

OBLITERATION OF POLAND

PEOPLE have been so long accustomed to identify Russia with the stories of savage persecution and cruel despotism suffered by the Poles that it is somewhat startling to find the latter being held up just at present by the Muscovite press to the sympathy of the entire civilized world as victims of barbarous oppression on the part of the German government. Indeed, there are plenty of people to whom the cable dispatches of the past two weeks bearing upon the matter will have recalled the generally forgotten fact that besides the Poland belonging to Russia, there are two other Polands, the one forming part of Austria-Hungary and the other of Germany. For when the subject of Poland, which ancient kingdom played so great a role in the old world's history during several centuries, was partitioned it was divided into three parts, Russia taking the lion's share, with about 7,000,000 inhabitants; Austria, a smaller slice, with a population of some 4,000,000, while Prussia's part in the spoils was a territory with a population of about 3,000,000.

The Poles of Austria are today the most loyal and contented of the subjects of Emperor Francis Joseph. It is from the ranks of their nobility that the emperor recruits his ministers and great dignitaries of the household, and the present moment being members of the Polish aristocracy, while it is the devotion of the people of Austria to the emperor is one of the strongest bulwarks of defense of the dual empire from any eastern and northeastern attack on the part of either Russia or Germany.

The Poles of Russia and of Germany are, on the other hand, so discontented and imbued with such bitter feelings toward their Muscovite and Teutonic masters that they form an important element of danger to both Germany and Russia, a danger which the mili-

tary authorities of these two countries are obliged to take into very important account in considering the possibilities of war. In one word, there is no Polish question in Austria, but in Russia and in Germany the Polish question exists, and is a source of as much trouble, anxiety and, I may add, weakness as the Irish question is to the British empire.

A few notes of explanation of this condition of affairs may be of timely interest, the more so as there has always prevailed in this country a very strong feeling of sympathy for the Poles. Americans cannot forget that the Polish patriot Thaddeus Kosciuszko, to whom a memorial has been erected at West Point, was one of the principal lieutenants of Washington and that a number of his fellow-countrymen took part in the American war of independence. Besides, the Poles have always been looked upon in the United States as victims of monarchical despotism, and as having been unjustly deprived of their national independence in order to satisfy the territorial greed of three unscrupulous empires, banded together for no other purpose than to crush out of existence a relatively small neighboring state.

While there are elements of truth in this view, it is not entirely correct. I have no intention of embarking here upon any course of Polish history or of championing the partition of the kingdom, but I would merely point out that at the time when the Polish country was in a state of anarchy of such a character as to disturb the neighboring states, due to the intolerable oppression of the peasantry by the nobility, which latter was divided into numerous factions, carrying on sanguinary warfare among themselves.

Originally the same principle of peasant and communal proprietorship of the land that exists in Russia and in the Balkan states prevailed in Poland. But by degrees the Polish nobles appropriated all the land, and the peasantry, possessed of no political rights, and subjected to a slavery far more cruel than the serfs of Russia previous to their liberation, were even worse off than the beasts of the field, their frequent risings against their oppressors that is to say, the Polish nobles, merely

adding to the general chaos and confusion. That was the end of Polish autonomy, and as soon as the insurrection had been suppressed by means of Russian troops Poland was declared a Russian province.

From that time forth the one object and avowed aim of the Muscovite government has been to Russify the Polish provinces of the empire, and to obliterate as far as possible every vestige of nationalism. With the object of accomplishing this the Russian language was substituted for Polish in all schools, universities, legal procedure and official communications. At times the representation of Polish plays has been forbidden on the stage, and people were likewise prohibited from singing any of the national songs of Poland in any public place.

The Russian tsar, or official, especially of the lower grade, is as a general rule devoid of any breadth of view, and, in fact, of any sense of justice, added to which he is imbued with that disposition toward despotism and tyrannical rule that is characteristic of the Oriental races, among which it is necessary to include the Russians. It will readily be understood, therefore, that the policy of Russification put into execution by instruments of this class quickly developed into intolerable oppression, which weighed far more heavily on the traveled and enlightened Polish aristocracy than it did upon the peasantry. Indeed, the latter would have yielded thereto had it not been for their clergy. The Poles in Russia, in Germany and in Austria have always been fervent Roman Catholics. The clergy of that denomination were quick to appreciate the fact that the substitution of the Russian language for Polish constituted a very important step toward the substitution of the Russian orthodox faith for the Roman Catholic religion, the conversion of the Catholic Poles to the national state church of Russia being, indeed, an avowed feature of the scheme of Russification in Poland.

