their widening vantage-ground they become the vanguard of German expansion—the founders of modern Prussia and its imperialism. It was an ill-starred moment for Poland when they were summoned as allies against the heathen Prussians by one of the Polish territorial princes, Conrad of Masovia, in 1226, and encouraged by a grant of land. They exterminated the Prussian nation root and branch, and its name was appropriated afterwards by its German successors. But the rescuers soon became a thorn in the side of the rescued; combats against the German Knights henceforward are an even more constant feature of medieval Polish history than the periodical fights against the Tartars. By uniting with her North-Eastern neighbour, Lithuania, against the common foe, Poland finally beat down the German Knights and succeeded in

securing access to the Baltic for good; but it took more than two centuries of wars to achieve that end, and in vanishing from history at last, the German Knights left behind them as their successor in early modern Europe the secular duchy of Prussia, which, from a vassal of Poland, developed into one of its powerful destroyers.

During the period we are surveying now the Teutonic element is irresistibly advancing, owing to the weakness of a divided Poland. The regional princes of Silesia are drawn into the sphere of German influence, and their Germanisation prepares the ground for the loss of the country to Poland in the fourteenth century. What is more, the Silesian example shows the way to introduce Germans into the very heart of Poland's interior provinces. The devastation of the country by the Tartars and the depopulation of its cities drive Polish princes to the expedient of calling in German settlers to re-people the towns. To make the offer alluring, the towns so colonised must be granted self-government, on the model of self-governing city institutions as established in the towns of Germany. For several centuries, some of Poland's principal towns—including the royal capital, Cracow—become German in the body of their wealthy merchant population, and even keep their records in the German language. When the effects of this German intrusion are at last overcome by assimilation to the Polish surroundings, a period of decay for the flourishing trade of the towns sets in, owing to the narrow-minded and selfish legislation of the privileged land-owning class, the gentry, which has only its own agrarian interests at heart. Such, then, is the historical foundation of the deplorable fact that the old Poland was deficient in such an indispensable mainstay to healthy social organisation as a strong middle class. During the period, however, which we are engaged on at present, the towns are still on the upward grade of

development, and their citizens grow rapidly in prosperity and culture, in spite of the ceaseless vicissitudes and disturbances in the country.

VII

Of these political vicissitudes themselves, showing Poland in its worst state of decomposition and enfeeblement, it is scarcely worth while to speak in detail. Some few outstanding personalities and facts only need be singled out, especially in the later part of the period, when the trend is towards consolidation once more.

At first we witness nothing but fratricidal broils, and the prestige of Poland lies low indeed when an expelled Polish prince invokes the German Emperor as arbiter in the Polish dynastic strife, and the exile's rival must ultimately submit to such arbitration and has to appear before another German Emperor—the great Frederick Barbarossa—in the very capital of Western Poland, Poznań—in the guise of a penitent, bare-foot, and with a sword hanging round his neck. If the German emperors do not profit by this period of disorder and division to subject Poland entirely, it is because they have constant troubles of their own to prevent them: crusades and expeditions into Italy at first, the dynastic struggles between Welfs and Hohenstaufens afterwards, and finally, a long and ruinous interregnum; after which, the new Hapsburg dynasty have enough to do to establish their position at home. But although all this lessens the German danger, the inner weakness of Poland advances; her territories are splitting up into smaller and smaller sections with each generation, as the territorial princes, in their turn, divide their provinces between their sons. A baneful feature of later Polish history—the ambitious intrigues of great nobles and their influence on the princes

—also begins to show its many hydra heads at this time, and is a main factor of the general restlessness and insecurity. At intervals only, rulers appear who are strong enough to curb the nobles' self-will, and far-sighted enough to conduct foreign affairs on imperial lines, chiefly by skilful dynastic marriages, as other medieval countries did. Such strong domestic and intelligent foreign policies were the distinctive merits of Miesco III (called the Old), who ruled at Cracow in the later half of the twelfth century. He also made rightly aimed efforts at strengthening the exchequer, although he employed for that purpose the doubtful means—common in more recent times—of intentionally debasing the currency. His endeavours, at any rate, if oppressively bureaucratic, were constructive in their aims, which is more than can be said of his successor, Casimir II (called the Just). This ruler set a disastrous precedent, often, alas! to be followed by later Polish kings: he bargained with the powerful nobles for recognition of his successor in return for such concessions as the exemption of the higher clergy from the State's right to their property and the abandonment of the State's right to requisition private transport for official use (1180). These were, indeed, the beginnings of the constitutional liberties of later parliamentary Poland, but they also contained the germs of the final anarchic weakening of all central government authority. If this act, then, must now be considered as by no means an unmixed blessing to Poland, it must be recognised, on the other hand, that this particular prince came nearer than anyone else in this disastrous period of division to reuniting all Polish lands under his sceptre. However, the fabric of reunion was shattered again under a regency of nobles during the long minority of the succeeding prince. It was at that time that the former ruler, Miesco the Old, three times returned to the Grand Ducal residence of Cracow, and

had to quit it again, until he died in possession during his fourth tenure of it. Succeeding holders of the throne do not even attempt to emancipate themselves from under the power of the great nobles, who are true king-makers, like some medieval barons of England. One of the princes, Lesco (called the White), being hampered by the barons in his endeavours to extend Polish power Northward to the seashore again and Eastward among the Russian tribes, seeks an ally against the barons in the Church, and, by way of propitiating the ecclesiastical authorities, recognises the Gregorian reforms, which free the ecclesiastical hierarchy from State control. This, unfortunately, meant but freedom for another dangerous power, which now strenuously takes sides in all civil wars and pursues a resolute policy of its own, as a State within the State. The appearance of this factor in its new strength upon the scene added the last touch to Poland's disruption, and for a time the Duke of Cracow ceased even formally to be the sovereign over the crowd of sectional rulers (1227).

VIII

The last trace of a Polish monarchy seems gone for ever. During another long minority of a Cracow prince the civil war reached its climax in the dispute for the regency between the Germanised duke, Henry the Bearded of Silesia, and the savagely cruel and recklessly impulsive Conrad of Masovia; the pacifying influence of Princess Hedviga of Silesia (who was declared a saint by the Church afterwards) is but a faint and intermittent flickering of comfort amidst the universal outburst of passion and violence; and the temporary success of St. Hedviga's son, Prince Henry the Pious of Silesia, in uniting a large part of Poland under his rule, is brought to a speedy end by his heroic death on the battlefield of Lignica in stem-

ming the tide of Tartar invasion at the very doors of Central Europe (1241). His successor at Cracow, Boleslas the Modest, does not follow this sublime example, but flees the country when the Tartars come again, and shows his incapacity besides by subservience to the power of the clergy during a long reign. No doubt his marriage to the saintly Hungarian princess, Cunegunda—also canonised by the Church, like St. Hedviga—had much to do with that policy, or rather want of policy; and as he errs by weakness, so his successor, Lesco II (surnamed the Black), errs by falling into the opposite extreme of passionate and vindictive rashness and violence in his continuous strife with the nobles, the higher clergy, and a princely rival. He does not achieve much success, either, in endeavouring to do what the medieval kings of France did more successfully—viz. to lean for support against the nobles on the growing and prosperous middle class of the towns. This policy is pursued to better effect by a Silesian prince, Henry the Honest, whom the German burghers of Cracow, now an active and important factor upon the political scene, triumphantly introduce into the capital (1298). The reason for their enthusiasm was largely that Henry, like the other Silesian princes, had become more than half a German, and even wrote German poetry. It was the reaction of nationality against German intrusion which at last, after the long period of degradation and division, united Polish forces for resistance. But another candidate of the German burghers, the Czech king, Venceslas, still succeeded a Polish prince, Przemyslaw, who had actually been the first to extend his power as far as the sea-coast once more, and to be crowned king of the whole of Poland again by the archbishop of the realm; and it was the foreign ruler, Venceslas, who actually reunited a large part of the Polish territories under his sceptre (1300). His government is ill remembered, because

he withdrew to his own Czech Kingdom and left Poland to be mercilessly exploited by Czech administrative officials (the "starostas"—a title and an office henceforward adopted in Poland). It was undoubtedly widespread dissatisfaction with this Czech rule which secured national support for King Venceslas's Polish opponent, Ladislas the Short ("Łokietek"), who after being three times defeated and expelled, and spending long periods in exile in Hungary and in adventurous wanderings about his own country, like King Alfred in England under Danish occupation, at last emerged after his adversary's death and resolutely fought his way to unchallenged supremacy over a large portion of Polish territories (1306). With his advent we enter upon a new epoch of political reunion and more settled conditions in Poland, which was to lead up to the splendour and power of a large Polish Empire in the later Middle Ages.

IX

Amidst all the ups and downs of domestic and foreign war which constitute Poland's early medieval history, there would seem to be little scope indeed for steady progress towards legal stability, social organisation, economic prosperity, intellectual culture or artistic activities. And yet all these peaceful aspects of civilised life develop in the intervals of storms, and foundations are laid for the magnificent structure of Polish national civilisation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Politically, Poland in this period, when united, is, like most of the surrounding European States of the time, an absolute monarchy. The monarch's power is theoretically unlimited and patriarchal in character. The Council of State, composed of the principal dignitaries, both spiritual and temporal, is at first a purely advisory body. The

dependence of Poland's early rulers on the German emperors was skilfully counterbalanced later by the protection of the other great power in the medieval world—the Holy See; this protection was obtained at the price of voluntary offerings, which in time became a fixed customary tribute called "St. Peter's pence." The organisation of administrative control over the realm was modelled, in early medieval Poland, on Franconian institutions. In this system the highest officers of the State were Court officials, assisting the king in his different sovereign functions, and foreshadowing the ministers of a modern constitutional monarchy. The centres of local government were fortified castles, from which their military commanders exercised all administrative and judicial functions over the surrounding districts. These castellans also levy on the settlers of the neighbourhood the heavy taxes imposed by the prince for the maintenance of his Court, his standing army, and his administrative apparatus, these taxes being, in early times, mostly paid in kind. The castles, from military and administrative centres, become the nuclei of towns.

This political structure of early Poland becomes more complicated in course of time, particularly with the progress of social differentiation. The estates, or social classes of the typical medieval community, become more and more sharply divided, and their rights and privileges more strictly defined, especially when weak territorial princes have to make concessions in return for recognition. Immunities or exemptions from certain duties towards the State are wrung from the rulers by different strong social groups, especially by the clergy.

X

In Poland, as elsewhere in early medieval Europe, the Church is the centre of the social world. Growing in wealth

and moral authority, the clergy become, in course of time, practically free from secular jurisdiction and political administrative control. On the other hand, they exercise a recognised active influence both on politics and on the law. In the political sphere, they win an assured position of power by the presence of the chief prelates in the Council of State. In jurisdiction, the authority of the ecclesiastical courts is gradually extended to all cases connected with the sacraments of the Church, and as these include Baptism, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, most of the important events and social relations of the citizen's life are brought by such an arrangement under the legal control of the Church.

The monastic orders are a factor equal in power to the secular clergy. As early as about the year 1000, foreign monks were invited to Poland from Italy to counteract the danger to nationality from the large number of German and Czech priests in early Poland. Irish monks also, of course, played their important part in Poland in the earlier Middle Ages, as they did all over the European Continent. Among the actual orders, the Benedictines and the Cistercians figure prominently in the early period; later on, with the rise of the Begging Friars in the thirteenth century, the Dominicans and the Franciscans become important. In Poland, as elsewhere in Europe, the rise of the Friars has a profound influence on the spiritual temper of the age. There is a widespread revival of mystic piety: many distinguished persons of the time, some of them of princely rank, both men and women, voluntarily end their days in convent cells, and thirteenth-century Poland gives its crop of saints to the Roman Calendar, mainly ladies of royal birth.

But it was even before that new movement, and particularly in the very earliest ages, that the Church had exercised a softening influence on the morals and manners

of a half-savage nation. The clergy and the monks were also the principal teachers of the people, instructing them in husbandry by the example of the administration of their own estates, introducing improvements in farming as well as various useful arts and crafts. Holding, furthermore, as they did, the monopoly of the arts of reading and writing and of the knowledge of Latin—that common international tongue of the happy medieval world—they established contact between Poland and the intellectual culture of the European West. Schools grew up in connection with cathedral chapters and large monasteries, and the common medieval courses of elementary and higher studies—the *trivium*, or three R's, and *quadrivium*, or liberal arts—came to be widely taught in Poland. The influence of the schools made itself felt in course of time; the knowledge of reading and writing spread beyond the class of clerics, and numerous well-written deeds on parchment testify to the growth of this accomplishment among the laity, particularly among judges and administrative officials. A Polish educated class was growing up. Sooner than elsewhere the native Polish element, of course, asserted itself among the educators themselves; the clergy of Poland become more and more purely Polish. The fact that bishops, in the later Middle Ages, are mostly drawn from the ranks of a few great noble families does not, of course, tell in favour of tranquillity in the country, family and class ambitions now running high in the sphere of Church politics. But the growing strength of the Polish element among the rank and file of the clergy is bound to be favourable to the development of popular education. In 1285 a Synod memorable in the annals of the Polish Church—the assembly of Łęczyca—among other provisions of far-reaching importance for Church organisation, lays down the rule that Polish priests only must be appointed to the posts of teachers in the schools.

This development could not but lead, in the end, to the growth of a *literature* in the Polish language. Polish literature, however, is singularly slow in coming. Latin predominates to a much larger extent, and for a much longer time, in the medieval literature of Poland than in that of Western European countries. That is equally true of sober prose and of romantic poetry. Next to nothing remains on record of any attempts to emulate in Polish the mass of epics of chivalry and adventure, songs of courtly love and mystic piety, didactic and satirical lyrics, and holy dramas and profane interludes which we possess in the medieval tongues of Western Europe. The oldest preserved song in the Polish language, a hymn in honour of the Virgin (*Bogurodzica*), has only come down to us in a manuscript of the Renaissance period, although the diction of the song points to a much earlier date.

The scarcity of early medieval literature in Polish is perhaps partly accounted for by the general restlessness of the stormy period of Poland's division, but no doubt largely by the fact that for several centuries education was in the hands of a foreign clergy. It was to them that the beginnings of literary activity in Poland were due, and they are naturally in Latin. It is a foreign priest—probably from Hungary, though tradition calls him *Gallus*—who, being in some way connected with the Court of the early Polish kings, left a valuable Latin record of contemporary Polish history behind, which ends at the year 1113. A higher level of elegance and learning is reached in a later Latin chronicle of Poland by Master Vincent (called *Kadlubek*), a bishop of Cracow in the thirteenth century, who ended his days as a monk; and Latin poetry, both on historical and romantic sub-

jects, becomes a flourishing branch of literature (mostly anonymous) in later medieval Poland.

XII

Next to the clergy, the most important class in Poland are the nobility and gentry, divided in the earlier Middle Ages into a number of higher and lower degrees.

The Polish gentry have been assumed by some historians to owe their distinctness from the rest of the nation to a foreign origin and to conquest. Whatever the real solution of that vexed historical problem may be, the gentry are a fully developed, privileged class in the twelfth century. Soldiers in war and tillers of the soil in peace, they hold their lands, like the knighthood of England and other European countries in the Middle Ages, from the king in return for knight's service. They are organised into family associations, somewhat resembling the clans peculiar to Scotland, and distinguished, like them, by common coats-of-arms and common slogans in the field.

As a superstructure above the large mass of the gentry there rises, like the prelates among the clergy, the class of the barons. They form the lay element in the Council of State, and they develop, by degrees, into an oligarchy of a few great families, members of which are the hereditary holders of the supreme offices under the Crown.

XIII

Towns became a necessity with the progress of material refinement and the growth of handicrafts and commerce. As we have seen, the Polish towns of the later Middle Ages largely developed through German colonisation and were endowed with self-government on the German

model. Being founded, however, round the existing castles, the towns contained a nucleus of old Polish population, which in course of time assimilated the German element. Having to pay rent for the ground they stood on and for the use of business premises and other public buildings, as well as fees for jurisdiction, the towns were sources of large income to the princes; on the other hand, their new inhabitants themselves prospered by pursuing commerce without the pressure of any competition, the fetters of administrative control, or the burden of State taxation. Within their self-governing social organism something like the power of the modern trade unions is organised over the individual citizen by the compulsory organisation of all professions into craft-guilds. The townsmen may own land in the neighbourhood of the town; they bear arms, like the gentry, and their trained military force occasionally makes its power felt in Poland's civil wars.

XIV

It was not only the towns around the castles, but also villages in the empty and uncultivated spaces of the country, which were organised by imported settlers from Germany, Northern France and the Flemish lands, who became the bailiffs of the new settlements; the name *Hollander* for a free peasant long survived in Poland as a trace of this foreign origin. The inhabitants gathering round the foreign organisers were largely Polish; and later on, the colonisation of waste lands by Polish peasants from more densely populated districts became the rule. This went on in the central provinces of Poland until the fifteenth century, and much longer in the vast unpeopled expanses of the Eastern borderlands, where it is being continued in the new Poland of to-day. The villages, like

the towns, were systematically planned in their architecture and organised on a basis of self-government of German type in their administration. It was from Germany also that the system of the "three fields" was introduced, the common land near the village being used one-third of it for tilth, one-third for pasture, and one-third left fallow by turns. This meant progress in the economic exploitation of land, and was maintained in many Polish villages until fairly recent times.

It was by degrees only, and in the shape of customary law, that peasant serfdom grew up to be an established institution in medieval Poland, as in the other European countries of the time. As the townsmen paid ground-rent to the lord of the castle, so did the villagers to the landlord of the neighbourhood. Besides, one class of peasants, the actual serfs, had the obligation to till his land for a fixed number of days per week in return for owning their land from him. This unpaid labour did not yet, in the early period of the Middle Ages, constitute the heavy burden upon the peasant into which it grew later, with the development of large estates. Nor were the landlord's powers over the serf tyrannous and unlimited in the early time; the bailiff and the elders of the village form a self-governing body, like the mayor and elected council in the town. A large portion of the peasants are entirely free in person, and the tenure of their land, in return for ground-rent and labour, is fixed and not subject to arbitrary change. Neither are the peasants under the control of the administrative officials of the State. Like the gentry and the townsmen, they have their own courts of law; on these the landlord sits as chairman in grave criminal cases only, which are judged at periodical assizes. The introduction of German colonists, who would settle on the liberal terms of German law only, of course told in favour of the legal position of the old Polish peasantry as

well, who in many cases obtained the same privileges. On the other hand, the Polish element in the village, as in the towns, showed its assimilative power: the foreign new-comers became, in a very few generations, entirely Polish, even more quickly than the larger and more organised communities of German settlers in the towns.

XV

After the political and the social conditions we may, in conclusion, briefly envisage the actual daily life of the people of Poland in the early Middle Ages in its material aspects.

From the details already given as to the founding of towns and villages by foreign colonists, it may be inferred how undeveloped a country Poland, on the whole, still was in the earlier centuries of the Middle Ages. Vast virgin forests and stretches of marsh and bog were only beginning to disappear, and on the frontiers the forest was purposely left untouched, to bar access to invaders. Agriculture is still in its infancy, and hunting and cattle-breeding are more important occupations. Handicrafts are practised in an elementary way, and for domestic needs only. What trade there is is in the hands of Germans and Jews in the West, and Russians and Greeks on the Eastern side. Foreign currencies are largely used, until the discovery of silver-mines in South-Western Poland makes the coining of Polish money possible. The people, and even their rulers, live in wooden houses of primitive structure; and wood is also the material used for the building of churches, and of towers and palisades on the walls which surround the towns. A national style of wooden architecture develops, which survives in modern Polish peasant art. Only in the eleventh century buildings of stone, and in the later twelfth century of brick, begin to arise. But

a prolonged period of peace and security as well as enlightened initiative is needed to carry Polish architecture forward to the higher achievements which it reaches at last in the fourteenth century, when all these conditions are provided in a reunited Poland by the wise rule of Casimir the Great.

LECTURE II

RENUNION AND PEACEFUL PROGRESS

I

In the thirteenth century it was still an open question whether Poland would occupy a permanent place in the European system as a united and independent State. The territorial division seemed to be progressing towards the same dissolution which was by that time overtaking the Southern Russian Empire of Kiev. The Tartar invasion and its devastations, with consequent German colonisation on a large scale, seemed to obliterate the very national physiognomy of Poland. Finally, reunion under a Czech king seemed to seal the fate of the Polish Empire.

A large and independent Poland could only be created by a personality gifted with the organising energy of genius, the governing capacity of a born ruler, and the heroism of a military leader. These qualities appeared upon the scene, united in the indomitable person of King Ladislas the Short. Twice expelled from his country, he returns for a third time, to take final possession of the throne after three years of guerrilla warfare and the deaths of two Czech rivals in succession (1306). But the whole quarter of a century of his rule is still filled with incessant struggles for reunion. At first Western Poland does not recognise him, preferring to submit to a Silesian duke; then the townsmen of his own capital, Cracow, revolt against him. In both cases it is the new German element in the country which refuses to be governed by a purely Polish monarch, whose popular watchword was "Poland for the Poles." At the same time the foreign German power—Poland's arch-enemy, the Knights of the Cross—

profit by an alliance concluded with them under stress of necessity, and seize the Baltic coast province of Poland. Out of all the adversities the king emerges victorious at home, and successful, to some extent at least, abroad. In his last battle, 1331, he inflicts a temporary check on the German Knights, who were strong enough by that time not to recognise even an award of the Pope in favour of Poland, and had found an ally in the Czech king as a pretender to the Polish Crown.

Against this double enemy the Polish monarch had sought alliances, with his Southern neighbour, Hungary, on the one hand, and his North-Eastern neighbour, Lithuania, on the other, in the usual form of dynastic marriages. In his domestic struggles he had had the support of the native Polish peasantry against the foreign candidates favoured by the German settlers.

II

Both these lines of policy—the dynastic alliances with neighbouring States and good relations between the Crown and the peasant element at home—were inherited by Ladislas's son, Casimir III (1333–1370), and skilfully developed with a view to peaceful consolidation above all. A true Prince of Peace among the militant kings of those stormy early ages, he became an empire-builder by this new and different means, and earned by it his surname of the Great. He is the only Polish king to whom history has given it, after his remote ancestor Boleslas I, who won it by building up a large empire with his sword.

Casimir's greatness was achieved, on the contrary, by a consistently peaceful policy—a policy of peace almost at any price, and certainly not free from diplomatic intrigue, which he used deliberately as a weapon preferable to war. Not in this respect only, but in others, Casimir

at first would seem to have little of the marks of greatness about him. Both his youth in his sister's brilliant Hungarian Court and his later life are full of passionate love adventures. Luxury-loving and effeminate, he had grieved his warlike father's heart by cowardly flight from a battlefield; and, attached to foreign, Western European manners and customs, he seemed to be little qualified for becoming as popular with his Polish subjects as his father, who was the embodiment of anti-German national reaction.

It was under no very favourable auspices, then, that he began a reign which meant a most thorough change of system in comparison, not with his father's only, but with the military spirit of several great Polish rulers before him. It was only the assured self-consciousness of creative political genius which enabled Casimir to persist from first to last in his deliberately peaceful policy against the tremendous odds of national diffidence. In the light of history, the three decades of his reign look indeed what a Polish historian called them—a masterpiece of art in logical continuity and unity of purpose. It is this purpose—the welfare and development of his country—which lifts him above the mere family ambition of his neighbours in Hungary and Bohemia, though the actual means he uses in foreign policy to ensure peace and safety for his domestic schemes are as unscrupulous as those employed by those neighbours themselves. In the quarrels between the German emperor and the Czech king he changes sides whenever he thinks it expedient; and when that type of knight-errantry, the Bohemian King John of Luxemburg (who was to fall in the battle of Crecy), invades Polish territory, Casimir cynically makes mockery of the decaying ideals of adventurous chivalry by challenging the blind old man to settle the dispute in a duel.

But more tangible objects than the abstractions of moral

dignity and chivalrous honour had to be sacrificed in order to gain for Poland the coveted Hesperide apples of prosperity and culture. It is one of the lessons most fully borne out by individual experience, as well as by the history of nations, that nothing in human life is got for nothing. Casimir had to pay for half a century of peace by renunciations, the full weight of which only made itself felt in later history, and partly troubles even the Poland of to-day.

The gravest of these sacrifices which stand to Casimir's debit account in Polish annals was the surrender of Silesia. The loss of this Western border country was prepared in the period of Poland's disastrous divisions by the peaceful penetration of German influence among its territorial princes and the loosening of their connection with the centre of Poland. Casimir, at the very beginning of his reign, and with a heavy heart, took the decisive step: he ceded his liege lordship over Silesia to the Czech king in return for the latter's resignation of his claims to the Polish Crown (1335). The price was even higher than that, for a large sum of money and the sovereignty over the central Polish province of Masovia went with it. Masovia was recovered in course of time, its prince did homage to Casimir, and when the territorial dynasty died out in the fifteenth century the province was finally incorporated in Poland. But Silesia shared, since Casimir, the fortunes of all lands of the Czech Crown, and was exposed, together with them, to growing German influence; it finally got under Prussian rule for nearly two centuries. It is one of the most magnificent proofs of the national vitality of the Polish peasant stock that the South-Eastern section of Silesia at least, becoming part of Poland again in our days after six hundred years of separation, should still be purely Polish in the body of its country population.

III

Silesia was the only jewel taken out of the Polish Crown permanently in Casimir's time, but not the only province signed away. Besides the Czech rival for the Crown, one other dangerous neighbour had to be mitigated—the German Knights. After concluding an armistice with them on the very day of his coronation, Casimir skilfully protracted diplomatic negotiations with them for ten years, until the regained strength of Poland allowed him to conclude a final agreement on fairly equal terms. Trickery on his part was not wanting in this diplomatic game, particularly in the way he secured the sympathy of the Popes, then residing at Avignon. Casimir's intrigues were the necessary and highly skilful counter-manœuvres to the undoubted bad faith of the Germans. In the end the Germans had to be bought off at no less heavy a price than the Czechs: Casimir voluntarily resigned to them the two provinces nearest to the Baltic shore in return for two others nearer to the heart of Poland (1343). But the struggle for the Baltic shore, that vital outlet for Polish agricultural export and trade, was soon to be renewed.

The only gain of Casimir's reign, counterbalancing the losses of Silesia and of the Baltic provinces, was, indeed, no inconsiderable one. Ever since the dawn of history wars had been going on between Poland and the South Russian princes for the territory of Red Russia, called in modern times Eastern Galicia, after its ancient capital, the town of Halicz. The disintegration of South Russia by territorial divisions and dynastic feuds proceeded even at a more intense rate than that of Poland in the thirteenth century, and Casimir finally profited by the extinction of the provincial line of princes governing the disputed province, to take possession of it by virtue

of a claim based on dynastic intermarriages (1340). But he did not succeed peacefully: a war had to be fought with the rival claimant, the Duke of Lithuania, before this extremely fertile region, together with a portion of the adjoining province of Volhynia and with feudal sovereignty over the neighbouring principality of Podolia, was secured for Poland. Only towards the end of his reign did Casimir ultimately attain the end of rounding off his domains on the Eastern side. Red Russia henceforward remains part of the Polish State for more than four centuries. Its principal town of Lwów (Lemberg, in German), growing in importance as a great centre of trade between West and East, becomes a purely Polish city. It gives splendid proofs of its Polish patriotism repeatedly in its history—for the last time in our own days, when the old struggle for the province was renewed between a reunited Poland and the modern Ukrainians.

The acquisition of Red Russia after the loss of Silesia is a turning-point in the history of Polish foreign policy. It has become clear now that, in her resistance against the German pressure Eastward, Poland is driven into a defensive position, and can barely hope to hold or regain that which is absolutely vital to her existence, while on the Eastern side an inviting territory for imperial expansion is opened up in the fertile, thinly-peopled and undeveloped regions of the South-Eastern borderlands. The fact that Poland has now definitely entered the valley of the Dniester, a river flowing South-Eastward into the Black Sea, points to the shore of that sea as an object of political and economic ambition, quite as the possession of the Vistula basin pointed to its outlet on the Baltic. Hence the endeavour to reach the Black Sea becomes as marked a feature of Polish policy on the South-Eastern border henceforward as the struggle to reconquer access to the Baltic in the North-West. "Poland from Sea to Sea"

now becomes the crowning ideal of all Polish imperial aspirations.

IV

Such a conception of Imperial Poland as was foreshadowed in the territorial changes of Casimir's time required a resolute policy to realise it, and involved grave responsibilities.

If the new territories, in which the natural direction of Poland's expansion lay, were durably to hold together with the national organism, they must be strenuously colonised, and culture of the Polish type—which means the Roman Catholic type common to Western Europe—must be imparted to their thin and uneducated population. And in this respect Casimir could not but fall short of the requirements of the historical moment. The weakness of a country freshly reunited and pacified after long broils did not allow him to pursue any other policy than one of inconclusive compromise. In Red Russia he found Eastern Christianity established, both of the Byzantine and the Armenian type, and he left the institutions of both of them untouched, and even developed them. Side by side with them he established Roman Catholic bishoprics as a third network of religious organisations in the new province, and he gave the Begging Friars of the Roman Church, Franciscans and Dominicans, full scope for missionary and civilising activities. However much we might admire such broad tolerance from the modern liberal point of view, in the Middle Ages, when the Church covered so much more of the ground of all social life than to-day, such a state of things meant the inevitable conflict of competing ecclesiastical hierarchies in the whole sphere of civil affairs, and was bound to lead to serious political complications. They produced, after two centuries and a half, a new compromise—the Uniat Church,

which, from a political device of the Polish Empire, has become the *Ecclesia Militans* of Ukrainian nationalism to-day.

In the same liberal spirit as with Church problems, Casimir dealt with the political organisation of his new province, and in this field he was more successful. Self-government for the towns, in particular, proved a valuable stimulus to colonising activity and economic progress. In Red Russia, as in Poland proper, the liberties granted to settlers under German municipal law attracted valuable human material. Not only the great Eastern trade centre of Lwów, but the other towns arising in Red Russia, became strongholds both of prosperity and of civilisation in course of time; and the countryside, with both gentlemen landowners and landless peasants flocking into its waste but rich expanses, developed into an opulent granary of agricultural wealth. It has been justly observed by a great Polish historian, otherwise severely critical of the faults of the old Polish Kingdom, that whatever the ultimate reckoning of its nine hundred years of existence may be, the great colonising Eastward movement, inaugurated by Casimir, stands to Poland's credit; it moved the frontier of civilised Europe two hundred miles further to the East, it dotted an almost desert country richly with churches and monasteries, towns and villages, castles and manors, shops and factories and schools. All this redeems the expansion of Poland from the reproach of sheer imperialist greed of land.

The great king's activity in the East was only part of the constructive work all over Poland to which he devoted his best energies during his reign, and which remains his chief title to fame.

V

Casimir had found his reunited kingdom in a lamentably unsettled, backward, and ruinous condition after two

centuries of civil war and terrible invasions. In his endeavours to re-establish legal order, economic progress and intellectual culture, he was guided by the example of enlightened monarchs in the neighbouring countries: Charles Robert of Anjou in Hungary, and Charles IV of the Hapsburg dynasty in Bohemia.

The first task to be attacked in order to place the inner conditions of Poland on a stable footing was to create a body of written law in place of the uncertain customary practices which had so far governed jurisdiction. This was done in the shape of two statute-books, worked out by congresses of ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries at Wiślica, in Central Poland, and Piotrków, in Western Poland, respectively (1347). Ignorant as we necessarily are of the customary law which was in force before these codes, we cannot form an opinion of how much in Casimir's laws was creation and how much only codification. At any rate, he stands by these statutes in Polish history as a law-giver similar to King Alfred in early England.

The towns, as Casimir had found them, already had a body of systematic law governing them—German law, chiefly of the Magdeburg type, and still in living connection with German Courts, which were referred to in the last instance. Following an example set by Hungary, Casimir took the very important step of making the law of the towns independent of Germany and placing them under a supreme Polish Court of Appeal at Cracow (1356).

The jurisdiction in the villages, exercised by the bailiffs likewise according to German law, was also made independent, but in another way, being withdrawn from under the control of the landlords and placed under provincial tribunals.

In this way the whole administration of justice, both

in town and country, had become organically connected with the Government of the State. The Government was the only force which could safeguard actual respect for the established law. For that purpose the central government had to be made sufficiently strong; accordingly, greater authority for the Crown and for the executive organs of administration were the goals of Casimir's endeavours.

In the matter of administrative organisation his reign marks the transition from a Poland divided into separate principalities into one united on a liberal basis of local self-government. For reasons of expediency, the administrative apparatus of the different territories was retained, and the old principalities became the new provinces. The king's lieutenants were endowed with full vice-regal powers over them. The king himself, on frequent progresses through all his lands, watched over the efficiency of the civil service and also over the administration of justice. This was dealt out, in civil matters, by autonomous justices of the peace at small or local, and large or provincial, assizes, and in criminal cases by royal officials who acted permanently.

The purposes of Poland's unification in law and administrative order were also intended, above all, to be served by the outstanding educational act of Casimir's reign: his foundation of Poland's oldest University at Cracow in 1364, sixteen years after the neighbouring Bohemia had received its University of Prague. It was the jealousy of Prague which at first caused the Pope to refuse his sanction for the erection of a Faculty of Divinity in the new seat of learning. Otherwise Cracow was organised on the model of the old and famous Italian University of Bologna. It had schools of philosophy and of medicine; but the principal Faculty, in the royal founder's own eyes, was that of law. To him, as to the later enlightened

absolutists of the eighteenth century, the University was chiefly to be a training college for competent judges and administrative officials; it was to develop in the national mind that mainstay of civilised life—a sense of legality. Renewed and enlarged by Casimir's successors of the Jagellonian dynasty, this University, called after them, has now led half a thousand years and more of unbroken existence, and, sharing all the tragic vicissitudes of the country itself, has been a true pillar of fire to the nation in the night of its darkest misfortunes.

Lower schools were not essentially changed in structure in Casimir's time, but largely augmented and developed. Archbishop Bogoria, one of the authors of the Casimirian Codes of Law, was also a great organiser and protector of schools.

Among other departments of public life which he put in order, Casimir did not forget a very vital one—that of finance. A basis of sound State finance was provided by the Crown's ownership of vast estates, which under Casimir's prudent administration were made to yield large revenues, and of such natural resources as Poland's great curiosity—the salt-mines near Cracow—which had begun to be worked a century before. The Czech king, Venceslas, had made a beginning with the much-needed reform of the debased Polish currency by extending to Poland the circulation of the solid Czech coins called *grossi* in Latin. On their model Casimir began to coin Polish *grossi* with a fixed amount of silver in them, and accordingly of stable value. For the Eastern trade copper coins were used, in accordance with Byzantine practice.

VI

The mention of finance brings us to the economic development of the country. Of this Casimir was as con-

stantly watchful as of the establishment of law and order. Poland, indeed, became a changed country under his rule. Marshes were drained, forests cleared, and vast areas of waste land, especially in the newly gained Eastern territories, brought under cultivation. The country was studded with newly founded towns, and dotted with new villages, in which flour-mills and saw-mills were erected at State expense. The system of roads and bridges was improved and developed. Walls were built round the towns, and fortified castles arose in the open country. These latter measures, intended to promote the security of life and property in a still unruly State, were supplemented by proper provisions for military training, both of town and country population. Practically universal conscription of all owners of land for the defence of the country in war-time was established by Casimir, and this only made Poland's later victories and international power possible.

The great social forces of the medieval world in the country—cathedral and convent, manor and castle—had no reason to complain of Casimir's rule. Both the secular and monastic clergy were munificently endowed with land, nor was land spared in reward for the military services of Poland's brave knighthood, who were settled in various parts of the country. Deserving nobles were appointed to high positions in the State; and it is from this official class that a new Polish aristocracy, comprising the greatest Polish aristocratic families of after ages, now begins to grow up. On the other hand, self-willed and rebellious barons, both spiritual and temporal, are held down with an iron hand: the curse cast upon the king by a bishop of Cracow is flouted by the drowning of the bishop's messenger in the river, and a revolted Western Polish noble is captured and walled up in a dungeon to die of hunger.

VII

Severe as he could be on occasion towards the aristocracy, both ecclesiastical and secular, Casimir is uniformly and markedly benevolent towards the democratic element rising in the villages and the towns.

He alone of Polish kings has received from posterity the appellation of "the King of the Peasants," and he deserved it by his fatherly sympathy for that neglected class. He not only succoured them with grain from his own stores in times of famine, but he placed them under the protection of the law against the self-will of their landlords; he made it legally possible for a peasant to sever his ties with a landlord who oppressed him; he provided by enactments for the proper care of the old and the feeble, the women and the children among the peasant class; and what is most important, he watched in person over the fulfilment of all these laws.

But if popular tradition glorifies in Casimir chiefly the protector of the peasants, what stands out above all in the eyes of a historian is the wise and fostering care he devotes to the *towns*. Their progress in his reign is the most salient feature in a general picture of rapidly growing welfare and culture. A great founder of towns, Casimir endowed many of them, both new and old ones, with self-government on the German model. He shielded their commerce with a strong hand against outrages from a lawless country gentry. He enforced the practice of a privilege called "staple right," under which the large towns of Poland compelled foreign merchants to sell their wares on the spot when they arrived with them, and thereby established for themselves the position of great centres of transit trade between Germany and Russia, between the shores of the Baltic and those of the Black Sea, between the North-West and the South-East of Europe.

Besides trade, manufacture also rose into significance in the towns. Towards the end of the fourteenth century we have on record, in the town of Cracow, a long array of distinct professions, from bakers, brewers and butchers to furriers and shoemakers, glovers and hatters, smiths, armourers and cutlers, tanners and clothiers and lace-makers, joiners and wood-carvers and painters. Foremost, then as now, among Polish industries, there stands the textile industry: Polish cloth is worn by the King of Bohemia; it is sold at Great Novgorod, in Russia, and known in Germany as *polensche Laken*. Other articles of export from Poland are chiefly raw materials, such as timber and grain, skins and hides, wax and honey, lead and salt. But Casimir, in his enlightened way, endeavours to develop Poland into a manufacturing country, and he protects the export of Polish manufactures into the newly acquired province of Red Russia by a tariff barrier against Silesia, which even leads to a state of "tariff war" with the Czech Kingdom.

VIII

Side by side with economic progress, there was a change, in Casimir's time, in the national complexion of the Polish towns. Partly owing to his own legal and economic measures, and largely owing to the mellowing influences of time and prosperity, the predominant German element in the Polish towns was by this time beginning to be assimilated to its Polish surroundings.

With the acquisition of Red Russia, a new strain of foreign blood was infused into Polish town life in the shape of the Armenians, who also became Polish in time, and remain distinguished unto this day as the most shrewd and enterprising business men in South-Eastern Poland.

Another foreign influx into the towns, which particularly

increases under the liberal and benevolent rule of Casimir, are the Jews. Persecuted in other countries of Europe, they had begun to seek shelter in Poland in the thirteenth century, and obtained a privilege of self-government in Silesia, which was afterwards extended to all the other provinces. The Polish monarchs favoured their immigration because they brought capital, enterprise and commercial experience into the country. Under the older privileges, Jews were allowed to settle in the towns, but not in the villages. Some of the rulers before Casimir had used Jews as the financial advisers and agents of the State, as some of the early Norman kings of England had done. Money-lending at interest was expressly forbidden to Christians by Canon Law; it became the monopoly and special profession of the Jews throughout medieval Europe. In Poland, in particular, they became indispensable in this capacity of bankers, because of the constant need of capital for the great building and other enterprises of Casimir's reign; even the new University of Cracow had a special Jewish money-lender for its students appointed in its charter.

Differently from the Germans and the Armenians, the Jews did not become merged in the Polish nation. Their racial peculiarities and religious traditions kept them more effectively distinct from the population, and their number gave strength to these factors. The extraordinarily large self-government which they enjoyed—amounting, in course of time, even to a legislative assembly of their own, with powers of taxation—constituted another Chinese wall between them and the Christians. The growth of this foreign body within a more and more unified Poland finally resulted in the grave and difficult Jewish problem which the new Poland of to-day has to face. Even in the remote age of Casimir the Great the gravity of this problem began to make itself felt. Jews, though self-governing, were

debarred from the considerable influence on political affairs which the Christian communities of the towns then exercised, and also from certain of their privileges, such as the ownership of land or the trading and manufacturing professions. In spite of such limitations, there are complaints of the townsmen of Cracow in Casimir's time against the preponderance gained by Jews in the government of the town. Nay, even more than that: when the terrible plague of that period, called the Black Death (1349), devastates Poland, there are actually anti-Jewish riots at Cracow, the Jews being accused of poisoning the wells and spreading infection among the Christians. Casimir founded close to Cracow the neighbouring town called after him Casimiria, which, in later times, became the Ghetto, or Jewish suburb, of Cracow itself; in a fine old synagogue in Gothic style, and a town hall, it retains specimens of its glorious medieval days. Now it is surely significant of the permanence of the old Jewish problem in Poland that this quarter should be a Ghetto still in our days. Jews, more or less assimilated to the rest of the population, live in all other quarters of the town; but the Jews who exclusively and densely people the Ghetto, and live there in extremely unhygienic conditions, wear the same long black cloaks, fur-lined caps, and locks of hair hanging down from their temples, use the same ancient Hebrew characters even for shop-signs, and conform to the same Old Testament ritual practices as their ancestors. And this spectacle is offered by the Jewish masses in all the Polish towns of to-day, both great and small.

IX

With the growing prosperity of towns in Casimir's reign, the comforts and ornaments of life begin to obtain a larger place and take more elaborate forms. The royal

Court of Cracow competes in splendour with the Anjou Court of Hungary and the Luxemburgs and Hapsburgs in Bohemia, and the rich merchants at Cracow rival the Court in display. One of them, Nicholas Wirsing, who also holds high office under the Crown, is said to have entertained four kings in his house on the occasion of a royal wedding, and subsequent political congress, in 1363; and that this is not an isolated instance of outlay is proved by the curious fact that a sumptuary law becomes necessary concerning patrician weddings: there must be no more than five courses served at the wedding banquets, and no more than thirty dishes of them; no more than eight persons on the bridegroom's side, and eight on the bride's, must take part, besides eight strangers, and no more than eight jesters; rhymesters are forbidden, and so are presents of silk clothing to the bride.

