

UKRAINIAN FOLK SONGS

A Historical Treatise

By

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Ukrainian Folk Songs

FOREWORD

IT is the opinion of most scholarly critics that there are no other Slavic people so rich in folk lore as the Ukrainians. The Ukrainian songs and airs are innumerable. A Ukrainian peasant is a singer in the full sense of the word; singing is his daily bread; no work, no walk, no family, social entertainment, no engagement of any kind goes without singing or "ex tempore" improvisation of some air and words; the proverb is well known that "a Cossack (a Ukrainian) laughs and sings through his tears," which means that even in time of his woes and worry a Ukrainian sings: sighs and sings! A Ukrainian, provided he be not depraved and deprived of his original native intuition by a foreign, and especially the modern urban culture (and thanks be to the Providence the ab-

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original feeling, the poetry of soul still predominates and is the express characteristic of every Ukrainian of all social and cultural degrees), is a singer; nature's own musician of no base quality. He has hundred-fold ways of expressing his hilarity or sadness in every instance, corresponding to and depicting every motion of body and soul: whether he be bringing the muck out of his stables to his fields, or the cattle to pasture in the spring, or thrashing his corn, or his wife weaving her cloth in winter; whether he be mowing, reaping, or at some trade in fall, or resting and merry-making amid the heat, verdure and fragrant Ukrainian nature in summer—he constantly sings, alone or in company; even his prayers are mostly performed through singing.

A student well acquainted with Ukrainian geography and the beauties of her nature, will agree with the author that nature herself prompts the Ukrainian to express his very soul in spontaneous singing; by the fragrance of meadows rich with the odors of a thousand flow-

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ers; by the song of the nightingales that wake the infants from their slumber in the early morning; by the rich black earth, plains, wide steppes, balmy forests and lofty hills of the Carpathians and the Caucasus; by the gentle, sweet Slavonic temper educated in the bosom of nature's luxuries; and last but not least—by the history which fortune, otherwise so bounteous with the Ukrainians, has made so harsh and strenuous for them, making the Ukrainians a subject of almost continuous struggle with foreign invaders—Tartars, Turks and the Poles and the Russians especially.

It is to be lamented that many of us do not understand or sufficiently prize the value of the folk songs of whatever origin or language they may be; we fail to see their beauty and meaning in the life of every living national organism; we can not see why so much stress is put on them by the educators. Some regard these songs as merely a pastime or extravagant folly of youthful revelry. True, that some original, charming, pensive songs are and have been

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adulterated and the effect soiled by wanton pornography and perverted sentences—yet these ought to be easily eliminated from the sacred treasury of the people.

It very seldom happens that the Ukrainian songs are changed in meaning and effect except it be by some foreign, usually Polish or Russian, words; sometimes even a whole, new worthless song is introduced among the Ukrainians, but on tracing its origin it is found out that it was of Polish, Russian or other foreign source brought about by men serving in foreign armies, or being in contact with other nationalities; such songs are commonly avoided with care, and traditional Ukrainian compositions are sung exclusively. This is true also regarding other Ukrainian folklore such as rural tales, ritual songs and ballads.

A noticeable decline in purity and beauty of Ukrainian folklore is observable where Polish or Russian influences have gained their access. The author of this study himself saw this decline twenty-two years ago in the western

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Ukrainian government of Kholm and Podlakhia, where he was born and brought up in his early childhood. He well remembers how in that part of the country the two foreign cultures wrangled with each other in an attempt to strangle the ancient Ukrainian culture. The Russian culture, by way of the state school system, and the Polish culture by means of the Polish Latin Catholic church wherein Polish national propaganda had its mainstay; both endeavored to deprive the Ukrainian peasantry of their nationality by forcing on them silly imitations of the alleged "higher" culture. It causes the author great pain to recall how the Polish landlords and priests have gradually made the good-natured Ukrainian peasants abandon their "pagan" ritual, Easter and Christmas folk songs and hymns; their beautiful out-of-door ceremonials, weddings, and christenings, which are inseparably connected with singing, changed their aspect to a great extent in the above mentioned Ukrainian territories. Polish religious songs may be more numer-

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ous, but the Ukrainian folk-songs thus lost under the forceful introduction of the Polish “Kultura” is a whole treasure lost to the local population—because the Ukrainian folk songs are unequalled, incomparable with any others in the world.

CHAPTER I

What are the Folk Songs in General and the Ukrainian Folk Songs in Particular?

VARIOUS peoples have different traditions and beliefs as to the origin of the folk songs. The ancient Greeks thought that songs were composed by the gods themselves, and all the famous singers claimed their parentage from the gods.

The author of the ancient Ukrainian-Ruthenian¹ poem—"Slovo o Polku Ihorevi" (The Lay of the War-Ride of Ihor²) relating the expedition of Prince Ihor upon the Mongolian Polovtzi—mentions some great singer Boyan,³ "the grandson of god Veles," who composed beautiful epic poems about the activities of the

¹ Ruthenian or Ruthen is the Greek form for Rusin or Rusitch—the original name for Ukrainian; for the last few decades it was applied to the Ukrainians of Galicia, Bukovine and Hungary. It now becomes obsolete.

² Translation of the Word of Igor's Armament was made by Prof. A. Petrunkevitch of Yale University; published in "Poet Lore," 1919.

³ Prof. John D. Prince of Columbia University wrote a dissertation on Troyan-Boyan, published by Am. Phil. Society.

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ancient Ruthenians. The renowned Ukrainian Kobzar, that is, a singer (composer) and player on the bandore, Ostap Veresay, who sang with profound emotion the beautiful historic songs, was wont to say that songs come from God Himself.⁵ Even in most recent times the Kobzars and singers, whether feeble old men or cripples, when they appear at bazars and church festivals are treated with highest respect. The people believe that the singers, especially the composers, are exceptionally beloved and endowed by God with talent to express the feeling of a rational human soul, common to all mankind; to move men to pity, charity and love of God and one's neighbor; to proclaim the manifold human activities and

⁴ Kobzar is a player on kobza or bandura which is a Ukrainian national instrument being used most frequently in the accompaniment of recitations; derived from Lat. pandura, Gr. πανδοῦρα; an instrument of the god Pan. Usually a blind elderly man, lover of the people, nature and song, gifted with great talent for emotional singing. Kobzars knew the songs by heart.

⁵ Ostap Veresay, one of the many famous Kobzars from whom Kulish, Rusov, Ohubinsky, Lysenko, etc.—the Ukrainian scientists, ethnologists and composers—copied the historic songs—epics, called Dumy in Ukrainian. Dr. Filaret Kolessa: "Ukrainski Narodni Dumy," Lviv, 1920, p. 58.

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thus instruct and educate weak human nature, uplifting men mentally and morally.

There is something in Ukrainian songs that attracts the entire being of those who understand the words; nay, those who happen to hear Ukrainian melodies are captured by the force of their expression of mirth and gayety, but principally by that of sadness and resignation. They teach us meditation concerning ourselves and appreciation of others' dispositions and ailments; they teach us to love the truth and abhor falsehood; they teach us to love mankind, one's native tongue and country; they produce noble aspiration, a spiritual conception of man's existence; they develop the sense of beauty and art.