Clinging to this the Roman Catholic clergy of Poland have for the past several years formed the most active and successful opponents of the Russian policy in Poland, and, being in much closer touch and more intimate communion with the peasantry than any Russian can ever hope to be, have encouraged the masses to cling to their language and to resist all attempts to Russify them, impressing upon their mind that it was their spiritual welfare which was at stake, and that it was preferable to submit to the persecution of the Russian authorities than to imperil their salvation by making concessions the object of which was to bring about the

abandonment of the Church of Rome for the orthodox rite.

Hundreds of Roman Catholic bishops and priests in Poland have been imprisoned and exiled to Siberia. But, like their flock, they are ready to suffer martyrdom for the faith, and it is in this that must be sought one of the chief sources of disunion in Russian Poland. For materially the lot of the Polish peasant, now an owner of his land, entitled to a share in the communal property, and a serf no longer, is 10 per cent superior to what it was in the days of Poland's national independence and of the oppression of the working classes by the nobility.

Poland is at present following in the footsteps of Russia and pursuing a similar policy—that is to say, seeking to Germanize her Polish provinces and to stamp out Polish nationalism. Identical the same methods are employed as on the Russian side of the border, and whereas the Roman Catholic church is treated with the most distinguished consideration in the western part of the German empire, it is subjected to every kind of restrictive measures in the eastern province of Posen, whereas in Russia the government sees in the Roman Catholic clergy the principal obstacles to its program of Germanization of the Poles.

Catholic nobles are high in favor at the court of Berlin, and occupy the most eminent positions in the imperial household, in the army, and in the various branches of the government administration. But only Protestants are appointed to any office in German Poland, and everything is done to induce the rising generation to adopt the Lutheran faith, not on religious grounds, but for the purpose of emancipating it from the spiritual, and incidentally the political influence of the Roman Catholic clergy, which, as stated above, remains an obstacle to the Germanization of the people.

As in Russia, the German officials of the lower class are often brutal in their methods, devoid of judgment and of tact, and apt to regard disobedience to their behests as furnishing an excuse for the employment of measures of an altogether intolerable character. It is impossible to describe in any other language their conduct at Wreschen, where Catholic Polish children were flogged by their school teachers until they were crippled for life for declining to learn

CONGRESS TO TAKE UP MAMMOTH CANAL PROJECT JANUARY 7TH.



By unanimous consent the consideration of the Hepburn Canal bill will be made the continuing order of business in the House until disposed of. Immediately after Congress reconvenes January 7th. The above combination half-tone shows the latest portraits of the men most prominent in bringing the isthmian canal project to its present status.

CHANGES IN THE CABINET.

Rumor Has It That More Resignations Will Occur—Root, Knox and Wilson to Stay—Senator Elkins' Proposed Railroad Legislation—Feeling in the Senate Over Committee Assignments—Ahead of the Procession.

Special Correspondence.

Washington, Jan. 1.—Ever since Mr. Roosevelt became President there has been a great stock of cabinet resignation rumors, which have ranged all the way from changing the entire cabinet to dropping out one or two. Now that Postmaster General Smith has resigned it may be expected that these rumors will take fresh life. If there is constant guessing, some one at some time is pretty apt to hit it and can confidently say, "As predicted in these dispatches," etc. It is not very difficult to prophesy that it is likely that Secretaries Hay and Long and perhaps Gage will not remain to the end of Mr. Roosevelt's term. I know that had McKinley lived Secretary Long for personal reasons would have retired before now, and it was only the manner in which Mr. Roosevelt asked the old cabinet to remain that has kept Mr. Long at the head of the navy department. Mr. Hay will no doubt remain until he has closed up some diplomatic matters upon which he has been engaged, and Secretary Gage may remain for a year, but there is an impression from what one hears about the capital that the men who are almost sure to remain with Mr. Roosevelt are Secretary Root, his long time personal friend; Attorney General Knox and Secretary Wilson. The work all these have in hand is of such a character that they should carry it out. It may be that some of the others will retire, but there is certainly enough substance in the gossip going about to indicate that they will not remain to the end of the President's term.

