UKRAINIAN LITERATURE

MANNING

Ukrainian Literature

Studies of the Leading Authors

By

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With a Foreword

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FOREWORD

The Ukrainians have sometimes been termed "the Irish of the Slavonic world," and the epithet is not infelicitous. In both cases there is a tradition of ancient, almost legendary, glory, followed by long centuries of stifled independence, in which the stream of national life disappeared underground almost completely—only to emerge in turbid and eager flood in modern times.

The two nations' literary traditions are likewise comparable. The *Cattle-raid of Cooley* in the old Ulster-cycle has its counterpart in the *Raid of Igor,* a powerful epic-fragment whose provenance is clearly Kievan and not Muscovite. The abundant Irish legacy of folk-song (recorded by Douglas Hyde and others) is more than paralleled by the countless Ukrainian folk-songs, full of echoes of "old, unhappy, far-off things." In both instances, there is a copious religious literature in medieval times. Most comparable of all are the literatures of the modern awakening, in which national authors, repudiating the dominant literary traditions of English (used by Goldsmith, Burke and Moore), Russian (used by Gogol) and Polish (used by Zaleski), have turned with intense political enthusiasm to the cultivation of their own ancestral speech.

Yet there are striking differences. While Irish Gaelic is today the official language of a small state of 3,000,000 people, many of whom are acquiring the language in school with reluctance and difficulty, Ukrainian is the cherished mother-tongue of nearly 50,000,000 Slavs in Eastern Europe. Regardless of all political considerations, the cultural dynamic of so large a group cannot be permanently disregarded by the scholar and the general reader. Professor Clarence A. Manning, of Columbia University, is rendering a service to international letters in making available, in English, a brief but comprehensive history of Ukrainian literature. It is a timely task, courageously carried out.

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INTRODUCTION

UKRAINIAN literature offers perhaps the best medium for studying the aspirations of the Ukrainian people and their mode of existence. In many ways it presents a sad picture for Ukraine has suffered much during the last thousand years and the efforts of its people to develop an independent state which could give them freedom and happiness have been thwarted again and again. We have the almost unique example of a nation of forty million people that has not been able in the last centuries to become the master and the director of its fate, that has been doomed to undergo every form of humiliation and yet has held firm its resolve to try again at the first opportunity that offered any hope of success.

It is the task of history to explain this anomalous situation and historians, whether friendly or hostile, have not been slow to take advantage of their privilege. The narrators of the story of Ukraine have approached the subject from every conceivable angle. Some have denied stoutly that there ever was a Ukraine. Others have declared that the nation met its fate because of its own errors and defects. Still others have challenged these unfavorable views and have laid the blame on better prepared and grasping neighbors. There are many more of these explanations but we have little to do with them.

Literature explains the results of history. It shows us the effects that history has had upon the masses and upon the individual. It gives us in artistic form a picture of the reactions of the people to the conditions under which they are compelled to live and even more than history, it mirrors their ideals and their dreams for the future. Yet it does even more than this.

The important thing in modern literature is the light which it throws upon the personalities of the authors themselves, both as individuals and as representatives of their people. No one in modern literature can produce a memorable work without making clear the innermost workings of his own soul and thoughts and feelings. When we look from this point of view at such men as Shevchenko and Franko, we realize that we are dealing with real spiritual and intellectual leaders with a real faith in democracy and that these men have a message not only for their people and age but for the entire world.

We are often inclined to believe that a literature which is little known can have little of value in it. The permanent worth and the greatness of an author are not immediately visible in the sale of his works and in the number of translations that are made of them. Accident plays a large rôle and often an unlucky but great author must wait years for recognition while another who is fortunate but less great will receive almost immediate and quick-passing praise as a genius. We need only think of the large number of last year's best-sellers that have gone into a speedy oblivion and of the world's masterpieces which continue a slow but steady sale for decades as the real virtues slowly but surely attract a multitude of devoted readers.

Human nature is remarkably constant from age to age and country to country but there develops through the centuries a specific character of each nation and culture. Manners and customs may change. Costumes may be discarded and varied. Economic conditions may be outgrown or swept away by revolution. Something remains and that something is the very kernel of the national character which perseveres and expresses itself in literature.

This kernel may be obscured by superficial details. Its qualities and virtues may be hidden by external trappings. It may seem to take strange and unusual forms. It may seem to be inconsistent with much that tradition and religion and education have built around it but it still remains and the sympathetic reader who can look below the surface of the outward form can realize its meaning and its significance for humanity.

This is especially true with Ukrainian literature. Its modern period started with the *Eneida* of Kotlyarevsky in 1798 and it has under severe difficulties carried on from then until the present. Yet it has never wavered in its two outstanding qualities, a keen sense of realism and above all a confidence and belief in democracy in every form and this is its chief characteristic. There is hardly a literature which is more devoted to the cause of the common man and presents him more sympathetically in his struggles, his difficulties and his achievements and if there may be said to be anywhere a literature of the common man, it is the Ukrainian literature.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BACKGROUND OF UKRAINIAN CULTURE

UKRAINIAN literature in its present phase may be modern but Ukraine and the Ukrainians are not a new phenomenon in the world's history. They have played their part under one name or another for over a thousand years on their native soil and they have had a rich past which furnishes the present with the soil on which it can operate.

What then is Ukraine? Who are the Ukrainians? What is the Ukrainian language? A simple answer to these questions opens up the entire Ukrainian problem, one of the most complicated in the whole of modern Europe and yet superbly simple if the idea is once adopted that the Ukrainians are a separate people who wish to live their own lives in their own way in their own land.

The Ukrainian language is an East Slavonic tongue which is closely akin to Russian but which differs from it very sharply in many important grammatical and phonetic ways. The language is spoken by a people of some forty millions in number who inhabit an area that was included between 1939 and 1941 almost wholly in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic and was after 1941 occupied by the Nazi invaders. Before the Second World War, the country was divided between the Soviet Union, Poland, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia. Before the First World War, it was divided between Russia and Austria-Hungary, and we have to go back for centuries before we find a free and united Ukraine.

Yet at that time the land was not called Ukraine but Rus, and even before that it had had a long and complicated history revealed only by archaeological exploration and scattered references in ancient authors. There are many gaps in our knowledge but enough remains to show that the organization of the state in the ninth century was but the last act of a drama that had resulted in the development of an important pre-Christian culture. After the adoption of Christianity, its history is better known and we realize the importance which the

country played in the world. Under the name of Kievan Russia, it has been treated by Russian historians who wish to deny that there ever was a Ukrainian culture which differs in any degree from the northeastern neighbor, Moscow. Its name, its culture, and its literature have all been preempted by Moscow which refuses to admit that there ever was a culture in the south which might develop in its own way and along other lines than did the tsardom of Moscow or Muscovy.

Yet in those days the ancient Rus or Ukraine embraced territory that was never again to be brought under the control of the tsars. Ancient travellers talk of a Rus that extended from the neighborhood of Prague to the east and they then speak calmly of passing from there to Muscovy for the old state was markedly different in area from many of the common conceptions.

In the beginning, and here was the geographical root of the tragedy of Ukraine, the Slavs who spoke this language lived in a belt of greater or narrower width from the Carpathian Mountains to the sea of Azov. Their land was longer from east to west than it was from north to south and it cut across the central portions of all those great rivers that flow from the north into the Black Sea. Nowhere except in the west were there any natural boundaries in the form of mountain ranges. To the north and east there were only the great plains of eastern Europe which were open to every invader from the depths of Asia and these invaders had appeared for millenia in an almost uninterrupted sequence, when the first Slavonic state was erected around the city of Kiev.

It was an unfortunate geographical situation, for it imposed upon the princes the constant and never-ending task of guarding a long and indefencible frontier with a relatively small population and enormous distances. Without modern methods of communication, the task was hopeless. The princes were unable to hold more than a small area under their personal supervision and the evils that were attendant upon feudalism were not slow in making their appearance.

In vain the more competent and conscientious rulers tried by almost superhuman efforts to hold their positions. Almost without their knowledge large regions grew up into quasi-independent realms and civil war was the result of the interference of even the best beloved monarch. The provinces and regions went on their own sweet way with little thought of obedience to a distant central authority and they were far too ready to seize a momentary advantage by an alliance with some one of their neighbors. At some time during the last thousand years, part at least of the people of Ukraine have been allied with

Muscovites, Poles, Lithuanians, Rumanians, various Mongolian tribes, Turks, and Tatars of the Crimea. For a long period Lithuanians and Poles were able to assert a secure political control and today the Soviet Union and Germany are fighting for the same area.

Ukraine paid bitterly for all these feuds of her neighbors, for her position was difficult and desirable. As we have seen, the state cut across all the rivers that ran into the Black Sea. They were the natural method of communication between the Baltic and the Black Seas, even as Ukraine contained the normal land route from Asia to Europe. It is small wonder then that the rich agricultural land was the welcome and alluring prize to many an invader from time immemorial to 1941.

Bad as all this was, the situation was made worse by the fact that the territory of Ukraine became the battleground between the Byzantine and Latin cultures. The great cleavage in the Christian world was often fought out on Ukrainian soil and religious feuds were added to the personal quarrels and ambitions of the neighboring sovereigns.

Ukraine received its Christian culture from Constantinople. In the first centuries of her existence, this was an advantage for the intellectual hegemony of Constantinople was unchallenged. It is hard today to understand that the great city on the Bosphorus with its unparalleled church of Hagia Sophia was the real centre of Christian culture and civilization. The Emperor of Byzantium was the Christian secular ruler *par excellence.* His wealth and his power were unrivalled save perhaps by the Mohammedan Caliph of Bagdad. Rome looked with envy at the riches and the splendor of the great city of Constantine. It remembered what it had itself lost at the hands of the Germanic barbarian tribes and was proudly jealous. The West envied the glory of the East and sought diligently to seize control of the border lands and to extend its control wherever possible.

It was at this period that the Kievan state was organized and St. Volodimir formally accepted Christianity, largely it is said because of the splendor of the service in the Church of Hagia Sophia. Soon a second Hagia Sophia was erected at Kiev and if it did not equal the splendor and the amazing beauty of the elder church, it was still one of the richest and most impressive structures north of the imperial city. The state adopted the standards of Constantinople and the legends and folk tales tell us of the wealth and power of the princes of Kiev, of their gold and precious stones, of their glory and their pride, yes, and of their intelligence and learning.

We must not think of education in early Kiev in terms of modern public schools and a high degree of literacy. There was none of that

but where was it to be found? At a time when such kings of England as William I and Richard Coeur de Lion were barely able to sign their names, Volodimir Monomakh was able to carry on the business of state in seven languages. The princesses of Kiev were sought in marriage by the most powerful rulers of the day and the blood of the royal family passed into the veins of the sovereigns of England, France, Sweden, Hungary, Poland, and Byzantium itself.

The new state had difficulties in the way of internal organization but no more than the neighboring countries. There were civil wars and heavy taxes and oppression of the people but those were universal failings. All the virtues and the vices of Byzantium were copied on a reduced scale in Kiev and its dependencies and the countries of Western Europe were in an even more deplorable condition.

Yet Byzantine culture was a strange phenomenon. It is hard for us to conceive of a great city and a great empire with powerful armies in which religion was the all-absorbing subject of interest. Constantinople was a fusion of the remains of Greek civilization, of many elements of the Roman Empire, and of ideas, habits and customs that had been brought in from Asia Minor, north Africa, Arabia, and points further east. Its religious art was based on principles which were far from realistic. Its ikons and its mosaics are still the wonder of the world, as the cleaning of the mosaics in Hagia Sophia is showing us. Its wealth, luxury, and formalism are proverbial, and yet the slightest acquaintance with its history shows us that there were very human aspects of life hidden under the stately pomp and the cold splendor of display.

It is small wonder that the Rus and the pagan Slavs were attracted by this outstanding and beautiful culture. Constantinople had no objections and Saints Cyril and Methodius created the first Slavonic alphabet and carried the Liturgy in Slavonic to Moravia and Bulgaria and the other Slavonic lands. Finally it penetrated to Rus in the days of St. Volodimir and Christian Kiev was on its way.

Soon all the books of the Church and the lives of the saints which had been translated into Church Slavonic were available in the capital and were gradually corrected into a language which was intelligible at Kiev. But such works as the *Russka Pravda* (the Russian law code of the eleventh century), the writings of Daniel the Palmer and the *Instructions* of Volodimir Monomakh speak of the high level which had already been achieved. There was little secular literature of which we know except the writings of the princes and their supporters. The only outstanding specimen of imaginative writing is the *Tale of*

the Armament of Ihor which has presented as many problems as it has solved.

Yet with all of the drawbacks and the troubles, life in Kiev was good in the twelfth century, until in 1169 Prince Andrey Bogolyubsky of Suzdal in the north sacked the city and moved the centre of the state to his native town and then later to Moscow. The interpretation of this action has long been a bone of contention between Ukrainian and Russian scholars. To the latter it was a necessary and logical step in the development of the Russian Empire. To the former it was a brutal conquest of a civilized government by foreigners and strangers. It did cause a sharp break in history which was emphasized still more by the fact that the new centre was never able to assert its authority over Galicia and Volynia to the west. The dynasty reigning there even was able for a time to call themselves the Kings of Rus. Whatever the merits of the controversy over the relations of the princes of Suzdal and Moscow to those of Kiev and the south, the fact remains that Kievan Rus and Ukraine was now split in half and was not to be brought together again fully except for a few months in 1918 and 1919.

Perhaps the damage would have been alleviated, if time had allowed the normal development of Moscow. The coming of the Mongols and Tatars changed everything. When the hordes of Genghis Khan swept over the land, Kiev bore the brunt of the desolation at a time when it had hardly recovered from the sack of the preceding century. The princes of Moscow readily submitted and henceforth the Tatar element and traditions grew in the northern capital. This process continued for two centuries and at the end of that period, when Ivan the Great finally declared his independence and assumed the title of Autocrat and Tsar of Russia, the manners and customs of Moscow were very different from those which had prevailed at the time of the coming of the Tatars.

Ukraine had a different fate. The western provinces formed a dangerous wedge between Poland and Hungary and extended into the area claimed by the Latin world. The Holy Roman Empire was pressing eastward with the Germans as the nucleus and the predominant power. Poland and Hungary confronted with this turned east in their turn. Both were Roman Catholic powers and western in culture and organization. Both were in frequent alliance and their dynasties were related by marriage. It was to the interest of both to crush Rus with its Orthodox traditions and its Byzantine culture. To the north was Lithuania, still pagan but with able rulers. To make a long story short, the end came in 1349 when the Western principalities

of Ukraine fell under the power of Lithuania and Poland, At about the same era the people in the Carpathians passed under the control of Hungary. Lithuania acquired control of the area around Kiev, so that by the time of the marriage of Jadwiga of Poland and Jagiello of Lithuania in 1385, a large part of Ukraine was under the control of Catholic rulers and the remainder was under the Tatar yoke.

With Moscow drifting eastward in its point of view owing to the influence of the Tatars and Ukraine gravitating westward under the control of Poland and Lithuania, the breach became wider than in the beginning and Ukraine was unable to work on its own behalf or to resist the encroachments of the West. Especially after the Union of Lublin in 1569 when Poland and Lithuania were formally united into one kingdom, Western influences grew stronger. More and more pressure was exerted upon the people to join the Roman Catholic Church, to adopt Polish, and to lose their identity in the new state. This was especially true in the case of the nobles and the wealthier classes. More and more they were Polonized and as they became ardent advocates of their new culture, they endeavored to force it also upon their people. Ukraine and its national spirit seemed to be doomed.

Ukrainian opposition to this process was bitter and continuous but the sucesses were few after many of the feudal lords passed over to the new regime. The lesser nobles continued the struggle. Deprived of any means of expressing their opinions to the heads of the state and without skilled and daring leadership, they saw their traditional privileges whittled away and themselves reduced to greater and greater straits. For a while it seemed as if Protestant ideas might seep in, but this stopped with the suppression of the Reformation in Poland. A few of the nobles as Prince Constantine Ostrozky endeavored to develop and strengthen the Orthodox (Byzantine) culture of the people. He tried to secure teachers from Constantinople for his schools but the Patriarch after the fall of the city to the Turks was weak and powerless and he was not in a position to carry out any strong policy. A few able monks as the young Cyril Lukaris, later the celebrated Patriarch of Constantinople, arrived for a short time, but they could have very little success and again and again the sons of a devout Orthodox father themselves Polonized and thus undid all that the older men had accomplished.

Then too in cities as Lviv there were various brotherhoods interested in education. They tried to establish schools and printing presses and to defend the old faith and customs and they did noble service. Still even these efforts did not bear too much fruit. They

were checked at every stage by the government and their work was so tied up with the defence of the Orthodox Faith that they were not interested in giving much secular learning to the young and that little was largely influenced by the Latin intellectual manner of thought. They used the old Church language which was becoming steadily more distinct from the vernacular tongue and created a sterile and polemic culture which often had little real value.

Finally in 1596 through the Union of Brest a part of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope. There was however great resistance to the new measure, the Orthodox hierarchy was reestablished by the efforts of the faithful and they regarded the Uniat Church as an agent of Polonization. The Academy of Kiev under a series of able leaders, as the Metropolitan Peter Mohyla, did splendid work in maintaining the Faith. Mohyla worked out a form of Orthodox scholasticism which retained most of the Orthodox manner of thinking and was yet available as a weapon again the Polish and Jesuit propagandists. Yet the Academy like the schools of the brotherhoods was never able to break with a narrow ecclesiastical tradition and to launch itself on a program of progressive education.

A more effective, if cruder, method of opposition lay in the rise of the Kozaks, peasants who fled to the east to live their lives in freedom as they desired. These men were prepared to fight against any foe, whether he were Pole, Muscovite, Tatar or Turk. At first they were a wild and turbulent group but their leaders finally forged them into an efficient force. Now and then the Kings endeavored to secure their assistance by payments and by enrolling some of them in units in the Polish army but the Kozaks remained independent and a pillar of strength to all Orthodox movements. Finally in the seventeenth century the hetman Bohdan Khmelnitsky won with them for a short time practically complete independence and again Ukraine could breathe freely. Bohdan died before he had established the new state on a firm basis and won for it international recognition. In his last years he found it necessary after the Kozak Wars which started Poland very definitely on the downward path to put himself and the Kozaks more or less under the protection of the Tsar of Russia. There was thus reestablished an official seal on that relationship which had been interrupted when the Tatars invaded Rus four centuries before. The result was none too satisfactory for the autocratic Moscow of the day constantly interfered with the liberties of the Kozaks and in 1667 in a treaty between the Tsar and the King of Poland, Ukraine was again

divided between Russia and Poland, with the Dnieper as the dividing line.

The next century and a half is a sad tale of broken promises and of political intrigue. Moscow and Poland alike repudiated every agreement which was made with the Kozaks and the Ukrainians. Discord arose in the ranks of the Kozaks between the officers and the privates, for the former tended to adopt the manners and customs of the neighboring nobles. As Russia steadily increased in power, she kept attempting to reorganize the whole of Russian Ukraine on the same lines as the rest of the Empire. Then Catherine the Great abolished the post of Hetman. She followed that up with the destruction of the Kozak centre, the Zaporozhian Sich, and finally liquidated all Ukrainian institutions and rights and bound the peasants to the soil.

Things were little better on the Polish side. There were the revolts of the Haydamaki and other groups but they were put down by Russian troops who were lording it over Poland. Finally when that unfortunate country was divided by Russia, Prussia, and Austria, Austria took most of the Ukrainian section of Galicia and Bukovina and added the Ukrainians to the ethnic confusion that formed the Hapsburg Empire. For this group Lviv was now the principal centre but the mode of living there and the methods of control of the Ukrainians or the Ruthenians as they were usually called in Galicia were very different from that exercised in Russia.

There was by the end of the eighteenth century really two Ukraines. There was the Great Ukraine under Russian control with its religious culture mainly Orthodox and there was Western Ukraine or Galicia under the Hapsburgs with the Uniat Church as the predominant religious body. Life moved at a different pace in the two sections but there were the same tendencies to denationalization, Russian in one case, Polish in the other, and the future of the people and their culture seemed very dark.

Yet in the seventeenth century at the time of the temporary flourishing of the Hetmanate, Ukrainian scholarship and spirit won one of its most signal victories. Moscow during its long period of subjugation to the Tatars had lost touch with the outside world, and its relations even with the Orthodox Churches of the east had become limited to a mere readiness to give liberally to the wandering Patriarchs who came to collect donations. The dangerous legend of the Third Rome and the accompanying belief that Moscow was the centre of Christian civilization had taken root, and the Muscovite scholars, if they could be called such, objected to all contact with the rest of Europe. Kiev

was a possible exception, for the princes of Muscovy still had a traditional respect for the city and its culture. When the tsars finally realized that they needed some outside learning, it was the scholars trained in the Academy at Kiev who were called in to assist. Some of these were invited to Moscow. Others went to escape Polish pressure. Yet all that was done in the way of intellectual progress was done by these men. The reforms in the Russian Church, incomplete as they were, were spurred on by the Kievan scholars and it was they also who inspired the beginnings of Russian literature, halting as they were.

Not enough attention has been paid to this movement and to the influence that Kiev exerted upon Moscow during the seventeenth century. It was a time when Russian military power was making itself supreme but in the world of culture it was the scholarship of Ukraine that was the master. The names of men from Kiev appear with monotonous regularity as the intellectual leaders of Moscow. Many of the greater Muscovites studied at Kiev and it is not too much to say that if Kiev had given Moscow its intellectual start at its foundation, so again in the seventeenth century it was Kiev that started the northern country on its return to Western intellectual ways.

Unfortunately most of this was in the narrowly religious sphere. The Academy of Kiev was still predominantly interested in theological polemics. During the long struggle with Poland, the Western ideas which had penetrated the Academy were largely connected with religion. There was little or no attempt to study the achievements of the West in literature and art and other secular subjects. Those who sought secular learning were usually absorbed in the Roman Catholic Church and in Polish life. Those who maintained the old traditions were usually peasants who were themselves suspicious of all innnovations and the masters treated more and more the speech of their Ukrainian peasants and serfs as an object of scorn and of amusement. Along with the decline in Ukrainian liberties, there came a steady reduction in the number of educated or even partially educated persons. As a people the Ukrainians were losing and losing rapidly all the marks and even the traditions of an educated class. Their interests were becoming those of serfs and peasants and they seemed destined to be swallowed up in the mass of the dominant races about them.

Thus at the end of the eighteenth century, the vast majority of the Ukrainian people had ceased to figure in the world of culture. They still had their folk songs which told of the exploits of the Kozaks and their great Hetmans and leaders of the past. They spoke among them-

selves in the vernacular but whatever schools there were still taught the Church Slavonic language which was hoary with age and which was by now very different from the daily spoken speech. Ukraine had drifted into an intellectual backwater. It is small wonder that many young men trying to escape from this stagnation looked for a more active life and became lost to the cause of the people. The whole question was whether the forces of destruction would sweep the country before there came a new inspiration to lift the people intellectually and to rekindle a healthy life. Fortunately a solution was found.

CHAPTER TWO

HRIHORI SKOVORODA

It was at the darkest hour when the right and privileges of the Ukrainians were being consistently reduced in Russian Ukraine and all hope seemed lost, that there passed across the scene a strange figure. That was Hrihori Skovoroda, philosopher, poet and ethical teacher. Even today it is hard to understand his attitude toward life, for he was one of those men who are sincerely human but who stand aside from the vices and evil deeds of men and in their avoidance of the bad, refrain also from much of the good, if not from life itself. Had Skovoroda been ambitious, he could have occupied almost any post in the service of the Russian government. Had he been thoroughly moved by nationalistic fervor, he could have had anything that Ukraine could offer him. An able man, he wished for nothing except to be allowed to live his life in his own way, to teach whom he wished as he wished how to live, and perhaps because of his refusal to fit into the conventional mode of existence, he left an indelible but none too sharply defined imprint upon all who came into contact with him. All of the writers who remodelled the Ukrainian language at the close of the century speak of him with the greatest respect and he was a precursor of the Ukrainian Renaissance which was to follow just a few years after he ceased his wanderings.

Skovoroda was born in 1722 in the village of Chornukhi in the province of Poltava. His parents were Kozaks and his father had belonged to the Lubny Regiment. They were not of the lowest class materially and the young boy had the opportunity to secure what education was available. He was a remarkably sensitive child and unlike the majority of his fellows, he cared more for reading than he did for the rough sports of the day. Religion and the Bible interested him but he early declined to be bound by the conventional interpretation, and this grew upon him as he passed through life. Because of his beautiful voice, his father sent him to study at the Academy of Kiev. He stayed there for two years and then he went to St. Petersburg and had a position

in the court choir of the Empress Elizabeth. She had secretly married Aleksyey Rozumovsky (1709-1771) and he induced her to do something for Ukraine. She even restored the post of Hetman after it had been abolished in 1734 and appointed her husband's brother Cyril to the position. In 1744 Skovoroda returned to Kiev and resumed his studies. His talents and his voice were such that the Archbishop urged him to take holy orders. It was in vain. Skovoroda absolutely refused and expressed himself so forcefully that he was finally compelled to leave the Academy.

In 1750 he had an opportunity to visit Hungary with Major General Vishnevsky and he gladly took advantage of it. Then for a while he was a singer in the Orthodox Church of Pest. He travelled extensively around the neighborhood of Pest, to Vienna, Bratislava and the neighboring regions and he seems also to have wandered on foot through Poland, Prussia, Germany and north Italy. During this time he seems to have interested himself in the classical authors of Greece and Rome and in the writings of the Church Fathers. He also learned Greek, Latin, German and Hebrew. Yet we can be very sure that he was more interested in the world and the people whom he met than he was in serious and intensive study from books.

He finally returned home and then for about ten years lived almost the life of a recluse, endeavoring to understand his own character and feelings. Next he had an opportunity to teach poetry in the seminary at Pereyaslav but he obstinately refused to change his convictions and he declared that for the Ukrainian (Church Slavonic) language, the accentual system was better suited than was the syllabic system employed by the French and Poles. As a result he lost the post. He served for a while as a private tutor and lost that in consequence of too severe a scolding of the boy whom he was teaching. Then came a long series of offers. In 1759 he was asked to teach poetry at the College of Kharkiv and was compelled to leave because the bishop wanted him to enter a monastery. In 1764 he visited Kiev and in 1766 he was asked to teach ethics at the college of Kharkiv again but he was soon forced out because of the strangeness of his ideas.

