

THE COUNTRY THAT USED TO BE POLAND

(Specially written for the younger readers of "The Listener" by Cecil W. Lusty)

Boys and Girls who read the newspapers will understand why some of this article is no longer true. It was all true two or three weeks ago, but now the tenses of some sentences will have to be changed. I leave my readers to do that for themselves.

AS you will see from the photograph on this page the children of Poland don't look very different from the boys and girls of New Zealand. Most of you will have heard your mothers and fathers talking of Poland during the past few weeks, and though you may have found this country on your school maps, I don't suppose many of you have thought of the cities, rivers, and mountains there, or the ways in which its people live.

The river Vistula cuts Poland into halves, but adds to the beauty of the country. You may travel by fussy little paddle steamer from the city of Danzig on the Baltic Coast to Warsaw in the centre of Poland and thence, past abbeys and castles, to the ancient capital Cracow, the gateway to the Carpathian mountains.

Let us leave the Vistula at Warsaw, through which it flows, just as the Thames does through London. The first things we will see will be the palaces and churches that rise above the river. Warsaw has a population of over 1,250,000, nearly as many people as in the whole of New Zealand. Like London, it has a city within a city, that is, there is the small ancient town around which is built modern Warsaw.

How It Got Its Name

In early times Warsaw, which then really consisted only of a castle, was the capital of the Duchy of Mazovia, and remnants of the necessary fortifications in that period may still be seen. Little settlements gradually sprung up around the original castle, and so Warsaw was created. A popular Polish belief is that the city was named after two early Czech settlers, Vars and Sava. Thus the Polish pronunciation of Warsaw is "Varshava."

The ancient part of Warsaw consists, largely, of narrow, crooked streets, over

which lean quaint stone houses, very much like the pictures some of you may have seen of the Shambles in York, England. The fronts of the houses around the market place have been restored to their fourteenth century appearance and are decorated with coats of arms and paintings of little ships and animals.

Flowers On Lamp-Posts

Modern Warsaw, which extends over both sides of the Vistula, is a well laid-out city, with wide, clean, tree-flanked streets and imposing buildings. Poland likes to make its cities as beautiful as possible. The street lamp standards are decorated with flowers growing in baskets attached to the standards, and you may see a caretaker climbing a ladder and watering the plants. The city also



A typical group of Polish children broadcasting from a Warsaw playing area.

abounds in spacious parks, with lakes for boating and rowing. Delightful palaces, portions of which are open to the public on holidays, add to the charm of the parks.

Monuments To Famous Men

Everywhere you will find striking monuments to distinguished Poles, such as Copernicus, the astronomer, and Chopin, the composer. More palaces and churches, theatres, museums, and art galleries.—Warsaw is full of interest.

Polite People

Mingling with the smartly dressed people in the main streets you will see many peasant men and women, some in colourful costumes, who make their living by selling fruit and vegetables or embroidery work in the public squares. You will notice how polite the Poles are. The men take their hats right off to one another when meeting, and they greet the women-folk by lightly kissing their right hand. And when you take a taxi or a horse-drawn carriage, you will notice the many "please" and "thank you" expressions used by the drivers.

The Vistula, which is lined with wharves, jetties and small docks, is always a source of interest. Lighters towing long strings of barges pass up and down incessantly. Perhaps the most interesting craft are the timber rafts, which are taken as far as Danzig, on which the watermen live in quaint little straw huts. Many Polish songs have been written about these bargemen.

Same Games As You Play

Most businesses are found in Warsaw, and the manufactures range from toys to railway carriages. There are the same games and pastimes, in the main, as in New Zealand. Cricket, however, has a limited appeal, while, on account of the heavy snowfalls in the winter, football

Microphones On Playgrounds

As in New Zealand, there are special broadcast children's sessions, and the young folk are encouraged to visit the studios and become acquainted with reciting or singing before the microphone. Sometimes a radio commentator will pay a surprise visit, with portable microphone, to park or playing area, and invite the young people to describe, for broadcasting, their hobbies and impressions.

Christmas is, as with us, an eagerly awaited festive occasion, and Christmas Tree parties are held at the studios. A charming Polish legend is that on Christmas Eve all birds and animals can talk, and reference to this folk-lore is found in much of Poland's poetry.

Interesting Costumes

Peasant costumes are many and varied. In the country districts near Warsaw the women and girls are dressed in brilliantly coloured very full skirts of thick hand-woven woollen material, decorated blouses, and gaily embroidered boleros and shawls. The men in these regions wear striped knee breeches, short dark, tight-fitting jackets, and long white coats. In the Carpathian mountains it is the men alone who boast the beautiful embroidered costume, that of the women being quite plain. It seems strange at first to see men in embroidered trousers, yet their traditional dress is in keeping with romantic Poland.

For Your Entertainment:

MONDAY

- 1YA: 5 p.m. Coral Cave
- 2YA: 5 p.m. Ebor presents the third series of "Romance of Useful Plants"
- 4YZ: 5.30 p.m. Toyshop Tales

TUESDAY

- 2YA: 5 p.m. Programme from Isobel Halligan's studio
- 2YH and 4YZ: 5.30 p.m. David and Dawn and the Sea-Fairies

WEDNESDAY

- 2YA: 5 p.m. Play by Mr. Cousins and Company
- 4YA: 5 p.m. Travel Man
- 4YZ: 5.30 p.m. Robin Hood

THURSDAY

- 1YA: 5 p.m. Little Women
- 2YA: 5 p.m. Games Programme
- 2YH: 5.45 p.m. Coral Cave
- 3ZR: 5 p.m. David and Dawn
- 4YZ: 5.30 p.m. David and Dawn and the Sea-Fairies

FRIDAY

- 1YA: 5 p.m. David and Dawn
- 2YA: 5 p.m. Special session by Andy Man
- 4YA: 5 p.m. The Botany Club
- 4YZ: 5.30 p.m. Toyshop Tales

SATURDAY

- 2YA: 5 p.m. Programme from Mrs. Crawford's studio
- 2YH: 5.45 p.m. Westward Ho!
- The Friendly Road Children's Session: 12B, 6.30 p.m. Sundays

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