There has been considerable talk of a secular kind about possible railroad legislation since Senator Elkins of West Virginia became chairman of the Interstate commerce committee, and some members have said that there is little danger of the railroad being injured with Elkins at the head of the committee. Now Senator Elkins acknowledges that he is a railroad man, and everyone knows that he is chief owner of a first class passenger road in his state, but yet he says that he can consider railroad legislation fairly. "I can look on both sides of this question," he says, "and I can tell what is right and proper. When the railroad men nor their opponents can tell what are the facts and what is false." As a matter of fact, there has been no legislation of late years, the former committee seemed unable to agree upon a pooling bill, a bill to further regulate carriers or to prevent ticket scalping, all of which measures have

been before it. Senator Elkins says he is going to bring forward a bill which he believes will pass and which will be for the mutual benefit of the shippers and the railroad lines.

There are two occasions when self-interest rises above senatorial courtesy in the Senate—when committees are being made up and in the assignment of committee rooms. As a result of the assignments to committees there is considerable feeling expressed by some senators who think that those who control affairs might have been more generous in giving the outsiders, and especially the new senators, better places. But it will not be long before the new senators will have that much desired length of service which counts for so much in the Senate. The rearrangement of committee rooms means changes in committee rooms, and here again is shown lack of senatorial courtesy as shown by senators who have good rooms and do not want to change. It often happens that a senator when promoted to the chairmanship of a higher committee will not give up the room he has been occupying heretofore. There are quite a number of contests to be settled during the holiday recess by the Senate committee on rules following the organization of the committees.

John W. Langley, who was the first man who mentioned the presidential ticket as nominated by the last Republican national convention, is chief of the appointment division in the census office. He is a delegate from Kentucky and presented the permanent chairman, Senator Lodge, with a gavel made from a tree in the Kentucky mountains. He spoke some words about the grand old state of Kentucky and pleaded the electoral vote to McKinley and Roosevelt. This was the first time Governor Roosevelt's name had been uttered in the convention proceedings up to that time, and it had been indefinitely postponed that he would be nominated for Vice President. Mr. Roosevelt was sitting with the New York delegation on the middle aisle, well to the front of the hall. He gave a slight start and then smiled at the enthusiasm of the Kentucky delegation. He rose from the cheer that followed the mention of his name that nothing could prevent his nomination. Talking with him a few minutes after, I found that he recognized that the convention was likely to elect McKinley and Roosevelt. He was talking with Mr. Langley the other day and recalled the circumstance and remarked that he thought that Mr. Langley was getting a little ahead of the procession.

Special Correspondence.

Washington, Jan. 1.—The people of the United States will shortly through their representatives decide upon which route to adopt for the construction of an isthmian canal uniting the Atlantic and Pacific.

At the present moment the Panama route, although by far the shorter of the two and one upon which millions of dollars have already been expended, is considered to be out of the question altogether.

Into this vast ditch a large amount of French capital was thrown at a time when it looked as if the canal was to be an international affair. Owing to the sudden understanding arrived at with G. B. Britain contained in the newly ratified Ponceforte-Hay treaty and the introduction of bills at Washington, favoring the Nicaraguan route, by Messrs. Hepburn and Morgan, the Panama canal people have been goaded to sudden action.

M. Hutin, who was so long president of the De Lesseps attempt, has been removed from that position and we are very likely to receive some favorable offer from this company which would probably be glad to sacrifice much to obtain something out of the wreck of their plans.