From then until his death in 1794, he lived the life of a wandering scholar, welcomed wherever he might be, whether on the big estates of the nobles or in the poor huts of the peasants. He cared nothing for material success and little more for shelter. His death was characteristic of his life. He was visiting on an estate and at dinner was never more cheerful. A little later he disappeared and the host found him in the garden digging a hole. He remarked jokingly that it was

where he wished to be buried. No one paid any attention or thought it strange when he disappeared after supper. It was not until the next night when he had not appeared that the host went to his room and found him dead, November 9, 1794.

Accustomed as we are to a life of constant and ceaseless activity with great emphasis on material success, such an existence as that of Skovoroda may seem to us the acme of uselessness and we may often regret that in him Ukraine lost a son who could have accomplished much for her regeneration. Perhaps the reverse was the truth. Skovoroda taught much and wrote a considerable amount, but his writings were intended for his close friends, especially a young student Kovalinsky, and were not published during his lifetime. He accomplished his work by oral instruction and still more by the powerful force of his example, for his life spoke more clearly than his words and proclaimed his utter indifference to the gradations of rank and honors that had been the means of bringing Ukraine to its fall. Here was the outstanding thinker of his day who dared to proclaim and act upon the principle that the great of the world were no more important than the small and who could not be hired or induced to do what he regarded as wrong and inexpedient.

It might be possible to compare Skovoroda with Socrates, for the Greek philosopher also accomplished much in ancient Athens by his constant and provoking habit of asking questions about all matters of moral and ethical importance. Nevertheless Socrates was married and played his part in the Athenian democracy. Skovoroda did not marry and avoided all public functions. He was not a voice crying in the wilderness and uttering a prophetic message. He was merely a quiet and educated Kozak moving among men, living his own life with a quiet dignity that showed both his self-respect and his consideration for other people. He could smile as easily and as bitingly at the aristocratic prentensions of the nobles as he could be indulgent to the whims and superstitions of the people. Yet wherever he went and whatever he did, he impressed upon all around him his own attitude toward life and allowed them to understand of themselves what he meant.

His great object in life was to know himself, to understand human nature and human capabilities, and that nature was as inherent in the serf as in the nobleman. As he once expressed it, "The wisdom of the lords that the simple man is 'black,' seems to me as amusing as the wisdom of the so-called philosopher that the earth is dead. How can

a dead earth produce living children? And how from a 'black' people can there be born 'white' lords?"

A well-trained classicist, Skovoroda echoed the quotation of Terence, the Latin comedian, "Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto," (I am a human being; I regard nothing human as alien to me.) All of life was his field and he studied in every situation how to obtain self-knowledge and self-happiness. His answer was very simple. "The necessary things for happiness are not difficult to secure. The difficult things are unnecessary."

Happiness is not something that can be secured by wealth or by health. It is something that exists in the human heart as a gift from God and man has only to reach out and take it and know when he has it. It was a quietistic philosophy but it cut sharply across the social and political views of the time and the more Skovoroda tried to fit himself into the world, the more he became technically less dangerous to the established order, the more bitter and unflinching was his indirect criticism of it.

Perhaps Skovoroda was greatly influenced by the western Protestant teachings that he met on his travels. Perhaps he was in contact with the Masonry of the day, for it was the Masonic lodges that first printed many of his works. Perhaps he drew upon certain intangible strains of human motivation that had inspired the early Kozaks to seek for liberty in the wilderness and which led him as a scholar to try to attain the same kind of intellectual freedom that they had sought by force of arms and by emigration from their homes.

His thought was deeply affected by the classical authors whom he had read and still more by the Bible. Yet from childhood, while he knew the Bible thoroughly, he refused to accept it literally and he sought from it an inner meaning which alone could satisfy him. He practically rejected both theology and the Church in their conventional forms and yet he was profoundly religious and highly ethical in his outlook on life.

There was a certain pantheism in his teachings. "The greatest truth has no specific name. To the ancients God was the Supreme Reason. He had among them different names as Nature, the Essence of Words, Eternity, the Hour, Necessity, Fate. And among Christians His most common names are Spirit, Lord, Tsar, Father, Reason, Truth." Elsewhere He is also Nature and Love.

Skovoroda saw in the universe the macrocosm which revealed God's greatness and power. God was likewise in the microcosm, in the nature of the individual man, in his heart and in his innermost being. It is for

this reason that happiness is to be found inside a man and not outside among acts, rewards, or possessions.

He lived according to his theories and so the people grasped his message without reading his philosophical dialogues. Their very titles are suggestive. There is *Narcissus or a discussion about self-knowledge, The book Ashkan on the knowledge of one's self. A friendly Conversation on spiritual peace,* etc. They were constructed in the form usually of a Platonic dialogue but they expressed in written and permanent form the ideas that he was expounding in his constant talking and traveling.

He also wrote poems and fables in the conventional form which repeated the same ideas for the common people. Such subjects as the *Blessed Herod* and the *Poor Quail* show the way in which he popularized his ideas. Fables and similar poems had been cultivated as a literary form at the Academy of Kiev and Skovoroda turned it into a living form of writing.

His dialogues and essays on literature have been lost but they showed an appreciation, we are told, of the real nature of the Ukrainian language and accent. Yet Skovoroda was not an epoch maker in any way. He valued the vernacular speech but he was still too much under the influence of his training to use it in place of the stilted and artificial language which was then current in Ukrainian letters. He still preferred to write in that artificial mixture of Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, and Church Slavonic that was the language taught at the Academy and as a result his writings passed into that oblivion which did not concern him at all. He had not cared whether or not they were published. It would not bother him, if they were forgotten, for they were but a subsidiary part of his work.

With his unmystical and individualistic religion and ethics, Skovoroda fits well into the picture of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, as it appeared in various countries of Europe. He was sharply opposed to the elegant scepticism of Voltaire which had become the ruling fashion in many of the European courts. He was nearer to the Deists and to certain eighteenth century Protestant theologians and on one side of his being, he was of that group of eighteenth century thinkers and scholars as Benjamin Franklin, Mikhail Lomonosov, and Dositej Obradovich who laid the foundation for the nineteenth century and the beginnings of Romanticism.

On the other side, he belonged rather with a group of Slavonic thinkers of all ages, as the Czech Peter Chelcicky and later in part Leo Tolstoy, who sought to avoid the evils of the world by living an

existence apart from it. These men had a vision of an ideal existence to be secured by extreme simplification and abstention from the affairs of the world in the interest of a higher and a different utility.

With it all, in a demoralized and disorganized Ukraine, where the national life was flickering to a new low, he revealed the possibilities of a newer and different democracy and a kindly and humane outlook on life. His was not the task to sponsor or to lead a reaction against the prevailing system. His was not the task to defend the existing order. He endeavored to stand apart and thereby he kindled a spark of hope in the people by ignoring, rather than by defying the prevailing system. He taught the value of the individual in a day when the individual was neglected. He taught the dignity of man as man in a day when rank and external glory was the supreme good. He taught calm and deliberate thinking at a time when people cared for little except external pomp and show. He emphasized the reality of the spirit and of the truth when the will of the sovereign was the supreme law. That was his teaching and he proved it by his own example. It is small wonder that he did not take the next step and yet that the men of the next generation felt his influence and were glad to express their obligations to him in fields and in ways that he never would have believed possible or valuable.

CHAPTER THREE

IVAN KOTLYAREVSKY

FOUR years after the death of Skovoroda, there began to circulate in the country near Poltava manuscript copies of an amusing travesty of Vergil's *Aeneid,* written by one Ivan Kotlyarevsky. It attracted attention not only because of its subject matter and treatment but because the author had for the first time endeavored to write in the ordinary vernacular of the day. In other words, modern Ukrainian literature had been born.

To understand the value and significance of this, let us glance at the political situation in Eastern Ukraine. In 1764 Catherine the Great had induced the last of the Hetmans, Cyril Rozumovsky, to resign his post, and in return he received from the Empress large grants of land. The position of Hetman was replaced by a Little Russian Board which worked strenuously for the Russifying of the country. There still remained the Zaporozhian Sich which had lost much of its former power but which still gathered around it many "unruly" Kozaks. In 1775 after the war with Turkey and the suppression of the revolt of Pugachev, Catherine sent a large army against this and confronted with overwhelming force, the Kozaks were obliged to submit. The regular Russian system of landholding was introduced and the Kozaks who did not join the Russian army had to become serfs. A large number refused to accept either of these alternatives and during the next years emigrated to Turkey. Then in 1783 the last remains of the Hetman state were abolished.

Thus perished Ukrainian autonomy in the Russian Empire and a large number of the officers and the gentry willingly Russianized in order to reap the advantages of their new position. Ukrainian songs, manners, and customs became a subject for popular jesting. At the same time many of these Russianized Ukrainians not only distinguished themselves in the Russian service but also in Russian literature. Such men as Vasili Kapnist made a name for themselves in

literature and played almost as great a role in the Russian eighteenth century as the Kievan scholars had done in the pre-Petrine period.

The new culture of St. Petersburg that had succeeded the old Byzantine formalism of Moscow was heavily under the influence of the pseudo-classic culture of eighteenth century France. The leading writers vied for the honor of being the Russian Vergil, the Russian Racine, the Russian Molière, etc. They carried the use of classical allusions to an almost ridiculous extreme and outside of the comedies, there was little about their works that was distinctively Russian. Their originality lay in an almost unconscious caricature of the French models and it was the vigor and energy of the authors that kept them from being as ridiculous as they might have well become.

In addition to that, the theoreticians of Russia found it necessary to develop in Russian the three styles of poetry as outlined by Boileau. There was the high style to be employed in odes, tragedies, and epics and the language of these forms was to have the highest proportion of Church Slavonic words. Then came the more ordinary styles, and finally in the low style of comedies there was to be the pure vernacular speech. It was all carefully arranged by the scholars and the arbiters of fashion by *a priori* reasoning and not by practical experience or literary skill. It could not fail to produce smiles and hence there were several attempts to write burlesque epics and to poke a heavy fun at the excesses of the more egotistical authors.

Yet it is to be noted that humor of this kind had long been a characteristic of Ukrainian writing. The intermezzos that had been inserted in the mystery plays were full of such burlesque exactly as they had been in the West in an earlier period and the Academy in Kiev had developed despite its formalism the comic element which was inherent in the Ukrainian character.

All this brings us back to Ivan Kotlyarevsky, the talented founder of modern Ukrainian literature. He was born in 1769 in Poltava in an impoverished noble family. This was just five years after the abolition of the Hetmanate and but six years before the destruction of the Sich. When the boy was sixteen, the last vestiges of Ukrainian autonomy were abolished. Thus in his youthful years he passed through the depressing atmosphere of the downfall of the Ukrainian state. He studied in the Seminary at Poltava and won a certain reputation as a poet. This did not give him a livelihood and so for several years he remained as a private tutor in the homes of various nobles. Then he entered the Russian civil service and later served in the army as a captain. When he retired from this, he secured a position as inspector

in one of the Poltava schools for the children of impoverished nobles. Later as a welcome guest at the home of the Governor General Repnin, he became director of the theatre at Poltave. He died in 1838.

His was a life lived in general superficial agreement with the new order. There is no record that Kotlyarevsky met with any difficulties because of his use of the Ukrainian language or because of his ideas and it is perhaps a little extreme to credit him with far-reaching separatist ideas. At the same time he clearly recognized the difference between the Ukrainians and the Russians. He had a lively interest in the conditions of his people and he deeply regretted that history had not developed differently. He was not afraid to say that conditions as he knew them were not ideal but it would be rash to press his views too far, when we consider the general atmosphere of his times.

During his lifetime also there began the intense interest in folk songs and folk customs. Rousseau had taught an interest in the lives of the simple people and Herder as early as 1773 had begun to write his glorification of the folksongs of the people. Everywhere in Europe this form of study was growing. Scientists and poets alike worked on the same themes and hardly a year passed without some new work in this field. Macpherson's *Ossian* was already known in Russian as well as in French and German. During the reign of Catherine the *Armament of Ihor* had come to light and in the early nineties scholars and courtiers "discovered" the idol of Tmuturakan and established a vogue for "South Russian" antiquities.

Yet it is very significant that Kotlyarevsky in his first Ukrainian work did not produce anything along these lines. Neither did his interest in the people and their speech lead him to make a scientific study of the language of the people. In this he differs sharply from the Czech scholar Dobrovsky and he differs equally sharply from Lomonosov and the other writers who founded modern Russian literature. Poland too had its own development on the basis of French pseudo-classicism which later passed into the Romantic period. Kotlyarevsky started on the basis of the old classical culture of the Ukrainian schools and stood nearer to the enlightened sceptics of the eighteenth century than to the younger group of Romantic authors.

There is a story that he had commenced the *Eneida* during his studies at the Poltava seminary and had worked over it for many years. It is perhaps possible, for there is much in it that reminds us of a work conceived in a school perhaps as a definite and humorous reaction to the excessive Latin training that was customary at the time.

It was a bold idea to undertake a travestying of the *Aeneid* but it was something that might be done under the conditions prevailing, as other authors of Russia had done. The use of the vernacular was only a slight extension of the normal usage for a burlesque epic should not, under the strict rules, have been written in the high style and we can therefore understand the course of Kotlyarevsky's reasoning in starting upon this work.

The most significant fact is that the author definitely decided to depict Aeneas and his companions as Ukrainian Kozaks wandering around Europe in search of a new home. The comparison was obvious but it took a mind of considerable penetration to grasp the situation. Then as now the vast majority of classical students insisted upon seeing the ancients in a vacuum which had no relation to present reality. On the other hand in the very first paragraph Kotlyarevsky sets the key note.

Aeneas was a clever fellow
And he was a superb Kozak.
He stood all ills and did not bellow,
Surpassed his men on every tack.
But when the Greeks old Troy had fired
And made of it what they desired,
He took his pack and drew a sigh.
A group of Trojans he did rally,
All banished boys, to make a sally
And showed his heels to Troy for aye.

The very opening stanza could not fail to bring to the mind of every Ukrainian the parallel between Aeneas and the Kozaks from the ruined Sich and with that as his text Kotlyarevsky worked on, following the Aeneid very closely and yet modifying the adventures of the Roman hero so that they would fit perfectly into the position of the Kozaks. His skill in selecting the proper details and episodes show his amazing talent in this difficult task.

Of course there were passages that were entirely unsuited to his purposes. There was nothing in recent Ukrainian history which he could use as Vergil used the destruction of Troy. Even aside from difficulties with the censor there was no possible similarity between the capture of the great city and the surrender of the Sich. None of the older sieges which the Sich had undergone would have fitted into the

picture, as the source of the migration, and so Kotlyarevsky merely assumes the fall of the home of Aeneas and goes on with his story.

For the same reasons he slurs over those episodes which take place upon the sea and it is in these passages that the work becomes rather a burlesque upon the original poem. In their earlier and happier days, the Kozaks had made many a raid down the Dnieper and across the Black Sea against the Turks but for a couple of centuries their exploits were associated with the land and so Kotlyarevsky could not adapt the scenes at sea with the same skill and wealth of allusion that he could the episodes on land.

Yet the great difference lies in the position of the authors. Vergil as the poet laureate of Augustus was describing the events leading up to the foundation of mighty Rome at a time when Rome was the mistress of the world. It was safe and necessary for him to introduce prophecies of Rome's coming greatness and of the glories that the descendants of Aeneas were to win. Anchises in the underworld could safely predict the coming of all those great men who were to increase the prestige of Rome and the Julian line for centuries to come. Kotlyarevsky, a contemporary of the emigration of the Kozaks, saw their glory in the past. What was to be their future? As he looked at the wretched inhabitants of Ukraine and the suffering Kozaks abroad, he could only hope and that hope had to be indefinite for the Russian sovereign had decided that there would be no more Ukraine and any prophecy of resurrection might be treated as treasonable. Thus the main differences in the treatment can be explained by the different position of the two authors.

The religious attitude of the authors is also very different. Vergil believed or pretended to believe in the gods of Rome. He had to maintain the proper attitude of piety to the state. Kotlyarevsky treats them as brawling and unidealistic beings, very human individuals with all the vices of the Kozaks and little of their human virtues. Thus Juno, the tutelary deity of the Latins and the implacable foe of Troy, becomes a very ill-tempered *baba* and she is described accordingly. The gods who drink their fill and beyond are ordinary mortals. In this there is a great deal of the scepticism of Voltaire and the criticism of paganism by the older Christian tradition that believed in the evil character of paganism, perhaps even more than a deliberate satire on the rulers of Moscow with their almost divine pretensions as is thought by Yefremiv (Istoriya Ukrainskoho Pis'mentsva Vol. I, p. 361). We can never forget the Kotlyarevsky was an Orthodox Christian, writing for his coreligionists and that they had been taught that the pagan

gods were either non-existent or evil and hence not deserving of a respectful treatment.

It is not so often noted that the *Aeneid* of Vergil is not the only source of Kotylarevsky's poem. He undoubtedly knew his Homer, especially the *Odyssey*, and the gods of the *Eneida* are often human in a manner similar to those of the Greek poet, although there is not the same naivite in their description and Kotlyarevsky does not feel the need of making them superhuman with the human virtues and vices raised to a high degree. The Greek influence can be clearly seen, for the poet perhaps for metrical reasons is far more apt to name the ruler of the gods Zeves (Zeus) than Jupiter, the regular form in Vergil.

There is also a deliberate slurring over of supernatural incidents. The miraculous plays very little role except in the transformation of the ships of Aeneas into swans. Kotlyarevsky follows Vergil in passing over lightly the episode of Polyphemus but he cannot resist the temptation to bring Aeneas close enough to Circe's Isle to see the animals into which her different victims have been changed. Thus the Poles have become rams, the bearded Muscovites goats, and the Prussians foxes.

He does not hesitate to depart from Vergil in the account of the visit to the underworld. He definitely says so himself:

> For Vergil, may he reign forever,
> Was always wise, as we well know.
> We would not harm him now or ever
> But he lived many years ago.
> Besides in hell conditions differ
> From what they were when he looked thither.
> And when the long departed wrote.
> I now will give the present story,
> Will change, omit some details hoary,
> And from my elders I will quote (III, 42)

So he includes in hell all those who have transgressed the Kozak spirit and code and all who are working in this world to make unbearable the lot of the poor people.

With these outstanding changes, Kotlyarevsky with good-natured fun and real pathos makes Aeneas and his Kozak followers proceed through the Latin story. They get uproariously drunk at Dido's court. Aeneas deserts Dido. They conduct the games in Sicily in the Kozak

manner, even to the scene where old Entellus, the former champion, is drunk in a ditch and cannot be roused to meet the young challenger until he is promised sufficient liquor, quite like the legends of Ilya of Murom in the old byliny. The Kozaks revel and fight as they did once in the Sich, they are loyal to one another and finally when they do make their way to Italy, they learn Latin out of the same grammar that was taught in the Ukrainian schools of the day and they make their petition to Latinus in a grotesque mixture of tongues which may be well translated:

> Aeneas, noster magnus panus
> And Troianorum mighty prince
> A-roaming o'er the sea, a gypsy,
> Ad te, O rex, has sent us nunc.
> Rogamus, domine Latine,
> Do not destroy our wretched heads.
> Permitte us to live among you
> E'en for pecuniam or gratis.
> We all will thank you always satis
> For your beneficentia. (IV, 46)

Likewise in places where Vergil indulges in descriptions as in the catalogue of the Italian clans, Kotlyarevsky gives us long passages of information as to the Kozak leaders of the past and he describes the various Kozak regiments as taking part in the campaign. He does not mention either Khmelnitsky or Mazepa. Both were perhaps dangerous figures to introduce, for the one had brought the Kozaks into connection with Russia and the other was in bad odor with the Russian government. It was therefore more convenient and more in line with the policy of Kotlyarevsky to omit any clear mention of either.

The author showed however an amazing grasp of the manners and customs of the Ukrainians of his day. Without idealizing or degrading them, he pictures the life of Aeneas and his followers exactly as the Kozaks lived, even to their petty virtues and vices. There is almost an atmosphere of folklore study about certain passages and it testifies to Kotlyarevsky's powers of observation and selection that he was able to do this so successfully.

The *Eneida* was a revelation to the Ukrainians. Here was a poem in the common vernacular, glorifying the Kozaks. It was very different from the attitude of the historians, whether they were pro- or anti-Kozak, and was nearer in spirit to the popular songs of the day. But

what a difference! For in the *Eneida* Kotlyarevsky had dared to be himself, to play with his material and to break out a new road.

The effect was almost instantaneous. What other writers had not been able to accomplish with serious tracts or flaming denunciations, in the old artificial language, Kotlyarevsky had done with a sure and firm touch, thanks to his appreciation of the language and customs of the people. Those who wished merely to laugh could find an abundance of humor. Those who were more serious could see the sufferings of the people hidden under a perfectly transparent guise. There was a message of hope in the comparison. If Aeneas and his Trojans, the founders of mighty Rome, had to pass through such hardships, then the cause of Ukraine was not lost, so long as any of her sons remained alive.

It is small wonder that the poem speedily became popular and went through three editions in a few years. It touched off the long hidden spark which most had regarded extinct. Henceforth Ukraine had a written language understood by the people, and it was up to them to write in it as well as speak in it. The country and the people had the proof that their ordinary vernacular could be adapted to literature and that real books could be written in it. Once and for all in Eastern Ukraine the artificial language vanished and slowly but surely its place was taken in publications by the vernacular of Kotlyarevsky.

Meanwhile the author kept on with his ordinary work. He did not try to repeat the performance. He did not engage in any propaganda for the new language but his home became the centre for the steadily increasing number of people who were awakening to a self-esteem that had been sadly lacking for many years. That was the highest praise that could be given to a work. Critics can analyze it and try to find the detailed meaning of each allusion. They can seek for the author's point of view on many questions of the day. They can annotate every line. They can praise or condemn. Kotlyarevsky had done the impossible and opened a literature in a new language and he could rest content.

Meanwhile the years moved on and there was a growing number of books written in the vernacular. Kotlyarevsky retained the friendship of the Governor General and became more and more interested in the theatre and finally was put in charge of the theatre in Poltava.

The Ukrainian theatre was in a bad way. There were troupes of serf actors on many estates and in some of the main cities there were theatres but there were no Ukrainian plays for them to perform. What they did was to give uninteresting performances in a mixture of

Russian, Polish and Ukrainian. They satisfied a certain need but the general level of education was so low that the new performances were little more than the degradation of the old religious and school plays.

In 1812 Prince Shakhovskoy, realizing the musical value of the Ukrainian folksongs, produced what he was pleased to call a Ukrainian vaudeville, the *Kozak Poet*. This employed certain Ukrainian themes and was written in what purported to be the Ukrainian language but Shakhovoskoy did not know the vernacular speech and his language was neither Russian nor Ukrainian but a hodge-podge of unreal and assumed forms. The *Kozak Poet* became very popular and its linguistic defects were largely unnoticed, for there was no fully accepted standard, and his work was highly praised, especially by all those who were seeking for advancement in the Russian service.

It displeased Kotlyarevsky, who had already shown some talent in various amateur performances and he determined again to be a forerunner in another field. In 1819 in his own theatre at Poltava, he produced two comedies *Natalka Poltavka* and *Moskal Charivnik*. (The Muscovite Wizard.) The celebrated actor Mikhail Shchepkin, a Ukrainian by birth, took part in these performances. They were the first real Ukrainian plays written for a modern theatre and they have held their own on the stage for over a century. Let us say frankly that they are not masterpieces of the dramatic art but neither are they to be despised. They are adapted to the stage and it is not only patriotic fervor that has kept them alive.

Let us look a little more closely at the *Natalka Poltavka,* "an opera in two acts," as Kotlyarevsky calls it, though it is really an operetta. It contains many elements that are typical of the Franco-Italian play of the period. The characters are quite conventional. There is the heroine, a beautiful country girl who has been reduced to poverty by the death of her father but who is still honorable and virtuous. She is a type that goes back through the ages into the ancient world. There is the poor orphan boy who was regarded as unworthy to become her husband and who returns rich at the crucial moment. There is the sincere but ambitious mother. All these are stock characters from world drama and if Kotlyarevsky had merely put these types through their paces, he would have laid a good basis for the Ukrainian theatre. He did more than merely imitate the conventional models. He was deeply conscious of the difficulties of his people and if he was not heroic in the later nationalistic sense, he stood for an ideal that was strange in his day and boldly emphasized various qualities of the Ukrainian temper.

Take the conversation between Petro and the *Vyborny* and the *Vozny*. Petro had been to the theatre in Kharkiv and had seen there the drama of Shakhovoskoy which was creating so much excitement. He boldly declared that he could not understand it because the Moskal did not know how to write the Ukrainian language or draw a Ukrainian character. Here he definitely expresses the author's sense of literary criticism. It is very interesting that Petro is fully conscious of his difference from the Moskals and that the *Vozny*, the judicial official, no more educated than Petro, corrects the historical mistakes which Shakhovoskoy made about Ukraine.

In the *Moskal Charivnik*, Kotlyarevsky also pokes fun at those Ukrainians who endeavor to turn themselves into Russians but this play is far weaker and less clear in its construction. In the *Ode to Prince Kurakin*, he stresses the same points and the hardships of the people.

Both of his dramas contain snatches of poetry, sometimes purely original and sometimes a reworking of the poems of Skovoroda. They end with a chorus as in the traditional dramas of the day and they show Kotlyarevsky's command of other forms of Ukrainian verse as well as the epic.

The striking characteristic of all of Kotlyarevsky's work is the democratic character of his writings. The nobility had been pretty well Russianized and it was only the common people who preserved the native language. However, while he depicted them in a kindly humorous way, he never lost an opportunity to speak out strongly about the peasant virtues and to emphasize that democratic tradition which had always been so strong in Ukraine and in the lives of the Kozaks. Thus Natalka in her talk with the *Vozny* definitely refuses to marry him, because she is of poor peasant stock and he comes from the gentry. There is hardly a literature which took its rise in such a clearly democratic atmosphere as did modern Ukrainian and Kotlyarevsky from the very beginning set the keynote which was to be followed by all of his important successors.

Yet with it all Kotlyarevsky did not present the Ukrainian cause in a manner that would get him into trouble with the authorities. He was not a political agitator nor a man to menace by his actions the social order of the day. He was a literary innovator and the creator of the Ukrainian language and like most of the early leaders of the Slavonic revival in various countries, he did not work in the field of politics. He did not aim at reviving the political independence or the political system which had been overthrown by the Russian Empress.

At that time Ukrainian culture had been so buffeted and demoralized that the first and most essential factor was the creation of a new spirit and a new self-respect.

