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AN UNKNOWN COMMEMORATIVE POEM WRITTEN
BY JULIAN URSYN NIEMCEWICZ IN 1783

A fascinating task for a historian of literature is to trace through European writing the reflection of the victory of John III (Sobieski) over the Turkish army at Vienna in 1683. An equally fascinating task is to discover to Polish literature all the numerous works written on the occasion of anniversaries of the Vienna victory.

On the centenary of the relief of Vienna the Polish poet and playwright, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, wrote two poems dedicated to this historic event. Until recently we knew only one of them, entitled "On the Day of Celebrating the Centenary of the Victory of King John at Vienna". The other one, "A Song on the Anniversary of the Victory Scored over the Turks by King John III of Poland at Vienna" had become forgotten, though it is known that it was sang to the tune composed by Izabela Czartoryska in 1783 in her famous residence of Puławy. In contrast to the former, which aimed at raising national consciousness and honour in the years of subjugation, that latter was written solely to add lustre to the anniversary celebrations which were to recall former glory.

This second poem, almost completely forgotten, was again recalled on the 300th anniversary of John III's residence at Wilanów.