

POLE AND CZECH IN  
SILESIA BY JAMES A. ROY

M.A. (late Captain R.G.A.) \* \* \*

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*April 21st.*

The Entente Commission has been christened, by the wits of the town, the "Ente Confusion" (Confusion of Ducks), but the fact remains that these same gentry would, if necessary, go a long distance out of their way to persuade us to remain, if they imagined for one moment that we were packing up our traps with a view to taking our departure. Our very ignorance of local conditions compels us to rely very largely on our own common sense. Our reliance on common sense is in itself a guarantee that we are unbiased; and to be unbiased goes a long way towards being trusted. The truth is that, if Teschen is not entirely essential to the welfare of the Commission, the Commission is, on the other hand, essential to the welfare of Teschen.

In theory, the main task of the Commission is to ensure that the conditions of the Treaty of Paris are carried out; in actual practice, it is to compose local differences between Czech and Pole. Both sides are mutually recriminatory, but difficulties are, for the most part, raised by the Czechs, who are not merely obstinate, but too frequently obstructionist. Their irritation is perhaps natural under the circumstances. The master mind on the Czech side is Colonel Snejdarek, a French

Colonial officer, who, besides commanding the Czech troops in the Teschen sector, has assumed administrative control within the occupied territory. Snejdarek is a strong man of outstanding ability who, through long dealing with Arabs and such gentry, has acquired a subtlety and resource in argument which is difficult to counter, and impossible to get the better of. He is a capable organizer, and impresses one as a good soldier, a man of decision, intelligence, and great force of character. He is attractive in manner and courteous in address, the type of man who, if he once gives his word, leaves one with the comfortable assurance that it will be carried out to the letter. Now, the Commission has a higher respect for his ability, admiration for his capacity has increased, but it has lost faith somewhat in its own powers of discernment. Snejdarek is, undoubtedly, a master mind, and whatever tune he chooses to pipe the others will dance to.

General Latinek is, in every way, a contrast to the Czech commander. He is a little man of middle age, who fails, somehow, to impress on a first interview. One might apply to him the epithet *gemütlich*—a word which has a friendly but not an entirely complimentary meaning. On further acquaintance one

“ And meanwhile, colonel, à votre santé.”

“ À votre santé,” said the colonel, raising his glass at the same time.

The tradition and training of the two commanders are as different as can be imagined. Snejdarek, the colonial, trained in and inured to the hardships of Arab warfare and the desert, accustomed to administer justice and maintain order with an iron hand ; Latinek, the Austrian soldier, trained in the school of Continental warfare, the diplomat, the courtier, the man of the world. If the latter fails to impress one as a man of the supreme ability of Snejdarek, the fact that he has been selected to command the Polish troops on the Silesian front is sufficient proof that he enjoys the confidence of his superiors. At the present moment he is handicapped, not merely from a tactical point of view, but by inadequate resources and insufficient reserves.

*April 25th.*

On the 20th, Coulson, Tarnowski, and Günther went on invitation to Cracow, where two days later Pindor and myself joined them. In the evening the whole party left for Warsaw on a semi-official visit. We were escorted to the station by Kurnikowski, who is shortly proceeding to America, and by Görski, who is