

EUROPE.

RUSSIA.

NOTES ON THE RUSSIAN ARMY.
Giurgevo, 1898.

By Lt. Col. C. R. O'Donnell, late of the 15th Hussars.

Whoever contemplates the present condition of the Russians, will be astonished at the rapid strides they have made towards civilization of late years, and the improvements that have evidently taken place in the organization of their forces. I did not exactly expect to find a horde of barbarians, though I was prepared to meet with a set of men not many degrees removed from that state;—deficient in mind, devoid of moral feeling, and destitute of all the nobler qualities of the heart; but I was mistaken. They have profited considerably by the experience they derived from the wars that arose out of the French Revolution; which wars, while they instructed them as soldiers, afforded them also an opportunity of visiting, and at the same time receiving some of the polish of the more civilized nations of the Continent.

The Russian is a tough material, and admirably calculated to bear the fatigues and hardships of war. With a fair complexion, resembling that of the English, and broad features, he is rather low in stature than otherwise, but stout-limbed and muscular. Endued with considerable bodily strength, and gifted with a constitution enabled to sustain the greatest privations and fatigue, the Muscovite soldier, loaded with heavy arms and appointments and a cumbersome kit upon his back, will march in the most intemperate season for days and nights together, with but a very trifling interval of repose; and, bivouacked in their customary and hardy manner, without tents and under a burning sun, with the thermometer at a-bore 105 deg. Fahrenheit during the day, and perhaps a cold, damp, chill, and heavy penetrating dew by night; subsisting, moreover, upon scanty food, of a very inferior quality; constantly exposed to all weathers, and subject to transitions the most trying to the human frame; he will remain comparatively unaffected or even inconvenienced by vicissitudes which to ordinary constitutions would be fatal.

The Russian is strongly attached to his religion; he is a thorough predestinarian, and at the same time very superstitious. He is submissive and patient; and although he may, from his state of vassalage, appear dull and stupid, he is naturally a cheerful being; fond of enjoyment, not altogether deficient in intelligence, nor unresponsive to enthusiastic excitement. It is evident from a degree of self-esteem and national pride which he possesses, that he considers his own country superior to any in the world. He is never guilty of desertion; and his readiness at all times to make the greatest sacrifices for his sovereign and his chief, evince the height of his devotion to them and the extent of his attachment to their interests.

It is impossible for a Russian soldier not to be brave; if he were even not so by nature, he must become so by the effect of discipline, which in the Russian army, is severe. He is taught to have a horror of cowardice; and courage, a striking characteristic with him, is not only upheld as a pre-eminent military virtue, but enjoined by the principles of his faith; he is persuaded that it is incumbent on him never to yield, but to keep up the contest until he insures victory, or until he meets death. Napoleon is reported to have said that "at Eylau he saw the Russians perform prodigies of valour—they were so many heroes."

With a steadfast belief in predestination, and an implicit obedience to orders, the Russian is, as it were, a complete machine. Careless and thoughtless of danger, he moves when he is told, and halts when he is commanded; nor will he, under the severest fire, retire, unless ordered to do so. Indeed, nothing can equal the steadiness and obstinacy of the Muscovite troops under such circumstances. It is quite surprising to see the perfect indifference with which they stand under a cannonade and the apathy with which they look at the balls and shells that fall around them. At the battle of the Moskva, when the Russian reserve with the imperial guards advanced to retake some redoubts, and to attack the centre of Napoleon's line, eighty pieces of French cannon suddenly opening out a most destructive fire, immediately averted and then overwhelmed their columns, which, not daring to advance and unwilling to retire, stood for two hours together in dense masses, while grape shot passed through them, and swept away whole platoons at a time. And it is positively asserted that, at the siege of Brailow, a considerable body of Russians, destined to storm the place, missed its way, and got into the ditch, where there was not the slightest vestige of a breach. In this situation they were nearly annihilated, nor would they, notwithstanding the mistake was evident, move until a peremptory order from the Grand Duke Michael was sent to recall them.

