

in vain for any others, and in the end went mad with horror at the thought of it. A story with a still more personal poignancy is told and vouched for by Ignace Paderewski. The incident took place during a charge. Both armies had been ordered to attack; and the Poles, as usual, were placed in the front lines. As they met in the shock they recognised. One poor fellow as he was struck through by a bayonet, cried out in his death agony, 'Jesu, Maria! I have five children!' 'Jesu, Maria!'—the words went straight to the brain of his conqueror as a dagger to the heart, and killed his reason. Somewhere among the madhouses of Europe there is a lunatic. He is not violent, but he never laughs. He only wanders about with the words of his dying victim: 'Ah, Jesu, Maria! I have five children! Jesu, Maria!'

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Stated in cold figures, without any attempt at rhetoric or declamation, the tale of ravage and destruction inflicted upon the unfortunate Poles is sufficiently appalling. The line of battle between the Masurian Lakes and the Carpathian Passes, the two extreme limits of the country inhabited by the Poles, extends to nearly 650 miles. It goes through the whole Kingdom of Poland and Galicia (Austrian Poland), an area of more than 80,000 square miles, with a population of 21 millions. In this territory about three millions of Austro-Germans and four millions of Russians are fighting each other. These seven million soldiers have been, for nearly ten months, treading down and tearing in turn the Polish land, famishing and exterminating its inhabitants, and bringing red ruin in their train. In the Kingdom of Poland proper, the area directly affected by the war, is one of 40,000 square miles, with 10 millions of people. The two largest and richest provinces after that of Warsaw, those of Lublin and Piotrkow, besides those of Kielce, Ransom, Plock, Kalisch, Suwalki and the greater part of those of Warsaw and Lomza, have been devastated from end to end. Two hundred towns and 9000 villages have been destroyed. The material damages amount to £120,000,000. Innumerable country houses and farms have been destroyed; more than a thousand churches have been badly damaged. All the stores of corn and forage were long ago seized or destroyed. One million horses and two million cattle were taken for the armies or perished for want of pasture. By the digging of endless trenches and also by the effect of heavy shells, the fertile soil was swept away, buried under clay and gravel, and, even in the richest districts of Lublin and Ransom, deprived for a long time of its productiveness. Ruin has come alike upon the peasant population and upon the great landowners. The whole of the agricultural production, valued at two and a-half milliards of francs (£100,000,000) a year, has been entirely stopped for a long time, by want of seed and cattle. A rural population of seven millions is therefore reduced to beggary. 'A very large proportion of them,' says an official statement on the subject, 'whose villages in the fire zone have been burnt down, are quite homeless: dying of hunger and cold, feeding on roots, bark, and carrion, they roam through the woods or shelter themselves in the towns.'

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The towns, also, have suffered severely, financially and otherwise. The means of communication have ceased to exist; upwards of 1000 miles of railways have been torn away, stations and bridges blown up, even the highroads ploughed over. The coal-pits of Dombrowa, supplying the whole country were lost at the very beginning of the war; the mines were blown up or flooded. Instead of getting, as usually it does, 30,000 waggons of coal every month, the country barely receives 100 from the far distant coal-pits of the Donetz. All the factories have stopped working, many are greatly damaged, 100 very important ones are destroyed. The whole of the industrial production, amounting to above £80,000,000 yearly, has been ruined, and 400,000 workmen are now without means of subsistence. To the terrors of famine and destitution are added the horrors of disease. Typhus fever, dysentery—especially among children, from the total want of milk—and

cholera are prevalent. The hospitals are crowded with the wounded; and drugs and proper medical treatment are not available for the suffering poor. Galicia (Austrian Poland) includes an area of 32,000 square miles, with eight millions of inhabitants. This territory has had to support battles and invasion again and again, in some places as many as seven times. The large tract between Lemberg and Bochnia (one million inhabitants) is totally depopulated. Over 100 towns and 6000 villages have been damaged, and the immediate losses amount to £28,000,000. More than 2500 villages were utterly destroyed. Eight hundred thousand horses were taken, one and a-half million cattle, and nearly all the stores of corn and forage. The yearly agricultural production of about £40,000,000 has been ruined for a considerable time. More than 700 churches have been demolished or severely damaged. The war-driven Galician emigration to the interior of the Austrian empire amounts to more than a million; and most of these exiles 'are without any means, and in the deepest misery. Generally speaking, the 300,000 Polish Masurs of the Lake plain of East Prussia, who have twice supported the heaviest disasters of the war, have endured the same calamities, such as destruction, famine, sickness, and death, which have been the portion of the Kingdom of Poland and of Galicia. The bitter cry of distress of the Polish people has been voiced by Mgr. Sapieha, Prince Bishop of Cracow; and regarding his appeal the *Nova Reforma*, a Polish journal published in that city, says: 'A Prince of the Church has now spoken on our behalf and addressed himself to the whole of Europe and the world. May his voice find an echo in the press and make known our misery. If there still exists compassion for the woes of others, they will not let us perish of hunger, but will surely send speedily the aid of which we are in such terrible need when they know that every week which passes without it is a sentence of death to thousands of human beings.'

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Like the Irish, the Poles have persistently upheld the cause of faith and fatherland; and like Ireland, Poland has long been persecuted and oppressed. Like Ireland also, Poland stands at the dawn of a better day, if only she can survive the present crisis. The Grand Duke Nicholas has promised that, if it shall be in his power to grant, Poland shall be a nation once again; and the hour, we trust, is drawing near when the resurrection of this liberty-loving nation shall be something more than a hope. In view of the numerous and heavy calls that are being made upon the generosity of the public, we make no direct appeal on behalf of the Polish people. But we have told the story of their sufferings and of their great need; and in view of the fact that, so far as we know, no other channel has been opened in New Zealand through which assistance can be rendered, we have thought it only right that those who may feel disposed to make voluntary donations to so deserving a cause should be given an opportunity to do so. Some one has said that charity is not charity until it pinches. If there are those amongst our readers whose charity has not yet reached the pinching point, and who desire to give practical expression to their sympathy with the distressed and destitute Poles, they may send contributions to the office of this paper. All donations will be acknowledged in our columns; and at a suitable time the amount received will be duly forwarded to the proper quarter.

CRUSADE OF RESCUE

We have received 5s from 'A Friend' for Father Bann's Crusade of Rescue, London.

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