That was his work and he succeeded admirably in what he undertook. It is even said that many of the Russianized nobles were moved to tears when they read in his lists of the Ukrainian regiments and groups their own family names and recalled the old traditions which they affected to have forgotten. Critics of the later day bewailed his frivolity and the light tone in which he worked. Yet those very men were compelled to use the language which he had forged and they profited by all that he had accomplished. That language which had been derided as a peasant tongue was revamped into a literary medium and when Kotlyarevsky died, he could look out at a world in which the great poet Shevchenko was just beginning his career. The creation of the language was the first step toward this flowering and that was the work of Kotlyarevsky who formed the speech out of an unwritten vernacular and taught his people to use it and to use it in a democratic spirit.

The *Eneida* was really the beginning of a new movement even as the comedies were the practical start of the modern Ukrainian theatre. They stand as a solid monument to Kotlyarevsky and every critic, friendly or hostile, must realize the full measure of his accomplishment.

CHAPTER FOUR

HRIHORI KVITKA - OSNOVYANENKO

KOTLYAREVSKY had paved the way for a Ukrainian literature and he had set standards for it in poetry and the drama. He had shown that the Ukrainian language was a proper vehicle for literature and he had given to it a strongly democratic quality. Yet the task of winning a proper place for the literature was not yet completed.

It was still necessary to break through the stubborn opposition of the gentry who then formed the bulk of the educated class. Most of these had been Polonized or Russianized and while they knew the language, they were ashamed to use it in their writings. They felt the charm of Ukraine and of the Ukrainian scenery and customs, but they preferred to write about it in the more popular and supposedly aristocratic languages. As a result there appeared in both Polish and Russian literature a large number of books which dealt with Ukrainian themes as if they were a special subdivision of the culture of the master groups. The authors regarded the Ukrainian language as suitable only for works in a lighter vein and as a source of amusement. The Ukrainians were often caricatured and derided and this procedure only increased the tendencies toward assimilation.

In Polish we find the *Maria* of Malczewski and in Russian we have Gogol's *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka* and the collection of *Mirgorod* with the great story of *Taras Bulba,* a brilliant description of Kozak life as Gogol conceived it. Yet Gogol had an attitude of unbending loyalty to the Russian Tsars. He knew relatively little of Ukrainian history, although he was proud of the fact that his family had been famous in the Sich and his father had written several plays in Ukrainian after the tradition of Kotlyarevsky.

It was necessary to widen the range of the Ukrainian subject matter and to create new forms of writing but this was no easy task under the conditions of the day. As at Poltava, so at Kharkiv there

was a great interest in things Ukrainian, especially after the foundation of the university there in 1805 but there was a general aristocratic tone to the entire social life and the same tradition that Kotleyarevsky had opposed at Poltava.

Despite these handicaps certain steps in the development of the literature were taken by Hrihori Kvitka, a landowner of the neighborhood of Kharkiv. He was born in 1778 and received the usual superficial education of the day and of his class. He had little regular instruction and that little was entirely in Russian. Largely through the influence of Skovoroda, he became deeply religious at the age of twelve and wanted to enter a monastery. His parents prevented it and they finally put him in the Russian army. In a short time he left it and entered the civil service. Then he tried the army again and when he was twenty he entered a monastery as a lay brother. This life too proved uncongenial and finally he left it and returned home to busy himself with the social life of the day and to dabble in intellectual pursuits. Of course he read the *Eneida* but it did not inspire him to imitate it or to use the Ukrainian language.

Instead of that, he began to write in Russian under the pen name of Falaley Povinukhin. His stories attracted a certain amount of attention in Kharkiv but they made no impression on the literary world of the two capitals. They were merely stories written by a provincial Russian for a provincial audience. Kvitka would have remained unknown and unnoticed, had chance not led him to try his native Ukrainian.

He was joking one day with a writer who was endeavoring to compose in his native tongue and Kvitka asked him to write something serious and sentimental in it. When the author replied that the language was unfit for such subjects, Kvitka became displeased and to prove his friend wrong, he decided to write himself some stories in Ukrainian and soon he turned out two of his main works, *The Soldier's Portrait* and *Marusia.* Their success was immediate in Ukrainian circles and it was not long before they were translated into Russian and brought the author that fame which he had never achieved in his Russian writings.

Before this in 1812 he had become the director of the theatre in Kharkiv and this inspired him to write dramas and especially comedies. In 1831, he gave up most of his interests in Kharkiv and retired to his estate at his native village of Osnova, from which he took the penname for his Ukrainian writings, Osnovyanenko. From that time he came to the city only once a year to carry out his duties as Marshal

of the local nobility. Thus absorbed in society and his estates, he died in 1843 at a ripe old age.

It is curious that in his later days the very success which he had won for the Russian translations of his Ukrainian works, many of which he had made himself, led him back to Russian and he again tried without success to achieve fame in that language, while he prepared Ukrainian translations of his Russian books. The result was a weakening of the value of his works, for it can be truthfully said that Kvitka wrote nothing of importance except in Ukrainian.

To a large extent Kvitka was typical of the vegetable existence of the nobles of the day. The timeless life on the big estates gave to the masters abundant and placid happiness and isolated them from the life that was proceeding at an ever increasing tempo in both Ukraine and Russia. Kvitka maintained the old conservative attitude toward life and was always the talented amateur and the respectable reactionary in his views. Thus in his *Letters to my dear Countrymen* which appeared in the thirties, he definitely set forth a type of reactionary doctrine which had long since been repudiated by the great writers of the same period in Moscow and St. Petersburg. He unhesitatingly declares "As God is heaven, so is he (the tsar) on earth" and he explains to his countryment of the government of Kharkiv the glories and the virtue and the divine origin of the imperial regime. Radical critics attacked him for his views but we must never forget that throughout his entire life he was a provincial nobleman who accepted uncritically the slogans of the day as they were accepted in the Russianized circles of Kharkiv society.

If these *Letters* could be taken as the whole of Kvitka's work, he would hardly deserve mention but it was only a small part of his activity. *The Little Russian Tales* published in Moscow in 1834-37 and in Kharkiv in 1841 were very different.

Let us take *Marusia* as an example. Marusia, a young Ukrainian girl and a paragon of all virtues, is the daughter of a fairly well-to-do farmer. She falls in love with a poor young man, who, as an orphan, has to serve in the army. To escape this and to make money to buy himself off from this obligation, he leaves home. This moves the heart of old Naum, Marusia's father, and he consents to the wedding but sends the young man on a business trip before the marriage takes place. The lovers part in the cemetery and Marusia promises to meet him there. Soon after she is taken ill and dies and her funeral is being held as the future bridegroom returns. Broken-hearted, he gives up his

career and becomes a priest but after a short time he dies of grief in a monastery.

The story is filled with ethnographical details. Kvitka knew the colorful life of the peasants and the vast number of customs that were carried out with almost religious scruples and he inserted them into his tale. We learn of all the ritual of courtship and of love making and in the hands of a less skilfull writer, these details would make the story drag. Kvitka avoids the danger and *Marusia* is one of the best tales of village life on its brighter side.

Yet the heroine is almost cloyingly sweet. There is little or nothing of the earthly about her and she is a typical heroine of the sentimental era which was attendant upon the introduction of Romanticism. This fashion had been started by Zhukovsky in Russian with his translation of the German ballads and now Kvitka adapted it to Ukrainian. The theme bears striking similarities to the contemporary Czech ballads of Erben and Celakovsky where we find the same over-sentimentality particularly in the case of young girls.

In his tales Kvitka had adapted this ballad material to prose and strange as it may seem, they really antedate similar works in French, German and Russian. This heavily Russianized nobleman who admired and almost worshipped the tsar wrote in Ukrainian a very strong plea for the people and produced realistic peasants who shared the thoughts and emotions of their fellows. He knew the life of the peasants around Kharkiv and depicted them sympathetically and in glowing colors.

He also noticed the differences between the Ukrainians and the Russians. He shows it in their reactions to various motives and he makes at least a passing reference to the hostility or at least the aversion that existed between them. Thus Vasil, the lover of Marusia, says when he tells about his entrance into the business world, " I got along at once with my companions, although they were Moskals." In the same way in another of his early stories, *The Soldier's Portrait*, the peasant artist who takes his painting to the fair for criticism, is not impressed when a Russian is deceived by its realism, "for it is no feat to deceive a Moskal."

In his early peasant stories, Kvitka has a rather light and somewhat humorous touch and many of his sketches of peasant life are distinguished by the general gaiety that pervades the atmosphere. Yet he soon became aware of the darker sides of the picture. Thus in the *Unfortunate Oksana,* he gives us the same theme that was used with such great effect by Shevchenko in *Katerina,* the story of the

unfortunate girl who is seduced and carried off by a Russian captain who promises to marry her and then abandons her with her baby. She finally returns to her home to her aged mother. Petro, a young man whom she had formerly loved, now becomes her brother and when the captain returns and gives the child, his child, a few coins for nuts, the mother throws them out of the window into the street. The evil desires of the captain have been helped by the pride and the beauty of Oksana who has hoped and dreamed of a husband who would be of higher social station than she is and it is this desire to rise above the other girls of the village that leads to her downfall and tragedy.

In the dramas which Kvitka wrote for the Kharkiv stage, he has the same attitude but he very often uses the same mixture of Ukrainian and Russian that was the vogue before the dramas of Kotlyarevsky. Thus in *Shelmenko the Orderly,* the hero who is saved from military service into which he has been plunged by the scheming and unscrupulous village clerk, talks Russian consistently whereas the orderly usually speaks Ukrainian. The way in which the governor unmasks the rascality of his subordinate and punishes him is typical of Kvitka's attitude toward the imperial regime. The crooked clerk is also a good example of the climbing and corrupt Ukrainians who desire to get away from their peasant past. As the inn keeper says, "The village clerk, a peasant with money, is ashamed to be with his brothers and wastes money for a costly meal and expensive wines," because he thinks that this represents enlightenment and improvement.

Again and again in these plays as in his stories, Kvitka the reactionary does not hesitate to put down the truth as he sees it, even though it runs counter to many of the preconceived ideas which he elsewhere stubbornly defends. He does not idealize many of his characters and almost unconsciously he gives us the attitude of the people to their Russian rulers. Thus Nikita says in this same play, "My father did not teach me to write in order that I should become evil and worthless and he tried to put me on the right path." It is also interesting that he, speaking Russian, still cannot read and write his native tongue, for he knows only the church language, that arbitrary and artificial system to which Kotlyarevsky had given the death blow with his *Eneida.*

After giving such rich and varied pictures of Ukrainian life, it is strange that he returned to Russian and in such stories as *Pan Halyavsky,* he describes in a fairly amusing manner the life of a typical rich cub with his stupid Polish tutors and his inability to accomplish anything. In great detail the author shows how he is tyrannized over

by his ambitious wife who succeeds in sending him to the country, so that she can play around with the army officers who seem to her more attractive. Perhaps in a way Kvitka is not so untrue to his own feelings, for he draws a sharp differentiation between the native life of the villages and the gay existence of the capital.

Kvitka then stands in a curious position in Ukrainian literature. He undoubtedly deserves the praise which was showered upon him for his ability in describing Ukrainian peasant life in excellent and readable prose. He marks a definite advance over Kotlyarevsky in the greater range of emotions and themes which he handles and in the more serious moods that appear at times. Yet it was not in him to be a champion of the cause of his people. It was not in him to break definitely with the polished world of the great estates and to start a definite movement for the assistance of the peasants. He recognized the dubious position of Ukraine in its contacts with the Russians but at the same time he appreciated the advantages which the connection with Russia had given him and his aristocratic friends and he was constantly torn between the two ideals.

Kvitka was really a passing phase in the development of Ukrainian literature. In many ways he can be compared to Gogol who had definitely stepped across the line into Russian. Kvitka was held back by his success in his Ukrainian stories. He knew the village life around him and felt that it was only from that life that he could draw his best themes. Yet he did not analyze or think through his position. He remained within the framework and lived the life of the average Russianized Ukrainian nobleman and hence it was, as he swayed back and forth, that he was condemned by Shevchenko and the ardent young patriots of the next generation.

At the same time he found a deeper appreciation at home than in Russia. Byelinsky, the great Russian critic and liberal, expressed himself very strongly against the peasant stories of Kvitka, for he did not believe that peasant life could furnish the material for serious literature and despite his marked democratic leaning, he was opposed to the use of the Ukrainian language for literary purposes. Hence he condemned Kvitka on all counts. Nevertheless Kvitka has held his own for his peasant stories especially in Ukraine. They have been often edited and reedited and still find large masses of readers, despite the sentimental style in which many were written. Had he been inclined to rest his fame upon his Ukrainian stories, his place would have been higher, and he could have polished them even more highly. As it is, his Russian work has been forgotten, his Ukrainian stories

have lived, and we must consider him as another milestone in the resurrection of the Ukrainian consciousness and in the development of the language. The great master had not yet appeared to crown the work but Kvitka was one of the men of the transition period who builded better and more solidly than they knew or dared to imagine.

CHAPTER FIVE

TARAS SHEVCHENKO

It was a favorable time for poetry, if not for the poet himself. The second quarter of the nineteenth century saw a great flowering of poetry in Russia and in Western Europe. The first wave of interest in folk poetry was reaching its height and together with the Romantic movement was spreading into the Slavonic countries. There was a lively interest everywhere in the collecting of folk songs and not only in Western Europe but throughout the Balkans there were the first rumblings of the new nationalistic interest in language. Goethe was translating and praising the Serb ballads which had been brought to his attention. The Czechs were discussing with vehemence the authenticity of the ancient manuscripts recently discovered by Hanka. Safarik was working on the history of all Slavonic literatures. Mickiewicz had already achieved fame as a poet and his residence in St. Petersburg during the twenties had spread a knowledge of his works throughout Russia. The Polish Romantic movement was dominating the Polish scene and the great trio of Mickiewicz, Slowacki, and Krasinski were doing their best work.

In Russia too poetry was in its Golden Age. It was the period of Alexander Pushkin, the greatest of the Russian lyric poets. Around him was gathered a group of the gilded youth who had mastered the art of elegant verse and who had wide human interests, even though they cloaked them under a mask of aristocratic dilettantism. As their patron and adviser, Zhukovsky was still the master critic. With his excellent court connections, where he was the tutor of the young Tsarevich, later Alexander II, he was able to save the poets from the consequences of their own pranks and to give them good advice on their literary work. More than that Gogol with his Russian stories on Ukrainian and Kozak life had concentrated the attention of the general public on the life of Little Russia, for the name of Ukraine was still taboo in official circles. Now, if ever, was the time in Russia when there might be a hearing for Ukrainian culture, even if there

were still no feeling for any change in the political situation. The era of the Russian literary gentlemen was at its climax. That of the plebeian realists was yet to come.

It was an ominous time for the poet himself. The Russian armies, returning from the defeat of Napoleon, had brought with them the seeds of modern democratic and republican influences. This had led the progressive aristocracy to embark upon the ill-fated Decembrist Revolution and when the tragic consequences of that evil day had passed, it was realized that Nicholas I with his narrow bureaucratic tendencies had destroyed the political power of the liberal elements of the country. Many of the literary men had suffered and even Pushkin was for a while under suspicion and in real danger. Then came the Polish revolt of 1831 and the Russian armies stormed Warsaw and destroyed the little autonomy that had previously existed in that land. Nicholas was suspicious of new outbreaks and as he firmly bound the universally recognized Pushkin with golden chains and broke his heart at the Russian court, so he was on the watch for any new malefactors who might venture to preach the hated liberal ideas.

It was just at this moment that a young Ukrainian serf, Taras Shevchenko, arrived in St. Petersburg, little dreaming of the changes that a few short years would make in his life.

He had been born on February 25, 1814, in the little village of Morintsy in the government of Kiev and was therefore a Ukrainian of the right bank of the Dnieper, far to the west of the home of both Kotlyarevsky and Kvitka. His father, though a serf on the estate of Vasily Vasilyevich Engelhardt, was able to read and write. His mother was also of a superior type and the boy always respected her memory and admired her, even though she died when he was nine years old. His father married again but the step-mother was not kind to him, and when his father died in 1826, the twelve year old Taras was left as an orphan amid the hard conditions of serfdom.

He had already been attracted to painting and he made several attempts to study with various local painters but his experiences were so unpleasant that he finally gave up and returned to his native village to pasture the cattle. A new attempt to get permission to study brought from the overseer of the estate merely an order to serve in the bakery but his failure there was so evident that he was appointd instead a page in the mansion.

This gave him at least the opportunity to feast his eyes on the beautiful works of art that it contained and encouraged him in his early attempts to copy them. He had to do this secretly and when his

master discovered his copying and painting, the boy was soundly flogged. Nevertheless Engelhardt, like many other nobles of the day, liked to have educated serfs on his estate, and since Taras seemed competent, he took the boy with him first to Vilna and then after the outbreak of the Polish revolt to St. Petersburg and apprenticed him to the painter Shirayev.

Shevchenko learned relatively little here and life was very hard but he had the opportunity to make the acquaintance of the Ukrainian artist Ivan Soshenko. This was a piece of good fortune, for Soshenko soon introuced him to Karl Petrovich Bryulov, the most fashionable painter of the day.

Bryulov was then at the height of his fame. He was of a French Huguenot family which had long been domiciled in Russia and had been allowed to Russianize his name, only when he received a fellowship to study in Italy in 1821. He stayed there twelve years and took the Italian capital by storm. There he painted his masterpiece, the *Last Days of Pompeii,* which encouraged Bulmer-Lytton to write his novel on that subject. He had come to know personally Sir Walter Scott and the other English authors who visited Italy. Now in 1833, back in Russia, his studio was frequented by the most fashionable people of the day. His courses at the Academy were the goal of all students and the approval of Bryulov meant success or failure for the average artist.

It was this man who took an interest in the young serf and desired to have him as a student, but no serf could be admitted to the Academy. Engelhardt refused to give Shevchenko his liberty but finally offered it in return for 2500 rubles. To secure this sum Bryulov painted a portrait of the Russian poet Zhukovsky and this was sold in court circles by a lottery. The money was easily raised and on April 22, 1838, Shevchenko, then twenty-four years of age, became a free man, just one year after the death of Pushkin. He commenced his formal studies at the Academy of Art and finished the course in 1845 as a free artist.

Probably as early as 1837 he had begun to write poetry but his writings began to attract attention only after he was set free. In 1840 he brought out a slender volume, the first edition of the *Kobzar,* at the expense of a Ukrainian landowner Petro Martos, whose portrait he was painting. There was something new and startling in the quality of this first work with its emphasis upon the decay of the old Ukraine and the pictures of the sufferings of the people. It was typical of the spirit of Shevchenko that one of the poems *Katerina* (named after his

beloved sister) portraying the sufferings of a Ukrainian girl betrayed by a Russian lover was dedicated to Zhukovsky. Incidentally it may be mentioned that Zhukovsky was himself the illegitimate son of a Russian officer and a Turkish girl who had been captured in war.

He then set to work upon the *Haydamaki,* his longest and greatest poem. He finished it in 1841 and published it in the same year.

In 1843 he paid a short visit to Ukraine and everywhere he was received with the greatest honors as the Ukrainian poet *par excellence.* He was entertained by the various magnates incluring Prince Repnin, the governor, who was of Ukrainian origin, and his daughter Barbara. He visited his native village and he could not fail to be impressed as he never had been with the hardships which the people were compelled to undergo.

As soon as he completed his course in the Academy, he returned to Ukraine and spent the summer of 1845 travelling around the country, visiting the sites of famous buildings. He soon found a position in the Archaeological Commission where his skill in painting stood him in good stead.

He finally settled in Kiev and soon found himself among a group of enthusiastic young men and scholars, including Nikolay Ivanovich Kostomariv and Panteleimon Kulish. Filled with the enthusiasm of youth and stirred by those revolutionary currents which were preparing the movements of 1848, they organized the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius, for the purpose of creating a great free union of all the Slavonic peoples under a republican form of government. It was typical of the change that had taken place in Russian and Ukrainian life since the time of the Decembrists that this new movement was headed not by members of the gentry or army officers but by a group of professors, scholars, and men of letters. The naturally radical instincts of Shevchenko and his ardent patriotism for Ukraine led him to associate himself with them and he shared their dreams as well as their activity.

The authorities soon heard of the movement and acted swiftly and savagely to suppress it. Apparently its existence was revealed to the authorities on February 28, 1847. The matter was referred to St. Petersburg and on April 5, Shevchenko and his friends were arrested. An investigation and trial followed and on May 30, he received the verdict that he was to be enrolled in the army in the Orenburg Independent Corps with the rank of private and the tsar added in his own handwriting, "under the strictest supervision with the prohibition of writing and drawing."

Shevchenko had been a free man for only nine years. Now he was back in bondage under an even more intolerable yoke, torn away from his beloved Ukraine and condemned to live as a soldier in the most remote area of eastern Russia on the borders of Asia. At first his service was none too rigorous, for sympathetic commanders attached him to two expeditions to explore the Sea of Aral and allowed him to make sketches for the records of the expedition. When this came to the attention of the authorities in Petersburg, the privileges were speedily revoked and the tsar's instructions were carried out literally. Finally Shevchenko was sent to the fortress of Novo-Petrovsk.

After the death of Nicholas I, the new tsar Alexander II pardoned him in 1857. Influential friends in the capital interceded for him and he heard in May that he was to be liberated but the official formalities were slow and it was the end of July before he was finally released, and he was able to start on his way home. He had reached Nizhny Novgorod on his way to Petersburg, when he was again detained, for his amnesty had not given him the right of residence in either of the capitals. It was March, 1858, before he was able to go further and even then he had to remain under police supervision. On his way to St. Petersburg, he stopped at Moscow to visit his friend Shchepkin, the celebrated actor, and he was kindly entertained by the Aksakov family.

In St. Petersburg, he resumed his studies at the Academy of Art and he renewed many old friendships, especially with Count and Countess Feodor Petrovich Tolstoy, who had been instrumental in securing his release. At their home he met such literary men as Count Aleksyey Konstantinovich Tolstoy, and in fact all of the conservative and liberal group of cultured writers, who appreciated the real value of art, literature, and freedom.

In 1859 he secured permission to pay another visit to Ukraine for the first time in twelve years and he spent the summer dreaming of marriage and of securing a little home for himself on the banks of the Dnieper. It was all in vain. On his return to St. Petersburg, he did succeed in securing the liberation from serfdom of his family but that was all. His health began to fail and he died the day after his birthday on February 26, 1861, just on the eve of the liberation of the serfs.

It was a sad life that Shevchenko had led. Out of his forty-seven years, he had been a serf for 24, in the army 10, and under police supervision for three and a half, so that there were only nine years under which he could feel himself a free man to come and go as he would. There is hardly any other writer of the same prominence to

whom fate was so uniformly unkind. Yet despite it all and despite all the obstacles which he had to face he had succeeded in placing Ukrainian literature on its feet as a recognized literature and it is highly significant that whatever may have been his radical ideas, he retained to the end the friendship and confidence of the Russian aristocratic writers far more than he did that of the liberals. Even Turgenev did not fail to look at him with some hesitation and the liberal critics utterly failed to understand his feelings of love and sympathy for Ukraine. On the other hand Apollon Grigoryev, one of the Slavophile critics, ranked him as a poet above both Pushkin and Mickiewicz.

From his earliest writings Shevchenko was the bard of Ukraine. The fate of the Kozaks and the misfortunes of his unhappy people were constantly in his thoughts and in his early works, in accordance with the Romantic currents of the day, he idealized the life which they had lived, the stern and bitter conflicts which they had waged for independence and he glorified the *kobzars*, the folk bards, who alone preserved for posterity the memory of the heroic deeds of the Ukrainian past.

That is the message of *Perebenda*, the poor old bard who wanders around homeless and neglected, singing of the great heroes of former days, singing wherever he can receive a few coins to eke out his miserable existence, and yet ever returning to the graves of the departed warriors to mourn over the fate of Ukraine. There was much in the old bard that can remind us of Shevchenko himself and of the role that he imagined for himself from his first steps in the art of writing.

There have been many attempts to trace the literary origin of this type of the old peasant bard which was so widespread and common in Ukraine and the other Slavonic lands. Some have tried to find the model in Mickiewicz, in the poems of Pushkin, but perhaps after all, we can imagine without too much fancy that Shevchenko had heard from his teacher Bryulov, the friend of Sir Walter Scott, of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel.* Those words at the beginning of the English poem,

> The way was long, the wind was cold,
> The minstrel was infirm and old.
> His withered cheek and tresses gray
> Seemed to have known a better day.
> The last of all the bards was he
> Who sang of border chivalry.

sets the tone of *Perebenda* far better than do all the mystical and

prophetic bards that have been invoked as models. We have an indirect support of this in the preface of the second *Kobzar* of 1847, when Shevchenko says that the Russians point to the fact that Scott did not write in his own language, but "he was born in Edinburgh and not in Scotland. . . And Burns was also a great national poet."

The pathos of the last minstrel, as Scott draws him, is close to the message of Perebenda, but Shevchenko adapts him perfectly to the Ukrainian scene. These is less of the beautiful romance about the Ukrainian situation. There is a deeper sadness and a deeper pathos, as the burden upon the lower classes was heavier and more intolerable. Scott described a situation of two centuries before and conditions had changed and mellowed with the passing of time, Shevchenko, the freed serf, was thinking of the life which he had once personally known and of the battles in which there had participated men whom he had known in Ukraine. In the *Kobzar*, he laid his main emphasis on the struggles between the Kozaks and the Poles. Moscow and the Russians play a subordinate part, for after all Shevchenko was from the right bank of the Dnieper where the bloody Kozak wars against the Poles had been fought in the preceding centuries.

The only poem that describes the relations with the Russians is *Katerina,* the story of the young girl who has a child by a Russian officer who has seduced her and then cast her off. When she finally overtakes him, he is unwilling to recognize her or his child. This social theme was to grow in importance as Shevchenko matured, but it rests upon his observation of the present rather than his regard for the past.

The *Kobzar* marked an epoch in modern Ukrainian literature. For the first time a poet had arisen to pour out his heart in his native tongue and to express the sufferings of his people and their past. Shevchenko was not like the earlier authors who had developed Ukrainian but who had also worked extensively in Russian. He did very little in the Russian language and even that little belongs to the most unimportant part of his work. He was a Ukrainian first, last, and always and he never was attracted by any of the compromises that were so convenient and popular.