The coolness with which they give fire, and the firmness with which they meet and receive the charge of the enemy, are also distinguishing traits in the character of the Russian infantry soldiers; and in these respects they are probably better calculated to be opposed to the Turks, than any other troops in the world. In vain has the "proud Arab" boasted of the Spanish of the Russian squares; in vain has the impetuosity of the Moslem been exhausted against the steady firmness of the Muscovite ranks.

In the use of the bayonet, the Russian may be said to equal the British soldiers; it is a most formidable weapon in their hands; and provided there is no natural obstacle in their way, they will carry every thing with it before them, or meet death with the most determined obstinacy.

The Russian cavalry is very good, and acquired considerable renown in the Polish wars. The men, who, from their original habits, are indifferent groomers and horsemen in the first instance, are, notwithstanding, intelligent, and by system and discipline soon attain a proficiency in their duties, become attached to their animals, and eventually make tolerably skilful equestrians.

Well clothed, appointed, and mounted, the cavalry of the emperor approaches in excellence very near to that of the British, over which it has, in one instance, an advantage, owing to the natural hardness of the Russian horse. The dragoons at Giurgevo were mounted upon rather large, but, at the same time, active horses, showing blood as well as strength, and were furnished for the occasion with long lances, a weapon which inspired them with confidence, and gave terror to the Turks, who, when opposed to it, were often wary of coming to close quarters.

The artillery, a favourite arm with the Russians, is well horsed, well equipped and ap-

* Count de Segur.

pointed, and well served in the field. The long howitzer-gun, highly approved of, is in common use amongst them. The horse-artillery is particularly good; it is formed apparently after the model of the British, is rapid in its movements, and very complete in every respect. The troop at the camp was provided with fine, strong, well-bred chestnut horses, which were, (as well as those of the cavalry,) considering they had made a long march from the very heart of Russia, and the manner in which they were continually harassed, in excellent working condition.

The grade of Captain in the Russian army confers (as I have been informed) upon the individual bearing that commission, the privileges of nobility. The officers amongst whom are many foreigners of ability, I found a more respectable and enlightened body than they are generally represented to be. Those of the superior ranks, of the staff, of the cavalry, of the guards, and of the artillery, are, for the most part, men of some education, who besides the several dialects of the Slavonic, speak the French and German languages, and many of them even the English, with tolerable fluency. In the regiments of the line, there are still many officers who have probably been promoted from the ranks, in consequence of the preference given by the aristocracy to serve in the other branches of the profession; and these, perhaps, on account of the want of instruction among the people, from which class they have risen, are ignorant and untutored; but they are not so numerous as I expected to have found them. The officers of the Russian army are, in common with the privates, brave, patient, and hardy; they are indulgent and considerate to their men with whose temper they are well acquainted; sociable and friendly towards each other; and kind and hospitable to strangers.

The attainment of distinctions and honours, (an incentive to heroic deeds, and an object of solicitude to all military men,) is a peculiar consideration with the Russian officers. Swords of merit are given for good conduct in the field; and the performance of certain services before an enemy substantiates a claim to particular medals; thus, impartiality in the distribution of such rewards and decorations reflects great credit upon the government; and the approbation and liberality of the emperor are in consequence sought for and esteemed with an enthusiasm that is scarcely to be imagined. Sir Robert Wilson mentions an instance illustrative of this feeling in a young lieutenant of hussars, who was shot by a cannon ball, in a charge near Pappenheim; his leg being shattered, a friend was lamenting his misfortune—"Yes, indeed," replied he with a sigh, "it is very great; for had I been wounded but a few paces farther on, I should have gained the order of St. George."

Green is the national colour of the Russians; and the dress both of officers and men is now simple and soldier-like;—that of the former is free from unnecessary ornament, and not expensive; and that of the latter, coarse in point of materials, but serviceable. The pay of all classes is very inconsiderable.

