TARAS SHEVCHENKO

POEMS

MANNING

TARAS SHEVCHENKO

The Poet of Ukraine

SELECTED POEMS

Translated with an Introduction

by

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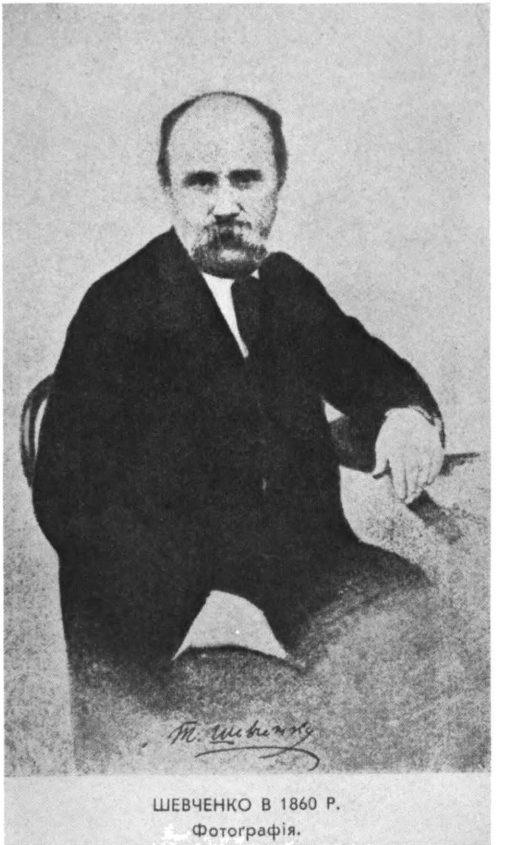

Shevchenko in 1860
Photograph

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INTRODUCTION

Taras Shevchenko is the poet of Ukraine. There is hardly a Ukrainian home from the humblest to the richest that does not contain a portrait of the poet who during his short life touched every chord of the Ukrainian heart. He shared the fortunes of his people and during his unhappy life he suffered all the hardships of serfdom, of exile, of police supervision that was the fate of the greater part of his compatriots. Seldom has a poet lived and suffered to the full as did Shevchenko and rarely has a man so fully incorporated all the aspirations of his people.

That is not all. As an artist and a thinker Shevchenko deserves the sympathetic knowledge and understanding of the entire civilized and democratic world. He deserves it as the representative of his people, a nation of forty millions who have so far failed to receive that independence for which they have long struggled. He deserves it also for himself, for his own writings, since it can be truly said that he is one of those men who have a message for all humanity, for the suffering and the downtrodden, the victims of injustice and oppression everywhere.

It is the object of this book to make available in English translation some of the masterpieces of this poet whose works have lived for a century with an ever widening influence and an ever increasing appreciation of his genius both at home and abroad. It has been a strange fate that has confined knowledge of his works to some scanty references in books on literature, while lesser men in other languages have received fantastic praises. Such was fate. In his lifetime many of the most penetrating critics in Russia saw fit to place him above Pushkin and Mickiewicz for his mastery of language and for the depth and sincerity of his ideas. Yet they were in the minority, for the vast multitudes were only inclined to see in him a young serf writing in his native language and they passed him by with a shrug of the shoulders.

He formed part of that great flowering of poetry which commenced with the period of Romanticism in Europe and he was one of those men who passed by a natural evolution to the great period of realism and of sensitiveness to the social problems of the day. Now in the twentieth century we are learning as never before to judge him for himself, as a flowering of the Ukrainian character and as a man who has a message not only for his own times and country but for the en-

tire world. He has stood the test of time and he deserves due recognition in these days when the entire world is sunk in war and desolation.

There can be no doubt to-day that Taras Shevchenko is one of the great Slavonic poets. He is one of the great poets of the nineteenth century without regard to nationality or language and his fearless appeal to right and truth and justice speaks as eloquently in the New World as it did in the Old or in the little village where he was born, the city to which he was taken or the treeless steppes to which he was exiled.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LITERARY SCENE

The half century before Taras Shevchenko began to write saw the beginning of those tendencies which were to develop to their full power at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. It was a period of transition in which the principles and ideas which had dominated Europe for centuries were being steadily shaken and losing all authority over the minds of men. They were questioned logically by the leading thinkers of the day but they were with equal vigor attacked by the uneducated masses who were vaguely hoping for better conditions of living. At the same time these new ideas with a few exceptions had not been translated into effective political and economic action and the resulting situation was the despair of both the reformers and the conservatives. There was an uneasy stalemate which differed from land to land and even from district to district.

On the positive side the successful revolt of the American colonies and the establishment of the Republic of the United States left a deeper imprint upon European thought, even in the east of Europe, than we usually think. There is no need to exaggerate this but for good or ill the ideas of federation, as shown by the new country in the West, penetrated into distant lands and was hailed as a substitute for the centralizing policies of the autocratic monarchs who were working to destroy on paper as well as in practice the local liberties and traditions which had existed for centuries.

This had been followed by the French Revolution and then the Napoleonic Wars. The confusion and hostilities had aided the ambitious plans of such rulers as Catherine II of Russia who had used the preoccupation of Europe with the West to finish the dismemberment of Poland and the annihilation of the last Ukrainian organizations. It comes as something of a shock to realize that the Zaporozhian Sich, long reduced to only a shadow of its past greatness, was not destroyed until 1775, and the last vestiges of the Hetmanate, which had been practically turned into an aristocratic regime, were wiped out in 1783 and the territory was divided into governments and ruled on the Russian pattern. Thus so far as Ukraine was concerned, the final extinction of the old liberties came precisely at the period of the American Revolution. In 1792, with the division of Poland, Russia

took over the region of Kiev, the area where Shevchenko was later to be born, incorporated that into its grandiose structure, and reduced the population to the status of Russian serfs.

The final end of local liberties was thus hardly carried into practice when Russia was compelled to face the Napoleonic Wars. The officers of the aristocratic and Europeanized classes were brought face to face with the new ideas which they met definitely in Paris and in the contact with their allies during the campaigns and they began to dream of introducing into their native country some of the modern practices which they had seen in the West.

These men were however too weak and too scattered to combine their influence for an effective movement and when they attempted it in the short-lived Decembrist revolt of 1825, they were decisively checked, and their leaders were executed or exiled to Siberia. The Polish revolt of 1831 fared little better and by the time that Nicholas I was securely established on the throne, he could in his own imagination breathe easily and forget that there had been such turmoils in the governmental organization.

Thus in the Russian Empire, it seemed as if the powers of the reaction had been definitely established. The ideas of the Holy Alliance and of Prince Metternich seemed as solid as the monolithic structure erected in Moscow by Peter the Great. On the political side the conservative and reactionary factions were in full control and the rulers no longer, as in the days of Catherine, played with new ideas, even if they had no serious intention of practicing them. There were peasant disorders but there were no more such convulsions as that led by Pugachov and his Cossacks which seriously menaced the established order and which demanded the use of large military forces to save the regime.

In the meanwhile every step forward in the Europeanization of the Russian aristocracy meant an increase in the exactions demanded of the serfs. This was a process that had been continuing especially since the reforms of Peter the Great, when there was inserted a steadily deepening wedge between the manorhouse and the peasant. Long hours of forced labor on the nobleman's lands and the ever diminishing size of the serf allotments because of an increase of population made the life of the poor unfortunates more and more miserable. This was especially marked in those areas where the Russian system had been but recently introduced and where traditions of an older and happier time still lingered on in the minds of the older inhabitants.

Along with this political and economic stagnation and retrogression went a new intellectual and artistic development. This made itself felt throughout the whole of the Empire. It had both its good and its bad sides. On the positive side, there was in Russia the appearance of a new art, a new literature which tried to imitate and then to adapt the French pseudo-classic culture of the eighteenth century. Nobles who had previously known little but the traditional Church Slavonic conceptions, handed down from antiquity, were fascinated by the new innovations. New methods of literary composition were introduced. A new language was devised. New influences from Western Europe came in.

All this could not fail to draw away a large part of the intellectually alert landowners from their original moorings. During the eighteenth century the Ukrainian educated class tended more and more to accept the Europeanized Russian culture. This was the easier, because the Ukrainian centres, as the old Academy of Peter Mohyla in Kiev, had busied themselves entirely with Church Slavonic and theological subjects. The system of education had not included any of the results of Western development, the language used was artificial and differed markedly from the colloquial speech of the villagers, and even such a man as Skovoroda in the eighteenth century had not taken any definite step to assault the entrenched system except by the power of his own personal refusal to bend himself to its demands. Where in the seventeenth century the Kiev schools had sent scholars to reeducate Moscow, now after the absorption by Russia, they contented themselves with a continuation of the old policies. As a result there was a growing exodus of the young men to the dominant center of St. Petersburg and there was a consequent fall in the culture and educational resources of the Ukrainian lands and a rise in Russian influence.

These tendencies were again counterbalanced by a new series of developments in Western Europe which could not fail to create a reaction throughout the whole of the continent. On the one hand, Rousseau in France developed his theories that the natural man had a higher moral virtue than the man of civilization and culture. There started a return to the primitive which could not fail to turn people's attention to the condition of the serfs, while at the same time the renewed theories of the rights of man attracted attention to their misfortunes.

Side by side with this there were the doctrines of Herder as to the

superiority of the folk song as a form of literature and the focussing of the attention of the educated on the speech of the common people and on their poetic productions and artistic practices. Those tendencies which had manifested themselves in Percy's *Reliques,* a collection of Scotch ballads, which had continued with a desire to collect German folksongs, in which even Goethe took part, and the later interest in the Serb popular ballads naturally spread into Russia and resulted not only in the discovery of the *byliny* in the far north but in a revaluation of the Ukrainian folk songs which had passed unnoticed outside of the villages or which had been treated with amused disdain by the polished noblemen. A new wave of interest was therefore set into motion and it came so soon after the disintegration of the old order that parts of it could be easily absorbed into the new movement.

It was in this environment that Ivan Kotlyarevsky published in 1798 the *Eneida,* the first work to be written in the Ukrainian vernacular. It is to be noticed that the author in his humorous adaptation of the old Latin story to the Ukrainian scene rested rather on the old classical traditions of the eighteenth century and the practices of the Kiev Academy than on the newer ideas which were beginning to appear on the intellectual horizon. Yet the work appeared at a critical time and it showed to the people still smarting under the newly imposed yoke that it was possible to develop the vernacular and to produce outstanding works of literature in it. This was all to the good and it in a way corresponded to the revival of the Czech language which was being started by the philologically inclined Josef Dobrovský.

Yet before the vernacular literature could take a firm foothold, some other idea was necessary. This was found in the beginnings of Romanticism which swept with startling rapidity throughout Europe. This was a complicated movement and its form varied with the individual countries.

It made its appearance in Russia largely through the influence of Vasily Andreyevich Zhukovsky, who was for nearly half a century the leading critic and adviser of the young aristocratic poets who developed at the Lycée of Tsarskoye Selo at the imperial court of Alexander I. This circle included Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin, the greatest of Russian poets, although in his composition there was always more of the older classical ideas and practices than it was fashionable to admit at the time.

Zhukovsky, who was an excellent translator, acclimatized in Russia the whole apparatus of the weird, the supernatural and the mediaeval that was being developed in Germany. He early translated Bürger's *Lenore,* the story of the dead lover returning to claim his living bride. He gave his people poems and stories of mediaeval chivalry and he translated many of the ballads of Goethe and Schiller. Very soon he added to this movement the influence of Byron and for some fifteen or twenty years the gilded youth of the Russian capital not only imitated Lord Byron's poems in their writings but they acted out his ideas in real life and considered themselves to be wanderers persecuted by the world.

With it all, the twenties and the thirties were the Golden Age of Russian poetry. Pushkin especially soon outgrew the narrow imitation of Byron. He added to the influences to which he was subjected those of Sir Walter Scott and Shakespeare. He wrote historical poems conceived in a profound admiration for Peter the Great as *Poltava* but at the same time in *The Captain's Daughter* and other works he showed a strong appreciation of the career of that doughty old rebel Pugachov. Yet during the last years of his life he expressed more sympathy as in the *Brazen Horseman* with the sufferings of the poorer class of the people. The collapse of the Decembrist movement and the silencing of the reforming elements among the aristocracy gave rise to the beginnings of a more critical literature based on an attempted understanding of Western ideas and sharply divided Russian thought between the Slavophiles who were primarily conservative and attempted to find differences between Russian development and that of Western Europe to the advantage of the former and the Westerners, conservative and liberal alike, who sought to emphasize the backwardness of Russia and to demand the remodeling of the country on western lines. By 1840 these men, led by the furious Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky, had secured the ear of most of the literary journals and were well on their way toward the formation of a realistic school and the radical intelligentsia.

The Romantic movement therefore had but a short life in Russia. This is not to be wondered at, for the Russian mediaeval history was not of a character that lent itself easily to the glorification of the past and of the feudal period that was so effective in German. Chivalry as an organized movement had not taken root in mediaeval Moscow with its strong Tatar and Asiatic influences and Russian Romanticism always lacked a certain basis which was found in

the Western European countries where for centuries the lords and barons had waged petty warfare with many deeds of individual daring.

A special position in this movement was held by Nikolay Vasilyevich Gogol, the son of one of the early writers in Ukrainian. In his *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka* and later in *Mirgorod* and especially in his powerful Cossack tale of *Taras Bulba,* he pictured the romantic side of Ukrainian or Little Russian tradition (to use the name which he gave it himself) and he told tales of the happier side of the life of the region where he had been born. His works really introduced into Russian literature a Russianized Ukrainian school of writing which by its color and charm attracted wide attention.

On the other hand in Poland, even after the division, there was the same outpouring of the Romantic spirit. Adam Mickiewiez who had started his brilliant poetical career in Wilno and Kaunas and had then been exiled to Russia and had finally gone abroad was the leading figure. One of that group of Polish patriots which had gathered around the University of Wilno, he had raised Polish literature to a new level of excellence. He was ably seconded by other writers as Juljusz Slowacki and Zygmunt Krasiński, the two other Romantic poets who were also forced into exile. The writings of this group were more in the conventional Romantic style and exercised an even stronger influence on Poland than did the Russian Romanticists in the narrow sense. Many of the writers of this time as Antoni Malczewski were familiar with the picturesque aspects of Ukrainian life, its rich supply of folksongs and its elaborate peasant rituals. As a result they introduced so-called Ukrainian themes into Polish literature and relying upon their Galician experiences, they made the Ukrainians or Ruthenians as they called them really popular.

In the meanwhile the energetic young group at Wilno were preparing for revolt which finally took place in 1831. Despite initial successes, the Russian Tsar speedily got control of this as he had of the Decembrist uprising among the Russian aristocrats. He suppressed it as brutally and for some decades the Poles were compelled to maintain abroad in France their chief literary activity, which continued to emphasize the principles of Romanticism with a strong feeling for their dismembered country.

Finally we cannot overlook the first halting steps of that movement which was destined to be labelled Pan-Slavism or the Slavonic brotherhood. It was really launched in Bohemia by the Slovak Jan Kollár who

in 1824 published a collection of sonnets, the *Daughter of Slava,* in which he pleaded for a brotherhood of all the Slavonic races. His work set the key for much of the later Czech literature and his ideas expanded in more prosaic form by Pavel Šafařík and others slowly permeated all classes of thinking Slavs. To Kollár and his friends this undoubtedly meant a free brotherhood with Russia as the most powerful member and protector against the Germanic world. To the Russians it meant the absorption of the other Slavs by Russia and the Slavophiles easily took many of the current ideas of the German philosophers and crossed them with conceptions of the Russian Orthodox Church to create a theory for their new nationalism.

All of these various impulses combined to influence the newly born Ukrainian literature. There was much that directly appealed to the writers. For example the Ukrainians were conscious of their past, at least those who were conscious of anything. They knew that the exploits of the Kozaks was exactly the sort of thing that had attracted the attention of the Romantic poets of both Russia and Poland. They knew the wealth of their folklore, the number of weird themes that they had at their disposal. They realized the potentialities of the description of their folk customs. Besides, tales of the unhappy peasant, the seduced girl, the serf were common in the Romantic literature and the everyday life around them gave them countless examples to illustrate their writings.

It required the work of a master to put the new modern Ukrainian literature on its feet. Kotlyarevsky had made a start in fashioning the language in which they could work. Kvitka-Osnovyanenko had carried on the work with his prose tales but there was needed an outstanding author who was sincerely devoted to the Ukrainian cause and was at the same time a master of the language, to weld together the various elements and to produce in Ukrainian works which would be on a par with those of the two conqueroring cultures which were then at their highest stage of poetic development. With the loss of most of their educated classes and with the hard conditions and the scanty opportunities offered to the peasants and the serfs, it might seem as if the man could not be found and as if the Ukrainian start was from the beginning foredoomed to failure. To the surprise of even the most optimistic, a great poet suddenly appeared, Taras Shevchenko.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LIFE OF SHEVCHENKO

Taras Shevchenko was born in Ukraine in the village of Morintsy in the district of Zvenihorod, Government of Kiev on the right bank of the Dniper River. The situation of this community was of great importance in the formation of the character of the poet. It was in this general vicinity that the bloody outbreak of the Koliischchina had taken place in 1768, when the infuriated Orthodox population of the province had risen against their Polish masters and had burned the city of Uman. This war was to be the theme of Shevchenko's great poem, *Haydamaki.* The revolt was bloodily suppressed, especially after Catherine the Great had listened to the pleadings of King Stanislas Poniatowski of Poland and had sent her troops to aid in the defeat of the rebels who had erroneously believed that they were acting in accordance with the will of the Russian Empress.

The only result of the war was the still deeper subjugation of the Ukrainian population and the hardening of the rule of the Polish masters. The second division of Poland which brought this right bank of the Dniper under the control of Russia did not aid the unfortunate Ukrainians. They found themselves bound still more strictly to the soil and they soon learned to their discomfiture that Russia would herself back up the claims of the Polish landlords. The demands of the masters were carried to a new high and there was little or no redress for the unfortunate victims. They had only their memories of the past and the traditions and folksongs which they had inherited to remind them that their ancestors and the Kozaks had once been free men and able to control their own destiny.

Among the survivors of this merciless struggle was Ivan Shevchenko, the grandfather of the poet and he lived well into the lifetime of his grandson and was wont to tell him and the other members of the family of the savage events of 1768 and the unfortunate consequences. He was a living contact between the old and the new.

The old man must have been a superior type of peasant for he had seen to it that his son Hrihori Shevchenko had been taught to read and write. The son was a prosperous serf at a time when his prosperity could bring him few advantages, and he constantly sought for a new and better life on the estates of his master, Vasily Vasilyevich Engelhardt. After his marriage to Katerina Boykivna, who seems to have

been also a very kind and intelligent woman, the two lived in the village of Kirilivka, where his father lived, as a carriage maker and he owned a cart with a team of bulls. His father-in-law soon bought him a little cabin and some land in Morintsy about a mile away and it was in a typical Ukrainian peasant cabin that the poet was born on February 25- March 9, 1814. Conditions here were unsatisfactory and it was not long before the Shevchenkos returned to Kirilivka where Taras spent his boyhood.

Kirilivka was a typical large Ukrainian village of the right bank. It was in a fertile region with an abundance of orchards and fruit trees and gardens. Picturesquely located, it seemed a real paradise but beneath the charming exterior, the institution and the practice of serfdom made the village for its inhabitants a perfect hell, where all kinds of evil and injustice prevailed and where the hours of forced labor demanded by the master made life almost impossible.

Taras was the third of six children and was always attached to his older sister Katerina who married when he was still very young. His father tried to give him an education but the opportunities were very scanty. Taras always remembered his parents with the greatest kindness but when he was nine years old, his mother died of poverty and of overwork on the lands of the master. This meant the ending of the happy period of his life.

With six small children, the father Hrihori could not maintain his household without a wife and so he soon married a widow, Oksana Tereshchenchikha, from Morintsy. She brought her three children with her to her new home. The marriage was not a happy one. The stepmother was very cruel to the children of her husband, begrudged them the food they ate, and quarreled unceasingly. It was a sore disappointment for the young Taras and to avoid the perpetual beatings which he received, he used to take refuge with his older sister who was married and living in a neighboring village. Finally when he was twelve years old, his father died too and the young Taras was thrown on his own resources, since his uncle who was his guardian paid little attention to him.

As a means of finding some respite from the cruelty that was going on at home, he went to a village clerk Bohorsky in an endeavor to learn something about painting, for he already had been attracted to this and also had developed a fertile imagination. His stay with Bohorsky was none too successful.

The clerk was an incorrigible drunkard and besides nearly starving

the poor boy, he tyrannized over him in every way but he did succeed in making him literate and in teaching him to read the Psalter. In fact Taras became so successful in this that the clerk sent him out to read the Psalms at peasant funerals and thus allow himself more time for drinking with his friends. Taras finally had his revenge. One day when he found his teacher drunk, he flogged him as hard as he could and then made off with a volume of art works. This was apparently a book containing some of the stock designs for ikon painting and for lettering.

Disgusted with the worthless and brutal teacher from whom he had imbibed only a feeling that violence was wrong, he made his way to the village of Lisanka to study under another clerk. This likewise was unsuccessful. For four days the teacher employed him only in preparing paints and in bringing water from the river Tykych. At the end of that day Taras again disappeared and turned up at Tarasivka, where there was a still more locally famous painter of Saint Nicholas and of Ivan the Soldier, but here again he met only a rebuff. Finally he had exhausted all the clerks in the neighborhood who had any reputation for painting, and there was nothing for him to do but to return to his native village and there as an orphan secure a scanty living by acting as a herdsman for the village cattle and by doing any odd jobs that might appear in the community.

It was apparently at this moment when he was about thirteen years of age that Shevchenko had his first taste of love. While he was pasturing the village sheep, he suddenly started to shed bitter tears and a young girl who was gathering hemp near by came over to console him and kissed him. Her name was Oksana Kovalenkivna and her memory remained with him for many years as a type of sympathetic friend and love. That was all. It was only a moment in the drab life of the poor boy but it gave him an ideal of sympathy and affection that he had not had since the death of his mother and the image of Oksana appeared in many of his later verses.

From this idle existence Shevchenko was suddenly torn away by the overseer of the estate. He had shown little promise in his efforts to master the old fashioned and then decadent art of ikon painting. His physical stature did not promise that he would develop into a valuable laborer in the fields and yet the overseer had no intention of allowing him to live in idleness. So the boy suddenly found himself sent into the kitchen of the manor house to work as an assistant baker. Again Shevchenko failed to acquire the necessary skill and he

was again in disgrace. Another task was sought for him and this time he was appointed a Kozak servant for the young master Pavel Vasilyevich Engelhardt.

His work here was boring and insignificant. He had only to remain dressed in a Kozak uniform in the anteroom of the master and to serve his slightest whims and needs. It meant long hours of doing nothing, the hardest kind of useless labor. He had to hand the young master his pipe, when he so desired, for it was beneath the dignity of Pavel Engelhardt to pick up his own pipe, even if it were beside him. All his other tasks were of the same non-essential character and the boy accustomed to his freedom was absolutely disgusted with his fate.

There was however one consolation. The master could not prevent the young serf from admiring the objects of art that were scattered around the house. The mansions of the day were very different from the rough houses of the peasantry. The latter were impoverished representatives of the past. The mansions were filled with the newest productions of western Europe and these gave to the sensitive boy a very different conception of art from that which he had received from the rude ikonostases of the village churches. He feasted his eyes upon them and apparently endeavored in stolen moments to make copies of them.

He also had the opportunity to travel. Pavel Engelhardt was perpetually going somewhere and he had to travel with an entire retinue of servants. This meant that the young Shevchenko was torn away from his native village and his native surroundings. In 1829 Engelhardt who was a Guards officer took him to Wilno and for fourteen years Shevchenko did not see again his beloved Ukraine.

It was at Wilno that an accident happened which determined his fate. On December 6 Engelhardt and his wife went out to an entertainment and the young Shevchenko was obliged to stay on watch until they returned. To wile away the time he set himself to copying a print of the Kozak Platon which he had acquired on the way to Wilno. He became so absorbed in this that he did not notice the return of the master who accordingly found him copying by candle light. Engelhardt became enraged at the actions of the boy and scolded him violently because he might have set fire not only to the house but to the whole city. The next day he gave orders to have him soundly flogged. The episode might have ended here but Engelhardt noticed that Shevchenko was making an excellent copy of the work. This led him to inquire further and he saw some of his other

sketches. So, having roundly punished the young culprit, he sent him to the Art Academy of Wilno, where he perhaps studied under Jan Rustem. Still later he transferred him to Warsaw to take lessons from the celebrated Franciszek Lampa.

It was a critical moment in the life of the young man. Now at least part of his ambitions could be gratified but he still remained a serf in his master's service with no hope of any amelioration of his lot, for the nobles of the day were only too happy to have under their control artists, actors, and learned persons of every description. It was a discouraging situation, for there was little hope of fame or of satisfaction for a man who was compelled under penalty of flogging or banishment to physical labor to draw sketches whenever it suited his master's whim.

While at Wilno Shevchenko had again fallen mildly in love with a Polish seamstress, Dunia Haszowska, a free woman who spoke to him about the coming Polish uprising. She was an ardent Polish nationalist and apparently her influence, intended to win Taras to the Polish cause, only drove him further in his devotion to the cause of Ukraine.

As the hour of revolt came nearer, Engelhardt suddenly left Warsaw and went to St. Petersburg. It was a safer place in case of trouble and it also gave him more opportunity for his social inclinations. Naturally Shevchenko was taken along with him and here Engelhardt apprenticed him for four years to the painter Shirayev in 1832.

There is something strange in this contract. It probably marked a change in the plans of Engelhardt for his unusual serf. At Wilno and Warsaw he had had him taught by painters in the best sense of the word and had apparently not spared money for lessons. Now in St. Petersburg be did not send Shevchenko to a portrait or landscape painter but to a professional decorator who was already known for his work in several St. Petersburg theatres. There was a plebeian and unidealistic side to this work in the making of designs and transferring them automatically to the walls and ceilings of buildings that displeased Shevchenko. He missed all the artistic inspiration that had apparently inspired him previously and felt that he was becoming a mechanical drudge.

The contract between Shirayev and Engelhardt must have ended by law in 1836 but Engelhardt left him to work further as a laborer in the atelier of Shirayev who was a determined exploiter of his subordinates. Shevchenko had but two methods of relaxation.—to

make sketches of a fellow serf, Ivan Nechuporenko, and to copy statues in the Winter Garden.

In 1837 he suddenly made the acquaintance of another Ukrainian artist, Ivan Maksimovich Soshenko, who was then living in St. Petersburg. There are two versions of this meeting. The more romantic is that Soshenko saw him first during one of the white nights of St. Petersburg sketching a statue of Saturn in the Winter Gardens. The other, that of Soshenko himself, is that he heard from a relative of Shirayev's of this wonderful young Ukrainian artist and decided to make his acquaintance.

In either case Soshenko became enthusiastic over the artistic abilities of Shevchenko and over his possibilities for independent work. He soon took the opportunity to introduce his young friend to the leading men in the Imperial Academy of Arts and desired to have him enrolled there as a student. This was impossible for no serf was allowed to study in this institution. Yet the Secretary of the Academy, Vasily Ivanovich Grigorovich, and the celebrated professor, Karl Pavlovich Bryulov, both desired to have him enrolled as a student. There was only one solution for the difficulty. It was necessary to obtain freedom for Shevchenko. Engelhardt was not sympathetic. He had expended considerable money on the education of the young man and he was not going to be deprived of his services now that he was becoming recognized as an artist. He promptly demanded the payment of 2500 silver rubles. This was an enormous sum and was apparently intended to be prohibitive.

The group of artists interested in Shevchenko was not to be discouraged by this demand. They interested in the case Vasily Andreyevich Zhukovsky, who naturally had great influence in Russian governmental cultural circles. He was the tutor of the Tsarevich, later Alexander II; he had been the Russian teacher of the Empress Charlotte of Prussia, the wife of Tsar Nicholas I. He was the recognized authority on European literature in Russia. With his court connections, it was clear that if he would, he could secure the necessary funds. He therefore arranged with Bryulov to paint his picture to be disposed of by a private lottery. A portrait of Zhukovsky by Bryulov was an event for the rich circles of Russia. The money was raised and paid over to Engelhardt and on April 22, 1838, Taras Shevchenko became a free man for the first time in his life.

Shevchenko was almost overcome by his new happiness. From that moment he was free. Like any other citizen of Russia, he was able to

apply for a passport, to choose his own abode, to do what he liked without any fear of the changeable moods of an autocratic master. The world seemed rosy to him and he could hardly concentrate on anything. He at once procured new clothes, filed the act of liberation in the official bureau, and the next day registered at the Academy as a student of Bryulov.

Karl Pavlovich Bryulov was then at the height of his fame. Originally of French Huguenot descent, he had been allowed to take a Russian name when he won a prize in the Academy of Arts and went to Rome. There he had become acquainted with the leading artists and literary men who had thronged to that city during the twenties. His painting, *The Last Days of Pompeii,* had taken Italy and then France and finally Russia by storm and when he commenced to teach at the Academy of Arts, he raised its popularity and became the very center of everything artistic and cultural in the Russian capital.

The effect of all this upon Shevchenko can hardly be overestimated. Almost over night he had passed from a nobody, a mere serf eternally at the beck and call of his master, to an independent student of the Art Academy and a favorite pupil of the great Bryulov. His sensitive nature could not fail to react to this overwhelming difference.

He worked hard every day in the Academy and made a very creditable success. At the end of the first year he won a silver medal for drawing from nature. Apparently his earlier instruction here came in handy. In 1840 he won a silver medal of the second class for his attempt in painting with oils and in 1841 he received the same award for a painting on a historical subject and for portraiture. He had made good use of his opportunities and had not allowed himself to be distracted by the gay amusements of many of the young artists, although he apparently had his share of entertainments and dinners.

More important than this for the young man were the opportunities which came to him for general culture. His early education was extremely defective. He had not had even the most irregular schooling outside of the elementary instruction in reading and writing offered by the local clerks under whom he had gone through the motions of studying. Now he was able to read at his leisure and he applied himself ardently to making up the defects in his training. He read abundantly in Ukrainian history and he probably was already fairly well acquainted with what there was in the modern Ukrainian literature. Yet he needed more than that and his relations with his

fellow students and still more with Bryulov opened his eyes to the classical and Western European cultures.

While he had been in Rome, Bryulov had been the friend of Sir Walter Scott, Bulwer-Lytton, and the various writers of France and Germany who made Rome their headquarters. His great paintings had been on classical themes and we can well ascribe to his influence Shevchenko's interest in classical antiquity, for the younger Russian poets were already turning away from the classical tradition that had dominated Russian literature through the period of Pushkin.

He dined frequently at Bryulov's home and Bryulov came to dinner in his poor quarters. The master warned him against marrying on the ground that geniuses should not marry and then introduced him to the fascinating actress whom he himself intended to marry and from whom he was soon separated.

At the same time Shevchenko was very slow in seeking the society of ladies whom he might consider above his own station in life. He never forgot his origin and his chief romance in this period was with a young girl, the daughter of a neighbor whom he tried to teach to read but whom he found an unserious pupil. At times he enjoyed the society of a higher class but there was something in him which urged him to confine his closest women friends to those of his own class.

At some time during his stay in St. Petersburg, Shevchenko began to write verse. It must have been before his emancipation, for the oldest known poem is the ballad *Prychynna* (The Mad Girl) which is reminiscent of Bürger, Zhukovsky, and Mickiewicz with a strong admixture of Ukrainian folklore. This was exactly the same type of poem that was practiced throughout the Slavonic world with the coming of Romanticism. It can be dated in 1837 but it is almost too perfect to be the first attempt of the young artist and it must have been preceded by many experiments. The modesty of Shevchenko and his devotion to his painting made him at first very hesitant in regard to his poetic performances and it was more or less by accident that they were brought to the attention of the public. A few of his friends were aware of his activity. Thus in 1838 Hrebinka wrote to Kvitka that there was in St. Petersburg a young Ukrainian named Shevchenko writing verses and excellent ones. Yet the poems attracted little or no comment until at the end of 1839 a Ukrainian landowner, Petro Martos, met Shevchenko and arranged for him to paint his portrait. As he was sitting in the artist's apartment, he

happened to notice some poetry on various sheets of paper. He succeeded in borrowing them and on reading them became so thrilled that he resolved to publish them at his own expense.

The work appeared in 1840 under the title of the *Kobzar* and it marked a new era in Ukrainian literature. Kotlyarevsky had died in 1838 and his passing made a gap which had seemed irreparable. Now the appearance of the *Kobzar*, small as it was, showed to everyone, both friend and foe, that his place had been taken by a still greater author. In vain the Russian critics, including Belinsky and the Westerners, attacked it as insignificant and peasantlike. The Ukrainians throughout the entire area of Ukraine welcomed it and saw in it the answer to their confused hopes for a worthy literature of their own.

The next year there appeared the *Haydamaki*, the longest of the epics of Shevchenko. There was the same criticism of his work by the Russian and Polish critics and the same enthusiastic reception of it by the Ukrainians. The edition was soon sold out and Shevchenko received a considerable amount of money for it. More than that, he was sought out by all the Ukrainians who had occasion to come to St. Petersburg and many of his later friends he came to know in this period. He had in a very real sense become a national figure and was more sure of himself in his relations with society and with all those whom he had to meet.

Yet despite the apparent success of all that he undertook, things were not going too well with him. He had many firm friends in St. Petersburg and his relation with his teacher Bryulov remained as close as before. Yet he seemed to be dissatisfied. He was dissatisfied with the Academy, perhaps because he was not making as much progress in his use of colors as he would have liked. It is to be noted that he won no prize after 1841, that is, after he had become famous from his writings, but there is no evidence that this was due to any antagonism on the part of the authorities to his ardent Ukrainian attitude. It could not be that he had neglected his painting for his writings, for it is remarkable that at this same time he had almost stopped writing and 1842 was one of his least productive years.

Undoubtedly his dislike for St. Petersburg affected him. He had seen his works hostilely reviewed or scorned by the Russian critics, especially those of the liberal camp from whom he might have expected to receive consideration. He was busy with portraits and with his social life, but at the same time he was struck by the contrast between the life that he was leading and the misery of his brothers and

sisters in Ukraine. He had not seen them for fourteen years and he was becoming homesick and he wanted at all costs to pay a visit to his native land.

So in the summer of 1843, he succeeded in securing a leave of absence from the Academy and obtained permission of the authorities to go home. His return to Ukraine was a real event. He paid a visit to his family but he was no longer a mere serf. He was the poet of Ukraine and all the landowners and the persons of prominence vied with one another in entertaining him. His trip was one triumphal procession, as he passed from estate to estate. Almost everywhere he was asked to paint one or more of the members of the family and the trip was successful not only from the social but even more from the financial point of view.

Among the families which entertained him, one of the most hospitable was that of Prince Repnin, the former governor general of Kiev and the friend of Kotlyarevsky. He was now living on his estates and was in disfavor with the government, for his wife was a granddaughter of Kyrylo Rozumovsky, the last of the Hetmans, and his enemies had charged that he was endeavoring to recover the title, even at the cost of separation from Russia. Repnin was a good type of the Russianized Ukrainian landlord who had not lost his interest in the people under him and who was sincerely opposed to serfdom.

It was here at his house that Shevchenko met his daughter, Princess Barbara. She was six years older than the poet but the two were attracted to one another. The Princess was a little nettled that the poet showed more interest in the beginning in a young friend than in her but she was sincerely impressed by his personality and ability and set herself to induce him to do more serious work and to avoid the company of the more frivolous and gay young people to whom he might be attracted. Shevchenko appreciated her interest and called her his guardian angel. For a while it seemed as if they might fall in love but the difference in their social position was a barrier to such a union, and although the two were ardently in love, yet neither betrayed it except through an extreme friendship in which they addressed each other as brother and sister.

By the end of the summer Shevchenko, whose painting had considerably improved, seriously considered not returning to the Academy. He even went so far as to write to the Secretary, Grigorovich, to ask his advice and when he was urged to come back and received a

two months extension of his leave, he paid a hurried visit to Moscow and was back in St. Petersburg shortly after the beginning of 1844.

