

GARDNER

MONICA MARY

KOŚCIUSZKO

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Kościuszko

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Monica M. Gardner

Kościuszko / A Biography

ADAM MICKIEWICZ, THE NATIONAL POET OF POLAND

(Published 1911)

Daily News. – "Miss Gardner's able study... Lovers of the heroic in history will be grateful to Miss Gardner for her account of this noble enthusiast." (Rest of review, of more than a column, analysing the matter of the book.)

Scotsman. – "So little is known in this country about Polish literati that a book which tells the moving story of the greatest among the poets of Poland is sure of a welcome from student readers. The present interesting volume – while it is instructive in no small measure as to the scope and character of Mickiewicz's poetry and literary work – draws so lively a picture of the persecutions and sufferings and of the unconquered spirit of the poet that its human interest easily overbears mere questions of literature. ... The work, at once discriminating and enthusiastic, will warmly interest all sympathetic students of Slavonic popular literature." (Rest of review analyses matter of the book.)

Westminster Gazette. – "Miss Gardner tells the story with excellent insight and sympathy. ... The author's description of the four parts of this poem gives a vivid idea of its far-reaching scope, its passionate energy, and intensity of patriotism." (Rest of review, three-quarters of a column, analyses matter of book.)

Birmingham Daily Post. – "We are very glad to see that Miss Gardner has at last produced a well-documented and impassioned study of the life and achievements of Mickiewicz. ... Miss Gardner has done a fine and useful piece of work." (Rest of review, a column, analysis of matter of book, and calling attention to the importance of work upon Poland.)

Manchester Guardian. – "Miss Gardner, a devoted and accomplished student of Polish literature, has performed a considerable service in making better known the life and work of the most famous of Polish poets. ... His pathetic story is told in great detail and with deep sympathy by Miss Gardner. ... Some of her prose renderings are of great beauty – often with the wild and wayward beauty which we associate with Chopin." (Rest of review, three-quarters of a column, analysis of matter of book.)

New Age. – "A real work of love, honest and thorough." (Rest of review, of about a column, analysis of matter of the book.)

Cambridge Review. – "Miss Gardner... gives us a remarkably true picture of the relations between the poet and his country. ...Miss Gardner has realized fully what she attempted, and indeed few countrymen of the poet could perform the task better."

Bulletin Polonais. – "Une étude biographique et littéraire très substantielle, très bien documentée, conçue très methodiquement et écrite avec beaucoup de charme et de clarté. ... C'est à notre connaissance le premier livre anglais qui traite avec tant d'ampleur et tant de conscience une question d'histoire littéraire polonaise. Nous espérons que Mile. Gardner ne se bomera pas à ce brillant coup d'essai."

Academy. – "Miss Gardner has done a real service." (The rest of a very long and sympathetic review is an analysis of the matter of the book.)

Tablet. – "In these days, when the reader is embarrassed by the abundance of books that are not wanted... it is well to meet with a work at once so necessary and so well done. ... When great poetry has waited so long for appreciation, and a story full of interest has been left untold, we might

welcome any attempt to supply the deficiency. But in this case the work is so admirably done that it would be welcome, though we had other biographies or critical appreciations of the Polish poet. This remarkable work... Apart from the purely biographical interest, which is of a high order, there is much that throws new light on the tragic pages of modern Polish history. ... It may be hoped that this book will do something to awaken a new interest in the history and literature of Poland." (Rest of review, about a column, analysis of matter.)

Standard. – "This is the first attempt which has been made in our language to capture the imagination by a critical study of the fine character and high achievements of Adam Mickiewicz. Miss Monica Gardner writes exceedingly well – with knowledge, with sympathy, and with vision. ... The book... is a capable bit of work, and it certainly succeeds in giving the reader a realistic and impressive picture of a man who loved Poland with an undivided heart." (Rest of review, about three-quarters of a column, analysis of matter.)

Athenæum. – "One would have been grateful for a moderate biography of Poland's national poet; Miss Gardner's work merits a more distinguished adjective, and therefore is doubly worthy of attention." (Rest of review analysis of matter.)

Glasgow Herald. – "The intensely tragic story is set forth by Miss Gardner with skill equal to her sympathy. ... What an inspiration Mickiewicz was, and is, may be readily gathered from the translations given by Miss Gardner, magnificent even as prose. ... The book is singularly interesting as the story of a man and a nation and as giving a vivid glimpse of a poetry almost unknown in Britain." (Rest of review, about three-quarters of a column, analysis of matter.)

Yorkshire Post. – "This book of Miss Gardner's should appeal powerfully to English readers because its subject has the provocations of novelty; because the work is gracefully and sympathetically written, with discerning and intimate knowledge of fact and of character, and yet discriminating and just; and because it embodies once more the story, especially dear to our hearts, of the struggle of a patriotic race for freedom and national existence." (Rest of review, about three-quarters of a column, analysis of matter.)

POLAND: A STUDY IN NATIONAL IDEALISM

(Published 1915)

Evening Standard. – "Miss Monica Gardner's eloquent book is a little epic of sorrow and courage. The picture that it paints is pitiful and splendid. ... The book must be read for itself. The author has a style that has caught fire from its subject, and a grace and restraint that make the book an appeal to all lovers of literature, as well as to every generous heart." (Rest of review, three-quarters of a column, analysis of matter.)

Spectator. – "Her eloquent and touching book. ... Miss Gardner gives us an excellent account, enriched by many spirited translations, of the principal works of these remarkable poets." (Rest of review, two columns and a half, a laudatory analysis of matter.)

T. P.'s Weekly. – "The admirable historical summary in Monica Gardner's Poland. ... The author has written a book that must be read. ... The position of Poland is one of the important questions to be settled by this war, and we cannot know too much of the soul of a country that, divided among spoilers, still retained national unity." (Rest of review, three-quarters of a column, analysis of matter.)

Pall Mall Gazette. – "Her well-written and brilliant book. This book deals with more than the soul of a nation. It speaks for the spirit of a people. ... Miss Gardner is steeped in Polish literature, and her account of these great poets is intensely interesting. ... Her description of Poland during the last hundred years is full of pathos and power. There is no straining after effect; the facts are ineffaceable;

and this brief story brings out into bold relief the sufferings, sorrows, sacrifices, struggle, and strength of the Polish race. ... This book is an eloquent description of a great people." (Rest of review, three-quarters of a column, analysis of matter.)

World. – "At present the only kind of 'War Book' that seems to us really worth reading is that of which the conflict now going on is rather the occasion than the cause. Such, we may say, is *Poland: a Study in National Idealism*, by Monica M. Gardner. ... Clearly Miss Gardner has not been hurried into producing this admirable volume by the mere war, but only gives out in season the enlightening result of what she long previously assimilated and made her own. This book really reveals Poland." (Rest of review analysis of matter.)

Outlook. – "In this little volume a faithful and fearless picture is given of her [Poland's] struggle for independence." (Rest of review, about a column, analysis of matter.)

Daily News. – "Miss Gardner's sensitive and accomplished little study. ... Miss Gardner's extremely spirited renderings." (Rest of review, column and a half, analysis of matter.)

Manchester Guardian. – "For the first time in England we are able to read books on Poland by an author who has made a special study of that country. To those who know not Poland this book will be a revelation." (Rest of review analysis of matter.)

Birmingham Daily Post. – "We render Miss Gardner the tribute of deep gratitude for introducing us to a noble literature." (Rest of review, three-quarters of a column, analysis of matter.)

The Venturer. – "Miss Gardner has done well to give us this book. It is not large in bulk, but it is no exaggeration to call it a great book."

