

What do the Poles represent in civilization ? Naturally it is difficult for a member of the nation in question to answer such a question. He may be accused of partiality and exaggeration, or he may overlook something of importance. The life of the Polish nation is too complex to admit of any short answer being given to the question I have proposed. I shall therefore confine my attention to one or two characteristic features of national development. The absence in England of reference-books with detailed statistics makes it difficult to give more than general indications.

First of all, in estimating the part played by Poland in the progress of civilization, one must remember her unfortunate position. A member of any nation with political independence can always work with one single purpose. In business, scholastic work, military service, he is always serving not only his own interest but his nation. Not so a Pole. Whatever new work he may take up, he must always remember that it is for him also to defend his national heritage against his enemies. Those enemies are armed ; he is not. They control legislative bodies ; he must obey their orders, or be treated as a revolutionary. They are powerful, and can make friends ; he has nothing but what God has given him and what he can win for himself. At the very best, he is graciously allowed to enjoy a few of those rights which everywhere else are considered the birthright of man ; but usually even that privilege is denied him. To understand Polish psychology, one must realize that two attitudes may be taken up in regard to Polish conditions. One is that of the cold chronicler, who simply records facts : to him, the Prussian Expropriation Law, the sufferings of children, the punishment of patriots, are merely items in a series of statutes, in