

**THE ARGONAUTS.
TRANSLATED FROM
THE POLISH.
[NEW YORK - 1901]**

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The Argonauts. Translated from the Polish. [New York - 1901] by Eliza Orzeszko & Jeremiah Curtin

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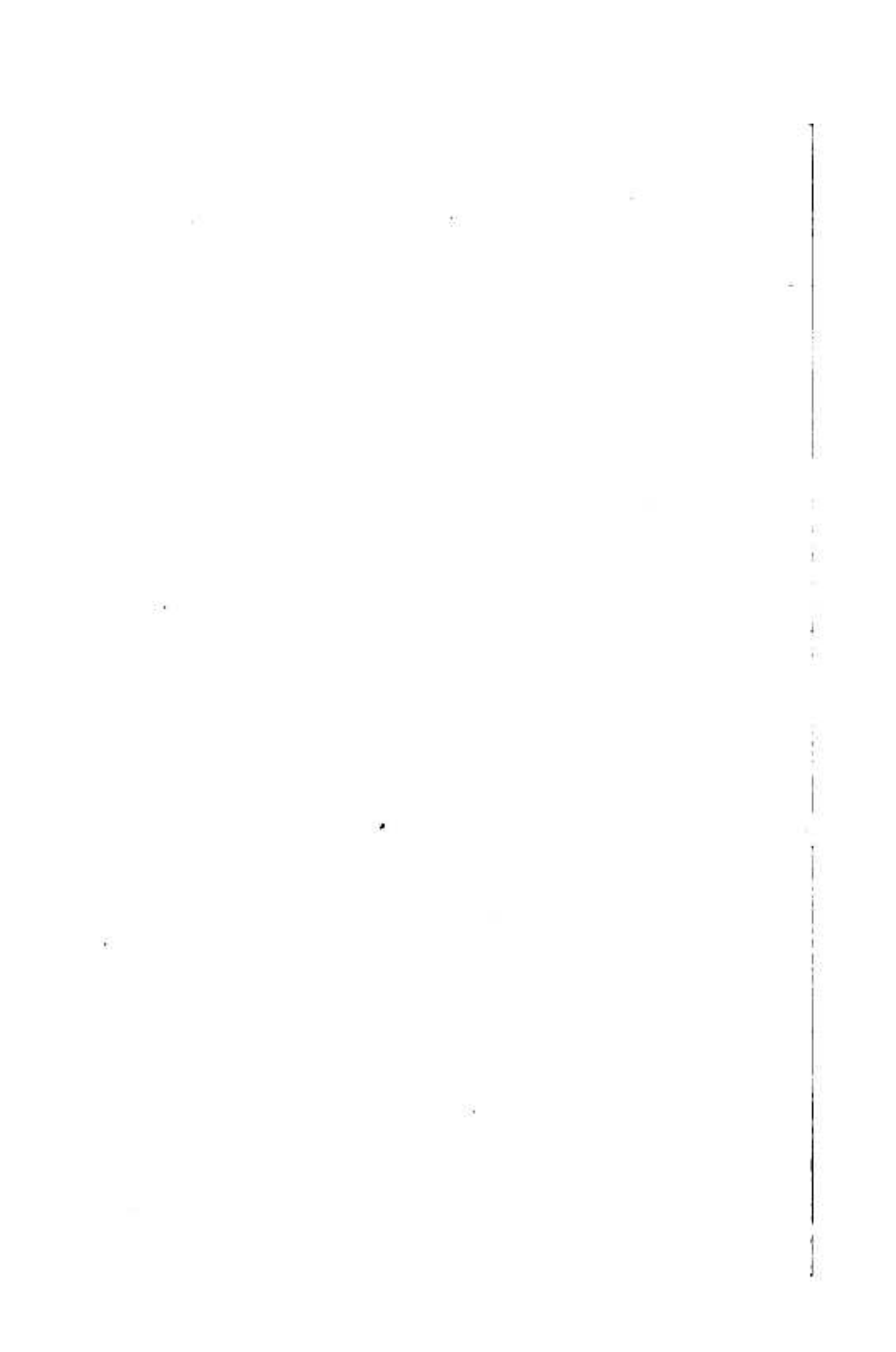
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ELIZA ORZESZKO & JEREMIAH CURTIN