Yet this short trip greatly changed the temper and the work of the poet. He was able to see the evils under which Ukraine was suffering not through the memories of a young serf but through the eyes of an enlightened and progressive and successful man of the world. His old conceptions based upon the tales of his grandfather that these ills were a result of Polish hostility and the suppression of the Koliishchina were proved false. The worst evil was in the present and that was a direct result of the Russian overlordship and the suppression of Ukrainian liberties. The evils which came from the union with Moscow by the so-called Treaty of Pereyaslav were more real than the danger threatening from an already vanquished and broken Poland. Henceforth his poems turned against Russia and he abandoned the romantic scenes of the past that had formed such a large part of the *Kobzar*. At the same time he increased his emphasis upon the injustice of the villagers among themselves. He had touched this in the *Katerina* but he had learned in his native village of the sad fate of Oksana Kovalenkivna whom he had once loved. She had been seduced by a Russian and had later become insane, after she had been disowned by her parents.

He occupied himself during this year with the bringing out of a series of sketches, *Picturesque Ukraine,* and continued his usual life at the Academy and with his friends. The ferment of opposition to injustice was however working in him and toward the end of the summer he finished the *Dream,* one of his most powerful attacks on the present situation in Ukraine. It was impossible to think of publishing such a poem with its caricature of the Empress and its open condemnation of both Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. It did however begin to circulate in manuscript form among the friends of Shevchenko and the adherents of Ukrainian liberties.

This was no exceptional thing under the regime of Nicholas I. Even such a masterpiece of Russian literature and such a harmless satire on the social life of the day as the comedy *Sorrow out of Intelligence* by Griboyedov was refused publication by the censor, despite the fact that it was the favorite reading of St. Petersburg society and the work of a distinguished and trusted diplomat. Most of the poems of Pushkin and Lermontov were still unpublished, and it was generally understood that there was in the two capitals a large amount of literature by the leading writers which were known only to the

reading public and the police chiefs unofficially. The circulation of a poem as the *Dream* which might have serious consequences would therefore not be threatening until it might suit the officials to take cognizance of it. Shevchenko probably spent some anxious moments when he first showed it to friends but apparently he gave very little thought to the possibility that he might be denounced to the authorities and he continued during the next years to write his great poems attacking the alien domination of Ukraine.

On March 22, 1845, Taras Shevchenko finished the course at the Academy of Arts and received the right to call himself a free artist of the Academy and later in the same year on December 10 a diploma was formally issued to him confirming this fact, granting him the rights and privileges pertaining thereto and allowing him "with complete freedom and liberty to enter the service into which he as an artist desires to go."

Without waiting for the arrival of the formal diploma, Shevchenko returned to Ukraine. In fact he went within two days of his formal departure from the Academy. He travelled by way of Moscow where he saw again old friends as Prof. Bodyansky and the celebrated actor Mikhaylo Shchepkin who had taken part in the first performance of Kotlyarevsky's drama *Natalka Poltavka.* He spent the summer travelling around Ukraine and then in the late autumn he secured a position with the Archaeological Commission which had been formed by the Governor General Bibikov to study the ancient monuments of Ukraine. For this he was recommended to receive the sum of 150 rubles a year. It was a trifling sum even for those days but there was attached a permission to travel and with his fame and the possibility of making portraits, it was possible for him to live without too much hardship.

The year 1845 was one of his most productive years literarily. It was the time when Shevchenko had the opportunity to acquaint himself personally with all of the ancient monuments of his country and to observe for himself the terrible conditions under which the people were living. The year saw the continuation of the tendencies described in the *Dream* and in such poems as the *Great Grave,* the *Caucasus,* and the *Epistle to my dead, living and unborn countrymen in Ukraine and not Ukraine,* he expressed his bitter indignation at the denial of independence and liberty to his people. He was skating on thin ice in these poems but the blow which was hanging over him was deferred.

At this time in Kiev there was a very active intellectual life. There had gathered around the University a group of young men who were destined to become famous in the Ukrainian movement. Here were Mykola Kostomariv, the historian, Panteleimon Kulish, Vasil I. Bilozersky, and many others. They were all attracted by the ideal of doing something for Ukrainian independence but their patriotic fervor was largely tinged with romantic dreams.

The traditions of the Decembrists of 1825 were still alive among a large part of the younger Russian thinkers, even though the centre of activity had passed away from the aristocratic officers who had risked their lives and careers in that abortive movement. They dreamed of a liberated Russia and they apparently like most of the Russian conservatives and radicals did not conceive of any dismemberment of their country. On the other hand in 1824 the Czechoslovak writer Jan Kollár had published the *Daughter of Slava,* a series of sonnets appealing for Slavonic liberty and stressing the brotherhood of all the Slavonic races. Kollár's work gradually spread throughout the Slavonic world and produced marked reactions everywhere. Some of the Russians played with the idea. It found strong repercussions in the Balkans. In Kiev it affected this group of young thinkers and its influence was aided by the studies of Slavonic antiquities and general Slavonic literature by Pavel Šafařík, another Czech scholar.

The immediate result was the organization of the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius in January, 1846. The young enthusiasts of the Society dreamed of a great Slav republic which was to embrace all the Slavonic nations with the various groups organized as states. Perhaps there was much of the Masonic organization in this but there is the strong likelihood that the example of the American Constitution played a considerable role in the final method of government that was proposed. For an internal policy the Society urged the development of education to fit the people for their new responsibilities.

There was nothing particularly dangerous about this Society. It contained the same kind of potential explosiveness as such modern organizations as Union Now and similar plans for world organization. The members seem to have believed in the possibility of peaceful change and the very unmilitary character of the leaders could easily have shown the Tsar that they were little more than idealists who might have been used to further the interests of the Russian Empire. Yet to Nicholas I, anything which savored of free institutions was actually and not only potentially dangerous. Russia was rushing

on to the debacle of the Crimean War and the Tsar was engaged in a futile effort to stop all discussion and the appearance of western ideals. It was evident that danger threatened the entire group and they were compelled to act as a secret organization. They adopted their own flag, their own seal, and ritual.

During the summer of 1846, the members of this Society scattered on their own business. Shevchenko passed the time on various estates and dreamed of going abroad to Italy to continue his studies in painting. He had received an offer of assistance and he did not realize that Anna Bilozerska, who was marrying Panteleimon Kulish, was planning to sell her jewels to secure for him the necessary funds which were to be given anonymously. At the same time he was building high hopes on the possibility of receiving a definite position as teacher of painting at the University of Kiev, and this was definitely given him in February, 1847.

Everything seemed to be favorable for a happy future, when the blow suddenly fell. Shevchenko had returned to Kiev for the wedding of Mykola Kostomariv and several of the friends assembled at the same time, while Kulish who had been called to St. Petersburg and then given a fellowship to travel abroad was on his way to the border. Unknown to them, Oleksy Petrov, a student who had lived in a room near that of Bulak, another member of the group, had listened to the lively discussions that had gone on at various times when some of the scattered members had come to Kiev during the preceding months, and had become convinced that there was some conspiracy afoot. Perhaps he had even made friends with Shevchenko with the idea of discovering something about the society.

At all events on February 28, he suddenly informed M. V. Yuzifovich, the superviser of education in the district, of the conspiracy. The latter at once suspended Shevchenko from his position with the Archaeological Commission on the technicality that he had gone to Kiev without permission. Still there was no real suspicion on the part of the group. Shevchenko appeared at Kostomariv's wedding. In the meanwhile Yuzifovich had forwarded the complaint to Bibikov who was then in St. Petersburg and on March 17, the latter had referred the matter to Count Orlov, the chief of the gendarmes.

The police acted speedily, when we consider the difficulties of transportation and the transmission of news. On April 5, 1847, the thoroughly unsuspecting Shevchenko together with his friends was

arrested and sent to St. Petersburg. He arrived there on April 17 and the trial took place almost immediately.

At an inquiry made at the Academy of Arts, Count Lakhtenberg, the President, replied after giving Shevchenko's record at the Academy, "It is necessary to add that Shevchenko has a gift for poetry and in the Little Russian language has written several poems, respected by people who are familiar with the Little Russian language and the former life of this region; he was always considered as a moral man, perhaps something of a dreamer and an honorer of the Little Russian past, but nothing prejudicial came to the knowledge of the Academy."

In his examination, Shevchenko denied membership in the Ukrainian-Slavonic Society but admitted that he had written some insolent and satirical works, "forgetting his conscience and the fear of God." He had nothing to say about his associates in the Society.

In the summing up of the evidence Count Orlov placed the case of Shevchenko almost entirely upon his verses. "Shevchenko instead of feeling eternal gratitude to the persons of the Most August Family, which had deigned to free him from serfdom, composed verses in the Little Russian language of the most revolting character. In them he expressed lamentation for the so-called enslavement and misery of Ukraine, proclaimed the glory of the old Hetman rule and the former freedom of the Cossacks, and with incredible boldness poured out slanders and bile on the persons of the Imperial House, forgetting that they were his personal benefactors. Besides the fact that all that was prohibited attracted persons of weak character, Shevchenko acquired among his friends the fame of a celebrated Little Russian writer, and so his poems became doubly harmful and dangerous. With his poems which were beloved in Little Russia there could be sowed and consequently take root thoughts of the so-called happiness of the times of the Hetmanate, the happiness of bringing back those times and of the possibility of Ukraine existing as a separate country. Judging by the extraordinary respect which all the Ukraine-Slavonians felt personally for Shevchenko and for his poems, it at first seemed that he might be, if not the active head among them, yet the tool which they wished to use in their designs; but on the one hand these designs were not so important as they appeared at first sight, and on the other, Shevchenko had begun to write his revolting poems already in 1837, when Slavonic ideas had not interested the Kiev scholars; similarly the whole case shows that Shevchenko did

not belong to the Ukrainian-Slavonic Society but acted separately, attracted by his own corruption. Nevertheless by his revolting spirit and boldness which passes all bounds, he must be acknowledged one of the chief culprits."

The sentence came on May 26 with the verdict, "The artist Shevchenko, for his writing of revolting and in the highest degree impudent poetry, as a person of a healthy constitution, is to be sent as a private to the Orenburg Separate Corps, with the right of freedom through honorable service and instructions are to be sent to the command to have the strictest supervision that from him, under no pretext, can there come any revolting and satirical works." The Tsar with his own hand added to this "Under the strictest supervision with a prohibition of writing and sketching."

The sentence was carried out at once and by June 11, Shevchenko was already in Orenburg and duly outfitted as a soldier. He was attached to the 5th battalion of the Corps which was stationed at the Fortress of Orsk, 267 versts (about 150 miles) east of Orenburg in the heart of the barren steppes. It was an uninviting place amid uninviting surroundings.

Shevchenko had no desire to become a soldier and he loathed army life and discipline. It seemed to him a worse slavery than that which he had known as a serf. Every detail awoke his disgust. It was in vain that the commanders endeavored to teach him to drill and to march. He was shocked at the filth and the language of the privates who surrounded him and with whom he had to associate. They were the exact opposite of the cultured and intellectual people with whom he had associated at St. Petersburg and in Ukraine. They were a tough and foul-mouthed gang of ruffians, and this is not to be wondered at for many of them had been sent there as a punishment. Yet much of his reaction must be attributed to the dissatisfaction of a sensitive intellectual with the dreary life of the barracks in peace times.

Besides that, the prohibition of writing and painting took away from Shevchenko the inspiration which he might have drawn from the unusual surroundings in which he was. He could only dream of Ukraine, think of its sufferings, bemoan his fate, and hope and pray for something better. He wrote letters to Princess Repnina and to others of his friends, lamenting especially the prohibition against painting. The Princess interceded for him with Count Orlov and in reply merely received a warning against corresponding with such an

evil character. One of his friends sent him some paints. If he tried to write verses, he was compelled to do so secretly and to hide them in his boot.

Apparently the officers were not too hard upon him, and the intercession of friends as Princess Repnina and Count Aleksyey K. Tolstoy, the celebrated Russian writer, had some effect, for on January 30, 1848, Count Orlov had sent to Orsk to inquire about the conduct of Shevchenko and the possibility of removing the ban on his painting. It is possible that some favorable reply was given for early in May, he was attached as a sketcher to an expedition which was setting out to explore the east coast of the Sea of Aral. However Shevchenko looked upon this unofficial modification of the original sentence, the work was difficult and attended with many hardships. His mission lasted for a year and half and he returned to Orenburg in November, 1849.

The little expeditionary force of infantry, engineers, Kirghiz and camels had set out from Orsk, gone to the Sea of Aral, built a fleet of ships and then sailing along the coast to Raim, had landed, built a fort at Kos-Aral and had passed the winter there. During this time Shevchenko made many sketches of the scenery under government orders, despite the official prohibition, and during the winter he was able to work on several poems. Yet it was a disagreeable journey. The Sea of Aral was a salt sea. Its banks were monotonous and bare, quite unlike the blooming fields of Ukraine. In addition to that, he was definitely cut off from the world. For a year and a half no mail reached him or the expedition and he imagined that he was entirely forgotten, while his friends at home thought that he had forgotten them.

When he returned to Orenburg at the end of 1849, he again presented a petition to be allowed to paint and in it he stated—what was perhaps not the exact truth—that never in his painting had he ventured to commit any impropriety. His officers, knowing his services on the expedition, seconded his request.

In the meanwhile they allowed him to live in the city of Orenburg, to wear civilian clothes instead of the hated uniform, and to paint as many portraits as he desired. The city was filled with Polish and Ukrainian exiles and in their company the time passed much more pleasantly and fruitfully than during the fatiguing and difficult days in the fortress and on the expedition.

It was too good to last. In the spring a certain ensign (it is not sure

whether his name was Isayev or Illashenko) presented a complaint that contrary to the Imperial edict Shevchenko was both writing and painting. Lieutenant Obruchev, who knew very well that Shevchenko had been acting under official authority, was yet afraid that the matter might reach the Third Section and made trouble. As a result he searched the quarters of Shevchenko and found what he had long known were there—civilian clothes, paintings, and writings. The poet was immediately rearrested on April 27 and set back to the Fortress of Orsk where his battalion was still stationed. There he was placed in the guardhouse and his trial lasted from June 28 to July 5 before General-Adjutant Ignatyev.

The ground covered was already known to every one. Shevchenko denied any deliberate wrongdoing and stated that he had supposed that the prohibition against writing had applied only to imaginative works and had not been intended to cover private correspondence, which the authorities forwarded and which had not violated any law of propriety but had been merely personal greetings and requests for assistance. There was no defence possible on the charge of having civilian clothes, but this was a matter that might become far more serious for his superiors who had allowed him to remain at Orenburg than for the unfortunate victim. It was to be expected that the Tsar would take a more serious view of a private wearing civilian clothes than of the other accusations, for that directly touched his personal views of discipline. On August 26, the order came to release Shevchenko from the guardhouse and to send him to the First Battalion at Novopetrovsk under the strictest supervision. His former commanding officers were also punished and the results had disagreeable consequences for many of the friends with whom he had corresponded.

He arrived on September 13 at his new post. Novopetrovsk was in a still more forbidding region on the east coast of the Caspian Sea and had been built four years before to protect the region from depredation by Kirghiz raiders. It was on a barren peninsular reaching into the Caspian Sea from the treeless steppe. His reputation had preceded him and also the knowledge that the Tsar himself had ordered him not to write and paint. As a result, the commanding officer, Colonel Mayevsky, did not feel able to mitigate the Imperial order. The company officers, Captain Potapov and Lieutenant Obryadin, were men of slight culture and of the most limited military outlook. They were willing to enforce the orders to the limit

and were only interested in compelling the poet to become an efficient soldier, to drill and march accurately and to go through the necessary motions in the proper way.

This was doubly depressing for the poor poet. He was a remarkably bad soldier. Whether this was because of his stubborn determination not to be a good one but to maintain his theories to the end or whether he was temperamentally unmilitary, it is hard to say. It is to be noted in this connection that even in his youth he had failed in any technical occupation at the Engelhardt estate, while he made progress so soon as he was allowed to study art and to write poetry.

For two years the unequal struggle continued. Shevchenko was watched minutely and hourly. He was not allowed a scrap of paper and during his service at Novopetrovsk there was no opportunity for him to write even the shortest poems. He was able to get out only a very few letters to Princess Repnina and to some of his closest friends. Yet his spirit never wavered. He maintained the same unwavering attitude in his feelings, treating himself as a sufferer for the cause of Ukraine.

About two years later Major Irakly Uskov was sent to command the garrison. He was a more determined and broad-minded man and he decided to do what he could to make the fate of Shevchenko a little more tolerable. He invited him frequently to his house, acquainted him with his family, and asked him to paint their pictures. The favor shown to the prisoner was so marked that gossip arose about his wife Agatha and Shevchenko and made it very difficult for the old relationship to continue. Yet Uskov did not on that account turn against the poet. When Shevchenko conceived the idea of painting the altar picture in the post chapel, Uskov warmly approved the idea but again the authorities in Orenburg sternly forbade it on the basis of the Tsar's orders, and this new hope of enjoyable activity was abandoned.

Nicholas I died February 17, 1855 and a new era seemed to dawn for Russia. The new Tsar, Alexander II, was the pupil of that Zhukovsky who had had so much to do with the liberation of Shevchenko from serfdom. The new reign was opening with an appearance of liberality and with a general amnesty and Shevchenko could hope for his release. Yet he was not included in the general list of pardons. His attack on the Dowager Empress in the *Dream* had been so bitter that she was believed to have influenced her son against the act.

Shevchenko was nearly in despair but his friends at St. Petersburg

did not lose heart. Count Feodor Petrovich Tolstoy of the Academy of Arts, and his wife continued to work through all possible social channels to secure the release of the poet. It was a hard and thankless task but by the spring of 1857 his friend Mikhaylo Lazarevsky could write that a pardon had been secured and that the days of Shevchenko's exile were numbered.

Then came one of the hardest parts of his confinement—the tedious waiting until the order could travel through official channels to Orenburg or Astrakhan and then be forwarded to the isolated post. Mail arrived rarely. Shevchenko began a journal and in it he noted down with despair the numbers of mails that arrived without bringing the desired letter. He was continually passing from the heights of hope to the depths of despair as week followed week without the desired news. Finally it came on July 21 and as often with such delayed greetings, Shevchenko was not on hand to receive it. He was living in the city and in the morning he went to the fortress for a shave "and from the non-commissioned officer Kulikh I first learned that at nine o'clock in the morning a mail boat had arrived. Having shaved, and with sinking heart, I returned to the city and, leaving the fort, I met Bazhanov who was in charge of the post hospital. And he first greeted me with Liberty: July 21, 1857, at eleven o'clock in the morning."

Shevchenko was now free but he was miles from any vestige of civilization and eager to return to his friends in the capital. There were two ways of leaving. The official route was via the corps headquarters at Orenburg but this meant a journey of 1000 versts across the desolate steppe before he could reach Astrakhan on the lower Volga. The simpler way was to board a boat and go directly to Astrakhan. His definitive orders for departure had not arrived and Uskov had no power to approve the direct route. He finally did so and on August 2, Shevchenko boarded a fishing boat for Astrakhan.

He arrived on the 4th in the late afternoon. For the first time in ten years he was free of military service. For the first time in ten years he was able to move around without fear of punishment. He greedily looked around Astrakhan and made many friends. The Ukrainians there welcomed him as a great poet and it relieved him to find that he had not been forgotten during his long exile.

Finally on August 22 he started with some friends on a river steamship along the Volga for Nizhni Novgorod. It was a revelation to him and he endeavored to make sketches of the scenery along the river but

it was all so new and startling in its beauty after ten years of the steppe that he did not complete any of his drawings. He stopped at Saratov for a short visit with the mother of his old friend Kostomariv. Finally on September 20, the boat reached Nizhni and he was able to go ashore.

Here the police were again waiting for him. His amnesty had not granted him permission to live in St. Petersburg and Major Uskov had from ignorance granted him this permission, when he let him go without requiring him to travel via Orenburg. Under any interpretation of the orders for his arrest, he would be required to return there for a formal receipt of future instructions. Yet he found friends at Nizhni and the Chief of Police and the Police physician very willingly allowed him to remain and forwarded to Orenburg a statement that he was too sick to travel. This left him temporarily safe but it postponed his hope of meeting with his friends for it was not until March 1, 1858, that he received the desired permission and then there was the disagreeable clause added that he was to remain under the supervision of the police.

The winter was not an unpleasant one. Everywhere he was received as a distinguished writer. He was invited to the Nizhni Club, was entertained by all the most distinguished social and artistic circles of the provincial city, and painted pictures of most of the outstanding persons, supporting himself largely in this way.

At the same time he wrote to Kulish and also to his old friend, the actor, Mikhail Semenovich Shchepkin, and asked them to visit him. With his usual caution Kulish refused to risk his career by visiting the banished poet but Shchepkin came down from Moscow and spent Christmas with him. He was the first of his old friends whom he had met since his return and it gave the poet great pleasure.

It also helped to precipitate a rather unpleasant episode. Shevchenko had never in his heart given up thoughts of marriage and while he was in Nizhni, he became enamored with an attractive young actress, Katerina Borisivna Piunova. She was apparently of Ukrainian stock for he saw her in Kotlyarevsky's *Moskal-Charivnik*. She was dissatisfied with her position in Nizhni and was trying to secure one in Kazan. Shevchenko, fascinated by her and thinking as always of Ukraine, tried to use his influence and that of Shchepkin to get her to Kharkiv. She seemed to like his attentions but it was not long before he discovered that she was merely using them in order to secure a better contract and his devotion resulted only in disillusionment.

While he was in Nizhni, he had the opportunity of meeting some of the Decembrists who had been exiled by Nicholas I in 1825 and who were just being released after thirty years of Siberia. He went into ecstacies over their high principles. His comments on this group were more enthusiastic than on most of his friends of his own age.

As a matter of fact Shevchenko had grown more radical in prison or we might perhaps put it better by saying that he had become aware that the Russian government was inflicting upon its own people most of the same hardships that it had upon the Ukrainians. As a result he read constantly the various writings of Herzen and of the other radicals which appeared abroad and from this time on came to have closer kinship with the leaders of the intelligentsia.

In productive work during this winter he wrote the *Neophytes,* a study of the Christian persecutions under the Roman Emperor Nero. The comparison between him and the Tsar is so obvious that the poem terrified Kulish and he advised Shevchenko to be slow about letting its existence be known. This advice did not satisfy the poet who was utterly fearless and not to be swerved from what he considered right, but there were no ill effects from its production.

On March 8, he went by sleigh to Vladimir and there he met Captain Butakov who had commanded the expedition with which he had gone to the Sea of Aral. Shevchenko's remark on meeting his old commander is very significant. "My heart grows cold at the very memory of that wilderness, but I think he is ready to settle down there forever." (Journal, March 10.)

From Vladimir he went to Moscow late on the 10th and was taken sick with some disease of the eyes and for some days he was not allowed to go out on the street. However he disobeyed this order to go and see Princess Repnina. She had been his closest friend in the old days and now when he saw her, he says only in his diary "She has changed for the better; she looks as if she had grown younger, and were rushing into matrimony, a thing which I had not noticed previously. Has she not met in Moscow a good confessor?" (March 17). This seems to have been almost the end of another dream. He saw her again on the 24th but the old correspondence seems to have ended.

The years had treated Shevchenko very unkindly. He was only forty-four but the exile had made him prematurely aged. His health had suffered under the harsh regime and the difficult living conditions of the frontier. Even though his spirit remained unbroken, he was no longer a young and vigorous man. He still cherished his dreams

of a home and children but from this time on he apparently gave up the hope of charming any one who might appeal to his mind and fit into the position to which he could honestly feel that he had risen. With the loss of his unconfessed love for Repnina and the episode with Piunova, Shevchenko turned more and more toward the peasantry from which he had sprung.

Yet it did not affect his dealings with men. He had the opportunity of making the acquaintance of Sergey Timofeyevich Aksakov, one of the grand old men of Russian literature and the author of the most delightful pictures of the good side of the old patriarchal life. Shevchenko had a sincere admiration for the old Slavophile who was then sixty-seven years old and whose early life had been spent in pleasant surroundings on the Bashkir steppes very similar to those where he himself had suffered. Aksakov invited him to his estates for the summer and Shevchenko apparently desired to accept. He also renewed his acqaintance with the family of Stankevich and with M. V. Maksimovich. At this time also he met the younger Aksakovs, Khomyakov and in fact all of the important Slavophile leaders, who accepted him as a great poet. Of course his closest friend was Shchepkin who was with him constantly but who was unfortunately compelled to leave for Yaroslavl.

Shevchenko left the same day for St. Petersburg where he arrived on March 27, just about eleven years from the time when he had been brought there as a prisoner for his trial and sentence. He went at once to his old friend, Mikhaylo Mikhaylevich Lazarevsky, who had helped him so much during his exile and then to see Count Feodor Petrovich Tolstoy, the Vice-President of the Academy of Arts.

It was largely through the Tolstoys that he had finally been pardoned and both the Count and Countess entertained him royally. They gave a dinner in his honor and acquainted him with many of the leaders of the cultivated artistic and literary set in the capital. Among these we may mention Count Aleksyey Konstantinovich Tolstoy, the celebrated dramatist novelist and poet, who with all of his liberal ideas was attracted and repelled by the strange figure of Ivan the Terrible, his cousins, the brothers Zhemchuzhnikov, the poet Lev Aleksandrovich Mey, the mathematician M. V. Ostrogorsky, Admiral Golenishchev, and many others. They all accepted the broken Ukrainian, they admired his poetry and Mey translated several of his poems into Russian.

On the other hand he also became acquainted with the leading

radicals of the day as Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky and Nikolay Aleksandrovich Dobrolyubov. Both of these men were connected with the *Sovremennik,* for which Kostomariv and Kulish also wrote. Chernyshevsky relied heavily upon Shevchenko in pointing out that the evils that befell the Ukrainians were due to the master-class, which was identical whether it was Russian, Polish or Ukrainian. To some extent Shevchenko agreed with him and this is greatly stressed by the Soviet critics as L. P. Nosenko (Velyky Poet-Revolyutioner, Odesa, 1939, pp. 51 ff.). It is very likely that there is some basis for their claims but on the other hand in a few poems which Shevchenko wrote after his return, his references to Khmelnitsky and to Ukraine show well that he had no desire to see his native country in any connection with Moscow and the Russian Empire.

He resumed his studies at the Academy of Arts but this time in etching. He achieved in this great success and his work under Prof. Yordan was so distinguished that in the spring of 1859 he was authorized to submit engravings for a promotion to the grade of Academician. He did this and on October 31, 1860, he was formally made an Academician of the Imperial Academy of Arts.

His life in St. Petersburg was relatively pleasant but he could not forget Ukraine and his unfortunate brothers and sisters who were still in serfdom. He finally secured permission to go there and left St. Petersburg for his last visit early in June, 1859. He planned to visit several friends and to pay a visit to his brothers and sister at Kirilivka. He met his sister Irina. They sat down under a pear tree, he placed his head in her lap, and listened to her sad story of all that she had had to suffer, especially since she became a widow. Shevchenko told her of his troubles also and asked her to find him a wife, for now that he was more or less free, he was determined to marry and have a home in Ukraine before he died.

From Kirilivka, he visited other friends and then new troubles overtook him. He was suddenly arrested at the town of Moshni. The police authorities at St. Petersburg had notified the police of the various sections where he would be of his coming and asked them to keep watch of him. He seems to have expressed himself incautiously to some friends and apparently some Polish landowners reported him to the police. He was arrested in Moshni on July 13, taken to Cherkasy, and then to Kiev. Here his case was brought before the Governor General Ivan Vasilchikov, who studied it with interest and very soon decided that Shevchenko had been unjustly accused

He advised the poet to return to St. Petersburg, "where the people are wiser and do not worry about trifles, in order to serve well."

The poet who had been brought to Kiev on July 27, stayed a few days longer at liberty under police supervision and then on August 14, he started back for St. Petersburg. He had been negotiating for a little piece of land near Mezhirich on the bank of the Dniper but this plan had fallen through with his arrest, and there was nothing for him to do but to see a few friends again and make his way back to the capital. He arrived there on September 7, profoundly convinced that nothing had changed in Ukraine with the accession of the more liberal Alexander II.

There was still the problem of his marriage. After his experiences with Piunova and perhaps with Princess Repnina, he had come to the conclusion that he should marry a peasant girl as much for symbolic reasons as for inclination. But where to find one?

By now he had become friendly with Vartolomey Shevchenko whom he addressed as his brother. This was not strictly accurate. Osip, the brother of Taras, had married the sister of Vartolomey, so that Vartolomey was really the brother of the sister-in-law of Taras. He had known him earlier but now the two men became very friendly, for Vartolomey was a practical and business-like man and the manager of the Korsun estate of Prince Lopukhin. He did not agree with the poet in his revolutionary and extreme views but Taras recognized his fundamental honesty and often was willing to follow his advice.

At this moment he met and became devoted to a servant in the family of Vartolomey. She was the sixteen year old Kharyta Dovhopolenkivna, an attractive but illiterate serf on the estate of Prince Lopukhin. She seemed to Taras to represent exactly the type of girl that he wished to marry. It was in vain that his friends advised him against the union, for they realized that Kharyta could not share in any of his higher interests, in his poetry or his painting. It was all in vain. Shevchenko insisted on formally offering her his hand. The girl solved the problem by refusing him because she was unwilling to marry an aged *pan* and she had no intention of becoming the slave to another nobleman. The fame of the poet was so great that the girl insisted upon looking at him as a person of a higher social stratum and Shevchenko despite his efforts could not disillusion her on this point. Besides she already had her own fiancé whom she had selected herself.

It was another blow to the aged man, but he even yet did not lose hope. He spent some time in the composition of his last great poem, *Mary,* an unconventional retelling of the life of the Blessed Virgin, largely on the basis of the apocryphal legends. His choice of material and the realistic tinge which he gave to the sacred story annoyed many of his friends and his enemies used it to spread a charge of atheism. The work is however fundamentally religious but the poet modified the story to bring it closer to the fate of Ukraine.

He was friendly at that time with a nephew of Aksakov, Karteshevsky. The latter's wife was a sister of Mykola Makarov, a Ukrainian landowner and literary man, and at their house many of the Ukrainian and Russian writers used to gather for pleasant evenings. It was here for example that Shevchenko met Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev, although the two men never became close friends. At one of these parties, to honor Shevchenko, they dressed in an elegant Ukrainian costume a young serf girl, Lykeria Polusmakivna.

She was a clever, coquettish and scheming little creature who knew both Russian and Ukrainian but for the occasion she pretended to know only Ukrainian. Her charm and beauty completely fascinated the poet and still saddened by the rebuff of Kharyta, he decided to marry her. He had her taught to read and tried to educate her. The girl responded quickly but it was soon clear to all, even to Shevchenko, that she was hoping to marry him only to get to Paris and to move in society. This completely broke the poet's heart and he began to feel that his chances for a happy married life in Ukraine were doomed never to be realized.

At the same time, however, he was busy with other plans. He was working hard on his etching and was achieving real success. He also reopened negotiations with the censor to bring out another edition of the *Kobzar* and he secured it in 1860, provided only it did not include poems written after his arrest and exile.

His visit to Ukraine and his new realization of the hardships of his family in serfdom aroused in him the desire to have them liberated. It was certain that a general emancipation would not be long delayed, but the poet would not wait. He opened negotiations with their master, V. E. Fliorkovsky, to emancipate, with a little piece of land, his two brothers, Mykola and Osip, and his sister Irina with their families. Fliorkovsky refused and demanded a considerable sum for the emancipation but refused to give them land, even when the Society for Aid to Russian Writers, with such imposing names as those

of Turgenev, Kavelin, a professor of the University of St. Petersburg, Chernyshevsky and various others appealed to him. Finally on July 10, 1860, Fliorkovsky succeeded in coming to an agreement with his serfs and gave them their liberty in return for 900 silver rubles but without land. The poet was angry at this solution but there was nothing that he could do. He saw his relatives freed but they were compelled to rent their land on disadvantageous terms until 1865 when as a result of the emancipation settlement they were able to receive some.

During the exciting year when it seemed as if the general emancipation would come almost daily, Kulish and his friends worked energetically on educational plans for the Ukrainians. Sunday schools were established, textbooks prepared in the Ukrainian language, and in general the future seemed rosy. Shevchenko was not behind in his interest and he set to work on a *South Russian Primer* for the Ukrainian children. It consisted of an alphabet, prayers, and easy selections for reading, with somewhat moralizing texts. It was an unimportant work which the poet had prepared to meet a real national need and it came out early in 1861.

It was about the end. By the fall of 1860, the hardships which he had undergone began to tell upon his health. He complained of pains in his chest but continued to work. In vain doctors and friends tried to persuade him to be careful. At Christmas he insisted upon visiting his friends but it was too much of an exertion. In the middle of January, 1861, he became worse and for some weeks was unable to leave his bed or to go out of his room. A watery swelling came in his chest and it grew constantly worse. Towards the end of February he was in constant pain. On February 25, his birthday, his friend Lazarevsky visited him and the dying poet asked him to write to Vartolomey about his condition. Late that evening he came back with a friend and they found Taras sitting up, breathing heavily but unable to speak. All that night he suffered greatly and could not sleep. In the morning he asked to be taken to his study but he had hardly crossed the threshold into the hall, when he staggered and fell—and never rose again.

The poet had lived to be one day over forty-seven. Out of those years he had been a serf for twenty-four, a free man for nine, a Russian soldier for ten and under police supervision for four. It was a sad life.

Two days later on February 28, there was an enormous funeral in the Academic Church and his friends and admirers gave glowing

eulogies of his life and merits. Among the speakers were Kulish, Bilozersky, and Kostomariv. He was buried in the Smolensky cemetery.

Meanwhile his friends planned to have the body taken back to Ukraine. The necessary permission was secured and on May 8, the body left the capital. It was taken through Moscow, Tula and Orel to Kiev. In every city ever increasing crowds welcomed the funeral procession. Finally on May 18, it reached Kiev but again there was a question whether the body could be taken to the Church of the Nativity. Permission was finally granted by the same Governor Vasilchikov who had freed the poet at his last arrest. At the bank of the Dniper, his friend Mikhaylo Chaly made a last eulogy: "The poetry of Shevchenko has won for us the right of literary citizenship and has spoken aloud in the family of Slavonic nations. In this is the great merit of Taras Shevchenko and his glory, which will never perish." He told the truth. The Dniper was in full flood but the enthusiastic admirers succeeded in getting the body across and in burying it on the Chernecha Hora, one of the poet's favorite spots. In 1892 Vartolomey bought this ground and handed it over to the local duma of Kaniv to preserve as a memorial to the poet.

Shevchenko lived a life of tribulation and sorrow. There was little that was joyous about it. His muse is one of sadness but of firm belief in the ultimate triumph of the right and of human brotherhood and he saw the Ukrainian cause as a part of this noble movement. Whatever he did for it politically, from the standpoint of spirit and of literature he placed his native land and literature on a firm basis among the Slavonic nations. He perfected the work of his predecessors and he still remains the greatest example of the Ukrainian genius.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POETRY OF SHEVCHENKO

In estimating the greatness of the poetry of Shevchenko, we can never forget that he must be judged in two different spheres and on two different planes. He is first and foremost the poet of Ukraine, and his poems breathe the secret longings of every Ukrainian heart. He is the spokesman of his people and from his lips we hear in all their clarity and intensity the prayers, the hopes, the disappointments of the Ukrainians. No one of the other Ukrainian poets has equalled him in the understanding of his fellow countrymen and his people have accorded him the highest praise and honor that they can bestow upon a man.

At the same time, his sympathy and compassion range far beyond the boundaries of his own people and here he becomes a world poet, able to stand comparison with such writers as Pushkin and Mickiewicz, the great masters of Russian and Polish verse at their periods of greatest excellence. Far more even than they he expressed the sufferings of humanity, the evil of injustice and of wrong, the need and the inevitability of the triumph of right, of kindness, and of brotherly love. His poems in this sphere have a message for all humanity and are an appeal for a better, a truer, a more decent life for all men and women everywhere.

It is one of the mysteries of genius how the poor serf was able to develop into the magnificent poet that he was to become in after years, despite the blows that fate hurled upon him, of poverty, of suffering, of imprisonment and of ill health. Yet there is no royal road to genius and there is no predicting where or when a genius will be born. The world can only note it and give due acclaim to the man who is thus favored or cursed by fortune.