No wonder that in view of such luxuries enjoyed by the financial aristocracy of the towns, the poorer tradesmen, artisans and apprentices begin to revolt, and Casimir the Great, protector of the oppressed as he always is, makes the provision that of the town councillors one-half must be representatives of the plebeian class.

Of the arts which were put in the service of the new wealth of Poland, architecture stands foremost. The reign of Casimir the Great is a true Golden Age for it. It is proverbially said of him that "he found a Poland built of wood, and left behind one of brick." In the towns he founded or developed, his memory lives in the shape of magnificent churches built by him, and of spacious municipal buildings, from bazaars to breweries. The Gothic style, which was in full flower throughout Europe, is worthily represented in Poland by many structures of his reign. His royal capital of Cracow, in particular, owes to him some of its finest buildings, which still stand and

make it a marvellous museum of medieval architecture. The cathedral on Wawel Hill, towering over the city, was finished in Gothic style by Casimir's father, and he had also begun to build, instead of the old wooden residence, a Gothic palace for the kings on the same hill, which was continued by Casimir, and afterwards transformed into a Renaissance palace by later kings. Side by side with these monuments of royal power, others now arose to testify to the growing wealth and splendour of the citizens: the lofty Gothic parish church of St. Mary in the market-place of Cracow, and the central bazaar, called "Cloth Hall," in the same huge square, grow up in Casimir's time, and are finished shortly after his death. The bazaar, like the royal castle, is afterwards replaced by a Renaissance building, both illustrating, by their changes, the successive great periods of Polish splendour.

Architecture, though occupying the foremost place, is not the only art favoured in Casimir's happy reign: statues, carvings and pictures in churches, seals of deeds and miniatures in manuscripts, jewels and richly ornamented objects of daily use, testify even to-day to the high level reached in fourteenth-century Poland by sculpture, painting and applied art of all sorts.

Intellectual culture keeps pace with the progress of wealth and of art; here, as elsewhere, the intelligent protection of the king works wonders: the standard of education is raised; the knowledge of Latin becomes more and more common among the Polish gentry; studies in foreign universities and sojourns in foreign Courts become the fashion among noble youth. A literary monument of high excellence, the Latin chronicle of Casimir's reign by Archdeacon John of Czarnków, vice-chancellor of the realm, bears eloquent witness to the success of the king's efforts in all domains. A numerous congress of central European kings and princes at Cracow in 1363

gave expression to Europe's recognition of the prestige and authority which Poland had attained.

X

"One king, one law, one currency," was Casimir's motto in his endeavours at the consolidation of this empire. While working successfully with this end in view, he remembered that previous attempts at Polish empire-building had failed because great rulers were succeeded by weaker ones, who could not shoulder the burden. Casimir, although nearly related in blood to petty territorial princes in central Poland and in Silesia, preferred to think of one as his successor who was brought up to handle the affairs of a large State. Early in his reign, with the memories of his sister's splendid Hungarian Court still fresh in his memory, he designated his nephew, Lewis of Hungary, for his successor, in case he should die without a male heir. In doing so, he also probably had in mind the frequent alliances between Poland and Hungary in the past against Poland's neighbours and brother Slavs, the Czechs; while the Czechs had always looked with a greedy eye on Western Polish territories, and even occasionally made common cause with the German foe against Poland, there had been less occasion for quarrels with the Hungarians, because the Carpathian Mountains formed a strong natural frontier on the Southern side of Poland.

Thus it happened that when Casimir died without a son, the Poland which not long before him had been ruled by a Czech king, which his father had won back with such difficulty, for the possession of which he himself had paid the heavy price of Silesia, once more passed into the hands of a foreign ruler. The reign of King Lewis of Hungary over Poland (1371–1382) is of no more happy memory than that of the Czech Venceslas. Like Venceslas, he resided in

his foreign kingdom and left Poland to the tender mercies of Hungarian officials, bent on enriching themselves; his reign is marked by a *pogrom* of these foreign parasites at Cracow (1376). Unlike Casimir (to whom, indeed, *salus republicae* was *suprema lex*), Lewis conducted a purely dynastic policy, and looked upon Poland as a piece of family property. Thirdly, and what is worst in its consequences, he led the Constitution of the country some further steps down the fatal inclined plane of concessions of the Crown to the nobility in return for recognition—the path entered before him by some of the territorial princes in the period of Poland's division. At two congresses of the Polish barons, in the Hungarian town of Kassa (1374), he granted them a reduction of taxes and a remission of other duties to the State, as well as guarantees for appointments to high offices within their class only. This was a disastrous precedent for the further extortion of class privileges from succeeding kings. The foundations now were ultimately laid, indeed, for parliamentary government of Poland by the gentry, but also for the weakness of the Central Government and the ruinous disputes over the elections of kings. And the end which Lewis had had in view by his concessions was not even achieved; the broils between opposing candidates for the Crown, which had led to civil war even during his reign, were continued for two lawless and turbulent years after his death. At last his younger daughter, Hedviga, was recognised and crowned (1384). The barons of the Cracow province induced her, against her inclination, to break off an engagement with William of Austria, and marry the rough and uncultured prince of a large State which, in the meantime, had grown up as Poland's Eastern neighbour—the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. With this dynastic union between Poland and Lithuania we enter on a new, and the greatest, period of Polish history. From the Little Poland

shaped into a civilised State by Casimir the Great, we pass into the Greater Poland of the Jagellonian dynasty, which, with the help of Lithuania, subdues its principal foe, the German Knights, and remains for more than two centuries a dominant power and a great centre of culture in Eastern Europe.

LECTURE III

THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN MONARCHY

I

Poland's North-Eastern neighbours, the Lithuanian nation, were one of a group of peoples who had occupied since immemorial times the Eastern stretches of the Baltic shore, and whose languages, closely related to each other, form a separate branch of the large Indo-European family. Under the pretext of the introduction of Christianity these tribes early became the object of German aggression; the Westernmost one of them, the Prussians, were entirely exterminated by the German Knights of the Cross, and left their name behind to their Teutonic successors. On the other hand, the tribe furthest to the North-East, the Letts, survived the conquest by another German order of military knights, and emerged in our own days into independent political existence as the republic of Latvia.

In between the Prussians and the Letts a group of tribes known under the common name of Lithuanians occupied the Eastern banks of the River Niemen, which flows into the Baltic. They showed more power of resistance and of political consolidation. In the thirteenth century their princes were already strong enough not only to make a successful stand against the Germans, but also to extend their sovereignty over adjoining portions of the Russian Empire, which was weakened by dynastic divisions. The territories known as White and Black Russia became part of the Duchy of Lithuania, and some of the greatest early Lithuanian rulers enlarged their dominions by the whole Eastern borderlands between Poland and Russia, as far to the South as the province of Kiev, and as far to the

North and East as Smolensk and Briansk; even the Russian city-republic of Pskov became, at a time, a vassal of Lithuania.

On the Western side, the German Knights, those common enemies of Poland and of Lithuania, wielded a powerful weapon against the Lithuanians by holding the monopoly of Christian doctrine and culture. Of this, accordingly, some early Lithuanian princes sought to deprive them by independently adopting Christianity for their nation. In doing so, Lithuania, like the Slavonic world before it, found itself at the cross-roads between Western (or Roman) and Eastern (or Byzantine) Christianity. The early religious history of Lithuania is full of oscillations between the two Churches, with frequent and violent relapses into pagan reaction. On the whole, Eastern Christianity, promoted by marriages with Russian princesses, had a greater influence, and with it, and with the greater number of Russian population in the border territories conquered by Lithuanian princes, there came Russian civilisation: the dialect of North-Western Russia was used by the Court, the administration, and the educated upper classes, like Norman-French in early medieval England. The tide was only to turn against these Russian influences, and in favour of Roman Christianity, by the union with Lithuania's Roman Catholic Western neighbour—Poland. The idea of a Polish alliance against the common German danger was entertained by early Lithuania's greatest prince, Gedymin, who was for Lithuania what Casimir the Great was for Poland—a builder of empire and founder of towns and churches. He married his daughter to Casimir the Great. Renewed and closer union became urgently necessary for Lithuania when the usual dynastic broils between territorial princes divided and weakened it under Gedymin's numerous heirs and successors. It was with the eagerness of well-under-

stood political interest that the most resolute of a crowd of warring brothers and cousins, Prince Jagello, accepted the proposal of the Polish barons to marry the girl-queen Hedviga, who, after her father, Lewis of Hungary, occupied the Polish throne. The marriage could not but appear as a source of strength and consolidation for both Poland and Lithuania in their precarious position. The year 1386 marks the beginning of a great new era for both countries.

II

The first consequence of the union of Poland with Lithuania was the reception of the new king and the entire population of Lithuania into the Roman Catholic fold. Western Christianity, and the Polish civilisation which comes as its exponent, now get the upper hand in Lithuania over the Russian influences of the early period. The nobility, hitherto drawn into the orbit not only of Russian faith but of Russian manners and speech as well, now acquire Polish culture. In the following centuries not the nobility merely but the smaller gentry, the people of the towns, and the whole educated class of Lithuania become entirely Polish, and remain so after the partitions of Poland. After the fall of Poland, the Polish University in Lithuania's old capital, Wilno, is for many years the greatest Polish intellectual centre. Throughout the nineteenth century leaders of the Polish nation in thought and art, in song and in war, come from the patriotic ranks of the Lithuanian country gentry. Not until the recent growth of Lithuanian separatism is there any difference felt to exist between an educated Lithuanian and a Pole; and the Lithuanian and White Russian peasantry are bound to the Polish community by the strongest of all ties—their common Roman Catholic religion.

Naturally, this process of assimilation was not without

its hitches and set-backs. The nobility had at first to be lured into allegiance to the new system by concessions and privileges. The new king's rivals for sovereignty over Lithuania—particularly his brothers, Vitold and Svidrigello, who both rose against him repeatedly—could find support in anti-Polish and even anti-Christian nationalism among the Lithuanians; and they could also make common cause, on this particular occasion, with Lithuania's arch-enemy, the German Knights, who, with the conversion of Lithuania to Roman Christianity, found their "occupation gone," and were deprived of every pretext for invasions. Another natural ally to Lithuanian separatism, in the fifteenth century, as afterwards in the nineteenth century, were the Russian rulers of Moscow, who could not look with equanimity at the loss of their Lithuanian "sphere of influence." For still other reasons, the united strength of Poland and Lithuania was not a pleasant sight in the eyes of the kings of Hungary, who had withheld Red Russia from Poland since the death of Lewis, and claimed the Polish Crown for his descendants. When the Luxemburg King of Hungary, Sigismund, became German Emperor, he used the waning authority of the Holy Roman Empire for persistent intrigues against the Polish-Lithuanian union, and tempted Lithuanian separatism by the splendour of a royal crown. Finally, Lithuania's next-door neighbours and cousins, the Samogitians, were afraid at first of the extension of Christianity and, with it, of Polish political power over them as well, and here again assimilation was to be only the slow work of long time.

It was against odds all round, then, that the founder of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy, known in history as King Ladislas Jagello (1386–1434), had to defend his political creation. He used the sword resolutely for the reunion of Red Russia with the Polish Crown, for the

suppression of Lithuanian risings, and even within Poland itself for the punishment of a territorial prince who intrigued against him with the Hungarians and with the Germans.

III

But all these difficulties were subordinate in comparison with the great cause which had chiefly drawn Poland and Lithuania together—the conflict with the German power of the Knights of the Cross. All the constructive effort of Jagello's reign is mainly preparation for the inevitable trial of strength between the German Knights and their now united opponents. On this the future of Poland depended in more senses than one; not only the permanence of the union with Lithuania, but the vital issue of Poland's and Lithuania's indispensable access to the sea was bound to be decided by it. A partition of Poland, in which the Czechs and the Hungarians were to share was actually planned by the German Knights in 1397. Another powerful stimulus to the unity of Poland and Lithuania against the Western foe was given by an equally terrible foe from the East: a defeat inflicted upon the Lithuanians by the Tartars (1399) made the need for closer union with Poland more keenly felt than any amount of Polish pressure could have done. An Act of Union between the two countries, in 1401, follows immediately upon it, and is the first step in a series of similar treaties which extend over nearly two centuries, and were finally crowned by the ultimate charter of Polish-Lithuanian political union framed at a Congress in the town of Lublin in 1569.

Only when the dynastic union had been followed by the beginnings of political union was there a sufficient guarantee given for mutual support between Poles and Lithuanians in the inevitable great struggle against

the German Knights. The great work of the union was crowned by its first outstanding success in the victory of the Polish-Lithuanian forces over the Knights of the German Order at Grunwald and Tannenberg, in East Prussia, in 1410—an event remembered and celebrated ever since as a turning-point in the history of the age-long conflict between the German and the Slavonic world. Crushing as the German defeat was, the fact remained without important immediate consequences; the victory was not fructified duly, and it took another half-century of intermittent wars, until Poland, in the Peace of Toruń (Thorn), 1466, permanently secured access to the Baltic for herself, with the province of West Prussia and the mouth of the Vistula, and made the German Knights her vassals. But it was by the victory of Grunwald that the prestige of the German power had for the first time been definitely broken in that part of the world, and the Polish-Lithuanian union had justified its existence as the foundation of Imperial strength, security and freedom. Besides, the victory brought one gain at least, which was not insignificant, in the return to Lithuania of its border province of Samogitia, which had been yielded to the Germans under pressure of the Tartar danger.

IV

In view of such material and moral success it is no wonder that the victory, which was the fruit of union, in its turn gave added strength to the union itself, and three years after it the bonds between Poland and Lithuania were drawn more closely by the Act of Horodlo (1413); the administrative organisation of Lithuania was reconstructed on the Polish model, and the rights and privileges of the Polish nobility were extended to the Roman Catholic nobles of Lithuania. Only the question of drawing

the Eastern Christians of Lithuania's Russian-speaking provinces into the orbit of a Western Christian political system remained without a satisfactory solution, and was to be a hopeless puzzle to Poland long after.

Other complications of a religious nature entered the political organism of the empire by its relations with its Western neighbour, the Czech Kingdom. Forebodings of the coming Reformation were stirring the European air in the doctrines of John Wycliffe in England and John Hus in Bohemia, and in both cases the idea of a democratic and a national Church was the definite political shape which the reforming tendencies were apt to assume. Now in Poland the Roman clergy, having accomplished the great task of the conversion of Lithuania and Samogitia, reached the height of their power. A priest of genius, Zbigniew Oleśnicki, was the all-powerful, leading Polish statesman of the time, and naturally used his best energies to strengthen the power of the Church within the State. Reaction against these theocratic ambitions fostered the intellectual sympathies which were developing between Poland and the Czechs, owing to the continuous presence of large bodies of Polish and Lithuanian students in the Czech University of Prague. Under the influence of Hus himself, who corresponded with the Polish king, and of Hieronymus of Prague, who came to Poland in person, a Hussite party arose among the Polish nobility. On the other hand, the Czechs sought strength for their national, Hussite religion against Roman and German persecution in projects of a dynastic union with Poland. But on this, as on many a later occasion, the power of Rome prevailed over Polish imperial interests: Hussitism was ultimately quelled by force in Poland, and left to be suppressed, in the Czech Kingdom, by the hostile forces arrayed against it; and the extension of the Jagellonian union to another great neighbouring kingdom was never permanently

realised. Princes of the Jagellonian dynasty, in course of time, bore the Czech and the Hungarian Crown, sometimes even both together; but finally both these countries came under the sway of the Hapsburgs, the rising central European rival of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchs. And the beginnings of the Reformation, nipped in the bud in their Hussite shape, only revived in another form and from other origins in sixteenth-century Poland, to be suppressed once more, after a longer history, by Roman Catholic counter-reformation in the seventeenth. Neither in imperial federation nor national Church organisation was Poland fated to reach the limits of those possibilities which were opening up so magnificently in the early Jagellonian age.

V

It is not entirely Poland's fault if these great conceptions were not developed to the uttermost. Firstly, the unwavering allegiance to Roman Catholicism which some of Poland's most enlightened men professed was, after all, rooted in the very solid fact that the connection with the greatest international organisation of the medieval world was a mainstay of culture and civilisation in Poland, and politically it was on a common basis of Roman Catholicism that the new greatness of the Polish-Lithuanian Empire rested. Such advantages were too palpable and too fresh in memory to be disregarded. And secondly, there were outward obstacles distinctly hampering the progress of Polish Empire-building even then, especially on the Eastern side. One of them was the growing and consolidating power of the new Russian monarchy of Moscow. The question whether this would not come into the common Catholic fold yet was still open in the time of the early Jagellons, when a Moscow

ruler actually signed an Act of Union with Rome at Florence in 1439. A solution in this favourable sense could not light-heartedly be endangered by Poland herself breaking away from Rome. Besides, there was the old, agelong foe, now full-grown—the power of Islam, building up a Turkish Empire in Europe on Poland's South-Eastern border. Energies were spent in fighting it which would have been needed to realise the imperial idea in other directions: nine years before Constantinople was taken by the Turks a king of Poland and Hungary, Ladislas III, died a hero's death in the battle of Varna, on the shore of the Black Sea (1444). And Poland's feudal overlordship over Rumania and Bessarabia was too intermittent, and the vassals' own policy too inconstant, to offer a lasting safeguard against the power of the Crescent.

VI

If under such conditions the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy could not develop into an even larger federation of Eastern European nations, the *constitutional* evolution of the State went on at a more continuous and unbroken pace under the Jagellonian monarchs.

The foundation for constitutional liberties and a limitation of the king's absolute power by the will of his subjects had been laid in the period of Poland's divisions and dynastic changes in the shape of concessions extorted from rulers by the nobility in moments of difficulty.

This system of privileges underwent, in the period of the Jagellonian kings, a fundamental change in the direction of democracy: from an oligarchy of the small class of great nobles it was transformed into parliamentary government by representatives of the large mass of the country gentry. At first the way was prepared for this by

further development along the old lines of prerogatives granted in return for support: the first Jagellonian king had to pay for the help of Poland's knighthood against the foreign foes of the new Union by such rights as control over the finance of the State, immunity of landed property from confiscation, and security of the nobleman's person from arrest, except in flagrant criminal cases. It was in this reign also that actual parliamentary practice became customary, in the form of assemblies of the gentry in the principal provinces in order to vote the taxes; these local assemblies were, and remained, the groundwork for an Imperial Parliament. But if the nation's Constitutional powers were, indeed, to broaden into such a sovereign institution, the ground had first to be cleared by the breaking-down of the exclusive privileges of the higher aristocracy, both spiritual and temporal. This lay also in the interests of the authority of the Crown against the barons, and accordingly this task was attacked resolutely by the third king of the Jagellonian dynasty, Casimir IV (1447–1492), a monarch of strong and stubborn will, and a true, enlightened autocrat.

VII

Coming from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, where the ruler's power was still unlimited, Casimir IV found himself surrounded in Poland by representatives of the new humanist learning, who advocated the emancipation of the State from the authority of the Church. One of the foremost Polish humanists, John Ostroróg, developed the theory of State sovereignty against ecclesiastical hierarchy in an elaborate Latin treatise (1474). It was under such influences that Casimir IV first thought of throwing off the shackles of Church authority. He profited by the struggle between two rival Popes to obtain

from one of them the important right of the appointment of Polish bishops by the Crown, and he was not afraid of the anathema by which another Pope later on endeavoured to thwart his purposes in foreign policy. But he was less successful against the secular nobles, whose privileges he ultimately was obliged to confirm under menace of deposition. By doing so he repeated a precedent set by the first Jagellonian king in his last years, which practically amounted to free election of each successive king by the nobility and gentry. This principle of the election of kings once admitted, the practice became one of the chief causes of Poland's later disasters.

In Western Europe, especially in France, the kings, in their struggles against the barons, had found support in the strength of the towns. In Poland early efforts of this kind had failed; later on, there had been strife between the kings and the German colonists in the cities; in the Jagellonian period the German separatism of the towns had long been broken, but at the same time they grew politically too indifferent and too weak to be a useful ally to the Crown. There remained one possible pillar of support: the large mass of the country gentry, which was as desirous as the king himself to limit the power of the great nobles, and which, when gathered in arms in war-time, represented a formidable strength. It was on such an occasion, during a general mobilisation of Poland's knighthood for one of the later expeditions against the German Knights, that the gentry obtained, in 1454, the privileges called after their place of origin, the Statutes of Nieszawa, which are the charter of Polish parliamentarism. By them, the legislative powers of the local assemblies in all important matters affecting the whole community, from taxation to war, were definitely established. Delegates of the local assemblies were to meet at three appointed places in the three

chief parts of the realm for joint deliberation under the presidency of the king, and occasionally at one place for the whole realm—the town of Piotrków, in Western Poland. From these occasional meetings at Piotrków of delegates from the provincial assemblies of all Poland, the Lower House of the Polish Parliament, the *Sejm* or Chamber of Deputies, developed in due course as a permanent institution. An Upper Chamber also definitely evolved, after the Statutes of Nieszawa, under the name of Senate, out of the Council of State, formed of the principal barons, spiritual and temporal.

VIII

Thus Poland, as one of very few countries on the Continent of Europe, developed in the later Middle Ages a system of parliamentary institutions analogous to the English House of Commons and House of Lords. The possession of Constitutional freedom by the Polish nation added great splendour to the Jagellonian monarchy, and became its chief attraction as a rallying-centre for neighbouring peoples, who now desired to enter into federations with Poland and share its parliamentary liberties.

The further history of Polish parliamentarism might have been brilliant, indeed, both within and without, if its institutions had continued to develop in the spirit of their beginnings. The basis of government having been extended to the whole gentry class, the logical and necessary sequel would have been, in due time, to extend it still further to the other classes of society, the townsmen and the peasants. Instead, the class selfishness of the gentry kept these classes in a condition of political subjection, and a legislation dictated by narrow-minded care for the landowners' interests only crippled the towns

economically. A great national awakening and generous constitutional reforms came in the eighteenth century, but Poland herself was perishing then.

Another weakness of the Polish parliamentary system, besides its later inertia, was a fact inherent in its very origins. The essence of the process by which the Polish Parliament arose was a change from an oligarchy of nobles to a gentry democracy. But this change was made largely illusory by the great prerogatives retained by the local assemblies. The Central Parliament, when meeting, was a congress of mandatories of the local assemblies only, each of them limited by the instructions from those who sent him; it was not a legislative body of unfettered representatives of the nation at large. By this arrangement the king hoped to control the individual local assemblies more easily, and to obtain more willing support from them, than a strong national body would always have been ready to grant him. As a matter of fact, however, it was not the Crown, but the great nobles of the different districts who easily controlled the poor and unenlightened gentry of their neighbourhood by favours and persuasion. And thus the gentry democracy became, in effect, a huge mass of unconscious slaves to the personal self-will and lawless family ambitions of a few great nobles. In this respect, again, reform came when it was too late: it was only by the new Constitution of May 3, 1791—four years before Poland's final partition—that the members of the Polish Parliament were declared to be national representatives, not bound by the wishes of their local constituencies.

IX

The period of the later Jagellonian kings takes us into the twilight of the great imperial foreign policy inaugurated

by the Union of Poland and Lithuania. The greatest success which had been achieved—the victory over the German Knights and the attainment of secure access to the sea—became a source of weakness: the flourishing export trade in corn, which now began, made the wealthy gentry effeminate and unwilling to assert the authority of the Empire against its neighbours by the sword. And the habit of making every armed expedition the pretext for some more collective bargaining with the Crown for further privileges also lessened the prestige of Poland as a military power. The substitution of hired soldiers for a citizen army caused difficulties concerning their payment, as the gentry also held the strings of the purse; and the Crown was weakened and humiliated by the devices it was obliged to use in order to raise money.

Such were the reasons why even the decisive struggle with the German Knights themselves was unnecessarily prolonged for thirteen years. For the same causes, the rights of Jagellonian pretenders to the Czech and Hungarian Crowns were but fitfully enforced against their rivals. The power of the Turks in Constantinople and the Tartars in the Crimea, who both between them began to cut off Poland from the Black Sea, was not opposed effectively: an expedition for the establishment of Polish rule over Rumania as a "buffer State" between Poland and Turkey ended in a disastrous retreat (1497). Another buffer State existed between the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy and its rising Eastern neighbour, the Russian Empire of Moscow, in the shape of the city-republic of Novgorod; but this failed to get sufficient support from Poland against Moscow, and so Moscow was allowed to grow up, under strenuous organisers, into a dangerously powerful immediate neighbour to the Russian-speaking border territories of Eastern Lithuania.

What was worse still, this growing foreign menace

was not encountered by progressive consolidation within the empire; the Union between Poland and Lithuania was actually broken towards the end of the fifteenth century, two brothers separately occupying the thrones of the two countries. The one who ruled Poland was compelled by the weakness of his position to extend the privileges of the gentry at the expense of the town population, who lost the right to own land, and were stripped of commercial advantages by the abolition of customs duties on foreign merchandise. Simultaneously the peasants were ultimately deprived of personal liberty of movement and of independent jurisdiction, and the village bailiffs made liable to arbitrary deposition by the landlord. The gentry, favoured economically by freedom for its corn trade, and morally by the monopoly of offices in the Church, enters upon the period of its oppressive preponderance over the less favoured classes. And the restitution of the personal union between Poland and Lithuania, accomplished under pressure of the rising Russian danger in 1501, cost the new monarch some more concessions, this time of a kind which strengthened the danger of aristocratic oligarchy, inherent in the imperfect parliamentarism of Poland: the Senate was vested with sovereign administrative powers, and the right of subjects to refuse obedience to an autocratic king was expressly sanctioned. This enforced move of the king in favour of the nobility against the gentry exasperated the latter, and drove it to refuse supplies and personal service in a war with Moscow, the net result being loss of territory in the North-East. This lesson only turned the tide in favour of the gentry once more, and a law called *Nihil Novi* (1505) definitely established a fully organised two-chamber Parliament with the express requirement of the consent of the Lower House for the validity of all legislation. Unfortunately this

provision for consent came to be absurdly interpreted as demanding absolute unanimity, and so the statute which finally organised the Polish Parliament most tragically became the starting-point for Poland's worst and most ruinous parliamentary abuse: the "Free Veto" (*liberum veto*), or abolition of any legislative Act by the protest of one solitary member of the Assembly.

X

Whatever seeds of danger to the commonwealth may now, in retrospect, appear to us to have been sown by the constitutional changes, the early Jagellonian period, on the whole, undoubtedly presents a spectacle not only of great international power, but of splendid progress in learning, literature, and art. The very greatness of the new monarchy, in fact, seems to give wings of inspiration and a grandeur of wide sweep and mighty daring to the Polish thought of that age. A great empire finds its worthy historian in a teacher of royal princes, John Długosz, whose thirteen Latin books of Polish history are the greatest monument of historical writing in Poland, until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries produce rivals to it in Polish. Throughout the fifteenth century, in the hey-day of Długosz' historical work, the University of Cracow, re-established by Queen Hedviga shortly before her death (1399), leads the nation in intellectual activities; it is illumined by great Polish scholars and men of science well known in Western Europe, like the classical philologist, Bishop Gregory of Sanok, or the astronomer, Adalbert of Brudzewo. It attracts both teachers and students from abroad: the humanist laureate, Conrad Celtes, lectures in it and founds a learned society at Cracow. Finally it becomes the academic *Alma Mater* of one of the greatest minds of all times: Nicholas

Copernicus, the immortal astronomer, as a youth wears its undergraduate gown in 1491. The intense literary and intellectual activities of Cracow in this period soon became widely manifest in the numerous products of its printing-presses: the first of them is set up in 1474, three years after Caxton began to print in English, and many others grow up about the turn of the century.

The achievements of learning and literature are paralleled by one shining light above all in the sky of art. The great sculptor, Vitus Stoss, residing at Nuremberg and Cracow in turn, crowns the Gothic Age of Polish art by his marvellous group of statues carved in wood which adorn the high altar of St. Mary's Church, and represent the Twelve Apostles and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. This last and greatest masterpiece of Cracow Gothic is soon to be followed by a magnificent outburst of Renaissance architecture and sculpture in the Cracow of the sixteenth century.

XI

The towns of Poland are, indeed, all at the height of their prosperity and culture in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. While still maintaining their traditional connections with Germany, they attract by their progress in commerce and manufacture citizens from far more distant lands: Scottish business men flock to Poland; Swiss and Alsatian emigrants establish patrician dynasties in the town. The townsmen of foreign origin find their best interest in firm loyalty to the Polish Crown. Satisfied by repeated extensions of their self-government, the towns cease to wrangle with the king, and become politically only too inactive and indifferent. The gentry will profit by this soon, and inaugurate a high-handed policy of political repression, which will bring about the decay

of the Polish towns. But in the period we are reviewing here, there is still an atmosphere of constitutional freedom in Polish town life which attracts the townsmen of Poland's neighbourhood. German towns under the rule of the Knights of the Cross actively manifest their willingness to pass under Polish domination; one of them, the town of Danzig, permanently included in Poland since the middle of the fifteenth century, becomes the principal gateway of Poland's foreign trade, and flourishes more than ever under continuous Polish rule.[2]

LECTURE IV

RENAISSANCE POLAND

I

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the united Polish-Lithuanian monarchy seemed to be entering on a period of growing wealth and steady progress, having asserted the union firmly against all its foreign foes. No wonder, then, that when two enlightened representatives of humanist culture ascended the throne in succession in the persons of the two Sigismunds, father and son, their ambitions should have been directed mainly at securing settled conditions for peaceful development. Like Casimir the Great, they wished to go down to posterity mainly as Princes of Peace; but like Casimir the Great also, they had to buy prolonged peace at the price of heavy sacrifices, which considerably diminished the prestige of the monarchy without and the authority of Central Government within the country. The first loss is particularly marked in the reign of the father, the second in that of the son.

When observing the older King Sigismund's (1506–1548) endeavours to secure prolonged peace for his country, we see for the first time in its history a distinctly joint array against it of the three Powers which were in the end to divide Poland between them—Austria, Prussia and Russia—being represented by the Hapsburg dynasty, the German Knights of the Cross, and the Tsars of Moscow respectively. A member of the Hohenzollern family makes his appearance among the Grand Masters of the German Knights, and it is his aim to extend

German domination over the whole stretch of Baltic shore from the island of Ruegen to the Gulf of Riga. For this purpose he wins the support of the Emperor Maximilian on the one hand, and sends arms and military organisers to the ruler of Moscow on the other. The Emperor sends a golden crown to the Moscow prince, recognises him as emperor of all Russia, and concludes an alliance with him. The Hapsburgs are only brought to abjure these intrigues against Poland by the payment of the heaviest price of all: at a Congress of Vienna, 1515, exactly three hundred years before another and more famous Congress there, the Polish dynasty resign their claims to the Hungarian and the Czech Crowns. This abandonment of Poland's Central European ambitions laid the foundations for the imperial grandeur of the Hapsburg dynasty in the later centuries, and certainly did not make the Hapsburg power less dangerous to Poland. True, the German Knights lost their chief supporter, the Emperor. With some more effort, Poland might have crushed them at least definitely then, and held the entire Baltic shore permanently; but King Sigismund was content with the easier triumph of an oath of allegiance from the Hohenzollern prince in 1525. The power of the Knights of the Cross, transformed at this time by the Reformation into a Protestant and hereditary Prussian principality, remains fixed on the shore of the Baltic as a source of trouble for Poland, and when it becomes united, over a hundred years later, with its Western German neighbour, the Electorate of Brandenburg, modern Prussia is created as one of the three mighty factors of Poland's destruction. The third enemy—the Muscovite Empire—irresistibly grows in strength at the same time under its determined, absolute rulers. The process is not stopped in King Sigismund's time, either by the sacrifice of the territory of Smolensk

or by a check inflicted upon the Russians by the united Polish-Lithuanian power in one of the military conflicts of this not altogether quiet reign (1514).

Finally, the fourth great adversary of Poland, and the principal foe of Christendom in that part of the world—the Turkish Power—also profited by the irresolute and peaceful policy of Poland at this period to intervene successfully in Hungarian dynastic quarrels and push its way Northward to the Carpathian Mountains, and Westward to the very walls of Vienna, which sustained its first Turkish siege then at the hands of Sultan Soliman the Magnificent (1529). Poland's traditional sovereignty over the buffer State of Rumania, although asserted by one victory in this reign, was not held durably or firmly, and greater trouble from Turkey was evidently coming. But Crusades were preached in vain, a ransom was even paid to Turkey, and peace renewed. The King's sacrifices to the Hapsburg dynasty brought no effective help from that quarter against Turkey, and France was too absorbed in her Central European ambitions to show interest in the Near Eastern danger to Christian civilisation. It began to develop into an economic danger to Poland, as the Turks, together with their vassals the Tartars, were debarring the Polish Empire from the natural and necessary direction of its colonising expansion —the fertile South-Eastern plains and the shore of the Black Sea.

II

Such imperfect successes against Poland's most dangerous neighbours were not at the same time compensated, like the losses of Casimir the Great two centuries before, by territorial gains or greater consolidation of the Empire. True, the central Polish province of Masovia was at this time, after the extinction of its line of territorial princes,

finally incorporated into Poland (1529); but the important province of West Prussia, that bulwark against German expansion along the Baltic, remained but loosely connected with Poland under a very liberal system of Home Rule. On the other hand, expansion of Polish influences into the Eastern territories of the monarchy made more satisfactory progress in this region. The Polish language gains ground both among the nobility of Lithuania and in the Ruthenian-speaking lands of the South-East; the town of Lublin becomes a great centre of the new Polish printing trade. The large towns of the interior of Poland at the same time officially abolish the last vestiges of their medieval German in municipal records and in the Church. Even Prussia, for political reasons, bows to the authority of Polish culture by appointing Polish and Lithuanian teachers to the newly founded Protestant University of Koenigsberg (1544) and by printing devotional literature in Polish for its Polish subjects, in order to spread the doctrines of the Reformation among them.

While these were satisfactory outward proofs of the vitality of the Polish element, the constitutional development of Poland at the same time tended more and more fatefully to move along exclusive lines of class privilege. Increasing wealth makes the gentry increasingly unruly. Under pressure of the Russian trouble statutes are extorted (1520) which strengthen the bonds of peasant serfdom and further limit the rights of townsmen. The Crown, under the influence of Italian humanism, shows Machiavellian tendencies towards more absolute rule; they call forth prompt reaction on the part of the gentry, and at last the old king is compelled (1530) formally to recognise the gentry's right to the free election of kings —the source of Poland's most ruinous civil wars in later ages.

III

Even these concessions, however, did not secure unchallenged authority for Sigismund's son and successor. The second Sigismund's reign (1548–1572) is marked by fruitless struggles against the tightening fetters of class rule imposed upon the Central Government by the selfish gentry. It is a truly critical period, illustrating how difficult progressive development and enlightened reform of the Polish Constitution was becoming. The second humanist king began his reign among stormy protests against his marriage to a lady of the noble Lithuanian house of Radziwiłł, and he continued to the end to encounter the diffidence of the unenlightened and undisciplined gentry against all his attempts to put the Polish State in order. The magnates, in this instance, were on the same side with the gentry at first, and the King was even driven to the desperate device of an alliance with the House of Austria for mutual support against revolted subjects. In the earlier period of his reign, besides, grave foreign troubles left little scope for reforming activity at home. Placed between Austria, who was definitely rounding off her Empire on the Hungarian side, and France, who even then conducted a pro-Turkish policy, it was by means of adroit diplomatic manœuvring only that the Polish King avoided being implicated in a war on a large scale with the Turks over a disputed Hungarian succession. War was also avoided with the rising Prussian neighbour, though at a heavy price only: the rights of the Hohenzollerns to East Prussia were ultimately recognised by the Polish Crown. On the other hand, German ambitions to extend Prussian control over the adjoining North-Eastern seaside province of Livland —the Latvia of to-day—were baffled by Polish diplomacy, and a definite beginning made with securing for the

Polish-Lithuanian Empire this outpost of its command over the Baltic shore. Unfortunately, the growing Russian Empire likewise could not but seek for an outlet in the same Northern regions of the Baltic, and Livland becomes the chief object of strife between Poland and Russia. Over this even Sigismund Augustus, with all his diplomacy, could not avoid war with the formidable adversary who now arises to Poland in the person of the great Russian Empire-builder, Ivan the Terrible (1533). A prolonged war with him was only to reach its culmination in the following reign; but one durable result was achieved even now: the South-Eastern portion of Livland became part of the Polish-Lithuanian Empire, and the body of the country a vassal to Poland, including the Gulf of Riga and the mouth of the Dvina River. Even this very real gain, however, is not made without sowing the seeds of conflict with another neighbour on the Baltic—Sweden, which begins to struggle for a hold on the shore opposite to its own coast, in Esthonia. Against these Swedish ambitions the diplomatic manœuvres of the Polish King are not of much avail, and the conflict was inherited by his successors. So were the frictions with the Danes, who were jealous of Poland's rising power at sea, and began to support Russia against her. Another conflict which the next king was to inherit was a struggle with the town of Danzig and the nobility of West Prussia over their separatist tendencies, fostered by material advantages and political privileges. Here, again, some progress at least was made, and the ties between Danzig and Poland were drawn more closely.

IV

On the whole, then, the enlightened King's endeavours towards the one outstanding and most vital aim of

Polish foreign policy—a firm and permanent foothold on the Baltic shore—were not unsuccessful, and even a Polish Navy began to develop in his time. Incidentally, the nine years' war with Russia contributed to one important achievement in domestic consolidation: the crowning and final Act of Union between Poland and Lithuania, under pressure of the Russian danger, was signed and sworn at Lublin in 1569. The constitutional liberties enjoyed by the Polish gentry were the chief attraction which moved the Lithuanian country gentlemen to clamour more and more loudly for closer union with Poland and for extension of all Polish administrative and legal institutions to Lithuania. The separatist Lithuanian nobles had at last to give way. The outstanding difference about the Southern provinces of the Lithuanian State, stretching towards Kiev, was settled in Poland's favour by the attitude of their gentry itself. And so at last, by this supreme one in a series of eight Acts of Union, extending over nearly two centuries, the assimilation of Lithuania to Poland was completed for the rest of the old Poland's existence: the Crown, the Parliament, the currency became common; the high offices, the treasury, the army, remaining distinct, were organised on strictly the same lines in Lithuania as already prevailed in Poland; and the citizens of both countries associated as "freemen with freemen, and equals with equals," as the motto ran, all the rights and privileges of the Polish gentry being extended to that of Lithuania, whether Roman Catholic, or Eastern Christian, or Protestant, as part of it had become by that time. This meant the introduction of Polish parliamentary democracy into Lithuania. On the other hand, the power of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian great nobles, with their enormous wealth in land, now definitely enters Polish politics, to become one of the chief factors which frus-

trated the constitutional evolution of Poland. And to the maturing conflict between the Polish monarchy and the Russian Empire the Union adds another powerful stimulus.

Thus coming events cast their shadows before, even in the sunshine of supreme achievement. And the great success of the Union is not paralleled by other triumphs of political progress in the domestic affairs of the time. A democratic party of noble-minded patriotic reformers in Parliament had made "the execution of laws" their watchword, but their own new laws erred by narrow class spirit. One of them, indeed, partly broke the power of the great nobles by subjecting their tenure of Crown lands to revision and their tenants to taxation for the support of a standing army. But another law, by forbidding exports and facilitating imports of merchandise in order to keep prices down, had a disastrous effect on the commercial prosperity of the towns, while the country gentry flourished by unlimited export of corn.

Even less comfort as to the organising capacity of Poland's legislators can be derived from the spectacle which this reign affords of futile endeavours to create a Polish National Church. The rising tide of the Reformation reached Poland from the West. The first distinguished poet in the Polish language, Rey, became a Calvinist in middle age; the first distinguished prose writer, Orzechowski, was a priest who married and quarrelled with his bishop. Parliament after Parliament demanded the Polish language in Church ritual, also civil jurisdiction and State taxation for the clergy, abolition of their celibacy, the Communion under both shapes, and the convocation of a National Church Assembly. The King himself leaned to the reformed side, and quarrelled with the Pope over a divorce, like Henry VIII. And yet the idea of a Polish National Church, which might have given strength to the State, was wrecked

on the shoals of Polish individualism. The Protestant movement at once split up on Polish soil into a multitude of sects, and even the genius of one of the makers of the Reformation—the Pole, John Łaski, who had won fame in the history of Frisian and English Protestantism—did not succeed in bringing the wrangling factions of the dissenters to a common understanding. On the other hand, the conflicts with Orthodox Russia on one side, and Lutheran Prussia on the other, united the Roman Catholic Poles under the banner of their common faith. It was a symbol of the ultimate victory of Catholic counter-Reformation over Protestant Reformation in Poland when the King accepted the Book of Decrees of the Council of Trent from the hands of the Papal Nuncio (1564). Soon afterwards the Jesuits, that vanguard of militant Catholicism, came to stay, and a ramshackle alliance of the Protestant sects—the Concord Act of Sandomierz (1570)—was no wall against such a disciplined power. It was only in the field of intellectual culture, and not in that of political influence, that one religious community of particularly advanced and enlightened views, viz. the Socinians (called "Arians" by the Poles, and "Unitarians" in their later existence among the Western nations), gave a number of men of high distinction to Poland.[3] And it was among the cultured, the educated class, only that Protestantism ever took real root in Poland. The large mass of the peasant people remained untouched by it, and even for the lower gentry it largely remained a "German creed" which they viewed with diffidence and aversion.

V

The calamities inherent in the Polish system, but kept in check by the diplomatic and political genius of the

second humanist king, for the first time broke over the country in all their terror when his death (1572) ended the glorious rule of the Jagellonian dynasty, and Poland was for several years in the throes of an interregnum. However, public spirit was still strong enough in the country to prevent the disastrous dynastic and religious wars which lacerated France at the same time. In fact, when for a few short months a French prince of the House of Valois occupied the Polish throne, his French companions admired the spirit of mutual toleration which they found prevailing in Poland. The Frenchman soon forsook the Polish throne for France, to reign there as King Henry III, and left behind him only one fateful legacy—the very strict limitations of royal power which the National Party had compelled him to swear to, called the *Henrician Articles* (1573). This precedent would have worked mischief enough at once if Poland had not received a truly great ruler in the person of another foreigner—the Transsylvanian, King Stephen Bathory (1576–1586). His policy not only surpasses in farsightedness that of his greatest predecessors, but it achieves the last, and highest, unmitigated successes which the old Polish Empire was ever to attain.