The next year saw the publication of the *Haydamaki,* the greatest poem of Shevchenko and the masterpiece of Ukrainian epic poetry. It goes back to the last struggles in Western Ukraine in the eighteenth century, to the last uprising of the peasants and the Kozaks in a futile attempt to secure relief from their Polish masters. His grandfather had told him stories of this struggle, the Koliivshchina, which spread

fire and sword through part of Ukraine in 1768, and in the poem Shevchenko reworked these legends on the basis of eye-witness accounts. As he says:

> My grandsir was there and my father who's dead,
> It happened one Sunday on closing the book
> And drinking a cup with a neighbor of ours,
> My father asked grandsir to tell us a tale
> Of Koliivshchina, how there they had fought,
> How Zaliznyak, Gonta had punished the Poles.
> His aged old eyes flamed afresh as the stars,
> His words came out fluently, youthful, and strong;
> How they finished the Poles, and how Smila was burned.
> The neighbors in fear and in sorrow were dumb
> And I in my youth more than once set to weeping
> In grief for the sexton.
> But no one did notice
> How wept the young child in the still of the cabin.
> Thanks, grandsir, for all that you kept in your head,
> The glory that once was the pride of the Kozaks,
> Now I to my grandchildren tell the same tale. (I. 2421ff)

In the preface the poet speaks in the same mood, bewailing the invariable tendency of the day to treat Ukrainian themes as a source of gaiety and merriment while "Ukraina's weeping." To him a country and a culture that had produced such warriors as the bards had sung of was not something to be mocked and treated as of small esteem. The hetmans and the atamans of the past were worthy of a better fate and a better regard among following generations.

There is nothing mild about the poem. The convulsion of the Koliivshchina had been too terrible for that. It was a tale of savage massacres, one of those wild outbursts which was a war to the bitter end and where the oppressed, once they had taken up arms, could look only for victory or death. Yet the best passages in the poem are not the battle scenes—in one sense Shevchenko slurs over them,—nor are they the pictures of devastation and of slaughter, but rather the preludes to the action, the gathering of the clans, the blessing of the weapons, scenes of the country which was so soon to be overwhelmed with bloodshed, and apostrophes to those leaders who had carved out for themselves a place in legend and in folklore and whose most patriotic efforts had met only with failure and disaster.

The prologue and the epilogue show us the enthusiasm of the poet and his spirit. Shevchenko was not bloodthirsty. He was not a military man. Yet as he looked out at the world, he could not fail to see the difference between the past centuries, when the Kozak hetmans moved in the most aristocratic circles of Poland and matched wits and swords with the Polish magnates and the present time when the poor serfs were denied the least human rights.

The visit to Ukraine in 1843 seems to have made a great difference in his ideas. The first ideal of Shevchenko was the free Kozak state, the Sich where the men made and unmade their officers, and he emphasized in his early poems the great struggle of these lovers of freedom against the Polish nobles. Later in the Hetman state, the rights and privileges of the ordinary Kozaks had been largely curtailed and a new form of aristocracy had grown up among the Ukrainian people. It was this new race of aristocrats that had made the treaty of Pereyaslavl with Moscow and had fashioned the Russian yoke upon the Kozaks. Much as he admired Bohdan Khmelnitsky, he could not help feeling that this act was the cause of all the troubles of Ukraine. He was not enough of a student of history to appreciate the complications of the situation in which Bohdan found himself and he did not see the difference between the great Hetman and his lesser followers who allowed themselves to be deluded and deceived by the Muscovite ambassadors in the seventeenth century. Perhaps there was more than a grain of truth in the artistic insight of the poet but he differed sharply with the scholars of his day, including his friend Kostomariv, and went on his own way. He was more fascinated by the figure of Mazepa who joined with Charles XII of Sweden against Peter the Great than he was with Bohdan seeking Muscovite support against the Poles. From 1843 on, Moscow and the Russians were for him the chief enemy of Ukraine. He was still free and had not yet met the personal disillusionment with the Russian regime. Still his return to Ukraine and the startling effect that the sufferings of the serfs made upon him seem to have swung his sympathies into a social channel and away from the romantic pictures of life in the Sich.

This is the theme of the *Great Grave* (*Veliky Lyokh*), a curious but effective mystical poem, in which under various forms Shevchenko pictures the past, the present, and the future of Ukraine. The lost souls come from three crucial periods of Ukrainian history. One had cooperated with Bohdan in surrendering to Moscow, the second opposed Mazepa in his attempts at liberation, and the third had aided Catherine in abolishing the Sich. Then come the three crows, the

Ukrainian which recognizes what has happened to bring the land to its doom, the Polish which expresses the fate of Poland and the Muscovite which boasts of its success. There are the poor singers who in their misery are endeavoring to collect alms for praising Bohdan. Finally there is the excavation of the graves, the little one where lie the bones of Bohdan and the great one in which are buried the spirit and the independence of Ukraine and which will also one day be excavated so that the nation can rise again. The poem is one of the most famous of Shevchenko's and perhaps nowhere does he express more powerfully and bitterly his disapproval of the oppression of Ukraine by Moscow and the Russians.

In the *Caucasus* he sympathized with the still continuing struggle of the mountaineers to maintain their independence from the Russian yoke. He sees the pathos of the natives and he compares it with the fate of Ukraine before the Moscow arms.

At the same time Shevchenko commenced to pay more attention to the suffering that he observed among the poor of his country. He had alluded to social ills in *Katerina.* Now he repeats and repeats the same message as in the *Hireling* where the poor deceived girl never confesses to her son that she is his mother, until she is on her death bed. All her life long she has had to treat him as the child of the kindly couple who have taken her in and given her protection when her own parents had cast her out. The sufferings of the girl at the hands of Muscovite lovers and the cruelty of the village toward those who have transgressed its moral code weighed upon his soul and more than once he returns to this theme which was to be one of the chief subjects which he treated in later days.

Another result of the dreams of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius is the *Heretic,* dedicated to Safarik and singing the praise of the great Czech patriot Jan Hus, who was burned at Constance for his religious and political views. Yet the treatment of Shevchenko is characteristic for he sees in Hus not so much the national hero or the great scholar as he does the representative of the common people. This is the first time when he went outside of Ukraine for a subject but we can see very clearly how those qualities which he glorified in Hus are precisely those which he desired for his own people and if we are to interpret any of his works symbolically we can do it here and feel that Hus is another lost leader of the Ukrainian people.

A deeper and more tragic note appears in his works as the hour came for his arrest. There is more of the purely personal lyric, more of a feeling of pessimism as he realizes that he had attained a certain

freedom for himself but that this only laid upon his shoulders the heavier burden of securing it for his own people. He could not enjoy his personal success while he remembered that his people and his family were still in bondage. More and more he came to draw inspiration from the Old Testament and the sufferings of Israel.

His arrest threw these new feelings into the foreground and during his confinement in St. Petersburg, he produced a surprising quantity of excellent songs which expressed his sorrow and his discouragement. Let us take the following as an example:

It makes no difference to me,
If I shall live or not in Ukraine
Or whether any one shall think
Of me 'mid foreign snow and rain.
It makes no difference to me.
In slavery I grew 'mid strangers,
Unwept by any kin of mine;
In slavery I now will die
And vanish without any sign.
I shall not leave the slightest trace
Upon our glorious Ukraine,
Our land, but not as ours known.
No father will remind his son
Or say to him, Repeat one prayer,
One prayer for him; for our Ukraine
They tortured him in their foul lair.
It makes no difference to me,
If that son says a prayer or not.
It makes great difference to me
That evil folk and wicked men
Attack our Ukraine, once so free,
And rob and plunder it at will.
That makes great difference to me.

At times as the difficulties and hardships of life descended upon him in the faraway districts of Orenburg and Aral, he became discouraged but the vast bulk of his poetry was a lamentation for his absence from his beloved Ukraine. He dreamed of the beauties of its fertile soil now that he was in an arid and desolate region and he lamented the sad fate of his beloved country as well as his own. A surprising number of poems deal also with the hardships and the

troubles of a young girl who has been left an orphan to make her way in a cruel and unfeeling world. Perhaps in some of these we may easily imagine that the girl symbolizes Ukraine, for the two themes of the ruined country and the ruined girl more than once merge in the thoughts of the sympathetic poet.

As the rigors of imprisonment became still more severe, Shevchenko tried his hand at prose in various stories which he dated from before his imprisonment but he seems to have done this in an effort to avoid the tsar's prohibition of writing and drawing. These stories, while they are good, add little to his reputation. Shevchenko was primarily a poet and the prose which he wrote contains little new, either in ideas or content. They are largely reworkings of the same themes of the suffering girl, the tyrannical landlord, the Muscovite seducer and oppressor that he had dealt with earliier in more concentrated form in his verse. They have attracted less attention than his poetry and as in the case of Pushkin form the minor part of his work.

We must mention two poems of this period. One is the *Prophet* in which he sets forth the value of the poet as a proclaimer of the divine ideals but the unappreciative people reject and kill him and choose a tsar in his place. The other is *To the Poles,* in which he laments the feud that the Jesuits had stirred up to destroy the harmony that had once prevailed between the free Poles and the free Kozaks. The poem is far removed from the glorification of the Kozak wars in the poems of the *Kobzar* and the more romantic dreams of a free Ukraine, but Shevchenko in his life and thinking had passed from the right bank of the Dnieper to the Hetman state and he realized the many conflicting elements that had wrecked Ukrainian existence. He saw now that they were more serious and more complicated than he had once believed and from this time on he rarely alluded to those old battles and never with the anger against the Poles that had once been so manifest. It is however interesting that he never relented in his distrust of and hostility to the Russians and in his condemnation of the tsars for their destruction of the rights of the Sich and the free Kozaks.

On his release from captivity, Shevchenko dashed off in a few days one of his great poems, the *Neophytes,* a tale of ancient Rome and the persecution of the early Christians, dedicated to his friend Shchepkin. We can hardly fail to see in this as in the other poems of the ancient world the influence of his old master Bryulov, who had laid the basis for his fame by his scenes from classical antiquity. Yet the story of the young Christian whose heroic martyrdom for the faith

finally converted his mother to Christianity and faith in the Crucified was perhaps a symbol of the spreading power of Ukrainian self-confidence. The comparison between the tyrannical Nero and the Russian tsar was so evident that it terrified some of the poet's friends as Kulish who feared that new misfortunes would come upon the poet. None did but it is a tribute to the courage and unbending loyalty of Shevchenko to his ideals that he never wavered in them even at the most critical times. His message of freedom and of kindness he would not dilute or hide, no matter what it might cost him personally or how more timid men might take to cover.

Nevertheless Shevchenko had returned a broken man. He produced one more long poem, *Maria,* a story of the Blessed Virgin which differs in some ways from the ecclesiastical tradition. For this he was denounced as irreligious. Yet that is hardly the word to be used, for there is a deep religious feeling in the work and if he has violated the sacred story to make more poignant the character of the Blessed Virgin and to equate her life history with that of the suffering Ukraine, the poem does not deserve the severe abuse that has been directed against it by the more literal minded. He aimed to show the apparent overwhelming of the right and the temporary triumph of evil but he never had in his own mind any doubt as to the final outcome, whether the time of waiting and of suffering were long or short.

The vast majority of his poems after his return, however, are either adaptations and imitations of the Psalms and the Old Testament or they are pathetic expressions of his hope for a little home on the banks of the Dnieper and for at least a few years of happy family life. He was weary of the struggle that he had waged for his people for his entire life. He had succeeded in freeing his own family from serfdom and the broken and exhausted man felt that he could now hope for something for himself. It was not to be and an untimely death struck him down just a few days before the tsar had definitely abolished that serfdom against which he had fought so violently.

The importance of Shevchenko cannot be overemphasized. He was the greatest of the Ukrainian poets and he was more than that. He was the first writer who was purely and thoroughly Ukrainian, who dared to dream of a Ukrainian language and literature that would be completely separate from Russian and would have an independent place in the world.

He had started his career with the romantic dream of perpetuating the memory of the conflicts between the Kozaks and the Poles and of reviving the old days when the free Kozaks were able to carve out

a precarious liberty for themselves and their people. Experience and observation taught him that that was impossible. He always valued the positive ideals of the old days, he realized the courage and the heroism of the leaders and still more of the ordinary man of the time. But he soon saw that that was not enough and that those days would not return. It was necessary to build for the future and he considered all that had passed since that fateful treaty of Pereyaslavl the unfortunate consequences of a mistake.

That led him to differences of opinion with many of his most intimate friends, for some of them were hoping against hope that there could be some settlement on the lines proposed by the great Bohdan. Shevchenko did not believe it possible and he dared to express his beliefs. To him a free Ukraine meant exactly what it said, a Ukraine that would be completely independent in every sense of the word, that would not be subject to interference by any foreign ruler, especially the Russian tsar. That was a more immediate danger than the old feuds with the Poles for after the division of that country and the failure of the revolt of 1831, Shevchenko saw that the Ukrainians, particularly those on the right bank and in the Hetman state had nothing to fear from the ruined Poland.

He had an ardent democratic and revolutionary faith in the common people and he recognized that they were the very backbone of the Ukrainian stock. In his lifetime he was friendly with many of the more enlightened members of the Ukrainian nobility and with many of the conservative writers of Russia. Never did he compromise his beliefs that the new order was to be founded upon the rights of the common man who must be educated to enjoy his new privileges. His ideas were often in close agreement with those of the Russian radicals but he did not have much personal contact with them for his belief in a liberal and radical solution of the Ukrainian question on its own territory shut him off from their refusal to recognize the Ukrainians as distinct from the Russians and their attempts to create in Russia an ideal system based only on western ideas and ideologies.

He was a peasant but he realized also that all was not well within the peasant communities and in the peasant way of life. They were cruel and merciless to one another, for example, in their dealings with girls who had transgressed the moral code and it was impossible to blame all this upon the external oppression to which they were subjected. It was perhaps a result of serfdom and of self protection but it was an attitude that needed to be changed, if Ukrainian life was to be enlightened.He felt from his own experience what the people could

achieve, if they were awakend to a sense of their own responsibilities and he worked in every way to help them. He understood the need of education and of progress and he did not try to conceal what he felt with the result that he gave us realistic pictures of peasant life, avoiding both undue idealization and excessive condemnation of the people's weaknesses, for he knew that much of these was due to ignorance.

Born a serf and later a soldier in the Russian army, he accomplished with few opportunities for formal education an amazing amount. He took the Ukrainian language as it had been developed by Kotlyarevsky and his followers and by the force of his own genius made it into a language capable of expressing the most refined emotions and fully adequate to all the needs of modern literature. He voiced in that language and in no other the thoughts and aspirations of his people. He had completely separated Ukrainian from Russian and started it along an independent course and he had made himself its greatest literary master. Taras Shevchenko, the son of a serf with his fanatical faith in the victory of democratic ideals and despite all obstacles, made himself one of the great poets of the Slavonic world and his fame will live as long as that of any of his contemporaries in the other literatures. No one of them believed more firmly or voiced more clearly an unyielding and uncompromising belief that democracy, truth and freedom would win the day and no one worked harder or suffered more to bring it about.

CHAPTER SIX

PANTALEIMON KULISH

SHEVCHENKO was a poet by the grace of God and a genius who set the path for the Ukrainian people. Endowed with an iron will and firmly devoted to the principles in which he believed, he was able to undergo all the hardships of his sad life without giving way or varying the course on which he had embarked. Not so with Pantaleimon Kulish who was great in his positive activity but unfortunately equally great in his defects and errors. He devoted himself to the cause of Ukraine but over and over again some peculiar mode of thinking cast over his reputation a shadow which was easily avoidable. It makes his figure unusual and pathetic rather than tragic. He stood the buffets of fate but it is always difficult to discover exactly what he sought from life.

Kulish was born of a small landowning Kozak family in the district of Hlukhiv in the government of Chernihiv July 27, 1819 and was thus only five years younger than Shevchenko. He first learned to read in Church Slavonic from a young cousin and as a child he was greatly influenced by a neighboring landowner Ulyana Muzhikovskaya who impressed him as a highly superior being and almost a god.

He was sent to school but was not allowed to finish the gymnasium because of the prejudices of his father. Despite this he succeeded in entering the University of Kiev and paid his way by acting for months at a time as tutor on various estates. It was from this period that he first became interested in peasant poetry and folksongs and some of his stories based on folk motifs were published in the collection *Kievlyanin,* edited by Prof. Maksimovich in 1840. In 1843 he published a collection of poems, *Ukraina,* based largely upon folksongs with some additions of his own, and he dreamed of combining them to form a Ukrainian *Iliad* but he did not have the opportunity or the poetical ability to undertake it. He was not a natural poet like Shevchenko and seemed to avoid direct comparison with him.

On the other hand the historical novel always interested him. While he was in the university, he had become acquainted with the works of Sir Walter Scott and he instinctively realized that the exploits of the Kozaks lent themselves to the same kind of treatment. Yet even then some impulse kept him from achieving in that line the perfection which he might have had.

At Kiev he became friendly with Kostomariv and Shevchenko and was with them in the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius. He very soon was called to St. Petersburg by Pletnev to teach in the University there and also to conduct classes in Russian for foreigners. He married the sister of Bilozersky, another of the members of the Society, and had just received a stipend to study abroad, when the blow fell upon the Society. Kulish was arrested in Warsaw, as he was preparing to leave the country, and was brought back to St. Petersburg for the trial. He fared better than most of the others and was only sentenced to two months in prison, perhaps through the intercession of Pletnev who warmly recommended him as a young man of high mind and religious principles. He was then exiled to Tula with the prohibition of writing but the supervision over him was not so strict as that over Shevchenko and he was able to continue his literary work by publishing under various pen names.

On his return to St. Petersburg in 1850 he was able to resume anonymous writing and he published the first of his studies on Gogol, the money for which was furnished by the distinguished Slavophile Sergey Aksakov. For a while he held a small job in the government service and then his friends bought for him 120 desyatins of land in Ukraine and he and his wife went there in an effort to earn his living by agriculture.

After the accession of Alexander II, he was granted an amnesty and the permission to publish under his own name. He rapidly brought out his *Memoirs on South Russia* (1856), prepared the first edition of his *Grammar* and in 1857 he published in both Ukrainian and Russian his main historical novel, the *Black Council.*

In his *Grammar* Kulish set the standard for the orthography of the Ukrainian language and his decisions were accepted as final for many years. He made himself the authority on all kinds of linguistic and grammatical and stylistic questions, and hoped that his work would be employed in the proposed Ukrainian school system. He followed this book with simpler writings intended for the common people.

The *Black Council* was his chief work of fiction. It dealt with the period immediately after the death of Khmelnitsky, when the various Kozak colonels were competing for the hetmanship and when Poland and Moscow had divided the country between the right and left banks of the Dnieper. He emphasized the vivid contrasts between the manners and customs of the officer class and the more unruly and undisciplined members of the Zaporozhian Sich as Kyrylo Tur, and although he pays tribute to their loyalty and fidelity to Kozak traditions and to the bravery and heroic conduct which they demonstrated on all occasions, there is always a lurking feeling in the mind of the reader that Kulish did not after all consider these Kozaks of the Sich as the real bearers of a national culture of a very high type.

With the love affair between Petro Shramenko and Lesya Cherivanivna, Kulish remained true to the type of the romantic novel as it was then understood in Europe. There are the usual scenes of adventure for the hero, the battles, the feasts, the feats of arms, that we are accustomed to expect. There is also a certain democratic tinge to the novel. On the whole it is a good piece of work and it was only at the very end in an epilogue in the Russian translation that he alluded to the certainty that it was the undisciplined actions of the Kozaks that had precipitated the loss of Ukrainian independence and had ruined the country.

In 1861 his brother-in-law Bilozersky secured permission to publish a Ukrainian journal at St. Petersburg, the *Osnova,* and Kulish, while forbidden by the censor to take over control of the publication, was its main contributor. It gave him an opportunity for sociological and ethnographical studies and it also gave opportunity to his enemies to criticize him, for in one unfortunate article, he declared that the hetmanate was a tree rotten internally and he asserted that the Ukrainians should not regret its destruction. Kostomariv, an infinitely more careful and better scholar, agreed in part with Kulish but he emphasized that the method of its destruction was the important factor and that this had been more harmful to Ukraine than the destruction itself.

There were other difficulties with the *Osnova.* Kulish still remained close to the ideals of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius which had been suppressed fourteen years earlier but at the same time he did not feel free to include in the periodical the extremely iconoclastic views on federalism which had precipitated the arrest of its members. He was little more friendly to the radical social views of some of the younger generation who had been influenced by the

Russian radicals of the late fifties. As a result the journal languished and finally came to an end before the repressive measures taken by the Russian government after the Polish revolt of 1863.

For a few years after the ending of the *Osnova,* there came a period when severe restrictions were put upon the printing of Ukrainian books. During this time Kulish was in the Russian service in Poland and then in 1869 he went to Eastern Galicia in Austria-Hungary to establish closer relations with the Western Ukraine and arrange to have his books published in Lviv.

Here his unfortunate disposition again got him into trouble with the leading Ukrainian circles. In 1882 in the *Krashanka* he used certain expressions that convinced the Ukrainians of the West that he was taking sides with the Poles against them and he suffered again severe criticism.

The fact was that Kulish had more or less fundamentally changed his views during the passing years. In his younger days he had noted in his travels that the Ukrainian customs and language had been better preserved in the villages than in the urban centres and on the large estates. He had already realized that this peasant culture was on a relatively low level and he became convinced that it was largely the result of the turbulent manners of the Kozaks. He did not take into account the other factors of denationalization that had swept from the Ukrainian population the bulk of the gentry and the educated class who had been drawn off into other fields. He expounded his ideas in the *Unification of Rus* in 1874-7, and also in the *Falling Away of Little Russia from Poland* in 1889. Both of these books aroused violent antipathy to his views and in the minds of many people they outbalanced the work which he had done for the upbuilding of the movement.

To tell the truth, Kulish had become gradually a violent Kozakophobe and he could hardly speak of those doughty warriors without applying to them all kinds of opprobrious epithets, despite the fact that it was in their camps that the Ukrainians had survived foreign pressure for two centuries. The whole theme of many of his later poems as in the *Village Sparks* can be well summed up in these lines,

> For thou hast perished, Ukraina mother,
> Amid Kozaks and all the worthless rabble.
> In blood and ruins dies the fairest flower
> Of thine abundant nature.

Yet this is from the pen of the same writer who first tried to unite Eastern and Western Ukraine and who had written interesting and sympathetic studies of the Kozaks of the preceding centuries.

He had returned to poetry after the death of Shevchenko with his collection *Dosvidki* (*Experiences*) 1862 and he brought out several other volumes. They were good poems but they were sadly lacking in that especial spark of genius which alone marks the great poets of the world.

At the same time and despite his unmitigated opposition to the Kozaks and all that they stood for, Kulish continued to work at the translation of the masterpieces of the world into Ukrainian. He translated many of the plays of Shakespeare, the poems of Byron, and much of Goethe and Schiller. On a more ambitious scale during his residence in Lviv he translated the Books of Moses and then in 1870 he brought out the Four Gospels and the Book of Psalms. He continued to work on this after his return to Russia and by his death he had completed twenty-nine books of the Old Testament. All this was in addition to a constant stream of journalistic work.

Kulish continued to work to the very end and often in the greatest poverty. For long periods of time, he and his wife were compelled to live on almost the same fare as those peasants whom he affected to despise and for whom he was expending all his energy. Illness did not stop his working and he continued almost to the very end which came on February 2, 1897.

His was a sad fate. One of that brilliant group that had suffered so much for the cause of Ukraine in 1847, he gradually drifted towards a point of view that could benefit no one but the enemies of his people. Yet with it all he continued his work, sacrificing more and more to it, without being able to see the inherent contradictions between his goal and his philosophy. With his ability and his personal integrity, he could have been a far more attractive figure, had he ever reached a proper balance but even without that, he has left his mark upon the development of the language and literature and he was one of the first to grasp the possibilities of contact between Eastern and Western Ukraine and to act upon it. In evaluating his work we must agree with Yefremiv that he was great in his positive achievements but also great in his mistakes. Then and only then can we see him in his true perspective.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MARKO VOVCHOK

The stifling bureaucratic regime of Nicholas I offered a poor opportunity for the development of a new generation. The collapse of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius was a heavy blow to the older school of Ukrainian authors and it weighed still more heavily upon the next generation which would have been attracted to it. At the same time throughout Russia the old Romantic school vanished and a new era of prose came into being. It was now the period of Turgenev and Belinsky and it was only natural that the new tendencies would make their influence felt upon the still weak Ukrainian literature.

There was another factor that was extremely important. Up to this time the authors had had a personal connection with the old Ukraine in its last phases. Shevchenko knew from his grandfather many details of the Koliivshchina. In his youth there were still living men and women who remembered that revolt, the Sich and the Hetman state. What would be the spirit of the writers who had been born too late to have that personal contact with the actors of the last scenes? That question was still to be answered?

By the time that Alexander II had ascended the throne, Russia and all Europe had passed out of the Romantic period. The new school of writing paid attention not to the past but to the present, to the hardships and difficulties of daily life rather than to the stirring deeds of even the recent past. This was particularly true in Russia where for nearly half a century all the writers devoted themselves exclusively to the contemporary scene and to the movement for the liberation of the peasants and the improvement of the conditions of the present.

Kvitka had in a way directed the attention of the Ukrainian authors to the rich stores of material that were to be found there but his characters were too idealized, too perfect to suit the next generation.

Besides that the predominant idea may well be called the belief in the republican philosopher in homespun. The type appeared in France, in England, in America, and in Russia and of course it would appear in Ukraine. This was a school of thought that definitely emphasized the humanity and the clear thinking of the uneducated peasant. The authors believed sincerely that most, if not all of the evil of life, came from the misthinking and errors of the upper classes. They saw in the peasants, despite their rudeness, a vigor and an intelligence that only required the possibility of free use and development to solve most of the troubles and abuses of the day.

And those abuses were heavy. The rights of the nobles were construed so as to deny to the peasants the most elementary human rights and the serfs in Russia were probably never more bitterly oppressed than they were in the last decades of serfdom. The economic pressure of progress upon the nobles was so great that many of them, to satisfy their supposed financial needs and to keep up with the procession of culture, found it necessary to squeeze the last drop of income out of their serfs and the more the landowners desired the comforts of the nineteenth century, the more they were forced to inhuman devices to collect the wherewithal.

Shevchenko in his last works keenly felt this oppression. He had passed through the school of experience and after he had been able to compare the life in the capital with the hardships of the peasants, he spoke out strongly against this oppression. His was not the only voice that was raised but it carried him over from the Romantic period to the age of realism.

The author that was to be the spokesman of this new period in prose was Maria Vilinskaya, who was born in 1834 of a Ukrainian landowning family which had moved from Ukraine to Orel in Russia. She was educated in the Kharkiv pension, one of the fashionable girl's schools of the period. When she returned to Orel, she met and married Opanas Markovich, who was there in exile as a former member of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius. The newly married couple returned to Ukraine in 1851 and for about a decade they lived in Chernihiv, Kiev, and Nemiriv. She became interested in ethnography and began to study the peasant life, customs, and language. Naturally the young wife became convinced of the evils of serfdom and it was this that launched her into literature.

