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SYMPATHY FOR POLAND.

It is with nations as with individuals—those who suffer most have most sympathy to spare for the woes of others. Is it not honorable to the American heart that while our Republic is grappling with a gigantic rebellion having for its object the partition of our country—the destruction of our nationality—the planting of an imperial barbarism upon the grave of our liberties—while we are mourning the loss of our bravest and best, straining our resources and suffering keenly from the anxiety excited by the uncertainties of such a contest—our people can pause to speak words of comfort and encouragement to the struggling patriots of the Old World? Not even considerations of foreign policy—and the value of the Czar's friendship under the existing circumstances is fully acknowledged—can restrain the organs of public opinion from denouncing the shocking misrule that provoked this last uprising of the Poles, and inspired them with the determination to conquer or to die. Here and there a mild protest is entered by persons who assume that it is not expedient for us to manifest sympathy for those who are in rebellion against a sovereign who has befriended us, or a doubt is expressed as to any benefit accruing to the masses of Poland from this struggle; but we believe these voices are exceptional discords. The American press from the Atlantic to the Pacific is nearly harmonious in wishing the heroic Poles complete success. When even Russian officers commit suicide rather than execute the orders of the Czar—when every branch of the liberal party in Europe gives voice to its sympathy with the Poles—when Garibaldi, whose life is consecrated to the service of freedom, expresses regret that he cannot instantly come to their aid—why should any American hesitate to concede the justice of the cause for which Poland

cede the justice of the cause for which Poland
is in arms?

We should be grateful for the kind offices of
the Czar; but our gratitude should be that of

conscientious men, who will not allow the re-
membrance of a friend's favors to blind them to
his errors. It is Alexander's fault that, receiv-
ing a policy of wrong as a legacy from the iron-
hearted Nicholas, he has not perceived that hu-
manity, the solemn obligations of treaties, and
the best interests of the people subjected to his
rule, demand a change. Without going back
to the original crime—the partition of Poland—
which Maria Theresa of Austria predicted
would be a cause of woe to the successors of
those who shared the guilt, although she signed
the agreement under the advice of her Minis-
ters—it must be remembered that by the treaty
of Vienna, concluded in 1815, Russia obligated
herself to respect the nationality of the Poles,
and to give them a separate, though tributary
Government. The first Alexander, in pursu-
ance of that agreement, granted the nation a
Constitution, a biennial Diet, composed of a
Senate for life and a Chamber of Deputies, a re-
sponsible Ministry, an independent judiciary, a
national army of 50,000 men and the freedom
of the press. But this Alexander's liberalism
was short-lived. The Constitution was repeat-
edly violated. The remonstrances of the Diet

were treated with contempt. The best of the
Polish officers were driven from the army by
outrageous insults. Prominent men were siezed
and exiled to Siberia, while others were con-
demned to suffer in loathsome dungeons. Nich-
olas, who ascended the imperial throne in 1825,
continued this policy of terrorism. The Con-
stitution was a miserable mockery. In 1830 the
Poles revolted, but having failed to enlist the
peasantry in the cause and being unable to har-
monize the aristocratic and democratic parties,
the leaders of the movement were, after a strug-
gle of wondrous heroism, compelled to succumb.
From that date until the present rising was ini-
tiated, Russia acted upon a deliberate resolution
to denationalize Poland. We, who within the
past two years have witnessed the terrible meas-

measures instituted by military usurpers to crush out the sentiment of nationality in the southern section of our country, can form a faint conception of what the unfortunate Poles endured under this alien despotism. Here was a people, with a glorious history reaching back beyond the birth of the Russian empire, having a language and a literature of their own, and a religious faith differing from that of the oppressor—a brave, high spirited people, whose valor had illustrated the most famous battle fields of Europe, and who were devoted to their native land, subjected to a system of barbarism which became the scandal of that continent. Nicholas either banished to Siberia or imprisoned every man whose energy and patriotism rendered him dangerous. The Constitution and laws were abrogated. The University of Warsaw and other institutions of learning were abolished, because they were known to be the nurseries of nationality. The literary collections were transferred to St. Petersburg. All marks of nationality were prohibited. The ablest of the Polish leaders took refuge in France and other countries, but cherished a determination to return and renew the struggle whenever an opportunity was offered. This system continued until the death of Nicholas, and the fact that it failed to crush out the national feeling is, to us, ample proof of the vitality and heroism of the Polish people. Soon after the accession of Alexander II. some concessions were made, and for a time there was a general expectation of wholesale reforms. But the attempts to force the Greek Church upon a people devoted to the Catholic faith, and other measures equally obnoxious, provoked agitation, and Gorschakoff, the Russian Governor, gave the Poles a renewal of military terrorism. The outrages that preceded the present rising—the plan of seizing and transferring to the military service in the Caucasus the young men who were supposed to be inspired with the idea of nationality—the proscription rather than conscription, as it has been called—the arrest and imprisonment of men who dared to affix their names to a petition for reform—and other measures equally atrocious and exasperating—

have been made known to the world through the liberal press of Europe. No revolt recorded in history can be considered more justifiable.

But it may be objected that the aristocratic institutions which have hitherto prevailed in Poland repel the sympathy of Democrats, and that it is only as a desperate resource that the nobles have proclaimed the freedom of the peasantry. Devoted as we are to the democratic principle, and firmly as we believe in an equality of political rights and privileges—we must insist that this is a matter for the Poles themselves to determine. Certainly, no serfholding empire like Russia had a right, either in the days of Catherine II. or the days of Nicholas, to make the existence of an aristocracy a plea for the destruction of a nation. The aristocracy of England, though not exactly serfholding, is obnoxious to us; but we should say that the attempt of a foreign power to abolish it would be rightfully resisted. A religious respect for the principle of nationality is the surest guarantee of the peace of the world. But the abolition of serfdom undoubtedly gives the Poles an additional claim upon our sympathies. The revolution has drawn into its vortex all classes of the people. Not only the peasantry, but the trading Jews are enlisted in the cause. All are helping in the good work and all will share the benefits, if success should crown their heroic efforts. Mieroslowski has been identified with the Democratic party ever since 1830, and Langiewicz is one of his pupils. A triumph achieved under such leaders would undoubtedly establish the democratic principle in Poland. May their arms be strengthened for the struggle. Among the Poles it is literally true, that "freedom's battle once begun," has been "bequeathed from bleeding sire to son." Who shall say that a people who have suffered so long and contended so bravely—who, whether immured in Russian dungeons or driven into cheerless exile, have kept alive their faith in the future of their native land, do not deserve a victory?

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