Let us look a little more closely at the work of Shevchenko in the national sphere. For centuries the free Kozaks had been holding up to view the principles of a free life and a free political organization on the steppes of eastern Europe. They had paid for their liberty with their blood. They had fought a losing fight, for disunity and factionalism had destroyed them even at the moments when they seemed the nearest to success and victory. Social classes had made an appearance among them. The Kozak officers had tended to turn themselves

into nobles and to seek from outside powers the ratification of their claims. They paid the price for their ambitions and with them the people who might have stood out as a strong and self-contained band were thrown into serfdom. It was a long, slow process and with unfailing psychological truth Shevchenko put his finger unerringly upon the defects of the Kozak system. He traced the downfall of his country through the ages. He pictured it in its ruin and he never lost hope that someway, somehow it would rise again. He was not a soldier at heart. He was not a conspirator. He was not interested in the secret passwords, the underground existence, the spiritual isolation and discipline that must become the dominating features of the life of every revolutionist. In childhood he had learned why the Koliishchina had failed. As a kindly, loving soul, he could not excuse the ferocity of that movement which he painted so vividly. He had seen the failure of the Decembrist movement in Russia and of the Polish revolt in 1831 and he understood the lessons. Yet he did not waver in his belief. He did not express himself as to the manner in which Ukraine would become free. He was not a political theorist and did not speculate on the form of government which would then come. He was too cultured, too modern to believe that the old Kozak system could return, that the Hetmans could be reestablished and recover their power. But never for a moment did he give up his feeling of loyalty to his mother-country. Never for an instant did he mitigate or reduce her claims to independence. Full friendship and trust in the Moskals could only come when Moscow was ready to greet Ukraine as a brother with all the rights and obligations that that meant.

At the same time that he avoided political revolution, Shevchenko was a bold and defiant revolutionist in the ideal sense of the word. He was not satisfied with a revolution which would remove the tsars whom he hated and put other men in power with the same privileges. To him the goal of human life was freedom, brotherhood, democracy. He wanted a society which would not injure the unfortunate and the downtrodden, which would not be composed of hypocritical Pharisees and snobbish and ambitious and conceited rulers and wealthy roués, no matter what terms they applied to themselves.

It is here that Shevchenko far transcended Ukraine and her problems. Wherever there was a suffering soul, an oppressed woman or child, an enslaved man, the message of Shevchenko demanded unflinchingly that evil must be wiped out, that need and want and fear

must be eliminated from the earth, and that greed and lust must be annihilated. In holding up these goals which are independent of and above national existence, which are in the realm of religion and of ethics, Shevchenko has a message for the entire world. His works are far more modern in their direct and simple speech than are those of most of his contemporaries. They cannot grow old or fade until those great ideals which we to-day call by the name of democracy and for which the world is fighting, are fully brought to reality. They are the dominant factors in man's struggle to achieve civilization and on man's success in obtaining them depends the future of peace and prosperity.

Yet we would be very wrong to think that Shevchenko acquired his point of view only from his own meditations and ideas. The picture that is often drawn of him as a mere serf who somehow or other appeared in literature is far from the mark. Of course he had no formal education—but that was true of many of the scholars and gentlemen of the early nineteenth century. We often say of them that they acquired their knowledge and outlook on life through constant association with the outstanding men of a previous generation. This is obviously untrue of Shevchenko who was born a serf and passed his childhood under the harsh conditions of life in a poor Ukraine village, where he could only secure an education from the ignorant and inefficient clerks and chanters of the various village churches and they were hardly the proper instructors for a young and ambitious man. Yet somehow or other Taras Shevchenko acquired a real education which enabled him to meet on an equality many of the most distinguished men of his time, he won a real insight into the psychology of his people, and he mastered their language as no one else has ever done. There is needed far more study than has hitherto been undertaken as to the way in which he acquired knowledge and trained himself for his great work.

We can only dimly trace in broad outlines the process of his development. From his earliest boyhood he had ambitions to become an artist and his first teachers were the local ikon painters. From them he seems to have learned little except to read and sing the psalms, but he was so expert in this that his first master used to send him out to officiate at peasant funerals, when the master was too drunk to attend them himself. Of painting he could learn only how to draw and color the general types of saints that were to be found in the local ikonostases and the sketchy outlines of the details of hagiography

and printing that were included in the cheap handbooks that served the rural workmen as patterns—and we must remember that at this period the art of ikon painting as an art was sadly on the decline. He also absorbed from his grandfather the latter's memories of the Koliishchina and from the village a knowledge of the folksongs and of the dances and other traditional elements of the village culture. He had certainly read Skovoroda, Kotlyarevsky, and the other early masters of Ukrainian literature.

All this represented the full range of his possibilities until he appeared at the Engelhardt manorhouse and was taken with the young master to Wilno and Warsaw. He had not only picked up by this time a knowledge of the Church Slavonic but he had also a general acquaintance with both Russian and Polish and he probably used every opportunity to read what books were in the manorhouse exactly as he feasted his eyes upon the works of art that were there. Yet we must not lay too much stress upon this possibility, for in those days books were often more neglected than cherished and there were many great nobles whose libraries contained fewer books than windows.

Shevchenko's opposition to serfdom and his irritation at being dragged from his homeland may have colored his own reminiscences as to the opportunities that he had for acquiring a knowledge of the cultures of the oppressors of his country. At the time he was far more interested in painting than he was in writing, and we are better able to trace the influences exerted upon his art than those upon his poetry. Yet his stay in Wilno was undoubtedly an important factor in his development.

At this time Wilno was the cultural centre of the movement for the liberation of Poland. Around the restored university there had gathered a group of talented young men who were ardent Polish patriots. Among them was Adam Mickiewicz who had been arrested and removed to Russia in 1824, just six years before the young serf arrived in the city. It was possible for him to be affected by the growing preparations for the Polish revolt of 1831 and his friendship with Dunia Haszowska undoubtedly did much to increase his already strong Ukrainian feelings. At the same time from her and from his teacher, Franciszek Lampa, he could hardly fail to become acquainted with the newer works of Polish literature and with the beginnings of the Romantic movement which was basing itself upon the newer German and English developments. He was probably already aware of the ideas of Schiller and Byron, before he went to St. Petersburg

and there he was again subjected to the same type of influences in their Russian form.

During his work with Shirayev, he probably had little time to continue this self-education, although it is always hard to say exactly what he was reading or what opportunities the poor serf had to study. At all events with his meeting with Bryulov and his subsequent emancipation, he was brought definitely into contact with men who were familiar with Europe and who had known personally most of the great writers of the day in all the European literatures. Many of their works had appeared in poor and often anonymous Russian translations. Even translations of the stories of Washington Irving were appearing and an ambitious and intellectually eager young man, even with his limited opportunities, was able to assimilate a great deal of literary knowledge. Up to the present time there are no exhaustive studies of this type of Russian publications, for we can hardly call some of these translations by the proud name of literature. Many of the students of Shevchenko have sought to confine the influences upon him to Polish and Russian. In a sense this is true, for Shevchenko gives no sign of learning more than a few words in any non-Slavonic language, but it is equally false to neglect the possibility that the young man got to know the masterpieces of the world through such defective sources. Besides this, he was in touch with Zhukovsky, who was the outstanding student of European literature in Russia at the day and the foremost translator. The poet was a friend of Bryulov and it is not fantastic to suggest that the years of his stay in St. Petersburg both before and after his emancipation were used to good advantage to give him a knowledge of literature as well as of painting.

At all events we do not know what occasion set Shevchenko to writing. We do not have any of his first attempts and the earliest poem which we know is the *Prychynna,* (the Mad Woman) which is very definitely based upon the weird, supernatural type of ballad which was so popular at the time and which had been acclimatized in Russian by Zhukovsky and in Polish by Mickiewicz on the basis of Bürger's *Lenore.*

It is interesting in this poem that Shevchenko has completely Ukrainianized the scene. The lover is a Kozak who has fallen in battle. There is a sympathetic description of the Ukrainian landscape and unlike the vast number of ballads of this period, the stanza form has been completely neglected and can be marked only

by the rhyming sequence which already has taken the form which is characteristic of most of the mature poems of our author. There is the same variation in metre which we are to find in his later poems and it is with good reason that critics regard this as one of his most successful works. Wonder grows when we reflect that this is the work of a twenty-three year old poet who was still a serf at the time when he composed it.

The same characteristics can be found in the other ballads which were included in the original *Kobzar* and in those which he wrote before his arrest. They are ostensibly based upon the Ukrainian folklore; they handle the traditional themes in a highly original way, but at the same time they fall well within the limitations of the form as it was worked out by the general Romantic movement. The same question comes up again and again in Gogol's Ukrainian stories, *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka,* when there can be no decision how far the author is using exclusively peasant material and how far he has been influenced by literary models.

A careful examination of these ballads will show that Shevchenko was by no means the guileless and unthinking poet of nature that he appeared to Russian critics as Belinsky. When the *Kobzar* appeared, Belinsky with all of his critical sense was so hostile to the use of the Ukrainian or Little Russian language for literary purposes, that he emphasized with malice aforethought the use of the vernacular and of peasant words, and regarded the poems as unimportant and unliterary. The Russian radicals and progressives certainly interpreted the brotherhood of man and the superiority of Russian to the other Slavonic languages as organs for their attempts to unify all inhabitants of the Russian Empire and their opposition to the Tsar and the system of Nicholas I did not lead them to have a shred of sympathy for any one who sought for himself the same privileges which they were so proudly acclaiming. From the beginning to the end of Shevchenko's career he did not find among the Russian radicals any who appreciated what he was really endeavoring to do. They might sympathize with his attacks on tyranny and slavery but they all looked askance at his use of the native speech of Ukraine as much as did the tsarist officials.

In the historical ballads as *Ivan Pidkova* and the *Night of Taras,* we have likewise the use of Ukrainian subjects and the adaptation of the ballad form for historical episodes, such as we find in Schiller and Byron. They are filled with the wild ferocity, the careless love of

freedom that were the traditional features of the Zaporozhtsy throughout their history.

When we turn to *Katerina,* we are on different ground, for here we are dealing with the story of the peasant girl abandoned by her noble lover that was familiar in the Romantic period and which had been introduced into Russian literature as early as Karamzin's *Poor Liza.* It is typical also of Shevchenko that he dedicated this poem to Zhukovsky who had been so instrumental in securing his freedom. A lesser and less outspoken person might have hesitated to do this, for Zhukovsky was himself the illegitimate son of a Russian nobleman and a Turkish slave girl. Yet apparently there had been a happy outcome to this situation, for the girl and Mme. Bunina, the wife, remained friendly and Zhukovsky was not faced with the hardships that confronted Ivas.

Through all these poems runs the fervent belief in Ukraine and her tragedy. Perhaps in *Perebendya,* Shevchenko modelled his old bard on the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* in the poem of Sir Walter Scott, who was himself an apologist for the long overthrown Stuart dynasty in England. The minstrel had been compelled to suffer by the changes of politics and Shevchenko could easily parallel him to the blind bards wandering around Ukraine and singing of the past glories of the Kozaks and the Ukrainian people. The Romantic glorification of the past fitted in well with his point of view and in the *Kobzar* almost every poem breathes the poet's sadness over the loss of his country's liberty and the present hardships of the people. They emphasize his dislike for Poland and his aversion to the indifference of the Moskals to the people of Ukraine.

Thus the *Kobzar* is far more than a mere imitation of peasant songs. It goes far beyond the talented reworking of peasant themes and it shows us Shevchenko as already a person well familiar with the literatures of Europe as reflected through Russian and Polish, with the Russian influence predominating. This was only natural for he was living at the time in the Russian capital, and his associates were drawn from the Russian cultural circles. The *Kobzar* appealed to the Ukrainian people. It set forth their case and their sufferings as well as their past glory, and it naturally won for the poet their love and esteem.

The next year he produced the *Haydamaki,* the longest of all his works. It is a long epic poem describing the revolt of the Koliishchina, the last outbreak of Western Ukraine against the Polish domination. The movement had been convulsive and brutal and the poet has en-

deavored to catch that fierce spirit of revolt that animated the unfortunate peasants. He studied the materials available for the history of the movement but he was also influenced by the stories which he had heard from his grandfather and his associates in childhood and like epic poets in general he did not content himself with a mere versified history. He followed the better artistic method of creating a relatively minor figure as hero, in this case Halayda and here again Shevchenko followed the favorite device of Scott, which had also been adopted by Pushkin in his novel, *The Captain's Daughter,* a study of the revolt of Pugachov, the last great outbreak of the Russian peasants against the new order in Russia at almost the same time as the Koliischchina.

There are passages in this poem, which seem to the modern reader unnecessarily brutal but on the whole Shevchenko was not a military poet. The parts of the *Haydamaki* which will live forever are not so much the scenes of battle and of bloodshed, as the descriptions of Ukrainian nature, the oppression of the peasants by their overlords, the blessing of the arms, and the introduction and epilogue which give the motif of the poem, "Ukraina's weeping."

The work met with the same reception as the *Kobzar.* The Ukrainians in St. Petersburg and at home welcomed the work. It was appreciated by many of the foremost Russian poets, but the leaders of liberal thought like Belinsky attacked it savagely. The great liberal and lover of freedom remarked of it (Vol. VII, p. 214ff.) "Works of such a character are published only for the pleasure and edification of the authors themselves." They rest "on an abundance of vulgar and commonplace words and expressions, lacking simplicity of conception and story, filled with pretensions and mannerisms natural to all bad poets—often not at all popular, although they are supported by reliance upon history of song and tradition." Belinsky had nothing better to say than to urge the poet if he desired to help his people "to talk to the people in a simple, intelligible language about various useful subjects of civil and family life, as Osnovyanenko commenced (but unfortunately did not continue) in his pamphlet, *Thoughts for my dear countrymen.*" Incidentally this pamphlet had aroused amusement and irritation, because Kvitka-Osnovyanenko as a provincial nobleman was giving vent to views on the divine rights of the Tsar which had long been unpopular even with the most reactionary circles in the capital. Such comments on the *Haydamaki* can be explained only by the ardent desire of Belinsky and his friends to bar

the development of literature in the Ukrainian or Little Russian language as they insisted upon calling it.

Belinsky did not change his opinions and about the time of Shevchenko's arrest, the great liberal critic wrote to Count Annenkov in December 1846 that "common sense must see in Shevchenko an ass, a fool and a scoundrel, and above all a bitter drunkard, a lover of spirits because of *Khokhol* patriotism."

Perhaps it was as a result of these attacks, that Shevchenko came to feel himself even more isolated in the Russian capital. He wrote very little during the next year and what he wrote breathes with every syllable the feeling that he was a stranger in a strange land and that the glory of Ukraine had definitely departed. He gradually ceased to glorify the past and to hope that it might return and he came to bewail the past.

It was in this state of mind that he returned to Ukraine for a visit in 1843 and was overwhelmed with the tragedy, the poverty, and the unhappiness which he found in his own country and his own family. His naturally radical propensities were reinforced and he felt on his return that his stay in St. Petersburg was rather taking him away from the field of action and of practical life. The pleasant associations which he had with Bryulov and his friends, his occupations with painting and writing, all seemed to him insignificant in comparison with the festering sore which he had seen at home. In *Three Years* he deplored the passing of his youth in unimportant occupations and he yearned to be able to do something more positive, more immediate for his fellow men. In this he was probably stirred by the general note of sentimentalism that swept over Russian literature in the forties and the beginnings of definite sympathy with the people and a call for the liberation of the serfs.

A striking result of this visit was a mitigation of his hostility for the Poles. In the more romantic dreams of his youth, he had harked back to the Kozak exploits against the Polish state. Now he definitely turned upon Bohdan who had been the first to sign a formal treaty with Moscow. It is idle to argue that Shevchenko was thinking only of the Russian tsar and the Russian landowners. The whole trend of his works, his denunciation of the German bureaucracy, his attitude toward individuals all indicate that he sharply differentiated the Russians and the Ukrainians and was willing to risk his life in order to create again an independent Ukraine.

The poems of the years between his first visit to Ukraine and his

arrest are perhaps his greatest consistent mass of writing and in them he allows his imagination to play over the whole field of life. Working in the Archaeological Commission, he resented the Russian excavation of the Ukrainian funeral mounds and the removal of the contents, where they were of artistic character, to the capital. He resented the glorification of Peter the Great and Catherine, the two rulers who had wiped out the Ukrainian self-government. He resented the praise of Bohdan for his subservience to Moscow and the condemnation of Mazepa for his joining with Charles XII against Peter. He resented the Russian advance in the Caucasus and the attempts of Russia to strengthen her power without solving her internal difficulties. He resented the willingness of many of the Ukrainian landowners to climb upon the band wagon of Moscow and to avoid their own culture. He hated the injustice of the people themselves towards the unfortunate girl who had been seduced, especially by a Russian stranger. His moral indignation urged him to speak out against every form of oppression.

He therefore willingly accepted the ideas of Kollár, a Slovak, when he wrote the *Heretic* and glorified Jan Hus as a Slav hero, but it is to be noted that in the introduction which was dedicated to Šafařík, he definitely criticized Pushkin's views on the necessity of Slavonic union under Russia and demanded a real Slavonic brotherhood in which all the Slavs would appear as brothers.

Naturally the Society of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and the association of the United Slavs made a strong appeal to him. Here was a group of young idealists who seriously believed, following Kollár, that all the Slavs should be brothers, that the German influence should be eradicated, and that a great Slav republic should be set up. Like the Decembrists a quarter century before, these young leaders had very little idea as to the ultimate consequences of their acts and the methods by which they would realize their ideals. Shevchenko saw in them a standard which would help humanity and he turned to it.

Naturally it was impossible for any author to express these thoughts openly under the iron rule of Nicholas I. To the administration, the problem of Ukraine had been settled when the country had been divided into governments and the full Russian administrative system introduced. It was therefore necessary for the poet to indicate rather than to state definitely the goals for which he was striving and hence it is that we have such poems as the *Dream* and the *Great Grave*.

There is much that is unclear about them. The *Great Grave* is a masterpiece of allusion and of vague indirection but the reader is able from it to grasp a full sense of the indignation which Shevchenko felt over the ruin of his country and his guarded expressions of hope that it will rise again free of Russian domination. The old nostalgic note of sorrow for the failures of the past still continues but the pressing needs of the present and the realization that there is much internal reform, much increase of brotherhood, much hard and unromantic work to be done, before the glorious days of the past can return, now take precedence over the old laments for a golden age. Shevchenko had come to realize that it was internal disunion as well as foreign pressure that had brought the country to its present state and he believed that this had to be fought at home as well as on the field of battle.

Just as before Ukraine is pictured as a poor widow, an orphan, abandoned by all in a cold world, and he poured out his heart over it. At the same time he expressed his bitter condemnation of the court and in the *Dream* he produced an unforgiveable and unforgettable satire on the slavish manners of the court itself. He must have been aware that he was risking his own personal liberty and fortune on such attacks. At times they were hardly tactful or in good taste but the bitterness which rankled in Shevchenko's soul made him oblivious to this.

It is perhaps idle to wonder what change would have taken place in him, had he received a fellowship to study abroad. He had already come a long way culturally from the little village where he was born and he was familiar with the accomplishments of the world outside. He lacked that personal knowledge that even a short trip to the West would have given him. We cannot tell how he would have reacted to a freer and a better life. He might have become a potent factor as an emigré in the life of his country as Drahomaniv was in after years. He might have, but it is hardly likely, been swept from his feet by the allurements of the outside world. Almost certainly his active mind would have drawn some lesson for his people, would have gained some experience, had he had the opportunity to make friends and to observe.

It was not to be and perhaps we are not going too far when we ascribe to the introduction of the second *Kobzar* which never appeared a fairly good summary of Shevchenko's views on the very eve of the catastrophe. He had planned to publish some of his poems and

they were already in the hands of the censor when he was arrested. In the introduction which he submitted with the text and which was only discovered in the files of the police in 1906, he bewailed the fact that all the Slavonic races were able to print freely, Poles, Czechs, Serbs, Bulgars, Montenegrans, Moskals but not his own people, and he complains even more bitterly that a large part of the Ukrainian educated class are ashamed of their own mother tongue and try to read and write Russian. "Do not pay attention to the Moskals; let them write in their fashion, and let us write in ours. They have a people and language—and we have a people and language, and let people decide which is the more beautiful. They rely upon Gogol, because he wrote not in his own language, but in Muscovite, as on Walter Scott, because he did not write in his language. Gogol grew up in Nizhen and not in Little Russia, and does not know his own language; and W(alter) S(cott) in Edinburgh and not in Scotland—and perhaps there was some reason why they gave it up. . . . I do not know. But Burns was also a great folk poet, and Skovoroda would have been, had he not been beaten from his course by Latin and then by Muscovite." "Why were not V. S. Karadjić, Šafařik and others not turned into Germans (it would have been easier for them) and why did they remain Slavs, sincere sons of their mothers, and acquire good fame?" This and other passages disposes of the widespread idea that Shevchenko was only opposed to the Russian autocratic rule. The whole trend of his thinking and development shows that he regarded Ukraine and the Ukrainians as entirely different from the Russians and on a par with the other Slavonic races. His comparison with Scott and Burns shows his general feelings and also his acquaintance with what European literature had to offer. He had worked through many of his original difficulties, and if he was of a radical term of mind, he still viewed his radicalism only through the eyes of his own people. It naturally made it harder for him in the capital and it alienated him from many of his more easy-going countrymen and more than that it prepared the way for the great catastrophe that was to overtake him.

Up to this time with the single exception of the *Heretic* he had confined himself entirely to Ukrainian themes. But during these years his understanding had broadened. He was as devoted as before to the cause of Ukraine but in his shift from the Romantic glorification of the past of his country to an eloquent plea for the elimination of the evils which he saw there, he had come to realize that these evils

were universal. The sins of injustice, of cruelty, and of meanness were everywhere and the poor of all nations suffered as did the Ukrainians. This gave to his poetry a far wider human significance than before. From this time on, the suffering and insulted girl who had been conceived as a Ukrainian phenomenon now becomes a universal figure. This type which had figured in world literature and been naturalized in Russian, Polish, and then in Ukrainian, now is seen as a universal phenomenon. The appeals for justice for the mother, for the poor are universal appeals, placed in a Ukrainian setting with a background of Ukrainian nature and reality. They can be read with sympathy throughout the civilized world and not merely as local peculiarities. A sort of national ethnography had served as the basis for many of the early Ukrainian writings and the authors had vied with one another to see how accurately they could describe the minutiae of village life. Shevchenko was not satisfied with this and he laid the weight of emphasis on the individual and the universal rather than on the local background.

It all marked another step in the transformation and broadening of the poet and the process would have continued with beneficent results, had it not been for his unfortunate arrest and exile. During the weeks of confinement, his poetry became more purely lyrical, more definitely personal than before and the little collection *In the Fortress,* shows a newer and deeper insight into his own psychology and that of his people. He realized that it meant the shattering of his hopes, the possible ending of his career, and the regret that he could not have done more burned him deeply. Yet it is interesting that in this very series, there grew in his mind the comparison between Ukraine and the poor girl driven from her own village. This was to be one of the main themes of his later verses.

Then came the stunning sentence that he was to be exiled and put in the army without permission to write or paint. He at first made attempts to have the ban on painting lifted. We cannot tell whether this was because painting was nearer to his heart or because it was his verses that had brought his condemnation and he believed that since his pencil and brush were less guilty of political opposition, he might be granted more mitigation of his sentence on this score than on the field of poetry in which he had definitely offended the Tsar.

The sentence was carried out spasmodically. Thus at Orsk he was apparently able to write a little. During the winter at Kos-Aral, he had still more liberty and while he was at Orenburg, he was able both

to write and paint. It was only after his second arrest that the ban was ruthlessly and rigorously enforced for some years and apart from some reworking of old themes in Russian, he did not attempt anything.

Life in the army was not kind to the poet. The needlessly harsh and stern discipline hurt his sensitive soul. His companions were largely ignorant peasants; many of them were political exiles and criminals. Their rough and obscene language, their brutal cynicism disgusted him as much as did the ignorance and lack of culture of many of the officers. He never became a good soldier and by his rigid performance of his duties never won some sort of alleviation of the hardships of his life. In addition, even on the expedition to Kos-Aral, there was a surprising lack of the necessaries of life for all, high and low, willing and unwilling. All this coupled with the prohibition of indulging openly in his favorite pastimes wore him down and his health was gravely shattered by scurvy and other diseases. In short by the time of his liberation, he had become a prematurely old man.

Intellectually he was, like Dostoyevsky at almost the same period, cut off from all the currents of literature and confined in his reading to the New Testament. Unlike him, Shevchenko did not grow and expand his range of interest during this period. He did not drink in and transcend his new experiences but he retreated more into himself and maintained his intellectual poise by meditating upon the same themes which had been stirring in his brain before he was arrested. He deepened his meditations and his thoughts and universalized them instead of absorbing the world around him and meditating upon it.

It is highly typical of Shevchenko and indeed of all the Russian intelligentsia of the period that this sudden forcible intrusion into a new and strange life did not produce in his writings any pictures of his experiences. The treeless steppe and the impoverished and nomadic Kirghiz might become the proper subjects for his painting and sketching. They leave on his poetry only his feeling of isolation from Ukraine. The hardships on the expedition do not rouse him to song to describe them nearly as much as do his memories of the green fields of Ukraine and the sufferings of the unfortunate serfs.

More than ever his poetry re-echoes the same motifs that we have already seen—the unwedded mother, a comparison of her with the widowed and desolated Ukraine, his solitude, his dreams of liberty. A Lermontov or a Tolstoy could thrill to the beauty of the Caucasus, the grandeur of the mountains, the sandy desert. Shev-

chenko could not but every step, every new event only increased his nostalgia and led him to a deeper and deeper lyricism which contrasts with the narrative themes which he reworked with slight variations. We can explain this in many ways, his feelings of alienation from his surroundings, his dislike of the army, his sufferings from the discipline, but the fact remains that his experiences remained apart from his poetry and his mind dwelt upon the past and the dreams that he had once cherished.

In Orenburg he came to know many of the exiled Poles and Ukrainians. On his release he met some of the Decembrists who were returning after a quarter of a century in Russian prison camps. The period taught him to overlook many of the Polish misdeeds in Ukraine. This was foreshadowed by that memorable passage in the epistle where he told his countrymen that the Kozaks had overthrown Poland but that her fall had ruined them. So in the poem *To the Poles* he was able to plead for a renewal of brotherly relations.

The Decembrists impressed him but it is highly significant again that not one word of his poetry pleaded for a reconciliation between them and Ukraine. He viewed them as martyrs, he eulogized them, but the fact that Pushchin, the Decembrist, the poet, and the friend of Pushkin, had an illegitimate daughter just like a gay hussar, shocked him to the depths. He must have remembered that passage in *Katerina,*

> Yes, the Moskal loves you lightly,
> Lightly he will drop you.

But there is a difference in his last period. He returned unbroken in spirit and almost his first experiment in poetry was the *Neophytes* written while he was detained at Nizhni Novgorod. His friend Kulish who was always cautious and fearful warned him that the poem was dangerous but that made no difference to Shevchenko. Even after his experiences in the army and while he was still in doubt as to whether he might be returned to the cheerless steppe, he wrote a poem which pointedly drew a comparison between the Russian tsar and the Emperor Nero. It is a sharp criticism of the abuse of Christianity by the modern despots. In form it is a retelling of a story that might have been the theme of a painting by Bryulov, the picture of decadent, luxurious, persecuting Rome, and the fate of the early Christian martyrs. In a sense the poem offers a conventional picture. Shevchenko chooses however, and this is in line with his development, the emotions of a

mother of a martyr who is converted by her son's courageous death to a belief in the Crucified. There are phrases which express the poet's dissatisfaction with organized Christianity but they reveal nothing more than his belief that truth and right are being mocked by their so-called observers and believers. We can read the story as it stands or we can take the very obvious comparison of the mother and Ukraine, and read the moral that Ukraine can only arise when truth is restored to its supreme position on earth, and men live again as brothers.

Shevchenko's return to St. Petersburg was almost a triumphal procession. He was entertained everywhere by the Slavophile leaders, as Sergey Timofeyevich Aksakov who had pleasant memories of that remote area among the Bashkirs which was somewhat similar to the land where Shevchenko had suffered. In St. Petersburg he met Count Aleksyey Konstantinovich Tolstoy and his relatives. He also became friends with Chernyshevsky and this friendship is of course exploited by the Communists who have tried to translate Shevchenko into their own language. It is true that the great radical spoke of the 1860 edition of the *Kobzar* in terms more favorable than did Belinsky but it is equally clear that he persisted in seeing in it only the folk elements and refused to grant it a proper place in the literature of a civilized nation. To him like Belinsky, Ukrainian had no right to exist except as a vehicle for folksongs. He rebuked the language and the writers for borrowing Russian and European words and believed that one East Slavonic language was all that had a right to appear and be counted. He denied to the Ukrainians that right which Russian in the eighteenth century had so generously utilized of modernization. He could quote Shevchenko on the abuses of serfdom with an easy conscience but both he and Turgenev were very sceptical of the validity of the underlying thesis of Shevchenko that Russia had its people and language and so had Ukraine.

Shevchenko had returned broken in body. His fiery will was unbroken but he was weary and the main notes in his later poems were a universal call for action against injustice and a personal lamentation for his bachelor life outside of Ukraine. Only rarely as in the attack on Bohdan did he revert to direct laments for the fall of his country. For the most part his works are adaptations of the Old Testament, breathing the moral indignation and the call to repentance that inflamed the Old Testament prophets. Again and again he emphasizes the need for truth and love and brotherhood, if mankind is to be truly happy.

To this series may be ascribed *Mary*. This is a striking study of the Blessed Virgin and Shevchenko deliberately changed the sacred story in order to make Mary typical of the lot of the average peasant woman. He also used apocryphal tales that were current among the peasants. Yet despite the surface variations in the story which take away much of the scriptural character, the story cannot fairly be called irreverent. It is not even unmiraculous in character, for the Star of Bethlehem, here called a comet, certainly plays a distinct role.

In writing this poem Shevchenko prefaces it with a glorious invocation of the Blessed Virgin, but exactly as he did in the *Neophytes*, the emphasis is laid upon the devoted woman, that truly human figure who carries on the work of her Son in the great cause of human freedom and human brotherhood after his untimely death at the hands of evil men. There is none of that spirit of deliberate blasphemy which appears so markedly in Pushkin's *Gavriliada* or in most of the attempts to humanize the sacred story. It brought down upon the unfortunate head of the poet a great deal of criticism but here as elsewhere a more careful reader will see the fundamentally religious nature of the poet, even when he at first sight seems to turn his back upon the adherents of conventional religion.

The other note of his last days is the more personal one of grieving over his own unfortunate fate. His one ambition in life was to have a wife and a little home on the banks of the Dniper and his last years were a pathetic search for the girl who was to share it with him. His last poem written only a few days before his death is a real swansong and a definite assurance that it will be in the next world that he can satisfy these innocent desires.

Taras Shevchenko finished his sad and thwarted career at the age of forty-seven. For only nine years was he free to write as he would and even during that period publication was denied his works. He could be known officially only by the *Kobzar* and the *Haydamaki*. A second edition of the *Kobzar* was stopped by his arrest. Another edition which did appear in 1860 could contain only those early poems which had appeared before his arrest. All his other works were known either by manuscript copies which were in the hands of devoted friends and were circulated at the risk of arrest and imprisonment or were buried in his own notebooks or in the more inaccessible files of the Imperial police. All this makes it more remarkable that he was so widely known and highly valued during his own lifetime.

There is a deceptive simplicity about his works. He seems to be the mere imitator of the folksongs and the traditions of his people but he is far more than that. He possessed a command of language and a degree of metrical skill which overshadows that of many of his famous Slavonic contemporaries. Pushkin was content to ring changes upon the iambic metre. Shevchenko uses with equal skill iambics, trochees (perhaps his favorite) and anapaests. He was a master in the art. He could employ the simple measures of the folksong and give them a real dignity and he was equally at home with the formal rhythms but always he was the master of his medium and the freedom which he uses in his system of rhyming and of accentuation show a skill in technique that is not rivalled by any poet of his own or later times. The very simplicity and artlessness which he reveals conceal the master artist and are the more amazing when we realize that he has left us no hints as to the way in which he attained his skill, for the earliest poems which we possess from his pen are as perfect in their own way as are his greatest masterpieces.

Shevchenko commenced his work at the height of the Romantic period, when the poets of eastern and western Europe were heavily under the spell of the supernatural and the historical and from there with the ripening of his talent, he passed by evolutionary stages into the age of realism and of social reform. Through it all there is a majestic dignity that is characteristic of the finer passages of the Old Testament together with a tender and sympathetic understanding of all the sufferings and sorrows of humanity. It is this characteristic that has made him a timeless poet of the human heart and has given to his works not only national but permanent and universal value.

It is now nearly a century since the promising career of Taras Shevchenko was blighted by arrest and exile. The Russian authorities hoped that they had silenced him and with him the cause for which he stood and the uncomfortable and dangerous ideas which he was expressing. They failed miserably. They isolated him for ten years and warped his spirit; they broke his health but he never wavered in his ideas and to the end of his life he proclaimed the selfsame undying truths. Year by year his poems have been recovered, they have been studied, edited and reedited. Year by year his fame has increased and to-day it is abundantly evident that he was not a petty revolutionist and plotter, a poet who repeated in more or less agreeable form the old village folksongs, the last remains of a passing phase of life in one small period of human history, but that he was a man who

against tremendous obstacles developed his heaven-given gift of song by long and serious study, who assimilated the best that the civilization of his time had to offer, and who was a flaming guide to the hearts of men and a prophet of a new and better world in which all that stains and ruins and tortures the human spirit will disappear. The poet of Ukraine, he is also a poet of humanity. His works have more than a purely local significance. To-day we realize as never before that freedom and truth and justice and mercy and brotherhood must be worldwide in scope and universal and eternal, if man is to be free and happy and peaceful. There are poets who express some of these ideals. There is none who speaks out more clearly, more artistically, and more touchingly to men everywhere than Taras Shevchenko. Those qualities which are local and temporal disappear. The underlying merits come to the surface and shine more brightly. Efforts to deride him or to bend him to the uses of aggressors and tyrants must fail and Taras Shevchenko appears to-day as some of the more keensighted and understanding of his contemporaries both at home and abroad realized, a poet of the first rank who deserves the ear and the study of every civilized man.

Chapter Four

The Religion of Shevchenko

What was Shevchenko's attitude toward religion? The best critics of the poet, whether they are Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, or Protestant, have come to the conclusion that he was fundamentally a religious man but that at times he employed certain phrases which have allowed the advocates of militant atheism to claim him for their party. Yet to prove their point, this latter group is compelled to believe that he distinctly concealed his own thoughts to satisfy the dictates of the censorship in a way that he did on no other subject and their comments are so biassed that it is difficult to take them too seriously.

There can be little doubt that, especially after his visit to Ukraine in 1843, Shevchenko was carried away by his bitterness over the lot of the Ukrainian people. This is expressed again and again in his attack on the official representatives of the Orthodox religion, which had been definitely bureaucratized by Peter the Great, destroyer of Ukrainian freedom, and Shevchenko could not resist the temptation to attack the Church on all counts. Thus in both the *Dream* and the *Caucasus* there are lines that reflect his distaste for the established Church of Russia. In the *Heretic* he employs his choicest invectives against the condemnation of Hus. Later while he was in exile, he expressed himself very sharply about the role of the Jesuits in Poland. After his return he inserted certain phrases in *Mary* that vary from the traditional thought of the Church.

All this might be interpreted as an extreme form of that type of anti-clericalism that is not uncommon in nineteenth century authors, except for the fact that at times when his sense of social injustice gets the better of him and he is writing with a burning zeal against the social order, he seems at times to include God Himself in his condemnations. It must be admitted by the best friends of the poet that on occasion he indulged in decidedly intemperate language.

On the other hand there are remarkable examples of Shevchenko's deep interest in the religion of the people. We must remember that the Russian occupation of Ukraine had led to a transfer of the clergy from the supervision of Constantinople (where it had been during the great days of Kiev) to Moscow and that the change bore as hardly upon the religious life of the villages as it did upon the political and

cultural. The Russian tsars were trying to standardize and organize everything under their own supervision and upon their own system and while they did not change in any important degree the native rites and practices, they tried to fit them into a different framework.

