duke of Prussia did public homage to the Polish king in the market-place of Cracow. The secularization of Prussia was opposed by the more religious of Sigismund’s counsellors, and the king certainly exposed himself to considerable odium in the Catholic world; but taking all the circumstances into considera­tion, it was perhaps the shortest way out of a situation bristling with difficulties.

Personally a devout Catholic and opposed in principle to the spread of sectarianism in Poland, Sigismund was nevertheless too wise and just to permit the persecution of non-Catholics; and in Lithuania, where a fanatical Catholic minority of magnates dominated the senate, he resolutely upheld the rights of his Orthodox subjects. Thus he rewarded the Orthodox upstart, Prince Constantine Ortrogski, for his victory at Orsza by making him palatine of Troki, despite determined opposition from the Catholics; severely punished all disturbers of the worship of the Greek schismatics; protected the Jews in the country places, and insisted that the municipalities of the towns should be composed of an equal number of Catholics and Orthodox Greeks. By his tact, equity, and Christian charity, Sigismund endeared himself even to those who differed most from him, as witness the readiness of the Lithuanians to elect his infant son grand-duke of Lithuania in 1522, and to crown him in 1529.

After his sixtieth year there was a visible decline in the energy and capacity of Sigismund. To the outward eye his gigantic strength and herculean build lent him the appearance of health and vigour, but forty years of unintermittent toil and anxiety had told upon him, and during the last two-and-twenty years of his reign, by which time all his old self-chosen counsellors had died off, he apathetically resigned himself to the course of events without making any sustained effort to stem the rising tide of Protestantism and democracy. He had no sympathy with the new men and the new ideas, and the malcontents in Poland often insulted the aged king with impunity. Thus, at his last diet, held at Piotrkow in 1547, Lupa Podlodowski, the champion of the *szlachta,* openly threatened him with rebellion. Sigismund died on the ist of April 1548. By Bona he had five children—one son, Sigismund Augustus, who succeeded him, and four daughters, Isabella, who married John Zapolya, prince of Transylvania, Sophia, who married the duke of Brunswick, Catherine, who as the wife of John III. of Sweden became the mother of the Polish Vasas, and Ann, who subsequently wedded King Stephen Báthory.

See August Sokolowski, *History of Poland* (Pol.), vol. ii. (Vienna, 1904) ; Zygmurrt Celichowski, *Materials for the history of the reign of Sigismund the Old* (Pol.) (Posen, 1900); Adolf Pawinski, *The youthful years of Sigismund the Old* (Pol.) (Warsaw, 1893); Adam Darowski, *Bona Sforza* (1904). (R. N. B.)