He had no easy task before him. From that skilful humanist diplomatist, Sigismund II, he inherited certain standing problems of Polish foreign policy which, after all, only power could solve in accordance with the vital interests of the country. Like his predecessor, and with even deeper insight into the fundaments of Empire-building, he realised the paramount importance of the Baltic shore for the existence and prosperity of Poland. But unlike the diplomat king, Bathory trusted to strength rather than manœuvre for the maintenance and enlargement of Poland's hold on the sea-coast. In this spirit he accomplished, as the first great enterprise of his reign,

the ultimate subjection of the city of Danzig, which had been intriguing both with the Russians and with the Germans against the Polish Crown, hoping for more commercial power for itself from Poland's weakening. From the time of Bathory's decisive victory (1577) onward we hear no more of such intrigues, and Danzig seeks its interest in loyalty to Poland.

But greater tasks lay ahead in the same direction. The North-Eastern seaside province was still a bone of contention with Russia, and a war for the possession of Livland had inevitably to be waged. Bathory made the greatest military effort recorded in Polish history. Having organised a Polish fleet against Danzig, he now put into the field against Russia that principal instrument of modern warfare—masses of infantry. It was for the first time in Polish annals that infantry, and not cavalry, decided great battles; and in connection with this, not country gentlemen only, but townsmen won distinction in fighting for their country. Thus Bathory became the precursor of the great modern Polish military leader, Kościuszko, who went one step further in the democratisation of national defence by calling the peasants to arms.

Bathory's successes in his wars against Moscow corresponded to the grandeur of the means employed. His three victorious expeditions are a turning-point in the agelong struggle: Poland, on the defensive so far, takes the offensive now, and maintains it till the middle of the seventeenth century. Under Bathory, a Polish army besieged Pskov (1581), and another one reached the Volga. But even Bathory's successes were inconclusive; although he reconquered the whole of Livland, with some adjoining territory, yet Moscow was saved from utter defeat by diplomatic skill. Ivan the Terrible succeeded in attracting the favourable interest of the German Emperor to his cause, and, what is more, in securing the actual interven-

tion of the Pope, to whom he held out hopes of a conversion of the whole of Russia to Roman Catholicism and of a crusade against the Turks. At any rate, however, Poland's successes in the East greatly increased her prestige in the West. The reign of Bathory is the hey-day of Poland's international authority and power.

In his last years the monarch who had done more than any other to give Poland a commanding position in the Baltic turned his eye towards that other shore which was the natural goal of a Polish Empire on its Southern side—the Black Sea. He contemplated even a Union with Russia in order to deliver Europe jointly from the Turk and to counteract the ambitions of the Hapsburgs in his native Hungary and in the Balkans. His former Russian conquests had been checked by the Tsar's diplomacy; his new plans were broken by the more potent hand of Death.

VI

Bathory's handling of Polish domestic affairs is marked by the same grandeur of conception and might of initiative as his foreign policy, but in the same way also it is only imperfectly and temporarily successful. Some of his measures at home were directly calculated to serve the ends he pursued abroad. Thus he completed the work of his two predecessors in giving organisation and self-government to the military community of the Ukrainian Cossacks on the South-Eastern border, with a view to making them a bulwark against Turks, Tartars and Russians. That they developed into enemies of Poland themselves and became the ancestors of modern Ukrainian Nationalism was not the fault of the great King's liberalism, but rather of the unwise selfishness of Polish border magnates.

Another great work of Bathory's, the creation of a

University in the town of Wilno, the historical capital of Lithuania (1580), was calculated to promote the spread of Western civilisation in the North-East of Europe and the assimilation of that part of the monarchy. The University of Wilno had its period of splendour more than two centuries later, when the Polish Empire had ceased to be. It has been re-established in the new Poland, and the hope of all Poles is that its peaceful influence may gradually overcome the present Lithuanian aversion for Poland, and thus finally serve the end which its far-sighted founder had in view.

These dealings with important national and racial minorities within the monarchy were but subordinate acts in comparison with the great task into which Bathory put his best energies: that of creating a high level of civic spirit among his Polish subjects. The Transsylvanian was determined to "govern, and not to be ordered about"; he would not be "a painted king," as he roundly told his very first Parliament. At the same time, he respected the parliamentary institutions he found established in Poland, and wished to educate the nation into perfect ability to govern iself in that republic which Poland, with an elective king, had practically become. In this endeavour to make a disciplined and enlightened democratic community of the large mass of Poland's citizens, the King was heart and soul with the king-maker who had helped him to the throne—John Zamoyski, whom he made his Chancellor. This great statesman, who was the right arm of a most resolute monarch, at the same time deserved the name of a "Tribune of the People" of Poland's gentry, which has been bestowed upon him by a modern historian. He assisted the King above all in the most urgent task of restoring the decaying authority of the law and suppressing the licence of individual ambitions. By the creation of two supreme Courts of Appeal, one for Poland and one for

Lithuania, a most thoroughgoing reform was effected in the whole judicial system with regard to the vast mass of civil litigations. Criminal jurisdiction remained in the last instance in the hands of the Upper Chamber under the presidency of the King, and a powerful example of its unsparing application to high treason was given when a great noble who conspired against the King and intrigued with Moscow and the Hapsburgs was mercilessly sent to the block (1584). This unique act was the final and supreme proof of the great King's firm will to make law and order the mainstay of free Constitutional Government. If he had found worthy successors in that path, the greatest disease of the Polish body-politic, lawlessness, would never have been allowed to develop and become one of the main causes of Poland's fall.

VII

Full as the sixteenth century is of the greatest political achievements in Polish history, it is perhaps even more resplendent with the glories of intellect and art.

The reigns of the two Sigismunds are marked by the advent of the Italian Renaissance into the art of Poland. Even before them Italian influences in various fields of Polish domestic activities had been frequent and strong. The most distinguished one of many Italian scholars and artists, politicians and business men who had stayed in Poland and left their imprint on its conditions was Philip Callimach Buonacorsi, a tutor of the royal princes of the Jagellon dynasty, and equally distinguished as a diplomat and a humanist. He acted as Poland's ambassador on diplomatic missions to the Republic of Venice, to the Pope and to the Sultan. He composed a treatise on political theory in the form of Counsels to the King, embodying the principles which shortly afterwards assumed classical form

in Italy in the writings of Machiavelli, who probably knew him. Besides his political activity, Buonacorsi won fame throughout Central and Eastern Europe as a writer of Latin prose and verse, and was a link between Renaissance Poland and the Platonic Academy of Florence; after its model, he organised a circle of scholars at Cracow, who discussed philosophical problems at their meetings in Callimach's hospitable house over cups of good Hungarian wine.

But a person of higher station was soon to form a more effective link between Poland and Italy. The first one of the two humanist kings, Sigismund I, married Lady Bona, of the ducal house of Sforza of Milan, and she brought a crowd of Italian courtiers, scholars and artists in her train. The coming of Queen Bona and her numerous attendants gave to Polish Renaissance culture, in this its earliest period, a wholesale foreign complexion. With Italian speech and manners, Italian architecture and applied art were transferred bodily on Polish soil. The results were certainly magnificent in the field of architecture. The royal castle on Wawel Hill at Cracow, burnt down in its Gothic shape, was rebuilt as a Renaissance palace by Italian architects early in the sixteenth century, and restored in that form in our days; it constitutes one of the finest and most original relics of Renaissance architecture North of the Alps. Another gem was added to the crown of that historical hill in the shape of the chapel with the tombs of the two humanist kings. Built on to the cathedral by an Italian, it is, in structure and ornament, perhaps the richest and most beautiful jewel of Renaissance art which Poland possesses. Nor is the adornment of the cathedral the work of Italian genius alone. One of its finest ornaments, a sepulchral brass on the tomb of Prince Frederick —a member of the Jagellonian dynasty who reached the rank of cardinal—is a production of the famous Nuremberg

brass-founder, Peter Vischer, who did much of his work for Poland at the time. And Polish masters soon rival the glories of the foreigners. Chapels are added to the cathedral by Polish architects, who became the pupils of the Italians. By degrees, the *dolce stil nuovo* of Italy blended with domestic traditions. It visibly does so in the exquisitely slender columns and peculiar roof decorations of the castle courtyard, with its tiers of galleries, from which the assembled Court looked down at tournaments and listened to concerts of Italian music.

The bishops of Cracow rivalled the kings in the splendour of their residences. In their hospitable palace the flower of Italian and Polish intellect gathered for Platonic dialogues. Such meetings in a bishop's suburban residence are commemorated in a notable early classic of Polish literature—Lucas Górnicki's paraphrase of that great Renaissance book of mundane manners and social philosophy, Baldassare Castiglione's *Courtier*. In its Polish form, it mirrors the moral and intellectual refinement which cultured Polish society was beginning to develop under the influence of the Italian elements engrafted upon it.

For a national Polish Renaissance, both in language and literature,[4] in science and art, began soon to grow up after the first flood of the Italian invasion. All the petty events at the Court of the first humanist king were still illustrated in most elegant Latin verse from the prolific pen of that witty, malicious and sensuous former Bolognese student, Bishop Andrew Cricius, a true Polish Aretino in his versatility and in his venom. But under the same reign also the morning star of modern Polish poetry sheds its light over Polish fields in the person and verse of Nicholas Rey. It is under the second humanist monarch that the literary sun of the Polish Renaissance—the prince of Polish poets, John Kochanowski (1530–1584)—is in the

noonday of poetical power.[5] Now the day-to-day chronicle of the Court is written no more in Latin epigrams, but in the Polish *Trifles* of this graceful singer, and his graver and more elaborate works often illustrate the outstanding political problems of the time. He holds the position of secretary to the King: the marriage of letters and statesmanship was common in Renaissance Europe. Latin and Polish still hold equal rank in literature. Kochanowski, like that other poet who was a Secretary of State, John Milton, writes with equal facility and felicity both in the classical and the native tongue; and his contemporary, Andrew Frycz, writes in Latin a work on the Reform of the Commonwealth (*De Republica Emendanda*, 1551), which acquires European fame and is circulated by its Swiss publishing house over all the Western world. But in the reign of the third illustrious monarch of the period, Stephen Bathory, Polish gets the upper hand in the grave sphere of political literature also: Poland's greatest political classic makes his appearance in the person of the Jesuit preacher, Peter Skarga. His grandest work, the *Parliamentary Sermons*, published in 1597, takes us into another era: it is a terrible voice of warning in an age of beginning decay.

Skarga's activities associate him with all the principal towns of Poland and Lithuania, but their spiritual centre lies at Cracow. Still the capital of Poland under the last two Jagellonian kings, this town now reaches the height of its splendour and glory.[6] Its University now passes from the scholastic traditions of medieval learning to the new ideals of humanism. It is reformed by the enlightened Bishop Tomicki, who organises the study of Greek and of Hebrew in it. The great Erasmus of Rotterdam is in correspondence with many of its professors and students, as well as with kings and prominent citizens of Poland. One of his friends, the Englishman Leonard Coxe who

lectures at Cracow on Latin poets, gives, in an academic oration of 1518, a survey of the many brilliant scholars and men of science who adorn the University at the time. There were distinguished foreigners from all parts of Europe among them: the German satirist, Thomas Murner, is on the roll of the students; the Swiss humanist, Rudolph Agricola, gives lectures, writes books and composes Latin poems for many years at Cracow; the Spaniard, Pedro Ruiz de Moros (called Roysius), holds a Chair of Law and becomes one of the most popular figures in Cracow society.

On the other hand, Italian Universities—chiefly Padua and Bologna—swarm with fashionable Polish youth. These scholars bring Italian refinement home from their travels, and the sweet tongue of Tuscany is as familiarly spoken in the streets of Poland's capital as Polish or Latin.

To turn from the gown to the town: Italian becomes no less known among the patricians of Cracow than in its academic spheres. Many new families of merchants and bankers come from Italy. The town itself is purely Polish now, but the old German connections are kept up by travels and studies in Germany, as well as by business relations: if the Court and the bishops favour Italian humanism, it is through the townsmen that the glories of German humanism hold an equally important place in Cracow intellectual life. The city magnates, both new and old, grow in importance and in culture alike. Two members of Cracow's first city family of the time, the Boners, are successively finance ministers to the first humanist king. To another Boner, who is Mayor of Cracow, the first Greek book printed in Poland is dedicated by its editor. And some gifted townsmen's sons combine, in true Renaissance fashion, political office and rank with distinction in learning and letters. Thus Martin Kromer, a burgher by origin, is both secretary to a king and author of a Latin chronicle

of Poland in thirty books. Another writer of burgher stock, Bielski, embraces even wider horizons: he writes a popular handbook of Universal History in Polish. The wealth of the city of Cracow is still at its former height: its patricians compete with the kings and the bishops in the magnificence of their life. The palace of the Decius family in a suburb of Cracow still bears witness to-day to that patrician splendour, and the tombs of the Boner family in the parish church of St. Mary's are a proud counterpart, down in the city square, to the tombs of kings and the monuments of prelates up in the cathedral on Castle Hill.

A new great fire of the royal castle at Cracow towards the end of the sixteenth century is like a symbolic mark of the close of Cracow's glorious days. With the transfer of the capital Northward to Warsaw by a new king, in 1596, we enter on another period, in which the grand fabric of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy begins to crumble into ruin.

LECTURE V

POLAND'S LAST VICTORIES AND HER DECAY

I

Towards the end of the sixteenth century the incapacity of the Polish parliamentary system for vital development and for the reform of growing abuses was becoming evident. On the other hand, the genius of one of Poland's wisest rulers—Stephen Bathory—carries the Empire just at this critical time to the supreme heights of its historical achievement and international power.

In the early seventeenth century both lights and shadows are heightened, if possible, in intensity: the lights in the picture become more glaringly bright for a time—the shadows darken for good. On the one hand, Poland twice in this period reaches the very heart of her most powerful enemy—the Tsar's capital, Moscow—and afterwards, by a lion-like effort, shakes off a crowd of invaders on all sides and once more inflicts a check on Islam. On the other hand, the advent of a King from the North, from the Swedish house of Vasa, unsuited by tradition and temperament to Polish conditions and Polish national character, heralds a new and disastrous era. He gives free scope for development to the germs of evil already fatally inherent in the Polish system, and introduces strange diseases formerly unknown to the Polish political organism. A greater contrast can hardly be imagined than that between the two foreigners who occupied the Polish throne in succession. Stephen Bathory, the Transsylvanian, with his hot Southern blood, was temperamentally in sympathy with the impulsive Polish race; his robust person, bright eye, red, whiskered face, gaudy cloak and fur-trimmed cap make him look like a Polish country noble. Hungarian

constitutional habits help him to understand parliamentary Poland. His successor, Sigismund III (1587–1632), had been educated in Sweden under the German influence predominant there even at that time. He is pale and anaemic in looks, limp and listless in body, gloomily cold and silently obstinate in mind in the fashion of his native North. He wears the unfamiliar black silks and velvets and starched ruffs of the West and a short beard of Spanish cut; he prefers lonely alchemy for a pastime to the jolly horsemanship of the Polish country gentleman. Foreign in all these outward characteristics of person, he is no less of a stranger to Poland inwardly and politically. A bigoted Roman Catholic, he is tainted with the same anti-Protestant fanaticism as his equally sinister elder contemporary at the other end of Catholic Europe—Philip II of Spain. Religious intolerance had been a feature unknown to Polish life; it makes its appearance in his reign, and begins to work harm together with the existing evils. The records of Polish towns are disgraced by anti-Protestant riots, and the Jesuits tighten their hold on the school and the Press.

The new King shifted his capital nearer to his native North—from Cracow to Warsaw—and a high column, with his statue on the top of it, remains to this day a landmark of the new metropolis. His figure on the top of the column bears a sword in one hand and a large cross in the other—true symbols enough, as a Polish poet has observed, of the endless domestic and foreign wars into which his policy embroiled Poland, and of the subservience of national interests to a narrow-minded Church policy.

II

Civil war, on a larger scale than ever before, certainly ushered in the coming of the new King. His adherents

cleared the way for him to the throne by their swords against the followers of another foreign candidate—the Austrian Archduke Maximilian. The victory was the work of the great king-maker who had been Bathory's right hand—Chancellor John Zamoyski, who justly considered the ambitions of the House of Hapsburg a mortal danger to Poland. But his great patriot heart soon bitterly felt that the Swedish remedy was, if possible, worse than the Austrian disease. The determining factor in the election was the magnetism of the Baltic—that one vital goal of Polish Imperial policy: a Swedish candidate on the Polish throne would extend Polish influence in the Northern Seas. Alas! the Swede's idea was rather to extend Roman Catholic influence above all, and to bring it back into power in his own country, Sweden, which by that time had become Protestant for good. This religious purpose gave sanction to the King's personal desire to possess the Swedish throne in place of his Lutheran kinsman, who was the Swedish national candidate.

The same personal and dynastic ambitions rather than the interest of the Polish State governed the new King's disgraceful secret negotiations with the House of Austria, with whom after rivalry for the Crown he entered into alliance by marriage. His actual willingness to barter away Polish lands to Austria for dynastic ends was unmasked by the great Zamoyski himself, and for the first time in Polish history a King was impeached by his own Parliament for treacherous intrigues against the State (1592). This was, indeed, a fierce blow dealt to the Central Government authority in the decaying Commonwealth, and it had been dealt by the underhand doings of the King himself. The fruit was not slow in coming: the same reign which saw this humiliation of the Crown saw the first armed revolt, on a large scale, of confederate subjects against their King—the rebellion of Zebrzydowski (1606).

It was caused by the King's plan to limit the powers of Parliament with the help of Austria, and to suppress Protestantism by force. The rebellion was put down, but the Polish Constitution remained unchanged, and Poland, for good or evil, did not pass through a period of absolutist reaction in the early modern era, like England under the Tudors and many Continental European States.

III

In spite of such a national calamity as the disastrous precedent of this rebellion, the reign of Sigismund III was not quite without its successes, both at home and abroad. In the interests of Catholicism, which the King had so much at heart, but also in the interests of the unity of the Polish Empire, the Uniat Church was created in 1596 in order to detach the Eastern Christians in the border provinces of Poland from connection with the Patriarch of Moscow, who was becoming an instrument of the Tsars, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was in the hands of the Turks. The Eastern Christians of Poland, retaining their Slavonic ritual, recognised the supremacy of the Pope, and thereby were organically linked up with the Roman Catholic body of the Polish State. If the Union did not serve the purposes of consolidation as well as it was intended to do, if the fire of Dis-Uniat opposition was left to smoulder on, if finally the Uniat Church itself could in our own days become the very fortress of Ukrainian separatism against Poland, this was due largely to the illiberal narrow-mindedness of Polish Church dignitaries, who grudged to the Uniat prelates the privileges of their rank and thereby stamped the Uniat faith as the Church of the lower people against Roman Catholicism as the religion of the governing class. The nobles who abandoned Eastern Christianity largely became Roman Catholics,

and not Uniats, and thereby deepened the social and national gulf.

At first, however, the Union bade fair to strengthen Poland's hold on her Eastern borderlands and to contribute to the peaceful extension of Polish cultural influence over them. Expansion of political power in the same outlying regions, particularly in the South-East, was sought in the tried old way by establishing rulers friendly to Poland in Rumania and the neighbourhood. But Austria's intrigues with the Ukrainian Cossacks, whose military republic was a vassal to Poland, succeeded at this very time in stirring up a spirit of Ukrainian separatism, which burst forth in open conflict and was to explode again, and even more mightily, in the following reigns. Austria's aim, besides the obvious one of weakening Poland, was to draw both Ukrainians and Poles into a struggle with Turkey. At that critical time this would have served Austria's Balkan ambitions rather than the true interests of Poland. A great war with Turkey was at first avoided by the skilful diplomacy of Chancellor Zamoyski; afterwards, the King's pro-Austrian policy provoked Turkey, and a new period of prolonged wars with the Crescent was inaugurated by a defeat in which Poland lost its noblest military leader of the time, Stanislas Żółkiewski (1620). The Cossacks, whose raids on the Turkish Black Sea provinces had largely drawn down this new struggle on Poland, did not always stand by Poland's side in it; the uncertainty of their adherence was the most difficult and disturbing factor in Poland's Near Eastern policy.

IV

With neighbours farther North than Turkey great conflicts had proved unavoidable even earlier, viz. with Sweden and with Moscow. The wars with Sweden into which this

first Swedish king entangled Poland dragged on more or less uninterruptedly for more than half a century under his two successors from the same Swedish dynasty of Vasa. The real object of these wars was the issue whether Sweden was to gain a foothold on the Southern shore of the Baltic and so to change this sea into a Swedish lake, or, on the other hand, Poland was to extend her power over the Baltic coast farther to the North-East and thereby strengthen her position as a maritime power in that part of the world. In the early stages of the struggle Poland succeeded in asserting the hold on Latvia which she had gained in the preceding century; but the possession of Latvia's North-Eastern neighbour, Esthonia, was disputed inconclusively.

Later in the period Sweden gained a valiant ruler in Gustavus Adolphus, who won fame as a Defender of the Protestant Faith in Central Europe during the Thirty Years' War. In that war Poland remained almost wholly neutral. It was part of Sigismund's policy to let Catholic Austria quell the national independence of the Czechs for centuries, as she did at the very beginning of that war, in the battle on the White Hill (1620). This neutrality, however, did not bring Poland any profit; certain prospects for the reunion of Silesia with Poland did not materialise, after all, and, on the other hand, Poland's neutrality in the Thirty Years' War, being a distinctly pro-Austrian and anti-Protestant neutrality, did not avert a conflict with that champion of Protestantism, Gustavus Adolphus. The question of the Union of East Prussia with Brandenburg under the Protestant Hohenzollerns, a consummation naturally opposed by Poland, furnished a welcome opportunity for Swedish intervention. Once more the whole of Poland's Baltic shore was at stake: the Swedes invaded East Prussia. This roused even the apathetic gentry of Central and Eastern Poland to a sense of the importance

of the issue, and, with their support, a fleet of ten battleships was built for Poland by a Scotsman, James Murray, and some successes were obtained against the Swedes both by land and sea. But the armistice with Sweden, which marks the close of the reign, is distinctly unfavourable to Poland, and the beginnings of the Polish fleet perished in supporting the Austrians. The historical process of Poland's being pushed away from its vital outlet on the sea had irrevocably set in.

V

At the same time, a new period of expansion Eastward by land seemed to be happily opened up by the brilliant successes of Polish intervention in Russian affairs. The anti-Austrian National Party, headed by Chancellor Zamoyski, favoured alliances with other Slavonic nations against the common German enemy; an opportunity for the grandest of all such possible alliances—for a Union between Poland and Russia—seemed to offer itself with the extinction of the Rurik dynasty in Moscow. By supporting a claimant to the throne, the false Demetrius, the Poles obtained influence in Moscow on his accession, and Polish institutions and manners, speech and literature, and even religion, for a time, made great headway in the Russian capital. In supporting a second false Demetrius in turn, the Poles even actually pushed their way to Moscow, and were garrisoned in the Kremlin for a period (1612). They were at Moscow's doors again a few years later, with a Polish prince at their head, who had been elected Tsar by a part of the Russian nobles. But successive national risings of the Russian people frustrated these Polish designs, and finally carried into power for three hundred years the dynasty of the Romanovs, the most implacable historical foe of Poland. A more peaceful success by way

of penetrating Moscow with the political and intellectual influence of Poland would have been possible if the narrow-minded king had not been bent on military conquest, forcible introduction of Roman Catholicism, and absolute rule. These views clashed with the more enlightened ones of the Polish General Żółkiewski, who was in favour of religious tolerance and a liberal Constitution as a step towards voluntary union. The irresolution of Polish action, resulting from such profound differences of programme, wrecked one of the greatest possibilities in all Polish history.

VI

There was no lack of far-sightedness in Sigismund III's son and successor Ladislas IV (1632–1647), one of the most patriotic kings who ever sat on the Polish throne. His reign, though marked by some successes abroad, is marked even more characteristically by his failure to accomplish much greater things which he planned, and which the growing inertia and obscurantism of his subjects prevented him from realising. Not that he was unpopular among them; educated in Poland as a Pole, he ascended the throne already crowned with the laurel of victories over the Russians and the Turks. To these he soon added new successes against one of these enemies: by another triumphant expedition into the interior of Russia he secured the territorial fruit of Sigismund's Russian wars—control over the North-Eastern shore of the Baltic and the inland province of Smolensk, as well as two others in the upper reaches of the River Dnieper (1634). But these territorial gains had to be paid for by resignation of the King's claim to the Russian Crown. The enlightened monarch endeavoured to win the favour of the Eastern neighbour by other means: he began to conduct a markedly liberal and conciliatory policy towards the dissenting Eastern

Christians in Poland itself. This, however, led to no rapprochement with Russia; nor did it achieve the other end—the desired closer union of different Christian sects within Poland. A temporary quarrel with the Vatican was the only real result. The cause of a Polish National Church, revived once more, is ultimately buried in this reign.

So is, unfortunately, the idea of a truly imperial naval policy of Poland in the Baltic. It was at the demand of his own electors that the King began to make diplomatic and military preparations in order to expel the Swedes from the Polish side of the Baltic. But when the decisive moment came, Poland's apathetic citizens preferred a prolongation of the *status quo* established by an armistice decidedly unfavourable to Poland (1635). The greedy eyes of the gentry were directed rather to the fat and fertile lands in the South-East than to the sea in the North. All they required in the Baltic was free export of their corn. It was therefore that they even failed to support the King in a struggle against Danzig to enforce export duties imposed with a view to strengthening the Polish treasury; the landowners feared that export duties would impair their foreign trade in corn. The united efforts of Danzig and its ally, Denmark, on the one hand, the apathy of Poles on the other, achieve the result that the development of a Polish naval force, after less than a century, comes to an end, and we hear no more of attempts to form a Polish fleet.

The King's eyes, like those of his very greatest predecessors, looked not towards the Baltic only, but towards the Black Sea as well. He had begun his reign by concluding an advantageous peace with the Sultan. In his later years he formed grandiose plans of a European crusade against the Turks, and he endeavoured to draw all the interested factors into the orbit of the enterprise, from the Eastern Christian Patriarchs and the Russian

Tsars to the enslaved Balkan Slavs and the Venetian Republic. The project suffered in its very inception from Poland's doubtful and hesitating position between the two great Continental Powers which had such widely divergent interests in Near Eastern matters, France and Austria. The King inherited the undecided problem whether it would be more favourable for Poland to side definitely with the one or with the other of these two powerful rivals; his own two marriages—to an Austrian and a French princess in succession—give proof of his own undetermined attitude on this fateful question.

But the great Turkish project was finally wrecked by that most incalculable factor, on which it would have been indispensable to be able to rely firmly: the Ukrainian Cossacks. The King dies in the midst of the most violent Cossack revolt that had ever broken out against Poland. The sinister figure of Bohdan Chmielnicki appears upon the scene of Polish-Ukrainian border history. A Pole himself by descent, but wronged by a Polish official, he rises into a leader of the insurgent Cossack peasantry, to become a Ukrainian dictator for a time and a Ukrainian national hero in the eyes of posterity. His coming heralds a period of storms and convulsions, which fill the reign of the third and last King of the Vasa dynasty.

VII

The reign of King John Casimir Vasa (1648–1668) is a true heroic age for Poland; it gives the last proof, in the history of independent Poland, of the still enormous vitality of the nation when stirred to self-defence, even against overwhelming odds. It has justly been glorified for that heroism by the modern Polish historian Kubala and the great novelist Sienkiewicz.[7]

But it began by the most shameful and ruinous defeats,

inflicted by the revolted Cossacks upon their undisciplined and effeminate oppressors. It was not the gentry, but the brave and self-sacrificing townsmen of Lwów (Lemberg) who first stemmed the tide of a joint invasion by a mass of Cossacks and their even more savage allies, the Tartars of the Crimea. After alternate efforts at military conquest and conciliation by treaties, the Ukrainian danger increased more and more, as thousands of Ukrainian propaganda agents succeeded in stirring up peasant revolts in the purely Polish inner provinces of the kingdom, particularly among the mountaineers on the South-Western frontier. The war with the Cossacks themselves was waged intermittently for many another year, both before and after a great Polish victory at Beresteczko in 1651. The ruthlessness of this struggle in the borderlands fully justifies the title of the great novel in which Sienkiewicz has described it, *With Fire and Sword.* The actual danger from Chmielnicki only grew less, as Polish diplomacy succeeded in depriving him of the support of Turkey and the Tartars. With the loss of this nearest and most valuable ally, Chmielnicki's power began to wane. After his death a Union was even concluded between Poland and the Ukraine, on the model of the old-established Union between Poland and Lithuania, with very liberal provisions for political self-government, religious freedom to Eastern Christians, and national education in a Ukrainian academy at Kiev (1658). It would seem that both Poles and Ukrainians had turned over a new leaf, and an era of peaceful relations between them was beginning. But the one material object of class strife between the Polish gentry and the Ukrainian Cossack peasantry—the land—kept contention alive; and contention was also industriously kept alive by the outward power to which Chmielnicki himself had turned in his last years for support, in place of his lost Mohammedan allies.

That power was Moscow. Chmielnicki's alliance with it had brought down a powerful Russian invasion upon the whole of Poland's Eastern provinces. Interrupted by an armistice, when Poland was beset by other foes, the conflict with Moscow flared up again a few years later, and in spite of Polish successes in the field the pressure of new danger from Turkey made it necessary to conclude a highly disadvantageous peace with Moscow in 1667. This year marks a turning-point in Poland's relations with her powerful enemy in the East. The offensive against Russia, which Poland had been conducting off and on for a hundred years, now comes to a definite end. Poland is driven back on her line of defence, the broad River Dnieper, and even that line is ominously crossed by Russia. The town of Kiev, situated on its Western bank, the metropolis of Poland's Ukrainian dominions, is lost to Poland. Polish expansion Eastward ceases, and Russian expansion Westward begins, soon to be framed into a programme of definite imperial policy against Poland by Peter the Great.

This, however, is true of political and territorial relations only. Polish civilisation, Polish language, Polish literature, after their glories in the century of the Renaissance, are far from having spent their vitality in this stormy age. It is matter for surprise, in fact, that a century of incessant wars should be extremely prolific in literature of all kinds, and that at a time when Poland begins to recede under the pressure of her Eastern neighbour, Polish cultural expansion should still proceed Eastward with vigour. Yet both these spectacles are offered by the seventeenth century. Its literature is not free from the same blemishes of intellectual obscurantism, unpatriotic class selfishness, and fanatical religious bigotry which are beginning more and more markedly to taint Polish public life. But the great national tradition remains powerful enough to inspire the most

gifted and productive poet of the age, the Unitarian, Wacław Potocki, for strains of heroic patriotism and lofty moral dignity. And even the picture of the growing abuses and moral decadence of the gentry, as given in the memoirs of John Chrysostom Pasek, undeniably constitutes at the same time a classic of Polish literary prose from which Poland's greatest realistic novelist in our own days, Sienkiewicz, learned a great deal.

No less surprising than this abundance of literary production, with its generous proportion of talent, is the vigorous activity of other arts in this age of warfare and destruction. The Jesuits, in Poland as elsewhere in Europe, popularise the baroque style in art through church architecture; numberless baroque churches spring up all over Poland; baroque palaces are erected, especially in Warsaw, as town mansions for the aristocracy; and while sometimes defacing monumental old buildings by incongruous additions, baroque art in its own architectural productions in Poland often reaches a high degree of refinement and has a peculiar charm: some beautiful churches at Wilno may be singled out as fair instances of this.

While thus displayed in literature and art at home, the unbroken creative vigour of Polish culture in this stormy century is perhaps even more amazingly manifested by its continued expansion and strong influence abroad. The high tide of Polish fashions and Polish speech in Moscow, which had set in during the reign of the false Demetrius, did not ebb away till Dutch and German influences assumed their sway in turn through Peter the Great. Poland's fierce adversary in the South-East, the Ukrainian dictator Chmielnicki, never discarded the traces of his Polish origin. Married to a Polish woman, he conducts his diplomatic correspondence, even with Tartar Khans, Eastern Patriarchs, and Russian Tsars, in the

Polish language. The Ukrainian Academy of Kiev is a seat of Polish learning and Polish literary production, which radiates Northward to Moscow from it, even after it has become incorporated into Russia, and its inheritor, the modern Russian University of Kiev, always had a strong Polish tradition. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Academy founded by the Jesuits in Lwów developed into the modern Polish University in that town.

VIII

We must return, however, to the political and military tempests which shake Poland on all sides in this age.

In the same year in which Chmielnicki had brought down upon Poland a great Russian invasion of the Eastern provinces (1655), Poland's West was overrun by the Swedes, who landed in larger force than ever. That moment, indeed, was the most critical one in the whole history of independent Poland before the partitions. It seemed that the entire monarchy would this time become definitely submerged under a *Deluge* of foreign aggressors, as Sienkiewicz has called it in the title of his second novel on the period. The terrible danger was heightened by the fact of inward disunion: the "gentry democracy" of Poland had by that time become effectively transformed into the rule of a few landed magnates over the masses of their dark and poor fellow-citizens, and the family ambitions of these great nobles pulled each its several way without regard to the interests of the Commonwealth as a whole. This became disastrously apparent on the outbreak of the new conflict with Sweden. The new Swedish King, Charles Gustavus, appeared in the guise of Poland's protector against the Russians and the Cossacks, but really with the purpose of annexing the whole of Poland's Baltic shore, and in alliance with Poland's

growing Prussian enemy, the Elector of Brandenburg, to whom he promised a slice of Western Poland. The most distressing feature in the situation, however, was that one Polish noble, exiled for high treason, induced the Swedes to invade Poland; another one surrendered to them the Western Polish army without a fight; and a third, the great Radziwiłł in Lithuania, voluntarily recognised their sovereignty over the Eastern part of the monarchy. The Swedes entered Central Poland and occupied the capital, Warsaw; the King fled beyond the frontier into Silesia.

It was at this hour of utmost need that it became manifest where the salvation of the people lay: those who wrought it, came not from the aristocracy above, but from the masses below. Poland's greatest military leader of the time, Stephen Czarniecki, who had risen from the ranks of the poor country gentry, heroically held the older capital, Cracow, in the South, against a Swedish siege; the townsmen of Lwów in the East bravely endured another siege from the Russians and Cossacks; a priest of humble origin, Kordecki, organised the successful defence of a third besieged place, Częstochowa, the centre of Polish religious traditions, in the West of the kingdom. Finally, the peasantry, though kept in serfdom, rose in arms against the invaders both in the mountains of the South-West and in the forests of the North-East, as well as on the German and the Russian border. The old religion as a symbol of national culture and national tradition gathered round its standard both gentry and peasantry against the Swedish Lutherans, who wantonly desecrated Roman Catholic churches, and remorselessly pillaged hearths and homes. A national confederation was formed in the Southern mountains, the King returned among his subjects, and in the heroic Eastern town of Lwów solemnly dedicated himself and his nation to the Virgin Mary as the "Queen of the Polish Crown" and the Divine

protectress of her people. This outburst of religious fervour and regained national unity marked the turning-point in a struggle which dragged on for long years yet, but ended in deliverance. The Swedes won the active support of Brandenburg in the North and of Transsylvania in the South by actual projects of a partition of Poland, and Protestant England, under Cromwell, backed these plans. On the other hand, Polish diplomacy succeeded in forming an alliance with the Hapsburgs against the Swedes, and, what is more, the Polish sword vanquished the invading Transsylvanians. Here again, as on so many other occasions in the period, the patriotic town of Lwów gave the first example of determined resistance. Finally, the Swedes, attacked nearer home by Denmark, withdrew from Poland, and were even successfully attacked on their own seashore and islands by a raid of Polish cavalry, who crossed the straits near Denmark swimming on horseback. Peace was made at last with Sweden's ally, Brandenburg, first, and with Sweden itself afterwards (1660). It meant heavy losses to Poland on that most vital territory, the Baltic shore. The Elector of Brandenburg was released from vassalage to Poland with regard to East Prussia, and so the rise of a united, independent Brandenburgo-Prussian power, one of Poland's greatest modern enemies, was sanctioned. Sweden, on the other hand, retained a large part of Livland, with corresponding loss to Poland's command of the North-Eastern Baltic coast. It was Russia who was soon to replace Sweden in supremacy over those regions, and Polish leadership in the Baltic was gone for good.

IX

Thus John Casimir, towards the end of his reign, had saved the country from the clutches of aggressive neighbours, but not without great sacrifices. And the loss in

outward power was accompanied by inward weakening. The last days of the King's reign are darkened by another great outburst of lawlessness—another rising of rebellious subjects against the authority of the State. An occasion for it is provided by dynastic efforts to reform the Polish Constitution with a view to strengthening the power of the Crown. By that time the lustre of the great French monarchy of Louis XIV was shining all over Europe; in Poland, France had gained in power as Poland's peace-maker with the Swedes; and a French queen desired to see a French dynasty firmly established on the Polish throne. Against such attempts to limit the beloved Republican liberty the Polish gentry turn for support to the hitherto abhorred Hapsburgs: a French Royalist party and an Austrian Republican party now stand up against each other. The fresh achievements of Cromwell stimulate the ambition of a great Polish noble, George Lubomirski, to take the lead in armed revolt, and a country recently ruined by great wars becomes the scene of partisan warfare among its own citizens (1664). In the end the principal object of the rebels is gained: the free election of kings is once more secured. The Crown is outwardly victorious, chiefly through the providential agency of a faithful general, soon to be crowned king himself, John Sobieski, who by sheer valour and commanding qualities rises into a dominant position in the military as well as in the political field.

The great new leader is greatly needed, for after so many powerful foes happily overcome, an old danger to Poland once more, and for a last time, rises in renewed force—the Islam. There had been a lull in the agelong struggle with Turkey during the years when Poland had fought against Swedish invaders, and the Northern sea-shore had been the chief object of strife. Now the centre of gravity of Polish policy, by force of circumstances, is

once more shifted to the South. The period of Cossack revolts, and the period of wars of deliverance against the Swedes, is followed by a third period of prolonged struggles with Turkey, fitly celebrated in Sienkiewicz's third great novel on the epoch, *Pan Michael.*

The Cossacks once more unite against Poland with Turks and Tartars. Sobieski defeats them at the head of an army put into the field at his own expense (1667). The danger increases when the election of a weak king, Michael Wiśniowiecki, proves a disastrous failure. Poland lapses into disgraceful weakness: the Brandenburg Elector—once a vassal—now insults Poland with impunity by high-handed action, and the Turks invade the South-East in formidable powers: for the first time in Polish history they are actually bought off by a shameful tribute. Another great victory of Sobieski's over the Turks on the old battlefield of Chocim (1673) makes him the most popular man in Poland, and finally carries him to the throne, which he occupies from 1674 to 1696.

X

The new King, although a soldier by profession and training, was not by any means inclined to force a continuance of the new great struggle with the Islam, in which he had won his early laurels. His weak predecessors had been an instrument of the Austrian, or Republican, party. He, on the contrary, was a friend of France, influenced by a French wife, and even subsidised during his reign by Louis XIV, as were a number of other European monarchs of the time.

Accordingly, he stood at first for conciliation with Turkey as a check on the power of the Hapsburgs. His eyes were, at the beginning of his reign, directed towards the Baltic shore: a secret treaty with France, and another

one with Sweden, had for their chief object the overthrow of the Prussian power on the Baltic. But these underhand diplomatic methods only turned his subjects against him, just as the dealings of Charles II with France at the same time made him unpopular in his British Kingdom. And in Poland the force of events themselves drove the King into alliance with Austria. He found large and fertile Polish border provinces in the South-East still under the Turkish yoke, and the very first years of his reign had to be spent in truly Homeric fights against continuous Turkish invasions. Finally, a more formidable attack than ever was aimed at the very heart of Central Europe itself, and it was to avert this mortal danger to the common civilisation of all Christian nations that Sobieski accomplished his supreme achievement—the rescue of Vienna in 1683. This was the last memorable historical success of independent Poland on the stage of European affairs. It remains to her everlasting credit that on this occasion she drew her sword chivalrously to help a neighbour who was not at all her friend. The victory of Vienna is the last noble reflex of the great crusading impulse of the Middle Ages, the last service generously rendered to a common European cause in an age of Machiavellian diplomacy and selfish national interests.

The unselfishness of Poland's action is, alas! only too fully attested by subsequent events. Delivered from the Turkish danger for a long time, the Hapsburg power henceforward directs its efforts at the aim of outflanking Poland on the Southern side, quite as Prussia outflanks her in the North, and both finally join the outstretched hands of Russia for the partition of Poland.

Such dangers seemed distant enough, when the Vienna triumph renewed the international prestige of Poland, and all the great European Powers surrounded her with homages and offers of friendship. But in reality attempts

were busily made all round to hasten the decay and downfall of Poland: cessions of territory to Moscow did not buy any active support in further campaigns against Turkey, nor did the delivered Austria assist Poland in her endeavour to re-establish the Rumanian outpost against the Turk. Both Austria and Brandenburg joined hands with the unruly subjects of the King himself to thwart his plans for securing dynastic succession as an element of strength and order. The lost influence of France was not reasserted energetically enough to be of real help against Poland's jealous Hapsburg rival; inner lawlessness was increasing, and the sunset of Sobieski's glory is clouded by the gravest domestic troubles. The main fruits of Sobieski's Turkish victories are reaped three years after his death by Austria in the peace treaty of Karlowitz (1699), and at the same time a resolute builder of Russia's command over the Black Sea is arising in Peter the Great (1700). This twilight of Poland's authority in the East is followed by the dark night of her utter helplessness and weakness under two disgraceful German kings, and the day of a great national revival in the eighteenth century only dawns to shine on the violent dismemberment of the Polish State.