Nowhere in the whole of the poet's writings does he cast any shadow of contempt or brand as superstitious the peasant practices of making the sign of the cross or of lighting candles or praying. The normal religious life of the village where it concerns the peasants and God he treats with the greatest respect. He recognized very clearly that there was in it a something that answered the religious needs of the people, that brought them into contact with a superior Power that alone could make life tolerable, and he never deliberately cast any aspersions upon it. It was part of the poet's endeavor to build his future Ukraine on all sound principles in the national life.

Similarly he makes absolutely no attacks upon the teachings of Christ, on His pleas for brotherly love, on the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The birth of Christ and the redemption of humanity form the central point in the entire history of mankind. He acknowledges and glorifies His teachings, even if at moments of vexation he complains that God is waiting too long, is allowing too much innocent blood to be shed, too many abuses to continue on this planet.

So too with the Blessed Virgin. In the introduction to the poem *Mary* he pays a glowing tribute to her, as sinless, the sacred power of all saints, and he implores Her to give to the suffering poor the power of Her martyr Son. In the introduction to the *Neophytes,* he again appeals to Her as "Blessed among women, the holy, righteous Mother of Her holy Son on earth." All these references fit in strangely with the arguments that the poet was in any way hostile to religion.

Besides this, there is abundant evidence that Shevchenko knew the Bible thoroughly. In his letters from exile, he writes to Princess Repnina that he read the Gospel constantly and he asked her to send him also a copy of Saint Thomas à Kempis. He declares that only a Christian philosophy could encourage a person in his hopeless position. We certainly do not need to assume that in these passages he was writing only with an eye to the effect that it would produce upon the Princess, his friends in the capital and the censors.

More than that, Shevchenko drew heavily upon the Bible for themes for his poems, especially in his later years. A favorite device might almost be called a meditation upon the Old Testament, particularly upon passages where the ancient prophets condemned se-

verely the abuses and the faults of their own day. Then in a direct manner he used the present situation in Ukraine to illustrate the great truths of the past. It is certainly interesting that it is not in these poems that he resorts to expressions which are really in bad taste, for the great majority of these occur in the poems written after his first return to Ukraine, when he was deeply shocked by the conditions which he saw there. Again on his last visit he apparently made remarks that irritated some of the Polish landowners and involved him in trouble with the police and the authorities.

The religious development of the poet thus seems to move along with the general development of his thought. In the poems of the early period through the *Haydamaki* and *Hamaliya,* when he was interested in picturing the romantic tales of the Kozaks, he accepts without a murmur the popular rites and devotions. There is a deep sincerity in the picture of the priests blessing the army before the uprising of the *Haydamaki.* It is a scene of deep piety and also one that a cynic could easily have turned into an attack on religion. The same is true of the prayers of the Kozaks in prison in *Hamaliya.* Even in *Katerina,* while he recognizes the harsh treatment of the poor mother, he goes little further than to ask God why such things are allowed to exist on earth.

It was after his visit to Ukraine in 1843 that the horrible position of his people burst upon him with all of its terror, cruelty, and injustice. To him the violation of the Christian law of love and charity was the overwhelming fact in life. He became openly rebellious against every institution—whether religious or civil—which seemed even remotely to imply toleration for a social order that could be so near a hell on earth. Yet even in his attacks on these institutions, we can always feel the underlying belief of the poet that religion and God are being deliberately misrepresented and that all would be well, if we could only break through the iron wall that seems to surround this world and penetrate the mystery beyond. There is much of the spirit of Job in these poems, although the author could not at all times hold fast to his vision of God's justice and mercy. Here there is undoubtedly a limitation on the thought of Shevchenko but it is a limitation that is liable to confront any forthright thinker who bounds his horizon with this planet and with life on earth. He was not a mystic to indulge in the contemplation of the Divine but a man suffering for the sad fate of his fellowmen, who believed with all his heart in truth and justice and who was willing to sacrifice himself for the good and true.

His arrest and imprisonment undoubtedly had a definite effect upon him. We know from his letters to Princess Repnina and others that he attended church services during his stay in the fortress. Later he endeavored to secure permission to decorate both a Roman Catholic and an Orthodox chapel and it can hardly be supposed that he did this only to have an opportunity to draw and to paint. It was rather the feeling that he could dedicate some part of his work to God at the moment when it seemed impossible for him to carry on his work for his country.

On his return to St. Petersburg, he was of course thrown into company with the fashionable radicals of the day with their deliberate and unadulterated atheism and we might expect that he would give some definite sign of their influence. He does nothing of the kind. Rather he turned to the Old Testament for its harsh judgments on kings and rich men who robbed and oppressed the poor and the downtrodden. He had long dreamed of analyzing the character of the Blessed Virgin as a typical mother and it is this that he does in *Mary*. While he might have been influenced by some of the more irreligious of the popular authors, the work emerged on an entirely different plane with an ardent religious introduction and a reverent treatment of the entire theme. So too with all of his writings.

In his last days Shevchenko had to some degree softened in his ideas. Perhaps he had learned by experience. He certainly was not terrorized. The man who had spoken so boldly in the *Neophytes* that he had frightened the timid Kulish would hardly have added a religious introduction merely to silence opposition. Such an idea conflicts with all that we know of Shevchenko's character but he came to differentiate more carefully between those elements of evil in the formal religion of the day and religion itself and sharp as are some of his criticisms, it is impossible for any honest scholar to claim that his works are deliberately irreligious.

An additional sign of this is his *Primer*, which he secured permission to publish only a few months before his death. It was definitely written for the Sunday Schools which were springing up in Ukraine under the new order. Shevchenko introduced a large amount of religious material into it and he shows again in this the same interest in seeing the social ideas of Christianty worked to the fullest possible extent. It would have been so easy for him to have created a purely secular book, had he been so inclined.

Thus at every stage of his life, we can find distinct traces of the re-

ligious interests of Shevchenko. He was no trained theologian, he was not a mystic, he was not a man who sought to evade the troubles of earth by taking refuge in heaven. He felt that here on earth there was a crying need for reform and human brotherhood and he never indicated for a second that there was any other possibility for achieving this than through the pure and applied teachings of the Gospel.

We know that he was familiar with the ideas of Skovoroda and of other writers of a similar character. We know too that in his own time there were various movements aiming for a new social order. He was influenced by the ideas of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius, and he was led to revolt against the more formal and ritualistic sides of a Christianity which neglected its task of teaching the people and was willing to follow the dictates of a tyrannical government.

Despite all criticisms, the overwhelming impression that the poems, the stories, and the letters of Shevchenko leave upon the careful reader is that he is a man who profoundly appreciates the Crucified and Risen Savior and who is only too ready to support his teachings and suffer for his fellowmen. Some of his outbursts may be extreme but it is very doubtful, if a single intelligent reader has ever found his faith shaken by any poem of Taras Shevchenko. When we subtract from his criticized remarks those that may be influenced by literary models and those that come from blazing indignation, we shall find an amazing residue of serious moral instruction, of deep respect for the worship and practices of his people, of his own deep and abiding belief in the traditional teachings and doctrines of Christianity in their true development and application. His prayers and invocations are no sham, no attempt to curry favor or to escape responsibility. They are a product of a believing mind and a great soul.

SELECTED POEMS OF TARAS SHEVCHENKO

The day doth come, the night doth come,
And with your head in hands clasped tight,
You wonder why there does not come
The Herald of the truth and right.

THE KOBZAR

The eight poems included in the *Kobzar* were selected by Shevchenko himself for publication in a single volume of poems and are the only group which appeared during his lifetime and under his editorship as a collected whole. They date from his early residence in St. Petersburg before his visit to Ukraine in 1843 and reflect the thoughts and interests of the poet in his first phase, when he was still under the influence of Romanticism. They consist of ballads, supernatural and historical, written under the influence direct or indirect of the Western Romantic writers. They emphasize Shevchenko's feelings that he was a stranger in a strange land in St. Petersburg, and that however much he was enjoying his work in the Academy of Arts, his heart was back in Ukraine and he was dreaming of the old free life there, of the heroic deeds of the past as contrasted with the sadness of the present.

The ideas of the later Shevchenko are all here. Ukraine, bereft of her Hetmans and the Sich, is tacitly compared to an orphan girl or a poor widow. The opposition to the Poles is clearly expressed but his dislike of Russian domination is more than hinted and it is certain, as General Dubelt, the Commander of the Gendarmes, thought at the time of the poet's arrest that there is a connection in thought between the poems which serve to illustrate the various aspects of the sad condition of Ukraine.

The Kobzars were the old bards who travelled through the country, singing tales of the past and of the supernatural. Shevchenko pretends to pitch his poems on the key struck by these wandering singers of the people but only a superficial observer does not see that the poet is far more than a singer of folksongs, that he has a real literary knowledge and skill far transcending the traditional bards and is familiar with modern literature.

The first poem which serves as an introduction really enumerates all the themes that are treated and it is small wonder that the censor in allowing the collection to be published eliminated lines 28-100 which express the poet's feeling of exile in the north and glorify the past of Ukraine.

The collection well shows the versatility of Shevchenko's genius and the way in which he succeeds in grouping a number of poems on varied subjects around the central theme, the sufferings of Ukraine. It was received most favorably by his fellow countrymen and made him famous almost at once and respected by all who were interested in Ukrainian rights and liberties.

Dedication

Songs of mine, O songs of mine,
You're a worry to me.
Why do you stand out on paper
In sad rows before me? . . .
Why did not the wind remove you
To the steppe as dust?
Why did fate not overlay you
Like a mortal child?

For misfortune brought you to this world to mock you,
Tears have flowed. . . . Why did they not drown you,
Wash you to the sea, or lose you in the field?
If so, people would not ask me of my pain,
Would not ask me why I curse my evil fate,
What I seek on earth? . . . "No, there is naught to do."
There would be no mocking. . . .

Oh, my flowers, children,
Why did I so love you, why did I caress you?
Is there one heart weeping so throughout the whole, wide world,
As I have wept for you? . . . Perhaps I should have felt it. . . .
Mayhap somewhere is a maiden
With a heart and coal black eyes,
Who will weep above these songs—
I can wish no more—
Just one tear from those black eyes
Lord of lords will make me.
Songs of mine, O songs of mine!
You're a worry to me.

* * *

For those loving coal black eyes,
For the dear black brows,
My poor heart has worked, has laughed,
And has poured out verses,
Poured them out the best it could,
For the darksome nights,
For the cherry orchard green,
For a maiden's love,

For the spacious steppes and tombs
That are in Ukraina,[1]
My poor heart was sad and would not
Sing in foreign land,
Would not 'mid the snow and forest
Summon to a council
All the forces of the Kozaks
With their mace and banners!
Let the spirits of the Kozaks
Dwell in Ukraina.
There it's broad and there it's cheerful
Everywhere you wander.
Like the freedom which has vanished
Is the sea-like Dniper.
The broad steppe, the roaring rapids,
And the tombs like mountains;
There was born and there was nurtured
All the Kozak freedom.
With the szlachta and the Tatars
It sowed all the meadows,
Sowed the meadows with the corpses,
Till it wearied sowing.
Then it lay to rest, and straightway
Rose the lofty tomb,
And above it a black Eagle
Flies just as a sent'nel.
And about it to good people
Do the Kobzars sing,
And they sing just how it happened,
Beggars blind and poor,
For they know the way but I, I
Only know to weep.
I have only tears for Ukraine,
Since I lack for words,
And all evil – be it far!
Who has failed to know it!
And the man who looks unfeeling
At the souls of people,

[1] Shevchenko constantly varies between treating Ukraina as a word of three syllables, U-krai-na and one of four, U-kra-i-na.

May he suffer here in this world
And in that. . . .
From sorrow
I will never curse my fortune,
Since I do not have it.
Let the evil live for three days,
I will keep them hidden,
Keep the great ferocious serpent
Right around my heart,
That my foes may never notice
How the evil smileth.
Let the song fly as a raven,
All around and call,
And my heart, a nightingale,
Warble on and weep
Quietly; men will not notice
And they will not mock it.
Do not wipe away my tears—
Let them flow in torrents
And besprinkle day and night
Foreign fields I know not
Till—until my eyes they cover
With a foreign dust.
So it may be!—What will follow?
Sorrow will not help me.
He who envies a poor orphan,
Punish him, O God!

• • •

Songs of mine, O songs of mine,
O my flowers, children,
I have reared you, have caressed you,
Whither shall I send you?
Go to Ukraina, children,
To our Ukraina,
Quietly, as little orphans,
Here—I'm doomed to perish.
There you'll find a loving heart
And a pleasant greeting,

There you'll find a purer truth
And perhaps some glory. . . .

Welcome, O my darling mother,
Oh, my Ukraina,
Welcome my unthinking children
As your own dear child.

Perebendya

Perebendya is a picture of the last of the old Kobzars. To earn a scanty living he is forced to sing to the people all the songs of the peasant village but he does not fail to include in them the story of Ukrainian vengeance on their enemies as Chaly who was killed in 1741 for betraying the Haydamaki and the final story of the downfall of the Sich.

Yet he is more than this and when he retires to the tombs to commune with nature, he is really the voice of Ukraine past, present, and future, the embodiment of the national spirit and the spirit welcomes him for his unbending allegiance to the cause of his nation.

Some scholars have tried to see in him a representation of Shevchenko himself. Others has sought to find literary sources for the conception in the poems of Mickiewicz and in Pushkin's *Prophet.* Much scholarship has been expended to little purpose upon the subject. *Perebendya* remains one of the great poems of Shevchenko and the picture of the old bard, whatever its source, throws light upon the poet's feelings for his country and its present fate. It forms a poetic introduction to the rest of the work, not so personal as is the first poem in which Shevchenko speaks for himself, but more fully national and in a more spiritual and eternal key.

Perebendya

Blind and aged Perebendya—
Who has failed to know him?
Everywhere he wanders slowly
On his kobza[1] playing.

[1] The kobza is a stringed instrument of the type of the violin, and was the favorite instrument of the wandering bards of Ukraine.

By his songs the people know him
And sincerely thank him,
For he drives away their sorrows
Though he too is burdened.
'Neath the hedgerows as an orphan
Days and nights he bideth;
Nowhere does he have a cabin;
Poverty ne'er stops her jesting
O'er his helpless person,
But he never pays attention.
By himself he sits a-singing,
"Do not rustle, meadow!"
He sings on in simple measures
That he is an orphan,
That he's grieving and he's weeping,
Sitting 'neath the hedgerows.
Such a man is Perebendya,
Aged, and so moody;
Now of Chaly bold he's singing,[2]
Turns unto Horlitsa;
With the maidens in the pastures,
Hritsya and Vesnyanka,
With the fellows in the tavern,
Serbin and Shinkarka;
Feasting with the newly married
(Where one mother's bitter)
Of the poplar and misfortune
And then "In the forest."
On the square, he sings of Lazar,—
But, that all may know it,
Tells with dignity and feeling
How the Sich was ruined.
Such a man is Perebendya,
Aged, and so moody,
And he sings, but while he's smiling,
Brings tears to his hearers.

[2] The poet lists folk songs of various types, each of which was sung at the appropriate occasion. They range from historical ballads of the deeds of the old Kozaks to spring songs, drinking songs, and songs of domestic unhappiness and tragedy.

Wings may blow and keep on blowing
O'er the fields a-straying;
On a tomb the bard is sitting,
On his kobza playing.
Round him spreads the steppes unbounded
Like a deep blue ocean.
Tombs and tombs in rows extending
Far as eye can follow.
See, the wind his hoary mustache
And his hair is tossing,
As it comes and softly listens
How the bard is singing.
With a smile in his heart, while his blind eyes are weeping.
It listens, then blows on. . . .
The old man is hidden
'Mid tombs on the steppe, where no eye may behold him,
The wind can sweep off his sweet words as they fall,
No ear to give heed,—'tis the message of God.
His heart can converse with the Lord without fear
As it warbles unceasing the glory of God.
And his thoughts, rising up, wander free 'mid the clouds,
Like a grey winged eagle, which soars ever higher,
Until it is lost in the blue of the sky;
It rests in the sun and it asks of the orb,
Where it spends the night? How it wakes at the dawn?
It harks to the sea and the words which it speaks,
And it asks the black mountain why it is so mute,
And again to the sky, for there's sorrow on earth,
And in all its expanse there is not e'en a corner
For him who knows all and who hears every sound,
Both what the sea says and where sleepeth the sun—
No one on the earth has a place for that man,
He is lonely among them, as is the great sun,
The people know him, for the earth bears him ever,
But if they should hear how, alone in his sorrow,
He will sing to the tomb and will talk with the sea,
They would all of them mock at the word of the Lord,
They would call him a fool and would drive him away,
And would say, "Let him wander above the wide sea."

Thou art noble, aged poet,
Father, you act wisely,
That to sing and to hold converse,
You the tombs do visit.
Wander on, my noble spirit,
Till your heart grows silent
And sing on your choicest songs
Where men will not hear you.
And that men may not avoid you,
Fit their whims, my brother!
Leap, just as the lord gives order;
That is why he's wealthy.

Such a man is Perebendya,
Aged, and so moody;
Singing songs of joy and gladness
And to sadness turning.

The Poplar

The Poplar is a good example of Shevchenko's union of Ukrainian folk motifs and the literary usages of the Romantic poets. The supernatural was dear to Romanticism, the transformation of maidens into trees is a theme that can be traced back to the classical authors and yet it received a new interpretation in the early nineteenth century. Shevchenko gives us a purely Ukrainian scene, he describes the tragedy that often happened in the days of the wandering Kozaks, he feels the horror of the enforced marriage arranged between the parents and the bridegroom without the willing consent of the bride, and he unites all these motifs in a work which is in the highest degree both national and literary.

The Poplar

Through the oaks the wind is blowing,
O'er the field it revels,
Near the road it bends the poplar
Till the ground it touches.
Tall its form, its leaves are spreading,

Why so green it's growing?
Round about the field is spreading
Wide as sea of azure.
Here the carter comes and marvels
And his head bows downward.
And the shepherd sits a-playing
On the tomb so sadly,
For he looks—his heart is grieving.
There's but grass around him,
And it dies just like an orphan
In a foreign country.

Who has reared her slender, pliant,
In the steppe to perish?
Hearken to me, I will tell you.
Listen to me, maidens!
Once a happy black-haired maiden
Loved a Kozak hero,
Loved him—and she did not heed it;
And he went and perished.
Had she known that he would leave her,
She would not have loved him;
Had she known that he would perish,
She would have detained him;
Had she known, she had ne'er wandered
Late at night for water,
Had not stood until the midnight
With him 'neath the willow;
Had she known! . . .
Oh, that's the trouble—
In advance to reckon
What to us will later happen . . .
You know not, O maidens!
Do not ask about your fortune!
But your heart will tell you
Whom to love. Let it now perish,
While they it will bury!
For not long, you black haired maidens,
With black eyes a-sparkling,
And your white face deeply blushing,

'Tis not long, O maidens!
By the noonday it will wither
And your brows grow paler . . .
Love and take your fill of loving,
While your heart will bid it.

Now the nightingale is warbling
On the little bushes,
And a Kozak young is singing
In the little valley.
He sings on, until a maiden
Comes from out her cabin,
Then he turns and asks the question—
"Does your mother know it?"
So they stand embracing closely,
While the bird is singing;
So they listen, then they're parting,—
Both are very happy . . .
No one notices the meeting,
No one asks the question—
"Where were you, what were you doing?"
She knows what she wishes.
She was happy, she was loving,
And her heart was singing.
For a little while she heard it,
Could not make a murmur,
Not a word—she stayed and waited.
Day and night she's cooing
Like a dove without its darling,
And no one doth notice.

Now the nightingale sings never
There above the water,
Never sings the black haired maiden
Underneath the willow;
She sings not—but like an orphan,
Shuns the burning daylight;
He is gone—her father, mother
Seem like unknown people;

He is gone—and now the sunshine
Seems like hateful leering;
He is gone—the tomb surrounds her
While her heart still's beating!

One year passed and then another—
There is still no Kozak;
She dries up as doth a flower.
No one ever asks her.
"Why are you thus pining, daughter?"
Mother does not ask her,
But unto an old, rich master
Secretly she joined her.
"So, my daughter", says the mother,
"Do not dally always;
He is rich, and he is lonely,
You will be a lady!"
"I don't want to be a lady,
I won't marry, mother!
With the towels I have woven,
Let me now be buried!
Let the priest sing o'er my coffin,
Let my friends bewail me;
I would rather now be buried
Than be living with him."
Mother paid her no attention,
Carried out her project.
But the black-haired maiden noticed,
Pined away in silence.
To a witch she went in darkness,
To consult her fortune,
Whether she could live here longer,
Live without her lover.
"Mistress, Oh, my trusted teacher,
O my heart and guider!
Tell me now the truth though bitter;
Where is my beloved?
Is he well? Does he still love me?
Or has he forgotten?
Tell me now where is my lover!

I will fly unto him!
Mistress, Oh my trusted teacher,
Tell me, if you know it!
For my mother soon will wed me
To an aged husband.
I would go, drown in the river . . .
Suicide is evil . . .
If my lover is not living,
Grant to me, my angel,
That I never reach my cabin,
It is bitter to me—
There's the old man with his wooers,—
Tell me all my fortune."
"Fine, my daughter! Rest a little,
Do as I now bid you.
If you have remained a virgin,
I can know the trouble;
It is past and I have learned it.
I give help to people.
Your whole fortune, O my daughter,
Last year I have noticed.
Last year all the herbs I gathered
For this very purpose."
Then she went and brought a vessel
Hidden 'neath her clothing.
"This is made to tell your fortune!
Go unto the fountain;
And before the songs they've finished,
Wash in the cool water,
Drink a little of this potion.
It will cure the evil.
Drink and run and do not tarry;
If you hear some shouting,
Look not back until you're standing
Where from him you parted.
Rest right there. And when there rises
The bright moon in heaven,
Drink again; if he's still absent,
Drink again the third time.

At the first, you'll be as handsome
As you were before him;
At the second, you will notice
That his horse is stamping.
If your Kozak still is living,
He will dash to meet you . . .
At the third, my darling daughter,
Ask not what will happen!
Make no cross, remember surely—
It will spoil the water.
Go, my darling, and recover
All your former beauty."

Then she took the herbs and answered,
"Thank you, mistress teacher!"
Left the cabin: "Come what happens,
I shall never wed him!"
So she went and washed and drank it,
Seemed to change her person,
Then a second and a third time,
Sang as if a-sleeping:

"Swim, O swim, my swan beloved,
Here across the blue sea!
Grow, O grow, O little poplar,
Higher and yet higher!
Grow so tall and yet so slender
To the clouds of heaven,
Ask of God, if I shall find him
Or not wait this marriage!
Grow and grow and look around you
Far across the blue sea!
On that side is my good fortune,
On this, only sorrow.
There my black-haired love is going
O'er the meadow happy.
And I weep, my years I'm wasting,
And I seek to find him.
Tell him, O my heart so loving,
I am mocked by people;

Tell him that I soon will perish,
If he does not hurry!
For my mother now is seeking
In the earth to lay me . . .
Who then will her needs provide for,
Guard and care, protect her?
Who will care for her and cheer her,
Help her, when she's older?
O my mother, O my fortune!
God, O God most gracious!
Rise and look, O little poplar!
If he's gone—weep sorely
Till the sunrise in the morning,
That no one may notice.
Grow apace, O little poplar,
Higher and yet higher!
Swim, O swim, my swan beloved,
Here across the blue sea!"
Thus sang on the black-haired maiden
On the steppe a-lying,
Then the herb produced a marvel—
She became a poplar.

Through the oaks the wind is blowing,
O'er the field it revels,
Near the road it bends the poplar,
Till the ground it touches.

Dumka

This is a lament of an orphan girl and can be read exactly as it is written. It naturally follows the Poplar as a simple expression of disappointed love. On the other hand, the reader cannot overlook the fact that already the poet has compared Ukraine to a weeping mother and himself to an orphan. To the Gendarme General Dubelt, the poem seemed an introduction to the following poem to Osnovyanenko.

Dumka

What do my black hairs avail me,
Or my black eyes, sparkling,
What do youthful years avail me,
Cheerful and a maiden's?
All my youthful years are passing,
Passing to no purpose,
And my eyes are weeping; meanwhile
Winds turn pale my tresses.
My heart sinks, it shuns the daylight,
As imprisoned birdlet.
What avails me all my beauty,
If I've no good fortune?
It is hard for me, an orphan,
To live on hereafter;
All my people are as strangers—
I have none to talk with;
I have no one to ask questions
Why my eyes are weeping.
I have no one to tell freely
What my heart is wishing,
Why my heart, just as a dovelet,
Day and night is mourning.
No one wishes to ask of it,
Knows it not nor hears it.
Strangers will not ask me of it—
Why should it concern them?
Let the orphan go on weeping,
Let her waste her hours!
Weep, my heart! My eyes, keep weeping,
Till you close forever,
Cry aloud, complain unceasing,
For the winds to listen,
And take all my lamentations
Far across the blue sea,
To the false and black-haired lover,
To his bitter sorrow!

To Osnovyanenko

Hrihori Kvitka-Osnovyanenko (1778-1843) was the leading Ukrainian prose writer between Kotlyarevsky and Shevchenko. He was an aristocrat and a conservative but in his prose tales, he expressed well the Ukrainian village and the difference between the people and the Moskals. He had published a story on Antin Holovaty some time before and Shevchenko now appeals to him to write more of the same type of story.

Antin Holovaty after the destruction of the Sich and the flight of many of the Zaporozhians to Turkey secured permission for the establishment of the Black Sea Army from Catherine the Great. This was really the beginning of the Kuban Kozaks. Shevchenko rightly or wrongly valued Holovaty highly for he saw in this new foundation an attempt to replace the vanished Sich, even if it was not on the same territory.

Later after his return from the army, Kulish persuaded Shevchenko to omit the reference to Holovaty. Growing disagreement between Osnovyanenko and the poet over the conservatism of the former led Shevchenko to dedicate the poem in the edition of 1860 merely to a Ukrainian writer. The poem forms a transition to the definitely historical ballads that follow it. At the same time it very definitely emphasizes the sad present of Ukraine in comparison with its past.

TO OSNOVYANENKO

Rapids roar. The moon is setting,
As in former ages.
There's no Sich, and he is perished,
He, the famous leader.
There's no Sich. The rushes murmur
By Dnipro's swift waters:
"What has happened to our children?
Where do they now revel?"
And the gull cries, flying over,
Weeping for the children;
Warm's the sun, the wind is blowing
Where the Kozaks wandered.
On the steppe the tombs are scattered
And they mourn in sadness,
Asking of the stormy breezes,

"Where are our men ruling?
Where are they now ruling, feasting?
Where have you been staying?
Come on back! And look around you;
All the grain is leveled,
Where your horses used to pasture,
Where the grasses rustled,
Where the blood of Poles and Tatars
Reddened all the water!
Come on back!"
"No, nevermore!"—
The blue sea repeated.
Then it added: "Nevermore!
They are lost forever!"
True it is, 'tis true, O blue sea;
Such is their misfortune!
Those you seek are gone forever,
Gone the ancient freedom,
Gone are all the Zaporozhtsy,
Gone are all the hetmans.
Their red tunics nevermore
Will protect Ukraina,—
Like a torn and ragged orphan,
She weeps o'er the Dniper;
It is bitter for the orphan
And no one will notice,
But the foe is smiling brightly.
Smile, O foeman evil,
Not for long, for all will perish—
Glory will not perish,
Will not perish but will tell men
What the world has witnessed,
Whose the right and whose the evil,
And whose children we are.[1]
Without gold and without jewels,
Without clever phrasing,

[1] In the first edition follows here this reference to Holovaty:
Our unyielding Holovaty
Will not die or perish;
There, O people, is our glory
And Ukraina's glory.

But as clear and always truthful
As the Lord's own utterance.
Is that so, my master, father?
Am I singing truly?
Yes, I am! . . . And I must say it,
But I have no talent.
And in Muscovy I'm staying,
Strangers are around me.
"Do not notice"—you may tell me,
But what will come of it?
They will laugh at the sad message,
That I fashion, weeping.
They will laugh. 'Tis hard, my father,
To live with the foemen!
Still perhaps I would be struggling,
If I had the power,
Would be singing, had I knowledge
And the gift of verses.
That is why it is so bitter,
O my dearest father!
For I wander in the snowdrifts;
"Do not murmur, meadow!"
I can do no more, but, father,
Sing to them, my dearest master,
Of the Sich, the barrows,
How they heaped the earth upon them,
How they buried heroes;
Of past ages and the marvels
That have been and ended . . .
You know, father! Let the wide world,
Learn against its wishes,
What was done in Ukraina,
Why it now has perished,
Why the former Kozak glory
Through the world is famous.

You know, father, noble eagle!
Let me keep on weeping,
Let my eyes again be gladdened

By my Ukraina;
Let me once again soon listen
How the sea is playing,
How the maiden 'neath the willows
Sings of Hrits's wooing.
Let my heart once more be smiling
In a foreign country,
Till a foreign land receive it
In the grave of strangers.

Ivan Pidkova

In Ivan Pidkova we have the first of the two historical ballads, showing the Zaporozhians at the height of their power and discipline. During the early part of the seventeenth century, they were strong enough to make several raids upon Constantinople and the neighboring region. The real Ivan Pidkova aimed to be ruler of Moldavia and was executed by the Poles at the inspiration of the Turkish Sultan in 1578 but Shevchenko found certain sources that identified Pidkova with one of the Kozak atamans who stormed Constantinople and so developed his theme. His apparent object was to represent the type of discipline that was enforced in a free community during the raids when military order and control were indispensable.

Ivan Pidkova

To V. I. Sternberg

I

At one time in Ukraina
Cannons roared like thunder;
At one time the Zaporozhtsy
Knew the path to power.
So they ruled and they acquired
Glory, yes, and freedom;
That is past—they've left behind them
Tombs upon the meadows.
And those tombs are high and lofty,

Where they laid to slumber
The white body of a Kozak
Wrapped in cloth of crimson.
And those tombs are high and lofty,
Black as gloomy mountains.
In the field they speak of freedom
Softly to the breezes.
And they speak to passing breezes
Of the past and serfdom.
And the grandson reaps the harvest,
Singing songs they fashioned.
At one time in Ukraina
There was evil dancing.
Sorrow vanished with the drinking
In the jolly circle.
At one time in Ukraina
Life was good and merry.
Let us tell it! Our hearts, maybe,
Can thus find some solace.

II

From Lyman a black cloud covers
Both the sun and heavens;
The blue sea, an angry monster,
Groans and tosses wildly,
And Dnipro's great mouths are flooded.
"Come now, boys, and revel!
To the boats! The sea is playing—
Let us go to revel!"

So the Zaporozhtsy started,
Filled Lyman with vessels.
"Play, O sea!"—they started singing
As the waves were foaming.
Waves rose round about like mountains,
Earth and sky were hidden.
Hearts might waver, but the Kozaks
Found it what they wanted.
Now they're sailing and they're singing,

Storm birds keep on flying . . .
And the ataman who's leading
Takes them where he wishes.
Up and down his deck he strideth,
His great pipe neglecting;
And he looks in every quarter
For a proper mission.
His black mustache he is twisting,
Pulls his black hair fiercely,
Lifts his cap—The boats come closer.
"Let the foeman perish!
Atamans, not to Sinop,
O my daring heroes,
But to Tsargrad to the Sultan
We will go for feasting."
"Fine, 'tis fine, O noble father!"
Comes a roar resounding.
"Thank you, sons!"
Again he covers.
The blue sea keeps foaming.
Up and down his deck he strideth
In unceasing motion,
And the ataman in silence
Gazes at the tempest.

The Night of Taras

This poem describes the victory of the Kozaks under Taras Tryasilo over the Polish troops of General Koniecpolski at Pereyaslav in 1630. Kozak tradition described this as one of the greatest victories of the Kozak armies and Shevchenko followed the tradition. It is striking that he contrasts more clearly than in *Pidkova* the present acquiescence of the younger generation in their state of slavery with the valor of their ancestors who were willing to fight even against overwhelming odds. The concluding sections of the poem have been often taken to be an appeal for the renewal of open hostilities but it is hardly likely at this time with the collapse of the Polish revolt less than ten years previously that the poet went as far as this. And even General Dubelt in his attempt to read all possible evil intentions into

the poems did not regard it as a direct incendiary appeal but as a poem written to drive home the evil of the present time and to rouse the people to anti-Russian thoughts, if not actions.

The Night of Taras

At the cross roads sits the kobzar,
Playing on his kobza;
Round about are boys and maidens,
Red as poppy flowers.
Plays the kobzar and he's singing,
Telling in his stories
How the Poles, the Horde, the Moskals
Struggled 'gainst the Kozaks;
How the brotherhood assembled
Early on a Sunday;
How they buried a young Kozak
In a boat of green leaves;
Plays the kobzar and he's singing,
But his smile is evil.

"Formerly we had the Hetmans,
That is gone forever;
Formerly they knew to govern,
Nevermore we'll do it.
Yet the former Kozak glory
We are ne'er forgetting!
Ukraina, Ukraina!
My dear heart! My darling!
When I tell of your misfortune,
Then my heart starts weeping!
What has happened to the Kozaks
With their crimson tunics?
Where are vanished our old freedom,
Standards, and the Hetmans?
What has happened? Are they ashes?
Has the blue sea swallowed
All your noble, holy mountains
And your tombs so lofty?
Mountains speak not, plays the blue sea.
And the tombs are mournful,

While above the Kozak children
Heathen pagans triumph!
Play, O sea! Speak up, O mountains!
Blow, winds, o'er the meadows!
Weep, O children of the Kozaks!
Such is now your fortune!

"From Lyman a cloud is rising,
From the field, another;
Ukraina's plunged in sadness—
Such is its misfortune!
Plunged in sadness, drenched with weeping,
Just as little children.
There is no one who can save her
And the Kozaks perish;
Lost is glory and the country;
Nowhere it is sheltered.
So the little Kozak children
Grow up unbaptized,
They must love apart from marriage;
Without priests, they're buried;
To the Jews the faith is traded;
Churches are barred to them . . .
As the crows the meadows cover,
So the Poles and Uniats
Fly around—and there is no one
Who can give good counsel.

"Nalivayko gave the signal,—
He is gone forever.
Then Pavlyuha raised his banner—
Quickly too he vanished.
Then Taras Tryasilo challenged
With his tears so bitter;
"Oh my wretched Ukraina,
Whom the Poles have trampled.

Then Taras Tryasilo challenged
That the faith he'd rescue,
Gave the signal, the gray eagle,
Let the Poles know of it.
Pan Tryasilo gave the signal:
'There's enough of weeping!
Let us go, my noble brothers,
'Gainst the Poles to struggle!'

"More than three days and three nights too
Fought there Pan Tryasilo.
From Lyman unto Trubaylo,
Filled the field with corpses.
The poor Kozak was exhausted,
And was filled with sadness,
While the cursed Koniecpolski
Felt more happy daily,
For he gathered all the szlachta,
To produce a triumph!
But Taras called to his Kozaks,
Asked them for their counsel;
'Otamani and my comrades,
Brothers dear, and children!
Give to me your wisest counsel,
What can we accomplish?
Now the Poles are celebrating,
For we have no leaders.
Let them banquet for their pleasure
And for their successes!
Let the cursed devils banquet,
Till the sun is setting.
Mother night will give good counsel;
Kozaks Poles can locate!'

"The sun set behind the mountains,
Then the stars appeared,
Like the clouds, then came the Kozaks
And the Poles surrounded.
When the moon reached the high heavens,
Thundered out a cannon.

Then the little Polish masters
Fled—but found no refuge!
Then the little Polish masters
Fled—to rise no more;
But at sunrise, Polish masters
Lay stretched out in masses.
Like a winding serpent crimson,
Alta bore the tidings,
That the ravens were assembling
To consume the masters;
That black ravens came together
To awake the nobles,
While the Kozaks came together
Unto God to pray.
The black ravens cawed and cried out,
Eating out the eyeballs;
But the Kozaks kept on singing
Of that wondrous battle,
Of that night that was so bloody,
That created glory
For Taras and for the Kozaks
Who the Poles had vanquished.

"O'er the river in the meadow,
Now a tomb looms blackish;
Where the Kozak blood was flowing,
Now green grass is growing;
On the tomb a raven's sitting
And it shrieks in hunger.
When a Kozak thinks of Hetmans,
As he thinks, he's weeping."