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BY

ELIZA ORZESZKO

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JEREMIAH CURTIN

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INTRODUCTORY

Eliza Orzeszko, the authoress of "The Argonauts," is the greatest female writer and thinker in the Slav world at present. There are keen and good critics, just judges of thought and style, who pronounce her the first literary artist among the women of Europe.

These critics are not Western Europeans, for Western Europe has no means yet of appreciating this gifted woman. No doubt it will have these means after a time in the form of adequate translations. Meanwhile I repeat that she is the greatest authoress among all the Slav peoples. She is a person of rare intellectual distinction, an observer of exquisite perception in studying men and women, and the difficulties with which they have to struggle.

Who are the Slavs among whom Eliza Orzeszko stands thus distinguished?

The Slavs form a very large majority of the people in Austria-Hungary, an immense majority in European Turkey, and an overwhelming majority in the Russian Empire; they are besides an unyielding, though repressed, majority in that part of Prussian territory known as Posen in German, and Poznan in Polish.

The Slav race occupies an immense region extending from Prussia, Bohemia, and the Adriatic eastward to the Pacific Ocean. Its main divisions are the Russians, Poles, Bohemians (Chehs), Serbs, Bulgarians; its smaller divisions are the Slovaks, Wends, Slovinians, Croats, Montenegrins.

These all have literature in some form, literature which in respect to the world outside is famous, well known, little known, or unknown.

The Slavs have behind them a history dramatic to the utmost, varied, full of suffering, full also of heroism in endurance or valor.

The present time is momentous for all nations, the future is a tangled riddle; for the Slavs this seems true in a double measure. To involved social problems is added race opposition in the breasts of neighbors, a deep, sullen historic hostility. Hence when a writer of power appears among the Slavs, whether he takes up the past or the present, he has that at hand through which he compels the whole world to listen. Sienkiewicz has shown this, so has Tolstoy, so have Dostoyevski and Gogol.

The present volume gives in translation a book which should be widely read with much pleasure. The winning of money on an immense scale to the neglect of all other objects, to the neglect even of the nearest duties, is the sin of one Argonaut; the utter neglect of money and the proper means of living is the ruin of the other.

Darvid by "iron toil" laid the basis of a splendid structure, but went no farther; he had not the time, he had not the power, perhaps, to build thereon himself, and his wife, to whom he left the task, had not the character to do so. By neglect of duty Darvid is brought to madness; by neglect of money Kranitski is brought to be a parasite, and when he loses even that position he is supported by a servant.

The right use of wealth, the proper direction of labor, these are supreme questions in our time, and beyond all in America.

Friends have advised Madame Orzeszko to visit this coun-

try and study it; visit Chicago, the great business centre, the most active city on earth, and New York, the great money capital. If she comes she will see much to rouse thought. What will she see? That we know how to win money and give proper use to it? Whatever she sees, it will be something of value, that is undoubted; something that may be compared with European conditions, something to be compared with the story in this book.

Eliza Orzeszko writes because she cannot help writing; her works, contained in forty-odd volumes, touch on the most vital subjects in the world about her. She tells the truth precisely as she sees it. We may hope for much yet from the pen of this lady, who is still in the best years of her intellectual activity.

Madame Orzeszko was born a little more than fifty years ago in Lithuania, that part of the Commonwealth which produced Mickiewicz,¹ the great poet, and Kosciuszko² the hero.

JEREMIAH CURTIN.

BRISTOL, VT., U. S. A.,
September 12, 1901.

¹ Pronounced Mitskévitch; the e as ai in vain.

² Pronounced Kostsúshko; the u as oo in boot.