CHAPTER II

The Influence of the Ukrainian Folk Songs

THROUGHOUT the vast Ukrainian territory—irrespective of various forceful political allegiances, foreign influence and domination in the past—the same motives, airs, wording and other peculiarities are found in all Ukrainian folklore, although there may be some dialectal differences, which, however, are the least noticeable in songs. This of course only goes to affirm the one Ukrainian national soul of the forty-five million Ukrainians who in the past unfortunately were divided for centuries by surrounding foreign powers. A Ukrainian may have forgotten his native language and may speak the Russian, Polish, Slovak, Rumanian, Madyar or German — but he expresses his soul in his native, incorrupt language of song; the songs were so deeply impressed upon his soul by his mother at the cradle that he never for-

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gets them; on the contrary we notice such an anomaly that these beautiful, affectionate songs are being sung by Russians and Poles, who otherwise may hate everything that savors of Ukrainism; one may hear these so-called "Little Russian"¹ songs chanted in the heart of Warsaw, Petrograd and Moscow by the foreigners themselves. It is said that wherever the Ukrainian song is once heard its charm enchants the listeners and creates in them the desire to learn the air at least. Other Slavic nationalities are well acquainted with Ukrainian songs and melodies; it is said that in Canada, where Ukrainians are quite numerous, a great many of the English and French speaking population love to sing Ukrainian songs.

¹ Little Russian is an artificial name introduced by Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, in order to Russianize the Ukrainians the more effectively.

CHAPTER III

The Theme of the Ukrainian Folk Songs and Their Kinds

QUITE many among the songs treat about the Ukrainian Cossack life, their love affairs, heroic deeds, courage and raids on Russians, Poles, Tartars and Turks. There are songs about general heroic deeds — the epopees — which are much older than the Cossack period. There are ritual and religious songs, the Kolyady or Christmas and New Year carols, the Eastern songs; the occasional holiday and festive songs; the spring, Kupalo and Obzhynkovi; political and patriotic songs; soldier, Cossack and recruit songs; the songs of the Cossack Sitch and Sokol (Falcon), hymns and marches which are stately and martial in character; historic and traditional songs; the Chumak songs composed by waggoners or drivers who traded in salt and fish; professional songs and ballads; Kolo-

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meyky¹ or the brisk, lively tunes and love words, originated in the vicinity of the city of Kolomya, Ukrainian East Galicia; wedding songs; burial songs; baptismal songs. But most numerous and diverse are the love songs; their multitude of airs, difference of shades and depth of sentiment is as varied and beautiful as the fragrant flowers of Ukraine. We must certainly distinguish the religious from the secular songs, for there are many of the former ones used exclusively in the church and home by the faithful. Their purpose is the glory of God and of his faithful servants — the saints — whose good works or miracles are being celebrated.

It is only in the rarest cases that the author of a celebrated popular song may be traced; as a rule the authors of Ukrainian folk songs are unknown, but the beauty, strength and popularity of their words and airs demonstrate that they were real masters of human souls who

¹ Kolomeyka, a short form of song, composed of two verses, fourteen syllables; it makes up a complete thought; it is being produced continually by the common people. Sometimes a few of these stanzas are linked together. Most of the truths of life are expressed in this form of people's poetry.

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either lived themselves through what they afterwards sang or else their intelligent, susceptible minds keenly felt the heart's emotions of others; they were the nation's long forgotten philosophers, although the simplicity of their verse and contents show that these authors were simple, kind-hearted, themselves. It may be that some of them were accomplished scholars, but through many centuries their productions underwent such a metamorphosis through oral transmission by the people that they no longer show signs of erudition.

It quite often happens that because these songs reflect so much individual and national suffering, the singers, particularly women and girls, sob while they sing; they cry while singing about a dramatic love affair which usually ends with death of the lover Cossack or with the captivity of his fiancee.

There are some ancient songs antedating Christianity officially introduced in Ukraine by St. Vladimir in 988, and these songs are sung with as great an interest as if they were recent

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compositions. They have to do chiefly with the pagan worship of the natural forces and celestial bodies, by the ancient Ukrainians; some of them are sung side by side with the Christian productions of later date, on various religious occasions. Ukrainian philologists and ethnologists such as Maxime Drahomaniv, Pantaleymon Kulish, P. Chubinsky, Michael Maximovitch, A. Metlinsky, I. Holovatsky have recorded many hundreds of these songs, most of which have been published; but it is said that at least another half of these popular songs have not been as yet collected and written down.

CHAPTER IV

A Brief Review of Ukrainian Folk Songs

A. Religious and Ritual Songs; the Kolyady and Shchedrivky

(a) Most of these songs are from the obscure pre-Christian era—expressing the adoration of natural forces, especially of the celestial bodies. Svaroh was the god of heaven and earth. Dazhboh was god of the sun; Perun was god of the thunder bolt; Stryboh was god of the winds; Zoria, the star goddess, and numerous other gods in whose honor hymns were sung at the appointed time. About the most important were the *Kolyady in honor of the birth of the sun in the spring*, as the life-giver to all. The deification of the sun as the most potent factor in the Universe was the fundamental religion. The word Kolyada¹ is derived from Kolo or Koleso, meaning a wheel, because the sun ap-

¹ Some claim that "Kolyada" is composed of the word "ko"—to, and the name for the goddess Lada, which denotes the turning of one's prayers towards goddess Lada.

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pears to be a round, shining wheel. These songs were recited about the end of December at the winter solstice when the god-sun begins to prevail over the darkness. They are generally sung now as the Christmas carols, both at home and church, by troupes of boys and girls carrying a beautifully decorated star with a lighted candle inside, going to the windows of every home in the village, and expressing their wishes to all inmates, whereupon many gifts are handed in response therefor:

OY KOLYADA—KOLYADYCIA²

O! Kolyada, little Kolyada,
Give some poppy to the Kutia;³
If you refuse, do so promptly,
Do not waste my little feet.

.

VSELENNAYA VESELYSIA

Rejoice, O Universe!
God is born to-day of Virgin,

² Diminutive. The translation of the following cycle of songs and folklore are my own and original, unless stated otherwise. Some of the quoted songs are those I remember from my childhood in Ukraine; others were suggested by friends, or translated from books of references or song books.

³ Kutia is the boiled wheat with honey for Christmas Eve; one of the indispensable dishes.

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In the cave, among the beasts,
Whom to adore
The Magi came.

.

(b) *The Shchedrivky* were also the sacred lyrics, hymns to honor and entreat the god of warmth. Shchedry means liberal, bounteous, as the god-sun was considered such. Nowadays these carols are sung at the New Year's Eve, and during the coming week, when various customary celebrations are taking place, and a rich feast is served; it is as it were a repetition of the Christmas Eve. The forces of nature and heavenly objects are usually personified, and even often referred to as opulent husbandmen or landladies, who give bounteously to all that sing them a pæan :

SHCHEDRYK⁴

Shchedryk, Shchedryk,
Dear little Shchedryk,
A tiny swallow
Perched on the house-roof;
She began chirping,

⁴ Shchedryk, one who sings Christmas or New Year's carols.

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Calling for the master.
Come out, my lord, come forth!
Look into your stable:
The ewes gave birth to lambs,
Behold thy beautiful kine;
Thou wilt become rich
But money is nought;
Thou hast a pretty wife
With black eyebrows.
Shchedryk, Shchedryk,
Shchedrivochka*—
A little swallow has arrived.

(c) *The Vesnyanky, or spring songs* (Vesna-spring) are the celebration of the radiant god over the dark ones. They are sung at the Easter time and in Spring generally and imply a great amount of love, courtship (romance), common instincts in life of mankind and nature's influence on man. In some parts of Ukraine an effigy representing the god of cold and winter, Kostruboh, is burned on top of a hill with spring songs (Easter songs), dances and general rejoicing accompanying the rite. Some ethnologists think that the Ukrainians worshipped the goddess of spring, Vesna

* Diminutive, feminine for Shchedryk.

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(Spring) being analogical to the ancient Indian Vasana or Huli (changed into the Ukrainian Hala), hence another name for the spring songs Hahilky:

OY, CHY YE, CHY NEMA^{6*}

1. Is the husbandman at home,
Or is he not?

(Refrain)

The New-Year's Eve, the God's Eve—
Is the landlord at home?