LECTURE VI

NATIONAL REVIVAL AND POLITICAL DOWNFALL

I

In the seventeenth century, Poland had waged heroic wars and still achieved great things in the works of peace; her armed force had shaken off invaders, her culture had spread among her Eastern neighbours. In the early eighteenth century the picture is changed for the worse at all points: what war there is is ruinous and shameful civil war, and in the slothful peace which follows, it is not Polish influence which expands abroad, but foreign influence of the most unwelcome kind which asserts itself in Polish affairs. Poland, in fact, reaches the lowest depths of her international degradation under two successive kings from another foreign dynasty—Germans, uniting the Saxon Crown to the Polish one, and exploiting the possession of Poland in favour of their native Saxony and in their own personal and dynastic interests.

The reign of the two worst kings Poland ever had is fitly ushered in by the worst one of the periodical wars which convulsed the country over each new election of a monarch. A true orgy of foreign intrigues, colossal bribery and lawless armed organisations is followed by an even more fierce orgy of domestic warfare and ruin. Russia, guided by the genius of Peter the Great, drags Poland into the Northern War against Charles XII of Sweden for her own imperial ends; Prussia profits by Poland's weakness to throw off the last remnants of former dependence. The King of Poland himself, Augustus the Strong (1697–1733), plots with Swedish invaders for a

partition of Poland; he consents, under Russian pressure, to the reduction of the Polish Army to a purely nominal figure; for a second and a third time he proposes partitions of Poland to Prussia and to Austria, provided he can secure a morsel of the Polish territories for his son. The nobler rival of this dishonourable king, a Polish nobleman of the name of Stanislas Leszczyński (1704–1735), is twice expelled from the country with the help of Russia, and ends his days in exile as the pensioner of his son-in-law, King Louis XV of France. He vainly exhorts his countrymen to reform in a noble patriotic treatise in Polish called *A Free Voice to Make Freedom Safe*. Civic spirit in Poland sinks to its lowest level during the dissolute peace under Augustus III (1733–1763), who is as indolent and luxurious as his father had been reckless and adventurous. In the father's reign, Saxon, Russian and Swedish troops had continually marched all over Poland, imposing and dethroning kings, and incidentally devastating the country; under the son, the all-powerful Saxon finance minister, Bruehl, sucked the Polish State dry, while the Polish gentry revelled in brutish material enjoyment, as if they said to themselves: "Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." It was, as a Polish satirist said, a Shrove-tide of licentious pleasures, after which the severe fasts of a long Lenten period of captivity were duly bound to come.

II

The one constant factor in the chaos—and a most ominous one—is the growing influence of Russia. Peter the Great originated the policy of maintaining disorder in Poland so as to make Russian expansion towards Western Europe more easy, and he already set the precedent of assuming protection over the small minority of Eastern Christians in Poland, who were not in the fold of the Uniat Church,

as a pretext for active intervention in Polish domestic affairs. The example was soon to be followed and improved upon by Catherine the Great, who was as utterly irreligious at heart as her predecessor, and as desirous as he was to establish contact between Russia and her German fatherland over the prostrate body of Poland. Peter the Great had already come to an understanding with Prussia as to a common policy towards Poland, and he had already posed as the upholder of the Republican liberty of the Polish gentry against the dynastic and absolutist ambitions of kings—a popular attitude, successfully imitated by Catherine. Polish attempts to seek support against the growing power of the two neighbours in alliances with the selfish house of Austria and the distant and indifferent Hanoverian kings of England were of no avail in themselves, besides being opposed by that part of the Polish gentry who had come irrecoverably under the influence of Russia and Prussia. The assumption of the title of king and of emperor by the rulers of Prussia and of Russia respectively in the early years of the eighteenth century are symbols of the progress they feel that their power has made on the common ground of their imperial ambitions in Eastern Europe; and Austria soon is on their side in a pact concerning the joint management of Polish royal elections with the use of military force in support of candidates agreeable to the three Powers. Against this alliance France was unable to enforce the election of her candidate, when another dispute about the Polish throne widened into a European war in the thirties of the eighteenth century. Poland, in that war, was rather a passive object of strife than an active participant, and her two last kings were both elected under the pressure of Russian armies. The stationing of large Russian military forces in Poland had by that time become a permanent institution; Russian troops march through Poland on their expeditions

into Turkey and into Germany; for the later act—during the Seven Years' War—Prussia retaliates by harassing the border provinces of Poland, who thus suffers from both parties for her neutrality.

The actual dismemberment of Polish dominions begins many years before the first partition, and at the most dangerous point, too. Poland's suzerainty over Courland is practically done away with by Russia, who after prolonged struggles succeeds under Catherine the Great in imposing upon that duchy as a ruler the French adventurer Biron, formerly the favourite of a preceding Russian empress (1763). Thus, the invasion of Poland's Baltic shore and the outflanking of Poland on the Northern side proceeds steadily and systematically.

III

This increasing outward weakness of the Polish State was accompanied by growing dissolution of the constitutional fabric within. The practice has now set in for good that resolutions, passed by a majority in a parliamentary body, may be vetoed by the protest of an individual member under a formal pretext. The use of this destructive privilege wrecks all the Parliaments in the reign of the second Saxon king, with one solitary exception. On one occasion even the session of the Supreme Court of Law for Poland is broken up by this disastrous "Free Veto," and the whole Western half of the monarchy is left for a time without the chief organ of justice. The adage "Poland is governed by want of government" is being stupidly repeated, as if it was a liberal maxim of political wisdom, and not a "writing on the wall" foretelling the wrath of God.

The gap in legislation, created by the common frustration of parliamentary work, was filled up by the activity

of the district assemblies, which created the worst type of decentralisation, and paralysed all constructive effort on broad lines by the tyrannical instructions they imposed on the deputies they sent to Parliament. It was not only imperial legislation, but political, financial and military administration, and even jurisdiction, which was decentralised in this absurd fashion, and crumbled away in the hands of provincial wiseacres, with their limited outlook. The determining factor in important matters, in such a system, was, of course, the richest landed magnate of the neighbourhood, and the driving spirit of public affairs was the interest of his family and estate.

Another great evil—religious obscurantism—had set in with the strenuous counter-Reformation conducted by the first king of the Vasa dynasty, and had never ceased to grow since. Poland's Protestants, already limited in the exercise of their religion, were now further limited in their political rights, being made ineligible both for Parliament and for public office. In 1724 European opinion was stirred by the execution of the mayor and nine aldermen of the Polish town of Toruń (Thorn) for the anti-Jesuit excesses of a Protestant mob; only the death of Peter the Great saved Poland from joint intervention of all the non-Catholic monarchs on account of this cruel sentence.

The chief reason for such outbursts of intolerant bigotry was the third great disease of the Polish Commonwealth, next to political anarchy and religious fanaticism, viz. the decay of learning. It is closely connected with religious matters, being chiefly due to the Jesuits, who held the monopoly of teaching. They restricted education almost wholly to mechanical mastery of Latin and the outworn speculations of scholastic philosophy. The result was a corruption of the Polish language by latinisms on the one hand, and backwardness, narrow-mindedness and ignorance in the most important matters of science and of life

on the other. Literature lapsed into bathos and the sheer stupidity of panegyrics or devotionalism; superstition became rampant; instead of the once fashionable studies in Italian Universities, pilgrimages to miraculous shrines became the predominant form of foreign travel; and the ancient University of Cracow enters in the early eighteenth century—not unlike Oxford and Cambridge at the same time—into a period of extreme decadence.

IV

But it is the darkest hour which comes before the dawn. In the very depth of the night which hovers over Polish intellectual life in the Saxon era, the first sparks of a new light begin to shine. The coming splendours of the great European Age of Enlightenment cast their lustre before them, through the activities of French, Italian and German tutors in Polish noble families, as well as in the writings of isolated noble-minded Polish citizens and in their efforts to spread knowledge and civic spirit. Bishop Załuski founds and presents to the nation one of the best-stocked libraries Poland ever had. A priest of the Piarist order, Konarski,[8] establishes a model public school in Warsaw—the *Collegium Nobilium*; learned societies begin to publish ancient Polish legal, historical and other records; physical science—with experiments—begins to be taught in secondary schools, astronomical observatories rise and do good work in the Universities; modern philosophy, from Bacon and Descartes to Leibniz and Wolff, begins to take the place of the medieval scholasticism propagated by the Church.

The light of intellects trained in this new atmosphere is focused on the evils of the Commonwealth. The great educational reformer, Konarski, points his finger at their root—the disastrous "Free Veto"—in an elaborate treatise.

Others at the same time, in books and pamphlets, recommend sounder financial administration, development of industries and commerce, adequate taxation of the wealth of the Church and the landed gentry, reorganisation and increase of the standing army, the granting of political rights to the town population and the release of the peasants from serfdom, responsibility of Ministers, simplification of parliamentary procedure, strengthening of the authority of the Crown and the Central Government by the abolition of the free election of kings.

The best men of the nation approved these counsels, but the large mass of the gentry, who formed the electorate, paid little heed to them. Organised political effort in the form of a parliamentary party was necessary to get anything done. The formation of such a party became the aim of one powerful and noble family in Poland—the Czartoryskis—"the Family," as they were called by their contemporaries. The rivalry between the Czartoryskis and another noble family, the Potockis, fills the whole reign of the second Saxon king with domestic restlessness, and in this contest the Czartoryskis certainly behave as unscrupulously in availing themselves of bribery, violence, and the military assistance of Russia, as did the Potockis, on the other hand, in pandering to the stupid and selfish conservatism of the country gentry. The Czartoryskis only rise to their responsibilities when at last they succeed in suppressing their adversaries completely, and obtaining full control of the Parliament which conducts the election of a new king (1764). In this Parliament they actually carry some reforms in Poland's administrative system—the first reforms in the Polish Constitution since the days of King Stephen Bathory, two hundred years before. They even make a beginning with the redress of the grave social wrongs of the existing order, as far at least as the

population of the towns is concerned; and they attempt to introduce, *viâ facti*, the principle of vote by majority in Parliament. This reforming initiative rouses the suspicions of Prussia and Russia, who had hitherto supported "the Family," and "the Family" have to pay the penalty in failing to get one of their members elected King of Poland. However, the new King, Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski, is their cousin and good friend.

V

The last King of Poland is the subject of one of the best books written in English on Polish history.[9] He is, indeed, one of the most fascinating, and at the same time one of the most ambiguous, figures among the many brilliant personalities on the stage of eighteenth-century history. He comes from diplomatic service in Petersburg, where he had been an early lover of Catherine the Great. He always remains open to those Russian influences which have brought him to the throne, and his weak character, sometimes rising into patriotism on a wave of momentary enthusiasm, at other and more critical moments fails the nation in the hour of its need. If the character is not what the grave historical moment required, the intellect, on the other hand, certainly is of a very high order. The new King had acquired not only the most graceful and engaging manners, but a really liberal education on his travels in Western Europe, and he endeavours to engraft all the rich Western culture of the Era of Enlightenment, which is now at the height of its development, upon the neglected Polish stock. If in the former reign Warsaw re-echoed and imitated the artistic and intellectual life of Dresden, the Rococo capital of the Saxon kings, now the Polish Court becomes an Eastern Versailles on a smaller scale; and the unanimity in the country, secured for a

time by the forces of the Czartoryskis as well as the support of their great wealth, gives splendour and power to the new *régime*. Their liberal political reforms are confirmed and extended; literature, science and the arts are galvanised into new life; the theatre and the Press rapidly develop under the King's protection into the powers which they are in every modern Commonwealth. A splendid group of writers and scholars basks in the sunshine of royal favour. The Court, like the brilliant Court of the Jagellon dynasty two hundred years before, encourages the labours of men of learning and of artists; the King collects a large library; he founds an astronomical observatory in his castle; he is a judicious collector of antiquities and objects of art; he gathers Italian and French painters round him—Bacciarelli, Grassi, Lampi, Antonio Canaletto, Mme. Vigée-Lebrun—and sends Polish painters to Italy for their education. His Thursday dinners become a sort of Academy meetings, with most fruitful discussions on science and art. Once again, as in the fifteenth century in the case of John Długosz, intelligent royal protection calls a monumental work on Polish history into being. Bishop Naruszewicz writes, in six ponderous Polish volumes, the first critical history of medieval Poland. And the most accomplished courtier among all the galaxy of fine spirits centring round the King—Bishop Ignatius Krasicki—rises to the rank of a Polish Voltaire by the immense variety, exquisite polish, lucid sense and caustic wit of his writings. His own *Satires*, as well as those of a number of brilliant poetical satellites of his, and also the excellent comedies of Francis Zabłocki, do yeomen's work for the spread of progressive ideas in Poland, while at the same time maintaining a healthy balance between foreign fashions and sound national tradition. The King's example in favouring knowledge and art is followed by great nobles, even in the

provinces. Under the protection of one of them an Italian geographer produces the first great atlas of Polish lands; others found libraries and collections of art, which largely are carried into Russia after Poland's partitions, and are only being revindicated more or less successfully by the new Poland of to-day.

VI

All the intellectual vigour of an age rich in great minds and swarming with new thought, initiative and effort is needed to remedy the decaying political condition and dangerous international position of Poland. It is employed in the service of that cause, and much is accomplished. If the record of successful achievements in the political field is less powerful than that of literature and learning, if the decay of Poland is not arrested and its fall not averted by the great men of the eighteenth century, because they come too late to turn the rolling wheel of historical fate in a new direction, yet it is fully recognised now by everybody who looks back thoughtfully at present on the closed period of Poland's captivity that the reforming efforts of the eighteenth century planted the seed of that unbroken national vitality which struggled through the national eclipse, and, overcoming the most cruel persecution during more than a hundred years, finally helped a reborn Poland to emerge into the full light of renewed free existence.

Russia soon realised that the reformers who had availed themselves of her assistance were not minded to degrade a reformed Poland into vassalage, and she henceforward resolutely opposed their activities with all the pressure she could bring to bear on Poland. The cause of the Nonconformist sects of Poland, tried before as a pretext for intervention in Polish affairs, was taken up again; it had the advantage of enlisting on Russia's side the support

of Protestant Powers, like Denmark or Great Britain. The result was a civil war in Poland, which was in reality a war between Russian troops and the Roman Catholic gentry, who had formed a Confederation in the town of Bar (1768) to oppose Russian intervention. After several years of guerrilla warfare this first chivalrous effort to stem the tide of Russian influence in Poland was overcome by superior force; the heroic leader, Pułaski, afterwards met his death in fighting for the independence of America (1779). Even during this first fierce struggle against Russian overlordship some slight progress was made with the great work of constitutional reform; the scope of the destructive "Free Veto" was somewhat diminished, and the arbitrary power of the landlord over the peasant was for the first time limited by law. But as all the new laws had to be embodied in a pact with Russia, constituting Russia a guaranteeing power, legislative progress was inextricably entangled with increased dependence. A young parliamentary deputy who raised his voice in protest against the Russian Alliance, Joseph Wybicki, was afterwards to become the author of the popular song "Poland has not perished while we live" (*Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła*), which is the national anthem in the Polish State of to-day. Others before and after Wybicki paid for their protests by violent deportation into Russia from the midst of a still free Poland. Russia's ostensible aim, the granting of equal rights to the dissenting Eastern Christians in Poland, was carried even before armed resistance broke out. But she attained more than that when she stirred up a revolt of the Eastern Christian Ukrainian peasantry against the Roman Catholic Polish gentry in the South-Eastern border provinces of Poland; many Polish country gentlemen and priests perished, many churches and manors were destroyed, particularly in the town of Humań; the total number of victims was 200,000,

and the horror of those events still lives in Polish memory. It was in those tragic times that the one voice in Europe to be raised on behalf of Poland against Russia was the voice of Poland's oldest enemy, Turkey, who was equally menaced by Russian ambitions. Turkey afforded shelter to the leaders of the Polish insurgents; Turkey waged wars against Russia which created diversions in favour of Poland; and Turkey only among European States never recognised the partitions of Poland. France, who prompted Turkey in some of these actions, herself gave a certain amount of active help to the armed risings against Russia in Poland, but did not attempt diplomatic intervention when projects of a partition of Poland began to mature, as they did about that time.

VII

The idea of a partition of Poland, instead of wholesale annexation by Russia, was the joint work of other jealous neighbours—Frederick the Great of Prussia and the Hapsburgs in Austria—who both looked with concern on the advance of the Russian power in Poland as well as in Turkey. They actually anticipated events by occupying portions of border territory, and then approached Russia, who was not strong enough to resist their joint pressure. Thus, in 1772, the first partition of Poland was accomplished, depriving Poland of about one-third of her territory and four millions of population, and, what was most important, leaving her but a narrow "corridor" by way of access to the Baltic, instead of the broad stretch of Baltic shore which she had possessed before. This despoliation of a free country was a unique and utterly unprecedented act in history; it was accepted in silence by the rest of Europe. In Poland itself no force for active resistance was left after the recent devastating domestic

war. A Parliament, elected under Russian pressure, incomplete, and presided over by a bribed Speaker, was brought to consent to the Partition Treaties, in spite of the passionate protests of the patriotic deputies, Reytan and Korsak, from Lithuania.

The partition was passively ratified by a Delegation which issued from that corrupt Parliament and governed Poland for a number of years afterwards. The actual instrument of administration was a "Permanent Council," instituted by the Delegation and organised into a number of Committees which acted as Ministerial Departments.

The rule of the Delegation and of the Council no doubt represented a certain advance towards order, stability and authority in administration. But apart from the fact that this Government was entirely under the influence of the Russian ambassador, its rule was also disgraced by favouritism and colossal waste of national resources. It is enough to say that when the Jesuit Order was dissolved by the Pope in 1773 and its rich possessions became the property of the State, they melted away almost wholly under the hands of a Commission which was to let them out to tenants and collect revenue from them for purposes of national education.

This was all the more regrettable, as the only department of the new administrative machinery which really did highly efficient work was the *Educational Commission.* Taking over the whole system of national education from the hands of the Jesuits, it won its well-deserved fame of the first modern Ministry of Education in Europe by its labours of reorganisation. Polish education, after two centuries of Church control, at last emerges into the sober light of secular teaching and State supervision. A beginning in that direction had been made in the first years of the new king's reign by the establishment of a military college in Warsaw, which was superintended by one of

the Czartoryskis, who was a particularly advanced free-thinker; it introduced memorable innovations in the way of teaching natural science and civic morality, and gave the impulse for the production of a number of sound textbooks on modern lines.

The labours of the Educational Commission covered a wider field and became truly epoch-making. The ballast of scholastic philosophy at last went overboard from the school system. The decayed Universities of Cracow and Wilno were thoroughly reformed, with particular attention paid to science. The reformer of Wilno, Martin Odlanicki-Poczobut, was himself an astronomer of European renown; the reformer of Cracow, a young priest named Hugh Kołłątaj, was to win even greater fame as the real father of a new Polish Constitution. In the secondary schools it was also science that gained a new position now, being endowed with laboratories and instruments. Besides, prominence was given to the mother-tongue over the old-fashioned Latin. The reorganiser of the secondary school system, Gregory Piramowicz, was himself a distinguished Polish grammarian. Not only Polish language and literature, but Polish history and law and institutions came into their own in Polish school education now. A shrewd eye to the practical applications of all knowledge governed the reforming tendencies of the Commission; the pupils of the new schools were to grow up into citizens fit to turn learning to public and social uses, able to realise the advantages of honour and virtue for the worldly welfare of the community, keenly alive to the vital importance of economic and technical progress, and active in infusing new life into the torpid and rigid body-politic. This was in the utilitarian spirit of the eighteenth century, with its ideal of the State as the proper machinery for producing universal happiness.

Similarly practical and social considerations rather than abstract intellectual theories governed the activity of the Free-Masons, who had a considerable importance in Polish life, both in the eighteenth century and also during the first decades after the partitions. During the period under review they effectually supplemented the work of enlightenment done by the Educational Commission, by fighting illiteracy and intolerance, and organising philanthropic and humanitarian endeavour; they gave relief and shelter to destitute old people and paupers; they introduced into Poland such important novelties in public hygiene as the practice of vaccination.

All this mass of manifold effort was to serve the one dominant purpose of strengthening and reforming the State. The actual cause of constitutional reform made slow and difficult progress only, and the shadow of Russian power lay across its long and painful road. Still, efforts at betterment never cease during the whole of this period. Some of the more corrupt departments of the "Permanent Council" are abolished under the pressure of universal discontent, and the enlightened Chancellor, Andrew Zamoyski (a worthy descendant of the great Renaissance statesman, John Zamoyski), is appointed to draft new comprehensive codes of law for Poland. However, another twelve years were to elapse before a Parliament at last met with the avowed purpose of reforming the Polish Constitution on a large scale.

VIII

In the meantime, symptoms of national awakening multiplied in all domains. It is significant, for instance, that in the play and counterplay of political manœuvres and personal ambitions at the centre of affairs *women* of noble birth and high culture now for the first time in

Polish history begin to play a conspicuous part, like the ladies conducting *salons* in France at the same time. One of these women in eighteenth-century Poland particularly fascinates the observer. Princess Isabella, of the Czartoryski family, a great traveller in Western Europe and a commanding personality at home, reminds us of the masterful women of the Italian Renaissance by her passionate temperament as well as her great learning and wide and free outlook.

Among the men, persons from outside the narrow circle of a few noble families no less significantly begin to rise into prominence. A townsman's son, Stanislas Staszic, untiringly popularises in Poland the liberal maxims and free-thought of the French encyclopaedists. He attracts general attention by his forceful political tracts on the reform of political abuses, and contributes many leading ideas to the programme of a new Constitution. Debarred by his humble origin from active participation in political life, he was destined to display an intense and manifold activity as Minister in the new and more democratic post-partition Poland both under Napoleon and under Alexander I. In the period we are dealing with now the actual conduct of State affairs is still in the hands of men from the noble class; but it is significant again that at this very time one of the oldest of these families, the Potockis, produces men of such free and advanced views as the brothers Ignatius and Stanislas Kostka Potocki, the first of whom is to become one of the authors of Poland's new Constitution, and the second one a most enlightened Education Minister in early nineteenth-century Poland after the partitions.

With such men having an important voice in the councils of the nation, the spell of comparative stability after the disaster of the first partition is marked by a good deal of constructive achievement, particularly in the

way of economic recovery and development. The output of agriculture rises beyond what it was before the first partition, and a beginning is made with organising industry in a country hitherto mainly agricultural. The King himself founds a porcelain factory and ironworks; and one of the State dignitaries, Anthony Tyzenhaus, establishes linen manufactures, cloth-mills, and paper-mills on his estates in Lithuania, and with the help of French, German, Belgian and Italian experts, transforms a whole suburb of the town of Grodno into an industrial area of the most manifold activities. His example is followed by other magnates, who cultivate each some industrial "hobby" on their country estates. But the towns also somewhat rise from the decay into which they had fallen under a legislation unfavourable to their interests. Agrarian legislative tendencies are counteracted by sympathetic protection from the King and the Department of the Interior, and towns assume a more ordered look and begin to grow again in prosperity. Polish trade had suffered a death-blow by the first partition as far as export by the Baltic route was concerned, because Prussia now held the keys of that, but commercial expansion into the Black Sea territories continued, and was even favoured by Russian victories over the Turks. Communications in the Eastern parts of Poland were considerably improved: large bogs were dried, new roads built, and two canals constructed which united the system of rivers flowing into the Black Sea with those flowing into the Baltic. The revival of commerce led to the creation of a number of new banks in Warsaw, and one Polish noble, Prot Potocki, could boast both of being the first man of his class to conduct a banking business, and of owning merchant ships of his own in the Black Sea. Polish exports rose above imports, and even the increase of population from seven and a half to nearly nine millions during the first

dozen years after the first partition bears witness to the growth of prosperity. The picture drawn of Poland's inner development at this time in a large six-volume work of the modern Polish historian, Thaddaeus Korzon, and supported by figures due to his painstaking research, is undoubtedly a picture of progress, and, given more favourable political conditions, Poland might have once more become the flourishing country it had been three hundred years before.

IX

But the political conditions, both within and without, in spite of all efforts of noble-minded individuals and groups, were taking a fatefully unfavourable turn.

The conservatism of the gentry resisted such enlightened endeavours as those of the Educational Commission, and made concessions to old-fashioned views necessary. Among the advanced upper classes, on the other hand, foreign ideas of progress and free-thought became a pretext for luxury and licence; the greatest national disasters are accompanied by orgies of riotous living and lavish entertainments in the capital, for which embezzlement of State funds and Russian bribes supplied the means. The well-meant attempts to develop industry, such as those of Tyzenhaus, come to grief in the end, owing to want of business training and of capital for improvements. Finally, the peasants, the backbone of the nation and two-thirds of it in number, are not only in a state of serfdom, but in a condition of dire destitution, as they were in France and elsewhere at the same time.

To remedy all these evils, drastic measures of political change would have been necessary: especially the necessity for enfranchising the peasants was pointed out by many enlightened political writers as a fundamental requirement.

Unfortunately, thoroughgoing reforms were rendered

impossible by inner and outer factors. The code of new laws, drafted by Andrew Zamoyski with the help of the best experts, and introducing considerable improvements into the legal position of the peasants and the townsmen, was rejected through the influence of Russia (1780). Only deliverance from the Russian protectorate could give the patriotic reformers a chance. Two roads lay open to attain that aim: Poland could assist Russia in her attack on Turkey, and hope to win concessions from her in return, or Poland could adopt the desperate remedy of an alliance with one mortal enemy, Prussia, against the other mortal enemy, Russia. The uncompromising attitude of Catherine the Great drove Poland into the second alternative, and the treacherous perfidy of the Prussian ally stabbed her in the back in the hour of crisis. Prussia, to whom all treaties then already were mere "scraps of paper," gave to Poland all the promises which were required, undertaking, above all, not to interfere in Polish domestic affairs, and an alliance with Prussia was finally concluded by the Parliament which met in 1788.

That Parliament is known in Polish history as the Great Parliament, and deserves its name; its crowning work, the reformed Polish Constitution of the Third of May, 1791, is the foundation of all modern Polish political development —the birth of a new democratic Poland on the very eve of the death of the old.

LECTURE VII

THE REFORMED CONSTITUTION AND THE LAST PARTITIONS OF POLAND

I

The great work of the Parliament of 1788, which met for the thorough reform of the Polish Constitution, was not accomplished in a day. It took three long and weary years before the fruit matured; and in the end the reformed Polish Constitution only came into being by a *coup d'état*, a bloodless parliamentary revolution engineered by the Patriotic Party.

This became necessary owing to the irresolute temper and sterile debates of the Great Parliament. At first, indeed, it promised to be strenuous enough in its measures. The new Prussian connection emboldened it to disregard those Russian guarantees for the maintenance of the unchanged old Polish Constitution, which had been thrust upon Poland after the first partition. The Long Parliament at once took the drastic step of abolishing the Permanent Council, which had been a tool in the hands of Russia. The Parliament further showed a strong hand in breaking up and suppressing the remnant of the pro-Russian faction, and it used the regained independence for reforms. It reorganised the Foreign Office, the War Department, and the civil administration. It voted a large increase of the reduced Polish Army, and even imposed new taxes on the clergy and the landowners for its support. It appointed a deputation for the reform of the Constitution. The French Revolution had broken out in the meantime, and the middle class of France had risen into power. The townsmen of Poland clamoured for equal rights, and

under their pressure a Parliamentary Committee was appointed to investigate their demands.

But then the zeal of the reforming Parliament flagged. The class selfishness of the gentry asserted itself, and discussions dragged on in disorderly and inconclusive fashion. The fault certainly did not lie in any want of activity of the Patriotic Party. That party had just at that time created a powerful and eloquent organ for its opinions in a journal called *The National and Foreign Gazette*, which was conducted by two of the leading members of the party. A Political Club was formed, consisting chiefly of the progressive deputies in Parliament. Satirical pamphlets and political tracts were issued in numbers, mainly by an organised group of writers, called *The Forge*. Even the theatre (in an excellent comedy by Niemcewicz called *The Return of the Deputy*) made propaganda for reform. Serious and elaborate works by the most distinguished political thinkers of the period—Kołłątaj, Staszic and others—laid down the new principles with a fervour increased by the pronouncements and successes of the French Revolution. The "Rights of Man" are in all their mouths when they advocate the democratic reconstruction of Poland. Even the assimilation of the Jews, the breaking-down of the traditional barriers between them and the rest of the community, chiefly by a more liberal education, finds its spokesman in a Polish deputy and is discussed in a Parliamentary Committee. But the constitutional position of the townsmen and of the peasants is in the forefront of debate, and here the most radical break with the old Polish social system is recognised as a necessity by the best minds of the age.

More resolute parliamentary action is at last stimulated by outward events. The Russian danger became imminent once more. Austria had been estranged from Prussia since

the Seven Years' War; it had under Joseph II been Russia's ally against Turkey, and incidentally exercised a restraining influence upon Russia's aggressive designs towards Poland. Things changed when, under the new monarch, Leopold II, Austria sought a rapprochement with Prussia; the Polish alliance became less necessary and valuable to Prussia. On the other hand, Russia concluded a favourable peace with Sweden, was on the point of successfully ending her war with Turkey, and would doubtless turn her whole force against Poland next. Poland would stand at bay alone. Rapid action towards strengthening the nation's own resources became imperative now. The Patriotic Party resolved to quicken the pace of Constitutional reform. Some new fundamental laws had already been voted, but they were dangerous in the given international situation. One of them asserted the unity and indivisibility of Poland's territories; this was a protest against Prussia's demand for Danzig and Toruń, the chief knots on the last thread which connected Poland with the sea; another law—the abolition of those Russian guarantees for the existing constitutional order in Poland which had existed since the first partition—was a direct challenge to St. Petersburg. So the progress which had been made actually increased the danger without establishing safeguards. More trouble at home seemed ahead owing to the fact that the duration of a Parliament was limited by law to two years. In order to keep a Parliament alive which had made a good beginning, the curious expedient was resorted to of holding elections and uniting the new Parliament with the old one. So it happened that the Parliament which ultimately voted the Constitution was one of double strength.

II

Important steps towards a thorough reform of Poland's social and political system were at last definitely taken by this new, redoubled Parliament when it passed two Bills—one on the district assemblies of the country gentry, and one on the towns.

The members of the Polish Parliament were actually delegates from the district assemblies. So a Bill which defined who had a right to take part in those assemblies practically amounted to a measure of electoral reform. It fixed the Polish parliamentary franchise, basing it on a certain census—ownership of land and the payment of a definite sum in taxes. Thereby the large and dark mass of the landless gentry proletariat, which was helplessly dependent on the great nobles, was kept out of politics altogether, and so a large source of domestic trouble was removed. Much more epoch-making in the way of social reconstruction was the Bill on the towns of April 18, 1791. Here at last the burghers of the towns were placed on an equal footing with the gentry in such matters as security of person, right to landed property, access to office in the Church and in the State, and dignity of professional occupations. They also received a certain share, at least, of parliamentary representation, which enabled them at any rate to put the grievances and the necessities of the towns before Parliament. They got once more the municipal self-government and jurisdiction which had been their proud privileges in the flourishing period of Poland's towns during the Middle Ages, and a breach was made in the wall separating the classes by providing opportunities for large numbers of citizens to become ennobled.

This law, which it is gratifying indeed to be able to record as one of the last achievements of independent Poland, meant a great stride in the right direction. But

much remained to be done. The free election of kings, that fertile source of civil wars, was still maintained in principle, although a national referendum had agreed to the election of a grandson of the second Saxon king. The "Free Veto" still existed in customary law; the administration was not placed on an ordered, modern footing of Cabinet responsibility; and the peasant was in a state of unredeemed bondage. All these old evils the Patriotic Party now resolved to attack together, and in the most drastic fashion, as there was no time to lose. It was decided to hurry a new Constitution through Parliament by force of numbers, without allowing it to be sent into Committee. The King was taken into the secret, and drafted the project himself in French; the priest Kołłątaj, the most fiery spirit in the Patriot group, translated the sketch into Polish and became the author of the ultimate version of the Act. For its introduction the time after the Easter recess was chosen, when many opponents of the measure would not yet be back to town; on the other hand, the ranks of the Patriots swelled; their full attendance and unconditional support was secured at secret preliminary meetings; the favour of the city population was assured. Finally, Parliament was taken by surprise two days before the time appointed for the introduction of the Bill, and a show of military force in the streets was used as a supreme warning to the Opposition.

III

It was under such circumstances that the Constitution was voted after a long and turbulent discussion on May 3, 1791. The Act was, indeed, of as revolutionary a nature as the preparations and attendant symbols warranted. It did away, at one stroke, with some of the worst political and administrative abuses which had crept into the body-

politic of Poland. It changed the Parliament from a congress of delegates of the district assemblies, bound by their instructions, into an assembly of free representatives of the nation at large. It abolished that pernicious constitutional absurdity, the "Free Veto," and established the principle of vote by majority. It assured the supremacy of the Lower House over the Senate by provisions very much like those of the Parliament Bill of 1909 in Great Britain. It organised a Cabinet of Ministers on modern lines, and made it responsible to Parliament. Finally, it removed the greatest cause of civil war in Poland in abolishing the free election of each individual king and making the throne hereditary, while at the same time maintaining and putting into modern terms the constitutional limitations of royal power.

These are indeed epoch-making signs of recognition of national faults by the nation itself, and of resolution to amend the corrupt political system. The Constitution is much less revolutionary—in fact, it is essentially conservative, on the social side. It preserves the traditional division of Polish society into three classes: nobles, townsmen and peasants, with different civic rights for each class and different organs of jurisdiction for them. It leaves the gentry in possession of all its ancient privileges; it does not set the peasant free from the yoke of serfdom. This may seem timidity indeed, after the example set two years before by revolutionary France in the "Declaration of the Rights of Man," which abolished all class distinctions. Still, the reforms of the Polish Constitution compare favourably enough with the much more limited changes introduced into the social systems of countries in Poland's immediate neighbourhood even by such enlightened rulers of the time as Frederick II of Prussia or Joseph II of Austria, to say nothing of Russia, where Catherine the Great, admired by the French free-

thinkers, made no social changes at all. The conservatism of the Polish Constitution in social matters is easily explained by the regard of the legislators for the threatening international position of Poland, which made sweeping changes inadvisable; also by their fear that the opposition of the adversaries of too thoroughgoing social reforms might lead to civil war; finally, by very sensible economic concern, as a too sudden break with the system of serfdom would have meant a blow to Poland's flourishing agriculture. Gradual transition to free agricultural labour was more expedient, and the Constitution was meant as a beginning in the right direction. It placed the relations between landlords and peasants on a basis of contract, equally binding for both parties, and it put the peasant under the protection of the State. It gave unconditional freedom to all new settlers on the land, and it opened the door for the most liberal arrangements between individual landowners and the peasants on their estates. The opportunity was willingly taken by a number of noble-minded Polish country gentlemen, who at once went beyond the Constitution and set their peasants entirely free. However, it was not only to such noble individuals, but to the whole nation, that the Constitution showed the way towards further reform and social progress by creating "reforming Parliaments" which were to assemble periodically, every twenty-five years. No such "reforming Parliament" was destined to meet until the Constituent Assembly of the new Polish Republic in our own days, but it remains to the credit of the falling Commonwealth of Poland that one great-hearted citizen arose in it still who carried the work of the Constitution a step further. That man was Poland's foremost national hero Kościuszko, who was soon to take the lead in the defence of the Constitution and of Poland's freedom against outside intervention.

IV

Such intervention was easy to foresee, and on it the opponents of the Constitution staked their last hopes for the maintenance of their cherished class privileges and political licence.

At first, indeed, it seemed that a wave of national enthusiasm would carry the Constitution, and with it the existence of the State, into an assured, better future. The district assemblies, almost without exception, took their oath on the Constitution most willingly, and its first anniversary was marked by a display of unheard-of unanimity. The Parliament continued its labours and worked out the details of the new administrative scheme; it even accomplished another memorable work by establishing total administrative unity between Poland and Lithuania, and thus completing the historical structure of the Union begun four hundred years before. It put into practice the principle of religious toleration laid down in the very first article of the Constitution, by organising the non-Uniat Eastern Christians of Poland into a self-governing body, independent of Russian protection.

From abroad there came abundant expressions of approval for Poland's achievement. The French revolutionary leader, Sieyès, praised it enthusiastically; the greatest British statesman of the time, Edmund Burke, congratulated the Polish nation upon it in a parliamentary speech; even Austria and Prussia joined in expressions of goodwill and in an undertaking not to attempt anything against the reformed Polish State. Russia was ominously silent, being occupied with a Turkish war.

But that favourable international constellation did not shine long. Discontented Polish magnates, residing in exile, soon approached Russia with proposals of inter-

vention against the new Constitutional order; and Russia, as soon as she had her hands free on the Turkish side, took up the matter all the more willingly as one of her rivals—Austria—had become entangled in a war with revolutionary France, and so could not compete with her designs upon Polish lands.

Three great Polish nobles covered the honoured names of their old families with everlasting shame by organising the gentry subject to their influence into a confederation which appealed to the Empress of Russia against the Polish Parliament on behalf of their Republican liberties.

Russian troops now entered the Polish territories without more ado, and Poland made frantic efforts to defend herself. The situation was desperate from the very outset. Attempts to negotiate a large foreign loan in Holland for the organisation of defence failed, and the Prussian Ally looked on inactively while an ill-equipped Polish Army of 45,000 men encountered two Russian ones which outnumbered it more than twice.

In spite of such overwhelming odds, the Polish Army, under the youthful leadership of the King's nephew, Prince Joseph Poniatowski, fought bravely while retiring towards the centre of Poland. The King, diffident about the possible success of armed resistance, with his characteristic hesitancy soon began to negotiate with the enemy. Russia asked for repeal of the Constitution and the King's access to the pro-Russian Confederation. To this the weak King, with the support of a minority of his Ministers, agreed, and so the heroic struggle against intervention came to an end. Russian influence reigned in Warsaw once more, the creators of the Constitution had to seek shelter abroad, its antagonists assumed sway. The administrative fabric freshly built up by the great patriotic effort of the Third of May was pulled down again, and the work of Poland's political reform was undone. Its blind destroyers

revelled in reactionary and repressive measures and in dishonest material gains, little knowing that behind their backs the neighbouring Powers were already preparing for a new partition of Poland. The Conservatives gloried in having stamped out in Poland the Jacobin Radicalism of the French Revolution. It was under the pretext of the spread of Jacobinism in Poland that the partitioning Powers, having agreed among themselves as to the division of the spoils, now openly proceeded to annex new large portions of Polish territory. The Confederates awoke too late from their illusions of generous Russian protection, their outcries of protest were raised in vain, and the second partition of Poland was accomplished in 1793, twenty years after the first.

V

The second partition is the subject of an important historical study written in English by an American scholar.[10] This partition differed from the first in that two Powers only, and not three, took part in it; and it also differed from the later distribution of Polish lands by the fact that Prussia annexed certain Western and Northern portions of what afterwards became Russian Poland. Russia, on the other hand, advanced only to those frontiers which in our own days, by the Peace of Riga, with the Bolsheviks in 1921, have become the Eastern frontiers of Poland. In one respect the second partition completed the work of the first; the lower reaches of the Vistula River, and its outlet on the sea at Danzig, now became definitely the property of Prussia; that meant the cutting of the jugular vein of the economic body of Poland.

And in one respect the accompanying proceedings resembled those of the first partition. The despoilers were

as anxious this time, as on the former occasion, to surround their action with the show of form by obtaining for it the enforced sanction of a Polish Parliament. And again they succeeded. What was to be the last Parliament of independent Poland issued from elections held under the double pressure of bribery and of military force. Even this Parliament resisted the new assault upon Poland most stubbornly, especially the mortal blow from the treacherous ally, Prussia. Silence, prolonged at a memorable meeting of the House till four o'clock in the morning, was the only reply to be obtained from the deputies. Silence was interpreted as assent, and the presence of Russian troops in the House and round it made all active opposition impossible. After the partition, a treaty of alliance with Russia had to be agreed to under the same military pressure, and in consequence of the treaty the Polish Army was to be reduced to 15,000 men. This called forth the last armed struggle of independent Poland—the insurrection of Kościuszko.

VI

The plan of an armed rising was discussed at secret meetings by some ardent patriots both from among the gentry and the townsmen; it was fostered from abroad by some of the creators of the Constitution of the Third of May, who were in exile; and it was readily entertained by the best elements in the higher ranks of the army. The prospective leader, Thaddaeus Kościuszko,[11] had risen from humble origin and low rank into universal and unanimous estimation by the qualities of his character. A native of Lithuania like many distinguished Poles, he had had a sound military education in France and experience of active service in the American War of Indepen-

dence. As a general of the Polish Army he had fought with distinction in 1792.

In spite of Russian precautions and repressive measures, the insurrection, planned abroad, actually broke out when one of the Polish brigade generals refused to submit to the reduction of his troops. Kościuszko secured popularity for the movement at the very outset by choosing for its starting-point the old capital of Cracow, which happened to be free from Russian troops (1794). The powers he assumed from the first were dictatorial and unlimited, and he rose to the responsibility of a great historical moment when he used them in truly unprecedented fashion: he proclaimed a general mobilisation of all men fit to bear arms, including the peasants. This step was as epoch-making as the Constitution of the Third of May itself. Until that time, in Poland, the gentry had enjoyed their great class privileges on the ground that they were the only defenders of the country. The social reorganisation of national defence by King Stephen Bathory two hundred years before, when townsmen won distinction in his Russian campaigns, was forgotten and had not been followed up by further steps in the same direction. Now the peasant, by shouldering side by side with the noble the hardest duty towards the State, was to establish his claim to equal rights. The new Constitution had only given him an earnest of such rights; it had but made a modest beginning with the removal of his social disabilities. Was it not too bold to expect that on such grounds he would answer the call of the country for the supreme sacrifice?

Kościuszko's great and daring experiment was justified by as complete success as was at the same time the introduction of conscription in revolutionary France by the mathematician Carnot, who became the creator of the first great national army in modern Europe. Kościuszko

also was soon at the head of an army more truly national than any Polish Army of former times; peasants of the neighbourhood of Cracow, armed with scythes only, flocked under his colours in their thousands, and it was by their valour, shown in attacking Russian artillery and capturing its guns, that he won his first victory at Racławice. That encounter, insignificant as it is from the strategical point of view, has never ceased to be celebrated in Polish song, story and painting, and justly so. The Constitution of a modern democratic Poland, written in ink on the Third of May, was here for the first time signed with the blood of that class of citizens who were to be, and are to-day, the backbone of the country. A nation whose largest and most essential section—the tillers of the soil—showed this spirit of citizenship was evidently fit to live in the changed social atmosphere of the modern world, and no political disasters and repressions could ever make it perish. The blood shed at Racławice fertilised the Polish soil for the undying crop of national life throughout a hundred years of captivity.

