

# Tschertkoff Cordially Hated by Poles.

Special Dispatch to The Call.

CRACOW, April 1.—Probably the most hated man in all Russian Poland is his Excellency the Governor General of Warsaw, as he is officially styled. In reality, however, General Tschertkoff rules over all the ten governments which constitute Russian Poland of to-day, and is more commonly known as Governor General of Poland. This position is perhaps the highest dignity in the service of the Czar. Poland differs from the various governments in Russia proper, as it is still ruled more as a conquered province. The Governor General has committed to him the destinies of 10,000,000 people.

7,000,000 of whom are peasants, for the most part unable to read or write.

General Tschertkoff has an official salary of 50,000 rubles a year (\$25,000), a palace in Warsaw, a castle in the country as a summer residence, horses and carriages, an army of servants and numerous other perquisites and privileges. He has also at his disposal an immense secret service fund for the expenditure of which he has not to give any account. All these dignities and emoluments, however, will soon pass from his grasp, for the general is 76 years of age, suffering from an incurable disease, and it is said that his successor has already been selected, and, in fact, may come here at any time.

The Governor General will go away "unwept, unhonored and unsung." The Poles hate him with a bitter hatred for his oppressions, his corruption, and his evil influence upon their beloved country. The new man may be infinitely better—much worse, they say, he cannot possibly be.

### **HIS RISE TO POWER.**

Michael Ivanovitsch Tschertkoff, Governor of Warsaw, Ataman of the Cossacks of the Don, General of Cavalry, Aid-de-camp to the Czar, and member of the Imperial Council of the Empire, was born in 1829. He was educated in the school for imperial pages at St. Petersburg and entered the army in 1848. He took part in the defense of Sveaborg, Finland, against the Franco-English fleet in 1854, and fought in the Caucasus in 1858. In 1864 he was appointed Governor of Volhinia, and five years later was made a lieutenant general. He also became Ataman of the Cossacks of the Don, ataman meaning General of Cossacks.

In 1877 he was nominated Governor General of Kieff, when he first came into notoriety. His administration is said to have been infamously corrupt and bad, even for a country like Russia, where official corruption prevails generally and, in fact, is almost expected. But Tschertkoff exceeded the usual limits of transgression. He abused his authority in every way and there were no bounds to his cupidity and extortions. He speedily amassed wealth and purchased an enormous estate at Kahorlik in Southern Russia, out of the proceeds of his ill-gotten gains. Finally his maladministration of the province became a public scandal, which attracted the attention of the authorities in St. Petersburg, who

found it was even more than they could stand, and General Tschertkoff was removed from his post.

As is common in Russia when officials of such exalted civil and military rank are removed from office, the general was "raised" to the rank of an Imperial Councilor. This was in 1881, and he remained out of office for nearly twenty years. General Tschertkoff was the faithful and devoted servant of the late Czar Alexander II, and acted as his personal aid-de-camp during the Turko-Russian war. Their intimacy was not entirely unconnected with General Tschertkoff's wife, whose union with the general was brought about in a very extraordinary manner.

#### **PURCHASE OF HIS WIFE.**

Madame Tschertkoff, who is still living, was the wife of a minor police official named Vereschagin, and a very beautiful and attractive woman. It is said that she is a Jewess. The late Czar saw her at some maneuvers and ordered that she be presented to him, and they soon were on very friendly terms. General Tschertkoff, who was attending the maneuvers, saw the lady also and was deeply enamored of her, and finally bought her from her husband for 30,000 rubles (\$15,000) and married her.

Such a seemingly extraordinary affair is not uncommon in Russia, and is done in a perfectly legal manner, through divorce procedure. The husband for a consideration—in this case the 30,000 rubles—permits his wife to have a divorce, and takes upon himself the role of the guilty party. Under the Russian law only the innocent party may marry again, the guilty one may not do so unless the other should die. In these cases it is considered rather a shabby thing if a husband isn't willing to accommodate his wife in this manner, and sacrifice his character for her sake.

