

EXPULSION OF POLES.

The Action of the Prussian Government Criticized.

During the past few months the civilized world has been startled by the harsh proceedings of the Prussian Government against inoffensive Polish citizens, whose only crime is that they happen not to have been born on Prussian soil and are of a race different from that of the iron-handed statesman who holds in his hands the destinies of the German empire. The 1st of October has been appointed as the day on which the last of these unfortunate Polish exiles must leave Prussian soil. The following article in the *Dziennik Ponianski* of the 30th of September, under the heading "The First Day of October," has been furnished us by Alexander Bednowski, Secretary of the Polish Society of California, and throws some light on the feelings of the expelled Poles. The paper says: "The 1st day of the ensuing month, which opens the sad and melancholy season of autumn, is becoming to us this time the saddest date in the present deplorable period of our national existence. With the 1st of October begins the term assigned for the involuntary pilgrimage, to which the blind policy that cares not for the consequences of its own acts, after having copied examples from the darkest epochs of human history, condemns over 30,000 of our Polish countrymen not possessing the rights of German citizenship.

"There is no need that we should speak out our feelings over it on this occasion. We say only this much, that if our sympathy with those who are affected by this decree of banishment is strong, deeper still and more painful is our feeling over the insult contained in these terrible proceedings against the life of our nation. In an age of enlightenment, civilization, progress of human and national ideas, to be degraded, for the only reason of being a nation and possessing a consciousness of our national existence, to the ranks of pariahs, Jews and gypsies—the tribes and races enjoying a sad privilege of being the object of persecution—is the height of all injuries, is a sting stuck by the enemy's hand into our hearts, the memory of which may never be lost, not even then when it shall cease to cause us pain immediately.

"The expulsion of our innocent countrymen is to-day an accomplished historical fact. It has written itself gloomily on the pages of history and has bought its way into the brotherly association of similar barbarities, whether borrowed from the practices of the Assyrian kings, of Diocletian, or a Philip III or Louis XIV. From to-day it will not be lawful for the German schoolmaster to teach his pupils to feel a just indignation at the expulsion of the Spanish Moors or at the proscription of the French Huguenots. From this day all such 'noble' deeds will receive their rehabilitation through the all-absorbing plea of State's reason. Not for the first time to-day do we take the liberty of reminding that ways and means of divine Providence are hidden; that it often permits the existence of errors and excesses of power to show us manifestly its worth in the world; that through thorny paths and gloomy darkness it leads the persecuted and proscribed ones into the bright light of day. Who knows but that there was need of a measure so glaring, so unjust and so painful even to the most indifferent hearts, in order to awaken the blunted consciences, to stir up the minds and cause them to reflect and give an answer to the question: What is it that these Poles are suffering so severely for? What is their guilt, their sin? And if they are really guilty, is not the penalty and penance dealt out by the persecuting hand too excessive and above all measure?

"In spite of the moral indifference of the world, we can say, with a full conviction of the truth of our assertion, that such a reflection over our present condition begins slowly to pave its way and to find a wider scope amidst the public opinion of Europe. As a proof of this assertion may serve the stand taken by the great majority of the German press in this matter and the attitude of the whole European press, with the exception of the organs, of which their own countrymen know well and even loudly proclaim 'that money has led their reason and hearts astray.' Perhaps it was necessary that the strong and brutal 'iron' should strike against the cold Russian flintstone in order to draw even from it a spark of sympathy for the injured, a spark of a Slav consciousness that has been aroused by this brutal insult.

"If it is true, as we are saying, that the height of an injury usually begins, by a natural revulsion, to call forth a reaction in the conscience of public opinion, then we may be allowed to say, further, that at all events our poor countrymen affected by this proscription do not suffer in vain, and that by the great sacrifice they make in person, family and property they are bringing the promise of a brighter future for the whole nation. Their present sacrifice shall not pass away, with God's help, without advantage to the nation's future. Expressing this conviction, and trusting to the decrees of merciful providence, visible in the history of mankind, ever measuring out its final justice, we would not be men, much less Poles, when affected by this historical prospect, should we not grieve in our hearts over what we look on, without endeavoring, according to our best means and abilities, to mitigate and to lessen this terrible blow that has been struck at the many thousands of our poor countrymen.

"Our hearts bleed at the sight of thousands of children, women, old men and cripples wandering away with a gloomy, sad and tearful train, pushed on by the hand of the 'higher civilization' toward an unknown future and an uncertain fate.

"We bid our unhappy countrymen farewell, with hearty wishes that the evil which afflicts them now may turn into good. We take leave of them with a strong and manly resolution to remember them further, to be mindful of the assistance we can give them still, and the help we are still able to afford them by defending their injured rights on the parliamentary platform.

"Farewell, then, you unhappy brethren, struck down by the iron hand of persecution, farewell; but God grant, not forever! The wrong inflicted on you was also inflicted on us, and what you are for us and we are to you, even those who have destroyed our political independence have themselves in the moment of honest and better inspiration (Congress of Vienna, 1815) publicly declared, saying: 'The monarchs who have decided over the fate of Poland acknowledge that this great family has been torn asunder by the concurrence of political events. But it is their will that the family tie of the Polish nation should still exist and be kept up under the three different Governments, Russia, Austria and Prussia, to whom they are now subjected.' 'God grant that this truth spoken of us, though not by ourselves, may remain a truth. In this conviction and in the hope of a better future, we say once more to our unhappy exiles, farewell till we see you again, which God grant us be very soon.'

By order of the Polish Society of California.

ALEXANDER BEDNOWSKI, Secretary.
No. 1235 Market street, San Francisco.