But the Cossaks,* who have of late acquired so high a military reputation, and who form the irregular part of the Russian army, excited most my curiosity and interest. These inhabitants of certain steppes or plains, chiefly on the borders of the Russian empire, are easily distinguished as a race possessing a degree of constitutional liberty and independence, accustomed to dwell remote, as it were, from civilization, in vast and desert districts; and habituated to constant warfare of some sort or other. They are governed partly by their own laws, and enjoy peculiar privileges and exemptions in consideration of military services, which they are obliged to render to the state, when called upon. At such times they appear fully equipped and mounted at their own expense; but obtain from government a trifling maintenance, in common with the other Russian soldiers, during the period of actual service. At the termination of the war, or when their assistance is no longer necessary, they return to their homes, and, from being the ruthless Scythian and devastating invader, the Cossak becomes the unoffending, honest and hospitable inhabitant, and again resumes his various occupations in agriculture and commerce.

There are several tribes or denominations of this species of force; such for instance, as the Cossaks of the Bug, of Tschuguev, of the Don, of Tchernomorsk, formerly the Zaporogian Cossaks, the Uralian, formerly the Yaik Cossaks, and the Calmucks of Sawropol; and each tribe is governed by its respective Attaman or Commander-in-chief, and officers chosen from among themselves, who are obliged to pass regularly through the different gradations of military rank, from that of private. These different tribes were, it was calculated at the close of the late war with France, capable of bringing into the field an aggregate of no less than a hundred and seventeen thousand warriors. Thus it will be seen of what vast consequences they are to the Russian empire, and the necessity there exists for keeping up a good understanding with them and securing their allegiance.

It was not until the time of Catherine II. that attempts were made to organize the Cossaks. Both Prince Potemkin and Suvoroff were extremely attached to them, and beloved by them in return; the former more particularly, is reported to have taken considerable pains to improve their condition as soldiers; he formed them into regiments, subjected them to discipline, and employed them with great effect in their true character of foragers and light troops, for which they seem peculiarly well adapted. Since that period they have undergone other partial changes in their organization, though they have not yet been brought to act with any degree of regularity.

Under their Attaman-Platoff, it is well remembered what wonders they achieved, and of what infinite utility the Cossaks were to the Russians during the recent continental wars, in covering the front of their army, masking its movements, protecting its flanks, and securing its retreat; in reconnoitering and foraging; in hovering continually about the enemy, harassing him, and cutting off his supplies.

From the natural hardness of constitution both of the Cossaks and their horses, they are enabled to make exertions of an extraordinary nature; and by swimming rivers in the winter time, and making forced marches of considerable length, amid all the rigours of frost and snow, their sudden and unexpected appearance has often baffled the designs and efforts of their opponents. Not only have they performed all these duties, in which no troops equal them, with a perseverance and vigour that is scarcely credible, but they have been known even to charge infantry *en traitaille* in a wood; and in a general action to snatch the palm from the regular forces of Russia, by retrieving the fortune of the day. The losses they occasioned

* Bishop Heber compares his Rajpoot and Maharatta escorts with the Cossaks, and remarks, that Cossak is a common word for a predatory horseman all through northern and central India.

Napoleon in the fields of Poland and Russia, where they were the cause of constant annoyance, havoc, and slaughter, to the French troops, especially during the disastrous retreat from Moscow, can never be forgotten.

The Cossaks of the Don are the most numerous and important of all the tribes; and are distinguished from the rest by greater civilization and industry. Their capital is Novotchekassk, a neat town not far from the Don, near its entrance into the Sea of Asov. They breed great quantities of horses, cattle, and sheep; are cultivators of the vine; fond of agriculture in general; and can furnish a contingent of no fewer than eighty regiments for service from among them. Each regiment consists of five hundred men, having a standard and captain for every hundred, independent of junior officers, one of two field officers for the whole, according to circumstances, and a lieutenant-colonel, or colonel commandant, whose name the regiment bears. The two corps before Giurgevo were of this tribe; they had served in the war against France, and, together with their chiefs, Rykowsky and Demidoff, had distinguished themselves considerably.