In 1852 Turgenev had published in book form his *Memoirs of a Sportsman* and these tales of peasant life speedily became the standard for the new realistic treatment of the peasant existence. The Tsar

Alexander II read and reread them and it was often said that they inspired him to issue the decree of emancipation. Yet it is to be noted that Turgenev had contented himself with picturing the peasants as human beings and had not laid stress upon those phases of life that were most repulsive to the human conscience. He had secured his effects by emphasizing the humanity of the peasants rather than the brutality of the landowners and thereby he had definitely reached the higher level of literature which many of his followers failed to attain.

In 1857 Maria Markovich sent to Kulish two stories on Ukrainian peasant life which he read with enthusiasm and published under the pen name of Marko Vovchok. The real identity of the author was not ascertained for some time but the stories themselves attracted a great deal of attention as soon as they were published. The next year, 1858, a full volume appeared under the title of *Narodni Opovidaniya* (*Folk Sketches*) and it was warmly acclaimed by Shevchenko as the writing of a prophet sent to the Ukrainian people to rouse them to opposition against serfdom. Turgenev translated some of these tales into Russian and Maria Markovich soon finished the translation herself.

She soon published another series in Russian under the title of *Stories from the Folk Life of Russia* which attracted attention. The Russian critic Dobrolyubov used this latter work as a text for one of his longer essays on the real strength of the peasant character, after he had criticized her Ukrainian works on the ground that it was impossible and undesirable socially to endeavor to create a literary vocabulary in what was essentially an uncouth peasant dialect, an idea which he stoutly maintained along with most of the Russian radicals and a large part of the reactionary bureaucracy.

In 1859 she and her husband went abroad and while she was away she published in 1862 another volume of Ukrainian stories. He returned to Russia without her and died in 1867. During these years she became very friendly with the radical leaders Herzen, Ogaryev, and Bakunin, and from this time on she practically ceased to write in Ukrainian. Later she married again and shortly before her death in 1907 brought out a few more stories but apparently most of these had been written during the few years when she was active.

Yet her fame really rests upon her stories in Ukrainian. As in the case of Kvitka, her Russian works were really mediocre and this is the more remarkable as Ukrainian was probably not really the language spoken in her family. So striking is her mastery of Ukrainian in these days that many critics have believed that the role of her husband in their production was greater than has been often supposed.

The appearance of the first volume of her *Ukrainian Sketches* was the sensation of the year and they added to the overwhelming disgust at serfdom which was growing among all thinking classes of society. Their one theme was the abominable way in which the serfs were treated and she emphasized especially the hard lot of the women who were thwarted by the cruelty of the masters in their desires to lead a normal, decent existence. In this they agree in style with the *Memoirs of a Sportsman* by Turgenev but they differ in that Marko Vovchok does not hesitate to present shocking examples of the abuse of the peasants by their masters, instead of merely indicating the humanity of the peasants. Thus in *Horpina* the peasants are compelled to work three days on their master's estates for him, two days for the poll tax, and the fifth and sixth days for grinding grain, and the young master drives his people harder than he does his cattle.

In the same story the mother takes a sick child to work in the fields with her, because there is no one in the village to care for it, and the master orders the overseer to take the child back and leave it alone in her empty house, because she takes time from her labor to look after it. In order to stop the child from crying, while it is alone, she gives it an opiate. When the child dies as a result, the mother from a sense of guilt goes insane.

Marko Vovchok does not hesitate to draw such stories of the callousness of the masters and to emphasize the differences between the small free proprietors and the serfs. Thus in the *Kozak Woman,* the girl Olesya is the daughter of a wealthy farmer but she falls in love with Ivan Zolotarenko, a serf. The leaders of the village express their opposition to this union of a free woman and a serf but she insists and submits to bondage for his sake. She spends all her money and sinks down to the level of her companions. Then her husband is taken away to the city by his master and dies there. At this moment she neglects to recover her freedom because of her children and almost at once her oldest son is taken away to serve as a companion and servant to the son of the master. He fails to make good and dies. When she too passes away, the master of the estate is even unwilling to bury her and the expense of this is left to the already over-burdened serfs, who have that sense of decency which is lacking in the master, a Russianized Pole.

In the *Institutka,* we have another picture of a cruel and abusive woman who has received the best education that her family can give her and who returns from school only to abuse her mother and to wreak her vengeance on every one that crosses her, including her

husband and her peasants. It is a lurid story of human meanness which spares no one. The story is told by a peasant woman Ustina, a maid of the Institutka, who has seen her husband forced into the army for a long term of years because he had endeavored to protect her when she was being unjustly flogged. Ustina is compelled to go to the city and work as a servant but even this is preferable to life on the old estate under the iron hand of the inhuman mistress.

Marko Vovchok's understanding of the emotions and the feelings of the peasant women struck a new note in Ukrainian and Russian literature. Her feminine instincts told her how they reacted to the hardships of their lives and perhaps no author has better expressed the disastrous effects of serfdom upon the women who suffered from it and the women who profited by it.

In addition to these tales of human suffering and brutality, she also wrote a number, setting out in narrative form some of the Ukrainian folktales and superstitions. Thus in the *Chary,* (*the Charms*) a sorceress succeeds in changing her rival into a bird and marrying the abandoned husband. Later when the bird returns to the old home, she persuades her innocent husband to shoot it and the dying bird changes back into the wife. The story is told simply and the author succeeds in imparting to it that unreal atmosphere that makes us regard it as a real event.

So too in *Lemerivna.* A rich, young Kozak loves a girl and woos her. The girl refuses to love him in return but her mother, who is mindful of the qualities of the young man, finally forces her into the wedding. After it is over and he starts with her for her new home, she commits suicide and he goes off and is never heard of again.

Marko Vovchok is easily the outstanding prose writer of her period, the age just before the liberation of the serfs. She was one of the group that cooperated in producing the state of mind that reformed the evil and deserves all credit for it. It is only a pity and a great loss to Ukrainian literature that she gave it up almost as soon as she had achieved success. She was another of those talents that were so frequent in Russian Ukraine who were swept from the vernacular literature of the land into the colossal sea of Russian and who then never justified their work, either by the quality of their productions or the benefit that they may have hoped to give to the people.

CHAPTER EIGHT

IVAN LEVITSKY - NECHUY

WITH the abolition of serfdom, there vanished from Ukrainian life the worst abuses which the earlier writers had experienced and described. The ruthless floggings were mitigated or abolished. It was no longer possible for the master to separate husband and wife or parents and children to suit a passing fancy or to indulge a mad caprice. A more humane spirit grew up in the villages and the old system gradually changed. The millenium was not reached, however, and new difficulties were added to the peasant lot, because with the abolition of the almost autocratic power of the landlord, the economic position of the peasant often became more complicated. Where he had formerly worked out his obligations, often at terrific cost to his well being, now it was necessary for him to secure by his labor the necessary money to pay his new obligations to the state and the land owner. The reform had not been far-reaching enough to put all the peasants on the road to material prosperity and the new conditions demanded a new type of literature.

The author who handled this new period was Ivan Levitsky, better known under his pen name of Nechuy. He was born in 1838, the very year when Shevchenko received his freedom and four years after the birth of Marko Vovchok. He was educated in the theological academy at Kiev, the very school which had been made famous in the seventeenth century by Peter Mohyla, and then he became a teacher of the Russian language, history and geography in the higher elementary schools. Here he toiled until he was able to retire on a pension. He still continued to live in Kiev and gradually became almost a recluse. He drifted away from active contact with his fellow men, and gradually slid into an obscurity which was aided by his devotion to his own theories of what Ukrainian literature should be. Finally the Central Rada of the free Ukrainian Republic gave him a pension in 1918 as its first gift to a needy writer, but it was too late for it to be of service and he died in a very short time.

Levitsky was induced to write in Ukrainian through his reading of Shevchenko's *Kobzar* and also by the influence of the *Osnova,* the journal which Kulish had founded in 1861. These models determined the course of his life and led him to prose and the social novel. In a few cases he attempted to deal with the life of the peasants under serfdom as in *Mikola Dzherya* but that period was definitely passed with the ending of serfdom and he turned his attention to the contemporary post-abolition scenes.

His first works were published in 1867 in the *Pravda,* a journal appearing in Lviv, and for many years during the time when the Ukrainian language could not be used in Russia for the publication of books, his works appeared regularly in the Galician capital.

The great bulk of his works dealt with the unjust and burdensome conditions of life immediately after the liberation of the serfs. Thus for example in *The Baba Paraska and the Baba Palashka,* we have a picture of the ignorance and lack of education that was hindering the economic development of Ukraine. The *Buried Alive* is another example of the hardships of the people and in general most of his characters are completely overwhelmed by existence and represent the failures who are unable to master life and work out their own salvation.

It is not for nothing that in one of his tales, the *Zaporozhians,* he represents the return of one of the old time women after a lapse of a century to the same village where she had formerly lived. She finds that life has become even more intolerable than it had been in the days of the Hetman state, when at least there was the possibility for a determined character to break away and live on the steppes a wild and tempestuous but free existence.

Levitsky also noted the beginning of the growth of factories in Ukraine, especially in the *Burlachka.* In these conditions were worse than in the villages. Long hours, utter lack of protection, miserable pay and impossible living conditions marked the life of the poor unfortunates whom need had driven to the new life. It was worse than the old slavery which had been abolished with serfdom, for in the industrial communities there were not even those safeguards and that healthy atmosphere and fresh air that had existed in the village.

He noted too the other evils as militarism and the effect of army service that were weighing heavily upon the people as in the *Two Moscow Women,* but the thing that concerned him the most was the gap between the intelligentsia and the people and the great dangers which the former ran of being absorbed and remade by the two

"aristocratic" cultures, the Polish and the Russiian. There seemed to be a constant stream of young and vital forces sapped away from the people by the insidious power of example and of material reward.

Thus in the *Prichepa* (*The Caviller*), Levitsky shows us pictures of Polish social influence in the neighborhood of Kiev and of the disastrous results that follow the attempts of the Ukrainians to adapt themselves to the Polish standards. Hanya, the daughter of the Orthodox priest, Father Fedir, marries a young Pole, Jan Seredynski. He is really of Ukrainian stock but his family has been Polonized for some generations. The young people get along well and improve their position financially, until the husband becomes infatuated with a Polish woman Zosya who offers him those superficial advantages that mark the Pole in the average Ukrainian story. For her he is willing to neglect his simple but wholesome wife. It breaks her heart. Finally her father thrashes him soundly and takes his daughter home but she pines away and dies and then her son dies and the unworthy husband is left alone without a position, for he has been discharged in the mess. The girl Zosya Przepinska is the daughter of a petty Polish aristocrat but a steward on an estate. She marries young Lemishka. This boy, the son of a prosperous Ukrainian trader, has been educated in Kiev and there has acquired a superficial Russian polish. Then as he comes under Polish influence he changes his name to its Polish form Lemishkovsky. He marries Zosya and for her sake and to keep up in her society, he sells his parental farm and goes to Kiev where he wastes his entire fortune. Then he comes back to a poor job as a steward and is ridiculed consistently by her aristocratic Polish friends, while she flirts unpardonably with Seredynski. Finally the whole family is engulfed in ruin, although she remains with him to secure her support while she continues her affairs with other men. Levitsky abhors the so-called aristocratic mode of life of the Polish nobles and of the Polonized Ukrainians which he contrasts to the simple existence of the ordinary peasants.

He bewails in *Prichepa* the lack of a true enlightenment among the Ukrainians and he summarizes the situation in the following passage (p. 110ff), "Who in Kiev does not remember the time before the Sevastopol war? It was a heavy time for Ukraine, it was its bad time. The ordinary people groaned in heavy slavery under the *pans*, compelled to be silent and suffer, worse than before Khmelnitsky. And for every groan it was tortured in the Muscovite manner. Ukraine had forgotten its historical tradition and could not by knowledge reach its lost thoughts. On both sides of the Dnieper they were overwhelmed

by foreign customs, in foreign skins, they heard a foreign tongue and forgot their own. Knowledge perished, education fell, remaining only in the scholastic Latin theological schools. The university knowledge was only the alphabet of European culture, cut on the official measure. This knowledge wished to train the people into Muscovites, for the army, for the administration. From the Ukrainian university and other schools came out bribers, grafting officials, unjust judges, who made the innocent guilty and the guilty innocent, those conservative teachers and professors, who twisted history on the Moscow orders, those Moskal officers who forgot their own people for profit. And the people were at forced labor, and the Polish and Muscovite landowners were stripping the last hide from Ukraine, at that time when our sincere Ukrainians for their young Ukrainian idea were sitting in slavery, in the distant Muscovite north. It was a hard time, may it never return!"

In the *Clouds* which first appeared in 1874, Levitsky tried to show something of this period and of the evil results that attended the Russianization of the scholars of the day. Here the situation is reversed. The learned professor Dashkovich, entering the Theological Academy of Kiev as the only Ukrainian amid a group of Russians, lives an idealistic life but he becomes finally so interested in his philosophical studies that he forgets his native Ukraine and loses touch with his native village. Meanwhile as an adherent of Pan-Slavism, he talks incessantly about the Slavonic question in the Balkans but cannot see that there is anything to do at home. His daughter, a beautiful Ukrainian girl, is sent to fashionable Russian schools and comes out as a wilful and cynical Russian aristocratic girl who is perfectly satisfied to make a loveless marriage with a rich and distinguished colonel. She has been in love with a young and patriotic Ukrainian Radyuk, who wears Ukrainian costumes and speaks in public and private the Ukrainian language and who even tries to convert his beloved to the Ukrainian cause, but she rejects him because he is not fashionable enough and frivolous enough for her, despite the fact that she really loves him.

In 1890 he added several chapters to the novel to carry on the fate of Radyuk still further but they add little to the novel and still less to the character of the young man, for the hero finally submits to social pressure and takes a governmental position in the Caucasus where no one will know him and his past.

In other words the new man is no more effective than the old and the problem of how the Ukrainians were to secure a real understanding

of European culture and such subjects as would be useful to them remained unsolved. Of one thing, Levitsky is absolutely sure. The teachers and all of those groups that stand for European culture are mere caricatures of what they should be. They have no appreciation of the deeper aspects of human life, the higher qualities of mankind, and they are really parasites on society. They and their institutions of learning are chiefly interested in the denationalization of the Ukrainians and they have no interest in true education, in truth, or in scholarship.

There are very sympathetic pictures of the life in the Theological Academy where Levitsky had studied himself in the dark days before the liberation of the serfs and he gives even more delightful pictures of some of the old Ukrainian landowners and business men who were continuing the old customs without bothering with the new fangled European notions and culture.

The novel shows some of the finest and some of the weakest points of Levitsky's style but it has been generally considered his masterpiece and marks a definite epoch in the history of the Ukrainian novel.

Levitsky well represented the situation as it existed in his lifetime. He had grasped the fact that the final solution of the Ukrainian question was not so simple as the mass of the intellectual leaders might think. It was one thing to declare that Ukrainian culture should be kept inviolate. It was something else to modernize and develop it without falling under the temptation to abandon the solid virtues for a superficial polish which could profit no one. By this time it was clear that even the liberation of the serfs had not released the new spirit or produced a new and better life for everyone. The accomplishment of this was a task that called for the highest abilities and limitless self-sacrifice and the orators and the intelligentsia were not able to make these contributions. In a way his works were a condemnation of that educated class which in the name of a misunderstood European culture were cutting themselves off from all that was best in their people and who would not listen to reason, because they could not find it in the European garb that they envied. For the years after the liberation of the serfs, Levitsky was a good guide but his later avoidance of life led him to an isolation that marred the value of his works. However in his early years, he was a forcible and interesting writer and the Ukrainians need still to ponder the problems which he raised, even though he was unable to give a thorough and complete answer.

CHAPTER NINE

CHANGING CONDITIONS

With the opening of the reign of Alexander II and the amnestying of the leaders of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius, a new era seemed to have opened for Ukraine. The authorities were not unsympathetic to the use of the Ukrainian language and while they were sternly resolved to resist and suppress any movement toward separation and toward the demand for the restoration of the ancient rights of Ukraine, they did not seem averse to the development and use of the Ukrainian language among the people. Steps were taken to print text books in Ukrainian for Ukrainian schools. Institutions for the education of the people were planned and some were started and it looked as if a new and happier era was dawning.

It was possible to think of establishing Ukrainian journals openly without resorting to subterfuges that they were intended for archaeological and ethnographical purposes. Now was the time when Bilozersky and Kulish founded the *Osnova* in St. Petersburg and in Kiev and Kharkiv and elsewhere in Ukraine other papers were speedily called into existence.

It was a false dawn. In 1863 came the Polish revolt and although Ukraine took no part in it as a whole and many of the Slavophile leaders were cooperating with them in their endeavors, the idea spread throughout the official circles that the Ukrainians were somehow involved in the Polish movement, an idea carefully fostered by the Poles. The result was the beginning of a far-reaching policy of repression which was to nullify many of the gains that had already been made.

The Sunday Schools that had been established in Kiev and other points in Ukraine were suppressed and the various journals were compelled to suspend. Then in 1863, Count Valuyev, the Minister of the Interior, issued a statement that there never was, is not, and cannot be any separate Ukrainian or Little Russian language. He ordered the

censors to prevent the publication of anything in it that had a spiritual content, textbooks or books intended for elementary instruction. This allowed only works of belles-lettres to be published and even this was a mere subterfuge, for it was not long before the censors were able to consider these too as popular books and under that clause of the order, the way was open to silence entirely the Ukrainian writers.

The new literature seemed destined to be crushed in its cradle. Even though for a time in the early seventies there was a slight lessening of the restrictions, the tsar in 1876 issued a more far-reaching order which forbade the printing of Ukrainian books except in the Russian spelling, the importation of books printed abroad, and theatrical performances in Ukrainian, and even the printing of musical texts with Ukrainian words. Of course the term Little Russian was constantly used, for every mention of Ukraine was to be banned.

This was a death blow to literature, and although at various times during the next thirty years before the Revolution of 1905, many of these provisions were quietly shelved, yet the Ukrainian authors in Russian Ukraine were effectively debarred from publishing their works at home. They had only one possibility left, and that was to turn to Galicia as Kulish and his friends had been doing from the end of the sixties.

The situation there had also changed greatly. At the time of the Union of Brest in the sixteenth century, the Kozaks and the Brotherhoods of the various cities had fougth stubbornly against the establishment of the Uniat Church, for they regarded it as a forerunner of Polonization. They feared from practical experience that the division in the Orthodox ranks would lead only to increased pressure from the government to give up their special characteristics. They were essentially correct in this idea. During the remaining centuries of independent Poland, the Ukrainians in that country lost most of their gentry and educated classes and only the parish clergy remained to plead the cause of the people.

After the fall of Poland, the situation changed. Western Ukraine under the rule of the Hapsburgs underwent a special development. The Emperor Joseph II, one of the enlightened despots of the day, decided it would be proper to improve the low educational level of the Galician intelligentsia which was chiefly represented by the clergy. As a result, immediately after the occupation of Galicia, Maria Theresa opening in Vienna a seminary for Uniat priests. She had earlier made certain arrangements for education among the Ukrainians in the Carpathian sections of Hungary. Now in various mild ways, she endeavored to

improve the conditions and the educations of all the Ukrainians in her territory. In 1784 there was established a University in Lviv and it was ordered that certain subjects be taught in the native language, that is the mixture of Church Slavonic which was commonly employed before the time Kotlyarevsky.

It was not long before the Polish magnates were able to renew their control and increase their influence at the court of Vienna and this led to ever new restrictions on the life of the Ukrainians or Ruthenians, as they were consistently called in Austria-Hungary. Yet the germ of a national renaissance had been established and the hopelessness that had prevailed was steadily mitigated. Willing or not, the leaders of the Uniat Church saw themselves forced into an attitude of loyalty to the Hapsburgs and of opposition to Polish domination in the province of Galicia. That very movement which in the sixteenth century had meant Polonization now at the end of the eighteenth came to stand for opposition to Polish influences and this shaped the entire life in Galicia for the next century.

There was still the language question to be solved. There was no agreement among the Ukrainians as to what form they should use. Many of the more conservative classes and the clergy and devout laity insisted upon continuing the ecclesiastical language which had been handed down from their fathers and they dreaded any innovation. Another group of the younger and more progressive elements read Kotlyarevsky and the writers in the Ukrainian vernacular and argued strenuously for its adoption. A third group, completely disillusioned with the rule of the Hapsburgs and the Poles became convinced that the future of the province lay in union with Russia and they endeavored to remodel the language on the basis of Great Russian with reference to the work that was being done in the Russian Ukraine.

There was a sort of a grim humor in this struggle. There were few or no relations between the average village in Galicia and one in Russia. Thus many of the Russian Ukrainians looked more or less with envy through rose-colored glasses at the scanty signs of recognition given to the Ruthenians in Austria-Hungary. At the same time, a large number of the Ruthenians looked with equal envy at every sign of progress in Russia and sought to join themselves to the dominant party in the great Empire.

The controversy was long and bitter, for there was really a three-sided debate among the Galician leaders themselves. There were the old conservative adherents of the Church language, there were the

Ukrainian nationalists, and finally there were the Moscophiles who gained influence in every period of Hapsburg repression. Yet in their relations with the outside world all three groups were faced with the same task of supporting the Hapsburgs in Vienna and of resisting Polish domination in the province of Eastern Galicia.

From the time of Markian Shashkevich (1811-1843) in Galicia and Osip Fedkovich (1834-1888) in Bukovina there was a constant stream of young men working to develop the language on the lines laid down by Kotlyarevsky. In 1848, Count Stadion as Governor of Galicia gave the Ukrainians many privileges to thwart the danger of Polish revolt. Jakov Holovatsky, a Ukrainian, became Professor of Ukrainian Literature at the University of Lviv. There was established a General Council of the Ukrainians in Galicia and on May 15 of that year appeared the first newspaper in the vernacular, the *Zorya Halitska* (*The Star of Halich*). A Society for Enlightenment was organized on the model of the Czech Matica and Ukrainian was introduced into many schools. Serfdom was abolished and this was a long step forward. Yet it was not long before the Emperor came to an understanding with the Polish aristocratic leaders and as soon as this was done, measures were taken to check the growing Ukrainian movement and a period of repression again set in.

In the sixties, the Galicians began to find themselves and were at least in a position to organize their own journals and literary papers, even though there was a very strong Russophile party in the province. It was to these papers that the Ukrainians in Russia were forced to turn when the period of repression began there and from this time on for a half century the heart of the Ukrainian movement was to be found in the Western Ukraine in Lviv and not in Kiev and Kharkiv where the modern revival had started.

The key to the work can be found in the Society of Shevchenko which was first established in 1875 but it was more than a decade before this secured enough funds to enable it to commence publishing operations. In 1892 it was renamed the Scientific Society and in 1898 it was again reorganized as the Shevchenko Scientific Society and became for all practical purposes the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.

Thus the movement in Western Ukraine, although it started later, was able to catch up and even to surpass in self-consciousness the movement in Russia but as we have mentioned before, the word Ukraine was always more or less suspicious to the Austro-Hungarian authorities and for a long while the people were compelled to call themselves Ruthenians. Even to the most recent times, the Poles have

emphasized this difference between Ruthenians and Ukrainians and have sought to foster a division between the two groups. So have the Hungarians in their domination of Carpatho-Ukraine, where the movement after 1848 languished in the isolated valleys of the Carpathian Mountains.

Thus this well-dismembered race finally succeeded in some small degree in establishing spiritual contacts about the middle of the nineteenth century. For the first time in centuries, the scattered groups became aware of their mutual relationships, desipte the religious differences. The people in Russian Ukraine were still Orthodox. Those in Austria-Hungary were primarily Uniat but the modern trend toward secular thinking and the diminution of the bitterness of the religious conflicts allowed them to work together. They could have small hope of political freedom and of political union, but there was a profound sense of social solidarity and in the peaceful years of the nineteenth century, the task of education and of social development took precedence over the old dreams of attaining liberty and freedom on the field of battle.

CHAPTER TEN

IVAN FRANKO

IN the sixties the writers from Great Ukraine had begun to find shelter in Lviv and to seek opportunities for publishing there which had been denied to them in their native land. Yet, when they reached Galicia, they were passing into another atmosphere and another society. There were some like Kulish who tried to reconcile the Ukrainians and the Poles in the province of Austria-Hungary. There were others as Levitsky, whose works dealt only with the Russian Ukraine and who described the problems there as they saw them with their own eyes. They undoubtedly contributed much to the desire on the part of the people of Western Ukraine to remodel their lives and to commence social and national work. Yet they themselves were not at home in the complicated problems of Austro-Hungarian politics and the different social institutions and they rarely interested themselves in the many questions that were raised by the existence of Vienna and the Hapsburg monarchy and the obligations and possibilities that existed in Western Ukraine as a result of being a part of a great multilingual and confused area.

If literature in Western Ukraine was to find itself, it could do so only through the efforts of some one who was born and reared there and who understood the situation and the lives and thoughts of the people as a native and a true son of the country. Just as the literature of Great Ukraine had been responsive in some degree to the moods of Russian literature, so in Western Ukraine similar influence would be exerted by the various schools of Polish literature and the changing literary fashions of Vienna. No one from the outside could steer a direct course amid this confused and confusing situation. The language in the two sections might be identical but the overtones and the connotations would be very different, for even the presence of a few leaders from Great Ukraine in Galicia had not yet spun together all the threads that had been torn apart so completely centuries before. The

man who was to found this literature and do more than his share in bringing together the two Ukraines was Ivan Franko, who is undoubtedly after Shevchenko the outstanding Ukrainian author.

It is hardly necessary to point out the differences between them. Shevchenko was a natural genius. Franko was far from that and in his works, talented and excellent as they are, there is not that supreme perfection, that incomparable greatness that there was in the older man. Their lives too are markedly different in every way. Shevchenko, the self-educated son of a serf, was born in the period when the Romantic movement was at its height. He was old enough to have thrilled in his youth to the tales of the men who had taken part in the last armed revolts of the Ukrainians and his mind often harped back to the heroic days of the past. There was something romantic and tragic in his life story. His liberation from serfdom, his service in the Russian army, his association with many of the broadminded aristocrats of his day, all lend themselves to the dramatic and the unusual.

There was none of this in Franko. He was more than well educated and his life is singularly empty of startling episodes. It is a prosaic record of duty recognized and executed, of articles written, of difficulties surmounted. If he ever had visions of riding into battle beside the great hetmans of the past, he did not bring himself to describe them. He offers us merely the commonplace spectacle of a hardworking journalist and editor winning his way by the sweat of his brow and the burning of the midnight oil. It was his task to remake the moral fibre of his people, to rebuild a shattered edifice and to expend superhuman energy in the process. All that does not lend itself to thrilling and unusual episodes but it is none the less valuable both for the man and his people. It is none the less important because it is not decked out with gaudy colors and with feats of physical daring and spectacular sufferings and endurance.