The sad kobzar ceased his music,
For his hands betray him!
Round him all the boys and maidens
Strive to hide their weeping.

Formerly the Kozaks cherished
Freedom and great glory.

Glory lives but bitter slavery
Freedom has devoured.
Formerly they knew to govern.
Nevermore we'll do it,
But that former Kozak glory
We remember always.

Down the street the kobzar wanders
With his sorrow playing!
Round about the boys are dancing
And he says on parting:
"Let it be without a sequel!
Sit upon the stove, my children.
For the inn I'll sadly enter
And a burning drink I'll ask for,
Ask for, drink it to the bottom,
And I'll laugh at all those foemen."

KATERINA

The theme of the country girl seduced by a nobleman and deserted by him was very popular in all European literature from the time of the sentimental novels of the eighteenth century. It was carried into Russian by Karamzin in *Poor Liza* and into Ukrainian by Kvitka in such a story as *Serdeshna Oksana* (The Unfortunate Oksana). Shevchenko followed the tradition in this poem but he added the other idea of making the lover a foreigner. The message of the bard in the beginning specifically warns the Ukrainian girls against the Moskals and there is not a word to imply that the manners of the ordinary Russian soldiers as distinct from the officers would be any different.

The poem completes the orginal collection of the *Kobzar* with a tragic story of the present. It is the only poem that definitely pins the stigma of oppression upon the Russians, although this is inherent in the other poems. When we remember the frequent identification of an orphan or a widow with Ukraine, we can see that the poet wants the readers to see in the sad fate of Katerina driven into banishment the fate of Ukraine but at the same time he is pleading the case of the

seduced girls who have been driven out of their homes. The poem fittingly concludes the *Kobzar* with its comparison of the past and the present and the survival of that past only in songs and legends.

KATERINA

To V. A. Zhukovsky
In memory of April 22, 1838

I

Have your love, you black haired maidens,
But avoid the Moskals,
For the Moskals—they are strangers,
And they treat you foully.
Yes, the Moskal loves you lightly,
Lightly he will drop you,
Goes away unto his country,
And the maiden's ruined.
Were that all, it would be nothing,
But her aged mother
Who into God's world once brought her,
She must perish with her.
So her heart will pine a-singing,
If she knows the reason;
People will her heart not notice,
And they'll say: "She's nothing."
Have your love, you black haired maidens,
But not with the Moskals,
For the Moskals—they are strangers,
And they always mock you.

Katerina did not listen
To her father, mother,
But she went and loved a Moskal,
As her heart had urged her.
So she loved the youthful stranger,
Went into the garden,
And she ruined there her fortune
And herself, unthinking.
Mother calls her to have supper,
Daughter does not listen;
Where she dallies with her Moskal,

There the night she spendeth. . . .
Not two nights she spent caressing
His black eyes so charming,
Till the gossip in the village
Had condemned her roundly.
Let the people talk about her,
Say whate'er they're thinking;
She's in love and will not notice
That there's evil brewing.
Suddenly bad news is coming—
He must go on service—
Unto Turkey went the Moskal,
It Katrusya startled.
She cared not, as 'twere a trifle,
That her head was covered,
For her lover she would either
Sing or grieve at random.
He, the black haired lover, promised,
If he did not perish,
That he would come back unto her,
And then Katerina
Should become herself a Moskal
And forget her sorrow;
In the meanwhile let the people
Say whate'er they're wishing—
Katerina does not worry!
Wipes away her weeping,
For the maidens who surround her
Sing their songs without her,
And she takes the pails at nightfall
To go for the water,
That her foes may never see her;
To the spring she's coming,
Takes a place beneath the bushes
And of Hrits she's singing;
So she sings and so repeats it
Till the bushes sorrow.
She comes back—in perfect quiet
That no one may see her.
Katerina does not worry,

She has no forebodings;
In her new and modern kerchief
She looks out the window.
Katerina looks around her—
Six months now are passing.
At her heart a pain is gnawing,
And her side is aching.
Katerina feels her illness,
It prevents her breathing.
She recovers. In her cradle
There's a child now lying.
And the women foully murmur,
Jest unto her mother,
That the Moskals are returning
And in her are resting.
"Yes, you have a black haired daughter,
And she is not lonely,
On the stove she has in training
A good Moskal baby.
She has now a black haired baby,
Mayhap she has studied."
May the devil, scandalmongers,
Beat you as severely
As that mother whom you're mocking
For her little baby.
Katerina, O my darling!
You are so unhappy!
Where can you go to find refuge
With a little orphan?
Who will feed you or receive you
Without your dear lover?
Father, mother now are strangers,
Hard 'tis to live with them.

Katerina was now healthy,
Left her little quarters,
Looked upon the street around her,
And caressed her baby;
As she looks, there's no one friendly!
What is next to happen?

If she went into the garden,
People there would see her.
At the sunrise Katerina
Walks around the garden,
In her arms her son she carries,
And her eyes she covers;
"Here I looked at them parading,
Here I used to greet him,
There, O there . . . my son, my baby!"
More she never uttered.

In the garden soon the cherries
Hung all full of blossoms.
When the first came out in flower,
Katerina walked out,
Walked out but she was not singing,
As was her old custom,
When she waited for the Moskal
In the cherry orchard.
Now the black haired maiden sings not,
Curses her ill fortune,
While the bitter, hateful women
Say whatever moves them,
Hammer out their unkind speeches.
What will be her future?
Were the black haired lover present,
He could stop their talking.
But the black haired lover's distant,
Hears not, does not notice
How her enemies laugh at her,
How Katrusya's weeping.
Has the black haired lover perished
By the quiet Danube? . . .
Or in Muscovy he's staying
With another darling?
No, the lover has not perished,
He is well and living.
Where can he find eyes so handsome,
Black hair so alluring?
There in Muscovy the distant
Or across the blue sea—

There he has no Katerina.
Here she's doomed to sorrow!
Mother knew to give her black hair,
Coal black eyes to give her,
But she knew not how to give her
Fortune for her lifetime.
Without fortune is her beauty
But a fading flower;
In hot sunshine, raging breezes,
Soon it 'gins to wither.
Wash your white face every hour
With your tears so bitter,
For the Moskals have gone homeward,
Other roads they've taken.

II

Sits the father at the table
With his shoulders drooping;
He cannot behold the sunshine,
Heavy is his sorrow.
Near him sits the aged mother
On the bench hand-carven.
Through her tears she's speaking coldly,
Speaking with her daughter.
"When's the wedding, O my daughter?
Where is he you've chosen?
When's the wedding party coming
With its chiefs and boyars?
There in Muscovy my daughter!
Go and search and find them;
Do not tell there to good people
That you have a mother.
Cursed be the day and hour
When I bore you for us!
Had I known, I would have drowned you
Ere the sun had risen. . . .
You have turned into a monster,
And into a Moskal . . .
O my daughter, O my daughter,

Once my rosy flower!
Like a berry, like a birdlet
You have lived and changed
Into evil . . . O my daughter,
What have you done to us?
So you've thanked us. . . . Go now after
Moskals as your kinsfolk.
You have not obeyed my warnings,
Now give heed to others!
O, my daughter, go and find them,
Find them and address them,
Be content among strange people,
Never come back to us.
Come not back to us, my daughter,
From a distant country . . .
Who will bury my old body,
When you have departed?
Who will weep above my coffin
As my child would sorrow?
Who upon my grave will set out
The dark red *kalynas!*[1]
Who without you will remember
My poor soul so sinful?
Oh, my daughter, O my daughter,
O my darling daughter.
Go from us now."
Coldly, coldly,
She gave her a blessing.
"God be with you!"—and as dying
On the floor she's fallen.

Then the aged father added:
"Why are you delaying?"
Katerina started sobbing,
To his feet she's fallen:
"O, forgive me, O my father,
For my awful misdeed!

[1] The kalyna, Viburnum opulus, is used extensively to mark graves and memorials in Ukraine.

O, forgive me, dearest father,
Dearest, loving falcon!"
—"Let the Lord Himself forgive you
And good people likewise!
Pray to God and go your own way—
I shall feel far better."

Then she rose and said a farewell,
Silently departed;
While her aged parents stayed there
Just as two poor orphans.
She went to the cherry orchard,
Said a prayer on leaving,
Took some earth from 'neath a cherry,
On her cross she placed it.
Then she said: "I'll come back never!
In a distant country,
In strange earth I shall be buried
By the hands of strangers,
But this earth which I am taking
Lies upon my spirit
And repeats to foreign people
All that I have suffered.
Do not tell it, treasured keepsake!
May I ne'er be buried,
That the people ne'er may notice
I'm a ruined sinner.
Say it not—and who will tell them
That I am his mother;
O my God! My woe unbounded!
Where can I be buried?
Son, I soon shall myself bury
Underneath the water,
And you will my sins atone for
As an orphan lonely,
With no father!—"
Katerina
Wept as she departed.
On her head her little kerchief,
In her arms her baby.

Going from the village sadly,
Back she scarcely glances,
But her head she cast down earthward
And began lamenting.
Like a poplar in the meadow,
She stood on the highway;
Like the dew just at the sunset,
So her tears were gleaming.
Through the bitter tears she's shedding,
Nothing she can notice,
But she pressed her baby closer,
Kissed him while she's weeping,
And her son, the little angel,
Pays it no attention.
His small arms he stretches to her
And he seeks her bosom . . .
Then towards sunset, 'mid the oakwoods
Glows the sky with crimson;
She lost hope and she turned backwards.
Walked . . . and only sorrowed.
In the village evil gossip
And unkind was spoken
But her father and her mother
Did not hear the stories.
Why, O why do people always
In this world harm others?
One they bind, and one they murder,
One they joy in hurting . . .
Why is this? The saints can tell us!
For the world is spacious
But there is no place upon it
Where a man's unbothered.
One his fortune has predestined
Everywhere to wander,
While another will be buried
Where his home was ever.
Where, O where are there good people
Who wish only one thing,
To live with and love their fellows?
They have gone, have vanished.

There's on earth a fortune,
Who can it discover?
There's on earth a freedom,
Who can e'er possess it?
On the earth are people
Who reap gold and silver,
They succeed in ruling
And they know no trouble.–
Neither that nor freedom!
With their woe and sorrow
Others don their tunics.
Take your gold and silver
And be rich in treasures.
It is tears I'm choosing
To shed them in plenty;
I will drown misfortune
With my bitter weeping.
Slavery I'll trample
With my feet unshodden!
Then I will be happy
And I'll be so wealthy,
If my heart is able
To remain in freedom!

III

Owls are calling, sleeps the forest,
Stars are shining brightly.
O'er the path and o'er the bushes
Larks are singing freely.
All good people now can slumber,–
Each has been so wearied.
Joy or tears have wearied each one
But the night doth hide them.
The dark night is come to hide them
Like a bird a-nesting;
Where has it Katrusya hidden–
In the woods? a cabin?
Or is she her son amusing
'Neath an open haymow?

In a forest is she fearing
Wolves behind each treetrunk?
God grant that no one may ever
Have such fine black tresses,
If they must such heavy payment
Make for their possession!
What can yet the future give her?
'Twill be evil, evil!
Yellow sands are on her pathway,
Strangers are there many;
Savage winter will confront her . . .
And the man she's seeking,
Will he know his Katerina,
Give his son a greeting?
With him would the black haired maiden
Roads, sands, woe not notice;
If he greets her as a mother,
Speaks as does a brother . . .
Let us notice, let us listen . . .
And meanwhile—I'm resting
And I'm asking at this hour
For the road to Moscow.
It is far, my noble brothers,
That is true, I tell you!
Now my heart is chilled and downcast,
When I think upon it.
I have measured it before this,
May no one repeat it!
I would tell about the hardships—
No one would believe them!
"He who tells them sure is raving,
(That's their talk in secret)
He is only telling stories
To deceive the people."
That's your truth, your truth, O people!
Why should it concern you
That I shed my tears before you
From my hard bought knowledge!
Why is this? Each living person
Has his own misfortune!

Devil take it! At this moment
Give to them tobacco
And a match, that they may never
Be at home unhappy,
Or they will tell you so quickly,
They have evil visions.—
Let the devil seize them firmly—
'Tis my task to notice
Where my wretched Katerina
With her Ivas travels.

Far past Kiev and the Dniper,
'Mid a darksome forest,
On the carters' road they're going,
Of the Owl they're singing.
There she is, a-pressing onward,
Like a pious pilgrim!
Why is she so sad and gloomy,
Why are her eyes weeping?
On her head is but her kerchief,
On her back a basket,
In one hand her staff she carries,
Bears her sleeping baby.
She has met with some stray carters,
Has the baby hidden,
And she asks of them, "Good people!
Where's the road to Moscow?"
—"Road to Moscow? You are on it!
But it's a long journey."
"Yes, to Moscow, I implore you,
Give me money for it."
That's the first step—how she hates it!
Begging is not easy!
Why is this? The baby needs it,
And she is his mother!
So she wept, pressed on her journey,
In Brovary[2] rested,

[2] Brovary is on the boundary separating Muscovy from Ukraine.

With the coin she bought a cookie
For her little baby . . .
Long, so long she walked exhausted
And she asked assistance;
Then at last, all spent and weary,
'Neath a hedge she rested. . . .

O, why was she granted those black eyes so sparkling,
For them to weep sorely beneath a strange hedge!
O maidens, look now and regret when you've seen her,
That you had no need for your Moskal to search,
That you did not need, as Katruysa is needing,
So then do not ask why the people abuse her,
And why they will turn her away from their doors,—

Do not ask, O black haired maidens;
People cannot answer.
Him whom God deems right to punish
They will punish also.
People bend as do the willows
As the wind is blowing.
For an orphan, when the sun shines,
Warmth is always lacking.
People would obscure the sunlight,
If they had the power,
That it might not light the orphan,
Dry away his weeping.
Why is this, O God most loving?
Why is light so painful?
What has she done unto people?
What do they want of her?
That she weep? O my poor darling!
Weep not, Katerina!
Do not show your tears to people,
Hold them till you perish!
Let not your bright face be darkened
With its clear black tresses—
Until sunset, in the forest
Wash your face with weeping!

Weep away!—they will not notice
And they cannot mock you
And your heart can find some solace,
While your tears are flowing.

So notice, O maidens, how great is the evil!
The Moskal has lightly forsaken his love.
Misfortune sees not him with whom she was loving,
And people may see but no mercy they know.
" 'Tis right, so they say, that this wretched girl perish,
For she did not know to be careful with love!"
Restrain yourselves, beauties, at times inauspicious,
That you may not need a bad Moskal to seek.

Where's Katrusya straying?
She slept nights beneath the hedgerows,
Rose up in the morning,
Unto Muscovy she hastened.
Then the winter opens.
O'er the fields the blizzard's howling.
Katerina travels
In light sandals—it is awful—
And without warm clothing,
Katya goes—her feet grow sorer—
And she sees disaster.
Then behold, here come the Moskals—
No . . . her heart is dying . . .
She flies up and goes to greet them,
Asks: "Is there among you,
My own Ivan, my dear lover?"
But they say: "He is not."
Then as is the Moskal habit,
They laugh loud and murmur,
"What a woman! We have talent!
Whom are we not fooling?"
Katerina looked in wonder,—
"But you seem like people!
Do not weep, my son, my burden!
What must be, is coming!

I'll go further—I've been coming . . .
And perhaps I'll meet him.
I will give you up, my darling,
And myself will perish!"

Meanwhile howls and roars the blizzard,
O'er the field it eddies.
In the fields is Katya standing,
Weeping without measure.
Then the blizzard seems to tire,
Here and there relaxes;
Katerina would be weeping,
But her tears are lacking.
Then she looked upon the baby;
Drenched with tears, it's ruddy
As the flower in the morning
Shining in the dewdrops.
Katerina smiled a little,
But her smile was bitter;
Round her heart, a coal black serpent
Wound itself around it.
Near at hand she heard some voices.
Nearby is the forest.
At its edge, hard by the roadside,
There's a little cabin.
"Let us go, my son! 'Tis twilight.
They may let us enter.
If they don't, within the courtyard
We can find some shelter.
Near the cabin we will rest us,
Ivas, my poor baby!
Where will you find nightly shelter,
When I am not with you?
From the dogs, my darling baby,
You must seek for friendship!
Dogs are evil—they will bite you.
But they will not blame you,
Will not say amid their jesting,
'Go, eat with the puppies!' . . .
O my poor, unhappy person,
What will happen to me?"

A parentless dog will have its own fortune.
An orphan can find a good word in the world;
They beat him, growl at him, and bind him in fetters,
But no one tries ever his mother to mock.
Ivas they will ask and before he can answer,
They give not the child e'en a moment to speak.
At whom on the street are the dogs wont to bark?
The naked and hungry who sleep 'neath the hedge.
Who leads the blind beggars? The black-haired young bastards . . .
For one is their fate. . . . They have little, black eyebrows,
And people all envy the beauty they have.

IV

Beneath the hill's a narrow valley
And like the brows of noble sires,
The oaks of Hetmans proudly stand;
There is a pond, a dam, and willows,
The ice holds fast the little pond,
A very little open water
Is shining like a kettle red—
By heavy clouds the sun is shaded,
The wind blows up and how it howls,
There's nothing near, around all's white,
And loud's the roaring of the woods.

So the blizzard moans and whistles,
Howling through the forest.
Like the sea, the field is whitened
By the driving snowflakes.
From the cabin comes a woodsman
To inspect the forest.
What is that? It is a pity
That you can see nothing!
"That is wild and devilish music!
Keep from out the forest!
In again! . . . But what is coming?
Who the devil are they?
Misery has sent them onward,
It must be real trouble.

O the devil! Just look at them!
See, they are snow-covered!
—"Are these Moskals? Are they really?"
—"What is this? You're crazy."
—"Where are now my darling Moskals?"
—"Here they are. Look at them!"
Katerina came a-flying,
And she did not falter.
Maybe Muscovy this moment
Comes where she can find it,
For she only knows in sorrow
That she calls a Moskal.
Through the stumps and through the hedges
She flies out, scarce breathing,
Stood barefooted in the roadway,
Rubbed her face—it's freezing.
Then the Moskals came to meet her,
Every one on horseback,
"This is ill! This is my fortune!"
With them, as she's looking,
In the van the captain's riding.
"Ivan, O my darling!
O my heart! my dearest lover!
Where have you been hiding?"
She ran to him, caught his stirrup . . .
He looked on in wonder . . .
With his spur his horse he's striking . . .
"Whither are you fleeing?
You remember Katerina?
Have you now forgotten?
Look again, my darling sweetheart!
Look again upon me!
I am your beloved Katrusya!
Why do you dash from me?"
But his horse he spurred on wildly
And he will not notice.
"Wait a moment, darling sweetheart!
See, I am not weeping.
Ivan, have you now remembered?
Darling, look one moment!

Yes, by God, I am Katrusya!"
—"Fool, let go my stirrup!
Take away this crazy woman!"
—"God! you do this, Ivan!
Are you leaving me forever?
After all you've promised?"
—"Take her off! What is the matter?"
—"What's this? Take me from you?
Why? O tell me, O my darling!
To whom are you giving
Your Katrusya, who once followed
You into the garden,—
Your own Katya, who bore to you
Your own son and baby?
O my father, darling brother!
If you will avoid me!
I will be a servant to you . . .
Go and love another . . .
Love the world! . . . I will forget it
That you were my lover,
That I bore a son unto you,
Bore it out of wedlock,
Wedlock! What an awful scandal!
Why must I die for it?
Leave me now, forget me always,
But don't fail your offspring!
You're not leaving? O my darling!
Do not hurry from me.
I will bring your son to see you. . . ."
She has dropped his stirrup,
Rushes to the house. Returning
She is bringing Ivas;
Dirty, swaddled, stained with weeping
Is the child unhappy.
"Here he is! Just look upon him!
Where have you been hidden?
He is gone and vanished, baby!
Father has disowned you!
O my God! My child unhappy!

What can I do with you?
O you Moskals! O my darlings!
Take him with you from me!
Oh, my friends! Do not forsake him!
He is but an orphan!
Take him with you; hand him over!
He's your captain's offspring!
Take him with you! I will leave him,
As his father left him,—
May God grant an evil hour
Will not leave him also!
'Twas in sin your mother bore you
Into God's bright world.
Grow on up, a jest for people."
On the road she laid him.
"Let him go and seek his father,
As I have been seeking."
Then she vanished in the forest,
Leaving him behind her.
The child wept—It made no difference
Unto them—They left it.
There it is and to its sorrow
Did the woodsman find it.
Katya, barefoot, ran a-crying,
Ran into the forest,
Cursing Ivan, her base lover,
Weeping, weeping, pleading.
So she ran into the clearing,
Cast one glance around her,
Saw the pond, ran to it, stood there,
Waited for a moment,
"God, accept my sinful spirit!
Pond, you take my body!"
In she leaped—passed 'neath the surface,
And the water gurgled.

So the black haired Katerina
Found what she was seeking.
Then the wind howled o'er the surface—
There was no trace of her.

It is not the stormy breezes
That the oak will shatter.
'Tis not hard and 'tis not evil,
When the mother dieth;
Little children are not orphans,
Who have lost their mother,
For her good name stays behind her,
And her tomb stays also.
Evil people all are laughing
At the little orphan;
At the tomb his tears are flowing,
But his heart is quiet.
But what is there for that orphan,
What can be left for him,
When his father has not seen him,
And his mother leaves him?
What is there for that poor bastard?
Who will speak unto him?
He has neither folk nor cabin;
Woe and sand and highways . . .
Noble face and mother's tresses . . .
Why? For men to know him!
She has stamped him, cannot hide it.
Would his beauty withered!

V

Unto Kiev went a kobzar,
Sat him down to rest him;
And his escort was well burdened
With a pile of baskets.
For a little child was escort.
Now he drops to slumber.
At that moment the old kobzar
Sings a song of Jesus.
All who pass, come up and offer
One, a roll; one, money
To the old man and the children
Come to the young escort.

All the beauties look and marvel
When they see him ragged:
"See what wondrous hair fate gave him,
But it gave no fortune!"
Then along the road to Kiev
Comes a coach resplendent,
In the coach there is a lady
With her lord and family.
See, it stopped beside the beggars
And the dust soon settles.
Ivas ran up. Through the window
A soft hand has beckoned.
Then the lady looks at Ivas
And she gives him money.
The man looked—but turned so quickly—
For he recognized him,
Recognized the black eyes sparkling
And the black hair also,
Knew his son stood there before him
And he would not take him.
For his name the lady asked him.
"Ivas"—"That is pretty!"
Then the coach moved on and Ivas
In the dust was hidden.
They picked up the things they'd gathered,
Stood up, both poor devils,
Made their prayers at sunset hour,
Went along the highway.

THE HAYDAMAKI

The Haydamaki is the longest of all the poems of Shevchenko and the most striking historical epic in Ukrainian literature. It describes the bloody revolt of the Koliishchina which broke out under the leadership of Maksim Zaliznyak and Gonta in 1768 and culminated in the massacre of the Poles at Uman. It was the last and one of the most terrible convulsions that shook Ukraine in its relations with Poland.

Shevchenko lays great stress upon the murder of the sexton which actually took place in 1766 and throughout the poem there are sim-

ilar cases where he has changed the historical course of events for a better artistic effect but this is common to all epic poems.

The story is briefly this: a group of Polish szlachta attack a Jew and to save himself he tells them stories of the wealth of the Orthodox sexton in Vilshany. They go there and torture him and he dies under their ministrations. In the meanwhile his daughter Oksana, who loves the poor orphan Yarema, comes to the aid of her father and is carried off. Yarema, knowing nothing of the fate of his beloved, goes to seek his fortune at the Sich. He joins the forces of Zaliznyak and his fury is redoubled when he learns of the fate of his beloved. The Haydamaki with the aid of the Zaporozhians rise in revolt. For his desperate and ferocious bravery, Yarema receives the name Halayda, "the homeless one." He succeeds in rescuing his beloved from a tower where the Haydamaki are besieging her captors and finally takes to a convent and returns to marry her. The Haydamaki continue their course and capture Uman, and savagely destroy their foes.

The poem is a true expression of the wild and merciless character of these peasant revolts against the hardships and oppressions inflicted upon them by brutal and careless masters. Shevchenko could feel this popular frenzy and describe it but he was not himself primarily a soldier and the finest parts of the poem are the lyrical descriptions of Ukrainian nature and the pictures of Ukrainian peasant life, even under the utmost hardships. He was too humane and cultured to enter fully into the wild emotions of the revolting people and to revel in the details of the battles. We could not imagine him enjoying the society of the atamans and hetmans of the past whom he consistently tried to applaud.

Rather he was deeply moved by their successes and failures. His heart was in the glorious past and the terrible present but it is of the latter that he sings the most sweetly, as he pleads also for the development of a new and better Ukraine. Yet this does not make him any the less rebellious that his people have been overthrown and are now in poverty and misery. It does not make him any milder to their oppressors. The *Haydamaki* is his last great outburst of hatred against the Poles and really it completes the cycle of the *Kobzar* which aims to picture Ukraine in the past and present through the Romantic tradition.

We include here the poet's preliminary description of himself and of Ukraine.

The Haydamaki—Prelude

All things ever come, ever pass, without ending . . .
Oh! whence are they coming? And whither they go?
The fool and the wise man know naught of the future.
Each lives and each dies. . . . One plant bursts into bloom,
Another has faded, has faded forever . . .
The winds spread abroad all the yellowing leaves,
The sun still arises, as in the past ages,
The stars are as bright as they were in the past,
And so will they be. . . . Come thou, moon, with thy white face,
Come out to make merry across the blue sky,
Come out to admire the stream and the fountain,
The infinite sea; thou still dost shine on
As o'er ancient Babylon and its fair gardens,
So over the fate that will call to our sons.

Eternal and endless! . . . I love to hold converse
With thee just as if thou wert brother or sister,
And sing to thee tales thou hast whispered to me.
Oh! teach me once more how to deal with my burden!
I am not alone, and no orphan am I;
For I have my children, what fate will they suffer?
To bury them with me? My soul is alive!
Perhaps it will find that life there is less bitter,
If some one repeats all those bitter sweet words
Which it has so generously poured out with weeping
And which it so humbly has sobbed o'er their cradles.
No, I will not hide them, my soul is alive!
As heaven is blue and it has no fixed limit,
The soul also has no beginning or ending.
And what will it be? Not mere words of deceit.
Oh! let some one cite them again in this world,—
The unknown dread always to pass to the future.
So speak up, my maidens, for you need to speak!
It loved you, my maidens, the world's pretty flowers,
And it loved without ceasing to sing of your fate.
Until it is sunrise, feast on, all my children,
And I shall think how I can find you a host.

Sons of mine, O haydamaki,
Broad's the world, and freedom,
Sons of mine, go out to revel
And to try your fate!
Sons of mine, who still are youthful,
Children still untutored!
Who in all the world will greet you,
If you have no mother?
Sons of mine! My little eaglets!
Fly to Ukraina!
Though the evil spreads around you,
Still you're not 'mid strangers.
There a soul sincere will meet you,
'Twill not let you perish.
There, O there . . . 'tis hard, my children!
When they let you in a cabin,
They will meet you, ridicule you,—
Those, you know, are people;
They are learned, reading, cultured,
And the sun they censure,
"For it rises where it shouldn't,
Shineth incorrectly.
It should change its stupid doings."
What can you do with them?
You must listen; perhaps truly
The sun never rises
As in books the learned read it . . .
Surely they are clever.
But what will they say then of you?
Yes, I know your glory.
They know how to scoff and mock you,
Hurl you 'neath the benches.
—"Let them stay there,"—they will answer,
"Till the father rises
And will tell us in our language
Of his famous hetmans,
Or the fool will sing unto us
In dead words that bore us
And present some old Yarema

In his sandals. Fool! They beat him
But they taught him nothing.
Of the Kozaks, of the hetmans,
Lofty tombs are with us—
Nothing else remains among us,
And these too they ruin.
And he wishes us to hearken
To the elders chanting.
Vain the labor, O sir brother!
If you wish for money,
You will sing what they desire!
Sing about Matyosha
Or Parasha, who's our pleasure,
Sultan, spurs, and parquet.
There is glory! But he's singing
'The blue sea is playing.'
And he's weeping, and your hearers
In their peasant costumes
Weep with you." 'Tis true, O wise man!
Thank you for the counsel!
Warm's the furcoat, but I'm sorry
That it doesn't fit me.
And your wise words are embroidered
With a lie accursed.
Pardon me—shout for your pleasure,
I will still not hearken,
Will not call you to my circle;
You are wise, good people,
I'm a fool and unattended
In my little cabin
I will sing and sob unceasing
Like a child unhappy.
I will sing; the blue sea's playing,
And the wind is blowing,
Black's the steppe and with the breezes
Speaks the tomb forsaken.
I will sing—and then there opens
Wide that tomb so spacious.
To the sea the Zaporozhtsy
The broad steppes all cover.

Atamans on swift black horses
With their banners waving
Dash ahead; the thundering rapids
'Mid the reeds all hidden
Howl and groan and rage in fury
And their roar strikes terror.
Yes, I hearken and I worry
And I ask the elders:
"Why are you so sad, my fathers?"
"Son, it is not cheerful,
For the Dniper's angry at us;
Ukraina's weeping."
I weep too. That self-same hour
In their shining squadrons
Atamans set out a-marching,
Captains with their nobles,
And the hetmans, gold-attired;
To my humble cabin
They have come, they sit around me
And of Ukraina
They will speak and tell me stories,
How the Sich was founded,
How the Kozaks boldly traversed
Rapids, rafting downwards,
How they revelled on the blue sea,
Dashed into Skutari,
How they lit their pipes beloved
At the Polish fires;
Then came back to Ukraina,
How they nobly feasted . . .
"Play, kobzar! Pour out, O tapster!"—
Let the feast continue!
Minstrel, sing!" and all the Kozaks—
As Hortitsa's bending—
Leap erect and never stopping
Start their joyous dances.
Pitchers come and pass around them,
Till they all are empty.
"Revel, sir, throw off your zhupan,

Revel, wind, a-blowing!
Play, kobzar! Pour out, O tapster,
Till our fortune cometh!"
Young and old, the Kozak heroes
Dance the native dances.
"Fine, O children; good, O children!
We will be the masters!"
Atamans at the rich banquet
Act as in the council.
They are walking, are conversing,
But the noble heroes
Feel the spell and join the others
Though their legs are aging.
And I marvel, I am looking,
Smiling, while I'm weeping,—
I marvel, I'm smiling, I'm wiping my eyelids—
I'm not all alone, for I live with those men!
In my little cabin as on the steppes boundless,
The Kozaks are sporting and singing their pride;
In my little cabin, the blue sea is playing,
The tomb sadly sobs, while the poplar is rustling,
The maiden is singing, Hritsa, very softly,
I'm not all alone! I can live with those men!
These are all my blessings, money,
These are all my glory,
And for counsel I will thank you,
For the counsel evil!
Stay with me, while I am living,
O dead words that bore you,
To pour out my tears and sorrow.
Comrades, now farewell!
I must go and speed my children
On a distant journey.
Let them go—they may be meeting
Some revered old Kozak,
Who will greet my little children
With his aged weeping.
That suffices. I will tell you,
Lord of lords it makes me.

So I'm sitting at the table,
Singing, meditating;
Whom to ask? Who is the leader?
Outdoors it grows lighter.
Fades the moon, the sun is blazing,
And the boys are rising,
They have prayed, have donned their clothing,
They now stand around me.
Sadly, sadly, just as orphans,
They have bowed in silence;
"Bless us, father,"—so they beg me,
"While we have the power,
Bless us that we find our future
In the wide expanses."
—Keep on waiting. Life's no cabin,
You are little children,
Foolish too. For who will lead you
As his gallant comrades?
Who will lead you? And I suffer,
Suffer with you near me!
I have fed you, have caressed you,
You have grown a little.
Now be people; there you'll notice
All is clearly written.
Pardon me that I learned nothing,
For you beat me roundly,
Beat me well and much you've taught me
Of a certain order.
Tma and *mna* I know, but *oksiyu*
I cannot explain it.
What will men remark? My children,
We will go and ask them.
I have now an aged father
(Kin I have none living)
He will give me counsel with you,
For he in his wisdom
Knows how hard it is to wander
As a homeless orphan;
And he is a noble spirit,

Kozak through and through.
He is not ashamed to utter
Words his mother taught him,
When she reared him in his cradle,
Trained him as a youngster;
He is not ashamed to utter
Tales of Ukraina
Which the blind old bards repeated,
Singing in the evening.
And he loves the old true legends,
Sings the Kozak glory,
Loves them. Come, my little children,
To his kindly counsel.
Had he years ago not met me
In the worst of seasons,
Long ago would I be buried
In a foreign country,
Buried and all men would scorn me.
"He was good for nothing."
Hard it is to fight and conquer,
If you have no motive.
Times have changed, till dreams are useless.
Let us go, my children!
If he did not let me perish
In a foreign country,
So he will accept and greet you
Just as his own children,
And from him, with pious praying,
Start for Ukraina!

Greetings, father, in the cabin!
On your ancient threshold
Give a blessing to my children
For a distant journey.

TO THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF KOTLYAREVSKY

This is one of the earliest poems of Shevchenko and was apparently written soon after he had learned of the death of Ivan Kotlyarevsky which took place in 1838. Kotlyarevsky with his parody of the *Aeneid* published in 1798 had commenced the modern Ukrainian literature in the vernacular. He had transformed Aeneas and his companions into typical exiled Ukrainian Kozaks and had used every opportunity to call back memories of the past. It was a frivolous but yet absolutely serious piece of work and it aroused an interest in Ukrainian history and manners that had been long forgotten. Kotlyarevsky followed his poem in after years with the first Ukrainian dramas of peasant life, *Natalka Poltavka* and *Moskal Charyvnyk*. These two became popular and the young Shevchenko on receiving the news of the death of the poet poured out his lamentation that the one great Ukrainian poet had passed away. It is a sincere tribute to the founder of the literature from the man who was to be its greatest exponent. There is the same mixture of elements of nature and of history that the poet was to employ so often later and it marks that union of social and historical themes under the influence of which Shevchenko began his work.

To the Eternal Memory of Kotlyarevsky

Warm's the sun, the breeze is blowing
From the field to valley,
O'er the water bend the willows
With the red kalyna.
In a bush all solitary
There's a nest a-swaying.
Where's the nightingale a-straying?
Ask it not, it knows not!
For the evil, it is absent.
It is gone and perished
For the good, their heart is pining.
Why did it not stay here?
So I look and think about it;
When the eve was coming
It would sing in the kalyna.
No one could ignore it:
For the rich who had good fortune

Like a loving mother,
Would steal up and look upon it,
Never pass, unseeing;
And the orphan who at dawning
Rose to go to labor,
Would awake and listen to it,
As if his dear parents
Were alive and talking to him,
And his heart beat gaily,
And the world seemed like an Easter,
People all were people;
Or the maiden seeking daily
For her lover's coming,
Pines away just as an orphan,
Knows not where to seek him,
Goes to wander o'er the pathway,
Weeping 'mid the thicket,
Then the nightingale would warble,
Stop her bitter weeping.
She would listen and then smiling,
Walk through the dark thicket,
As if she spoke to her lover.
And the bird was singing.
So softly, so calmly, as if he were praying,
Until a foul villain came out to do harm
With knife in his boot-top—his steps echo dully,
They come and they stop; but the song's to no purpose.
It cannot restrain the cruel heart of the villain.
He ruins his voice, but can teach nothing good.
Let him go on raging, until he shall perish,
Until the crow caws with hoarse voice at his death.
The vale will sleep; in the kalyna
The nightingale sleeps too.
The wind blows softly through the valley,
The echo passes in the grove.
The echo, like God's voice, is fading,
The poor arise to go to work,
The cows come out into the thicket,
The maidens after water come,

The sun is shining—all seems happy!
The willow smiles—and all is good.
The villain weeps, the savage villain.
It was so once—now look and see:
Warm's the sun, the breeze is blowing
From the field to valley,
O'er the water bend the willows
With the red kalyna.
In a bush all solitary
There's a nest a-swaying.
Where's the nightingale a-straying?
Ask it not; it knows not!