VII

The example of the peasants fired the hearts of another imperfectly emancipated class. The victory of the peasants at Racławice was soon followed by a victory of the townsmen in Poland's capital itself. The citizens of Warsaw, led by a shoemaker named Kiliński, drove the Russian occupation troops out of the town at Easter, and so completed the union of the nation round the standard of the insurrection. The capital of the sister country, Lithuania, the town of Wilno, soon followed suit by rising under Colonel Jasiński and expelling the Russians in its turn.

KOŚCIUSZKO'S REFORMS

Kościuszko himself had in the meantime followed up the epoch-making beginning of his insurrection by another most memorable act. Full of admiration for the patriotism shown by the peasants, he issued, on the third anniversary of the new Constitution, a decree from his headquarters at Połaniec, which carried the great work of the Constitution one decided step further. The peasants were now granted legal freedom of movement; they were no more to be tied to the soil in medieval fashion; the amount of labour which they had to do in the landlord's fields in return for the land they themselves held from him was reduced by half; on their own farms they were protected against arbitrary eviction, and the farms of soldiers on active service were placed under the special protection of the State authorities. District officials were appointed everywhere to watch over the interests of the peasants in their relation to the landlords. For the first time in Polish history the peasant felt the protective arm of the State extended over him. Kościuszko's reforms, decreed in a time of war, could not be carried out fully and normally, and did not remain in operation long, but they have the greatest historical and moral importance as having set a shining example to all coming generations of Poles. They showed how the Constitution of the Third of May must be fulfilled and developed, and how a truly vigorous national life under social conditions worthy of a civilised modern nation is to be lived.

VIII

These glorious beginnings of Kościuszko's insurrection constitute that element in it which indeed morally matters to a historian whose aim is directed at the spiritual truth of things rather than at material detail. Taken from the

purely outside point of view of strategic and international prospects, the insurrection, and Poland's freedom with it, was doomed to catastrophe and ruin.

While admitting this, we cannot help admiring the valiant stubbornness and administrative energy with which Poland's greatest leader carried on his losing fight through nearly a whole year.

He created an ordered machinery of Government in Warsaw out of chaos; and he resolutely put a stop to revolutionary terror and lynch law of the mob in the capital, which had been inspired by the bad example of the Jacobins of Paris. Treacherously attacked by Poland's perfidious ally, Prussia, who now openly joined the Russians, Kościuszko did not lose his head even after two sanguinary defeats of his armies on the Western and Eastern front respectively. He bore manfully the blow dealt to his cause by the loss of Cracow, and he successfully endured a two months' siege of Warsaw. Polish risings in the rear of the enemy—in Prussian Poland on the Western side and in Lithuania in the East—created diversions, and forced the enemies to raise the siege of the capital. The inevitable end was bravely delayed by all these efforts; it came at last when the fall of Wilno opened the road into Poland for overwhelming Russian forces. They appeared under the command of the famous Suvorov, who was afterwards to cross swords with Napoleon Bonaparte in Italy. The Austrians, on their part, had followed the example of Prussia and invaded Poland. Kościuszko's forces were scattered to fight all these enemies. He himself, remaining at the head of a small portion of his army only, and attempting to prevent the junction of two large Russian armies on the banks of the Vistula, was defeated, wounded and taken prisoner. This loss took the life out of the enterprise. The Russian forces now closed down upon Warsaw, and, taking its suburb, Praga, by storm,

massacred thousands of its civilian population, including women and children. Terrified by this, the town capitulated, and the King himself, who had played a passive part during Kościuszko's dictatorship, now in despair placed the fate of his nation in the hands of the Russian Empress. The rest is soon told. The final partition of Poland was accomplished between the same three Powers which had taken part in the first. In this division of spoils Austria and Prussia received large portions of Western Poland, which in the course of the nineteenth century passed into the hands of Russia and formed part of the province known before the Great War as Russian Poland. Even Warsaw, after the partitions, was for a time governed by the Prussians, as it was again in the first years of the World War. The last King of Poland spent the remainder of his days in exile. The year of his death (1798) is the year of the birth of Poland's greatest poet, Adam Mickiewicz, the spiritual king of modern Poland. Thus the death of the body of the old Polish Commonwealth links itself up with the new birth of the very soul of Poland.

IX

A legend which arose in the nineteenth century untruthfully reports Kościuszko as exclaiming when he fell down wounded, *Finis Poloniae!* ("The end of Poland!")

The events of Poland's last years, indeed, present a record of struggle at reform within and defence without which was utterly hopeless under the fateful historical circumstances. Neither military success against the enemy nor full political success at home was possible.

And yet it is not too much to say that in those hours of failure and downfall the foundations of a new existence for Poland were laid. The happenings of those days are the first of a series of Poland's protests against the loss

of its independence, which continue throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the shape of military effort first, of constructive economic, educational and political work afterwards, and of new armed organisation in our own day. To all such succeeding endeavours Kościuszko showed the way by the spirit in which his work was done. All his administrative measures and governing activities were aimed at proving that the nation was capable of moral recovery, not in the dead letter of a new Constitution only, but in living social practice; that it was perfectly able to manage its own affairs on right, reasonable, modern, democratic lines; that its internal corruption and disorder was a thing of the past, and could not be truthfully used as a pretext for aggressive designs of greedy neighbours upon its lands and its liberty—nay more, that such designs, even if outwardly carried out, would inwardly fail, because the life of a nation so reformed and progressing could not be quenched by any use of force. Kościuszko's insurrection, together with the glorious Constitution upon which it set the seal of action, truly shows, as Poland's foremost Constitutional historian in our days, Professor Oswald Balzer, has said, that "the crime of Poland's last partitions was committed too late." The morning-star of the new democratic Polish Republic of to-day visibly shines in the twilight of the old Polish Kingdom, and the hundred years and more of captivity are not a night of utter extinction, but the slow dawn of a new day. Even under the most hopeless political conditions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Polish nation not only never ceases to exist as a living whole, but never ceases to evolve as a social organism in the direction which modern European civilisation is taking. If, having emerged into freedom at last, it could at once take its due rank among the cultured communities of a world so profoundly changed since the French Revolution, the credit

for this is very largely due to those who rescued the falling old Poland from the reproach of going down to its grave with all its old faults, and who instilled new life-blood into a diseased and decayed body. The Poland of to-day and to-morrow is essentially the Poland of Kościuszko and of the makers of the Constitution of the Third of May.

It is also essentially the same as the Poland of earlier centuries in the vital conditions of its life. Such much-discussed international and domestic problems of the Poland of to-day as the fundamentally important question of access to the sea by way of Danzig; the insecure position of the Polish State on the map, between Germany and Russia; the relations with Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Rumania, the Baltic States; the Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and the Jewish questions; Land Reform and the great civic future of the peasant class—all these issues cannot be properly understood without the light thrown on them by ages of history. It is hoped that some assistance towards deeper understanding of contemporary problems has been given by the outline presented here of the history of the old Polish State.

That outline, in order to enable the student to form opinions on modern Polish problems, must be supplemented by another outline of Poland's existence during the century and more between the partitions and the reunion. In the nineteenth century the Polish nation, although divided and oppressed, lived, as an indivisible national whole, the life of modern European communities. It produced the very greatest works of its literature and great achievements in scholarship and science during that period of captivity; it developed a new and most abundant growth of industry in Russian Poland; its economic organisation triumphed in a gigantic struggle for the agricultural land with the power of Prussia; and it showed its capacity for self-government under Austria. All these

factors have gone to the making of the new Polish State, as also have the heroic armed efforts of the Polish insurrections in the nineteenth century; and accordingly these things claim full and detailed consideration in a separate study of post-partition Polish history.

PART II

POLAND'S CAPTIVITY AND DELIVERANCE

(1795–1930)

LECTURE I

POLISH NATIONAL EFFORT FROM THE NAPOLEONIC WARS TO THE INSURRECTION OF 1831

I

THE lectures which follow are chiefly intended to explain the political position, the social conditions, and the national mentality of present-day Poland by some account of the history of the country during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In attempting such a task it is unavoidable to become involved in a sort of paradox. On the one hand, the foundations of modern Poland, like those of all the world of to-day, are laid in that development, mainly along the lines of democratic liberalism, which characterises European history since the French Revolution; on the other hand, this is a period during which there is no Polish State on the map of Europe. Thus we have to deal with a nation for which the modern social evolution begins when its political existence ceases. Historians in the new Poland of to-day willingly turn away from the painful and weary tale of brutish oppression and impotent revolt in the nineteenth century towards the international problems of the free Poland of earlier centuries, because these problems are essentially the same for the rebuilt Polish State. But to a foreign observer many aspects of contemporary Polish life and politics would seem puzzling indeed without the peculiar kind of light which can be thrown on them from the darkest part of Polish annals.

The eclipse of Poland during the century and more of her captivity never is so entire that there is nothing to record which could be described as Polish history in the proper sense of the word. Divided and subject to foreign

rule, Poland, owing to great international upheavals and her own armed effort, repeatedly re-emerges into partly independent existence; this happens particularly during the earlier decades of the century. Again, towards the middle of the century, when the breath of a spring-time of revolutions is stirring the European air, Poland's voice, stifled at home, is powerfully heard in the forum of Western thought and discussion. Finally, towards the end of the period, the Polish element, incorporated more organically than before in the life of the three partitioning Powers severally, manifests its vitality within the borders of each of them by growing influence in the economic sphere (as in Russia), or in the political councils (as in Austria), at any rate by unbroken resistance to the most drastic attempts at extermination (as in Prussia). Hence the natural subdivision of this epoch of Polish history into three sections. The first of them is a time of ever-renewed military effort, and of short spells of constructive peaceful work under conditions of temporarily regained independence; it ends with the disaster of the insurrection of 1831. The next period is marked by the literary and propagandist activities of Polish emigrants in Western Europe, and their share in European revolutionary movements; it closes on another catastrophe, that of the rising of 1863. The third and longest stretch of time is filled with manifold Polish economic and political endeavour in the three different empires which Poles belong to, and it extends until the beginning of the World War, which opened a new chapter of Polish history.[12]

II

That the age of Poland's subjection should begin with a period when Poland is not yet really absent from the

international and diplomatic scene is only natural. The framework of institutions, the fabric of agelong habits, the network of international relations, which all belong to a large State, are not to be done away with by the summary obliteration of that State on the map. All these things very markedly survived the last partition of Poland in 1795. What survived, above all, was the man-power of Poland's last defenders—a number of military leaders who escaped that fate of imprisonment which befell the great national hero, Kościuszko, and who, while driven abroad, did not for one moment relinquish the thought of resuming arms at the earliest opportunity. It was inevitable that their hopes should turn towards revolutionary France. Poland had fallen as constituting in the eyes of her despoilers an outpost of the French Revolutionaries in Eastern Europe. She had certainly, a few years before her fall, given herself, on the 3rd of May, 1791, a new Constitution, modern and democratic in spirit, and so she had broken away ultimately from her feudal past and its abuses. Now France, having by a mighty national effort shaken herself free from her reactionary invaders, was carrying war into the enemy's country, and proclaiming the new principles of Republican liberty to all the nations she reached. Was she not the natural ally of a down-trodden and dismembered country, whose people had always considered, and even called, their State a Republic? Attempts at conspiracy in Poland itself being soon quelled by the concerted action of the three partitioning Powers, and an endeavour to gather Polish soldiers near Poland on Turkish territory meeting with little success, it was one of the generals of the last Polish insurrection, John Henry Dąbrowski, who, after some hesitation, fixed his eyes on the conflict between the new France and Austria as an opening for the revival of the Polish military and national idea. Napoleon, then

a rising young general of the French Republican Army, and already using Northern Italian nationalism as a weapon against Austria, eagerly grasped the proffered hand of a new ally. Polish troops were organised on Italian soil, nominally as the army of the new-formed Republic of Lombardy, practically as auxiliaries of France. They were chiefly recruited from Poles of Austrian Poland who had been compelled to serve in the Austrian Army and had either been taken prisoners or deserted.

The Polish Legions, as they were called in the Roman style fashionable in the period, did not carry out their leader's plan of revolutionising all the different nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and marching through its dissolution to the deliverance of Poland. They were used strictly for French strategic ends on Italian soil, and the Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797, in which no mention was made of Polish claims, was only the first in a series of disappointments that dogged the steps of the Polish soldiers who, for nearly twenty years, followed Napoleon's banners on all his battlefields in different parts of the world. Disillusionment produced distrust in some of the best among the Poles. The national hero, Kościuszko, when delivered from Russian captivity, declined to add his popular name as a strong asset to the new military movement. But the idealism and chivalrous spirit of the Polish legionaries, becoming known to the world at large, built up a European opinion, by which the Polish cause was to benefit in the end, even at the hands of Napoleon's adversaries. Napoleon, when he had reached the rank of First Consul, transferred the Polish Legions from Italian into French pay, but in the Peace Treaty of Luneville (1801) again did nothing for Poland—nay, he endeavoured to get rid of the Polish volunteers by sending a large portion of them across the Atlantic to San Domingo, in the Island of Haiti,

where they perished almost to a man in guerrilla warfare against the negroes or by yellow fever.

No wonder that Napoleon's behaviour led many Poles in Poland itself to think of other protectors for their cause. Not only were there attempts to organise Polish troops on the side of Austria—which eventually came to nothing—but, above all, there arose, even at that time, hopes of a new Polish policy in Russia, as aristocratic Polish patriots acquired influence at the Court of the Tsars. One of them, Prince Adam Czartoryski, was for a time Foreign Minister to Alexander I, and endeavoured to reconstruct a Poland united with Russia, as well as to form a Russo-Austrian alliance against Prussia (1805). But the solidarity of imperial interests between Russia and Prussia proved too strong for the genius of that Polish statesman; twice it ruined his plans, as it was to ruin many another project of Russo-Polish federation in the next hundred years. The only positive outcome of Czartoryski's policy was a strengthening of the long-established cultural predominance of the Polish element in the Lithuanian, White Russian, and Ukrainian border provinces between Poland and Russia. It was at that time that the University of Wilno rose into splendour. Its distinguished professors of the period counted the greatest of Polish poets, Mickiewicz, among their pupils, while further South, in the borderlands, the town of Krzemieniec, the seat of Poland's best public school of the time, became the birthplace of Poland's second great poet, Słowacki.

III

But the political hopes of Poland could only revive when a blow was aimed at her arch-enemy, Prussia, who then held the most important share in Poland's spoils. Even Warsaw and a large part of later Russian Poland during

the first ten years after the last partition was under Prussia.

The blow at Prussia was delivered by Napoleon on his conquering career in Central Europe in 1806. This time Napoleon himself appealed to the Poles to rise against their oppressors. Forgetful of past disappointments, they gathered with enthusiasm round his standards, willingly made the extraordinary sacrifices in men and material which he ruthlessly exacted, and helped him to win a difficult winter campaign against Prussia and Russia. They were rewarded by the creation of a "Duchy of Warsaw" out of a small central portion of the territory of the old Poland, without access to the sea, Danzig becoming a free city under international control, as it became again one hundred and twelve years later. The Duchy of Warsaw was placed under a Saxon ruler, who was a descendant of Poland's two Saxon kings in the eighteenth century; this was part of Napoleon's policy of favouring Southern Germany against Prussia. The Duchy of Warsaw was a military outpost of Imperial France in the East. While organising, with feverish haste and surprising results, its administrative, economic and intellectual life, the new little State was involved in all the wars of Napoleon, not in Poland's neighbourhood only, but farther afield as well: Polish soldiers were obliged to assist the Emperor's armies in quelling the liberty of Spain (1808), just as ten years before they had fought for him on the hot sands of Egypt. The Napoleonic legend became an epic of Polish heroism interwoven with French, and it accordingly retains an unfading halo of glory in Polish national memories, in spite of its tragic fruitlessness for Poland. Napoleon's gains were gains for the Duchy of Warsaw, but his fall was bound to be its ruin. The victory over Austria in 1809 enriched this nucleus of a new Poland by a considerable portion of Austrian

Poland, including Poland's ancient capital, Cracow. But Napoleon's great Russian campaign, grandly announced as his second Polish war, and ending in one of the greatest military disasters of history—the retreat of 1812—led to the automatic extinction of the short-lived Duchy of Warsaw from the map of Europe. Honourably faithful to the last, the Poles lost their noblest leader of the time —Prince Joseph Poniatowski, a nephew of the last King of Poland—in the task of covering Napoleon's retreat from Leipzig in 1813.

It was only after Napoleon's downfall that this quixotic fidelity turned out not to have been in vain for Poland. Even during the last years of his career bids for the favour of the Polish nation had frequently been made, by Austria first and then by Russia. At the Congress of Vienna the Polish problem became one of the foremost issues. Diplomatic play and counterplay centred round the ambitions of Alexander I, who dreamed of becoming an Eastern Napoleon and using the still extant Polish military force for the purpose. The jealousy with which the Western Powers, and especially Great Britain, naturally looked upon such plans finally resulted in a new partition of Poland, which gave its three sections the frontiers that remained unchanged until the World War. Under this redistribution of Polish territories among the three partitioning Powers part of Alexander's design was accomplished, and at the same time a gain for Poland achieved, in that once more a nucleus of free Poland—on the model of Napoleon's Duchy of Warsaw, though still smaller in size—was formed. The so-called "Congress Kingdom" of Poland, with the Tsar for its King, received a parliamentary Constitution with an army and a treasury of its own, while those Poles who were turned over once more to Prussia and Austria respectively were guaranteed a number of political and commercial liberties and privi-

leges. These never became real, and outside the pale of the Congress Kingdom only the old town of Cracow, with its district, for some thirty years enjoyed self-government as a free city, under joint inter-allied control.

IV

The Congress Kingdom, when we look back to-day on the fifteen short years of its existence,[13] surprises us no less than the Napoleonic Duchy by the amount of productive work in political organisation, economic reconstruction, and intellectual culture which, during this brief spell of freedom, the energy of the nation succeeded in accomplishing in a war-swept and exhausted country. True, the possibilities of the country's managing its own affairs were very limited from the outset. The Polish Parliament had only advisory powers, and the fittest man—Czartoryski—was not appointed Governor; instead of him, the place was taken by Alexander's brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, whose Asiatic brutality ultimately goaded the military youth of Warsaw into revolt. Alexander himself, though he had professed liberal ideals in his earlier days, was as much afraid of the revolutionary spirit then beginning to stir in Europe as any other of the reactionary monarchs of the Holy Alliance. A police *régime*, accordingly, hung over Poland and Russia alike. The noblest young men of Poland, the poet Mickiewicz and his friends in the University of Wilno, were soon to become its victims, going into prison and exile a few years before those noble sufferers for Russia's liberty, the Decabrists, met an even darker fate under Alexander's successor.

In spite of such handicaps, much progress was made. It was at this time that Warsaw received its University (1817) and its High School of Engineering, both of them

afterwards Russianised and only revived as Polish seats of learning in our own days.

The creation of these academies in Warsaw, as well as the establishment of numerous secondary and elementary schools all over the country, were the merit of Congress Poland's Minister of Education, Stanislas Kostka Potocki. The passionate fight which, in the true spirit of eighteenth-century enlightenment, he waged against all obscurantism, and the attacks he made on Church property in order to endow educational institutions, at last led to his downfall through a conflict with the clergy.

Not only educational, but the most vital social and economic problems, were attacked in Congress Poland in a manner worthy of remembrance. In a country which even to-day has two-thirds of farmers among its inhabitants, the condition of the peasant must necessarily always be a question of paramount importance. The old Polish State, before its fall, had done much to wipe out the shame of old abuses to which peasant serfdom had given scope: the provisions of the Constitution of the Third of May, 1791, placing the peasant under the protection of the law, and the more thoroughgoing reforms of Kościuszko during his dictatorship, amounted to almost total enfranchisement of the peasant. They had been partly revived under the Napoleonic Constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw. The Congress Kingdom witnessed the complete abolition of all dependence of the peasant upon the landlord in the neighbouring Prussian sector of Poland (1823), as well as considerable improvement of his lot in the minute but enlightened and well-governed City-State of Cracow. In the kingdom itself, however, as well as in the Lithuanian, White Russian, and Little Russian borderlands, much less headway was made in this respect, because of their connection with Russia, which still remained completely feudal in her system. However,

the freedom of movement which the peasant, at any rate, now enjoyed had its good effects: the towns received an influx of population from the country, and trade and industry, which had been the weak side of the old Poland, began to develop. It was chiefly owing to a Polish finance minister of great genius, Lubecki, that at this time the foundations were laid for that industrial prosperity which afterwards made Russian Poland the great manufacturing centre for the whole Russian Empire. Lubecki found the finances of Congress Poland in a state of chaos. By skill and energy he removed the burden of debts which the period of wars had left behind; by strenuous resistance to arbitrary expenditure, and by a highly unpopular system of drastic, almost predatory, taxation, he succeeded in balancing the Budget; by the establishment of a Polish State Bank (1825)[14] and an Agricultural Credit Society he placed currency and credit on a sound footing. By building a ship canal between the Vistula and the Niemen he endeavoured to create an outlet for Polish trade on the sea in the North-Eastern regions of the Baltic in place of Danzig, which now was in the hands of Prussia.

V

But all these most hopeful beginnings of new prosperity and peaceful progress were thwarted by the course of political events. The conflict between liberalism and autocracy, then maturing everywhere in Europe, was bound to be more acute in Poland than elsewhere. By degrees, as the effervescence of youthful enthusiasm for liberty, propagated by numerous Masonic Lodges and Students' Societies, increased, the grip of the political reaction characteristic of Alexander I's old age tightened upon Poland. An officer who stood at the head of a "Patriotic Society," Łukasiński, was imprisoned in a

fortress, and ended a martyr's life after many years in the notorious prison of Schlüsselburg. The Polish Parliament, which had rejected certain reactionary Bills introduced by the Government, was not allowed to meet again for five years; and when it was summoned for a session at last, the leaders of the Opposition were not admitted to the House, and the publicity of its debates was abolished. Alexander's successor, Nicholas I, ascended the throne (1825) under the impression of connections which he knew to exist between Polish and Russian revolutionaries; and the Polish Parliament further challenged his despotic temper by refusing to pass a death sentence on a group of Polish citizens accused of political conspiracy. It was only a war with Turkey and a conflict with Austria which prevented Nicholas from aiming a decisive blow at Congress Poland's liberties, and even induced him to flatter Polish feeling by letting himself be crowned King of Poland in Warsaw. The final clash was hastened by the outbreak of the July revolution of 1830 in France. There was much sympathy with it in Poland, especially among the army, which had inherited French revolutionary traditions through its Napoleonic officers. Nicholas, on the contrary, being one of the most determined autocrats who ever sat on the throne of Russia, intended to use the Polish Army, together with the Russian one, for intervention in France and Belgium against the new movement. He would perhaps have succeeded if Parisian events had not found a quick echo in Warsaw. The young hotheads of the Polish Officers' Training Corps in Warsaw organised a conspiracy against the Emperor's rumoured plans, and revolution flared up in the streets of Warsaw at the end of November 1830. Once more, as in the years of the first French Revolution, a diversion, created by Poland, saved French liberty from suppression by the power of Russia.

VI

But once more also Poland was to pay the penalty. The insurrection of one small province against the whole gigantic Russian Empire seemed a hopeless undertaking from the very outset to the reflective minds of the older generation, particularly to the old generals who had served under Napoleon and believed in his maxim that "victory is always with the big battalions." The first leader of the insurrection, General Chłopicki, belonged to this type of men, and clung to the last to a hope for negotiations with Russia. But the road to negotiations was soon cut off entirely by the rising wave of national enthusiasm, which carried even the greybeards with it. Parliament issued a manifesto to the nations of Europe, and shortly after that took the irrevocable step of declaring the Tsar deposed from the throne of Poland. Poland's most authoritative politician, Prince Adam Czartoryski, sacrificed his cherished, lifelong programme of co-operation with Russia to the cause of national unity and assumed the presidency of the insurrectionary Government.

The chances of the insurrection, on closer examination of the historical circumstances, do not appear so utterly desperate as they seem at first. Poland had embarked on her adventure with a small but disciplined and well-equipped army, with a well-filled treasury, and an ordered Polish administrative machinery in the country. In case of prolonged, successful resistance, the Poles counted on Western European sympathies; some of them even hoped for Austrian and German intervention. These expectations of help from abroad proved fruitless both in 1831 and during the second insurrection of 1863. But the insurrection made a surprisingly long stand—nearly for a whole year. The slowness and indecision of Russian

tactics, and even an epidemic of cholera among the invading troops, told in its favour. It fell at last through want of consistent and resolutely active military leadership, frequent changes in the supreme command, and ruinous dissensions between the radical and the moderate wings of the civil Government of Poland. Salvation might have lain in following, on a larger scale, the example set by Kościuszko thirty-six years before, and moving the peasant masses on behalf of the insurrection by the immediate grant of full enfranchisement; but the task was tackled in a half-hearted manner by a Parliament composed largely of country landowners, and the support of the peasants was not obtained. Even without it, the small Polish Army succeeded in several offensive movements, and partisan risings among the Polish gentry of the Eastern borderlands threatened the rears of the Russian forces and their communications. But expeditions of parts of the Polish Army into the North-Eastern and South-Eastern border provinces failed, the best Russian troops—the Guards—forced their way into Poland from the North-East, and, finally, the friendly attitude of Prussia enabled the Russians to attack Warsaw from the Western side. The capital surrendered after a gallant defence, and the remainder of the Polish Army largely emigrated, laying down its arms at the Prussian frontier. The exiled soldiers were welcomed with sympathy even in Germany, and both they and the political and intellectual leaders of the nation found hospitable shelter in France.

On Poland itself the shadow of Russian revenge fell darkly. The Tsar, freed by the Polish revolt from the obligations towards Poland imposed upon him by the Congress of Vienna, viewed his victory as the first step towards the stamping out of the revolutionary spirit in the whole of Europe. To save appearances in the eyes of

the West, a Constitution was given to Poland, called the *Organic Statute* (1832), which preserved some measure of its self-government. But the proclamation of a "state of siege" in Poland suspended all its provisions, and Poland was practically ruled from the palace of the Russian Governor in Warsaw. Sweeping confiscations of the landed property of insurgents made room for an invasion of the Russian element, while many thousands of Polish families were expelled into distant parts of Russia. Russian was gradually introduced as the language of the schools and of civil administration; special facilities were given to the propaganda of the Russian Orthodox faith against the traditional Roman Catholicism of Poland. Warsaw from the centre of Polish life was transformed into a stronghold of military oppression and police control. The real capital of Poland for the next quarter of a century lay in Paris, where a galaxy of Polish statesmen and soldiers, writers and scholars, journalists and artists, was gathered in exile.

LECTURE II

THE POLISH EMIGRANTS ABROAD AND THE PERIOD OF EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS

I

THE defeat of the insurrection of 1831 was a sinister landmark indeed in nineteenth-century Polish history. As long as the self-governing "Congress Kingdom" existed, the separated provinces of Poland had rallied round it as a centre of Polish national life. Now this focus of Polish national unity was destroyed, and it was not under Russia only, but under Germany and Austria as well, that the years which follow the insurrection of 1831 are marked by a recrudescence of political oppression.

A mighty voice of protest against these doings of the oppressors of Poland was raised at this time in the West of Europe by all those leaders of Polish thought and Polish action who had been compelled to seek refuge there.

Centring chiefly in Paris, but spreading its activities over provincial France and into Britain, Italy and Germany as well, the Polish emigration stands out in the record of nineteenth-century Polish efforts as a great moral factor. It undoubtedly rendered the Polish cause vital service by keeping the memory of Poland fresh in Western European public opinion, and by keeping, on the other hand, the sacred fire of Polish national tradition and national consciousness alive in the bosom of Poles themselves.

The historical picture of the emigration, as it now presents itself to us in the light of research and from the

distance of nearly a whole century, is rich in strong lights as well as in deep shadows. It strangely resembles the pathetic spectacle offered to present-day observers by those noble sons of Russia who have similarly been obliged to forsake their country in large numbers in order to escape Bolshevik tyranny, and who are now scattered over the capitals of Western Europe.

In both cases—the exile of Russians to-day and the exile of Poles after 1831—the body of emigrants contains some of the nation's most illustrious men in the field of statesmanship, learning and art.

Both the Russian emigrants of to-day and the Polish emigrants of ninety years ago can claim the merit of making their country better known than ever to the West, and from its worthiest side, too: the presence of distinguished men in Western centres of intellectual life, and their living contact with the highest minds in these centres, established for Poland after 1831, and establishes for Russia to-day, a nobler place than ever in the attention of cultured Europe.

Not even in the days of universal sympathy with Poland during the World War had Poland such illustrious heralds of its cause among foreign friends as after 1831. In England the organisers of a "Literary Association of the Friends of Poland"—Thomas Campbell, the poet, and Lord Dudley Stuart, above all—raised their voice in sympathy. In Germany a plentiful crop of poems about Poland—labelled *Polenlyrik* in German literary history—was produced by the poets of the period, including such noble names as Uhland, Lenau, and Platen. In France the "choice and master spirits of the age," from Lamennais to Michelet and from Montalembert to George Sand, lived on terms of intimacy with the great Polish writers, thinkers and artists of the emigration, and wrote enthusiastically in support of the Polish cause. The Polish poet

Mickiewicz was appointed to a new Chair of Slavonic Literature in the University of Paris, and became the first and foremost interpreter of the Slav world to France and Western Europe. In Italy, the Republican idealist Mazzini and others founded a tradition of Italian sympathy for Poland, which continued through the days of Garibaldi and later. Similarly, the greatness of Russia's contributions to thought and art, and the pathos of her tragedy, is voiced by some of the most eloquent tongues in Europe in the present day.

But there is another, and a less comforting, analogy between the activities of Polish emigrants after 1831 and Russian emigrants since 1918. In both cases the efforts of emigrants in what must, after all, be their most essential aspect in the eyes of the historian, viz. on their political side, appear tragically futile. The Europe of to-day is compelled, by the current necessities of international life, to recognise Bolshevik rule over Russia, quite as the Europe of 1831 was bound to acknowledge foreign domination over Poland; and in both instances, accordingly, the clamours of exiles for intervention beat on the deaf ears of unsympathetic statesmen and uninterested Parliaments. In both cases the appeal to the historical interests of civilisation, however nobly worded, is utterly fruitless; and in both cases the voices uttering it are neither harmonised nor clear.

The want of all opportunities for positive and constructive political endeavours made of the Polish emigration of 1831, as it largely makes of the Russian emigration of to-day, a pandemonium of wordy strife, of passionate party dissension, doctrinaire programme-mongering, empty oratory, and violent mutual invective. The poverty and distress of the homeless, the uncertain legal status of political refugees, the difficulty of leading a normal life of self-respecting work in a foreign country

and in a professedly temporary place of shelter, all this plunges the weaker brethren among the emigrants all too easily into beggarly moral degradation.

On the other hand, there is a peculiar megalomania in the mentality of slavery which morbidly grows in the unreal atmosphere of exile: in the absence of common human day-to-day tasks dreams are dreamt of magnificent missions for humanity, which the oppressed nation is destined to fulfil, and comfort is sought in them against the contempt which exiles, in their mean and wretched outcast existence, often have to endure from their hosts. In Poland's case it so happened that her greatest poets were among those exiled, and in the immortal works for which the tragic state of the nation inspired them they evolved the conception of Poland as a nation chosen, like a Messiah, to redeem the debased European world by its sufferings—a fantastic idea which, however, served the noble purpose of instilling a sense of dignity into an enslaved people at a time when that dignity was most needed as the moral mainstay of national existence. The nation is safely guided through its darkest hours by its poets. The fact is morally justified by its great spiritual results; it is historically explained by a situation in which no more practical instrument of political self-expression was left to the Polish people. But this spectacle of the political leadership of poets and visionaries cannot but seem strange and unaccountable to the Western European, and particularly to the English, mentality.[15] There is something similarly abnormal, and arising out of a similarly anomalous situation, in the mystic notions which are spreading among the Russian emigrants of to-day, and are known by the name of *Eurasianism*, because their subject is the providential mission of Russia on the confines of East and West, midway between Europe and Asia.

II

The Polish emigration in Paris after 1831 was politically divided into two main camps, which differed both as to principles and as to tactics. The right, or aristocratic, wing professed monarchism, and considered its chief, Prince Adam Czartoryski, as the uncrowned King of Poland. It saw hope for Poland in diplomatic intervention by the existing European Governments, and accordingly assailed their offices with visits and memorandums, articles and pamphlets. It was ready to place the remainder of Poland's armed force, for ulterior Polish ends, at the service of some foreign Power, as had been done before in the time of Napoleon.

The Left, or democratic, wing was led by those who had represented the Radical side in the National Government during the insurrection. Foremost among them stood Joachim Lelewel, a distinguished historian, but a demagogue and doctrinaire in politics. The Left blamed the egoism of country landowners for losing the insurrectionary war by failing to secure the support of the peasant masses. It had wished to make the insurrection a social as well as a national revolution, and its hopes lay in the prospects of European revolution now. It directed its appeal, not to the Governments, but to the nations, to whom it issued manifestoes as busily as the other side addressed diplomatic notes to Ministers.

There was certainly more response from popular sentiment in Europe to the Radicals' appeal than there was from official quarters to the representations of the Monarchists. There was also, of course, wider support for the Radical programme among the rank and file of the emigrants themselves, and even such outstanding personalities as the great poets, Mickiewicz and Słowacki, while deploring or despising the strife of emigrant parties,

distinctly sympathised with the revolutionary ideals of popular freedom and international brotherhood.

Backed by such high spiritual authority, as well as by sheer force of numbers, the Polish Radicals formed no unimportant element in the network of popular secret societies then spreading over all Central and Western Europe; they co-operated actively with them, and groups of Poles took part in all the small local outbreaks which here and there announced the still distant universal storm of a later day. While thus staking their hopes on coming European commotions, the Radical camp also believed in the possibilities of renewed armed movements in Poland itself, and continually stirred up the spirit of active resistance there. Several desperate attempts of small insurgent bodies in Poland during the first years after 1831 were cruelly put down by the partitioning Powers, which united in two successive conventions for their more systematic suppression, and extended their watchfulness and influence not only over the free city of Cracow, but over the movements of Polish emigrants in such Western countries as Switzerland and even France.

Not discouraged by this, the emigrant politicians continued their activities on Polish soil.

The full enfranchisement of the peasant, and free ownership for him of the land he tilled, were proclaimed as the principal watchwords of the new Polish programme, and the emissary from the emigration, carrying these ideas among the common people in Poland itself, became a familiar figure in all parts of the country, and an object of intense, but mostly vain, pursuit by the police of the partitioning Powers. The work of the emissaries was supported by secret democratic societies in Poland, formed by enthusiastic University students, composed of men and women from all ranks of the educated class, and anxious to get into touch with the masses of the

people. Futile as the work of these conspiracies was in its tangible results, they were the training-ground for the administrators and legislators in the self-governing Austrian Poland of later years. Austrian prisons were part of the schooling for some of them.

Against the endeavours of these noble-minded idealists the partitioning Governments, besides a system of police persecution, elaborated a conscious and persistent policy of sowing discord between the country gentry and the peasants, and of posing as the protectors of the Polish peasant against his landlord.

It must be admitted that both in the Russian and the Austrian part of Poland the selfish fear, especially of the large landed proprietors, for their possessions, largely played into the hands of the foreign rulers by estranging the peasant and refusing all assistance to the secret efforts of the Polish propagandist. There were noble exceptions, however, and the Russian Government, under Nicholas I, while with one hand upholding the idea of peasant proprietorship against the landlords, was employing the other to put down all attempts of individual landlords to promote peasant ownership of land by generous initiative on their own part.

III

Such were the actions and reactions centring round the great social problems of modern life in Poland when the revolutionary restlessness of Europe, after the Congress of Vienna, at last began to reach its crisis in the later forties.

The Polish Radicals abroad, planning a national insurrection on a more democratic footing than the unhappy one of 1830, found the ground particularly well prepared in Prussian Poland, where the peasants

were already free from serfdom and refugees from Russian Poland were stimulating the spirit of revolt.

It was accordingly to Prussian Poland that the Paris centre of the Polish Revolutionary Party sent a leader of the coming insurrection in the person of Lewis Mierosławski, a typical emigrant politician, uniting unscrupulous dictatorial ambitions with demagogic methods and a doctrinaire's democratic fanaticism with vague international ideals. Baffled at its outset by Prussian arrests, which included Mierosławski himself, the attempted insurrection broke out under other leaders at Cracow, took possession of the town, and was spreading in the Western part of Austrian Poland when Austria's ruler, Metternich, that arch-demon of European anti-liberal reaction, resorted to a most perfidious device for suppressing it. He used his agents to organise a peasant militia against the insurgents, and what was undoubtedly the darkest moment in Poland's modern history came in the shape of a fratricidal massacre of the Polish gentry and educated class in Galicia by bands of peasants (1846). This tragic hour, which no Pole can remember even now without a shudder, has found its everlasting literary monument in the *Choral Song* by the Polish poet Ujejski —one of the grandest lyrics of national despair ever penned, and yet ending in accents of unbroken faith and hope and brotherly charity and forgiveness. Metternich's plan succeeded, and his net gain was the incorporation into Austria of the free city of Cracow, with a new flood of Germanism sweeping, in consequence, over all the institutions of Poland's ancient capital.

In Prussian Poland, in the meantime, insurrectionary movements went on in spite of the check they had encountered at the start. The Polish cause received new support from the German revolution, which broke out in March 1848, in the streets of Berlin. Polish political

prisoners were delivered and made the subject of manifestations of sympathy by the German population. During a short period of enthusiastic demonstrations of fraternity, it seemed as if a new era of friendship was to follow the ages of hostility between the Germans and the Poles. Emigrants were flocking homeward from the distant West, a provisional Polish Government at Poznań demanded a Polish army and a Polish civil administration for Prussian Poland, and dreams were entertained by Mierosławski and his comrades of a Poland rebuilt through the joint agency of Prussia and Austria against Russia. Mierosławski even became the military leader of a rising of Republicans in the Duchy of Baden against the unpopular Prussian ruler, who afterwards was to unite Germany under the Prussian sceptre as William I. But that Baden adventure of Mierosławski's—which ended in failure, like all his fantastic undertakings—already took place a year after an armed Polish volunteer force, organised by him in Prussian Poland, had been compelled, by superior Prussian military force, to disarm and disperse. Even in the first flush of the new German liberal enthusiasm, German nationalism, in the revolutionary Parliament at Frankfurt, had raised a serious voice of protest against the idea of independence for the Polish provinces of Germany. The German Revolution ended as a brilliant but futile episode, which bore important literary and intellectual fruit, but produced no political results on a large scale. The Poles under Prussia emerged from it poorer by one illusion, but richer in consolidated national strength. The peasants of Prussian Poland had taken active part in the armed rising. Prussian efforts to inveigle them against the Polish gentry, as their brethren in Austria had been inveigled, had proved fruitless. The renaissance of Polish national feeling had spread into the old Polish province of West Prussia, stretching towards the sea-

coast, and it had been manifested in the South-Western border regions, in Upper Silesia, which had been separated from Poland for five hundred years: the peasants of Silesia, still speaking Polish after so many centuries, had sent a Polish deputy, a Roman Catholic priest, into the Prussian Diet.

IV

If the results of the revolutionary episode in Prussian Poland lay mainly in its moral effect on national efficiency, in Austrian Poland the contemporary outburst of revolution was to have more tangible consequences of distinctly political shape, although they were not realised at once.

When the European storm of 1848 shook the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, together with the rest of the Continent, it found the Poles among the most revolutionary elements in Austria. Aristocrats and democrats alike were incensed against the Vienna Government after Metternich's crime of instigating the massacre of 1846. Some had turned to renewed projects of an alliance with Russia, some—like the great poet Mickiewicz—organised active Polish support for the insurrection of Northern Italy against Austrian rule. The Sardinian Army was even commanded by one of the Polish insurrectionary generals of 1848. Another and more famous Polish general, Joseph Bem, became a national hero of Hungary by leading the Hungarian rising against Austria in 1849.

In Austrian Poland itself national governing committees were formed and national guards organised as soon as revolution had broken out in the rest of Europe. The enfranchisement of the peasant and his endowment with land was the foremost plank in the revolutionary platform, and the disastrous work of 1846 seemed about to be reversed by the generous initiative of Polish land-

owners. In order to prevent the effects of such a gesture of reconciliation, Austria hastened to be beforehand with the measure, and the Austro-Polish peasant got his liberty from serfdom, and his land, as a generous gift from the Emperor. Even the money compensations to the gentry for the land were to be paid out of the Central Austrian Exchequer.

It was at this time also that a new instrument for use against the Polish element in Galicia was devised by Austria. In the revolutionary ardour of 1848 joint action by all the different Slavonic nationalities of Austria seemed a hopeful means of overthrowing the reactionary German centralism of Vienna. A Slavonic Congress was held at Prague, and about one hundred eminent Poles from all the three sections of the country took part in it, together with Czechs, Russians and Southern Slavs.

The new spirit of nationalism was rising everywhere in Europe. Polish nationalism in Austrian Poland overflowed into the Austrian portion of Silesia, the Duchy of Cieszyn (Teschen in German), which after many centuries of separation from Poland now asserted the Polish character of its population in the Press and on the platform through peasants' sons who were University students at Cracow.

Austria at this juncture, with the same insidiousness with which she had used the peasants against the gentry in Galicia, bethought herself of another application of the old Roman maxim, "Divide and govern!" It was to be applied to the new position of the nationalities. That very same Slav Congress at Prague, which Austria was clever enough to tolerate, witnessed the first-fruits of a policy of hers which consisted in fostering national differences in order to balance the different national forces against each other. Against the rising power of

Poles in Austria, in particular, the Austrian Government at that time began to cultivate the separatism of the inhabitants of Eastern Galicia, the "Ruthenians," as Austria called them, or "Ukrainians," as they call themselves to-day. Ruthenians of the separatist type, favoured by Austria, quarrelled even at the Prague Congress with Ruthenians standing for the historical union of their nation with the Polish. These beginnings were to have an unbroken sequel of growing importance in the later history of Austrian Poland.