The usual dress or uniform of the Don Cossak is a blue shell jacket, without buttons, but hooked down the front; loose trousers of the same colour, ornamented down the sides with a stripe of red cloth; and a cylindrical cap, or low forage cap. A short fur cloak, called a *burka*, made of a peculiar impenetrable skin, is either suspended from his shoulders or carried under each arm, and attached by a neck-line, sufficiently long to admit of their being discharged with an extended arm; a fire-lock slung across his back; a sabre at his side; and a long, twelve or fourteen foot pike, which is constantly in his hand. He is mounted upon a small, bony, and by no means Bucephalus-like, but certainly hardy, horse, which is guided by a single snaffle, and equipped with a simple wooden saddle-tree, of unusual height, furnished with a leather cushion strapped over it; this cushion forms not only the ordinary seat and pillow of the Cossak, but serves as a depository for his money and valuables. The horse much resembles, in shape and character, the common hack of the Irish peasant, and is urged by a severe whip, something like a flail, called a *hendsha*, which the rider, who does not wear spurs, generally carries with a loop over his wrist or across his shoulders. Thus dressed, equipped, and mounted, the sturdy warrior of the Don is, on the slightest alarm, instantly ready for the combat.

The Cossaks are an incongruous set, certainly! Some old fellows, with long, grey beards; some smart young lads; some almost in rags and patches of various shades; while others are in very decent attire. The one appointed to attend me as orderly, was a young man, by no means Cossak-like, according to the notions I had previously formed of these people. When he first came to me, I was struck by his civilized appearance and behaviour; for, uniting the respectful deportment of a soldier with an easy and almost elegance of manner, he said he was sent to wait upon me by order of his general, and had the honor of presenting himself to receive my commands. It is not to be understood that many of them are of this class; but I am told that some are people of great wealth in their own country, amassed chiefly by plunder in war; yet so great is their passion for that species of gain, that, notwithstanding their riches, they will even voluntarily leave their families and comfortable dwellings, and expose themselves, at an advanced age, to dangers, in quest of more.

Equally brave and hardy as the regular Russian soldier, they possess a sagacity and cunning which is not a characteristic of the former. It was observed, that in action, when the firing commenced, the detached Cossaks that were around us began to assume an alert, and to be alive to what was going on. They took their horses in hand; never remained quite stationary; kept a sharp look-out in the direction of the firing of the cannon, and watched the *ricochet* of the ball and the flight of the shell, so as to be in readiness to avoid them. They are endowed by their nature and habits with an instinct which peculiarly fits them for the duties of outposts; and for this service I suppose the Cossaks to be the best troops in the world. From an extraordinary tact in making reconnoissances through unexplored districts; they supply the defect or want of topographical maps; they excel as patroles, and are said to be capable of telling, with tolerable accuracy, merely by inspecting the ground, not only the number of horses that have passed over a tract, but even how many of them were led; and their faculties of sight and hearing are such, that they will, without artificial aid, discern objects at a considerable distance, and by applying their ears to the earth distinguish afar off the tread of feet, whether they are those of men or of horses, and thus discover the movements and designs of an enemy.

The confidence reposed in these troops is great; three or four of them are sometimes posted, for the purpose of observation, in an exposed situation on frontiers, bordering an enemy's country, where they will remain for weeks and months together without requiring any assistance; they will manage, by some means or other, to subsist themselves and their horses, and may be depended upon for the most exact information. At Giurgevo the whole duty of the advanced posts was intrusted to their care, and performed by two hundred and fifty men, and so great was their patience and vigilance, that nothing escaped their observation, and not a Turk could stir outside the fortress without their immediate knowledge.