2. He is not at home,
He is in thick forests,
The New-Year's Eve, the God's Eve—
In the thick of forests.
3. For he is in the dark woods
Where he splits the stones,
The New-Year's Eve, the God's Eve—
And he splits the stones.
4. There he splits the stones,
And he builds a pretty church,
The New-Year's Eve, the God's Eve—
He builds a pretty church.

^{6*} Songs marked thus were suggested to me in Ukrainian by a lady sixty-five years of age, a Pole by origin married to a Ukrainian; Madame Zazulak of 951 Washington Ave., Bronx, New York City.

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5. A cozy church he does build
And erects the altars,
The New-Year's Eve, the God's Eve—
He erects the altars.

VINKU MIY ROZHEVIY*

1. My rosy wreath,
Where wert thou?—at Lviv;⁷
What was offered for thee?
A pair of black horses
And a hundred ducats.
2. My rosy wreath,
Pick out a maiden
Whichever thou wishest—leap around,
Choose one—jump around!

OY TY IVANCHIKU — TARABANCHIKU*

Oh, thou Johnny
Thou little drummer,
Swim, come along
The pretty little Dunay,
Comb your hair—fresh with dew,
With hands on your hips
Look around for a mate.

⁷ Lviv—Lemberg, Capital of Ukrainian Galicia, written in other Slavic languages—Lvov.

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VESNO, SOLODKA VESNO!

Spring, Oh! sweet Spring!
Where is thy daughter?—
She seweth a shirt in the garden,
Embroidereth it with silken threads,
And forwards it to her beloved,
Oh! Spring, sweet Spring!

(d) *The Kupalsky Pisny* — are songs sung in commemoration of Kupalo, a festivity dating from immemorial pre-Christian times. It is not certain whence the word comes, but etymology would show that it is derived from *kupaty* — to bathe or to swim. The feast of Kupalo is observed on the 24th of June, which falls on the Christian birth of St. John the Baptist, according to the Julian calendar. The bathing here has reference to the sun and its rays; the spring and summer rain, the thunderstorm, the lightnings, etc., during which time the earth, as it were, bathes and will surely produce abundant fruit in the autumn as the result of their action. Although primarily it is the adoration of the god-sun and all the good forces, yet secondarily,

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it is the worship of Marena, the goddess of the clouds, waters and death, for now she gradually prevails over the god-sun who decreases in his power after the twentieth of June. Christian piety has connected this pagan festival with St. John the Baptist, introduced names of some saints in the lore and in some instances even changed the name of goddess Marena into christianized name Maryna (Mary). At Kupalo's ceremonies the effigies representing the god-sun and goddess Marena are usually thrown into the water and a great entertainment follows: the girls in wreath dance with the boys around a fire, all sing and foretell their fortune:

HEY, NA IVANA, HEY NA KUPALA

Hey, during the feast of St John the Kupalo, Hey,
Hey, Hey!

A beautiful maiden sought her good fortune.
She plucked the flowers and wreathed a garland,
Sending it down the stream;
"Swim, little wreath, along the swift stream,
Swim by the house, where my loved one lives."
The little garland swam down the stream,
Taking the lass's heart along with him.

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Early next morning the garland withered away,
Kupalo bestowed not his favors on her.
Hey, on the feast of St. Ivan the Kupalo, Hey!
This pretty maiden dug herbs at midnight;
At midnight she dug and boiled them,
At sunrise she fell infected with poison.

OY, PIDU YA DO MLYNA, DO MLYNA

1. To the wind mill, wind mill shall I run,
At the wind mill shall I hear some tidings, tidings:

There is the miller, mother dear,
There is the kindly miller;
There is the handsome one, dear mother,
He grinds the buckwheat free of charge.

2. He grinds and grinds and heaps the corn in hopper
Each time he heaps it—he embraces me:

(Refrain).

3. He grinds and grinds and sieves the flour,
Each time he turns the stone—he kisses me:

(Refrain).

(e) *The Obzhinkovi pisni*—the harvest songs,
from obzhinaty—to harvest around, to reap

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around, and finish the harvest—are the expression of thanksgiving to gods of bounty and harvest for the benefits received; they are sung both on thanksgiving days and on the way to and from the work of harvesting, while it lasts; these gods have been consequently changed into hospitable husbandmen and house-wives:

VECHIR⁸

1. The sun is hid beyond the mountains high,
All things slumber in silence: meadows, groves
and hills.
The tolling bells are heard, the moon enlightens
heavens,
Pretty little nightingale sings in the balmy wood.
2. The world is like God's church forsooth,
Peace and quiet all around;
After daily toil and moil
People enjoy relaxation.
3. The moon is like a sentinel;
She eagerly views the world
And rejoices at her heart,
Seeing all in quietude.

⁸ The evening.

CHAPTER V

B. Historic and Political Songs

WITH the introduction of obligatory Christianity by Vladimir the Great, the grand duke and ruler of Ukraine and other territories which later developed into the white Ruthenian and Russian countries respectively, at Kiev in 988 (unofficial Christianity existed in Ukraine centuries before; even Olha — St. Helen — Vladimir's grandmother, had been formally baptized at Constantinople on her visit thither), the production of heathen ritual and religious folk songs gradually diminished, for it was in the interest of the Church to eliminate these pagan beliefs; or, where this appeared difficult, this pagan lore and ceremonial were merged with Christian tenets, other personalities having been substituted; the Christian songs appear to be less indigenous and original than the ancient pagan songs.

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(a) *Songs from the age of Ukrainian Principalities of the earliest date.*

These songs may be justly styled the political annals that celebrate the exploits of the Ukrainian heroes who formed and consolidated the Ukrainian Kiev Empire of the Ruriks that ruled until the Kiev Ukraine fell under the foreign Lithuanian domination of the Gedymins after Ukraine was weakened by constant Tartar invasions from the East. For almost two centuries did the Lithuanian grand dukes hold their sceptre over Ukraine, but they adopted the ancient Ukrainian culture and language. In the vicissitude of fate both Ukraine and Lithuania were forced to unite with Poland in the so-called "Union of Lublin" in 1569. The subject of these songs is the heroism and chivalry of the Ukrainian princes and their retainers while advancing upon foreign cities and distant lands.

The lyric-epic poem: "Slovo o Polku Ihorevi"—The Lay of the War-Ride of Ihor, or

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the Word of Ihor's¹ Armament, is the best and most famous production of the Ukrainian antiquity written by an unknown poet of the twelfth century, such as no other nation possesses.²

SLOVO O POLKU IGOREVI³

¹ The Ukrainian pronunciation and transliteration into English of the name of the heroic Ukrainian prince is Ee-h-o-r, not Ee-g-o-r, Ihor not Igor as is faultily pronounced and written by Russians and their uncritical followers. The only excuse for the Russians is that their alphabet does not possess the equivalent English h sound; they pronounce the Ukrainian r=h as g. The Ukrainian g is r, which again does not exist in Russian.

² It is a pity that until recently both the Russians (Moskovites) and some foreigners unacquainted with historical facts presented the "Word" as being "Russian" instead of Ukrainian. The language of the oldest, mistakingly so called "Russian" literature is chiefly old Slavonic with ample admixture of the early Ukrainian. The earliest Ukrainian literature written during the Kiev period of the Ukrainian Empire, which also included the present European Russia and White Ruthenia, differs linguistically from the literary documents written on the Moscovite territory at the same period. Until Peter the Great the Ukrainians and the Russians were officially recognized as two different nations with two entirely different languages. He introduced the "theory of the union of the Russian nation," and styled the Ruthenians or Ukrainians as the "Little Russians" with a "Russian" dialect. True, that the Ukrainians were also called "Russi" and "Rossi," but it meant not the present day Russians (Moscovites); the historic word was "borrowed" from the Ukrainians, to say it gently.