So recently, recently here, in Ukraina
The old Kotlyarevsky sang sweetly to us;
The poor man is silent, has left just as orphans
The mountains and sea, where he formerly dwelt,
Where he led his bands of outcasts,
Taking them to travel,
All is left, and all is saddened,
As Troy's ancient ruins.
All is grieving—but his glory
Like the sun is shining,
For the kobzar dies not. Glory
Ever will proclaim him.
Father, you will reign forever,
While mankind is living.
While the sun shines in the heavens,
Men will not forget you.

O spirit most righteous! accept my poor tribute,
Accept it as stupid and yet as sincere!
Leave me not an orphan as you left the forest,
Fly to me and help me, if but for one moment,
And sing to me songs of my own dear Ukraine.

O grant that my soul may yet smile in its exile,
May smile even once, as it hears how you brought
The whole Kozak glory in words so appealing

Into the poor hut where an orphan did dwell.
Fly here, O gray eagle, for I am an orphan
Alone in the world, in a land that is strange;
I look at the sea which is deep and far spreading,
And seek to go over it—there is no boat!
I think of Aeneas, I think of my country,
I think and I weep, as a child that is grieving.
The waves come and roar and they break over there,
And perhaps I am dull and there's naught that I notice,
Perhaps a bad fate on that side is a-weeping?
The orphan is mocked by all people he meets!
Let them keep on mocking, for there the sea's playing,
For there is the moon, and the sun brighter shines,
The grave with the wind on the steppe is conversing;
Were I with them there, I'd be no more alone.

O spirit most righteous! accept my poor tribute,
Accept it as stupid and yet as sincere!
Leave me not an orphan as you left the forest,
Fly to me and help me, if but for one moment,
And sing to me songs of my own dear Ukraine!

DUMKA

Water flows into the blue sea,
But it never leaves it.
A young Kozak seeks his fortune,
Seeks, but does not find it.
He has gone where chance has beckoned,
Where the sea is playing,
And his Kozak heart is playing,
But his thoughts arouse him:
"Where have you not gone, a stranger?
To what hands entrusting
Father and your aged mother
And your smiling sweetheart?
People there are not your family,
Life with them is very hard.

With them there you cannot weep,
Cannot freely talk."
Far from home the Kozak's sitting,
While the sea is playing,
Thinking, he will find good fortune
But he meets with sorrow.
And the cranes hie homeward swiftly
In their ordered row.
Weeps the Kozak,—on life's pathway
Piercing thorns have grown.

HAMALIYA

During the early part of the seventeenth century, the Zaporozhian Kozaks, especially under the ataman Peter Sahaydachny, made many raids into the Black Sea and there was hardly a single city of importance, even including Constantinople itself, which was not the victim of their attacks. They showed to the full the weakness of the shore defences of the Ottoman Empire and the defects of its navy. In their small boats, hastily constructed below the rapids of the Dniper, they dared to put to sea in the middle of the wildest storms that raged on the Black Sea and their courage and seamanship stood them in good stead against the superior arms and inferior morale of their enemies.

This poem seems to be an independent poetical creation of Shevchenko to bring out this period of Kozak history and to picture the naval exploits of the Zaporozhians. It is in a way a continuation and amplification of the poem *Ivan Pidkova* but it presents a rounded picture in concise form of one of these expeditions. The name of the leader Hamaliya seems to have been created by the poet, and while the sequence of events described is true to history, the poem is not based on any specific historical event.

HAMALIYA

"Oh, there's no wind and there's no wave now coming
From our own Ukraina.
Do they gather and prepare the Turk to battle?
We hear not in foreign prison.

Oh, blow, Oh blow, O wind, across the waters,
From Great Luh bring tidings.
Dry our tears and mute our clanging fetters,
Scatter all our sorrow!
Oh, play on, play on gaily, sparkling blue sea,
And beneath the sturdy barges
Which the Kozaks sail, scarcely can their caps be seen,
And they will come for us.
Oh, God, our God! E'en if they fail us,
Carry them from Ukraina,
We will hear the glory, all the Kozak glory,
We will hear and then we'll perish!"

So sang the Kozaks in Skutari's strong prison,
So sang the poor devils and loudly they wept,
They pour out their tears and they uttered their sorrow.
The Bosphorus trembled, for never before
Had it heard laments of Kozaks; with great groaning,
It roused itself mightily like a gray bull,
And roaring aloud, it sent out to the distance
A wave which resounded upon the blue sea.
The sea then reechoed the Bosphorus message
And bore it to Lyman, and Lyman repeated
Unto the Dnipro the sad voice of the wave.
Our mighty sire 'gan to laugh
Till from his mustache foam ran down.
"O brother Luh, don't sleep but listen!
Khortitsa sister?"
Both replied,
Luh and Khortitsa, "Yes, I hear it."
Dnipro was covered with the barges
And thus the Kozaks loudly sang:

"Over there the Turk is happy
In a well built palace.
Hay, Hay! Sea, play on,
Roar and break the cliffs.
We will go as guests!

"There the Turk has in his pockets
Talars, yes, and ducats,
  We won't rob his pockets,
  We'll tear them and burn them,
And we'll free our brothers.

"There the Turk has janissaries,
A pasha's their leader.
  Hay, there, look out foemen,
  We know not to waver!
That's our strength and glory!"

So they sail; they're gaily singing,
Winds hear all the waters;
In the van sails Hamaliya,
Guiding his boat wisely.
Hamaliya, you are anxious—
Then the sea is maddened,
He heeds not. They soon are hidden
By great waves like mountains.

All sleep in the harem. As if in high heaven
Skutari, Byzantium sleep! There's a roar
Of terror from Bosphorus, groaning and tossing.
It seeks to awake the great city from sleep.
"Disturb it not, Bosphorus; you will be sorry!
I'll break your white cliffs into powdery sand,
And hide them away." Thus the blue sea was roaring.—
"Pretend you don't know what fine guests I now bring
Unto the great Sultan." When thus the sea threatened,
(For it loved the stedfast, the brave tufted Slavs)
The Bosphorus feared. So the Turk kept on sleeping
And in his rich harem the Sultan dozed on.
Alone in Skutari in prison the Kozaks,
Poor devils, sleep not. But for what do they wait?
They pray to their God in the midst of their fetters,
The waves pass along and reecho their song.

"O God, dear God of Ukraina,
Let us not die in foreign prison,
Us, free Kozaks, in fetters bound!
'Twill be a shame both here and there
To rise from out a foreign coffin
And to Thy righteous judgement come,
With our strong hands encased in iron
And there in fetters before all
Stand out as Kozaks!"
"Slash and kill!
Destroy the unbeliever foul!"
The cry's outside. What can it be?
Hamaliya, your heart's anxious.
Now Skutari's raging!
"Slash and kill"—upon the ramparts
Thus shouts Hamaliya.

Skutari thunders with its cannon,
The foemen roar and rage apace;
The Kozaks charge without a waver,
The janissaries fall in heaps.
Hamaliya's in Skutari,
Through the hell he wanders,
He, himself, breaks in the prison,
Shatters all the fetters.
"Fly, you birds, fly for your fortune
To the wide bazaar!"
Then the falcons spread their winglets,
Long time none had told them
Such fine words of Christian speech.
Then the night was startled;
The old mother had ne'er noticed
How the Kozaks paid.
Do not fear, but cast your glances
On the Kozak banquet.
It is dark as on a workday
But it is a banquet.
The bold boys with Hamaliya
Eat not leavings calmly

Without meat. "We want good lighting!"
To the clouds above them
With the many masted schooners
All Skutari's burning.
Then Byzantium was startled,
Rubbed its sleepy eyelids,
And it crossed to bring assistance,
With its teeth a-gnashing.

Byzantium awakes and rages
And gains the bank with eager hands,
She reached it, screamed, and started back,
Grew mute before the bloody knives.
Skutari's blazing like a hell;
Through the bazaar red blood is flowing
And turning red the Bosphorus;
Like black birds gathered in a grove,
The Kozaks fly without a care.
No one dares now to interfere,
The fire burns not these brave men.
They wreck the walls. The Kozaks bear
The gold and silver in their caps
And load with spoils the heavy boats.
Skutari blazes, work abates,
The brave boys meet, they gather round
And light their pipes from blazing fires.
Upon the boats—they lounge around
And cleave the mountain-high red waves.

They sail forth as from their homeland—
Just as if they're playing,
That is like the Zaporozhtsy,
And they're sailing, singing:
"Our otaman Hamaliya,
He's a worthy leader,
He got boys and then he started
O'er the sea to revel—
O'er the sea to revel
And to gather glory

And release from Turkish prison
All his captive brothers.
Oh, then sailed up Hamaliya
Right into Skutari.
There he found the Zaporozhtsy
Facing bitter sentence.
Ho! then cried out Hamaliya,
'Brothers, we'll be living,
We'll be living, wine be drinking,
Killing janissaries,
And we'll deck our homes in velvet
And with costly kilims.'
So the Zaporozhtsy sallied
To sow well their meadows,
Sowed them well and reaped the harvest,
And they sang together:
'Glory be to Hamaliya,
Through the world he's famous—
Through the world he's famous,
Through all Ukraina,
For he did not let his comrades
Die in foreign prison.' "

They sail and sing. Behind them there
Courageous Hamaliya's sailing,
Just as an eagle guards its eaglets.
The wind blows from the Dardanelles,
Byzantium can find no rest,
For it still fears that once again
Chernets may light up Galata
Or the hetman Ivan Pidkova
May summon them to give a present.
So they sail. Behind the billows
Reddens all the sun.
And before them the kind waters
Murmur on and call.
Hamaliya, winds are blowing.
Here, O here, the sea is ours.
And they hid behind the billows—
And the rosy mountains.

TO OKSANA K . . .

This was long supposed to be a complete poem written by Shevchenko in memory of his first love. Only in 1914 was it fully realized that it was the preface to an unfinished poem *Maryana Chernetsa* (Maryana the Nun) and a considerable part of this poem was then published. Unfortunately Shevchenko did not complete it and efforts to determine the definite form of the poem have been in vain. The text as we have it opens with the love of a peasant girl Maryana for a poor boy Petrus. He leaves to seek his fortune. The girl promises to be true to him, although her mother is determined that she will marry a rich old man. The poem was then another in the series dealing with the poor girl condemned to marry someone whom she did not love, one of the favorite themes of Shevchenko.

TO OKSANA K . . .

(In memory of what was long ago)

In the forest winds toss wildly
Branches and the poplars,
Break the oaks, and o'er the meadows
Sweep the tumbleweed.
So is fate: one man it crushes,
And another tosses,
Me it carries off; its purpose
It can never vision.
In what distant land am I destined to perish?
Where shall I lie down for my last endless sleep?
If there is no fortune and there is no joy,
There's no one to feel. There's no one to remember
Or say, e'en in jest, "Let him rest in his slumber,
It was his good fortune to perish so young."
It's true, O Oksana, O black-haired young stranger,
You do not remember that orphan of yore,
In his ragged coat, but who always was happy,
If he could but look at your beauty divine.
When you without speech, without words him instructed
To speak with his eyes, with his soul, with his heart,
With whom you have smiled and have wept and have sorrowed,
To whom you have sung the sad tale of Petrus?
You do not remember! Oksana! Oksana!

But I am still weeping, still sorrow till now.
I pour out my tears when I think of Maryana.
I look unto you and for you do I pray.
Remember, Oksana, O black-haired young stranger,
And deck your Maryana with blooms bright and gay,
And smile at Petrus, smile at him and be happy,
And be it a joke, yet remember the past.

THE DREAM

After Shevchenko's return from Ukraine in 1843, he had changed his mind as to the vital needs of his country. Henceforth Poland takes a secondary place among the oppressors and his wrath is concentrated more on Russia and the Russian monarchy. It was difficult and dangerous to express this opinion in St. Petersburg and almost impossible to secure the publication of works which criticized the imperial regime. Yet Shevchenko did not hesitate and in a series of poems, partly mystical, partly ethical, he spoke out against the oppression of his native land.

The *Dream* which he labels a comedy and to which he prefixes a passage from the Gospels is one of the bitterest of these attacks. He introduces it with a series of criticisms against various types of selfish and unpatriotic people and contrasts himself, shedding his own blood for his native land and weeping day and night, with these self-satisfied and self-righteous egotists. Then he passes to what purports to be a drunken dream for reality is so ghastly that he feels it necessary to be in an unusual state to dare to notice it.

First he visits Ukraine, the poor and helpless widow, who has been abandoned with her population to the mad whims of an autocratic despot and the feudal lords. The misery of the people is overwhelming beneath the exactions of the upper classes.

In his attempts to flee from the world he is carried to Siberia and here he is no more happy for the sound of the fettered prisoners working in the mines brings home to him again man's inhumanity to man. He probably alludes to Ukrainian exiles but it is possible that he is citing the example of the Decembrists who suffered for their ideals and of the Polish revolutionists of 1831.

The capitals are the next places which he visits in his imagination

and here he is completely disillusioned. He condemns the Muscovite slavery to the Tsar, the power of the Tsar to beat the highest members of his organization and their corresponding right to tyrannize over their subordinates, until the lowest of the people, the common man, is proud and happy to be beaten indirectly by the Tsar. It is another example of Shevchenko's belief that the Moskals were incapable of appreciating liberty and that this sharply differentiated them from the people of Ukraine, the worthy sons of which were ready to sacrifice themselves for their ideals and for the truth.

Then when he sees the statue of Peter the Great erected by Catherine, the two monarchs who had ruined Ukraine, he turns to the misery and captivity of Polubotok and the Kozaks who were sent to St. Petersburg to build the capital and to perform other severe labor under which they died in great numbers between 1720 and 1725. Polubotok, the acting Hetman, was himself arrested and died in prison in 1724.

He sees the poverty of the people, even the Russians, the girls forced by poverty to enter upon prostitution, and he returns to the palace where he beholds the ridiculous character of the Tsar and the subservient manners even of the Imperial Family, who are unworthy to acquire such power and unable to hold it.

Then he wakes up with the renewed explanation that it was all a dream.

The poem is a violent attack upon the lack of truth and righteousness in the Russian dealings with Ukraine and the injustice which emanates from the throne. The attack upon the Imperial Family and in particular the Empress whom he called a dry mushroom so infuriated Alexander II that the poet was excluded from the general amnesty on his accession to the throne. It is the one of the series which emphasizes specially the political side of the Russian domination and it contains some of the most powerful denunciations of political oppression of all of Shevchenko's work.

THE DREAM

A Comedy

The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.—St. John, 14, 17.

Each man's fate is special to him,
And his own broad highway;

One man builds, another ruins,
Or with eye unsated
Looks a third beyond th' horizon
Seeking to discover
What to seize and carry with him
To his grave as booty.
This man counts as lawful victims
Kinsmen in his cabin;
This one, crouching in the corner,
Aims to kill his brother;
While another, mild and sober,
With a pious feeling,
Stealthily as any kitten,
Sees when a misfortune
Strikes you and he slyly buries
Deadly knife within you.
Ask no mercy! He will hearken
To no wife or children.
And another, rich and gen'rous,
Builds the churches richly
And he loves so well his country
That he sorrows for it,
And he therefore most sincerely
Sheds its blood like water,
And the company all silent
With their eyes wide open
Like the lambs—say, "Let him do it!
It perhaps is needed!"

It is needed! For there is not
Any Lord in heaven!
You beneath the yoke are falling,
And you're still believing
There is paradise above you?
No, there's not! There's not!
Vain's your effort! Just think sanely,
All upon this planet,—
Be they tsars or be they beggars—
All are Adam's children.

He . . . and he . . . what do I matter?
Not a bit, good people;
For I feast and have a banquet
Sundays and on work days.
Are you bored? Are you complaining?
Heavens, I don't hear it.
Do not shout!—My blood I'm drinking,
Not the blood of others!

One time returning home unsteady
From a rich banquet late at night,
I thought upon this all my journey
Until I came unto my cabin.
At me the children do not shout,
A wife's never scolding,—
'Tis calm as in heaven.
On all is the blessing of God—
In heart as in cabin.
So I could sleep calmly;
But when a drunken man once sleeps,
E'en though the guns roared loudly,
He would not stir a hair.
A dream, a dream unprecedented
Disturbed my slumbers.
A sober man would gladly tipple,
A miser Jew would give a penny
To have a glimpse of what I saw.
Yes, devils two.
I see as if it were an owl
A-flying over fields and banks and thickets,
And o'er deeply cut ravines,
And across the steppes unbounded,
And the forests.
And I fly after her unceasing.
I fly and bid the earth farewell.

"World, farewell! Farewell, O earth,
Cruel and unkind land!
All my bitter torments cruel
I'll hide in the cloud.

Greetings, my dear Ukraina,
Poor and helpless widow!
I will fly to you and meet you,
From the cloud will speak,
In a quietly sad meeting
Seek advice from you.
I will fall on you at midnight
Like the dew of morning.
Let us talk and let us counsel
Till the sun arises,
Till your poor and little children
Stand upon the threshold.
Then farewell, my darling mother,
Poor and helpless widow!
Help your children, truth is living
At the throne of God!"
I fly and look. The dawn is breaking
And the sky grows brighter;
Nightingales in the dark forest
Greet the rising sun;
Softly blow the morning breezes,
Steppes and fields are clearer;
'Mid ravines above the waters
Willows seem far greener;
Flowers bend beneath the dewdrops;
Poplars just as sentinels
Stand apart and separated,
Talking with the meadows.
Everything upon the landscape
Is all wreathed in beauty,
Growing green, and being freshened
By the morning dewdrops;
Nature all is being freshened
And the sun is greeting . . .
Nowhere is there a beginning,
And there is no ending.
No one can perfect its beauty,
No one can it ruin, . . .
It is full and fair. . . . My spirit!

What do you know of it?
Oh my poor and wretched spirit,
Why do you weep vainly?
Why do you complain? For the ills you don't notice?
When you cannot hear how the people do weep?
Then look and look well! For I now shall be flying
Above, far above the swift-moving blue clouds.
No rulers are there, nor are punishments known.
The people's loud cries and their laughs are not heard.
But see, in that paradise which you are leaving,
They strip the patched clothing from off of the beggars,
They strip with the hides—for the poor must find shoes
For youthful young princes. They pummel the widow
To pay her poll taxes; they fetter her son,
Her son, her one son, the one child which she has,
Her hope—and they send him away to the army!
'Tis but for a while—but in mud and in filth
The boy soon is bloated,—from hunger he dies,
His mother is reaping the wheat at forced labor.
Do you see him? Eyes, my poor eyes!
Why do you have vision?
Why did you not dry to blindness,
Washed out by your weeping?
Here a ruined maiden wanders,
Wanders with her bastard.
Both her parents cast her off,
Strangers will not take her! . . .
All the elders flee her presence,
The young lord rejects her,
With the twentieth libation
Drinks away their souls.

Does God from behind the clouds
See our tears and sorrow?
He may see it but he helps us
Like the giant mountains
Of past ages which were flowing
With the blood of humans.
Oh my sad and troubled spirit,

You are sad and wretched.
Let us drink the bitter poison,
Lie down on the ice,
Let us send our thoughts to God,
Tell them to inquire
How much longer it is fated
Hangmen rule this world!
Fly across the world, my thought, my bitter sorrow!
Gather all the sorrows and the evils too
As your ancient comrades!—You were reared to know them,
You have loved them truly; and their heavy arms
Wrapped themselves around you. Pick them up and fly
And then scatter them throughout th' entire sky.
Let them turn it black or red,
Let them fan the flames,
Let again the serpent's venom
Fill the earth with corpses.
And without you I shall somehow
Bury all my heart
And shall seek that selfsame moment
Paradise apart.

Again I fly above the earth,
Again I say farewell to it.
It is hard to leave the mother
In her roofless cabin,
But it is still worse to notice
Both her tears and rags.
I fly, I fly, the wind is howling;
Before me is the snowbank white;
Around me are the woods and marshes,
The fog, the fog, a boundless waste.
No human sound, there is no trace
Of any human footstep here. . . .

Ye foes, and ye who are not foes,
Farewell! I shall not come as guest!
Go on feasting, have your banquets,
I shall yet not notice—

All alone for evermore
I'll rest in the snowbank—
But until you know for certain
That there is a country
Not bedrenched with tears and blood,
I will rest here gladly . . .
I shall rest. . . . But yet I'm hearing
Sounds of fetters clanking
'Neath the earth. . . . And I will notice.
Oh, the wretched people!
Where are you? What are you doing?
What are you now seeking
'Neath the earth? No, no, perhaps,
I cannot be hidden
In the heavens! Why this torture?
Why these woes I feel?
Who has suffered ill from me?
Whose harsh arms have fettered
My poor soul within my body,
Have inflamed my heart
And my birdlike strength—
Have disturbed my thoughts?
For what,—I know not, but I suffer,
Bitterly I suffer.
And when I repent my evil?
When will be the end?
I don't see, don't know.

The wilderness has roused itself,
As from its last and narrow dwelling
For that dread final judgement day
When all the dead for truth arise.
These are not the dead, the murdered,
And not asking judgement,—
They are people, living people,
Stricken down in chains,
From deep holes the gold they're fetching
To pour down the lusty throats
Of the greedy. They are convicts.

Why? Almighty God alone
Can reply. . . . Perhaps He also
Has not noticed this!
Here the branded convict stumbles
With his heavy fetters;
He, a tortured ugly bandit,
Grits his teeth in anger—
Tries to kill his lucky fellow
Who has suffered less!
And among them in their torture,
Wrapped in fetters heavy,
Is th' almighty tsar of freedom
Branded with the selfsame mark!
In the prison torture quiet,
Weeping not or groaning;
Once your heart is warmed with blessing—
It will never cool.

But where are your thoughts, O ye flowers of roses?
Admired and bold, well beloved little children?
To whom did you give them, my friend, to whose hands?
Or are they forever sunk deep in your heart?
O brother, don't hide them! No, spread them abroad!
They'll gather and grow and go out in the world!

What is this trial, what will it be?
It is coming, for it's chilly,—
Frost the mind awakens.

Again I fly. The earth grows darker.
My mind's asleep. My heart is aching.
I look—the houses o'er the roadways,
The cities with their hundred churches
And in the cities like the cranes.
The Moskals formed in solid lines;
Well fed, in splendid boots arrayed,
And laden down with heavy chains,
They are drawn up; again I look;
Down in the valley like a pit,

The city glows as in a fire;
Above it hangs a heavy fog
Black as a cloud—To it I fly . . .
A city without end.
    But is it Turkish?
    Or is it German?
Or yet it may belong to Moscow . . .
    Palaces and churches
    And pot-bellied lords,
But not a single peasant cabin.
It has grown dark. . . . The fire's blazing
And spreading all around,—
I was afraid. . . . "Hurrah! Hurrah!
Hurrah!"—they all did shout.
"Well, well, you fools! Where is your mind?
Why are you glad at this?
What are you burning?"—"Hey, khokhol!
He does not know parades.
We are parading! For He deigns
Himself to sport to-day!"
"But what is this amazing toy?"
"You see the palace there . . ."
I push my way; a turncoat there,
(I thank you, he confessed!)
With all his gaudy uniform;
"Where did you come from, man?"
—"From Ukraina!"—"So that you
Do not know how to speak
Like people here?"—"Oh, yes,"—I say,—
"I do know how to speak,
I do not wish to."—"What a crank!
I know the entrance here;
I serve within, and if you wish,
I'll try to take you in
Into the palace. Only, see,
We are enlightened, friend,—
Don't spare your cash for what you'll get."
"Be gone, you fool accursed!"
Once more I made a sudden change

And was invisible,
And so I boldly walked within.
My God, my only God!
It was a heaven! Parasites
Were there, all wreathed in gold!
And then He, tall and angry too
Strode out among the crowd.
Beside him came the empress too,
On whom his love did rest.
She seemed just like a dry mushroom,
So thin and long of leg,
And constantly she nods her head
To bring both good and woe.
"Is that a goddess, there, I see?
The devil take you now!
And I, a fool, who had not seen
This game a single time,
Believed your stupid, ignorant
Verse hucksters as they are.
O what a fool! And what a price!
I dared to trust as pledge
A Moskal's word! Go on and read,
And see the faith they have!"
Like gods, the nobles are around,
In silver and in gold,
Like well-matured and aged boars
With muzzles and with fat.
Like them they shove, like them they push
To be the nearest ones
Unto the Persons; They may give
Or deign to offer fruit.
It may be small but yet it's fine,
E'en though but half a pear,
If They distribute it.
They stood arranged in solid rows,
All quiet,—not a word—
A bell.—The Tsar then stammers out,
Likewise Her gracious self,
Just like a heron midst the birds,

She hops and struts about.
Long time the two walked back and forth
As pompous as two owls
And they conversed in muttered voice
(Afar I could not hear)
About their country, so it seems,
About the newest ropes,
About the very last parades.
And then the empress took
Her seat upon a little stool.
I look; the Tsar goes up
Unto the oldest man and then
He hits him in the face.
He slapped him and a younger man
Upon the belly struck.
Oh, what a shout! The victim struck
His junior on the back.
He chose another lesser man
And he some one below.
And so it went, till each in turn
Beyond the palace gate
Upon the streets kept up the game
Until they pummeled well
The still unbeaten Orthodox
And they began to yell
And cry; and how they all did roar.
"Our father revels, that is sure!
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"
I had to laugh, it was so good.
They even gave to me
The selfsame blessing. Ere the dawn
They all were sound asleep.

But here and there the Orthodox
Upon the corners groaned
And groaned and groaned and thanked the Lord
For all their father gave.
'Mid tears and laughter I set out
To look around the place.

Night was like day. And so I looked.
So many palaces
Above the quiet river stood.
Its bank was edged with stones
Throughout and so I stood and looked
Like a benighted fool.
The job was done with thoroughness
Amid the mud and slime.
It was a marvel. So much blood
Was shed of human kind—
Without a knife! And on that side
A fortress and a tower
Just like a needle overlong,—
'Twas wonderful to see,
And clocks were striking everywhere.
Then as I turn away—
A horse flies up and with its hoofs
It pounds a mighty rock.
He sits upon the unsaddled horse
In cloak of strange design,
Without a hat—his head is wreathed
As with a sort of leaf.
The horse rears up—and towards the stream
As if it would leap o'er
And he extends his lordly hand
As if he wished to seize
The whole wide world. Who is this man?
I read myself the words
That are engraven on the crag.
"The Second to the First."
At first it seemed a title strange
But now I know the truth.
It is the first who crucified
Our own Ukraina;
The second stabbed with savage blow
The widow spent and poor.
Oh hangmen! Foes of human kind!
You both have had your fill,
You've stolen much! What did you take
Unto that world with you?

It was so hard, so very hard
For me when I did read
Ukraina's sad history!
I stand and sink in heart. . . .
And still it softly, softly sings
And yet so sadly too
That these were very monstrous deeds.

"From the ancient town of Glukhov
Have the troops departed
With their shovels in due order
And they sent me with them
As appointed hetman.
O our God of love and mercy!
O the tsar of evil!
Cursed tsar, and wicked ruler,
Viper never sated!
What have you done with the Kozaks?
You have filled the marshes
With their skeletons so noble!
You have built a city
On their dead and buried bodies!
And in loathesome prison
Me, a free man and a hetman,
You have killed with hunger
In my chains! . . . O tsar, O tsar!
God will never sever
You and me. It's hard and painful
To hang o'er the Neva.
Ukraina is not near me
But it may have perished.
I would fly and look upon it
But God does not will it.
Mayhap Moscow's burned the region
And has turned our Dnipro
To the blue sea! Has it opened
Lofty tombs, our glory?
It may be, but, Lord of mercy,
Pity us, dear Lord!"

All was still. I saw while looking
How a white cloud covers
The gray sky, and in those clouds
Like a beast that's roaring.
It's no cloud, a white bird settled
As a cloud descending
O'er the tsar, the cruel and evil,
And began to speak:

"We are fettered firmly with you,
Murderer and viper!
At the last great day of judgement
We will shelter God
From your always greedy eyes.
Us from Ukraina
You have driven, naked, hungry,
To the foreign snowbanks.
You have slain us and have taken
Our skins for your mantle.
You have sewed it with our sinews
And have clad your city
In new robes. Look and admire!
Palaces and churches.
Revel on, O savage hangman,
Cursed, ever cursed!"

So we flew and so we wandered.
Then the sun was risen,
And I stood and looked with horror
At the scenes occurring,
For the poor were now in motion,
Hurrying to labor,
And the Moskals at the crossroads
Were drawn up in order.
On the streets the girls were running
Homeward, not to labor.
They were sleepy, for their mothers
Sent them out to labor
All night long without a respite
And to earn a living.

And I stood, depressed and troubled,
Thinking and remarking,
How severe a task for mortals
Just to earn their living.

And the brotherhood decided
To join in the senate,
Sign its papers and to plunder
Father, yes, and brother.
And among them all the turncoats
Seek the way of fortune.
So they murder like the Moskals,
Laughing and tirading
At their fathers who neglected
To teach them as children
To speak German,[1] and at present
They exploit their sorrows.
Peacocks, peacocks! Mayhap father
Sold his last poor cow
To the Jews, before you knew well
The new Moscow language.
Ukraina! Ukraina!
These too are your children,
These are your fresh youthful flowers,
Spotted now with ink.
Deafened by the Moscow bleatings
In the German gardens.
Weep, O weep, my poor Ukraina,
As a childless widow!

Merely go and look at leisure
At the tsars, the palace.
What is done there! I am going.

[1] German. It is usually assumed that Shevchenko is using the word German to mean foreign, i.e. Muscovite or Great Russian. There is very probably an allusion to the hold that the German bureaucracy had over the entire empire. Only a few years before, the famous marshal Suvorov in answer to a request from the tsar as to what reward he desired, answered: "Your Majesty, make me a German." The following years had not broken the hold of this clique upon the Russian administration. Cf. the Epistle.

The pot-bellied elders
Stand in rows; they sigh, they're snoring,
And they all are pompous
Like a turkey, and they're glancing
At the door askance.
Sunk in slumber, they are waiting.
Then the bear approaches
From his lair. He barely, barely
Totters on his way.
And he's swollen, till he's bluish,
For his cursed orgy
Bothers him. And how he bellows
At the fatted fellows.
All the bellies—no exception—
Fall to earth before him.
He has taken off his bandage
And all now are trembling,
That are left. Just as a mad man,
He strikes at his lessers,—
They fall down; the smaller people—
And they quickly perish.
He turns to the mass of servants.
They are lost and ruined.
To the Moskals—little Moskals,
There is only groaning.
To the earth they fall! A marvel
Is come to this planet.
Then I look to see what follows,
What my little bearcub
Will do now. Why, he is standing
With his head dejected
Like an orphan. Is he showing
Aught of bear's true nature?
He's a kitten—it is wondrous,
And I laughed about it.
Then he heard and how he thundered,
And I too was frightened.
I awoke, and then I noticed
It was a strange dream.

It was strange. For only mystics
And the race of drunkards
Have such dreams. So do not marvel,
Dearest brothers, ever,
That I told you not my story
But what I had dreamed.

TO ŠAFAŘÍK

This dedication to Šafařík was used as the preface to the poem the *Heretic* in which Shevchenko glorifies Jan Hus. It expresses, better than any other poem, the spirit with which the poet entered the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius and his dreams of a union of the Slavs in which all would be truly free. It is interesting that this preface is a direct answer to Pushkin's poem, *To the Slanderers of Russia,* in which he expressed his assurance that the future of the Slavs lay in submitting to the domination of Russia.

Pavel J. Šafařík (1795-1861) was one of the brilliant leaders of the movement for a Slav brotherhood following the ideas of Jan Kollár. He had published a *History of the Slavic Languages and Literatures* and a very valuable work on *Slavonic Antiquities,* so that his name was well known to the entire group of young men at Kiev.

TO ŠAFAŘÍK

Evil neighbors burned the dwelling,
It was new and modern,
Of a neighbor. Then well warmed,
They lay down in slumber,
But they quite forgot the ashes
By the wind were scattered;
On the crossroads lay the ashes.
Under them there smouldered
A lone spark of that great fire,
Smouldered, did not perish,
Waited kindling, as th' avenger
Waits for the right season,
For the hour. So it smouldered,

Smouldered and it waited
There upon the traversed crossroads,
And began to perish.

The Germans once destroyed by fire
The mighty house and then they scattered
The Slavic family far and wide,
And stealthily they sent into it
The cursed snake of family feuds.
There poured out freely streams of blood,
The fire they extinguished,
And then the Germans parcelled out
The place and the poor orphans.
The children of the Slavs grew up,
All bound in fetters heavy.
In their slavery forgetting
They were in the world.
But amid the burnt out embers
Smouldered on the spark
Of their brotherhood and waited
Firm courageous hands again—
So it waited. For the fire
You saw hidden deeply
With your bold, courageous spirit
And your eye like eagle's.
Seer, you caught the glimpse of freedom,
Freedom, and of truth!
And the Slav wide-scattered family
Sunk in dark and slavery,
You collected all together,
Yes, and e'en the corpses
And those Slavs no longer. Then you
Mounted on the debris,
Stood upon the crowded crossroads
As Ezekiel.
'Twas a marvel—all the corpses
Rose, their eyes they opened.
Brothers clasped the hands of brothers
And they promised loudly
Oaths of quiet love and friendship
Ever and forever!

Into one great sea there gathered
All the Slavic rivers.

Glory be to you, O wise man,
Czech and Slav together,
That you did not leave to perish
In the German swampland
All our truth! Your mighty ocean
Of the Slavs, reviving,
Will be full again, 'tis certain
And the boat goes sailing.
With its mighty sails wide spreading
And a helmsman noble
It will sail on a free ocean
O'er the boundless waves.
Glory to you, Šafařík,
Ever and for ever!
That you called into one ocean
All the Slavic rivers!
Welcome in your mighty glory
My poor, lowly tribute
That is neither wise nor mighty,
To that Czech renowned,
To the martyr great and holy,
Hus the well revered.
Take it, father, I will humbly
Pray to God Almighty
That the Slavs may be hereafter
Worthy friends and brothers,
Sons of that same light of truth,
Heretics forever,
Like that noble heretic,
Who at Constance suffered!
May they give true peace to mortals,
Glory too forever!

THE GREAT GRAVE

In the preceding poems Shevchenko laid stress upon the political corruption and cruelty of Russia in *the Dream* and on the general ethical conception of Slavonic brotherhood in *the Heretic.* In the *Great Grave* he summarizes the leading faults in Ukrainian history and character. He called the poem a mystery and so it is in the traditional sense of the word, for it is a careful and complete exposition by means of symbols of all that had led Ukraine to its deplorable situation. It also incorporates a definite criticism of Bohdan Khmllnitsky, whom the poet was regarding by now as the source of Ukraine's troubles.

The poem opens with the appearance of three souls who are debarred from heaven and hell. At first sight their crimes seem negligible but they represent three stages in the downfall of the country. The first had crossed the path of Bohdan with a pail full of water (a good omen!), without knowing that he was going to Pereyaslav to submit to Moscow. That act marked the end of the hopes of a strong, united and free Ukraine. The great Hetman had almost won his country's independence and his reliance on the word of the Tsar caused the division of the country and the loss of everything. This act of the first caused the death of "father, mother, self and brother and the dogs"—in a word, the death of all Ukraine.

The second soul had watered the horse of Peter after the overthrow of Mazepa, who had united Ukraine with Charles XII of Sweden in an effort to recover the liberty of at least part of the land. The soul represents that part of the country that had been loyal to Peter; the slaughtered sister, that part which had fought for liberty. Again the mother represents the entire Hetmanate, and the grandmother who buried the young girl is almost certainly the whole conception of a great and independent country.

The third soul, a mere child at death, smiled at Catherine, when she was on her way to liquidate the Hetmanate. It represents that Ukraine which was willing to accept ignorantly and gladly even the few shreds of liberty left by Catherine and the mother again symbolizes all that was left of Ukraine that was forced to yield.

Thus each soul speaks for a smaller and smaller Ukraine, a lesser and lesser demand upon Russia, but even by yielding there was no salvation. They only succeeded in debarring themselves from the heaven of a free country or at least an honorable death.

Then come three crows. The second crow, representing Poland, has seen the end of the country, has driven the nobles to Siberia, and has feasted in Paris with the emigrés after 1831. The third crow represents Russia. It has fostered tyranny but despite that has been sold out to the Germans.