The Cossaks generally act independently under their own officers, in single combat they are expert; and, in the swarm, attack fearfully. Occasionally they move in line; but being accustomed to desultory warfare, they have an aversion to discipline and system. The moment an alarm is given, the two or three that can first get ready instantly fall forth from the bivouac; these are followed by six or eight; these again by more; and lastly comes the reserve, or main body, in perhaps greater order. In their regular attacks, they are sometimes in one and sometimes in two ranks, according to their strength; they advance with a most terrific yell, the form of a semi-circle, having, the centre retired, the greater number fly off and beat the flanks and rear of the enemy, while a small portion, frequently supported by a reserve, attack to the front; but what perhaps renders them most formidable, is the extraordinary facility with which they disperse, and instantly collect again in a *Polk*, or body, upon any particular part of the enemy's line. However for the most part, they pay little attention to regularity; so that, after a charge, having no trumpets or sounds to assemble them and as they do not always take out their standards, their captains are obliged, by dint of hallooing, or in the best manner they can, to collect their *Polk*.

With the pike, which is in their hands from infancy, they are particularly adroit. They do

not in general use it as the lance, but couch it, and ride full gallop, like the knights of old, at their antagonists. The Turk justly fears this weapon—as, should it not kill, it inflicts a dreadful gash, and the unfortunate victim, when severely wounded or transpierced, has often been known to exclaim, "Ah, Cossak! Cossak!" and, by signs implore him to put an end to his miseries by an effectual thrust.

Having overcome his adversary, the next thing the Cossak does is to seize upon his arms which, with the Turks, are highly ornamented and valuable—his turban and sash, sometimes Cachemere shawls, of great worth—and his purse; and, if he is not killed or badly wounded, the victor then places the unfortunate man behind him upon the very cantel of the saddle, grasps him by both hands, and gallops off with him to the rear.

That they are marauders, and that they are also rather merciless at times, is true. An attempt was lately made to induce them to give up for the general good the plunder they took in action. This, however, had not the desired effect; for it was then found that the prisoners were invariably killed; so that as the services of these troops were so essential to the army, it became necessary to sanction their practices; but to prevent atrocities, the Emperor Nicholas issued a very humane order, by which the Cossak or soldier received one ducat for every prisoner mounted.

The encampments of the Cossaks display the same want of regularity which is observable in their movements. In front of their bivouac before Giurgevo, a high stage was erected upon four poles, as is common with them in their own country, and similar to those met with at several of the post stations in Wallachia. From this a constant look-out was kept; and in rear of it, without the slightest regard to order, were scattered the huts, both of the officers and men; before, and about which, were pitched their horses, most of them ready saddled. These huts, were made in the rudest manner imaginable; indeed, sometimes, three poles or poles, with branches and hay, or perhaps their *burkas* thrown over them, formed a dwelling. Whether mounted or not, the collar rein of his horse is often placed in the girth of the Cossak, who is consequently enabled to lie down in his hut without being disengaged from the animal; so that a stranger seeing a horse feeding over what is apparently a haycock, would little suspect it at first to be the habitation of a human being, until perhaps a long pike protruding from it, and a pair of feet sticking out from beneath, might suggest to him that such was in reality the abode of the modern Scythian.

The armies of the Emperor, from the comparatively striking expense of the Russian soldier in the field, and the vast extent and resources of the empire, are composed of enormous masses. They are also accompanied by a large proportion of artillery; and, from their being accustomed to carry on war in countries incapable of furnishing the necessary supplies, by a considerable train of waggons, and other vehicles.

The staff is well regulated, and the general officers throughout the service are proportionably more numerous than with most nations. The medical establishment, although, when possible, every care is taken of the sick or wounded, and the commissariat, are not perhaps quite so efficient as the other departments.

The Russian troops exercise and go through their evolutions with precision, though not perhaps with great rapidity. But it has been observed, that in science and skilful combinations—in difficult retreats—in dexterity and mobility, so essential to the versatility of manoeuvre, and to the ready and timely application of bodies in the moment of action—they have not yet attained to perfection. Their masses are powerful engines, and continue so as long as they are in order; but, like pieces of mechanism, when once broken, their unity of movement is lost, and they require time for repairs before they can be brought to act again with advantage. However, it must be confessed, that in these respects the Russians have benefitted in a considerable degree by the experience of late years—that they at this moment hold a high rank amongst the soldiers of Europe—and that they are still in a state of progressive improvement.