³ As translated from the ancient Ruthenian-Ukrainian by Prof. A. Petrunkevitch of Yale University in "Poet Lore," 1919. The reader is also referred to Prof. Leo Wiener's "Anthology of Russian Literature," vol. i, p. 80 ff, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. Giving the translation of Prof. Petrunkevitch, the author of this study disagrees with him as well as with many others who translated the words: Руськѣѣ, Русь, Русич as if identical with the modern "Russia" and "Russian." The author's position is supported by the self consciousness of the entire over-forty-million Ukrainian nation as well as by Ukrainian and foreign historical authorities.

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Were it not meet, brothers, to begin the sorrowful lay of the war-ride of Ígor, Ígor Svyatoslávlitch after the old fashion?

But let us picture events of our own day, not fancies in the manner of Boyàn.

For whenever inspired Boyàn wished to make a song of praise, he would let his fancy stray, now as a gray wolf over the ground, now as an eagle among the clouds.

Recalling the strife of olden days, he flew ten falcons against a flock of swans and whatsoever swan was reached first, would sing the praise of old Yarosláv or of old brave Mstisláv who slew Redédyá in sight of the hosts of Kosógi, or of comely Romàn son of Svyatosláv.

Yet were they not ten falcons that Boyàn flew against a flock of swans, but his impassioned fingers with which he struck the live strings and these of themselves sounded forth the praise of the princes?

Let us then, brothers, begin this tale of the times from old Vladímir unto our own Ígor who girded his mind with strength, steeled his heart with courage and filled with the lust of battle, led his brave hosts against the Pólovtzy in defense of the Russian land.⁴

⁴ За Землю Руськую, — *Za Zemlu Rus(i)kuyu* means for the land of the *Rusyns* — *Rusyts(i)* or *Rusytch(i)*, these words having been Latinized into *Ruthenus* (*Ruthenia*) in the 9th century; another appellation was introduced in the 12th century: "Ukraine," Ukrainians, which latter name was generally adopted by all the Ukrainians during the struggle for independence with Poles and Russians in the 17th century similarly as the name "Rumanians" replaced the former names Moldavians and Wallachians; the word *Rusyn* means *Ruthenian*; is still locally used by the Ukrainians. Since the "Word" was written in Ukraine by the Ukrainians it is self evident that this precious ancient Ruthenian masterpiece as well as many others cannot be and

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Galician Osmomysl Yaroslav! High art thou seated upon thy gold-wrought throne.

With thine unyielding hosts thou hast borne the weight of the Hungarian mountains.

Thou hast blocked the path of the king, closed the gates of the Danube, hurling bolts from thy clouds, sending forth ships as far as the Danube.

In storm thy thunder reaches unto many lands.

Thou openest the gates of Kiev, strikest from the golden throne of thy sires, sultans and distant lands.

Strike, sir, Kontchàk the Pagan nomad, for the Russian⁵ land, for the wounds of Ígor, the valiant son of Svyatosláv!

.

Boyàn, bard of olden times, sang the encounters of Svyatosláv and of Yarosláv and of Olèg, saying, "Though evil it is for thee, oh, head lacking body,

is not the "Russian" literature; and that therefore "Земля Руська" means the Ruthenian or Ukrainian land of the princes of Kiev and Galicia—Volhynia. Russian is always and invariably written by double *ss*, whereas Ruthenian is invariably written by one *s* with a sign of softening added *ь*: Руссиа adjective: Русский equals Ruthenian—Ukrainian.

The Russians (Moskovites) wrongly claim the foundation of the Kiev empire to themselves; they have fed, so to say, on the ancient Ukrainian culture, language, state and civilization which were already known historically in 8th century, while the Russian state began forming itself in 13th century around Suzdal and Moscow by the amalgamation of the Slavic tribes of Radimitches and Viyatiches with the Mongolian Finns.

These facts are undisputed by all modern unbiased students of history. That the Russians succeeded in overwhelming the Ruthenians temporarily and have favorably impressed the world as the inheritors of the ancient Ukrainian empire—ah!—it is another story, a story of ruthless oppression and extermination of the Ukrainian people and their independent state.

⁵ *Vide supra*, the note on Руська Земля—*Rus(i)ka Zemla*, which, when rightly translated means the Ruthenian land, i. e., the Ukrainian land, and not the modern "Russian."

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worse farest thou, body without head,"—Russian⁶ land without Igor.

The sun shines in the sky, prince Igor in the Russian land.

Maidens sing on the Danube.

Their voices are borne across the sea to Kiev.

Igor rides through Borítchev to the holy shrine of the Mother of God.

The lands rejoice; the cities are glad.

Having sung to old princes, now we shall sing to young ones, "Glory to Igor Svyatoslávlitch, to dauntless warrior Vsévolod, to Wladímir Ígorevitch!

Hail! princes and retinue fighting Pagan hosts in behalf of the Christians!

Glory to princes and retinue! Amen!⁷

(b) Of somewhat later period are the *Ukrainian Dumas*.⁸ Stanislaus Sarnicki, a Polish historian, in his "Annals" of 1506 is the first one to mention the Ukrainian Dumas, saying that

⁶ Ruthenian—Ukrainian land.

⁷ The Word of the Armament of Ihor being an epic poem, the author of this study fancies that instead of prose—like continuation of sentences, each sentence should be written separately forming a strophe.

⁸ Duma—*dumaty* means to think, to meditate on some deeds of the times of yore. They are the Ukrainian epopees, epic rhapsodies about heroic deeds, usually of Cossacks in their struggle against the Turks, Tartars, Russians and Poles. Equivalent in meaning to the Bilinas (bylo byti means that which has happened, been done or performed) which though of Ukrainian origin, became known as exclusively Russian epic poetry. One must remember that the "Word of the Armament of Igor" is called the "Ukrainian Duma of the XII Century" by all Ukrainian ethnographers.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

“The Ruthenians call these elegies their Dumas.””

Dumas of the earlier period are of lyric-epic character, as well as didactic; they resemble the popular Ukrainian folk songs, and may have been derived from the ancient ones. The later period Dumas, from the middle of the XVII Century, are less poetic; they are realistic, humorous and with traits of sarcasm. They differ from the folk songs, and may not be considered verse in its strict sense, in that they are, as it were, a free improvisation without rhythm or rhyme, with constantly changing, irregular succession of arsis and thesis (beats), sung in melodious recitation, accompanied by the Kobza. There are twenty Ukrainian national Dumas of the older, and nine of the later period with many variants (same themes but different readings). There are some dumas falsified by the Russifiers, which are easily distinguished

* Ivan Erofeiv: “Ukrainian Dumas (Epos) and Their Arrangement” (Redaction); *Zapiski Naukovago Tovaristva*, Kiev, 1909, VI.

Annales sive de origine et gestis Polonorum,—“. . . elegias, quas dumas vocant.”

Ukrainian Folk Songs

from the genuine ones by contents and form,
which we do not take account of here.¹⁰

PLACH NEVILNYKA—

(The Cry of a Captive)

A poor captive sends his greetings
Out of the Turkish land and from the faith of
Mussulmans,
He sends regards to the Christian cities—to his
father and mother.
Yet he can not bring his greetings in person
But forwards his salute through a gray dear little
dove.

.

UTECHA BRATIW Z AZOVA

(The Flight of the Brothers from Azov)

When out of the Turkish land
And from the faith of Mussulmans
A small regiment flew
From the Azov city:
A rather small troop,
And there were not great dust clouds.

¹⁰ Dr. Filaret Kolessa: "Ukrainski Narodni Dumy," Prosvita, Lviv (Lemberg), 1920, p. 63ff.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

Three own brothers were escaping,
Three beloved friends.

Two on horse-back; the third one on foot
Runs, approaches the riders,
Grasps the stirrup
And speaks out these words:

.