The first crow represents Ukraine. This crow confesses its evils, its treachery, its bloodshed. It acknowledges that during the centuries it has destroyed Ukraine by its civil wars, its treachery, and its evil. Yet it must weep even now for all that it has done and it predicts the coming of twins, one like Gonta, the leader of the Haydamaki, who will fight for freedom and the other like the modern people who care nothing for virtue. It hopes with the aid of its friends to ruin the first and help the second.

Then come the three bards, one blind, one crippled, and one hunchbacked. They are all that is left of Ukraine, for they know the songs, they can glorify the past, but they are perfectly ready to sing of their nation's glory to please the conquerors, if they can only secure a living and some financial return. The tomb of Bohdan is to be excavated by the enemy. They see nothing of the disgrace of this, nothing of the misery around them. All they ask is a good profit.

They arrive at Subotiv. The people are taking orders from the conqueror who expects by this symbolic act of opening the tomb of the Ukrainian leader to secure a rich profit. There is nothing there—nothing but a few old bones and the disappointed and humiliated Russian official flogs the bards for daring to put in an appearance. Even their servility has brought them no more than servility brought the souls. The mystery ends with the question as to when the Great Grave that contains the liberty of Ukraine will be opened.

The poem is obscure, for no open defiance would have stood any chance of spreading among the people and would have subjected the poet himself to certain punishment. Yet its impression is very powerful. It is a formal declaration of war by Shevchenko on the masters of Ukraine and it is also an expression of his abiding confidence that somehow there will be a better future. It is not based on a political program; there is less of the ethical aspects than we find elsewhere but it is a definite history of the Ukrainian spirit which can never die.

THE GREAT GRAVE

A Mystery

Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.
Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

—Psalms 44, 13-14 (Psalm 43, 14-15)

Three Souls

Three snow-white little birds came flying
Up through Subotiv and they lighted
Upon a torn and twisted cross
On an old church.—"The Lord forgive us:
We are now souls, no longer people!
And from this height we'll see more clearly
How men will excavate the grave.
The sooner that grave will be opened,
The sooner may we enter heaven.
For so the Lord has promised Peter:
'You may admit them into heaven
When the Moskal has all well plundered
And has dug open the Great Grave.' "

First Soul

"When I was a mortal being,
I was named Prisea.
I was born in this same village
And was reared right here.
In this churchyard with my comrades
I was wont to play.
With Yuras, the hetman's son,
We played blindman's buff.
And his mother would come out
And invite us in
To the nearby house and then
Raisins, figs, and fruit,
She would often give to me.
She was fond of me.
And when guests came from Chihrin,

Oft the hetman sent
Unto me to come and join them,
Clothes and shoes they gave me.
And the hetman was my escort,
And he used to kiss me.
So here in Subotiv village,
I was reared and blossomed
Like a flower. All the people
Loved and welcomed me,
And to no one ever, ever
Did I speak unkindly.
And I was a black haired maiden
Beautiful, I tell you.
All the boys were wont to court me,
Many sought my hand.
For the moment I was ready
With my towels woven
And I soon would have consented,
When misfortune came.

"Very early, 'twas near Christmas,
Yes, it was a Sunday,
I ran out to fetch some water . . .
But I found the spring
Was all muddy, ceased its flowing,
And I kept on flying . . .
Then I saw the hetman's party.
And I got the water.
With full pails I passed before them,
For I had no knowledge
That he went to Pereyaslav
For an oath to Moscow! . . .
It was very hard to carry
To the house that water.
Why had I not sense to shatter
All the pails that held it?
Father, mother, self and brother
And the dogs I poisoned
With that thrice accursed water!

That is why I'm punished;
That is why they keep me, sisters,
From the gates of heaven."

Second Soul

"This, my sisters, is the reason
Why they barred me also,
For I watered well the horse
Of the Moscow ruler
There in Baturin, when he
Went back from Poltava.
I was but a little maiden,
When at night the Moskals
Set in flames great Baturin
And they murdered Chechel
And they drowned the young and adults
In the river Seyma.
I fell down among the corpses
In the very chambers
Of Mazepa. And around me
Mother and my sister,
Murdered in each other's arms,
Lay there dead beside me.
Then by force and violence
From my stricken mother
They removed me once for all.
And I kept on begging
From a Moscow captain that he
Would kill me at once.
But they did not. No, they sent me
As a toy for Moskals.
But I fled and found a refuge
'Mid the raging fire.
There was but one house left standing
In all Baturin.
In that house they had determined
That the tsar would stay
On his way back from Poltava.
And I went with water

To the house. . . . And then he beckoned
With his hand to me.
And he bade me tend his horse.
So I gave it water.
I had no idea I'd wrought
Such a grievous sin.
I had scarcely reached the building
When I fell down dead.
The next day, when he departed,
I was safely buried
By grandmother, who was staying
'Mid the growing fire.
For she laid me out with kindness
In a roofless building.
On the next day she died too
And decayed right there,
For in Baturin was no one
Who could bury victims.
But they well the house demolished
And they burned the beams,
Turned them into coals with curses.
I must keep on flying
Over the ravines and meadows
And the Kozak steppes.
But the reason why I'm punished,
That I do not know.
May be, 'twas because I aided
Every one in need,
And to please the tsar of Moscow
Watered well his horse."

Third Soul

"See, my birthplace was in Kaniv.
I was but a baby,
When one day my mother took me
In her arms to see
How the Empress Katerina
Came there on the Dniper.

Mother sat with me in silence
On an oak-grown hill.
I was weeping, but I know not
Whether I was hungry
Or if something hurt me badly
On that very day.
Then my mother tried to cheer me,
Pointed to the Dniper,
And she showed to me the gorgeous
Golden galley towering
Like a building. . . . And upon it
Sat the princes, nobles,
Leaders, and amid the throng
The renowned tsaritsa.
Then I looked, and then I smiled,
And I lost my soul!
Mother died. And on one morning
Both of us they buried.
That is why it is, my sisters,
That I now am punished,
That they still do not admit me
For that grievous sin!
Did I know, a little baby,
That the empress was
Ukraine's bitter enemy
And a hungry wolf?
Tell me this, my sisters!"
It grows dark. So let us hasten
For the night to Chuta,—
What is now the next to happen.
There we can find out!

So the spirits spread their wings
To the forest flying,
And together in an oak tree
Rested for the night.

Three Crows

First

"Caw! Caw! Caw!
Goods Bohdan stole,
  Took them all to Kiev,
  And he sold to knaves
All the goods he stole."

Second

"I have drunk in Paris.
With Potocki and Radziwill
Three gold coins I squandered."

Third

"O'er the bridge Satan comes.
  The goat is on the water.
Woe is coming! Woe is coming!"

So called the crows and they flew up
From different sides and lighted
On a dead tree upon a hill
Amid the forest, three of them.
With feathers upright as 'gainst cold,
Each grimly eyed the other crows,
Just as three stern and aged sisters,
Who lived alone and lived alone,
Until they were with moss o'ergrown.

First

"That's for you, and that's for you!
I have just been flying
To Siberia and stealing
From a poor Decembrist
Bits of gall. And so you see
I have something still to eat.
But in all your land of Moscow
Is there food for you?
E'en the devil knows there's nothing."

Third

"Sisters, no, there is abundance.
I cawed out three royal orders
On one road alone. . . ."

First

"On which road? The road of fetters?
No, you have done very well."

Third

"And six thousand souls I strangled
In one verst alone. . . ."

First

"Do not lie, there were but five.
It was with von Korff.
Go on boasting for it shows you
Taking praise for others.
You are only pickled cabbage,
And you, gracious lady,
Take your banquets there in Paris!
O you cursed pagans!
You have shed a bloody river
And have chased your nobles
To Siberia—it's proper
And you talk about it.
What a noble peahen you are!"

Second and Third

"What have you done better?"

First

"It is not for you to ask me!
You were not yet born,
When I poured the wine in plenty
And shed lots of blood.
Marvel how! You both have read
Karamzin's creations,

And you think that you are like me!
Get away, you blockheads,
You have never been in fetters,
Beggars featherless!"

Second

"No one dares to touch you.
She did not rise early,
Who was drunk till daylight
But who drank and slept."

First

You have drunk enough without me
With those priests of yours!
Devil take you! I burned Poland,
With its kings and all.
Without you, you tongue unruly,
I would still stand firmly.
With the free Kozaks, my victims,
What have I accomplished?
Unto whom have I not sold them,
Unto whom betrayed them?
But they live forever, curses!
I believed that with Bohdan
I had buried them forever—
But the rascals rallied
With the foul upstart Mazepa.
What was there accomplished!
When I think of it, I shudder.
Baturin I burned,
And the Sula there at Romna
I dammed with the leaders
Of the Kozaks—With the others,
With the simple Kozaks
Finland's fields I made to sparkle
And I piled them high
And I sent my children
To Orel . . . and in Ladoga
Band on band I killed

As they filled the awful swamps
At the tsar's command,
And the famous Polubotok
In the prison smothered.
Oh, that was a holy feast!
And when hell was sated,
Blessed Mary there in Rzhavets
Once again was sobbing.

Third

I have had a splendid living.
I intrigued with the foul Tatars,
With the Torturer I revelled,
I have drank with dear Petrukha,
And I sold them to the Germans.

First

You have done your work superbly;
You have chained up all the Kozaks
  In the German fetters.
  Now lie down to sleep!
Devil knows, what sort of person
They will see in me.
For I handed all to slavery
And the power of the nobles
I increased with uniforms,
When I introduced these lice;
All of them are nobles' bastards!
And the cursed Sich is loaded
With the German spawn.
And the Moskal's just as bad.
He knows how to warm his hands!
I am cruel and just the same
I cannot see calmly
What the Moskals do in Ukraine,
Do unto the Kozaks.
Such an order do they publish:
'By the mercy of the Lord,
You are Ours, all is Ours,

Whether good or bad!'
Now they've come to excavate
The 'antiquities'
From the tombs . . . for there is nothing
In the house to take,—
You have plundered all so nicely!
But the devil knows full well
What they're seeking now again
From the worthless grave!
They should wait a little longer
And the church would fall.
Then they could describe two ruins
In the journal *Bee!*"

Second and Third

"Why did you call us to come here?
Just to see a grave?"

First

"Yes, a grave! Yet now two marvels
Are about to happen;
On this night in Ukraina
Twins are to be born.
One will scourge, as once did Gonta,
All the hangmen evil!
And the other—will be ours,
Help the hangmen work.
Ours pinches in the belly . . .
And I have read often
When this Gonta is a man,
All of ours perish.
He will plunder all their goods,
Not forsake a brother,
And will scatter truth and freedom
Through all Ukraina.
So take care, my dearest sisters,
What they are preparing.
They are making fetters ready
For our knaves and friends."

Third

"I will close his eyes forever
With a golden shower."

First

"He, the cursed charlatan,
Will not heed the gold."

Third

"I will tie his hands with tokens
Of the royal honors."

Second

"I will bring from everywhere
All the ills and torments."

First

"No, my sisters, 'tis not needed.
While mankind is blind,
There is need to bury him
Or there will be trouble.
See there; high above our Kiev
Is his broom uplifted.
O'er the Dniper and Tyasmino
Is the earth hard shaken.
Do you hear? A groan is rising
Over old Chihrin.
And the whole of Ukraina
Laughs and sobs again.
Both the twins have now been born,
And the crazy mother
Laughing says that she will call both
By the name of Ivan!
Let us fly." And so they flew off,
And they sang, a-flying.

First

"Then will come our Ivan
O'er the Dniper to Lyman
With his Kuma."

Second

"The dear lamb will run off
So as to eat serpents
By my side."

Third

"When I seize him, when I catch him,
Unto very hell I'll fly
Like an arrow."

THREE BARDS

One was blind and one was crippled
And the third was hunchbacked,
Going to Subotiv singing
Of Bohdan to people.

First

"What is this the crows have uttered?
They have paved the way!
Just as if the Moskals kindly
Made a seat for them."

Second

"And for whom? They will not seat
Any man, I'm sure,
Counting stars."

First

"You tell the truth.
Maybe they will place
There a Moskal or a German.
Either of them there
Can find good support."

Third

"Why do you talk utter nonsense?
What are all the crows?
And the Moskals and the seats?

May the Lord protect us!
Mayhap they will bid us lay eggs
And hatch out some Moskals.
For there's rumors that the tsar is
Seizing all the world."

Second

"Maybe so! Upon the devil
They will be on high
For they are so lofty minded
That they'll reach the clouds
To crawl out . . ."

Third

"That's really true.
Or there'll be a flood
And the lords will crawl out there
And will look and marvel
How the peasants have to drown."

First

"You are men with sense,
But you have no whit of knowledge;
For they have created
All these phantoms just for this;
That men may not steal
River water and that never
They will plough the sand
That is there near Tyasma."

Second

"Devil knows their purpose!
You can't guess. So don't talk nonsense!
Just suppose we sit
Down beneath this tree before us.
And we'll pause a while.
In my pack I have two pieces
Of dry bread for us.

Let us stop and take our rest
Till the sun arise.
(They sat down). And who, my brothers,
Will sing of Bohdan?"

Third

"I will sing to men of Yassy,
And the Yellow Waters,
And the town of Berestechko."

Second

"They to-day won't fail
To bring to us splendid profit,
For around the grave
Is a crowd of people gathered,
And a few of nobles.
That will mean a lot to us.
Let us try our songs
As a sample."

First

"Not at all!
Let us rather rest!
Take our sleep. 'Twill be a good day.
And we'll sing enough."

Third

"So I say. Come, let us pray
And we'll go to sleep."

• • •

The bards beneath the tree soon slept.
The sun still slept. The birds are still,
But near the grave men have awaked
And they have started out to dig.
They dig one day, they dig a second,
And up on the third with toil
They dug until they reached a wall.

Then they rested briefly
But first they set a guard around,
For the captain ordered
Not to let a soul come near.
To Chihrin he sent
"For his chief." That chief disgusting
Came without delay,
And he marvelled,—"Yes, we must
Break the vault at once."
"'Tis the proper course."—They broke it
And they were all frightened.
In the grave some bones were lying
As if they were laughing
That they saw the sun again.
That's the wealth of Bohdan.
It's a skull and rotted feedtrough,
Bones encased in fetters.
Had a uniform appeared,
They could profit by it.
All were laughing and the captain
Was the jest of all.
There was nothing fit to take
And he had worked hard.
Day and night he had been striving
And it proved no good.
If Bohdan had chanced to happen
Into his stern hands,
He would put him in the army,
Till he knew he must not
Fool officials! And he runs,
Like a fool he cries,
Hits the face of Yaremenko,
Cursing in his Russian
All the crowd; he turns in anger
To my aged bards:
"What are you here for, you rascals?"
"Sir, we came just now
So that we Bohdan can sing."
"I'll give you Bohdan!

Rascals, knaves, and parasites!
You have made a song
For that foul accursed knave! . . ."
"We have learned them, sir!"
"I will teach you! Thrash them well!"
So they took and thrashed them
And they steamed their insides out
In a Moscow bath.
Thus the singing of Bohdan
Brought to them a profit.
So the small grave in Subotiv
Was cleaned up by Moscow.
But the great grave that is there
She has not located.

THE CAUCASUS

During the early part of the nineteenth century, Russia was occupied with the conquest of the Mohammedan mountaineers of the Caucasus who defended themselves long and ably especially during the time when Shamyl was in charge of their resistance. Pushkin glorified the Russian victories. Lermontov and Count Leo Tolstoy took a personal part in the conquest in behalf of the civilizing mission of Russia among the wild and untutored mountaineers.

Count Yakov de Balmen, a friend of Shevchenko at this time, had entered the Russian army and had been killed in the fighting in the Caucasus. His death deeply affected Shevchenko and the latter wrote this poem in which he expresses his sympathy with the mountaineers who were struggling for their liberty and caustically comments on the blessings of civilization which they could receive from Russia. The hitherto free peoples would become as Ukraine, they would become ruined serfs, and they would see only a travesty of the Christian religion and not its essence.

The poem expresses again Shevchenko's friendship with the foes of Russian tyranny and his sincere admiration for all peoples who are struggling for a real liberty. The loss of this, the loss of human dignity, cannot be counterbalanced by the extension of the vices of civilization and the creation of a sterile advanced culture.

THE CAUCASUS

Dedicated to my Yakov de Balmen

Oh that my head were tears, and mine eyes a fountain of waters, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my People! —Jeremiah, 9, 1

High mountains on mountains with clouds e'er surrounded,
Illumined by sorrow, with blood ever watered.
On Prometheus an eagle
Feasts throughout the ages.
Every day it's tearing, rending
Both his heart and body,
Rending but it ne'er drains fully
All his living blood,
For again he is revived
And again he's smiling.
And our human spirit dies not
And our freedom dies not;
And the greedy man ploughs never
Fields beneath the ocean,
Does not bind the human spirit
And the living word,
Does not carry off the glory
Of Almighty God.

'Tis not for us to quarrel with Thee,
'Tis not for us to judge Thy deeds.
It is for us to keep on weeping
And mix each day our daily bread
With bloody sweat and bitter tears.
The hangmen jest and mock about us
And truth sleeps on in drunken sleep!
When will it awake to action?
When will God be weary
And lie down to slumber peaceful,
Give us leave to live?
We believe Thy strength and power
And Thy living spirit,—
Truth will rise! And so will freedom!

And to Thee, Almighty,
Every tongue will pray unceasing
Ever and for ever!
And meanwhile the streams are flowing,
Streams of blood are flowing.

High mountains on mountains, with clouds e'er surrounded
Illumined by sorrow, with blood ever watered.
From there we in our Mercy boundless
Have drawn our heartfelt liberty,
Unfed and naked as it was,
And tracked it down. It lies 'mid bones
Of men once mustered in the army.
And tears? And blood? Enough is shed
To give their fill to all the rulers,
And drown them with their sons and scions
In widow's tears. . . . And those of maidens
Shed secretly the whole night long!
The hot and blazing tears of mothers.
The aged bloody tears of fathers!
Not rivers—seas have poured apace!
A sea of fire! Glory! Glory!
To dogs and hunters and to trainers
And to the tsars, our dearest fathers!
Glory!

Glory be to you, blue mountains,
Girded with your ice,
And to you, ye aged heroes
By God not forgotten!
Struggle on—and you will conquer!
God is helping you!
On your side is truth and glory
And the sacred freedom!

"The bread and hut—they are your own.
They were not begged, they were not given;
No one has seized them as their own,
No one has led you off in chains!

And we! But we are trained to write
And we can read the word of God,
But from the prison's lowest cell
Unto the highest throne above
We're all in gold—but naked too.
And knowledge! We all learn too well
The cost of bread, the price of salt.
And we are Christians,—churches, schools,
All good there is and God are ours!
But yet your hut allures our eyes!
Why does it stand in your domain
Without our sanction? Why do we
Not throw to you, if we so please,
Your bread as to a dog? You owe

To us the price for your clear sun!
And only that! We are not pagans,
But we are really Christians true—
We're satisfied with little. . . . So,
If you would really be our friends,
You could learn much of many things!
We have a world and what is more—
Siberia that none can leave.
And prisons? People? Without end!
From the Moldavian to Finn
On every tongue there is a seal.
For—there is happiness! . . . With us
The holy monk the Bible reads
And teaches us to realize,
A tsar who once did pasture swine
And took another's wife to him
And killed a friend—is now in heaven!
And so you see, what people we
Regard in heaven! You are dull
And not enlightened with the cross!
So learn from us! . . . Come join us now,
Pay us and so
To heaven go,
E'en though your family is destroyed!

Join us! What is there we don't know!
We count the stars, we sow buckwheat,
We curse the French, and we can sell
Or lose at will, when we play cards,
Real people—they're not negroes—no,
They're Christians too—but 'simple men.'
We are not Spaniards—Keep us, God,
From buying any stolen goods,
As do the Jews! We live 'by law!' "

By the law of the apostle
Do you love your brothers?
Hypocrites and idle talkers,
Cursed by the Lord!
For you love your brother's carcase,
Care not for his spirit!
And you rob him "by the law,"
For a coat for daughter,
For a dowry for a bastard,
For a wife's new footwear,
For yourselves for many reasons
Wife and children know not.

For whom wast Thou crucified,
Christ, the Son of God?
For us good folk or the word
Of the truth? Perhaps 'tis so,
That we mock at Thee, forever?
Is that why it happened?
The churches, chapels, and the ikons,
The candles and the incense smoke,
The endless, ever endless bowings
Before Thy image in the church
For stealing, for a war, for blood—
They pray to shed a brother's blood.
And then they bring Thee as a gift
A shirt they've stolen in the fire!
We're enlightened. So we're seeking
Others to enlighten.

To reveal the sun of justice
To the blinded children!
We will show all! Only let us
Take you in our power!
How to build and fill the prisons,
How to forge the fetters.
How to wear them, how to fashion
Narrow, useful lashes,—
We'll teach all! But give us only
Your own high blue mountains.
That is all—the rest we've taken,
All the land and ocean!

* * *

They banished you cruelly, friend so beloved,
My Yakov so dear! But not for Ukraina
But for its harsh hangmen you had to pour out
Good blood, not the bad, and they forced you to drink
The poison of Moscow from Muscovite cup.
O friend, my good friend, whom I'll never forget,
Come with your live soul to my dear Ukraina;
Fly with the brave Kozaks above its broad banks
And see on the steppe the old ruins of tombs,
And weep with the Kozaks their salt, bitter tears,
And look with me out on the steppes from a prison.
Meanwhile I will sow to aid you
All my verse and sorrow.
Let them grow until that moment
And speak with the breezes;
And the quiet wind from Ukraine
Will bear with the dewdrops
All my verses, bring them to you!
With a brother's sorrow
You, my friend, will meet and greet them,
You will read them softly,
And the tombs and steppes and blue sea,
Yes, and me remember.

THE EPISTLE

The Epistle is really Shevchenko's political and social testament. It summarizes all that he had seen and read and thought as to the fate of his country and it emphasizes the great gap which he saw between Russia in all its forms and Ukraine.

From the days of Peter the Great, there had come a steady flow of Western European (especially German) influence into Russia. Old Moscow had given way to the modern St. Petersburg and the scholars, including the historian Karamzin, had developed the theory of Russian history that the Ukrainians and especially the Kozaks were a mixture of Tatar tribes who had been more or less Russianized. The ambitious youths, the socially aspiring nobles, all were eager to go to the capital and to acquire there that advanced civilization which they could not find at home.

Shevchenko, bewailing in St. Petersburg the fate of his people and then returning to Ukraine to live, wrote this poem as an appeal to his fellow-countrymen to avoid this cheap adulteration of their ancient culture. He urged them to be themselves, to strive for a new and human and Christian order at home. Nobles and peasants alike have to repent of their evils, the old order of serfdom needs to be abolished, and men need to realize that they must live as brothers. The poem aims to unite all classes in the country for the good of mother Ukraine who has lost so many of her children and for the mutual good. Those who refuse to obey will be overwhelmed in the judgement of the coming revolution which will be directed against traitors as well as against the foreign foe.

Shevchenko attacks all of those who seek a closer union between Ukraine and Russia than between Ukraine and the other Slavs. As he expressed later in the preface to the edition of the *Kobzar* prepared in 1847, the Ukrainians have the same rights as the Russians, Czechs, Poles, etc. They equally deserve consideration as a part of the Slavonic world.

In the past they fought for every one but themselves. They ruined Poland but her fall destroyed the Kozaks and Ukraine. They aided Russia and were enslaved. To Shevchenko it is sacrilege to boast of such a history, when there is so much good available for the future, if they will only awake and see it and use it.

The poem is a statesmanlike and wise summary of Ukrainian history and the Ukrainian character. There is little of the extreme in it and it can well serve as a masterpiece of advice to a people. As such it ranks with the great specimens of its kind in world literature.

To my Dead and Living and Unborn Countrymen in Ukraine and not in Ukraine

MY FRIENDLY EPISTLE.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.
—I John 4, 20

Dusk descends, the light returneth,
And God's day is passing,
Once again the wearied people
And all things are resting.
Only I, as one accursed,
Day and night am weeping
At the always crowded crossways
But no one e'er sees it,
No one sees it, no one knows it,
They are deaf and hear not,
They exchange their heavy fetters,
O'er the truth they haggle
And the Lord neglect they always,
While they harness people
Into heavy yokes. For evil
They are ploughing, sowing.
The results? Just watch and notice
What the harvest will be!
Pay attention, O hyenas,
Crazy little children!
Look upon the quiet heavens,
At your own dear country;
Love with a sincere, true heart
Such a mighty ruin!
Break your chains and live as brothers!
In a foreign country
Do not seek and do not search for
What is non-existent

E'en in heaven and not only
In a foreign country . . .
In your home, you'll find your justice
And your strength and freedom!

The world has only one Ukraina,
Dnipro cannot be found elsewhere.
But you dash to a foreign country
To find another and a better,
More sacred good! And freedom too!
A closer brotherhood! You sought,
You found and brought from countries foreign
And carried into our Ukraine
The mighty power of great slogans,
And nothing more. . . . So now you shout
That God has made us not for that,
That you should bow unto injustice!
You bow your heads, as formerly,
And once again you strip the hides
From brothers, blind unseeing peasants
And to discern the sun of truth,
To German lands you call not foreign,
You rush again. . . . If you should take
With you the misery around you
And all the goods the masters stole,
Dnipro would stay a lonely orphan
With all of its most holy mounts!

Oh, if it should happen you never returned,
That you should rest there, where you truly were reared,
No children would weep, no mother would sorrow,
No one of God's friends would e'er notice your murmurs;
The sun would not warm, would not rot the manure
Upon the pure, broad, and the truly free land;
No person would know what brave eagles you are
And they would not nod with their heads a poor greeting.
Mark my words! Come! Act like humans,
For you will meet evil;
Swiftly will release be given
To the fettered people;

Judgment nears. Dnipro, the mountains
Will appear against you.
And the blood of your poor children
Will flow down in torrents
To the blue sea. . . . There'll be no one
Who will ever help you;
Brother will deny his brother,
Mother will her children.
Smoke like clouds will cover over
The bright sun before you,
And you will be met with curses
By your children ever.
Change your minds! And do not sully
God's bright face with foulness!
Do not try to fool your children
That they are sent hither
Only that they may rule others . . .
For an eye unlearned
Looks into their very spirits
Deeply, Oh so deeply!
For the children will soon notice
What a hide you're wearing;
They will judge you and the stupid
Will deceive the wiser.

If you had studied what is needful,
This wisdom would be yours by now;
But you thus climb the road to heaven:
"We are not we, and I'm not I.
I have seen all and well I know it,
There is no heaven, there's no hell,
There is no God, there's only I.
The little German self-possessed,
And nothing more!"—"It's fine, my brother,
What are you then?"
"The German's willing
To tell you, for we do not know!"

So you're set to go and study
In a foreign country.
There they'll tell you: "You are Mongols,
Mongols, Mongols, Mongols!
Tamurlane's the golden leader,
You're his naked children!"
They will tell you, "Slavs we count you.
Slavs, yes, Slavs, we count you!
Of your great and famous sires,
You are worthless children!"
You continue to read Kollár
With unceasing ardor,
Šafařík and Hanka also
And you strive to follow
All the Slavophiles. The language
Of the Slavic peoples—
You know everything, neglecting
What you're heir to!—"When we
Talk as we are duly practiced,
If the German shows us,
And will tell to us, moreover,
Our own past in lessons,
Then we can begin our answer!"

You have started nobly,
When the German gave the order.
You besides are speaking
So he cannot understand you,
He's a splendid teacher,
And not like the common people,
Then the shouting! Shrieking!
There is harmony and power,
Music, all is splendid!
History? It is the poem
Of a freeborn people!
Oh, you poor and wretched Romans!
Damn it—you're no Brutus!
But our Brutus and our Cocles
Are well-known forever!

Freedom grew and flourished with us,
In Dnipro was washed,
Sent her rays upon our mountains,
In our steppes was hidden!
In our blood she oft was bathed,
Slept together with us
On piled corpses of free Kozaks,
Corpses which they've plundered. . . .

To admire their old virtues,
Read again the story
Of that glory, read it over,
Word by word reread it;
Do not miss a single chapter,
Or a little comma—
Learn it well and you will answer
For yourselves. Who are we?
Whose sons are we? Of what fathers?
What is there that charmed you?
Read it and you soon will notice
Who's your famous Brutus?
Yes, slaves, the "footstools," filth of Moscow,
The noble lords of Warsaw's garbage,
Hetmans so noble and revered,
Do you pride now yourselves on that?
Content as sons of free Ukraina
To walk contented 'neath the yoke,
And do it better than your fathers?
Boast not; from you they'll strip the belts.
From them they tried out all the fat.
You are boasting that the brothers
Well the faith defended?
That they baked bread in Sinop,
Or in Trapezont?
True, 'tis true, they ate their fill
And you fade away,
On the Sich the clever German
Plants potatoes now;

You are glad to buy their crop
Eat it for your health,
And the Zaporozhia praise.
Whose blood in past ages
Made that land so very fertile
That potatoes grow?
You care not, so long as you
Raise a goodly crop.
You can boast that once we could
Beat the Poles in fight!
You are right, for Poland fell
But that ruined us.
And so your fathers poured their blood
For Moscow and for Warsaw too,
And handed over to their sons
Their fetters and their fame!
Ukraina struggled bravely
To her utmost limit.
Now her children crucify her
Worse than Poles e'er dreamed of;
For instead of beer—they draw out
Blood from every body;
But they claim they wish to give light
To a mother's vision
With the fires of the present,
Guide the poor blind singer
In his ignorance and darkness
For the age and Germans.
Fine it is! Go on and lead him!
Let the aged mother
Learn the method of beholding
These her modern children!
Show your nature! 'Tis for knowledge—
Worry not; for Mother
Will pay well for all these lessons.
Eyesores vanish quickly
On the eyes of your base grabbers!
You will see the glory,
Living glory of your sires

And your evil fathers . . .
Do not fool yourselves, however!
Go to learn and study
And the foreign knowledge master,
But don't spurn your own.
God will punish every mortal
Who forgets his mother.
And his children will avoid him,
Keep him from their cabin;
Strangers too will drive him onward,
And the evil have not
In the whole wide world a refuge
Cheerful welcome giving.
I am sobbing, when I'm thinking
Of the heroic exploits
Of our sires; they were mighty!
Yes, but to forget them,
I would give up half the pleasure
I shall ever have here . . .
Of such nature is our glory
And of Ukraina! . . .
So go on and read the story
Till awake you're dreaming
Of the ills, and the mounds open
And reveal their secrets
Right before your eyes, and then
Ask the martyrs frankly,
How and why and for what purpose
They have been so punished?
Oh, embrace, my dearest brothers,
E'en your poorest brother—
Let your mother smile with pleasure,
She has long been weeping . . .
Let her bless her faithful children
With a fervent blessing!
Let her kiss her little children
With lips now unfettered.
Then the shame will be forgotten,
All the recent epochs,

And new glory will be rising,
Ukraina's glory!
Then the sun will shine eternal,
Quietly and sweetly . . .
O, embrace, my darling brothers,
That is what I beg you!

THE TESTAMENT

Shevchenko wrote this poem on December 25, 1845, at Pereyaslav, the city where the Hetman Bohdan Khmelnitsky had made the agreement with Moscow, Kostomariv, in publishing the first eight lines, gave it the title by which it is now generally known. The poem is one of the most famous of Shevchenko's works and has been accepted as the keynote of the movement for Ukrainian liberation.

The Testament

When I die, O lay my body
In a lofty tomb
Out upon the steppes unbounded
In my own dear Ukraine;
So that I can see before me
The wide stretching meadows
And Dnipro, its banks so lofty,
And can hear it roaring,
As it carries far from Ukraine
Unto the blue sea
All our foemen's blood—and then
I will leave the meadows
And the hills and fly away
Unto God Himself . . .
For a prayer. . . . But till that moment
I will know no God.
Bury me and then rise boldly,
Break in twain your fetters
And with the foul blood of foemen
Sprinkle well your freedom.
And of me in your great family,
When it's freed and new,
Do not fail to make a mention
With a soft, kind word.

IN THE FORTRESS

Shevchenko arrived in St. Petersburg under arrest on April 17, 1847 and was sentenced on May 30. During this period of his confinement and trial, the poet composed some of his most exquisite lyrics. They are short and concise but there is a personal touch about them that was often lacking in his longer works. Thrown back on himself, unable to associate with his friends, and in danger of death, he achieved a concentrated form of verse that has put these poems in a class by themselves.

IN THE FORTRESS

1

I'm alone, all alone,
As a leaf in the meadow,
For the Lord gave me not
Either joy or good fortune.
God gave to me naught
But black eyes and my beauty
And I wept them away
As a lonesome young maiden.
Not a brother I knew
Nor yet ever a sister,
Amid strangers I grew
And I grew—without loving.
Where's the husband I sought?
Where are all you good people?
There are none. I'm alone.
And no husband will cheer me.

2

There is grove after grove,
There's the steppe and the tomb—
From the tomb a Kozak
Rises gray and bent double,
Rises there in the night,
And he turns to the steppe,
And he sings, sadly singing,
"They have piled up the earth,
And gone back to their homes,

But no one remembers!
For three hundred of us
Have been shattered as glass,
But the earth will not take us.
Since the hetman has sold
Into serfdom the Christians
And has ordered to drive us
Upon our own lands,
We have poured out our blood
And have murdered our brothers.
Their blood we have drunken
And we henceforth are lying
In the curse of the tomb."
So he spoke in his sorrow
And he leaned on his spear
At the edge of the tomb
And he looked at Dnipro
And he sobbed and he wept.
The blue waves have made answer
From across the Dnipro,
From the village it echoes.
Then the third cockcrow sounded.
The Kozak quickly vanished,
Then the grove waved in terror
And the tomb groaned aloud.

3

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 lull now to sleep
Our mother Ukraine, and will rouse
Her, when she's plundered, in the flames.
That makes great difference to me.

4

"Leave not your dear mother," they told you,
But you paid no heed and went off.
She sought for you but could not find you,
At last she abandoned her effort.
She died 'mid her tears. Long ago
No playmate was left of your comrades.
Your dog has strayed off and is vanished.
A window is broke in your house.
In the garden the lambs go to pasture
By day, and when darkness is come,
The owls wake the night with their cries
And give to the neighbors no quiet.
Your bridal wreath grew and it flourished
But now it is faded to dust,
For you did not pick it. Your pond
Dried up in the neighboring forest
Where you once delighted to bathe.
That forest is sad and lies low.
No bird is still singing within it,
You carried them off when you went.
In the meadow the spring is not flowing,
The willow is leafless and fallen.
The path where you formerly wandered
Is covered with many a thorn.
Where did you direct your sad footsteps?
To whom have you flitted away?

In an alien land, amid strangers
Whom do you rejoice? Unto whom,
To whom have your arms been outstretched?
My heart whispers that you are happy
In palaces, where you ne'er think
Of the home that you once have abandoned.
God grant that no drop of remorse
May ever disturb your sweet slumber,
That it may not enter your palace,
That you never turn on your God
And never your own mother curse.

10

'Tis hard to bear the yoke—though freedom,
To tell the truth, was never there.
But yet somehow I could live on,
Though in another's home and field.
But now I have been brought to wait
An evil fate as I do God.
I wait for it, and as I look,
I curse my poor and untrained mind
That I allowed poor fools to fool me,
To drown pure freedom in the mud.
My heart grows cold, when I remember
That in Ukraine I shall not die,
That in Ukraine I shall ne'er live,
To love both people and the Lord.

12

Shall we again e'er meet together
Or are we parted once for all?
The word of truth and of pure love
Has been cast out to steppe and jungle.
Let it be so! 'Tis not our mother!
To her we still must pay respect;
It is God's will! Respect it fully!
Be humble now and pray to God
And think yourselves of one another,
And love our dear Ukraina.

So love it . . . in this time of woe,
And in that last and awful minute,
Let each pray to the Lord for her!

POEMS OF EXILE

During the first years of Shevchenko's service in the Russian army, when he was in the fortress of Orsk and at Kos-Aral, he was able with difficulty to write. His mind was filled with longings for Ukraine, with dreams of his own past life, and some of the poems of this period are among his finest personal lyrics.

1847

Songs of mine, O songs of mine,
You are all I have.
Do not leave me now, I pray,
In this dreadful time.
Fly to me, my little dovelets,
With your wings of gray.
From the spreading Dnipro fly here
To the steppes and stay
With the poor and needy Kirghiz.
They are really poor,
Yes, and naked, but in freedom
They can pray to God.
Fly to me, my darling thoughts,
With calm words and true,
I shall greet you as my children
And shall weep with you.