Expository Times. – "Let us read and follow the course of the war. Let us read and understand what must be when the war is over. Let us read Monica M. Gardner's delightful book on Poland. It is both literary and historical." (Rest of review quotation from the book.)

London Quarterly Review. – "The book is a real contribution to the true understanding of Polish character and Polish aspirations." (Rest of review analysis of matter.)

Tablet. – "This masterly critical appreciation of a great national literature. ... This welcome work on the tragic story of the Polish people and on the glories of their great national literature is singularly happy in the opportuneness of its appearance. For however much other books may be neglected, there is naturally a great demand for books that offer any information on matters connected with the war. In most cases, no doubt, what is called war literature is scarcely literature in the strict sense of the word. But here, happily, we have a book of rare literary merit ... and it comes before us when it meets a present need. ... Miss Gardner, in this fascinating little book on Poland, enables English readers to understand the tragic story of the Polish people, their unbroken spiritual unity, and their undaunted hope in the future of their country." (Rest of review, two columns and a half, analysis of matter.)

Times. – "Miss Gardner is an instructed and cultivated student of Poland."

POLAND ("PEEPS AT MANY LANDS")

(Published 1917)

Daily Telegraph. – "To their popular series of travel books called 'Peeps at Many Lands' Messrs. Black have now added a volume on *Poland*, by Monica M. Gardner. The more we know of Poland and the Polish people the better our understanding of the causes of the war. ... The book is as good reading as any fiction, and the most austere critic must admit its relevance to the task of 'getting on with the war.'"

Spectator. – "Young people should read Miss Monica Gardner's short and interesting book on *Poland*. ... English readers know very little about the Poles, and this book deserves attention, for we cannot as a nation afford any longer to neglect Poland."

Common Cause. – "The little volume gives a most vivid and delightful picture of Poland as it was before the war, with its spacious steppes and wonderful forests, and it tells of the nation's struggle for freedom against overwhelming odds. The book deals largely with the manners and customs of the people in modern times, which the writer makes extremely interesting; but it tells also the main events in the history of the unfortunate kingdom from early days."

Globe. – "Miss Gardner tells in a most touching way the picturesque story of that unhappy land."

Aberdeen Journal. – "To the 'Peeps' series of attractive books ... has been added this dainty volume on *Poland* by Monica M. Gardner, well known as the author of *Adam Mickiewicz* and *Poland: a Study in National Idealism*. That the war must have a vital effect on the destiny of Poland is universally acknowledged, and now is the time to study the characteristics of the Poles. ... The chapter devoted to Polish National Customs is quite fascinating, and 'A Day in Cracow' presents vivid glimpses of the chief city of 'Austrian' Poland. The vexatious character of the rule in 'Prussian' Poland is effectively exposed. Miss Gardner possesses a clear and pleasing style well suited to a popular and well-timed book."

Tablet. – "With the fate of Poland once again in the melting-pot of a European war, Miss Monica Gardner's sympathetic account of its people and cities in Poland may be confidently recommended as the work of one who knows and loves her subject. It is a work which, small as it is, deserves the attention of readers young and old."

Polish Review. – "Miss Monica Gardner's little book on Poland in the 'Peeps at Many Lands' ought to be in the hands of all in this country who want to get to the heart of Poland. The authoress both knows and feels her subject, and her lively picturesque style ... makes her pages interesting both to young and old."

THE ANONYMOUS POET OF POLAND

(Published 1919)

Spectator. – "Miss Gardner has followed up her monograph on Mickiewicz with an admirable companion study of Zygmunt Krasinski, the 'Unknown' or 'Anonymous' Poet of Poland, second only to Mickiewicz in genius, and, in virtue of his personality, his strange gift of prescience, and the romantic and tragic conditions of his life, appealing to a wider audience than his great contemporary. He came on his father's side of an ancient, noble, and wealthy Polish family, related to the House of Savoy; his mother was a Radziwill. A precocious only child, he was brought up in his father's palace in Warsaw and on his country estate at Opinogóra. Vincent Krasinski had fought with distinction in the Polish Legion under Napoleon; he was a commanding figure in the autonomous Kingdom of Poland until 1828, when he was the only member of the Senate of the Polish Diet who voted for the death-penalty at the trial of the Poles implicated in the Decembrist rising of 1825. More than that, when the students of the University at Warsaw deserted their lecture-rooms *en masse* to attend the funeral of the patriotic Bielinski in the folio-wing year, Zygmunt Krasinski was forbidden by his father to join them, and peremptorily ordered to go to his work. This invidious isolation blasted Zygmunt's youth and affected his whole career. He had to be removed from the University, was sent with a tutor to Geneva in 1829, and never saw Poland again save as a conquered province of Russia. His father transferred his allegiance to Nicholas I, migrated to St. Petersburg, was held in high honour by the Tsar and execrated by his fellow-countrymen. Later on he effectually thwarted Zygmunt's desire to

join in the rising of 1830, and by his persistence forced him into a reluctant *mariage de convenance*. Zygmunt Krasinski was undoubtedly in a painful position, for he could not openly declare himself without still further compromising his father's position. He hated his father's policy, but he loved the man who had trained him to love his country, and, above all, he feared him. It was a new and tragic variant on *odi et amo*, which drove Zygmunt Krasinski into a strange life of compromise, evasion, and sacrifice. To put it brutally, he was not a fighting man; so far as action went, he feared his father more than he loved his country, and there was a sting of truth in the bitter taunt addressed to him by his brother-poet Slowacki: 'Thou wert afraid, son of a noble.' He was often conscious of his weakness as when he wrote to Henry Reeve in 1830: 'I am a fool, I am a coward, I am a wretched being, I have the heart of a girl, I do not dare to brave a father's curse.' But it is right to remember that he was physically a weakling, tormented by ill-health, neurotic, and half-blind from his nineteenth year. Torn in two by the conflict between filial duty and the desire to serve his country, always dreading the worst for himself, never free from the apprehension that he would end his days in Siberia, he took refuge in anonymity as the only means of salving his conscience and sparing his father. The curious and self-protective devices by which he secured secrecy were sometimes more ingenious than dignified. Some of his works were put forth under the names or initials of his friends. The secret was most loyally kept, but others suffered. According to his biographer, his poems were penal contraband, and many of his countrymen were sent to Siberia for possessing them. What Krasinski sacrificed was fame, publicity, above all peace of mind. He envied those of his contemporaries who fought and died for their country. He was not a hero, and he knew it. The heroes of his poems and plays were always soldiers, men of action, and in his most original work, the extraordinary *Undivine Comedy*, he levelled the most damaging indictment against the self-centred egotism of the poet that has ever been penned by a man of letters. And the bitterness of the portrait is only heightened by the fact that it was largely inspired by self-criticism; his letters and his life afford only too frequent justification for the recurrent comment of the mocking spirit in the play on the melodramatic pose of the hero: 'Thou composest a drama.'