ROZMOWA DNIPRA Z DUNAYOM

(A Colloquy of Dnieper with Danube)

The Dnieper river asks silent Danube:

“Why, quiet Danube,
Do I not behold my Cossacks on thy waters?
Hast thy mouth devoured my Cossacks—
Hast thy Danube-water carried them away?

.

KORSUNSKA BYTWA

(The Battle of Korsun)

.

Soho, Sir Potocki!¹¹

Why hast thou, hitherto, a woman's brain?
Thou knewest not how to behave at Kamianets of
Podolia,

¹¹ Nicholas Potocki (pronounced Pototski), a Polish military leader in the war against the Ukrainians in 1648, badly defeated by Ohmielnitsky.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

How to use a roasted suckling pig, a chick with pepper and saffron;
And now thou wilt not know how to battle with us
Cossacks,
Thou wilt be unable to live on rye flour and fish
sauce;
Unless I deliver thee into the hands of the Crimean
Khan,
That his whip may teach thee to chew the mare's
row meat!

(c) Some of the *recent historical songs* are:

.

SHICHE NE VMERLA

1. She lives on, our Ukraine, her glory and freedom!
Once again, young brethren, shall good fortune
smile on us.
Our foes shall perish like the dew in sunshine,
Once more will we, brethren, prevail in our own
dear country.

(Refrain)

Soul and body shall we offer for our longed for
freedom,
We shall yet prove, we are, brethren, of Cossack
descent.

.

3. Oh, Bohdan, our Bohdan, our celebrated Hetman!
Wherefore hast thou sacrificed Ukraine to Mosco-
vites?

Ukrainian Folk Songs

We shall lay down our lives for our former prestige,
Proudly shall we call ourselves Ukraine's faithful children.

(Refrain)

4. Our Slavonic brethren are under arms already;
Forward promptly must we go, but not lag behind.
Let us all, Slavonic brethren, cheerfully unite
That our enemies may perish.—Gain freedom and right!

(Refrain)

NE PORA

1. 'Tis no time, 'tis no time, 'tis no time,
To serve the Moscovites and Poles!
Repeatedly they wronged our Ukraine.
For our Ukraine alone must we live.
.
4. For this is the favorable time!
In the headstrong and obstinate fight
Shall we perish to gain honor, freedom and right
For thee, our native and glorious land!

VZHE BILSHE LIT DVISTA

1. Over two hundred years ago since Cossack was enslaved;

Ukrainian Folk Songs

He wanders along the river bank, calling out his
Fate:¹²

“Come forth, come out of the water,
Deliver me, my dear, from this misfortune.”

2. “My falcon dear, I shan’t come out,
Though willing; for in bondage am I, too;
In bondage, under the yoke of servitude,
In Moskovite Custody, cast into prison.
3. Young Cossack Destiny that I am,
To the Moscovites was I sold as a slave,
Into captivity, heavily fettered,
Thou unwise Hetman Bohdàn, see, what you’ve
done!

¹² Figuratively: Ukraine.

CHAPTER VI

D. Songs of the Cossack and of Haydamaki¹³ Era

After the Union of Lithuania with Poland, whereby Ukraine was also forced to join the latter, the Ukrainian and Lithuanian nobility became gradually Polonized as a consequence of Polish political tactics and repressions — so much so that the Ukrainian people felt the necessity of providing for some measure of national defence. As a consequence of this feeling there arose on the lower left bank of the river Dniro (Dnieper), a Ukrainian knighthood — the Cossacks who at the end of the Fifteenth century organized in Sitch under Ostap Dashkevitch, and consequently organized into a strong military force under Prince Demetrius

¹³ Haydamaki is a Turkish word for a robber, a highwayman; this word was originally applied to the Ukrainian Cossack bands who inveighed guerrillas against the Turks. With the progress of time the Ukrainian peasants rebelled against the Polish rule of nobility and the economic oppression and expropriation by Poles and Jews in Ukraine—applied this word to themselves as a meaning for self-defense.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

Wyshnevetsky in 1515, and became the bulwark of the Ukraine against Turks, Poles and Russians. This excellent Ukrainian organization, called also the Zaporoghian Cossacks or Sitch¹⁴ (since the first settlements were located beyond the cataracts of the lower Dnipro and on the islands of the River) — was the first to revolt against the mediaeval intolerable economic conditions and national oppression by Poles; insurrections followed in quick succession under Ataman¹⁵ Kosinsky, 1592; Loboda and Nalywayko in 1596; Tryasylo, 1630; Pavliuk, 1637, until Bohdan Chmelnitsky, one of the greatest leaders of the modern times, proclaimed war for independence in 1648. The entire nation became insurgent. The Poles were defeated many a time; Ukraine was liberated, but when Chmelnitsky saw that Turks, Poles and Russians were

¹⁴ Sitch (or kish-basket) was a camp of the Ukrainian Cossacks of the Dnipro River, who inhabited the country beyond the porohi (thresholds), i. e., rapids or cataracts of Dnipro; derived from "sitchi" or "sikti," to hew or cut down, because the virgin forests were hewn and extensive territory cleared up and prepared for cultivation.

¹⁵ Ataman or Hetman are words corresponding to the English Head-man; he was the elected chief or president of the Ukrainian Cossacks and of the entire Ukrainian people.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

bent either on ruling wholly or on partitioning the Ukraine, he entered a free alliance with Russia at Pereyaslav in 1654, to save Ukraine from Poles and Turks. Ukraine was promised entire freedom and independence; but soon she was again partitioned by Russia and Poland in the treaty of Andrussow (1667); at that time all freedom and rights were abrogated and serfdom gradually introduced.

The Cossacks as the flower of the Ukrainian Nation, and inheritors of glorious national traditions from the period of Princes, were always struggling for Ukraine's independence and for the privileges of the common people, and this is the reason why the people have celebrated this era most of all. The variety of subjects is greater than in any other period; love and exploits are the main themes.

What the Cossacks were for Ukraine let this folk song demonstrate:

A Cossack drives over the mountain
And thus he addresses it:
“Why, Oh, why, thou mountain white

Ukrainian Folk Songs

Hast thou not burned long ago?"
— Reason why I have not burnt
Is because I am soaked with blood.
— What sort of blood? — Cossack blood,
Intermingled with Turkish.¹⁶

Terribly did the Ukrainians suffer in the
Turkish Yassir¹⁷

. . . . Thrice, they flogged and cut to the bone in the
same place the poor captives,
The young white Cossack flesh was torn from the
bones

.

Thou Turkish land, thou Mussulman faith,
Thou which separated Christians!
Many a one didst thou separate from father and
mother,
A brother from sister,
A husband from a faithful wife.
Deliver us, O, Lord, the poor captives
From heavy Turkish yassir,
From the Mussulman galley
Into the quiet waters;
Under the bright stars,
Into the joyful land;

¹⁶ Lysenko: Collection of Ukrainian Songs, Vol. IV, p. 11.

¹⁷ Yassir, a Turkish imprisonment, captivity, detention.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

. . . More than a year or two have passed already,
Since there has been prosperity in this Christian
land.

. . . How the Jews the inn-keepers
Have leased all the Cossack highways.

How in this renowned Ukraine, Jews took lease of
the Cossack trade.

And levied taxes — customs,

How Jews took lease of all the Cossack churches in
the renowned Ukraine,³⁰

Hetman Chmielnitsky ordered these outrages
and abuses stopped and conditions changed, and
then both the noblemen and the Jewish expro-
priators suffered, and both were compelled to
flee from Ukraine for their lives; the populace
meant revenge for the extreme suffering:

. . . Then the Jews — the inn keepers
Cried with a bitter voice:
Stop Poles, stop if ye care for us,
Open the gates to Poland
And let us in beyond the Vistula, though we have
nothing but shirts on.

