

WARSAW---THE GEOGRAPHICAL CENTER OF EUROPE

Warsaw is the centre of the world's thought to-day. In the light of its present tragic condition the following pages from an excellent work, "Poland, the Knight among Nations," by Louis E. Van Norman, descriptive of the besieged city will, we know, greatly interest our readers. Mr. Van Norman writes with enthusiasm, sympathy and understanding what he calls "a collection of honest impressions of a remarkable people." Of Warsaw, he says:

"Warszawa!" shouted the guard at half-past nine one evening in August, as we steamed into a beautiful white city, splendidly lit by electricity and gridironed closely by tram lines. "Are all large Russian cities as handsome as this?" I asked my seat companion, a gentleman whose French was Parisian, or Slavonic, for all Slavs speak nearly perfect French. He looked at me in surprise. "This is not Russia," he said: "this is Poland." And there you have the matter, after nearly two centuries of the "benevolent assimilation" of Pan-Slavism. Warsaw is Poland, and Russia is a foreign country, off at a distance. Approaching Warsaw from the Vistula, one may see where the city has built its defences, toward the East. Thence came the enemy the Mongol, the Russian. Moscow is Russia, Kiev is Russia. Odessa and St. Petersburg are Europe. But Warsaw is not in Russia: it is in Poland. The government on the Neva may designate "Krolestwo Polskie," the old kingdom of Poland, as the governments of the Vistula, and deny that the Poles exist as a national force, but this same government finds it necessary to keep ready a garrison of 200,000 troops to overawe a city of 900,000 people, and, somehow, the guns of the citadel are turned, not toward the German frontiers, the only point from which a foreign enemy could be expected to come, but toward the streets and shops of the third most populous

town of the Empire. Poland does not exist officially, but it is, if dead, certainly a very lively corpse.

The Door to Europe.

If you draw a circle about the entire continent you will find that the former Polish capital is the geographical centre of Europe. It is now one of the busiest, liveliest of European cities, and it is destined in the future to become one of the great world-centres of population. The completion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad brings Asia to the very door of Europe, and Warsaw is that door.

The newly constructed line ends at Moscow, but Warsaw is the real Western terminus. Moscow, more than half Asiatic, belongs to an Eastern, Byzantine civilization. Warsaw is Latin, Occidental, the first really great European city on the steel arteries of trade that throb between Berlin and Vienna, St. Petersburg and Moscow. She is a great manufacturing centre. Her factories supply all of Russia. She is the Birmingham and Sheffield of the Empire. All the articles de Paris, all the "galanterie" and goods "made in Germany" bought in Russia come from Warsaw. Moreover, she is now making a bid for the trade of the Far East. She makes sugar, leather, cotton, wool, iron, gold and silverware, and shoes for the rest of the continent. She sends more than half a million dollars' worth of beet sugar alone every year to America.

The outlying neighbor of Warsaw, Lodz, known as the Polish Manchester, is fast gaining on its English rival. This great manufacturing centre, which stepped from the rank of a village to that of city in two decades, has thousands of spindles which turn out cotton for the world. The wool comes on cars from north of Samarkand—what Americans know as Siberia. Almost all of Lodz's half million people help turn it into useful fabrics for the Tsar's empire. The

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industrial and commercial impulse that has characterized the Russia of the present is, perhaps, nowhere more strikingly evident than in what was the old kingdom of Poland, and particularly in Warsaw, still the capital of the head of the race, as Cracow is the heart. Warsaw helps distribute the overland trade from the East. In her shops, whose clerks speak Polish, Russian, French and German, and sometimes English, is every variety of product direct from the Orient.

Origin of Warsaw.

There are many traditions concerning the origin of Warsaw. One of the oldest is the account which says that, in the year 1108, a Bohemian family of the name of Varsovski, suspected of treason to its king, was banished from Bohemia. It settled on the banks of the River Vistula, and the growth of centuries has made of its little settlement the city of Warsaw, and known as Praga, in memory of the Bohemian capital, Prague. Then the princes of Mazovia took possession of the growing town, and when the last of this Mazovian line died, Zygmont, the Polish king, made Warsaw his fortified residence.

There is something in Warsaw that seems familiar to the traveller that knows western Europe—at first he is at a loss to say just what. Then it comes back—the touch of Paris, the light gaiety and pleasure-seeking, the beautiful parks and splendid drives, the fine theatres and seemingly inexhaustible capacity of the people for amusement—almost all that makes Paris Paris is characteristic also of Warsaw. But Warsaw has, in addition a flavor all her own.

Agonizing Memories.

How much these Poles have suffered and are suffering day by day! The old royal palace is weighted

down with tragic, agonizing memories. On the great balcony, to the right of where the Russian sentinel now treads day and night, Stanislaw Poniatowski, the last Polish king, looked out upon the square along the Vistula, and saw the Marshal Suwarow slaughter 14,000 Poles. Here, in 1863, 50,000 Russians camped and made "order" by firing with cannon on men and women who knelt in the snow and sang the national hymn. I tried to enter and look over this palace, but found it so full of Russian soldiers that visiting was exceedingly difficult, even with an official pass. On coming out of the court-yard I found my way across the square barred. A Russian army corps, including 4,000 Cossacks and the famous mounted infantry regiment organized by Alexander III., was returning from a review preparatory to leaving for the seat of war in the East. The force of men carried an 18-foot lance resembling one of the celebrated Cromwellian pikes, a short sword with a wicked, half-Turkish crook to the blade, a long carbine, and the cruel Cossack whip, the most terrible of the four.