"*The Undivine Comedy*, a prose drama, though prompted by the events of 1830, makes no mention of Poland. It is a double tragedy in which the central figure, Henryk, after wrecking his home life by his egotism, assumes the leadership of his class, aristocratic and decadent, against a communistic rising led by Pankracy, a Mephistopheles who is not sure of himself. Henryk goes down in the struggle, but his conqueror falls in the hour of triumph with the words 'Vicisti Galilae' on his lips. The scenes from the domestic tragedy are strangely moving: the sequel, in which the influence of *Faust* is obvious, is chiefly noteworthy for the flashes of prescience in which the *Walpurgisnacht* of brutal, revolting humanity fore-shadows with a strange clairvoyance the outstanding features of the democratic upheaval in Russia. But it is a drama of hopelessness: 'the cry of despair,' as Mickiewicz called it, 'of a man of genius who recognizes the greatness and difficulty of social questions' without being able to solve them. *The Undivine Comedy* is 'the drama of a perishing world': it was only in his later works that Krasinski's belief in the ultimate resurrection of Poland emerged. In *Iridion*, another prose drama, we have his first direct appeal to his nation, though it is cast in the form of an allegorical romance, in which the men and women are rather symbols than portraits. The hero is a Greek in Rome in the time of Heliogabalus, Rome standing for Russia. Beginning with this drama, and increasingly developed in his later poems, is to be found Krasinski's abiding conviction that Poland's salvation consists in the abjuring of vengeance – that the political redemption of the world would be achieved by her sufferings, as mankind was redeemed by the sufferings of Christ. The agony of Poland was not regarded by him as merited for any crimes in the past. She was an innocent victim, and the greater the wrong inflicted on her, the greater was the chance of her ultimate victory. In what was the darkest hour of his life, in 1846, when the Galician peasantry, incited by Austrian propagandists, rose and massacred the Polish nobles and Austria annexed Cracow, he wrote: 'That last span of earth torn from us by the fourth partition has more than anything else advanced our cause. Every wound inflicted

on something holy and good becomes a far deeper wound, by the reflection of the Divine Justice that rules history, on him who inflicted it.' And again: 'There was never a nation in such sublime circumstances, in such favourable conditions, who was so near, from the cross on which she hangs, to heaven whither she must ascend.' It will be readily understood that this panegyric of suffering, coming from a man who had not fought for his country or suffered forfeiture of his wealth, did not appeal to all Polish patriots. The gospel of pardon and the acceptance of pain revolted men like Kamiński and Słowacki, who resented the tone of the Psalms of the Future, in which Krasinski's distrust of democratic propaganda found impassioned utterance. His appeal to his countrymen to adopt the watchword of love and not that of terrorism was ineffective; but the catastrophe of 1846, though it shattered his health, did not shatter his belief that Poland's resurrection depended on each Pole's personal purity of heart and deed. His last national poems are prayers for goodwill. In 'Resurrecturis' his answer to the eternal mystery of undeserved pain is that the 'quiet might of sacrifice' was 'the only power in the world which could crush Poland's crushing fate,' As the late Professor Morfill well said of him, Krasinski 'always stood by the open grave of his country,' and the somewhat cloudy mysticism in which he found his chief consolation is too rarefied for robust minds. Yet his hope never wholly failed: the saying that he quoted to encourage his friend Soltan – '*speravit contra spem*: that is a great and holy word of the sacred Scriptures' – might stand for his motto; and a saying from one of his poems, as Miss Gardner not unjustly contends, might well be his epitaph: 'If you would mark him out by any sign, call him a Pole, for he loved Poland. In this love he lived and in it died.'

"Krasinski died in Paris, where he had also been born, in 1859, only outliving his father by three months, in which he was engaged on a memoir, never completed, in vindication of the memory of the man who had dominated his earthly existence. He had many devoted friends who advised and helped him, acted as his amanuenses, and, as we have seen, shielded him by assuming authorship of his works. In turn he was the generous friend of all Polish patriots in distress, whatever were their politics. Deeply susceptible from his boyhood, he was profoundly influenced by three women: Mme. Bobrowa, to whom he dedicated his *Undivine Comedy* and other works; the beautiful and unhappy Countess Delphina Potocka, immortalized by her friendship with Chopin, who both before and for several years after Krasinski's marriage was his Egeria, and to whom he inscribed a series of love lyrics and the mystical poem 'Dawn,' in which two exiles on the Lake of Como dream of the resurrection of their nation. The idealistic nature of Krasinski's love for Delphina Potocka, as compared with his infatuation for Mme. Bobrowa, is emphasized by his latest biographer. She was his Beatrice, and the figure of the woman he loved constantly merges in that of his eternal mistress, Poland. The third woman was his wife, Elżbieta Branicka, whom he married reluctantly, treated coldly for years, but came in the end to respect and love for her goodness and forbearance, repairing his neglect in the beautiful poems of repentance and gratitude addressed to her in the last years of his troubled life. Miss Gardner's translations, especially those from Krasinski's prose works, are done with spirit and no little skill. The difficulties of the poems are greater, but she has given us at any rate a good idea of their mystical eloquence. She has made excellent use of the already extensive literature on the subject, culminating in the complete edition of his works published in 1912, the year of Krasinski's centenary. And she has drawn freely from the remarkable letters written in French to Henry Reeve, whom he met in Geneva in 1830 – when Reeve was a romantic, enthusiastic youth 'with the face of a beautiful girl' – and corresponded with for several years. More than sixty years later these letters were handed over by Henry Reeve to Krasinski's grandson, and published in Paris in 1902 with a Preface by Dr. Kallenbach, of Lwow University, the chief authority on Krasinski."

PREFACE

The appearance of an English biography of the Polish patriot, Tadeusz Kościuszko, requires no justification. Kościuszko's name is prominent in the long roll-call of Polish men and women who

have shed their blood, sacrificed their happiness, and dedicated their lives to gain the liberation of Poland. We are now beholding what it was not given to them to see, the fruit of the seed they sowed – the restoration of their country to her place in the commonwealth of the world. It is therefore only fitting that at this moment we should recall the struggle of one of the noblest of Polish national heroes, whose newly risen country is the ally of England and America, and whose young compatriots fought with great gallantry by the side of British and American soldiers in the war that has effected the deliverance of Kościuszko's nation.

M. M. G.

CHAPTER I

THE YOUTH OF KOŚCIUSZKO

The great national uprisings of history have for the most part gone down to time identified with the figure of a people's hero: with some personality which may be said in a certain manner to epitomize and symbolize the character of a race. "I and my nation are one": thus Poland's greatest poet, Adam Mickiewicz, sums up the devotion that will not shrink before the highest tests of sacrifice for a native country. "My name is Million, because I love millions and for millions suffer torment." If to this patriotism oblivious of self may be added an unstained moral integrity, the magnetism of an extraordinary personal charm, the glamour of a romantic setting, we have the pure type of a national champion. Representative, therefore, in every sense is the man with whose name is immortally associated the struggle of the Polish nation for her life – Tadeusz Kościuszko.

Kościuszko was born on February 12, 1746, during Poland's long stagnation under her Saxon kings. The nation was exhausted by wars forced upon her by her alien sovereigns. Her territories were the passage for Prussian, Russian, and Austrian armies, traversing them at their will. With no natural boundaries to defend her, she was surrounded by the three most powerful states in Eastern Europe who were steadily working for her destruction. In part through her own impracticable constitution, but in greater measure from the deliberate machinations of her foreign enemies, whether carried on by secret intrigues or by the armed violence of superior force, Poland's political life was at a standstill, her parliament obstructed, her army reduced. Yet at the same time the undercurrent of a strong movement to regeneration was striving to make itself felt. Far-seeing men were busying themselves with problems of reform; voices were raised in warning against the perils by which the commonwealth was beset. New ideas were pouring in from France. Efforts were being made by devoted individuals, often at the cost of great personal self-sacrifice, to ameliorate the state of the peasantry, to raise the standard of education and of culture in the country. Under these conditions, in the last years of the independence of Poland, passed the childhood and youth of her future liberator.