The cynical use, however, made by Austria of this new nationalism did not attain the chief aim desired—it did not impede the growing influence of the Polish element in Austrian political life. The first Parliament which met in the revolutionised Austrian monarchy was presided over by a Pole, Francis Smolka, who upheld its dignity under the most adverse circumstances.

The revolutionary movement throughout Austria was suppressed by another wave of reaction which set in for a number of years. The larger towns of Austrian Poland—Cracow and Lwów (Lemberg)—suffered bombardment, just as Prague and even Vienna did in the same stormy year. A Constitution, already granted, was suspended once more, and the *régime* of persistent Germanisation was reintroduced in Austrian Poland. It could well seem to Poles that the Austrian Revolution had proved as abortive, and had brought as complete disillusionment in its train, as the contemporary revolution in Germany.

But the tendencies of the age were not to be checked permanently, and the harvest of the revolution was soon to be reaped. In fact, in looking back now to the events of 1848, both in Germany and Austria, we perceive that although they ended in momentary disappointment, they were potent factors in strengthening the Polish

element in both these empires. The strength acquired was, under Germany, a strength *de facto*, and under Austria a strength *de jure* as well, which was shortly to be recognised as such in the public life of the monarchy.

V

The picture is very different when we turn to Russian Poland. Not only was there no trace of a corresponding revolution in 1848 in that part of Poland, but the empire of that resolute autocrat, Nicholas I, once more acted as the vanguard of European reaction. An army under the same field-marshal who had quelled the Polish insurrection of 1831 marched in 1849 into Hungary and suppressed her rising against Austria.

All the more heavily was the pressure of autocratic Russian rule felt, of course, on Polish soil. Western revolutionary movements finding an echo in Polish secret societies in the towns of Wilno and of Warsaw, the leading members of those societies were promptly expelled to Siberia, and by 1850 the deadly quiet of successful oppression once more lay over the whole country.

Three years later a new and great historical opportunity presented itself to the Polish nation in general, and to the Poles under Russia in particular. The Crimean War, beginning as one of the many wars between Russia and Turkey, developed into the most formidable concentric attack ever made in modern history upon the empire of the Tsars.

The onslaught broke the iron spirit of Nicholas I, who threw away his life in despair.

There had been Poles before who had sought an ally for the Polish cause against Russia in Turkey, and formed volunteer troops in the Ottoman service. Now no less

a man than Poland's greatest poet, Mickiewicz, threw the weight of his personality into the scale, realising, with the intuition of genius, that another great moment had come for the reappearance of Poland upon the international scene.

He went to Constantinople to organise a Polish armed force there. At the same time Great Britain, standing in the forefront of the new struggle against Russia, was encouraging and financing the formation of Polish troops on the Oriental theatre of war.

Disputes arose between a Turkish and a British party among the leaders of the new Polish military movement. Mickiewicz endeavoured to mediate between them, but was suddenly struck down by cholera (1855). His death bears a singular analogy to that of another great poet, Byron, whom sudden disease had also carried off in the East while organising an armed struggle for national liberty.

But Byron's death gave glory to the dawn of Greek freedom, while the death of Mickiewicz meant the death also of the Polish cause in the Crimean War. The plan of Great Britain to reconstruct a Poland on a small scale—a plan for which Lord Dudley Stuart, in the last effort of his life, strove to win the support of Sweden—that plan naturally met with determined diplomatic resistance from Austria, and especially from Prussia.

The Congress of Paris, which ended the Crimean War (1856), was presided over by a French Minister who was a Pole by birth—Count Walewski, of Napoleonic parentage; but, different from the Congress of Vienna, forty years before, it did not even raise the Polish issue.

Thus, after European revolutions, a great European war had also ended in disappointment for the Poles. But like the German and Austrian revolutions, the

Crimean War was not without fruit for the Polish cause, as was to become apparent by and by. Nicholas's successor, Alexander II, ascended a throne recently shaken by the greatest of dangers, and he endeavoured to strengthen it by a more popular method of government. He was to become known in Russian history as the great deliverer of the Russian peasants from serfdom, and towards Poland he adopted at first, like his ancestor, Alexander I, an attitude of conciliation and concessions. True, he addressed, at the very outset, a deputation of Poles in Warsaw in the memorable words: "No dreams, gentlemen!" (*Point de rêveries, messieurs!*), yet he allowed certain particularly offensive and oppressive measures to be relaxed.

This was all the more expedient in the interest of Russia's hold on Poland, as at the same time a new Napoleon had arisen in France. Napoleon III, who was to prove a mere caricature of his great ancestor, was posing, with many theatrical gestures, as a deliverer of oppressed nations; and even Poland's spiritual leader, Mickiewicz, had died believing in that mission of his.

Napoleon III actually assisted Italy, for purposes of his own, in her rising and reunion. Garibaldi became a household name in Poland, and national revolution seemed about to stir in Polish lands as well as elsewhere. Against this danger Bismarck, then Prussian ambassador to Russia, urged the necessity of closer co-operation between the partitioning Powers. A meeting of their rulers in Warsaw (1860) irritated Polish sentiment, and the story of Russian Poland during the next few years became a conflict of two opposed tendencies: conservative endeavours to obtain reforms from Russia by legal methods, on the one hand; and patriotic manifestations of protest, and revolutionary impulses of active

resistance, on the other. Finally, the insurrection of 1863, the last armed revolution in nineteenth-century Poland, broke out and ended in new disaster. Like the insurrection of 1831, it is a tragic landmark in the history of Poland.

LECTURE III

THE POLES UNDER RUSSIA

THE INSURRECTION OF 1863 AND AFTER

I

During the first years after the Crimean War there was little outward change in the Russian government of Poland, but the successes of national movements in Western Europe on the one hand, and the beginnings of liberalism in Russia on the other, could not fail to have their effect on the Poles under Russia. New currents were stirring the stagnant air. Citizens, irrespective of profession, gathered in the newly formed Agricultural Society and debated that fundamental problem of Polish social life—the peasant question. The President of the Society, Andrew Zamoyski, son of one of Poland's worthiest aristocratic families, became the most respected man in the country. Having taken part in the insurrection of 1831, he had not emigrated, like many of his friends and relations, but remained in the country devoting his energies to the work of economic reconstruction and technical improvement. Among other things he introduced steam navigation on the river Vistula. He abstained from all political activity, disdaining the policy of shows of loyalty to foreign rule for the purpose of obtaining minor concessions.

Such tactics, however approved of by the older generation, could not be to the liking of young enthusiasts, who had a rallying-centre of their own in the new Medical Academy, which was the embryo of a revived Polish University in Warsaw. They organised patriotic manifestations of protest, in which large masses of the popula-

tion of Warsaw shared. One such procession was fired upon by the Russian troops, and five victims fell (1861). The indignation of the people of Warsaw rose high, but was calmed by the tactful behaviour of Prince Gortchakov, the Russian Governor of the province, an honest old soldier, who allowed a delegation of citizens to assume responsibility for public order in the city. He also gave high Government office to a Polish noble, who was soon to become an outstanding figure in the political life of the country. Count Alexander Wielopolski, a man of iron will, overbearing pride, and cynical common-sense, was doomed never to become popular among a romantic nation like the Poles. Having been abroad on a diplomatic mission during the insurrection of 1831, he fully understood, with his shrewd sense of reality, that all hopes for intervention of the Western Powers on behalf of Poland were fond delusions in the given European situation, and he resolutely took up the broken threads of the policy of Czartoryski and Lubecki. Absolute loyalty to the union with Russia was to give to the Polish nation the assurance of peaceful economic progress, of growing concessions in the way of self-government, and finally, perhaps a controlling voice in the destinies of the great Russian Empire itself.

Here, then, were three schools of political thought, apparently irreconcilable with each other: the idealism of revolt and protest embodied in the young men of the University; diametrically opposite to it, the thoroughgoing realism of co-operation with Russia as personified in Wielopolski; and midway between the two the noble figure of Zamoyski, combining the idealism of dignified political restraint with the realism of day-to-day economic activities. At first Wielopolski had it all his own way. It must be admitted that he achieved considerable success by way of changes of the Russian political system in

Poland and concessions to the demands for self-government. The Tsar was induced to give his assent to the formation of a Polish Council of State with deliberative powers, and of corresponding local councils. Later on, Wielopolski obtained even more: the civil and the military powers in Russian Poland were separated from each other, and the civil administration was made entirely Polish in language and personnel.

Wielopolski's most important achievements lay in the field of education. At his proposal, a special Ministry of Education for Poland was re-established, and he became its head. He reorganised the school system of the country very thoroughly. The Polish high schools, which had been made Russian, became Polish again, including the University of Warsaw (1862). This University was Wielopolski's pride, and it had a short period of great intellectual splendour under his protection. The number of secondary and elementary schools in Poland was considerably increased under Wielopolski's administration, and the programme of teaching was reformed on Western European lines.

The great social problem of Poland—the peasant question—was brought no nearer to a solution under Wielopolski's rule, because his temper, conservative and dictatorial as it was, did not lend itself to the liberal reforms demanded by the spirit of the age, and partly, also, because the Polish gentry declined to co-operate with the proud dictator. Serfdom still existed in the form of a certain amount of compulsory labour of the peasant on the landlord's soil in return for the use of such soil as the peasant tilled for himself. Two solutions lay open: the immediate transfer of the land which the peasant tilled into his unreserved ownership, in return for a money compensation paid to the landlord; or the establishment of a relation of tenantship between peasant

and landlord. The majority of the Polish gentry, during many weary years of inconclusive discussion, favoured the second and slower method. In Russia and in the Lithuanian, White Russian, and Ukrainian borderlands between Russia and Poland the historical decree of Alexander II, issued on February 19 (old style), 1861, accomplished the great reform of the abolition of serfdom on the lines of the first of the two alternatives just mentioned: provision was made for the gradual purchase of the land by the peasants in the course of a transitional period of twelve years. Under the influence of this memorable event, a struggle for the favour of the peasant class began in Poland between the Radicals and the Conservatives. The Radicals held out hopes of immediate and unconditional ownership of the land to the peasant if he would co-operate in a revolution which would carry them into power. The Conservative side, on the other hand, at last did something definite: Wielopolski caused two decrees to be issued for Poland, which were analogous to the decree abolishing serfdom in Russia. But their provisions were much less thoroughgoing than those of the Russian decree; they satisfied neither peasant nor landlord, and were never carried into effect by either side.

If the peasant cause did not make much progress during this short era of partial self-government, the development of the towns and their trade and industry presented a more favourable picture. The city of Łódź, the centre of Poland's textile industries, was growing with almost American rapidity; its population doubled during the ten years between 1850 and 1860. The Germans, who had laid the foundations of business prosperity in this and other towns, were becoming assimilated, and a strong Polish middle class of German origin was developing. Many German names of townsmen's families, both in the records of the insurrection of 1863 and of patriotic

activities after it, bear honourable witness to this absorption of the German *bourgeois* element into Polish national life.

II

In spite of its obvious successes in the spheres of self-government, education and economic development, the Wielopolski administration was unpopular throughout. Wielopolski's despotic pride roused Russians and Poles alike against him. The clergy had taken part in patriotic processions: Wielopolski offended the Roman Catholic hierarchy by gruff expressions of his displeasure. The Agricultural Society refused to have anything to do with Wielopolski's political programme: he dissolved the Society. Crowds of people assembled in the streets in protest: he caused the Russian troops to fire upon them, and there were victims again. There was only one section of the population whom he conciliated—the Jews, to whom he granted full equality of rights and access to public office. He endeavoured at the same time, by special regulations, to enforce their assimilation to the Polish element in language and habits. This at first had some good effect: a new fellow-feeling arose between Jews and Poles. The leading Polish writer of the day, Kraszewski, was appointed editor of a large daily paper owned by a patriotic Jewish banker; and the Jewish Rabbis, side by side with the Roman Catholic and Lutheran clergy, took part in the national manifestations in Warsaw. But in the long run Wielopolski's reforms, causing a considerable influx of Jews into the capital and into other large towns, weakened the rising Polish middle class by Jewish competition and rendered the Jewish problem in Poland only more acute instead of solving it. In the later stages of Wielopolski's rule his unpopularity only increased instead of waning.

Manifestations of protest continued, and even the churches of Warsaw were kept closed by the clergy for a time because some of them had been invaded by the Russian soldiery for the purpose of arrests. The Polish Radicals profited by the rising discontent. They raised the war-cry of complete independence for the nation, and entered into communication with the emigrants abroad with a view to another armed rising. That restless old revolutionary, Mierosławski, who was to become its first leader, organised a training school for Polish officers on the hospitable soil of Northern Italy. In Warsaw several attempts were made upon the life of the Tsar's brother, who had been appointed lieutenant of the province. The gentry party, now called the *Whites*, as opposed to the Revolutionaries, or *Reds*, continued in its attitude of political non-coöperation, and issued a manifesto demanding the reunion of Poland with its historical border provinces, which Wielopolski thought Utopian. In consequence, the leader of the Whites, Zamoyski, was removed from the stage of public affairs by exile, and Wielopolski, having lost all chance of support from the gentry, had only force to rely upon for the maintenance of his rule. The Reds tacitly hoped that a proposed levy of recruits for the Russian Army from among the Polish peasantry would set the whole country aflame with a democratic revolution. As a counter-stroke to such expectations, Wielopolski obtained a decree from the Russian Government which exempted both gentry and peasants from the levy and threw its whole burden on the revolutionary youth of the towns. The Revolutionary Committee was informed of the plan, and caused a large part of the young people to hide in the forests. The rest were taken at night in their beds, and Wielopolski proclaimed this, through his newspapers, as a triumph of law and order. An open conflict was now inevitable,

and the Revolutionary Committee, on January 22, 1863, issued a decree declaring the country to be in a state of armed insurrection against Russia.

As in the case of the former insurrection of 1831, the country did not rush into insurrection without a certain amount of administrative machinery ready for use. The "Central Committee," as the revolutionary organisation at first called itself, had already developed in name and in fact into a "National Government," acting in secret, but possessing a postal service, a police, and a tax-collecting apparatus of its own. Throughout the year and a half during which the insurrection lasted that National Government, with numerous departments, remained secretly active in Warsaw, filled as the town was with Russian soldiers, and the official seal on its orders carried authority throughout the country: taxes were collected, supplies exacted, and orders executed in spite of all outward obstacles and of the inward weakness of the movement.

That inward weakness consisted, above all, in the want of that disciplined and completely equipped Polish Army which the insurrection of 1830 had had at its disposal. The heroic story of 1863 is a record of guerrilla warfare, conducted by small bodies of insurgents, without artillery, without a commissariat service, without connection between the units, without comprehensive strategic plans, with sporting-guns for their only arms, drastic requisitions for their only source of supplies, and the forests for their only quarters.

The heroism of this desperate struggle has been commemorated by one of Poland's greatest artists, Arthur Grottger, in three series of designs, known in every Polish household, and by the leading novelist of our generation, Stephen Żeromski, in a story called *The Faithful River*, which was written on the fiftieth anniversary of the

insurrection. The military history of the insurrection, as far as it can be said to have any, is not unlike that of 1831: a quick succession of commanders-in-chief, and disastrous party dissensions in the civil Government. The two first dictators, Mierosławski and Langiewicz, each came to grief in a very short time; a collective Government of moderate type, hoping for foreign help, soon failed; so did a Radical one, relying on acts of terrorism; and the last leader of the insurrection, Romuald Traugutt, a truly noble figure, vainly endeavours to form something like a united regular army and to make civil administration efficient when it is working under a thickening net of police persecution. He bravely holds out in his concealed office in Warsaw itself for three-quarters of a year, till he is captured at last and publicly hanged with four of his principal functionaries on August 5, 1864.

III

Like the insurrection of 1831, that of 1863 had one chance of success: the appeal to the peasant masses. The originators of the movement realised this, and in their very first manifesto announced the unconditional enfranchisement of the peasants and the unreserved transfer of the land tilled by them into their ownership, with compensation to the landlords out of national funds. But the insurrectionary Government did not have the power to enforce such a sweeping change: landlords largely failed to comply, and peasants even more largely remained ignorantly apathetic. They darkly remembered the disappointments of former generations. The insurrection of 1831 had been predominantly an insurrection of the gentry. That of 1863 was indeed much more democratic, many of its noblest soldiers and leaders coming from the middle class of the towns. But neither

the first nor the second insurrection succeeded in reaching that bed-rock of Polish national strength—the peasant class. The peasants merely began to warm to the cause as the insurrection went on, and attempts at insurrectionary conscription in the villages had some success in the later stages. But on the whole the appeal to the peasant in 1863 was a failure. The Polish peasant had received his freedom under Prussia from the Prussian King in 1823; under Austria from the Austrian Emperor in 1848; he ultimately received it under Russia from the Tsar in 1864, when the Polish insurrectionary Government was in its death-throes.

The initiators of the insurrection had thought of giving it a broad basis, not in the social sense only, by appealing to the peasants, but in the geographical sense as well, by extending the insurrection to all the territories of the historical Poland before the partitions, including the Lithuanian, White Russian, and Ukrainian borderlands. The Polish element in these borderlands was chiefly represented by the gentry, and that gentry had always been distinguished by its patriotism: the greatest modern national hero, Kościuszko, and the greatest Polish poet, Mickiewicz, had come from its ranks. The border gentry now added some of the most glorious pages to the record of the insurrection. It was in the North-Eastern borderlands, now belonging to the States of Lithuania and Latvia, that the insurrection held out longest (for nearly two years and a half), and it was there also that the peasants gave more active support to it than elsewhere. It needed all the ruthless cruelty of Muraviev, the Russian Governor-General of Wilno, to suppress the insurrection of Lithuania. The numberless summary executions, which earned for him the surname of "The Hangman," the sweeping confiscations of Polish landed property, the wholesale expulsions of many Polish families into the far-off wastes

of Eastern Russia and Siberia, which all mark Muraviev's rule, are certainly the most appalling chapter in the pathetic annals of Poland's persecution by Russia. If the insurrectionary appeal had met with popular response on the North-Eastern border, the case was very different in the South-Eastern Ukrainian borderlands. There the peasants, in spite of a manifesto in their own language called the "Golden Writ," and proclaiming their enfranchisement, took sides actively against the Polish insurgents. The sins of Polish gentry rule over the peasant of the border in past centuries were now visited upon the descendants of those rulers: a band of noble-minded Polish students of Kiev University, who had gone forth among villagers with the new message of fraternity, were pitifully massacred.

Besides counting on the support of the peasants and on the extension of the movement into the borderlands, the leaders of the insurrection of 1863, like those of 1831, had hoped for intervention from Western Europe. Again Polish diplomatic agents importuned the Western Courts, and as a result of their efforts, two joint diplomatic notes were presented to Russia in the course of 1863 by the ambassadors of France, Britain and Austria. But the demands expressed in them on behalf of Poland were not enforced after Russia's evasive replies. Britain, in particular, in spite of widespread popular sympathy with the Polish cause, was not willing to risk becoming entangled in another European war against Russia—so soon after the Crimean War, too—for the sake of an object comparatively so remote from British interests as Poland was.[16] Napoleon III, on the other hand, would have favoured the idea of such a war in order to satisfy his own large ambitions for French predominance on the Continent; but he could not undertake it single-handed. Austria was from the first a half-hearted and insincere

partner in the diplomatic action; and soon she was won over to the other side. It was at the initiative of Bismarck that the partitioning Powers once more made common front against the Polish insurrection, as they had done in 1831. A military convention between Prussia and Russia, directed against the insurrection, had been concluded as soon as the armed movement in Russian Poland began; and it was also under Bismarck's influence that Austria, somewhat later, proclaimed a state of siege in Austrian Poland, thereby depriving the movement of a basis and its leaders of shelter.

The attitude of Prussia won for her the benevolent neutrality of Russia in the wars against Austria and France, with which modern German Imperialism was to begin its career a few years after the Polish insurrection.

Western European help to the Polish insurgents, after all, remained limited to the self-sacrificing heroism of a few individuals—Frenchmen and Italians—whose names (Rochebrun, Francesco Nullo, and others) are gratefully remembered in Poland.

IV

There are few events in nineteenth-century Polish history which mark a period as definitely as does the insurrection of 1863.

It differs from the former one of 1831, among other things, in that it is not followed by emigration to the West on a large scale. Paris does not again become the capital of Poland. The Emigrants' Democratic Committee, having transferred its powers to the insurrectionary Government, never resumes them after its fall. Of the insurgents, many thousands go to Siberia to perish; not a few survive there, and remain to make a living; some even become rich. The time begins when cultured Poles qualified to hold responsible positions are scattered

all over Russia, and the Polish element comes to the fore in the development of Russian industry and agriculture, in learning and in law.

More important, however, than this dispersion of cultured elements from Russian Poland over the Russian Empire is the profound change which Polish society at home now undergoes. It is mainly twofold.

In the first place, the social structure of the nation changes very materially. With the Tsar's decree of 1864, peasant serfdom is finally abolished in the last section of Poland in which it still existed. At the same time the gentry, as a class, is shattered by the insurrectionary disaster, and many of its young men, having lost their fathers' lands by confiscation, go to swell the ranks of the professional classes in the towns. The free peasant class, powerful in numbers, instinctively and irresistibly gropes its way in the Poland after 1863 towards economic, and in due time towards political, power. After 1863 the gentry can no more be called a dominating factor in Polish national life, though many leading men are still descended from it. This is realised both by the Polish leaders themselves and by Poland's foreign rulers, and both endeavour to get the Polish peasant on their side. The struggle lasts longest, and is hardest, in Russian Poland.[17]

The second difference between the things before and after 1863 also concerns the problem of national unity, but on its political side. The insurrection was the last occasion in modern European history, before the World War, when the Polish problem figured in diplomacy as a living international issue. Henceforward the Powers acquiesce more thoroughly than ever in the fact of Poland's division between three States.

And what is a more serious change, the Poles themselves seem to acquiesce in it, too. Life under the three foreign Powers brings its different day-to-day tasks, evolves its

different methods and tactics. One movement, indeed, is common to all the three sections of Poland after 1863, but that is a negative one: throughout the country there is a universal, violent revulsion of the national mind from all wild dreams of political change through revolution, because this programme has disastrously failed. The watchword of *organic work* becomes popular instead. It implies political resignation and patient endeavours to strengthen the nation by economic and educational progress. This necessitates co-operation with foreign rule, or, if counter-action, at any rate counter-action by legal methods only. Such tendencies are apt to develop into mere absorption in the material aspects of life and selfish indifference towards national ideals. The wonderful adaptability of man to any permanent state he is placed in produces in Poland a strange spirit, which has been mockingly described as "threefold loyalty." Poles in the three different parts of Poland, if not all loyal to foreign rule, become, in their mentality, more and more like the nations they are subject to. The three sections of the nation are drifting apart, and going each its separate way. It seems as if Poles were voluntarily moving along a road where Polish national history must cease, and become merged in the different histories of three large empires.

But it is not this differentiation only which becomes a danger to unified national existence. There is also a new internationalism abroad which pushes everything that is distinctly national into the background. The progress of science and technology attracts universal attention. It develops a philosophy of its own which, after running to extremes of materialism, settles down into the agnostic attitude characteristic of a whole generation. In Poland the new scientific outlook on the world becomes known and popular under the name of *Positivism*,

derived from the fashionable *Philosophie positive* of the Frenchman, Auguste Comte. The ardent young Positivists prefer studies in natural science to all other intellectual pursuits; history and poetry lose in attraction and in importance. As Poland then was largely living on her historical tradition, this weakening of historical interest spells unmitigated national loss. The poets are no more a gospel of national action; what poetry there is in the new age gives little food to national aspirations.[18]

Coupled with the new enthusiasm for science, there is a powerful interest in those social problems of industrial town life which are common to all the modern world, without difference of nationality. That interest is bound to grow by degrees as Russia, by means of a policy of high protective tariffs, develops her Polish province into an intensely active industrial district, serving the vast markets of the Russian Empire. Polish Socialism begins to develop soon after the insurrection of 1863, and common social aims bind Polish and Russian revolutionaries together.

An infusion of national spirit into this new movement of Socialism was only to come much later. So was a revival of interest in national history among the general public: that interest was only reawakened, some twenty years after the insurrection, by the great historical novels of Sienkiewicz and the historical pictures of Matejko. In the period immediately succeeding 1863 there is at first nothing but reaction against all tendencies to seek national comfort in the glories of the past. The so-called Cracow school of historians, great as its works are, makes all Polish history a dreary record of fateful shortcomings and faults, leading to ruin; and even the fresh memory of the heroic insurrection of 1863 itself is not spared by one of that school, who elaborately presents the insurrection as a vast piece of tragic national folly.

V

If reaction against all the ideals of the foregoing epoch is the outstanding consequence of the defeat of 1863 among Poles, reaction in a darker sense, of course, also marks the Polish policy of Russia in the new period. There is a distinct return to the methods of Nicholas I: the liberties won by Wielopolski all vanish, and measures of brutal Russification take their place.

No liberties had ever been obtained for the Eastern borderlands, and proceedings could accordingly be more simple and sweeping there. The landed gentry, chiefly representing Polish tradition and culture in those provinces, was the main objective. The work left undone by executions and expulsions during the insurrection was now continued by taxation, first in the form of a huge indemnity imposed on the border gentry for the support it had given to the insurrectionary movement, later on in the shape of a permanent 5 per cent. super-tax on landowners of Polish nationality. At the same time purchase, or even repurchase, of land by Poles was rendered impossible by special decrees.

Together with the country, the towns were to lose their Polish character. Wilno was stripped of its Polish historical relics and collections, and the Polish language banished from all public use.

The Church in the borderlands constituted an important link between the Lithuanian, White Russian and Ukrainian peasant and the Polish nationality of his landlord. Community of religion meant adherence to the historical Western type of Polish civilisation. In the North-Eastern part of the borderlands Roman Catholicism in its strict form had prevailed; there, a number of Roman Catholic clergymen had been the leaders of insurgent troops, composed both of peasants and minor gentry.

The Roman Catholic Church, accordingly, now suffered systematic persecution. Roman Catholic church buildings in the borderlands were transferred in great numbers into the ownership of the Russian Orthodox Church, numerous Russian monasteries were established, and Catholic ones were suppressed. Besides, the most strenuous efforts were made to introduce the Russian language, instead of the traditional Polish, into the vernacular portions of the Roman Catholic ritual. The Church was treated with equal harshness in Russian Poland proper: here, also, Catholic monasteries were doomed to extinction; all Church property was confiscated and the clergy paid by the State; the administrative affairs of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland were severed from direct connection with Rome and placed under a special authority sitting in St. Petersburg.

But the severest religious oppression was reserved for that section of the population of historical Polish lands which professed the Uniat faith. The Uniats, it will be remembered, are Eastern Christians, using Slavonic ritual like that of the Russian Orthodox Church, but professing allegiance to Rome and unity with the body of the Western Catholic Church. The Union had existed since the end of the sixteenth century, and was the prevailing form of religion in the South-Eastern, or Ukrainian, borderlands, as well as in the South-Eastern corner of Central Poland itself. To detach the Uniats from the Roman Church meant a definite step towards the disintegration of Poland. In the borderlands little was left undone against the Union even before 1863. After the insurrection of 1831 already, the Union had been summarily abolished there by a decree of Nicholas I: the Uniats were declared to belong to the Russian Orthodox faith, and passive resistance, practised by Uniat monks and nuns chiefly, was cruelly repressed. The same repres-

sive measures were to be extended, after the insurrection of 1863, to the Uniats in the South-East of Russian Poland proper. But although a bishop had been found in due time who willingly carried out the wishes of the Government, the peasant masses remained demonstratively faithful to their old faith, and rejected Russian Orthodoxy. Military force was used against them, and shootings and massacres of religious processions and of individual worshippers became a feature of the history of the Uniat Church during nearly half a century. It became a Church of martyrs, quite as the Russian Orthodox Church itself, together with all other Churches, has become in the Soviet Russia of to-day.

Having, so far, dealt chiefly with the treatment of the Eastern borderlands after the insurrection of 1863, we now turn to the province of Russian Poland proper. Here, more was needed than the mere brutal acts of oppression practised in the borderlands. The self-governing institutions for Central Poland which had come into existence during the last years before 1863 had to be abolished first. This was accomplished by a special authority called the "Organising Committee."

It was now that the policy of assuming guardianship over the Polish peasant against his landlord was fully developed, and a Russian Minister named Milyutin became its ablest exponent. In accordance with his projects, the deliverance of the peasant from serfdom, and his endowment with land, was carried out in Poland in such a way as to undermine thoroughly the economic position of the landed gentry. The indemnity they received was paid in securities, which in reality had only half their nominal value; and the peasants got the right to use the landlords' pastures and woods. In the constant conflicts to which this settlement gave rise, Russian officials, called the "Peasant Commissioners," acted as

arbiters between peasant and landlord, and busily stirred up enmity between them. So did the District Administrators, who controlled the elections for the newly created representative assemblies which were to be the organs of village self-government.

Next to the peasant's cottage, it was the school at which the Russian Government now mainly directed its attention in order to make it an efficient instrument of Russification. All the revived Polish schools of the Wielopolski Administration were made Russian again, including the University of Warsaw, and they were placed under the control of a soulless bureaucracy. No effort was spared, in the teaching of history in particular, to produce in the minds of youth an utterly distorted image of Poland's past. It shows the vitality of the Polish national tradition that even under this system generations of ardent Polish patriots grew up; the greatest Polish novelist of recent times, Żeromski, himself educated in Russian schools, described their fruitless attempts at denationalisation of the young Poles in his autobiographical story, *Labours of Sisyphus*.

Finally, the civil Government of Russian Poland was deprived of every trace of independence and distinctness, and Russian administration organised exactly on the same model as in the rest of the Russian Empire. But even that was done with a difference: the Poles were not allowed some elementary liberal institutions which the Russians by that time possessed, such as municipal self-government and trial by jury. The administrative offices and the courts of law were filled with the scum and offal of the Russian official class, and in no part of the vast and corrupt body of the Russian bureaucratic organism was bribery, embezzlement, and every other form of abuse as rife as in Russian Poland. Many higher officials were endowed with confiscated Polish land, and

settled in Poland as colonists. Poles, on the other hand, were debarred from all public service in their own country. Many of them obtained high distinction as judges or civil servants in distant parts of Russia; others turned at home to engineering, industry and trade. The Polish educated class in Russian Poland became largely commercialised, which was not without its good effect on the wealth of the nation. Intellectual and artistic life sought shelter across the Austrian border, at Cracow, and that old city became, in a spiritual sense, once more the capital of Poland, as it had been politically in the Middle Ages. In Warsaw, a brutal and stupid censorship strangled every free utterance of the national genius in the domain of thought or art. But even there the Polish creative genius proved irrepressible, and great writers and scholars did splendid work under the worst conditions imaginable.

The height of the police *régime* was reached under Tsar Alexander III, in the eighties of the century. It was then that even the elementary schools became completely Russian, and even in the private business relations of daily life in Poland the use of the Russian language was made compulsory. All Polish social activities were driven underground, and although there were no stirrings of political revolution, the prisons were constantly crowded with victims of Russian suspicion and espionage.

VI

It was with a feeling of relief that Russian Poland welcomed, in 1894, the new Emperor, Nicholas II. The industries of the country and its trade relations with Russia had rapidly increased during the period of acute persecution, and it was hoped that the vital part now played by Poland in the economic life of Russia would

induce the new ruler to treat the country in a more conciliatory manner. On the other hand, the visible growth of revolutionary dispositions in Russia itself aroused hopes for enforced political concessions throughout the empire. Nothing of these hopes was fulfilled during the early years of Nicholas II's reign. Nevertheless, the same hopes rose to a particularly high pitch when the military power of Russia suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Japanese in 1904. Revolution broke out in Russia in 1905. Its firstfruits for Poland consisted in some relaxation in the religious persecution of the Uniats in South-Eastern Poland, who immediately in masses declared themselves Roman Catholics, and thereby showed their attachment to the Polish historical tradition. Much more was expected from the historical moment. Again, however, as on the eve of the insurrection of 1863, Polish opinion proved irreconcilably divided between the moderate nationalists who desired merely self-government and hoped to win it by legal means, and the revolutionaries, whose aim was complete independence, and who thought the moment come for another armed rising. Two names which were to be great in the new Poland at this time rise into eminence: that of Roman Dmowski, the able leader of the Polish deputies in the new Russian Parliament, and of Joseph Piłsudski, the chief of the revolutionary conspirators. Polish Socialists had hitherto co-operated mainly with Russian revolutionaries: Piłsudski inspired a new "Polish Socialist Party" (*P.P.S.*) with the idea of a national war against Russia and a national army secretly organised for the purpose. But the victory of reaction over revolution in Russia soon put an end to these plans for the time. The proposed Polish insurrection simmered away in isolated acts of violence often indistinguishable from mere banditism. Piłsudski himself was at last obliged to seek refuge across the Austrian border. Nor was his

distinguished antagonist, Dmowski, much more lucky in his endeavours. His work in the Duma was also rendered futile by the rising tide of Russian reaction, which soon transformed succeeding Dumas into more and more passive tools of autocracy. In Poland itself some degree of success was achieved in the educational field, not in the shape of any official reforms, but of private initiative tolerated by the Government. A boycott of the Russian schools by the body of Polish pupils in 1905 resulted in the foundation of numerous private Polish schools, and a large society called "The Mother of Schools" (*Macierz Szkolna*) became the leading organ of the movement. Similar efforts were made in economic organisation on a co-operative plan. The peasants, among whom the secret work of devoted Polish teachers had borne fruit, spontaneously introduced the Polish language in their self-governing bodies. Polish national life revived also in the borderlands, where it had long been silenced. Wilno had again its Polish theatre, Polish newspapers and clubs, and even in the Ukrainian South, Polish intellectual activities at Kiev, formerly a great centre of Polish culture on the border, once more began to develop.

But checks and disappointments soon came. The Government succeeded in stirring up Russian national feeling against the Poles even in the non-reactionary political parties of Russia; the Polish representation was cut down from thirty-six to the ridiculously small figure of ten deputies, even in the second Duma; the School Society which had maintained hundreds of Polish elementary schools and libraries, was closed, and so were many other Polish societies. A stride was made in the Russification of the country by the Government's purchase of the railway line from Warsaw to the Austrian frontier and the removal of all Polish railwaymen from the service.

Finally, the district of Chelm (called *Cholm* in Russian), in the South-East of Russian Poland, the home of the main body of the faithful Uniats, was in 1912, by a Government decree and subsequent vote of the obsequious Duma, separated from the administrative complex of Russian Poland and embodied in Russia proper. The fact was received with indignant protests by Polish opinion as a new partition of Poland.

The outbreak of the World War found Russian Poland industrially still progressing and economically well organised, but politically more oppressed than ever, and torn into discordant factions, all equally helpless.

LECTURE IV

THE POLES UNDER PRUSSIA

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BISMARCK AND HIS SUCCESSORS

I

THE history of that section of Poland which, after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, became for more than a hundred years part of Prussia falls, broadly speaking, into two periods. The first of them lasts until Prussia definitely assumes the leadership in a united Germany during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. During this first period the relations of Prussia to her Polish subjects change with the general fluctuations of German politics. Prussia, indeed, starts on a strenuously anti-Polish course of policy as early as the thirties of the nineteenth century, but she is still too much preoccupied with other issues, and altogether too weak, to pursue it resolutely. And the revolutionary movement in Germany about 1848, though it does not essentially alter the course of things, acts as a cross-current for a time.

The second period begins with the victory over France. The goal of Prussian ambition being achieved, and Germany united under the King of Prussia, the transformation of the new Germany into a nationally homogeneous empire is required in order to make the achievement durable. The limit of conquest on the Western side being reached by the incorporation of Alsace-Lorraine, expansion of the German element Eastward follows as a natural tendency with the growth of population and of industry. It is as a logical part of the plan of consolidating and strengthening the new German Empire that a resolute

campaign of legislative, administrative and economic persecution against the Poles now begins, which, with only one trifling interval, continues unabated, and even goes on increasing in force, until the World War. The principles and methods of this campaign are not new; they have all made their appearance in Prussia's Polish policy long before; the difference between the two periods is only in the intensity with which the anti-Polish policy is now pursued and the consistency with which its leading maxims are applied. After 1871 Poles are again and again excluded from privileges conceded by progressive legislation to Prussians; and even liberal German parties vote for anti-liberal measures against the Poles in order to obtain advantages for themselves from the Government.

At first there seemed to be some hope for the Poles in an alliance with German liberalism. Not only after the insurrection of 1831 and during the revolution of 1848, but even at the time of the new Polish rising of 1863, were active sympathies for the Poles publicly manifested by the progressive parties of Germany.

After 1871 the new Prussian rule over Germany has many adversaries within the empire: the Southern and Western Germans oppose it on grounds of tribal jealousy, the Roman Catholics struggle against Protestant domination, and in more recent times German Socialism combats all measures of the Government as reactionary. But none of these forces ever proves an effective ally to the Poles of Prussian Poland at really decisive moments, and some are frankly in sympathy with Prussia, as far as her Polish policy is concerned.

II

The Prussian policy in Polish matters, then, must evidently be treated historically as a German policy, and the

temporary relations of the Poles with this or that component part of the German body-politic do not matter much in a survey of the subject.

What is important is the behaviour of the Poles themselves under Prussian rule, and the effect the Prussian policy has on them. The view is not infrequently held that both Polish insurrections of the nineteenth century—that of 1831 and that of 1863—were largely Russian-Polish affairs, and the Prussian and Austrian sections of Poland were not much affected by them. This is not the exact truth. Prussian Poland sent about 12,000 fighters into the ranks of the Polish Army in 1831, and made heavy material sacrifices to the cause. But very soon after this insurrection, opinion in Prussian Poland began to be divided between the two camps, which became so marked in Russian Poland about 1863: a party of direct revolutionary action and a party of peaceful work by legal means. Now it must be observed that the latter party is stronger in Prussian Poland from first to last. If there is an armed rising there in 1848 it is because the revolutionary mood then prevailing all over Europe takes possession of Prussian Poland as well; but after 1848 revolutionary violence is never favoured again by the shrewd and level-headed citizens of Prussian Poland. Some measure of support, indeed, is forthcoming for the insurrection of 1863, but there never is, in the Prussian section of Poland, any delusion among the masses as to its possible success. The history of Prussian Poland during the second half of the nineteenth century is an unbroken record of inward strengthening by the quiet and lawful means of enlightenment, industry and economic organisation. The hard school of the Prussian *régime* developed in the Poles of that sector some of the best qualities of their German adversaries: industry and endurance, frugality and patience, discipline and co-

operation. Like the Czechs, whom they have come to resemble in temperament, they followed in their daily contact with the foe the classic Virgilian maxim, *Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*

It was after the insurrection of 1863 that the watchword of "organic work" became popular in Russian Poland, and directed the energies of the people into economic and educational channels. In Prussian Poland the same programme had even earlier got the upper hand over fantasies of conspiracy, and it was under Prussia that this type of political realism, in the later decades of the century, achieved the greatest successes. Greater general prosperity and more fellow-feeling between the different social classes than in any other part of Poland became the happy result of the Prussian Poles' struggles against their oppressors. It is true that a high level of popular culture and business efficiency goes together, in that province, with a want of subtle intellectual refinement and a certain common-sensical narrowness of mind; but these are only the inevitable penalties which had to be paid for essential success in a fight carried on exclusively by weapons of economic organisation and elementary education.

III

In order to appreciate duly that powerful spirit of resistance which was gradually developed in Prussian Poland, we must again go back to the events before the revolution of 1848.

When Prussia once more took over a large portion of Poland after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, she did not fulfil the promises given at that Congress with regard to provincial self-government for the Poles and freedom of economic relations with other parts of Poland. While Russian Poland remained for some time an autonomous

kingdom in union with Russia, Prussian Poland became simply a Prussian province from the very first, and remained so since.

Still, the *régime* during the first fifteen years was endurable. A Polish nobleman was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the province: Prince Radziwiłł, who was related by marriage to the Prussian dynasty. There was a provincial assembly, and there were local representative bodies in the urban and rural districts; in all these the Polish element was even assured of a majority at first after 1815; and so it was in Government offices and courts of law, and the Polish language still predominated there, as well as in the schools and in the Church, although administrative pressure was even then beginning to work against it. There was as yet no such pressure in economic matters. An organisation of landowners, chiefly Polish, which was to secure credit for the gentry ruined by the Napoleonic wars, was actually subsidised by the Government: a loan was granted to it without interest.

Other times, however, were approaching. The very year of the first desperate outbreak of insurrection in Russian Poland, 1830, was marked, under Prussia, by the advent of the first administrator who endeavoured systematically to uproot the Polish element in the country and destroy the Polish character of the province. That man was President Flottwell. He was the first to renew strenuously the attempts made half a century before, after the first partition, by Frederick the Great, to colonise Prussia's Polish lands by German settlers. Government lands were let to German tenants only; Polish estates which had to be sold were parcelled up among German colonists, amply subsidised by the Government for the purpose; and only Germans were employed on public works. Another aspect of later Prussian rule—the language policy—was for the first time clearly revealed under

Flottwell. Polish was deprived of the footing of equality with German on which it had hitherto been placed (in theory at least) in Government offices and courts of law, and German henceforward took first rank both in principle and in practice. Duality of language was introduced in the existing Polish schools, and predominance of German teaching over Polish guaranteed in the new ones which Flottwell, it must be admitted, founded on a liberal scale.

Like the Russian Government, the Prussians saw the chief opponent of foreign rule over the country in two factors principally—the landed gentry and the Roman Catholic Church.

To paralyse the influence of the gentry, Flottwell quickened the process of the endowment of the recently emancipated peasants with land, with very limited compensation to the landlords. He replaced the organs of rural self-government, in which the gentry had had a large share, by Prussian administrative officials. To many towns, on the contrary, he granted municipal self-government in order to weaken the influence of the gentry on them. All this had little effect. In the country the gentry were wise enough to secure friendly relations with the peasantry by loyalty and goodwill; in the towns the grant of self-government only served to strengthen the rising Polish middle class. Even the concession of full citizens' rights by Flottwell to the Jews did not impair this: the liberal treatment of Jews in other parts of Germany as well as in Prussian Poland favoured their more equal distribution over the empire, and they did not become a factor of danger to the Polish character of the towns, as they did under Russia.