The detachment stopped directly in front of the monument in the palace square to the Polish king, Zygmont. This column, says the inscription on its base, was erected to the memory of Zygmont III, by his son Wlasylaw IV. In Zygmont's reign, the inscription says further, Moscow was captured by the Poles, and Prince Wlasylaw proclaimed Tsar of Muscovy. The inscription does not refer to the fact, but all this reminds one that Phlaret, the father of the first Romanov, was carried a prisoner to Poland, and kept there for nine years, for refusing to acknowledge Wladylaw as king. It was significant to recall this fact again when, standing in the Red Square, in front of the Kremlin, in Moscow, I read beneath the great group of statuary in its centre:

"To the memory of the Aristocrat and the Peasant who, in 1613, saved Russia from the Poles."

The Cossacks halted right beneath this Zygmont column, and the humble citizen of the latter-day Warsaw stepped nervously aside. So history mutates.

Warsaw, the Cultured.

To thoroughly enjoy Warsaw, understand it, and appreciate it, one must enjoy good music, understand good painting and good acting, and be able to appreciate fine public gardens, splendid horsemanship, good eating, and—beautiful women. The subtle, cultured taste of the Poles is especially conspicuous in Warsaw in all of these: in the music they hear, the painting and drama they see, the parks and horses they enjoy, and the fascinating women who make their seats and drawing-rooms so alluring.

One of the gayest corners of Warsaw is the Krakowskie Przedmiescie—the Suburb of Cracow Street—in front of the Hotel de Europe. Most of the Churches, newspaper offices, and public buildings of the city are located on this busy thoroughfare. At night it is a blaze of light and a whirl of life and motion. Hundreds of cabs dart about—and in Warsaw the cocher drives as swiftly and recklessly as the swallow flies—and the elegantly dressed throng passes and re-passes. The street is literally lined with cukiernias—those attractive little tea and cake houses which were originally an exclusively Italian institution, but brought into Poland during the Italian immigration. There the Varsovian sits and sips his glass of tea and munches his bit of cake, while he skims the latest newspaper from Paris, London, Berlin. The cukiernia is to him what the cafe is to the Parisian, and more than the beer-garden is to the German.

There is a nervous quickness about the Pole, a staccato nimbleness of spirit, which makes him again resemble the Frenchman. He is exceedingly fond of light and sociability, and these little tea-houses which line the streets of Warsaw are immensely popular with him. They are scarcely second to his home.

A City of Music and Musicians

Warsaw is more than a city of music and musicians. Every Varsovian is a musical connoisseur. Warsaw has been the home of Paderewski, Silivinski, and the Reszkes. Its conservatory is world-famous.

The Poles are born actors. Even after Vienna, Berlin and Paris, one

can find new beauties and harmonies on the Warsaw stage. This stage is the place to see artistically perfect dancing. The polonez, the mazur, and the krakowiak, the three national Polish dances, are the race in epitome. The polonez gives the color, ceremony, politeness, grace, suppleness and rhythm of the Polish lady and gentleman. It is the aristocracy personified. The mazur gives the agility, suppleness, almost recklessness, and, withal, the gallantry of the szlachta, or landed gentry. The krakowiak shows the quick, gusty, passionate alternations between passivity and wild abandon, so characteristic of the Polish peasant. The music seems to be part and parcel, bone and sinew, of the dance itself, and the color of the costumes is picturesquely and artistically perfect.

The art impulse of the past twenty-five years that has resulted in the appearance of a distinctively Polish school of painting, looks to Warsaw as the home of many of its imitators. The Sienkiewicz house, in Spolna street, has long been the shrine of literary Poland. Warsaw has been the home of Alexander Glowacki (better known by his nom de plume of "Boleslaw Prus"), who has been captivating Germany by his classical novels; of Wlacyaw Sieroszewski, the Polish Pierre Loti; of Maryan Gawalewicz, author and editor of the *Kurier Warszawski*, and of Eliza Orzeszko, author of "The Argonauts," recently translated into English.

The Lubomirskis, Potockis, Zamoysskis, and Radziwills, the oldest and most aristocratic families of Poland, each has a representative in philanthropic and educational work in the city.

The Poles think very highly of their physicians, and justly. The medical profession is unusually well represented in all advancement and public enterprise in Poland. One of the best known presidents of the Warsaw Society of Fine Arts, which numbers more than 5,000 members, was a physician, Dr. Karol Benni. It was a physician, Dr. Chalubinski, who founded the great Polish health resort, Zakopane, in the Carpathian Mountains. Dr. Jordan, who established the unique park for children in Cracow, which bears his name, was a citizen of the widest reputation. Dr. Jan Jablonski, at one time Rector of the Cracow University, founded a hospital for poor children irrespective of their religion.

A Sociological Park

Two details of the vast scheme of the Russian government to minify the evils of intemperance are worked out very picturesquely in Warsaw. Local temperance committees supervise a popular theatre and a "Sociological park," supported by government subsidy. The theatre gives performances for merely nominal prices—the maximum being sixty kopecks, about 30 cents.

Liberal Stand-Pat Record

Grain Growers' Guide

The record of the Liberal Party at Ottawa certainly does not inspire one with the belief that the return of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, with a safe and solid majority at his back, would mean even a considerable approach towards Free Trade.

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