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POLAND AS A GEOGRAPHICAL ENTITY.¹

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of Science for Ireland.

FROM the foreword we learn that the original Polish edition of this work was published in 1912 as a memorial of the author, who died on January 29, 1911. The Polish Information Committee, in reproducing the book in English, takes a high view of the intelligence of those to whom an appeal is made. This is no political tract, arising from the enthusiasms of the war-time, but a serious geographical study, addressed to those who have already thought on Poland. It is easy to say, "Poland is a nation; the claim of the Poles to freedom is unanswerable." Nalkowski sets himself to ask what is the geographical basis for the claim, and he ends this too brief essay by leaving us with a sense of fatal insecurity. The Poles themselves are Poland; where they are sufficiently concentrated, there they may hope to hold their own. The allies whom they have invited have too often obliterated the frontier-lines, and these boundaries must be marked out once more by the historian rather than by the geographer.

If the northern and southern frontiers are fixed, if we grant that Poland must extend from the Carpathian crest to the Baltic shore, the east and west remain "directions of transitionality." Nalkowski indicates the Oder on the west; but the exceedingly condensed sentence on page 54 regarding the eastern frontier will be completely unintelligible to most readers. On the east, it is suggested, "you can draw a line from the Riga, or Finland Gulf, to Odessa: along that line flows the Dnieper and Dwina or Dnieper and Wielika Narova with the Peypus." Surely two alternatives are here put forward, one of which excludes, while the other includes, Livonia and Esthonia. The choice of the Dnieper, moreover, brings Kiev, and a vast territory where the land-owners are Poles and the peasants predominantly Russian, within the bounds of Poland. Kiev, where the Northmen of Novgorod met the Byzantine culture, is surely bound up with the very origins of Russia; and then, if Kiev remains Russian, why not Ukraina and a good deal else?

The fact is that a reconstituted Poland must be a matter of mutual concessions rather than of geography. Nalkowski's careful treatise only serves to give this emphasis. The basin of the Vistula is clearly Polish, and brings us from the limestone crags that loom up amid the pine forests to the proud red castles of Marienwerder and Marienburg on the Nogat, and so, without hesitation, to Danzig and the sea. Krakow, where the kings of Poland sleep, becomes once more the inspiration of

¹ *Poland as a Geographical Entity*, by W. Nalkowski. With a preface by James Fairgrieve, F.R.G.S., Lecturer on the Methodology of Geography in the University of London, and an ethnographical and historical map. Published for the Polish Information Committee by G. Allen and Unwin, Limited, London, 1917. Price 6d.

the race, leaving the lowland mound of Warsaw, half way down the waterway, as a convenient trading centre for those who pass from west to east. But beyond this broad basin all the features point to "transitionality." The old commercial routes (p. 22) ran from north to south, when Baltic amber was bartered for "besants" on the Mediterranean. Later, the east and west traffic arose, and the way proved equally open in that direction—a way that led, in fact, to Tatary. The author aptly indicates the central position of Poland in modern Europe, aided by a map of equidistants (lines of equal distance from the sea). This very fact, which should assure commercial greatness to the country, has proved its undoing in an imperfect world. Poland, so to speak, has lain between the goals, and her level lands have experienced to the full the trampling of rivals in the game.

The varied groups of the population are connected by Nalkowski with their prehistoric origins, in a series of paragraphs that are models of vivid concentration. The Jewish immigration is touched on very lightly (p. 34). Those who know the streets of Krakow, or who have sought, along some dusty Polish highway, the shelter of a village inn, will have realised another problem in the revival of Poland as a nation. Yet those who have passed from Pomerania to the gentle courtesies of Westpreussen; or have descended to Krakow from the grey Carpathian wall, and have offered up their thanks in the glory of St. Mary's nave; or have stood on the wind-swept knolls of Myslowice, and have seen, in the striped frontier-posts of empire, partition manifest to the eye: these will know that a kingdom or a republic of the Vistula needs no support from the geographer. The present southern and western frontiers cannot bound the living soul of Poland. Nalkowski urges the effect of the open lands in diverting the love of country towards "sadness, indifference, and dreaming immersion in memories of the past"; but these characteristics are found equally in Ireland, which is a most pronounced geographical entity. Both countries need what he so finely calls an "active clinging to the future." These five words are an effective illustration of the compressed energy of his treatise.

GEOGRAPHY IN ITALY.¹—SECOND ARTICLE.

By GEORGE G. CHISHOLM.

THE earlier volumes of two of these school books have already been noticed in a short article which appeared in the *Magazine* for September 1916, and the general character of their successors, including the sense in

¹ *Corso di Geografia per il Ginnasio Moderno*. Volume secondo: *L'Europa*. By Paolo Revelli. Price L. 1.50.

Corso Pratico di Geografia Moderna per le Scuole Medie de 1° Grado. Volume terzo: *I Continenti extraeuropei—La Geografia astronomica*. Price L. 1.80.

La Geografia nel Ginnasio Superiore. Parte prima: *Italia*. By Professor Sebastiano Crinò of the Royal University of Catania. Second edition. Price L. 1.50. Novara: Istituto Geografico di Agostina. 1917.