With regard to the Roman Catholic Church, Flottwell also tried to undermine its strength as a factor of nationality. He confiscated the property of all the convents

and monasteries which still existed in Prussian Poland, and used it largely for introducing an element of German culture into the education of the Polish clergy. But here again his purposes were thwarted by Polish national vitality: the Polish priests, while acquiring the best education to be got from the new German sources, only became thereby better qualified to make good leaders and organisers for the Polish peasant people in their struggle against the German policy.

It is only fair to admit that, under Flottwell, the country progressed, both through German and Polish effort, in education as well as in economic development. Flottwell built roads and drained marshy parts of the country on a large scale; he favoured and protected horticulture, and assisted the rise of industries. Polish initiative, on the other hand, combined the care for economic and technical progress with culture in a national spirit. Thus Count Raczyński, one of the most deserving citizens of the province, became the founder of the waterworks in its capital, Poznań (Posen), while, on the other hand, he enriched the city with a fine library and other monuments of art. Another and most valuable library was founded on the estate of Kórnik by Count Działyński, himself a scholarly editor of historical sources. But even higher than these aristocratic names there stands, in the history of intelligent social effort in Prussian Poland, that of a modest townsman's son, Dr. Charles Marcinkowski. He created, by personal sacrifice and wide appeal to others, a Fund of Relief for Poor Students. This was a work of outstanding social importance: it laid the broad and solid foundations for that high professional culture and efficient business education which came to distinguish the Polish middle class in Prussian Poland, and became the chief weapon against the German invasion of the towns.

IV

Marcinkowski's activities were rendered possible by a relaxation of the anti-Polish policy of Prussia for a short time in the forties. A king had ascended the throne—Frederick William IV—who was a personal friend of the Poles. Under his reign, in fact, many of Flottwell's measures were reversed, oppression ceased, and the Poles regained some of their rights.

The progress of these concessions was interrupted by the revolutionary outbreaks of 1846 and 1848. When revolution burst over Germany itself as well, Berlin was willing, for a time, to consider the demands for comprehensive home rule which were raised by Prussian Poland. But they were violently opposed by the strong element of German settlers who had already accumulated in Prussian Poland itself, and these were backed by the new Parliament of the Kingdom of Prussia, which was of a very reactionary complexion from the very outset. Under the new Constitution with which Prussia emerged, in 1850, from the revolutionary ferment, the idea of self-government for Prussian Poland was buried once more. Legally, then, the Poles had gained nothing by the revolution in Germany, and it was followed by an era of deadly reaction in Prussia, as it was elsewhere in Europe; in fact, the anti-Polish measures taken at this time were clearly part of the general reactionary programme. They hit Polish organisations, and particularly the Polish Press, very hard. A large "Polish League," which had been formed in the revolutionary year, and developed manifold economic and national activities, was dissolved, and no Polish newspaper appeared for nearly ten years. The Polish Landowners' Credit Society was cramped in its activities, and a new State-supported German Society formed, which finally supplanted the Polish one. The

elections to the Prussian Parliament took place under increasing administrative pressure, and reduced the Polish representation from fifteen to five deputies in five years. One reform only made steady progress during these weary years, and that was the endowment of the emancipated peasant with land. Although that progress was very slow, and the burdens on the new peasant landowner very heavy, yet a strong Polish peasantry was consolidating, which by-and-by was to play a great part in the history of the country.

After nearly ten years of reaction a new period of liberal government seemed to begin with the accession of William I, who was afterwards to become the first emperor of the new united Germany. The Polish representation in the Prussian Parliament rose again to a somewhat less inadequate figure; a Polish daily newspaper once more began to appear, which has not ceased to exist since; a Polish Society for the Promotion of Research was organised, which has also led an unbroken existence ever since, and published much valuable work.

But at the same time a powerful figure rose into sinister significance in Prussia: Otto von Bismarck, the greatest enemy of the Poles under Prussia, became Prussian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1862). His iron grip on the Prussian Parliament tightened, as the victories over Denmark, in 1864, and over Austria, in 1866, made him the popular hero of a new German nationalism. He formed, in the "North German Union," the first nucleus of a reunited Germany, and the inclusion of Prussian Poland in it was greeted with applause by the majority of both Prussian Chambers. But his more systematic anti-Polish campaign only began when the victory over France in 1871 had placed him at the height of his power as the Chancellor of a new German Empire under the sceptre of the Hohenzollerns.

In its first phase, this anti-Polish campaign of Bismarck's was part of his mighty struggle against the Roman Catholic Church in Germany—the *Kulturkampf*, or "struggle for culture," as it was called by himself.

This fact was the basic element of failure in Prussia's anti-Polish policy. By arousing the religious feelings of the Polish peasant masses, Bismarck rallied them more effectually round the Polish national standard than any amount of Polish propaganda could have done.

Outwardly, Bismarck was successful enough in the first few years. The *Kulturkampf* took practical shape as a war on the Roman Catholic clergy, and Polish priests were among those most heavily fined and most frequently imprisoned. Archbishop Ledóchowski himself, the venerable head of the Roman Catholic Church in Prussian Poland, spent two years in a prison cell, as another Polish Archbishop did in Bolshevik Russia in our own days. Hundreds of congregations were deprived of their parish priests, numerous parishioners were also fined or imprisoned, theological colleges closed, and ecclesiastical charities, such as orphans' homes, compelled to stop their beneficial activities.

The first blow to be struck at Polish nationality, as such, was aimed at the Polish language and Polish schools. The connection with religious persecution was immediate: the clergy were also inspectors of schools, and Bismarck denounced their activities as Polish propaganda. By a special law the control of schools was transferred to the State. Perfectly reasonable as such a measure must seem to the man of to-day, it must not be forgotten that in practice it meant the transfer of all school control out of Polish into German hands. Other not less modern and democratic measures in the seventies and eighties—such as the enforcement of universal attendance at school, the creation of evening classes for

adolescents, the public control of teachers' appointments and the improvement of their salaries, large State expenditure on school buildings and scholarships—all were made the tools of militant Germanism against the Poles. In a quick succession of ministerial decrees in the same years, without even the formality of parliamentary enactment, the introduction of German control was followed by the universal introduction of the German language in the entire secondary and elementary school system. After a period of fruitless passive resistance on the part of the clergy, even the teaching of religion in secondary schools was ultimately Germanised in 1887, and an increasing swarm of German teachers zealously carried out the decrees in practice.

Next came the systematic introduction of German as the only language in Government offices and courts of law. This was accomplished by a Bill passed only five years after the Franco-Prussian War; and ten years later it was extended to its utmost limits by forbidding even municipal councils to conduct their debates in Polish. Again, as in the schools, appointments of an overwhelming majority of German officials went hand in hand with the laws concerning the language, and the legal career in Prussian Poland became almost as completely closed to Poles as it had by that time become under Russia. The difference between the Russian and the Prussian system was only one which told in favour of greater efficiency of the anti-Polish policy in Prussia: while Russia sent its very worst officials to Poland, Germany made a career in the Polish province attractive for the best by granting them, later on, special additions to their salary, called "borderland bonuses" (*Ostmarkenzulagen*). The German bureaucracy, incorruptible and well-trained, worked like a pitilessly accurate machine. The effect on Polish society of the almost total exclusion from the civil service was

partly good, as in Russian Poland: numbers of men and their energies were directed into the channels of commerce and industry, and the Polish middle class got the added strength of which it stood very much in need.

The attack on the Polish character of the country soon went beyond the precincts of schools and Government offices. The civil registration of marriages and births was introduced throughout Germany; in Prussian Poland the German officials who conducted it wilfully Germanised Polish Christian and family names. The old Polish names of hundreds of villages and towns were also either distorted so as to look German, or arbitrarily replaced by new German ones, and the exclusive use of the new names was afterwards enforced in postal and railway service. On the other hand, certain liberal changes, when introduced in the public life of Germany, were not extended to Prussian Poland: the province, for instance, was excluded from the privileges of reformed municipal and provincial self-government when the rest of Prussia got them. In this also, as in other respects, Prussian methods, though boasting of legality and culture, strikingly resembled the contemporary anti-Polish measures of Russia.

V

But all the legal and administrative acts of oppression against the Poles under Prussia during the first years after the Franco-Prussian War were only the prelude to Prussia's supreme efforts to crush the Polish element by *economic force*. She was well equipped for this by the five-milliard francs indemnity which she had wrested from France, and which laid the foundation of the new Germany's industrial prosperity and commercial expansion. The time for the application of this powerful instrument to anti-Polish ends came when a change in Bismarck's

imperial policy set in. The skilful diplomacy of Pope Leo XIII defeated the purposes of the *Kulturkampf*, and a reconciliation with the Roman Church took place. The anti-Polish campaign henceforward was dissociated from the Roman Catholic problem. The appointment of a German to the episcopal see in Prussian Poland—the historical seat of the Primate of Poland—was the last marked success Bismarck obtained when driven by political necessities to come to terms with Rome (1883).

While realising that the methods of the *Kulturkampf* were no more to be continued, Bismarck also was shrewd enough to perceive that all his other measures had only served to strengthen Polish nationality. In ten years the number of Poles had increased by nearly 10 per cent. That number, to begin with, must be diminished by one strong blow. Prussian Poland, flourishing agriculturally and rapidly developing industrially, had attracted masses of landless labourers from Russian and Austrian Poland. Now one edict of Bismarck's, in 1885, expelled thirty thousand such people from the country where they had settled and prospered, and made them homeless overnight. A cry of indignation rose from all parts of Poland, and was re-echoed by Western European opinion.

This, however, was only an isolated episode. More systematic endeavours were coming. It was the Prussian party calling itself National Liberals which proposed that State funds should be employed to subsidise the German element in Poland against the Poles. In 1886 a special one hundred million mark fund was created by statute for the express purpose of assisting German settlers in the purchase of Polish land. This became the corner-stone of all further German policy against the Poles. The Colonising Commission, administering the fund, was henceforward the chief organ of the Prussian attack on the Polish nation.

The new Prussian offensive brought out all the forces of organised resistance which were latent in the Polish element. Two banks were quickly organised to oppose the financial onslaught: one was created almost immediately by the patriotic middle class of the towns, another somewhat later by the country gentry. This later and larger bank took the lead in organising the co-operative purchase of large estates by groups of small Polish farmers, who parcelled them up into middle-sized farms. That movement even obtained credit facilities by a special Bill, a few years later, from a Prussian Government which was opposed to the predominance of large landowners, whether German or Polish, in the Eastern provinces. The same Government allowed the Polish co-operative credit societies to be exempted from a new German law which subjected all such societies to inspection of their accounts by Government officials. Thus the most important of Polish economic organisations was spared a great deal of political chicane, and got guarantee of unfettered development for some time.

In spite of such propitious beginnings of Polish self-help, the results of the struggle for the land between Germans and Poles were naturally in favour of the Germans at first, as they had brought so much more financial power into play.

But a very few years later the picture begins to change. This change is chiefly brought about by the *peasants*, who prove a more effective bulwark against the German invasion of the land than the large landowners had been. Peasant emigration to America used to be a feature of the life of the country, quite as it was in Italy or Ireland; it now ceases. Emigration of agricultural and, later, of industrial labour to Western Germany continues, but the savings of the emigrants are used for the purchase of Polish land. The peasants cling to the soil. They are

organised, during the last quarter of the century, into a powerful network of local co-operative societies. The members of these societies are encouraged to put their savings into co-operative banks, which in return help them with credit for the enlargement and improvement of their farms, while on the other hand they also serve to strengthen the Polish middle class of the towns. By sheer hard work and economy, the Polish peasant is enabled to pay competitive prices for the land he buys, and the general rise in the price of land in Prussian Poland is one of the main foundations of the great prosperity of its population. One of the organisers of Polish co-operative credit even performs the incredible feat, merely by the business solidity of Polish institutions and their clients, of attracting capital from German banks in Western Germany, which actually find it highly profitable to back the Polish farmer in his purchases. Altogether this is one of the proudest pages in the history of Poland's unbroken national vitality, and the leaders of the peasants' co-operative movement, largely Roman Catholic priests, with Father Michael Wawrzyniak at their head, deserve to rank with the best citizens of the country. Figures best illustrate the results. During the first four years of its existence the German Colonising Commission bought twelve times as much land as Polish organisations did; during the next four years only four times as much; and during the ten years which followed the Poles already bought more than eight times as much land as they lost. Their new gains more than counterbalance their former losses, and the quality of the Polish element which wins the fight is as remarkable as the quantity of the achievement: it is a true "survival of the fittest." The economic campaign proved as complete a failure as the campaign of legal persecution and administrative oppression.

VI

When the young German Emperor, William II, on coming to the throne in 1889, "dropped the pilot," as the title of Sir John Tenniel's famous drawing in *Punch* puts it, Poles could hope that with the dismissal of Bismarck his anti-Polish policy would also be abandoned. As a matter of fact, there was a brief period of more conciliatory tactics under the Chancellorship of Caprivi. A Polish country gentleman of the name of Joseph Kościelski took the lead in a corresponding policy of meeting the Government half-way, on the part of the Polish representation in the German Parliament. But that policy, never popular among the Polish peasants, failed to obtain concessions of any significance from the Government, and accordingly soon collapsed.

The short era of moderate counsels in the Polish policy of Prussia was brought to an end by the rising tide of imperialist propaganda which was taking possession of German popular feeling. It was at this time that with the very real growth of Germany's economic prosperity, international power, and colonial possessions, that strange megalomania developed in the German mind which was to be the undoing of Bismarck's great work. The historical mission of Germany, and of Prussia in particular, began to be idealised into a sort of religious dogma by such historians as Henry Treitschke. The new patriotism had a sharp anti-Polish edge. The danger of a foreign element in the empire at a hundred miles from Berlin was painted in vivid colours. The conception of an agelong and unending "pressure Eastward" of the German element (*Drang nach Osten*), as a law and a duty, was carried by orators and writers among the German masses. Old Bismarck, though out of office, was active in it all. He gave his patriarchal blessing to a new "Pan-German

League," which became the chief exponent of the new agitation throughout Germany; and he wished no less well to a new special "Society for the Support of the German Element in the Eastern Provinces," which became known as *H.K.T.*, from the initials of its three founders. The anti-Polish tone of these two societies and of the Press, becoming popular, was soon echoed by the Emperor William II himself in some of his numerous and sensational speeches. He became personally reconciled to Bismarck, and Bismarck's anti-Polish policy was officially resumed to its full extent when Bismarck's mantle at last fell on the shoulders of Bernard von Bülow, the outstanding representative of extreme imperialism among Bismarck's successors in the Chancellorship.

Bülow found himself confronted by the fact that the economic campaign against the Poles was beginning to show signs of failure. He accordingly endeavoured to infuse new vigour into it by largely increased money grants. Between 1898 and 1908 the Government funds at the disposal of the Colonising Commission were gradually increased from one hundred million marks to nearly half a milliard, and a special fund towards a campaign against the Polish middle class in the towns—amounting to nearly half a million a year—was created and placed at the disposal of the administrative authorities.

All this, however, proved insufficient, and Bülow went a step beyond Bismarck by a new device. It consisted in special economic legislation which discriminated against the Poles in the elementary rights of personal property. In 1904 Poles were forbidden to establish new peasant farms on soil of their own, legally purchased from the owners of large estates. That piece of anti-Polish legislation was, in fact, a homage of Prussia to the strength of the Polish peasantry, and it was a Polish peasant who made himself memorable by thwarting even this: not

being allowed to build a cottage on the soil he owned, he lived on it in a covered waggon.

But the summit was reached by the notorious Bill of 1907, which authorised the Government to acquire Polish soil by *expropriation*. Even the Prussian Government did not dare to carry the provisions of this Bill into operation except in a small number of cases during the next few years, and the public opinion of Europe was deeply stirred by this assault upon the very foundations of civilised social order.

But the Expropriation Bill was not the only act of the Bülow administration which created a painful sensation throughout the world, and gave a dramatic touch to the sober and monotonous history of the struggle in Prussian Poland. While concentrating his energies on the colonising problem, Bülow did not neglect the other tried methods of combating the Polish element. The resistance of children and their parents against the teaching of religion in German in a provincial elementary school at Września (Wreschen) culminated, in 1901, in merciless bodily punishments inflicted on a group of children by a Prussian teacher—an event which excited world-wide indignation. And resistance on a larger scale, in 1906, took the unheard-of form of a *strike of school-children* throughout Prussian Poland, in which more than one-half of the pupils took part, and which, in spite of severe measures of fining and imprisonment against their parents, lasted for nearly an entire school year. Finally, at the same time with the Expropriation Bill, another and no less notorious Bill, limited to a minimum the right of Polish citizens to form societies, and altogether abolished their right to hold public meetings at which Polish was spoken. The Bill became known as the *Gagging Bill*, and was deeply resented far beyond the limits of Prussian Poland. In fact, it is not to be wondered at

that after such measures the conviction became deeply implanted in the mind of many Poles in Russian and Austrian Poland, as well as under Prussia, that the German power was, after all, the most deadly and implacable of all foes of the Polish race. The greatest Polish writer of recent times, Henry Sienkiewicz, gave expression to this conviction in several of his public utterances; Paderewski, the musician, asserted it by presenting to the town of Cracow, in 1910, a statue of King Ladislas Jagiełło, who had defeated the German Knights five hundred years before; and when the World War came a large section of the Polish nation were so dominated by the idea of the German danger that they preferred to entrust Poland's fortunes to Russia rather than to have anything in common with the Central Powers.

LECTURE V

THE POLES UNDER AUSTRIA

SELF-GOVERNMENT AND ITS RECORD

I

THE part played by Austrian Poland in the recent history of the Polish nation has been compared with that played by the province of Piedmont in the national awakening of modern Italy.

Like Piedmont, Austrian Poland was the refuge and rallying-ground of patriots persecuted in other parts of the divided country, and the last shelter of the idea of national unity; it harboured exiled conspirators from Russian Poland, and was a source of moral encouragement for Prussian Poland in its stubborn struggle for land and language; it afforded free scope for the cultivation of learning, literature and art in the national tongue and the national spirit, and so became a centre of Polish intellectual culture. But it was much more than that.

Being the only section of Poland which, during the last decades, had a fully developed system of self-government, it trained by practice a large number of administrators, politicians, legislators, officials, judges and teachers who served the first needs of the new Polish State after the World War.

That the importance of the Austrian province for a new reunited Poland would be as great as that could scarcely be foreseen in the earlier half of the nineteenth century. The first seventy-five years of Austrian rule, from the first partition in 1772 till the European Revolution of 1848, were uniformly inspired by that centralism which was characteristic of such enlightened absolute

monarchs of the eighteenth century as that autocratic liberal on the throne of Austria, Joseph II (1780–1790). Gratefully remembered as he is, and always will be, by German-speaking Austria, the system named after him, "Josephinism," had the worst possible effect on the Polish province of Austria. Austrian Poland was governed from Vienna, in a German spirit, and for the exclusive benefit of the German provinces of Austria proper. Austrian administration, in fact, during this period meant nothing but a system of predatory exploitation, and reduced both towns and country districts in Austrian Poland to a state of impoverishment which Polish efforts during another seventy-five years have not quite been able to overcome. Austrian Poland's greatest political writer, Stanislas Szczepanowski, could, even in the eighties of the nineteenth century, entitle a famous treatise of his *On Galician Misery*, and on the eve of the World War Austrian Poland was the least wealthy of the three parts of the country.

Austrian rule during its first decades was as ruthless politically as it was economically. The administrative system of the country was unrelentingly Germanised with the help of many Czech officials who were the faithful tools of the Germanism of Vienna. Of real provincial self-government there was no trace. Austrian Poland was on the high-road towards such Germanisation as Bohemia had undergone during the several centuries of its connection with Austria—a Germanisation which three-quarters of a century of strenuous Czech national effort were needed to overcome.

The dawn of revolutionary freedom which lit up all the Austrian lands in 1848 was followed, as it was in Germany and elsewhere, not by immediate sunrise, but by a period of darkest reaction which extended over more than ten years. True, the new Emperor, Francis Joseph, even in his youthful years, had already enough of his characteristic

shrewdness to realise that further government of his empire on absolutist and German lines would lead to its disruption by the forces of the awakening nationalities. He accordingly, after the ten reactionary years, allowed a Prime Minister of his, who was a Pole—Count Gołuchowski—to draft a parliamentary and federative Constitution called the *October Diploma* (1860) which embodied large and liberal provisions for the self-government of Austria's and Hungary's different nationalities in their several provinces. But the opposition of the Germans, who had hitherto played the predominant part on the Austrian side of the Dual Monarchy, and of the Magyars, who ruled the Hungarian side, made the October Diploma illusory in practice, and Gołuchowski's successor, Schmerling, resumed the old Germanising methods.

It was only after another six years, in 1866, that the crushing defeat in the war with Prussia, putting an end to Austria's influential position in the German Federation, made the Vienna Government ultimately see reason.

At the hands of a new and more sensible Prime Minister, von Beust, not only Hungary got the autonomy for which she had vainly struggled in the armed rising of 1849, but the lands composing the Austrian half of the empire received a new Constitution called the *Fundamental Laws*, which contained guarantees of equal rights for all nationalities and of fair representation in the reorganised Central Parliament.

Now at last, in 1867, better days came for the Austrian Poles. No Austrian Government henceforward could hope for a majority in the Chamber of Deputies without the Polish vote; accordingly, the Poles had to be won over to support the Austrian system. And there were reasons for such new tactics in the field of foreign policy, too: Austria looked with jealousy on the rising power of Prussia among the Germans, on one hand, and on Russia's ambitions to

unite all Slavs under her protection, on the other. And the Poles were, naturally, enemies both of Prussia and Russia.

Under the influence of all these considerations, the Vienna Government now made conciliatory overtures to the Poles. They did not meet with unanimous response. Some Polish leaders were in favour of boycotting the Central Parliament and at once enforcing a reconstruction of Austria as a federation of entirely free nations; but finally the compromise favoured by the moderate wing prevailed, and the same Gołuchowski, who had been Prime Minister of Austria, became the first Polish Lieutenant-Governor of a self-governing Galicia within the framework of a united constitutional Austrian Empire.

The struggle between Polish demands for absolute home rule and Austrian centralism went on, indeed, for several years longer. In 1868 a majority of the new Provincial Assembly demanded the appointment of a Chancellor for the province who would not be responsible to the Vienna Government. The practical result of this resolution was the creation, somewhat later, of the post of a special "Minister for Galicia" in the Austrian Cabinet as a link between the self-governing province and the Central Government. That Minister was always a Pole.

II

The rule of Gołuchowski as the first Governor of Galicia in the new home rule period offers an interesting and memorable parallel to the years of Wielopolski's administration in Russian Poland a short time before. The leading idea of each of the two statesmen was the same: to secure for his part of Poland the maximum of possible provincial autonomy, while firmly adhering to that

unity with a foreign empire which was dictated by inexorable reality.

The fundamental difference is that Gołuchowski actually won for Galicia permanently and in the largest sense what Wielopolski had only obtained in fragments and for a short time. The progress of self-government under Austria was not cut short by an armed rising, as was that of the Wielopolski autonomy in Russian Poland in 1863. During those very years after 1863 when the use of the Polish language was systematically suppressed in the public offices, the courts of law and the schools of Prussian and Russian Poland, Austrian Poland went through the exactly opposite process of an equally systematic re-introduction of Polish into public life and education. Polish officials, by degrees, filled all positions in the administration and the judiciary, and a generation of citizens grew up who received all their education in Polish, including the public teaching of Polish history and literature in schools supported out of the rates and taxes. Official careers lay as widely open to Poles under Austria as they were completely closed to them under Prussia and Russia. There, the unnatural position of the Polish element had driven the best forces of the cultured class into engineering and industry, commerce and agriculture. In Austrian Poland, on the contrary, the new unwonted freedom of public service caused Polish society to fall into the opposite extreme: administrative posts became the ambition of the majority of educated men, and commercial callings suffered from depreciation and desertion. The bureaucratisation of the educated class was a failing which Galicia shared with the whole of modern Austria. But in the case of the Poles, whose weak side long had been commerce and town life, it had a particularly bad effect: owing to it, the economic recovery of Galicia after the ruinous earlier Austrian administration did not make

proper progress. Besides, within the narrow bounds of Austrian legal formalism the larger aspects of Polish national unity were often lost sight of by Austrian Poles in their loyalty to the empire which had given them home rule.

Such were the less desirable features which made their appearance in the physiognomy of Austrian Poland side by side with valuable national privileges and their obvious moral and political advantages. One of the reasons for the persistence of defects together with the excellences of the new freedom lies in the social backwardness of the ruling class in Austrian Poland. The party which assumed the reins under the new constitutional system represents chiefly the landowning gentry. This is only natural, as the real leaders of the nation in all parts of Poland during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century still mostly come from that class. But the gentry prove unwilling to make room for the new social forces which rise into civic consciousness and importance in the town and in the village, and even in the early twentieth century the highest responsible positions in the Austro-Polish system are still largely held by representatives of a class whose predominance is, or ought to be, already matter of history.

III

The Poles had scarcely attained self-government under Austria when they proved their capacities in the larger field of Austrian imperial politics as well. Their influence and importance at the centre of Austro-Hungarian affairs grew quickly and continually, especially since their representation in the Austrian Parliament was organised into a powerful fraction called the "Polish Club."

In the very first Austrian Cabinet after the new change in the Austrian Constitution there was a Polish Minister

of Agriculture, Alfred Potocki, who, a few years later, became Prime Minister. Austria since that time had many another Polish Minister of distinction. Her Finance Ministers, in particular, were almost all of them Poles, and two of these made themselves particularly memorable: one, Dr. Dunajewski, in the earlier period, reorganised her whole budgetary system; another, Dr. Biliński, more recently occupied also the positions of Governor of the Austro-Hungarian Bank and President of the Polish Club in Parliament in turn, and was one of the greatest personal forces in Austrian politics before the war.

At the very end of the nineteenth century a Polish Prime Minister of Austria, Badeni, nearly revolutionised the empire by his famous decrees which gave the Czech language special rights in the Czech provinces of Austria, and in the early years of the twentieth century Austro-Hungary's foreign policy was in the hands of a Pole—Gołuchowski, junior.

What we are concerned with here, however, is not the share of Polish statesmen in the policy of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, but the history of Polish home rule in Austrian Poland.

In its final form this home rule was lodged in the Galician Provincial Diet, the nearest approach to a Polish Parliament which existed during the last half-century before the World War. It was a Parliament on the old-fashioned basis of "States-General," different classes of society being represented by different groups of deputies, elected by different electoral colleges. It had a fairly large sphere of legislative competence in matters of agriculture and forestry, elementary and secondary education, hygiene and communication, and local government.

The permanent executive organ of the Diet was the "Provincial Committee," with "district councils" subordinated to it. Elected local councils exercised self-

government in the towns and villages. Matters which were organised on a uniform plan throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire—such as political administration, conscription for the army, taxation, the postal service and the State railways—were under Imperial Government authorities which were independent of the autonomous provincial ones.

Thus the country was covered with two different networks of authorities, imperial and provincial ones. They worked fairly smoothly together, because the personnel of both services soon came to be composed exclusively of Poles; and this dual rule lasted without considerable alterations till the days of the World War. Only the army remained a thing apart, retaining the German language. Although, under the system of territorial conscription, there were units composed almost entirely of Polish soldiers, the professional military career of officer and general never became a popular subject of ambition among Austrian Poles.

IV

The progress in the organisation of Polish institutions, and in the development of the country under this system of partial self-government, was different in different domains.

On the whole, it may be said that Polish culture in Galicia was of a predominantly intellectual type, and the country advanced much farther intellectually than economically. In this respect, it presents a striking contrast to Prussian Poland, where material culture is to the fore. While, under Prussia, the most splendid successes of organised Polish effort are to be recorded in the struggle for the land and the attainment of commercial prosperity, in Galicia the growth of Polish *schools* in number, and their rise in quality, are the most remarkable achievement.

After half a century of self-government Galicia possessed on the eve of the World War several thousands of schools; there was hardly a small obscure mountain village without one. Official effort, in this respect, was amply supplemented by private endeavour, particularly during the last quarter of a century before the war, since the distinguished poet Asnyk had founded, in 1891, the Popular School Society (*T.S.L.*), which has grown into a huge educational organisation, and continues its work in the new free Poland of to-day. The State-supported secondary schools in Galicia also reached a respectable number, although on the eve of the war this was insufficient for the steady flow of pupils from the country into the towns. The educated class in Galicia was receiving an increasing admixture of peasants' sons, fresh from their villages. This new element showed the same preference for classical education and a bureaucratic career which was characteristic of Galician life generally. Technical and commercial colleges were much less numerous than classical schools, and when founded in greater numbers more recently were not frequented as they ought to have been. Schools of agriculture and forestry, on the other hand, were more popular, and developed favourably, as two-thirds of the population still remained farmers, and remain so in the new Polish State.

One of the proudest chapters in the history of Galicia is the development of its Universities. The University of Cracow, Poland's oldest high school, which reached the five-hundredth anniversary of its unbroken existence during this period (1900), now attained the height of its importance in modern times as an intellectual centre of Polish life. Side by side with it the Polish Academy of Sciences at Cracow, founded in 1871, encouraged and endowed original research, and published its results in hundreds of volumes.[19] A second Polish University was

re-established, as a centre of Polish culture for the Eastern border districts, in the town of Lwów (Lemberg). Academies of Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, of Arts, of Music, of Mining, of Economic and Political Science grew up round the two Universities, and the Technological College at Lwów became a complete University of the Engineering Sciences. All these institutions have continued their life in the new Poland. What is more, they have sent out former students and professors of their own to organise new Polish Universities in other parts of Poland, when Poland was at last reunited and free, and to hold the first chairs in them.

And another contribution of the Galician Universities to the formation of the new Poland must not be forgotten, either. It was to them that students from Russian and Prussian Poland, where they had no Polish Universities of their own, flocked in larger and larger numbers. During the later nineteenth century this student element from Russian Poland became particularly numerous when an organised boycott of all Russian schools there by the youth of the country set in after 1905. Now the fact that people from two sections of Poland mingled in large numbers within the hospitable walls of a Polish *Alma Mater* (and at the most impressionable period of their lives, too) had far-reaching and highly beneficial consequences. It paved the way to mutual understanding, to renewed community of aims and ideals, to obliteration of the traces of foreign rule on the mentality of the two provinces. It was, in a word, the best possible preparation for true national reunion.

V

The social and economic development of Galicia shows a less favourable picture than her intellectual culture and

educational progress. It is hampered by a legacy of old social sins. There lingers, from the days of serfdom, a good deal of the old sullen diffidence between peasant and landlord, and the landlords, who govern the country, are unwilling to let their old privileges go.

It is only when the peasants themselves, like the peasants in Prussian Poland, take their economic affairs into their own hands, when they begin to organise into co-operative societies and village savings and credit banks of the type named after the German economist, Raiffeisen, that the social development of Galicia assumes a more hopeful aspect. What Father Wawrzyniak had meant for the peasantry of Prussian Poland, the indefatigable organiser of peasants' co-operative credit societies, Francis Stefczyk, meant for Galicia.

The work of laying more solid foundations for peasant prosperity is by no means easy. The peasants, emancipated from serfdom in 1848, come but very slowly and with great difficulty into the possession of sufficient land to support them and their families. The largeness of these families prompts the subdivision of farms and ensuing poverty in land. Emigration on a large scale to America, and, more recently, seasonal emigration to Western Europe for harvest work, becomes a common phenomenon.

This indeed brings wealth, but the activities of emigration agents, especially on behalf of great shipping companies, become a sort of white-slave traffic, and often defraud the peasant of his hard-earned savings: they give frequent occasion for scandalous disclosures in Parliamentary debates and for judicial proceedings.

Similarly, the gradual purchase by peasants of land from the larger estates—what is called the *parcellation* of the latter—becomes a profitable branch of commerce in the hands of middlemen, who exploit the peasant purchaser. Towards the end of the century only, large banks

are created for the purpose, which place the matter on a less speculative footing and make a more systematic process of that redistribution of land.

The owners of the larger estates, after the abolition of serfdom, indeed, still profit for many years by the large supply of cheap labour caused by the general scarcity of land among peasants; but large strikes of these ill-paid labourers periodically shake the prosperity of the country, and are sometimes accompanied by acts of violence. Besides, the management of the larger estates long remains technically backward and economically wasteful. It is sufficient to say that even in the early years of the twentieth century Galicia had to import from Hungary about one-fourth of the grain her population consumed, and the standard of consumption was lower than in Germany. Agricultural efficiency and economic management only rose to a higher level among the greater landowners when a co-operative society and a credit bank helped to remedy the evils of traditional recklessness and prodigality. On the other hand, provincial laws relating to forestry, to the preservation of game, and to fisheries, saved large portions of the country's wealth from their ruinous administration by improvident owners.

VI

It was the dream of some of Galicia's noblest sons to develop the country from an exclusively agricultural one into an industrial area as well. The conditions of industrial development were largely present: there is coal in plenty close at hand in Silesia and in the younger coalfields of Galicia herself; besides, rich oil wells were discovered on the Northern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains, and there is abundance of uncurbed and unregulated water-power in the streams coming down from the mountains.

High-grade iron ore is the only ingredient which is wanting, in Galicia as in other parts of Poland, to develop industry on a large scale.

On the other hand, the country is rich in mineral resources which could be made profitable. It has, as a unique object of curiosity in its Western part, salt-mines which have been worked since the thirteenth century; it has, in the Eastern part, layers of potash salts which are yielding rapidly increasing quantities of this valuable industrial material now; it has numerous springs of mineral waters of uncommon healing power.

But although so many of the material conditions for the growth of various industries were given, there were moral factors telling against the efforts to develop them. The larger landowners who ruled the country were narrowly restricted to agrarian interests in their whole mentality. The peasants were too absorbed in their struggle for more land, and altogether too uneducated, to understand that a development of industry would provide employment for the permanent surplus of landless population. Even if they had understood, they were politically powerless for a long time. The educated middle class in the towns was aware of the industrial development of the outside world, but it had no capital at its disposal to develop Galicia in the same way. The fervent patriot, Stanislas Szczepanowski, made an attempt to use the Polish capital in the provincial Savings Bank for developing the oil-fields by large investments, but he only wrecked his career and shortened his life by this endeavour. The oil-fields got largely into foreign hands.

Over and above the domestic drawbacks to industry, there was the traditional policy of the Austrian Government, tending to preserve Galicia in the condition of an agricultural country so as to have in it, on the one hand, a granary for the highly industrialised inner provinces

of Austria, and on the other hand a receptive market for their manufactures. Owing to all this, the only industries which really showed marked development in the earlier period of Galician home rule were those immediately connected with agriculture and forestry, such as the production of spirit from potatoes or the manufacture of matches.

It was only in the early twentieth century that things began decidedly to improve. A great effort was made by the creation of a provincial fund of ten million Austrian kronen in order to give credit facilities to industrial enterprise, and a "League of Help to Industry" was organised to assist especially minor industries in their development; it did hopeful work down to the days of the Great War.

VII

The distinct change coming over Galicia in the early years of the twentieth century is not manifested by these industrial efforts only. It is, in fact, best illustrated by the development of the political party system of the country.

The party which had almost the monopoly of rule during the first thirty years of self-government was, as said before, representative of the country gentry. That fact determines its essentially conservative temper and limited political outlook. Loyalty to the Church of Rome and to the Austrian State were its fundamental principles; it abhorred all dreams of national revolution as well as radical social changes. However antiquated its dogmas were bound to become in course of time, the party, during its long rule, produced many of the most enlightened and gifted Polish politicians of the time. Great scholars, like the historian, J. Szujski, and the literary historian, St. Tarnowski, were its ornaments at Cracow, where its

intellectual home lay; and it sent the most cultured representatives of the Polish national type of mind, like the witty and subtle W. Dzieduszycki, to represent Austrian Poland at Vienna.

With the growth of an educated official middle class in the towns under home rule it was inevitable that the ideas of *bourgeois* liberalism, which had risen into ascendancy in Western Europe in the earlier nineteenth century, should find an echo in Austrian Poland when it had at last a political voice of its own. A Democratic Party arose among the *intelligentsia* of the towns. Being in opposition throughout, and never attaining power, it has not left much of a constructive record behind, although some respectable achievements in the field of education were due to its creative criticism. Like all liberalism, it suffered in practice a good deal from an innate tendency towards doctrinairism; its endeavours to promote industry and commerce were handicapped by the adverse factors described before; being a town party, it had no contact with the strongest democratic force in the country—the peasants; and when the Austrian Parliament, by an electoral reform of 1896, gave a standing to the more radically democratic elements of modern society in the public life of the empire, the Galician Democratic Party underwent the common fate of European liberalism: disruptions between Radicals and Moderates proved difficult to heal, and the liberal programme could not be adapted to the new requirements of the age.

The most characteristic social process in the modern democratic development of Austrian Poland, as of most of the Eastern European countries, was undoubtedly not so much the evolution of liberal democracy in the towns as the rise of a strong *peasant* class in the country. This could not fail to find political expression. A party representing the class interests of the peasantry was formed.

Its real founder was an ambitious and gifted Roman Catholic priest, St. Stojałowski; and though his unscrupulousness and his demagogic oratory created for a time a rupture in the movement, yet towards the end he succeeded again in gathering a large part of the peasants round him in 1905. Other leaders of the peasants had in the meantime arisen from among their own class, and Polish peasant deputies had entered both the Galician Diet and the Central Austrian Parliament. The Peasant Party was assuming its proper complexion as the representation, not of landless village labour, but of the well-to-do and economically organised peasant farmers. As such it was becoming, during the last years before the war, one of the foremost powers in the country, and has remained so on the larger political area of the new Poland after the war.

The growth of a class party of peasants was but one of the symptoms of Galicia's share in the world-wide social and political movements of modern times. The two principles which even in our world of to-day, after the war, are the great opposite poles of all political thought and action—Nationalism and Socialism—necessarily found their special organs in the political structure of Galicia.

The Nationalist (or, as it was usually called, the National Democratic) Party developed in the eighties and nineties of the nineteenth century, chiefly in the patriotic town of Lwów (Lemberg). Different from other Galician parties, it looked beyond the Austrian frontiers, and revived, among the educated class, the neglected tradition of national unity and fellow-feeling with the other two parts of Poland. In emphasising, in its activities in Galicia itself, the idea of a homogeneous national character of the country, it became, like all nationalism, tinged with fanaticism in methods and with disregard of hard modern realities in outlook. Both its high qualities and its essential

defects have been inherited by the Nationalist Party in the new Poland, which holds similar sway over large numbers of the educated class of the towns, as liberalism did in its day.

It was not nationalism only which looked beyond the provincial frontiers of Galicia to a larger Poland, Socialism, as soon as it began to rise, did so too, though in a different sense at first. It linked up its activities with the international Socialist movement and its organisations. But, thanks to the glowing patriotism of its most capable leader, I. Daszyński, it soon acquired the same national character which Polish Socialism in Russian Poland was gaining at the same time through Piłsudski. Like the former Liberals, the Socialists were in Austria before the war a party of opposition merely, and did not evolve much of a constructive programme. Galician Socialists were hampered besides by the predominance of agriculture and the absence of those large industrial centres which were becoming the strongholds of Socialism elsewhere. Socialism, applied to the problem of land ownership, is repugnant to the strongly individualist mind of the peasant, and it proved so in Galicia. But the Austrian Government bethought itself of using the rising Socialist movement as an antidote against the quarrels of the nationalities, which were threatening the unity of the empire, and so it gave new strength to Socialism in the Central Parliament by a great democratic electoral reform in 1906. This reacted on Galicia. The Socialist Party certainly played an important part in the public life of the province during the period of national excitement which preceded the outbreak of the World War: it was the Socialist camp which first raised the Polish military standard again, and proclaimed the national necessity of an active share of a Polish armed force in the great conflict.

VIII

The new Polish State inherited from Galicia not only the principal Polish parties, but also two factors standing outside them and creating momentous problems. These are the two chief non-Polish components of Galicia's population. Firstly, the *Jews*. The old Poland had given them shelter, and allowed them to acquire almost a monopoly of commerce in the towns and in the country, but it had not assimilated them in language, dress, or habits to the rest of the people. That is how Austria found them, constituting some 7 to 8 per cent. of the population; the number afterwards increased to nearly 12 per cent., and is percentually even higher to-day.

Under Austria the Jews were at first merely tolerated, but they received full equality of rights when the other races in Austria got them after the middle of the century. That equality was in striking contrast with the treatment of the Jews under Russia, and it was more complete than under Prussia, where practice differed a good deal from theory. As a result there were more Jews in Galicia than in any other part of Poland who became assimilated to the educated Polish class in speech, ways of life, and all the outward marks of nationality. At the last census before the war, in 1910, more than 90 per cent. of the Galician Jews registered themselves as Poles. On the other hand, the modern Jewish separatist movement of Zionism, in all its different religious, nationalist and Socialist forms, also developed more fully and freely on Galician ground than elsewhere. Economically the Jews, owing to the commercial and industrial backwardness of Galicia, largely remained in possession of their monopoly of trade. They prospered greatly, and began to acquire land and to enter the academic professions in large numbers. All this

produced Polish counter-effort in the form of economic organisation. Attempts to save the peasant from exploitation by the Jewish tradesman, publican and usurer began to assume forms of violent anti-Semitism, especially when anti-Semitism also became a definite party programme in the imperial politics of Austria in the nineties. There were anti-Jewish riots in Western Galicia in 1894. During the last years before the war there was an effective boycott of Jewish trade organised in Russian Poland. This was caused by the fact that persecution in Russia had thrust upon Poland masses of Russian Jews called *Litvaks*, and thereby made the Jewish problem more serious than it already was. Its gravity was realised, with a shock, by Polish public opinion when the Jewish vote in the town of Warsaw proved strong enough to send a nominee of the Jews as deputy to the Duma in 1912. In Galicia the boycott movement, suggested by the example of Russian Poland, did not attain anything like the same strength, and the war found the Jewish question open, and more complex than ever.