The comparative value of the two routes has already been decided upon by a Senate committee on interoceanic canals and a bill was passed by the House of Representatives authorizing the President to acquire from Nicaragua and Costa Rica such territory as might be necessary to control in order to build and fortify the canal. The bill provides that the canal should be of sufficient depth and capacity to permit the movements of ships of the largest tonnage and greatest depth now in use and should be made from a point near Greytown on the Caribbean Sea via lake Nicaragua, to Breto on the Pacific. The bill called for a preliminary appropriation of \$10,000,000 with a limit that

further appropriations should not exceed in the aggregate \$140,000,000. Neither this bill nor the one introduced concurrently in the Senate by Senator Morgan, became law.

The total distance from ocean to ocean of the Nicaragua route is 189.3 miles, including 110 miles of Lake Nicaragua which reduces length of cutting to 79.3 miles.

The length of the Panama canal is estimated at 46 1/2 miles, the canal being practically finished from Colon to Buleo, a distance of 14 miles. It is estimated that the cost of completing the Panama canal would be \$100,000,000, a sum of \$25,000,000 having already been expended on preliminary operations. While it is estimated that the Panama canal would take ten years to complete owing to the great engineering difficulties to be overcome, the Nicaragua Canal can be finished in about seven years, at a cost of \$125,000,000, according to the report of the committee.

Railroad experts who have examined the ground differ considerably from this point of view and instead of \$125,000,000 place the estimate of cost for the Nicaragua route at \$250,000,000.

It seems to be a plain, indisputable fact that as a business proposition the Nicaragua Canal will for a long time be a dead loss and that the proposition is defensible only on the ground that it is necessary as a strategic step on the part of the United States government and for the development of its own coastwise commerce between the Atlantic and Pacific seaports and in other directions.

Comparisons in regard to possible tonnage which should pass through the isthmian canal are sometimes made, and the length of the canal is an important factor generally lost sight of. While the Suez Canal has no railway competition to consider, the Nicaragua route would be a competitor of thirteen lines of transcontinental railway.

Grave engineering difficulties are suggested by the fact that there is a total difference to be overcome in canal and sea level of 223 vertical feet.

Unfortunately another drawback, or a much more serious nature confronts the projectors of this undertaking.

The most difficult engineering work in connection with the construction of the canal will be the building of a dam across the San Juan river, a feature which is specified in the new Hepburn bill as an integral part of the plan. There are engineers who say that such a dam cannot be constructed with any certainty of its permanency or safety. Nicaragua has always been the seat of seismic convulsions. There is scarcely a month during which some kind of disturbance is not noticed. These disturbances always center near the line of the Nicaraguan volcanoes. Should such a cataclysm occur as that which inundated Nicaragua with lava and ashes in 1825, what would be the effect upon the dam, and consequently upon the canal?

The explosion lasted two days and the mass ejected into the air was sufficient to have covered a surface equal to about half the continent of Europe, ashes being carried fifteen hundred miles out to sea. As late as 1833 there was an eruption of a volcano located in the very center of Lake Nicaragua.

On Jan. 7 the Hepburn canal bill will be taken up in Congress and be made the continuing order of business until disposed of. The bill calls for an aggregate appropriation of \$180,000,000 to cover cost of construction and its provisions imply the use of the Nicaragua route.

Should Congress, contrary to the convictions of the isthmian commission, prefer the Panama route, the protocol with Nicaragua would become void and the negotiating of a treaty with Colombia for a right of way across the isthmus would be necessitated.

Germany Openly Accused of Cruelty by the Press of Russia.

German prayers and hymns, and subsequent intervention in their behalf by their parents being visited upon the latter with the most unrelenting charges of inciting to disobedience of the authorities. One old woman, widowed and ailing, who was sent to prison for two years on this account, exclaimed very pathetically in reply to the inquiry as to the cause of her imprisonment: "All we ask is that our children should be taught religion in Polish and not in German, that we may at least have the satisfaction of being able to pray with them."

It is only during the past few years that this program of Germanizing the Poles has been enforced with so much vigor and severity. Old Emperor William would never allow it, his marked predilection for the clergy and the clergy which he entertained for their being popularly ascribed to his romantic infatuation in early life for the lovely Princess Elise Radzivil, a Polish noblewoman, whom he would have married, were it not for the opposition of the throne had it not been for his father's prohibition. During the first part of the present emperor's reign the Polish aristocracy played a great role at the court of Berlin, especially the lovely Princess Kosciuszko, whose alleged influence with the Kaiser constituted on one occasion the subject of a fierce public denunciation by the late Prince Bismarck.