**SIGISMUND II.** (1520-1572), king of Poland, the only son of Sigismund I., king of Poland, whom he succeeded in 1548, and Bona Sforza. At the very beginning of his reign he came into collision with the turbulent *szlachta* or gentry, who had already begun to oust the great families from power. The ostensible cause of their animosity to the king was his second marriage, secretly contracted before his accession, with the beautiful Lithuanian Calvinist, Barbara Radziwill, daughter of the famous Black Radziwill. But the Austrian court and Sigismund’s own mother, Queen Bona, seem to have been behind the movement, and so violent was the agitation at Sigismund’s first diet (31st of October 1548) that the deputies threatened to renounce their allegiance unless the king instantly repudiated Barbara. This he refused to do, and his moral courage united with no small political dexterity enabled him to win the day. By 1550, when he summoned his second diet, a reaction in his favour began, and the lingering petulance of the gentry was sternly rebuked by Kmita, the marshal of the diet, who openly accused them of attempting to diminish unduly the legislative prerogative' of the crown. The death of Barbara, five days after her coronation (7th of December 1550), under very distressing circumstances which led to an unproven suspicion that she had been poisoned by Queen Bona, compelled Sigismund to contract a third purely political union with the Austrian archduchess Catherine, the sister of Sigismund’s first wife Elizabeth, who had died within a twelvemonth of her marriage with him, while he was still only crown prince. The third bride was sickly and unsympathetic, and from her Sigismund soon lost all hope of progeny, to his despair, for being the last male of the Jagiellos in the direct line, the dynasty was threatened with extinction. He sought to remedy the evil by *liaisons* with two of the most beautiful of his countrywomen, Barbara Gizanka and Anna Zajanczkowska, the diet undertaking to legitimatize and acknowledge as his successor any heir male who might be bom to him; but their complacency was in vain, for the king died childless. This matter of the king’s marriage was of great political importance, the Protestants and the Catholics being equally interested in the issue. Had he not been so good a Catholic Sigismund might well have imitated the example of Henry VIII. by pleading that his detested third wife was the sister of his first and consequently the union was un- canonical. The Polish Protestants hoped that he would take this course and thus bring about a breach with Rome at the very crisis of the confessional struggle in Poland, while the Habsburgs, who coveted the Polish throne, raised every obstacle to the childless king’s remarriage. Not till Queen Catherine’s death on the 28th of February 1572 were Sigismund’s hands free, but he followed her to the grave less than six months afterwards. Sigismund’s reign was a period of internal turmoil and external expansion. He saw the invasion of Poland by the Reformation, and the democratic upheaval which placed all political power in the hands of the *szlachta;* he saw the collapse of the ancient order of the Knights of the Sword in the north (which led to the acquisition of Livonia by the republic) and the consolidation of the Turkish power in the south. Throughout this perilous transitional period Sigismund’s was the hand which successfully steered the ship of state amidst all the whirlpools that constantly threatened to engulf it. A far less imposing figure than his father, the elegant and refined Sigismund II. was nevertheless an even greater statesman than the stem and majestic Sigismund I. Tenacity and patience, the characteristics of all the Jagiellos, he possessed in a high degree, and he added to them a supple dexterity and a diplomatic finesse which he may have inherited from his Italian mother. Certainly no other Polish king so thoroughly understood the nature of the ingredients of that witch’s caldron, the Polish diet, as he did. Both the Austrian ambassadors and the papal legates testify to the care with which he controlled "this nation so difficult to lead.” Every­thing went as he wished, they said, because he seemed to know everything beforehand. He managed to get more money than his father could ever get, and at one of his diets won the hearts of the whole assembly by unexpectedly appearing before them in the simple grey coat of a Masovian squire. Like his father, a pro-Austrian by conviction, he contrived even in this respect to carry the Polish nation, always so distrustful of the Germans, entirely along with him, thereby avoiding all serious complica­tions with the ever dangerous Turk. Only a statesman of genius could have mediated for twenty years, as he did, between the church and the schismatics without alienating the sympathies of either. But the most striking memorial of his greatness was the union of Lublin, which finally made of Poland and Lithuania one body politic, and put an end to the jealousies and discords of centuries (see Poland, *History).* The merit of this crowning achievement belongs to Sigismund alone; but for him it would have been impossible. Sigismund II. died at his beloved Kny- szyne on the 6th of July 1572, in his fifty-second year.

See Ludwik Finkel, *Characteristics of Sigismund Augustus* (Pol.) (Lemberg, 1888); *Letters to Nicholas Radziwill* (Pol.) (Wilna, 1842); *Geheime Briefe an Hozyus, Gesandten am Hofe des Kaisers Karl* V. (Wadowice, 1850); Adam Darowski, *Bona Sforza* (Pol.) (Rome, 1904). (R. N. B.)

**SIGISMUND III.** (1566-1632), king of Poland and Sweden, son of John III., king of Sweden, and Catherine Jagiellonika, sister of Sigismund II., king of Poland, thus uniting in his person the royal lines of Vasa and Jagiello. Educated as a Catholic by his mother, he was on the death of Stephen Báthory elected king of Poland (August 19, 1587) chiefly through the efforts of the Polish chancellor, Jan Zamoyski, and of his own aunt, Anne, queen-dowager of Poland, who lent the chancellor 100,000 gulden