Ivan Franko was born August 15, 1856, in the little village of Nahuyevichi, in the foothills of the Carpathians only five years before the death of Shevchenko. He was the son of a poor farmer-blacksmith. The boy was not deprived of the opportunity of a formal education. Quite the reverse. He early learned to read and write Ukrainian, Polish and German and he received most of his early education in a German speaking school conducted by the Basilian Fathers. His father died when he was eight years old and his mother soon married again but his stepfather treated him kindly and helped him with his education.

On finishing the elementary schools, he entered the gymnasium in Drohobych and during his entire course he stood almost continuously at the head of his class. His clothes may have been ragged and tattered and he may have been shy and retiring, but he showed clearly that he had an acute mind and a great deal of endurance. He dabbled in literature along with many of his fellow students but there was still something youthful about his works and they did not appear in all of their later perfection.

In 1875 he entered the University of Lviv at a time when practically all the lectures were given in Polish and he was at once plunged into the frenzied academic debates about the problems of Galicia and the fate of the Ukrainians there. He listened for hours to the bitter partisanship over the form of the language to be used in the province and soon realized the sterility and artificiality of the entire controversy.

In his first period at the University, he drifted into the Academic Circle, a group of students that were rather Moscophile in tendency. At least this group had access to a journal which could publish his writings, and besides it appeared to be more serious and less devoted to society and frivolity than some of the groups that were more purely nationalistic.

It was about this time that he became interested in the writings of Mikhaylo Drahomaniv, (1841-1895) who was the leading Ukrainian scholar of the day. Drahomaniv, a great democrat, had taken a relatively advanced position and was frowned upon as a radical in many quarters. Yet he held firmly to the idea that the Ukrainians in both sections should cooperate closely and in order to work more freely in this connection he moved to Geneva, from which point he found it easier to communicate with the leaders on both sides of the Russian-Galician border, and later he was professor in the University of Sofia, Bulgaria.

Drahomaniv used his influence definitely against the Galician Moscophiles and he had no difficulty in pointing out that this group was an artificial and insincere creation, for at the very moment when its members were talking of adapting themselves to the Great Russian point of view, they were taking little interest in understanding what that point of view was and they were almost equally innocent of the achievements of Russian literature. In fact many could not even use Russian well. This policy brought Franko and Drahomaniv together and the younger man commenced a correspondence with Drahomaniv that continued until the latter's death.

In 1877 Franko had his first taste of Austrian justice. He was arrested with many of his friends on the charge of being involved in political conspiracies with Drahomaniv and sentenced to nine months in prison. When he was finally released, much of the Ukrainian society of Lviv declined to meet him. He was forbidden to enter many of the gathering places and was treated as if he had been an ordinary criminal. The immediate result was a strengthening of his desire to pursue a direct course for the welfare of his people, as he saw it, and in 1878 with money which he received from Drahomaniv, who was supported from the Russian Ukraine, he commenced the publication of the *Hromadsky Druh* to spread his ideas. The journal lasted about a year but was constantly in trouble with the censor. The work, however, brought Franko in contact with the socialists of the province. This had its good and bad sides. It brought him into contact with the Polish liberal journals and one the other hand it alienated from his influence many of the people of the conservative classes. The mood of the young poet can be well seen in the last stanza of the *Stone Cutters*, which he wrote at this time—

And so we moved ahead, united as one man
By sacred thought, with hammers in our hands.
Let us be cursed by all, forgotten by the world,
But we will break the rocks and build a proper road
And happiness will come for all from our lost bones.

The immediate result of all this activity was a second arrest in 1880 when he was travelling through the country and after three months in prison he was ordered sent back to his native village, but before he arrived, he was taken ill and after extreme privations and a long illness, he was allowed to return to some of his friends. In 1889 he was arrested a third time and kept in jail for three months without any formal charges being preferred against him.

During all this time he continued to write and in fact in the early eighties, he did much of his most significant work. He was not, however, satisfied and in 1885 he made a trip to Kiev to establish personal contacts with the Ukrainian leaders there and to arrange for the publication of their works in Lviv. The following year he returned to Kiev and there married Olha Khorunzhinska ,a marriage which turned out very happily until his wife was taken ill in his later days.

For the next ten years he made his living by writing for various Polish liberal papers but he steadily became more disillusioned as to

the possibility of creating a working harmony between the socialist parties of the two peoples. He came to believe that the ideal of socialism as preached by the Polish socialists toward the Ukrainian working people was not deep enough to bind the two peoples together. In 1897 in a review of *Konrad Wallenrod,* a poem by Mickiewicz, he criticized the idea that a man could become a national hero solely because of his treachery. Some of the Poles regarded this as an attack on their whole nation and it cost him most of his Polish friends and more seriously yet, his position as correspondent for various Polish papers but he did not change his opinions to better his financial status.

In 1892-1894 he studied at the University of Vienna and in 1894 he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a dissertation on Ivan Vishensky, a Ukrainian publicist of the early seventeenth century. He had high hopes of securing the chair of Ukrainian Literature at the University of Lviv and the faculty approved his candidacy. The governor of the province, however arbitrarily cancelled the nomination in view of his three arrests.

Then for a while he dabbled in Galician politics and would have won an election to the Diet in Vienna as the representative of the Radical Party, the first party of the Galician Ukrainians to be organized on a definite economic program, had he not been defeated by the most unashamed chicanery and cheating. After that he avoided politics in the strict sense of the word and continued his activities as writer, critic, scholar, and teacher of his people.

The response on the part of the people of Galicia and the respect which he had won were fully shown in the reception accorded him on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his entrance into literature in 1898 and again on the fortieth anniversary on the eve of the First World War, when the Shevchenko Scientific Society awarded him a yearly pension and the Ukrainians in Russia, Galicia and the United States raised for him the sum of 30,000 Austrian crowns.

His health began to fail in 1908 and he almost lost the use of his hands but he continued to work without any relaxation. The World War was an even more serious blow. His sons were mobilized in the Austrian army. The Russians penetrated into Lviv and Galicia and endeavored to put an end to all Ukrainian activities. Finally he died on May 28, 1916, just about two years before the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the temporary independence of Ukraine. His funeral was arranged by the Shevchenko Society and despite the restrictions of the war, over 10,000 people were in his funeral procession.

It is the simple story of a life devoted to the service of his people. Most of the controversies that Franko had with other Ukrainian leaders and the periods when he fell in disfavor were connected with that most severe problem of a leader, how to guide his people in a democratic spirit and at the same time not be so far ahead of them that he loses touch with their feelings and their beliefs and preaches to them real truths which they cannot and do not wish to comprehend. He summarized his obligations as he saw them in the preface to the Polish translation of the *Galician Sketches*:

"Before all I confess it as a sin, that many patriots regard me as destructive; I do not love the Rusins. Compared with that burning love, which comes often 'for a brother race' from the pen of Polish conservative journalists, my confession may seem strange. What is to be done, if it is true. I am not one of those naive and blind lovers and I can speak soberly about such a tender subject as love. I affirm again: I do not love the Rusins. I have found so few among them of righteous character, and so much pettiness, narrow material egotism, duplicity and pride, that I really do not know for what I could love them, remembering constantly the thousands of greater and lesser darts, that they have planted in my skin, often with the best ideas. It is understood that there are exceptions, many pure personalities, worthy of all respect among the Rusins (I am speaking of the intelligentsia, not the villagers), but these exceptions unfortunately only confirm the general statement.

"I accept it as a great sin; even our Rus I do not love at least as our patented patriots do or pretend to do. What is there to love in it? To love it as a geographical conception, I am a foe of empty phrases and I have seen too much of the world to be able to say that there is no such beautiful nature as in Rus. To love its history, I know it well and I love too warmly the general human ideals of justice, brotherhood, and freedom not to recognize how few examples there are in the history of Rus of real community spirit, just sacrifice, true love. But it is important to love this history, for at every time it is necessary to weep over it. Why can I love Rus as a race—this race which is hard, intractable, sentimental, a race without temper or strength of will, so little adapted for political life on its own behalf, and so fertile in producing renegades of every kind? How can I love the bright future of this Rus, which I do not know, when I cannot see any basis for this bright future?

"But if on the other hand, I feel myself a Rusin and with all of my strength I work for Rus as the honored reader will see, it is

not from reasons of a sentimental nature. I am guided before all by a feeling of a canine obligation. The son of a Rusin peasant, reared on black peasant bread, the work of stout peasant hands, I feel myself bound by the labor of my whole life to repay those coins which a peasant hand has expended, so that I can ascend to the heights, where one can see clearly, where freedom is poured out richly, where universal ideals shine. My Rusin patriotism is not sentiment, not national pride, but a great yoke placed by fate upon my shoulders. I can protest, I can quietly curse my fate, for placing that yoke upon me, but I cannot throw it off, I cannot seek another country, or I would be base against my own doubts. And if anything lightens for me the burden of this yoke, it is the sight of the Rusin people, that, although bent, deafened and demoralized for long centuries, although today poor, awkward, and joyless, yet is gradually advancing and perceives somehow in the widest circles the feelings of light, truth, justice and is seeking approach to them. It is worth while to work for this people and no honorable work for it is lost."

We can well understand how such plain speaking aroused criticism against Franko among those Ukrainians who were flattering the people and at the same time hindering their educational advance and the improvement of their social conditions. From the very beginning of his work Franko took as his goal the good of the people. He realized that it was no easy task and that his path would not be strewn with roses. He realized the opposition that he would encounter not only from his opponents but also from those whom he was trying to help. Yet he approached his task with the coldly realistic manner of the end of the century when the hopes of decisive and rapid changes had practically vanished from the minds of most people and when it was fully understood that only hard work and slow social reform could benefit the people.

Yet it did not curb his enthusiasm or his belief in the undying spirit of liberty and the good in man. He summed it up in his poem *The Eternal Revolutionist,*

A revolutionist eternally
Man's spirit, driving him to fight
For progress, liberty and right.
It lives, it cannot die.
(Translated by Arthur P. Coleman)

This theme runs through all of his collections, especially of the early

days and the titles are themselves suggestive. *From the Heights and Depths, Sad Songs, Night Thoughts, The Thoughts of a Proletarian, Ukraine, Prison Sonnets, Galician Sketches, Jewish Melodies.* The overwhelming mass of his poems especially in his early years and until about 1893 dealt with various social problems. They pictured the hardships of society, of fhe common man and of the poet himself in his aspirations to do something before the people. They run through all forms of lyrical verse, sonnets, *et cetera,* and form a good poetic picture of conditions as they were in Western Ukraine with the constant struggle against the Polish lords.

It is very rare that Franko creates a true narrative poem and the best example is the *Nobleman's Pranks,* a picture of peasant life in Galicia on the eve of the abolition of serfdom. Pan Mihucki, a strong willed Polish landlord, could not believe that this liberation would ever take place. He could not believe either that the peasant had any rights, even those which were guaranteed by the law. When the devoted priest on his estate endeavored to preach temperance and to teach the children to read and write, the autocratic master ordered him to be put to work in the fields like a common peasant despite the laws of the land which exempted priests from such labor. The priest was compelled to work until he dropped dead. The imperial commissioner, an Austrian German, tried in vain to moderate the lord's wrath when he learned that serfdom had been abolished and when all remedies were useless, and the new order was introduced, he placed the Polish landlord in jail. It was an overwhelming shock to Pan Mihucki and though he was soon released, his time was over and within a year he died abroad. His widow returned but she was entirely in the power of the Jewish agent who held the mortgages on the estate and soon she too disappeared, "And Moshko bought the village." It was a grim warning of a situation that was far too common in Galicia and not generally recognized.

The priest is one of those types that Franko particularly appreciated and to which he returns again and again. He is a man who does all that he can for his fellows and perishes in his attempts to aid them but at the time he is so conscious of how much more he could have done, that he feels no self-satisfaction even amid the plaudits of others.

This type of a lost leader appears in a poignant form in the *Death of Cain.* Old Cain who has struggled with the curse of God for centuries finally learns that the way to a peaceful and quiet life is through the virtues of a man's own heart. He returns to men to tell them of the new truth and his great grandson Lamech, old and blind, shoots

him with an arrow directed by a little child. Ignorance and misunderstanding prevent Lamech from learning the message that the old sufferer had wished to give him.

Of his lyrical collections perhaps the most musical are the *Three Garlands of the Fallen Leaves* which appeared between 1893 and 1896. They are personal poems dealing with the emotion of love and pain. In the first Garland they emphasize disappointment. In the second pain is treated as a cult and in the third, Franko glorifies a feeling of detachment from sensation, a lack of feeling, with a tendency to glorify Buddha and to approach Nirvana even through suicide. Some of his critics accused him of accepting the philosophy of the decadents. He repudiated the idea but these poems strike an unusual note in Franko's general attitude of eternal confidence in the human spirit. Still they are among his best work and together with the collection *My Emerald,* written during a period of illness, they are among his most deeply musical creations.

Perhaps the greatest of his longer poems is *Moses* which he wrote in 1905, and we cannot fail to see in it a certain hidden autobiographical touch and to regard the Hebrews as types of the contemporary Ukrainians. Moses, the great prophet, has led his people into the wilderness with the promise of a happier and a more abundant life. Yet the new world is not forthcoming and the people whom he has aroused to action, murmur against him and prefer the advice of the false prophets. Moses defies them and wins but he withdraws from them to go alone and by himself to the Promised Land. Yet hardly has he left when doubts begin to assail him. Can he be sure that he has been on the right path? Can he be sure that he has acted properly in rousing the people in the beginning? He grows more and more discouraged and finally loses faith in God. While the evil spirit mocks him, he curses Jehovah and can therefore not enter the Promised Land. Yet the people without him willingly obey the call of Joshua and press on to their destined goal. His sufferings have not been in vain but that one moment of unbelief has wrecked his chance to go with them to happiness.

Franko in the last years of his life had many such moments of discouragement. He shows it clearly in the preface to *Moses,* when he proudly asserts that there will come a time when his people will achieve their goal and be masters in their house from the Caucasus to the Beskids, even though the way seems dark and hopeless at the time. He realized that with his failing health he could not be the leader until the struggle for freedom would reach a victorious ending. He

knew that there was no one else to take his place at the time, but he never lost hope that the right man would appear and like Joshua carry the cause to triumph.

In addition to his original poems, he enriched Ukrainian literature with many translations, especially from English and German. He early published lengthy translations from Byron, Goethe, Heine, and other writers and he commented extensively on the literature of his own country and that of Western Europe.

Yet poetry was not his only mode of literary expression. He was a prolific writer of novels and short stories. All of these aimed to show forth by example the great truths which he felt in his poetry and which he expounded in his journalistic writings.

Let us take for example *Zakhar Berkut,* a historical novel of the Ukrainian people in the Carpathian Mountains in the thirteenth century, which he wrote in 1882 and for which he received a prize offered by the journal *Zorya.* The Boyar Tuhar Vovk was given domains by Danilo the Prince of Halich. There he exercised certain rights and powers in opposition to the peasant tradition and he refused to submit them to adjudication before the council of the villagers under their chosen head, Zakhar Berkut, a peasant of some ninety years of age whose mind was still keen, even if his body was aging. All the efforts of the Boyar to assert himself against the wishes of the people came to naught. As one man they stood together and thwarted all his schemes. Even when the Boyar became a traitor to his people and allied himself with the Tatar invaders, it did no good, for the villagers were able to flood the path over which the attackers had to move. The love affair between Berkut's son and the daughter of the Boyar is rather colorless and stereotyped. The novel reads well and even the editors who awarded him the prize did not grasp the obvious moral that the people would be invincible, if they would but unite under a rational and sane leadership to defend their rights. Power and legality cannot come from mere words. They rest upon concerted action and that is the one thing that the villagers of his day did not wish to see.

He returns again and again to this same theme and in one of his latest novels, the *Crossed Paths,* he unites this theme with the same lesson which could be drawn from the *Nobleman's Pranks.* The scene is in Galicia of the present day and the young lawyer Dr. Rafalovich is surprised to learn that the great landowners are as hopelessly in debt to the Jewish money lenders as are the peasants to their tavern keepers. This lawyer has decided to devote himself to the cause of the people and so has developed a laborious practice among the Ukrainians in-

stead of seeking a more lucrative one among the Poles. In that region one of the big estates was being sold at auction and Dr. Rafalovich realizes how easy it would be for the villagers to secure their own land. Yet not one peasant is willing to trust another to cooperate in the transaction. One and all want the land, they realize that they cannot be prosperous without it but they will not work together or trust one another, in order to secure it. They much prefer to grumble rather than to show a modicum of common sense and win. On the other hand the romantic part of the story is equally sad. Rafalovich has loved a girl in Lviv. Now he finds her married to a drunken sadist who is insanely jealous of her and does everything to make her life unbearable. Both she and her husband die. Rafalovich is arrested, and though he is cleared of all charges and released, something has gone out of him and he is tormented by doubts as to the sense of the course which he has followed.

Franco realized that the new conditions after the abolition of serfdom were not ideal and in one of his early stories the *Boa Constrictor* he pictured the evils of the growing industrialization of the neighborhood of Borislav and the consequent fate of the workers who are kept in an economic serfdom which was as bad as that of the enslaved villagers. This was another theme that he treated again and again throughout his life.

Another subject that interested him was the inhumanity of one man to another especially as regards family life. Thus in *For the Home Hearth* the hero Captain Anharovich returns from Bosnia to Galicia only to learn that his wife has been trapped into recruiting girls for the purposes of prostitution. When she is finally unmasked, she commits suicide and her husband is thus allowed to continue his career and maintain his honor as an army officer, although the rumors of his wife's disgrace have led him into a duel with his best friend and broken his own heart.

Questions of peasant marriage also concerned him greatly and in his best play, *Stolen Happiness*, which won a second prize in a competition at Lviv he criticizes the arbitrary way in which such unions were arranged. A soldier returns from his army service to find that the girl whom he loved and who loved him had been forced into marriage with another man. Such happenings were relatively common and they aroused the enmity of Franko as much as did the abuse of his people by outside oppressors.

It would be too long to list all of his stories and collections which range from autobiographical studies as in the *Sweat of the Brow,*

stories taken from adventures and incidents in his whole life, to studies of peasant customs in every form. In all of them Franko was willing to see the good as well as the bad and he gave invaluable pictures of Galician life in the period from 1880 to 1914.

Yet it is to be noticed that in many of these stories as in the *Nobleman's Pranks,* he has kind words for the representatives of the Austrian government at Vienna, who were mostly Austrian Germans, although some were of Slavic origin.

This was only natural for Franko rarely left his native land except for the two years in Vienna. During his lifetime the Poles had a strangle hold on the government of Galicia. They were the direct oppressors of the people and the Viennese government in many cases tried to mitigate the iron hand of the provincial administration, partly from a feeling of justice and partly from self-interest. The Hapsburg policy had always been to allow a relatively free hand to the dominant group in a province and then to favor and help in minor ways the oppressed sections of the province. In this way they hoped to maintain a policy of "Divide and Conquer" and to facilitate their own control of the entire area.

Almost universally also he refers to his people as Rusins or Ruthenians. The name of Ukraine was taboo for political purposes in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Franko would merely have been courting trouble and injuring his own work, had he not followed the usual practice. At time as in his poems *Ukraine,* he uses the word for the larger entity. At the same time he worked steadily for the promotion of closer relationships with the people in Great Ukraine. He did not regard it possible that the two groups, the one in Austria-Hungary and the other in Russia would be able to cooperate freely until the two great Empires met with shipwreck and thus permitted the establishment of a united and independent Ukraine. In both sections there were the same economic problems of an oppressed agricultural race struggling against a dominant aristocracy, largely composed of persons who had risen out of their own soil and adopted a more aristocratic language and mode of life. The danger of assimilation was however greater in Russia than in Galicia where the process had largely slowed down some centuries before,and so many of the themes which had stirred Levitsky and others seem to pass unnoticed by Franko.

In the same way his literary models were those of Western Europe rather than those of Russia. From his youth he was well educated in German and he wrote for German as well as Polish papers.

He was affected by the types of writing common there, even more than by the developments in Russia.

Despite all of the persecutions and the hardships that he had to meet, he had still more abundant opportunities to express himself freely on the political and social theories which he advocated than did the authors who wrote in Russia, but he had to adapt himself to the framework of the Hapsburg empire. Within that he struggled long and strenuously for the welfare of his people. At times he was very popular and his ideas caught public fancy. At times he stood alone and felt to some degree that which Moses and his other lost leaders realized, that he was ahead of his time, that he was not accomplishing all that he had intended, that his words were not being interpreted in the sense in which he meant them.

He suffered from discouragement but long before his death men of all parties recognized that he was the chief teacher, poet, and novelist of the province. They realized his incorruptible character, his wide knowledge and his literary talent. He was not the peer of the incomparable Shevchenko but next to him he stood out as the most important talent in Ukrainian literature, the greatest scholar, and the one man who could see the problems of his people and the path on which they should go. His enormous funeral bore token to the esteem in which he was held and to the work which he had done during the unremitting years of journalism. Franko worked hard. His life was uneventful. It was not filled with surprising and unusual episodes but as scholar, critic, poet, novelist and teacher he deserved well of Ukraine and was the glory of the Shevchenko Scientific Society.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

LESYA UKRAINKA

THE age of realism gradually gave way to neo-romanticism. After a period of time in which literature was bound within the strict limits of a photographic reproduction of nature and of social life, the authors gradually came to demand the liberty of expressing their thoughts in their own way and of choosing such subjects as they desired. There came a renewed emphasis on poetry and a higher technical skill in its production. New devices in metrics and in rhythm were introduced and there appeared authors with the proper talents to master the new devices.

Nowhere was this more true than in Russia. The eighties had been a time of discouragement to the Russian intelligentsia but toward the middle of that decade, some of the writers against the opposition of most of the liberal elements demanded for themselves the same liberties that were being claimed in other countries. There came a broadening of themes and an endeavor to get outside the narrow range of contemporary subjects that had preoccupied the literature for forty years.

The same influences were working on Ukrainian literature, although the authors who had never bowed the knee to that peculiar type of Russian liberalism which had discounted the Ukrainian right to exist did not have to pass through all the phases of pessimism that their conquerors did. Besides that, the influence of men like Franko and contact with the Ukrainian renaissance in Galicia had to some extent opened direct channels to western Europe which were lacking in St. Petersburg.

Yet most of the older writers had been either primarily scholars or provincial writers. Few of them had travelled abroad and most of them had confined their works to the contemporary life of Ukraine, to the recording of national customs and to direct attempts to solve the most pressing problems of the day. It gave a narrowness to Ukrainian

literature which prevented it from taking its rightful place in the literature of the world. There was needed a new type of writer who would be no less patriotic, no less devoted to the national cause, but who was familiar with the world, with modern literary developments, and with the aspirations of other peoples, especially in Western Europe. The person who was to exercise that influence upon Ukraine was the poetess who wrote under the pseudonym of Lesya Ukrainka.

Larisa Kosacheva, for that was her real name, labored under no less difficulties than her predecessors. Yet these were strikingly different, since her greatest handicap was ill health. For practically the whole of her adolescent and adult life, she was a hopeless invalid. She never knew a healthy day, and it was the power of her mind and her own spiritual resources that kept her alive and allowed her to triumph over all obstacles and to express her faith and confidence in a better day to come. The careful reader can see the effects of her illness upon her outlook on life and yet no author has more carefully hidden her personal burdens in her devotion to a great cause. It is much harder to connect her poems and her biography than it is in the case of most writers, for in reality her mind and body were separated and the courage of the one has little relationship to the weakness of the other.

She was born on February 25, 1871, in Russian Ukraine. She came of a prominent intellectual family, for her uncle was none other than Mikhaylo Drahomaniv, who was at that time at the height of his influence and was working actively to bring the Ukrainian movement in line with the other democratic movements of the world. Her childhood friends were children of similar families and formed a group that was decidedly precocious and superior.

As we might expect, she was given a good education, chiefly at home, with particular emphasis on the study of modern European languages. By the time that she reached maturity, she had a good knowledge of Russian, English, German, French, Italian, Latin and Greek, and later she learned Spanish. She naturally read and knew the works of the older Ukrainian authors but she was also familiar with such writers as Goethe, Schiller, Victor Hugo, and Byron. She was thoroughly acquainted with the writers of the Romantic school and she was therefore better prepared to bring about that adaptation of their ideas that was beginning to take shape in the world. Her first poem written at the age of twelve was a translation of a poem of Heine and her first independent poem began about the same time with the phrase, "I have no freedom nor fortune, there is left only hope."

At almost the same time she was stricken down with tuberculosis of the bones of the hand and was compelled to stay in bed for months at a time while her young friends were enjoying the pastimes of youth. Finally this seemed to yield to treatment but it was not long before the disease reappeared in her feet. From then on, her life was merely the passage from one system of medical treatment to another. In 1892 at the age of twenty she brought out her first book of poems *On the Wings of Songs* and this was followed by other volumes, *Thoughts and Dreams* in 1896, and *Echoes* in 1902.

Meanwhile she lived most of the time in Kiev except during the winters and the long trips necessary for medical treatment. She had to go to the south and she spent her winters in the Crimea, the Caucasus, in Bulgaria where her uncle was professor at the University of Sofia, and in Egypt. She travelled in Italy and Germany and in 1900 underwent a serious operation in Berlin. In 1907 during a period of relief from suffering, she married K. M. Kvitka but the disease soon came on again. The doctors in Berlin advised against further operations and sent her to Egypt but finally even the climate there ceased to have a favorable effect upon her and she passed away in 1913. It was really her iron will that had kept her alive to the age of forty-two and had allowed her to accomplish so much.

It was a heroic record of resistance to suffering and disease and undoubtedly her linguistic talents and her love of literature helped to vary the monotony of those months of suffering when she was confined to her bed and was unable to move around freely. Yet with it all she never lost her interest in life and if many of her later works show a preference for exotic and literary subjects, we can well understand it from the nature of her affliction. She was constantly in touch with the leading people of the day and was actively interested in all the reforming movements of the period. Her poems appeared in radical and progressive papers and showed that despite her physical isolation, she was not isolated in mind and thought.

The preface of her first book of poems is suggestive of her attitude throughout life.

> To thee, O my Ukraine, my dearest, unfortunate mother,
> My songs will be raised first of all.
> They will be solemn and quietly sounding.
> Each song will flow forth from my heart.