N. N.

Sunset is coming, mountains are shadowed,
Birds sink to quiet, fields cease their murmur,
Peoples are gladly stopping their labors,
But I am looking, while my heart's flying
To a dark garden in Ukraina;
Flying, I'm flying, my thoughts ever roaming,
Thus my poor heart is receiving some quiet.

Fields are in shadow, mountains and forest,
In the blue heaven, stars are appearing.
Stars, O bright stars, for I am weeping,
Have you come out yet there in Ukraina?
Are the black eyes there awaiting your coming
In the blue heaven? Have they forgotten?
If they've forgotten, do not disturb them.
Let them not notice what I am suffering!

N. N.

My thirteenth birthday was now over.
Near where I dwelt, I pastured lambs.
Perhaps it was the bright sun shining,
Perhaps it was something in me,—
I felt so happy, yes, so happy,
I loved the Lord. . . .
They called me to share in their fortune,
But I sat on the little hill
And prayed to God. I have no memory
Of what as little boy I sought
When I was praying so contented,
Or what a cheerful thought I had.
The Lord's own heaven and the village,
The lambs appeared to be so merry.
The sun just warmed,—it did not bake.

It was not long the sun was warm,
Not long endured the prayer.
It 'gan to bake, it turned bloodred,
And heaven it burned up.
I wondered, as if waked from sleep,
The village turned to black,
God's heaven turned unto dark blue
And lost its golden sheen.
I looked again upon the lambs,—
They were no lambs of mine.
I turned again unto the homes,

There was no home of mine.
For God had nothing given me,
And then my tears welled forth,
Such bitter tears. A little girl
Upon the selfsame road,
Not far away from where I stood,
Was plucking at the hemp.
She noticed I was weeping loud;
She came and spoke to me,
She wiped away my bitter tears
And gave to me a kiss.

Again the sun was shining brightly,
Again all things in the wide world
Were mine, the lambs, the fields and forests,
And we were smiling as we drove
Another's lambs to water.

How foolish! Now, when I remember,
My heart weeps sadly and still aches;
Why did the Lord not let me linger
Some time in that dear paradise?
I would have died a simple ploughman,
I would have known naught of the world,
I would ne'er been a fool to others,
Would not have cursed both men and (God).

This poem from the Fortress of Orsk shows again the great impression that his first love Oksana Kovalenkivna made upon him. It is one of the few poems that are definitely autobiographical in character.

RETURN

After Shevchenko returned from his service in the army, he was a broken man. His health was shattered, and while his spirit was not quenched, there is a note of finality in much that he undertook. He had been forced to realize the limitations on his sphere of activity.

There is a deeper note of austerity in his writings and a different spirit animates most of his verses, a spirit which becomes more strong and poignant as the end neared. The two following poems were written at Nizhni Novgorod on his way back to St. Petersburg.

Fortune

You never played me false, I swear it:
You grudged to me a brother, sister,
And e'en a friend; you took me early
And led me as a little boy
And put me in a school for peasants,
Where I might learn from drunken clerk.
"Work hard, my darling! You will later
Become a man!"—These were your words,
And I obeyed, I studied hard,
And learned my lesson.
And you lied!
What sort of man! 'Twas all in vain.
We never played you false, I swear it,
We lived our life! And never, never
Left any seed of lie behind us . . .

So let us go, my humble fortune,
My friend so poor, so free from guile,
Let us go on; ahead is glory
And glory is my only guide.

The Muse

O thou most chaste and holy maiden,
Of Phoebus the beloved young sister,
You took me when I was a child
And carried me into the meadow;
There on a tomb upon the meadow,
You wrapped me in a cloud of gray
Just as that freedom in the valley
And fondled me and sang your measures
And worked your charms . . .
And I, meanwhile . . .

O my enchantress ever fair,
You helped me wheresoe'er I was,
You watched o'er me wheree'er I was,
And everywhere, my star of brilliance,
You glowed, by evil never spotted,
And on the steppe, the barren steppe,
  In my deepest prison
  You shone there in gleaming raiment
  Like flower in the field.
  From the filthy hole of prison
  You flew out to meet me
  As a bird both pure and holy,
  And above my person
  You flew down with pennons golden
  And you sang so sweetly.
  You refreshed my thirsty spirit
  With the living water.
And so I live, above my head
With all your Godlike charm and beauty,
You blaze forever, star of heaven.
You will receive me, cherubim,
Revered six-winged seraphim,
My holy counselor adored,
My fate which leads me since my youth,
Do not forsake me!
  And at night
In daytime, evening, and the morning
Be with me ever, teach to me
With my sincere and truthful lips
To tell the truth!
  Then help me too
To send a prayer unto my end;
And when I die, my sacred friend,
My loving mother, place your son
Within his small and narrow casket,
And show at least one little tear
In your immortal, holy eyes!

TO MARKO VOVCHOK

The appearance of the Narodni Opovidaniya (Folk Sketches of Marko Vovchok in 1858 was an event in Ukrainian literature. It was the penname of Maria Markovich (1834-1907) but she wrote in Ukrainian for only a few years. Her stories of the hardships of serfdom, especially on the women, were very powerful and were translated into Russian by Turgenev and others of the leading authors. Shevchenko welcomed her literary advent most warmly, for he saw in her his most talented prose successor.

To Marko Vovchok

(In memory of January 24, 1859)

Some time ago beyond the Urals
I wandered and I prayed to God
That our dear truth would never perish,
That our dear word would never vanish.
My prayer was heard.
God sent to us
In you a mild and tender prophet,
A bitter scourge of all the greedy
And ruthless men.
My beacon star,
You are the holy star I wished for,
The youthful strength that I desired!
Shine on me, shed your warmth afar,
And now refresh my broken spirit,
My poor and shattered heart and power,
My hungry heart!
I live anew
And call to life from out the grave
Free thought that bides forever true,
Free thought forever.—My good fortune!
Our prophet! Yes! my darling daughter,
I dare to call my poems yours.

MARY

After his return from imprisonment, Shevchenko planned to write a poem on the Blessed Virgin and equate her lot with the fate of Ukraine and the average Ukrainian peasant woman. To do this, he made certain studies in the apocryphal legends and read some of the more liberal books of the day.

As a result he produced this poem on unorthodox lines. He was bitterly attacked for it but his dominant mood is throughout reverence for his subject, and the preface is thoroughly in line with the traditional faith.

MARY

"Rejoice, for thou hast renewed all creatures."
(Akafist of the Blessed Virgin, l. 10)

I place my hope and consolation
On Thee, my Heaven fair and bright,
Upon Thy mercy without limit,—
I place my hope and consolation
On Thee, O Mother ever holy,
The holy Power of all saints,
All-sinless and forever blest!
I pray to Thee, I weep and sob;
Look, holy Mother, down on them,
Those prisoners who have been seized
And who are blind; give them the strength
Of Thine own martyred Son, that they
May bear their cross and heavy fetters
Unto the end, the bitter end.
O worthy of all praise!
I bless Thee,
The holy Queen of earth and heaven;
Hark to their groans, and send to them
A worthy end, O ever worshipped;
Without ill feeling, I will sing,
When the poor villages are happy,
Thy sacred fortune everywhere
With quiet and with cheerful psalms.
But now there's tears and woe and weeping
For each poor soul and, poor myself,
I add to them the final mite.

I

Once Mary dwelt, a hired servant,
With Joseph, the old carpenter,
Perhaps he was a pious cooper.
She grew and turned to maidenhood
And blossomed as a lovely flower
Within a stranger's poor abode,
A quiet, holy paradise.
The carpenter looked on his servant
As on his own beloved child.
He used to leave his plane and saw
To look at her.
The years passed by
But he did not once even notice
And think: "She has no living kin,
No cabin of her very own—
She's all alone. And yet perchance
Death stands not far behind my back."

She stays there underneath the hedge
And spins white wool which she will fashion
Into a festal suit for him,
Or to the shore she's wont to drive
The goat with its warm-hearted kid
To feed them and to give them drink;
Although 'twas far, she loved to look
At that serene and holy lake,
By name Tiberias. And then
She was so radiant with joy
That Joseph sitting there was still
And did not bar in any way
Her trips to the dear lake.
She went
All smiling and he sat as ever
And did not reach for plane or saw.
The goat would drink and eat its fill.
The maiden stood there by herself,
As if entranced, amid the woods
And looked with sad and troubled gaze

Upon that broad and holy lake
And prayed, "O beautiful, broad sea,
Wide tsar of all the lakes that be,
Tell me, O my wise counselor,
What fate will open unto me
With aged Joseph? O, my lot!"
Then she bent over as a poplar
Bends in the wind towards the ravine.
"He looks upon me as his child.
With my young shoulder I'll support
His weakened and infirm old age."
She cast her eyes around the scene,
Until the sparks shown in her eyes,
And from her good and youthful shoulders
The ragged tunic softly slipped
Away; such holy charm divine
No eye had ever dared to see
Or to imagine. Evil fate
Brought to her such a crown of thorns
And mocked about her beauty fair.
O such a fate!
Above the water
She walked with the same quiet step.
She found some flowers on the bank,
She broke them off and made them then
A flower cover for her head,
Upon her holy, troubled brow,
And entered in the forest dark.

O our unsetting Sun of light,
Most holy of all women ever!
The fragrant gem of all the herbs!
Within what woods and what ravines,
And what unknown and secret caves
Thou hidest now from that fierce heat
Of those consuming rays of passion
That burn the heart without a fire
And drown it without water, drown
The holy thoughts Thou always hast?
Where art Thou hiding?

No, nowhere,
The fire blazed, as well it might.
It burst to flame and then alas,
For nothing is its power lost.
It goes into the blood, the bone,
That cursed fire naught can quench.
And still unbroken, Thou must pass
Through all the hottest flames of hell
For Thy dear Son.
Thy future fate
Like prophecy appears to Thee
Before Thine eyes. Do not look at it.
Wipe off the tears that herald this,
Adorn Thy head, a maiden's head,
With lilies and the wildly spread
Red poppies too and fall asleep
Beneath the vines where it is cool
And see what comes!

II

Towards evening, like a shining star,
Sweet Mary wandered from the grove,
All wreathed in flowers, There Mount Thabor
Just as if wrapped in gold and silver
Shone far away so dazzling bright.
It blinded all.
Then to that Thabor
Sweet Mary lifted up her eyes,
So mild and holy as they were,
And smiled. And then she caught the goat
With its gay kid within the grove
And 'gan to sing:
"Heaven, heaven,
O dense forest!
I am young and,
Gracious God,
In Thy heaven
Can I rest me,
Play with pleasure?"

Thus she spoke;
Around her once she glanced so sadly
And then into her arms she took
The kid. She held him firmly
And felt so happy as she went
Unto the carpenter's poor hut.
She walked along and cuddled kindly
And sang and played with the young kid
And pressed it to her bosom softly
And kissed it.
For its part, the kid,
As if it were a little kitten,
Did not object and did not struggle;
It nestled in her bosom, played.
For two long miles she danced along
With that sweet kid still in her arms
And was not wearied.
The old man
Sat sadly 'neath the hedge and sought
Her as if she were his own child;
He came to meet her, welcomed her,
And softly said: "Where have you been?
My poor, dear child, please let me know!
Let us go in the house and rest
And have our supper there together
With a delightful visitor.
Let us go, daughter."
"Who is he,
This new-come guest?"
"From Nazareth
He has come down to spend the night,
And says. 'The grace of God is come
Upon the old Elizabeth.
'Twas yester morn it has occurred
For yesterday,' he says, 'she bore
A son and aged Zachariah
Has called him by the name of John.'
That's what he says. . . ."

The guest, relaxing,
Well washed, now came out of the house,
Dressed only in a tunic white.
He shone like any flaming star.
He paused majestic on the threshold,
Made a low bow, and then he greeted
Sweet Mary calmly.
It seemed strange
And wondrous too. The guest stood there
And gleamed with more than human gleam.
On him one glance did Mary cast
And trembled and she turned away.
She seemed just like a frightened child
And to her aged Joseph turned.
Her eyes then asked the youthful guest
To enter in (or yet, 'tis better,
They led him in.)
At once she brought
Cool water from the nearby spring
And milk and goat's cheese which she gave
To them to have their evening meal.
Herself she did not eat or drink,
But silently knelt in the hut
And looked and looked upon the guest
And listened till the stranger spoke
And turned his words to her directly.
His holy words fell bright and clear
Upon the heart of Mary dear,
Until they chilled and burned it too.
"In all Judea there never was—"
So spoke the guest—"in ancient times
What now is seen, for a new rabbi,
A rabbi with a flaming word,
Is coming now upon the meadow.
His words grow swiftly and will bear
A rich and overflowing crop,
A holy seed. I go to preach
A new Messiah to the people!"
Then Mary prayed a silent prayer
To the apostle.

On the hearth
The fire blazes soft and low
And righteous Joseph sits alone
And thinks . . .
By now the evening star
Has risen brightly in the heavens.
Then Mary rose and took the pitcher
To fetch fresh water from the spring.
The stranger followed and caught up
With Mary in the deep ravine.

At dawn, while it was cool, they led
Th' evangelist to that same sea
And joyful were they in their hearts
And joyously they made their way
Unto their home.

III

For him waits Mary
And waiting, weeps; her youthful eyes,
Her eyelids and her wondrous lips
Grow thin and pale.
"You are not now
As you were once," O Mary dear,
A flower fair, our source of beauty."
Thus Joseph spoke—"Some thing most strange
Has come o'er you, my dearest daughter.
O Mary, let us go and wed
Or else without a word they'll kill you
Upon the street but we will hide
In our oasis."
For the trip
Sweet Mary quickly made her ready
And wept and sobbed to break her heart,
And so they go upon their way.
The old man took his newest yoke
Within a basket on his shoulders;
He wants to sell it and to buy
A kerchief new for his sweet bride
And give it to her as a present.

O righteous, rich, revered old man,
A blessing comes not from Mount Zion
But from your quiet little home
It is proclaimed to us.
If he,
The righteous, had not lent his hand,
We would be worse than slaves of slaves
And we would die.
O suffering great!
O heavy sadness of the soul,
It is not you, ye poor, I pity,
Ye blind and humble, poor in spirit,
But those who wield above their heads
The axe and hammer and who forge
New fetters. For they'll kill and slay you,
They slay your soul and from a spring
Of blood that comes from human hearts,
They give the dogs to drink.
But where
Went that strange guest who was so evil?
He might have come and glanced e'en once
At this thrice glorious pure wedding,
A stolen wedding!
Not a sound
Of him or of his great Messiah
But men wait something and they wait
What they don't know.
O Mary dear,
What art Thou waiting in Thy sorrow
And what wilt Thou await from God
And from His people?
Wait for naught
And likewise do not think of waiting
For that apostle. Thou art taken
As bride by that poor carpenter
Into his poor and humble home.
Pray and give thanks, he did not spurn Thee
And did not cast Thee on the street
Or Thou mightst have been stoned to death,

Hadst Thou not hid or fled away.
But men said in Jerusalem
Beneath their breath, who had come down
From out Tiberias' city
That there the men had crucified
One who proclaimed a new Messiah.
"Can it be he?," exclaimed sweet Mary,
And joyfully she made her way
To Nazareth.
He too was glad
That his dear servant bore in her
The righteous seed of a good man
Who lost his life for liberty.

They go from there upon their way,
They come back home and there they live
As married but unhappy too.
The carpenter now sets himself
To make a cradle while she sits,
Sweet Mary the immaculate,
Beside the window and she looks
Into the fields and sews apace
Upon a little infant shirt.—
For whom is it?

IV

"I want the master,"
A voice cried in the court. "An order
From Caesar, from the lord himself,
Commands you go at once this hour
For a great census in the city
Of Bethlehem. Set forth at once."
That stern commanding voice is gone;
The echo rings above the wood.
So Mary went at once to bake
Some cakes; and then without a word
She put them in a little basket;
Without a word she followed Joseph
To Bethlehem.

"O holy power,
Protect me now, my God most dear."
That's all she said. And so they go.
Both of them are depressed and sad.
Poor as they are—they drive before them
The goat and with it its young kid,
For there's no one to care for them,
And God might send to her the baby
Upon the journey and the milk
Would be a godsend to the mother.
The animals stray onward feeding
Along the way and side by side
The man and woman walk behind them.
And they begin to speak just as
They will but softly.
Joseph said:
"The high priest Simeon said once
To me a word prophetic, true.
The holy law of Abraham
And Moses now the pious Essenes
Renew again in all its power;
And I shall never die—he told me,—
Until I see myself Messiah.
O Mary, do you hear my words,
Messiah comes."
"Nay, he has come,
Ourselves we have Messiah seen."
Sweet Mary said.
Then Joseph looked
Within the basket, found a cake.
He gave it to her. "Take this, child!
Be strong for what is coming now!
We are not near to Bethlehem,
And I will rest for I am weary."
So they sat down beside the road
To rest.
Then while they're sitting there,
The righteous sun sank quickly down
And hid itself behind the hill.

It sank to rest and darkness came
At once—and then a miracle.
No one had ever heard or seen
Of such a marvel.
Joseph trembled
For from the east a blazing comet
Rose over Bethlehem far off.
The comet seemed to be of fire
And lighted all the steppe and mountains.
But Mary did not rise from off
The road. 'Twas then she bore her son,
That child who by his wondrous power
Saved all of us from prison cruel
And as a saint was crucified
For us, the evil and the sinful!
Not far away along the road
The shepherds saw the miracle
And they gave heed.
The wretched mother
Together with the child they took
And carried them into their cave
And there the wretched shepherds gave
To him the name Emmanuel.

By sunrise in the market place
Of Bethlehem the people gathered
And whispered the exciting news
That something strange would happen now
In all Judea. They passed along
The news in quiet tones. "O people,"
A shepherd came and shouted out,
"The words of Jeremiah and
Isaiah now are true, are true!
Among us shepherds has been born
Messiah yesterday."
It spread
Throughout the whole of Bethlehem.
"Messiah! . . . Jesus! . . . Hail! . . . Hosanna!"
The people scattered.

V

In an hour
Or maybe two an order came
From out Jerusalem from Herod.
A legion came and brought an order
Which men had never heard before.
The swaddling children slept in peace,
The mothers warmed their food—'twas needless.
They needed not to bathe their children
And to prepare them for the night.
The soldiers bared and dipped their knives
In the just blood of little children,—
Such was the order Herod gave!
Look on in horror now, O mother!
And see what tsars like him can do!

But Mary did not need to hide
Herself and child. Praise to your names,
The poor, untutored shepherds there
Who greeted him, had hidden safely
Our Savior and they saved him thus
From Herod!
So they fed him kindly
And gave him drink, a little shirt
And jacket for the toilsome journey,
And poor as they were, yet they gave
An ass's foal and set the mother
Upon it with her child and led it
By secret paths amid the darkness
Unto the road to Memphis.
Then
The comet, that great ball of fire,
More brilliant than the sun, shone on
That ass which carried into Egypt
Sweet Mary and the young Messiah.

Had ever queen sat so upon
An ass, the fame of it would quickly
Be spread abroad and all would talk

Of her and of that ass forever
Throughout the world.
But Thee it bore,
The true and living God upon it!
A wretched Copt in after days
Had tried to buy the ass of Joseph
But it had died. Perhaps the road
With its great load had worn it out.

The child, bathed in the Nile, doth sleep
In swaddling clothes beneath a willow
More safely, and among the willows
The righteous mother weaves a cradle
And weeps the while she spends her time
In weaving of the little cradle,
While Joseph sets himself to build
A little hut out of the reeds,
That he may have a humble shelter.
Across the Nile just like an owl
The Sphinx with dread and fearsome eyes
Looks on the scene; and there behind it
The pyramids on the bare sands
Stand like a chain in order due,
Just as the guards set out by Pharaoh,
As grim as if they had reported
Of what they know, that God's own truth
Has risen and is come to earth,
A menace to the Pharaoh's power.

Then Mary found a job to weave
Soft garments for a Copt, while he,
Saint Joseph, went to feed a flock
That he might keep that single goat
To furnish milk for his dear child.
A year doth pass.
Around the hut
Within his own obscure domain
The righteous holy carpenter
Left no time to be spent in thinking.

He fashions barrels and small kegs
And murmurs oft.
But why is this?
Thou dost not weep and dost not sing;
Thou thinkest ever without pause
How best to teach him and to place
Thy holy son on righteous paths
And how to save him from all ills
And shield him from the storms of life.

Another year. Around the hut
The goat still feeds, but the young child
And the small kid together play
Within the courtyard, while the mother
Sits at the threshold of the hut
And spins the wool of fibres soft.
Meanwhile the old man walks on tiptoe
And carries to the city barrels
To sell. He buys the child a cookie,
A kerchief for his darling wife,
And for himself a good stout thong
To make some sandals.
There he sat.
And then he said: "Don't grieve, my daughter!
For Herod, the cruel tsar, is dead!
One evening he enjoyed a feast
And ate so much it caused his death.
Those are the tidings that I heard.
Let us go now unto our grove,
Unto our quiet, little heaven.
Let us go homeward, daughter mine!"
"Let's go!", she said and quickly went
Unto the Nile to wash the shirts
For her son's journey. While the goat
Played with the kid around the house,
Saint Joseph played with his dear son
Upon the threshold and the mother
Washed in the river the small shirts.
And after that within the house,

He packed and tried out his new sandals
For the long journey. All was ready
Before the sunrise; then he took
The basket on his shoulders and they
Within the cradle bore the child.

VI

So on they went and reached their home.
God grant no one may ever chance
On such a sight.
Their little love,
Their quiet refuge in the field,
Their one and only home and fortune,
That place—they could not recognize it—
All he had loved, the little house—
All, all was plundered.
'Mid the ruins
They had to spend a wretched night.
And Mary quickly hurried down
Unto the spring in the ravine,
Where once the bright-faced holy guest
Had met with her.
The heavy grass,
The spiny bushes, and the nettles
Had thickly grown around the spring.
Poor Mary, I am sorry for Thee!
Pray, darling, pray at this sad time!
Forge well Thy true and holy strength,
Forge it with patience and endurance,
Grow strong amid Thy bloody tears!
She almost slipped within the spring
And drowned herself.
Then woe to us,
Who would have been enshackled slaves!
The child would then have grown alone
Without his mother; we would know
No truth and justice on this earth,
No sacred freedom.

She remembered
And then she smiled despite her woe
And sobbed a bit. The holy tears
Poured down upon the wellhead there
And dried away; and then she felt
Much better.
But Elizabeth,
A widow old in Nazareth,
Lived there with her one little son,
With John, and she was distant kin
Unto them.
So in early morning
The unhappy woman took her child
And fed him and she dressed him up
And with her saint she made the trip
To Nazareth unto the widow
To ask her for some hired work.
The little child grew as it should
And played together with young John,
And he was soon a little boy.
The two went out upon the street
And played together. There they found
Two sticks and took them to their homes
And gave the wood unto their mothers
Like other children!
So they live,
Both cheerful and both healthy too—
The people watch them on their way.
The little boy one day a stick
Picked up from John for his own game,
(For John was playing horse alone)
And made a cross and bore it home
To prove that way unto his mother
That he knew how to work in wood.
Then Mary met her little son
Outside the gate, and lost her courage.
She fainted too when she beheld
That scaffold cross.

"An evil man
With foul intent and unkind plan
Has taught thee to produce this thing.
My dearest child, please drop it, drop it!"
The little boy, all innocent,
Threw down the sacred mark of death
And sobbed aloud and shed boy's tears
For the first time upon the bosom
Of his dear mother.
This kind act
Refreshed her soul. She rose again
And took him to a nice cool spot
Within the garden on the grass.
She kissed him and she gave him cakes,
Fresh cakes.
And then he fondled her
And played and sang a little while
And fell asleep to lullabies.
Upon her knees he lay and slept.
The child slept on in peaceful slumber
Just like an angel there in heaven.
The mother looked on her one child
And shed such quiet, blissful tears,
The angel slept so still and lovely,
It would be wrong to try to wake him.
She could not look at him enough.
A single tear just as a flame
Fell on him and without delay
The child awoke.
Sweet Mary quickly
Wiped off her tears and tried to smile,
Lest he behold them, but she could not
Deceive her little son at all.
He caught her action, guessed it well
And 'gan to sob.
She earned a little
(Or else the widow lent it to her)
That she might buy a book for him.
She would have taught him, but she knew

Not how to read. She took the boy
And sent him to a little school
Among the Essenes. And meanwhile
She gave him lessons in the good
And in the right.
Meanwhile young John,
The widow's son, had done the same.
The boys went to the school together
And studied too, He never played
With other children on the street
Or ran around. All by himself,
He used to sit in the long grass
And fashion there with childish hand
A little staff; and try to help
His holy father in his work.

VII

Then in the young boy's seventh year,
(For he already showed great skill)
While resting in a corner dark
The old man thought about his son,
What trade he would adopt in life,
What kind of man he would become.
He took his pails and other wares
And father, mother, and the son
Went to the greatest market there,
Jerusalem, the capital.
The trip was long but there they could
Get better prices.
So they went.
They strayed apart. The parents then
Sat down to try and sell their goods.
They paid no heed to the young boy.
He ran around. . . . The mother wept
And sought her son. There was no hint
Of where he was. She went at last
Unto a synagogue to pray
For his return and there, behold,
The child, her child, was sitting there

Among the rabbis in the midst
And teaching in his innocence
How men should live and love their fellows,
Should stand for truth and die for truth—
Without truth woe comes! "Woe to you,
Ye teachers and ye high priests too!"
The Pharisees looked on amazed,
The scribes all wondered at his words
And great was then the holy joy
That Mary felt!
For she had seen
Messiah, had seen God on earth
With her own eyes. . . . They sold their wares,
Then in the temple prayed to God
And cheerfully they started home.
They made their journey in the night
Amid the cool.
The Holy Children
Grew up together and they learned
Some more each day; and both their mothers
Were proud and happy when they saw
Their children.
But they finished school.
Then on the thorny path of life
They parted; both preached God's true word,
The sacred truth for men on earth.
They preached and both were crucified
For freedom, sacred freedom true.
John made his way into the desert.
Thy son—among men; and with him,
With thine upright and truthful son,
Thou wentst along.
In the old hut
She left Saint Joseph there alone
To live alone among the strangers.
She wandered here and wandered there
Until at last she reached her goal
At Golgotha.

VIII

The holy mother
Went everywhere with her dear son;
She listened to his every word;
She watched his acts and was enthralled
And joyed in still anxiety
When she looked at him.
For he would
Sit on the Mount of Olives often
And rest a while. Jerusalem
Was proudly spread before his eyes—
The priest of Israel flashed proudly
In all his golden robes and rich,
A humble slave of Roman gold!
An hour, two, would pass away.
He would not stir or look at her
But weep and wonder at the wealth
Of the Judean capital.
Then she would weep and make her way
Down to the spring in a ravine
And quickly would bring back with her
Fresh water, and would humbly wash
His sacred feet which were so weary.
She'd give him drink and brush him off
And shake the dust from his white tunic,
She'd mend a hole, and then again
Go to the fig tree and sit down
And look, an ever holy mother,
At her sad son, while he was resting.
Perhaps the children then would run
From out the city; they would follow
Him always through the busy streets
And sometimes to the Mount of Olives
The little ones would come to him.
They would run up,—"O holy ones,
And sinless too"—he used to say.
Then when he saw the children, he
Would rise and kiss them, give his blessing.
He'd play with them just like a child,

Put on a wreath, and gay and happy,
He'd go with all his children dear
Unto Jerusalem to preach,
Tell to the wicked words of truth.
They would not hear and crucified him.
When they led him to Golgotha,
Thou stoodst at a crossroad nearby
With the same children (for the men,
His brothers and disciples too)
Had lost their courage and had fled.
"O let him go, O let him go!
He'll lead you to the self same fate."
She said this to the children, then
She fell upon the earth and fainted.

Thine only child was crucified
And Thou, beneath the hedge abiding,
Went back again to Nazareth.
The widow long before was buried
By strangers in a hired casket.
She'd been alone for her dear John
In prison had been murdered too.
Thy Joseph was no longer there
And Thou wast left alone to live
Just as a broken stick.
Yes, that
Was Thy sad fate, O mother dear!
His brothers and disciples too,
Unsteady men of little soul,
Concealed themselves from hangmen cruel.
They hid and then they separated,
And Thou wast forced to seek them out. . . .
By night they gathered round about Thee
And came to grieve with thee and mourn,
But Thou, the greatest among women,
Didst scatter all their fear and terror,
Just as the chaff that blows away,
With Thy most holy word of fire;
Thou sentst at last Thy holy spirit
Into their petty souls!

All praise,
All praise to Thee, O holy Mary!
The holy men regained their poise,
They travelled through the whole wide world
And in the name of Thy great Son,
Thy suffering and martyred Child,
They spread the news of love and truth
Throughout the world; Thou weptst and grievedst
And 'neath a hedge among tall grass,
Thou starvedst to death.

Amen! Amen!

HOSEA, CHAPTER XIV

After his return from the army, Shevchenko's poetry took a more austere note. A large part of his latest works were adaptations of the Old Testament and the warnings of the Prophets were transfigured into lessons for the Ukrainians and on the fate of Ukraine. They deal with the same themes that he had treated earlier—the uselessness of depending upon the Russian autocracy, the weaknesses of the people of the day, especially the intellectuals, and the need for all the people to apply the lessons of brotherhood to all their fellows. Shevchenko's contact with some of the Russian radicals may have influenced him to some degree but these poems can be read as general denunciations of the vices of men and countries. Never more than in the works of his last period did Shevchenko become a stern, commanding teacher holding up to all men everywhere the proper course of actions for human things to pursue. Now more than ever he became a great ethical teacher not only for his generation and people but for all the nations of the world.

HOSEA, CHAPTER XIV

(Imitation)

Yes, you will perish, Ukraina,
And leave no trace upon the earth!
And yet you once were richly famous
For good and wealth!

O Ukraina,
My dear, my innocent poor land,
Why does the Lord send you this fate?
Why punish you?
'Tis for Bohdan,
And for the mad, insensate Peter,
And for the pagan lords around them,
He ruins you and drives you down,
Destroys you so.
And it is just!
He long with patience looked upon you
And watched your silence and neglect,
Your sinful womb that bore such monsters,
And spake in wrath: "I will destroy
Your beauty and your charm superb.
You will be broken. In their wrath
Your sons will slay you, when full grown,
And others, ill-conceived, shall die
Within your womb, and fade away
As unhatched chickens that are not.
With tears, the tears of a sad mother
I will fill full your towns and fields
That all the earth may see and know
That I am ruler—and see all."

Arise, O mother, and return
Unto your spacious home and rest.
You have been burdened long enough
With sins your sons have wrought at times.
A sad and mournful mother, rest
And say to your unfaithful sons,
That they will perish in their sins,
That their dishonor and their treason,
Their crookedness are cut within
The souls of men by fire fierce
And by a bloody flaming sword,
Their destined punishment cries out
And their good tsar will never save them,
Their mild and drunken sovereign lord!

He will not give them food or drink
Or yet a horse to mount unsaddled
And gallop off. You cannot flee,
You cannot hide!
For everywhere
Avenging truth will seek you out.
Men will watch for you, catch you then,
And they will not waste time in trials.
In fetters they will firmly bind you
And take you home for men to see,
And on a cross without a hangman
Or yet a tsar they will spread you,
And nail you fast, tear you apart,
And, dogs, they will give your fresh blood
Unto the dogs to drink.
Add this
And say this word again to them.
Speak plainly, Say, "You have done this.
With foul and filthy hands you made
Your hope and then you say,
'The tsar's our God, the tsar's our hope
And he will feed and will protect
The widow and the orphans.' " . . . No!
Say this to them: "The gods are mad,
The idols in the palace rich."
Tell them that truth will rise again,
Not the departed, ancient word
That now is rotten; a new word
Will come with might unto the people
And save the plundered and the lost
From the false favor of the tsar.

I DO NOT MURMUR AT THE LORD

I do not murmur at the Lord,
I do not murmur at a soul,
I fool myself in my despair
And sing as well.

For I will plough
My meadow, my poor, humble field,
This word of mine; a harvest rich
Will come some day from it.
I fool
Myself, my own poor, humble person
And no one else, as I can see.

Be thou ploughed, my humble meadow,
From the top to bottom.
Be thou planted, this black meadow
With the shining freedom.
Be thou ploughed, and well turned over,
Let the soil be levelled.
Be thou sown with seed most fertile,
Watered by good fortune.
Be thou turned in all directions,
Ever fertile meadow.
Be not sown with words unmeaning
But with reason, meadow.
Men will come to reap the harvest
In a happy moment—
Be well worked and be well levelled,
Poor and barren meadow.

Do I not fool myself again
With this fantastic word of hope?
I do! But it is better far
To fool myself, my very self,
Than live at peace with my cruel foe
And vainly murmur at the Lord.

THE APPROACHING END

The end of Shevchenko's life was approaching. In the autumn of 1860 he became conscious of the fact that his health would not allow him to carry out his dreams of marrying, having a family, and living in a little home on the bank of the Dniper in Ukraine. He expressed

this feeling in his poem *The years of youth are passed away,* written on October 19, and soon after he consulted a physician because of his difficulty in breathing. His friends could not realize his condition but he failed rapidly and during January, 1861, he was able to do little work. He finished his last poem, *Is it not time for us to stop?* on February 25. It was the end for early the next morning, the day after his birthday, his eyes closed forever.

THE YEARS OF YOUTH ARE PASSED AWAY

The years of youth are passed away . . .
A chilling blast has swept upon me
From hope.
The winter's on its way.
So sit alone in your cold home
With no one there to hear your word,
With no one to receive your thought,
No one at all, no one at all!
Sit there alone, until hope fools
The fool himself and mocks him well
And seals with frost his lonely eyes
And scatters all his haughty thoughts,
Just as the snowflakes on the steppe.
Sit there alone in your poor home,
Wait not for spring, a holy fate!
It never will appear again
To deck your garden with its green
Or to renew your faded hope.
It will not come to set free thoughts
Again at freedom. No, sit there
And wait for not a thing at all.

IS IT NOT TIME FOR US TO STOP?

Is it not time for us to stop,
My neighbor poor, but yet so dear,
The writing of these worthless verses
And to commence our preparations

To go upon a distant journey?
Unto that world, my friend, to God,
We'll hurry on to take our rest. . . .
We're wearied now, we've grown so old
And somehow we have gained some sense,
That is enough!
We'll go to sleep,
We'll go to rest in a small cabin . . .
The cabin's cheerful, as you know!

We'll not go, we are not going,—
Friend, it is too early!
Let us go, and let us sit
And enjoy this world.
Let us look, my humble fortune,
Think how broad it is,
How it is both broad and cheerful,
Clear and yet so deep!
Let us go, my friendly star,
And ascend the mount,
There we'll rest . . .
At that same moment
All the stars, thy sisters,
The eternal, heavenly stars,
Will swim up a-shining.
There we'll wait, my sister dear,
Ever holy comrade,
And with chaste and pious lips
Let us pray to God.
We will start in utter quiet
On our distant journey,
O'er the bottomless and raging
Lethe we must pass.
Bless me for this, O my comrade,
With a holy glory!

But while we wait to meet the future,
We will go simply—and direct
To pay to Aesculapius

To see if he can trick old Charon
And the wise Fates who spin.
There after
While the wise grandsir is a dreaming,
We'll stop and write a mighty epic—
And steam it well above the earth
And weave hexameters for it,
And take it to the attic
A breakfast for the mice . . .
And then
We'll sing in prose—and not by notes
And not as chance may say . . .
My friend,
O sacred guide of my whole life,
Before the fire has gone out,
We'd better go to Charon now!

O'er the Lethe bottomless
With its raging waters
We will sail and carry with us
All our sacred glory,
Ever youthful and eternal . . .
For—I dread it, friend!
If I have to go without it,
I'll be very mournful,
So whether it's on Phlegethon,
Or on the Styx in heaven,
Or on Dnipro, that mighty river,
I shall construct a little cabin
In the eternal forest there
And plant a garden round the cabin
And thou wilt come to its cool shade
And there I'll seat thee like a queen;
We will recall Dnipro, Ukraina,
The cheerful forest villages,
The mountain tombs upon the steppes,
And we will sing a cheerful song.