³⁰ Antonovitch and Drahomanow: "The Historic Songs of the
Ukrainian Nation," Vol. II, pp. 20-22.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

We shall teach our children all good deeds,
We shall teach them not even to glance at Cossack
Ukraine.²¹

Chmeilnitsky won a few decisive battles over
the Poles, for example, at Zhovti Vodi, Korsun,
Pylava; annihilated a great many of them and
liberated Ukraine:

. . . Our famous Ukraine is sorely afflicted
But we shall pick up this red cranberry
And we shall yet cheer our renowned Ukraine.²²

.
Be not surprised, oh, good folks,
What happened in our Ukraine:
Beyond Dashev, nearby Soroka
Many Lachs²³ have perished.
Perebeynis²⁴ has but few of them,
Seven hundred Cossacks at his side.
He takes off the Poles' heads from their shoulders,
While the rest he drowns.²⁵

But Chmielnitsky met with a heavy defeat
just outside of Berestechko in 1651, solely on

²¹ "Antonovitch and Drahomanow: "The Historic Songs of the Ukrainian Nation," Vol. II, pp. 20-25.

²² Antonovitch and Drahomanow: "The Historic Songs of the Ukrainian Nation," Vol. II, pp. 20-25.

²³ Lach is another name for a Pole; supposed to be derived from a legendary Polish King Lech.

²⁴ Perebeynis or Kryvonis, a famous Cossack Colonel.

²⁵ Ibidem, Vol. II, p. 114.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

account of the treachery on the part of the Tartar Khan whom the former summoned against the more numerous Poles and their mercenaries, so that the Poles returned to Ukraine for some time:

. . . The Lachs,
The nobility,
Took up the Cossacks' and peasants' abodes
And made expensive quarters of them.
Took the keys away from the proprietors
And began to husband in them.

Permit us to ask the Russians' assistance
Or else let us make an insurrection against the
Lachs. . .²⁶

²⁶ Antonovitch, and Drahomaow: "The Historic Songs of the Ukrainian Nation," Vol. II, p. 50.

CHAPTER VII

Historic and Political Songs, Continued

ONCE more, after the Union with Russia at Pereyaslav, the whole nation arose against the Moscovites under the leadership of Hetman Mazepa, who made a covenant with Charles XII, King of Sweden; but both were defeated near Poltava, Ukraine, in 1709. Peter the Great and Catherine (II) the Great abrogated all the liberties of the Ukrainian nation and destroyed the last camp of the Cossacks in 1700 and in 1775 razed all Ukrainian schools, and forbade speaking and praying in Ukrainian. It is estimated that 170,000 Cossacks perished at the compulsory building of St. Petersburg, making canals and general improvements in Northern Russia, while hundreds of thousands perished in Siberia, dying from disease and hunger!

“. . . So it came to pass that the famous Zaporoghians became melancholy
And no wonder, for the Moscovites besieged them all
around,

Ukrainian Folk Songs

The hateful Russian lords, generals, the heretic sons
Have wasted the serene land and the wide steppe.”¹

The Zaporoghians have shed tears on their way to
Turkey. . .”²

“ . . . Alas he went to Moscovy and there he per-
ished”³

Never has he abandoned his native Ukraine. . .”⁴

The sad condition of affairs owing to the economic slavery, and compulsory labor or servitude, that were gradually imposed by the Russian and Polish land owners, caused the Haydamaki war or the peasant uprising first under Simon Paley who desired to reunite the Left and Right-Bank Ukraine in 1704, and then in 1768 under the two national leaders Gonta and Zalizniak, who were the authors of the renowned massacre at Uman (1768); it was a chain of bloody reprisals of the people for the many abuses and sufferings:

¹ Antonowitch and Drahomanow: “The Historic Songs of the Ukrainian Nation,” Vol. II, p. 40.

² Antonovitch and Drahomanow: “The Historic Songs of the Ukrainian Nation,” Vol. II, p. 40.

³ Ibidem, Vol. II, p. 114.

⁴ Drahomaniw: “Political Songs of the Ukrainian Nation,” Vol. II, p. 114.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

. . . Let us go, beloved brethren,
Into the steppes, and become the Haydamaki,
We may, perchance, some day
Revenge ourselves on the oppressors.⁵

. . . Do not ask, O, Lach, for any direction in
Ukraine,
Just look up and see how Cossacks are hanging from
the oak trees.⁶

(e) Songs of the Servitude and Compulsory Army Service.

After the partition of Poland (1772-1795), the entire Ukraine—except East Galicia, Bukovina and Hungarian Ruthenia which fell to Austria—went under the Russian yoke, and Catherine the Great razed the last remnant of the Zaporoghian Sitch in 1775, just when the United States were struggling for independence; both Russia and Austria began recruiting soldiers from among the Ukrainians; thus, recruited soldiers had to serve twenty five years in the army and one was never certain of seeing home and relatives again; life was lost for such

⁵ Drahomanow: "New Ukrainian Songs about Community Affairs" p. 34.

⁶ Holowacky: "National Songs of Galician and Hungarian Ruthenia (Ukraine)," Vol. I, p. 16.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

a one forever, for if not killed, he returned home old and maimed.

. . . When shalt thou return, dear brother?
Take, my sister, a handful of sand,
Sow it, sister, upon a stone.
When this sand begins to grow
Then thy little brother will return.⁷

Just then the servitude or compulsory labor and slavery were introduced in Ukraine with all the hardships, for, while the feudal system and servitude were much older, they received the sanction and protection of both these governments again:

. . . It was well for the fathers
To live in Ukraine,
While now their sons
Must perform servitude.⁸

. . . A priest walks in the church, reading a book,
Why good folks, don't you attend the church?
And how can we, reverend, come to church,
If they tell us to thresh grain from Sunday to Sunday?⁹

⁷ Lysenko: "A Collection of Ukrainian Songs," Vol. VI, p. 7.

⁸ Drahomanow: "New Ukrainian Songs about Community Affairs," p. 36.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p 25.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

(f) *Songs about Freeing the Peasants from Servitude.*

Austria, in order to acquire the sympathy and support of the peasantry of all nationalities, officially abrogated the servitude in 1848, and Russia in 1861, mostly on account of democratic principles, disseminated by Ukrainian savants and writers best expressed by tenets of the Cyryllo-Methodius Society of Kiev; this caused a great jubilation among the Ukrainian peasantry, uttered in numerous songs:

OY LETILA ZAZULENKA

Flying, did the little cuckoo cry:
Stay, good folks, I have ought to say!
On my return trip to you, the groves grew green,
I sat in the thick of the forest and reposed.
It clattered and roared, so I turned around
And saw such a marvel that it made me wonder.
Freedom drove out and pursued Servitude;
She drove Feudal Service into woods and down
precipices.
Lords and masters followed her, earnestly entreat-
ing

Ukrainian Folk Songs

“Come back, return, oh, Servitude; no incomes to live from.”

While Servitude retorted: “ ’Tis not my fault, A trusty servant was I — ye dismissed me.”

“We know not how to thrash, nor our wives to reap, We’re aware how hard it is to earn one’s livelihood.”

CHAPTER VIII

C. Professional Songs

(a) *The Chumak*¹ songs. Chumaks or merchants were well organized in groups and eagerly protected by the Ukrainian forces before attacks of nomadic tribes, as ones who were indispensably necessary for the progress and improvement of Ukraine. They were guarded by the Cossacks who collected toll from them.

Many of them met with ill luck. Here is a stanza from a song about the pair of oxen, that drove home alone, leaving their dead master far away from home:

. . . The eldest sister came out first:—
Oh, my little Chumak, Oh, my little brother, where
hast thou met thy death?
“We left our landlord in a foreign country.”