Naturally it is possible to find in this first collection poems that show the influence of the authors whom she had read and there are

slight touches of regret that she cannot do more for her country. There are moments of disillusionment and of weakness but more and more she found herself and expressed her desires to be useful to her country in whatever way was possible. There is little direct mention of her personal afflictions but we can to some extent imagine that they had much to do with her fits of pessimism.

It was not long before she became more interested in social problems and she thought hard and earnestly about the position of Ukraine. She was aware of the fact that all was dark and confusion around her and that the future of the country could not be secured by words alone. Thus she writes,

> The fellahin and pariahs are happy.
> Their minds and thoughts are swaddled in repose.
> In us the fire of a Titan burns. . .
> For we are paralytics with fierce blazing eyes,
> Are great in spirit but in strength are frail,
> We feel the wings of eagles on our backs,
> While fetters binding us to earth ne'er fail.

That was her judgment on most of the intellectuals of her day and on the fate of Ukraine. Yet she never wavered in her words of hope and consolation and the very titles of such poems as *Contra spem spero,* (I *hope against hope*), show the confidence that she had that right would finally conquer and they refer to the fate of her people as well as to her own physical condition.

Yet even in her first volumes we find specimens of that kind of song which she was to do more as time went on. Thus in the *Iphigenia in Tauris* she makes the priestess say that she is willing for the glory of her country to live "without glory, without family, without a name." if only she can assist in its triumph. Here Lesya Ukrainka turns to literature to find illustrations that might be impossible to draw from the present conditions in view of the censorship. It is often forgotten that the scene of the play of Euripides was laid in the Crimea. Orestes and his friend had come to Ukraine and its neighborhood to recover the statue of Artenis and undoubtedly the poetess was thinking of this in choosing her theme.

Ukrainian literature had long dealt with Ukraine and Ukraine only. The writers of the past half century had neglected other subjects but there was a movement away from this narrowness and in dealing with classic antiquity and the ancient world, she was follow-

ing after decades in the steps of Shevchenko with his poems as the *Neophytes* and *Maria.* So Lesya Ukrainka with her more abundant erudition and her acquaintance with the Black Sea and the Mediterranean south knew by study and observation the life of other regions and saw how these ideas could illustrate the psychological, moral and social lessons which she wished to convey.

Her English reading gave her the idea of Robert Bruce and she pictured the well known story of the Scottish king who accepted the throne only on the condition that he could use his power to keep his people free. That was his claim to fame and the fact that he lived up to his promise gave him everlasting glory.

After 1902 the nature of her works gradually changed. They ceased to be predominantly lyrical in character and gradually assumed the form of poetic dramas and dialogues in which by preference she treated some subject connected with the downfall of a people and the efforts that they had to make to win back their independence.

Many of these as the *Babylonian Captivity* and *On the Ruins* dealt with the sufferings of Israel under the yoke and immediately after the return to Palestine. Lesya Ukrainka understood well that death or shame were the only alternatives to a courageous struggle for independence. Even in *Three Moments* which dealt with the French Revolution the Girondist who is able to save his life by escaping realizes that he cannot be happy while his companions are facing death and prison for the cause in which he believes.

Thus for example in *Ioanna, Wife of Khusov,* we have the story of a woman of Palestine who has left her husband to follow in the train of Jesus of Nazareth. When she returns after the Crucifixion, she finds her husband busily engaged in gaining the favor of some Roman visitors. There is obvious misunderstanding on both sides, an obvious attempt on his part to deny his own traditions in order to curry favor with the new rules of the land and to secure an invitation to Rome, and to do this, he is willing to break all the rules of native etiquette, and imitate the strangers. Ioanna is thoroughly unhappy and feels herself more isolated than ever before because of her grasp of higher ideals. Yet she is compelled to go through with her role, even though it leaves her unhappy and miserable. The parallel to the Ukrainian situation is obvious and we can be sure that it was in the mind of the poetess, even though there are no definite statements that might apply to the situation.

In the *House of Slavery* we have still another study of the same problem. The scene is Egypt but the Hebrew slave and the Egyptian

slave cannot work together and be friends. Both desire freedom but the one wants it to continue the culture that has enslaved him. The other desires it as ardently but that freedom would be meaningless unless it gave him the power to shatter and destroy all that had overpowered him and reduced him to his present situation. There are differences in slavery as well as in masters and he who would forget that does so at his peril.

Thus at almost every turn Lesya Ukrainka chooses some subject which can have at least an indirect significance for Ukraine and the cause of its people. Yet the connection is never too obvious. For its understanding it required deeper thought and a clearer insight into the nature of the problems which were facing the country.

There was also required a better understanding of the psychological nature of man. The earlier authors had treated this in a casual way when they saw fit to mention it at all. They had taken a rather simple view of human nature and the problems of their characters could be expressed in terms of external injustice and oppression. In such writings of Lesya Ukrainka as *Tristan and Isolda,* where the one Isolda represents spiritual love and the other earthly, we have a clearer representation of the problems of human nature than we have had hitherto. Even in the poems of Shevchenko we do not meet such representations of human life with its manifold aspects and the problems that come from the various elements of human nature.

All this marks the entrance of Ukrainian literature into a more mature stage and heralds its approach to the great literatures of the world in their modern form. Of course it annoyed many of the representatives of the older school, who could not see that this deepening of themes was anything but a betrayal of the sacred cause. They were ready to condemn the poetess and lament that she did not continue in the old vein.

The same thing happened when the various theatres attempted to produce her plays. The troupes of actors were in many cases experienced and able to represent the old fashioned type of characters and the old fashioned problems. They were hardly prepared by training or outlook to give a good exposition of this new kind of problem. It is true that her writings were more literary and not so well adapted to theatrical presentation as those of the older writers. She had not had that experience with the theatre that was possessed by many of her predecessors but under proper auspices some of her sketches contain striking dramatic scenes.

Thus Lesya Ukrainka used her very isolation from the world and the fact that she was obliged to live in a literary atmosphere with books as her chief friends to increase her power to write a Ukrainian literature in a modern and more cosmopolitan style. She was typical of the newer intelligentsia who were none the less patriotic, none the less zealous for Ukraine, because they were able to present its case in forms that were being developed abroad. In a sense her work marked the end of that old ethnographical-political period which had been so necessary in the first stages of arousing the people to a consciousness of their past. She assumed that that had been achieved, and on that basis she started for the younger generation a new literature which was to adapt the general ideas of modern Europe to Ukraine and to bring the intelligentsia into a new world.

Surrounded by those friends whom she knew and liked and isolated from the worst storms of the day, she often felt the oppression of loneliness and solitude. She could not hope for wide popularity and it is probably not too much to say that the wider circles of Ukrainian society began to appreciate her only after her untimely death. Since then there has been a steadily widening circle of her admirers who have recognized in her one of the great masters of the Ukrainian language. Her native talent and her industry made her works masterpieces. She won many imitators for the new style of writing. The universality of her themes and the careful treatment that she gave to various human emotions have made her more than the poet of a passing era and she is one of those authors who gain a steadily increasing number of readers and admirers as time passes. Yet with it all her desire for the cosmopolitan never led her away from her native land and in her Ukraine found a devoted patriot and a great understanding soul.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MIKHAYLO KOTSYUBINSKY

During the greater part of the nineteenth century it was the task of the Ukrainian authors to arouse and educate their people. The nation in its darkest hour had lost to Russia or to Poland practically the whole of its educated class and the national habits and characteristics were preserved in the villages among the illiterate peasants. The first and most pressing duty was to form a new educated class, to give a knowledge of the past of Ukraine to those people who were but dimly conscious of their existence as a separate entity and to lay the foundation for a deeper study of their own traditions and habits. At the same time the harsh censorship and the regulations, especially of the Russian government, practically required that this work be carried on under the guise of the study of ethnography and archaeology. The very names of the journals that appeared in Russia as *Bulletin of the Archaeological Commission* and the *Kievskaya Starina*, (*Antiquities of Kiev*) the only ones that were allowed to appear during the periods of repression show the truth of this statement and it was only natural accordingly that the writers who were compelled to work with one eye on the censorship tended to exploit these possibilities. There grew up in Ukrainian literature a definite ethnographic school and the writers with pleasure and profit gave long descriptions of the manners and customs of the villagers. The time, however, had to come, when the authors would no longer be content with these self-imposed limitations and would branch out into a broader field. The author who was to do this in prose was Mikhaylo Kotsyubinsky, one of the greatest artists in this field.

Kotsyubinsky was born at Vinnitsa in Podolia in 1864. His father was a poor official but during his father's lifetime he was able to study in the bursa and the theological academy. He did not finish the course and after his father's death he made his living for a while as a private tutor. He continued his own studies especially of literature and finally

entered the government service. In the early nineties he was attached to the commission for the elimination of the phyloxera which was ruining the vineyards in the south and he passed several years in Bessarabia and the Crimea, where he had extensive opportunities to study the lives of the villagers. He then served in the statistical office in Chernihiv. During this time the Revolution of 1905 broke out and Kotsyubinsky became very friendly with Maxim Gorky and many of the leaders of the Social Democratic party of Russia. He finally retired on a pension in 1911 to devote himself entirely to literature. He went to Italy and lived near Gorky on the island of Capri. His heart grew steadily worse and he returned to Kiev for a long period of treatment but it did no good and he passed away in 1913 at the age of forty-nine.

Kotsyubinsky started to write in the same ethnographic realistic style that had been popularized by Levitsky-Nechuy. He had been inspired to write in Ukrainian by the *Kobzar* of Shevchenko and the stories of Marko Vovchok but he very soon broadened his literary range by the diligent reading of later Russian authors such as Chekhov and also by the careful study of the French and Scandinavian naturalists as Zola, Maupassant, and Hamsun. All of these affected his style in passing but he gradually worked out his own attitude toward literature and developed that individual style in which his main works were written.

As he developed, he came more and more to understand the importance of beauty in writing. He realized that there was always one correct word artistically for every situation and he made great efforts to find that right word, so as to secure the maximum effectiveness of his work. He had a lyric and almost a sentimental appreciation of nature and his power of casting a roseate glow over a scene and giving a poetic picture in a few simple words of prose is marked. Perhaps of his contemporaries only Korolenko shares that power and he too was of Ukrainian origin, although he wrote in Russian. The ability to transfigure an unpleasant and sordid scene and make of it a thing of beauty without preventing the reader from realizing its real character is a marked feature of Kotsyubinsky's style. It definitely advances him above the level of the great majority of the Ukrainian authors and makes him a European writer in the best sense.

Side by side with this is a delicate appreciation of human psychology. In his short stories with a remarkable economy in means, he is able to penetrate the human heart and to express the most poignant feelings and the most secret ambitions of a man or woman.

These characteristics are most clearly seen in his last collection published just about the time of his death and especially in the *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors,* a story of peasant life in the Beskid Mountains which he visited in 1911. It is the account of the life of the shepherd boy Ivan Paliychuk. We see the young boy under the shadow of the family feud with the Gutenyuk family in which his father is killed, and his love for young Marichka of the rival clan. There is a really idyllic picture of the young love of these two children of nature, but Ivan is compelled by poverty to take a position as herdsman for the summer in the mountains and during that summer Marichka is drowned. Later he marries the wealthy Palagna and all seems to prosper but there is not that affection and sincerity between them that had existed between the young Ivan and his first love. His wife misbehaves shamefully with the sorcerer Yura and the two plan to kill Ivan by magic but he, broken hearted and in despair, wanders off into the woods and mountains, lured on by a spirit, a Nyavka that took the form of his beloved Marichka. Finally he fell over a precipice and was killed. Then came the funeral rites, the entertainments and the games that were customary while all through the neighborhood resounded the death strains of the Hutsul pipes. How far at this moment Kotsyubinsky is from the cold realism of the earlier authors can be seen from the way in which he enters into the realm of the peasant superstitions and makes plausible the appearance to Ivan in his despair of all those supernatural beings, the Nyavka and the Chugaystyr. He carries his readers into the spirit of the mountains not in any cold archaeological sense but as a living world apart from the ordinary affairs of men.

If this was the culmination of the work of Kotsyubinsky, he had covered a long path in his creative development. He had started with little Sketches and it was only in the pictures of the south in *Under the Minarets* and *In the Paths of the Devil* that he had begun to work out this finally chiselled style, the success of which depends so much upon his ability to evoke the beauty and the artistry of untutored nature.

The style is still only partially developed in such tales as *At a Great Price* published in 1902. It might easily be a historical novel for it refers back to those days when the persecuted and oppressed Ukrainians were seeking to escape into Turkey in the hopes of founding there a new Sich after their own had been destroyed. Ostap starts on the difficult journey and his wife, the devoted Solomeya, overtakes him and goes with him and shares his hardships. They try once to

cross the border but the Cossack guards intercept them. A little later Ostap is badly wounded in another attempt and is nursed back to life by the care of his wife. They are helped and plundered by the Gypsies and finally Ostap is rescued by his wife and a friend from the hands of the Turks, but she is drowned in the Danube in the attempt. So he lives alone, and he shows his bare back to those who will listen and look at the marks left by the cruel floggings which he had received in his lifetime. "Here on my back is a memory from my master, and in front between my ribs is my present from the Moskal. Well placed . . . with them I will go to God. . . I paid well for my liberty, I paid a bitter price. Half of me lies at the bottom of the Danube and the other is waiting and cannot wait to join it." Here is the germ of the later development with its appreciation of nature and of the undying call of liberty and democracy.

Kotsyubinsky was keenly aware of the wave of unrest that was sweeping Ukraine along with the rest of Russia just prior to the Revolution of 1905 and in the *Fata Morgana*, he gives us the first rumblings of the coming storm in the picture of the poor peasant Andriy and his wife Malanka and his daughter Hafiyka. The father has long since given up the struggle to become independent. His wife has married him for want of a better suitor and they have one daughter, beautiful as a picture but still with no dowry and faced with the possibility of a joyless life. The father dreams that a factory may be built, so that there can be work. The mother still has the unsatisfied craving of the Ukrainian peasant for the land. She muses "How splendid thou art, O earth. It is pleasant to sow thee with grain. to adorn thee with green, to decorate thee with flowers. It is pleasant to work thee. Only thou are not good in this, that thou art not kind to the poor man. For the rich thou glowest with beauty, the rich thou pleasest, thou clothest him, and the poor man thou receivest only in a grave. . . But our hands are waiting to work our meadows, our cities, our gardens. . . They will divide thee, O land, and 'our benefactor' will come to the plough. Oh, God, God, even in my old age grant me this happiness to bring out my child among people." Into this environment come the first students who are arrested by the police, the first outbursts of hostility against the established order. Kotsyubinsky had planned a trilogy on this theme but he only finished two parts and the whole remained a mere skeleton.

There are many other stories dealing with the Revolution and the revolutionary movement and Kotsyubinsky tries in each to illustrate the psychology of the various participants, as the *Birthday*

Present where the bureaucratic father decides to give his son the pleasure of seeing a hanging but the boy fails to appreciate the honor which is shown him. He interferes, and at the end, the father fears that he will be put out of the service, that the boy will be excluded from the school, while the young Dorya is thinking for his part that he must somehow punish the people responsible for such an outrageous act. Or *The Horses are not to Blame* gives us the reactions of a family on the very eve of the time when the peasants demand from them their land.

Yet perhaps the best stories of Kotsyubinsky are not those that have this kind of content but those where an ordinary man faces some sharp crisis. Thus in *What is written in the Book of Life,* an old peasant woman feeling herself in the way and wearied that death does not come, persuades her son to take her out into the woods to leave her to die. He does so, but at the very moment when she is determined to leave this world, she shows so much interest in the chatter about her neighbors, that the son finally changes his mind and goes back for her. He thinks of all the rites and customs that surround the average funeral, the drinking, and the entertainment and these things done for the good opinion of the neighbors are almost as potent in making him change his mind as is the actual sorrow for the fate of the poor old woman whom death has forgotten. Or there are such stories as the *Letter* where a young and idealistic boy is brought face to face on his return home with the killing of a little pig for his dinner. The stain of blood separates the family and without knowing why, he loses all contact with them, He is horrified by the church and its services and he looks perfectly calmly at the fighting and the drunken brawls that go on around him for blood will have blood.

One of his most striking stories is the *Dream,* and here we see one of the underlying ideas of our author. The scene is the prosaic life of an ordinary family. When they were young and first married, Antin and Marta had something to live for. They had love and affection but the dull routine of life had carried all that away and now they were living well but uninterestingly. There were the prosaic facts of daily life, the ordinary cares and petty household and office activities. Marta was unconscious of the loss. Antin was and in his dreams which he tells his wife, he resurrects the past and imagines à new romance with a girl in Italy. There is beauty, there is love, there is passion, and it is all a dream. At first the mere idea that her well-known husband could become a problem to her, that there were in his being elements that she had effectively stifled in herself was too

much for her. Yet at the end it did rouse her to make an attempt to bring back something of that past, and "She did not know whether she would have the strength, whether storms would rage at some future time, but now oftener than before roses adorned their dining table."

It was the fault of routine. "She had not known to guard life, to preserve its beauty. Daily she had been throwing it away in trifles, in the useless filth of existence, until she had turned it into a foul pit. Poetry cannot live in such an atmosphere, and without it, life is a crime."

That is the real gist of the work of Kotsyubinsky. In his memoirs Gorky emphasizes this quality of the author and it takes precedence over all other aspects of his work. Life can be made interesting. Life can be made good. Sympathy and love and kindness can be universal and perhaps they are so natural to man that they can even pass over into the consciousness of dogs and other animals that are near to man. It is a law of life and he who neglects does so at his infinite peril.

It is this spirit that moved and inspired all of his writings. It gave him the feeling and the desire to penetrate the human heart and mind to understand man as he really can be. Humanity, beauty, the people, Ukraine—these were the things for which Kotsyubinsky lived and about which he thought and wrote and dreamed. Between him and Levitsky and the older novelists there was a great gulf. They had been as eager to help the people as he was. They were as self-sacrificing as he was, but they did not try to take into account those other values which he regarded so highly.

Like them in style he was realistic and naturalistic. He endeavored to deal with life as it was in the rough and the unmild as in the *Intermezzo,* where life among human beings is like that among the wolves for the people ruined by syphilis, poverty, alcohol, and illiteracy, know nothing better than to fight and destroy one another, but there was something more, for he wished not only to tell a story to impress the minds and hearts of his readers, but he wanted also to evoke a mood so as to stir their emotions and to rouse their sense of beauty.

Beauty and harmony appear in all the later works of Kotsyubinsky. It is a deliberate beauty and a deliberate harmony, not like that natural spark of the genius Shevchenko who seeemd from the very beginning to know what to say and how to say it. With Kotsyubinsky it was something acquired. The feeling was natural to him. He had that finely balanced character that was favorable to its growth but

there was a conscious training of that feeling. It is small wonder that Kotsyubinsky was not a voluminous writer. It was impossible to imagine him combining literature and journalism or entering the rough and tumble arena of life. It is impossible to picture him careless or indifferent. The very methods that he borrowed from impressionism and grafted on to his realistic settings are those which are the results of a real understanding of the finer points of culture. Without poetry, life is a crime. It is a new note in Ukrainian literature, a note of a growing maturity, a greater refinement, a sign that Ukrainian literature is taking its place as one of the culture literatures of the world. The problems of Ukraine are still as pressing, they have not been solved but Kotsyubinsky feels that it is no use to harp only on the external and the immediate. The Ukrainians still have souls and if they are to be really civilized people, they must share the emotions and the sensations of civilized people. They must deepen their life as well as broaden it. From his earliest efforts Kotsyubinsky steadily deepened and broadened his range of subjects. He did for prose what Lesya Ukrainka and others had done for poetry and when he died in 1913, he could look at the world and say, as he had always thought, that life was good, that mankind had enormous potentialities, and that he had done his part in making them available and accessible for literature.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

VASIL STEFANYK

A NEW realism appeared in the twentieth century but this was significantly different from the older form that had been handled with so much success by Marko Vovchok and Levitsky. Its centre of gravity was different. Where the older authors had indulged in stories of peasant life that had the avowed intention of awaking the educated classes to a realization of the problems confronting the Ukrainian people, the new authors sought to give pictures of the conditions as they existed at that period when the old patriarchal order was definitely breaking down. There is not the constant harping on the theme that changes in the social order might produce important results. Rather there is a representation of people who have been broken by life and we are asked to look at them as they are in their misery and despair.

It is definitely the underprivileged who are described. We are not told how or why they have become that way. The fact is that they exist and they form a sad spectacle for the keen observer. An atmosphere of fate broods over the whole and there is nothing that they or we can do to change their lot. Life has dealt them many blows. It has taken away their power of resistance and man becomes an individual, no longer one of a group that is bound together as a class, a family, or a member of society. He stands out by himself with his own problems with which he cannot grapple and if he has a family or friends beside him, they cannot do much to ease his solitude. We are born alone and we die alone and compared with those great truths, our petty human attempts to understand one another are doomed to futility, try as we will.

Gone are the days when we feel that the peasant, the serf, has within himself abundant resources of mental and moral and physical strength. Gone are the days when we are led to believe that these oppressed and insulted people are the backbone of society and can be

led and taught to live a better and a more abundant life. The tide has turned and is running strongly toward other phases of existence. If there is to be a brighter future, we cannot expect it to come from the actions of the impoverished, drunken, broken peasants. We must seek it elsewhere, if we can.

The new style perhaps tooks its rise in French naturalism but it was certainly influenced by Dostoyevsky's interest in broken souls, by the misunderstandings of Chekhov, and by the revolutionary heroes of Gorky. It was influenced to some extent by the teachings of Marxism and the growth of radical political parties which clustered around the factories and the cities.

The phenomenon was not confined to the Slavonic countries. We can trace it in English and American literature, in the almost unconscious efforts of the more modern writers to turn away from the picturing of virtuous peasants and farmers and to see in the country characters who possess all possible vices and perversions. The old view that the city is the source of corruption and decay and the rural districts are the home of virtue is looked upon as old-fashioned and the newer psychology endeavors to analyze, to explain or at least to picture almost photographically the warped and helpless types that are found everywhere.

The same movement made its appearance in Ukrainian and the great master of this school was Vasil Stefanyk, a consummate artist and a miniaturist in words. His pictures are short and concise. In a few phrases and a few paragraphs he pictures the sad state of the average Galician village and the strange creatures that inhabit it.

He had a good opportunity to study these people for he lived almost his whole life among them. He got to know the inner life of the village, the sorrows and the scanty joys of the people of a community where prosperity rarely occurs and where misery and disease are universal.

Vasil Stefanyk was born in 1871 in Western Ukraine in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. He received a good education at Krakow and for a while studied medicine but he left the university without completing his course. In the meantime he had become friendly with some of the leaders of the Young Poland movement and shared with them their infatuation for the life of the common people. Wyspianski and the others of the group were actuated by a new interest in the life of the ordinary Polish peasant and were trying to understand the psychology of the average villager. Stefanyk applied the same technique to the life of his own people. As a result he went back to his

own village and settled down as a farmer among them. He got to know them and their modes of thought and expression. He studied their local and untutored dialect, he learned to appreciate the difficulties with which they were confronted and he began those stories of peasant existence that have made him one of the greatest prose artists of modern Ukrainian literature.

He was not a voluminous writer. He began to produce his masterpieces when he was about thirty years of age and for a decade he worked and developed his own gemlike style and his gift of portraiture. The task of composition was not easy and he toiled over almost every phrase and paragraph, tearing up copy after copy, until he had found exactly the right word and the right idea. Then he grew silent and for another decade, although he was recognized as a master, he produced nothing. The impact of the war and the temporary liberation of Ukraine roused him again to write and for the first time he used the word Ukraine and emphasized the unity of the people in both halves of the country. The disastrous situation that ensued as a result of the Ukrainian defeat and renewed division made him again give up writing and return to his former silence. He died in 1936, just before the new catastrophes were to overwhelm his country.

He does not reveal himself in his sketches. Far from that. If we read them carefully, we will find few clues to the author and his personality. He does not dwell upon any special theme with marked enthusiasm. He does not comment or give moral judgments upon his characters from which we could infer his own sympathies or his own point of view. He simply in a few well chosen sentences sets out a situation confronting some broken souls and bodies and he objectively pictures a little incident that explains the situation. It is useless for us to ask him why these things happen. They simply do and that is all there is to it.

In the beginning there was a slight touch of symbolism in his works as in the *Road*, the pilgrimage of a man through life, nameless and unidentified. He leaves his mother and starts out through the world. He sees people in their agony and despair. At night they lie like stones one by the other. His strength rises and wanes again when he finds his mother's grave, he sobs with dry eyes. She does not answer him when he calls. "He ran from grave to grave, as autumn flowers. When he had passed one hundred graves, the one hundred first was his. He fell down to it, as he had long ago to his mother's bosom."

This was the early phase of Stefanyk's work but he did not long

remain at this level. His characters speedily become more individualized and if there is a special symbol that we may deduce from his works to describe the people whom he presents, it is as fallen leaves blown along on the autumn wind. No one understands them nor do they understand themselves.

So in the *News.* "In the village there was the news that Grits Letyuchy had drowned his little girl in the river. He wanted to drown the older one, but she begged off. After his wife Grítishka died, he suffered misfortunes. He could not care for his children without a wife. No one wanted to marry him, for besides the children there were also poverty and need. Grits suffered for two full years with his young children. No one knew about him, how he lived, what he did, although neighbors were very near. They said only that Grits for a whole winter never lighted a fire in the hut and he and his children passed the winter on the stove." He takes the hungry children to the river and throws the youngest Dotska in. The older one Handzynya begs off, "Daddy don't drown me, don't drown me, don't drown me." He relents but tells her that Dotska will be better off than she. However she can go to the first hut and ask to spend the night and then try for a position to care for a child. He himself starts to ford the river but changes his mind and goes to the bridge.

There is no moral judgment on the action of Grits. The poor man is at the end of his physical and moral powers but Stefanyk does not explain it. He does not condemn him. He merely in plain, unadorned language describes the course of events.

No one in the village knows how Grits lives, although the neighbors are very near. The old village spirit has vanished. In the stories of Marko Vovchok, the peasants are ready to help one another. They sympathize with the unfortunate. They are ready to share their last crumb with one another. Here even that spirit is gone. The members of the village are enemies one to another or at best are impartial and neutral observers as is the author of the story. We have travelled far from the days when the chief cause of peasant suffering was the flogging by the arrogant and haughty lord. The peasants are free but they are free to starve and Stefanik is not interested in those who have carved out a secure place for themselves in the village community.