Within the period of little more than half a century, such national names as Roumiantoff, Suvoroff, Platoff, and Woronzoff, appear amongst the distinguished generals of the continent; and these have, in conjunction with other heroes, so raised the character of the Muscovite arms as to give to Russia a preponderance in the scale of nations which she never before enjoyed.

That power has now an emperor, young, active, ambitious, and beloved by his troops; and a magnificent army capable of any enterprise.

RUSSIAN ACCOUNT OF THE EXPEDITION OF CHIRZANOWSKI.

Russian Head-Quarters at Luckowo, May 17.

When the detachment of Count Pac, reinforced by the troops of General Romanoff, under the command of the Chief of the General Staff of the army of the insurgents Chirzanowski, amounting to 10 battalions and 16 squadrons, with 12 pieces of cannon, had passed the Wieprz, General Kreutz immediately gave orders to the detachment of General Thiernann to leave Kock and march towards Kamiouka. In fact the enemy occupied the first named place on the 6th of May, with a considerable force, and General Kreutz proceeded to concentrate his troops. On the 8th of May he proceeded towards Kamiouka, and ordered Gen. Faesi to send a reconnoissance towards Firley. In the wood his brigade fell in with the enemy, attacked him bravely, and succeeded in taking 100 prisoners; but it was soon surrounded by a large force of the insurgents, and by cavalry, which seemed to cut off its retreat, when General Dellingshausen, who was seeking a position near Kamiouka, with the few troops he had at hand immediately advanced to relieve it. General Faesi, as soon as he heard the cannon, made a charge with the bayonet, and succeeded in opening himself a passage through the enemy's troops, with some loss, and leaving the prisoners behind.—The Poles advanced in close columns against Kamiouka, but were forced by the Russian artillery to retreat into the forest, and during the night marched in the direction of Lubartow.

On the 9th General Kreutz attacked them in their position, and caused them considerable loss. After several attacks of cavalry and infantry, the insurgents, crushed by the fire of grape shot, entirely retreated.—The battalions which were posted in the village itself, and in the monastery, made a desperate resistance; but the houses taking fire, all those who had posted themselves in them, to resist the attacks of the brave conquerors perished in the flames.

Meantime a breach had been made in the wall of the monastery, and the troops that defended it were compelled by a fresh assault of General Dellingshausen, to lay down their arms.—The field of battle, which was covered with the killed and wounded, was completely abandoned by the enemy, who repassed Wieprz by a ford, and lost many men in the waves. The gun carriages, which were found on the bank with the powder waggons, show that the guns themselves had been thrown into the river.—In the course of the engagement six hundred prisoners, including eleven officers were taken. Gen. Kreutz estimates the loss of the enemy in the two days at about 3,000 and part of their troops was dispersed in the woods. After this defeat, the insurgents retreated towards Leuzna, and were closely pursued; but as the Russian infantry, which had made forced marches for three days, in order to reach the enemy, had need of rest, the Poles, who had returned to the left bank of the Wieprz, escaped by the rapidity of their movements, and reached Old Zamose, having marched more than twelve German (fifty-five English) miles in less than two days, constantly harassed by the Russian light cavalry, which several times attacked their rear guard, especially on the 11th of May, when Col. Cousnetoff, with the Atrakian regiment of Cossaks, caused them a great loss. Since these events, Gen. Kreutz has formed movable columns, for the purpose of scouring the woods and by-ways, to pick up the soldiers who had dispersed in all directions, in bands of 30 to 60 men, and many prisoners have already been brought in. The Russian loss in killed and wounded amounts to 400 men; the brigade of Faesi suffered the most during the brilliant attack, by which it disengaged itself from the superior numbers of the enemy.