Very often the man marries again without waiting for his former wife to die, as it is not difficult to find a priest who will not ask too many questions and insist upon too much evidence regarding his legal qualifications for entering the matrimonial state. General Tschertkoff's marriage turned out to be a very happy one and madame is very popular in Warsaw society, much more so than the general.

Some few years after his marriage the general was told one day that a stranger wished to see him alone on important business. He was shown into the room and addressing the Governor, said: "Your Excellency will remember me no doubt, as you did me the honor to take my wife some time ago. I come now to inform your Excellency that I have another wife, who is younger and handsomer, and much better altogether than my first wife, and if your Excellency wishes I will let you have her at the same price." What his Excellency answered is not report-

ed, but the visitor left the palace very hastily.

General Tschertkoff was appointed Governor General of Warsaw in 1900. It is said that when offered the position, he told his Majesty that he feared he was too old (he was then 71), but the Czar replied that made no difference, he need do nothing, his subordinates would do all the work.



General Tschertkoff took the position, and inspired by an intense hatred of the Poles, entered upon his new duties with great zest, in spite of his advanced age. He has missed no opportunity of displaying his animosity to Poland and everything connected therewith. The always obnoxious press censorship has become doubly severe under his rule. The Catholic clergy has been persecuted to the last degree, and he has thwarted every attempt of the Poles to obtain any concessions from the imperial Government at St. Petersburg. Even the Russians detest him, and his departure from Warsaw, which is expected to take place within the next month, will be the occasion of much private rejoicing.

When in his prime General Tschertkoff was a handsome man of dignified presence, but his age and infirmities render him now a somewhat pitiable figure.

**UNPOPULAR VON NOLKEN.**

If General Tschertkoff is the most hated man in all Poland, then Baron Carl von Nolken, chief of the Warsaw police, who was recently injured by a bomb, can claim the same distinction as regards the ancient capital of Poland. And this is no libel on the chief, as he has frankly admitted that he knows that he is hated. He has no easy task to maintain public order in a city of 800,000 people, nearly all of whom may be regarded as a hostile population. And the police force is ridiculously inadequate to cope with the situation. Its full strength is barely 1000 men and Warsaw has over 4000 known criminals and thugs of the most desperate class. Four "hooligans" to every policeman, and all armed with revolvers infinitely superior to the police patterns warranted not to hit at ten paces.



There is an interesting and typically Russian story, now being told in Warsaw about these revolvers. During the disturbance in January the police found them perfectly useless, and reported that a bullet fired from them wouldn't penetrate the skin of a person three paces away. Orders were, therefore, given for new revolvers to be purchased, and the commission was intrusted to a dashing cavalry colonel of aristocratic lineage and one of the foremost figures in Warsaw official society. The colonel bought the revolvers at 12 rubles (\$6) each and they were handed out to the men. But they speedily proved to be of less service than the discarded ones. An investigation was made and it was found that the aristocratic colonel had bought 1000 of them at 3 rubles (\$1 50) each and charged the city 12 rubles (\$6), pocketing 9 rubles (\$4 50) on each gun for his trouble, a net gain of \$4500 on the

little transaction.

### LIVES IN REGAL STYLE.

Baron von Nolken is an ex-army officer and passed through the general staff academy. He is said to be the first officer having this distinction who has entered the police service. But the Baron enjoys living well, and he probably saw that there was a better opportunity of gratifying his desires in this direction in the police service than in following a military career. He went to Warsaw from St. Petersburg a year ago, where he was one of the police chiefs, and had command of the mounted division. In Warsaw he receives a salary of 9000 rubles (\$4500) and has a handsome suite of apartments in the City Hall, carriages, horses, servants and all kinds of extra allowances. He has also a large secret service fund at his disposal, regarding the expenditure of which no questions are asked.

The chief lives in grand style and is said to spend at least three times his official salary. There are many ways in which a Russian chief of police can add to his income, and report says that a certain Jewish resident in Warsaw, who is looked on as a sort of intermediary of the Baron, knows most if not all of them.

Baron von Nolken is a handsome man in the prime of life, with very courtly manners, which he probably acquired during some time spent in the consular and diplomatic service. When in full uniform his breast is covered with an array of orders and decorations, Russian and foreign, which few Russian officials of his age can display.