¹ Chumak is a Tartar word for a waggoner, carter, carrier or driver; this word became identical with a trader or merchant. The Ukrainian peasants occupied especially with import and export of grain, textiles, dry fish, salt and other useful articles in wagons called mazha, were named Chumaks.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

The little oxen amble along and bellow :
“We have left our landlord on our way home.”²

(b) Quite numerous are the *songs about the servants and small rural farmers*, that treat of the general home life, the toil and blessing connected with agriculture :

I shall sow my little wheat,
I shall sow a piece of land,
And when God blesses its growth
I shall make two stacks of it.

All birds came flying, sparrows flocked together,
Ate and sucked out the little wheat, leaving only
stalks alone.

Oh that all these birds may die
For having eaten the poor widow's precious little
wheat!³

(c) There are but few *Artisan songs* in Ukrainian, since the city's population was composed largely of a foreign element and was not so creative :

. . . We have all gathered together,
We are not common people but craftsmen :
Some clerks, some painters,

² Ivan Kolessa: Ethnographic collections.

³ Ivan Kolessa: Ethnographic collection, Vol. XI, p. 242.

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Some blacksmiths, some locksmiths,
Some musicians, some moulders,
Some little shoemakers, some shop-keepers;
Kuperyan is the master of the straw corporation.⁴

⁴ Lysenko: "Collection of Ukrainian Songs," Vol. III, p. 80.

CHAPTER IX

D. Songs of Family and Private Life

(a) THE oldest songs and ones that give a good insight into home life are the *Ritual Songs*, and especially the *Wedding Songs*. In these we see traces of the so-called Matriarchal Age, when the mother was considered the head of a family, which denotes great antiquity for these songs; in most of them the father is rarely mentioned. The main subject is the grief and reluctance of the bride to leave her parents, relatives and home. It is a litany, so to speak, of all the happiness of childhood and virginity and fear for the uncertain future. In these songs, and even at the present day, the people call the bridegroom a prince; the bride, a princess; the best man, ushers and bridesmaids, — the high nobles, etc. The ceremonies are antique, very religious and of great variety. In some parts of Ukraine there still exist the reminiscences of the ancient times when candidates for marriage

Ukrainian Folk Songs

stole girls for wives, or bought them for a considerable amount of money. This was done away with at the introduction of Christianity.

The author remembers well from his childhood, the wedding rites in his own village of Choroshchinka, in the western part of Ukraine, Podlakhia (Cholm Government). These ceremonies were identical with those of centuries ago. The following brief description may facilitate in the understanding of the beauties of a Ukrainian rural wedding.

After the bans of the marriage are proclaimed, the bridegroom, usually from another village, is preparing in his own home for the marriage reception, while the parents of the bride are doing their best to get ready for the wedding. On Saturday afternoon the bride, with wreaths or flowers on her head and many ribbons hanging from her coiffure, accompanied by some of her maids, goes from house to house kissing elderly persons on the face and hands, with view of obtaining their blessing, and asking everybody to come to the wedding. Some

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understand that this is a mere formality and although they thank the bride and promise to come, they do not appear, unless they be very dear friends or relatives.

About seven o'clock in the evening almost all the young and middle-aged married women come to the house of the bride and make the Korovay — a wedding cake, and various other small fancy cakes, all sitting at a long family table, singing until about eleven o'clock, chanting in a kind of plaintive voice:

. . . Oy Korovay, Oy Korovay
What an expensive thing thou art!
A korets¹ of wheaten flour is needed,
And a gallon of spring water. . .

and other inexhaustible strains of wedding songs are sung.

In the meantime the bridesmaids are making wreaths, loosening the bride's tresses and hair and asking the parents' blessing. One must remember that there are songs prescribed for

¹ Korets, a measure, a bushel.

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every action. On Sunday morning the bridegroom comes with his mates and many guests in as many wagons as are needed, and brings his future wife many presents. After an introductory reception which consists of bread and salt and consequently (inseparably) some drink for the guests — the young pair kneel down before the bride's parents, asking for blessing. For this purpose many of the oldest folks of the village (some centenarians) are invited to bless the young by making the sign of the cross over their heads. There is much crying and lamentation while the rural music plays on.

The entire gathering then starts for Mass and the marriage at the church to the accompaniment of musicians; everybody walks. The bride on her way, kisses all the older folks she meets, asking their blessing. The essence of the blessing is wishing for temporal and eternal good, and, especially, marital happiness and a numerous progeny.

After the imposing church ceremonials according to Greek Rite, on returning home, the

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wedding party sings among others the following song:

.
We have fooled the pope (priest)
We have fooled the priest
As if he were an uncouth peasant;
We gave him three pence,
But he thought it was an old ruble. . . .

The assembly feasts until midnight when the bride-princess is getting ready to leave her parents' home, with all her trunks and effects, — an action called locally "Perezviny," perhaps "Perevozyny," meaning carrying over, transfer. The wedding continues at the bridegroom's home for at least two days more:

. . . Do not cry my little mother after me,
I shall not take all the goods with me.
I shall leave thee my footsteps outdoors,
I shall leave thee my tears upon the table,
I shall leave thee my fragrant herb in the chamber.²

(b) *Cradle songs* are sung by every mother who lulls her baby to sleep. These songs are very emotional because there is no language

² Collections of Osyp Rozdilsky.

Ukrainian Folk Songs

in the world that is so captivating as the conversation from the heart of a mother to the part of her own body and soul:

It is bright and pretty, it is bright and pretty,
Wherever the little sun shines,
But it is still brighter, it is still prettier,
Where the little mother walks. . .³

(c) *Love themes* are most numerous in every walk of life. The songs relate the natural affection of sweethearts; but many of them complain of the unsteadiness and treachery of the other party, for example:

Rise, O, bright little evening star;
Say, come out, come out my faithful lass!
Oh, the little evening star would appear, but a black
cloud interferes,
“I should be eager to come out to see you, but my
little mother forbids.”⁴

Or

. . . When the rye had blossomed,
News came to the village •

³ Collections of Osyp Rozdilsky.

⁴ Ivan Kolessa: Ethnographic collection, Vol. II, p. 118.

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That the Cossack would no more return to thee
For he lay asleep forever in the steppes.⁶

(d) Songs of the Conjugal Life.

Though some celebrate the marital happiness and mutual accord, yet most of them tell of the sad disappointments we so often meet with in actual life. In them the woman's position is attractively depicted, her superior, delicate nature, her suffering and humiliation and patience well described. There is always some third person, usually a relative, who becomes the bone of contention. It is usually the bad mother-in-law; a drunkard husband; an unfaithful husband; the elopement of a wife; unsteadiness of a wife; mistreatment of an orphan by the step-mother, etc.:

I SHUMYT I HUDYT

1. The wind blusters and roars,
Sending down drizzling rain;
Here I am, a young married woman;
Who will lead me to my home?

⁶ Lysenko: "Collection of Ukrainian Songs," Vol. VII, p. 16. Steppes of Ukraine are the extensive plains not unlike the American prairies, but now rendered very fertile.

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2. A young Cossack* replied
Amid drinking sweet honey,
 "Black browed woman dance on
 I shall bring thee to thy house."

3. Do not show me the way,
I beseech thee, do not;
 For my husband is bad,
 He will object and beat me.

4. Not because I use his salt
Enjoy dainties and bread,
 But for loving other men
 Will he take vengeance on me.

(e) *Funeral Songs.*

Outside of the numerous religious Christian songs about the two elements in man: material and spiritual, the eternal truth that every man must die and decompose, the reward of the soul and body for every good deed, the resurrection of the body, the second coming of Christ-God in his majesty to judge the living and the dead, there are many remnants of the ancient pagan singing, and soliloquy. One might say that a

* Figuratively, and in every day use a Cossack means any young man, wooer, lover or a man of courage; a Ukrainian.