Kościuszko came of a class for which we have no precise equivalent, that ranked as noble in a country where at that time the middle classes were unknown, and where the ordinary gentry, so long as they had nothing to do with trade, showed patents of nobility, irrespective of means and standing. His father, who held a post of notary in his Lithuanian district and who owned more than one somewhat modest estate, was universally respected for his upright character, which, together with his aptitude for affairs, caused his advice and assistance to be widely sought through the countryside. Kościuszko spent his boyhood in the tranquil, wholesome, out-of-door life of a remote spot in Lithuania. The home was the wooden one-storied dwelling with thatched, sloping roof and rustic veranda, in aspect resembling a sort of glorified cottage, that long after Kościuszko's day remained the type of a Polish country house. Kościuszko's upbringing was of the simplest and most salutary description. There was neither show nor luxury in his home. The family fortune had been left to his father in an embarrassed condition: his father's care and diligence had for the time saved it. The atmosphere that surrounded the young Kościuszko was that of domestic virtue, strict probity. He had before his eyes the example of the devoted married life of his parents. He went freely and intimately among the peasants on his father's property, and thus learnt the strong love for the people that dictated the laws he urged upon his country when he became her ruler.

Unpretending as was his father's household, its practice was the patriarchal hospitality that marked the manners of the Poland of a century and a half ago, as it does to-day. Friends and relations came and went, always welcome, whether expected or unbidden. We have a delicious letter from Kościuszko's mother, Tekla, to her husband on one of the numerous occasions when he was away from home on business, in which, fondly calling him "my heart, the most beloved little dear Ludwik

and benefactor of my life," she begs him to send her wine, for her house is filled with "perpetual guests," and will he try and procure her some fish, if there is any to be had, "because I am ashamed to have only barley bread on my table."¹ When accommodation failed in the overcrowded house, the men slept in the barn. In the day they hunted, shot, rode, or went off in parties, mushroom hunting. If to the pure and unspoiled influence of his home Kościuszko owes something at least of the moral rectitude and devotion to duty from which he never swerved, the country life of Lithuania, with its freedom and its strange charm, the life that he loved above all others, has probably a good deal to say to the simplicity of nature and the straightness of outlook that are such strongly marked characteristics in this son of the Lithuanian forests.

His early education was given him by his mother, a woman of remarkable force of character and practical capacity. Left a widow with four children under age, of whom Tadeusz was the youngest, she, with her clear head and untiring energy, managed several farms and skilfully conducted the highly complicated money matters of the family. Tadeusz's home schooling ended with his father's death when the child was twelve years old. He then attended the Jesuit college at the chief town in his district, Brześć. He was a diligent and clever boy who loved his book and who showed a good deal of talent for drawing. He left school with a sound classical training and with an early developed passion for his country. Already Timoleon was his favourite hero of antiquity because, so he told a friend fifty years later, "he was able to restore his nation's freedom, taking nothing for himself."

In 1763 the long and dreary reign of Augustus III, the last Saxon king of Poland, came to an end. Russian diplomacy, supported by Russian cannon, placed Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski, the lover of Catherine II, upon the Polish throne in 1764. The year following, Kościuszko, an unknown boy of nineteen years of age whose destiny was strangely to collide with that of the newly elected and last sovereign of independent Poland, was entered in the Corps of Cadets, otherwise called the Royal School, in Warsaw. Prince Adam Czartoryski, a leading member of the great family, so predominant then in Polish politics that it was given the name of "The Family" *par excellence*, frequently visited Lithuania, where he held high military command and possessed immense estates. Young Tadeusz attracted his interest, and it was through his influence that the boy was placed in an establishment of which he was the commandant and which, founded by the King, who was related to the Czartoryskis, was under immediate Royal patronage. Technically speaking, the school was not a military academy, but the education was largely military and the discipline was on military lines. Above all, it was a school for patriotism.

The admission of the candidate was in the nature of a semi-chivalrous and national function, bearing the stamp of the knightly and romantic traditions of Poland. On the first day Kościuszko was formally presented to the commandant, to the officers and to the brigade to which he was to belong. He embraced his new comrades, was initiated into the regulations and duties of the life before him and examined upon his capabilities. On the following day he gave in his promise to observe the rules, and with a good deal of ceremony was invested with the deep blue uniform of the cadet. But this was merely the probation of the "novice," as the aspirant was termed. A year's test followed, and then if judged worthy the youth received in the chapel his final enrolment. All his colleagues were present in full dress carrying their swords. High Mass was sung, which the "novice" heard kneeling and unarmed. The chaplain then laid before him his high obligation to his country; subsequently the proceedings were adjourned to the hall or square, where the brigadier proffered the neophyte's request for his sword. With the brigadier's hand on his left arm, on his right that of the sub-brigadier – the sub-brigadiers being the senior students – the candidate was put through a string of questions, reminiscent of those administered to a probationer taking the religious vows. One is typical: "Hast thou the sincere resolve always to use this weapon which thou art about to receive in defence of thy country and thy honour?" On the youth's reply, "I have no other resolve," arms were presented, drums

¹ T. Korzon, *Kościuszko*. Cracow, 1894; later edition, 1906 (Polish).

rolled, and the senior officer girded the new soldier with his sword, and placed his musket in his hand to the accompaniment of moral formulas. The young man then made a solemn promise not to disgrace his comrades by any crime or want of application to his duties. Led to his place in the ranks, he presented arms, each brigade marched away, led by its brigadier, and the day concluded with a festive evening.

The catechism that the cadet learnt by heart and repeated every Saturday to his sub-brigadier – it was written by Adam Czartoryski – was of the same patriotic description. Next to the love of God it placed the love of country. "Can the cadet fear or be a coward?" was one of its questions, with the response, "I know not how to answer, for both the word and the thing for which it stands are unknown to me." This was no mere ornamental flourish: for a dauntless courage is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the Polish race, whether of its sons or daughters. No opportunity was lost, even in the textbooks of the school, to impress upon the students' minds that above all their lives belonged to Poland. Let them apply themselves to history, said the foreword of an encyclopædia that Adam Czartoryski wrote expressly for them, so that they shall learn how to rule their own nation; to the study of law, that they may correct the errors of those lawgivers gone before them. "You who have found your country in this most lamentable condition must people her with citizens ardent for her glory, the increase of her internal strength, her reputation among foreigners, the reformation of what is most evil in her government. May you, the new seed, change the face of your country."

In this environment Kościuszko spent the most impressionable period of his youth. Early portraits show us the winning, eager, mobile young face before life moulded it into the rugged countenance of the Polish patriot, with its stern purpose and melancholy enthusiasm, that lives as the likeness of Tadeusz Kościuszko. Even as a cadet Kościuszko was distinguished not merely for his ability, but still more for his dogged perseverance and fidelity to duty. Tradition say that, determined to put in all the study that he could, he persuaded the night watchman to wake him on his way to light the staves at three in the morning by pulling a cord that Kościuszko tied to his left hand. His colleagues thought that his character in its firmness and resolution resembled that of Charles XII of Sweden, and nicknamed him "Swede." Truth and sincerity breathed in his every act and word. What he said he meant. What he professed he did. The strength that was in him was tempered by that peculiar sweetness which was native to him all his life, and which in later manhood drew men as by magic to his banners, even as in his school-days it won the respect and love of his young comrades. The esteem in which his fellow-cadets held him is illustrated by the fact that on an occasion when they were mortally offended by some slight put upon them at a ball in the town they chose Kościuszko as their spokesman to present their grievances to the King, who took a personal interest in the school. Something about the youth attracted the brilliant, highly cultured sovereign, the man who wavered according to the emotion or fear of the moment between the standpoint of a patriot or of a traitor. After that interview he often sent for Tadeusz; and when Kościuszko passed out of the school as one of its head scholars or officers, he was recommended to Stanislas Augustus as a recipient of what we should call a State travelling scholarship.