Or let us take *The Family of Les.* Les steals a sack of barley from his wife to sell it at the inn and secure something to drink. She follows him with her two boys, one eight and one ten years old and makes a scene. Then she knocks him down and orders the children to beat their father roundly. Finally she goes home with them in mortal

terror that their father will return in the night and take vengeance. All the tragedy of drunkenness is described, all the pathos and despair of the poor mother who cannot work enough to take care of her children and the inn keeper. There is no attempt at presenting a roseate view of peasant life. Misery, need, want, that is all the unfortunates know. It is what has been in the past and all that they can expect in the future. Yet there is more to it than this for again Stefanyk brings out the complicated psychology of an event which might seem at first sight simple. Thus the mother realizes that she could receive assistance from the state if her husband were crippled whereas she could have no relief, if he were merely drunk. Likewise the father is willing to suffer at the hands of his children and even takes off his overcoat so that their light blows can inflict greater pain upon him. Family feeling has taken a strange turn and the mother appears more like an female animal defending her young than she does as a member of a civilized community but Stefanyk gives clue after clue to the varied reactions of the individuals which are by no means simple.

We have the same sort of peasant cynicism in the *Blue Booklet* (or is it really a picturing of the despair that comes when a man is finally broken?). Antin has lost his wife and his two children and alone in the world, he has no solace left but drink. He loses his land and then his little hut and takes the blue employment book to start out in the world alone. He flaunts his poverty in the village inn and names the people to whom he has lost everything but he boasts "I haven't a cent, but I will drink. I will drink with our people, I'll go to ruin with them. Let them know how I have left the village. Go, I have the blue booklet in my pocket. Now that is my hut and my field and my gardens. I'm going with it to the end of the world! A booklet from the emperor, I have all doors opened to me. Everywhere. Among gentlemen and Jews and every faith." Antin has ceased to belong. He has passed out as so many of Stefanyk's heroes from the normal humdrum life which at best may bring a normal respectable living or at least a slow starvation.

Death and preparation for death is another favorite theme. Take *Katrusya* for example. The poor girl is dying of tuberculosis. With the last of their money the family take her to a doctor but the comment they make is "Peasants do not need to go to doctors. He tells you to drink a lot of milk, or eat some light meat or drink some liquor, or eat white bread or something like that (all things not obtainable on a peasant's income). It can help the gentry, but it won't help in our class. Therefore let her die as she is." A neighbor replies. "Do you

think the doctors give the peasants the same medicine that they give the gentry or the Jews? Therefore let her die as she is." They look at Katrusya and say, "There is nothing on her as on a leaf that has been torn away from the tree." So death comes on but this symbol of the fallen leaf is a favorite one with Stefanyk. Indeed most of his characters are just that. They are the unsuccessful, the poor devils who have been torn away from the tree of life and yet there is something human and touching in their misery and their despair.

For an example of characters drawn from the wealthier classes we have the *Basarabi.* They had been an old and brutal race which as overseers had mercilessly driven the peasants in the days of forced labor. One of them during the Turkish wars had murdered seven little children. Now in their decline they were little better although they are well-to-do peasants. The old vitality of the race is gone and with the ill concealed hatred of the other peasants and the disordered minds of the family, suicide becomes the rule rather than the exception. Tomas who has been cut down in time, tells the rest of the family of the pangs of conscience and of the weird spirits that hang around him and drive him to his deed. The doctors ascribe it all to nerves but even at this the gruesome story so impresses another of the clan, Mikolay, that he goes out into the night to commit the same deed to the consternation of the others. It is typical of the decline of a family and in the Galician setting there is something of the studied horror of Edgar Allen Poe and the other writers who set forth the degeneration of a once tyrannical family. It is longer than most of the works of Stefanyk, for it contains more of a story with a perspective over generations. It is rare that he refers back to the days of the past. For the most part his stories deal with an event in the present and he assumes as his background the whole degeneration of a community under the influence of alcohol, Jewish tavern keepers and grinding poverty. It is highly significant for Stefanyk's attitude that he chooses as his horrible examples no outsiders but one of those Ukrainian families which had prospered in the past by devious and unmentionable methods.

For a long while Stefanyk gave up writing and then during the exciting years after the First World War he returned to literature. His later stories were of the same type as the earlier ones. They had the same compressed form, the same careful workmanship but there was something different about them. He had grown during the years of silence and had come to find more positive qualities in his poor folk. He shows their sufferings in the war, when the peasants of Western Ukraine came to feel toward the Russians, the Moskali, what

had been mentioned again and again in the writings of the people from Great Ukraine. Thus in *Maria,* the old woman comes to meet the Kozaks in the village and she is surprised that they being Ukrainian also respect Shevchenko. In the *Sons,* an old peasant realizes that his sons have gone to fight for Ukraine. On his return from seeing the last one off, he finds his wife dead before the painting of the Blessed Virgin and in a fit of simple religion, not without a bitter undertone, he appeals to the Blessed Virgin to care for his home for he has given not one but two sons for a great cause.

There has come a new enlightenment in the village, a new feeling that the people have some part to play other than to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. It is a sign of the deepening of the national consciousness, of that tendency that Franko had hoped for and in which he had believed. The Ukraine is now a real thing even to the humblest and the most underprivileged and along with this there is a growing tendency of hostility to the Polish landowners and bureaucrats. They had hardly appeared in the earlier stories where Stefanyk had been describing merely little sketches of peasant life taken without any background except the misery and suffering of the village.

It brings about a new atmosphere of hope, a deeper confidence in the capacity of the peasants. There is more thought, more conscious guiding of their own affairs. They are no longer satisfied to accept their fate without questioning and to pass from the scene without a murmur. Yet they are fundamentally the same people. With the same temptations and vices.

Take for example, "*She is the Earth,*" where the Bukovina refugees make their way to the north. Old Danilo has brought his family with him but his wife is silent. From the time when they abandoned their little farm before the onrushing armies, she has remained still and silent. Old Semen, the same type of man, advises the newcomer to go home. "An old bird must not leave its old nest, for it is not able to build another. It is better that its head grows cold in its old nest than in a hollow on a strange road." He warns against following the lords and the Jews. "The Emperor has his purse open for them, but the purse is closed for you. . ." "Our work is with the earth; you abandon it, you are lost, you cling to it, it rakes out all your strength from you, it fills your soul with its hands; you fall down to it, you bend your back, it fills your veins, for that you have flocks and herds, and haystacks. For your strength it gives you a hut full of children and grandchildren, who laugh as silver bells, and bloom like poplars.

. . . Don't go, Danilo, with the lords and the Jews, don't seek the tsar, for you do not need the tsar; there is always someone to come to the farm to collect the taxes." And it is only then that the old woman finds her voice and says,—"Let us go home, Danilo, let us go home." "And when the sun rose, the old men parted, they kissed their black hands, and the red sun threw their shadows across the boundary far along the earth."

This is the creed of the peasant, the creed of the earth, and it was a new note for Stefanyk. It is perhaps too optimistic. It perhaps shows a narrow conception of life but it is the fundamental essence of the peasant wisdom put in a simple form. It opens a new vista to the reader, it gives a psychological motive and a philosophy that had been hitherto lacking in his work. Now in his later stories he ventures to give the world and his characters some elements of philosophy other than the cynical or coldly unmoral picture of human dissolution and disaster.

Stefanyk was working toward a deeper and a more satisfactory philosophy of life under the pressure of the events of the World War. Yet his basis was the impartial observation of the poor material condition of the average Galician village in the period when the old safeguards had been removed by the abolition of feudal powers and when the individual peasant was not yet effectively trained to stand for himself.

He writes of a transition period when the peasant was left almost entirely alone to stand upon his own two feet and when he was not prepared to do so. The peasant exists under the implacable rule of the erstwhile master and the no more tender mercies of the tavern keeper in the village (usually a Jew) and hence it is that again and again Stefanyk attacks the gentry and the Jews, the two classes in Galician society that seemed to get along, while the hard working peasant gave to both all of his hard earned money. For those peasants who had solved the problem and who were able to live and get along, Stefanyk has nothing to say but in his time the refuge for all of these was ultimately America. The still living ambition to succeed drove the peasant to sell everything and emigrate to the United States or Canada where he could be free to become a man and had some prospects of solving his own problems.

This was the period that Stefanyk described and his knowledge of the lives and thoughts of the people he set forth in exquisite and carefully worked out stories in which every word is important. No writer up to this time in Ukrainian had been so economical in his use of ma-

terial. No one had been so compressed in his style and language. Stefanyk was a supreme artist in a particularly difficult medium. His stories had the finish of a miniature but they are not to be neglected because of the brevity of their material. With the exception of Franko, he was the leading author produced in Western Ukraine during the past seventy-five years and his sense of literary values, his command of language and his appreciation of the significant episodes in life make him an author of whom any literature may well be proud. He dealt with a restricted field but in this field he knew how to show the important elements not only for his people but for humanity and he is one of those authors who under the guise of picturing the down and downtrodden, the failures and the misfits, have known to show them as human beings with many a toil and sorrow but still profoundly human and profoundly worthy of pity and assistance, yet without any attempt to include any form of propaganda and without adding anything that conflicts with pure literature in the strictest sense of the word.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

OLES

At the end of the nineteenth century a new poetry spread rapidly over Europe. Directly or indirectly this traced its source to the French symbolists and decadents, to Verlaine and Mallarmé and the other writers of that period. Then came the influence of Maeterlinck and the movement was in full course. However, as the movement with its emphasis on aestheticism and beauty and its frequent desire to shock the bourgeoisie spread among the Slavs, it gradually sought a philosophical basis for the new developments.

The new authors rapidly advanced the technique of poetry and at the same time they broadened the range of materials which were regarded as proper subjects. For a half century there had been predominant a form of realism which conceived as within its scope only the contemporary lives of the people. It remained to go outside of the conventional and to choose subjects from the entire field of recorded history. Lesya Ukrainka had started this with her dramas and sketches from the antique world. Even this was not enough and as the symbolistic movement expanded, the authors flew from the earth to the heavens, to other planets, to imaginary scenes and they sought in all these areas that which they considered beauty in their own imaginations. Many schools of thought arose among the new artists and basking in the light of self-adulation, they cared little for the old-fashioned social motifs which had been instrumental in training the people for the last half century. They cared little more for the enthusiastic admiration of the great masses who were beginning to appreciate at long last the older writers and were content to read new and ever new reinterpretations of the old themes.

Ukrainian literature was no exception to the general rule, and around 1890 at the very end of the century the new movement made its appearance. It rapidly forced into the background the older writers. In the meanwhile life was changing and the symbolists and decadents were being attacked on all sides. The champions of the old order had

not spared even Franko for his *Withered Leaves* and they were even more concerned with the vagaries of the still younger authors.

Yet it cannot be denied that with all their weaknesses, these new men were doing a great work in the adaptation of Ukrainian literature to world models. They were rapidly forcing the literature from a narrow and almost provincial field to a world arena and if in the beginning they cut themselves off from their less fortunate fellow men, the greater writers, once they had mastered the forms steadily began a return to the world which they had formerly scorned. Yet that return was no mere repetition of the past, no slavish abjuring of the ideas that they had formerly admired. It was rather a realization of the fact that literature did have other purposes than the purely photographic repetition of details of ethnography and social philosophy, that it could affect the readers by the evocation of various moods, and could give them a deeper understanding of some phases of human psychology by the use of symbols more or less easy to penetrate than it could by plain matter of fact narration and bald statement. In other words there was again a conscious approach to that method of exposition which had been unconsciously present in the mind of a great genius as Shevchenko. His *Great Grave* is as much of a symbolistic poem as is any work of the present writers but he did it with the spark of genius and with his eye directed at the history of his nation even more than at individual psychology.

The author who was to develop this new poetry to its height was O. Oles, the pen name of Oleksander Kandyba who was born in Russian Ukraine in 1878. Like many of the more modern writers, he was well educated and from 1903 on, he was recognized as the most outstanding poet since Shevchenko. Yet at no time could he have the appeal of such a man as Franko, for Oles with all of his talent was still pitching his works on a level which was inaccessible to the average educated man and he could be admired and understood in many cases only by a relatively small audience.

The early years of the twentieth century saw many changes in Ukraine both in Russia and Galicia. In Russia there were the high hopes at the time of the Revolution of 1905, when it seemed again as if with the abolition of the strict rules of the censorship there would be presented favorable conditions for work. Almost over night there sprang into existence new journals, new writers, new hopes. Then again the clouds descended and the reactionary regimes that followed tried to go back to the old days when Ukraine seemed non-existent. Between 1905 and 1910 many of the new journals again passed out of

existence and the despairing may have thought that all hope was again lost. Yet much had been gained. The Ukrainians had learned to group themselves into political parties and other organizations. They had secured a larger nucleus of a reading public and that public could not be easily disintegrated again. The time was past when an imperial fiat abolishing the very name of Ukraine and wiping out the Sich could discourage and almost destroy the entire movement.

So too in Galicia. The Ukrainian population there was becoming more self-conscious. The students were demanding more and more vigorously the introduction of Ukrainian courses in the University of Lviv. The contacts with the Russian Ukraine were growing stronger and that exchange of writers and published books which had been going on for nearly a half century was no longer a tender plant which could be shattered by the slightest blow.

Then came the stirrings of the First World War and the final collapse of the two empires of Russia and Austria-Hungary. For a few months Ukraine was again free. The two republics of Great Ukraine and Western Ukraine came together with Professor Hrushevsky as the President of the Rada and there came a rapid flowering of the national culture. The work of the preceding century had borne fruit. Alas! It was only for a short time and then with the renewed division of the country, between the Soviet Union, Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia, it seemed as if the hopes of all had died again.

During all this period Oles continued his work, grouping together words of encouragement and lamentation, personal lyrics and poems with a definite social content which had a real meaning for his countrymen. His moods varied with the political conditions. They were strong and cheerful when the outlook was hopeful. They were sad and depressed in moments of adversity but he never lost hope and he never felt that his work in the service of social ideals bound the wings of his talent or interfered with the artistic value of his poems. When misfortune finally came to Ukraine, he withdrew to Galicia and then became one of that group which moved to Prague and from there he poured out his poems of despair, of the sadness of the emigré but always with the superb confidence that Ukraine would rise again and that her sons would some day be happy and free in their own land.

In moments of encouragement he can sing:

> I'll weep no more. My sorrow I will fetter
> In chains of strongest steel.
> My people are still burdened with their fetters

Their wounds their woes reveal.
And all my soul
I show forth with their wounds.

I'll sing no more. And nightly in the struggle
The iron swords sing loud.
The swords cut deep into the people's vitals
And call a race uncowed.
Then let my sword
Sing for me in the strife.

Or again Oles with his eye upon nature and the same hope in his breast will sing:

Thou marvelous and wondrous night!
Just yesterday a coverlet of snow was sifting down,
And now to-day a change . . . so warm and bright,
With here and there a pushing upward from the frozen ground.

Know this: 'twill be the same with man. . .
Such miracles there be! . . . Upon a certain day
Men everywhere, free and of equal rank shall stand
And seize the visions dreamed along the way.

So too with his confidence in man's power to gain his goal by fighting and denying even the powers of nature that endeavor to stop him. . .

Make sport of us, ye winds, and mock us, thunder,
Unswerving we tread a beckoning pathway,
Our young breasts we raise to defy the wind's power,
Thunder we deafen with paeans of victory.

Only he wins his goal who, unmoved, presses forward,
Who burns with a passion that never consumes.
Life's carpet spread out lures his youthful steps onward,
The crown Death shall weave him immortally blooms.

More faith in our cause! Raise higher our banner!
Tears, groans, and misgivings . . . begone from the fray!
Life rides a winged charger,
Spreading flowers on our way.

(Translated by A. P. Coleman)

In his early poems as *Anxiety and Joy Embraced,* Oles harps on that theme which was so dear to the early symbolistic authors in all European countries that sorrow and joy are closely connected, that in nature the extremes meet and that it is the duty of the individual to embrace both as parts of the great existence of the universe. In moments of depression he returns to the same theme with an almost pantheistic interpretation of nature as but an external manifestation of what is within the human heart.

It was an age of symbolism. In Russian literature it was the time of Aleksander Blok with his symbolic dramas and of Leonid Andreyev with such grim and disillusioning plays as *The Life of Man and Anathema* where the characters are universal types as man and woman. Oles follows in the same traditions and produced many lyrical and symbolistic plays as *On the Road to a Legend* and the *Tragedy of the Heart.* They are really literary dramas better suited to be read than produced.

Very rarely are the characters personalized. There is He and She and a Girl, a Gentleman and a Lady. They are merely symbols for Oles to indicate the involved and contradictory, self-including and self-excluding universe and man. They deal with the memories of the past and the hopes for the future but Oles realizes that there is no clear line of demarcation and that no one of the alternating and contradictory emotions of the human heart and emotions and mind can ever win a clear and definite triumph. Man and the universe are mysteries and we can only hope to approach their underlying meanings by indirection and symbols. All of this makes them very difficult for theatrical representation but they easily belong in the masterpieces of Ukrainian literature.

Again following the tastes of the day, Oles translated into Ukrainian Longfellow's *Hiawatha.* It was one of the many translations of this poem that were made early in the twentieth century into the Slavonic languages. Of all the masterpieces of American poetry, not one has taken a firmer hold on Slavonic thought and feelings than has the story of the Indian chief and lawgiver. Hiawatha became almost a symbol of America and Oles in making his translation marked an enormous step in the placing of his native literature on the basis of a world literature, in which the world masterpieces existed in adequate and poetical translations.

Oles belongs to the greatest masters of his people's literature but he can never be popular in the sense of a Shevchenko or a Franko. He will always be a poet's poet, a man whose art requires sympathy

and understanding. At times in the height of national indignation or of national jubilation, he emerges from his cultured seclusion and his study of human moods to express something clear and definite. For the most part he remains within the mystic shrine of pure art and deep thinking and feeling as one of those poets who represent the higher aspirations of modern civilized man.

The recognition of Oles as a great poet by his people is a sign of the growing maturity of modern Ukrainian literature. It is a sign that the people are securing a new intellectual class, are acquiring a modern culture, are thinking in modern ways, and sharing modern emotions. It is a sign that Ukrainian culture is deepening constantly and that with favorable conditions it would include all those gamuts of emotion and thought that have been fitted into those literatures which have developed naturally and freely over long periods of time.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

AFTER 1918

THE brief independence of the Ukrainian National Republic and its fall could not fail to have catastrophic results upon the literature. The whole trend of Ukrainian literary development had been to develop along those lines on which the other literatures of the world had travelled. There had been a constant effort to establish close contact between the Ukrainians in Russia and those in Austria-Hungary. Finally there had come with Franko, Lesya Ukrainka, and the later authors at the very end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, a group of writers and critics who were familiar with what was going on abroad and had striven to acclimate at home the new methods and ideas as they were rising to prominence.

All that was changed. New barriers were erected between the different parts of the dismembered country and these barriers were even more impenetrable than those which had been erected by the severe decrees of Russia at the middle of the nineteenth century. Then it was possible for the Ukrainian authors in Russia to print in Galicia and have their works smuggled back into Russian Ukraine. Now the censorship was ruthless and efficient. Some of the authors as Oles, the last of the great names who remained alive, emigrated to Prague to live the sterile life of an emigré. Lesya Ukrainka had died just before the war, Franko had died before the collapse of Austria-Hungary. Stefanyk soon returned to silence.

The early enthusiasm for independence produced a large number of promising and talented young writers who eagerly were adapting futurism and imaginism and the most modern literary movements to the Ukrainian scene. Such authors as Pavlo Tychyna (b. 1891) attracted more than favorable mention and the leading historian of literature, Serhey Yefremiv, in 1923 could speak glowingly of the groups of younger authors who were bidding fair to herald a new and still more glorious period. All this was soon changed.

In Poland some scientific and literary work was still possible. The Shevchenko Scientific Society was able to continue. A Ukrainian Scientific Institute was established in Warsaw in 1929 and accomplished a great deal. Such writers as Bohdan Lepky (b. 1872), professor of Ukrainian literature at the University of Krakow, was able to continue writing and a number of promising young authors as Ulas Samchuk appeared. At the same time the Czechslovak government encouraged the formation of a Ukrainian University and Institute in Prague. But it was hardly the time for fruitful work. The dark shadow of Fascism was beginning to appear upon the horizon and threatening an overturn of life as it had long been known.

In the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic the problem of communism forced itself ever more to the foreground. It became imperative for the authors to write on those themes and in that manner which was regarded as politically reliable by the authorities. At first for errors recantation was regarded as sufficient punishment, but from about 1928, the Soviet critics denounce in scathing language as bourgeois Ukrainian nationalists all those authors who went beyond the appointed line and that line varied with the exigencies of Soviet politics in Moscow.

Some of the writers as Tychyna made their peace with the Soviets and the Soviet Encyclopedias can speak of his growing revolutionary optimism in his later works. He had been one of the masters of the younger generation with his melodic songs on the rebirth of Ukraine. Now he became another of the Communist poets writing in praise of the Party and sharply condemning their foes.

On the other hand, Mikola Khvylovy, (b. 1893), one of the more talented of the prose writers, passed on an opposite course. Khvylovy had been far to the left and had counted himself one of the first Ukrainian proletarian writers. As the pressure grew, he sought and sought in vain to establish in Ukrainian literature a reliance and a contact with Western culture in contrast to the ever increasing dependence upon Moscow. This was interpreted as a Fascist plan for the development of Ukraine. Thus A. Khvylya, a Soviet critic, wrote about Khvylovy's novel *Wood Snipes*, "Khvylovy carries his heroes on a literary horse to prove that Soviet Ukraine is not Soviet, that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not the dictatorship of the proletariat, that the national policy is only deceit; that the Ukrainian people is exclusively a benighted, unfree people, that a rebirth is coming, that finally the party itself is an organization of hypocrites. Khvylovy in a very talented way sets forth these ideas in the *Wood Snipes* and

having made such an analysis of our reality proves that the one hope, which can enkindle millions, bring to the height of a pathos for the struggle for Ukraine, for the people is national rebirth, the rebirth of the nation. . . In the beginning it is necessary to create firm cadres of a new Ukrainian tempered intelligentsia. In the beginning there must come a tempered Ukrainian Longfellow, to lead the Ukrainian people to the state of another great social movement, and only after this can there be new economists, new workmen, to lead the economies and social life of our country to other days. . . The only means of safety is nationalism. It is necessary to see to it, that Thermidor develop to the creation of a powerful Ukrainian national state. And there is no doubt that if a Ukrainian 'communist' does not do it, a Russian 'communist' will do it, for he will act against him, against the Ukrainian, in order to hand over to his own Fascist 'a single indivisible' (land). In the minds of the heroes of Khvylovy, the questions are either for a Russian or a Ukrainian fascism. There is no third course."

Confronted with such attacks on his novels and publicistic works, Khvylovy shot himself on May 13, 1933, and he was only one of a large number that passed from the literary scene. Serhey Yefremiv, the literary historian, was liquidated as a writer. Prof. Mikhail Hrushevsky, the historian and former President of the Ukrainian National Republic, died in exile. Many others were shot or committed suicide because the Marxists and the Communists who had hoped for the development of some independent intellectual physiogonomy within Soviet Ukraine were regarded as equally hostile to the state as were the bourgeois and the anti-Marxians.

The language was allowed to exist. No one ventured to repeat the words of Valuyev in the sixties that there never was, is not, and never will be a Ukrainian language. It was clear, however, that there never was, is not, and never will be a Ukrainian culture distinct from the general Soviet culture within the Soviet Union. The measures taken in the twentieth century go further than any in the nineteenth. At that time supervision and censorship were primarily of the external form. Now they are of the internal content. The modern ideological state cannot tolerate the diversity, the privileges that were granted by the old fashioned despots, no matter how cruel and tyrannical they were. Everything must be standardized, must be run strictly according to pattern, and most of the younger Ukrainian authors in Eastern Ukraine have learned it to their cost and have been silenced or have submitted.

The Second World War has swept the entire area into its vortex. The Ukrainians of all groups and classes in both sections of the Ukrainian lands have learned that the Nazis are but carrying out on a broader and more terrible scale the same policy that the Germans did in 1918, the using of Ukraine as a mere granary, and that they have no more intention than in the past of allowing any human rights or liberties to the Ukrainian population. Fire and sword, famine and disease are destroying the population as they did twenty-five years ago. Yet that period was followed by the brief outburst of the national spirit that accompanied the brief moment of independence. Then amid the ruined conditions of the land there suddenly appeared, poets, prose writers, scholars, men of every intellectual calling. They left their imprint upon Ukrainian culture and the events of the past years have not been able to destroy all that they accomplished. Ukrainian literature which under adversity has developed so well during the past century and a half cannot have been brought to an untimely end. Its revival depends upon victory and the triumph of the human spirit over regimentation. When that moment comes, Ukrainian literature will take its next step and march hand in hand with the other great literatures of the world.

The only guide to the future is the experience of the past and the century and a half during which Ukrainian literature has developed into being the chief expression of the Ukrainian people leads us to expect even more in the future and to look with confidence at the Ukrainian genius.

It was a happy instinct that led Kotlyarevsky at the close of the eighteenth century to put into literary form the speech of millions of serfs and to revamp the old archaic Church Slavonic so as to form a modern literary language. It was still more fortunate that he gave to the new development a democratic flavor and a sympathy for the down trodden and the oppressed which have ever since remained as the fundamental message and keynote of Ukrainian literature.

A half century later, one of the greatest of all Slavonic poets, Taras Shevchenko, set to work and added to it his own noble conceptions of the human spirit. Devotion to the cause of his people and to the highest ideals of human liberty was his especial contribution to the language which he molded into being, a true poetic language.

From that time Ukrainian literature has not lacked authors of varying degrees of excellence and of vision to comment from generation to generation on the aspirations of their people and of humanity. They have followed the various social movements of the times and

they have broadened their range of interests from the narrow area in which they lived to include every land where the Ukrainian people have been living under alien rule.

More than that, they have realized that no literature can live and develop for itself alone. They have come more and more into contact with the great movements of world literature. They have felt themselves a part of the international world of culture, of that brotherhood of mankind that has been so brutally attacked in the last years. With each generation the outstanding authors have gained a broader outlook on life, a closer contact with and a fuller understanding of the best that was being done in the world. They have worked hard and have succeeded in placing Ukrainian literature on an equality with the other literatures of the Slavonic nations and of Europe as a whole.

There is a direct and unswerving line of service to the democratic ideals of humanity and to the cause of the people from Kotlyarevsky through Shevchenko and Franko and Lesya Ukrainka to the present time. It is a line of which the Ukrainian people may well be proud and we can be sure that their ideals will not die but that in the newer and better world after the war the goals for which they have struggled will be realized and that Ukrainian literature and culture will play a prominent part in the development of the coming centuries.

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