Shortly after this, however, she vanished from the court of Berlin, and Polish influence ceased to be a factor in imperial and official circles, and today the Kaiser is being held up by the Russian press to the obloquy of the civilized world as the oppressor of the Poles.

Austria being a Catholic power has, of course, been friendly among the Polish Roman Catholic clergy, and thanks to this has been enabled to accord to her Polish provinces a large amount of autonomy, as well as the permission to retain the use of the Polish language in judicial and administrative matters. The result is that the Polish party in the imperial parliament at Vienna is the one upon whose support the government can always rely, and that the aristocracy, which would bring the Catholic Polish children were flogged by their school teachers until they were crippled for life for declining to learn

GOOD-BYE TO AFRICA.

Perils of the Street in Tangier—A Glimpse of Ceuta, Spain's Most Terrible Convict Station, Off the Coast of Morocco.

ON THE Mediterranean November 11, 1901.—We have encountered many "scapes" in course of these African wanderings, but none to our knowledge—that came so near the "hair-breadth" line as one which marked almost our last moment on the Dark Continent. Already the steamer had signalled that the time of departure was at hand, and we were hurrying to the quay, conveyed through the winding lanes of Tangier by a magnificent-looking Moor, who might have been Ali Baba himself, but was really a hotel-runner. Tall, straight and imperiously solemn, with long, gray beard, and piercing black eyes, made bleaker by constant squinting, he wore a white turban, green Moroccan slippers embroidered with gold on his stockings, and voluminous draperies of snowy wool girded about the middle by a crimson sash—he looked altogether too imposing an individual to be ordered about by "Christian dogs." Evidently he entertained the same opinion, for straight ahead he stalked, without once looking back, paying no more heed to his charges than if he had not pocketed a liberal consideration for plotting us safe to port. The wonder is that we did not lose him in the crowds that surged the labyrinthine alleys, with their unexpected turns and cul de sacs. Doubtless we should have passed on either side, but for the hunting of the sultan's soldiers, who do not hesitate to trample under the hoofs of their horses whatever may be in the path; or a company of mounted water-peddlers, with driving pigskins of the precious fluid carried before them on donkey-back; or hordes of insolent slave-women, returning from market, who delight to visit upon defenseless strangers some of the abuse that is their life-long heritage.

Our "scape" was met near the journey end, at the last turn of the street, within sight of the landing. The narrow space was packed with a shoulin, exalted through, through which we lunged a pass, and our steamer. The central attraction was a Santo, or so-called "Holy Man"—in other words, a Mohammedan lunatic, apparently of the most dangerous type. In this land of fanatics, you know, lunatics are permitted to range at will and indulge their wildest vagaries unhindered, because it is believed that Allah loves them above other men. This ebony fiend might have come direct from the infernal regions, if "looks" count for anything—wild, rolling, blood-shot eyes; wide-open, foam flecked mouth, in which yellow snags of teeth contrasted with the blackness of his skin and thick, wiry, curling beard. He wore no clothes to speak of—only the remnants of a brown "gahab" that did not half cover his nakedness, and a skull-cap, studded with silver coils, from which long, coarse charms and curses of equal potency, and in the other he grasped

a huge snake which writhed and hissed and thrust out its tongue and tried to strike with all its venomous power. The Santo's face and arms were scarred with snake-bites; but as he leaped to and fro and around the circle of spectators—which promptly widened as his approach—he would bring the snake's head to his own mouth and thrust out his tongue till it touched the serpent's fangs. The reptile seemed to bite the tongue repeatedly, but with no effect upon the lunatic, except that a few drops of blood trickled down his breast and drew forth another and larger snake—a mottled fellow fully seven feet long. He twisted the two serpents together and teased them in every way, until they became frantic with rage when he would thrust them toward the spectators, who scattered in all directions. Remembering that the street was barely five feet wide and that we—a handful of hated "unbelievers"—must not be guilty of doing anything so dangerous and furious as to insult the snake, I will agree that if not a hairbreadth escape, it was at least an unenviable moment.