In 1768 Kościuszko's mother died, leaving her two daughters married, the eldest, spendthrift, and most beloved son out on his own, and Tadeusz still a cadet. With his mother's death Kościuszko's financial troubles began. For the greater part of his life he never knew what it was to have a sufficiency of means. His brother held the estate and apparently the control of the family money, that was no considerable sum and had in latter years diminished. Public affairs, moreover, were now assuming an aspect that threatened the very existence of Kościuszko's country. Catherine II's minister, Repnin, with Russian armies at his back, ruled the land. The Poles who stood forward in a last despairing attempt to deliver their country were removed by Russian troops to exile and Siberia. Then in 1768 rose under the Pułaski father and sons that gallant movement to save a nation's honour that is known as the Confederation of Bar. For four years the confederates fought in guerilla warfare all over Poland, in forest, marsh, hamlet, against the forces of Russia which held every town and fortress in the country.

These things were the last that Kościuszko saw of the old Republic of Poland. In the company of his friend Orłowski, who had been one of four cadets to receive the King's stipend, he departed from his country in 1769 or 1770 with the intention of pursuing his studies abroad.

Five years passed before Kościuszko saw his native land again. Very little is known to us of that stage of his history. It is certain that he studied in the school of engineering and artillery in Mézières and conceivably in the Ecole Militaire of Paris. He took private lessons in architecture from Perronet, and followed up his strong taste for drawing and painting. Sketches from his hand still remain, guarded as treasures in Polish national museums. French fortifications engaged his close attention, and by the time he left France he had acquired the skill in military engineering that saved a campaign in the New World and that defended Warsaw in the Old.

It is said that Kościuszko prolonged his absence abroad rather than return to see the enslavement of his country without being able to raise a hand in her defence. For in 1772 Russia, Austria, and Prussia signed an agreement to partition Poland between them, which, after a desperate resistance on the part of the Polish Diet, was carried out in 1775. Austria secured Galicia, Prussia a part of Great Poland and, with the exception of Thorn and Danzig, what has since been known as "Prussian" Poland, while to Russia fell the whole of Lithuania.

All this Kościuszko watched from afar in helpless rage and bitterness of soul. His peace of mind was further destroyed by his increasing financial difficulties. Little enough of his share of his father's fortune could have remained to him, and he was in debt. The Royal subsidy had ceased when the treasury was ruined by reason of the partition of Poland. Moreover, Stanislas Augustus was never a sure source on which to rely when it came to the question of keeping a promise or paying his dues. The greater part of Kościuszko's career is that of a man pitted against the weight of adverse circumstance. It was inevitable that he who threw in his lot with an unhappy country could have no easy passage through life. In this he resembles more than one of the national heroes of history; but unlike many another, he never reached the desired goal. His is the tragedy of a splendid and forlorn hope. Even apart from the story of his public service his life was dogged by disappointment and harassing care.

Somewhere in the year 1774 he at last returned home. A youth of twenty-eight, possessed of striking talent and freshly acquired science, he now, with his fiery patriotism and character as resolute as ardent, found himself in the country that he panted to serve condemned to inaction of the most galling description. The King who had been his patron was the tool of Catherine II and through her of Russia. Russian soldiers and officials overran even that part of Poland which still remained nominally independent, but of which they were virtual masters. There was no employment open to Kościuszko. A commission in the minute army that survived the partition was only to be had by purchase, and he had no money forthcoming. All that he could do was to retire into the country, while he devoted his energies to the thankless task of disentangling the finances that the elder brother, Józef Kościuszko, was squandering right and left in debts and dissipation. The relations between this riotous brother and Tadeusz, himself the most frugal and upright of youths, were so painful that the latter refused to remain in the old home that had not yet gone, as it did later, to Józef's creditors. He therefore in true Polish fashion took up his abode in the houses of different kinsfolk, often staying with his married sisters, and especially with that best beloved sister, Anna Estkowa. Between him and her there was always the bond of a most tender and intimate affection, to which their letters, still preserved in Polish archives, bear eloquent testimony.

At this time occurred the first love affair of the hero, who never married. Among the manor-houses that Kościuszko visited was that of Józef Sosnowski. He was Kościuszko's kinsman and had been his father's friend. Tadeusz was a constant guest at his house, giving lessons in drawing, mathematics, and history, his favourite subjects, to the daughters of the house by way of return for their father's hospitality. With one of these girls, Ludwika, Kościuszko fell in love. Various tender passages passed between them, without the knowledge of the parents but aided and abetted by the young people of the family, in an arbour in the garden. But another destiny was preparing for the

lady. The young and poor engineer's aspirations to her hand were not tolerated by the father whose ambition had already led him into dealings that throw no very creditable light on his patriotism, and that had Kościuszko known he would certainly never have frequented his house. Over the gaming tables Sosnowski had made a bargain with his opponent, a palatine of the Lubomirski family, in which it was arranged that the latter's son should marry Ludwika Sosnowska. Getting wind of the Kościuszko romance, he privately bade the girl's mother remove her from the scenes; and when one day Kościuszko arrived at the manor he found the ladies gone.

The bitter affront and the disappointment to his affections were accepted by Kościuszko with the silent dignity that belonged to his character; but they played their part in driving him out of Poland. Whether the story that Ludwika really fled to take refuge from the detested marriage imposed upon her in a convent, whence she was dragged by a ruse and forced to the bridal altar, as long afterwards she told Kościuszko, was a romantic invention of her own or an embroidery, after the fashion of her century, on some foundation of fact, it is impossible to say; but it is certain that through her unhappy married life she clung fondly to the memory of her first and young lover. So long after the rupture as fourteen years his name was a forbidden topic between herself and her mother, and at a critical moment in Kościuszko's career we shall find her stepping in to use her rank and position with Stanislas Augustus on his behalf.

With home, fortune, hopes of domestic happiness, all chance of serving his country, gone, Kościuszko determined to seek another sphere. He left Poland in the autumn of 1775.

Poverty constrained him to make the journey in the cheapest manner possible. He therefore went down the Vistula in a barge, one of the picturesque flat-bottomed craft that still ply on Poland's greatest river – the river which flows through two of her capitals and was, it is well said, partitioned with the land it waters from the Carpathians to the Baltic. On his way down the river he would, observes his chief Polish biographer, have seen for the first time, and not the last, the evidence before his eyes that his country lay conquered as his boat passed the Prussian cordon over waters that once were Polish. Thus he came down to the quaint old port of Danzig, with its stately old-world burgher palaces and heavily carved street doors, then still Poland's, but which Prussia was only biding her time to seize in a fresh dismemberment of Polish territory.

Dead silence surrounds the following six months of Kościuszko's life. Every probability points to the fact that he would have gone to Paris, where he had studied so long and where he had many friends and interests. The envoys from America were there on the mission of enlisting the help of France in the conflict of the States with Great Britain. We do not know whether Kościuszko became personally acquainted with any of them. At all events the air was full of the story of a young country striving for her independence; and it is not surprising that when next the figure of Kościuszko stands out clearly in the face of history it is as a volunteer offering his sword to the United States to fight in the cause of freedom.

CHAPTER II

THE FIGHT FOR AMERICAN FREEDOM

In the early summer of 1776 Kościuszko crossed the Atlantic on the journey to America that was then in the likeness of a pilgrimage to a wholly strange land. He found the country palpitating in the birth-throes of a nation rising to her own. Not only was she carrying on the contest with Great Britain by arms, but democratic resolutions, appeals for freedom for all men, were being read in the churches, proclaimed at every popular gathering. What a responsive chord all this struck in Kościuszko's heart we know from his subsequent history.