Information having been received that the insurgents with their main force, intended to make some attempt against Siedlec, the Russian Commander-in-Chief immediately took measures to anticipate them by a rapid movement. On the 11th, in the evening, he advanced towards Jablonna, and the next morning proceeded with the troops there assembled against Kaluszyn; but the poles had already evacuated it. They made no stand, either in the wood, before the town, or in the intrenchments thrown up for its defence, from which, according to the unanimous exertions of the inhabitants and the prisoners, they had moved the guns the preceding day. They were pursued for some time, and made a show of resistance near Jendrzewo, where the ground was advantageous; but the fire of the artillery, which commanded their position, having caused them great loss, and the Russians charging with the bayonet, they gave way, and, passing Mink, they retreated to Dembe Wielkie. The Commander-in-Chief having convinced himself that all the masses had retreated, and that he had only to do with a rear guard suspended the pursuit, and withdrew his troops the next day to their positions. The Russians made 100 prisoners in this march, which, without fatiguing the troops, has again proved the superiority of their arms, and the resolution of the enemy to avoid a battle. The Russian loss is not 100 men killed and wounded. Gen. Grabbe, who led the van guard, has received a contusion, which has not obliged him to quit the ranks, to which he does so much honour by his talents and valour.—*Prussian State Gazette* May 25.

POLAND.

POLISH INDEPENDENCE.

Circular, addressed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at Warsaw to the Agents of the Polish Government in Foreign countries.

Recent military events having freed the capital and the whole of the right bank of the Vistula from the attack of the enemy, I deem it a duty to request you to use every possible effort to convey to the Government to which you are accredited the wishes of the Polish nation. It is a received principle in Europe, that the independent existence of every country is founded on those rights which have once been recognized, as well as in the formation of a domestic force capable of protecting and maintaining it. When the question of right is co-existent with that of fact, both yield to each other reciprocal support. The former existence of Poland, her relation with other States, are sufficiently known, nor can the three partitioning powers question their historical accuracy, for they must retain a recollection of the intimate relations which Poland formerly maintained with them, of the services that she rendered them, or of the reverses which she forced them to endure.

If then, we consult the history of our country, or that of Europe, it will be seen that the right of the Poles to a national and independent existence is incontestable. It is true, that at the close of the last century the three partitioning Powers, after having confederated for our ruin, destroyed that independence; but that act has been designated throughout the world as spoliation and political crime; that act could never annihilate ancient rights nor create new ones. Thus, even after the success of one conspiracy of the three courts, the voice of Europe, in raising itself in favour of the rights of Poland, proclaimed them to be prescriptive; but although they preserved their full vigour, they could no longer be exercised in the political world, invested with their external attributes.

Recent events have changed this state of things. An insurrection, distinguished for its energy, and exemption from every excess, has severed the bonds which connected Poland with Russia. The kingdom is now subject only to a national Government, unanimously chosen by a Diet, the members of which, it is worthy of remark, were all elected under the Russian Government. That Diet has instructed the public affairs to persons the most eminent both for birth and popularity, and whose political career affords the best guarantee to Europe. The Diet has thus secured in the strongest way possible those monarchical institutions which the two Chambers have declared are best suited to the wishes and wants of the nation. The National Government of the Kingdom encounters no opposition in the exercise of authority; its orders are executed with the utmost zeal, in every part of the kingdom unopposed by the enemy. The Polish troops, the armed representations of the opinions, and of the power of the nation, after three glorious but deadly conflicts, after having sustained dreadful losses, have again completed their full numbers.

Their confidence in their own resources has increased them, and that heroic army responds to the hopes that the National Government reposes in them. We are now independent in the strongest sense of the term, and the question of fact is no longer in opposition to the question of right. The dangers which may hereafter threaten us, and which to-morrow may threaten the liberty and the glory of other Powers in Europe, cannot in any respect alter our position, nor can they prevent us from proclaiming at this moment that we are independent. It is, therefore, admissible for us to claim from other Governments the recognition of our