It seemed to be a particularly good day for snakes in Tangier, for directly in front of the spot where our luggage was now scattered on the quay, awaiting the final view, a "charmer" had taken up his stand. His performance was assisted by a band, consisting of a native violin and two stringless sned drums; but his own savage yells and cries, as he exhibited his reptiles, drowned the discord of the instruments. There was a bag full of serpents, of every size and shape, and the beggar, guest, (what prevented the rest from taking refuge in our luggage I do not know,) and after going through a series of contortions with it, he seized it in the middle with his teeth and held it in his mouth for a moment, dividing the bag for two smaller snakes. These he endeavored to make bite each other, still retaining the other great wriggler in his teeth. They flatly refused to fight, though smartly pinched, until he applied their heads to his own forehead, nose and eyes. Then they woke up to business, as nobody could blame them for doing, and struck repeatedly with all the fury that was in them. The man did not move a muscle, though blood trickled from the bites. Then he made one of the smaller snakes hold the big one by its teeth, suspended in the air; and various other performances were in progress when we finally rescued our luggage and got away from the unpleasant neighborhood. This man's face, like the Santo's, was covered with snake-bite scars, yet he appeared in robust health. It is said that the snakes are really poisonous, one bite being sufficient to kill an ordinary individual; but the charmers eat a certain plant which serves as an antidote.

We were extremely glad of an opportunity to call at Ceuta, the famous penit colony, our vessel having some business at that rarely visited port. It is a small, but bold and rocky peninsula, jutting out eastward into the Mediterranean, directly opposite Gibraltar, and separated from the great British stronghold by a channel only fourteen miles wide. Though in the empire of Morocco, it belongs to Spain, having been taken by the Portuguese in some early wars and annexed to Spain with Portugal in 1580. And Spain has held it ever since, through terms innumerable, though Sultan Maia I. remitted it at its gates with all his army. Never was a town more beautifully situated, rising tier above tier, amphitheatrically from the blue Mediterranean to the Seven Hills behind, whose tops seem to touch the glowing sky. The village itself is clean and well built, in the Spanish style; the houses bright with pink, blue, yellow and purple colors, and the streets are paved with iron-wrought balconies filled with flowers and trees planted on both sides of the street. The civil population is

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COST OF THE CORONATION.

Millions Will be Spent During the Ceremonies.

I have just returned from the lord chamberlain's office, at St. James' palace, where I found a blue-blooded official poring over an estimate—in thousands of figures—of the approximate sum of money that is likely to be spent on the coronation during the next six months. He estimates that in gold lace, miniver velvet, blunt court swords, silk coat stockings, artificial eaves, coronation coaches, red sealing wax and so on, nearly \$1,250,000 will be spent. He puts down houses and windows to view the procession, coronation parties in the West End, and entertainment by the government of princes, chiefs and envoys of all shades of black, red and yellow at West End hotels and private houses (graduated in luxury largely according to the color of the guests), the sum of \$1,500,000; traveling expenses of nobles from Europe, \$100,000; from

America, \$175,000; traveling expenses of nobles and others, with their monthly retinues from everywhere, \$1,250,000; cost of the short journey to Westminster Abbey officials, police, soldiers and the rest, \$75,000; cost of long procession all around London, \$175,000; cost of state banquets, balls and garden parties at Buckingham palace, \$250,000; entertainment at Windsor castle and upkeep of 1,000 Indian soldiers in camp for seven weeks, \$300,000; coronation parties on the Thames and at the big houses near London, Saturdays to Mondays, \$250,000. He calculates that there will be spent at Hyde Park fair \$750,000; banquets of learned and other guests all to foreign colonial and other societies, over the British isles, \$2,750,000; coronation tours to manufacturing and other centers, \$2,500,000; popular fetes and fireworks, charity feasts and decorations, \$1,500,000. He puts down half a million sovereigns under miscellaneous headings, and makes the total \$19,025,000.