His best documented historian ruthlessly dismisses the story that the Pole presented himself to Washington with the one request that he might fight for American independence, and that in reply to Washington's query, "What can I do for you?" his terse reply was, "Try me." As a matter of fact he applied to the Board of War, and his first employment was in the old Quaker city of Philadelphia where, in company with another foreign engineer, a Frenchman, he was put to work fortifying the town against the British fleet's expected attack by the Delaware. These fortifications of his devising still remain. They gained for him his nomination by Congress as engineer in the service of the States and the rank of colonel.

After some months passed in Philadelphia, Kościuszko was taken over by Gates for the northern army, and sent to report upon the defences of Ticonderoga and Sugar Loaf Hill. Gates highly approved of his proposed suggestion of building a battery upon the summit of Sugar Loaf Hill; but at this moment Gates was relieved of his command, and Kościuszko's ideas were set aside for those of native Americans to whom his plan was an unheard-of innovation. The authorities soon saw their mistake. "For the love of God let Kościuszko return here," wrote Wilkinson when sent by the commander to inspect the work, "and as quickly as possible." But it was then too late. The English fleet was on Lake Champlain, and Kościuszko's design was vindicated by the British carrying it out themselves. He, meanwhile, was fortifying Van Schaick, with the result that the army of the States, retreating in disorder before Burgoyne, could retire on a safe position, Kościuszko's personal privations and discomforts were considerable. He did not so much as possess a blanket, and had perforce to sleep with Wilkinson under his. He was then sent on by Gates, who was again in command, to throw up fortifications in the defence of Saratoga.

With justifiable pride the Poles point to the part played by their national hero in the victory at Saratoga which won for America not only the campaign, but her recognition as an independent nation from Louis XVI. The Americans on their side freely acknowledged that Kościuszko's work turned the scale in their favour. Gates modestly diverted the flood of congratulations of which he was the recipient by the observation that "the hills and woods were the great strategists which a young Polish engineer knew how to select with skill for my camp"; and his official report to Congress states that "Colonel Kosciuszko chose and entrenched the position," Addressing the President of Congress at the end of the year 1777, Washington, speaking of the crying necessity of engineers for the army, adds: "I would take the liberty to mention that I have been well informed that the engineer in the northern army (Kosciuszko I think his name is) is a gentleman of science and merit."² The plan of the fortifications that saved Saratoga is preserved in Kościuszko's own hand among Gates's papers, and traces of them could as late as 1906 be still discerned among beds of vegetables.

That winter of the war – 1777-1778 – was famous for its length and its intolerable severity. The American soldiers suffered from all the miseries of hunger and cold and insufficient pay, Kościuszko, to whom the piercing rigour of the climate must have seemed as a familiar visitant from his northern

² Jared Sparks, *Writings of George Washington*. Boston, 1847.

Lithuanian home, was on the borders of Canada when he heard of the arrival in Trenton of a Pole, famous, as Kościuszko himself as yet was not, in the national records of Poland – Kazimierz Pułaski. With his father, brothers, and cousin, Pułaski had led the war of the Bar Confederation. He alone survived his family. His father died in prison, suspected by his confederates; his brothers fell in battle, or in their turn breathed their last in prison. Ignorant of fear and gaily risking all for his country, Kazimierz carried on the struggle without them. Pursued on all sides by the Russians, he performed almost incredible feats of doubling and unheard-of marches: leading his troops in the Ukrainian steppes, escaping to the Carpathians, reappearing in Great Poland, fighting on until the last doomed defence of Czenstochowa, after which he was seen no more in Poland. In Paris he met Benjamin Franklin and other envoys of the States, and, like Kościuszko, he set sail to fight for liberty in the New World.

At Christmas time in that bitter winter Kościuszko came out on furlough through the wild snowbound land to Trenton, impelled by desire to see the Pole whom he knew well by repute, and by the craving to hear news of his country from the first compatriot who had come across his path in the New World. They had not known each other in Poland, for Kościuszko had been a youth engaged in his studies at home and abroad while the Bar confederates were fighting; but for the love of Poland they met as brothers. Kościuszko stayed ten days with Pułaski and his Polish companion, entertained, despite their poverty, in true Polish style, and then returned to his quarters. Probably on the way to or from Trenton he turned aside to Valley Forge to make the acquaintance of Lafayette, who had come over to America with Pułaski, and it is possible that on this occasion he may have met Washington. He never saw Pułaski again, for, leading a headlong charge with the fiery impetus of the Polish knight of old, the leader of Bar fell at Savannah in October 1779.

The question of the defence of the Hudson was now being agitated. West Point, the so-called Gibraltar of the Hudson, was chosen for its commanding position on the heights above the river, and the work of fortifying it was finally conferred, over the head of the French engineer, Radière, upon Kościuszko. "Mr. Kosciuszko," wrote McDougall, the general now in command of the northern army, to Washington, Gates being employed at the Board of War, "is esteemed by those who have attended the works at West Point to have more practice than Colonel Radière, and his manner of treating the people is more acceptable than that of the latter; which induced General Parsons and Governor Clinton to desire the former may be continued at West Point."³ Washington acceded to McDougall's request and confirmed the appointment to the Pole, not only because he was the cleverer engineer, but especially, adds Washington, because "you say Kosciuszko is better adapted to the genius and temper of the people."⁴ A few months later Washington ordered Kościuszko to submit his plans to the approval of an inferior officer. Kościuszko, who never sought distinction or pushed his own claims, did not permit himself to resent what was, in fact, a slight; but quietly went forward in his own thorough and painstaking manner with the business entrusted to him.

Kościuszko's work at West Point was the longest and the most important of his undertakings in the United States, and is inseparably connected in the American mind with his name. Little is now left of his fortifications; but the monument raised in his honour by the American youth, with the inscription: "To the hero of two worlds" remains, a grateful tribute to his memory. That the military students of the United States can look back to West Point as their Alma Mater is in great measure Kościuszko's doing. When it was first resolved to found a training school in arms for the young men of the States, Kościuszko urged that it should be placed at West Point, and suggested the spot where it now stands.

Kościuszko was at West Point for two years. Here, if we do not accept the legends and conjectures of former meetings, he met Washington for the first time. He had two thousand five

³ Jared Sparks, *Writings of George Washington*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

hundred workmen under him, whom he treated with the courtesy and consideration that always distinguished his dealings with his fellow-men, whether his equals or subordinates. The story goes that with his own hands, assisted by his American workmen, he built himself some sort of cottage or shanty in the hope of one day receiving his own countrymen as his guests. One of his modern Polish biographers often heard in his youth a song purporting to be Kościuszko's composition, with the tradition that he had composed it to his guitar – he played both the guitar and the violin – on the arrival of Polish visitors.⁵ The doggerel, kindly little verses, express the hope that everything his compatriots see in his modest house will be as agreeable to them as their company is to their host, and inform them that he raised its walls with the purpose of welcoming them therein. It is a fact that, true to the Pole's passion for the soil, he laid out a little garden, still known as "Kościuszko's Garden," where he loved to spend his leisure hours, alone with his thoughts of Poland. Times were hard at West Point and provisions scanty. Washington himself could not sufficiently furnish his table, and Kościuszko naturally fared worse; but out of the pay that he could ill afford and from his own inadequate stores the Pole constantly sent provisions to the English prisoners, whose misery was extreme. It is said, indeed, that had it not been for Kościuszko's succour our prisoners would have died of want. Many years later a Pole, who collected the details of Kościuszko's American service, fell sick of fever in Australia. An English shopkeeper took him into his house and tended him as though he were his own – for the reason that he was a compatriot of the man who had saved the life of the Englishman's grandfather when the latter was a starving prisoner at West Point.