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Ukrainian peasant woman, on losing her child or other beloved person, keeps on crying uninterruptedly for three days—the time prescribed for the body to lie in state. She usually cries loud with a wailing, plaintive air that moves to tears all the visitors. It is said that the Ukrainians are the most emotional of the Slavic peoples. While she wrings her hands, she invokes the Deity, clamoring:

Look at your father, consider the bereavement
Of your mother and return to us again! . . .

. . . O, God, my God, why hast thou taken my child?
. . . O my little darling,
My golden child, why hast thou left me forever?

In most of these crying monologues, there is rhythm and rhyme. No doubt in many instances there is the spontaneous outburst of poetic phraseology, but many are sung alike by all. Now, taking into consideration the frequency of diminutives⁷ for the dear departed persons and

⁷ The frequency of diminutives used in the Ukrainian renders the language most harmonious of all Slavic tongues; a word may be used in two, five and even ten different ways.

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possessions and the intensitives for the grave, death, sickness, calamity — one sees a great poetic beauty in these expressions of despondency:

KOLOMEYKA

How beautiful are the flowers that begin to blossom
How fortunate are the children whose mothers are
 alive,
Others' children—happy children, but I am a poor
 orphan,
Others' children have their mothers—mine is with
 dear God.

CHAPTER X

E. Wandering Songs, Ballads

THE Ukrainians have many of the common songs whose themes are proper to all the rest of the world's peoples — *songs that are the common treasury of mankind*; such as songs of the mediaeval chivalric knighthood, or adopted according to the characteristic views and inclinations of the Ukrainians. The general, universal ballads were remodeled into typical Ukrainian; popular heroes and fictitious persons introduced so as to render them indigenous. Following are some of the general subjects:

1. A widow and her daughter by mistake marry their own son and brother.
2. Sweethearts drown themselves because parents opposed their marriage.
3. A man commits suicide on the grave of his wife whom he killed through misunderstanding.
4. A father sells his daughter to bandits, while her brother rescues her.

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5. Foreigners seduce a girl, promising to marry her, but they burn her having tied her to a pine tree.

6. A woman marries another man, thinking her husband to have died in war; he appears at her wedding.

7. A Cossack kills his perfidious sweetheart.

8. A girl poisons her perfidious fiancé.

A mother is the cause of the death of her grand-child and daughter-in-law through her severity. The daughter-in-law had been compelled to do most of the work; she went to reap the corn on Sunday leaving her child asleep. Being in a hurry to milk the cows, she forgot the infant in the field. Being reminded of her child by the mother-in-law, she ran wildly and was told by an eagle that three hawks — “nurses” — have killed the child:

. . . The first one pecks the eyes
The second one plucks the little heart
The third one pulls the little bones. . .

In her despair the young mother returned home asking the mother-in-law to hand her a knife, ostensibly to cut some cloth, but stabbed herself therewith, exclaiming:

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. . . There, mother, thou hast three sins on thy soul:
The first sin — the holy Sunday
The second sin — the little infant
The third sin — I, young Hala. . .¹

¹ Lysenko: "Collection of Ukrainian Songs," Vol V, p. 17.

CHAPTER XI

Most of the Ukrainian folk songs are, as a rule, of ancient date. The Serbs are the nearest to the Ukrainians of all Slavs with the quantity, contents and quality of their folk songs.

The leading ideology of these songs is the constant moralization, desire for liberty, and protest against violence. This popular poetry is the true picture of a Ukrainian soul that consciously strives to better conditions of self and of all humanity. Such a nation — such songs!

One of the greatest authorities on the subject, Drahomaniv, says that Ukrainian popular poetry is more of historic than of fictitious and fabulous origin.

Ukrainian folk song naturally had a great influence on national literature. In 1819, Prince Tsertelev published a collection of Ukrainian historic songs. Michael Maksymo-

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vich, a Ukrainian professor at the Moscow University, published another compilation of songs in 1827. Among the greatest students and collectors were Ambrose Metlynsky, 1854;¹ Pantaleymon Kulish, 1856; Nicholas Kostomariv, 1859; Alexander Rusov and Paul Chubinsky, 1874; Jacob Holowatsky, Rev. Markian Shashkevich, 1837 (in East Galicia); Osyp Fedkovich, 1860 (in Bukovina).

These collections of folklore made a decisive turn in national literature. Latin and Church Slavonic were abandoned in writing, national consciousness awoke and the Ukrainian masses began the struggle for liberty and independence, both under the Russian and Austro-Hungarian governments. Ivan Kotlarevsky was the first one to introduce the pure living Ukrainian language in his works, 1798, without an admixture of Russianized and Slavonic words. It was this very source that produced the immortal poet Taras Shevchenko, 1814-1861, who is classed

¹ The years quoted refer to dates of publication of the works of these Ukrainian savants.

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with the German Schiller and Goethe, the English Shakespeare, the Polish Mickiewicz and the Russian Pushkin. Among the greatest students and ethnologists of Ukraine are two Kiev professors, Volodymyr Antonovich and Michaylo Drahomaniv, who collected many volumes of Ukrainian folklore; there is a host of other men of erudition, writers and poets who devoted their lives to the investigation of the Ukrainian folklore. Among these were Potebnia, Zhytecky, Manzhura, Hrinchenko, Lesia Ukrainka, Filaret Kolessa, Ohorowych, Horlenko, Sumtsov, Malynka, Kalash, Martynovych, Slastion, Speransky, Domanytsky, Tkachenko-Petrenko, Lysenko, Yerofeew, Zelenyna, Rubets, Marko Vovchok, Franko, Lomykowsky, Tomachynsky, Iwashchenko. Excellent school books of latest date, with treatises on the subject were written by Dr. M. Pachivsky, Prof. Lukachivsky, A. Barvinsky, Serhey Ephremov, Michael Hrushevsky. To quote the German, F. M. Bodenstedt:

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“In no other country did the tree of people’s poetry produce such grand fruit; nowhere else did the spirit of a nation reflect so vividly and forcefully in songs as with the Ukrainians. What a sensitive breeze of sorrow, what immaculate human feelings are expressed in these songs sung by a Cossack in a foreign land! What a subtle delicacy in part with heroic force, masculine strength pervade his love songs! A special attention should be called to the tact and purity, as the chief factors of these songs. One cannot help but admit that a nation which sings such songs and is so fond of them — must be far above a low degree of cultural development”
“ The Ukrainian language is the most melodious among all the Slavic tongues, having great musical properties.”²

A Serbian, V. Lukich has this to say: “The Ukrainian language is distinguished for its harmony and beauty, and is the most adaptable to music and singing among the Slavic tongues.” . . .

² Translation of the quotations rendered by the author of this study.

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“The national poetry of the Ukrainians is the richest one in Europe; it is distinguished for its esthetic properties and poetic inspiration and harmony of wording; it contains something grand, uplifting, the essence of feeling, melancholic and invigorating.”

“. . . the celebrated Russian music is the music of the Ukraine, and it is the Ukrainian, Gogol, who has opened the way to the Russian romancers of genius.” (Charles Seignobos, Professor at the Sorbonne.)

A race that has such an inexhaustible source of inspiring poetry which denotes a great wealth of spirit, inborn intelligence and talented souls, shall never perish, but its aspirations to a united, free, independent national existence will be realized:

. . . No one will chain a live soul,
No one will chain a live word.

The darkness of thralldom will disappear
The light of truth will shine,
And the children of bondage
Shall praise God in Freedom.

Taras Shevchenko.

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¹ Little Russian and Red Russian (Galician) names for the Ruthenians or Ukrainians according to the Russian and Polish State ideology, which appellations every conscious Ukrainian resents, because they are used for purpose of dividing the Ukrainian nation.

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