IX

The other vexed question of Galicia was the problem of the three million *Ukrainians*, chiefly peasants, in Eastern Galicia, constituting a majority there, and a strong minority of 40 per cent. among the total population of the province. Austria, since 1848, had systematically fostered the growth of Ukrainian nationalism to counterbalance Polish power in the monarchy.

It was under Austria's protecting care that a Ukrainian educated class arose from among the peasants, and the Ukrainian priesthood made the Uniat Church, with its Roman allegiance but Eastern ritual, a bulwark of militant Ukrainian nationalist propaganda.

Under Galician Home Rule the Ukrainian language was

granted equal rights with Polish in the public and official life of Eastern Galicia: it was the language of teaching in nearly one-half of the elementary schools of the country, in about a dozen secondary schools, and an increasing number of professorial chairs in the Polish University of Lwów. Ukrainian societies and newspapers enjoyed the same freedom as Polish ones, and began to flourish particularly in the eighties.

These were sufficient guarantees of national freedom. But it cannot be denied that Polish landowners, especially in Eastern Galicia, on many an occasion let a selfish class spirit get the upper hand of political wisdom in their decisive influence over the legislative and administrative policy of the Galician home rule authorities in Ukrainian matters. The old social contrast between the Ukrainian peasant and the Polish landlord in the East was deepened, and fuel added to the fire of nationalism in the hearts of the young Ukrainian *intelligentsia*. The history of the Galician Provincial Diet is an unbroken record of bickerings between Poles and Ukrainians, and the Ukrainian problem added one more storm-centre to the stormy atmosphere of the Central Austrian Parliament at Vienna. In the early years of the twentieth century the conflict between the two nationalities in Galicia began to assume violent forms. There were riotous rural strikes on Eastern Galician Polish estates, assaults of Ukrainian students upon Polish professors and students in the University of Lwów, and in 1908 the Polish Lieutenant-Governor of Galicia, Count Andrew Potocki, was assassinated by a young Ukrainian fanatic. One of the Ukrainian parties, which considered the Ukrainians simply as part of the Russian nation, was, curiously enough, occasionally in tactical alliance with the Poles against the Ukrainian nationalists proper: these nationalists themselves, on the other hand, in the very last years before the war, established contact with the chief

anti-Polish organisation in Prussia (the *H.K.T.*), and received active German support.

On the very eve of the war one of Austrian Poland's most energetic statesmen, Professor Bobrzyński, made the most determined one of many attempts at reconciliation with the Ukrainians, on the basis of a very thorough-going and democratic reform of the electoral franchise for the Galician Provincial Assembly. This would have secured for the Ukrainians a largely increased representation there. But the system had not yet begun to work properly when the World War began, and the Polish-Ukrainian situation as it actually existed in 1914 contained the germs of later conflicts and disputes.

In this, as in so many other particulars, Galicia is a microcosm of Polish problems which, in the new Polish State, have assumed national dimensions. The historical study of Galician home rule in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is one of the most essential foundations for a proper judgment on Poland's political issues in the present day.

LECTURE VI

THE WAR AND THE NEW POLISH STATE

I

When the World War broke out few nations were placed in a more perplexing position by it than the Poles.[20] It was clear to every Pole that here was a great and unique historical opportunity for Poland: the Polish problem was sure to be raised once more at the Peace Conference, as it had been raised a hundred years before at the Conference of Vienna. It was equally clear that the voice of Poland must be heard, and the Polish nation must make its appearance on the scene of the international struggle, or the Polish claims would not be considered.

On the other hand, such an appearance necessarily meant taking sides in the conflict. Now two great historical enemies and oppressors of Poland—Germany and Russia—were in opposite camps. On which side was Poland to range herself? True, France and Great Britain soon joined the ranks of the combatants. But France, which had been the mainstay of Poland's hopes for foreign help in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, had in the later half of it become the ally of Tsarist Russia; and neither France nor Great Britain was likely now, when Russia was their powerful helper in a life-and-death struggle against Germany, to exert itself actively on behalf of the independence of a country of which three-fifths belonged to Russia.

And there was another difficulty. The Poles, since the last insurrection of 1863, had become so used to peaceful methods of national struggle that the idea of military action was almost lost among the nation. Neither the Poles under Russia nor those under Prussia, indeed, found

their yoke easy to bear; but the Prussian subjects were not less fascinated by the power of Imperial Germany than the Germans themselves, while Russian Poland was bound to the Russian Empire by ties of increasing industrial and commercial interests.

In one part of Poland only had the idea of military activities emerged again in the national mind before the war, and that part was Austrian Poland. Refugees from Russian Poland after the suppression of the revolution in 1905—Joseph Pilsudski above all—had made propaganda for secret military organisation; this had found an echo particularly among the youth of the schools in Galicia; and the Austrian Government, foreseeing a clash with Russia over Balkan problems, gave support to the various types of military societies which during the last years before the war were formed by different Polish political parties in Galicia. The more radical among these were resolute to stand by the side of Austria in case of a conflict with Russia, because they considered the overthrow of the Russian power the first and most important step towards the deliverance of Poland. They did not fully realise to what extent Austria by that time had become a mere vassal to German imperialism, and how little, accordingly, Poland had to expect from that quarter.

The fact became apparent when the war began. The manifestos issued by Germany and Austria on entering Russian-Polish territory were singularly weak and devoid of substance. Germany could not bring herself to make the slightest concession to Polish national demands, even by way of promises; in Austria both the Austrian Germans and the Hungarians viewed the perspective of a possible strengthening of the Polish element with anxious jealousy. Russia, on the other hand, while directing her main force at the conquest of Eastern Galicia from Austria, wished, at the same time, to produce in her ally, France, the

impression that she was, according to their pact, attacking Germany chiefly; so she issued a manifesto to the Poles, which was signed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Grand Duke Nicholas, and held out hopes of the reunion of all Polish lands and of self-government for them under Russia. Little as the manifesto promised definitely, it addressed the Poles in accents to which they had not been used from Russia for a long time, and it had the desired effect. On the one hand, it inspired public opinion in Western countries with confidence that the Polish problem could now be left to Russia to solve by conciliatory methods, and accordingly the problem was not taken up seriously either by France or by Great Britain during the early years of the war; on the other hand, the manifesto captivated a large section of Polish society, particularly the sympathisers of the National Democratic Party, who had worked, even before the war, for reconciliation with Russia, mostly in vain. There was, accordingly, no movement against Russia in Russian Poland, and even plenty of enthusiastic support for the Russian Army. The hopes awakened by the manifesto were soon disappointed. During the first year of the war, while Russia still held her part of Poland, nothing was done to fulfil the promises of self-government; the occupied Eastern portion of Galicia, with the large Polish town of Lwów, and one-third of its total population Poles, was declared to be "old Russian soil," and treated as such. During the retreat of the Russian Army Eastward in 1915, the Eastern part of Poland was ruthlessly devastated, and the population compelled to retire into Russia in masses and suffer all the hardships of exile; and several succeeding official documents and appointments of commissions to consider the Polish problem, when Poland was no more in Russian hands, were mere make-believe and of no practical consequence.

II

In the meantime disappointments were also dogging the footsteps of those Poles on the other side of the front who had resolved, after all, actively to throw in their lot with Austria. Piłsudski had led his organised volunteers into Russian Poland and against Russia as soon as the first shot was fired; other military organisations pressed for action; the whole movement was taken under the official protection of the Austro-Polish politicians; a governing "Chief National Committee" was formed; and a Polish armed force, named the *Legions*, like the Polish volunteers more than a hundred years ago under Napoleon, took the field on the side of the Central Powers.

Thus Poland, by a tragic necessity, presented at the crucial moment of her new fortunes a spectacle of division: not only did Poles in the different uniforms of the warring armies fight against each other under compulsion, but Polish volunteers stood on opposite sides of the front. For besides Piłsudski's legions, an attempt had been made to organise Polish legionaries under Russia, and a band of Polish enthusiasts fought on the side of France on the Western theatre of war. Disputes between supporters of Russia on the one hand, of the Central Powers on the other, became unfortunately the dominant feature of Polish life during the first two years of the war. One side obstinately hoped for reunion of all Polish lands under Russia and the grant of liberal self-government under the pressure of the Western Allies; the other side as obstinately clung to the conception of a united Poland in federal connection with Austria on the same terms as Hungary. To neither the completely free Poland which was to come seemed possible in reality at the time. Of all the three sections of the country only Prussian Poland, knowing the Germans well, kept up a mere attitude

of passive resistance throughout, preferring to "wait and see."

In Austrian Poland, on the contrary, what was called "activism" on the side of the Central Powers was very animated at first. But Eastern Galician Poles seceded from the movement very early; in Western Galicia some of the political parties soon protested; the Central National Committee, transferred to Vienna, proved powerless to influence the policy of the Central Powers in Polish matters; Polish civilian refugees from Galicia were ill-treated by the Austrians, and the Polish legions under Piłsudski were used unsparingly for the military ends of the Central Powers without any obvious profit to the Polish cause.

Under these circumstances, a policy of reserve, in order to save national strength from useless waste, found serious advocates in Austrian Poland; a Committee of Relief for Victims of the War, organised by the Prince-Bishop of Cracow, Adam Sapieha, received wide support. Polish War Relief propaganda was extended to a much wider field soon by a committee acting on the neutral ground of Switzerland, and assured of European popularity by the name of its president, the great novelist, Henry Sienkiewicz, whose noble heart, sharing all the nation's sufferings in those terrible years, broke at last in 1916.

Sensational events on the Eastern theatre of war had by that time carried the Polish problem into a new phase. The Russian military system proved rotten at the core. Warsaw was taken by the Germans, Lwów was re-entered by the Austrians, and almost the whole territories of the old Polish States were united, not under Russia, as she had proudly announced, but under her opponents. In fact, they were not united at all; Poland was more divided than ever. Besides the German and the Austrian Polish provinces, which retained their pre-war status, there was now a sphere of Austrian military occupation in former

Russian Poland, being the South-Eastern portion of the country, with the town of Lublin for its administrative centre, and a German sphere of occupation, including Central Poland with Warsaw. And what the Germans had been able to occupy of the Eastern and North-Eastern border provinces of the old Polish monarchy, outside the limits of Russian Poland proper, was also placed under separate administration; thus, Wilno and district were subject to "the Supreme Command of the Eastern German front." Polish energies were as divided as the country itself: many national leaders had left Warsaw with the Russians and retired to Russia, whence some of them proceeded to Western Europe. Petrograd, Moscow, Kiev, Paris, London became quite as important centres of Polish political activity in the later years of the war as Warsaw or Cracow.

III

The Central Powers realised that something definite would have to be done politically with the conquered Polish territories. Polish dissatisfaction with the ruthless and predatory policy of military requisitions in occupied Russian Poland was growing and threatening the rear of the Eastern front. Besides, recruits began to be urgently needed, and a million of them were to be had in former Russian Poland. With all this it took a year and a half of political debates behind the scenes before Germany and Austria decided on a positive step. It came naturally in the shape of a compromise. By the manifesto issued by William II and Francis Joseph on November 5, 1916, an independent Poland was proclaimed as being created out of the territories of former Russian Poland only. Galicia remained with Austria and received ineffectual promises of enlarged self-government. Of Prussian Poland not a word was said. And the new Poland was, of course, to be

in federative union with the Central Powers, and its future army under their control.

However strictly limited in its provisions, the Act had its importance: the ice of silence which had hitherto covered the idea of Polish independence was broken; the freedom of Poland once more became an international issue, and had to be treated as such even by Russia.

The actual steps taken by Germany and Austria to give effect to their declaration were half-hearted and inconsistent. The two spheres of military occupation continued to be divided, and remained so till the occupants had to clear out in 1918. A Polish Council of State, nominated by the Central Powers, was created as a substitute for Polish parliamentary Government, and endowed with very limited powers. It organised departments and commissions, but their projects were rarely sanctioned by the occupants. Of a large Polish Army the Germans were afraid, and they only formed a nucleus of it, called "the Polish Armed Force," on a basis of enlistment. The real Polish Armed Force, which existed in the shape of Piłsudski's Legions, resisted German dispositions, and accordingly was disbanded and interned in concentration camps. Piłsudski himself was imprisoned in the German fortress of Magdeburg.

It was only under the pressure of their military position growing worse and worse that the Central Powers decided in favour of some more concessions to the Poles. A Polish University in Warsaw had been re-established in 1915; now the whole spheres of education and of judicial administration were turned over to Polish management. A Polish Regency Council of three men was created, a Cabinet of Ministers was formed, and the Council of State was to become an elective body. At the same time, the question of the ultimate Constitution of Poland and of its territorial limits was still the subject of inconclusive

discussions, and in the occupied Eastern and Northern border provinces the Germans encouraged Lithuanian and Ukrainian nationalism for activities against the large and cultured Polish element.

IV

Such small gains as had been obtained by the Poles from the Central Powers had been largely the effect of the one mighty event which had perhaps more determining influence on the fate of Poland than any other of the dramatic happenings of the war years—*the Russian Revolution.*

This is not the place to tell the pathetic story of its passage from the enthusiasm of a new freedom to the ruin and tyranny of Communist rule. We are concerned solely with Russia's attitude towards Poland.

The first Russian revolutionary Government—still a moderate one—after some hesitation, on March 30, 1917, recognised, with certain reservations, Poland's claim to independence; a sort of special Ministry for the winding-up of accounts between Russia and Poland was formed under the presidency of a leading Polish politician in Russia, Alexander Lednicki; a spontaneous movement for the organisation of Polish units out of Poles in the Russian Army and of prisoners of war from the German and Austrian ranks set in. All this went on amidst many dissensions among the Poles themselves and much friction with various Russian parties; and the effects of it all were soon to be destroyed by Bolshevism. Still, the dawn of the Revolution in the early months of 1917 was a new dawn of Polish hopes as well.

It also brightened markedly the prospects of the Polish cause in the West. The restless propaganda of prominent Polish citizens, like Dmowski in Western Europe and

Paderewski in America, was beginning to bear fruit. Even before revolution had overthrown Tsardom in Russia, Poland's old friend, Italy, soon after joining the ranks of the Allies, had nobly raised her voice by a unanimous vote of her Parliament in 1916 on behalf of unconditional independence for Poland. In America, President Wilson had spoken of a free and united Poland in a peace proposal issued while America was still neutral.

Now the Russian Revolution gave the Polish cause a new standing and Polish opinion a firmer voice. Under Austria, University professors first, and a meeting of parliamentary politicians afterwards, demanded a united Poland with access to the sea in the memorable Cracow resolutions of 1917. In Western Europe, Polish leaders organised a *National Committee* in Paris, which soon was recognised by the Allied Powers as an official representation of the Polish nation. The formation of a Polish Army on the Western front was decided upon, and received the patronage of France.

Then came the Bolshevik landslide in Russia. It led in a few months to the conclusion of a separate peace between the Soviet Government and the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk (1918). Poland claimed a representation at the negotiations, but was denied it. The treaty renewed one of the last wrongs inflicted by old Tsarist Russia on the Poles before the war: it turned over to the Bolsheviks that district of Chełm (Cholm) in South-Eastern Poland which the Tsar's Government had separated from Russian Poland and incorporated in Russia proper (1912). This raised the loudest protests from all the Poles under Germany and Austria. The highest Polish functionaries tendered their resignations. The remainder of the Polish Legions demonstratively left the Austrian front and marched into the midst of the welter of revolutionary violence in the Ukraine. Many perished there, some

escaped, including General Haller, who became the leader of Polish military forces on the Allied side.

Thus the rise of the Bolshevik *régime*, however disastrous to all the world, had at least made the path clear for the Poles. There could henceforth be no more question of any support for the Central Powers from the Polish nation, and the elections for the Polish Council of State in 1918 showed this manifestly. On the other hand, the Allies now were no longer fettered by regard for Russia in their treatment of the Polish question. And they showed it clearly, too. President Wilson included a reunited and free Poland, with access to the sea, among his Fourteen Points, formulated in January 1918; and half a year later the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France and Italy, in conference at Versailles on June 3rd, pledged themselves to the same solution of the Polish problem. That solution had grown up, as it only could grow up, out of the ruin of Tsardom in Russia.

V

But the ruin of the German power was necessary in turn to make that conception a reality. It came in autumn, 1918; capitulation at the front was accompanied by revolution at home. Austria-Hungary, which had been disintegrating for many years, fell to pieces at once, together with the downfall of monarchy in Germany. The Poles this time took occasion by the forelock, and a Polish State was consolidating long before it came officially into existence at the Versailles Peace Conference. In October, 1918, Polish independence was proclaimed and established in Western Galicia, and about the same time by the Regency Council in Warsaw. In the town of Lublin, which had been the centre of the Austrian occupation, a special Government of very radical complexion was formed

for a time; but both this and the Regency Council itself placed dictatorial powers in the hands of Piłsudski when he returned from his German prison and was acclaimed by all as the chosen leader of the nation at this historic hour. The Germans left former Russian Poland without much resistance in November, and they were driven out of Prussian Poland a month later.

Poland was reunited and free, but far from organised.[21] The first Cabinet, headed by a Radical-Socialist, made preparations for the election of a Constituent Assembly on a basis of universal suffrage. Harmony between the activities of the Polish Government at home and the Polish National Committee in Paris was only established when Poland's most popular representative abroad, Paderewski, arrived in Warsaw and was entrusted with the formation of a Coalition Cabinet. It was under his rule that the Constituent Assembly met in February, 1919, re-elected Piłsudski temporary Chief of State, and gave the new Polish Republic a provisional Constitution.

The task of the new rulers of Poland was one of extraordinary difficulty. With the international status of Poland still under discussion at Versailles, and her outward frontiers undetermined, Poland still possessed frontiers within her territories too: a political and economic whole had only to be created anew out of three provinces which had been separated for over a century and had become accustomed to different social conditions, legal systems, administrative practices, national surroundings, and also to different markets, trade routes, and railway and waterway networks. Both in the external order of things and in inward mentality, the three parts of Poland had drifted far apart from each other. They could not be unified, even outwardly, in a day or a year, and real inner unity will only come when the young generation now growing up in a united Poland has reached maturity.

In the immediate present the essentials of national unity had to be provisionally established with the utmost haste in a country of which two-thirds had actually been the scene of war. There agriculture, industry and communications lay in ruins; everywhere the population was starving physically and demoralised mentally both by war and by the revolutions in the neighbouring countries.[22] That the new Poland herself did not fall a prey to social revolution in the first desperate moments of her existence is a proof of her national vitality and the sound instincts of her people. They were aided generously from abroad, chiefly by the activities of the American Relief Administration under Mr. Hoover, for which Poland must always remain deeply grateful to the United States.[23]

VI

Peace did not come to Poland with the Peace Conference at Versailles. That Conference, in fact, in spite of the untiring effort of Poland's distinguished representatives, MM. Dmowski and Paderewski, created some of the new Poland's greatest difficulties by leaving her frontiers undetermined at several points both on the Western and the Eastern side. The inevitable consequence was a series of conflicts between Poland and her neighbours. A struggle with the Czechoslovak State for the possession of the former Austro-Silesian Duchy of Cieszyn (Teschen), with its valuable coal-mines, began early in 1919. At the same time, the principal town of Eastern Galicia, Lwów (Lemberg), was the scene of warfare between the Poles and the Ukrainians, whom Austria, before departing, had installed in power there. A state of war with Bolshevik Russia along the Eastern frontier went on throughout 1919, and culminated in 1920, after fruitless attempts at negotiation, in the greatest campaign which the new

Poland has yet had to fight. The very existence of Poland, and with it the safety of Western European civilisation, was threatened when, after a temporary Polish advance as far as Kiev, a huge Bolshevik army rolled its tide of invasion up to the very gates of Warsaw. By a mighty, united national effort, the Bolsheviks were at last thrown back.[24] Nor was even this the end of warlike complications. Modern Lithuanian nationalism had grown up under Russian rule, very much as Ukrainian nationalism had developed under Austria; and when a new Lithuanian State arose, with German assistance, in the later years of the World War, it was opposed to the union with Poland which had existed for four centuries and had made Lithuania's capital, Wilno, an almost purely Polish city. After an unsuccessful attempt at settlement by the League of Nations, Wilno and district were seized by the Polish General Żeligowski in 1920. A vote of the population has since confirmed the incorporation of Wilno into Poland, but Lithuania has not ceased to consider herself as being in a state of latent war with Poland, and all efforts to establish normal diplomatic or commercial relations between the two countries have so far been fruitless.

Finally, the former Prussian province of Upper Silesia, on the ground of a vote of the population, was divided between Poland and Germany; but the transitional period before the final award was interrupted by several armed risings of the Polish population, with its political leader, Korfanty, at its head, during the year 1921.

The era of conflicts over the frontiers of Poland may be considered as ended only in 1922; and it was in 1923 that the Ambassadors' Conference gave the sanction of the Western Powers to the Eastern boundary of Poland as established by the Polish-Bolshevik peace of Riga in 1921.

As ultimately constituted, the new Poland, a country equal to three-fourths of France in area, and with a population now well over thirty millions, is about two-thirds of what the historical Poland was at the height of her power. The Eastern frontier is, in the main, that which Poland retained after two partitions, and before the third and final one. The White Russian and Ukrainian border provinces, which for more than four centuries had belonged to the Polish monarchy, are now divided between Poland and Russia. On the Western side, on the other hand, Poland has regained from Germany nearly all she ever lost, including the coal-mining district of Upper Silesia, which had been separated from Poland since the early Middle Ages, but remained Polish in speech. Of Polish-speaking Austrian Silesia only the Eastern part has come to Poland; the Western part, with its coal-mines, has gone to the Czechs. In the South, Poland is bordered by the Carpathian Mountains, as she was throughout history. On the North side, she has a much smaller strip of sea-coast than she once possessed: the miscalled "Polish Corridor"—a remnant of the historical Poland's larger seaside province—once more separates the principality of East Prussia from the body of Germany (as it always was separated before the partitions of Poland) and thereby constitutes a bone of contention. The "Corridor" does not include Poland's natural outlet on the sea, the port of Danzig at the mouth of the Vistula, which had belonged to the Polish State for more than three hundred years. Danzig, in pursuance of a precedent set by Napoleon, was turned by the peacemakers of Versailles into a free city under international control—an arrangement which gives occasion for continuous disputes between Danzig and Poland.[25]

The international problems by which the new Polish Republic is confronted are in many ways like those

which the historical Polish State before the partitions had to deal with. The Islam, in fact, has long ceased to be the danger to Poland and to Europe which it still constituted in the days of Sobieski; but the situation of the diminished Poland which has once more arisen, between a rapidly recovering Germany and a convulsed but still gigantic Russia, is almost as precarious as it was in the eighteenth century, on the eve of the old Poland's fall. Choice in favour of one of these neighbours for protection against the other is debarred by their evident community of interests, which was made manifest to the world by the Rapallo Treaty in 1922, and has only gained in strength since. Poland has succeeded in maintaining peace with Russia since 1921, and even in concluding a commercial agreement with Germany in 1930; but constant support to Communist propaganda within Poland on the one hand, and persistent German demands for the abolition of Poland's access to the sea on the other, continue to remind Poland of her insecurity. In the early post-war years the alliance with France (to whom the new Poland appeared as a substitute for her pre-war Eastern ally Russia) was Poland's main safeguard; later changes in European affairs made Poland's position more independent. Important international Acts, such as the Locarno agreement of 1925 and the Kellogg Pact of 1928, and quickly multiplying agencies of all sorts for the promotion of the idea of permanent peace, are doing their work. Foremost of all such organisations there stands the League of Nations, in whose Council Poland now holds a seat. It is to be hoped that the League, whose activities are evermore widening, may become strong enough in course of time to protect the world effectively against new upheavals and to keep it safe for peaceful, constructive international co-operation.

VII

The new Polish State had come into being as a democratic Republic, with supreme powers vested in the National Assembly, and with the authority of the Chief of State strictly limited.

In spite of the foreign difficulties described above, and of manifold domestic disputes still to be dealt with, considerable success was achieved, even during the very first few years of the new Poland's existence, in those extremely complex tasks of unification which happier States have not been troubled with.

There were at first different administrative authorities—provincial Governments with their several departments—for former Austrian and Prussian Poland respectively; it took several years before they could cease to exist; and even a customs barrier between Prussian Poland and the rest was for a time jealously maintained, because Prussian Poland, having never been the scene of actual warfare, enjoyed more normal economic conditions.

In its completed form, the *administrative organisation* of the country has taken the form of a division into small provinces, or "palatinates," as they were called in the old Poland, and corresponding to the English counties. These are to be governed by councils, partly elected and partly composed of officials, and presided over by the chief administrative officer of the county. Similarly, there are to be urban and rural district councils, as well as municipal councils in the towns and communal councils in the villages. The attempts to reconstruct the entire organisation of the country in accordance with this logical scheme were confronted by a dilemma which naturally arose between the necessity of establishing uniform and efficient administrative authorities, on the one hand, and the expediency of making allowance for widely different

provincial conditions, and of stimulating regional effort by the largest possible measure of self-government, on the other. That dilemma has taxed the ingenuity of Poland's law-givers all along, and has not quite been overcome yet: the sphere and practical activities of local self-government have not yet fully materialised, partly because of lack of funds.

Conspicuous among the things actually achieved in the sphere of administrative organisation has been the development of Poland's *school system.*[26] It was in Austrian Poland only that a complete body of Polish educational institutions was ready to hand, and this had to feed, not only with its experience but with its actual personnel, those other parts of Poland which, under Russia and Prussia, had been deprived of public education in the national tongue. The system has stood the enormous strain: besides the two Polish Universities, and one agricultural and one engineering college, which existed in Galicia before the war, Poland now has a dozen institutions of academic rank, including five complete Universities, and harbouring an army of 40,000 students, of whom 10,000 are women. The number of secondary schools is approaching 1,000; and elementary schools are provided at the rate of one per thousand of the population. School attendance, after the economic troubles of the first years were over, rapidly rose to an average of more than 90 per cent.: there is, in fact, in Poland as elsewhere after the war, an unprecedentedly eager and general demand for education, especially among the peasant class.

Besides a uniform system of administration, uniform *codes of law* were needed for the new State in place of the three vastly different legal systems of former Austro-Hungary, Germany and Russia. In this respect, work was bound to be particularly deliberate and accordingly slow, in order to be of permanent value. A law-making

Commission, composed of the first legal experts and teachers of law in the country, has been at work on codification for ten years now. What the Commission has so far produced consists chiefly of the codes which were most urgently needed, namely, those governing day-to-day business relations, as well as a uniform system of judicial procedure for the whole Republic.[27]

The *monetary system* of the country presented particular difficulties, not only because of three different currencies, but even more because of the ruinous financial policy adopted during the war by all the partitioning Powers. The mark as a unit, and the continued printing of new paper money as a means of meeting economic necessities, were both inherited by the Polish Government from the German occupants. Both factors continued their reign in Polish finance for five years. Valiant efforts of gifted Finance Ministers—even a Capital Levy in 1922—proved futile, because of a general unwillingness to pay taxes and a general desire for State credits to finance private enterprise; also because of the irresistible growth of bureaucratic machinery and the large expenditure on the army. All these patent evils are by no means confined to Poland, but constitute the grave economic diseases of post-war Europe generally. It was only when the rate of exchange of the Polish mark had fallen to a disastrous depth that the same heroic effort was made as in France and Germany at the same time: Parliament consented to curtail its powers, and a resolute Government, headed by W. Grabski, stopped the printing of paper money by means of drastic taxation (including a second Capital Levy), as well as by severe cuts in expenditure. A new currency unit, called by the old Polish name of *Złoty*, or "guilder," and intended to be equal to the Swiss franc, was introduced, and a "Bank of Poland" founded on a solid basis of universal private subscription. The revival of the Bank

of Poland—exactly a hundred years after the first Bank of Poland had been founded, in the Congress Kingdom, by Lubecki—was greeted with national enthusiasm; a second Bank of similar type—the "Bank of National Economy"—was founded side by side with it, for the main purpose of assisting the rise of industries, which had been one of the useful functions of the old Bank of Poland.

But Grabski's currency reform turned out to have been too hasty and too drastic. A British financial adviser engaged by the Polish Government—Sir Edward Hilton Young—ventured to express doubts whether Poland was strong enough to accomplish her own financial salvation without the aid of foreign capital; and events soon confirmed his diffidence. Under the pressure of parliamentary demands for State grants in all domains of life, it proved impossible to maintain the balance of the budget, and inflation—under the less conspicuous form of large issues of silver coin—crept once more into the financial system. A violent slump in trade, inevitably caused by the ambitiously high rate of exchange of the new currency unit, was equally inevitably followed ere long by a drop of that new currency itself to half its exchange value. It was only when Poland, aided by the services of two American experts successively (Prof. Kemmerer and Mr. Charles S. Dewey), had introduced a number of essential reforms in her financial administration and at last succeeded in balancing her budget definitely, that the finishing touch was put to financial stabilisation by a loan of $70,000,000 from the United States in 1927. Since 1926, the *Złoty* has remained unshaken, and considerable reserves have accumulated in the Treasury.

If it took so long to establish the Polish currency on a sound foundation at last, that was largely due to the huge tasks in *reconstruction work* which the new State had

to face, especially in its Eastern provinces, after the havoc of war. Much was accomplished in a very few years in the way of rebuilding houses, roads and bridges. Poland has a *railway system* whose efficiency is unanimously recognised by all foreign observers. There is no *arable land* left in Poland which is not under cultivation. *Industry*, aided somewhat artificially by State credits, even reached a higher level in some respects at first than before the war. Besides supplying a largely increased home market, it found new territories for exports in the Balkans and the Baltic States, and thus largely made up for the loss, through Bolshevism, of the huge markets it had formerly possessed in Russia. These delusive gains of the period of paper-money inflation, as well as some more solid ones of later years, largely vanished when the world-wide economic crisis of 1929 reached Poland and made itself felt to agriculture and industry alike. Whatever way out of this crisis the world may find in the near future, the fact remains unalterable that the new Poland is a country whose energies are now no longer devoted to agriculture exclusively, as they were in the historical Poland of former centuries, but largely to industry as well. Together with these new industrial developments, the geographical importance of Poland as a centre of *trade* between Western Europe and Russia, as well as between the Baltic and Black Sea regions, may, with the resumption of normal economic relations, become apparent once more, as it was in the Middle Ages. The conclusion of commercial treaties between Poland and almost all the great commercial Powers of the world during the last few years has paved the way for such a revival, and the rapid growth of the new Polish harbour of Gdynia in the neighbourhood of Danzig bears eloquent witness to its progress. Two-thirds of Poland's trade now goes by the sea-route; and that proportion will be increased when

the new railway which is linking up Gdynia with the Silesian coal basin is completed. Poland's exports of coal—especially to the Scandinavian countries—are a corner-stone of her economic fabric. Poland's growing trade is served by a Polish commercial fleet of quickly increasing tonnage.

One other achievement in the unification of the new State remains to be mentioned, and that is the creation of a united *Polish Army* out of soldiers of the three armies of the partitioning Powers, and out of volunteer organisations of all sorts formed under the Polish banner during the World War. The most important in numbers among the latter was General Haller's Polish Army in France, formed in the last year of the war out of American and Canadian Poles, as well as out of prisoners of war from the Austrian and German ranks, who had been set free by France and Italy. Owing to various political difficulties, that strong and well-equipped Polish Army only reached Polish ground late in 1919, when it was finally incorporated in the new army of the Polish State. That army consolidated chiefly under the pressure of outward dangers. From the wars which the new Poland had to wage during the first years of her existence, the army, with French assistance, emerged as a well-organised and well-drilled body, based on conscription and amounting, in its peace strength, to 1 per cent. of the population (that is, about 300,000 men). Valuable adjuncts to it are formed by a modest Air Fleet, as well as a small Navy for the protection of Poland's strip of sea-coast and the defence of some frontier rivers.

VIII

The problems of *domestic and parliamentary politics* in the new Polish State, like those of most other States of to-day

have been moving mainly between the two opposite poles of *national* and *social* questions.

Among national issues, the foremost one—still far from being definitely solved—is that of the *national minorities*.[28] There are over three million Poles living outside Poland in the neighbouring countries. On the other hand, Poland, like most other States of Central and Eastern Europe, has many districts of mixed nationality, and one-third of her population is not Polish in race and speech. The rights of racial and national minorities in Poland are safeguarded not only by the thoroughly democratic Polish Constitution, but also by a special treaty which the Polish representatives had to sign at Versailles, and they are under the constant and watchful protection of the League of Nations. In Poland itself, differences between thoroughly Nationalist views and liberal Home Rule conceptions of the problem of the national minorities are a standing party issue.

With regard to one of the largest compact national minorities, the three million *Ukrainians* in Eastern Galicia, Poland is under international obligation to give them provincial self-government: disputes over the form and extent of this self-government have been going on ever since an abortive attempt was made to frame a Statute for it in 1922. They are rendered difficult not only by irresolution and inconsistency on the Polish side, but even more by a continuous campaign of military conspiracy, policial assassination, and economic *sabotage* which the Ukrainian Nationalist Party in Poland are conducting with support from Berlin and which, in 1930, even called for drastic punitive measures of military character.

So far, only one Polish province of mixed nationality, viz. *Silesia*, with its large percentage of *Germans*, has had Home Rule in the shape of a Provincial Assembly of its own, ever since its incorporation in 1922.

Home Rule in any form is impracticable in the case of one of Poland's strongest racial minorities, the *Jews*. Being scattered in various proportions all over Poland, from 1 per cent. in Western to 80 per cent. in Eastern towns, they do not form a consolidated territorial unit to which a scheme of autonomy could be applied. The relations between Poles and Jews in the new Republic were at first very strained: the favour shown by the Eastern Jewish population to Poland's Ukrainian adversaries and to her Bolshevik invaders occasioned local anti-Jewish riots, which were magnified into systematic "pogroms" in the foreign press. A British and an American mission of inquiry, both headed by distinguished Jews, ascertained the facts and did away with anti-Polish legends. Still, the body of thirty-odd Jewish deputies who entered Poland's Parliament remained in uncompromising opposition against every Polish Government for a number of years, and much harm was done to Poland's international interests by world-wide Jewish propaganda. In recent times, the tension between the two elements has considerably diminished; a majority of the Jewish deputies in Parliament are now supporters of the Government, and 1931 saw the abolition, by statute, of all the civic disabilities of the Jews which had lingered on as a remnant of the Tsarist system in former Russian Poland.

Poland's outstanding *social problem* has been that of *agrarian reform* at the expense of the large estates and in favour of landless peasants.[29] The process of disintegration of the larger estates, and of the growth of middle-sized peasant farms, had been going on in Poland ever since the emancipation of the peasants from serfdom: it was the natural expression of the development of the peasant class. The political power of that class in the new Poland was manifested by the early passage of a Bill in 1920 (preceded by a resolution of the Constituent Assembly

in 1919) which was intended to quicken that process: by provisions similar to those of the Agrarian Reform Bill of the Gracchi in ancient Rome, the possession of land is to be limited to a certain fixed norm, and the rest parcelled up, under State control, among peasant farmers, at a price fixed by the State. Similar measures of land reform, in many cases much more drastic, have been passed in all the States of Eastern Europe recently, the peasants being a prominent political power everywhere. In Poland, the opponents of the Bill argued that the sudden dismemberment of all large estates would bring agricultural production down to a disastrously low level, and party struggles over the issue led to the result that the original Bill was replaced by a new one in 1925, which substituted the principle of voluntary for that of compulsory sale and made some provision for the enlargement of dwarf-sized peasant farms, as well as for the rearrangement of scattered strips of peasant land into solid territorial units of property. The huge task of financing the great change in the agrarian system was definitely aided by the creation of a network of "Agricultural Banks" in 1927. The process of the dissolution of large landed property is in full progress in Poland now, and it is not to be doubted that the large mass of the peasantry, now on its way to possession of all the rural land, is also destined to be a dominant power in Poland's political and social system.

The history of *parliamentary and party politics* in the new Poland was at first scarcely less stormy than the record of her foreign relations. The Constitution—both in its provisional form of 1919 and in its final shape of 1921—was modelled on that of the French Republic, and included provisions for the unfettered sovereignty of a Parliament elected on a basis of universal suffrage and proportional representation. As a result of this, faction ran riot both in the Constituent Assembly of 1919 and

in the Parliaments which succeeded it after 1922. The Peasant Farmer Party, which was among the strongest of the many groups, under the leadership of its shrewd chief, W. Witos (three times Prime Minister of Poland between 1920 and 1926), seemed to inherit all the class selfishness and other political vices of the privileged gentry of the old Poland. Passionate conflicts between the Right (where the Nationalists did duty for a non-existent Conservative Party) and the Left (of which the pre-war "Polish Socialist Party" provided the groundwork) led even to the murder of the first Constitutional President of the country by a party fanatic in 1922. Poland, it appeared, could only be governed by shifting coalitions of parliamentary groups, whose cohesion had to be purchased by all sorts of concessions to persons and interests; and vital problems of the State, both economic, international and legislative, were either dealt with incompetently by the parliamentary demagogues, or utterly buried in the turmoil of party strife. In the midst of this, in Poland as elsewhere in Continental Europe, a mood of weariness with parliamentary democracy began to grow upon the nation at large, and the desire for a dictatorship became vocal. The dictatorial powers granted to the Government of Grabski in 1924 for purposes of financial reform were considered by many as an improvement worth maintaining and expanding. But it was not till 1926 that the decisive event came. Marshal Joseph Piłsudski,[30] as temporary Chief of State, had piloted the new Republic through the wars and other troubles of its first few years, but had afterwards been gradually chicaned out of public life by the parliamentary politicians who were his adversaries. In May, 1926, when the country was once more plunged into one of its periodical and prolonged Ministerial crises, he gathered a body of his military adherents round him and, after three days' fighting in

the streets of the capital, assumed full power in the State. His dictatorship never became a formal one; a nominee of his was elected President of the Republic, Parliament remained in existence and was only somewhat limited in its budgetary and other powers, and Piłsudski himself, although occasionally occupying for a few months the post of Prime Minister, generally remained content with the portfolio of Military Affairs.

The first years of the new *régime* were undeniably years of comparative calm and of steady progress. The military dictator firmly maintained peace with all of Poland's neighbours, and the international prestige of the country rose to a higher level than under any previous Government. Parliament having been made liable to dissolution, the long intervals between parliamentary sessions were utilised for abundant legislation by Presidential decree, which settled satisfactorily many outstanding problems of administrative unification and legal order. Over and above this, Poland seemed entering into a period of material prosperity, and much was achieved in the way of economic reconstruction and development.

Economic progress was interrupted by the world-wide crisis of 1929. At the same time, the international horizon once more became darkened both by the activities of the Bolshevik Government and by the growth of passionate demands for frontier revision on the part of Germany. In Poland itself, impatient expectations of thoroughgoing Constitutional reform still remained unfulfilled, while the military group, favouring dictatorship pure and simple, grew in power and committed certain political mistakes characteristic of its mentality.

Under these unfavourable auspices, the Government still succeeded in obtaining an unprecedented majority in the new Parliament of 1930. The beginning of 1931 found the Piłsudski *régime* in possession of the Constitu-

tional means both to carry out political reform and to conduct economic and foreign policy in accordance with any programme which it may choose to devise.

Whatever the further course of affairs may be, the reborn Poland, after the enormous dangers and difficulties happily overcome in the first dozen years of its new existence, is a State much stronger internationally, and far better ordered domestically, than the new Republic which was beginning to consolidate after the Bolshevik invasion ten years ago. On the ground of her achievements in reconstruction and progressive development, the Poland of to-day may look forward to its future with no less confidence than any other part of the new Europe which has emerged from the World War.

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Longitude East 15 of Greenwich

20 25 30 35

Statute Miles
0 50 100 200

55 50 45

ESTHONIA
Dorpat
Gr. Novgorod
Pskov
Courland
LATVIA
Livland
Riga
SWEDEN
BALTIC SEA
LITHUANIA
Memel (Klajpeda)
Wornie
Dynaburg (Dvinsk)
Polock
Witebsk
Moscow
Tilsit (Tylza)
Smolensk
Kaunas (Kowno)
Wilno
Troki
Königsberg (Królewiec)
Danzig (Gdansk)
East Prussia
Stettin (Szczecin)
Marienburg
Mohylew
Mińsk
Grodno
Niemen
Grunwald
Bydgoszcz
Torun
Briansk
Berlin
Warta
Inowrocław
Gniezno
Dobrzyn
Plock
Biatystok
Oder
Posen (Poznan)
Drohiczyn
Kursk
Leczyca
Warsaw (Warszawa)
Finsko
Kalisz
Brześć n.B.
Pripec
Łodz
Czernihów
Piotrków
Polessia
Breslau (Wrocław)
Lublin
Chelm
Bug
Częstochowa
Sandomierz
Vistula
Luck
Volynia
Kiev (Kijów)
Dniepr
Cracow (Kraków)
Prague
Bez
Krzemieniec
Tarnow
Oświecim
Teschen (Cesky)
San
Przemysl
Lwow
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Halicz
Podolia
Bar
Kamieniec Podolski
Bradslav
Bog
Dniester
Vienna
Danube
Chocim
HUNGARY
Moldavia
Suczawa
Bessarabia
Jassy
Tartars
RUMANIA
Crimea
BLACK SEA

Historical frontiers of Poland:
A.D. 1138
A.D. 1370
A.D. 1634
Vassal States

Partitions of Poland:
Austria Prussia Russia
First partition (1772)
Second " (1793)
Third " (1795)
Present frontier of Poland.


Oder
Warthe
Netze
Brahe
Weichsel
Bromberg
Thorn
Culmsee
Graudenz
Marienwerder
Dirschau
Neustadt
Putzig
Danzig
Elbing
Braunsberg
Heiligenbeil
Pillau
Frisches Haff
Frische Nehrung
Memel
Tilsit
Ragnit
Insterburg
Gumbinnen
Goldap
Oletzko
Lötzen
Johannisburg
Lyck
Ortelsburg
Neidenburg
Soldau
Osterode
Hohenstein
Allenstein
Rastenburg
Mohrungen
Preußisch Eylau
Friedland
Bartenstein
Heilsberg
Rößel
Sensburg
Angerburg
Darkehmen
Ebenrode
Stallupönen
Pillkallen
Schloßberg
Tilsit
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Inowrazlaw
Strasburg
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