The West Point episode of Kościuszko's career came to its end in the summer of 1780, when he asked Washington to transfer him to the southern army. The motive of the request was that, without having given Kościuszko notice, Washington had removed a number of his workmen. The correspondence that passed between them was courteous but dry, Kościuszko avoiding acrimonious expressions, and simply stating that under the present conditions he could no longer carry on the work at West Point. The relations between the liberator of America and the champion of Poland's freedom were, indeed, never of the nature exacted by romance. They were confined to strict necessity, and held none of the affection that marked the intercourse of Gates and Nathaniel Greene with their Polish engineer. The precise reason of this is hard to fathom. It has been ascribed to Kościuszko's intimacy with Gates, Washington's adversary, or, again, to Kościuszko's extreme reserve – which latter conjecture, in view of the warm and enduring friendships that the hero of Poland won for himself in the New World, seems untenable.

Gates, now nominated to the command of the southern army, had at once requested that Kościuszko should be sent to him. "The perfect qualities of that Pole," he wrote to Jefferson, "are now properly appreciated at headquarters, and may incline other personages to putting obstacles against his joining us; but if he has once promised we can depend upon him."

Washington gave the required permission, to which Kościuszko replied from West Point on August 4th:

"The choice your Excellency was pleased to give me in your letter of yesterday is very kind; and, as the completion of the works at this place during this campaign, as circumstances are, will be impossible in my opinion, I prefer going to the southward to continuing here. I beg you to favour me with your orders, and a letter of recommendation to the Board of War, as I shall pass through Philadelphia. I shall wait on your Excellency to pay due respects in a few days."⁶

A French engineer took Kościuszko's place, and the latter had not long left when the treachery of the new commandant of West Point, Arnold, was disclosed by the capture of André. Before Kościuszko had time to reach the southern army his old friend Gates was defeated at Camden, and in consequence disgraced. Nathaniel Greene, after Washington the greatest general of the American

⁵ F. Rychlicki, *Tadeusz Kościuszko and the Partition of Poland*. Cracow, 1875 (Polish).

⁶ Jared Sparks, *Writings of George Washington*.

Revolution, was appointed his successor. While awaiting Greene's arrival to take up his command Kościuszko was for some time in Virginia among the planters. He thus saw the coloured slaves at close quarters, and was brought face to face with the horrors of the slave trade. It was probably then that, with his strong susceptibility to every form of human suffering, he learnt that profound sympathy for the American negro which, seventeen years later, dictated his parting testament to the New World.

Through the whole campaign of the Carolinas, the most brilliant and the most hardly won of the American War, Kościuszko was present. When Greene arrived he found himself at the head of an army that was starving. His troops had literally not enough clothing required for the sake of decency. He was without money, without resources. He resolved to retire upon the unknown Pedee river. Immediately upon his arrival he sent Kościuszko up the river with one guide to explore its reaches and to select a suitable spot for a camp of rest, charging him with as great celerity as he could compass. Kościuszko rapidly acquitted himself of a task that was no easy matter in that waste of forest and marsh. In the words of an American historian: "The surveying of the famous Kościuszko on the Pedee and Catawba had a great influence on the further course of the campaign." The campaign was carried on in a wild country of deep, roaring rivers, broken by falls, and often visited by sudden floods. The frequently impassable swamps breathed out poisonous exhalations. Rattle-snakes and other deadly reptiles lurked by the wayside. Great were the hardships that Kościuszko, together with the rest of the army, endured. There were no regular supplies of food, tents and blankets ran out, the soldiers waded waist-deep through rushing waters. Often invited to Greene's table, where the general entertained his officers with a kindness and cordiality that atoned for the poor fare which was all that he could offer them, Kościuszko was regarded with strong affection and admiration by a man who was himself worthy of the highest esteem. Kościuszko's office, after the survey of the river, was to build boats for the perilous transport of the army over the treacherous and turbulent streams of the district. Greene writes: "Kościuszko is employed in building flat-bottomed boats to be transported with the army if ever I shall be able to command the means of transporting them."⁷ The boats of Kościuszko's devising contributed to the saving of Greene's army in that wonderful retreat from Cornwallis, which is among the finest exploits of the War of Independence. Again his skill came prominently forward when Greene triumphantly passed the Dan with Cornwallis on his heels, and thus definitely threw off the British pursuit. Kościuszko was then despatched to fortify Halifax, but was soon recalled to assist in the siege of Ninety Six, a fort built with heavy stockades originally as a post of defence against the Red Indians. The night before the siege began Greene with Kościuszko surveyed the English works. It was dark and rainy, and they approached the enemy so close that they were challenged and fired at by the sentries. The mining operations that Kościuszko directed were of an almost insuperable difficulty, and his Virginian militiamen struck. By his persuasive and sympathetic language Kościuszko rallied them to the work; but finally Greene abandoned the siege.

When the campaign changed to guerilla warfare Kościuszko fought as a soldier, not as an engineer. At the battle of Eutaw Springs, where the licence of the American soldiers pillaging the British camp and murdering the prisoners lost Greene a decisive victory, we hear of Kościuszko as making desperate attempts to restrain a carnage which horrified his humane feelings, and personally saving the lives of fifty Englishmen. Peace and the defeat of Great Britain were in the air, but hostilities still dragged on, and Kościuszko fought through 1782 near Charleston with distinction. After the gallant Laurens had fallen, his post of managing the secret intelligence from Charleston passed to Kościuszko. "Kosciuszko's innumerable communications," says the grandson and biographer of Greene, "exhibit the industry and intelligence with which he discharged that service."⁸ Kościuszko possessed all the Polish daring and love of adventure. He would sally forth to carry off the English horses and cattle that were sent to pasture under guard, protected by English

⁷ William Johnson, *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathaniel Greene*. Charleston, 1822.

⁸ George Washington Greene, *Life of Nathaniel Greene*. New York, 1871.

guns from the fort. He succeeded in capturing horses, but the cattle were too closely protected. Or, accompanied by an American officer named Wilmot, he would cross the river to watch or harry the English on James' Island. One of these expeditions, when Kościuszko and his companion attacked a party of English woodcutters, has the distinction of being the last occasion on which blood was shed in the American War. They were surprised by an ambush, and Wilmot was killed. At length Charleston fell. On December 14, 1782, the American army entered the town in a triumphal procession, in which Kościuszko rode with his fellow-officers, greeted by the populace with flowers and fluttering kerchiefs and cries of "Welcome!" and "God bless you!" Greene's wife, a sprightly lady who kept the camp alive, had joined him outside Charleston. Her heart was set on celebrating the evacuation of Charleston by a ball, and, although her Quaker husband playfully complained that such things were not in his line, she had her way. The ball-room was decorated by Kościuszko, who adorned it with festoons of magnolia leaves and with flowers cunningly fashioned of paper.

