

DEATH OF A WARRIOR PRIEST.

There died at Lucerne, in Switzerland, in the last week of July a priest who came of one of the noble Polish families which for centuries has supplied the armies of Europe with fighting leaders—the class from which Sobieski, Poniatowski and Kosciusko sprang. His ancestors were feudal nobles, holding by feudal tenure vast wheat fields and pasture lands, which they cultivated with servile labor. When the Polish throne was vacated by death or successful insurrection the custom was that the vacancy could not be filled without a term of civil war. In these strifes the Ledochowskis took their part. Each generation witnessed the sacrifice of one or more of its members to the popular love of warfare. In the veins of the priest who has just died the blood of the born warrior flowed.

He did not show it as a young man. He went through the usual stages of the hierarchy of his church, and in 1866, when he was 44, he was Nuncio at Brussels. Thence he was translated to the archbishopric of Posen, and there his active life began. His archdiocese was within the Prussian dominions and the war between Bismarck and the church was just breaking out. The quarrel was over the schools. In the archdiocese of Posen the schools, which were called seminaries, were in the hands of the church. Bismarck's effort was to secularize them, as had been done in France and Spain. Ledochowski set himself like a rock against any change. He even went so far as to forbid the teaching of the German language in the Polish seminaries. As Posen is only a few miles east of Berlin this was throwing down the gauntlet with a vengeance. When the close of the French war gave the Chancellor time to attend to domestic affairs he summoned the recalcitrant priest to Berlin and bade him choose between submission to the Government or war. Without a moment's hesitation Ledochowski set the conqueror of Sedan at defiance. He was promptly punished. He was seized by Prussian soldiers, tried for high treason and imprisoned in the fortress of Ostroma.

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The man of blood and iron found that his prisoner was more formidable in his dungeon than he had been in his palace. Bismarck had hoped that captivity would weaken his spirit. But the haughty Pole was as unbending as ever, and he had sympathizers in many countries who began to clamor against the imprisonment of a prelate whose personal character was unassailable. After keeping him in jail for two years Bismarck let his prisoner go on condition that he would leave Poland.

Ledochowski departed for Rome, where he was received as a martyr. The Pope had created him a Cardinal while he was in his dungeon. He was now assigned chambers in the Vatican, from which he continued to foment hostility to the Prussian authority in Poland and relented not a whit in his implacable enmity to the Chancellor. In return the latter had him tried *par contumace* for each separate violation of German law, and sentences of fine and imprisonment were constantly pronounced against him. At these he mocked from the safe exclusion of his Italian chambers; each sentence was followed by a defiant epistle from the Cardinal. His triumph came when Bismarck fell. He promptly offered a cordial support to Von Caprivi and wrote to the Emperor assuring him of his profound loyalty to his person. William welcomed the olive branch. Baron von Bulow, German Minister to Rome, was directed to invite the Cardinal to an imperial luncheon, and thus the warrior priest closed his career in amity with his sovereign.