Peace with England was now attained. Kościuszko had fought for six years in the American army. The testimony of the eminent soldier in whose close companionship he had served, whose hardships he had shared, whose warmest friendship he had won, that of Nathaniel Greene, best sums up what the Pole had done for America and what he had been to his brother-soldiers. "Colonel Kosciuszko belonged" – thus Greene – "to the number of my most useful and dearest comrades in arms. I can liken to nothing his zeal in the public service, and in the solution of important problems nothing could have been more helpful than his judgment, vigilance and diligence. In the execution of my recommendations in every department of the service he was always eager, capable, in one word impervious against every temptation to ease, unwearied by any labour, fearless of every danger. He was greatly distinguished for his unexampled modesty and entire unconsciousness that he had done anything unusual. He never manifested desires or claims for himself, and never let any opportunity pass of calling attention to and recommending the merits of others."⁹ All those who had been thrown together with him in the war speak in much the same manner. They notice his sweetness and uprightness of soul, his high-mindedness and delicate instincts, his careful thought for the men under his command. Even Harry Lee ("Light Horse Harry"), while carping at Kościuszko's talents, to the lack of which, with no justification, he ascribes Greene's failure before Ninety Six, renders tribute to his engaging qualities as a comrade and a man. But Kościuszko's services did not in the first instance receive the full recognition that might have been expected from the new Republic. He alone of all the superior officers of the Revolution received no promotion other than that given wholesale by Congress, and was forced to apply personally to Washington to rectify the omission. In language not too cordial, Washington presented his request to Congress, which conferred upon Kościuszko the rank of brigadier-general with the acknowledgment of its "high sense of his long, faithful and meritorious services." The recently founded patriotic Society of the Cincinnati, of which Washington was the first president, elected Kościuszko as an honoured member. Its broad blue and white ribbon carrying a golden eagle and a representation of Cincinnatus before the Roman Senate, with the inscription: "Omnia relinquit servare Rempublicam," is often to be seen in the portraits of Kościuszko, suspended on his breast.

Kościuszko was now a landowner of American soil, by virtue of the grant by Congress of so many acres to the officers who had fought in the war. Friendship, affluence, a tranquil life on his own property, that most alluring of prospects to a son of a race which loves Mother Earth with an intense attachment, lay before him in the New World. To him nothing was worth the Poland that he had left as an obscure and disappointed youth.

For all these years his heart had clung to the memory of his native land. On the rocks of West Point he had walked in solitude under the trees of his garden, and sat by the fountain which is still shown, yearning with an exile's home-sickness for his country. At times, probably very rarely in days

⁹ T. Korzon, *Kościuszko*.

of long and difficult transit and when communications for a fighting-line were doubly uncertain, letters crossed between Kościuszko and friends in far-off Poland. "Two years ago I had a letter from him," wrote Adam Czartoryski in 1778, as he requested Benjamin Franklin to ascertain what had become of the youth in whom he had been interested; "but from that time I have heard nothing of him."¹⁰ Some sort of correspondence was carried on by Tadeusz with a friend and neighbour of his in his old home, Julian Niemcewicz, the poet and future politician, later to be Kościuszko's companion in the Rising and his fellow-prisoner and exile. Niemcewicz, wrote the Princess Lubomirska who had been Ludwika Sosnowska, to Kościuszko in America, "has told me that you are alive, he gave me your letter to read, and I in my turn hasten to tell you through Julian that in my heart I am unalterably and till death yours."¹¹

This letter, the same in which the lady gives the remarkable account of her marriage to which we have already alluded, left Kościuszko cold. That chapter was entirely put away from him. The first and hopeless romance of his youth had naturally enough been driven off the field by stirring and strenuous action in a new hemisphere. Even had this not been the case, Kościuszko was of too high a moral mould to cherish a passion for a married woman. His relations with the other sex were always of the most delicate, most courteous and most chivalrous; but, admired and honoured by women as he invariably was, they in reality enter but little in his life.

Now that the war had ended Kościuszko only waited to wind up his affairs in America, and then he could keep away from his country no longer. He started for Europe in July 1784, landed in France, and by way of Paris reached Poland in the same year. From America he brought an enhanced attraction to the democratic ideas that were gaining vogue in Europe, and which had had a hold over him from his youth. Still more, he had seen with his own eyes the miracle of a national struggle.

He had fought and marched side by side with ragged, starving, undisciplined, unpaid men who had carried off the victory against a powerful nation and a regular army. With that memory burnt into his soul, ten years later he led a more desperate throw for a freedom to him incomparably dearer – his country's.

¹⁰ T. Korzon, *Kościuszko*.

¹¹ *op. cit.*

CHAPTER III

THE YEARS OF PEACE

When Kościuszko returned to his native land, that great wave of a nation's magnificent effort to save herself by internal reform, which culminated in the Constitution of the 3rd of May, was sweeping over Poland. Equality of civic rights, freedom of the peasant, a liberal form of government, political and social reforms of all descriptions, were the questions of the hour. The first Commission of Education to be established in Europe, the precursor of our modern Ministry of Education, that had been opened two years before Kościuszko left Poland, and on which sat Ignacy Potocki and Hugo Kołłontaj, both afterwards to be closely associated with Kościuszko in his war for national independence, was, founding schools, refounding universities, and raising the level of education all through the country. Roads were built, factories started, agriculture and trade given fresh impetus. A literary and artistic revival set in, warmly encouraged by Stanislas Augustus, who gathered painters, musicians, and poets around him in his brilliant court. All this was done by a dismembered nation upon whose further and complete destruction the three powers that had already partitioned her were resolved.

Coincident with these last days of Poland's political existence that hold the tragic glory of a setting sun is the one tranquil span of Kościuszko's life. His sister's husband had managed his affairs so generously and so well that his old home had been saved for him. Here Kościuszko for four years led the retired life which was most to his taste, that of a country farmer and landowner in a small way, his peace only disturbed by the financial worries handed on to him by his brother.

Soldierly simplicity was the note of Kościuszko's rustic country home. The living-room was set out with a plain old table, a few wooden seats and an ancient store cupboard. The furniture of the small sleeping apartment consisted of a bed and by its side a table on which lay Kościuszko's papers and books, conspicuous among the latter being the political writings of the great contemporary Polish reformers – Staszyc and Kołłontaj – which to the Pole of Kościuszko's temperament were bound to be fraught with burning interest. His coffee was served in a cup made by his own hand; the simple dishes and plates that composed his household stock were also his work, for the arts and crafts were always his favourite hobbies. An old cousin looked after the housekeeping. A coachman and manservant were the only other members of the family. There was a garden well stocked with fruit-trees that was the delight of Kościuszko's heart. On a hillock covered with hazels he laid out walks, put up arbours and arranged a maze that wound so craftily among the thicket that the visitor who entered it found no easy exit. The maze may still be seen, together with the avenue of trees that was planted by Kościuszko himself. His interest in his domain was unfailing. When far away from home, in the midst of his military preoccupations, while commanding in the Polish army, he wrote minute directions to his sister on the importation of fresh trees, the sowing of different grains on the farm.

Although Kościuszko was an ardent farmer, his farm brought him no great returns; and this by reason of the sacrifices that he made to his principles. As a Polish landowner he had many peasants working on his property. By the legislation of that day, common to several countries besides Poland, these peasants were to a great extent under his power, and were compelled to the *corvée*. Such a condition of things was intolerable to Kościuszko. The sufferings of his fellow-men, equal rights for all, were matters that ever touched him most nearly. Many others of his countrymen were earnestly setting their faces against this abuse of serfdom and, even before the measure was passed by law, as far as possible liberating the serfs on their estates. That at this time Kościuszko entirely freed some of his peasants appears certain. It was not then practicable to give full freedom to the remainder; but he reduced the forced labour of all the men on his property by one-half, and that of the women he abolished altogether. His personal loss was considerable. He was not a rich man. His stipend from

America, for one cause or another, never reached him, and thanks to his brother his private means were in so involved a condition that he had to summon his sister to his help and contract various loans and debts.

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